

ALAMO FLY FISHERS

NEWSLETTER

Issue XVII, No. 8

August 2002

Just One More Cast



By Clay Gill
President – Alamo Fly Fishers

It seems we slid over to tropical latitudes and inherited Bermuda Triangle-like weather this summer. They say wait around a few minutes in Texas and the weather will change. All so true this year. Wow--what can we expect next? As this goes to print, we begin the hurricane season and all dread the news from Steve Brown that a large depression is brewing in the Atlantic and aircraft are on the way to determine circulation and strength. No more storms please. May they all go north and fizzle out in the cold North Atlantic harmlessly. Another twenty-inch rain could be more than we can handle. No more rain dances please. Things are just fine now.

The skills outing on the Guadalupe at Louise Hays Park in Kerrville went very well. Many learned and all had fun catching fish during casting lessons. The water was beautiful, and Jon King even brought breakfast. We had lots of mentors, and the students enjoyed casting and tried out various boats. The following week we had the expeditionary outing on the Nueces. It went very well also. We had a good crowd and did two shuttles to get everyone upriver. We will go back to the Censontli. It was the best! Maybe the next one can be a camp-out. They have everything you need, and the price is right! The fish were there also.

Now that summer wanes, I wait to see those dead calm dog-days I remember as a kid. It is when the Third Coast surf is just a blip on the sand during August and September. Twenty miles out by the rigs, it looks like a lake. You can barely discern the land swells rolling slowly west towards the beach. The blue water-as it is often referred to this time of the year moves close to the beach, replacing the green surf lines. As summer passes, the fishing just gets better and better. The fall fish runs are soon to happen.

About the time school starts, the larger mature Redfish school-up and begin their annual migration to the sea through the passes. Huge “pods” of Redfish roam in unison smashing bait and pushing big wakes. If you have never seen large fish together smashing mullet, it is a sight to behold. It can instill the true meaning of “Buck Fever”. A cast into the melee is an instant hook-up. When this happens, just forget the silent poling for lone fish with tail high, mudding in the flats. By October, certain areas always become concentrations of fish, bait, and birds. There is no mystery, you just sit and wait for the next explosion. Don’t you love it.

All the while, out on the Island, there is increased action out in the surf. It is never really slow, but moon, tides, and fall season combine to create some of the best action of the year. When you patrol on south down the beach to the “Big Shell” area, another frenzy is under way. In the “guts” of the surf, very near the beach, you find the sea-run Trout and Reds, Jack Crevalle, skipjacks, occasional Ling, Kingfish and Bonito, Spanish Mackerel, Pompano, and Sharks. They are all in competition for the smorgasbord of bait that gets pushed into the shallows to be bashed over and over again. If you are there in the waist deep water, you can literally catch a fish of a lifetime around you feet. One thing you must remember is the open ocean is a wild and crazy place. It is every man for himself, and there are no promises. This is not the swim beach! The area is called the elbow to those in the know, and action there is around your feet, including Bull sharks! You become part of the food chain, waist-deep.

Each year the spectacle repeats itself, and the very best is right around the corner now. The tough part is to decide what to do, and where to go. Don’t wait-get going and be safe out there. Take a kid along if you can. ■

August Meeting (Aug. 20)

Program

Fishing Florida and Texas with Ethan Wells

By Jay Forrest
Vice President, Alamo Fly Fishers

We continue our tour of salt water destinations this month with what promises to be a great presentation on fly fishing the Texas flats and winter fly fishing in Florida. Our speaker, Ethan Wells, began guiding in Rockport eight years ago. Two years ago Ethan began traveling to Florida to guide and fish during the winter and early spring months that are so difficult and slow on the Texas coast.

Ever since Ethan began going to Florida he has been telling me about the baby tarpon he catches, and the big ones, too – up to 150 pounds or so, and the big snook, and the big bonefish, and.... I am really looking forward to seeing his pictures and knowing more about how he is fishing for them. Ethan will also show some pictures from Rockport and share observations on fishing the Texas coast.

If you have never met Ethan, you are in for a real treat. If you have fished with Ethan, I know you will be glad to see him. His presentations are always interesting, educational, and inspiring! ■

Calendar of Events

August 2—4	--Land Cut at Jim Dodd's Place
September 28	--Red Fish Rodeo Roundup in Port O'Connor
October 25—27	--San Juan River or Upper Guadalupe
November	--No Outing
December 7	--AFF Christmas Party

August Outing

The Land Cut

By Bill Slough

We have graciously been invited to enjoy a three day weekend at Jim Dodd's cabin at the Land Cut. The trip will take place August 2nd, 3rd, and 4th. It is one of our most popular outings, giving you a chance to see the most remote area on the Texas Coast; you can only get there by boat. The fishing is usually spectacular. There is excellent fishing for speckled trout off the dock, and there are miles of shallow flats for wading. If you have any questions, call Bill Slough
(210) 826-6697. ■

Fly Fishing on the Censontli River Ranch

By Mike Richards

Club members met at Censontli Rivers Ranch, and fished the Nueces River. They used canoes and kayaks to move down the river. The fishing was done in clear, deep holes and next to brush piles.

