

Baby Tarpon Mayfly Project

Please join us for our March meeting where Suncoast Club member Tim Elms will tell us about his pursuit of baby tarpon in Pinellas County; and, his work with the Mayfly Project.

Tim was born and raised in Denver Colorado and traded his nymphs for bait patterns in 2018 when he and his wife decided to move to the St Pete area. Shortly after he joined SFF he became their webmaster and writes for their newsletter, even interviewing and becoming friends with Andy Mill. He has honed his tarpons skills and now catches hundreds of baby tarpon each year, mostly on foot.



**Next meeting 6:30 - 8:30 PM
3 March 2026**

We meet at the Northdale Recreation Center from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. We will provide pizza and drinks, so join us for an enjoyable evening. Families and newcomers are welcome to walk in and check out the club. **Come early about 5:30 to practice fly casting.**

Directions to Our Meeting: (6:30 pm) Northdale Rec Center: Take Dale Mabry north past Ehrlich Road and then left on Northdale Blvd. Then left on Spring Pine Drive and straight to the Rec Center on the right.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Now is the time to buy your tickets for our annual banquet on 28 March. The cost is \$25 per person and we will have them available at our March meeting. Please don't miss out on a fun event.

Jim Dye is managing our club Facebook page, which we have updated and members are now posting pictures. Check it out as a good source of fishing news.

April is our **Trash and Treasures** meeting so look around the house and garage for those items you no longer use and bring them to the club. For this meeting, you will bring and donate to our club the fishing stuff you no longer need or use and we will auction it off at a low cost. This will declutter your garage/house to your spouse's delight and also pass on the items to another club member to use and enjoy. This is a fun meeting with spirited bidding for interesting items. Please join us and bring cash or check.

Sight fishing has been especially good this winter and I hope you found your way to a local flat. Please let us know if you need more help or a fishing buddy.

//Walt Durkin



Fly Fishing Quotes

“True friendship shines brightest while sharing the thrill of the chase.” – Hannah Sullivan

“Good friends make great fishing companions, creating joy with every splash.” – Michael Sanders

“The greatest catch of all is the friends made along the way.” – Grace Bennett

“Fishing trips recorded in our hearts are treasures we carry forever.” – Lucas Wells

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President: Walt Durkin

Walt.durkin@aol.com

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Patty Anderson

Denise Bruner

Bryon Chamberlin

Pat Damico

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Keaton Anderson

February Meeting Photos

Forty members attended our February meeting and we welcomed seven new members. I hope you enjoyed Capt. Rick's talk on winter fishing in our area. Rick had some great tips and insights into how to pursue our game fish, especially reds. Thanks to Rick for coming over from Sarasota and sharing his expertise. Rick also donated a two-hour casting lesson, which one of our new members won!



Annual Banquet 28 March

The Suncoast will host our annual banquet this year in St Petersburg. The date is 28 March and tickets are \$25 per person. Our theme is 'Legends of Fly Fishing' and our guest speaker is Captain Steve Huff who happens to be a legend himself. He began guiding in 1968 in the Florida Keys after graduating from the University of Miami with a degree in marine biology. In 2010, he became the first full time professional fishing guide ever inducted into the IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame. His insatiable curiosity and passion for being on the water have driven him and his clients to nearly 50 years of great friendships and fishing. This is an annual fund raiser for our clubs as well as a great time. We will have many raffle items to include gear and trips. Additionally, we will offer a custom bamboo rod. Buy your tickets at our March meeting or online at the Suncoast website. Please join us for good food, fun and to meet one of the greats of our sport. //Walt



TBFFC NEWS & NOTES

Do pay your club dues! Please note we start collecting annual club dues in January. Your \$40 gets a good return with informative guest speaks, free guide trips, a great banquet and the camaraderie of other fly- fishing aficionados. Please pay at a meeting or find instructions at the end of the newsletter.

New club member Mike Franz is an experienced fly fisherman and a certified casting instructor. He has offered to be a new resource for our members, for example, casting clinics a few hours prior to our meetings for new casters or problem solving for experienced casters. We welcome Mike to our club and look forward to using his knowledge and good will. Please come to our next meeting and introduce yourself to Mike.

Jack Hexter is selling a new Yamaha four stroke motor for charity priced at \$1250. Contact Chet Jasak, Fish-On Clubs, Wish-to-Fish Ph. 727-385-3193

Club member John Lookabill has a flats boat and is seeking fisherman to go out with him on the boat. He can also help new folks with their casting. You can meet John at the next meeting to exchange contact info.



Catch of the Month Photo Contest

To all members of the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club. Here is your chance to be on the front page of the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club website! Each month we will review and display the best member photo of your fishy catch. The best photo will be judged on the quality of fish caught, composition of the image as well as the excitement of the moment of the catch.

