

On The Fly

Newsletter of the Suncoast Fly Fishers of St. Petersburg

March 28
Hog Roast. P4



Capt. Steve Huff

Cypress Point Park Outing P6



Habitat? P6



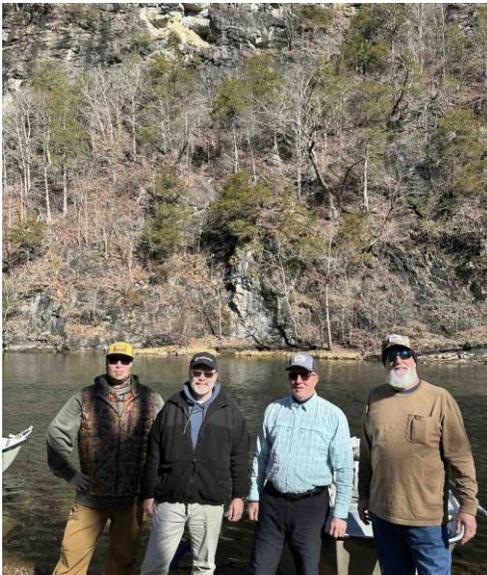
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SFF President David Redd

President's Message -- March 2026

This year's Hog Roast is shaping up to be an exciting event! We are honored to have legendary IGFA Hall of Fame guide Steve Huff joining us to share stories from his remarkable life on the water. You won't want to miss hearing him speak.

In addition to great company and storytelling, the evening will feature silent auctions, bucket raffles, and a delicious BBQ dinner.

We are also very grateful to Cliff Nigh, who has graciously donated a handmade bamboo fly rod to be raffled off. Tickets for the bamboo rod are only \$20. Thank you, Cliff, for your generosity!

Tickets for both the Hog Roast and the bamboo rod raffle can be purchased on our website, at our March member meeting, or at the event.

We're pleased to once again welcome members of the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club to join us this year. The Hog Roast will be held at St. Jerome Catholic Church in Largo.

The Hog Roast is our club's major fundraising event and helps support club activities, outreach efforts, and operating expenses throughout the year. Your support makes a real difference, and we hope to see you there for a great evening.

David

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/>

Welcome new members: Michael Pobat & Dave Ulgenalp

Membership. **Our club now has 125 members including 16 family and six honorary.** Annual membership is \$60 (\$50 for seniors) and \$70 for families. That includes benefits and annual membership in [Fly Fishers International](#) and the [Florida Council](#) of Fly Fishers International.

Paying dues: Dues can also be paid via cash, check or credit card at any club meeting, outing or event. Annual memberships can be paid online through the website -- SuncoastFlyFishers.com -- or by mailing a check to SFF, PO Box 40821, St. Petersburg, FL 33743. You can also pay by credit card by calling Karen Warfel at 813-505-3162.

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, Bill Scarola, Bob Burkard, Bruce Evensen, Cliff Nigh, John French, Bill AuCoin

Casting: Pat Damico, Dayle Mazzarella

FFI Liaison: Pat Damico

Conservation: Cliff Nigh

Fly Tying: Myron Hansen, Bruce Evensen, Bill Scarola

Hog Roast: Jack Collins

Membership: Karen Warfel

Webmaster: Tim Elms

Facebook: Cliff Nigh, Anne Mitchell

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

Outreach, shows: David Redd, Bob Burkard, Bill Scarola

Succession Plan:

Programs: Board of Directors

Publicity: Bill AuCoin

Social media: Anne Mitchell

On The Fly

Editor Bill AuCoin, Abby Gambrel, 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

March 19 meeting

- Maya Burke, vice president of the Tampa Bay Estuary Program, will update us on the research about the health of the bay and fish populations.
- Bob Burkard, chairman of the nominating committee, will present the slate of recommended officers and board members then ask members to vote. Elected officials take over at the April BOD and membership meetings.

