



T·R·A·V·E·L N·O·T·E·S

January 2006

MARS BAY BONEFISH LODGE SOUTH ANDROS ISLAND

When fly fishing for bonefish was unceremoniously born on a sultry June morning in 1947 near Islamorada, Florida by legendary angler Joe Brooks, it was only a matter of time before the sport would find its second home on the extensive flats of the Bahama Islands. Soon, adventuresome anglers were exploring the seemingly endless creeks, flats and cays that this sleepy archipelago offered. For the early explorers, it was only logical to start with the largest and most promising island in the chain. These early explorations produced spectacular results and it wasn't long before Andros Island became synonymous with bonefishing.

Initially all the attention was focused on the area around the North Bight. But soon anglers branched out to fish the Middle Bight to the south and all the way to the Joulter Cays to the north. Ultimately, the South Island was discovered and explored. Now, names like Grassy Creek, Deep Creek, Jackfish Channel, Water Cays and Curley Cut Cays have entered the lexicon of the bonefisher and taken on almost mythical proportions.

Ideally situated to access these extensive areas is Mars Bay Bonefish Lodge. Located only ten

minutes by boat from Grassy Creek, Mars Bay Bonefish Lodge is literally at the end of the road!

We have been a fan of this area for years and have come back again and again for what South Andros is famous for: vast spaces, huge hard and untrodden flats, numerous bonefish with opportunities for real trophies and relatively light pressure.

For years, when we visited South Andros on our own trips, we stayed at Mars Bay. We loved its location and enjoyed its authentic "out-island feel". There were some rough edges then, but we thought we had discovered a real "treasure" and always had a great trip. We recommended this lodge to some anglers, but we were hesitant to suggest it to all.

In the last 18 months, Mars Bay Bonefish Lodge has removed any reservations we might have had. Now under very competent new management, Mars Bay Bonefish Lodge has completely renovated the facility, relandscaped the grounds, and built a wall around the compound for privacy.

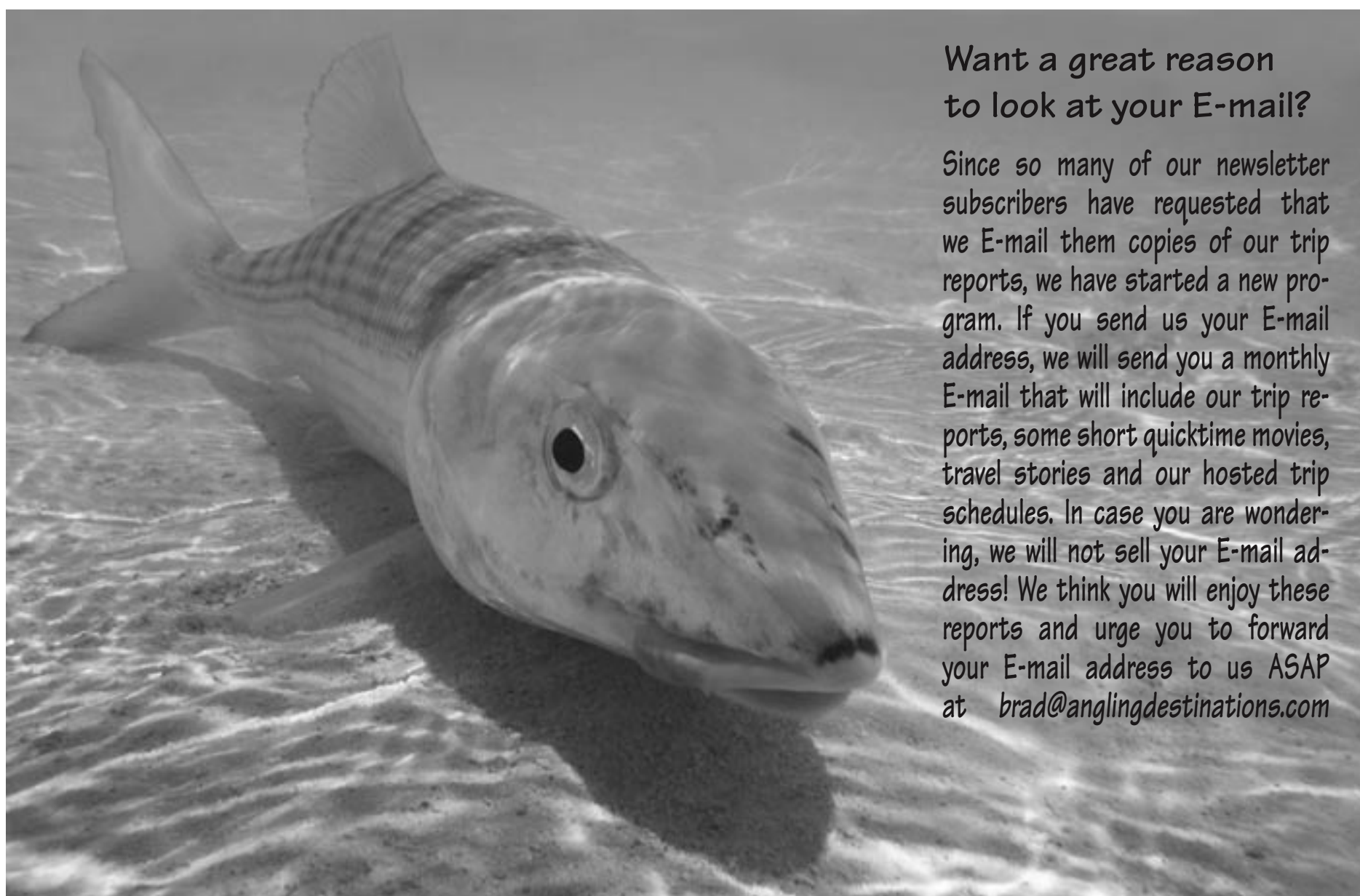
Anglers are headquartered in one of two buildings. The main building, or what we used to call the "villa", is great for intact groups and has three bedrooms, two baths, a living room with satellite TV and a full kitchen where a Bahamian chef prepares delicious meals. The newly built guest house brings the lodge's capacity

to eight anglers and has two bedrooms, each with a private bath. All the accommodations are air-conditioned with ceiling fans and plenty of room for fishing tackle and personal belongings. Daily housekeeping is provided and laundry service is available upon request.

Under the competent command of our friend and head guide, Wilfred Andrews, all of the guides at the lodge are licensed bonefishing guides who live in Mars Bays and grew up on the water. They know these complex waters well and work hard to put you on fish every day of your trip! These guides use roomy and fast Rahming skiffs equipped with poling platforms and casting decks.

