



THE ANGLING REPORT

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

September 2010 Vol. 23, No. 9

DATELINE: ITALY

**Honor Roll Report
Is This The Perfect
Spouse-Pleasing Trip?**

(Editor Note: We love it when subscribers discover an opportunity through The Angling Report, try it, then write to tell how it went. That is what subscriber Jamie Larkin did recently after reading our reports on trout fishing in Italy. For taking the time to file this useful report, we are placing Larkin on our subscriber Honor Roll and sending him a coveted Honor Roll fishing cap. See page 2 for more details on our Honor Roll Program.)

I recently enjoyed three days of excellent fishing during a family vacation to Italy. For the fishing part of the trip, I used information from *The Angling Report*. I'm submitting this report to return the favor.

My trip was arranged through the custom travel service offered by Claudio Tagini of Western European Travel (Tel. 302-436-0153. Web:

www.westerneuropeantravel.com). My guide for the three days was Luca Castellani (Cell phone from the US: 011-39-340-349-9273. Web: www.flyfishing-tuscany-umbria-lazio.com). We fished for two days on the Tevere River in Sansepolcro in Tuscany, and for one day on the Nera River just



outside of Spoleto in Umbria. My non-fishing spouse (Christine) accompanied me on this trip, and while I was fishing, Claudio arranged for her to tour the local countryside with Daniela, a friend of Luca and Claudio. Claudio also arranged our

lodging one night in a bed and breakfast that had formerly been a convent a few miles away from the Nera River. On a second night, he placed us in a small hotel just inside the walls of Montalcino.

Some changes in the travel plans for the remainder of my family required last-minute changes in our itinerary. Claudio handled these changes seamlessly. They included the addition of the lodging in Montalcino, and arranging for us to be picked up in Rome, driven through Umbria and dropped off in Montalcino, where we joined the remainder of my family.

Luca was ready and waiting each day when I arrived for fishing. He supplied rods, reels, flies and waders. The rods included both graphite and modern fast-action bamboo models by local makers. One of the rods was outfitted with an Italian-made silk line. Another featured bamboo ferules and was particularly sweet to cast. Unfortunately, during our day on the Nera, this rod fell victim to an overhanging tree while Luca was demonstrating some close-range casting techniques.

The schedule for each fishing day was flexible. Luca was perfectly willing to fish until I fell over. However, I opted to end early to meet up with Christine for some late-day sightseeing.

I should mention the food, since that was important to the overall enjoyment of this trip. One day, we ate a lunch of sandwiches on the river - in Italy, delicious pannini and espresso can be purchased at the local gas station! Another day, we ate at a local restaurant on the banks of the Nera, and, on the final day, at Luca's club. The meals at the club and restaurant were excellent, particularly the restaurant meal. During our

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morning fishing session on the Nera, Luca had a brief conversation with a farmer along the river. The farmer had found a large black truffle that morning. I asked about purchasing local truffles and Luca told me not to worry. Christine joined us for this lunch, which featured *pasta alla Norcina* with freshly shaved black truffles, plus cured meats, a few carafes of white wine and espresso with *Sambuca* for dessert. Lunch at Luca's club was also very good, *papardelle* with *cinghiale* (local wild boar), *ragu* with ice-cold Italian beers (if you have not guessed yet, I am not a skinny guy). It was exceptionally hot and sunny during my trip, so a lunch break in a nice setting was a real treat.

The Nera is a small to medium-sized river that benefits from a cold-water diversion just upstream from the stretch that we fished. All fishing in this area is no-kill with barbless hooks. Certain sections are designated no wading. Luca informed me that he was disappointed with the water conditions. Due to some repairs in the diversion upstream the water was high and off color. However, it was not muddy; it was more or less cloudy, as if it contained snow-melt. Any potential disappointment quickly dissipated when we arrived at the first fishing hole. I was shocked at the number of fish feeding in plain sight on such a sunny day. At least 15

large trout were sipping bugs from the surface. We fished with small olive patterns, caddis patterns and large to medium Chernobyl ants (Luca ties his without rubber legs, and they are surprisingly effective on the local trout). It was also surprising to learn that the river is not stocked, and all of the fish were wild brown trout, the only species of trout in this stretch of river. The majority of the fish ranged from 12 to 16 inches, but much larger fish were present. One that I fished over for the better part of an hour was well over 20 inches. Finally giving up, I asked Luca to show me how it was done. He promptly caught the fish on a large caddis pattern. (*Note: you can see a picture of this fish in our online Subscriber Photo Gallery.*)

These fish were extremely sensitive to any drag, so long (14- to 16-foot), fine (as low as 8x) leaders were a must. Because the river is not particularly wide, long casts were not necessary. Instead, short and accurate casts were the order of the day. Luca had to regularly remind me that the longer casts that I am accustomed to making on the Delaware River were completely inappropriate for this type of fishing, and that I should focus on "precision" instead. It was very challenging trying to accurately place a fly with a 16-foot leader and only six inches of fly line beyond the tip of the rod.

In all, we covered about three

Honor Roll Subscribers

■ The *Angling Report* encourages subscribers to file reports on great places to fish and/or important news developments that help the rest of us decide where to go (or not to go!) fishing. Subscribers who file unusually important and useful reports are placed on our Subscriber Honor Roll and are sent a complimentary *Angling Report* Honor Roll Fishing Cap. Honor Roll subscribers also get special consideration in the awarding of FREE Trips. You can find out more about our FREE Fishing Pro-

gram on our website. Click on FREE Fishing. If you have been on an interesting trip recently, send in a letter-length report and see if you can get on our Subscriber Honor Roll. Send it via e-mail to: doncausey@anglingreport.com. Our new Honor Roll Subscriber this month is **Jamie Larkin** for his detailed report on brown trout fishing in Italy. You can find the complete list of Honor Roll subscribers on our web site, www.anglingreport.com. Click on Honor Roll subscribers.



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kilometers of Nera water. The surrounding countryside was beautiful, lush green farmlands with steep mountains springing from the valley floor. We landed four fish before lunch, and six to 10 more in the afternoon.

While I was fishing the Nera, Christine toured Spoleto and some of the other local towns. She particularly enjoyed a visit to the waterfall at Marmore, which is apparently one of the tallest in Europe. I, on the other hand, particularly enjoyed the local *Norcian* sausage that she purchased while I was fishing.

The Tevere (it's hard to believe that this little river we fished is the same one that flows through Rome!) sits between the town of Sansepolcro (home of Buitoni pasta) and the *autostrada*. The surroundings are not nearly as beautiful as the Nera. Where we parked looked a lot like the West Branch of the Delaware in Deposit, New York, below the Norbord plant. Still, the Tevere (a slightly larger river than the Nera) is lined with trees and brush that provide a feeling of seclusion and respite from the town and highway. Fishing on the Tevere was also no-kill with barbless hooks.

The Tevere is home to both wild and stocked brown trout and some grayling. We arrived both days at about 11 am. Though it was bright and sunny, there was a consistent hatch of olives, and fish were rising regularly. The fishing on the Tevere was very technical. The fish seemed to be more selective than those of the Nera and we used the same long, fine leaders with generally smaller flies, though Luca's Chernobyl ants worked here as well. Most productive was a fly that Luca refers to as "the sh***y pink fly." It is tied on a 22 or 24 hook, with a body strip of pink foam that is floated by a wisp of CDC. I landed 10 or so fish on this fly the first day, and five on the second. The fish here ranged from 12 to 16 inches. I saw some larger fish but could not fool them.

I would highly recommend a few days of fishing on these rivers to any-

one visiting Tuscany/Umbria. These are not necessarily "destination" rivers. However, they offer challenging fishing for quality fish. The activities available for non-fishing spouses are a big plus, too. I am very lucky that Christine was willing to strike out on her own with Daniela. The ideal situation would have been two couples traveling together with two people fishing and two touring. - *Jamie Larkin*

(Postscript: If you are intrigued by this report, you can find much more coverage of Italian trout fishing in our Trip-Planning Database. See Article Nos. 2399, 2267 and 2079; and Subscriber Reports Nos. 3949, 3888, 3819.)

