



# A great catch

*The challenge of a catch weighing up to sixty pounds, the splendour of clear rushing water, the serenity of vast, open and unspoiled wilderness, this is the fishing experience of a life-time.*

## **The stuff anglers dreams are made of**

The float plane lifted off the mirror-still surface of the Yukon lake, climbed and banked to slip around the nearby towering mountain.

Within minutes we were at altitude and heading to our favourite lake for a couple of days solitude and great fishing – the stuff anglers' dreams are made of.

Boreal forest rolled away to the horizon, carpeting valleys and mountains up to the treeline. Jewel-like lakes and serpentine rivers shimmered in the distance, loomed closer, then were left behind as the plane droned further into the Yukon bush.

Wondering if any of these waters held fish, I tapped the pilot on the shoulder and asked him if anybody had fished the nameless lake we were now flying over. 'I landed there once and saw some huge jackfish, but I never bothered to try catching them', he replied nonchalantly through his headset. This is the typical response from bush pilots who fly over nameless bodies of water like this every day. Hundreds of square kilometres of rugged mountain country peppered with countless lakes, yet few people have ever tested the waters.

Of course there are plenty of Yukon lakes that

are known for their consistency in producing both sizeable fish and plenty of action. Our party was heading for a fly-in camp in the southern part of the territory where we had great success on previous occasions.

The northern pike in our lake run to 28 lbs, at least that's the largest we've been able to bring to the boat. The average weight would be somewhere around 6.5lbs, with lots of 13–18lb lunkers hanging around.

They must get fat on the lake trout that seem to be everywhere here. On one trip in early June, the trout went crazy in a feeding frenzy that lasted for three days. Fish in the 4 lbs range nailed small spoons and plugs cast on ultralight gear. We had a riot catching and releasing these fighters back into the cool, clear waters they came from. There are bigger trout too, but none we caught topped the lake record of 38 lbs.

We had comfortable cabin accommodation where we did our own cooking and kept our own hours. The camp proprietor makes sure everything is to our liking, then leaves us to our own devices. He supplies us with a sea-worthy aluminium boat, motor and fuel as part of a package deal. Other Yukon lodges we've been to provide similar services. Some facilities may be more deluxe and the fish bigger, but the overall wilderness experience is one of quality.

## **Catering for every taste**

The account recorded above is just one example of the enormous variety of fishing experiences open to you when planning this type of holiday in Canada. You can chase the white-tipped fins of Arctic char in Labrador and the Northwest Territories, or seek out the elusive Inconnu. You might prefer to battle with the infamous steelhead trout in British Columbia's coastal rivers, or the smallmouth bass in remote New Brunswick rivers. Whether your favourite technique is fly-fishing, spinning or casting, a visit to Port Alberni or Campbell River on Vancouver Island is a must for ardent salmon fishers. But if catfish, walleye or lake trout are your kettle of fish, then central Canada, with more lakes than one can count, is the place to be heading for your next expedition.

## **World salmon record**

There are two kinds of anglers: Those who live in British Columbia, and those who wish they did. For salmon enthusiasts there is no denying that the Pacific west coast of Canada offers by far the greatest choice of species found anywhere in the world. The Coho salmon is a prized quarry. They start returning to their home rivers in early spring, maturing as early as two years old. Adult Coho vary from 4 to 12 lbs in weight and can be taken in fresh or salt water.

The Chinook salmon returns to spawn in British Columbia rivers anything from two to seven years after migration to the sea. Since the age of mature fish varies, their home rivers tend to enjoy spring, autumn and winter runs of fish. A full grown Chinook can weigh between 5 and 30 lbs. The world record, sea caught, is 126 lbs.