



# Flies and Lies

Newsletter of the Fly Fishers of Northwest Florida

May, 2024

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Business Meeting  
1T Tuesday, 6:30 PM

Bull Session - Tying  
2ND Thursday, 6:30

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

# Auction Time!!

## But first:

### Club Meeting – Tuesday, May 7 6:30

Steve Hofmann will present "Fly Lines" - selection, maintenance and up-keep. And, just two nights later:

### Fly Tying – Thursday, May 9 6:30

Tarpon Bob Korose will present **The Double Bunny** – a fly so effective it was banned from trout fishing competition (seriously!)

## And then:

### The Auction – Saturday, May 18 9:00

Dear Members; This Year's Club auction is almost upon us! Besides the usual fly fishing gear and fishing trips for sale we also have a great deal of spin fishing gear. So, invite your spin fishing friends and their check-books to our annual club auction. Steve Hofmann, Auction Chair

**10 Fly rods** including Orvis & Scott. Most are "like new" condition

**6 Fly reels** including Orvis and Ross. Some Orvis reels in their original boxes. Most reels are supplied with fly line.

**3 Fly rod and reel** combo units

**Fly tying equipment:** ( including kits and vices- one Renzetti traveler vice)

**14 Boxes** full of flies (Over 520 flies , mostly trout flies)

**Fishing Trips with Capt Baz and Capt Richard Montgomery**

**New this year** - We have over 600 spinning lures spread over 17 tackle boxes. And reels and rods... So bring your spin fishing friends

And miscellaneous gear like: nets backpacks, vests, tools, and jackets,

**PLEASE COME OUT AND SUPPORT YOUR CLUB!!**

Steve Hofmann, Auction Chair

# Fishing with Capt Baz **The Emerald Coast Grand Slam!**

The first half of April was frustrating due to the wind and rain. I cancelled all my trips except one, and on that day all we found were Spanish mackerel and a few redfish with lockjaw. I knew the pompano and jack crevalle were here, but the Gulf was just too rough for my skiffs. Around mid-month I got a call from Gulf Breeze resident Kyle Purnell who had been awarded a two-day fly-fishing trip by his employer. Kyle knew from my website that he needed to be able to cast 50', and he had been practicing in his yard. I was impressed that he'd done his "due diligence" and agreed to take him out on April 19. The only problem was he owned a boat, so I couldn't take him to my best spots. I planned to start the trip at Town Point, where I could assess his casting and maybe catch a few Spanish.

When Kyle showed up early at the dock, the first thing I noticed was his demeanor. He was friendly, but obviously serious and focused on the fishing. I was impressed with his maturity at 35 years. He reminded me a lot of a younger Travis Akins in his stature, speech, and understated level of self-confidence. I liked him immediately and decided to take him wherever we needed to go, even if he did have a boat.

We had a blast with the Spanish. The NE morning breeze was at his back, and Kyle was easily casting 50-60'. We stayed there for a couple hours steadily catching fish and working on stripping techniques and strip-setting. When the wind shifted to the south, we moved across the sound and poled the shoreline casting from time-to-time at fleeing redfish. Later, with the sun straight overhead, we ran down to the Big Lagoon for lunch



and spent the afternoon poling east with the sun at our backs. There were plenty of redfish, and Kyle got the redfish skunk out of the boat immediately with this little guy. At the end of the trip, he executed a nice cast into the wind and landed a beauty...his best-ever redfish on fly. Kyle's performance



award was for two days of fishing. I wanted the second trip to be in the Gulf, and my next open day with good conditions was April 25. Kyle could be available, so we booked it.

I had a great day in the Gulf a few days before our next trip. We found good numbers of jack crevalle for the first time this year and landed a big one on fly. I also knew the location of a school of redfish close to shore that might be amenable to eating the fly. Could we possibly find a pompano? The shore break was forecast at 1-2' which would be challenging but possible. I was thinking about the *Emerald Coast Grand Slam* the night before as I prepared the tackle.

Kyle arrived at 0900 and our first order of business was initiating him on big-game tackle. He had not cast anything bigger than a 9, and my old Sage RPLXi 11wt with fighting grip was a new experience. It took him only a few casts to get the feel of it, and we bolted for the pass running at high speed across glassy water.

We turned east into the sun, and after about a minute a big dark mass the size of a tennis court appeared a couple hundred feet ahead of us. I slammed on the brakes, killed the engine, and we drifted toward the mass trying to determine if it was fish. To our delight it was a school of jacks and they regrouped and began moving in our direction.

