



Travel Newsletter January, 2025



The Take, Skinny Water, Fiordland, New Zealand

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We are in the twenty-second year of publishing our monthly newsletter with updates on the great fly fishing venues, trip reports and insights for our traveling fly fishers. We've been to most locations and pride ourselves on our ability to research new destinations. Whatever unbiased information on timing and locations we can provide comes at the same cost to you as booking direct – i.e., NO EXTRA COST.

FIRST NEW ZEALAND REPORT OF THE NEW SEASON



Dana and John Landis (at left) are veterans of New Zealand travel, having made several trips to the land of the Kiwi's. They always mix the world class fly fishing experience with some touring, usually adding a new experience with each trip. And, they always fish with some of the globe's top trout fly fishing guides. These are the guides who are the very best and can assist you in earning a doctorate degree in trout fly fishing!



Comments and photos from their recent trip were sent while they were there: "We are having a marvelous time and Dana has already decided on beginning to plan a 'grand tour of NZ' trip in two years." From Dana: "As you can see from John's

photos, we have had some really nice fish from some really skinny waters. We have averaged 10-12 fish a day ranging from 6" to almost 6 lbs. The weather has been a "mixed bag".....overcast, some sun, some clouds and always wind in the afternoon. But we feel fortunate with all the fish we have been catching and seeing some really big browns along the way, just not finding their way into the net."



Photos above, l to r: Dana with some of her skinny water browns; shoreside lunch.

Photos below, l to r: Activities in Fiordland included a trek on one of NZ's famous paths into the alps and a lunch cruise on Milford Sound; one of the joys in NZ is sight fishing 3 – 5# fish in small waters.



Photos below, l to r: for Dana, happiness comes in all sizes; the hike to a “farm river”; John and nice fish on.



HOSTED TRIPS – PLAYA BLANCA AND BELIZE

Any interest in joining me at two of the finest salt water flats fisheries on the globe as I pursue finishing off my goal of releasing 100 permit?

PLAYA BLANCA - ESPIRITU SANTO BAY; One of the world's great fly fishing lodges, Playa Blanca, fishes Espiritu Santo Bay (photo at right) in the Yucatans Sian Ka'an Biosphere. A great shallow water environment, Espiritu Santo Bay has all the most exciting flats species (photos below): bonefish, baby tarpon, snook, permit. Also, this is an excellent environment to learn how to salt water fly fish if fishing the flats is on your “to do” list. This link has a report on our last trip to Playa Blanca last September: [REPORT: FISHING ESPIRITU SANTO BAY](#)

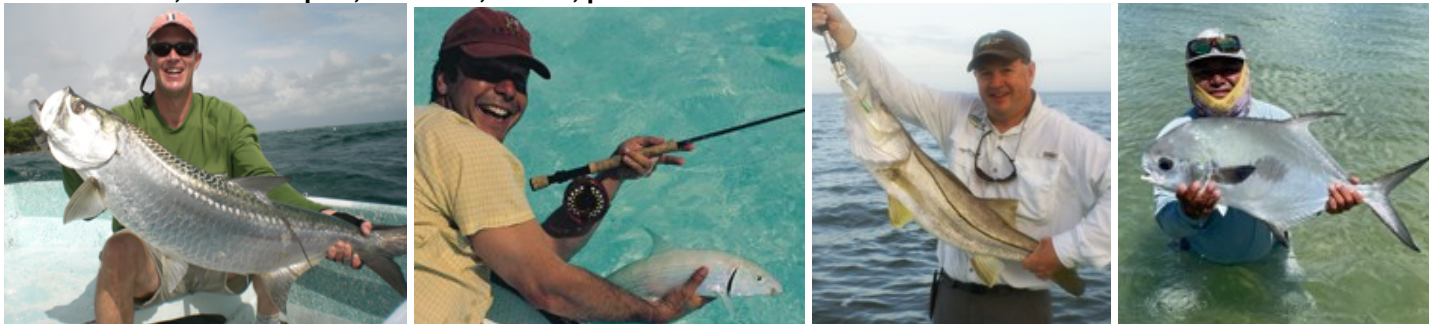


Join our group at Playa Blanca on these two weeks.

June 7 -14: we have one guide available for either a single angler or a pair sharing.

Sept 13 – 20 (same week as we had in 2024 – report above): we may have two guides still available, but for certain we have one guide for either a single angler or a pair sharing.

Photos below, l to r: tarpon, bonefish, snook, permit



BELIZE: Over 55 of my permit released have come from this trip. I'll be on the Rising Tide next month, March 19 – 26. **NOTE:** Belize has a great variety fishery (photos above), however this trip is fully devoted to moving south for permit.....only experienced permit anglers should consider. We have one guide available, either a single angler or a pair sharing. www.flyfishbelize.com

Questions are welcome – hit reply and ask or give us a call.

