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IND

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No. 22  
Winter '17

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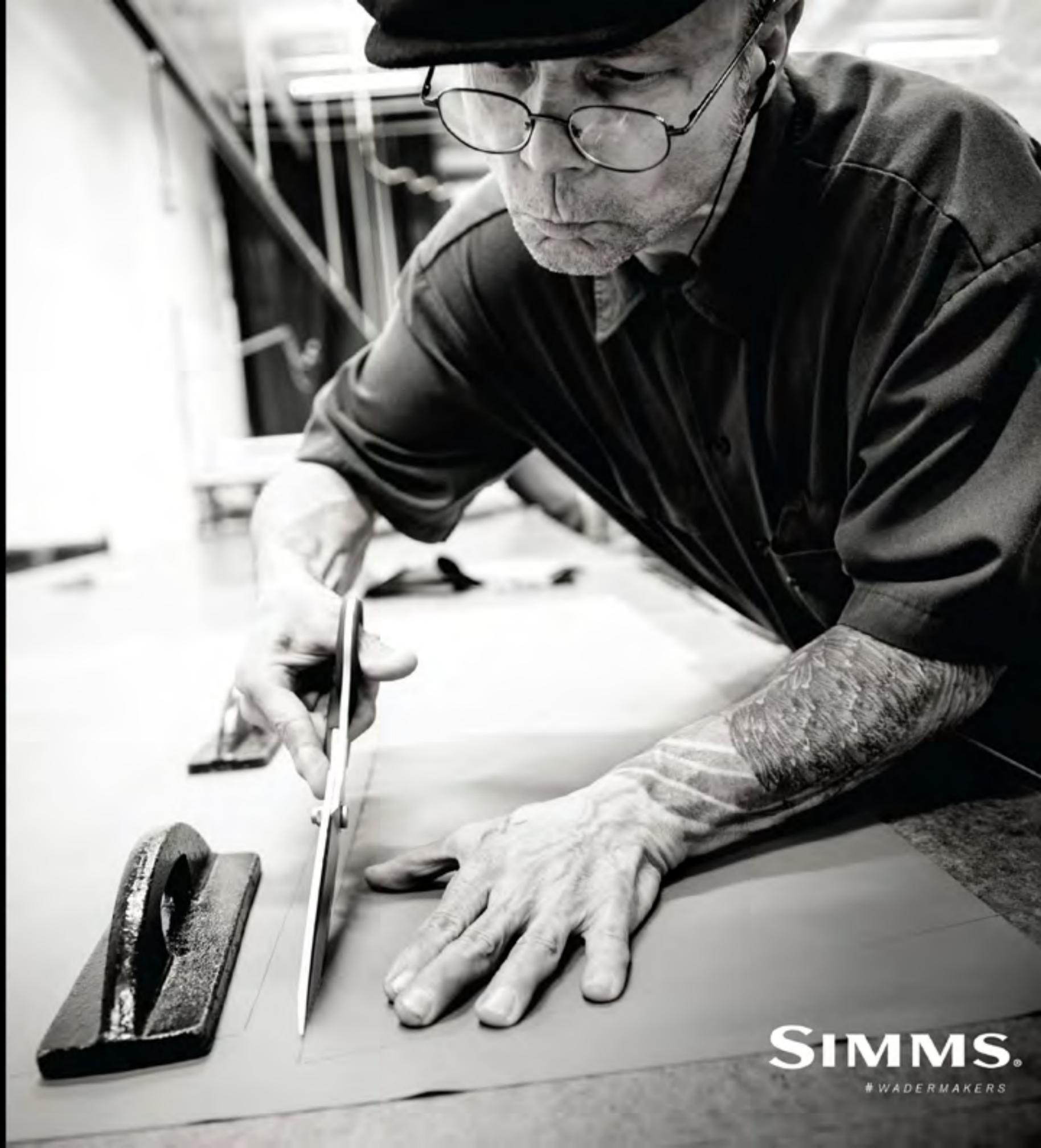


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*John Salcedo*

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WINTER 2017  
ISSUE NO. 22  
DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY

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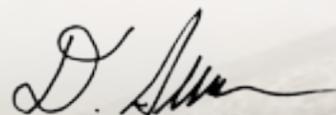
I'm a libtard, a snowflake, a commie. You might be a redneck, a gun nut, a fascist. That's ok though. If you're reading this, we can at least both agree we love to fish, and maybe hunt, but if nothing else, we both take solace in the natural world around us. **We are Outdoorsmen.** Unfortunately, there are powers conspiring against us. Our elected officials can no longer be trusted to have our best interests at heart in this arena. I've got a sneaky suspicion that the new name of the game is "making as much money as possible, as quickly as possible while throwing any conservation efforts that stand in the way under the proverbial VW van." No matter where we stand on abortion, taxes, civil liberties, or any other matter that has gotten all of our panties in a bunch, it is time to look past those issues and agree that clean water, clean air, and public lands have to be protected and not peddled to the highest bidder. The threats we face from the current political situation cannot be written off or pushed to the side while we wait and see what happens. What will happen is we'll all be sitting around planning our next golf outing because the rivers, flats, and mountains that fill our souls will merely be poisoned shadows of their former selves. As an added bonus, "no trespassing" signs will dot every landscape. This dreary conclusion will be considered paranoid by some, an overreaction by others. But as I write this, the en-

emies are at the gates and prodding our defenses.

*Let's just sell off a little public land and see what happens. Let's fast track some permits for pipelines and mines. But in order to get away with that we'll have to make sure we keep the scientists quiet by reviewing all findings ourselves before we release them to the public. Coal companies should be able to dump their waste in our rivers without any of that burdensome monitoring.*

There are no alternative facts when it comes to our public lands and our environment. The only fact that matters is that if we don't act to protect them, they will fall by the wayside, sacrificed to the wealthy few at a monumental loss to the rest of us.

So I implore anyone who happens to be reading this, stay vigilant. I don't care where you stand on any other issue, or you who you voted for, or even whether you believe that mainstream news lies. Do the research yourself, read the bill proposals, get pissed off. We're going to have at least a four-year fight on our hands. If we have any hopes of coming out of this with water to fish, air to breathe, and some semblance of public land, it's time stop bitchin' at each other and start screaming at our elected officials. This shit will not stand, and our outdoors won't be sold so a few shitbags can get even richer. That is all. Now we hug.



D. S. Miller



Everything that Matters



NO. 1  
FALL 2011



NO. 2  
WINTER 2012



NO. 3  
SPRING 2012



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SUMMER 2012



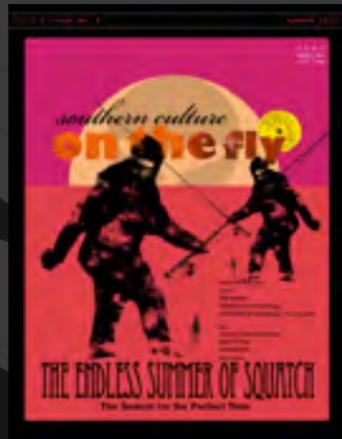
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SPRING 2014



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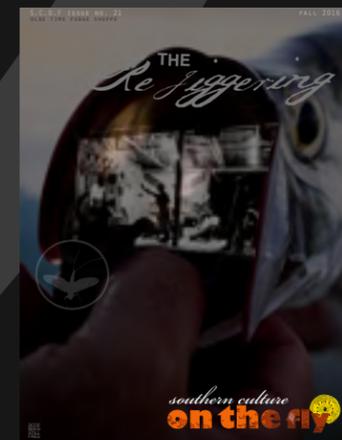
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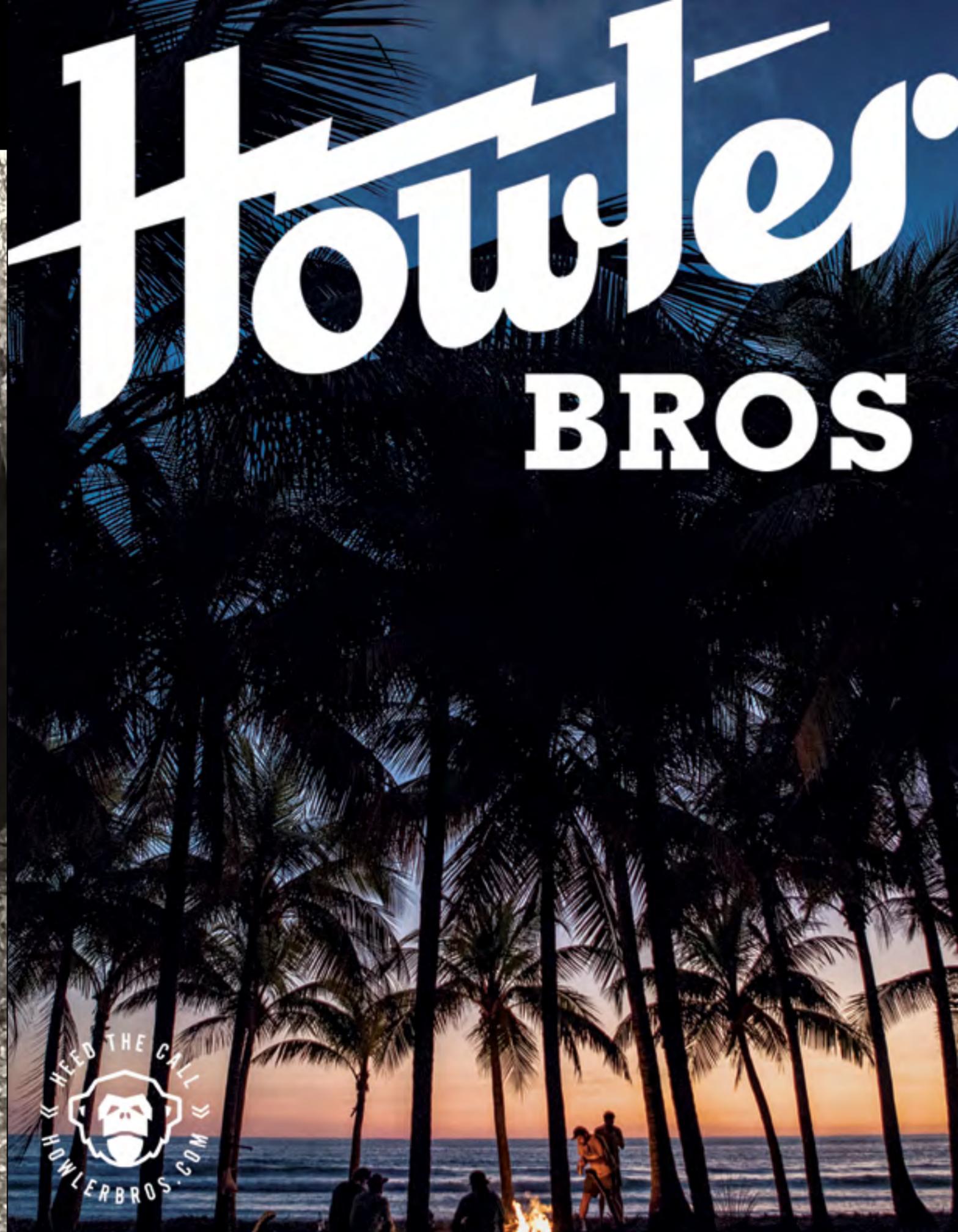
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# Haiku

