

FIRST COAST FLY FISHERS

AUGUST 2012





Night Fishing Special!

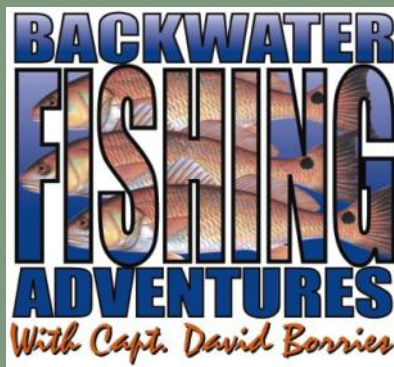
Why fight the heat and humidity of the daytime? Work all day long and have no time to fish? Night fishing is on right now! Why not give it a try?

According to Captain David Borries, the lighted docks around Jacksonville are giving up lots of fish - sea trout, jacks, ladyfish and an occasional lookdown. Perfect targets for 5-weight fly rods. It is a perfect opportunity to dust of that trout rod and put a bend in it.

If you are new to night fishing or just don't have the time (or inclination) to fish during the day, Captain Borries has a deal for you. For the entire month of August, Captain Borries is offering night fishing charters for **\$125 per person** (two persons per charter). **This is an exclusive offer for members of the First Coast Fly Fishers.**

So, grab and partner and book and evening with Captain Borries. If you don't have a 5-weight rod, no worries. Dave will provide you with one. Act fast before all the nights are booked up.

To book your trip, contact Captain Borries by phone: (904) 708-8915, or by email captain-daveborries@comcast.net.



On the Cover:

Don Edlin took this photograph of his brother fishing the Whitestone River near Te Anau, New Zealand in November 2002. Don calls this photograph "Frustration" because his brother is casting to two large brown trout that refuse to eat. **Third Place Winner of the FCFF Newsletter Photo Contest.**

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Under the Lights ~ Stuart Snook Outing

In July, after a several-year hiatus, the First Coast Fly Fishers headed to the Stuart/Jensen Beach area to fish for snook under the lights. Home base for the three day outing was the Four Fish Marina on Indian River Drive in Jensen Beach.

Several folks were looking forward to this year's outing including President Rob Benardo, who had this to say:

I knew this was going to be a great outing and I was not disappointed. Nothing could have kept me from going to Stuart with the Club. During the outing I learned a lot about patients, disappointment, not to mention how long I can stay awake. I enjoy spending time with my friends, old and new, and shared in the thrill of hooking a big snook. We fished much more than we slept and that made for some very funny goofy moments in a boat full of four hard-core fly fisherman. We literally would have been lost in the dark without Ryan Curley who was our source of information on the where and how to fish this area. He also provided a fly box full of more flies than we could lose no matter how many docks we hooked. Mike Harrigan was our gracious host and made sure everyone was having a good time and was well fed. Bart Isaac, who pound for pound has more enthusiasm than any fly fisherman alive, showed us that there is always a way to get a selective fish to eat.



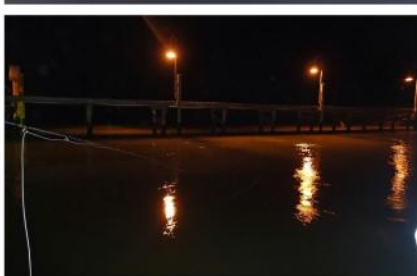
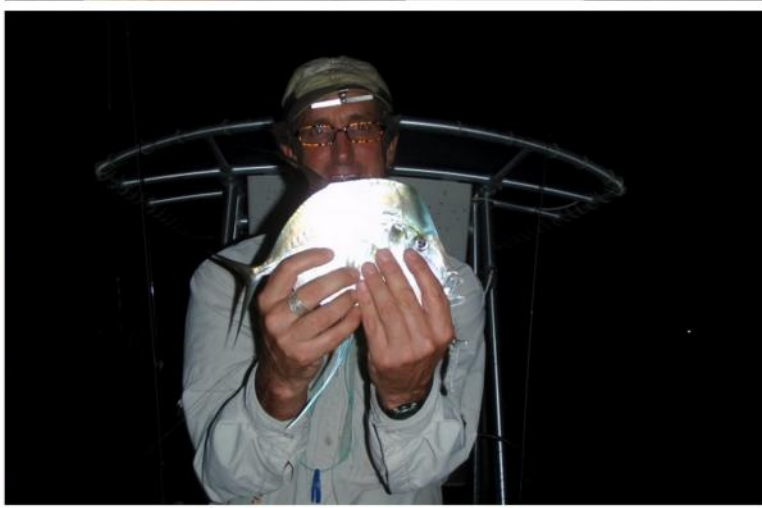
At-Large member Ryan Curley helped to coordinate the trip. His knowledge of the Stuart-area proved to be key in the success of the outing. According to Ryan:

I believe the recent outing to Stuart was a success. I met Mike Harrigan and Rob Benardo at the 210 truck stop on Wednesday afternoon, and we loaded up and headed down to Jensen Beach. We checked into the hotel, and headed out on the water. We decided to fish the Loxahatchee the first night so we would not put too much pressure on the fish around Stuart before the rest of the Club arrived. The three of us launched the boat around 10 pm. Within fifteen minutes Rob caught the first fish of the outing. I scored another within the next thirty minutes. Mike had yet to catch a fish. So he got the first shot at the next set of dock lights. After a couple of casts he connected with his first fish and our trip was officially underway. Our luck continued on throughout the night and ended up with around 30 snook; some nice lookdowns; ladyfish and a couple of jacks thrown in for good measure.

Everyone caught some nice fish on Thursday, but Mike had the big fish of the night with a 28" snook that came off of a dock we hit later in the evening. Right at day break we hit a dock with busting fish near the ramp and I broke off two nice fish back to back. Very frustrating, but there are some monsters in Stuart.

Jim Fallon, who made his first trip to Stuart summed things up nicely:

I was thrilled to be part of this trip. The area is a huge fishing/boating playground...Bait everywhere and big snook, redfish and trout to chase them. Much thanks to Ryan, Rob and Mike for engineering a great trip.





Snook to Remain Closed Another Year in Gulf Waters

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) voted to keep the recreational harvest of snook in Gulf of Mexico waters closed for another year to offer the species additional protection after a 2010 cold kill detrimentally affected the population.

The decision came at the June 28 Commission meeting in Palm Beach Gardens after staff presented an updated stock assessment that showed snook populations are improving in the Atlantic and are not in biological jeopardy in the Gulf. The next assessment is due in 2015.

“If we have a bad winter this year, we will benefit from this caution; if we don’t have a bad winter, we will let all these breeding fish come through the slot,” said Vice Chairman Kenneth Wright, referring to the snook slot limit of 28 to 33 inches in Gulf of Mexico waters. “We’ll really have done something good and we’ll have protected some of these fish.”

The recreational snook season was closed in Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic waters by executive order on Jan.16, 2010, after the cold kill. The FWC manages

snook in both state and federal waters, though the species tends to inhabit the shallower, near-shore state waters. The effects of the cold kill were less severe on the Atlantic coast, where the normal season reopened for harvest Sept. 1, 2011.

The Gulf of Mexico recreational season was to reopen Sept. 1, 2012, and now is expected to reopen Sept. 1, 2013. Catch-and-release of snook will be allowed during the closure. In the Atlantic, the season will remain unchanged. Annual closures in the Atlantic are from Dec. 15 through Jan. 31 and from June 1 through Aug. 31. There is no commercial harvest for snook in Florida.

Snook are one of Florida’s premier game fish, and anglers often practice catch-and-release techniques when targeting this species. When planning to release snook, proper handling techniques ensure the best chance of survival. This includes returning the fish to the water as quickly as possible; using wet hands to handle the fish; supporting its weight in a horizontal position when the fish is out of the water; not holding the fish by the gill plate, eye or jaw; and reviving the fish if necessary by running it through the water head-first to allow water to flow over its gills.

Why I Withdrew the Doc Ford Name from the Professional Tarpon Tournament Series

By Randy Wayne White

[*Editors Note: New York Times best selling author and former fishing guide Randy Wayne White recently posted the following piece on his website (www.docford.com) regarding the practice of "jig fishing" in association with Proessional Tarpon Tournament in Boca Grande Pass. The article is being re-printed, in its entirety, with the permission of the author.*]

In my opinion, there are three distinct dynamics at play in the Boca Grande Pass Professional Tarpon Tournament Series (PTTS) controversy.

