

# The Leader



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FLY FISHERS  
INTERNATIONAL

## Fishin' Tales

by Julia Bell

Spring is here and “The bite is on!” I am seeing many people sharing their recent adventures on the water or tying fly patterns in preparation to be on the water. While the '20 and '21 spring seasons differ greatly than our lives' previous springs, I am reminded of a much-loved hymn whose opening line is “When peace, like a river, attendeth my way...,” because we continue to find recreation, joy, and solace that only being on the water chasing fish brings, whether we are with others or are alone. After learning of the hospice care and then passing of long-time DFF member Richard Blair, I went fishing in a local creek for some fond remembrances of Richard, who shared his passion for life and fly fishing with anyone, but particularly newcomers, me included. At a DIVA's event in early 2008, Richard challenged me to learn to fish small rods (I owned nothing smaller than a 7# rod at the time). What a great gesture, as it expanded not only my skill, but it opened more opportunities and waters to fish. Thanks to Richard, I now have rods in

each weight through 10# and a 12# and love using them for specific waters and fish. We miss you, Richard and send comforting thoughts and prayers to Diane.

Slowly, we are beginning to share our adventures and future fishing plans with one another, in person! The Fly Fish & Brewfest, the TRWD Fly Fest, and the resumption of the monthly Fly Tying Night with Kristian at Tailwaters demonstrated how much we are wanting to celebrate fly fishing together. I enjoyed seeing fellow members in March at our meeting and White Bass Run outing and am looking forward to our in-person, April meeting and outing to the Gannon Ranch in Ellis County. Normalcy is shaping up nicely, but we will continue our virtual airings, as well, as part of our “new normal.” Joining us in March are our new members: Ben Hines; Andrew Turner; Erik Fosheim; and John Amendt, and from January and February: Coley Johnson; Mark Brown; Margaret Christian; Lee Simpson; and Carter McCowan. Please accompany me in welcoming our newest members to the club.

We will be making a change with our social media in the next few weeks. Our Facebook page will be for our current, paid memberships, while our new Instagram page will be for anyone who wants to talk about Dallas fly fishing. Be sure to follow us on Instagram and use the tags @dallasflyfishers and #dallasflyfishers.

All things DFF, meetings, outings, education, seem to happen when and how they are supposed to occur, which is a testament to the dedication of the wonderful Board members. We do have two Board vacancies we would

like to fill; one is the Outings Chair and the other is the Fly Tying Chair. If you know of a member you would like to nominate or have any interest yourself in helping serve the club in either of these positions, please contact any one of the Board members. We would love to have you fill these roles.

May the peacefulness of the river attend your way as we move further into our springtime fishing activities, and I'm looking forward to seeing you at April's meeting and tying session with Kevin Hutchison, because we're in for a funny and educational time.

**Here's to bent tips and happy days,**

*- Julia*

*President, Dallas FlyFishers*

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Richard Blair

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## DFF Speaker Details

The Dallas Flyfishers regular meetings normally are on the first Monday of the month. Watch your E-Mail for information on meeting site. The April Speaker wants to meet in the Hotel at 5 and tie flies. Then at 7 will be the meeting. It can also be experienced as a Zoom Meeting.

### April Meeting, Kevin Hutchison.

Kevin Hutchison is the owner of Hill Country Flyfishers, an Austin-area based guiding and instructional company. He is the author of many articles on fly fishing in the Texas Hill Country, including the book *Fly Fishing the Texas Hill Country*, Fourth Edition, and frequently speaks on the subject to fly fishing groups across the state and country. He has introduced hundreds to the joys of fly fishing using the innovative casting instructional techniques he has developed. Kevin is a FFI certified casting instructor and former "Teacher of The Year" for the Southern Council of the FFI. He spent 4 years with the National 4-H Sportfish training staff and served as lead instructor in the Texas Parks and Wildlife "Becoming an Outdoor Woman" program for 11 years. He also served on the International Education Advisory board for the Cortland Company. Kevin is also a master fly-tyer and has developed flies specifically targeted to fishing the Texas hill country waters. He was formerly with AK Best Fly Tying Pro Staff. Kevin is regularly invited to demonstrate his innovative patterns to fly tying groups. Kevin is passionate about every aspect of flyfishing and dedicated to spreading awareness of what a wonderful resource we have in the rivers of the Texas hill country. He is the founder and former president of the Central Texas Flyfishers in San Marcos, Texas. He is also the former president of the Austin Flyfishers in Austin, Texas. Kevin lives outside Bastrop, Texas, and never misses the opportunity to fish a Texas hill country stream.



### May Meeting, Jen Ripple.

Jen Ripple grew up on a small private lake in Wisconsin. Spending all of her formative years diving the waters of the Midwest, it is no wonder it's in her blood. Currently, she is the Principal of Fly Squared Media, a company that publishes a number of magazines in the



outdoor industry with an emphasis on the fly fishing lifestyle. She is most known as the Owner and Editor-in-Chief of DUN Magazine, the international women's fly fishing magazine. In addition to these positions, she is a member of the Board of Directors for Fly Fishers International. When not on the water, she spends her time empowering women in fly fishing through speaking engagements nationwide and teaching fly casting and fly tying clinics. She is an avid conservationist, who devotes her free time to conservation efforts through nonprofits. A sounding-board for women in our sport, Jen has created a home base for women worldwide to connect and engage in the art of fly fishing.

