

# On The Fly

Newsletter of the Suncoast Fly Fishers of St. Petersburg

**Suncoast Fly Fishers - March activities have been canceled or postponed. Notice on Page 2**

March Meeting  
Canceled

Capt. Shawn McCole P7



February Outing P9-10



March Outing  
Canceled

Tie Spoon Flies P12



March Hog Roast  
has been Postponed  
  
New Dates TBA

Irma Pass P14



Pond Bass P18



## SFF Responds to the Coronavirus Outbreak

The SFF leadership has made the difficult decision to suspend all club activities at least through the month of March. This means that there will be no March member meeting and no March outing. The Hog Roast will be postponed. A new date will be announced at a later date.

The current slate of Officers and BOD members will remain in place until the next member meeting can take place. Our annual election and business meeting will take place at that time.

Going forward we will get the club back to business as usual as soon as possible but there is a possibility that we will need to extend the suspension of club activities for an additional period of time. We will keep you posted. We can't wait to bring back everything that we do and get SFF back to being better than ever!

*SFF Board of Directors*

## Meetings, Outings, and More

**NOTE: PLEASE BE AWARE THAT APRIL EVENTS ALSO MAY BE CANCELED**

### THURSDAY, APRIL 16 MEETING, WALTER FULLER PARK

- Members vote for new officers and board members.
- Treasurer Tom Gadacz will present an extended financial report and take questions from members.
- Our speaker is fly fishing author Chris O'Byrne. His latest book is The Beautiful Addiction. He'll bring some books to sign.



Chris O'Byrne

### SATURDAY, APRIL 18 OUTING,

- Old Tampa Bay with lunch at the Crab Shack restaurant on Gandy Blvd

**THE MARCH 28 HOG ROAST AND SILENT AUCTION HAS BEEN POSTPONED. NEW DATES TBA**

### HOG ROAST AND SILENT AUCTION

- 4 to 8 pm, St. Jerome's Catholic Church, 10855 Hamlin Blvd., Largo.
- Tickets, \$20. Children 12 and under are free. Buy tickets at the meeting, the outing, or at the event.

### Hog Roast --Call for volunteers

- The Hog Roast Committee needs your help: Decorations, Catering, Silent Auction, Bucket Raffle, Donations, Ticket Sales, Registration and Member Tied Flies. Contact Rick Warfel by text or email. 813-523-0692 / [rh\\_warfel@yahoo.com](mailto:rh_warfel@yahoo.com)

### Donate your best flies

We need your best flies for our upcoming hog roast and silent auction. Member's flies are always some of the most popular items of the auction. Quality is the key. Bring 6-12 of your best flies to the March meeting. Bruce Evensen and Myron Hansen will be collecting your creations. Be sure to include your name with your flies (buyers like to know who's flies they are bidding on). If you miss the meeting we can even accept your contributions the day of the hog roast.



St. Jerome's Catholic Church 10855 Hamlin Blvd., Largo

## Meetings, Outings, and More

### **TIE-FLY MONDAYS WITH BRUCE EVENSEN**

- Every Monday, starting at 6 pm, Bruce guides club members and other fly fishers through all the steps it takes to tie different flies. On the second Monday of each month Bruce teaches his Fly of the Month for the next outing.
- Bruce's Fly-Tying Studio is 531 80th Avenue N. St. Petersburg.



### **EVERGLADES OUTING**

- April 22 – April 26

### **THURSDAY, MAY 21 MEETING, WALTER FULLER PARK**

- TIE-A-THON and free pizza. Bring your vise and materials. Bill Scarola will coordinate.

### **SATURDAY, MAY 23, OUTING**

- Sunshine Skyway Bridge with picnic lunch at the USCGC Blackthorn Memorial, North Skyway Rest Area.

### **THURSDAY, JUNE 18 MEETING, WALTER FULLER PARK**

- Docklight fishing panel (TBA) -- tutorial with questions and answers

### **DOCKLIGHT OUTING**

### **FRIDAY-SATURDAY-SUNDAY, JUNE 19-20-21 Friday - Saturday-Sunday, OUTING**

- Fish docks or beaches from Friday night through noon on Sunday.

## News & Notes

### Friday, May 8 -- SFF members invited to take a tour of a USF marine research vessel

- Our tour will begin with a 20-30-minute overview of the research being conducted by the College of Marine Science followed by the tour.
- The research being conducted by the school is quite impressive and should be of interest to our members.
- If you plan to attend please contact Cliff Nigh at [cliff.nigh@gmail.com](mailto:cliff.nigh@gmail.com). He can provide USF with a headcount.

### The Mayfly Project. Teach fly fishing to kids in our foster care system

- St. Pete's Foster care youth are going to be matched with members of the Suncoast Fly Fishers who will help them learn fly casting, fly tying, and catching fish on the fly. The board of directors voted to award these youth Certificates of Accomplishments along with flies and fly boxes. Also, they'll be added to the mailing list for *On The Fly*.
- So far six club members have volunteered to mentor and teach fly tying and fly casting to six foster care mentees. **The Mayfly Project** (TMP). TMP is a non-profit that uses fly fishing to mentor some of the 415,000 youth that are in our foster care system on any given day. If you are interested in being a mentor and/or learning about other opportunities to get involved in the St. Petersburg project, contact Scott Russell at 727-403-8165 or at [russellti@me.com](mailto:russellti@me.com)

### Zups Resort, July 14-19

- Bill Scarola is the go-to person to sign up for the trip to **Zups Resort** in Canada. He'll bring fliers to the meetings.
- Catch 100 smallmouth bass each day? Could be. This is Lac La Croix.