March 21 Outing, Fort DeSoto Park

- Fish anywhere in or around the park.
- Meet at noon at Pavilion #4 on North Beach for the picnic.
- The member catching the longest redfish and seatrout will win the outing prizes.

March 28, Hog Roast, St. Jerome Catholic Church



Steve Huff, IGFA
Hall of Famer

- This is our annual fun and fund-raising event with the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club. Buy raffle tickets at the March meeting or at the event. It's Saturday, March 28 from 4 to 8 pm.
- Our speaker is Capt. Steve Huff. Captain Huff, who began guiding in 1968, is recognized as one of the few major influencers for a whole new category, saltwater fly fishing.
- Huff started guiding in 1968 in the Florida Keys after graduating from the University of Miami.
- Huff became the first full time professional fishing guide ever inducted into the IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame. Recently he received the Isaac Walton League of America award for modeling the "Compleat Angler" for his fly fishing leadership, mentoring, and conservation.
- At the Hog Roast members are invited to participate in silent bidding for fly rods, fly reels, fly lines, guided trips, fly fishing clothing, and other items. Plantation Inn has donated a round of golf for four.
- Bamboo rod with mahogany case raffle. Member Cliff Nigh has created a one-of-a-kind bamboo fly rod. Member Rick Warfel has handcrafted a mahogany rod tube for the fly rod. Raffle tickets are \$20.

September 12, 2026, Lady Fly Tournament (Date subject to change)

- The Board of Directors has approved the budget, subject to membership approval, for the 2026 Lady Fly Tournament.
- Tournament Director Samantha Tallyn anticipates revenue of \$17,550, expenses of \$8,300.
- If all goes well this results in a profit to the club of more than \$9,000. That will in large part continue to fund our annual scholarship to the USF College of Marine Science and other charitable donations such as the Mayfly Project.

November 6-7, 2026

- FFI Florida Council 2026 Expo at Plantation Resort on Crystal River

Fly Fishers International has raised membership prices

- After remaining unchanged for 15 years, effective March 2, FFI has raised membership dues to ensure that FFI remains strong, sustainable, and well-positioned for the future.
- Standard memberships will now be \$45/year. (Up from \$35).
- Senior, and Veteran dues will be \$35 (up from \$25). Youth will now be \$25 (up from \$20).
- Advocate, Patron and Sustainer dues remain unchanged.

Meetings, Outings, and More

Updated 2026 Meetings and Outings (Details subject to change)

