



# T·R·A·V·E·L N·O·T·E·S

December 2004

## OUTPOST LIVEBOARD AN INCREDIBLE FIRST YEAR

Our first year with the *Outpost* mothership has more than lived up to our expectations. This mothership program has generated much interest and for those anglers who took a trip with the *Outpost*, you know what we are talking about. We have received excellent reports from these anglers and many have rebooked for the 2005 season. If you would like to read a trip report, you might consult the September 2004 issue of the *Angling Report*.

And perhaps just as important as all this good feedback from clients, the owners of the *Outpost*, Penny and Fred Wheeler, were also thrilled with their first season in the Bahamas. Apparently, our anglers are a pretty fun crew! The Wheelers have said over and over again, how much they have enjoyed the part of the day when anglers return from their peregrinations up and down the West Side of Andros. The Wheelers have overcome all the logistical difficulties of operating in the Bahamas and are eager for the 2004/05 season. For Penny and Fred, the *Outpost* is truly a labor of love. You can see this in the boat from the immaculate engine room, to the beautiful woodworking to the care taken with meals... the Wheelers love what they are doing! Everything has gone so well that we have decided to expand the program... more on this later.

If you have been an ongoing subscriber to this newsletter, you know that in our first season working with the *Outpost*, we focused our attention on the vast flats on the west side of the north island of Andros. After coming aboard, anglers enjoyed cocktails on the ample aft deck, while the *Outpost* was moved south from the pick-up point to its anchorage at Williams Island. This anchorage was an excellent spot to be based providing easy access to the most remote and prolific areas of Andros including the Wide Opening, Pumpkin Lake and many other creeks that we simply are not going to name given that our explorations have paid off so handsomely!

To refresh your memory, the *Outpost* is a 61-foot shoal draft Hatteras that sleeps 4-6 anglers in well-appointed staterooms and features such amenities as satellite TV, central A/C and a reverse osmosis water system that provides plenty of freshwater for hot showers and for cleaning equipment. This ample freshwater also powers the plumbing system thus eliminating the odors often associated with marine toilets.

If you want all the info on the *Outpost*, please give us a call and we'll send all the details including a DVD that gives you a great feel for the trip. Now, on to the exciting news:

First of all, as we stated earlier, we have expanded the schedule. We will still do the six weeks on the West Side of Andros beginning April 1 and ending May 14, but in addition, we will take the *Outpost* to Crooked Island beginning Jan. 8 for seven weeks ending February 26. This positions the boat in the southern Bahamas during the winter months when cold fronts often screw up the fishing in the more northern realms of the Bahamas. While we are on Crooked/Acklins Islands, we will be using Landrail Point guides Clinton Scavella and Mike Carroll. We have worked extensively with these guys and know that they will do an outstanding job. So if you've been looking for a great trip this winter, THIS IS IT!

Now here's the second bit of great news. We will take bookings for Crooked/Acklins with a minimum of only two people.

Last year, we needed a group of four to charter the boat and that was difficult for some anglers to put together. Now, all you need is two anglers making it now perfect for fishing buddies or couples! If we receive two more anglers, we will book them too, but if we do not receive two more anglers, the trip will be run AT THE SAME PRICE! So come join us this Spring and experience the best the Bahamas has to offer!

Here then is our Spring 2005 schedule:

### Crooked/Acklins Islands... seven weeks only!

January 8 to 15, January 15 to 22, January 22 to 29, January 29 to February 5, February 5 to 12, February 12-19 and February 19 to 26, 2005

### The West Side of Andros... six weeks only!

April 2 to 9, April 9 to 16, April 16 to 23 and April 23 to April 30, April 30 to May 7, May 7 to 14, 2005

## WEST SIDE OF THE YUCATAN

### EXPLORATIONS FROM TARPON CAY

If you are a tarpon fisherman, please pay close attention to the following report:

For the past year, we have been sending anglers to Tarpon Cay on the northwest coast of the Yucatan Peninsula. This area has been so prolific that we have spent much of this Fall expanding into new areas south of Tarpon Cay. Our forays have been so promising that we thought you might be interested in one of the missives we have received from our guys on the ground:

*"Hey guys... I'm back with arms sore and fingers shredded! We landed a lot of tarpon! Our trip was a total suc-*

*cess! We found some great backcountry habitat! Tarpon Cay lodge owner, Marco Ruz, was very impressed with the fishery. In addition, the local village is very charming. This city is rich in Mayan history, with impor-*



*tant archaeological sites like Edzema, Calakmul, Needz and Balam Ku nearby. Some of these monuments can be seen from our fishing grounds. In 1526, the Spaniards conquered the city and established one of the richest ports in the Americas. As pirates invaded the city on a regular basis, it became a city of arms. The cannons, fortresses and treasures have all been preserved in various museums under the cultural preservation laws. Those interested in Mexican and Mayan culture will love this area. In addition to the area's rich history, the local cuisine is excellent. Pargo, pompano, shrimp and lobster are cooked in traditional Yucatan salsas. They are worth the visit alone! This is the real Mexico... about as far from Cancun as you can get.*

*This fishery is awesome! In Marco's words, it is 15 times the size of the Tarpon Cay fishery with over 40 miles of mangrove coastline. In contrast, the local sport fishing scene is very small. There is a father with two sons who fish the occasional tourist for a day or two. They are very proficient shallow water guides. They have an immense knowledge of the area and pole a boat very well. The fish are, for the most part, unmolested. Some of the habitat is what you would expect to find at Tarpon Cay with lots of backcountry creeks, bays, and lakes. The first day, we poled the panga right through a stand of mangroves. On the other side was a 25 acre lake full of big snook and no less than 10 pods of tarpon up to twenty pounds. The wa-*

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ter was very low and crystal clear. This is sight fishing at its best. We jumped over 10 tarpon and landed 12 snook. All in this one lake! The entire forty miles of coast is lined with this type of habitat. The water in this backcountry area tends to be very clear. So even when the tarpon were not rolling, we had a lot of sight fishing opportunities. Also there are a lot of snook around. We encountered large schools with some real giants mixed in. We landed around fifteen snook in three days. I think this vast estuarine system is a bonafide snook fishery and demands more exploration.

At times, we could see ten different pods of tarpon rolling at the same time. It was tough to pick a fish to throw at! This place has some of the finest saltwater sight fishing I have ever seen. We caught tarpon from twelve inches to 20 pounds indicating that like Tarpon Cay, this is a tarpon nursery. What a great find! We look forward to more explorations in January."

