



Aardvark McLeod

NEWSLETTER



Fish Tails...

I have just returned from a phenomenal week of steelhead fishing in British Columbia and finally experienced upstream dry fly fishing for these powerful fish. Seeing a 14 lbs steelhead sip a Green Drake mayfly three feet from the bank is something I will never forget. Our group had over 40 steelhead caught with numerous lost in addition to coho, pink, and chinook salmon all being landed.

Iceland had a fantastic season this year despite the drought in the last two weeks of July. We had record catches at the beginning of the season and the north coast had the best run of large fish since 1995.

The trout fishing on the Upper Adaldal was spectacular with numerous fish in the 6 – 8 lbs category landed, often on tiny dry flies. Combining rivers has also proved to be extremely popular.

As autumn approaches here, saltwater fishing will start again in earnest once the hurricane season has passed. For those of you looking for some winter sun it is an ideal time to hit the flats as they will have been well rested from the early summer.

There are still some good openings available in Argentina for next years sea trout fishing, so if this is not something you have tried before and would like to, then please contact us.

There are still a few spots on Charlotte's hosted group to Alphonse in February so if you would like to join her, please get in touch. She will also be travelling to Mexico and Iceland in the summer. I will be heading back to Cosmoledo in February which I am very excited about. I would like thank you all for your continuing support in these difficult times and look forward to another busy year.

Iceland in 2011

We are now rebooking Iceland for next season and if you are wondering 'why Iceland?'...

- It is easy, quick and cheap to get to
- Fishing is consistently good
- You fish the same day you arrive
- There are a wide variety of rivers to suit all abilities
- You may combine rivers to hedge your bets

Please call us to discuss the many options and rivers to which we have exclusive access.





FACT: We run a number of packages throughout the year: spring steelhead and chinook, summer salmon and coastal steelhead (perfect for children), and hardcore steelhead and large coho in the autumn. Terrace is reached by flying to Vancouver on British Airways followed by a connecting flight to Terrace on Air Canada Jazz.



British Columbia

Variety is the spice of life

Peter McLeod sums up his most recent hosted trip...

The Skeena watershed in British Columbia is one of the most diverse freshwater fisheries on the planet. With a reputation as the steelhead capital of the world many fishermen arrive focused on this one fish and often don't take advantage of the numerous other species swimming these rivers. All the major rivers in the area are tributaries of the Skeena, so all the fish heading for them must travel through the main Skeena. Apart from these rivers further east, the area immediately around Terrace has numerous tributaries, the most well known of which are the Copper, Kalum, and the Kasiks – all with their own runs of fish.

Apart from the holy grail of steelhead, all five Pacific salmon species run many of these rivers and provide a hugely diverse fishing experience that many overlook.

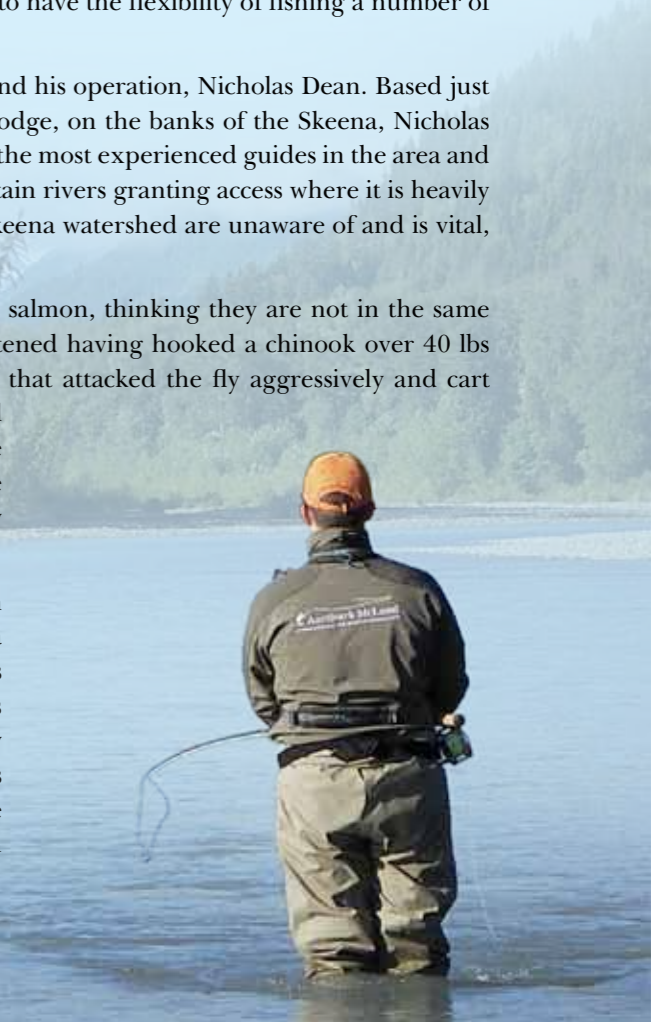
Giant chinook arrive in the third week of April and run until September. These super charged fish average between 15 – 40 lbs and can exceed 80 lbs! Coho normally appear in August and range from 5 – 15 lbs and are the nearest to our Atlantic salmon. They also run very large in this area. Then there are the super charged sockeye, the dogged chum and the aggressive pink salmon. Also in the river you may encounter dolly varden, a sea going char species, bull trout, an aggressive char which attack anything and eastern cutthroat trout which also have a sea run.

