

# First Coast Fly Fisher

February 2006

www.fcff.org

Jacksonville, FL



**Rick Palazzini's Big Black Bass at Our Cold Weather Outing Last Month**

*More photos on page 2 & 4*

## **Free FCFF Casting Day Sun, Feb 12. With Euro Casting Great Andy Murray**

Come join FCFF for this free once-in-a-decade chance to learn from one of the international casting greats -- Andy Murray.

Andy's home waters are the Spey, Tay, and Tweed Rivers. He teaches all forms of casting -- conventional, two-handed, and spey. **Sunday, Feb. 12, M & M Dairy, 9:30 a.m..** We'll provide the lunches and drinks.

We'll need a head count for lunches. Sign up with David Lambert, [d.lambert@onwatermedia.com](mailto:d.lambert@onwatermedia.com)

## **MEETING & SPEAKER**

**FCFF Meeting: Monday, Feb. 6, 7 p.m. -- Speaker: Dr. Dana Griffin III** -- Dana is one of the most knowledgeable and interesting speakers we've had the pleasure to host at FCFF. His presentations are unusually informative and colored with subtle

humor. Dana is the retired botany curator for the Florida Museum of Natural History and is much in-demand as a speaker and fly tyer. His topic will be Peacock Bass in The Amazon Basin.

## **COMING EVENTS**

**Sunday, Feb. 12 -- 9:30 a.m, M & M Dairy - Free Casting Day w/ World Renowned British Casting Instructor Andy Murray of the House of Hardy** -- This is once-in-a-decade opportunity to learn conventional, two-handed, and spey casting

from internationally recognized casting instructor Andy Murray of the House of Hardy. Andy teaches casting on the rivers Tweed, Tay and Spey in the UK and conducts casting clinics worldwide. Ours is one two clinics for Andy on the East Coast, so it's our privilege to have him. Lunch and drinks will be provided by the club, but we need a head count. Please call David Lambert, 241-4163 ([d.lambert@onwatermedia.com](mailto:d.lambert@onwatermedia.com)) if you'd like to attend.

**Saturday, Feb. 25 -- Shad Outing**, Info at February Meeting. Call George Durrance for information.

**March Outing** -- Speckled Perch/Crappie, White Springs. Details To Be Announced



**COLD WATER BLACK BASS AT AN UNNAMED JASPER LAKE**

## **Fish Big, Weather Cold at Jasper Lake**

*by Rick Palazzini*

Deja vu Jasper Florida! It's Saturday a.m. in the wee hours and your alarm goes off. It's tough dragging your body from a warm, comfortable bed. Your wife says, "Please stay," and you look outside. Dang it! The weather report turns out to be accurate -- a forecast of 30-knot winds and overcast skies. But there's no time to spare; you've got to get your body moving to rendezvous with your buddies 30 miles down the road.

Why would 20 or so First Coast Fly Fishers gather at a local Cracker Barrel restaurant under such conditions? Passion or stupidity? You decide. I say passion, pure passion. The opportunity to stick a large numbers of fat "water walking" black bass on private waters is a rare treat and not to be passed on!

This is the second year we've had this outing; both times the weather conditions were the same -- cold and windy. The location of this little piece of fishing paradise is off I-75, north of the Suwannee River. The man-made lake is a series of connecting canals of very deep water. We kayakers fished along the west bank, which blocked the wind and provided some calm waters to cover. Deep waters called for a sinking line and short leader. It seemed reasonable to assume that large fish like large bait so Bottko's "Surfin' Wooly" and a large black rabbit-hair leech seemed to be a great place to start. It didn't take long -- my second cast -- before I stuck my first and largest "water walker" of the day! Man, he could dance the "BB" ballet at the end of my 6 wt!

I hope we get invited back next year! Special thanks Ernie Frey for making the arrangements!! Possibly it would be on a calm day and heaven only knows what fishing under those conditions would be like. Monthly outings are an important club activity that offer FCFers an opportunity to put into practice what they learn from all the great programs put on by the club. Members who don't participate miss much of what the club has to offer.

