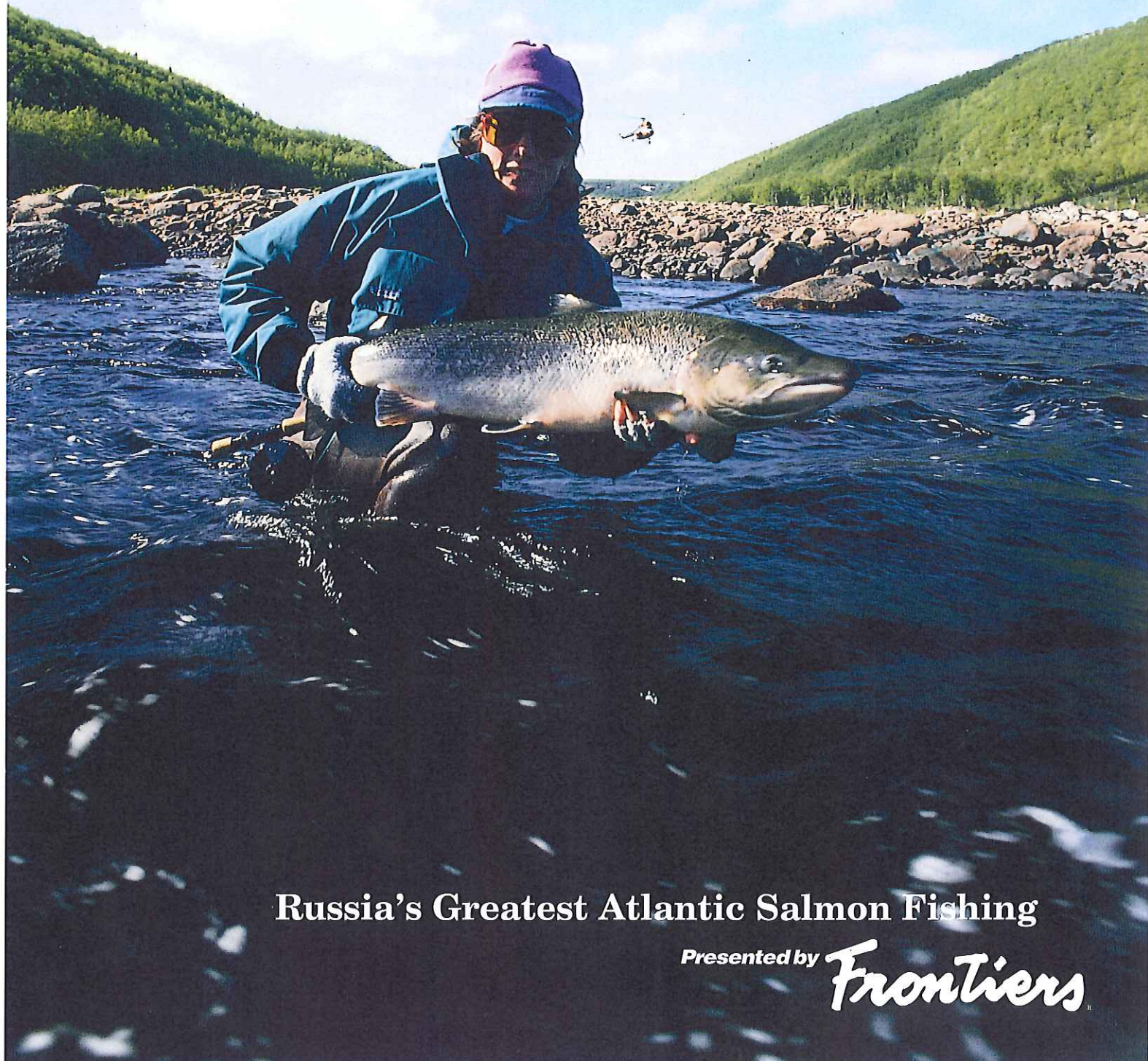


**THE INCOMPARABLE**

# PONOI



**Russia's Greatest Atlantic Salmon Fishing**

*Presented by* **Frontiers**



# We invite you to discover the incomparable Ponoï, the most productive Atlantic salmon fishing in the world today.

The Ponoï continues to prove herself as the premier river on Russia's Kola Peninsula. Our guests in 1994 caught and released 6,580 salmon, bringing the three-year total to over 20,000!

These remarkable results were achieved in spite of confronting unusual Arctic North weather extremes; from a cold, wet, high-water spring to a hot, dry, low-water midsummer. We had some slower weeks in late July and early August than seen before, but for the whole season, catch results were nearly the same as 1993. Throughout the year, more large salmon were encountered than ever before, with salmon outnumbering grilse every week of the season, peaking at a ratio of 10 to 1 during the fall run.

For the well-seasoned salmon fisher or for the beginner, there is no better choice. The three-year average catch statistics reported here speak to this fact best. Even the slowest week at Ponoï has produced an average 15 fish per 6-day rod-week. This takes into account guests from 10 years to 85 years old, and from first-time fly-fishermen to those who had "seen and done it all before." While there is no doubt that the Ponoï will challenge and duly reward the experienced and aggressive Atlantic salmon angler, we must also emphasize that there is simply no better place to learn to fly-fish for Atlantic salmon and to build confidence and develop long-term skills from real life encounters with these great game fish.

At the end of each exhilarating day, you will be warmly welcomed

at the superb Western-owned and equipped tent camp with surprising amenities and excellent meals. Frontiers and the staff of the Ponoï River Company, who host you in Russia, are proud of the Ponoï and remain committed to preserving its pristine nature and wonderful fishery. We hope you'll give us the opportunity to share it with you. The Ponoï Experience doesn't just relate to the number of fish — it's the esthetics of the fishing, the ambience of the camp, and the quality of a wilderness experience in a lovely setting. There are less expensive rivers on the Kola Peninsula, but none that offers so much for the discerning salmon angler, and none that has proved itself again and again as the Ponoï has.

## The Fishing

The Ponoï is fly-fishing only and catch-and-release. We fish over 50 miles on the prolific lower section of the river, where the width varies from 50 to 150 yards; plus, we now fish an additional 50 miles of productive tributary water. Ponoï is a big, gentle gradient river with greatly varying character, providing the opportunity to fish the way you like under different conditions — wading, bank casting, or boat fishing. Most of the fishing is with floating line, and it is a superior river for dry-fly fishing for Atlantic salmon. Depending on personal preference, both single- and double-handed rods are used effectively here, as well as a cross-section of traditional Atlantic salmon fly patterns. Frontiers provides comprehensive pre-trip information to each registrant, outlining cloth-

