

# On The Fly

Newsletter of the Suncoast Fly Fishers of St. Petersburg

*Docklights, beaches P8*



*Salute the Schminnow P15*



*Mike Larkin June 20 P4*



*May outing at Picnic Island Park P6*



*Shell Key Snookie P8*



*Walt Durkin's big blues P10*



*Troy and BethAnn in the Florida Keys P9*





## President's Message: June 2024

This month Suncoast Fly Fishers has some exciting events that give us a chance to showcase the club and practice our aims and purposes.

We will have two youth casting sessions in Riverview, one on the 11th and one on the 25th. For the past several years Hillsborough County Parks and Recreation has invited the club to introduce fly fishing to the youths enrolled in their summer Eco Camp. A typical session will have around twenty kids ranging in ages 9-13. Although it may only be for a couple of hours per session, we hope that some seeds have been planted.

The other exciting event is a FFI Women's Connect seminar on beach fly fishing. The seminar was held on the 15th of this month in Orlando at the Bass Pro Shops. Suncoast Fly Fishers member Samantha Tallyn organized this event to promote women's fly fishing and to also help promote a ladies fly fishing tournament she is planning to be held in September of this year. Volunteers from the club will be in Orlando to help with the seminar and to promote the club.

It is events like the ones taking place this month that I think epitomize what our great club is about, bringing fly fishing to the community through our dedicated members.

*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 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 118 members including 22 family and six honorary. We have one returning member. Welcome back Ted Rich. A total of 24 members including two family were removed from the active roll. All non-renewed memberships received two notices. Annual membership is \$50 (\$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.

## Suncoast Fly Fishers

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

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**FFI Liaison:** Pat Damico

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**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

### SAVE THE DATE:

*The 2025 Hog Roast and Silent Auction will be March 29 at St. Jerome's Catholic Church in Largo.*

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### Thursday, June 20

- Our speaker is SFF member Mike Larkin, Ph.D. Mike works with the sustainable fisheries division of the NOAA Fisheries office in St. Petersburg.
  - Mike will update us with the latest NOAA research on tarpon migration timing and pod meet-ups. His topic at a previous presentation was "The Life and Science of Tarpon."
  - Some of this information is contained in an article Mike wrote which is in the latest issue of TAIL Fly Fishing magazine.
  - New hats and other gear with our club logo can be purchased at the meeting. Also, buy raffle tickets for fly-tying materials and the \$50/\$50 bucket pot raffle shared with the club.
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### June docklights and beaches outing

- Fly fish dock lights on Friday night and Saturday night, June 21 and June 22.
  - Fly fish beaches on Saturday, June 22 and/or Sunday, June 23 until 1 pm each day.
  - The member catching the longest snook wins the outing gift certificate.
  - If your fish look long enough to win the outing or take the lead in our annual tournament, be sure to measure and take pictures. Categories are snook, seatrout, ladyfish, and redfish. See the latest tournament leaders and longest fish on page 5.
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### FFI Women Connect Expo

- Bass Pro Shops in Orlando hosted a one-day fly casting and fly tying expo on June 15.
  - Member Samantha Tallyn arranged for the Suncoast Fly Fishers to have an information booth to help spread the word about and to find sponsors for our club's big September event. Yep, that's the Suncoast Fly Fishers Ladies Fly Fishing Tournament.
  - Volunteers are needed to promote the women's fly fishing tournament in St. Pete in September. Contact member Samantha Tallyn, [stallyn86@gmail.com](mailto:stallyn86@gmail.com)
  - Stay tuned. This is gonna be a big deal and probably will attract national attention and sponsor interest.
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### Youth Fly Fishing. Volunteers needed

- Suncoast Fly Fishers members are teaching fly casting to youth June 25 in Riverview at the Balm Park Recreation Center from 9 to 11 am.
  - We already had two sessions. One on March 28 at the Carrollwood Village Center in Tampa and another June 11 in Riverview
  - Help! If you can help out please contact David Redd at [reddfish68@yahoo.com](mailto:reddfish68@yahoo.com). Other volunteers include Rick Warfel, Bill Scarola, Don Cantin, and Jack Collins have volunteered to help.
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### May meeting speaker talking points

- May meeting attendees said that our speaker -- Jill Thompson-Grim -- was terrific. We hope to include her talking points and slides in the July issue.
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## Meetings, Outings, and More

### 2024 Calendar updated

(Some speakers are tentative)

- June 20 Meeting. Speaker, Member Mike Larkin PhD, Gulf tarpon and other sportfish info update.
- June 21-23 Outing. Docklights and beaches. Prize for the longest snook.
  