Most of the perch (sunfish) and bass were caught on poppers and small, white clousers. Some very big fish were seen, but they were not caught. During the six-hour trip, most people caught fish, and enjoyed their time on the river. ■

For Sale

G Loomis Rods

GL3 Mega Taper, 8/9 wt., 3 peace, used very little, excellent condition – \$220

GL3, 6 wt., 2 peace, excellent condition -- \$185

Both rods – \$400

**Contact Chip Evans 830-217-4496
hairbug66@hotmail.com**

Those “Special” Fish

By Jay Forrest
Vice President – Alamo Fly Fishers

If you have been fishing for very long, you will have caught several “special” fish. If you are a beginner, take heart, you WILL catch a special fish, too.

During our July skills outing I caught a “special” fish. Not very special – just a six inch long bass. I had cast to an area where the minnows had just erupted and the first twitch was met with a small, but smashing strike and swirl. After a brief dive for cover he erupted in a head shaking double jump followed by more bulldogging. Clay yelled encouragement after the jump thinking I had a much bigger fish. A third jump rounded out the battle and I gladly released this fighter hoping it will spawn many hard-fighting offspring. It’s not often that you catch a six inch bass that makes you smile!

Thinking of that fish and having to write an article, led me to think back to my first special fish. It was BIG! Well, at least to a six year old. A 12 inch channel cat, caught in a small pond on my sixth birthday. It was easily the biggest fish of the day and the only channel cat. I still remember my mother taking it out of the fridge the next morning and its cleaned carcass only being seven inches long. I protested and asked what happened to it. “It was this long yesterday!” I protested as I held my hands about two feet apart. Reality is not always kind to special fish!

Fish are sometimes special because they are big. Sometimes, because of where they were caught, or who you were fishing with, or because it took a great cast, or like the little bass – because they show spunk and fire. There is no magic formula, but over time we all collect these fish – in vivid memories and these fish reward us and nurture us, making fishing rewarding whether we catch a fish or not.

Many of the big fish are special. They earned it by living to be unique. And they are often more difficult and as a sight fisherman, I admire that. But size alone doesn’t make a fish special – he has to do something to deserve it. Fight extra hard like the little bass.

Scream across a flat so fast your reel feels like it is about to explode. Leap like the water was fire. Or sometimes simply sip your fly as though it was the perfect meal (the perfect take).

Writing that paragraph brought back a flood of memories: The sad, round, dark, puppy-dog eyes of my first permit. My first self-guided bonefish. A 15 inch male brookie in full spawn. My first winter steelhead. Fred (a notorious five pound Deschutes rainbow at Frog Camp). A much smaller three pound female rainbow that took a stonefly cast one foot from shore and ten feet back from branches hanging only six inches above the water (one of my two or three greatest casts). The eighteen inch brown taken from under overhanging brush over an inside bend cut bank in a small, shallow stream only fifteen feet wide. The list seems endless.

Each has a place in my heart. Thirty-five years of fly fishing have given me a wealth of special fish to remember. Special fish. Special days. Special places. Special friends. They blur together to make fishing more than a pastime – more of a way of life, a tonic for the soul.

There is more to fishing than special fish and friends and places... There are the ones that got away. The ones that haunt us. And that is a whole ‘nother story! ■

NEW WORDS FOR 2002

OHNOSECOND:

That minuscule fraction of time in which you realize that you have just made a BIG mistake.

PERCUSSIVE MAINTENANCE:

The fine art of whacking an electronic device to get it to work again.

MOUSE POTATO:

The on-line, wired generation's answer to the couch potato.

THE FROG POND

By Chip Evens

The sun had barely cleared the horizon and I was already on my way down the trail that led to the back tank. I was spending a couple of weeks in Arkansas on my Grandmother's ranch, a massive stretch of land that measured some 650 acres. Through the thickest of trees meandered a small creek lined with game tracks and claw marks on the tree trunks. To me this land was infinite and spectacular. I spent each day fishing and hunting till my legs were weary and my spirit refreshed. The back tank, or pond in Arkansas lingo, was supposedly the home of the big one. I caught bass and panfish readily on a variety of lures and baits, but none as fun or productive as the tiny spring peepers that inhabited the shores of this tank.

Equipped with an ultralite Daiwa spin cast rod and reel I foraged the banks trying to catch baby frogs to feed the hungry bass that awaited my offering. One afternoon my Father and my Uncle took me to one of the first Walmarts ever built and I spotted some small frog lures attached to a card. They were made of rubber and were a near perfect match of the real thing. I could hardly wait to get to the tanks to try out my new lures.

The next morning found me on that small pond with visions of lunker bass and perch on the end of my line. The frogs were so light I could barely cast them, even with my ultralite outfit. I resorted to attaching a short piece of mono behind a larger top-water plug and then affixing the baby frog to the mono. I have no way to know for sure how many fish I caught using those frogs, but I know all six were totally destroyed by the end of my stay.