### June Meeting Speaker, Chris Taylor.

Chris Taylor is the founder of Fisheads and has been fly fishing since he was a young pup. He has fished all over the world, and guided throughout the West, from Alaska to Colorado. A better teacher of fly fishing you will not find. People who fish with Chris are always amazed at his abundance of energy. His excitement about your fishing trip is contagious and his ability to put you into fish is awe-inspiring. Fisheads has been recognized with an Orvis Guide Service of the Year Award as a premiere full service lodge and outfitter on the San Juan River.



### July Meeting Speaker, Rex Walker.

For 15 years Dallas-based casting instructor, fly fisher, and fly tyer Rex Walker has been helping people improve their fly casting skills. He has worked with many of the region's fly fishing clubs, at fly fishing events across Texas, and with both Reel Recovery and Project Healing Waters. Walker is a Fly Fishers International-certified casting instructor and the fly casting coordinator for the Dallas Fly Fishers. When not helping other fly fishers, Walker can often be found on Lake Texoma chasing black bass and striped bass on the fly.



— Jack Gillis

Program Chairman, Dallas FlyFishers

## The 2021 Dallas Fly Fishers Board



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President



Jack Gillis,  
Vice-president &  
Programs Chair



Jack Janco,  
Past President



Steve Jackson,  
Treasurer



Jim Woodman,  
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2022 Trustee



Lajan Barnes,  
2023 Trustee



William McAlpine,  
At-large Trustee



Finny Khan  
Auction Chairman



Rex Walker,  
Casting Instructor



Jere Anderson,  
Conservation &  
Newsletter Editor



Richard Johnson,  
Education Coordinator



Jeff Ziehm,  
IT Specialist



Mike Becker,  
Membership

DFF Board Members 2021 — <https://www.dallasflyfishers.org/board.html>

Currently, we have two positions open, the Outings Coordinator and the Fly-tying Coordinator. If you would like to volunteer in either of these positions, please contact a board member. We would love to have you!

## 2021 CALENDAR:

**April 5th** - The April DFF Club Meeting. The speaker is Kevin Hutcheson whose Topic will be Fly Fishing for Bass in Texas. Kevin will tie in the meeting room at 5 PM and the meeting presentation will be at 7. Zoom will also be available as I write this. Don't miss this.

**April 10th** - 5th Annual DFF / Gannon Family Sugar Ridge Ranch outing. Details in this newsletter in the sign-up poster.

**April 17th** - Fly tying with the DIVA – WOW women's group. This is a great group of active outdoor women, and the DFF is glad to help out.

**April 16th-18th** - The Ennis Blue Bonnet Trails Festival.

**April 30th-May 1st** - Probable date for the Smallmouth Rendezvous, Tahlequah, OK

**May 1st** - World Championship Bass on a Fly Event, Lake Fork, located at the Lake Fork Marina. This event is explained at [www.bassonthefly.org](http://www.bassonthefly.org) and is a very important fund raiser and fly fishing event.

**May 3rd** - The May Club Meeting. Our speaker will be Jen Ripple whose Topic will be Fishing the Mighty White.

**May 17th-18th** - The summer session with DBU teaching the Outdoor Class in Fly Fishing.

**June 7th** - The June Club Meeting. Our speaker will be Chris Taylor sharing The Secrets of Fishing the San Juan River.

**June 11th-12th** - Planned dates for the 7th Annual Lake Athens Fly Fishing Festival. This is a big event that combines fly fishing with raising money for some very deserving veterans groups.

**July 5th** - Our speaker will be none other than Rex Walker, who will share with us the secrets of Casting Accuracy.

**July 17th-24th** - The joint DFF/FWFF Colorado Trout Outing to Southfork, CO

**August 2nd** - DFF Meeting.

**September 13th** - September DFF Meeting.

**September 11th-18th** - Third Annual White River Trip. Details are in this newsletter.

**October 1st-3rd** - Southern Conclave, Mountain Home, AR

**October 4th** - October DFF Meeting.



**October 15-17** - Oktoberfisch, at Edgewater Springs Resort and Event Center, Fredericksburg Texas.

**November 1st** - November DFF Meeting.

**November 5th-7th** - Toledo Bend Rendezvous.

## Lake Athens Fly Fishing Festival

by Johnny

*Hello fellow Fly Anglers and Tyers.*

In 2010 I was introduced to fly fishing by the Dallas Fly Fishers. Since then I have met, fished with, learned much, and shared many great adventures with many great anglers. One of these great adventures has been the development of the Lake Athens Fly Fishing Festival. I would like to extend an invitation to the 2021 Lake Athens Fly Fishing Festival held at the Lake Athens Marina and RV Center June 11th & 12th 2021. I hope you will come out to enjoy and support this great event.

Last year the covid Pandemic caused us to postpone the event and host it in early June along with practicing the health and safety protocols, limiting many of the extra activities, even so we had over 50 anglers registered to fish. I would like to share a little about the history of this event.

The first year was a simple event, we hired a local business, Danny's BBQ for lunch, sent out a few emails and TFO donated us one prize, a Rod of Choice Certificate and

### Save The Date

#### 7th Annual

### LAKE ATHENS FLY FISHING FESTIVAL

#### June 11th and 12th at Lake Athens Marina/RV center



More Information to come  
Johnny Martinez (972) 697 - 7096



some of the very well known TFO caps that we gave away as door prizes. We had around forty anglers come out from the Ft. Worth, Tyler and Dallas clubs. The catching was pretty good along with the BBQ. Over the years our list of sponsors and supporters has grown. Having gained some success in 2017

I thought we should do something beneficial with this fun event.

