

Recommendations to Consider for the Fly Fishing Experience

It's advisable to carry at least three rods; deciding between even or odd sizes is the question. I personally bring even-sized rods on my trips: an eight, a ten, and a twelve. They should measure nine feet and ideally be designed for saltwater fly fishing. Rods specifically prepared for fly fishing in the sea have some special features: reinforced guides with larger diameters, additional epoxy coatings on their wraps, and anodized aluminum reel seats. These are fast-action and powerful rods designed to handle strong winds and bulky flies. In marine environments, anglers accustomed to using heavy gear and casting large flies, such as those for dorados or pike, are generally better prepared. Reels should ideally be machined from a solid block of aluminum, large arbor, or even super large arbor, with a sealed drag and components resistant to saltwater. They should have a substantial backing capacity, not less than 150 meters is advisable. When fishing for large tarpons and permit, it's common to use 200 meters or more. As we know, lines have been manufactured for quite some time to withstand extreme heat and saltwater. Some anglers use the same line weight as indicated by the rod manufacturer, while others, like myself, prefer one weight higher. Most of the time, weight-forward floating lines (WF) are used. In Los Roques, it's not very common to use sinking lines; occasionally, intermediate lines are seen. An exception is when anglers venture outside the archipelago to pursue "bluewater" species, where sinking lines and deep-diving lines are necessary. It's advisable to periodically clean the lines; this will enhance casting and increase their lifespan. Regarding leaders, the most common choice is knotless tapered leaders equal in length to the rod. Fluorocarbon is frequently used for both leaders and tippets, more so than traditional nylon. Some anglers, like myself, use traditional knotless nylon leaders for saltwater fishing and replace tippets with fluorocarbon, which is a more economical option. Ideally, you should carry replacement tippets of 8, 10, 12, and 16 pounds for bonefish, 20 pounds for permit and lighter species, 40 pounds for parrotfish, snooks, sharks, and barracudas, 60 pounds for medium-sized tarpons, and 100 pounds for large tarpons. To fish for barracudas and sharks, it's crucial to have knotable steel cable of 30 or 40 pounds. Knots are a very important

aspect, and for targeting these powerful species, it's essential to learn how to tie good knots that are easy to create and reliable.

My preferred knots include:

- Fly to tippet: Non-slip loop knot.
- Tippet to leader: Slim beauty.
- Leader to line: Loop to loop with a Perfection loop knot in the butt.
- Line to backing: Loop to loop with a double surgeon's knot in the backing.

In general, to guide you, the recommended hook sizes for each species would be:

- Bonefish #4, #6, and #8.
- Triggers and parrots #2 and #4.
- Permit #2.
- Jacks and miscellaneous #2 and #4.
- Tarpons, snooks, barracudas, and sharks #3/0 and 2/0.

A basic selection of classic flies for each species could include:

- Bonefish: Bitters, Crazy Charly, Racciatti LR, Mantis Shrimp, Squimp, Mini Puffs, Gotchas, Gummy Minnow, and Clouser Minnow.
- Permit: Avalon, EP Crab, Squimp, Rag Head, EP Spawning Shrimp, Merkin Crab, Mantis Shrimp, and Kung Fú crab.
- Triggers and parrots: Alphlexo Crab, PF Sea Urchin Fly, EP Crab, and EP Spawning Shrimp.
- Jacks and miscellaneous: Gummy Minnow and Clouser Minnow.
- Tarpons, snooks, barracudas, and sharks: Gummy Minnow, Tarpon Toad, Tarpon Bunny, Black Death, Dahlberg Diver, Poppers, Gurglers, Needlefish Fly, and Clouser Minnow.