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Will 2010 be the Year of MONSTER Peacocks?

By John N. Felsher & Leonardo Leão

The fish's strike barely dimpled the water, but it sent waves hurtling throughout the freshwater fishing world by being large enough to potentially dethrone the coveted peacock All-Tackle world record that has stood for 16 years.

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The Quest for 1000 Species: In the Home Stretch

Back in November of 2007, we featured an article on California angler Steve "not the Apple guy" Wozniak and his mission to catch and document over 1000 different species of fish. At that stage, Steve had caught 660 different species on his adventures through 48 countries.

Recently, we caught up with him for an update on this unique quest.

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In 2010, California, USA Angler Steve Wozniak hopes to fulfill a life-long quest of catching 1000 species of fish.



12th Annual IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony

Save The Date: October 26, 2010



This year's event will honor these legends of the international fishing community: From left to right, Yoshiro Hattori, Capt. Steve Huff, George G. Matthews, John Wilson, and Forrest Wood.

The 12th Annual IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame Induction ceremony is being held at the IGFA Hall of Fame & Museum in Dania Beach, Florida on Tuesday, October 26, 2010.

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Norwegian Codfest Fishing for cod along the shoreline

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New All-Tackle Rainbow Trout

Sean Konrad's rainbow is official

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Tropic Star Lodge
Piñas Bay,
Panama



Sign-up for the IGFA Panama Expedition Tropic Star Lodge fishing extravaganza

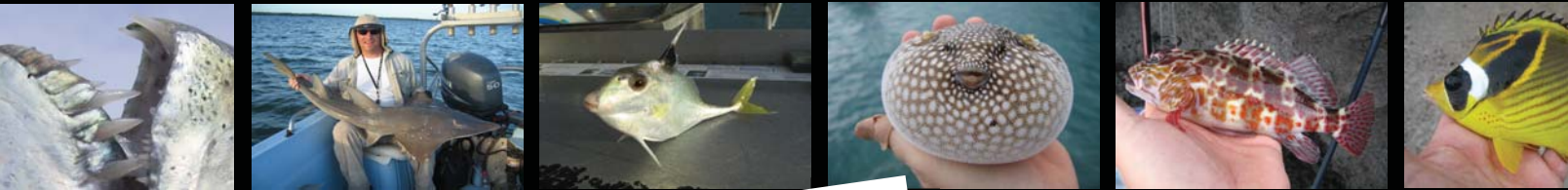
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IGFA School of Sportfishing Proper Trolling SPEED and SPREAD

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The International Game Fish Association is a not-for-profit organization committed to the conservation of game fish and the promotion of responsible, ethical angling practices through science, education, rule making and record keeping.



The Updated Numbers

A little more than two years have passed since that article, and Steve has been a very busy angler. The species count has jumped to a stunning 898, and the quest for 1000 now seems within reach. Steve has also raised his country total to 61, managing to catch fish in some spots outside the regular travel fishing destinations – places like Cambodia, Jordan, and Liechtenstein. (Yes, Liechtenstein. It's in the Alps – we had to look it up.)



Two of Steve's most adrenaline-filled catches had to be a mahseer in the Cauvery River in India and his 200 lb grouper in Weipa, Australia.



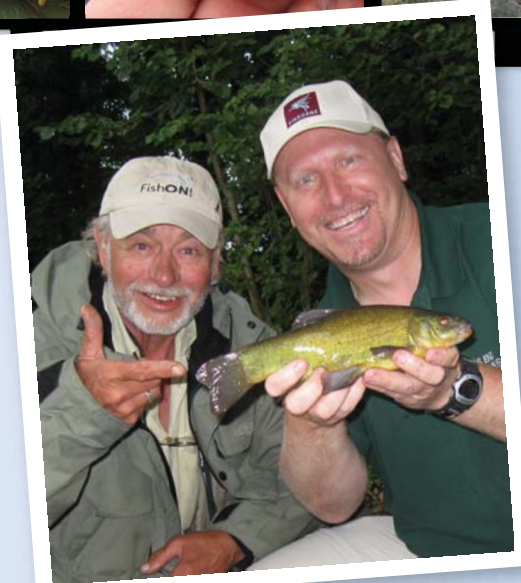
The BIG Trips

We asked him where he had added all these fish, and he said "I've had some great trips in the last couple of years – Weipa in northern Australia, the Red Sea, Kona, and, of all the places, Monaco. But I also added a bunch of new ones the hard way – by hitting the books and figuring out all of the 'mystery fish' I've gotten over the years." Steve also told us that he has worked with quite a few ichthyologists on figuring out some of his exotic catches. "These guys have been incredibly generous with their time," he told us. "We're talking scientists from some of the big museums and aquariums, and they always seem to respond to emails as fast as I can send them out. To a fish geek like me, it's like getting golf advice from Jack Nicklaus."

