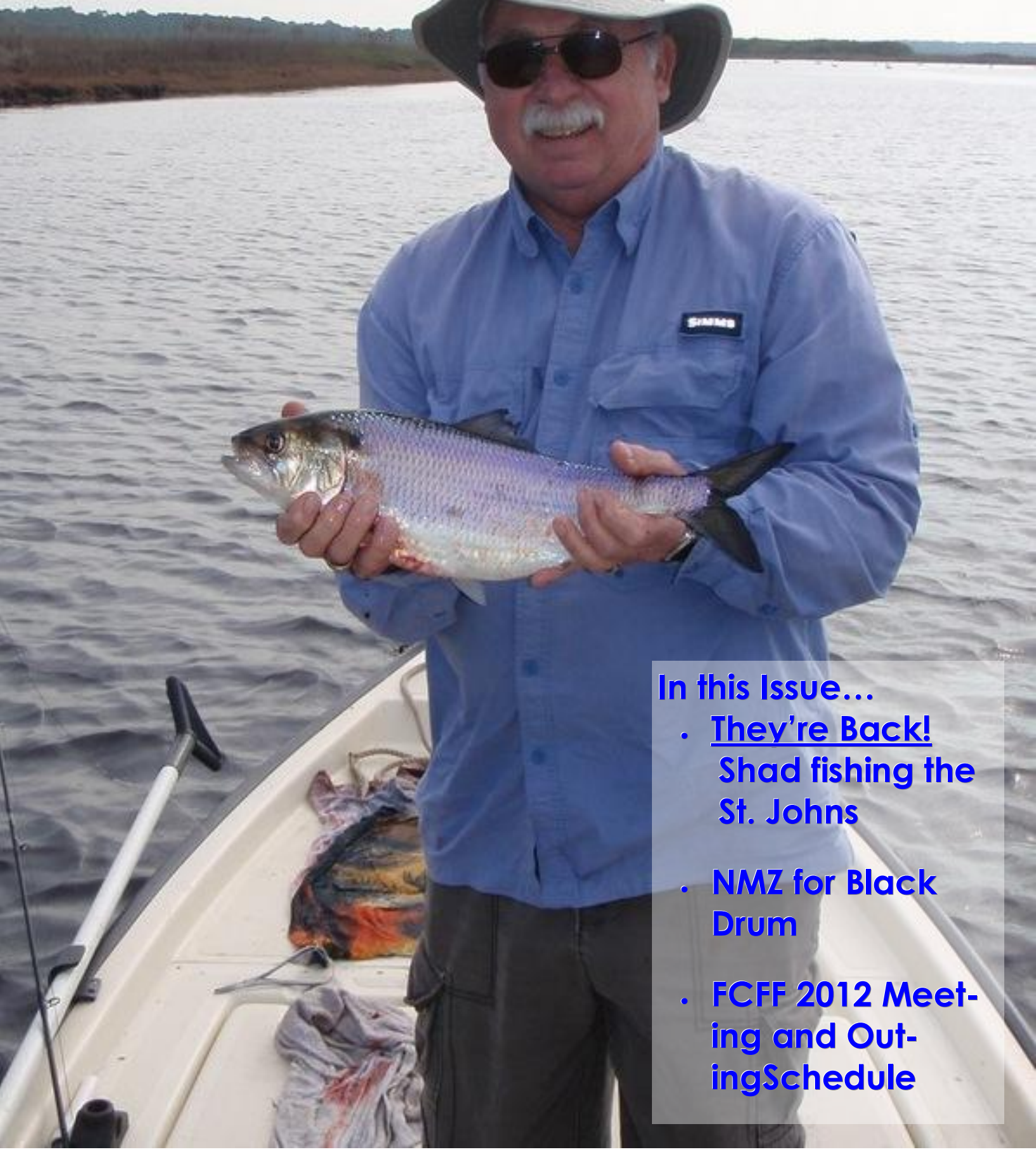


FIRST COAST FLY FISHERS

February 2012



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President's Message

By Robert Benardo

The no motor stretch of the Banana River in Cocoa Beach is the place to go if you want to catch a giant. Whether you are looking for a super sized trout, a monster black drum or big redfish, the winter fishing in the No Motor Zone (NMZ) is your best bet. Here are some of the things you will need to consider before making the trip.

