

On The Fly

Newsletter of the Suncoast Fly Fishers of St. Petersburg

May 16 Meeting
Gulf Fisheries P4



Trout Creek
Park outing P 7



Memories are made of this. P7



150+ Plus Everglades Exotics P8



Fort DeSoto Seatrout Bonanza P10



Florida FFI Expo at Bass Pro Shops P13



Top Rated Fly Fishing Kayaks P14





President's Message: May 2024

April brought us to one of my favorite outings, the Everglades. This year did not disappoint, we caught great numbers of fish and many different species. The group in Clewiston was one of the largest we have had in many years. On Saturday the group from Sunrise and the group from Clewiston fished the same area, it was nice having the club fish together on the last day. If you haven't experienced it, catching exotics on a 4 or 5wt. is about as much fun as you can have with a fly rod. I encourage everyone to make the trip next year if you can.

One of our aims and purposes at SFF is to support conservation of natural resources. For that purpose, Cliff Nigh worked with USF and the board of directors to establish the SFF USF Conservation Scholarship grant given annually to a USF student in conservation studies. In May our speaker will be the 2022 recipient of this grant and club member Jill Thompson-Grim. Jill will give us an update on her latest research.

Lastly, if you haven't already done so, I encourage you to renew your SFF membership. Renewal can be done easily on our website or at this month's member meeting.

David

David Redd

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 22nd Avenue N turn North on 72nd St. N. Turn left (West) on 26th 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

[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 139 members including 23 family members and 6 honorary members. Dues are \$50 (for individuals, \$40 for seniors, and \$60 for families. That includes benefits and annual membership in [Fly Fishers International](#) and the [Florida Council](#) of Fly Fishers International.

Welcome new members: John Lookabill and Mark Johnson and Family

Suncoast Fly Fishers

P. O. Box 40821
St Petersburg, FL 33743
www.suncoastflyfishers.org

Club Officers

Pres: David Redd
Vice Pres: Jack Collins
Secretary: Tony Piazza
Treasurer: Karen Warfel

Board of Directors

Quin Berry, Rick Warfel (Prior President), Bill Scarola, Bob Burkard, Bruce Evensen, Cliff Nigh, James Davis, Bill AuCoin

Casting: Pat Damico, Dayle Mazzarella

FFI Liaison: Pat Damico

Conservation: Cliff Nigh

Fly Tying: Myron Hansen

Hog Roast: Open

Membership: Karen Warfel

New Members: Rick Warfel

Webmaster: Tim Elms

Facebook: Cliff Nigh, Anne Mitchell

Outings: Bob Burkard, David Redd, Bill AuCoin, Quin Berry, Mandy McGarry, Anne Mitchell

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.

Meetings, Outings, and More



Thursday, May 16 meeting.

- Our speaker is member Jill Thompson-Grim, PhD candidate, University of South Florida college of Marine Science.
 - Jill will give us an update on the most recent research about the health of the Gulf and fish populations and habitats.
 - Jill was our club's PhD scholarship grantee. She will give members an update on the health of various Gulf marine species. She recently helped staff a NOAA Fisheries expedition in the Gulf.
 - Also, purchase raffle tickets for fly-tying materials and \$50/\$50 bucket pot raffle shared with the club.
-

Saturday May 18 outing, Picnic Island Park, Tampa

- There's good wade-in opportunities here as well as kayak-launch and a boat ramp, too.
 - Fish south of Gandy Boulevard and north of Macdill AFB
 - Gift certificate for the member who catches the longest redfish. Measure it, take a picture.
 - Measure your snook, seatrout, and ladyfish, too, for the annual outing tournament.
 - Picnic at noon at pavilion 607.
-

Big Hog Roast Reward

- Treasurer Karen Warfel has totaled up the earnings from the April 6 Hog Roast at St. Jerome Catholic Church in Largo and, all considered, it's very good.
 - The club is banking approximately \$3600 from ticket sales and silent auction bids.
-

Youth Fly Fishing. Volunteers needed

- Suncoast Fly Fishers members are teaching fly fishing to youth June 11 and June 25 in Riverview
 - We already had one session on March 28 at the Carrollwood Village Center in Tampa.
 - They'll be held in Riverview at the Balm Park Recreation Center from 9 to 11 am.
 - Volunteers needed. Help! If you can help with any of these sessions or have any questions please contact David Redd at reddfish68@yahoo.com. Rick Warfel, Bill Scarola, Don Cantin, and Jack Collins have volunteered to help.
-

Ladies Fly Fishing Tournament

- Suncoast Fly Fishers is organizing a women's-only fly fishing tournament.
 - Samantha Tallyn has been laying down the foundation for what could become a major annual event.
 - Samantha is in the process of securing sponsors to help fund the event and is getting closer and closer to making it a done-deal.
-

FFI Women Connect Event at Bass Pro Shops, Orlando, June 15.

