
THE ANGLING REPORT

That price includes all fishing, lodging, food and transfers Saturday to Saturday.

Elsewhere, old Kola hands and bargain hunters may want to note that Varzina River Lodge (www.varzina.fi) is offering rods at tent camps on the Sidorovka and Drosdovka Rivers for €1,350 to €2,600 (\$2,000 to \$3,800) per week depending on the week. That price includes helicopter transport from Murmansk, food and guides. The Sidorovka is also being represented by Club Lax-a. In the past, these rivers were fished as day fly-outs from the Varzina River Lodge. At least, that's how I fished both in 1999 (see article ID 1129). These are smaller rivers with a reputation for producing large fish. The Sidorovka also has a strong grilse run. They are both well worth exploring.

Still on the Kola, Charlie White of Roxtons (011- 44-1488-689-701 – dialed from US. Web: www.roxtons.com) tells us that there's news on the Varzuga: "We have shortened our season to six weeks. A year or two ago, we made the decision to stop offering shoulder weeks. Few anglers are interested any more in weeks when there are mosquitoes, and the fixed costs of running the program mean that we can't make those shoulder weeks cheap enough to be sufficiently attractive. Typically, there are still fresh fish running in the river now as we leave for the season!"

White tells us they still have six rods available for the third week of the six-week season. "It doesn't get any more prime," he writes, noting the eight-year average is 36 fish per rod for the week. The cost is £5,000 (\$8,000 at this writing) per person.

In a side note, Roxtons is no longer operating their super-conve-

nient London-Murmansk charter flight and instead have teamed up with Frontiers on the "Salmon Shuttle" charter flight from Helsinki to Murmansk. More details are available from frontiers at: www.frontierstravel.com.

Leaving the Kola and heading west, Roxtons is promoting a new big-fish opportunity on the Lakselva River in Norway. White admits that Norway has been generally disappointing of late, citing problems with private access, too many rods on some beats, not enough fish being caught and fishing that has been over-hyped by agents and outfitters. However, after four years of research



and exploratory trips, he says he has found what he thinks will be a winner. "The Lakselva, on the North Cape of Norway, can genuinely claim to hold 40-plus-pound fish every season," he writes. "Our first season here was a great success, with many big fish lost and a few landed. The largest fish taken weighed 44 pounds. Our second season gave one angler a 32-pound fish and another angler two 30-pounders. This past season we had many fish in the high 20s, numerous 30-pound-plus fish and the biggest Atlantic salmon a Roxton's client has ever taken – a 48-pounder!"

According to White, the best fish-

ing on the Lakselva starts in late July and runs to the end of August. As he describes it, early to mid-July offers the chance to cast over the fresh big fish. As the season progresses, the grilse run adds variety and numbers.

White tells us the lodge here has six very comfortable rooms with three bathrooms. The food is consistently excellent, he says, with local produce featured. For a look at the fish and the lodge, go to: <http://picasaweb.google.co.uk/Roxtonsphotos/LakselvaAugust2008#>. (Postscript: If you go to the Lakselva this season, please file a report. I'd like to have on-site feedback about this river. E-mail me at: timjones@anglingreport.com.)

Turning to Iceland, you'll recall that we asked several experts on the salmon fishing in Iceland this past December 2008 (Article ID: 2250) if the collapse in that tiny country's banking-based economy would cause prices to fall. The general consensus seemed to be yes. Well, we're still looking, but so far, it appears that Iceland's best rivers are still pricey. Though the price in Euros has indeed fallen up to 30 percent in some cases, the relative strength of the Euro against both the Dollar and the Pound has eaten into the savings. A rod/day on a quality Icelandic river is still typically going for well over \$1,000. Anything less than that is a shoulder-week bargain. Prime time on prime water can still cost much, much more than \$1,000 a day. That said, Stefán Páll Ágústsson of Club Lax-a tells us that some of Iceland's smaller, self-service rivers are going for as little as €120/day (\$175 at this writing). So a bargain trip might be a possibility. Stay tuned. – *Tim Jones, Managing Editor*

Briefly Noted

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

■ Last month, you'll recall, we had some very enthusiastic, last-minute feedback from subscriber Reece

Lansberg on the new bonefishing opportunity at **St. Brandon's Rocks** in the Indian Ocean. Well, this month

we have some additional feedback from new subscriber Kathryn Maroun who lives in Bermuda. Ms Maroun

THE ANGLING REPORT

fished Saint Brandon's this past December 11 to 20, and she is generally enthused about the experience but with some important caveats that are worth noting. Her entire report containing additional information about tackle and other matters is available in our Trip Planning Database. Here are the rest of her comments. We are placing Ms. Maroun on our Subscriber Honor Roll, by the way, for taking the time to file such a thoughtful and useful report. Women subscribers in particular will appreciate some of her comments. Feedback leading to a full discussion of the issues she raises is welcome. Write: doncausey@anglingreport.com.

