

First Coast **Fly Fisher**

First Coast Fly Fishers

www.fcff.org

July 2008



Sunset Over the City

photographs by Woody Huband

MEETING & SPEAKER

Monday, July 14 - FCFF Meeting at Southpoint Marriott, Salisbury road. Speaker: Capt. Terry Lacoss, director of fishing for Amelia Island Plantation and owner of Amelia Fishing Charters. Terry will talk about the fishing opportunities around Fernandina and Nassau County. Terry's website is : www.ameliaangler.com

COMING EVENTS

New Moon -- Wednesday, July 2; Full Moon, Friday, July 18

Saturday, July 19 -- Fish fernandina and Nassau Sound. VP/Outings Bob White has put together a great opportunity - fish a part of our area that

most of no nothing about. Come to the July meeting and bring your questions for the premier guide in the Nassau area. Meet at the Fernandina Ramp: Drive east on 95. Turn east at the Fernandina/Amelia exit (200/Buccanner/1A). Follow 200 until it becomes S. 8th St. Turn left on Ash Street. Boat ramp is 7 blocks west. Park in the dirt lot south of the ramp. Here's a map to the ramp and parking, Click Fernandina boat ramp, then zoom in <http://maps.google.com/maps?ie=UTF8&hl=en&msa=2&z=4>
Monday, August 4 - FCFF Meeting - Speaker: Capt. John Bottko of the Salty Feather, on fishing Nassau Sound.



Dick Michaelson Presents Doug Moore with FCFF Life Member Honor, A Beautiful Gyotaku Print Framed in Hand Made Old Cypress Frame--Both Frame and Print by Rob Benardo

Doug Moore Honored As Life Member

The 2008 Board of Directors of First Coast Fly Fishers has honored Doug and Teresa Moore with life memberships. The Moores, owners of M & M Dairies, are only the second recipients of an FCFF Life Member Award in the club's 14 year history. The honor is awarded to members who have contributed significant, long term time and energy to the club. Doug Moore is a director of various banks, a member of the Soil Conservation Board, and a Florida Wildlife Association Outdoorsman of the Year. FCFF director Rob Benardo created a stunning original gyotaku print from a bream he caught in Doug's pond, then framed it for the presentation.



Team FCFF Fished the North Mosquito Last Month

See page 7 for story

2008 Officers and Directors of First Coast Fly Fishers

PRESIDENT

Jason Sheasley
pgflyfisher@gmail.com

VP PROGRAMS

Rob Bernardo
kiribas@aol.com

VP OUTINGS

Bob White
rgwhite@lycos.com

TREASURER

Lew Holliday
lewcarol@bellsouth.net

SECRETARY

Bob Connery
bgconnery@comcast.net

LIBRARIAN

Troy James
troywjames@aol.com

EDUCATION

Rich Santos
Rslov2fish@comcast.net

MEMBERSHIP

Bart Isaacs
bsisaac@comcast.net

AT LARGE

Woody Huband
Whuband@yahoo.net

Rick Palazzini
palbro@comcast.net

BANQUET

Dr. Larry Holder
leholder@earthlink.net

NEWSLETTER

David Lambert
smartcasts@gmail.com

Little Abaco: My First Bonefish

6 a.m. No coffee. Shorts and wading boots behind the motel

by Bart Isaac

Fly fishing for bonefish was on my “to do” list. This past April, a trip was being organized by Capt. David Borries to do just that. I decided that it was time to go after a bone. With passports in hand, David Borries, John Adams, Bill Lott, John Spires, Rob Benardo and myself flew out of Daytona Beach at dawn, during stormy morning skies, on a direct flight to Little Abaco.

We were at our fishing destination early enough to wade flats near the motel later that afternoon. The clouds broke shortly after we arrived but we still had to deal with 15 to 20 mph winds that really held the water on the flats. On that first day, we split into two groups of three. A couple of fish were seen and caught (by some), but the wind made fly fishing very difficult. We walked back to the motel, ate dinner and sat on the back patio looking out on the small flat behind the motel, talking about the fishing ahead.

