

# CROOKED & ACKLINS ISLAND LODGE

THE CHRISTMAS ISLAND OF THE CARIBBEAN

## SOUTHERN BAHAMAS



*The Fly Shop*

TACKLE & OUTFITTING GUIDE

GPS COORDINATES: 22°43'37.34"N | 74°08'27.33"W

[WWW.THEFLYSHOP.COM](http://WWW.THEFLYSHOP.COM)



### **Trip questionnaire**

Please click on the link below. This will take you an electronic questionnaire form that we ask you to complete and submit to The Fly Shop. Please be sure to click the **“Submit”** button at the end of the form. The information provided will help us -- and the outfitter best coordinate your trip.

THANK YOU!! Click [HERE](#)

This is one of the least-visited fisheries in the Bahamas, and about as far south as you can go without landing on the Turks and Caicos. The southerly location is significant when you consider the weather patterns that bring winters chill and harsh winds to the northern Bahamas. These shallow, firm flats are home to abundant schools of bonefish averaging three to four pounds, and a ten plus pound fish is a daily possibility. If you enjoy wading into position to make a precise presentation up close and personal, then this fishery should not be overlooked. It's a wade fisherman's dream, with shallow hard sand flats extending for miles.

The islands of Crooked and Acklins are located in the far southeastern portion of the Bahamas, 239 miles southeast of Nassau. Acklins and Crooked Island are two of the four islands forming an atoll which hugs the beautiful shallow waters of the Bight of Acklins, a 500-square-mile lagoon. Total land mass of Crooked Island is 57 square miles, while Acklins island totals 150 square miles. The islands are located less than 60 miles from the Haitian and Cuban coastlines and both islands maintain a population of no more than 500 +/- permanent residents.

In addition to the incredible bonefish opportunities, the in-shore fishing is excellent for jacks, snapper, shark, mackerel, barracuda, and grouper. Trigger fish are available on the coral flats, and juvenile tarpon can be found in protected backcountry lagoons. Wahoo, yellowfin tuna and dorado (mahi- mahi) are target species for those anglers venturing offshore, with blue water depths just a few miles off the of the coast.

Bordered by the nearly uninhabited Castle Island and Long Cay, they are as natural as they were when The Bahamas was first "discovered." Columbus reputedly sailed down the leeward side of the islands through the narrow Crooked Island Passage, which has ever since served as an important route for steam ships travelling from Europe to Central and South America. This seaway, referred to locally as 'the going through,' also earned these islands the notorious reputation as convenient bases for buccaneers and pirates, who attacked ships in these shallow waters.

The islands are two of the Bahamas' most natural and unspoiled islands and are popular for diving, snorkeling, and bonefish fishing, as well as other leisure activities.

## **Getting to Crooked & Acklins Island Lodge**

Most anglers fly commercially to Nassau International Airport (NAS). There are numerous daily flights to Nassau from many of the larger U.S. cities.

### **Direct to Nassau from United States:**

|                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Delta              | JetBlue           |
| Silver Airways     | American Airlines |
| Southwest Airlines | United            |
| Bahamasair         |                   |

### **Other Airlines Flying to Nassau International:**

|                    |         |
|--------------------|---------|
| Air Canada         | Copa    |
| Caribbean Airlines | WestJet |
| British Airways    |         |



All U.S. citizens are required to have a valid passport that does not expire within six months of their trip dates. Please be sure that your passport has at least two blank, unstamped pages remaining in the back, and that it is not torn, delaminated, or damaged in any way.

#### **Arrival Day:**

The most popular option in travel to Crooked & Acklins Island Lodge is flying to Nassau's Lynden Pindling International Airport (NAS) and then taking a Bahamas Air flight to Crooked Island's Colonel Hill Airport (CRI). Wednesdays and Saturdays are designated arrival and departure days for the island via scheduled commercial service on Bahamas Air for the two hour flight.

You can make a reservation and payment on their website, [www.bahamasair.com](http://www.bahamasair.com). The round-trip fare on Bahamas Air is usually around \$350.00 per person. Sometimes these flights are late, and every once in a while, they will even leave early! So be prepared to be in the waiting area a bit ahead of schedule, please be patient and prepared to wait a bit. There is a decent bar, a Duty Free shop, and a Dunkin' Donuts for food in the waiting area in the Nassau airport.

If you are flying commercially into Nassau International Airport you will first clear immigrations, retrieve your luggage and clear customs. Once you have cleared customs, you will recheck yourself and luggage to Crooked Island at the nearest Bahamas Air counter.

Once you arrive in Colonial Hill, a lodge representative will meet you at the airport for the short drive to the lodge. The manager will greet you at the lodge and help you get checked in and comfortable.

#### **Departure Day:**

Please reconfirm your flight arrangements with the lodge the night before departure. Transportation from Crooked & Acklins Island Lodge to Colonial Hill is provided by the lodge. As you leave Nassau, a Bahamas departure tax of approximately \$15 is assessed at the airport (this is usually built into your international flight fare).