Mars Bay Bonefish Lodge is a comfortable facility, with good food and an atmosphere that you would expect from a quality Bahamian fishing operation. But it is also the best location for those wanting to fish the southern tip of Andros and take advantage of a spectacular fishery that receives little fishing pressure. It should be emphasized that the lodge's location puts you ten miles closer than the next nearest lodge to the best fishing grounds. That translates to a ten mile shorter run over choppy open water and can mean an extra hour of fishing each day.

Given the quality of the reports we are receiving from returning anglers and our own experiences, we consider this spot to be a real winner and high time that a few other anglers know about this spot.



**Want a great reason
to look at your E-mail?**

Since so many of our newsletter subscribers have requested that we E-mail them copies of our trip reports, we have started a new program. If you send us your E-mail address, we will send you a monthly E-mail that will include our trip reports, some short quicktime movies, travel stories and our hosted trip schedules. In case you are wondering, we will not sell your E-mail address! We think you will enjoy these reports and urge you to forward your E-mail address to us ASAP at brad@anglingdestinations.com

THE BEST IN THE COSMOS

COSMOLEDO ATOLL UPDATE

Is there really a "best" spot? Is there a saltwater fly fisherman's Shangri-la... a piscatorial so-to-speak, Garden of Eden where dreams are fulfilled and Nirvana is attained? Tough question and the short answer is... you betcha! But like all good things, it comes at a price both literally and figuratively. This promised land is not easy to get to and it requires a significant commitment of both energy and of course, money. Is it worth it? ABSOLUTELY! But things are changing so you'd better hurry! In a shrinking world where pristine angling is quickly becoming a thing of the past, Cosmoledo Atoll glimmers relatively untarnished under a magnificent Indian Ocean sun. To our minds, Cosmoledo offers the world's best saltwater fly fishing... period!

A bold statement indeed! But, the fates have been kind to us and somehow we have managed to fish Cosmoledo Atoll many times over the past five years. For example, AD staff member, Todd Sabine, has spent five weeks of his life, that's 35 days, wandering this expansive and prolific atoll. He would tell you that this place makes him feel awestruck, a bit privileged and at times vulnerable! Sounds like he's in love!

We have fished Cosmoledo during every conceivable weather condition. Whatever the gods tossed at us from rain with high winds to dead calm under a baking sun, Cosmoledo has always delivered an epic angling adventure for us and our clients. As such, Cosmoledo has epitomized consistency, as well as species diversity and abundance.

On our last trip in November, we had such good bonefishing that after two days, our clients tired of catching fish that averaged six pounds and refocused their attention on other species, especially giant trevally. For the remainder of the trip, they virtually ignored the best bonefishing known to man to chase these GT's. Trevally, that we discovered on this visit, will attempt to eat an adult booby bird unfortunate enough to become entangled in a fly line!

If a normal day's fishing is not enough for the hardcore angler, there is always after hours. If you like, you can fish off the stern of the I.O.E. all night long. On this last trip, we threw casting plugs to hundreds of shimmering ghostly trevally flanks, many the size of refrigerator doors, that loomed like apparitions just beyond the reach of the rear deck floodlights. With every new day and with every new turn, Cosmoledo creates images that literally take your breath away.

We have at times, upon our arrival, encountered a group of departing anglers. No big deal, we know other anglers have discovered Cosmoledo too! But this year, we encountered anglers arriving upon our departure too. Not divers, not researchers, but fisherman! Hmm... guess the cat is out of the bag! That's the bad news, the good news is that often these groups have not done too well. Such was the case with some first time visiting European anglers we met on the runway this year upon our arrival. With no Cosmoledo veterans in their group, they mentioned that the fishing program on the I.O.E. was disorganized and they, at times, struggled to find fish. We commented, as diplomatically as we could, that this was the beauty of this place... there is no organized fishing program! This is why we bring the program with us! That includes not only a veritable mountain of bluewater gear, but also our years of experience fishing the atoll. So while you may be at Disneyland, without knowing the game, the ride can be disappointing.

But perhaps a more important point is this, what will increased angling pressure do to Cosmoledo and what does this increased attention mean for the future of our favorite atoll? Well, one thing is for sure, going there on your own and trying to figure the place out by trial and error could become exasperating, especially in the wake of a more experienced group of anglers. But in the long run, if you are interested in visiting Cosmoledo, it would be best to do it in the next few years before too many other anglers and God forbid, other liveaboard boats, discover the atoll. Our advice then is go soon, go often and go with a group that knows the intricacies and secrets to fishing success on this fantastic atoll. Experienced leadership shortens the learning curve and optimizes your time. By going with those that have, over time and through great investment, learned the secrets of this amazing fishery, you too will see what all the hub-bub is about.

If you are interested in joining us aboard the *Indian Ocean Explorer*, give us a call. We have trips to Cosmoledo Atoll scheduled for spring 2006 and 2007 and fall 2006.

BIG BONE BEHAVIOR

The road to wisdom? Well it's plain and simple to express: Err and err and err again, but less and less and less. Piet Hein (1905-1996)

It had been a while since I had caught a big bonefish. By big, I mean those big-shouldered, flat-headed monsters that have left the cute and cuddly class reserved for poodles and hamsters and entered the realm of Rottweilers and wolverines. In front of me was a real beast. While small bones bob and weave on the flats as if looking for a handout, big bones slide into the shallows all slinky and invisible. They act like any bonefisherman worth his salt should act. This guy in front of me, when visible, was the palest of green. He moved slowly and seemed at times to be nothing but bottom. This is precisely how bonefish got their name "the grey ghost". With these guys you're never really sure you see them until the light is just right. Then two to three feet of grey-green vapor suddenly becomes a direct link to your adrenal gland. And if you don't keep your vision focused and your mind concentrated, they will disappear just as quickly as they came.

After a few days of catching dinks, this big bone seemed to be sent by the central committee to restore the species storied reputation. I knew from experience that this is the moment when casts fall apart. A thousand things can go wrong and often do. Fly lines can wrap around rods and fighting butts can reach out to grab any fly line loop not battened down. If you do manage to get your line in the air, there are lots of traditional ways to screw it up and I always find a few new creative ways to botch a cast on each trip. Of course, you can screw it up by being too short or too long... or you can pile your leader... or you can noisily smack the fly. Other popular choices are to line the fish or even pop the monster on the head with the fly. But the result is always the same. You get no fish... nada... nothing. You are left with just a big goose egg on the scoreboard and an overwhelming and somewhat masochistic need to relive what you just did.