We fully expect to be booking anglers to this area by Spring, 2005. If you want to be one of the first to explore this seemingly incredible area, give us a call for updates.



## MAGAZINES & TV SHOWS

Here at Angling Destinations, Inc., we are often faced with difficult decisions on how much exposure to give "new" fisheries. We are constantly searching out leads and running down rumors. It's our job, and we love it! Most of these leads don't pan out, but some do and some REALLY do! As a result, we are approached by many magazines and TV shows wanting new destinations to promote. We are always torn between helping them in their endeavors and keeping our mouths shut. As we all know, attention can be good for an area by focusing economics on sportfishing rather than on development or it can irreparably damage an area if overdone. With this conundrum in mind, we have recently "opened our mouths" a few times and wanted to give our readers a short list of things to look for in the press and on TV.

### Magazines

**Fly Fishing in Salt Water Magazine:** July/August, 2004

– Great Inagua Island, Bahamas

**South Florida Sportfishing Magazine:** Spring, 2004

– Outpost Liveaboard, Bahamas

**Wild on the Fly Magazine:** Summer, 2004

– Trevally Trauma, Seychelles

**South Florida Sportfishing Magazine:** Fall, 2004

– Great Inagua Island, Bahamas

### T.V.

**Spanish Fly With Jose Wejebe: Winter 2004 – Rickmon Bonefish Lodge...** These two shows featured guide Ricardo Burrows at Sandy Point on Great Abaco Island. It also featured our staff photographer, Jeff Stine's (jeffstine.com) work of capturing classic angling moments on film. The show's producer said it was one of the best shows they have ever done! **Spanish Fly With Jose Wejebe: February, 2005 – Tarpon Cay Lodge...** These shows feature Capt. Marco Ruz, our partner at the superb baby tarpon fishery in the northwest corner of the Yucatan peninsula. The action is hot and heavy. If you love tarpon on the fly, check this out! **In Search of Flywater: February, 2005 – Flatiron Trout Horsepack Trip...** Host Conway Bowman heads to our neck of the woods in northern Wyoming to experience our fabulous trout fishing in the Cloud Peak Wilderness Area. It's fun to watch a "saltwater boy" learn the precision of dry fly fishing for wild trout... it ain't as easy as it looks! **In Search of Flywater: March, 2005 – Pira Lodge, Golden Dorado...** Check out this incredible fish! The golden dorado has all the aggressiveness of a bluefish combined with the aerial abilities of a tarpon. Golden dorado are truly one of our sport's best fish on the fly.

# OLD GRANDAD

*A thing long expected takes the form of the unexpected when at last it comes...* Mark Twain, author and humorist (1835-1910)

We had gone as far as we could go by boat. We had turned off the Yelovka into the Levaya and gone well past yesterday's beat. The water was gin clear with riffled runs, loggy bends and shallow braids. Antoine, our young Russian guide, was nervous. He was afraid of reading the runs wrong and damaging his beautiful new Yamaha. We told him to relax, go where we pointed and pull over when we said there was no way up. At these points, we would swing our waded legs over the gunnels and begin hauling the "War Eagle" skiff up and over the shallow bar or obstructed channel that blocked our way. Once we were in the next run, Antoine, eyes dilated with adrenaline, would once again fire up the new motor and we would continue up the Levaya.

Now we could go no further. At the base of a steep cut bank, logjams and sweepers were stacked all the way across the river. Without a chain saw or at least a big handsaw, we were done. We told Antoine to pull in. Relief

washed across his face. At least for the moment, Antoine would survive the crazy intentions of these wacky Americans. We pulled in, tied off the boat to a tree and grabbed our "mousing rods". I looked upstream past the cut bank and saw a beautiful little riffle plunging into a deep pool formed by the terminus of an old back channel. I had to get there! The lure of virgin water is strong and was, after all, why we had come this far! I had always wanted to catch a really big, and by that I mean over 30 inch, Kamchatka rainbow. Maybe this was my chance.

I kicked steps in the layered mud of the cut bank and climbed around the roots of trees that had fallen from the rim, their anchors finally eroded by a river on the march. On the far side of the cut bank, I repeated a loud hello into a forest that held the highest density of brown bears on planet earth. Finally, I made it to the dark, deep pool. I was bathed in a cloud of mosquitoes and sweat. The pool looked good. I threw a big hairy mouse with a foam collar and orange legs slightly upstream, then skated it into the pool. As my mouse that looked like no mouse swung into the eddy

line, a bright flash made Mickey disappear. A quick hookset and a strong fight brought a 23" "bow to my feet just as I saw Scott Shoppell begin to negotiate the slippery mud and loose gravel of the cut bank. By the time he had joined me, I had caught another 20" "bow and a couple 16" grayling, their mouths barely big enough to ingest the mouse. Scott and I walked upstream to the next bend, then decided to fish back to the boat and fish the miles of water we had, perhaps a bit too energetically, motored past.

When we again passed the deep pool, Scott paused to try his mouse, while I reregged with a pale white and slightly pink, woolly bugger. Almost immediately, I caught a nice 20" white Siberian or Kundzha char. This beautiful fish had nickel-sized white spots somewhat reminiscent of a lake trout. This fish was a real treasure and this year's first Kundzha for me. A few more casts brought in a big grayling and a 19" rainbow. Scott had flashes on his mouse, but no takers. I had probably ruined the run for him previously. As he reeled up, I made the proverbial last cast. The line stopped and I struck hard knowing the 12 lb. tippet could handle the shock. Initially, the line didn't move, but then pulsed once, then twice as a big fish wallowed to the surface.

"It's a 'bow... a big 'bow!" I whispered.

"Whoa" Scott added, accurately summing up its apparent size.

I can't say the fish fought exceptionally hard. He didn't rip off a lot of line and he did not jump. I got the feeling that this was a very old guy. An ancient creature wise to the ways of fishing bears and aggressive salmon, but not prepared to have his seniority questioned in quite this way. He sulked on the bottom impossible to turn, then repeatedly rolled to the surface in a massive boil flashing silver and a deep burgundy stripe. Eventually it was over, the fight more time consuming than difficult. The measure of this fish was not in the quality of the battle, but in the rarity of his length and girth. He was a monument to survival and sheer time.

"We need a camera," I mumbled, knowing it was far away, stored in my dry bag on this rainy morn.

"I'll get it", Scott offered with a smile, approaching the difficulty of the hike back as he had every other obstacle or inconvenience on this trip.

