

May, 2001

RAGGED ISLAND BONEFISH CLUB

Let's face it... it's getting harder to find great flats fishing in the Bahamas. You know - those kind of spots that ten years ago, seemed like they were everywhere. Places where great schools of bonefish prowled the flats and where the occasional permit snuck up on you from behind. Spots where every tidal eddie held a huge barracuda and where every blue hole, channel and cut held an amazing array of baitfish and snapper. This is what we all seek - those untrodden, unmapped and unfished flats, reefs and cuts that hold the mother lode.

In early February, Angling Destinations hosted an exploratory trip to the new **Ragged Island Bonefish Club**. We all hoped that just maybe we could stumble upon one of those untouched spots where the bonefish were not only plentiful, but stupid. We were not to be disappointed. From the first moment we entered the water, we were

into fish. Sure, we had some slow moments, but it is also safe to estimate that over 600 bonefish were caught and released by the seven of us for the week. That fact alone would have made for a highly successful trip. But what made Ragged Island truly exciting for us were the opportunities and availability of other species from permit to sharks and snapper to ladyfish. We caught huge 'cudas on s u r f a c e p o p p e r s . We hooked lemon, blacktip and even spinner sharks that jumped like supercharged tarpon. We caught mutton snapper and Nassau grouper in the deeper cuts between the smaller cays. A significant number of large permit were sighted (often on the backs of rays), a few were casted to and several were hooked... a 27 pounder was even landed. We didn't even get to the end-

less patch reefs and holes on the windward side of the islands or beyond to the tremendous blue water opportunities that lie almost immediately offshore. In the calmer spring and fall months, this area must be incredible. The lodge has on hand over 20 spin and bait casting rods from 8 lb. to 25 lb. rigged and ready for guest use, so there

will be no excuses for not sampling this fishery on our next visit. Let's just summarize by saying the fishing was truly exceptional and we all left Ragged Island with broad



smiles on our sunburned faces.

The bonefish club is housed for the time being (until a new facility can be built on the north end of the island) in a local guesthouse. Rooms are clean, well-serviced and air-conditioned. Our meals were delicious and plentiful. Since you could order whatever you wanted from cracked conch to grouper fingers and steak to lobster, we heard no complaints. A full-service bar has a satellite TV, pool table and a well-equipped tying bench. The owner of the club repeatedly delineated the club policy, "Whatever you want we will make it happen, but if you don't tell us, we can't read your minds." Since

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many of us had traveled extensively in the Bahamas, we were initially skeptical of his “whatever you want” policy. But by the time we left, we were true believers. Let me give you a few examples: Our gear was carried to the boats each morning by the guides and brought back to the lodge and cleaned each evening. We were outfitted with hand-tied wire shark rigs when, following a dinner conversation, we quietly expressed a desire to experience the spinner shark fishing discussed.

“We fished as long as we wanted... many of us would not return until well after the sun was set... even more remarkable, there was no grumbling from the guides.”

The meal service staff was exceptionally friendly. They called us by our first names and asked us each evening if we would like an extra helping of their homemade desserts. Get the idea? Let’s just say we lacked for nothing.

But what was perhaps the most exceptional event that occurred each day was that we fished as long as we wanted. We were in the boats at 7:45 a.m. and many of us would not return until well after the sun was set. And even more remarkable, there was no grumbling from the guides. Conditioned to guides wanting to be back at the dock at 3:30 p.m., it doesn’t take long to calculate that a few extra hours a day adds up to a full day of extra fishing over a week. Talk about cost effective.

A quick word about the guiding. There are 59 people that live on Ragged Island. Obviously, that doesn’t create a huge labor pool from which to draw aspiring guides. But given this fact, our guides were all adequate and one was very good. We have no doubts that given the commitment management has made to this issue, all guides will be well-trained in relatively quick order. But at this point, it is only fair to state that one must not expect highly experienced guides on Ragged Island. Personally, we’ll trade expert guides for stupid fish any day. Just give us a guide that is friendly, hardworking, wants to learn and has the ability to put us on fish and he can expect a healthy tip at day’s end. We had this on Ragged Island.

If all this sound interesting to you, give us a call. The new lodge should be completed by late fall, 2001. They will take six fishermen at any one time. We expect Ragged Island Bonefish Club to fill up early for spring 2002 with many bookings coming from returning anglers. Now would not be too early to start thinking about next year. Give us a call today for all the details.

