



AUSTIN FLY FISHERS

April 2021
Volume 23, Issue 4



Jayden Maness with largest fish caught on SKIFF trip, article on Page 4



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President's Message by David Bush

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Texas Parks and Wildlife has made their first adjustment to size and bag limits due to the winter storm. The Upper and Lower Laguna Madre daily limit for Spotted Seatrout has been reduced from five to three fish between 17 and 23 inches. The emergency change went into effect April 1 and will run for 120 days with the possibility of a 60 day extension if warranted. While most fly fishers don't necessarily keep a limit of specks, this is an indication that the fishery sustained significant damage from the cold weather and needs time and protection to recover. TPWD is continuing to survey the fish populations across all Texas bay systems and, depending on the results, may need to take further action.

For anyone interested to learn more about the impact of the storm on the state's fisheries as well as other wildlife, you may want to attend the Texas Master Naturalist webinar starting at noon on Tuesday, April 13. More information is available at <https://txmn.tamu.edu/tmntuesdays/#april>. Note that preregistration is required to attend the event, and a link to do so is on the same page. Past AFF VP Dakus Geeslin will be presenting on behalf of the Coastal Fisheries Division. If you are not able to attend in real-time, it appears that the presentations will be available for later viewing on YouTube.

The effects of the pandemic during 2020 includes one that is close to those of us who are active fly fishers. Marketing research firm Ipsos estimates that there were almost 11 million new or reactivated anglers during the year as people sought socially distanced activities. Considering there were approximately 14.6 million active anglers previously, that's impressive growth for the sport. Ninety percent of the new or reactivated anglers intend to continue fishing in the future, and there is a

significant impact from all of those new anglers getting started or restarted.

Anyone who has tried shopping for fishing gear during the past year may have discovered that inventories are very low, especially of the more desirable items. I have heard that the major equipment manufacturers do not expect to catch up on their orders until late 2022 based on their projections because demand has doubled or even tripled in some cases.

One other aspect of all the new anglers is fishing pressure on limited resources. Fortunately Texas is blessed with a lot of water to fish, but unique fisheries like the Guadalupe River tailwater below Canyon Lake saw unprecedented demand for lease access this past trout season. The flip side of all of the increased pressure is that the number of fishing licenses sold by TPWD has increased significantly. The good news is that all of those incremental funds go directly to TPWD and may enable them to expand or accelerate investments in the state's outdoor resources. That would be nice to see and is perhaps one of the rare silver linings of the pandemic.

Financial Report

by Jim Robinson

3/1/2021 to 3/31/2021

Begin Bal. Checking	\$20,620.24
Income:	
Total Income	\$00.00
Disbursements	
Total Disbursements	\$00.00
Net	\$00.00
Unencumbered:	\$12,943.89
Encumbered Funds:	
Casting for Recovery	\$2,365.52
SKIFF	\$5,310.83
Ending Bal-Checking	\$20,620.24

April Speaker – Tim Birdsong

Thursday, April 15 at 7:00 pm

www.facebook.com/atxflyfishers/

Presentation Title: Three decades of concerted efforts to conserve the State Fish of Texas (1991–2021): Reflecting on strategies, outcomes, lessons learned, and future directions

Presentation Description: Guadalupe Bass *Micropterus treculii* are endemic to rivers of central Texas, where populations are threatened with local extirpation from habitat degradation, flow alteration, and hybridization with non-native Smallmouth Bass *Micropterus dolomieu*. These threats are enormously challenging to address, but since 1991, cooperators have restored or conserved Guadalupe Bass populations in 14 rivers. This was accomplished through conservation stocking of over 2.4 million genetically pure Guadalupe Bass, implementation of nearly 50 habitat restoration or preservation projects, and watershed-scale management of riparian invasive plants in eight watersheds.

