



IN THIS ISSUE:

- FISHING THE PADDOCKS IN NEW ZEALAND – A “TOP 10” FLY FISHING EXPERIENCE
- TROPICAL FAMILY ADVENTURE.....WITH FISHING – A PHOTO ESSAY
- “NO ONE THERE, BUT US”
- WHAT WE DO AT FLY FISHING ADVENTURES
- SEPTEMBER MEMORY PHOTO

We are in the fifteenth 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.

FISHING THE PADDOCKS IN NEW ZEALAND – A “TOP 10” FLY FISHING EXPERIENCE

(I’ve been fortunate to have been a part of so many memorable thrills in pursuit of my fly fishing passion. Over the next several newsletters, when space allows, I will attempt to relay what I consider to be the Top Ten. These are events either experienced by a fishing partner or personally.)

A dozen years ago, during our third trip to New Zealand, we were just beginning to explore new areas to fish. On this trip, we had included a stop in the Lake Brunner area of the South Island and a stay at one of NZ’s classic old lodges, Lake Brunner Lodge. We had scheduled two days to fish here and sample one of the local guides who had been referred to us. We arrived in the late afternoon and that evening, rain began coming down in torrents. It came down so hard that visibility was limited to about 15 feet and the noise of it beating on the roof made it difficult to sleep. We didn’t know it at the time, but we would come to learn, that the west side of NZ’s South Island is one of the world’s wettest places. The storms, which occasionally blow across the Tasman Sea, stack up against the Alps which cover the western edge of the south island.



That morning at breakfast, I encountered the lodge owner. The rain was still coming down in buckets and I was feeling discouraged that my day on the water had been ruined. I mentioned to him that it didn’t seem like there would be any decent fishing today. He replied, “I don’t know about the fishing, but your guide is out back waiting for you.” I decided to see what the guide had to say. When I expressed my negative feelings to him, he replied, “I don’t know about that.....if you have some good raingear and you’re up to give it a try, I will show you something very interesting.” I wasn’t sure how to take this response, but I told him I had excellent rain gear and I’d give it a try if he thought it might be worthwhile.

We got in his truck and drove for about 15 mintues. We crossed a bridge with a raging river running underneath. The water was pure chocolate brown and several feet over its banks. He pulled over and parked shortly after crossing the river. We zipped up tight and stepped into the rain, crossed the road, and climbed a fence surrounding a pasture with a few bulls milling around. He said, “be careful of the large black one – he chased me a few weeks ago so let’s stay close to the fence.” By now, I’m feeling very uneasy about my guide and wondering what I’m doing here. I followed him as we climbed a few more fences and began walking through another paddock.





I was about to ask him to bring me back to the lodge when he dropped to his knees and waved me to get down. I followed directions and slowly, on hands and knees, moved up to his side. He was pointing at the flooded grass. As I watched, I noted some motion in the water. Breaking the surface was the dorsal fin of a brown trout of about 20 inches as it moved very slowly, parting the grass as he swam. I risked getting my camera wet, but decided I had to have this photo (above at right). His nose was down as he looked for worms and insects in the roots. The guide motioned me to move back and stand, then to follow him.



Rainfall can be so heavy in western NZ that the paddocks are constructed in “humps and hollows” so the cattle can have some high ground to keep them dry when it pours. We moved to an area where we could look down one of the “hollows” where water was running about two feet deep. He said, “let’s just watch here for a bit.” Watch we did...shortly, there was a rise...then about 30 feet below that rise, another rise...then about another 30 feet below, a third riser. There were three fish working in that hollow of the flooded paddock. We were able to take two of them, both in the 5-6# range (photo at right in 1st paragraph). In other areas of the paddocks, we took four more fish, including one that appeared to be a solid 7-8#. That fish had different markings and appeared to be of the strain of browns from Lock Leven in Scotland (photo, left below). The others were the more common German Brown strain with the occasional red spots.



About 1:00, the rainfall decreased to a drizzle. In less than an hour, the water almost disappeared from the paddocks.....the fish also. Those browns know that when the rains are heavy enough, they come out of the lake and the nearby river to eat in the paddocks. And, when the waters begin to drop, they know it’s time to leave.

So concluded one of my most surprising and memorable days with a fly rod in hand.....who would have ever thought that fishing the “humps and hollows” in a driving rainstorm could be so interesting?

TROPICAL FAMILY ADVENTURE.....WITH FISHING – A PHOTO ESSAY



A half mile inside the Belize barrier reef (the second longest barrier reef on the planet) sits a small private island which hosted our family vacation this summer – aerial photo at left. On the island is a three bedroom home that can sleep six. We chartered the Rising Tide, with it’s crew of four, and tied the boat to the dock. With the three staterooms of the Rising Tide and the island house, we could sleep a total of 12, enough room for our kids and grandkids to join us for a week in this tropical paradise. The grandkids range from 9 to 16.

to the dock. From the left, a palapa on one of the piers, sand beach with a volleyball court, the house, and behind the house, another dwelling for the island’s staff of three (including cook).



