

# On The Fly

July 2012 Volume 22, Issue 7

## The Prez Sez



### **Sharing Information**

*At the April meeting we did not have a formal program but instead talked about how to fish the Everglades. This was a spontaneous event that turned out to be a great exchange of information about having fun in the Everglades. I was amazed about how much experience was shared about favorite locations, flies, spotting where the fish might be and even how to use the wind to your advantage. The Everglades trip was going to be the one where I was going to catch those hundreds of fish. As those of us who took the trip know, the weather beat us up and very little fishing was done. The great thing about the trip was not the terrible weather but the membership meeting where I acquired a great deal of knowledge about fishing the*

*Everglades. The few books I've read about the Everglades had none of the pearls I learned at the meeting. That meeting truly fulfilled our commitment to sharing information and improving our fishing skills.*

*This session was so successful that we are having another similar meeting this month and the discussion will be sharing your experience about the Hillsborough River.*

*This is one of my favorite trips. Aside from the excellent fresh water fishing it is an extremely scenic river with many side branches, patches of lily pads and plenty of room to cast. If you want to catch fish and just not practice casting, a horizontal cast is a must. Casting under overhanging tree limbs will pose a challenge and force us to improve our fishing skills. Of course you can use that vertical cast to cast near the many docks where some fish are hiding but most will be along the banks especially under the trees and bushes.*

*Come to this month's meeting and learn what's in our own back yard. Learn about fishing the Hillsborough from those who know. Learn some interesting casting techniques from those with plenty of experience. Our meeting this month will be filled with great fishing information. Come prepared to share your experience and bring your favorite flies and stories.*

### **Florida Council FF Expo**

*Make your plans to attend the annual Florida Council of the FFF on October 19-20. It will be held at the Orlando Sun Resort and Conference Center, 6375 West Irlo Bronson Highway in Kissimmee, FL. Check the FL Council web site for upcoming information.*

<http://www.fff-florida.org/>

*Tom Gadacz, President, Suncoast Fly Fishers*

## On The Fly

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# We are Suncoast Fly Fishers

## Suncoast Fly Fishers

P. O. Box 40821

St. Petersburg, FL 33743-0821

Number of members on July 1, 2012: 119

### Club Officers

President: Tom Gadacz 727360-8030

Vice President: Woody Miller, 727-560-6086

Secretary: Ken Hofmeister 725-521-1637

Treasurer: Roger Blanton

### Board of Directors

Dan Bumgarner – Kirk Burton

Hugh Copeland – Mark Craig

Pat Damico – Myron Hansen – Alan Sewell

### Committees

*Volunteers welcome. Please speak to any director.*

Casting Skills – Pat Damico, Dayle Mazzarella

FFF Liason—Pat Damico

Fly Tying – Myron Hansen

Membership – Roger Blanton

Newsletter/Publicity – Bill AuCoin

Webmaster – Woody Miller

Hog Roast – Richard Oldenski

Outings – Alan Sewell

Outing lunches – Richard Oldenski, Mark Hays

Project Healing Waters – John Craig, Terry Kirkpatrick

Raffles – Tom Hummel, Bryan Jankovic

Florida Gulf Coast Center for Fishing – Kirk Burton, Tom Gadacz, Ken Hofmeister, Richard Oldenski

Programs: Board of directors

### Visit your club's website

<http://suncoastflyfishers.com/>

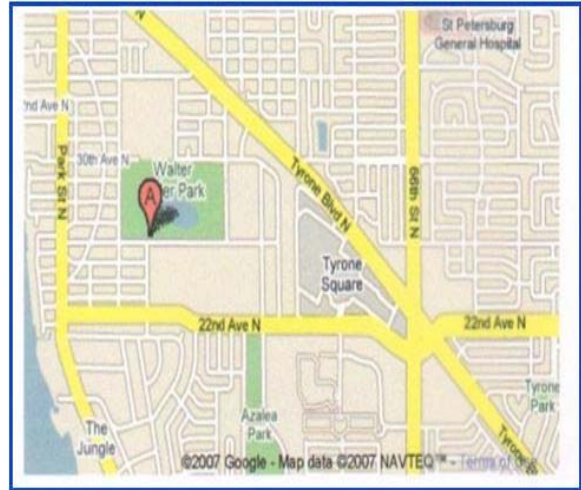
[Click here for a membership application](#)

### Monthly Meetings

Suncoast Fly Fishers meet on the third Thursday of each month (except December) at Walter Fuller Park, 7891 26 Avenue N. St. Petersburg, FL 33710

6:00 – 7:00 pm – Fly tying and casting

7:00—8:00 pm – Meeting and program



Walter Fuller Park, 7891 26 Avenue N. St. Pete

### SFF Club Calendar

- July 19, meeting, Walter Fuller Park – Annie Hays presentation. Also Hillsborough River info exchange.
- July 21, outing. Hillsborough River Float 'n Fish
- August 16, meeting, Walter Fuller Park, John Adams.
- August 18-19, outing, All-nighter, Pinellas only
- September 8, Fly Casting Clinic with Pat Damico (MCI)
- September 20 meeting, Walter Fuller Park – Brad Lowman presentation
- September 22-23, SFF exhibit at Florida Sportsman Show, Tampa Fairgrounds
- November 10. SFF table at Marine Quest. Help kids tie their first fly. Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, St. Petersburg

