

A Publication of the Gulf Coast Council of Fly Fishers International

The Gulf Streamer

Spring 2025

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Corinne Duplan - Editor

A Note from the President

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

It is my hope that everyone survived “Snowmageddon” 2025 when the northern Gulf Coast saw snow and temperatures unlike anything we have seen in over 100 years. Although there have been some reported fish kills it looks like many of our species were able to get into deeper water and survived the sub-freezing temperatures. There have even been reports of snow angels on the beaches in Florida.

Things are in full swing throughout the Gulf Coast Council. The Gulf Coast Council Board of Director elections took place at the end of 2024, with the new board being seated in January 2025. As we head into Spring and Summer look for new and exciting events that the council will be rolling out this year.

2025 promises to be a great year in the Gulf Coast Council. One of our long-time member clubs, The Mississippi Coast Fly Fishers Club, decided to disband the club and merge with the HOSSFLY Club. The new club is named The Gulf Coast Fly Fishers Club. We wish them continued success. The New Orleans Fly Fishers Club hosted its Bi-Annual Expo on January 25th. The Redstick Fly Fishers hosted its Annual Red Stick Day in Baton Rouge on March 8th. Both events were great successes. Several of our member clubs host events throughout the year. The Gulf Coast Fly Fishers, Kisatchie Fly Fishers, Redstick Fly Fishers and New Orleans Fly Fishers clubs all host mixed bag fly-fishing tournaments that run throughout the year. These tournaments are a lot of fun and a great way to get your members involved. GCFF will host its’ annual Jack Crevalle tournament that starts this summer. Eastern Shore Fly Fishers will host the Triple Tail Classic on June 7th. The New Orleans Fly Fishers will host the 16th Annual Rio Grande Rodeo on October 4th, 2025. Along with the many monthly regularly scheduled activities our clubs have to offer, our members are keeping busy.

On May 1st through 3rd, 2025, the Gulf Coast Council will host the 3rd Annual Gulf Coast Classic Fly-Fishing Festival & Expo at the Learning Campus of Gulf States Park in Gulf Shores, Alabama. The Classic will kick off with a mixed bag fishing tournament on Thursday morning, May 1st. The tournament is open to anyone that is registered for the Classic. You can purchase

tickets in advance via the Classic website at www.ffigulfcoastclassic.com.

The event goes into full swing on Friday morning, May 2nd, when the doors will open to the public at 8:45 AM. There will be numerous demonstrations, seminars and workshops throughout both days. We have a host of talented fly tyers that will be demonstrating their skills as well as teaching several workshops that attendees can sign up for. We will have casting instruction for beginners, intermediate and advanced level casters available from FFI Certified Casting and Master Casting Instructors. We will also have several great raffle and silent auction items that those in attendance can buy raffle tickets or bid on. This event would not be possible without the help of all our volunteers, demonstration fly- tyers, exhibitors, workshop instructors and seminar presenters. I want to especially thank our sponsors who support our event every year. Without their generosity and support the event wouldn’t be the great success that it has been.

Please visit the Gulf Coast Council’s website for more information on council news and happenings at www.gulfcoastcouncilffi.org.

On behalf of myself and the entire Gulf Coast Council Board of Directors I want to thank all of you that voted for us for the FFI Board of Director’s positions. We will do our best to represent the Gulf Coast Council, it’s members and our fishery. We are honored that you have entrusted us to represent you.

Tight Lines,

A.J. Rosenbohm

President, Gulf Coast Council of Fly Fishers International

Cover photo: A reminder that Spring is when sunfish take to the beds across the Gulf Coast. If you haven’t yet entered any species in the GCC’s Suncatch Challenge, now’s a great time to start!



Register now for the Gulf Coast Classic!

Gulf Coast Classic fly fishing festival Friday & Saturday, May 2-3, 2025

Gulf State Park

20249A State Park Rd, Gulf Shores, AL

www.ffigulfcoastclassic.com

Registration is now open for our 3rd annual Gulf Coast Classic on Friday May 2nd and Saturday May 3rd at Gulf State Park in Gulf Shores, AL. The Classic is the largest fly fishing event on the Gulf Coast, and features seminars, fly tying demonstrations, casting and tying workshops, a fishing contest, a film festival, and much more!

On the registration pages, you can pay for admission, signup for a workshop, purchase film festival tickets, and even procure inexpensive onsite lodging on the campus. Or you can register for the Classic now, and register for the workshops later. But don't wait too long... workshops and lodging can book up in advance of the event!

Many of our tiers are nationally-recognized and some are even professional tiers. Several of the tiers will be leading workshops as well. On the Classic website, you can read up on the bios of our fly tiers, as well as our presenters, seminar and workshop descriptions, and much more.