Each river has its own character and techniques, and you can experience anything from traditional two handed fishing with swinging flies to single handed dry fly fishing. Technique will very much be dictated by conditions and it is important to feel comfortable using heavy sink tips if the water is high and coloured. As this area is a temperate rain forest, weather can be an issue and it is important to have the flexibility of fishing a number of different rivers.

To access this area we are proud to work with Dustin Kovacvich and his operation, Nicholas Dean. Based just 15 minutes drive west of Terrace at the fabulous Yellow Cedar Lodge, on the banks of the Skeena, Nicholas Dean has access to over 40 rivers. Dustin and his team are some of the most experienced guides in the area and also, importantly, have a large number of classified licenses on certain rivers granting access where it is heavily restricted. This is a key point which fishermen travelling to the Skeena watershed are unaware of and is vital, often being the difference between success and failure.

I have always been something of a snob when it comes to Pacific salmon, thinking they are not in the same league as our Atlantic salmon. I have, however, been sorely chastened having hooked a chinook over 40 lbs which nearly tore my arms off along with numerous large coho that attacked the fly aggressively and cart wheeled across the river. We did also have some phenomenal steelhead fishing and landed a good number in the mid to late teens, largest being 20 lbs. We lost as many again, and I had the chance to experience catching steelhead on an upstream mayfly on the surface.

The conditions that bring the Green Drake mayfly off don't happen very often I must add, so I was extremely fortunate. Dropping a dry fly over a dimple, seeing the take and striking into a 14 lbs steelhead that proceeds to charge around like a tarpon on steroids is probably the highlight of my angling career. I hooked 12 that day and landed 8, and despite the rare occurrence of these conditions it only makes me want to recreate the experience more! I will be going back next September, so if you would like to join me then please let me know.



Best for...



Hard core saltwater... Cosmoledo

Cosmoledo is cutting edge fly fishing at its best. Everything here is bigger: bonefish like torpedo's, GT's like buses and barracuda big enough to swallow anyone under 4 ft. This is the ultimate destination for saltwater fly fishermen... it's not for wimps but nowhere else comes close to beating this experience. Tides are very important and the departure dates are chosen to make the most of these during the October to April season.



Families... Belize

One of our favourite destinations, Belize is a perfect holiday spot for families. Whether stalking the flats in pursuit of bonefish and permit, diving the blue hole, having a massage with the sounds of the forest providing background music, cave tubing or zip lining through the forest canopy there is plenty here for everyone. Time wise, perfect for Christmas and Easter holidays.



Tailing bonefish... Los Roques, Venezuela

Spotting tailing bonefish on the pancake flats in Venezuela is enough to make anyone's heart beat faster. This bonefish paradise comes with great accommodation and food as well as a reasonable price tag. Los Roques is a true year round destination although the tides can be a little high for the pancake flats in the Autumn months.



Saltwater first timers... Pesca Maya, Mexico

Cost and location make Pesca Maya an ideal destination for fly fishermen with limited saltwater experience. The sheltered Boca Paila lagoon and the vast, sandy flats of Ascension Bay offer inexperienced saltwater fly fishermen the best possible opportunity to target bonefish, permit, tarpon and snook as well as barracuda and jacks. One of the best places to aim for the Grand Slam!



Species variation... Alphonse, Seychelles

You simply cannot beat the St Francois atoll for the sheer variety of species waiting for a tempting fly. Accommodation and service on Alphonse Island are first class and it is a consistent favourite, with many clients returning year on year. The season runs from October to early May, and it is important to choose the correct tides for the species you wish to target.