At times like this, you might swear or look to the heavens. Some anglers lower their rods to their side and drop their heads to stare at the water. We all know the posture of defeat. Shoulders slump and arms collapse as assorted and highly descriptive expletives waft over the pale yellow flats. You cheesed the cast, you screwed it up, you blew it... and now you have plenty of time to think about what just happened.

But if you do somehow manage to make a good presentation, no such leisure time exists. Things happen fast from here on in. Through the adrenaline haze of thumping chest and buzzing fingers, you must now get the fish to eat. If you do, your journey continues. If not, you have another block of time to think of all the synonyms for rejection.

But if the big bone eats, it all happens right then. If there is one moment in fishing that we all seek, it is that nanosecond before and the few seconds after the hookup. This is when all hell breaks loose. When a big bone decides to take his considerable bulk elsewhere, he leaves an angler with a fly line caterwauling through the air as he struggles to keep up with his rapidly advancing tachycardia. If you do manage to get on the reel and avoid plinking your 10 lb. tippet like a broken violin string, line begins to melt off your spool. You hope you set your drag right as thoughts of getting spooled replace the dozens of other concerns, including the cast, the retrieve and the hookset, that you just successfully put in your rear view mirror.

Fighting a big bonefish is a different game. If you haven't done it for a while, it can be a real shocker. What may have been routine with the poodles becomes an awe inspiring exercise with their larger, supercharged brethren. If you're lucky, you get to see your fish. You have to do a lot right to get to this point. But if you do everything correctly and if you are really lucky, you get to measure and release your catch... 28, 29, even 30 inches can translate to 9,10,11 pounds. Anything over ten pounds is considered the fish-of-a-lifetime. You may get a bigger one, but it will never be any better. You found your Holy Grail and you muse on the species as you look up to begin once again scanning the flat. You think about bonefish, in Latin, it's *albula vulpes*, in legend, it's "the grey ghost". Whatever you call them, you think their reputation is well-deserved and now duly noted.

I slowly took another step forward towards the pale green form. Only time would tell whether I was up to the task.

Ready for this?... Podcasting!

Ever heard of "podcasting"? Thought so! We hadn't either until a few days ago. And it's not casting to pods of rolling tarpon... rather it involves tuning into Apple's wildly popular web site, iTunes. Podcasts are downloadable mp3 audio files discussing topics for various interest groups. It's like a blog only easier 'cause you can listen to it in your car or at home after work or for that matter, during work. Angling Destinations is starting our own podcast to discuss a variety of fishing-related subjects. These include recent trip reports, tips on becoming a better angler, funny stories we come across and many other interesting things. So with the advent of satellite radio, special interest stations, blogs and now podcasts, you can tune into a myriad of fishing-related forums. What are you waiting for? Type in www.itunes.com to download Apple's free software and check out Angling Destinations' "podcast". Just another way to find the very best angling destinations our planet has to offer.

WEB SITES OF NOTE

As our sourcing of information slides irrevocably towards the internet, here are a few of the web sites that we at AD use frequently to garner information and materials before we embark on our next great angling adventure.

The most important variables of saltwater fishing success are sea surface temperature, moon phase, tide and wind. In the past, it was almost impossible to collect the needed information to either plan a trip or get an accurate weather report for a destination soon to be visited. Now via the internet, you can get current weather for practically any location. Here are a few web sites you might want to visit:

The NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) web site is jam packed with good information. Go to www.srh.noaa.gov and click on your area of interest for the United States. You can get hourly observations and forecasts for up to five days into the future. Other links can take you to tropical weather, climate, a national weather map and satellite imagery.

To get further afield, NOAA has access to a huge network of automated weather stations all over the world. Go to www.ndbc.noaa.gov and click on your area of interest. You can get the latest hourly observations including wind speed, wind direction, air and sea temperature, wave height, barometric pressure and a pressure tendency. Click on the icon next to these conditions and you'll get a graph covering the recent history of that parameter. Very useful information! There is also a satellite wind map for the area. If you want to call a specific buoy for current information just click Dial-a Buoy on the menu on the left side of the page.

Another great site is www.wunderground.com. Saltwater anglers will be especially interested in the islands section, but there are many other world wide choices.

During hurricane season, there is a terrific web site that keeps you up to date on current information at www.wunderground.com/tropical. There is a vast amount of information available on this web site including storm forecasts, satellite images, latest warnings, storm tracking info and reports from storm hunter aircraft.

For information on moon phase, you might try the U.S. navy site at tycho.usno.navy.mil/vphase.html. This is a great site for correlating moon phase to a particular trip date. You can look up future trip dates or keep a record of past trips and fishing performance as it relates to moon phase. Many anglers keep this info in their log as some destinations and species fish better on certain moon phases. For simple moon phase charts try the U. S. Naval Observatory site at aa.usno.navy.mil/data/docs/MoonPhase.html.

For tidal information try tbone.biol.sc.edu/tide/sitesel.html. You can find information on tides for virtually any place in the world on this site. Try the alphabetic list of tide height for your destination of choice. There is also a great explanation of tides and a tide glossary. Just click under useful links. Another site of interest for tides appropriate to coastal U.S. is www.tidesonline.com.

In addition, a good source for nautical charts, books and maps is www.bluewaterweb.com. This is an extensive site and is especially useful to anglers looking for nautical charts for hard-to-find exotic locales. Give it a look!

And finally, a good source for inexpensive, but well made flies is www.discountflies.com and also www.ligasflies.com.

All of the above sites are free. Please let us know your favorite web sites and we'll pass them on to our readers in future newsletters.

ANTE UP FOR FLY POKER!



If you travel to fish, at some point you will run into some down time. Whether it's a blown-out river on a steelhead trip or a tropical storm that forces you off the flats on a bonefish trip, Mother Nature has a way of testing our patience. No matter how carefully you make your plans or how good your luck, Mother Nature will eventually steal a day or two from your precious fishing time. On days like this, one must look elsewhere for entertainment. Casting lessons will kill an hour or so, while homemade putting contests and pitching pennies offer traditional diversions. You could even try a good book, but most anglers are all amped-up when the weather goes to hell and need something more active to pass the hours. Well, here's an idea... try poker, more specifically, fly poker.

