



BY AIR MAIL
FIRST CLASS



It has been quite a year :)
I will tell you all about it
when we meet next Saturday.
Until then,
Nils

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FIRST CLASS



Nils Folmer Jørgenson



DRY

weareflyfishing.com

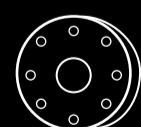
Making choices
Lukasz Stanczuk

Lukasz Stanczuk

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As an avid fly fisherman, I spend much of my life with a fly rod in my hand. Not only in Iceland, where I live, but as luck may have it, anywhere in the world. Whenever things really go my way, like they did last year (2024 ed.), I'd be fishing both the blue waters of Costa Rica and the pristine rivers of Iceland (and lots of venues in between :) So lean back, grab a drink and join me on my journey through the 2024 season!



Nils Folmer Jørgensen

*"As I travel back
in my head and
relive last year's
experiences,
I fall in love
with fly fishing
and the diverse
landscapes that
continue to in-
spire me all over
again".*

January

First stop, Costa Rica. A place that immediately captures your heart, not just with its stunning landscapes but with its people. The friendliness of the locals, combined with the natural beauty of the country, create a vibe that's hard to resist. But for me, as with many places I've explored, it was the fishing that really drew me in.

Through a friend, I found myself at a remote gem at the edge of the jungle. Getting there is an adventure in itself: a flight in a small eight-seater plane, followed by a boat ride will take you to a hidden lodge; actually more like a luxury resort tucked into nature's embrace.

Inshore fishing for roosterfish and offshore fishing for tuna, sailfish, and marlin are the activities I target. All exclusively on the fly for me. However, people without fly fishing skills can also target, and land, these magnificent fish, using live bait on spinning rods. But this is also a good place to bring the whole family. Costa Rica is a paradise not only for those of us who live and breathe fly fishing, but also for anyone wanting to share in the excitement of the catch.






February

This is a month without fixed plans, giving me the freedom to venture into new adventures. It is the time for spontaneity, where anything is possible, and the next big catch could be just around the corner! That said, one has to remember to put in our hours at work. After all, this fishing doesn't pay for itself.

March

March signals the start of more stable weather across the Caribbean, and for me, that means flats fishing. There's nothing quite like wading white sand flats in ankle to knee deep water, sight fishing for bonefish. The thrill of the stalking, the intensity of the moment, it never gets old. Permit and tarpon bring just as much excitement. Any saltwater angler knows that heart-stopping moment when a permit's black fins break the surface.





With its 700 islands and cays, the Bahamas is legendary for bone-fishing, offering some of the finest flats fishing in the world. Shallow flats shaped by mangroves and tidal creeks provide the perfect habitat for these elusive fish, making for an unforgettable sight-fishing experience. The laid-back spirit of the Bahamian people, along with their deep connection to the sea, enriches every visit for me. Later in the season, I'll head over to Cuba and Florida for a broader variety of species and more amply sized bonefish, but the Bahamas hold a special place in my heart — there's just something about it.



Meridian

April and May

As winter begins to relinquish its grip on Iceland, a few trout fishing spots open up for the season. April is marked by the local pursuit of sea trout, mainly kelts making their way back to the sea after spawning and overwintering. While this tradition is beloved by many Icelanders, it doesn't captivate me. What does capture my full attention, however, is the allure of Lake Thingvallavatn and its massive, wild 'ice age' brown trout.

Lake Thingvallavatn is more than just a fishing spot; it's a geological wonder. Its crystal-clear waters are filtered through the surrounding lava fields, creating pristine conditions for fishing. But it's not just the clarity of the water that makes this lake unique – the lake is home to some of the largest completely wild trout in the world.

For over 20 years, I've been fortunate to fish the ION *beats – long before ION was even founded. These beats, responsible for around 90% of the trout caught in the lake, are particularly special due to the natural hot springs. These springs create warmer pockets, rich in food sources, which naturally attract the massive trout the lake is famous for.