Value... Turneffe Island Lodge, Belize

Fishing on the Turneffe Atoll for permit and bonefish is some of the best in Belize but the added bonus is that the lodge is very comfortable for non-fishers, with a pool and spa treatments on hand. The costs have reduced in the last few years making this lodge exceptionally good value for couples. Tidal variations are minimal here but best to try and avoid the off season (July, August, September and early October).



Always searching for that elusive combination of a fantastic lodge and excellent fishing, Charlotte reports on Tiamo on South Andros Island in the Bahamas.

Bahamas...

Tiamo Resort, South Andros

Tiamo ticks all the boxes... It is ideally located to give you access to some of the best fishing grounds in the Bahamas and the lodge itself is exactly what you expect from a Bahamian island hideaway. Access to the lodge is from the sea and as you approach, the only sign of habitation are the sun beds scattered along the white sand of the beach and the palm thatch of the big house poking above the palm trees.

Originally built as a pioneering eco-lodge, Tiamo has been refurbished with an enormous amount of effort and thought put into the buildings and the furnishings. If you were to transplant Tiamo to Africa, Seychelles or Morocco it wouldn't be out of place amongst the best camps and lodges to be found there.

Firstly about the fishing... Ideally located on the South Bight of Andros, Tiamo has access to an almost endless variety of fishing grounds. Shallow, hard sand-flats, tidal creeks, mangrove-covered shorelines and sand spits run all the way to the most often fished west side of the island. Prime species are bonefish with schools of smaller bonefish averaging 2 - 4 lbs being most common with the larger fish between 4 - 7 lbs more often found along the west side. Permit are seen occasionally and are just as difficult to catch here as they are elsewhere. There are tarpon in the creeks on the west side but if you fancy a change, there are plenty of barracuda to cast a fly at. No hopping into cars and towing trailers to the put in is needed as you depart from the dock. Tiamo has a fully equipped blue water boat and a short run out there is some fantastic blue water and reef fishing on offer with sailfish, wahoo, kingfish, dorado, tuna as well as reef species such as grouper and snapper.

The lodge itself... Tiamo has a very private feel and all the cottages are set back from the beach amongst the trees. There is a central bar and dining area together with a wonderful library with wireless internet. Artwork graces the walls and there are comfy chairs and sofas in abundance, both on the deck above the pool, and on the beach below it. The ten cottages are similar in their design and furnishings - the Island Breeze cottages open their doors on three sides to benefit from the cooling breeze whilst the Cool Cottages have air conditioning. The Pool Cottage (one of a kind) is the most private of the cottages, and has a jacuzzi on the deck. All rooms have large walk-in showers and the water pressure is excellent. I have to say, the beds here are some of the most comfortable I have ever had the pleasure of sleeping in.

What else to do... There are plenty of activities if you are not fishing and this is a wonderful place to just relax, swim or read your book. There is a PADI registered dive master on site, and snorkeling is part of the package. You can sail and kayak or explore the island in search of rare island orchids and iguanas. There is a small gym tucked away near the pool and the wonderful luxury of an on-site spa offering some fantastic treatments and massages - always enjoyable whether as a result of a hard days fishing or just some heavy duty page turning.



FACT: British Airways has direct flights to Nassau five times a week from Heathrow, connecting with the inter-island flight to South Andros. Aardvark McLeod have an exclusive with the lodge whereby you stay for eight nights and pay for seven. There are no set entry or exit days and the amount of days fishing is entirely flexible. The lodge is closed from the end of July to the end of October with prime time March, April and May.



Agua Boa

Amazon Lodge, Brazil



FACT:

The season runs early December to late March. Your destination in Brazil is Manaus. Currently Agua Boa Amazon Lodge has a special offer specifically designed for groups – with a group of six anglers, you only pay for five so the saving on one rod can be split amongst the group, reducing the cost per person.



As the premier destination for peacock bass on the fly, Francois Botha reports back on his recent trip to Brazil...

I punched out a low cast so that the fly brushed the water before the leader straightened out deep under the overhanging trees. It only took two strips before I saw three fish turn around the fly and felt the line go tight. At that instant the fish erupted and made for the structure with huge force. I clamped down on the line so hard that I felt like either my 50 lb leader or the fish was going to break and the former felt imminent. I battled the fish to the boat, heaved the rod up extra hard, there was a loud bang—the undeniable sound of a rod snapping. I threw down the remnants of the 9-weight rod and lunged at the leader. I was face to face with the fish before it made a final turn for the bottom and snapped the leader in my hands. There was a moment of silence on the boat. “It’s ok guys,” I said, “we’ll get another one.”

