

January 1, 2008
Volume 33, Issue 1

The Backcountry Flyfisher

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



A MEMBER CLUB OF THE FEDERATION OF FLYFISHERS

President's Message

Happy NEW YEAR TO EVERYONE!

Here I go again taking on the duties of your Club President trying each month, along with our fellow board members to bring you good quality speakers and enjoy the comradely of our membership and our outings.

We have scheduled our friendly FWC (Florida Wildlife Commission) Biologist Reid Hyle to speak to us again this month on shad. If you missed him last year speaking on the St. Johns Fishery then you missed where to fish for Stripped Bass in the St. Johns River. That was just one of the gems he provided to us during last year's meeting and who knows what tips Reid will bring to our January meeting. Other than Reid being a HOAKIE, he's filled with a lot of great tips of the St. John's Fishery.

Later this month and into early February one way to gear up for the Shad run would be to venture over to the St. Johns River. The river should begin to heat up with some good blue gill, crappie and small bass along the weed or reed edges. A light 5wt. Fly rod should be sufficient out on the prairie south of Hwy 46. Small white flies with a small gold bead head have worked well in the past but if not white then try your favorite color. Remember you are not fishing for a 50" red so not too big of a fly, think small!!!

Our club is always looking for new members who like all of us enjoy the outdoors. We all encourage everyone to take ownership in their membership with the Back Country Fly Fishing Association. If you want to be more involved, all you have to do is speak up!! If you want a certain speaker, again please ask! You'll only get out of the club what you put into it. We strongly encourage your involvement and participation and you will only get out of the club what you yourself give back to the club. I want to personally thank member Bill O. for coming and getting involved with the board of directors last month at Outback Steakhouse. Anyone else? We would love to have your help? Anyone?

Happy fishing and as always may all your files be eaten by the monsters of the deep.

Regards
Bill Norton

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Get Flies Deep For Big Fish

By Capt. Pat Damico

As the water cools and fishing activity on the flats heats up, are there times when you would like your fly to go deeper? We all love to see fish come up to the surface and slam a top water fly or popper, but sometime larger fish are more interested in having their dinner put closer to their nose as they lie with their belly against the sand.



Deeper usually means a slower presentation is needed to entice a lunker to open wide. Can this be accomplished with a long rod that is best suited to casting small light flies on a calm day? Fortunately, a few old tricks and the advent of modern technology make this easy.

If you are just starting saltwater fly fishing, a floating, weight forward line may be all you have available, with your one fly rod and reel. This is certainly the best equipment for the beginner. Can we work with this combination to fish deeper? Yes, in a limited way. Adding weight to the fly is the simplest approach. If you tie your own flies, wrapping the hook shank with thin lead, or non-toxic wire would be the first step in construction. Vary the amount of weight so that you will have a variety for different depths.

How will you know which flies are weighted, and to what degree when they are in your box mixed with others that look the same? If you have three different weights, small, intermediate and heavy, wrap a small amount of colored thread close to the wing material when the head is finished. Blue for small, green for intermediate, and red for heavy would work. Your weighted creations will now stand out from the same unweighted patterns.

Weight near, or on the fly's head is another option. Bead chain, lead, or non-toxic eyes have been used on Crazy Charlie and Clouser patterns for years. At least five weights are available from extra-small to large. These are attached with thread, using a figure eight configuration and some crazy glue to secure them to the hook shank. Painting eyes on these will make them more attractive. Recently, cone head and bead head flies have become popular. One of these is slid on the hook and secured against the hook eye, as the fly is finished. The cone head has the additional advantage, because of its narrow front and wider rear of helping the fly be more weedless or snag free.

The addition of weight to the forward section of flies will make them act more like a jig when the retrieve is stopped. As they drop, a strike is often triggered. Shorten your leader when using weighted flies. A heavier leader, especially in the butt section will assist in casting so you won't have to "Chuck and Duck" to prevent from getting hit in the back of your head.

Picking the line off the water on a more horizontal plane and then casting forward at a vertical plane will not only help your casting, but also prevent your weighted fly from hitting your fly rod tip. Clipping the tip with a weighted fly will weaken or break the tip section. This is one of the major causes of rod breakage.

The best approach for getting flies deep is to use a fly line designed for that purpose. Rather than a full sinking line, which is a casting nightmare, one with a sinking tip will satisfy all of your inshore needs. Older lines of this design seemed to have a hinge where the regular floating line joined the weighted tip section. This was very noticeable when casting.

