

A Publication of the Gulf Coast Council of Fly Fishers International

The Gulf Streamer

Spring 2026

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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,

Our 4th annual Gulf Coast Classic is just a couple of weeks away. The Council has been hard at work locking down the final details and this year's Classic promises to be bigger and better than ever. We have signed on some of the best national and regional fly tyers in the country that will be there to show off their skills and talent.

Our sponsors and exhibitors have stepped up in a big way and are generously supporting our event with a number of guides donating trips for the silent auction, rod and reel donations for the fishing tournament, and many great items for our raffles.

This year we will again offer seminars on all types of fly-fishing topics as well as paid workshops for you fly tyers and fly casters. Sign up for the workshops that opened on April 5th are already starting to fill up so don't wait too long to register. Seating is limited.

For the first time ever, we will be hosting a children's event at this year's Classic. There will be activities for children of all ages so please be sure to bring your young ones out for what will be a good time. We will even have a session for parents on how to get your kids started fly-fishing.

We have once again teamed with the folks from **4 Corner's Costa Rica** to raffle off a trip for two to their beautiful country. If you want more details on the experience, please grab me or GCC Treasurer Wayne Schnell to get the low down on our experience this past year. Tickets are only \$25 each.

We are honored to have **Dr. Aaron Adams** from the Bonefish & Tarpon Trust as our keynote speaker on Saturday. One of the world's most renown marine biologists, Aaron is also a renowned fly fisherman as well, having published a number of books on the subject including 2007's *Fly Fisherman's Guide to Saltwater Prey*. You will not want to miss Aaron's address.

As we have done the past three years, we will close the Classic with the 2026 F3T film tour. In addition to a number of great raffle items that attendees will

have a chance to win, one lucky attendee will have a chance to win a new Winston 8'6" Air 2 Max 8 wt. fly rod (Valued at \$1,295).

Complete information on the Classic, as well as tickets, workshops, the F3T, and the 4 Corners Raffle can all be found on the Classic website at www.ffigulfcoastclassic.com.

I hope to see many of you in Gulf Shores on May 1st & 2nd.

Tight Lines,

A. J. Rosenbohm

President, FFI Gulf Coast Council

Cover photo: Our 2026 Classic Title (Tarpon) Sponsor is The Fly Hair Company. Owner Jeff Preddy is renowned for having the greatest selection of high-quality hairs and furs available to fly tiers. Check out The Fly Hair Co. and other great exhibitors at the GCC Classic.



Peggy Brenner returns to the 26 Classic



Register now for the Classic!

Gulf Coast Classic fly fishing festival Friday & Saturday, May 1-2, 2026

Gulf State Park

20249A State Park Rd, Gulf Shores, AL

www.ffigulfcoastclassic.com

Registration is now open for our 4th annual Gulf Coast Classic on Friday May 1st and Saturday May 2nd 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!

At our new **GCC Portal website** at

www.ffigulfcoastcouncil.org, you can pay for admission, signup for a workshop, purchase film festival tickets, and purchase tickets for the 4Corners Costa Rica raffle. There's even a few beds still open for inexpensive onsite lodging on the campus. You can register for the Classic now, and register for the workshops later. But don't wait too long... some of our past workshops have booked up in advance of the event!

Most 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 panfish to redfish to tripletail to fishing the surf – and more. In addition, there are speakers on conservation topics, including our **Keynote Speaker, Dr. Aaron Adams**. Dr. Adams

isn't just one of the top marine biologists in the country, he's also an avid fly angler and the author of several books and articles on fly fishing.

This might be the best lineup of raffle and silent auction items ever for a GCC event. Our amazing sponsors have donated some great items! Of course, many tiers also will be contributing boxes of their favorite patterns. *You can't buy these flies... you must be there and bid or be a lucky raffle winner!*

Once again, we'll have our always popular "Mixed Bag Challenge" fishing contest where size doesn't matter, but diversity does. It's FREE entry with registration!

On Saturday evening, we'll hold our film festival. The 2026 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 offers a chance at a very special attendance prize – a Winston Air fly rod!