During 2015 - 2016 Johnny Walker from Lake Fork had asked me to help as a boat Captain for a few of the Project Healing Waters weekends. So as an Angler and a Patriot I found it a natural fit, after some discernment we adopted this worthy cause as our benefactor. To date we have raised and donated over \$8000.00 to Project Healing Waters, North Texas. Last year we added a donation to Casting For Recovery in the form of a raffle that raised about a \$1000.00.

Over the years our activities and attendance has grown. Along with the Fly fishing contest we have added fly tying, fishing demos, exhibits from Texas Parks and Wildlife, casting instructions and a casting contest plus some great food and drink. The competitions, which I call the Challenges are meant to be fun and sporting events and there's always a chance to hook a Big one on Lake Athens. On Friday we hold the Sunfish Challenge in which anglers are tasked to catch, photo and release and correctly identify five species.

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## Lake Athens Fly Fishing Festival

(Continued from page 3)

On Saturday anglers compete in the Big Bass Challenge. Anglers hunt and try to land the biggest Bass of the day and accumulate the longest stringer. 100 % of the entry fees are donated to Project Healing Waters. North Texas. Both competitions are catch photo and release, only fly fishing gear and barbless hooks.

In 2016 the Big Bass was caught by Michelle Huddleston and we had a two way tie in the longest stringer challenge between Janet Baca and Kimberly Penick with each landing and

reporting 5 fish. The tie was broken by total inches in which Kimberly won by 4 inches. In 2016 we split into a boat and small craft divisions because I thought that the boats had an advantage but over the last two years the Kayak division has been formidable with the kayaks taking most of the big prizes.

Lee Kadat from the Lonestar Fly Fishers winning the longest stringer in 2017 and 2018 along with Biggest over all bass in 2018. An added fact, the Lonestar club took 5 of the 6 big prizes in 2018. So I invite and hope that

you will join and support us this year for the biggest and best LAFFF 2021 Lake Athens Fly Fishing Festival. If you're interested in attending or competing please RSVP and register at [johnnyonthefly.com](http://johnnyonthefly.com) or call me at 972 697 7096.

### **Tight lines**

—Johnny

[Johnnyonthefly.com](http://Johnnyonthefly.com)  
[Johnny2448@gmail.com](mailto:Johnny2448@gmail.com)  
972 697.7096

# 5th Annual DFF Fly Fishing Outing at Sunset Ridge Ranch

April 10, 2021

7:30 am to 1 pm

In rural Ellis County at the properties of  
Jeff & Catherine Gannon & Family  
1234 Sugar Ridge Rd  
Ennis, TX 75119

Sign up with name and number of fisherpersons  
via email to [gannon.jeff@gmail.com](mailto:gannon.jeff@gmail.com) or text 214-608-7507

**Bring your own camping chair and beverages. Bottled water will be available. Social distancing will be observed by sitting apart with your chairs. Wear a mask when appropriate.**

### **Menu**

Pastries in the morning

A box lunch at Noon

Bottled water available and BYOB if you wish

### **Fishing Info**

3 Ponds totaling ~10-15 acres stocked with Bass(some 6# or more), Panfish(some > 1#), and Catfish of ? weight.

Onsite transportation to/from ponds provided as needed.

Personal fishing watercraft can be brought for use on the largest pond.  
(no access to ponds with your personal vehicle)

Contact Jeff for directions if needed. Google Maps has proper location

# White River Three Peat

by Mike Becker

September 11 - 18, 2021

I seem to recall one of our guest speakers asking “Would you like to catch a fish like this?” The pictures indicate that we did. But, even better yet, we want to do it again and so can you.

DFF will be returning to the White River this fall in pursuit of large browns and rainbows. Last year, five DFF members made the trip. At last count all plan to return to this amazing fishery; and, we would certainly like to see that number increase in 2021.

Attendees are responsible for their own arrangements. We generally get together in the evening hours to exchange fish stories,

maybe fish some more, and enjoy some socially responsible community. Last year, we had a group dinner at Gaston’s one evening, and a Dutch oven cobbler prepared by Jeff E on another evening.

Pat and I have reserved an RV site for the week at the Denton Ferry RV park in Cotter and booked 3 guided days with Dally’s Ozark Fly Fisher ([www.theozarkflyfisher.com](http://www.theozarkflyfisher.com)). We will probably wade fish, rent a boat or generally goof off on the other days. Denton Ferry RV Park has wade access to the river (if the water level cooperates); and, the Wildcat Shoals access is a short drive down the road.. There are also smallmouth opportunities on Crooked Creek.

Dally’s is a regular contributor to DFF’s auction and has a roster of experienced guides. I have a helpful North Fork and White River fishing map that identifies wade access areas on the rivers, depending on the water level. Boats are available to rent at Bull Shoals park and several other facilities. There are several campgrounds, cabins and lodges along the river. Hotels are available in Mountain Home.

Please plan to come for all or part of the week.

If you have an interest in going, please contact Mike Becker at 214-288-3885 or [kuduguy@verizon.net](mailto:kuduguy@verizon.net).