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# Catching Made Easy

## You'll Fish Better After Reading Capt. Rodney Smith's Book

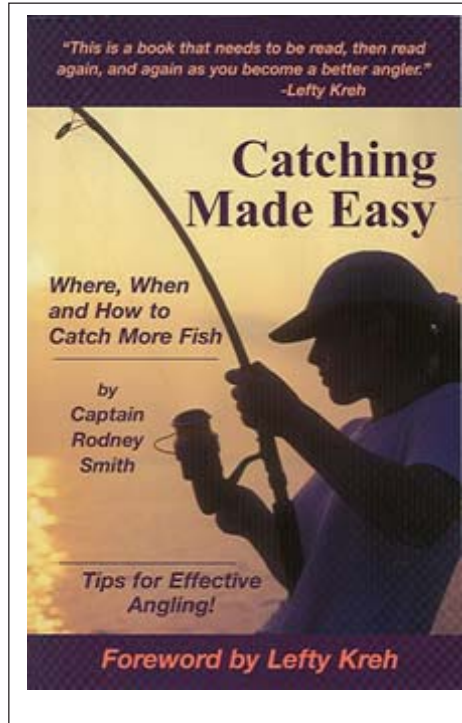
Rodney Smith is no stranger to fish or fishing. Those of you who've been around awhile know him as a consummate fish-finder in the Mosquito and Indian River Lagoon systems. You've seen his boat, *The Mangle Tangle*, at the Satellite-Canaveral area ramps. You've seen Rodney poling a client on a quiet grass flat.

Some of us in the industry know Rodney's secret -- after 40 years of fishing and decades at the smart end of a push pole Rodney Smith is still excited about catching fish, no matter who's doing the catching. In the lexicon of the South, Rodney would 'just as soon you catch fish as him.' He's that kind of guy.

So it's no surprise that his first book is a compilation of tips, advice, tactics, and observations which are guaranteed to help you become a more successful angler.

Angling legend Lefty Kreh says of *Catching Made*

Review by David Lambert



*Easy*: "This is a book to be read then read again and again as you become a better angler" and "... unlike most how-to-fish books, this one helps you 'think'."

In the chapter titled *Moon and Tides*, author Smith does just that. His explanation of the solunar tables, how they effect fish and fishing, efficiently condenses a very complex subject into information we can all use and remember. It's as simple a rendering of this oddly complex subject as I read or seen anywhere.

*Catching Made Easy* is broken into 4 sections: Planning, Tackle, Fishing, and Catching. These are subdivided into 25 chapters like *Developing a Game Plan*, *Reading the Water*, *Common Tackle Sense*, and *Fishing New Waters*.

"The first principal of reading water is this: fish are found at the edges of things." Smith begins his chapter '*Reading the Water*' with this quote from

veteran fishing writer Charlie Waterman, then adds: "But there's so much more to reading the water." A couple of pages into the chapter and you realize Smith has taken you to school. Pay attention and you'll learn.

Matter of fact, pay attention to every word of *Catching Made Easy* -- you'll be a better angler and a better teacher, and maybe you'll learn a little about stewardship and resource appreciation along the way.

*Catching Made Easy*, 139 pp, Sawfish Press, ISBN: 0-9771284-0-7; \$19.95.

Available at local fishing stores. Call, 321-693-2292, or email [camads@cfl.rr.com](mailto:camads@cfl.rr.com).



Dick Choate with A Big Bass From Last Month's Outing

# Amazon Basin Peacock Bass

by Dana Griffin, III

By virtue of a set of circumstances that likely won't be often repeated, I found myself recently in a remote corner of the Amazon Basin trying to lure peacock bass to a fly. It was quite an experience. Maybe this qualifies as extreme fly fishing.

The adventure began when my wife and I were flown in a charter plane from Manaus 200 miles northwest to an isolated dirt airstrip that had been carved out of the jungle and runs along the north bank of the Unini River.

The camp was located at one end of the airstrip. Our lodging was surprisingly comfortable. The room we were assigned came with two beds, a private bath and an air conditioner. Meals were served in an upstairs dining facility and consisted of a succession of entrees that included fish on some days, mainly peacock bass or piranha, and chicken or beef on other days. Nobody went hungry.

The fishing, undoubtedly to everyone's surprise, fell short of the vision painted in the slick brochures that we had read prior to making this trip. The river was up a tad, and this sent most of the fish back into the jungle and beyond the reach of even the most skilled caster. But this must be placed in context. Poor fishing in this part of the world means your daily score falls to the downside of 50 fish. Clients were still catching fish, but those who were back for a second or third time inevitably compared this season's lackluster results with previous trips when the angler would return to camp in the evening worn out from fighting monster peacocks that tore up equipment and left license holders with aching wrists and arms.

In a client pool of around 20 individuals, I was the only one fly fishing. My camp companions went after these coveted fish with saltwater spinning gear or beefed up bait casting rods. Reels were loaded with 80-lb.



monofilament. Lures of choice included 6-8 inch woodchoppers (a surface plug bristling with treble hooks), zara spoons or banjo minnows.