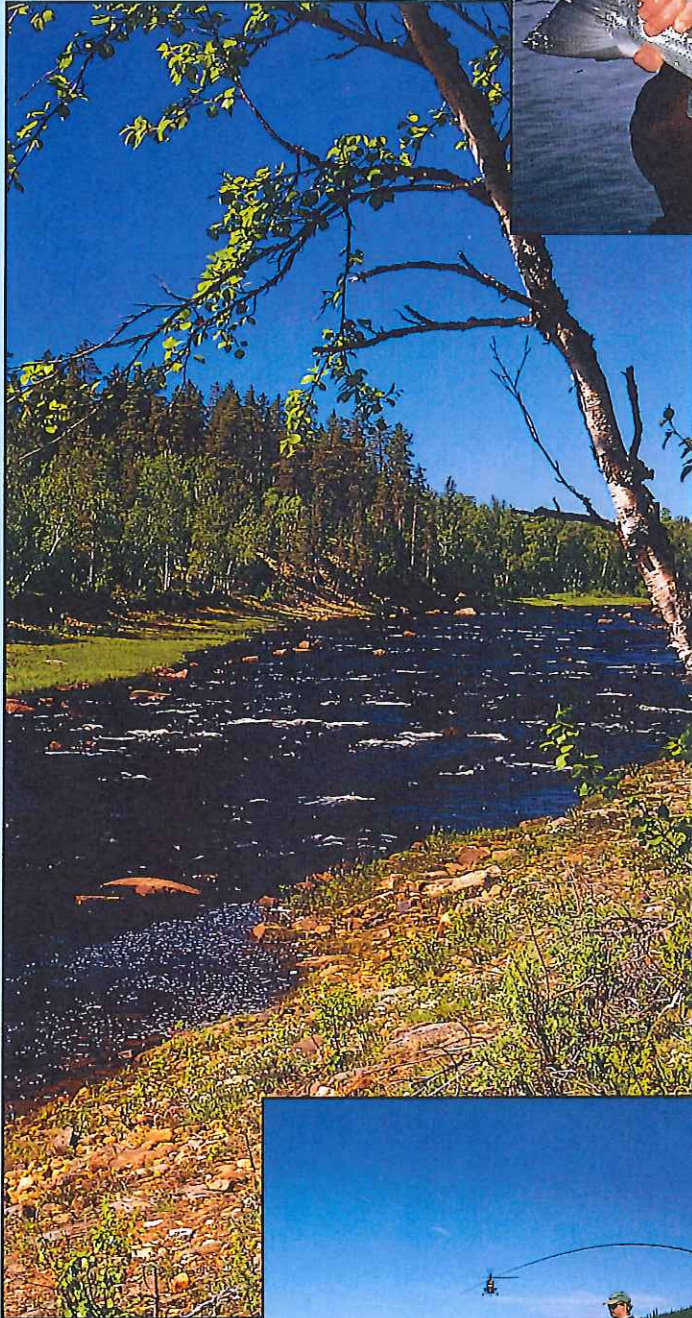
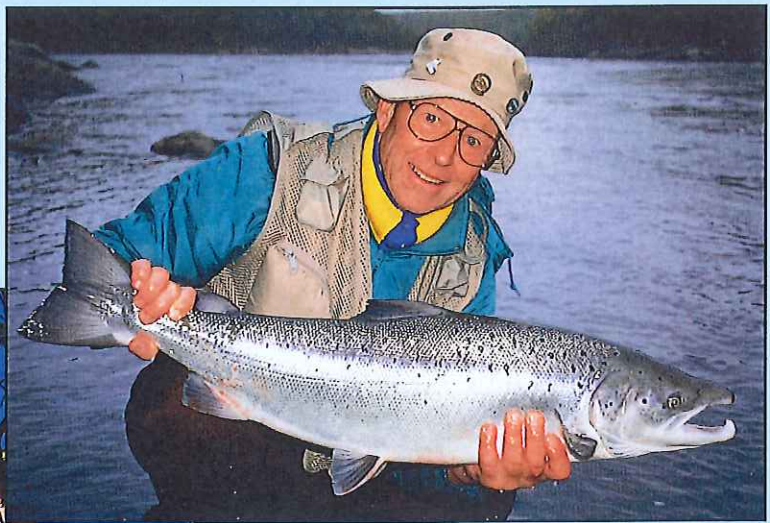
ing and tackle suggestions as well as other important details.

The daily fishing schedule in '95 will be more flexible and will vary throughout the season to accommodate prevailing conditions and hours of daylight. Wide-body 18-ft. river boats with 55-hp. American outboard motors (all with jet units when needed) are used to transport rods to closer beats and provide a stable casting platform when anchored and dropped through pools. Two MI-2 twin-jet helicopters piloted by veteran crews are used to fly out to more distant beats.

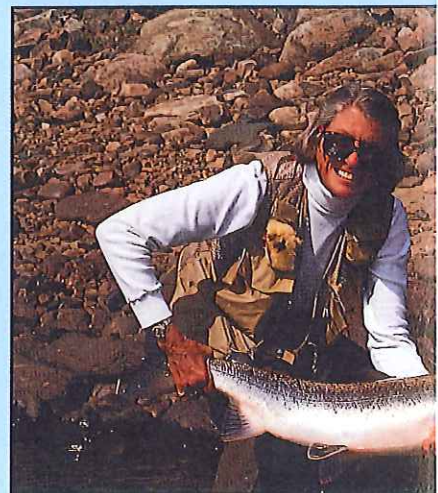
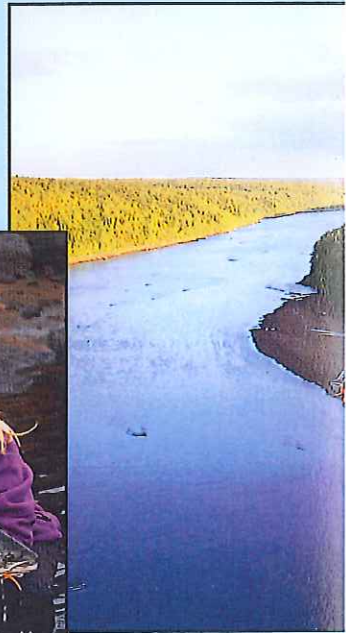
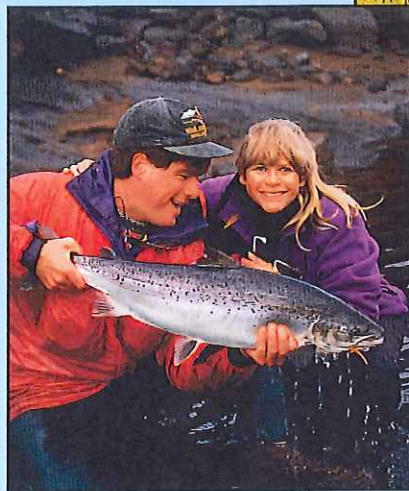
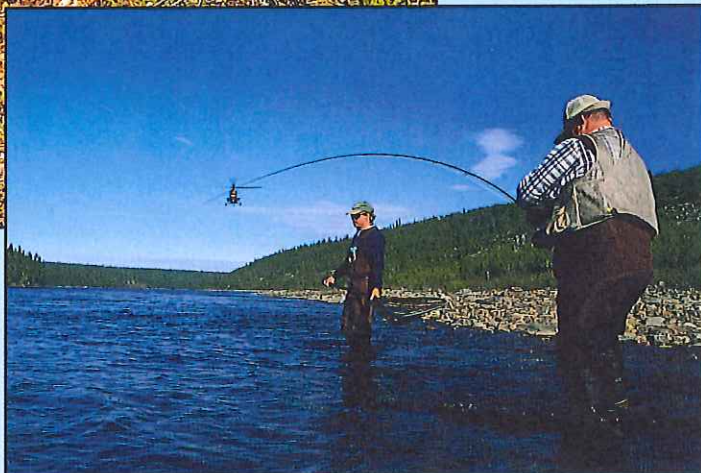
Starting in 1995, to ensure that our guests will fish only the most productive beats on the main river, we are adding the Pornache and Atcha tributaries to the fishing rotation, a short fly-out from Ryabaga camp. These were fished from our upriver camp (now closed) in the past and proved reliably productive. Everyone who fished them loved the esthetics and feeling of smaller river fishing with lighter tackle as an attractive complement to the larger Ponoï.