with Jay Johnson



Public Land Owner  
Respect and don't fuck  
with me  
The battle continues



# Howler Bros

## BROS





Six days of travel stripped to a few frenzied seconds: on Sudan's Red Sea coast, Josh Gallivan comes tight to a bluefin trevally while Stu Harley and Mike LaSota look on. Russ Schitzer © 2017 Patagonia, Inc.

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# RHYTHM

By Christian Fichtel  
Photos: Rand Harcz



You don't see a lot of two-handed rods in the Southeast, and the reasons aren't hard to find.

I'm in a rut. I've been down this murky back-channel before, we all have—but I've never ventured quite this far. It's become more than just sitting out the cold and rainy days; I've caught myself sitting out those rare winter "have a few drinks and float down a river in the sun" type of days. Of course, there are all of the usual excuses—work, commitments, projects around the house. They are just lies to cover up the truth, though. I'm just bored of doing the same damn thing.

The word "privilege" gets thrown around too much these days, but I live a life of fishing privilege. Working in this industry has allowed me to spend an amount of time on the water that most would envy, so I feel a bit like an Upper East Side housewife complaining about the way my doorman is dressed. The fact remains, however, that dredging up dozens of Watauga rainbows doesn't even get me to half staff these days. I may, however, have found my salmonid sildenafil.

You don't see a lot of two-handed rods in the Southeast, and the reasons aren't hard to find. Primarily, we just don't have the kind of swingin' water that our friends to the north and west have. Most of our water is too broken and the runs are far too short. Of course, we don't have steelhead, and don't tell me that we're actually going to call a few scattered lake-run rainbows a steelhead run. Finally, and quite simply, it just isn't the most productive way to fish. Don't take that to mean it doesn't work, though.



The history of the modern switch rod can likely be traced to 11-foot Fenwick offerings from the '60s. Although a few of these rods did, in fact, come with a removable lower grip, most folks were using them with a double overhand technique similar to some current surf fishing methods. While switch rods have become a mainstay of the Great Lakes steelhead crowd, they aren't just for chrome fish and intruders. You're increasingly likely to see a two-handed rod swinging up stripers on the 'Hooch, mopping up smallies on some muddy creek, or probing the depths of high water on the Nantahala. Manufacturers are building two-handers that aren't overkill on your average trout stream, and the line options are almost overwhelming. If there is a specific task you want to accomplish, I'd bet there's a two-handed tool for the job.







As a result of the downstream swing, every eat is a violent encounter, the line immediately tight to the fish and the reel instantly in on the fight.

In my case, the job is digging me out of my rut. The tool, then, is a five-weight, two-handed rod, and the setting is a cold and snowy TVA tailwater. I've fished all of these runs before, dozens of times, but I'm looking at them differently this time. I know I could wear them out with the usual junk, but wearing them out isn't what I'm after. It's the rhythmic cast and step that, at the best of times, can reach an almost meditative calm that is only interrupted by the tap-tap-pull of a winter-darkened fish. As a result of the downstream swing, every eat is a violent encounter, the line immediately tight to the fish and the reel instantly in on the fight. And when a hot fish starts a downhill run, you quit meditating and just hang on.





If I had to identify a single, unifying goal of my fishing efforts, it is to be a truly complete fly angler. I've amassed the gear and know-how, tied the necessary flies, and shared a drink with enough pros that I feel relatively confident in packing up and heading off for a new adventure with a reasonable expectation of success. I suppose learning to fish a two-hander is a necessary component of that process, but it is somehow much more than that. It is both a connection to the past and a clear demonstration of the advantages of modern rod and line technology. It manages to be an almost mindless endeavor while at the same time demanding an involved and occasionally exhausting level of determination. It's not for the adrenaline junkie, but each forceful eat pushes you closer to becoming one.

It's not that there's anything wrong with indicator nymphing or sink-tip streamer stripping; sometimes you just need a change. For me, that change is diving into the world of two-handers. The best part, of course, is that I don't need to head north for steelhead to get my fix. Just give me a mountain free-stone or TVA tailwater, a light switch rod, and a hungry fish or two, and I'll be back to hucking heavy nymph rigs in no time. There's always a two-hander in the boat, though, just begging for a juicy run and a willing fish to bring me back to reality.





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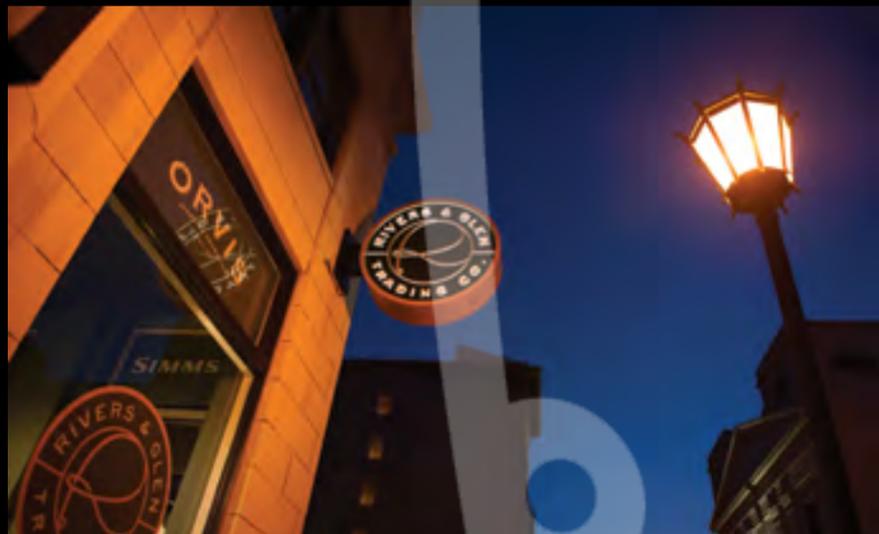
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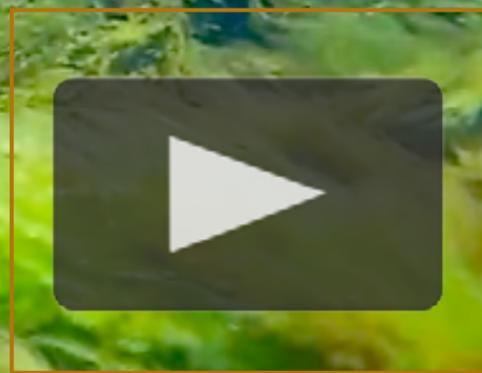
MOVING PICTURES



Brett Winchel and Matt Crockett



Coldwater compilation



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A photograph taken from the perspective of someone on a boat, looking towards the stern. The boat's deck is a light blue color. A wooden oar is positioned diagonally across the deck. To the right, there is a rectangular storage hatch with a yellow interior. Two circular portholes are visible on the deck. In the background, the water is a mix of blue and white, with a forested shoreline under a cloudy sky.

