



A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

THE ANGLING REPORT

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DATELINE: BRAZIL

**News...News...News
New Amazon Fly Trip
A Real Tour de Force**

Longtime subscribers to this publication know that I am very stingy in my use of superlatives. You know, words like spectacular . . . over the top . . . extraordinary. Such words, in my view, are just not appropriate in a fishing newsletter devoted to sorting out the good, bad, and ugly things that happen in the world of fishing. What I try to do is find that rifle shot of a word, or expression, that says what I mean rather than hurl a shotgun blast of vowels and consonants in the general direction of a fishery or fishing professional.

All of that is a roundabout way of telling you that Untamed Angling has pulled off something quite special with its new peacock bass trip on the Marié

River in Brazil. The trip is a genuine tour de force, an impressive achievement that has been accomplished with great skill. I have never been to Untamed Angling’s other great destination, Tsimane, but I have heard countless anglers rave about it just like I am about to rave a bit more quietly about its Marié River operation. I was there just days ago as I write this, and I still feel a warm glow of pleasure



reflecting on the events that unfolded on that faraway river in the northeastern

corner of the Amazon, almost within hollering distance of the Colombian border.

The section of river you fly into for this trip is an almost unbelievable 900 kilometers from Manaus. The return trip, which includes a refueling stop, takes as long as the flight from Miami to Manaus. What in the world in the way of infrastructure can they possibly have in an area this remote? Well, great skiffs with wide casting platforms in front and back, for starters, with electric motors in front and new 90 hp four-stroke Yamahas in the rear. The electrics have those control boxes you activate remotely so there is no problem with wires on the floor. Oh, the skiffs also have poling platforms and poles, too, for getting around in skinny water. As for lodging and food, the mother ship is an elegant, roughly 60-foot craft with four air-conditioned guest cabins on the first deck, a dining room on the middle deck, and an open-air sitting space up top where you can munch appetizers and read your e-mail in the evening thanks to a satellite Internet system.

It would not be accurate to say the cabins on the mother ship are spacious, because they aren’t. They verge on being claustrophobic, in fact, and, if you are tall, your feet will hang off the end of your bed. Getting to the top bunk (yes, the two beds in each cabin are stacked) is no mean feat. And watch it once you are up there, because you will bump your head on the ceiling. I know; I did that often, especially when I had to get up during the night. The tightness of the space inside those cabins is probably the worst thing about the trip, and it would be genuinely troubling if the whole problem were not slated to go away by next year. More on that in a moment, after I mention that the only comments I heard about the food placed before us in the morning and evening in the din-

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ing room and on the boat during the day were positive. After all, we had a chef flown in from Argentina to oversee the food. Think Malbec wines and desserts to die for.

I'm impatient to get on to telling you about the fishing, but I need to clear up that complaint about the mother ship by telling you Untamed Angling's Rodrigo Salles shared with me an architectural drawing of *Untamed Amazon*, the planned mother ship for the Marié River operation starting next year. The craft looks a bit like a floating three-story condo complex. All of the cabins have out-facing plate glass windows. In the drawings, they appear to be wonderfully spacious, almost airy, with adjoining private bathrooms. Amenities available on the boat will include a Jacuzzi. Importantly, the planned mother ship is expected to be able to negotiate water less than a meter deep (roughly three feet), while the current mother ship has a draw of nearly a meter and a half (almost five feet). The lesser draw is important because Untamed Angling's fishing strategy revolves around being able to move its base of operation up and down the Marié River, as well as the Turi River tributary, which it also has rights to fish. During my own trip, the mother ship moved three times for a combined distance of almost 100 miles. Without those moves, the daily runs in the skiffs to disperse eight anglers would have been impossibly long. Dispersing 12 anglers, which they hope to be able to accommodate next year, would be just out of the question without mother ship mobility.

So, how was the fishing? If you don't know much about peacock bass fishing, the figures I am about to give you may not mean much. Believe me, they are (pardon the superlative) extraordinary. In all, our group of eight anglers caught 19 fish on the fly that weighed more than 13 pounds. Seven of those weighed more than 17 pounds. Three weighed more than 20 pounds. The biggest fish taken tipped the scales at 22.4 pounds. Additionally, I think every one of us had big fish on that we simply couldn't turn, much less stop, before they broke off or straightened our hooks. Catch figures like those above generated by anglers using traditional baitcasting equipment would be remarkable. To my knowledge, there have just never been peacock bass figures like that generated anywhere by fly fishermen. I firmly believe that our small group of anglers went a long way toward establishing the peacock bass as a viable, exciting, and desirable fly fishing species. Yes, there has long been a fly fishing lodge in the Amazon Basin (*Agua Boa Amazon Lodge*, www.aguaboamazonlodge.com), and there have long been a few outliers who bring long rods along on trips dominated by traditional anglers, but the overall activity to date has been minimal. Not anymore. I predict that, going forward, peacock bass fly fishing will emerge as a distinct category of fly fishing tourism, like Atlantic salmon fishing and tarpon fishing. Move over, traditional anglers with your woodchoppers! Fly fishermen are going to start challenging your dominance of the Amazon.

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It is worth noting here that Untamed Angling was asked by the Brazilian government to test-fish the Marié River this past fall, utilizing an equal number of fly and traditional-tackle anglers to see which group would catch the most and biggest fish. Apparently, government officials had some doubts about the efficacy of fly tackle and they did not want to allocate river access to a company whose plans to use it were unworkable. Not to worry. Rodrigo Salles says both groups caught roughly the same number and overall average size of fish, with fly anglers edging out traditional anglers slightly in the size category. At one point, he says, fly anglers had an enormous double hookup of peacock bass on the fly. One of the fish weighed 25 pounds and the other weighed 23 pounds! The test lasted only 10 days and employed only a handful of anglers, so the results are far from scientifically valid. Still, they ratify what our group proved, namely, that fly tackle works like gangbusters on big peacock bass.

As for the way our group fished, we spent most of our time in lagoons and lakes off the main stem of the river, utilizing floating and intermediate sinking lines, 40- to 50-pound leaders, and very large flies. Untamed Angling has brought in two English-speaking guides from Argentina and two from Brazil to supervise each boat, but the real guides (that is, those who know where and how to fish) are the Indian guides, who are also assigned to each boat. As a member of Untamed Angling's first group to fish the Marié River, I expected the relationship between the two guides on each skiff to be a bit awkward, but that was not the case at all. The Argentinean and Brazilian guides all knew enough Portuguese to communicate easily with the Indians, who were uniformly polite and friendly. They were also clearly very intelligent and comfortable with the operation of the electric and outboard engines. The ones I fished with showed a keen interest in the GPS device on board, too. It will not surprise me to see some of them, in time, step up to supervising boats themselves.

All of that said, the guiding on this

trip was a work in progress. In my view, the Argentinean and Brazilian guides made far too much noise with the electric motors, over-steering them to the point of annoyance while also scaring the fish. The constant whirr, whirr, whirr of electric motors being turned this way and that ranks as one of my greatest beefs, right up there with the guides' reluctance to shift from the use of the electric motor to the use of the pole each boat had. To be sure, I fished each day with an angler who was left-handed and I am right-handed, and that made it difficult for us both to fish a shoreline with a guide standing on the poling platform. Still, I believe we



could have fished a lot more places and, in shallow water, caught a lot more fish if the guides had been ready to switch from the electric motor to the pole in shallow water. As it turned out, the only poling that was done in any boat I fished was the poling I did myself one day to illustrate the value of switching from the electric in shallow water. Admittedly, we didn't catch anything while I was poling, but we did see fish within casting range instead of just watching wakes develop in the distance.

