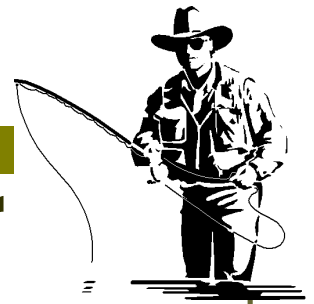


August 1, 2008

Volume 32, Issue 8

# The Backcountry Flyfisher

BackCountry Flyfishing Association  
<http://www.backcountryflyfishingorlando.com>



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*A MEMBER CLUB OF THE FEDERATION OF FLYFISHERS*

## President's Message

My early saltwater angling years were filled with hit or miss adventures. It didn't take long for me to figure out that the bays surrounding Galveston Texas were not blessed with fish on every flat or oyster bar. Not only that, if I did catch fish in a particular area I was usually perplexed as to why when I returned a month later, the fish were nowhere to be found. I began to realize that the quote "90% of the fish are in 10% of the water" was indeed a very true statement. Looking at the three massive bay systems surrounding Galveston and knowing my fishing time was extremely limited, I began thinking of ways that I could improve my odds of making every trip a successful one. I had heard of anglers keeping a log of their fishing trips and this agreed nicely with my analytical thought processes and compulsive personality.

At first the data was interesting, but not very helpful. As time passed and more trips were logged, I started to notice some things. One important thing I noticed is that my memory was not as good as I thought it was. After reviewing notes of good trips or catches in the past, I realized that many details were not the same as I had remembered. Having a written log of the experiences allowed me to easily identify actual patterns based on true fact and not misguided recollections of what I thought was happening. There is just too much data for me to memorize, analyze, and recall years later with accuracy.

The next thing I discovered is that the fish I pursue are fairly predictable. They show up in the same areas, during roughly the same time period, year after year. These patterns don't always follow the calendar exactly due to climate and weather changes, but rest assured they do repeat themselves. Other repeating patterns include which areas are good on specific tides (outgoing vs incoming), where the majority of the fish go based on water temperatures, and where the prey appear during certain seasons and tides.

Sometimes I discover patterns that go against traditional wisdom and are not what I would expect. For instance, how many times have you heard that the fish don't bite well after a full moon because they are feeding all night? I hear that all the time but after many nights of pounding the water on a bright moon, I can tell you that the fish I am trying to catch are not filling up their bellies. I can also tell you that the bite is generally best for a short period early in the morning and then again in the afternoon following a full moon. By logging exact times of significant catches, it became quite apparent that these fish were feeding on the moon set and again when the moon was underfoot (early morning and early afternoon).

### President's Letter Continued

I have also found that contrary to what many magazine articles lead you to believe, the best time to catch trophy seatrout is not in the early morning or just before dark. After analyzing my fishing logs, I found that 100% of all the trout over 9 pounds and 85% of all the trout over 8 pounds that I recorded were caught between the hours of 10 am and 2 pm (Yes, I generally fish from sun-up to sun-down and not only between 10 and 2).

Methods for keeping logs can vary greatly depending on what type of fishing you do and how committed you are. The log needs to be simple enough that you will do it after every trip. For me the most important variables to be tracked include the date, time, location, tide movement and height, water temperature, and moon phase during significant catches. Just documenting this data alone only takes minutes and would be extremely valuable, particularly if you are not currently keeping a log. Having seen the incredible benefits of logging my catches, I keep track of many other variables including water depth, water clarity, wave height/chop, cloud cover, air temperature, barometric pressure, wind speed, wind direction, amount and type of prey present, fly type and color, and anything else that I deem significant that day. I actually have two logs that I always keep. A text summary of what happened that day and a detailed spread sheet of all the variables listed above for any trout I catch over 6 pounds. An example of each is below:

February 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> 2007 Fort Pierce

- water temp 65 by inlet; 55 in lagoon; warm winter with strong passing cold front; new moon; winds NW 10-15
- only saw trout in two areas on the shoreline; hundreds of snook in warmer water close to inlet
- caught a 7.5 and 11.5 pound trout on a white EP baitfish #1 hook

