

First Coast Fly Fisher

August 2006

www.fcff.org

Jacksonville, FL



Veteran Fly Angler Capt. Warren Hinrichs Wins Prestigious Del Brown Tourney in Key West. Story on Page 2

MEETING & SPEAKER

FCFF Meeting: Monday, August 7, 7 p.m. -- Speakers: Annual Charter Guides' Clinic with Capts. Larry Miniard, Tony Bozzella, David Borries, and John Bottko. Bring your questions. This is a chance for you to get thoughtful, informed answers from our area's best fly guides. Get there early, 'cause this fills up fast. Cast with master instructor David Lambert at 6 p.m. on the Marriott pond.

COMING EVENTS

August 12 -- Tailing Reds -- First of the Year. Meet us and take advantage of a good high tide just before noon at the Sawpit Creek boat ramp at Nassau. With a little luck, we'll have flooded flats and tailing reds for the first time this year. Capt. John Bottko has already caught some redfish tailing on the flats. The plan is to gather at the Sawpit Creek boat ramp at the Nassau Bridge on A1A about 9 a.m. Saturday Aug 12, fish the high tide, and see what Nassau Sound and Bird Island have to offer on the falling tide. Make sure you sign up at the meeting and we'll match boat and folks

Big Win For Hinrichs

At Prestigious Del Brown Permit Invitational



Warren Hinrich's 9-lb. bonefish didn't count in the exclusive Del Brown Permit Tourney. See Cover For Winning Fish

Veteran fly angler and FCFFer Capt. Warren Hinrichs has achieved a coup for a North Floridian. He won both Grand Champion and Largest Permit in Key West's prestigious Del Brown Permit Invitational. Hinrich's big fish measured 30-inches (see photo on cover).

"(Guide) Kris Suplee put me on fish on all three days—even the last day, which had severe lightning storms in the morning," Hinrichs said. "The fish we found on the last day were definitely upset about the weather too! They were very spooky. On the last day we took time to build the good fish karma and actually caught a 9-lb. bone! Seconds after we released the bone we were covered up by blinding rain and lightening. That's tournament fishing for you!"

Team Suplee/Hinrichs caught three permit, the most fish caught by any team. The permit lengths were 30-inches, 23 1/8-inches and 18-inches. As a side note, Team Suplee/Hinrichs also caught the largest permit during the '05 Del Brown Tournament at 27-inches. Hinrichs used an 8-wt. Temple Fork Outfitters TiCR-X and small Tan Merkin. Also as a side note, during the last day of the tournament, Hinrichs caught a 9-lb. bonefish during a severe lightning storm!

Team Capt. Dale Perez and angler Doug Mayer received second place and Guide Bill Houze and angler Will Benson received third place for each catching one permit. The other guides should be recognized for their accomplishment in tough permit conditions—Capts. Rae, Krowka and Becker all poled their anglers to one fish. Fourteen skiffs signed up to compete in the tournament. The Del is one of the most challenging and rewarding tournaments on the planet. Contact Capt. Kris Suplee at www.flatsbandit.com and Warren Hinrichs at www.warrenhinrichs.com.



Stuart-St. Lucy Top Guide Marcia Foosaner Led The Club on A Fish Filled Tour of St. Lucy County Last Month

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H & L Variant

Tempting Fish Treat on Pond or Stream

by Dana Griffin III

Hook: dry fly, sizes 10-18;
Thread: 8/0, brown or black;
Tail: white calf tail or poly yarn;
Body: peacock quill (rear half) and Peacock herl (thorax position)

For tiers, the H & L Variant introduces the quill body (the rear half of the fly's body is constructed of wrapped peacock quill). Quills require some preparation, but it's nothing complicated. You start with a normal length of peacock herl. Lay the feather on a flat surface, and, using a pencil eraser, rub off all of the herl (the little iridescent, green, fuzzy stuff). Take a few of these stripped quills and soak them for about 30 minutes in warm water. This water bath relaxes the quills and allows the tier to wrap the quill around the hook shank without the quill breaking. Either calf tail or poly yarn can be selected for the tail and wings. Poly is more absorbent (not a good quality for a dry fly) but easier to control and offers less bulk as you tie it in. Calf tail, on the other hand, is more water repellent, but bulkier – it's your choice. The other features of the fly, the peacock herl thorax and the forward- positioned hackle are tied in the standard way.

