



Flies and Lies

Newsletter of the Fly Fishers of Northwest Florida

April, 2023

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Business Meeting

1ST Tuesday, 6:30 PM

Bull Session - Tying

2ND Thursday, 6:30 PM

Clinic -Casting, Tying,
Lunch - 3RD Saturday
9 AM

IT'S TIME!



DON'T DELAY, RENEW
YOUR MEMBERSHIP

DUES ARE DUE!

2023 Dues: \$35.00 renewal
(check payable to FFNWF) to

Larry Sisney - 3610 Baisden Rd. -Pensacola, Fl 32503

You may pay online at our website www.ffenwf.org. Click 'membership'

New Members : \$42.00 (cost includes a member nametag)

Club Meeting: Tuesday, April 4 6:30

The program will be a 45 minute travel documentary, *The Rocky Mountain Fly Highway*. Popcorn will be provided.

Fly Tying: Thursday, April 13. 6:30

Our Fly of the Month will be a traditional fresh water classic – The Black Nose Dace



Clinic: Saturday, April 15 9:00 am

 (same week as fly tying)

Our Chef of the Month will be Russ Shields. The menu will be grilled chicken breast sandwiches with some trimmings and beverages. Another traditional classic! **Joe**

The Prez Sez:

The Fly Fishing 101 course started off with a bang with 14 very enthusiastic students participating. The kickoff program was Capt. Baz's famous presentation on Pensacola area fly fishing and, as usual, it was enthusiastically received. The program will continue for the next 6 weeks at which time we will "graduate" 14 new fly fishers.

With April and warmer temperatures approaching, we look forward to some encouraging fishing reports very soon. And don't forget that our fundraising auction is scheduled for May 20th so dig through your gear and donate some of that surplus stuff that you have laying around.
Til next month.....Mick

Fishing with Capt. Baz

The most amazing thing about March was the incredible false albacore run in Santa Rosa Sound and the Big Lagoon. I first saw them on March 3. There were large schools of fish churning the surface in the channel just west of the Bob Sikes Bridge. It sure *looked* like false albacore, but in over 60 years of fishing these waters I'd never seen them so far up in the Sound. I got confirmation from my brother that night that some of his guide buddies had found them south of Shoreline Park earlier in the day. Maybe it was the unusually warm water that brought the baitfish into the bay. Who knows, but it was quite a treat that lasted a couple weeks. I'm embarrassed to say we never landed one; however, we hooked quite a few on a #6 Cowen's "albie anchovy" and 12# fluoro tippet. Broke every one of them off...

Last month's report ended with a photo of Steve Cobb with his first-ever redfish on February 20. My good client Ken Smith brought Steve on the trip with the hope that he would catch a redfish. Ken spent most of the day watching Steve and cheering him on. He finally took the



rod right before we lost sight of the school of redfish, but when he hooked his first and only fish the leader broke at a wind knot. I was sure sorry to have missed seeing that knot. Ken came back alone the following week, and once again we found a nice school of redfish. This time he got all the shots and landed these two beauties. It's nice when one of the good guys gets a break.

The Gulf was blown out during the first couple weeks of the month before a big cold front knocked it down flat on March 14. Jeff Nall was on the boat, and he was truly glad to be here. It was 19 degrees back home in Missouri, and we were chasing albies at Sherman Cove. The FA were spooky, and after breaking one off we decided to head to the Gulf. The wind was gusting out of the NNE when I pulled in by the Observation Tower to warm up. We had good sun and clear water so I poled us east along the edge of the inner bar. I hadn't seen any redfish along that beach in months and thought the dark area ahead of us was either a school of mullet or cownose rays. By the time I



realized they were redfish we were too close, and the school spooked before regrouping a hundred yards farther down the beach. This was one of the schools like we found last March. There were 50-75 redfish in a tight school floating and daisy-chaining with their fins out of the water. Spawning maybe? Matt Wegener

probably knows what was going on, but we really weren't too concerned about the biology. After waiting a few minutes I cranked up the engine and we ran a big semicircle around the fish, anchored on the bar, and waited for them. As expected they ambled in our direction, and Jeff picked one off with the EP grey/white baitfish. His fish took off to the west as the school passed us heading east.

