



Rising Tide At Hatchet Caye Pier

Note: SPECIAL BELIZE EDITION – There was so much Belize news this summer, we had to hold off other reports and articles for next month.

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We are in the fourteenth 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.

BELIZE FAMILY VACATION WITH LOTS OF FISH – PHOTO ESSAY



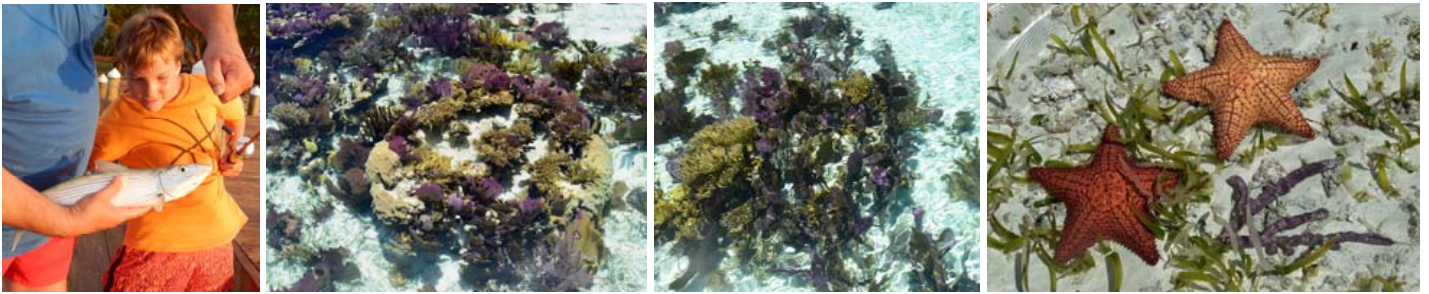
Hurricane Earl tried to put a damper on our planned family vacation in Belize, but all it did was delay for a few days what was our most fun family experience to date (see the Earl report below). My wife, Marte, and I had planned to begin our trip in Belize City where we would board the Rising Tide and leisurely motor south inside the protection of the barrier reef for six days, fishing and snorkeling along the way. We were to meet our family (our son Scott and daughter Holli, spouses Michelle and Jody respectively, and our five grandkids, ages 8 to 16) at Hatchet Caye, a 13 acre private resort island near the barrier reef in southern Belize. Earl caused a delay, limiting our motoring time to three days and causing everyone to scramble to delay flight schedules, but all else worked as planned. At left, dinner for the family in the Hatchet Caye dining room.

We tied the Rising Tide to the pier at Hatchet Caye. Captain Dean and first mate, Noel, were in charge of teaching the kids to fish, guiding permit ventures, and twice-daily snorkeling forays. For accommodations, seven of us stayed on the Rising Tide while two lodge rooms housed the other four.

There were 3 or 4 schools of small bonefish (one school that had fish of 6 – 8 pounds) roaming the area near the pier and enabled the kids to fish from the dock. The three youngest released over a dozen bonefish including their first ever. L to R, below: Sophia with Dad, Scott; Nico with bone on his fly rod (a small piece of conch helped hold down the frustration of getting the bones to eat) and his first bone; Captain Dean coaches up Jack - Jack with his first bonefish!



L to R, below: Jack would hook one of the largest fish, but it escaped his mini-Zebco type gear, but he did land a nice bone. The colors of the coral gardens and reef fish were spectacular!



L to R, below: Twice-daily snorkeling explorations were led by Noel and Grandma Marte snorkeling. Julia, Nico, and Abby; Sophia; returning to the Rising Tide from snorkeling on nearby coral heads; Abby and Julia cradle a pretty conch shell which they returned to its home – the area was a marine preserve.



L to R, below: kids join Michelle and Grandma snorkeling near an isolated caye near the reef – there were sea turtle nests buried in the sand on this caye; Rising Tide tied to pier at Hatched Caye Resort; Nico and Julia join Granddad on a hobie cat ride. In addition to instructors being available for hobie cats, there were sea kayaks and colorful coral heads surrounding Hatched Caye. Scuba diving is a major attraction of the resort with lessons available and attractive dive sites.



L to R, below: meals were excellent and were split between the Hatched Caye dining room or on the Rising Tide; R.T. Chef Velda with one of her fabulous lobster dinners; the fresh water pool offered a way to cool off when necessary or wash off the salt; Julia struggles and then “wins” with the large barracuda at right.



L to R, below: trolling gave the kids a chance to take large fish. Big barracuda are an exciting, and often willing, option - Nico with a 'cuda; Abby and Sophia with a Spanish Mackerel. Permit tails are not a kid's game.



Below: the permit flats between Placencia and the reef can be some of the most productive permit flats anywhere when they are not receiving the amount of angling pressure that is present much of the year. July, August, and September are a good time to fish them without seeing many skiffs. While this trip was focused primarily on family activities, Son Scott and I got away for a few hours each day with Dean and Noel to find permit tails during the prime tides. We did get enough shots to release two fish. At left, Scott has one of them on.....small, angry fish, took over 20 minutes to get to the boat – ran off the flat and sounded in deep water.



Hatchet Caye caters to a max of 24 guests in very comfortable ocean front cabana’s and lodge rooms. There is a staff of 24 employees so even when there is a full house, there is at least a ratio of one staff for each guest. They have built an intense infrastructure to support the experience of an isolated tropical island, located a one hour boat ride from Placencia.

