



# AUSTIN FLY FISHERS

September 2020  
Volume 22, Issue

Jim Gray hides in the brush while patiently stalking carp on the San Gabriel river. Check out his 6 tips for catching carp and buffalo on pages 4 & 5



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# President's Message by David Bush

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During a normal year, September is the month when we'd be planning a sizable club outing to South Padre Island. With the coronavirus putting a damper on those group outing plans, that's not to say you shouldn't plan your own trip to enjoy fishing the Lower Laguna Madre and walk the beautiful beaches of South Padre Island.

This summer I was listening to a popular salt-water fishing podcast to pass the time while working on an outdoor project. The Florida-based podcast host was interviewing a long-time guide and well-known television fishing show personality who also calls Florida home. Eventually the discussion turned to fishing for redfish, and the host asked his guest where his favorite place was to target them. Without hesitation, the Florida guide/TV host said that, by far, his preferred location was the Lower Laguna Madre near South Padre Island. Never one to be at a loss for words, the host was momentarily speechless since he was almost certainly expecting him to name a Florida destination or perhaps Louisiana. The guide/TV host went on to explain that the miles and miles of shallow grassy flats covered with crystal clear water were unparalleled anywhere in the United States. Coupling that with the relatively low fishing pressure and the abundance of redfish made South Padre an easy choice.

I'm getting the impression that the word about the pristine waters of the Lower Laguna Madre and the local redfish population is gaining traction outside of Texas. Last September while I was spending some time at South Padre Island, I got up early and headed out to the small marina where I was keeping my boat. Upon my arrival, I discovered the marina was overrun with about a dozen very impressive boats and buzzing with lots of commotion. Little did I know the Elite Redfish Series Championship Tournament was about to get started, and my boat was moored right in the middle of the action. I quickly prepared my boat and beat the tourney participants to the bay, but decided to target other species for a couple of days to stay out of the prime redfish waters.

On the last day of the tournament I happened to return to the marina shortly before the final weigh-in. Out of curiosity, I joined the crowd near the stage to hear what these top redfish fishermen had to say about their Lower Laguna Madre experience. While displaying their impressive catches, the elite teams had nothing but great things to say about the fishery even if a couple of them had a difficult time finding a limit of slot redfish. Redfish can be like that so it was nice to see that even the best fishermen have tough days occasionally. In any case, I found it interesting that South Padre Island was selected for their Championship Tournament. I can't help but think it's

for the same reason the Florida guide/TV host named it his favorite destination to hunt redfish.

South Padre Island is a great destination to get away with the family if you're looking for a drivable and relaxing beach vacation. Autumn offers cooler temperatures, minimal visitors, excellent fishing, and off-season lodging rates. The area offers excellent fishing by wading, kayaking, or boating, and also offers some very good beach and jetty fishing in the fall. Being a resort town, there are many excellent restaurants and a few interesting activities on the island for those who don't fish (although they've most likely adjusted operations due to coronavirus). Cameron County is reporting very few active coronavirus cases on the island which is encouraging if you decide to go.

My request for a Conservation Officer has gained some traction. Thanks to Juan Sheppard who is willing to co-lead our conservation efforts if another person is able to step up and share the duties. If you would like to co-lead our conservation efforts with Juan, please get in touch with me or Juan. Thanks!

Once again, we will be broadcasting our monthly meeting live on Facebook which can also be viewed at a later time. To participate, go to our Facebook Page at [www.facebook.com/atxflyfishers/](https://www.facebook.com/atxflyfishers/) at 7:00 pm on Thursday, September 17, to join live. Alternatively, if you are a member of the Austin Fly Fishers Facebook Private Group, go to [www.facebook.com/groups/22082405715/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/22082405715/) at the same time. If possible, I encourage you to join the meeting in real time so you have the opportunity to ask questions of our speakers. We will be going live a bit before 7:00, so feel free to drop in a little early to make sure you're all set up to join in.

Until next month, be safe...

