

Fishing Reports/Photos

Saturday, December 27, 2008

John Boy

Many thanks to John Boy from the "John Boy and Billy Big Show" fished with us on the Dragin Fly last week. Report was that his crowd caught 9 sails.....I wish that I could've been there.

posted by Capt. George Beckwith at 11:54 PM

Wednesday, December 24, 2008

Merry Christmas, mosquitoes, tarpon and grouper

Anna and I are here in Miami for Christmas and she didn't let me bring any fishing rods. We took a road trip yesterday to Flamingo in the everglades. In the little marina there were tons of rolling baby two foot long tarpon.....no fishing rods. We explored a couple of trails that were nice, but should have better consulted our maps before trekking down Snake Bite Trail towards the lookout where occasionally you can see flamingos.

The trail, unlike the well maintained boardwalks through the glades and mangroves that we had been strolling, this was a path through the woods. It had been built up from the fill of an adjacent ditch. The ditch was no wider than 10 feet and maybe a couple of feet deep, although there was no way to see the bottom.

As we started the walk, I heard an occasional splash in the ditch and went down to investigate, thinking that maybe there was a small alligator. There are alligators everywhere you go, but always too many people around to try an attempt at catching one...not to mention a nagging wife that continuously reminds me of the signs that warn of a \$5000 fine for feeding or harassing wildlife.

The water was muddy and stagnant, rich with the smell of sulfur and rot. As I squat ed down at the edge of the water another splash, then another, but always where I wasn't looking. Now I'm thinking that the source of the splash was a cormorant who kept popping up, seeing me in my "I Love New York" t-shirt, then ducking back down in the water.

Anna asks me what's making the splashes and I assure her that it's a cormorant or more likely an anghina, it's Florida cousin. From her vantage up on the path, Anna says that they're fish. I'm thinking no way can any fish live in this putrid water. Perhaps some exotic air breathing Amazonian fish with legs, but nothing that is native to the US, then I saw it. No doubt, they were tarpon, all about 2 feet long and lots of them.

After identifying the source of the splashes and now being harassed by the every accumulating mass of buzzing mosquitoes, I sloshed up to the elevated path and continued to walk with Anna, the mosquitoes followed.

The information guide did not mention how long Snake Bite Path was to the edge of Florida Bay where one can occasionally see flamingos. We knew where we were going, but didn't know how long it would take to get there so we continued to walk...and walk, and walk deeper into the woods and bald cypress swamp. After about a mile, the water in the adjacent ditch disappeared. Those baby tarpon must have come up during the rainy season

or a very high tide, maybe during a hurricane. It was amazing that so many of them would be so far away from open water and in such a different habitat from the ones that we had seen earlier in the marina.

As we continued, the mosquitoes followed and Anna's pace hastened. Anna doesn't do well with mosquitoes. I kept telling her that they can't be any worse than that still August night that we met, working on her research and fishing for red drum off of Turnigan Bay. After the sun set you could actually hear the mosquitoes coming for you, when they arrived, you could wipe them off of your arms. Growing up in Pamlico County, I know about mosquitoes and kept assuring Anna that this was nothing compared to what I've seen....the tough guy that I am, bla, bla, bla.

There aren't too many non-outdoorsman folks that have faced mosquitoes like what Pamlico County can offer and what Snake Bite Trail was beginning to give us. This was evident from the terrified look on the Asian couple who were running towards us from down the trail. The hood on the man's raincoat was pulled down and tied tight, both his Nikons were swinging back and forth as he ran/jogged. His poor wife was just behind him, tears running down her face. Anna asks if they are OK and she replies, "Bugs so bad".

Despite their warnings, Anna trudges on, the ever accumulating black cloud of mosquitoes right behind. Thank God I had long pants, blue jeans which were now speckled with black mosquitoes which would swarm every time I stopped to roll over a log looking for snakes or a frog or a salamander. The only way for any relief was to keep walking and it was tough to keep up with Anna's pace.

Finally, the path left the woods and opened up into the marsh and an elevated boardwalk that led to the edge of Florida Bay. A stiff breeze swept the mosquitoes away....for now. After about 15 minutes of surveying the area and ascertaining that there were no flamingos to be seen, we reluctantly started our return.

As we walked together along the path, I began to pluck the tops of long grasses, bundling them together and lashing them tight with honeysuckle vine, making a skeeter swatter. I asked if Anna wanted one, but she declined. When we reentered the forest, the mosquitoes were waiting. As Anna led the way, I swatted the accumulating cloud from her legs and back until her pace thickened to a full on run, she's in a lot better shape than I am.....