- Volunteers are needed to staff the Suncoast Fly Fishers booth to promote the women's fly fishing tournament in St. Pete in September. Contact member Samantha Tallyn, stallyn86@gmail.com
-

Meetings, Outings, and More

2024 Calendar

(Some speakers are tentative)

- May 16 Meeting. Speaker, Jill Thompson-Grim. Subject: Gulf of Mexico marine science research.
- May 18 Outing: Picnic Island, Hillsborough County. Prize for the longest redfish.

- June 20 Meeting. Speaker, Member Mike Larkin PhD, Gulf sportfish population update.
- June 22 Outing. Docklights and beaches. Prize for the longest snook.

- July 18 Meeting. Speaker, Hallie Repeta, 2024 SFF's PhD Scholarship Winner at USF Marine Science.
- July 20 Outing. Sunshine Skyway. Prizes for the longest snook, redfish and seatrout.

- August 15 Meeting. Speaker, Gina Russo, MYFWC outreach update on Suncoast-area regulations and research.
- August 17 Outing. Fort DeSoto Park. Prize for the longest snook. Summer Brisket bbq picnic lunch.

- September 19 Meeting. Speaker, Capt. Brad Lowman. Topic: Best local fishing spots. Also, Louisiana redfish.
- September 21 Outing. Carl Hanson Memorial Outing with TBFFC. Prize for most bluegills and longest fish.

- October 17 Meeting. Speaker, Kerry Flaherty Walia, Restoration Ecologist, Tampa Bay Estuary Program.
- October 19 Outing. Emerson Point, Manatee County. Prizes for longest snook, redfish, seatrout, or ladyfish. Members of Sarasota's Mangrove Coast Fly Fishers will be invited to join us.

- November 21 Meeting. Open House. Our speaker is Bob Schorejs, aka "Kayak Bob." Topic: Kayaks.
- November 23 Outing. Upper Tampa Bay. Prizes for the longest snook, redfish, trout, or ladyfish.

- December , Christmas Party. Date TBD. No meeting.
- December 14 Outing. Don Coleman Invitational at Fort DeSoto Park. Prize for the longest fish of any species. Picnic: Annual chili cook-off.

Leaders on the 2024 Outing Tournament Trail

Species	Winner	Length	Outing (Month)
Longest bream	Kelly Sobczak	11-inches	Trout Creek Park
Longest black bass	Robert Mitchell	15-inches	Glades (April)
Longest Peacock Bass	Mark Hays	15.5-inch	Glades (April)
Longest redfish			
Longest snook			
Longest seatrout	Tim Elms	18.5-inches	Fort DeSoto Park (March)
Longest ladyfish			

Bob Burkard, May 18 Outing, Picnic Island Park, Tampa



*Bob Burkard,
chairman, outings
committee*

Alas, I won't be able to attend the May outing at Picnic Island Park in Tampa but Anne and Robert Mitchell are all set to make sure everybody gets too much to eat at the picnic lunch. That's at noon at Pavilion 607 which, incidentally, is close to parking, close to wade fishing the grass flats, and close to the euphemism; ie, comfort station, powder room, "rest" room.



I also happen to know from fishing friends that the Picnic Island grass flats and mangrove shorelines hold some biggies -- redfish, snook, seatrout, ladyfish. Also, water is warming and fish are more aggressive.

The member catching the longest redfish wins the \$10 gift certificate but be sure to take a picture and measure your snook, seatrout and ladyfish too because they might take the lead in the annual tournament challenge. See the updated chart at the bottom of page 5.



This is a great area for kayak and boat fishing. Picnic Island even has a boat launch. There are lots of places to slide your 'yak into the water. Fish anywhere south of the Gandy Bridge and north of MacDill Air Force Base.

I've been checking the water quality on Healthy Beaches for Hillsborough County and Picnic Island Park has been scoring "good" for many weeks. So, it's looking like you're good to go wade fishing, imho. You can check it again before you go. [Here's the link.](#)

Bob

Bob Burkard: April Outing at Trout Creek Park



*Bob Burkard,
chairman, outings
committee*

Man, I love this place. So beautiful. So peaceful. And so perfect for fly fishers in either direction. Trout Creek Conservation Park is just downstream a tad from the headwaters of the Hillsborough River. It is pristine. Fishing is great. So is the bird watching. Wood storks. Roseate spoonbills. Yellow crowned night herons. Bald eagles. The list goes on.

