



We are in the twenty-second year of publishing our monthly newsletter with updates on 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.

#### IN THIS ISSUE:

- BEST VARIETY FLATS FISHING ON THE GLOBE?
- LEARNING TO FISH THE SW FLATS IN BELIZE – TRIP REPORT
- DISCOUNTED TIMEFRAMES - THE RISING TIDE, BELIZE
- 2027 - BOOKING NEW ZEALAND & FIRST NZ REPORT OF THE SEASON
- PLAYA BLANCA – FIRST TIMER TRIP REPORT
- 250<sup>TH</sup> PERMIT!!
- ONE OPEN SKIFF – PLAYA BLANCA
- WHAT WE DO AT FLY FISHING ADVENTURES
- NOVEMBER MEMORY PHOTOS

#### BEST VARIETY FLATS FISHING ON THE GLOBE?

The shallow salt water flats are home to an amazing array to species including the four that make up the Super Inshore Flats Grand Slam: bonefish, tarpon, permit, and snook. Also present are barracuda and many varieties of snappers and jacks. The four primary species (bonefish, tarpon, permit, and snook) and a barracuda are pictured at right and below.

There is a 300 mile stretch of coastline that begins about 75 miles south of Cancun on the Mexican Yucatan that contains the habitat that people who have spent copious amounts of time fishing here would claim as the best variety flats fishing in existence. I am among this group having spent well over 100 weeks, since the late 80's, fishing this stretch of water. The second longest barrier reef on the globe is just offshore along this coastline offering protection for hundreds of square miles of shallow inshore flats, mangrove channels, tropical river mouths, the Sian Ka'an Biosphere (which includes the massive Ascension Bay and Espiritu Santo Bay), and the country of Belize.

This newsletter contains reports from newcomers to this area and their experiences pursuing the great variety of sight fishing opportunities for these shallow flats critters.



## LEARNING TO FISH THE SW FLATS IN BELIZE – TRIP REPORT

Lisa and Dave Piccone wanted to find the best destination for them to do their first salt water flats fishing trip. We spent over a month in conversations discussing all the options. Their final selection was Captain Dean and his Rising Tide livaboard in Belize. It was decided that here would be the place they would get an entire week of very personal guidance and coaching and have the chance to experience all the variety of shallow water flats fish. As part of their extensive, detailed, written report on their trip, they would recap their trip: “All in all, Dave caught all the species he wanted to catch- barracuda, permit, snook, bonefish, tarpon, and snapper. Lisa caught permit, tarpon, bonefish, houndfish. These fish were all brought to the net.....there were many others that were hooked and fought but got off the hook. It was certainly an exciting week overall.”



An amazing introduction to the salt water flats, both of them would release their first permit – Lisa at right above. They submitted a day-by-day diary of their experiences on the Rising Tide along with a summary of the trip. What follows are excerpts from their reports. If you have the appetite to see their entire day-by-day diary, click on this link: [LISA AND DAVE - DAY-BY-DAY REPORT OF RISING TIDE TRIP IN BELIZE](#)

- “This was our very first saltwater fly fishing trip. There was a lot of excitement and nervousness about the trip. Our first day and first time heading out to fish....Captain Dean took us to a spot near the reef where he got a chance to inspect our fly-casting skills, provide guidance and instruction.”
- “.....Dean took us out to an area near a point for a variety of fish to include permit, bone and tarpon. We had plenty of opportunities for there were multiple feeding groups.”

Photos, left to right: The Rising Tide at anchor; Dave works on his casting; Lisa with a nice Baby Tarpon; Lisa with a permit on; Captain Dean with a bonefish taken on a shallow flat.



- “Our casting is getting better each day, but hard not to get excited when fish are sighted in the shallows.”
- “\*We headed back to the Rising Tide to shower up and have a cocktail. Dinner by 7, and then to early bed 9-9:30. Georgia really is an excellent baker.....and a fine chef. The meals were hardy and delicious.”
- “.....we were out by 6 am headed back to the point. There was a group of permit in the area. We followed them a bit, and Lisa was able to land her first permit. Dave did catch another bonefish, snapper, and a grunt. Back in for pancakes, eggs, and crispy bacon.”

