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JUNE 2010



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Cover Photo: George Lyncker

Algae Bloom Back in St. Johns

by Neil Armingeon

Its official, i.e. the blue-green algae blooms are back in the St. Johns River.

We observed the beginnings of the bloom as we passed through Lake George on our spring boat trip in early April. Soon afterwards, we heard from members and boat patrollers (BP) that they were seeing blooms in the Welaka and Murphy's Island stretch of the River.

Since the first of May, sightings have been on the increase. We have reports on both sides of the River north of Palatka, including Green Cove Springs, Collee Cove, and Picolata.

I observed an incredible bloom in Rice Creek last Friday. Ben Williams documented the same bloom. I attached a few photos of that event.

Yesterday, BP member Bill Kirill who lives in Pirates Cove, near the Florida Yacht Club (west side of the River), saw the telltale sheen of a bloom in his backyard.

St. Johns Riverkeeper needs your help to report/document these blooms.

We believe this year's blooms are going to be bad, perhaps as bad a last year's. We are going to do a better job of documenting the blooms this year.

REPORT THE BLOOM

First, it's important to report the blooms to the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJR-WMD). To do that, follow these directions from Teresa Monson TMonson@sjrwmd.com of SJR-WMD.

Top right: Bloom spreads on Rice Creek.

Bottom right: A swirling algal soup in Dunn's Creek





Ain't Nothing Like The Lotts'

Bill and Ann Lott work so hard to produce this annual function. Please give 'em a huge 'attaboy this year. They sure deserve it.

Nearly 35 FCFFers showed at their house the Saturday in May. A few showed up at 7 a.m. and fished all day. As usual, the Lott outing is as good eating as it is fishing. Bill, Ann, and helpers prepare the sides and fry the fish. More Photos? [Click here](#) to go to Woody Huband's photo page of the event.





Fishing the 'Glades and The Trail

Tarpon, Snook, Oscars, Gar and Peacock Bass

by Rob Benardo

I have been on enough adventures to know that if you want to fish, you'll have to overcome many obstacles through perseverance and force of will. So it was when Ernie Mancill and I left recently to fish in the Everglades.

Half way through our journey Ernie's Honda Element started acting up. The engine ran hot and continued to need fluid replacement every 150 miles or so. Ernie remembered getting a recall notice about the radiator.

Despite the overheating we it made it to Florida City and got a room. First light Monday morning we paddled through a long mangrove tunnel. As I exited the tunnel I made my first cast of the trip toward the mangroves, wham! I caught a beautiful snook on top water. That fish summed up all the reasons the adversities of travel must be over come. The day was as good a first day of fishing as we could have hoped for. We caught many small tarpon in the 3- to 8-lb. range, more snook, had lots of missed top water explosions,



TAMIAMI TRAIL PEACOCK

and lost quite a few fish during the fight.

Day 2 — The day started slow so we returned the canal where we found tarpon the day before. It was a wise choice. Ernie was 10 feet away from me, dragging the bottom with his 6-wt. sink tip, when he hooked an 80-lb. tarpon, which launched itself

next to my kayak. Wow what a sight.

In close quarters his tarpon put on a magnificent display of power and beauty. There was no way he could land a fish that size on his 6wt. but we both had an eye full while it lasted.

On the paddle out I was standing in my kayak, trying to put into words Ernie's tarpon episode, when something caught my eye. To my left, 50 feet out and as clear as day, lay a huge tarpon in two feet of water. I threw a #4 Qwan Fly to him with my 6-wt. He turned, followed and gulped it down. When I set the hook, the shuttle launched. In shallow

water, he had no where to go but toward the sky. He jumped and jumped and ran and jumped some more. I was in a much better area than Ernie had been when he had hooked up so landing my fish was do-able. I got him close to the boat but he ran out toward Ernie and rolled on his side. I tried to haul him back but the Mustad 34007 hook was too soft. He straightened the

hook and took off.

