Neither clouds nor wind or the gloomy prospect of rain stopped Suncoast Fly Fishers from convening at Cypress Point Park in Tampa at the November outing. Some came hungry to catch reds, trout and snook. Some came hungry to enjoy pulled pork, baked beans, coleslaw, spicy pickles, brownies and pies, pies and pies. A good time was had by all. Page 9

Masterful Casting Clinic at Maximo Park with Tampa Bay's top IFFF instructors. Page 13-14

Andy Constantinou reports that his dog biscuit fly continues to rack up trophies catches. Like, even a seagull. And a gator. Be careful out there, Andy. Page 15.
News 'n' Notes

Who was Don Coleman? We don’t have a “meeting” in December but we do have a meet-up, our December outing. It’s an end of the year biggie, the Don Coleman Classic, on Saturday, Dec. 20. We remember our former member, the author of “Wading the Saltwater Flats with a Fly Rod” a valuable publication given to each new member of the club.

Fish where you want to fish in the Fort De Soto Park area then show up for lunch at noon to chow down on Alan Sewell’s red and white chili and talk fly fishing with fellow members and members of the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club, Sarasota’s Mangrove Coast Fly Fishers Club, the Tri County Fly Fishers Club, and Tarpon Coast Fly Fishers and others. Buffet lunch will be under the pavilion in front of the fort and adjacent to the Gulf Pier parking lot.

November meeting winner. Bill Scarola held the winning ticket and won the coveted TFO 8-foot Mini-Magnum rod awarded by Captain Pat Damico at the conclusion of his talk about transitioning from freshwater trout fishing to saltwater flats fishing.

Put these dates in your calendar

- Thursday, January 15 meeting -- Trash and Treasures Auction. Bring the gear you no longer use and let auctioneer Alan Sewell peddle it to somebody who will use it. The money raised at this event pays for all of the food we eat at the monthly outings.
- Saturday, January 17 outing, Weedon Island
- Thursday, February 20. Free pizza and a new membership survey courtesy of Tom Trukenbrod’s Strategic Action Committee.
- Saturday, February 28, Hog Roast, Treasure Island Auditorium.

132 members and counting. Treasurer Karen Warfel reports that our club now has 110 individual members, 16 family members and six honorary members.

Premier instructor McCauley Lord coming to St. Pete? McCauley Lord, one of the few individuals who have earned a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Federation of Fly Fishers, may be coming to St. Pete in February to speak at our Hog Roast and to hold a special fly casting instruction session for Suncoast Fly Fishers. Dayle Mazzarella is our liaison. Stay tuned.

Last call: Put the SFF logo on your shirt. Bring your favorite fishing shirt to the January meeting and Tom Gadacz will see it that the SFF logo is brodered on it. Just $10 per shirt. Tom expects to have the shirts returned at the February meeting.
SUNCOAST FLY FISHERS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name* _______________________________ Date __________
Address* _______________________________ State* __________
City* _______________________________ Zip* ________ Telephone* (____)
E-Mail______________________________

Suncoast Fly Fishers (SFF) for new and renewing members. Membership categories (select one):

____ Regular Membership 1 year - $15
____ Family Membership 1 year (includes Member, Spouse and children under 18) - $25
____ Business Membership 1 year (includes monthly business card newsletter ad) - $100
If a current member of FFF, enter your FFF number ________________.

Federation of Fly Fishers (FFF). This is only for new members and is in addition to SFF membership. If you are a current member of FFF, please enter your FFF number (above). SFF is a charter club of FFF, and membership in SFF requires membership in FFF. Current members pay annual dues directly to FFF. Select one category only if a new member:

____ Individual 1 year - $35
____ Individual 3 years - $85
____ Family 1 year - $45
____ Family 3 years - $100
____ Senior (age 65 or over; provide date of birth (mm/dd/yyyy) ____/____/____ 1 year - $25
____ Youth (under 18; provide date of birth (mm/dd/yyyy) ____/____/____ 1 year - $15

Total amount due $ _____________. Please make check payable to Suncoast Fly Fishers and bring it along with completed application to next meeting or mail to:

Suncoast Fly Fishers
P.O. Box 40821
St. Petersburg, FL 33743-0821

Amount received $ ______. Date received __/__/____. SFF Treasurer _______________________

*This information is shown on the Membership List which is distributed to members only and is not used for commercial purposes. If you do not desire this information disclosed to members, please so indicate. Your e-mail address is not given to other members. The monthly newsletter, “On the Fly,” is only distributed electronically. If you do not provide an e-mail address, you can obtain the newsletter from our web site.
(www.suncoastflyfishers.com)
We are Suncoast Fly Fishers

Suncoast Fly Fishers (SFF) is a non-profit 501(C) 3 organization and a charter member of the International Federation of Fly Fishers.

Suncoast Fly Fishers are dedicated to sharing their total fly fishing experiences and to developing interest in fly fishing in both fresh and salt water. We promote and teach both fly fishing and related subjects of fly-tying, rod building, fly-casting and knot tying. Through collaboration, fellowship, conservation and sportsmanship we help members become more skilled, have more fun, and be more productive in the sport. SFF supports the conservation of natural resources, boating safety and fishing regulations.

Directions to our meeting at Walter Fuller Park...
From 22nd Avenue N turn North on 72nd St. N. Turn left (South) on 26th Avenue N. Then turn right into the recreation center parking lot.

http://suncoastflyfishers.com/meetings.html
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. SFF is a nonprofit, 501(C)3 organization. SFF is a charter member of the International Federation of Fly Fishers (IFFF). SFF is a member of the Florida Council of IFFF

Contact Us: By U.S. mail: Suncoast Fly Fishers, P.O. Box 40821, St. Petersburg, FL 33743-0821
Alan Sewell's Club Outing Reviews & Previews

November 22, 2014 - Cypress Point Preserve
Our club has fished in lots of bad weather. This could have one of those days. The wind was blowing about 15 - 20 knots. Our food was being blown off the tables. It could have been a big upset, except the wind was coming from the east. This park faces to west, and the water was as calm as on a still summer morning.

What about the fishing? Ladyfish were the targeted fish and hundreds, yes hundreds, were caught. It was stated that it was like fishing in the Everglades, catching fish on every cast. Tom Gadacz caught the longest ladyfish. It did not break the yearly record, but it was close. Lunch was served at noon and 25+ members enjoyed homemade North Carolina BBQ. Once again, our SFF members enjoyed the 4 Fs: Fun, Friends, Fish, and Food.

December 20, 2014 - Fort DeSoto Park
This outing is our Don Coleman Memorial and Chili Eating outing. All local fly fishing clubs are invited to fish and eat with the SFF members. This is an open fishing outing. No prizes...but free food. SFF will supply all of the chili and drinks. Members and guests can bring any food or dessert to add to the menu. The food will be served at the shelter next to the Fort and in front of the gulf pier. Food will be served at around noon. Please come to eat, even if you don’t fish.

January 17, 2015 - Weedon Island Preserve. Details to come

2014 - 2015 Outing Tournament Catches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fish Type</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Largest Bass</td>
<td>Karen Warfel</td>
<td>14-inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largest Sunfish</td>
<td>Annie Hays</td>
<td>8-inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largest Ladyfish</td>
<td>David Putnam</td>
<td>21-1/2 inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largest Snook</td>
<td>Alan Sewell</td>
<td>38 inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largest Speckled Trout</td>
<td>Ken Doty</td>
<td>23-inches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All fish entered in the yearly contest must be caught at a club outing, in the zone defined, and must be at least the legal size set by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission

Alan

December 2014

ON THE FLY

Page 5
Kirk Burton: Member in the Spotlight

Hometown: Cartersville, GA

When did you join Suncoast Fly Fishers? 2009

What is your favorite game fish to catch on a fly, and why? I would have to say that fishing for largemouth bass with floating flies and poppers is my favorite type of fishing.