Think about it. Flies are the perfect medium of exchange for a poker game. They're small, valuable (usually at least \$2.50 each) and not in short supply around any fishing camp. Anglers shouldn't forget the guides either... they usually have more flies than cash and your downtime (depending on your poker skills) can serve to replenish your stock of flies. Fly poker can be a real hoot and the betting can get intense. Go ahead, make the bet..." I'll see your two crazy Charlies and raise you two pink puffs". After all... it's not really money. If you do the math, three dozen flies can be a pretty sweet pot. One rule: each bet has to pass the value standards of all the players at the table. In other words, a size 2 articulated steelhead leech can't be called with a used size 18 Adams! That's just bad form! By group consensus, that bet would be more like three Adams, but the specific terms are always negotiable and the table banter is half the fun. Give it a try... fly poker will make that bad day a whole lot better!

The Yucatan's Tarpon Coast

While most of the angling attention is focused on the Caribbean side of the Yucatan, the coast bordering the Gulf of Mexico remains relatively unfished. For the past three years, we have explored this gulf side in the area between San Felipe to the north and Campeche to the south. This area holds the most promise due to both a very rich habitat and a lack of large population centers. As a result, the existing operations at San Felipe (Tarpon Cay) and Campeche (Tarpon Coast) have consistently offered some of the best opportunities for baby tarpon found anywhere in the world. Not willing to rest on our laurels, we spent a great deal of time this fall exploring further up and down the coast. What we found was simply amazing! We're so excited about this vast new area that we want to explain further some of the options we plan to offer.

For the sake of total disclosure (sleeping well at night is important to us), we feel compelled to tell you that we had one bad trip this year on the west side of Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. It was in August. The weather was very hot and somehow the winds conspired to defeat the tides and the flats subsequently got too hot. The tarpon hid out in the mangroves and were seemingly impossible to find. While we regret the outcome, there is simply no way to predict such occurrences. Especially in light of the fact that the next week was drop-dead awesome!

So when we say the vast majority of trips this past year have been simply outstanding, this is what we mean! Many experienced anglers feel that this is the best destination for baby tarpon found anywhere in the world. All we can say is we don't know where we could send our clients that would be better. If you know a better spot, let us know and we'll send our clients there instead.

Buoyed by this success, our Tarpon Coast manager, Cody Muchow, joined us this summer to explore many new areas. We have been exploring with great success in two directions. The first direction is north towards Celestun where we are finding lots of fish on the outside. The other direction is inland toward the interior where we are exploring many of the creeks that open up into interior lagoons seemingly just jam-packed with baby tarpon. Please look at our web site under recent adventures and read the report "Babes in the Woods". The results of this fervent exploration should be a much expanded habitat for our clients to explore in 2006.

In order to access this recently discovered habitat, we will be making some runs to the north, when the weather is conducive, for day fishing trips. In addition, we have recently begun to offer some overnight trips for intrepid souls. These camping forays will involve two days. On day one, anglers will spend the day exploring far to the north (some one and one half hours by boat). While the anglers are fishing, a camp cook and camp manager will run in

another boat in order to have camp set up by the time anglers pull in that afternoon. Meals will be prepared over an open charcoal fire from supplies brought in coolers by the camp staff. Anglers will sleep in tents on a beautiful white sand beach, then fish south on day two all the way back to Campeche. We are really excited about this camping option. We feel it will maximize fishing time while providing a truly unique experience for adventuresome anglers. Enjoy sleeping in the area you will fish, then enjoy the luxuries of Campeche the following night! And yes, for the diehard tarponaholics, we are

just made for an 8 wt. rod!

Both destinations are unique. While Tarpon Cay operates out of the sleepy little village of San Felipe, the Tarpon Coast is headquartered in the bustling city of Campeche. Tarpon Cay offers a great remote getaway with simple, yet clean accommodations and terrific food all under the watchful eye of manager/guide extraordinaire, Marco Ruz. By contrast, the Tarpon Coast offers truly luxurious

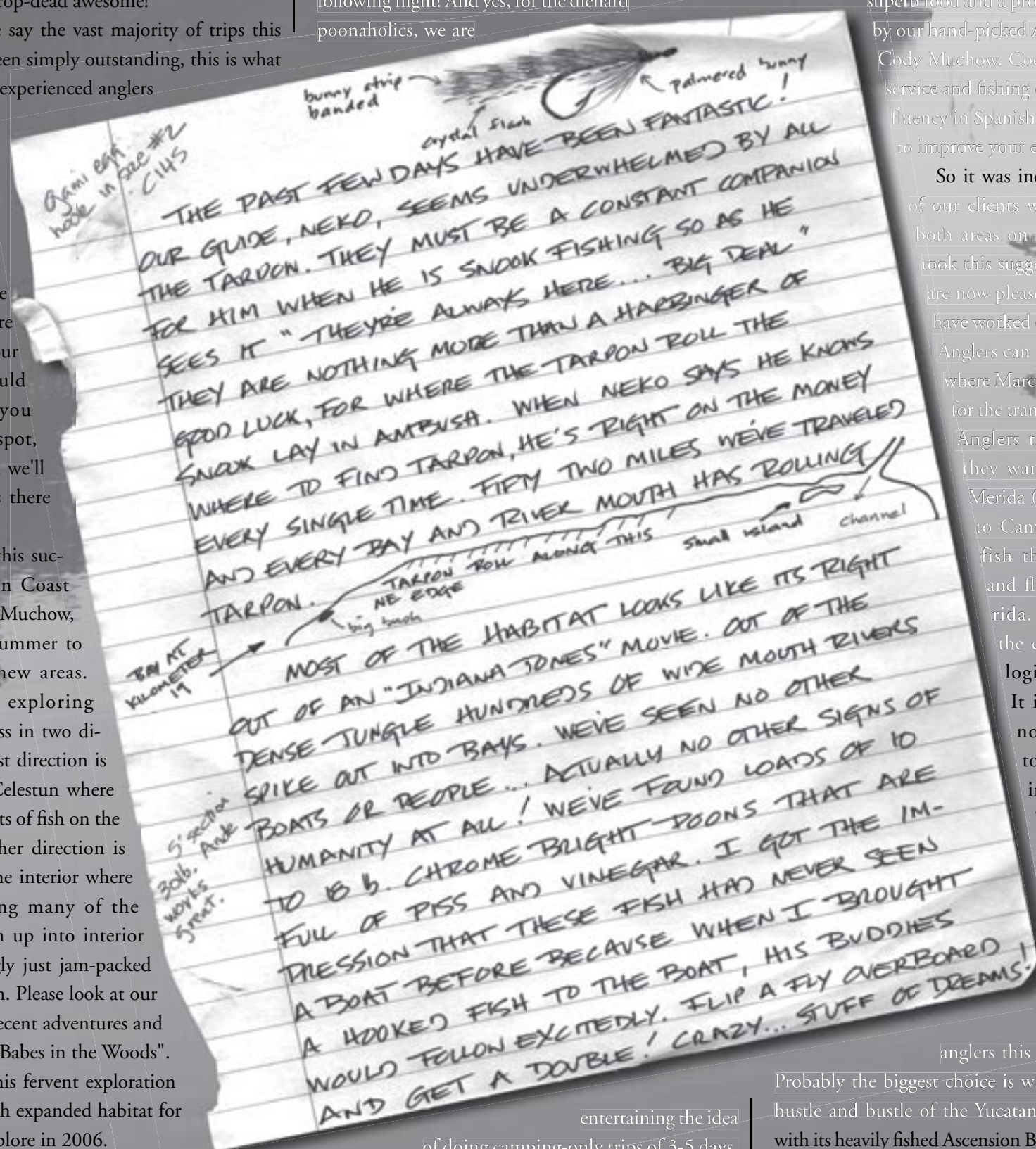
accommodations, a much busier town, superb food and a program administered by our hand-picked American manager, Cody Muchow. Cody brings a level of service and fishing expertise, as well as fluency in Spanish, that is guaranteed to improve your experience.

