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OCTOBER 2010

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Biking on the Beach by Jason Sheasley

FLA Fly Show Oct. 22-23

The Florida Council FFF presents the third annual *Florida Fly Fishing Expo* Friday and Saturday, Oct. 22-23 in Ramada Inn Celebration in Orlando. Come join hundreds of the states best fly casters and fly tyers and learn about the unique and varied fly fishing opportunities in our beautiful state.

- **TOP FLY FISHING EXPERTS, WRITERS, AUTHORS, FLY CASTERS, CHARTER CAPTAINS, AND FLY TYERS FROM FLORIDA AND THE U.S. INCLUDING JON CAVE, GORDY HILL, DAVE JOHNSON, JOE MAHLER, KATHY GUIDON, CAPT. MEL SIMPSON, DUSTY SPRAGUE, ERIC COOK, DAVID LAMBERT, JIM PENROD AND LITERALLY DOZENS MORE**
- **LEARN THE HOTTEST NEW CATCHING TECHNIQUES, THE BEST PLACES TO FISH THEM, AND WHICH FLIES TEMPT THE MOST FISH.**
- **WATCH AND LEARN FROM THE BEST FLY TYERS IN THE COUNTRY.**
- **CAST WITH MASTER FLY CASTERS FROM AND SOME OF THE BEST INSTRUCTORS AND GUIDES IN THE REGION.**
- **LEARN WHERE, WHEN AND HOW TO FISH FLORIDA'S MOST PRODUCTIVE WATERS.**
- **SEMINARS, HANDS-ON DEMONSTRATIONS, FLY FISHING MANUFACTURERS AND INDUSTRY EXPERTS AND WORKSHOPS FOR TWO FULL DAYS.**

This is a social event so bring family and friends. Plan to attend the Friday night bar-b-que and a huge banquet/raffle/auction on Saturday evening.

Mark your calendars now for the Florida Fly Expo, Oct 23-23. <http://fff-florida.org/expo.htm>



Bob Connery With Talbot Island Jack

photo by Jason Sheasley

Nassau Sound Images



Little Talbot Island State Park Offers Some of the Best Late Summer Early Fall Fishing In the Area. But Watch Out When The Fall Mullet Run Starts. Then The Bull Sharks and Black Tips Find Their Way Into Calf-Deep Waters.

photos at left
Don Edlin



Don't High Stick That Red

by Scott Shorber

“High sticking” a fish can get you in trouble — and by trouble, I mean break your fly rod. By definition, high sticking occurs during the fighting and landing of a fish. The angler lifts the rod tip so high and back that the tip bends to a more-than-90-degree angle to rod butt. When the fish bolts, the acute angle of the rod overstresses the rod’s hoop strength, and the rod breaks, or, as in my case, it explodes.

High Sticking On A Big Red Made This A 7-Piece Rod

On a recent trip to Brown's Creek to fish the low tide with Rob (Benardo) and Mike (Harrigan), I recently demonstrated the explosive high-sticking technique to my friends.

Here's what happened: Rob landed several fish before Mike or I had any action. Finally, after I landed a nice slot-sized red and a small trout, we continued deeper up into the creeks in search of more fish, paddling through some pretty heavy late afternoon summer rain showers. Finally I saw some big reds slamming bait back in a small shallow cove – lots of big action back there. I paddled back into the creek to get a little closer.

I saw a nice red with his back out of the water cruising within casting range. I made the cast, but managed to bop him on the head – and he was gone !@!#. After sitting for a short time, another big back appeared within range – this time I put the fly right in front of him and he hit it. “WOOHOO,” I yelled to let my partners know I had hooked up.

The redfish ran away from me for a bit and then turned and came straight back at my kayak, about 5-6 feet to my right. I had my rod tip high and was reeling furiously. Just when the fish was broadside, he turned 90 degrees and, like a torpedo, went right under my kayak. Before I could react: KAPOW, my 8 wt. TFO Axiom exploded in pieces — five of them! I yelled #\$\$@% this time, to let my partners know of my new situation. When I tried to bring him in by hand he broke off easily.

