



Next meeting TBD. Stay vigilant until we beat this virus.

Neighborhood artists leave the rocks pictured below by the roadside near our house. We walk by them on the way to Bayshore for our daily exercise. They come and go daily!



Directions to Our Meetings (0600pm): We are looking for a new meeting place. One prospect is the clubhouse in Carrollwood. More to come on this and hope to see you all soon. //Walt

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope you all are getting by okay and staying out of harms way. We will resume club activities when it's safe again. The club is also looking for a new place to meet. See the next page for details.

Please support our local club guides sooner than later. The front of a flats boat can be okay and loads of fun.

We had a fun-filled banquet planned, which we will reschedule. We will refund any advance payments as needed.

Robert Fischer has a few openings at the Two Boys Inn, 10-17 Oct 2020. This is a great trip for \$2600 and includes six day's guided fishing for big bone fish. Also, good food and lodging.

Capt Frank Rhodes also has openings for Mexico 17-24 Oct. Contact me to reserve your spot with a deal at \$2500. We go there every year and have a great time. Costa de Cocos lodge.

//Walt Durkin 

We send our condolence and prayers to **Capt. John Hand** who lost his wife Leslie following her two year battle with cancer. John and Leslie were active TBFFC club members who moved to Everglades City a few years ago where John began guiding full time.

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President: Walt Durkin	813-513-2122
Walt.durkin@aol.com	cell 813-853-5870
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Bryon Chamberlin	813-361-8801
Pat Damico	727-504-8649
Robert Fischer	813-962-0185
Bruce Anderson	813-960-8523

TBFFC NEWS & NOTES

Aardvark McLeod on YouTube: While stuck at home, I have watched more fishing shows on TV and YouTube. Aardvark McLeod has many great offerings for you. I recommend his photo tips for fly fisherman, and his ten best flies for bonefish and also for permit. His many videos are interesting, informative and based on fly fishing around the world.

NY Times article: My Isolation Breaking Point

I can't wait for social distancing to end, so I can be alone again.

https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/15/opinion/covid-fishing.html?fbclid=IwAR3w5-XKoYKoUeA6zZEt86B_sZNMMSIP1dbPqvQaYrY6oo3ePEZKrgFkM1Y

Staying in the Fly Fishing Game for life

<https://troutbitten.com/2020/01/29/how-to-stay-in-the-fly-fishing-game-for-a-lifetime/>

The above two posts submitted by Captain Pat Damico.

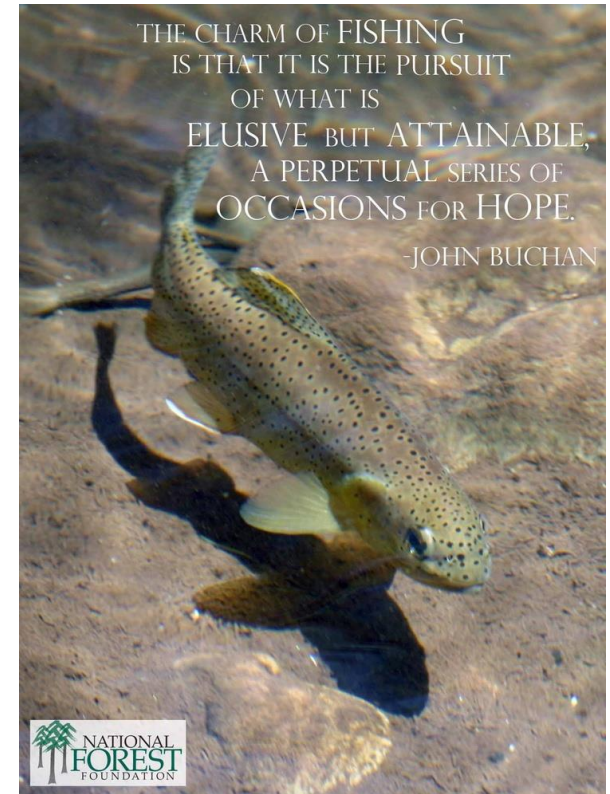
April addition of On the Fly South:

<https://ontheflysouth.com/>

Brazil Shows Interest in Big Gun. I have been in contact with Pedro Pereira, a fly fisherman from Brazil. He likes our club and would like to start a Big Gun! He lives in São Paulo and organizes a Fly Fishing Festival every June in Sao Paulo. I have emailed him our Big Gun info and will keep in touch.