DATELINE: ALASKA

FREE Fishing Report Painter Creek Lodge: An On-Site Report

(Editor Note: In the February 2010 issue, Honor Roll subscriber and frequent contributor Bob Peters gave us an update on



Painter Creek Lodge in Alaska. This is the lodge, you'll recall, that was impacted by a local volcano that "burped" more than a billion gallons of highly acidic water into Indecision Creek, Mother Goose Lake and the King Salmon River. This event had a severe impact on the fishery and the lodge in 2005 and subsequent years. Peters report, however, indicated that the fishing around the lodge was more or less back to normal in 2009. But there was a problem with asking Peters to write about Painter Creek. As we noted at the time, he has a vested interest in Painter Creek Lodge - namely, he is the broker representing retiring owners Jon and Patty Kent as they try

to sell the property, asking price \$3.8 million. While we double- and triple-checked all of Peters' observations and we believe what we printed to be absolutely accurate, we know the conflict of interest underlying his report left some lingering doubts about the fishing around Painter Creek Lodge. To remove those doubts, the Kents agreed to offer a FREE Fishing Trip to an Angling Report subscriber of our choosing, with the understanding that the selected subscriber would write a candid report on what he, or she, experienced. Well, Honor Roll Subscriber Sonja Nisson got the nod for that trip, fished Painter Creek in early August and filed the following report. For more information on our FREE Fishing program and how you can participate, see the box on page 6.)

When I was told I had been selected for a FREE Fishing trip to Painter Creek Lodge, I was ecstatic. I was interested in this opportunity for three reasons. First, prior to the volcano event, anglers had described both the fishery and Painter Creek Lodge in glowing terms. Second, Bob Peters' report about his 2009 fishing showed hope for the fishery. Bob is a frequent contributor to *The Angling Report* and, historically, his reports have been fair and closely aligned with my personal evaluations. Third, there are very few volcanoes in the world that have behaved the way the one around Painter Creek did. After its "burp," volcanologists studied and reported on Chiginagak in great detail. However, there has been very little scientific follow-up of nature's efforts to repair and renew herself after an acid leak of the sort Chiginagak caused. I jumped at an opportunity to look at the fishery and the ecosystem first hand.

Painter Creek Lodge is about 400 miles southwest of Anchorage. Access is easy: Pen Air flies several times a day from Anchorage to King Salmon and a smaller plane then flies to the gravel landing strip at the lodge, which sits on a plateau above Painter Creek, about 400 feet above sea level.

Mother Goose Lake sits at the base of Chiginagak Volcano, which rises a majestic 7,000 feet, slightly above the surrounding peaks. Painter

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Creek flows out of Mother Goose Lake and into the King Salmon River. As for the lodge, the main building has a comfortable lounging area with fireplace, a dining area and a library, all of which offer spectacular views of the Aleutian mountains and the Alaska Peninsula Wildlife Refuge. The atmosphere is casual, family-like. The guest quarters are two duplex cabins, each unit with private bath, dedicated hot water and efficient heaters. The accommodations were more spacious than those in most lodges, and I found them to be very comfortable.

The owners, Jon and Patty Kent,

are very personable, efficient hosts. They made me feel instantly at home. Patty is also an excellent cook who serves outstanding meals. The lodge currently books only four anglers per week, tailoring the week's experience to the preferences and abilities of the anglers. I decided to target salmon primarily and include some Arctic char. Also, if possible, I wanted to take fish on or near the surface using a floating line.

The entire month of July this year saw record-high water levels and record-low water temperatures. The first sunny, absolutely calm day of summer came on our first day of

fishing. We used a jet boat to locate large schools of chum salmon, and we then waded those areas. With the calm conditions, literally hundreds of salmon were visible in holding areas. I used an 8-weight rod and floating line to swing pink flies on or just under the surface. In deeper pools, I used a weighted fly about a foot beneath the surface. I could clearly see salmon following my wading fly on several occasions before I could entice one to strike.

My first fish was a chrome-bright, 10-pound chum salmon that was still sporting sea lice. My second was nearly identical. These are strong, ag-

□ An On-Site Report

Fishing 50 Miles From The Gulf Of Mexico Oil Disaster

By Don Causey, Editor

(Editor Note: Angling Report Editor Don Causey was in Louisiana in mid-August where he fished the mouth of the Mississippi River, just 50 miles from site of the BP oil well blowout. His observations will likely surprise you. If you've spent any time on the water in the Gulf yourself since the spill, we'd like to hear your perspective.)

■ Unless you have been living under a rock, you know all too well that millions of gallons of oil were released recently in the Gulf Of Mexico when an oil well under development by BP off the coast of Louisiana blew up, killing 11 people and allowing a torrent of oil to escape. The video feed showing the release of the oil was sickening in the extreme. Now that BP has finally capped this monster, is there anything at all left of our beloved Gulf of Mexico?

Having just returned from a trip to the Gulf – specifically to Venice, Louisiana, at the mouth of the Mississippi River – I can assure you the answer to that question is yes. For three full days in early August, a friend and I – John J. Jackson, III of Conservation Force (www.conservationforce.org) – fished the mouth of the river. Thanks to his extensive local knowledge, we were able to visit all of the major passes. We even fished the edge of the outer shelf one day, looking for tarpon around fascinating reef-like structures known locally as mudlumps. At one point we were only 50 miles from the BP spill site.

So, what did we see and catch in three days? Unless you have an investment in punishing BP, you will be relieved to know we did not see any significant oil anywhere on the shore or on the hundreds of miles of booms stretched across flats and passes. Within 50 miles of the spill site we saw tarpon upwards of 100 pounds smashing baitfish. We caught a redfish there that weighed more than

20 pounds. Actually, we caught amazing numbers of fish everywhere we went: Redfish to 30 pounds; sea trout upwards of four pounds. In places, we saw acres of mullet and huge clouds of baitfish, not to mention erupting schools of bonita. Sharks were everywhere, too. The biggest shark we saw took my biggest redfish of the trip just yards from the boat. In one attack, it severed the entire body of a fish that likely weighed close to 50 pounds. The remaining head that I was able to bring in weighed an astounding 18 pounds (see the photo in our online gallery). On our last night together, John Jackson and I, along with our wives, had a dinner focused on fresh-caught redfish and sea trout.

Make no mistake - this report of what I saw is not presented to minimize the BP oil disaster. The accident appears to have been a result of gross and perhaps criminal negligence. We have to learn from it as a nation. And, for all I know, the wonderful vistas of plenty I saw may have been a mirage. Underneath all that fish-rich, seemingly uncontaminated water, a cocktail of chemicals may have been churning. For sure, we may also have been looking at an island of well-being in a sea of destruction. After all, the push of the Mississippi River is outward into the gulf. The river itself may have been providing an umbrella of protection for many of the areas we visited.

More to the point of this newsletter – namely, providing where to go information for anglers who travel – what I saw may not have a lot of relevance to the travel plans of most subscribers. I say that because most of the fishing we did was old-style conventional tackle fishing. We fished that way because John Jackson's boat was not really suited to fly fishing. Moreover, most of the water we fished was discolored by the river and too deep for practical fly fishing.

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gressive fish and each made three or four hot runs before coming in close, but never giving up. Chum salmon fight extremely hard. Pound for pound, they outclass kings in my opinion. I believe they are underrated by most anglers. Maybe it's their name? After all, how much respect can you give a fish called "chum"? It also may be that there are only a few places where you can target chums so close to the ocean. At any rate, the chums at Painter Creek were totally chrome and mad as can be!

After a streamside lunch, a slight wind came up and the bite really turned on. It did my heart good to see

these brutes have their way with my two angling companions, as some had with me. We all landed some fish and tipped our hats to others, who, after runs, aerobatics and just plain orneriness, won the day. The fish ranged from eight to 15 pounds. As a bonus, there were also some kings available, probably due to the late run, high water levels and low temperatures.

This day was capped by sighting one of the largest bull moose I have ever seen. It appeared to weigh about 1,500 pounds, and it sported antlers with a 60-plus-inch spread in velvet. It will probably measure 70 inches by fall. As expected, we saw not another

human. Jon states that he has never encountered an angler on his home waters, and this week was no exception.