Restoration of Guadalupe Bass populations is underway in another six rivers, while status assessments are planned for another eight rivers during 2021. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department currently manages 23 public river access areas that offer angling opportunities for Guadalupe Bass, which have served as

focal points for engagement of fly fishing clubs, local conservation non-profits, and communities in efforts to restore and preserve Guadalupe Bass and their habitats. These efforts have been guided by a range-wide conservation plan established in 1991 and updated in 2017. With the initiative celebrating its 30th anniversary, this presentation will reflect on strategies, outcomes, lessons-learned, and the importance of staying focused on strategic goals while remaining flexible, adaptive, and responsive to opportunities.

Bio: Tim Birdsong has over 16 years of experience as a fisheries biologist with Texas parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Since 2008, Tim has coordinated efforts by TPWD to conserve Texas' 191 species of native freshwater fish and their habitats. He also manages several programs designed to enhance river fishing opportunities in the state, such as the Guadalupe Bass Restoration Initiative, River Access and Conservation Areas Program, Texas Conservation License Plate, and Conserving Texas Rivers Fund. Since joining TPWD, Tim and cooperators have restored over 10,000 acres of fish habitats, controlled invasive riparian plants along more than 400 miles

of Texas rivers, preserved more than 30,000 acres of focal watersheds through conservation easements, established more than 120 river fishing access sites, and conserved Guadalupe Bass (state fish of Texas) in 14 rivers.

Tim holds a B.S. in Biology from Southeastern Oklahoma State University and a M.S. in Fisheries from Louisiana State University. He also holds a Certificate in Nonprofit Management from the University of Texas at Austin, completed the Texas Governor's Center Senior Leadership Development Program, and was recently selected as a fellow of the National Conservation Leadership Institute.



SKIFF Program by Bob Maindelle

Dear Friends of S.K.I.F.F.,

After a long, COVID-impacted rough patch, I had the opportunity to guide two young men to success on a white bass fishing trip on Stillhouse Hollow on March 20th, the last day of our local school district's spring break week.)

On that morning I welcomed the Maness brothers aboard. Jayden, age 9, and Elijah, age 8, are the sons of U.S. Army Sergeant First Class Jamal Maness and his wife, Nicole (who is herself a veteran).

SFC Maness has been in the military for 11 years and serves as the acting First Sergeant in an aviation maintenance unit. His unit is undergoing intensive field time at Fort Hood in preparation for a rotation

to Germany by year's end. In such cases, even though soldiers are training at Fort Hood, they can be away "in the field" and separated from their families for weeks at a time.

The boys had limited prior experience in fishing saltwater down in Florida prior to this trip, but, they were both enthusiastic and willing to listen.

Given their age and experience, I tried to "mix it up" the best I could given the weather conditions and fish mood. We alternated back and forth between flat-line trolling and vertical jigging with 3/4 oz. white Hazy Eye Slabs.

The flat-lining gave us a steady feed of fish from start to finish and

allowed me to slowly, effectively sweep large areas of bottom with side-imaging. When I spotted what I thought would be a "can't miss" opportunity for white bass, based on school size and location, we brought in the trolling rods, quickly switched over to slabs and used a slow-smoking tactic in combination with Garmin LiveScope to add fish to our tally more quickly than the flat-lining allowed for.

In this way, we put a total of 34 fish in the boat in 3.5 hours, including 32 white bass up to 14.25", and 2 largemouth bass, one for each boy.

Thank you for the part you played in making this trip a reality for the boys and their parents!



Elijah (8) and Jayden (9), were treated to a SKIFF trip, free of charge, as they face separation from their father during train-ups in advance of his unit's months-long rotation to Germany.

Bayou Goldmine by Juan Shepperd

I don't sing. I listen. Let me share what the pros say.
The Mississippi Delta
Was shining like a national guitar
I am following the river
Down the highway
Through the cradle of the Civil War
-Graceland by Paul Simon

An' I can remember the Fourth o' July
Runnin' through the backwood bay
I can still hear my old hound dog barkin'
Chasin' down a hoodoo there
Chasin' down a hoodoo there
Born on the bayou
Born on the bayou
Born on the bayou
Lord, Lord
Wish I were back on the bayou
Rollin' with some Cajun Queen
Wish that I were a fast freight train
A-just a-choogling on down to New Orleans
Born on the bayou
Born on the bayou
Born on the bayou
Do it, do it, do it, do it
-Born on the Bayou by Creedence Clearwater Revival

During Covid, Saturday mornings at my house look something like this: My wife, kids and I wake, go sit on the sofa, and watch a home improvement show my wife likes. We all like it, really. When my wife suggested we drive East over Spring Break and visit the small town in Mississippi where the show is filmed, I said, "Sure. Could we please overnight 2 nights in New Orleans?"

