

# First Coast Fly Fishers

June 2011

**Saturday, June 25**

## **Fish Black Rock Beach**

• Reds, Ladyfish, Blues, Jacks

**Meeting Monday, July 11**

• Speaker Capt. James Dumas of St. A



**First Coast Fly Fishers  
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**David Lambert  
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**Cover photo:**

**Rob Benardo's camera sees redfish  
from water level**





PHOTOS BY WOODY HUBAND

## Finally, Grass Season

You've cleaned your fly line and put on a knottless leader. You've tied on the perfect fly. You've found the flats on Google Earth and scouted them in person for fiddler farms. The season is finally here. Now you have to remember not to tell anyone about it!



# First Fish of the Grass Season for Jim Fallon

Caught on his final cast of  
a long day of searching the  
flats



## Coming Events

**June 25 Outing** - Redfish, blues, maybe jacks, ladies trout in Black Rock Beach in Nassau Sound. Meet at Big Talbot. Lunch and drinks supplied. Contact Mike harrington for more info -

**Monday, July 11** - FCFF meeting. Speaker, Capt. James Dumas of Drum Man Charters in St. Augustine. Talks about July's outing spot -- Devil's Elbow in St. Augustine. Casting at 6 p.m.; meeting starts at 7. Southpoint Marriott.

**July Outing** - Fishing Devil's Elbows south of St. Augustine for reds. Date to be announced.

**Monday, Aug. 11** - Aug - Capt. Doug Moore will discuss catching reds in Cedar Point's Grass flats.- Cedar Point reds in the grass.

# AN ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON AND MASTER CASTER LOOKS AT CASTER'S ELBOW

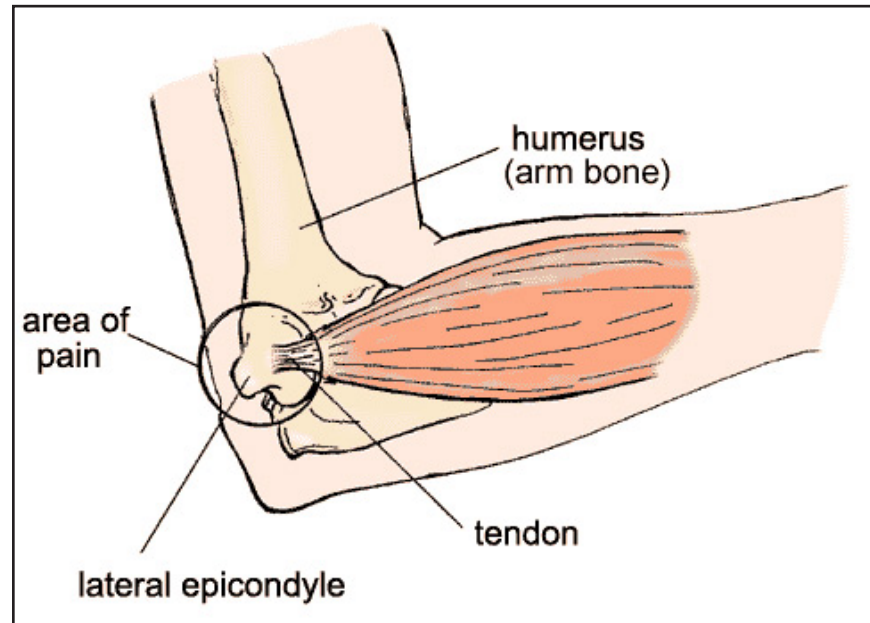
by Dr. Gordy Hill, Master Casting Instructor

I'd like to develop a point on the direct causes of tennis elbow in casters: One of the primary causes that I see is with the pickup. This is one of my friend and master casting instructor Tom White's pet peeves -- the caster who finishes the retrieve, then picks up for the next backcast with the rod tip high above the water. As this is done, the caster has to use a lot of pickup force in a short interval. The distance between that rod tip and the water creates slack. This has to be taken up before the rod can begin to load and the effective stroke begin. The caster has shortened his available stroke length and therefore uses a lot more force.