## **Contact Information**

Should any problems occur during your travel, including significant flight delays please have the following emergency contact information with you. Please feel free to contact The Fly Shop® or the lodge directly.

#### **Crooked & Acklins Island Lodge Emergency Contact Numbers:**

Christine Gibson (Lodge Manager): (242) 468-0669 (first contact in case of a travel delay...)

Carnetha Knowles (Lodge Staff): (242) 357-1426

Orville Williamson: (242) 395-7386

#### **The Fly Shop®**

(800) 669-3474 | (530) 222-3555 | [travel@theflyshop.com](mailto:travel@theflyshop.com)

#### **Emergency Assistance:**

In case of emergencies involving the death, injury, welfare, or arrest of an American citizen in The Bahamas or the Turks and Caicos Islands, please call (242) 328-3496 or (242) 311-1181 x9 during business hours, and (242) 357-7004 at all other times. (Please note that the Duty Officer who answers this number will not be able to assist with visa or routine passport matters.)



## General Travel Information

### Travel Documents:

A valid passport is required for all travelers and must be valid for six months beyond the arrival date. All travelers must have return or continuing tickets to pass through customs. A visa is not required for Americans, Canadians or most European countries. Residents of other countries should contact the Bahamian Embassy in their country to double check that a visa is not required.

You will complete an immigration card upon arrival. It will be checked at your first point of entry and a copy will be given to you. Be careful not to lose this copy as it must be given back to Immigration upon departure.

### Staying in Nassau:

There are many options for your stay in Nassau, ranging from small family-owned inns situated in quieter areas to full-scale casino/resorts on Cable Beach and Paradise Island. There is an array of restaurants and clubs, day cruises and other activities. Below are some of our recommendations but we encourage you to hop on any of the popular travel websites and do some research of your own. As always, feel free to contact us with any questions.

### Nassau Hotels:

Sandy Port Hotel and Resort

West Bay Street

(242) 327-4279 | [info@sandyport.com](mailto:info@sandyport.com)

- SandyPort Hotel is part of the greater SandyPort Development. It is located 10 minutes from the airport and can be a great choice for your over-night in Nassau. You will find a variety of dining options, stores and even a health club within walking distance of your accommodations. It has a relaxing atmosphere and a very professional staff.

Orange Hill Beach Inn

West Bay Street

(242) 327-7157 | [Info@orangehill.com](mailto:Info@orangehill.com)

- Orange Hill is a quaint family-owned inn 5 minutes from the airport. It is a convenient, economical choice for our traveling anglers. It sits across the street from a nice quiet beach and has a small bar/restaurant and a refreshing outdoor pool.

British Colonial Hilton

No. 1 Bay Street

(242) 322-3301

- The British Colonial is a beautiful, well-appointed, luxury hotel situated right in the heart of the action on famous Bay Street. The grounds are amazingly quiet considering where it is situated. It is everything you expect from an International Hilton property and places you within walking distance of all the shops and restaurants of downtown.

Atlantis Resort and Casino

Paradise Island

(242) 363-2000 x 65401

- The grandeur of "The Atlantis" is hard to describe. It truly is a "mega" resort in the spirit of Las Vegas. It houses one of the largest aquariums in the world, a Vegas-style casino and numerous shops and restaurants. It hums with energy and activity 24 hours a day. If you are staying elsewhere in Nassau, it is worth taking a taxi to Paradise Island and wandering through.



### **Nassau Restaurants:**

Indigo Cafe and Deli  
West Bay St. and Skyline Dr.  
(242) 327-2535

- Indigo is a relaxing, stylish Cafe with a very eclectic menu of wonderfully prepared foods. Choose from local Bahamian, Asian, and European cuisine, even an impressive selection of fantastic sushi! They also have a full service bar and espresso.

The Poop Deck West  
SandyPort on the Beach/West Bay Street  
(242) 327-3325

- An island favorite, the Poop Deck features a full bar, great steak, seafood and traditional Bahamian dishes.

Twin Brothers  
Arowak Cay  
(242) 328-5033

- Located at the Arowak Cay Fish Fry Grounds, Twin Brothers is a fun, relaxing place to enjoy great local Bahamian cuisine. It is a favorite among the locals. Enough said?

Clay Oven  
Downtown  
(242) 325-8639

- A wonderful, reasonably priced authentic Indian Restaurant. This is where our manager eats when he's in Nassau!

Green Parrot Paradise Island  
Hurricane Hole  
(242) 322-9248

- A well-known, very popular outdoor bar and grill that sits on the Hurricane Hole Marina. This is a fun place to hang out day and night watching the boat traffic in and out of Nassau Harbor, while chatting with the crews of the many yachts that are parked in the marina.

### **Staying in Ft. Lauderdale:**

Here are a few recommendations for lodging and entertainment for our guests who have some time in Fort Lauderdale on either side of their trip.

