

Belize River Lodge
June 12-19, 2021

We just returned home after 6 fabulous days of fishing in Belize! It has been 15 years since my last visit to the [Belize River Lodge](#). On my previous adventure I had hooked 5 tarpon and managed to land 2, one 80# and one 106#. I was hoping to once again have a shot at landing one of the big migratory tarpon that frequent the coastal flats and cayes during the summer months.



Lodge staff met us at the airport and drove us to the Olde Belize River where our luggage was loaded on pangas for the trip up river to the lodge. There are no roads or highways leading to the BRL so all travel is by boat. Jacquie and I were spending the week with 6 fly fishing friends from Sacramento. Some of us had fished together on previous trips to AK, Belize, Christmas Island, and Nicaragua.



Along the way upstream we could hear the welcome of the howler monkeys. As the lodge came into view, I was delighted to see it had changed very little from the way I had remembered it.

Early on the first morning after just a couple casts I hooked about a 40# tarpon. The initial jump close to the boat surprised the heck out of me, and in all the excitement I neglected to bow to the fish and he was off. Soon after, our friends just downstream released a 100# plus fish. I was able to avoid a skunk for the day with a nice 15# snook.



Jacque was delighted to land her first bonefish. On any given day in Belize, it's possible to land an IGFA Inland Grand Slam which is any 3 of the 4 prized gamefish species: Tarpon, Snook, Bonefish, and Permit. A Super Grand Slam is all 4 on the same day!



The second day of the trip I targeted tarpon but it turned out to be a snook day. I landed 5/7 snook, all in the 10#-15# range. There is a technical aspect to snook fishing in the mangroves. The goal is to get the fly under the overhanging branches and as close as possible to the mangrove roots and thick cover.



It was easy to adapt to the BRL lodge schedule. Return to the dock 4:30-5:00 where staff unload the boats and rinse our rods. Then enjoy a cold local brew and spend a bit of time relaxing.



Hors d'oeuvres are served at 6:15 and the dinner bell rings at 7:00 with the announcement of the dinner menu. Some of the charm and traditions are reminders that this country was formerly British Honduras and only gained its independence in 1981.



We appreciated the varied menu which always featured local creole cuisine.



Over the six days of fishing Jacquie and I landed a range of species including bonefish, snook, jack crevalle, snapper, barracuda, a ray, and several baby tarpon (under 30#). I failed to land the two 100# plus tarpon that I hooked but sound of the screaming reel, the splendid jumps, and thrill of battling such magnificent fish are memories that will last a lifetime. I can't wait to return to Belize and don't want to wait another 15 years.

Totals for our group included 2 tarpon landed over 100#, 3 landed in the 50#-100# range, numerous baby tarpon under 30#, and plenty of snook, bones, jacks, and other species. No permit were landed but we all got a few shots. For the non-angler or those wishing to take a break from casting there are many eco-tour options. Jacquie and Karen spent one day touring a Mayan site and visiting one of the Mennonite communities.



Belizean wildlife is diverse and abundant thanks in part to the tropical landscape and the country's commitment to conservation. Tarpon, bonefish and permit are catch-and-release only. All offshore and coastal gill netting is heavily restricted and will be totally banned by the end of 2021. As avid birders we easily recorded over 40 species just near the lodge. Manatees were regular fishing companions at the river mouth and in the bay. We also observed crocodiles, iguanas, bats, frogs, snakes, monkeys, and butterflies.

Looking forward to our next trip to Belize River Lodge,
John & Jacquie Durand