



Float trip, Kanektok River, Alaska



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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. 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.

### PART 3 – THREE WAYS TO DO ALASKA



Our August and September newsletters carried the first two parts of this series – Alaska using a top notch fly out lodge and a lodge that was stationary with no fly outs (links to those reports are below). This part deals with Alaska via a reputable, long time float trip operator, the most rugged way to fish Alaska. Obviously, a float trip does not provide the ambiance and comforts of a high end lodge, but has other rewards that come from being close to nature and allows your more primitive and basic "man instincts" to surface.

A group of six fly fishing friends put this trip together on the Kanektok River, one of Alaska's famous rivers for multiple species. The group in

the photo at right, beginning on the left: Jim Hine, Steve Simco, Dick Abbey, Steve Mitchell, Peter Simon, and Mike Carlson.



#### Comments from Jim about the trip:

"The Alaska trip was superb. We each landed between 150 and 250 fish between 2 and 20 lbs in 7 species - rainbows, grayling, Dolly Varden (arctic char), and pink, chum, sockeye and silver salmon. The only thing we missed for the full grand slam were Kings- saw very few (bad year for them in Alaska). We had some great action on mice (mostly rainbows whose takes were vicious, but also grayling and char). Char were the really pleasant surprise of the trip. At one spot I landed more than 40 in less than an hour- beautiful fish between 2 and 8 lb's, very good fighters. Even got a few on dries when the sun came out. Saw lots of bears. The outfitter you recommended is one of the most reliable float trip operators in Alaska and they did a terrific job."



Photos above, l to r: Arctic Char, fish on, grayling

Photos below: rainbow, rafts at rest, grizzly, arctic char



“The species taken varied from day to day with rainbows and grayling plentiful for the entire six night float. The silvers were very hot, especially the last three days as we got closer to the ocean. Landed probably 30 - 40 in the 10-15 lb range, at some points landing fish on 60-70% of the casts.”

Photos below: silver salmon, fresh salmon prepared for dinner, salmon in spawning colors, red fox, a float plane dropped the group and equipment off near the headwaters of the Kanektok River to begin the trip and a plane picked them up near the ocean at the conclusion of the trip.



“There were six of us, all pretty hard core fly fisherman. Had 3 guides, 3 rafts, with good drift fishing from boats (especially mousing in the wooded sections), and many stops to wade good runs. Although this was a wilderness trip with tent camping, the food was great, and included a few dinners of fresh salmon and char. Bugs weren't bad, and although mostly cloudy, only had a couple of stretches of bad wind and rain.”

Links to Alaska reports, parts one and two - photo essays from August and September newsletters:

Alaska Fly Out Lodge: [http://www.flyfishingadventures.org/Newsletter/August\\_Fishing.pdf](http://www.flyfishingadventures.org/Newsletter/August_Fishing.pdf)

River lodge, no fly outs: [http://www.flyfishingadventures.org/Newsletter/Godnews\\_photos.pdf](http://www.flyfishingadventures.org/Newsletter/Godnews_photos.pdf)

### WHEN YOU “DON’T HIT IT RIGHT”

Sometimes, a fly fishing trip, regardless of the cost or anticipation, just doesn't go well. Or, at least, doesn't meet expectations, even if those expectations were based on reasonable possibilities. When that happens, the culprit is often weather related or strange conditions that can't be controlled. In fresh water, unexpected rain or runoff can create high or dirty water. In salt water, winds can churn up flats or create weird tides or there can be strange atmospheric conditions that can chase the fish out of the shallows and into deeper water. Or, maybe there was a misunderstanding of the expectations or the expectancies were just out of balance from the beginning. The month of September provided two of those trips where expectancies were just not met.

### BELIZE – A TRIP ON THE MECA

Dylan Rose (from Fly Water Travel) hosted a trip with four anglers on the mothership Meca (photo at right below) in Belize in September. One of the primary expectancies of the group was to have numerous bonefish shots. While the consensus was the accommodations were comfortable, the food excellent, and the guides hardworking and fun to fish with, but the bonefish didn't meet expectancies,. For whatever reason, some special fish were taken, but they found limited shots on the bonefish flats and short of a half dozen bones were released. However, there were highlights worth remembering.

One angler took his first permit ever after an exciting hour-long stalk of a small school of fish – photo left below. Early morning and late evening blind casting in select channels produced a solid hook up with a 100# tarpon for another angler. After a struggle that lasted over an hour, the fish was brought to the skiff and the guide had the leader in his hand. As often happens with large tarpon, the final photo was not obtained as the class section of the leader parted right before the photo. The 60 inch long tarpon in the photo below was taken by Dylan near the mouth of the Belize River while casting to rolling fish (Dylan stayed a few extra days after the Meca trip was complete and took the fish at that time). Large schools of Jack Crevelle (photo left of Meca below) crashing bait provided some action.



