



## FLY FISHING ADVENTURES TRAVEL NEWSLETTER – JULY '07

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We are in the sixth year of publishing our monthly newsletter with updates on great fly fishing venues, trip reports and insights for our traveling fly fishers. We want to help you match the right location with your fly fishing goals and objectives and properly prepare you to fully enjoy the experience. We've been to most locations and pride ourselves on our ability to research new sites. One of our services is to compare and contrast different lodges/outfitters. Whatever unbiased information on timing and locations we can provide comes at the same cost to you as booking direct – i.e., NO EXTRA COST.

### TRIP REPORT: GASPE, QUEBEC ATLANTIC SALMON

(Note: this is an abbreviated report – if you'd like to receive the detailed report including the different options, prices, lottery detail, and best times, hit “reply” and we'll forward)



Over the years, I've spoken with many people who believe the Atlantic Salmon to be a superior gamefish and would argue they are the top freshwater sport fish. I've always wondered about the Atlantic, but never fished for them. Recently, I heard about a clear-water, sight fishing venue to pursue Atlantics. Clear water.....casting to sighted fish....floating lines.....dry fly fishing possible – sounded like something I should know more about so make reservations I did. My wife, Marte, and I headed off to eastern Canada. What we found was a unique and (at least for me) different fly fishing experience.

Gaspé, Quebec is a charming, predominantly French speaking town isolated on the tip of the Gaspé Peninsula. It is an untarnished and

wholesomely industrious community of 16,000 Canadians on the shore of Gaspé Bay.

There are three primary rivers within short driving distance of Gaspé. Each is broken into pools – gathering spots where salmon stop while making their way upstream to spawn. The rivers are further broken into sectors. Some of the sectors are spectacularly beautiful with canyon stretches, waterfalls, and crystal clear pools over varying rock formations carved out by nature throughout the centuries. There are lotteries to determine who gets which sectors for what dates and our outfitter in Gaspé handles the lottery drawings for all our clients.

What made this experience special were the crystal clear streams and, for the three days I fished, I only cast to sighted fish with floating lines. However, from what I observed, the sight fishing aspect is a function of having the right guide as many of the fishermen we saw were primarily blind casting. We also did a fair amount of fishing with large, floating (not skated) dry flies and upstream presentation, ala New Zealand. I was very fortunate to release four fish, one of them on a dry. Sizes were 5, 10, 14, and 16 pounds....all hot, fresh fish.



The Atlantic is a spectacular sport fish, capable of stripping line deep into the backing and dramatic aerial antics. They reach large sizes with third year returning fish in the 15- 22 pound range and fourth year returnees are 30+ and can reach in excess of 40 pounds. They are also a challenge to get to eat and this should be considered a trophy fishery where, even with a good guide, you're doing well to release one good fish a day.



One 30# fish joins in with several in the 15# range and a few smaller grilse

Prices range from \$2,000 per person (based on shared occupancy and guide) for 5 nights and 4 days guided fishing. This includes lodging, meals, and sector rod fees (options explained in our detailed report). Season is from June 1 to September 30.

Previous to making our decision to go, we dug up as much information as we could. Don Powell, who has made four trips from California to Gaspé and taken Atlantics up to 32 pounds, supplied us with thoughts on his experiences with this conclusion: "I highly recommend going to experience it yourself...each time I go I run into members in the Who's Who of the fly fishing world. Believe me, these folks wouldn't be there if it wasn't something very special. I believe the average angler just doesn't know this type opportunity exists for such a reasonable price."

### GIANT BROOKIES OF THE MINIPI AND DEAN RIVER STEELHEAD



For 16 years, Dave Ellis (photo at left with the monster 8.25 pound male brookie taken on a Turk's Tarantula) has been making the trek to Labrador to pursue, with dry flies, the giant brookies of the Minipi River system. He's been joined by his brother, Dan, for the last eight years. Generally, they spend two weeks and visit more than one of the lodges. This year, they spent time at all three lodges, splitting one week at two different lodges. Dave reports on his best three days: "On our fourth day, we transferred to Minonipi and things changed. In 3 days, we got 13 brookies on dry flies with 3 of them over 7 pounds. The 13 fish averaged 5.6 pounds."