And we have winners. Wes Sobczak caught the longest bass -- 13-inches and the most panfish, 20. So he gets both \$10 gift certificates. Kelly was a winner, too. She caught 16 fish including an 11-inch bream which takes the lead in the annual outing tournament contest.



*Wes Sobczak's winning bass caught at
Trout Creek Conservation Park*



*Wes and Kelly have a dark good way to load and unload
their kayaks on the truck.*



Attaboys: Jack Moder with his first fish on the fly.

New member Jack Moder caught his first fish on the fly. Yeah. His dad John was there to shoot the picture. He felt like a winner, too, and deservedly so.

"This is what winning looks like," his dad wrote. "Jack caught his first fish on a fly today. Bob and Wes provided advice and flies and he went at it with youthful vigor and minimal parental interference...just great." Thank you and the club for such a great opportunity to experience what fly fishing and community are all about. Just the beginning!" (R/JM)

Bob

Bob Burkard: April Outing in the Everglades

The club had one Everglades outing in late April but there were two expeditions. One group of 11 headquartered at Roland and Mary Ann Martin's Resort in Clewiston. The other group headquartered in Sunrise, which is just west of Fort Lauderdale. Fly fishers in both groups landed dozens and dozens of native and exotic fishes but the Hays/Mitchell collaborative really hit the jackpot.



Mark Hays with his award winning peacock bass, 15.5-inches long.

Mark Hays caught the longest peacock bass measuring 15.5 inches long so he wins the club's longest peacock bass gift certificate. He caught it on a no-name, black and purple fly. Annie Mitchell caught the most exotics times ten, about 68 on Friday and 90 on Saturday for a weekend total of about 158. She's a \$10 gift certificate winner, for sure. Husband Robert caught the longest fish of the outing, a 22-inch mudfish. Alas, mudfish wasn't the designated species.

Annie would like everybody to know that the secret of her success was a gold spoon fly tied by Alan Sewell. In fact, she has written a tribute to the gold spoon fly and it's in this issue.

Kevin Kelly also fished the power line canal on Saturday. Alan Sewell and John Conley fished Friday.

The Clewiston guys caught lots and lots, too: Jaguar and Mayan cichlids, oscars, native panfish and native bass. The Clewiston crew included Bill Scarola, Bruce Evensen, Tony Piazza, Jack Collins, Tom (Truk) Trukenbrod, Brian Harrigan, Gary Sundberg, Kelly and Wes Sobczak. Gary caught some nice peacock bass.

The Roland and Mary Ann Martin Resort was priced right. Bill Scarola said it was just \$110 a night.



Robert Mitchell with a Mayan cichlid



Bill Scarola with a Mayan cichlid. Nice!

Bob

Annie Mitchell: All Hail Alan's Gold Spoon. And Exotics



Annie Mitchell

I have to start this article with a huge thank you to Alan Sewell. A few years ago he gave Robert and I some gold spoons that were small enough to work on a fly line. We use those spoons every year in the Everglades now, and most years that is the winning fly.

This year, not only was that spoon the best fly of the trip, I caught 100% of my fish on a gold spoon. The only issues I have with the spoon are that the hooks are very weak, even for fly hooks, so it's very easy to accidentally snap them while unhooking a fish. Also, the spoons have a circular piece of metal to tie the line to, and this piece of metal can wear out the line after a while.

The true beauty of the gold spoon in the Everglades is that the body of the spoon is nearly indestructible. Whereas foam spiders and deer hair flies will shred after a few toothy fish and hemostats clamp down on them, the spoons remain intact. This is a huge advantage when one is catching 100 fish a day. You don't need a whole fly box to survive a weekend. Between Robert and I, we only lost or damaged 4-5 spoons in two days. When you run out, just order more online. Here's a link: <https://hofmannslures.com/product/frizzs-flyrod-spoon/>.



Okay, enough about gold spoons. We had a wonderful trip this year to Alligator Alley. As per tradition, on Friday when we drove to Sunrise we stopped at a ramp that can only be reached going east. I would argue that this canal is our most consistent fishing spot each year. This year was no exception.

Dad, Robert, and I started catching fish in our first few casts. Not just any fish, but big, fat, aggressive Mayan cichlids and oscars. These fish are the reason we make the pilgrimage to Sunrise every year. Sure, catching a hundred dinky stumpknockers can be fun (more on that later), but fighting those lunkers is soooooo satisfying. Robert also caught a 14-inch largemouth bass, and Dad caught a 15.5 inch peacock bass on a nameless black and purple fly that works well for snook and tarpon. I managed to lose my first peacock, but my second one was 14-inches long.

That night we had an excellent dinner, as always, at Lester's Dinner. Just before the trip, I saw an article on Facebook that named Lester's as one of the best retro dinners in the state. Apparently they've been in business over 50 years. Everyone who's been there knows why. Everything on the menu is great, particularly the Greek section of the menu (except for the chicken parm. I've been reliably informed never to order that).

