



Stonely Maidens Women's Fly Fishing Club

Christmas Island...I've Gotta Go Back!!!

It's a glorious May Sunday evening in Jackson Hole and I think back almost exactly six months to another Sunday afternoon in November as I began my first trip to Christmas Island. I was ready - new rod, new reel, 9 dozen new flies, and everything else I could think of in my often-weighted 40 pound (total weight) bags; and I was psyched!

Of course, nothing I do can ever be simple. I arrived at the airport very early. Checked a bag with non-essentials; you know, things like clothes, a toothbrush, etc.; but the good stuff, the flies, reel, fly tying stuff, rods, wading shoes, etc., were in my pack by my side; almost chained to my wrist. This was one flight I was not going to mess up! The minutes dragged by. Let's go already! Finally they called the flight, and we were through into the boarding area. We were on our way, but no, they could not get the baggage compartment door to close. Forty minutes later they canceled the flight and sent us back to ticketing. Another twenty minutes later as we were all standing around waiting our shot at the next available flight, the baggage compartment suddenly decided to work, but 'twas too late as about half the passengers had left the terminal.

When I finally got to the counter, they confirmed my guess; my new connection out of Salt Lake would not get

me into San Francisco in time to make my flight to Honolulu, nor would it get me to the coast any where in time to make a Sunday night flight to the Islands. They routed me through to Los Angeles, and although the free hotel room was nice and the food was excellent, having to get up and get on a plane the next morning was a far cry from the day in the waves of Oahu I had planned. I guess it all does make a point though. When you go to Christmas Island, having at least a one day cushion between your anticipated arrival in Honolulu and your scheduled departure time for CI is literally worth its weight in gold.

John Courtney, Jack Dennis Sports

I arrived in Honolulu in the early afternoon to leaden skies o gray, fitful winds, and light rain. Monday passed in anticipation and, well, suffice to say there are some exceptional watering holes in Honolulu. Tuesday morning most of what was to become our group of nine came together for the first time in what seemed the wee hours of the day before. I am not sure, but considering the way we were all to behave over the next week in pursuit of our prey, I think the term "pack" would be very appropriate. Anyway, as soon as Jack Dennis's Jeff Carrier, our guide and mother hen, got us up, walking and coherent (sort of) it was off in a dark drizzle to seek the home of Coral Pacific Airlines. I guess I should explain a bit here.

Over some time preceding our planned trip, flights to CI had fallen apart; and as late as about a week before our scheduled departure we were unsure whether we would be going west over the Pacific or south to an alternative location (Frontiers did ask each of us if we

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Meeting Information

- December 14, 2005
6:00 pm Social Hour
7:00 pm Business Meeting and Speaker
- Iron Horse Restaurant
6034 SE Milwaukie Ave
Portland, Oregon
(503) 232-1826
- Christmas Party and Fly Exchange

This Month with the Stonely Maidens

It's time for our Christmas Party. Don't forget to bring 6 flies for the Fly Exchange. Remember to write down what they are so that the person who gets them will know, too. You can tie your own flies or buy them. They can be trout flies, steelhead flies, saltwater flies, dry flies, wet flies, or any combination of flies. The fun is in the selection and the presentation.

Bring a guest with you to the meeting. This is a great way to introduce her to the

club. She'll have such a good time, she'll want to join on the spot.

Bring your fishing pictures and your favorite fishing stories even though we have all seen and heard them before. You know that each telling of the tale makes the fish jump higher, fight harder and get bigger.

Can't wait to see what flies, I'm going to get this year.

Fly Lines

Merry Christmas, everyone. I hope that all of you get lots of fly fishing things under your tree. At the very least, make sure you put time in your calendar to go fishing with the club and with others. A wise fisher person I know says that every day spent fishing adds another year to your life, so let's go fishing a lot.