### **Hotels:**

Courtyard® by Marriott®  
Port 400 Gulf Stream Way/Dania Beach, Florida 33004  
(954) 342-8333

- The Courtyard at the Fort Lauderdale Airport is a hotel that's just a couple of miles from the airport. The rooms are nice and the hotel shares a parking lot with the IGFA Museum, Bass Pro Shops, and the Islamorada Fish Company. The Courtyard provides free shuttle service to and from the airport.

### **Restaurants and Attractions:**

Seminole Hard Rock Casino  
1 Seminole Way/Hollywood, FL 33314  
(866) 502-7529

- About 15 minutes from the airport and its hotels is the large Hard Rock Casino complex on the Seminole Indian reservation. In addition to the hotel and casino, the complex includes 18 restaurants



in a variety of styles, all with outdoor seating, 13 bars and clubs, and some high-end shopping. The cuisine includes something for everyone, and the people-watching is a sport unto itself!

IGFA Museum  
300 Gulf Stream Way/Dania Beach, FL 33004  
(954) 922-4212

- If you want to see some really big fish, stop off at the IGFA Museum and Hall of Fame. It's located very near the airport and the Wyndham.

## General Lodge Information

### Lodge Communication:

There is cell service throughout the island. Check with your carrier prior to departure to be sure you have international coverage. The lodge does provide free internet and Wi-Fi service that guests are able to access from their rooms or at the lodge. The bandwidth is limited to simple emails and texts.

### Phone Calls:

Cell phones work most places in major cities such as Nassau or Freeport, but you will want to make sure your plan allows for international coverage. On the Out Islands, cell coverage is decent depending on your carrier; some areas will have good coverage, others will not.

### Electrical Outlets:

The electrical outlets are AC 110 volts (same as the U.S.) and most appliances will work fine. Make sure that you have plenty of spare batteries for cameras and other small appliances, as the cost for replacements in the Bahamas is high.

### Insects:

Mosquitoes and “doctor flies” in the Bahamas are prominent during the rainy season, from April through September. Year round, tiny biting “No See’ums” can also come out at dawn and dusk and whenever the winds are exceptionally calm. The Bahamian doctor fly is basically a large horsefly on steroids, whose bite will draw blood. (Why do they call them doctor flies? “Because when de bite, mon, it feels like a SHOT!”) They prefer salt-coated skin, and love to harass anglers who are wading shallow waters and mangrove-filled areas. Wearing long pants and long sleeves while fishing, and insect repellent (with DEET) will deter these bugs. If you can find it, Avon Skin-So-Soft is the best deterrent for No-See-Ums.

### Laundry:

The staff will wash your laundry twice each week. A gratuity is appreciated for the service.

### Alcohol:

The bar stocks a limited selection of wine and spirits, and domestic beers, not included in your package. If you have a specific beverage that you would like to enjoy on your trip, it would be best to bring it with you.

### Gratuities:

Gratuities are at your own discretion, and should reflect your feelings about the service received. As you will rotate your guides each day, please tip your guide at the end of the fishing day. \$100.00 per boat per day (\$50 per person, per day) is suggested, and you are always welcome to increase that amount if you feel that your guide deserves it.

The staff should be tipped at the end of your stay, with \$150.00 per person per week suggested. Cash in U.S. dollars is the best way to leave gratuities. Again, tipping is always at your discretion, and greatly appreciated by those who serve you. Please have Cash in US\$ for Gratuities.



### **Bahamas License Requirements for South Andros:**

All persons over the age of 12 are required to have a license to fish the flats. Licenses are issued by the Department of Marine Resources in New Providence, or the Out Island Administrators in the Out Islands. Fly fishing licenses will be available at Go Outdoors Bahamas for pre-registration.

- [Bahamas Flats Angler Application](#)

## **Clothing & Equipment**

Crooked Island may be the most informal place on the planet Earth. Comfortable, casual wear is accepted and encouraged. Flip-flops, sandals, shorts, T-shirts...casual is king. Expect air temps in the mid-80's during the days, and high 60's to low '70's in the evening and early mornings. We recommend long-sleeved shirts and long pants while on the flats. Liberally apply a waterproof sunblock of at least 30 SPF rating to all exposed skin including your ears and lips. Re-apply occasionally through the day and consider a wide-brimmed hat or Buff. After applying sunscreen, scrub your hands with a scoop of sand and water as bonefish can smell lotion on your fly and will quickly turn away.

Although casual tropical attire will generally work great during your time on the water, there are three fishing specific items that are critical for each angler to bring: a raincoat, for boat spray or the occasional cloudburst, polarized sunglasses to help you see the fish, and flats boots or other footwear suitable for wading. Since the flats that we wade vary greatly in their bottom surface (hard sand, soft sand and grass) we do not recommend wading sandals; boots are greatly preferred. Even on sunny days we suggest including a rain jacket in your boat bag. Boat spray can occur at any time and a cloudburst can form when least expected.

### **Wading Pants:**

Lightweight pants are strongly recommended for both sun and insect protection.

