

# First Coast Fly Fisher

September 2006

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

Jacksonville, FL

## Once A Thing of Beauty

*Is the St. Johns River gasping for breath? Have we loved our river to death? See page 2*



Photo by Bill Yates, CYPIX.net

### MEETING & SPEAKER

**FCFF Meeting: Monday, Sept. 11** -- Come join us for an evening with Capt. Vaughn Cochran of Black Fly Outfitters. Vaughn's a fascinating guy -- an artist, musician, and native St. Augustinian. He guided in the Keys in the formative 70s and managed fishing lodges in the Yucatan, Costa Rica and Turneffe Island in Belize. He was also an original member of Jimmy Buffett's Coral Reefer Band. Casting at 6, meeting at 7, as always at the Southpoint Marriott.

### COMING EVENTS

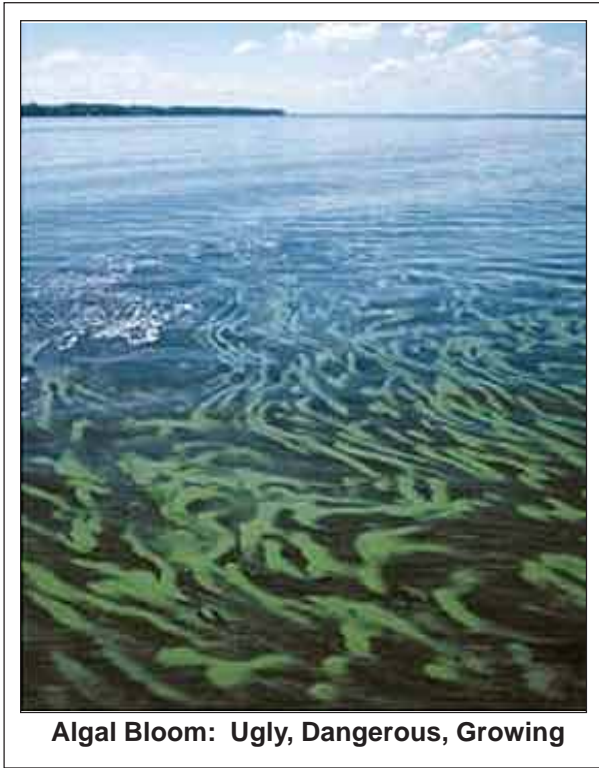
**Sat and Sun Sept 9 & 10 -- Tailing Reds** -- Saturday September 9 we kick off the best weekend so far for fishing for tailing redfish in the grass. Both days look good for weather, but our forward scout John Adams reports higher than forecast tides. We'd better get started about 30 minutes sooner than planned, so let's meet Saturday at the Cedar Point ramp at 0800, Sunday at 0900. If you're coming from the Sisters Creek Ramp, look for marker 75 and turn left at Horseshoe Creek to meet up with us at the Cedar Point Ramp. VHF channel 71. Rather than make a long day longer, bring some food and drinks, and we'll discuss the day's fishing after we finish up at the ramp.

*SJRWMD and Watchdogs Say Yes*

# Is The St. Johns Sick?

*by David Lambert*

Some years ago, Johnny Cash delivered us these lyrics: "Don't go near the water son, the water isn't water any more." I wondered what he meant at the time. Now I know.



**Algal Bloom: Ugly, Dangerous, Growing**

Eight years after the St. Johns River became one of only 14 American Heritage Rivers in the nation, it faces serious pollution troubles. Sadly, the prestigious presidential designation can't shield the St. Johns from the smothering embrace of the people who love it, or love to make money from it. Part of that crushing hug combines abuse and overuse, waste-water dumping, and residential and agricultural runoff in the form of fecal coliform and nutrients.

If anyone reading this thinks the St. Johns River is in good health, go right now to this website and look the work of CYPix's Bill Yates, whose photos biting detail our once lovely river in its recent gasping state. Here's the website:

<<http://www.cypix.net/gallery.html?gallery=ALGAE%20BLOOM>>

Then take a good look at the state's own collected stats — high levels of fecal coliform, excess nutrients, and low levels of dissolved oxygen <<http://www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org/river/ImpairedWaters.html>>. The River's highest levels of fecal coliform were monitored in a creek near Avondale where the bacteria count reached 160,000 colonies per 100 ml. A bacteria count of 200 per 10 ml of sample signifies a water body is safe for primary contact, like swimming. Many streams in Duval County have bacteria counts in the tens of thousands. The Impaired Water link above will tell you if your creek or river is safe.