Julie and Dennis Smith made their first visit to the Minipi this year visiting Minipi Lodge. Pike play an important role in the fishery on the Minipi, keeping the brookie balance in order. They also make an exciting top water option when the brookies

are not on the surface. Watching a big pike slowly surface 5 or 10 feet behind a popper is reminiscent of watching a submarine break the surface. Photos are of Julie with a 10 pound toothy pike and Dennis with the spectacularly colored male brookie in spawning dress.



For several years, we've been holding prime time slots on the lower Dean River for its world famous summer steelhead run. Also, for many years, Frank Jackson



has been occupying one of those spots. Frank returned recently from his annual visit to report that the numbers of steelhead seemed to be down this year, but fresh Chinook and Chum salmon helped pick up the slack. Frank did manage the trophy 18 pound steelhead pictured at left.

Note on Minipi and Dean availability: Regarding the Minipi for the prime time in '08, things are virtually full already. Best think '09 if you want to go and it's not too early to reserve your space now. The lower Dean may have some prime time, summer slots open – it will depend on whether all the “regulars” repeat or not. We should know within a few weeks if there will be any openings.

### “YOU GUYS MUST BE GREAT FLY FISHERMAN?”

At the conclusion of a slide presentation titled “Stalking The World's Great Gamefish With A Fly Rod” to a fly fishing club in Las Vegas, one of the club executives approached my son, Scott, and I. He was very enthused after viewing the many photos of great fish and stunning fly fishing environments. He asked us “You guys must be great fly fisherman?”

We were flattered to be asked the question and, frankly, we had never considered whether we were “great fly fisherman.” Having been exposed to many fly fishing situations over the years, especially the saltwater flats, has “forced” us to develop a degree of fly casting skills. While casting skills are certainly an important part of being a “great fly fisherman,” there are many other elements involved also, and, I'm very mediocre at some of those skills. I know many other fly fishers who are finer fly fisherman than either of us will ever be.....I know because I've fished with them and observed them in action.

So how do we answer the question, “how have we acquired so many photos of trophy fish?” The answer we came up with is we have spent enough time in the right places to “hit it right.” You can be the world's greatest fly fisherman, but if you're fishing in the wrong place at the wrong time, you won't be releasing many photo-worthy fish. However, even if you are a relative novice, if you are fishing in the right place and you “hit it right,” you can look like and feel like you're one of the greats like Lefty Krey or Lee Wulff. We've just been fortunate enough to be in the right places enough to experience those magical times when you “hit it right.” And, it's been those “right times in the right places” that have produced all those wonderful photos.



## GASPE ATLANTIC SALMON SLIDE PRESENTATION AUG. 7 IN ALBANY SHOP

Next Tuesday, August 7, I'll be in the Fish First! Albany shop (near Berkeley) for private appointments on different fly fishing destinations. At 4:30, we have scheduled a slide presentation on the Gaspé Atlantic Salmon fishery. If you'd like to have more info on Gaspé, come on in at 4:30 – if you'd like to schedule a time to review a different destination, please hit reply and let's discuss a time that works for both of us. For directions to the Albany shop, visit the website [www.fishfirst.com](http://www.fishfirst.com)



## THE 43 POUND RAINBOW FROM JUNE NEWSLETTER

We received lots of questions about the photo (at left) that appeared in the June newsletter so we did a little digging. The twins pictured with the fish had spent considerable time and effort trying to catch the world record rainbow. The record fish came from a lake in Saskatchewan. If you want more details, check out this link: <http://sports.espn.go.com/outdoors/fishing/news/story?id=2901070>



### PHOTO CREDITS

Dave Ellis for 8.25# brookie; Julie and Dennis Smith, Minipi pike and brookie; Frank Jackson for the 18# Dean steelhead; 43# rainbow, Nancy Siegler.

Either phone or drop us an e-mail if you have questions or would like more information about any of our destinations.

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