This fly will produce on both running and still waters, but it was originally designed to be worked on rivers. An interesting strategy when using the H & L Variant is to knot an 8-12 inch length of mono to the bend of the hook and tie in for a trailer another dry fly about 2 hook sizes smaller than the tippet fly. This two fly rig can be the trick to inducing reluctant bream or bass to rise to the occasion. Of course, the angler must keep both flies in view so as to be able to strike on cue.

The H & L Variant, like any of a number of effective flies, has an origin shrouded by the mists of time. Speculation has it that some unnamed tier, probably from Idaho or Montana, gave the world this pattern but evidently did not step forward to claim credit. A shame, that, because this is a great fly for enticing bream and small bass right here in the Deep South. The fly also goes by the name House and Lot (hence H & L). Variant refers to any dry fly hackled with a feather 1-2 sizes



H & L Variant

larger than would be standard. The H & L Variant floats well and can be followed easily due to the highly visible calf tail or poly yarn wings. These features explain why President Eisenhower asked his guide for this fly whenever he was fly fishing in the Rockies. Whereas nymph fishing is all about feel, dry fly fishing is entirely a visual sport.

Lose sight of your fly, and you've basically reduced by about 95% your chances of responding to a strike at the proper time.



Dave Kudley's Cam-

FCFFers boats docked at Carribbean Shores in St. Lucie Outing.

Chile's Lake District

Accessible, Plentiful Fish and A Guide Named Marcelo

by Mike McQuiston

This March found me casting to searun browns and rainbows and salmon in the Lake District of Chile - the fishing was great. I spent 11 days in Chile fishing with 7 other folks on a trip put together by Jack Campbell of San Jose, an old Navy buddy of mine.

I flew out of Miami to Santiago, then caught a connecting flight to Puerto Montt, in the heart of Chile's Lake District, 75 minutes south of Santiago. Jack met me and we drove to our fishing lodge on the Rio Maullin, just west of Puerto Varas, 15 miles north of Puerto Montt.

Jack did a great job of arranging loading, outfitter, guides, everything. Our outfitter, Marcelo A. Wilhelm (www.wildriverchile.cl), is an extraordinary fisherman and guide. No one is better equipped to put fish and fisherman together in this absolutely beautiful alpine region on the Pacific coast. Located south of Chile's high desert region and north of wind-swept Patagonia, the Lake Region is a fresh-water piedmont at the foot of the Andes adjacent to salt-water coastal fjords. The weather in March — their fall — is perfect, with night time temperatures in the mid-40s, rising to daytime highs in the 70s. Rain is frequent, but of short duration and normally not an obstacle to comfortable fishing.

Marcelo's lodge on the Maullin River is near Lago Llanquihue, the largest lake in the region with the lovely town of Puerto Varas on the lake's west shore. During our stay, we fished the Maullin River in 3 sections, the Rio Petrohue (about 25 miles from Puerto Varas), and Chaiten, 60 miles south of Puerto Montt on a Pacific fjord. We fished from drift boats on the Maullin and Petrohue, and we waded the fjords around Chaiten. Five days of the trip were spent in Marcelo's lodge, and the last 5 days in Chaiten, a short flight from Puerto Montt in private aircraft.

The first fishing day we floated Rio Petrohue for salmon, sea-run browns and steelheads, native rainbows and browns. We hooked several large kings, landed two, several steelhead, and many browns and rainbows. The Petrohue was a great start! The



The author and Guide Marcelo Wilhelm with a fine brown trout from Maullin River, Lake District, Chile

next 4 days were spent floating the 3 sections of the Maullin. Rainbows and browns to 5 lbs. were not uncommon and the action was constant. A 250-grain sink-tip line is needed to get down to the fish; using this kind of line was a new experience for me. A great deal of mending and sometimes rapid-fire stripping were the order of the day. It's hard work, but worth it! The 2nd

and 3rd sections of the Maullin, ever closer to the salt, offered the occasional steelhead and sea-run brown, but the beautiful rainbows and resident browns were the more plentiful.