1. "User Conflict" A natural animus results when fishermen perceived as outsiders dominate a water-space historically dominated by local fishermen. I have close friends who are Boca Grande guides. To their credit, not one has ever urged me to withdraw the Doc Ford name from PTTS sponsorship. The issue of "user conflict" is beyond the boundaries of my expertise, and has little to do with why I took a public stand against "jig fishing" and the snag-and-drag practices of any and all tarpon tournaments. I agree that Boca Grande is among Florida's greatest treasures, both economically and environmentally, and I am aware that Boca Grande is the diamond eye of the Lee County schematic. It would benefit the entire state if Boca Grande and its namesake pass were buffered from this current assault, and the fact that the FWC and state lawmakers have failed to take mitigating steps, in my opinion, dodges the ethical and fiduciary responsibilities of both. On the territorial issue, however, I have feelings on the subject, but emotion cannot be argued factually. This is not my issue.

2. Gaffing, Dragging and Weighing Tarpon I'm against this, and so are my Doc Ford's restaurants partners (much thanks to them for backing me on this issue!) However, I have also acknowledge publicly that as a fishing guide I have gaffed, dragged and hung many tarpon to be photographed and mounted. Do I wince at the admission? Yes. Do I apologize? No -- nor should any fishing guide who does it legally, and who is fighting to pay his bills by succeeding in an extraordinarily competitive business. It is also true, I must point out, that I voluntarily stopped killing and

hanging tarpon for mounts in the 1980s, soon after taxidermists at Ike Shaw & Co., Fort Myers, informed me they no longer needed the whole fish, or the fins which we'd previously had to strip. This voluntary decision is true of most fishing guides I knew in the era. Most of us also stopped gaffing tarpon in the early or mid-'80s, in favor of bare-handing tarpon by the lower jaw. In fact, by the early 1990s it was considered amateurish and rather prissy to use even a lip gaff.

"Times change, and most of us tried to take the lead in conservation practices," a fishing guide from that era wrote to me recently, "and any tournament that lags so far behind the times sure doesn't reflect the professionals I knew and still know. We stopped gaffing and killing tarpon more than twenty years ago. Same with the guides from Key West to Homosassa. Why are these TV people [PTTS television series] still doing it?"

Good point. The problem here isn't the guides, nor their angler clients, in my opinion. The problem lies entirely with those who make tournament rules (investors in a television production company among them), and with lawmakers in Tallahassee who endorse gaffing and dragging tarpon by issuing "kill tags" for a fee.

3. Is Jig Fishing Snag fishing? Is jig fishing, by definition, snag fishing? No -- not as jig-baits are used world-wide.

Is using a greatly modified "jig" while drifting Boca Grande Pass snag fishing? Often, in my opinion, although perhaps unknowingly by some anglers who employ the technique.

There are myriad scenarios in which a fish could be snagged using a 'jig' as the rig is commonly configured in Boca Grande Pass. Here, though, is the most likely scenario as assessed from my own experience, and after discussing the subject, over a span of two decades, with other guides, many of whom were/are far more expert than I on the subject.

Imagine a column of tarpon stacked forty feet high, mouths pointed into the tide. This mass of fish is then

transected by many dozens of near-invisible fluorocarbon fishing lines, heavily leaded-hooks attached, a process repeated hundreds of times over a day. Leaded hooks attached to these lines may be oscillating violently up and down, but are actually more effective as snag hooks if they are held motionless, allowed to drift quietly near the bottom of the column of fish.

These tarpon aren't feeding (in this scenario) nor are they unaware. Even so, the jaw structure of a tarpon is such that the bony side-flaps of the mouth (the maxilla or 'clipper plates') are exposed targets. These flaps are hinged (by soft tissue and sutures) and flair slightly outward, not unlike an overgrown thumbnail, or the backside of a human ear. When fluorocarbon line makes contact with this bony flap, the line is sometimes funneled toward the inside hinge of the maxilla (clipper plate.) The hinge, as it narrows, becomes an effective guide. Soon, as the boat moves, or the fish moves, the flow of line is halted by an abrupt collision: The hook (given additional mass by the heavy sinker) either loops and buries itself in soft tissue at the edge of a suture outside the tarpon's mouth...or it bounces free. Key elements to this technique:

1. A heavy (3-6 oz.) sinker must be attached directly to a hook.



A gaffed tarpon caught outside the mouth using the "jig fishing" method, which is in reality snag or floss fishing.

