

A Publication of the Gulf Coast Council of Fly Fishers International

The Gulf Streamer

Summer 2022

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Corinne Duplan - Editor

A Note From the President

Hello GCC Members and Fly Fishers of the Gulf Coast Council of FFI,

The weather is hot throughout the Gulf Coast area and so is the fishing. Many of the clubs in the GCC have returned to their normal fly-fishing related activities. In my conversations with many of you, it is encouraging to hear that your fly-fishing lives are back in full swing again.

Please join me in welcoming Eastern Shore Fly Fishers as the newest FFI-affiliated club in the Gulf Coast Council. The ESFF is a welcome addition to the GCC. They are a great group of fly fishers and are a very active group with lots of enthusiasm, energy and love for the sport of fly fishing.

There are many exciting things happening throughout the Gulf Coast Council. Clubs have been very creative during the pandemic in keeping members involved and excited despite restrictions and concerns caused by COVID-19. One of the great outgrowths from the pandemic has been the use of virtual meetings via Zoom and Facebook for fly tying classes and meetings. The Gulf Coast Council is in the planning stages of sponsoring a quarterly virtual multi-club fly tying meeting where fly tyers can attend from anywhere to learn new fly patterns and tying techniques. Please watch our website for more information regarding these events.

Please join me in welcoming the newest members of the Gulf Coast Council Board of Directors. **Cindy Griffin** of the Kisatchie Fly Fishers, **Lance Renoux** of the Acadiana Fly Rodders, **Chris Williams** of Red Stick Fly Fishers and **Ben Roussel** of Red Stick Fly Fishers.

In this edition of The Gulf Streamer newsletter the recipients of the 2022 Gulf Coast Council Awards will be announced. All of this year's recipients are well deserving of these honors and help to make the Gulf Coast Council the outstanding council that it is. Please join me in congratulating all of the recipients.

The council needs your help. We have been reaching out to the clubs for the past couple of years in an effort to get the best contact person to

share information that is important to the club members and would also benefit the clubs in general. Our efforts have met with little or no response. Please see David Buckner's article regarding this.

There are many fly-fishing events that are coming up in the fall months and next year. The New Orleans Fly Fishers Club will once again sponsor the Rio Grande Rodeo on October 1st. The North Louisiana Fly Fishers and Pineywoods Fly Fishers of Lufkin will sponsor the North Toledo Bend Rendezvous on October 28th through 30th returning to North Toledo Bend State Park. FFI's Virtual Expo will take place November 4th -6th . There will be numerous live fly-fishing expos in the early part of 2023 including the New Orleans Fly Fishers Expo in January and the Red Stick Day in March.

The Gulf Coast Council is very excited about an event that will take place May 5th and 6th, 2023. We will sponsor the Gulf Coast Classic at Gulf Shores State Park, in Gulf Shores, Alabama. This will be a two-day event which will be a combination expo and fishing tournament that promises to be something you don't want to miss. There will be fly fishing seminars, fly tying demonstrations and classes, casting instruction, a fishing tournament, the F3T film tour on Saturday evening, auctions, raffles and much more. We will be looking for at least two volunteers from each Gulf Coast Council club to work each day.

Watch the GCC's website and Facebook page for more information and updates.

If you ever have any questions or need help with anything, please let me know. You can contact me at ajrosenbohm@gmail.com.

Hope to see you at some of these upcoming events. Let's get out there and fish.
Tight Lines,

A.J. Rosenbohm

President, Gulf Coast Council of Fly Fishers
International

Connect With Us

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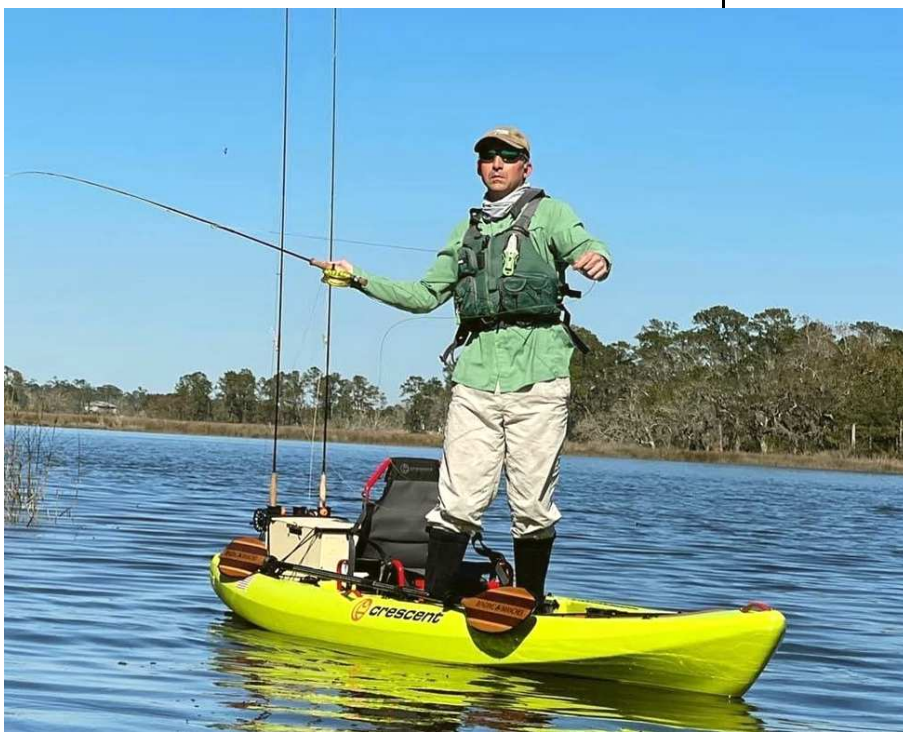
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Casting from a Kayak

By Donald Dehm



Ever wonder if there are special secrets or tricks to fly casting from a kayak?

As an avid Kayak Fly Angler who learned to fly fish after learning to kayak, I can tell you that there are a few tips, but no real secrets or tricks. The biggest tip I can offer is practice, practice, practice. Yes, I know it is the same thing you have heard in other areas of fly fishing, but it is true to fly casting from kayaks as well. Practicing the following tips will make you a more confident kayak fly angler and help you achieve more accuracy and distance when using the long rod in a little plastic boat.