# The July Colorado Outing is On Again

by Jeff Ziehm

**The Dallas Fly Fishers (DFF) and Fort Worth Fly Fishers (FWFF) will again be holding a joint outing to South Fork, Colorado in 2021. Dates for 2021 are July 17-24.**

It is the responsibility of the members to make their own travel and hotel plans and bring their own gear. There is fishing available that will satisfy most anglers, small creeks, large rivers, and high mountain lakes.

Our home base will be the Ute Bluff Lodge. Ute Bluff has cabins, lodge rooms, and RV sites available. We have reserved a block of rooms with two queen beds in each room.

These rooms will be held until February 28, 2021, so reserve your room before then to guarantee getting a room. Just mention Dallas Fly Fishers when you call to make your reservation. Ute Bluff Lodge phone number is 719-873-5595. If you are interested in a cabin or another room configuration, just mention that when you call. Only the two queen rooms are being held.

<https://www.utablufflodge.com>

We meet every morning to discuss the day and spread out nicely. Every evening there is an informal “where did you go today and how did you do?” gathering. The Ute Bluff Lodge

has a great community room that can be used for our gatherings if weather conditions are inclement. Remember to bring a camping chair, as we gather outside if the weather is nice.

Most will leave on Saturday the 17th mid-morning and drive most of the way there, stopping somewhere between Amarillo, TX and Walsenburg, Colorado. Spend the night and head on into South Fork Sunday morning. Fishing in the afternoon, and next 5 days, returning home on the 24th or 25th.

If you have any questions, contact Jeff Ziehm, 214-202-2826, [jziehm55@gmail.com](mailto:jziehm55@gmail.com).

# Nolan River Outing

By Jeff Ziehm and Julia Bell

Nolan River outing. Saturday, March 6, 2021. Let me start my trip report two days earlier. I actually did a scouting outing on Thursday. Water temp: 58°. Streamflow 10cfs. I got skunked. I fished from about ½ mile upstream of the Rock Creek confluence to ½ mile below the confluence. There were three other fly fishermen there. One said he caught 77 two days earlier, and 36 the day before. Normally, when I get skunked and I hear this kind of story, I think of the old fishing adage; “How can you tell when a fisherman is lying? When his lips are moving.” But he said he caught 18 that day, and he had a stringer of 18 fish. Words can lie, stringers don’t.

Mar 6, 2021. Another pretty slow day, but a few fish. I caught one below the big rocks, a half mile downstream of the confluence. I then joined Julia and Cody Bell, Jeff Gannon, and Dave Shatzer, who were fishing upstream, about 1000’ below the Rock Creek confluence. Fred DuPre had been fishing with them earlier but had already left by the time I joined them. I fished this area for about 30 minutes and caught a couple more White Bass. Water was still a little bit cold (58°) and running low (10cfs). We just need a little rain to key the fish into moving upstream.

Jeff wasn’t the only one doing scouting trips pre-outing. I started venturing to the Nolan in mid-February, as it depends heavily on Mother Nature’s winter. Seeing that the large gravel bar that lies just downstream of the Rock Creek-Nolan River confluence had skinny water flowing over its divergent currents, I knew that without any measurable rains, the White Bass would be downstream. I again visited the Nolan after the February freezes, and though we had snowfall, it was not enough precipitation. Several members fished on the 3rd, Jeff on the 4th, and that information helped direct the location to fish for our outing.

The Nolan River is a popular destination for the White Bass Run, and while it’s not opening-day-on-the-Yellowstone-River combat fishing, there are crowds. What was noticeable about this year’s crowd was the friendliness of everyone—fly fishers, bait and spin casters, males, females, youth, just everyone. COVID protocols and restrictions have seemed to unite us in that we’re all sick of the pandemic and grateful to be outside enjoying the fishing with others.

Seeing the catches and others’ stringers, males were the only ones moving upstream. Weighted flies on long fluorocarbon leaders or sink tips/sinking lines fished in deeper, current holes were the hook-up zone for the day. Mid-morning, warmer ambient temperatures generated a small hatch that brought an intermittent, top-water cavitation. Sadly, the White Bass rejected man-made recipes opting only for Mother Nature’s “real meal deal,” instead.

Our outing was the beginning of the White Bass Run which lasts until about early April. On 5 March 2021, TPWD hosted Pat Vanek in a virtual presentation of fishing the WBR and are in the process of making that recording available to the public. Pat offers great strategies for fishing any WBR, as well as some tried-and-true fly patterns.

Our April outing is a members-only on private waters at the Gannon Ranch in Ellis County. This is a great event for new and veteran fly fishers. Please remember to RSVP to Jeff Gannon (see notice 5th Annual Outing to Sunset Ridge notice). We hope to see you there.



# Making Sense of Hooks

by Jack Gillis & Charlie Craven

After conducting the recent Survey, I realized our fly tying members are wanting more technical aspects of tying. As a result, I will be starting, with the April newsletter, a series of articles on the following topics: Understanding Thread Sizing, Construction & Materials; Making Sense of Hooks; Spinning vs Dubbing Loop; Thread Control; and how to tie the five flies for FFI's Bronze Skills Award. Have fun tying.

*—Jack Gillis*  
Fly Tying Director  
(214) 718-4910

## MAKING SENSE OF HOOKS

*Understanding sizing, shapes, and proportions*

By Charlie Craven

It's rare for me to spend a day teaching or working in the shop without some poor soul asking me to explain the merits of this hook or that hook, and the reasoning behind why I might choose one brand or model over another. There's good reason for this. Like tying thread (see my story "A Tangled Mess" in the Feb.-Mar. 2017 issue), hook sizing and nomenclature seem almost purposefully confusing, so let me give my best shot at clearing up some of that confusion.