We need more newsletter contributions from all members. Send us your tips, favorite knots, fishing reports and pictures. Share your opinions, fishing tips and photos, ideas, suggestions, concerns. Got something to sell or swap? Email newsletter editor Bill AuCoin, [wmaucoin@verizon.net](mailto:wmaucoin@verizon.net)

# Suncoast Fly Fishers News 'n Notes

- **July meeting program...** Member Annie Hays will present highlights of her FFF Bighorn Youth Adventure trip, followed by SFF members sharing tips and techniques for fishing the Hillsborough River.
- **Fly Swap.** The second club “fly swap” will take place this month (July). Sixteen members signed up to bring new (never fished before) flies to the July swap. (Kirk Burton will manage the swap in Myron's absence.) The members who signed up will swap three of their freshwater flies for three freshwater flies tied by other participants. Flies are to be turned in at the beginning of the meeting. After the evening program, names of the eleven participants will be drawn one at a time. When a participant's name is called, he will come forward to select three flies. **DID YOU MISS THE CHANCE TO BE PART OF THE JULY SWAP? READ ON--**The next swap will take place in September. Members will be able to sign up at the August meeting.
- **Project Healing Waters.** SFF members provided kayaks and fly fishing equipment and other assistance for 17-20 Bay Pines VA vets at Arrowhead Park, Ft. DeSoto Thursday July 12.
- **Florida Gulf Coast Center and Interactive Museum - Largo.** Club initiatives – fly fishing instruction and a display – are moving along smoothly. Ken Hofmeister reported on the Fly Fishing 101 Class scheduled soon after Labor Day from 6:30-8:00. Students will learn to tie Schminnow and Spider flies, learn to roll cast and to cast overhand, identify five local fish and where to catch them, and tie knots needed in rigging a fly rod. They will know where to go to improve skills and knowledge (SFF web site, newsletter, and meetings of course).

## New SFF members introduce themselves



### Wes Demmon writes ...

We recently moved here from Chicago and absolutely love it here. I've been blessed to have the opportunity to fly fish from Alaska to Panama and catch Bluegill to Sailfish. But the real rewards are the friendships I've developed over the past years. I'm just hoping I can find new friends at Suncoasters.

### Johnny Boyer writes...



I am brand new to fly-fishing. For the past several years, I wanted to learn but haven't had the opportunity until I met Dayle Mazzarella, an instructor. Dayle was also the one who encouraged me to check out the Suncoast Fly Fishers club. I have taken several lessons with him since January (He is now back in Wyoming until the fall) and have managed to catch a few trout along the way. Through the club, I'm looking forward to making some new friends along the way. Thanks.

*Editor's note: Thanks Wes; thanks Johnny. On The Fly invites each new member to send us a note introducing yourself to the club. Send them to Bill AuCoin, [wmaucoin@verizon.net](mailto:wmaucoin@verizon.net)*



## Alan Sewell's Fishing Reviews & Previews

*[Our June outing was not to be. Somebody said only "mad dogs and Englishmen" would have fished during tropical storm Debbie. But, take note of the August outing below.]*

### July 21, Hillsborough River Float and Fish

#### Lunch at noon - Trout Creek Park

12550 Morris Bridge Road

Thonotosassa, FL 33592 [\(Google map\)](#)

We will be Fishing or Floating the Hillsborough River. Members will be awarded prizes for the longest bass and sunfish. The river is open for fishing from Temple Terrace to Sargeant Park. This outing could put your fish on the yearly tournament chart. We DO need extra kayaks or boats for members who would like to fish. Please help with your extra vessels so our non-boating members can experience the beautiful Hillsborough River. If all our boats are full, members can call **Canoe Escape, 9335 East Fowler Avenue, 813-986 2067**. They will take you to the river and return you back to their store. Club will pay for the rental for Trip #2.

### What's it like, the Hillsborough River?

This river travels over 50 miles from Crystal Springs to Tampa Bay. This is a blackwater river because of the tannic and humic acids that seep into the water from the swamp and flatwoods. The River is exceptional for bird watching and is home to many threatened and endangered species. You will see alligators and turtles and maybe deer and hogs. The river is shaded with sunlight seeping through the trees and is beautiful as it was hundreds of years ago. The upper 20-plus miles are the most spectacular from Crystal Springs to Fletcher Avenue in Temple Terrace. Past this road you will find residential areas all the way to the dam in Hillsboro Bay. The upper paddle trip is from Crystal Springs to Hillsborough State Park where the Rapids are. (Yes, rapids in Florida). The next trip is from the Park to Sargeant Park. This trip is not recommended for novices; it has Class-4 rapids because of the danger. **There could be 40-50 trees that have to be crossed, gone under or portage around.** This is also the "Seventeen-Runs" area that will totally lose you. The sign on the entrance says "Abandon Hope All Who Enter Here". The next three parks are Sargeant, Morris Bridge and Trout Creek. The float is 4 miles from Sargeant to Morris Bridge and the same from Morris Bridge to Trout Creek. Time is about 2 hours from each park or 4 hours from Sargeant to Trout Creek where lunch will be served. All these parks have good launching sites and parking with bathrooms. This is a great trip to float and or fish. Bring your family for a good day outdoors with food and friends. Fish the Parks, float or just come for lunch. Fishing can be fun, but you need a short rod to cast under the trees. My favorite is a 6' 2-wt that can get under the branches. Above Trout Creek the river opens up for longer rods. Fish this area from NATURE'S CLASSROOM to the take-out at trout creek for bream and bass. Hope to see a large group at this outing. (Be sure to read more Hillsborough Float and Fish tips on the next page.)

