

FIRST COAST FLY FISHERS

JUNE 2013



June 2013 Meeting
Monday June 3, 2013 at 7^{PM}
Southpoint Marriott

Woody Huband: How to Take the Best Fly Fishing Photographs of Your Life

When he is not taking photographs of his granddaughter or shooting pictures for the Jacksonville *Times Union*, Woody Huband can be found on the water chasing fish with a fly rod and a camera around his neck. To see some of Woody's work for the *Times Union* you can go to: <http://photos.jacksonville.com/mycapture/category.asp?CategoryID=36742>. In addition to the *Times Union*, Woody's photographs can be found of the Club's forum as well as in the pages of the FCFF newsletter. More often than not we find ourselves asking *How does he take such great photographs?* Come to the June 3rd meeting and find out.

Nowadays, advances in digital technology have ensured that practically everyone carries a camera with them on the water. Woody will explain that you don't have to have a \$3,000 SLR camera to take some fantastic photographs of you quarry. Armed with a simple point-and-shoot digital camera, a little bit of know-how and an eye for composition, you too can take great photographs to illustrate all your ~~lies~~ fish stories.



Woody with a redfish in the grass.

On the Cover:
Fish On! Redfish recently caught in the grass.
Photo By Troy James

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**FIRST COAST FLY
FISHERS
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THE SNEAKY FLY FISHERMAN

BY CHAN RITCHIE

This past Thanksgiving we made the trek to Mobile, Alabama, my hometown. I was out driving the old familiar back-roads when I noticed a For Sale sign on old man Hannah's farm. I spent many a day on that farm when I was a boy. My eyes glazed over as my mind drifted back to the summer of 1978. It was my first summer to have a driver's license. It was also the summer that Greg Parker and I were caught fishing in old man Hannah's pond. It only took him four years to catch us. He was pretty crafty for an eighty-three year old man. The pond has been there for generations. There were a few boys before us who were caught by Mr. Hannah and many more who were too terrified of the prospect.

It goes against the laws of nature to expect a country boy to stay out of a pond, especially if there is a no trespassing sign. There aren't many things on this earth as bone-headed as a boy who is between the age of thirteen and thirty-five. To a boy's way of thinking, a no trespassing sign says, "There is something worth seeing

or touching or doing on the other side of this fence." Any real boy with an adventurous spirit is going to touch that hot stove at least once.

My first assault on Mr. Hannah's pond came in 1974 with my close friend Jesse Thomas. Jesse's parent's property cornered up with Mr. Hannah's place. Jesse and I were so close as boys that we could read each other's mind. We were the best two-man basketball team around. We took on all comers and beat them, even if they were years older than us. We were fiercely competitive, even with each other. We decided to see if we could outwit Mr. Hannah. Everyone knew that Mr. Hannah was a mean, crotchety old cuss. His own grandkids were not allowed to fish in the pond. Apprised of this knowledge we determined that capture was not an option. We surmised that if we were caught Mr. Hannah would tell his grandson Dale, our classmate, how we had cried like girls. Dale would then tell everyone in the sixth grade. You can see why evasion became a prime objective. Also, my good friend Ivan Lawshe had an older brother Tommy who had experience with Mr.



Hannah. Tommy was 22, which to a 12 year old seemed a wise age. (I would later learn that 22 is not an age at which wisdom visits the male neighborhood.) He bragged that he had evaded capture back when Mr. Hannah was “young and quick.” Tommy taunted us by saying that any boy with “cods” should be able out run an old man. Tommy told us about the time he talked his friend Stevie into sneaking into the pond. He said, “Poor Stevie got caught and was never the same.” “Mr. Hannah might near killed’em.” I said, “Stevie, Stevie who?” Tommy said, “Why Stevie Hannah of course.” My eyes widened as Jesse and I studied each other for signs of chicken-outness, but having already practiced our manly exteriors, none shone through.

