



TOPICS IN THIS ISSUE:

- EARLY “SEASON” REPORTS: PATAGONIA, BELIZE, AND NEW ZEALAND
- AMAZON: AGUA BOA WATERSHED – “OFFICIALLY” FLY FISHING ONLY
- JANUARY MEMORY PHOTO

We are in the eighth 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 destinations. 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.

EARLY SEASON REPORTS: PATAGONIA, BELIZE, AND NEW ZEALAND



December and early January would be considered part of the early season in Patagonia, Belize, and New Zealand. The good side of the “early season” is rested, unpressured fish and not as many anglers pursuing them. The downside is that weather can be less stable and waters can be a little higher. However, when you hit the conditions right, early season can be the best season.



ARGENTINE PATAGONIA

Barbara (casting, above right) and Charlie (at left, below right) Renfrew are seasoned globe hopping anglers who spend three weeks each year in New Zealand and 8 – 10 days in Patagonia as part of their fly rod travels. They have spent time annually during the last 20 years fishing the waters on the Argentine side of Patagonia and are very familiar with the waters from the Esquel and Bariloche areas north through the San Martin rivers and streams. The Chimehuin River has become their favorite watershed and fishing it from a 48,000 acre country estate (estancia), which controls both banks of the Chimehuin for seven miles, has become the place where they spend their annual trip. While visiting this year in early January, the water was still a little high, but Barbara states that the fishing was still excellent and “during the week that we were there, I never used a nymph once – all ‘match the hatch’ dry flies.”

Why do they favor Tipiliuke lodge on the Cerro de los Pinos estate? Barbara’s reasons:

- it is a smaller river, so the experience is more dramatic.....by that I mean you stalk the fish most of the time. You walk along the edge or in the river looking for feeding fish. There are several hatches a day.
- The fish are challenging. Sometimes they are ravenous and you could throw anything at them, but usually they are both hatch and size specific, which makes it great fun to try to match, as you may be getting both caddis and may flies coming off the water.
- Some people like to float the river and you do cover a lot more territory from a boat. However, we make it a total wading experience. We drive to various parts of the river and then both wade and walk so we can cover all the water. To us the joy is finding the fish, observing what they are doing, and casting to them. The thrill is in “the hunt.”
- They take very good care of the water and don’t overfish it. The lodge, the hosts, the guides, the food, the scenery.....It is all a treasure.





The top thrill for the Renfrew's this trip occurred when Charlie was presenting a caddis and had a large brown (estimated at 28 inches) rise to the fly, but was missed. Both Charlie and the guide were still shaking long after when reliving the experience.

This is a spot that is also good for new fly fishers. They have a special program geared to introduce new casters to fly fishing. Lots of other activities are also

available: golf (Jack Nicklaus designed course), horseback riding, day spa, birding, trekking, wineries, national parks, and the charming town of San Martin has been called "the Vail of Argentina." This destination can also be included with stops at many other fine waters on the Argentine side of the Andes or crossing over the crest into Chile to round out your Patagonia experience (Golden Dorado fishing in Northern Argentina can also be part of the itinerary).



BELIZE

Last year, Jim and son, James (left with baby tarpon), had a first quarter trip in Belize to the Turneffe Islands – this year, they were back in Belize the first week of January, this time on the mothership Rising Tide. Here is Jim's report:



"We had a great time in Belize with Dean and Carol. The fishing was good and the weather was great. In fact, the weather may have been too good, as we had two dead calm days, and I think that may have made the fishing tougher - wary fish and not as many on the flats as on the other days we were there. We caught a good number of bonefish, had multiple chances at permit (two that ate, one that I had on that inexplicably threw the hook after he was pretty much played out) and we caught several small tarpon. We had a unique opportunity on day four - we actually had snook in good numbers on a bonefish flat and were able to spot and throw to them. It took us a while to find a fly that they would eat (gummy minnows), but finally were able to get several to take. I had one well over ten pounds on for quite some time but was not

using a shock tippet and he eventually made short work of the 15 lb. tippet I was using. It was a great week with my son." (note: the Belize mothership experience is an especially good salt water flats option for small groups of friends/family who enjoy spending time together on the water)