So it was inevitable that many of our clients would want to fish both areas on the same trip. We took this suggestion to heart and are now pleased to announce we have worked out all the logistics. Anglers can now fly to Cancun where Marco will pick them up for the transfer to Tarpon Cay. Anglers then fish the days they want and transfer to Merida (212 km.), then on to Campeche. They then fish the Tarpon Coast, and fly home from Merida. This itinerary is the cheapest and most logistically possible. It is also possible to not sacrifice a day to travel by fishing in the morning at Tarpon Cay then making an afternoon transfer to Campeche.

So there are lots of new choices for adventuresome anglers this winter and spring.

Probably the biggest choice is whether to leave the hustle and bustle of the Yucatan's Caribbean coast with its heavily fished Ascension Bay in your rear view mirror. Once you made it to the lightly fished West Coast of the Yucatan, you have to choose between the rustic charms of the Tarpon Cay area and the more cosmopolitan offerings of the Tarpon Coast headquartered at Campeche.

So give us a call today. We'll send you all the pertinent information and an entertaining DVD we put together on some of our explorations up and down this spectacular coast.



entertaining the idea of doing camping-only trips of 3-5 days.

Then you'll really enjoy the showers in Campeche! More details on this program will be available in our next newsletter.

And we have yet another option! Both our destinations on the West Coast of the Yucatan have been enjoyed by many anglers over the course of this last year. Both Tarpon Cay and the aforementioned Tarpon Coast are producing fish in the 5-20 pound size range with the average being 8-10 pounds. These fish were

ATLANTIC HIDEAWAY GREAT BONEFISHING ON A BUDGET

As gas prices have soared skyward, many Bahamian bonefish lodges have been forced to raise their prices. This fall, there have been a lot of faxes streaming into our office reflecting these price increases. Now, the average price per week at a good lodge is somewhere around \$2700 to \$2900.

Recently, when discussing the Bahamas with Jim Dean, our good friend from Casper, Wyoming, we were reminded that there is one destination that is still a drop-dead bargain at \$2295 per week. Jim is an excellent angler and has fished all over the Bahamas, but it is Long Island that brings him back again and again. And when Jim visits Long Island, he headquarters himself at Bernard Adderley's Atlantic Hideaway. Jim wrote an article on his experiences at Atlantic Hideaway and Long Island for the March 2003 issue of "The Angling Report". Read it if you get a chance! In the meantime, we asked Jim to synopsise his reasons for visiting Atlantic Hideaway year after year.

Here is what Jim said:

"I like the owner Bernard Adderley and his wife Greta (pronounced with a long "e"). They are very personable and accommodating people... a common trait among the "Out Islanders".

The food at Atlantic Hideaway is wonderful; sometimes the portions are too much and I have to ask Bernard to hold back. The evening meals include great homemade desserts and although I am not a dessert eater, it is hard to resist pineapple upside-down cake.

The rooms are very clean with comfortable beds and air conditioning and have a lot of storage space for gear. Rooms also have a kitchen, although I don't know why anyone would need to use it.

The lodge's location is very close to the airport and the car rental agency. The lodge sits on a bluff overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and you can hear the big rollers coming in as you lay in bed at night. There is a very picturesque beach just below the property which has a sheltered cove. The lodge is close to the center of the island so you can journey both north and south and take less time to get there.

Long Island is noted for being one of the most beautiful islands in the Bahamas. It is fascinating to watch the water on the flats change colors during the day as the sun moves and the clouds screen the light. There are so many shades of green and blue in the shallow areas around the island. Two of the sights that astronauts can readily recognize from space are the Great Wall of China and the waters of the Bahamas.

Bernard has some wonderful guides and they know where the fish are. I have seen schools of bonefish on the flats of Long Island that would number in the hundreds.

Friends ask me why I keep going back to Long Island. The fishing is great and even sometimes challenging (especially when even a guy from Wyoming starts to notice the wind!). But I have discovered something... it's the people. The Bahamian people I have meet in the "Out Islands" are all very good natured and friendly and have a wonderful attitude about life. Some of them have very little when it comes to material things, but they live in a paradise and seem to realize what is really important."

Thanks Jim, we couldn't have put it better! If you're looking for a great bonefish destination at a super price, please consider the Atlantic Hideaway. This spot is a real sleeper and somewhat of a throw-back destination. An "Old School" spot where you get your money's worth and a whole lot more!

NEWS & NOTES...

In October, headlines reported the bad news that Mother Nature had sent hurricane Wilma roaring through Cancun. For anglers, the good news was that Marco Ruz's **Tarpon Cay Lodge** not only escaped damage, but the storm seems to have supercharged the fishery. Not uncommon after a hurricane, this nutrient rich coast has been "stirred" and as such, it seems the tarpon have found an increased availability of tasty prey species. Recent fishing reports from the area have been outstanding. While further down the west coast of the Yucatan, the **Tarpon Coast at Campeche** completely escaped the wrath of Wilma. The Tarpon Coast's American manager, Cody Muchow, tells us the tarpon mysteriously vanished the day before the storm, then reappeared en masse three days later generating some of the best fishing of the year. So while the devastation of this fall's storm season remains fresh in all our minds and our hearts do go out to all of the victims of Katrina, Rita and Wilma, the fish don't really seem to mind or at the very worst, for very long. For those anglers who were lucky enough to have timed a fishing trip to arrive just after a storm, they now know how these maelstroms can produce some of this season's best angling. Surfers have known this for years and diehards chase storms all over the planet. And now, a small group of dedicated anglers have taken a page from the surfer's book and are doing the same. For their efforts, they get calm weather, great fishing and no other anglers within often hundreds of miles!