"I'll owe you one." I said and I meant it.

Scott raced across the cut bank, grabbed my camera and in no time was back with Antoine in tow. As it turned out, Antoine was happy to join us as a big brown bear had just poked his head out of the forest not 50 feet from where he was laying out our lunch.

By the time they got to me, the big 'bow was fining comfortably in the pool.

"That's the biggest 'bow I've seen on this river!" exclaimed our young guide. "He's beautiful."

We photographed him from every angle taking extra care to keep him alive. Copepods coated his gill filaments perhaps explaining why this old fella didn't fight harder. We measured him at over 30 inches and estimated his weight at 5.5 kilos... around 12 pounds. We placed him back in the pool and for a while, lost him in the mud that we had stirred up. Eventually, he swam slowly out of the cloud and back into the fast clear water. He was fine, although I was left with the feeling that this venerable fellow wouldn't see too many more Kamchatka summers.

Quietly, we marched back to the boat to dine on Russian black bread sandwiches and strong dark #9 Russian beers. Antoine told us he could smell the bear before he saw him.

"He smelled awful." He said as he bit into his sandwich, "Like a swamp..."

My thoughts were not on smells or lunch or even bears, but were back upriver with a gutsy older gentleman who dressed in gaudy stripes and spots.

# NEWS & NOTES...

Since our last newsletter, we have posted quite a few new trip reports on our website. To read these reports, go to [www.anglingdestinations.com](http://www.anglingdestinations.com)... then click "recent adventures". Check in often as the trip reports change frequently! Here are a few of our most recent adventures:

► **Costa Rica's Pacific Coast at Crocodile Bay** ► **Belize: Meca Liveaboard** ► **Kamchatka's Yelovka River Camp** ► **Los Roques, Venezuela** ► **West Andros - Outpost Liveaboard**

There is a small, new lodge scheduled to open in the early summer of 2005 on the **Elk River** in **Fernie, British Columbia**. We have worked with the owners for many years. We know that this lodge, built on the banks of the majestic Elk River, will be a home run for people looking to fish the Elk and its incredible tributaries. Take a look at our hosted trip page because we have already scheduled a trip!

Rave reviews have come from anglers who fished **Alaska** out of the **Kanektok River Camp**. **Dave Duncan & Sons** have brought their considerable Alaskan expertise to this camp and it shows in these fantastic reviews. If you're contemplating Alaska next summer, this destination deserves a close look.

Closer to home, **Straub Outfitters** is a highly personalized fly fishing outfitter based near Montana's fabulous Missouri River. Owner Pat "Paddy" Straub, has selected a staff of knowledgeable, humorous, and unforgettable guides. Many of Straub's fishing guests stay at a family-run guest ranch, **The Rocking Z**. The Rocking Z is as Montana as it gets! If "taking-it-all-in", catching fish and private water are paramount to your Montana trip, then the Rocking Z is THE place for you.

In Argentina, a new **golden dorado** program has recently started down in the **Esquina** region. During peak season, the fishing tends to be fast and furious. The average dorado runs about 5 to 6 pounds with 8 to 10 pounders caught frequently. The biggest fish to date is 16 pounds. Many folks love action over size and if that fits you... call us!

Speaking of South America, Nervous Waters, has purchased **Futa Lodge** in Chile. Futa is top-notch and is situated on the banks of the Futalefu River, a trout fisherman's dream river. The best part is it's at peak during January and February. So if you are considering a dead-of-winter getaway for trout, think Futa.

Finally, how about a budget **Kenai River** trip in **Alaska**! It's a great four-angler idea for kids and wives who may not be hard-core fly fishermen or for those just learning how to fish. This fishery can be amazing both in terms of size of fish and numbers of rainbows and dollyies.

Anglers stay in a beautiful house on Kenai Lake which sleeps four people comfortably. Breakfast foods are stocked, guides will provide lunches and dinners are taken in town. There is a daily housekeeping service. The rate for a four-person group is \$1225.00 per person for four nights and three full days of guided fishing! What better way to experience Alaska in the early or late season.

This is just a small sampling of the great trips we offer. If you would like more information, give us a call today and we'll help you plan a great adventure this summer!

## TIDES, BONEFISH AND THE BAHAMAS PART 1

Determining the time of the tide and the flow of the current is part science, part art and part pure magic. Tide tables are mathematical calculations generated from readings carefully collected at specific locations over broad spans of time. Tides measure the vertical flow of water from high to low. While a tide chart calculates the high and low tides to the minute, actual tides seldom conform exactly to this prediction. This is what makes judging the state of a tide part art and part magic. Because local features can cause variations in time and height, being near a specific tide location does not guarantee alignment with that tide schedule. But having said that, generally speaking, the further a point is from the main ocean flow i.e. reading point, the later the tide. You can use tables to estimate when high or low tide will be, but it is seldom the same. Moon phase, atmospheric pressure, wind, weather, and local geologic features all affect the timing of tides and currents.

You can use tide tables as an indicator, but there is no substitute for local knowledge... or for careful observation garnered over time by anglers themselves. In fact, this is part of the skill set experienced anglers bring to the table. They may use the science given in tide

tables, but the art of using your own observations and those of guides and locals is what gives a true picture of the tides and currents wherever you are. Obviously, if you are going to a new destination or have not had the inclination to carefully observe tide patterns, then accurate tide tables become your chief source of information.

This is where all of us at Angling Destinations come in. We try to interpret the science held in our detailed tide tables with both our own experience in fishing specific areas and that of a network of knowledgeable

locals. We pay attention to tides, perhaps like no other agency. We know the importance of tides on fishing success. We carefully coalesce tidal information for our own trips. We will do no less for you!

In our next newsletter, we will go into greater detail concerning what you should really pay attention to with tide tables and give you a few hints to remember regarding tides when planning your next trip.



### Scott's Dog Bone Series Fly #1... The Labrador Deceiver

Hook: Tiemco 8115 or Mustad 34007 size 4-8  
Thread: Mono  
Antennae: Silli Legs tan  
Mouth: Tan Sheep Fleece  
Body: Bunny strip palmered with pink bead back  
Eyes: Pink bead on burnt mono

#### Tying Instructions

Originally tied with the undercoat from a very pale, yellow Lab named Cooper (necessity is the mother of invention), this pattern eventually evolved using bunny strips instead of dog fleece, but the name stuck (bunny worked great, but I really switched because my wife thought my dog got tired of having bald patches and Cooper wasn't too thrilled about my coat-nabbing activities either).