We spent day two at the power lines canal. Two years ago I touched Robert's shoulder to step down in the boat and I shocked him three times until we realized that touching another person while standing under massive power lines is a bad idea.

Now this day was a little tricky for us. The previous day, we realized something was wrong with Dad's trolling motor. It just wasn't spinning very well, and the battery died after a few hours. The wind buffeted us around the canal, and thank goodness we only saw three gators because we did not have much control over where we were going.

Continued on next page

P2/Annie Mitchell: All Hail the Gold Spoon. And the Glades.

Day Two

Day two the second battery was deployed, but the same thing happened. And the wind was much worse. A small storm was brewing on top of us all morning, and the wind was pushing the boat around even more violently. Finally Dad realized that the pin in the propeller was broken. We made our way back to the ramp, and he channeled his inner MacGyver by replacing the pin with part of a de-hooker. The motor worked great after that, but the wind was still blowing us around like a raft on the Pacific Ocean.

Despite these challenges, I caught roughly 100 fish that day. On our first day, the ratio of exotics to natives was about 90-95% exotics to 5-10% natives. On day two the ratio was about 75% exotics to 25% natives. This was nice to see as over the last few years we have not seen many native fish in the Everglades. Robert caught the biggest fish of the trip for our boat, which was a decidedly unsexy 22-inch mudfish. At least the fish fought long enough that all the mud was washed off before it came in the boat. This was caught on a white greenback imitation. Dad also caught a large snakefish, and he and I each caught respectably-sized largemouth bass.

It was a little hard to keep up with what flies the guys were using as they were just having fun changing to different colored streamers every so often. White deer hair, the black and purple fly, and the greenback fly each did very well. The most fun I had all weekend was at the end of day 2 when Dad fished a huge bass popper a few feet in front of my gold spoon. Most fish were too small to go after the popper, but it made them so angry they had to attack my spoon.

Lastly, a word of advice. Do not try to cook fish from the Everglades in an air fryer. Deep frying does a lot more to mask any pond scummy taste from the meat. The air fryer does nothing to hide this. Robert had to stop at McDonalds on his way home from a late day at work, and the stray cats at our office turned their noses up at the fish. Only the crows, grackles, and opossums would eat this stuff.

Annie

John French: Lots of FDP Seatrout

New member here, finally caught my first saltwater fish and a lot of them! A lot of trout at Fort DeSoto Park.

Pat Damico told me to use a Clouser Minnow and he was right!

John



Bill Scarola: Honeymoon Redfish

May 9

*Inshore fishing today. Here's the 26-inch redfish
I caught east of Honeymoon Island.*

Editor's note: Bill said his fly was a perfect imitation of a threadfin minnow. In fact, it may have been a real threadfin minnow.

Bill

Tim Elms: Gear Check List

Howdy! I was at the meeting in February and was really happy to see many new members and many people who moved recently with interest in fly fishing in their new home waters in Tampa Bay. Well, it's been 6 years for me since I was new to these waters and I thought I would give quick tips that I really wish I had when I started here. These may be tips, or some Fact Checking of silly things that always seem repeated for Fly fishing in Florida.

Gear

For some reason I hear this all the time: "I need to get a salt water fly rod" There is NO such thing as "SALT WATER FLY RODs, SALT WATER REELS, Or SALTWATER LEADERS!!!" –don't be a victim to marketing. You don't need to up your equipment right away to a \$1200 rod that you can't cast. If you have a fly rod and reel, USE IT. If you are scared about rust, salt, or corrosion, Rinse it. Or don't drop it in the ditch.



Lines

FIRST, get a new fly line. I can't emphasize this enough people. THIS will make the most difference for any newbie or nymphing transitioner. GET A WARM/Tropical WATER LINE with a mono braid core. Don't use a second hand line EVER!. Is your line not casting well? Is it 4 yrs old? Don't know the taper? Get a new line. Try them out at a shop, ask a friend what they use, or buy a few. (its very difficult to have 1 ALL AROUND Florida fly line) Don't fall for "RED FISH TAPER" because you're fishing for redfish for one day. Get a line you can cast well, far, and doesn't go sticky and limp 11 months of the year.

Also, people say leaving fly lines and gear in a hot car will ruin your line....this is FALSE. A hot car will never get to temps (over 350F) that ruin your line. Most bug spray and Ozone generators **WILL** ruin a fly line, so be careful with Deet on your palms and storing your line by an electric motor or any room air purifier...smelly.

