

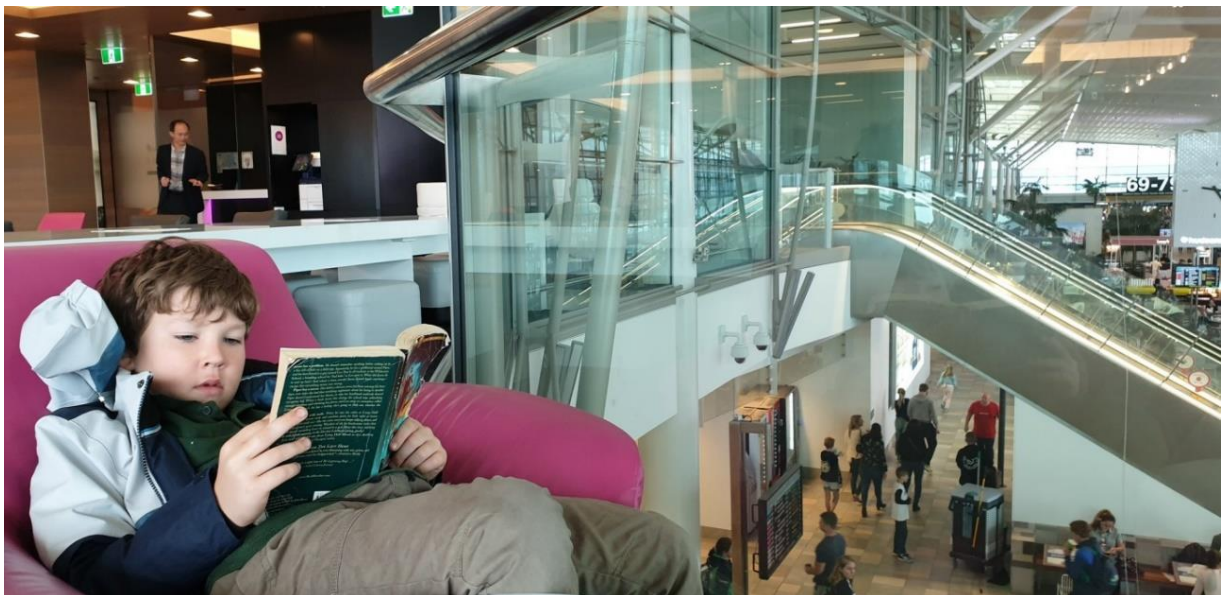
SPATSIZI FISHING TRIP 2019 – JOHN & JACK BLACK

June/July 2019

Wow! A double rainbow crowns a wet and cold Brisbane CBD this morning as Jack & I head off for a week of fly-fishing in northern British Columbia, Canada #Spatsizi. It was Jack's turn for the float-plane adventure of a lifetime with his old man ... which would be me, folks. Here's a collection of tweets, pictures and notes from our trip.



The Trip to Spatsizi. My fly-fishing companion #Spatsizi son Jack, chillaxin' before the Air Canada Vancouver flight this morning. For those who've never experienced it, the Brisbane to Vancouver direct flight to Vancouver is one of the best international flights there is. Even better with a pass to the Brisbane Air Canada lounge.



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Fortunately, Jack was on hand to help the Air Canada pilots fly big jet across the Pacific. Well, to be honest, I think we'd already landed, but Jack enjoyed it.



Day 1 - After a quiet night in lovely downtown Smithers, the next day saw Jack and I heading off for a week's Recreational Research on the local trout at #Spatsizi with Alpine Lakes Air. Not bad runway, eh? as the Canadians would say.



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En route, Alpine Lakes Air, Jack checks out the snow-capped #Spatsizi plateau on his first-ever float plane ride. So far, no sign of the barf bag; I was so proud, not to mention relieved.



Here's Jack a few hours after our arrival #Spatsizi and – from this grin – can you guess who caught the first fish #Spatsizi today, on the mighty Stikine River?



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The end of Day 1 saw Jack and I, sitting on the viewing platform of a local Beaver House #Spatsizi. Jack had seen a beaver, a muskrat and a bald eagle. It was quite a day.



Day 2 - Here's son Wee Jack playing Barry the Bull Trout at Lake Tuaton #Spatsizi today. Barry weighed in at 10 pounds (I taught the boy all he knows).



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Jack was clever enough to land Barry the Bull Trout today #Spatsizi but not quite strong enough to lift him for a picture, so Head Guide Luke helped out. “Hey, I just had small hands and he was way too slippery.” Barry was soon back in the water.



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Day 3 – Heading off to Kitchener Lake for The Perfect Day, with my little mate.



Taking in the view from the Old Cabin on Kitchener Lake. Must have been an idyllic spot for a holiday home and is kept maintained, for emergencies. Every visit I make, I sign the visitors' book with one of my family. Really. First brother Steve, then son James and son Jack.



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Bertie the Bald Eagle, making off with some of our lunch today beside Kitchener Lake #Spatsizi.



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Nice backdrop. Nice fish at Kitchener Lake #Spatsizi today. Actually, I think the backdrop was the star of this shot.