Again, to learn more about the Classic, 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.ffigcc.org

Facebook Page:

"Fly Fishers International Gulf Coast Council"

Facebook Group:

Join "FFI Gulf Coast Classic Group Share"

Instagram:

Follow "ffigulfcoast" and
"the_gulf_coast_classic"

Conservation Corner



All Fish, All Waters

Catch Cormier

FFI Conservation sometimes gets downplayed by the Negative Nellies who say there are other organizations that better represent certain species than we do... “so why join FFI for conservation?”. Take for example redfish and speckled trout. The Nellies say, “Well CCA does that!”.

We’ve now proven that when it comes to speckled trout and redfish – at least in Louisiana and South Carolina – that FFI was FAR more oriented toward long-term conservation regulations than other groups (ASGA being the exception).

I can also point out several cases where FFI was more conservative on coldwater trout than Trout Unlimited.

And who represents panfish? Last I saw, there wasn’t a “Sunfish Unlimited” or other such organization.

That’s why our motto, “All Fish, All Waters” is so powerful. It means we support conservation of EVERY species, and unlike many orgs, we put the resource first, not the wants of anglers. Because if the resource prospers, so does the quality of fishing.

A clear example is our continued fight here in the GCC to bring crappie regulations into the 21st century. We’ve been highly successful in Mississippi, and just this year, new regulations were

put into place in Alabama, which now has a 25 fish daily limit.

Sadly, Louisiana still has a 50 fish limit. And a whole lot of armchair biologists – and a few educated biologists – continue to cite 1960s research which demonstrated that, unchecked, crappie could overtake a body of water.

My dad worked for the Soil Conservation Service - now Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Part of his job was advising the 200+ landowners in the parish (county) who had farm ponds. They would often ask him, “Mr. Fred, the biologist told us not to stock sacalait in our pond.” My dad’s response was always: “Do you have catfish in your pond?”. If they said “yes”, he replied “Put ‘em in, you’re good.”.

Dad knew that catfish are major predators on small crappie. When one biologist seriously questioned my dad’s advice, they made a bet. My dad took the young man fishing on a trio of landowner ponds that had been stocked with sacalait. My family enjoyed a great meal at Pat’s Seafood Restaurant – courtesy of the discredited biologist!

Crappie only spawn once per year, but with a fairly large number of eggs. However, they’re also finicky spawners and in some years, have poor reproduction due to harsh environmental conditions.

When Texas initiated a more stringent 10-inch minimum, 25 fish per day limit, armchair biologists wailed on how all their lakes would soon be overrun with small crappie. In fact, just the opposite happened. And surprisingly, the highly erratic recruitment cycles on a number of lakes – many high peaks and low valleys – became far more moderated.

So why have a lower limit if it’s rare that anyone ever catches 50 fish in one day? With the advancement of electronics – most notably forward-facing sonar – anglers are becoming much more successful in their trips. They may not catch fifty, but if everyone is suddenly catching 20 to 30 fish where in the past they only caught 15 or 20, there will be an impact – and not a good one!

We'll continue to make our case to the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission for reasonable regulations for crappie - like we did in Alabama and Mississippi. We ask all our members and friends to join us and other stakeholders in an effort to bring 21st century management to one of our most prized freshwater gamefish.

Handle Fish Safely

Lee Wulff, co-founder of FFI, once famously stated that a sportfish was too valuable to be caught only once. "Catch and Release" has since become an important practice to sustain healthy fish populations.

Even among those of us who love to eat fish, there are many times where we fish for fun, or only to catch what we need and release the rest. Research has shown that with proper handling, post-release mortality can be near zero. The keyword is "proper handling".

FFI has initiated a new conservation program, "Handle Fish Safely for Soft Release" with the purpose of educating anglers to the best practices for handling fish. Those practices include:

- Use of barbless hooks, or hooks with barbs bent down
- Land fish quickly, especially in hot weather
- Use of rubberized nets that protect their slime
- Keeping the fish in water and wet
- Cradling a fish as opposed to holding by the jaws
- Minimize any time fish is out the water
- Never lay fish on dirt, concrete or other that might expose scales to infection

With these practices, that fish you release today can produce new generations of sporting fun!



