



AUSTIN FLY FISHERS

August 2022
Volume 24 Issue 8



**Our AFF Meeting Thursday, August 18
at Northwest Recreation Center**

- 6 pm Casting
- 7 pm Keith Mars -DIY fly fishing Idaho
- Brandon Rabke and Nils Pearson
- Fly fishing the Gardens of the Queen, Cuba

Gary Heintschel on the Upper Gunnison
Article by Kathi Harris on Pages 3-4



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Charter Club**

President's Message by Kathi Harris

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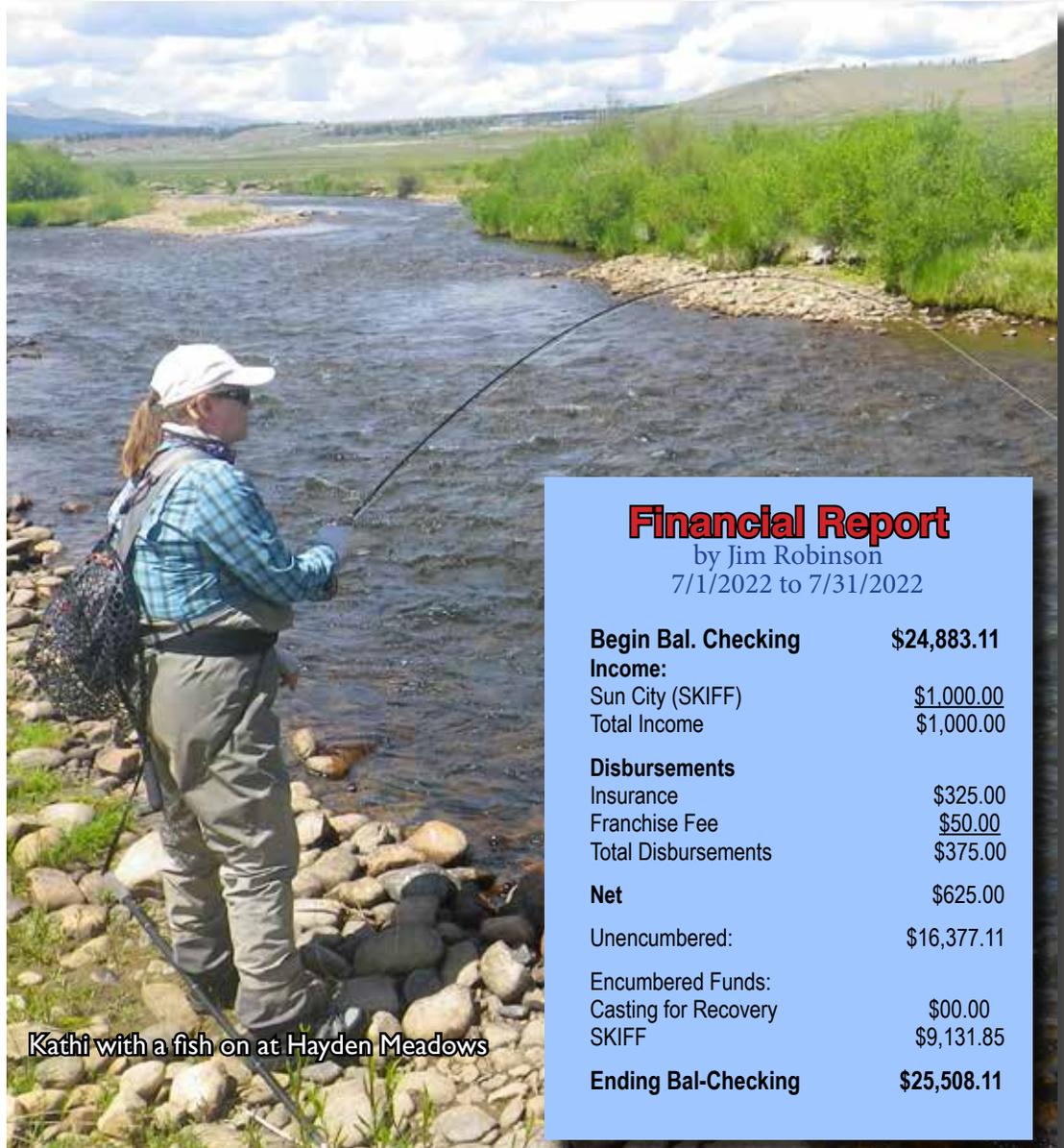
August. Having just returned from a wonderfully cool and fishy two week road trip to Colorado and New Mexico, the heat is making me grumpy and listless. While the few days of unusually warm temperatures we encountered there did not make us uncomfortable, high temps can negatively impact trout. Also, Colorado appeared to be under assault by road-tripping tourists while virtually every business was short-handed. We did our best to smile (and tip) a lot but I was still wishing for a bumper sticker on our Texas-plated 4Runner that said "our other car is a plug-in hybrid", which

is true. Perhaps an all-electric SUV is in our future.

