



## *The July 2019 NEWSLETTER*



**Northern Arizona Flycasters  
An active member club of the World Wide organization  
“Fly Fishers International”  
“Conservation, Restoration, and Education through Fly Fishing”**

**We support active involvement in cold water fisheries conservation. We work to insure that Arizona’s habitat is not degraded and in the development and maintenance of fly fishing opportunities.**

**We support the practice of “catch and release”, the use of barbless hooks, and quick and harmless release practices. Fish should never be kept out of the water for over 60 seconds.**

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Northern Arizona Flycasters meets the first Wednesday of the month at the Arizona Game and Fish Regional office at 3500 S. Lake Mary Road, Flagstaff. Meetings start at 7 PM with a board meeting at 6 PM.  
The meetings are free and the public is invited.

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### **PRESIDENT’S DRIFT – J Shambaja**

#### Presidents Drift

Apology for any confusion or inconvenience to all regarding the July change of meeting date to avoid conflict with July Patriotic events. We are scheduled for July 10 and our guest speaker is Chuck Benedict. Chuck always has useful information regarding where to go for fish numbers, fish size or scenic landscape. Plus, up to date data on future fishing expectations and conservation activities. Our June Grill/BBQ cook-out was well attended and was enjoyed by all. This was a great opportunity to meet up with friends that have not been visited in a long time, get to know someone unfamiliar and plan your next fishing trip plus we had great food. Special thanks to our friends at Game and Fish for providing the meeting location, to Denise Dean, Tom Hudnall for cooking the wonderful pork and chicken entrees and to Ray Wolosz for helping Denise and Tom with set-up and clean-up and, most importantly to all that attended this social. Also, thanks to Brad Bradley for organizing the raffle to help fund the Paul Weitz Scholarship and to Tom Hudnall for running the 50/50 raffle, a lucky attendee was very kind and donated their winnings back to the club.

This past snow season has been very kind to aquatic insects and cold-water fish; we are now moving into the prime fishing season thus plan to attend our joint meeting of Northern Arizona Flycasters and the Grand Canyon Chapter Trout Unlimited to obtain up to date insights. Lees Ferry continues to be highly recommended, if you go expect very hot air temperatures and cold water; stop in the fly shop to say hello to Terry and Wendy Gunn. The early Arizona season has been good fishing, we are fortunate that our snow run-off occurred early and happened quickly, our limited streams were only blow-out for a short time in comparison to many out of state locations across the West that are still running high, fast and dirty. Fortunately, good snow fall was widespread across the Western United States so expect great fishing this summer and into the late Fall season. So, consult with our club members and plan your trips now, then take trip pictures and upon return share your story. We enjoy hearing about your adventures and learning about new places to fish. Speaking about new places to fish, has anyone visited Conejos River, Colorado yet? If so tell us about your experience. Conejos is near Alamosa Colorado just north of New Mexico. Here is another suggested summer fly fish adventure. Northern Arizona Flycasters is associated with the Fly Fisher International, they promote learning how to fly cast and cold-water conservation. You can visit their web site at [flyfishersinternational.org](http://flyfishersinternational.org) to learn more about the organization and how to become a member. Plus, they are holding their 2019 Fly Fishing Expo on July 23 – 27 in Bozeman at the Montana State University. Good reason to go fly fishing in Montana's famous water, attend the Expo and still visit Yellowstone Park; details on their web site.

Our friend and temporary President of Grand Canyon Chapter Trout Unlimited, Steve La Falce is currently negotiating to obtain guest speakers from Backcountry Hunter & Angles for the November 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. If they are available then be sure to attend our upcoming meeting. I say temporary President as Steve has stepped forward to guide the chapter due to Neil's resignation. A big thanks to Steve for taking on this role as without a Chapter President, significant benefits would have converted to out of area control. Both clubs, GCTU and NAF, are seeking additional Board members to help guide these two organizations. If you find that now is the time for you to have fun and expand your social network then join our club's directors; please let me or Steve know, we would enjoy adding you to the team. The reality is we are local clubs and need local board members for guidance and control.