Leader

YAY no more X sizes! Throw that stuff in the trash. No more premade knotless mystery leaders made by who knows who. Make your own leaders, its very simple. Learn perfection loops, blood knots, unis, and a good loop knot for your bait pattern goodness. Do research or talk to others on how to build a leader for warm water fly fishing. Remember, thicker diameter mono or fluoro usually means less wraps on your knots. 60% length of butt, 20% Mid and 20% class...then tippet...

Tippet

Would you fish a plug for large snook with 12lb? NO. So, STOP IT! Tie on at least a foot of something reasonable (30lb) if you ever want to land a fish your spouse may compliment its glory. We aren't protecting tippet, they rarely are leader shy.....they are LINE SHY.

Casting

"If you can't double haul you should stay home." Hauling isn't the end all be all.. But you will need to work on things. A good start to see how terrible you truly are is to take a lesson, join an advanced clinic, or fish with someone better. Take it seriously, and take it home with you. Ask questions. Like, "how can I cast 60ft with no false cast?" "How the heck do I cast in a 20mph head wind?" "Should I really BACK cast to a fish sometimes?" "Is a tight loop always what I want?"

Strip Strip Strip---Tim

Scott Russell: The Mayfly Project 2024 Update

Another successful Mayfly project is almost complete! As always, we had an awesome group of foster kids to work with this year. Each group of kids is unique and a pleasure to work with. As mentors, we learn something new each project, which helps us continue to evolve our outings to make them more fun for the kiddos.

We had a few notable events this past year. Tim and Scott traveled to Arkansas to participate in an outing lead by one of the founders of The Mayfly Project, Jess Westbrook, which provided a lot of takeaways for improving our own outings. Mandy McGarry joined our mentor team! Finally, our St. Petersburg project became a partner organization within the Florida Youth Conservation Centers Network, which gives us access to additional FWC resources.

A quick recap of this year's project:

As always, the first two outings were focused on learning about fly fishing, fly tying, knot tying, and of course, learning to cast. The next three included the opportunity to fish! Although we change up our fishing locations a little each project, this year our destinations included the Suncoast Youth Conservation Center, Fort De Soto, and Idlewild Church in Lutz. All our outings reinforce information needed for the kids to continue fly fishing and tie in elements of conservation.

Our awesome team of mentors includes Suncoast Fly Fishers members; Tim Elms (Co-Lead), James Davis, Jack Collins, and Mandy McGarry (Non-member mentors include Brian Clark, Jim Williams, and Christie Russell). We are also looking forward to adding at least two more members that have shown interest in joining our team. If you have an interest in learning more about what being a mentor entails, please ask any of our member/mentors.

How can you help us prepare for our next project? Donations are always appreciated and needed to help cover project expenses (e.g., curriculum, gear for the kids, etc.) but the gift we value most is your time! Having enough dedicated mentors allows us to potentially serve a couple more kiddos each year and be able to fill in the gaps when we might be without a mentor or two due to unexpected circumstances.

If you would like more information about how to make a financial donation or how to apply to be mentor, please reach out to Scott at russellti@me.com or 727-403-8165. Or donate by going to this link: [St. Petersburg Chapter](#)



SFF mentors included (l-r) James Davis, Tim Elms, Mandy McGarry, Jack Collins, and Scott Russell. Also, pictured are Christie and Kailey Russell.

Scott

Jack Collins: FFI-Florida Expo at Orlando's Bass Pro Shops



Jack Collins, VP, SFF

Post covid, meet-ups are getting back to normal. The Florida Council of Fly Fisher held its first Expo in a long time on April 13 at the Bass Pro Shops in Orlando. SFF VP Jack Collins and other SFF members attended. FFI Board Chairman Dave Peterson updated everybody on FFI's big plans for the coming months. Other fly fishing notable fly tyers, casters and authors included Bob Clouser, Erik Estrada, Capt. Frank Catino, Dusty Sprague, Dave Lambert, John Grasta, Jon Cave, and FFI Florida Council President Dave Olson.

Here are some pictures from the Expo at Bass Pro Shops on April 13. The event was very well attended but it was hard to get a head count. Since the event was held at the Bass Pro Shops the folks kind of wandered in and out of our event hall on their way outside to the

casting demonstration.

Agreed. The fly shop manager was really pumped up. He's looking forward to the next event. He said he can get more suppliers to attend if he gets more time to plan.



Robert Fischer (l) discusses flies with Bob Clouser



Something special from Mr. Clouser Minnow



Robert Fischer and David Redd chat up fly tyer Mike Franz



Kelly Sobczak checks out the raffle table

Greg Clark: The Best Fly Fishing Kayaks

Editor's note: During the April meeting somebody asked if the newsletter ever had anything about which kayaks were best for fly fishers. Good question. The answer was "no." But now the answer is "yes." Member Greg Clark decided to drill down on this issue. He searched and read all about it then sent in links to the best articles. Be sure to click on the links and check out the recommendations. And, Greg, on behalf of all members, thank you! And the club also thanks special friends specializing in kayaks -- Canoe Country Outfitters and West Coast Kayaks.

