



## TURNEFFE FLATS FISHING INFORMATION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Turneffe Atoll is noted for its variety of saltwater fishing. The availability of bonefish, permit and tarpon make Turneffe Flats one of the rare spots in the world offering a legitimate shot at a GRAND SLAM. In addition, Turneffe offers several other saltwater species so we encourage you to come prepared for a wide variety of fishing opportunities.

Several outfitters and fly shops can assist you with flies and equipment and the gear that works best at Turneffe can also be purchased at our lodge. We do rent fly rods/reels and spin rods/reels. However, supplies are limited and rental arrangements should be confirmed with our Reservations Office prior to your trip.

**BONEFISH:** Our oceanside flats are some of the most picturesque, wadable flats anywhere in the world, with large schools of bonefish as well as smaller schools and singles. These fish average 3-5 pounds with some as large as 8-12 pounds.

Fishing the oceanside flats at Turneffe offers something for anglers of all levels of expertise. Novice saltwater anglers will see hundreds of fish, providing a great opportunity to learn the basics of saltwater fishing while experienced anglers will find plenty of challenging fishing, particularly targeting smaller schools and larger singles.

Bonefish are present in equal numbers throughout the year. The oceanside flats can offer some challenging fishing, and having the right gear, flies, presentations and fishing techniques are all important.

Bonefish also inhabit the mangrove-lined lagoons and flats on the interior of the atoll. These bonefish are often larger and take flies more readily than the oceanside fish, although they tend to be on the move so casting accuracy is crucial. Fishing for these fish is mostly done from the bow of our 16' Dolphin Super Skiffs.

### **Recommended Bonefish Gear:**

Rod: 7 Wt. to 9 Wt.

Reel: Saltwater reel with at least 150 yds. of 20 lb. backing

Fly Line: Tropical WF floating

Leader: 9 -14 feet depending upon the fishing situation

Tippet: 2X - OX (fluorocarbon tippet is preferable)

Flies: #10 to # 6

### **Bonefish Flies:**

Pop's Bonefish Bitters, #6 and #8 (Olive and Amber)

Pop's Egghead Bitters, #6 and #8 (Olive and Amber)

Crazy Charlies - white, pink, brown (unweighted for outer flats), #6 and #8

To-Dy-For, #6 and #8

Gotcha, Horror, Baited Breath, #6 and #8

Raghead Crab, #6

EP Micro Crab, #8

EP Micro Shrimp, #8 and #10

Various small shrimp and crab patterns

On our oceanside flats, smaller flies are more effective (#6's, #8's and some #10's). Unweighted flies are an absolute necessity. Larger flies (#6's) work best on the inner flats, and weighted flies are often preferable here.

**PERMIT:** Permit are the primary objective of many anglers at Turneffe Flats. On the bars and flats, you can expect plenty of shots at permit averaging 10-20 pounds. You can also expect to see some 30-40 pound permit. Permit fishing at Turneffe is primarily done from the bow of our Dolphin Super Skiffs, although there are also some wading opportunities.

**Recommended Permit Gear:**

Rod: 9 Wt. or 10 Wt.

Reel: Saltwater reel with a minimum of 200 yds. of 20 lb. backing

Fly Line: Tropical WF Floating (some anglers prefer a slow sinking line such as a slime line)

Leader: 9 - 12 feet

Tippet: 1X - OX

Flies: # 4 to 1/0

**Permit Flies:**

Del Brown's Permit Crab (Merkin), #2 or 1/0

Raghead Crab, #2 or 1/0

EP Turneffe Crab, #2 or 1/0

Various other crab patterns, #4 – 1/0

**TARPON:** In season, tarpon inhabit the creeks, channels and lagoons of the atoll. Most tarpon jumped are 60-90 pounds with some fish up to 150 pounds. Most of our tarpon fishing is to rolling fish with limited sight fishing.

Tarpon fishing is seasonal as they are migratory. Tarpon numbers begin to increase in April or May and drop off in September or October, with peak months of June, July and August. In addition, there are a few resident tarpon around Turneffe throughout the year.

**Recommended Tarpon Gear:**

Rod: 11 Wt. or 12 Wt.

Reel: Saltwater reel with a minimum of 200 yds. of 30 lb. backing

Fly Line: Intermediate sinking (slime line) or medium sink tip

Leader: 4 - 6 ft. butt section, 16 lb. - 20 lb. class tippet, 60 - 100 lb. shock tippet

Flies: Size 3/0 to 4/0

**Tarpon Flies:**

Apte-style tarpon flies, 3/0 and 4/0

EP Peanut Butter, purple/black and red/black, 3/0 and 4/0

Cockroach, Black Death and Purple Haze, orange/red and white/red, 3/0 and 4/0

Deceiver patterns - various colors, 3/0 and 4/0

Abel Anchovy, 3/0 and 4/0

Dark colors tend to be better in the early morning and brighter colors work best when it's bright.