Not ones to let good judgment cloud our thinking, Jesse and I made our plans. We decided that our first raid would best be carried out under the cover of darkness. We had read that nighttime is when the big fish are most active. We would wait for a full moon and then slip onto the property. That night arrived a week later. We were about half way to the pond when I remembered having also read that nighttime is when Bigfoot, Sasquatch, Yetis, Werewolves and ax-murderers are most active. “Besides,” I told Jesse. “It ain’t very sportin to out-smart old man Hannah while he’s asleep.” Jesse enthusiastically agreed as we slumped under his back-porch light trying to catch our breath. We would wait for daylight.

As it turned out Jesse and I were able to sneak into the wooded south end of the pond without being detected. We caught bass after bass. Over the next couple of years we would wear the paint off of lures such as Devil’s Horses and Nip-a-diddys. However, like most good things, it’s never good enough. Our success had emboldened us...or made us more bone-headed as my wife would point out upon my retelling of this tale. Like most females, she has a hard time recognizing raw masculine courage. We just had to try the fishing on the forbidden north end of the pond. To do so would mean that we would have to leave the cover of the woods. There was a hill that ran lengthwise along the far bank between the pond and Mr. Hannah’s house. From a standing position you could see the house and it could see you. But in a squatting position we could go undetected. Each day Jesse and I would waddle further along the bank. We caught a lot of fish while crouched along those banks. Life was good. In four years Mr. Hannah had not seen us.

As 1978 rolled around we all came of age to get our driver’s licenses and our minds turned to other things besides fishing. One night Greg Parker and I were circling the McDonald’s waiting for the girls to swarm us and beg for a ride in my stylish and dashing 1972 Volkswagen Super Beetle. Inexplicably, the girls were somehow able to resist their urges so our conversation turned to fishing. I bragged to Greg about the great fishing at Mr. Hannah’s pond and our super-human ability to outwit him. He said he had a new Cortland fiberglass fly rod with a Martin Automatic reel that he was dying to try out. We made plans to go early the next morning. That night I tuned up my fly rod and reel. Jesse and I had not tried fly-fishing the pond. When Greg and I got to the pond we soon realized why we had not fished it with a fly rod. You cannot work a fly rod while crouching on a sloping bank! We surveyed the situation in a way that only a determined 16 year-old sportsman can... without forethought.

Greg said, “I got it!” “Let’s wade out into the pond until we are low enough that he can’t see us from the house. Then we will have room to cast.” “Yeh, That’s a great idea!” I said. (As I look back on my youth, most of the events that followed the exclamation “Yeh, That’s a great idea!” were met with a great deal of unforeseen adrenalin followed by tenny shoes striking the ground in rapid succession.) As we were stepping into the water I realized that we had our wallets in our pockets. Back in those days the worst thing about getting your first car is that you must also get your first wallet. My dad was a generous sort. Upon nearing the magical age to own a car he said, “*Son you can have a Corvette convertible...as long as you have a matching wallet.*” As hard as I looked I never did find such a wallet. Mercifully Dad gave me his Volkswagen that only had 162 thousand miles on it. In today’s mileage that equates to a car with approximately 1.3 zillion miles on it. Wherever I went I always tried to drive it up hill, secure in the knowledge that I could coast back home when it died. I digress- the wallets. Greg I looked around for a safe place in which to stash the wallets. There was a thick bush growing near by so we decided to hide them there.

Everything was going well. The pond’s bottom was firm and shallow enough for us to wade all the way across. The bass were nailing our popping bugs. “This is a great idea!” I said to Greg over my shoulder. It was at this time that I heard a strange, high-pitched sound. Whrrrrrrrrrr! I looked back and saw Greg’s popping bug screaming across the surface as though it were being towed behind a ski

You can have a Corvette convertible...as long as you have a matching wallet.



boat. He had his finger on the trigger of the automatic reel and was himself in the mists of breaking the Olympic record for the under-water 20-yard dash. I looked up the hill saw the motivation for Greg's newfound enthusiasm. There stood Mr. Hannah 100 yards away. He was much larger than I had heard. He was at least 6 foot 8 or 9. His massive fists were clinching and I knew he planned to grab my throat with one hand while pummeling me to death with the other.