Year	Month	Meeting Date	Speaker / Meeting	Outing Date	Outing	Target Fish	Fresh or Salt	Lunch	Comments
2026	January	1/15/2026	Trash & Treasures: Alan Sewell	1/17/2026	Weedon Island	1. Longest Ladyfish 2. Longest Trout	Salt	Fried Chicken at Bruce Evensen's	
2026				1/24/2026	Fly Casting Clinic				
2026	February	2/19/2026	Wader Dave (Dave Ulgenalp)	2/21/2026	Cypress Point Park	Longest Redfish	Salt	Sandwiches at the Park	Shelter 03
2026	March	3/19/2026	Maya Burke Assistant Director Tampa Bay Estuary Program	3/21/2026	Fl. Desoto	1. Longest Ladyfish 2. Longest Trout 3. longest snook	Salt	Shelter 04	Shelter #4
2026	March			3/28/2026	SFF/TFF Joint Banquet (The Hog Roast)				
2026	April	4/16/2026	Tim Elms	4/18/2026	Taylor, Seminole, or Walsingham Lakes Lunch at Taylor Lake Park, in Largo	1. Longest Bass 2. Most Bream	Fresh	Grilled Hamburgers, Sausages and Hot dogs	John S. Taylor Park Shelter 07
2026	April			4/23/2026	Everglades Outing	1. Most Bream 2. Most Cichlids 3. Longest Native Bass 4. Longest Peacock Bass	Fresh		Need to Decide if we are having the Everglades as an SFF Outing this year
2026	May	5/21/2026	Scholarship Recipient (not confirmed)	5/23/2026	Fishing along Skyway Bridge - North & South Lunch at Skyway Rest Stop North	1. Longest Snook 2. Longest Trout 3. Largest Ladyfish	Salt	Sandwiches	
2026	June	6/18/2026	Samatha Tallyn - Lady Fly Overview & Andy Austin	6/20/2026	Dock Lights & Beaches for Friday & Saturday Lunch at War Veterans Memorial Park	1. Most different Saltwater 2. Most different Freshwater species	Salt & Fresh	TBD	Bob following up with Samantha, Dave following up with Andy
2026	July	7/16/2026	TBD: Find a speaker to talk about upper tampa bay or member panel	7/18/2026	Upper Tampa Bay or Alligator Lake Lunch at Philippe Park	1. Longest Trout 2. Longest Bass 3. Most Bream	Salt	Gill Hot Dogs, Sausages, etc.	TBD,
2026	August	8/20/2026	TBD	8/22/2026	Fort DeSoto	1. Longest Snook 2. Longest Trout	Salt	Summer Brisket, Ribs, and Pulled Pork BBQ	Pavilion # 13
2026	September	9/17/2026	Cliff Nigh - Latest Fly fishing Equipment update from ICAST & Fly Typing Tables - Pizza Party	9/19/2026	Skyway Rest Stop North with Mangrove Club	1. Longest Ladyfish	Salt	Skyway Rest Stop North - Sandwiches and sides	Dave following up with Cliff
2026	September			9/12/2026	Lady Fly Annual Tournament				
2026	October	10/15/2026	Member Panel for Fishing the Hillsborough River	10/17/2026	Hillsborough River - Carl Hanson	1. longest Bass 2. Most Blue Gills	Fresh	Tampa Bay Club turn for lunch	Panel members TBD
2026	November	11/19/2026	SFF Open House, SFF Fly Market & Mayfly Project Introduction of Participants & Pizza Party	11/21/2026	Upper Tampa Bay and Alligator Lake	1. Longest Ladyfish 2. Longest Bass 4. Longest Trout	Salt & Fresh	Lunch at the Bar Fly Restaurant in Safety Harbor	
2026	December			12/12/2026	Christmas Party - St Jeromes				
2026	December		No Meeting	12/19/2026	Fl DeSoto - Member Tribute Outing	Longest Fish on a Fly	Salt	Our Annual Chili Extravaganza	Pavilion # 13

Bob Burkard: February 21 outing at Cypress Point Park



Bob Burkard, meetings-outings committee chair

Everybody caught ladyfish. Not bragging, but I caught 28. Members also caught needlefish, flounder, catfish, even sting rays.

But...

But.. nobody caught a redfish which was our sought-after outing prize category.

And why? This was the subject of discussion at the picnic lunch as we gobbled up chips, Cheetos, sandwiches, slaws, and cookies. (Thank you, John French, for bringing and setting up the tasty picnic buffet.)

So? Well, everybody pretty much agreed the problem was we had an outgoing tide and redfish like incoming tide starting at a negative low. When the water level is deep enough the redfish invade the flats to feed.

The outing committee hereby commits to trying to sync outing locations and tides for the best results in the future. But, as you know, this is not an exact science.

Bob



Fiddler crab habitat. Bill AuCoin left it in the water. Right?



Three members of the Tarpon Coast Fly Fishers -- Terry Dunne, Jim Humphrey, and Ray Cannata -- drove down from Springhill and fished with us. Terry created this very neat photo montage.



Rigged and ready -- (l-r) Bob Burkard, Wayne Shriver, David Redd, Rick Warfel, Claude Neidlinger.