TBFFC Moving from Compton Park

We are seeking a venue for club meetings. The new manager at Compton Park indicated we do not really meet the requirements to continue at that location. We had a great run there and thank the helpful and courteous staff for their support for over 10 years. Special thanks also to Dr. Greg Stepanski for originally sponsoring us. We welcome ideas for a new meeting place and will keep you informed. We hope to meet again in perhaps June, or at the latest, July. //Walt



Fly Fishing in the Time of Corona

(my apologies to Gabriel Garcia Marquez for this title)

Part 1

Six of us had planned a trip to Cuba several months ago but when the corona virus started intensifying, we had some doubts as to whether we should go. So, on Friday the 13th, (a great omen also) we met at the Tampa airport with packed bags and internal conflict. Should we reschedule? Can we? Is the flight still available? How bad is the virus in Cuba? What if we get trapped down there?

While talking about this, Wes walked up and put his bag on the ticket counter. OK, decision made for better or worse. We all checked in. The direct flight from Tampa to Havana was packed, but nobody was coughing so things seemed ok. There was no in-flight service for drinks or snacks due to CDC requirements, but that's OK since it was only an hour.

Havana airport has two terminals. An old, crowded, rough conditioned one for the poor people, and a nice new modern one for the international travelers. They sent us to the old one. Of course, they sent us to the old one and of course one of Walt's bags got lost. (How do you lose a bag on a direct flight?) We waited around in the old terminal for 3 hours trying to locate the bag. No luck, so we took the cab to the Capri hotel in downtown Havana. It is a very nice hotel and the people could not have been nicer or more helpful. They assured us that the bag would be delivered to the hotel that afternoon or the next morning. A restaurant one block away was recommended for lunch and we dined on excellent Cuban food, beer, wine and dessert. Later that afternoon we took a tour of Havana in classic old American cars that were used as taxis everywhere. We've heard that a taxi driver can make more in one day than a doctor can make in a month. There is some free enterprise in Cuba, but not much.

The next morning Walt heard that his bag was at the airport. Not wanting to miss our bus at 11:00 am, he took a \$30 cab to the airport. The bag wasn't there, it was sent to the hotel. Back to the hotel for another \$30 and Walt had his bag finally. We loaded up on the very modern Chinese bus, picked up 4 more fly fishermen at another hotel and headed to the port city 3 hours away. The main highway out of Havana was surprisingly well maintained, six lanes of concrete with landscaping medians, decent signage and minimal traffic. Hitch hikers waved dollar bills at the bus looking for a ride but we didn't stop to pick up any. It narrowed down to 4 lanes later but was still in good shape. After turning off the main road toward our port town we travelled through typical Caribbean island back country; small farms, big government farms, horse carts, old bicycles and motorcycles, unpainted houses, small resorts and roadside restaurants.

The cutoff to our boat was down a dirt road that we almost missed, but the host had a GPS and there was a car waiting at the road to guide us. This all seemed a bit sketchy because the road was barely wide enough for the bus to get by. But a couple of hundred yards later we were at a small shipyard and there was our beautiful mothership waiting. We unloaded, tipped the bus driver, and settled in our comfortable cabins. Lunch was served as we motored to our first stop about 3 hours away. Life was good.

In part 2 we'll talk about the fishing, the food, and the almost head on boat crash. Robert Fischer

Part 2

So, we made it to the mothership and continued our “Friday the 13th, start of a world pandemic, into a communist country, going to a remote island” trip. What could possibly happen? Well, for one thing the east wind blew about 15 to 20 mph the whole week. The island, Cayo Largo is about 40 miles long and lies east to west so there were only a few places that we could go that weren’t windy. This made the guide’s jobs much harder but they did the best they could. Remember the casting clinics with Dale Mazzarella and Pat Damico when they said to practice casting in the wind?? How great that advice is. The wind also made the boat a little rocky and some folks felt queasy, but it just rocked me to sleep like my momma’s rocking chair.