What I'd learned a few days before was that these are "early season", cooler-water jacks that are much more skittish than those that appear later. These fish will many times run from a popper or a "teaser" plug, so I had Kyle throwing the large clouser that had worked earlier in the week. There was a little breeze, and he struggled getting the fly to the fish. Plus, they spooked from the heavy RIO *Outbound Short* line hitting the water. I tried the teaser plug which totally freaked them out, and



the whole school ran a few hundred yards and started daisy chaining. It was time for a fly change, and I went with the old tried and true chartreuse big-game deceiver, and this time it worked. Kyle made a nice cast, and a fish crushed it. He did a fine job on the hookset and keeping the line tight as the fish circled frantically around the boat. Eventually the school swam away with Kyle's fish trying to keep up, and he was able to clear his line and get the jack on the reel. After a hard-fought 20-30 minutes, we netted the fish and got the photo.

We saw Capt Dan coming along the outer bar and waved him over. I knew he had a photographer on his boat hoping for some good jack crevalle video. When I pointed out the school and told him to have at it, he asked me if we caught one. I said yes, and he replied "I can feel a *SLAM* coming". I thanked him for the jinx, and off we went looking for redfish...

We found the school of redfish tucked in tight to shore inside the inner bar. I had an up lined 8wt ready with my new "custom" EP pale-yellow tarpon fly that the redfish love. The problem was getting to the fish. The shore break was a solid 1-2' with an occasional larger wave in the mix. I had the bow leaning post in place and my new "sissy" bar installed on the poling platform, and we went in after them. It was a wild ride, but the fish let us get within casting range. After a few erratic shots, Kyle got the fly into the school and let it sink. When he stripped a fish grabbed it, but it was a big Spanish mackerel! He fought it while I jockeyed the skiff out of the breakers, but it didn't take long for the line to go slack. Big Spanish mackerel and 20# fluorocarbon are a bad combination.

The redfish moved off the shore and swam down the inner bar while we regrouped. Once again it was time for a fly change, and I went with one of Travis Akins' "shrimp" clousers. We needed to get the fly deeper into the school, and I've caught them on this fly before. We made the change and poled after the fish, eventually cranking up the motor so we could get in position. The fish had moved back to shore, and we had to pole through the shore break again to reach them. The wind picked up making casting difficult especially with the heavy fly, but Kyle persisted making cast after cast until he eventually got a good cast into the redfish. A fish grabbed it, but this time it was a pompano! He did his best keeping the barbless hook from falling out as the pompano went berserk and I fought the waves and shallow water getting the boat to safety. We got far enough out that I could get off the platform and help. After a short fight we netted the fish and got the photo.



It was only noon, and we felt good having the whole afternoon to catch a redfish. We decided to leave the school of beach redfish behind and run back to the Big Lagoon where we'd had success the previous week. The plan was to anchor up, have some lunch, and then get the redfish. After a long run back to the lagoon, we found a nice spot, dropped the anchor, and started to get the lunches out. That's when the phone rang. It was Capt Dan who said, "Got your redfish yet?" I told him we had the pompano and were just preparing to go for the redfish, and he suggested we consider coming back to the Gulf. He and his anglers had been following a school of redfish for a couple hours, had caught two, and were ready to head back in. He told me exactly where they were, and they were "all mine".

This is the kind of thing that happens often in my business. I've got my plan together, and someone calls with a hot tip that's hard to pass up. The problem is it never works. Something always happens that changes the perfect situation they are enjoying. Jet skis, wind shift, something bad screws it up, but you're still tempted. The only time in the last ten years that I can remember it paying off was

when Capt Eddie Woodall called me in on a school of jacks in the Gulf out in front of Battery Langdon. I was anchored at Town Point with Bruce Trumbull trying to catch his first jack, and we ran all the way out there and the school was right where Eddie said it'd be. Bruce landed one and got the monkey off his back.

Capt Dan is as dependable as they come, so after talking about it we pulled the anchor, and Kyle ate his lunch while we ran back out there. We found the fish right where Dan said they'd be, but the problem was getting to them. The wind was blowing 10-15 from the south, and the strong outgoing tide was flowing right into it. The waves were standing up making it impossible to pole the boat, so I had to motor into position. Of course, the redfish didn't like that and continued to move out of range. It'd chosen a clouser, so Kyle could get the fly down in the school, but he was having a hard time casting it in the wind. It required a long cast which left line all over the boat getting tangled in everything possible. He tried and tried, but it just wasn't happening and that's about when the jet skis showed up. There was a pod of dolphins close by, and they had to get right in there with them. It was a nightmare, and I told Kyle I'd had it. We moved to some less turbulent water a hundred yards away, and I ate my lunch.

