

First Coast Fly Fisher

July 2005

www.fcff.org

Jacksonville, FL



Capt. Doug Moore
w/ Belizean Permit
(See story on page 4)

MEETING & SPEAKER

Mon., July 11, 7 p.m. at Southpoint Marriot. **Speaker Change: Guide Kevin Fenn** will speak to the club in July. Kevin is a FCFFer who moved to Tampa to kayak-guide. He will bring his new Gladesmen boat and a new prototype being worked on by Everglades Canoe Company. **Capt. John Kumiski** will speak to the club in August. **Come practice casting at 6 p.m.**

COMING EVENTS

Thurs - Sat - July 6-9 -- ESPN Great Outdoors Games, Disney World. Come view the fun. FCFF casting instructor David Lambert will teach casting for the American Fly Fishing Trade Association (AFFTA), Friday.

Note Date Change Sat. & Sun July 9 & 10 -- Tomoka State Park near Ormond Beach. Fish the Tomoka River for redfish, snook and trout

Mon., Aug. 1 FCFF Meeting - John Kumiski -- "Fishing the Banana River No-motor Zone." Author, writer, fly fishing fanatic John Kumiski loves his work. His photos are superb and his knowledge of the area is unparalleled.

August 27 - Nassau (Back Country) - Find out about this new outing from Outings Chair, Mike Head.

September 18 - Cedar Point Redfish in the Grass - This is your opportunity to go after this area's favorite fly fishing sportfish - reds in the grass. Even if you don't hook-up, you'll learn this unique fishery. Sign up now. Boat space is limited

Take A Wounded Warrior Fly Fishing

by John Colburn

The Soldiers' Home – Washington, DC



Thanks to television, we all know the latest count of service men and women who have been killed in Afghanistan and Iraq. What the TV reporters don't tell us is that at least ten are wounded for every one killed, and of the nearly 20,000 wounded, many have lost arms or legs or suffered wounds that will prevent them from using or limit the use of their hands or feet—often for the rest of their lives.

These wounded warriors are in military and veterans' hospitals across the country, many of them far from their homes and families, and being stuck in a hospital for months of rehabilitation is a fate they don't deserve. Watching TV, reading, playing cards or video games, or sleeping can get old pretty fast, and trips away from the hospital are pretty hard to arrange because of the limited staff available.

Here's where fly fishers can really be useful in the rehabilitation of these wounded warriors: Go to the nearest military or veterans' hospital and talk to the rehabilitation and MWR (morale-welfare-recreation) staff and offer to take one or two out for a day or half a day on fishing trip. Find out what limitations the men and women have—what they are capable of doing and what you can do to make the outing a pleasant one.

Don't plan on going to your favorite mountain stream because wheelchairs, crutches, and artificial legs don't work very well on the rough terrain along most streams. Find a lake or pond where the warriors can get to the bank and fish for bluegills and other panfish and maybe bass or trout.

Plan on spending a little time teaching them to cast—nothing special, just a simple pick up and lay down cast of 35 or 40 feet will get the fly to where the fish are on most any water. Save the double hauls and fancy casts for later.

You'll probably have to furnish the fishing outfit, but your fly fishing club may have rods and reels that you can borrow. An 8 or 9 foot, 5 or 6 weight rod and a single action reel loaded with a weight forward floating line, a leader, and backing; a spool of tippet material, and a small box of flies will suffice for starting. A nipper or fingernail clipper, a forceps, and a small towel for hand wiping will complete the outfit. Remember, you're not going to try to set any world record or catch enough fish to feed everyone—you're just going to let the warriors have fun and maybe catch a few fish.

Now for the wounded who can't get out and go fishing, you might start a fly tying class. Fly tying can have definite value in the rehabilitation of those who have suffered hand and arm injuries. The fine motor skills used in fly tying may

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Ascension Bay: Permit, Bones, and Heat

by Scott Sheridan

Since moving to North Carolina and I'd become a "born-again" trout angler. But I could not forget about saltwater fly-fishing and I had a low-grade fever to do some Caribbean bonefishing this summer. Last February at the Charlotte Rod Building and Fly Fishing Show, I met Sarah Fullhart of Fishing Pursuits and Ascension Bay Bonefish Club (ABBC). I've heard from friends about the excellent fishing in the Ascension Bay area and promised Sarah that I would commit after talking to Doug Moore. When I outlined the program, Doug said he was in.