What are your top three places to fly fish?
1. Dock lights along the Intracoastal.
2. Everglades canals
3. Chassahowitzka River

What is your go-to fly rod and reel? Saltwater - A TFO 7wt TiCrX with a TFO MK II reel; Freshwater rod is a 4 wt rod with a Scott reel

How and when did you get introduced to fly fishing? My wife and I were visiting her cousins who have a houseboat on Lake Cumberland in 1999. He had an old fly rod on the boat and showed me the basics. I would get up early and take the runabout out around the shoreline. It only took me one morning to get hooked. As soon as I got home I went to Walmart and bought a 5 wt combo. I kept that rod until I joined SFF and of course then I needed something for saltwater. Now I have a four, a six, a seven, and two eight weights.

Why do you like fly fishing compared to fishing with conventional tackle? I like the feeling of trying to outsmart the fish with a homemade fly and little knowledge. There is something simple about tying a fly in the afternoon, using it to fish the docklights that night, and eating your catch the next day. I also like the challenge of getting the fly where I know it should be although you would not think I enjoy it if you watched me on a bad casting day.
Tying Bench – Sand Flea -- Tied by Layne Smith

Fish this sand crab (sand flea) in the surf wash casting parallel to the beach. Also work the fly through troughs and holes on a tight line.

Smitty’s Sand Crab

Materials:

Hook: Mustad 3407 2-8 (2 & 4 Most Popular Size)
Thread: Danville Flat Wax Nylon - Olive
Shell Back: Natural Deer Hair (Needs to be at least 2” long)
Egg Sack: Hot Orange Chenille, medium
Legs: Sili-legs Marked Grizzly
Body: Gray chenille, medium
Beard: Root Beer/Brown Sparkle Krystal Flash
Shellback Coat: UV Resin

Tying Sequence:

Step 1: Stack deer hair in stacker (tips first) and then trim butt ends even.

Step 2: Tie in deer hair by the butt ends (tips should be extending to the rear).

Step 3: Tie in orange chenille and cover tied in portion of deer hair with three wraps of chenille. Cut off excess.

Step 4: Tie in a pair of legs with figure-eight wraps so they extend to either side. Trim off in proportion to hook size (should extend past hook bend about ½ to ¾ of an inch). Over-wrap legs to make them extend backwards past hook bend.

Step 5: Tie in grey chenille and wrap to just behind hook eye (leave sufficient gap to tie a neat head). Cut off excess chenille.

Step 6: Tie in Krystal Flash in beard position and trim to half body length.

Step 7: Fold deer hair over body to create a tightly formed shellback. Tie off firmly and trim.

Step 8: Form a neat head with thread wraps. Trim thread and overcoat head and shellback with UV resin. Harden with UV light or set out in sunlight for 20 or 30 minutes till hardened.
Capt. Pat Damico talks about fresh to salt fly fishing transition

By Bill AuCoin

At our November meeting Captain Pat Damico told about the time his client was a productive trout fly fisher. Long story short, the trout guy couldn’t cast a fly rod. The line just piled up on the deck of the boat. He was used to fishing from a drift boat and pretty much just flipped the fly a few feet left, a few feet right.

He wasn’t representative of all trout fly fishers but Damico’s story illustrates the point that when you fish for saltwater fish you’ll need to be able to throw that line way out there. Thirty feet won’t do it. Try 30 times two; even 30 times three.

That’s not all. Damico put up slides that listed the differences. In trout water you’re fishing with 2 to 6 weights. In salt, it’s 6 to 12. Your flies are bigger, too. Your salt line isn’t always floating. Sometimes it is a sinking line or has a sink tip. Your saltwater reel has a strong drag and you’ll back up your fly line with lots of backing. False casting is pretty much a saltwater no-no. The trout angler can often take up a position where he can see the trout rising. His challenge is to make an accurate cast and keep the fly floating naturally. The saltwater fly fisher is usually moving and hunting, all the while sizing up the wind direction and strength. Trout anglers prefer knotless, tapered leaders with a fine tippet. Saltwater fly leaders are fluorocarbon line with a shock tippet (sometimes a wire bite guard). One more thing. When you get a strike do not lift your rod. Rather, set the hook with a quick, hard strip of the line.