Mixing it up at the Classic

Chris Williams

The Gulf Coast Classic is proud to announce the return of one of its most exciting and anticipated events—the Mixed Bag Tournament. Set against the diverse fisheries of Coastal Alabama, this multi-day fly fishing challenge offers a refreshing twist on traditional tournament formats, blending strategy, exploration, and conservation into one unforgettable experience.

At its core, the Mixed Bag Tournament reflects something deeper about the Gulf Coast fly fishing community. In recent years, members of GCC FFI and its affiliate clubs have increasingly embraced the idea that fly fishing is about more than just a single species. That shift—fueled in part by the growth of the community in recent years—has encouraged anglers to explore new water, target a wider variety of fish, and ultimately become more well-rounded on the water.

There may be no better place to celebrate that mindset than Coastal Alabama. With expansive access to brackish lakes, bay systems, and miles of Gulf shoreline, the region offers an incredible diversity of species in a relatively compact area. That abundance made it clear from the outset that this event deserved more than a traditional "big fish" tournament—it called for a format that rewarded variety, curiosity, and adaptability.

The result is as much a fly fishing scavenger hunt as it is a traditional tournament.

Unlike conventional tournaments focused on a single target, the Mixed Bag Tournament challenges anglers

to catch, photograph, and release as many eligible species as possible within the tournament window. Each species carries a point value based on difficulty, encouraging anglers to think strategically about where—and what—they pursue. From redfish and speckled trout to sheepshead, flounder, and even more unexpected catches, success depends on versatility as much as skill.

The format has continued to evolve over the years, introducing a refined species list, tiered scoring system, and a range of bonus opportunities that reward creativity and community engagement. Anglers can boost their totals through “wild card” entries as well as bonuses for volunteering, supporting local fly shops, participating in conservation efforts like beach cleanups, and landing “lunker” fish that exceed minimum size thresholds. With multiple ways to earn points, the competition goes far beyond simply catching fish.

Open to all Gulf Coast Classic participants, the tournament features both Adult and Youth divisions, making it accessible to anglers of all ages and experience levels. Entry into the Mixed Bag Tournament is included with registration for the Gulf Coast Classic—no additional fee is required—making it an easy and exciting way for attendees to get more involved in the event.

As a catch-photo-release tournament, the Mixed Bag emphasizes responsible angling. All entries must meet strict submission criteria to ensure proper fish handling, and only fly fishing equipment is permitted, reinforcing the conservation-minded traditions of the sport.

More than anything, the Mixed Bag Tournament is about discovery. It pushes anglers to step outside their comfort zones, explore unfamiliar water, and appreciate the full range of species that call the Gulf Coast home. Whether fishing from shore, wading the flats, or navigating backwater estuaries, each outing becomes part of a larger adventure.

At the conclusion of the tournament, participants will gather for an awards ceremony hosted at Community Fly Supply, where top performers in each division will be recognized alongside standout achievements like most unique catch, longest fish, and conservation contributions. While the competition is spirited, the

true reward lies in the experience—and in celebrating the remarkable diversity that defines both this fishery and the anglers who pursue it.

For more details, full rules, and registration information, please visit:

<https://ffigulfoastclassic.com/fly-fishing-tournament/>.

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THE GULF COAST COUNCIL OF FFI & THE FLY HAIR CO. PRESENT THE 4TH ANNUAL

GULF COAST CLASSIC

FLY FISHING FESTIVAL



MAY 1-2, 2026
GULF STATE PARK LEARNING CAMPUS
20249A STATE PARK RD, GULF SHORES, AL

FLY FISHING TOURNAMENT • FLY FISHING FILM TOUR
FLY TYING DEMONSTRATIONS
FLY CASTING & FLY TYING WORKSHOPS
BEGINNER TYING & CASTING INSTRUCTION
RAFFLE & SILENT AUCTION • EXHIBITORS & VENDORS

MORE INFO AT FFIGULFCOASTCLASSIC.COM

Suncatch Challenge update

By Ben Roussel, Suncatch Director

Here is a quick Suncatch Challenge update for Spring of 2026. We are up to 242 entries (16 so far this year) among 33 different participants. Of those 33, five are new this year, so, with that, a big welcome to Chad Creppel, Eli Kimmons, Charles Miller, Jason Branch, and Dustin Vickers! Thanks for joining us in the Suncatch Challenge, hope you enjoy the program as much as we do!

