

# On The Fly

Newsletter of the Suncoast Fly Fishers of St. Petersburg

Chuck Hall's Docklight Tarpon. P8



Fresh Docklight Perspectives. P5



Robert's Revenge. P9



Fly fishing's next generation. P14



Docklight tripletail. P9



Smitty's Estaz Crab. P18



Bruce's Mullet Clouser. P17





## The President's Message: July 2022

July 2022

There is no denying it. It's hot. We are definitely in the Dog Days of Summer, and it has an effect on our fishing. According to the Farmers' Almanac, the "Dog Days" of summer are from July 3 to August 11 each year. They're usually the hottest and most unbearable days of the season.

We often hear about the "Dog Days" of summer, but few know where the expression originated. You may be surprised to see it has to do with the stars!

The phrase is a reference to Sirius, the Dog Star. During the "Dog Days" period, the Sun occupies the same region of the sky as Sirius, the brightest star visible from any part of Earth. Sirius is a part of the constellation Canis Major, the Greater Dog.

In the summer, Sirius rises and sets with the Sun and because the star is so bright, the ancient Romans believed it actually gave off heat and added to the Sun's warmth, accounting for the long stretch of sultry weather. They referred to this time as *diēs caniculārēs*, or "dog days."

Thus, the term Dog Days of Summer came to mean the 20 days before and 20 days after this alignment of Sirius with the Sun—July 3 to August 11 each year.

It may be too hot to fish in the middle of the day. Fish early, fish at night, fish the beaches and don't forget the sunscreen.

Stay safe and keep fishing!

Rick Warfel  
SFF President

## Meetings, Outings, and More

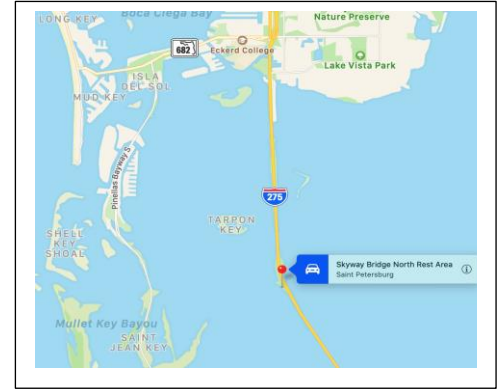
### Meeting, Thursday, July 21, Walter Fuller Park, St. Petersburg, 6:30-8:30

- The meeting starts at 7 but come early for snacks, coffee, raffle tickets, and chatting up friends.

### Outing, Saturday, July 23. Lower Tampa Bay

#### Picnic, 11:30 am, North Sunshine Skyway Rest Area

- Fish Gulf or Bay waters anywhere south of 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue South (Florida State Road 682) in St. Pete.
- Wade fishers can join outings chair Bob Burkard and Bill AuCoin at 7:30 am at the North Skyway Rest Area.
- Fishers and non-fishers alike should meet up at 11:30 am for the outing picnic at the North Sunshine Skyway rest area.
- The outing tournament ends at noon. \$10 gift certificates will be awarded for the longest snook, redfish, and longest speckled trout. Measure, take a picture, and show it to Bob Burkard or Bill AuCoin at the picnic pavilion by 1 pm.
- Check the lengths on the annual outing tournament, too. Your longest fish could take the lead on one or more of those categories.



### Summer youth casting clinics

- David Redd reports that all four of the summer youth casting clinics in Hillsborough County went very well and he thanks all of the club members who volunteered to help.
- Two were held in June at the Riverview Civic Center. Two were at Carrollwood Village Park in July.

### IMPORTANT UPDATES: 2022 OUTINGS

- July 23: North Sunshine Skyway (I-275) Rest Area (Longest snook, redfish, and speckled trout)
- August 20: Family outing at Fort DeSoto Park. Meet up at Shelter #3 in North Park area.
  - Best Brisket in the Bay Luncheon. (This outing is going to be a big deal with home-cooked briskets made by President Rick Warfel and Outings Chairman Bob Burkard.
  - PLUS, there's a free raffle for lots of fly fishing and other fun prizes.
  - It's a family outing. Spouses and children and grandchildren are all welcome.
- September 17: Urban Outing, Bay Vista Park, St. Petersburg. (Longest fish of any species)
- October 22: Carl Hanson Memorial, Hillsborough River. (Longest fish and the most bluegills)
- November 19: Weedon Island Preserve (Longest ladyfish)
- December 17: Don Coleman Invitational, Fort De Soto Park (Longest fish of any species)

### Member James Davis has very sad news: His wife has had a massive stroke.

UPDATE: Member Tim Elms and Christina Elms have set up a "Go fund me" site and are asking members to donate, even if only \$5. Go to [gofund.me/b2561bfd](https://gofund.me/b2561bfd)

- My wife Lisa has had a massive stroke and she is not able to speak or swallow and the right side of her body is paralyzed. She is in rehabilitation at BayCare Alliant Hospital in Dunedin, room 160.
- The goal is to have her come home and be somewhat independent even if she is not able to speak. My daughter and I are devastated, so upset, so sad.

*James###*

# We are Suncoast Fly Fishers of St. Petersburg

## Aims and Purposes

The Suncoast Fly Fishers, Inc. (SFF) is an organization of fishing enthusiasts who love fishing with the fly rod. We welcome all people of all ages with similar interests, regardless of their fly-fishing skill level. We enthusiastically teach those that wish to learn or improve their fly casting, fly tying and related fly-fishing skills. SFF meets monthly where we talk fly fishing, tie flies and most months feature a speaker with a program highlighting local fly-fishing opportunities.

