



America's Oldest Saltwater Fly Fishing Club

THE CURRENT

"The lifeline of the estuary and knowledge"















Embracing Growth While Honoring Tradition

Rhoddy Fly Rodders is a diverse group of over 70 members, each bringing their own experiences, skills, and reasons for being part of this club...*continued on page 5.*

"Pass on to all, who ask, what you learn here"



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@Rhody_Fly_Rodders



It looks like we turned the corner on this year's winter. By the time you read this the clock should be changed back to Daylight Savings Time. We will have more sunlight in the afternoon to fish!

Old Timer's/Old School Night, March Meeting

Hail, hail, the gangs all here! I'm calling out Bondorew, LeBlanc, Tobojka, Testa and Aguirre to attend. Imagine the stories to be told to friends you haven't seen in decades? We have an excellent program on hand presented by Ed Lombardo. It should be a fun filled informative, special night.

Club Dues!

Thank you members for getting your renewals done in a timely fashion. If you have not, dues can be paid at the monthly meeting. You can also mail them. Dues are \$30.00. Payments can be mailed to John Pope, 6 Canonchet Drive, Portsmouth, RI 02871.

Special Gratitude to RISSA Northeast Fishing Show!

We were so fortunate to have our donated flies on display at this show. On behalf of Rhody Fly Rodders, I'd like to thank RISSA and their fly fishing committee. Don Goodroe and John Edwards saved the day with this splendid idea to promote charitable contributions at their committee table.

We are currently creating the Summer Fishing Schedule.

Naturally we want the best locations for the time of year. We also have to consider safe conditions for our age group, parking, and access. Our emphasis as a club has always been the social experience. To promote this, we are bringing back Grill Night. We plan on having two fishing events scheduled where we will provide the grills to cook what you bring. More details at the next meeting.

New Members!

We have some new faces around. Please welcome, Joseph Antocci, Shane Denherder, Mark Ellis, Bill Kole, and Joshua Simmons to our cast of enthusiastic fly fishermen. We are here to help you expand your knowledge, share, and create new friendships. See you at the next meeting.

Capt. Ray Stachele

Capt. Ray Stachelek



President
Rhody Fly Rodders

"..we are bringing
back Grill Night!!"

Preview



Tuesday, March 18th, 6:30pm

Riverside Sportsman Association
19 Mohawk Dr., East Providence, RI 02915



Fly fishing for Trophy Striped Bass in Tidal Rivers

At our March meeting, Ed Lombardo will be making his annual presentation. This year he will be speaking about how to target trophy stripers in the tidal rivers. Ed caught one of RI's biggest fly caught stripers of 2024. This is not an anomaly. Ed not only consistently catches fish, but also catches a number of fish over 32 inches each year. In this presentation, he will be revealing all of his secrets and telling you his keys to success. Join us at the Riverside Sportsman Association on March 18th to learn where, when, and how to target trophy bass in RI's coastal rivers.

Ed Lombardo

Ed Lombardo is well known for being an authority on fishing in our coastal rivers. With over 45 years of experience as the chief Fly Fishing Instructor for both Addieville East Farm in Mapleville, R.I. and Deer Creek Farm in Foster, R.I. and as a respected saltwater fishing guide, Ed has built a well deserved reputation in Southern New England as an expert fly fisher and teacher of the sport. What is less known about Ed is that he is also a philanthropist who volunteers his time and efforts for numerous organizations. Ed has been instrumental in raising money for RFR's charity donations and donates his time to angler education programs.



Through his work, he has introduced many to the sport of fly fishing and has been instrumental in the formation of new friendships. Ed embodies RFR's motto, "Pass on to all who ask, what you learn here." Ed achieves this with uncanny humility and respect for both nature and fly fishermen of all skill levels. There is no better compliment I can give a fellow angler.

Directions

From Providence take Rt.195 to Exit 2B. Bear right on the ramp and follow Rt. 114 S for 2 miles. Look for WPRO Studios on the left, then take first U-turn back to Rt.114 north. Continue north and look for the Riverside Sportsman Club (blue) sign on the right.

Embracing Growth While Honoring Tradition

Rhoddy Fly Rodders is a diverse group of over 70 members, each bringing their own experiences, skills, and reasons for being part of this club. Some seek to improve their fishing success, others want to build friendships, embark on new adventures, or simply enjoy the camaraderie of our meetings. Every reason for being here is valid, and our goal as a club is to provide an environment where each member can find what they're looking for.