BLUE WATER

A STAR IN THE TROPICS

There is nothing delicate about the way a charging sailfish takes a fly. In that wonderful moment of transition from teaser to fly, the heart pounds as the adrenal gland empties. Luckily, this fact was impressed upon me twenty or thirty times during a recent trip to Panama’s **Tropic Star Lodge**. Sitting like a jewel in deep recesses of the Panamanian jungle, the Tropic Star Lodge can be reached only by air charter.

The nearest road is hundreds of miles away. The Tropic Star Lodge was built over twenty years ago and this very comfortable and absolutely beautiful lodge still stands as one of the finest bluewater destinations in the world for sailfish and marlin.

Finding the fish can be ridiculously easy; hooking one properly and fighting him to the boat may not. Many anglers assume that fly-fishing for sailfish lacks delicacy and technical skill... simply a brute act devoid of subtleties. Quite the opposite is true. The timing of your cast, placement of your fly, hook set and big fish fighting techniques are all difficult time-consuming skills to acquire and require true expertise.

But the experienced bill fisherman will tell you that the real reason to fly fish the blue water is to experience the sheer intensity of the process. T.V. may make it look routine, but to pull off landing a 100 lb. sailfish everything has to be just right... making it anything but routine. Every fish is different and each one requires you to think on your feet in the heat of battle. Fly tackle is up against the limits of its design. The failure of class tippets, reels and rods is common. To boat a billfish on the fly it is essential to have the opportunity to cast to many fish over the course of your stay. It is equally essential that an experienced and skillfull boat crew back you up. *Numbers and knowledge...*this is what makes the difference in destinations.

We are careful in our recommendations, and especially so when it comes to blue water flyfishing. Bluewater is not a fishery that can be successfully explored by anyone but experts. It is with this in mind that we heartily endorse both the Tropic Star Lodge in Panama and the Villas del Pacifico in Guatemala. If the bluewater beckons you, we encourage you to call us for the details.

SAFETY

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

“Luck is the residue of design and preparation.” This adage is never more true than when you apply it to the great outdoors. In our experience, most accidents occur as a result of the cumulative effects of many smaller bad decisions. The fact that one thing goes wrong is usually not a problem. Big problems occur when you get a cluster of small events that magnify into one larger problem.

Take the case of one Alaskan fisherman who ripped his waders on a beaver-chew. The rushed patch job seemed inconsequential but as his waders leaked slowly throughout the day, he became cold. Hours away from his scheduled pickup flight, he began to get chilled as rain began to fall. After rifling through his gear, he realized that he had forgotten to pack his rain gear in his early morning rush to patch his waders. Crawling up the bank of the river to start a fire, he stumbled and fell, suddenly realizing that he was much colder than he initially suspected. The fall filled his waders with cold water, soaked his matches and further chilled the core of his body. Fortunately his plane was a bit early and he was able to change into some dry warm clothes before his shivers deteriorated into full blown hypothermia. A delayed flight could have spelled the end for this angler. He was a lucky man on this particular day. But his slide towards hypothermia illustrates well how the cumulation of small events can add up to bigger consequences. With this in mind, here's a few hints when making preparations for a trip.

Always pack your gear carefully. Develop a detailed checklist for yourself. A basic medical kit, knife, hook remover, whistle, signal mirror, water and an energy bar are essential and remember to always, *always* bring foul weather gear even in the tropics.

Review with your guide the plan for the day. Being aware of pick up points and times is critically important. Make sure you have a firm understanding of the plan and terrain before you set off on your fishing day. If you fish alone, make sure that if you get into some kind of trouble you can get to help. Make sure you let everyone know where you will be and what route you will take.

Quality fishing experiences often take place in remote locations. Remember that you are ultimately responsible for your safety.

LOS ROQUES

ONE OF SALTWATER'S BEST KEPT SECRETS

The 350 enchanting islas that make up the Los Roques archipelago lie just 80 miles off the coast of Venezuela but far away from the urban hustle and bustle of Caracas. Los Roques enjoys national park status and its main island, El Gran Roque serves as park headquarters and is the only populated, albeit sparsely, island in the archipelago. On El Gran Roque, development and tourism have been strictly controlled. The few inhabitants, mostly fishermen, live in pastel-hued homes and lead unhurried lives consistent with this tranquil seaside setting.

For the visiting fishermen there is great variety to the flats of Los Roques. Comparisons are often drawn to Christmas Island for almost all the bonefishing is done while wading and many of the flats are white, hardpacked sand. Anglers find singles and doubles on these tidally influenced shallow expanses often tailing and often big with the average size being 3-5 lbs. There are also “pancake” flats adjacent to reefs and small islas that are not as tidally influenced as the shallow white flats. Generally these flats are deeper and hold fish on more stages of the tide. In addition, bonefish often cruise the beaches as in the Seychelles. They sometimes prowl the water's edge with their backs virtually out of the water or hang offshore in 2-4 feet of light blue Caribbean water waiting for an opportunity to raid the prolific schools of baitfish that line the shore. Los Roques is primarily a bonefishery but opportunities for snook, baby tarpon and permit are good during certain times of the year.