### August 18 -19. All-Night Fishing

The night-time outing will be fished on Saturday night-Sunday morning, August 18-19, from sundown to sunup. All of Pinellas County is open for fishing.

#### Update: Fishing Tournament

**Trout - Mark Hays - 18.5 inches**

Bass - open

Redfish - open

Other Fish - open

Snook - open

Sunfish - open

**IMPORTANT -- All fish must meet minimum size by FWC rules. Any fish may be entered for each category when we are having an outing and you must pass the strictest investigation.**

## Ready-Set-Go

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### *Insider Tips for Success* *Hillsborough River Float and Fish Saturday, July 21*

#### Ken Hofmeister

My "go to" fly is Layne Smith's beetle, followed by Ken Doty's spider (both can be viewed at [suncoastflyfishers.com](http://suncoastflyfishers.com) under the fly tying section). Sub-surface choice would be the St. Johns Sinker (See Tying Bench, page 6). Size 8 hooks work best for me, but others prefer size 10.

Best rod selection is a 7 ½ ft. 4 wt. rod with a five foot 10 lb. test leader. Bluegill and stump knockers are usually up against the bank, out of the current. An anchor helps when fishing from a kayak; but, it is not essential.

A favorite launch site is Sargeant Park, located off 301 after taking the Fowler exit off I-75. Morris Bridge (off I-75 Fletcher exit) is another good choice. Drifting from Morris Bridge to Trout Creek is an easy float to lunch--unless it takes you a long time to land a bluegill.

As usual, sunscreen and a broad brimmed hat is a good idea. Insect repellent has saved the day a few times. Enjoy the wildlife along the way. Expect some canoe traffic on Saturdays—but remember that the fish are used to it. Enjoy!

#### Robert Fischer

Sponge spiders and Betts Poppers are the most fun. Rubber legs seem to increase effectiveness. Most of the fish are small so small flies are best. Trim down the long legs on some bugs for better hookups.

Bring forceps to get the hooks out of little mouths.

Leaders should be 6' long and 10 or 12# test. Forget the lighter stuff because you'll need to get bugs out of trees and limbs.

Don't use fluorocarbon for surface flies. Use a color you can see. The fish don't usually care.

Underwater flies include wooly buggers #8 or #10, small Clousers, grass shrimp (scuds), black gnats with peacock herl bodies.

Underwater flies get hung up a lot so bring several.

Usually a motionless fly works best, but occasionally they like a little motion.

#### Richard Oldenski

On past outings on the Hillsborough River a foam spider did the job. Start with a foam spider, if they don't hit it, change to a little brown river Clouser by Paul Sequira in the July 2008 SFF Newsletter p. 9.

Cast close to shore and close to cover like weeds, logs and cypress knees.

#### Layne Smith

Also... when you are in tight quarters, if you don't have a short rod (6-7ft. or less), break down your two piece rod and just use the tip section for casting... It will help to get into small pockets and keep you from catching the notorious "Tree Trout"... You can strip your line in by hand to land fish since they will more than likely be fairly small... If you happen to hook a bass and need a little more backbone, re-attach tip to rod and get him on the reel.

## Tying Bench – St. Johns River Sinker by John Adams



*Bass and bream candy for our Hillsborough outing*

**A John Adams fly and instructions. Adams says:**

"Trust me; this fly works."

### **Ken Hofmeister spotted this winner:**

Since John wouldn't name this fly--I did. It could, of course, refer to the St. Johns River where it was tied and where it has been deadly on bluegill and bass. Or, it could refer to the Saint named John who taught me to tie it. I'd go with the River version and give John Adams credit for introducing this pattern to Suncoast anglers.

### **Materials**

**Hook:** Any short shank, sized 14 to 6  
**Thread:** 210 denier waxed thread, any color  
**Weight:** .025 or .030 lead wire  
**Tail:** Rubber legs  
**Body:** Thin chenille, any color

### **Tying Sequence**

Step 1: Cut a strip of rubber legs in half and fold. Wrap in place at bend of hook.



Step 2: Wrap hook shank with six turns of lead wire.



Step 3: Tie thin chenille at bend of hook and wrap to hook eye.



Step 4: Tie in more rubber legs at hook eye. Legs should extend from eye past tip of hook



eye.

## Tie-a-Thon

Pictures from our June 21 meeting featuring come-one, come-all fly tying and, hubba-hubba, free pizza.



**Fine arts class.** Siobhan Archard and two fly tiers and future club members, her nephews, Ryan (l) and Connor. Siobhan writes, "They are new to fly fishing and with nudges from their Aunt (me of course) are learning some of the fine arts of fly fishing!"



Tom Jones leads new member Johnny Boyer through the steps of creating a streamer.



**Getting Ready.** Ken Hofmeister and his grandson Ryan Voigt get ready for some serious desk work. Ryan tied streamers. Ken tied the "St. Johns Sinker," a weighted bluegill fly. He's getting ready for the Hillsborough River Float and Fish outing.

