

We thought it might be of interest to have a daily recap of our fourth trip on the Rising Tide.

Day 1: after a cancelled flight at midnight for Dave five hours before his scheduled flight, he was able to scramble and find an alternative flight that got us on the same flight from Houston to BZE. Needless to say, we arrived tired and excited. We met up with Dean at 2pm as expected. What we didn't expect was Dean asking us if we wanted to fish that afternoon. That was an upside surprise only followed by Dave catching an 18# Permit his first cast at the first fish we saw. It was 4:30pm, overcast skies and a 10-12mph breeze. Dave's fish was the only one we saw in that abbreviated session. To say we were excited was an understatement. Dinner, drinks, cigar, bed.

Day 2: Johnny repeated Dave's feat by catching the first fish he saw at 6:30am. It was a nice 14# that was nice enough to stick its tail up and allow an easy 35 foot cast on its head. It's an easy game with that set up. He was given another opportunity on the same flat a few min later but the fish refused after a long follow. Dave wasn't able to repeat his initial success and got blanked for the morning and midday sessions. Evening sessions were equally challenging given the wind and lack of sun.

Seen: 85 (2 schools of 30)

Tails:2

Shots:7

Caught:1

Day 3:

Woke to 20mph winds and overcast skies. Not ideal, and the fishing proved to be as difficult, as expected. Very few seen fish. The count below represents two large schools of 30 & 50 with the remainder mostly singles and doubles. We pulled anchor halfway through the midday session given to poor fishing and headed to Bxxx Fxxxx, which turned out to be a good decision. The winds remained 20mph all day, but the first pancake produced some fun action. Five 30#+ fish greeted us within the first two minutes, but it required a backhand against the wind cast of 40 feet, which was asking too much. We didn't wait long until the school of 50 showed up which allowed Johnny to feed the same fish 3x (tight all 3 times!) only to realize the hook had been broken off on the first set. It was amazing to see the fish eat the fly 3x and have it pull out of his mouth each time, only to have him go crazy looking for it again and allowing the additional shots. Jose said he has had never seen that, nor had Dean. Really fun (and disappointing). The evening session produced virtually nothing despite the clouds parting.

Seen:90

Tails:3

Shots:10

Caught:1

Day 4:

Morning started with clouds and 25+mph winds. Not ideal. Predictably, it was a slow morning session. Johnny saw 1 push and no fish. Dave saw 10 fish, which included a school of 5 on the pancake, but no shots for either all morning. The clouds cleared in the afternoon but wind remained a healthy 10-20mph. Johnny went to Alxxxxxr Cay and saw three healthy schools of 20-30 and had five good shots, but they didn't appear in the eating mode. Dave also had five good shots with five follows, which would have resulted in a fed fish if he hadn't ripped it out of its mouth. The weather improves in the afternoon with clear skies and 15 mph winds. The pancake continued to be the most active flat (by far) with a steady steam of fish passing over it. Johnny saw 50+ fish, cast to 7, and caught none. He needs work on his casting into the wind.

Seen:169
Tails:1
Shots:18
Caught:0

Day 5:

We awoke to perfect weather (finally), though the clouds rolled in shortly thereafter only giving us sun for about an hour of the morning session. Winds were 5-8 mph and a welcomed change from the 15-25 we had been experiencing. Johnny saw two pushes and about 20 fish coming across the northern pancake, which we hadn't tried previously. Dave has a good session but failed to land one despite feeding one of the two tailing fish he saw. He had three fish charge the fly on different shots, but two decided to pass. He also saw a 20 pound tarpon on the flat which no one expected.

The midday session proved MUCH better. Given the clouds, we decided to take one of the pangas with Jose to Sxxx Fxx, with uneventful stops at Alxxxxxr and Cxxxxn, which allowed the clouds to pass and give us perfect weather at Sxxx Fxx. No clouds and 5-7mph winds. In a two hour stretch we saw 750+ fish. School after school provided two hours of epic fishing. Dave caught two smaller fish (5-7#) and Johnny got shut out despite 7-8 shots each and multiple follows. Despite only catching two fish, it was a super fun and action packed two hours neither will forget.

The evening session proved less eventful. Johnny saw 12 fish with 5 shots. Dave saw 41 with no shots.

Seen:800
Tails:4
Shots: 24
Caught:2

Day 6:

Morning session was great. No fish caught, and mostly clouds, but both Johnny and Dave has great shots on fish. Johnny had a Permit and nurse shark fight over his fly only to have neither get it. He also saw two nice Cobia which wouldn't eat anything he threw at them. Dave has 3-4 great shots but couldn't get them to eat either. The lighting started to improve at the end of the session so both are optimistic for the midday session and both will be returning to the white flats where all the excitement happened yesterday.

The midday session brought perfect weather but no fish. Neither of us saw a single fish. Drinking at lunch was unusually strong. We are hoping for a strong finish to the day.

We decided to go south to Bxxx Gxxxx for the evening session. Johnny saw one tail but couldn't get him to eat. Dave and Dean saw nothing.

Seen:59
Tails:5
Shots:7
Caught:0

Day 7:

We woke to partly cloudy weather with 5 mph winds. Not bad. Johnny saw two tailing fish, and Dave saw one. Neither converted. Jose saw a school of 20 fish, but no shots were available.

We decided to fish our way back to Belize City a night early to allow for more fishing on our last day (tomorrow). We stopped at all our favorite flats on the way back. Weather was PERFECT. Sxxx Fxx...nada. Cxxxxn...nada. Alxxxxxr...saw several fish and had a few shots at good sized fish. Bxxx Fxxxx pancake...saw one fish tailing and several fish coming/going. None caught. Front of Bxxx Fxxxx...saw 50 smaller fish emerge from the deep and surprise us. got two shots, but no fish. Went to Lxxx Cxxx (wreck) and saw nothing but barracuda. Finished at Rxxxxxn and saw fish coming from the deep and

thinking about entering the flat, but saw us and decided otherwise. A few shots, but no follows or fish. We returned to the marina fed up with Permit:-). Fun day regardless.

Summary: we had a great week with mostly good weather. Ironically, we caught most of our fish in the poor weather, and both of us caught the first fish we saw (setting very high expectations). As the weather improved and winds died, the fish got much spookier. Several times the fish spooked before the fly hit the water on the first cast. Dave caught 3 for the week, and Johnny caught 2. Hard to say how many we “should have caught”, but the action was fairly steady with a few moments where there was non-stop action. We had another fun week with Captain Dean, and really enjoyed Jose, who was a new guide to us. They both worked tirelessly to make our trip fun and productive. The food, as always, was great. We look forward to our next visit.
All the best,

Johnny Williams