You will have about eight hours of guided fishing daily, plus the big home pool right in front of Ryabaga camp is always open for those who want to extend their fishing day. This terrific pool has produced as many as 200 salmon in a week while being fished only during extra hours! **Note, too, that Ryabaga beats produced 3,271 salmon 10 pounds and over (up to 25 pounds) in '93 and '94, by far the most of any river in Russia.**



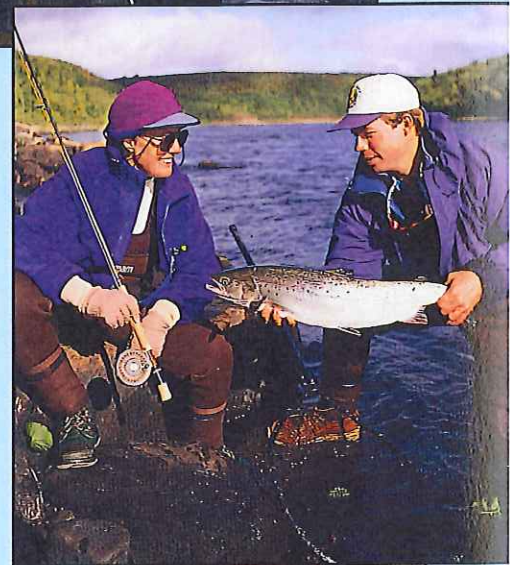


The lovely little Atcha

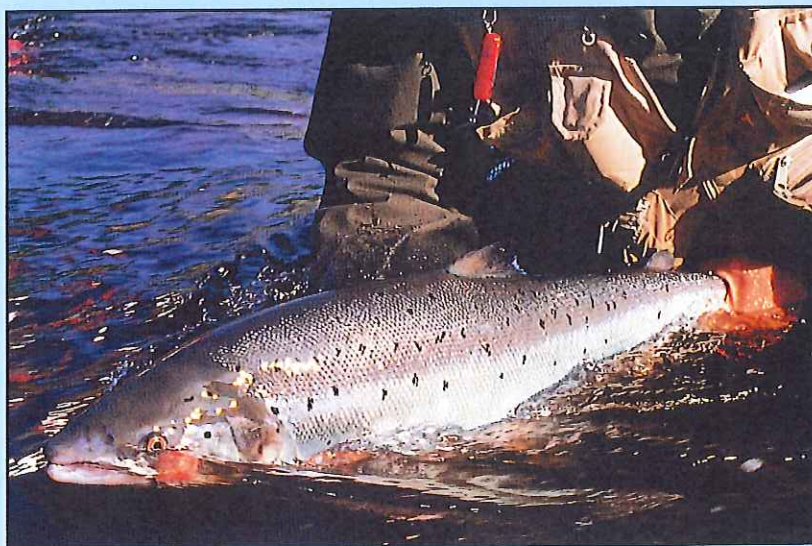


Sis Chapin with her 18-pound





Fishing the Pornache

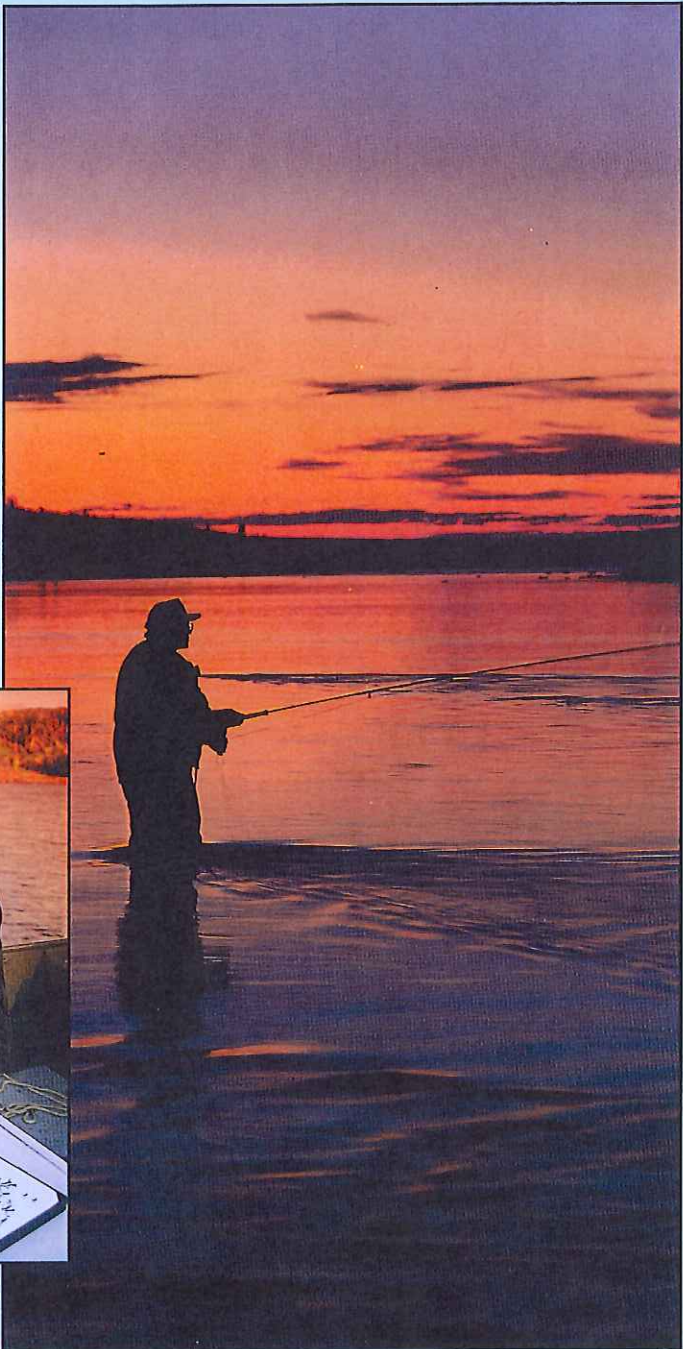
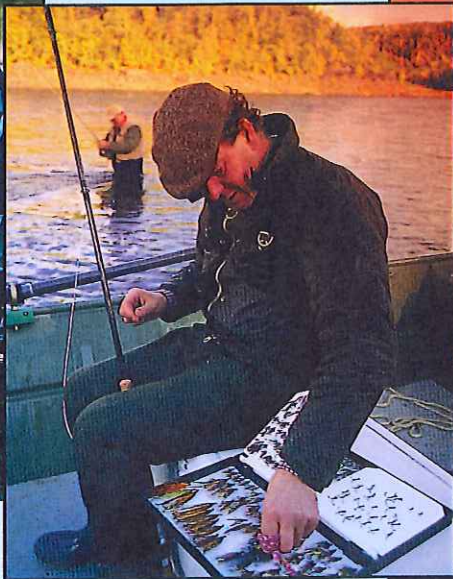
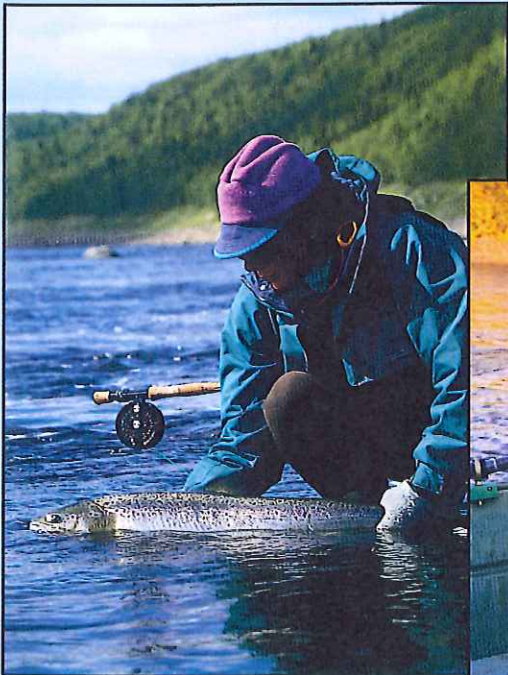