First and most important you need a non - motorized craft. My preferred vessel is a kayak. Many people use canoes but when the wind comes up, and it will come up, you are better off in something lower to the water. You should plan on paddling at least 6 to 8 miles by the day's end. The distance from Kars Park to the first good fishing spot is about 2 miles. Believe me when I tell you that this won't be your final destination. Most people continue looking for hungry fish all the way north which is an additional 5 miles. If the wind comes up out of the south while you are at the north end of the NMZ you will never forget the experience.

Next thing to consider is your fly rod. I prefer a 9 weight but a stout 8 weight will get the job done. Use a floating line with a big head like a Bonefish line, this will help you cast into the wind. Most of your casts will be in the 50-foot range. You will be casting to tailing or cursing fish, blind casting is a waste of time, so bring a rod that you can cast accurately. It is important to put the fly right in front of these fish consistently to have any chance of catching one.

As far as flies are concerned, I have had my best luck on a #2 black marabou style fly with a little red flash. I have also caught them on a root beer Borski Redfish Slider but the sky's the limit. You want something that looks a crab or small bait fish, is dark in color, and has life like movements with minimal motion. It is also important to weight your flies because you need to be on the bottom. Most of the fish you encounter will be in 2 to 4 feet of water.

Other considerations include your leader which should be finished with a 12 to 20 pound test tippet. I like to use 12 pound because it is less visible. Keep in mind, these fish are big and I have lost a few due to my light tippet. Total length of your leader should be no longer than 9 feet, any longer makes casting a weighted fly very difficult.

Try to fish during the week. The NMZ can be crowded on weekends and when these fish get pushed around they stop eating. Best time to fish is first light and just before sun set. You will see fish all day but they tend to bite best when it's quiet. Look for fish in areas where the bottom is pock-marked with grass, on sandbar points, and on muddy bottoms. Follow and fish the outside of sandbars that run north and parallel to the shore about 100 or

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President's Message Cont.

more yards out. Scan the waters in front and to the outside of you looking for big broom sized tails. Position yourself in water about 2 feet deep on the outside sand bar and start heading north. When you see a tail cast your fly right in front of the fish, wait for the fly to sink and start moving your fly trying to entice the fish to eat. Big drum will tail on your fly like a sheepshead or a redfish in the grass. They won't pick it up and run. You need to watch the fish's movements and feel for any tension in your line then strike when you think the fish has taken your fly.

My last recommendation would be to try and fish with

someone who has fish this area before. The NMZ is not an easy fishery to figure out. It took me a couple of years fishing here on my own before I started catching fish. Knowing what to look for and where to look is a big help.

The NMZ will test the abilities of the best fly fisher. The rewards are all the memories of the monster fish you encountered and the few you catch. The lessons learned here will make you stronger or break you.

Good Luck,
Rob Benardo



FCFF President Rob Benardo with a No Motor Zone Black Drum



Seth Nerke with two monsters from the No Motor Zone



FCFF 2012 Annual Banquet February 25, 2012

Featuring

**World Renowned Fly Casting
Instructor**

Ed Jaworowski



Please join us on February 25, 2012 as the First Coast Fly Fishers welcome world renowned fly casting instructor, author and photographer Ed Jaworowski. Ed is an international fly fishing authority. His angling travels, classes, and lectures have taken him around much of the western hemisphere. He has authored four books and served as editorial consultant for a fifth. These, along with his photographs and hundreds of articles, have been published in the USA, England, Spain, Norway, Belgium, Germany, Hungary, Italy and Japan. He is best known as a casting instructor, and Lefty Kreh calls Ed “*a well-rounded freshwater and saltwater fly fisherman who understands fly casting techniques and principles better than any man I have ever met.*” Currently he tests and helps design rods and other fly tackle for Temple Fork Outfitters (TFO).

Ed is the author of: *The Cast, Troubleshooting the Cast, Essential Saltwater Flies* and *Pop Fleyes: Bob Popovics’s Approach to Saltwater Fly Design*. We hope to have copies of Ed’s books available for purchase at the banquet. If you already have copies, be sure to bring them with you to the banquet, Ed will gladly sign them.

On Saturday afternoon, from 9 am to noon, Ed will be holding a casting clinic at M & M Dairy. This is your opportunity to learn from the man that Lefty Kreh calls “*the best teacher of fly casting that I have ever known.*” The casting clinic is free and open to all paid-in full members.