We alternated guides each day. Paul and Jon are the sole guides. Jon has over two decades of guiding experience and an intimate knowledge of these waters. Paul has guided Painter Creek for five years and is both knowledgeable and personable. Both are top-notch guides and good people.

The second day started with sighting a huge male bear that stood 12 to 13 feet tall and weighed at least 1,200 pounds. I watched him "fish" his territory for a while, plucking 15-pound-

We did visit some areas where the long rod would have worked, and I will have more to say about that in a moment.

First, though, I believe the important takeaways from my experience are as follows:

- The gulf oil disaster may not be as catastrophic overall as was originally feared. For whatever reasons – the unexpected beneficial action of microbes in warm sea water, the use of dispersants, a fortunate accident of helpful currents and tides – I think it is safe to say the gulf is going to survive as a commercial and sport fishing area.

- What was going on in Venice, Louisiana (and I understand it is also taking place all around the gulf), had all the appearances of insanity. Thousands of "workers" and hundreds of boats of all sorts (everything from airboats to shrimp boats to out-of-state pleasure boats) had been mobilized, not to mention ATVs and other vehicles. You could tell the boats that had been "hired" by the BP flags flying from masts in every direction. We called this vast flotilla "the BP Navy," as that indeed was what it was. In truth, it looked as if there was almost nothing for all those boats to do. Ditto the thousands of workers we saw walking around with shovels and plastic bags. The amount of fuel being burned by all those boats is mindboggling to consider. And so is the bottomline effect of all this activity. The main impact appeared to be negative, as more than once we saw bored workers tearing through fragile reeds and marshes with ATVs. One particularly destructive vehicle we saw – an APC-type vehicle with tracks, not wheels – was in almost continual use along one beach we fished. Periodically, it would veer off into marshland. The driver and passengers appeared to be simply joy-riding. Wouldn't it be more reasonable to come up with a direct-payment system for individuals harmed by spills like this one? Why go through a charade of hiring them unless there is actually something to clean up?

- I'm giving my personal opinion and perspective here,

but there seems to me something terribly wrong – and blinding – about the way the media approach stories today. It appears to be a nasty blend of mob mentality meets ideology, with ideologues on both sides blatantly blurring the distinction between news and entertainment. Based on what I saw in one area of the gulf, the media appears to have gotten it at least partly wrong on the gulf oil spill, and they have not owned up to their error and exaggeration. That distorted coverage appears to me to have resulted in real damage to the environment and sickening waste. The profligate squandering of resources I saw around Venice, Louisiana – human and material – was unbelievable. Whole barges loaded with temporary housing units. Ton of shovels. Millions of plastic bags. A mini-fleet of \$100 million dollar government ships called Responders anchored in the Mississippi, doing nothing day after day. I could go on and on with this catalogue of waste. And that's just what I saw...

- On a more mundane level, I came away from this trip with an enormous new respect for big Gulf Coast redfish as a sportfishing target and for Louisiana as a fishing destination. The state is clearly a far more interesting and rich fishing destination than most traveling anglers realize. One of the surprising things I learned is, most Louisianans don't respect redfish as the great gamefish they are; they view redfish as nuisance species that get in the way of catching sea trout. This contempt for the redfish has blinded all but a handful of local guides and agents to the enormous sportfishing potential. In coming months, I plan to explore this idea and this area more fully. One of the more intriguing possibilities is the development of a year-round fishery (not just a winter fishery) for big bull reds in areas such as those I visited around Venice. Stay tuned. And, in the meantime, if you have another perspective on the gulf oil spill, I'm willing to listen and publish what you say. – *Don Causey.*

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ers from the water and carrying them to shore as if they were feather weights. This was the first of many bear sightings - all big boars, no sows or cubs. During the day, I also saw red fox, eagles, harrier hawks, goshawks and other wildlife.

With a slight wind, overcast and hundreds of fish in the water, the salmon took our flies right away. The first three I landed on the second day all exceeded 15 pounds and, once again, they were fresh and strong, with many still sporting sea lice. The hookups were so numerous I lost count. We also landed a bright king that morning and the first silver

salmon of the season.

On day three, we headed up



Painter Creek toward the mountains. With higher-than-normal water levels,

we were able to travel well upstream by jet boat before wading. The water is absolutely clear that far upriver, reminiscent of a large spring creek. The scenery was pristine meadows and wild flowers, with the snow capped Aleutians as a backdrop. I fished for Arctic char on the way back, using a 5-weight rod and floating line. Jon suggested I fish exclusively on the surface. Indeed, the fish readily came to a waking fly, especially when I gave it some movement. All the char I landed had evidently just arrived and were still silver. They were larger than I have found elsewhere in Alaska. The rest of the week, we fished for salmon in the morning and early afternoon, then Arctic char to finish the day. Fresh pods of chum salmon arrived daily. Even those that had started to show spawning colors were in beautiful shape and had all their fight. The weather was windy and overcast, conditions that favor surface action. On several occasions, the fish followed the fly throughout the swing and then struck hard while it was stripped. Watching the wake of a double-digit fish chasing down my fly was a total thrill. The five- or six-second wait until the hook set seemed like an eternity.

Late in the week, the chum salmon run was still going strong and the numbers of silvers increased. All of the silvers I landed were over 10 pounds, and all were very hot fish. One took my fishing companion well into his backing and another broke off. Without exception, each fish was a memorable challenge on an 8-weight rod.

The arctic char run also arrived in earnest and I landed several over 18 inches, with my largest measuring 25 inches. All were hooked on the surface. On the final afternoon, the first four I landed all measured over 20 inches and all had good breadth with large shoulders. Jon says the largest char come in late August and September. Several over 30 inches were landed last season, he says. Some late-season anglers primarily target

Want To Go Fishing Free?

All About Our FREE-Fishing Program

■ *The Angling Report* has always valued feedback from its subscribers. And the reasons are clear. For one thing, *Angling Report* subscribers are some of the world's most experienced fishermen. Hence their judgments about places are broad-based and sound. On top of that, most subscribers' insights on trips have a refreshingly candid air about them. That's because they are written from a point of view that no other publication embodies - namely, the paying client point of view.

So, here's the deal. We have begun to encourage lodge owners, guides and others to offer us FREE visits to their facilities with the understanding we will turn these invitations over to *Angling Report* subscribers who convince us they are capable of writing useful and accurate reports on what they experience. At this point, more than 30 subscribers have been invited on FREE fishing trips here in the US or to places outside the country such as Argentina, Christmas Island, Brazil and Mexico. The total value of all that travel is in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. And the good news is, more and more outfitters are offering us FREE trips around the

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- Don Causey, Editor.

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Arctic char while others prefer silver salmon. This was my first experience with "chromer" Arctic char; their energy is comparable to rainbows.

Part of my job at Painter Creek was to evaluate the fishery, not just the angling. Here's what I observed. First, the number and quality of fish I saw on Painter Creek was outstanding. Jon Kent readily admits that the runs are not as massive as before the volcano leak. Based on my experience, however, I am not convinced that, beyond a certain point, the numbers significantly affect the angling. When there are 200 fish in a pod, would 500 make the fishing any better? When "the bite" was off, we were still humbled by nature's display of unattainable plenty. An hour later, when something changed, all three of us sometimes had simultaneous hook-ups. Fewer fish in the system may translate to spending more time finding the fish, but, once you've found them, I cannot imagine how it gets better. During our week, we did not spend more than half an hour at any time finding fish. The Arctic char

fishery has definitely recovered, and the size of these fish is remarkable. The fact that silvers showed up early and increased in numbers daily seems positive, but I cannot speak beyond that about the silver run.

If it is true that large bears and large boars in particular gravitate to



better fisheries, then the predominance of large males at Painter Creek may be a general indicator of a healthy fishery.

Mother Goose Lake, the area of greatest acidity right after the spill, showed signs that it is recovering. I saw loons and other birds on the lake, and insect hatches were taking place.

On Painter Creek, I observed good numbers of smolts, several insect hatches and weed growth in the water, all signs that the ecosystem is recovering. Weeds, grasses, wild flowers and bushes are once again abundant along the banks. My observations are not science, but I am glad to see it happening.

