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We are in the ninth 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 destinations. 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.

PRIME TIMES AT A VARIETY OF WORLD CLASS FLY FISHING DESTINATIONS – THE BUCKET LIST

Our December newsletter is primarily devoted to answering the questions we are most commonly asked about the best time to visit this destination or that destination. Listed chronologically, and all in one place, are the general answers we provide. Here is Santa's BUCKET LIST! None of this information should be considered infallible as weather patterns, water levels, and hatch cycles are never exact – but these timeframes will give you a sense for the best odds of "hitting it right."

JANUARY – MARCH

Trout: This is the heart of the summer in southern hemisphere destinations such as Argentina, Chile, and New Zealand. Late January through February usually provides the best dry fly fishing, but it's good all through this timeframe into the brown trout spawning cycle which begins during March into April. These months would be best also for the giant sea run brown trout of Tierra del Fuego in southern Argentina.

Amazon – Peacock Bass: Water level is critical for the Peacock Bass (below, left). In the only "fly fishing only" watershed in the Amazon, the season gets started in November, but the most stable low water levels usually occur in the first quarter of the year.

Christmas Island, South Pacific: The fishery for bonefish, Giant Trevally, and Bluefin Trevally (at right) is relatively stable year round since C.I. is on the equator. However, some veterans prefer to avoid the winter months when the winds tend to be stronger.



Golden Dorado: The prime northern Argentina Golden Dorado (below, right) fisheries fish well during the early part of the year. There are some of the newly discovered dorado fisheries, such as Bolivia, that this does not apply to, but this would be a good time to visit the established fisheries. Can combine with Jurassic Lake and Patagonia visit.

Seychelles: This is the middle of the season for trevally, bonefish, milkfish (below, right-center), etc at the truly world class Alphonse Island in the Seychelles. Season will conclude in April.

Tropical Flats Fisheries – Western Hemisphere: Occasional weather fronts can put a damper on the fishing in places like Belize and Ascension Bay. Fishing can be good if you avoid those cold fronts. Generally, the weather, under any conditions, is a lot warmer than our cold, gray USA skies. February and March have provided many great permit (below, left-center) trips in Belize.



APRIL - JUNE

Trout: April can provide good conditions before the runoff begins on some western Rocky Mountain waters, but weather can be an issue – difficult to plan far in advance. Tailwaters, such as the San Juan, will be the most stable. Runoff is less of a factor as we get into late June, but most waters in the Rockies (both USA and Canada) are going to fish better as we move into July.

Tropical Flats Fisheries: April and May are usually “prime” for tropical salt water flats fisheries in the western hemisphere. Migrating tarpon (below, right), in places like Belize, are on the move and beefing up the numbers of the resident fish. By June, even though fishing can be excellent, most land based lodges will have biting bugs in sufficient numbers to carry you away.

Mongolia - Taiman: May and June are some of the top times to pursue the giant Taiman (below, left) of Mongolia.

Minipi River – Brook Trout: If the spring is a little early, the giant brookies of the Minipi River in Labrador are on the move in late June sipping hatching caddis and mayflies from the surface.

Alaska: June is the early season – salmon not yet in the rivers. Rainbows chasing salmon smolt as they migrate – some good dry fly fishing in selected spots.

Atlantic Salmon: Begin to arrive in many rivers around the globe. The Ponoï in Russia has numbers of Atlantics (below, center) in May. Many of Canada’s top waters, like the Gaspé region, have the largest fish entering in June even though water conditions usually are not yet ideal.



JULY - SEPTEMBER

Trout: In the Canadian and US Rocky Mountain states, the runoff is winding down in late June and through mid July, depending on the location. The best hatches of the season usually begin as the waters clear and drop. Montana, Idaho, British Columbia and the American west is at its best in July. August brings the hopper season and September sees the beginning of the fall hatches. The second week of July til mid August is usually the best time for sight fishing the large Bull Trout (below, left) in the Fernie BC area.

Tropical Flat's Fisheries: The fishing can be outstanding, the weather is hot and humid and, for land based lodges, the bugs can be a bother. Most land based lodges close during this time. However, for air conditioned mothership operations in places like Belize, exciting results are available and, generally, you'll have the waters to yourself.

Minipi River – Brook Trout: The first two to three weeks of July is the absolute prime time to take 5 to 8 pound brookies (at right) on the surface on the Minipi in Labrador.

Alaska: Early July sees giant king salmon begin their runs into the rivers. Most anglers consider the prime Alaska time to begin with the run of the silvers (below, right), the top fly rod Pacific salmon. This usually occurs in most watersheds beginning around the middle of August. The Rainbow fishing begins to peak around this time also and continues to be strong into September.

Kamchatka: About mid July, the dry fly activity begins in earnest on some rivers. Different watersheds have the prime times (depending on the individual definition of “prime”) in slightly different times during the next 6 weeks.

B.C. Steelhead Waters: The lower stretches of the Dean River begin to host their famous summer run peaking the last two weeks of July and into early August. For the majority of the great steelhead (below, left-center) rivers, look too early to mid September through October for the runs of fresh fish to be in full force.

Canada – northern waters: Northern Pike (below, right-center), grayling, and lake trout in the northern Canadian waters are at their best soon after ice out. Late June and into July are prime.



OCTOBER – DECEMBER

Trout: Weather begins to become an issue as we get into the fall in the American west; however, there are some waters that provide a good October opportunity.