We recognize that our activities may not always meet everyone's expectations. Change can take time, and in the past, some suggestions may not have received the attention they deserved. However, progress is happening. Our newsletter now features more member contributions, the grills are returning to fishing events, and smaller groups are forming for fly-tying, camping, and fishing trips. There has been interest in additional initiatives like trash cleanups, volunteer activities, book clubs, and informal social meetups. Moving forward, we want to continue turning good ideas into action, but we also need to recognize the challenges that come with that.

Embracing Change Without Losing Our Roots

Change does not mean abandoning what makes RFR special. Our commitment to fly fishing, monthly meetings, and fishing events remains at the heart of who we are. But it's important to acknowledge that the club has always evolved—just as fly fishing itself has. What once worked well may need to adapt, and that's a natural part of growth.

Small Groups Matter

Not every initiative needs to involve the entire club. Some of the most meaningful experiences come from smaller, more focused gatherings where members can connect on a deeper level. We should encourage these opportunities rather than dismiss them simply because they may not appeal to everyone.

Leadership Comes from Within

If you have an idea, share it—and take the lead in making it happen. Whether it's organizing a fly-tying night, a fishing trip, or a social gathering, your enthusiasm will inspire others to join in. If you're looking to learn, make friends, or achieve personal goals within RFR, the best way to do so is by taking that first step and engaging with fellow members. You'll always have support in your efforts.

A Welcoming Environment for All

One of the simplest yet most powerful things we can do is make sure every member feels included. Too often, new members have walked in and found themselves sitting alone. That's something we can all work to change. Being welcoming costs nothing, yet it strengthens the very foundation of our club.

Let's continue to build on what makes RFR great—honoring our traditions while creating space for new ideas. Together, we can ensure that every member finds value in being part of this community

By Patrick Williamson and Bob Tilton

Upclose

Bob Tilton

Barrington, Rhode Island

How long have you been a member?

Since December 2024

Favorite flies?

Gurglers and bangers

Favorite places to fish?

Estuaries

Boat or shore fishing?

Shore

Any notable catches?

Windowpane flounder

Favorite species to catch?

Striped bass

How long have you been fly fishing and tying flies?

I have been fly fishing for 27 years, yet I don't tie flies.

Favorite fishing partner?

Patrick Williamson

Any notable stories?

I was fishing the Farmington in January and it was 14 degrees and snowing. I decided to wade out a bit too far and within a few steps I sunk up to my belly button in mud. The water was only a few inches below my waders and I was stuck. I reached for my phone, but there was no service. I was a mile from my car and started contemplating what would happen if I had to fall forward and crawl/swim to the bank. Would I make it back to my car before hypothermia set in? A half hour had passed, and I was still stuck. I had been wiggling my tows and trying to make any progress I could, but it was not working. I attempted to rock back and forth with no success. I tried twisting back and forth with no success. Finally after another fifteen minutes one of the rocking twists worked, and I was able to free myself. It was a scary moment.





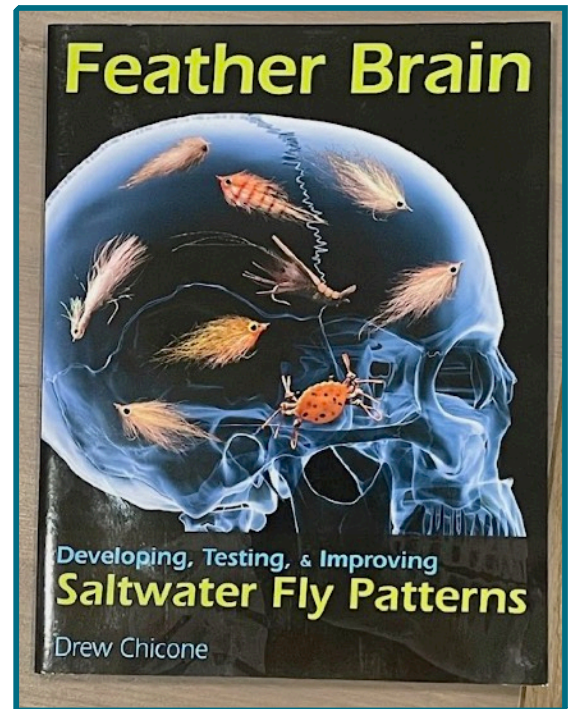
Book of the Month:

Feather Brain

by Drew Chicone

Feather Brain: Developing, Testing, & Improving Saltwater Fly Patterns by Drew Chicone is a 155 page guide to creating more productive flies.