After landing the redfish we ran east until we found the school and repeated the maneuver. When Jeff caught the second fish we took a lunch break and then found them again. By the time Jeff landed his fourth fish the school merged with another school of larger fish that was hidden in one of those little pockets inside



the sandbar 20' from shore. I poled us in to casting range, and Jeff hooked into an "unstoppable" bull. With his Tibor Riptide screaming he held on to his rod as the redfish crossed the bar and ran 50 yards into the backing. I poled us out into water deep enough for the motor, and we chased the fish. After 40 minutes Jeff had made good progress and brought the fish to the surface close enough for me to grab the leader. I underestimated the remaining strength of the fish and didn't release the line quickly enough when it surged away from the boat and popped the 16# leader. I looked back at Jeff, and he said: "It's okay, Baz. That's only the biggest fish I've had on in my entire life". Jeff's been fishing with me for 20 years and is my good friend and longest tenured client. He was just kidding me, but man did it hurt. Jeff ended up landing five redfish and returned the following day for some inshore sight-fishing where he landed this 10 pounder. Pretty good two days...



Another cold front came through that weekend, and the windchill was 38 degrees when Megan Nellen and I left the dock at 10am the following Monday. We crawled our way across a rough Pensacola Bay, spent some time looking for FA at Sherman Cove (they were AWOL), and then ran to the Gulf pulling in by the Observation Tower to thaw out. We had good sun and clear water, so I anchored on the inner bar and set Megan up with a "green weenie" hoping for redfish, pompano, or false albacore. I was itching to head east looking for redfish, but there was a solid 1-1/2' easterly swell slowing me down. So we sat there for an hour waiting for the wind to settle and "catching up" on our lives. Since we'd only seen three jacks and a single FA we decided to suck it up and head east waves and all. It wasn't as bad as we feared, and we found a school of redfish before we reached Battery Langdon. These fish were acting differently from the previous week's redfish. They were deeper in the water column and moving faster. Maybe there was a little hull slap, because the fish seemed to be on to us even from a hundred feet away. Megan made numerous good casts, but the fish showed no interest in the fly. We decided to leave them alone and ran east to a nice secluded spot and had lunch.

By the time we finished our sandwiches the wind and seas diminished and it got very nice. Megan got up on the bow and had multiple shots at single and double redfish cruising along the dropoff. We got a momentary thrill when a pompano swimming with a big redfish followed her fly for 10' before refusing it. Then in the distance we saw the school of redfish, but now they were tightly packed together on top with their fins breaking the surface just like last week. The fish had no idea we were there when they came into casting range, and this 16 pounder quickly grabbed Megan's EP minnow. Her Orvis Helios II 8wt and Hydros IV reel were a good match for the fish, and she was able to land it in 20 minutes. We regrouped and ran east until we found the school, and Megan landed another similar sized fish. After we released it a heavy



cloud layer descended upon us, and we lost our light. We could've quit then but decided to pole around in the glare and haze hoping for a miracle. After a half hour of fruitless poling we motored back to the general area where we had caught the previous fish and poled along the sandbar in the shallow water. Visibility from the platform was reduced to 100'. It was tough, bordering on impossible, and starting to feel like a waste of time when at 3:30 a big school of redfish appeared to the south of us coming straight at the boat. With the wind at her back Megan fired off a 70' cast that dropped the EP minnow 15' ahead of the



school and directly in their path. She let it sink. On the first long strip a huge fish surged forward, inhaled the fly, turned and ran south for the deeper water in the draw. She couldn't see *the take* because of the glare, but I got to see every second of it. Just like the previous week, as the drag spun I poled hard across the bar to water deep enough to fire up the engine and ran after the fish. No doubt we were outgunned this time. Megan was bowed up to the max, and I was advising her on not breaking her rod . It was a stalemate. The fish was right down on the bottom in 16' of water trying all the usual tactics. Megan was intent on keeping slack out of the line and maneuvering around the boat as necessary. I was motoring the boat trying to keep the line out of the prop and off the trim tabs. An hour passed. I instructed Megan to not touch the drag for another hour. She thought I was kidding... The battle continued, and at 5:30 I reached over and carefully added 2 clicks of drag. She was working the fish as hard as possible, but it wouldn't give an inch. She'd gain 2' and then lose 3'. When we reached 3 hours I started getting more aggressive with the drag adding another 6-8 clicks over the next half hour. At 7pm the sun was setting, and I told her it was time to go. We had to land the fish or break it off. I suggested trying to "handline" it in, but that 90% of the time we'd pop the 16# tippet. We finally decided to reel down as far as possible with the rod deep in the water pointing straight at the fish as I tried to gently handline it up. When I added a little bit of extra pressure the fish turned its head up. Then with more steady pressure it slowly swam to the surface where we got it in the net.