I had performed all of the no-no's of a classic “high stick” perfectly: Rod straight in the air, and hand tight on the reel trying to “horse” him in. When he shot under my kayak my rod tip was way past a 90 degree angle to the butt! Had I brought the rod down and allowed a properly set drag to let him run, and or, if I had pointed the tip at the fish, then taken most of the fight in the rod butt, the results might have been different.

However, even if my rod had not broken, it's possible that I might have created some stress fatigue in the rod that may have shown up and caused a break at a later time. It all happened pretty quickly and I'm not sure I could have done much differently given the situation, but a valuable lesson was learned.

(Ed. Note: What could Scott have done to stop his rod from breaking? For one: he could have immediately given the fish more line. Do this by loosening the drag or dipping the rod tip toward the fish. Or he could extend his arm out so the tip would extend beyond the kayak, then follow the fish as it goes under the kayak. If this happens in a boat, sometimes there is not much you can do except put the reel immediately in freespool and hope the fish stops running when the line goes slack.)



The red that didn't break the rod

Nature of the Beast - A Different Approach to Tailing Redfish

by Chan Ritchie

The big 7-point whitetail buck ran sixty yards and fell dead. Three minutes earlier I had been dozing, my longbow in my lap. The buck's foot-fall had awakened me just in time to glimpse him moving out of bow range.

I yanked the arrow from the string and threw it down against the lower branches of the oak tree in which I was perched. I heard the buck stop. I retrieved the pebbles from my pocket and began to drop them also. The buck's natural curiosity brought him straight back to me. A traditional archer must use everything at his disposal to gain an edge. The nature of the beast is often his weakness.

The nature of redfish on the grass is to feed. However, how many times have

you made a "perfect" cast only to watch the fish ignore your offering or even worse spook and flee? Why would a hungry fish ignore an easy meal. . .or run from it, I wondered? I began to experiment and take thoughtful notes.

I believe that the fish that do not strike simply because do not see the fly. . .the grass is thick at fish-eye level. The ones that spook are, I believe, too close to the fly when it moves un-naturally. For all creatures there is a fine line between comfort zone and fear zone.

The nature of redfish on the grass is to feed. But . . . how many times have you made a "perfect" cast only to watch the fish ignore your offering -- or even worse, spook and flee?

Two seasons ago I changed my approach. I began to cast well ahead of the red and let him cruise toward the fly. Then when he was still a comfortable foot away I would make a strong strip, ensuring enough movement to catch his eye. I make the fly flee. . . a trigger for predatory beasts.

My cast-to-strike ratio went through the roof while my instances of spooking fish fell to practically zero. I do not get to fish every day, so I cannot afford to spook fish when I do. I must use everything at my disposal to gain an edge with the few opportunities that I find.

This year I have cast at 11 reds and hooked up 8 times on highly pressured fish; none of them spooked. It works for me. If your methods are not working for you, then give this approach a try.

Disclaimer: Reds are one thing, but sheepshead are a beast unto themselves. For them, I am considering a return to the longbow. CR.



A Simple Guide to Catch & Release Angling

by Ron Taylor, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

The most important steps an angler can take to ensure a successful release are to hook and land the fish as quickly as possible, leave the fish in the water while removing the hook, and release the fish quickly. There are several other ways to improve survival rates:

Whatever you do, do it quickly. Keeping an exhausted fish out of water is like holding a bag over a runner who has just completed a marathon. They both need oxygen to recuperate.

Wet your hands or gloves before handling the fish. Do not injure the eyes or gills. Placing the fish on a wet towel will help the fish retain its protective slime. To keep the fish still, place it on its back or cover its eyes with a wet towel. Control the fish at all times! If you drop the fish, its chances of injury and death increase.

Do not engage in a prolonged debate over whether or not to release the fish after the fish has been landed. Never place a fish in your live well intending to release it later if you catch a larger one. Once you make a decision to keep a fish, stick with it. The fishes you release from your live well have a decreased chance of survival.

