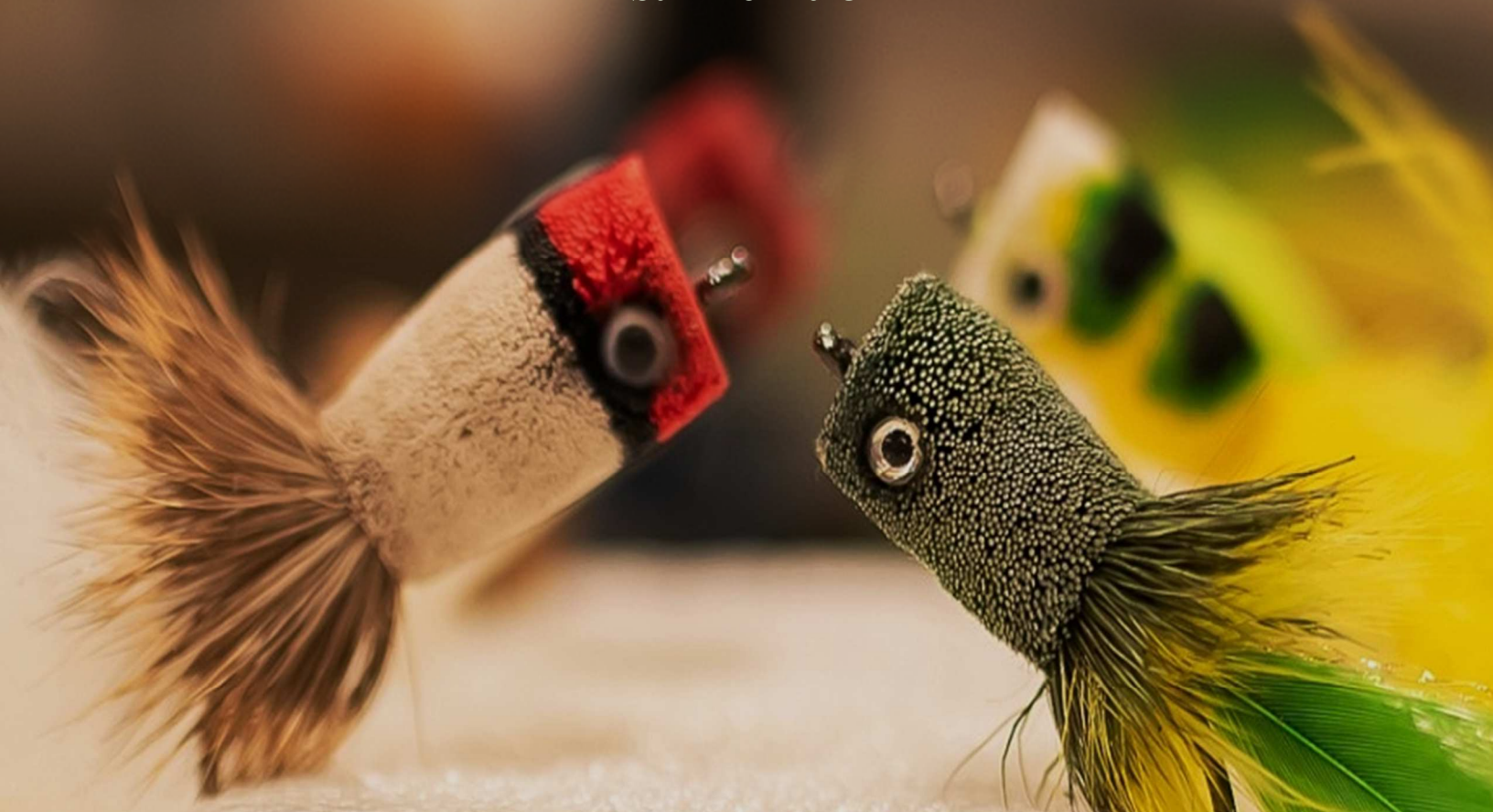


A Publication of the Gulf Coast Council of Fly Fishers International

The Gulf Streamer

Summer 2023



IN THIS ISSUE

From the Prez - p.1

Suncatch Challenge Update - p.2

Sluggish Sunfish Solution - p.3

Master of the Cast - p.4

Reds and Specks and Pogies - p.5

A Catch-All Panfish Pattern - p.7

Upcoming Attractions - p.10

2023 GCC Awards - p.11

Tripletail Classic Recap - p.14

An Invitation to All Tiers - p.15

Corinne Duplan - Editor

A Note from the President

Greetings All Members and Fly Fishers of the Gulf Coast Council of FFI,

I hope everyone is well as we are in the throes of Sweat-Fest 2023 along the northern Gulf Coast. Despite the heat, fishing has been good in the Gulf Coast Council region and we are getting great reports of good days on the water from many of our members.

There is a lot that has happened since our last newsletter.

On May 4th - 6th, 2023, the Gulf Coast Council hosted the Inaugural Gulf Coast Classic Fly-Fishing Expo at the Learning Campus of Gulf States Park in Gulf Shores, Alabama. The Classic kicked off with a mixed bag fishing tournament on Thursday morning. The FFI Board of Directors held their first live meeting at the event that afternoon. The expo portion started on Friday morning and continued on Saturday with fly tying demonstrations, hands-on casting instruction, numerous fly-fishing seminars and a number of raffles throughout both days.

