



Casting To Tailing Permit, Belize

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IN THIS ISSUE:

- **THE SAME.....BUT VERY DIFFERENT – BELIZE REPORTS**
 - THE CHETUMAL BAY EXPLORATORY VARIETY TRIP
 - DEDICATED PERMIT TRIP
- **NEW ZEALAND – CURRENTLY A “VALUE” PLUS A TRIP REPORT**
- **DISCOUNT OPPORTUNITIES – NEW ZEALAND (BOTH ISLANDS) AND BELIZE**
- **AUGUST MEMORY PHOTO**

We are in the tenth year of publishing our monthly newsletter with updates on the great flyfishing 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.

THE SAME.....BUT VERY DIFFERENT - BELIZE REPORTS

Following are two trip reports from Belize. They are similar in that both are from Belize mothership trips; but they were very different trips. One report is from an exploratory trip on the Meca north into Chetumal Bay, near the Mexican border, and includes an angler on his first ever salt water fly fishing adventure. The other report is from a pair of experienced salt water fly fishers who ventured south from Belize City on the Rising Tide to hunt the most challenging and exciting of all the fly rod targets – the permit.

THE CHETUMAL BAY EXPLORATORY VARIETY TRIP:

Two years ago, together with Ryan Hawks and Mickey Myhre, we used the Meca to do our first exploratory trip north into Chetumal Bay. This involved both Belize waters and also fishing across the Mexican border (Mexican guides had to be hired for waters north of the Belize border). There were several areas we did not have time to sample on our first exploration so this August trip was set to expand on what we learned the first trip. I was joined by my wife, Marte, Mark Andersen (on his first ever salt water fly fishing trip), and our son, Scott (for the last four days). At right, Mark and Scott scouting.



Below, l to r: Following directions on his first day ever fishing the flats, Mark is well protected from the tropical sun. Unmasked, Mark with one of his first bones – anchored Meca in background at right. Looking for tailing bones. Green turtle.



The short version of the top options we have found from our Chetumal explorations:

- Unpressured permit flats. The coastal flats of the Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve offer numbers of permit shots in a spectacular environment with the waves crashing over the barrier reef in the background.
- More tailing bonefish than we have seen in Belize.

- Snook and baby tarpon sight fishing lagoons on the Belize side that see virtually no fishing pressure.
- Baby tarpon lagoons on the Mexican side.
- Marte found the snorkeling in the Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve to be as good as any she has experienced in her extensive experiences around the globe.

Mark's initial successes as a salt water fly rodder supplied the most excitement during our trip. His first ever saltwater fly fishing trip resulted in nine bonefish, two permit hooked and one released, plus taking some snook and jumping a 50# tarpon. Mark's comments on the trip: "My initiation to saltwater fly fishing couldn't have been more rewarding than what was provided by the 'Meca' and her crew. My advanced preparation, learning the casting skills to fish saltwater productively, was certainly valuable in making the occasion enjoyable. However, our guide's skills are what made my adventure so successful. Fishing dawn to dusk for seven days was intense; however we found time to snorkel on two days. Our cook displayed wonderful diversity, with Caribbean, Mexican, lobster, shrimp and, yes, even some fresh fish to my liking, on the menu. The vivid memories of the trip remain fresh in my mind, yet I am anxious to remedy those lost opportunities.....and yes, next time I'll land that Tarpon!"

Below, l to r: Captain Dean with one of the snook taken off the mangrove edges. Mark tames his first permit (next photo) while a dark cloud brings showers down as he brings it to the net. Coral heads near the reef in the Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve provided spectacular snorkeling.



Below, l to r: Our last evening, we did some channel casting as dusk for tarpon – Mark jumped a 50 pounder. Scott with his 12th permit taken on the grassy flats on the coast, inside the barrier reef, in the Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve. Anchored Meca with the two skiffs tied behind. On our last morning, before departing for the airport to catch our flight home, we got a few hours on the waters near Belize City – Jack Crevalle with city in background.



A veteran of many Belize mothership trips over the years, son Scott had these reflections: "Being able to explore the northern waters of Belize's shallow water inshore fishery via mothership was an exciting opportunity. We fished some flats with bonefish, permit and snook that had likely never been cast over before. The fish were eager, and I was fortunate to catch my 11th and 12th permit on a fly, my first multi-permit trip."

DEDICATED PERMIT TRIP:

The finest permit flats on the globe begin about 15 miles southeast of Belize City and extend south for about 40 miles. This is "permit water" where the hardcore permit angler is in their version of heaven. Much of this water can not be practically accessed except from a floating lodge/mothership. Perry Harvey (right with guide) is a veteran permit angler and has had some productive permit trips on the Rising Tide in past years.....not so much this year for numbers of fish released. Perry's comments: "The wind had its way



with us on this trip. It was very tough making it hard to position the boat before you were on the fish. We saw a lot of permit most days. I caught two, both about 9lbs. It was a great trip - beautiful water, and our captain/guide and cook were terrific."

