



Rainbow On, Upper Copper River, Alaska



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We are in the ninth year of publishing our monthly newsletter with updates on the great fly fishing venues, trip reports and insights for our traveling fly fishers. We’ve been to most locations and pride ourselves on our ability to research new destinations. 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.

**ALASKA FLY- OUT LODGE – PHOTO ESSAY REPORT**

Global fly fishing travelers usually evolve to an annual schedule of travel that includes their favorite destinations and spiced with other adventures they may visit one time, semi-annually, or occasionally. So it has become with John Landis, who’s photos comprise this photo essay. John, including his upcoming trips already booked, will have visited jungle destinations such as the Amazon and Tsimane in Bolivia (scheduled for next year), New Zealand and Chile (rotating every other year), Belize, Seychelles, and other miscellaneous global fly fishing attractions like Costa Rica. Two destinations that are becoming part of John’s annual itinerary are Africa and his favorite fly out lodge in our 50<sup>th</sup> state, Alaska Sportsman’s Lodge, the subject of this photo essay. John returned this summer for his 6<sup>th</sup> trip. Accompanying him were Jim MacDonald and his son, Jamie MacDonald (on his first Alaska trip), Terry Landis, Rob Pizzie (also on his first Alaska trip), and Mike Cirello.



The fishing program at Alaska Sportman’s Lodge includes all the Alaska species: rainbows, lake trout, grayling, Artic Char, Dolly Varden, northern pike, and all five species of Pacific salmon. Daily flyouts, weather permitting, access whatever streams and rivers are fishing best for the desired particular species for that specific time of the summer. Waters accessed via fly outs vary from small, walk ‘n wade streams to larger rivers. Timing is always a critical element in Alaska as the fishing changes dramatically from week to week and month to month as the different species of salmon make their runs. Plus, the Kvichak River, one of Alaska’s most productive rivers, is available in front of the lodge and its entire length can be accessed via jet boat.

The series of photos below were captured during fly outs to two different rivers on different days. The float plane dropped the anglers and guides (with lunches and drinking water) off and the rafts were then inflated. The rivers were floated using the rafts to get between productive riffles and pools, which were then waded. At the end of the day, the plane would return to a pre-determined place on the river to pick everyone up and return them to the lodge for drinks and dinner.





Right above is Rob with a small chum salmon – next to John with rainbow. Below left, Rob displays a silver salmon with a pair of bear claw marks. Obviously, this fish escaped the bear's clutches to find Rob's fly.



It is the life cycle of the five species of Pacific Salmon (chinook, chum, coho, pink, and sockeye) that create a super- charged marine environment that attracts 1000's of fly fishers annually. Each summer, millions of salmon return to the place of their birth in Alaska's rivers and streams to spawn and then die. They come in waves, with the different species occupying different parts of the summer calendar. The act of spawning itself begins the process of enriching the fishery as billions of eggs are dropped, many of which become food for swimming predators like the rainbow trout, Dolly Varden, and a host of other species. After the spawn, the salmon die, but before that, they are fodder for the Brown and Grizzly Bears that rely on this run of fish to maintain their bulk. As the dying salmon bodies begin to decay and come apart, their flesh provides a rich diet for all the creatures in the eco system, including the flying, the aquatic, and the land based creatures. The next step in the life cycle occurs in the spring when the eggs begin to hatch, sending millions of baby salmon back to the ocean, and during the trip, becoming fresh feed for the waiting predators along their route.

Below: the sandy beaches become the final resting places for what is left of the salmon carcasses after the bears, birds, and other opportunity feeders have had their fill. The sockeye salmon, below in red spawning colors, enter the rivers bright silver and, after exposure to the fresh water, slowly turn to red.



The full photo essay report is available through this link: [JOHN LANDIS ALASKA PHOTO ESSAY](#) The full report has more information on the lodge, John's personal perspective, and some of the amazing group of bear photos from John's camera. Booking the top Alaska lodges for their prime times has become more of a challenge the last few years due to the large number of anglers who repeat their adventures with the top operations. The top fly – out lodges are very pricey, in the \$9,000 range per person per week.

**THE "PART REPORT" – FROM NEW ZEALAND**

This particular newsletter covers a very wide scope of fly fishing.....the article below gives perspective from Kathryn Roberts from her first ever fly fishing experience.....this report from John Part comes from an



experienced veteran who travels the globe, fishes New Zealand twice a year, and has released more than 45 stream caught brown trout that weighed in excess of ten pounds.



John had a full knee replacement in July and was curious how it would hold up in early October with the physical element of walking the spectacular streams and rivers in New Zealand. John's full report (link provided below) explains how the new knee did on his trip, and also covers more of the details of his trip. Excerpted below from his complete report is the story of a true fantasy fly fishing day, the sort of day that can only happen with the fishing gods smiling brightly on you in New Zealand.

“.....Our best day was a stroke of real luck. First visitors (so it seemed) to a high country stretch of river known to hold big fish. We ended the day with 13 fish, 3 in double figures and 4 more over the trophy

threshold of 8lbs. The best fish was taken at the very top of the last pool of the day, and went 13lbs (at left with John).