Fly Swap -- Bob Morrison, Bill Scarola and Richard Oldenski check out the flies tied for the November meeting Fly Swap.
Capt. Pat Damico: Converting to saltwater? Here's how

(Editor’s note: The following article by Captain Pat Damico describes in detail some of the things that freshwater fly anglers need to know to transition to saltwater fly fishing.)

How does one become a saltwater fly fisher? Usually, most are freshwater converts. But these days there are many that have actually started in saltwater. Northern visitors that come to Florida to enjoy our weather can be frequently seen in our airports carrying rod cases. All fly rod companies make 2, 3, 4 and even 5 and 6 piece outfits that easily conform to on-board baggage requirements. However, I have one word of caution: Checking fly rods in with luggage could be a disaster. Your “hard” case can end up like a pretzel!

Most of my northern clients have spent their fly fishing past with nothing heavier than a 5 wt. rod fishing freshwater trout streams. The most frequently asked question I'm asked is, "How far must I cast to fish saltwater?" Saturday morning TV fishing programs have intimidated them because of the frequent emphasis on distance. If their best previous cast has been 30 feet, they are not going to cast 60 feet with a 10 wt. rod no matter how well balanced the outfit is.

When fishing for freshwater trout on a stream, you have current, structure, feeding stations, wind, water clarity, air and water temperature variations, casting obstacles, drag, and the sun causing shadows, but increasing visibility. Depending on the species, you can have most or all of the same in the salt.

Variations in current that create drag are the most significant problems when trying to tempt a freshwater trout to take your tiny dry fly. Tide can be substituted for current, a dock, piling, or oyster bar would be structure.

On small freshwater streams casting obstacles can be a real problem, but I fished small creeks entering Tampa Bay either wading or in my canoe that were just as challenging. Overhanging mangroves, boats on lifts, docks, and bridges are certainly obstacles to casting.

I’ve caught a lot of saltwater species on small flies and many freshwater fish on bigger offerings. Are there more similarities than you thought? When the wind is flat, I’ve used 6 wt. rods for bonefish and reds in shallow water to allow a stealthy presentation. Other circumstances may require a 9 wt.

Most saltwater species roam looking for forage. If you’ve ever fished a big brown trout river at night you know that they do the same. During the day, these lunkers are under a bank or behind a rock in a deep hole and not actively feeding.

Watch snook under a lighted dock face into the tide waiting for supper. As the tide changes they will reverse position. I fish a lot at night, and the position of a light on a dock will have fish under the dock with an incoming tide and out in open water away from the dock on the outgoing tide. Is this the reason some docks produce better on certain tides, or is the accessibility to the fish the problem?

Trout will generally hold in a “feeding lane” and rise as the fly drifts into their vision. I’ve fished over stubborn brown trout for hours as I tried to imitate the specific mayfly they were engulfing and the horizontal position of the fish never changed. Herein may lay one of the major differences for the aspiring saltwater fly fisher.

Continued on next page
Continued... Converting from fresh to saltwater fly fishing

Time to cast is a bigger factor in most saltwater applications. Most notable is when a guide is poling you across a shallow flat and seeing a redfish, he calls out the position. Provided you see the fish, and know his direction, you have a set of unique circumstances to overcome. Get the fly in his zone of vision quickly, quietly, naturally and accurately at his depth, with a minimum of false casting—preferably using only one, from a moving boat, at a moving fish, in the wind, without hooking the guide. This will be the defining moment and where failure is most frequently assured.

After attempting this drill a number of times, frustration will set in and trying harder will only make matters worse. The guide isn’t doing too well either! He has worked very hard to position you properly only to have his efforts wasted.

If I’m taking someone out for the first time, we meet at least an hour before I expect the fish to be active. We then go to a quiet area and I show them how to cast, retrieve, clear line, strip strike, and get line on the reel with the outfit they will be using.

I realize books have been written on each of these topics. However, in a short period of time an experienced fly fisher will get it together enough to be able to up the odds for success considerably. On my charters, we usually use my equipment because it is better balanced and will work for the specific task. I will hand the rod to my client and ask them to show me how well they can cast.