The event concluded with the 2023 F3T fly-fishing film festival on Saturday afternoon where we raffled off a number of great items. Steve Martin of the New Orleans Fly Fishers Club was the lucky winner of a Sage R8 8 weight fly rod that was given away to one lucky attendee of the film fest. This event would not be possible without the help of all of our volunteers, demonstration fly tyers and seminar and program presenters.

I would like to especially thank all of our sponsors, including Tail Magazine, No Wake Outfitters, Orvis and Bajio among many others. Without their generosity and support the event wouldn't have been the great success that it was. There were over 200 attendees over the course of the Classic. We will be back next year with an even bigger and better event. Mark your calendar for May 2nd- 4th, 2024 for the 2nd Annual Gulf Coast Classic.

2023 has been a busy year in the Gulf Coast Council. The New Orleans Fly Fishers and Red Stick Fly Fishers kicked off the year with successful club expos. A number of our clubs have events throughout the year. The HOSSFLY, Kisatchie, Redstick and New Orleans clubs

all host mixed bag fly-fishing tournaments that run throughout the year. These are a lot of fun and if your club doesn't already host one, you should consider doing so.

HOSSFLY hosts their annual Jack Crevalle tournament that started this summer. Eastern Shore Fly Fishers will host the Triple Tail Classic on July 29th. The New Orleans Fly Fishers will host the 14th Annual Rio Grande Rodeo on September 30th. And the first weekend in November is the oldest fly tying event in the South, the Toledo Bend Rendezvous. Along with the many monthly regularly scheduled activities our clubs have to offer, our members are keeping busy.

Interest in fly fishing continues to grow as more people gravitate to the sport we all love. We are seeing more young people that want to learn to fly fish. They are the future of the sport. Let's show them all there is to love about fly fishing.

In this edition of The Gulf Streamer newsletter the recipients of the 2023 Gulf Coast Council Awards are listed. All are well deserving of these honors. Please join me in congratulating all of the recipients.

On a personal note, I want to thank all of you that voted for me for membership to the FFI Board of Directors. I will do my best to represent the Gulf Coast Council, its members and our fishery at the international level. I am honored that you have entrusted me to represent you.

Tight Lines,

A. J. Rosenbohm

President, Gulf Coast Council of Fly Fishers International

Cover photo: Some of the amazing hair bugs tied by Dr. Ed Lash at the Gulf Coast Classic back in May.

Photo courtesy of Maedbh Ryan.
www.maedbhryanphotography.com



Suncatch Challenge Update

Ben Roussel - Suncatch Chairman

The Suncatch Challenge is an initiative by the FFI Gulf Coast Council to highlight the value of species diversity among sunfish in our geographic area, and the importance of conserving the places they reside and their individual habitats. It mimics the Fly Fishers International Cuttcatch and Basscatch Projects in that it encourages FFI members to document the different species they catch and release, and, in return, receive recognition for those fish.

The program seeks to enhance the fly fisher's knowledge of our native sunfish, their habitats, and their conservation needs. We encourage all FFI members, especially those within the Gulf Coast Council, to learn more about their native sunfish species by visiting the waters in which they reside and fly fishing for them.

The program was started in April of 2021 and now has sixty (60) entries by ten (10) different challenge participants. Five folks have received Suncatch awards: Chris Williams – 11 species, Ben Roussel – 11 species, Brian Roberts – 10 species, Kirk Dietrich – 9 species, and Bill Morrison – 8 species. It won't be long before someone hits the twelve (12) species mark!

The program is open to all FFI members and does not have a time frame for completion. Participants use an online entry form accessed via the Suncatch website (<https://gulfcoastcouncilffi.org/suncatch/>) to submit entries. In October of 2022 the form was amended so that participants can now attach an accompanying

Connect With Us

Website:

www.gulfcoastcouncilffi.org

www.ffigcc.org

Facebook:

Like "Fly Fishers International Gulf Coast Council"

photo to the entry form making it even easier to submit fish.

A boundary map representing the eligible watersheds within the Gulf Coast Council can also be found on the website as can a database of all the entries received. The database is updated weekly and contains live links to pictures of each fish submitted. It's a great tool for fish identification and will only get better with more entries!

If you wish to enter a fish and don't know the species, feel free to submit an email (gccffi+suncatch@gmail.com) to the Suncatch board and they will do their best, or solicit knowledge from fisheries professionals, so that an accurate ID can be determined. Starting in May of this year hybrid sunfish will no longer be accepted, so catching fish that are representative of the species submitted is imperative.

Also starting in May of this year the Suncatch Challenge was expanded to include nineteen (19) species from the Centrarchidae family whose native ranges fall within the boundaries of the Gulf Coast Council. The newest species added are black and white crappie and banded sunfish. A total list of species available to submit can be found on the Suncatch website.

Also new in May of this year the Suncatch committee has added an additional reward level:

- Suncatch Fanatic – 8 species – custom sunfish mug
- Suncatch Expert – 12 species – TBD* (new this year)
- Suncatch Master – 16 species – TBD

Participants that submit at least eight (8) of the selected species qualify for the first Suncatch award level, twelve (12) species qualify for the second award level, and finally sixteen (16) qualifies for the "Suncatch Master" award. Suncatch award recipients will be recognized on the GCC Facebook page and website.

** Editors note Brian Roberts hit the 13 species mark just after this article was submitted. Congratulations!*

Sluggish Sunfish Solution: the Black Boudreaux

By *Catch Cormier*

Here in Louisiana, we've had the hottest summer on record. Whether you blame global warming or a strong El Nino, the gobblers don't care. The water is hot - 90 degrees here on the home lake - and the sunfish are lethargic. Getting them to eat is a challenge.