It would be wrong and unfair to make too much of the poling issue because, again, our group was the first one into the Marié. And think about it: where would a guide from Argentina or Brazil learn how to pole a Florida-style flats skiff for peacock bass? It is slam-dunk sure that Untamed Angling will solve this problem quickly. In the meantime, look at the catch record we established! Who in their right mind can seriously complain about the guiding after a trip

A Word about Pinawaca Flies

■ One of the truly absorbing things about the Indians of the Marié River is their local tradition of fly fishing for peacock bass. Indeed, what has been discovered about their approach to fly fishing for peacocks may cause historians of fly fishing to revise their theories about who really invented the sport and when. And it's conceivable that some reassessment will be in order about the first practitioners of Tenkara fishing, too.

Untamed Angling, it seems, has uncovered evidence that the Indians here have long used what they call *pinawaca* flies made from dried strips of wood to attract and catch peacock bass. They also use the colorful flower from a local tree as a fly at times. Both flies bear a remarkable resemblance to modern flies, complete with thread wrapped around the shank of the hook to hold materials in place. The fly that turned out to work best for me in my own fishing was roughly the same size and shape as a *pinawaca* fly.

The technique the Indians use is to position themselves on the front of a dugout canoe with a *pinawaca* fly attached to a short, stout stick (in effect a tenkara rod) by line made from wood bark.

As the dugout is quietly paddled along, the Indian waves the fly back and forth through the water in front of him, occasionally slapping the water with the stick to arouse any nearby peacocks to strike.

When a peacock strikes, the Indian points the stick straight at the fish and yanks backward. If this isn't fly fishing, then what is it?

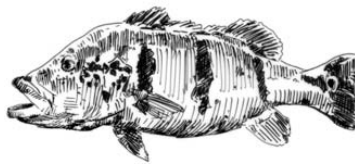
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like that.

As for how we caught our fish, we did it mostly by cruising slowly down shorelines and sandbars, casting toward structures such as fallen trees and flooded bushes. Points and narrow passes were particularly good places to cast. In shallow water, the trick was to start stripping immediately. In deep water, it was often best to let your fly sink a moment. Roughly 30 percent of the fish I caught took my fly visibly; the rest took it after my fly had sunk into the dark tannin-stained water and disappeared. Both ways, takes were uniformly breathtaking. A peacock bass, particularly a big one, takes your fly like a freight train. Wham! No warning. No holds barred. Technically, you are supposed to set the hook on a peacock bass using an exaggerated line strip (or tarpon set), but in practice you pretty much hold on for dear life as the line races out through your rod guides. Burnt fingers were rife on this trip. Finger guards were at a premium by the end of the week. I know I used up close to a half dozen. Do not think of coming on this trip without a pocketful of finger guards.

One problem we all had was the tendency of hooked fish to head straight for downed trees and brush. We all quickly learned to ratchet up the pressure quickly on smaller fish and pull them back, making full use of the backbone provided by 40- and 50-pound leaders. With larger fish, that was impossible. All you could do was loosen the drag and let the fish exhaust itself in the brush, at which point the Indian guide assigned to the boat would leap into the water and, often as not, retrieve it. Fortunately, all of my big fish but one were hooked in open water where I could land them unassisted. The one that dashed into the trees got away, but he did leave a haunting after-image in my mind because I saw him when he took my fly. I honestly believe he weighed in the high 20s, crowding the current all-tackle world record for this species (which is quietly known to have been caught in the Marié, by the way, no matter what the IGFA Record Book says). That giant fish will forever be etched in my mind, I'm sure.

One interesting wrinkle in the fishing was provided by head guide Gerson Kavamoto, who is developing a list of places where the big fish congregate in the middle of lakes, usually on shallow bars. I caught one of my biggest fish with Gerson on a mid-lagoon flat, and that same morning I had two other behemoths swirl behind my fly. Unfortunately, it was cloudy that day; Gerson told me in sunny weather we could have sight-cast to those fish, a prospect that ups the attraction of fly fishing for peacocks somewhere just this side of the stratosphere. I am not sure what you could do standing up that would rival the excitement of sight fishing for 20-pound peacocks. I got a taste of what that would be like my second day with Gerson when he took my fishing partner and me to a long, shallow flat where we



both sight-cast to small peacocks, as well as to some mammoth catfish that did not respond to our offerings. Those two experiences with Gerson, I think, point in the direction Untamed Angling will be moving with this fishing. I believe it will be captivating and addictive, and, assuming they can solve some problems they face on the Marié, it will make this fishery a fixture on the fishing travel scene for years.

So, what are those problems Untamed Angling faces? The main one is the cost of outfitting this destination. Currently, the only viable way to get anglers in and out of the Marié River is via eight-passenger floatplane, and a single round-trip charter costs an astonishing \$11,000. Do the math. The charter alone eats up \$1,375 of the fee an angler pays

to fish here. Then there is the cost of fuel, guides, skiffs, food, and on and on. The fee this year to fish the Marié River was pegged at \$5,950, plus an Indian Community fee of \$595. Rodrigo Salles says he envisions the fee rising to roughly \$7,000 next year, and that figure likely does not include the community fee. Will the market bear that kind of cost? Will even \$7,000 be enough to cover the cost of outfitting this destination? A key factor here is Untamed Angling's proposal to build an airstrip in the area that can accommodate wheeled aircraft capable of transferring 12 anglers at a time, along with needed fresh food and other supplies. Indeed, 12 anglers coming and going more cheaply than eight anglers changes the financial picture entirely, though it does create another problem, namely, how do you disperse 12 anglers at a time up and down a river that does not have a lot of lagoons and lakes where big fish tend to aggregate? With only eight anglers in camp for our trip, most of us experienced runs in the morning of anywhere from a half hour to more than an hour. How much longer can you make a run without negatively impacting the overall experience of a trip?

The dispersal problem is not rooted in lack of river access, mind you, because Untamed Angling has access to more than 350 miles of the Marié and Turi Rivers, and there is a good chance the company will get an additional 150 miles next year. What the company has to do is find more good fishing spots, perhaps by chopping into currently blocked lagoons and lakes and by finding places to fish in the main rivers themselves. Right now, Untamed Angling is not fishing the rivers at all, calling them unfishable. Frankly, I do not think that will prove to be the case as guides have time to prospect around sandbars and large brush tangles along the banks.

Ultimately, I'm sure Untamed Angling will solve the cost and angler-dispersal problems it faces on the Marié. Witness the near-miracles Untamed Angling achieved at Tsimane, where flash floods and disease worries initially clouded the prospects for success. Years later, Tsimane is one of the most beloved

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fly fishing destinations in the world, and that is true despite an undercurrent of griping about costs, late arrival of the sabalo, and so on.