We were both happy to be done with those fish and looked forward to being back up in the lagoon poling the calm water close to shore with the sun at our backs. After a while the jet skis left, but I could still see the school of redfish holding in the fast water. It was hard to leave them without one last shot, and I decided to try a different tactic. I switched to an easier-to-cast EP minnow and



motored around the school and then up current a couple hundred feet. The plan was to drift with the current to the side of the school while Kyle cast into them. It called for a tough cast into the wind, but it was our best shot. The school was holding steady facing up current as we drifted toward them. As it unfolded, I realized that all we had to do was drop the anchor up stream, and the fly would swing straight into the school. And that's how we did it. The boat stopped short of the standing waves where the fish were, and Kyle made a cast across the current and played out line until the fly reached the target. A couple strips, and he was on. I pulled the anchor, fired up the motor, and maneuvered the boat through the chop to softer water where we landed the redfish.

**The *EMERALD COAST GRAND SLAM* was in the books for just the 5<sup>th</sup> time in 20 years! Hearty congratulations to Kyle Purnell!**

I want to leave you with some other terrific catches. First is Hunter Hargis on April 22 with the first jack crevalle of the year. It was his first-ever jack on fly. Next is Greg Hawley from Birmingham with a phenomenal jack crevalle landed April 26 in the Big Lagoon. And finally, another shot of Hunter with the best speckled trout of the year landed and released unharmed on April 24.



It's happening out there, boys and girls. Time to get on the water

***Capt Baz***

# This Weekend: South and East FFI Fly Fishing Classic Gulf State Park in Gulf Shores May 3 and 4

## Fly Fishing 101

As the 2024 FF101 class nears completion, the students were enlightened with a brief life cycle summary and fly tying instructions of the Caddis fly, (Trichoptera). Jerry Giles with his keen knowledge of aquatic insects and Phil Hartz with his fly tying technique guided the students in all phases of the Caddis fly. Well done. And many thanks to our certified casting instructor, Capt. Richard Montgomery

*Jay Brykczynski*



From Wolfgang's presentation on Tarpon in Campeche, Mexico



Gary Pheabus doing tying instruction at PHW meetings

# Fly of the Month **Double Bunny Streamer Variant** by Bob Korose

The Double Bunny streamer, a creation of Scott Sanchez, was so effective as a trout fly that it took the famed Jackson Hole "One Fly" tournament in the early '90s for 3-years running and was barred from future tournaments in 1995. Since then, it has also been effectively used in warm water fisheries for bass and others. I felt that tied in the appropriate size and color it should be effective for saltwater fish in our area also. I recently tied a size 2 tan and olive version with yellow eyes and a red head and fished it in the bay and found that Spanish mackerel liked it too.



Chris Williams provided the following tying instructions:

<https://fatfingeredflytyer.com/double-bunny-streamer-step-by-step/>

## Materials:

Hook:	Gamakatsu BS10 Size 2	Thread:	White flat waxed nylon 3/0.
Head:	Red thread or red marker.	Eyes:	yellow dumbbell size med
Belly:	Tan 1/8 " zonker strip	Back:	Olive 1/8" zonker strip
Flash:	Body silver. Lateral line copper.	Glue:	Super Glue

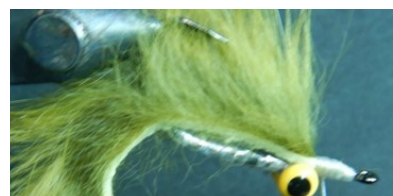
## Tying Instructions:



Step 1: Debarb the hook. Take a 2" piece of olive zonker and push the point of the hook through the middle of the leather side. Place the hook in the vice and start a thread wrap behind the hook eye and wind rearward. Tie in dumbbell eyes 1/3 way back to the bend.

Step 2. Tie in body flash to bend of hook and return thread to in front of eye.

Step 3. Wrap flash forward to the eyes and tie down behind eyes. Trim off excess. Return thread to in front of eyes. Put in half hitch with thread.



Step 4. Remove the hook from the vice and turn upside down with hook point up. Rotate the zonker with the flow going toward the back and tie the front down in front of the eyes. Trim excess. Make a thread head and whip.

Step 5. Tie in the middle of the lateral line flash in front of the eyes on the side facing you. The flash should extend just past the end of the zonker.



Step 6. Remove the hook from the vice and turn upside down. Take the forward flash and tie it down in front of the eyes extending back and trim just beyond the end of the zonker.