With this simple evaluation, I’ve seen everything from a cast of 10 feet with a loop the size of the moon to someone who was very proficient. In either case these clients had told me during our pre trip phone conversations stories about catching salmon in Alaska, giant rainbows in Colorado, and sailfish in Mexico -- on flies, naturally. The ten foot caster could be much more descriptive and vocal. Now he is in trouble! And yes, I’ve had trips where I had to make every cast for clients, they did the retrieve, and we caught fish! Who thinks guiding is easy?

Frequently, a good portion of our trip has been devoted to casting instructions. Some inexperienced anglers have actually doubled the distance from their first attempt. Certainly, this could very well have been done in a back yard on the grass, or in a snow covered parking lot up north. When you do practice, use the heaviest outfit you have. Get some good instruction. Most good fly shops, even 200 miles from saltwater have heavier outfits than you can use. Become familiar with 8 and 9 wt. rods and you will have an enjoyable trip.

Saltwater fly fishing is a blast! This article is really intended to help you put your expectations in perspective and encourage you to join the ranks of many who are discovering this new dimension to our sport.

Information is available by contacting me at: pat4jaws@hotmail.com or 727-504-8649. Click here for my web site

Capt. Pat Damico -- St. Pete Beach, Florida
November Club Outing: Cypress Point Park

Photos by Tom Gadacz and Bill AuCoin

Lunch is served -- Ken Doty, left, lets Truk go first since he has a rotator cuff issue. Outings chairman and chef Alan Sewell, the thin man wearing chinos, in the rear, watches to make sure nobody eats too much. Not.

The wind is your friend. Robert Fischer and Richard Oldenski plot their approach.

On Saturday, November 22, the Suncoast

Fly Fishers monthly outing was at Cypress Point Park just north of the Howard Frankland Bridge on the Tampa side of the Bay. Neither rain nor heat nor feisty wind would stay Suncoast Fly Fishers from their monthly fishing outing, especially when there's an after-fishing menu of pulled pork, smoky baked beans and cole slaw all prepared just right by Alan Sewell and his picnic committee. Oh, yes, also brownies, pumpkin pie, and apple pie.

Wader season on Tampa Bay. Air temperature is warmer than the water temperature. Frank Moss knows that.

Tom Gadacz and what's left of his UV fly after 60 or so ladyfish attacked it.
Continued ... November Outing at Cypress Pt Park

Dave Barson and Mark Craig wait patiently for the buffet announcement.

Joe Dail gets ready to chow down on pulled pork, baked beans, cole slaw and more. Kirk Burton, next in line, is thinking, “Save some for me.”

Tom Trukenbrod, he of the rotator cuff issue, with George Haseltine and President Kirk Burton.

Above, Richard Oldenski stirs the beans.

Left, Frank Moss, new member Bob Burkard and Jimmie Carroll.
Bill AuCoin: Suncoast Fly Fishers Host All-Star Casting Clinic

Photos by Bill AuCoin and Tom Jones

Supported by the best fly casting pros in the Tampa Bay area, IFFF Master Casting Instructor Dayle Mazzarella led a day-long fly casting clinic Saturday, Dec 6 at Maximo Park in St. Petersburg.

It was free for current members of the Federation of Fly Fishers and a number of non-members and lapsed members gladly handed over annual dues of $35 (Seniors $25) for casting assistance worth much more than that. In all about 30 fly fishers from the Suncoast Fly Fishers club and the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club took advantage of the clinic.

Mozarella demonstrated techniques to improve casting distance and accuracy plus maneuvers like the roll cast to take slack out of the line and follow-throws that send the fly around a corner or under the limbs of a low-tide mangrove shoreline.

Participants practiced those drills with the help of fly casting partners then paired up with experts for personal instruction. Leigh West helped those who wanted more distance. Capt. Pat Damico steered others on how to cast accurately. Steve Parker led the quick-cast session. John Hand worked with casters on improving their double-haul and spey casting. Capt. Dan Bumgarner helped instill the basics to those new to fly fishing. Mazzarella worked with individuals who might want to pursue earning casting instructor status with the IFFF.