Agua Boa Amazon Lodge, formerly the Royal Amazon Lodge, was established more than 12 years ago and situated on the Agua Boa River in Brazil. All fishing has to be catch-and-release, only fly fishing is permitted, and only barbless, single-hooked flies are allowed. It is the only exclusive-access ‘fly fishery’ in the Amazon basin, with more than 250 km of private river access. There is virtually no human impact, and the main targets on the Agua Boa are butterfly, barred and spotted peacock bass. The thousands of butterfly peacocks from 3 to 6 lb are mainly found in the many lagoons along the river. Then there is the barred peacock bass which range between 8 and 15 lbs and specimens of 20 lbs are not uncommon. Finally there is the spotted peacock. These fish are the most prized of all because they fight almost twice as hard as the barred peacocks! We also caught arowana, piranhas, oscars, bicudas, characin pike, dogfish, shovel-nosed catfish, red-tailed catfish and others, totalling 15 species of fish on fly.

The bird life is astonishing and all in all we counted more than 40 species of birds that we had never seen or heard before. The plant and insect life was just as breathtaking. We found a baby anaconda on the riverbank and we saw the giant river otter. Everyone was overwhelmed by the pristine environment and the top-class management and service we received.



Permit Fever: Symptoms: wild rolling eyes, sweating palms and brow, shaking legs, whispered profanities along with dissipating hand eye co-ordination, normally resulting in complete failure of casting ability.

Cause: A round fish with large dark eyes, black tipped fins and a forked tail. NO KNOWN CURE.



Mexico GRAND SLAM CENTRAL



If there is one thing most saltwater fishermen aspire to, it is the capture of a Grand Slam. This is to catch a bonefish, permit and a tarpon all in one day. It is not an easy task, and those who have managed it have truly achieved greatness. Adding a snook to this mix turns it into a Super Grand Slam. There is one area of the saltwater arena that averages more Grand Slams than anywhere else in the world, and that is Mexico’s Yucatan peninsular. The Boca Paila lagoon system along with Ascension and Espiritu Santo Bay provide one of the most prolific habitats for permit in existence, but they also have an excellent resident population of tarpon. The best result I have heard of fishing in this area was a fisherman who caught five Grand Slams and four Super Grand Slams in six days of consecutive fishing. His tally included 11 permit with an average weight if 12 lbs, tarpon to 40 lbs, snook to 15 lbs and numerous bonefish.

The lodges we recommend in this area are Pesca Maya, Casa Blanca and Playa Blanca. Pesca Maya fishes the Boca Paila lagoon area along with the top of Ascension Bay and is excellent value for money. Casa Blanca is one of the Caribbean’s most established lodges and has been running for 23 years. Many of the guides and staff have been there since inception, and it is one of the slickest saltwater lodges in the world. Its sister lodge Playa Blanca is a little further south on the same private island and is designed with non-fishers in mind with a stunning beach and comfortable surroundings.

Mexico is ideal for a first time saltwater fishermen as you will encounter all the main saltwater species over the course of a week.

FACT: From 3rd November 2010 British Airways will have a direct flight to Cancun twice weekly on Saturday and Wednesday from £630 per person in economy.



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Iceland: *pick n mix*

The rivers in Iceland offer huge diversity and often when salmon fishing, it is a good idea to hedge your bets. Conditions may not be right in one river system, but firing on all cylinders in the next valley.

FACT: We are currently rebooking Iceland space for next year and all rods will be given first refusal on their 2010 space. Iceland Air flights are also open for rebooking – the earlier you hold your flights, the cheaper they will be.

All our salmon and trout fishing is sold in three day slots offering the ability to mix and match. This has been increasingly popular amongst our clients as they have the opportunity to experience a more rounded view of Iceland during one trip. I should add it also makes Iceland the ideal location for a long weekend break being only 3½ hours away. By combining two rivers it is also possible to reduce the cost.



“Hitchers Heaven”, a combination that has been particularly popular in the west was a combination of Nordurá and Laxá I Kjos, Nordurá and Langá or Nordurá and Laxá I Dolum. For those who love to fish the hitch with small flies, in clear water, these rivers offer a multitude of pools to practice this art.