When this happens, there is tremendous strain on the extensor muscles of the forearm and hand, most of which is transferred to the lateral epicondyle of the elbow (that bony point of tenderness on the outer side of the affected elbow).

Doing this repeatedly is a perfect formula for getting "caster's arm" or tennis elbow in some folks, because it provides repetitive trauma concentrated at one small point of vulnerability.

Once that happens, and it becomes chronic, then anything which puts a strain on these muscle attachments will bring on the pain and perpetuate the problem. The casting solution is obvious to good instructors, but rarely to the afflicted caster.



Tom White emphasizes to all his students and candidates. The pickup is best done with the rod tip close to the water. This allows a longer back stroke to spread the energy over a wider arc and thus, avoids a spike of power with the arm in its most vulnerable position.

The pickup is beautifully demonstrated in Lefty Kreh's video, Lessons with Lefty, as Sarah Gardner plays the part of his unknowing student while he corrects her errors.

This is still not always enough to cure the casting problem, which can be compounded by making that pick-

up with too much line resistance.

There are 3 causes for this: 1.) Too much line length out there in the water at pickup time. 2.) Too much line weight out there (this is where the heavy sinking line comes in to play). 3.) Pickup with a heavy weighted fly, like a Clouser, especially if that weighted fly is at the end of a long leader.

There is another casting fault which has yielded this problem, in my experience. This is repetitive casting with the casting arm extended too far. Often we see poor casters casting with the arm way out and up. This makes very inefficient use of arm power. The cast suffers and sometimes so does the elbow.

*(Note: Gordy Hill has cast for saltwater fish in the Keys for 70 years. He's a retired orthopaedic surgeon and one of most knowledgeable fly casting instructors in the world today.)*



# NYMPHING FOR BIG NANNY BROWN

MARK SCARBOROUGH CAUGHT THIS BIG BROWN A COUPLE OF DAYS AFTER THE AUTHOR FISHED THE RIVER

David Lambert

# free nymphing fast waters calls for a different set of fishing skills

by *David Lambert*

Ken said we'd be fishing from a boat, that this river might be too cold for me to wade.

But this is a late afternoon in early-June in the mountains of North Carolina and I've just spent six hours standing in the swelt of the North Georgia sun, then driven 2 hours to get here. So, I'll be damned if I don't at least get my sweaty, sore feet wet.

So I do, step right on in, right up to my thighs, right there next to the rubber boat we'd humped over a riverside rail into the river. Ken was right about the water; at 45° it sends my testicles in search of warmer housing.

Ken Kastorff is right about a lot of things when it comes to fishing western North Carolina. He's paddled these mountain rivers for 30 years years. He's a guy people listen to. Ken wants to do some R & D fishing to find one of the really big fish this rugged, fast water is known to hide. Big brown trout, that's what we're looking for. Two state records have come from this river recently, he tells me. Neither were caught on a fly.

But the free-nymphing fast water requires a different set of fishing skills than fishing the slow-water/deep-water fishing on my North Florida spring river. . .and I have maybe never fished for trout with streamer.

'I'm not much good at this,' I tell him truthfully.

Fast-water nymphing is a specialty skill, one that requires lots of hands-on, lots of hours dredging the bottoms of cold-water rivers. This fishing calls for a sort of 'fling and flop' casting style, but also technical casting, too, lots of round casts and curving deliveries, all of which will be around or under jutting rock, rhododendron and



**KEN KASTORFF**

**continued on next page**





**THIS BROWN FOUGHT OUTSIDE ITS WEIGHT CLASS**

blooming mountain laurel.

Getting the fly to the fish is only part of the game. Fast water is no place to hone one's line-control skills. Here, you command your fly line or you get skunked, or worse, you get fouled. Seeing the take and setting the hook is a masters level course. In the tumble and boil of a fast-river bottom, a fish can spot your fly, taste it and reject it before you ever know it. And landing a big fish in fast-running water from an oar-powered boat can present its own difficulties.