Day 3 — Another beautiful day in another beautiful area. We paddled 11 beautiful miles but caught only one small snook for our efforts. Exhausted and back at the ramp, we added water to Ernie's leaky radiator and started for the motel. Or so I thought. Ernie had had enough of the leaky radiator. He drove to the local Honda dealer to hear, "Sir you should not drive that truck another inch." Since the truck was our kayak carrier, we would be without our kayaks for the foreseeable future. Tough day all around.

Day 4 — We drove up to the Tamiami Trail in Ernie's rental car. The trail is bordered by canals where an angler can catch snook, peacock bass, tarpon, and many other piscine varieties. Ernie has had many great days of fishing along highway. . .but today was not to be one of them.

Fly fishing on a busy highway means constantly watching your back cast so you don't hook a passing car or truck. This kind of fishing is the antithesis of the quiet beauty of the Everglades backcountry. We caught some oscars, black bass and gar, but the tarpon and snook were nowhere to be found. Any day in the Everglades is interesting, so the experience was not a waste of time, but I would not put the Tamiami Trail on my top 10 list of places to fish.

Day 5—We rented a canoe and paddled up the canal from Flamingo to Coot Bay, a very productive stretch of water. It was partially shielded from the wind, which had been started earlier and increased in strength every day.

After pushing off the dock we paddled no more than 100 feet to the opposite side of the canal. There we found tarpon feeding along the mangroves. We cast to and caught 2- to 5-lb. tarpon nearly every cast. All this catching was in plain site of local guides with their boat loads

of \$600-a-day clients. I even pulled a Snook out of that area.

We followed the canal north, casting to rolling tarpon 'til around 2 p.m., then headed in. Ernie called the Honda dealer, only to hear, Your truck will not be ready until around one tomorrow afternoon."

Day 6—The guy in a Florida City bait shop told us that the canals along local roads here were worth a try. We hit a few of them in the morning

and caught some peacocks, we even saw a couple of nice snook. The last fish of the trip would turn out to be the biggest peacock we hooked all week, but it was lost to the sharp edge of a drain pipe. By 3 p.m. we were in Ernie's Element heading for Key West to smoke a cigar and have a sunset Margarita.

The ride back to Jacksonville was a long one but the truck was now in fine working order. Ernie and I have already planned our next trip down to the Everglades and it is unanimous, I will be driving.



ONE OF THE MANY PEACOCK BASS ERNIE MANCILL CAUGHT ALONG THE TAMIAMI

The Spider Slider



by Bart Isaac

I look forward to Spring bream fishing almost as much as I do to the Flood Tide fishing. These tiny titans are excellent light fly tackle targets. Over the last few years, I've become addicted to chasing these fish in local ponds, lakes, springs and the St. John's River.

I recently decided that I need to educate myself further on targeting bream and purchased Terry and Roxanne Wilson's book "Bluegill...Fly Fishing & Flies". As a side note, if you are interested in taking fishing for this class of fish to the next level, I highly recommend this book. One of the flies discussed in their text is a subsurface fly called the Bully's Bluegill Spider.

I've taken the attributes of their subsurface fly and applied them to my topwater

pattern. Specifically, I have applied the round rubber legs to the head of the fly. The legs collapse to the side of the fly when stripped and then spring out when I stopped. The legs are added after the fly is trimmed. This step ensures that the rubber legs are not accidentally removed while shaping the body.

Recasting poppers can be loud due to their open mouth design. The shape of this fly is deliberate. The deer hair body is formed to help minimize noise upon recasting but still causing enough of a disturbance when fished to gain the attention of a Bream or Bass. The deer hair pattern gets into the surface film when fished. I feel it helps with a better hook to strike ratio.

(see tying steps on next page)



Spider Slider Fooled A Big St. Johns River Bluegill

Tying the Spider Slider

Fish this pattern as you would any topwater bream pattern. Spin a few up and keep them in your freshwater fly box. You'll be glad you did.