Published in 2013, majority of the concepts and patterns are still relevant. Although this book is for an intermediate to an advanced tier who already knows the basics of constructing flies, the writing is properly edited and easily understandable for even a novice. While this book could not teach you how to go from bare hook to finished produce, that is not Chicone's intended purpose. As mentioned above, *Feather Brain* is meant to be a guide for tiers to use to elevate the average fly to above average.



What I like about *Feather Brain* is that it contains some patterns and techniques that you do not see in many other books. These include how to dye materials with Kool-Aid, make dubbing brushes, use rattles, and stack foam like deer hair to make heads. What I do not like about this book is that it seems a little light on patterns. However the patterns that it does contain are somewhat unique compared to what you find in most fly fishing books. Part of this is because the book addresses flies mostly fished in Florida and southern destinations, but as I have mentioned before, there are many parallels between designing flies for stripers and flies used closer to the equator. Two patterns from this book that I have found to crossover quite well are the Disco Shrimp and the Flats McNasty.

Rams Wool Sea Robin



I saw a video of someone tying a sculpin for trout and knew what I had to do. I had to tie a sea robin fly and share it with RFR. This is a reminder that fishing and fly tying should not be taken too seriously. Both should always be fun.

- 1) Attach your thread near the bend and add 3 feathers on each side for your tail. Alternatively, you can use craft fur for a fuller tail.
- 2) Add bucktail with a hollow tie to cage in the tail.
- 3) Attach a piece of bunny strip to each side like sea robin fins. You can attach rubber legs in front of the fin to be even more realistic. Wrap forward and add a dumbbell eye. This is only for weight, so use a drab color that will blend in to the head.
- 4) Cut rams wool from the skin and comb it out. Tie it in as if you were stacking deer hair. Alternate adding wool to the top then to the bottom as you move forward. Whip finish near the angled portion.
- 5) Comb out the head. It should look like a mess. Google a picture of a northern sea robin and use this as a guide for the next steps. Now cut the head to shape and add the eyes. The best eyes for this fly are stemmed dome (doll) eyes in 6mm, but any will work.

Materials



1/0-3/0 Jig hook



Any thread



Brown or tan bucktail



Red, brown, & tan feathers



Rust or crayfish zonker



Rust & tan rams wool



Spotlight: Fishing from Shore: Quonnie Pond

This section is meant to highlight well known fishing spots in order to provide information to new saltwater fly fishermen. The intention is to provide basic information without providing specifics that could be considered a spot burn.

Quonochontaug Pond, better known as Quonnie Pond, lies on the coast between Westerly and Charlestown, RI. Quonnie drains into the sea (technically, Block Island Sound), through a breachway that is very popular with serious surfcasters. Much of the pond's waterfront is privately owned and inaccessible to the general public. To reach the area of Quonnie that is accessible to the public, take West Beach Road south from Route 1, follow it to the very end, winding past the tennis court on your right, where it continues as a dirt road ending in an unpaved (no fee) parking area. A new boat launch ramp was installed there by the RI DEM a few years ago, but there is plenty of room to launch a kayak from the shore just to the east of the ramp.