The next morning after a great breakfast the 10 of us (6 in our party and 4 from Colorado and Germany) loaded into Dolphin flats skiffs with Yamaha motors. The fishing was great. Wes, on his second bonefish trip ever, caught lots of fish in the 4 to 6 # range and a big snook. Bruce caught a 10# bonefish but didn’t get any pictures (suspicious?), but the guide did say that it was the biggest bonefish he had ever gotten to the boat. Patty out fished most of the guys on most of the days and that’s not unusual for her. Guess that dispels the old sailor’s myth that women are unlucky on boats! Walt got 3 tarpon bites on 3 casts, and landed a 20# one on the 3rd cast. Ted got a nice tarpon also and a 20# permit, the only one of the trip. Ted got the slam. Congratulations.

The other guys did pretty well also. In fact, Ralph, the guy from Germany, got his 4th super slam; bonefish, tarpon, permit and snook. And some weird stuff happened too. Wes had a fish run about 50’ into his backing and the backing broke. Goodbye fly line. Then, 2 days later one of the guides found the line and fly, wound it up on a can and returned it to Wes. He was very surprised but gave the line to the guide as a memento. Also, I lost a tarpon when the nail knot stripped the coating off the fly line; that’s never happened before. One guide told me that I couldn’t use my 7wt because it was too light. And we needed to use 20# leader for the bonefish. I capitulated on the first day and used my 9wt but after that I used my 7wt with 12# and 16# leaders for the rest of the week. It worked fine and I didn’t break off any flies. Hah.

After each day of fishing we returned to the mothership and were greeted by hostess Yoah (Johanna) with ice cold moist towels on a silver platter to wipe our salty faces. And also by Ama (Amarinth) with a fresh mojito or daquiri also on a platter. Then came the appetizers, fish fritters, calamari, etc. What a wonderful way to end a fishing day. I’ve tried to teach this skill to my wife but so far I’m not having much luck. Then there was time for a good hot shower before dinner. We often viewed the spectacular sunsets from the upper decks and thanks to Bruce and Patty’s coaching I actually saw the green flash just as the sun sank below the horizon. Always thought that was a myth.

Dinners were off the chart delicious. There were usually choices of meat, chicken, fish, lobster, pasta, several salads, side dishes and breads, fruit, soup and excellent deserts. The two chefs did an incredible job every night. There was one especially great chocolate cake called a senorita, that would have been right at home at Bern’s Steak House. Breakfasts were also great; eggs or omelets anyway you wanted, meats, cheeses, fruit, breads, fruit juices and great coffee. The we packed our own lunches into Tupperware boxes and they were put into our boats for the day. The chefs even made gluten free meals for one of our guests. I think I would go again for the food, even if the fishing was terrible.

After dinner we retired to the air-conditioned salon for true stories, jokes and Havana Club Especial Rum. Then back to bed and start all over again the next morning. Each day Ama made the beds with fresh linens and folded the towels into animals like swans, turtles, or rabbits. How nice! It's a tough life but somebody has to do it.

Then there was the boat crash. On Cayo Largo there are a few inside lagoons that are accessed by zig zag canals that are about 20' wide and ¼ mile long. When the guides enter these narrow canals they announce on the radio that they are coming into the canal. Apparently the message did not get through. Walt and I were in one boat and 2 guys from Colorado were in the other boat. We came around a blind corner at 25 mph and there on our side of the canal was the other boat also at 25 mph. It's incredible how fast things happen in 20' at 50 mph. As soon as we saw the other boat Walt was thrown into mangroves and I was into the water. Fortunately, both guides did the right thing and turned hard right so the boats hit bottom to bottom. Had one boat gone over the top of the other it could have been much worse. We got Walt back in the boat, he had a small cut on his hand and some bruises. I only got a small bruise. But Bill, in the other boat got a huge bruise on his hip. The guides were furious with each other. Wish my Spanish was better because I could have learned some new cuss words.