To tie the fly, begin by tying a small bundle of sheep fleece off the bend of the hook. Then tie two silli-legs for antennae and stack another appropriate amount of sheep fleece on top of the antennae to finish the mouth. Tie in the eyes that were constructed earlier. Tie in a piece of mono for the beads just above the hook point. Palmer the bunny strip and tie off at the eye. String the desired number of beads, then both super glue and tie off the mono at the hook eye.

This pattern uses pink beads from Enterprise Art available at 800-366-2218 bead # 25199 6/0 pink color # 13. These beads impart a very lifelike look to the fly. Using the time-tested coloration of pink, tan and off-white, this fly is a proven killer. Remember, the more beads you add to the mono strip, the heavier the fly. This makes the pattern very versatile and effective on all bones from tailing fish in skinny water to cruising fish in deeper water.

Official PETA disclaimer... No animals were harmed in the making of this fly other than a couple sillies and they don't use their legs much anyway.



# Los Roques Archipelago

*Los Roques is a stunningly beautiful archipelago, reminiscent of Christmas Island, lying only one half-hour by air off the northern coast of Venezuela. This prolific area, only three hours by air from Miami, is often overlooked by anglers intent on the Bahamas or the Yucatan Peninsula. The reward is endless pale flats of which nearly every square inch is wadeable and scavenged by big tailing bonefish.*

Over 350 islas make up the Los Roques Archipelago. Los Roques means "the rocks" in Spanish and to a mariner that is probably all you need to know to avoid a catastrophe. But for the angler, Los Roques is not a rock at all, but is actually composed of layer after layer of coral built up over the millennia creating hundreds of skinny water flats and the perfect habitat for bonefish. These flats are usually hard-bottomed, always beautiful and hold some of the biggest bonefish in the Caribbean. Comparisons are often drawn between Los Roques and Christmas Island for almost all the bonefishing is done while wading and many of the flats are hardpacked white sand. This is where the comparisons end though. While Christmas Island is quite difficult to reach, has lots of smaller fish often seen in schools and is perfect for beginners, Los Roques is much easier to reach, has big bonefish, often seen as singles or doubles, and is a destination better suited to anglers with at least intermediate skills. Bonefish on Los Roques are often seen tailing in very skinny water making casting ability, stalking skills and accuracy of presentation a prerequisite for success. You will not rack up as big a numbers on Los Roques as on Christmas Island, but often every opportunity is a classic, usually beginning with tails and ending with thumb-shattering, knee-knocking runs. Most aficionados agree that big numbers quickly become irrelevant when every fish stalked provides such a classic memorable moment.

On Los Roques, anglers find big bones on tidally influenced, shallow expanses that most experienced anglers see as traditional, white sand flats. But fish are also found on the many "pancake flats" which are the barely submerged tops of coral-colonized, ancient lava flows. While these areas are still tidally influenced, they generally hold fish on more stages of the tide. In addition, bonefish often cruise the beaches. They prowl these edges with their backs virtually out of the water or hang just offshore in 2-3 feet of pale blue water waiting to ambush the prolific schools of baitfish that line the shore.

One important last note... whereas Christmas Island is excellent year round, Los Roques has a unique tide profile. If you are conditioned to the Bahamas where daily high and low tides are critical to success, think of a Los Roques as having only one high and one low tide per year! High tide then is mid-October, November, December and January. During these months daytime high waters cover the flats making tailing opportunities rare. The fish are still there of course, but the classic tailing opportunities Los Roques is known for are simply

not available. During the low tide "good months" of February to October, daily tide charts are not as important as currents, winds, weather and many other factors that can completely change the daily tide profile to the point where a tide chart may become worthless. It is therefore best to simply schedule your trip during these good months. You will find that cloud cover, weather and wind have a much greater effect on the fish than do the tides. This is especially true on the pancake flats where constant fresh, cool seawater flushes in from deeper water making the warming effects of sunshine more important to the foraging bonefish.

If you are considering adding Los Roques to your life list of bonefish destinations, there are essentially two operations on the El Gran Roque (the only populated island in the archipelago). These two operations are Pez Raton Lodge which works with Alex Gonzalez and his guides and Sight Cast headed by Chris Yrazabal and his guides who use Macanao Lodge. We prefer to use Sight Cast and Macanao Lodge for the following reasons:

Owner Chris Yrazabal is always at the lodge. He not only guides, but acts as a host making sure all angler

libation as you watch the sun slip below the horizon. This lovely hotel has an excellent fly tying area, free laundry service and a place to clean the salt from rods and reels.

With Sight Cast, you are fully escorted from the moment you leave customs at the Caracas airport. They will meet you, drive you the five minutes to your hotel, pick you up in the morning and even help you check in for your 30 minute morning flight from Caracas to Los Roques. They will answer any questions, help change money and even make sure your wake up call is accurately conveyed to the hotel staff.

With LTA air services, Sight Cast uses 4 engine Dash planes that hold up to 47 passengers. The other lodge may use single engine planes. We feel that LTA is the safest option and while this costs a bit more, it should be noted that overall trip costs are LESS with Sight Cast than with Pez Raton Lodge.

Other advantages of going with Sight Cast include the use of the best boats on the island. These new boats are equipped with 75hp 4-stroke Yamaha engines and are always well-maintained and immaculate. Unlike their competition, Sight Cast's boats are equipped with canopies to help anglers escape the sun. The experienced know the importance of these canopies with Los Roques being only eleven degrees from the equator.

Sight Cast guides are the best available. Chris, Shane and Claudio speak excellent English and are superb guides. Elian, Cayito, Pedro and Terry speak technical fishing English and are also superb guides having fished this area their entire lives.

And all these advantages come at the best price available on the island. When comparing prices between Los Roques and a trip to the Bahamas or the Yucatan, please remember that both your flights to and from Los Roques with LTA and your two nights at a hotel in Caracas are included. This puts a Los Roques trip at the same cost or even a bit less

than comparable trips to the Bahama Islands or the Yucatan Peninsula.