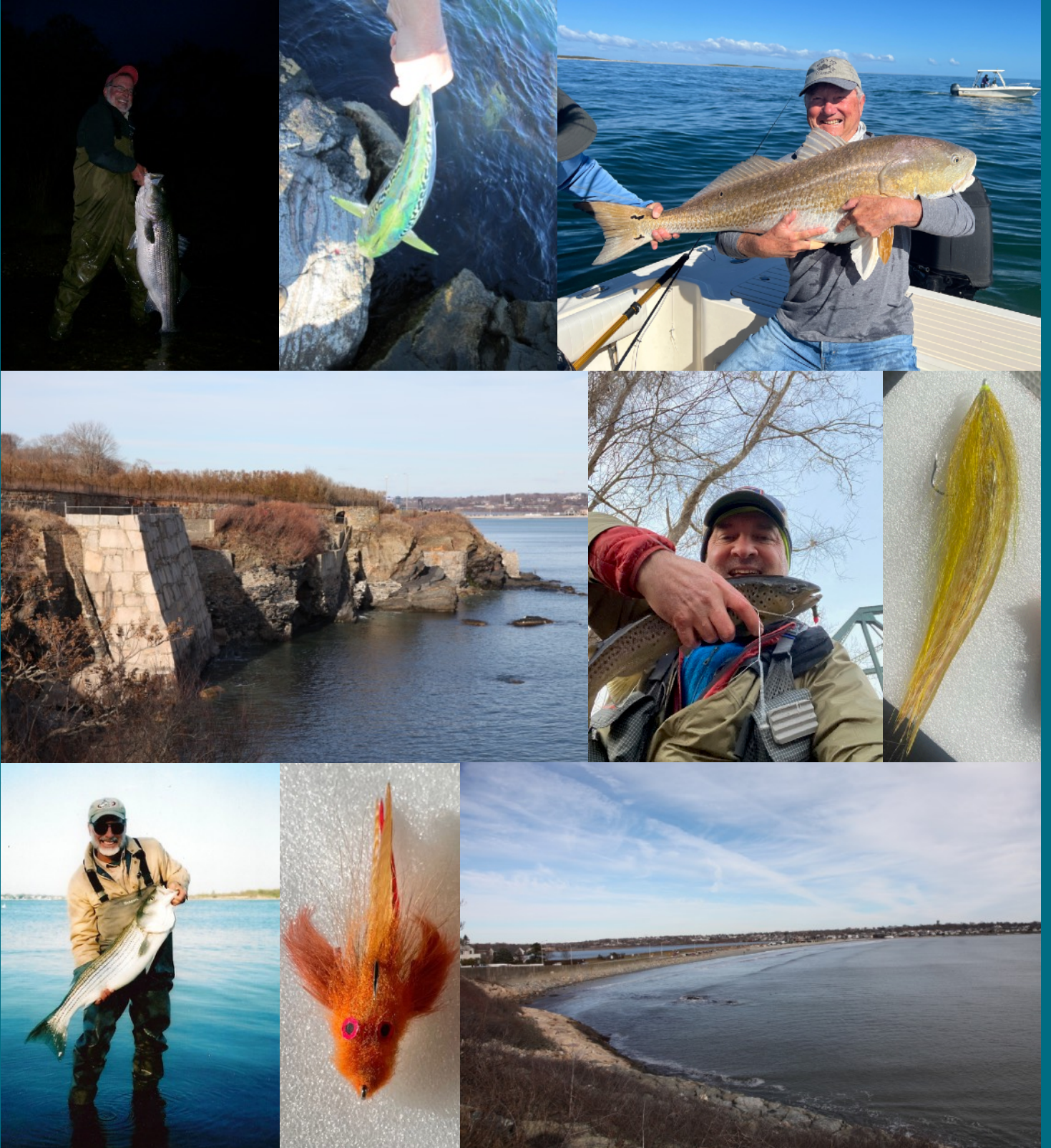
Quonnie is ideal for fishing with a fly rod. As with other South County salt ponds, Quonnie fishes best in the spring, before the water warms to 70 degrees, and then again in the late fall, as the water temperature drops and bait flushes out of the pond. The primary target species is striped bass, mostly schoolies, but there are often bluefish roaming the pond. Occasionally, some very decent size stripers will be drawn into Quonnie in pursuit of large squid. That's the rare occasion when you will want to have tackle capable of casting big squid fly patterns. More often, you will find schoolie stripers averaging 20 inches. Most fly fishers will be casting an intermediate line with small clousers on size 1/0 hooks. Chartreuse over white is probably the most popular color scheme, but black is a good choice for night time.

There is a worm "hatch" in Quonnie in May or early June, but it does not compare with the more intense and popular events in Ninigret, Potter and Point Judith Ponds just to the east. When casting from shore, my most productive fishing has been in the dark of night on an outgoing tide in May, wading out to the channel edge directly in front of the new launch ramp. I like a 7 or 8 weight fly rod and an intermediate line. If you hit it right, there will be bass stacked up with their noses into the current, ready to dine on silversides, shrimp and other munchies carried toward the breachway by the outflow. Two cautions: One, if you are wading, be careful not to slip into the deeper water of the channel; and two, bring and use insect repellent.