INFO ON NEW ZEALAND TRAVEL

Some notes on NZ:

- Prices – in my 20+ years of traveling to NZ, can't recall a more favorable exchange rate than now.....possible to pay now to lock in today's rate and travel whenever you want.
- Fishing: the trophy 8 – 10# fish is still available in the crystalline streams and rivers, but the real highlight is stalking-sight casting to 3 to 5# fish in skinny water. Ten+ fish days happen with right guides!
- Still the world's top couple's trip with world-class fishing!
- Ask if you'd like a copy of our "10 STEP IN PREMININARY PLANNING FOR NZ."

TOP 10 FLY ROD EXPERIENCES

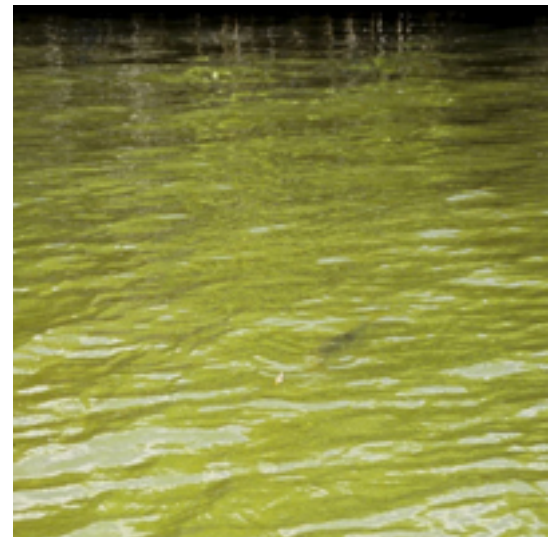
(This story is part of a series we began in our newsletter several years ago – reporting on one of my top 10 all-time fly rod experiences. These are adventures I personally experienced , either with the rod in my hand or being present while it happened)



I was in Belize fishing one of our favorite mangrove shorelines which often held snook and sometimes baby tarpon. Our mothership, the Rising Tide, was anchored close by, less than a 5 minute boat ride. I was guided by the Rising Tide's captain, Dean Myers, and he and I had fished this mangrove edge together at least 50 times in the last 20 years so we knew it well. The drill was always the same – cast to pockets in the mangroves and hope to draw a snook out, or if lucky, sight cast to fish cruising on the edge of the roots. On this day, the river mouth near where we were fishing was spewing out heavy muddy water and the water around us was chocolate brown. We were fishing a floater/diver pattern and hoped that the commotion it created on the surface would attract a hungry snook. Unfortunately, and uniquely, there is no fish photo at the end of this Top 10 experience - to find a photo to accompany this story, I had to use a 14# snook photo from the past – above-left. This adventure may be strong evidence that some of the most memorable fish never make the net!

The cast was inches from the edge of the mangroves, maybe 40-50 feet from where we were poling the shoreline. As soon as I moved the fly with the first strip, a shadow appeared right behind it. With the muddy water, we couldn't see the fish clearly, but it looked very large (floater-diver fly and snook faintly visible in photo at right). Every time I stripped the fly, it dived and then popped back up. Every time I stripped it the fly moved 6 or 7 inches closer to us. And, every time the fly moved, the shadow moved the same distance, with it's nose an inch or so under the fly. The actions kept repeating themselves – I stripped, the fly moved, and the fish moved, but wouldn't eat. As it got closer to our panga, we realized this was a very large fish, even though we still couldn't see it clearly in the dirty water. I looked back at the captain. He was staring intently at the fish and just gave a slight nod of his head like "I see it.....how could I miss it you idiot!" When it was about 10 feet away, we could see the telltale black line on his flank marking it a snook.....and it was huge – "take your breath away huge." What happened in the next few minutes left images in my memory that will always be with me.

10 feet, 9 feet, 8 feet.....it kept getting closer and nothing changed. Strip, fly moved, fish moved. We could now see the fish was staring intently at the fly. 7 feet, 6 feet – leader now inside my rod tip. The fish was now below my rod tip, just laying there staring at the fly. We could see every inch of him.....maybe all 40 plus inches of him. The largest snook



I've ever seen, even in photos.....long as my leg and more than twice the size of any snook I had ever hooked!!! Finally, he did something different. He sank straight down into the muddy water, like a submarine submerging, and out of sight. I wiggled the fly and he rose up and put his nose within an inch of the fly, but wouldn't eat it. Next, he sunk again, straight down. I wiggled it again and he came back and the scene repeated. He was so obsessed with the fly, he didn't even notice the boat a few feet away.....or the four eyes staring intently at him from inside the boat. Then, he disappeared again. Out of things to do and in desperation, I ripped the fly hard for about 4 feet across the surface. He jumped on it....and was hooked up.