We also now have the Friday and Saturday schedules up in PDF format. Seminar topics cover a wide range of fishing opportunities, from bluegill and bass to tarpon and speckled trout to Louisiana redfish and more. In addition, there are speakers on conservation topics, including the Director of Alabama's Marine Fisheries Division, and Friday

Keynote Speaker, William Strickland of Mobile Baykeepers.

There's also an incredible array of raffle and silent auction items courtesy of our amazing sponsors. And our always popular "Mixed Bag Challenge" fishing contest - it's FREE entry with registration!

On Saturday evening, we'll hold our film festival. The 2025 Fly-Fishing Film Tour (F3T) will feature short films of a variety of locations, species, topics, and focused on the joys of fishing with a conservation message. In addition to the numerous door prizes, our showing ONLY will have special guests, and a chance at a very special attendance prize!

To help defray the cost of attendance, the Gulf Coast Council has procured the on-campus dormitories for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights. This extraordinary facility comes complete with linens, wi-fi, and more. Cost is \$50 per night, a bargain compared to hotel rates in the area.

Again, to learn more about the Classic, and links to registration and workshops, go to:
www.ffigulfcoastclassic.com.

**** NOTE: smoking is not allowed anywhere in the state park, either indoors or outdoors. We can suggest walking-distance places to smoke if the need arises ****

Connect With Us

Website:

www.gulfcoastcouncilffi.org

www.ffigcc.org

Facebook Page:

Like "Fly Fishers International Gulf Coast Council"

Facebook Group:

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Instagram:

Follow "the_gulf_coast_classic/#"



2025 Gulf Coast Classic Paid Workshop Lineup

The 2025 Gulf Coast Classic is just weeks away, and we're excited to announce an outstanding lineup of paid fly-tying workshops, featuring expert tyers from across the country. Whether you're looking to master traditional techniques or explore new materials, these hands-on classes provide an incredible opportunity to learn from some of the best in the craft.

From classic streamers and dry flies to deer hair and modern saltwater patterns, this year's workshop series offers something for everyone. Check out the details below and be sure to register early as class sizes are limited!!

Advanced Streamer Fly Tying Techniques

Hosted by Allen Rupp

This workshop is designed for intermediate fly tyers looking to elevate their streamer game. Allen Rupp will break down essential techniques such as tailing, collaring, and securely attaching dumbbell and bead chain eyes to ensure durability and performance on the water. By focusing on reinforcement techniques, participants will learn how to tie streamers that withstand aggressive strikes while maintaining their shape and movement.

All necessary hooks and materials will be provided, along with a bottle of Brush-on Zap-a-Gap for each attendee.

Date & Time: Friday, May 2, 2025 | 9:30 – 11:00 AM

Cost: \$50 per student

Class Size: Limited to 10 participants

Note: Participants must bring their own **fly-tying vise, scissors, and bobbin**.

By the end of the session, students will have the confidence and skill set to craft more durable and effective streamers that hold up to repeated use.

Tying the Marsh Candy

Hosted by Fred Hannie

Join Fred Hannie, the 2024 Buszek Award Winner and author of *Fly Tying with Monofilament* and *Uncommon Flies*, for an exclusive workshop on tying his Marsh Candy pattern. This innovative variation of the classic Surf Candy adds a touch of realism, making it an excellent choice for fooling even the most selective fish.

Fred will guide participants through each step of the tying process, sharing his expert techniques for working with synthetic materials, layering for realism, and achieving a durable yet natural-looking baitfish profile.

All necessary materials will be provided.

Date & Time: Friday, May 2, 2025 | 9:30 – 11:00 AM

Cost: \$20 per student

Class Size: Limited to 10 participants

Note: Participants must bring their own **vise, tools and UV Resin**.

Don't miss this chance to learn from one of the most innovative minds in realistic fly tying and add a highly effective saltwater pattern to your fly box!

Classic Streamers of Herb Welch

Hosted by Peggy Brenner

Herb Welch, the famous Rangeley taxidermist and painter, opened his fly shop in Oquossoc in 1903 and became known for his innovative streamer patterns. His designs, including the Cupsuptic Streamer, the Jane Craig Streamer, the Yellow Jane Craig, the Kennebago

Streamer, the Welch Rarebit, and the iconic Black Ghost, remain widely used by anglers today.

This hands-on workshop will guide participants through tying two of Welch's legendary streamer patterns. Students will learn traditional tying methods, material selection, and the historical significance of these timeless flies.

All necessary materials will be provided.

Date & Time: Friday, May 2, 2025 | 1:00 – 2:30 PM
Cost: \$35 per student
Class Size: Limited to 10 participants

Note: Participants must bring their own **vise, tools, and thread**.

This is a rare opportunity to learn and preserve classic streamer techniques that have stood the test of time!