I had visualized this moment everyday for four years. I knew what to do. "RUN!" Greg yelled. He needn't have wasted his breath. My brain had already instinctively sent this same message to my feet. However, there was a short circuit somewhere on my neurological super highway and the highly charged message ended up going to my hair follicles instead. My feet did not budge, but the hair all over my body was doing a micro-version of the Wave. As Greg sprinted past me he reached out and smacked me up side the head with the new Cortland rod. This apparently jumpstarted my motor skills and I flew into highly controlled action. Greg later told me that when he hit me with the rod I had instantly morphed into a geyser of froth, foam and bubbles that had a striking resemblance to one of those motorized aerator paddlewheels they use in catfish ponds. The water slowed me down giving Mr. Hannah the advantage. He was coming on like an enraged leopard and was at 99 yards and closing.

I made it to shore and retook the advantage. I yelled, "Head for the corn field!" We shot around the north end of the pond and into the five-acre corn patch. We crossed the patch, then turned east through the woods until we hit a dirt road that lead us back to Jesse's house. We banged on Jesse's window until he woke up. We sat on the porch and laughed as we recounted the events. "Man, that was easy!" Greg said. "I don't know why you guys were worried about getting caught in the first place." "What about our wallets?" I said. "GEES, I forgot about the wallets!" He said. We decided to let things cool off for an hour or so, then we would sneak back to the pond and retrieve the wallets from the hiding place in the bush.

When we returned we crouched at the edge of the woods and surveyed the terrain for signs of life. The coast was clear. We quickly waddled out to the bush. I thrust my hand into the bush, but could not locate the

wallets. Greg joined in followed closely by panic, then mayhem. Momentarily our attention was caught by the sound of a soft whistle. I looked up and there he was again. Mr. Hannah was standing on the hill motioning for us to follow him. He said, "Come on up here. I got your purses." We were done for. Tenney shoes would not solve this problem. He had our wallets and in them were our driver's licenses. We had been out-smarted and soundly defeated.

As we slowly trudged up to the old man's house a thousand thoughts raced through my mind. How could I get out of this? When we got to the house Mr. Hannah was rocking in a chair on the porch of the old wooden house. He nodded toward a stark wooden bench, the kind you used to see in the prison yard at the movies. He said, "Grab a seat. I've already called the Sheriff.

There stood Mr. Hannah 100 yards away. He was much larger than I had heard. He was at least 6-foot 8 or 9. His massive fists were clinching and I knew he planned to grab my throat with one hand while pummeling me to death with the other.

He'll be here in a few minutes." We silently did as we were told. He stood up and paced back and forth eyeing us with a great deal of suspicion. He rubbed his hand across his stubbly jaw. It was obvious that he was undecided as to whether he should wait for the sheriff or hack us to pieces and bury us behind the barn with the rest. He began rifling through his pockets and soon pulled out a large Old Timer folding knife. He snapped the blade open and slowly thumbed its edge to see if it was sharp enough to dismember two small

boys. He then sat back down and began to whittle on a stick. I had to think of something fast, before he changed his mind! The man who taught me to fly fish, Vondel James, had also taught me that the fastest way to friendship is to find something in common to talk about.

"Mr. Hannah did you know old man Rob Ritchie?" I asked. Without looking up he said, "Yep. Why?" I said, "He was my grandfather." He stopped whittling and smile appeared on his face. I winked at Greg as to say "I told you I could get us out of this." With a jovial voice Mr. Hannah said, "Well...Is that right? Yeh I knew em. He died owing me money. The old bastard." Greg shot me a look that was laced with venom. Mr. Hannah went on. "Old man Rob's cows got out and came over here. They ate up my garden and half my corn. He said he'd pay me for it, but he dropped dead before I ever saw a nickel."