In summary, I was very impressed by the total Painter Creek Lodge experience. Even if the angling results had been less positive, the remoteness, the family-like feeling of the lodge, the wildlife and the beauty of the surroundings would still make this a stellar angling destination. Sometimes, it is not just about the numbers. - *Sonja Nisson*.

(*Postscript*: The 2010 all-inclusive rate for a seven-day stay with six days of fishing is \$5,000 without fly-outs. Helicopter fly-outs are available but must be arranged in advance of arrival. A seven day stay with three helicopter fly outs is \$8,500 per person. For more details, go to: www.paintercreeklodge.com. Tel. 907-248-1303. E-mail: pattykent@gci.net.)

Briefly Noted

Things To Do... Places To Go... New Developments

■ Here at *The Angling Report* we cover mostly outfitted fishing trips because that is what most subscribers are interested in. However, we are very aware that there is another world of fishing out there that individuals can do on their own or largely on their own. Witness the following correspondence we received recently from subscriber Jim Carter who has put his own deal together on **Andros Island, Bahamas**. It just may get you to thinking about how and where to set up your own personal fishing deal.

"I have been fishing Andros Island for 15 years. The first ten years I fished out of Cargill Creek mostly, but I also camp-fished in the Bahamas during this time - once on Water Key and once on Williams Island. I shifted

my interest to South Andros (Kemps Bay) five years ago. My stays on South Andros nowadays are for a minimum of one to three months. I have very good knowledge of the island, even owning my own flats skiff. I moved to South Andros because, in my opinion, it contains the largest population of bonefish anywhere. In addition, I can rent motel rooms there fairly cheaply. The place I like to stay is Javarr's Twin Berry Inn at Little Creek on South Andros (www.androsbeachclub.com/javarrs-inn-bahamas.htm). US telephone contact: 954-681-4818). The place is owned by James & Alice Sands of Nassau. The inn is only three years old, has ocean frontage and approximately 20 rooms, plus a kitchen area and a

lounge area with television. The kitchen is fully stocked with pots, pans and utensils, and it is available for usage by guests. The lounge area is a spacious and comfortable place to watch television, play cards or just sit around talking about fishing. There is also a wooden deck out front that faces the water. It's great for relaxing in the afternoon. Kayaks and bicycles are available.

"This is the best and cleanest inn on South Andros. It is better than some of the fishing lodges. Naturally, it has air conditioning. Rates are \$70 for a single and \$100 for two people in the same room. The owner, James Sands, is a retired businessman from Nassau who is present while guests are there to make sure all of their

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needs are met.

“There are two independent guides on South Andros who have their own boats, Leslie Johnson and Nat Adams. They charge \$500 per day. In my opinion, they are the best two guides on the island. Leslie and Nat (when not guiding their own clients) work for Bair’s Lodge. They started guiding for them in 1995. They are the most requested guides at Bair’s. Leslie’s home phone is 242-369-5047; his cell number is 242-357-2326. Nat’s home number is 242-369-5544; his cell is 242-471-2165.

“I always take my own steak and lunch meat to South Andros. Chicken, fish, lobster and some American lunch meat can be purchased there. I choose to cook most of my meals at the inn though restaurants are available in the area. Their prices are very reasonable at \$6 to \$12 for an evening meal. Kathy’s Bar & Restaurant that sits on Little Creek is a favorite watering hole for locals and visiting fishermen. The place has great food, a TV set, a pool table and Bahamian music. Kathy will prepare breakfast and lunch for you if you wish. I normally prepare my own breakfast and lunch in the kitchen at the inn. Everything you need is available at the local grocery store except for good quality steaks.

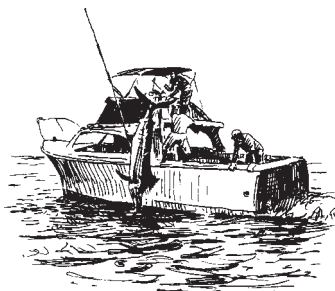
“It is an individual’s personal choice whether he wants to save a few dollars and cook at the inn or go to the restaurants and eat out. If two anglers stay at the Twin Berry Inn for \$100 per night and pay a guide fee of \$500 per day, that comes to \$600 a day for lodging and 2 x 1 guiding, or \$300 each per day. Multiply that by six days give you \$1,800. This is \$1,800 to \$3,000 less than you will pay if you stay at one of the lodges. In my view, this is a great way to experience bonefishing in one of the most beautiful places in the world at a very reasonable price with two of the best guides anywhere.” - *Jim Carter*, jccarter@consolidated.net.

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■ We are indebted to subscriber

Martin Malmsten for the following account of a saltwater fly fishing trip to the **Galapagos Island** arranged for him this past March by Braden Escobar of Ecuagringo (www.ecuagringo.com. Tel. 011-593-9-5956542 – dialed from the US). See note at end for word of another company that offers fishing trips to the Galapagos.

“I visited San Cristobal in the Galapagos this past March in search of a striped marlin on the fly with a company called Ecuagringo. San Cristobal is a lovely little town where wildlife is abundant even in the town center. There are sea lions lying around everywhere, eagle rays swimming in the harbor just yards from the sea promenade, etc. The wildlife in the open sea is even more spectacular than that around San



Christobal. The main attraction for fishermen in the Galapagos is striped marlin. Here, you typically can expect a large number of daily shots at very good size marlin. There are black and blue marlin available, too, as well as sailfish and yellowfin and big-eye tuna, plus some shark and dorado. However, the main attraction, in my view, is the striped marlin.

“Fly fishing for marlin is way harder than fly fishing for sailfish. I do not recommend that one focus his first blue-water fly fishing trip on marlin. Go to Guatemala for sailfish instead, or to Australia for wahoo and tuna. All of these fish are much more forgiving. You’ll wind up with more fish landed in a day. For example, Guatemala, in my experience, typically allows you to land five to 10 fish a day on the fly, while here I

managed to get only three to the boat in four days of fishing. They were nice fish, though, about 140 to 190 pounds.

“Why are marlin harder? For one thing, they are harder to tease in. They lose interest in a couple of seconds. This means that only about one in three fish raised to the teasers come within casting range. The same proportion applies to the number of successfully teased fish that actually bite. As for the number of hooked fish that are actually landed, plan on landing only one out of three to five. Do the math: To land one fish a day, you would then need to raise about 25 fish a day, or about one fish every 15 minutes. Very few places in the world allow you to do this. Fortunately, Galapagos is one of them.

“All considered, though the end result of my trip in terms of numbers of fish landed was small, I found the days to be action-packed. On top of that, the few fish landed were magnificent, twice the size of sailfish and five times stronger. I broke two 70-pound fly lines the first day alone trying to clear free line and get fish on the reel as they were screaming away like a missile. A fisherman on another boat while I was there had rod, reel, line, leader and fly pulled overboard by a fish. Needless to say, you need a lot of experience, a high frustration tolerance and a big tackle box to score on fly-caught striped marlin. It’s also important to have a good crew helping you find and tease the fish. If you’re a single flyrodder, you’ll need two mates on hand once you have raised a fish - one to handle the teaser rod and one to get the gear on the other two rods out of the water. Normally, you run three hookless teasers, skirts with or without bait sewn in. Surprisingly often during my trip, the fish came up on an inner teaser, in which case all hell broke loose. A lot of things had to work within a few seconds for a successful hook-up. Other times, I had fish follow way back from the longest teaser. The challenge in those cases was to

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tease the fish all the way in to about 20 to 25 meters. Clearly, catching marlin on the fly is very much a team effort. Fortunately, Braden Escobar and his mates are very knowledgeable and skillful in the finding and teasing of fish.

“The boat we used was an out-board craft, which meant I needed to be more than usually careful with my line. More than once I had to lean way out over the deck and stick my rod as deep into the water as I could in order to avoid having my fly line cut off by the props. The boat maneuvered well and appeared to be quite seaworthy, however. I was told the quality of diesel is poor in the Galapagos, rendering inboards prone to break-down.

