

BLOOD OATH



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**on the fly**



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*John Salcedo*

JOHN SALCEDO, PRODUCT SPECIALIST,  WADER MAKER



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**COSTA** | 

SCOF summer fluffer

\* S.C.O.F  
P A R T Y \*

Meet:  
Dave Grossman  
3:15 - 4:15



Photo: ICAST Orlando, FL - Summer 2016, Steve Seinberg

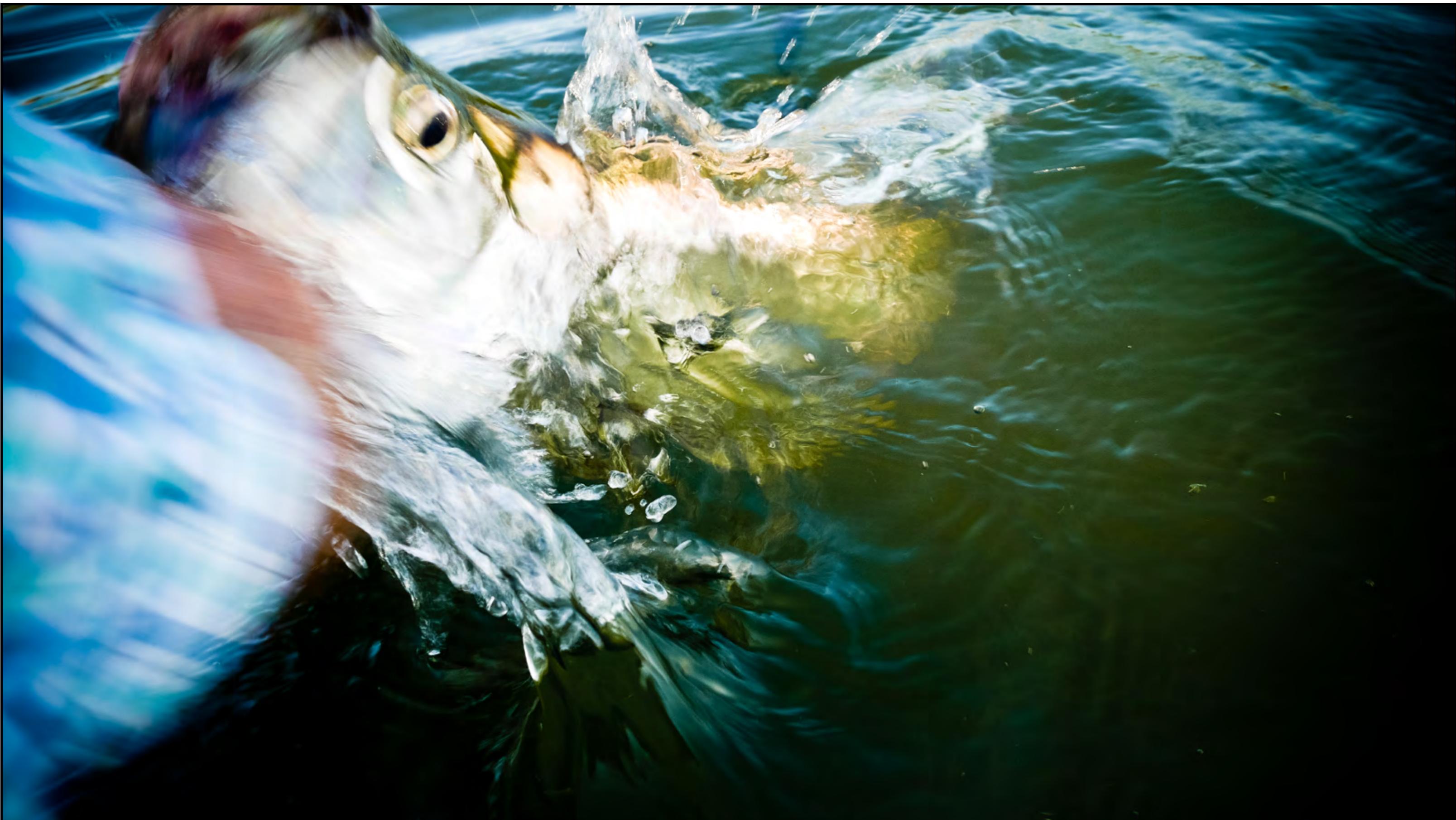


Photo: Indian River Lagoon, FL - Summer 2016, Steve Seinberg

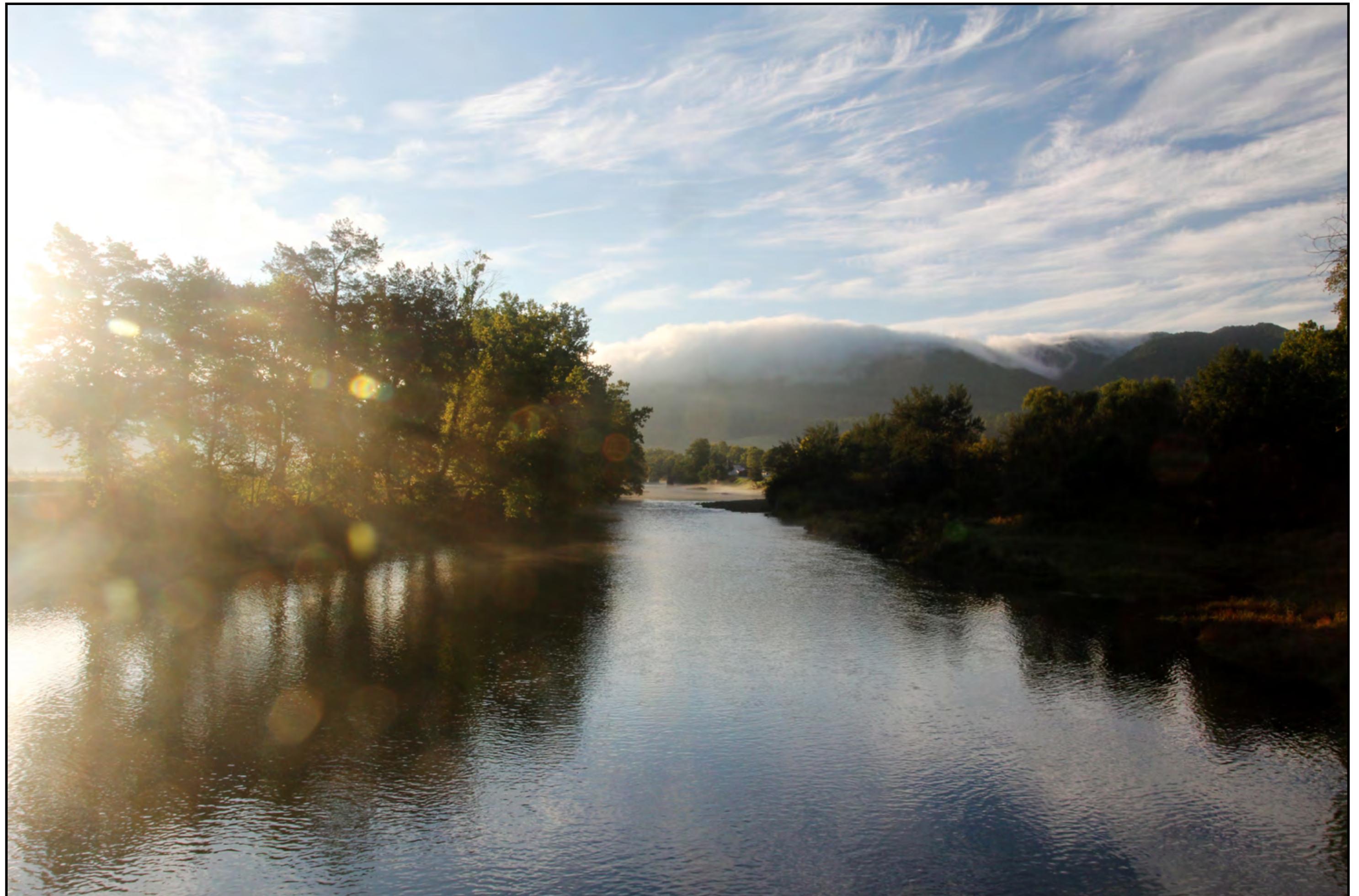


Photo: Watauga River, TN - Summer 2016, Rand Harcz



Photo: *Indian River Lagoon, FL - Summer 2016*, Steve Seinberg



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Photo: Steve Seinberg

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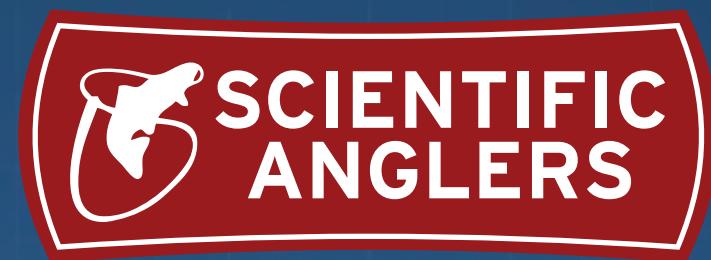
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## From the Editor's desk...

to your bathroom.

Summer 2016

Fly fishing needs more blood oaths. Maybe then we would take shit a little more seriously. We all have friends who show up late to the ramp, call last-minute saying something came up and they can't make it, forget the beer, forget flies, or cancel the trip. Hell, I've been that guy. The excessive flaking we all experience would be a thing of the past if blood oaths became mandatory. I don't think we should limit blood oaths to social interactions though. They should be instituted in regard to the entire realm of fly fishing: social, transactional or otherwise.

Blood oaths are serious shit. Telling your buddy, "You got it," carries no consequences. But, if you take a blood oath that you'll bring the anchor, I think you're going to put it in the truck the night before and maybe even grab a back-up anchor just in case. I would be more likely to believe that a fly shop employee was telling me the truth about the hot fly right now if he swore a blood oath to it. Otherwise he might just be trying to push some pattern that got over-ordered. Or think of the whole shuttle driver situation. On more than one occasion I have been less than confident my

truck would wind up at the right place. If the shuttle driver swore a blood oath to deliver my truck safe and sound (while wearing his shirt the entire time), I could enjoy my day on the water anxiety-free.

Some of my married buddies and I have started the fly fishing blood oath pilot program. We swore a blood oath that if any of us gets divorced that we all will immediately divorce our wives, leave our families, move into some shack together, and spend the rest of our days fishing and dicking around together. Now I love my wife and kids, but a blood oath is a blood oath. Once taken (drunken or not) a blood oath must be honored above all else. No one's gotten divorced yet, but it's just a matter of time.

So the next time your buddy agrees to a road trip, or a shop monkey tells you that an \$800 fly rod will improve your casting distance, or even if someone says they'll be right back when they get up from the bar, demand a blood oath. Anything less than blood is bullshit.