Suncoast Fly Fishers (SFF) is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization. SFF is a charter member of the Fly Fishers International (FFI). SFF is a member of the Florida Council of FFI. SFF supports the conservation of natural resources, boating safety and fishing regulations.

### Monthly Meetings. Guests welcome.

Third Thursday of every month (except December) at St. Pete's Walter Fuller Park Rec Center, 7891 26th Ave. N. 6 to 8:30 pm.

**Directions to our meeting at Walter Fuller Park.** From 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue N turn North on 72<sup>nd</sup> St. N. Turn left (West) on 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue N. Then turn right into the rec center parking lot.

### Monthly Outings

Club members meet up every month for a fly-fishing outing and lunch. Usually it is scheduled on the Saturday after the monthly meeting on the third Thursday of every month.

**Contact us by mail:** Suncoast Fly Fishers, P.O. Box 40821, St Petersburg, FL 33743-0821

### Visit our website and Facebook pages, too

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

[Monthly Calendar](#)

[Facebook.com/scff2020](https://www.facebook.com/scff2020)

### Online Pay Portal: Pay dues, donate, purchase

<https://suncoastflyfishers.com/eshop/>

### Membership

Suncoast Fly Fishers now has 112 members including 13 family members and 6 honorary members. Dues are \$50 (for individuals, \$40 for seniors, and \$60 for families. It includes benefits and annual membership in [Fly Fishers International](#) and the [Florida Council](#) of Fly Fishers International.

**New member: Welcome Pete Wallace, Clearwater**

### Suncoast Fly Fishers

P. O. Box 40821  
St Petersburg, FL 33743  
[www.suncoastflyfishers.org](http://www.suncoastflyfishers.org)

### Club Officers

Pres: Rick Warfel  
Vice Pres: Quin Berry  
Secretary: David Redd  
Treasurer: Tom Gadacz

### Board of Directors

Bill Scarola, Bob Burkard, Bruce Evensen, Ryan Sollars, Cliff Nigh, Karen Warfel, James Davis

**Casting:** Pat Damico, Dayle Mazzarella

**FFI Liaison:** Pat Damico

**Conservation:** Cliff Nigh

**Fly Tying:** Myron Hansen

**Hog Roast:** Open

**Membership:** Tom Gadacz

**New Members:** Rick Warfel

**Webmaster:** Tim Elms

**Facebook:** Cliff Nigh, Anne Mitchell

**Outings:** Bob Burkard, David Redd, Bill AuCoin

**Outreach, shows:** David Redd, Bob Burkard, Bill Scarola, Tom Gadacz

**Succession Plan:** Rick Warfel

**Programs:** Board of Directors

**Publicity:** Bill AuCoin

**Social media:** Anne Mitchell

### On The Fly

Editor Bill AuCoin, Anne Mitchell, Bob Hood, Tim Elms, Marshall Craig, Kevin Kelly

**Committees?--Members are encouraged to serve on one or two committees. Do you? If not, speak to one of the officers at the next meeting.**



## Insider Secrets: Captains Matt Foster and Brad Lowman

***Captains Matt Foster and Brad Lowman shared their docklight and beach fly fishing secrets at the June 18 meeting.***

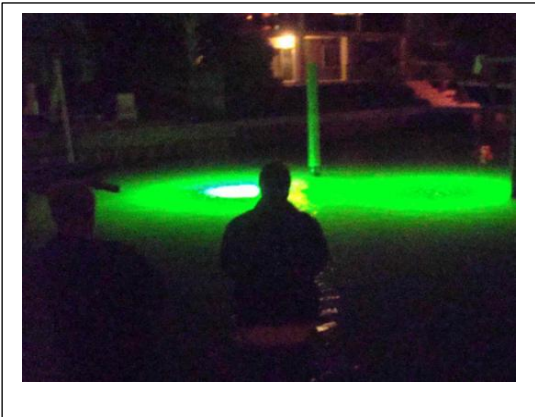
Matt, Brad, and Capt. Lisa Lowman are a team now on a new initiative called [Gulf Coast Fly Fish](#). They're booking fly fishers from Tampa Bay all across the Gulf Coast to Louisiana. Matt, Brad, and Lisa are overturning old stereotypes and bringing fresh perspectives to catching fish on the fly. The website describes them as "just three guides with a crazy obsession for fly fishing..."

Well, yes. They have an especially crazy obsession for fly fishing docklights, grassy flats, and beaches for tarpon, snook, redfish and spotted seatrout. The Tampa Bay area has 'em all. Brad believes Tampa Bay populations of these grand slam species are better now than they were ten years ago. Still, it's a notoriously tough fishery for the inshore slam fishes. He quoted Lefty Kreh saying he went to the Florida Keys to fly fish for bonefish so he could get better at catching Tampa Bay redfish.

For fishing beaches and mangrove shorelines fish parallel, not perpendicular. On beaches, snook are typically close to the sandy shore feeding on disoriented baitfish and sand crabs in the wave zone. On mangrove shorelines, snook and redfish will be up under the mangrove limbs or close to the mangroves which give them shelter and food.



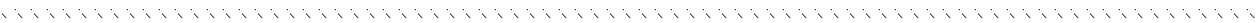
*That's Capt. Brad Lowman (l) and Capt. Matt Foster talking to Suncoast Fly Fishers at the June meeting. Matt is showing his Green Weenie Fly which is his favorite for docklight fly fishing.*



Member questions kept urging Matt and Brad to share their docklight secrets. The St. Pete/Clearwater metro is blessed with several hundred miles of residential canals and docks with underwater and overwater lights that attract bait and, of course, gamefish. The captains acknowledged that they're seeing lots and lots of tarpon and snook and expect they'll stay there through the summer and into the fall.