I understand their reluctance to eat anything. Dissolved oxygen is very low and functioning in such warm water is strenuous. After working in the yard most of the hot day, my appetite for dinner is usually a salad. Fish don't eat salad - unless you're a grass carp. For sunfish, it's a downsizing from large bugs to tiny bugs.

One fly that works very well in these tough conditions is the Black Boudreaux and its spinoffs, the Purple Boudreaux and Blue Boudreaux. This pattern was created by Ray Boudreaux of New Iberia, a longtime member of Acadiana Fly Rodders. As Ray tells it, he had just joined AFR and participated in a fishing outing at a local pond. One of the members was having great success catching bream on a small fly. Ray tried to recreate the fly and, in the process, came up with something new and different. Fellow member Bob Boese was so impressed with the fly, he named it after Ray.

Bob's variation of this fly uses brown or black hackle for the tail, and tinsel instead of peacock for the body. I tie the original body, but have adapted the hackle for the tail.

Here's the pattern materials I use:

- hook: size 12 Czech nymph, Hanak H333BL or similar
- thread: size 6/0 black
- tail: hackle feathers from near base of feather
- body: peacock herl
- hackle: dry fly hackle (black, purple, blue)
- eyes: small bead chain black

The original pattern was tied on a size 14 scud hook. After much field testing, I moved it up to a size 12. While catching four and five-inch bream is still possible, I tend to hook up to more 6 and 7 inchers - and not have them swallow the hook as often.

Why is this fly so effective? Gary Borger has the answer. In his book, "Designing Trout Flies", he points out that color vision in fish allows them to distinguish food items against the background color of the water.

"Indescent feathers such as peacock herl... are very successful during opportunistic times because they stand out strongly against any of the background space light colors."

If you're anxious to get some bream action in during this record "SweatFest", fish early or late, please stay hydrated, and give the Black Boudreaux a try. You won't be disappointed!

Link to tying video:
<https://youtu.be/g7KeUlrHJEo>



Save the Date!

2nd annual FFI Gulf Coast Classic
Friday-Saturday, May 3-4, 2024
Gulf State Park – Learning Campus
Gulf Shores, Alabama





A Master of The Cast

by Catch Cormier

Last October, the fly fishing world lost one of its most prolific educators in David Diaz. Dave passed away following four years of poor health after suffering a hemorrhagic stroke. Although Dave had relocated to Birmingham prior to the formation of the Gulf Coast Council, his contributions to the Southeastern and Gulf Coast councils, and the entire FFI cannot be overstated.

A native of New Orleans, Dave earned his bachelor's degree from University of New Orleans, and his Masters and PhD from the University of Oregon. He later taught at UNO and Tulane, and worked for a number of private companies as well as the U.S. Forest Service. He also started his own side business supplying blanks and components for rod builders.

He was a man of many interests. They included art, photography, musical theatre, making and playing guitars, reading books, building fly rods, tying flies, and traveling to places from Argentina to Kamchatka, and across the US and Canada in pursuit of fishes on the fly.

But his first love - besides family - was teaching others how to fly fish and fly cast. Over the years, he taught over 5,000 persons the joys of both. He was the first elected president of the FFI Casting Board of Governors and served for many years in various capacities to the casting program.

Our council's Casting Director, Jeff Ferguson, an FFI Master Casting Instructor (MCI), Level 2 Examiner, and member of the Casting Board of Governors, credits Dave with his journey to the peak of fly casting prowess. "Without his help, I'd probably still be a basic instructor.

Dave was instrumental in getting me to that next level."

My first encounter with Dave was in 1988. A member of the New Orleans Fly Fishers at the time, he gave a casting clinic to our newly-formed club in Baton Rouge. At this stage of my fly fishing life, I'd not seen anyone with as smooth and efficient a casting stroke as Dave.

When I asked him about several of the VHS instructional casting videos I'd watched - from Gary Berger, Doug Swisher, Joan Wulff and others - Dave could tell me every detail of their cast and why their particular methods worked. It was with Dave's guidance that I qualified to become an FFI Certified Casting Instructor in 1993, the first full year of the program.

For nearly 8 years, Dave also conducted our club's rod building clinics. It was much more than just a "how to" event. He knew every aspect of the industry, and he was a walking encyclopedia of fly fishing knowledge.

When Dave moved to Birmingham, he decided to end his rod building supply business. Jody Titone and I told him we were interested in taking the reins. So with his help, we continued his legacy of assisting clubs with rod building clinics. Whenever we had a question on anything, Dave was always willing to take a call and assist.

As accomplished as he was, it was also with humility. Dave once asked me to sit in on a CCI Preparation Workshop he was doing at an upcoming Southeastern Council conclave. For 45 minutes, he covered every detail of the written and field examinations, what was important to know, where the students could get help on each topic, and so on. Then for the next 40 minutes, he went into a "How to Instruct the Beginner" hands-on demonstration, teaching the students how to recognize faults and fixes.

Afterwards, I was bit perplexed as to why he had asked me to sit in and just watch. He told me, "I was trying something new, and I needed someone to give me an honest evaluation. Tell me what you thought... on a scale of 0 to 10?". After some hesitation, my response was "Twenty?".

Dr. Dino Frangos of Mobile, one of our Council's top casting instructors (MCI, Level 1 Examiner) was another of Dave's many proteges. Dino recalled some fond memories.