(STILL FREE)



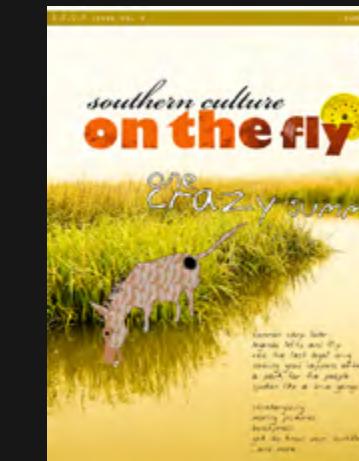
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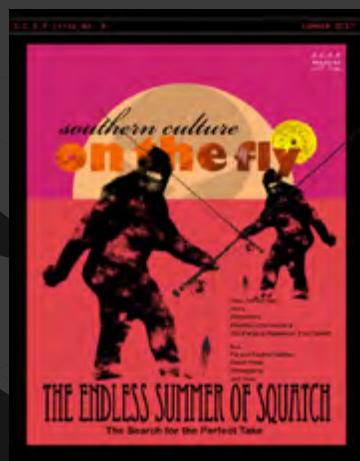
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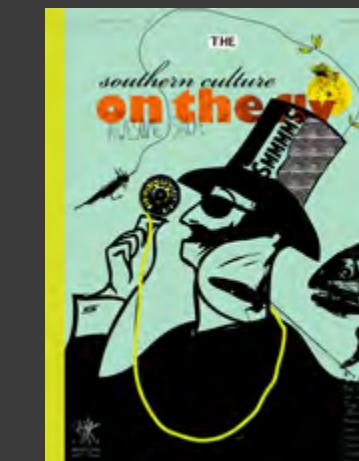
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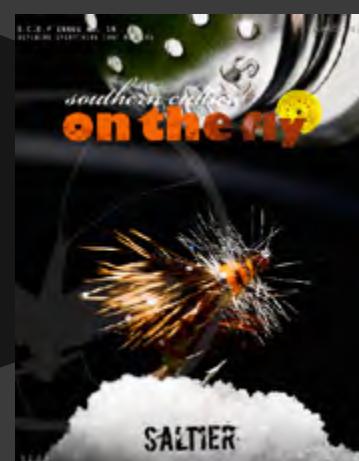
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# Haiku

with Danny Reed

Into my backing  
Slippery, slimy, the fight  
Such a pretty face



photo: Alex Landeen

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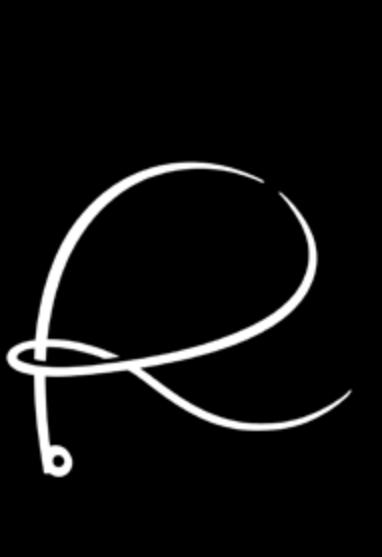
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LIVE LIFE IN THE CURRENT



SAVANNAH - AUGUSTA  
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A woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing a grey baseball cap with a logo, a grey hoodie, and tan waders, stands in a shallow river. She is holding a fly fishing rod with both hands, casting a line. Her waders have a small digital device attached to the side. The background shows a blurred landscape of trees and foliage.

I'M NOT ARM CANDY IN WADERS

By Brita Fordice

Photos: Chris King and Julie Cyr



My name is Brita Fordice and I have been blessed with a huge chest. At a 34G, it's hard to miss what's stuffed into two layers of capilene, one layer of fleece, a down coat, and waders. Most would consider a chest this big to be a blessing. And as a fly fishing guide, you wouldn't think they'd come in handy very often.

Seeing as we live in the age of social media, becoming "Instafamous" is a real thing. I know that I could squeeze my chest into a tight little sundress or a bikini while wielding a fly rod and instantaneously get a thousand more followers. But do I do that? Hell no. That's not what this sport is about, and it is definitely not what I'm about. I am among the last of a seemingly dying breed of anglers: A female guide who is trying to make a name for myself and get by on knowledge, skill, and experience rather than how many Instagram followers or Facebook "friends" I have.

Growing up, I was fortunate to spend a great deal of my free time on the famed waters of the Stillaguamish river in Washington state. My father spent many years trying to teach both my sister and I to fish. He said we could get any man we wanted as long as we learned to fly fish. As I grew older, he added that I would never meet anyone I should marry in a bar. Now midway through my divorce from a terrible fisherman whom I met in a bar, I'm starting to understand the legitimacy to his words. My sister had little interest in learning the art of fly fishing whereas I couldn't get enough of it. In hindsight, I see why my sister is a lawyer by trade, and I am a fly fishing guide. I joke with clients that God messed up by making my older sister too smart, so he decided to give me the chest to make up for it.

I taught myself to tie flies at the age of 10, and with an enthusiasm assisted by unmedicated ADHD, I finally found something I was really good at and wanted to focus on for hours at a time. As a sorority girl in college, I horrified every poor girl that mistakenly accompanied me on a drive by veering off roads to grab dead pheasants and such to use for tying materials.

Following college I spent a few years in both Idaho and Alaska. I moved back to my home state in 2005, where I began working for The Avid Angler Fly Fishing Outfitters in Seattle. I was the second female to work in the shop since 1975, with the first lasting only a few months. I work both in the shop and as a guide. With determination I proved myself among the old timers who loved to start off with the statement "now I've been fishing since before you were born..." or asking, "Do you fish?"

I began to realize that being young, cute, and female wasn't getting me anywhere with these guys. I spent hours perfecting my Bimini twist and slim beauty knot combos for the guys who insisted "one of the guys" tie the knot since it's "being used for tarpon," and years perfecting my spey casting so that I could have street cred while explaining the difference between a Rio Windcutter cheater and a compensator. I spent days perfecting flies for guiding in Puget Sound. I then spent hours testing them before they'd even see a client's hands to gain my confidence in a pattern and add legitimacy to my skill as guide.





I worked hard to prove both my skill and ability for six years before I accepted my first offer to represent a rod manufacturer on their pro staff in 2009, and I didn't take that lightly. I worked my ass off representing the brand in a positive way. I refuse to take one for the team and take bikini shots with bonefish, or even a nice butt shot on the front of a flats skiff. Granted, I'm sure I would have many more opportunities thrown my way should I stoop to that level. But I won't do it.

I am a guide's guide, and measure my skills against the top guides in the industry. However, I'm still a female in an industry full of men. An industry where shops are eager to put a female on their staff as more of a token than for skill. It gives legitimate female anglers in the industry a bad name. And extremely qualified male anglers are getting passed up and ignored for the new female guide who has a photographer following her around in order to get that perfect Instagram shot.

So the next time you're perusing the usual suspects of social media in search of your next fly fishing location and guide, do yourself a favor: take a closer look and do your research. Don't

overlook the guide pictured wearing layers resembling a muumuu and displaying blurry fish photos that aren't professionally edited. After all, a few hundred dollars is a lot of money to spend for arm candy in waders and a few good scenery pics.



I may not be "the cute fly fishing girl from the Internet," I may not show cleavage in my fish pics,

but I sure as hell will work my ass off to get you into fish and share my lifetime of angling experiences with you. And if you're lucky, I might wear a tank top, but I will never post a picture of that. My name is Brita Fordice, and I am proud to be a #flyfishingguide.

*Brita Fordice fishes. She guides, ties, and works at the shop. Real deal type shit, folks. You can find her at the Avid Angler in Washington -- just don't ask her to put on a bikini and hold a fish.*



# FINATIC



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GUIDED TRIPS AND TRAVEL



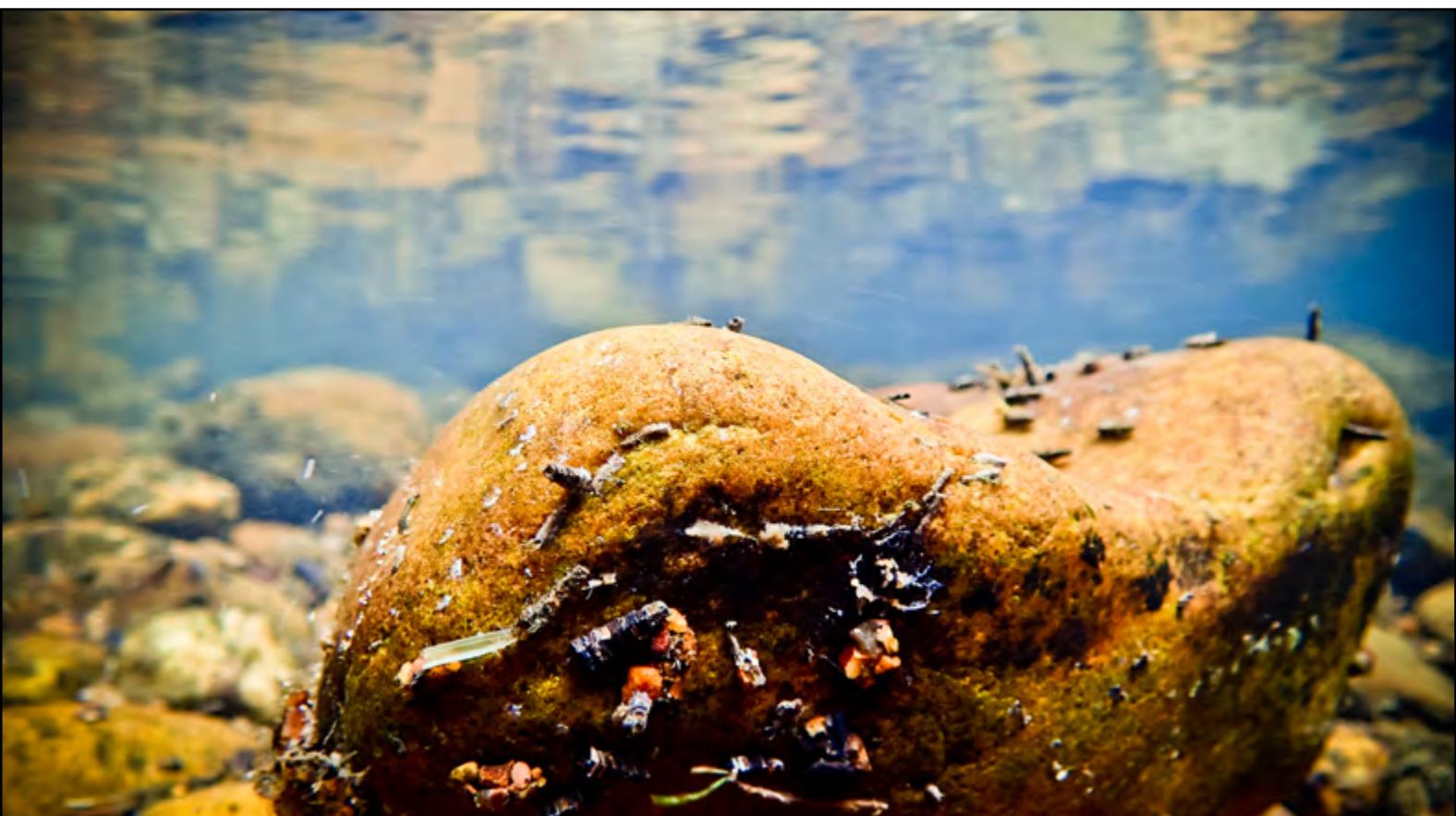
By David Grossman  
Photos: Steve Seinberg



“SCOF Staff” is not a title we throw around lightly in our hallowed halls.