Dave

## Financial Report

by Jim Robinson

8/1/2020 to 8/31/2020

<b>Begin Bal. Checking</b>	<b>\$17,929.35</b>
<b>Income:</b>	
Total Income	\$00.00
<b>Disbursements</b>	
Total Disbursements	\$00.00
<b>Net</b>	<b>\$00.00</b>
Unencumbered:	\$10,058.00
Encumbered Funds:	
Casting for Recovery	\$2,365.52
SKIFF	\$5,505.83
<b>Ending Bal-Checking</b>	<b>\$17,929.35</b>

# September Speaker –Jim Gray by Scott Kerrigan

**Online Event with**

**Jim Gray**

**Fly Fishing from a float tube**

Thursday September 17 7:00 pm

[www.facebook.com/atxflyfishers/](http://www.facebook.com/atxflyfishers/)

Our September speaker will be Jim Gray. Jim has 30 years of fly fishing experience, the last 20 based in Austin. He is a passionate angler, fly tyer, rod builder and conservationist. Jim, a past AFF club president, is a frequent guest speaker at fly fishing clubs Texas, Louisiana and Florida. This will be the 7th presentation that Jim has given to the Austin Fly Fishers.

Jim's presentation will cover types of float tubes, accessories, places you can fish, tactics for targeting bass and carp from a float tube and how you can customize your rig.

"I spoken to the club about fishing in England and Florida, about fishing the Colorado and the Llano, about fishing for carp and exotics. I'm always looking for something different to share, and I think I've found something in float tube fly fishing that will be interesting to many club members. Float tube fishing fills a niche between wading and kayaking, and is budget friendly."

If you have never consider a float tube, or you haven't put yours in the water for years, here's a chance to see just how much fun this type of fishing can be.



# Six Tips for Stalking Carp and Buffalo by Jim Gray

The popularity of fishing for carp on the fly has exploded over the last few years, and now there is no shortage of anglers searching the shallows for a shot at a big carp. You might call me an “early adopter” because for the past 15 years I’ve been targeting carp and buffalo in our local streams and rivers. Over these years, I’ve learned a lot about catching carp and developed strategies that have helped me consistently catch carp and occasionally catch a buffalo.

Like most of you, I have had good success catching guads, perch, largemouth and smallmouth bass by searching our local waters for structure that will likely hold fish and by blind casting to those areas. By casting a well-chosen fly to the right spot and retrieving my line the instant it hits the water, I have been regularly rewarded with a nice fish. These same tactics that work so well for most freshwater fish will not bring success when targeting carp because you will be sight-casting to a very nervous prey. Needless to say, fly fishing for carp can be terribly frustrating. However, these fish, when feeding, will generally eat a well-presented fly.....if you don’t spook them first; and accomplishing this feat is usually easier said than done. Based on my experience, I’ve put together six tips for stalking carp and buffalo that should help you increase your odds.

## 1. Fish upstream and stay out of the water

If you fish upstream and there is flow, the noise of you coming will be lessened, and you will most often find fish facing upstream, making it less likely that they will see you. Of course this isn’t always an option. My two favorite stretches of carp water are only accessible from upstream. Regardless of my approach, I always try and stay out of the water. Sound travels faster and further underwater. When you are crunching though gravel, you are letting every fish in the pool know that you are coming for them. It is important to note that your success rate drops dramatically when you are in the water. Again, sometimes you don’t have a choice. When faced with a downstream wade, in the water, I work very slowly and try to keep any kind of a disturbance to a minimum.

## 2. Plan your approach

When I’m fishing a stretch of water, I spend a lot of time planning how I will get into position to cast to the next fish. I may be looking 30 to 50 yards ahead and



## Stalking Carp and Buffalo cont.

thinking about the path I'm going to take to get into a spot where I can make a good cast without being seen. If you can get into position without fish knowing you are there, the likelihood of finding a fish that will eat increases dramatically. Again, take your time and go slowly.

### 3. Keep your profile low and use cover

Carp vision is monocular, which means they lack depth perception but have a very wide field of vision and see movement very well. It's very hard to cast to a fish that is close to you without spooking it. I find the best option is to find some cover to cast from. I often cast from a kneeling position and use shoreline structures to hide behind. Even a clump of tall grass can break up your profile.

### 4. Wear colors that help you blend in

Carp have a highly developed sense of color vision and see a broader spectrum of light than humans. Choose clothing that doesn't stand out. Camo may be your best option.

### 5. Don't cast to carp that are cruising

One of the biggest mistakes I see novice carpers make is continuing to cast at a fish that has become nervous and is moving slowly away. Casting to a fish like this will ensure that you won't get a second chance. Carp are very wary and if they sense something isn't right, they will stop feeding. Usually before too long, they will resume feeding. If you just let the fish settle and you will have another opportunity.