I predict something similar will evolve on the Marié River of Brazil. This river is one of the best big-fish rivers left in the world. It's located in a pristine part of the world where well-meaning people are trying to craft a strategy to lessen the impact of change on indigenous people. It is an enormous privilege to be able to

visit a place like this at all, much less wave a long rod over water like this. I'm ready to cut Untamed Angling a lot of slack as they craft a strategy to make this trip sustainable, and I think that is the attitude you should have at this point toward booking a trip to the Marié River. Just be careful and not let your fears take over. I've been on a lot of fishing trips over the last 27 years, and this one was special. Enjoy!—*Don Causey*
Postscript: The Fly Shop in Redding,

California, is currently the exclusive agent for this trip, and that is a plus because The Fly Shop has a long and distinguished history of stepping up to the plate in those rare instances when things have gone wrong for anglers they have booked. Interestingly, as this was written, owner Mike Michelak said fully half the available space for next year on the Marié is already spoken for. You can get more information at: www.theflyshop.com. Tel. 800-669-3474.

Briefly Noted

Things to Do . . . Places to Go . . . New Developments

■ Remember Honor Roll subscriber Lee Ann Ross's report last month about an American angler in Chile who was injured in a fall and needed major medical help, followed by medical evacuation? Ultimately, if Lee Ann herself had not intervened to get the man home, it is not clear how he would have ever made it back to his home hospital of choice. The paperwork tangles were monumental, the pain and confusion unbelievable. Well, contrast that ordeal to what happened recently when an angler became gravely ill on **Christmas Island** in the Pacific. He, too, needed medical evacuation, but the difference is he was a member of Global Rescue, the medical and security evacuation provider we recommend. The following is from the Mission Summary provided to us by Global Rescue:

"Global Rescue member John Bates of Billings, Montana, traveled to Kiritimati on a much-anticipated fishing trip over the summer. Late one evening, he fell seriously ill at his lodge. His symptoms included weakness, high fever, an inability to walk, and difficulty breathing. Dr. Gordon Cox, a retired pathologist traveling with Mr. Bates, contacted Global Rescue for help when Mr. Bates was unable to do so. Because of its remote location, Kiritimati presents challenging communication issues. Communication on the island is very poor, with the only access provided via the island's 'communications center,' and even then in limited fashion.

"The Global Rescue medical team determined that Mr. Bates's complex medi-

cal history meant that he was particularly sensitive to the symptoms he was experiencing, with a life-threatening risk of sepsis, in a remote location where proper



care was not available. It was clear that Mr. Bates's condition necessitated evacuation from the island to receive needed care. With no time to waste in obtaining the best care for Mr. Bates, Global Rescue physicians recommended an immediate medical evacuation from Christmas Island to a hospital in Honolulu, Hawaii, for medical treatment. It was determined that this was the closest, best hospital for treatment under the circumstances.

"Following a brief hospitalization where he received stabilizing care, Mr. Bates was able to travel home to Montana. He made it home safe and sound, praising the efficiency of the medevac team and thanking Global Rescue for its role in his medical care. Mr. Bates had the following to say about his ordeal: 'First, I would suggest to the tour com-

pany I was traveling with, which books trips to Christmas Island, that they mandate that anyone going to fish in a remote area like Christmas Island sign up with Global Rescue. You're nuts if you go someplace like Christmas Island and don't have Global Rescue in your back pocket. Second, I'd suggest that someone in your group investigate the communications technology available at any destination. When in doubt, have a satellite phone, acquired specifically for the purpose of the trip, to provide a clear line of communication in case of emergency. It was Dr. Cox, in fact, who had suggested Global Rescue to me. I looked at the information and thought maybe I should join up. I'm very grateful that I did. I'm here, and I've got all of my limbs. I'm glad I had you guys. Having seen what you can do, I'm a believer. Global Rescue's follow-up system certainly makes you feel you're being tended to. It becomes apparent that they're on top of things, and that's important."

Postscript: Individual subscribers who want to become members of, and fishing professionals who want to become partners with, Global Rescue can get more information at: <http://globalrescue.com/anglingreport/>

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■ It's been a while since we checked in on Brigadoon Lodge in **Georgia**. The place is famous, you may recall, for its beauty and charm and, of course, its 30-plus-inch brown trout. That's not

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counting the owner/manager of the place as an attraction, the indomitable Rebekah Stewart. Under her hand, Brigadoon has earned a quiet reputation as one of the most beautiful and exclusive trout lodges in the Southeast. If you haven't been there, go this fall and file a report so the rest of us can enjoy what you saw and did there.

The last new thing at Brigadoon Lodge that we told you about was Rebekah's launch of Flyline Wine, a carefully selected collection of privately labeled wines from California. Originally limited in distribution to the lodge itself and to guests of the lodge who enjoyed what they drank there and wanted more afterward, Flyline Wines are now available at restaurants and retail shops throughout the Southeast, as well as in Colorado, Montana, and California. Included in the collection are a Chardonnay, a Cabernet Sauvignon, a Pinot grigio, and a Pinot noir.

One thing we haven't told you about is Rebekah's decision a while back to stop hosting regular fishing clients overnight at Brigadoon, deferring to the services on offer at a nearby 100-year-old Inn, Glen Ella Springs. The chef there is a four-star personality, Rebekah tells us. She and clients of Brigadoon have apparently both been happy with the new setup, but this past spring Rebekah says she was overwhelmed by a desire to fix up the old place, and that has led her to create a special lodging package at the original Brigadoon Lodge for groups of six or more who agree to stay for a minimum of two days of fishing and two nights lodging. The cost is \$600 per person, guides and gear not included. Here is how this new program came about:

"I gave up the lodging business because it was far too costly to keep the place up," she wrote us near press time. "But then, unexpectedly, I wound up spending the summer here. I came the first week of June prepared to do a week or two of spring cleaning. I'm still here, though, and it's been almost four months! My cleanup turned into a renovation. Then while I was waiting for weeks on end for contractor after contractor, I discovered Internet shopping. So . . . I redecorated. The new furniture looked so good I had

to paint; then the interior looked so good I had to stain the exterior, then the decks. The old lodge has never looked better! It looks so good I have reconsidered my decision to stop taking care of guests here at the lodge. I've decided, at least for a while, to do everything involved in taking care of six or more guests who agree to my two-day minimum. Is that comprehensible to anyone but me?"

Now, I ask you: Does this not sound like a nice place to spend a few days, even without considering the quality of the angling? On that score, here is what Rebekah had to say in a recent e-mail to previous customers: "I hope everyone had an enjoyable summer. Fall started early in the Blue Ridge. Really early. Like in August. We have had the coolest summer on record. I have been at Brigadoon since



early June and have had a fire almost every night. There has been no air conditioning usage at all. The water temperature of the Soque River has been around 60 to 62 degrees all summer. Unheard of. The fish are loving it. Me too. At this writing, the leaves have already started turning. The handful of anglers who fished here this summer caught record-sized fish and dozens of them. I'm pretty sure that each one caught at least one fish over 24 inches. A Brigadoon regular, Tim Morrison, caught over 60 in one day with 12 of those measuring more than 24 inches. Marty Wood, another regular, also had a spectacular couple of days and caught more than we could count."