Photos, l to r: brilliant sunsets are often part of living on the water in Belize; while the great majority of time was spent fly fishing on the flats, trolling on the reef produced teathy critters like barracuda and houndfish; Dinner.





- “.....Captain Dean decided that we had seen enough of this area and made the call to sail up north a bit.”
- “I was able to hook into a decent baby tarpon that jumped numerous times.....Dean netted it finally, but it released itself before the photo...”
- “This was a trip we will remember for a long time, our first saltwater fly fishing trip and did it living aboard a boat.....”
- “On this day, there were multiple tarpon sightings. There was also a large group of bonefish swimming along nearby. After casting to several tarpon, she had one follow the fly. Lisa set the hook with one strong strip. He was larger than her first tarpon. Finally, success and the tarpon was in the net.”

Photos, l to r: Dave lowers his profile as a school of smallish permit near the panga: Dave with one of those smallish permit; Lisa with a Baby Tarpon; Dave with a snook that completed a Super Grand Slam for his first ever sw flats week: Captain Dean and Dave motoring.



### SPECIAL DISCOUNTED TIMEFRAMES ON THE RISING TIDE

Captain Dean is offering a 25% discount on the standard 7 night trip during these special upcoming timeframes:

Nov 24 – Dec 7

Dec 21 – Jan 5

Jan 18 – 31

Feb 16 – 28

Mar 8 – 15

Website has pricing and other details: [www.flyfishbelize.com](http://www.flyfishbelize.com)

### NEW ZEALAND IN 2027 – NOW IS THE TIME TO PLAN

Planning far in advance has become necessary for a New Zealand adventure if you want the options for the top guides and best fishing/eco tour lodges. If you want an answer to the question: “Why New Zealand” as well as different types of NZ adventures from world class hard-core trout fishing to couples/family trips, see our most recent NZ newsletter – this link: [NEW ZEALAND NEWSLETTER](#)

To begin the process of planning, we have our “10 STEPS IN PRELIMINARY PLANNING FOR NZ” available – just ask for a copy. These steps include the initial questions that need to be answered before serious planning can start.

### EARLY REPORT FROM THE NEW SEASON IN NZ



Jim Hine (left) just began his first NZ adventure. He has a fairly complicated itinerary beginning with him fishing 8 days with two of the top Kiwi independent guides. Following that, Jim’s wife, Karen, arrives for a few weeks of touring followed by a stop in Fiji at a “second honeymoon” type out-island resort. Jim sent over some reports from his first few days on the water.....here’s some excerpts – if you’d like to see his complete reports from his first 3 days, just ask.

- “Amazing day! Got nice browns on both dries and nymphs - virtually all casting to fish we saw. Hunting!”
- ”Unbelievable morning- in the first 90 minutes - hooked 7, landed 7, all but one via sight fishing. five in the 4-5 pound range.”
- “we are driving up the average for the area - most other

guests/guides, even the helicopter folks, are averaging 0-3 fish/day.”

- Rained all night, dirty waters, lots of scrambling all day looking for decent water.....late in the day: “.....in that little river, at the first place I cast, best fish so far - a fat 6+ pounder. The day was saved. The fly fishing gods clearly took pity on us. We caught a bunch more small guys to get our numbers up (6 or 7 total)”

## **PLAYA BLANCA – FIRST TIMER TRIP REPORT**



Pat March (left with Baby Tarpon) happened to pick a week to join us at Playa Blanca Lodge on Espiritu Santo Bay that had the worst weather/conditions I have experienced in our many trips to Playa Blanca. Yet, Pat’s results for his first time fishing here were outstanding (unlike my results as well as some others at the lodge that week).

