

PERMIT FISHING AT NO NAME  
MAY REQUIRE GETTING WET.



age along the reef. Over the ensuing weeks, Beckett and Pourbaix eventually found permit on nearly every reef-adjacent flat they fished.

The best part? It seems some aggressive tailing is often required for the permit to find their meal. Cuts and gashes on their raw, pink lips indicate a permit's efforts to secure their food by plucking it from this labyrinth of reef. Further evidence was found when olive-colored crab patterns were proven to be the most successful.

"Out of everywhere in the world I've fished for

## No Name Lodge

Is Puerto Rico the next great permit destination?

BY JOSEPH EVANS

ALMOST DUE NORTH of Caracas, Venezuela, with the Dominican Republic to the west and the British Virgin Islands to the east, lies relatively unexplored Puerto Rico. The flyfishing rumor mill began churning out reports this past spring about what South Florida boys Cooper Beckett and Matt Pourbaix had cooking down in southwestern P.R.—the next unknown hotspot for permit and tarpon lovers to pre-spend their 2022 tax refund.

Pourbaix had spent six years exploring the Puerto Rican fishery starting in 2013, living there while his then-girlfriend now-wife was attending medical school. He convinced Beckett to join him on a scouting mission in January 2022. After a month of searching, they'd seen enough big tarpon, schools of bones, and tailing permit to know it could work. But it was a later permit trip that convinced them they'd found something truly special.

The two had heard an octopus fisherman talking about seeing "*mucho palometo*" on one of the atolls. Armed with only an inflatable SUP and a sub-par rental boat, Beckett and Pourbaix went searching for proof. Shortly after dropping off Pourbaix on the first flat, Beckett received a breathless call. "Cooper! They are tailing everywhere," Pourbaix said. "It's nuts!"

As they continued exploring the area, they came across habitat and sea life that made the permit sightings far less surprising: an abundance of bait and birds, octopus and nurse sharks, stingrays and barracuda, and a seemingly endless amount of crabs. While the number and variety of crabs was one of the most promising signs, perhaps most vital was the topography, revealing flats with aggressive drop-offs that would draw larger permit looking to for-

permit," says Pourbaix, "I've never experienced so many tailing fish, with so many of them being large ones."

Lest this sound like suspect promotional lingo, it's worth noting that this is not Beckett and Pourbaix's first experience with lodge ownership. They are co-owners (with others) of Cayo Francis, on Belize's Ambergris Caye. And both are quick to remind potential No Name guests that these *are* still permit, and for every one that's come unbuttoned over a sandy bottom, ten have broken free when they have a reef to leverage in the fight. Not only could your fly snag some coral in the middle of your shot, but waves will be crashing, so the permit you spotted a half-second ago with its back out of the water will suddenly disappear. Once hooked, they'll head for deep water on the *other* side of the drop-off, and in the age-old battle of coral head versus 20-pound fluoro, you lose.



Your guide will run down the flat trying to herd your permit toward the forgiving sand, but if that's unsuccessful, his push-pole becomes your leader prop. Some guides may even swim out to grab your permit. All of which makes the reward of catching one feel that much sweeter.

There've been local sightings of smaller permit in schools, a promising sign that populations around the small town of Boqueron should continue to grow.

Nevertheless, the fishery is primarily casting to large singles or small groups. Old fish mean smart fish, so pack your A-Game.

No Name Lodge is not a singular location, building, or fishery, but a business model of "fun, fast, and flexible" that Beckett and Pourbaix are using as they continue to explore and expand. No Name is welcoming guests for the 2023 season, accommodating six anglers per week in Marina Boquerón, a lively harbor town that is walking distance to the beach, as well as an exciting collection of local bars and restaurants. And since most of us forget: Puerto Rico is a U.S. Territory, so no passports required. 🍷