Postscript: To book or find out more, the web address is: www.brigadoonlodge.com.

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■ We've published several reports in the last year about the **Hawaiian Island of Molokai** as a place to catch big bonefish. The most recent report, by subscriber Mike Lucey in April 2014, was an outright rave full of indications that he caught more than 60 bonefish in five days, including at least one that weighed 10 pounds. Well, subscriber Doug Borland of Sitka, Alaska, believes there is something wrong with that picture. Specifically, he thinks we need to ask what kind of tackle and techniques Lucey used to catch all those fish, because he knows that kind of success on the fly is nigh unto impossible. He writes:

"I am a longtime *Angling Report* subscriber, and I read with great interest the glowing report by Mike Lucey in the April 2014 issue regarding his trip to Molokai. For information purposes, I am an Alaskan who owns a second home on Molokai, and I have been traveling there since the early 1980s, spending up to three months each year. As a lifelong and avid fly fisher, I spend a fair amount of time in the waters there targeting Molokai bones and other reef species. I spent perhaps 30 days doing that this past winter.

"The results of my years of experience chasing Molokai bonefish are quite different from Mr. Lucey's. My experience has been more along the lines of your previous report by Coach Duff, the respected bonefish guide from Oahu, who summed up his thoughts on Molokai by calling it 'graduate-school bonefishing so difficult and unpredictable that I would not take a client there.' So, what is up here?

"First of all, there was no information regarding how Mr. Lucey was fishing—fly or spinning? Maybe with bait? As an aside here, I think it really should be made clear in every report what methods and means the reporting angler is using. I hope this was just an oversight. Secondly, I personally know all of the folks that Lucey named in his report: Rob Arita (a good guy and guide from Kauai; Joe Kalima (his boat-driver); and Walter Naki and Eddie Tanaka (both are outstanding local 'Kahunas' who know Molokai's waters top to bottom. I have fished and hunted with all of these guys for 30-plus

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years. Plus, I am a friend of the only Molokai-based fly fishing guide, Capt. Clay Ching of Hallelujah Hou Fishing (www.hallelujahhoufishing.com).

“Since most of us who bonefish Molokai frequently and regularly (and we are a close-knit group of passionate fly fishermen) have never experienced anything remotely like the ‘success’ Mr. Lucey had, I think that it would be a disservice to your readers if you allow them to form an opinion, or plan a trip, based upon what seems to be a gross anomaly. Capt. Clay tells me that his best day ever on Molokai saw him landing seven bones. Personally, I have never reached 10 hook-ups, much less landed 10 fish in any day, and I say that after spending literally hundreds of days there on the water!

“Your readers need to know that Joe Kalima, Mr. Lucey’s boatman, is a former local Molokai commercial fisherman, who targeted bonefish along with many other inshore reef and flats fishes until his commercial markets disappeared. He is an expert at catching Molokai’s deep-water bones. He is also a salt-of-the-earth, stand-up man who has my utmost respect. However, the method he commonly uses (as do most locals) is to anchor alongside a deep channel and ‘chum’ bonefish in from the blue water, where he fishes for them with bait using conventional tackle. Typically, he does this in waters too deep to effectively fly fish.

“I guess it’s conceivable that one can hook 80 bonefish and land 60 in five days of fishing, in mostly cloudy conditions, the way Lucey did, but it is beyond my comprehension and for sure beyond my ability to do so with a fly rod! I do know that a fly fishing friend who went out with Joe this past fall told me that Joe anchored and ‘chummed’ and went on to offer him a baitcasting outfit when fly fishing was not working. This is no knock on Joe, who, like almost all local Molokai residents, lives a simple subsistence lifestyle and can’t conceive of catch-and-release fishing, as he needs to feed his family. The idea of sport-fishing and catch-and-release are simply foreign concepts. The locals also do a fair amount of subsistence netting for bonefish and other species on the reefs, which is one

reason the bones are relatively few and far between.

“The dozen or so frequent fly fishers on Molokai, myself included, uniformly agree that Molokai offers the most challenging bonefishing we have ever experienced, and, collectively, we have fished from the Florida Keys to Christmas Island and nearly everywhere in between. The typical day on Molokai offers 20 to 30 mph winds. I have been literally blown off the water when gusts reach 35-plus. At that point, wind waves of over a foot simply knock you down! And, since tailing bonefish are a rarity anywhere on Molokai, if the sun is not out, you just cannot fish, unless blind casting into deep water is your cup of tea. Most bonefish on Molokai frequent the edges of the deep, around coral heads, where landing one in



three is a great average, as there is no way to stop the inevitable run into the coral. Add to all that the deepness of the flats, where wading often is waist high—even on my six-foot-four frame—and you can see what the challenge is about.

“This spring a group of my friends, all seasoned world travelers and experienced bonefishers, joined me for a week on Molokai. We fished with Joe and on our own, and three of four went home without landing a single bone, given the weather and sun issues, the coral cutoffs, the refusals, and the simply blank days we experienced. So, my advice to fellow subscribers is to come for the unique experience of Molokai, the quiet, the authentic laid-back Molokai lifestyle that is rare in Hawaii today. But don’t expect to catch a bunch of bonefish. On the other

hand, if you are process oriented, and not concerned about numbers, Molokai does offer the opportunity to target big bones in difficult conditions that will test any fly fisher who loves a challenge.”

Postscript: We like Mike Borland’s suggestion that we identify the tackle and methods used by anglers who file reports with us, particularly when the success reported is out of the norm. We’ll do that in the future. □

■ In previous issues, we have told you all about the reckless overharvest of stripers along the **Northeast coast**. The unrelenting slaughter of a fragile resource that faces a host of other challenges has to rank as one of the most senseless things we have done recently as a nation. It makes you wonder if reason will ever play a dominant role in our affairs. What occasions that conservation *cri de coeur* is the following report I just received from Duncan Barnes, former editor of *Field & Stream*. Some positive action appears imminent (finally!), Duncan says, but stripers are far from safe. He writes:

“The recreational catch of striped bass of all sizes along much of the northeast Atlantic Coast has been steadily declining for the past 10 years due to poor spawning success in Chesapeake Bay, worsening habitat, forage issues, and unrelenting fishing pressure. Reports from anglers, guides, and charter boat skippers who regularly fish good striper water have been discouraging. From Maine’s Casco Bay down along the Massachusetts North Shore to the Cape Cod Canal and Nantucket Sound, and points south into Long Island Sound and out to Montauk—the numbers of fish just aren’t there.

“Longtime fishermen are especially concerned about the lack of small “schoolie” stripers from the strong 2011 spawn in Chesapeake Bay and about the opportunistic targeting of prime spawning-size female fish. Over a period of many weeks this past summer at Block Island off the Rhode Island coast, charter and commercial boats hammered night after night on pods of big cow bass, taking thousands of fish in what one angling observer called “a greedy, bloody slaughter.”

“Some three million anglers pursue

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striped bass along the Atlantic Coast, generating an estimated \$6.5-plus billion in economic activity versus about \$250 million for the commercial fishery. Understanding the socioeconomics of the fishery, six coastal states already manage striped bass as game fish, and Stripers Forever, a conservation organization, thinks it's past time for the other coastal states to do the same. So far that's a tough sell. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC, www.asmfc.org) continues to 'manage' in favor of commercial fishermen, opting for maximum yield in the face of a declining striper population instead of reducing harvest quotas to increase the biomass and managing the resource in a sustainable way.