Wader Dave Ulgenalp: Tampa Bay Wade Fishing Secrets

Fishing guide Dave Ulgenalp, aka *Wader Dave*, was our February meeting speaker and shared some of his secrets for catching snook, redfish, and seatrout on the Tampa Bay flats.



Waders catch more fish -- Dave Ulgenalp, AKA Wader Dave, helps clients sight-fish the Tampa Bay flats for snook, redfish, seatrout, flounder, pompano, and more.

With Wader Dave, you'll not be fishing from a boat. You'll be standing on the sandy shallows next to Dave and he'll be showing you where-to cast.

"Boats spook fish. Wading is better. You'll see more fish. You'll catch more fish," he said. "Don't stay too long in any one place. Keep moving."

One of his favorite areas is the Tampa Bay flats near Cypress Point Park in Tampa. He pulled up a premium access map on the Salt Strong website and showed us the cuts where redfish move from the drop off onto the flats with incoming flats. Wader Dave is a featured instructor on Salt Strong's "Wade Fishing Mastery" video course and a pro staffer for Mirrolure, Simms, TFO rods, and more.

He's got a lot of insights gleaned from 40-years of wade fishing and he shared a few, like...

- Wade shorelines up and down. Casting with the wind is good.
- Go out into the deeper water with the falling tide. That's when you will sometimes see tailing reds.
- At first light fish the incoming tide -- especially a negative low - because hungry fish are anxious to move onto the flat when the water is deep enough. It's great sight-fishing.
- After the gamefish are on the flats, concentrate on fishing deeper-water grass flats, especially where you see deeper, sandy potholes

CONTACT FORM...

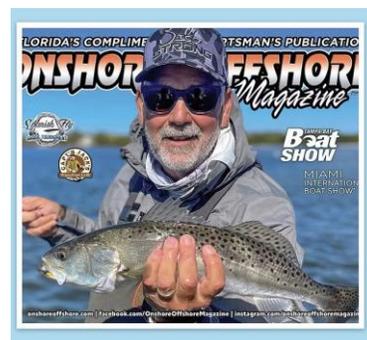
<https://www.wadersguide.com>



Another special flat for Wader Dave is on the ICW just south of the Bellaire Country Club golf course. Study it on a satellite image and you'll see where redfish access the flats through several cuts on the sandbar providing fish access to the skinny water flats.

- His go-to flies are crab and shrimp flies.
- His favorite fly colors are copper and brown

Bill AuCoin



Wader Dave with nice spec

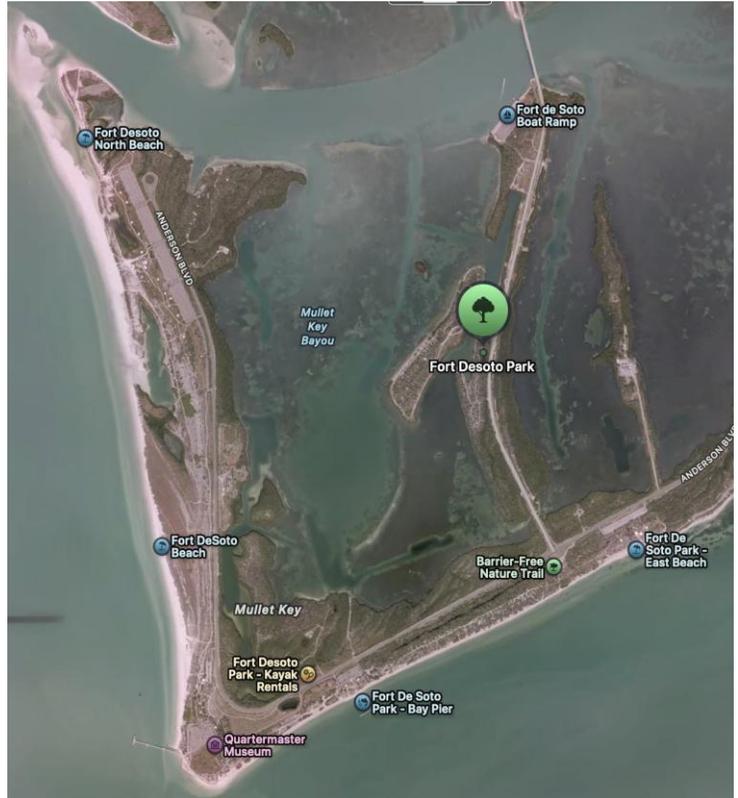
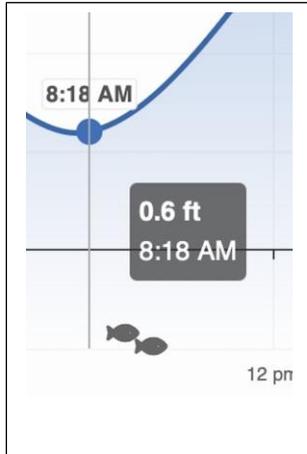
Bob Burkard: March 21 outing at Fort DeSoto Park