# GOOD LOVIN'

By David Grossman  
Photos: Steve Seinberg

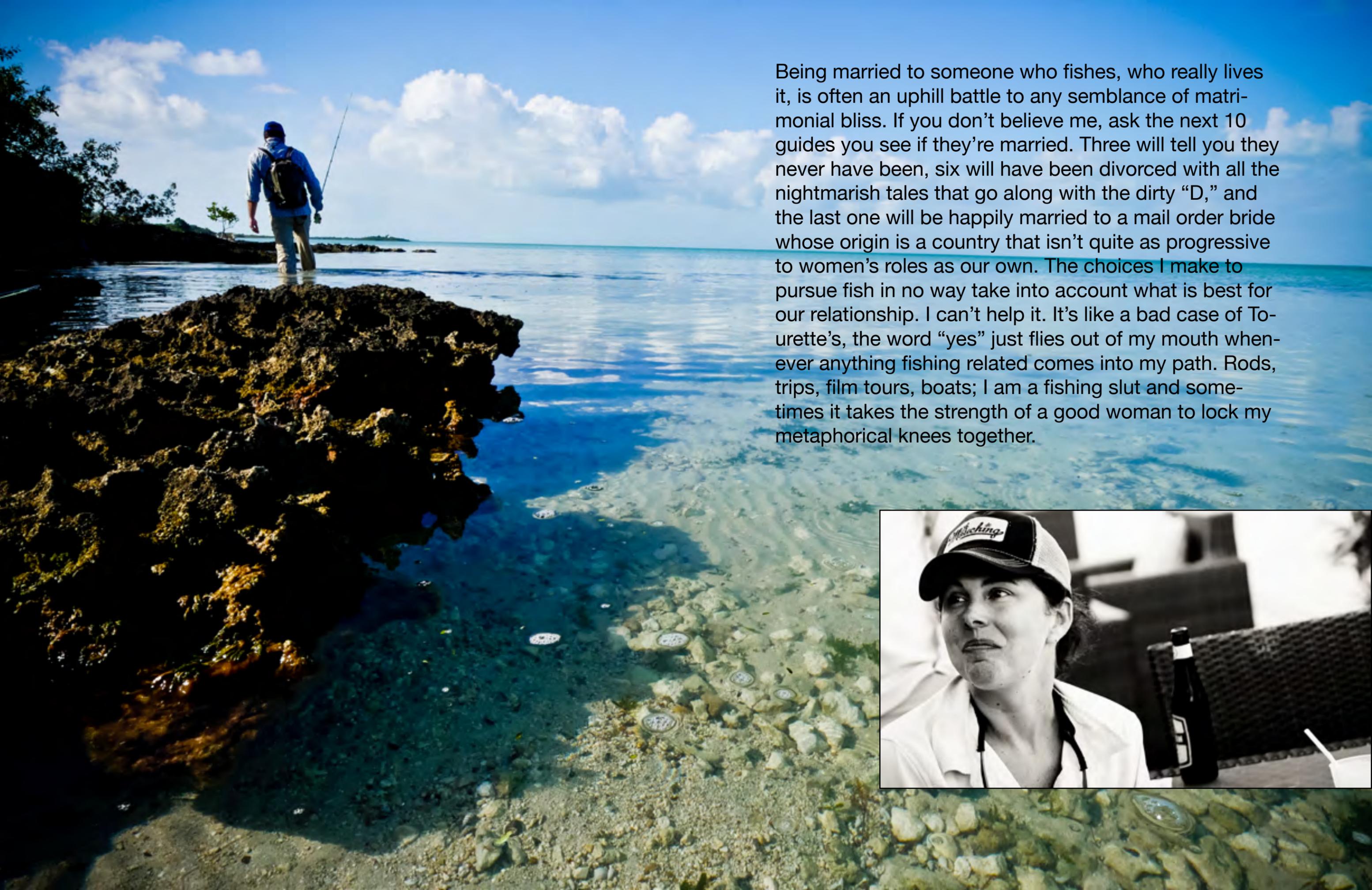


People I fish with often ask about my wife. After I tell them we've been happily married for almost a decade and a half, the terms "saint," "hell of a woman" and "insane" start flying around as if I am some sort of drooling, knuckle-dragging neanderthal that smells like a cross between donkey taint and lavender. All of which just happen to have been true at various points in our marriage. I am not disputing the fact that my wife might be one of the best people on the planet as she might also be the only woman on the planet that could possibly tolerate me for any duration of time. That's why I married her.





Being married to someone who fishes,  
who really lives it, is often an  
uphill battle to any semblance of  
matrimonial bliss.



Being married to someone who fishes, who really lives it, is often an uphill battle to any semblance of matrimonial bliss. If you don't believe me, ask the next 10 guides you see if they're married. Three will tell you they never have been, six will have been divorced with all the nightmarish tales that go along with the dirty "D," and the last one will be happily married to a mail order bride whose origin is a country that isn't quite as progressive to women's roles as our own. The choices I make to pursue fish in no way take into account what is best for our relationship. I can't help it. It's like a bad case of Tourette's, the word "yes" just flies out of my mouth whenever anything fishing related comes into my path. Rods, trips, film tours, boats; I am a fishing slut and sometimes it takes the strength of a good woman to lock my metaphorical knees together.







*My wife doesn't hate fishing, or hate me for fishing. She deserves to.*

As I write this, she is on vacation with friends, leaving me responsible for our two young children. While I do love them more than life itself, I now realize if anything happened to Lindsey, I would be forced to sell them to the highest bidder, which I would assume would be a nice man in Dubai. I can't do what she does. She holds it down a lot, and because she does I get to go places, act like an idiot, and still have a semi-adult home to come back to.



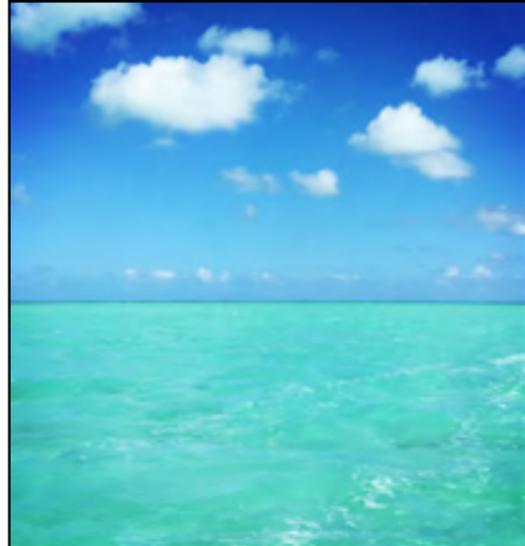
Every so often I try to compensate my huge account payable by planning a trip to a fishing destination where she will have just as good a time as me. This means a beach, good food, sleeping in, yoga, and at least dinners with me. This time around, Belize fit the bill quite nicely. I had never fished saltwater out of the country and had yet to catch a bonefish or a permit. In case you were wondering I am still “O-fer” for permit, but I did see one...it had a horn and hooves. I digress though as this is not the point of this little yarn.





The second day of the trip, my friend and I fished with our wives instead of each other. Lindsey and I had fished together before, but never had we fished together where I focused on my fishing rather than hers. The first half of the day was spent figuring out how to set the hook on a bonefish. Read here: [My best attempt to fornicate with a football](#). Me being the monkey, the bonefish being the football, and my hook setting was, just well fucked. With every lost fish Lindsey just rooted for me more. It was weird having someone in the boat who cheers you on with actual words of encouragement as opposed to the two S's: shame and shit. Not weird in a bad way, just weird.





By the end of the day, I had figured it out, and bonefish started coming to hand at a rate that might only be possible in Belize. With every fish, Lindsey was counting with sheer amazement as I had magically transformed into some sort of Norse god, pecs and all. On the way back, I sheepishly asked her if she had fun. Obviously angling toward replicating this arrangement as many times as I could get away with. Yes she had fun, but she told me that seeing me fish that day was seeing me at my

happiest, at my most comfortable, really my most “me.” Seeing me in my element was the coolest part of the day for her.

I plan on staying married for a long time, and the more years we tear off the calendar together, I realize someone that gets me is a rare thing, and every minute of every day is better when you spend it with someone that sees past all the bullshit and really gets you. Well, that and fishing more would be nice, too.



- This is Steve. I was there too, with my wife Lael. And honey, ditto on everything Dave said ....really. And thank you so much to El Pescador Lodge for an amzaing trip.



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# Things Louis Hates

By Louis Gaudet

- Bobbers a.k.a Indicators
- Tenkara
- Tenkara (not a typo)
- Guides who take themselves too seriously
- Stocked trout
- The sun when I'm not flats fishing
- Clouds when I am flats fishing
- Meteorologists
- Czech nymphing
- Bait fishermen
- Bikini model pro staffers
- The entire government of Florida
- [REDACTED]
- Shitty Drivers
- Bad BBQ
- Bud Lite
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- Poachers
- Big Sugar
- Manatees
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- Vegans
- Fracking
- Men with beards who can't make fire
- Center pinning
- Seafood
- 2% Milk
- Sheepshead
- Full moons
- Weekend boaters
- Jetskis
- GPS
- All country music post circa 1989
- Dirty water
- North winds
- The government of Utah
- Myspace
- Techno
- Don King
- Nazis

- YouTube casting instructors who can't cast
- CCA Florida
- Politics
- Children
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- Fly rod shoot outs
- Hipsters
- Any color besides black
- Grey
- [REDACTED]
- Millennials
- People who don't understand how a boat ramp works
- Bloggers
- 7 weights
- The Wizard of Oz
- Leonardo DiCaprio
- Tippet rings
- LOL, XOXO, LMAO, all emojis
- Bow ties
- Seersucker
- The remake of Point Break
- Snowbirds
- Popping corks
- [REDACTED]icans
- Crowded heads
- People who complain about shit
- Also kittens



*Trolling for marlin off Oahu, tuna fishing on the Grand Banks, commercial whaling.....*



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Chicone's  
Swamp  
Cabbage  
Shrimp

Drew Chicone

## Chicone's Swamp Cabbage Shrimp

If you have spent any time pursuing redfish in skinny water, chances are you have spent your fair share of mornings wading through an awful lot of arachnid- and reptile-infested swamps. This is okay if you were born and raised in the stagnant water of southwest Florida, but if you want to make it home for dinner, you either have to know what you're doing or know someone who does. Thankfully for me, I do. If you were to take equal parts Steve Irwin, Charles Darwin and Trapper Rudd, you would end up with a Florida native and a good fishing buddy of mine named Cody Pierce.

I truly enjoy fishing with Cody, not only because of his knowledge of the ecosystem, but because he may be one of the only guys as nerdy as me when it comes to exploring new fisheries and putting a microscope on the feeding behaviors of flats species in our backyard. As of late, Cody and I have spent an inordinate amount of time capturing and analyzing one of the universal salt-water prey items: shrimp. Not your standard run-of-the-mill bait shop pink or white shrimp that come and go with the tides—no, we're talking about the lesser-known, reclusive resident species that burrow into the mud at low tide. The filet mignon of shrimp for finicky redfish. Fossorial species of shrimp, like the mantis or

snapping shrimp, have small territorial dominions and don't typically venture too far from their burrows. When you see the pockmarked mounds in the mud that look like an underwater ant hill, that is from these bottom-dwelling crustaceans. Having a hideout gives pistol shrimp a unique advantage over other species of shrimp that reside higher in the water column and take refuge in the turtle grass. These highly sought-after morsels are welcomed treats to a cruising redfish, and anglers often overlook employing a convincing imitation of these less familiar shrimp species.

After numerous explorations, Cody and I discovered that the redfish in our neck of the woods have an affinity for a uniquely colored olive and orange snapping or pistol shrimp. These shrimp get their name from an oversized claw that snaps and shoots a burst of bubbles much like a shot from a gun. This explosion of sound and blast of bubbles momentarily reaches the temperature of the sun, stunning their prey and rendering them defenseless. These miniscule marauders are smart enough not to expose themselves to lurking redfish much, but when they do, they are gobbled up faster than you can say fried chicken.