Summary, Trends, and Lessons:

- large #'s of snook gathering near the inlet flats probably awaiting warmer temps to migrate into the lagoon
- on outgoing tide fish started to move into the current away from the inlet (don't know if short movements or would continue to migrate into the river)
- the trout seemed to stay in one general area and did not move into the tide like the snook
- would definitely fish areas close to the inlet in early spring and when water temps decrease significantly
- small fly worked best in clear, cool water with very little bait jumping
- big trout bit better when moon overhead and on outgoing tide
- surf temp had just made its way into the low 70's
- big 11.5 pound trout had already spawned and was beat up

Feb 07	wt lbs	area	dpth in	clar	tide	temp F	moon	time	weather	press	wind	chop	dpf	Bait (0-5)	Fly color	Notes
17	7.5	fpw2b	33	10	out L	65	new	1pm	sunny	30.1 st	wsw10	2	1	2.5 mullet	EP white	lots of big fish/ moon over
17	11.5	fpw2b	30	10	out L	65	new	1:30p	sunny	30.1 st	wsw10	2	1	2.5 mullet	EP white	lots of big fish/ moon over
28	7.3	fpw2c	33	9	out h	70	first+4	8a	pt cldy	29.9 ris	nw5	1	1	2 mullet	EP pnk/w	off peak; other big fish
28	8	fpw2b	20	9	out	71	first+4	10a	pt cldy	30 st	ne10	2	1	2 mullet	EP pnk/w	moon down; other big fish
28	7	fpe9a	20	9	out L	73	first+4	1p	pt cldy	30 st	ne15	1	1	3 mullet	clser olive	off peak; isolated

This system works for me but is probably outdated. I envision a time when most of this data will be continuously monitored by your boat's on board computer/GPS and the only thing one will have to do is place a cursor on the GPS screen at the location of the catch and fill in a few other details. I also imagine software that could analyze this data and predict where the fish will be based on the current time of the year and current conditions.

If you are not catching fish as consistently as you would like, you may want to try keeping a log. It has been an invaluable and reliable tool for myself allowing me to plan trips on my own and never worrying about hearing "you should have been here last week".

## **Musings from a “Failed” Trip**

**By Mike Adamson**

Have you ever returned from a trip that was more fishing than catching only to have your wife ask you how it went? “Only small trout” is the answer I have to give more than I’d like. As I was returning home from a July excursion to Boca Grande with 3 other BFA members I sure didn’t want to tell my wife that I just spent four days looking and didn’t even put a fly in a tarpon’s mouth. Or a small trout’s mouth for that matter.

But as I began to think about the four days I realized that, sans adrenaline rush and great pics, it had been a wonderful way to spend my week. Among the highlights:

- Sunrises that produce hope and a sense of new beginning.
- East winds that provided gentle seas for tarpon searching.
- Long white sand bars along emerald waters near Gasparilla pass.
- 2500 sq. ft. floating waves of anchovies.
- Magnificent cloud patterns viewed from the boat and hellish thunder storms viewed from the cabin.
- Experiencing less tarpon fever on the last day than I did the first.
- The determination that failure provides.
- Learning how to tie a bimini without using 7 appendages (thanks Phil).
- One of the all-time sunsets viewed while wading the flat on the last evening. An enormous fire ball descending in the opening of BG pass that flattened out and then silently disappeared.
- Pie and No Cracker Barrel (Cas’ favorite hangout)
- The chance to fish with a Puglisi instead of a catfish head. (you had to be there)
- Interesting discussions and comments on politics, genetics, war, and marriage by men with passionate opinions who also have the capacity to agree to disagree.

Justification? Kinda. Rationalization? Maybe. But number me in that group of men who are easy to please, even if all I have to look back on was a “good day on the water”. I’d have scripted a different outcome but I’m glad that I had chance to play a role in the overall story. As a club, let’s write new chapters to this book on various waters in the months ahead. And let’s include a few with good pics.

