

REPRINTED FROM THE ANGLING REPORT

Mention Belize and most anglers immediately think of permit followed by bonefish and tarpon. But this Central American country also has a goodly number of snook, as witness the following report sent to us by Don Muelrath of Fly Fishing Adventures www.flyfishbelize.com Seems Muelrath works closely with captain and guide Dean Myers, who has made a name for himself operating mothership trips in Belize. He has two motherships, the original, *Meca*, was the boat built by legendary Belize guide, Martin McCord (Myers worked as first mate with McCord for many years until his death from a hereditary heart condition in 2006) . The most recent addition is the *Rising Tide*, a luxury 58-foot Hatteras. Both motherships tow skiffs behind for fishing the flats. Anglers use the boats as a base of operations while fishing both north and south of Belize City. They specialize in permit trips to a variety of permit flats from about 20 miles southeast of Belize City all the way down to Placencia. Muelrath calls these trips “...the finest permit adventures on the globe,” and we would love to have an on-site report from a subscriber substantiating that claim.



At any rate, over the years, Muelrath says the Belize guides have regaled him with tales about the number of snook that can be seen and caught in the months of November, December, and January when they are spawning. This past December, he finally took Captain Myers up on his offer to prove just how many large snook can be found in Belize during that time. He describes the trip they made as follows:

“Over the years, the guides I work with in Belize have been telling me that if you want to fish for snook, you should come in November, December, and January when they are spawning. The numbers and size of fish are supposed to be at their peak then. I finally decided to give this

fishing a try this past winter. A small group of us chartered *The Rising Tide* to use as a comfortable base of operations. As usual, the food aboard this boat was outstanding and the guides excellent. The weather for six of our seven days was the best I've ever seen in my 60-plus trips to Belize. The humidity was low, the wind was very light, and temperatures ranged from the low to mid 80s. There were three of us fishing. We covered the coastline from roughly 30 miles north and south of Belize City. Our focus was entirely on snook, with baby tarpon occasionally in the mix since they frequent many of the same environments as snook do. While casting for snook, we jumped more than 30 baby tarpon and boated nine during the week.



“As for snook, we had our flies into two that weighed more than 20 pounds but we couldn't hold them. When a fish that big gets within five feet of the mangrove edge, he becomes supercharged and something always seems to give. We did manage to boat a few fish over 15 pounds, and we had other double-digit fish on that broke off on the mangrove edges. Some days we had to fish hard for a few fish, but on other days

we hit it just right. We explored a lot of new water that I'd never fished in all my years in Belize along with a lot of my favorite snook haunts around Belize City. One day on this trip we realized what I consider the ultimate snook fantasy. Imagine a stretch of mangrove shoreline about 50 yards long. In about two hours, we took 20 snook and three baby tarpon from that stretch and hooked at least twice that many. The fish we tangled with included a 20-plus pounder we spotted on the flat about 30 yards off the mangroves. I hooked him up and had him on for about 10 minutes until he made his final lunge for the roots. Somehow, he got my 40-pound leader caught on his gill plates and cut me off. What a great thrill! We didn't rig a bonefish or permit fly the whole week, opting to focus entirely on snook. That's certainly not a standard Belize fishing trip, but it was enjoyable and I would do it again in a heartbeat.”

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