- July 18 Meeting. Speaker, Capt. Matt Foster. Topic: Hottest fishing spots.
- 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. Hallie Repeta, 2024 SFF's PhD Scholarship Winner at USF Marine Science
- 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 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*

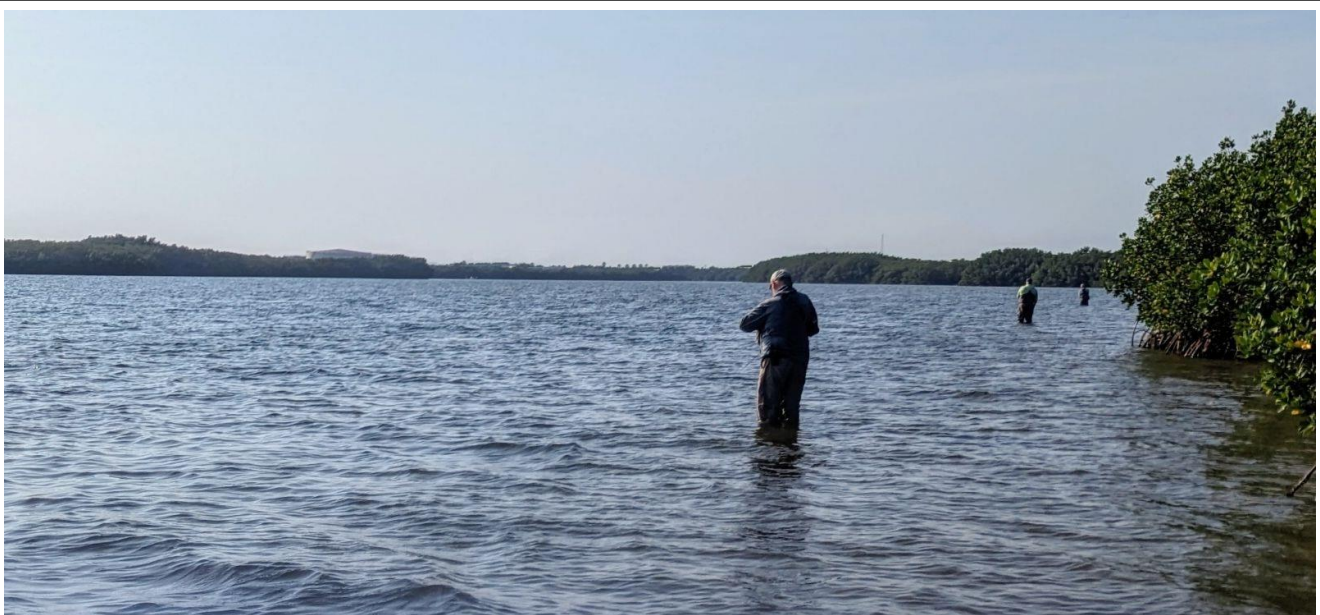
Well, the Picnic Island flats didn't deliver snook or redfish at the May 18 outing but I'm happy to report that Bill Scarola caught a 12-inch seatrout. Or was it 14 inches. Whatever. It was a pretty fish and a tad short of keeper size which is 15-inches.

And Tim Elms remains the seatrout tournament leader. His hefty 18.5-inch seatrout he caught at the March outing at Fort DeSoto Park may stand the test of time.

Apparently nobody caught a redfish, the designated species. That category remains wide open.

Another big takeaway was that Chris O'Byrne caught two Spanish mackerel. I didn't know mackerel moved this far up into Tampa Bay. They were juveniles. Chris said one was a tiny little thing just 6 inches long and it was "scared." The other mackerel was larger, about 9-inches. "He wanted to eat me" Chris said.

Attendance was pretty good, 17, and everybody enjoyed the meat and cheese sandwiches and extras served up by Anne and Robert Mitchell. This outing picnic was supposed to have grilled hot dogs and burgers but, darn it, the Picnic Island pavilion grill was not functional. Robert reported, "They are all corroded and have no bottoms." That sound you hear is me calling Parks and Recreation.