Step 7. Tie on the tan zonker in front of the eyes with the flow going to the rear. Whip finish the head. Color with marker or tie on red thread and whip finish. Seal with head cement or UV.



Step 8. Lift the tan zonker strip and apply super glue to the hook shank & leather from bottom olive zonker strip. Press the tan zonker strip down onto the olive strip allowing super glue to set. Trim the shape, if desired.

## **General Meeting April 2, 2024 Minutes** by George Norton

**1830** The President Called the Meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes** from Last Month were approved

**Treasurer's Report:** Income was from dues, 101 class, beverages, and class textbooks. Expenses included re-stocking the refrigerator, fly tying materials for the 101 class and club, clinic food and the president's shirt. There is a healthy balance in our checking account. Report was approved; motion by George, second by Steve..

**Events:** FFI May 3-4 at Gulf Shores State Park as reported in early newsletters

**Auction:** May 18 on Saturday instead of the monthly clinic

**101 Class:** Russ reported it is going well.

### **Presentation by Wolfgang Szutie: "Fly Fishing Tarpon Town: Campeche, Mexico**

Wolfgang has a wealth of experience in international fly fishing for tarpon and bonefish along with club member, Tarpon Bob Korose. Both men are great resources on overseas fly fishing trips. Wolfgang's trip occurred in May, 2022. He landed many tarpon from five to thirty pounds and a few snook. He booked his trip with "Fishing with Larry," a well-known outfitter who is also used and recommended by Tarpon Bob.

Wolfgang took us through his well planned trip to Campeche. He flew into Merida and was met by the outfitter. The first day he toured the Mayan ruins right outside Campeche followed by six days of non-stop fly fishing in a skinny twenty-five foot panga guided by Raul, a Mexican who spoke good English. Wolfgang felt very safe and comfortable with Raul who knows the area like the back of his hand.

Every day they left the dock at 6 AM and motored almost an hour to one of Raul's hotspots with mangrove shorelines. The action was fast and furious for the first two hours. Wolfgang said "tarpon threw the hook frequently and got away about 75% of the time; but the thrill of jumping tarpon overruled losing fish as you got to see them. Tarpon Bob said that he once hooked twenty-five in a morning and felt fortunate to have landed about half, though he cautioned the action isn't always that good.

How to play tarpon when they jump led to an interesting discussion. There was some disagreement but bowing to the tarpon when they jump is the generally accepted way to play them as you want slack in the line. On Wolfgang's first day he landed eight to ten but had many more hook ups. Some broke him off. His nine foot leader was 40-30-40 pound mono with loop to loop sections.

The rest of the trip followed a similar pattern of fast action early in the day and then having to work hard the rest of the day for more fish. One day they got deep into a backwater creek full of fish but casting was just too tough in the tight jungle. Other times they ventured offshore looking for fish. Tidal movements were a big factor in timing the best action. Many times Wolfgang came across large groups of tarpon rolling. The best flies were black and purple early in the day and white later. The heat was something you had to be prepared for; just like Florida in the summer. Campeche is loaded with juvenile tarpon but not the big fish. Next year several club members are planning a trip to Campeche. For further information about Campeche talk to Wolfgang or Tarpon Bob.

Flies are supplied by the outfitter but it is wise to bring some of your own. Some suggestions were gurglers, micro minnow, tarpon toad, cockroach and the purple egg sucking leach. The outfitter can guide you on which flies to bring. Don't forget to bring a backup eight rod. You only need floating lines. Thanks Wolfgang! Great job.

**Fishing Reports:** Steve H reported seeing lots of reds seen along the beach on a recent charter but they wouldn't hit any flies. Bob K went to Christmas Island for bonefish but catches were down due to poor weather, but he still managed to catch some other unusual species. George and his wife, Janie enjoyed their trip to Holly Lake in Defuniak Springs. He caught a number of bass (no big ones) fly casting poppers and streamers. George also reported that Spanish mackerel showed up in the Bay in April but it was hit and miss with a lot of running around to find any. Terry reported he did well on Spanish. May should get better inshore when the water gets into the mid 70's and the big ladyfish show along the beaches and the bay along with more Spanish and bluefish. May is also a good month for trout and redfish inshore.

**1945** the Meeting was adjourned

**Coming:** Ducks Unlimited is sponsoring a fly fishing tournament in Bay St. Louis in July.  
Info: ["Crab Slinger" FFT- Captains Meeting": Fri, Jul 12, 2024 \(myeventscenter.com\)](https://myeventscenter.com)

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