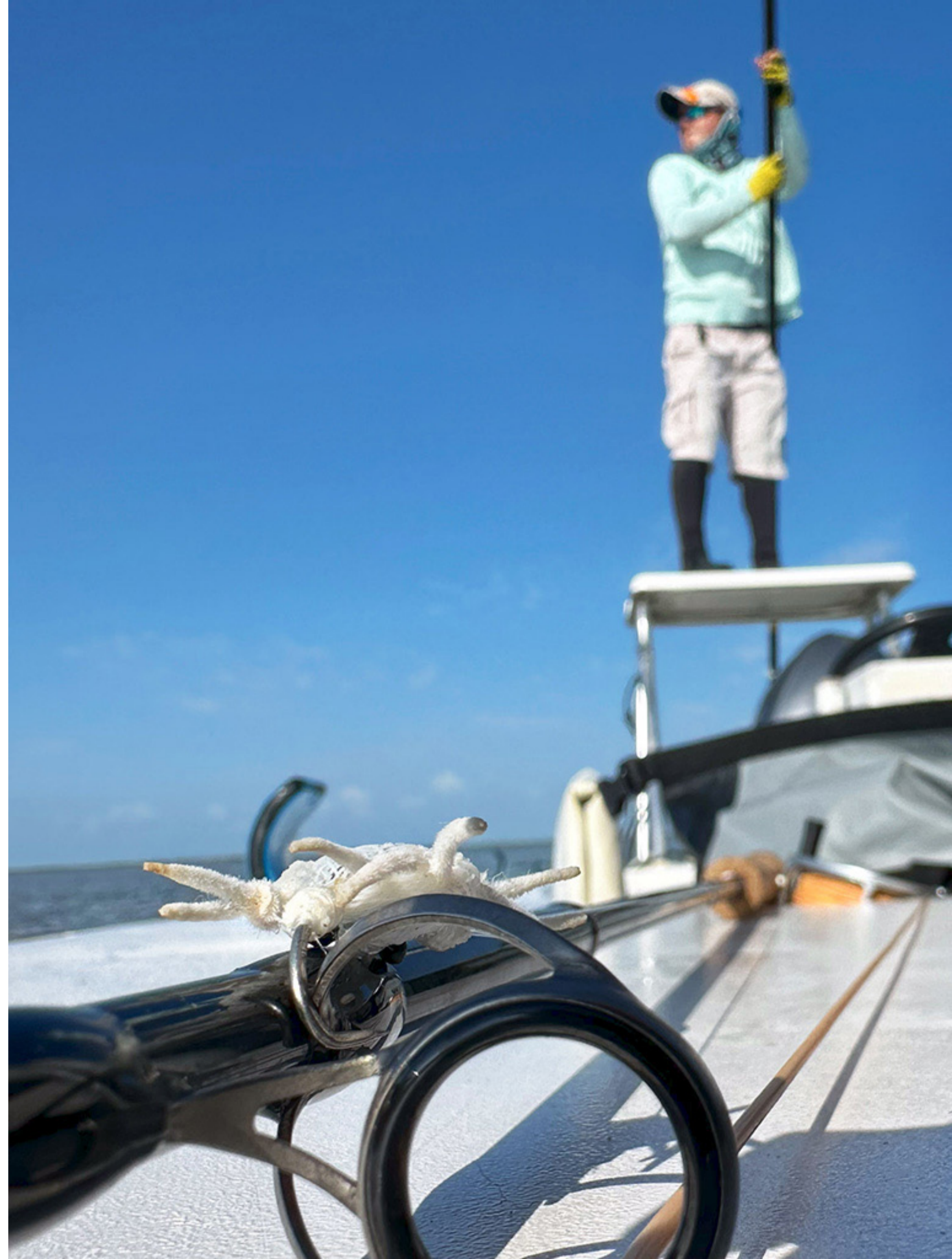
Over the decades, I've landed over 1,500 wild brown trout here, including more than 20 weighing over 20 pounds, with the largest one pushing close to 40 pounds. Fly fishing with #5-6 nymphs and dry flies, often sight-fished, you can't blame me for spending my Icelandic spring in pursuit of these legendary fish, relishing every moment in this magical setting.

