



In the Indian Ocean, off the east coast of Africa, lie a collection of 115 islands and atolls, over half uninhabited, known as the Seychelles. This past April, the spectacular Seychelles' sister atolls of Alphonse and St. Francois were John Landis' home for a week of quality salt water flats fishing. Not only did John have an outstanding week of salt water fly fishing, he put together a magnificent selection of photos from his trip, many of which are included in this photo essay. Using a very comfortable five star tropical resort as his home, this rich and protected marine environment provided outstanding opportunities for bonefish, giant trevally, trigger fish, milkfish (a 20 to 40 pound fly rod trophy fish which belies it's somewhat tame name) and a host of colorful coral reef fish.



foreground – barely visible on the left above St. Francois is the Alphonse Atoll with the narrow and deep channel separating them.

The Atolls: The two sister atolls of Alphonse and St. Francois are separated by a deep channel less than a mile wide. The unique currents and structure of these two atolls with the channel between them helps create this ultra-rich marine ecosystem. The small island of Alphonse has been home for several years to the five-star Alphonse Island Resort. Currently, the resort is not operating except to cater to and service fly fishers and spouses – maximum of 12 per week. This is a salt water environment which pulsates with life providing sustenance for sea turtles and masses of crustaceans, reef and coral fish and, of course, a great number of sport fish. In the photo, the expansive flats of St. Francois atoll are in the

The four primary target fish of Alphonse and St. Francois: l to r – trigger fish, milkfish, bonefish, and John with a 20# GT (Giant Trevally).



John's comments on his pursuit of the "primary" species above:

Triggers – "There are three species of triggers that are pursued and fished with crab patterns, similar to permit. I almost had the Grand Slam of Triggers all in one day, but the 3rd specie was lost to coral after a long struggle."

Bones – "Lots of bonefish. I took 20 or so in the mornings, largest 6#, and could have caught 70+ if that's all I did for the day, but there were so many other options."

Milkfish – "Left this one for the next trip."

Giant Trevally – "Hooked four GT's..... a fish of about 60# was the largest, but didn't make the net."

Variety Species - "Took many species of grouper, snapper, and other strange things - I forgot their names."

Many of those "strange things" have photos that appear below.



Protection For The Fishery: Before the government recognized how unique these atolls were and put protection in place, they were subject to the usual array of human abuse that can diminish special natural paradises such as this. At one time, plug fishermen were filling freezers and natives were netting the flats. About fifteen years ago, restrictions were put in place and since then, only “catch and release” fly fishing is allowed inside the lagoon systems and only the guests staying at Alfonse have access. Since then, the fishing has improved dramatically every year and continues to develop as the most reliable and consistent of all the Seycheles destinations. While fishing the flats, there are days you’ll see 40 to 50 or more sea turtles, large sharks, massive rays, and hundreds of bonefish – all signs of a vibrant marine ecosystem. When we were there, the deep water, just outside the reef system, was home to a small pod of Humpback Whales. As a salt water environment, this is an amazingly rich aqua-paradise – truly one of the few places I would label among “the fishiest places in the world.”



Fishing Program: Most of the bonefishing is done while wading on hard bottomed, grass-free, sand flats. The larger species (GT’s and milkfish) can be stalked on foot near dropoffs, but are most often pursued from a flats skiff that allows for covering more and deeper water, with better vision than wading – also, the skiff is handy for pursuit when a GT or milkfish is hooked. You are transported between the two atolls on a comfortable catamaran (below center) – a 30 minute run. The catamaran anchors for the day in the lagoon at St. Francois, serving as your base. You have the option of returning to the cat for lunch or eating on your skiff. The Dolphin flats skiffs are kept in the St. Francois lagoon where you anchor.



Booking Considerations: Like most of the world’s very special places, this one is not a secret which means planning far ahead is usually necessary to get “prime time” space. Also, the “right” tides play a key role.



Logistics: Mahe, the capital of the Seychelles, is just a four hour flight from either Johannesburg, South Africa, or the fascinating city of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. The connection with Johannesburg makes tying in a game viewing stop in Africa a workable combination. Also, there are direct flights between Paris and London to Mahe.



An enthusiastic traveling fly fisherman,
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