### Sunshade for the Suncoast Fly Fisher

The SFF logo is on the front. On the back there's a mangrove snook breaking surface with a fly in its mouth. It's by a well-known Florida tattoo artist/angler Shane Woodward. White, mint green, or grey.

Hoodie: \$45.

No hood, \$25.

Tee, \$18

Order from SFF member Tim Elms, [trelms@yahoo.com](mailto:trelms@yahoo.com)

His brother Jeremy is a carp and trout fly fishing guide and a maker of custom fishing shirts and accessories.

His company [www.draganddropfishing.com](http://www.draganddropfishing.com)



# We are Suncoast Fly Fishers of St. Petersburg

## Aims and Purposes

The Suncoast Fly Fishers, Inc. (SFF) is an organization of fishing enthusiasts who love fishing with the fly rod. We welcome all people of all ages with similar interests, regardless of their fly fishing skill level. We enthusiastically teach those that wish to learn or improve their fly casting, fly tying and related fly fishing skills. SFF meets monthly where we talk fly fishing, tie flies and most months feature a speaker with a program highlighting local fly fishing opportunities.

Suncoast Fly Fishers (SFF) is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization. SFF is a charter member of the Fly Fishers International (FFI). SFF is a member of the Florida Council of FFI. SFF supports the conservation of natural resources, boating safety and fishing regulations.

## Monthly Meetings. Guests welcome.

Third Thursday of every month (except December) at St. Pete's Walter Fuller Park Rec Center, 7891 26th Ave. N. 6 to 8:30 pm.

**Directions to our meeting at Walter Fuller Park.** From 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue N turn North on 72<sup>nd</sup> St. N. Turn left (West) on 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue N. Then turn right into the rec center parking lot.

## Monthly Outings

Club members meet up every month for a fly fishing outing and lunch. Usually it is scheduled on the Saturday after monthly meeting on the third Thursday of every month.

**Contact us by mail:** Suncoast Fly Fishers, P.O. Box 40821, St Petersburg, FL 33743-0821

## Visit our website and Facebook pages, too

[SuncoastFlyFishers.com](http://SuncoastFlyFishers.com)

[Facebook/Suncoast Fly Fishers](#)

## Club and FFI Membership combined

Suncoast Fly Fishers currently has 135 members including 15 family members and 6 honorary members. Annual dues are payable in September. This also includes benefits and annual membership in [Fly Fishers International](#) and the [Florida Council](#) of Fly Fishers International

## Suncoast Fly Fishers

P. O. Box 40821  
St Petersburg, FL 33743  
[www.suncoastflyfishers.org](http://www.suncoastflyfishers.org)

## Club Officers

Pres: George Haseltine  
Vice Pres: Rick Warfel  
Secretary: David Redd  
Treasurer: Tom Gadacz

## Board of Directors

Bill Scarola, Bob Burkard, Bruce Evensen, Ryan Sollars, Cliff Nigh, Karen Warfel

## Committees

Members are encouraged to serve on one or two committees. Do you? If not, speak to one of the officers at the next meeting.

Casting: Pat Damico, Dayle Mazzarella

FFI Liaison: Pat Damico

Conservation: Cliff Nigh

Fly Tying: Myron Hansen

Membership: Tom Gadacz

New Members: Rick Warfel

Webmaster: Dennis Marquis

Facebook: Woody Miller

Hog Roast: Open

Outings: Bob Burkard, Hilton Bruch, David Redd, Bill AuCoin

Project Healing Waters: Ted Rich, Dave Barson, David Redd, Terry Kirkpatrick

Outreach, shows: David Redd, Bob Burkard, Bill Scarola, Tom Gadacz

Raffles: Dave Barson

Succession Plan: Rick Warfel

Programs: Board of Directors

Publicity: Bill AuCoin

*On The Fly*

Bill AuCoin, editor  
Duane Mertz, Anne Hays, Bob Hood, Tim Elms

## Duane Mertz: Redfish-Tarpon Tips by Capt. Shawn McCole



*Duane Mertz*

Winter fishing for redfish and tarpon in Tampa Bay was the subject of a talk by **Captain Shawn McCole** at the February 20<sup>th</sup> SFF meeting.

A native of the area, Captain McCole has learned in his years of angling local waters that winter tides can be perfect for targeting tailing redfish. Redfish feed on crabs, shrimp, worms and snails and can be spotted in skinny water with their noses down and tails up, rooting in mud and grass flats when they are feeding.

Captain McCole starts off looking for morning low tides and an area that has 3-5 feet of access to the flats. He stays away from expansive flats. A good way to track tides is to subscribe to the app Tide Graph Pro as it provides good information on local tides.

He will wade at dead low tide until the water starts to come up. Water just below knee depth is best. Low light and low wind conditions are best to find tailing redfish.

Captain McCole will look for rays or bonnet sharks as they signal that redfish action is coming. If he sees mullet jumping that's a sign that it's too late.

### **Tailing Redfish in Mud Flats**

Captain McCole uses a heavy weighted green crab fly for redfish tailing on mud flats. The angler wants to throw the crab fly on the redfish when the tail is up.

Redfish will key on the mud puffs that the fly stirs up. When the fish's tail goes down the angler will use a subtle, small, slow retrieve. When the angler sees the fish's tail come up again he knows the fly has been taken.

