



BELIZE - TURNEFFE ATOLL (TAR|JUN.2018):FRED SCHMITZ

**DATELINE: ARGENTINA**

**Subscriber Report  
Northern Patagonia: So  
Many Lodges So Little Time**



*Editor note: In many past issues (including the May issue) we have*

*brought you stories and reports from the Golden Dorado River Cruiser, and though this story is also partly a review of that same operation, the other half details a nearby and contrasting operation that angler Danny Simms was fortunate enough to fish with on back-to-back trips. This story gives us a unique comparison of two outfits, two experiences, and two different sections of the same river. Though the two share water and target the same species, you will soon see that the fishing, lodging, and results were very different. Danny writes:*

**I** recently completed a trip to two locations in Argentina with emphasis on fishing for golden dorado. The first location was Amokagni (Pinti's Lodge)

located at Itá Ibaté, Argentina, which is a ninety-minute drive east of Corrientes. Itá Ibaté is on the Paraná River. The shoreline of the river is essentially jungle, which means that the water along the shoreline is full of trees and limbs that have fallen into the water. This setting greatly impacts the fishing, as the fish hold in the structure. The most common approach to fishing for golden dorado is throwing large streamers around the structure. It is physically demanding fishing.

The main attraction of this location is the potential to catch a really big golden dorado on a fly. I landed both a 20-pounder and a 28-pounder on this trip. I also hooked three other very large fish that I lost when they managed to get into the structure. Landing a large golden dorado is partially skill, but it definitely takes a lot of luck as well. Just hooking a large golden dorado was one of the greatest thrills that I have had in fishing. They typically take the fly close to the boat and immediately go airborne. Consequently, I have great memories of all of the large fish I hooked, even if I only had them on for a few seconds. In addition to the large fish, I also caught numerous golden dorado, which ranged from about three to 12 pounds.

Another attraction of this location is fishing for pacu and pirá pitá. Pacu are called the permit of Argentina because they are difficult to hook and look a little like permit. A major portion of the diet of pacu, are the nuts that fall from the trees

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along the shore. The fly we used was essentially a piece of foam shaped like one of these nuts. The difficulty in fishing for pacu is hooking them, because their take is so deliberate. At times, we would grow impatient watching a fish slowly approach the fly; waiting until the fish actually ingested it was challenging. Let's just say that I took the fly out of the mouths of a lot of pacu. The largest pacu I caught was eight pounds, but they easily get to over 20 pounds. They are very strong fighters. One of the nice things about fishing for pacu was that it provided a break from throwing large streamers.

While I didn't target pirá pitá, I caught several while fishing for golden dorado and pacu. They are very aggressive and probably the strongest fighter of the three species on a pound-for-pound basis. They get to over 15 pounds, but the largest I caught was about eight pounds.

Having success at this location requires the ability to throw a large streamer 50 feet or more on a consistent basis. When I first arrived, there was an American in camp who was very frustrated because he couldn't cast very far and had had little success. This definitely isn't a location for a beginning fly fisherman.

The lodging at Amokagni was quite adequate and the food was very good. One of the strengths of their program is the quality of their guides. They were extremely knowledgeable and spoke good English. Since I fished as a single, having a guide that I could visit with was appreciated.

I booked Amokagni through Pescador Solitario ([www.remoteflyfishing.com](http://www.remoteflyfishing.com)). Mark Cowan from their operation has fished this

location numerous times and was helpful in providing information on flies and other equipment. In addition, they did a good job of setting up in-country travel arrangements.

After fishing at Amokagni, I flew to Buenos Aires, where I was picked up by the shuttle from the Golden Dorado River Cruiser. This operation was described in detail in the May 2018 issue of *The Angling Report*. Consequently, I will concentrate on the major differences between these operations.

The Golden Dorado River Cruiser is also located on the Paraná River, but in a section called the Entre Rios delta. In this area, the river consists of numerous channels and lagoons. The banks are typically grass, with very few trees. There is some structure in the water, but sinking lines were the norm when I fished there because the water was very high. The water was also colder than normal, driving the fish lower. In more typical conditions, floating lines would be used.

The golden dorado at this location are much smaller on average than the fish at Amokagni. However, they were numerous and aggressive. For example, on the first morning, I landed about 20 fish ranging from two to 10 pounds. The fishing was hot on the first day and half of the next. Then a cold front moved through. The water level in the river rose, and the river became even colder. As a result of these changes, the fishing slowed on the last day and a half of fishing. On the last day, I probably landed only five fish.

I had been told that the golden dorado in this fishery could be caught readily on poppers, so I came



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prepared with numerous poppers. However, the guides indicated that poppers work very well in January and February when the water is warmer. My fishing partner did throw a popper to try it, but he didn't get much action.