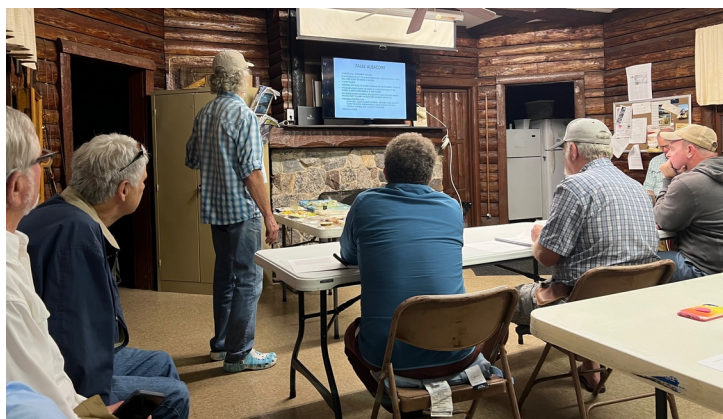


The redfish was huge...ridiculous for 8wt tackle. We snapped a quick photo but didn't take time to weigh or measure it. Naturally I was concerned for its health after such a long fight, but the fish didn't seem at all phased by the experience. I quickly got her back in the water and she immediately started kicking to get back down. It was almost like she was just playing with us until those final five minutes, but nevertheless we were quite relieved to see her swim away. The sun was down as we ran hard to Pickens Point. We made the turn and hurried across the bay skimming across the tops of the NE chop in the failing light. It was nearly dark when I picked out the familiar 4 second red light

of the Deer Point channel marker, and we tied up at the dock in total darkness basking in the afterglow of an epic adventure we'll never forget.

Capt Baz

Opening Night – Fly Fishing 101 – Capt Baz



Fly of the Month – The Black Nose Dace

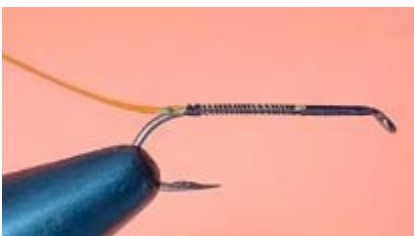
This is a repeat of a Fly of the Month article by club fly tying legend, Tom Regina, from 2006. George Norton will lead the session April 13.

This month's featured streamer fly is the Black Nose Dace, an effective imitation of that minnow. The black nose dace is a small bait fish that grows to about 2 inches in length. The black nose dace is distinguished from other minnows by the black lateral line which extends from the mouth through the eye to the tail. The body is rounded and plump in the front and compressed behind. The back is olive-green to dark brown while the lower sides and belly are silvery-white. This minnow is found on both sides of the Appalachian Mountains in Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama, north into Canada and Nova Scotia, and as far west as the Dakotas. The black nose dace inhabits small, rapid streams and rivers with rocky or gravelly bottoms but is seldom found in lakes and ponds. If the waters you fish are inhabited by black nose dace then this streamer fly is one you don't want to be without. Even if your stream or river waters have no dace population, carry a few of these streamers. Its an excellent searching pattern.