The best anglers – pros like Ken and his buddy Mac Brown of Bryson City – those guys have it down. They

use advance techniques lesser anglers wouldn't conceive. They might drag the nymph slightly faster than the current. They fish tandem and triple flies. They dredge streamers on the bottom, pulling them in advance of the flow, or retard them. And they fish the shallows, the bubbly, churning riffles.

I spent the better part of two days fishing this stunningly cold river from Ken's boat, a rubber craft with fore and aft seats and a rowing rig. It's a utilitarian vehicle, perfect for a river that moves this quickly, one that responds well to the oar through Class II and III rapids. My perch is in front; Ken mans the oars from the center seat. He is an expert oarsman and we float down this bumpy mountain water in search of big brown trout.

Because this river is in Western North Carolina and because it is very close to the Smoky Mountain National Park, it sees lots of river traffic. Possibly a hundred rafts passed us each day I fished. . .and many more kayakers. Nearly everyone who goes by asks if we're catching fish. It's impolite not to respond, but you find yourself wishing no one would ask. The answering gets tiresome. So here's the conundrum: Do you lie and tell them you're doing great, catching lots of fish? Or do you tell them the truth as they whoosh by: that you're out testing the waters for really big fish and that you're not really fishing for the small guys?

Conundrum, Part 2: Fishing the river is part of Ken's business at Endless River Adventures. It's not good for business to tell the truth either way; that is, if you say you're taking lots of fish, you're enticing more anglers to fish this river than it can handle; if you say 'not many,' then Ken loses potential guiding clients.

So Ken's developed a psychology that pretty much salves the situation: He's cut out and carries a stringer full of obviously plastic fish. He leaves it dangling over the side of the boat. When someone asks if he's catching fish (and the virtually all do) he quietly displays the stringer of plastic fish. It's great for a laugh, real fishermen get the joke, the myriad paddlers think it's clever, six-pack rafters think it's funny—and he's not given up any info on the quality of fishing on this inviting, tumbling water.



A final note on this: One can quickly see how answering the same question a hundred times a day might become annoying, especially if you have a client in the boat who can't cast, or who doesn't listen, or if the fish aren't biting and it's 95 degrees. A stringer of plastic fish keeps the a little humor in the process, it diffuses the bomb in the boat. A smart solution, really.

Oddly, with all the interest from the passing paddlers, and barring a couple of riverside anglers, we were the only fishing boat on the river the two days we fished.

How'd we do? I caught maybe 15 fish total on both days. And none were the really big ones we were hoping for. Mac Brown called later on the final day of fishing. He'd had the U.S. Fly Fishing Team on a couple of rivers for some mentoring. These are the best young anglers in the country; they represent us international competition. Mac told me most of his guys caught far fewer fish. Said the past couple of days had been real tough fishing.

So Ken and I didn't do too bad fishing what is largely a rafting river, looking for those big browns. Mac sent me a pic a couple of days later of a 29-inch fish caught on a streamer by a local fly guy.

I know the spot. Ken put me on it and told me to fish it as we passed over it – twice. I did. But did I fish it well? That is another question entirely.

Note: Ken Kastorff and Endless River Adventures has built a really cool fishing lodge with individual cabins in Ecuador. From there they do trout trips, bird tours, eco tours, and lots of kayaking. For more information on fishing the Bryson City, NC area visit [www.endlessriveradventures.com](http://www.endlessriveradventures.com) or call Ken Kastorff at 800-224-7238.



THE AUTHOR WITH A SMALL RAINBOW TROUT

Because this river is in Western North Carolina and because it is very close to the Smoky Mountain National Park, it sees lots of river traffic. Possibly a hundred rafts pass us each day . . . and many more kayakers. Nearly everyone who goes by asks if we're catching fish.