Quonnie Pond can provide good fishing with easy access and ample free parking, and these features make it very popular, especially on weekends.

February

March, 2025



A Memorable Story: Women Who Fish

New to fly fishing but keen as all get out, Dina hooks her first bluefish. Excited, she tips over backward and her waders begin filling with sea water. Before I can get there she rights herself, gains control, and lands that toothy creature. Drying out can wait, she says. Keep fishing!

Kay has turned heads from Kansas to Hong Kong. She is beautiful, bright, and loves to fish. On this very warm day we try our luck in western Massachusetts. It's agreed that I will hike upstream and fish my way back. She will start at the car and fish up. When we meet we'll have our picnic lunch. I've covered more than half the initial distance between us when I spot her. She is sun-bathing nude from the waist up on a big, flat stone in mid stream. She explains that the fishing has been slow and she needed a break.



The Hexegenia is a very large mayfly and around dusk the emerging adults shake free of their larval skins and suddenly appear. It's like watching kernels of corn in a hot pan: suddenly it's pop, pop, pop! Trout eagerly take the bugs off the surface; ducks converge on them as well; birds and bats grab a share of those able to get airborne. It can be quite a fishing experience for those who are prepared. Anne and I have paddled about a mile up this slow moving river. It's about a week early for the Hex activity so I'm expecting the much smaller, darker Mahogany duns to emerge. We see a few but the fish are not enthused. Then, pop, pop, pop! Anne is fairly new to fly fishing but I've mentored her and she has been having fun with it. Tonight she puts her guru to shame for he does not have an imitation hex to offer these fish. She does.



Destination: Tampa Bay's Dock Lights

MARCH, 2025

I truly did not know what to expect when I pulled into a dilapidated parking lot spotted with a few “very Florida like” characters as the sun was going down. I half expected one to try to sell me an alligator as I walked down the boat ramp, but I made it to the skiff without any new pets. Away we went zooming through hurricane debris trying to get past these obstacles in daylight before it was too dark to mark them on the chart for the return trip. We cleared the creek mouth, entered the bay and headed straight towards a long row of dock lights abutting a neighborhood. This neighborhood was new and did not lose all power in the storm that passed through a few weeks before. We cut the outboard and began to navigate with the trolling motor towards the lights. As we approached, I could see the snook, tarpon, speckled trout, and bait moving through the lights. I had watched videos online and frequently fish in the dark for stripers, but I did not expect such a visual experience. Imagine fishing a flat and casting to individual fish, but the fish staying in one 10 foot lit up area. Every light was different, but a good light could produce 6 fish in a row before it was time to move on.