This was not good, not good at all. Here I was a trespasser, the known descen-



dent of delinquent cows. I was marked. The hole was now twice as deep. My mind was reeling. Greg could tell that I was searching for words. He gave me a hard look and shook his head as though to say, “keep your mouth shut before you get us hacked to pieces.” What should I do? I had a trump card that I played only in case of emergencies. Since death was eminent, I considered this to be an opportune time. Sheepishly I said, “Mr. Hannah, sir, do you by chance know Mr. Clayton Miller?” He immediately shot me a hard stare. I said, “He’s my other grandfather.” His eyes grew narrowed. He rose to his feet and raised the knife as he came toward me. Greg closed his eyes. Mr. Hannah squared off in front of me. He raised the knife and folded it shut. He looked down at me and said, “That truly surprises me.” He reached into his pocket and came out with our wallets. He thrust them at me and said, “You boys get outa here.” We thanked him and left there “while the git’n was good.”

The next day was Sunday. I had breakfast with my grandfather as I did most every Sunday. A bad storm blew through. On Monday I pulled into Mr. Hannah’s farm. My heart was pounding as I strode across the

porch. A woman’s voice called out, “He’s down at the barn.” I rounded the house and saw a small barn. I could hear hammering. As I walked up Mr. Hannah did not acknowledge my presence. He barked, “Grab the end of that board.” For five minutes I held boards as he nailed them, never saying a word. Finally he stopped and removed his gloves. He looked at me squarely and said, “Well?” When words failed me he said, “Clayton sent you back to apologize did he?” “No sir.” I shift my eyes down and said. “I haven’t told him yet.” “Well, he said, Clayton’s a mighty fine man, good as I’ve ever known. If you’re his grandson, then I spect you’ll grow into it.” He extended his hand to me and it was at this time that I realized that he had shrunk. He was no longer 6’8”. We were actually eye-to-eye. He said, “Ju bring your fishing rod?” “Just don’t tell anyone. I got a reputation you know.” I fished for a while. As I was leaving I stopped by the house. I thanked them both. Mrs. Hannah said, “You’re getting pretty big. It sure has been funny watching you boys waddle across that far bank these last 4 or 5 years. I spect a new batch of young’uns will be along to take your place soon.” Mr. Hannah winked at me. “You boys have a lot to learn about being sneaky fishermen.”



An Older and Wiser Chan Richie with a nice largemouth bass

The Florida Council of the Federation of Fly Fishers
Presents

Florida's 2013

FLY FISHING EXPO

The Plantation on Crystal River
Friday & Saturday, Oct. 18 & 19, 2013

\$10 for BOTH DAYS (Kids under 16 free)



With Featured Guest
J. M. "Chico" Fernandez
World-Class Fly Fishing
Instructor and Speaker

- *See The Latest Fly Tackle & Gear*
- *Clinics & Workshops with IFFF Certified Casting Instructors*
- *Fly Tying Demo & Workshops w/ Top Professional Fly Tyers*
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- *Raffles, Silent Auctions, Live Auctions & Much More.*
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**FOR RESERVATIONS, MAPS AND
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WWW.FFF-FLORIDA.ORG

Reservations at the Plantation

Call 352-795-1605 or log onto www.FFF-Florida.org where you will find a direct link to reserve a room giving you the "FFF-Florida discount"

This Month's Outing

June 15th

Clapboard Creek for Reds

This month the First Coast Fly Fishers will be fishing Clapboard Creek for redfish. **Low tide is a 8:15 am.** The plan is to hit the water early in the morning and fish the incoming tide. Jeff Bivins will be grilling up hamburgers and hotdogs at 11.

Clapboard Creek is the gateway to the expanse of marsh and mud flats not of Heckscher Drive. It contains

finger creeks, small islands and oyster bars that a perfect for targeting redfish. This will be a great opportunity to your recently learned photography skill to the test.

More information about the outing will be available at the June meeting. If you have questions contact Vice President of Outings Jeff Bivins at outings@fcff.org.



Photo by Capt Troy James



Twenty Questions with FCFF VP of Outings...