It's no wonder a DEP spokesman recently dismissed the possibilities the St. Johns River would ever again contain potable/drinkable water or produce edible shellfish. One hundred years ago we were drinking water from this river. Even a guy as young as me can remember oystering in Mayport in the early 60s. No more. In fact the state cautions women of childbearing age to eat no more than one largemouth bass, black crappie, red breast, or bluegill per month. This for St. Johns, Flagler, Clay, Seminole, Lake, Volusia, and Putnam counties.

The DEP is responsible for enforcing water quality standards. They've done a poor job of it lately, saying that the standards are too difficult to enforce. So what do they do? Instead of beefing up enforcement, they are right now actively attempting to lower the water quality standards for the St. Johns River. At the same time they're telling us these 'new' standards will improve the water quality — that same skewed logic was applied to lowering the numerical grading scale in public schools, then saying our students are

**(Continued: See St. Johns on page 3)**

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# Klausmeyer On Salt

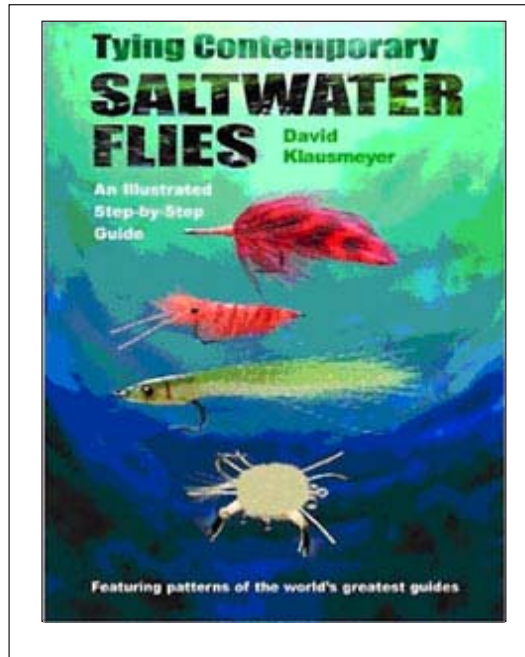
*Superb Photos Will Make This Book A Tying Classic*

**Tying Contemporary Saltwater Flies: An Illustrated Step-By-Step Guide;** Author: David Klausmeyer; Countryman Press, October 2002; 160 Pages; ISBN 0881505242

Do a search on Amazon.com for saltwater fly fishing and you are bound to get numerous hits. But, if you do a search on saltwater fly tying, you will find only a few available titles. As he relates in the introduction, the genesis of *Tying Contemporary Saltwater Flies* came out of David Klausmeyer's chance meeting of a bookseller who specializes in fly-fishing books. When Klausmeyer asked him what book hasn't been written, the bookseller responded, "A book about tying saltwater flies." From those auspicious beginnings, David Klausmeyer set out to write, what may be the finest book on saltwater fly tying.

Klausmeyer is the editor of *Fly Tyer* magazine and a senior editor of *American Angler* magazine. Those credentials alone make him uniquely qualified to write a book on fly tying. However, in writing this book, he turned to those folks who know best which flies work and which do not – professional saltwater guides. The result is a book full of saltwater flies that are effective and worthy of tying. You'll find recipes or instructions for old stand-bys like the Bendback, Whistler and Clouser Minnow as well as others like the Rootbeer Sugarloaf Special and the Soda Straw Shrimp that are making their first appearance in print.

The book is divided into seven chapters. With the exception of the first chapter, which is an introduction to tools and materials, each chapter pertains to a specific type of fly pattern, i.e. baitfish imitations, tarpon flies, shrimp patterns and epoxy flies. The chapter contains a brief introduction by the author about the corresponding fly patterns. Step-by-step instructions are included for thirteen individual flies followed by color photographs, recipes and discussions of over one-hundred other flies. Each set of step-by-step instructions is prefaced by a brief discussion of the fly, its origins and its use. The step-by-step instructions, which are clear and concise, are accompanied



*review by Jason Sheasley*

by detailed color photographs taken by Klausmeyer. The photographs and instructions are what make this book superb.