My favourite catch of the trip: Nice fish, tough to get to the net, easy to release.



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“Hurry up and get the net out, Cam. I can't hang on much longer, here”, #Spatsizi



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Fish of the day from my little mate Jack at Kitchener Lake #Spatsizi.



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Day 4 - Heading out from #Spatsizi Lodge for the local Grayling Hole with Guide Cam. It was a long Boat trip and then a big walk for the Little Man.



A very nice (mayfly) omen to land on your hand when you're heading out from #Spatsizi to chase Grayling. This was going to be a great day. Jack and I were trying to catch and release a Full House: Bull Trout, Rainbow Trout, White Fish and Grayling – in the one day, on the same River.



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This is how you do it Dad #Spatsizi.



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Now **THIS** is a Grayling, Dad #Spatsizi.



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“Get the net out Cam” ... Jack onto action #Spatsizi in the Grayling Hole.



A beautiful Grayling, temporarily inconvenienced by my Tom Thumb fly, shortly before release.



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When you gently cradle a trophy fish, so as not to injure the little guy, sometimes they get away from you. And it's not your fault!

Trust me on this. Now I have the picture to prove it.

Jack, in the background here, just chuckled, as he repeated aloud the words: "Hello ... Goodbye. Hello ... Goodbye".

It was then I found out that Guide Cam had Jack holding his fly rod in his casting hand, while pretending to pick up an old fashioned telephone handset.

He'd hold his hand and rod to his ear and say "Hello".

Of course there was no one on the end of the line, so Jack would say "Goodbye" and put the imaginary handset down, picking up and laying down 20 feet of line right in front, every time, with the pause judged just right.

Well done Cam. That's how the adults teach their kids to cast in Kamloops and most things are done better in Kamloops. Apparently.



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I sent this Love Heart Rock Pool shot back to my long-suffering spouse, Jeanine and our little family, back Brisbane.



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On the way back from the Grayling Hole. I think Jack was telling me here that Barry the Bull Trout was a lot bigger than mine.



I was a long walk for the little guy, to and from the Grayling Hole. On the trip home, nothing much could keep him awake. He'd caught and released a Full House: Bull Trout, Rainbow Trout, White Fish and Grayling. I missed out. But I'm over it now.



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Day 5 – I unpacked and crimped the barb on this new Royal Wulff fly #Spatsizi before fishing the Firesteel River. A pristine fly, dressed for action.



This was the same Royal Wulff fly after five Firesteel River Rainbows had had a chew. It was looking a bit flustered.



The same Royal Wulff after 10 Firesteel River Rainbows had been played and released. Looking pretty distressed by now.



This mangled Royal Wulff is now officially retired to the top of my computer screen after playing 20 Firesteel River Rainbows. Did I mention the Firesteel River has a lot of Rainbows?



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Our Guide Luke took great care of my little man during wading on the Firesteel, seeking out the shallowest reaches and never leaving his side. You remember these things. Thanks Luke.



These purple lupins lined the Firesteel River. Not that the River's natural beauty required any more ornamentation.



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The Firesteel Cabin. Built to last. On arrival we saw a tree had blown down near the Cabin, fortunately missing both the Cabin and the Outhouse. This proved to be fortunate.



This angry Firesteel Beaver decided to leave us to it, whacking his tail in disgust as he swam away. During the flight to Firesteel, we saw Caribou and a Bull Moose from the floatplane. Impressive.



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Day 6 – My favourite picture of the trip. Lunch al fresco by Lake Stalk with guide Cam, Pilot/Guide/Chef Tim, tending the camp fire and a thoughtful Jack, missing his Family back home. After lunch, as we were taking off, a Moose ran past us, evidently being chased by wolves.



The Little Man among the Rainbows at Lake Stalk. Job done. Not a bad mountain backdrop to learn the noble art.



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Jack and Cam out-fishing your humble scribe at Lake Stalk. “Hello ... Goodbye”. I should have remembered.



Beautiful chrome Rainbow Trout being released back into Lake Stalk.



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Day 7 – The last day of fishing. Well we had to get the bad weather at some point and low cloud cover on the last day kept us indoors at the Lodge, buying flies and T shirts. When the cloud finally lifted, the Little Man resumed his position as the star of the week and was tied into his life jacket by fellow guests Bette and Steve, for a quick afternoon trip to Lake Ella.



With the life jackets on, it was rods into the float plane tube and off we went.



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The star attraction at Lake Ella turned out to be mineral salt lick for the local wild goat population. You can just see here an underground spring, with slightly discoloured (blue) water emerging from under this small log. The goats love the stuff apparently. Not quite sure why.



Day 8 – Homeward bound. To while away a few hours waiting for the cloud cover to clear, Bette taught Jack about the rules of solitaire in the lodge. Bette was impressed with Jack's ability to innovate with the rules, as the game progressed. Innovate is a polite description.



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And then it was time for your intrepid adventurers to say farewell to our home for the week ...



... and the weary travellers began the long trip home, dozing on Wendell's Alpine Lakes Air float plane. It was a big week for the Little Man, and Bette apparently. I think Jack wore her out.

