

Jeff Currier *global fly fishing*

January 11, 2009

Back From Brazil

Hey everyone,

As most of you know from my New Years report, I have been fishing the Amazon River basin in Brazil for peacock bass with my father since December 30. We returned yesterday and I can tell you we had a fantastic trip!



Jeff with a fresh caught Aruana

The adventure was organized by Gonzalo Fulquet of River Plate Outfitters (riverplateoutfitters.com). They have been leading trips into the tributaries of the Amazon River since 1992. I've covered much of the peacock bass waters of Venezuela, but a trip to Brazil was one I have been wanting to do for years. Now that I have been, I can tell you I will return many times. This says much because the truth is, we had difficult fishing. Not by any means

because of a lack of fish, but rather because of unusually high water conditions - 20 FEET HIGH to be exact!!!! (Monsoon Currier strikes again!)

We spent our adventure fishing tributaries to the Rio Negro (the main branch of the Amazon River). It began with a float plane ride from Manaus for 1 hour 30 minutes headed northwest. We all know of the incredible jungle/rainforest of the Amazon, but I'll

say this, Discovery Channel doesn't nearly show how incredible it truly is. Trust me, seeing it with my own eyes below our plane blew my mind!

After a water landing at the mouth of the Rio Branco we boarded our mothership, the Black Water Explorer (BWE), which would be our travelling base camp for the next 6 days. We ate, slept and relaxed while the BWE travelled to new spots. Our rooms even had air conditioning! For the fishing we used aluminum boats that we towed along behind the BWE. It is a brilliant way to access these remote waters. Each morning we left the BWE before sunrise with a packed lunch and explored and fished some spectacular places until dusk. Our guides were outstanding. They spoke enough English to communicate, could cast a fly and never got us lost in what I consider the trickiest terrain I have ever fished! Best of all, we never fished the same place twice in 6 days.

I said our fishing was difficult, but that's not to say we didn't catch fish. We actually caught some great fish. Our group consisted of Dad and I and 6 others whom we never met before this trip.

They were spin and plug

fishermen and we had a blast

fishing and hanging out with

them. Everyone caught fish with the biggest a 15lb peacock landed by Daryl Gorup.

Dad cast flies solid for two days before our guide Saba taught him the art of tossing jigs on a spin rod. Dad was reluctant at first that is until he learned he could sit back in the boat chair and cover water effortlessly. Dad managed several nice peacocks and varieties of sardinata.

Unless I'm severely injured or baitfishing for monster catfish, I never put down the fly rod. It often lowers my catch rate, but on this trip I kept pace with the rest of the gang. On my 3rd cast, I lucked into a 11 pound peacock! He was gorgeous, but like many first day fish, we didn't take enough photos and naturally it was my largest peacock of the trip.



The Black Water Explorer

Throughout the remainder of the week I managed others, but none broke the 4lb mark. To my delight, I caught two new species to add to my life list, the aruana and pacu. Both species fell for the pattern Fat Albert like we use for cutthroats on the Snake. I must of averaged about 750 casts a day with my 8, 9 and 10-weights and have 8 blisters on my casting hand and my stripping arm is absolutely toast!

It should be mentioned that fly fishing the Amazon puts tremendous strain not only on the angler, but also the equipment. On past jungle trips I have broken as many as 5 rods and even snapped fly lines! A special thanks to Ross (whom I am proudly a part of these days) for providing me both reels and rods that handled and endured the strains of the jungle beautifully. In addition, Rio has been my fly line and tippet choice for many years. On this trip Rio's lines specifically designed for hot weather and casting huge flies made it possible to cast 750 times a day and place the flies in the hard to hit spots required for Amazonian fly fishing.



Jeff's Father with a Peacock Bass

There's a long list of non-fishing highlights as well. A personal favorite was the abundance of macaws (the big colorful parrots common in pet shops). All my past trips to the rainforest and I never saw one in the wild. On this trip we saw every color possible and

once saw a flock of nearly 20!

On the last day we decided to baitfish for catfish in the depths of the murky waters of the Rio Branco. This is an event everyone in our group agreed we should of done sooner. The BWE had heavy spin rods for Dad and I to borrow loaded with 80lb braid. To make a long story short - we were broken off by giants of the depths 8 times! It was unreal! Several of the guys including Dad landed 100lb + freshwater stingrays. In addition we caught numerous small catfish - varieties of species - and Kevin Deckert landed a gorgeous redtailed catfish of 22lbs. It was one of the most beautiful fish I have ever seen!

Unfortunately my return home has not been so good. Instead of a big date with Granny on the happening town of Victor, ID last night, Granny is in NYC accompanying her

mother at an intensive care unit. Her mom became terribly sick while I was away and doctors are unsure of the cause. Granny will be in NYC as long as necessary and I will keep everyone posted.

As for me, I head out on a two week show circuit on Tuesday to try and make some money. I'll be back to Victor on the 26th and hopefully Granny will be home and everything back to normal.

I look forward to hearing from you all and best of all look forward to seeing some of you during my travels!

All the best,

Jeff