Since most of the angling in Los Roques is done while wading, our experienced guides use 26 foot pangas equipped with twin outboards to safely and quickly reach the flats. These bilingual guides schedule a maximum of 6 anglers per week and are able to analyze the critical variables of water temperature, tides, wind and time of year to put you at the right place at the right time.

Accommodations for visiting anglers are provided by the Acuarela Lodge. This beautiful, small lodge has tile floors, comfortable air-conditioned rooms, a full bar, great food and a lovely ocean view. Los Roques is on any experienced angler's list of world class bonefish destinations and we encourage you to call us for all the details.

TREVALLY

A BULLY PROWLs THE FLATS

The Seychelles Islands sit like jewels under the equatorial sun of the Indian Ocean. With the recent opening of the spectacular **Alphonse Island Resort**, the traveling angler now has easy access to the fantastic fishery surrounding the Alphonse Group in the central portion of the Seychelles. Bonefishing is the main fly rod game on Alphonse and it's neighbor, St. Francois. However, there is also a bully prowling the crystal clear waters that surround these lovely islands. This bruiser is known to saltwater aficionados as simply GT... and Mr. GT was made for a fly rod.

The giant trevally, *Caranx ignobilis*, is a menacing fish. Make no mistake, they are at the top of the aquatic food chain. One encounter with these beasts and you'll know why. They don't just eat a fly; they attack it with an intensity that may be unique in the angling world. Last year, we videotaped one aggressive trevally turn his thick body parallel to the sandy bottom, then fight his way up onto the dry beach to capture an escaping fly. Only the surge of the surf allowed this amazing fish to turn around and make off with the fly in tow. We lost this thirty-pound fish when the tippet section parted on a coral head, but the memory remains firm. For sheer excitement nothing matches the focused strike of a GT!

For top water enthusiasts, the take of the GT is heart stopping. One minute you're stripping your fly, the next your popper explodes between two coal-black eyes. The best way to fish for trevally is to wade the flats at higher tide stages. The trevally often cruise the flats and prowl the edges hunting for the weak and the incautious. Sometimes GT hunt in packs and upon sighting your fly, will break at lightening speed towards your offering. Here winner takes all, and the commotion is spectacular. Incredibly, often other trevally will follow a hooked fish and nip at the fly hanging out the side of its mouth.

In addition, trevally like to patrol the edges of the reef at dead low tide, looking for access to the flats or an easy meal. Landing a GT in these circumstances can be very difficult. Submerged reefs provide a safe haven for hooked trevally. Sharp edges and strong fish test tippets and fly lines. Breakoffs are common and frustrating.

If you're interested in taking a shot at giant trevally, Alphonse Island Resort is one of the best spots in the world. As a bonus, there are thousands of cooperative bonefish in the neighborhood for those "down" times when no trevally are around. Call us for more details or visit our "new" website at www.anglingdestinations.com and see some great photos of the magnificent Seychelles.

ATTENTION

DOCTORS, LAWYERS, & DENTISTS

2001 SEMINAR DATES

Angling Destinations, in conjunction with Classic Sports International, will be hosting two exceptional hunting and fishing opportunities for 2001. Each seminar will offer CME Cat.1 approved 2001 Medical - Legal update sponsored by the American Educational Institute, Inc. The seminar has extensive CLE and CDE accreditation and meets IRS requirements for tax deductibility.

May 19-24, 2001

Experience four days of guided fishing with lots of big browns & rainbows and five nights luxury accommodations at the Bighorn River Resort including all meals and gourmet lunches & refreshments. In past years, the dry fly fishing has been truly exceptional in May. Cost: \$1,895.00

Nov. 18-23, 2001

A real Montana Cast and Blast... do what you enjoy the most. Come to Montana and enjoy the best food and lodging on the Bighorn River and the best fishing and hunting anywhere. Cost: \$2,550.00

Dec. 8-12, 2001

The Bighorn River brown spawn is one of angling's best kept secrets. Combine this superb fishing with world class birdhunting on our private ranches and you have a sure winner! Four nights with two days guided fishing with one day birdhunting: Cost \$1595.00



Days of the Full Moon, 2001/2002

May 7	September 2	December 30	April 27
June 6	October 2	January 28, 2002	May 26
July 5	November 1	February 27	June 24
August 4	November 30	March 28	July 24