Fly fishing the Flats on a Kayak

Kayaks give you an advantage in many shallow areas because you can portage them. If you can walk in the water, you can pull your kayak along. I spent years looking for places where I can float the kayak, walk the extreme shallows, and paddle through the channels and troughs to hunt Biscayne Bay bones. Through trial and error and finally many successes, I found kayak "drop zones" where I could meet the tide and wind on the days I wanted to fish.

[\(Fly Fisherman\)](#)

Fly Fishing Kayaks

Many fully rigged boats are not ideal for fly fishing, and veteran kayak anglers do everything possible to keep a snag-free boat. Captain Alex Tejada likes a simple, no-frills boat that is stable enough to pole into position, and also has bare bones with nothing to snag his fly line. "I like a clean, open deck. No fish finders, no leaning poles. Nothing to get in the way of the fly line and nothing to get in the way of my focus, which is on my target, 20 to 30 feet in front of me."

[Fly Fisherman](#)

Best Fishing Kayaks for 2024

- BEST PEDAL KAYAKS – [HOBIE MIRAGE PRO ANGLER](#) / [JACKSON KNARR FD](#)
- BEST BIG KAYAKS – [JACKSON BIG RIG FD](#) / [OLD TOWN SPORTSMAN BIGWATER EPDL+ 132](#)
- BEST THROW AND GO KAYAK – [JACKSON BITE FD](#)
- BEST VALUE KAYAK – [MAGELLAN OUTDOORS PRO PEDAL DRIVE KAYAK](#)
- BEST KAYAKS UNDER \$1000 – [VIBE YELLOWFIN 100](#) / [FEELFREE LURE 10](#)
- BEST AFFORDABLE FULL KAYAK PACKAGE – [ASCEND 133X ULTIMATE FISHING PACKAGE](#)
- BEST FOLDABLE KAYAK – [ORU BEACH LT SPORT](#)
- BEST INFLATABLE KAYAKS – [NRS PIKE 12.6 PRO](#) / [BOTE RACKHAM AERO](#)
- BEST 2-PERSON / TANDEM KAYAK – [NATIVE ULTIMATE FX 15 TANDEM](#)

[Wired2Fish](#)

2024 Fishing Kayak Buyer's Guide

Do you value the stability of a stand-up platform or is a light and nimble hull more important to you? There are dozens of kayaks built specifically for fishing, and each one offers a unique combination of stability, size, speed, and fishing features. [Onthewater.com](#)

Fishing Kayak Reviews

The backyard at the Kayak Angler editorial office looks like a used kayak dealership. Big boats, little boats, pedals, motors, inflatables, foldables, and standup paddleboards are parked in rows and stacked in every corner. Each boat is scratched and muddied from hours of testing. [Kayak Angler Magazine](#)

Best Fishing Kayaks of 2024

- Best Sit-On-Top Kayak: [Wilderness Systems ATAK 120](#)
- Best Pedal Kayak: [Hobie Mirage Outback](#)
- Best Under \$1,000: [Pelican Catch Classic 120](#)
- Best Sit Inside Kayak: [Native Watercraft Ultimate FX 12](#)
- Best Tandem Kayak: [Ocean Kayak Malibu Two XL Angler](#)
- Best for Freshwater Fishing: [Old Town Topwater 120 PDL](#)
- Best for Saltwater Fishing: [Wilderness Systems Radar 135](#)
- Best Under \$500: [Perception Kayaks Drift 9.5](#)

[FieldandStream](#)

Tie some White Rousers with Bruce Evensen & Bill Scarola



Bruce



Bruce's White Rouser



Bill



Bill's White Rouser

Bruce and Bill and participating club members tied White Rousers at Bruce's St. Pete fly tying studio on the evening of May 6, 2024. Bill pointed out this is a great pattern for catching for trout, reds, and snook or any fins. "If it swims and has fins, it'll work," said Bill. All are welcome to join other members are Bruce's studio. They meet up at 6 pm on Mondays. Bruce's studio is located at 530 80th Avenue N in St. Pete. We have equipment and materials even if you are a beginner.