2. Tarpon must be stacked in a contained area (which is why this technique works only in Boca Grande and a few other passes world wide.)

3. The circle hook must be extremely sharp and is more effective if canted slightly, using pliers, (Gamakatsu brand "circle hooks," a favorite of "jiggers" are sold pre-canted.)

4. Low visibility fishing line --fluorocarbon -- and an unpainted grey sinker are necessary because deception is imperative.

5. A high speed reel (to rocket the hook upward through schooling tarpon at 5-feet per revolution) and a good boat handler all add to the likelihood of hooking a fish. This finesse is known as "Floss fishing," a term that is more accurate than the misnomer, "jig fishing."

If a tarpon is hooked in this manner, does the angler realize it? Often not, judging from the sincere responses I've gotten to this question from some PTTS anglers and guides. But possibly yes, depending on the angler's experience, or if he is knowingly 'speed-flossing,' by using a high speed reel.

Has the fish been fairly hooked? Or has it been foul hooked? According to the FWC it has been fairly hooked. According to sports fishing ethics, however, and literature that dates back to the 1590s (Sir Izaak Walton) the fish has been foul hooked -- indeed, worse: this tarpon has been "snatch-hooked," "flossed" or "snag-fished." These terms are synonymous with "poaching" in the literature.

A three year study done by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is consistently offered as proof that an insignificant percentage of tarpon are foul hooked when landed by this "jigging" technique. Considering the funding and time constraints that hampered these biologists (not to mention their uninspiring, bargain-basement salaries) the data is remarkably pertinent, in this layman's opinion, but how the FWC reached a conclusion that is often at odds with its own data is mystifying. The study also suffers at least two key flaws: one flaw is an inarticulate definition; the other is a glaring oversight.

1. **The FWC's definition of what constitutes a fairly hooked fish is too broad to address this issue.**

Picture yourself holding a spoonful of cereal. You swing it toward your mouth but, instead, hit yourself in the forehead, the throat, the cheek, or the nose. By the



A tarpon hooked in the eye is a typical result of “floss fishing.” “Jig Fishing” is the euphemism used in Boca Grande Pass. Notice, the heavy sinker and rubber “jig” have broken free, as intended. Also observe why the side flaps of a tarpon’s mouth are prone to snag, then funnel, fishing line, not unlike the backside of a human ear.

definition of this study, you have successfully hit your target, and are now chewing your cereal compliments of your head, your cheek, your outside maxillary, your isthmus (in terms of tarpon physiology) but NOT your mouth as it is used by primates and fish alike. It is for this reason, and this reason only, that the FWC was able to conclude in its study:

“While more tarpon were foul-hooked using artificial bait than live bait, percentages were not unusually high and did not contribute negatively to the survival of tarpon.”

What a convenient but unconvincing way to dodge a controversial issue! An obvious question is: 'unusually high' compared to what? I've read the FWC study many times. An answer to that question is not provided.

My observation: the tarpon is an ancient species; a marvel of evolution that has outlasted dinosaurs, survived global cataclysms, all largely due to its ability to hunt, forage, ambush and feed successfully. With its giant Megalops eyes, its sensitive lateral line, this is an apex predator and survivor -- an animal that has NOT survived the eons by whacking its head, throat and cheeks against prey it intended to eat. I know dozens of guides who share my experience that when a tarpon strikes a bait, that bait ends-up inside the tarpon's mouth, not on the outside, in the vast majority of strikes. The FWC

study, however, dismisses this aberration as "not unusual." Again, compared to what?