"Until the end David showed his parch-dry sense of humor and interest in all matters of fly fishing and casting. Despite being bed-bound from a massive stroke and in a nursing home, he would relish FFI news, and in vintage fashion David would offer his opinion on such matters. A visit from a flyfishing friend would cause his eyes and face to light-up with excitement."

"Personally, I hold David right up there with the past icons of our proud organization. He represents the best ideals of our FFI founding fathers, or as I might tease David, 'one of the old guard'. I was fortunate to have David as a long-distance mentor as he was the only FFI MCI in Alabama. Tom Dempsey and I would travel 4 hours each way for a casting lesson. Of course, there were a lot of phone calls for advice."

"I remember the first lesson I had with David and boasted that someday I would be a CBOG. His sage advice was that first I better worry about passing my CI exam. I accomplished the latter several years ago, but I am still waiting on a call from the CBOG."

Dino believes his late friend's legacy must continue, "As this next generation of CBOGs, MCIs, and CIs take the FFI helm, I hope we can follow the path that David Diaz helped forge."

Conservation Corner

Reds and Specks and Pogies, Oh My!

by Catch Cormier

When the FFF transformed to the FFI, among the extensive changes was a greater emphasis on proactive conservation. As Ben Franklin put it, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!"

And with that in mind, the GCC has been very busy this summer trying to prevent collapse of three imperiled fisheries. We attended Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission meetings representing the Gulf Coast Council on topics related to commercial menhaden harvest, spotted seatrout management and red drum management.

Let me summarize where we stand on each of these three species.

Menhaden

It was frustration once again. Louisiana remains the only state without a quota for menhaden harvest, and

one of only two states from Texas to Maine without a harvest exclusion zone of less than 1/2 mile. The annual harvest in Louisiana is a whopping 100 million pounds, or 90 percent of the nation's total. Last year, under immense pressure, the Commission enacted a measly 1/4 mile zone but it's been violated numerous times.

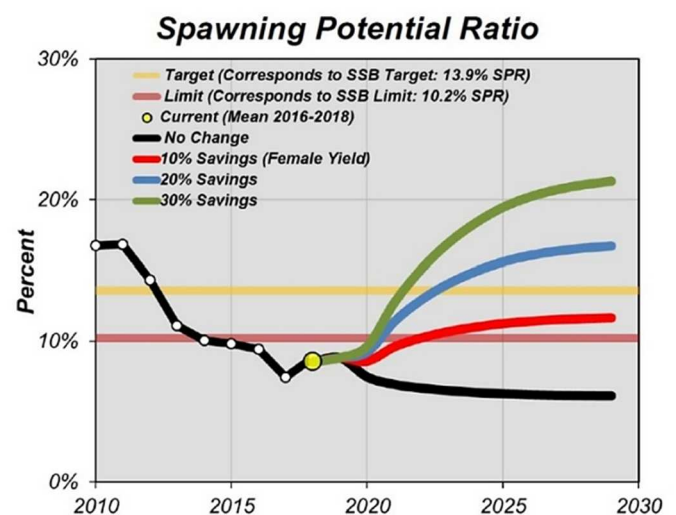
Pogies are a significant forage fish for nearshore species such as redfish, speckled trout, spanish mackerel, king mackerel, jack crevalle, and many others. Especially in summer when these fish are spawning and need the high protein to build egg mass. In addition, there is a large bycatch of these spawning species when nearshore harvesting.

Efforts to get quotas and buffers through state law have been thwarted by a few individual lawmakers despite having a wide majority of support in both houses of the legislature.

Speckled Trout

Set 35 years ago, current regulations for seatrout are 12-inch minimum size, 25 fish per day, the most liberal of any state. Since then, a number of factors have led to seatrout decline: significant loss of wetlands, loss of habitat diversity, decline in forage, historical levels of freshwater discharges, and large increases in the number of anglers and angler efficiency.

As a result, the Spawning Potential Ratio (SPR) for trout has declined below the Conservation Standard. New regulations are required.



Last year, the GCC proposed a 14-inch, 15 creel limit which several of our conservation partners also backed. Oddly, the Commission passed a 13.5-inch, 15 creel Notice of Intent (NOI).

We had heavy opposition from one conservation organization that claimed that moving to 14 inches - or even 13.5 inches - would result in a 90 percent harvest of females. The Legislative Natural Resources Oversight Committee bought into this, despite contrary evidence by the LDWF biologists. So they rejected the NOI.

At the July meeting, the Commission put seatrout back on the agenda with an amended NOI of a 12-inch minimum, 15 daily limit. Most of the two dozen speakers from the eastern and western parts of the state still wanted a larger minimum size. The Commission then tabled any regulation change for a month, and asked the LDWF biologists to come back with a proposal for Zone Management.

At the August meeting, a zone proposal was offered. And though it initially had support from LWC members, it was evident after discussion that too many questions remained. So, the Commission passed a statewide proposal instead.

If approved by the Legislative Oversight, the new regulation will be 15 trout per day, 13-20 inch slot limit, with only 2 over 20 inches allowed.

Redfish

The July meeting also considered an NOI to address the decline in redfish. There were a couple developments in advance of the meeting that aided the Commission's decision.

First, after LDWF presented evidence of overfishing on their website, the majority of responses on social media were strongly in favor of both size and creel reductions.

Second, a resolution was brought to the legislature weeks before the meeting. It called for eliminating the harvest of all over slot size redfish. It passed unanimously.