### **Tailing Redfish on Grass Flats**

Captain McCole uses weightless tan shrimp flies for tailing redfish on grass flats. Again, the angler wants to hit the fish with the fly. When the tail goes down the fish has taken the fly. It is important to use a small, short retrieve to leave the fly in the fish's feeding zone longer and allow it to be seen by the fish.

It is important to remember that redfish are not darty fish, so slow retrieves are best. Also, flies with weed guards are recommended.



*Capt. Shawn McCole*



*McCole's weighted green crab fly or mud flat tailers*



*McCole's tan shrimp fly for reds tailing on grass flats*

*Continues on following page*

## Continued... Capt. Shawn McCole: redfish and tarpon insights

### **Tarpon Fishing in Tampa Bay**

- Tarpon fishing starts in Tampa Bay when the water reaches 72-degrees for 72 straight hours.
- Best fishing occurs after Mother's Day with May and June being the peak months.

Captain McCole has developed a proprietary toad fly that will stay in the top of the water column. Using this fly he can throw it in front of the tarpon and leave it alone so the fish will have a chance to see it. The angler wants to look for warm flats with dark bottoms. Four to six feet of water is best.

Because tarpon are skittish, the angler generally only has one shot at a fish. So, the successful angler will slowly work the fly by the prey allowing the tarpon to get a good look at the fly.

Because tarpon move fast, if they are rolling you will want to look for bubbles to locate the fish before casting.

Oftentimes tarpon will travel in small pods with a large female in the lead followed by smaller males. Experienced anglers will bypass the lead female and cast to the smaller males that are less experienced.

When casting be sure not to hop your fly.

A good signal for a take is the fact that tarpon always kick out their pectoral fins before they eat.

Juvenile tarpon can be found July through September in rivers and ponds with stagnant water.

Brown and tan flies are recommended on outgoing tides while black and purple flies are best for low light conditions.

It's best to stay away from the first full moon in June as that is when tarpon migrate offshore to spawn.

###



## February Outing: Fort DeSoto Park



*Anne Hays was not skunked. Alas, pinfish was not the designated species.*

It was a dark and stormy night. No, actually, it was a cold, windy, sunshiny morning. Fish hate the sun. So do anglers. Fishing is/was slow, on a sunny day.

Bob Hood fished at East Beach Picnic Area, out of the wind (sort of) but he was skunked. Except he spotted a \$5 bill in the grass. Which he pocketed. Good going, Bob! That's like getting reimbursed for the \$5 fee into the park, and the gas for driving all the way from Lithia Pinecrest.

Anne Hays caught a pinfish – WooHoo – and waded close to a huge sea turtle. Her Dad, Mark, caught ladyfish, two flounders, and an itsy-bitty speckly trout.

Anne's fishing partner Robert Mitchell was skunked with the fly rod, but he got the biggest catch: a marriage YES from Annie. President George Haseltine announced the engagement at lunch.



*There were many shiny objects; ie, big, juicy hot dogs and bratwursts, grilled fat and juicy by Bob Burkard and Dennis Marquis. And hot coffee. Everybody forgot about the lousy fishing.*



*How about another brat? Griller Dennis Marquis asked Mark Hays (l) and George Haseltine (r). They nodded yes.*

<b>2020 Outing Tournament Leaders</b>			
<i>Species</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Winner</i>	<i>Outing (Month)</i>
<b>Longest bream</b>			
<b>Longest black bass</b>			
<b>Longest snook</b>	<b>18"</b>	<b>Bruce Evensen</b>	<b>Weedon Island Preserve (January)</b>
<b>Longest redfish</b>			
<b>Longest ladyfish</b>	<b>25"</b>	<b>Mandy McGarry</b>	<b>Weedon Island Preserve (January)</b>
<b>Longest seatrout</b>			

## Annie Hays: The Backwaters of Fort DeSoto Park



Annie Hays

I love fishing beautiful Ft. De Soto Park. The problem is that everyone else in Pinellas County loves fishing there as well. It is becoming increasingly difficult to deal with the crowds in the park every Saturday, and the fish are, as my dad would say, well exercised.

Fortunately, the day of our last outing there was very cold and windy. This kept nearly all of the yahoos home so that our club could do some real fishing. The challenge this time was to find a spot out of the wind.

Dad, Robert and I parked at the boat ramp. We sent Robert out into the frigid air to scout out an area next to the parking lot behind some construction. He ran back to the truck and reported that the area looked fishy. We put on our brand-new waders and wading boots, then shuffled down to the mud.

Somehow, I managed to not lose a boot in the muck as we searched for a promising flat. The ground fluctuated from somewhat stable to Indiana Jones quicksand every two steps. Robert and I waded to the far edge of the flat so that we could yell at the guy fishing from the camp ground if we felt like it.

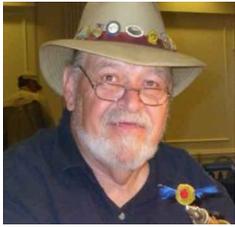
Dad stayed farther behind us and caught significantly more fish than we did. He landed a small speckled trout, 11- and 14-inch flounders, and several ladyfish.

Robert and I focused on the fast-moving channel between the flat and the camp ground. The tide was coming in and the fish were active. I had several promising strikes and nearly landed two ladyfish, but the fish were cold and they didn't bite the fly very hard. Robert had far less luck than I. It was his turn to be skunked.