Now that should be enough reasons to give Los Roques a serious look this year. After all, Los Roques is one of the richest and most spectacular bonefishing destinations in the world. With hurricanes passing well to the north, infrequent rains and no winter "cold fronts", Los Roques is one of the most consistent bonefishing destinations in the world. Combine this with over 350 cays that provide seemingly endless wadeable habitat that teems with bonefish that average four pounds and you've got a spot that should be on any well-seasoned anglers top five bonefish destinations worldwide.

needs are addressed. This is college educated, speaks fluent English and is a consummate professional with over 15 years of experience guiding in the atoll. Chris dines with anglers each evening. Besides offering his natural charm, Chris is there to answer questions, organize daily fishing schedules and solve any problems that might arise. We know a few other lodges that could benefit from a good dose of this kind of service!

The Macanao Lodge is the only lodge on El Gran Roque located directly on the beach. Massive, hand carved mahogany doors lead from the street to tiled courtyards, beautiful guest rooms, and excellent food. A roof top lanai is the perfect place to sip your favorite



## KAMCHATKA WILL, VICTOR AND THE TWO BEST RIVERS IN KAMCHATKA

When we started in Kamchatka some five years ago, we were working with Will Blair and Victor Rebrikov. Will and Victor were partners on the Kolpakova River. These trips were exceptional experiences. Our anglers were delighted and usually eager to return to Kamchatka to experience some of the other rivers on this incredible peninsula.

Then Kamchatka got "discovered". The number of trips offered in Kamchatka by various outfitters quickly doubled and soon tripled. The marketing got pretty glitzy. For various reasons, Will decided not to run his company in Kamchatka any longer and he went to work for another company that did business in Russia. We were certainly sad to see Will's organization fold, but wished him well. We remember thinking at the time that Will would be back with his own company. All this was just in his blood and he was damn good at it. Over the next 12 months, the principal American liaison to Kamchatka, Wild Salmon Rivers, got, to our minds, a bit big for its britches. Required donations to an affiliate, the Wild Salmon Center, and the collecting of too much money from anglers for Russian fishing licenses were only two of the reasons we chose to look elsewhere. We made the decision to pull out of the fray until the smoke cleared. We didn't want to damage our reputation by being lumped together with this organization. We knew that eventually small outfitters with tightly controlled operations would emerge. And they did.

We began working with Ultimate Rivers offering high quality Alaskan-style float trips in Kamchatka, and then started working with Monte Ward and his beautiful jet boat camp on the Levaya River. We decided, as we stated in our last newsletter, to work with these smaller outfitters and "fly under the radar". While we had great trips in the ensuing years, we still wished we could work directly with Will and Victor again. It was just more fun and besides Victor had the two best rivers in Kamchatka... the Ozernaya and the Two Yurt Rivers. But bide our time was our directive and bide we did.

Then low and behold, in December, Will called to say he had left his job and he was working again with Victor. He

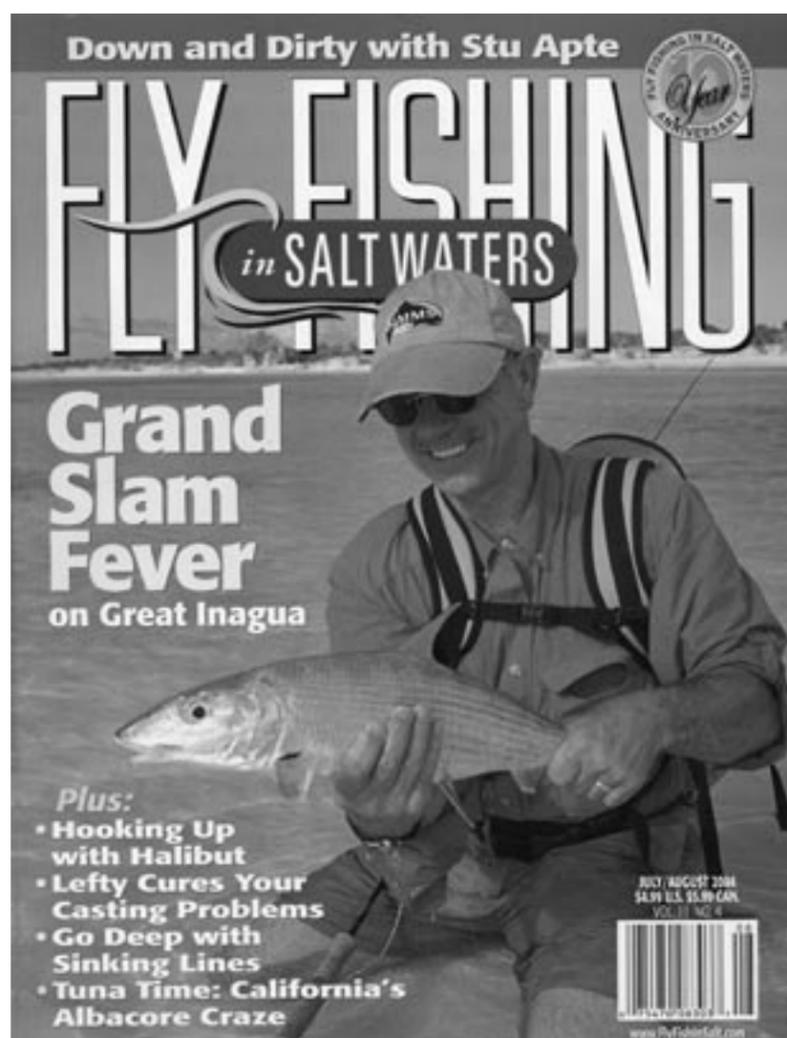
said he would be offering trips on the Two Yurt and Ozernaya Rivers. This was the news we were waiting for! We now had a small company that included the best Russian outfitter in Kamchatka and the most knowledgeable and experienced American, namely Will Blair, together on the two best rivers on the Peninsula... all at a better price than what was currently being offered. And as an added bonus, there will be no mandatory "donations" or exorbitant fees!

So if you are contemplating a trip to Kamchatka yet are confused as to which company to go with, given all the publicity out there, give us a call today. We'll explain your options, delve in to the politics, tell you whose marketing you can trust and help tailor a trip to meet your expectations. So give us a call and start planning an adventure to one of the best places in the world to catch salmon and trophy rainbow trout!

## SOUTH PACIFIC LIVEBOARD FIJI, COOK ISLANDS, PALMYRA

Without question, one of the most popular adventure trips we have offered in the past few years has been our live-aboard program in the Seychelles with the *Indian Ocean Explorer*. Incredible adventures, but these trips have required a tremendous commitment in terms of time, energy and money.