I booked a week in early June as the club was pretty well sold out until then. Our trip would be the last week of the season. The lodge closes during the summer due of the heat and threat of storms. Sarah furnished a great preparation kit that provided everything we would need to sight fish for bones, permit, snook and tarpon.

We arrived in Cancun on June 3. Punte Allen and the ABBC was a four-hour drive away. Our hosts, Dick and Jan, met us in Punte Allen. We learned that the area had the greatest permit population in the Caribbean and that 103 fish had been landed by clients of ABBC this season.

Our meals were prepared by Fila and her assistant, Lady.

They served local fare that was deliciously prepared. The rooms were clean and comfortable, although not air-conditioned. We found out that after a day of fishing in the Mexican heat it was easy to sleep with the aid of a fan.

Pangas For Transport Only

We fished from 21' panga -style boats with two guides and two anglers in each boat. The boats were heavy but served us well as we had a 45-minute ride across the mouth of Ascension Bay to the mangroves and permit flats. The boats are only used for transportation to locate fish. Once fish are sighted an angler and guide leave the boat and wade to the most advantageous position to cast to the fish. Most of the permit we cast to were either alone or in groups of two or three. We only saw a couple of schools of small permit.

Bounty of Bones; Picky Permit

The first day we fished for "bones" and caught six fish in the 2-lb. to 3-lb. size. We spent the rest of the week stalking permit because neither Doug nor I had landed one. Crab and shrimp patterns were the fly of choice, but I have never seen a fish that was so selective about what they eat. I used to think cruising bonefish were difficult to catch but they are no match for a permit. On the third day I spotted a tailing permit about 75 yards from the boat. The guide poled us closer and Doug and the other guide left the boat. The permit was pretty hungry and took the first fly Doug presented and the battle was on. Forty-five minutes later Doug landed a 15-lb. beauty. After pictures, the fish was released in good condition.



We spent the rest of the week trying to get another permit but after several bones a broken rod and too much sun we had to leave with Doug's permit in our memory. After six days of fishing the six anglers at the lodge landed seven permit. Both Doug and I plan to return next year and try again.

If anyone would like additional information about Ascension Bay Bonefish Club they can call 800/819-0750 or visit <http://www.ascensionbay.com/>

Fly Fishing History Site Fascinating

by Dr. Andrew N. Herd

... In fact, the first mention of casting a fly wasn't made until 1620, and then it was by Lawson, in one of his more economical moments. To be fair, every word on fly fishing left to us by Lawson is in the form of footnotes to a poem by John Dennys, a circumstance that must have been fairly limiting for him, and it is a pity that he didn't write more. Even the tone of Lawson's writing suggests that he was an expert fisherman. He advised fishing with:

... a line twice your rod's length of three hairs' thickness, in open water free from trees on a dark windy afternoon, and if you have learned the cast of the fly...



To all intents and purposes, we know nothing about fly fishing during the interval between the publication of *The Treatyse on Fysshynge with an Angle* [by Issac Walton] and the end of the English Civil War. The Civil War (1642-1651) might have divided the nation and families as history was written in iron and blood, but for us, it had the useful effect of prompting a group of five men to write about fly fishing. The five are Thomas Barker, Colonel Robert Venables, Isaac Walton, Charles Cotton and Richard Franck.

The typical 17th century fly fisherman used a twisted horsehair line, tapered from 7 hairs or more at the thickest part down to 3 hairs or less at the point. All lines were home-made, and



although horsehair was the rule, pure silk, and silk/horsehair mixes were used on occasion. The line was usually fixed to the top of the rod, in which case the length was less than twice the length of the rod. Some anglers allowed the line run free through a loop at the tip of the rod, the free line being held in the angler's hand, or sometimes attached to a reel.