Avoid the use of gaffs, and never remove large fish such as tarpon from the water. Large fish can injure themselves and the crew and should, therefore, be treated with respect. Take a photograph of the fish in the water and release it.

Refrain from holding fish in a vertical position when inspecting or photographing them. Internal organs are displaced and stress is increased in this unnatural position. Large fish should never be held by the bottom jaw only, with a boca grip or otherwise (any tool designed to grip the lower jaw of caught fish to facilitate handling). Hold the fish horizontally by the lower jaw with one hand, and support the belly with the other hand. If unsupported, many large fish, especially snook, will rupture the isthmus—a cartilaginous bundle of ligaments that connects the head and body—and the fish will die a slow death from starvation. This connection is necessary for the tremendous gulping action during feeding.

If the hook is difficult to remove by hand, use long-nosed pliers or a hook-removal tool. Do not tear additional tissue by removing the hook. Back the hook through the original wound. If this fails, cut the leader and pull the hook forward through the injury. Regardless whether or not you intend to keep the fish cut the leader close to the hook when releasing large Goliath Grouper (jewfish), tarpon, sharks, and other fishes that are gut hooked. Do not lift a gut-hooked fish out of the water by the leader; this can increase damage to the fish.

Try fishing with barbless hooks, or crimp and remove the barb. Catch rates using barbed or barbless hooks are not significantly different. Barbless hooks are easier to remove, and they cause less physical damage to the fish.

Use circle hooks. They cause less injury and increase catch rates.

If your fish is in good shape, immediately return it to the water headfirst. If it does not swim or is lethargic or erratic, some “resuscitation” may be needed until the fish can swim on its own. Revive exhausted, but otherwise healthy fish by first placing one hand under the tail and holding the bottom lip with the other. If the fish is in fair to good shape, merely hold it headfirst into the current. If it is severely lethargic, depress the bottom lip to cause the jaw to gape and gently move the fish forward. Moving the fish in an erratic back and forth motion will just induce more stress. Have you ever seen a fish swim backward and forward? Practice and share these techniques! Teach your children and inexperienced anglers these few simple procedures to help ensure abundant fish populations for the future.

If you have any questions, please e-mail: ron.taylor@myfwc.com



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TRICK YOURSELF...

**INTO THINKING THAT ANYONE
HAS A BETTER SELECTION
OF FLY FISHING GEAR, APPAREL AND BOOKS
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(L) Buster Points A Red. (T & R) Don Edlin On A High Flood Tide
 (B) Seth Finesses A Flood Tide Red.





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Northeast Chapter

**CCA Northeast Chapter Annual Banquet
PRESENTED BY
MERRILL LYNCH
November 18, 2010
Florida Tackle and Gun Club
9010 San Jose Blvd
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm Silent Auction & Raffle
7:30 pm - 10:00 pm Dinner & Live Auction**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT
STEVE ORMAN (904) 262-9929
GREG CRADDOCK (904) 982-6104**

Please mark your calendar now and plan on joining us for the
**20th Annual Northeast Chapter
 Banquet and Auction**

- We're back at the Florida Tackle and Gun Club and gearing up for an even more successful banquet than last year! Last year was a sell out so get your tickets early!
- Reserve a table for 8 for \$1000 and get a program advertisement, and sponsor gifts.
- \$75 per person, \$140 per couple - includes 1 year membership, dinner, and a great time.
- If you are the lucky table to win the Captains Table Raffle, you will be eating steak and lobster.
- Come prepared to bid on new rods, reels, Costa sunglasses, vacations, a Hells Bay Boat, and much more.



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 is a grassroots organization that is committed to
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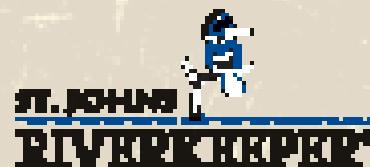
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