



JULY NEWSLETTER
July 2017 Volume XXII: No. 7

www.wacoflyfishingclub.org

PROGRAM:
Tuesday, July 11, 2017

LOCATION:
Lake Waco Wetlands

PROGRAM:
Fly Tying and Tall Tales
About 6:00 p.m.

JULY PROGRAM

Lots of vacations this month. All of the speakers that we thought might come to Waco and present a program are, so far, unavailable. We will continue looking for a speaker and will keep you posted through email notices.

We will still get together next Tuesday and at least tie a few flies and trade a few stories. It will be much better than sitting in front of the TV wishing it was cooler.

If you have any program or outing ideas let one of the club officers know. We are always looking for quality programs and places to fish.

JUNE PROGRAM - FLY FISHING FOR EXOTICS IN SOUTH FLORIDA
TEXAS COUNCIL PRESIDENT - JIM GRAY

Jim Gray has presented several outstanding programs to our club over the years and his talk about fly fishing for exotics in South Florida scored high on the interesting scale. Urbanization has turned swamp into human habitat with an extensive system of interlocking drainage canals -

a nonpolitical draining of a real swamp. There is plenty of water available to keep the canals full which makes the fish happy.

What is most interesting is the mix of fish. Florida natives like Bass and Sunfish take advantage of the new habitat as do an increasing diversity of exotics. One species, Peacock Bass were introduced by the Florida fish and game department. The others, ranging from the most common, Mayan Cichlids, to Snakeheads were privately released mostly by aquarium enthusiasts.

Those of use familiar with the impact of introducing "exotic species" automatically cringe at hearing of this exotic introduction. Introducing "exotics" into a new habitat is usually harmful to the native species. For example, introducing "exotic" Smallmouth Bass in Guadalupe Bass habitat in Texas was a really bad idea. The Smallmouths hybridized with the Smallmouths putting the Guads at risk of being bred out of existence as a distinct species. Recovery efforts are still underway. Rio Grande Cutthroats have been hurt even more by stocked Rainbows, Browns and Brook Trout in their native range in New Mexico and Colorado.

However, the situation in South Florida seems to be unique. The canals present a new and unique habitat. The exotics are tropical species that are limited by cooler climate conditions north of South Florida. In fact, cold snaps in South Florida but a serious hurt on the exotics. Jim doesn't believe that the exotics have had much of a deleterious impact on the natives.

And, the exotics are there so you may as well catch them. They are really pretty and Jim described them as strong fighters like oversize Texas Perch with not quit.

This is also an "on foot" fishery with many miles of accessible water that can be fished from the bank. Watercraft can expand your options, but are not a necessity.

Jim provided more detailed information on fishing techniques than can be fit into a newsletter. In general, this is frequently sight fishing to spooky fish that hit hard and very fast. The most productive approach is subsurface with colorful flies that you easily see in the water.

If you find yourself traveling to Florida consider giving this fishery a try. For more information you can start at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission - myfwc.com and the Ole Florida Fly Shop - olefloridaflyshop.com

LIVING WATERS FLY FISHING

Jim Gray is a regular at the Living Waters Fly Shop in Round Rock, Texas whose proprietor and lead guide, Chris Johnson, takes every opportunity to support our club. Our June meeting gave Chris just such an opportunity. Chris gave Jim Gray a set of Loon Quickdraw Forceps to donate



to our club. Ordinarily something like those forceps would be the top prize in our fly (etc.) drawing, but Kris Kahler donated a vintage issue of Outdoor Life which took first place.

If you find yourself in need of a fly shop or a guide check out Living Waters. Support those who support us and our sport.

FLY GEEK

Our favorite Fly Geek, Matt Bennett, was also at our June meeting adding to the entertainment value of the program (it wasn't really heckling). Matt is an all round good guy who has supported our club for years. He is also a professional fly tyer and at least one of his patterns is carried by Umpqua. Matt is a Central Texas fly fisher who ties flies that our local fish really like. Do yourself a favor and try a few - another opportunity to support one of our supporters. Fly Geek Custom Flies - www.flygeek.net



FLY TYING NIGHT ON VACATION

Attendance at fly tying night has dropped off for the summer so we decided to take a vacation in July.

BOSQUE VALLEY FLY FISHING - A NEW GUIDE SERVICE

Pat Vanek has worked at being a guide for almost as long as I have know him and he is good at it. A number of our club members have successfully bid on Pat's annual donation to our Christmas Party, a guided White Bass trip. Reports from the winners have been unanimous - OUTSTANDING. For example, a few years back, Coach Menefee went along on a run with Pat up the North Bosque for Whites and reported it was one of the best fishing trips of his life. John Maddux was there and wholeheartedly agreed.

One afternoon late in the 2016 White Bass run, Pat called and sought my expertise. He was still working out the details of what was then an unofficial guide service. Pat wasn't about to go official until he had everything just right and clearly needed the benefit of my many years of fly fishing experience to get everything just right. My role was to sit in the bow of his new jet boat to provide the ballast needed to level the boat so we could blast through the shallow, very shallow, riffles of the North Bosque.

