

Kauai Ocean Fly Fishing

By Tim Huckaby

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Intro (for non ocean fly fisherman)

If you are a trout fly fisherman and have never fished the shore in the ocean then be prepared for a totally different and frequently challenging experience.

Firstly is the **wind**. There is always going to be wind. Frequently it takes a double haul into the wind to get any decent cast in. You will want at least a 6 wt and mostly likely an 8wt to deal with the wind. Mostly shooting heads or sinking lines. In addition, where you fish will have to dictate the sink rate. It is really easy to lose flies in the lava on the reefs, yet at the same time if your flies are not being stripped close to the reef you won't hook up. In open water there are floating line opportunities for pipefish, jacks, trevallies, etc.

Secondly is **line management**. Short of the flats in Anini, you are going to have to deal with the surf moving your line around or your line getting hung up in the lava. Using a stripping basket is highly recommended.

Thirdly, **clothes**. Shoes: flats shoes, Reef shoes, tevas, keens, etc. all work great. There is no real need for traditional wading boots. Nor is there a need for waders. The water is warm even in winter. Don't underestimate the sun.

4thly – **Tides**. You are probably on vacation and if you are like me, your shots at fishing are dictated by your spouse. But, if you do have control over when you fish the ideal time is during the rise and crest of the tide. That is when the predators come into the shallows. Unlike a trout stream people on the beach and in the water will frequently dictate where you can and can't fish.

5th – No **fishing license** is required when fishing the ocean anywhere in Hawaii.

6th – **Flies**. Any baitfish pattern (like clousers) will work from small sizes to big ones in the open ocean. Crab and bonefish patterns will work in the flats.

Locations

Anini Beach

Anini beach is the most famous of all the fly fishing spots in Kauai. Its on the North side of the island. And you won't see another sole fly fishing it. And you'll have plenty of room. It just doesn't get crowded at Anini. Anini is where the flats are... bonefish, jacks,

and the legendary blue trevally. It's sight fishing and it can be really challenging. I have done plenty of "practice casting" down there. but, I have had success too.

Getting there – the entire ~3 mile stretch of Anini is fishable. From where you first drop down to the ocean, through the park and all the way to where the road ends are great flats to sight fish. There is an enormous beach park at anini. You probably want to avoid fishing in there just because of people. If you drive as far as possible north and park, you get out and fish north from there. if you are going to bring your wife and kids the beaches on the south side are the best ones. There are public access points scattered between the 20 million dollar homes. Anini is a bay and there are flats so you don't need to worry about surf...typically.



If you fish it's best to go all the way north. you can fish all the way north to the point around which is Princeville. It's mangroves on the shore and you'll wade slowly looking for fish to cast at in 1 to 4 feet of calm water. There is nobody / nothing there... except for a few vagrant camps up in the mangroves. These fish are like steelhead, though... 1000s of casts... I cast to blind water all the time just because I'd get bored if I didn't. Most people who are good cast 2-3 times in 4 hours.

Kee Beach – This is one of the most famous beaches in Kauai. It's where the road ends at the North side of the island. If you walk away from the people south you'll find yourself secluded pretty quickly. I have caught many reef fish and pipe fish in the area.

Mahaulepu – Mahaulepu is a must. You will thank me. This southern beach is close to Poipu, yet is great because it's hard to get to and there is no civilization for miles. You have to take a small easy series of poorly maintained dirt sugar cane roads. Drive to the hyatt in poipu and keep going past until the road ends. Take a right on the dirt road that parallels the poipu bay golf course. When that road end take a right turn on the

dirt road (mahaulepu road) another couple miles, past the empty guard shack until it ends at the beach (that is gillin's beach). Left turn following the beach for another 1.5 miles until it ends at Mahaulepu. There is Plenty of parking here at the end of the road and the nasty dirt roads scare the tourists off. It can get windy here and the beach is primitive and beautiful. There is a trail that parallels the beach to the north that goes for miles... past spouting horns and beautiful cliffs. About a mile down the trail is the lithified cliffs; climb to the top and take pictures. You can continue the hike for another mile to what I call the most secluded beach in Kauai because there is not a road close to it for miles. Follow the trail to a gate, ignore it, and keep going until you are stopped by the cliffs. Look down and you'll see the secluded beach. I have never seen anyone on this beach...ever.

There is a 4 foot long blue trevally I hooked and lost off the bluff at mahaulepu. It has haunted me forever.... Catch him. You can fish (with difficulty) off the bluffs doing mega roll casts or fish the beaches and reefs for miles in either direction without running into people. It's also get an awesome beach and an even better scenic hike. By the way the crow flies it's probably only 4-5 miles from our timeshare at Waiohai... What makes Mahaulepu awesome is only the locals and the adventurous go there. It is a "wild" beach. Plenty of dirt beach parking, but a dirt, sugar cane roads to get there.

Southern Beaches

Your second best choice is at and around our condo at Marriott Waiohai in Poupi. Park in the public lot next to Brenneckes. Facing the ocean go right away from Brenneckes to the public access next to the waiohai. The reef in front of the waiohai is where I can fish for hours for those little hawkfish...and every once in a while a trigger. If you can fish the beach portions (crowded because it's arguably the nicest beach on the island) you can target the jacks. Btw, there is a beach bar right there at the waiohai.... Expensive..... but worth it. get Tai Chi.

The third choice is going west from Poipu, picking any awesome beach by following the coastal roads, hoonani rd, hoona rd and lawaii rd all the way to Kukuiula Small Boat Harbor. We have nailed a ton of fish off the lava there. Mostly with the kids on squid, but the fly rods casted well into the wind can work great too.

Btw, that whole stretch...from mahaulepu all the way to the harbor is spectacular snorking. You will see turtles.