*The beats empty in the lake near the ION Hotel.





Late April, I head down to the north coast of Cuba to kick off May. Cuba feels like stepping back in time, far removed from the busy world I leave behind. With no cell phone reception, it's the perfect place to unplug and reconnect with nature and myself.





The northern coast of Cuba is a remote paradise, with endless flats that stretch on forever. The bonefish here have an impressive average size, even larger than those found in other parts of the country. But it's not just the bonefish that draw me back each year; there are permit in great numbers, and the big tarpon start showing up right around now, offering heart-pounding fishing moments. Cuba is a truly unique place. Its timeless beauty and remote wilderness offer an angling experience like no other. And it's more than just catching big fish; it's about the peaceful escape, where the pressures of modern life melt away. The warmth and friendliness of the Cuban people, combined with the country's rich culture, make every trip unforgettable, leaving you with memories far beyond the fishing itself.

A man wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt, a white mesh cap, and sunglasses is leaning over the side of a boat. He is holding a large, silver tarpon fish by its mouth. The fish is partially out of the water, showing its scales and fins. The background is dark water with some ripples.

May

The Keys

As May rolls in, I usually find myself drawn to the Florida Keys, where the anticipation of prime-time fishing for migrating Silver Kings (tarpon) fills the air. These huge fish are at this time not particularly focused on eating, making them a challenge to entice. Yet, this adds an exciting layer to the game; the rewards are magnificent.

I landed my biggest tarpon ever here, a 135-pound king that will forever be etched in my memory. Catching these giants requires hard work and patience, including standing in a boat for hours. Then, in an instant, everything changes as a 'string' of fish appears along the flats! The thrill of that moment makes the hours spent waiting all worth it.

Fishing in the Keys has its unique charm. Mornings are dedicated to the pursuit of these remarkable fish, while evenings are spent socializing in the vibrant atmosphere of Key West. The dining options are plentiful, with lively venues offering delicious meals and the chance to unwind after a long day on the water. Other places I have enjoyed fishing are The Everglades and Fort Myers.

Returning from the sunny tropics to Iceland, I cool down with some more trout in Thingvallavatn.




June and July

As June unfolds and summer reaches its zenith in Iceland, I am captivated by the midnight sun illuminating the land, where flowers burst into bloom and migrating birds fill the air with their joyous songs.

These months signal the arrival of my true passion: the pursuit of Atlantic salmon. Their annual run transforms the rivers into stages for one of nature's most thrilling spectacles.



A man in a dark jacket and cap is fly fishing in a river. The river has a waterfall and rapids. The background features rocky cliffs and a mountain with snow. The foreground has green grass and yellow and purple flowers. A fishing rod is visible, with the line arched over the river.

Despite fishing for countless species around the world, the mystery of the Atlantic salmon remains unmatched. They are the enigma of the rivers, not eating while in the river, yet there are moments when they take the fly and the heart skips a beat to that 'pull'. My salmon journey began in Norway and Scotland, but I gravitated to Iceland for more of those thrilling 'pulls'. With well-managed rivers and a commitment to conservation, Iceland offers some of the best salmon fishing in the world.



SIMMS




Each river in Iceland tells a different story, but most share one feature — crystal-clear waters. The visibility calls for delicate fishing techniques, small flies, and offers an unparalleled opportunity for sight fishing. Coming from larger rivers, the visual aspect of fishing here deepens my connection with the water and the fish.