**The spirit of Carl Hanson.** Below...Richard Oldenski at work. Take note of his Carl Hanson fly tying kit.



**Study Hall.** The next generation of tyers learn from a pro.

**Photos by Bill AuCoin. More on next page>>>>**

## ***Tie-a-Thon Continued***



***Busy hands make light work***



***How am I going to dress this Clouser? Bob Morrison ponders a big decision.***



***Robert Fischer shows Ray Cianci his fly tying procedure and rotating fly-dryer. Oh, that gold spoon he ties? That starts as Christmas wrapping ribbon. Yeah.***

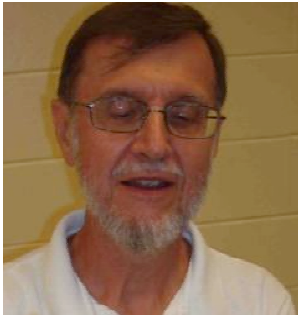


***A big June meeting bonus -- all you can eat pizza.***



# Fly Fishing Injuries

## Prevention and First Aid



*Fly-fishing is not considered a dangerous sport. However, there are hazards that can ruin a good day...or worse.*

*By Richard Oldenski MD*

Cuts and hook injuries; venomous critters; heat, cold and lightening exposure; and even drowning can be an unexpected event during a day of fly fishing. A skilled fly fisher will know how to prevent and manage these emergencies.

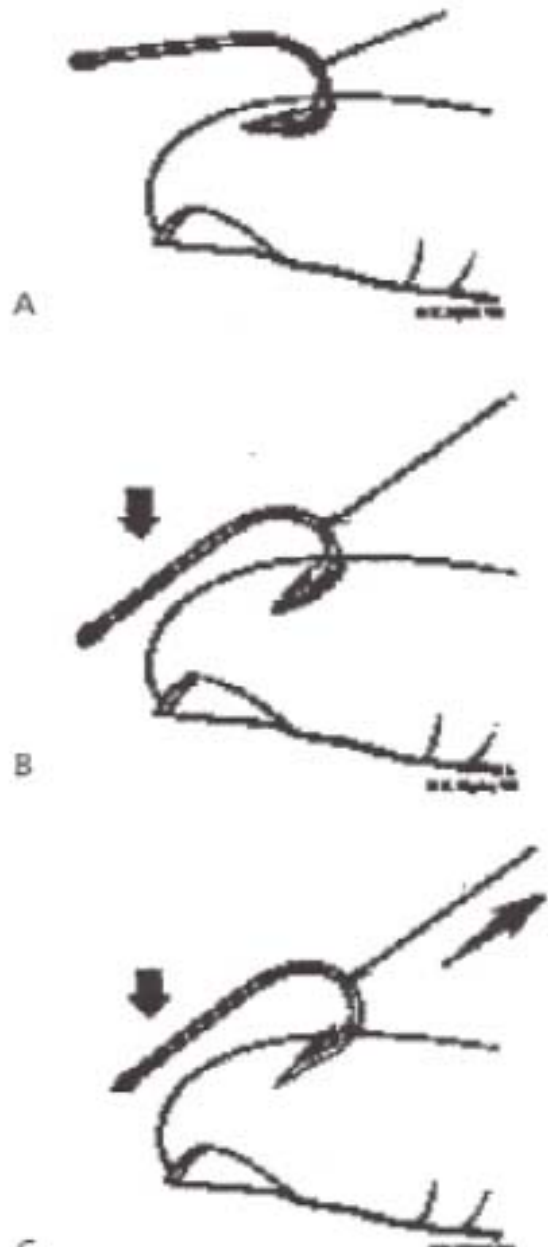
This article will focus on wounds and hook injuries. Fortunately, most fly-fishing wounds are superficial cuts, scrapes and abrasions. But once the protective barrier of the skin is broken, bacteria can invade and cause cellulitis (skin infection), abscess (subcutaneous infection) necrotizing fasciitis ("flesh eating infection") sepsis and death.

Puncture wounds from a fish hook are especially at risk because bacteria that are on the hook and on the skin are pushed under the skin with the hook barb.

Fish hook injuries to the eye are especially devastating, since loss of vision is added to the risk of infection. Fishing injuries make up 9% of all sport related eye injuries, and this number has been increasing annually. Hooks in the eye account for 38% of fishing related eye injuries, while 44% are attributed to injuries from sinkers and lure bodies.

There are several steps we can take to prevent hook injuries:

- First, crimp down the barbs on your hooks. This will make hook injuries less serious, as well as help to release your catch.



### **"SAVE THE DAY FISH HOOK REMOVAL"**

*A. Tie a piece of strong string or monofilament fishing line, like a 12 inch piece cut from your leader, to the bend of the hook.*

*B. Depress the shank of the hook to disengage the barb.*

*C. Give the string a hard, sharp, decisive jerk along the path of entry.*

Artwork from Gammons and Jackson, *Fishhook Removal*, [American Family Physician](#), vol. 63; number 11; June 1, 2001

*Continued*

## **Fly fishing injuries. Prevention and First Aid, by Richard Oldenski, MD**

*Continued from previous page*

- Always wear protective glasses or sunglasses when fishing. Polaroid glasses will protect your eyes as well as help you sight fish.
- A hat with a wide brim will protect your scalp, face, ears and neck as well as your eyes.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Watch for objects that might catch or ricochet off your hook and line.
- Be aware of your fishing buddies. Keep your line away from them and stay out of the way of their casts. Learn and practice correct casting with tight loops and line control.