# ESSENTIAL KNOTS & RIGS FOR TROUT

JOE MAHLER



## DESIGNING FLY CASTING AND FLY FISHING

Bad leader  
design may well cause  
poor presentation and  
exaggerate the effect  
of casting faults

by Ally Gowans from the FFF Flycaster's newsletter, *The Loop*,

The leader is concerned with the connection between fly line and fly. It can conveniently be thought of as three parts, the butt, which attaches to the fly line; the taper, which provides the transition between the butt and the tippet and which controls the energy flow and fine-tunes the characteristics of the leader; and the tippet, which is the final connection to the fly.

All parts of the leader are important but they need not be complicated and certainly should never contain any more pieces of monofilament than is necessary to achieve the desired result. Ultimately it is you who must be happy with the way that your leader performs but beware; leader design cannot compensate for faulty casting technique, but bad leader



design may well cause poor presentation and exaggerate the effect of casting faults.

Fly line manufacturers take great pride and care in designing the profile and tapers of their products. The front taper of a fly line is designed with the purpose and range of likely fly sizes to be encountered in mind. For best results the join between fly line and leader should be as non obtrusive as possible and so a nail or needle knot connection is likely to perform better than a comparatively heavy and bulky braided loop attachment. Recognising the convenience and popularity of loops many of the latest designed fly lines come with small factory made neat and relatively inconspicuous loops for leader attachment which is a useful improvement for those who like to use loop connections and largely overcomes the criticism of braided loops.

#### ***Comparison of leader butt qualities***

The leader butt section is attached to the fly line and should have characteristics similar to the tapered end of the fly line in order to transfer energy from the line to the butt section and hence smoothly along the leader.

If the butt is too flexible it will hinge, if it too stiff it will be very difficult to control or make tight loops, the perfect transition will have similar flexure to the line itself. Three scenarios are illustrated and the suitability of the leader butt material can be judged by comparing the relative stiffness of the fly line and leader, if the leader is too flexible it will hinge at the join, if it is just right the transition will be smooth and if the leader is too stiff the fly line will be flexed by it.



Image Source: Ally Gowan's Website: [letsflyfish.com](http://letsflyfish.com)

The tapered section in the middle of the leader then transmits energy from the butt section to the tippet. Fly size, the target fish species and the prevailing conditions determine the preferred characteristics for the choice of leader make up materials. Proprietary knotless tapered fly leaders of many types and sizes can be purchased and these are suitable for lots of uses but for some situations it is better to custom make tapered leaders with materials of your own choosing or at least it is fun to experiment with different recipes for bespoke leaders to suit you purpose.

As a rule of thumb the common formula for general purpose leader design is approximately 60% butt, 20% taper and 20% tippet. These percentages can of course be adjusted according to purpose e.g. leaders for gentle presentation or to combat drag may have shorter butts and longer tapers and tippets and indeed the leader in total may be longer than normal whereas leaders for delivering a heavy or bulky fly will have extended butts, steep tapers and shorter tippets and the overall leader length is made shorter than normal. Nine feet is the most popular general purpose leader length and most are between that and 12 feet long. Much shorter leaders from 3ft upwards are commonly used for pike fishing and in conjunction with sink tips and sinking lines for salmon and steelhead where the short length helps to keep the fly down at the same depth as the line. Stillwater anglers occasionally use extra long specialised leaders up to 20 feet in length to achieve the most subtle presentation for buzzers but they can only be used in favourable weather conditions and casting direction.

***(Note: Ally Gowans is a master fly casting instructor and a fly fishing guide who resides in Scotland)***



Rob's  
Big  
Bahama  
Bone-  
fish

Caught bonefishing with Capt. David Borries in the Abacos on the last bonefish trip. Rob said the fish was just too big to handle. Biggest fish he or the guide had ever seen.







Bill's Big Picolata Bass  
Taken on An Adam's Cricket



Don With  
Talbot Island  
Tarpon  
He helped another angler  
land this fish from the beach



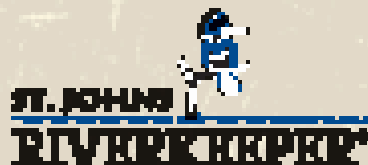
Don Edlin's First Grass Redfish  
(of the Season, of Course)

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