

# Fly Fisher

First Coast

MAY 2006

[www.fcff.org](http://www.fcff.org)

Jacksonville, FL



Dick Michaelson's Dry Fly Fooled This Lovely North Mills River, NC, Rainbow Last Month

## MEETING & SPEAKER

**FCFF Meeting: Monday, May 1, 7 p.m. -- Speaker: Capt. Larry Kennedy**  
Our May speaker will be Capt. Larry Kennedy of Brunswick/St. Simons. Somewhere around the late-60s Larry Kennedy bought out fly-fishing department of New York's Abercrombie and Fitch and moved it down to St. Simon's, GA, where he set up a saltwater guide service and fly shop. Larry is the 'man,' when it to Georgia fly fishing. His topic this night is the tripletail fishery off in coastal South Georgia.st.

## COMING EVENTS

**April Outing: Lochloosa for Bass and Bream.** Saturday, April 29: Bass, Bream or Crappie. Orange and Lochloosa, connected by Cross Creek. Launch Lochloosa Landing fish camp. Call George Durrance, [grdrbgay@bellsouth.net](mailto:grdrbgay@bellsouth.net) (904) 241-5697

**Lott/Adams Bass Bream Extravaganza, May 27:** Our May outing is the possibly our **most highly anticipated outing of the year.** Here we fish, we feast, and we actually get to know some each other in a day of fun and fishing. We do this at Bill and Ann Lott's beautiful place in Tocoj on the east bank of the St.Johns River. John Adams and Mike McQuiston offer what little expertise, assistance, aquatic transportation, food preparation, dishwashing, and local knowledge as may be required. We will need a head count for food so sign up at this month's meeting.

**June 22, 23, 24 Annual Steinhatchee Weekend Outing:** Better reserve your room quick for the annual Steinhatchee weekend. Rooms fill up fast. Contact Mike McQuiston or George Durrance for more information.



DICK MICHAELSON LEAD TU-S ROB ROBERTS TO THIS SWEET 7~1/2 LB FISH

## Trout Guy Tames Reds

FCFF casting instructor and all-round good guy Dick Michaelson took member Vic Roberts and his son Rob fishing early this month in the Clapboard-Sisters area. Vic is a newer FCFF member; Rob is the Western Coordinator for Trout Unlimited who lives in Montana

Says Michaelson: "We were fishing the low tide early that morning. Rob is a very good caster. He was using a Orvis T-3, 9 wt. The fly we used was Bill Sherer's Redfish Fly, the one he tied at his tying demo in the February meeting.



"We caught two that morning. Rob hooked a second fish, then fought it for awhile, but did not land it. We saw a lot reds that morning and throughout the day. Rob had a good time and Vic caught his first red on a fly. All in all we all had a good day."

Pictured left: Vic Roberts and Dick Michaelson

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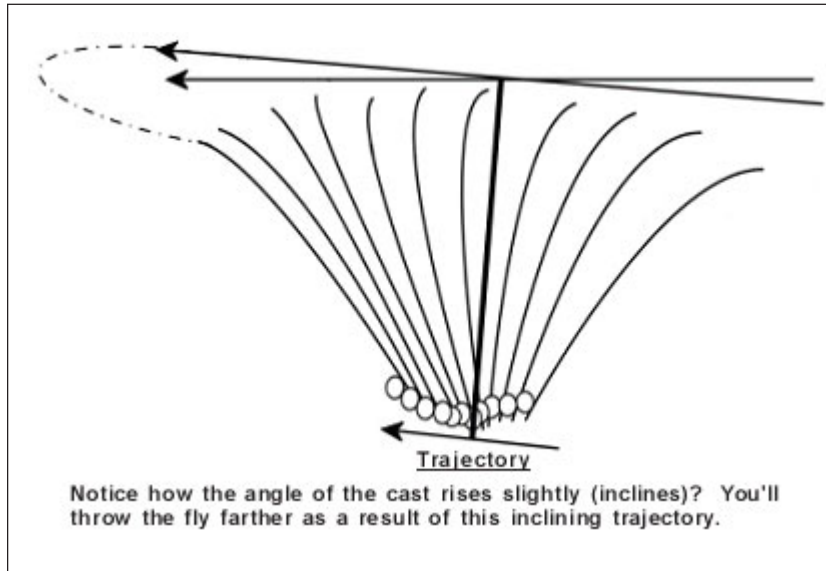
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# Distance Champs



A slate of six world class casters demonstrated their power and prowess on the casting stage at the Best of the West Distance Casting Competition Championship at the International Sportsmen's Exposition in Salt

Lake City on Sunday March 19, 2006. The shoot-out style format highlighted, and rewarded, the best casting techniques performed under pressure.