As a result, we have always paid close attention to opportunities that offer similar experi-



Recently, Angling Destinations' founder, Scott Heywood, was seen on the cover of *Fly Fishing in Saltwaters* magazine. In case you haven't seen it, Scott was holding a bonefish on the cover of the July/August 2004 issue. This photo was taken by Jon Cave who wrote an excellent story in that issue on fishing Great Inagua Island in the Bahamas. Scott and Jon had a great time on this trip. They jumped some tarpon, caught lots of bones and saw good numbers of permit. Scott came back all fired up as usual and everything seemed normal until the issue came out.

While we appreciate the publicity, the photo has sure made for a rough Fall! Scott has started wearing a cape around the office and has taken to calling everyone babe as in. "Hey babe, let's do lunch". He babbles on incessantly about his next photo shoot and how difficult it is to be a model. So do us a favor, if you know Scott, please give him a call and tell him to straighten up. All of us at AD would appreciate it!

ences, but at a cheaper cost and with less travel time. Well, we think we might just have found one!

As a result of our recent article in the Summer 2004 issue of "Wild On the Fly Magazine" entitled, *Trevally Trauma*, we were contacted by the operators of the well-appointed, 82' *Island Voyager* that offers long range angling adventures for up to 10 anglers out of Fiji. This ship has the experience and amenities to offer a safe and comfortable experience, not to mention a genuine explorer's spirit that double-dog-dared us to come see what exists beyond the reefs of this South Seas angling paradise.

We are now in the process of fleshing out the details for our first exploratory visit. Our preliminary contacts have inspired us to place this potential destination at the top of our got-to-go list. Look to our web site and future newsletters for more information on this exciting new liveaboard program.

## SOUTH ANDROS THE RETURN OF MARS BAY BONEFISH LODGE

South Andros is a different world than the relatively more sophisticated North Island. If you drive south from the airport at Congotown, you can see this almost immediately. The homes are more simple, the road is rougher and there just seems to be less activity. And the further south you go, the more remote it becomes. If you keep driving south, eventually you will arrive at the end of the road and the little settlement at Mar's Bay. As you stand on the primitive concrete dock at the harbor, you're within hailing distance of some of the world's best bonefish flats. South Andros is riddled with interior creeks systems and a maze of exterior coastal cays. The further south you go, the better the bonefishing becomes.

Most of the bonefish lodges trailer skiffs to this put-in at Mars Bay. For some lodges, this eliminates over ten miles of choppy seas thus preserving both valuable angling time and equally valuable angler's derrieres. But if you wanted to fish these prolific southern areas, you had to put in your time either trailering or riding a bumpy skiff south.

For years, our solution to avoid this transfer time was to book the Mar's Bay Bonefish Villa. We worked with the owner, Sardious Smith, and sent hardy anglers only to this lovely three bedroom, two bath villa complete with central A/C, satellite TV and a full kitchen. Things at Mar's Bay were a bit rough around the edges, but for the right anglers, quite sufficient. Subsequently, Sardious died, Mar's Bay Bonefish villa closed and we sent anglers to the excellent lodges at Little Creek and Kemp's Bay. But this last Fall, after all the legalities surrounding Sardious' estate were ironed out, a new management team, led by two Americans, took over. They immediately built a new lodge which includes three A/C bedrooms with baths, a full kitchen and a dining room. They built a wall around the compound, cleaned up the grounds and did a lot of landscaping work. They also bought two new 16' Rahming Skiffs and equipped them with 48 hp Yamaha engines.

The on-site American managers, Bill Chatterley and Bill Howard, hired local guides, including the experienced Wilfred Andrews to man these boats and explore the extensive and protected interior creeks of

fabled South Andros. These guides know the areas well from Grassy Cay to Deep Creek and from Hawksbill Creek to Curly Cut Cay. The flats lie from 5-40 minutes away while the coral reefs begin one half mile offshore from the villa. These coral reefs are expansive and provide excellent reef fishing which is a great way to break up a few days of bonefishing.

This is a perfect destination for a family or a group of friends looking to get off the beaten path. The villa can accommodate a maximum of five people while the lodge can accommodate six. Meals are a delicious blend of traditional Bahamian fare (with an emphasis on local seafood) and American favorites.

If your looking for a spot that is far away from the angling crowds, but with all the amenities, please consider the lovely and well-positioned Mars Bay Villa. Please call us for all the details!

## THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

### WHAT IS A GUY TO THINK

Man this is the toughest part of our job. A good customer calls. They want an outstanding trip. You want to do your best for them. You want to find a spot where a son can give his dad a great trip. But it is tarpon fishing and all the good and bad that goes with it. But you feel confident! You have helped develop a rock solid destination. You've trained guides, thoroughly investigated the fishery and made numerous trips to assess the habitat. You feel 100% confident in both the resource and the people you have put both on the boats and in the lodge. In other words, you have done your homework!

At just such a destination, we may go a whole season without one negative comment. We may go a whole season where each and every angler tells us it was the best trip they have ever had. But we know one thing for

sure, eventually, we will have that one trip that simply does not fulfill the angler's expectations... or ours! Then we get that E-mail or letter as in the box above.... and it usually ruins our day. And here is what makes that correspondence especially difficult for us. While disappointed anglers often choose to tell us the destination is not as advertised, sometimes they also imply that we are somehow misleading them for the sake of money. That's a tough one and it always hurts. It is especially difficult when the bad comment follows a week in which anglers had the trip of a lifetime... at that very same destination! This happens way more often than you would think so maybe its time to talk about how some anglers get to the point where they feel their experience somehow summarizes both a fishery and the veracity of our marketing.

Well, here is the truth that no one in the angling travel business seems willing to discuss. Fisheries are not consistent. Most experienced anglers would leave it right there. They usually sum up these sentiments with the old phrase "fishing is fishing". They know it doesn't matter if a destination is the best in the world, it simply will not fish well at times, often for no apparent reason. It doesn't matter if it is the Seychelles or the Yucatan or some unexplored coast in the Bahamas, there are times when the fishing will suck. Now businesses that invest tens of thousands of dollars in brochures and advertising do not want to discuss this, but nonetheless, this is the cold hard truth. Much of angling travel is being marketed as a product. You pay the money, you should get the product. But is it that simple? Sometimes, the more expensive the trip, the greater the promises made and therefore the more the angler will expect. And often, since we are all products of the advertising age, no matter how inured from it we may think we are, the more money an angler spends, the more likely he or she is to expect a product that conforms to the hype. But you are not buying a car... you are going fishing!