KAMCHATKA

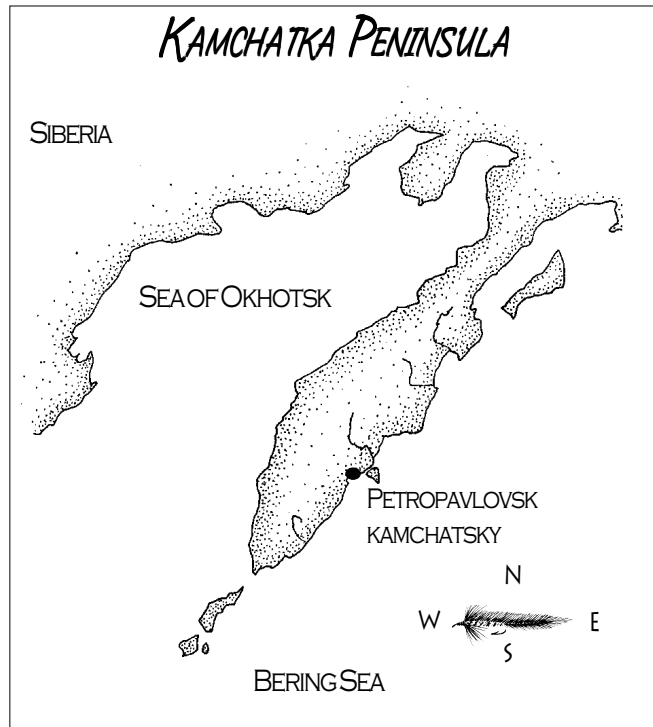
REPORTS FROM LAST SUMMER

The reports filtering back to us from returning anglers about Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula have been intriguing. Several returning clients have reported sensational fishing for huge rainbow trout on dry flies, and all of the returning anglers from this past season reported seeing not a single "other" fisherman on over one hundred miles of river! The rainbows averaged 20 inches, most anglers caught fish of at least 24 inches and several anglers reported hooking or landing fish in the 26 to 30 inch range. The majority of fishermen landed 20 or more smaller fish per day. The facts are undeniable... the fish are huge and there is virtually no pressure.

Our outfitter has had many years' experience running some of the big name Alaskan rainbow lodges. They know what details need to be in place in order to provide a successful and comfortable angling experience. Visiting anglers will have everything from warm showers, great home cooked meals in a heated central dining tent, comfortable cot-style beds and full fly tying facilities to well maintained jet boats and motors and experienced, friendly guides. Of course, all this is meaningless without a great river, so it is important to note that many anglers caught 20 plus inch fish right in front of the camp in the evenings after the

guide day!

We can now confirm that the rumors of prolific hatches are indeed true. Because the warm Japanese current runs along the coast of Kamchatka, the weather tends to be a bit warmer than in Alaska. These weather patterns create a more nutrient rich environment from which more prolific numbers of insects grow to maturity. These consistent dry fly hatches make Kamchatka the spot to consider for the midsummer months of July and August. Angling Destinations, Inc. is scheduled



to lead a group of 8 anglers July 21 - 29, 2001. **As of press time, there are two spots left on this trip which are the only two openings at any time for this summer and fall.** We firmly believe that the Kamchatka Peninsula provides a rare opportunity to experience what fishing was like in Alaska fifty years ago. The camp only accommodates eight anglers a week, so if you are interested, we suggest calling us as soon as possible.

SEYCHELLES

TWO NEW ATOLLS

If you haven't heard about the fantastic fishing in the Seychelles by now, you've either been out of the country or working too hard. Many of you have by now visited the plush new Alphonse Island Resort, experienced the incredible bonefishing and subsequently expressed intrigue over the angling opportunities that might be found on some of the other atolls in the chain.

Never willing to rest in the pursuit of stupid bonefish, we are excited to announce that we have found yet another incredible bonefishing opportunity in the Seychelles. Far to the south of Alphonse Island lie a group of unexplored islands that are similar to Alphonse in both habitat and structure. Here one finds bonefish numbers equal to those found on St. Francois but the trevally populations are considerably higher. This area promises to be another angling paradise.

With this firmly in mind, we have chartered a 116 foot mothership to take our group of 10 dedicated anglers into this remote area. This mothership is very comfortable and carries two 18 foot skiffs to ferry anglers to the bonefish flats. Most of the bonefishing will be done by wading. In addition, giant trevally, bluefin trevally, enormous barracuda and a host of other species are present in phenomenal numbers. We are hosting a trip November 27th to December 4th, 2001. As of press time we have 1 spot remaining. We have also chartered this mothership for two weeks in the spring of 2002 and for one week in the fall of 2002. Call us for all the details!