The women's championship showcased defending BOTW Champion Wendy Gunn and Cezanne Alexander, two-time winner of the Salt Lake City regional finals.

Gunn was first to cast and declared a cast of 87 feet 4 inches as practice cast. Two of her next three casts drifted out of bounds, leaving a disappointing cast of 73 feet 8 inches as Gunn's only recorded distance.

Alexander's first cast carried the yarn fly to 75 feet 8 inches to cinch the 2006 title. Her third cast carried to 85 feet 10 inches.

In a down-to-the-wire battle, the men's competition was determined by mere inches. Three time champion Jim Gunderson cast first. Gunderson declared a cast of 106 feet 1 inch as practice. After his first cast-for-record drifted out of bounds, the next cast carried to a BOTW finals record 120 feet 9 inches.

World champion caster Steve Rajeff was next and passed on a practice cast of 119 feet 10 inches. He needing as many casts as possible to best Gunderson's mark. Rajeff's next two casts, 111 feet 0 inches and 118 feet 8 inches were also short of the winning distance. Rajeff pounded his third cast down the casting lane. The crowd waited in anticipation while the distance was measured and ISE's Best of the West Tournament Director Bruce Tarbet announced the official distance at 120 feet 2 inches. Just seven inches short of Gunderson's cast.

Championship Results:

Men's Division: 1st - Jim Gunderson 120' 9"

2nd - Steve Rajeff 120' 2"; 3rd - Rick Hartman 112' 10"; 4th - Jeff Wagner 106' 9"; 5th - Brian O'Keefe 108' 8"; 6th - Clay Roberst 71' 8"

## Lott/Adams Bass/Bream -- May 27

Once a year Bill and Ann Lott open their house to FCFers for one the most fun outings of the year. Neighbor John Adams jumps in to cook and co-sponsor the event. Every year they provide us with fine fishing opps and great food. We fish in the morning, gather for lunch and refreshment, then fish in the afternoon. The fishing's good, but the camaraderie is better.

As prez Mike McQuiston says: "Here we fish, we feast, and we actually get to know each other in a day of fun and fishing. We do this at Bill and Ann Lott's beautiful place in Tocoli on the east bank of the St. Johns River. John Adams and Mike McQuiston offer what little expertise, assistance, aquatic transportation, food preparation, dishwashing, and local knowledge as may be required. We will need a head count for food so sign up at this month's meeting."



**Bill Lott Welcomes Kayakers To Outing**

# The Founding Fish

Review By Jason C. Sheasley

## The Founding Fish

By John McPhee

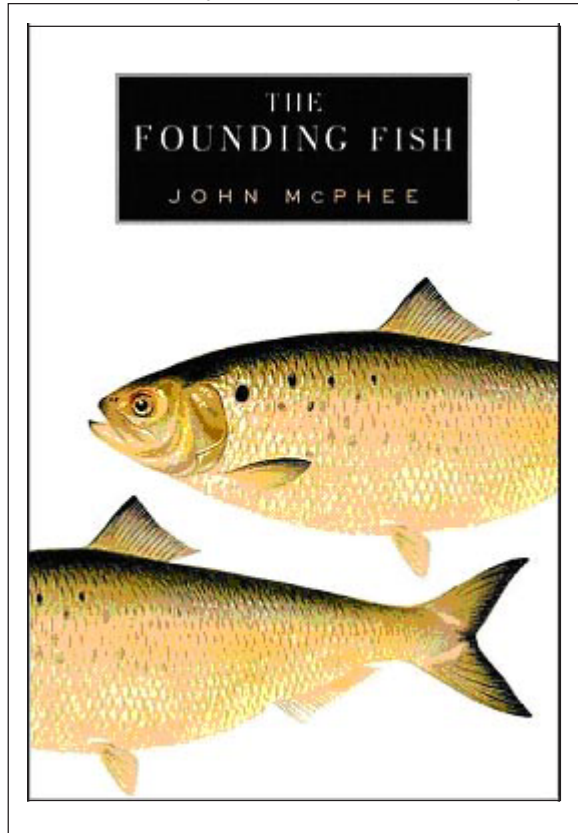
Published by Farr, Straus and Giroux, October 2002; 352 Pages; ISBN 0-374-10444-1

The world is full of fly fishing “how-to” books and books where the author makes vained attempts to use fly fishing as a metaphor for life. Fortunately, John McPhee’s *The Founding Fish* is neither. *The Founding Fish*, McPhee’s 26th he loves best – the American Shad. As stated on his web page ([www.johnmcphee.com](http://www.johnmcphee.com)), *The Founding Fish* is an amalgamation of “personal history, natural history and American history in descending order” revolving around the American Shad.

