

Pre trip information for Ponoï 2007

Atlantic Salmon fishing with Lax-á on the Kola Peninsula Russia

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Location and the Ponoï River

Ponoï River has gained worldwide recognition as one of the most productive Salmon Rivers on earth and you will have to search hard to find such a unique and un-spoilt Salmon stock. The Ponoï River with an overall length of 400 kilometers is the longest river on the Kola Peninsula. It flows parallel and just north of the polar circle, through the largest nature reserve on the Kola. With numerous lakes in the system, water flow is very stable and remains nearly unaffected by rain or dry conditions.

Ponoï is regarded as a big river with 60 to 150 meters from bank to bank, but it is quite shallow with an average depth of about 1, 5 meters. The fishing is therefore possible and productive both wading or from boat and in many places you will find pools and holding places side by side across the river as if two or three rivers were braided together. Wildlife is prolific and from May through the summer the area is practically invaded by a variety of birds of all kinds from ducks and songbirds to falcon and eagles. Actually one of our best pools on the beat below Acha camp is running close to a steep cliff where the falcon has made a fine penthouse-like nest construction hanging some 20 meters above a very nice salmon run - that's a view to envy.

The area is sparsely populated mostly by descendants of the ancient northern Sami people. A few miles west of Acha camp you will find a village with around 60 residents through the year. Their main occupation is in line with the ancient traditions of "Caribou - farming" and their trapping fences can be seen on the south side of the river below and opposite the village. The residents have permission to fish for salmon in certain areas, but this allowance is restricted to rod and reel fishing only. So in that respect we are in the "same boat" except for a small difference in choice of tackle!



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Angling Club Lax-á - Ponoï program

Through Lax-á club you can book Three different programs on the Ponoï and they are evenly spread on a scale from luxury camps to expeditions along untouched and wild salmon water. With these Ponoï programs Lax-á offer you the best value for the money on Kola today and no matter which of our programs you choose, Lax-á guarantee that you an unforgettable fishing adventure, that will change your salmon fishing forever.

1. Acha camp

Acha camp is our core program on the Ponoï situated just upstream the well known Ryabaga-stretch with camp at the junction between the productive Acha River and the Ponoï. Fishing the beautiful lower pools in Acha River just beside the camp is off course included in this program so bring your single hand rod, dryflies and skaters - and be tuned for a short-lining salmon-rush.

The fishing at Acha camp is fantastic and very reliable.

In June/July 2003 this program produced 2287 Salmon in six weeks between 56 rods.

In June/July 2004 the score was 1851 Salmon in Seven weeks between 66 rods.

In June / July 2006 the score was 2441 between 70 rods in a 7 weeks period.

The camp has been improved with a total of 10 new wooden cabins with twin beds and stove etc. A new Dinning house - containing kitchen and separated cozy dinning room, salmon bar, fly tying corner and sofa has also been build in 2006 – for 2007 a new Shower and Sauna house will be ready

2. Acha River boating program

The explorative alternative for the challenging guy, who likes a bit of sweat with his salmon! The helicopter will drop of the team with two well trained guides and you will be able to fish the pools from about 30 km upstream of the Acha camp and all the way downstream to Acha Camp. These exploratory visits are highly successful and you will discover premium fly-fishing water with numerous holding pools in the most beautiful countryside with abundant wildlife. Ponoï: 2006 – june/july .. Acha Produced 2500 salmon between 70 rods in a 7 weeks period.

In 2003 and 2004 Acha river produced more than 700 salmon yearly during a 6 weeks period – where on earth do you find Salmon fishing like that? Our Acha river boating program are the ultimate trip for a young and fit Salmon angler who are looking for an inexpensive and challenging salmon fishing

Accommodation will be in portable tents which our Russian guides will move regularly in rubber boats.

Please notice that you have to bring your own sleeping bag because of hygienic reason.

3. Pacha camp

The Pacha program is just upstream the Acha program and the fishing is more or less of the same nature and numbers. The program is especially interesting for those who value accommodation highly as it is revolving around a luxurious timber camp with a communal building for eating and socializing. Accommodation is in comfortable cabins with twin beds and heated by stoves.

Staff

In all our camps you will find a friendly and organized staff that will take care of you both when fishing and recovering in camp.

All our guides will have passed our own training program and furthermore carry between 3 and 9 years of guiding experience in their vest. They are all capable of communicating in English and they will surely have a genuine fly-fishing interest.

The daily organization of the fishing and guides is managed so that each of the guides is appointed to a certain beat and there they will show you the melody of the situation. This way you will rotate between the guides and you can rest assure that the guide will be on top of the actual situation on his home-court?

The fishing.

On the Ponoï you will encounter a week of salmon fishing that you will never forget!

When you arrive you may think that this is one hell of a big stream, but after a few hours on the river you will soon discover that it is readable and very accessible water featuring all the classic salmon-domains from riffles, glossy glides to stream edges, bars and big rocks scattered in a curving pool. Okay there is no fall pool stopping the fish in a aquarium-like situation, but some days you may face so many fish that it feels like someone has sneaked a waterfall in above our beat during the night!