## Materials List:

**Hook:** Mustad S71SNP-DT Size 4 or similar saltwater hook

**Thread:** Danville 210 Flatwaxed Nylon - Olive

**Eyes:** EP Crab & Shrimp Eye - Small  
1/8" Dazl Eyes - Black

**Legs:** Chicone's Micro Crusher Legs - Orange/Clear

**Flash:** Krystal Flash - Black & Bonefish Tan

**Body:** EP Foxy Brush 1.5" - Olive Brown  
Finnish Raccoon - Bonefish Pink

**Weed Guard:** 30 Mason Hard Mono

**Adhesive:** Loon Outdoors UV Clear Fly Finish Flow

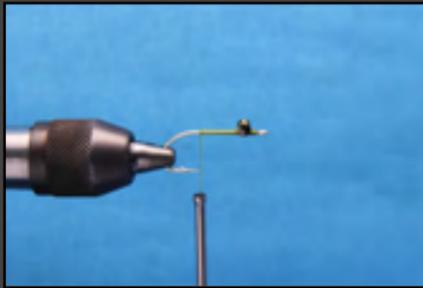


Over the past few years, I have had tremendous success, in all kinds of different fishing scenarios, with my Coyote Ugly Shrimp pattern. Success leads to confidence, and faith in a particular pattern is often the reason that that one fly tends to perform better for you than another. That being said, I believe there is always room for improvement, and sometimes there is simply a better tool for the job. Whether it's size or color, sink rate or strip length, all these factors affect the productivity of a particular pattern. The Swamp Cabbage Shrimp is a more user-friendly manifestation of the Coyote Ugly Shrimp—one of my favorite light bottom shrimp patterns. It is tied using many of the same techniques and shares the same basic framework as the Coyote Ugly shrimp pattern with the exception of a few purposeful color and material substitutions, which make this pattern far better suited for emulating the characteristics of this stunning specimen.

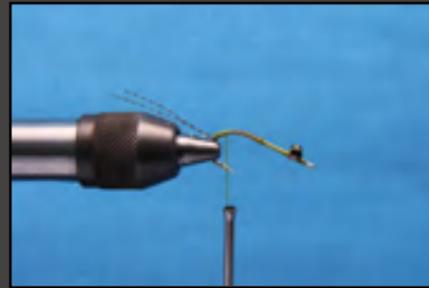
The most notable advantage of the Swamp Cabbage shrimp is its fishability in thick grass and algae. The stiff synthetic materials palmered around the hook work to help the fly cling to the grass rather than plummet deep in it. This doesn't sound like a big deal, but the vast majority of strikes happen after the fish is following your fly and you stop it dead in its tracks. Natural materials like fur and feathers are wonderful when it comes to lifelike movement in the water, but they tend to collapse when saturated and provide little, if any of the much-needed resistance or friction to keep the fly up in the view and strike zone of the fish. The choices and blends of colors found in the EP Foxy brushes are much better for mimicking the exact camouflaged colorations of the pistol shrimp found in our estuaries, but can be easily exchanged to match different color variations as well. Weed guards help to keep any fly from fouling; however, some materials are better than others when it comes to deflecting slimy algae. You can toss this fly in the thickest of floating goo, and miraculously it comes out cleaner than a whistle. The micro-cut orange crusher legs provide a realistic look and plenty of movement without altering this small pattern's buoyancy or ability to track in the hookup position.

Targeting redfish on fly in the winter months can be fantastic if you are prepared to do a little homework on what the fish are eating and where. Don't be afraid to tie up something a little different and experiment with different prey item imitations that you may see on the flats. You never know when you'll stumble on a local favorite like Swamp Cabbage.

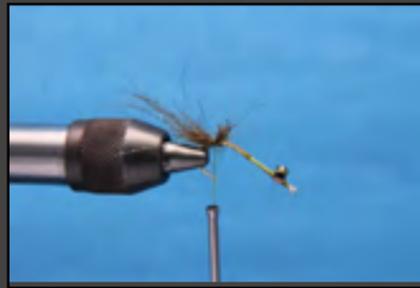
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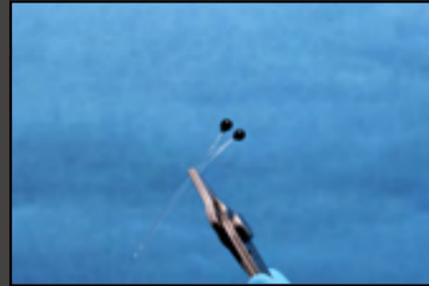
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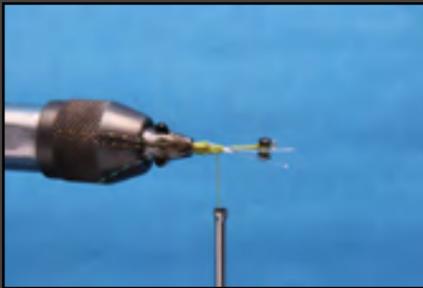
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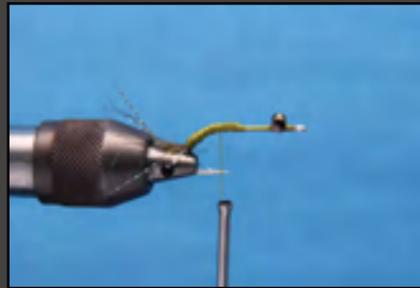
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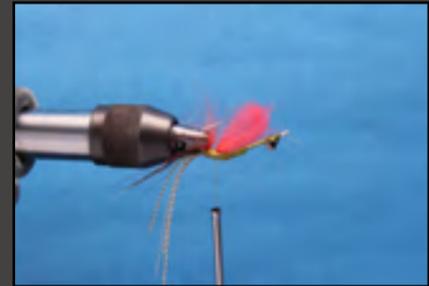
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12



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14



15



1. Start your thread at the eye of the hook and wrap 10 turns toward the hook bend. Attach the dumbbell eyes with a series of figure eight and doughnut wraps to secure in place.

2. Adjust the hook so it is angled slightly downward. Cover the hook shank with a series of thread wraps until you have reached the point of the hook. Double the thread over and tie in one black and one tan strand of Krystal Flash. Wrap down the bend of the hook 8-10 turns, securing the four strands in place. Trim the flash to approximately one hook length.

3. Trim approximately 1" of material from the end of the EP Foxy Brush doing your best not to drop the fibers. With two loose wraps, roll trimmings around the Krystal Flash. Tighten the thread to secure in place. The section of fur should be evenly distributed around the shank of the hook.

4. Fold forward the butt ends of the brush material and secure in place with several tight wraps.

5. With a pair of needle nose pliers, crimp a pair of EP monofilament eyes 1/4" down the post. The flattened segment will create an angle that will ensure that the eyes protrude away from the body at an angle when secured in place.

6. Position the mono filament eyes so they are angled downward and extend just beyond the bend of the hook. Wrap forward 4-5 turns, securing the first eye in place.

7. Position the second eye on the opposite side of the hook with 3-4 snug wraps.

8. Take the fly out of the vise and check that the eyes are aligned evenly. I like to look at the fly from the top and side to make sure they are even. Once satisfied with their position, put the fly back in the vise and secure the eyes with several tight wraps toward the eye of the hook.

9. Trim off the excess mono posts at the point of the hook and cover with an even layer of thread.

10. At the bend of the hook—on top of the mono eyes—double over the thread orange/clear 2 Crusher Legs. If you stretch them slightly after the first few wraps, it is much easier to position them where you want. Make several wraps down the bend of the hook to secure the legs in a downward position (when hook point down). Trim the pair of legs on the bottom so that they are twice the hook length. Trim the second pair of legs approximately 1/4" shorter.

11. Turn the hook over in the vise, hook point up, and tie in a matchstick-size bunch of shrimp pink Finnish Raccoon. The tips of the fur should extend beyond the mono filament eyes approximately 1/2".

12. Fold forward the butt ends of the Finnish Raccoon and secure in place with several tight wraps. Trim the butt ends so they are even with the point of the hook.

13. Turn the fly over in the vise, hook point down, tie in the tip of the Foxy Brush on top of the Crusher Legs. Advance the thread to the dumbbell eyes.

14. Make two tight wraps directly behind the Finnish Raccoon. Do your best not to trap any of the long forward facing hairs that enrobe the legs and eyes.

15. Wind the brush forward, stroking all the hair back with each turn. Do your best not to trap hairs under consecutive wraps. Leave a slight gap between each forward turn, otherwise, the fly will be too bulky and will not sink.

16



17



18



19



20



21



16. Once you have reached the dumbbell eyes, tie off the brush with several tight wraps, and work the brush back and forth until the wire brakes. I do not like to cut the excess brush away with nippers because it leaves a sharp burr which can damage your leader.

17. Whip finish in front of the dumbbell eyes and cut the thread. Using a dog brush, pick out the body of the shrimp. This process makes the fly much easier to trim and eliminates any gaps in the body.

18. Trim the belly of the shrimp as close as you can to the hook shank. Lay your scissors on the dumbbell eye and make your first cut from the eyes just before the bend of the hook. Be careful not to cut the Krystal Flash or the Legs.

19. Turn the fly over, hook point up and make a second cut along the back of the shrimp as close as you can to the hook shank. Remove as much material as you can from eyes to the start of the hook bend. Good hook-clearance is very important for hooking fish.

20. Next, align your scissors with the outside edge of the bead chain eye and remove the fur from one side of the fly. Trim from the bead chain eye to the start of the hook bend. Repeat on the opposite side of the fly.

21. Take the fly out of the vise and with a few more cuts, clean up any sharp edges and round out the body of the shrimp. The finished fly should have a neatly trimmed body, the same width as the dumbbell eyes. A sparse tuft of material should enrobe the Krystal Flash, eyes and rubber legs.

### APPLYING THE WEED GUARD

1



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5



6



1. Place the fly back in the vise hook point up. Start with a 2-3" piece of 30lb hard mono ( I like to prep a couple of dozen at once), and flatten the very tip of one end. When done correctly, this will create a flat spot that is slightly wider than the round mono post. This small flattened section will catch the thread, and keep it from rolling off the mono. It will also keep the mono from rolling off to one side of the hook.