"Fortunately, the tide may finally be starting to turn. Although insisting that striped bass are not being over-fished, ASMFC has faced up to the increase in striper mortality by proposing three options to reduce the recreational and commercial harvests coast-wide: (1) a 25 percent reduction taken in 2015; (2) a 17 percent reduction within three years; or (3) a seven percent sequential reduction for three consecutive years—along with a suite of options for bag size, slot, and trophy-size limits for recreational fishermen and harvest quota reductions for the commercial fishery.

"At public meetings held by the ASMFC in September from Maine to North Carolina, most anglers and guides have enthusiastically supported taking the conservation measures immediately. But a strong contingent of charter and head boat skippers whose shortsighted economic interest in striped bass doesn't always equate with sustainable resource management argue that any catch reduction should be dragged out over three years, or not taken at all. They also contend that their customers will stop booking trips if each one of them can't take home one or more big bass on every outing.

"As this is written, ASMFC is scheduled to announce its decision as to which of the three above options it will pursue in Mystic, Connecticut, on October 29. Just be aware that no matter what is decided, striper anglers are in for more lean fishing

years, especially if those 2011 year class fish don't start showing up everywhere and the managers don't come up with a plan mandating the release of a whole lot more big female breeders."

□

■ Recently, a subscriber dropped us a note asking about that area of **Colorado** known as South Park. We immediately sent the note out to our top source of information about fishing in the Rocky Mountains, Bill Owen of New Mexico. Here is what he had to say about South Park:

"South Park is an immense grass-land basin southwest of Denver that is surrounded by 14,000-foot peaks and crisscrossed by some of the finest trout streams of Colorado. It is one of three similarly named large, high-altitude basins in Colorado. The others are North



Park (North Platte River headwaters) and Middle Park (Colorado River drainage). South Park encompasses roughly 900 square miles draining the tributary headwaters of the South Platte River.

"Though South Park is located a mere 60 miles southwest of Denver, it is a world apart. The basin's largest community is Fairplay, the county seat of Park County. It's located at an elevation of 10,000 feet and has a population of 610 hearty souls.

"For the fly fisherman South Park offers a full range of angling challenges. The mountain headwaters of the drainage offer many publicly accessible streams for generally small and wild trout. However, in the low-gradient topography of the 'park,' the streams change character. These lower reaches are generally small

or medium-size sinuous meadow streams with healthy trout populations. Large brown and rainbow trout may be found in these waters, particularly in the spring and fall when spawners migrate upstream from reservoirs that supply the domestic water needs of Denver.

"There are a number of public and private waters on these meadow streams of the Park. More than 50 miles of South Park's streams have been designated Gold Medal water. The designation is based upon State Division of Wildlife biologic field assessments. Gold Medal waters are defined as being able to produce 60 pounds of trout per acre, and containing at least 12 trout per acre measuring 14 inches or larger. Only 322 miles of Colorado's 9,000 miles of trout streams carry the Gold Medal designation.

"Over the last 20 years I have had a chance to fish many of the public and private waters of South Park. This is one of my favorite places to fish because of the scenery and wild feeling one gets of vast open meadows surrounded by soaring peaks. On a recent July visit to the area, South Park was filled with pronghorn antelope and it was easy to visualize how it must have looked 150 years ago when it was grazed by buffalo hunted by the native Ute tribe.

"In addition to the scenery, the various streams offer variety. Many of the small tributaries have unobstructed banks that provide no back-casting obstacles and thus are perfectly suited to novice anglers. Other stretches offer technical presentation challenges to educated trout, some them of trophy size.

"As one might expect, the weather at high altitude can change on a dime. South Park is famous for seasonal strong winds, and it is also subject to the typical Rocky Mountain summer afternoon thunderstorms. In my view, the potential for extreme weather adds to the experience. One of my favorite memories of South Park occurred one October afternoon as I was fishing the South Fork on the State of Colorado's 63 Ranch Lease. I remember trying to calculate how many more casts I could make to some large migrating browns as a snow squall, accompanied by lightning, swiftly approached from the

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west. I made it back to my car as the first flakes covered my windshield.

“There are three major stream systems that collect the high mountain tributaries and result in the larger meadow fisheries of the Park. These are the South Fork of the South Fork of the Platte, the Middle Fork of the South Fork of the Platte, and Tarryall Creek. These stream systems flow through a checkerboard of public and private property. Some of the private reaches in each of these systems are accessible on a daily rod fee basis through either the South Park Fly Fishers (www.southparktrout.com) or the Rocky Mountain Angling Club (www.rman-angling.com). The latter is a membership club open to the public with the payment of an initiation fee, annual dues, and daily rod fees for the specific days you book on one of the streams they control. RMAC currently has seven leased properties in South Park, as well as many other leases elsewhere in Colorado and southern Wyoming. I described RMAC in detail in the March, 2013 issue of *The Angling Report*.

“The eight private leases administered by the South Park Fly Fishers are available on a daily rod fee basis without membership fees. Reservations for South Park Fly Fishers can be made directly through their website, which is administered by Gary Nichols of the Park County Recreation Development Office.

“Gary Nichols is a third-generation native of Colorado, and he is a very knowledgeable angler of South Park’s waters. He prepares an annual, must-read guide to both the public and private waters of South Park. It provides comprehensive information on access and contains a wealth of suggestions about seasonal angling tactics based on anticipated seasonal factors such as spawning migration timing. Currently, Nichols’s guide is only available by e-mail request at GNichols@parkco.us. Next year, the guide should be available on the Park County website at: www.parkco.us.

“For the non-angling companion, South Park has some interesting possibilities. There are many nearby trails for the hiker or mountain biker. Whitewater rafting on the Arkansas River (a Gold Medal river in its own right) is only about a

45-minute drive southwest in Buena Vista. Fine dining and shopping is available year-round 35 miles north in Breckenridge. Closer to Fairplay, there are some ghost-town ruins, as well as remnants of the historic mining railroad roundhouse.

“A good reference work on the fly fishing opportunities of the South Platte system is the 2005 edition of *A Fly-Fishing Guide to the South Platte River* written by noted guide Pat Dorsey. Dorsey’s book (available from Amazon and in various fly shops) also covers the tailwaters created by downstream reservoirs serving Denver. Enjoy!”—*Bill Owen*.

□

■ Here’s a question for you. What kind of length restrictions does **Finnair** place on items brought into the passenger cabin as part of their carry-on allowance? The



question is from subscriber J. D. Reynolds, who says he is flying to Russia on Finnair next spring and wants to bring a fly rod tube into the cabin with him.