The next morning, Rob and I awoke early to tie some last minute flies before our guide trip. Our tying was interrupted by David knocking on our window *from the outside*. I pulled back the curtain and opened the window. David begins to speak in a loud whisper through the window, “Get your rod, there’s a bone tailin’ out here.” Rob looked at me and said, “Well, get your rod.” It’s 6 a.m., I’ve had no coffee, I’m wearing a T-shirt, shorts and wading boots and heading behind the motel to stalk a bonefish with my fly rod.

As I approached the water, I could see the fish tailing right next to the bank—back yard really. David watched as I dropped the fly right next to the fish. Nothing happened. The fish began to tail again a short distance away, I picked up the fly and put it in what I thought was a good spot. Nothing. The fish seemed to just disappear.

I told David, that since I had my boots on, that I was going to walk in the water at the edge of the mangroves to see if I could find any other fish. I disappeared around the mangroves and slowly scanned the surface as the sun began to rise. I noticed some “nervous” water but didn’t see any tails. However, from my



The Author Fights A Post-Dawn Bonefish in Little Abaco

experience with redfish, I was convinced that the water looked like it was hiding fish. Looking through my polarized lenses, I changed my angle. My heart began to race as the image of the fish appeared. I made a 30-foot cast and placed a #4 Gotcha about 2 feet in front of the fish.

I watched the fish swim up to the fly and I gave it a twitch. The fish took it and I buried

the hook with a strip strike. The next thing I know, my rod is doubled over with my drag screaming. I then realized that I’ve just hooked my first bone and there’s no one around. I begin to scream, “Hey guys, you still there?!!” I was able to fight the fish and

navigate the short distance around the corner to where I last saw David. Total excitement!

By now, Rob showed up. Both David and Rob were there to see me haul in my first bonefish. There was some final drama when the fish seemed to get snagged on some grass about 60 feet out. With a change in my position I was able to get the snag free and land the fish.