2. Place the flattened end directly behind the hook eye. Make 2-3 wraps directly on top of the flattened section to hold the mono post in place.

3. Pull the mono post forward, so it is perpendicular to the hook shank, and make two turns around the post and gently pull the wraps snug. Make one turn behind the post and repeat two more times. This will keep the mono post from pulling free.

4. Cut the excess mono post off even with the point of the hook. Bend the mono post forward and make 10-12 diagonal wraps behind the post, but in front of the dumbbell eyes. This will act like a wedge to hold the upright and give it more support.

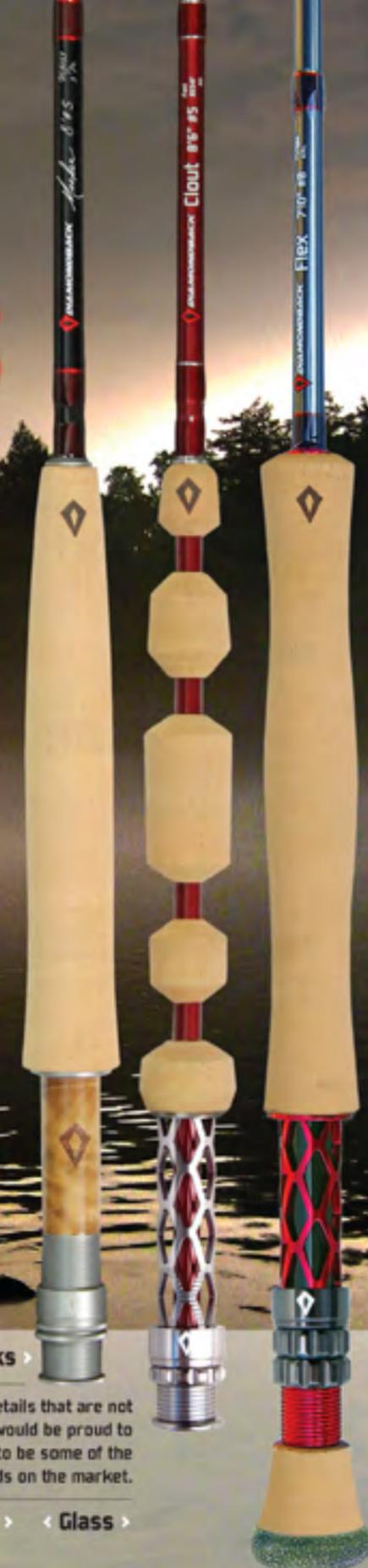
5. Whip finish behind the mono post. This will keep the final wraps from sliding off the head of the fly and crowding the eye of the hook.

6. Apply a thin coat of Loon Outdoors Flow over all the thread wraps in front and behind the mono post. This will add a bit more rigidity to the weed guard.



*Drew Chicone is our favorite Florida mad scientist. Check out more patterns on his website, grab some of his signature materials and pick up one of his books. You won't be sorry.*

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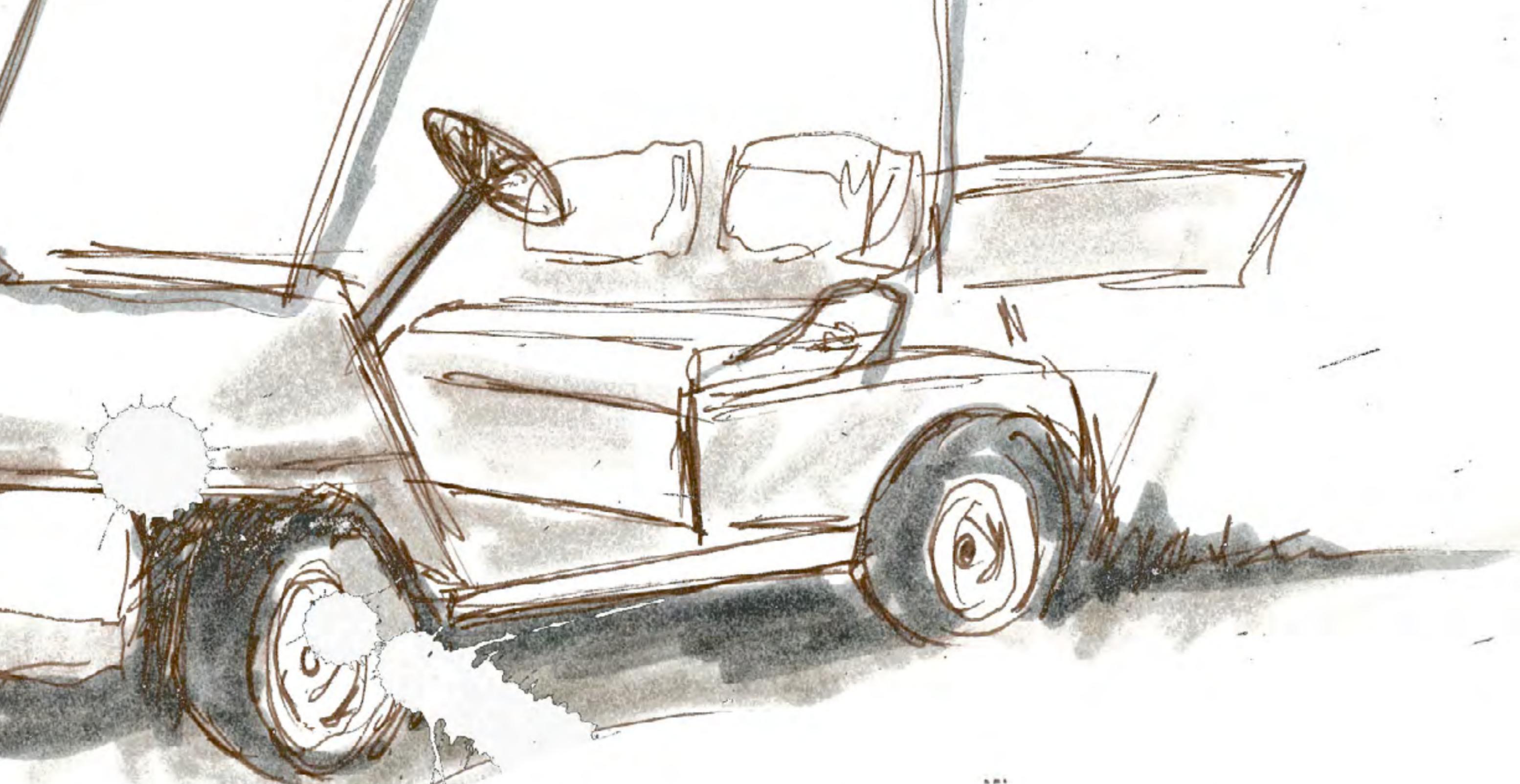
## **CUIDADO CON LOS COCODRILOS**

By Matt Smythe  
Illustrations by Zane Porter

I'm not sure what I was expecting the take to be like. Maybe aggressive and angry. Explosive. Reveling in the carnage like a Tyrannosaurus on a fresh kill. Something akin to the raw meat grabs I'd seen on *Swamp People*. Nope. It was actually slow and nerve-racking. Like watching the second tarpon in an oceanside string put his nose on your fly and follow-follow-follow before the bucket yawns and he turns into the strip set. Or, more likely, snubs you completely. But I'm getting ahead of myself. Let me back up.

First of all, I wasn't fishing for a crocodile. Actually, I had been having the most mindblowing tarpon experience of my life. Four days earlier, my fly rod was an afterthought as I packed for a week in Mexico with my wife and parents. *Bring your salt gear*, my dad texted the day before we left. *They're catching fish out front of our place*. Reel, rod, a mixed bag of Clousers, crease flies, and foam poppers. I felt better prepared for stripers than anything swimming in the Cancun surf.





This particular morning was number three of sneaking onto a private golf course. With only a couple hours before temps required poolside cervezas, I was up and on foot at dawn. A quarter-mile walk from where we were staying, I'd cross a four-lane highway, skirt a hedgerow and two bus stop shelters, and then cross the approach to the 15th green, reaching a quiet section in the lagoon that was furthest from the clubhouse. My dad informed me that when you pay for your round and get the keys to your cart, they tell you not to retrieve your ball if you put it in the water. *Amigo, leave it for the cocodrilo.* There tends to be more pesos exchanged for a second or third sleeve of balls at this point.

A giant, prehistoric log  
at the end of 60 feet of  
fly line, leader, and a  
striper fly.