Contributor status is fleeting -- “Staff” is the bedrock on which SCOF stands. To be selected as one of the few requires a rare combination of fishiness, prowess with a camera or pen, quickness with a fart joke, and an absolute willingness to never be paid for the toil and terror you will undoubtedly experience. Your name will appear in the masthead, you will ride with Norse-like heroes whose names (Steve and Dave) inspire fear in men and lust in women. But let me reiterate, these are unpaid positions.

**“Being awesome is way better than getting paid,” pg 37 *SCOF Employee Handbook*.**









With this feudal lord/serf business model, it's not surprising that all SCOF staff members have other jobs to pay for life's necessities. These "real jobs" run the gamut from shop monkey to kitchen manager, and we even have a professional artist, whatever the hell that means. These other less spiritually important endeavors do make it difficult to get the whole office on the same water at the same time. This year, however, we put our responsibilities and geographic obstacles aside and made it happen.





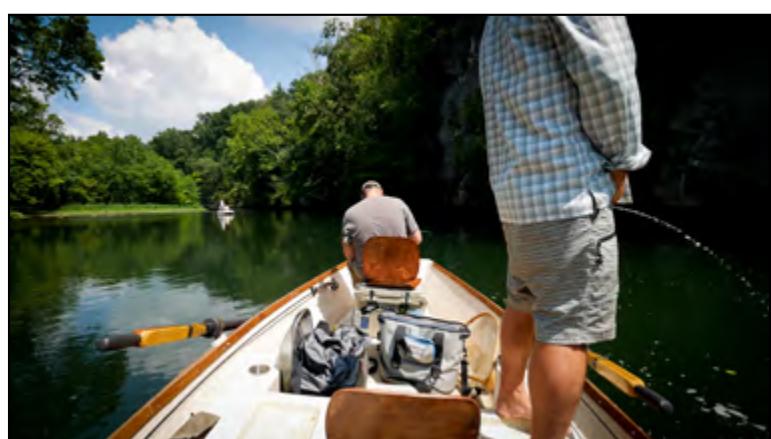
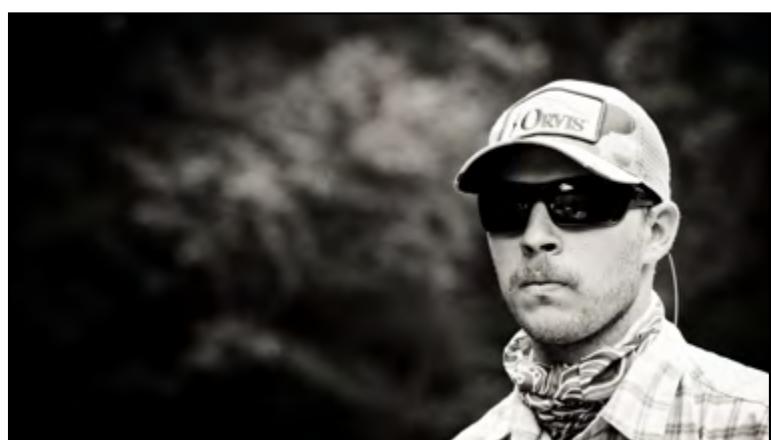


With appreciation in our hearts, and fried chicken and beer in our coolers, we put the boats in on our local tailwater and went looking for some decent beetle fishing. The chicken was crispy, the beer was cold, and the beetle fishing was only so-so. But a day on the water with no other obligations other than to be on a boat with like-minded individuals always seems to make up for the missed eats, and lost fish.



No, I'm just joking. It was really painful to row the SCOF Florida boys and watch them miss eat, after eat, after eat. Steve actually missed an eat while we were in the car on the way to the river when I ate his biscuit while he wasn't looking. But I laughed at their ineptitude, cheered at their incompetence, and rejoiced in their saltwater-loving frustrations, so at least I got something out of it.





After all was said and done, I found myself sitting in a Mexican joint, surrounded by the people that have helped make SCOF happen with a big shit-eating grin on my face. I figured the least we could do was take them fishing and buy them some tacos after all they've done for us. Suckers.





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A close-up, low-angle shot of several fly rods standing vertically in a holder. The rods have dark, polished wooden handles and black shafts. The word "CLUTCH" is printed in large, white, sans-serif capital letters down the center of each shaft. On the upper portion of the shaft, there is additional text: "archipelago" in green, "pelagic" in blue, and "air" in light blue. The background is blurred, showing more of the rod holder and some foliage.

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FOR A NEW BREED OF ANGLER...

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BENCH PRESS

Drew Chicone



CHICONE'S MICRO MANGROVE CANNIBAL

## Drew Chicone's MICRO MANGROVE CANNIBAL

Drew Chicone is a yak hair fly tying machine. The "Micro Mango Cannibal" is his favorite new fly from his soon-to-be released book on flies for snook and juvenile tarpon. Make sure you check out his website, Salty Fly Tying (<http://blog.saltyflytying.com>) for more patterns and all your yak needs. (Yes, Drew is so cool that he has his own yak hair gig.) Here is what he had to say about the Micro Mangrove Cannibal:

*If I only had one fly for SW FL [Southwest Florida], this would be it. It has been really productive on the beach for snook as well as in stained water (back bay) for baby tarpon, snook and redfish. It is about half the size of my typical yak hair baitfish patterns so I use a little different technique to tie it. The double weed-guard is a must for fishing it in tight spots like creeks or around mangroves.*



### Materials List:

**Hook:** Mustad C68SNP – DT, Size 1

**Thread:** Danville .006 Monofilament

**Body:** Saltwater Yak Hair -White, Tan, Yellow

**Flash:** Pearl Pearl Wing N' Flash

**Eyes:** 8mm Doll Eyes with Post - Florescent Yellow

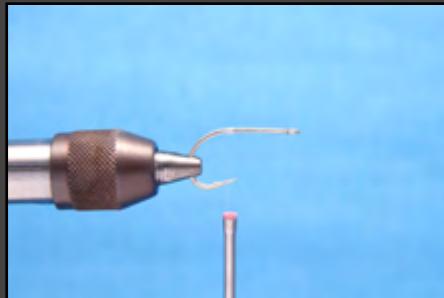
#### For the belly portion of the fly;

1 - 50 strands bundles of White Saltwater Yak Hair  
Pearl Wing N' Flash

#### For the back color blend;

40 Strands of White Saltwater Yak Hair  
15 Strands of Tan Saltwater Yak  
5 Strands of Yellow Saltwater Yak

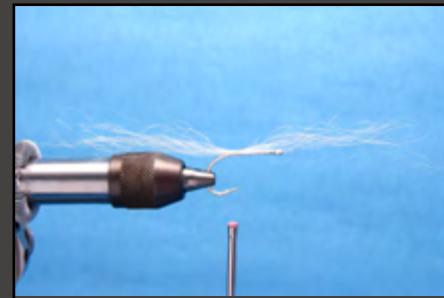
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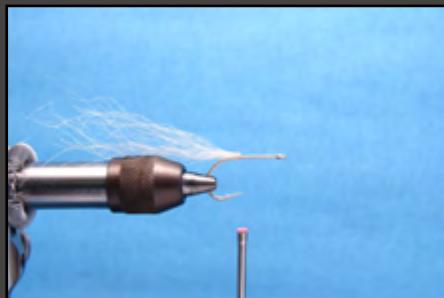
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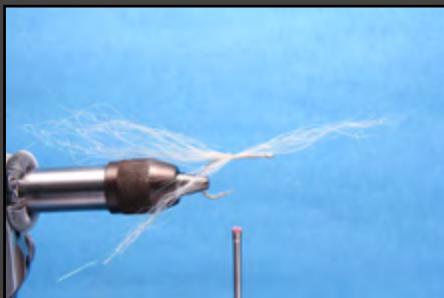
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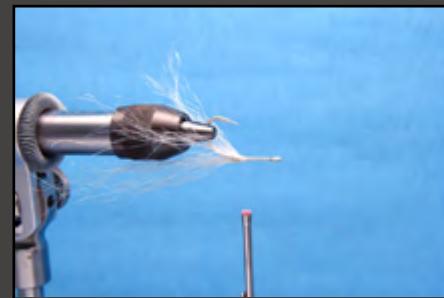
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14



15



1 Start your mono thread slightly behind the point of the hook, 8-10 wraps.

2 Cut a 3 1/2-inch piece of the white (belly color) I like to measure it using the length of my middle finger, so all my flies are a more uniform length and shape. Taper each of the ends until it is approximately 6 inches. Add to the tapered bundle 2-3 fibers of the pearl Wing N' Flash that measure the same length or slightly longer.

3 Lay the tapped bundle of white yak hair on top of the hook so the pearl Wing N' Flash is on top. Secure the bundle at its middle with 8 turns wrapping backward. By positioning the flash on the top of the bundle it will end up enrobed in the middle when doubled over in the next step.

4 Fold back the forward facing half, and tie it down on top of the rear facing half. Secure by wrapping forward with 8 wraps. I do this to position my mono for tying down the folded back half of the material so I do not have to make a large jump with the mono over the bend. It enables me to wrap forward without doubling up my warps and giving me a cleaner sleeker look and makes for a smoother transition from on top of the material back down to the hook shank. The Mono round are very slippery and wraps have a tendency to slide off bulky materials. Position the thread on the shank of the hook.

5 Cut another piece of White Saltwater Yak Hair this one 3-inches long (the length of my index middle finger) and taper both ends until it reaches approximately 5- inches in length. Add to the tapered bundle 2-3 fibers of the pearl Wing N' Flash that measure the same length or slightly longer. On the side of the hook closest to you, tie in the piece below the other materials and angled slightly downward. Make 8-10 turns stacking your wraps behind the previous wraps and pushing them forward.