Hook: Mustad 94840, #6 Dry Fly Thread: Flat waxed black, Denier 210

Body: Spun Deer hair, Black Legs: White round rubber, medium

Step 1: Start the thread on the hook shark just in front of the barb.

Step 2: With the tips of the first clump of deer hair in place, begin to spin the deer hair onto the shank. Continue to spin the deer hair down the shank; remove the tips of the remaining amount of hair as you work your way just short of the hook eye. Leave about 1/16 of an inch of the shank behind the eye clear of deer hair. Whip finish.



1



2



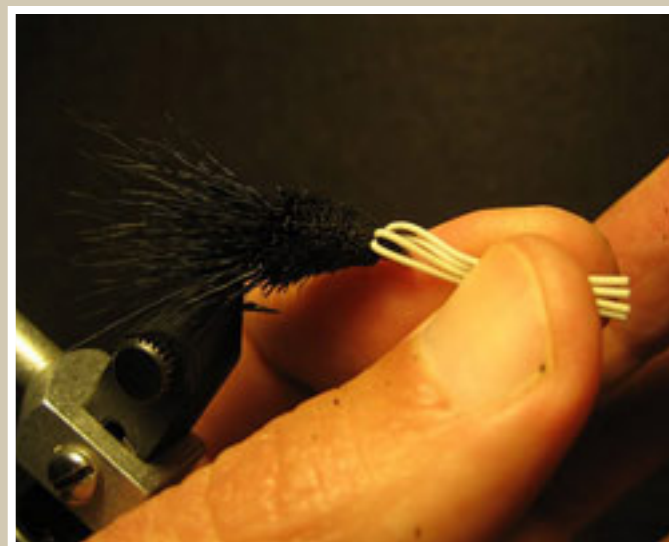
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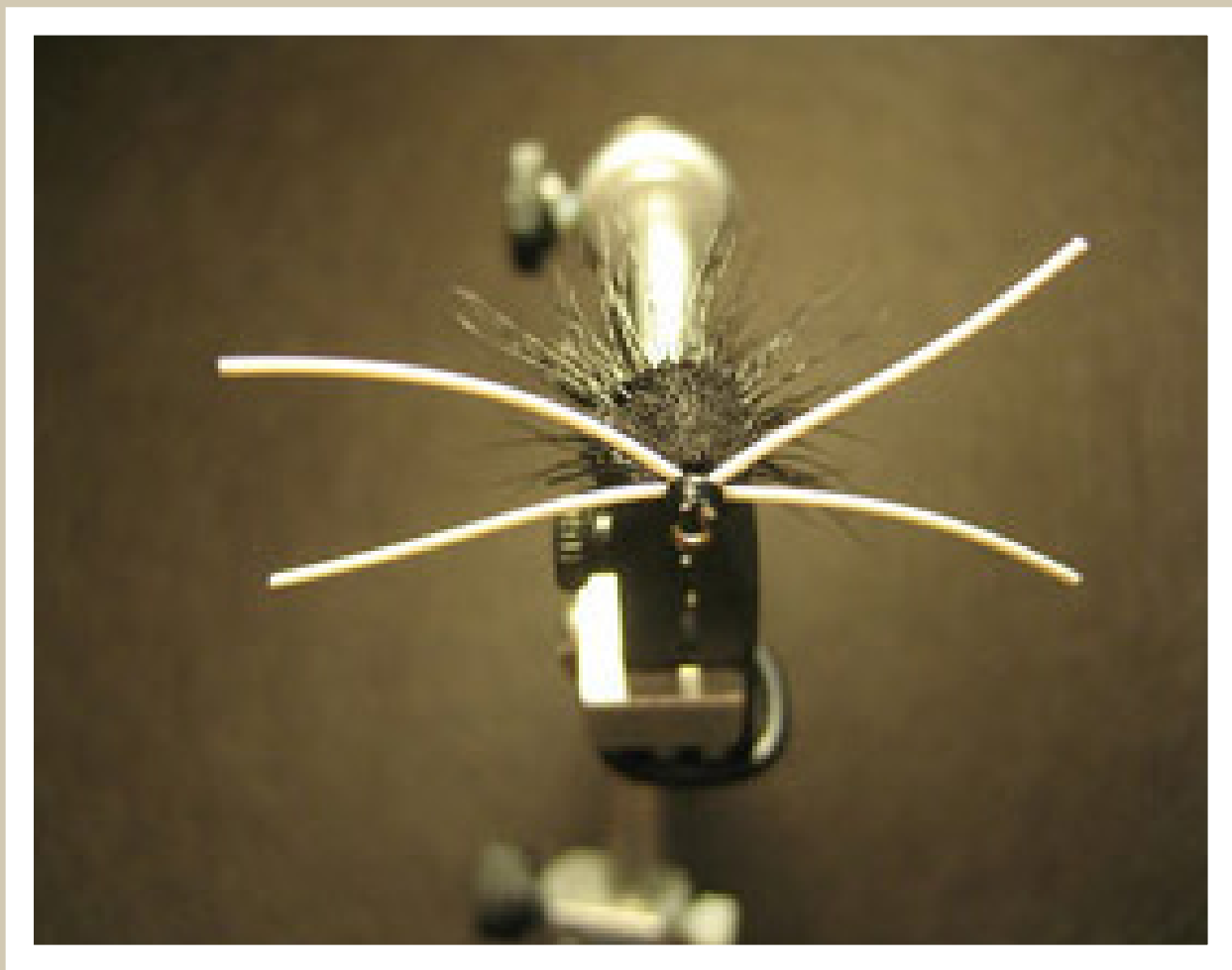