"I won't give you a play-by-play of each day's events once the fishing started, but I will tell you that the fishing at St. Brandon's Rocks was 'ridiculously fantastic.' You can quote me on that. The smallest bonfish landed that week to my knowledge weighed six pounds. The average landed would probably push double digits, and trophy bones were common. They wouldn't eat absolutely anything. We know because we tried to get some outright refusals, and we eventually got some. Mostly what they did love were Gotchas in No. 6 and No. 4 and Spawning Shrimp and Fleeing Crabs in tan and tan and cream. I bought all my flies from the guides. They were beautifully tied on steel hooks.

"We were fishing a new moon so the tides were pulling water and the big boys were on the move. Time to break out the 12-weight for giant trevally, golden trevally, greenspot trevally, bluefin trevally and barracuda the length of my refrigerator (no joke). All these were available each time we went out, provided you could hold it together as they blew past. Sometimes I did but most times I didn't. I loved every minute!!!

"The atoll's bottom is composed mostly of sand and pancake flats, which makes for ideal conditions for spotting fish and easy wading. This is a great location for the mature angler

who may be a little unsteady and has been limited to fishing from a boat. Although there are sharks around, they paid no attention to the anglers, unlike Abaco, Bahamas, where I had to keep my rod butt at the ready.

"One quibble I had was that at times we had as many as nine people walking the same flat. With so much water, if they had provided a fourth tender, my fishing partners and I would have chosen to fish away from the group to capture the essence of a true exotic fishing adventure. That's what we paid big dollars for. At one point during the week we were actually 'pushed off' our water by a more aggressive fellow angler fishing nearby. This is an easy fix for the outfitter: They simply need four tenders for eight anglers, not three tenders.



That will allow everyone flexibility on a daily basis.

"As for the weather during my trip, a storm named Cyclone Cleo posed a threat early on. But, as storms do, it changed course. Fortunately, we had high winds, murky water and chop for only two days followed by two days of unusually still air and pancake-flat water. The remaining days of the trip were more in keeping with what is expected on the flats: moderate winds that keep a nice ripple on the water that allows you to get close to the fish.

"Turning to problems on the trip, the group dynamic was a little odd. We had four people who had traveled together before and four people who had never met. In my opinion, the former controlled the daily flow of events - the pack mentality. As previ-

ously mentioned, there were only three tenders for eight people. So, virtually every other day, you were forced to coordinate your whole day with another pair of anglers and their guide as to where and how long to fish. It has been my observation that, at fishing camps, people who complain the most and are difficult to deal with wind up getting the best water. That's particularly important to me because I don't complain and consequently seem to find myself assigned to water that is more difficult and/or less productive than the water assigned to others. I spoke to the head guide about this, and he assured me that that was not happening. The problems I was perceiving, he said, were simply due to coincidence. Be that as it may, more and more women are making time to fish these days, and I think we women anglers need to try a little less hard to be 'one of the guys.' We need to speak up about some of the real differences that we quietly muddle through out on the water. In the future, I am going to make an effort to be more honest about my needs. I am no longer going to dehydrate myself so that I can go eight to nine hours without using the washroom. I don't even know how to broach the topic of the menstrual cycle with the guides in this location because you go out for eight to nine hours at a time. We are wading up to our waists at times with other anglers in the vicinity, and we can't return easily to the mothership without disrupting the other anglers with whom we share the boat. An easy fix is to have control over when you go out and when you go back - in other words a fourth tender.

"My training as a sailing instructor always kicks in whenever I am in open water and small boats. These guys are better than most when it comes to safety, but I would like to recommend that self-inflating life vests be put on the packing list, and anglers should be required to wear them coming and going from the fishing venues each day. The swells here

THE ANGLING REPORT

are large enough at times to make it difficult to spot an angler if he ended up in the water. There were life jackets on the boats, but they were stored under a hatch and they were the bulky type that you generally choose not to wear. The guides were always in touch with one another and the ship by radio, but I would have felt more comfortable if they had kept the emergency shut-off cords attached to themselves while they were operating the dual outboard engines standing up. The shut-off cords would have killed the engine if they lost their balance and fell overboard.