Modern technology has produced some great lines. I have been using saltwater lines by Cortland and Rio that are a pleasure to cast, don't have that hinge feeling and have a clear sinking tip. Cortland's 444 Tropic Plus Ghost Tip Taper has a nine foot clear sinking section to which the butt portion of your leader is attached. The Powerflex Core QuickShooter line from Rio has a twelve foot clear forward section while the Powerflex Core Tarpon line has a fifteen foot clear section. When short leaders are used with these lines, the clear section will not spook fish. More importantly, a short leader allows the fly to more easily stay at the same level as the line. Using four feet of fluorocarbon of the proper strength may be all that is needed.



A little experimenting with leader lengths will be needed at first. Use the countdown method after you cast to get the desired depth. If you want to fish a little above a submerged grass flat and a count of twelve picks up some weeds, count to ten before the same retrieve is used to accomplish your goal. These lines are also much better to cast in our constant wind than their floating counterparts. When fishing where a school of fish is present, the smaller more aggressive ones are always closer to the surface. Your chances of getting a deep prowling lunker to take your fly will improve as your offering sinks.

Fishing a floating popper with a sinking tip line will give an effect that often is irresistible to finicky feeders. Your retrieve allows the popper to sink and when stopped will allow it to return to the surface much the same as a wounded baitfish. Ed, from Edgewater Products suggested this method to me some years ago, when discussing the versatility of some of their cell foam popper heads. This technique works! Ideally, a second rod should be rigged with one of the above combinations allowing you to be able to have an instant choice to suite your needs. Give this method a try and stick with it. I know it will soon become an important part of your fly fishing armamentarium.

Reprinted with thanks to Capt. Pat Damico who can be reached at 727-360-6466 / pat4jaws@hotmail.com

Chico Fernandez! Chico Fernandez!

Did I mention Chico Fernandez?

One of fly fishing's legends is coming to Central Florida and we have the opportunity to spend a day with him. On January 24, 2009, the Backcountry Fly Fishing Association of Brevard is hosting Chico Fernandez and they've opened their doors to our members. The day includes both breakfast and lunch as well as several presentations and interactive opportunities with Chico. Cost, including both meals is \$20 and must be pre-paid to Cas Summers. (No reduced rates for partial attendance or meals). The festivities take place at Mimaw's Bar-B-Q on Eau Galle Blvd in Indian Harbour Beach. Take the Eau Gallie exit E off of I-95 and cross the Indian River. The restaurant is 1/5 mile on your left. Reserve a spot by emailing cas@casanddebbie.com

February Speaker

Capt. John Turcot

John grew up plying the local waters and is from five generations of Florida river folk. His family have fished, hunted and farmed the Mosquito Lagoon and surrounding waters since the late 1800's.

John's passion is fly fishing and has been guiding anglers upon his home waters for more than 15 years. To his credit he's appeared on several outdoor television shows as a guest and local guide including "The Walkers Cay Chronicles", "Spanish Fly", "Sport Fishing Magazine TV" and more. His work has been documented in Florida Sportsman, Fly Fishing in Saltwaters, Eastern Fly Fishing and Fly Fisherman magazine.



Sunset John

Backcountry Flyfishing Calendar

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

- Jan 10 **OUTING:** Mosquito Lagoon Riverbreeze 6:30 am
NOTE: This trip occurs before our first meeting. Contact jay.wright@cfl.rr.com to sign up and be paired up. Good trip for boats, kayaks, canoes.
- Jan 14 BFA Monthly Meeting @ O'Boys Bar-B-Q, 6:30 pm
Reid Hyle on Shad in the St. Johns See President's Message.
- Jan 24 Chico Fernandez @ BFA Melbourne Club
Mimaw's Bar-B-Q in Indian Harbour Beach. See Article. Please pre-register with Cas Summers.
- Jan 29 BFA Board Meeting
- Feb 4 Flies n Lies: Orlando Outfitters, 6:00-9:00
Come to tie. Come to watch and learn. Come to just hang out.
- Feb 21-22 **OUTING:** Shad on the St. Johns (TBD)
Start tying your shad darts now. This will be a 2-night campout with several clubs.

