

The Newsletter of The Connecticut Fly Fisherman's Association

WWW.CTFLYFISH.ORG

October 2019



The Goldman Brothers are waiting for some members to return the 30 books that they have paid for and very generously donate to their library for all to enjoy. No club has anything like this that I know of. Please return or pay them for the books you still have or have lost. Lets not make them upset this is a wonderful resource for everyone to enjoy. Editor



   <p>JOHN BILOTTA</p> <p>Cell: 301.351.0121 jbilotta@georgetownflyfishing.com georgetownflyfishing.blogspot.com</p>	<p>Bait • Tackle • Fly Tying Accessories • Licenses</p> <h1>JT'S FLY SHOP</h1>  <p>664 Buckley Highway, Union, CT 06076 860-684-1575 jtsflyshop@yahoo.com</p>
 <h2>WILLINGTON PIZZA HOUSE</h2> <p>Route 32 • 25 River Road Willington Trading Center Willington, Connecticut (860) 429-7433 www.willingtonpizza.com</p>	<h2>HIGH HOOK OREGON</h2>  <p>T. MARK SEYMOUR PRESIDENT</p> <p>WWW.FISHHOOKVINEYARDS.COM 22 LEADMINE ROAD LEVERETT, MA 01054 413-218-0638 MARK@FISHHOOKVINEYARDS.COM</p> <p><i>Wines</i></p> <p>Love life. Go fishing. Care for the planet. Drink wine.</p>
  <p>CONSERVATION - EDUCATION - PASSION</p> <p>RAUL (RAY) RAMOS - FFI CERTIFIED CASTING INSTRUCTOR</p> <p>Individual / group fly-fishing lessons ramosray007@comcast.net 1.860.559.0369</p>	<h2>UpCountry Sportfishing</h2>  <p>352 Main Street, P.O. Box 44 • Pine Meadow, CT 06061 Phone: (860) 379-1952 www.FarmingtonRiver.com</p>

Ed Mitchell program will be on Tips and Tactics for Bonito and False Albacore

This lecture covers all the information you'll need to fly fish for Atlantic bonito and false albacore in local waters. Topics include good locations, best time of year, time of day and tide, matching your flies to the bait, right retrieve, right hook set, and how to fight and land these fascinating fish. Ed Mitchell is one of the most well know saltwater fly rodders along the Atlantic coast. He has four books: *Fly Rodding the Coast*, *Fly Fishing the Saltwater Shoreline*, *Fly Rodding Estuaries*, and *Along the Water Edge*. Ed has also written extensively for all the fly-fishing angling magazines. His website is www.edmitchelloutdoors.com

From the vest of the President



Our September membership meeting happened on a beautiful evening, so beautiful the air conditioning inside the clubhouse was well appreciated. I was blown away by the number of people that attended the event including some 1st time visitors. It's always nice to see familiar faces and catch up with people you have not seen since our last meeting in May. John Kovach was our speaker and he presented an excellent program featuring the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum. His passion and dedication as Managing Director of the Center came through loud and clear. It is a relatively short and easy three hour ride from the Hartford area and well worth it.

Our BOD meeting held the week before our membership meeting went well. We are in good shape right through January with committed speakers for our monthly meetings thanks to our program chair Roger Plourde, so mark the second Wednesday evenings on your calendars and bring a friend. Dan Price our publicity chair informed us that Mathies Grove picnic area in Peoples Forest has been reserved for June 13 of 2020. The Women in Fly Fishing Event to be held that day will display the many aspects of Fly fishing to women with the intention and hope of getting more women involved in the sport. Dan is working with a number of committee members representing other organizations as this is going to be a joint effort. Our CFFA will be involved and is looking for volunteers to assist on the day of the event. I know this is many months away but if you want to be a part of our effort or have any questions about what we will be doing please talk to Dan. He will be glad to hear from you. We have enjoyed teaching many women in our CFFA classes over the years so I hope some of them reading this will put the date on their calendar. We will keep you informed as we move closer to the date.

I have had more than one member approach me about the possibility of conducting Fly Rod Building classes like we did many years ago. We would need at least one member to take a lead position for his to happen. When I was Education Chair we had some talented rod builders lead the class including Ed Roberts, Todd Gorman and Barry Whitehouse. If anyone reading this wants to take this on contact me or Pete Naples.