“I thoroughly enjoyed our week at Playa Blanca Lodge. The cabanas were spacious with excellent large baths with walk in tile showers and lots of storage. The food at the lodge was excellent with a varied menu each evening. The staff were friendly and

focused on making the service top notch. The weather was not ideal for fishing with mostly overcast skies and intermittent rain showers, but the fishing in Espiritu Santo Bay still provided an incredible variety of sight fishing opportunities. With the guidance of a superb guide, I still managed to catch fish each day and end the week with 7 tarpon, 3 jack crevalle, 3 bonefish, 2 permit, 2 barracuda and 2 snook. Best of all, the other 5 individuals I shared the experience with were wonderful, engaging company. I am already looking forward to next year.” (Photo above – Mexican night dinner, a weekly event at the lodge – I to r: Joe Dudra, Pat March, Sarita and Gordon McHaney, yours truly, Jeff Reinke).



Photos, I to r: this week saw too many dark clouds, raindrops, and sometimes, windy.....tropics can be tropical paradise and turn to tropical hell.....but it’s still the tropics; Pat with permit, barracuda, and bonefish.



## **250<sup>TH</sup> PERMIT FOR JOE DUDRA**

Joe Dudra has been pursuing the elusive permit in Ascension and Espiritu Santo Bay from Casa and Playa Blanca since 1999 when he got “hooked” on the challenge of stalking permit.



He has spent 130 weeks since then in his pursuit. In the early days, he would also pursue the other available species, but then became a dedicated permit addict. This is a common affliction that impacts many flats fly fishers, including yours truly.

In September, Joe reached a milestone of releasing his 250<sup>th</sup> permit (at left), an amazing feat that takes an incredible amount of skill, patience, endurance, and ability to deal with repeated defeat and rejection. However, for those of us who are members of this “dedicated permit anglers club,” the thrill is in the stalk. There’s nothing more exciting in the world of angling than seeing that big black tail pop up above the surface.....or watching a school of them creating “nervous water” as they



approach on a shallow flat. It's that adrenaline rush that makes the pursuit worthwhile and keeps the challenge vibrant, whether or not you can get the wily, unpredictable creature to eat your fly.

Photos below, l to r: Playa Blanca made Joe's celebratory evening special with a special 250<sup>th</sup> cake and even a Pinata in the shape of a permit; to make the evening more special, while Joe was swinging at the Pinata, someone noticed the nest of a sea turtle was hatching, sending baby turtles scurrying to the ocean. Not all Joe's fish are large, however A PERMIT IS A PERMIT!!



### **PLAYA BLANCA - ONE GUIDE STILL OPEN FOR ONE OF OUR 2026 WEEKS**

Our September 13 – 20 week next year at Playa Blanca still has one guide available – can be either a single or pair. For more information on joining us, just ask.

### **WHAT WE DO AT FLY FISHING ADVENTURES**

This is a link with a description of who we are and what we do.....also, it lists the destinations around the world where we can provide reliable information and help you prepare for your trip: [Fly Fishing Adventures - About What We Do](#)

### **NOVEMBER MEMORY PHOTOS**

And to finish this newsletter completing a circle around the globe, thanks to Michael Vollink for this incredible collection of photos from the flats of a Seychelles island in the Indian Ocean. Two giant bonefish flank a large permit and the huge Giant Trevally.



Photo credits: banner photo – Lisa and Dave Piccone; 'Best Variety.....' – Mark Andersen, Arran Andersen, Tim Quattlebaum, Art Hinckley, Mike Buck; Belize – Lisa and Dave Piccone and Captain Dean Myers; NZ – Jim Hine; Playa Blanca – Pat March; 250<sup>th</sup> – Joe Dudra.

An enthusiastic traveling fly fisherman,  
Don Muelrath  
Fly Fishing Adventures  
[www.flyfishingadventures.org](http://www.flyfishingadventures.org)  
888-347-4896  
[flyfish@napanet.net](mailto:flyfish@napanet.net)