n a dry fly



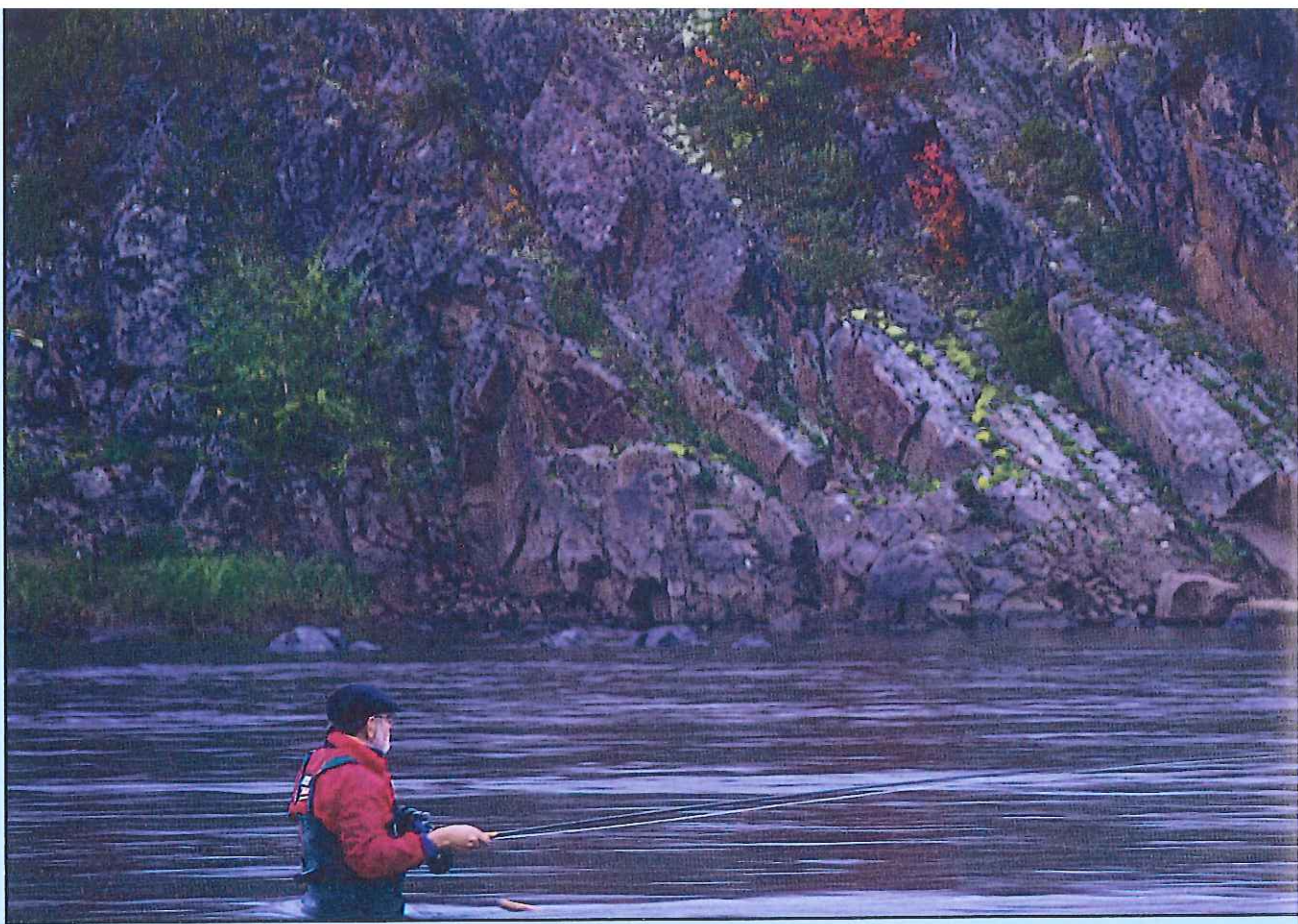


Thorpe McKenzie shows his 25-pounder



Home pool at midnight sun





## The Best Time to Go

Choosing when to go is somewhat dependent upon your personal objectives and fishing budget — costs correlate roughly to catch statistics. The first eight weeks of the season are when we see the largest number of fish caught during our main spring run of salmon. These are the famous “white nights” with 24 hours of daylight. During this period, large numbers of grilse run with the salmon. Water and air temperatures are colder and water levels are higher, so more emphasis is placed on heavier lines and boat fishing.

The middle weeks of the season provide excellent value, the warmest weather, and tend to be the most productive weeks for those who enjoy dry-fly fishing, with all the excitement that entails. Water levels are lower and wading and bank casting much easier. The autumn run of larger salmon usually begins about mid-August and, although this run is smaller than in the spring, there is a significantly higher average size. In September 1994, half the fish were 10-20 pounds, fresh and fit, with only a handful of grilse caught each day. As with salmon fishing anywhere, weekly results are greatly influenced by prevailing weather conditions. The Ponoï fishes reliably well throughout the season and, quite honestly, we feel there is no poor time to fish this river compared to any other Atlantic salmon river anywhere.

Consider the following, written by an August guest who was one of the first to fish this river while we were exploring in 1990.

*“I have very vivid memories of my first visit to the Ponoï. It was mid-August and the water was low, clear and cold. The tundra was alive with color and the smells of the birch and red pine were sharp. At night the air was brisk enough to require a fire in the tent stoves and the heavens were ablaze with northern lights.*

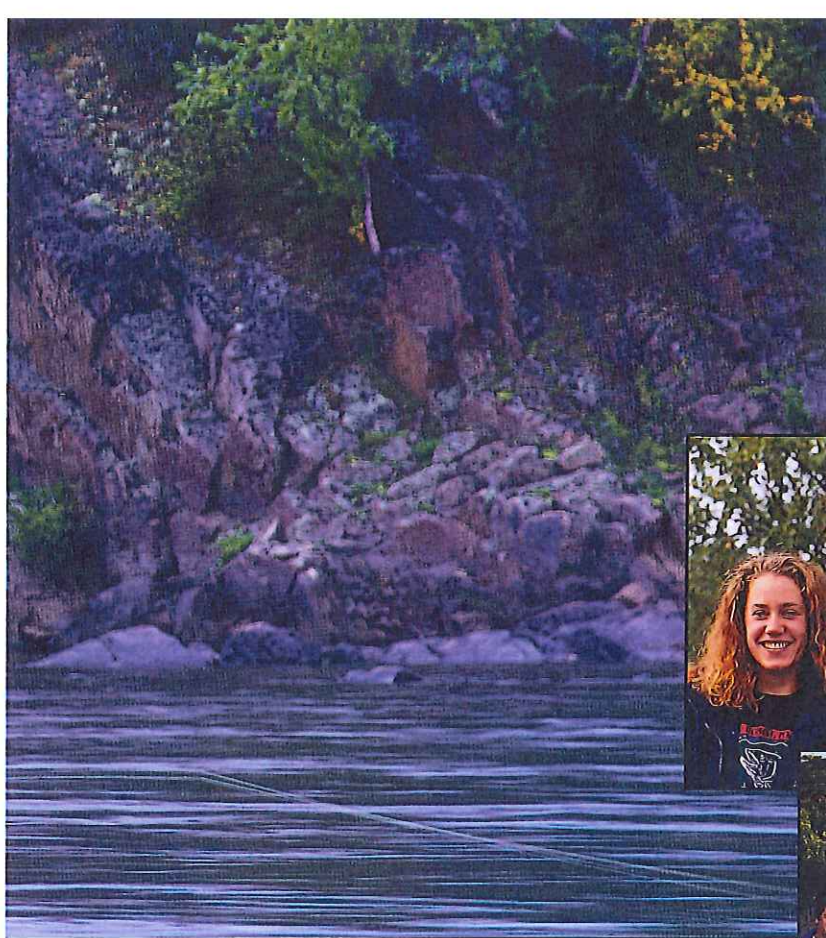
*“Each morning the Indian Summer sun lazily burned away the river fog, revealing the summer’s rich growth of blueberries, lingonberries, and glorious golden mushrooms. Mosquitoes were long gone and small herds of reindeer were making their way back to the river meadows. It was a wonderful place to be.*