In May, I met with LDWF Marine Finfish Manager Jason Adriance and another biologist where we discussed possible regulations. Their data showed the state needed at least a 35 percent harvest reduction to eventually reach the conservation standards for both Spawning Potential Ratio (SPR) and Escapement Rate (ECR). They told me LDWF would be offering a 35 reduction proposal. I told them that would take way too long, and we (GCC) would be offering a more conservative proposal.

At the July Commission meeting, here's what was considered:

NOI as put forward by LDWF:

- 18"-27" slot, 4 daily creel, no overslot
- 36.9% harvest reduction
- ECR target: 3 years
- SPR target: 26 years 🤔

GCC Proposal

- 18"-26" slot, 3 daily creel, no overslot
- 45.8% harvest reduction
- ECR target: 2 years
- SPR target: 11 years

At the Commission meeting, most of the two dozen speakers on the redfish NOI were fly fishing guides. No surprise since in Louisiana, the *Spottail Elvis* is the primary target species for fly anglers worldwide. Most of the other speakers also supported a more restrictive limit. Only two speakers were opposed to tighter limits.

As each supporter spoke passionately about their firsthand observations on the decline of red drum in Louisiana - **and why a 35 percent reduction was wholly inadequate** - you could sense the Commission feeling the message. When public input was complete, the Commission then submitted and passed a new Notice of Intent (regulation change).

NOI passed by the Commission:

- 18"-24" slot, 3 daily creel, no overslot
- 55.1% harvest reduction
- ECR target: 1 years
- SPR target: 9 years

You could've knocked me over with a hackle feather... size 16 at that! We had been told that our proposal would never get consideration. And yet, the Commission passed one more conservative than ours!

The redfish NOI still must go through a 90 day public comment period. We ask everyone to send their comments to Jason Adriance at jadriance@wlf.la.gov.

Also, please keep checking our website at ffigcc.org for further updates and how to contact members of the Legislative Natural Resources Oversight Committee.



A Catch-All Panfish Pattern: The Rosenbohm Bluegill Spider

by Bill Morrison

I don't know if Abraham Lincoln was an angler, but with a small change, one of his most famous quotes perfectly describes fishing, "You can fool some of the [fish] some of the time...but you cannot fool all of the [fish] all of the time.". While I'm not proposing that this fly will fool all of the fish all of the time, over the past year, it has fooled more fish more often than most other patterns I've used for panfish.



I first became acquainted with this variant of the popular Bully Bluegill Spider in the summer of 2022 when a friend and I met our good friend A. J. Rosenbohm in New Orleans City Park for a day targeting Rio Grande Cichlids. A. J. gave each of us a few copies in white and chartreuse, and we were not only successful catching cichlids, we also caught bass, bluegill, warmouth, red-spotted sunfish, and an unexpected 25" spotted gar on the fly.

This pattern differs from the classic Bully Bluegill Spider in two ways: It is unweighted, and it has a larger, UV-resin head that serves as a hot spot. A. J. is far too modest to name a fly after himself, but I have come to refer to this fly as the Rosenbohm Bluegill Spider, as it is sufficiently different than the classic Bully Bluegill to need a different name.

A. J.'s changes make the fly fish significantly different than the original pattern. Since the fly is unweighted, it fishes well in the shallow water in which panfish are often found, and it casts well with even the lightest of rod weights. It hovers and sinks slowly in the water column, so can be fished from just under the surface to a foot or so deep, depending on how long it is allowed to sink and the retrieval rate. In lakes and other stillwater such as swamp areas, I fish it close to or above cover, letting it sink a bit and then retrieving in

5"-6" strips with brief pauses every few strips. I also enjoy fishing the creeks of Louisiana for native fish, and this pattern works perfectly in the shallow water I normally find in most creeks. Additionally, it is a great pattern for sight fishing in that the slow sink rate gives the angler good control over positioning the fly in front of the fish. In short, it is a very versatile pattern for different water types and fishing situations.

In tying the pattern, I like the look of the curved nymph hook, though a straight 3x long hook will work just fine. I also like a heavy wire hook because, as I mentioned above with the gar, we never know when we may hook a large fish that inhabits the same water as panfish. With a heavy wire hook, I would be comfortable hooking bowfin, pickerel, or even carp without concern about the hook straightening. Regarding colors, I fish mostly white or chartreuse, but I also tie them in olive, black, gray, and florescent pink. I try to generally match the leg color to the body, but I don't find it makes that much difference.



For most fly fishers who have tried it, the Rosenbohm Bluegill Spider has become one of their go-to confidence patterns for panfish. The fly checks all the boxes for a great fly: it is quick and easy to tie, durable, versatile, casts well, and most importantly, it catches fish. Below are links to the page with tying instructions as well as a YouTube tying video. I hope you give the fly a try – I know you'll enjoy it as much as I have.