Docklight fishes are, you know, quick to spook. Well, in our urban fishery they are targeted over and over and over again and at the slightest sound they will stop feeding and scatter. So the first rule of docklights is, dammit, be quiet.

*Next page: Gear secrets and more*



## P2/ Docklight/Beach Secrets: Capt. Matt Foster and Brad Lowman

That said, Matt and Brad acknowledged they have found and go to some secret docklighted canals that don't get much fishing pressure, if at all. "We are sometimes more like hunters than fishermen," Brad said.

### Patience is a virtue

Matt shared how he works a docklight for tarpon, snook, redfish and spotted seatrout. First, he quietly moves the boat to about 30 feet from the docklight. Then he tells his fly fisher on the platform to just watch the fish. He points out that the feeding fish are moving around the docklight and structure in a repeating pattern. So, yes, get in sync with the biggest fish and its pattern.

So, while your targeted gamefish is doing his roundabout, Matt tells the client to make a side-arm cast (less spooky) and place the fly exactly in that spot where you know the fish will reappear. Because it will. And when the fish does come back, start ticking your fly to tease the fish. Sometimes the fish will grab the fly quickly. But sometimes it will follow the ticking fly to the edge of the light. When the fly gets to the edge of the light, stop moving the fly and the fish will often suck it up.

### Gear and Techniques

Last, but not least, is their recommended gear..

- Six-weight fly rod: A 6 weight. Really? Not an 8 weight? Yes, really. Most anglers make more accurate casts with a 6 weight rod plus the lighter, thinner line is less disruptive. And the rod is strong enough to land big fish. When you need some rod power, put the pressure on the lower section of the rod." Reel down, pump up," said Brad.
- Fly Line: 6 weight floating line with an intermediate sinking tip. The slow sinking line takes the fly down to right level without the up and down jig-like effect you get with a Clouser or any fly with heavy lead eyes. Plus, Brad said he has noticed time and again that flies tied with heavy lead eyes don't get a good hook set. He suspects it might be because the hook is riding up, not down, but also because the fly is jerking up and down on the retrieve and the fish sometimes miss it.



*Green Weenie Fly*

- Leader: Nine or 10 feet long. On docklights the butt and mid-section should be mono. The bite tippet will be 30-pound fluorocarbon. On beaches, the leader can be all fluorocarbon.



*Black/purple crab fly*

- Flies. Matt loves his Green Weenie marabou minnow. Crab flies are good, too, but remove the lead eyes. Black and purple are good colors.
- Hook. Matt and Brad's go-to hook is a size 1 Gamakatsu SL 12S. It's a short shank hook and it's very sharp.

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### Contact info:

Capt. Brad Lowman, [lowmansluckyfly@gmail.com](mailto:lowmansluckyfly@gmail.com), 727-484-0065

Capt. Matt Foster, [matthewfoster91@gmail.com](mailto:matthewfoster91@gmail.com), 813-765-2932

Website: [www.gulfcoastflyfish.com](http://www.gulfcoastflyfish.com)

Facebook.com/*gulfcoastfly*

## Bob Burkard: June 17-18 Docklight and Beach Outing

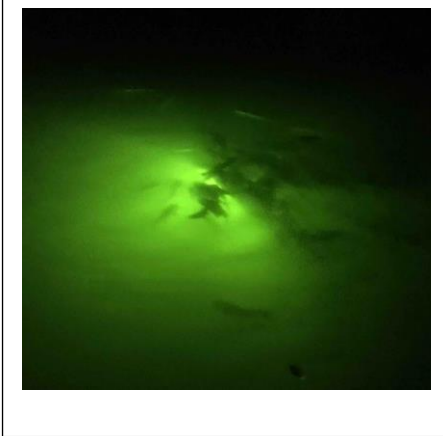


*Bob Burkard,  
Chairman of the  
Outings Committee*

I was hoping to get lots of emails and lots of fish pictures and reports. Reports were few, but the reports we got were good.

Chuck Hall hired Capt. Matt Foster (our June speaker) and caught a nice tarpon on docklights. See his article on the next page.

Anne Mitchell sent in pix and a report on her Friday night docklight fishing excursion with her husband Robert and her dad Mark. Robert caught a 26-inch redfish and takes the lead in the annual tournament. Mark caught a nice tripletail. Her report is on page 9.

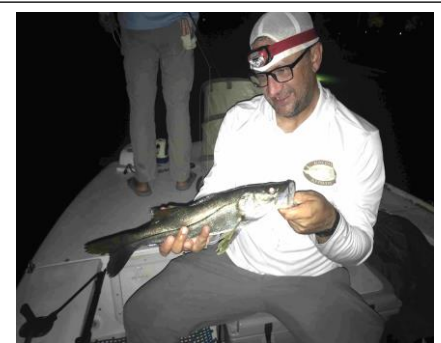


I fished canal docklights around Weedon Island with Bill AuCoin. There was one canal with a hundred or more fish (snook, redfish, seatrout, ladyfish, mangrove snapper, and even little tarpon.) The outgoing tide was strong and kept pushing the boat too far away to make an accurate cast. Bill took the boat up closer and closer to the dock light, so close that I was just a few feet away from a huge redfish. I thought we had spooked it but, what the heck, I flipped the fly at the fish and she gobbled it up just like that. Alas, she also wrapped the leader around a barnacle-encrusted piling. That's all she wrote. I can't prove it but I think mine was longer than Robert Mitchell's redfish.



*Tim casting to a docklight near Weedon Island.*

That was Friday night. On Saturday night Bill guided Tim Elms up to the same thick-fish canal. Bill said the number of fish on the lights was way down but still Tim jumped five snook. One was in the 30 inch range, Bill said, but he really messed up with the net and failed to get the thrasher into the boat.. A little later Tim landed the longest snook, a 20-incher which made him the outings champ and earned him a \$10 gift certificate. He also takes the lead in the annual tournament in the snook category.