“Big fish, small fish” has also been popular by combining the Langá or Nordurá with the Laxá I Adaldal in the north. The benefits of this combination are the greater numbers of fish on the west coast but a smaller average size with the chance of a fish over 20 lbs on the Laxá I Adaldal.



“Trout & Salmon” greatly appealed to those looking to try the fantastic upper beats of the Laxá I Adaldal for large wild brown trout while not missing out on the salmon fishing. Here it is possible to either stay in the Laxá I Adaldal valley and fish the trout and salmon beats together, or three days in the west before flying north to fish for trout.

“Private Party” allows a party to take a whole lodge for themselves and therefore dictate how the fishing and rotations will work. For those looking for the Scottish house party feel this works well. Laxá I Dolum takes six rods, but the lodge has space for 12 – 14 allowing for family members and rod shares to join in the fun. Hitará also takes six rods, but has space for 12, and for those looking for a sprinkling of multi-sea winter fish combined with technical fishing this is ideal. Laxá Adaldal in the north caters for eight rods, with room for family members or shared rods to join the party. Our recent guests loved the thermal baths, pony trekking, birding and local outings.



“You should have been here last week” need no longer apply. With these flexible options you can narrow the odds, increase the opportunities and have twice the fun. Most rivers are close enough to fish a morning session on one, have lunch, drive to the next and then fish the afternoon session on another. With 46 rivers to chose from we have the largest portfolio in Iceland to meet your needs.



KENYA... fishing & safari



Kenya... where you can combine your fishing with fantastic beach locations and some of the best safari experiences you could ever hope to have.

It is a fisherman's paradise with a wide variety of different species inshore and offshore. The billfish season runs from November to April when black, blue and striped marlin as well as sailfish come through. Dorado, wahoo, king mackerel, giant trevally, swordfish, sharks, and tuna are abundant all year round.



Kiwayu is located on the mainland about 30 miles north of Lamu: it is totally private and secluded. Visited only by local fisherman, it really is an African

beach hideaway. The spacious reed and palm thatch cottages stretch along the seemingly endless beach. There are inshore and offshore boats, numerous watersports available and private picnics and champagne on the beach only add to the sheer pleasure of being completely away from it all.



South of Kiwayu on the Lamu archipelago is Manda Bay. Surrounded by calm inland waters and sandy beaches, it is the ideal retreat for families and honeymooners alike.

With only 16 rooms, it is very private and the level of service consistently high. Offshore boats are available to take advantage of the prolific billfish runs up the coastline.

FACT: There are regular flights to Kenya and temperatures remain pretty constant throughout the year with the rainy season falling in April, May and November.



Still travelling south, Hemingways is situated on one of the top five tropical beaches in the world, in Watamu Marine Park. It is an area with great fishing, places to visit and a perfect opportunity to relax. It has an international reputation for billfish and has some of the most experienced captains in Kenya, many of whom are familiar with fly fishing techniques.



Apart from the excellent fishing, Kenya is one of the best known safari destinations in Africa. We recommend at least three nights in a safari camp in order to experience everything: from prolific game and excellent guides to fantastic accommodation and camp staff who really cannot do enough to ensure truly unforgettable memories of your time there.



FACT: You fly into Mombasa where you will spend a night at both the beginning and end of the trip. Numbers are limited to only four anglers per trip in a sixteen week season running from the beginning of September.