Practice sitting on the ground, or if your kayak has a removable seat, practice sitting in it on the ground and

practice casting. Sitting down when casting offers some challenges that standing does not. Your fly line is much closer to the water surface, so you must increase your line speed when making casts. You also have a smaller platform that has a condensed casting area and sometimes multiple things in your casting area that can hinder you from full freedom of movement.

There are three casts that I use more than any others when fly casting from a kayak. First is the normal back cast/overhead cast, but with a high sticking aspect on the back cast, this helps keep your fly line off the water a bit when using this traditional casting method. Second, is the roll cast in which you may find very easy to use in the kayak when standing but can be difficult to perform when sitting.

Lastly, the side-arm cast is one that I use more than any other. It allows me to keep the fly line off the water and out of any overhead obstacles such as trees. You must increase the speed of the side-arm cast to a rather high speed to ensure that your fly line and/or fly does not hit the water surface, but this cast has been very productive for me in more situations than any other.

There is another cast that I have been adopting lately, the Belgian cast. It can be a bit difficult to learn and become proficient at, but there are great YouTube videos, instructors who can teach you this cast, and information on how to make this cast and how to do it rather efficiently. This cast is a continuous motion cast. There is no stop between the back cast motion and the forward cast. Because it keeps the fly well away from the caster it is a safer cast to use when casting large

flies or weighted flies such as streamers. It can also be used to cast safely in the wind and from the kayak.

I will leave you with a golden tip for your kayak fly fishing adventures... bring along an old towel on your next trip. Dip the towel into the water and then lay it across the area of the kayak in front of your lap and where you will be stripping line. This will help to mitigate snags and provide better line management for you.

The reason you want to wet it is so that it does not blow off the kayak with any wind, prevents you from moving it around easily with your feet and legs, helps to provide

a slicker surface for the fly line to release from, and provides a cooling sensation on warmer days.



To avoid any excess weight, just wring out excess water. Be sure to dampen the towel now and again, or you may find yourself chasing that towel down river or across the lake.

Tight lines and safe paddles to you all.

When You Don't Know What to Tie

By: Fred G. Hannie Sr.

The summer heat is beginning to make mid-day fishing along the Gulf coast almost unbearable. With temps climbing to triple digits in some areas it's nice to have fly tying as a fishing related activity that can be practiced in the comfort of an air-conditioned dwelling. If your fly boxes are full because you have been tying all winter you may need some extra motivation to return to the vise. For some of us this is not a problem as we think about fly tying and new patterns nearly as much as we think about fishing. But for some of us it's hard to tie without a specific need.

Deciding what to tie can be frustrating and no one knows this better than me. I believe I've tied every insect, crustacean, fish, reptile and amphibian relevant to fishing the gulf coast waters and I've tied at least one fly of every genre or subset of fly style (including salmon, classic, warm water, saltwater, cold water, etc). So I've tried to come up with some ideas of what to tie when I have no idea what to tie.

On some of the social media platforms - such as fly tying or fly fishing groups - there are often fly swaps. A fly swap is usually limited to 10 – 12 tiers that agree to send in an equal number of flies as there are participants to the "swap meister" who will collect the flies and redistribute them so that each participant

receives one fly from every other tier. Most swaps have a theme, either by type of fly (shrimp pattern) or by target species (bass flies). I've done some of these in the past and have gotten some really nice flies as well as some good time at the vice tying 10-12 exact copies of the same flies. If you can't find a current swap start one of your own as the swap meister. Pick a fly and post an invitation in a group or page. As swap meister you will be responsible for sorting and shipping the flies but it is common practice for tiers to send a bonus fly or two to the meister for their trouble.

The skills award challenge offered by the FFI Fly Tying Group is another project that will widen your tying knowledge as well as your skill sets. There are three levels of the program, Bronze, Silver and Gold with each level increasingly more complex than the previous one. In each level you will have 5 - 7 mandatory patterns and 2-3 bonus patterns. The program is set up for you to succeed as it provides step by step instructions for each pattern as well as a tying video of each fly. The mix of materials and techniques is meant to make you a well-rounded tier. Fly Tying Skills Award Program (flyfishersinternational.org)

If you are a demonstration tier you can tie up some flies for the auctions of future events. It's always nice to have those ready way ahead of packing for the event.

Try expanding your skill set. Now's the time to learn a new technique. Do you make popping bugs? Kirk Dietrich, a member of our council recently published an extensive book on the subject. How about spinning deer hair, woven bodies, married wingsthe list goes on. When you don't know what to tie, think about broadening your techniques.

Still not motivated? Go to the GCC fly tying page, Native Flies List - FFI Gulf Coast Council, and look at the ever expanding list of flies for fishing the gulf coast. Tie some of these proven patterns or add to our database with one of your own.

Think about tying flies to donate to charitable organizations like Casting for Recovery, Fly Donation Website (castingforrecovery.org) Though they will accept any fly donation they are very fond of pink flies and you may find it fun to tie some patterns color specific.

Sometimes even the best suggestions fall on ears not ready to hear them and motivation is as hard to find as an honest politician. In these times I clean and organize my tying desk and supplies.

I hope I've given you some options to consider the next time you're sitting at the vise not knowing what to tie. I know I didn't cover everything and would enjoy hearing from you what you do when you face this issue.

Till we meet on the water,

Fred

Fred G. Hannie Sr.

Vice President, FFI Gulf Coast Council
FFI-GCC Fly Tying Chair
FTG Board of Governors

Nighttime is the right time!

By Catch Cormier

The dog days of summer fishing are here. How do I know? When you call up your most dedicated fishing buddies, and they're home binge watching old reruns of "My Mother The Car".