1. Where are you originally from and how long have you lived in the Jacksonville-Area?

Born and raised and lived my whole life here so far.

2. What is your job/profession?

Customer Service team manager in an in-bound call center for a financial institution

3. Tell us a little something about your family?

It's myself, my girlfriend Tanya and our rescued Pit Bull Mix Roxy

4. How long have you been fly fishing?

Just over five years

5. Who are your heroes?

I have the greatest parents in the world. They define who I am every day.

6. Where is your favorite place to fish?

Prior to April of this year I would have said Crescent Lake, however, it may very well be the Bahamas now.

7. With what person (living or dead) would you like to spend a day on the water?

I grew up fishing with both parents. I still fish with my dad quite a bit but my mom doesn't go so much anymore. So I guess the answer is my mom.

8. Aside from the obvious (rod, reel and flies) what piece of fly fishing gear do you consider essential to have with you on the water?

A landing net. The best way to lose a fish or break a fly rod is by lifting the fish out of the water with it

9. What is your "go-to" fly?

I don't know that I really have a go-to fly. I tie [flies] so I am always experimenting.



Jeff Bivins

10. What is your favorite fish to catch on a fly rod.

Bonefish

11. What is your bucket list fish i.e., what fish haven't you caught on a fly rod but would like to do so?

Saltwater would be a Tarpon. Freshwater would be a mullet

12. What book is on your night stand?

I read quite a bit and I love anything to do with Florida history.

13. What is on your iPod (i.e. what kind of music do you listen to)?

Not a lot actually, but it falls in the 80s hairband genre

14. How many fly rods do you own?

I can't tell because Tanya might read this. But it rivals her shoe collection.

15. What is your favorite guilty pleasure?

Fried fish and grits.



16. What is your idea of a perfect day on the water?

Being in your spot at fist light, watching the birds and other wildlife begin their day and landing the first fish before the sun gets high in the sky. Everything after that is a bonus.

17. Which talent or skill would you most like to have?

Learn to play a musical instrument

18. What do you consider your greatest non-fishing achievement?

I used to build some pretty fast race cars.

19. What is your most treasured possession?

My family

20. What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?

Lack of organization. I have stuff everywhere and I can't find it when I need it.

Bonus Question: Who is going to win the Stanley Cup this year?

I would guess Stanley. Is this a trick question?

First Annual Jim Fallon Memorial Story Night a Success!

During the May meeting the FCFE held its' First Annual Jim Fallon Story Night and by all accounts it was a hit. The idea for story night came about through a desire to honor our comrade Jim Fallon and to try something new to engage the members. It was conceived on the premise that fisherman by nature are innate storytellers. The Club provided the food and drink and the members provided the entertainment.

All total, 11 members shared their best fishing stories with the Club. At the end of the night, the audience voted on the best story. Ryan Curley and Jeff Bivins each told stories about this year's trip to the Bahamas with Captain Dave Borries. Captain Borries shared a story about showing Jim Fallon and Larry Holder his secret redfish-hole only to find that the two of them returned to the spot the next day. Dave had the last laugh when the pirates of the redfish hole were left high and dry after the falling tide. Bill Lott told of the time when John Adams' boat went missing on their way to the boat ramp. Not to be outdone by Bill, John regaled us with the his tale of getting lost in the wilds of the Bahamas.

Ted Mayhew and Larry Holder each told stories about the trip they took together to fish for Salmon in Alaska. Mike Head and Bud Larson told of misadventures during Club outings. Bud recalled the time when an old man and young boy were nearly swept out to sea during an outing to Talbot Island. Similarly, Mike remembered



Don with a redfish from the 2012 Stuart Outing

a surf fishing outing in which he spent more time plucking members out of the surf than fishing.

While it wasn't a prerequisite, several of the night's stories were about or included Jim Fallon. Robert Benardo talked of putting Jim on his first redfish. The night's winning story was by Don Edlin who told of last year's outing to Stuart with Jim Fallon. Don's story included a PowerPoint presentation with photographs of Jim and the rest of the members at the outing. Don's storytelling prowess netted him a \$50 gift certificate to Blackfly Outfitters.