Most Exciting Catch

What were the really exciting catches over the past few years? "They're all exciting," said Steve. "But the most adrenaline had to be either a mahseer in the Cauvery River in India – what a strike – or a 200 plus pound grouper in the middle of the night in Weipa. I woke up the other six guys on the boat, which turned out well, because they kept me from being dragged overboard. I'm not sure they'd do it again."

And what was the hardest one? "Gotta be the tench. It's a European still-water fish I have put in days and days on, and I finally stumbled into one last summer in England. I think the guide, Roger Barnes, was even happier than I was – we've been chasing one of these for seven years."



The tench, a European still-water fish was Wozniak's hardest species to catch. He added the fish to his bucket-list while fishing last summer in England with guide, Roger Barnes. Wozniak had been chasing the species for seven years.



When Will it Happen?

So when does Steve think he will hit his magic number – 1000? “That’s the question,” he told us. “A couple of exotic trips should put me in shouting distance. I’m hoping to get to Egypt and to the Anaman Islands this year, so I have a pretty good shot in 2010. If not, 2011 is the year, baby. It’s getting close.” We asked if it’s getting harder to find new ones. He said, “I knew it was getting tough when I flew two days to get to Mozambique and my first four fish were things I already had. Antarctica is really the last untouched place I can go – hey, there’s an idea.”

Steve’s Sources for Fish Identification

BOOKS: Books are probably the number one source I use. The very best would be anything and I mean anything, by Dr. Jack Randall. He is simply awesome. After that, in no particular order, the various *Peterson's Guides* are great, but Allen's *Marine Fishes of Tropical Australia and SE Asia* is a gem, as is *A Guide to the Common Sea Fishes of Southern Africa* by Rudy Van Der Elst, and *Freshwater Fish* by Greenhalgh and Carter. (Great for Europe.) Also, *Sharks of the World* by Compagno, Dando, and Fowler is a good one, as is anything by Lieske and Myers.



Life After 1000?

And what will he do afterward? Take up golf? The response - “Not a chance – my golf game is a danger to society. I’ll keep fishing. I’d like to say I’ll be a bit less obsessive about it, but that just isn’t true.” (We’re guessing that we’ll be doing an article on the “Chase for 2000” one of these years.)

Steve promises to keep the IGFA posted as he heads toward the milestone. Steve can be reached at S_Wozniak10@yahoo.com, and he loves to hear from other species hunters. He told us “We should form a support group.”

SCIENTISTS: The scientists are almost too many to mention, and I am sure I will make some horrible, glaring omission here, but a few that come to mind immediately are:

Dr. Jeff Johnson of the Queensland Museum - my go-to guy for anything in tropical Australia or nearby waters. Has more IDs to his credit with me than any other scientist.

Dr. Sven Kullander of the Swedish Museum - a true giant in the field, Dr. Kullander has pinned down some truly exotic freshwater species for me. He sorted out the confusing mess of tilapia I had caught over the years, and for this, I am forever grateful.

Dr. Kent Carpenter of Old Dominion University - The King of the Sparidae and Lethrinidae, Dr. Carpenter has put a name to dozens of fish for me, clearing up obscure sea breams, threadfin breams, and emperors from roughly a dozen countries. He also taught me how to take and send in DNA samples, although no fish have been cleared of a crime as a result of this.

Dr. Alfredo Carvalho of University of Sao Paulo - Dr. Carvalho enthusiastically took charge of my unidentified Brazil saltwater creatures and pinned down every one of them. (Although an unfortunate proportion of them turned out to be different color phases of the ubiquitous Southern Pigfish.) He also helped me with some strays from west Africa.

Dr. Patricia Kailola - A very special mention here. Dr. Kailola has spent what was likely hours of her life discerning subtle differences in the many sea catfish I have caught in the Indo-Pacific.

Dr. Paolo Petry of Harvard University - Sorted out the morass of South American freshwater catfish for me, and then went on to work through my various other oddities from the Amazonian jungle.

Dr. Milton Love, UC Santa Barbara - West coast expert. He knew it was a Stripefin Ronquil immediately. Do I need to say any more?