*The Picnic Island flats have given up some rewarding gamefish over the years. But not this time. (Chris O'byrne photo)*

*Bob*

## Bob Burkard: Gulf Beaches and Dock Lights Outing

They say June is the best month on the Suncoast when snook attack flies. Let's prove "them" right this year. Snook is the target species for the June outing and we're giving you lots of ways to prove it.

This is our docklight snook and beaches snook outing. You can target them on Gulf or Bay beaches and you can target them on those Tampa Bay canal dock lights. The snook category is also wide open on the annual tournament trail competition.

Okay, here are the where's and when's and the do's and don'ts. Fly fish dock lights on Friday night and Saturday night, June 21 and June 22. Fly fish beaches on Saturday, June 22 and/or Sunday, June 23 until 1 pm each day. You can fish anywhere in the Tampa Bay area including Pinellas, Pasco, Hillsborough, and Manatee counties. Measure and take a picture of your redfish, seatrout, and ladyfish, too, because the longest ones might take the lead in the annual tournament contest. Check the leaderboard on page 5. Release it alive. Snook season reopens September 1 and to keep them they have to be between 28 and 33 inches.

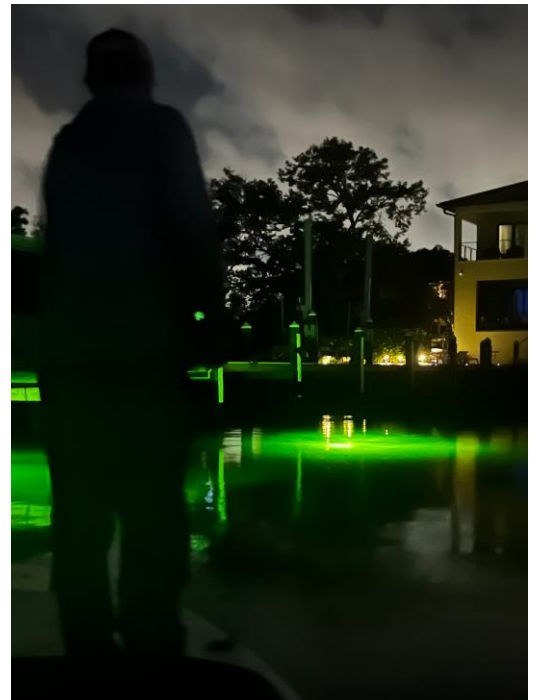


*Casting to docklights is often sight casting to snook and other gamefish, including small tarpon.*

*Bob*



*James Davis won the docklight/beaches outing last year with this 21.5-inch snook. His snook edged out Tim Elms' 20-inch snook. Don't feel sorry for Tim. He enticed three juvenile tarpon to his fly on the lights.*



*Look carefully and you can see fish circling the underwater light.*

## John French: Shell Key Snook and Ladyfish



*Snookie Bear -- New member John French is doing well in the catching category. He's working on taking selfies, too.*



*I camped out on Shell Key, and did fairly well with snook and ladyfish in the late afternoons and morning tides. I used a Kwan Crab Fly! This might be a decent option for an outing for a group with kayaks and paddleboards or we could take the ferry from the boat ramp.*

*John*

## Pat Damico: Fly Casting Lessons in Pennsylvania

*While visiting Pennsylvania for a few days of trout fishing member Pat volunteered his time and fly casting skills at the White Haven Trout Festival*



Pat Damico "Fly Guy," FFF master certified fly casting instructor, shows off his fly casting technique at the second annual White Haven Trout Festival Saturday at the White Haven Library.  
Frank Barr / Contributing photographer



## Troy and BethAnn: White Marlin in Marathon

*BethAnn Bologna and Troy Dillman were down in the Keys recently. They hooked up with and landed a big white marlin from Troy's 24-footer. They fished the north side of the Gulf Stream off of Marathon. No, they didn't catch it on the fly but, still, it was quite a thrill.*