MATERIALS

- a. Hook: Stinger, sizes from 4 to 2/0. 3407's also work
- b. Thread: White flat waxed
- c. Eyes: Barbell and or bead-chain, medium to large
- d. Body: White bucktail.
- e. Legs,: Sili legs, white and or red, etc.
- f. Flash: Pearl Krystal
- g. Head; White large Estaz and/or palmered pearl chenille

HOW TO

1. Wrap thread from eye to bend.
2. Attach the eyes, a short distance behind the hook eye. Clouser style.
3. Add a bit of white bucktail from behind the eyes you added.
4. Add several strands of crystal flash, slightly longer than the bucktail.
5. Add 4-6 Sili Legs at the same tie in spot.
6. Attach your "head" material, attach over the legs and flash tie in spot and palmer it forward, behind the eyes and in front of them.
7. Add a drop of glue or two and whip finish the pattern.

Layne "Smitty" Smith: Stroman's Crystal D Snook Fly



Layne (Smitty) Smith, RIP

This fly was in March 2020 *On The Fly*. He wrote that his friend Drei Stroman had caught a lot of snook with it. Smitty tied it with Pearl Krystal Flash instead of gold and suggested it for enticing snook on the beach or the dock lights.

Materials

Hook: Daiichi 2546 size #2 or similar saltwater hook

Thread: Pearlescent or clear mono thread

Tail: Two pair Whiting American cape hackles and UV Pearl Krystal Flash

Body: White marabou and Pearl Krystal Flash

Eyes: Clear 8mm posted doll eyes or your favorite 3D molded eyes

Adhesive: Fletchtite and Solarez UV Resin



Crystal D Snook Fly

Tying Sequence

Step 1: Start thread slightly behind the eye of the hook and wrap back to the bend.

Step 2: Align two pairs of 2 to 3-inch cape hackles, concave sides facing each other (not splayed) and flatten stems perpendicular to feathers (remember, you cannot tie round to round) to keep stems on top of hook shank as you tie them in just above hook point and then tie in 3 strands of UV flash centered down each of the feathers.

Step 3: On the underside of hook (between hook shank and hook point) tie in a small bundle of marabou about an inch long with a couple of thread wraps to hold it in place and then using the tip of your finger, press on the marabou to disperse the plumes evenly around the bottom and sides of the hook but not on the top. Wrap them down securely with 7 or 8 tight wraps to conceal the cut ends and set them in place.

Step 4: Cut a 3 inch long bundle of Pearl Krystal Flash the thickness of a match stick and taper one end by pulling out some fibers to create the taper. Tie this bunch on top of the hook shank so the tapered end is slightly shorter than the tail but longer than the marabou collar, and then fold back the butt ends of the flash backward on the underside of the shank and secure with 4 or 5 tight wraps. Trim butt ends to stick out beyond the bottom of the hook point.

Step 5: Take about 15 strands of the Pearl Krystal Flash and tie them in on top of the hook shank slightly in front of the previous section. The butt ends should measure about half-way back on the marabou collar. Fold the excess material underneath as you did before and trim the butt ends of the flash so they are even with the first belly section. Repeat this process on top and bottom of the fly 2 or 3 more times, or until you reach the eye of the hook.

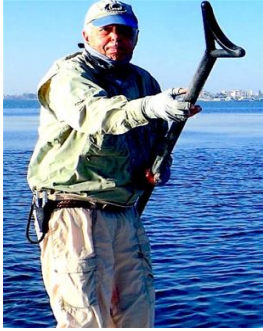
Step 6: Once you reach the eye of the hook, whip finish and cut thread. Take the fly out of the vise and straighten the top and bottom of the flash by pinching and pulling it into position, aligning the fibers so they are centered on top and bottom of the hook shank.

Step 7: Start with the belly of the fly and trim to shape making a curved cut from hook point to the eye of the hook. DO NOT TRIM THE TOP (back) of the fly until you have glued the eyes in place.

Step 8: If you are using posted eyes, remove post and apply Fletch-Tite to back of the eyes and position on each side of the fly. The eyes should rest between the second and third section of the Krystal Flash, and lay directly on hook shank. Line the eyes up from top and front so they are even in both directions. If you are using 3D molded eyes, follow the same procedure eliminating the need to cut off a post. You should use a "pea" sized dollop of Fletch-Tite for this size of eye

Step 9: Allow the glue to dry thoroughly (10 to 15 minutes) and then trim the top of the fly to shape. Placing the eyes on before trimming the top allows you to follow the natural curvature with you scissors.

Step 10: Finish the fly by coating the head and eyes with UV Resin.