I love New Orleans. I love the history. The culture. The food. Two years ago, my 11 year old (definite foodie!) and I went and ate at a few James Beard award restaurants. My son also discovered other neat things. Like Café du Monde. (Beignets soon became his favorite food.) The Garden District. Trolley cars. The Mississippi River. Bourbon street. I discovered a fly shop in the French Quarter.

This March, while my wife looked forward to Mississippi, my oldest son (and me) looked forward to the New Orleans food, my youngest son and I looked forward to fishing the waters south of New Orleans.

I've never fished in Louisiana. Period. I know it's considered the best redfish fishing on the planet. I know many of you in this Club have fished it for years and are very familiar with it. More than I ever will be. Want to organize a Club outing? If any of you in the Club, unfamiliar with this water and curious, want to organize a trip, I support you. There's a lot of experience with southern Louisiana fly fishing inside the Austin Fly Fishers. It is a world class destination. Here's my half day experience.

My fishing companion is my 9-soon-to-be-10-year-old son. He owns a snake named "Striker," a parakeet named "Ninja," and used to own a fish called "Dragon." The fish is no longer with us. The kid almost always outfishes me. I don't mind. Makes me happy. Knowing Louisiana redfish can be big, I called the guide and we decided it'd be best if I brought a Youth life jacket.

South of New Orleans is like the end of the world. The road stops. Marsh and water take over. Live oaks and swamps south of New Orleans. Marshes, snakes, and crocodiles, pretty much, beyond that. I stopped the car in Cocodrie, Louisiana. Cocodrie, which is an alternate



Bayou Goldmine Cont.

Louisiana French way to spell "crocodile" basically, is an unincorporated fishing village. There's not a lot in the way of tourist attractions. Unless you fish. Then Cocodrie is a goldmine. There's a lot of ways to hook up. Red drum (redfish), familiar to Texans (and people from Mexico to Massachusetts) grow big here. They terrorize crabs, shrimp, and mullet. They rip off fly lines. Get into your backing. Think nothing of pulling a kid overboard.

I brought my trusty 20+ year old 8-weight rod equipped with a new 2 year old reel. Guide had a 9 weight fly rod and spinning reel as back up. I had several shots at monster redfish and black drum but didn't catch anything. Wasn't my day. My son, on the other hand, caught 4 fish. Two of them nice sized black drum. He wasn't fishing a fly rod, he used conventional tackle with crab for bait. Who doesn't like tasty crab? I was happy for him. It's important to have a good time. Sometimes, that means putting your fly rod up and focusing on kids. Kudos to all of you in the Club that help with an Austin Fly Fishers original -> SKIFF (Soldiers' Kids Involved in Fishing Fun). I know my son liked

being out on the boat. He liked looking for manatees (there were signs posted but we didn't see any). He liked the wildlife. Of course, he liked landing big fish the most. Seeing him happy made me smile.

Our time in Mississippi was short. We stayed in a cabin near a river and a pond. Mississippi had a torrential downpour for 2 days while we were there. We never fished. We didn't make it to Natchez or Vicksburg. The weather did not cooperate. I didn't mind. I kept replaying casts and grins from my days in Louisiana.

If any of you want to organize a fly fishing trip to Louisiana, I support you. There's never a bad time. Late Fall, early winter brings out 40-inch Bull Reds. You can catch smaller stuff year round. Small is still big by Texas standards. Redfish grow bigger in Louisiana. Want bigger still? Amberjack are around. Yellowfin tuna too. It's a sportsman's paradise. There's great saltwater fishing and great food East of Austin, other side of the Texas border, in Louisiana. I am scheduled to get my second Covid shot this week. After that, if anyone wants a Louisiana fishing partner, I'm in.