At left, there were two birthdays to celebrate during the trip. This birthday party took place after dinner on the Rising Tide with the appropriate cake and candles.

What first attracted me to this idea was, while fishing this area for the past 30 years, we had observed the construction of the island and the structures. Some of our favorite Belize tarpon flats are nearby.



The photos above (from THE HUNT, Fly Fishing's Greatest Adventures – www.ffhunt.com) were shot within 500 to 1000 yards of the island.



We had three guides available 24/7 to facilitate everything from bonefish/tarpon/permit fly fishing, snorkel and swimming trips, trolling with the kids, fishing snappers off the pier, and whatever else everyone wanted to do. Most of this crew we have known for 15+ years. Left to right in the photo are the crew from the Rising Tide who provided private guiding for all activities: Claude, Carol (an outstanding cook), Captain Dean, and Noel. Dean and Noel are two of the most accomplished flats guides in Belize and all three have a great touch teaching the kids how to cast and fish. They could get excited with the kids, whether fishing for snappers from the pier, or trolling for barracuda and, for a short while in the evenings, fishing for large tarpon with plugs. The constant availability and skill of our guides was a key to the success of our gathering.

Photos below, L to R: Snorkel adventures, exploring marine life on the coral heads near the reef, were a daily activity. Nico, Sophia, Julia, and Abby getting ready to snorkel. Sea kayaking in the late afternoon sun.



Photos below, L to R: Some time was spent daily catching snappers from the pier. Occasionally, a school of bonefish would appear and twice, after dark, we jumped 20# baby tarpon fishing under the lights on the pier. Family Monopoly games helped fill voids during the day or evening. Relaxing under the palapa and contemplating the stress of home was always available. A beach fire pit was there to light up the night. Nico with a barracuda taken within sight of the island. Short sessions of trolling for 'Cuda and mackerel inside the reef happened often – also, for the possibility of larger fish, some opted to troll outside the reef when the waters were calm enough.



Photos below, L to R: Guided daily excursions to the mainland were available at an extra cost. These could include everything from the Belize Zoo, ziplining in the rain forest, rafting in caves, and visiting some of the many Mayan ruins which dot the Belize countryside. Abby, Julia, Nico, and Holli opted for a daytime tour of some extensive Mayan ruins.....climbing the steps of a Mayan pyramid. The fishing highlight had to be the hour before dark. Every evening, in some historically productive channels, the kids used all three guides to fish for tarpon with plugs. On each evening, except one, at least one tarpon of 50+ pounds was jumped.....some exceeding 100#

were put in the air. Most of the fish released themselves, but below, her Dad, Scott, helps 9 year old Sophia bring a 50# tarpon to the boat after a 30+ minute struggle. The kids all had the thrill of watching the silver king do its thing, tail-walking across the surface. Of course, we found some time to utilize the guide's expertise at fishing the flats....and, at right, casting a fly to rolling tarpon at dusk.



At left, the Rising Tide tied to a pier at the island. Our family has been doing adventures on Belize motherships since the late 80's. Our grandchildren are about the same age as our kids were when we first began taking Belize trips using a floating lodge as our headquarters. When we first began going to Belize, our fly casting ability was very rudimentary. We only carried one fly rod to fish for bonefish – all our other rods were spinning for tarpon, permit, barracuda, snook, jacks, etc. We didn't have the skills to cast a fly to anything but bones. Over the years, as we learned how to double-haul and gained experience, we began dropping spinning rods and adding fly

rods. If you'd like to learn more about the Rising Tide, this is the website: www.flyfishbelize.com

"NO ONE THERE BUT US"

For many years in the early fall, Son Scott and a friend have been visiting a certain spot in Northern California. This particular spot requires a steep hike, but the rewards are seclusion and a fishery that is theirs alone – at least for the time they are there. If you fish Northern California, you know how unusual it is to find a place with decent fishing that can be "yours alone." While the fish are not New Zealand size, it is a solid fishery. At the conclusion of his trip this year, he sent the photo at right with this sentence: "Beautiful canyon and no one there but us." In our view, most of our world has too many people and not enough fish.....finding fly fishing environments and opportunities that offer a feeling of seclusion and isolation has value that is worth the time and money.



WHAT WE DO AT FLY FISHING ADVENTURES

This is a link with a description of who we are and what we do.....also, listing the destinations around the world that we can provide reliable information regarding the experience and how to prepare for your visit: [Fly Fishing Adventures - About What We Do](#)

SEPTEMBER MEMORY PHOTO

Taylor Bennett-Schlunt recently returned from Alaska where she captured this beautiful rainbow. The fish went 30" and weighed 15#. Super fish from a spectacular Alaska environment and great memories that will last a lifetime!

An enthusiastic traveling fly fisherman,
Don Muelrath
Fly Fishing Adventures
www.flyfishingadventures.org
888-347-4896