Capt. Pat Damico: Captain's Corner

Tarpon Time. Wind direction and water are best at daybreak

Get out at daybreak with an easterly wind and calm water to take advantage of some great shallow water tarpon action. An advantage to getting at these fish now is they haven't been beat up by hoards of fishermen and are in the pre-spawn mode making them more likely to grab a well-presented fly. Position your boat close to shore with the sun at your back. Good polarized glasses will allow you to see their flash as they lazily roll on the surface occasionally even inside of swim markers. Eleven weight fly rods with a floating or sink tip line are required. Having your fly at the fish's depth is important for success. A 40-60 pound fluorocarbon shock tippet tied to a 2/0 Keys

type or toad pattern in darker colors has been most successful. Minimize boat movement using only a push pole in shallow water. The ideal cast is having the fish come straight to you, then place the offering in her path. If you can't do a saltwater quick cast, get some help to learn. Figure out a pattern where most fish are moving and have them come to you. If not familiar with heavier rods, practice before getting on the water. Use your body to make casting easier and then use your body to fight the fish, not your arms. Keep your rod tip low close to the water and immediately start putting tension on the fish. If anchored, a floating marker buoy with a quick disconnect will allow you to chase hooked fish and then return to your spot. Remember to bow when the giant jumps.

Fly fisherman and casting instructor Pat Damico runs charters in lower Tampa Bay and can be reached at captpatdamico.com and 727-504-8649.

Captain Pat

Used Gear for Sale

Bill Scarola also is selling a metal rifle and pistol storage cabinet. \$50 (was \$75)

It's for rifles, pistols, or whatever. It's 52 inches high, 17 inches wide, and 13.2 inches deep. Excellent condition. Call Bill at 732-740-7538.

Bill Scarola: Just Joking

Cook a fish for a man and you feed him for a day. But teach a man to fish and you get rid of him for the weekend.

If your family has to eat dinner on TV trays because your dinner table was full of fly tying materials, you might be a trout bum.

Paa dump bummm!!!!

Bill AuCoin: Flyfisher Flyover



Remembering Jimmy Buffett -- For most of his adult life Capt. Vinnie LaSorsa has known only one job, that of boat captain to legendary waterman and musician Jimmy Buffett. His story of working for a boss-turned-friend shines a light on the late artist's personal time afloat—and what a remarkable person he really was.

[\(Power and Motoryacht\)](#)

Norm Zeigler has died -- Sanibel Island fly fishing legend Norm Zeigler has died. He was 75. Zeigler, who suffered from Parkinson's, was a retired fly shop owner, magazine writer, inventor of the famed Crystal Schminnow, and author of [Snook on a Fly](#). A memorial service will be held on Sanibel Island later this year or early 2025. Donations in his memory may be given to captainsforcleanwater.org or to an organization supporting Parkinson's research. [\(Fly Fisherman\)](#)

Saving the Indian River Lagoon -- CCA Florida, Florida FWC, and University of Florida have launched the "Indian River Lagoon Billion clam initiative." Four million clams will be deployed using special drones and other innovations. [\(CCA Florida\)](#)

The Greats of Sportfishing -- Meet 10 outstanding anglers who have influenced the sport in meaningful ways. [\(Soundings Online\)](#)

Florida Fish Art Contest winners: The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), in partnership with Wildlife Forever, has announced the winners of the Florida State Fish Art Contest this year. Students in kindergarten through 12th grade submitted their artwork in this free contest for a chance to win state and national honors, and prizes. This program inspires creativity while encouraging the next generation of anglers and conservationists. [\(MyFWC\)](#)

FYI, SFF member Scott Russell is one its leaders: -- The Mayfly Project is a 501(c)(3) national organization that uses fly fishing as a catalyst to mentor and support children in foster care. The Mission of The Mayfly Project is to support children in foster care through fly fishing and introduce them to their local water ecosystems, with a hope that connecting them to a rewarding hobby will provide an opportunity for foster children to have fun, build confidence, and develop a meaningful connection with the outdoors. [\(The Mayfly Project\)](#)

One Fly To Rule Them all -- Bob Clouser was one of the stars at the recent Florida Council FFI Expo in Orlando. He is best-known for his namesake pattern, the Clouser Minnow. But his contributions to fly-fishing go way beyond that. [\(Angler's Journal\)](#)

Why do we fish? "I am locked into the hunt, the presentation and the expectation that at any moment I'm going to be battling the biggest fish of my life. This single-minded focus alters the normal passage of time." [\(Soundings Online\)](#)

Bill

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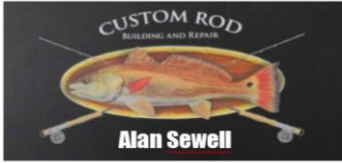
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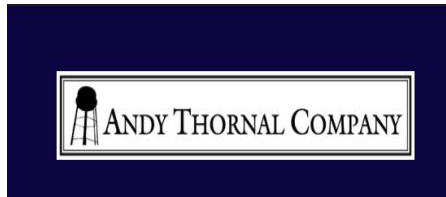
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