My father was very sure about certain matters pertaining to the universe. To him, all good things - trout as well as eternal salvation - come by grace and grace comes by art and art does not come easy.

Norman Maclean
A River Runs Through It (1976)



The Nassau Sport Fishing Association (NSFA) is pleased to announce the new and exciting details for its 2013 Fernandina Beach Fishing Rodeo. Entry forms and rules are available on their website at www.fishnsfa.com. Sponsorship opportunities and vendor information can also be found on their website.

New features have been added to this year's rodeo:

Kayak Division: We are welcoming kayak anglers with their own Division and their own pay-outs.

Expanded Payouts for the Rodeo Division: Instead of one cash prize, we now have 1st, 2nd and 3rd places for each of the eight (8) species: Cobia, Redfish, Flounder, Sea Trout, Sea Bass, Dolphin, Wahoo and Sheepshead.

Redfish with Most Spots: This prize is open to all anglers, regardless of which division you are fishing; the prize can be won by any tournament entrant. The category is exactly what the name suggests...the redfish brought in by any angler, dead or alive, in any division with the most spots, wins. The fish must physically be brought to the weigh-in by the deadline to be eligible for the prize. The number of spots will be counted and verified by the biologist. If the fish is brought to the

biologist alive, you will be awarded one (1) extra spot. All live redfish will be immediately released.

Boat Number Raffle Drawings: The Rodeo Committee has been hard at work to obtain over \$20,000 worth of raffle and silent auction prizes. There will be NUMEROUS prizes awarded at the Captain's Meeting on Friday, August 2, based on your boat number, just for entering!

Raffle and Silent Auction Prizes: Numerous prizes will be available for the silent auction and raffle drawing. The Silent Auction ends at 7:30 pm at the event on August 3...the Raffle Drawing will be held immediately following the Awards Ceremony at 7:00 pm on Saturday, August 3.

Tickets are a donation of \$5 each or buy 4, get one free! (5 tickets for \$20). If you'd like raffle tickets (need not be present to win), send your check or money order to NSFA at PO Box 16417, Fernandina Beach, FL 32035. We'll fill them out and drop them in the hopper for you! (Due to statutes, we cannot mail your stubs to you.)

GRAND PRIZE: Two Round Trip Domestic Tickets on JetBlue Airways

Other Raffle Prizes include:

Omni Amelia Island Plantation Resort: Two Nights Accommodations with Dinner for 2 at the Veranda Restaurant

Tampa Travel Package: Five Nights Accommodations; Food and Entertainment Gift Certificates

Siesta Key Travel Package: Three Nights Accommodations; Food and Entertainment Gift Certificates

Amelia Island Merchants Package: Our local businesses treat you to dinner, golf, gifts, and more.

The entertainment on Saturday begins at 5:15 PM

Back by popular demand, Flashback from Jacksonville will be playing all your oldies and rock 'n roll tunes! From The Eagles to Motown to the Rolling Stones, Flashback has you covered!



Yea, But it Probably Casts Like a Broomstick!

