



FIRST COAST FLY FISHER

F E B R U A R Y 2 0 1 0

- FCFF Banquet
Feb 27
- Shad Outing,
Feb. 20
- Winter Drum in
the NMZ
- Fly Fishing on
Jekyll Island

WWW.FCFF.ORG

President's Message

No March Meeting Meeting; Banquet Is Weekend Prior, St. Johns Shad Outing Feb. 20

by Robert Bernardo



First, let me say that I hope by now most of you have paid your dues and registered for this year's banquet. The banquet is one of the best get-togethers that we do during the year. This year Jason Sheasley has done a great job pulling together all the loose strings.

As you probably know, the **2009 Banquet** will be Saturday, Feb 27 at the Southpoint Marriott

in the same room we have our meetings. Our speaker for the evening is the world renowned fly tyer, raconteur, classical musician, and entertainer Oscar Feliu. Tickets are \$35; yes, Jason negotiated the price down and we passed the savings along to you. There will be a cash bar, as usual.

Register on or before the February meeting for ticket for the grand drawing, a \$400 Tibor 8-9 reel. This is maybe one of the best reels made. Contact Jason at pgflyfisher@gmail.com to register.

Next on the agenda: Because the banquet is only two days from the monthly meeting in March, the board decided to cancel the March meeting. Normal meeting dates will resume on Monday, April 5, with James Buice, author of - **The Southeast's Best Fly Fishing**, a Headwater's Book. James will discuss fishing the trout waters of North Carolina, Georgia & Tennessee. Buy a copy of James' book at <http://www.amazon.com/Southeasts-Best-Fly-Fishing/dp/1934753025>

Lastly, don't forget our Feb 1, meeting with speaker **Mike Head**.

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Cover Photo:
River Sunset
by Woody Huband

Fish PHOTOS

& Coming Attractions



Bill Lott With A Big Winter Red. Photo by Woody Huband

Coming Soon To A Club Near You

Monday, Feb 1 - FCFF Meeting. Meeting at 7. Speaker: FCFF expert angler Mike Head. Topic: Fly fishing for shad in the upper St. Johns River. Mike will show you flies and give all the info you need to catch fish on our monthly outing, Feb 20. See you there.

Friday, Feb. 19 - Outing Friday, 5 p.m. at the Black Fly Outfitter, next to the Strike Zone. Learn everything you need to know about fishing for shad on the Saturday, Feb. 20 outing. Burgers and drinks available

Saturday Feb 20 - Outing for running shad in the upper St. Johns River. Join us and use what you learned in this month's meeting. Information from Rob Benardo or at February's meeting.

Saturday Feb. 20 - 1:30 p.m. Fly tying with Oscar Feliu, our banquet speaker. This free event is part of the Banquet. Any FCFF member and family can attend. Held at the Southpointe Marriott.

Saturday, Feb 27 - FCFF Banquet. New location this year -- At the Marriott where we meet monthly. Lots of prizes and raffles. Guest speaker, Oscar Feliu, world renowned fly fisher, guitarist, entertainer and fly tyer. This is a great event for spouses and friends. \$35 per person.



Jekyll Island

by Bill Steitz

Just after the New Year, I spent two very cold afternoons chasing reds at Jekyll Island, GA. The afternoons were in the mid-40s with a moderate wind. With about five layers of clothes on, the weather was almost tolerable.

The water temp on the flats was 47 degrees. The guide's boat was a brand-new Hell's Bay Whipray with a 90 hp Yamaha. Very nice.

We ran about 3 miles (not tolerable) to a large flat and saw maybe five schools of reds, with each school having some 10 reds each. Although we were in 8"-10" of water, I could only see down about 3" due to the black silky mud bottom stirred up from the wind. So we looked for tails and pushes. And boy, were there tails, backs, and pushes.

It's hard for five to ten pound redfish to hide in just a few inches of water. I caught only one, as they were extremely spooky and not easy to approach in shallow lee water.

So after some time, we ran again (still not tolerable) to near our launch area and staked out, as the guide said that in late afternoon the reds congregate in this area. You couldn't see the size of this huge flat, but it was probably 40 or so acres. Again, dark mucky bottom and late afternoon milky sun limited our vision.

A couple of dolphins (they're not tolerable either) were some 300 yards from us, tossing reds in the air and just tearing the water up.

Within minutes the reds were running for their lives straight at us. They came in waves of up to 50, and settled down within casting distance from us. These fish were extremely nervous, and were not eating. More kept coming, and soon we were sitting in the middle of probably 200 reds.

After a while of relative quiet, tails and backs appeared and pushes started everywhere. I think the reds began chasing small mullet that seemed to be stunned in the cold water. I was tossing my go-to slider on one rod and the guide's go-to weighted tan chenille-flash fly on the other rod. Hook-ups were tough though, and I wished I had had a Puglisi black and purple peanut bunker on the boat, but did not.