NEW ZEALAND

It seems at least once each year, Vicki (who is a research botanist associated with the Smithsonian Institute) finds a project in some part of the world that allows Jim to tag along for some world class fly fishing in that same general geography. Last year, it was Patagonia and this year, in early December, it was New Zealand, and they managed to squeeze in a week at Poronui Ranch on the North Island. Jim Nix's (at right with rainbow) report:



"It was a fabulous get away tucked in the hills just south of Taupo, New Zealand on the North Island. I caught all rainbows, although some of the other fishermen caught 24+ inch browns. It just depended on the water you fished. Some streams had only brown, some had only rainbows, and some had both. New Zealand fishing is all sight fishing and described by the Kiwi as being a "bit of a trek"! I had a fantastic helicopter fly out one day to float flies over huge trout that had not seen a fly in over a year! Spent the night at "The Hut" on the river and continued chasing the huge trout the next day. Fished for 6 days, netted over 60 rainbows in the 3-5 pound range with the biggest tipping the scales a bit over 7 pounds."

THE 10 POUNDER, NEW ZEALAND STYLE

Small water, big fish – that is the ultimate delight of stalking New Zealand's spectacular streams and rivers. Of course, some of the larger rivers provide exciting sight fishing opportunities also, but there is nothing quite the same as searching out these big fish in water that sometimes doesn't even fully cover their dorsal fin. There just aren't many places that allow for a possible opportunity to cast a dry fly to a 10 pound rainbow or brown in a small stream.



The 10 pounder in New Zealand is not as common as it used to be, but we have a few clients every year who manage to take one. The brown at right was taken in early January while fishing with one of our favorite independent guides who specializes in big fish in small water. It weighed in at 10.6#! Massive body.

AMAZON: AGUA BOA WATERSHED – “OFFICIALLY” FLY FISHING ONLY



The Agua Boa Amazon Lodge has always been the Amazon’s only “fly fishing, catch and release” lodge. However, what kept the clear water Agua Boa River that way was the armed guard shack at the mouth of the river. Now, it has total government support as exclusively fly fishing only. Recent press release:

“As many of you are aware, the owner of the Agua Boa Amazon Lodge, and all the staff involved with the lodge have been working continuously to protect and enhance the beautiful environment, habitat, and the fishery of the Agua Boa river and the surrounding area. As the new year commenced, we received confirmation that all

of this hard work and effort had resulted in some really positive news coming from the authorities of the state of Roraima (the state in which the Agua Boa river and the Agua Boa Amazon Lodge are situated). The environmental authorities (FEMACT) of Roraima state signed a document that has now been entered in to law, which states that the Agua Boa river (which the Agua Boa Amazon Lodge is situated on the banks of) is a ‘FLY FISHING ONLY RIVER’. All other forms of fishing are prohibited.”

It’s wonderful to see this approach being taken by more governments as they realize the revenue generated from live fish is more beneficial than dead fish and, as a rule, fly fishers help to protect their fragile environments. The law enacted in Belize two years ago making it illegal to possess their primary fly fishing sport fish is making a difference in the fishery there, reducing the gill netters. Progress.....sometimes slow, but moving in the right direction in many places.

(Note: there are still a few prime weeks in February and March with space available for this season at the Agua Boa Amazon Lodge.)

JANUARY MEMORY PHOTO

Bill Pihl is a globe trotting fly fisher who has a wide array of spectacular photos. This one is pretty special – any permit is special, but a 30# permit is a lifetime angling experience!!

PHOTO CREDITS: (top to bottom) banner photo: Mike McGuire; Patagonia - brown and rainbow – Barry Beck, Barbara and Charlie - Isaias Miciu Nicolaevici, fisherman on water – Thibaut Millet; baby tarpon – Jim Andras; New Zealand – Jim Nix.

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

An enthusiastic traveling fly fisherman,
Don Muelrath
Fly Fishing Adventures
www.flyfishingadventures.org

888-347-4896

flyfish@napanet.net

If you want to be removed from our e-mail newsletter list, just hit “reply” and let us know – you’ll be removed immediately