Each guide has his own spacious alu-boat and this is both for transportation and fishing - but if you prefer fishing from the bank or wading you will find this very possible on all our beats so just ask your guide for directions on that matter. Of course there are pools that are best covered from boat - but there is definitely equally many pools better covered from the bank or waders!



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Ponoï is Ponoï!

There are rivers on the Kola where you have a chance of catching bigger fish and there are maybe also places where you can get bigger numbers of smaller fish - but the unique mix of quantity and quality that you will find on the Ponoï is unparalleled! This doesn't mean that you just have to show up at any given time and situation and the just hurl fish out on a row. No - luckily this is still Atlantic salmon fishing with all the edges and challenges so water, weather, skills and good old fishing luck still influence the outcome of the day and week, but you will have to look hard for better odds than here.

Spring fishing

The fishing starts in late may when the usual spring flood is running of and the white polar nights normally create a euphoric and exhausting fishing trance among our guests. As may moves into June we see a period that must be considered prime time. The fishing is extremely reliable as both the over wintering non-spawners and fresh fish from the sea start to respond to the increasing temperatures and steadily dropping water. If wind and weather also plays along these are weeks where the salmon-ceiling is popped of like corks from our Russian champagne.

Some guests have had up to 60 fish in June and we are not talking grilse on a string. The ratio salmon to grilse is about 3:1.

The fishing is mostly carried out with double hand rods or heavy single hand outfit and the usual choice of line would be intermediate or slow sinking, but as soon as you face a day of good rising temperature it will be very smart to get the floater sorted out and start to fish faster.

Summer fishing

As June moves into July the summer will manifest itself with high-pressure weather and sunshine sometimes 24 hours pr. day. Needles to say that these conditions will can affect the fishing, but you may be astonished to hear that it sometimes can improve catches. Dryfly tactics is very worthwhile and it can be absolutely essential in July

The amount of fish on our beats is probably peaking in July and the reason why the catch pr. rod is a bit higher in June is probably that weather and temperature is more suitable for the salmon to get hooked. Regarding the fish - two major things happen during July. We see an increase in fresh grilse so that the salmon to grilse ration moves towards 1:1 But we also face some of the over wintering fish that are bound to stay in the river for 1,5 years before spawning and you will not be in doubt when you hook one of them. Being up to 25 % heavier pr. length these bombs will make your lower jaw smack the bank.

The average summer-salmon will be between 7 and 15 lb. but every week there will be landed some bigger fish - usually males, sometimes well over 20 Lb



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Organizing the fishing

Our Lax-á camp manager will setup a weekly fishing schedule that suit the conditions and actual numbers of guest in camp and usually there will be a mid-day-rotation after lunch. This system is tried and trusted and every guest will usually fish all pools more than once. The manager schedule is worked out with the main purpose to give all an even share, but this does not mean that it cannot be altered. The only criterion that must be fulfilled in that context is that all affected guests agree and that this agreement is found between the guests and the presented to the camp manager.

Fishing after dinner is usually free around camp - but it is still under the command of the camp manager. If the group wishes or if the manager find it necessary there will be made up a schedule for evening fishing.

Early morning fishing is restricted to the beats you are going to after breakfast the following day.

For a small extra tip guides will be available for evening fishing also on the beats further from camp. Make these agreements before dinner directly with you guide or through the manager.

Fly tackle

The Ponoï fishing is normally not demanding heavy tackle!

There are no waterfalls or brute runs where you cannot follow a "distance-runner" and there is few places where distance-casting is a must so unless you have your own fitness reasons, don't bring the half mile rods and python lines.

Light double hand outfit or medium to heavy single hand is the right choice and will both be the most effective, pleasurable and gentle for your back and shoulders.

Regarding lines it is always wise to bring both floating intermediate and sinking - even in summer - not that you will need more than a floater most of the season - but you never know when you meet a wind, water or weather situation where it would give you an extra edge to make the effort and change line maybe even for just a couple of hours or less! And honestly - a couple of back-up lines in you pocket won't make you sweat?

Flies.

All rivers have their favorites and Ponoï is no exception. That said though it must be added that - probably due to the neutral color and clear water of the Ponoï - very many and very different types of flies seem to work.

According to the rules and regulations your flies can be tied on either single or double hook and before you release them to swim the Ponoï you must pinch down the barbs.

Some of the hot patterns on the present list are:

Red But

Silver Doctor Francis.

Ally's Shrimp

Thunder & Lightning / Mar lodge

Willie Gunn / Sheep series in Black – Blue. Hairy Mary / Blue Charm

The Undertaker

Recommendation towards sizes would be in direction of: 2 – 4 or Tube flies size ½ – 1 ½ inches in May beginning of June – Middle of June moving to 6 - 8 in late June early July and further down to 10 and smaller in summer with the addition of bigger dryflies etc.

Bombers, muddlers and skaters size 4 - 6 are highly recommendable in summer

For more information and photos of the right "Ponoï ammunition" please visit - www.lax-a.is under Russia / Fishing tackle.