As with the fishing at Amokagni, the technique was to throw streamers to the shore; however, the streamers used tended to be smaller. While species other than golden dorado were occasionally caught, essentially the entire focus was on golden dorado. The largest fish caught by the group I fished with was about 16 pounds, but there were only two caught that were this large. Most of the fish were in the two-to-five-pound range.

The guide I used spoke no English. However, he knew where the fish were and was excellent at positioning the boat. Thus, I was generally pleased with the guiding. The rooms on the boat are small, especially for two people, but, to make up for it, the food on the boat was the best I have had at any lodge in my numerous travels.

After we arrived at the River Cruiser we discovered that there was no cell service. We had not been advised of that, so we didn't think to let our families know that we were alive and well before traveling there. We were told that the boat will have cell service in the near future.

I booked the Golden Dorado River Cruiser directly with Luciano Alba at [info@estancialagunaverde.com](mailto:info@estancialagunaverde.com). He can be reached at 850-253-7192. For more information, visit <http://estancialagunaverde.com>.

After fishing at both of these locations, I think combining them makes a great trip. It is easy to travel from Amokagni to the Golden Dorado River Cruiser in one day. Both locations appeared to be very flexible with respect to arrival and departure dates. This trip provides the excitement of targeting a truly trophy-size golden dorado in addition to pacu and pirá pitá at Amokagni

with the potential for large numbers of golden dorado on the Golden Dorado River Cruiser.—*Danny Simms*

## DATELINE: BELIZE

### Subscriber Report Turneffe Atoll Trust: A Voice for the Reef



*Editor Note: Fred Schmitz, a longtime subscriber and frequent reporter for The Angling Report, has kept us in the loop with regard to much of the activity in Belize and elsewhere, for which we are thankful. Here is another of his insightful reports on Turneffe Atoll.*

I just returned from a week at Turneffe Flats Resort in Belize. My last visit there was six years ago, but some of you will remember last year, when I reviewed the other fishing resort on Turneffe Atoll (Turneffe Islands Resort) for *The Angling Report*. Even though I've been away for six years, seeing Craig and Karen Hayes again was great.

It's nice to be at a place where the owners are involved on a daily basis. You can look at the pictures in the lobby area and in books that

depict the history and development of the resort. You can see the effort they invested, moving lobster traps and building houses, and you begin to understand what makes this resort so special. This is *their* paradise, and they are willing to share it with us.

Craig helped set up the Turneffe Atoll Trust to protect this valuable reef environment. Their mission statement says, "Our Mission at Turneffe Atoll Trust, is to drive conservation efforts at Turneffe Atoll leading to sustainable environmental, social and economic benefits for Turneffe and Belize and serving as a model for similar coastal marine environments throughout the world."

On this trip, Craig and I spent a few evenings discussing the efforts they have undertaken to help insure the Belizean government enforces the rules that all interested parties have agreed to, but it sounded like there have been some instances of back-dealings and blind eyes turned to some development. Turneffe Atoll Trust has even turned to prosecuting these corrupted officials, stating, "As part of our Conservation Oversight Program, in late 2015 we addressed a destructive development approved in the Northern Bogue area of Turneffe which is in direct opposition to the guidelines of the Turneffe Atoll Marine Reserve and the laws of Belize. Before it could be stopped, developers deforested five acres of mangroves and then dredged a swampy area in the middle of the property to fill this low-lying land with mud. Turneffe Atoll Trust sued the developers as well as the Fisheries Department and the Department of Environment, arguing that several laws and policies of the Marine Reserve had been violated. As a result of TAT's efforts, this development has been shut down since February and we are very optimistic about the outcome of the lawsuit.

Now, with a dedicated watchdog protecting the Belizean flats, there is a great improvement, and you often see the government stopping barges

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and boats to make sure they are not violating the rules. This is all new and wonderful to see; it is key to the future for Turneffe.

Craig and Karen really need to be congratulated for this undertaking, and if you ever want to see a study in a worthwhile environmental cause, Turneffe Atoll Trust is it. Places like this are too special to put at risk with shortsighted development activity. You can learn more at <http://www.turneffeatoll.org>.

Now, more about my experience at Turneffe Flats Resort:

I'm sure we've all been on trips that take multiple flights, taxis, and boats to get to the final destination. The stress and aggravation caused by a complex itinerary cannot be underestimated. I have enough to worry about: Will my double-haul be sharp this trip? Did I tie the right leaders? Bring the right flies, shoes, etc. Come on, this stuff gets complex after a while, not to mention costly.