They couldn't get through my jeans and as long as I kept moving, they weren't too bothersome on my arms, I'm a tough guy...right. The skeeter swatter was very effective at brushing them away from either side of my head, ears and neck. On the return trip I never stopped to roll over logs or look at baby tarpon, just kept moving.

The gathering swarm is good incentive to keep up a good pace and the walk back to the car really didn't seem as long as the walk towards the phantom flamingos. Anna got a really good work out, running down the path and out of site, returning a couple of times to make sure that I was still making progress. She runs a lot.

The sound of buzzing faded to sounds of cars on the highway and coming down the path towards me was another couple, the guy in long pants and a full beard, his lady companion, blond hair, very pale pink skin in shorts and a t-shirt, already swatting, but not yet 100 yards down the 3 mile path. I offered my homemade skeeter swatter to her and advise to her partner, "There are no flamingos, the path is very long and the mosquitoes are horrendous".

He said, "Well, you never know, maybe the flamingos showed up right after you left".

My response, "Even if they did, it ain't worth it, you can see flamingos in stuck in people's yards all over Florida."

I'm certain, from the look on her face that she agreed with me, it wasn't going to be worth it. But from the look on his face, he was leading this adventure and was thinking "What does this guy know, he's wearing a 'I Love New York' t-shirt, he can't know anything about mosquitoes and wouldn't know a flamingo from a rosey spoonbill"

I feel certain that they did not see any flamingos or rosey spoonbills, I happen to know the difference, if they even made it to the end of the trail. I feel equally certain, that the great adventurer didn't get any love last night.

Note to self, before embarking on trails, check the details and bring the essentials, mosquito repellent, sufficient water and always, always bring a fishing rod. You never know where you might run into a tarpon.

Back in NC, Capt. Ray had a great day with limits of groupers and American snappers and plenty of sea bass. There is still some decent fishing when the weather cooperates.

Most importantly, Merry Christmas. On this day, remember the greatest gift that we have been given.

Tight lines, calm seas and God Bless,

George

posted by Capt. George Beckwith at 9:52 AM

Monday, December 22, 2008 **wish I was there**

I haven't heard of any giant stripers on Cape Lookout shoals, although you can have a really good afternoon catching those 16-22 inchers up the Neuse/Trent. When things warm up and you are in the right place at the right time (yesterday), the trout fishing is pretty decent. The duck hunting? It's almost impossible to have a really good legal duck hunt anymore.

On the other hand, the Dragin Fly is averaging 8-10 sails and a marlin every day, a few dolphin and enough tuna for s sushi feast....I'll be there soon enough.

posted by Capt. George Beckwith at 10:08 AM

Sunday, December 14, 2008 **ducks and fish**

Well, not a lot of either, but just enough to make it worth going. Yesterday morning we got the dogs a little work out on a bufflehead hunt, after wrapping it up we managed to beat down a few trout for dinner. I had an afternoon trip and did pretty good on the stripers, nothing red hot, but still pretty good fishing, we ended up with 8-10.

posted by Capt. George Beckwith at 10:26 AM

Saturday, December 06, 2008
hot fishing up there and down here

Capt. Ray smoked the trout a couple of days ago with a nice triple limit of 30 fish. No giants, but plenty for dinner and a few for the freezer.

Meanwhile, I'm stuck in the tropics. I say stuck, because although the weather is great and the fishing is even better, I haven't had a chance to get on the water. I am very proud of our crew of the Dragin Fly. They were chartered to fish in the WBS World Championship Billfish Tournament. This event is for individual anglers, 2 per boat. The top 5 anglers in the field compete on separate boats on the last day for the World Championship.

Day 1 Mainor Oporto, the first mate of the Spanish Fly was in first place (1 marlin/5 sails). Larry Drivon was in second place (1 marlin/4 sails). Both Mainor and Larry were fishing on the Dragin Fly.

Day 2 Mainor in first and Larry in third. We were very proud to have 2 of the top 5 anglers qualify for the Championship, both fishing on the Dragin Fly.

Day 3, the championship day, Larry fished on the Dragin Fly and Mainor switched over to his home boat, the Spanish Fly. Although the Dragin Fly raised 25+ fish, the bite was a little finacky and Larry couldn't seem to keep them connected. He ended up landing 6 sails and finished in 3rd. The Spanish Fly couldn't seem to get in the right spot and didn't raise as many fish, but Mainor took advantages of his opportunities and finished in 2nd.

Congratulations to both Mainor and Larry, we are thrilled to have had the opportunity to help them get in the championship.

posted by Capt. George Beckwith at 7:42 PM