It was quite a memorable first



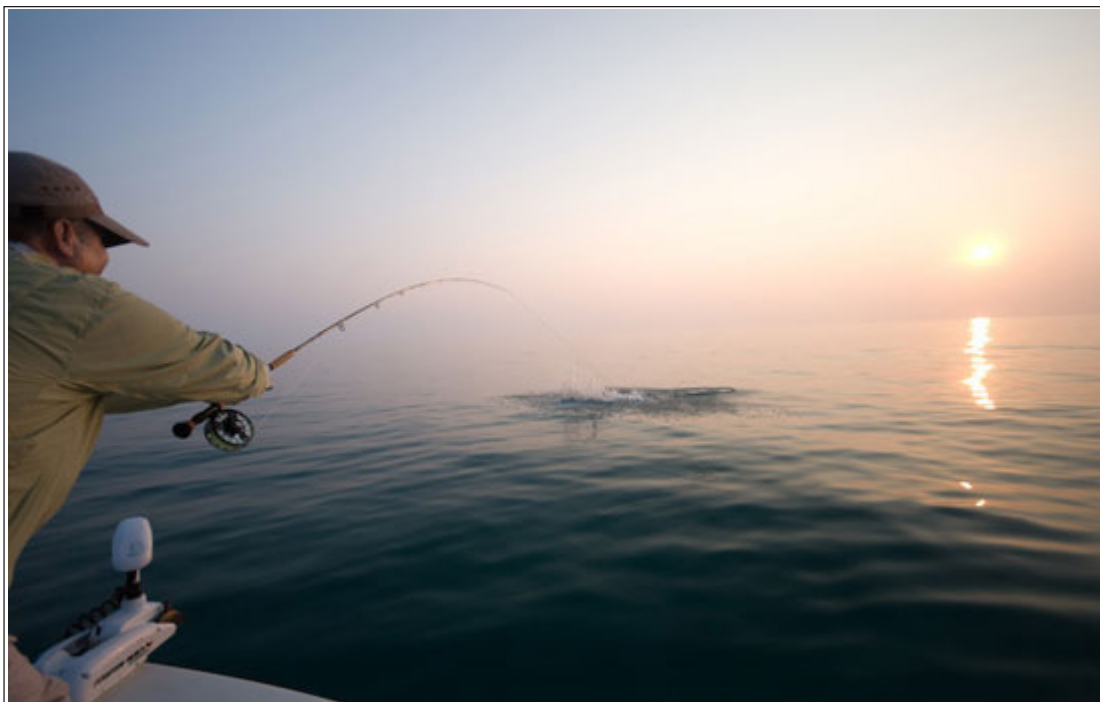
Bart Isaac With His First Bonefish

bonefish. We snapped some pictures and sent it on its way. On the way back into the motel for breakfast, David gave me a

(continued on page 5)

Bluewater Bonanza in Stuart

by Rich Santos



The Author Bows To A Morning Tarpon

I fished with my old buddy Capt. John Meskauskas for my annual Tarpon trip in Stuart! The beachfront had perfect conditions to hunt for Tarpon and see any fish movement. Finding the schools rolling was tough. They mostly stayed just under the surface when moving, and we would occasionally see the typical back breaking-roll of Tarpon. Apparently they were in a migratory swimming pattern and moving quickly.

Once we spotted them it was tough to keep up with the trolling motor even at a top speed of 5+. I would get a couple shots and we would have to motor way up ahead of them and wait for them to come at us for another shot.

According to John, it's tough to get their attention and get them to eat when they're moving like this. The schools were fairly large, spanning from 30' long to 100' long in a train-like formation. One smaller school slowed down and started daisy-chaining and meandering around in a ball. I got off a couple good casts into them and finally hooked one 30 minutes after we got onto the water! It hit real hard and stripped line of my reel so quick that I got a line burn! Even with gloves on! It was long battle; it fought unusually hard, according to John. It beat the captain up pretty good too at boat side. This was an estimated 80 pounder.

Later I got another good shot and actually saw the 'poon turn away from the school, flash and boil on the fly. John saw him eat the fly but the line never came tight! After checking the fly the leader was roughed up. John said apparently he ate it and spit it out, which there known to do. Overall we only had about 7-8 shots at these fish while they were up where you can see them.

Then we headed back in to get some live chum for some offshore action. Filled the livewell and off we went into the bluewater. We first hit the 100' depth which was about 6 miles off shore. Started chumming and within 5 minutes the Little Tunny's were at the back of the boat. Caught 3 on my 8wt. and listened to my reel sing to me!

We went out further to about 200' depth and started chumming again. 5 minutes later we had a pair of Sailfish off the back of the boat about 250' in the chum line! We set up to (from page 4) catch one with John's 12 wt. and my luck a big



Nice Albies Came To The Mix, Too

(continued on page 5)

Stuart Trip Yields Poon, Albies, Blackfin, Dolphin



Santos With Tarpon (L) and Blackfin Tuna

(from page 4) -- school of Little Tunnys moved in and cut the Sailfish off and stole the show! The Sails never got close enough and didn't come back!

We then moved out to 320' of water approx 12-13 miles off shore in search of floating weeds and Mahi-Dolphin. Started chumming. Again within 5 minutes we saw leaping fish about 100 yards out that were behaving differently and moving toward us in the chum line. It was a school of Blackfin Tuna. I'm happy to say it's my first ever true Tuna caught on fly. They were only in the 5 lb. range but beautiful and rare to see.

Some of you know Capt. John Meskauskas, as he did a presentation on Stuart fly fishing in our club a couple years ago. John is very good at what he does, works very hard and he's a lot of fun to fish with. He will treat you like a king! I highly recommend him for something different to do!



Borries' Little Abaco Trip Brings Bones Before Breakfast

congratulatory handshake, looked me in the eye with a smile and a laugh and said "you owe me." I sure did!

With a guide, I was able to catch four more fish that day, but none were as exciting as that first fish.