### 6. Rest the water if the fish stop feeding

I think the biggest key to my success with both carp and buffalo is that I spend a lot of time watching, and make very few casts. It's not uncommon for me to walk up to a spot where I see fish and then settle into a hiding place where I can observe what the fish are doing. I'll wait for the best opportunity to make a good cast to a feeding fish. I'll often sit quietly for 15 minutes or more before I make my first cast. Carp fishing isn't about numbers. For me, the objective is one fish per outing. With that in mind, I allow myself to be patient and wait for the right fish.

If you follow these six suggestions, you should greatly improve your chances of hooking up a carp. Even if you aren't fishing for carp, these tips are good practices to use to keep from spooking your target.



# SKIFF Program by Bob Maindelle

## Dear SKIFF Friends, 12 August 2020 (8th Trip of the 2020 Season)

**WHO I FISHED WITH:** On Wednesday, August 12th, I conducted the season's 8th Soldiers' Kids Involved in Fishing Fun (SKIFF) program trip with Victoria (age 8) and Derrick (age 6) Rosado, accompanied by their mother, Valerie Gonzalez. Neither child had ever been on a boat, nor landed a fish before this evening.

U.S. Army Specialist Christian Rosado is currently deployed to Poland. Shortly after his return, he will leave once again for training at Fort Irwin, California.

**HOW WE FISHED:** Just as the last hour (which is typically the hottest and brightest) of a summer morning trip is often the least productive, so the first hour (also typically the hottest and brightest) of a summer evening trip is often the least productive.

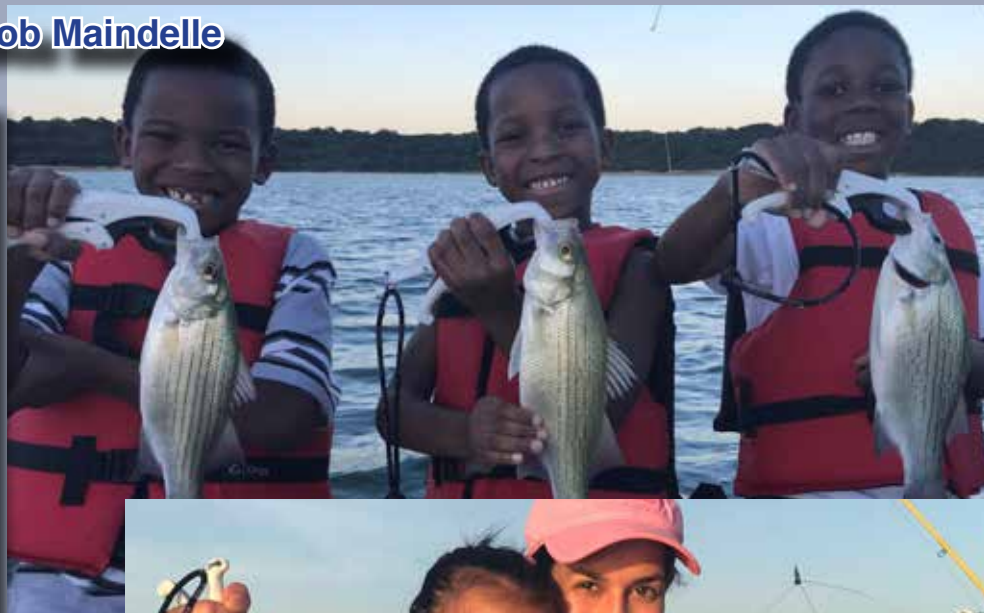
Understanding this, we focused on fishing for sunfish up shallow on a (shaded) west shoreline until around 6:45PM, when I felt the first of the evening's white bass feed would begin in open water.

Derrick took a long time to warm up to the idea of fishing. While Victoria jumped right in there and landed sunfish after sunfish, including longears, bluegill, redears, and greens, Derrick landed his first and then retreated to the safety of mom as his sister amassed a handsome catch of 30 fish.

By around the 1 hour mark, the novelty of sunfishing had begun to wear thin, and Victoria expressed an interest in doing something different.

We began pursuing white bass with downriggers in open water and this kept the kids' attention right up until the close of our trip at sunset. We added 29 white bass to the 31 sunfish they'd landed, for a total of 60 fish for the night.

We caught fish equally well on silver/white #12 Pets and silver/yellow #13



Pets. We set the 'rigger balls at ~22' and never moved them. We landed singles, doubles, and one triple (way to go Derrick!!).