**Do not** attempt to remove a fish hook from an eye or eyelid.

**DO** get urgent medical care if you suspect that a vital organ or blood vessel is involved.

Fortunately, most hook injuries occur on the extremities and are not very deep. A safe and easy procedure is the "string method". This method is taught by the Boy Scouts of America, and it has been used by several of our club members to remove a hook and "save the day" while fly fishing.

Once the hook is removed the wound should be thoroughly rinsed with clean water to wash away dirt and bacteria. You could apply an antibiotic ointment and Band-Aid if you have them with you. Light pressure should stop bleeding. In most cases, this is all you have to do.

If the wound is in the genital area or into a joint, further medical evaluation is advisable. You should watch for signs of infection like swelling; increase in size, redness and pain, heat, or pus drainage. If the wound gets infected these symptoms will develop within one to five days from the injury, and you should get medical attention.

### **When was your last tetanus booster shot?**

If you have not had a tetanus shot in the past five years, you should get a tetanus booster shot within 48 hrs of sustaining a puncture wound. The bacterium, Clostridium Tetani, is found everywhere, especially in dirt and animal feces. It is present in fresh and salt water. When it infects a person, it produces a toxin that causes paralysis, leading to "locked jaw" and death. Since the tetanus shot was introduced in the 1940's, the number of cases of tetanus infection reported in the USA has decreased by 95%, but it has not been eradicated. The Center for Disease Control has reported an average of 29 cases in the USA per year, and about 30% of these cases are fatal. The people most at risk are those who did not get the childhood immunizations, people over 65 years old and diabetics and others with health conditions that impair their immune system. It is recommended that anyone over the age of 19 years old get a tetanus immunization booster every 10 years.

In summary, follow these eight steps measures to help prevent fish hook injuries.

1. Crimp down barbs on hooks
2. Always wear glasses when fishing
3. Wear a hat with a wide brim
4. Watch out for your fishing buddies
5. Be aware of obstacles in the environment
6. Become a skilled fly caster
7. Thoroughly rinse all wounds with clean water
8. Keep your tetanus immunization up to date

## Suncoast Fly Fisher Report

**Siobhan's Mullet.**  
*(A fly rod was not involved)*



This mullet met its match during Tropical Storm Debbie. It was captured by the quick hands of member Siobhan Archard from the flooded residential streets of St. Pete. Siobhan writes, "We were playing down at the end of 62nd Avenue NE. near my house and had just had some fun watching Connor kayak down Bayou Grande Blvd. He had just paddled back and we were standing around talking when a mullet leapt out of the 18-inch deep water and landed at my feet! He either came directly from the bay – the waters were well over the sea wall -- or he came up the storm drain at the corner of Bayou Grande and 62nd Ave. (I've always suspected that was a good place to fish!) But his leap landed him very close behind me and the water he landed in was only an inch deep so I heard the thunk on the pavement and before he could escape back down the storm drain, I snagged him!!"

**Andy Constantinou and Pat Damico.**  
*(Fly rods were involved)*



From Andy's iPhone, on location, we received this intriguing report. "If you're interested, I've attached a photo of a trout I caught the other day in my fishery in Latimer Hertfordshire, England. It weighed about 9 to 10 pounds. It took a size 14 black buzzer.

Regards, Andy Constantinou  
*(Andy, will you show us how to tie that black buzzer when you return to the states?)*



On July 9 Suncoast Fly Fisher Pat Damico and Bill Whitebread (another MCI) caught 30 smallmouth bass on the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania. Fly rods. Poppers. Pow.

# Suncoast Fly Fisher Report

## **Confessions of a Lake Okeechobee bluegill and shell cracker fly junkie**

*[Psst: Wanna know what's in David Putnam's fly boxes? Read on. There's still time to put this savvy stuff work for you on the Big O]*

*By David Putnam*

Since a few days before June's full moon, I've made four fly fishing trips to Lake Okeechobee, a two-and-a-half hour drive from my home in St. Pete to boat ramps on the west side of the lake. Known for the numbers of big bass it produces, and the winter speckled perch fishing, it's less well known for the bluegill and shell cracker fishing that happens every June, July and August during the new and full moon phases when the fish bed.

It's amazingly good fishing.

A boat is required to access the bedding areas. You motor and drift until you see beds, then stop and cast to the fish while wading in three feet of water on firm bottom. It's a big lake, so local knowledge is needed to find likely areas. Tackle shops ring the lake.

Anglers in two Gheenoes fishing near us were having fun filling their coolers on yesterday's trip, fishing with red wigglers. I trailered a 16' Towee, a light fiberglass-fishing skiff with a 15 horsepower outboard. My trolling motor stayed at home.

I'm a Florida Cracker, born in Fort Pierce, and I've been fishing and duck hunting Florida lakes since I was a boy. A few years ago I was wading with a fly rod at Lake Istokpoga with a friend who was attacked by an alligator that bit him on the outside of his hip, bruising and scratching him and causing him to exit the water and change his underwear. We hadn't caught many fish that morning, and once I helped him back in the boat and we saw he was not badly hurt, he asked what I thought we should do. I responded that we ought to change to subsurface flies and put away our poppers. He saw no humor in the situation at all, and chose to return to the boat ramp and seek medical advice.