So back to the mothership and the captain decided to take Bill to the small clinic on Cayo Largo. Because the bruise was getting larger, and because Bill was 80 years old and only had one lung they decided to fly him to the hospital in Havana the next day. Unfortunately, he had to remain there until the flight home. His friend that accompanied him and returned to the mothership and said that the doctors and nurses were very professional and taking good care of him. Also being an American citizen, they were required to report his condition to the American embassy each day. FYI, your plane ticket to Cuba includes a \$25 charge for Cuban medical insurance. That paid for all the care he received. We hope that Avalon Charters will also comp him a return trip since he only got to fish two days.

Well, this is getting long so let me wrap it up. We had sporadic internet access so were able to confirm our return flight on Southwest was still ok. Lots of bad news about corona in Europe and travel lockdowns caused some anxiety in us all. If the flight was cancelled our backup plan was (1) to build a raft and paddle home, or (2) hitchhike to Guantanamo and see if the US military would give us a ride, or (3) to bribe the ship captain to take us to Key West and rent a car to drive home. Actually, staying on the ship was a pretty good idea, safe, isolated, good food and rum, good company.

The airport in Havana was crowded, about 20% of the people wearing masks but very few coughing. The plane was full but the flight was uneventful. Security was quick and easy and they didn't even take our temperatures back in Tampa. All the baggage made it home safe and sound. All in all, it was a great trip. Would I go again? Yes. Yes. In a heartbeat. Like all the Caribbean islands I've been to the people are warm and friendly. They rely on tourism as an important part of their economy and want you to come back. Hopefully, this bug will die out and the Cuban and American governments will stop picking on each other. Then trips to Cuba could only get better.

Patty, Bruce, Ted and Wes display our club flag in front of the National Hotel in Havana, Cuba. Robert Fischer took the photo.



Corona humor from Dick Miekka

Half of us are going to come out of this quarantine as amazing cooks. The other half will come out with a drinking problem.

I used to spin that toilet paper like I was on Wheel of Fortune. Now I turn it like I'm cracking a safe.

I need to practice social-distancing from the refrigerator.

Still haven't decided where to go for Easter ----- The Living Room or The Bedroom

PSA: every few days try your jeans on just to make sure they fit. Pajamas will have you believe all is well in the kingdom.

Home-schooling is going well. 2 students suspended for fighting and 1 teacher fired for drinking on the job.

I don't think anyone expected that when we changed the clocks we'd go from Standard Time to the Twilight Zone

This morning I saw a neighbor talking to her cat. It was obvious she thought her cat understood her. I came into my house, told my dog..... we laughed a lot.

So, after this quarantine.....will the producers of My 600 Pound Life just find me or do I find them?

Quarantine Day 5: Went to this restaurant called THE KITCHEN. You have to gather all the ingredients and make your own meal. I have no clue how this place is still in business.

My body has absorbed so much soap and disinfectant lately that when I pee it cleans the toilet.

Day 5 of Homeschooling: One of these little monsters called in a bomb threat.

I'm so excited --- it's time to take out the garbage. What should I wear?

Classified Ad: Single man with toilet paper seeks woman with hand sanitizer for good clean fun.

Day 6 of Homeschooling: My child just said "I hope I don't have the same teacher next year" I'm offended.

Better 6 feet apart than 6 feet under....