New Zealand: The “early season” in New Zealand is the fourth quarter with November and December providing some of this country's famous stalking experiences for large rainbows and browns (below, center). The upsides are unpressured fish and few anglers to pursue them; the downside is the weather can be more unsettled during their spring than their summer.

Tropical Flats Fisheries: October can be a month of settled weather in the tropical climates for bonefish, tarpon, and permit,. As we get into November and December, the snook (below, left) in Belize move into their spawning period and the numbers of large fish increase; also, the possibility of cold fronts become a more pronounced threat.

Jurassic Lake: In Argentina, November begins the runs of giant rainbows into the only stream flowing into Jurassic Lake , the Barrancoso River. November and December are prime times to take these trophy rainbows in the river. Late March and April also provide this same opportunity. The lake fishes well throughout the season.

Tigerfish, Africa: The Lower Zambezi River National Park provides a protected tiger fish (below, right) fishery that many believe to be Africa's best. If you measure both quantity of fish and the opportunities for large tiger fish, it passes all the tests. October is the end of the dry season. Waters are at their lowest and clearest – great conditions for game viewing (safari style) because the animals are congregated around the river as the water holes and smaller rivers have dried up. Plus, tiger fishing is at its best at the same time – an exciting dual purpose destination.

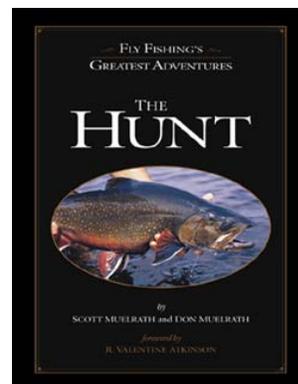
Seychelles: October sees the opening of the season at Alphonse Island. No anglers have been on the flats for several months and the Giant Trevally (below, right-center) are eager and aggressive eaters.

Redfish: The shallow flats of the Lower Laguna Madre estuary system, which cover over 150 square miles off the South Texas coastline, provide their best sight casting for redfish (below, left-center) in October and into early November. Much of this water is a foot or foot and a half deep making stalking these brutes a visual experience.



A GIFT EVERY FLY RODDER WILL TREASURE

It's been called “the finest collection of fly fishing photos ever gathered in one place” by the publisher of *Fly Fishing The West.* We can't say whether it's deserving of that lofty praise, but we do know it has satisfied the gift giving challenge for hundreds of fly fishers. The book we're referring to is fly fishing's award winning *THE HUNT – Fly Fishing's Greatest Adventures* - \$45. Check out the website to see what fly fisherman are saying about it – www.ffhunt.com It was written and photographed by my son, Scott, and myself, and is devoted to capturing the thrill of sight fishing and stalking the world's greatest gamefish with a fly rod. If you'd like to give *THE HUNT* as a Christmas gift and want it personalized with an author's signature and message, here's how - under the section titled “Special Instructions” on the order blank on the website, list the person's name you'd like it addressed to and request “personalization.”



DECEMBER MEMORY PHOTOS – WHERE IT ALL BEGINS

Where does it begin if a child is to develop a love of the outdoors and all that nature has to offer? Certainly not in front of a computer monitor where today's children are spending a great deal of their time. It happens outdoors and if the objective is for that child to appreciate the joys of fishing, it happens with a rod in hand..... and not necessarily a fly rod (at least not for starters). It certainly can begin with a fly rod in hand if the situation is right and the action fast enough, but for me, it happened with a spinning rod. I remember visiting some nearby lakes with my Dad where trout were planted, carrying a jar of salmon eggs and worms. Then, a little later, there were some pack trips into the Sierras – many lifetime memories came from those experiences and a love of the outdoors grew out of those times.





Our son, Scott, and I now share a passion for fly fishing that began on a guided three day fly fishing trip in Northern California when he was 13. We fished the Fall River and other streams in the area with an exceptional guide who left a lasting impression and launched us into what became a lifetime hobby that we share. Before that fly fishing trip, there were several fish caught, cleaned, and cooked.....catfish, trout, bass, etc.

Now, there is an eight year old grandson in our lives, Scott's son, Nico. Nico is becoming quite the fisherman – at right with a stringer, and later at left, cleaned and ready for the frying pan. Scott is working hard at making sure that the places he fishes with Nico have a good opportunity for some fast action, whether it's with bait, trolling, or whatever. And, when situations are right, there are limited attempts with a fly rod. I would venture to say that twenty years from now, those two will be sharing some great fly fishing trips together.....hope I'm around to be with them.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

We wish everyone a holiday season that is everything you want it to be with lots of time spent with those most important to you. And, a new year that will allow you to enjoy your favorite waters and also have time to discover some of the destinations on your “bucket list.” From our end, we plan to do our share of fly rod travel beginning with three weeks in Argentina in late January and February split between Jurassic Lake, Patagonia, and Golden Dorado in the northern areas of the country.

PHOTO CREDITS: (top to bottom) bluefin trevally – Loren Irving; peacock – Annie Kubicka; permit – Art Hinckley; milkfish – Rich Cheatham; dorado – Mark Cowan; taiman – Jerry Saltzgaber and Chip Fudge; tarpon – Todd Roebken; brookie – Jeff Reinke; steelhead – Lance Ruffel; northern – Jim Hine; silver – Henry Gans; snook – Steve Mitchell; redbfish - Barbara Klutinis; brown – Paul Wilms; Nico – Scott Muelrath.

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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