Link to YouTube tying video:

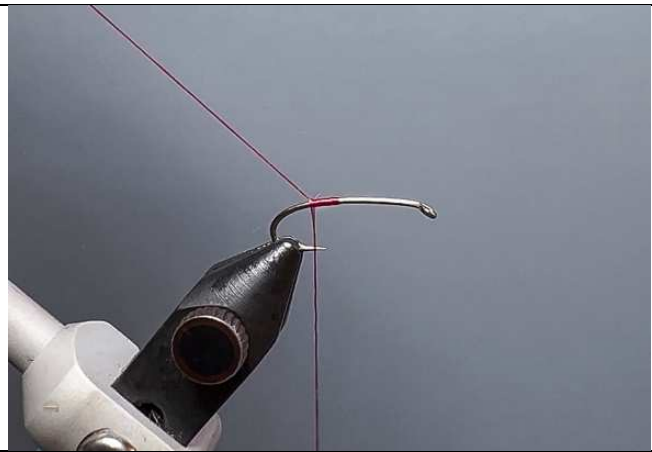
<https://youtu.be/kGIm67VrVdc>

Here is a step-by-step instruction:

Rosenbohm Bluegill Spider

Material List

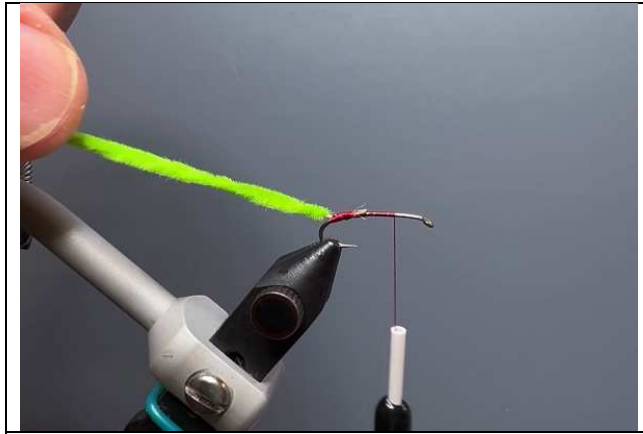
1. Hook: 3x-long curved or straight nymph hook in preferred size (#14 shown here)
2. Thread: 140 denier in (red) or other bright color
3. Body: Standard ultra chenille - your color choice (standard size in chartreuse, white, grey, olive, etc. Chartreuse and white seem to be the most effective)
4. Legs: Silli Legs to match body (barred chartreuse in nymph size)
5. Head: Thread and thin UV resin



Start thread about 2/3 of the hook shank back from the eye and wrap thread back between the hook point and barb.



Strip about 1/4" of the fuzz from a 6" or longer piece of ultra chenille and tie the chenille core in at the thread point.



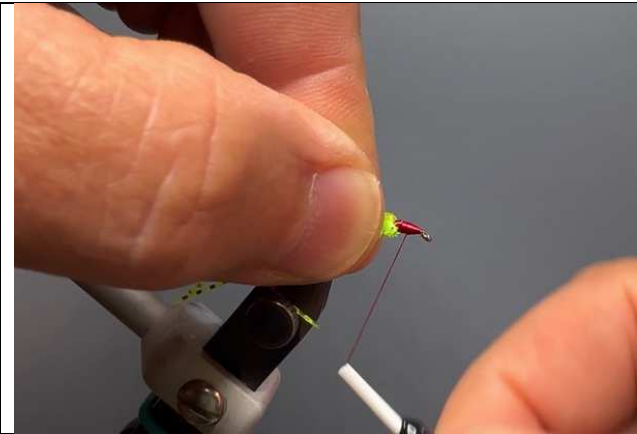
Wrap thread over the chenille core back to the rear of the thread. Wrap the thread forward. Stop the thread behind the eye, about 1/3 of the distance between the eye and the point. This should leave a minimum of two eye lengths open behind the eye.



Wrap the chenille forward to the thread stop point and tie off the chenille with a few wraps of thread. Trim off the excess chenille.



Double over two rubber legs and tie in at the mid-point to create 4 legs.



Continue wrapping thread after tying in the legs and create a football-shaped head that is about 1/2 the diameter of the chenille.



Cover all sides of the head with a coating of UV resin, continually rotating the fly (if you have a rotary vise) to evenly distribute the resin around the head. While rotating the head, cure the resin with the UV light.



Grasp all 4 legs and pull to the rear (don't stretch). Trim the legs just back of the rear bend of the hook.

Clubs of the Gulf Coast Council





Coming Attractions

Sept. 15-16 - 1st annual FFI Fly Tying Group

Rendezvous. Lions Community Center, 1015 E. State Highway 76, Branson, MO. Largest gathering of fly tiers from across the country. Tying demos, raffles, auctions, Texas Tenors concert Saturday night. Site: www.flyfishersinternational.org.

Sept. 23 - National Hunting and 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. Site: www.nhfd.org.

Sept. 30 - 14th 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. Site: www.neworleansflyfishers.com.

Sept. 30-Oct. 1 - 2nd annual Flyfishing Round Up and Casters Gathering. Millican Reserve, College Station, TX.

Roundup: Sat. 9am-4pm, Round Up features presentations, casting and tying instruction, live music, Kids Zone, Fishing Tournament, VIP After Party.

Gathering: Sun. 9am-3pm. The Gathering is a series of workshops for CCI instructors or potential casting instructors. Hosted by Good Fly, Aggieland Fly Fishers, and the FFI Texas Council. Site: www.aggielandff.org.

Nov. 3-5 - North Toledo Bend Rendezvous. North Toledo Bend State Park, Zwolle, LA. Friday - Sunday. Rendezvous is an annual gathering of members of fly fishing clubs from Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Mississippi and beyond. No planned activities but plenty of fly tying, food, fly casting, fishing. Fee includes lodging and meals. Check out the Rendezvous webpage for more details: <http://flycasting.bravesites.com/>

Jan. 20, 2024 - 4th biennial Cenla Fly Fishing Festival.