## **August Speaker**

Capt. Randy DuMars is a full time guide on the waters from Melbourne to Vero Beach and on the Kissimmee chain of lakes for winter for Large mouth Bass. Among other topics he’ll be talking to us about one of Central Florida’s most talked about fish...Barramundi and the opportunity to fight them at Osceola Outback Adventures.

## August Outing

The Sebastian River offers a wide variety of options for waders, kayaks, canoes and boats. The summer months offer lots of shots at snook and tarpon as well as reds and trout. We'll pair up riders based on your Orlando location and meet in Sebastian at 6:15 am. Contact: Phil Triano at (407) 366-5320 or [philiagofishen@aol.com](mailto:philiagofishen@aol.com) to sign up a/o get paired up.

## Flies and Lies

We know you can tell them. Now join us and learn how to tie 'em. The first Wednesday of each month we'll be gathering at Orlando Outfitters with fly fisherman from around Central Florida to learn new patterns.

Sessions begin at 6 pm and end between 9-10 pm. Bring your own equipment or let us know ahead of time if you need us to bring a vice and tools for you. This is the perfect venue to begin tying or to hone your skills. And if you're lucky someone might just tell a true story.



Speaking of Orlando Outfitters, remember that BFA receives a rebate for all purchases by club members. Just remind them before you pay at the register and they'll apply it to our account. Proceeds are used to stock raffle items at club meetings.

## For Sale

11' Ocean Kayak, sit-on-top style, 1 person, 2 rod holders-- \$300; with paddle, \$335.

11' Clear Blue Hawaii kayak, sit inside, 1 or 2 people, 2 cushions; NEW--\$850

Tibor, Pacific QC, 12 wt fly reel, black, large arbor, with line, backing; NEW--\$730

G. Loomis Pro-1 Series flyrod, Cross Current, 12 wt, 1-piece, 9'; NEW--\$370

Contact Tim Alexander @ [talexander326@gmail.com](mailto:talexander326@gmail.com) or call 321.228.5458

## **Flies and Snook Under the Lights**

**By Capt. Pat Damico**

As long as the water temperature remains above seventy degrees, it is now 84 where I fish; dock snook will readily take a well presented fly. Docks close to the passes are loading up with transition fish. The Tampa bay has a good snook population and the recent changes in regulations will only make large snook more available. Good fly rodding for linesiders is best when you can find a concentration of fish. Lights and their attraction for plankton, which in turn attracts bait fish, is a dinner bell for lazy predators. "Matching the hatch," has been most productive for me. The size of the fish they are pursuing is easy to determine by watching the frantic bait scatter when Mr. Snook makes his run. Select a fly that closely duplicates his forage and success is guaranteed.

Most of my fishing is from a Hewes Redfisher, equipped with a bow mounted Minn Kota. Not using an anchor, allows me to maneuver the boat away from the dock and structure quickly after setting the hook. Two experienced fly fisherman can fish at the same time and help one another when one is hooked. This is not a problem with small fish, but in the area I fish most fish are over 24 inches and every outing results in a few broken leaders as Hawgs head for the pilings.

Tackle requirements will vary with the size fish that will be encountered. A few years ago I spent a week in Naples and fished dock lights every night. I caught very few fish over 23-24 inches and used a 9 foot, 7 weight, with a floating weight forward line, most of the time. A 9 foot leader with a 20 pound shocker was more than adequate. Here I use a 9 or 10 weight, one with a floating and one with a sink tip weight forward line. 30 to 40 pound fluorocarbon shock tippets are used. If you want to use regular mono, I suggest Mason because of its stiffness and abrasive resistance. The extra investment in fluorocarbon for a shock tippet is well worth it.

Check the tide charts and pick a night or early morning when you have maximum tidal flow. This is very important! If you don't have moving water, they will not be active. If a fast flow is just beginning, a feeding frenzy could be your reward. As you approach a dock, if you see fish actively chasing bait, you know you're going to have a bonanza.