McPhee begins the book with a personal account of shad a fishing trip on the Delaware River near New Hope, Pennsylvania. From there the reader is quickly introduced to the fish that brings anglers, including McPhee, out of the woodwork each spring. In the midst of a fishing story, McPhee sets the stage for what is yet to come. For many, the “poor man’s tarpon” is more than a sporting pursuit - it is an obsession. This obsession is exemplified by McPhee’s story of his three hour fight to land a 4 ¾-pound roe shad.

McPhee’s reputation as a writer needs no introduction. However, in the instance that you utilized your free time in favor of piscatorial pursuits rather than literary ones, allow me to introduce on of my favorite authors. McPhee has been a staff writer for the *New Yorker* since 1965. During the past 41 years he has perfected the art of the personal narrative. He writes about things that interest him. As such, the subject matter of his articles and books is quite varied. For instance, in *The Deltoid Pumpkin Seed*, McPhee tells the story of a Presbyterian minister who attempt to turn his dream of building a hybrid airship into reality.

*Looking for a Ship* is his story of a Merchant Marines sailor looking for his next duty ship. “The Atlantic Generating Station,” a piece which appears in *Giving Good Weight*, is the story about the improbable task of building a nuclear power plant off of the coast of Jacksonville, Florida. In 1999, John McPhee won the Pulitzer Prize for *Annals of the Former World*. Twenty-three years in the making, *Annals of the Former World* is a compendium of



four previously published books about the geology of North American through the 40th parallel.

Unique to McPhee’s books and articles is the manner that he approaches his subject matter.

In *The Founding Fish*, McPhee combines scientific information, folk wisdom and personal narrative, to describe the shad’s place in American history. The shad’s territory extends from the Bay of Fundy to the St. John’s River in Florida.

As such, McPhee travels from Nova Scotia to Florida in search of Shad. Along the way the reader is introduced to a host of individuals and historical figures whose livelihood, in one fashion or another, is linked to the American shad. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Confederate General George Pickett and John Wilkes Booth are just a few of the notable historical figures whose lives have been intertwined with shad.

McPhee dedicates an entire chapter (*The Shad Alley*) to fishing in Florida. Fred Cross, a fisheries biologist with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, provides McPhee and his fishing partner Sam Chandler with insight on how and where to fish for Shad on the St. Johns. According to Cross, Shad Alley is the stretch of river between Lake Jessup and Lake Harney. Ultimately McPhee and Chandler fish this area and take three dozen shad on the fly. Anglers planning to fish for shad on the St Johns River would be remiss if they did not read this chapter.

Throughout the book, McPhee writes of the culinary merit of the Shad. After all, the Latin name for the American Shad, *Alosa Sapidissima* translated to “most savory.” Therefore, it is only fitting that *The Founding Fish* includes an appendix on cooking Shad. In the appendix McPhee provides commentary and recipes for various ways to prepare shad and shad roe. McPhee has tried some of the recipes; others are included for historical reference.

McPhee is a fly fisherman. But first and foremost, he is a fisherman dedicated to angling for shad by any means available be it a fly rod, conventional tackle or seining. Do not expect to finish this book with a deeper understanding of how to take shad on the fly. What the read should expect is an engaging tale of the American Shad and its place in the history of the United States. Entertaining and educational, *The Founding Fish* is required reading for all manner of fishermen.

# The Slim Beauty

A LOVELY KNOT FROM A STYLISH FLY FISHING WEBSITE -- WWW.MIDCURRENT.COM

I like tying knots. They're tidy and complete, a winding geometry in which there is a beginning and an end.

Every now and again a new fishing knot comes along that I think might be useful. I tie and untie the knot until my fingers no longer need my brain to form the knot, 'til I can tie it in the black of night.

Sure as Christmas, though, when the time comes to use that new knot, I never do. /

*always never use it.* At trigger-time, I will 100-percent-of-the-time use knots I learned as a kid — my go-to knots. Clinch, improved clinch, double overhand, Bimini, Albright, and maybe a uni-knot. With the exception of the Bimini, these are knots my Granny taught me on the Atlantic Beach Pier. I can tie them all in the dark of night -- and I have.