Fort DeSoto Park at the mouth of Tampa Bay opens at 7 am but the boat ramp area opens earlier. Some club members park there for an earlier start.

Fish anywhere around Fort DeSoto Park. Meet up at noon at Pavilion #4 in the North Beach area for lunch and fishy stories. Members catching the longest seatrout and redfish win the outing prizes.

Also, be sure to measure and take photos of your longest snook, redfish, seatrout, and ladyfish for a possible lead in those outing trail categories.

We'll have a nice incoming tide. Gulf and Bay water temperature has warmed rapidly. It's about 75 degrees and probably warm enough for wet wading.



Fish anywhere around Fort DeSoto Park. Meet up at noon at Pavilion #4 in the North Beach area for lunch and fishy stories. Member(s) catching the longest snook, seatrout, and redfish win outing prizes.

Leaders on the 2026 Outing Tournament Trail

Species	Winner	Length	Outing (Month)
Longest bream			
Longest black bass			
Longest Peacock Bass			
Longest redfish			
Longest snook			
Longest seatrout			
Longest ladyfish	Bill AuCoin	19.5-inches	Weedon Preserve (January)

Tony Piazza: Fly Tyer Cruise and Catch



On Wednesday, March 11 Suncoast fly tyers and their significant others took their fourth annual barrier island cruise, a wonderful four- hour round-trip from Tarpon Springs to the Anclote Key lighthouse followed by dinner. Bill Scarola brought his fly rod and the son of a gun caught three trout. Way to go, Bill!

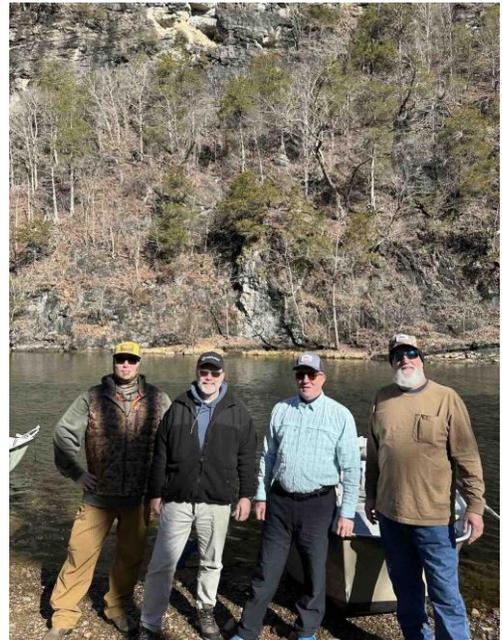
Tony

Sean Pascoli: South Holston River in Tennessee

Claude Neidlinger and myself went up to the South Holston River Lodge with the local Project Healing Waters program -- 10 Vets total - - for two days of fishing in BEAUTIFUL weather.

Claude caught all the fish on his trusty Sage rod. Biggest fish caught by a Vet was an 18 inch brown.