6 Turn the fly over in the vise (hook point up), and fold the forward facing half under the hook shank and back on top of itself, in the upward facing direction. Secure it with 8-10 forward wraps. Both sides of the fly should be symmetrical, and there should be a small gap on the sides of the fly where the bare hook shank peeks through the white yak hair. Laying the hair at the downward angle instead of straight back will start to build the profile of fly. Position the thread in front of the bump on the shank of the hook.

7 Cut a 4-inch piece (slightly longer than my middle finger and the first white section) of the color blended bundle and taper each of the ends until it is approximately 6 inches long. The back color blend has slightly more hairs in it then the belly. Building the baitfish with more material on the top of the hook, will keep the fly from spinning or riding on it's side. Tie in the tapered piece on top of the hook and in front of the other materials at its middle point. Try to keep the tan and yellow hairs on top. With your thumb and index finger, position the bundle just slightly on the near side of the hook. Secure the bundle with 8 turns wrapping backward up on to the white yak hair bump.

8 Fold the forward facing half back, but this time instead of securing it directly on top of itself, position the material in a V Shape to create shoulders or width. This half should be tied down just slightly off center on the far side of the hook. Each half of the back colored material should be angling slightly wider than the first tail pieces. Secure by wrapping forward with 8 wraps.

9 Next cut a 2 1/2-inch section (slightly shorter than my index finger) of the White Yak hair, and taper it until it is roughly 4 inches. I do not add any more flash to this fly. Turn the fly over in the vise hook point up, and tie in the tapered bundle so that the forward facing half is slightly shorter than the rear facing half.

10 Using your thumb nail, press down on the forward facing section, fanning the hairs and evenly dispersing them around the top (hook point up) and sides of the hook. Fold the forward facing half back directly onto of itself and secure it with 8-10 forward turns. Again, use your thumb nail to disperse the material evenly around the sides of the hook. This will help to cover up any spots where the hook is exposed.

11 Cut a 3 1/2-inch piece (the length of my middle finger) of the color blended bundle and taper each of the ends until it is approximately 6 inches long. Tie in the tapered piece on top of the hook and in front of the other materials at its middle point. Try to keep the tan and yellow hairs on top. With your thumb and index finger, position the bundle just slightly on the near side of the hook. Secure the bundle with 8 turns wrapping backward up on to the white yak hair bump.

11 Cut a 3 1/2-inch piece (the length of my middle finger) of the color blended bundle and taper each of the ends until it is approximately 6 inches long. Tie in the tapered piece on top of the hook and in front of the other materials at its middle point. Try to keep the tan and yellow hairs on top. With your thumb and index finger, position the bundle just slightly on the near side of the hook. Secure the bundle with 8 turns wrapping backward up on to the white yak hair bump.

12 Fold the forward facing half back, in the position the material in a V Shape just like the first back section. again, this half should be tied down just slightly off center on the far side of the hook. Secure by wrapping forward with 8 wraps.

13 Cut a 2-inch section (approximately two segments of my index finger) of the White Yak hair, and taper it until it is roughly 3 inches. Turn the fly over in the vise hook point up, and tie in the tapered bundle so that the forward facing half is slightly shorter than the rear facing half

14 Repeat the same process as step 11.

15 Cut another piece of the blended back color Saltwater Yak Hair this one 3 long (the length of my index middle finger) and taper both end until it reaches approximately 5 inches in length. Tie in the tapered piece on top of the hook and in front of the other materials at its middle point. Try to keep the tan and yellow hairs on top. With your thumb and index finger, position the bundle just slightly on the near side of the hook. Secure the bundle with 8 turns wrapping backward up on to the white yak hair bump.

16



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16 Fold the forward facing half back, in the position the material in a V Shape just like the first back section. again, this half should be tied down just slightly off center on the far side of the hook. Secure by wrapping forward with 8 wraps.

17 Whip finish 2-3 times on top of the folded over portions of belly and back color yak hair. This will create an even thread head or nose for the baitfish. Cut away the monofilament thread. Whenever tying with monofilament thread I like to make a few extra whip finishes to insure that the slippery thread does not come on raveled. This is especially important when you are planning on combing out the fly with a wire brush and will not be applying a uv adhesive until after the weed guard is applied.

18 With a dog brush, comb out any tangles and blend all the colors. Comb each side of the fly to create a wide flat leaf shape. Don't worry too much if the hook is slightly exposed. This fly is designed to be space, and the eyes will help to conceal any hook that peeks through.

19 In order to keep the fly from spinning in the water when it is stripped, you need to keep more material on top of the fly than on the bottom. The finished fly should have a leaf shape, but simply trimming the yak hair on the dotted line will NOT give you the desired results. Place the fly in your non-dominant hand with the hook up so you are looking down on the belly of the fly. Angle your scissors so you are cutting the side of the belly material on an angle. Cut on the right side of the fly from the hook point to the tip of the tail. Repeat the process on the left side. Turn the fly over so that the hook is down. You should be looking down on the back of the fly. Fan out the material of the back out and round out the back of the fly from the hook eye to the tip of the tail. Follow the dotted line with your scissors, being careful not to cut off the tail. You want to keep as much length as possible.

20 Place the fly back in the vise. Using your bodkin gather a pea-sized ball of e6000 glue. E6000 has some pretty strong fumes, so I typically do this outside. Apply a liberal amount of e6000 glue where you plan on placing the eyes. Spread the yak hair apart, and using your bodkin, work the glue down into the material making sure to touch the shank of the hook.

21 The placement of the eyes is extremely important to how the fly tracks in the water. Line up the eyes so that they are slightly in front of the hook point and above, yet just touching the shank of the hook. Align the eyes from the top making sure that one eye is not positioned in front of the other. The back of the eyes should line up with the point of the hook.

22 Turn the fly toward you and double check that the eyes are aligned from a forward facing view. This is very important, because if the eyes are out of alignment it will cause the fly to spin when stripped.

23 Set the fly aside until the eyes have glued thoroughly. As the glue cures sometimes the eyes will drift out away from the hook or out of alignment. It is a good idea to give them a good pinch after a few minutes and make sure they are drying where you want them.

24 Cut a 3-inch section of 30-pound Mason Hard monofilament. Double it over and line up the cut ends to find the middle of the piece. Using a pair of needle nose pliers or crimpers, squeeze the middle of the monofilament creating a flat spot. Re-attach the monofilament thread at the eye of the hook and wrap backward until you reach the bump of yak hair. Fold the weed guard in half at its middle and place the loop over the eye of the hook and position so that the flattened section is approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$ " from eye of the hook. Make 4-5 wraps over both legs and the hook shank to hold the weed guard in place.

25 Being careful not to hook yourself, pull the both legs of the weed guard at a 45-degree angle until the flatten middle of the monofilament loop just touches the eye of the hook. There should be just enough room to keep the thread over the bottom of the weed guard. If you pull it too snug, the thread will slide off the bottom of the weed guard and you will need to start over and reposition the weed guard. Once you have the weed guard in place, Turn the fly over in the vise and make 6-8 wraps behind the two posts sticking up above the shank of the hook, but in front of the flattened loop sticking below the shank of the hook. These wraps should be in the opposite direction of the first 4-5 wraps used to hold the weed guard on the hook and will work as a wedge to lift the posts upward.

26 Pull the weed guard backward over the point of the hook and trim the two monofilament posts slightly in front of the barb of the hook. If you trim the posts to short they will not be effective.

27 Make a few figure eight wraps between the posts to separate them slightly. You should not have to do to much, they should be naturally splayed due to the size of the hook wire and the monofilament thread. Whip finish 2-3 times behind both posts of the weed guard and cut away the thread.

28 Apply a thin coat of Loon Outdoors UV Fly Finish Flow over the nose of the fly and the wraps used to attach the weed guard. Make sure the posts of the weed guard are where you want them, and cure with the UV light.

Drew Chicone is an author, award-winning outdoor writer and fly designer, photographer, lecturer, and materials expert, whose passion for teaching the

art of fly tying has inspired numerous how-to articles, books and detailed instructional guides. He has lived and breathed the sport since he was tall enough to sit at the vise, and his fly creations are well known and in high demand among saltwater anglers and guides across the globe. In 2012, Drew partnered with Stackpole books to publish; Feather Brain - Developing, Testing & Improving Saltwater Fly Patterns. Other Chicone titles include; Redfish Flies, Snook Flies, Essential Bonefish Flies – Andros, and Essential Permit Patterns.



He is the winner of the 2016 IFTD Best in Show, Salt Water Fly Pattern award, and the 2014 IFTD Iron Fly.



A wide-angle photograph of a coastal scene at sunset. In the foreground, tall, green reeds grow out of the water, partially obscuring the rocky shoreline. The water is calm, reflecting the warm orange and yellow hues of the setting sun. In the distance, a small, densely forested island or peninsula extends into the horizon. The sky is a clear blue above the horizon, transitioning through warm tones near the sun.

*salt*

By Tom Hazleton



**Sodium and chloride**, individually deadly toxic, but when perfectly arranged, critical for organic functions. For life. The Gulf coast does not feel like home. Home is lakes. Superior and Michigan. Drinkable seas. Here in Texas, water and salt are mixed and undrinkable yet aswarm with life. Most of Earth's life, diverse, furious, pitiless, unfathomable. Fascinating and frightening. Some of it vulnerable to a fly rod, the nine-foot probe by which we anglers explore unfamiliar bodies.

But severe thunderstorms ruin fishing plans even here. Flooding and lightning chase me indoors at the Moody Gardens Aquarium Pyramid. Mid-week, no tourists, but still no fly rods allowed. I wander among penguins and coral reef fish and crustaceans in ultraviolet tanks.

I walk into a glass tube that becomes kind of a Klein bottle, at once surrounded by and outside of a massive seawater tank. Tarpon, permit, snook, jacks orbit me, the first I've ever seen up close. Some vitality lost, I'm sure, in their confined habitat, but still heart-quickenng to this fly fishing film festival junkie. Deep in the rear of the tank, half in shadow, a shark silhouette. Eight feet long or more.

Next, I consider a California sea lion skeleton in a glass case. *Zalophus californianus*. Impressive meat eater. Look at those teeth. A hallway leads to a darker room, heavy damp air, open water and artificial rocks, faint bait bucket odor. A harbor seal swims adorable laps at the top of a deep tank.