*That's Tim with his docklight outing winner. He hooked, fought, and wrestled a much bigger snook to the boat but the netter goofed up and it got away.*

Check out the outings reports by Chuck Hall and Annie Mitchell on the following two pages.

*Bob*

## Chuck Hall: Docklight fishing with Capt. Matt Foster

After attending the June meeting of the Suncoast Fly Fishers and hearing about nighttime dock fishing, I booked an outing with Captain Matt Foster of [Gulf Coast Fly Fish](#). I have fished numerous times with Captain Brad Lowman so I knew that Matt would run a safe trip after dark.

After we launched and dodged some rain we pulled into a waterfront development in an area where I never expected to find homes. There were dock lights on most docks but we were alone to fish. We approached the first dock. It had several overhead lights shining on the water. I couldn't see anything. Captain Matt declared confidently that there were fish there. I guess it is true that guides have better eyes than the rest of us.

At the second light, a green light shining under the water, we watched for several seconds. And then from the dark outside the ring of green a shadow appeared. It moved slowly over the light and it was huge. Then another and another. They were everywhere and there was no mistaking-they were tarpon.

A slow quiet cast of less than 50 feet with my nine weight Scott put the fly on the outer one-third of the light circle. Then I followed Matt's instructions regarding stripping. Strips were much shorter and more rapid than I was accustomed to using for snook.



*This tarpon visited us before returning to dinner under the lights.*

It was a blast and we had dozens of shots at fun-sized tarpon. Many followed the fly, a few ate, a couple launched from the water, and this one (see photo) came to visit the boat for a few moments.

Captain Matt not only gives a good seminar, like the one he gave the club, but he knows how to fish! I can't wait to do this again!

*Chuck*



## Annie Hays Mitchell: Robert's Redfish Revenge



*Robert Mitchell and his 26-inch docklight redfish.*

Dad, Robert, and I launched at Jungle Prada around 10 or 10:30 pm on Friday night. We fished the docks around Treasure Island and Admiral Farragut Academy. There were thunderstorms all around us over the bay. Sure, technically we were in danger of a lightning strike, but we didn't want to spend Father's Day sleeping so we took our chances. The wind kept us from getting too hot even though it was steamy late into the night.

Robert and I fished my dad's "near hair" fly (it's a synthetic substitute for deer hair), and Dad fished the tried and tested DT Special. As we fished around the first dock,

Robert threw his fly in the water next to the boat. He inadvertently caught a ladyfish in the middle of the canal. As we drifted past the first couple of docks, we noticed a large, black disk floating under the light. Robert thought it was a mass of seaweed, but Dad and I could tell it was a huge fish.

On our second drift, Dad caught that huge fish. It was a 20 inch tripletail. Robert and I had never seen one before. It fought very hard and nearly broke Dad off on the pilings. When Dad cleaned it the next morning it was full of crabs, which is interesting given the fly it took did not resemble a crab in any way. We saw lots of crabs, shrimp, and white bait swimming across the surface all night due to the full moon and strong tide.

We eventually worked our way to some docks between Admiral Farragut and Blind's Pass. This dock was infamous because last year on this outing a massive redfish broke Robert's line on the piling after a long and difficult fight. There was a large school of hungry redfish making swirls and surface strikes as we approached.

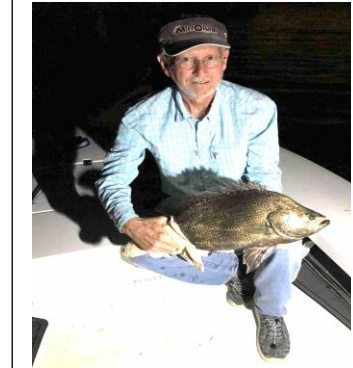
Robert was out for revenge, and he managed to bring in one of these monsters this time. It was 26 inches and it had the distinction of being his very first redfish on a fly rod. When Dad cleaned it, he noted that the fish had been gorging itself on crabs, shrimp, and whitebait. It was one of the fattest redfish he'd ever seen.

For both the redfish and Dad's triple tail it took three of us to capture each fish. One person had to fight the fish, one to had run the trolling motor, and one had to hold the net and camera. It was a family thing.

During our last stretch of the trip in the early morning hours Robert caught another ladyfish and I caught a 15 inch hard head catfish. I always hate that feeling one gets when you hook a catfish. You think you caught a monster, then you realize the fish is sinking like a rock to the bottom, then you realize that's because it's obviously a catfish. Oh well, at least I caught something.

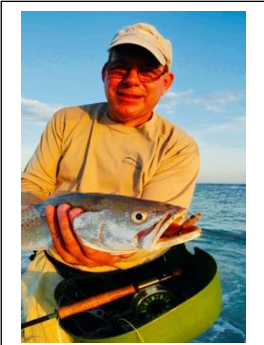
Dad had been experimenting with preserving the fish in our cooler with ice and saltwater. We've had a few fishing trips now to try this out, and everyone in the Hays and Mitchell family can attest that this makes the fish taste significantly better and preserves it longer even if it's frozen. We always either grill or bake our fish so keeping it fresh is paramount to us as these methods don't hide poor flavor like frying does.

*Annie*



*Mark Hays and his 20-inch tripletail.*

## Bob Burkard: July 23 Outing. North Skyway Rest Area



*Bob Burkard,  
Chairman of the  
Outings Committee*

Ooops. Change of plans:

We have been talking up the South Skyway Rest Area for the July outing. Cross that out. Our July outing will instead be based at the North Skyway Rest area. That's the exit just a mile or so South of the I275 tollbooth coming from Pinellas County. This rest area is also sometimes called the Blackthorn Memorial.