In the end, after a few hours, all I had to show for it was a pinfish. However, the highlight of the day that made waking up on that cold morning all worth it was a wildlife sighting. Robert spotted a manatee in the middle of the channel not long after we started fishing. After an hour or two, he caught a smaller shape out of the corner of his eye. About ten minutes later, I saw a green sea turtle surface. It was about 10-20 yards away, so for five seconds I saw every detail of its shell and body. The turtle was about three feet long, and it looked just like the sea turtles from "Finding Nemo."

**In Hawaiian culture, sea turtles are a symbol of luck and longevity. And as our club president George Haseltine announced at lunch that day, Robert Mitchell and I are engaged. We can't wait to share many more years of fishing and adventure together.**

Annie



Layne (Smitty) Smith

## Smitty's Fly Box : Crystal D Snook Fly

My friend Drei Stroman showed me a gold variation of this fly a few years back at an expo. He told me he was having success with it on snook and that I should try it out. Well I did ... only I didn't have gold material at the time, so I tied it in pearl ... HE WAS RIGHT! Great beach fly or night fishing around dock lights. Fish this fly as you would fish *any* Silversides imitation. Slow 12 inch long strips followed by a few 6 inch quick erratic strips ... then HANG ON!!!

### Materials

Hook: Daiichi 2546 size #2 or similar saltwater hook  
Thread: Pearlescent or clear mono thread  
Tail: Two pair Whiting American cape hackles and UV Pearl Krystal Flash  
Body: White marabou and Pearl Krystal Flash  
Eyes: Clear 8mm posted doll eyes or your favorite 3D molded eyes  
Adhesive: Fletch-Tite and Solarez UV Resin



### Tying Sequence

**Step 1:** Start thread slightly behind the eye of the hook and wrap back to the bend.

**Step 2:** Align two pairs of 2 to 3-inch cape hackles, concave sides facing each other (not splayed) and flatten stems perpendicular to feathers (remember, you cannot tie round to round) to keep stems on top of hook shank as you tie them in just above hook point and then tie in 3 strands of UV flash centered down each of the feathers.

**Step 3:** On the underside of hook (between hook shank and hook point) tie in a small bundle of marabou about an inch long with a couple of thread wraps to hold it in place and then using the tip of your finger, press on the marabou to disperse the plumes evenly around the bottom and sides of the hook but not on the top. Wrap them down securely with 7 or 8 tight wraps to conceal the cut ends and set them in place.

**Step 4:** Cut a 3 inch long bundle of Pearl Krystal Flash about the thickness of a match stick and taper one end by pulling out some fibers to create the taper. Tie this bunch on top of the hook shank so the tapered end is slightly shorter than the tail but longer than the marabou collar and then fold back the butt ends of the flash backward on the underside of the shank and secure with 4 or 5 tight wraps. Trim these butt ends to stick out just beyond the bottom of the hook point.

**Step 5:** Take about 15 strands of the Pearl Krystal Flash and tie them in on top of the hook shank slightly in front of the previous section. The butt ends should measure about half-way back on the marabou collar. Fold the excess material underneath as you did before and trim the butt ends of the flash so they are even with the first belly section. Repeat this process on top and bottom of the fly 2 or 3 more times, or until you reach the eye of the hook.

**Step 6:** Once you reach the eye of the hook, whip finish and cut thread. Take the fly out of the vise and straighten the top and bottom of the flash by pinching and pulling it into position, aligning the fibers so they are centered on top and bottom of the hook shank.

**Step 7:** Start with the belly of the fly and trim to shape making a curved cut from hook point to the eye of the hook. DO NOT TRIM THE TOP (back) of the fly until you have glued the eyes in place.

**Step 8:** If you are using posted eyes, remove post and apply Fletch-Tite to back of the eyes and position on each side of the fly. The eyes should rest between the second and third section of the Krystal Flash, and lay directly on hook shank. Line the eyes up from top and front so they are even in both directions. If you are using 3D molded eyes, follow the same procedure eliminating the need to cut off a post. You should use a "pea" sized dollop of Fletch-Tite for this size of eye

**Step 9:** Allow the glue to dry thoroughly (10 to 15 minutes) and then trim the top of the fly to shape. Placing the eyes on before trimming the top allows you to follow the natural curvature with you scissors.

**Step 10:** Finish the fly by coating the head and eyes with UV Resin.

## Bruce Evensen : Spoon Fly



*Bruce Evensen*

This pattern can be tied in several different ways.

### Materials

(Note different materials as in the photo such as the aluminum from a soda can or plastic from a bottle.)

**Hook:**-# 2 or 4 -- 3407 or Stinger types.

**Body:** Note when tying onto a #2 hook use 30-lb monofilament line to form the tear-drop shape. On the #1 sized hook, use colored tape (ie, gold, silver) or cut up a soda can into tear-drop shapes. There is also a pre-fab tear-drop sticker available. Mylar clear plastic, the kind you remove from some packaging, also can be cut into the shape. Nail polishes can be used to color the body. Cutting tear drop shapes from plastic bottles is an alternative. Be sure to keep a curve to your material so that you'll get the desired wobble when retrieved.

**Eyes:** Your call. Bead chain eyes. Barbell eyes. Flat stick-on eyes.

**Tail:** Squirrel tail and/or calf tail in various colors. Or, mark it up with a Magic Marker pen.

**Thread:** Colored (red is popular) flat waxed thread. Or, monofilament thread works well if you're also tying with the 30 lb.-test mono.