*Troy*

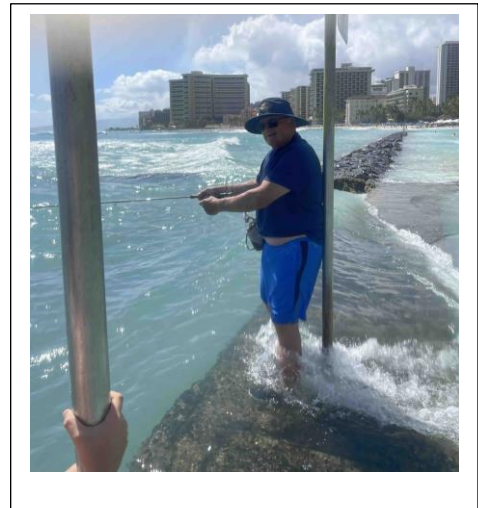


## Bill Scarola: 50th Anniversary Trip in Hawaii

*That's Bill getting in some practice fly casting on Waikiki Beach in early June. He was on the breakwater wall that protects the swimming area.*

*Bill said, "Alas, no catching was allowed!, said the fish."*

*Bill*



## Former Member Dennis Marquis scores big stripers



*Former member Dennis Marquis, who now lives in South Carolina chasing reds, went up north for a change to score stripers. He caught some big stripers recently fly fishing with an old friend in nearshore waters around Cape May, NJ.*

## Walt Durkin: Big Bluefish, Snook, Tarpon, Reds, and More

*Walt and several TBFFC members and spouses vacationed on Gasparilla Island a few weeks ago and had a great time fishing and relaxing time.. Here's his report:*

We ate, drank, swam and fished for a very relaxing time. Ted and I found quite a few snook on the beach and had fun catching them. The beach had changed a lot since last year with more troughs and contours, which helped the fishing.

When grass and seaweed came in, the snook were using these beds as ambush points and were easy to catch. A blind cast over grass patches usually resulted in one or more snook popping up, something we had not noted before.

We caught multiple snook over the grass and I had a personal best of 19 in one afternoon. Ted also caught a beautiful 22 inch trout over the grass. The night I left Ted caught more snook and a redfish for the first time on the beach there.

The beach has also formed a new pond-like trough about a half mile down from our condo. By myself one afternoon, I saw some tarpon circling on the far side of the trough. So, I walked down and around on the sand bar to get to the other side. Sure enough, the fish were still there and daisy chaining. They broke up and came toward me so I cast my shrimp fly at them and got some looks, but each time the fish turned away. I switched to a bigger Lefty Deceiver and I was hooked up the next cast. I was fishing my 6 weight Sage Salt and the fish was soon into my backing. It jumped a couple of times and did not really look like a tarpon.

Finally, I landed about an eight-pound jumbo bluefish! I went on to catch five out of eight that I hooked that week. We found them every day waiting in that trough for us. Blues have very sharp teeth and would cut thru our 40 pound mono leaders a lot of the time. We were amazed at how much they looked like tarpon when they were daisy chaining.

Ted's son Jeff who has guided the area for years was surprised to hear about our catch. Very unusual and loads of fun on a fly rod in shallow water. After some research, I found an article by William G. Tapply, which also notes blues in a daisy chain. This seems to occur in shallow, inshore water where we were. I am already looking forward to next year to see if they show up again!

We stay at Sea Oates Condos, but you can access the beach from several streets in town. If you want to go for some good beach fishing, try the first street you come to with beach access on the right side of the island. From there walk north to fish the area; focus around our North-end condo. Here you will find about two miles of uncrowded beach to look for snook close to shore in the troughs. Fish small white flies like a Puglisi minnow, a small Clouser, or Rick Grasset's snook fly. Sight fish and make careful presentations so the fish don't see you. Use a 25 or 30 pound bite tippet and you are all set.

*Walt*



*A big Gasparilla Island bluefish poses with Walt Durkin, President of the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club*

## Bruce Evensen's Docklight Schminnow



The Docklight Schminnow was Bruce's Fly of the Month for June 2020 and it's a goodie for 2024.

It's a great fly for our June 2024 outing targeting snook on docklights and on Gulf beaches. And here's another bonus: it's a salute to Sanibel Fly Fishers' Norm Zeigler who died in May. Norm created the Schminnow.

That said, Bruce has made some adjustments as you'll notice in the pictures.