Saturday evening at 6 pm we will be holding our annual banquet at the Southpoint Marriott, which is located at Butler Boulevard and I-95 in Jacksonville. The evening will culminate with a program by Mr. Jaworowski in which he will exhibit a lifetime to fly fishing travel and photography.

Banquet tickets are \$35 per person. Guests will have a choice of Seared Chicken Breast with a Mushroom Marsala Sauce or Grilled Salmon with a Dijon Cream Sauce.

This year’s banquet will include several thousand dollars in fly fishing auction and raffle items; including fly rods, reels, guide trips and fly fishing art work and other fly fishing essentials. More items are being added every week. Raffle tickets are \$5 a piece, and five for \$20.

The Grand Prize Raffle this year is for a new **Hardy Zane Series 1 8/9 Weight Reel** (a \$500 value). Memberships paid in full by the February 1, 2010 meeting will receive a Grand Prize Raffle ticket. In addition, we will be auctioning off an engraved Tibor Back Country Wide Reel.

For more information contact Banquet Director Jim Fallon at fallontest@comcast.net or Rob Benardo at robert@fcff.org. Additional information is also available on our web site - www.fcff.org.

Banquet Schedule Saturday February 25, 2012

9 am to Noon —Ed Jaworowski Fly Casting Seminar at M & M Dairy

6 pm to 9 pm—Banquet with Silent Auction and Raffle at Southpoint Marriott, Baymeadows Room

Shad Fishing the St Johns River

By Dick Michaelson

This is one of my favorite kinds of fishing. This is like the Tailing Reds in the grass that happens for a short time every year. So at the first of January I told Kitty that during the month of February she was going to be a Shad Widow.

I have been in contact with Hyle Reid, Fisheries Biologist and shad specialist with the Florida Fish and Wildlife and I receive his Shad Report via email. FWC regularly conducts shad sampling to determine the stage of the spawn and identify areas where the fish are concentrated. So when Donn McKinnon and I decided to hit the River on the first and second of February, we had a pretty good idea of where the shad were located.

We put in at the Lee Ramp, which is 11 miles west of I-95 on Highway 46. Shad usually spawn in the afternoon between 4 and 6 PM, so the fishing to be better in the mornings. The best fishing it to be had before 10 AM, which is when the crows usually show up. We spend two days fishing the river. We fished the morning and afternoon of the February first. On the second, we fished in the morning and made it back to Jacksonville by 3 PM.

Shad can be caught on a variety of flies and fly lines. Most use a sinking line but in some of the shallower water one can

get away with using a floating line. Donn and I were using shad flies tied on #8 and #10 size hooks in Chartreuse and Chartreuse-Pink combo. We both were using 6 weight rods. I was using a sink tip line, while Donn was using a full sink line. With benefit of the full sink line, Donn was able to keep his flies on the bottom and caught more fish than I did. Even with a sinking tip line I still caught plenty of fish. I did not have a landing net but wish I had. Shad are hard to land and hard to hold onto. A 3 to 4 pound Shad will fight just as hard as a 6 to 7 pound red. Even when you get them to the boat they keep fighting.

I also found a good deal if you want to fish for two days or more.

If you are planning to fish for several days and need a place to spend the night, check out the Titusville Super 8 motel at I-95 Exit 220. If you ask for the Redfish rate you can get a room for two for \$45 plus tax a night, which includes a continental breakfast. Also tell them that you are towing a boat and they will give you a room where you park your truck and trailer and look out your window and see it during the night. The Super 8 is located at 3840 Garden Street in Titusville. Their telephone number is (321) 267-6859.

It was a great trip and was I not tired when I got back. Try



Donn McKinnon with a spawning shad

First Coast Fly Fishers 2012 Meeting and Outing Schedule

Meeting Date	Meeting Guest Speaker ¹	Outing Location ^{2,3}
Mon Jan 9th	Swap Meet	Salt Run
Mon Feb 6th	Mike Head	Shad
Mon March 5th	No Meeting	Rodman Bass
Mon April 2nd	Vaugh Cochran	Full Day Practical Casting With Dave Lambert
Mon May 7th	Jim Romeka	Lotts Fish Fry St. Johns River Bream & Bass
Mon June 4th	Tommy Thompson	Clapboard Redfish
Mon July 2nd	Marsha Fossner	Stewart Florida Snook
Mon Aug 6th	John Turcotte	Cedar Point Reds in the Grass
Mon Sept 10th	Larry Minyard	Palm Valley Reds in the Grass
Mon Oct 1st	Norm Zeigler	Cedar Point Reds in the Grass
Mon Nov 5th	Dave Borries	Sister Creek Redfish
Mon Dec 3rd	Frank Cattino	Mosquito Lagoon

Note:

1. Monthly guest speakers are subject to change based on their availability.
2. Monthly outing locations subject to change based on prevailing weather reports, fishing reports
3. Outing dates to be confirmed later.