We need to congratulate a few members who have reached milestones so far this year. Congratulations to **Yvette Dietrich** for reaching the Suncatch Fanatic (8 species) level on March 28th with a spotted sunfish caught in Florida. She becomes the first female angler to win a Suncatch Challenge award! We can also congratulate her husband **Kirk Dietrich** for reaching the Suncatch Expert (12 species) level with a white crappie caught on Feb. 21st. Congratulations also go to **Eron Borne** for catching a flier and reaching the Suncatch Expert level on the same day as Kirk!

Back in January I was able to catch up with **Brian Roberts** at the monthly RSFF meeting and present him with his Suncatch Master award – a beautiful handcrafted net built by **Ethan Igleheart of Stonefly Nets**! Brian was able to reach the Master level prior to our latest species expansion to 20 species, a feat no one will be able to replicate!

Be sure to read the Winter 2025 edition of the Gulf Streamer where we highlighted all the changes to the Suncatch Challenge program this year – I'm looking forward to seeing our first fish turned in from the state of Arkansas!



Skinny Angler, Skinny Water

By Catch Cormier

Don't know about you folks, but I'm really looking forward to settled weather. I've been on this new diet plan called "Weatherman Deal-a-Meal". Everytime the local weatherman gets the correct forecast, you can have a meal. I haven't touched food in 21 days.

Don't get me wrong. Eating is important. Maybe not as much as fishing, but it's something everyone should do at least a few times each week.

Take the redfish. King of the marsh, the Spottail Elvis. He eats every opportunity he gets. And he certainly doesn't let a little thing like a pond full of grass get in his way. As the days grow longer and warmer, various aquatic grasses begin to take hold in isolated areas of the marsh. They spread and grow to the point where an entire pond becomes choked. Shrimp, crabs and small baitfish move into these ponds, to seek protection from predators.

Reds, drum and sheepshead are never far behind. They move in, rooting their noses in the grass in an attempt to force the forage species to make the wrong move. While doing so, they're oblivious to the fact that their backs and tails are protruding above the waterline.

Sight-casting to reds in grass-mat ponds is about as technical as fly fishing for this species gets. For grass-mat fishing, a stealth approach is necessary. The right boat is either a bateau, kayak, canoe or shallow water skiff. The right tackle would be a saltwater-rated 6 or 7 weight rod for casting of small,

unweighted and often weedless flies - such as yarn or furry foam crabs, bendbacks, or charlies. A second rod rigged with a popper is a good option. Floating fly lines are a must or you'll end up with more grass in your boat than a Mexican drug dealer.

In this environment, tackle and fly selection – while important – is not nearly as critical as the strategic aspects. For instance, casting effectively to target the cruising red's strike zone, and in such a manner that the fish needs minimal effort to get to the fly.

Forget all this double haul, triple haul, trying to cast your entire line. That doesn't impress a fish who, if you give them a chance, can sometimes get within a rod's length of you. You must exercise patience, and make the right cast. Not necessarily a great cast, but the right one.

Many years back on Memorial Day, my younger son Jake and I took the canoe down to an area south of Montegut where I'd scouted several grass-mat ponds the week before. As I push poled us into one such pond, Jake motioned with excitement. We immediately spotted several tails and backs.

Jake's first plan of attack was to cast the popper, either to one of several openings in the grass, or up against the bank (relatively free of grass). Small poppers, such as Dinks and Crease Flies, have a way of bringing reds out of the grass or off the bottom. Not to mention that there's no bigger thrill than seeing a redfish smack a surface lure!