“As for gear to bring on a trip of this type, I recommend nothing lighter than a 15 weight rod with a high-quality big game reel. Bring lots of lines, mainly floating lines with an 80-pound breaking strength. I used mostly 14-inch flies with the biggest popping heads I could find (about four centimeters in diameter). The popping seems to be essential for the fish to react. Bring big hooks, 8/0 to 10/0 in a tandem-hook setup. None of this equipment is available in San Cristobal and Ecuagringo has few spare items, so bring all the gear you will need with you. Overall, this was a truly amazing fishing trip. I definitely want to go back. I highly recommend it to anyone who wants to land good-sized striped marlin on the fly.” - *Martin Malmsten.*

(*Postscript:* The other major outfitter of big game fishing trips in the Galapagos is Artmarina, www.artmarina.com. Tel. 305-213-5521. If you fish with this company be sure and file a report.)

□
■ In our report last month on new opportunities in **Seychelles**, we asked for on-site feedback on the fishing at Desroches Island Resort. This fishing program, you’ll recall, takes place around Poivre and St. Josephs islands. It was created by Untamed Angling

(www.untamedangling.com) and can be booked directly through that company, through Frontiers International (www.frontierstravel.com) and through various other agents.

The feedback we received on this fishery is from an angler in Brazil, Antonio Celso Spiniella, who used the Report Form on our website to weigh in with his impressions. Spiniella fished out of Desroches Island Resort this past April 17 to 24. He says the lodge’s equipment, accommodations and overall service were excellent and the food and guiding were good. He reports taking lots of bonefish by wading and casting on the flats and sailfish by trolling. Permit were around in average numbers, he notes, while giant trevally were scarce. “We didn’t



have what I would call a really good week of fishing, but in general this looks like a good place,” he writes. “Desroches Island itself, as well as the resort, is very beautiful. This is a nice place to take the family, as it has good beaches, a swimming pool, water sports, hiking trails and all the stuff you find in resorts.”

Spiniella concludes that he would recommend this destination to fellow anglers. He gives the cost of his trip as \$6,000 (US).

□
■ Still on the subject of **Seychelles** fishing, we received word of another mothership that will be operating there this season. Unlike the other two motherships we told you about last month, this one won’t be operating in the outer atolls where piracy is a concern. We learned about this

mothership – it’s called *MV Illusions* (www.mvillusions.com) – from Benoit Maury Laribiere with a French agency by the name of DHD-LAIKA Voyages (Web: www.dhdlaika.com. E-mail: bmaurylaribiere@dhdlaika.com). Laribiere says he is booking space aboard the craft only because it is not going to operate in the remote outer atolls. “My feeling is the peak situation with piracy is behind us because pressure on them is getting higher and higher,” he told us last month in an e-mail. “But there is still some activity west of Seychelles and some risk everywhere within a 1,000-mile range from the Somali coast. This will last as long as the situation is not under control in Somalia.”

Laribiere says he does not want anything to do with putting clients at risk. He says he feels better about some of the northern islands southeast of (but not too far from) Mahe, and he has no problems with fishing that is land-based, or that involves

Information, Please

■ Subscriber Nathaniel Lawrence would like to hear from fellow subscribers who have personal knowledge of the fishing opportunities near **Lubbock, Texas**. Lawrence can be reached by e-mail at: gmorris@l-mlaw.com. Please copy us on any feedback sent. Write: doncausey@anglingreport.com.

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■ Subscriber Nathan Mayl tells us he is going to **China** this coming September, and his trip will include stops in multiple areas including the Yangsee River. “I could not find any information on fly fishing in China in *The Angling Report* or anywhere else,” he writes. “Do fellow subscribers to this publication have any leads for me?” Mayl can reach by e-mail at: nathanmayl@hotmail.com. Please copy us with any feedback. Write: doncausey@anglingreport.com. We hope agents and outfitters as well as subscribers will pass along what they know.

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moorings right inside lagoons. "These kinds of waters are no more unsafe than the rest of the world and some of them offer great fishing," he says. "Pirates attacking people onshore seems to me just a phantasm, not a real risk."

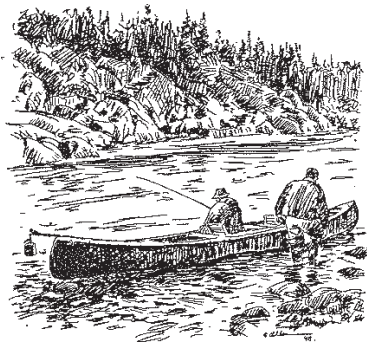
Laribiere says the *MV Illusions* operated last season in Farquhar, and he plans to use that experience to coordinate some land-based groups. "Right now, we already have three fully-booked weeks in 2010," he says. "We still have space in early January, and we may have some other weeks opening up as well. Interested anglers should contact us soon, however. If the demand for rods exceeds our land-based capacity, we intend to take the boat down to Farquhar and keep her safe inside the lagoon. Barring that, the *MV Illusions* will be available to provide fishing cruises to Platte Island in November and December at \$2,750 per week from/to Mahé. Platte Island is only 135 miles south of Mahé. This will require a group of eight and we will try to match interested individuals with other anglers. We will cruise down to save air charter. The bargain price reflects our lack of experience on that island. We will soon prospect it and work out a program I believe will be a good opportunity at a very reasonable price."

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■ As the worldwide recession/recovery (choose your term) continues to lurch along, it seems lodges and booking agents are getting more creative with the enticements they are offering traveling anglers. Witness the

unusual "value added" feature Lago Verde Wilderness Lodge (www.hosteriaselaura.com) is attaching to some trout trips in Argentina this coming season. The lodge, located in Los Alerces National Park, Patagonia, has scheduled two "Bamboo Rod and Casting Clinic" weeks that will allow anglers to cast and fish with bamboo rods created by a local rodmaker named Marcelo Calviello (<http://calviellorods.blogspot.com>).

Anglers can stay all six days or as little as two days. The quoted price for any length stay is \$500 per angler



per day, which includes double occupancy accommodations, breakfast, lunch on the river, dinner at the lodge's restaurant, fishing guides, boats or rafts as needed, transfers from and to Esquel airport and internet access. Not included are transfers between the lodge and Bariloche, fishing license, drinks, phone calls, cigars, and gratuities. You can get a 20 percent discount if you book before August 31. The two dates currently set are November 28 to December 5, 2010; and March 27 to April 3, 2011.

The agent handling these trips in the U.S. is Tim Purvis of Andean Angler. He can be reached at 503-703-

7323; or by email at tim@andeananglers.com. His web address is: www.andeananglers.com.

(*Postscript:* At press time, Purvis contacted us to let us know he recognized that *Angling Report* subscribers would have only a few days at best to take advantage of the 20 percent discount being offered for early booking. So, he and lodge owner Alfredo Zubiri have extended the discount offer until September 30 for *Angling Report* subscribers only. Be sure you identify yourself as a subscriber when you make contact. If you do go to either "bamboo" session or simply fish the lodge this season, please file a report. We have one first-hand look at this destination in our database from 2006. See Article No. 1884 in our Trip Planning Database. We'd be interested in another look at the fishing at this lodge and in knowing whether the "bamboo" offer really adds to the value of the trip.)

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■ And finally, Honor Roll subscriber Kent Sullivan passed along this tip we thought worth sharing for "recycling" old, leaky Gore-Tex waders. "I have begun cutting off the boot foot portions of old waders and using them as breathable, waterproof, coveralls/rain gear. Small leaks are rarely noticeable because they are not being fully immersed in water. These old waders are ideal for wearing in boats in rainy or cold weather. On a winter redfishing trip, the weather was cold even for an Alaskan and these cut-off waders made bitter morning boat rides and cold days of fishing relatively pleasant. It certainly beats throwing them away."

OUTFITTER CRITIQUES

The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

(This section of The Angling Report is based entirely on subscriber-written Fishing Trip Report Forms. Our policy on these forms is we publish excerpts in the newsletter of Angler Network Forms as received and exert no censorship. Agents, guides, lodge operators and/or outfitters who disagree with anything said about them in this section are free to submit a rebuttal. As a subscriber, you can help extend the reach of this program by filing a Fishing Trip Report Form yourself. You should have found one inside this issue of your newsletter. Alternately, you can file a report online by going to our website, www.anglingreport.com. Click on File A Report. For details on how to order printouts of Angler Network Reports, see page 2 of this issue.)