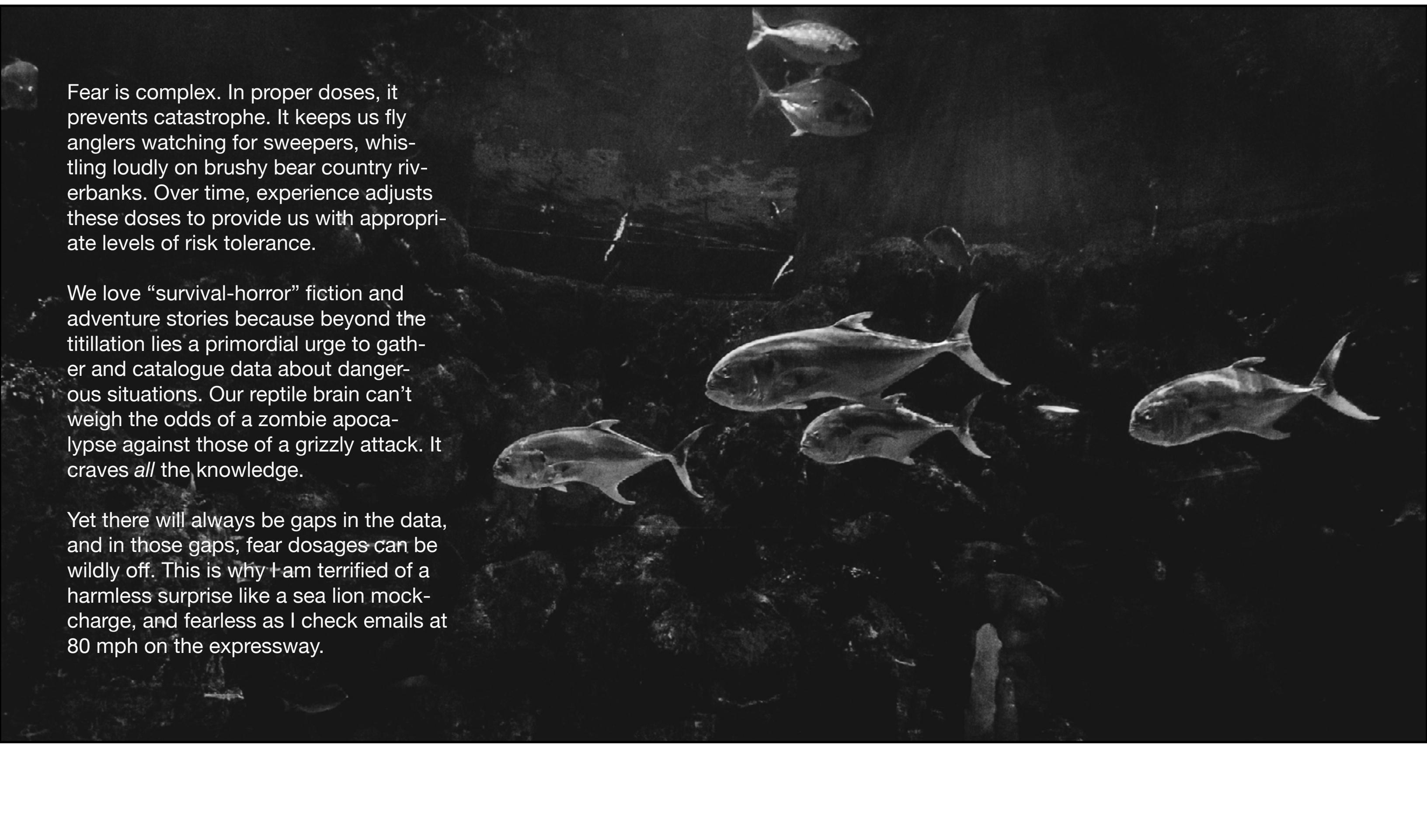




A tunnel winds below the exhibit. A single floor-to-ceiling porthole casts marine blue light into the claustrophobic blackness. I can see the harbor seal playing far above me; the window lenses inward, pulling me into the habitat with forced perspective. My breath fogs the glass. In a sudden and impossibly huge black flash, a male sea lion comes from nowhere and fills the window with teeth and whiskers, turning aside inches from my face. I jerk backwards and sharply inhale -- involuntary reactions to a full dose of about-to-be-eaten adrenaline. He swims off with a sideways glance and my ears roar and my fingertips tingle.

I know that I am safe from the great beast behind two inches of aquarium glass. But for an instant a primitive part of my brain overrode the rest of the system because it *knew* that I was about to be ragdolled by 600 pounds of marine grizzly bear.

Glad nobody was around to see it.

A dark, grainy photograph showing a school of fish swimming in the ocean. The fish are silhouetted against a lighter background, creating a sense of depth and movement. The image has a high-contrast, almost black-and-white appearance.

Fear is complex. In proper doses, it prevents catastrophe. It keeps us fly anglers watching for sweepers, whistling loudly on brushy bear country riverbanks. Over time, experience adjusts these doses to provide us with appropriate levels of risk tolerance.

We love “survival-horror” fiction and adventure stories because beyond the titillation lies a primordial urge to gather and catalogue data about dangerous situations. Our reptile brain can’t weigh the odds of a zombie apocalypse against those of a grizzly attack. It craves *all* the knowledge.

Yet there will always be gaps in the data, and in those gaps, fear dosages can be wildly off. This is why I am terrified of a harmless surprise like a sea lion mock-charge, and fearless as I check emails at 80 mph on the expressway.



Later I balance unsteadily on the riprap brim of Galveston Bay. Rod in hand. Stormclouds exiting east. Salty air unfamiliar. Nerves still wound tight. Vaguely aware of hazards here, saline and carnivorous and venomous. Unable to meter the proper level of fear. Timid first steps into gluey mud.

The familiar rhythm of casting is reassuring. Tying knots. Double hauls. As in all things, there are fewer unknowns in the actual mechanics. Focus on them.

*Tom Hazelton is a regular contributor at MidCurrent, but now that we convinced him to contribute to SCOF, we are sure he has seen the error of his ways. Check out Tom's blog at [voyageurpursuits.com](http://voyageurpursuits.com).*



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TOP: TORCHBEARER JADE THOEMKE, PHOTO BY MINDY PEEP | BOTTOM: TORCHBEARER JEFF IADONISI, PHOTO BY SCOTT HUNTER

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AUDIO CAPTION

# BEAVER BOMBIN'

By David Grossman  
Photos: Alex Landeen





Beaver Island is the other side of the looking glass. Caribbean water, Irish islanders, and water teeming with carp, smallies, and pike come together in the middle of Lake Michigan to form the most unique fishing destination I have ever had the pleasure of visiting. While the fishing during my time there was nothing short of remarkable, I found myself equally entertained by our midwestern hosts. Folks from Northern Michigan sound Canadian, but don't be fooled. They are way cooler than Canadians. Something about dealing with the inevitability of winter over a lifetime has left these men of the Northwoods with few words, but a very dry wit. As an ode to my new favorite regional inhabitants, I have audio-captioned this photo essay, using my best Northern Michigan accent. So press the play button and bring the sights and sounds of Beaver Island into your day.



AUDIO CAPTION





**AUDIO CAPTION**



**AUDIO CAPTION**





AUDIO CAPTION





## AUDIO CAPTION



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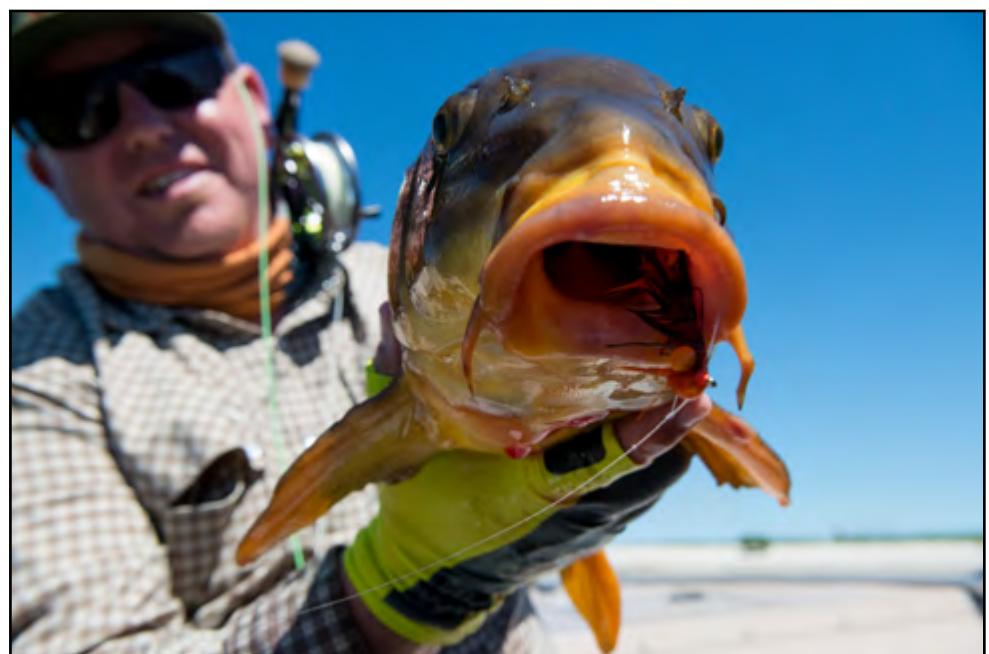
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 **AUDIO CAPTION**



AUDIO CAPTION





Alex Landeen knows every line from every movie ever made. He also knows his way around the business end of a kitchen. He also does some photography...really sick photography. Check out his work at [alexlandeen.com](http://alexlandeen.com).

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*strategizing*

Louis Gaudet

*surf fishing*



Photos: Steve Seinberg

Illustration: Paul Puckett

Well, it is now that time of year in Florida -- the days are hot and humid accompanied by light winds and afternoon thunderstorms. That may sound miserable, but this is by far my favorite time of year. This is when "something really special" happens here on the East Coast of Florida (I'll get to that in a little bit). This is when the fishing off the beach is explosive. I spend a majority of my time in the summer driving up and down the beaches, from parking lot to parking lot, looking for fish.

Usually, I begin in late June looking for snook cruising in the surf. You have to pick and choose your days, but when you hit it right, the snook fishing can be as good as it gets, and it's your best chance to tangle with a snook of a lifetime. For beach snook, I look for days that have flat surf with a west wind and high tide around midday. With these conditions and clean water, you can spend the day sight fishing to large snook. When it's early on in summer and snook have just hit the beach, I like to fish smaller patterns, especially tan- or white-colored seducers in sizes 2-4. The early summer snook are the wariest and toughest to fool. Generally, they are out there to spawn and not exactly interested in eating. That's why I opt for a fly that is a little less intrusive. I like to head out around noon so the sun is high and I can easily see into the water. The trick to this game is how you feed these snook. They aren't really looking to eat, so you have to spoon feed them the fly. Once I spot a fish, I will get way ahead of him and make a cast, landing my fly along its path. I try to lead the fish by 30 or 40 feet, and then just wait.