“As for the mothership itself, *The Gryphon* is a lovely boat and ideal for the location, but it needs a little tender loving care. On the cruise over, our cabin leaked fairly heavily through a porthole which was later caulked shut. Also, the A/C unit was not draining properly and therefore was leaking into the clothes closet, making it impossible to hang up our clothes. The shower drain did not drain properly either, which left you standing in water. On the other hand, we were very happy to have a private bathroom.

“All problems aside, I recommend this trip. It is a dream destination, a trip of a lifetime provided by a professional tour operator. It offers spectacular fishing of a quality that is increasingly hard to find today.”

(*Postscript:* Ms Maroun gives the cost of her trip as €5,900 (\$8,550 as this is written) per person, excluding gear rental, gratuities, flies, ground transportation, local hotels and alcohol other than beer and wine on board ship. You can get more information on St. Brandon’s from the agent/out-fitter Flycastaway. Tel. 011-27-82-334-34448 – dialed from the US. Web: www.flycastaway.com. It is worth noting that Ms Maroun says Lufthansa lost her luggage in Frankfurt Airport on the way to Mauritius. This is the second time in four months she has had that problem with Lufthansa. “The first time the luggage was lost for nine days, enough to ruin

the trip,” she writes. “This time, after 20 days, the bag is still missing. Apparently, they have a problem keeping track of luggage and a poor record at finding it.”

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■ Once in awhile, *The Angling Report* finds itself in a position to do some real good in the world. That usually occurs when someone in the field gives us an idea that a mover and shaker in the angling community recognizes as worthy. Our report last month on Patagonian Base Camp (www.patagonianbasecamp.com) is a case in point. That lodge in Chilean Patagonia, you’ll recall, has started providing wading boots for its guests in an effort to prevent the spread of invasive species such as Rock Snot and New Zealand mud snails. Well,



that story prompted this response from subscriber K.C. Walsh, who just happens to own Simms (www.simmsfishing.com), one of the world’s leading suppliers of waders and wading boots:

“I was just reading through your January 2010 Report and came across the story about Marcel Sijnesael’s idea of stocking boots at his lodge in Chile. I agree with your assessment that this is an excellent idea, both as someone who knows a lot about ANS (Aquatic Nuisance Species) and as a traveling angler. I typically take a new pair of boots with me on a trip, and I always leave them behind. But, I own a wading boot company!

“How can Simms help get more lodges to do this? We’d be willing to supply boots at or below our cost to get this done. It is a win-win-win: The

lodge adds an important service that protects their local waters; traveling anglers do away with the biggest hassle of their trip; and Simms would get exposure by having those anglers try out our boots.

“I plan to launch a program designed to help lodge owners acquire our boots as economically as possible. We could use your help in getting the word out to lodge owners. And, we’ll call the booking agencies who we are closest to (Frontiers, Flywater, Sweetwater, etc.) and get them to help spread the word.

“Thanks for another great issue, for sharing a good idea and for bringing more light to the ANS issue.” – K.C. Walsh.

Our thanks in turn go to Walsh for making the resources at Simms available to make this happen. Now it’s up to anglers and lodge owners to take it from here. If you are a traveling angler and you’d rather not have to tote along wading boots and run the risk of infecting pristine waters, talk to the lodges and booking agents you are working with. Tell them you plan to spend your travel dollars with companies and individuals who sign on to this important initiative. If you are a lodge owner or agent, then get with the program. As Mr. Walsh observes, this is a win-win-win for everyone.

(*Postscript:* As this issue went to press, Simms was still running the numbers on what it would cost lodge owners to take part in this effort. In the meantime, the contact person at Simms who will be able to answer at least some of your questions is Diane Bristol. E-mail: dbristol@simmsfishing.com)

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■ What’s the latest on false albacore fishing in **North Carolina**? We ran that question by Jerry Gibbs, the former fishing editor for *Outdoor Life* magazine. Gibbs is also a subscriber and sometime correspondent for this publication.

The bad news is, fall albacore fishing has been way off for the past few years, Gibbs says. But the good news is, 2009 was a gangbuster year