The flies in the book range for simple to moderately complex. It is not necessarily a book for the beginning fly tyer. However, a beginner who is a quick study will be able to learn to tie most of the patterns thanks to the step-by-step instructions. The flies are not the only thing salty about the book. The cover price of \$45 will likely keep the book out of the library of the casual fly tyer. Nevertheless, for those with a passion for fly tying, the book is well worth the price.

## **St. Johns River . . . from page 2**

getting smarter because they're showing higher letter grades.

Huh?

Not many people have studied the St. Johns River as thoroughly or as long as Dr. Quinten White, professor of biology and marine sciences at Jacksonville University and dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Here's what Dr. White had to say in an open letter to the Environmental Regulation Commission, care-of the Department of Environmental Protection:

"[The DEP's proposed lowering of the water-quality standard] is not about science; it is about money. It has taken us many years of using and abusing the St. Johns River to reach the critical stage we are at now. It will take lots of time, energy and money to correct the mistakes we unknowingly made in the past. Let us not make another mistake and lower our standards now. Let's enforce the existing standards and help the St. Johns River recover. If we don't do it now, then we are only delaying the decision that will cost our children and grandchildren billions of dollars more to correct in the future."

Well said Dr. White.

Well said, indeed.

# Jupiter For Snook and Albies

## *Dock Lights, Stern Waves, and Fussy Snook*

I took a long weekend recently to catch up with my old friends from the South Florida Fly Fishing Club and do my annual trek for snook under the dock lights and little tunny fishing offshore.

I met up with my old partner Carl and saw his new Gordon Waterman 18 boat. What a beautiful piece of technology. Carl had gotten a tip about a spot that might have tailing snook. When we got there, slow water movement meant no snook.

What I did find was a 4-pound jack crevalle that slammed my topwater deer hair fly (white and red Spanish Snook). That got the ball rolling.

Later that evening we motored to the dock lights for about 2 hours. The first dock light was loaded with 3-5 lb. snook and medium-sized mullet. They faced the current, popping and feeding on tiny little bait (probably shrimp). We got some pretty good casts on them but the fish had no interest. I'm sure the 4 people fishing on the dock on top of them had something to do with that. They were using shrimp bait and couldn't get them to eat!

We moved on and found some better lights where the fish would eat our polar fiber minnow flies. Especially the green light! Surprisingly the 1<sup>st</sup> fish landed was about 3- to 4-pound trout. Then my partner landed a 5-pound trout. We end up boating 3 snook, with the biggest at 5 pounds and those 2 big trout. Got to bed at midnight to wake up at 4:30am.

Saturday pre-dawn we drove to Jupiter and picked up some frozen glass minnows and sea salt for chumming. Jupiter has a very thin inlet where water moves at a brisk pace. Outside the inlet, a 2-foot southeast chop made it a slow ride to our hot.

On our arrival, we saw trolling boats pulling up kingfish. We started drifting, chumming and feeding our fast sinking fly lines into the chum line. There was no action for awhile, just the occasional wave breaking over the stern! Carl's new bilge pump got a pretty good work out.

Thirty minutes into the drift we finally hit a school of fish. The action began and didn't stop for about an hour or so. We ended boating 5 little tunny (AKA - false albacore, albies, or Fat Albert) and a huge blue runner. I had about a 4-minute fight with a kingfish that broke off at the boat.

We had some pretty good reel-screaming action that got all the bugs out of the equipment! Unfortunately, we lost some



*by Rich Santos*

equipment, but it was still worth the trip! If you're not either breaking or losing equipment, you're not catching many fish. When the action slowed, we went in for an afternoon nap.

That night, we fished the dock lights again and managed to get couple more snook. At 3 a.m., we stopped fishing and went back to the ramp to get some much needed sleep.