This is my last newsletter. I want to thank everyone for your contributions and your encouragement. Please give the same support to the next person (whoever that may be). After being the newsletter editor for at least four years, it is time for someone else with new ideas to share their talent with the club. I am looking forward to being a supporting member of the club for a while.

Next year's schedule looks like an exciting one. We are going to have some repeat speakers and some new ones. Looks like there is a good

mix of how to and where to go presentations. We will also be going to some new places.

One of the things that helps everyone on fish-a-longs to have someone be the hostess for the trip. This person does not have to know the fishing area well, just be willing to commit to go on that month's trip, do a little research to share with the members, and be the contact person. This way the load is spread out among several members instead of just the officers. I am going to be the fish mistress for the January trip for steelhead on the Sandy River. Who's going to do the next one?

Thanks again for all your support over the past few years. I'm looking forward to seeing all of you at the Christmas Party. Don't forget to bring your flies for the exchange and your pictures from the last year of fishing to share with the rest of the group. Fish long and prosper.

Tilda Runner



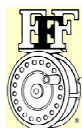
Name This Fly Contest

Write the name of this fly on a raffle ticket with your name. The first person drawing with the correct name of the fly wins six of them.

Goings On

Federation of Fly Fishers

July 25-29, 2006—FFF's 41st Int'l Show & Conclave 2006, Bozeman, MT



Oregon Council of the Federation of Fly Fishers

January 15—Winter Meeting, Eugene, OR

February 8 to 12—Pacific Northwest Sportsmen's Show, Portland, OR

February 25—Lower Umpqua Fly Fishers Expo, Reedsport, OR

March 25—18th Annual Fly Tyers Expo, Wheeler Pavilion, Eugene, OR

March 26—Youth Fly Fishing Seminar, Rainbow Trout Farm, Sandy, OR

April 2—Spring Meeting, Eugene, OR

May 13—Adult Beginning Fly Fishing Seminar, Rainbow Trout Farm, Sandy, OR

July 16—Summer Meeting, Eugene, OR

August 26—State Fair Fly Tying Day, Salem, OR

October 8—Fall Meeting, Eugene, OR

November 11—NW Fly Fishers Fly Tyers Expo, Glen Otto Park, Troutdale, OR

Native Fish Society

February 18, 2006—NFS Auction and Banquet, Ambridge Event Center, located just north of the Oregon Convention Center.

Fly Fishing Shops

Don't forget to check out the links on the Stonefly Maidens website for the fly fishing shops that support the club. Many of them have great classes available.

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would be willing). The upshot of it was that there had not been a fishing flight into CI for over a month. Sounded okay to me! It was a good thing the cabbies found the small unpretentious office of Coral Pacific on the "wrong side of the" airport, we certainly would not have done so. We unloaded our stuff outside on an old trailer and went in to wait and wander around in what was for most of the time a completely empty four or five room office space. Finally the necessary folk arrived and we did our passport & visa thing and returned to sitting. About this time we learned that we would not all (we were up to 12 having been joined by a lovely Italian couple and Richard, a true CI veteran) be going out on the scheduled flight. Hum??? About the same time we looked out to see all our bags and gear driving off and disappearing into the grey, misty, early predawn night. I am not sure how the flight arrangements were arrived at; Jeff, however, in good mother hen fashion chose to remain and follow us later. The plane would fly one group of us out, return, and make a second flight the same day. This meant three hours out, refuel, three hours back, refuel, three more hours back to CI, right!!

For whatever reason I was among the first group and was considering myself extremely lucky as I think eight of us passed through a set of locking double doors and trudged our way around the hangers in the half-light. None of us had a clue what kind of a plane to be looking for. As we understood it, the reason for there being a flight at all was a Japanese satellite tracking station on the Island and the need to get stuff there. Soooo? Oh well!, nothing like your own eight passenger Lear jet, complete with sandwiches and drinks.