Steve Maldonado's Saltwater Patterns

Hosted by Steve Maldonado

This workshop offers participants a unique opportunity to learn from Steve Maldonado as he shares his expertise in crafting three of his signature saltwater fly patterns:

- **Sheepshead Slammer Crab** – Imitates small crabs, a primary food source for sheepshead, and is designed to entice these notoriously picky feeders.
- **Redfish Wrecker** – Mimics crabs, shrimp, and baitfish that make up the majority of the redfish diet, making it effective in various conditions.
- **Lunch Lady Tarpon** – A versatile crab pattern that has also proven successful with bonefish and is designed to trigger aggressive strikes from cruising fish.

Designed for beginner to intermediate fly tyers, the class will cover essential techniques such as thread control, material manipulation, and achieving proper proportions. Steve will also demonstrate multiple methods for tying each pattern, allowing participants to discover the approaches that work best for them.

All necessary materials, such as **thread and hooks**, will be provided.

Date & Time: Friday, May 2, 2025 | 1:00 – 2:30 PM
Cost: \$50 per student
Class Size: Limited to 10 participants

Note: Participants must bring their own **basic fly-tying tools**, including a **vise, scissors, and bobbins**.

By the end of the session, attendees will have the skills and confidence to tie these effective saltwater patterns, enhancing both their fly-tying repertoire and on-the-water success.

Tying Nymphs: A Hands-On Workshop

Hosted by John Demuth

This workshop focuses on tying nymphs that are both durable and effective in various waters across the country. Participants will practice key techniques such as reinforcing pheasant tail wraps, creating tight and compact dubbed bodies, and constructing nymphs that sink quickly through the water column.

All necessary materials will be provided, but **students must bring their own vise and tools**. This class is recommended for those with **basic fly-tying experience**, including familiarity with using a vise, whip finishing, and handling standard tying materials.

Date & Time: Friday, May 2, 2025 | 3:00 – 4:30 PM
Cost: \$50 per student
Class Size: Limited to 12 participants

Don't miss this opportunity to hone your nymph-tying skills and create flies built to perform in a variety of fishing conditions!

Mack's Favorite Redfish Flies: How to Tie Them & When to Use Them

Hosted by Mack Bryson

Redfish enthusiasts won't want to miss this exclusive free workshop with Mack Bryson of Southeastern Fly Works at the 2025 Gulf Coast Classic Fly Fishing Festival! As a Renzetti Vise ambassador and Semperfli Pro Team

member, Mack will share his go-to redfish fly patterns and expert techniques to help you fish them effectively.

In this session, Mack will introduce his top redfish flies, explaining why they work and when to use each pattern for maximum success. He will also demonstrate essential tying and fishing techniques, providing insights that will help anglers of all skill levels improve their approach on the water.

Date & Time: Friday, May 2, 2025 | 3:00 – 4:30 PM

Cost: Free

Class Size: Limited to 15 participants

Spots will fill fast! Sign-up will open soon on the Classic website—stay tuned for registration details and materials lists.

NearNuff Crayfish School

Hosted by Allen Rupp

In honor of legendary fly tyer Dave Whitlock, this hands-on class will dive into the techniques behind his renowned NearNuff Crayfish pattern. Allen Rupp, personally mentored by Whitlock, will share insider knowledge on the materials, design, and purpose of this highly effective fly.

Beyond tying, the workshop will explore the ecology of crayfish, covering over 400 species found in North America. Understanding their habitats and behaviors will help participants know when and where to fish the NearNuff Crayfish more effectively.

Participants will receive **all necessary tying materials**, along with a **NearNuff Crayfish tied by Allen Rupp for reference** and a **bottle of Zap-A-Gap** for future use.

Date & Time: Saturday, May 3, 2025 | 9:30 – 11:00 AM

Cost: \$50 per student

Class Size: Limited to 10 participants

Note: Students must bring their own **fly-tying vise, scissors, and bobbin**.

By the end of the session, participants will have the knowledge and skills to confidently tie and fish one of Whitlock's most celebrated fly patterns.

Tying Dry Flies: A Hands-On Workshop

Hosted by John Demuth

This workshop is designed to help fly tyers refine their skills in crafting clean, durable dry flies. Participants will focus on essential techniques such as tying parachutes, working with deer hair and CDC, and creating tightly dubbed bodies. The class will cover versatile patterns that are effective across the United States and beyond, ensuring anglers are prepared for a variety of fishing conditions.

This session is best suited for those with a basic understanding of fly tying, including the ability to use a vise, whip finish, and work with standard tying materials. **Students must bring their own vise and tools**, but all necessary materials will be provided.

Date & Time: Saturday, May 3, 2025 | 9:30 – 11:00 AM

Cost: \$50 per student

Class Size: Limited to 12 participants

Don't miss this opportunity to sharpen your dry fly skills and take your tying to the next level!

Steve's Jungle Junkie

Hosted by Steve Maldonado

Join renowned fly designer Steve Maldonado for an immersive workshop where you'll learn to tie his signature Jungle Junkie streamer fly. Originally crafted for pike and muskie, this flashtail streamer has also gained acclaim among anglers targeting species like peacock bass. Featuring a bucktail and magnum flashabou body with a laser dub head, the Jungle Junkie maintains a bulky profile without excessive weight—making it both highly effective and easy to cast.