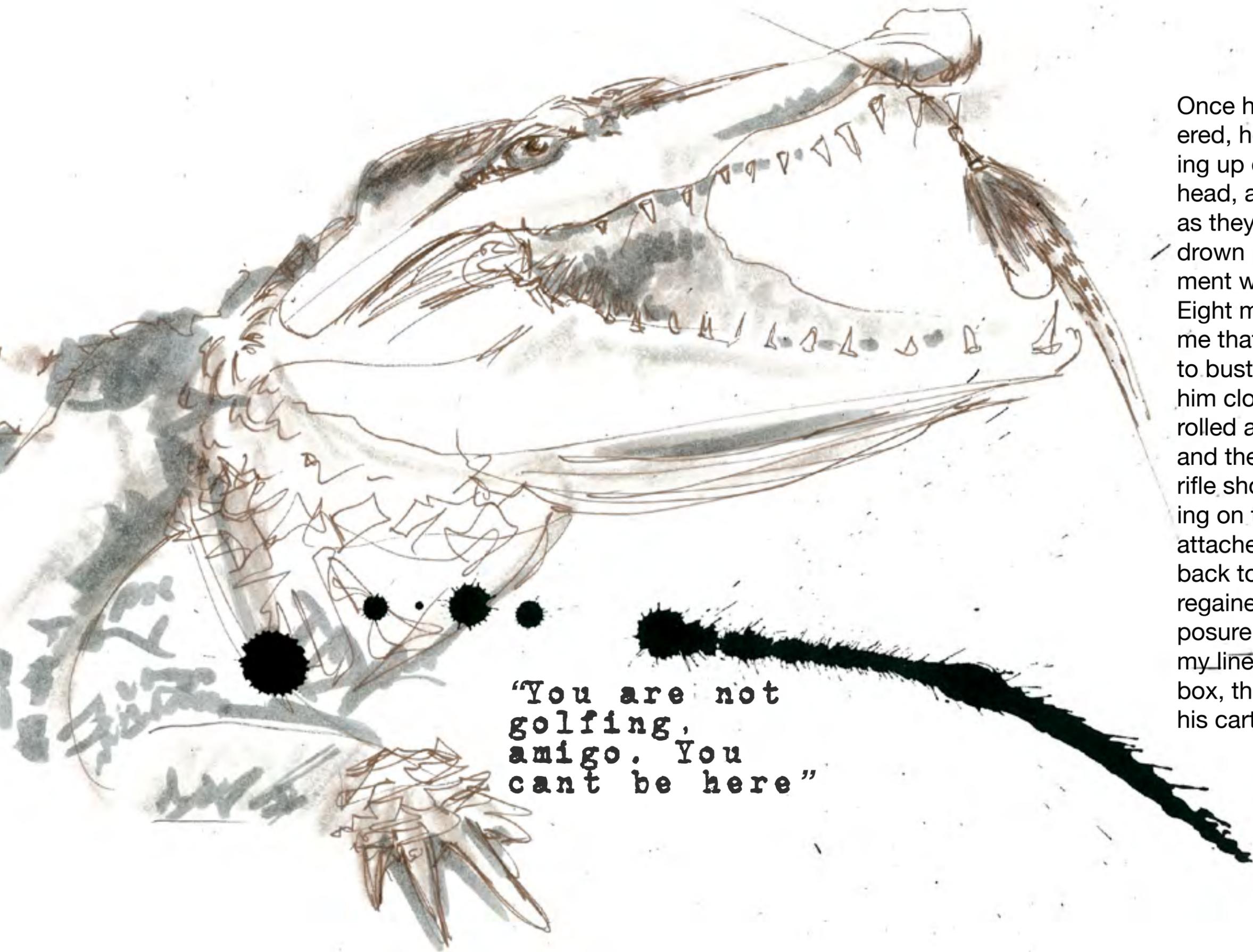
Day 1: I walked up on a school of baby tarpon crushing baitfish, cast a crease fly into the melee and promptly hooked and landed a beautiful, acrobatic juvenile.

Day 2: Thinking I had found a nursery and was giddy with the prospect of staying as busy as a kid on a farm pond, I discovered that there were far larger specimens in the murky green water. I put eight 60+ pound tarpon in the air in the two hours I was there. Granted, half of them came unbuttoned after one jump, and the rest after a few more, but holy hell. They were all within 25 yards of where I stood on the shore and they were all surface eats. A Japanese fivesome watched in horror while trying to tee off behind me as one fish jumped, rattled, and cannonballed back to the water.

Day 3: It started with another baby tarpon, and he attracted some attention, too. The eyes and snout of a croc are deceiving. The ones that surfaced about 20 feet away looked like they belonged to a far smaller

reptile than I expected. He sat still. I sat still. He drifted off to post-up in the mangroves and wait for another distressed fish. I elected to make another cast in hopes of finding another tarpon like the prior day's.

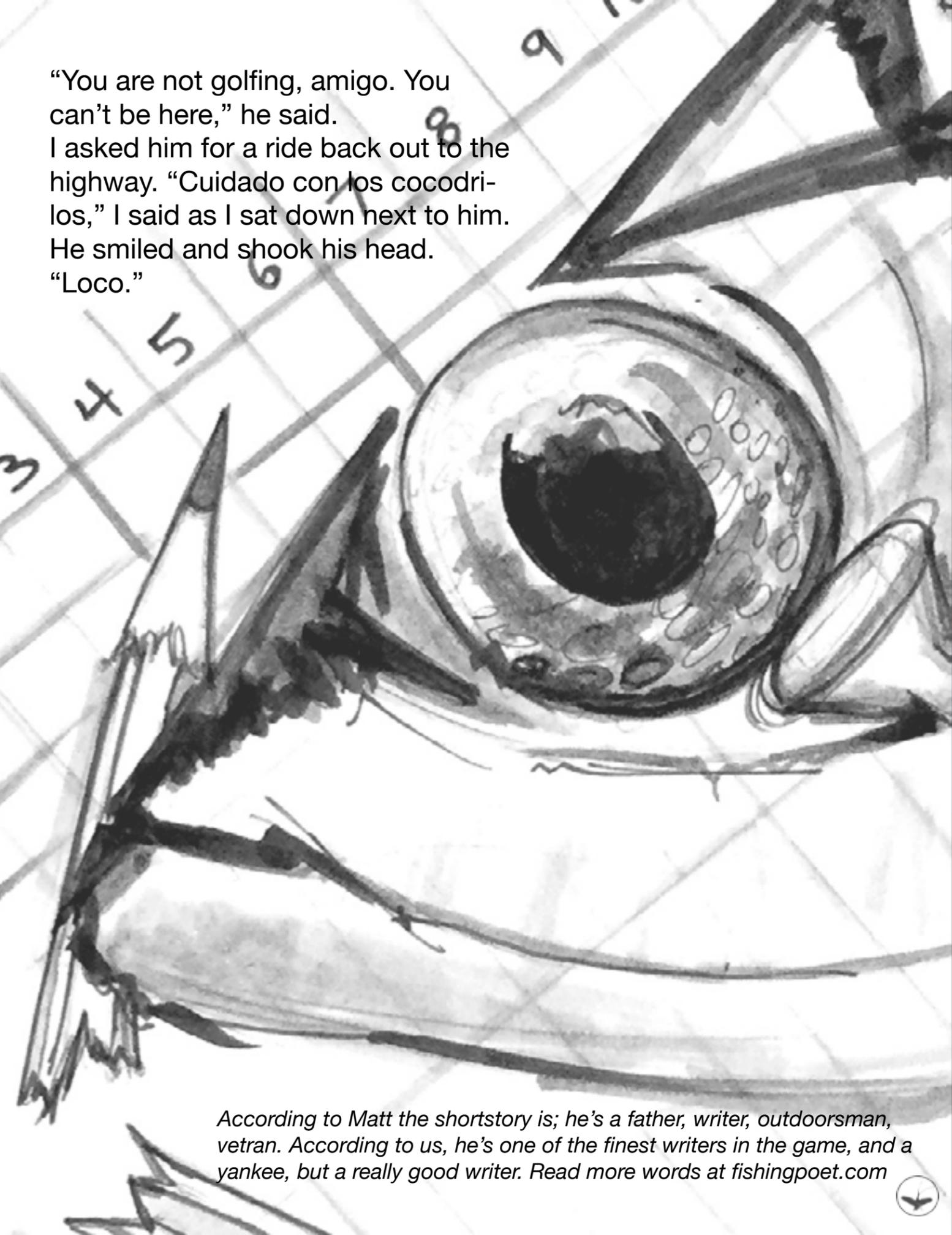
When my fly landed, the croc surfaced full body, the length of my 9' 5wt. and then some, flexed his massive tail once and effortlessly closed the 20 yards between himself and my fly in about two seconds. He stopped with his nose on the fly. I twitched it once. His mouth opened and hammered shut with a sound that I can only describe as a heavy, hollow *clock*, followed by a smaller second bite. And then he sat. A giant, prehistoric log at the end of 60 feet of fly line, leader, and a striper fly. I'm not sure how long I had been holding my breath, but I exhaled "holy shit," stripped line until I came tight, and laid the graphite to him. The log didn't move except to slowly turn toward me as any free-floating nine-foot log does under constant side-pressure from a fly rod.



**"You are not  
golfing,  
amigo. You  
cant be here"**

Once he realized that he was tethered, he went to the bottom, churning up dark brown, shaking his head, and rolling over and over as they do when they're trying to drown prey. "Holy shit." The movement was massive. Other-worldly. Eight minutes later, as it dawned on me that I'd have to figure out how to bust this thing off if I actually got him close to shore, he sank again, rolled a half-dozen more times, and the fly let loose, firing like a rifle shot past my head and landing on the 16th tee behind me, still attached to the leader. He swam back to his mangrove cover while I regained some semblance of composure. Just as I finished reeling up my line and put the fly back in my box, the course ranger pulled up on his cart.

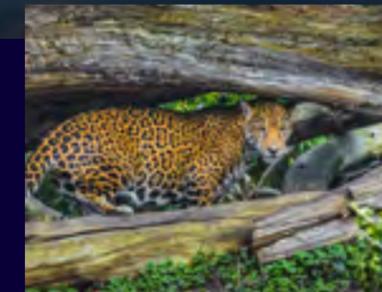
“You are not golfing, amigo. You can’t be here,” he said. I asked him for a ride back out to the highway. “Cuidado con los cocodrilos,” I said as I sat down next to him. He smiled and shook his head. “Loco.”



*According to Matt the shortstory is; he’s a father, writer, outdoorsman, vetran. According to us, he’s one of the finest writers in the game, and a yankee, but a really good writer. Read more words at [fishingpoet.com](http://fishingpoet.com)*



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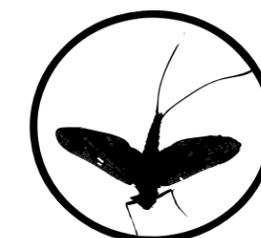
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# Redneck Traveler

By Danny Reed

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VULCANO ENERGY DRINK  
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- SANDUÍCHES
- BRANDES
- BOMBS AÇUCARAS
- ATRAPALMOS
- CUPONS DE DESCONTO
- BRANDES E FRUTAS
- CUPONS E BRANDES
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Sitting on the bow of our boat, sipping on a hot cup of coffee, I reflected on the magnitude of my trip. The sun was rising and with complete clarity, I realized that there are moments and experiences that define who we are. Pivotal points in our lives that change the way we perceive the world. Spending a week in the Amazon was one of those moments for me. I'll never forget when Michael Williams reached out and invited me on his exploratory trip into the jungle. I said yes without hesitation. What better place to find myself at 36, on my first exit from America, than the middle of the great Brazilian Amazon? What I didn't know, was the cultural impact it would have. It opened my eyes to a whole new world, and helped me better understand the different struggles that people face day-to-day. It made me appreciate the life I have, but showed me how much I still needed to grow. While the fishing was incredible, the people were really what made the trip. I've lived in the South my entire life, and I've experienced true Southern hospitality at its finest, and found it very hard to beat. Well let me tell you, Brazilians might do it even better. From the moment we met our guides and crew, we were greeted with open arms and warm smiles. These dudes were truly happy people. Very few times in my life have I seen such camaraderie. Their laughter was contagious, their attitudes inspiring. These guys came from poverty of a level I could never imagine, yet their demeanor and outlook was far more positive and grateful than what you might see in your average American. They were poor and happy, two things that don't always mix.