Fly of the Month

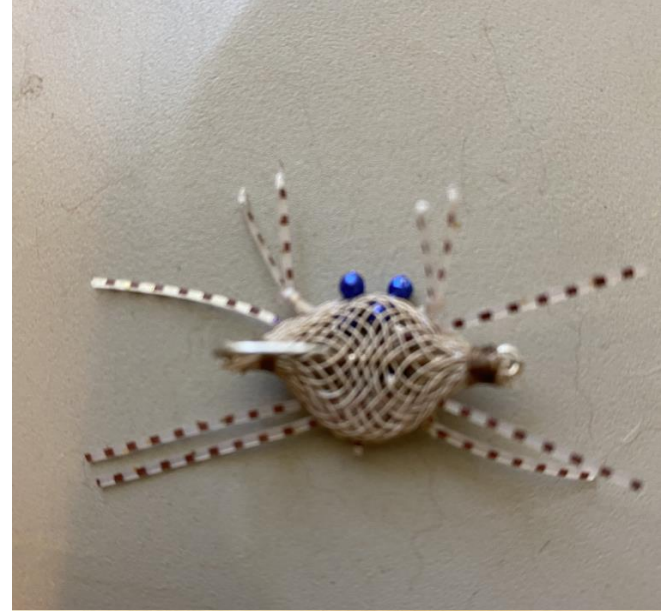
Alphlexo Crab

This is the latest fly I have been experimenting with. It follows the spoon fly, the rat fly, the double bunny and the five bead orange-butt bitter. I have fun tying them and sometimes they even catch fish!

Originally designed for fly fishing the Seychelles, the Alphlexo Crab has become a must-have fly for targeting saltwater species such as bonefish and permit worldwide. I found the tubing at White Water Outfitters, but local shops may have it.

You tie barbell eyes on the center bottom of a hook shank. Then slide about an inch and one half of the tube over the shank/barbell eyes and tie it in at the rear. Trim excess and hit with superglue. Next, push the tubing forward to make a bulge and tie in at the eye (tricky); leaving a nice crab-shaped body. Trim excess. Add silly legs through the body with a needle. For eyes I used two blue bead-chain stuck in the body (one in, one out). You can also use burnt mono eyes. Super glue all your legs and eyes to hold them in place.

I was pretty happy with my third attempt (pictured) and am looking forward to showing it to some local reds, trout and snook. Maybe I can even get a sheepshead to eat.



My wife and I walk on Bayshore for our exercise most mornings. We caught the birds resting in a calm spot one morning pictured on the right. And, on low incoming tides we always see many snook cruising when the water is clear. The snook often follow rays, which are moving over grass. Pretty cool and I am waiting for the chance to pole my boat along there on a nice morning.

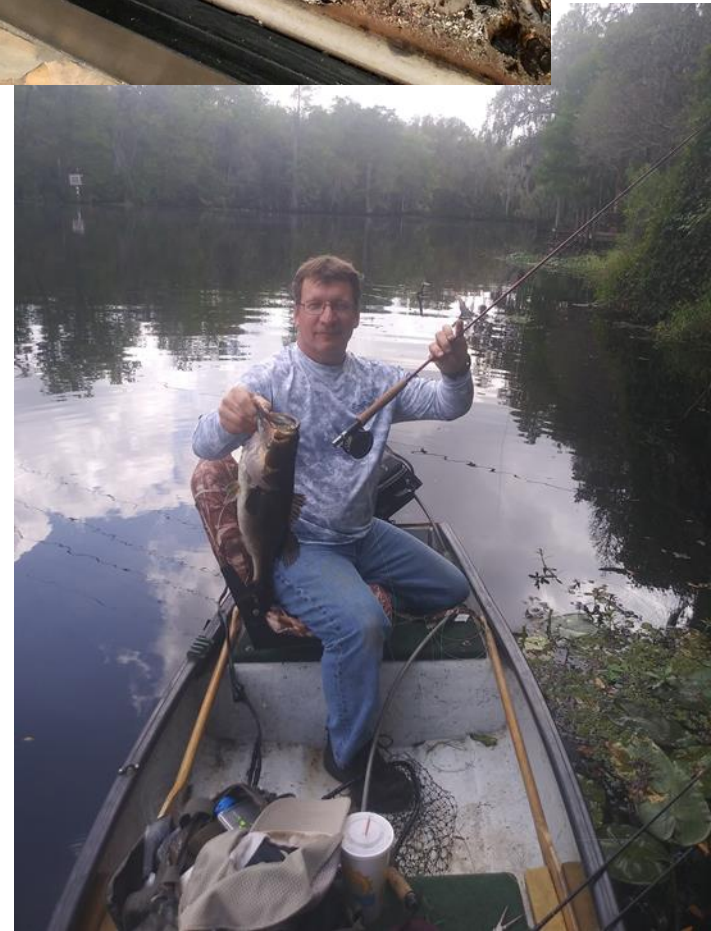
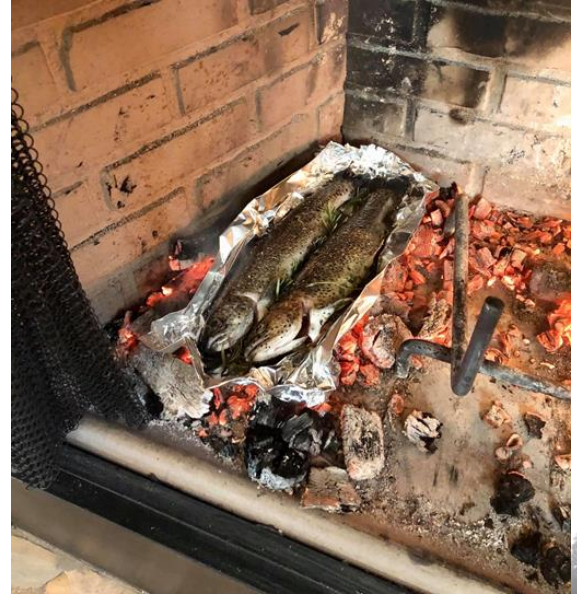