Earlier that day we fished without success for a truly awesome fish. It swung in the fast current of the pool, dominating the food supply and shouldering aside two smaller fish that kept it company. I caught one of these 'smaller fish.' He went 10 1/2 lbs! I'll see the big black backed fellow in my dreams in the dark London winter. How big? Certainly in the upper teens of pounds, and that is without the benefit of mice! But all the fishing was great, large and small (well, not that small, just a handful under 4lbs). The total was something over 90 trout during my 13 days.”

Note: the 8# brown trout is acknowledged as a very special fish, even in New Zealand. The 5 to 7 pound fish, if you're fishing with the “right guides in the right places” are very common, but far fewer grow to the 8# mark.....even fewer get to double digits.

This link will take you to John's full report: [THE "PART REPORT" - OCT '14, NEW ZEALAND](#)

### FIRST FLY FISHING EXPERIENCE – A DAUGHTER'S PERSPECTIVE

Kathryn Roberts, at right with one of her first ever trout, joined her father, Bill, in eastern Idaho for her first time fly fishing. She put together an excellent report capturing the essence of her experiences with a fly rod in hand. It served as a reminder to this old, grizzled veteran of why we got captured by fly fishing in the first place! Some excerpts from her report, condensed for space:

“I remember being surprised when my dad suggested a fly fishing trip for my birthday present.....I have never vacationed with just the two of us. I was thrilled at the opportunity to fly fish, to visit Idaho for the first time, and to spend some time with my dad. I got my first taste of the spectacular Idaho landscape.....It compels you to be outside exploring.



Our guide was simply top-notch. He's an accomplished angler, as you'd expect, but also a very good teacher. His feedback was positive, encouraging, and he also understood that the best way to learn is just to do it on your own.....the first day we just kept floating and fishing.....my dad and I each caught about 10 fish apiece, so we were delighted by the positive feedback the river gave us. On the second day, my dad and I had enough of the feel for fishing that our guide could start telling us where to cast and what to look for. Overall, I loved this fishing expedition. I didn't realize how much I missed being outdoors, and I think fishing is a profoundly beautiful way to see the world. Idaho is magnificent, and I wouldn't mind using fly fishing as an excuse and activity to see more of the United States, other continents, and even more of Western PA, where I live.”

A few comments from father Bill: “We had a great time. My daughter caught the first fish, the most fish, and the biggest fish. The accommodations were excellent. The staff was focused on making sure everything went smoothly. All of the staff set a very professional tone. I was very comfortable having my daughter with me. It was just a great all around experience.”

Kathryn's full report is available (or will be up soon – see the “Trip Reports” section of our website – under “Newsletters/Trip Reports”).

## BC HOSTED STEELHEAD TRIPS WITH A NOTABLE VETERAN

Jeff Bright is an old, young fly fishing friend who served as a consultant for us during the days of producing our book, *THE HUNT – Fly Fishing’s Greatest Adventures* ([www.ffhunt.com](http://www.ffhunt.com)) For over a decade, he has been hosting steelhead trips in British Columbia. He has earned our endorsement as a “guy to go fishing with.” Jeff has extensive “hands on” knowledge of fishing for steelhead and king salmon in the rivers and streams of BC. Currently, Jeff has space for two rods joining him for each of the following two upcoming trips:

- Spring steelhead, 4/26 – 5/2: six night trip to fish remote coastal streams (moderate hiking and wading skills required), Lower Nass Tributaries, Kalum, Kitimat, and the mainstream Skeena. This program offers the chance to sight-fish for large steelhead in remote, not-to-be-named coastal streams. Involves some hiking to stalk the fish and sure to provide heart-pounding wilderness adventure.
- Summer Kings (Chinook), 6/21- 27: the Chinook salmon is indeed the “King” of wild sea-run fish with an average size of 15 – 40 pounds with much larger fish possible. Sea-liced and fresh from the salt, a silver-bright Chinook is the ultimate speyfisher’s challenge. Target rivers include Kitimat, Skeena mainstream, plus Zymoetz and Kitsumkalum, Dean.



Later in 2015, Jeff (at right with fresh run steelhead) will have hosted programs for Atlantic Salmon (two) and BC fall steelhead – dates and specifics will be released soon. In addition to his “hands on” hosted trips, Jeff is a noted fly fishing photographer and author. He is actually working his way out of his long-time graphic designer “day job” with his fly fishing exploits taking up most of his time.

If you’d like more info and/or an introduction to Jeff, just hit “reply” and let us know.

## NOVEMBER MEMORY PHOTOS

The last week of June found Alex Wee enjoying a special week with permit at Casa Blanca. This was his fifth annual trip to Ascension Bay and he scored some beautiful permit with some great photos. Regarding his salt water flats fishing preferences, Alex commented on his permit pursuits: “I am not a dedicated permit angler, I also like to play with tarpon and snook. Ascension Bay has pretty much the big four, including some nice size bones if the guide knows where to look. I’ve taken 5 permit from AB, and a few from elsewhere around the world, but the majority have been embarrassingly small. I do spend an increasing amount of time looking for permit, probably about 75% of the time during the last trip, but need to get a bend in the rod. So if nothing has been seen I will chase other fish.”



Photo Credits: banner photo – John Landis; Alaska – John Landis; New Zealand – John Part; Idaho – Bill and Kathryn Roberts; steelhead – Jeff Bright.

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