We both still fish wading when conditions are right, but we do not trail stringers of live fish. Make no mistake: There are plenty of gators in



Lake O, but they're just as worried about you as you are about them. I think.

I watched that same friend catch more than 100 shell crackers yesterday on flies like the ones in the fly box attached to this article, tied with various types of dark, shiny chenille and chartreuse or white legs made from spinner bait skirt material, on size 8 or 6 freshwater hooks.



None of the fish I interviewed showed any preference for hook style, choosing the down turned nymph hooks as readily as straight - shanked ones.  
*Continued>>*

### ***Putnam's Lake Okeechobee secrets, continued...***

Detailed two-part instructions are: 1. Start a piece of chenille at the rear of the hook—all hooks de-barbed, naturally-- and wind it forward to behind the hook eye and tie it off. 2. Attach a pair of legs to each side of the fly just long enough so you don't think they'll wrap around the hook.

Sometimes I put a plastic, craft store bead on the hook before tying on the chenille, if I'm feeling fancy. It makes 'em sink quicker, as does a wrap of lead wire on the hook shank, but neither is mandatory in shallow water.

### **What are the fish thinking?**

As I tie flies I imagine how they'll behave in the water, how they'll sink, how they'll look to the fish and what the fish will be thinking. (If I weren't a little nuts I wouldn't tie thousands of flies and accumulate hundreds of dollars worth of things like Estaz, hair stackers, squirrel tails and zonker strips.) I think, for example, that a shell cracker swimming around his bedding area thinks that these flies resemble spiders or other legged critters coming to eat his girlfriend's eggs. Shell crackers date to the Miocene, when God only knows what was stalking 'em. We catch mostly male fish, the ones who stay to watch over the eggs after momma lays 'em.

### **Shell cracker beds versus bluegill beds**

Shell cracker beds differ considerably from bluegill beds, and are more difficult to spot. Often you'll spot the fish moving before you see the beds if you motor slowly along and look carefully at the bottom. Shell crackers aren't as fastidious, don't clean their beds as well as the bluegills, and tend to be very social, sometimes crowding hundreds of beds into an area the size of your bedroom.

Bluegills usually bed close together too, and make a circular, bright, sandy-looking bed resembling a shallow bomb crater into which they drag small rocks to act as the adhesive to hold their eggs. Beds are crunchy under foot if you inadvertently walk through one. This year, due to low water in the lake, beds have been easier to see, in water less than waist deep. Once you've seen a few beds, you learn to recognize the differences in tilapia, armored catfish, bass, bluegill and shell cracker beds, all of which are in the same areas. When you find beds, slow down and fish carefully. I caught over 50 fish yesterday without moving more than

***If you go to "the Lake" make sure you eat at the Speckled Perch restaurant at Okee Tanti Park to get a taste of authentic southern fried fish straight out of the lake. Order the "sharpies," the smallest catfish. If you don't eat the crunchy tails your waitress will chide you. Hush puppies? My, they make a nice hush puppy.***

six feet once I found a bedding area. Worm fishermen often stay anchored in the same spot for hours at a time.

Most anglers are familiar with what a bluegill looks like. These at Lake O this time of year are the big ol' "copperheads" with the band of light gold, copper color across their foreheads. (Little bluegills are off in a play area somewhere during bedding time.) Shell crackers have a distinct bright red flash of color near their pectoral fins. Males are dark colored, the females brighter, with more yellow coloration. Shell crackers are thicker, meaner fish, better fighters when hooked, and better table fare.

In the fly box with the small flies you'll see a row of insect flies on the top, a couple of tried-and-true bee flies and two small grasshoppers, which I've used over the years when I see bluegills hitting bugs on the surface. On the second row on the left, there are two froggy flies tied with foam strips, big eyes and rubber legs. They're good flies most of the year, around lily pads particularly.

### **Hint: put a Clouser in your bream box**

Favorite flies sneak in the box somehow, whether they're appropriate or not for the trip. I'm no longer surprised to see a winning saltwater Clouser in my bream box.

During full moon bedding season, I use size 6 hump-shank hooks on all my panfish poppers. I rarely use a weed guard. I'm a rip-and-tear fisherman. I've got *boxes* of flies. Fishing lily pads with a fly rod is a pain, with your fly line catching under the pads, taking fun away from casting, and it's hard to land a big fish that wraps itself in the pad stalks. I fish around the outside of pads.

*Continued>>>*

### David Putnam's bream box, continued...

Chartreuse and white are my favorite colors, with green backs and two red dots on white or yellow abdomens. (The red dots are a carry over from years of fishing *Peck's Poppers*, all of which carry red dots.) I prefer to buy cork bodies and paint them myself, attaching a variety of leg and tail materials. I also use the small plastic poppers sold by most catalog companies, and paint them with magic markers and cover that with nail polish after I apply stick-on eyes.

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### **I like flies with a scooped, popping bug face. (I like hearing the *blooop* sound they make on retrieve, even if the fish don't.)**

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I epoxy the hooks in place. My Dremel tool is perfect for shaping bugs, and I sometimes buy flat-faced bodies and cup them myself. At the bottom of the popper lineup in the box are three small deer hair bugs I tie on size 10 hooks, for use when I want a quiet presentation. They float high when I dose 'em with fly floatant. (Any fly tier who hasn't learned to "spin hair," is missing one of fly tying's most creative and fun aspects.)