Despite the FWC's own broad and misleading definition, the snag numbers are revealing to anyone who has more than a cursory knowledge of fish and fishing: About 10% of tarpon landed using "jigs" were foul hooked. Using live bait? Zero percent (0%) of tarpon landed were foul hooked. Ten percent is a small number, but still markedly disproportionate. These figures disprove a naive but common assertion that it's "impossible" to snag a tarpon with a circle hook. This disparity (10% versus 0%) does more than that, though: it proves that using the heavy-lead-on-a-hook technique ("jigging") is markedly more likely to snag a tarpon than a hook drifting live bait.

2. A glaring oversight: the FWC study failed to acknowledge that only tarpon foul-hooked near the head have any likelihood of being landed.

As most who have caught a tarpon will agree, it's difficult enough to land a fish that's hooked in the mouth, but it would be nearly impossible to land a tarpon that has been hooked in the belly, the anus, or chest -- particularly in Boca Grande Pass where tidal velocity on spring tides, especially, is epic.

The FWC study includes data regarding tarpon that were hooked but not landed, but the implications of that data were pointedly ignored. In the study, 138 tarpon were hooked using modified "jigs" -- 41 of which were landed (a success rate of 30%). Using live bait, 92 tarpon were hooked -- 44 were landed (a success rate of % 48).

To me, these numbers are compelling if not conclusive. Consider these oddities:

1. *Startling statistics.* In this study, among anglers who fished Boca Grande Pass during the same period, and on a similar number of outings, "jigs" hooked 20% more tarpon than live baits (swimming crabs; live fish) which tarpon have depended upon for eons for survival. (138 versus 92 = a 20% increase.)

My observation: Aside from Boca Grande Pass, I don't know of another place in the world where tarpon demonstrate this preference for eating plastic when natural prey is also offered. A simple question: if this "jigging technique" hooks twenty percent more tarpon, why don't anglers use the same leaded "jigging" technique off shore where tarpon school, literally, by the acre in

water of similar depth? Or in backcountry hotspots like Captiva Rocks, Burnt Store Bar, Hendry Creek Rocks? Or on the flats?

But they do not. No knowledgeable angler would bother to waste his or her time, and here's why: this "jigging" technique works ONLY when tarpon are stacked in columns, and constrained by limestone walls that form Boca's Grande's deepest holes. World-wide, this same scenario -- schooling fish, constrained by structure or current -- is key to successful floss or snag fishing. An aphorism comes to mind that references fish in barrels.

I don't care what you're studying, twenty percent is a significant portion. How could FWC biologists have ignored this startling disparity? If I still guided for a living, I would break down doors to find a method that produced twenty-percent more tarpon hook-ups, yet freed me of the pre-dawn chore of catching live bait. Had I invested money to produce a fishing show, I would fiercely protect any technique that guaranteed twenty-percent more action footage to my viewers and sponsors. Why not? By whatever name -- jigging, flossing, or snag-fishing -- the technique is not only allowed by the state of Florida, it is tacitly endorsed by the FWC's own limited and determinedly myopic study.

Hyperbole? Nope. Between 1974 when my Ocean Operators License was issued, and 1991, I did more than 3,000 full or half day charters, and I know how tough it is to make a living (let alone a reputation) as a fishing guide. I also once hosted a fishing show, and know the pressure to produce action on a limited budget (two camera hours per episode, in my case.) Would I have used modified jigs as a guide or as a host? IF (and only if) supporting my family required it, you bet! Indeed, to be shed of that pressure, I would've used .22 hollow points (on myself, or the fish, not my anglers -- although tempting in a few instances.)

2. *Most damning evidence.* Of the 138 tarpon hooked on a modified "jig" only 41 were landed. Only thirty-percent! In my opinion, this is the most damning statistic regarding this issue. Seventy-percent of all tarpon hooked by "jigging" were lost -- even though using the very reliable circle hook. Why? Tarpon veterans I know agree that a normal land-loss ratio is somewhere between 50-50% and 65-35%. But 30-70% is an outrageously poor showing. Even my fly fishing clients landed about 40% of fish jumped! Yet the FWC failed to notice, or even allude to this aberration, nor did its biologists pose an obvious question: Are these so called

Professional Tarpon Tournament "experts" to be faulted as hopeless incompetents?

