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A MEMBER CLUB OF THE FEDERATION OF FLYFISHERS

From the President

Captain's Log 9:58am, Wed. March 25, 2008

Weather: Windy, Windy, and yes more Wind. My "spring break" fishing trip with my two boys was a bust. We had lots of monster hook up's in Ponce Inlet with the reds, but we were broken off every time. The fly rod didn't even have a chance to escape the fly case with all the bodies on board coupled with the wind. The fear of spending the day getting a hook removed prevented me from shedding the sheath.

We all know that here in our State the wind is prevalent in the spring. Unfortunately, if we don't pay attention to the cold fronts, changing weather conditions, and massive quick rising seas fishing excursions can turn deadly in a matter of minutes. We were recently reminded of that again as we followed the news over in Tampa with the USF and NFL Football players. After reading the accounts of that situation at sea, from the one lone survivor, I was shocked at what happened. One victim said he saw land and swam for it. Another, who felt constricted by his life jacket, took it off only to perish at sea. I'm personally struggling how someone can take a 20' plus bay boat out offshore 20 plus miles away from the shoreline. For me, this was the first mistake that could and should have been avoided. Don't get me wrong, I personally feel for each and every family member of these 3 athletes. It is a terrible, terrible loss.

However, a quick check of the weather with an approaching cold front would have been my first indication that rough seas could be experienced out in the Gulf of Mexico. After speaking to some other fishing captain's, the consensus was in, that the proper boat safety equipment like an "EPIRB" or even the now less expensive "SPOT" that is frequently advertised on TV, could possibly prevented this terrible catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico.

Again let me emphasize again, I'm not here to point fingers to those who perished, but to bring to the forefront that I feel this whole tragedy could have been avoided. With the proper electronic equipment, and correctly fitting, life jackets. With this equipment on board they could have been rescued in hours rather than days at sea. And, better yet, they would have lived to fish again another day. We all think it can't happen to us until we read the account of this tragic event. Think about it, check your gear, and let someone know where you are going and plan ahead. Look at the approaching weather and see how it could affect you while you are out. Finally, remember as summer comes, lightning will kill you.

All the best,
Bill Norton

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Editors Note: *At our last club meeting Capt. Earl Waters talked of his love of clear lines and in particular those manufactured by Monic. The following article offers insight on these lines*

Clear Fly Line Provides Hidden Advantages

By Paul Bruun

STEALTH HAS ITS PLACE, especially in the outdoors. Witness the growing popularity of the camouflage garment business and the extra money bow and rifle hunters are investing in scent blocker boots, pants and shirts that aid in stalking and still hunting, especially for whitetail deer and turkey.

On the fishing front, fluorocarbon fishing line/leader sinks faster than regular monofilament and is reported to be less visible under water. Despite exorbitant prices skinny spools of fluoro leader command, its reported invisibility and toughness first became popular with commercial rod and reel tuna fishermen long before bass pros and fly fishermen knew it existed.

Getting an extra edge is important to many. Fortunately for a retired chemist in Colorado, more and more serious fly fishermen are beginning to use clear floating and sinking fly lines, which are



photo courtesy of Monic

his specialty. In certain instances, clear fly lines spook fewer fish than the colored lines. This is especially true in shallow, transparent ocean and fresh water streams and lakes. Bob Goodale is a chemical engineer who worked for ARCO and Firestone in Ohio for years before he semi-retired and moved to Boulder, Colorado. The fact that Bob loves to fly fish obviously influenced his venue change.

For a time in Colorado, he sold rubber seals for medical applications but he finally decided to follow his passion and produce a revolutionary fly line. John Simms and I were fishing on the Babine River in British Columbia and met Goodale in the late 1980s. During this trip he repeatedly talked about developing a stealthy clear fly line that would float.

It wasn't until 1993 that Bob's first Monic Tropical Clear fly line arrived on selected fly shop shelves. As Bob promised, the line body was totally clear over a monofilament core. This innovation lent an extra element of stealth that surpassed just a longer leader for sight fishing especially in shallow water. But clear fly lines have a history of problems and it has taken time for the Monic concept to grow. Today more users demand its advancing versatility.

A Word on Monofilaments

Scott Kozlowski is the Monic line engineer who joined Bob Goodale in 1994 and has walked the unique product line into its latest fabrication known as Fish Specific Tapers. Scott and Bob have referenced the growing number of fishing guides and tournament anglers who continue providing helpful input and their personal clear fly line experiences. Scott promises new advertising and Web site updates on the latest Monic line configurations, tapers and capabilities.

First a word about the original monofilament clear lines that arrived in the early 1970s when tarpon fishing with a fly rod was just becoming a Florida Keys growth industry. A prominent light tackle/fly rod angler named Al Pflueger Jr., who along with his father operated the world's largest marine taxidermy company in South Florida, conceived the idea of a clear monofilament fly line. Pflueger had close associates within the Shakespeare Tackle Company in South Carolina and eventually obtained a prototype semi-clear fly line that sank very slowly. Al and a few friends had good luck while experimenting with the clear intermediate line.