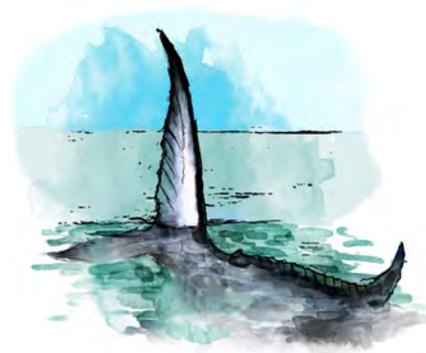
The thing I really like about Turneffe Flats is you just have to get yourself to the Belize airport and get a beer. They'll have a van there to pick you up and bring you to their very comfortable large boat with a talented captain and happy English-speaking crew. That's it. Just sit back, relax, and enjoy the boat ride to the resort.

I always travel with my rods and reels, and they take care of the luggage from the airport all the way to the room. After you've had a welcome cocktail, you'll have the chance to meet some of the other guests—which is always very interesting, as those of us who pursue this lifestyle are a rather interesting bunch.

Their fly shop has rental equipment as well as flies and leaders, so even if you do forget to bring the right leader they can help you out. Again, less stress. All meals are served family style and are always delicious. They serve tasty Belizean specials in addition to delicious fresh fish. They always have a wine

paired with the meal, and I find that selection to be quite to my liking. And even though I hale from the land of spectacular BBQ, the Belizean version is awesome—skip the wine and knock down a few Beklins after a day of hard fishing; you deserve it.

I've shared a boat with a number of different people in my life, and I rather enjoy it, as it's an opportunity to talk about individual experiences. This year, I went as a single and was paired with a gentleman from California. We both were targeting permit and had quite a few shots every day. We shared some great stories, a few beers, and showed each other a couple of different knots. He had fished San Diego quite a bit, so when he hooked into a nice tarpon his skill in handling a large fish was quite evident.



The standard routine was to meet the guide at the boat at about 7:30 and fish to about 4, head to the dock, and either chill or try our luck in front of the resort. We always took lunch on the boat with us, and it allowed us the freedom to wander the island, but if you wanted to come back to the lodge they could facilitate a sit-down lunch. Turneffe Flats is in the center of the atoll, which makes travel easier and shorter.

Once, we were having lunch in a wide lagoon that the guide knew tarpon would frequent. Sure enough, about halfway through lunch we heard a roll and saw some bubbles and we knew the game was on. The

guide liked my Enrico Puglisi fly called the "Peanut Butter," which is a weird name for a fly that is purple and black, but nonetheless, we tied it on and my buddy gave it a few casts with an intermediate line on his 12-weight Sage xi2.

About the fifth or sixth cast, as he was retrieving the fly, we saw a 125-pound tarpon (guide's guess) hit the fly sideways. It looked like I was watching a 75-inch flat panel television image of a giant tarpon taking a fly. He was just below the surface, about 25 feet from the boat, and must have passed the fly and turned to hit it running perpendicular to the line. It's an image forever burned into the back of my skull.

The fight went on for about 45 minutes, and we thought we were ready to bring the tarpon to the boat. The guide had his boots on by now and I had the camera in hand. All of a sudden, it turned sideways and spit the hook. The look on my friend's face was also quite unforgettable. He sat quietly for a while with his head slumped, muscles aching, mouth dry.

A few years ago, I hooked into my first big tarpon while in Holbox, Mexico, with Sand Flea, and I had the same look on my face. My good friend, Rod King of the Bozeman Angler, had landed a beauty and I thought I was next. I explained to my new friend what I call the "circle of tarpon fishing." It begins when you lose your first trophy tarpon. I explained that in his quest, he'll most likely run across words written by tarpon sage Andy Mill and the discussion about fighting tarpon and landing tarpon. It will consume you for years, your wisdom will grow, and you will evolve. Someday he will close that circle with the glory picture that I achieved six years ago at Turneffe Flats. Until then, there will be quite a bit of introspective analysis. In the final analysis, though, he did everything correctly, it's just tarpon fishing.

He wanted me to take the rod and land one. I passed, remembering the

large bruises under my belt area for weeks. My circle was closed now; one monster tarpon was enough for me.

On the next morning, we blasted out from the dock full of piss and vinegar in pursuit of permit. We came upon an island where we could see some permit activity. They were just milling about in deeper water and didn't really seem to be interested in eating. We ran through the crab inventory and decided it was time to move on. It was then that we realized there was a single dolphin that had a permit in its mouth and, as

dolphins will do, it was playing with it, releasing and catching the poor trophy over and over again.

It quickly became apparent why the other fish weren't interested in eating. Their brother/uncle/cousin had been taken away by a "monster," and at this point, a quick death probably looked like an upgrade from his current round of torture.

I learned many years ago in the Florida Keys that when you see a dolphin in your fish ground you're better off just rolling in the reels and heading out, they're quite the apex predator.