Consider this: The money you spend just puts you at the table... the place where you can roll the dice. Nothing more. If you expect otherwise, you have forgotten that fishing is generally considered a sport. And if you truly accept that fishing is a sport and not a commodity or an amusement ride that you can purchase, then you must accept that the outcome must be unknown. BECAUSE THAT IS THE NATURE OF SPORT... outcome unknown... period. And isn't that what makes fishing so great. Wouldn't you just go to a stocked pond if you wanted a guaranteed

experience. Some anglers have made that choice. Many resorts are stocking ponds, building habitat in streams and feeding fish all in the name of delivering a product... guaranteed. Apparently, these anglers go home happy convinced of their angling skills and seemingly sure that they got what they paid for. We will leave it to you to decide if this is sport or even an adventure... or if ultimately the direction where we want fishing to head. But let's just say it isn't. Let's say anyone reading this is seeking adventure in a real environment... they are sportsmen. That doesn't mean they won't whine about a bad day occasionally, we sure do! But it does mean that they accept the truth about natural environments. They are complex places where tides, wind,

weather, sunlight or lack thereof, currents, temperature and a million other variables conspire to either destroy your day or make it something you will truly remember when you can no longer fish a flat or wade a stream. We'll call these objective variables. Variables you can't control. Variables color brochures don't discuss. Variables that will always make

"As you know, I have been waiting 5 to 6 years to take my dad to a baby tarpon camp. I believed this trip would have satisfied all expectations. Unfortunately, we were both very disappointed and unhappy with the overall experience."

"Thanks for setting up the trip to Mexico tarpon fishing. It was everything it was cracked up to be and one of the best tarpon trips I have ever taken. Nice when these trips go off as planned and advertised."



fishing... real fishing, virtually impossible to quantify or promise or neatly package... no matter what the cost.

When you combine these objective variables with the subjective variables that we can control such as guide skills, equipment, local knowledge and experience then mix in the real unknown of angler's skills and perhaps more importantly, anglers's attitude, and you'll know why it is

impossible to predict what will happen on any given day... no matter how good the fishery is. This is why experienced anglers return to fisheries to give them another try. They know that a few days or even a week is not enough time to pass judgement on a fishery. And this is why experienced anglers never ask us how many fish they can expect to catch on their trip. There is *no* answer to this! Even if we could control the objective variables delineated above, we may not know how well you cast or how well you can see fish or how strong are your powers of concentration. Angling has always been and hopefully always will be a skill sport. Good anglers generally have better days than poor anglers even if a fishery is fishing poorly. As one of our more experienced clients said to a guy one day who was whining about his day "Just because you can't catch 'em, does not mean the fishing is bad!" Think of golf... your green fees put you on the course, yet golfers do not blame the course for poor scores.

Now we are not suggesting that you don't do your homework and choose the best destination available. And we are not suggesting that you don't ask us the hard questions. And we are certainly not asking you to keep your complaints about a destination to yourself! We want your comments, assessments and criticisms. This is how we get better and how we know what you want. But here is what we are suggesting: Keep your expectations in check, temper your comments, especially concerning the fishing, by remembering that fishing is a sport and please remember, no one, no matter what they may describe in their advertising, can promise either the weather or good fishing. IT cannot be done. If you choose to deal with people that make these promises with a straight face, you deserve what you get. And please remember, fishing is a skill sport. Keep your mind open, assess your skills accurately and continue to learn. While you're at that, we'll try and conform to the gauntlet thrown down by one of our best customers. He has said to us, "I come back to you guys because you always tell me the real s\*\*t... the good AND the bad". We promise we will not betray that trust if you will listen to both the good... and the bad!

## DOCTOR FLIES

Many of the islands in the Bahamas are home to a despicable little creature that the natives call a doctor fly. While these small horseflies show up from time to time on many of the islands in the chain, they reach their deserved hated status only on Andros Island. This is probably because Andros has ample freshwater available both in cenote-like aquifers and in limestone pockets that hold rainwater. The doctor flies need this freshwater for breeding and egg laying purposes. Anglers quickly learn that wearing shorts can be a disaster during certain times of the year as painful bites are soon followed by big itchy welts. Anglers also learn that most bites occur on the lower legs usually on the calves. If long pants are worn while fishing from a poled skiff, usually the dry pant material does not allow the doctor flies to get close enough to the skin to complete their bite. The wind only helps this process by keeping the material in motion and away from the flesh. But, if anglers begin to wade, the wet material sucks up against the legs and is easily penetrated by these horseflies. If you've ever been on a tailing fish and had to divert your attention from the task at hand to take a whack at a doctor fly, you know how annoying and distracting these pests can be. Ignore them and you'll get a painful bite. Look down to whack one and you'll lose sight of your fish. Both options are a poor choice.

Here's a couple solutions: First of all, wear long pants and long sleeve shirts. While this doesn't guarantee anything, it surely helps! Now, to eliminate the bites on the lower legs while wading, there are two solutions that can greatly increase your comfort level. First, bring some heavy wool knee socks that you have cut the feet out of and wear these above the tops of your wading shoes. If you keep them wet, they are not too hot. The second option is to wear neoprene gravel guards on your calves. Use the ones with Velcro so you can take them on and off without taking off your wading boots. These work great and are too thick for doctor flies to penetrate.

Some anglers seem to be more susceptible to bites about the head, neck and hands. To protect your head and neck, try wearing a nylon sleeve called a buff. Their website is [www.buff.es/](http://www.buff.es/) These work great, dry quickly, and come in a variety of patterns and colors. They can be worn in a variety of ways from a bandana to a balaclava. They're great for the sun also. For your hands, sun gloves will help, but since they are often wet, they will not solve the problem entirely. If any anglers have any other hints for avoiding doctor flies, give us a call and we'll publish them in our next newsletter.

# BAHAMAS UPDATE

First, a few comments on the spate of recent hurricanes in the Bahamas this Fall... then on to the news.

As most of you already know, the Bahamas suffered one of the worst Fall hurricane seasons in recent memory. To refresh your memory, Frances barreled through the Bahamas in early September. The storm just brushed Crooked and Acklins Islands, but slammed San Salvador with 120 mph winds and Grand Bahama Island with sustained winds of 105 mph. Just a few weeks later, Jeanne roared through the islands with even stronger winds! The eye passed directly over Great Abaco Island before it veered west to once again, you got it, hit Grand Bahama Island. Apparently, Jeanne stalled over Grand Bahama and spun there for 48 hours raking the island with winds of 100 to 140 mph! The good news is that most of the other islands suffered little damage from this incredible one-two punch. Needless to say, many areas on Grand Bahama Island were severely damaged including parts of Freeport. However, we are pleased to report that at press time, almost all the bonefishing programs on the island were back in action and the major hotels were functioning well and accepting guests. We are also pleased to report that the fishing lodges on Great Abaco, Andros, Long, Crooked, Acklins, Mayaguana and Great Inagua Islands received only minor damage and were up and running within a week of each hurricane!