To make sure I address all the right questions, as I write this article, I have ten different size 14 hooks sitting on my desk. No two are the same size, length, or shape, and gazing upon them does nothing to shine any light on why they are all so different, so let's start at the beginning and talk about how hook sizes work.

To understand how hook sizes and styles vary, it's important to define the parts that make up a hook.

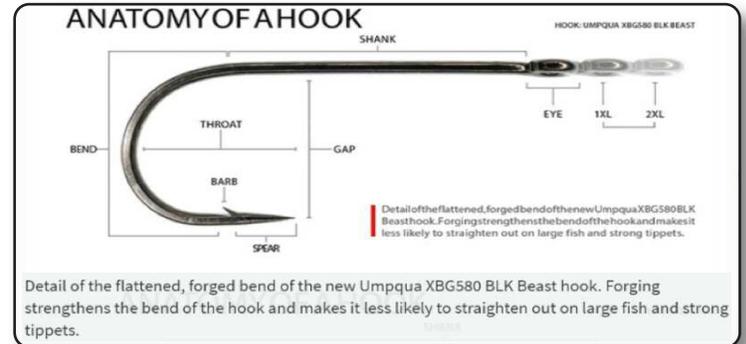
The hook gap (sometimes called the hook gape) is the distance from the point to the shank. The shank is the (usually) straight portion of the hook between the eye and the bend. Some hooks, however, have curved or humped shanks that are not straight at all. Curved-shank hooks mimic the shapes of many insect larvae and pupae, as well as the body shapes of crustaceans. A curved shank can orient the rear of the fly under the surface in floating patterns like the Quigley Cripple or the Klinkhamer Special.

The bend is where the shank starts to curve, as well as that entire radius encompassing the curvature down to the point. On curved-shank hooks, the shank and bend are often continuous with no clear line of distinction between where the shank stops and the bend begins.

The spear of the hook is the length of the tapered point to the barb or, in the absence of a barb, where it would be. The throat is the distance/depth from the point of the hook to the inside of the bend.

The hook eye is the loop at the front of the hook through which you tie your tippet. The eye can be turned up, turned down, or straight (ring eye). Turned-down eyes are the most common, though straight-eye hooks have gained significant popularity in recent years. Straight-eye hooks swim better and more

in line with the tippet in the case of streamers, and in very small hook sizes, they obstruct the hook gap to a lesser degree. Up-eye hooks are common in heavier steelhead and salmon patterns and traditional trout fly patterns.



The barb is the small sticker angled away from the point, intended to make hook removal difficult. Even if you pinch the barb down (as I recommend) the remaining bump still helps anchor the point in a fish. It also helps retain a dropper tied to the hook bend.

The point obviously is the sharp part, but it goes without saying that some hooks are sharper than others. Almost all hooks today are chemically sharpened, which means after the mechanical sharpening, the manufacturer uses an acid bath to dissolve the hook point, making it sharper.

With these terms defined and understood, let's look at how they relate to one another, most specifically, the relationship between the hook gap and the shank.

Hook sizes historically are based on the gap of the hook. The size of the hook has nothing to do with the shank length, only the gap. So, all size 18 hooks ought to have the same size gap, right? Well, in a perfect world they would, but in this day of unbridled design and outright lies, this "standard" is very loosely employed. To truly understand hook sizing, we've got to start off with an imaginary "standard" hook and extrapolate from there.

A standard hook is supposed to have a hook shank equal to twice the width of the hook gap. It is with this "standard" hook in mind that we can begin to understand the variations in gap and length and how they relate to one another.

As I mentioned earlier, this "standard hook" is really a fantasy, and in all my years of tying I have yet to come across this perfect example but using it as a baseline is a good way to understand hook sizing. Once the baseline is established, hooks vary far and wide with extra-long (XL) or extra-short (XS) shanks, wide-gap (WG), extra-heavy (XH) or extra-fine (XF) wire sizing and offset points, among other variations.



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## Making Sense of Hooks

(Continued from page 7)

Extra-long hooks have a shank length longer than two hook gap widths. These are often denoted as 1XL or 2XL, all the way up to 9XL in the case of some streamer-style hooks. The additional increments in shank length are based off the diameter of the hook eye in these cases, so a 2XL hook has a shank length of two hook gaps plus two eye lengths. Conversely, extra-short hooks are reduced by that same hook eye length increment, so a 3XS hook has a shank length of two hook gaps minus three eye lengths. These variations allow for flies of various lengths and shapes, and accommodate the addition of beads and coneheads without increasing or decreasing the hook gap disproportionately.

Lengthening and shortening shank lengths seems to make reasonable sense and is easy to follow once you have an idea of where things start, but when you start adding in gap width variations, everything goes to hell. Many hooks these days have a nonstandard wide gap, that is, a gap wider than the standard half a shank length (which could also be correctly construed as a shorter shank, just to confuse things further). Wide-gap hooks allow more room for thicker-bodied flies, and they increase the chances of the hook finding a home in a fish's mouth. The increments in which a hook gap is increased are by hook sizes. For instance, a 1X wide-gap size 14 hook should have a gap equal to that normally found on a size 12 standard hook. A 2X wide-gap size 14 should sport the gap normally found on a size 10 standard hook, and so forth. For the record, I have never encountered any hooks labeled with a narrower-than-standard gap, though some of the wide variety of available hook bend shapes certainly contribute to narrowing the hook gap.