■ Subscriber Michael Huggins has checked in with reports on two recommended fishing opportunities he

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experienced in **Mexico** this past June – one in Cancun and one on Holbox Island north of Cancun. In Cancun, he fished Nichupte Lagoon near the hotel district with outfitter Martin van der Does (Toll free from the US: 866-607-2246. Web: www.cancuntarponfishing.com), personal guide Mauricio. Huggins gives the equipment and guiding an across-the-board excellent rating, noting this was his seventh or eighth time to fish with van der Does. “He runs a very professional outfit,” Huggins writes. “I have referred several people to him and they have all had a positive experience. (*Editor Note:* See Report No.4028 in our Trip Planning database for another positive report on van der Does.)

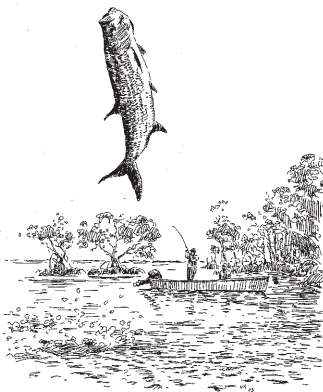
Huggins says his fishing in Nichupte Lagoon was conducted from a 17-foot Maverick Mirage flats skiff, though van der Does also has an 18-foot Hewes Redfisher which he uses when three anglers want to fish together. Huggins says the weather was perfect with no wind and that baby tarpon and permit were both abundant on this day. “I caught five baby tarpon and jumped many more,” he writes. “I also caught a small snook. The lagoon is loaded with permit, too, with some weighing 20 to 25 pounds. I had several shots but could not get a bite.”

Huggins says he used 8-weight rods with floating and intermediate lines; he did not have a stripping basket but reports that it would have been helpful. He gives the cost of his six-hour day on the water as \$325. “Seeing so many great flats species in the middle of a major tourist district is gratifying,” Huggins writes. “They have good fishing year round, which makes it a great place to fish during a family vacation. Cancun has everything non-anglers could want: parasailing, diving, spas, beaches, shopping....”

On this same vacation, Huggins traveled to Holbox Island north of Cancun to fish with Alejandro Vega Cruz’s Holbox Tarpon Club (Tel. 011-52-1-984-875-2144. Web: www.holboxtarponclub.com).

He rates the local accommodations and food as excellent. He also gives a thumbs-up to the guides, citing their thorough knowledge of the water and the fishing, plus their ability to communicate.

Huggins says both large ocean tarpon and baby tarpon on the flats were abundant during his visit. “All our fishing was done from *pangas*, and I was assigned a different guide each day. The first day we saw no big tarpon, so I fished flats for baby tarpon which were abundant. I caught one and jumped a few more and also caught several small ‘cudas. I saw hundreds of large ‘cudas cruising the surface of the ocean that first day. The second day there were big pods of large, fast-moving tarpon rolling in the open ocean. I had multiple shots



at these fish, hooked up with a 100-plus-pound fish and fought it for 15 minutes before he broke off.

“I used 12-weight rods for the big tarpon with Rio Leviathan and Outbound Express 500-grain fast-sinking lines. As for flies, I used 2/0 and 4/0 standard tarpon patterns such as Black Death, Red-and-Black and Cockroach. For babies on the flats, I used an 8-weight with floating lines and 2/0 chartreuse flies.”

Huggins reports no problems on the trip at all. The weather, he says, was sunny with heavy fog each morning, and winds that were dead calm until late morning when a light breeze came up. Mosquitoes were present in the evenings, he says, but not to the point of being a nuisance, though he would recommend bring-

ing repellent. “Holbox is a rustic island,” he warns. “Some of the hotels have a/c but some do not. The restaurants also do not have a/c. This was not a problem for me, as my hotel room had a/c and I went out to eat in the evenings after the temperature dropped. If you aren’t tolerant of the summer heat, this may be a concern for you.”

Among the highlights of the trip, Huggins lists hooking his first big tarpon on a fly rod and seeing a part of Mexico that is totally different from the tourist city of Cancun. He gives the cost of this portion of his trip as \$1,800. For non-anglers, Huggins tells us the island has “great beaches, bird watching tours and, during the summer months, tours available that involve swimming with whale sharks.”

(*Postscript:* Huggins’ report on Holbox Tarpon Club contrasts sharply with one submitted a while back by another subscriber. See Report No. 3741 in our Trip-Planning Database. Timing, tides and weather were the major culprits on that trip. We also have two other subscriber reports on fishing this area. They are must reading for anyone planning a visit to this destination.)

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■ Donny Beaver’s Homewaters Club (www.HomewatersClub.com) has earned a rave review from subscriber Chris Dorsey, who happens to own a company called Orion Multimedia. Orion is one of the major producers of outdoor television shows, including the acclaimed *Pirates of the Flats* series starring Lefty Kreh, Tom Brokaw, Michael Keaton, Tom McGuane and Yvon Chouinard. The series highlights the work of Bonefish Tarpon Trust, the organization devoted to the scientific study and conservation of bonefish, tarpon and permit. Dorsey is on the board of Bonefish Tarpon Trust, and he visited Homewaters Club recently in connection with a BTT planning meeting. He has this to say about Homewaters Club:

“One of the best known angling

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membership destinations in the world is the famed Homewaters Club in central Pennsylvania. For those of you not familiar, Homewaters Club is the product of a 2009 joint venture between Spring Ridge Club in Pennsylvania and Alpine River Club in Colorado. Having visited Donny Beaver's Spring Ridge destination many years ago when it was simply an idea - no significant infrastructure or amenities at that point - I had my reservations, as many efforts such as his have been attempted without much success. However, on a recent visit, I was stunned to see that his vision has not only come to life but it truly exceeds what I had imagined could be achieved. In addition to classic lodging with attention to detail that reinforces the angling experience, the setting is how an angler would dream of the ideal destination - meandering streams with hungry trout the dimensions of which normally only live in an angler's imagination. If there is poetry to the fishing experience, Spring Ridge has achieved it with a celebration of all things angling.

"I happen to own a private lodge in Montana on one of the state's most famous waters, and I can only dream of offering guests what Donny has provided at Spring Ridge. From the outlandishly big trout to over-the-top, chef-prepared meals in a historically significant angling setting (the area is the fishing destination of many past presidents and dignitaries), Spring Ridge provides a storybook angling experience. The proximity of Spring Ridge to several major metro areas such as New York City, Philadelphia, Washington, DC, etc. has helped Donny Beaver attract many high-profile individuals to his club. These same folks are influencers who leave Spring Ridge echoing the need to protect more waters from development and exploitation that would threaten the fisheries. In my experience, no one champions a resource like those who savor it most, and it certainly doesn't hurt to have well-connected individuals experiencing

what a stream can deliver when tended to with care.

"While I have not visited Donny's other properties in Colorado, I am eager to see what awaits, as the reports that I've received indicate those properties match what I just experienced at Spring Ridge..."

(*Postscript:* You can get more information on *Pirates of the Flats* and Bonefish Tarpon Trust by going to the BTT website at: www.tarbone.org)

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■ In the January, 2009 issue (see page 12), we summarized six reports that gave across-the-board excellent ratings to the fishing, guiding, food and accommodations at Salmon Hole Lodge on the Lapoile River on **Newfoundland's** remote south coast, east of Port aux Basques. See Report Nos. 3962 - 3967 in our Trip Planning



database. That report was followed up by yet another positive report in the April 2009 issue. See Report No. 3998.