I have been informed that the State has replaced Cole W Wilde TMA sign in the rest area on the Willimantic River and added one down river on the access road to Nye-Holman State Forest per our request. The one in the rest area was rotted out at the base and we thought it would be nice to have one at the lower end of the Fly Fishing Only TMA that Cole W Wilde was so instrumental in attaining. The TMA did receive a fall stocking on Sept. 19th. We did not float stock it due to the low level of water in the river. It is a beautiful place to fish during the fall and the fish are there so give it a go.

Hope to see you all on October 9th when Ed Mitchell will present a program.

Gary

Editors note,

I want to thank the people that have taken the time to send me some stories as well as the pictures in the newsletter. The above shot was taken by me as you can see much thought goes into what cookies Phil brings for us each month, and of course the president has an opinion on the subject. Take a moment to thank the board members who work very hard EACH month to make sure we have an enjoyable evening. Phil has several jobs, as he takes care of membership as well as helping out for the annual banquet.

John



For several years now Ron Dunleavy has had a wild turtle return each year to the exact spot he carps fishes. Tammy last year came with a friend and now they both come to him to be fed.

A hell of a vacation by Mark Casali

Sixteen years ago, I met two brothers from New Jersey in the parking lot of the Pleasure Beach boat launch in Waterford, CT. We were all in high school, and back then, we seemed to be the only “underage” fly-fishermen around. We instantly bonded over our unique obsession with fly fishing, and over the course of the next several years we fished almost every late summer and fall weekend together for Bonito and Albies. We fished like maniacs. While the brothers were in college, they’d wake up at 1am on Saturday morning, drive their gold minivan to CT—boat in tow—and meet me at the Pine Island or Barn Island boat launches for a first-light launch. This was a weekly occurrence, and they’d often sleep in their car, or even in the boat! In any other circle, I’d be a compulsive, die-hard fisherman, but compared to these two, I was a lightweight! I often wondered if I’d ever make it back to the launch, and after one trip chasing school bluefin off on Newport, we almost didn’t...We had fantastic times together, though,



and great fishing memories. We unofficially set the fly rod record for weakfish, had a day where we caught 88 Albies on fly, and most memorably, fished for about 12 hours straight in the remnants of Hurricane Katrina catching a bluefish on almost every cast.

Fast forward to May 2019. My wife and I were headed

down to Florida for the wedding of one of my old friends—the oldest Jersey brother. Both brothers had moved to Florida (for fishing of course) in 2010. We were all a bit shocked that a girl could put up with my friend’s fishing schedule, and even agree to hold the wedding in Marathon Key—a sort of Mecca for fishing. Marathon is just south of Islamorada, and is the home to outstanding inshore tarpon, bonefish and permit fishing, not to mention its extensive offshore opportunities. While our schedule was tight for the weekend, I managed to book an 8pm flight the day after the wedding, which left time for a guided Tarpon trip in the



morning.

Our trip was scheduled with Paul Fisicaro of Strip Strike Charters, one of the top fly-fishing guides in Marathon. Fate aligned with this trip because that Sunday morning was the only opening he had for weeks and weeks out. My wife and I met Paul at the launch across from our hotel for a 7am start. The plan was to fish the ocean-side migration for jumbo Tarpon (100 – 200lbs), but Paul informed us that the morning bite was slow on the ocean side. He instead planned to take us in the back country for the first half of the trip for baby Tarpon. I was admittedly a little disappointed about going for “baby” Tarpon, until we got to Paul’s first spot. We poled into position and soon saw several pods of rolling Tarpon. Paul shouted that these were 80-100lbs. Babies? I guess I’d be ok with targeting babies at that

size! The rolling Tarpon are actually gulping air in deoxygenated water. They're not actively feeding, but it's important to spot rolling fish because it reveals their position while laid up. These backcountry fish are much more willing to eat than the migrating fish on the ocean side, and if you hit them on the head with your cast, you'll often get them to eat. Paul continued to pole us into position until a rolling fish was in casting range. I made around an 80' cast and tried to lead the fish by putting the fly about 4 feet off his nose. Paul scolded me and explained that I have to put the fly right on the fish's head. When a Tarpon rolls it appears like it's moving, but Paul explained that they're actually staying stationary. On my next cast I put the fly directly on the fish. A wake built behind the fly and after a couple strips, the fly was absolutely slammed! I stripped hard to set the hook into the Tarpon's bony mouth, but I pulled it right out of its mouth. I was very mad at myself, and Paul told me I was a millisecond too early with my hook set. Fortunately, I had another shot setup a couple minutes later—this time to an easy 100lber. I made another good cast and put the fly right on the fish's head. The water erupted as if someone set off an underwater mine. It was really something to see, and all three of us watched a 100lb fish follow and then engulf the chartreuse colored fly. I did my best to set the hook again, but once again the fly slipped out of the Tarpon's bony mouth. I was disap-



pointed to say the least, but getting to witness that take was worth the trip alone.