When Shakespeare finally offered the clear mono intermediate fly line, eager tarpon hunters snapped up 10, 11 and 12 weight versions and spooled their Fin-Nor, Medalist and Seamaster saltwater fly reels. Unfortunately, a manufacturing glitch crept into many of the heavyweight running line segments of the revolutionary product. The running line weakness went nearly undetected until anglers attached to 80 to 120 pounds of muscular silver. After tarpon broke a number of the new lines, the monofilament fly line concept suffered an agonizing setback that lasted nearly a dozen years.

Finally in the mid-1980s Scientific Anglers introduced the Stillwater, a trout version of a clear intermediate sinking mono fly line designed for freshwater lake fishing. Intermediate lines that gently submerge just below the surface normally cast easily and allow true wet flies and streamers to perform exceptionally well. Also because they ride just beneath the surface film, intermediate lines are not blown around as much as floating lines during windy conditions.

Seeing is Believing

A clear line excels for blind casting. However, they are more difficult than a colored line to watch in the air. Thus a clear line challenges your accuracy when fishing to a shoreline with heavy and/or overhanging cover. Adjusting casting distances to moving fish targets is equally difficult. And regardless of their fishing efficiency and practicality, intermediate lines have never been great sellers until recently.

Bob Goodale's determination and extensive chemical background provided the world's first and only clear floating fly line. Floating lines are popular because they are easier to pick up and cast when the need arises for a quick re-cast. The intermediate's slow sink rate requires it to be stripped in much further before picking up for another cast.



Monic's Tropical Seamless Phantom Tip line (left) and their new Tropical FST Bonefish Taper (right).
David Dalu photo

Although I don't think Bob's initial plan was to produce separate fly lines for fresh and saltwater fishing, that's how things are today. Saltwater fishing is usually performed in warmer temperatures and water conditions (some Northeast saltwater is an exception). Therefore, formulation of material over the monofilament core had to be stiffer in order not to collapse or wilt in the heat. Clear floating fly lines are particularly coveted by Florida anglers pursuing giant tarpon, bonefish, redfish and snook usually in shallow water. As this shallow style fishing pressure continues to increase, experienced guides and fly fishermen realize that sometimes the slightest hint of a colored line causes especially cruising and feeding fish to change direction. Even after the cast the surface presence of a colored line is equally capable of spooking unseen cruisers whose sudden departure ultimately disturbs the entire area.

Long ago in a drift boat I noticed that the average person both casts and fishes better when spooled with a brighter fly line. Many casts are made during a river day in mostly wide open conditions. Yet the easier it is for casters to see and follow their fly lines, the more accuracy they enjoy. Low light, windy and shady conditions add new problems best solved by easy-to-spot lines. Having explained my line observations above I was still surprised when I used the first 8 and 9 weight Monic floating lines after Bob introduced them in 1993. Adjusting casting distances with clear lines was tough. Even after a week of practice I was able to hang more flies in bushes and mangroves than seemed to land in the water!

Practice, Practice, Practice

"We know that lots of anglers and guides struggle with our lines at first because they have difficulty locating the fly after the cast," Scott Kozlowski acknowledges. "But we emphasize that Monic lines are like anything else — they take practice."

Dustin Huff, a Grassy Key guide who encourages the clear line commitment agrees. "I regularly stress to my anglers who use clear lines to study where their fly is heading and landing during the cast as well as afterward. When stripping they really must watch their fly rather than the end of the line which is invisible. Their skills improve with practice."

As previously mentioned, both clear floating and intermediate sinking fly lines have a variety of specialized uses. Freshwater lake fishing especially for trout is by far the venue where most intermediate clear fly lines appear. Lake fishermen regularly use full length fly lines that keep their presentations at an even level in the water column and hopefully slipping along just above weeds. Monic's clear floating tip fly lines helped me fool a number of Manuka beetle sipping brown trout cruising in New Zealand lakes.

Tip sections of clear intermediate lines in lengths from a meter to 15 feet are also popular with anglers trying to duplicate sub-surface chironomid (midge) emergences to streamer and nymph presentations in rivers and lakes. Steelhead and Atlantic salmon fishermen also employ clear intermediate tips as do some tarpon chasers. For the last three years, at the suggestion of several Florida guide mentors, I've re-spoiled Monic clear tropical lines and reserve them for shallow water snook and redfish hunting. In spite of the clear line and long leader stealth job, a hard slap down or some other thoughtless casting behavior still spooks fish. But it is gratifying to watch a shallows-cruising snook pass beneath a clear line and not leave in a big swirl of scales. Oceanside and Gulf Coast tarpon chasers continue to report even more positive results when using the all clear floating lines for these heavily pressured fish.

