



Caddis Blizzard – Minipi River, Labrador



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We are in the sixth year of publishing our monthly newsletter with updates on great fly fishing venues, trip reports and insights for our traveling fly fishers. We want to help you match the right location with your fly fishing goals and objectives and properly prepare you to fully enjoy the experience. We’ve been to most locations and pride ourselves on our ability to research new sites. One of our services is to compare and contrast different lodges/outfitters. 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.

GIANT BROOK TROUT FROM THE WILDS OF LABRADOR



With a land mass that is approximately 2/3 that of California and a population of just 40,000, there is still a lot of “wild” left in Labrador in Northeastern Canada. To us, what makes it special are the trophy-sized, wild native brook trout that make the Minipi River the best destination on the globe to cast dry flies to 5 to 8 pound brook trout.

Having ventured into this wild country for our sixth trip earlier this month, we know what drives us to continue to return. It’s the massive hatches of caddis, mayflies, and stoneflies in this watershed that have these large brook trout looking to the surface for a meal. Indeed, the hatches can be

amazing during the prime time, a narrow three week window that includes late June and the first half of July.

The excitement of stalking one of these stunningly beautiful fish as it cruises and sips from the surface creates memories that are not forgotten. On our recent trip, we had several scenarios where 10 or 20 minutes were spent pursuing a single fish as it meandered while searching for something to sip, occasionally sending off a series of wide rings as it’s lips broke the surface. However, the ultimate stalk was had by one of our personal friends and fly fishing companion who was sharing the lodge with us for the week, Paul Wilms. Paul had a classic 60 minute stalk, all from a guide powered, quietly paddled canoe. He had of a fish which kept working up and down this one particular bank, approximately 200-300 yards long. About 20 minutes into the episode, he got the fish to eat, but just pricked him and it didn’t stick. However, getting stuck didn’t stop him from eating and the fish kept feeding until Paul finally got him after about an hour of intense pursuit – 7.25 pounder!



In this fishery, the brook trout are measured in pounds, not inches. This should be considered a “trophy fishery” where things are not measured in numbers, but by the quality of the experience. If high numbers of fish are your game, this is not the right place.



The conservation ethic is very strong as each fish over three pounds is recorded with where it is taken, when, the weight, what fly, and the angler. Many fish are tagged so their movement in the watershed can be tracked. Basically, the management policies in place for the last 30 years allow this water system to be one of those rare places that fishes today like it did 20 or 30 years ago.



If you'd like to see a photo essay on our recent week, click on this link:

http://www.flyfishingadventures.org/Newsletter/pe_minipi.pdf

Before we left Labrador, we reserved the remaining open spots for the three prime time weeks at our favorite lodge for '09. Available are:

6/26 – 7/3: 4 spots

7/3 – 10: 4 spots

7/10 – 17: 2 spots

We also booked our next trip for 2010 to assure us of the dates we preferred. Price varies depending on which of the four lodges, all owned by the same outfitter. Our favorite lodge is the most expensive at \$4,695 plus tax which includes the float plane trip from Goose Bay, the jump off point.

“WORLD CLASS” DESTINATIONS HAVE ISSUES



A “world class” fly fishing destination has the opportunity for unique or, at least, very special fly fishing excitement. Both of the destinations reported on in this newsletter, Belize and the Minipi River, meet that qualification. Sight casting to tarpon or permit on shallow flats certainly qualifies as a “world class” experience as does casting dry flies to a sipping 7 pound native brook trout. However, both of these destinations have “issues” associated with them that can prevent that experience from happening for a day or two....or in extreme circumstances, an entire week.

Virtually every “world class” fly fishing destination we know of has these same issues. The issues result in “conditions” which don't allow that very special excitement to be present at that particular time....or limit that special opportunity to those casters with

superior casting and fishing skills which allow them to be able to deal with the conditions. Almost always, those difficult conditions are weather related. There is no way to control the weather element – its part of the package that comes with virtually every “special destination” including Alaska, New Zealand, the Amazon, salt water flats, etc., etc.