Out of the corner of my eye, I spotted the back of one red as he made the bend around a point. Instead of casting to the fish, Jake put the popper up against the bank, and about five feet in front of his projected path. Jake first waited, then timed his retrieve to intercept the red within inches of his path. Just as the fish approached his line, Jake gave the popper a few quick strips. The red took notice and BAM – the Spottail Elvis exploded on that popper!

Rather than move from this spot, we placed the stick anchor into the mud and watched the middle of the pond - literally a sea of grass - for any other signs of life. Within a few minutes, a back stuck out about 20

feet away. This red was in the thick stuff, and getting a fly to fall to him was near impossible.

Jake picked up a second rod with a bendback and made several casts in an effort to put the fly right on top his nose. Because the grass limits the red's zone of recognition to within inches, a misplaced cast or two was no problem. When the fly was finally placed on target, the red quickly picked up his head, knocked the fly into his mouth, and I swear you could see him chewing that fly. Once hooked, the biggest struggle of the day was getting him out of all that grass.

With two reds caught and released, we then pulled up anchor and inched closer to another spot in the grass where several reds were bunched in an area a few yards wide. And when I say inched, I mean caterpillars are speed demons compared to how fast we were moving. But it put us almost atop the fish without them even taking notice.

With fifteen feet of line outside the tip of his rod, Jake dragged the bendback across the grass, until it came on top of where one Elvis was stirring. The very next time the fish swirled, the bendback fell into the hole he created. Jake then gave a strip and the Elvis bit. Fish number three was on!

A good skinny water tactical approach needs practice. Go in your backyard or park area and place objects around the grounds. Imagine they are fish, and imagine them moving in different directions, or feeding in place, and try to make the right cast and the right retrieve.





Micro Articulated Shrimp

By David Buckner, GCC Tying Director

One of the most intriguing aspects of fly tying is the ability to get creative and innovative. I have taken advantage of River Road Creations (RRC) to make custom cutters on several occasions. Tony Tomsu at RRC is very accommodating and helpful when I have a new idea.

Recently, I had an idea for micro articulated shrimp cutters. Tony produced the cutters in about a week based off of my sketch and a brief phone conversation. I had the same experience when he produced my custom sandflea and dwarf crawfish cutters. And they are fairly inexpensive.

If you have an idea for a foam body shape, give Tony a call and get his guidance and help. He does a fantastic job! Attached is my Micro Articulated Shrimp recipe. I'm happy to share my cutters, if you would like to tie your own.

I'm sharing a link to the pattern rather than having it reproduced in the newsletter. This makes it easier for anyone interested in tying this pattern to print off just the instructions and get larger images of each step.

https://www.ffigcc.org/GCCfiles/MAC_Shrimp.pdf



Teaching the Dance

By Syd Smith

** The following is an article published by the late Syd Smith in the Winter 2013 edition of The Loop, the journal of the FFI Certified Casting Instructors. Syd, a resident of Gulfport, was a Master Certified Instructor and served three terms as Casting Director for the Gulf Coast Council. He was recognized in 2008 as GCC Flyfisher of the Year and in 2012 by FFI for the Council Award of Excellence. **

I imagine that all of us have, in the teaching of an all day introductory class, come upon students who appear lost. They might seem to be unsure they belong there and are nearly frozen with what appears to be fear of failure. Their movements have deteriorated to mostly ineffective wristy movements of the rod without body involvement. There is no good loop formation or obvious feeling of loading the rod.

As the day progresses the problem intensifies. When I have talked with such students they generally feel fly casting is too complicated for them. What follows is a teaching technique which you may not often need, but when you do it can be invaluable. I call it "The Dance". It embodies Bill and Jay Gammel's Five Essentials in an easy to learn series of movements. It usually produces beautiful loops quickly – often within 5-10 minutes.



Start by overlining a rod by two line weights and pull about 15-20 feet of line out from the tip. Instruct the student to lock the rod hand wrist holding the rod at their side pointing straight up, low elbow with the elbow flexed at the side blocking at full flexion.

The arm, hand and rod should be pointing straight up (see photo 1) with the line at the reel clamped against the grip with the rod hand finger. Instruct the student that they are not to move this position of the arm and rod AT ALL, NO wrist bend during the cast. The line hand may simply hang at the side.