Kees Park Center, Pineville, LA, 8:30am - 3:30pm, free admission. Hosted by the Kisatchie Fly Fishers, this biennial event (even years only) features seminars, fly tying, fly casting clinics, and more. Lunch and refreshments available. Site: www.kisatchiefly.org.

Feb. 2-4, 2024 - Atlanta Fly Fishing Show.

Gasouth Center, 6400 Sugarloaf Parkway, Duluth, GA. The Fly Fishing Show is the largest commercial event celebrating our sport. With dozens of national and regional experts, recognized fly tiers, seminars, workshops, vendors, and more. Fly Fishers International (FFI) offers free fly casting and fly tying instruction each day. Site: www.flyfishingshow.com.

May 2-4, 2024 - 2nd annual FFI GULF COAST CLASSIC.

Gulf State Park - Learning Campus. Gulf Shores, AL. Friday-Saturday. Activities planned: seminars, fly tying demonstrations, casting instruction, fly tying instruction, exhibitors and vendors, Film Festival, Fishing Contest, raffles, auction, and more. Hosted by the FFI Gulf Coast Council. For details, go to www.ffigcc.org.

If you know of a club event within our council, or an event involving FFI in a neighboring council, please email details to catch@laflyfish.com.



2023 FFI Gulf Coast Council Award Recipients

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 GCC and Fly Fishers International.

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

Fly Fisher of the Year - Donald Dehm

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 fishing in general.



Donald's impact on the GCC began when he was a member of the Southeastern Council. For helping instruct wounded warriors at the annual "Fly Fishing the Mission" tournament in southeast Louisiana he was recognized as "Friend of the Council".

Since moving from Huntsville to Foley, and joining the GCC Board, Donald has made significant contributions to the Council. He serves as our Treasurer and Educational Director, and has been a "Swiss army knife" resource to our clubs and partners. He played a major role this past year in organizing our inaugural Gulf Coast Classic and the Fly Fishing Film Tour. He has also represented GCC in the "Conservation Corridor" at the annual Eastern Shore "Tripletail Classic", the largest conservation event in the Council.

Donald has been a longtime advocate for fly fishing from kayaks, through either magazine articles, social media, or other resources. He has put together over 90

instructional videos covering all aspects of kayak fishing. His Floating Feathers Kayak Fly Fishing School helped hundreds to learn how to kayak fish. Sadly, Donald had to close his school due to health issues, but continues to be a strong voice in the kayak industry and close friend to many of the top kayak anglers in the country.

We are very lucky to have him with us, and look forward to more great things in the future.

Education Excellence Award - Dino Frangos

Awarded to individuals or clubs that have made outstanding contributions in teaching one or more elements of our sport to others. Elements such as fly fishing basics, fly casting, fly tying, rod building, or advanced fishing techniques.



Dr. Dino Frangos is a native of Wyoming and retired urologist from Mobile, AL. He's been a member of the Gulf Coast Fly Fishing School, and through the school and other venues has taught over a thousand folks how to fly cast. A longtime FFI Certified Casting Instructor, in 2013 he was certified a Master Casting Instructor (MCI). And in 2021, he met the requirements to become a Level 1 Examiner for testing and certification in the CCI program.

In addition to teaching and instruction, Dino has written numerous articles on flycasting, including the FFI Casting Publication, The Loop. A few of his articles have been invaluable to those pursuing the Master Casting Instruction (MCI) certification. Dino has volunteered for casting instruction at various events, including most recently at the FFI Gulf Coast Classic in Gulf Shores.

Lifetime Excellence in Fly Tying

Awarded to an individual - who over a good number of years - has made an outstanding contribution to the art of fly tying, through any combination of accomplishment, innovation, enhancement of the art, instruction of others, or media education. This year, we

had two nominees, both of which we felt very worthy of this honor.

David Buckner



David is a member of both the Historic Ocean Springs Saltwater Fly Fishing Club (HOSSFly) and Eastern Shore Fly Fishers (ESFF). Retired from executive management at Mississippi Power

and Southern Company, he has been active in numerous civic and charitable organizations, also serving on the boards of United Way, Walter Anderson Museum of Art, Boy Scouts and more.



David has also served as Membership Director during his time on the FFI Gulf Coast Council and was instrumental in helping organize our inaugural Gulf Coast Classic.

David is a nationally-recognized tier, with a wide range of patterns from salmon flies to trout flies, and to his specialty, saltwater patterns. His willingness to share his knowledge with others was key to him being awarded the Gulf Coast Council "Excellence in Education Award" in 2022. That same year, he was named to the FFI Fly Tying Group Board of Governors. The mission of the FTG is to share opportunities for the fly tying community to learn new, or enhance, their tying skills.

Some of David's favorite creations are mashups of popular flies. For example, combining spoon flies and clousers, combining bendbacks and spoon flies, hair

streamer jig flies, and more. Whatever he creates, he tests the pattern. If it doesn't catch fish, it's not a "keeper".

David has been gracious to donate his flies to several events each year including the Tripletail Classic each summer with which he's also been actively involved.

Kevin "Doc" Andry



Dr. Kevin Andry is a nationally-recognized educator and music director for St. Michaels High School in Baton Rouge.

Although he's only been tying flies for 13

years, everyone who knows "Musicdoc" will tell you that his boundless energy, enthusiasm and quest for excellence was bound to result in him mastering many aspects of the craft in short time.