Stop Press... Giant Tiger fish in Tanzania



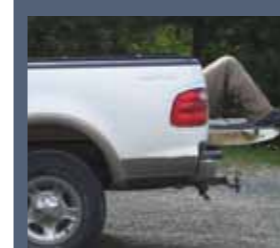
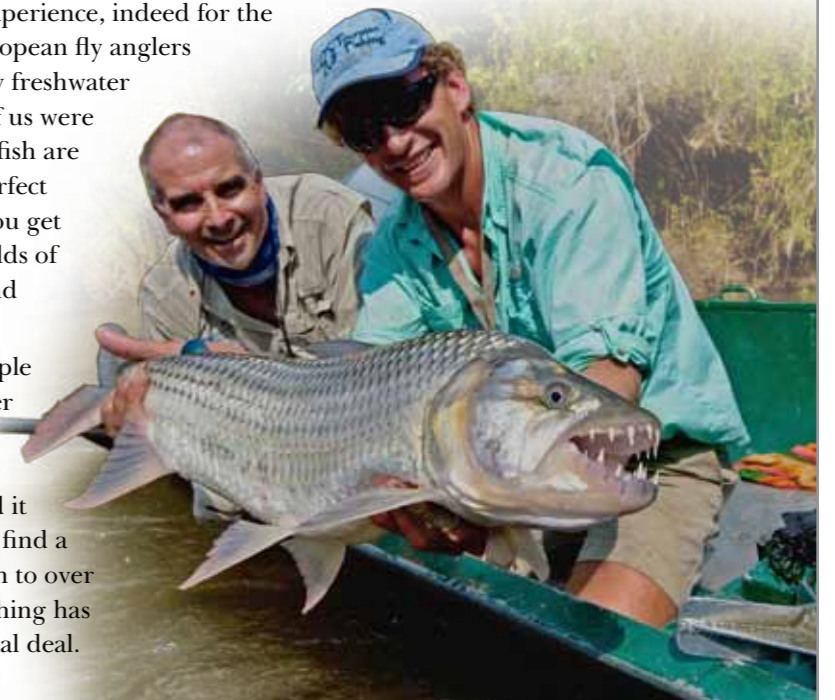
Henry Gilbey has just returned from his most recent quest for giant tiger fish.

For those anglers looking for a perfect combination of the chance to fly fish for monster tiger fish together with the complete and real African experience, then there is a new destination on the map.

Head for Tourette Fishing's new camp in the wilds of Tanzania and you are putting yourself a whole lot closer to breaking through the magical 20 lb mark for a fly caught tiger fish.

Words will never truly do justice to the Africa experience, indeed for the life of me I simply can't work out why more European fly anglers aren't chasing tiger fish. They hit you unlike any freshwater fish I have come across, to the point where all of us were left with line-burn marks on our fingers. Tiger fish are out and out savages. Brutes of the bush. The perfect freshwater quarry for the fly angler. But what you get into the bargain is the chance to step into the wilds of Africa and experience a completely different kind of fishing trip.

When did you last come off the river after multiple encounters with big tiger fish, have dinner under the stars, and then lie on your bed listening to lions roaring you to sleep? Chasing giant tigers is the whole thing, and I can't recommend it enough. The hunt has been on for years now to find a place where tiger fish could be legitimately taken to over 20 lbs. The area of Tanzania where Tourette Fishing has set up their operation is this place. This is the real deal.



If you have any pictures for our next newsletter we would love to see them.



Some people just don't take fishing seriously enough...



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Will Casella, guide and camp manager, shares one of his favourite spots with us.

Montana

“I have been very privileged to work at some of the finest fly fishing destinations in the world from Russia to the Caribbean. While not working

onsite at destinations I have spent extensive time travelling and fishing my way around the globe. However, one place has always been held dear to my heart and that is Montana.

Over the past few years life and business have brought me back to the rivers where I learned to cast a fly for the first time. It is only with time and experience that one is able to ascertain the true greatness of any destination – and Montana is really that good.

Montana comprises a total square mileage 15% greater than the whole of the British Isles with less than 1.5% of the total population. A tremendous variety of geographic landscapes exist within the state ranging from 12,000-foot peaks in the west to endless open plains in the east. In almost every corner of the western part of Montana countless streams, rivers, and lakes course with some of the densest populations of wild trout in the world. Some of the rivers boast over 4,000 fish per mile, averaging 16”. Depending on the local cutthroat, brown,

bull, brook, and rainbow trout will readily take a well-presented dry fly. The majority of waterways are accessible to the public offering near limitless

angling possibilities, from self-guided to formally guided lodge experiences.

Trout fishing is not the only reason to go to Montana. A variety of non-fishing activities exist from backcountry riding to luxury spas. Fantastic scenery and wildlife abound throughout the numerous State and National Parks and often enough just outside your car window. Yellowstone and Glacier National Park come immediately to mind but are by no means all encompassing. Every turn in the road seems to reveal another breathtaking panorama and a new opportunity.

Montana is a long way from anywhere and the distances between top destinations are great. The best way to explore is in a vehicle, at your own pace, stopping off at prearranged locations for guided activities, fishing, and overnights. Lodging options vary to suit each budget from B&Bs and basic hotels, to luxury privately catered camping and five star fishing/spa resorts. The fishing is equally as varied; small mountain streams teeming with fish that have never seen a fly to sprawling rivers offering a chance at catching a trout over 10 pounds. For the trout fisherman, Montana is truly as good as it gets.”



FACT: We arrange inclusive trips throughout Montana. The best time to visit is between May and September.