Monic recently retooled its tropical floating lineup with new tarpon, permit, bonefish and redfish tapers. The monofilament cores have increased to 32-pound test for everything except tarpon and permit models, which are up to 42-pound. The heavier monofilament also stiffens the line action and provides necessary strength when pulling on these tougher fish. The line tapers were changed to deliver longer casts and softer landings for bonefish and tarpon presentations. Distinctive line belly tapers were redesigned to pitch bulkier redfish flies and the heavyweight crab patterns for permit. I look forward to clocking some more Florida hours with these lines in June.

April Speaker

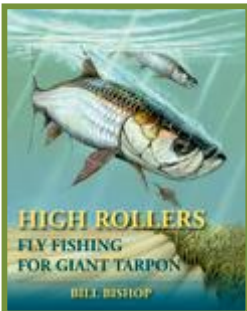
This month we host author, illustrator and fellow fisherman Bill Bishop. Bill's wonderfully creative view of a sportsman's life weaves nicely with his systematic approach to his prey. It's a successful mix of right and left brain that makes him one of Florida's finest and most engaging sportsman. Come join us for an evening of stories and practical advice. Bill will also be signing copies of his latest book, *High Rollers, Fly Fishing for Giant Tarpon*, following our meeting.

Book Review

High Rollers: Fly Fishing for Giant Tarpon

By Cas Summers

I am usually not a person that hears about a book that has been published and runs out to buy it; "High Rollers" by Bill Bishop is another story.



Mr. Bishop is a very well respected angler that has dedicated a lot of time fishing for tarpon. For anglers who have fished Boca Grande it is almost uncommon to spend any time on the water and not see Mr. Bishop on the water. If you have any plans to fish for Tarpon I would recommend that you read this book before you go.

The book's content focuses on the Boca Grande Tarpon fishery. The artwork is also from Mr. Bishop and a lot of the photography is from Mark Hatter. The book reads as if you were on the dock or in your condo listening to the stories from the mouth of the author. Many entertaining personal experiences with Lefty, Flip, and family are shared.

The content covered in "High Rollers" is unbelievable. Years of experience and time on the water have been sifted through and summarized in the book. The book will not tell you where to fish, but it does tell you how to fish successfully. Chapters include information on feeding fish, boat operation and Tarpon body language.

This book is for all fly anglers. It is hard to believe that after reading "High Rollers" that its reader does not up their efforts to become a better angler. It is an easy book to read and well worth the time. I bet that you will read it more than once.

Mosquito Lagoon Saturday

We are going to try something new in regards to monthly outings...Bill O. coined it "ML Saturday." We know that we all like to fish in different areas of the state when that fishery is at its best; such as our Tarpon trips to Boca Grande in July. That is what we try to accomplish with our monthly Outing schedule.

Even though at least four of our monthly trips are to local waters every year, we're also going to schedule an additional trip here in Central Florida on the months that we head to other areas around the state. So even if you can only get away for a half-day you'll have opportunity every month to fish with the club. We will fish different areas in the ML, IRL and NMZ in an attempt to show our less experienced saltwater angler's new places. The trips will be available to wading anglers, kayaks & canoes. The discovery of new areas can provide opportunities that may help to avoid the wind, avoid crowds, and fish a new place if your favorite hole has been slow. Most often these events will be the 4th Saturday of them month and you'll know early in the month is that changes. Your contact person is Jay Wright. Best of luck fishing!

Quick Tips

Covering Up

Covering up is a great alternative to sunscreen, especially in saltwater environments, where it's easy to forget to reapply sunscreen 3 or 4 times a day. Lightweight facemasks — either tube- or balaclava-style — are a particularly good idea, since on hot day perspiration can carry sunscreen into your eyes.



Marshall Cutchin photo

Best Release Practices

You don't usually need to handle a fish or take it out of the water in order to remove a hook or take a picture. Remove flies with forceps or a similar device, and use a net rather than your hands if you must control the fish. Remember, the larger the fish, the more damage you can do by lifting it out of the water.

Reprinted from midcurrent.com

Backcountry Flyfishing Calendar

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

- April 1 Flies n Lies @ Orlando Outfitters, 6:00-9:00
Come to tie. Come to watch and learn. Come to just hang out.
- April 5 Club Casting Practice @ Loch Haven Park, 2:00-4:00
Join members of every level of expertise. Learn from each other. FFF Master Instructor Joe Mulson on hand to coach. **Beginning this month we'll meet for practice the first Sunday of every month.**
- April 8 BFA Monthly Meeting @ O'Boys Bar-B-Q, 6:30 pm
Author, Artist, Tarpon specialist, Bill Bishop. Book signing at end of meeting.
- April 18 **OUTING:** Ft. Pierce
Please contact Jay Wright ASAP if you'd like to go. Club pays for boat gas.
- April 22 BFA Board Meeting @ Carluccis Winter Park, 6:30-8:30
- April 26 **OUTING:** Mosquito Lagoon Saturday
Always on home waters. Always the last Saturday of the month. The perfect time to fish and have fun with BFA members.

Pic of the Month

BFA is happy to help fill the flybox of the member who submits the best picture each month. We owe Russ a fly next time he ventures in from Lake County. (Like he needs one)



Russ Hampton, John Bartoletti and Baramundi on the fly