Many fishermen still made their own rods, and a typical specimen might have a cane butt, covered with thin leather or parchment, or painted after the fashion of the London makers at the time. Cotton used single handed rods up to 18 feet (!) long, but this was unusual and most rods would have been shorter than that. For the fly-fisherman, hazel was recommended, as it made a long light rod that could easily be managed with one hand. The last 2 feet of the top was cut off and a 'small shoot of black thorn or crab tree' fitted onto it, the end of this shoot being cut off in turn and replaced with a small piece of tapered whalebone. The reel was fitted onto the rod by a spring clip with a pad of leather or some other material inside, so that it could be attached at any position on the butt.

In the main, fishermen preferred to cast downstream, but the reality was that they must cast downwind, so they would cast upstream if necessary (there was an argument raging about up versus downstream even in Venables' day.) A day's fishing on a winding river might involve several changes of direction of cast; first downstream, then up, as the angle of incidence of the wind on the river changed.

The good fisherman tried to cast with the sun at his back, "whipping" the line repeatedly, so that the flies had little time to sink, and as little as possible of the line was drowned. Our model angler prayed for conditions which would make us pack up and go home: wind and coloured water. A windy day was a good day, since it offered the best chance of concealment for the angler; a principle which would hold for another two hundred years.

Walton, a late convert to fly fishing, listed the twelve flies from the *Treatyse*, but Cotton, writing in the 5th edition of the *Complete Angler*, gives us 65 trout flies, marking the beginning of a huge diversification of patterns. By Cotton's day, there were already marked regional variations in fly patterns, and it seems likely that much development had taken place in the sixteenth century.

We have few details about early salmon flies, but if we read between the lines, a 17th century salmon fly might have had a dull body, made of bear's hair, perhaps wrapped in coloured silk, and hackled with cock, pheasant, partridge, or the gaudy feathers of macaw, flamingo or parakeet. The fly might be left as a palmered pattern, or it could be dressed with one, two, or even three pairs of wings, taken from the teal, heron, mallard or falcon. The size of the patterns would have ranged from large trout fly size upwards

Read more of this fascinating history at <http://www.flyfishinghistory.com>.

FCFF Photo Page



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: PRES CHAN RITCHIE AND JENSEN BEACH SNOOK; CASTING LESSONS AT THE POND; BILL SCOTT (REAR) WITH BILL LOTT AT LOTT/ADAMS ANNUAL OUTING; PRES AND BRAD MILLER OF COASTAL OUTDOOR CENTER, SPEAKER LAST MONTH

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Wounded Warrior (continued from page 2)

help in recovering the use of the hand and arm. Talk to the rehab staff and maybe give them a demonstration so they can see what's involved.

The *Introduction to Fly Tying* booklet published by the Federation of Fly Fishers is a good, inexpensive text to use. It's available through the FFF web site <http://www.fffcatalog.com/> for \$2.00 plus shipping. Your FFF club can get quantities of the booklet at a discount.

The tools and materials needed to tie the flies in the booklet are relatively inexpensive. If you explain to your local fly tackle shop owner what you planning, you may be able to get a reduced price or even a donation.

Get sufficient materials so that your students will be able to practice tying between class sessions and provide each student with his or her own packet of materials. They may not be able to get together for tying sessions. Also, provide a container for all the materials and tools because storage space is often limited in hospital rooms.

Remember the "KISS" principle in teaching fly fishing and tying to these wounded warriors—Keep It Simple, Stupid. You will be working with people who have a full load of difficulties and trauma; don't add to that load. You want to give them something to do to relieve the monotony of the hospital and teach them a hobby that they can enjoy the rest of their lives.

Regardless of your opinions about the current or previous conflicts, don't burden these young men and women with those. Share your pleasure of fly fishing and tying with them and let them know that you care.



LEFT, TED MAYHEW THIS YEAR ON THE ROANOKE RIVER; RIGHT, A FALL FROM A POLING PLATFORM CUT UP RICK PALAZZINS LEG DURING THE JENSEN BEACH OUTING.



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First Coast Fly Fishers

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