

Fly Rod & Reel

New Media

By Will Rice

The crew at Confluence Films doesn't necessarily have all the money or time in the world, but they do get to ask the question we'd all like to ask: Where would we fish if we could fish anywhere, any time?

You can find their answers in *Waypoints*, which debuted at 50 theaters around the world on November 8 and included compelling segments from the Indian Ocean, Alaska, Venezuela, Chile and India. Production began at the Indian Ocean's St. Brandon's Atoll in 2012 and wrapped up in Alaska this past April.

Those who have seen Confluence's previous films—*Rise*, *Drift*, *Connect*—should recognize the cinematographic excellence, which includes heavy doses of fish porn, ranging from battles with steelhead and giant trevally to mahseer and even payara. The film begins at St. Brandon's Atoll, a destination that took four days to reach from Confluence's Bozeman, Montana offices. In this segment anglers land a variety of species, including the coveted giant and bluefin trevally. In addition, some giant bonefish are hoisted and there's an unexpected run-in with the buttery Indo-Pacific permit.

Next up is Alaska, and a compelling segment that unfolds on the decks of the 56-foot mothership *Adventurous*, where we find Dan "Rooster" Leavens blasting an iceberg with a large handgun in the pursuit of fresh ice for cocktails. From *Adventurous* the anglers access an extremely rich stretch of southeast Alaska steelhead water for what looks like a prolific spring run. It is here that the two anglers, who are business partners in the operation, drop the hammer on a high volume of big steelhead.

Next up is Venezuela, where Wil Flak and Oliver White are piscatorially challenged by the toothy payara. This segment delivers one of the most physically demanding scenes from any of the Confluence movies to date—a swim down and across a raging river, with a payara on the line, weaving in and out of willows.

From Venezuela we move to another mothership operation—the decadent *Nomads of the Sea*, which operates *Atmosphere* off the coast of Chile. This is where the film dips into the fly-fishing lifestyles of the rich and famous. That's because *Atmosphere* is a 150-foot ship/super yacht equipped with a Bell 407 helicopter that delivers anglers and rafts to Patagonia's untouched interior rivers. The operation is the vision of Andres Ergas, president of *Nomads*, who simply wanted to combine his passions—fly-fishing and heliski—with a comfortable base for others to do the same. He wanted to knock the socks off of his guests and in this segment that clearly happens, as anglers battle the rainbow and brown trout of their (and our) dreams. While enjoying the experience, angler Gregg Bricker summed up the experience like this: "It's like fishing with the Dos Equis guy," a remark that drew big-time laughs at the Oriental Theater in Denver, Colorado, where I took in the premiere.

The final segment follows nomadic angler Jeff Currier in his pursuit of India's golden mahseer. This scene scored big points for the fishing and the scenery, wonderfully capturing the textured landscape and the international culture, which included a riverside funeral pyre, right where Currier was raising mahseer to a skated dry!

Be warned, this film is not a how-to for DIY anglers. These trips aren't easy to plan or inexpensive to conduct. Each segment includes an outfitting service that takes care of logistics. This is pay-for-play fishing on the highest level. But this film is worth seeing, even if you are a common angler who's most adventurous trip might be a few miles away from home on a local trout stream. Why so? Because watching these scenes creates a desire to travel and explore, to find new waters and species and see if they can be taken on the fly. That's the true beauty of this effort—producer Jim Klug and cinematographers Chris Patterson and Denver Miller describe a world that remains rich in fly-fishing opportunity for those who have the motivation (and in this case the resources) to venture down that road less travelled.

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