Voice of experience: Capt. Dan Bumgarner shares some valuable tips with a student.

More photos on next page>>>

Brush strokes. Dip the paint brush in water. Make the water fly horizontal to the ground. Imagine you are pounding a nail in the wall.

Suncoast Fly Fisher Bob Burkard gets some one-on-one advice from Capt. Pat Damico, MCI.
Continued: Suncoast Fly Fishers Host All-Star Casting Clinic

Notice the noodle? Dayle said practice different casting movements with a noodle before picking up the fly rod. Leigh West makes a movie. Capt. Pat Damico looks on.

Two fly casting buzz words -- Translation. Rotation -- were demonstrated several times. Accelerate from 2 pm to 10 am with translation. Give it a turbo boost at the end with a rapid flip of the wrist.

Dayle demonstrates the movement and the timing of the double-haul. Accelerate the line when the rod at 2 pm on the backcast and at 10 am on the forward cast.

Dayle demonstrates how to feed and shoot line quickly. False casting spooks fish.
Andy Constantinou: More species fooled by the dog biscuit fly

Our newsletter has documented that Suncoast Fly Fisher Andy Constantinou has caught carp, bass, tilapia and a turtle on the dog biscuit fly. Since the last issue, though, the number of species this fly has fooled has increased by three. Take a look.

Let's ask Smitty to tie some of these at a meeting.

Clockwise from top left, catfish, seagull, and an alligator. It's the dog biscuit grand slam. Surely, a large measure of the credit goes to the chum -- fistfuls of dog food spread generously upon the waters. On closer inspection, however, it appears that the gator didn't actually eat the dog biscuit fly but a fish that was attached to it. Andy?
By Capt. Pat Damico, Master Casting Instructor

Accuracy demands consistent rod movement

Our recent casting clinic with lead instructor Dayle Mozzarella was another great event. After lunch, we broke up into smaller groups and worked on whatever the particular needs were of each participant. My group wanted to improve accuracy and learn mending techniques. When working on accuracy especially, movements with the fly rod must be consistent. Putting a target 30 feet away and using one hand repeating a pickup and lay down cast should have the practice fly hitting very close to the target. Holding the rod more vertically and lining up your eye with the target helps. When experiencing any casting problems, shortening the distance is always a good first step.

Pat Damico, St. Pete Beach

Tom Jones: How to sharpen dull clippers and nippers

They can be sharpened in just a few seconds. With a Dremel Tool or any rotary hand tool. Just insert a small fine grinding stone into the chuck, making sure you’ve selected a stone that’s just a wee bit smaller in diameter than the curvature of the clipper edge. Then, pinch the clipper shut and hold firmly while you pass the grinding bit smoothly across the front edge of the blades. Be careful to hold the tool at a 90° angle to the clipper. Very light passes will deliver the smoothest edge. Your clippers will be as good as new.

If you don’t have a rotary tool like the Dremel, you’re welcome to stop by and try it at my shop. Call 727-667-4112 to see when I’ll be in and get the address. If any of you don’t want to be bothered with sharpening your old clippers, please save them and pass them to me at the meeting.

Tom
ROLL CAST TO PICK-UP-AND-SHOOT DRILL

GOAL: Roll Cast Pick Up 25ft. of line and feed or shoot to 50ft.

Fishing Application: This series of skills is used on a regular basis especially when fishing moving water. It saves lots of time as the amount of time stripping line back to start a new cast is drastically reduced.

This cast is especially useful when fishing from a drift boat as there are many times you want to get slack out in a hurry, and then make a cast.

This cast is used to get a heavy fly or sinking line in the air.

PRINCIPLES: No slack, timing matches line length, straight line rod tip path, arc and stroke match line length, smooth acceleration.

STEP 1: Strip off 50 ft. of line.

STEP 2: Pull your yarn back to 25ft.