I've fished most salmon rivers in Iceland, but I gravitate towards my favourites. The ideal experience combines pristine water, a comfortable lodge, good company, and a luxury — not too many fish! After catching over 20 salmon in a single day, I've learned that the thrill lies in working for each fish, plus the chance for a 10 kg fish has to be there.

Icelandic rivers typically host only 2 to 12 rods, resulting in low fishing pressure. This, combined with strict catch-and-release regulations, ensures robust salmon stocks. Some suffering rivers even adopt a complete catch-and-release policy, highlighting the importance of preserving the remaining fish.

I've developed a fondness for larger rivers, where 'blind' fishing has become the norm. Casting into the depths, unsure of what lies beneath, keeps me engaged. The thrill of blind fishing, paired with the excitement of spotting salmon from the cliffs, creates a unique experience.





Each moment spent on the water in June and July is a delightful surprise. A pool that seems lifeless in the morning can suddenly come alive, filled with fresh, silver salmon sporting stunning shades of cyan. I prefer to focus my fishing efforts in July, spending three to four weeks on waters where these fish are in mint condition; outstanding beautiful silver bullets. Already in the latter half of July that will change.

Small flies are the key to success here, and I rely on my own double hook fly patterns to entice the salmon. Iceland is also renowned for the riffling hitch technique, a surface method that offers an intense and visual spectacle. This technique complements my fishing style, adding another layer of excitement to the experience.



The rivers Laxa í Adaldal, Vididalsa, Jokla, Hofsa, Midfjardara, Midfjardara í Bakkafjordur, Hafralonsa, Sanda, Vatnsdalsa, Stora Laxa IV and Hrutafjardara have become like old friends, each with its own charm. Nestled within Iceland's wild beauty, these rivers serve as a haven for the majestic Atlantic salmon. Welcome to the mesmerizing world of Iceland's rivers and their iconic salmon.