Step 3: The goal shape of the body is almost that of a bullet. With utmost care and caution, use a razor blade, to shape the body of the fly. I begin by trimming the bottom of the fly to ensure the hook gap is open. Then, carefully begin trimming the sides and top. My goal is to ensure that the tips of the first clump of hair remain pointing backwards.

Step 4: After the body is formed, restart the thread just behind the eye. Double over about three inches of the round rubber around the thread. Tie in on the near side so that the rubber legs will splay out 90 degrees from the shank. Repeat this on the far side. When completed, there will be four legs. Whip finish. Use head cement if desired.

Step 5: Pull all four legs forward. Trim the legs to about one inch in length.

Step 6: Completed fly to the right.



Photos by Bart Isaac

Roanoke Score: One Day. One Fish. One Broken Steer Cable

by Don McKinnon

Bud Larsen and I returned from fishing the Roanoke River after one day fishing due to a broken outboard steering cable (happened at the ramp just before pulling out at the end of the day...thankfully). There was no way to repair it there.

I only caught 12 fish, eight in the AM and 4 in the PM. They were stacked up in a very narrow section of the river right below the ramp. It was “combat fishing” with 40 or so boats running back and forth in a very small area. Evidently the run was so small they were concentrated just below the rapids.

In the past, they would be more spread out for up to 2 miles below the ramp which made things a lot easier. Both Bud and I agreed that the run has to improve in order to make it worthwhile making the long trip again.

I got this nice 5.5 pounder on about the 4th cast in the morning, chart and white Clouser.



DONN MCKINNON'S STRIPER FROM THE ROANOKE TRIP LAST MONTH

Knot and Line Strength Test

Field & Stream fishing editor John Merwin tested break strengths for lines and knots in the May 2010 issue. Merwin spent 'several' thousand on a Chatillon/Ametek calibrated force gauge for his tests.