For those anglers who love the rush of sight fishing, **Crocodile Bay Lodge** sits like a siren on **Costa Rica's Osa Peninsula**. This seductive area tempts you to "try something different". How about a sailfish on



the fly! If you want to balance your angling yang, the ying of sailfishing is everything bonefishing is not. Big fish, big rods, big flies... there is nothing subtle about this pursuit! There is no doubt that the "take" of a sailfish is the most exciting "dry fly" eat you will ever see. No delicate presentation or barely discernible strike here, just good ol' fashion, smash mouth predation. You won't see slinky tails or vanishing ghost fish either... what you will see is a neon purple and blue nine-foot gangster looking to lay waste to your fly. Sailfishing is a rush and nobody does it better than Crocodile Bay Lodge. While Guatemala may have more fish, the amenities, proximity of the fishery and biodiversity of species is unparalleled at Crocodile Bay Lodge. In fact, the Osa Peninsula of Costa Rica has been termed the "most biodiverse place on earth" by National Geographic Magazine. If you love the excitement of fishing, open your horizons and try a sailfishing trip this spring.

With one solid drought-free season under its belt, **Montana's Big Horn River** seems to be regenerating. For the first time in three years, our home waters "playground" is producing good numbers of fish. In addition to the 20+ inch monsters the river is known for, we are routinely catching 12 to 15 inch 'bows and browns, a certain sign that the increased water levels in the river are paying dividends and will for years to come! Perhaps we are not more than a year or two away from experiencing the halcyon days of past? Let's hope so!

As we predicted, **The Best of Kamchatka's** Will Blair, along with his Russian partner, Victor Rebikov, knocked it out of the park this year. Returning clients gave us superlative reports of his service, logistical support and fishing productivity on both the Ozernaya and Two Yurts Rivers. We feel he accurately described to our clients what their experience would be like and then delivered the goods! Now there's an interesting concept! Kamchatka has been something of a mess for several years and we are pleased to see Russia's best operator where he belongs, on his own and at the top. Unbelievably, he has had something like a 80 % rebook rate for 2006 and finding a date for the premier experience on the Ozernaya River is darn near impossible. However, a few spots are open here and there and we have 4 spots left on our hosted group scheduled for July 28 to August 4, 2006. So if you are thinking Kamchatka and big rainbows on mice patterns... CALL US ASAP!

O.K., this is a bit different, but we are never shy about offering new experiences. So, how about going with us down to **Mexico's Baja Peninsula** this coming September and fishing for giant Humboldt squid with a fly rod? Yes, that's right... SQUID. It seems Scott got a hot lead on an excellent opportunity to get greasy with four-foot long cephalopods. Hey, it's fly fishing and squid are crazy strong critters producing massive water jet explosions at the boat, long fights and perhaps the largest *calamari grande* hors d'oeuvre tray ever seen! What could be better? Only one question, Humboldt squid have a beak like a parrot so who's gonna land 'em? Betcha you won't see Scott rushing for the privilege? We'll fish for dorado and a host of other bluewater species by day and then giant squid at night. If you like crazy and wild, this is your bell ringing!

THE GOLDEN GOOSE

If you have ever fished the mangrove edge for bonefish, permit or tarpon you have no doubt run across a strange winged creature that blurs the line between a duck and a fish. Looking like a cross between Daffy Duck and Groucho Marks, cormorants swim superbly enabling them to easily chase down underwater prey. But perch them on a branch and the aerodynamic price they paid for this underwater ability will eventually be revealed. For when a perching cormorant is spooked, their propensities for being aerially challenged soon become evident. Jonathan Seagull they are not... more like Jonathan Freefall.

When a skiff enters a rookery, cormorants flush from the mangrove bushes and desperately try to achieve a state we would loosely describe as flight. Depending on the partially digested fish payload they carry, cormorants either drop sickeningly to the water's surface where they flap their wings in a vain effort to get airborne and failing that, then scoot surface-bound out of harm's way or... if they have a few less fish in the tank, they drop only slightly less sickeningly while furiously beating wings and then slap the water with oversized webbed feet before they gain enough speed to reach liftoff. Either way, launch a cast into the path of a panicked cormorant and you're looking for a bird's nest of a different color. Fly line intersecting cormorant always means trouble.

Cormorants that have eaten way too many sardines automatically abandon any attempt at flight and, upon impact, immediately dive taking their distended bellies with them. Reemerging briefly many yards away, cormorants can look surprising like a rolling tarpon... especially to an angler all drugged up on adrenaline and tarpon dreams.

So why even fish where these silly, overloaded, winged gluttons reside? Well, it's all about the tarpon. When you eat like a cormorant, which is a lot... you poop like a cormorant... which again is a lot. This potent concoction falls from the cormorant's precarious perch and enters an aquatic food

chain that begins only a few feet below. Bacteria grows easily in this enriched, let's call it fertilized, water. Soon the plankton count their lucky stars while feeding on the heaven sent bounty brewing in this bacterial bouillabaisse. Small invertebrates gorge on these plankton and protozoan feed on the plankton and so it goes on and on up the line. Shrimp, crabs and sardines bless father cormorant before gorging on the millions of minute krill or the collected organic detritus they leave behind.

At the top of this food chain are the tarpon. They come for the bounty the cormorant droppings eventually provide and with the tarpon, come the anglers. It is simple math; more cormorants mean an enhanced broth and a richer soup means more food for the tarpon's prey. To put it another way, more guano creates more food and more food means more tarpon. An elegant, if not a bit disgusting, system.

I have heard it said by some guides in the Keys and in Mexico that they kill cormorants because they eat baby tarpon. Here's a bit of advice to these misguided souls that are truly biting the hand that feeds them: Perhaps you shouldn't be so judgmental about cormorants. Perhaps you should be glad these ancient avians do their digesting where they do. Perhaps you should be glad they haven't better mastered the air. Perhaps you should be pleased they only use flight to get to their fishing grounds and then trundle straight home again headed for their mangrove *salle de bains*. Perhaps those that damn cormorants haven't learned the most basic rule of fishing... it is best to not mess with Mother Nature. Let her be! She has things pretty well worked out and her devices almost always work to the benefit of the angler. Mess with her and you just may be killing the goose that laid the golden egg.

Although in this case, it may not be a goose, but a cormorant and it may not be an egg, but a pile of... OK, OK, you get the picture. So let's all bless the cormorants. The tarpon undoubtedly do!