Outings by Juan Shepperd

I have a couple of outings planned, if you would like to join. As a reminder, Club meetings are free. Club Outings are limited to members. Unofficial club outings are open to anyone. I want to help plan trips you want to join. If you have ideas, suggestions, or want to lead an outing even, let me know. I am happy to work with you and/or step aside and let you lead. Help is always appreciated.

April 2021 Outing

Saturday, April 17, 2021 is the April Club outing. I think it might be nice to float and fish the Colorado River from Little Webberville Park to Big Webberville Park. This stretch of water is close to Austin and offers a chance to land largemouth bass. Float and fly fish from Little Webberville Park to Big Webberville Park. This stretch of water is close. From Austin, take MLK Road, drive East and it will turn into FM 969. Little Webberville Park (100 Water Street, Webberville, TX 78621) is located on the banks of the Colorado River in the town of Webberville, about 20 miles East of Austin.

Don't have a boat? Call Syd 512-276-7767 at Cook's Canoes, he rents canoes & kayaks and runs shuttles. \$50 per day for tandem boat. \$35 per day for solo boat. \$20 shuttle. *Rental includes canoe or kayak boat, PFD (lifejacket), paddles and shuttle. You can also rent a boat from Austin Canoe and Kayak.

If there are enough people, we might self-shuttle. Save you \$20. If interested, lets meet at 9 AM at Little Webberville Park on Saturday, April 17.

There is free parking and a public boat ramp. Big Webberville (Both parks are free, have public boat ramps, are limited day use only (no camping), and both close at twilight. It is an easy 5 mile float between the 2 parks. There are no major rapids or dams through this stretch. You may go as fast or slow as you wish. At this time of year, there should be some hungry bass – so take your time and enjoy the fishing. Bring water, a hat, sunscreen, cooler with food and drinks, first aid kit, camera & a lifejacket.

Put In:

Little Webberville Park (GPS N30 13.772 w97 31.142) – No Water Available
100 Water Street, Webberville, TX 78621
6 acre Travis County Park - <https://parks.traviscountytexas.gov/parks/little-webberville>

Take Out:

Big Webberville Park (GPS N30 12.539 W 97 29.695) – phone 512-854-7275 2305 Park Lane, Elgin, TX 78621
135 Acre Travis County Park with free parking, barbecue pits, and public restrooms
<https://parks.traviscountytexas.gov/parks/webberville>

This should be a relaxing float. There are a few islands where you can get out, wade, and stretch your legs. The land above the Riverbank is private. Please respect private property by not trespassing or littering. For the more adventurous, the Colorado River flows into Matagorda Bay. Eventually.



Unofficial 2021 Outing

I planned a fly fishing trip to Yellowstone National Park (YNP) from June 6 – 10, 2021. That is open to anyone. Here are some details.

Getting there Fly, don't drive. There is a new direct flight from Austin to Bozeman, Montana. Tickets are priced competitively. I paid less than \$60 for one way (of course, then I had to pay for my suitcase). Still, it is much cheaper and more convenient than what it used to be: Fly to Dallas or Houston. Wait hours. Fly to Montana. Or, I've done this: Fly to Salt Lake City and then drive 5 hours to YNP. You want the direct flight.

Where to stay? I'm camping - \$32 a night – inside the Park. YNP fills up fast. If you are interested, book now. You can also look for hotel rooms and lodges in West Yellowstone, MT, just outside the Park. That entrance is 14 miles from where I will stay and fish. I'll eat in the Park and lunch on the river. Again, modestly priced. I'm on a budget.

Where to fish? The best fishing spots this time of year are the Firehole, Gibbon and Madison Rivers. I'm staying at Madison Campground, right off the Madison River. The Madison fishes best

in the Fall, but I've caught fish here outside the Fall. It's probably the most scenic river. Think big western gorgeous river.