Captain Bryon Chamberlin reports fishing has been really good. Snook and redfish are in their springtime feed. Tarpon are already here in good numbers, and they are hooking multiple fish each day when the weather hasn't been crappy. Bryon helped **Captain Greg Peterson** break in his new Chitum Skiff recently. They went 2 for 4 on tarpon. Pictured is Greg with the fish he caught. Greg is open for business on his new boat!



Club member, Bryce is sheltering in the Blue ridge mountains for the month of April. He has been fishing the tail waters of the Toccoa. Lots of rainbow trout, gorgeous weather; cooked a few over coals right in the fireplace!

Club member Jeff has good luck on the Hillsborough river. Pictured right with a nice bass.



Club member Rich Gorden has also scored on the freshwater with bass and bream. Try and get out for a few hours on our many canals and lakes to enjoy nature and relax.



Fishing Report and Forecast

“What a great time to go fishing!”

Club Member George Ross reports: I go bass fishing at my pond early in the morning and this gets me out of the house other wise I would go nuts. Everyone, I can't wait to see you again.

Kayak guide Neil Taylor reports: We are in the world of the surreal with the best fishing in 15 years and only so many people are able to go. The closures have led to major improvements with the inshore species. Trout were never in danger as they spawn year-round so their numbers are at a 35 year high. We see redfish in numbers we haven't encountered in 7 to 8 years. Snook still continue a gradual rebound from the effects of the 2010 freeze. Pompano and flounder have filled some gaps. My "pompano fly" went through testing and Steve caught everything on it. They didn't find pompano, but it killed everything else. I sent them to Key West where Jeremy L. caught a bunch of pompano on it. The fly, chartreuse with silver and gold and multiple tungsten beads has the right weight and the color is just right. In the down time, I've tied 50 of them. With new hooks arriving, I'll tie another 50. Since fishing is outstanding, when all goes right with the world I will look forward to taking a bunch of people out for this action. Contact Neil at Livelybaits@aol.com Phone: 727-692-6345