*“And the salmon . . . My home rivers in Canada had produced an average one salmon for every three days of fishing. Imagine my shock to find that here on the Ponoï I averaged three salmon each day of fishing. Some were colored with their brilliant red spots, contrasting sharply with their fall-run brothers fresh from the sea and mirror-bright. It was an incredible introduction to a fishery that has only gotten better with each passing year.*

*“This is how salmon fishing is supposed to be. If you are an outdoors person, don’t miss out on experiencing this wonderful Arctic wilderness while you can.”*

**Bill Hunter**





**Julie Ratko and Mariusz Wroblewski,**  
our managers at Ryabaga



**Our camp crew and guides will welcome you**

## The Guides

We have a carefully selected, international pool of guides — American, British, Canadian, Russian and French. Many of them have been with us since the beginning so they know this river and know salmon fishing. You'll find our guides to be skilled fishermen, safety conscious, good boatmen, and personable streamside companions. We rotate guides along with the beats daily, assuring that your guide is intimately familiar with his "piece of water." We're certain that the guides at the Ponoï are the best on the Kola.

## The Ponoï Scientific Project

On July 16, 1994, Dr. Fred Whoriskey, natural resources scientist for the Atlantic Salmon Federation, arrived with his assistant, Stephan Poulin, to begin a long-term research project in collaboration with Russian scientists at the Ponoï. Smolt and parr counts were taken and all released fish were tagged by the Ponoï guides.

The scientists expect to produce data that will help Atlantic salmon, not only on the Kola but throughout their North Atlantic range. As part of the scientific project, Russian authorities agreed that no nets or obstructions of any kind will be at the Ponoï River, another first in a region where commercial netting has been the norm since the last century.

When sportfishing was opened in 1991, Ponoï netting was immediately curtailed by about 90 percent and now eliminated. Interestingly, when viewing commercial catch statistics first made available to us last April by Russian scientists, we saw that the Ponoï produced the same number of salmon in 1990 as it did in 1880!

We'll keep you posted as findings emerge. In the meantime, Dr. Whoriskey stated in camp: *"No mining, no clear-cutting, no agricultural run-off, no grazing, and no dams. This is the way salmon rivers used to be. If you had asked me to design a salmon factory, it would look a lot like the Ponoï River."*

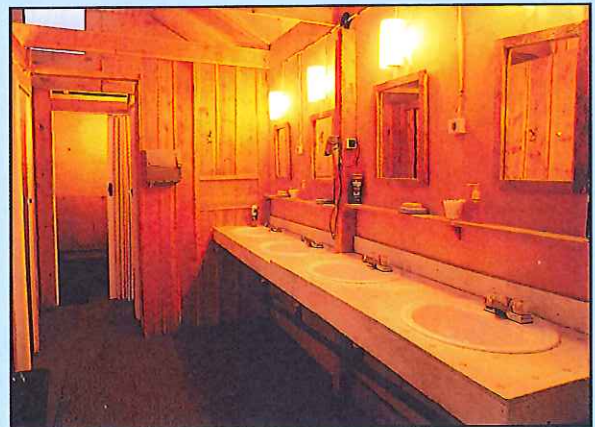
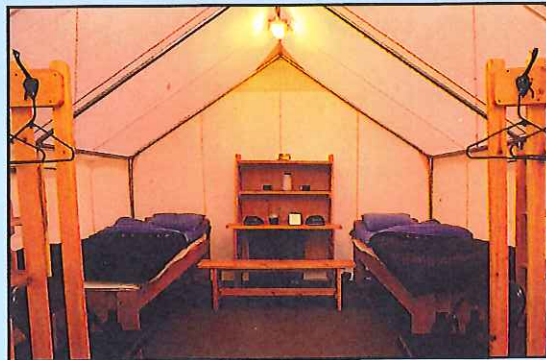
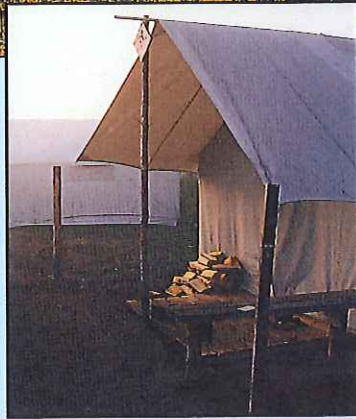
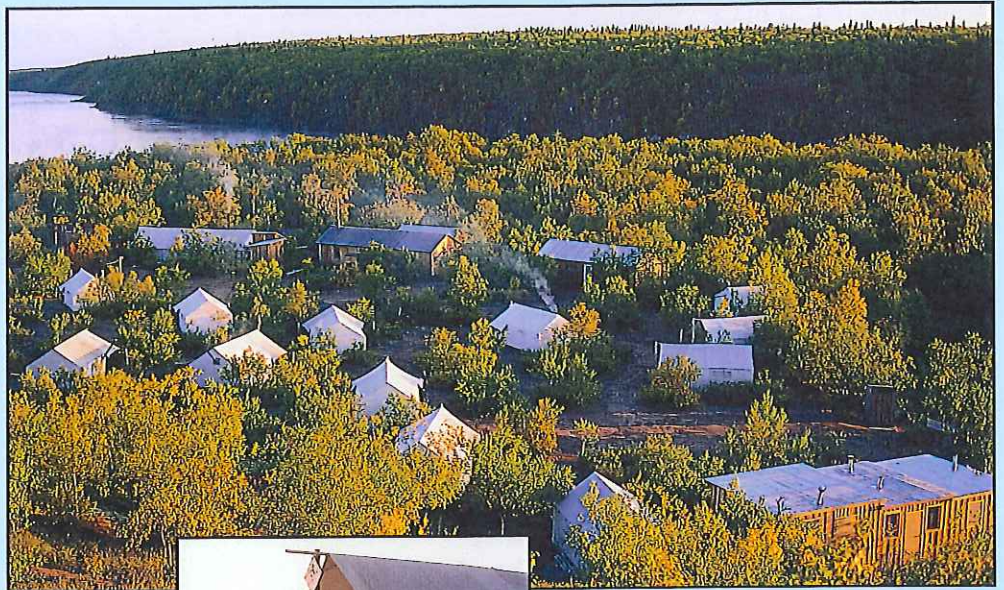