STEP 3: Now execute a roll cast, but keep the forward cast OFF the grass and in the air. When the forward cast straightens, begin your back cast. You may need to aim your roll cast at an upward angle.

STEP 4: When your back cast has straightened, begin a forward cast and, at the end, stop ... release the line.

STEP 5: Continue False Casting and feeding line until you can reach 50ft.

PROBLEM SOLVING: All problems should be resolved by referring to the previous drills and their problem solutions.

Want a Challenge?

STEP 6: Shoot as much and as quickly as possible. Start with more line.

STEP 7: Do the same drill, but over the opposite shoulder.

Dayle
Spawning sea trout are hungry

Rinse your tackle. When rinsing your tackle for removal of salt water, remember your vests, tackle bags, and lace-up wading boots with metal lace grommets. Concentrate on anything else that can rust, such as metal zippers. Few things can be as frustrating as a zipper stuck in the closed position, especially when you’re in a hurry. Also check pliers, knives, nippers, and other tools that often get wet when you are wading.

Fish after the cold front pushes through. With water temperatures cooling, fish are moving into the shallows such as the bayous around Weedon Island. Many of these waters are sheltered from the wind, making for easier fly fishing. Watch the weather news, and fish just after a cold front goes through. The fish should be hungry then.

Explore with a jig...catch ’em with a fly. Sea trout are gathering in holes just off the grass flats, since the water there is usually a little warmer than in the grass. Save time by scouting for them with a spinning outfit and baitfish or shrimp plugs or jigs. When you find them you can then switch to flies. Clouser, pinfish and greenback patterns, along with shrimp, should work well. Keep your fly close to the bottom and retrieve it slowly, remembering that fish are less aggressive in the cooler water.

Female sea trout need to eat now. Sea trout are spawning about now, and females especially are hungry as they develop their eggs. They school with others of their own size, so if you catch little ones move to another location until you find those biggies. Try poppers and gurglers in the early morning, and watch for redfish as well in the shallow holes.

Go get ’em and good luck!

Bob
Special Friends of Suncoast Fly Fishers

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Will the Supremes let Georgia’s Lake Lanier go dry? The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to settle the long-term Florida-Georgia war of words over how much water each state may take from the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River Basin. Florida needs a certain level of fresh water to maintain the health of the oyster beds and fisheries of north Florida. It has sued Georgia for taking more than the agreed amount. But Georgia has been covering up its ears and yelling, “I can’t hear you.” Why? Because Atlanta needs 360-million gallons of water a day from Lake Lanier, part of the system. If Georgia loses, guess what happens. Oysters anyone? (Wateronline.com)

Are the feds listening to us now? Major angling industry players like Bass Pro Shops’ Johnnie Morris and Maverick Boats’ Scott Deal have been like the kids in the back of the classroom frantically waving their hands. Now it looks like the teacher -- aka National Marine Fisheries Service -- has called on them and is listening to what the Morris-Deal Commission has to say. NMFS has released the first draft of a landmark policy that suggests future fishery regulations will recognize the cultural, conservation and economic contributions of saltwater angling. And, importantly, the feds will draft regulations that protect fish populations only after careful collaboration with angling interests. (The Outdoor Wire)

Remember the Deep Water Horizon oil spill? There’s a fund to help pay for the damage. Florida has put in for $77 million for projects throughout the state, including $6.9 million for water quality and sanctuary projects in the Tampa Bay Watershed. (The Outdoor Wire)

Release that seagull carefully. Andy Constantinou's dog biscuit fly was a little too good last month, as it turns out. He caught a seagull. It happens to the best of us. If you hook one accidentally, enjoy the fight. Oh, sorry, I meant to say here’s how to release it unharmed. (Seabird Sanctuary)

Bill

PS: Fisherman’s Prayer--published in the obituary of William Howard Spoor, former CEO and President of Pillsbury. Our thanks to Ken Hofmeister for sharing this.

“I pray that I may live to fish/Until my dying day./ And when I come to my last cast,/ I then most humbly pray,/ when in the Lord’s great landing net/ And peacefully asleep/ That in His mercy I be judged/Big enough to keep.”