**TALLY:** 60 fish caught and released

## 19 August 2020 (9th Trip of the 2020 Season)

**WHO I FISHED WITH:** On Wednesday, August 19th, I conducted the season's 9th Soldiers' Kids Involved in Fishing Fun (SKIFF) program trip with three young men from Killeen -- 7-year-old Marcus Grady, 7-year-old Isaiah Davis, and 6-year-old Elijah Davis.

Their step-father, U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Sylvester Grady is currently away from Ft. Hood, serving at Fort Benning, Georgia. He has been in the military for over 20 years.

**HOW WE FISHED:** Since the boys were young, and none of the three of them had ever fished before, we kept it very basic this evening.

Since we were still under the influence of Monday's cold front passage, I suspected the white bass would be catchable, but would still require more effort

than during more ideal conditions, so, I save the white bass effort for just a short part of our time at the end of the trip as the sun was setting.

Prior to that, we hit two areas up shallow for sunfish, where the boys were able to hook and land 40 sunfish, including longear, bluegill, and green sunfish. We used long rods, balsa floats, and small hooks and split shot to present small live baits to these fish in under 4 feet of water.

Around 7:15P, the sun sank below a bank of grey clouds in the western sky, thus immediately dimming the ambient light level and making it cooler to the point of being pleasant, given the low humidity which the cold front brought with it.

From that point forward we began downrigging with two sets of 3-armed umbrella rigs. Each boy got to land 3 white bass over the course of the next hour. By about 8:15, the boys were ready to move on to supper. Hence, we finished up the trip with 49 fish caught and released.

**TALLY:** 49 fish caught and released

# AFF Outings by Juan Shepperd

Happy September, Everyone!

Hope this newsletter finds you all safe and enjoying the outdoors. This is my favorite time of the year. September 1 brings dove season (first one in the bag), football, cooler weather, and a great time to be outside. For fisherman in Texas's waterways, beautiful backcountry, and road-side scenes of red sumac, little bluestem and other native grasses starting to yellow and fade, indicating that Fall is right around the corner.

September is a busy month, from an Austin Fly Fishing perspective. Several of you will make it to South Padre Island. I won't make it this year but I look forward to your fishing reports. If you missed it, wonderful newsletter last month by Nils Pearson with Austin Orr and Dave Bush sharing open waters' experiences and advice. Worth a reread. Fall is a great time to visit and fish the Texas Coast. The Texas Women Fly Fishers fished last weekend and caught a lot of fish. Someone in the group even had an inshore grand slam earlier this month on a separate trip. Houston Fly Fishers had a successful trip too to the Coast. If you haven't fished the Texas Coast in the Fall, I encourage it. Port O'Connor, Rockport and Port Aransas are closer than South Padre, if you are concerned about distance. Fortunately, every Texas River eventually ends up in the Gulf of Mexico. The fishing is good, up and down the coast.

I will leave in September for the Mountains. The trip I organized to Chama, New Mexico happens Oct 1 - Oct 5. Got a solid group going. Most people are leaving early and spending a few days in New Mexico on their own. I checked in with the Outfitter by phone last week. Imagine my surprise when he told me it snowed in Chama over Labor Day. That's exciting. Brown trout should be hungry. Cold snap should bring great Fall color. I'll share details about the trip when I return.

October also brings Oktoberfish 2020, hosted by the Fredericksburg Fly Fishers from October 16-18. It's always a lot of fun. I've attended it when it was on the Llano River. This year's event is at a new location and they've traded in the Llano for the Pedernales River. See <https://www.fredericksburgflyfishers.com/oktoberfish> for registration and details.

In November, for those of you that want some Fall color without going too far, consider fishing Oklahoma. I will fly fish the Lower Mountain Fork River outside Broken Bow, Oklahoma from Nov 5 - 8, 2020. The Texas Women Fly Fishers will be there that same weekend. The San Gabriel Fly Fishers made the trip last November. I've fished the area once years ago. It's not far from Texas, so it's a relatively easy drive. Accommodations are plentiful. There is a state campground, plenty of log homes (I've rented a cabin for me and my family), and other lodging (motels, hotels, etc.) available. Chris Johnson at Living Waters guided here for years. He is always a great resource. Next time you are in Living Waters, pick his brain on the Lower Mountain Fork River. The Club has talked about going to Broken Bow, OK for years. I understand Covid has disrupted travel plans. If you are comfortable traveling a few hours North of Dallas, you won't be disappointed in the fishing. Circle that weekend and let me know if you want to join.

Last, if you haven't fished this year, I encourage you to get out. The brutal hot weather is behind us. Get out and enjoy the water. Be safe and responsible. If and when you do get outdoors, I think you'll be reminded a couple of hours on the water (and outside) does a body good.



