



Lower Zambezi River, Zambia, Africa



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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'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.

### TIGERFISH AND SAFARI GAME VIEWING, ZAMBIA, AFRICA



The Lower Zambezi National Park, Zambia, Africa – the best combination of fly rod tigerfishing (at left) and game viewing in Africa. Regular readers of our newsletter have seen our personal report on this destination and photo essays from other clients over the years. The photos for this latest photo essay come from John Landis who visited here in October of '12, and returned home with these comments: "The Africa safari and fly fishing trip was the best wilderness experience that I have ever had."

The photos below in this newsletter are just a teaser for the outstanding collection of photos that John provided. To see the full photo essay, which includes an incredible array of big cat (lions and leopards) shots and the cameras and lenses used, double-click on this link: [http://www.flyfishingadventures.org/Newsletter/Africa\\_fish.pdf](http://www.flyfishingadventures.org/Newsletter/Africa_fish.pdf)



The tigerfish, with its spectacular leaps and bony mouth, resembles in some ways a baby tarpon. September and October are the best months for tigerfishing. At that time, the river is as low and clear as it gets. This is the dry season and all the waterholes are dried up, congregating the animals close to the river. This timing provides the best of both options – throwing flies for tigerfish and game viewing.



John: "In addition to fishing, I enjoy nature photography. Until now, the bar was set by my fishing experience in Alaska where I fished with the Grizzly Bears. Fishing in this environment was special and raised the bar. It was like fishing in a zoo with no bars. At all times, whether fishing from the boat or the bank, I saw large numbers and variety of animals. I will add Africa, with and without fishing, to my travel calendar every year."



**A GREAT FLY FISHING THRILL – GENERALLY UNRECOGNIZED**



Photos above:

**LEFT** – angler casts to a school of snook in about ten inches of water that are working their way down the edge of the mangroves.

**CENTER** – snook grabs the fly near the mangrove roots (behind loop of fly line in the air). Angler pounds the hook home with a firm hook set, temporarily stunning the fish to give the angler a chance to move him out, away from the tangle of the roots. Meanwhile, the experienced guide is poling the skiff backward, creating as much room as possible between the fish and the mangroves.

**RIGHT** – fish makes a charge for the safety of the mangrove roots and gets right to the edge. The angler has the fly line wrapped around his hand in an attempt to stop the fish on the edge of the mangroves. A smooth drag doesn't help in this situation – it's a question of stopping this fish totally NOW, not letting him into the roots. The angle of the rod (pointed almost straight at the fish) and the anglers body language tells the story.

If the fish is 3-4 pounds, stopping the snook and keeping him out of the mangroves is not that challenging. A firm hand turns him and moves it out and away from the edge. However, if the fish is 7-8 pounds (like the fish at right, above), this is not so simple. Heavy leaders – a level six foot piece of 30 to 40# abrasive resistant mono is needed. The edges of their gill plates are sharp and can cut mono easily.



If the fish is ten-plus pounds, you have a real challenge on your hands. It is amazing how much force a fish that large, lunging for the security of the roots, can exert. As it gets close to the edge of the mangroves, he becomes supercharged and the lunges become frantic, sometimes taking him out of the water.

Now, for the ultimate snook thrill, take a fish that is 15-20+ pounds (like the snook taken by Dave Fulthorpe, green shirt above right) and try to keep him from gaining the security of "home." In Belize, I've been fortunate to have hooked four fish in this class. The two largest, both over 20 pounds, got free – one of them pulled the butt section of my leader off the fly line at the edge of the mangroves and the other parted my 40# Hard Mason leader right at the roots (think the fish got my leader on the edge of its gill plates). I was fortunate to get the two others (15+ pounds) to the boat for photos.....these experiences rate among my top fly rod thrills.

## LOOKING FOR PARTERS – KAMCHATKA, THE PONOI, SEYCHELLES, AND BELIZE

This feature runs occasionally in our newsletter when we have singles or small groups that are looking for someone to join them on a fly fishing adventure. An especially interesting array of destinations in this issue:



**Seychelles:** the atolls of Alponse Island and St Francois Lagoon provide the most dependable and predictable fly fishing experience in the Seychelles. Bonefish, Giant Trevally, and Milkfish are the primary species pursued, but many others, including Indian Ocean permit, are available. In the past, we have not been able to get a long term commitment that this fabulous flats destination would be available to fly fishers – a new owner was threatening to turn it into the finest marine based resort in the world. However, that has changed and they now have made a long term commitment to the fly fishing program. We have space booked for a prime tide week in early April, 2014. For more info on the Seychelles, this link will take you to a photo essay

report on our personal trip..... [http://www.flyfishingadventures.org/Newsletter/tr\\_seychelles.pdf](http://www.flyfishingadventures.org/Newsletter/tr_seychelles.pdf)

**Kamchatka:** Large rainbows on the surface (like those with Chip Fudge and Chris Degner, below) are the main focus of this wilderness adventure destination in eastern Russia. Anglers considering both this year and 2014 and looking for partners.

**The Pono:** Arguably, this Russian watershed is the globes finest Atlantic Salmon fishery. Have a group going in late May in 2014 that may need one more angler to join them.

**Belize:** Using a mothership as your base of operations allows the best access to the different species options that are available in Belize. There is an experienced Belize mothership group that have dates booked for this May and are looking for one more (maybe two) to round them off. They are going to focus on permit, going south from Belize City, for the majority of their trip but will most likely move north for tarpon/bonefish/snook for part of the time.



## PERSONAL STUFF I'M EXCITED ABOUT

Two items that have me fired up going into the new year:

- When we arrived in Belize in December, the customs agent spent 2 or 3 minutes looking through my passport for a blank spot to place his stamp. He barely found a space large enough and suggested that I do something about it before our next trip. I had to send my passport in to have them add several blank pages. Never thought I'd ever see that happen!!!! A fun goal achieved.
- My favorite Christmas gift.....This summer on our 8<sup>th</sup> trip to the Minipi River watershed in Labrador chasing giant brookies, I got my largest brookie – 8.5 pounds (we've taken several seven pounders and three others at eight or more, but this was our largest). The scene was one of those you never forget. Large drakes covering the water and a feeding big fish cruising and eating, just on the edge of my maximum casting distance. He did a full head to tail roll when he engulfed my fly, a size 6 Yellow Stimulator, at the end of one of the longest casts ever for me. I relive the excitement of that fish every time I walk into my office. On my



office wall hangs the painting above, a replica of that fish painted on wood by the renowned artist and taxidermist, David Footer. Excellent job by Mr. Footer.

- Off to New Zealand and Fiji for Feb, our 11<sup>th</sup> visit to the land of the Kiwi's. Will be in touch with e-mail while gone and my administrative assistant will be in the office so it's "business as usual" if you have questions regarding anything.

### JANUARY MEMORY PHOTO(S)



Head and shoulders photos provide an interesting look at a fish and leave a little "mystery" regarding the entire fish. Brian Hodges took these two of some large Kamchatka rainbows on his trip last year. Try it.....even with smallish fish. You'll need to experiment a little to get the best angle on the fish – key is to focus on the eye, which is always the starting point when photographing living things.



**PHOTO CREDITS:** Banner and Africa photos – John Landis; large snook – Dave Fulthorpe; pair of Kamchatka rainbows – Chip Fudge and Chris Degner.

Either phone or drop us an e-mail if you have questions or would like more information about any of our destinations.

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