*Bruce's Docklight Schminnow*

### Materials:

- Hook: 3407 size 2
- Thread: Danville Flat Waxed Nylon (white)
- Front: White bucktail and white marabou
- Body: White Supreme Hair
- Eyes: Red shrimp eyes
- Legs: White round Sili Legs
- Legs: White Estaz
- Glue: Thick UV Loon



*Norm's Crystal Schminnow*

### Tying Sequence:

1. Use a 3407 size 2 hook. Wrap from hook eye back to the hook point.
2. Above the hook point wrap a small amount of white bucktail.
3. Add a half inch long piece of white marabou.
4. At the same point wrap two or three white Sili Legs on each side.
5. Tie in shrimp eyes, either white or red.
6. Tie in white Estaz and wrap back to the hook eye. Trim Estaz off the back.
7. Take match stick thickness of white Supreme Hair. Tie in 1/4 inch of it over the hook eye with two more inches going back over the hook bend and out.
8. Take Loon thick UV and put a bead where you tied at the hook point and take it all the way forward.
9. Take two strands of pearl Krystal Flash and put 1/4 inch bead of Loon UV from the front tip back for 1/4 inch. Lay the pearl Krystal Flash into the Loon UV pointing forward.
10. Set with UV light

*Bruce*

## Layne "Smitty" Smith: Electric Bunny



Layne (Smitty) Smith, RIP

Smitty recommended tying this fly in two different color schemes. He wrote, "It's a great fly for "nosey" reds as they try to "sniff out" their prey while tailing. You can crawl it over the bottom or retrieve it with short strips. Good Luck ! "

*Editor's note: And it looks like it would catch snook on the docklights and on the beaches, too.*



*Tie it pink and yellow*

### Materials:

Hook: Gamakatsu SL12 S #2 to 2/0

Thread: Danville's Flatwaxed Nylon (to match body color)

Eyes: Medium to heavy Stainless Steel bead chain

Tail: Magnum zonker rabbit strip (rust or white) same length as hook shank

Legs: Silicone legs (brown w/ orange glitter or clear pearl w/ silver glitter)

Body: Estaz (root beer or chartreuse)

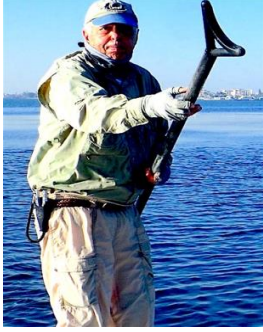
Finish: Solarez UV Resin



*Tie it green and red*

### Directions:

1. Start thread just behind hook eye. Build up a bump of thread then build up another bump of thread  $\frac{1}{8}$ " farther down the shank. Place bead chain between thread bumps and tie in securely.
2. Wrap thread in open wraps to hook bend. Tie down rabbit strip firmly with touching wraps of thread making sure skin side of strip is facing up.
3. Rotate to invert hook in vise and tie in 2 to 3 lengths of leg material by wrapping them around the standing thread at their mid-point and securing them half each on either side of hook. Trim legs just beyond the end of zonker strip.
4. Advance thread to barbell eyes and tie in Estaz. Wrap Estaz in touching wraps to bend of hook covering zonker tie-in completely then over-wrap back to bead-chain eyes to create a thicker body then tie off and trim excess.
5. With thread, create a smooth head by counter-spinning your thread before making head with touching wraps.



## Capt. Pat Damico: Captain's Corner

### **If you want fish to notice, you've got to work your fly in the water**

How do I strip my fly? Next to, "What fly should I use?" This is a very frequent question. On a recent saltwater charter with two clients, they told me about trips made during their last couple of days where they caught nothing after 6 hours of wade fishing. Stopping the boat in a wind-protected area, I asked each one to cast for me. Both were very poor casters, with layouts of their line full of slack. Holding the rod tip about 5 feet above the water, when they did strip, the fly never moved. After watching each do a couple of casts and "work" the fly, I informed them their Clouser minnow did not move in any of their presentations. No fish would show any interest in a baitfish imitation that didn't move. Their stripping to give the fly appropriate action varied considerably. I told them to watch the end of their floating fly line where it joined the butt section of the leader. This will give you a very good indication of what your fly is doing. Saltwater fish usually like to have the fly on their level. If they are on the bottom in 5 feet of water, a fly on the surface is rarely taken. Sometimes with the tide coming toward you, it is necessary to exaggerate the long frequent strips to give the fly the desired action. Keeping the rod tip close to the water during the retrieve and at the beginning of the cast also helps reduce slack.