The Firehole River in June offers superb dry fly fishing in a unique setting. In Flyfisher's Guide to Yellowstone National Park, Ken Retailic writes:

"The Firehole's modern fame as an extraordinary dry fly stream springs as much from the wariness of its brown and rainbow trout as from the privilege to cast a line in such a spellbinding amphitheater of nature. Puffs of steam and sulfurous vapors drift on the winds across an arena carpeted with spouting geysers, hissing fumaroles, and bubbling mud pots linked by the most genial of Yellowstone's streams. Lush meadows and verdant pine forests lining its banks harbor large herds of bison and scattered bands of elk, occasionally spooked by roaming coyotes, grizzly bears, and wolves."

About the Gibbon, south of Norris Junction, Craig Matthews writes In The Yellowstone Fly Fishing Guide, "This is a great place to see elk and wolves. The river is much like a spring creek here, with deep slow meandering flows and deep undercut banks." He adds, "This area is on-your-knees fishing to wary brown trout."

How's the fishing? Since this is a fly fishing club, you'll be pleased to know it is OUTSTANDING. In these rivers, it is fly fishing only. Barbless hooks. Artificial flies. No lead. No felt-bottom boots.

License Fee This has changed. The National Park Service raised the price on March 24, 2021. A three (3)-day license is now \$40 and can be bought online at www.recreation.gov.

Interested in this trip, let me know. I'm happy to share more details with you.

Juan (5-one-2-7-Five-1-seven-7-ate-3)

Itinerary.

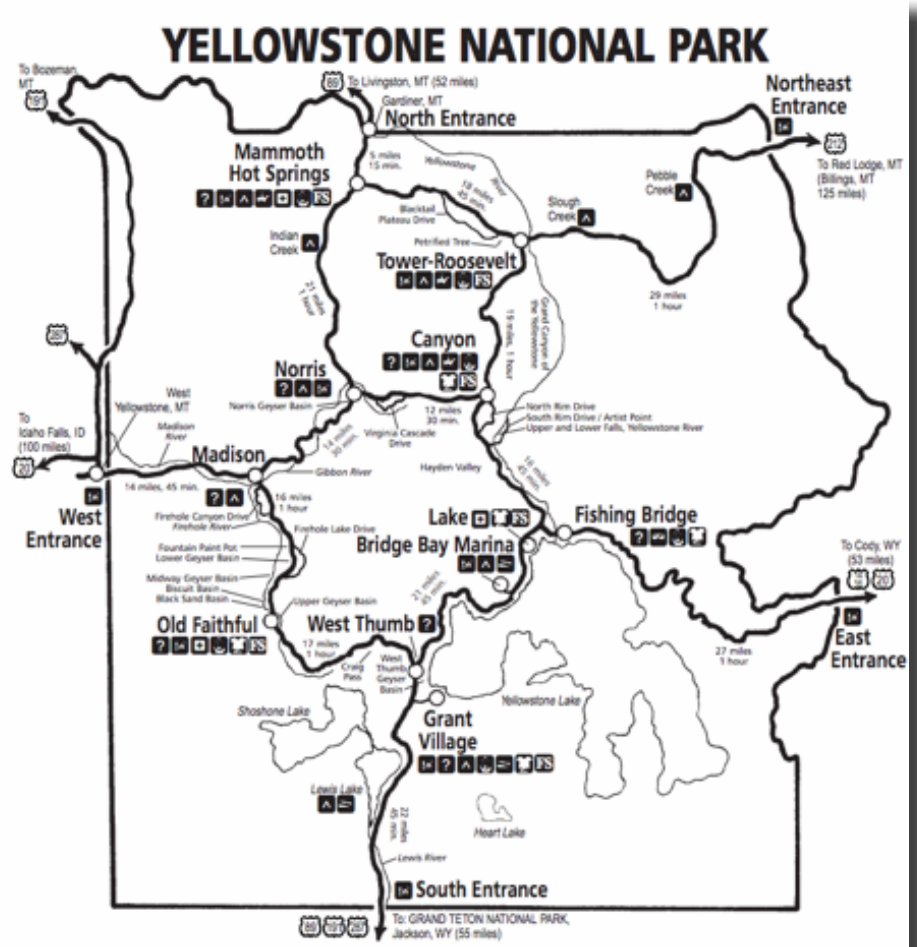
Day 1 – Fly direct from Austin to Bozeman. Overnight.