Next ask the student to begin a process of stepping first forward and then backward, coming to a stop when the advancing foot hits the ground (see pictures below). The student then immediately reverses the step. The point is to encourage the student to make the forward and backward steps so vigorously that good loops are formed and maintained. When done properly the loops will be tight and the student will feel the rod loading and actually see an effective fly cast.

Most students really get into this when the loops are visualized and the load of the rod is felt, understanding that this is a valid process. Some wrist usually will be automatically added by the student when the load of the rod is felt. As the situation progresses the process may really take off. It can be a needed epiphany and can help get the student into the game. I've never seen it fail, although I imagine it will sometime.

Encouragement is a prime factor in getting "The Dance" going. The movements are familiar and most people have no problem executing them. Many women take to it quickly, and I have used it most with women who seem to like the fact that it is just a little dance. But men also find it helpful.

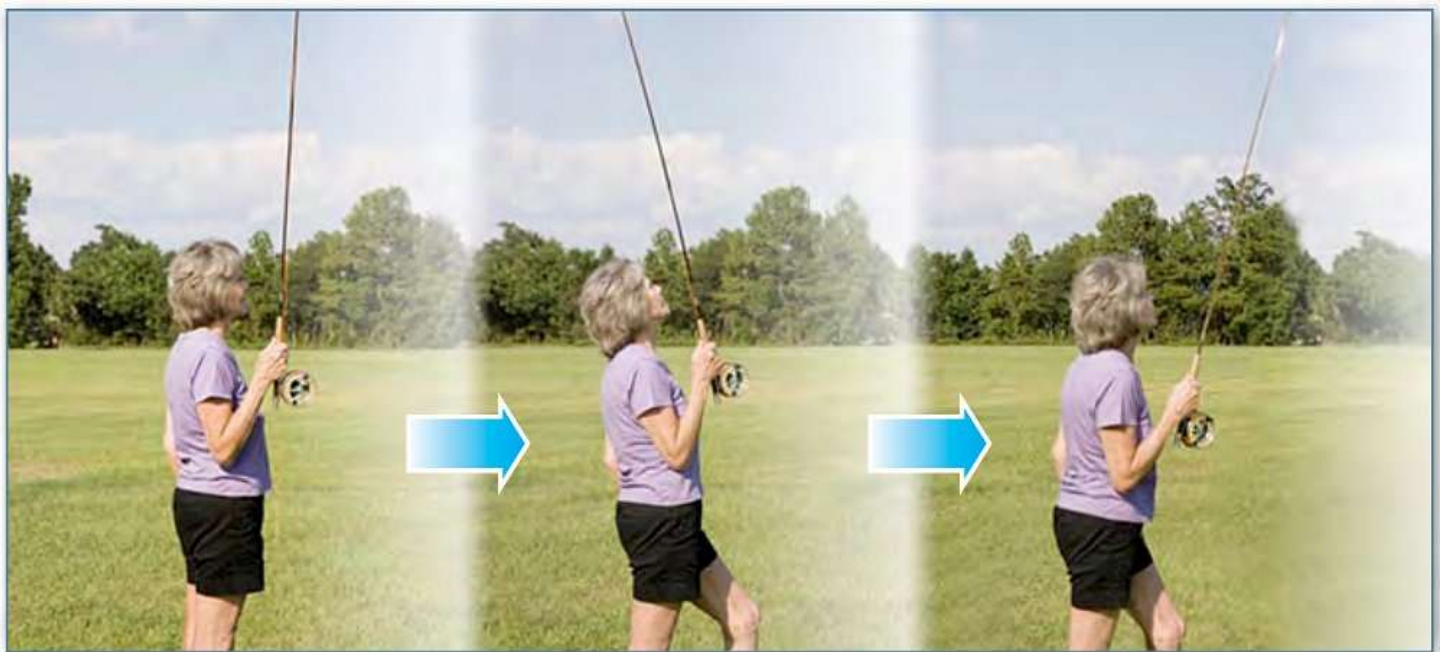
So, what is going on? Is this overly simplistic or is there real substance to this methodology? I would submit there is real substance.