Difficulty of Travel: 2

Physical Demand: 2

Fishing: 4

Price: 3

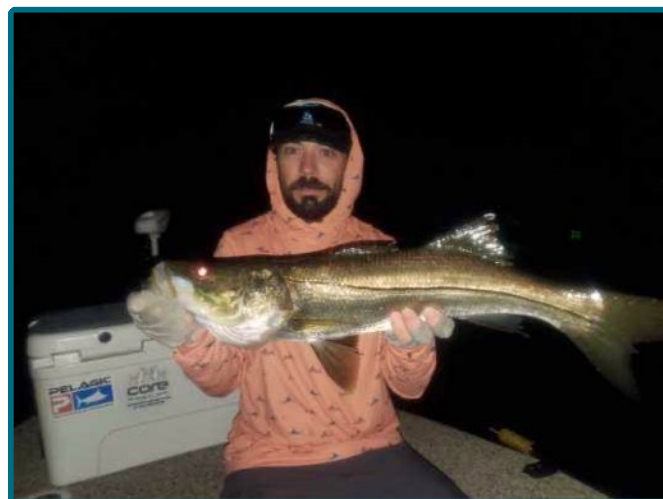
Accommodations: 3

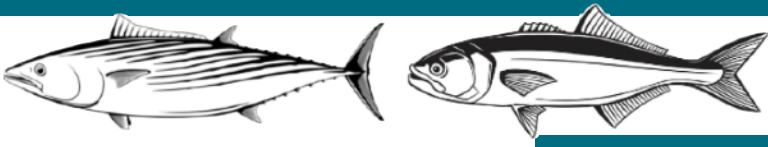
Family Rating: 5

Remoteness: 1

Safety: 5

Fishing dock lights is a great add on to any trip to the Tampa area. I would describe it as the closest thing to a sure bet that you can get for catching snook and speckled trout. Besides the odds being on your side, these guided trips seem to be more affordable than the full day trips. They still present some challenges. Casting at night is something that comes with experience. Casting directly under a dock at night is a whole new ball game. Add in the mosquitos and adrenaline from seeing 30 inch snook and small tarpon feeding in the light, and dock light fishing will test you as an angler. The Tampa area has accommodations for any budget, activities for couples and families, and there are direct flights from Providence. With the flight only being 3 hours, a long weekend trip is not out of the question.





What's New?

Simms has released the new version of their **Flats Sneaker**. This “new” boot keeps the best features from the past design, but also incorporates several features to increase durability. The new Flats Sneaker looks sleek, well constructed, and light weight. When the hodgepodge aqua seal, tear mender, and shoe glue repairs on my current boots fail, the Flats Sneaker may become my next pair of flats boots.



What's Worthless?

I'm not sure there is a single benefit to **visors**. Maybe the increase in air flow to ones scalp keeps you 0.1 degree cooler or maybe there is a portion of the population with sweaty heads? For those with sweaty heads or who can only regulate their temperature via their scalp, they do make quick dry, wicking, light weight hats. If you went to college in the **90's** a visor may be part of your style, but with the damage UV rays can do to our skin I don't understand why anyone would choose a visor over a hat. I also don't have much hair left, so visors look funny on me.

What's Worth It?

The proper assortment of **Sharpie markers** can elevate your fly tying and save you money on materials. Sharpies are waterproof and the ink withstands most glues and solvents. They are the perfect tool to add designs to foam, synthetic material, and even change the color of your thread. Many times I may not have the right color material for a crab, shrimp, or baitfish fly. Instead, I will color the tubing, foam, synthetic fiber, or thread with a marker. While I have an assortment of 30 colors, **I find myself using black, red, green, tan, pink, orange, metallic bronze, and metallic silver the most.** Next time you see a sale on Sharpies, pick a few up and see what you can create.

Early Season Fishing

Early in the season, Geno and I scout for river herring to indicate its time to start fishing. A few days after we find river herring, we will start fishing for the stripers that are lurking around looking to eat these baitfish. While access can be difficult, we target these fish as close to the top of the runs as we can get. Please keep in mind it is illegal to fish too close to a fish ladder or, catch, retain, snag, or net river herring. If you see anyone doing so, please call the conservation officers. Some good places to find river herring and early season fish are the upper reaches of the Narrow River, 100 Acre Cove, and the Barrington River.

Because we are fishing in shallow water, we typically use intermediate and floating lines. The leaders we use are no different than the leaders we use later in the season. However, we do use some different flies. Other than my favorite pattern, “Eds Shrimp,” we will use small 5 inch eel patterns, flies that imitate mummichog and killifish, and sometimes simple silverside imitations like clousers.

Once we find the right spot and tie on our chosen fly, we fish largely the same as we would later in the season. This might be a surprise as the metabolism of striped bass will be slower in the early season and the fish can be sluggish. I typically make a cast and wait for the fly to sink. This wait ranges from 5-7 seconds. Then I will make two quick short strips before pausing for at least a full second. After the pause I will make two quick strips of 8-12 inches of line followed by a slow strip 16-24 inches in length. Many times the bass will hit on the pause, between strips, or on the slow strip when the fly looks more vulnerable.

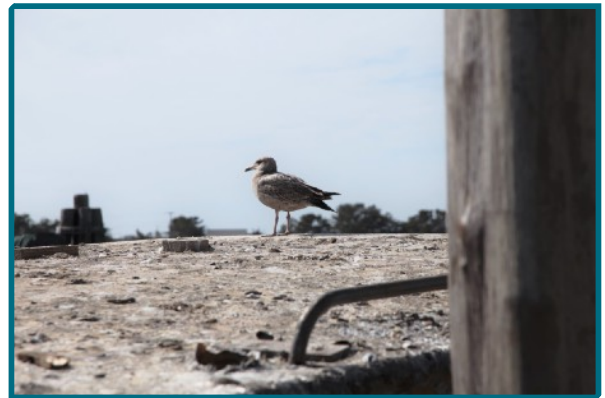


The Best Fish Finder has Bars!