We took off with the sunrise, and our little silver bird seemed to hurl herself southward across the blue Pacific. The 3-hour flight simply melted away in anticipation and excited talk; suddenly there it was. Narrow curving ribbons of brown and green, surrounded and interspersed with what seemed a limitless expanse of lagoons & tidal flats of white, off white, and where they met and merged with the Pacific, every shade of green and blue known to nature. Suddenly, too suddenly really, we were landing; then we were down, on a runway built for B-52's and their kin, a runway being attacked by the vegetation with greenery showing up everywhere in cracks in the cement and encroaching from the edges.

We were here! Here being a single ramshackle old half building, half-open hut sitting along the runway which

masquerades as a terminal. We all breathed several sighs of relief as everyone's gear appeared out of the plane, then it was time for paperwork and customs. There must have been six or seven stations along this wooden counter with a dozen friendly people. For customs, the first bags were given the microscope treatment, while the last were...well, I think they thought about checking them.



Then it was outside with our stuff to meet what was going to be our main means of transport for the next week, compact pickups with wooden benches down each side of the bed and slightly peaked roofs overhead with built-in rod holders (a series of holes below the peak at the front and back of the bed). Twenty minutes later we were at the Captain Cook Hotel, home away from home. I am not sure what I was expecting. What we got clearly used to be military in nature. This was something along the line of a bachelor officer's quarters with a sitting area, a mess hall a couple of

lines of single story motel-like rooms and several bungalows which ranged from about 35' to 100' from the water on the ocean/reef side of the island. We checked in, were told that any of us who wanted to go fishing for the afternoon should be ready in an hour, and were hauled (again by our trucks) to our bungalows which were duplex units, each with; 2 beds, a tiled shower, toilet sink area and very limited storage. Yes, it was basic, with no TV and no phones...anywhere. We found out who won the November election when we got back to Honolulu. It was great!

My roommate Ben and I threw our belongings on our beds and started pulling gear together. Fifteen minutes later everything was either on me or in my fanny-pack, and all that was left was to rig my rod. Ever capable of creating chaos out of relative serenity, somehow I started to drop my new 3n Loop reel over the bed, reached out to catch it, and succeeded only in knocking it several feet into the air, to watch it come down, of course, on the bathroom tile floor, and of course on the spool edge. Naturally, when I tried it, it would not turn. Since this was my first visit to the salt, the reel I had bent was the only reel I had brought. Panic! It is amazing what one can do in five minutes with bravery born of "oh, ----!", a pair of old needle nose pliers a Gerber multi-tool, and more luck than anyone deserves.

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Our mission is to create opportunities, encourage, educate, and mentor women's participation in the sport of fly fishing.

Our goal is to bring women together who share a love of fly fishing and the beauty of nature to create friendships and lasting memories.

Stonefly Maidens Women's Fly Fishing Club

An Oregon Council-Federation of Fly Fishers Member Club

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Calendar (tentative 2006 Schedule)

Meeting	Speaker/program	Fishing
Jan 11	Fly-tying-Mark or Bob from Fly Fishing Shop-steelhead flies	Sandy-Oxbox Park-Steelhead
Feb 8	Open	Crooked
Mar 8	Entomology with John Smeraglio & Rick Hafele	Deschutes or Clackamas
April 12	Knots & Reels with Jack Hagen from NW Fly Fishing Outfitters	Harriet Lake
May 10	Simon Gawesworth – spey or Scotland	Sauvie's Island – misc warm water fish
June 14	Fishing Fashion Show-Patty Barnes	Casting Clinic, June 17 Clack on SUNDAY June 18 th
July 12	Open	Shad on Columbia Bonus * Hex on Lost Lake (Mt Hood)
August 9	Dave Roberts	Rogue Holy water Extended trip?
Sept 13	Ron Lauzon/Leroy	Fall River OR
Oct 11	Katherine Hart	Deschutes for October Caddis hatch
Nov 8	Mike Duley – New Zealand	No fishing scheduled
Dec 13	(no speaker in Dec) Holiday party and Fly Swap	No fishing scheduled

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Soon four of us hopped into a truck with two guides, and we were off! Ten or maybe 15 minutes later we were driving on the flats, sometimes on the sand and sometimes in the water. Finally we came to a stop and parked in 15 to 18 inches of water. Glad it's not my truck! Each guide took two of us and all six fanned out on a huge tan white flat (there would have been enough room for 50 - 100).