What happened? Well, what happened was that the Florida Dept. of Transportation has put up a No Fishing sign at the popular South Skyway Rest area. Bill AuCoin emailed the DOT to find out why they put the sign up. The answer was that it's because of construction underway at the South Skyway building. So, the question is, will we be able to park and fish there next year? Well, the DOT is not sure when (or even if) they will take the sign down. Let's hope they do. It's a great place to fish. It doesn't look like Florida Fish and Wildlife has played a role in this decision.



*South Skyway Rest Area sign.  
So, we're moving the July  
outing to the North Skyway  
Rest Area.  
(David Redd photo)*

Anyway, enough about that. Here's the where and when:

- You can fish beaches, bays, or bayou anywhere south of 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue South in St. Petersburg. That's also Florida 682. It stretches from Little Bayou Park on Tampa Bay and the Don Cesar hotel on the Gulf. The waters on either side of I-275 are good for wade fishing.
- Wade fishers are welcome to join me and Bill AuCoin. We'll be at the pavilion by 7:30 am. If you don't see us text Bob at 813-384-6698 or Bill AuCoin at 727-417-6676. They'll call you right after they land the big fish they're fighting.
- A picnic lunch will be served starting at 11:30 at one of the North Skyway Rest Area pavilions. You'll spot the *Suncoast Fly Fishers* sign.
- \$10 gift certificates will be awarded to the members catching the longest snook, redfish, and speckled trout. Measure. Take pictures. If you want your long fish to be considered for the outing and annual tournaments you need to arrive at the pavilion before 1 pm and show your pictures to me.

### *Leaders on the 2022 Outing Tournament Trail*

Species	Winner	Length (inches)	Outing (Month)
<b>Longest bream</b>	<b>Anne Mitchell</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Walsingham Park (March)</b>
<b>Longest black bass</b>	<b>Mark Hays</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Walsingham Park (March)</b>
<b>Longest snook</b>	<b>Tim Elms</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Docklight/Beaches (June)</b>
<b>Longest redfish</b>	<b>Robert Mitchell</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>Docklight/Beaches (June)</b>
<b>Longest ladyfish</b>	<b>Rick Warfel</b>	<b>20-1/4</b>	<b>Weedon Island Preserve (January)</b>
<b>Longest seatrout</b>	<b>Rick Warfel</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Cypress Point Park (May)</b>

## Bob Burkard: Preview: August 20 Outing at Fort DeSoto Park



Bob Burkard, Chairman of the Outings Committee

### LET'S GET BACK TOGETHER

Hello fellow Suncoast Fly Fishers,

We all know that the last few years have been very strange ones for us and for our Suncoast Fly Fishers (SFF) organization. The isolation that we had to deal with during the COVID lockdowns extended to our SFF club meetings, outings, and annual events. We missed socializing with our families and our SFF friends felt alone in our homes.

While many of us attended our SFF General Meetings using Zoom Video conference these could not compare to our in-person gatherings and presentations. We also had "virtual" outings where we fished apart from each other but could not break bread and swap stories about our fishing adventures and conquests. So, while our Suncoast Fly Fishers members

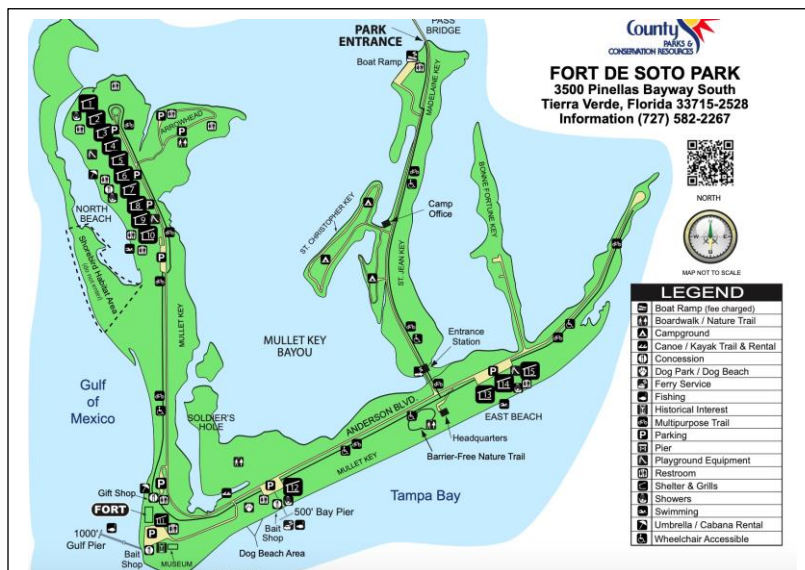
persevered through these trying times, we lost a lot of the "Magic" that makes our SFF experiences so important to us.

### THE PANDEMIC HAS ENDED

Now the Pandemic has ended! And it is time to do our best to get back to a "new" normal.

Our Suncoast Fly Fishers Board would like to celebrate this occasion by inviting our members and their families to a "Get Back Together" bash at our August Monthly Outing at Fort DeSoto. We are planning a summer BBQ and get-together with our SFF friends and their families at Shelter #3 by the North Beach on Fort DeSoto.

### DOOR PRIZES. CASTING FUN



Suncoast Fly Fishers' August outing is a Fort DeSoto Park with a BBQ picnic, door prizes, casting fun, and more. Save the date. We meet for lunch at Shelter #3 on North Beach.

Please hold the date for Saturday, August 20, for our celebration. More information will be shared over the next month. We will have door prizes and casting activities.

I am looking forward to this gathering to share great food and to catch up with our friends.