**Epoxy:** Thick-style Only. Or use Knot Sense glue. Optionally, glitter can be used to coat some materials. Seal it in with epoxy. Alternately, fingernail polishes can be used to color the materials, including the monofilament to give it a red and white colors to look like the famous Eppinger Dardevil spoon. (see image on right)

### Sequence

Step 1: If tying a taped or material fly pre-wrap the hook shank. If tying with 30 mono pre-wrap on the bend of the hook only.

Step 2: Add a half inch of tail material. Tie-in at hook bend.

Step 3: Add bead chain or small barbell eyes at top of bend and tie in.

Step 4: Turn fly over and add tape or other material by tying pointed end behind hook eye on the underside of the hook. For 30-lb mono-tie in first in back of hook eye, looping it so mono is half way up the hook bend then back at hook eye forming the tear-drop shape.

Step 5: Coat all materials with epoxy on both sides and cure. Fill in epoxy between the 30 lb mono fly. Several layers will work here. Glitter can be added as you apply epoxy. Coat over the glitter and cure.



*And we have a winner. Here's a green barbell fly crafted by Woody Miller.*

*Bruce*

## Dennis Marquis : A Facebook Memory



You know how Facebook reminds you of past posts? Recently, FB popped this post up for me. (See image, right) It was a reminder of my fourth anniversary of fly tying. My first flies were a set of Clousers, tied at Bill Jackson's under the tutelage of Bruce Evensen. The memory made me pause and

take stock in where I am currently with regards to fly-fishing.

In later half of 2015, I moved down here from Pennsylvania where I cut my teeth learning to fly fish with my 9 wts for stripers and blues in the inshore waters of New Jersey. Not knowing the local Tampa waters and what or how to fish, I sought the help of Captain Dave Dant for several trips until I started to feel more comfortable. Dave is a great guide, one I recommend, especially for tarpon. After Dave got to know me and learned more about what I was looking for in the way of fishing, he coaxed me to join SFF. I blindly took his advice and showed up at the January, 2016 meeting.



When I joined, I owned two 9 wts, had never tied a fly, thought the only fly to fish was a Clouser and had only landed stripers and blues. Four years later my 9 wts for the most part have been relegated to the closet, my go to rod is a TFO Mangrove 8wt custom made for me by Alan Sewell. In that time, I have fished salt, brackish and fresh water. You name it and I've landed it while fishing from my boat, the beach, kayaking, dock lights and yes wade fishing (which I was initially scared to try on my own).

I can tie more salt and fresh water flies than I will ever use and own a dozen rods from 6wt on up. Joining SFF has exponentially accelerated my knowledge, abilities and confidence. Most importantly, I have made friends. "Reel" friends, people who help me continue to learn, share techniques and like me, find fun with all things fishing.

I've come to look forward to the newsletter, monthly meetings, Dave's raffle, Smitty's flies and outings (especially the eating part), trash n treasures, the annual Hog Roast, casting clinics, tying with Bruce on Monday's and participating in the clubs volunteering programs.

I have fished with a long list of you, and look forward to expanding that list this year. I still consider myself a learner, but now I am a learner with confidence. That confidence has come from the shared knowledge I have received from all of you.

By the way, Clousers are still my go to fly, but not nearly the only fly that I cast. Thanks!

*Dennis*

## Dennis Marquis: Irma Pass Creates New Opportunities



As Hurricane Irma passed through in September of 2017, it cut a new opening through the Gulf side of Shell Key Preserve (near Tierra Verde) that provides boat access from skinny water to deeper pools behind the Preserve. Locals call it Irma Pass. I've made several trips with club members into the area over the last couple of months.

Once you make it through the pass, it takes patience guiding your boat through the snake like shallow channels to reach the deeper pools, but it does seem to be paying off. My boat drafts about 11" with a light fuel load and two average adults. Still we often scrape bottom, but persevere to get into the areas we hope to find snook, reds and trout. You need to fish the top of the incoming tide through the start of the outgoing tide or you could be stuck back there for hours. I also think I will start to bring my wading gear, as I believe there are opportunities to wade away from the boat to land fish. As a result of my most recent trip, at times I think I need to try an intermediate or even a sinking line.

I fished the incoming tide Saturday, February 29. Water temperature registered 67 degrees. My neighbor Mike, a spin caster, was on the boat fishing a ½ ounce jighead with a 6" long soft bait. It was dark green on top and light on the bottom. I was casting a brown/tan medium dumbbell Clouser on a floating line with an 8' leader. Every spot we stopped he landed a nice size snook in deeper moving water. I didn't hook up until we found calmer water and a feeding school of trout. In which case, I was able to let my Clouser sink to the count of ten and slowly strip it up landing several nice 18-20" speckled trout. As we got deeper into the Preserve and at the terminal end of a small cut in, Mike had a 4' tarpon take a run at his softbait. While he didn't hook up, it was exciting to watch the tarpon chase the lure.

We managed to get to the western part of the preserve not far from Billy's Stone Crab seafood restaurant. Here Mike found another snook, and I landed a nice size gag grouper that was lying next to a dock post. I literally hit the post with my fly, let it fall into the water and sink to a slow count of 10. The gag swallowed the fly on the first strip. It was like landing a nice size large mouth.

After a few nice snook, a handful of chubby trout and the gag, we headed out. The winds had picked up and going back through the pass into the gulf was a bit of a challenge. Truth be told, it was a bit of white knuckler as we punched through the surf for more open water.