I probably hooked up on 20 reds, with most hook-ups happening with the fish running straight at the boat. A tough hook-up. But I did get a few to the boat, but lost most to lousy sets. We tried moving the boat to the edge (who knew where the edge was?) of this monster school of fish, but to no avail. More waves of reds kept coming to our area due to the dolphins, so we were constantly in the

midst of this huge school. Part of the problem was that every cast I made at a tail or push, I would line another 10 or 20 reds, which would of course would startle the fish I was casting to.

In my many years of fishing, I have never seen a phenomenon such as this. I thought this was absolutely a rare event until I told the guide this, and his reply was, "This happens pretty much all the time!"

Yah, Yah, I've heard that crap before, so I decided to go out again the next afternoon. Still cold and windy, still five layers of clothes. We made the run up to the first flat again but no fish around this time, so we ran back to the big flat again where last evening's action was and staked out (both runs damned cold - frozen fingers).

One dolphin was working the water far way, but I couldn't see any frightened fish running our way. After five minutes or so of being staked out, a tail popped up, then another, then another. Pushes and tails everywhere, all within casting range.

Here we go again! I don't think the dolphin was the reason for this school of reds, as he was so far away, and now think the guide was right when he said this was a pretty regular occurrence. And this school was easily as big as the previous afternoon's school of reds. Unbelievable!

The same problems existed however, spooking 10 reds by lining them when casting at a particular fish. Again I caught some fish, lost many and had a lot of missed sets. Most of the reds I caught or hooked up were in the 5 to 10 pound range, but I did have a 15 pounder hooked up and near the boat before I lost him. Big ones always gets away, huh? Anyway, it started getting dark (and colder), and the dolphin was moving on to "our" flat for his evening meal. We motored away and were rewarded with a beautiful sunset on our ride back to the launch. All in all, two cold and windy afternoons that I will never forget. Seeing 20 or 30 tails and pushes all at the same time, and watching this go on and on for a couple of hours will stay in mind forever. How's that for a fish story? **(Note: Bill Steitz is a member of Panhandle Fly Fishers. This article appeared in their January 2010 newsletter.)**





Banana River

by Seth Nehrke

Rob Benardo and I left early Fri in January and got to the No Motor Zone (NMZ) of the Banana River (near Cape Canaveral) to be greeted with calm conditions but no sun. Then we had sun but big wind. Then rain. Then more wind AND rain. Then I cried a bit...but only on the inside, as by then we had paddled the yaks about 10-11 miles. Then it stopped raining, the sun came out, the wind died, and the tails started popping. Rob was in deeper water while I was inside.

I quickly decided I could get plenty of refusals from small fish at home and headed out just in time to see Rob land a truly prehistoric beast of a black drum that was every bit of 50 lbs!! To be honest, I was a bit nervous even netting the thing!! Then it was my turn, and after 2 blown shots I hooked one. And then the fun began!!! After about 10 mins of absolute insanity we had this monster in the net. Measured in at 38". Too cool.

We then paddled back to camp and ate steaks and potatoes to replenish our energy! This am we woke up to wind and some rain, but it stopped and slicked up for a bit. While we were paddling in we started seeing fish and I connected with another pig. He wasn't quite as big as last night, but still absolutely awesome. We had a bunch more shots, and then ran from the weather just in time. It started to shift from the south and really cranked up. Made for a painful paddle home, but it was well worth it.



er Big Boys

by Rob Benardo

I headed back down to the NMZ with Dave Borries a week or so after Seth and I went down. We put in around 8 a.m. at Carrs Park and paddled north up the west side. The winds were blowing from the north at 5-10 mph. Not bad, it made casting and seeing fish difficult. We saw tons of tails, red and black, but could not get them to eat. We fished from morning 'til night without hooking one fish. I watched Dave make perfect presentations over and over to countless drum with no takers. We tried every fly in our boxes without matching whatever these drum were clued in on. It reminded me of fishing for Sheepshead.

After a long day we set up camp and headed over to the Outback to stuff our faces and use up a gift card Dave had. After diner sitting around the camp fire we smoked a cigar, drank a few beers and hit the hay.

Friday the weather was perfect, no wind, slick as glass. We started seeing tails 10 minutes out and continued to have shot after shot all day. We never went more than 15 minutes without seeing another tail, but still not takers. I finally headed into the shallows and started concentrating on the stationary tails I had been seeing closer to shore. I could paddle up to these motionless triangles and put my fly right on them and wammo fish on. It took me a while to figure this approach out but when I did I started catching Reds in the 26" to 29" range.

We got off the water around 5 p.m. big black tails still visible on the horizon. We'll getem next time.

Banquet Features Oscar Feliu, Great Food, Great Raffles and Silent Auctions

The First Coast Fly Fishers Annual Banquet will be held at 6 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 27 at the Southpoint Marriott in Jacksonville. The banquet will be headlined by world renowned fly tyer, tenor and classical guitarist Oscar Feliu. Oscar has traveled the world fly fishing and entertaining. His unique presentation - "*Taking Care of Our Outdoor Sports,*" will be followed by Oscar entertaining and playing several of his favorite musical selections.