Sincerely,

Bob

Bob Burkard

## Mike Larkin: Tarpon and Bonefish Podcasts

Member [Mike Larkin](#) who works at NOAA Fisheries was interviewed by Tom Rowland recently on two major subjects.

His tarpon podcast is at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOHLQfxtfK0>



### [Dr. Mike Larkin - Tarpon Behavior, Anatomy, History, And More - EPISODE #597](#)

This week's podcast is about all things tarpon. My guest is Dr. Mike Larkin and he goes over so much information on tarpon and there is a TON to learn. Mike is a fisheries biologist and has a ton of knowledge about why tarpon behave the way that they do. We go over the research he has done which includes tracking tarpon and how we can use ...

[www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

His bonefish podcast is at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NcMLYCHA1Ec&t=4462s>



### [Dr. Mike Larkin - Everything You Need to Know About Bonefish - Episode #630 - YouTube](#)

For this weeks podcast, Dr. Mike Larkin rejoins the show to talk about all things Bonefish



## Tim Elms: Sixth Sense Fly Fishing



Howdy. It's prime time people. Let's go!

Snook are freaking everywhere. Go outside and catch a soap fish. Anything white with a hook works well.

But, you know me. I'm chasing silver princesses or what ever they identify as these days. I know I know. The big "birthing fish" are about done migrating at the beach and this year the ones I saw were exceptionally good. But alas I didn't get to throw my buggy whip at the big mommas or dudes. I do work, you know!

It's that time of year I use all my senses to my advantage in my war of fly vs juvenile tarpon in the craziest creeks, ponds, ditches, and storm drains. The little mouth breathers have no idea what's coming. My senses have paid off because this is the first year I have landed more than 30 before the peak season..

Let's talk about the 5 senses for juvi poon:

See: I see a roll. Oh, did he come up and down deep? Or up and stay up and happy. Happy is what we want. Did I see an eat? I have learned that poons in my crap water will even show a fork tail. It's not hard to miss as this is usually the darkest part of their body.



Hear: Hearing is overlooked in fishing but you should try to learn to hear a baby poon sip air. Yea it's a sound. After a while you know the differences of a gar or a pleco and the sweet sound of a tarpon.

Touch: This is my hookset. Even if I see a flash I make myself wait just a millisecond for the line to be tight.

Smell: Rain. If all else fails I wanna smell rain, in fact, let it pour. I'll be waiting for them to be happy again.

Taste: Yep. There's a taste of glory. You do it all correctly, You get to fly a tarpon in the dirtiest water, and pop!



The taste can be the worst. Or the best!.

And the mysterious 6th sense? It will come with time. To be fishy. Yes that's a thing. One must be ready for anything at any time. And you will mess it up it. But if you really focus, the effort pays off. Be happy with happy fish. You can't catch fish if you aren't happy. They can smell it on you.

How do you use your senses to make you a better fly angler?

*Strip Strip Strip!!!!—Tim*

## David Redd: Summer Camp Fly Fishers

Suncoast Fly Fishers enjoyed another successful summer partnering with the Hillsborough County Parks and Recreation department. With two sessions in June and two sessions in July, we introduced fly fishing to over 80 youths ranging in age from 9-14.

With the help of Chris O'Byrne, Rick Warfel, and Tom Gadacz we covered the differences between fly fishing compared to traditional fishing. We covered fly fishing equipment and fly patterns. And we taught them proper casting techniques.

Hopefully, we have sowed the seeds of the next generation of fly fishers. I'm looking forward to doing it again next year.

*David*



*Summer camp fly fishers at Riverview Civic Center*



*Summer camp fly fishers at Carrollwood Village Park*



## Jack Collins: Heckuva Halibut Trip in Alaska

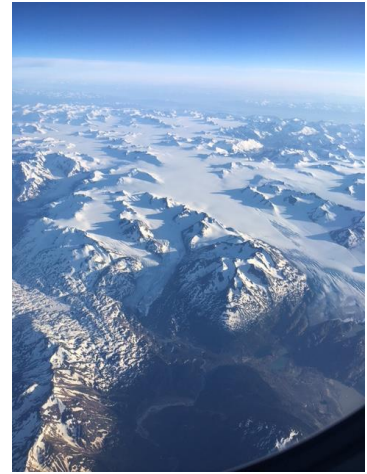


*Jack Collins fights halibut on the fly rod. (Just teasing.)*

### July 2

Our flight last week to Anchorage was long but amazing as we flew over the ice covered Rockies in Canada and Alaska. We are here to help my daughter and family move south to Louisiana.

I did a fishing trip from Seward. The 2 1/2 hour exciting ride to the first spot paid off with everyone catching their big fish within an hour. Our second stop was on our ride back for our shorter fish. I caught mine within 1/2 hour. I also continued fishing and caught a couple more throwbacks, too many halibut, before catching a nice salmon and a rock fish, both keepers. I caught my limit of two halibut one was 42 inch the other 32 and we netted 30 pounds of filets.



*Rocky Mountain High*

*Jack*

## Andy Constantinou: Bluefish are back in Tampa Bay

*May 12*

I spent the morning fly-fishing the Cockroach Bay flats with my 7-weight rod and I caught my first Bluefish on a fly.



When it hit it made an incredible run taking me down to the backing. It fought like a bonefish for the first few minutes.

What a fish! it weighed about three pounds. I also caught several sea trout and the smallest ladyfish in the sea. All in all it was a lovely morning of fishing. I managed to get back in just before the wind picked up.

*Cheers, Andy*

## Chris O'Byrne: Freshwater Tips for July



The edges are back in play.

Bass and big bluegill are beginning to spend mornings in the shallows again. I caught this bass (and the bluegill he was trying to eat) on a woolly bugger made of mohair and featuring a cone head.