My fly wasn't sinking fast enough or deep enough to attract the attention of the snook in some of the faster moving waters. I'm going to try these same spots with a Clouser on a shorter leader and an intermediate line.

*Dennis*

**PS: Cindy and I may be going on a trip this summer to Vancouver and down into Washington state. Any fly-fishing suggestions for me? Please email me at [marquid59@gmail.com](mailto:marquid59@gmail.com)**



*Locals call it Irma Pass*

## Mark Hays: Bass and Bluegill in Ocala National Forest

While I was loading my truck for the Traditional Bowhunters of Florida State Championship, I threw in my indestructible 7 ft, \$20 yellow fiberglass, 4 weight fly rod, and a small box of flies. Robert Mitchell, Annie, and I camped on the shores of beautiful Lake Eaton in Ocala National Forest.

After the competition, while we procrastinated from packing up camp, I decided to wet a line. The lake was still steaming as the cold air rolled off the water. I selected a number 8 Muddler Minnow tied by Paul Sequira.

My third cast produced a small bluegill. There had to be more fish in this lake.

Two minutes later, I hooked a very nice bass. Less than 20 minutes later, I had landed two large bluegills and lost a bass that was about 4 lbs. I might need to visit Lake Eaton again before the next tournament.



*Mark Hays with a nice bass he caught on Lake Eaton in the Ocala National Forest*

## Mike Larkin: St. John's River Shad. 'Tis the season

Mike Larkin fly fished the St. Johns River in late February. He fished the mouth of the Econ river in Geneva, Florida. In a half day of fishing Mike caught 15 shad and one bass on a chartreuse Clouser fly with a sinking fly line. The line weight was a 7 weight.



## Gary Sundberg: Honeymoon Island Seatrout



Got into some trout at Honeymoon Island in my kayak. My flies were "Garage Flies" tied in Bruce Evenson's Monday night garage party. (Sorry, I meant tying session!)

*Gary*

## Marshall Craig: Learning at the Feet of the Sensei



New member Marshall Craig,  
AKA The Old Road Peddler.  
Check out his blog, [Craiglit.life](http://Craiglit.life)

Steve, the goateed one from Ohio, and I, the Old Road Peddler, waited on the Maximo Park boat ramp. We were tight, nervous - two guys inhaling their last smokes in a WWI trench, ready to go over the top. We had assembled our fly rods from the tip section down. Check. We had lined up the ferrules with the little dots. Check. Our reels weren't on backward. Check.

We had prepared for this moment. I had taken Steve out to North Shore Park and watched him practice his fly casts as people stared at us, waiting for their dogs to poop, wondering what, exactly, we were doing. I knew that practice was important.

The cause of our nerves came swinging into view around the mangrove point where Frenchman's Creek opens out into the bay. It was Capt. Pat Damico in his Maverick Master Angler. Capt. Pat could tie a Homer Rhodes loop knot in a raging storm, in the dark, using only his toes. He was the real deal and now would check out our fly casting. Adding to the tension was the fact that Steve and I were determined to score the much-sought-after Inshore Trash Grand Slam, catching three of Tampa Bay's most infamous fish: the teeth-intensive and ferocious *lizardfish*; the googly-eyed, acrobatic, leader-fraying *ladyfish*; and the Bucky the Beaver-toothed *pufferfish* that lives entirely on eating the tails off rubber jigs.

Capt. Pat took on his paying cargo and we proceeded to a flat with a four-foot drop-off. He tied rust-colored Clousers to our leaders, and Steve and I lurched into action, fore and aft. On Steve's third cast a young and impressionable sea trout gobbled his slow and deep offering. A Chinese fire drill ensued as Steve tried to figure how to deal with the slack line at his feet. He hadn't read the memo with "How to Actually Land Fish" on the subject line. Capt. Pat coached Steve. "Keep your line tight!" "How, how?" "Pinch the line!" "Where, where?" etc. The trout was considerate and hung around long enough to be swung on board and then released with a sore lip.

As the morning progressed, Capt. Pat held class: we learned to cast backwards in order to go forward into the wind; we learned how to retrieve our line, stripping direct to the fly; we learned to tie Mr. Rhodes' loop knot. Trout interfered with lessons, kept getting themselves on the ends of our lines. Where were the lizardfish, ladyfish and pufferfish? Happily, a pod of ladyfish came careening through like commuters trying to catch the last bus out, and nosed on the Clousers.

We saw less and less of Capt. Pat as he eased into full fishing burqa mode, only his eyes appearing. You will not find Capt. Pat in a dermatologist's waiting room soon. The sun got up, the wind got up and the fishing got skinnier. Time to head for the barn. But we had learned at the foot of the *sensei* and there would be other opportunities to go *mano a mano* with the ferocious lizardfish and the cruel-toothed puffer.

*The Old Road Peddler*



Steve is the goateed guy on the right. Sensei Pat Damico is on the left in full burqa fishing mode.

## Walt Durkin: Low Tide Redfish at Cypress Point Park

*Thank you, Walt*

The flat at Cypress Point Park continues to hold schools of redfish both outside the bar and inside over the grass. We did particularly well over the full moon weekend of 8-9 February 2020. Here are tips I learned while fishing Cypress the last four days.

Two flats fish well at Cypress, one to the south and one to the north. The flat to the north holds the most fish by far, but can be a little crowded with fisherman. The flat to the south can also be quite good and you may have it to yourself.