In this hands-on session, Steve will guide participants through every step of tying the Jungle Junkie, sharing expert insights into its design and the techniques that make it a standout in both freshwater and saltwater environments. Whether you're an experienced fly tyer or a beginner looking to expand your skill set, this workshop will provide valuable knowledge and hands-on experience.

Date & Time: Saturday, May 3, 2025 | 1:00 – 2:30 PM

Cost: \$50 per student

Class Size: Limited to 10 participants

Required Materials: Participants must **bring their own vise and tools**.

Don't miss this chance to learn from one of the industry's leading experts and add a proven predator pattern to your fly-tying collection!

Deer Hair Boot Camp

Hosted by Jeff Rowley & Joe Jackson

Step up your fly-tying game with Joe Jackson and Jeff Rowley as they share their expert techniques for working with deer hair. Whether you're a total beginner or an experienced tier looking to refine your skills, this workshop will provide the knowledge and confidence to master this specialized craft.

Jeff Rowley will guide you through the entire process of crafting a proper hair bug, from hook preparation to final trimming, while Joe Jackson will identify common mistakes and teach you how to fix them without starting over. This immersive session will cover everything from selecting the right materials and tools to advanced tips and tricks for achieving professional-quality flies.

Each participant will receive a **detailed take-home handout** with step-by-step instructions, along with **exclusive private scan links** to video tutorials covering more advanced techniques.

Date & Time: Saturday, May 3, 2025 | 1:00 – 3:00 PM

Cost: \$70 per student

Class Size: Limited to 12 participants

Please Note: This is an **observation-only** class, not a tie-along session.

Don't miss this chance to learn from two of the best in the business—reserve your spot today!

From Fur to Fly – Crafting Custom Dubbing Blends

Hosted by Allen Rupp

Take your fly-tying creativity to the next level with this hands-on workshop focused on crafting custom dubbing blends. Join Allen Rupp as he guides participants through selecting and blending natural and synthetic materials to achieve the perfect textures and colors for various fly patterns.

In this session, you'll learn how to combine materials to replicate the natural hues of aquatic insects and baitfish, enhancing your fly designs for greater realism and effectiveness. With a strong focus on practical application, each student will leave the workshop with at least four unique dubbing blends they've created themselves.

As a special bonus, all participants will receive a **one-year membership to Trout Unlimited** or an **extension of their existing membership**.

Date & Time: Saturday, May 3, 2025 | 3:00 – 4:00 PM

Cost: \$50 per student

Class Size: Limited to 18 participants

Don't miss this chance to elevate your fly-tying game—reserve your spot today!



THE GULF COAST COUNCIL OF FFI PRESENT THE 3RD ANNUAL

GULF COAST CLASSIC

FLY FISHING FESTIVAL

MAY 2-3, 2025

**GULF STATE PARK LEARNING CAMPUS
20249A STATE PARK RD, GULF SHORES, AL**



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FLY TYING DEMONSTRATIONS • FLY CASTING & FLY TYING WORKSHOPS
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MORE INFO AT FFIGULFCOASTCLASSIC.COM



Bream Plinking

By Glen Davis

I've been doing it all wrong. Yep. Last year I thought my little neighborhood lakes were fished out due to a number of my neighbors allowing friends to come in and bait fish the heck out the lakes. But that's just typical fisherman thinking, in that if you're not catching fish then "somebody else is to blame!".

This year, I've been going out to the lakes just before dark, not deliberately but by the fact that in the late winter there is very little light. There is just enough time and light to get in a little fishing. Due to the late fishing, I have figured out that the big bull bluegills are still there. The kicker is that they are, contrary to public opinion, hard to catch. I slowly started hooking up with the big gills right around dark and the bite got better each day as the weather warmed.

Once I realized that the big bulls were feeding late, I changed my routine to simply go fishing right before dark. The big Brimskis are feeding on midges. I know there's a midge hatch because the midges (which bite) are swarming so bad I have to wear a head net to be able to stay out there. This midge thing happens in early Spring. I've always had problems with Buffalo Gnats in early Spring turkey hunting. I think these midges are different because they are smaller. The midge activity is somehow acute to the early Spring, in my own anecdotal determination.

There's not much time once the big bulls start rising and I have developed a few techniques using my hard earned single-hand spey casting skills. Mind the fact

that I am bank fishing with numerous trees around. I can overhead cast but only in certain directions. When I see a rising bream, I raise the rod, slipping line out as I raise it until I have about a foot of overhang, then I use MCI Jeff Ferguson's elbow drop roll cast to roll the fly out into the middle of the ring. It's faster than an overhead and I don't have to worry about my backcast.