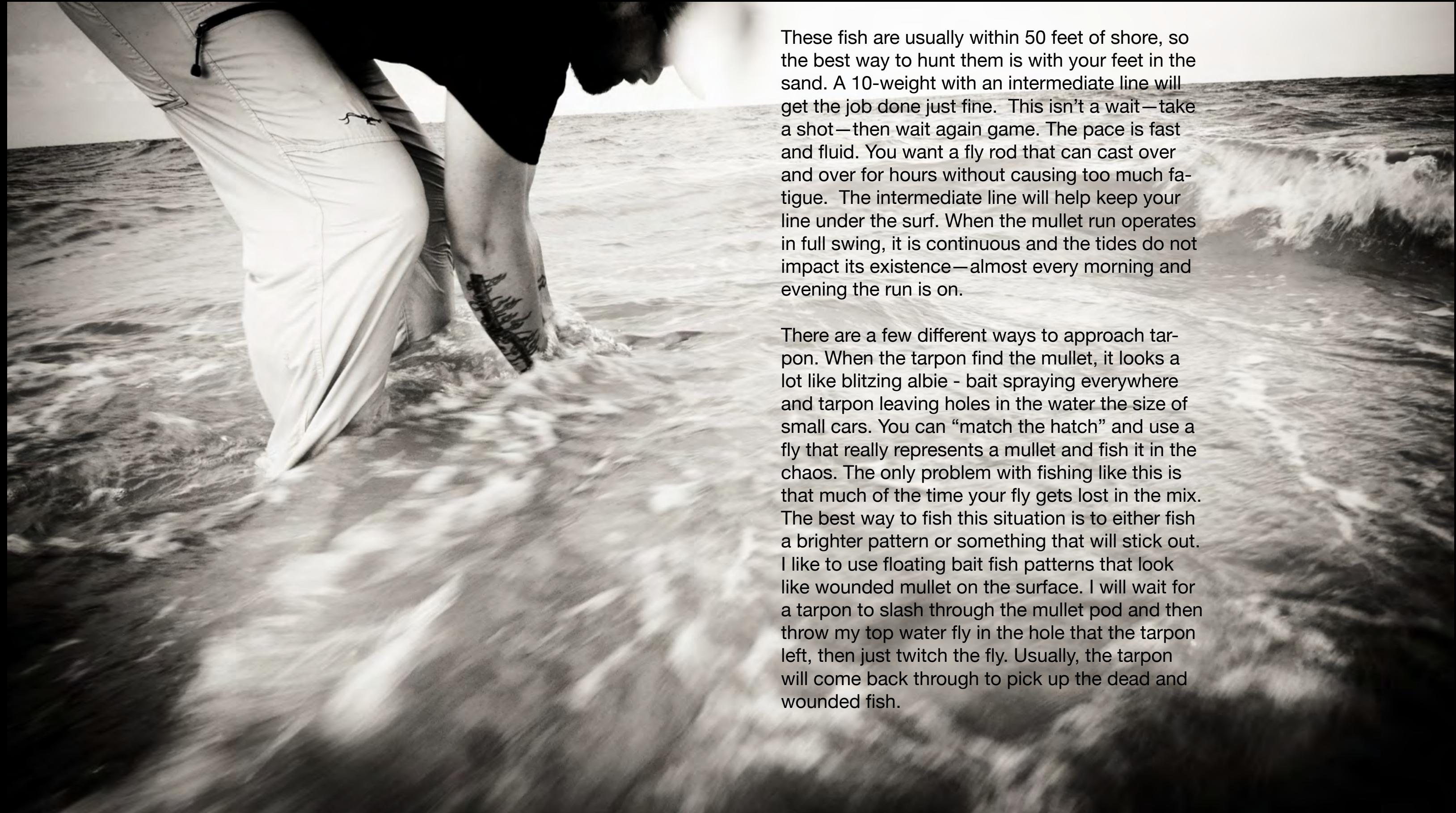
Once the fish gets within a foot or so of the fly, I start stripping in a short and rapid movement. This causes the snook to have to make an immediate decision to eat or not. The hope is that as soon as the fly comes up in front of them, they will crush right away. If the snook ignores the fly, or just follows but doesn't commit, I'll move on and find another target. You can fish snook like this usually well into September, as long as the conditions are right.

As the summer progresses, different bait fish starts to show up on our shores. Beginning with pogies, then glass minnows, and finally mullet, along with others mixed in every now and then. When any of these comes close to shore, you will have shots at snook, tarpon, jacks, Spanish mackerel, and other game fish. Usually, any bait fish pattern that's similar in size to the actual bait on the beach will get the job done.

But out of all these bait runs/migrations we get, there is one that stands alone, and that is the mullet run.

This is the "something really special." Once the heat of summer becomes almost unbearable and poling the flats in the middle of the day feels like being stranded in the Mojave desert, the beach turns into one of the most intense fisheries in the country. As strings of mullet begin their migration down the beach, they bring in all sorts of predators looking for an easy meal. For two months, sometimes more, tarpon ranging from 30-100 pounds arrive at our beaches to feast on mullet. This is an intense, run-and-gun-style fishing. These are not like tarpon in the Keys, or the west coast of Florida, which are on a migration and primarily feed at night consequently making them difficult to convince to eat a fly. These fish are here for one thing and that's to eat!





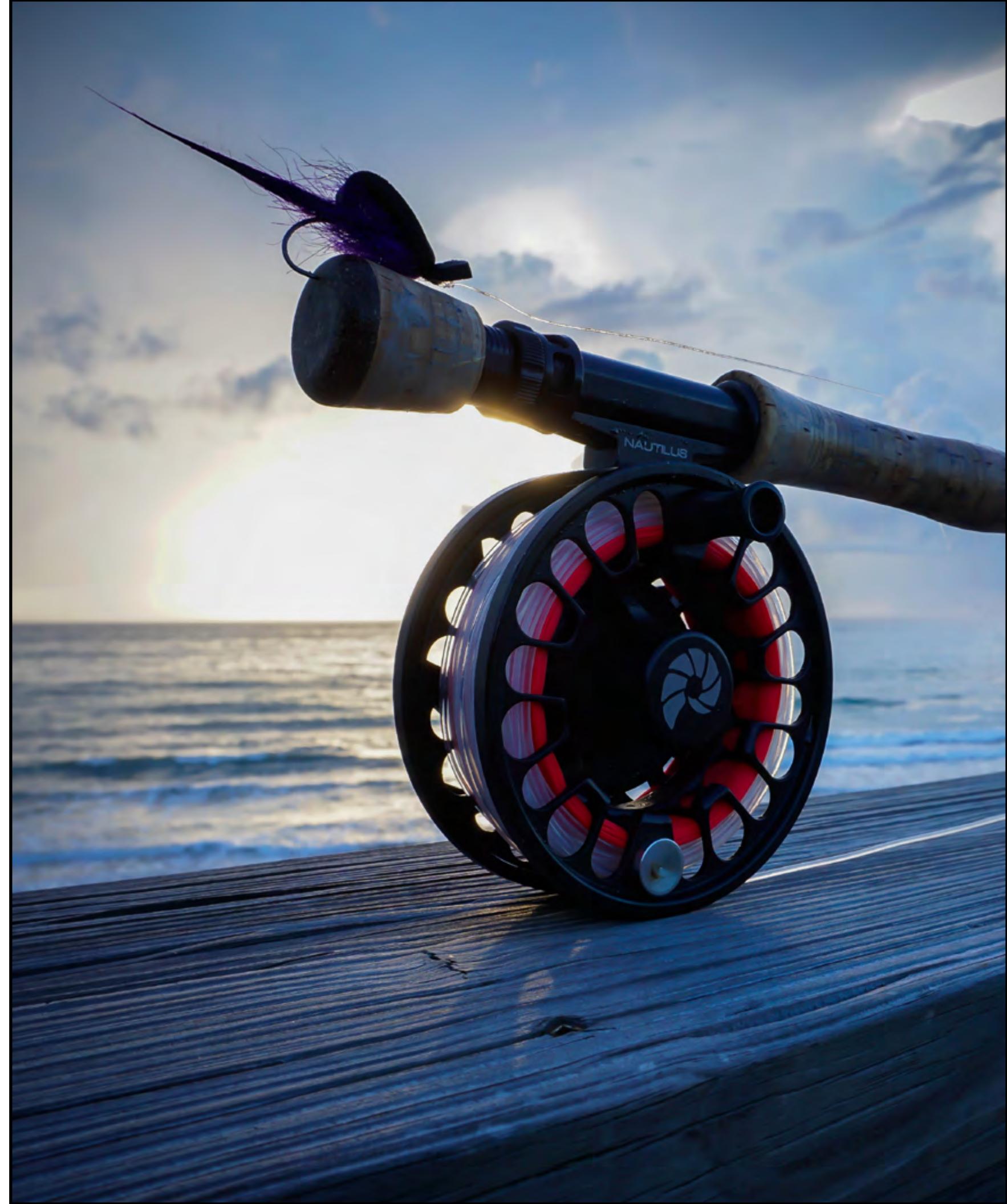
These fish are usually within 50 feet of shore, so the best way to hunt them is with your feet in the sand. A 10-weight with an intermediate line will get the job done just fine. This isn't a wait—take a shot—then wait again game. The pace is fast and fluid. You want a fly rod that can cast over and over for hours without causing too much fatigue. The intermediate line will help keep your line under the surf. When the mullet run operates in full swing, it is continuous and the tides do not impact its existence—almost every morning and evening the run is on.

There are a few different ways to approach tarpon. When the tarpon find the mullet, it looks a lot like blitzing albie - bait spraying everywhere and tarpon leaving holes in the water the size of small cars. You can “match the hatch” and use a fly that really represents a mullet and fish it in the chaos. The only problem with fishing like this is that much of the time your fly gets lost in the mix. The best way to fish this situation is to either fish a brighter pattern or something that will stick out. I like to use floating bait fish patterns that look like wounded mullet on the surface. I will wait for a tarpon to slash through the mullet pod and then throw my top water fly in the hole that the tarpon left, then just twitch the fly. Usually, the tarpon will come back through to pick up the dead and wounded fish.