With my help we made it upstream to a section of the river that Pat had scouted and found full of aggressive Hybrids. Well its fishing and it was late in the run - Hybrids had become scarce. Even so, Pat put me on one, my first ever. Hybrids are a cross between White Bass and Stripers but fight like they have some Redfish in them. I could tell Pat was worried that I won't land the fish, but after a long battle Pat was able to grab it for me at the bank, a guide thing.

If you or anybody you know wants in on the secrets of fly fishing the Brazos or the Bosque's call Pat. You will catch fish and learn from the experience.

Bob Hanley

FROM PAT:

Hey folks, well after some time, years in fact, I've finally started officially guiding fly fishers on the rivers around central Texas. Currently I am guiding trips for largemouth (and whatever else you may want to cast at) full and half days on the Brazos above Waco. See Living Waters Fly Fishing Facebook page for some really cool shots of a recent trip with Chris Johnson and Nathan Brown (Special thanks to Chris for his help, advice and encouragement along the way, as well as Nathan Brown of Trailhead Design for the killer logo design). There are some big bass swimming in the Brazos and they hate poppers! I also guide for white bass in the spring on our area rivers for half days only. When water is available, full day floats on the Middle Bosque for one (canoe trip only) are available.

Rates for the Brazos are \$450.00 for a full day and \$350.00 for a half day, one or two people (jet boat trips). White bass trips in the spring are half day only, \$325.00 for one or two people. Full day canoe floats on the Brazos or Middle Bosque are \$450.00 (one person only). For club members only, If you book a trip (to include next year's spring white bass run) by October 31, 2017, I'll take \$25.00 of the rate.

If you'd like more information, please feel free to contact me! Thanks for all the support and well wishes ya'll have given over the years.

Pat Vanek

Bosque Valley Fly Fishing



Special Note: Ask Pat about that foam popper in his logo.

SOME HAVE "LAID ASIDE BUSINESS AND GONE A'FISHING"

MIDDLE BOSQUE AT 3047

One Sunday morning early in June, Todd Nafe's *Outdoors* column in the Waco Tribune Herald was basically a trip report. Todd had recently made a few fishing trips, catching his own bait (sorta like tying your own flies) and eventually hooking a "whopping" Bass that quickly tangled him on something under the water. Todd "eased the tension and allowed the fish to swim free." Unfortunately, that Bass still proved the theme of the column - "odds are that big fish will somehow manage to get away." The Bass managed to saw through Todd's line on the rough edge of the submerged roadbed where Todd was fishing.

Well, the night before that column I had also eased tension so a whopper could swim free. I had been pulling Perch out of a deep pool for quite a while and had given up catching any Bass. The one Bass I had hooked an hour or so earlier "somehow" untied my knot thereby managing "to get away." More evidence for Todd's axiom. Not that big a deal, the Perch were all pretty and fought like only Perch do.

It was about time to call it a night and go home to cook a nice rib eye that was waiting for me along with a nice bottle of cab. Of course, even with the temptation of a steak I still felt the need to make a few more casts with a fresh fly. I had gone through several Llano bugs (including the one that thieving Bass had taken), a woolly bugger and a small version of Redfish crack. Before leaving it seemed like a good idea to try a mink zonker fly.

As soon as that fly hit the water there was one of those explosive takes that only a Bass can make. I was using a soft four weight which gave the Bass an early advantage. It used the advantage to wrap my leader around some dead brush near the back of the pool. At first I was



able to move the fish and the brush a little leading me to think I might land a fish in a tree. When the snag caught on something I thought I had lost the fish, but eased tension just to be sure. I was actually surprised when fish swam free. That tension easing thing doesn't always work.

Fortunately, there was no submerged roadbed and I landed the fish. All in all I was pretty proud of myself for having the expertise to land that fish.

All of the commotion killed that pool, but that mink zonker produced at least two more Bass and a few more Perch on the wade back to the bridge. Presentation is usually more important than pattern, but sometimes they seem to want a particular fly.

I was awash in hubris that night which made the rib eye and wine seem like a proper reward for some outstanding angling on my part. But, we all know from Shakespeare that hubris is not a good thing. Fortunately Todd's column cured me. Not only did he know about the easing tension thing, he can throw a cast net. If I had to rely on my ability to use a cast net I would never catch a fish. Fly tying and fly casting are simple in comparison.

GO FISHING, CATCH FISH, TAKE PHOTOGRAPH AND EMAIL IT FOR THE NEWSLETTER

Most of us take photographs during our fishing trips particularly of the big one that didn't get away or one that is particularly colorful or special for whatever reason. Digital cameras and those cell phone cameras that you younger anglers use make it easy.

Emailing me a copy for the newsletter is one option if you don't have time to write up a trip report.

You will also help diversify our newsletter. It has been many months with only my trip reports.

CLUB T-SHIRTS

We are ready to order T-Shirts imprinted with our club logo. We don't want to drain the treasury (Treasurer John Maddux would not let us do that) so we are going with prepaid orders. The shirts are quality cotton or the new girly stuff, in a range of colors. There are even long sleeve shirts available. We will have details at the meeting so come prepared to shop.

OFFICERS FOR 2017

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