What better place to find myself at 36, on my first exit from America, than the middle of the great Brazilian Amazon?





Every day we fished, our guides put in the work. Their desire to get us on the fish was just as great as our determination to catch them. While the language barrier was tough at times, the fishing was very relatable. We made jokes and gestures, and somehow carried on conversation with the universal language of humor. We bounced around the tannic jungle waters from spot to spot, searching for peacock bass. When the fishing was on, it was hard to beat! White and chartreuse Clousers were a fish favorite and our own midday eats were incredible. We'd gather around the table every afternoon and gorge ourselves on proper Brazilian fare: pork, chicken, beef, and arapaima cooked perfectly, served with rice, beans, pasta, and veggies.



I'd sit and eat my meal while listening to the guides carry on in never-ending laughter, wishing I could understand and chime in with my own barrage of shit-talking. These moments in between the epic fishing were the times I remembered most. Sometimes it was the energy of the crew and guides that kept us going on those boiling hot days. The happiness was contagious on the boat, and there was no shortage of smiles.

On the last day of the trip, we had the privilege of visiting a small jungle village. We were greeted by the local children on the banks, and offered them snacks and sweets from our boat. You could see the joy in their eyes, as these were not common treats in the jungle. The children followed us as we walked up the hill to explore the rest of the village. There was about 15 shanty-style homes, a school, and a soccer field (every village had a soccer field). Everyone we came in contact with was neighborly and happy to have their picture taken. Mangy dogs wandered around aimlessly, and chickens freely pecked around in the sand. We watched a village elder pull apart vines with his weathered hands to prepare strips for woven baskets. You could tell he was a master of his craft.







Some of our crew even joined in a quick game of soccer with the kids. These people had nothing, but they were happy. There wasn't sadness on their faces, only smiles. There was a part of me that didn't want to leave that little slice of heaven. I wanted to lay in a hammock with a case of cold beer and chill. No phone, no Internet, just sit back and watch the world turn.







The whole experience reminded me that I needed to smile more often and be thankful for the amazing things I have. It showed me that being a more well-rounded and thoughtful American meant stepping out of your comfort zone, traveling to new places, and experiencing new people in their own environment. Although we are all so different, we are all human, and we all have a

*As Americans, we sometimes fear what's on the other side of the ocean, or for that matter, pretend it's not even there at all.*

natural ability to bond with one another. As Americans, we sometimes fear what's on the other side of the ocean, or for that matter, pretend it's

not even there at all. I beg you, if there is one thing you do in the next few years, buy a plane ticket somewhere outside of this country, and dive deep into unfamiliar culture. Eat and fish with the locals. Laugh with strangers and make new friends. Experience poverty on a real level and pay close attention to how people make the best of it. Travel re-

ally is the best education you can pay for. I'm glad I finally got my passport stamped and started living life outside the "Bubba" bubble.



*Danny Reed is a friend, a harbor in the storm, and the sweetest bear that ever walked the woods. When he's not designing clothing for Crooked Creek Holler, he loves tattooing people when he's on vacation.*

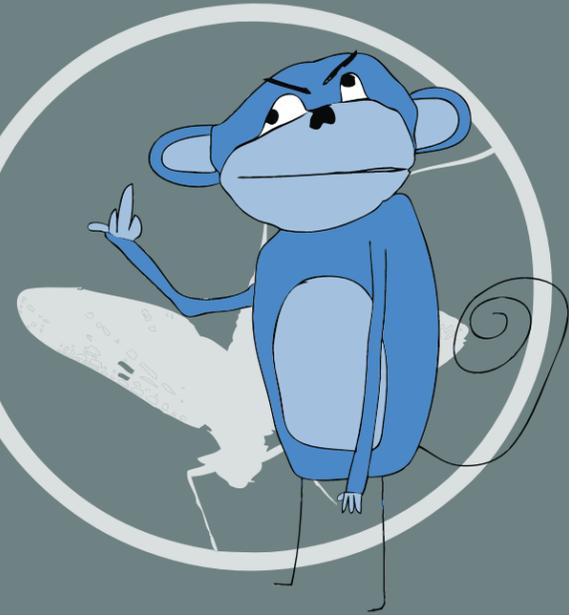


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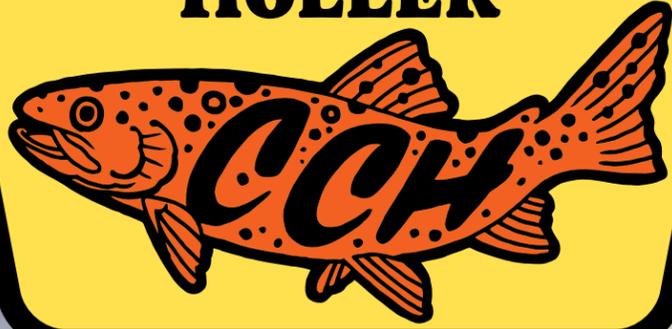


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# TU COSTA 5 Rivers Rally

By David Grossman  
Photos: Jared Zissu

Conservation only works if the people who believe in it don't keel over dead with no one to pick up the baton out of their cold dead hands to carry it on. Luckily for us, Trout Unlimited figured this out. What might appear as the best college party a 38-year-old could ever hope to be invited to, is really a cunning ploy to recruit the next generation of Teddy Roosevelts. Costa del Mar college fly fishing clubs have been organized at over 75 colleges nationwide, with college "pro deals," instruction sessions, conservation activities, and fishing days. The highest of the highs for any young college fly fishing club member is to attend the annual 5 Rivers Rally. Yes, a clean-up happens, and yes there are some meetings about leadership, but once you get past the brochure, everyone is there to have fun. Why can't it be fun? When I was in college I liked to have fun. If we want the next generation to give a shit about anything, we're going to have to get them hooked on the fun. The not-so-fun comes later, but they're young; let's let them enjoy it a little.





More than 200 hundred college students showed up for the 5 Rivers Rally this year at the Nantahala Outdoor Center this past October, and as I looked around the bonfire the last night, the darkened landscape was littered with beer, fly fisherman, and hope. Everything but the hope got cleaned up the next day. For the first time in a long time I felt that we as fisherman, outdoorsman, and conservationists just might be okay with who gets the baton next. As long as the hangovers don't get 'em first.





Big ups to my homies at Costa del Mar, and especially my bzzoy at Trout Unlimited. Franklin Tate all I got to say is, play on playa. Check out the program here:

The TU COSTA 5 Rivers Program  
[www.tu.org/5Rivers](http://www.tu.org/5Rivers)



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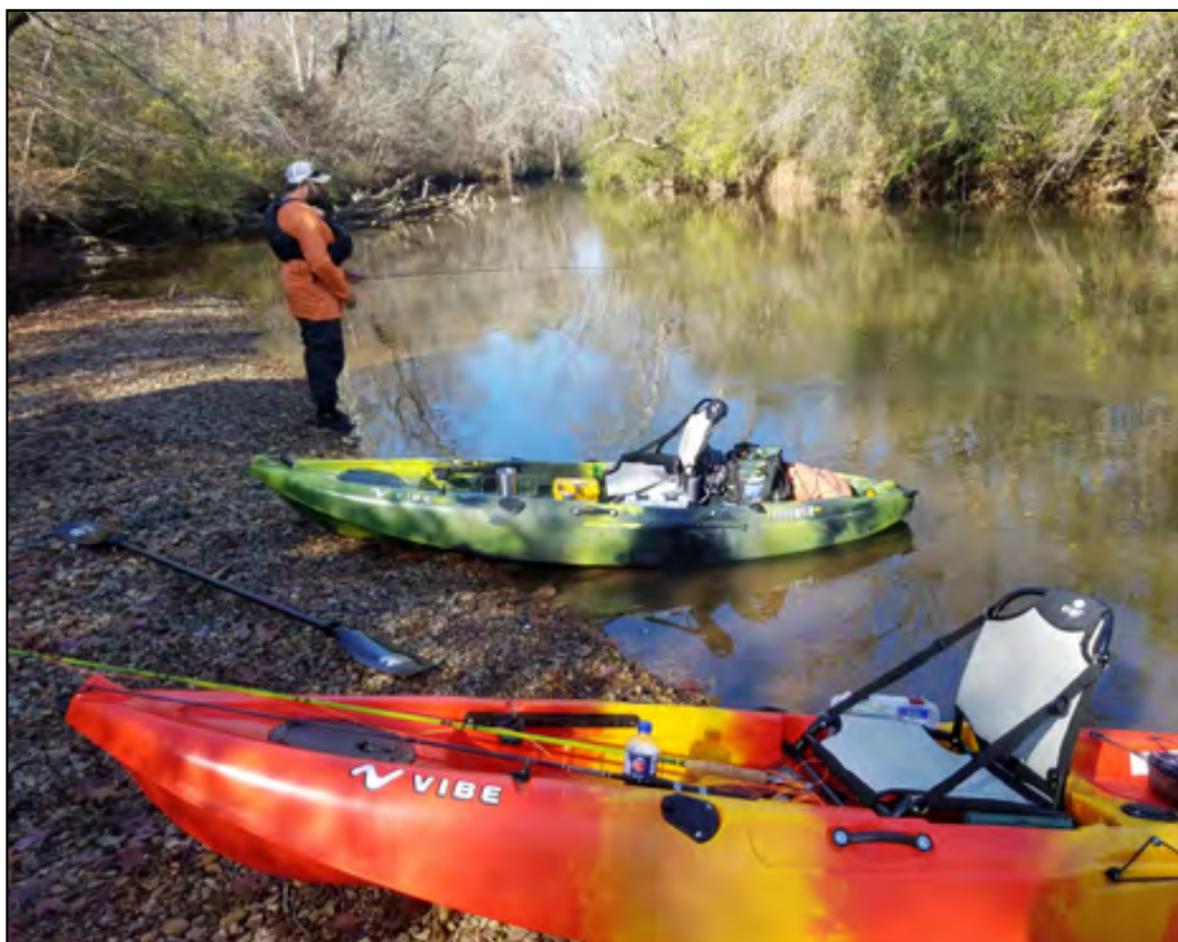
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*strategizing*

Todd West





Over the last few years, Kayaking and fly-fishing have become devious partners in crime. The trade secrets of getting to and from the forbidden city of fishtopia are almost as important as what the fish were eating that day. If you are anything like me, you will tell a total lie as to what fly you were casting but spew some profound pattern that makes perfect sense to all who inquire while sending them on the grail quest of their damn life just to find your spot.