Hook Streamer 3X to 6X long, size 6,8,10, or 12. We will use a Mustad 9672 (3XL) size 6
Thread 6/0 black
Body Flat silver Mylar tinsel
Midwing Black bucktail
Head Epoxy (optional)
Tail Red wool yarn
Underwing White bucktail
Overwing Brown bucktail
Eyes Paint or stick on (optional)

Tying Instructions (Do not over dress)



Debarb and mount the hook in the vise. Using a jam knot start the thread about two hooks eye distance back from the hook eye. In tight touching turns lay down a smooth neat thread base for a distance 1/4" back from the hook eye. At this point tie in about a 5" piece of flat silver Mylar tinsel gold side up on top of the hook shank with the running part of the tinsel extending back over the back of the hook bend. (Note: Flat Mylar tinsel comes in several sizes or widths. Most flat Mylar tinsel is

gold on one side, silver on the other. To use the silver side tie the tinsel onto the hook gold side up. When the tinsel is wound around the hook shank the silver side will be out. Visa versa for gold side out). Continue wrapping the thread around the hook and over the tinsel to the hook bend.

2. For the tail cut about a 2" piece of red yarn from the skeen. Tie the yarn on at the bend. The tail should extend back over the hook bend a distance equal to about one hook gap.



3. Pull the tag end of the yarn forward over the top of the hook shank and advance the thread forward in close spiral wraps to tie the yarn on top of the hook. Stop the thread wraps short of the thread tie-on point. Cut away the yarn tag end at a shallow angle and cover the angle cut with a few thread wraps.

4. Wrap the tinsel forward in slightly overlapping turns to the point where the back of the yarn shallow angle cut started. Tie off the tinsel and cut away the tag end.





5. Cut a small amount of white hair from the white bucktail for the underwing. Remove any fuzz or underbody hair from the butts and tips. Stack the hair to even the tips. (Clue - It's fine if the hair tips are not perfectly aligned. Staggered hair ends feather out naturally and appear tapered in the water). Measure the hair so when tied in by the butts, the tips will extend just past the end of the tail. Tie the hair in at the front of the body as shown in the picture. Use only 5 to 8 thread wraps to secure the hair. Do not allow the hair to migrate around the hook shank/body.

6. The black bucktail hair for the midwing should be less bulk than the white and brown hair. The black midwing, remember, represents the lateral line of this minnow imitation. The bulk of the midwing should be less than half the white and brown hair. Follow the procedures in step 5 and tie the black hair on top of the white.



7. The overwing of brown bucktail hair should be about the same bulk as the white underwing. Follow the procedures in step 5 and tie the brown hair on top of the black. 8. With the tying thread, build a relatively large neatly tapered head. Whip finish or half hitch the head. Cut away the thread and apply head cement. To make the streamer more pleasingly aesthetic for the angler the head can be epoxied and eyes applied. But the fish don't care... right Tom?

Like other streamers, the Black Nose Dace fly should not be forsaken when the water is high, cold, or murky. Use the Black Nose Dace and other streamers when salmonid are in shallow water but not aggressively devouring aquatic or terrestrial bugs. Fish streamers shallow with floating or sinking-tip lines with longer leaders, or deep with sinking lines and short leaders. Fish streamers across tailouts of pools, in low light, and to tempt brawny trout out of the deep. Position yourself upstream and at the edge of tailouts. Cast across the tailout. Let the streamer swing down to where the water shelves up. Twitch retrieve the streamer through the tailout shallows. Discipline yourself not to set the hook when you see the V-wake of Mr. Big Trout following your presentation... wait until you feel the fish... strike... hold on, then tell me how you disciplined yourself. **Tom Regina 2006**

Reminiscing the Days with the Dace In 2004 I was heading up to North Carolina to fish with Art and four other guys. I had never really fly fished for trout before and was a new member of our club. I asked Travis Aikens what fly I should tie for the trip and he suggested I tie a Black Nosed Dace. I researched it and tied several on size 10 hooks. We started fishing early on a gloomy Monday morning. I fished about 150 yards south of the bridge, and on my second cast I caught a nice 13 inch rainbow, my first on a fly and that fly was the Black Nosed Dace that I had tied! It started raining pretty hard and went back to the cabin. It rained for three days! We got flooded out, and came home! That was one of the worst rains on the "Tuck" and all the rivers and streams overflowed their banks causing lots of damage but I had my first fish on a fly that I had tied myself and this something you just do not forget! **Russ Shields**

The Auction is Coming! Saturday, May 20. We have sold most of the estate donations so we are back to a traditional auction with tackle donated by our members (you!). There will be no clinic – just the Auction.