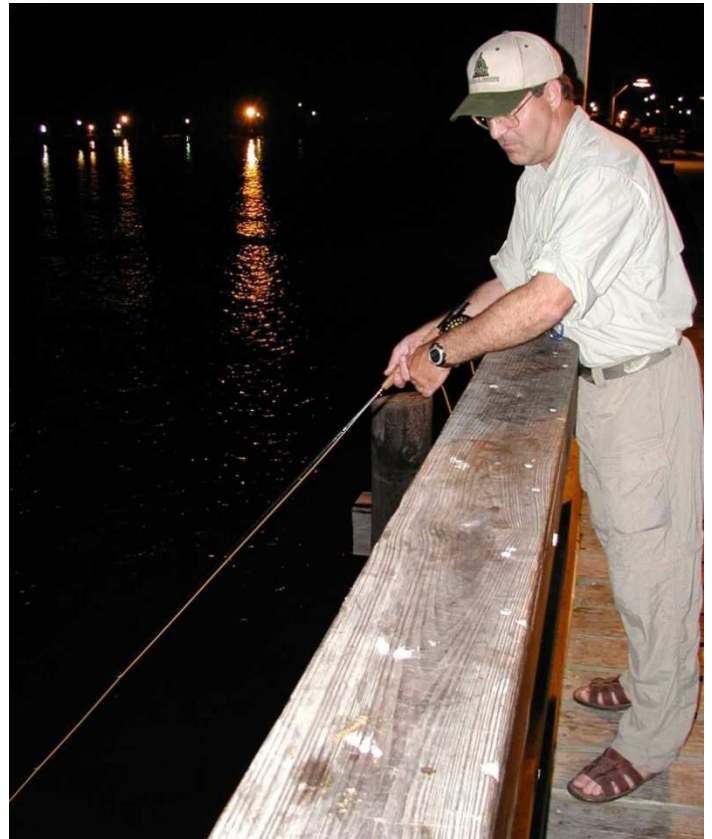
The excuse I often hear is... "it's too hot" or "fish ain't biting". Granted, from August to early September, water temperatures are at their peak. The warmer the water, the less oxygen it holds, the more sluggish the fish are.

One summer evening many years ago, I was thinking about what the fish might do under the lights at our neighborhood pond. I told my wife I was taking the dog out for a walk. Strange that she believed it, since we didn't have a dog at the time.

I brought my fly rod along, with a wet fly tied at the end of my tippet. I made a cast out and let it sink. Suddenly the line went tight, and after a short struggle, a nice crappie came to the surface. So began my exposure to fly fishing at night.

Over the years, I've spent probably a third of my cumulative fishing hours between sunset and sunrise. You can flyfish for just about any species after dark. I've done browns on the Madison River in Montana, snook under boat docks in south Florida, rainbows on the Norfolk River in Arkansas, stripers at Toledo Bend and bass and crappie in numerous lakes and ponds.

But my favorite night fishing species is speckled trout.



Find any public dock with lights, at least four feet of water and some tidal movement and you're in business. If you've never witnessed a speck strike a lure under a light, it's pretty amazing the speed at which they do it, then swim away. The strike-to-hookup ratio is five to one. The only way to change that is to hook the fish before he bites. (I can see the emails coming, "Catch, how do you do that?" You can't, it's a joke.)

The Clouser Minnow is an excellent imitation of the bay anchovy, a.k.a. silverside, which everything eats after dark. If you cast a Clouser off a pier, and skim it just below the surface, you'll catch specks. If you let it sink to the bottom, then strip it up, you'll likely catch sand trout.

I've also had good success using a Charlie's Angel and other weighted baitfish patterns. But when the waters are full of shrimp, it's a classic case of matching the hatch. That's when you want to have an EP Shrimp, Crystal Shrimp or Popovic's Epoxy Shrimp handy.

My early days of night fishing for specks were from docks or boat. But when my friend Steve Lee and I got heavy into kayak fishing, we figured it was time for a change of strategy.

Steve came up with the idea for a portable lighted dock that could be towed by our yaks. The portable dock worked out okay, but it was cumbersome to setup and it was like towing a barge behind my yak (notice who did the towing?). Soon, I had a better concept.

First, get a cheap kids sit-on-top yak. These are very short, wide, and stable - perfect for a portable dock. A good supply of used ones can be found at beaches where they rent them out during summer.

You also need a green LED light with a wide beam and rated for at least 500 lumens. A battery inside a milk crate will sit in the center of the yak. Off the milk crate, have an extension arm of thin PVC pipe to hold the light. Finally, you need two long and narrow PVC pipes that will fit through scupper holes to anchor the yak.



Once you've anchored your portable dock, then paddle back several yards beyond the perimeter of the lighted water, and anchor your yak there. A lot of times, we'll catch trout just outside the edge of the lighted water.

Yakkers need to remember to have a single light source on their vessels that can be seen for two miles, and in coastal waters, to follow Coast Guard requirements.

I am haunted by lights over water. Give this a try, and you'll be too.

A Big Grizzly Bear: July 1979: West Yellowstone, Montana

By George Norton, Outdoor Writer

All the campsites in Yellowstone Park were full and we lacked a place to camp. It was mid-July and we had no reservations. On our first day in our eagerness to go fishing full-bore, we hadn't planned or given much thought to where we would camp. After eating dinner at a café, and with no other options, we drove down an old logging road and simply hoped for the best.

The Pinto wagon crept slowly along the moonlit dirt road. After several miles, Jim pulled off to the side to the perfect campsite two miles from West Yellowstone, Montana, which is America's fly fishing mecca for dreamers of big trout in western rivers. With a big grin, Jim said "Hey Norton, this looks great." It was about ten at night after a twelve-hour day of fly-fishing the Yellowstone River. I got out, walked around until I found some flat ground and then shuffled my feet, and said, "Jim it seems level and there are not too many rocks. Let's get the tent up fast. I'm bushed and we fished hard til dark."

Jim said, "Norton there are no signs, no fees and who's gonna know we're back here? Aheeehee."

"Looks perfect," I replied just wanting to hit the hay and fall asleep.

We planned to fish a fifty-mile radius over the next several days; so unless the owner or the law came and kicked us out for trespassing, the logging road site seemed perfect, and besides, nothing else was available.

A full moon lit up the forest almost like day but there were shadows and an eerie silence. The enhanced visibility grew my vivid imagination of the animals. I heard a branch snap. Did I just imagine that sound?

After setting up the tent and before nodding off I said, "Jim, do you think there are any grizzlies in this area?"

"Norton, I doubt it," he replied. "All the bears are up in the high country foraging about, so forget about that bear story in the paper yesterday."

The weekly newspaper reported an isolated tent camper in the Park had been mauled and partially

consumed by a grizzly bear the prior week. Perhaps the camper stumbled upon a bear after returning to his campsite late at night or bear cubs had been in the presence of a protective female.