# Club Sponsors

The following individuals who made presentations to our club in 2017/2019. Please follow the links to get more information on the services they provide. You won't be disappointed.

**Marcus Rodriquez** – <http://livingwatersflyfishing.com/> Central Texas Guide

**Capt. Billy Trimble** – <http://trimbleflyfishing.com/> Fly Fishing Rockport/Texas Coastal Bend

**Chris Johnson** – <http://livingwatersflyfishing.com/> Living Waters Fly Shop and Central Texas Guide

**Pat Dorsey** – <http://www.bluequillangler.com/> Fly Fishing Colorado

**Capt. Scott Hamilton** – <http://www.flyfishingextremes.com/> Fly Fishing Florida's Atlantic Coast

**Capt. Eric Glass** – <http://www.captainericglass.com/> Fly Fishing South Padre Island

**Kevin Stubbs** – <http://www.expedition-outfitters.net/> Fly Fishing the Devils River

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**Capt. Steve Soulé** – <http://www.theshallowist.com/index.asp> Fly Fishing Galveston

**Jeff Davis** – <http://allwaterguides.com/jeff-davis/> Fly Fishig the lower Colorado River

**Jud Cole** – <http://centraltexasflyfishing.com/> Central Texas and Colorado

**Capt. Rus Schwausch** – <http://www.epicanglingadventure.com/> Fly Fishing Southwest Alaska

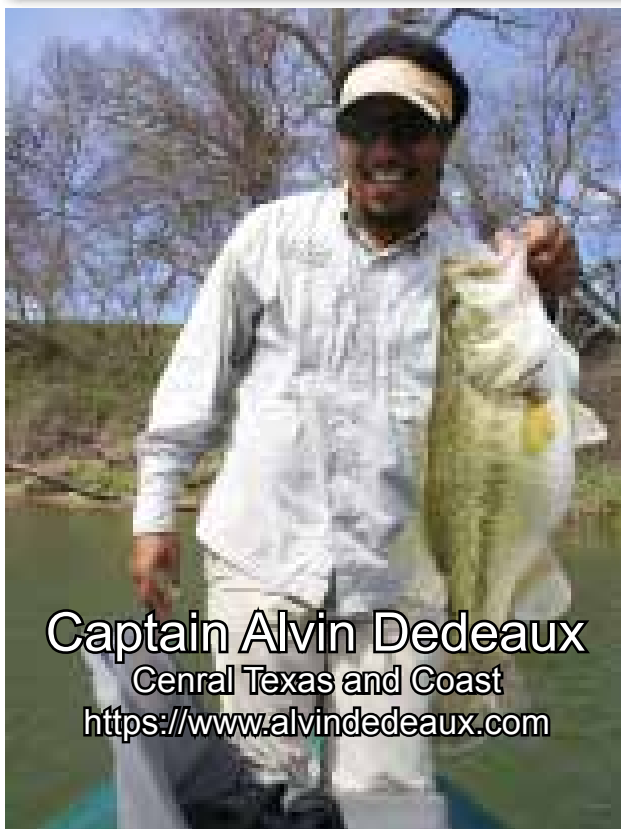
**Nick Streit** – <https://taosflyshop.com/flyguide/main> New Mexico and Southern Colorado