For me, the highlight of the trip was catching some nice permit. My successful shots were always to two or three fish cruising the beach side. I've learned to be very quick with the fly because these guys tend to move swiftly, so having the ability to get the fly out there fast is important.

In the end, I hooked a few permit, a bunch of bonefish, Jacks, yellow tails, and even a few needlefish. I highly recommend the trip. It's a very special location.—  
*Fred Schmitz*

*Postscript:* Fred listed the cost of his trip at about \$4,500 including tip.

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## • Briefly Noted •

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

■ Subscriber Jim Simcoke recently filed a report on the website detailing a moderately successful experience fishing at Scorpion Atoll, a relatively new fishery off Mexico's **Yucatan Peninsula**. Alacranes Reef, or Scorpion Atoll, is the largest coral structure in the Gulf of Mexico. The reef is located off the coast of Mérida, Mexico, where travelers spend a night at arrival and also before final departure.

Visitors have two means of accommodation when visiting Scorpion Atoll; the traditional live-aboard is the preferred method, but for the more adventurous, the outfitter boasts a camping option. This option leans more toward "glamping" than a pure primitive campsite, as air mattresses and use of the local lighthouse's facilities are available to guests. Still, keep in mind that water is limited and collected in buckets from a local cistern.

Jim booked his trip through Luis Menocal of Fly Shop of Miami and was joined by four other guests. They flew American Airlines from Miami to Merida, where owner Raul Castaneda had booked accommodations at a hotel downtown. Jim had this to say about his experience:

"To begin, Raul met us at the hotel in Merida at 4:30 the next morning for an hour drive to the boat, a 42-foot SeaRay. Once our gear was loaded on the boat, we picked up another 26-foot open fisherman to tow behind us to Scorpion Atoll. The trip was about five hours due to the wind and seas."

"Along with Raul were two guides—the captain and mate—for a total of 10 people on the boat. Raul and the guides took the small boat and camped on one of the islands every night, while the captain and mate slept on the flybridge. The captain also served as the cook, and the mate would set up the table in the cockpit. We would sit on coolers for meals. Meals were simple, but plenty and good.

"After arriving on the first day, we took the 26-foot boat to two small islands and walked the beaches looking for bonefish. About 5:30 or 6 we returned to the boat for drinks and dinner. We would usually have breakfast between 7:45 and 8:30 every morning, take the 26-foot open fisherman to an island, spilt up into two or three groups, and walk the beaches and flats looking for bonefish.

"While we caught fish every day,

the bonefish were mainly single and doubles, rather than large schools as we had expected. All the fish were large—8 to 12 pounds. One of the anglers caught the largest bonefish on a barracuda tube fly. We also caught several small jacks and two small permit.

"The return trip was a bit faster, as the seas were not quite as heavy. We spent another night at the same hotel in Merida and left the next morning for the return flight to Miami.

"When we left, Mexican security at the airport refused to clear us carrying our fly reels, and we were all required to check our tackle bags for a \$42 fee each. American Airlines was not able to assist us in this matter, although none of us had ever experienced a similar occurrence anywhere we have ever flown. Mexican security was even going to confiscate my three-inch Allen wrench, as it was considered a weapon. Fortunately, all the bags arrived safely in Miami, but this is the first instance any of us had been required to check reels, and each of us have flown throughout the United States along with many foreign destinations with no similar incident."

*Postscript:* Jim left with mixed

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feelings regarding the overall experience. Although he gave high marks for the guiding and left with a good opinion of the operators, he did say that there was room for improvement with regard to the lodging, and he felt that even though the bonefish were large, they were not as plentiful as any of his party had expected.

The cost of a six-night / five-day stay is listed at \$4,850 per person, based on a group of five anglers. Booking is based on a group rate, as there is a minimum of five anglers per trip. The outfitter can accommodate smaller groups if anglers are willing to split the five-person cost.—*Seth Fields, Editor.*

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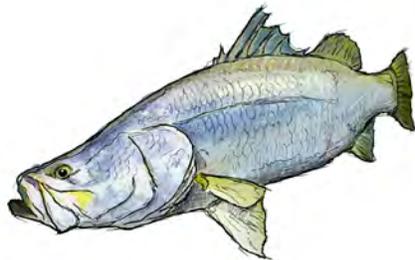
■ A lot of reports that come across our desks here at *The Angling Report* consist of what most people would deem “bucket-list trips.” While the formula for what people would consider being a bucket-list trip varies from angler to angler, the basic rule of thumb is to catch exotic species in exotic locations. The following report is by no means a bucket-list trip, but it is undoubtedly one of the most interesting that we have seen in some time. And it does involve an exotic species, although we would not describe St. Cloud, **Florida**, as an exotic location. However, we do give credit where credit is due, and reader James Ovelmen gets extra credit for creativity and making the best of a small window of opportunity.