Recommendation: Take advantage of those soon-to-be extended tax credits for electric vehicles and be on the lookout for applicable Texas grants through the Texas Emissions Reduction Plan. I love my car's plug-in feature and do much of my driving on battery only. With electric vehicles, we could all drive to our favorite fishing spots while reducing our carbon boot prints and get substantial savings to boot!

Happy Fishing!

Kathi



Kathi with a fish on at Hayden Meadows

Financial Report

by Jim Robinson

7/1/2022 to 7/31/2022

Begin Bal. Checking	\$24,883.11
Income:	
Sun City (SKIFF)	\$1,000.00
Total Income	\$1,000.00
Disbursements	
Insurance	\$325.00
Franchise Fee	\$50.00
Total Disbursements	\$375.00
Net	\$625.00
Unencumbered:	\$16,377.11
Encumbered Funds:	
Casting for Recovery	\$00.00
SKIFF	\$9,131.85
Ending Bal-Checking	\$25,508.11

Quantity, Quality, Rumbling and Humbling by Kathi Harris

Gary and I spent the last 2 weeks of July fishing up a storm, sometimes in storms, in Colorado and New Mexico.

Quantity

Our first stop was Salida, Colorado where we dodged a couple of thunderstorms and what the locals call excessive heat for three days along the Arkansas River. Our first venture on the river was a float trip with Ark Anglers guide John Lagow.

We started the morning with double dries, a small Chubby Chernobyl (the state fly of Colorado) followed by a Red Quill, with which we caught about a dozen small browns. In the afternoon, we switched to Chernobyl/dropper combinations. We caught another dozen fish, ranging from 12-16", including a couple of small but notable rainbows. Notable because the trout population of the Arkansas is reportedly 70-90% browns.

The next two days, we wade fished in areas recommended by John and the folks at Ark Anglers including a section down-river from Stockyard Bridge that we had passed on our float, and Hayden Meadows, along the upper Arkansas south of Leadville. The lower Arkansas is wide and boisterous, making wading a bit challenging, but we caught a few small trout, on similar flies to the float trip. At Hayden Meadows, the wading is easier while the undercut banks and clear, shallow water make the fish a little spookier. Drifting dries and droppers along the undercut banks I managed to hook one fish. Gary landed a brown from a mid-stream riffle. I then swapped out my second dry for a not-recommended sparkly prince nymph and had a 14" brown halfway in the net before it perfectly executed a self-release. The moral is don't neglect the riffles for the banks and don't worry too much about the type of dropper.

Quality

After fishing the Arkansas, we moved on for a one-day float trip on the upper Gunnison. In 2019, after a great day dry fly fishing on this same stretch of river with the same guide, Eric Grand, I had proclaimed, "I'm never nymphing again!" Of course I was lying, but I have at least managed to avoid using split shot. This second trip did not disappoint. We fished double dries all day, Chubbies partnered with small Parachute Adams. Eric's recommended technique is to make sure to keep those dries riding high with frequent dry shake. He's right. We caught about a dozen 16-18" browns, rainbows and cutbows.



Kathi with a nice rainbow on the Upper Gunnison

Quantity, Quality, Rumbling and Humbling cont.

Rumbling

From the Gunnison, we moved on to the Conejos River. We stopped in at Conejos River Anglers, bought flies and supplies and received excellent advice. The afternoon we arrived, we caught a few small browns in front of our rental cabin, which were all smaller than the mice we caught later IN the cabin. We had to dodge thunderstorms, lightning and hail during our entire stay but still managed to fish at least part of every day. We fished accesses near the cabin, including Aspen Glen Campground and one of the designated pullouts north of that. These sections of the Conejos are beautiful but obviously pressured. The water was silty at times from the rain so fishing was slow. On our third day, we drove the 25 miles of washboard gravel road to the Platoro area below the reservoir and got in about 2 hours fishing the high meadow section of the Conejos until the black clouds and large raindrops sent us trotting back to the truck. Above the Platoro Reservoir, the Conejos reportedly holds plenty of 12" browns, offers spectacular scenery and is lightly pressured due to its remoteness. I would like to check it out sometime, possibly using the Platoro area as a base camp.