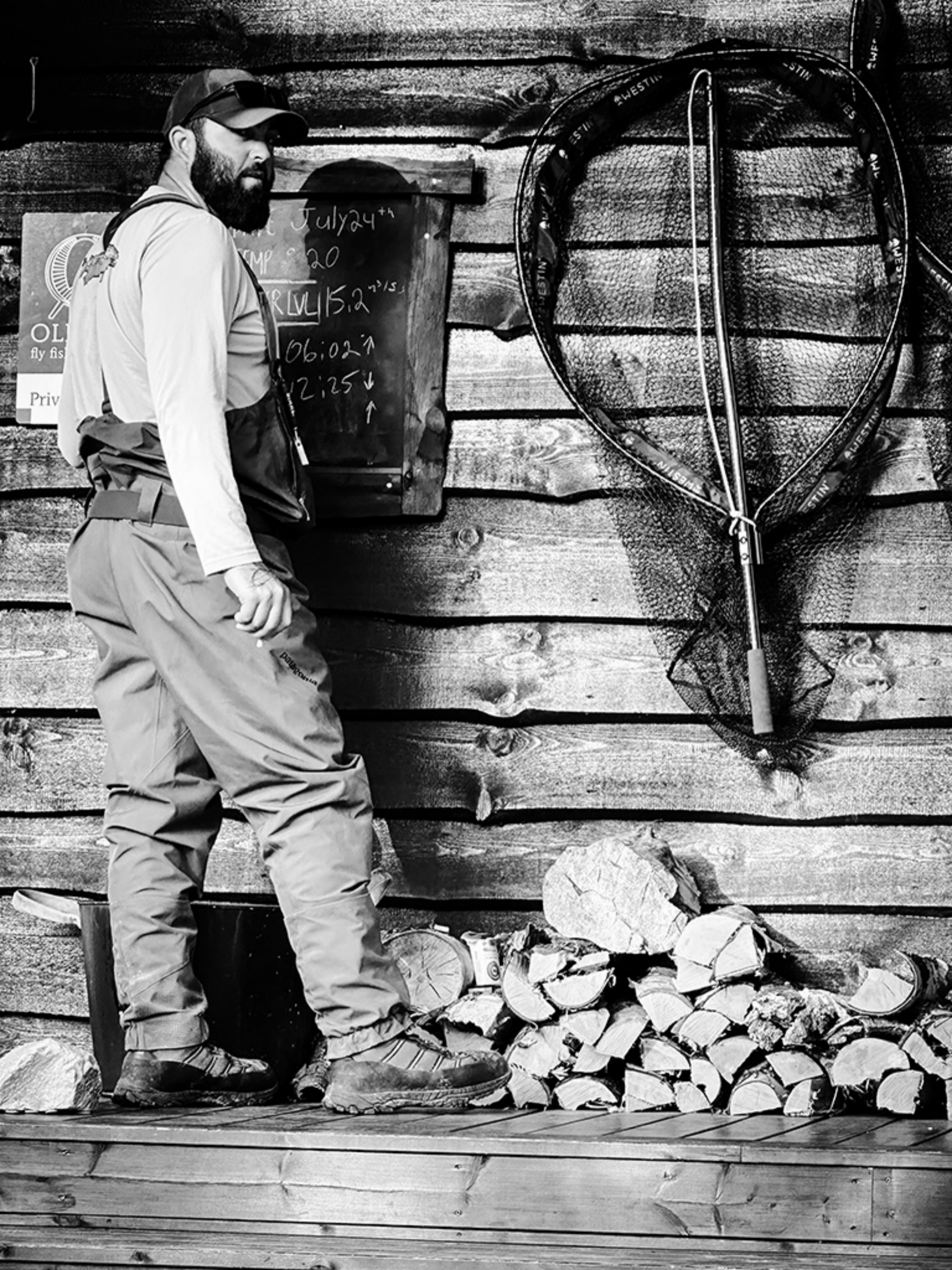
August

'the grey zone'

In Iceland, August feels like a transitional month for salmon fishing. By now, most of the summer run fish will have entered the rivers, yet there are still solid runs in the eastern rivers. Regardless, the excitement isn't the same for me.

While there are now many salmon around, their vibrant silver sheen has faded, leaving them in a more muted grey state as they prepare for spawning. They linger in this 'grey zone', not as active as they are in the lively months of June and July, yet still capable of surprising moments.





Lakselva

To escape this *grey zone* in August, I have my yearly trip to the Olderø Lodge in Lakselva, Norway, for a week of prime time fishing for some of the largest salmon in the world. The perfectly sculpted pools are designed for fly fishing, easy to cover with a 12 to 13-foot rod. I love the simplicity of fishing with floating lines and hook flies for these monster salmon.

Lakselva is not a numbers game; it's a river of potential, with a nonzero chance of hooking a salmon weighing 50 to 60 pounds! It can be hard work, but the rewards are worth it.

———— *hard work* ————



I recall one unforgettable day when I hooked two salmon around 40 to 50 pounds from the same pool within half an hour — both winning their battle. This highlights the river's extraordinary possibilities. What sets Olderø apart is its mostly private waters, which ensures minimal fishing pressure. The lodge's commitment to catch-and-release practices is commendable, and I often wish more of the river would join in the conservation efforts to protect this endangered species.





After my time in Norway, I head back to East Iceland to fish a little more or even guide other anglers. However, a break from the water may be a welcome chance to pause and reflect. It stirs a longing within me, intensifying my desire to be back on the river, just as we prepare to wrap up the salmon season and usher in the exciting sea trout season in September.



September

As the island quiets down, with only a few migratory birds remaining, Iceland's landscape bursts into autumn colors. The rivers reflect this shift, and so do the salmon. This is when we go 'crocodile hunting' – targeting the male salmon that have transformed from silver to vibrant hues of yellow, orange, and brown. These fish, having spent months in the river, are now starting to stir, preparing for the spawn. They have lost weight after months without eating, while the females are fat with eggs, making late-season fishing exciting.