Six days into the trip we boarded 2 small aircraft and flew 60 miles south to Chaiten, a town on the banks of a Pacific coast fjord. From Chaiten, we traveled by truck to 3 different river mouths, all broad and filled with a mix of fresh and saltwater. Marcelo and his band of outstanding guides placed us in prime locations for wading and casting heavier 8 and 9 weight rods. We averaged between 7 to 10 steelhead per person per day to 10 pounds, 1 or 2 sea-run browns to 10 pounds, and several salmon; among our gang, the largest was a 35-lb. king. Three salmon species inhabit Chilean waters – Atlantic, Silver, and King. We caught 'em all, but not with the success we had with the steelhead

The trip was an outstanding success due

in large part to Jack Campbell's superb organization and knowledge of requirements. Flying to Puerto Montt is just as easy as flying to Alaska, and you're 15 minutes from fishing upon arrival in Puerto Montt!

Chile's national airlines, Lan Chile, has 5 daily flights to Puerto Montt from Santiago, and you can fly from Miami to Santiago on Lan Chile and American Airlines, both with great service. Puerto Varas and Chaiten are wonderful tourist attractions with a European flare, great hotels, and fantastic food.

I highly recommend Marcelo Wilhelm and his extraordinary guides. They use new fiberglass drift boats and two fishermen can easily cast from bow or stern. Marcelo made what would have been a very good fishing trip into an unforgettable fishing experience.



Fly Fishing South Florida

One Man's 869.3-Mile Quest for Peacock Bass, Snook, and Baby 'Poons

by Rick Palazzini

Planning a trip for some new varieties of game fish generates excitement in the minds of a serious saltwater fly anglers. I consider it the spice of life – one that allows you to test your learned skills and hone your instincts.

Recently, I joined FCFFer Don Reed and former FCFFer Bob Minke, now a resident of South Florida. The idea was to do something different. How about the Southern Glades? Specifically canal C-111 under tropical storm conditions! Our target species was peacock bass (*Cichla ocellaris*). Interestingly, in 1984 Florida's Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) stocked several southeast Florida canals with peacock bass to control some 86 non-native species like the Oscar that preyed upon the young bass and bluegill populations.

As the morning turned, tropical storm Alberto approached and cut our 1st choice short, so we headed to Franco's Biscayne Bay Fly Shop for leads and ended up fishing the Blue Lagoon next to Miami International Airport. Wow!

As we approached the water's edge, peacock bass were busting fry. The shoreline was a prime habitat that included its own population of iguanas. Suddenly the water came to a boil when a small school of fry were attacked from all sides. The catching strategy that seemed to work was rapid and repeated accurate casts into the area of active fry. Line stripping was not necessary and the more commotion made the better. Once we ignited a feeding frenzy the fly would fall victim to a ferocious attack! These fish display very cool surface acrobatics and are beautiful to see up close.



Don Reed (front) and Bob Minke Ply The Canals of South Florida



Peacock Bass From The Hand of Palazzini

Sixteen hours later, Bob's wife Pam welcomed our return with a gourmet meal and spirits. Bob and Pam treated us wonderfully; I look forward to returning the hospitality some day soon.

Three o'clock Sunday morning came too soon, but baby tarpon at Sebastian was on the agenda. Don hardly slept a wink!

Sunday we arrived at Sebastian only to be teased by rolling tarpon while we were launching our yaks! The water's surface was absolutely placid. Life is good! We covered the water, casting 7-wt. and 8-wt. fast action rods and intermediate sink tips. Unfortunately, the baby 'poons didn't cooperate, though they did provide a show that makes my return a sure bet.

Snook, on the other hand, were very cooperative all day!

The strategy that worked here was similar to casting for peacocks – we used rapid, repeating casts to create a surface disturbance. Also, we let the rod tip work the fly a short distance instead of stripping in line. Covering the water with accurate casts and targeting the pockets among the mangroves is required. No words can describe the experience of having a baby snook suck your thumb parting company!

In many ways, belonging and participating in the FCFF organization has helped me prepare for a lifestyle that includes adventure traveling. The club offers a rich resource of interesting personalities who are willing to share their passion and knowledge.

Pogy As A National Treasure?

Excerpted from Bruce Franklin's Mother Jones Article Titled Net Losses

...BLUNT HEAD, TOOTHLESS MOUTH, pudgy body—a menhaden sure doesn't look like the superstar of coastal ecology. A mature adult is only about a foot long and weighs about a pound. Nobody will ever write a Moby-Dick about the menhaden. Yet a school numbering in the tens of thousands can weigh as much as the largest whale and behave like a single organism. Watch an acre-wide school creating flashes of silver with flips of forked tails and splashes, zigging and zagging, diving and surfacing, pursued relentlessly by bluefish and striped bass from below and gulls, terns, gannets, and ospreys from above—and you're not so sure there's no epic story here.