Humbling

We stopped in Taos for two nights on our way back to Texas and fished one day with Jason Sides from the Taos Fly Shop. The region was just getting past the massive forest fires in Carson National Forest when the seasonal monsoons arrived, about two weeks early. The Rio Grande was blown out and the Costillo was reportedly crowded so Jason decided we would make the long drive to try the Chama River just below the El Vado Reservoir. His theory was that, since that section of river is usually a little silty anyway, the trout are used to it so a little more dirt from the rains shouldn't bother them. Dry flies apparently weren't going to cut it, so we nymphed using indicators and tungsten bead head nymphs, but no split shot! I hooked a rainbow trout on about my third drift, which we took as a good omen. But that was going to be our only action for the entire day. The only other fish we saw caught that day was by an osprey at tiny Hopewell Lake. After swooping down and snagging the fish, the bird flew directly at us from across the lake. She then made a 90-degree turn and did a slow fly-by right in front of us, the trout still wiggling in her talons. We could practically hear her thinking, "THAT'S how you catch a fish".



Kathi nets a small rainbow on the lower Arkansas River



Gary with a nice brown on the lower Arkansas River

Conservation Report

by Keith Mars

Book Review

Headwaters: The Adventure, Obsession and Evolution of a Fly Fisherman

Author: Dylan Tomine

Publisher: Patagonia Press

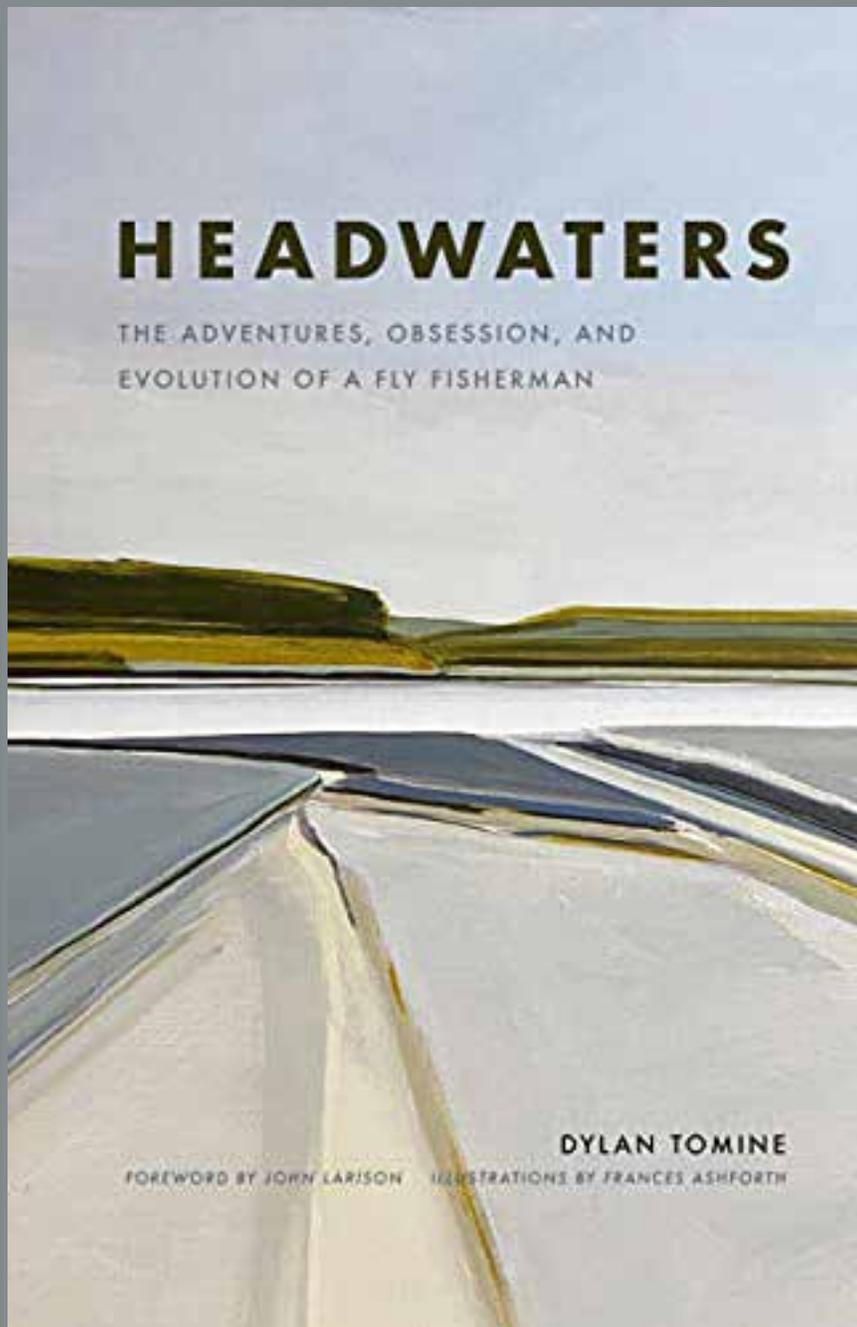
Date: April 2022