For centuries fishermen have relied on bird behavior to help locate their quarry. After all, birds are nature's best fish finders. Their keen eyesight, instinct, and ability to fly overhead are unique advantages developed through centuries of evolution. We basically relied on them every day to point us in the right direction. It's no different for either fresh or saltwater fly fishermen. Birds can detect the beginning of an insect emergence along a river bank or pond. Their chirping and erratic flight paths soon signal a beginning of a hatch on the water's film. Nature, it seems, keeps them one step ahead of us humans.

Birds will always be good bait indicators for us, but with the development of modern compact, dependable, water resistant electronics, the personal cell phone has become one of the most important tools fishermen have today.

Communication is as important as having the proper fly tied at the end of your leader. Fishermen now get current, up to the minute fish reports on secure lines that are exclusive. The key ingredient is to have a good circle of die hard friends willing to share information for the common good of the group. This expedites the chances of a more productive fishing trip. Although this goes against the traditionalist views of simplicity, the use of communication technology pays dividends. My advice, "just don't go overboard and get carried away with it." You should be making reports, not always chasing them. REAL-TIME equates to REEL-TIME, that having more fish on the line for you. No pun intended!



We Need Your Help!

Did you read a good fishing book or go on a trip somewhere? Do you want to share your knowledge of a **well known** spot with members new to the area or new to fly fishing? How about just some pictures of the fish you catch? ***U dun't hav 2 worry about gramma or speling***, we can fix it! Let us know and we will include it in the next issue.

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Officers and Board

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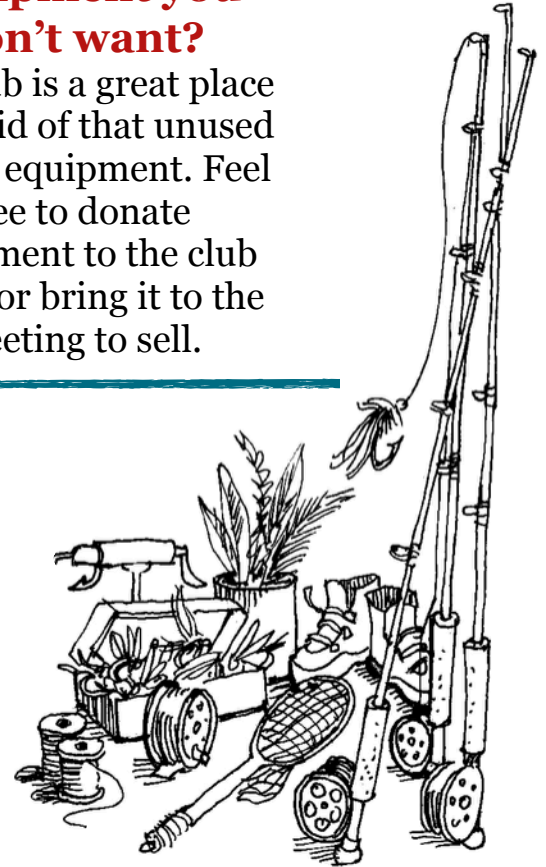
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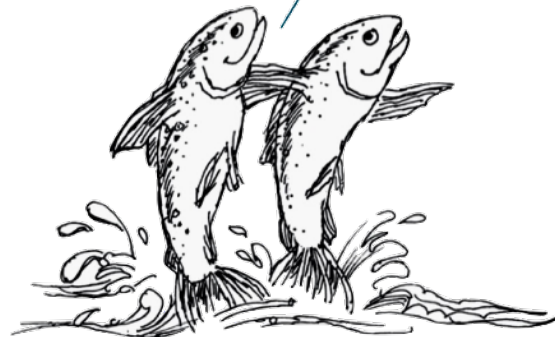
Susan Estabrook
Bob Teeden
Gary Menard
Patrick Williamson

Do you have unused fishing equipment you don't want?

Our club is a great place to get rid of that unused fishing equipment. Feel free to donate equipment to the club raffle, or bring it to the meeting to sell.



Good Times!



Artwork by: **Peter Nilsen**