No, they are, in fact, competent in my opinion. Then why do "jig" fishermen lose 20% or more tarpon than live bait anglers? If you have read this assessment, you already know the answer. Don't feel badly if you missed it. The FWC also missed this significant point. As I wrote earlier:

It would be nearly impossible to land a tarpon that has been hooked in the belly, the anus, or chest -- particularly in Boca Grande Pass where tidal velocity on spring tides, especially, is epic.

That's why "jiggers" lose so many fish, in my opinion. Many of the tarpon they battle have been foul hooked (as defined historically AND by the FWC.) Fish that have been snagged in or around the head can be landed. Tarpon that have been snagged mid-body, the anus, the lateral fin, would be nearly impossible to get to the boat. The FWC study does acknowledge that one tarpon was landed after being jig-hooked in the tail! But it otherwise, sadly, ignores the issue of fish that have been snagged and lost. In doing so, the FWC has turned a blind eye to the significance, and the wider implications of snagging a tarpon in the belly area, fighting it to near exhaustion, only to lose that fish to the hydraulics of Boca Grande Pass, or much worse: to the load



Another example of a snagged tarpon caught in the Boca Grande Pass using the "jig fishing" method.

bearing limits of a tarpon's own body flesh.

CONCLUSION

The issue of "jig fishing" Boca Grande came to my attention in the early 1980s when I was guiding at Tarpon Bay Marina on Sanibel Island. We guides had just switched from CB radios to VHF, as I remember, and were able to eavesdrop on Boca Grande guides commenting on this new phenomenon of outsiders "jigging" tarpon successfully.

Among my favorite clients was a superb striper fisherman from Long Island, Don Brezniack. Don liked to experiment and innovate on our week-long charters, so we decided to give it a try. I had switched to circle hooks in the late 1970s, after seeing their effectiveness on a trip to Asia, so that's what we used, attaching heavy, break-away sinkers with copper wire.

Don hooked three tarpon and landed two, one hooked in the throat, one hooked outside the mouth. "They're snagging these fish," Don had already guessed, and the third tarpon convinced us both. When hooked, instead of rocketing away at an angle quartering the tide, the fish ran straight down-tide -- behavior I'd observed in jack crevalles snagged during feeding frenzies. The fish then used the tide to apply body-leverage out of proportion to any tarpon in my experience. "She's hooked in the side fin or the belly," Don told me after ten minutes, then he intentionally cupped the reel and popped the line, freeing the fish at the leader -- we hoped.

When people ask why I'm convinced that "jig fishing" is more than occasionally snag fishing, my reply is simple. "Because I did it." Same with using pliers to cant circle hooks -- I did it!

Why I withdrew my name and sponsorship. Two years ago, through my own dumb inattention, I didn't realize that a boat sponsored under the Doc Ford name was entered in a tournament that encouraged "jig fishing." This year, again due to my own inattention, I didn't put the threads together until after my restaurant partners had already paid to be a principal PTTS sponsor. Much to their credit, my partners took the financial hit, and backed me 100% when I told them, "We don't want anything to do with snag fishing -- or with what this tournament represents." I stand by this, and by the points I've made about the FWC study. Rather than make my opinions known in haste, though, I invited my own form of "peer review" (something the FCW failed to do) by sending a first draft of this letter to, among



Randy's son at Mote Marine Field station, carrying a tarpon found in Pine Island Sound to be necropsied. Over the years, Randy and his sons have had the pleasure of working with and observing biologists from Mote Marine, Wood's Hole, University of Florida and other research stations.

others, three respected biologists for review (two of whom are experienced anglers and have the credentials to comment on tarpon; the third has published widely on other saltwater species.)

Like me, two of the three were aware that the FWC took pains AFTER its study was published to prop-up the validity of its conclusions by inviting input from Dr. Justin Grubich of the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, and Dr. Philip Motta, Professor of Biology at the University of South Florida. Writes Dr. Grubich, "*Tarpon almost invariably turn their heads quickly to the side just after the strike which is probably how they are getting snagged in their "clipper plates..."*"

If quoted accurately, Dr. Grubich's conjecture is shaky

at best. "Almost invariably . . . probably?" Dr. Grubich's syntax is "almost" as unsettling as his apparent eagerness to agree with the FWC's conclusion.