Even though grizzly attacks are extremely rare in Yellowstone Park, there is nothing more terrifying to contemplate in your tent late at night, when stimulated by the night sounds and your raw imagination.

The next morning we drove to our favorite café in West Yellowstone. After a massive breakfast of pancakes, eggs and bacon, we drove to the Snake River in Idaho. The fishing was challenging and frustrating. Later that evening, we stopped in town at the same café and returned to our campsite on the logging trail. Our site was undisturbed. After a good sleep and a big breakfast in town, we drove into the Park's Northwest Entrance to fish the Yellowstone River. We rigged up our fly rods with large dry flies and sprinted eagerly to the River. Jim went upstream and I worked down river.

The excellent action on the Yellowstone River was in stark contrast to the Snake. The Yellowstone cutthroat trout from 16-18 inches rose eagerly to take our dry flies of the surface. I even caught one cutthroat that had two flies hooked in its mouth. I removed the flies, secured them to my vest, and released the trout no worse for wear.

Cutthroat trout are non-selective and easy to catch early in the season. After being caught and released several times, they become much tougher to catch.

"Tomorrow we've got our float trip down the Madison River," I said. "I'm thinking of a twenty trout day and hopefully we'll get some big fish too."

"Don't get ahead of yourself Norton. It's bad luck to predict great future fishing. "

"Well I'm fired up. This is our first float trip since the Bighorn River trip last year. I can't forget that twenty-two-inch brown trout."

"Did he grow four inches since last summer?" Jim cackled. "Fish only grow unless you measure them, and don't you know all fishermen are liars?"

"Mark my words I'm going to measure the big one tomorrow," I said.

The next day we floated the Madison in a drift boat. A guide seated in the middle seat rowed while we cast big stimulator flies and hoppers against the bank and under willow tree. While our oarsmen kept us perfectly positioned for casting, trout came slammed our dry flies and leapt for the sky after feeling the hook.

In some areas, he beached the boat on a shallow sandbar and we waded grass-lined islands. The Madison is one of America's most storied rivers for a reason. Shocking surveys turn up more rainbow and brown trout per acre of water than practically any other river in America.

After another day of fly fishing we headed to town. The café was packed. A western swing band sounded like Bob Willis and the Texas Playboys. While we ate, we watched the crowd. They were locals dressed in western clothes. I drank another beer and noticed a cute cowgirl sitting alone. She had on a western hat and tight jeans.

I looked at her and she looked back and held my gaze just long enough before turning away. I said, "Jim her I go again. Sounds like a country hit?" We danced and I said, "If only I could forget about flying back to New York in a few days and stay here. I've got a job and I feel obligated."

"I'm just here with a girlfriend looking to have a good time on Saturday night," she said. "She's the one dancing with that guy hanging all over her. I hate to see that. He's her ex-boyfriend and didn't treat her right. Some of us never learn our lessons. By the way if you come back next summer I'd love to see you again. You seem like a decent guy. You tried to get to know me. A lot of guys just want to ... "

Later the cute cowgirl kissed me on the cheek, gave me a hug, and said, "Good night, I had a great time and I'll write."

Jim was ready to go hours earlier. He doesn't drink nor dance but enjoys western swing music. We got in his Pinto, which in those days made Oscar Madison's car look like he was a neat freak.

It was normal to open the passenger door and expect an old pizza box that had been in there six months might fall out on your foot.

Marriage has since civilized Jim. Now he lays everything out neatly the night prior to a trip and even cleans out all the built up trash in the passenger side before we embark on our annual fishing trips. I had contemplated fishing tomorrow as he drove down the dirt logging road to our camping area. The full moon illuminated the woods. A sad melancholy crept over my thoughts of office work, the New York subways, and the hot concrete jungle. A massive grizzly bear jolted me upright as we turned the corner leading to our campsite.

"Holy Cow!" I yelled. "Did you see the size of that big fellow? Suppose he has been taking this trail every night we've been here?"

"Must be a garbage bear hitting the town dump.", Jim said.

"Those are the dangerous and unpredictable bears! Let's get out of here," I said.

Jim had a big smile. "Pawdner don't tell me you're yellow?"

The bear disappeared around the bend. We sat silently in the car with the motor off for what seemed like forever. No one said a word. Finally, I broke the silence and said "We've gotta pack up, get back in the Park and find a spot there. I'm not sleeping here another night."

Jim looked at me with a sheepish grin. "Come on Norton, that bear is long gone. He's not gonna be back tonight." I knew he was pulling my leg and probably just as eager to high tail it.

"Well his sister or brother may be on his way here too," I said.

We hurriedly took down the tent, threw our sleeping bags in the Pinto, and drove back to Yellowstone Park. We pulled up to the first campground we saw. A sign said, "All full" and a heavy chain blocked the entrance.

I jumped out of the passenger side, surveyed the tents and lifted the chain while Jim pulled in. As soon as we found some empty ground, we put up our tent.

Early next morning we left before the Park Ranger arrived. We fished a half day on the Yellowstone River and after lunch headed south towards Denver.

"Why don't we get a motel tonight?" I said. "We've been sleeping on the ground and we could use a hot shower and besides no bears!"

Two days later, I arrived back in LaGuardia Airport on a Sunday evening. The city was hot and humid.

The next morning in a daze, I returned to the office yearning for the swift rivers, snow-capped mountains and that cowgirl. Who would ever forget that big grizzly bear running past our tent just as we came around a bend in the moonlight?

I imagined the trout rising to a dry fly, the rod bending gracefully and then leaping and then the fish somersaulting after feeling the hook. All this in the beautiful Madison River (named after one of our earliest Presidents). Both of us wanted to escape and live.



What's happening in the GCC

Sept. 17 – FLY FISHING 101. Hosted by Acadiana Fly Rodders of Lafayette, LA. East Regional Library in Youngsville, 10:15am to 1:00pm. Free and open to the public. Pre-registration required. Covers the basics of fly fishing, including equipment and accessories, flies, hands-on tying of knots and leaders, and hands-on casting with instruction from FFI CCIs. For details, go to www.acadianaflyrodders.org.

Sept. 24 - NATIONAL HUNTING & FISHING DAY.

Activities in several states. In Louisiana, festivities held at Baton Rouge, Woodworth, Minden and Bodcau. Activities include fishing, fly casting, fly tying, shooting, canoeing, archery, exhibits on wildlife, bird watching, turkey hunting, game tagging, much more. For details, go to www.nhfd.org.