To add complexity, also consider the variations in wire sizing. Some hooks are made of wire heavier (X-heavy) or lighter (X-fine) than what would be considered standard, so a size 14 1X-heavy hook is made from wire normally used on a standard size 12 hook, and a 2X-heavy size 14 would be made of wire typically used in a standard size 10 hook. That same size 14 in 1X-fine would be made from wire normally used in a standard size 16. Obviously, heavy wire hooks are stronger and physically heavier for bigger fish, or for sinking flies quickly. Lighter wire can be advantageous in keeping small, delicate dry flies floating. The trade-offs are that the wire size can get too big to provide good penetration on a hook-set, or in some cases the wire could be too light to stand up to larger fish and strong tippets.

With the basic nomenclature and sizing understood, let's move on to the difference between good hooks and bad hooks. In nearly every case, it boils down to the tempering and forging process used to strengthen the wire. Tempering is a complicated heat-treating process that renders the steel wire used to make hooks both stronger and more elastic. A batch of hooks with a bad temper can be brittle and break easily, or they can be soft and bend out of shape on the fish of your dreams.

I won't pretend to know the ins and outs of the entire tempering process, as I am just a guy who has wrapped a few miles of thread around hooks and thrown them at an awful lot of fish. I can say that I have yet to find an inexpensive hook that is worth tying a fly on. Quality hooks don't straighten, bend, or break as easily as cheaper hooks. To put it in perspective, expensive hooks are still the cheapest pieces of tackle you own, and also the most important. I can't think of anything worse than tying a bunch of great flies on garbage hooks.

### Modern Hooks

The influence of competitive fly fishers in recent years has made competition-style hooks extremely popular. According to the rules of FIPS/Mouche, the official governing body for international fly-fishing competitions, the hooks in these contests must be completely barbless. While the competition hooks that have evolved from these events come in all shapes and sizes, they often feature a very wide gap, and a long point and spear to better hold the fish in the absence of a barb. For some reason, many of them tend to be black, a feature that adds a degree of stealth and dare I say panache if not for any more practical advantage.



I would be remiss if I did not mention the growing popularity of jig-style hooks—also adopted from the competitive fly-fishing scene. Flies tied on jig hooks with heavy tungsten beadheads are filling fly boxes across the country. Jig hooks for fly fishing are typically barbless and are available with the hook eye set at 60 degrees or 90 degrees in relation to the hook shank. The 60-degree versions have a more exposed hook gap but require a slightly heavier bead to keep them riding with the hook point up. Regular 90-degree jig hooks ride hook point up more consistently but are more prone to break at the bend due to the aggressive reshaping of the hook.

Jigs are very effective at hooking fish in the top of the snout, a perfect place to find good purchase and steer the fish during the fighting and landing process. That's one reason competitive fly fishers use them. The biggest advantage, however, is that they are less prone to snagging the bottom.

I hope that the preceding has helped provide a general understanding of how hook proportions and shapes affect fly design and your own tying. The hook is the foundation of what you build, so it's important to choose the right hook for the job. As with thread, there is no real base industry standard, so styles and baselines range widely among manufacturers.

These rules of thumb tend to apply broadly to all hooks, but are more accurate when taken into consideration among hooks of the same brand, and even then there are always a few outliers. This broadly sweeping guideline is just that and should be used as such. Good luck!

Go to:

<https://www.flyfisherman.com/editorial/Making-Sense-of-Hooks/383617>

for Charlie's Video: Making Sense of Hooks

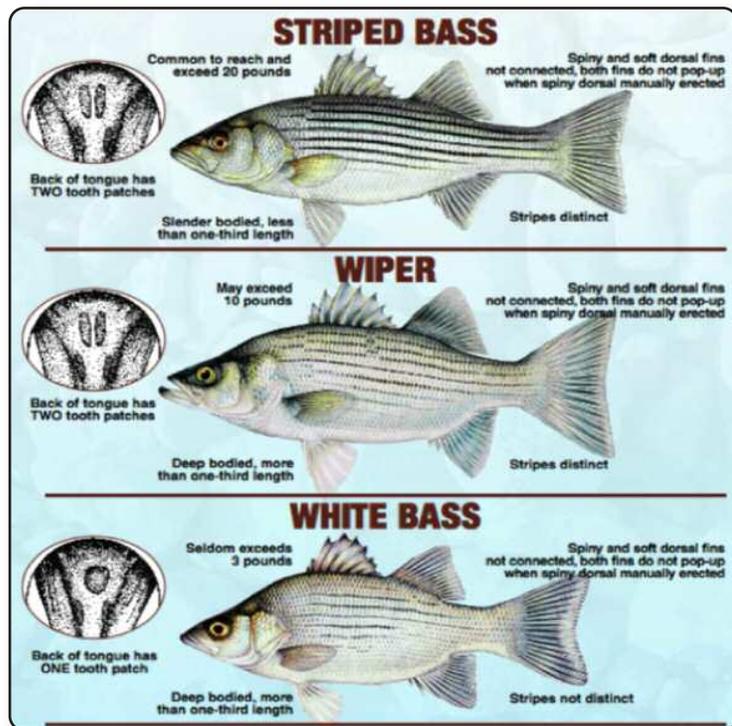
*Reprinted with permission. Charlie Craven co-owns Charlie's Fly Box, recently moved to 7279 W. 52nd Ave. in Arvada, Colorado. He is the author of four books, most recently Tying Streamers: Essential Flies and Techniques for the Top Patterns (Stackpole Books, April 2020).*

# The Conservation Corner

by Jere Anderson

Spring is upon us. The Texas Springtime is a really great time to be alive, and an even greater time to be an outdoors person. Not only are the ugly cold snaps fading to a memory, but our beloved fly rod fish are getting to be more and more available.