KANTON ISLAND

ON THE EDGE

Fishing wild, untouched areas is a once-in-a-lifetime experience most anglers never forget. The small handful who were the first to cast flies in the Seychelles or Kamchatka will tell you that it was a peak life experience. But often, remote locations create difficult logistical situations and pioneering these fisheries can be demanding. A lack of good accommodations, unfor-giving weather and difficult travel schedules can be hard on the uninitiated. On the other hand, being first definitely has its rewards!

It is with this in mind that we announce our plans to make a foray to Kanton Island in the South Pacific. Located 2000 miles from Hawaii and accessed only by charter flight, Kanton shows tremendous potential for some incredible fly fishing.

In addition to Kanton Island, we have begun work on a few other trips listed in the box below. We want to begin compiling a list of anglers interested in adventures not for the faint of heart. Please give us a call so we can put you on our list to contact when plans for these destinations begin to coalesce.

PALMYRA...reports of great flats fishing and an amazing variety of reef species point to Palmyra as a potential unexplored gem.

FANNING ISLAND... Christmas Island's neighbor to the north, we have reports of fantastic bonefishing and great trevally action.

SEYCHELLES... With the world's best bonefishing already confirmed, there are many other outer atolls and islands yet to explore.

CONFESSIONS OF A SALTWATER ANGLER

I'm a saltwater fly fisherman. I've caught lots of bones, a couple permit, some big tarpon, tons of stripers and tuna and countless snapper, 'cudas and redfish. I've never been interested in anything but the salt and certainly not in trout fishing. I never wanted to be associated with those fussy trout anglers bedecked with vests festooned with wid-gets and doohickies who don't know a double haul from a haywire twist and couldn't throw a line across their living rooms let alone at a cruising permit 70 feet upwind.

So given my view of the world, I reluctantly accepted an invitation to meet a friend in Wyoming to "dry fly" fish. I almost cancelled when my host offered to loan me his 3 wt. (a 3 wt. for God's sake!), but I decided to hang in there if for no other reason than to parade my angling superiority.

Humility (perhaps even humiliation) comes to mind as the best word to describe my first dry fly experience. First of all, my double haul was useless and my casting accuracy, especially with a 12' 6x leader in a light wind, was truly awful. I couldn't see the fly. I couldn't understand how my bespectacled companion could, and after 45 minutes of fishing with no strikes (while my friend was hauling in 17-20 inch trout as if on a conveyor belt), I began to think

"Maybe I could use some help".

Thank God my friend offered because after all my proclamations about saltwater and my lofty skills, it would have been almost impossible to ask.

So after 20 minutes of him coaching me on drag, drift and feeding lanes and another 20 minutes on casting and

"turning over the leader", I finally got my first strike. Of course, I set the hook like I was striking a triple digit tarpon much to the delight of a pair of off-duty guides in a passing drift boat. I was left with a broken tippet, a black and blue mark on my ego and a giggling friend. But on my second strike, I "slowly but firmly raised the rod tip" and the big rainbow was on. I couldn't have been prouder if I'd hooked a 10 lb. bone tailing upwind between 2 mangrove shoots. I had to admit it was pretty exciting to see the trout take the fly. The anticipation as the big 'bow confidently opened his mouth to slurp my little bug was palpable and the feeling was quickly addicting.

I won't go through all the boring details of my metamorphosis from saltwater snob to troutophile. Now I like to think I'm well-rounded (a term that seems to become more appropriate as I get more acquainted with middle age). But now, I find myself fanaticizing about hatches and rising trout in addition to tailing permit and gulping tarpon. And more importantly, my casting accuracy has greatly improved in the salt and I'm seeing more subtle visual clues when I do fish for bonefish and permit. I'm sure that dry fly fishing has somehow trained my eyes in many subtle ways.

So if you are a dry fly trout guy, you probably only need a little help with your casting to be successful in the salt. Probably the addition of 15-25 feet of casting distance with a bit more line speed to handle the tropical breezes will be all you'll need. I'll be happy to give you a lesson and I promise not to laugh once, even when you raise your rod tip to strike a fish.

DEDICATED PERMIT

TRIPS FOR THE ANGLING GOURMET

The big black sickle-shaped fin gently broke the calm surface of the water. The permit was visible from across the small bay. Martin quietly poled the skiff towards the wandering fin.

"Easy now, cast about four feet in front of the fish" Martin whispered.