Writes Dr. Motta, "*For fish hooked on the inside of the maxilla, there is little chance that these hookups occurred by chance (i.e. the hook dragged past the fish and caught it).*"

I don't know either of these men but, in my opinion, both are either unfamiliar with the subtleties of floss fishing and "speed-flossing" or they have been quoted inaccurately or out of context by the FWC. Neither biologist has much experience hooking or landing tarpon judging from the quotes chosen by the FWC, because their observations are 100% at loggerheads with those of four fishing guides who have also read a first draft of this letter. Collectively, these captains have more than 100 years of guiding experience, and have collectively landed approximately 25,000 tarpon, yet agree to a man that a tarpon that hits a live bait is RARELY hooked outside the mouth.

FISHING GUIDES SPEAK OUT

"It happens so seldom," one guide wrote to me, "I've come to believe the hook comes free when the fish jumps, then re-snags the outside of the fish's mouth on those few times it happens. But for someone to say it happens a lot is total BS as you know."

He's right. I won't say it's total BS, but I will say with confidence that the assertions of biologists solicited by the FWC do not remotely reflect my own experience. In my career of 13-plus years, my clients landed just under 600 tarpon* (not a stellar record, I admit, when compared to guides who boated 300-500 tarpon annually) but I side with my more experienced and successful colleagues. It was rare when we landed a tarpon hooked outside the mouth -- and never did we land a fish hooked in the throat, the tail, or the lateral fin.

Regarding this point, one biologist wrote me, "I agree their [FWC's] definition of 'snagging' is inadequate. I am also intrigued by the phrase 'percentages were not unusually high' -- compared to what!"

Sound familiar?

Regarding the FWC's findings that ten percent of jig-hooked fish were snagged, but zero percent of bait-hooked fish were snagged, another biologist wrote, [Re: They don't find this significant . . . ?] "*Given that*

the study determined that a 0% versus 10% difference in snagging was deemed 'not significant,' it is not surprising that a 20% difference in the number of tarpon hooked is also deemed 'not significant.' It seems to me to indicate a preference to first look for no difference, making unreasonably high standards for determining that there is an impact."

Exactly! But why would Florida's own Fish and Wildlife Commission launch a study that, from the start, prefers (and also manipulates) data that suggests there is no significant difference in "jigging" snag percentages? I don't believe in conspiracies (not successful conspiracies, anyway) but there other possible explanations, none of which are very savory. Neither do they do justice to the people of Florida, nor the species *Megalops atlanticus*, a fish that is key to bringing in eight billion dollars annually to our state economy.

Do I have an opinion on this puzzling and disturbing incongruity? Yes. Do I have suggestions on how to mitigate these issues, and help buffer the treasure that is Boca Grande Pass? Yes. But these questions are beyond the purview of a letter written to explain why I took a public stand and withdrew my name and support from a tarpon tournament. Readers may disagree with my assessment of Boca Grande "jig fishing," but it would be disingenuous not to agree I have the right to protect the name of a fictional character I created, I own legally, and to whom I've been devoted for twenty-one years.

Doc Ford would NOT participate in a PTTS tournament as it is currently administrated. Nor will I.

Authors Note:

* Instead of relying on an optimistic memory, I've reviewed my guide logs and lowered the number 800 to 600; 573 is the exact figure, although a number of pages are unreadable, and notebooks for 1991 and 1993 are missing.

~~*Randy Wayne White was a light tackle guide for 13 years on the Gulf Coast of Florida before becoming a New York Times Best-Selling Author. He is the author of 19 adventure novels, featuring the protagonist Doc Ford, as well as four non-fiction collections. On September 4, 2012, Putnam will publish Gone, the first installment in his new book series featuring heroine Hanna Smith.*~~

Blackfly the Restaurant

Blackfly The Restaurant is another exciting Blackfly project by artist/entrepreneurs Vaughn and Jean Cochran. The new restaurant is now open in St. Augustine and is located just across the bridge from the historic downtown area.

"It might be the worlds first fly fishing restaurant, says Vaughn, and everybody seems to think it's a breath of fresh ocean air". The decor is definitely island style and is highlighted by the paintings and wall murals of Vaughn. There is a main dining room that's very comfortable with a mixture of booths and tables with a colorful "Anglers" bar to wait in when they're full.