Send all photos with subject line Photo Contest along with your first and last name to: Tampabayffc@gmail.com

Be sure to show the lucky angler, the fish and lure (hopefully a fly) in your photo. All entries will receive a raffle ticket for a nice prize, which we will award at our annual Holiday Party. Cigar Rob with a red at Cypress.



Google Groups for Fly Fishing



Use the **Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club Google Group** to reach out and communicate with other club members about fly fishing! This resource is available to obtain information about fishing, connect with fishing partners, inquire about areas to fish, techniques, flies, or anything appropriate to fishing!

**Please note that this is a private forum,
and is limited to club members.**

**To join, please email: Sightcaster@gmail.com with your request.
Subject Line: TBFFC Google Group
You must have a Google or Gmail account to join.**

Salt Water Leaders

Your leader is an important part of your fly-fishing outfit. A proper leader is necessary for a good presentation, often the critical step in fooling a fish and getting a hookup. I will explain my ideas on leaders and also suggest you research this topic online where you will find useful information. For example, here is a link authored by our casting instructor Jonas: <https://www.everyjonahhasawhale.com/post/take-me-to-your-leader-no1>

The easiest way to go is to purchase a 9 to 12 foot tapered leader down to 12 or 16-pound test. Store bought leaders for salt water will have a proper taper to turn over your flies. And, a proper turnover will extend your cast to its greatest length. Additionally, your leader will be tight when you have to make a quick strike. Getting these small details right will be critical to success.

Nine foot leaders are adequate for many situations. I extend my leaders to 12 feet in the winter for spooky fish in clear water. Fish, especially reds, will spook every time if they see your line in the water. Thus, the extra 3 feet will help in this regard. As your 9 foot leader gets shorter with fly changes simply add another two-to-three feet of fluorocarbon tippet to restore the length. I generally buy or make my leaders out of mono to save expense. Then, I add fluorocarbon tippet to the end for stealth. Flouro is more invisible and also holds up well to general wear and tear.

When I make my leaders out of mono I use a 40-30-20 model. That is, about 4 feet of 40, 2 feet of 30 and 2 feet of 20. Then, I add 2 feet of flouro bite tippet at 12 or 15-pound test. Use blood knots for this process. This results in a 10-foot leader that should turn over just fine. Others leader formulas are available online. If you are targeting snook, you need a stronger bite tippet. In that case, I go 20 to 30-pound bite tippet of 18 inches. Snook have a sand paper-like jaw that will wear thru a leader, so the heavier test is needed. I tie this on with an Albright knot, but other knots will work. You can also research this on the internet or ask at a club meeting.

Please note your leader is always the weakest link in your system and needs your attention. A proper leader will help in more hookups and also in actually landing a nice fish. A broken leader is a disappointing way to lose your next fish. I hope this helps and we are always available to answer questions about fly fishing setups.
//Walt

Douglas Fly Rod sent us a 40% off deal. Read the details below and let me know if you would like to buy one of their rods. They cost \$500 to \$900 retail. //Walt

Hi Tampa Bay Fly Fishers,

I hope you're doing well. My name is Chelsea and I'm reaching out from Douglas Outdoors, the makers of the **award-winning SKY G** and **DXF Gen2** fly rods. We've been expanding our presence in Florida and wanted to connect with your club, given your members' strong focus on saltwater fly fishing.

Our Douglas Saltwater Series rods were built specifically for the demands of Florida's fisheries, engineered for long, accurate casts in windy conditions and with salt-resistant components that stand up to tarpon, redfish, snook, and bonefish.

I did attach our complete fly rod digital catalog, but more specifically [page 15](#) outlines ALL our saltwater fly rods that we offer.

To introduce your club to Douglas, we'd like to extend an **exclusive offer** just for your members, special pricing (40% off MSRP) on all Douglas saltwater fly rods.

If this sounds like a good fit, simply reply to this email and we'll get your group set up with usernames for our portal right away all we will need are email addresses to get them signed up. We'd love to see Douglas rods in the hands of your anglers this season and to support your club's events however we can.

Tight lines,
Chelsea Lehman
[Douglas Outdoors](#)

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Club member Kevin Welsh landed his personal best red fish measuring 34 inches in January. This is a very fine red fish for Tampa Bay. Kevin only joined the club last year and is already a fine fly fisherman. Good job Kevin!

DIY Abaco

Four club members traveled to Cherokee Sound on Great Abaco for DIY bone fishing in late January. I will explain the ins and outs of this trip in case you want to give it a try.

Abaco is fairly easy to get to and Cherokee Sound has a great bone fishing flat. You can book a flight to Marsh Harbor via Miami on American Airlines. Immigration is fairly simple and quick at the small airport. We rent a car from Barefoot rentals, but other options are available. Situated about 40 minutes south of Marsh Harbor, Cherokee Soind is a small village with about 200 people and has a small grocery store. The village also boasts the famous long dock stretching to 770 feet. Walk out on the dock when you arrive to find bonefish waiting for you on the vast sand flat. Several houses are for rent in town, all within a short walk to the water and the long dock. We rent a two-bedroom, one-bath house with fishing right out the front door.