Captain Dean and I had worked together on many snook on the mangrove edge. I struck the fish hard several times knowing that I could keep him off balance for a few seconds while the captain began poling the boat hard and fast as possible away from the mangrove edge and the threatening roots. We were able to move about 20 feet before the monster snook got his balance and turned, streaming back to the safety of the roots. I wrapped my fly line around my hand knowing I couldn't let him reach those roots. He actually pulled the panga for about 10 feet before the captain got a firm purchase in the bottom with the pole. Next, we watched an incredible display of aerial antics as my monster snook, angry that he couldn't reach sanctuary in the roots, kept tail-walking and cartwheeling back and forth right at the edge of the mangroves. I was using a 5 foot piece of 40# Hard Mason leader and felt confident he wouldn't break off. For a few breathtaking minutes, we watch him fight hard to get to the roots, but there was no slack anywhere, no line for him to take as the fly line wrapped around my hand tightened, almost cutting into my skin. I actually began to believe this fish would make the net. Then.....the line is slack. What happened? We reeled the line in wondering what had failed. Nothing broke.....he had pulled the butt section of the leader off the end of the fly line. He was probably deep inside the tangled roots, trailing behind him 5 feet of Hard Mason mono.....and Captain Dean and I were in recovery.

LOOKING FOR PARTNERS – ALASKA, TROPHY RAINBOWS

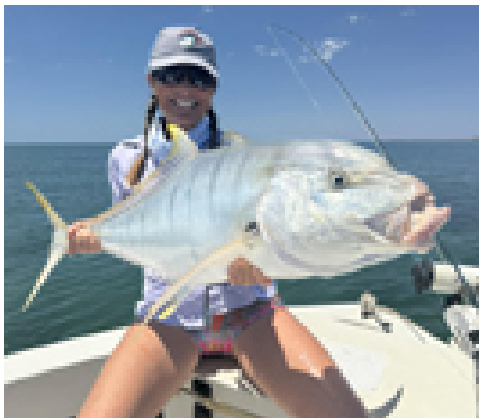
Mid-September is prime time for trophy rainbows in Alaska. We have a spot (possibly two spots) to join an experienced traveling fly fisher at one of Alaska's top fly-out lodges – pricey.

THE WINTER OF MY LIFE..... BY WINSTON MOORE

Winston Moore is a legendary fly fisher, outdoorsman, businessman, and some would say, philosopher. Son Scott and I met him at a Sportsman Expo over 35 years ago where he was speaking on fly fishing for permit. This was at a time when most fisherman didn't think you could get a permit to eat a fly. Among his legendary fly rod feats is being among the first to take 100 permit on a fly. Winston did a lot of his fishing in Belize using a mothership as his base. Today, he is 100 years old and still drives himself to his office daily.

His eloquent thoughts on aging begin like this....if you want to read the rest, click on the link following: "You know.....time has a way of moving quickly and catching you unaware of the passing years. It seems just yesterday that I was young, just married and embarking on my new life with my mate. Yet in a way, it seems like eons ago, and I wonder where all the years went. I know that I lived them all. I have glimpses of how it was back then and of all my hopes and dreams. But here it is.....the back nine of my life and it catches me by surprise.....How did I get here so fast? Where did the years go and where did my youth go?" This link takes you to [THE WINTER OF MY LIFE by Winston Moore](#)

Mickey Myhre has written his biography, an interesting and inspiring read – titled "WINSTON THE LEGEND."



WHAT WE DO AT FLY FISHING ADVENTURES

This is a link with a description of who we are and what we do.....also, it lists the destinations around the world where we can provide reliable information and help you prepare for your trip: [Fly Fishing Adventures - About What We Do](#)

JANUARY MEMORY PHOTO

That's a monster Golden Trevally taken near the Ningaloo Reef in Exmouth, the far northwest corner of Australia. Raquel Cowan was the lucky fly fisher fishing with husband, Mark. This big Golden Trevally was tailing on top of a stingray. Her guide reported that Raquel made a great cast and the golden scooped the fly as soon as it landed. The fish was

finally netted about 1 km from where Raquel hooked it.

Photo credits: Banner and NZ – Dana and John Landis; bonefish – Josh Frazier; snook – William Owens

An enthusiastic traveling fly fisherman,

Don Muelrath

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