I personally am very fond of the migratory fish. Large numbers of spawners moving into the rivers and streams to find suitable nesting sites can have some exciting searching activity and when you find them, very active catching action. The most interesting to me were the White Bass Runs. The Striper family are the major true Bass in our rivers. The White Bass, the smallest of the three species, are the most active as I remember.



Missing from this graphic is the Yellow Bass.

One of my favorite River Systems is the Brazos. The segment from Lake Granbury to the tailwater of Lake Possum Kingdom in the 1990's was a big spring event that would have lots of our club and the FWFF camping in farmers fields along the banks. This upper Brazos was a great spring fishery when the dam at Possum Kingdom was doing hydroelectric generation. But after 2010 when that stopped, the river is too low much of the time.

Someone in the FWFF used to scout the river banks, and print a map with the locations where the farmers were willing to have a few campers spot in and fish the river. These maps were very popular, and for the next four or five weeks saw lots of our North Texas Fly Rods hitting the water. We had lots of the old timers that had a few favorite spots and you could make a mortal enemy by talking about where he had taken you fishing.

The other segment was from Lake Whitney up to the tail waters of Lake Granbury. I loved to fish that segment for the White Bass runs with Charlie Cypert, a great fly fishing guide, who guided Lake Whitney

among others. My brother and I fished with him several times. His signature fly, the Cypert Minnow, was a killer pattern on any fish that was a serious meat eater.

Every year in early spring, white bass, or sand bass as they are also known, leave the lakes and migrate upriver to find moving water in which to spawn. The exact timing of the annual white bass run depends upon the water temperature, but generally in Central Texas the main run lasts from March to mid-April. As air and water temperatures warm, the bass move progressively into shallower areas of the lakes and then up the rivers and into their tributaries. Often, the white bass are accompanied by stripers and hybrids, which can make for some very exciting fishing. The bass may travel as far as 40 miles upriver, or until they encounter a dam that stops their travel. The smaller ones (males) start the run while water temperatures are still in the 50s, and the females follow when water temperatures get into the 60s. The fish usually move through the shallows during the night and stack up in deep holes to rest and feed. After the spawn, in April-May, the fish will go back downriver to the lakes.

Charlie would put in at one of the many parks with a launching ramp above Lake Whitney on the Brazos. We would then run up river as far as we could then tie up the boat and hike to the pools on the river. The fish would move up the river a pool or so per night, and then rest. So in the morning a big pack of active fish were in the pool. He also guided the big lake, and his favorite put in spot was the Lake Whitney State Park. The fish that were not inclined to go river running would spawn like Largemouth in the flats below the point where the Brazos dumped into the big lake.

Julia arranged a trip to the Nolan River, a tributary of Lake Whitney. There is an excellent article in this newsletter about that trip. It was pushing the season a bit, but the early running males were in the river. Good fish caught. By now, the females are on the beds and some of them may be migrating back into the bigger lakes. Here is a graphic of the better runs.

### Where to Fish?

- Lake Waco tributaries, the Bosque rivers
- Brazos and Nolan rivers above Lake Whitney
- Navasota river just outside of Groesbeck
- Colorado river at Colorado Bend State Park
- San Gabriel river above Lake Granger
- Llano river above Lake LBJ
- Sabine river
- Reimer's Ranch – Pedernales River

This migratory spawning run is a very good opportunity to wade fish our slow moving rivers. It is easy wading if you are careful, but the bottom can be very slick. So the entire spring thing is coming along very well. The migratory spawners are on the move. The still water spawners are building nests and getting ready for the big Bass, loaded with eggs, to

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be shallow. If you lake fish, the smaller males will be building nests, and then guarding the eggs. The females will be roaming from deeper water to the shallow flats, looking for a nesting partner. The bigger egg laden females are the Shar-A-Lunker class Black Bass that are the best chance for a fly rod bass man to get his personal best double digit Bass we all would love to brag about. So for the next two months the fly rod warm water fishing addicts are going to be out there flogging the water. In spite of all the crazy weather, those animals need to reproduce.

There is some chance of your favorite fishing spot being damaged by the power outages. Sewage spills, polluted runoff, and who knows what else may have occurred. Probably more than we know as I write this. But the native species have survived at least 10,000 years of wildly varied weather, and I have high hopes that they can do it again. Write me a fishing report or two.

**Live with nature, love the wild and take care of it.....**

*- Jere*

## Education and Outreach Report

by Jere Anderson



In spite of an utterly insane February, weather wise, March did good. We started with the Fly Fishing and Brew Festival. It had been moved to Mesquite, and still it was good. Lots of DFF folk and the other groups from the Texas Council of the FFI came out to support the commercial groups.

about this fishing trip written by Julia and Jeff Ziehm. Back in the 1990's the spring spawner migration of these midget Stripers was the cause of camping trips all over the Brazos. Julia organized and led this one. Estimates are that as many as 20 Fishers were there. White Bass, known as "Sandies" in Texas, were beginning to move up the streams out of Lake Whitney. The early birds are the young males looking to establish a nest site for his true love when she arrives. There is an article in the Conservation Column about this spawning migration. Great job, and the fishing will just keep getting better and better for about 6 more weeks.