Oct. 1 - The 13th annual RIO GRANDE RODEO. Hosted by New Orleans Fly Fishers. Open to the public. A fly-fishing only tournament for the Rio Grande cichlid. Categories: longest fish and most fish. Advance and on-site registration. Fishing time 7:30am to 12:30pm. \$15 registration fee includes lunch and drinks. Benefits Casting for Recovery. For details, go to www.neworleansflyfishers.com.

Oct. 28-29 - SOUTHERN FLYFISHERS RENDEZVOUS.

North Toledo Bend State Park, Zwolle, LA. Friday - Sunday, Oct. 28-30, 2022. An annual gathering of fly anglers from Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and beyond. No planned activities but plenty of fly tying, food, fly casting, fishing. Fee includes lodging and meals. For more details, go to: <http://pages.suddenlink.net/w/Rendez/indexR.html>

Nov. 4-6 - 2nd annual FFI VIRTUAL EXPO. Fly Fishers International will host a series of live seminars, workshops, fly tying demonstrations, casting presentations, and much more. Some require an additional fee. Also, auctions for many unique items. For more info, go to www.flyfishersinternational.org.

Jan. 21, 2023 - 2nd biennial NEW ORLEANS FLY FISHING EXPO. St. Christopher the Martyr school gymnasium, Metairie, LA. Seminars, fly tying demos,

Clubs of the Gulf Coast Council



Kisatchie Fly Fishers



casting presentations, exhibitors, raffles, and more. For details, go to www.neworleansflyfishers.com.

Spring TBA - FFI Certified Casting Program

Examination. Hosted by the Gulf Coast Council.

Candidates for the FFI Certified Casting Instructor (CCI) badge as well as Master Certification Instructor (MCI) badge will be tested. For details, contact Jeff Ferguson.

May 5-6, 2023 - GULF COAST FLY FISHING CLASSIC. Gulf Shores State Park - Learning Campus. Gulf Shores, AL. Friday-Saturday. Activities planned: seminars, fly tying demonstrations, casting instruction, fly tying instruction, exhibitors and vendors, roundtable discussions, Fly Fishing Film Tour, Fishing Contest, raffles, auction, and more. For details, go to www.ffigcc.org.

If you have an event, meeting or activity you wish to publicize, and/or put on our website Calendar, please email details to catch@laflyfish.com.

How we ate my State Record Fish for Supper!

By George Norton, Outdoor Writer

It was late February in Baton Rouge. Tree buds were just starting to pop out. Spring was just around the corner. The afternoon was warm, humid and overcast, the calm before a storm.

Our fifteen-acre neighborhood lake in south Baton Rouge was full of bass and sac-a-lait (known outside south Louisiana as crappie). The lake had everything necessary to produce large fish. There was ample cover, overhanging trees full of insects, bait fish, and fertile water which gave the lake a greenish and cloudy tint. I had fishing access from several friend's yards that backed up to the *lake*.

I walked a block down our neighborhood street with my old South Bend bamboo fly rod. My Grandfather had driven twelve hours from Clearwater at ninety and given me all his fishing tackle. It was like he realized he was planning on going to the Promised Land soon, and he wanted to make sure I was going to get it all. I had his South Bend fly rod, a variety of spinning rods, and even a short stout boat rod. He had also handed over a

variety of tackle boxes filled with everything from old antique Daredevil spoons to fly fishing paraphernalia.

Massive cypress trees stretched out over the water. Storms periodically knocked dead branches into the lake which added structure for fish and fertility to the water. The shallows were full of tree limbs and underwater root systems from cypress trees that made perfect habitat for spawning fish.

As I selected an old streamer from Grandpa's worn and cracked leather fly case, a thought passed through my head. Maybe I shouldn't use his flies and risk losing them to snags but he wasn't a sentimental man, and wanted his equipment to be used.

While I scanned the lake for signs of active fish, an angler in an aluminum flat boat came around the point which separated the two parts of the lake. His rod was bent and he fought a massive bass. The big bass jumped one last time and he grabbed the fish by its jaw and weighed it on a hand-held grip.

I hollered down the lake at him, "How much did he weigh?"

"He's eight and three quarter," he yelled.

"What are you fishing with?"

"Live shiners." He gently released the fish and disappeared back out of sight around the point.

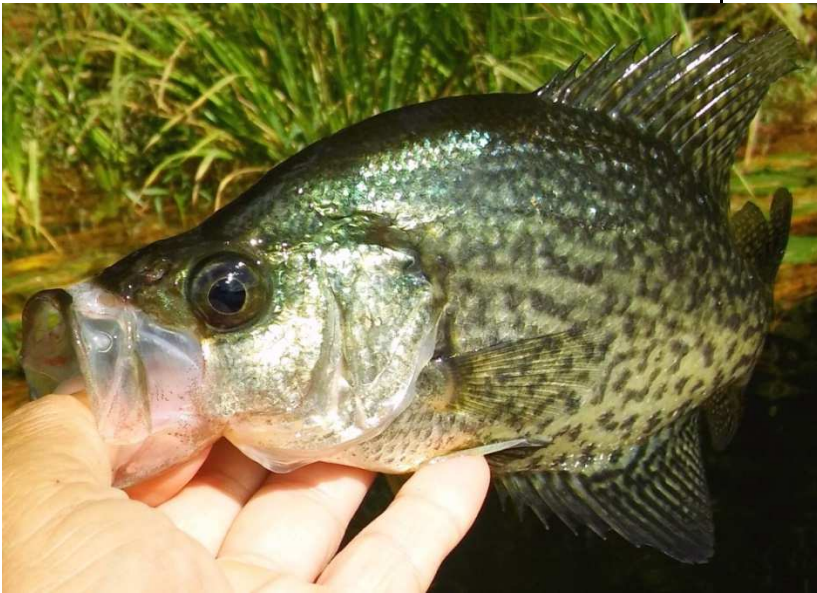
Out of the corner of my eye I noticed a swirl under the cypress tree; a sure sign of spawning activity around the underwater tree roots. I made a short cast, stripped the line, paused and set the hook with a short strip of the fly line. I fought and beached a beautiful sixteen-inch black crappie; a monster for this species, all in five minutes.