Now, we have two more rave reports on this lodge. The first report is from Jim Staples who tells us he's been going to Salmon Hole Lodge yearly for 29 years. He says he's been taking five other anglers on that jaunt most years and he has yet to find anything to complain about. "In 29 years, there has never been a problem to make me even consider looking for another place to fish," he writes. "I've fished a few other spots, and nothing even comes close to Salmon Hole Lodge. Yes, we've had high water to delay our arrival at the lodge or hasten our leaving. And, we've had low water, too. Once, the river was closed because of that. That's fishing. The

guides at Salmon Hole are resourceful and accommodating, and we make the best of what nature delivers. Traveling to and from is fraught with all that flight or ferry travel can provide, and we've been annoyed by schedule changes, mechanical breakdowns and even by striking crab fishermen, but we've never lost appreciable time on the river. There were no problems at all in 2009..."

Sheryl Psiuk, who was at the lodge a week after Staples in 2009 for her first-ever salmon trip, offered these thoughts: "This was a trip of firsts for me.... first time fly fishing, first time fishing for Atlantic salmon and first visit to Newfoundland. So, my visit was more than just a fishing trip; it was an opportunity to sightsee and relax. I estimate I spent two hours a day for four days actually fishing. During that time I caught three salmon. What an exhilarating experience; these salmon were fighters! I also caught a few brook trout; some of the others fishing with me were catching three- and four-pound brook trout!

"This area of Newfoundland is amazingly beautiful, peaceful, serene and rugged. The Lapoile river has many faces and many moods, and the fishing there is excellent. By the end of the week I was truly sorry to say goodbye to the wonderful guides who provided exemplary, warm and friendly hospitality and some of the best home-cooked meals I have ever eaten!

"There were no other people around, so we had the pools all to ourselves and the solitude meant the moose and caribou felt quite comfortable walking through camp! It was just what I needed to take my mind off work, deadlines, schedules and the stresses of daily life. I can't believe how fast the week flew by...!"

Salmon Hole Lodge can be contacted by phone at 902-835-8872; or by E-mail at scott@salmonholelodge.com. The web address is: www.salmonholelodge.com. Cost is about \$2,000 for six days of fishing.

(*Postscript:* Newfoundland seems to

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be emerging from the shadows as a top-shelf Atlantic salmon destination. My personal network of salmon spies is telling me that Newfoundland in general is experiencing a banner year of outstanding Atlantic salmon fishing. Despite the fact that projected returns were the same as last year (which turned out to be a so-so year at best), I'm hearing stories of multi-fish mornings (and afternoons!) on rivers across the Province. To be sure, this could be just rumor, but clearly it's worth further investigation. Stay tuned for a full report in time to plan for the 2011 season. And, as always, if you fished the island this season, please file a report! – *Tim Jones, managing editor.*

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■ Subscriber Bill Wason and several of his angling companions are very pleased with the service they received in **Utah** with Park City Outfitters (Tel. 435-647-0677. Web: www.parkcityoutfitters.com) this past July. They fished both the Green and Provo rivers, and Wason describes the guides they were assigned were "...the most uniformly excellent guides we have ever fished with."

They began with two days of wade fishing on the Provo River where the brown trout were both abundant and large. Wason writes: "I caught 12 fish in two hours one morning, but six to 10 fish during a six-hour period was closer to the norm. Over half of the fish we caught measured more than 16 inches. That's a lot of big fish for a small river!"

Wason says he used a 5-weight for dry fly fishing and a 6-weight with a floating line for nymphing. Weather and water conditions were perfect for their trip and they hit a Green Drake hatch from 11 am to 1 pm both days.

The Provo was not without its problems, however, Wason warns: "This is an urban river with very heavy pressure, especially during a major hatch. The fishing situation was reminiscent of the 'combat fishing' I've experienced on the Russian River during salmon season. You had

to get there early to stake out your 'territory' and you had to be prepared for some confrontations. I would probably not consider the Provo a 'destination' river by itself because it was so crowded with anglers. While the river can handle the pressure, who wants to engage in 'combat fishing'? Most of this section is on public land and could easily be fished without a guide with a little direction from a fly shop. On the other hand, this is a nice little river to wade fish if you are in the area for other reasons, such as fishing the Green River. The Provo is fishable 12 months of the year if weather permits, and there is a lot for non-anglers to do in the area. Our three guides for the Provo (Jen, Ken, and Ted) deftly handled seven anglers, and were excellent."

Wason gives the cost of this seg-



ment of the trip as about \$700 per person for two days fishing. That included three nights lodging, meals and tips.

More to Wason's taste was the three days he spent float fishing Sections A and B of the Green River with guides 'Dan-O,' Eric, Rodney and trip-organizer Brandon Bertagnole. Wason says Bertagnole did a great job putting a trip together that included both the Provo and the Green rivers, even though their party was comprised of an odd number of anglers.

Wason notes Section A of the Green provides mostly float fishing. There is minimal opportunity to wade fish in Section A (the Canyon section): "It's seven miles from put-in to take-out. Although there is a trail on one side of the river, there are few places to wade in the deep, narrow

canyon, and there are no walk-outs for the entire seven miles. As for Section B, it is nine miles long with no access at all between put-in and take-out, though you can wade fish up and down from the take-out of Section A. We didn't fish Section C."

Wason emphasizes that the Green is not a river for do-it-yourselfers. Rapids claim a couple of driftboats and numerous single-person pontoon boats every year, he says. The three days he was on the Green he says he saw two pontoon boats wrapped around boulders. He described one of the incidents as potentially fatal. "We gave the angler a four-mile ride out of the river, leaving behind his Winston rod and car keys," he writes. "Understandably, life jackets must be worn at all times on Section A and half of section B with fines enforced if you don't".

He and his group found naturally reproducing brown trout abundant in the river, while rainbows were scarce, despite the fact that 20,000 are stocked each spring.

"We averaged 10 to 20 fish per day, but the catch actually ranged from six to 30 fish," he writes. "I could see no rhyme or reason for so much variation. About 60 percent of the fish were bigger than 16 inches, with an occasional 20- to 21-inch brown. The river reportedly has 13,000 to 15,000 fish per mile in Section A, and I believe it. If you stop to look down in Section A, you will see eight or 10 large fish lounging about below you almost every time you look."

Wason says they used a wide variety of nymphs and dry flies on this water, including caddis, WD40, Yellow Sally and tungsten zebra nymphs and caddis, Chernobyl Ant and various attractor dries. They were too early for hoppers.

"The Green is in the middle of nowhere," Wason warns. "You don't just 'drop in' and expect things will go smoothly. For one thing, there are some restrictions on the number of people allowed on the river and the number of guides who can fish it.

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There are also limited accommodations in the area. Don't expect a Holiday Inn or even a Motel 6. I would strongly recommend using a professional outfitter and try to avoid weekends if possible. Even though the Green is several hours away from civilization, it can be extremely crowded with driftboats and rubber rafts filled with families, especially in Section A. The river can easily handle the pressure, but it can still get a little crowded. Section B and Section C have dramatically less pressure and a totally different character from the canyon in Section A."

Wason gives the cost of this part of his trip as about \$1,100 per person for three days on the Green. That included three nights lodging and food. In parting, he writes: "The Green is probably the most spectacular trout river in the lower 48 as regards scenery and fish. The scenery is so fabulous it's hard to keep your eyes on the flies."

(Postscript: The Green and Provo rivers have received a lot of positive attention from Angling Report subscribers recently, as witness the following materials that are available in our Trip Planning Database. They provide more perspective on these waters: Report Nos. 4139, 4142, 4131, 4090, 4013 and 4012; and Article No. 2361. The latter is a Close-up Report on The Green River by frequent correspondent Bob Peters. It appeared in the September 2009 issue.)

□

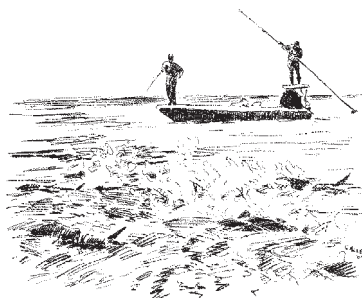
■ Subscriber Dr. W.R. Schlichtemeier tells us he had a "fabulous" experience in **Montana** this past July,

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fishing the Gallatin and Madison rivers and upper and middle Jerome Rock Lake from Lone Mountain Ranch (800-514-4644; www.lmranh.com), an Orvis-endorsed lodge.