The fare is seafood of course but there is a nice selection of fine steaks also. Blackfly The Restaurant is open 7 days a week with happy hour starting at 4:30 and ending at 6:30. Thursday is Ladies Night with drink specials all night. The dining room hours are 5:30 to 9:30 Sunday to Thursday and to 10PM on Friday and Saturday. The restaurant website is www.blackflytherestaurant.com to check out in advance the menu and wine selection.

Blackfly The Restaurant
108 Anastasia Blvd.
Saint Augustine Fl 32080

For reservations call
904-201-6300.

August Outing

On Saturday, August 25th, the Club will be holding the first of several outings targeting tailing reds in the grass at Cedar Point. A 5.3 high tide is predicted for 3:04 pm that day.

This year has already all ready been a productive one as several members have taken advantage of the early flood tides brought on by the tropical storms this summer. The early reports indicate that the rains we have been having this summer have resulted in higher than normal spartina grass. As a result, You may need to adjust your techniques for getting the fly in front of the fish.

For the many of us this outing will mark the first opportunity to stalk the grass flats for tailing reds. And if you are new to the Club, this is an excellent opportunity to

learn about a truly unique phenomenon of the northeast Florida fishery.

We will meet at the Cedar Point boat ramp at the end of Cedar Point Road 12:00 for hamburgers and hot dogs before heading out on the water. Ryan Curley will be organizing the outing. He will make sure that everyone that wants to participate in the outing will be paired up with a boat.

Plan to meet back at the boat ramp around 4:15 pm for cold drinks and to compare notes (and fish) from the day's outing.

More information and a sign-up sheet will be available at the August 6th meeting. If you need additional information, contact Ryan Curley at: rkcurley@yahoo.com



ORDER NOW

FCFF SHIRTS



FRONT

The new FCFF Shirts are here!

Sport Tek, 100% polyester Dri Mesh Performance long sleeve shirts are now available for \$30 a piece. These shirts come in a variety of colors with an image of a Clouser Minnow and “The tug is the drug” on the left front breast and the FCFF logo on the back.

The Club hopes to be able to offer button-down shirts in the near future. More information about these shirts should be available at the September meeting.

If you are interesting in purchasing one of these performance shirts so that you can be the envy of the grass flats, contact Don Edlin by phone **904-261-4065**, or by email dpedlin@comcast.net. When ordering, Don will need to know your shirt size and the color you want.

When you place your order, be sure to thank Don for coordinating everything.



BACK



The Tug is the Drug

Blackfly Lodge Roadshow August 25th

Blackfly Outfitter is happy to announce that the Blackfly Lodge "Roadshow" is coming to Jacksonville Saturday **August 25**. The "Roadshow" team is going to fill up the parking lot at the Strike-Zone Fishing Center and Blackfly Outfitter with East Cape Skiffs, the Evinrude test tank, the Costa Del Mar sunglass tent, the Thomas and Thomas fly rod casting area and a special tent reserved for Capt. Clint Kemp of Blackfly Lodge to cook authentic conch fritters. If you look in the Blackfly boat cooler you'll find a supply of Kalik beer to help keep you cool during the day.

All of our sponsors, including Hatch Reels, Airflo Flylines, Yeti Coolers, Schooner Bay and Airgate Airlines will be in Jacksonville to talk about Blackfly Lodge in Abaco Bahamas and how to get your group to the lodge

for some incredible bonefishing. There will also be a representative from the new development of Schooner Bay to talk about the new marina for all you "big boat" guys looking for a home for your sportfish boat for the next fishing season.

Come spend the day with us and learn about one of fishing's most talked about destinations in the world. You can also join us the night before when we will set up the "Roadshow" in the parking lot of Blackfly The Restaurant in St Augustine. It's a Friday night so it's sure to be jammin at Blackfly till closing. Give us a call at **904-997-2220** if you need directions or if you have any questions. Friday and Saturday, August 24th and 25th for the Blackfly Lodge Summer Tour Roadshow.



“I fish all the time when I’m home; so when I get a chance to go on vacation, I make sure I get in plenty of fishing.”

Thomas McGuane
“Fishing the Big Hole”
An Outside Chance (1990)

Say "Thanks" and tell 'em the First Coast Fly Fishers sent 'Ya!