Don't quit fishing until the afternoon. Look for shielded places near moving water, and be ready when the sun comes out from behind passing clouds.

*Chris*

## Chris O'Byrne: Unicorn Clouser on Featherwater.Com

### OB's Unicorn Clouser

Updated: Jun 14

Fish will attack a fly that sinks quickly when we stop stripping it in. And in happy times, they'll blast through the surface to grab a topwater fly. But at certain times as the seasons pass, fish prefer baitfish type flies that land soft and sink slow. For this stage, I tie OB's Unicorn Clouser.



This variation on the Clouser minnow style of flies is designed to fish down the water column in vegetated areas. Nearly weightless eyes and craft fur are assembled in the normal steps on light wire trout hooks. When chasing bass and bluegill in water up to 7 feet, I use this leisurely sinking fly if I don't know what vegetation may be coming up from the bottom.

Member Chris O'Byrne blogs about fishing the freshwater lakes in nearby Polk County. We pinched and posted (left) one of his June blog posts about a Clouser fly variation he created, OB's Unicorn Clouser.

There's a lot more including a how-to for tying this productive fly.

Here's [the link](#).

PS: *Florida Sportsman* magazine has published another of my how to fly fish articles. *Cell Phone Casting* is a Florida Sportsman Seminar article that introduces a teaching plan I've been using for some years. New fly anglers who fall into certain age groups can quickly begin to learn the fly cast with this introductory analogy.

Ask for the July issue of *Florida Sportsman* in fly shops, check for it on magazine racks, or subscribe below. I hope you enjoy it.

Thank you to editor Jeff Weakley and Anna Deines.

*Chris*



## Bruce Evensen: Mullet Clouser



Bill Scarola and I are vacationing so we won't be helping you tie this fly in person in July or August at my St. Pete fly tying studio.

This is tried and true fly and a good one for upcoming outings in lower Tampa Bay. It's a baitfish imitation but, on the beaches, in the surf, it also looks and acts a bit like a sand flea. Beach snook eat it up.



*Bruce*

### Materials:

*Note! this is a standard CLOUSER PATTERN. but with different materials..*

Body- Top- gray Steve Farrar Slinky Fiber

Body- Under, white Steve Farrar Slinky Fiber

Thread- Gray flat-waxed or whatever. Mono works here, too.

Flash- Optional.. Steve Farrar Slinky Fiber has sparkly fibers in it

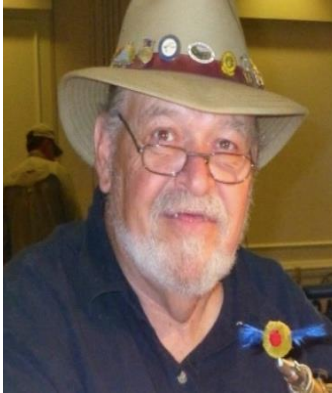
Epoxy-UV epoxy and curing light. Sally Hansen top coat can be applied to remove stickiness of cured epoxy

Glue- Super glue (aka head cement), Zap a Gap, etc.. I like brush-on nail glue.

### Tying Sequence

1. Wrap thread from hook eye to bend, bring thread to front
2. Attach barbell eyes to top of hook about 1/4 to 3/8th inch behind hook eye. Use figure 8 wraps 3-4 times, then 2-under/over wraps to secure eyes. Some tiers add some super glue to firmly secure eyes.
3. Add a small clump of white Steve Farrar material. Start in front of eyes then tie down material behind eyes several wraps on each side of barbell eyes.
4. Rotate fly so white material is on top then add a large clump of gray sf material in front of the eyes and tie in front of eyes only.. Material should be slightly more than the white belly material, but still you should still be able to see through the gray stuff.
5. Whip finish the front of the fly to a tapered head.
6. Apply epoxy glue to cover thread and barbell eyes.

## Smitty's Fly Box: Estaz Crab



I had success with this fly early in my saltwater fly fishing career from Pensacola to southwest Florida. It might be time to break it out again.

*Smitty*



### Materials:

Hook: Gamakatsu SL45 size 2 to 6

Thread: Danville Flat Waxed Nylon in Salmon pink Eyes: Gold barbell or Dazzle Eyes

Tail: Tan marabou

Body wrap: Large root beer Estaz chenille

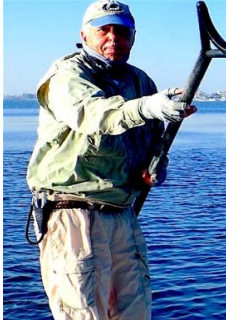
Legs: Root beer or Tan Sili Legs

Head: Built up thread

Finish: Softex

### Tying Sequence

1. Lay down a base of thread from the hook eye to the bend and finish with the thread behind the eye.
2. Attach the barbell eyes behind the hook eye and wrap thread back to the hook bend.
3. Tie in the marabou over the hook point and bind slightly around the hook bend (When sitting on the bottom, the marabou needs to be pointing upwards. This not only ensures that the fly turns over so that it is hook point up but also it allows the marabou to wave around enticingly in the water movement.)
4. Tie in body wrap at the hook bend and transfer thread back to half way along the hook shank.
5. Attach three rubber legs using a figure of eight wraps and move thread to behind the hook eye.
6. Using close wraps but not overlapping, wrap body material around shank back up to barbell eyes, tie off and trim excess chenille. Whip finish thread in front of barbell eyes.
7. Remove from vice, hold the legs out of the way, and trim the sides of the body to a "crab shape".
8. Trim the bottom of the crab flat. Spread the legs and apply a small dollop of Softex or silicone and work it into the materials on the bottom of the fly to help maintain crab shape.