NAF President Jack

Go Represent Your Water

**Every club member is important to the wellbeing of our club and to our local fisheries.**

NAF needs your involvement and there are many volunteer venues available such as fishing trips, conservation, writing about club activities, and fund raising. Remember, NAF raises funds to support conservation efforts; we are a non-profit organization. You can sign-up to volunteer on our web site. <http://nazflycasters.com/volunteer/>

**Gear Sale**

The following is a list of items remaining that will be available for purchase.  
Estimated prices are given for most items.

### Travel Cases

Orvis Traveling rod and equipment case soft side \$30

Medal hard side rod case – 4 rods no equipment storage \$75+

### Fly Rods-6

Cabela's SLi SL908, 9ft 8wt two pc. rod with metal tube \$40

Bamboo of split cane rod, two pc. With two tips, 7 ft. Clark indicates it casts well with a 5wt line \$150

G Loomis Stream Dance GLX 8ft 3 inch, 3 wt. High Line Speed Rod 3 pc. With tube \$200

G Loomis 4pc. GLX FR 1087-4 (ft. #7 With tube (crosscurrent rod, salt water \$300 (sold)

Orvis TLS Power Matrix 4 pc, 9 ft. 8 wt, tip fles 9.5 with tube 908 Fast Action \$150 (sold)

Temple Fork Outfitters Ti Crx 9 wt. 9 ft. 4 pc. With tube medium fast action \$50 (sold)

### Reels

Ross Reel CLA 1 with 3 wt. forward line \$35 (sold)

Ross Reel Gunnison G-4 With Line? \$100

Ross Reel Gunnison 4 with 9 wt. *line \$100*

Ross Reel Momentum 4 takes 7-9 wt. lines \$100 (sold)

Orvis Madison with 2wt. line \$30

Orvis Mach III Titanium with 5 wt. forward line for 4-7 wt. lines \$50 (sold)

Orvis DXR 9/10 reel with line. Extra spool with line. Salt water. Takes 8 to 11 wt lines \$100

House of Hardy JLH #5 Light wt. plus extra spool reputable English company \$40 (sold)

Marryat MR7.5A light wt. 4-5 lines, Quality Japan manufacture \$100

(2) Ross Flywater 3 reels with line. 120.00 each

Martin 61 reel with line ?

BFR Rimfly 1075 with line 7wt 50.00

Cahil CR0001 with backing 30.00

Shakespear 1094. 15.00

Extra reel cases -2 Ross

1 Orvis

2 Cloth pockets

## **EDUCATION**

Mostly about fishing...maybe a few odds & ends thrown in.

Crappie Fly Patterns

I've tried a good number of fly patterns on the crappies around here. Almost everything will catch fish at times, but there are a handful of patterns that have REALLY stood out as

being VERY effective for crappies.

Crappies everywhere have a ritual of moving both higher in the water column AND closer to shore in the evenings. During the day they often hang in deeper water, and are more difficult to target with a floating fly line. But in the evenings they can often be caught fairly easily if you find the right areas.

Also be aware that although crappies often like to hang near some sort of structure (preferably woody structure, like a fallen tree or flooded brushpile), they often also school suspended in open water. Fishing can be quite good if you can keep near a school of crappies!

Another thing to keep in mind is that crappies prefer to feed UP. Depending on the water clarity, they will move up a fair distance to take a fly. I've seen this behavior even in cold water, when ice-fishing. I've seen crappies move up from 5' to even 10' below the fly to chase it upwards before hitting it. And that was in water of questionable clarity!

In the evenings, crappies can sometimes be caught on topwater flies, but I don't believe this is the BEST option.

I do a lot of my crappie fishing in the late evenings...from just before dusk to well after dark. The fly that has worked best for me when fishing at night over several years, is the Boa Yarn Leech. Silver or white can be good, but bright yellow has worked the best for me. This pattern has excellent movement in the water, and can be fished shallow and slow. Slow is key. I tie Boa Yarn Leeches unweighted on a #8 3XL Streamer Hook. If the fish won't come up to within 5' of the surface, you can add a beadhead to get the fly down a bit deeper.