### **Use down time to check your gear**

Using downtime to examine and maintain fly fishing equipment is a good idea. All fly fishers use a clear monofilament tapered leader that attaches to the heavier fly line and eventually the fly. Saltwater leaders are commercially available but they are easily made when you understand some basic principles. Keeping it very simple, my basic leader starts with a four-foot butt section of 40-pound test, two feet of 30-pound test for the midsection, and two feet of 20-pound test for the tippet that attaches to the fly. Purchase a spool of each at any tackle store in a name brand that is clear and of medium flexibility. Use the same brand for all components. Use a double surgeon's knot or blood knot for the connections. Moisten each knot before closing with constant pressure and trim any excess near the knot. You now have a basic leader 8 feet in length. Wrap each one around your fingers to make it look like commercial ones and tuck the butt section under a few times. Place each in a small plastic sealable bag and store where they are readily available. A lighter tippet can be added for clear water and spooky fish. A heavier, hard monofilament leader or fluorocarbon tippet can be added when needed to resist abrasion from toothy predators. A carefully tied loop knot on hooks with straight eyes will give the fly more action and appeal.

Fly fisherman and casting instructor Pat Damico charts lower Tampa Bay and can be reached at [captpatdamico.com](http://captpatdamico.com) and (727) 504-8649

*Captain Pat*

## Bill AuCoin: Flyfisher Flyover



**Mike Conner's docklight tips.** You'll need good tidal flow. One light is often better than multiple lights. Lots of boat traffic is not good. Overhead or underwater lights? Yellow lights? Yeah! He's got some very insightful tips in this article. Thanks, Mike.

([Salt Water Sportsman](#))

**Calling all women fly fishers.** June is women fly fishers month at FFI. Our club's Samantha Tallyn is Florida FFI's Women Connect leader and was instrumental in connecting Suncoast Fly Fishers to the women's fly fishing expo at Bass Pro Shops on June 15. Sign up today at the FFI Women Connect section. ([Fly Fishers International](#))

**Schminnow? Well duh.** Sanibel FlyFishers is holding "30 Days of the Schminnow" in June to honor the life and the fly of their well-known schminnow fly creator, Norm Zeigler, who died recently. Check it out. ([CaptivaSanibel.com](#))

**More about Norm Zeigler.** He founded Sanibel Fly Fishers and the Norm Zeigler Fly Shop on Sanibel Island. His wife's and daughter's tributes are quite moving. ([Fly Fisherman](#))

**Tie Norm's schminnow.** It's easy to tie and snook on the beach love it. So do the snook on docklights. ([Moose Knuckle Fishing](#))

**Don't forget tarpon.** Capt. Rick Grassett likes to cast with a 12-weight rod with a large arbor reel capable of holding 300 or more yards of backing. Shallow is better for getting your fly in front of the fish. There'll be other anglers in anchored boats nearby. Mind your manners. ([SnookFinAddict](#))



*And speaking of the schminnow. A few years ago Suncoast Fly Fisher Mike Larkin caught this 29-inch beach snook on a schminnow tied by his daughter at a St. Pete Fishing Outfitters fly tying class.*

**Captain Kiburz likes the 12 weight, and the 11 weight, and the 10 weight.** The 12 is great until it isn't. Sometimes, for a better fly presentation to spooky tarpon, he has a 10 weight and 11 weight ready to go. But Ethan said one of the the most important thing is how the guide and the angler have to work like a team, patient and persistent team all day long. Yeah, tarpon is his thing. ([Captain Ethan Kiburz](#))

**I'm glad Trout Bum became a writer.** This is a terrific article explaining how John Gierach really helps us fly fishers know who we are and why we do what we do. Author Monte Burke nails it. "It's a singular voice. Many have tried to imitate it. None has succeeded." ([Angler's Journal](#))

**Why do we fish?** The tug is the drug. Check. It fires up our brain cells. Check. And we relax? Nope. ([SoundingsOnline](#))

**First grader James Luce has already caught thousands of fish.** I have a feeling we're going to be hearing more and more about this fisherman. Just saying. ([Angler's Journal](#))

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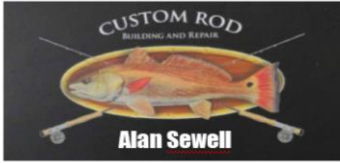
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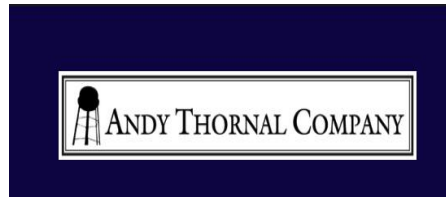
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