I always throw to the middle of the ring because that's what makes sense. It's what we do in saltwater when we see a jack blow up on the water. I can hear my guide in my head now as he screams "throw it in the hole!" It may be counterintuitive to throw where a fish WAS, but it's the right thing to do because when a fish blows up or takes on the surface, often they will just circle right back around. Since you don't know which way he might have gone, the only safe bet you have is to throw where he will be if he makes a circle or, possibly, he may hear the fly and come back. Doesn't always work, but it certainly works better than assuming he went in a particular direction. You can't read their mind.

When it is windy I use a subsurface bead-head nymph and when the water is calm I use a Griffiths Gnat.



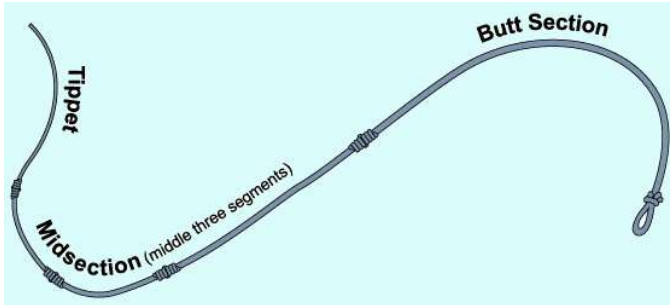
I also use a snake roll to quickly change directions and after I roll it I don't just drop it on the water in the new direction, I use the load to cast immediately without the line touching the water to keep the surface disturbance to a minimum.

Again, thanks to MCI Jeff Ferguson for his instruction at Red Stick Day. The snake roll and Jeff's elbow drop roll cast are the two casts that get a fly into the ring quickly when the trees won't allow an overhead cast.

I usually will start catching the medium size fish about thirty minutes before it is too dark to fish and fifteen minutes after that the big bulls will start taking. I'm not sure if they would continue rising into the night because when it gets too dark I just can't operate. I do seem to notice that the activity seems to shut down when it gets too dark.

So anyway, that's what I'm doing. Please don't think I'm trying to foist my "expertise" on you, I just think folks might be interested in what I'm doing since this seems to be working and I'm having fun plinking bream in the evening.

Glen is longtime member and past president of the Magnolia Fly Fishers of Jackson, MS. He enjoys fishing for redfish on the coast, bream and bass closer to home, and in the Mississippi River for a variety of species.



Notes on Fly Leaders

By Knots Leaderman

Imagine you're a novice and you've come to learn about the basic tackle in fly fishing. You've probably been told that the fly line is most important element of casting – sometimes more important than the rod itself. But for fishing itself, there's another element of greater importance.

After you've gotten fly lines figured out, then comes the connection between the fly line and the fly – the leader and its final section, the tippet. This is the business section of the setup.

The leader has two basic functions; 1) stabilize the loop while delivering the energy of the casting stroke to the fly, and 2) make the fly more lifelike than the heavier fly line. You can make your own leaders or buy them ready-made.

If you're a history buff, you'll appreciate that the French hotelier Charles Ritz pioneered the basic 60:20:20 leader formula using monofilament after World War II.

Some think that custom (knotted) leaders "turn over" better. If you make your own, they are easier to repair. It can be complicated. One online selection tool (Global Fly Fisher, 2017) offers 2971 different formulas for leaders (This link is worth a look). It is easier to buy pre-made knot-less leaders, but they can add up in cost. Pre-made leaders are common in local fly shops or purchased online.

In most, the thicker butt section tapers to a tippet section. Some sellers (i.e., Scientific Anglers) provide size and taper information on many of their leaders, but not all. There's a great video by Rio on materials, sizes and weight ratings of leaders and tippets online – highly recommend watching!

As you replace flies your tippet will get too short, and the conventional method is to tie in a new section of tippet, which shortens the midsection. Consider tippet rings as this saves on the amount of material used for the Midsection. Tippet material comes in many diameters. Using an indicator colored tippet material is easier for this writer to work with. It also helps to better detect strikes.

The truth is, a fly fisherman can buy and fish with any number of off-the-shelf leaders. Try several and use what works for you.



Micro Mylar Merkin Crawfish

By David Buckner



Materials List:

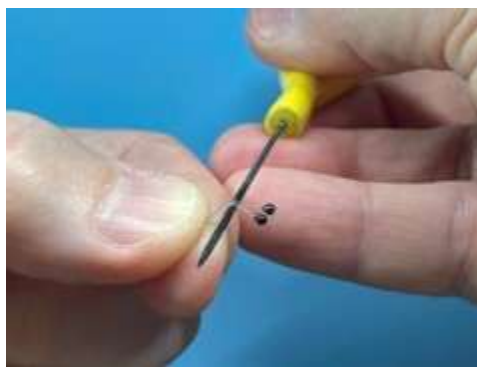
Fulling Mill FM51 30 Jig Hook – Size 14
Slotted Tungsten Bead – 2.8mm – Copper
Danville Flymaster 70 Denier Thread – Brown
Aussie Possum Fur – Crawfish
Whiting Soft Hackle w/Chickabou – Burnt Orange
20lb Mono Eyes – Black
Pine Squirrel Micro Zonker – Crawdad Orange
Textreme Micromylar – Gold



Burn the tips of mono line to create round eyes at each end.