Capt. Pat reports: Fly reels in freshwater are generally thought of as a place to store fly line. It is rare that the backing is even seen. In saltwater, your first trip might include a large jack, snook or even ladyfish that will have you into the backing in seconds. Take some necessary steps to avoid any problems that can happen very quickly. Don't knock the reel against rocks, boat decks, hard floors, etc. Small scratches and dents expose bare metal which will easily corrode. On a boat always place the rod butt (and reel) on a damp cloth, so it will not slide and scratch, or get a reel cover if not supplied with your reel. Flats boats have 6 or 8 horizontal rod holders under the gunnels that afford perfect protection for both rod and reel. Never drop the reel in the sand, especially when stringing your rod. When taking a picture in the water with your catch, avoid having your reel on the sandy bottom at your feet. Placing a reel in your hat if it must be on the ground is a good idea. Sand grains are very hard and can scratch the inner housing, causing damage to disk drags and even ball bearings. A ball bearing housing is made from stainless steel, the balls themselves are not. A corroded ball bearing will heat up and seize in the middle of the fight with your fish of a lifetime. Immediately after fishing, rinse the reel with a soft freshwater spray or spigot. Remove the spool, shake off excess water, and leave it to dry before reassembling. Ideally, after a saltwater fishing trip, and before putting the reel away for a long period, give it an in-depth cleaning. Remove the fly line and backing, scrub carefully with hot soapy water to remove salt crystals, rinse and dry with a clean cloth. It is never a good idea to soak a fly reel for long periods. The freshwater will not dislodge salt trapped in the tightly wound backing. Water will also penetrate the ball bearings and cause rust. Soaking can also distort the cork drag plates and prevent the drag from working smoothly. Make sure your reel is designed to not use internal grease or lubricant. When applicable, apply new grease and lubricate according to the manufacturer's instructions. Apply a light coating of oil to all exterior surfaces. Total reel maintenance will vary with use. Sending it to the manufacturer may be necessary if you can't resolve a problem.

Pat Damico charters Fly Guy in lower Tampa Bay and can be reached at captpatdamico.com and (727) 504-8649.

Capt. Rick Grasset reports: Higher tides this month will mean that reds will spend more time feeding on shallow flats. Look for them along mangrove shorelines and around oyster bars when the tide is high and in potholes or along sandbars when the tide is low. When fishing shallow water for reds, be as quiet as possible. I prefer to use a push pole or wade. Reds are one of the most challenging species to catch on a fly. Since they can be very spooky, I often wade for them when fly fishing to keep a lower profile. I like a 12' or longer leader on a floating fly line. Wide profile baitfish patterns work well this time of year since many reds are feeding on larger baitfish. Lower Tampa Bay and Gasparilla Sound are both good areas for reds this month.

You'll also find big trout in many of the same shallow areas that you find reds. Trout will also be plentiful on deep grass flats. Drifting and casting ahead of the drift is usually the most productive method. I like Ultra Hair Clouser flies on sink tip fly lines for trout or other species that be found there. Look for flats that have a good mix of grass and sand and good tidal flow. Snook Fin-Addict Guide Service, Inc. (941) 923-7799 (office)



Our new **traveling club flags** are on the move! Four club members in Cayo Coco, Cuba in May. Lower right **Ted and Frank** in Cordova AK in September. **Lou and Walt** at Casuarina Point, Abaco, Bahamas in April 2018.



Patty and Bruce Anderson
In Belize City, Belize
behaving themselves



Mexico 2019 hog
snapper dinner



Ted and Walt beach snook
fishing Little Gasparilla
Island May 2019



Walt and Capt. Frank
in the jungles of Columbia
March 2019



Two Boys Inn, Andros, Sep 19



2020 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Jan 18 Red Fly Tournament
- Feb 21-22 Shad Outing, Mullet Lake campground
- Mar Casting Clinic
- Mar 29 Annual Banquet - Cancelled
- Apr 23 CCA Banquet - Cancelled
- June Lake Calm Freshwater Outing we hope!
- Oct 10-17 Two Boys inn, Andros Island
- Oct Marine Quest, St Pete
- Oct 17-24 Mexico: Costa de Cocas trip
- Oct Carl Hanson Outing, Hillsborough River
- Nov 8-12 Chattooga Trip for trout
- Nov 6-7 FFI Expo
- Nov Big Gun, Picnic Island
- Nov Florida Sportsman Show
- Dec 3 Members Year End Party
- Dec 11 Play Hooky at the Hatchery
- Dec Don Coleman Outing, Ft Desoto

Member Benefits

TBFFC is famous for its value and focus on the sharing of information, experience, and craftsmanship with its members. As a TBFFC member you will enjoy many benefits free or at nominal cost.