As the sun moved higher in the sky, the Tarpon rolls became less and less frequent. Paul suggested we move to

another spot with smaller fish where we were almost guaranteed to put a fish in the boat. I blind casted at this spot, and within three casts I was on with a solid fish. I couldn't see the take on this hit, and I think that helped my hook set. I was slow to react, and that let the Tarpon swallow the fly a little bit deeper than the fish in the morning. The fish shot up in the air with jump after jump and we estimated it was a 30-40lb fish. Unfortunately, we lost it at the boat. A couple casts later I was on again, this time with a small 10 pounder. We did land that fish and everyone breathed a sigh of relief just to get a fish in the boat.

Paul then suggested we take a look on the outside and try for the migrating fish. He setup the boat by anchoring on the edge of a sandbar. In front of us, there was literally a Tarpon highway. It was amazing to see dozens of fish swimming single file through a well-defined lane down the shoreline. The issue on this day was that the fish were moving FAST. Schools of 2-10 fish would cruise by at around 20 miles per hour, which made it very difficult to present the fly. Since these fish aren't very interested in eating, it's critical you make a cast where you can swim the fly with the fish for at least 5 seconds. At 20mph, your window is razor thin and you have to spot the fish well before they reach the boat. I never did have a great shot, but it was exciting to watch these monsters cruise by.

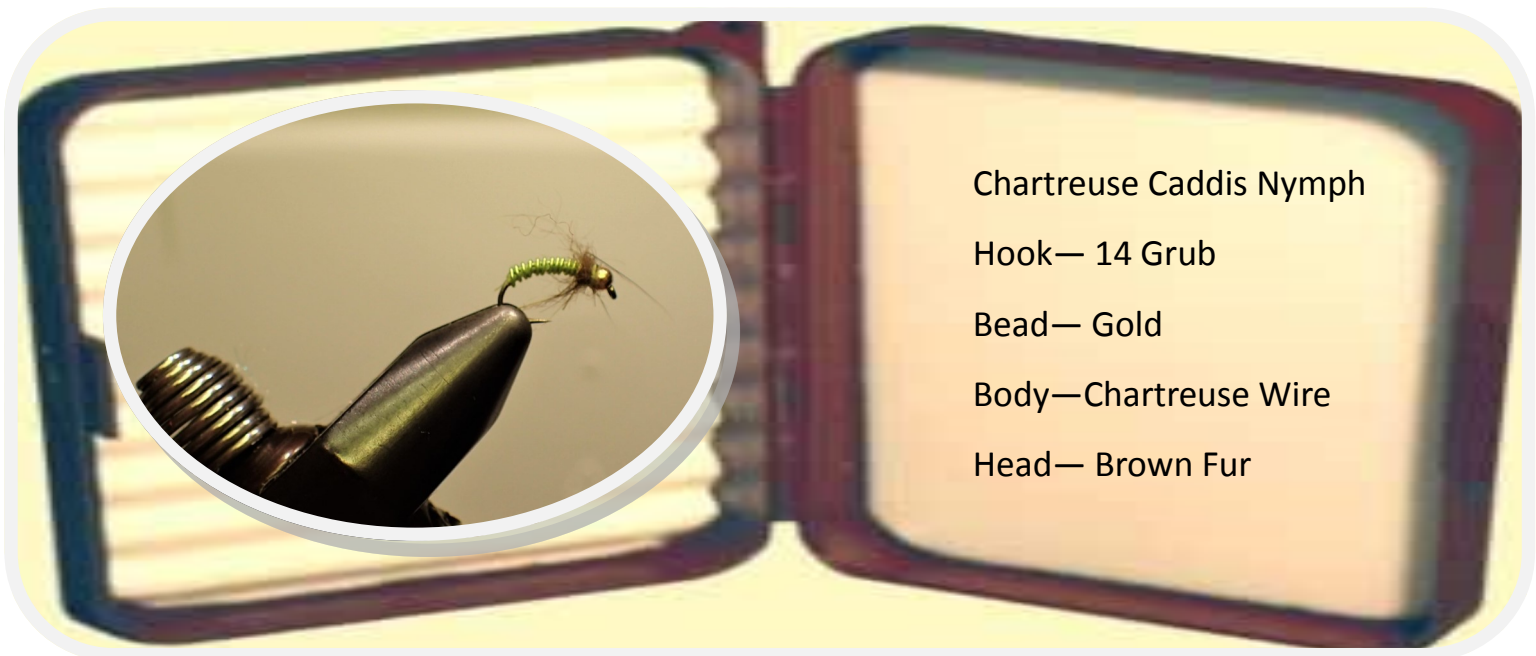
With two hours left in the trip Paul gave us some options. We could wait for more shots at migrating fish or try more protected spots for smaller resident fish. My wife, Chelsea, had patiently sat through 5 hours of fishing at this point, so I was anxious to get her in on the action. We all agreed to move our location for the smaller fish. We stayed on the ocean side of Marathon, but moved inshore to a stretch of mangroves. On the way there Paul spotted stained, "tannic" water in the area. Imagine an area of "iced tea" colored water amidst crystal clear aqua blue shoreline. The tannic water is a byproduct of decomposing matter released from the mangroves. It has far less oxygen than the surrounding waters which is bad news for baitfish, but excellent news for the Tarpon (which aren't 100% reliant on their gills). Sure enough, as soon as we pulled up to this stained water, we found Tarpon rolling everywhere. I put on my own fly for this spot, and Chelsea picked up a spin rod rigged with a chartreuse Zoom Super Fluke. Chelsea made a great cast into a pod of rolling