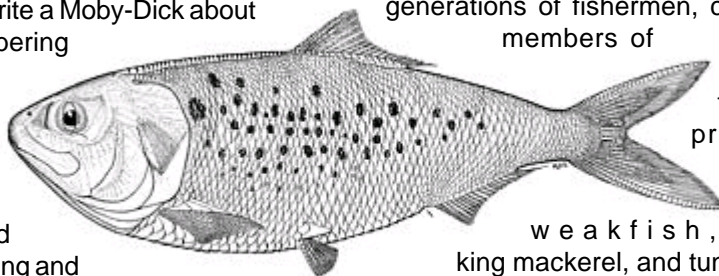
When Europeans first arrived on the east coast of America, they encountered a living river of menhaden flowing with the seasons north and south along the coast, extending out for miles, and sometimes filling bays and estuaries from Florida to Maine with almost solid flesh. In 1608, explorer John Smith found his two-ton boat laboring through a mass of menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay "lying so thick with their heads above the water, as for want of nets (our barge driving amongst them) we attempted to catch them with a frying pan." To the Pilgrims, menhaden were just another of the bountiful sea creatures God had intelligently designed for them, as described by an awestruck Reverend Francis Higginson in 1630: "The abundance of Sea-Fish are almost beyond beleeving, and sure I should scarce have beleeved it except that I had seene it with mine owne Eyes."

Because menhaden were essential to this natural bounty, they were a powerful hidden force in the colonization of North America. As Mark Kurlansky wrote in *Cod: A Biography of the Fish That Changed the World*, it was superabundant food

fish that first drew Europeans—the Vikings, then the Basques, and later the British—to North American waters. Nineteenth-century scientists, partly drawing on the knowledge of generations of fishermen, concluded that menhaden, members of the same family as herring and shad, were essential to the diet of almost all Atlantic predatory fish, including bluefish, cod, haddock, halibut, mackerel, w e a k f i s h , striped bass, swordfish, king mackerel, and tuna, as well as many marine birds and mammals, including porpoises and toothed whales. As the ichthyologist G. Brown Goode put it in his monumental 1880 volume, *A History of Menhaden*, "It is not hard to surmise the menhaden's place in nature; swarming our waters in countless myriads, swimming in closely-packed, unwieldy masses, helpless as flocks of sheep, close to the surface and at the mercy of any enemy, destitute of means of defense or offense, their mission is unmistakably to be eaten." He wasn't far from the truth when he proclaimed that anyone enjoying a meal of American Atlantic saltwater fish was eating "nothing but menhaden!"

But where did this enormous biomass of menhaden, so crucial to the food chain above it, come from? Just as all those saltwater fish are composed mainly of menhaden, all those billions of tons of menhaden are composed almost entirely of billions of tons of the tiny particles of vegetable matter known as phytoplankton. Eating is just as crucial an ecological mission for menhaden as being eaten. . . .

(Read the full fascinating article in the Mar/Apr Mother Jones -- http://www.motherjones.com/news/feature/2006/03/net_losses.html)



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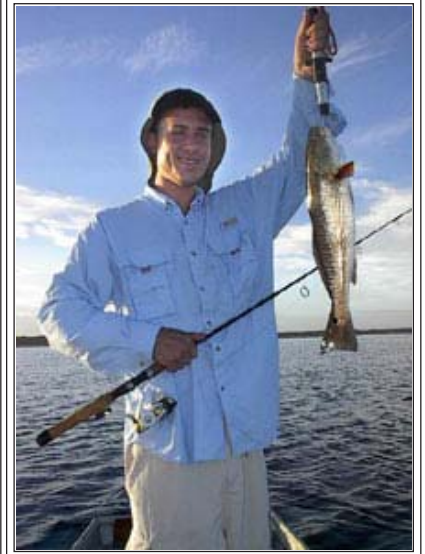
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Clockwise from Top Left, Larry Holder In Alaska; A Durrance (?) in St. Lucie; Robbert and Ruth Bouman's Boys Fishing at St. Lucie Dock, and David Kudley with Maine Smallie.



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People with Fish