For me, one of the best parts of each day was the post fishing gathering on the back patio after dinner—cigars, cold beer and trading fishing stories. Everyone caught fish. Over the four day trip, the six of us caught close to 60 bonefish.

An adventure is always best when shared with good people. These were good people. I'll remember this trip always.

You can't go wrong fishing with Capt. David Borries. He's said he would put together another trip of this type this coming year. If he does, definitely be one of the first to sign up. He can only handle 5 or 6 anglers. You absolutely want to be there.



Waffles Brings The Bass

by Jason C. Sheasley



Sunday mornings I can count on being awakened by a cold nose and wet tongue in the ear—my Labrador alarm clock. Waffles, my son's 2-year-old Labrador retriever, has become as efficient at waking me as my traveling alarm. An early Sunday morning wake-up means she and I will make a trip in the truck to grab coffee and a newspaper. To tell the truth, I look forward to our Sunday morning ritual almost as much as she does. Driving down the boulevard, we always garnish looks from the Sunday-morning contingent making their way to church or the beach. There is something joyous and joyful about a dog riding with its ears flapping in the wind. It puts smiles on people's faces.

Her name is Waffles, named by my son after his favorite breakfast food. Her coat is a warm golden brown color, like homemade waffles. To say that Waffles is a water dog would be to understate the force of her genetic predisposition. She not only loves the water, she lives for it. She loves water as much as I love fly fishing. It was only a matter of time before I decided to take her fishing with me.

I wasn't quite sure how Waffles would do out on the water, so one afternoon I put the canoe in the swimming pool then climbed in with Waffles. She did pretty well, really, which is to say we did not capsize. Emboldened by this, I decided to see if Waffles would enjoy bass fishing. Still, I opted for a jon boat as Waffles' maiden craft.

A smarter man may have left the fly gear at home. I am not that man, but I did at least pack lightly, limiting my gear to a five-weight fly rod and one box of flies. It took 10 minutes of coaxing before Waffles would climb into the jon boat. Once in the boat, she sat on the deck with her front paws over the center seat and a bewildered look on her face. She stayed in that position for about five minutes, until she mustered the courage to stand up and move around. Soon she moved around the boat like a seasoned first mate.

Fly fishing two men in my 12-foot jon boat is a bit of a dance; it requires skill and balance and each man must play his part in the balancing act. On the other hand, fly casting with a 2-year-old Labrador in the boat is a more challenging endeavor. For starters,

Waffles--The Author's Fishing Lab

maintaining balance is tricky; it requires keeping at least one eye on the dog so you can counteract her moves. Add a waving fly line to the mix and you'll understand the challenge. The key, as I soon discovered, is line control. I often have trouble keeping the fly line from tangling around my own two feet. Add four paws and a tail and—well, let's just say it was a challenge.

Labs retrieve things; it's how they got their names. Those things include fly lines, a concept, by the way, that didn't reveal itself to me until I made my first few casts. Waffles was poised to launch herself off the bow of the boat to retrieve a lump of feathers and fur thrown her master. A few stern "Nos" from me stopped her swimming in alligator-inhabited waters. But each cast I made seemed to wind her spring tighter. And that increased movement, which multiplied the sound of her toenails, like hail on a tin roof, and made the conditions impossible for catching fish.

It was only by sheer luck (or the fact that the fish was deaf) that I hooked and ultimately boated a three-pound largemouth bass. When the fish was finally in the boat, Waffles didn't know what to make of it. First she sniffed the fish in front of her. She looked at me as if to say "What the heck is this thing?" Then she tried to lick it, only to find the slime and taste were not to her liking. After I released the fish, Waffles wagged her tail and licked the side of my face. She was ready for me to catch another fish. I had the makings of a fishing dog on my hands.