The water was not quite clear and we cast to 2 - 5 pound fish coming across the flats; but I have never ever thought I was so blind! I could almost step on them, but I could not see them until it was too late to make a decent cast. We had agreed to split time with the guides and I started alone.

In the first 40 minutes or so I must have seen a dozen fish flash by me, several clearly spooked by others 100 yards away. Finally, simply standing there in frustration, I thought I saw something moving only about 25 feet away. I cast to what I thought was eight or so feet in front of what I thought I had seen, hesitated, made a slow tentative strip to straighten the line, and found the bottom. I pulled gently on the line again to dislodge it, and the bottom exploded, the reel sang, the sun shone, I was into my backing in a heartbeat, and I was in heaven! Ten very careful minutes later I counted coup on very first bonefish, about 4 pounds. Then it was my turn with the guide, and the beginning of an education.

"There, 40', too long, cast again, stop, wait, strip, strip, strip long, stop, strip," explosion! The fish were many and willing, and we all caught fish. Toward the end of the day the guide and I had somehow worked our way well out from the others, and we found a bonefish highway. As quickly as I could catch and release a fish, or miss one which I did too often, he had another for me to cast to. It went on for over an hour and I had fish on almost continuously, and I began to really see them. They were mostly in the 3 # range and I haven't a clue how many. I do remember that I was euphoric and incoherent as I stumbled back to the truck.

The second flight from Honolulu with Jeff and others arrived by dinner and afterwards we sat drinking Fosters, talking about our day, and thinking about what the next would bring. This turned into pretty much the pattern for the week, where we would congregate and relax, usually with something in hand, in front of Jeff's bungalow before dinner, go to eat, and return to the same spot for a short while before falling into bed in order to be able to get up for the next early morning; they were all early!

While our fishing would remain the passion, there were other special things: most special were the friendly, happy, native people of Christmas Island, especially the children; walking very carefully amid the huge multi-species rookery which was probably less than 50 yards from the hotel; Pacific sunrises, sunsets; the incredible nighttime sky; the beach, especially at night; the native show; the luau; the seafood and the wonderful roar of the sea which put us to sleep every night.

The next day we all went by truck to the ocean flats, an area between the reef and the sand of the shore, and very different in character than the huge interior flats which we had fished the day before. These flats are more dynamic with a much greater diversity of fish species, and the water was almost crystal clear. Also, dramatically different were the sounds, from the relative silence of the protected flats to the crashing and surging of the surf. The perspective on the coral was so different that having been finally able to see the fish on the flats the day before was of little value here, and the guides were, again, at least for me, and most of our party, essential.

The fish were stronger, and one had to deal with the constant problem of coral, both on your line as a 6 # bonefish flew away from you and underfoot as one stumbled after trying to keep the rod high above one's head. As the tide came in we were forced to walk either the high ridge of the reef (where we could) or the beach.

The most amazing sight was a group of bonefish actually partially beaching themselves on the sand reaching for food. It was an incredible day and everyone caught fish, mostly bonefish and small trevally. Jeff tried for everything, including the small sharks, which seemed to continually cruise the flats.

We returned to the ocean shore one morning later in the week, but at low tide, to find most of the fish off the flats. I quickly gave up and walked the outer reef edge throwing everything from Clousers (black was by far the best color) to Little Rainbow Trout streamers into and in front of the many channels running from the open sea through the reef to the flats. It was a picnic, or perhaps better a smorgasbord! In addition to bonefish, trevally, and some form of red bass, I gave up counting at about around 20 different types of reef fish. We left at lunch, yet to this day I have to wonder how incredible it might have been on the incoming tide.