**OTHER FISHING:** The interior of the Turneffe Atoll offers miles of mangrove-lined bays, creeks and lagoons to fish for snappers, jacks, and barracuda with poppers or #2 Clouser minnows. This can be some very exciting saltwater fishing – with either a fly rod or spinning gear.

Barracuda are an underrated and acrobatic game fish inhabiting the reefs at Turneffe in large numbers. Many anglers prefer to troll a fly for them, but barracuda can also be taken by sight casting on the flats or by blind casting poppers into the deeper holes along the reef.

Along the reef, large snappers and jacks can be taken by casting deceiver patterns or poppers into the surf.

**Recommended Barracuda Gear:**

Rod: 8 Wt. to 10 Wt.

Reel: Saltwater reel with a minimum of 200 yds. of 20 lb. backing

Fly Line: WF floating

Leader: 20-45 lb. wire shock tippet (8 to 12 inches in length)

Flies: Size 1/0 to 3/0

**Barracuda Flies:**

Braided Needlefish or variations, 2/0 with tandem hooks

**SPIN FISHING GEAR:** Although the great majority of anglers at Turneffe Flats prefer a fly rod, others wish to use spinning gear. Some of the fishing at Turneffe is very well suited for spin fishing and we particularly recommend that you consider spinning gear for barracuda fishing and mangrove casting.

Bonefish can be fished with a 7-8 1/2 ft. rod with 250 yds. of 8-10 lb. line. 1/16-1/8 jig heads in various colors with bait work best for bones.

Permit can be fished with a 7-8 1/2 ft. rod with 250-300 yds. of 12-15 lb. line. Crab or conch bait on 1/8-1/4 oz. jig heads are very effective for permit while some larger crab patterns like the McCrab work well.

Tarpon should be fished with a 6-7 ft. rod with 300 yds. of 15-20 lb. line. Mirrolures (65M's and 38M's) work well for tarpon and so do Rapalas (CD 14's). A 12-18 inch shock leader should be used and 60-80 lb. shock tippet is necessary.

Barracuda are best fished with a spinning reel or an open face reel with 250 yds. of 20-30 lb. You need to use 20-45 lb wire shock tippet (9-12 inches). Bright tube lures are the best baits for barracuda.

Mangrove casting is best done with a set up similar to above for permit. Poppers and various other lures (Mirrolures and Rapalas) are the best baits.

**FISHING SCHEDULE:** Our fishing schedule is as flexible as possible. A standard day's fishing is about eight hours. Generally the fishing day begins after breakfast and ends in the late afternoon. For safety purposes, we do require everyone to return to the lodge well before dark.

During tarpon season, many anglers wish to begin fishing shortly after sunrise and then take a rest during the day. There is a long, productive flat right in front of the cabins that allows hardcore anglers to fish from sunrise to sundown.

You will be given the daily option to take either a packed lunch or return to the lodge for lunch. Lodge management will coordinate your day's fishing during the prior evening (guide, meet-up time, what type of fishing and whether you wish to return for lunch or take a lunch).

**FISHING SKIFFS:** We fish from tiller-steered 16' Dolphin Super Skiffs that were custom built in the U.S. These are comfortable boats with a nice casting deck, rod holders and dry storage.

**CATCH AND RELEASE:** With rare exception, all fish at Turneffe Flats are released.

**WEATHER:** Temperatures in Belize generally range from 75-95° (24-35° C) and good sun protection is essential. Most of the time there is a comfortable trade wind which helps to cool things off. Cold fronts in the fall or early winter can occasionally drop temperatures into the 60's.

**OTHER ACTIVITIES:** We also operate a full scuba diving program. Diving Packages or Combination Fishing and Diving Packages are available. Our Discover Scuba Class is available for non-divers interested in trying the sport. We also offer an Atoll Adventure Package, which provides daily guided activities such as snorkeling, sightseeing, dolphin watching, and birdwatching. This is a very enjoyable option during the week for non-angling partners.

## DON'T FORGET TO BRING:

- Flats wading boots (e.g. Simms Flats Sneaker). These need to be firm-soled shoes designed for flats wading and impermeable to small, sharp pieces of coral. Light tennis shoes or reef walker booties do not work and can be dangerous.
- Polarized sunglasses
- Sun hat
- Lightweight long-sleeve shirt and pants (for sun protection and repelling insects)
- Sun mask or “buff”
- Water bottle
- Sunscreen (reef-friendly and mineral-based) and insect repellent
- Rain jacket
- Fly tying materials
- Snorkeling gear
- Camera
- Binoculars
- First aid medications (including a cortisone cream for sunburn and insect bites)
- Prescription medications



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