



RISING TIDE REMODEL – FISHING UPDATE

The 58' Hatteras, Rising Tide (at right anchored under a full moon), has been serving as the floating lodge for Belize fly fishers for several years. In the last few months, Captain Dean has been making several updates and improvements. The new fridge/freezer and stove are part of the new kitchen to the delight of Georgia, outstanding cook and Dean's wife. The toilets and A/C units have been updated, fresh paint was apparent everywhere on my trip last week, as well as new drapes and furniture re-coverings being in process.



What hasn't changed is the quality of the fishery. In fact, with the banning of gill nets in Belize a few years ago, the increase in numbers and size of fish is apparent with several species – among them bonefish, permit, and snook. This ban was a long time coming.

On my recent trip, we saw many permit that were over 20# as well as 3 or 4 we're sure were 30+ pounds. For numbers, during the four days we spent anchored near our traditional world class permit flats, we saw several schools of 10+ fish and a total of over 250 permit

(the guides and I counted the numbers starting with the beginning of each day and kept a running total). One of those fish became #78 for yours truly. Very slowly, I'm sneaking up on my goal of 100 permit released!

On this trip, we did not see another angler for the entire week – when our focus is on the great permit waters of Central Belize (south of Belize City), this is not unusual. However, if we venture too far south, we run into great numbers of guides who fish the waters from around Placencia north to Dangriga.....the pressure on these waters has kept us, in the last ten years, from venturing this far south except via day trips when we can turn around if excessive angler traffic is encountered.

SEVERAL OPEN WEEKS DISCOUNTED IN 2024

The year of 2024 has been lightly booked due to Captain Dean's health issues of 2023. Now that he is fully operational, he is anxious to fill the following weeks and is extending a 20% discount for any bookings for these weeks.

5/24 – 6/1

6/14 – 21

7/12 – 19

8/11 – 18

9/15 – 22

10/6 – 13

10/25 – 11/1

11/24 – 12/1

12/2 – 9

The prices and other details are to be found on the website www.flyfishingadventures.org/belize

NEW FIRST MATE PROMOTED



Ken Myers has been working closely with Captain Dean for over a year. In addition to learning guiding and poling, he is skilled in mechanical functions and is learning to fully operate the Rising Tide independently. On my recent trip, he poled the panga every day and, in addition to becoming very proficient at handling the boat, he will pole upwind with no hesitation.....if that is the most productive way to fish a flat. His progress will enable him to operate the Rising Tide when moving from anchorage to anchorage.



Ken also has a talent for turning a conch shell (selected from the many stacks of discarded shells piled up on the cays occupied by native conch fisherman) into stunning tropical jewels (above right is a shell he did for me). He can convert shells for clients into a work of art for a nominal fee.

PERMIT FISHERY IN THE SOUTHERN LAGOON

Captain Dean is from the small village of Gales Point located on the shore of the Southern Lagoon. For years, he has told me about large schools of permit that show in the lagoon in April and May (he described them as large black spots in the water). They would stay for about a month and then disappear. This seemed to me to be some sort of spawning run these permit made.



A few weeks before my recent trip on the Rising Tide, several of these large “black spots” were seen in the lagoon. We decided to spend the first two days of our week exploring the fishery in the Southern Lagoon. Note: Both Captain Dean and First Mate Ken were born and raised in Gales Point and neither of them had seen anyone ever fly fishing for permit in the lagoon. Guess we would be the first!

South of Belize City are two massive bodies of brackish water – the Northern Lagoon and the Southern Lagoon. The boat ride, using different canals (at left) and rivers, takes over an hour from the marina where we were docked. The trip was sort of like a tropical adventure ride.

We looked for the “black spots,” but apparently they had departed or moved into deeper water. Determined to find some permit, we moved to a shallow shoreline flat and began poling. What we found would seem to support that this is a “permit nursery.” We had many shots at small singles and pods of smallish permit. Did manage to release one – at right.....would you believe that little fish got ten yards into my backing! Also, we saw very small permit – smaller than the size of your hand. There seemed to be enough evidence to put this on the “must do” list for more exploration. Only next time, I hope to be casting to those large black spots of parents and grandparents!



Note: while there, we did a visit to Gales Point. What an amazing history this little village has that produced Dean, Georgia, Ken, and Martin. If you are ever in the Southern Lagoon, would recommend a “walk-around” Gales Point.

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

An enthusiastic traveling fly fisherman, Don Muelrath www.flyfishingadventures.org 888-347-4896