Color the round eyes black with a sharpie. Add UV resin to increase the size of the eyes and continue coloring black



Bend the mono to a 90 degree angle with a warm bodkin.



Create a thread base to just into the hook bend.



Attach a small batch of possum fur in at the hook bend and clip off the excess.



Secure the tips of two chickadee feathers at the same tie in point and clip off the excess.



Invert the hook and mount the mono eyes at the hook bend.



Apply head cement to secure the materials



Invert the hook and attach one of the squirrel zonkers on the near side of the hook with the fibers to the outside and pointing towards the rear of the hook.



Rotate the hook and attached the other squirrel zonker on the far side of the hook with the fibers to the outside and pointing towards the rear of the hook.



Invert the hook. Remove the fluff and stroke back the fibers on a soft hackle.



Cut a tie in notch at the tip of the feather



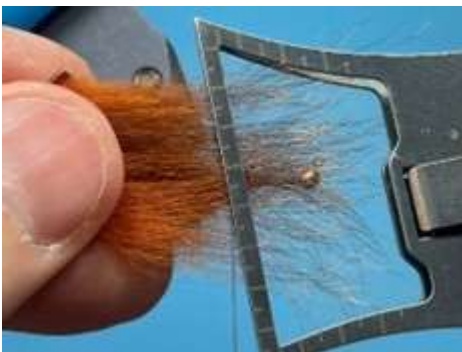
Secure the notched tip at the tie in point.



Wrap the feather forward around the shank, stoking the fibers back as you wrap.



Tie in the hackle and cut off the stems.



Cut a thin possum strip and place the tips in a clip.



Cut off the butt ends, leaving 1/8" of the hair beyond the clip edge.



Create a split thread dubbing loop by uncording the thread, laying the thread across your thumbnail, and inserting your bodkin to split the thread.



Place the butt ends into the split thread loop. Place tension on the thread to hold the hair in the loop and remove the clip.





While keeping tension on the thread with your thumb and forefinger, spin the bobbin clockwise. Release the thread and the hair will twist in the thread loop. Brush out, if needed.



Invert the hook and wrap the dubbing loop forward.



Tie off the dubbing loop. Uncord the thread by spinning your bobbin counterclockwise.



Invert the hook. Cut a 3" piece of mylar cord. Tie in the mylar cord directly behind the tie in point,

extending about 1/4" on the far side of the hook shank. Take 2 wraps over the top of the mylar from right to left. Take 2 wraps in the opposite direction, from left to right, creating a figure eight wrap.



Lift the mylar cord to place it as far back as possible, against the tie in point.



Make a couple of securing wraps in front of the mylar. Cut the mylar cord about 1/4" on the near side of the hook shank.



Continue to tie the mylar cord in, up to the hook eye. Whip finish.



Coat the exposed threads with UV resin.



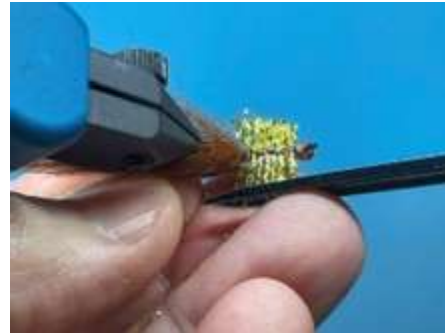
Cure the UV resin.



Invert the hook and apply UV resin to the exposed threads.



Cure the UV resin.



Trim each side of the mylar in a merkin shape.



Pick out the mylar with a bodkin. More trimming may be required after picking the mylar out.



Note finished merkin shape.



Finished fly.



Here's your chance for a Costa Rica Adventure!

Again this year, the Gulf Coast Council (GCC) of Fly Fishers International (FFI) is raffling off a five-day adventure trip to beautiful Costa Rica, donated by 4 Corners Costa Rica. **Anyone can purchase a ticket online until all online tickets are sold.** A reserve number of tickets will be sold at the FFI Gulf Coast Classic on May 2-3, 2025, in-person only.

You do -NOT- need to register for the Classic to participate in this raffle. Simply go to the GCC or Classic website:

www.ffigcc.org -or-

www.ffigulfcoastclassic.com

Click on the links for 4Corners Raffle. You'll then go to the portal. At the portal, select the raffle item, the number of tickets you wish to purchase, and check out.

The drawing will be held during the F3T Showing on Saturday, May 3rd. Winner does NOT need to be present to win.