Though he reports the food was only fair, he tells us the fishing, guiding and equipment were all excellent. "We had excellent fishing on both the Madison and Gallatin," says Schlichtemeier, "One day we were driven to a trail head for Spanish Peaks. There we hiked into One High Lake, where we stayed in tents, cooked over campfires. From there, we rode horses a mile to Middle Jerome Rock Lake and fished from the bank and float tubes. Gorgeous scenery! We also Fished Margo lake. No fish rose to our flies, but we were



told the fishing can be fabulous in September.

Schlichtemeier gives the cost as \$875 per person for the horseback fishing, plus \$200 for the Madison float. He tells us he recommends the trip for "... adventure, scenery, stars, fun, remoteness and fish!" For non-anglers there's plenty of horseback riding, hiking, photography and camping, he notes.

Controversy

• Subscriber Dudley Cunningham has filed a mixed report on a mid-December bonefish trip to **Water Cay Lodge** on the north side of Grand Bahama. He booked his trip through Angling Destinations in Sheridan, Wyoming, which operates the lodge.

On the plus side, Cunningham raves about the fishing, pointing out that bonefish were abundant in the area and that his personal guide,

Sidney Thomas, was one of the best guides he had ever used. He lists among highlights of the trip the chance to see "...an expansive new flats system absolutely loaded with bonefish. We never fished the same area twice." Cunningham reports taking multiple bonefish up to seven pounds. Overall, the fish he caught averaged around four pounds.

In the minus column, Cunningham says weather conditions were not the best during his visit and that affected his ability to see fish. He tells us the low-angle sun made wade fishing impossible.

More significant, however, were some problems at the lodge. "Our trip was scheduled during an off-period," he writes. "The lodge had been unused before we got there and was closed after we left. They were low on many provisions and the big screen TV was overused by the staff."

On balance, Cunningham still recommends his trip, calling Water Cay Lodge "...a go-to bonefish site." He gives the cost of his trip as \$2,400 excluding airfare.

(Postscript: At press time, we sent a copy of Cunningham's report to Scott Heywood of Angling Destinations to get his take on the complaints about the lodge. Here is his reply:

"I thank Mr. Cunningham for his heads-up on the problems he experienced at Water Cay Lodge. I apologize for the lack of proper provisioning during his stay. I have discussed these concerns with the lodge staff and we are all working hard to make sure that, if Mr. Cunningham returns, he will not experience a similar situation. We are working particularly hard to ensure that the quality of service stays consistent throughout the year. Hopefully, our efforts in the last few months have already ironed out some of these problems that crop up every now and then, largely due to the remote location of the lodge. This lodge is for hardcore anglers. The guides, boats and fishery are all top notch. But, frankly, we struggle to get cooks and other staff who are willing

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to spend time in such a remote location. This fall, the lodge will install a TV in the guides' room to alleviate the problem of their monopolizing the TV in the central area. As for the weather during Mr. Cunningham's stay, December weather is indeed un-

predictable in the northern Bahamas. While we obviously cannot control this, we can make sure that anglers who book these winter months (and the early fall hurricane season) are fully aware of potential weather issues. We would certainly agree with Mr.

Cunningham that the Water Cay fishery, boats and guides are some of the best in the Bahamas. We really appreciate his taking the time to provide this valuable feedback, and thank him for the opportunity to make the experience at Water Cay Lodge even better.")

□ And Finally....

A Memorable Tarpon Tale

(Editor Note: When your very first tarpon weighs almost 100 pounds and takes more than an hour to land, it's hard to imagine that your second tarpon could be more memorable. But long-time subscriber Kenneth Spint tells us that's exactly how it was for his son on a recent, very recommendable trip to Belize City.)

■ At the end of March, my son and I flew to Belize City, Belize, to fish for tarpon in the Belize River for four days. Compared to many fishing adventures, this was an easy trip. We were actually able to make it to Belize City from our home in California with only one stop in Houston. Once there, it was a quick \$35 cab ride from the airport to the hotel. At that point, our travels were done until we left for home.

I'd heard about the fishing in Belize City from a fanatical angler in my area. Following his advice, we stayed at a place called The Great House (Tel. 800-698-2915. Web: www.greathousebelize.com). This is a small, older, three-story, plantation-style hotel that is clean and well maintained. It has large rooms with wood floors, high ceilings and air conditioning that works. The baths are also large and clean. There is a restaurant on site, but we found it not as good a value as the several dining venues right next door at the Radisson Hotel.

Again following my friend's advice, we booked with an independent local guide, Richard Young, Jr. (011-501-606-0678 – dialed from the US), who goes by the name, 'Junior.' He speaks perfect English, and he is a sociable and interesting fellow who is good company in a boat and great at

spotting tarpon. He's also something of a local entrepreneur with several *pangas* and a fish-wholesaling business. We really enjoyed our time with him.

Going fishing in the morning was a matter of walking a short distance to the wharf of the neighboring hotel, where Junior would await us in a 21-foot *panga*. We fished mainly downstream of the large highway bridge. This is around the mouth of the river, which is tidal at that point. The river is probably 300 to 400 feet wide and green in color with visibility down



two or three feet. We also spent a little time on the flats at the mouth of the river. Tarpon were scarce there, but we did see a number of smaller bonefish which we ignored in favor of tarpon. It is probably worth noting that this same water is fished by anglers staying at Belize River Lodge further upstream.

Despite difficult, windy conditions with broken clouds on two of the four days, we saw lots of adult tarpon as they rolled, swirled and porpoised. Some surfaced as close as 20 feet from the boat. We didn't see

any fish at all that weighed under 80 pounds. Most weighed more than that. These fish were clearly active and moving, not laid up, and you had only seconds to get a cast to them before they disappeared. Given the wind and poor visibility, this was sometimes tough with a fly rod.

I fished with a variety of 11- and 12-weight rods with 3/0 Cockroaches, Black Deaths and yellow-white Deceiver flies all effective. I used a floating line exclusively, but next time I'll take an intermediate sink-tip. I think getting the fly down deeper would have resulted in more hook-ups. My son used a medium-heavy spin rod with a white-red plug.

Any time you fish for adult tarpon you count hook-ups, not fish landed. We had several hook-ups per day for the four days we fished – probably 12 fish hooked in total. We brought two to the boat. One of them was my son's first-ever tarpon. It took him 70 minutes to bring it to the boat. At the boat, I was able to measure it carefully. Using a standard calculation (girth in inches squared times length in inches divided by 800), I came up with a weight of 92 to 95 pounds. It was a memorable first tarpon! I then hooked several fish, only to lose them to bent hooks and broken backing, my fault, what else can I say?

On the third day, Junior spotted a tarpon close to the boat. I cast to it and immediately hooked up — with a small jack. Not the outcome I was hoping for. My son saw his opportunity, cast to the same tarpon and hooked it. On the second hook set, the fish flew into the air, straight into

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the boat, and crashed into my son, clearing him out of the boat and into the river like a Steeler's linebacker.

After ascertaining that my son was OK, Junior and I then had to deal with a huge, fresh, strong fish that was crashing around in the panga. The fish flipped itself end-to-end at least once. Eventually, Junior was able to lip-gaff the tarpon and maneuver it over the side where it swam off, apparently none the worse for wear. My son ended up with a six-inch-diameter round bruise on his right hip and an

experience he won't forget. My gear, however, was not so lucky. We lost the rod that had hooked the tarpon and had three others broken. Two of my favorite Tibor reels looked like a truck had run over them.

By the way, after it was all over, I did land that small jack that was still hooked up. We all felt that it would have been more convenient if the jack had jumped in the boat instead of the tarpon. These large tarpon are clearly dangerous! You can see a video of the errant tarpon in the boat

and its release at www.youtube.com/watch?v=obz0qFm29SM. By measuring the space the fish occupied when in the boat (72 inches), and by estimating its girth (42 inches), I think the fish weighed about 158 pounds.

Even without the tarpon in the boat, this was a memorable trip. The access was easy and the cost very reasonable - \$400/day, plus tip for the guide and boat; \$125/day for two at The Great House; plus meals and incidentals. The big tarpon are there and I'll be going back. - *Kenneth Spint.*

Back of the Book

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