I personally have been kayak fishing for about 11 years, doing the conventional thing and chasing whatever I can get to eat for me that day. I was about five years deep into the newfound freedom before I decided to put a fly rod in the mix of tiny boat, gear, and having to control myself with a paddle.

Sitting in a kayak with more gear than you need is not the answer to your fly fishing dreams by any means. So allow me to drag you down the rabbit hole that is kayak fly fishing and possibly help you make plenty of your own mistakes along the path to swinging bugs from a little boat.

First things first: the purpose behind chasing fish from a kayak for me was simple. I was sick of limited access to creeks and rivers around my house, and the North Georgia

area in which I reside. I'm not sure how many of you have ever tried lugging a big canoe or jon boat around on skinny water, but a full day of that and you'll be flipping your lid and ready to throat punch the nearest victim by last light.

I found the answer was a kayak. They draft super shallow, and for the most part I don't have to get out of it if I don't care to wade. The average draft depth comes in at around two to four inches, depending on the brand and model. They are very stealthy when paddled softly, so sliding in on sketchy fish becomes a simpler task versus trying to motor or pole your way into an area. There are plenty of people just using them as a ride to gain entry to spots they haven't been able to access in the past, be it distance or just too deep to wade.



## Beware

Remember that you are the motor. However far you paddle to get there, you have to paddle it back unless you get into a pedal drive-type boat, but that just creates snag points for fly line. Sometimes a long paddle to your spot makes for a short fishing window. Unfortunately, this is the price you pay for self-propelled crafts of any sort.

Room for gear is a big factor. If you pack like you are off to a weekend in Cabo with your spouse, then kayaks may not be your best option of watercraft. But if you can dial in a few boxes of flies and a few bare essentials, then you are one step in the right direction.

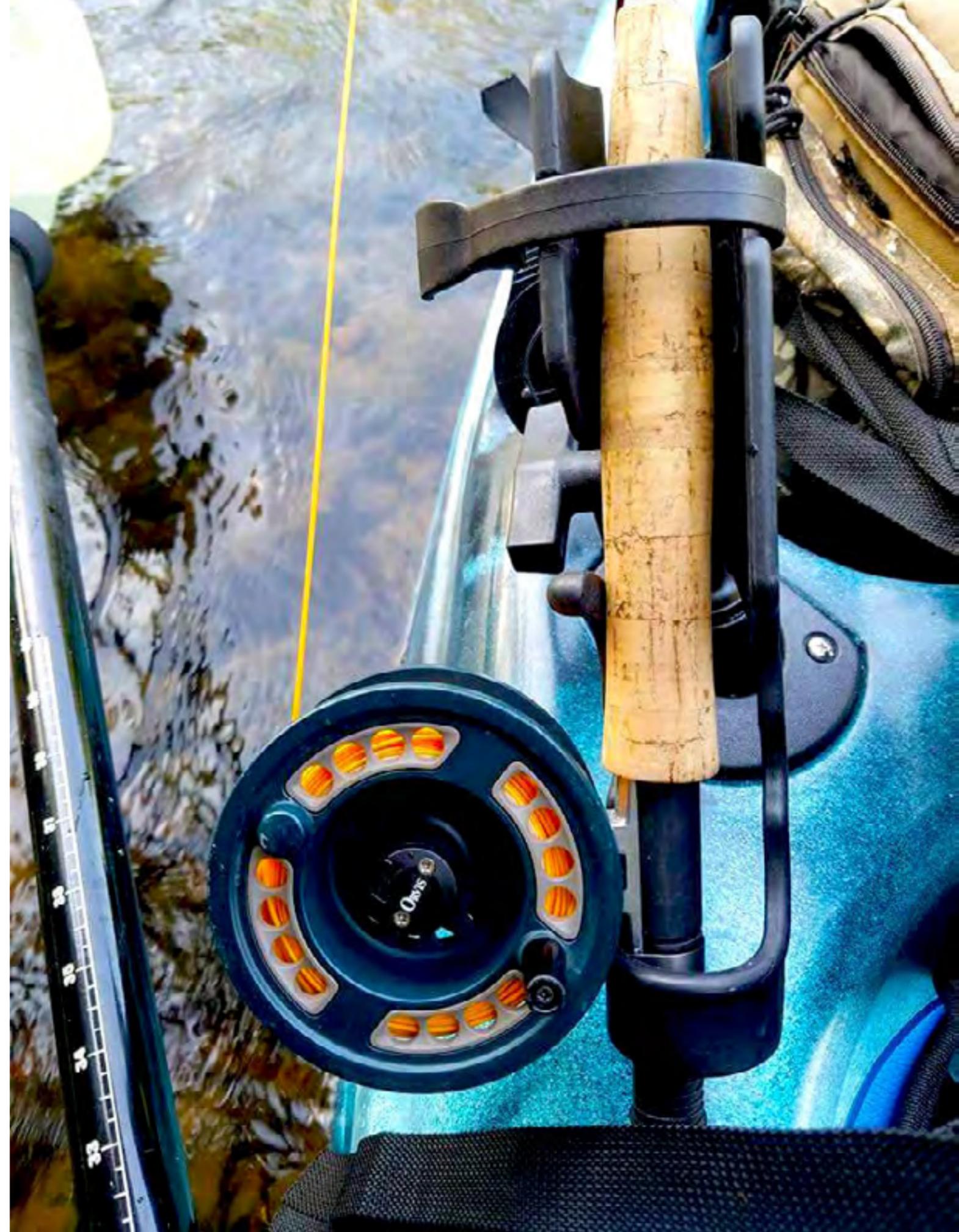
Tactic-wise, it's not much different than fishing from any other vessel other than the fact you are in control of your own direction and distance from your target. Unless you just prefer long cast or want to impress your buddies that day, there's no real need to do so from a kayak that I have yet to find. Due to the stealth and ability to paddle yourself to the desired locations, this cuts down on a ton of arm strain if you are swinging heavy weight sticks and big streamers all day.

## Finding your spot

While setting up to fish a spot or just blind casting on moving water can bring a total flood of rage and pure hate into your life at times, it's not always the hardest thing to accomplish. Using the features of the rivers or creeks you choose to fish play a key role in your mental state of love or hate at this point in the game.

Try to look for eddies or slack water behind rocks to park yourself in and sling a few casts. Keep in mind fish also seek out these places as ambush points so always fish them before you park yourself there with a big chunk of floating plastic.

A stake out pole serves as an anchor point in moving water situations. I do not recommend using regular anchors in moving water because if they aren't set up properly, you will end up in a very bad situation, possibly leaving your kayak on the bottom of the river or flopping in the current like a hound dog's ears in the wind. I personally have had to cut a few friends off of anchors in the past, so they are a no-go for me unless I'm in flat water or the ocean.



## Practice makes practice

I tend to target a ton of log jams and brush piles on the rivers I fish, so the kayak makes for a useful tool to get in close and cast more accurately in tight cover situations. Sitting in your yard in your kayak and practicing casting from a seated position is a must. It is very unnatural and you feel like a fresh baby deer for the first hour or so as you try to get your kayak legs off and running while you tangle yourself in a web of fly line and paddle (yes, I had my paddle in my lap).

I played around on small ponds and lakes for a couple weeks before trying my hand at moving water. The whole fly line death trap idea kind of creeped me out. But after a few trips to the local farm ponds and the occasional private lake I had enough confidence in casting from a seated position to give it a go. An easy way to prepare yourself for casting seated is to put your kayak in the yard and cast to targets. This will give you a better feel for what you are getting into.

## Which boat's for you?

Choosing a kayak is going to be the key to a love or hate relationship. Obviously stripping fly line out into a kayak is going to require the least amount of snag points possible. Most people are looking for an open deck platform to allow room for standing and stripping without any sort of snag points to constrict the angler. There are boats on the market also that allow standing but have a center console or some type of storage between your feet/leg area. Most of these storage options will not cause any issues with your



fly line management depending on the closure system the manufacturer uses.

Some of the boats I prefer for kayak fly fishing are very wide, stable boats with a frame-style seat. This allows for comfort and the stability you need to make a lot of movement without the feeling of “I’m going swimming today.”

These recommended brands vary from price point and manufacturer: Diablo Kayaks, Jackson Kayaks, Feel Free Kayaks, Vibe Kayaks, Old Town Kayaks, NuCanoe, and the Ascend FS12 line from Bass Pro. They all offer several models to suit the needs of the type of paddling you may be doing.

If you are paddling through boulder-infested water, do some research and make sure you are getting into a boat made from high-density materials. This will save you some heartache down the line for sure. I could ramble for days on this topic and most of you will still find things I missed or things that come into play for you that doesn’t affect me. There are too many styles out there to cover every base, so I hope this helps you find a bit of insight into the wild and wonderful rabbit hole of kayak fishing.

*Todd West is a kayakin' summamabitch. He slings plastic for Vibe Kayaks and edits all things fly for Kayak Angler Magazine. He also has the best Facebook selfie mini-van videos I have ever seen. Or will ever see. Look it up on Facebook. Awesome Sauce.*





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