James and his family were recently visiting Universal Studios in Orlando when he and his father split off from the pack to check out Osceola Outback Adventures. This outfit is likely unfamiliar to *Angling Report* subscribers, as fly fishing is not something that they specialize in. Their specialty is bass fishing on local lakes, airboat fishing, bow fishing and, oh yeah, breeding barramundi! James had this to say about their experience:

“The barramundi fishing was a great add-on/break from going to

the Orlando theme parks. I could see it also working great for someone in town for a conference or work. There is nothing challenging about the fishing; it’s just nonstop fun. My dad and I had smiles on our faces the whole time.

“We fished from the shore at three different ponds, two of which are stocked with barramundi. The areas around both ponds were cleared, flat, and mowed. My dad was only casting about 20 feet off the shoreline and caught fish nonstop for three hours straight. We caught more barramundi than we could count. Most fish were around four to six pounds and great fighters. I also made one cast into the other pond on the property and caught a three-pound largemouth bass.



“Six-, 7-, and 8-weight fly rods with floating lines were perfect for this type of fishing. Deer-hair poppers like a Snookaroo, foam poppers, Clouser minnows, and other streamers did the trick. The guide can also provide spinning rods if need be.

“It was simply a fantastic quick trip, and everything was so easy. We drove about an hour southeast of Orlando to Osceola Outback Adventures’ property. The guide had texted us in the morning with specific driving instructions, including where to park, and let us know he was going to be about 30 minutes early, so we could start whenever we got there.

“We were only interested in fly fishing, so we did not use their equipment, but what they had seemed to be of good quality. We basically only fished the main pond, which is heavily stocked with barramundi from Australia. It is apparently the only place in the Western Hemisphere

where you can fish for barramundi. They are very aggressive, hard-fighting, and aerobic fish and are related to snook, but they reminded me of peacock bass in the way they fought. While all of our barramundi ranged from about four to six pounds, the guide said some would grow to over 10 pounds in eight months and the over 20 pounds in a couple of years.

“I used a fast-action 6-weight and reel with a good drag, which worked fine, but an 8-weight is probably more appropriate. These are stocked fish and in manmade ponds, but for three hours it is a total blast. My dad had to keep taking breaks, as he was exhausted from catching so many hard-fighting fish.”

*Postscript:* James listed the price tag at \$275 per person for three hours, and said that they run three sessions per day. For more information, or to try your hand at catching barramundi in Florida, go to <https://www.osceolaoutback.com>.

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■ From Bart Goodwin, longtime subscriber and first time contributor:

The bonefishing on **South Andros** has been reported on many times in this publication. However, there is a new lodge on the island (two years old) called Deep Creek Lodge, which is a real find. The lodge is fully Bahamian—owned and managed by Nathaniel Adams and his wife, Sharmaine.

Nathaniel is the real deal of fishing guides on the island, with many of the guides at the other lodges in the area having been trained by him. He was the longtime head guide at Bair’s Lodge, having guided presidents as well as celebrities like Tiger Woods, Jimmy Buffet, Jack Nicklaus, Jim Belushi, and others. When famous fly fishermen like Lefty Kreh, Andy Mill, Flip Pallot, or Stu Apte have come to South Andros, “Nat” is their guide. He prides himself on once having guided Billy Pate to catch a 14-pound bonefish in Grassy Creek.

Nathaniel has built a very simple

but clean and well-appointed lodge with three double bedrooms right on Deep Creek. Meals are served in an adjacent dining room, and they feature predominantly fresh local seafood prepared Bahamian style. Dishes include conch, grouper, snapper, and lobster. Nathaniel and Sharmaine are two of the nicest people you'll ever meet and both excellent cooks. In fact, locals will tell you Nathaniel is the best cook on the

island.

The fishery itself is well known, stretching from the South Bight to the south end of the island, with access to Deep Creek, Little Creek, Grassy Creek, and the fabled west side of South Andros, where there are no lodges—it's a national park—and where the flats go on forever. Deep Creek Lodge has access to all these areas, most within a 45-minute boat ride.

Another great feature is the size of

the lodge. With only six beds, it is ideal for a small group, which can easily take over the lodge. An added benefit is that its rates are the lowest of the other lodges in the area. All in all, a great new option to fish some of the best bonefish flats in the Bahamas. Dates can be booked directly with Sharmaine at (242)471-7920. See their website for current rates and other details on travel, fishing, and so on at [deepcreeklodge.squarespace.com](http://deepcreeklodge.squarespace.com).