Let's take a brief look at the essentials of casting. We want a straight line movement of the rod tip which is accomplished by the positioning of the rod with rod tip movement from about 1-2 o'clock on the back cast to about 10-11 o'clock on the forward cast, approximating SLP when the force is added.

The Force comes from the use of the big muscles which begin slowly as the student steps and progress with as near a constant acceleration as physiology will allow. The motion stops when the advancing foot hits the ground. It is followed by a pause. This pause is usually exactly right for the student's body movement.

If the student gets faster the stop is longer due to the increase in momentum and consequent increase in time required for reversal of the movement. The student maintains a stroke length appropriate to the line out from the rod tip as part of the technique of loop formation. There is usually no slack problem once the technique is mastered although mastering the technique includes eliminating slack.

Give it a try if you have not already. I think you will find it helpful.





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.** A number of tickets will also be sold at the FFI Gulf Coast Classic on May 1-2, 2026, in-person only.

Tickets are just \$25 each. There is no limit on the number of tickets available to be sold.

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 trip will be for 2 persons for 5 days (6 nights).

The drawing will be held during the F3T Showing on Saturday, May 2nd. Winner does -NOT- need to be present to win.

The proposed itinerary is as follows:

Day 1: Arrive to San Jose – travel 45 mins to San Ramon

Day 2: Travel 3hrs to Deriva in the rainforest

Day 3: Full day floating on rafts for Machaca (piranha) and afterwards, we drive 1 hour to stay at our lodge at the base of Arenal Volcano to relax in the hot springs.
Day 4: Sight seeing around the volcano and then travel 2 hrs back to San Ramon

Day 5: Full Day fishing for Roosterfish on Pacific coast while island hopping secluded beaches, return to San Ramon for final dinner/evening

Day 6: Departure from San Jose

Retail Value: \$6000.00

**Trip includes all domestic transportation, meals, fishing, and lodging. International flights and alcohol are not included.*

*** The trip can also be adjusted to accommodate additional fishing for an added fee.*

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, to all skill levels. We share info through our newsletter, tying demonstrations, 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





Coming Attractions

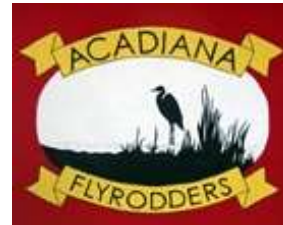
May 1-2 – 4th annual FFI GULF COAST CLASSIC. Gulf State Park - Learning Campus. Gulf Shores, AL. Friday-Saturday. Activities planned: seminars, fly tying demonstrations, casting instruction, fly tying instruction, exhibitors and vendors, Film Festival, Fishing Contest, raffles, auction, and more. Hosted by the FFI Gulf Coast Council. For details, go to www.ffigulfcoastclassic.com.

May 30 – Cenla Fly Fishing Festival. Kees Park Center, Highway 28 East, Pineville, LA. 8:30am – 3:30pm. Hosted by Kisatchie Fly Fishers club. Free admission. *Postponed from January due to winter weather.* Presentations, fly tying demos, casting clinics, exhibitors and more. Jambalaya lunch available. A portion of the raffle benefits Food Bank of Central Louisiana. For details, go to www.kisatchiefly.org.

Sept. 24-26 – FFI FlyFest 2026. Redding Civic Auditorium, Redding, CA. Fly Fishers International in conjunction with The Fly Shop brings the fly fishing community together for learning and connection. Inspiring presentations, fly tying and casting demos and workshops, a vibrant trade show, conservation outreach, womens connect and much more. There's also a community dinner and fundraising to support FFI. For details or to register, go to www.flyfishersinternational.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.

Clubs of the Gulf Coast Council



Kisatchie Fly Fishers



Alexandria, Louisiana





This fly is an All-Around Winner

By *Catch Cormier*

Just after college, I coached a high school girls softball team. After a successful season (we made the playoffs for the first time in years!), the assistant coaches and I had to come up with candidates for the team awards for the annual Sports Banquet.