Gorgeous weather, and the lodge is 5 stars.



John French: Saturday Fly Casting at Meadowlawn Park

A few months or so, I showed up at Meadowlawn Park in St Pete early in the morning to start casting practice, I really have no idea why I did or why someone would want to subject themselves to the verbal and psychological abuse (just teasing!) although it did feel much like being at home again.

The group meets most Saturdays to practice different skills, mostly we practice for the Florida Casting Games, sometimes we set up courses and test for FFI Bronze, Silver, or Gold. The group has talented mentors and coaches, and everyone is out to see everyone improve and razz each other like it was high school.

Learning to be a better caster for accuracy, tighter loops, distance, and offhand delivery has certainly paid dividends for me. In a month or so my skills improved dramatically and so did my confidence on the water.

I target windy days. On February 22 winds were gusting 38 MPH and usually I would have found something else to do for the day, but instead I geared up, placed non dominant cast from 35 feet within a few feet of the mangroves. It was remarkable.

I am very grateful to have joined the club and to Pat Damico for giving me my first lessons, Tim Elms, Dayle Mazzarella, Joe Mahler and James Davis for helping me improve on the foundation that was built. If you haven't



SFF member Tim Elms unloads another long distance winner at Saturday casting practice. The hula hoop takes a knee.

participated, you should. Your casting skills will increase exponentially, and certainly more fish will fall prey to you. Chances are you will develop friendships with people you don't even know or haven't met!



Suncoast Fly Fisher memories are made of this. Tim Elms, Dayle Mazzarella, Ernest Sennhouser, and David Redd.

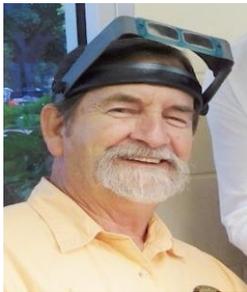
Group Casting Practice Details

Suncoast Fly Fisher Tim Elms leads almost-weekly fly casting practice sessions on Saturday mornings starting at 730 am. "We work on whatever people want to work on.... including FFI's Fly Casting Skills Development Program including Gold, silver-Bronze achievement levels."

Where: Meadowlawn Park
7501 14th St N.
St. Petersburg FL 33702

Time: 730 am - noon

Bruce Evensen / Bill Scarola Host Monday Fly-Tying Classes Open to All
John Connolly: Mini Game Changers



Bruce Evensen

The game changers shown are all tied with chenille except the orange/brown fly which is tied with marabou. John Connolly led fly tyers through the steps at Bruce Evensen's fly tying studio on Monday, March 9.

SFF members and guests are welcome to come to Bruce's fly tying studio and tie flies every Monday starting at 6 pm. Come early to get a good seat. No charge. Bruce's studio is next to his house at 531 80th Ave. N. St. Pete.

Materials and vises are available if you need them.



Bill Scarola

MATERIALS

- Hook: 3407 size 2, or similar.
- Thread: Flat waxed in white or matching colors, and or mono thread. Shanks were supplied by John and Dave Redd.
- Markers: Your choice, to color the pattern. particularly when using white chenille.
- Wire: Supplied by John.
- Glue: Super Glue and or epoxy and eye glue. I prefer E-6000 for the eyes.
- Eyes- stick on eyes.
- Body: Chenille. Hareline Chocklett's Finesse Body Chenille. John likes to tie with the large size in various colors. Or use Orvis Ice Chenille.



Use Orvis or Chocklett's Chenille



Tied with maribou, not chenille.



Chenille is all you need.

###

Bill Scarola: Productive Shrimp "Pattern"



Bill Scarola and a 13-inch sheepshead.

I caught these two keepers just south of the Seminole Road Boat ramps in Clearwater! 16" seatrout, 1-1/2 l-b and a 13" Sheepshead. I caught them on "SHRIMP" patterns! (Actually they were frozen shrimp. Don't tell anybody. LOL.)