That's a why, when I first heard of the Slim Beauty Knot, the knot tyer in me was intrigued, but the the knot user in me suppressed a yawn. The upshot was that I ignored the Slim Beauty Knot for years, only to re-discover it on a top-shelf website, **Marshall Cutchin's Midcurrent.com**.

The beauty of the Slim Beauty Knot is that it doesn't require a Bimini Twist to achieve a near-100% class-tippet-to-shock-tippet connection. It's far more graceful in it's finished shape than either of the usual shock-to-class knots, which makes it 'Slim.'

Here's what Marshall Cutchin's says about the Slim



Beauty:

"For many anglers, the process of tying big game leaders means beginning each leader with two bimini twists in either end of the class tippet.

While this is still an excellent foundation for leader systems, there is an easier way to achieve strong leader connections, and one that in our experience is more reliable

when tying on the water and under what we

like to call "more-than-favorable conditions" -- being surrounded by fish.

"We first started tying an early version of the Slim Beauty back in the early 1990s in the Key West area. The idea for the knot began in the 1970s with a desire to develop a knot similar to the jam knot that was quicker to tie but just as strong as Bimini-to-Huffnagle or Bimini-to-Albright knots."

Keys Guide Capt. Simon Becker popularized and promoted the Slim Beauty Knot. MidCurrent.com quotes Becker on his use of materials and his technique:

"The rig I'm using currently is 25 lb. Mason class tippet and 60 lb. Orvis Mirage bite tippet and butt section. I started using a single strand of tippet to tie the knot (instead of doubling it) when I went up to the 25 lb. Mason. Tied with a single strand the 25 lb. Mason breaks at around 23 lbs. on my low-tech scale. That's just right for my needs: the tippet

**(Continued on Page 6)**

by David Lambert

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# The Slim Beauty -- SEE THE VIDEO AT [WWW.MIDCURRENT.COM](http://WWW.MIDCURRENT.COM)

(continued from page 5). . . should break before the fly line, and it gives my anglers lots of leeway for setting the hook and pulling on fish as hard as they want to. My experience is that no matter what the breaking strength of the leader, most anglers will max out pulling around 10 lbs. of steady pressure. It's the spikes in pressure on the hook set and during head-shaking jumps that we need the buffer for.

"Added benefits of this system are more bites because of the inconspicuous knots and longer bite tippet" it's no longer necessary to carry a "leader stretcher case" and reduced stress on the fish. We can land and release the fish much faster because the leader can be grabbed earlier in the fight, as you don't have to wait for the short foot-long bite tippet of an IGFA leader to come within an arm's length of the boat.

Capt. Becker offers simple advice on tying the Slim Beauty Knot at: [http://www.midcurrent.com/articles/techniques/becker\\_slim\\_beauty.aspx](http://www.midcurrent.com/articles/techniques/becker_slim_beauty.aspx)

Here you'll find Becker's personal account of the origins of the knot.

While you're surfing [www.Midcurrent.com](http://www.Midcurrent.com), take a look around. The editorial staff regularly tips its hat to fly

fishing literature, travel, and learning — all done with style and taste.

If you like what you see, sign up for the Midcurrent.com newsletter. The staff peruses latest fly fishing news and publications and brings them to you in compilation form once a week.



## Quote

"May June is the perfect time to get hook-ups on fly. If fly is your passion, then ladyfish are your answer. They are truly the "poor man's tarpon." I think they are a great fish for the fly rod. Ladyfish are an aggressive fish that usually eat a fly or plug, there are lots of them, and they jump and fight hard, who couldn't like a fish like that!

It is also great practice to help hone your skills for those harder to catch fish."

--Capt. Tony Bozzella

## 3rd Jax Kayak Classic May 19-20; \$40k in Prizes; 2 Kayaks Awarded In Fly Category



JaxKayakFishing.com, will sponsor the **world's largest kayak fishing classic** on May 19-20. The 3rd annual *Jacksonville Kayak Fishing Classic* promotes kayak fishing in Jacksonville with a fun

conservation-oriented format and

raises funds for children's programs through Daniel Memorial. The premier eco-tourism event also supports the St. Johns Riverkeeper.

**Register online at [www.JaxKayakfishing.com](http://www.JaxKayakfishing.com)**

**First Coast Fly Fishers**  
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