Fly patterns that match the bait they are chasing will get results. I've thrown larger flies that look irresistible, but are refused. Ninety percent of the time a minnow imitation is used, occasionally a small shrimp pattern is preferred. The fly that was a hot item the last time out will not work tonight. Accurate casting is needed; a sloppy presentation will spook fish. If one or two snook are caught under one light, even though there are other fish present, a move to another area to let the fish settle will get them feeding again. I often fish an area where enough lights are present that only my electric is needed to move around. When using the electric, a constant, slow steady speed will not spook fish like frequent starting and stopping.

Night fishing makes normal function more difficult. Get very familiar with everything in your boat. Organize your fishing so that you can find what is needed without fumbling around and making noise. Remember, you are usually in someone's back yard. If there's a big noisy dog in the neighborhood, he'll be out on the dock letting everyone know you're there. Decorating a dock with flies and leaders is not the way to get an invitation back. Be courtesy and quiet! If someone is on a lighted dock, I use my electric to get close and let them know how much I appreciate being able to fish there. You will be surprised at their reaction, and will often get more good information. Recently a dock owner said to me, "you should try Ted's dock over there, he has a lot of structure in front of his place."

Night fishing for snook around lighted docks is one of my favorite fly fishing pursuits. Give it a try, and see what you've been missing. The first time a big, mean snook grabs your fly and heads for the barnacles you will begin to adjust you're your sleeping pattern to allow more time for unbelievable excitement.

Reprinted from Federation of Fly Fishers National Newsletter

## **A Foundation for Power**

**By C.W. "Don" Coleman**

I could not help but relate Tiger Wood's advice on "How to Smoke a Driver," which appeared in a recent issue of the *St. Petersburg Times*, with how to produce power during a long cast with a fly rod. Tiger pays close attention to the placement of his feet—his foundation for power. He spreads his feet slightly wider than his shoulders for stability and flexes his knees enough to make them feel alive and promote easy movement of his torso. He flares both feet out slightly—the right to allow a modest hip turn without straining his knee and thigh, and the left to prevent turning his hips too far during the back swing (back cast) and to allow rotating his upper body freely on the down swing (forward cast). He also angles his right knee in a bit to make it easier to shift his weight toward the target during the down swing (forward cast). Of course Tiger has a completely closed stance whereas long casts with a fly rod require a 45 degree open stance.

It goes without saying that a golfer (or fly caster) should not try to hit a ball (make a cast) with his arm muscles. The stroke starts with the hips turning, followed by the shoulders turning. This rotary motion is like loading a giant spring. By the time he reaches the top of the back swing (back cast) his hips and shoulders are primed to unload with tremendous speed. While he shifts his weight between his feet during the back stroke (back cast) and the down swing (forward cast) he does not allow his hips to slide back and forth because a sliding motion on the down swing (forward cast) cuts his power about 50 percent of what he can develop by the unwinding of his hips and shoulders. He turns his shoulders further than his hips for a gradual application of power.

Tiger also extends the butt end of his club (fly rod) as far from his right hip as he can. Turning his shoulders make this possible. He believes in a big shoulder turn. Tiger starts his down swing (forward cast) by first shifting his weight, then turning his hips and finally his shoulders—all in a smooth sequence—followed by uncocking his wrists (speedup-and-stop) at the very end.

Reprinted from the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club Newsletter

## Backcountry Flyfishing Calendar

*The gods do not deduct from man's allotted span the hours spent in fishing. ~Babylonian Proverb*

- Aug 13      BFA Monthly Meeting @ O'Boys Bar-B-Q, 6:30 pm  
                 Capt. Randy DuMars. See article.
- Aug 23      **OUTING:** Sebastian River (See Article)  
                 Contact Phil Triano to sign up and be paired up: [philiagofishen@aol.com](mailto:philiagofishen@aol.com) / (407) 948-4953
- Sept 3       Flies and Lies @ Orlando Outfitters
- Sept 10      BFA Monthly Meeting @ O'Boys Bar-B-Q, 6:30 pm

## Pic of the Month

BFA is happy to help fill the flybox of the club member who sends in the best picture every month. The newsletter editor is happy to receive these flies if he has to submit his own pictures to fill this slot ☺



This summer has produced more snook on the IRL than any other I've experienced. This one caught while wading the East shore of the river at sunset. Send me some pictures of your recent fishing trips.