### **Chest, Back, or Fanny Pack:**

You may be wading for hours and the boat will be just a spec on the horizon. Be sure to bring a wading pack to carry your flies, leaders, tippet, clippers, a water bottle, camera, etc.

### **Tools:**

Pliers, hemostats, release tool, line nippers, hook sharpener.

### **Rain Gear:**

Lightweight and breathable is the best for the climate. Bring your rain gear with you on the boat everyday no matter how clear it looks. Squalls pop up quickly and the boat ride can be wet.

### **Sunglasses:**

Polarized glasses with amber or copper lenses are the most popular, and having an extra pair in your boat bag is always the smart thing to do.

### **Multiple Rods:**

We strongly suggest that you have an arsenal of fly rods strung-up, handy and ready to fish. Most of the flats fishing you'll encounter is what we call "opportunistic fishing." This means that at any given time, on any given day, on any piece of water, you may see bonefish, permit, tarpon, barracuda or jacks and it may all happen in a matter of minutes or all at the same time. The idea here is to be ready for anything at any time. If you have three or four rods, bring them with you. Have the rods ready to fish, one with a bonefish fly, and another with a permit crab, or maybe a 'cuda fly, and another with a tarpon streamer or shark fly. If you are wading the flats, have your guide take one of the other rods along. At the least, it will double as a great fish pointer.



## Bonefish Tackle

The big draw – and primary focus – of Crooked and Acklins islands is sight fishing for bonefish. The Bahamas offers some of the best bonefishing in the world. Bonefish range in size from 2 - 15 pounds. On the average, bonefish will be in the 3 - 5 pound range. Smaller bonefish tend to swim together in large schools, a natural defense against sharks, barracudas and other predators. Large bonefish typically travel alone or in pairs. We have found that most times when fishing to big schools of moving bonefish, the largest fish tend to be in the back of the pack. Bonefish are active feeders and a variety of flies and fishing strategies are effective in taking them. One of the nice things about bonefishing is that the proper equipment needed to catch them successfully is also one of the most common fly rod weight and size. The following suggestions and recommendations should help in assembling your bonefish tackle.

### **Fly Rods:**

We strongly suggest 9', 4 piece travel rods in 7, 8 and 9 weights. We prefer fast tapered rods that generate high line speed. Rods that have been especially designed for the rigors of saltwater fly-fishing are the best choice. In that category, we like the Sage, Scott, and Winston rods. Traveling with spare rods is always good idea.

### **Fly Reels:**

Fly reels specifically designed for saltwater fly fishing are important. Features to look for are smooth drags, plenty of backing capacity, and a sturdy, machined, aluminum, one-piece anodized frame. Large arbor reels are a great choice and retrieve line and backing very quickly. Models to consider include the Nautilus, Galvin, Abel, and Hatch reels.

### **Fly Lines:**

A weight forward floating line designed for the tropics is extremely important. Scientific Anglers and Rio are our favorite lines for bonefish. These lines are specifically designed for saltwater fly fishing and have a special core that provides the proper stiffness to allow excellent shooting while resisting tangles, even in tropical heat. They are extremely accurate lines, and the running portion is a large diameter and floats on top of the water, making it a pleasure for wade fishing. Traveling with a back-up fly line is a smart thing to do. It weighs almost nothing, takes up little space in your luggage, and won't spoil before your next trip.

### **Flats Boots & Socks:**

There are daily opportunities to get out of the boat and wade the flats. Most flats are hard white sand, so either neoprene flats boots or lightweight hard sole boots will work fine. We are often asked about what socks work best, and strongly recommend the Simms lightweight neoprene socks.

### **Leaders:**

We typically fish 9' - 12' tapered saltwater leaders made from clear monofilament or fluorocarbon, with 12 - 20 lb. test are the most popular choices. 12lb. leaders are common, but there are situations where you want to go heavier, 16lb. to 20lb, making the release quick and easy. You should bring along some tippet material, clear monofilament and fluorocarbon in spools of 12, 15 and 20-pound test. Fluorocarbon tippet is a great choice as they are nearly invisible in water, perfect for spooky fish in very clear water.

### **Bonefish Flies:**

Day in and day out, year after year the standard Gotcha has proven to be a "go to" fly. If it were the only fly you brought you would do just fine. Spawning shrimp patterns in varied weights are an important fly on Crooked Island. You could ask any guide on Crooked and Acklins Island what the single best fly is and each one will often tell you something different. The important factor in your fly selection is to have flies varied sizes and weights and colors to meet the specific situation.





Bring the usual suspects; Gotchas, Charlies, Puffs, spawning shrimp and crab patterns, etc., in white, pink, pearl, brown, and tan in sizes #2 and #4. Be sure to bring a few crab patterns tied in size #6. Also bring a few weighted flies for fishing the deeper edges and high tides. If you do get a couple refusals change the fly. You might have to change the pearl Gotcha that worked all morning to a pink one in the afternoon. One school of fish will hit a certain pattern aggressively and next school might refuse it. On another day the only fly that may work is a natural buggy looking fly like a mantis shrimp or tan crab pattern. The next day it might be a fly with some sparkle like a pearl Gotcha. Not often but sometimes the bones can be picky, particularly during the cooler months or after a front. Presenting a smaller #6 fly may work.