Great Resources in Old Newsletters

2007

- A great fly-line to leader knot
- Anatomy of a Fly line
- Fly line maintenance
- Tying the Byrd's Gillibuster
- Short-distance casting
- Tips for flyfishing alone in a skiff
- Fine tuning your cast for the new year
- Planning for your guided fishing trip
- The pursuit of a world record
- Productive beaches for SW Florida's snook
- Long-distance casting
- Effective fishing w/ sink tips

2008

- Gunning for Gator Trout (Jan)
- How important is your Fly (March)
- Fly reel Drag Systems (April)
- The Olfactory Factor: Fish and Smell
- Keeping an Effective Log (August)
- Tying Capt. Keith's Crustacean Fly (Sept)
- Labeling Line (Oct)
- Casting Tips from Joe Mulson (Nov)
- Winter Reds on the Fly (Dec)
(Dec)
- Effective Flies for Shad Fishing (Feb)
- A Study in Seagrasses (March)
- Black Forest (PA) Trout Fishing (May)
- The Mulson Wind Cast (June)
- Snook Under the Lights (August)
- Rod Tip Path: it's effect on the cast
- Musings on Morning Fishing (Nov)
- Tippet Tips (Dec)
- Casting Tips from Joe Mulson Pt. 2

For replacement copies or to pass along additional articles that you feel would benefit the members please email mike.adamson@ccci.org

Editors Note: Just before Dave Olson left The Fly Fisherman for brighter horizons in south Florida he shared the following "fishing calendar" during a presentation to our club. As we start the new year I'm dusting off my *unedited* notes. Happy planning.

Planning Your Florida Fishing Calendar

By David Olson

January

1. Shad: St Johns
2. Pompano inside the IR and SI (near concrete channel marker on inside of inlet)
 - Slow sinking I line
 - Small, bonefish flies or clousers on 6/7 wt.
3. Bonefish in Biscayne Bay
 - Largest fish caught here in Jan. 8/9wt.
 - 2-3 warm days turn the fish on. Warming trend AFTER a front.
 - Crab patterns #2 and larger / Borski sliders and merkins
 - Launch further S in the bay

February

1. Shad
2. Cobia in the Keys. 9/10wt
 - Follow rays. Throw fly on top of ray and let it wash back to fish
 - Clousers look like what rays would be pushing up as they pass
3. Tarpon: Laid up in the cuts in Flamingo
 - Lethargic / Put darker flies right on top of them

March

1. Bonefish in the Keys
2. Permit in the Middle Keys (need windy weather)
3. Bass in the St. Johns when water levels drop

April

1. Red in Central FL. Largest of the year.
 - Shrimp are running so use appropriate patterns with clear I line.
2. Bahamas trips best from April to June
3. Cobia: Boca Grande and Homosassa later in the month / down the beaches
4. Tarpon and Snook in the Sebastian River South Fork (best month of year)
 - Between Wimbrow (sp) and McDonalds park
 - Fish where it "shallows up". 5 ft or less increases your odds greatly.
 - Bright yellow and chart flies (some like brown) that push water
 - Fish at 90 degree angles...not at them... with slow, steady, long, straight, consistent pull.
 - Fish average 8lb. in S. Fork and 12 in N. Fork

May: Best month of the Year in Florida.

1. Tarpon all over the Keys, BG and Homosassa. Bigger fish early. More fish later in month.
 - Start early on Black Rock and work way south to Oklahoma Flat during the day
2. Snook in dock lights and in backcountry of Chokoloskee

June

1. Tarpon on Beach in BG
2. Panhandle Fishery kicks in esp. in latter half of month.
 - N wind is best / E or a strong S wind is difficult
 - Fish rising tide if possible / Best time is dead low at 9-10 am rising to high tide at 4 pm.
3. Snook under dock lights in Ft. Pierce and Stuart

July

1. Snook on the BG and Sanibel beaches (best time of year)
 - Starting to get good on the E Coast beaches
2. Keys Oceanside fish are gone. Backcountry only.