SHAD ON THE ST JOHNS RIVER





Baitfish Fly Patterns That Fish Eat

By Pat Damico

As fly fisherman, we are given a rare opportunity, especially if we tie our own flies because there is no limit to our creativity when sitting down at the tying bench. The variety of materials available to help create great patterns has never been better. When I first began to tie flies, a Herter's catalog and my hunting trips were supplemented with a few trips to local farms where bandy roosters were carefully selected for their plumage. Sunday morning church services had me distracted by fancy feathered hats worn by some of my female neighbors. Each fly as it left the vise was carefully scrutinized to make sure it was perfect. Dry flies were dropped on the table to make sure they bounced and stood upright indicating that they would ride nicely on the water's surface. Wet flies and streamers were carefully contoured to entice subsurface feeding fish.

Although I still enjoy freshwater trout and bass fishing, much of my time is spent fishing the salt. As I get older, my interest in tying size 20 flies has been replaced with larger patterns that frequently duplicate baitfish. I wish I could limit the number of flies I tie and carry, but the desire to tie a new pattern or modification of an existing fly still fascinates me. Holding a killer fly in your hand doesn't necessarily assure success. Think of the many times your perfect fly was mutilated after catching fish repeatedly only to perform better. Bigger doesn't necessarily mean better when fly fishing. I remember an incident a few years ago when I was wade fishing at Ft. DeSoto Park. Another angler was fly fishing to my right and was casting a fly that looked like it was eight inches long. I waited for him to get closer and asked him how his morning was going. His response was that he hadn't caught anything, even though he saw several fish. The flies he was using were the same he had successfully used in the surf in Massachusetts, where he did most of his fishing. Large stripers were his targets there,

with most of his fishing after dark. In order to cast such large flies, he was using a ten-weight rod, a weight forward full sinking line and a rather short heavy leader. Fly fisherman can make the same mistake as spin fisherman using tackle that is very heavy. I gave him a few small baitfish patterns and a different leader. He looked at my flies like they would never work. Several minutes later, I saw his rod bent as he shouted to me to get my attention.

Kayak fishing recently with a friend who was using the same setup, I had showed the importance of varying your retrieve and depth. He was not having much success, but connected to his first good fish while mimicking my retrieve. His initial movement imparted to the baitfish pattern was jerky and near the surface. I was using a slow, long retrieve after waiting for the fly to sink.

A list of suitable patterns to duplicate baitfish could include Lefty's Deceiver, a half and half, which is half Deceiver and half Clouser minnow, a Clouser Minnow and a Bendback. These all are usually tied with animal hair and feathers. Substitute synthetic material for these patterns. These traditional proven patterns are great, but I must confess I use a lot of totally synthetic patterns that are very productive. My Bead Butt Baitfish, EP patterns as well as those with added flash should be included in your selection. Some unusual colors work well: chartreuse/white, black/purple and brown/orange are some of my favorites. Eyes, frequently oversized, add appeal to any pattern. Matching the hatch is always a good starting point, but sometimes being unconventional leads to better results.

The fish are always our best teacher and will reward good performance. Now that you have selected a suitable fly, put it to work in the water and enjoy some great fishing.

Taken from the Suncoast Fly Fishing Club Newsletter



From upper left:

Clouser Deep Minnow,
Lefty's Deceiver, Half-and-
-Half and Bendback


COSTA
PRESENTS...

2012
FLY
FISHING
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SCHEDULE
TICKETS
TRAILERS | **the f3t.com**



Tuesday April 3, 2012 at 7:00 PM Five Points Theater, Jacksonville, Florida
Tickets On Sale at *Black Fly Outfitter* \$12/Ticket
www.flyfilmtour.com