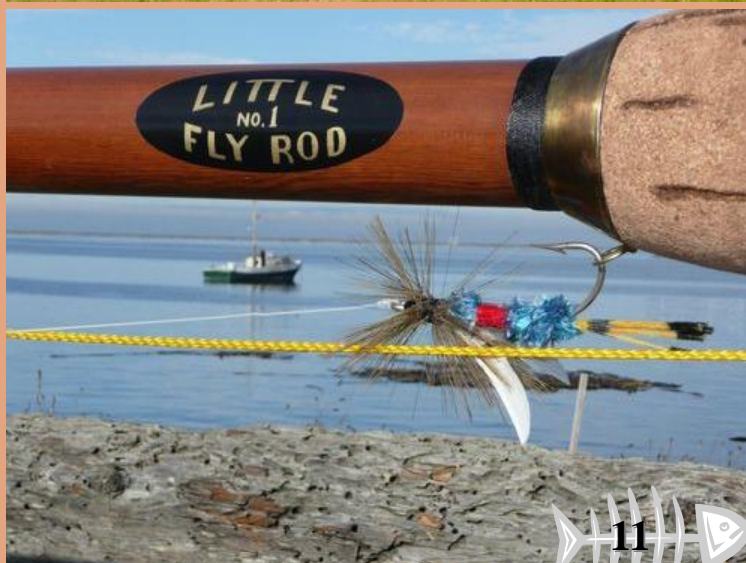
Several of our members are into building their own rods. It is probably safe to say that none of them built a rod quite like this one. Recently a 38 foot long, 3-piece fly rod went up for sale on eBay. According to the seller:

Because I collect antique fly rods, all I could envision was one gigantic fly rod. Therefore, I started shaping the masts into what would ultimately become what I believe to be the world's largest 3 piece wooden functioning fly rod and reel. I spent 9 months hand crafting the rod and reel. I hand fabricated the copper ferrules, the steel snake guides, the stainless steel reel seat, the African Wenge wood reel and genuine cork handle. I machined the brass for the frame of the reel. All to create a realistic version of a 19th century English fly rod and reel.

The Wenge wood for the reel was used because it closely resembled the black walnut they used for the English reels. The Douglas Fir pole resembles the green hart wood of the English fly rods. The handles for the reel are made of marble which represents the agate handles of the period. The pole and reel have been aged and weathered to emulate the wear that an old rod would have. As time goes on, it will only get better. The length is 38 feet long. It is a 3 piece rod that comes apart just like a real fishing pole into approximately 3, 13 foot long sections. I realized that to scale, there should be one more section. But I was taking into consideration that this would need to fit inside most structures that would have a moderately large room for display.

This Fly rod has been featured in the December 2009 Issue of Fly Fisherman Magazine Page 23. It has been on display at a local sporting goods store for 3 years now for the public to enjoy. But it needs a REAL home! If you are the owner or decorator of a hunting/fishing lodge or sporting goods store (or own a large man-cave and just need a large fly rod) then consider this one-of-a-kind item for your pleasure!

Selling price—\$7,500 plus shipping.



Thanks *Ann and Bill* Lott

Once again Bill and Ann Lott opened their home along the sylvan banks of the St Johns River to the First Coast Fly Fishers. They say it is a 'labor of love,' but there is no denying the fact that Bill and Ann put a lot of time and effort into hosting the fish fry each year. For your efforts and hospitality the First Coast Fly Fishers thank you very much. A word of thanks also goes to everyone who brought food or helped make the outing a success!

Aside from the great food, the weather was perfect and the fish cooperative. If you May's outing at the Lotts you missed a great time! If you were there and went away hungry, it's your own dang fault!



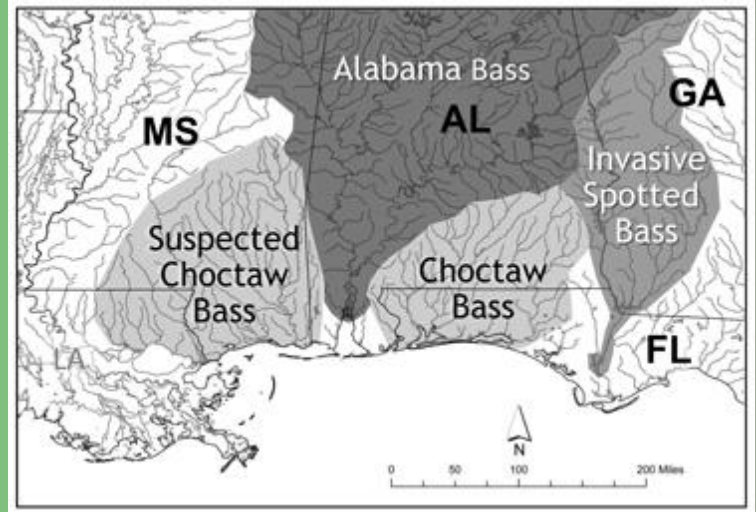
FWC Scientists Announce Discover of New Bass Species

Scientists with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) have uncovered a new species of black bass in the southeastern United States. Scientists have proposed naming the new species the Choctaw bass and recommended the scientific name of *Micropterus haiaka*. They revealed their discovery at a meeting of the Southern Division of the American Fisheries Society earlier this year.