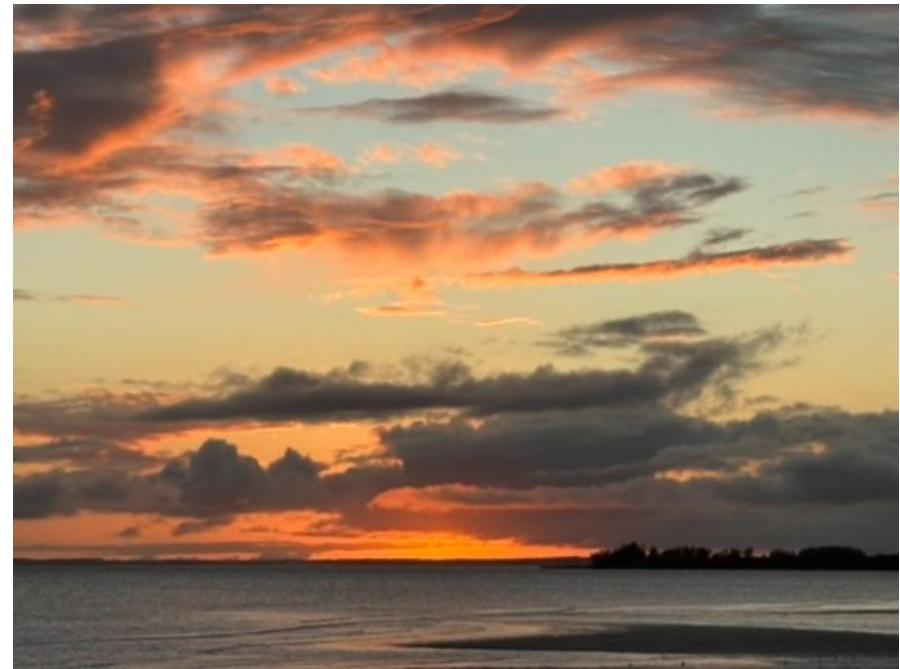
Marsh Harbor has two well-stocked grocery stores where you will find all you need. Most all of the goods are imported from the states. Since it is an island expect everything to cost about twice as much. We also found a nearby seafood store with fresh fish, lobster and conch. Several liquor stores on the island offer wine, beer and liquor. Next to the liquor store is a small shack selling conch salad. In my opinion, no visit to the Bahamas is complete without a conch salad or two. We also bought fresh grouper and stone crabs. We drank and ate well during our week cooking our own meals after a day on the flat.

The fishing is on one of the most beautiful flats on the island with firm, white sand that is dry on the low tide. We started each day by watching the sunrise on the long dock and then having breakfast. We headed out about 9:00 AM and often just walked on the dock to spot any close fish. From there, you have about a quarter mile of water to the south with two coves that hold fish on all tides. You will find another mile or so of the flat to the north. Again, this whole flat will hold fish depending on the tide. Low tides are fun as they concentrate the fish with the end of the outgoing the best chance. On the high tide you will find fish cruising the shore line. On the lowest tides you will find fish in inches of water as they stay on the flat as long as possible. This is classic Bahamas bonefish for tailing fish in skinny water. Standard flies work, for example, gotcha's, bitters, and shrimp, but expect to chase very spooky fish. Four of us caught 7 fish over six days and we did pretty good. We saw fish every day and had good chances, but challenging. None-the-less, super fun and a tailing bonefish on a pristine flat in shallow water is a sight to see.

We took part of one day off and traveled to Elbow Cay by ferry. Here, you can walk around this small island with many pretty houses, shops and places to eat. We always have lunch at a place by the ferry dock with a good view of the lighthouse. Back in Cherokee, we usually end each day on the Long Dock to watch the spectacular sunsets. This is a very relaxing trip and you can fish (or not) on your own schedule.

The house, food and car cost us about \$800 per person for a week in paradise with spectacular fishing. A great deal, and we look forward to many more trips to Abaco. //Walt

Lou and Patty with fish and me below. Another fine sunset to end the day.





A day in
Cherokee
Sound!



Denise Bruner fished the first week of February at Kay Fly Fishing Lodge Punta Allen, Mexico with a hosted ladies group. The cold front that hit Florida made it down to our area, even the Chihuahuas were wearing sweaters. Our group caught everything although the Permit were hard to find, water clarity was an issue too. I had 2 Permit follow and 1 grab but no hook up. I did manage to catch lots of Bonefish sight fishing and we found some in deeper cuts. I caught some mangrove snapper, Snook, Jacks and my first Barracuda on fly. Had tons of shots at hunkered down Tarpon, think they were stunned by the cold front and were not interested. It was fun being poled around in fresh water canals and seeing fish hiding out. We had a good time and the Margaritas were delicious at the end of the day.