Bluegills will readily hit poppers. Shell crackers rarely do. At Lake Okeechobee this time of year the bluegills are as big as they come, and the shell crackers run to 9 or 10 inches, in the pound-and-a-half range, real "titty bream," so big you have to hold 'em to your chest to unhook 'em. Using sinking bugs it's easy to catch fish far faster than the live worm crowd. Twice yesterday we had bait fishermen ask to be shown just what it was that we were using to such devastating effect. They thought we were crazy to begin with, wading instead of staying in the boat, releasing every fish. After we left the area I saw one of the good ol' boys get overboard and wade along slowly—not far from his boat-- using his plastic cane pole like a fly rod, catching fish with a fly my friend had given him. I use a seven-and-a-half foot 3-weight. I carry forceps on a small bungee cord tied to my belt to help in unhooking all these small fish, which are in a hurry to swallow a fly once they capture it. Even with flattened hook barbs flies can get wedged. You'll seldom injure a fish badly, but you will lose a few rubber legs while using the forceps. You'll be happier if you tuck in your shirttails to avoid having them catch your floating fly line as you cast.

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***Ken Hofmeister from Suncoast Anglers fished with me recently, and we caught nearly 200 bluegills and shell crackers, so many that we wouldn't stop and try bass fishing, which is world class also at Lake Okeechobee.***

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We caught four or five bass accidentally, with size 8 poppers and sinking flies. The week before, wading just offshore of the reeds and grass, a pal caught more than 50 small bass and one three pounder on poppers while we fished the beds. The fishing is *that* good at Lake O for fly rodders this time of year. Imagine a 10-lb largemouth on a fly!

It's out there.

For bass I tie big poppers, most made with cork bodies I buy from a supplier in Louisiana. I use size 4 hump shank hooks, epoxied in place, and paint the raw cork with magic markers or spray paint, and cover that with nail polish.

I like big eyes on all my flies, and lots of hackle, flash and rubber legs. The idea is to create a frog, and make it gurgle and pop on the surface. I think bass strike big poppers because they resemble frogs, and the noise they make sounds to a bass like a pal of theirs has just tried to eat something and it somehow got away. All striking fish love to eat cripples, relatively free lunches. I keep the fly moving, with only occasional stops. It's *going* to get away if they don't eat it NOW! They strike when their greed and natural aggression overrides their fear.

*It's important to keep your line tight when using a popper. Point your rod at the fly while you're retrieving it, impart motion to the fly with strips instead of a rod tip twitch, and use a hard strip-strike when a bass hits. You'll miss 'em if you raise your rod and sweep it to set the hook.*

These big flies call for a stout rod to cast them well, but I opt for a nine foot 5-weight rod usually, going with a straight seven foot piece of 12 pound leader.

*Continued>>>*

# Suncoast Fly Fisher Report

## ***Putnam's Bream Box Secrets revealed...***

*Continued from previous page.*

If I were seriously trying to catch a wall hanger, I'd use a 9-weight and 20 pound leader. It's casting with the big rod all day that's not as much fun. The key is to try and let the fish run and wear itself out before it breaks you off or throws the hook. Follow along closely as it darts into the grass, and do your best to get it untangled and in-hand. You gotta dig in there and lift 'em out, usually with a bunch of grass.

Long narrow foam popping bugs like the yellow one in the big bug fly box work well when bass are feeding on schools of minnows on top, and the deer hair diver flies are a quiet way to show a bass a critter that's trying to get away from 'em. Some of my favorites are the foam flies I tie like the one in the corner of the box, with the plastic curly tails.

Even with the hooks properly wrapped with thread and epoxied in place, a bass over four pounds can ruin a cork fly in a hurry. Plastic ones are easily reshaped, easier to paint, and much more durable, but somehow to me they're not as much fun to work with as cork. It's a feel thing.

Those two boxes are what I call my "pocket boxes," the ones I stick in my shirt when I wade off from the boat. Other boxes hold dozens of flies that aren't likely to make it off the bench and into the game that day. If there's room in the boat or a bag, they go for a ride like the rest. They're an important part of the team.

###

*David. Thank you for this wonderful, in-depth, and very readable article on how to score on the Big O.*

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# How-To

By Bob Morrison

## **Magnetize your net**



If you are fishing up north or out west for coldwater trout you may occasionally drop a small fly and lose sight of it in leaf litter on the forest floor. If you have a magnetic attachment where your landing net connects to your vest you can use the magnet to

search for the fly. Just sweep the magnet across the ground until the fly sticks to it. I have tried this method many times and only once failed to find the fly. I'm sure it will work as well in the palmetto litter around here as it does up north. If you don't have a magnetic net your cell might work. Check to see if it has a magnetic panel; it's usually near the hinge.

## **Orange bellied flies are best**

2. The great Dave Whitlock states that grasshopper pattern terrestrials with orange bellies catch more fish than grasshopper patterns with other belly colors. I tried them, and they work. Thanks, David.

## **Sun cream conundrum solved**

3. I have read a few times that the smell of some sunscreens, if they get on your fly, will cause some fish to turn away. So, I don't put sunscreen on my hands at all when fishing. Instead, I wear sun gloves, small fingerless gloves, to protect the back of my hands from the sun, scratches when bushwhacking through dense brush, and - okay - fish odor, too.