The northern end starts at the end of the beach area and runs about one quarter mile to a canal coming out of the mangroves. You can fish beyond that canal if you have a kayak and I have found reds there. The main feature to the north is the sandbar, which runs parallel to shore about one hundred yards out and will be dry on a negative low tide. Inside the bar to the east, grass is the main feature and covers the flat even in winter. Outside the bar is mostly sand with some patches of grass that get sparse in the winter.

Negative low tides in the winter provide the optimum conditions to sight-fish the Cypress flat. Seek the negative lows around the full and new moons, especially aided by a north or northeast wind. You want to fish around the lowest possible tides, which concentrate the fish outside the bar to the west.

On a good negative low (minus one foot or more) all the fish will have been pushed off the grass and to the outside of the bar. Here you will find them milling about in schools of 20 or more and also smaller bunches.

They are easy to see on a sunny day over the sand, but not so easy to catch. Fish small crab or shrimp patterns on long (12-13 feet) leaders down to 10 lb tippet. I also use a clear-head floating line for stealth. The fish can see well in the clear water and will spook if they see your line or see you cast. Try to carefully present the fly about 10 feet in front of one or more fish and get the fly on the bottom before they see it. If they see the fly land they will spook. When the fish approach the fly give it a very small bump and hope for the best. If you get a follow, I like to keep the fly moving a little like it is trying to get away. Single fish moving slowly along the bottom and looking down are very hard to catch. They almost always spook when they see the fly or when you move it. Another technique is to fish a fly with a little inherent movement and just let it sit as they approach. These single fish are real tough, but can be caught. Sometimes you just have to keep trying until you find the right fish.

Club member Ted Hagaman had an epic day and caught 16 redfish including some big ones, fishing from 8am till 2pm. He fished the same fly all day; a little green shrimp fly with bead chain eyes.

Sunday was another good day for the tide and wind and the fish were there. Four of us lined up on the bar about 100 feet apart and I think we caught 21 redfish among us. The fish were in schools outside the bar that morning and easier to catch. I fished a new double bunny fly I tied at the last meeting. One thing to note was the presence of schools of big mullet. Redfish always seem more responsive when around or among mullet. Schools of mullet are always a welcome sight on the flat and usually indicate the presence of game fish.

I fished on Monday morning and was the only one there at 0830. I ended up with three, all big fish, that went into the backing. I caught them on a double bunny, a shrimp and a worm fly.



*Walt Durkin,  
president of Tampa  
Bay Fly Fishing Club.  
He was our club's  
April 2018 speaker.*

*Walt*

**Tim Elms: I love chasing pond fish**



*Tim with a big bass caught in a neighborhood pond on a little popper*

Howdy! It's been good out there this month for my fly pole. My wife and I recently moved to a new neighborhood and of course I love chasing pond fish. I knew from our HOA that the ponds are kept in pristine condition and stocked with bluegill, sunfish, and largies. It has turned into fantastic freshwater fishing.

On the first day I could fish, I caught my personal best bass on a fly. I just love fishing water that has never been fly-fished.

I know I have suggested largemouth bass haven't floated my boat at all. BUT and this may be a big BUT... when I'm targeting *THEM*, I find it to be pretty darn fun. LMBs don't fight that hard. Some people say they do, but I haven't found one that rivals a snook or a red or even some ladyfish. The best part about bass to me is the eat, and specifically top water eats. Nothing is more exciting than throwing a large frog or mouse fly on a weed bed and popping it in. When a big bass is hungry, they sure strike hard.

I usually start on a new pond with my 5 wt, a light leader, and a very small popper. I love to challenge myself to see what fish is aggressive and how fast I can hook something. Most likely a small LMB or panfish will jump on a small popper pretty darn quick.

Then, I like to bump up my gear and tackle to see what's lurking below the small ones. Move up to an 8-wt and if the water is full of greenery go with a large popper, deer hair frog, or mouse. If the water is pretty open, I love to stick to my tried-and-true minnow patterns.



*I love those dark bass from the pond.*

Fresh water fishing on a fly in Florida is an excellent way to get young people interested. Heck, it's a great way to get new fisherman interested. And most importantly for me is it's a great way for me to really hone my skills for the salt. I find myself focusing on my loops, keeping my back-cast straight, and of course practicing my strip-set.

Don't get me wrong, we all get fatigued fly fishing and it all falls apart at the end of a long evening throwing heavy flies. But it does get easier with practice.

Until next month, Oh, man, I jumped a tarpon at another pond so let's hope that's in my next article. And as always:

Strip.Strip.Strip!

*Tim*

## Capt. Pat Damico: Captain's Corner



### Attention to detail equals success on the water

Most fly fishermen and women are really interested in learning about having and using suitable equipment. A fly rod alone can cost from 50 to 900 dollars. Technological advances in this sport have been very rapidly advancing. When we receive an initial inquiry about a charter it is not without a list of good questions. For many, this may be their first adventure into fishing saltwater with a fly rod. We can supply everything needed and often do, but if they have any equipment of their own that sounds suitable I encourage them to bring it. I can learn a lot just by watching them assemble their rod, reel, line, leader and fly on the end. Very few, "Intermediate to advanced," fly fishers know how to assemble their multi-piece rods properly, secure their reel, connect line and leader and use a suitable knot to tie on a fly or add a leader tippet to the end. If they have any flies, especially if they tied their own, I can learn a lot by just looking at them. I had a fourteen-year-old client who came with his mother because he wanted a guided trip with me for his birthday. His high-end equipment including the flies he tied were perfect, as was his casting. I've had other clients who have fly fished for years who needed help with almost everything. All of these factors will affect your success on the water.