Here are the details:

- The trip will be for 2 persons for 5 days (6 nights). It will include two full fishing days: one river fishing from rafts for Machaca (the Piranha's cousin) and one fishing from panga's island hopping for Roosterfish.

- There will be two days exploring a volcano and one day at the coffee plantation (This is the place where the trip winners will be staying).
- Trip value is: **\$6000.00!!**
- The trip includes all transportation to and from the airport, all lodging and meals. It does not include airfare or alcohol. The attendees will be responsible for purchasing their own.
- There will be 100 tickets available at \$50 apiece.

The trip is being offered by 4 Corners Costa Rica. Check out their website at www.4cornerscostarica.com.

Love tying flies? Join FTG

The Fly Fishers International (FFI) Fly Tying Group is dedicated to sharing and teaching the art of tying, and to help tiers learn new or enhance their current skills. We share information through our newsletter, tying demonstrations at events, maintaining a comprehensive video library, and teaching about the art of fly tying on FFI Online.

To learn more, go to www.flyfishersinternational.org

Join the Fly Tying Group Be Part of Preserving the Art

1-Year Membership - \$20

Lifetime Membership - \$285





Bringing in the Sheep

by Catch Cormier

In early March, both the fly fishing and kayak fishing communities lost a great friend, as Mathew Roberts was killed in an industrial accident. A former marine who served in Iraq, Matt and Shawn Babin co-founded Mission Six, an organization dedicated to helping alleviate the effects of PTSD by providing benevolent support to our veterans and servicemen and women in our communities.

An avid kayaker, and still newly obsessed fly angler, Matt in 2017 came up with the idea of holding a fly fishing tournament to raise funds for Mission Six. He and Shawn teamed up with Eric Fey, Eric and Nicole Ditch, and others to create "Fly Fishin for the Mission". This wasn't just to be a fundraising event, but veterans with PTSD were invited to come and learn about fly fishing, and/or participate in the tournament.

Our good friend and former GCC board member Donald Dehm came over from his home in Huntsville - he was a member of the FFI Southeastern Council at the time - and gave fly fishing and casting lessons. A few of us also chipped in with instruction. There was even one year when one of the participants - brand new to our sport - ended up being part of the winning team!

It's a trap!

Back in 2019, my perennial partner Kevin "Doc" Andry and I were looking to repeat as the top kayak fishing team at FFFTM for the third year in a row. Early that morning, things were looking very promising for a threepeat. We'd each landed a couple smaller slot reds, and the tide was just getting right for the big fish to move onto the banks.

That's when things took a turn. Actually, I took a turn - down a deep dark hole of obsession!

I spotted this large grass flat full of sheepshead. Sheepies remind me of the Hypnotoad on the cartoon comedy "Futurama." Spot one, and they hypnotize you into casting to them. Most of the time it's a trap. They have no intention of eating your fly. It's a conspiracy to make you forget about redfish.

Well, I have to say it worked - somewhat. I forgot about the reds and spent the next three hours trying to catch those toothy convicts.

The Cajun Permit

Throughout the northern Gulf Coast, sheepshead are highly revered among fly anglers. They've been branded the "Cajun Permit" because much like their tropical-waters namesake, they are extremely wily and difficult to get a solid bite. But that's where the comparison ends... if you've ever hooked a permit, you know what I mean!

With so many teeth and no toothbrush, sheepies can be ornery! And tough to hook set unless the hook is very sharp.

The key to catching sheepies - especially the big ones which we call "goats" - is patience. That, and the right fly, the right presentation, and lots of luck!

If the goats are rooting in the bottom, with their tails waving out the water, it's worth a cast. But don't expect much. These fish seldom track a fly.

Spot a small pod that's moving across a grass flat, and you're in much better luck. You need to cast several feet ahead to avoid spooking them. Then hold off your retrieve until the fish get close.

I've caught sheeps on all kinds of flies, including spoon flies and even a couple on poppers! But that's the rare exception. By far, my best luck has come on the Crazy Charlie or one of it's derivatives. Other popular bonefish flies like Gotchas, Bitters, Mantis Shrimp have also done well.

Crab patterns are equally effective... as long as they have materials with movement. I see too many “stiff” crab flies – the goats give them one look and just laugh.

The important criteria is that the fly is light so it makes little or no splash, can be retrieved very slowly without dragging the bottom. It should also be made of materials that give lots of subtle movement, and oh yes, has a SHARP hook!



Down the Rabbit Hole

It was late morning that tournament day, and I was now deeply committed to catching sheepshead on the fly. The grass flat I'd encountered was full of small pods of goats. They were swimming slowly in aimless circles, perhaps looking for shrimp or crabs to pop out from the grass.

I tied on a size 2 LaFleurs Charlie and placed the cast about five feet ahead of a moving pod. I didn't have to wait to strip – one skirted forward and ate the fly on the fall.

Two hours later – with 10 sheeps hooked and eight landed – I was ready to paddle back to the launch.