My preferred method to fish the beach tarpon is to position myself between two pods of bait. The tarpon will cruise back and forth between the bait pods smashing one, eating, and then moving to the next one to do the same thing. I will get between the two pods and look for those fishing going back and forth. The mullet will be forced into these tight pods, and if you fish between the pods, your fly no longer has to compete with the rest of the bait. This also allows you to see the target better, improving accuracy with your cast to the fish. I like to use a 6-8-inch bait fish pattern on a sharp 2/0-3/0 hook. Colorwise, I fish a lot of black and purple, white and pink, or grey and white. I don't think the color matters too much with these fish - it's more about getting them to see it. I hand-tie my leaders and always have a section of 12lb tippet in the leader and 30-40lb bite tippet. The

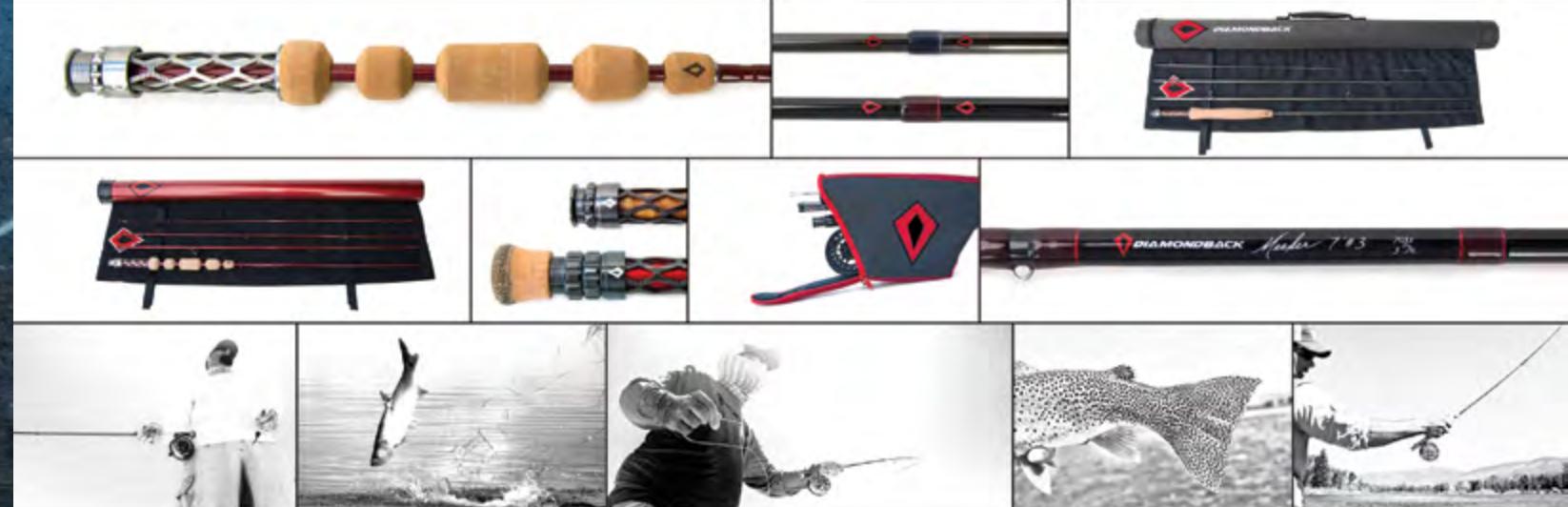
12lb serves as sort of like an ejection handle. If you get into a big fish that chooses to go East, there is no stopping him and the 12lb gives an easy break-off point. If not, you have a good chance of losing everything. I don't chase these fish with the intention of landing them. As long as I can get a jump or two, I'm happy. Actually, getting one of these fish-to-hand is no easy task and usually more hassle than it's worth. It is very hard to land one of these fish on the beach without risking serious injury to the tarpon.

The time is upon us, soon the mullet will be here and not far behind, the tarpon will trail. I eagerly await this time of year. For me, it's like Christmas, but it lasts for two months. So, as you read this, I will probably be standing on a beach somewhere on the east coast of Florida, throwing feathers and bowing to the Silver King.





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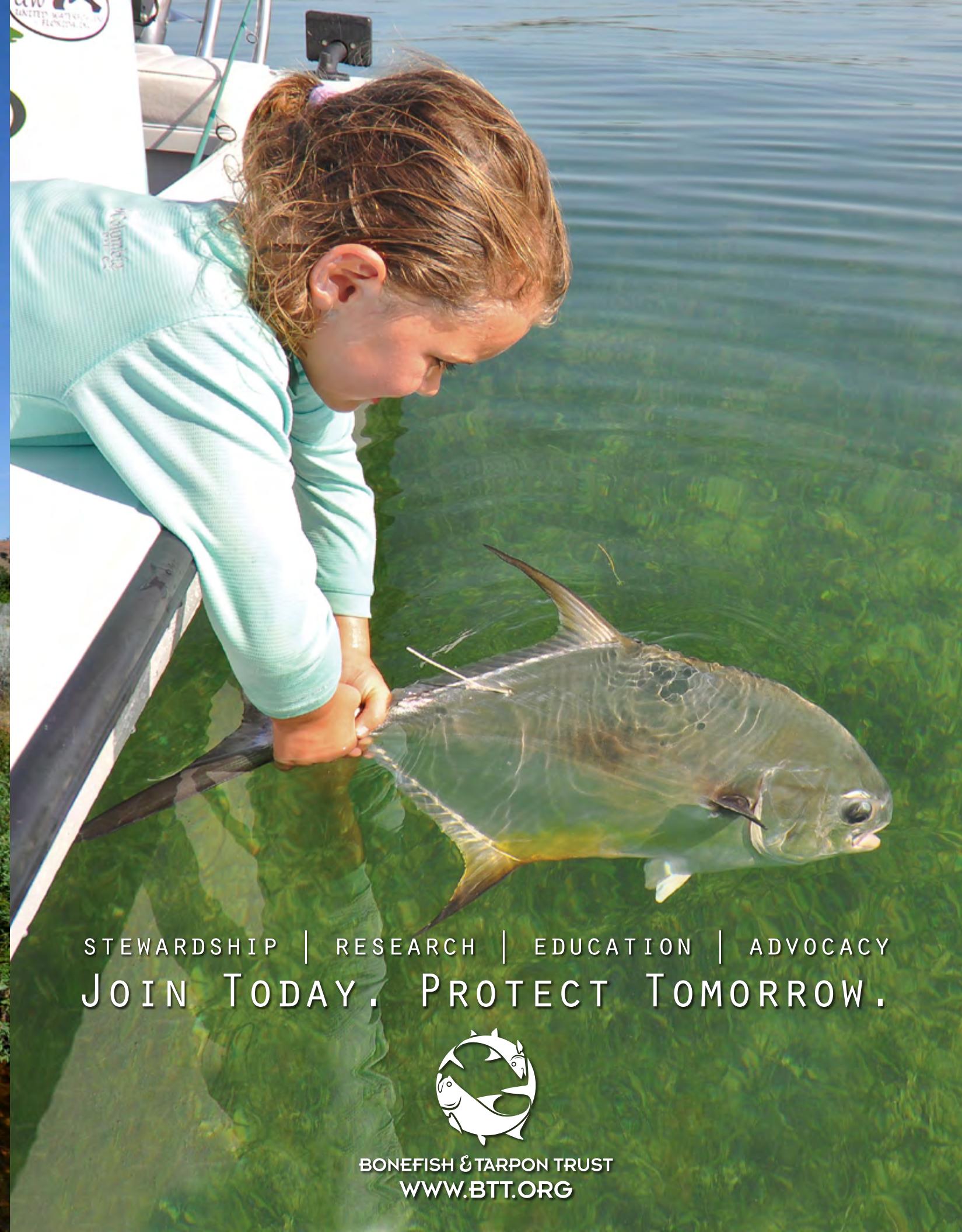
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# How The Sausage is Made

## THE DARK SIDE OF ICAST

By David Grossman

Photos: Steve Seinberg





**The world's largest circle jerk for the world's smallest niche industry.** There, I said it. Once a year, the International Fly Tackle Dealer (IFTD) show brings a large portion of the industry together to see all there is to be seen for the upcoming year in fly fishing. Secondly yet simultaneously primary to the whole affair is seeing friends from all over the country while trying to scam as much free booze off manufacturers as one can in a three day time period. While fun, over the course of a few years, IFTD can get a tad homogeneous, as you might imagine when that many people wearing plaid shirts and trucker hats get together. But a few years ago, the industry was thrown a wrinkle. Instead of standing alone as its own quirky family reunion-style show, IFTD got swallowed (quite literally when you look at the floor space distribution) into the huge, flashy world of the International Convention of Allied Sportfishing Trades (ICAST). We still get drunk with our friends, but there's a whole new crowd in town these days, and they have models, digital crankbaits, Salt Life, and a whole bunch of other crazy shit. It's awesome.

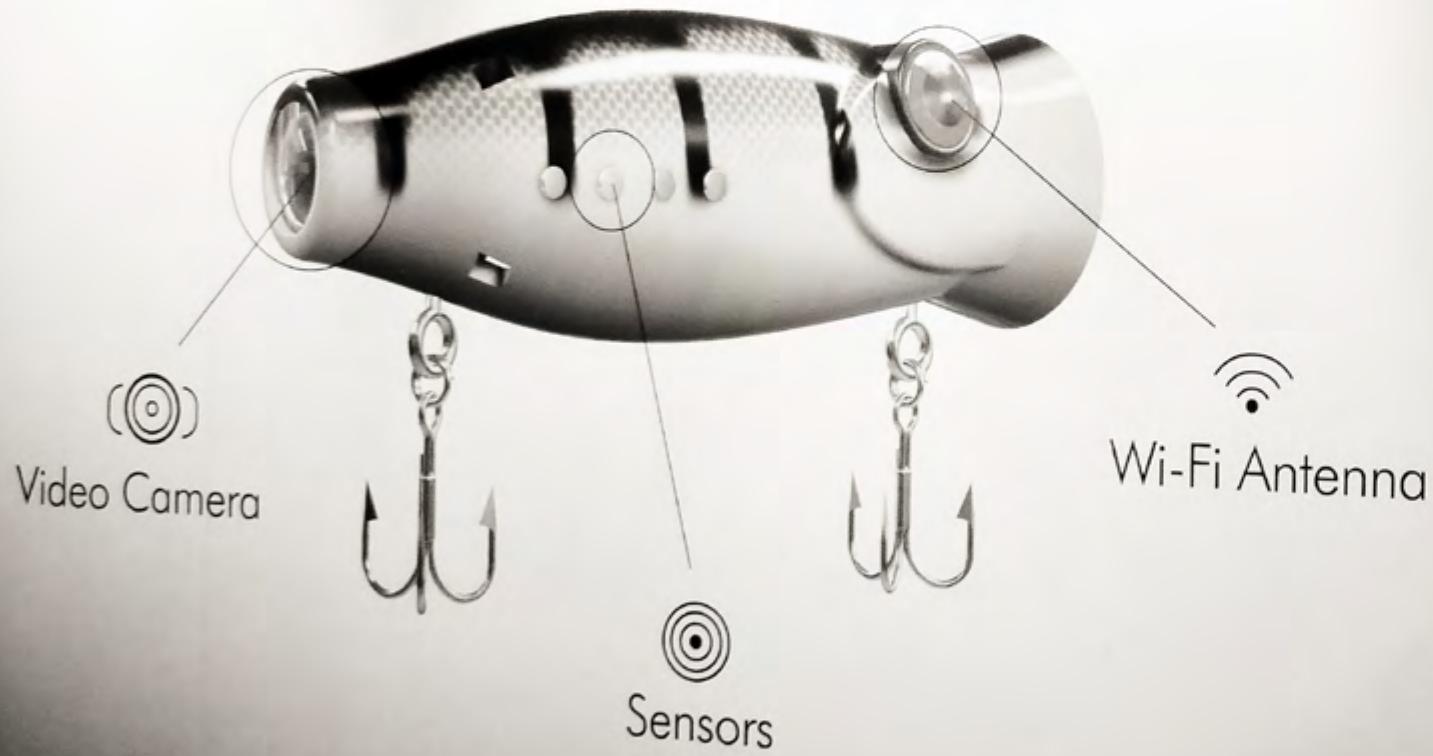


So this year, while we were impressed with all the new products, innovations, and players that will soon hit your local fly fishing retailers, we figured that's what everyone else would be talking about. So instead we are bringing you some of the weirdest stuff we saw on the other side of the show, and let me just say, what a weird and wonderful side of fishing it was.