There are basically two color groups; the pinks/pearls and the naturals like brown, tan, or blonde. Bonefish are fond of rubber legs, and they are common additions to many patterns. On the natural colored flies, try adding a few strands of copper or gold flash in the wing and/or tail.

Experienced anglers agree that sometimes having the right fly can make the difference between a good trip and a great one. Having a broad selection of bonefish flies will help to insure a successful trip. An important aspect of fly selection is sink rate. When tying or purchasing bonefish flies, vary the sink rate of your flies by including some with no eyes, bead chain eyes, and lead barbell eyes. This allows you to fish different depths of water and to fish tailing (cast close with light fly) and fast cruising fish (cast well ahead with quick sinking fly), effectively.

As a general rule, use light colored flies on a sand bottom, and dark colored flies on turtle grass or rubble bottoms. In nature, overt visibility can make any animal prey. Most prey on bonefish flats are well camouflaged. Try smaller flies for fish that are spooky or tailing on shallow flats in calm weather conditions. On deeper flats, or in windy conditions, larger flies work well, especially on fish that are cruising fast. Larger flies should typically be cast further away from bonefish.

Subtle earth tone flies, (tan, brown, olive, green, gold, yellow) work best on sunny, bright days in shallow water when bonefish are spooky. Bright flies, (pink, orange, chartreuse) typically work best on cloudy or overcast days, and especially at sunset.

### **Bonefish Flies**

- Gotcha - #2, 4 & 6...must have fly!
- Orange Butt Gotcha - #4, 6 & 8
- Bonefish Clouser - #4 & 6; tan/white, & chartreuse/white
- Mini Puff - #4 & 6; pink & tan
- Borski's Bonefish Slider - # 2 & 4
- Squimp - #2, 4 and 6
- Beck's Sili-Legs - #6; tan
- Miheves Flats Fly - #6
- Bully Special - #4 & 6
- Bonefish Junk - #4
- Spawning Mantis - #2; tan/orange
- Tan Raghead Crab - #6
- Pop-Up Crab - #4; tan
- E.P. Spawning Shrimp - #4 (bead chain and lead eyes, tan and translucent)

There have been many books written on the subject of bonefish fly patterns. Two of our favorites are



- **Bob Veverka's Innovative Saltwater Flies**, Published in 1999 by Stackpole Books (ISBN 0-8117-0902-7). The author asked us to compile a chapter on some of our favorite bonefish patterns. The patterns we included are field-tested, proven winners with a bent towards tying for big selective fish.
- **Dick Brown's, Bonefish Fly Patterns**, Published in 1996 by Lyons & Burford Press, (ISBN 1-55821-392-9). Easy to read and quite complete, many consider this to be the definitive work on bonefish flies.

Both books are a terrific resource for almost all of the patterns listed above. These books are easy to find and they will become a great reference tool with their hundreds of beautiful color plates and clear, concise recipes. We recommend them highly for all serious bonefish aficionados.

## Tarpon Tackle

Although tarpon are not what most fly fishers are chasing in the Bahamas, they are available. Tarpon in the Bahamas are most often seen in and around creeks or around freshwater springs and blue holes. Most tarpon in the Bahamas range in size between 20 - 60 pounds; however, bigger fish are not out of the norm. Big tarpon, up to and over 100 pounds, are often sighted. If you have a "Big Gun" (10 - 12 weight fly rods) bring it, as it may come in handy and there is no use leaving it at home.

### Fly Rods:

Fast action 9', 4 piece travel rods in 10, 11, & 12 weights are standard. The Sage, Scott, and Winston rods are excellent choices.

### Fly Reels:

A heavy-duty saltwater reel is a must for tarpon. Look for a reel with a smooth drag, plenty of backing capacity (minimum 200 yards of 30-lb. backing), and a sturdy one-piece, machined, aluminum anodized frame. Models to consider include the Galvan, Abel, Hardy, and Hatch reels.

### Leaders:

Leaders for tarpon can be simple, or complex. The knots used in building class tippet tarpon leaders take some practice to learn, and it can be very rewarding to acquire those skills. We often build a simple tarpon leader with 8 feet of 40# fluorocarbon followed by 2 feet of 60#, 80#, or 100# bite tippet. You can also purchase Hand-Tied Tarpon Leaders from Rio.

If you would like to tie your own tarpon leaders, some good reference books are Lefty Krey's "Fly Fishing in Saltwater" and "Practical Fishing Knots by Lefty Kreh and Mark Sosin." We like to use clear, stiff monofilament or fluorocarbon when constructing our class leaders.

### Fly Lines:

Ninety percent of tarpon fishing is done with a weight forward floating line and Scientific Anglers makes one of the best. An intermediate sinking line is an excellent choice when tarpon are moving in deeper channels and flats, and we fish the Scientific Anglers Sonar Saltwater intermediate.