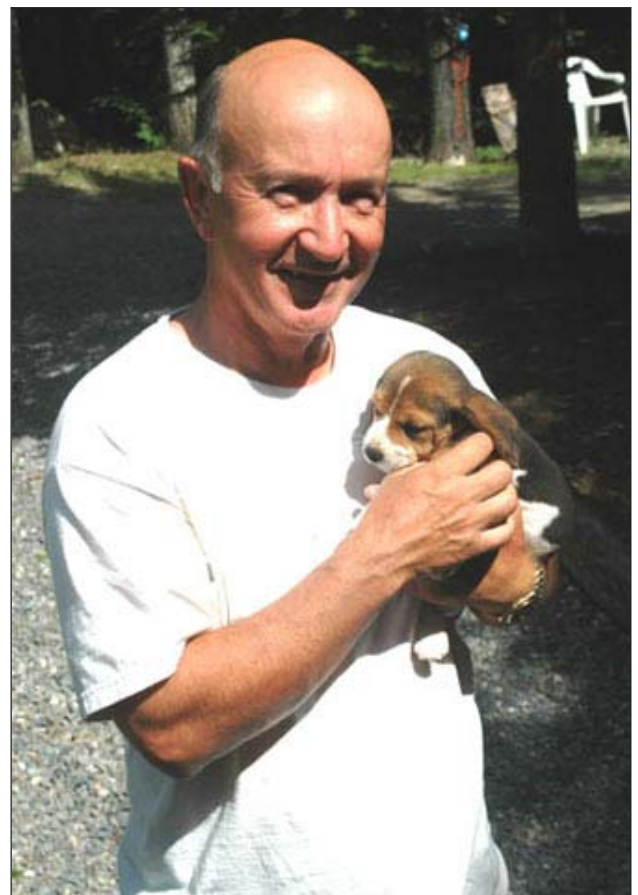
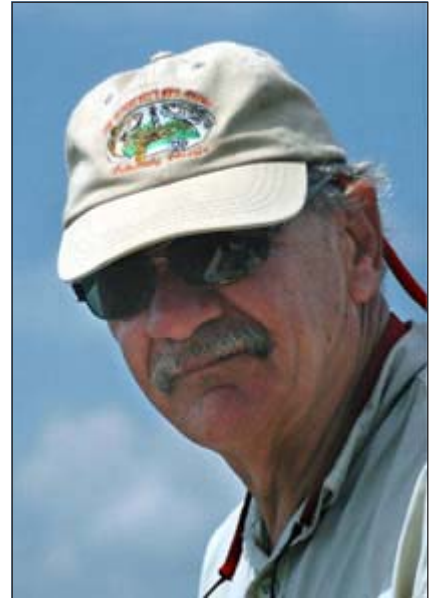
Here's an accident report.

I went up to get the truck and trailer to back down the ramp... Warning! Do not step into a grassy area at night! I decided to relieve myself before getting the truck and all of sudden my feet and ankles were on fire! Fire ant attack! I felt like I had sunburn from hell and itched like dog with bad fleas! To top it off right before my trip to Stuart I got stung by a bee in my office. Imagine that! I love when the outdoors beats me up! I sleep better! Still the trip was worth all of that and more.



**Dave Kudley Nets Sheepshead From Last Outing**





## *FCFF Photo Page*

Clockwise From Top Left: Dave Kudley shot This Black & White & Blue shot of Dick Choate near Cedar Point; Fearless Leader Mike McQuiston by Kudley; Lew Holliday with Beagle Pup from Maine; Big Talbot Kayaking; and Dick Michaelson with Clapboard Creek Redfish.





Above, Donn McKinnon Grass Flats Sequence. Bottom, Dick Michaelson in the Shadow of The Stacks

# For Sale For Sale For Sale

Make Offer. . .Quick Sale  
12 ft Indian River Square-Back



Must sell. 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. Approx 55 lbs. Make offer. *Trailer not included.* Call David Lambert, 904-241-4163 or 403-5525

## 14 Foot Stiffy Push Pole . . .\$100

STIFFY push pole is a 1.25" high visibility white fiberglass shaft, with gel coat impregnated throughout. 14' Long. Asking \$100. Retail for \$179. Excellent condition. Used only 10 times. Call Rich Santos (904)497-9736



## Capt. John Meskauskas Next Month

Capt. John Meskauskas will be FCFE's October speaker. John is a full time flyfishing and light tackle guide from Stuart, FL, where he was raised. His guide service is called Grand Slam Guide Service, both in reference to fishing as well as baseball. John spent three seasons in the Colorado Rockies organization and is still an avid baseball fan.

He guides out of a 2200 Pathfinder Tournament Edition and specializes in fishing the waters of the St. Lucie and Indian River lagoon as well as the beaches from Stuart to Fort Pierce. John is on the pro staff for Minn Kota trolling motors, Oakley sunglasses, Hummingbird electronics, and others.

Contact info: [www.stuartflyfishing.com](http://www.stuartflyfishing.com) or (772)529-4484

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