We checked the Finnair website ourselves and noted that the maximum dimensions of a carry-on item are 22 inches x 18 inches x 10 inches, which pretty much rules out all rod tubes we know of except, maybe, those special five-piece rod tubes. Of course, this is not the full answer to Reynolds’s question, as airlines allow all kinds of exceptions to their carry-on rules depending on what an item is. They also place additional restrictions on some items if they appear to flight personnel as threatening in any way. So, the real question is this: How does Finnair behave toward customers who attempt to carry rod cases into the passenger cabin? Perhaps, because of where they fly, they

are more lenient toward rod cases than other kinds of items? Or maybe they view them the way a lot of other airlines view them—that is, as potential cudgels or clubs. If you have had experience in this area, please weigh in at: doncausey@anglingreport.com.

□

■ And, finally, in recent issues, we have reported quite a bit on the near collapse of bonefish in the **Florida Keys**. And so have other writers, because all indications are that something bad has indeed happened down that way. The establishment of Bonefish Tarpon Trust (www.bonefishtarpontrust.org) is a direct outgrowth of this phenomenon. That said, you can imagine our surprise to receive the following note last month from occasional correspondent Bill Horn who lives part of the year in the Florida Keys and devotes a significant amount of time to keeping up to speed on bonefish in the Keys:

“They just wrapped up the Marathon Bonefish Tournament,” Horn wrote in late September, “and the participants this year caught record numbers of bones, which surprised everyone. Capt. Albert Ponzoa’s team won with 63 bones in three days. Last year he won with 16. Collectively, the team boated 33 bonefish one day, topping the all-time one-day catch record previously set by Harry Snow Jr. some 40 years ago. Everyone reported seeing lots of bonefish spread widely in the Marathon–Big Pine Key area. Most of the fish were in the three- to five-pound class. No big fish were seen or caught, indicating older fish in the Keys may have been killed off and only now are the three- to four-year-old fish making a reappearance. For years, small bones (one- to two-pounders) have not been part of the Keys fishery, so it looks like traditional-size Keys fish are reappearing. If this trend holds up, it creates more mysteries for us to solve.”

As this issue went to press, we had calls out to Bonefish Tarpon Trust for comment, but no one had gotten back to us. As we wait to hear what they have to say about this, we aren’t going to speculate on what the recent results mean or portend. For sure, they can’t be a bad sign, though. Hip. Hip. Hooray!

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• 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 to publish excerpts in the newsletter of Angler Network Forms as received without 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 find one inside this issue of your newsletter. Alternately, you can file a report online by going to our website, www.anglingreport.com, and clicking on "File a Report." For details about how to do custom searches for Angler Network Reports on our website, see page 2 of this issue.

■ Subscriber David Kelly gives a rave review to the smallmouth bass and brook trout fishing arranged for him in **Maine** this past July 15 to 18 by guide Kevin McKay of Maine Fishing Adventures (www.maineanglingadventures.com). "I had action all day each day of my trip," Kelly writes. "I caught dozens of smallmouths on the Penobscot River ranging from 12 to 19 inches. These were strong, healthy fish with tons of fight in them. Plus, one evening McKay took me to a remote pond to catch some native brook trout. I caught a number of beautiful brookies, including one that measured almost 19 inches."

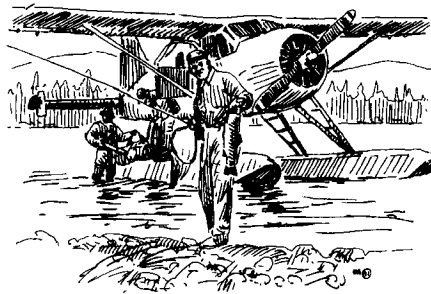
Kelly says the smallmouth fishing was conducted from a drift boat and jet boat, while the brook trout fishing was done from a canoe. He says poppers and streamers such as Conehead Woolly Buggers were the top producers on smallmouths while Hexegenia dry flies were the ticket for brookies. He lists as highlights of the trip the stunning beauty of the brook trout he caught and the pristine environment in which he took them. "There are no 'stockies' here," he writes. "These were all 100 percent native brookies such as are found in very few places nowadays."

Kelly gives the cost of his four-day trip as \$1,500, and he warmly recommends the experience to fellow subscribers. "I have fished with guides from Maine to Montana, and have never fished with a better guide than Kevin McKay," he concludes. "Every one of the trips he has arranged for me for the last six years has produced terrific fishing. Kevin just never fails to put clients on lots of fish. On top of that, there is great scenery in his area, and he offers incredible food. His breakfasts are legendary. Some guides are too serious, some are impatient, and some are just not enjoyable to be around. Kevin, on

the other hand, loves what he does and it shows. I've always had a great time with him, and I am looking forward to my seventh trip with him in 2015. I strongly recommend him if you're coming to Maine!"

□

■ Subscriber Harry Peterson is very pleased with the daily fly-outs and every



other aspect of his stay this past July at Rainbow River Lodge in **Alaska** (www.rainbowriverlodge.com). The lodge provides fly-out access to various famous rivers flowing into and out of Iliamna Lake. "Rainbow were numerous," Peterson writes, "with the largest ranging upward of 24 inches. Dolly Varden were abundant in the Iliamna River, as were grayling in the Gibraltar River and elsewhere."

Peterson said the daily schedule revolved around flying out each day to a different river, where he either float-fished or waded. He says the weather in late June ranged from the 40s at night to about 60 during most days. It was rainy and overcast a couple of days.

"The surroundings at the lodge were spectacular, and the staff very professional," he writes. "Good food and outstanding guides. These are people who like what they are doing and work very well together. The lodge accommodates

12 guests, and all of us commented on the relaxed atmosphere and the high level of coordination among the pilots, guides, and other staff members. Rainbow River Lodge is a very attractive place for guides, so they attract and manage to keep the best available."

Peterson gives the cost of his trip as about \$7,450, plus \$465 for the charter from Anchorage. "If you want outstanding fishing to large rainbows in beautiful surroundings, this is the place to go, even if only once in a lifetime," he concludes.

□

■ Italian subscriber Riccardo Pinelli says his week with Avalon (www.cubanfishingcenters.com) at Cayo Largo in **Cuba** this past August was simply unforgettable. He says one boat during the week he was there caught nine permit in six days. Collectively, the three boats that were in operation that week caught a total of 13. In all, four Grand Slams were taken. "This was a dream trip, thanks to the quality of the fishery and the professionalism of the staff," Pinelli writes. "I will never forget this week."

Pinelli says he booked his trip through an Avalon representative in Italy, Sandro Mediani in Palagano, Italy (sandro.mediani@avalon-europe.com). He gives the cost of the trip as 3,000 but does not indicate if the currency used was euros or dollars. He warmly recommends the trip to fellow subscribers. "Great location, great time, great fishing!" he says in conclusion.

□

■ Subscriber William Boyle says he had three exciting takes and three refusals from tarpon this past July on a trip with **Tampa, Florida**, guide Greg Peterson of Headshot Charters (www.headshotcharters.com). Boyle says they fished the flats on the north side of Tampa Bay. He says one of his takes was in only four feet of water,

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and it was particularly exciting. "It was my first blow-up of the year. A perfect rise on an ocean flat," he writes. "The big fish spooled my Billy Pate reel before we got the motor started!"

Boyle says his experience with the big tarpon drove home to him the limitations of a small arbor reel. He won't make that mistake again, he says. He goes on to give his guide, Greg Peterson, excellent ratings for his general fishing knowledge, his knowledge of the water, and his ability to communicate. "Two of my three fishing days were great," he writes, noting that storms drove them off the water one day. Boyle does not give the cost of his experience, but he does recommend it to fellow subscribers.