### Tarpon Flies:

In general, tarpon flies for the Bahamas should be tied on 1/0 through 3/0 size hooks. Slight variations in shape and color can be all that is needed to entice tarpon into striking.

- Tarpon Rabbit Toad - #1/0; purple/black, tan, chartreuse
- Cockroach - #1/0 & 4/0
- Bigeye Tarpon - #3/0; orange grizzly, sand devil, yellow
- Black Death - # 3/0
- Tarpon Toad - #2/0; yellow, chartreuse, red/black



- Megalopsicle - #1/0; tan/orange, chartreuse, purple/black

## Permit Tackle

Permit frequent the waters of the Bahamas in good numbers, and it's not uncommon to see them on the flats while pursuing bonefish. Permit in the Bahamas range in size from 3 - 40 pounds. Most often you will sight permit in deeper water (4 to 6 feet), along the edge flats or at the top of a high tide change. They call permit the fish of 10,000 casts, and casting to one of these sickled tailed ghosts is about as exciting as it gets. We recommend taking a 9 or 10 weight rod, and having it rigged and in the boat.

### Fly Rods:

We suggest 9', 4 piece travel rods in 9 or 10 weights. We like fast tapered fly rods that generate high line speed. Rods that have been especially designed for the rigors of saltwater fly-fishing are the best choice. In that category we like the Sage, Scott, and Winston rods.

### Fly Reels:

Fly reels specifically designed for saltwater fly fishing are important. Features to look for in reels are smooth drags, plenty of backing capacity, and a sturdy, machined, aluminum, one-piece anodized frame. Large arbor reels are a great choice and take up line and backing very quickly. Models to consider include Galvan, Abel, Hardy, and Hatch reels.

### Fly Lines:

The Scientific Anglers and Rio produce excellent salt water lines for permit.

### Leaders:

Fluorocarbon leaders are your best choice for permit as they are virtually invisible in water, and abrasion resistant. A tapered leader 18 or 20 pound, test are good choices.

### Permit Flies:

There are many excellent permit crab and shrimp flies on the market these days, and here are some of our most productive patterns:

- Bauer's Fur Crab - #4 and 6; olive or tan
- Raghead Crab - #2
- Del's Merkin - #2
- Squimp - #2 and 4; tan
- Enrico's Spawning Shrimp - #2 and 4; tan and translucent
- Doug McKnight's "Danger Muffin" Crab – white or olive

## Barracuda & Jacks

Barracuda in the Bahamas get big, and they are very aggressive. They attack a fly at an unbelievable rate of speed, and often skyrocket into the air when hooked. When hooked, few fish can match a 'cudas initial run for speed and sheer violence...hold on!

Jacks are very fast, pull like a freight train, and will destroy both surface poppers and streamers. Watching them blow up on your popper while you strip it as fast as you can is a sight to remember. Endurance is their strong point, and no jack gives up without a fight that you will remember.



### **Fly Rods:**

Flies for these fish are often large streamers and poppers, so 9', 4 piece travel rod in a 9 or 10 weight are good choices. We like fast tapered fly rods, that generate good line speed. Fly rods that have been especially designed for the rigors of saltwater fly-fishing are the best choice. In that category we like the Sage, Scott, and Winston rods.

### **Fly Reels:**

Fly reels specifically designed for saltwater fly fishing are important. Features to look for in reels are smooth drags, plenty of backing capacity, and a sturdy, machined, aluminum, one-piece anodized frame. Large arbor reels are a great choice and take up line and backing very quickly. Models to consider include the Hardy, Galvan, Hatch, and Abel reels.

### **Leaders:**

Leaders for barracuda and jacks can be simple. We often build a leader with 8 feet of 40# fluorocarbon for jacks, and add a bite tippet of 40 lb. Rio Powerflex Wire Bite Tippet for barracuda.

### **Flies**

- In-Shore Popper - #3/0; chartreuse
- Tandem Cuda Fly - #2/0
- Cuda Killer - #4/0

## **Bonefish Behavior**

Bonefish are the target species on Crooked and Acklins islands, and have three basic modes of behavior.

### **Feeding:**

Bonefish feed on the bottom, and through the water column. While feeding on very shallow flats their wavering tails are often visible out of the water. In deeper water their tails are not visible but the fish can still be seen. While bonefish are feeding, the condition of the surface of the water affects their feeling of security. Bonefish are more nervous in calm water. Conditions determine how best to present the fly. On most days there is a slight chop or ripple on the surface and the fly must be presented three to five feet in front of them. On very still days the fly should be cast further from the fish and stripped back into his area of awareness.

### **Mudding:**

During the warmer months very large schools of bonefish will often back off the shoreline into about 5 to 10 feet of cooler water. As they grub for food, they stir up the bottom creating a visible cloud of mud, referred to as "milk". This cloud of mud moves as the bonefish move and makes these bones feel quite secure because they are not visible to predators. Often the angler can catch one fish after another without spooking the school. It is generally not a common practice to fish muds because the desired challenge of sight fishing is eliminated. However, guides will fish muds with you at your request, and this can be good for beginners to feel the first lightning-fast tug of a bonefish.