THE NEXT GENERATION

Slang has always been an important part of fly fishing. Slang (or lingo) serves two important functions: First of all, slang is just a lot of fun. Isn't "poon" just more colorful than tarpon and isn't "stick a lip" a lot more interesting than hooked? But slang also serves another function. This lingo lets us know where we stand in the tribe. Don't know the lingo and you are relegated to a newbie or worse yet, a bait fisherman. Every generation of fly fishermen makes contributions to this vernacular. Slang therefore reflects the health of the sport. If no new slang is entering the lexicon, that may mean fly fishing is a dying art form. If slang abounds, then many new young faces can usually be seen around each bend on the river and on the world's saltwater flats. Well, you'll be happy to know that our sport is indeed healthy and in an effort

to keep you up on what's happening and to offer some truly useless information, here's some new terms we thought you ought to know:

Cheese... To screw up. As in "Yeah, I cheesed that cast and threw it right on his head." Can also be used with a poor retrieve, presentation or anything that causes you to screw up.

Cracked... To lose a fish by snapping the tippet or breaking your leader. Best if done dramatically either through over anxiety by the angler or a big run by the fish.

---zilla... A significant fish. Combine it with the species name as in poonzilla for a tarpon or bonezilla for a bonefish. Some species don't work. Permitzilla doesn't flow and bluegillzilla doesn't make sense. To qualify, a zilla must be big, strong, acrobatic or otherwise really get your blood going.

Poondamonium... This is the chaos that occurs right after a hookup with a poonzilla.

---dog... A diehard fisherman for a particular species as in bonedog or poondog. You get the idea! Again, don't try it with bluegills.

---amatic... Add the species to the front to signify a take with no hesitation. As in poonamatic or tunamatic. Best with short fish names.

---atronic... Same thing. Add the species name as a prefix. It means any fish acting like that species generally acts. OK, OK, we're not sure what it means, but it is fun to say!

Jimmied... Our favorite! It means applying overwhelming force while fighting a fish. Derivation comes from Jimmy Houston, a TV bass guy not known for his subtle fish fighting techniques. So you could say "I Jimmied that fish until I crackeded him."

Railed... To really do well as in "We really railed on them today".

Hoovering... Like the vacuum. This does not mean vacuuming all the fish up as you might expect. It means not sharing shots or not relinquishing the casting platform. A generation before would have called it "Bogarting".

Reduced... Hooking a big fish and losing it by either getting spooled or perhaps some other creative method of dramatically losing a big, powerful fish. Synonyms are **schooled** and **worked**. To be really current, try saying "I got completely reduced by that poonzilla".

Garbaged... When a fish eats a fly with no hesitation. Think of a dog dining in garbage and you've got the image.

First round draft choice... THE fly of choice! Also the main character in a competitive fishing game.

Rules are: choose a criteria for the day's contest (usually biggest fish or most fish). Whomever wins the contest gets their choice of any fly from the loser's box... in other words, a first round pick. Anglers can choose the number of first round picks they want to wager as in "biggest fish gets three first round picks."

And finally...

Casterbator... One who repeatedly and excessively uses multiple false casts to measure distance and/or to feed line agonizingly slowly to his quarry. May eventually cause blindness, carpal tunnel syndrome or guide hysteria.

Plastic monkeys... fish rising, finning, tailing, rolling or otherwise making themselves be seen. We don't know where this comes from or why, but again, it sure is fun to say. It is basically a term of endearment and often followed by an excessive session of adrenaline-induced casterbation.



Full Moons 2006

January 14	June 11
February 13	July 11
March 14	August 9
April 13	September 7
May 13	October 7

◆ BAHAMAS UPDATE ◆

This year's hurricane season was reasonably kind to the Bahamas. While the U.S. was hammered, our favorite island nation got by relatively unscathed for a change. Unlike last year, most of the islands skirted any serious encounters with Mother Nature's violent side and the fall fishing season was superb. One troubling issue however, has been the escalation of gasoline prices in the Bahamas partially due to the hurricanes that hit the Gulf Coast. As a result, most lodges have been forced to increase trip prices. With prices at the pump tipping up towards five dollars a gallon, I guess you can't blame 'em.

Because of the aforementioned gas crunch, many anglers are looking for a good bang for their buck this spring. In our opinion, there is no better location than **Atlantic Hideaway on Long Island** to combine value with great fishing. Well named, this picturesque island has many miles of beautiful sandy outside flats that can be easily visited by traveling south of **Deadman's Cay**. In the island's interior, the salt salinas are a bonefish nursery and the fishing is consistently reliable. The real beauty of this destination is the cost. At only \$2295 for a week of fishing double occupancy, we do not know of a location that can compare. The lodge is very clean, fully air-conditioned, and sits high atop a ridge overlooking the Atlantic side of the island. The trade breezes keep the mosquitoes to an absolute minimum so that you can enjoy a cold beer and watch the sun disappear after another perfect fishing day. Excellent hearty meals, a fully stocked bar, a pool table, great fishing nearby and a clean comfortable lodge... what more could any traveling angler want? All this makes Long Island an excellent choice for this spring!

As we stated on the front page, the newly re-opened **Mars Bay Bonefish Lodge** located at the end of the road on **South Andros Island**, has been receiving rave reviews by our clients who have recently fished the area. The vast sand flats of the nearby Grassy Cays, Hawk's Nest Creek and Curly Cut Cays are the stuff of bonefish legend and any fisherman who has fished this area will tell you that the huge schools of bonefish and the perfect white sand flats make for an unforgettable experience! If you're look-

ing for a great trip, excellent food and solid, experienced guides, then Mars Bay is an excellent choice.

On a recent trip to Freeport on **Grand Bahama Island**, we were once again reminded what a fine job Greg Vincent and his guides are doing at **Pelican Bay Bonefishing**. This is a perfect couples destination promising great bonefishing while offering high-end amenities that will keep your non-fishing spouse happy. This beautiful hotel features a lovely pool and top-notch rooms. It is well-situated right in the heart of dynamic Lucayan Village. Shopping galore, casinos, nightlife and a myriad of super restaurants to choose from each evening combined with big bonefish, Maverick flats skiffs and veteran guides makes for a winning combination. If you travel with a non-angler... call us and we'll fill you in on all the details. Scott and Brad have wives who don't fish and as a result, they are experienced at striking that delicate balance between a "family" vacation and a hardcore fishing trip. We'll help you make a good choice in this regard and help you find some great fishing without coming home to a frustrated spouse at the end of a your glorious day!