Day 2 – Enter and fish YNP.

Day 3 – Fish YNP.

Day 4 – Fish YNP.

Day 5 – Free. Depart Bozeman that evening for Austin.



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 Rodriguez – <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

Kevin Hutchison – <http://hillcountryflyfishers.com/> Fly Fishing the Hill Country

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

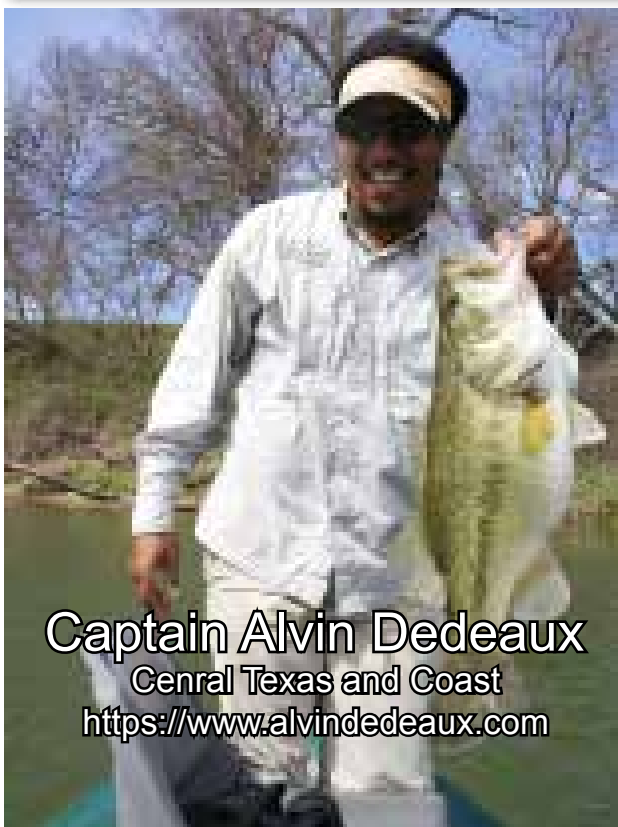
Nick Streit – <https://taosflyshop.com/flyguide/main> New Mexico and Southern Colorado