## **What to do with an empty pizza box**

4. If I'm not using a particular fly line for an extended period of time, I remove it from the reel, coil it loosely like a cowboy's lariat, and store it in a pizza box. The same goes for leaders, which become like a coil spring if left on the reel. Resting lines and leaders in this manner probably helps them last longer as well.

## Pat's Fly Casting Clinic

### **Low backcast -- high forward cast**

*By Capt. Pat Damico, Master Casting Instructor*

#### **Casting tip # 32:**



Many of our club members have the opportunity to do a variety of fly fishing venues. Freshwater trout fishing is one of them and occasionally requires different techniques than those used for saltwater. I recently fished a Heritage Trout Stream that gets constant pressure every day of the year. Fishing a Trico hatch, our success depended on size 24 dry flies, 7X tippets and a drag free drift. Wild brown trout would almost touch the offering with their nose before accepting or refusing a floating fly. At my suggestion, my companion made a lower backcast, there was a high obstruction behind him, and an elevated forward cast. This allowed the long fine leader to develop slack in the end before the fly lightly touched the moving smooth water surface creating several feet of drag free drift and a strike

### **Need to Know Knots**

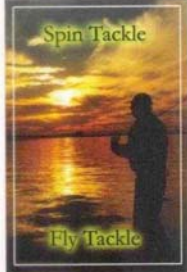
***What are your favorite knots? Here are Paul Sequeira's top six***

1. Perfection Loop
2. Uni Knot and also the back-to-back Uni Knot
3. Nail Knot
4. Albright Special
5. Non-slip Loop Knot
6. Bimini Twist

**Paul adds...** *I have used knots in the past that are still good but I've found better (or easier) knots. For instance, I have replaced the Improved Clinch Knot with the Uni-Knot. I have replaced the Blood Knot with the Back-to-back Uni-Knot. I'm sure other fishermen would disagree with all of my choices but those are the ones I use most often. I recently learned about a website that has excellent instructions to tie knots for all fishing situations. This site [- NetKnots.com/fishing knots](http://NetKnots.com/fishing_knots) - not only has an excellent diagram of each step in the tying process for each knot, but also an animated version of the tying process. The non-slip loop knot that I use is not the one shown at the NetKnots.com website. I don't have any special name for it; John Homer (remember the Saltwater Fly Fisherman shop?) taught it to me and I have used it ever since. It is easier to demonstrate than it is to describe.*



# Special Friends of Suncoast Fly Fishers



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Capt. Wayne Simmons Tampa Bay Area 727-204-4188  
Capt. Steve Soult, Nature Coast Area 352-686-0853  
Capt. Jason Stock, St. Petersburg-Englewood, 727-459-5899.  
Jim Swann - fresh water 352-567-6029

## Some of our favorite websites...

[Suncoastflyfishers.com](http://Suncoastflyfishers.com)

[FloridaSportsman.com](http://FloridaSportsman.com)

[Fishermanscoast.com](http://Fishermanscoast.com)

[FlyFishinSalt.com](http://FlyFishinSalt.com)

[SaltwaterSportsman.com](http://SaltwaterSportsman.com)

[AnglingTrade.com](http://AnglingTrade.com)

[CaptPat.com](http://CaptPat.com)

[Earthnc.com/online-nautical-charts](http://Earthnc.com/online-nautical-charts)

[SaltwaterTides.com](http://SaltwaterTides.com)

## New Website Recommendation

Recommended by Paul Sequira

[netknots.com/fishing\\_knots/](http://netknots.com/fishing_knots/) **NEW!!**

Members, got a good fishing website you want to share with other Suncoast Fly Fishers? Email Bill AuCoin, [wmaucoin@verizon.net](mailto:wmaucoin@verizon.net)

# Fly Over

## *Here-there-and-everywhere in the world of fly-fishing*

**FFF Expo 2012** -- Florida Council of FFF is having its annual meeting -- FFF Expo 2012 --on October 19-20, 2012 at the Orlando Sun Resort and Conference Center in Kissimmee. Visit the web site - [www.fff-florida.org](http://www.fff-florida.org) -- for details and registration information.

**Casting for Recovery** – Suncoast Fly Fishers are invited to attend the July 28 *Fish Tales & Cocktails* event in Titusville, a fundraiser for **Casting for Recovery Florida** to support its three-day fly fishing retreats for women with breast cancer or breast cancer survivors. Just \$125. Contact Lily Renzetti (321) 267-7705. More info at [www.castingforrecovery.org](http://www.castingforrecovery.org).

**The3Day** -- Susan Doty has signed up to hike 60 miles in three days in October. That's quite a hike and she is asking Suncoast Fly Fishers to support her and the Susan G. Komen Foundation with a donation. Go to [The3Day.org](http://The3Day.org) and click on "Search for a Participant." Enter **Susan Doty**. That will make sure she gets the credit.

**FREE:** Sign-up for FFF's E-News, delivered monthly by email

1. Go to FFF website:  
<http://www.fedflyfishers.org>
2. Click on the blue icon where it says "Click to Sign up for our Newsletter"
3. You'll be asked to fill in the blanks—email address, first name, last name.
4. You'll receive a confirming email message.



**NEW MEMBER BONUS.** New members receive a free copy of *Wading the Saltwater*

### *Dubbing at rest?*



*Photography and curious caption by Layne Smith. Dubbing is not the name of his cat.*

**"Let 'em wonder," said Smitty**