March Clinic

FFNWF March 7, 2023 Meeting Minutes by G. Norton

1830 Meeting called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance

President's comments: The Fly Fishing 101 Class opens Monday, March 13, with Capt. Baz making his famous opening presentation (worth the cost of tuition all by itself). The enrollment of the class is full.

The Auction will be May 20: There will be no clinic. Please bring your donations before the auction. Thanks.

Club dues for 2023 are due. Please pay Larry as soon as possible.

Treasurer's Report: Larry reported monthly revenue from dues, the class, beer and reel sales, less expenses for the Saturday clinic, beer, water, and fly tying materials. Income exceeds expenses. The treasurer's report was approved.

Presentation: George Norton on warm water fly fishing opportunism in Arkansas. Most fly fishers travel to the renowned trout rivers and streams and our club members are no exception. George lived in Little Rock for eight years before moving to Pensacola and returns every year for trout, but also for warm water species. The state has cool water striped bass and walleyes that run up tributary rivers in late winter to spring. Striped bass on top water poppers are every bit as exciting as the running of the bull reds. Arkansas is the southern range for walleye. Smallmouth bass in rivers and lakes, largemouth and spotted bass and panfish on a fly in a variety of water. The eighty-mile long Buffalo River features spectacular canyons that you don't see on the trout rivers. When reservoirs are generating for hydroelectric power, options in warm water are a good alternative.

George gave information on where to go and stay from a yurt at Petit Jean State Park on a small lake to resorts at two big lakes (Norfolk and Ouachita). He also covered the state's topography and two mountain ranges (Ozarks and the Ouachita's) that run east to west and are really high plateaus.

FFI Gulf Coast Conclave in Gulf Shores State Park May 4-6th – see flyer below. The cost for the three day is \$20 plus \$20 for the film festival. Details are available on the FFI web site. Anyone interested in volunteering should go tovolunteers@ffigcc.org and the deadline to sign up is April 1st.

Fishing Reports: The winter doldrums suddenly exploded with a run of false albacore in the Bay and the surf. George connected on March 8 after a lot of dry runs this winter. The water was choppy with a brisk east wind and no one wanted to go out due to weather and recent lack of fish, but diving gulls gave them away in the Bay. The first cast resulted in a hook up and took him deep into his backing, and then the reel fell apart. The fly was one we tied in the club (slinky anchovy size 6). After a phone call to the factory to get help reassembling his Liquid Lamson reel, he landed the second fish but the smooth drag lost its smooth give and the third fish broke off. He had no back up fly reel with him. The next week he guided Wolfgang in the Bay on March 15. They found the fish between Ft. Pickens and the Navy Base but the fish only came up for a few seconds and they had only a few shots and no hook ups. They tried both chasing and killing the motor and waiting for them to show up which is tough when fish are working under gulls 100 yards away.

First Club Trip to Port St. Joe on April 5-6th for two nights at the Dixie Belle Motel to wade and kayak fish. They plan to leave early Wednesday out of Pensacola. Call or see Wolfgang or George if interested. The motel is 120 miles from Pensacola and a three-hour drive. I have never fished there so research will be on site. The second club trip will be to Port Pickens in early May TBA when the water warms up for wading. George plans a trip for Shoal bass in June in Florida (day trip floating in a canoe) to the Chipola River. Details TBA.

Meeting Adjourned at 1920

Future events:

The Gulf Coast Council – 12 clubs including FFNWF will host a **Fly Fishing Conclave at Gulf Shores State Park the first weekend of May**. The park has a 200 seat auditorium, three classrooms for seminars with fly tying and casting instruction. Fly fishing films will be shown. A fly-fishing tournament will be held on Friday details TBA. Don't miss it.

- Seminars
- Fly tying demonstrations
- Fly Tying Theatre
- Exhibitors and vendors
- Beginner fly casting instruction (free with admission)
- Beginner fly tying instruction (free with admission)
- Fly tying workshops (registration required)
- Casting workshops (registration required)
- Fishing Tournament (registration required)
- Fly Fishing Film Tour (F3T) (ticket purchase required, limited seating)
- "Lunch & Listen" conservation roundtable
- Raffles & silent auction for great items