Fishing Report

Reds should be more active as the water warms and baitfish become more plentiful. Higher tides, as we head into spring, will allow them to spend more time feeding in shallow water. Look for them over shallow grass, along mangrove shorelines and around oyster bars when the tide is high. You should find them in potholes and along sand bars when the tide is low. Fly anglers should score with my Grassett Flats Minnow fly, fished on a 12' or longer leader. When using a long leader be sure you are able turn it over, otherwise you'll need to shorten it until you can. The butt section should be at least 50% of the total length of the leader and stiff enough to transfer energy from your fly line to the leader.

You may find big trout in skinny water in many of the same places that you find reds. Blind cast seams where grass meets sand or focus on light colored bottom, in potholes on top of sand bars, where you may be able to sight fish them. These big fish are important to the health of our fishery since they are usually females that are often filled with roe in March. Full regulations and details for all species can be viewed at <https://myfwc.com/>

SNOOK FIN-ADDICT GUIDE SERVICE, Capt. Rick Grassett, (941) 923-7799, www.snookfin-addict.com (941) 923-7799.



Wes and Kelly traveled to the Amazon in Brazil to fly fish for peacock bass. They stayed at Agua Boa Lodge about 300 miles north of Manaus (and 100 miles north of the equator) where all fishing is fly fishing using single barbless hooks only. Fishing was done from boats, from shore, and sometimes at the end of a hike to a laguna. Most of the peacock bass fishing was sight fishing stripping as fast as you can. No matter how fast they stripped, the guides said they were "muy slow" and needed to strip faster, although only one fish had its tail eaten by piranha as Wes reeled it in. There are many things in the Amazon that want to eat you, from the toothy fish (boga grips were a necessity) to caiman wanting to eat your fish (or you) and the no see ums that just ate everything. The lodge was nice and at the end of each day of fishing, servers offered Caipirinha (National drink of Brazil) as you stepped off the boat and appetizers at the top of the boat ramp. Over 7 days of fishing, Wes and Kelly caught 17 different species, including Wes' largest 17 pound peacock bass.





Good job Kelly and Wes
on a great trip!



Fishing Report and Forecast

“What a great time to go fishing!”

Sight Fishing Tip

Sight casting to visible fish is the most exciting way to catch larger fish with any equipment, but especially with a fly rod. If you have balanced tackle and the proper fly it must be quickly and carefully placed so the fish can see it. Wind, tidal movement, boat position and direction of the cast must always be considered. If you are executing all the essentials to make a good fly cast, how do you stop the fly at the correct spot to achieve much needed accuracy? At shorter distances, you can false cast to the side of the intended spot then deliver the cast to the target. This takes time and risks spooking your quarry especially when the sun can cause the fly line's shadow to scare the fish. As your fly approaches the correct spot, pinch the fly line with your line hand as it slides between your thumb and index finger to achieve accuracy. Some lawn practice is necessary to do this well and always pay big dividends when on the water.

Fly fisherman and casting instructor Pat Damico fishes from Fly Guy in lower Tampa Bay and can be reached at www.captpatdamico.com and (727) 504-8649.

2026 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Jan 24 Fly Casting Clinic
- Jan 17 Red Fly Tournament
- Feb 20-21 Waterman Tournament
- Feb 21 Cypress Park Outing w/Suncoast
- Mar 28 Annual Banquet
- May Lake Calm Freshwater Outing
- Oct 17 Carl Hanson, Hillsborough River
Rotary Park and Trout Creek
- 7-13 Nov Chattooga Trip for trout
- Nov Big Gun, Picnic Island
- Dec Kayaking Suncoast Youth Center
- Dec Suncoast Outing, Ft Desoto

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- Tampa Fishing Outfitters, 3916 W. Osborne Ave, Tampa, FL; 813-870-1234, tampafishingoutfitters.com

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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. David Grassett (941) 923-7799
- Capt. John Hand (239) 842-7778
- Capt. Greg Peterson (423) 432-1973

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Leigh West813-971-8697

Ted Hagaman.....813-920-7863

St. Petersburg

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

Winter Haven

Mike Franz.....239-269-5016

Member Application

Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club

Name: _____

Date: _____

Mailing address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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: \$40.00 Individual Membership

\$50.00 Family Membership

\$150.00 Corporate Single Membership

(includes one membership and Ad Space)

Five-year dues: \$160.00 Individual Membership

\$200.00 Family Membership

Please make check payable to: Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club C/O Walt Durkin at 3401 W. Vasconia St, Tampa, FL 33629