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• OUTFITTER CRITIQUES •

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## 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](http://www.anglingreport.com), and clicking on "File a Report."*

■ Mike Lucey was gracious enough to prepare and send in this report at the last minute before the June issue went to press. His report includes very useful reviews of some rivers and lodges in the northern region of **Patagonia**, and I'm sure you will find that it makes you long for the one-of-a-kind beauty and experience only found in Patagonia. Mike writes:

"My wife and I planned a spring trip with friends to Machu Picchu, and since we were going to be on the same continent as some fly fishing I insisted upon a pre-Machu Picchu fishing trip to Patagonia. I used Yellow Dog Fly Fishing Adventures for the first time. They were terrific to work with.

"Our criteria for the trip were these: We had to be in Lima, Peru, on a certain date. We wanted couples-friendly venues with a mixture of floating and wading. And we wanted the opportunity to participate in non-fishing activities if we wished to (as it turns out we fished every day—yes!).

"John Hudgens at Yellow Dog quickly identified Patagonia River Guides (PRG) North as the outfitter. PRG partners with several estancias in the northern Patagonia region to

provide a great overall experience. We were only going to fish a week, so the first question was how many lodges we wanted to visit. We started with three and then cut it back to two, which was a good decision. Patagonia is a huge area, and many of the roads are improved dirt roads, so getting from one lodge to the other is a half-day affair, which cuts in to the fishing.

"We originally wanted to stay in the northern region of Patagonia, thinking that with fall approaching we might get warmer weather up north, which turned out to be true. We also figured it would be closer to Lima—and ultimately to the second part of our trip—but it turns out it did not matter, since all flights into Patagonia have to go to and from Buenos Aires. To reach the northern Patagonia region, you fly into San Martín de los Andes, which has a very nice airport, about the size of the airport in Missoula, Montana.

"If you time it right, you can take a red-eye to Buenos Aires and then take a car from the international airport right to the local airport for the flight to San Martín de los Andes. You need at least three hours for that transfer to be sure you pass through

customs, get your bags, deal with traffic, and so on. On the other hand, a night's stopover in Buenos Aires is not a bad thing either. We stayed over on the return leg and enjoyed a day and a half in Buenos Aires, a very cosmopolitan and fun city.

"We started our fishing stay at the Tipiliuke Lodge. Tipiliuke is a high-end lodge on the Chimehuin River. We fished the Chimehuin and Malleo Rivers over three days, both wading and floating. The fishing was good, but not great. I would say that the trout, specifically the rainbows and browns, were about what you would expect to catch on a typical day in Montana, both in terms of size and numbers. We mostly fished small dries, as you would expect for that time of year. If your goal is to catch huge trout or massive numbers, this may not be the place, though in a different season perhaps it could be. The Malleo was an off-the-charts beautiful wade river, with great structure and good-sized fish. The access is private, and they regulate the number of anglers each day. We had the river all to ourselves, which was really nice. I really enjoyed fishing there. The Chimehuin River was a slightly larger river, which you

# THE ANGLING REPORT

could wade or float, so we did each. The fish were smaller, but numerous. Our fish were all in the teens, but another guest caught a nice brown that looked to be into the mid- to high 20s.

“The real uniqueness of this trip came with experiencing the Argentine way of fishing. The estancias are huge. Tipiliuke is a 50,000-acre ranch with two rivers running through it, so you don’t have to travel much to get on the water, nor do you have to fight crowds. You start with a huge lodge breakfast at 8 a.m. and hit the road at about 9:30. At first it seemed late to me, and I was antsy, but I went with the flow. After a half day of fishing, you return to the lodge at about 1:30, take off the waders, and sit down to a massive “lunch.” It looked more like a full dinner, complete with steak, wine, and so on.

“This, of course, necessitates a siesta, which means that you don’t get back on the river until about 4 p.m. We then fished until about 7:30 or 8 and headed back to the lodge for a (thankfully) smaller dinner at 9:30 p.m., with more good wine. We usually went to bed around midnight, so the 9:30 a.m. start time turned out to be a good idea.

“The Tipiliuke Lodge is a very high-end, comfortable place. The rooms are great. I regularly fish at “lodges” in places like Christmas Island, and by comparison, Tipiliuke was like the Taj Mahal. The group at the lodge, about 16 people, was made up of mostly couples. This was hunting season, so a little more than half the guests were there for red stag, which left the rivers pretty free for us anglers. There is also horseback riding, bird-watching, a spa, and other activities, but we did not do any of that; the day was pretty full with fishing—and lunch.