We finally have some good news to report coming out of **Crooked Island's Pittstown Point**. If you have been following this newsletter, you know that for the past two years, we have suggested, due to substandard performance by the resort's management team and especially ownership, that anglers look elsewhere when planning a southern Bahamas fishing vacation. The good news is this long awaited change has been made. As of October, our old friend and Crooked Island veteran Carter Andrews, has purchased the resort and quickly moved it back to the fully functional level that it was a few years ago when we heartily suggested this destination to anglers looking for a great fishing destination in the Southern Bahamas. To refresh your memory, Pittstown Point is a great choice, especially for couples, and we are delighted to once again give this destination an unqualified thumbs-up. So come on down and enjoy one of the prettiest spots in all the Bahamas.

Nearby on **Acklins Island**, the **Grey's Point Bone-**

fish Inn has quietly and without much fanfare become one of the most consistently praised and rebooked destinations that we offer. Grey's Point is certainly not a fancy resort, but it does offer a very solid fishery with some of the best out-the-front-door fishing available anywhere in the Bahamas. Clean A/C rooms, good guides, delicious island fare and a family atmosphere have garnered Grey's Point a very loyal following. Call us for all the details!

If you can spot fish well, like to wade and don't mind going solo, remote **Mayaguana Island** offers great fishing at a very economical price. Underfished destinations are getting hard to find and this spot is a real winner for the right angler. Last June, we did an article for **Fly Fishing in Saltwaters Magazine** on the island's potential with our old friend Jon Cave, so be looking for that story this winter. In the meantime, you might want to get a leg up on the competition and visit Mayaguana this winter. But please remember, there are no guides available on Mayaguana, But a clean A/C room and a rarely fished island loaded with big bonefish is all some anglers need!

After two very successful seasons, the interest in chartering our yacht the **Outpost** has grown and grown. To refresh your memory, the Outpost offers a sensational angling experience primarily on the West Side of Andros Island, but the Berry Islands, just a stone's throw to the northeast, are also an option. Unfortunately, the Outpost is now completely booked for this next spring '06 season. We can only suggest that if you're interested in chartering this boat and experiencing some of the least fished areas of legendary Andros Island, now is not too early to plan for Spring '07. If you are interested, give us a call and we will send you a DVD on this great opportunity.

Finally... **Great Inagua Island!** We have two words for those of you who want to go. Plan ahead! With all the recent publicity received, Ezzard Cartwright, the island's only accomplished guide, is booked solid until June 2006. Inagua is one of most unique fisheries in the Bahamas and for those readers who have fished other locations and want to see something new and fresh, please consider Inagua for 2007. Give us a call and we'll put you into the best tides and moon for an unforgettable trip.



Kyle Holt's "Tarpon Coast" Fly Series

Hook: Gamakatsu SC-15 or appropriate Owner or Varivas hook.
Thread: 3/0 monocrad in appropriate color.
Collar: Palmered bunny strip.
Body: Bunny Strip tapered towards rear. Two strands pearl crystal flash on each side.
Weed Guard: Mono loop tied above hook point on shank below bunny body strip.
Colors: Red/Yellow, Purple/Purple, Tan/Tan, Brown/Orange.

Kyle ties these in four color combinations: The "Pacifier" has a red collar and a yellow body. The "Firebunny" is a brown collar/ orange body version. A purple/purple version is appropriately named the "Purplenator" and finally, the "Salad Shrimp" is a tan/ tan version with the body barred as pictured above.

Kyle made a few comments on the Tarpon Coast fishery and on his flies that we thought you might find interesting:

"I found the red and yellow to be best in dark water especially in the rivers and lago mouths. You can see this fly really well and it makes the strikes more visual. On the lighter bottomed flats, the "Puplenator" works great maybe due to its excellent contrast with a light bottom. Some days on our trip, we had the guides stake-up where the channels met the flats. Here, numerous groups of tarpon swam right at us and they were voracious! The "Salad Shrimp" worked very well here, and also out in the channels and in the deeper flats off these channels. We had zero refusals on this fly in these areas, but strangely enough, tarpon would not touch it in the creeks! I think one of the things that makes this fishery so special is the variety of terrain where you can find fish. You never get bored launching these brat sized 'poons in so many different types of water.

I also thought tickles and bumps work better than a traditional strip, strip, strip technique. I think bunny works better when moved slowly. We even caught a number of fish just drifting our flies to them in the current... just like trout on a river back home!

Even though these fish are babies, you can still get "pooned" meaning rods, leaders and egos can and will be broken. Tarpon are a humbling fish and anyone who has fished for them has experienced the "poon palsy" you can contract just by laying eyes on a big baby. Symptoms of this palsy are misguided casts, shaking knees and premature hook sets. Despite this, the Tarpon Coast has a lot to offer and an angler can't have any more fun anywhere fishing for baby tarpon. I cannot wait to go again!"

Guide and fly fishing instructor, Kyle Holt, owner of Thunder River Outfitting in New Castle, Colorado. He can be reached at 970-379-6965 or E-mail at Fish4bonz@sopris.net

Todd Sabine's Tarpon "Knowbetter"

...as in these tarpon ought to know better than to eat such a simple fly!

Hook: Gamakatsu C-145 glow-bug hook in size 1 or 2. Small and ultra sharp with a short shank, a straight eye and a wide gap, these heavy gauge wire hooks are ideally suited for baby tarpon.
Thread: 3/0 black monocrad.
Collar: Schlappen (long webby feathers that palmer well).
Body: Arctic fox hair from tail or body of fox of appropriate length. Three strands pearl crystal flash.

Tying Instructions:

Tie in a 3" piece of Arctic fox hair mid-shank for the tail. Accent each side of the tail with sparse crystal flash in a contrasting color. Collar begins behind hook eye with five to six turns of a contrasting colored schlappen feather. Whip finish and cement. These flies are easy to tie, easy to cast, turn over effortlessly, hit the water as softly as a dry fly and sink very slowly. Perfect for tarpon in skinny, clear water. Tie with a purple collar and a black body and also with a red collar and a purple body.



Explore the angling world on adventures run by fishermen for fishermen...

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Page 1

Mars Bay Bonefish Lodge, South Andros, Bahamas

Page 2

Cosmoledo Atoll, Seychelles • Big Bone Behavior

Page 3

Web Sites of Note • Fly Poker

Page 4

Tarpon Coast, Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico

Page 5

Atlantic Hideaway • News and Notes

Page 6

The Golden Goose • The Next Generation

Page 7

Bahamas Update • Kyle Holt and Todd Sabine's Tarpon Flies



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