Goat paradise had given me plenty of anxious fish to cast to. My largest fish was big enough to win the Sheepshead Division. In addition, this tied my personal best ever for number of sheepshead on fly in a single day.

We still had enough reds - and big enough - for Doc Andry and I to finish 3rd in the kayak division. When he found out I'd given up on reds and went all in for sheepshead he couldn't stop laughing. He knew from experience that the lure of goats is too hard to pass up. He was just amazed I'd outsmarted them. I still think they were smarter... just too hungry to pass up a good looking meal.

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Coming Attractions

May 2-3 – 3rd 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.

July 18-19 – Caddo Fly Fishing Expo. Jefferson County Convention Center, Jefferson, TX. Join us for a delightful celebration of fly fishing, in Historic Jefferson, TX, as we gather by the water to enjoy various activities, including casting demonstrations, workshops led by expert anglers, and engaging discussions about the latest techniques and equipment. Whether you're looking to refine your skills or simply immerse yourself in the friendly atmosphere, there's something for everyone. For details, go to www.northlouisianaflyfishers.org

Sept. 26-27 – FFI FlyFest 2025. Grand Rapids, MI. Fly Fishers International is proud to gather our members and the fly fishing community for a return to an in-person event. Grand Rapids is also a hub of culture and entertainment options along with plenty of fly fishing to be done in the area. The FlyFest will offer an extensive slate of indoor and outdoor workshops, presentations, and demonstrations for all experience levels and covering topics including fly casting, fly tying, and important conservation partnerships.

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.

Clubs of the Gulf Coast Council



No grass, no bass... no gamefish!

Catch Cormier

False River is a dormant oxbow of the Mississippi River located near New Roads, LA, about 45 minutes from where I once lived in Baton Rouge. At one time, it was listed as one of the top ten freshwater lakes in America. It also holds a very special place in my heart.

First, it was on this lake that I cemented my reputation as a successful bass angler. In 1979, my dad and I won a major tournament with a 10-fish stringer of 54 pounds... a lake record which still stands today!

But second - and far more important - False River is where I put my newly learned fly fishing skills to use. And quickly discovered the joys of catching fish on long rod. From 1984 until the early 2000s, this lake provided countless days of fly angling pleasure, jousting mostly with wristband-sized bluegills and redears.

Catching 100 bream in a morning trip was pretty normal. And although the average size didn't rival those caught in the nearby Atchafalaya Spillway or Old River (a live oxbow), the fishing was good nearly every month of the year. No other lake could match that.

It's where I discovered that trout flies could be deadly on sunfish. My arsenal for this lake included weighted wet flies, Montana Stoneflies, wooly buggers, and the Borger Grass Shrimp (aka, da bomb!). It's where the Ville Platte Special and Jitterbee flies got their start.

What made False River so productive? Three things: (1) High alkalinity - the limiting factor in aquatic biomass production. False River was - and is - one of the most fertile lakes in the South. (2) Spawning habitat - the mile-long shell-bottomed flats at both ends were ideal for spawning fish. And (3) complex structure, aka grass.

I can't emphasize how important that last factor was. Although the lake was mostly deep and featureless, a wide variety of submergent plants lined the miles of

shoreline and extended across most of the flats. Relative to the size of the lake, vegetation coverage was about 25%, considered to be the ideal amount.

In the late 90s, the interior of the oxbow - known as "the island" was clear cut for agriculture. Over the next decade, an annual average of 21,000 tons of sediment was deposited in the southern end of the lake, smothering the shell beds.

The sediment was blamed for the deterioration of the lake and it's fishing. And for the sudden disappearance of all vegetation. But it didn't explain why the northern end of the lake - which never got muddy - suffered the same fate as the southern end. It also didn't explain why vegetation began to disappear even before the clear cutting began.

The disappearance of "grass" - mostly pondweed and hydrilla - was devastating in more ways than one. They harbored gazillions of grass shrimp, a prime food item for both juvenile and adult fish. And provided juvenile fish shelter.

But the most important function of the grass was that it filtered the lake's nutrient-overloaded water. False River was borderline eutrophic, and on rare occasion experienced a minor fish kill.

When the grass disappeared, the fish kills became annual events and far more severe. Low dissolved oxygen lakes favor species like catfish, drum, and buffalo. And that's what became of False River - a catfish and "goo" paradise!

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries spent \$7 million to build sediment traps, restore the shell beds, build spawning beds, and build islands to create "quiet water" for spawning fish. They also aggressively stocked bass and redear sunfish.

But no grass. Not even one stem of hydrilla exists today. Man, it takes a lot to kill off hydrilla. But congratulations to LDWF, they did it!

Recently I stopped by the lake and fished a couple hours off the docks. Not a bite. Five other folks were fishing with worms and crickets and not a bite for them either. In the good old days, those docks produced 20-30 fish an hour.

What has happened to my old friend?