One of the awards recognized the player who worked the hardest and/or was our best utility player. There was no question that Jodie deserved this award. She wasn't our best hitter, or the best fielder at any position, but she was REALLY GOOD at everything she did.

If there was such an award for flies, that distinction would go to Dave Whitlock's "Red Fox Squirrel Hair Nymph" (RFSHN). It's not in my top 3 trout nymphs, or my top 3 sunfish flies, or my top 3 cichlid flies, or my top 3 Atlantic perch flies. But it's still near the top of every list for every species - a rare quality indeed!

Renown tier Tim Flagler describes the RFSHN as "one of the best nymph patterns ever designed". Dave once told a group of us that it was his most consistent fly for trout both in numbers and size. I can attest that consistency extends to all species of panfish as well.

Many years ago, I watched Dave tie this fly at a show. One thing he said that I'll never forget... his patterns were inspired by Polly Rosborough. At that point, I was like Leonardo DiCaprio's character in the film *Django Unchained*:

"Sir, you had my curiosity, but now you have my attention!"

A longtime admirer of Rosborough, this fly embodies Polly's theory of using soft furs and feathers to create subtle motion in the water, along with a "fuzzy" body that gives the impressionist look of an actual aquatic bug.

The RFSHN has seen a resurgence since the passing of Dave. It's great to see that more folks are appreciating this fly. What is rarely known is that Dave had several variations of this pattern - including one with rubber legs.

My variation has a few differences from the original. For example, I tie it on a 1X long hook mostly because the shorter hook version looks better. The tail I use is from pine squirrel zonker (natural or brown). The legs are from a Brahma Hen feather instead of Partridge.

I pool test all my flies, and when stripped slowly, this fly looks great in the water. It's a fairly easy tie, so give it a try!

Material list (again, this is my variation):

- Hook: 1x or 2x long nymph size 10, barbless, black nickel (I use Saber 7230).
- Thread: 140 denier
- Weight: lead wire either .015 or .020 gauge
- Cement: Zap-a-Gap (ZAG)
- Tail: one-quarter inch off pine zonker strip
- Abdomen: Dave's SLF Squirrel Dubbing (lighter color)- Ribbing: Oval gold tinsel small
- Thorax: Dave's SLF Squirrel Dubbing (darker color that compliments the color used on the abdomen)
- Wing: Brahma feather barred

Colors: my favorites are natural, rusty brown and olive (yes, olive!) . I use matching thread, but sometimes use a red to make the head a "hot spot".



Start the thread, then tie in a flattened end of wire to secure the wire while wrapping. Do 6 wraps. Cut a 1/4-inch section off the squirrel zonker, remove the underfur, and tie in such that the tail extends the same length as half the hook shank length.



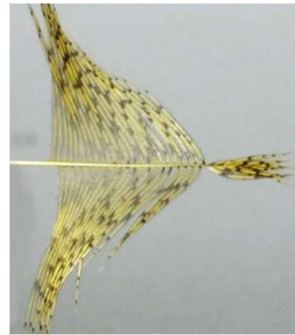
Tie in the oval tinsel, then apply the light color dubbing to the thread to create the abdomen.



Wrap the lighter dubbing forward to halfway up the shank. Then wrap the tinsel spiraled so just forward of the dubbing edge and tie off.

Now apply the darker dubbing to the thread. While this section will be very short, it's going to be a little bulky. Rather than apply extra dubbing

to the thread, make it a longer section of dubbing. Once all dubbing is done, I sometimes use an old toothbrush and brush it out a bit.



Take your feather and strip fibers off the bottom. Stroke the very top short fibers forward and trim to a wedge. This wedge is the tie-in point.

It should be noted that you want about 1/4-inch of fibers on each side, as the wing on this fly is somewhat sparse.



Tie in the wedge at an angle just behind the hook eye. The "color" side of the feather should be facing forward. Wrap the hackle using hackle pliers or an electrical clip. Stroke the fibers back as you wrap the hackle. When the exposed stem is left, make 3 wraps of thread over the stem to lock it in, then trim the remaining stem.



The Finished Product!