The fish probably weighed two and half pounds. The prior week I had caught a similar sized fish and released it, under the assumption that anything caught in private waters would not qualify for a state record. That fish would have been state record number one on the fly rod.

I pitched the fish fifty feet up the bank and kept fishing. This second fish was a likely state record on the fly rod, and caught on an antique streamer after a short walk down the street from a neighborhood lake only five minutes away.

Thirty minutes later, I ran a tree branch thru the fishes' gills just like any nine-year-old boy who grew up in the

country would do. I walked home and deposited the fish in an ice chest for safe keeping. The only question to resolve was did it qualify for a state record having been caught in a private pond?



Early that same morning a friend and I trailered the boat an hour away, and fished a swampy lake in the middle of the Atchafalaya basin, which is America's largest swamp and caught nothing.

That evening I called the outdoor columnist for the daily newspaper and the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to resolve my unanswered question. It was the weekend and no one returned my calls so we made the decision to eat the fish, since I was leaving on an overseas business trip the next afternoon.

Two days later on Monday afternoon, the newspaper's outdoor writer called and left a message on our answering machine saying, "Private ponds count for the state record for crappie but not for bass."

That night my wife relayed his message, "Honey guess what? We ate your state record fish last night. Have a good trip and stay safe. Don't worry you'll catch another one when you get back," she said with certainty.

Two weeks later after returning from my overseas trip to South America, I caught a smaller one that was fourteen and half inches long. A wildlife and fisheries biologist certified my catch with measurements and photos. After weighting the fish at a local convenience store's meat scale, and having submitted all the paperwork to the state with a ten dollar processing fee,

I waited thinking this is a done deal for the state record on the fly rod.

Two weeks later a letter from Wildlife and Fisheries said, "we're sorry to inform that though your fish would have been recognized as a state record on the fly rod, we regret your state record was disqualified because the convenience store's scale was two weeks past its' renewal date.

"We hope you submit another fish in the future and here is another form." That summer the lake was drained and afterwards it was never a productive fishery.

I'm still trying to catch a state record on the fly. In North Louisiana the fish is called a white perch while in Florida and Georgia they are known as specs or speckled perch. In the north they go by their correct name of crappie.

Too bad the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' rules and regulations were so inflexible. Maybe some flexibility would have been acceptable in this situation. I went 0-3.

**Editor's note: the Louisiana Outdoor Writers Association has since moved private pond records to a separate "Private Pond" category. All state fly fishing records must now be caught on public waters.*

Conservation Update

By: Glen 'Catch' Cormier, GCC Conservation Director

Over the past four years, the FFI Conservation Committee has been more involved in conservation activism than in any time in its history. The same is true here in the Gulf Coast Council. It's part of the new paradigm of our organization to be pro-active in conservation.

This Spring, a coalition of conservation groups - including FFI-GCC, CCA, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, IGFA, Bonefish & Tarpon Trust, and two dozen others - made another effort to establish a nearshore exclusion zone for menhaden harvest in Louisiana.

Louisiana is the only state in the union that does not have either a buffer zone of at least one mile, or a very restricted nearshore harvest.

Once again, the measure had strong support in both chambers of the state legislature. And once again, it was stymied by the actions of one state senator who happened to be the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee.

Just recently, an incident off the Virginia coast where a large number of bull redfish were killed as a bycatch of menhaden sets made national news. It once again triggered public opinion against nearshore menhaden harvesting. We'll see how this impacts any future measures our partners propose. But I'm confident this fight will go on and we'll be successful in the end.

Now for some good news. We came out in support of a proposal by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to create a no-harvest period on southern flounder from October 15 through November 30 of each year. Thanks to many emails by FFI and FFI club members - and support from our conservation partners - this measure passed.

Louisiana now joins Florida, Alabama, Texas and North Carolina in having a seasonal closure. The intent is to help declining flounder populations by keeping more female fish to spawn during the annual Fall migration period. Alabama instituted this measure in 2019, and already biologists there are reporting some success.

The possible culprit? Scientists have data showing that Gulf waters are warmer than they have been in the past. This is significant because when juvenile flounder get to be about 60 millimeters in length, the XX chromosome fish choose their gender. If the water is above a certain temperature, they become overwhelmingly males. Alabama Marine Resources Division has even begun stocking flounder that were reared in tanks (cooler than Gulf waters) and which transitioned to primarily females.

On the national level, the FFI and its conservation partners have been speaking out against HR8167, a resolution in Congress that calls for eliminating the Wallop-Breaux excise tax on fishing related products. Since 1950, Dingell-Johnson and Wallop-Breaux have provided states over \$6 billion dollars for fish hatcheries, stocking programs, artificial reefs, fisheries research, boating and bank access, outdoors education programs, and more.

While HR8167 is only a resolution and has no effect of law, the author is "testing the waters" to see if future support for an actual bill exists. While most taxes are not popular, this one has long had over 70 percent

support among anglers, and even had the full support of Newt Gingrich when he was Speaker of the House.



Again, good news. Recently several co-authors of HR8167 have dropped their support, and many other Congressmen and women - Republicans and Democrats - have declared opposition.

While the FFI Conservation Committee has been focused on issues, we're still processing applications for conservation grants and scholarships. The maximum grant award is \$3,000 and applications are accepted year-round.

The FFI Scholarship Award provides monetary support for outstanding undergraduate and graduate students pursuing degrees in fisheries or closely related fields. The maximum scholarship award is \$2,000 and can be used for tuition, living expenses and other costs directly related to the student's educational expenses. More info can be found at www.flyfishersinternational.org/conservation.



Test Your Fly Tying Skills

By David Buckner



The FFI Fly Tying Skills Award program is a great way to expand and challenge your fly tying skills and abilities. The program offers written, video, and personalized instruction to achieve bronze, silver, and gold levels. The required flies include freshwater and saltwater flies and a wide variety of materials and techniques. It's a great way to test your fly tying skills and receive awards for your personal accomplishment.

My fly tying journey began less than three years ago. I had fly fished for years and even built fly rods, but I never had an interest in tying flies. I don't remember why I pursued fly tying, but it all started when I knocked on the door of local saltwater fly fishing and tying expert Tom Herrington and asked him to teach me how to tie flies. Tom graciously invited me into his home and we spent the next two hours talking about the virtues of fly tying. It was a whole new world and opportunity to learn a new skill.