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Accessories

tape measure
Leader material (12 lb. Up to 18 lb.)
Dry fly floatant
Clippers.
Repair kit for Waders
Some sinking tip for extreme situations
Pliers Wading stick
Pocket torch with fresh batteries.
Kamera and video etc. With fresh batteries .
Bag or backpack for daily equipment
Mosquito repellent
Sun glasses

Clothes and other items

The weather is very unpredictable and it can change dramatically within very short time so it will be very sensible to bring both something that will keep you warm and dry in rainy and windy day and on the other hand something that is more comfortable when the sun is dancing for 20 odd hours a day.

The following list may inspire:

Fleece trousers and jacket
Warm socks
Fleece gloves
Hat and scarf
Waterproof fishing jacket
Waders (breathable)
Fishing shirts and vest
Cap
Sneakers or short boots (boat fishing in hot weather)

It is also advisable to bring:

Ear plugs for helicopter flights, snoring tent partner and screaming reels
A couple of plastic bags for wet clothes and boots when leaving
Personal medicine and painkillers
Cash in USD for bar, gratuities etc.

Usual temperatures

May:

Day temp. Minus 5 C. to Plus 15 C.
Night temp. Minus 10 C. to Plus 10 C.

June:

Day temp. 0 C. to Plus 25
Night temp. Minus 3 C. to Plus 15 C.

July:

Day temp. Plus 10 C. to Plus 28 C.
Night temp. Plus 5 C. to Plus 15 C.



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Daily schedule

06.00 a.m. Generator starts for water pressure in the showers cabins. All Huts / Tents will be heated up.

07.30 a.m. Tea and coffee ready in dining tent 08.00 a.m. Breakfast.

09.00 a.m. Fishing starts. Depart to the beats according to the fishing schedule

02.00 p.m. Lunch in the camp or on the river depending on fishing schedule.

19.00 p.m. Return to the camp.

20.00 p.m. Dinner

21.00 p.m. fishing for those who have energy according camp managers plan. For the none fishing part of the group, the bar will open and will probably stay open beyond the camp manager's control!

23.00 p.m Generator shuts down. The same does some people!

Catch and release

Fishing Rules and Regulation for Ponoï River In Ponoï River operates a strict catch and release policy. All fish must be reported and registered daily in the camp's catch statistic book All fishing is strictly Fly only with use of single or double barb less hook. We would request extreme care in handling all fish **A** - Please try not to beach the fish or tail the fish. Use a knotless landing net and use it as carefully as possible. **B** - When fishing from a boat try to land the fish from the bank. **C** - For Photographs please ensure the fish is supported underneath. Wet your hands (never hold it up by the tail or the mouth) and return it to the water as soon as possible. **D** - When returning the fish support it in the water (mouth pointing upstream) until it has fully recuperated before allowing it to swim away.

The Travel / Flights

Angling Club Lax-á does not handle the flights to Murmansk but we recommend Frontiers International. Frontiers are in a position to offer competitive prices for all international flights to Helsinki, meet and greet services and with a guaranteed space on a chartered air flight to/from Murmansk.

The fishing weeks will operate Saturday - Saturday and the prevailing times for the Murmansk flight require an overnight in Helsinki inbound. Also here Frontiers can help you with first class accommodation at a special rate.

For more information and booking contact Frontiers US Office: PO Box 959, Wexford, PA 15090-0959, PH: +1-724 935 1577. E-mail: info@frontierstrvl.com

Frontiers EU Office: The Tithe Barn, Barnsley Park Barnsley, Cirencester GL7 5EG

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Visa

The Russian Embassy will stamp the Visa direct into your passport and we feel it is both safer and more convenient for everyone that you send the paper to your local Russian Embassy, or special designed travel company in your country that deals with this. If you for any reason find problems with your visa, please do not hesitate to contact us immediately.

The normal time to get the Visa is 7 working days plus mail which means approx. 2 weeks.

After receiving your booking form filled out and signed we will send the special **Russian invitation** that is needed to get the Visa **For 2006 season Lax-á will start the invitation process in April month.**

To process your Visa you will need to send to consulate or local visa agent:

1 - Russian Invitation

2 - Questionnaire to be filled out and signed at the bottom – this questionnaire can varied from country to country, so please contact your local Russian consulate / Visa support for further information.

3 - Your Passport

4 - Four Passport photos (with some Embassies it is enough with Two)

Agents dealing with Russian Visas:

England: Visa & Passport Service, Ground Floor, 4-8 Rodney Street, London N1 9JH, www.visaservice.co.uk

.Tel: 08708 900 185, Fax: 020 7229 7656, Mobile: 07850 426241, E-mail: visa-passport@btclick.com Ask for Lisa.

France: Visas Express, 54, Rue de l'ouest, BP 48 - 75661 Paris Cedex 14, Phone: 0144 1072 72

Acha camp Satellite phone number - 011 88 16 31 55 8457 - Best between 20.00 and 21.00.

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See you out there – Arni Baldursson and Steffen Juhl

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