Our week had something for everyone. We fell in love with Hatchet Caye and have added it to our list of Belize properties we’re happy to recommend and represent.

IMPACT OF HURRICANE EARL

When we left Napa, California during the morning of July 31, we had no idea we were about to find out for ourselves the consequences of flats fishing in the aftermath of a hurricane.

We arrived in Belize City during the early in the afternoon of Sunday, 7/31, with the expectancy of boarding the Rising Tide (right) and then thirty minutes later, heading south toward our first anchorage. That’s when we first heard the reports of a tropical storm forming in the Caribbean and heading in the direction of Belize. There was a lot of anxiety and uncertainty in Belize City. No one knew whether it would develop into a hurricane and move north into the Gulf of Mexico, or keep its course straight for Belize. We stayed tied up in the marina to wait and watch.....



The full report of our experiences with Hurricane Earl and its impact on Belize City and our fishing are detailed in the complete report available through this link: [Impact Of Hurricane Earl](#) The report was completed after we had moved south and were waiting for our family at Hatchet Caye – the article above about our family trip to Hatchet Caye is actually PART TWO of this Belize adventure.

FIRST BELIZE MOTHERSHIP TRIPS – JUNE AND JULY REPORTS



Johnny and Nancy Johns were joined by friend, Bill Terry, for their first Rising Tide trip this July. Johnny is a salt water veteran and had taken several permit previous to this trip, but Nancy and Bill (at left) were looking for their first success at releasing this greatest of fly fishing targets. Since this was their first trip, it was agreed they would take a “variety approach” to examine some of the options and species available in Belize using a floating lodge as their base. They were going to begin in the area with the best tarpon flats, located between Belize City and Ambergris Caye. Often, these waters are very productive for tarpon on the flats and with rolling fish in some deep channels early morning and late evening. However, they encountered over a dozen guides/skiffs – there were several guides from Ambergris and Belize City that had converged in the area. There were lots of fish, but with all the activity, they weren’t very catchable

– seemed like the Florida Keys and that is not what the Belize mothership trip is about. So, they weighed anchor and moved south to more secluded waters and no competition.

Comments from Johnny: “Captain Dean runs a good show and it is a pleasure to be with him on the water. Velda did a superb job of keeping us well nourished with hardy fare. Not withstanding a few mechanical issues, we had an enjoyable and productive trip. We caught six nice permit and lost a few more, which we thought was pretty good for our first Rising Tide trip.....I took my largest permit ever. We are very excited about returning next year.”

Nancy, with her first permit at right: “What a great experience we had on the Rising Tide. The crew was wonderful. I cannot wait to go back to beautiful Belize!”

Bill was the “permit king” on this trip. Not only did he take his first permit, but four permit total! Bill commented: “What an awesome trip! I can’t wait to come back and bring my son!”



Don Armstrong usually fishes alone so he recruited a partner to join him on his first Belize mothership trip. Now, Don is looking for one to four guys to join him on his next trip in 2017. If you have any interest, see his information at the end of his report below.

Don occasionally writes reports describing his fishing destinations for *The Angling Report*, a monthly publication with information on fisheries around the globe. At the conclusion of his trip, he wrote the following report for that publication. His report does provide a lot of detail on the trip and represents fairly the experience.

“I love fishing in Belize for Permit as well as Tarpon and Bonefish. When I learned of this opportunity to fish from a mother ship and move through the islands in Belize, I pursued the opportunity vigorously.....” To see his entire report, click on this link: [Trip Recap For The Angling Report](#)

20% DISCOUNT WINTERTIME OFFER

On my recent trip to Belize, I reviewed the booking calendar for 2017 with Captain Dean. For the months of March through August, early bookings for next year are very strong; however, for December ‘16 through next February, the calendar is pretty much wide open. This lack of wintertime bookings is very unusual. He wants to keep his excellent crew working through the winter and, that being his number one concern overriding profit

margins, has offered a 20% discount for all trips booked in those three months. This is a one time program – may not be repeated.

Every time of year has its upsides and downsides in Belize and most tropical destinations. In short form, here are the upsides and downsides to a winter trip in Belize.

The upside of this time of year:

- it is the snook spawning period (Dec – Jan) and the snook come out of the river systems to spawn in the mangroves. I took a very successful Dec trip a few years ago focused on snook – this is the report on that trip: [December Belize Mothership Trip](#)
- the number of anglers in Belize is way down – not much pressure or competition anywhere.
- If the cold fronts stay away, the bonefish, tarpon, and permit flats fish well.
- No matter what the weather is in Belize, it is far better than our cold, gray skies here in the states. Cold fronts in Belize can drop the temps “all the way” to 69 or 70 degrees.

The downside for this time of year:

- the obvious: cold fronts can pass through and have a negative impact on the flats fish. However, the jungle rivers and mangrove fisheries usually hold up even under these conditions.

Prices and other trip information are on the website: www.flyfishbelize.com

AUGUST MEMORY PHOTO



All permit photos are the stuff of memories! This is a special one of Perry Harvey with Captain Dean and his 11th permit. Perry has been on the Rising Tide annually since 2014, usually with his fishing partner, Andy Baxter. This year, he was optimistically hoping to increase his total of permit released to fifteen. However, the fishing gods were not in his corner on this trip and he had to settle for number eleven.

PHOTO CREDITS: Hatchet Caye story – the Muelrath family; First Belize trip – Nancy and Johnny Johns and Bill Terry.

An enthusiastic traveling fly fisherman,
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