Sporting literature offers many stories about dogs and fishermen. No breed of dog deserves the title of "Fishing Dog" more than the Labrador Retriever. The origins of the Labrador date back to the mid to late 15th century when the early settlers of Newfoundland

(continued on page 7)

Waffles's First Black Bass

(continued from page 6)

(from page 6) cross-bred the now extinct St Johns Water Dog. Two breeds emerged from the St Johns Water Dog, the Newfoundland and the Labrador. The larger Newfoundland was used for hauling, whereas the Labrador was used by fishermen to help retrieve and pull in nets. The dogs would grab the cork floats on the nets and bring them to shore. Labradors were also known to round up and catch the fish that escaped from the nets.

Watching me catch fish tickled Waffles' ancestral fishing gene. Her excitement mounted with each fish I caught. When I brought a fish to boat, she would lean down to greet the fish nose to gill. Upon watching this I immediately thought that maybe I can draw upon some of her ancestral lineage and teach her how to net a fish.

Soon daylight became scarce—one final cast before returning to the dock.

Waffles watched anxiously from the bow. I laid out a 50-foot cast to some submerged branches along the shoreline. A bass sucked in my fly the instant it touched down. I set the hook and set



Waffles and Pal

about persuading the fish not to become tangled in the branches. The fish came acrobatic a couple of times while I gave rod to save my 5x tippet. I played the fish softly, allowing it several more jumps. What I didn't see was what was effect a jumping fish had on Waffles.

Just as I brought the fish within eight or ten feet of the boat, she stopped wagging her tail. Muscles tensed her shoulders and hind quarters. The genes of her ancestors took control. I hadn't gotten out the words "Waffles

no!" before she was in the air he was in the air, then swimming for my bass.

I held the rod steady, but worried about my dog. She dipped her head beneath the water. She emerged proudly. Firmly in her mouth she held a three pound bass. Waffles nearly strutted as swam to boat.

When she put the fish in my hand, what else could I say but "Good girl!" Then I had to figure out a way to get her back in the boat.

North Mosquito Outing Report

by Bart Isaac, from the FCFE Forum

Great trip with great friends. I fished with Rob, Jazz and Woody. Getting up early for a long road trip is tuff but can be worth it.

Weather was perfect for fishing as well as a shuttle landing. Rob, Jazz and I were fishing in a secluded area when we heard the sonic boom.....fish and kayaker alike were taken by surprise. In the pic below, you can see Jazz at the bottom and the shuttle in front of the cloud in the upper right.... As far as fish, we found quite a few redfish but they proved to be very difficult. We all had shots.....Rob and Woody were able to hang a redfish. Yazz caught about 6 trout. I had two trout with only one worth a picture.....see below.

I tossed my fly toward what I thought was a couple of moving redfish. The fish slammed it as took off. I was convinced it was a good sized redfish until I got it about 20 feet away. That was when my fishing buddies heard and saw me freak out a little. I snapped some crappy pics and relased her unharmed. It went



Bart's Big Trout

slightly over 8#s on my boga grip. I measured the distance in the bottom of my kayak later—looked to be around 29 inches. Don't think I'll come close to a trout of that size on fly anytime soon.....ok, probably never.

Redfish Likes A Mud Bath

*text and photos
by Bart Isaac*



I put in at first light this morning to do some prospecting for some backing redfish. However, what I happened to come across was a little more than I expected—more on that later.

Found some fish moving as the tide came in just as the sunrise—hitting oyster bars mostly. I was able to pull a 19 inch off of an oyster bar. About an hour in the sunrise, I came across a backing red inhaled my fly and took a great run. I had to put the brakes on that guy while I got a knot out of my fly line.....good times.....haha. He turned out to be around 27 inches.....safely released.

A little later, I came across another creek that had a redfish slowly backing with much of his body out of the water. I got into position and made a cast. My cast was a little too far to the left and snagged in the grass, but easily came out. I recasted right in front of the fish.....he went for it but it pulled and he went right back to the same spot....."weird" I thought. I looked at my fly and there was a grass root over my entire point down to the bend.....found my reason for the hook pull.

As I began to get ready to re-cast at this fish (thas was just sitting there) it proceeds to literally "go nuts" slashing and thrashing in a circle of about a 6 foot diameter. It ends up OUT of the water on the mudbank. I sat there and watched in awe as the fish did not move. In fact, it stayed there for was seemed like a full minute. It then came back to "life" and got itself back into the water where it just sat there with its back out of water. I decided that picture taking took priority, of which I have attached a few.