- Monthly Meetings with informative speakers
- Fishing Trips Sponsored by Members and the Club
- Group Clinics and Workshops
- Fly Tying Lessons
- One-On-One Fly Casting Lessons
- Shirts and Hats with club logo
- 80-page Beginner's Basic Skills Instruction Manual
- Annual Banquet

Fly Fishing Guides

- Capt. Nick Angelo (813) 230-8473
- Capt. Pat Damico (727) 504-8649
- Capt. Bryon Chamberlin (813) 361-8801
- Capt. Rick Grassett (941) 923-7799
- Capt. John Hand (239) 842-7778
- Capt. Frank Rhodes (863) 967-4258
- Capt. Greg Peterson (423) 432-1973

Fly Casting Coaches

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Walt Durkin.....813-853-5870

North Tampa

Robert Fischer.....813-962-0185
Dan Lagace.....813-929-6605
Leigh West813-971-8697

St. Petersburg

Capt. Pat Damico.....727-504-8649

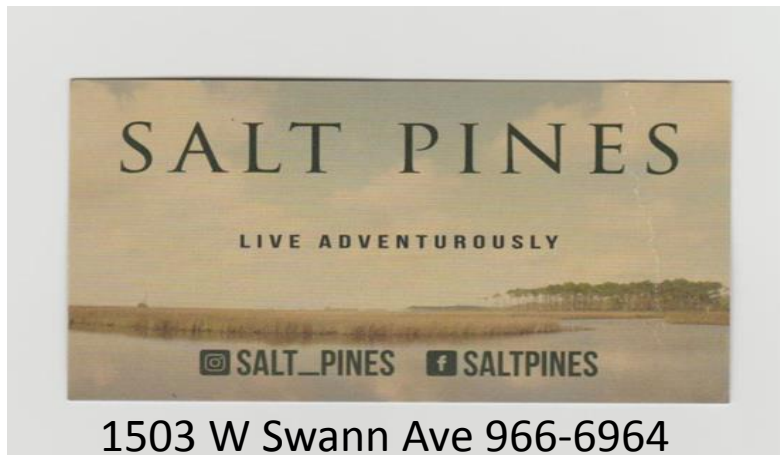
Polk County

Capt. Frank Rhodes.....863-967-4258

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These companies sponsored the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club. Some are members of the club. We urge you to patronize them.

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- REDFISH LANDING GUIDE SERVICE, Capt. John Hand www.RedfishLandingGuideService.com, (239) 842-7778
- THE FLY GUY, Capt. Pat Damico, (727) 504-8649 ,w www.captpat.com, pat4jaws@hotmail.com
- SNOOK FIN-ADDICT GUIDE SERVICE, Capt. Rick Grasset, (941) 923-7799, www.snookfin-addict.com
- SWANN'S FLY FISHING SHOP, Jim Swann, 13650 South 98 Bypass, Dade City, 33525, (352) 567-6029
- Carbon Marine, 3916 W. Osborne Ave. Tampa Fl, 33614, 813-870-1234
- Tampa Fishing Outfitters, 3916 W. Osborne Ave, Tampa, FL; 813-870-1234, tampafishingoutfitters.com
- Dave Chouinard, Simms Fishing, 732-610-9700, Fax: 727-953-6296 ; Dave@ChouinardOutdoor.com



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Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club

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Date: _____

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Hm. Phone: _____ Wk. Phone: _____

Email address: _____

Type of Membership: _____

Please Check: One Year _____ Five Year _____

Please list names you wish to include in family membership

Annual Dues: \$25.00 Individual Membership

\$35.00 Family Membership

\$95.00 Corporate Single Membership

(includes one membership and Ad Space)

\$120.00 Corporate Double Membership

(includes two memberships or family membership and

Ad Space in Newsletter)

Five-year dues: \$100.00 Individual Membership

\$140.00 Family Membership

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Oxfordshire Ct. Brandon, 33510