The next morning we were introduced to our other form of CI transport, two large outrigger canoes powered by lightweight outboards. The morning saw us being ferried in groups of four from flat to flat seeking the elusive bones. In the afternoon, the boat I was on opted for going outside the reef, and in doing so discovered, at least for us, another face of Christmas Island. A face which some members of the pack chose to pursue on two succeeding days, blue water

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and big fish! There were many, many memories of the boats and the offshore experience including trolling plugs on 10 and 12 weights and Ahi yellowfin tuna - up to 80#, Yea! I remember Mike; enjoying as fresh as it gets raw Ahi and Fosters to supplement our lunches; watching guide Simon horse up from the depths, and he and the boat crew manhandle about an 8-foot shark over the side and into the well of the canoe; Mike's casting to and landing a 30# Dorado (Mahi Mahi/Dolphin) on his eight weight (Yes, he is a guide, on the East Coast, with a penchant for Stripers and False Albacore); shattered rods from the day that produced the 80# tuna; more Simon, tearing a small bonefish apart with his teeth and hands and then standing in the water to hand-feed two 90# - 100# Trevally, while Jeff sought to tempt them to a fly; Jeff's 90# trevally; and more; UNBELIEVABLE!!!

The remaining precious fishing hours, more for some of us than for others across the week, were spent on the flats, and these too were memorable, perhaps most so for me as bonefish and the flats were why I had come. Day after day, fish after fish, it only gets better!; watching my three partners for the day bring three fish in the 6-7# range to hand at the same time and trying to take pictures for them all; wading a chest deep run between two flats and being scared out of my wits as three trevally which the guide said were in the 50-60# range flashed by within arms length; 3 hours blind-casting on a "honey hole" on an unremarkable flat which yielded a fish on literally every cast running from 2# to over 7#, and never having a clue which it would be; the tailing monster that the guide said was around 10# which took nearly 200 yards of backing in one awesome run before wrapping me around a hunk of coral; the two fish which put into my backing four separate times; just everything.

IT JUST DOESN'T GET ANY BETTER THAN THIS!!!

The week evaporated, and on our beds were the details for departure. The folk who had come in on the first flight would go out the same way, and the others would fish the balancing half+ day. By chance, listening to talk of others on the Island needing to fly out, I heard of someone who wanted to go early. So I asked the head guide if I could switch places and stay and fish the extra day. As he had planned to send a guide with the one of the pack wanting to fish the flats, he agreed. The day dawned, we said goodbye to our new found friends, and headed one last time to the water. The day was typical of all the others; skies of brilliant blue with a few white clouds, the backdrop to the white sand, the gracefully moving green of the palms, and the ever changing colors of the water; wonderfully warm but not hot, dry not humid. It couldn't get any better than the day before, but it did. The water was crystal clear, and the fish were everywhere! And I don't think that either of us caught one that was not at least close to 6#. At one point I stood watching close to 20 fish of this size and larger cruising within casting distance. I had not been ready to leave the day before, but somehow, this day when the guide said we had to go, I was strangely at peace.

It was a quiet flight, again in the Lear; I guess each of us was happy to be alone with our thoughts. I made my flight to the mainland by all of 15 minutes, and somehow the escape into paradise was over.

In the short six months since our return and in the absence of a diary, the days have begun to run together. Each day of the trip was different and special, but for me, the days and all that is Christmas Island blended, and I guess continues to blend, into a whole that was and is much greater than its individual parts.

Christmas Island, yes, I will go back.



Editor's Note: Sorry girls. I just couldn't resist finding a Christmas Island story for my last Christmas issue. Hope all of you have a safe and fun Christmas and New Year.

Catch a good one this Christmas