At the time, I was newly retired and had the time and flexibility to expand my hobbies! Along with a few others members of the Historic Ocean Springs Saltwater Fly Fishing Club, we began weekly classes.

Tom took us through a rich and progressive program, starting with locally effective saltwater flies and extending into other flies requiring new techniques. Gaining the ability to tie a fly that would catch a fish was a new thrill. After several months of classes, we were equipped to tie and create on our own.

Having learned a good deal about fly tying and with increased participation in FFI, I learned about the Fly Tying Skills Award Program. I thought, what a great way

to challenge myself and the skills I've learned over the past couple of years.

Each level of the program (bronze, silver, and gold) requires tying three each of the prescribed flies and flies of the tyer's choice. Each level requires ten or less flies. The breadth of flies required in each level span from freshwater to saltwater, from cold to warm water, and from simple to very complex. Each fly has associated online recipes and videos.

Upon completion of the flies, you are required to mail them to an evaluator for review. If you have deficiencies, you are allowed to correct them and resubmit the flies. Also, the evaluators are available to coach and guide you through the process. After the flies are approved, you receive an award pin and certificate, as well as recognition on the FFI website.

The flies required in each award level are progressively more difficult to tie and the grading scale also becomes more difficult. Achieving the required proportions and similarity between the three flies submitted are the most common mistakes, according to evaluator Al Beatty. My practice has been to tie several of each fly and pick the three best.

Another great tip came from evaluator Fred Dupre'. Fred told me to tie in steps across all flies to maintain uniformity. As you can see, the evaluators are very helpful guides and are critical to the learning process.

So far, I've completed the bronze and silver award levels and am working on my gold level flies. What a challenge! The gold flies are tough and the grading will be really tight. If you choose to participate in the program, you will learn new techniques and tie with an extensive variety of materials. You will learn to tie across a broad range of flies, including salmon and steelhead flies. You will definitely grow from the experience and enjoy a sense of accomplishment.

It seems intimidating, but the program is designed for education and you will have assistance throughout. The program is definitely worth the time and investment and I highly recommend participating.

Program details can be found at <https://www.flyfishersinternational.org/Get-Involved/Fly-Tying-Group/Fly-Tying-Skills-Award-Program>.

I also suggest that you become a member of the FFI Fly Tying Group to build relationships with fellow tyers, continue your education, and contribute to the fly tying community.

Pictures of my bronze and silver level flies are below. These include the required flies and those I chose to include.

Bronze Level Flies



Silver Level Flies



2022 FFI Gulf Coast Council Award Recipients

By David Buckner, Awards Chairman

The Gulf Coast Council Awards and Recognition Program began in 2007 to recognize individuals and clubs for their accomplishments in conservation, education, service, and other areas that promote the goals and ideals of the Gulf Coast Council, and of Fly Fishers International overall.

The following individuals, clubs, and organizations have been selected this year for awards and recognition.

Fly Fisher of the Year - Danielle Davidson

Awarded to individuals who demonstrate unusual devotion to the sport of fly fishing. Their contributions have benefitted FFI, the Gulf Coast Council, their local club, the fly fishing community, or the sport in general.



Danielle joined the FFI GCC Board in early 2021 as the Women Connect Director. She organized the "Bikes and Bugs" event, which gathered 40 women to

Gulf Shores State Park for a day of fishing and biking. She also organized an online casual gathering of fly fishing women across the Gulf region called "Online Networking and Coffee". Danielle assisted with getting Sisters of the Fly active into our annual Sweetwater Classic. Furthermore, Danielle put together one of the most successful youth fly fishing events ever on the northern Gulf Coast, *Fly Fishing with Kids* at the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Reserve Visitors Center in Fairhope. The activity included instruction and exhibitors for over 100 kids. Danielle serves as the President of the Eastern Shore Fly Fishers and a committee lead on their annual Tripletail Classic.

Danielle's contributions to Gulf Coast fly fishing over the past year have been significant and the honor is well deserved.

Fly Tying Excellence Award - Marc Pinsel

Awarded to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the art of fly tying, through a combination of innovation, enhancement of the art, instruction of others, or media education. In 2018, this award was modified to recognize lifetime achievement.

For over 30 years, Marc Pinsel has tied at various shows across the country and abroad. Although he ties a wide variety of flies, his specialties are salmon flies and woolhead patterns. His list of creations includes the 4M (Marc's Marvelous Magic Minnow), B&W Woolhead, Bream Woolhead, and Orange Bream Bass Fly.



He is a member of the Whiting Pro Staff and the Fly Dressers Guild UK. He has conducted fly tying workshops at FFI events, such as "Tying Salmon Flies for Largemouth Bass".

Marc served on the board of the FFI Southeastern Council and was a co-founder of the Gulf Coast Council. He is a previous recipient of the GCC Fly Fisher of the Year and President's Award. He was honored by the Federation of Fly Fishers with the Charles E. Brooks Memorial Award for lifetime achievement in fly tying. Marc has been featured in fly fishing magazines such as Eastern Fly Fishing and American Fly Fishing.

Education Excellence Award - David Buckner

Awarded to individuals or clubs that have made outstanding contributions to passing along the art of fly fishing to others, whether in the form of fly casting, fly tying, rod building, or any of the other fly fishing arts and sciences.

David joined the FFI GCC Board in 2021 and has become a key contributor in the Council's efforts. He is a former officer of HOSSFLY club and has been a driver in their growth and contribution to the GCC.

David is an accomplished fly tyer and always seeks opportunities to share his knowledge and expertise.

David was instrumental in the success of the 2021 GCC Sweetwater Classic, teaching several event sessions and

demonstrating his fly tying skills. He developed several



GCC materials and presentations for the event. David is a tremendous advocate for fly fishing in our region and within the GCC.

In his short time with the GCC Board, David has demonstrated a desire and ability to educate new and seasoned fly fishers in

various ways. His efforts truly warrant this honor.

Conservation Excellence Award - Eastern Shore Fly Fishers

Awarded to individuals or clubs that have made outstanding contributions to the conservation of our fisheries resources, either through projects or activism.

