

First Coast Fly Fisher

October 2005

www.fcff.org

Jacksonville, FL



Fishing the Grass Flats, North Florida Style
Howard Marshall bends a rod in the September spartina shortgrass

photo: Julie Marshall

MEETING & SPEAKER

Monday, Oct 3 - FCFF Meeting -- "Fishing the Mosquito Lagoon." Speaker: Capt. Frank Catino -- Frank is one of the revered veteran fly fishing guides in Florida. He's also the Cortland rep. He knows as much about rod design, lines, and general fly fishing as any man in in the state. Make sure you don't miss this one. Bring your questions; Frank has answers.

COMING EVENTS

Saturday, Oct 15, - Palm Valley Redfish in the Grass - This month we'll chase reds in the grass in the Palm Valley to St Augustine area. Lots of great flats for 5.5 foot tides or better. Start at the south end and work the tide north to get maximum scouting opportunities. Fish from a kayak and you may win the fly event below.

Friday/Saturday, Oct 14 & 15 - Jax kayak Fishing Annual Tourney. Catch Redfish, Trout, and Flounder for a local kids' charity. \$25,000 in prizes and gifts. Surf to www.jaxkayakfishing.com for more info. See page 6.

Wednesday, Nov 2 -- Coastal Conservation (CCA) Banquet and Auction. UNF. Call Greg Craddock (904)982-6104

Monday, Nov 7 - Author, World Famous Fly Fisher Norm Zeigler - Norm Zeigler is an internationally known outdoor writer and journalist who fishes from Naples. His book *Rivers of Shadow, Rivers of Sun: A Fly Fisher's European Journal* was published in June 2004 by Countrysport Press.

November 19 - Mill Cove redfish and seatrout - Mill Cove is normally a high tide fishery due to very shallow water at low tide. There are some limited shallow flats. Mike Head will have more information at the October meeting. There's some talk about having a family day following the outing with David Lambert and Dick Michaelson teaching fly casting.

FCFF Photo Page



(Top Left) Don Reed with a Silver Salmon last week in Alaska. (Top Right) Chan Ritchie with grass-red from September's outing. (Center, left) Lew Holliday with a very nice redfish taken north of Fort George Inlet. (Center, right) Chan, this time with sheephead. (Bottom) Maybank Scurry's fine first spartina redfish. His fishing partner, Howard Marshall is not actually biting the fly rod.

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Distance Casting Part 2: A Method For Improvement

by Bill Gammel

(Ed Note: This is the second and final article from casting cognescenti Bill Gammel.)

Good technique will out-distance brute strength any time, but if you put the two together, you will achieve great distance.

Add The Double Haul

Practice the double haul; it is the most important addition to what we have already discussed. It increases the line speed, adding distance to the cast. In order to get a significant benefit from the haul, you must already be throwing good loops. Be sure to practice sometimes without the haul because it can mask casting faults.

Hold A Long Line Aloft

Practice holding a long line aloft. The more line you can smoothly hold in the air with high line speed and good loops, the farther the line will go on your final cast. To do this, false cast as long a line as you can -no hauling, no shooting-with the line pinned against the grip. The loops should remain tight and u-shaped.

When you can comfortably hold this length, add one more foot, and so on. If the loop opens, falls over to one side, or if the line speed diminishes, you are casting too much line.

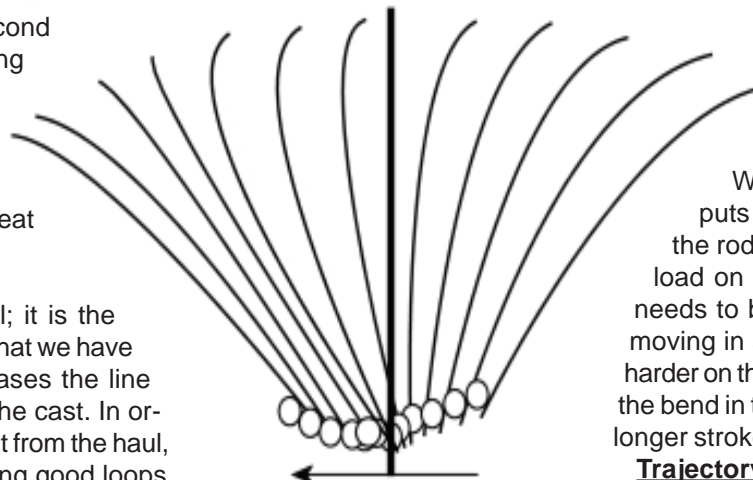
Shorten the line to regain control and then gradually work the line out to the desired length. Remember that a smooth cast will travel farther than a sloppy cast. This drill enables you to increase your turnover-time, the time it takes the line to run through its loop. The longer the turnover-time, the longer the cast. Note that the length of line you can hold line in the air will vary from taper to taper. You'll be able to hold more of a long-belly, distance taper than of a short-belly line such as a saltwater or bass-bug taper.