August

1. Redfish in the surf in Jacksonville
2. Sebastian: Calmest water for fishing the surf
 - Fish 510 causeway to the next "walkover" to the S. (Disney resort is in between)
 - Glass minnows / Fish Polar Fiber minnows in small patterns
 - Larger EP flies for Tarpon
3. Tarpon in the Harbor in BG Pass (on the backside)

September (Prime Surf Month)

- Lots of snook, tarpon, bonita, kings on mullet patterns
- Sebastian Beach fishery is best because of the high water needed to get fish near shore.
- Playalinda only a couple times during the month. Patrick AFB not bad but rough conditions muddy the water
- SI, N of inlet near the Aquarina Golf Community. (Park at own risk in lot across from it)
- Fishing good down to the North of Florida Beach

October: Still a good beach month

1. Snook and Reds in BG.
 - Strong tides in Bull Bay creating "ponds" of stacked fish
 - Huge #'s caught. Especially if chumming

November

1. ML picks up for tailing fish and for large trout

December

1. NMZ picks up and ML still good
2. Ladyfish at Power Plants
3. Sebastian: Backside just off channel.
 - Intermediate line with slow sinkers
 - Tons of fish come into inlet from the ocean
 - Channel shoots to the S and there is big expansive grass flat
 - S of boat ramp or W. of boat ramp. / S of the "party" sand bar.

Editors Note: Just in case we have you in planning mode, here's our tentative schedule of club outing locations for 2009. Default dates for each outing will be the second Saturday of the month. We'll verify that date the month previous to the outing.

BFA 2009 Outing Schedule

January: Mosquito Lagoon
Note: Jan 10 is THIS SATURDAY

March: No Motor Zone
Typically last month for cold-water Black Drum

May: Sebastian Inlet & River
Tarpon are in

July: Hatchery Tour
Learn more about the resource

September: Stuart
Surf Fishing: A club "first"

November: Mosquito Lagoon
Back to our home waters

February: Shad on St. Johns
The run has started

April: Ft. Pierce
Snook and Trout

June: Stuart
Snook/Tarpon

August: Boca Grande
Tarpon, Snook & Trout

October: Tampa
Big Gun Casting Event: fun for all levels

December: No Motor Zone
Cold weather bringing big fish up on the flats

Cas Summers Elected to Florida Council of FFF

Congratulations and thanks are both due Cas following his unanimous selection to this committee. The Florida Council was birthed to address needs that are unique to fly fishermen in our state. Cas forms part of the team that includes:



President: Bill Gunn, Back Country FF of Brevard - wtgunjr@aol.com

1st VP: James Harter, Treasure Coast/Stuart FF - pjharter@comcast.net

2nd VP: Cas Summers, Back Country FF of Orlando - cas@casanddebbie.com

Treasurer: George O. Haennicki, South Florida FF Club - flytyer-golfer@worldnet.att.net

Secretary: Gerald Bell, Big Bend FF of Tallahassee - libertyi@nettally.com

Director-at-Large: Ken Hofmeister, Suncoast FF of St. Pete - khofmeister@tampabay.rr.com

Director-at-Large: Tarpon Coast FF of Hernando Beach - rmaler@comcast.net

Special thanks to outgoing Board President, Capt. Pete Greenan for the sacrificial and pioneering work he did in leading the founding board. Your effort is greatly appreciated.

The Mentor

Casting Tips from Joe Mulson

Pt. 3 of 4

In a previous newsletter, I broke the fore cast into two parts, the pre-loading and the rod turnover. I mentioned that the rod is pulled forward and turned over primarily with the two or three last fingers. The pulled forward is the pre-loading.

Elbow Position

Let me digress at this point and mention that there is another way to accomplish the pre-load and turnover. I find it to be less efficient and seldom use it but it's worth knowing. It has to do with the position of the elbow. The elbow behind the hand results in a push cast where the thumb dominates in the forward thrust of the hand. This motion is similar to that used in throwing a heavy object. If the elbow is not behind, but rather under or slightly in front of the hand, a pulling motion results, similar to the throwing of a lighter object such as a baseball.

The Force Behind the Load

I assume most of you know what loading of a rod is, but let me talk about it anyway. A rod is loaded when it is bent. This occurs when the hand and the line (if it is straight) accelerate forward or backward in the cast. One must learn to be aware of the force/pressure in the hand when this occurs and keep it constant for a smooth cast. The total force being applied by the caster is the result of three actions: movement of the hand, rotation of the hand, and haul by the other hand. Each action needs to be a uniform application for a good/great cast. The pre-load (force) results from the initial hand movement. For best results the turnover and haul occur simultaneously with the haul lasting until the turnover is complete. Before the above cast can be accomplished, the line must be straight or nearly so. Timing and smoothness not power are the keys to good casting.

Pic of the Month

This month we say goodbye to our friend and fellow fly fisherman, Markku Hamarila, who is returning to his native Finland.



Markku it's been a pleasure fishing with you, getting to know you and murdering the pronunciation and spelling of your name. Come Back Soon !!