### **Traveling:**

Traveling bonefish are intent on changing location but are very aware of their surroundings and not necessarily interested in feeding. When casting to traveling bonefish place your offering well ahead of the fish and let it settle. Your guide will tell you when the fish is in range and when to strip.

## **Tarpon & Permit**

Tarpon are not always present, but we certainly come across them. They range in size from 30 to 200 lbs. Tarpon are the largest, strongest, and most acrobatic of flats fish. Even juvenile fish will put your angling



skills to the test and strain your tackle. We highly recommend having a rod set up for tarpon each day as the moment of opportunity does not last long.

We also see permit on occasion. They are by far the most difficult, picky and frustrating fish you will encounter on the flats. Permit are very finicky about what they eat. They will often charge your fly, only to stop at the last moment and refuse it. When you are presenting the fly, focus first and foremost on landing your fly near the fish and getting the slack out of your line. Your guide will help you “read the fish” by watching its behavior, and will instruct you on you fly manipulation in regards to the fish.

### **Technique:**

On the flats, your guide will be standing on the poling platform and poling the boat while scanning for fish. You will be standing on the front deck of the boat with your rod in one hand and your fly in the other.

When you are not fishing from the boat, you will be wading the flats. When wading, walk slowly and stop often to look for fish. If you see the fish moving in a specific direction, move quietly into position so you will be able to present the fly in front the fish. You usually have more time than you think to make a precise presentation.

Bonefish are almost always moving, and movement is often the first sign of fish. Scan the water slowly from side to side, within the range that you can cast. The guide will be looking further out, responsible for finding fish at a distance and poling the boat into good casting position. Look for the flash of an exposed tail, nervous water, a wave or wake on top of the water, or the shadow of a cruising fish. When casting to a fish that is moving towards you, land the fly in front of the fish, let it sink while the fish moves towards it, and begin stripping when the fish is close to the fly.

Typically, the guide will see the fish before you, and will put the boat in position for your cast. You will hear him direct you to the fish by saying something like “10 o’clock, 40 feet, going left”. Point your rod where you think he is directing you, and he will often help by saying, “more left” or “more right”, and tell you when to cast.

If you do not see the fish, do not cast until your guide asks you to. He will put the boat in position for the cast, tell you how far to cast and in which direction, and when to cast. Follow his directions in when to begin stripping your fly.

After you cast, let the fly sink to the bottom and make your first strips long and slow to get the fishes attention. Now you are going to “read the fish” by observing its behavior. If it moves quickly to your fly and stops, it probably ate your fly. Make a long strip to set the hook. If there is no resistance, stop, let the fly sink, and begin stripping again. If you do feel resistance, **pull on your line to set the hook without lifting your rod**, and prepare to “clear your line” as the fish runs. The first run often takes all the line quickly off the deck, and it is important that you guide the line off the deck and onto the reel. Your drag has been preset, so hold your rod tip high and enjoy the run! Occasionally the fish will turn and run towards you. If you can’t strip fast enough to keep a tight line, push your rod tip into the water and the drag of the fish pulling the line through the water will keep tension on the hook. Bonefish have tough mouths and having sharp hooks is important. Check your hook point regularly by pulling it across your thumb nail. If it digs into your nail, it’s sharp. If it drags across your nail without sticking, it’s time to sharpen the point.

Bonefish evolved their incredible burst speed to avoid being eaten by predators. Since they are the favorite food of sharks and barracuda it is very important to release them in good condition and give them a chance to survive. Please be careful when handling bonefish and be sure to fight the fish quickly. If it has been a long difficult battle, please consider taking photos of the fish only in the water. Trophy bonefish are old fish and what makes our fishery special so please take good care of them. We hope all anglers realize that the release is more important than a photo.



We do not recommend ultra-light leaders and long fights with loose drags that tire the fish excessively. Leader should not be lighter than 12 lb and we recommend 16 and even 20 lb leaders.

For photographs, please revive the fish before removing it from the water for the photograph and please keep the fish out of the water for as short a time as possible. Handle the fish with clean, wet hands as little as possible. Please allow your guide to take the time to revive the fish before releasing.

We follow the recommendations of Bonefish & Tarpon Trust's "Best Practices for Bonefish Catch & Release". Detailed information is found at [www.tarbone.org](http://www.tarbone.org)

Be certain to pinch down the barbs on your hooks. This makes it easier to release fish with minimal handling, and also minimizes the risk of injury to yourself and others.