My approach required scaling down considerably the hardware to be used. Throwing caution to the wind, I stuck with my 8 weight rod, used a wimpy 5 foot length of 50 pound mono as a leader and alternated between 1/0 and 3/0 streamers.

Several normal considerations don't seem to apply on the Unini. Fly patterns for instance. The fish could care less what you sling at them. Stealthy approach. Forget it. The more noise your fly makes



Peacock Bass Love Large Flies.

Photos: Dana Griffin, III and Jodi Slapcinski

when it hits the surface, the better.

It was important to be able to cast accurately. Casts on the order of 40-60 feet were routine, but even more so, the fly often had to be delivered back amongst snags and overhanging limbs.

Of course I'll go back if the opportunity arises. Peacock bass fever is easily caught. To become infected normally requires little more than hooking your first one! If you think you'd like to join in this brand of fly fishing, visit the following website: [www.PeacockBassTrips.com](http://www.PeacockBassTrips.com). It reminded me of snook fishing in the mangroves. Peacocks, like large-mouths and snook, avoid the heavy current of the river channel, preferring the vegetation choked margins of the river. This, plus their well deserved reputation for strength, makes every fish you boat a prize. Most of the fish I caught ranged from 2-5 pounds with one beauty coming to net that scaled at 11 pounds. Guides use boca grips in handling these fish. A peacock's teeth are not large but they are extremely sharp and can leave a thumb bloodied from trying to lip one.

*(Ed. Note: Dana is our speaker this month. He's the retired botanical curator of the Florida Museum of Natural History, an entomologist, and a great fly tyer.)*



## Teaching Taylors Were Terrific And Banquet Was Huge Success.

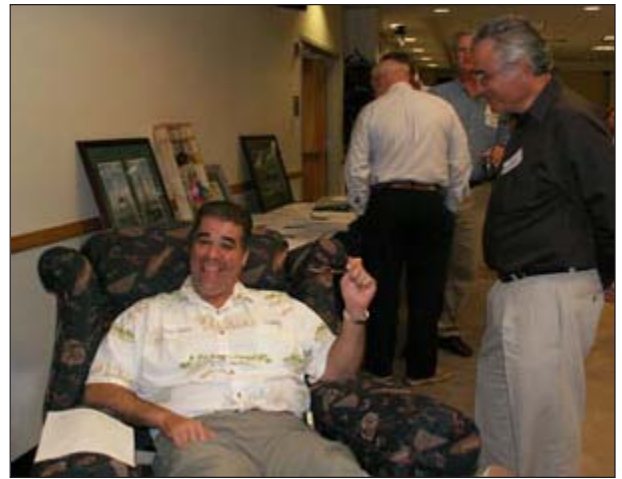
Gary and Wanda Taylor are exceptional teachers. and we are lucky to have had the talented duo here for the 2006 banquet. For those members who missed it, these two had a funny, interesting, quirky presentation and two very special days of instruction.

Special thanks to Homer Bliss for all his hard work bringing the Banquet and Fly fishing Weekend together. It's a hard job and it went off without a hitch.



### 2006 FCFE OUTINGS

FEB 25	DELAND	SHAD
MAR	WHITE SPRINGS	SPECKLED PERCH
APR	LOCHLOOSA /ORANGE	BASS
MAY	ST. JOHNS PICOLATA	BASS AND BREAM
JUNE	ST. LUCIE	FOOSNER
JULY	KEYS/FLORIDA BAY	REDS AND TROUT
AUG	NASSAU SOUND	REDS
SEP	CEDAR POINT	REDS IN THE GRASS
OCT	PALM VALLEY	REDS IN THE GRASS
NOV	FERNANDINA	REDS AND TROUT
DEC	CUMBERLAND ISLAND	JIM MCCULLY
JAN 07	WHITE SPRINGS/?	



Rich Santos Tests His Banquet Win

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**Banquet Weekend Instructor Capt. Gary Taylor Appraises Chef Robbert Bouman's Casting Form.**

(Editor's Note: Apologies to Robbert. It's a Really Lousy Photo Of Him But I Loved How The Camera Stopped The Rod Tip To Show the Beginning of The Loop Formation.)

### For Sale: 12 ft Indian River Square-Backed, Tunnel Hull Canoe



Good back-of-pick-up or roof rack boat for kayakers and canoeist who want small motorized craft. 12 Foot Boat w/ Tunnel Hull. Good Condition; Little Use. Takes up to 9 hp motor or troller. \$275 or trade for small jon aluminum jon boat. *Trailer not included.* Call David Lambert, 904-241-4163 or 403-5525

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