The day was absolutely still, with no wind to buffer a burning yellow sun. From fifty feet away I could barely make out the stingray that the permit was lazily dogging. As my rod bent under the load of my line, I had the feeling that everything was just right for my first permit on a fly. The merkin shot overhead then dimpled the flat surface, quickly settling to the bottom about six feet in front of the cruising permit.

"Good, good, he's going for it" Martin said.

*I just bumped the fly and the permit charged, then tipped up on the rug yarn crab. I waited...hoping he had eaten the fly, then I stripped long. I felt no resistance and the fish, seeing the explosive movement of the fly, shot out of Belize on his way to Mexico. Unfortunately, another lesson learned with the toughest adversary on the flats, *Trachinotus falcatus*, the permit.*

Most anglers who spend time fishing the flats for bonefish and tarpon have a story like this one. The permit is, without a doubt, one of the toughest fish to catch on a fly. Entire books have been written on the subject of how

to catch a permit with a fly rod. Permit have both outstanding vision and smell. More often than not, they see a fly for exactly what it is: yarn, rubber and steel... and sweet juicy crab meat definitely does not smell like yarn or steel. It is precisely because permit angling is so difficult that the strategy of "more is better" has to be adopted by anglers seeking this most elusive quarry. If you



get enough shots at permit, and do everything just right, eventually one of them is going to eat your fly.

We believe that the best place on earth to hunt for permit (and be successful) is the Yucatan Peninsula all the way south to central and southern Belize. Without a doubt, the two best guides for the job are Belizian veterans, Martin McCord and Charles Westby. Both of these captains operate their own superb motherships. Martin captains *The Meca* and Charles *The Seaduction*. Past experience show that fishing for permit from a mothership greatly increases your odds of hooking one. Without the run back and forth to the lodge, the guide day is much longer and the boat can reach more remote areas

where the permit are most abundant at a given time and tide.

Given the delicate nature of fishing for permit and the need for both the guide and angler to be highly skilled, it is probably not surprising that the fraternity of anglers who have caught a permit on a fly is still relatively small. We feel that the best way to be inducted into this elite fraternity is to commit to a dedicated permit trip. If you have spent time bonefishing, consider a trip with Martin or Charles in pursuit of the flat's greatest prize. Yes, the angling is more difficult, but the techniques are similar and the reward is a high point in anyone's angling career. Besides, after you boat your first permit, you can spend the rest of the day pursuing bonefish and tarpon and perhaps score a grand slam!

WITH PERMIT THE RETRIEVE IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS!

You can find the permit and make a great cast and still blow all your hard work with one ill-timed strip. Most experienced permit anglers agree there is one retrieve that optimizes your odds. It is this: after you've patiently waited for your fly to settle to the bottom, make one very SLOW strip of 4-6 inches. DO NOT move your fly again! This is contrary to everything you've ever done before and takes great discipline to achieve. Wait for the permit to tip up on your offering then slowly come tight. If you feel resistance, strip strike. If the permit veers off, then and only then, try another slow 4-6" strip. Good luck!

COSTA DE COCOS

AN ALTERNATIVE TO ASCENSION BAY

From the Atlantic side of Central America, the Yucatan Peninsula juts north for over 200 miles into the fish-rich waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Most of the Yucatan's angling attention is centered around Mexico's Ascension Bay and Ambergris Cay in Belize. Many of the peninsula's most venerable fishing lodges are located near these two areas. But near the border, where Chetumal Bay meets the blue waters of the Caribbean, is a lesser known but just as productive, estuarine system. Because Chetumal Bay is too far south to be reached easily in a day from Ascension Bay, this area has been virtually ignored by the Mexican angling establishment. And while the Belizeans know full well the area's potential, it is illegal for them to cross the border into Mexico. As a result of this happy coincidence of political and geographical isolation, the Chetumal Bay area has remained virtually untouched and unfished.

The **Costa de Cocos** lodge is strategically located on the peninsula between Chetumal Bay and the open Atlantic making it a perfect base for fishing these prime waters. Built on a beautiful beach two kilometers north of the small village of Xcalak (Ishkalak), Costa de Cocos is located on the doorstep to a fishing paradise.

In order to insure the flats are not overpressured and to guarantee a solitary experience, we book only four fishermen per week. Nato Erera is the head guide and has lived in the area all of his life. Nato and his other captains have an extensive knowledge of their local area and they understand the habits of the fish that prowl these waters. These guides have excellent fish spotting ability and have become experts in the needs of itinerant anglers. Two new 19' El Pescador flats boats are moored at the lodge's private dock for the exclusive use of these guides.