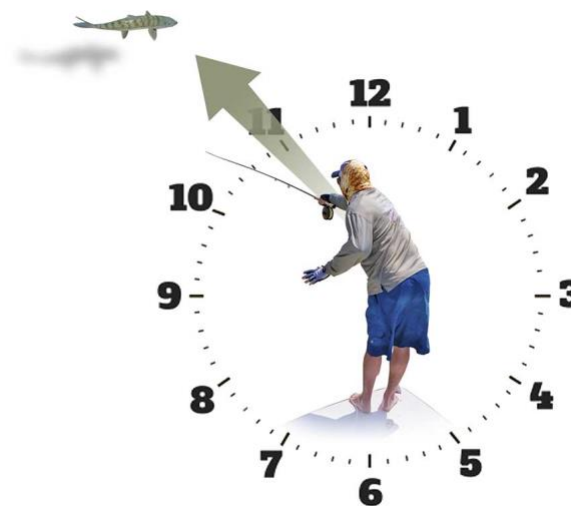
### **YOU & YOUR GUIDE ARE A TEAM:**

Please introduce yourself and get to know your guide. Discuss which species you want to fish, how you want to fish (wading or from the boat), your abilities and fishing experience. Encourage your guide to check your equipment, knots, leaders, tippet material, flies, rod and reel, etc.

On the flats, the guide will often spot fish before you. When this happens, your guide will refer the numbers on a clock to give you the fish's general direction. For example, the bow on the boat would represent 12:00 O'clock. Perpendicular to the boat off of your right is 3:00 O'clock; perpendicular to the boat off your left is 9:00 O'clock, etc. In addition to the direction, the guide will also refer to the distance and the direction that the fish is swimming. For example: "1:00 O'clock --- 50 feet, going left".

When you first step up on the casting platform, strip out some line and make a short cast as the guide watches. Ask the guide how far you just cast. Next, make a medium cast. Then, make a long cast. Make sure you are both agree in judging distance.

If your guide spots a fish and you do not see it, don't cast until you see that fish. Point your rod in front of you as if a pointer on a chalk board and have your guide direct your rod to where he sees the fish. Your guide might say, "2 o'clock, more right, keep going, stop!" That is where you should concentrate your vision and again do not cast until you see the fish, or your guide instructs you to do so.



Setting the hook in saltwater fishing is very different from what most of us have learned in freshwater. You want to learn and practice the "Strip" strike or set. This is done NOT by lifting the rod tip as in trout fishing, but by keeping your rod pointed at the fish and pulling on the line, or stripping. In this way, the hook is either buried in the fish with the static line driving the hook, or at least the fly will remain in front of the fish for another chance. Lifting the rod tip will likely pull the hook out of the mouth of the fish without a hookup and spook the fish from the area. Each species of fish has subtle variations of the strip set to maximize your hook up rate with each take.



## Crooked & Acklins Island Lodge Checklist

- \_\_\_ Hat with bill and neck protection (the bill should have a dark underside)
- \_\_\_ Polarized sunglasses (amber or brown, wrap-arounds or with side shields)
- \_\_\_ Buff®
- \_\_\_ Long sleeve fishing shirts (lightweight, quick-dry material work best)
- \_\_\_ Evening-Wear shirts
- \_\_\_ Raingear (lightweight for thunder showers or wet boat rides)
- \_\_\_ Wading pants / shorts
- \_\_\_ Sun Gloves
- \_\_\_ Shorts and swimsuit
- \_\_\_ Wading Socks (we recommend the Simms light neoprene socks)
- \_\_\_ Wading shoes or booties (should have heavy sole for maximum protection)
- \_\_\_ Sandals or camp shoe
- \_\_\_ Belt (nylon or cotton)
- \_\_\_ Sunscreen (at least SPF 50 UVA/UVB, waterproof)
- \_\_\_ SPF 15 Lip balm
- \_\_\_ Hand lotion
- \_\_\_ Insect repellent (DEET as the active ingredient is best)
- \_\_\_ Anti-itch cream
- \_\_\_ Pocket knife
- \_\_\_ Utility Pliers (Leatherman)
- \_\_\_ Line dressing & cleaner (Glide, Scientific Angler, Loon)
- \_\_\_ Lens cleaner
- \_\_\_ Forceps / pliers, hook file, line clipper
- \_\_\_ Reel lube / oil
- \_\_\_ Zip-lock® bags and garbage bags
- \_\_\_ Small flashlight or headlamp
- \_\_\_ Small lighter
- \_\_\_ Roll of athletic tape or finger guards
- \_\_\_ Toiletries
- \_\_\_ Camera & Battery Charger and storage Cards
- \_\_\_ Cell Phone & Charger
- \_\_\_ Small binoculars
- \_\_\_ Sewing Kit & Duct Tape
- \_\_\_ Fanny pack
- \_\_\_ Airline Tickets
- \_\_\_ Notebook & pen
- \_\_\_ Passport
- \_\_\_ Book / magazines
- \_\_\_ Tablet or laptop
- \_\_\_ \$USD Cash and credit cards
- \_\_\_ Emergency Contact Numbers
- \_\_\_ Prescription glasses
- \_\_\_ Pre-trip information
- \_\_\_ Ibuprofen, Prescription drugs
- \_\_\_ 2 Copies of passport (packed separately in Zip-Lok baggies)