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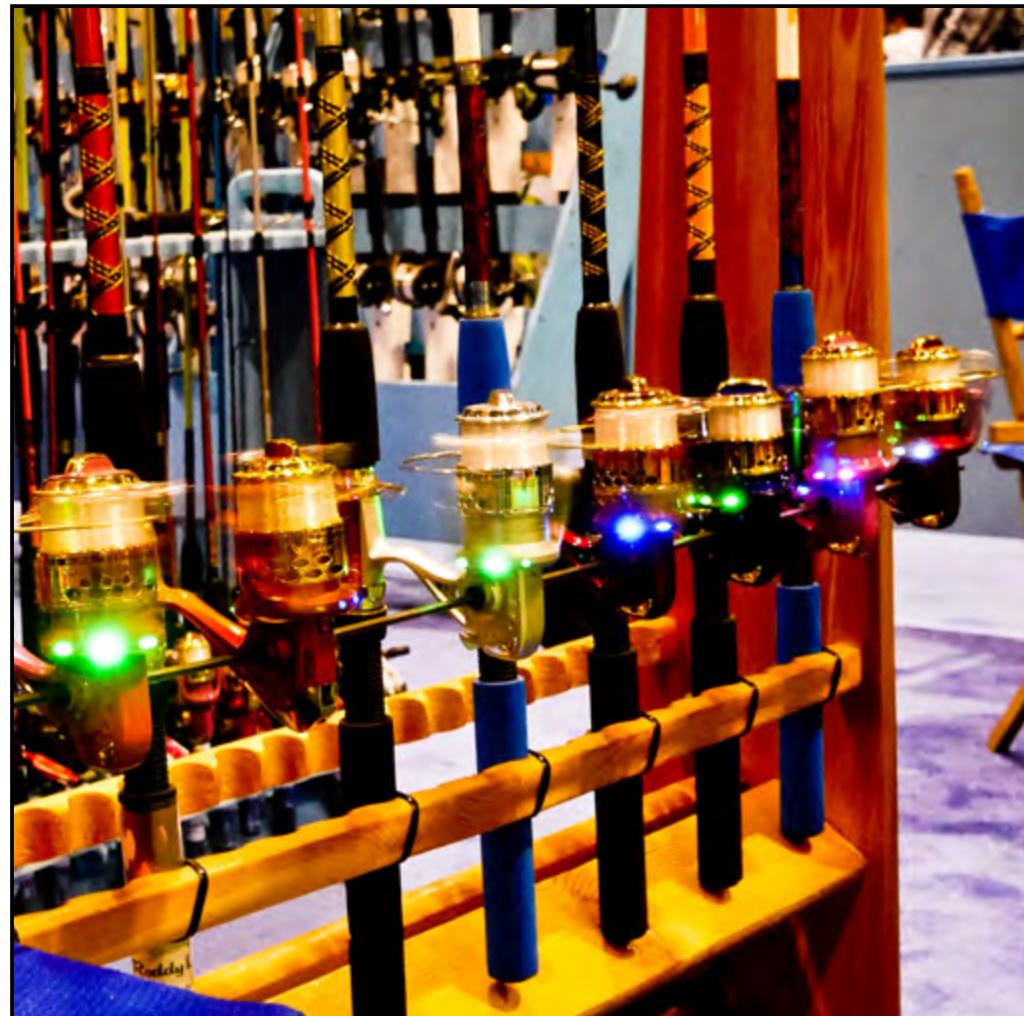
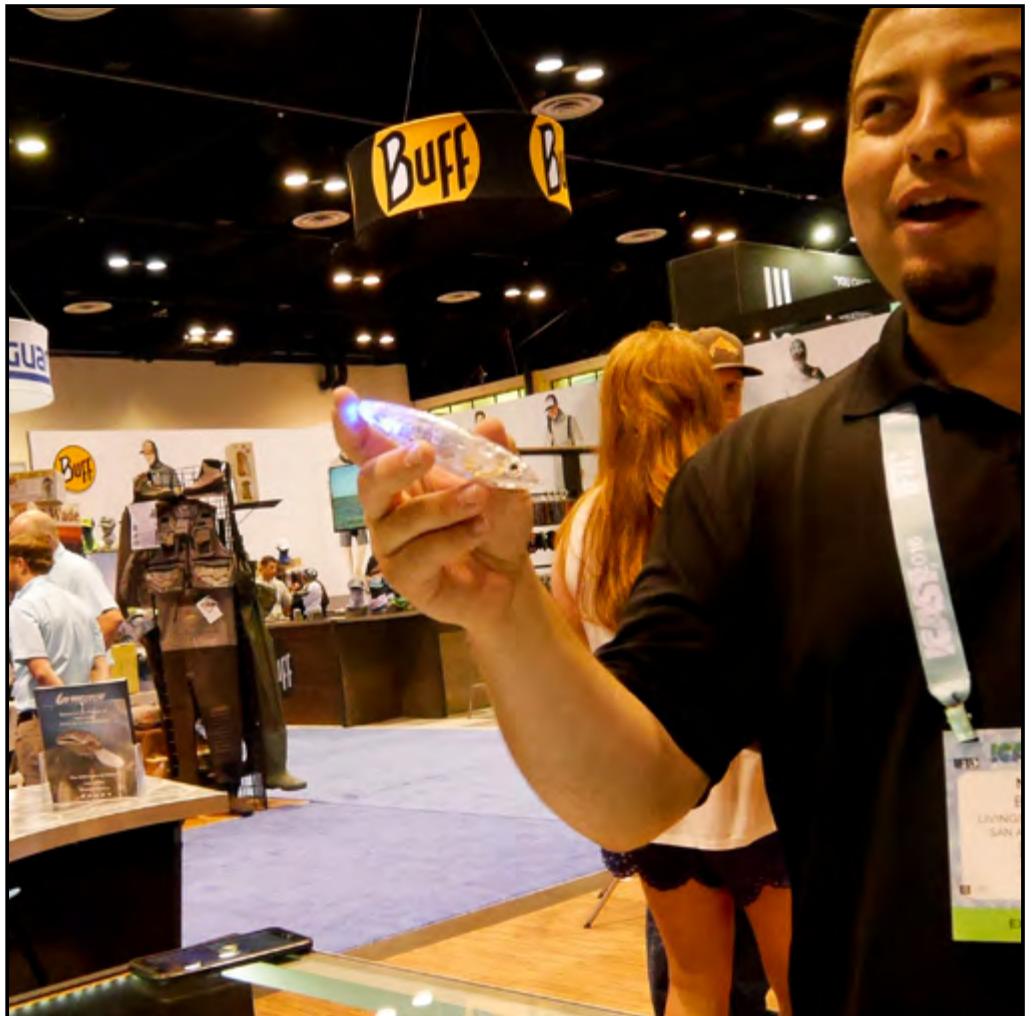


Golden Shiner











I am now thoroughly convinced that what fly fishing needs is more spin fishing...and money...and crankbaits with a small speaker built in that makes dying baitfish sounds... and maybe just maybe...mermaid costumes.



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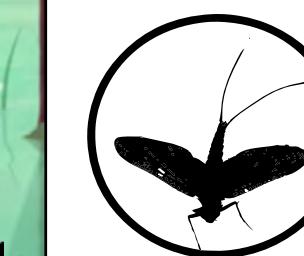
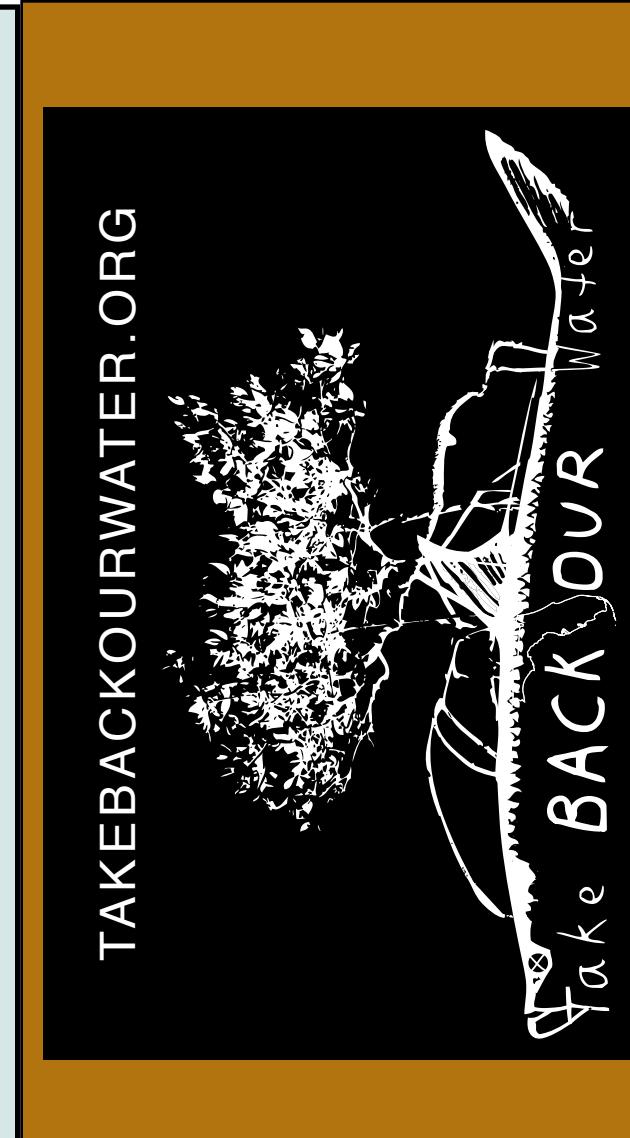


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A man in a grey jacket and cap stands on a boat, holding a large redfish. The background shows the ocean under a clear sky.

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The Back Page with Paul Puckett





FALL ISSUE 21  
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*southern culture on the fly*