The local waters have excellent populations of bonefish found on the numerous hard and soft bottom flats. It is important to note that the area's bonefish generally run larger than the fish you will find both north and south of Costa de Cocos. Various theories abound on the reasons for this, but this anomaly delights the seasoned angler accustomed to the smaller fish found at Ascension Bay. For the experienced angler seeking the most elusive of flat's inhabitants, permit are found in the bay and at the lagoon mouths. These fish sometimes school in numbers of 5-20. We suggest the

months of May, June, and July for fishermen specifically targeting the bigger permit. Smaller school permit are present throughout the season. For baby tarpon, you can cast to mangrove edges in 6 to 10 feet of water or fish the flats and shallower lagoons for larger fish.

Anglers are housed in individual cabanas constructed of native stone and hardwoods. These spacious rooms have two double beds and a private bath with hot shower... perfect for two fishermen. Three meals per day are included in your package. Breakfast is generally light, but special requests for hardier appetites will be accommodated. Lunch is almost always on the flats, taken on the run between casts. Gourmet dinners are served family-style and include a full range of seafood, local fare, and more traditional foods.

Diving, including full day excursions to Banco Chinchorro, can be arranged through the on-site dive shop. This area is well known for its varied and plentiful marine life and sea kayaks are available for exploring the nearby lagoons and rivers. At your request, we can arrange ruins exploration through Rancho Encantado at Laguna Bacalar. This overnight excursion offers the best of the best in exploring ruins on the Yucatan Peninsula.

The best way to get to Costa de Cocos is to fly to Belize City and take the short flight to San Pedro. We will have you picked up in San Pedro for the the 1.5 hour boat ride back to Costa de Cocos. The route to the lodge is inside the reef in the bay so the boat ride back to the lodge is usually quite comfortable with spectacular scenery. If your looking for an out of the way destination with sensational fishing, great people and beautiful flats, we strongly urge you to give us a call today for all the details. With only four anglers booked at any one time, April, May and June of 2002 will fill quickly... so plan accordingly.

I just returned from Costa de Cocos in early March. In a little less than two days of fishing, I caught two permit and 35-40 bonefish up to 5 lbs. The bonefish proved to be unusually large for the Yucatan. All the bonefish caught were singles or doubles in very shallow water. Many were tailing and all were strong, well-conditioned fish and not one-bit educated. I had many shots at permit and some were quite large. In one afternoon, I landed four tarpon up to 25 lbs. This is a sensational spot for a grand slam or even a Super Grand Slam especially in April thru June. - SSH March 2001 trip report.

BAHAMAS NEWS

IMPORTANT UPDATES

It appears **Acklins Island Lodge** will re-open for fall 2001. They have ironed out their legal problems over ownership of the land (a very long story) making way for anglers to once again enjoy this wonderful facility. Acklins Island Lodge earned a wonderful reputation in its first full year of operation and almost every angler that visited this beautiful spot re-booked for the following year. We feel encouraged by this development and hope to be able to take reservations for this fall....

The **Bair Bahamas Guesthouse** on South Andros provided outstanding service to all our clients this year and that coupled with the legendary fishing on South Andros resulted in the highest percentage of repeat business for any lodge we represent. If you are looking for a small lodge that offers the best in guides, boats, food and accommodations, this is it! The only drawback is that you must plan well ahead of time... so plan your trip now for next spring. There are some great dates open for fall 2001 and although we have numerous bookings already for spring 2002, if you act quickly upon receiving this newsletter, there are some wonderful dates open....

The **Rickmon Bonefish Lodge** has been doing a great job during their first year and visiting anglers have enjoyed this new lodge immensely. Since we work closely with a number of guides at Sandy Point including Patrick, Anthony, Derreck, Kendall, Ricardo, Paul and Ferde, we have made a concerted effort to select the best guides available when planning your trip. A word to the wise, this is a critical component when planning a trip to this part of the Bahamas and the best way to explore this extensive area is with an experienced guide....

On the north side of Grand Bahama Island there is a new resort poised to open this fall on **Water Cay**. This lodge has the same ownership as the Ragged Island Bonefish Club and we feel confident they will bring the same attention to detail and service to this operation. They will fish this fabulous "big fish" fishery and have much better access to the north side of Grand Bahama Island than do existing lodges in the area. This is indeed exciting news and if the owners make the same commitment to providing long fishing days as they do at Ragged Island, anglers will enjoy this new facility immensely....

We are receiving rave reviews on the new Lucayan Lighthouse Point Hotel from which **Grand Bahama Bonefishing, LTD.** and the Pinder brothers operate. The Lighthouse Point is absolutely beautiful and has its own private pool, beach and restaurant. This beautiful smaller hotel is a perfect spot for both serious anglers and their non-fishing family and friends....