A member of both Red Stick Fly Fishers and Kisatchie Fly Fishers, the wide repertoire of patterns he ties ranges from traditional nymphs and streamers to inshore saltwater favorites such as Clousers and Spoon Flies. But his love for bass fishing on fly rod - at which he's been highly successful - has led Kevin to mastering a few of his favorite flies: Crease Flies, Hard-bodied Poppers, and Deer Hair Bugs. The latter of which he has earned a national reputation alongside his mentors Pat Cohen and Ed Lash.



Kevin has participated as a demonstration tier at annual events of several regional clubs and has instructed tying workshops for clubs. He's donated his works of fly art not only to club events and the GCC Classic, but to other charitable events. He's given presentations on "Fly Fishing for Bass" and "Kayak Fishing the Louisiana Marsh". A longtime avid kayak angler, his blog, "*Kayak Fishing With Kevin*" details his many kayak fishing adventures.

And then there's that "lagniappe" - a little something extra that gives any candidate for this award extra consideration. In his case, Kevin started a fly fishing club at St. Michaels High School where he teaches. Now going into its fifth year, the club has taught dozens of young people fly casting and fly tying. Several of those students have themselves become excellent casters and tiers, and will hopefully be future champions of our sport.

President's Award - Chris Williams



Selected by the Council president, this award is given to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to the Council. But also in service to helping our members advance in the sport, through

either casting, tying, conservation, environmental, or other aspect.

As Tournament Director for the Gulf Coast Classic, Chris Williams put together the popular Mixed Bag Contest held during the event. But more important, he was a key member of the planning committee, providing valuable insight, and also directly responsible for a number of sponsors who donated fantastic items for our event, thus assuring it as a financial success.

A degreed marine biologist, Chris is an accomplished fly tier who ties at club meetings and events, and enjoys traveling to many locations in search of new and familiar species on the fly rod. He chronicles his adventures and many of his favorite fly patterns on his blog, "The Fat Fingered Fly Tyer".

In April, 2022, Chris started a monthly casual tying event called "Flies and Flights" at a local brewery. Not affiliated to any club or group, it's become very popular and the blueprint for other regional casual tying events that have initiated since then.

A member of the Red Stick Fly Fishers and Kisatchie Fly Fishers, Chris has won or placed in each club's annual diverse species contests. In 2021, he won the RSFF club's "Jambalaya Challenge" with 45 different and unique species logged on fly rod!

Chris is also involved in the Mayfly Project, a national non-profit organization which uses fly fishing to mentor and support children in foster care. It uses our sport to help children build a connection with the environment and the outdoors.

We are truly blessed to have Chris with his incredible talent and enthusiasm!

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In July, the GCC once again participated in the annual Tripletail Classic out of Weeks Bay Reserve in Fairhope, AL. One of the largest conservation events on the Gulf Coast, the TTC is a Catch-Tag-Photo-Release tournament targeting the Atlantic Tripletail. Hosted by the Eastern Shore Fly Fishers, the tournament is a joint project with the University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast Research Lab.

It was a very tough day on the water for the 70+ teams. Many fish were seen, but only 15 fish were caught. The wary tripletail is difficult to catch as is, but the unusually warm water made the fish lethargic.

Participants still had a great time. Back at tourney headquarters, there was fantastic barbecue, cold beer and LOTS of canned water, blind casting games, cornhole games, live music, raffles with fantastic prizes, and of course, the Conservation Causeway.

The Causeway consisted of tents and tables of 13 conservation groups. Donald Dehm and Catch Cormier manned the GCC tent and spoke to nearly a hundred anglers that stopped by. Chris Williams also attended and helped promote our efforts to support science-based management of fisheries across the region.





All FFI Fly Tying Group members - and potential FTG members - are invited to tie at the inaugural FFI Fly Tying Group Rendezvous in Branson, Missouri, September 14-16, 2023. Bring your family and stay a few days to tie, see some family friendly shows and fish in and around beautiful Lake Taneycomo.

WHO CAN TIE: You can tie as long as you are a member of the Fly Tying Group. Said another way, you don't have to be a Dave Whitlock to tie. This event is for individuals that like to tie to get together and have fun. It is a JFZ (Judgment Free Zone).

EVENT LOCATION: Lion's Community Center, 1015 E. State Highway 76, Branson, MO

EVENT SCHEDULE:

- SEPTEMBER 14, 2023 from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM: Kickoff Party for the tiers. Tickets \$6.00 each. Food will include hot dogs, hamburgers, chips and drinks.
- SEPTEMBER 15, 2023
 - Morning Session Tying from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM
 - Afternoon Session Tying from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM
 - Raffles and Auctions from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
 - Tier's Dinner from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM Tickets \$16.50 each.
- SEPTEMBER 16, 2023
 - Morning Session Tying from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM
 - Afternoon Session Tying from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM
 - Raffles and Auctions from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
 - 7:00 – 9:30 PM – OPTIONAL EVENT – Attend Texas Tenors Concert as a group. (\$37.50 each)

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Each tier must bring two boxes of flies. One to swap on Thursday night and one to raffle. Also please bring any raffle donations with you.
2. To tie, you must be a member of FFI and the Fly Tying Group. But, if you aren't a member now, it is not too late to join! Not only will you be able to tie at this fantastic event, but you will start receiving education and conservation information and will have access to the FFI Learning Center, with over 1000 fly patterns.
3. To join the Fly Tying Group, go to www.flyfishersinternational.org.

TO VIEW TIERS AT THE EVENT: There will be a minimal entrance fee at the door. The first tying shift starts at 9:00 am September 15, 2023. Concessions will be available.