Barracuda (below left) were taken near the reef. Numerous baby tarpon (below in air) and snook were released near Belize City during the last few days of the trip. Great photo below of an aggressive surface take of a good snook near the docks after dark – Mat ////////////// displays that fish at right.



### FERNIE, BRITISH COLUMBIA

“This is just the most incredible dry fly fishery I have seen in 35 years of fly fishing, period.” Comments describing the waters in and near Fernie, similar to that quote from well-traveled fly fisher, Loren Irving, have been a part of our newsletter for many years. A lot to like: a variety of waters, Canadian Rockies scenery, drift boats as well as walk ‘n wade fisheries, great guides, various types of accommodations, etc. A few years ago, Ken Yabusaki selected Fernie as the place to take his wife, Ann, for her first fly fishing experience – a good choice for beginners with the numerous native West Slope Cutthroat being so surface oriented. They had a wonderful trip.



Ann learned to cast, mend, and set, releasing numbers of native Cutt’s to 18 inches on dry flies. Additionally, Ken took a 27 inch Bull Trout (at right) in the Wigwam River, waters he termed: “.....in my opinion, in the top two most beautiful rivers on earth. The various colored stones and rocks in almost gin clear aqua and emerald tones made it a spiritual experience. It was nature’s art at its finest.”



So, with a successful first trip combined with continuous strong angler reports over the years, Ken and Ann were set for a return trip this September, this time bringing their son, Sean, with them. This time, not so good. The Wigwam just wasn’t fishing well so they never got on it. The main stem of the Elk River, a usually dependable drift boat trip in the Fernie area, was having some issues. Those issues were further complicated by a group of 9 drift boats, previously contracted for a high end tour group, drifted the river an hour earlier than Ken’s party – obviously no one knew this was happening until after their day was complete and everyone was wondering why the “eats” were so few (this was a shocker as the Elk is famous for the purposeful management approach that is used in monitoring the number of people on the river at any one



time.....just a weird situation). The last day was spent doing a walk 'n wade trip on Michele Creek, a delightful small water experience with numbers of Cutts and the occasional Bull Trout. Both Sean (above) and Ann (left, Michele Creek in background) were able to release some trout on the Michele.

Ken maintains a solid approach in the face of adversity such as this.....his final comment: "The 'fishing' was great, but the 'catching' wasn't as good as our last trip. The main thing is we had a fantastic experience in one of the most beautiful places, the Western Slopes of the Canadian Rockies."

(Personal note: sometimes the fishing gods just don't cooperate, no matter how much money you spend or how far you travel. We've had many spectacular trips to New Zealand during the last dozen years, but on one trip a few years ago, we encountered a series of independent and similarly weird situations on half of our fishing days – ask if you'd like to hear more about what the fishing gods did to us.)

### **"ANOTHER" SEYCHELLES NEW SEASON AT ALPHONSE**

For each of the last several years, many salt water fly anglers from around the globe wait to see if the ecologically protected sister atolls of Alphonse and St. Francois in the Seychelles are going to open for another season. This issue has been ongoing because a developer (who has committed to "building the finest salt water resort in the world") purchased the atolls and has been threatening for years to begin construction. These sister atolls are quite simply the most amazing salt water environment I have ever seen. The numbers of bonefish are staggering, but it's the Giant Trevally (right, below), Milkfish (left) and other species that draw the most attention. Great spot for both someone new to salt water fly fishing and also a veteran looking for large trophy species on the flats.

So, we know that the season will be open for now (through April), but there is no certainty for next year. Many weeks still have space, but everything is sold out between now and December 1. If you want to see a photo essay report on our trip there, this link will take you there:

[http://www.flyfishingadventures.org/Newsletter/tr\\_seychelles.pdf](http://www.flyfishingadventures.org/Newsletter/tr_seychelles.pdf)



### **OCTOBER MEMORY PHOTO**

Its early season in New Zealand. Many travelers who frequent NZ prefer their spring time because the big fish are rested and naive and there just aren't many other anglers there. The weather is more likely to be an issue in spring, but the freestone rivers clear quickly and many find the benefits are worthwhile. That's Zane Mirfin with an 11 pound benefit at right.

**PHOTO CREDITS:** Alaska – Brian Montalbo; float plane – Steve Simco; Belize – Dylan Rose; Fernie – Ken Yabusaki.



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](http://www.flyfishingadventures.org)  
888-347-4896  
[flyfish@napanet.net](mailto:flyfish@napanet.net)