Back on South Andros Island, the **Mars Bay Bonefish Villa** now has new flats skiffs eliminating the one complaint we have heard from customers. This lovely little villa can handle 4 anglers at a time making it perfect for 2 couples or smaller group of friends. The villa is 10 minutes away from Grassy Creek and is the closest lodge to the southern tip of Andros Island. This spot is a real winner for those looking to get away from the larger lodges....

We get a lot of calls about **Acklins Island**. This is a great fishery with some of the best wading available in the Bahamas so it is natural for anglers to gravitate to this area. But lodges seem to pop up on Acklins and then disappear sometimes leaving in their wake disgruntled fisherman. So to set the record straight and answer everyone's questions at one time, there is

only one lodge that we recommend on the island and it is **Grey's Point Bonefish Inn**. When **Acklins Island Lodge** reopens this fall there will be two. Both are reputable, have good equipment, excellent food, air-conditioned rooms, plenty of water and experienced guides. We strongly suggest you forget about any others - enough said....

Another top pick is **Stafford Creek Lodge**. Owned by Prescott and Samantha Smith, this lodge has not only great food and accommodations, but a superb guide staff headed by Prescott who is one of the top five guides in the Bahamas....

At Treasure Cay on Great Abaco Island the **Banyan Beach Bonefishing Club** continues to improve and upgrade its operation. With all the amenities available for non-fishermen, this destination continues to provide anglers with great fishing and their non-angling companions with a world class beach out the front door of their beautiful condominium....

At press time, we are working with a group of guides on **Inagua Island**. This large island has a somewhat unique fishery for the Bahamas with snook and tarpon available, as well as bonefish and permit. We are going to book only 4 anglers at any one time to preserve this resource. We should have it up and running by this fall. We will be in Inagua in May and will keep you informed about our progress in our fall newsletter. If you are interested, give us call, and we'll fill you in on all the details... and in other news, on Crooked Island at **Pittstown Point** there are new flats boats and we've had many reports from returning anglers that the bluewater opportunities have been sensational.... We are also working with a group establishing a camp on the west side of **Andros Island....** more on this exciting development in our next newsletter!



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Bahamas

Rickmons Lodge, Acklin's Island Lodge, Grey's Point, Moxey's Banyan Beach Bonefishing Club, North Andros Bonefish Lodge, Grand Bahama Bonefishing Ltd., Bair Bahamas, Ragged Island, Tranquility Hill, Pelican Bay, Mars Bay, Stafford Creek Lodge, Pete and Gay's Guesthouse

Belize, Mexico

Belize River Lodge, Turneffe Flats Lodge, Turneffe Island Lodge, Casa Blanca, Playa Blanca, Isla Holbox, *Meca* and *Seaduction* Live-Aboards, Costa de Cocos, El Pescador, Journey's End, Sunrise Almond Tree Lodge

Wyoming, Montana

Private Ranches
Mountain Streams
Mountain Horsepack Trips
Madison Valley Ranch
Ruby Springs Lodge
Forrester's Frontier Travel
Bighorn River Country Lodge
Lewis and Clark Expeditions
Montana Birdhunting

Alaska, Canada, Kamchatka

Lodges, Float Trips and Tent Camps in Bristol Bay, British Columbia Russia and Northwest Territories including Bristol Bay Lodge
Kanektok River Camp
Royal Coachman Lodge
Kamchatka Expeditions
Wilderness Place Lodge

ANGLING DESTINATIONS IS COMMITTED TO PRESERVING BOTH THE FISHERIES WE DISCOVER AND THE FRIENDSHIPS THAT WE MAKE. THE MAJORITY OF OUR BUSINESS IS FROM REPEAT CLIENTS. WE TRY AND KEEP AN OPEN EAR TO CUSTOMER FEEDBACK AND TAILOR OUR FUTURE DIRECTION IN A WAY TO

SATISFY SUCH CRITIQUES.

WHETHER YOU ARE SEARCHING FOR BONEFISH AND PERMIT IN SALT, PIKE AND WALLEYE IN CANADA, SALMON IN ALASKA OR TROUT IN THE ROCKIES, WE CAN DRAW ON OUR COMBINED YEARS OF FISHING THE WORLD TO MEET YOUR NEEDS. OUR DES-

TINATIONS ARE UNIQUE. MANY ARE EXCLUSIVE TO US ... AND WE DON'T MIND SHARING.

WE HOPE YOU ENJOY THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNTS. THEY REPRESENT SOME OF THE ADVENTURES WE HAVE TO OFFER.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR CALL!