The Eastern Shore Fly Fishers Tripletail Classic has become a leading fly fishing event and tournament in our region. Drawing approximately 100 fly fishers and leading sponsors, this event raises significant funds for Tripletail research and awards participants for cleanup efforts. The Dauphin Island Sea Lab is the primary benefactor of the event and coordinates tagging efforts during the tournament. The tournament also awards participants for trash cleanup during the event. This catch, photo, and release tournament is in its third year, with maximum participation each year.

The Eastern Shore Fly Fishers Club has demonstrated that conservation is a priority with the Annual Tripletail Classic and their monetary and practical contributions are deserving of this award.

Club Fellowship Award - Historic Ocean Springs Saltwater Fly Fishing Club (HOSSFLY)

Awarded to clubs that have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to their membership through activities other than regular meetings.

HOSSFLY has been a leading regional fly fishing club for over 25 years. In the last few years, HOSSFLY has seen significant growth and increased participation. The club's leadership has provided programs and events to membership to increase their fly fishing knowledge and skills and abilities.

We recognize HOSSFLY's promotion of the FFI Casting Skills Challenge and Fly Tying Skills Awards Programs.

Also, we recognize HOSSFLY member efforts to make the GCC Sweetwater Classic a success.

HOSSFLY's mission is to further fly-fishing as a sport, to understand to the fullest extent possible the form and function of the sport, and through it promote protection and enhancement of angling resources and embody the sportsmanship, fellowship, comradery, and courtesy with all anglers in this true sport of gentlefolk.

HOSSFLY has truly delivered on its mission and their significant contributions to the sport.

Friend of the Gulf Coast Council - Sisters on the Fly (SOTF) Southeast Chapter

Awarded to individuals or groups who have made outstanding contributions to the Gulf Coast Council.

In 1999, sisters Maurrie Sussman and Rebecca Clarke, outdoor and fly fishing enthusiasts, decided that their adventures needed to be shared by all women, so they founded Sisters on the Fly. Today, Sisters on the fly has more than 12,500 members in regional chapters across the country. The Southeast Chapter of SOTF represents North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi with over 1,000 members.

At the 2022 Gulf Coast Sweetwater Classic, SOTF Southeast Chapter coordinated with the Gulf Coast Council for a variety of educational programs as well as participation in our fishing contests. This participation gave the GCC an opportunity to reach out to a large group of women, with the hope that this will translate to greater numbers of women fly anglers across the region. In addition, several SOTF members joined the FFI during the event.

Our regional Sisters on the Fly chapter has become a great friend of the Gulf Coast Council and we look forward to their continued participation in our events. We are happy to recognize Sisters on the Fly with this award.

President's Award - Glen "Catch" Cormier

Selected by the Council president. Given to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to the Council, either in service to the board, in service to its individual members and clubs, or both.

Catch Cormier was a founding member and the first president of the Gulf Coast Council of FFI. For 20 years as columnist of Louisiana Sportsman magazine's "Fly Lines" column, Catch would entertain us with topics of

great interest to fly fishers along the Gulf Coast. Catch is a member of the Kisatchie Fly Fishers and Acadiana Fly Rodders.



A staunch conservationist and advocate for the Gulf Coast region, Catch serves as Conservation Chairman of the GCC and is a member of FFI's Conservation Committee. He is a champion of the GCC's conservation efforts. He also serves as a member of the GCC's

Board of Director's Nominations Committee. He has chaired the past two GCC Sweetwater Classic expos and fishing tournaments and is a member of the upcoming GCC Classic Organizing Committee. He is a selfless leader who works tirelessly to promote the sport of fly fishing.

Catch is also an FFI Certified Casting Instructor. An accomplished fly tier and inventor of numerous flies, including the Coma Spoon and Coma Cockahoe. His Louisiana Fly Fishing (laflyfish.com) website contains a wealth of information for fly fishers across the region. It is with great pleasure that I award the GCC President's Award to someone who is well deserving of this honor.

Save the Date!

2023 Gulf Coast Fly Fishing Classic

Friday-Saturday, May 5-6, 2023

Gulf Shores State Park – Learning Campus



For more info, go to www.ffigcc.org



2022 Kayak Raffle Kicks Off!

This Summer/Fall, the FFI Gulf Coast Council is raffling off a Crescent Kayaks CK1 Venture kayak. It includes paddle and an inflatable PFD. Every ticket purchased helps to support GCC conservation and education initiatives. The raffle is open to the general public.

The CK1 Venture is one of the hottest new fishing kayaks on the market. Made in the USA, it has received strong reviews for its hull design that offers an optimum blend of speed, stability and excellent tracking for its length. It also weighs an amazingly light 60 pounds! A perfect kayak for all ages, combat launching or river or marsh fishing.

Donations are 1 ticket for \$10, or 3 tickets for \$20. A limited number of tickets will be sold. The deadline for ticket sales will be November 11, 2022 at 11:59 p.m. CST.

Individuals can purchase tickets by mail via check, VENMO, or online via credit card. If purchasing blocks of 3 tickets (\$20 each), make the payment to the amount of a block. For example, \$40 for 6 tickets.

A very special thank you to Crescent Kayaks for their support of the Gulf Coast Council, and also to Donald Dehm of Floating Feathers Kayak Fly Fishing School for his assistance. For more info about Crescent Kayaks, go to www.crescentkayaks.com.

For more details, or to purchase tickets, go to www.ffigcc.org/raffle-2.

GCC Board of Directors

A.J. Rosenbohm - President

president@ffigcc.org

Fred Hannie - Executive Vice-President,
Fly Tying Director

hannief@bellsouth.net

Donald Dehm – Treasurer

Education Director

education@ffigcc.org

George Norton – Secretary

geonorton@gmail.com

Jeff Ferguson- Casting Director

landlord2401@yahoo.com

Cindy Griffin - Women Connect Director

ccandnangriffin@gmail.com

David Buckner - Club Outreach

flyhawk13@outlook.com

Glen Cormier - Conservation Director

catch@laflyfish.com

Danielle Davidson

Danielle.davidson015@gmail.com

Tom Bullock

twbullock@aol.com

Lance Renoux

lance.renoux@gmail.com

Chris Williams

thefatfingeredflytyer@gmail.com

Ben Roussel

bmroussel@gmail.com

OTHER CONTACTS

Corinne Duplan - Newsletter Editor

corinnecormier24@gmail.com