Another unweighted pattern that can be good is a chartreuse-and-white **Thunder Creek Minnow** pattern. The key is to have the right size fly. I sometimes go as big as a size 6, but usually size 8 and 10's will get more hits. And this is interesting...I've caught good numbers of 12"+ crappies using spinning gear and 3" long twister-tail jigs...but when fly-fishing, I've had better luck going SMALLER!

The top fly below is a Thunder Creek Minnow. The other hairwings sure look good, and I have caught fish on them, but just not nearly as many.



For weighted patterns, I've got 3-4 good ones in my arsenal. First is what I call a **Microjig**. These have marabou tail and chenille or yarn bodies. The best colors for me are pink-and-white, and chartreuse. I tie these on 1/80 oz and 1/100th oz jigheads.



A very similar pattern is the **Springbrook Wunder**. These are usually tied in more natural colors, starting with grizzly chickabou tail, and a silver or gold sparkle chenille body:



Here's the actual one that caught a lot of the nice crappies in the previous blog:



The next pattern is a **Kraft Fur Clouser**...which is tied like a Clouser Deep Minnow. Because I tie these in sizes 8 and 10...and sometimes even 12...I find Kraft Fur works a lot better than bucktail on patterns this small. 1"-2" sizes work very well. I've caught crappies on all the colors below. Chartreuse and/or white is always a safe way to go, size seems most important. Choose the barbell, hourglass, or beadchain eye size/weight to suit the hook size and the sink rate you desire. Also, you can somewhat affect sink rate by how thick you tie on the Kraft Fur. Too much can hamper hooksets, though.



Red sandwiched between white has been a good color scheme for me, too.



Somewhat similar to the Clouser, and also very effective, is the **Crappie Candy**. Again, pink-and-white or chartreuse-and-white are usually good colors to start with.



One last pattern to consider, especially in dingy water is a **minnow pattern tied with silver or opalescent mylar tubing**, and your choice of tail material. You can use lead tape or lead-substitute wire under the mylar tubing to achieve the sink rate you desire.



If you feel comfortable with Woolly Buggers, weighted and unweighted versions can work in a pinch.

Of the ones I've listed above, my top 3 would be Boa Yarn Leech for the shallowest presentations, and I really really like both the Microjigs/Springbrook Wunder, and the Kraft Fur Clousers. All three of these are very quick and easy to tie, which is a plus. If you are fishing around brush, you definitely might lose some flies!

You can use a strike indicator and fish somewhat vertically. In this case, the Microjigs are most likely to sit horizontally in the water, and so look like the most natural presentation. I prefer not to use indicators, if at all possible. So, I usually cast out, let the fly sink to an appropriate depth, then start a slow, jerky retrieve. For some reason, Crappies LOVE a jerky retrieve! Sometimes this can be better achieved by sort of shaking your rod while slowly retrieving, but often just doing very short, abrupt movements while stripping in the line works well.



As for strike detection, crappies often just suck the fly in. You'll really need to watch your line. At any indication that some extra weight is on the line, or your line begins to move backward while you are doing your slow retrieve, SET THE HOOK. A quick hook-set is more important than a STRONG hookset. Just tightening your line, or doing a medium side-sweep with your rod is usually sufficient to bury the hook. Don't horse the fish too much during the fight. The skin around their mouths is paper-thin, and you can rip the hook right out of their mouth with too much pressure.

Crappies on fly gear are a lot of fun! Good luck!



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### NAF EVENTS SCHEDULE

(Date to be announced) install fish habitat structure in **Kinnikinick Lake**.

**July 10 club meeting 7 pm Az Game and Fish office** our guest speaker is Chuck Benedict.

#### **Under discussion by board**

Assist FS and AG&F with preparing trees for placement in Kinnikinick Lake- Now scheduled for 2019.

Fishing outings to the Williams lakes

Fly casting sessions on a regular basis.

**The Board welcomes suggestions from members.**

**There will additional events so watch this space**

#### NAF CLUB OFFICERS/COMMITTEE CHAIRS

President	Jack Shambaugh
Vice-President	Mike Clementino
Secretary	Mac McIlwaine
Treasurer	Denise Dean

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