Shoot Precisely At The Stop

When shooting on your final cast, practice releasing the line at the precise moment the loop forms (when the rod stops). For every extra millisecond that you hold the line after the stop, you deny distance to your cast. Even great casters sometimes hold the line a few milliseconds too long. Practice releasing the line a hair too early. Then too late. This will help you pinpoint the magic moment.

Add Drift On The Final Backcast

Drift is a powerless repositioning of the rod that occurs after the stop of the final backcast-it does not affect the loop at all-and it is a must for distance casting. To drift properly, stop the rod on the backcast, and as the loop unfolds, allow the tip of the rod to "drift" or slide backwards, repositioning the rod for the forward cast.



A Fly Rod Flexing and Unflexing Through A Casting Stroke
Illustration: Lambert

It is an often-misunderstood aspect of distance casting that a drift allows you to lengthen the stroke without widening the loop.

When false casting, the caster puts a certain amount of strain on the rod. The longer the line, the more load on the rod, the longer stroke the needs to be in order to keep the rod tip moving in a straight line. And, by casting harder on the final cast, you further increase the bend in the rod, which requires an even longer stroke. The drift permits this.

Trajectory

The trajectory in which you release the cast is important. Direct the cast 3 or 4 degrees above horizontal, using your energy to gain distance instead of altitude.

Secondary Practice: Putting It All Together

gether

Begin to blend all of the aspects discussed above. First, using the primary practice drills, incorporate the double haul. Start with a slow line speed and increase it gradually. This should be done with a comfortable length of line.

The next step is to increase the length of line that you are holding in the air. Remember: lengthen the stroke as you lengthen the line. A good drill is to under-line the rod, with, for example, a 7-weight line on an 8-weight rod. This gives you the ability to hold more line. By doing this you will learn the timing and smooth application of power that is needed when distance casting. Be sure to judge each loop as you cast and adjust each one.

To tighten a loop, shorten the stroke. If the loop is tailing, lengthen the stroke. Now it is time to let one fly.

While hauling, hold a comfortable length of line aloft at a comfortable speed; gradually lengthen the line to your maximum comfortable limit; when everything feels smooth and sustainable;

choose one perfect backcast, and then drift. Make the final forward cast go as fast as you can, smoothly; release the line.

By following these steps with proper practice, you and your students will enjoy increased distance casting success and more opportunities to catch distant fish.

(Known by his peers as a superb practitioner and teacher of distance casting, Bill Gammel serves on the Board of Governors and lives outside Houston, Texas. With his father, Jay, he co-authored the FFF publication, *The Essentials of Fly*

Striper Frenzy on Lake Powell

by Donn McKinnon

"They're fighting over it!" I exclaimed as several 3- to 5-pound gray torpedoes slashed at my small white deceiver. I stripped line as fast as I could. Finally one of the five pounder's won the battle and the fight was on.

After a 3-minute battle and a quick picture, I released the fish. When I looked up, the school was still in casting range, slashing at threadfin shad all around the boat. It was difficult to calm down enough to get the fly line in control so I could cast again.

I caught 6 fish out of this school before the bait sounded and the surface calmed again. The action lasted about 20 intense and frantic minutes. This is Lake Powell striper fishing!

I fished with guide Bill McBurney, of Ambassador Guide Service. Club member Jerry Bott recommended Bill to me several years ago. Bill has guided Colorado trout fishing trips out of Lees Ferry, Arizona for many years, offering a bonus day of fly fishing for striped bass in Lake Powell.

Unfortunately, the trout populations below Glen Canyon Dam have been decimated by flow fluctuations and even shocking to "eliminate non-native fish species," such as rainbow and brown trout. It seems that western environmental groups have finally managed to use their influence to essentially wipe out this fishery.

Bill and his wife Cathy owned a fly shop with their guide service in Marble Canyon close to Lees Ferry for many years. He has moved to Page, Arizona and now he fishes mostly in the lake itself unless the angler wants to take a chance on the river's dwindling trout resource.

The good news is that Lake Powell has more striped bass than they can handle! In fact the National Park Service asks anglers to harvest all stripers caught in order to reduce the population. There is no limit on size or number of fish.