I focus my efforts on big fish rivers like Laxa i Adaldal and Vididalsa, where I've landed some of my biggest fish, to over 110 cm. I also take a week at Olderø Lodge in Norway's Lakselva, where the late season means a chance at monster salmon. For me, autumn fishing is a relaxing time to reflect on the season, enjoying good company and taking things slower.

Most Icelandic salmon rivers close by September 20th, and I firmly believe they should all shut down by then, to protect the spawning fish. Artificial rivers remain open, but fishing stocked waters doesn't appeal to me, especially in a country with such wild fisheries; which I believe should be fully protected from introducing something that does not belong there.



As said, when the salmon season ends, prime sea trout fishing begins. In recent years, our sea trout have gained international attention. While this has priced out many local anglers, it has drawn people from places like the UK, who are eager for world-class fishing just hours away.

Occasionally, I wrap up September with a trip to Malaysia, chasing sailfish. It's a completely different experience – no fish spotting electronics, just spotting seagulls following bait balls. Fly rods and teasing fish to the surface before casting to them, nobody knows what this is here. The simplicity of it however offers a refreshing and soul-nourishing change of pace. The fishing is great, the people are humble and friendly but beyond that, there is no luxury.



October

Sea trout fishing in Iceland continues until the 20th of October, but for me, by then the drive has faded. I usually receive an invitation to come to Scotland around this time, but more often than not, I can't seem to muster the energy to go. This year was no different. Instead, my thoughts turn to saltwater adventures. As we speak, I'm gearing up for my annual November trip, this time returning to Cuba for some thrilling flats fishing. Alongside that, I've penciled in a trip to Denmark and Sweden to chase pike—a nice change of pace.

<https://www.a-fishing-iceland.com>
<https://nfjdesign.com>

December

December is a time to step back from fishing and focus on my closest, cherishing the spirit of the season. But a few days chasing Louisiana redfish always fits in perfectly with the festive mood. Redfish offer a relaxing, low-stress kind of fishing. They're not overly clever. Sometimes I lose one only to hook it again in the same retrieve :) Everyone I've fished with finds it enjoyable, and it's a great way to wind down from a busy year. Perfect combo with some days in New Orleans.

That said, I have sneaked out before New Year's eve, spending the last days of the year fishing. It's a perfect way to ring in the New Year. One year, on December 31st, 2008, I was casting to a big permit just before heading to the lodge — didn't land it, of course :) But the next morning, on January 1, on my second cast I hooked a tarpon. That's the kind of happy ending and bell ringing I like! So, as I wrap this up with New Year's fishing on my mind, I can't help but wonder what's in the cards for this year?

BIO

Nils Folmer Jørgensen

Originally from Denmark but a resident of Iceland since 2007, Nils Folmer Jørgensen lives and breathes fishing. A lifelong angler, his passion for fly fishing has taken him from the rivers of Iceland and the north to saltwater flats worldwide. Known for his expertise in targeting Atlantic salmon, wild brown trout, and tropical species, Nils is not just a fisherman—he's a true artist of the sport.

In Iceland, he's known both on and off the river, having landed 49 salmon over 100 cm to date. His innovative fly designs, including the Tin Tin, the Autumn Hooker, the Erna, and the Olive Ghost, are relied upon by anglers for their consistent success in Icelandic waters and beyond.

Beyond casting lines and catching fish, Nils has left a significant mark on the fishing industry, working with leading brands like Simms, Loop, Mustad, Sierra, Savage Gear, and Einarsson. From fly rods to apparel, his design work has elevated the angling experiences of countless enthusiasts and earned him six prestigious industrial design awards.

Nils is also an author, TV presenter, and speaker, inspiring others while advocating for responsible angling practices. For him, fishing is more than a career and hobby—it's a way of life shaped by adventure, creativity, and a deep respect for the waters he treasures.