“After three days at Tipiliuke, we traveled by truck for a couple of hours to Quemquemtreu Lodge, which is an even larger estancia (160,000 acres). To give you some sense of the size, there are about

25 miles of the Collón Curá River running through the property. The scenery, which reminds me of the eastern Sierras, was exceptionally beautiful and full of wildlife. We saw guanaco, red deer (including many huge stags), and an abundance of birds. The lodge is more of a working ranch, so it had fewer of the high-end amenities, but it was still very nice and very comfortable. We liked the style better, in fact—it seemed a bit more “authentic.” We floated three different sections of the Collón Curá over three days. We ate lunch on the river, which we preferred, but the guide insisted on the picnic version of the massive Argentine lunch program, which was unique and



fun but sometimes made for a sleepy afternoon. Fishing on the upper and middle sections was very good. My wife fished dries with great success. The guide kept encouraging me to fish with a minnow pattern (looked like an anemic woolly bugger), which was moderately successful. The fish were all in the mid- to high teens.

“On the third day, we floated the lower section down to the lake. That’s where the minnows paid off. Before hitting the lake we hooked up with, and broke off, some big fish, and the guide kept saying that the really big fish were right in the approach to the lake. He was right. After lunch, we

made it to the inflow, where the river turns into a delta with several small rivulets entering the lake. In each little branch of the river you could see very aggressive splashes, where trout were hammering minnows as they washed into the lake.

“We walked each branch, quartering the little streamer across the flow. We got hit on almost every cast. By day’s end, we probably caught 30 to 40 fish, all in the 20s. Dozens more broke off, some huge ones too, though it’s hard to say how big they were. I don’t often use the word “epic,” but this was truly an epic afternoon.

“A word about Yellow Dog and PRG: The folks at Yellow Dog were great to work with about the fishing options. Our trip was really tailor-made, which was really nice. John Hudgens is their Patagonia expert, and he was very knowledgeable and easy to work with.

“They have an in-house travel person named Kimberly Franke who really knows her stuff too. Together they were able to set us up with a very efficient and well-thought-out travel plan that went off without a single travel/lodging hitch. There is no added cost to working through them as far as I could tell, so why not?

“PRG guides work independently of the lodges, but they provide all the equipment, guides, and transportation for the fishing part of the stay. I always bring my own gear, but for this trip, I didn’t want to drag a bunch of gear around Machu Picchu, so I only brought a few flies, a spool of 4x, and a lanyard with snips and forceps.

“That was it. PRG provided Simms waders and boots, Winston rods, and all the fixings. We did not want for good equipment or tackle on our trip. The guides all speak English pretty well and are very enthusiastic and charming. My wife really enjoyed their help and instruction.

“All in all, it was a wonderful trip.”

## On the Radar

Angling Report subscribers are always looking for new opportunities and waters to explore. In this section, we will provide you with details for new and expanded operations that are popping up on the international and domestic radar.

■ Of all the salmonids, bull trout have seen harder times than most. Once an abundant species, the bull trout's habitat and historic range has been slowly diminished and, quite literally, eroded to the point that they are protected in many parts of the United States.

There are, however, places where the rivers are still pure enough, and the landscapes are unspoiled enough to effectively host large populations of these apex predators. These fish need clean, cold waters, with uncompromising water quality, and you can guarantee that anywhere you find them is likely to be remote and truly unspoiled.

The Canadian Rockies are a prime destination for anglers looking to hook into a trophy bull trout on the fly, and that's where Texas-based company Expeditions Outfitters, recently unveiled a new program for targeting them with the long rod. This trip is likely to be

an experience that one simply cannot have in many parts of the globe, and that will take you to some truly pristine landscapes.

I recently spoke with guide and general manager of Expeditions Outfitters, Kevin Stubbs about their new operations for trophy bull trout in British Columbia. Here is the takeaway of our conversation:

**Expedition Outfitters has made a name for itself guiding in the Texas hill country on rivers like the Guadalupe, San Marcos, and the Devils River. What led you to partner on a Canadian bull trout trip?**

Our company, Expedition Outfitters, has been hosting trips on the Devils River at Sycamore Canyon Ranch for over 10 years. The Russell family, who owns the ranch, introduced us to a gentleman with access to some great waters in British Columbia. His name is, Jordy McAuly,

and he has approximately 1.2 million acres under permit for commercial fishing and hunting activities in the area.

Jordy has been the Russell's personal hunting outfitter for many years. They described the fishing opportunities as "fantastic" and suggested we partner with him to develop clientele specifically for fly fishing in the vast, remote wilderness of the Northern Canadian Rocky Mountains.

**Many places in the United States have outlawed fishing for bull trout, and there may be readers that aren't familiar with the tactics for catching bull trout on the fly. Can you talk a little bit about the style of fishing used to them, and what anglers can expect from a hookup with one of these fish?**

All of our rivers are catch-and-release only, with single, barbless hook restrictions. We use 8-, 9-, and 10-weight rods with floating lines to target the bull

## Want to go fishing for free? Changes to Our Free Fishing Program

*The Angling Report* has always valued feedback from its subscribers. And the reasons are clear. For one thing, *Angling Report* subscribers are some of the world's most experienced fishermen. Hence, their judgments about fishing destinations are broad-based and sound.