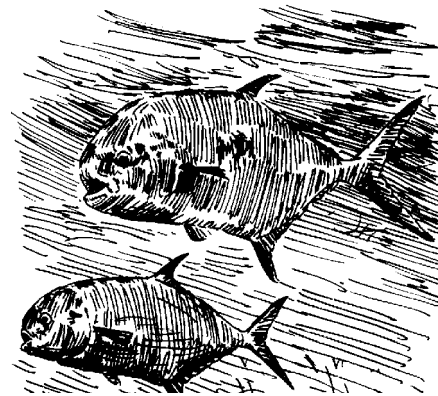
Controversy

■ The feedback on Farquhar just keeps coming in as a result of the first less-than-positive report we published several months ago. Here is the latest from Alexander Kennedy in England, who operates a fly fishing agency called Castaway Fly Fishing Company (www.castawayflyfishing.net, no relation to Flycastaway, the South African Company) and from subscriber Ben Pierce, who has fished Farquhar five times over the last three years:

Alexander Kennedy writes: During my trip to Farquhar at the end of April 2014 there was certainly a notable change in the fishing from our Castaway Fly Fishing visit in April 2012. There were fewer fish on the flats, particularly GTs, and even offshore the disappointing action was only compensated by the early arrival of some sailfish. It is significant that this coincides with the views already expressed by others in your August newsletter. The guides suggested that some weeks were good and others not so, and that we were simply unlucky. Our week, in fact, was the last week of the season, so there may have been an issue of fishing pressure from the previous weeks, and probably previous years. We also had the beginning of the monsoon, with strong winds every day, and this could have been a factor. Having said this, my group of Farquhar first-timers this year were sufficiently impressed by the fishing that we will be returning in 2015. Also, one of the group, having read your August article, said, "The fishing in our week was

not that bad, obviously not as good as in 2012, but not poor, and as far as the food being inedible, I also disagree. That was still my second-best trip in seawater. Guess which one was the best? Farquhar, 2012!"

Ben Pierce writes: I have now had the pleasure of fishing Farquhar with Fly-Castaway for five different weeks over the last three years. While it is a long way to travel from Montana, it has been worth it every time. This past March I took my whole family, my wife, three kids, and even a friend of the family who was new to the sport of fly fishing (and thus did not catch much). In one week we landed over 40 different species of fish on the fly. The diversity and the wilderness feel are the highlights for me, although it is hard



not to suggest that landing milkies, GTs, and goldens is not also the best part. Farquhar is challenging fishing if you are not an experienced saltwater spotter and fly caster. I have taken some intermediately skilled friends who were lured by photos of incredible diversity and were not able to connect with much. If the flats prove to be too challenging, then just offshore are many other species that can be teased up or trolled for. But if you are not a great angler, you might leave disappointed. I would say that if Flycastaway continues to limit the number of anglers and the number of weeks that the resource is used, then Farquhar will continue to be a top-ten saltwater destination for years to come. It is pristine, and there are no people for hundreds of miles. A few locals do harvest snapper and grouper on a pretty regular basis, but to my knowledge they don't target any of the major sportfishing species.

I do think eight anglers might be better than 10 per week here. And I know it is a challenge to work with IDC, the entity that manages the island for the Seychelles government. It is important that the resource is truly being rested when not in use by Fly-castaway. The accommodations are pretty simple on Farquhar Atoll, but a bathroom and AC in each room is really all you need, given the view from the front porch and lawn. My wife and I keep pushing for some double beds instead of singles and bunks, but no luck so far. In my view, the dinners have gotten better over the three years I have been going to Farquhar, while breakfasts and lunches are generally very simple and plain, as well as the same each day. They have added one picnic lunch each week, which is quite a treat when enjoyed somewhere on the atoll. The guides have always been good or great, and they work hard to get you into fish while paying attention to safety, which is key in an environment this remote. I have been told two new boats are being added in 2015. I think you have to go to Farquhar for the diversity and the wilderness feel. If you are determined to catch GTs, then you might not want to choose Farquhar, since they are finicky, move around a lot, and quickly get educated. The GTs are a heck of a lot wilder on Farquhar, however, than those you find on Christmas Island. If you are happy catching whatever comes along, you will have a blast on this atoll. We have always landed 30 to 40 different species in a week. In that regard, my friend Whitney Tilt has put together a good species guide you can use here. You can order a copy at: <http://www.prestophoto.com/bookstore/163455>.

Information Sought

■ *The Angling Report* has received an unconfirmed report that one or more subscribers headed to St. Brandon, north of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean, have had their trips cancelled recently after they arrived in Mauritius. Anyone having more information on these alleged cancellations is urged to check in. Write: doncausey@anglingreport.com.

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□ And Finally...

More Thoughts on Travel Insurance

by Lee Ann Ross

Don Causey Note: What kind of travel insurance should you buy when you book a fishing trip away from home? Do you need cancellation insurance? Baggage insurance maybe? Medical evacuation insurance? Oh, and what about medical insurance that will pay doctor and hospital claims outside the country? Indeed, travel insurance is at least as complicated as health and life insurance, and as a fishing newsletter, not an insurance newsletter, we don't pretend to be able to figure out for you just what you should (or should not) buy in the way of insurance before your next fishing trip. Legally, we are not allowed to advise you on that even if we wanted to and were capable of doing so. Enter Honor Roll subscriber Lee Ann Ross, who wrote our recent report about an angler who took a spill on a recent trip to Chile that left him partially paralyzed and in need of emergency surgery followed by medical evacuation. Getting the angler's insurance company to carry out the evacuation took 12 full days, you'll recall, and it happened then only because Lee Ann is a determined, compassionate woman who cared enough to get involved and bring her career experience as a Foreign Service Officer to bear on the situation. Well, Lee Ann has not stopped pushing forward on the travel insurance front. Now, she has weighed in with the following report on travel insurance generally, not just medical evacuation insurance. It is based on many hours of research she conducted so that she, herself, would have a better idea about what to buy and not to buy in the way of insurance on her next trip. Characteristically, she didn't simply hoard the insights she gained; she took the time to pass them all on. The report does not contain advice, mind you. Contact a licensed agent for insurance advice. This is just one *Angling*

Report subscriber sharing what she found out. Our hats off to Lee Ann Ross.

■ Travel insurance is made up of three basic parts: trip cancellation, medical expenses, and emergency evacuation. Combinations of these three components are usually bundled into a package policy when buying travel insurance. Carefully read your policy to determine your exact coverage.

There are many hidden pitfalls in bundled travel insurance, I have discovered, and I will point out as many



of them as I can in the following paragraphs. In order to fully understand what each component includes and how each component is priced, I have found it useful to seek out an insurance site that allows you to customize your insurance for any given trip based on your age, your destination, your special needs, and more. One site that allows this is Travel Guard (www.travelguard.com). The proper starting point on this website, I believe, is the "All Products" tab. This is in no way an endorsement of Travel Guard, by the way. I chose this company's website simply because it allows for customizable coverage. A similar analysis could be undertaken at other travel insurance websites.