## Capt. Pat Damico: Captain's Corner

### Make some noise with your favorite popper

If early morning fly-fishing trips have not been productive, our weak tides may be the reason. High tide at mid-day will drop sharply and trigger feeding activity. The larger volume of water will get our quarry under docks, mangroves, and other obstructions that may require something other than a small fly that will be recognized only when the fish is facing it. Have one of your fly rods with a floating weight forward line rigged with your favorite popper that imitates a baitfish. Use smaller, lighter ones at first to get used to how they cast. White is usually the best choice, switching to darker colors in low-light situations. Make sure your tapered leader does not have fluorocarbon components as this will sink and pull the floating popper's nose under the surface causing it to not work properly as well as making casting more difficult. The noise of the popper disturbing the surface will attract gamefish similar to a popping cork used by bait fishermen. Unlike when fishing for freshwater bass, don't let your surface popper sit too long. Quick twitches using your line hand instead of the rod tip will make it seem like it is struggling and trying to escape from the large fish. A good addition to the popper is an artificial eye on the side that floats instead of on each side of the head. This more clearly represents a struggling baitfish laying on its side. Strikes are often violent and add excitement.

### *Captain Pat*

Fly fisherman Pat Damico charts Fly Guy in lower Tampa Bay. [captpatdamico.com](http://captpatdamico.com) and 727-504-8649

## Gear for Sale or Swap

### Robert Fisher is selling his trolling motor

Motor Guide W75 Remote Control Trolling Motor; 24 volt, 48" shaft; very good condition. \$350. Call Robert at 813-495-5685.

## Bill Scarola: Puns of the Day



Did you hear the one about the new horror movie where they cross a killer shark with Nessie, Scotland's famous monster?

*It's called "loch jaws"*

Did you hear about the fishing trawler that collided with a tanker carrying red and brown paint?.

*The crew was marooned!*

See y'all in August!!!

*Bill*

## Bill AuCoin: Flyfisher Flyover



**Okay, starting Sept. 1** -- With heavily-pressured redfish populations, the Tampa Bay area is now one of nine Florida management zones for redfish. Now managers can set separate regulations for each of the nine zones to help redfish populations get bigger, not smaller. I'd be okay making redfish catch-and-release only for a while. ([MYFWC](#))

**Meet your neighbors** – We know about and members of Tampa Bay Fly Fishers and, ditto, Mangrove Coast Fly Fishers. Now we have fly fishers to our north. This club covers all the counties from Pasco north to Wakulla. ([Tarpon Coast Fly Fishers](#))

**Plus** --I sure do like the name of the club's newsletter. ([Salty Tippet](#))

**Mark Sosin, RIP** – We still don't know the cause of his death but what know and what we always knew was that Mark was one of saltwater fly fishing's biggest stars. Here is just one of many well-deserved online tributes. ([Saltwater Sportsman](#))

**Mark Sosin interview**-- Andy and Nicky Mill sat down with Mark and got him to talk about his fly fishing life including details about some huge catches. He also pays tribute to the late Joe Brooks for inspiring him and leading him into his fulfilling life in the fly fishing world. ([Millhouse Podcast](#))

**Some say macroalgae. Some say snot grass.**– I wade-fished middle bay mangrove areas recently and snot grass stuck to my hook and knots on almost every cast. The catch-all name is ^MACROALGAE." Officially, it's seaweed, not seagrass, and the word is that there's more than usual in Tampa Bay. (Piney Point, is that you?) Anyway, macroalgae is a good thing until there's too much of it. Maya Burke of the Tampa Bay Estuary Program mentioned it in her May presentation to our club. TBEP is looking into it and is interested in launching a community science program to get a better handle on the location, type, quantity and seasonality of macroalgae in Tampa Bay. Subscribers can read more about it on the [Tampa Bay Times](#) For a deep dive on snotgrass, go to this USF 2002 study.. ([digitalcommons.usf](#))

**Sarasota Bay, too** – And a lot more news is coming soon all around Florida.. ([Sarasota Bay Estuary Program](#))

**Don't tread on me.** Rattlesnake Key State Park. It's just south of the Sunshine Skyway. ([Sarasota Magazine](#))

**Of course. This is what we do** – Here's a very thorough tutorial about fly fishing the Southwest Gulf Coast of Florida. There's a whole lot of good things on the FFI website, btw. ([Fly Fishers International](#))

**Tail test** -- There's one big thing Florida fishers have in common with Pennsylvania Fishers. Fishing guide Jim Kukorio in Pennsylvania wants to release his fish alive. So are we, of course. And fish are especially vulnerable in the hot summer months. He fishes with a barbless hook.. He also performs the "Tail test." H/T to Capt. Pat Damico for this link. ([Barry and Cathy Beck](#))

**Beach snook tutorial** –Sarasota guide Steve Gibson died recently but he has left behind a terrific selfie video on how to catch snook on the beach. We can fly fish Gulf beaches at our July and August outings. Thank you, Gibby. ([You Tube](#))

*Bill*



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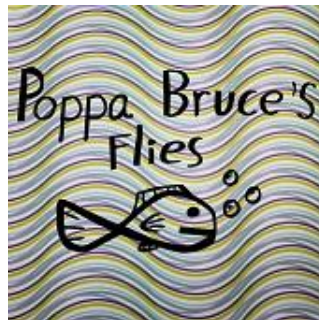
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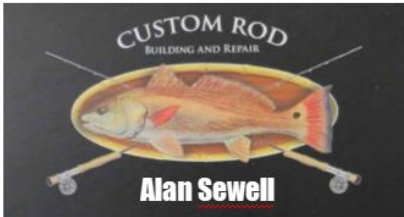


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