Some anglers are reluctant to book trips to the Bahamas in the Fall concerned that they will be caught in a tropical storm or hurricane. If this is your stance, we will not try and talk you out of it, but anglers should be aware that if you are on an island that is in a hurricane's path, there is always plenty of time to leave before the hurricane hits. Satellite imaging and computer tracking usually afford anglers ample time to evacuate as long as you pay attention. In addition, lodges are always willing to credit anglers for future trips if their trips get cancelled due to a hurricane. Anglers should also be aware that the Fall is one of the best times to visit the Bahamas. The flats have been rested all summer, the weather is usually excellent, and with many other fishermen fearing storms, angler numbers are way down.

It should also be noted that many anglers are hesitant to visit the Bahamas after hurricanes and often call us to see if they should cancel a scheduled trip. After watching the news, they are sure that the islands are blown away and that the fishing will be nonexistent. While this is an understandable concern, in our experience, just the opposite holds true. In fact, we have a hard-core group of anglers that waits each year for a hurricane to do its job, then calls us to book a trip. So if you call us after a hurricane and want a damage report, please don't think it's just a sales pitch if we tell you the fishing is great. If there are problems on any of the islands, we promise we'll give you the straight scoop! And please remember, we ourselves took trips this Fall to Andros, Abaco and Acklins Islands and had absolutely spectacular fishing.

As if to prove our point, **Ricardo Burrows**, owner of **Rickmon Bonefish Lodge** on Abaco, called us about five days after Hurricane Jeanne and said,

*"Man you would not believe how good the fishing is right now. I have never seen so many bonefish and permit up on the flats. You gotta tell some people to get down here right now cause the fishin' is amazing."*

This comment reveals that often hurricanes will "turn over" a flat and create a bounty of exposed prey for bonefish to gorge themselves on. All of us here in the AD office have seen this happen and we know that Ricardo speaks the truth. So, on the one hand, hurricanes are a devastating force and on the other hand, they are intensely regenerative for the marine

already receiving too many fishermen, an injection of additional anglers from this new resort could make the pressure on these flats "off the charts". In fact, the resort has been sending folks up into the **Barre Terre** area, the island's last pristine bonefishing flats. So anglers please be aware of this development... forewarned is forearmed!

On **Long Island**, **Bernard Adderley** and his lodge are doing great. Fishing has been solid and at \$ 1,850.00 for a full week of fishing, this lodge offers the best value in all the Bahamas. One of the other attractive features of Long Island is that there are flights twice a day into **Deadman's Cay** from Nassau. This makes Long Island super easy to get to. If you have been looking for a great spot that is easy to reach, Long Island ranks high in our book!

For veterans of **Acklins Island**, the big news is that **Acklins Island Lodge** is now employing **Elvis Collie**, formerly of Grey's Point Bonefish Inn. For those of you who have fished with Elvis, you know that he is one of the best guides on the island. He has a vast amount of experience fishing Acklins' West Side and he has that intangible "fish sense". This is a major coup for Acklins Island Lodge and we expect all of their guides to "up their game" with Elvis on board.

As usual, **Clinton Scavella and Mike Carrol** on **Crooked Island** are doing a super job. Clinton recently built a bait pen and on his days off, he cast nets pilchards and stocks his pen. This is a big benefit for anglers because you no longer have to waste valuable fishing time netting bait before you go chum Crooked Island's prolific reef edge. For those of you who have never done this type of fishing, Clinton is a master and the cornucopia of wild fish that swim the reef edge is big fun on a fly rod! Clinton told us recently,

*"Chuckin' pilchards out over this edge is like tossing candy bars into a room full of elementary school kids."*

Of course, Clinton and Mike offer a sensational bonefishing program, but this reef chumming option is a great way to maximize your fishing time especially during high tides when the bonefish head into

the mangroves and the fishing can become a bit slow.

While were on the subject of Crooked Island, talks continue up the road at Pittstown Point. We continue to hope that they will get their program dialed in. For now, we are holding firm to our position of urging great caution if you are considering booking a trip to this lodge. In the past, disorganization has ruled the day and nothing has changed to remove our skepticism. Hopefully, there will be a breakthrough soon and a reorganization will occur. We'll keep you posted in our next newsletter.

As mentioned earlier, many of you saw our "cover boy", **Scott Heywood**, last summer on **Fly Fishing in Salt Water** magazine. The article he and **Jon Cave** did on **Great Inagua Island** has received a lot of attention and as a result, super guide, **Ezzard Cartwright**, is almost booked full for Spring 2005. Ezzard still has some open dates in January and May/June, so don't hesitate to call if you are interested. Inagua is an outstanding fishery with great bonefishing, some reliable permit spots and the Bahamas' most predictable tarpon fishery located in Lake Windsor.

So there you have it, all the news that's fit to print and then some. Have a wonderful holiday season from all of us at Angling Destinations, Inc.!



ecosystem. Bottom line... keep it all in perspective!

As reported on the front page of this newsletter, the *Outpost* has had another fantastic season fishing the West Side of Andros Island. But we have also had reports that the North Bight and the central west side of Andros are also fishing quite well. Folks returning from trips at **Tranquility Hill Lodge** near Behring Point have had

superb fishing for big bones. Again this may be the result of the hurricanes passing near the island or perhaps it's just **Ivan and Dwain Nymour's** outstanding guiding ability. Nevertheless, the Fall fishing has been great and if you are a fan of this area, you should consider heading down soon.

With the development of the **Four Seasons Resort** on **Great Exuma**, we are sorry to report that yet another Bahamian jewel has been tarnished... or at least the bonefishing has! It is axiomatic that the greater the number of people in an area, the more pressure the fishery receives. With the area around Georgetown, Exuma

## Full Moons 2005

January 25	August 19
February 24	September 18
March 25	October 17
April 24	November 16
May 23	December 15
June 22	January 14
July 21	February 13



Images from Los Roques...

Photography: JeffStine.com

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