## The Ryabaga Camp

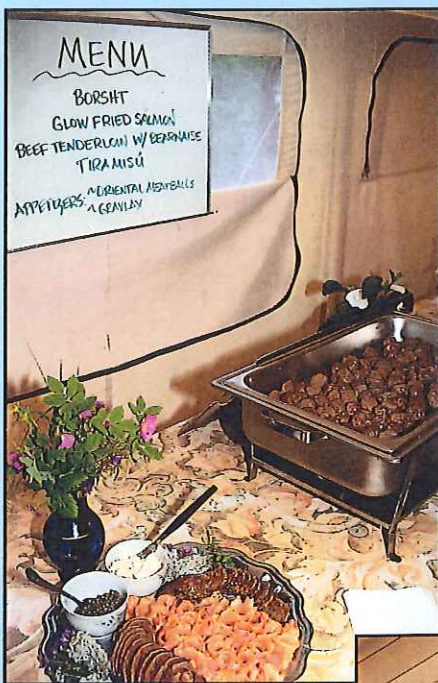
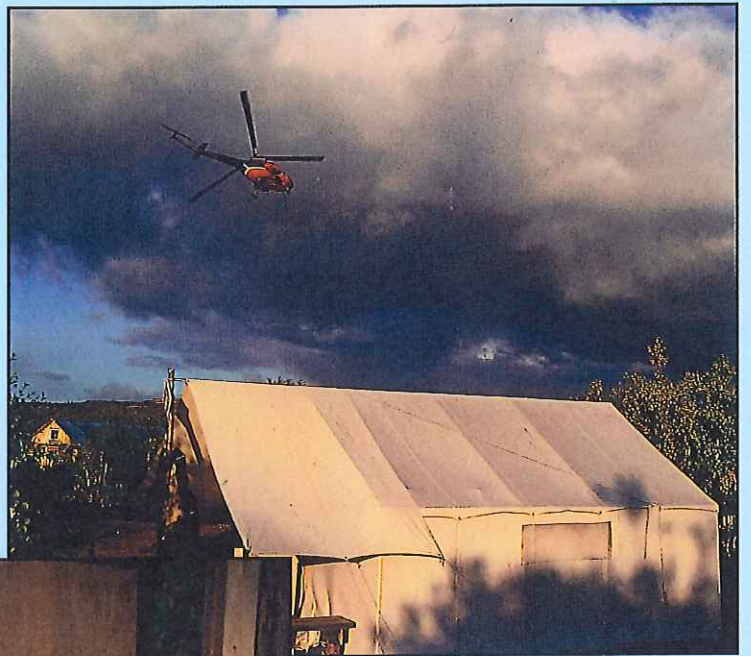
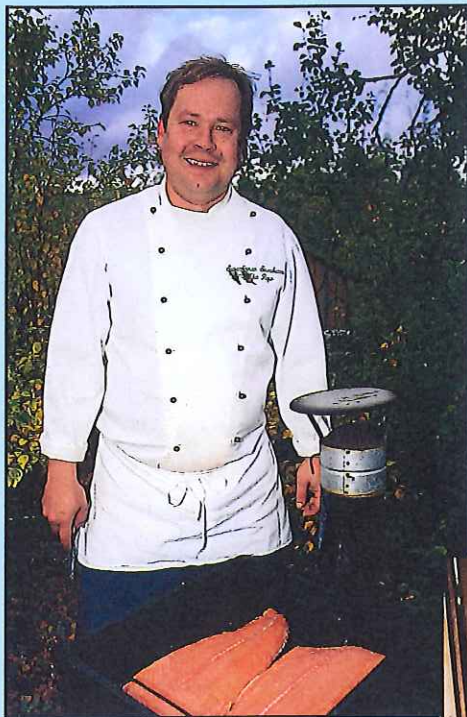
The camp at Ponoï is an outstanding wilderness facility with a very special ambience created by management, fishing guides, and support staff who really care about their guests. It offers comforts well beyond the expectations of most guests. The camp has received universal praise from those who stay there, noting the continuous improvements each year, including all of the little extra touches that have been thought of for your comfort, safety and convenience. Accommodations are in spacious wood-floored safari-style tents, each equipped with electricity, a small sink, a wood stove, and supplemental electric heating. There are proper beds with firm mattresses, extra-large warm sleeping bags with flannel liners and good pillows. There are built-in shelves, many wall hooks and places to hang things. There are a number of well-maintained outdoor toilet facilities, plus flush toilets. There are separate men's and women's shower areas, with plenty of hot water, sinks and private changing areas, all of which are kept spotlessly clean. Adjacent to the showers is a warm sauna, which is welcome at day's end.

The large central dining tent with its big wood stove is a favorite gathering area for memorable meals, drinks at the "hammer and sickle" bar, and for exchanging fish stories around the well-equipped fly-tying bench. The American/Finnish/Russian chefs and kitchen staff provide meals that are hearty and delicious. To complement their talents, only the best quality and freshest ingredients are flown in weekly from Helsinki.

There is also a heated drying tent for waders and wet outerwear, and a small but very well equipped medical clinic, supervised by our resident physician.









# What makes the Ponoï unique among all Russian rivers?

● Ponoï is the only Kola river held on a 10-year lease, thus ensuring longevity and continuity of operations and giving the Ponoï River Company the incentive to make long-term investments in equipment and personnel.

● Ponoï is the only Kola river to be Russian-designated as a "test river" for Atlantic salmon research on-site in a joint Atlantic Salmon Federation/PINRO long-term scientific study project.

● Consistency of the fishing throughout the season — Many other Kola rivers have a very narrow prime-time window, and then the fishing deteriorates dramatically.

● No pollution — The water is pure, radiation levels have been measured, and readings have been uniformly negative, and there is no mining or deforestation in the area.

● A service-oriented, English-speaking international guide pool, anxious to put their expertise to work for you.

● Unlike other rivers, there are no long hikes or climbs to reach pools or beats. It's an easy river to handle physically, thus allowing you to direct your energy to fishing rather than getting to or from your fishing.

● No poaching, no local fishermen, no nets or obstructions in the river, and no civilization encroachment. You have both banks exclusively along 50 miles of productive water where no one else but our guests are permitted to fish, plus another 50 miles of tributaries.

● Productive dry-fly fishing under normal conditions throughout the entire season.

● Size of the beats, which are measured in miles. You have more water to fish each day than you can possibly cover.

● In addition to liberal hours of guided fishing each day, there is unlimited productive fishing right at your doorstep at the Ryabaga home pool, which has been called "the jewel of the Kola."

● Comforts of the spacious Ponoï camp, its efficient staff, and fine meals provide a welcome respite each day you're there.

● Reliable satellite fax, radio and telex communication with the outside world on a 24-hour basis. The Ponoï is the first and only Kola camp with its own resident doctor and Western-supplied medical clinic.

● The size, quality and safety of boats and motors, with one available to every two guests. These are American-manufactured and well maintained so no fishing time is sacrificed or safety compromised.

● We were the first to provide ease of access via reliable Finnair service from Helsinki, an attractive European capital which avoids the hassles, delays, expense and insecurity of large Russian cities.

● Our own staff both in Helsinki and Murmansk, providing every assistance and smooth operations from arrival through departure.

● Over half of the Ponoï River Company employees are Russian, carefully selected, hard-working people who enhance your experience in Russia, together with their international counterparts.