FWC scientists first noted a DNA profile that did not belong to any recognized species while testing a bass specimen from the Chipola River in 2007, as part of a broader genetic study of bass.

“We didn’t set out to find a new species,” said Mike Tringali, who heads the genetics laboratory at the FWC’s Fish and Wildlife Research Institute. “It found us.”

After confirming the initial discovery, scientists searched for the DNA profile in bass caught in nearby



Range of the Choctaw Bass

rivers to determine the species’ range. They found that the Choctaw bass inhabits coastal river systems in Alabama and along the western Florida panhandle, including the Choctawhatchee River.

“We chose the name ‘Choctaw bass’ because the species’ range overlaps the historic range of the Choctaw Indians,” said Tringali. “As for our recommended scientific name, *Micropterus haiaka*, ‘haiaka’ is a Choctaw word that means ‘revealed.’”

The American Fisheries Society must approve the suggested scientific name for it to take effect.

The Choctaw bass is very similar in appearance to its relative, the spotted bass. The physical differences between the two species are not easily seen with the naked eye, one reason they had never before been distinguished despite decades of bass studies in the region.



Say ‘Hello’ to the Choctaw Bass

Snook Harvest Season Closure

June 1st marks the closure of the recreational snook harvest season in Atlantic state, federal and inland waters. This includes Lake Okeechobee and the Kissimmee River. The season will reopen September 1st.

Snook season remains closed in the Gulf of Mexico as well as Everglades National Park. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission will hold a meeting in June to decide whether to allow snook season to reopen in Gulf waters in June.





First Sheephead of the Season

Looks like Rob Benardo managed to land the first Sheephead of the season. According to Rob: Last year I caught a Sheepie in the grass on my birthday and I didn't think there was a way of topping that as a personal best. But last night on my first trip out on the flats this year my first fish was this Sheepie. That's a lot of first for me.



Sometime You Win When You Lose

Back in early April John Adams went to St. Pete to fish with his son in a small tournament put on by the Marine Science Department of his granddaughter's school. The grand prize went to the boat with the most inches for largest red, trout, and shook. There were then individual prizes for each fish. 1/2

They lost the \$500.00 grand prize by one inch 77 1/2 inches to 78 inches but won the individual 1st & 2nd place for shook (23 inches & 21 inches), 1st & 3rd place trout (23 inches & 21 inches), and 1st place red (31 1/2 inches). Total prize money split was \$875.00.

According to John *Not only did I win a little case but I had a memory for my life's book.*



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*Calling fishing a hobby is like calling
brain surgery a job.*

Paul Schullery
Mountain Time (1984)



TARPON OF A LIFETIME!

BY KEVIN BECKER

I managed to Luck into a once in a Lifetime Fish last Thursday in the Florida Gulf. North of Homosassa. It was the Largest Tarpon my Guide has ever had to his Boat. It was well over 200 lbs. according to him. (His description on the Photo, is better than mine - He posted this on his Facebook Page). He fishes Tarpon 120 Days a year and has seen a lot of Tarpon. The Fish was hooked on a relatively tiny 1/0 Puglisi Finger Mullet Fly.

I fought the fish for 1 hour and 50 minutes. I was tired enough that I did not fish for 2 days after that and surrendered the Bow to my Fishing Buddy, who jumped 5 but did not manage to land any.

I thought I would let my Good Buddies at FCFF my good fortune. Probably the Highlight of my entire fishing life. Am I going Back next year? **Hell Yeah !**





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