Once the fish got back into the water (that sounds wierd, huh?) I made several casts at the fish as it sat with its back exposed. My casts ranged from right in front, beyond, across its back.....did move for at least five minutes. In fact, one of my casts, snagged it and it just kinda rolled out of the way. Overall, I'm glad that the grass root fouled my hook because I would have never seen such a show.



photo by Rich Santos



These two photos deserve a bit of explanation. The top was taken this month by Dick Michaelson, in the Keys with Doug Moore. In it, ace bonefisherman Rick Palazzini displays the act-nonchalant-and-they-won't-see-you bonefish fooling gambit. Lew Holliday stares at his toes in disbelief. Below, North Mosquito Lagoon anglers watch as the Space Shuttle descends to the Cape. FCFF photographer Woody Huband took this cool shot.

Black Bottom Hunt Club Has Openings

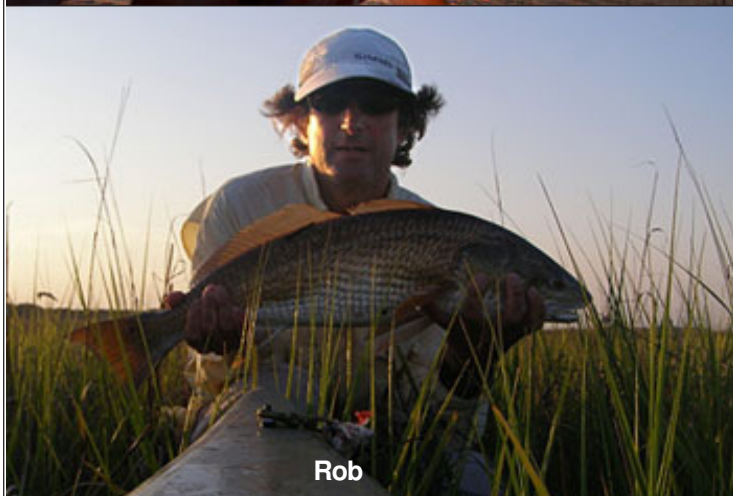
Former FCFF president Bud Larsen notes that his hunt club has a couple of openings for local hunters. The club is located on US 301, 7 miles north of Lawtey. This club is still-hunting only. Contact Bud Larsen for more information -- 904-502-7600.



Rob Benardo



Val



Rob



Bart

Support The Guides & Shops Who Support First Coast Fly Fishers

Capt David Borries

captdavidborries@comcast.net
904/708-8915

Capt John Bottko

feather2@ix.netcom.com
904/645-8998

Capt Tony Bozzella

bozzella@aol.com
904/651-0182

Capt Vaughn Cochran

blackflyjax@bellsouth.net
904/997-2220

Master Casting Instructor

David Lambert

smartcasts@gmail.com
241-4163

Capt. Larry Miniard

captlmin@bellsouth.net
904/285-7003

Tying Instr. Don Reed

donreed@saltwaterflytyers.com
904/535-6929

FFF Casting Instructor

Rich Santos

1st Coast Complete Fly Fishing

www.FlyFishJax.com

Stockton Safaris Inc

Capt Jimmy Stockton

904/316-2143

**Black Creek Outfitters,
10051 Skinner Lake Drive,
Jacksonville, FL 32246
904.645.7003**

**Black Fly Outfitters
11702 Beach Blvd, Suite
103, Jacksonville, FL
904.829.6481**

**Salty Feather
ST JOHNS BLUFF RD,
JACKSONVILLE, FL
904.645.8998**

WWW.SALTYFEATHER.COM

This newsletter is a copyrighted monthly publication of the First Coast Fly Fishers. All rights reserved. To to submit articles, photos, or request republishing rights. Contact David Lambert, editor, smartcasts@gmail, or call 904-241-4163.