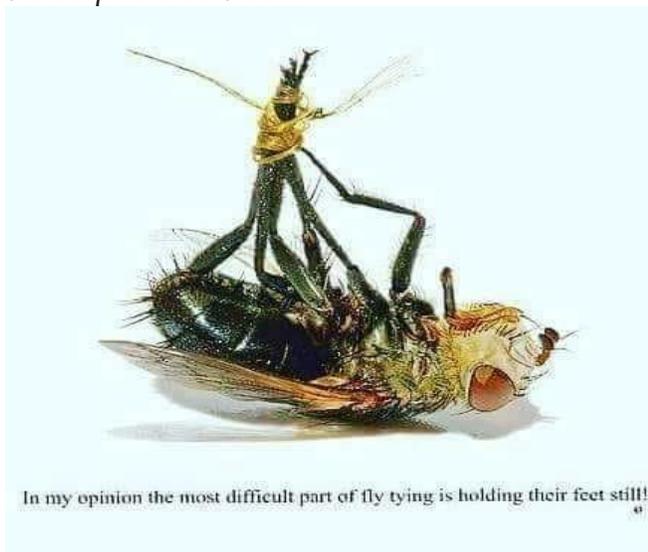
Bill



Bill's 16-inch seatrout.

Flyfisher Funnies

Hat tip to Bob Hood



In my opinion the most difficult part of fly tying is holding their feet still!!

Hat tip to Abby Gambrel

FINALLY GOT THAT 16 POUNDER THAT KEPT STEALING MY LURES



Flats boat for sale

Capt. Pat Damico is selling his year 2000 Maverick flats boat with outboard and trailer. Check it out at O'Neill's Marina.

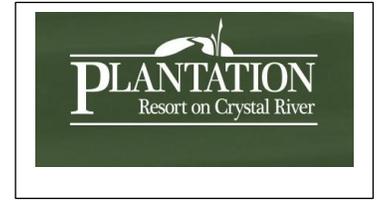
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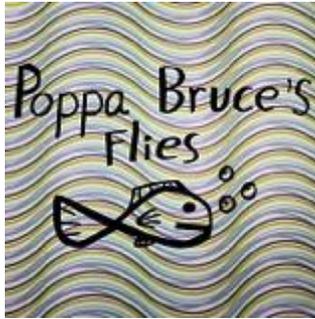


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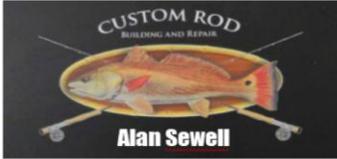
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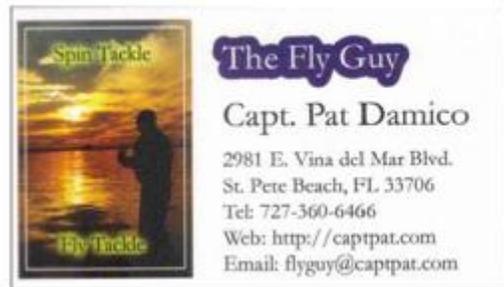


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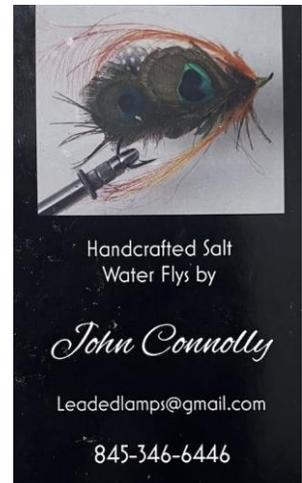
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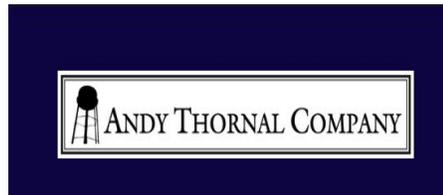
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