**Capt. Randy and Truette Cawfield** – <http://www.lagunamadre.net/styled-33/index.html>

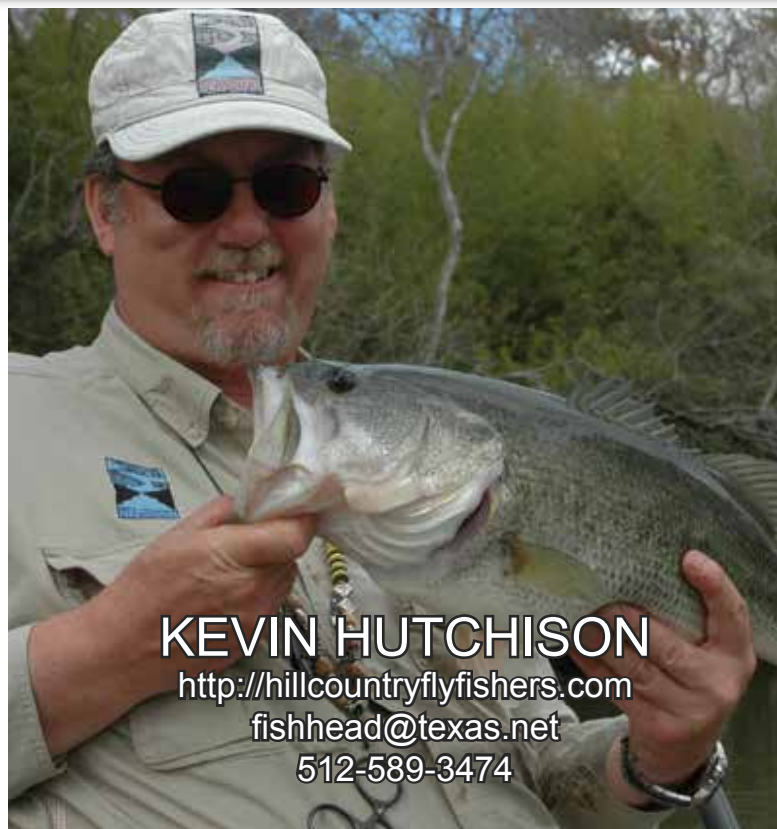
Lower Laguna Madre

**Pat Vanek** – [BousqueValleyFlyFishing@gmail.com](mailto:BousqueValleyFlyFishing@gmail.com) Rivers of Central TX

**Capt. Alvin Dedeaux** – <https://www.alvindedeaux.com> Central Texas and Texas Coast



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**Captain Eric Glass**

South Padre Island, Texas  
<http://www.captainericglass.com>

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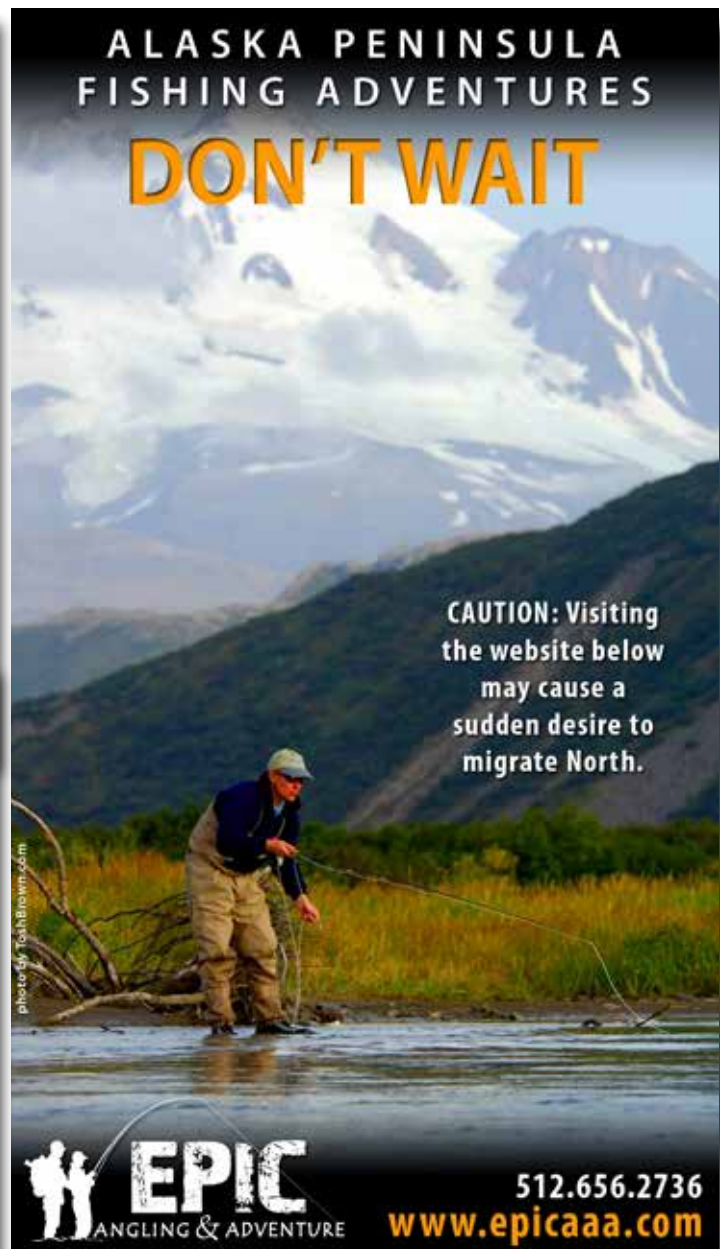
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