● The esthetics of the fishing — Fish as you prefer, whether wading, bank-casting or by boat. This combination of methods accommodates weather variables, different water levels, and your ability to cast or wade.

● Reliability and reputation of Frontiers — All travel arrangements will be handled professionally, reliably and according to your objectives.

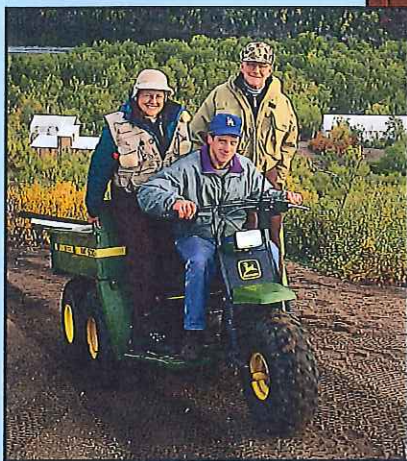
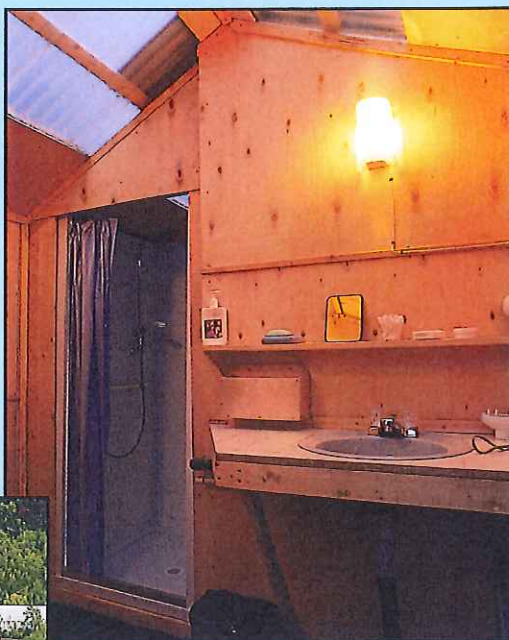
● The character of the watershed and its origin permits effective fishing through virtually any weather or water-level condition.

● The nice combination of great numbers of salmon, yet very attractive size up to 25 pounds. This presents "the best of both worlds."





Part of our Murmansk host staff



Dr. Simon, one of our camp physicians



Marketta Pettersson and her assistants make everything work in Helsinki



**Photo credits:** R. Valentine Atkinson, Jeff Vermillion, Dave Goodhart and James Rowinski



## A few reflective thoughts about Atlantic salmon fishing at the Ponoï . . .

The three-year catch statistics in the rate sheet with this brochure are accurate and have been kept diligently by camp management. The client comments are real statements by real people from the season just concluded. Together, they should give you the impression that the fishing is excellent at this river, supported by an outstanding camp. Organization, transportation and logistics are dependable and efficient — uniquely reassuring on the Kola Peninsula. Customer satisfaction is very high.

However, two or three weeks every season have proved to be disappointing compared to people's expectations. Occasionally, we have been told that we're "over-promoting" or "hyping" this resource. Nothing disappoints us more than to hear of unfulfilled expectations or of someone who has been to a great river and suffered a modest catch.

Those of us who have fished for Atlantic salmon for many years on less productive rivers often think we're understating the excellence of the Ponoï. The great variable which we all have come to accept is the profound influence of prevailing weather conditions on Atlantic salmon. Even though the Ponoï climate is fairly benign considering its 67 degree north latitude location, extremes can be encountered which adversely affect the fishing and sometimes even the fighting capability of the fish. The unpredictable Ponoï weather the week you're there can mean a 200-fish difference compared to the week before or the week after, or what happened the same week a season or two ago. This simply "goes with the territory" in the Arctic North.

This fishing has to be viewed in the context of Atlantic salmon fishing — not salmon fishing in Alaska, for example. English fishing writer David Profumo wisely wrote, "A preoccupation with arithmetic is not a good idea for the salmon angler." Some of our clients have suggested that we de-emphasize the numbers of fish, yet catch statistics are usually the first question we are asked. For some reason, catch statistics have been a part of salmon fishing

for a long time (they have been kept meticulously on some rivers back to the 18th century). We have only a three-year databank from Ponoï and, although the numbers week by week are fact, they are averages. This means that some people catch fewer fish and others many more each week.