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

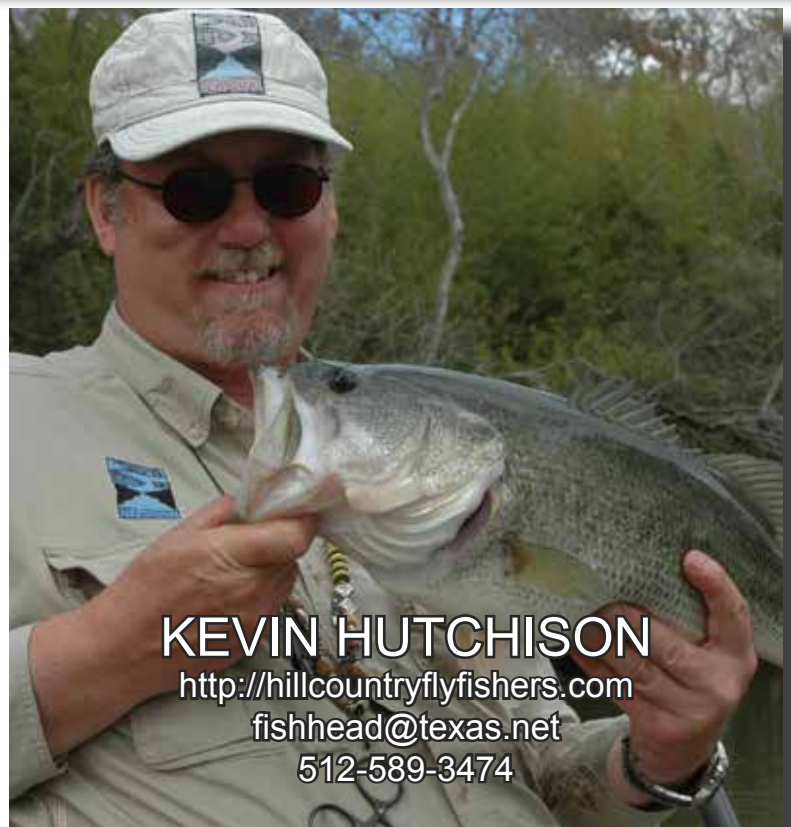
Lower Laguna Madre

Pat Vanek – BousqueValleyFlyFishing@gmail.com Rivers of Central TX

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



Captain Alvin Dedeaux
Central Texas and Coast
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KEVIN HUTCHISON
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Capt. Billy Trimble
Shallow Water Flats Fishing
Texas Coastal Bend

<http://trimbleflyfishing.com/>
361-205-1266



Capt. Scott Hamilton
Fly Fish Jupiter, Florida

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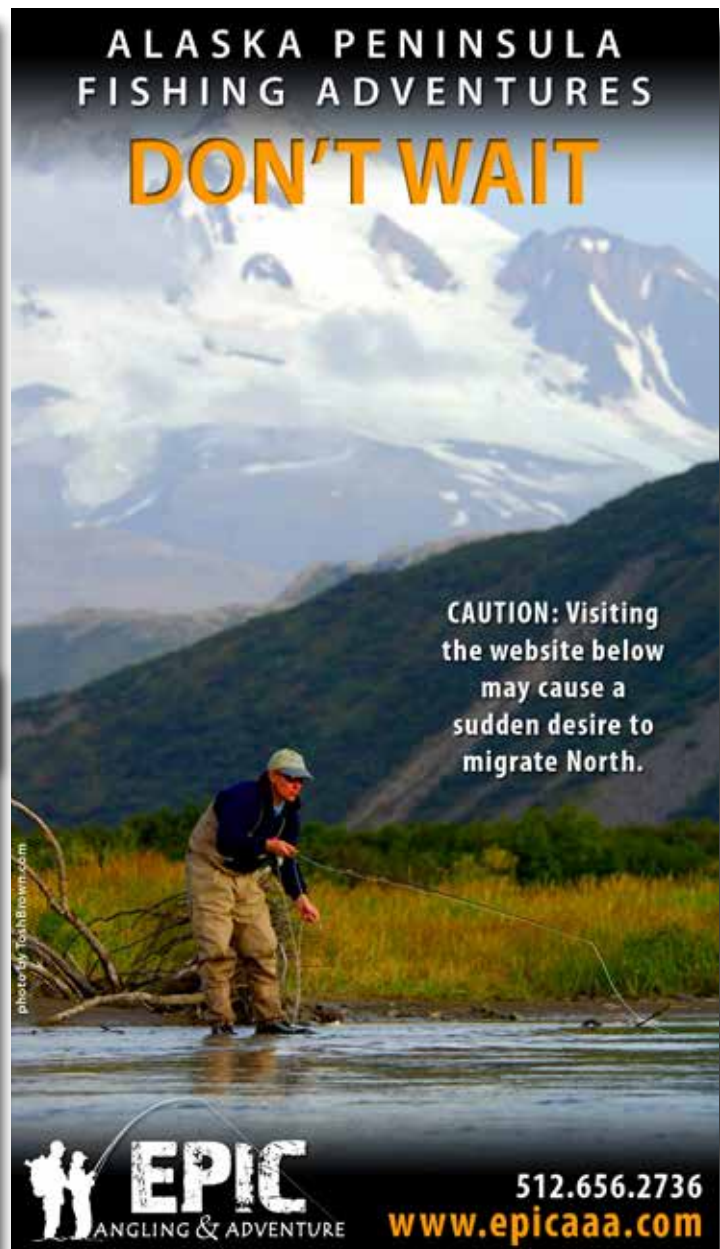
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