You might think that striper fishing is easy on Lake Powell, but it's not. The lake is 125 miles long on the Colorado River arm alone. There is also a San Juan River arm. When I fished it in early September, the highest concentration of threadfin shad and therefore stripers were located some 35 miles from the launch ramp near the dam.

It can be a long waiting game before you start to see fish push the bait up to the surface, then you "run like heck" to the upwind side of the frenzy and start casting. Early morning and evening are best times for the bait to remain on the surface for longer intervals. However, the feeding frenzy can occur anytime during the day (or night). The

mid-day frenzies are much shorter and the fish go down in about 15 seconds, or just about the time you race over to them.

When the fish are not coming up, you fish the area by trolling with foot-long, deep-diving Rapalas or you fish the rocky points for smallmouth bass. I tried it all. We caught several fish trolling, but I didn't find it too appealing. The smallmouth fishing was very good. Most were small, but we found several up to 3 pounds. We used sinking lines and even light spinners with grubs. Everything worked! While we fished for smallmouth, we watched for emerging striper frenzies. Often we had to put down the bass gear and race over to busting fish.

All in all, I had two outstanding intense days of fishing. Striped bass are a great game-fish and the visual part of chasing the feeding frenzies is great sport. Lake Powell is a wondrous place where it is sometimes difficult to simply gaze at the scenery. The marinas have huge houseboat fleets. Bill says he sets up lots of trips with up to 6 anglers on a houseboat. He brings another guide and boat out to fish 3 per boat for the stripers. He recommends this way to fish because you can catch the early morning frenzies then go back in the air conditioning during the hot part of the day. During the evening you go back out to fish. The best time of year for this is July. The best fishing time is around the new-moon phase.

Contact Bill McBurney, 800 256-7596 or bill@ambassadoroutdoors.com or www.ambassadoroutdoors.com.



Trout Fishing On Germany's Buhler River

by Ed Billings

Last summer in Germany, I fished the Buhler River in Swabisch Hall, which is leased by my friend Stefan Schmid. The Buhler is a beautiful stream with prodigious insect hatches of various insects. Stefan's lease is 2 miles long and has several stretches which are quite deep. The previous summer was very hot, causing the mortality rate in many rivers to be quite high.



A Buhler River Brown Trout

On my first cast, after a long drift, a huge rainbow took my fly. He jumped 4 or 5 times, then dove for the bottom, where he got entangled and got off. Stefan figured the trout went 4 or 5 pounds. Some of the rainbows on this river exceed 7 pounds and they are prolific breeders.

We fished on until early evening. We were about to quit when I hooked a beautiful brown,

On my friends section, the rather large deep stretches gave fish an escape from the heat and the survival rate was high.

One day we fished faster sections for grayling, since the sky was a little overcast. We fished for 2 hours and were successful only with nymphs. Toward noon we saw occasional hatches of green drakes.

We broke for lunch, then went to fish faster stretches immediately above the deeper water. We were surprised to find the green drake hatch on this time of year. Not a heavy hatch, but regular.

A huge rainbow took Stefan's green drake fly on the first cast. It threw the fly after 4 or 5 leaps.

about 4 pounds. It took a green drake and I had some fun with him until we brought him to the net, got his photograph, then released him.

Stephan was surprised by the number of small grayling we caught. He said that some of the breeder grayling went 16 to 20 inches, but they were rarely caught.

Trout fishing in Germany is really great. It is difficult to obtain a fishing license, though, because it is necessary to take a lengthy course and then pass a difficult examination. I have a license because my friend Stefan pulled some strings for me.

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Jacksonville Kayak Fishing Classic, Oct 14-15

FCFFers Dick Michaelson, Dick Choate will represent Wilderness Systems Kayaks and Black Creek Outfitters in the Oct 14-15 Second Jacksonville Kayak Fishing Classic, sponsored by Jax Kayakfishing.com. David Lambert, representing Temple Fork Outfitters, will help judge the event.

Kayak anglers will target Redfish, Trout, and Flounder in a catch-photo-release format for over \$25,000 in prizes and gifts. The captain's meeting is October 14th at Strike-Zone Fishing Center, and the check-in, awards ceremonies, and BBQ is October 15th at Angie's Subs in Jacksonville Beach.

Entry fee is \$50 (\$60 after Sep. 1), which includes a captain's bag (first 150 entrants), rights to fish, entry into the tournament raffle, and BBQ.

All monies raised will go to various local children's



Don Reed's Alaskan Coast

charities. Contact Mike Hogan, 904-382-5007 to sign up or volunteer to help, or go online to www.jaxkayakfishing.com.



Outings Chair Mike Head with a big redfish caught in the grass at September's outing

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