*Fly fisherman Pat Damico charts Fly Guy in lower Tampa Bay and can be reached at [captpatdamico.com](http://captpatdamico.com) and (727) 504-8649*

## Bill Scarola and friends: Drum Rolls Please

A man was fishing at his favorite lake and was stopped by a game warden. As he had two buckets of fish... The warden asked if he had a license. "No sir" said the fisherman. "These are my PET fish!" Pet fish, said the warden? Yessir, every night I take these here fish down to the lake and let them swim around for a while. I whistle and they jump back into the buckets. And I take them home."

"That's a bunch of crap! Fish can't do that!" replied the warden in. The man looked at the warden and said "here i'll show you, it really works." The man poured the fish into the lake and stood and waited.... After several minutes, the game warden turned to the man and said, "Well?" "When are you going to call those fish back?"

"Call who back?" asked the man."

THE FISH," the warden said sternly. "

WHAT FISH?, said the fisherman.

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There's a *fishcious* rumor going round that someone else is trying to *mussle* in on these puns! I've heard that some don't like fish puns. I don't listen to them... but they're *kracken* me up!!

**Padump Bump Ching**

## Fly Gear for Sale or Swap or Purchase

**Larry Lurie is selling his 16-foot Bass Tracker and trailer. Just \$4800. Email him at [lawrencelurie@gmail.com](mailto:lawrencelurie@gmail.com)**

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**Lynn Skipper has two nice fly rods he'd like to sell. He can bring them to the next meeting. Email [vintagevette@msn.com](mailto:vintagevette@msn.com) or call 813-541-3195)**

1. ROSS WORLDWIDE FlyStik Heavy - 10 wt, 4 piece, 7'11" rod with sock and tube. Value \$200 +, sell \$150 OBO
2. ORVIS TLS Power Matrix Mid-Flex 4 piece 3 wt rod with sock and tube + ORVIS Battenkill DISC 3-4 reel with backing and 3 wt WFF line. Value - \$260+. \$160 OBO.

**Want to sell or trade? Need some fly gear? Email [Bill AuCoin, wmaucoin@verizon.net](mailto:wmaucoin@verizon.net)**

## Bill AuCoin : Flyfisher Flyover



**Sex on our shorelines** – Spring has sprung on Florida’s thousands of miles of salty shorelines and horseshoe crabs are mating. It’s okay to watch. In fact, state biologists are worried about horseshoe crab populations and want you to report where and what you see. You can complete and submit the form online. I’ve sent in two. ([MYFWC.com](http://MYFWC.com))

**Florida Bass is king**—Florida’s state record largemouth bass was caught in 1986 by Billy O’Berry in Polk County, Florida. It weighed 17.27 pounds. Since then the Fish and Wildlife department has instituted its *Trophy Catch* program and they’re seeing many more 15 and 16 pound giants. And they’re encouraged that it won’t be long before we’ll have a new state record. ([The Fishing Wire](#))

**131, going on 136** – IGFA Hall of Famers, that is. IGFA has named five sportfishing stars to its class of 2020 including Dave Whitlock, modestly described as a “fly-fishing extraordinaire.” He’ll join stars like Zane Grey Ernest Hemingway, Ted Williams, Lefty Kreh, Mark Sosin, and Flip Pallot. The induction ceremony will be Sept. 12 at the Johnny Morris *Wonders of Wildlife* museum in Springfield, Missouri. I met Dave Whitlock some years ago in Arkansas and I ran into him and chatted him up briefly at January’s Denver Fly Fishing Show. ([IGFA](#))

**Planning to Fly Fish Alaska?** -- You’re going to need this new book by Chris Batin, editor and publisher of *The Alaska Angler* and a trophy catch fly guide. He told me he once guided country singer Johnny Cash and his nephew and as they headed upstream Cash and his nephew sang *North to Alaska*. Now, that’s a memory! Buy it from the author directly and he’ll autograph it. [Advanced Alaska Fly Fishing: Volume 1: Alaska Salmon Fishing Principles, Theories and Proven Techniques.](#) ([Alaska Angler](#))

**Coming soon to a coastline near you** – Two Florida bills will establish the *Nature Coast Aquatic Preserve* of Citrus, Pasco, and Hernando Counties. It will add 400,000 seagrass acres to the state’s Aquatic Preserve system on the Gulf and Atlantic Coasts. Our nearshore Grand Slam species – tarpon, snook, redfish, seatrout – will do much better. ([The Fishing Wire](#))

**I’ll take Florida’s shorelines for a billion dollars, Alex** -- What’s the best one way to restore marine life in fresh and salt water? S E A G R A S S E S. I just learned about this firm that is chalking up some remarkable victories restoring the Florida’s lakes, rivers, bays, bayous, and salty shorelines. ([Sea & Shoreline](#))

**Tell this joke at your Hog Roast table** -- Former member David Putnam and *On The Fly* columnist, who now lives in Maine, told me a joke like this a few years back. His story was the little pig was so smart he was able to dig around in a box of maps and get the map of South Georgia for a motorist who was lost. Whatever. To the discomfort of family members and, hopefully, a laugh from guests, I’ve retold it every time pork is on the table. ([Jokes4Us](#))

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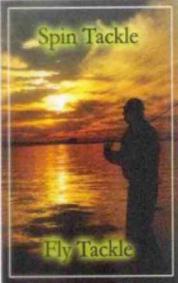
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