Perry was accompanied on this trip by another veteran salt water angler and talented outdoor photographer, Chad McClure. From Chad: "This was my first trip to Belize and it was fantastic. The accommodations were comfortable, the food was good and we saw a lot of fish. Having the ability to move around via the mothership was great. It was nice getting to fish different water every couple of days and cast to fish that haven't seen much angling pressure."

Chad and his camera contributed an outstanding collection of photos.....many appear below. First row: permit in different modes, beginning on the left with what it looks like to stalk tailing permit.



L to R below: the flats panga is towed behind the Rising Tide. Catching up on some reading during a late afternoon break. The schedule has three shifts: early morning, before breakfast; mid-morning through mid-afternoon; evening. Meals are prepared around the fishing schedule. The Belize barrier reef is the second longest in the world.....and in many places, the adjoining flats just inside are good permit grounds.



L to R below: Many experienced permit hunters will use the elevation of the poled panga to find fish and, if the fish is tailing aggressively, finish the stalk while wading. Meals are a highlight – hard to lose weight on this trip. Purchasing some fresh lobster from a local “outlet.” Crab imitations.



NOTE: the menu of possible Belize mothership itineraries has been expanded. It now includes, in addition to the standard variety species trip and the dedicated permit venture south, the variety oriented “Best Of Chetumal Bay – Three Days Each In Belize And Mexican Waters.”

NEW ZEALAND – CURRENTLY A “VALUE” PLUS A TRIP REPORT

Mike Kelly contributed a detailed report on their late season New Zealand trip.....“Bottom line, we had a great time and were impressed by all of the people and accommodations that were included in our itinerary.” Mike and his wife, Susan, were on a primarily couples touring itinerary with some fly fishing included in a few places with

two of the top Kiwi guides. If you'd like to see their detailed feedback on their trip, just hit "reply" and we'll forward it to you (this report also includes info on their stop in the Cook Islands).

One part of the report was intriguing as Susan is a "very occasional" fly fisher and had not intended to fish at all while in NZ. The top guide where they were staying near Murchison had a cancellation on their last day so....."Susan ended up hiring Scotty to guide her separately since he didn't have any clients himself due to an unexpected opening in his calendar. He was terrific in being patient, teaching her the basics and helping her catch some fish – she really appreciated it and enjoyed the day." We say it often in describing the NZ fishery – it is the most "guide driven" trout fishery we know of. That is true whether you are a seasoned expert with a fly rod in hand or a novice just learning. The top Kiwi guides are truly exceptional guides as well as just being great people to spend a day with on the water.



Currently, due to the best US dollar exchange rate in many years, New Zealand is an outstanding value compared to the travel costs five or six years ago.

DISCOUNT OPPORTUNITIES – NEW ZEALAND (BOTH ISLANDS) AND BELIZE

NEW ZEALAND: Two of our favorite Kiwi lodges, one on each island, are offering early season specials of "stay five nights and only pay for four nights." Both Poronui (North Island) and River Haven (South Island) are making this offer for stays through Dec 19 (must be booked by October 1). There are some additional savings involved also – inquire for the details. Approximate per person price at either, including guided fishing and based on double occupancy, would be \$2800US (Poronui) and \$2200US (River Haven). It is not necessary to book both lodges for the special offer, but combining these two operations would comprise an excellent foundation for a wonderful, first class, New Zealand experience. Non-fishing activities available also.

BELIZE – RISING TIDE: the Rising Tide (at right) has three cabins that sleep a maximum of six anglers. For all bookings made for either 2015 or 2016, six anglers can charter the boat for the price of five – i.e., sixth person goes free. To obtain this "6 for the price of 5" rate, bookings must be made before December 1, 2015.



BELIZE – MECA CHETUMAL BAY TRIP: Regarding the Chetumal Bay trip described above in this newsletter, Captain Dean Myers is very excited about doing more exploring in this area during the next five months. If you can travel on short notice, he is offering a 10% discount on any Chetumal Bay trips taken on the Meca prior to January 31, 2016.

NOTE ON BELIZE, BOTH MECA AND RISING TIDE: The motherships only do three trips per month so space can already be limited in some months. Pricing for both boats as well as other details and descriptions are on the website www.flyfishbelize.com

AUGUST MEMORY PHOTO



Eleven year old Garrett Hayden had a day he will always remember! While fishing a small river in Wyoming that his family frequents, he released a weighed 8# cutbow and a 9.5# rainbow. Sorry.....the name of this stream remains a mystery. Thanks to the Butt's family for contributing many terrific family oriented photos over the years. Garrett hooked and played both fish himself with his father coaching and his grandfather manning the net.....a memorable family event!



PHOTO CREDITS: Banner photo – Chad McClure; Chetumal – Mark Andersen and Scott Muelrath; permit trip – Chad McClure; New Zealand scenic – John Landis.

An enthusiastic traveling fly fisherman,
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