fish and she hooked up right away. After her fish cleared the area, I made a cast back into that pod and we soon had our first double-header. Paul told us that catching a fish would normally cause the rest of the school to spook and disperse, but we were lucky because this giant school stayed put. We ended up catching over 10 Tarpon at the spot with multiple double headers. What we gave up on size, we certainly made up in numbers. It was a fantastic end to our trip in Marathon.

It's been a long time since I fished with the Jersey brothers. On the way to the airport I called them to give them the report on the trip. We excitedly went through every detail of the day—from flies, to knots, to retrieves, to tackle. Life was different now, and we had wives and jobs and houses. These were good things, and things we often talked about during the countless hours we spent waiting for fish to show out on the water. But that call brought us back to the old days. Once again, for a short call, we were high school kids with fly rods, standing in a boat launch parking lot with nothing else to worry about except where to fish the next day.



Dick Wemmell's Fly Box



Chartreuse Caddis Nymph

Hook— 14 Grub

Bead— Gold

Body—Chartreuse Wire

Head— Brown Fur

This spring club members Ron Dunlevy and Kevin Fuller joined me in Vermont for a week of fishing I can always use more pictures like this and a story or write up to go with them from your trips.



Pictures by Kevin Fuller and Ron Dunlevy and myself.





Board of Directors

President • Gary Steinmiller

(c) 860-563-0040 (e) steinmillergary@yahoo.com

Activities VP • Bob Winot rwinot25@cox.net 860-292-1685

Environment VP • Phil Apruzzese (e) pjapruz@aol.com

Promotions VP • Richard Gaudreau:

(h) 860-745-0548 (e) readfr1@cox.net

Recording Secretary • Phil McCormick (h) 860-871-8703

Legal Secretary • Mark Barbieri (h) 860-623-8187

Treasurer • Chuck Koteen

Advisory Board • Gary Bogli (h) 860-858-5633

Advisory Board • Ray Riley (h) 860-721-0547

Banquet Chairman • Kurt Jagielow

Conservation Chairman • Ted Rzepski

Education Chairman • Peter Naples 860-620-2317

Indoor Facilities Chairman. • Denise Dauray

Legislative Chairman • Vin Ringrose (h) 860-828-4642

Membership Chairman • Phil McCormick

(h) 860-871-8703

Newsletter Chairman • John Springer

(h) 860-510-2383 (e) cffa@comcast.net

Program Chairman • Roger Plourde

(w) 860-747-3324

Publicity Chairmen Dan Price



P.O Box 380268

East Hartford, CT 06108



FLY FISHERS
INTERNATIONAL