The best control you have is spending enough time at a particular destination so that you are there when the conditions are present that unlock the potential of the fishery that attracted you in the first place. During a week long trip, you're very fortunate if conditions are “right” every day. More likely, you may have good conditions for 2 or 3 days mingled with some “iffy” days and maybe a “lousy” day or two – that would be considered “normal” to experienced, globe hopping, fly fishers. Unfortunately, that's the way it is and accepting these terms will reduce your frustration level next time you have invested your money and time to visit a “dream destination” and things don't go right as often as you'd like.

HITTING IT RIGHT IN BELIZE



Brad Young and a group of fun-loving, salt water fly fishing friends re-visited Belize recently, chartering the Meca and Seaduction again as their floating lodge and base of operations for the week. Brad's comments on their week:



"We had a great trip overall. Fishing was great, guides and weather were fantastic. Other than a few issues with the Seaduction, we had a blast!! Attached are some photos from my camera. Will send more to you once I get them from the guys. Nato, Taco, Noel and Dean were great!! What a difference it makes having 4 great guides. Everyone was so happy with their guides that nobody switched the entire week."

One of the great advantages to living on the waters you fish is the amount of hours spent fishing. Another member of the group, David Blackbird, had this report on that topic (David took his first tarpon on this trip):

"...the service and guides were top notch. On other trips, the guides are itching to be back at the dock and at home – not the case with this

trip. It was so refreshing to see how eager and excited they were to be on the water and fishing."

The group certainly capitalized on the great variety of shallow water species available to the fly rodder in Belize releasing multiple species ranging from tarpon, permit, and bonefish to snook, jacks, snappers, cobia, and even box fish.

A photo essay of their trip and many of the species can be seen by clicking on this link:

http://www.flyfishingadventures.org/Newsletter/pe_Belize.pdf

OPEN DATES FOR 2009:

About two-thirds of the dates for '09 are spoken for by repeat clients on the Meca and Seaduction. We are in the process of finalizing the time frames for those with "first rights" and then we'll open up the remaining dates for first timers. If you'd like to inquire about the possibilities for next year, hit "reply."

BEST "ON THE WATER" SNACK

The best snack to carry with you while fishing should meet these criteria:

- doesn't melt or spoil and can handle all weather conditions
- compliments a cold beer or soft drink
- doesn't add inches to your waistline
- can sustain you for a short period during those wonderful times when the fishing is so compelling you don't want to stop for lunch or dinner.

There may be other answers, but for us, beef jerky has been that snack. If someone has a better answer, we'd like to hear about it.

OPEN DATES AND SPECIAL OFFERS FOR THIS WINTER

Two of our favorite South American lodges still have a few prime time open slots for this coming winter (summer in the Southern Hemisphere).

Patagonia Base Camp Lodge – due to a late cancellation, has four open slots for the week of 2/13 – 20.

Agua Boa Amazon Lodge – still have four open slots on the upriver houseboat during the prime week of 1/25 – 2/2.

Special Offer: Lake Rotoroa Lodge, New Zealand – one of NZ's world class fly fishing lodges is offering a special "5 nights for the price of 4" for lodging and meals, but not guiding.

July's "Memory Photo": The photo at right from Steve and Ryan Davidson's Meca trip in Belize captures the classic tarpon jump – body arched, gill plates flared, and red gills visible. In the original file size, the fish's eye is even sharp!

We like to think our newsletter is a good gathering spot for photos of memorable fly fishing experiences. If you have a photo that you think could fit in this space, submit it – never can have too many great fly fishing photos.

PHOTO CREDITS (top to bottom): banner photo of caddis hatch – George Fareed; photos on link to Minipi River report – Jeff Reinke, Paul Wilms, Josh Luftglidden; peacock bass – Herb Newman/Rex Setzer; Belize photos – Brad Young/David Blackbird .

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

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