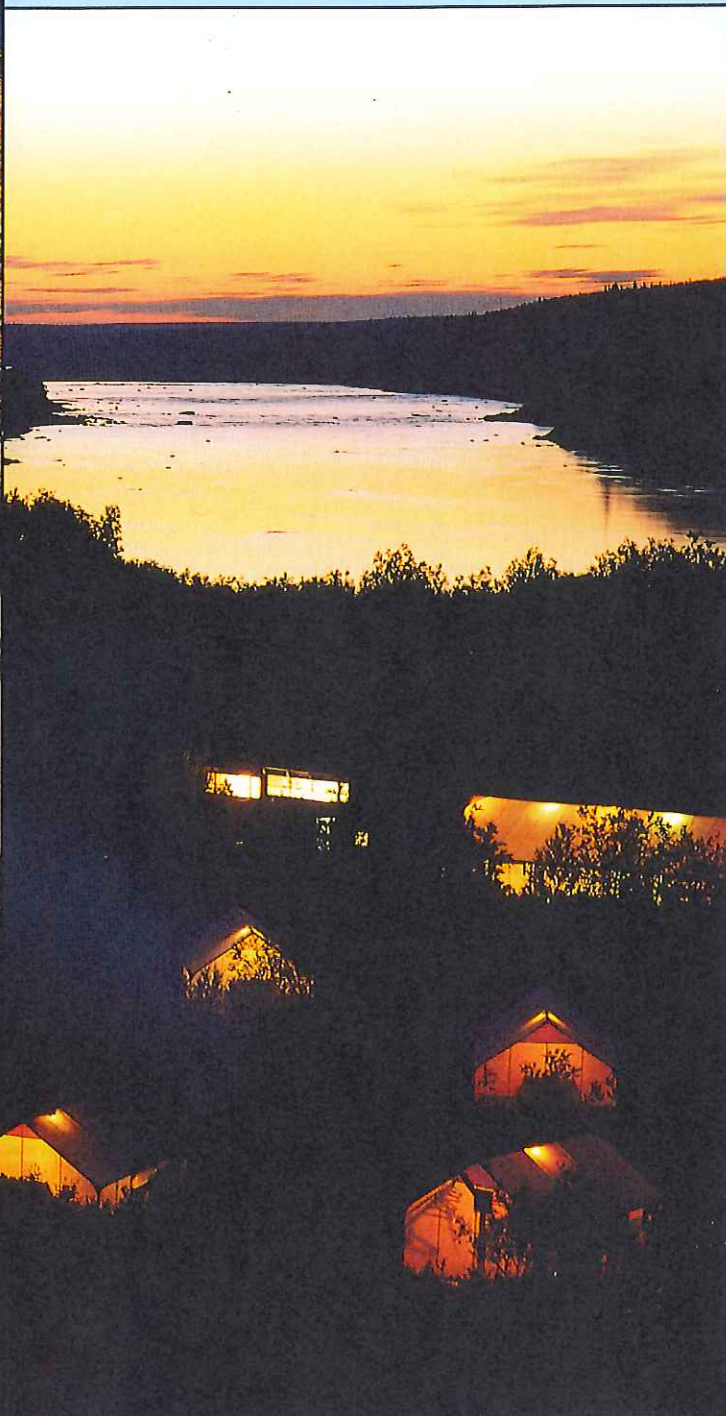
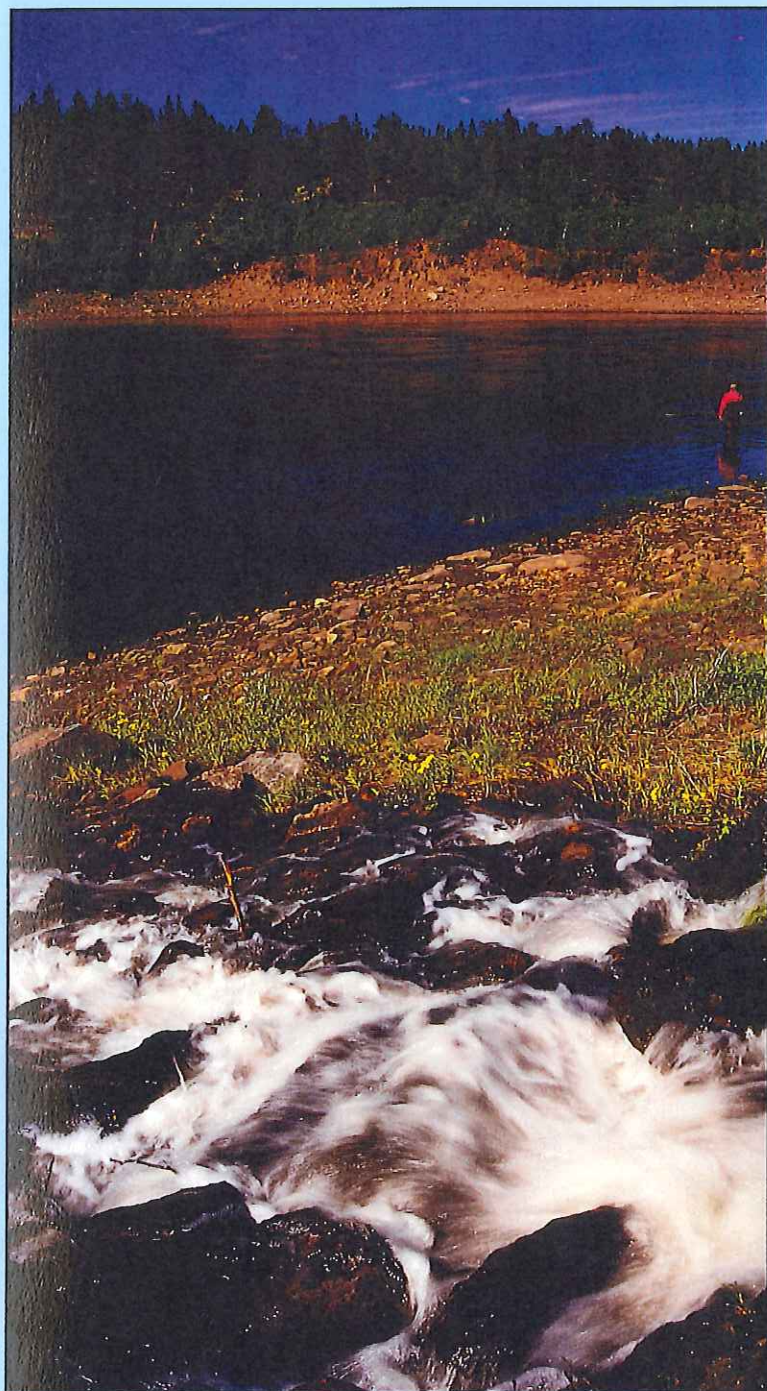
Some people prefer to fish only with a dry fly, and that's terrific; others will use only techniques that have worked for them elsewhere, and that's a very personal thing. Certainly your ability to wade, cast and employ different tactics will influence your success; so, too, will the energy people are willing to devote to their fishing day. These factors also "go with the territory."

One of our best American salmon fishing writers, Art Lee, wrote a memorable line, "The word 'bad' does not belong in the same sentence with Atlantic salmon fishing." Those of us who can now be considered veteran salmon anglers and who have come to love this precious wild creature, which is still in short supply in this world, agree completely with David and Art's advice.

When you come to the Ponoï, plan to enjoy Atlantic salmon fishing for what it is, a relatively unpredictable sport with skills sometimes overshadowed by luck, knowing that there's no better river anywhere to give you an excellent chance of success. However, the element of chance, most often weather-induced, is still there, and that's a part of the sport. If you're after fish over 30 pounds, this is not the river for you, even though the average size of Ponoï salmon is quite respectable, currently as good as you'll find in Scotland or Iceland and most rivers in Canada. There's also a type of fishing for all tastes throughout a hundred miles of productive salmon water between the Ponoï and her tributaries.

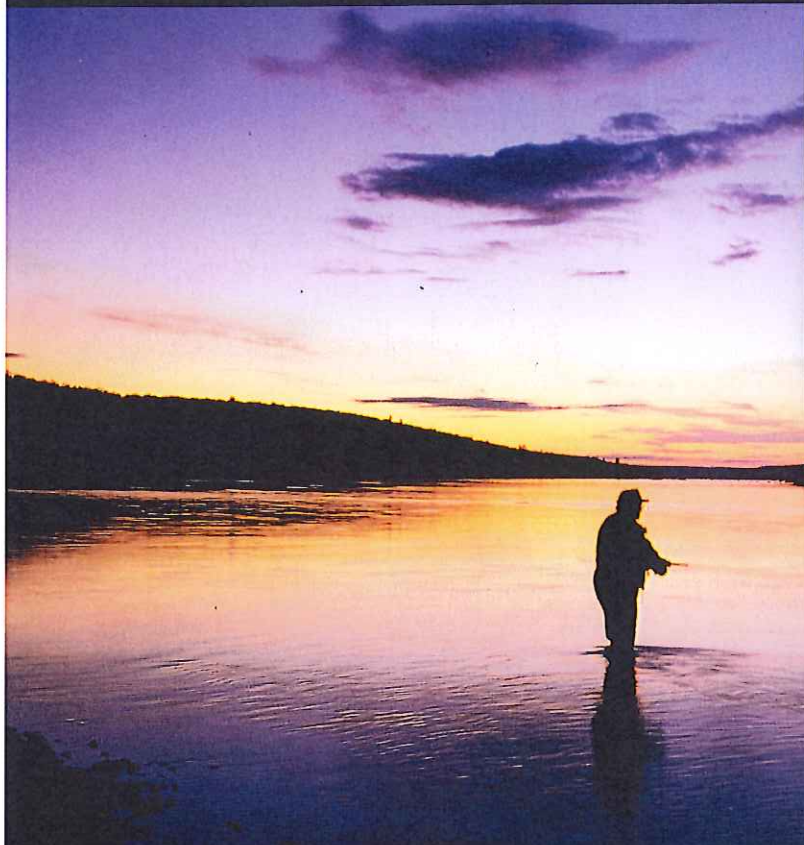
In any case, all of us at Frontiers and our associates with the Ponoï River Company will be doing all we can to help make the Ponoï meet your expectations.





**The Ponoï, Pornache and the Atcha are still rivers of dreams. If you would like to discover the excitement of The Ponoï Experience in 1995, please call us today. For availability and detailed information, call Mike Fitzgerald Sr. or Mollie Larsen in Wexford at 800-245-1950. In London, call Tarquin Millington-Drake at 171-493-0798.**





# Frontiers<sup>®</sup>

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