This experience provided a deep love and appreciation for the frog's ability to entice a bass to eat. I have never forgotten those fish or those frogs. Later in life when my evolutionary struggle brought me to fly fishing and fly tying, I dreamed of a frog pattern that would produce as well as those little rubber frogs did that summer in Arkansas. There are many frog flies available, but none really excited me. I tried many methods and materials to reproduce those rubber peepers, but my efforts were futile. All I could do was keep trying.

One day while fishing a Texas Hill Country river with my Dad he mentioned to me an article he had read in a magazine. The article was about a fly for the coast that would imitate a small shrimp or baitfish

on the surface. He starts describing the fly to me and the methods and materials used to create it. Then he said, "I bet you could even make it into a frog". The light bulb exploded and I could hardly wait to get to my vise. Chip's Peeper Frog was born.

The simplicity of this pattern astounds me and the effectiveness is phenomenal. I have caught many a Largemouth Bass in the short time since its creation. I have my current best bass using this fly. It was a monster of 10 pounds. I continue to enjoy fishing these small bodies of water. After all, they are where I cut my teeth on big bass and panfish. It has been over twenty years since that Arkansas summer. And, unfortunately the land is no longer at my disposal. However; I never tie on one of my frogs without reliving those days. Needless to say, I never visit a stock tank without a box full of peepers. The fly is now being produced commercially and continues to amaze me. You gotta love frogs, Bass sure do. ■

Stripers, Bluefish, and More!

By Jay Forrest

Vice President – Alamo Fly Fishers

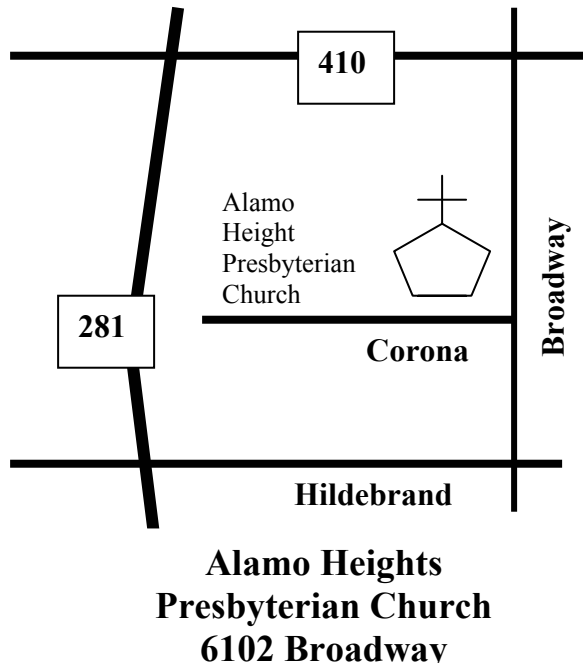
Our July meeting featured Ken Brumbaugh of Houston sharing information on fishing for stripers, bluefish, weakfish, and more on the Rhode Island and Massachusetts coast. Ken shared experience gained on almost twenty trips to fish that area. From fishing under the landing lights at Logan airport in Boston to the waterfront of Providence, to Narragansett Bay and Cape Cod, the northeastern coast offers cool weather (always appealing this time of year), cold water (ditto), and lots of BIG, hard-fighting fish.

Ken shared information on just about everything you need to know to plan a trip to that area – from where to fly in, to rods, flies, lines, leaders, and where to stay. And who to fish with, and where you can fish on your own. His photos of fish were inspirational.

I joined Ken on one of his trips to Providence and got an opportunity to experience the region first hand. I was just thankful he didn't include a photo of me with the two pound sea robin that broke my 8 weight rod! Seriously, it was a wonderful experience with an amazing variety of fish and experiences. It makes a wonderful vacation.

Thanks Ken, for a great presentation. You showed us a great destination that gets little attention down here! ■

Where to Find Us



AFF Web Site--<http://www.alamoflyfishers.org>

Regular Activities

Meetings are held the third Tuesday of every month, 7 p.m. at Alamo Heights Presbyterian Church, 6201 Broadway.

Fly tying sessions are held every Tuesday at 7 p.m., with the exception of meeting night. Bring your vise and tying gear or just come and share in the discussion.

Alamo Fly Fishers club officers

Clay Gill	President	491-0555
Jay Forrest	Vice-Pres.	490-3732
Todd Fleming	Treasurer	497-3062
Jon King	Outings	378-7414
Buddy Robichaux	Education	492-7125
Mike Richards	Newsletter	641-7268

Local Fly Shops

Tackle Box Outfitters

6330 N. New Braunfels
San Antonio, TX 78209
210-821-5807
Fax 210-821-5807
tackleboxoutfitters.com

One Shot Outdoors

18720 Stone Oak Parkway Suit 105
San Antonio, TX 78258
210-402-5344
Fax 210-402-5365
oneshotoutdoors.com

Gruene Outfitters

1629 Hunter Road
New Braunfels, TX 78130
830-625-4440

Northwest Tackle Center

6850 Bandera Road
San Antonio, TX 78238
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