Travel Insurance Products
Trip Cancellation Coverage:

Depending on the policy, trip cancellation coverage can include trip cancellation, trip interruption, trip delay, and baggage delay. Separate upgrades can be purchased for "cancel for any reason" or "additional unforeseen events." Different policies offer different levels of coverage.

Medical Expense: If you get sick on a trip, most medical coverage policies will reimburse for the services of a doctor or a nurse, hospital charges, X-rays, ambulance, prosthetics, physical therapy, and dental work. Adventure sports injuries are usually not covered, but an additional rider can be purchased. Read your policy carefully to see how preexisting conditions are covered. The first question to ask yourself is whether you need insurance against medical expenses or not. If your personal health insurance policy covers you anywhere in the world, you don't need this benefit. Just be aware that you will probably be required to pay any medical bills upfront and get reimbursed later. Most hospitals abroad do not have a contractual relationship with U.S. insurers. And here is an important warning: If you are on Medicare, you are NOT covered abroad. If you have a Medicare Supplement Policy, you may or may not be covered for an emergency abroad. Check your policy. Most travel insurance medical expense policies are written as secondary coverage. This means that your travel insurance carrier will reimburse you for expenses only after any other insurance carrier you have a policy with has paid their share. To be sure, you can change that secondary coverage to primary coverage on most customizable websites, and you can increase or decrease the amount of coverage you want. My advice to fellow subscribers is to pay very close attention to the medical coverage aspect of your

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next travel insurance policy. On a recent trip to Chile, the fellow traveler I told you about last month who broke his neck had secondary coverage, and he had to put \$42,000 in medical charges on three credit cards. It took a year of protracted negotiations and hours and hours on the phone to get his Medicare Supplement Policy to reimburse him. The travel insurance company only provided their part of the reimbursement after the Medicare Supplement Policy had paid. It was so complicated that he hired someone to deal with the insurance reimbursement while he focused on recovery.

Emergency Evacuation and Repatriation of Remains: This portion of a typical travel policy covers medical evacuation back to your home country. Aspects of this coverage that need to be analyzed carefully are: (a) Does the coverage start at the point of your accident or illness or at the closest hospital? (b) Does the policy transport you to the “nearest appropriate medical facility” wherever that might be, to the “nearest licensed medical facility” in your home country, or to your “home hospital of choice”? and (c) What is the dollar limit of the coverage? The bill for my fellow traveler’s private jet evacuation from Chile was \$123,000. Make sure you have enough coverage. Evacuation for security and or terrorism reasons is often not included but can be purchased separately. Again, read your policy carefully.

Coverage Prices

So, what will all these insurance products cost you on your next trip? That will depend, of course, on what you buy, but some figures I got from the Allianz Travel Insurance website (www.allianztravelinsurance.com) are illustrative. Allianz offers four different packages, priced at \$234, \$275, \$359, and \$485, for a one-week trip for a 63-year-old person going to Belize. The \$234 plan only covers trip cancellation on domestic trips. The \$485 plan provides \$1,000,000 in emergency evacuation coverage, \$50,000 in medical coverage, and a host of trip cancellation benefits. On

the Travel Guard website, there is a silver plan for \$303, a gold plan for \$362, and a platinum plan for \$558.

What do I conclude about all this? For starters, if one only has Medicare, I think it would be important to obtain primary medical coverage and to increase the amount of coverage. On a customizable website the cost of increasing medical coverage and changing that coverage from secondary to primary is minimal. Personally, I have full medical coverage abroad through my health insurance. And, as for cancellation insurance, I am willing to eat the \$5,000 or so it will cost me for a single trip if I have to cancel.

I can buy coverage for my airline tickets through the airlines for a few bucks. Also, if I pay for my ticket and my trip with my United Airlines credit card, I have some trip cancellation insurance built in. My biggest concern is emergency evacuation. I have lived and worked in the third world for over 30 years and I know how hard it is to get good medical help and how hard it is to arrange an evacuation. I’ve fished in Kamchatka, Mongolia, and Uganda—not places where I would like to rely on a standard travel insurance company for an emergency evacuation.

I have an annual emergency evacuation plan through Global Rescue instead, the company that Don Causey recommends and the company that is an *Angling Report* sponsor. Global Rescue is the only company that will provide field rescue in the event that you are in a remote location and cannot get to a local hospital on your own. They provide medical evacuations from anywhere in the world to your choice of home country hospital any time you are more than 160 miles from home. Finally, they have 24/7 medical advice from Johns Hopkins Hospital. This would be invaluable for a medical emergency in a remote fishing location. For those under the age of 75, an annual Global Rescue policy is \$329. They also have family rates.—Lee Ann Ross.

Don Causey Note: I did not urge Lee

Ann to say good things about Global Rescue. But her endorsement of the company’s service is welcome because she has a long personal history of handling various kinds of emergencies in third world environments. Certainly, she is right about the need

100th Permit Taken!



Art Hinckley with his 100th permit

■ Last month, you’ll recall, we filed a Special Report on the small clique of anglers who are trying to catch 100 permit on the fly. One of the anglers we mentioned was *Angling Report* subscriber Art Hinckley, who had notched 96 at press time last month, and he was on his way to Belize to fish on *The Rising Tide*, a mother ship, with Don Muelrath of Fly Fishing Adventures (www.flyfishbelize.com). Well, Art got his 97th, 98th, 99th, and 100th permit on that trip, and Muelrath sent us a photograph of Art holding it. Since we don’t run photographs in *The Angling Report*, we sent it to our artist, Gordon Allen, who promptly created the above sketch. Our hat is off to Art Hinckley for the accomplishment! Has anyone else moved up a notch? Remember, this is a race to catch 100 permit on the fly, in a flats environment only, no bait scent allowed! Check in with anything related to permit by writing: doncausey@anglingreport.com.

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to clarify whether your intended provider of medical evacuation service provides field rescue and where it promises to transport you in the event of a crippling injury or illness. The gold standard is “home hospital of choice,” and that is what Global Rescue provides. One thing Lee Ann does not say is that Global Rescue medical

and security evacuation service is not a regulated insurance product; it is a benefit one receives by becoming a member of Global Rescue.

The business model is analogous to that of Boat US, which provides its members emergency towing service, and AAA, which provides its members roadside assistance if their car

breaks down. All services by all three of these organizations are provided at no cost up to an agreed-upon value, so there is no worry about out-of-pocket expenses or delayed reimbursement. The maximum annual value of a Global Rescue membership is \$500,000. Amounts in excess of that are almost never necessary.

Back of the Book

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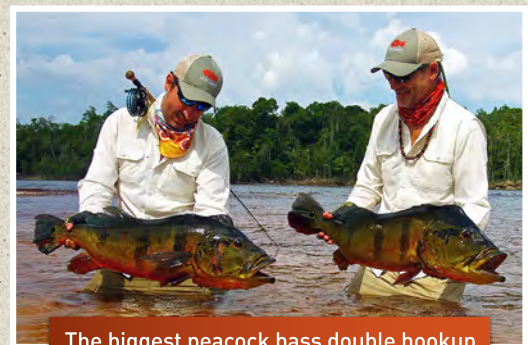
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