Line and knot winners were:

Break strength winner for 10-lb mono -- P-line X-tra Strong, 22.8 lbs, .015 dia. All 10 tested lines were tested and all broke above 10 lbs. Ande scored worst at .012 diameter with 11 lb break. Stren Original, Silver Thread and Trilene Big Game all tested 13+lb break. Maxima came in at .0145 dia. and 14 lb. break.

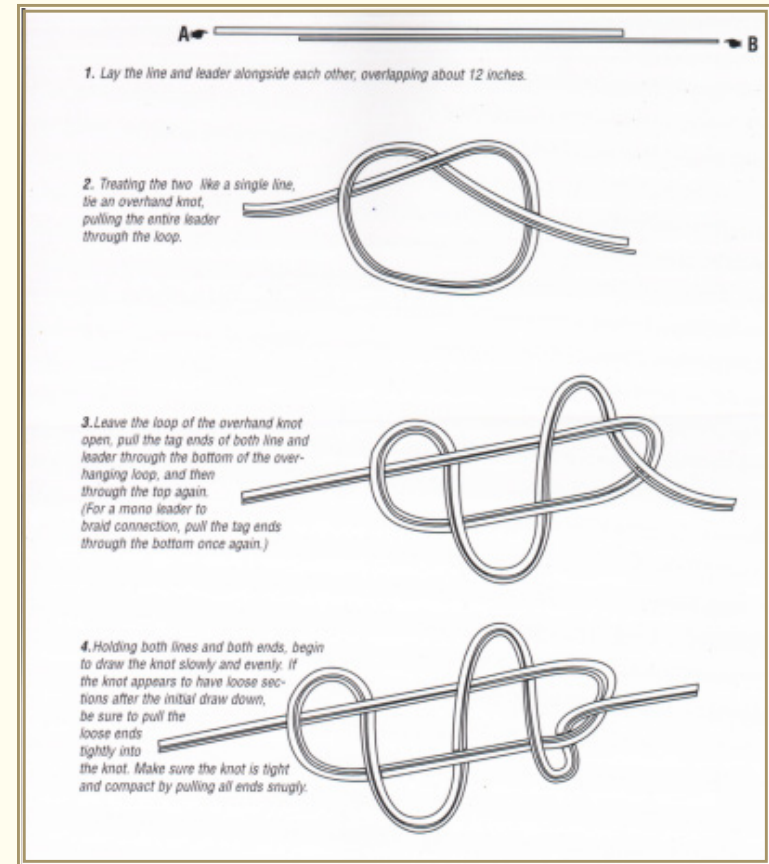
Line-to-line knots winners (note: see tippet to leader below) -- On mono-to-flouro, a 5-turn blood knot, 83% of strength. A 4-turn Uniknot broke at 61%.

Mono-to-fly/lure winner: Trilene, 6-turn regular clinch knot, and 5-turn improved clinch, broke at 96% of stated strength. The 5-tun 'regular' clinch broke at 81%.

Flouro to lure/fly winner: 4-turn non-slip mono loop, 83% break strength. Palomar, 82 %. 5-turn improved clinch 75% using flouro.

Superline to flouro? The "J" knot, hands down. Here's a link to the J Knot tying video <http://espn.go.com/video/clip?id=3593040>

On 6x tippet and size 18 fly: 3-way tie. 1. The 3 turn 16-20 knot (aka: Pizen Knot) (97%). 2. 6-turn improved clinch knot, 96%. 3. Orvis/Becker Knot: 94%. Here's a link to the Pizen



THE J KNOT

Knot (aka: 16/20 knot) <http://www.wonderhowto.com/how-to-tie-pitzen-knots-animated-knot-tying-help-265827/view/>

6x tippet to leader: Triple Surgeon's and blood knot broke in the low 80s; the winner was the Seaguar knot: "Exceptionally strong (97%)," and "substantially easier to tie."

Here's the link for the Seaguar knot video: <http://www.seaguar.com/seaguar-community/seaguar-knot.htm>.

Lots more good info in May's Field & Stream knot article.

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