And our subscribers' insights are refreshingly candid. That's because they are written from a point of view that no other publication embodies, namely, the paying client's point of view.

So here's the deal. We encourage lodge owners, guides, and others to offer us FREE visits to their facilities with the understanding that we will turn these invitations over to *Angling Report* subscribers who convince us that they are capable of writing

useful and accurate reports about their experience. More than 100 subscribers have been invited on FREE fishing trips here in the United States and to foreign destinations such as Argentina, Christmas Island, Brazil, and Mexico. The total value of all that travel is in the many hundreds of thousands of dollars. And the good news is that more outfitters are offering us FREE trips in return for reviews.

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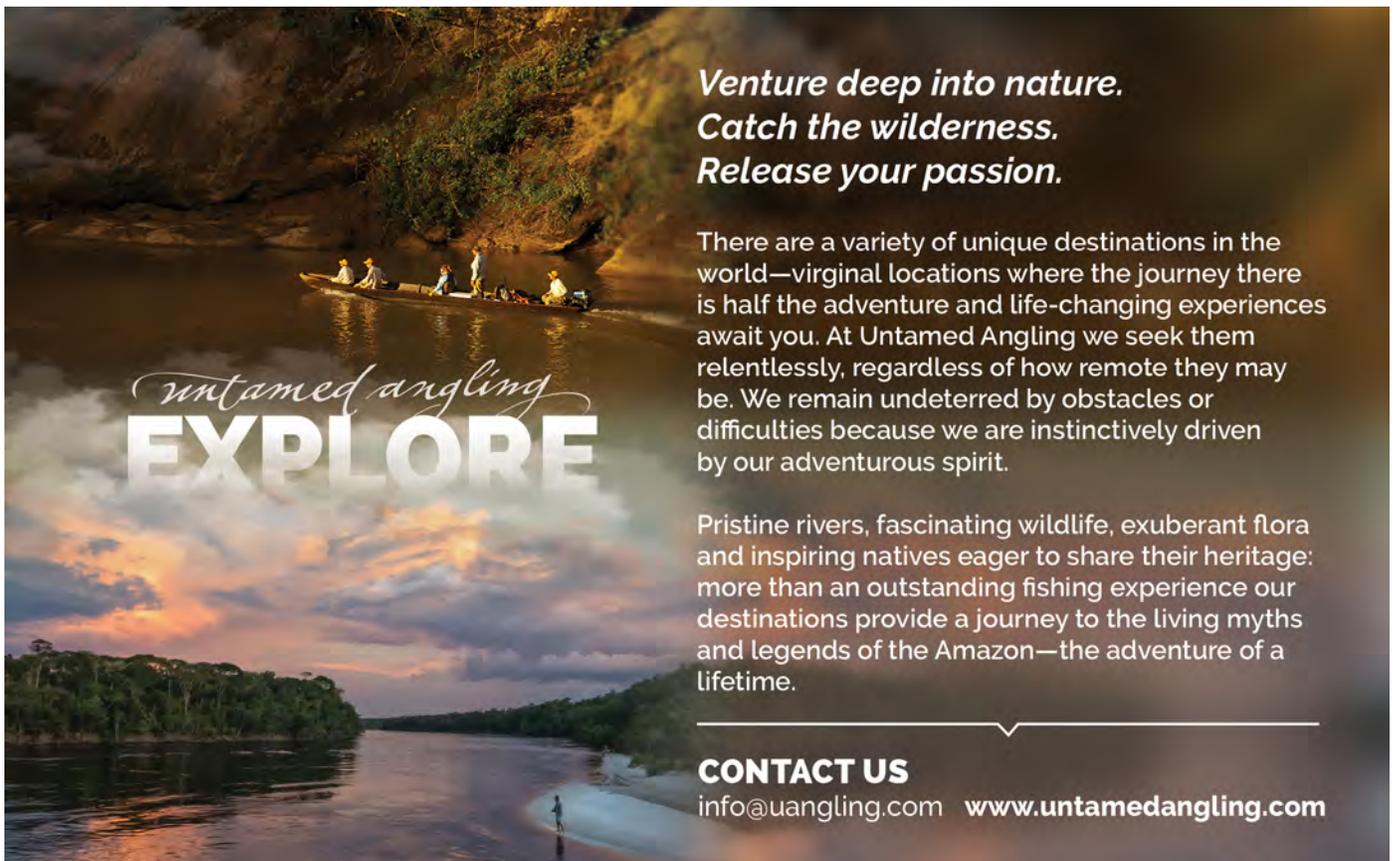
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