For the past several years Oscar Feliu he has held a position on the Federation of Fly Fishers, Fly Tying Board of Governors. As a musician, Oscar has traveled the world entertaining countless people. His repertoire ranges from operatic arias such as Granada, to pop classics from the likes of Elvis and Johnny Mathis. He has recorded a number of CDs, which have received critical acclaim.

Banquet Sign-Up: Banquet sign-up cutoff is Friday, Feb.15. Banquet tickets are \$35 per person and include your choice of entrée and a cash bar. Banquet forms are available on the Club's website: <http://fcff.org/pdf/2010%20banquet%20application.pdf>.

Fly Tying with Oscar Feliu: Oscar will hold a hands-on fly tying class on Saturday before the banquet, between 1-3 p.m. on Saturday at the Southpoint Marriott. During this two-hour long class Oscar will be presenting tying instructions for four of his favorite saltwater patterns. The class is **free** to all members whose 2010 memberships are paid in full. Each member attending the class will receive a packet of fly tying material prepared by Oscar. Club members will be responsible to providing their own fly tying vices and tools. Members planning to attend the fly tying call are asked to register in advance so that the correct amount of tying materials can be prepared. There will be a sign-up sheet at the February 1 meeting. Members unable to attend the meeting are asked to email Jason Sheasley pgflyfisher@gmail.com by close of business, Monday February 1.



Grand Prize Give-A-Way, Raffle and Silent Auctions

All members whose annual membership is paid-in-full by Monday, February 1st will receive one ticket for the Grand Prize Give-A-Way, a new **Tibor Back Country CL Wide Fly Fishing Reel**. Members may be eligible to receive a second Grand Prize Raffle ticket if they encourage a new member* to join the FCFF. To qualify, "new members" can not have been a member of the FCFF in the last five years and their membership must be paid in full by **February 15, 2010**. Members need not be present at the banquet to win.

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

For more information contact Jason Sheasley at pgflyfisher@gmail.com. Additional information is also available on the Club's website at www.fcff.org.

Winter Trout Outing at Fernandina

Brave FCFFers met this month to fish the January Outing at Fort Clinch. Pictured with volunteer trout, the Bobs - Connerly (l), and White (b)



2010 Southeastern Fly Fishing Show

Hosted By The Southeastern Council of FFF

Unicoi State Park, Helen, Georgia, June 4-5, 2010

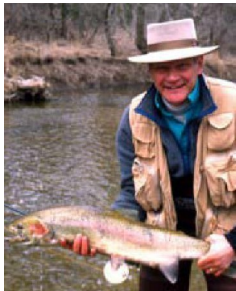
Unicoi State Park will be the location for the 2010 Southeastern Fly Fishing Show & Conclave. Nestled in the North Georgia Mountains, Unicoi is one of Georgia's most beloved State Parks where outdoor enthusiasts enjoy hiking, biking and of course access to some of the best fishing Georgia has to offer. The 2010 Fly Fishing Show is a 2-day event featuring keynote speakers **Gary Borger, Tom Travis and Jim Casada**.



In addition to these keynote speakers, the FFF Southeastern Fly Fishing Show will offer numerous educational programs, casting instruction, and fly tying demonstration sessions with over 30 of the best fly tiers in the world. The show will also feature a number of commercial fly fishing vendors exhibiting the latest fly fishing equipment and guide services. You will have opportunities to fish some of the best streams in north Georgia and learn from some of the best casting instructors in the USA.

Unicoi State Park Lodge and Conference Center in Helen, Georgia is the ideal setting for our show with plenty of room for commercial vendors, classes, seminars, demonstrations and beautiful mountain scenery surrounding the facility.

Look for the latest information on the 2010 Southeastern Fly Fishing Show at our website at www.fffsec.org. Everyone is welcome to attend.



Gary Borger

Gary is one of the world's foremost fly fishing educators. He has been a fly fisher since 1955 and has taught classes and lectured internationally on all aspects of fly fishing for trout and salmon.

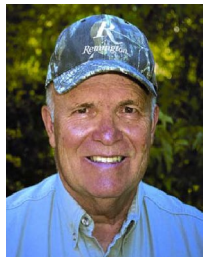
Gary is a member of the Federation of Fly Fishers (FFF), Trout Unlimited, the American Museum of Fly Fishing and numerous other organizations and conservation groups around the country.



Tom Travis

Tom has been an Orvis endorsed guide for over 25 years, fishing the premium fly fishing areas around Yellowstone and southern Montana. For years Tom has been a popular speaker at regional and national fly fishing events.

Jim was born and raised in Western North Carolina and grew up hunting and fishing in the region. He will be showcasing his new book, "Fly Fishing in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park: An Insider's Guide to a Pursuit of Passion".



Jim Casada

Jim is the winner of more than 125 regional and national awards for writing and photography.

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The Southeastern Council of the FFF is a non-profit organization that supports fisheries conservation and educational programs that introduce the public to fly fishing.

www.fffsec.org

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