The Spring Break Class at Dallas Baptist University once again got to fish in all the campus water. They have several lakes that really look good, and often fish well too. This time, the Bass were better than the Sunfish. But most still caught something.

We had to limit the number of worker bees for health reasons on classroom day, but the fishing day had more help. Masks were REQUIRED, and several other rules were to be vigorously enforced. The best bass caught by one of the students is this one.



Our teaching group known as the A-Team, had a new member. Our President, Julia Bell, got to teach, and loved it. Here is the class.



The week after that was the Tarrant Regional Water District Outdoor Event, known as FLYFEST. Lots to do. Lots of fish were planted, and lots of activity led by the FFI Texas Council, FWFF and DFF. Food and family fun in the spring weather, and lots of fun things to do. The wildly changing Texas Springtime gave us a break, so we got this one done in a break between big time rain storms.

The Trout Fishing contest is a team event, with lots of prizes. Here are the well worked fly guys.



The Monday after this was a VERY GOOD ZOOM meeting of the DFF, with a Colorado Fly Fishing guide from the Front Range part of the state doing a lot of easy but effective Trout flies. Then he showed us how and where to use them. His web site is patdorseflyfishing.com, so go look for yourself.

There was a White Bass event on March 6th. There is an excellent article in this newsletter

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## Education and Outreach Report

(Continued from page 10)

Both team trout fishing and free time fly fishing had lots of takers. Here is a typical picture of the two man teams working the water.



The next thing will be in April, but it is worth the wait. One of the truly wonderful events in Nature is the Texas Springtime. Warm weather, beautiful wildflowers, spawning fish, the list is huge. I grew up in the Pacific Northwest, with the Lupines and Trilliums blooming in the mountain meadows in springtime. Well, I must admit, the hillsides full of our Texas Wildflowers beats it. I am in a rapture of love for the outdoors in this time period. It is so great that we have a family in the Club that are dedicated to maintaining and improving a huge expanse of these wonderful little beauties.

The Event is the 5th Annual Gannon Family Ranch wildflowers and Fishing event at their ranch on April 10th. This is a sign-up event and the poster is in this Newsletter. This place is so beautiful it is too good to miss.

The lakes are in good shape and the fishing should be good.

Better yet there are Bluebonnet Festivals all over the place for the next two or three weeks after the Gannon Ranch Event. So even if you cannot get to the great one, you can still take the

family for a drive through the wildflowers. A big public event in Ennis and one in Fredericksburg are in the Calendar. One called The Best of Texas food and Wine Festival is also in the Calendar, and it is a ticket event.

Work is underway for a fishing event in May. This is still a work in progress but could be a fun fish patterned after the club outing for White Bass.

May 17th and 18th is our last teaching opportunity with Dallas Baptist University for this school year. It should be warm, and the ponds on campus active. With any luck, Jere will be back teaching by then. I will have all my shots in March.

The next event is the Lake Athens Fly Fishing Festival on June 12th.. This is just about the most important event that the DFF leads. It is a charity fund raiser, a fishing contest, a picnic and a whole lot else. Johnny Martinez puts a lot of time and effort into this one. He has written an event history article in this newsletter. It is an outdoor event, so it is easy to keep separated from each other. Do not miss this one.

And as Porky Pig would say; "That's all Folks". The spring series of events, often dozens in number, these are all there are.

Then comes the summer joint trip to Colorado with the Fort Worth Fly Fishers. As usual it is being coordinated from the DFF side by Jeff Ziehm. Julia may never be able to forget this one. So glad you seem to be healing, Madame President.

The Southern Council may be able to hold the Southern Conclave in Mountain Home, AR on October 1st – 3rd. This one was hosted for three years in the late 1990's by the FWFF and the DFF before we split the Texas Council off from the Southern Council.

October 15th – 17th, the Oktoberfische Event at the Edgewater Springs Resort and Event Center, in Fredericksburg is way too good to miss. Consider going up early and fishing some Guadalupe Bass.

There are a cluster of opportunities in October to do some family outings to the Cotter AR area. A sign-up option with Mike Becker, the trip planner, is available in this newsletter as well. Read the three-peat article.

Last, but never least, is the Historic Toledo Bend Rendezvous at The North Toledo Bend State Park, near Zwolle, LA is planned for November 5th-7th.

So from the looks of our calendar, we have about one event a month or less coming up. The club can continue to help with the list of on-going projects. I will miss our distinct menu of outdoor events being thought about and scheduled.

It is a tough life, but someone gets to live it. It might as well be us. Life is returning to the land of Oz.

**Best wishes for big fish  
and lots of them....**

- Jere

To Join DFF, complete the form below and mail along

with your check to:

Dallas Fly Fishers  
8349 Club Meadows Dr.  
Dallas, Tx 75243

You can also join or renew online at

<http://www.dallasflyfishers.org/membership.html>

### MEMBERSHIP / RENEWAL

New Member  or Renewing My Membership  (Check one) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's name: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a current member of the Federation of Fly Fishers? Yes  No  (check one)

#### New Members:

Annual membership dues: \$36 per year

After July 1st, pay \$18 for half year

After Oct 1st, just pay for the following year

#### Renewing Members:

Annual membership dues: \$36 per year