This month's update is a sidebar from my typical writings on conservation matters. I was so moved by a recent book that I wanted to share my thoughts with fellow Austin Fly Fishers. I recently finished *Headwaters: The Adventure, Obsession and Evolution of a Fly Fisherman* by Dylan Tomine. It left me captivated, inspired, and deeply moved and breathes fresh life into preserving and protecting our natural world.

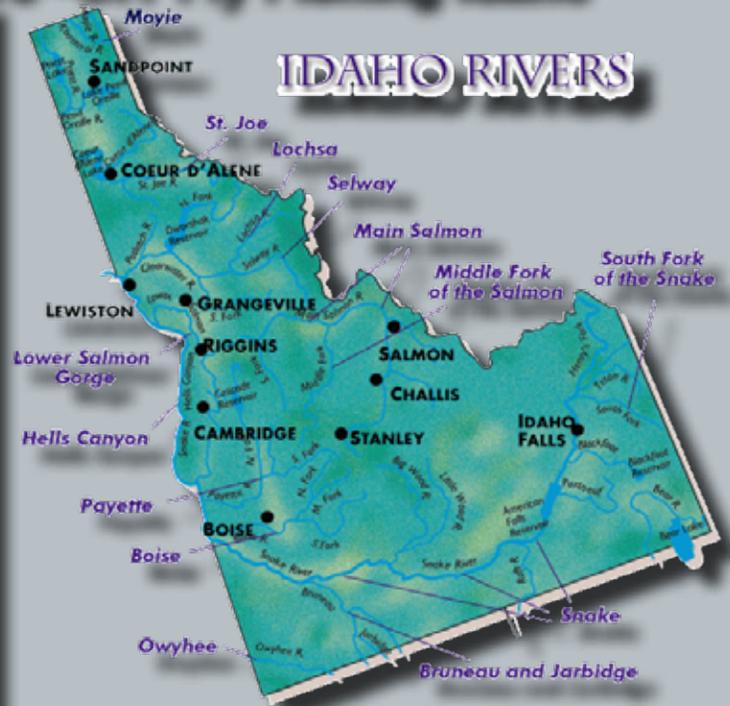
The book is a collection of short stories ranging from adventure travel to far off fisheries, to contemplative essays on why we fish and why preserving our environment goes hand-in-hand with giving back to fisheries more than we take. This book struck me differently— it wasn't a self aggrandizing book of a fisherman turned conservationist. Rather, it was deeply reflective and conveyed a real sense of internal struggle and a deep commitment to being an advocate, particularly for wild fish and fisheries. Mr. Tomine's arc from self-absorbed steelheader to family man, conservationist is one of the steady themes in this book. His deep concern about the future his children will inherit is conveyed with such meaningfulness. Throughout the book, the author's ability to speak clearly and without pretense left me with a better appreciation of the struggles, and that many, many people and organizations are out there everyday fighting the fight to protect fisheries and the environment.

Two thumbs up for *Headwaters: The Adventure, Obsession and Evolution of a Fly Fisherman* by Dylan Tomine and I hope you give it a read. I feel confident it will instill or add fuel to your fire for wild fish and wild places and it's up to us to take a stand.

Tight lines and clean waters,
Keith Mars

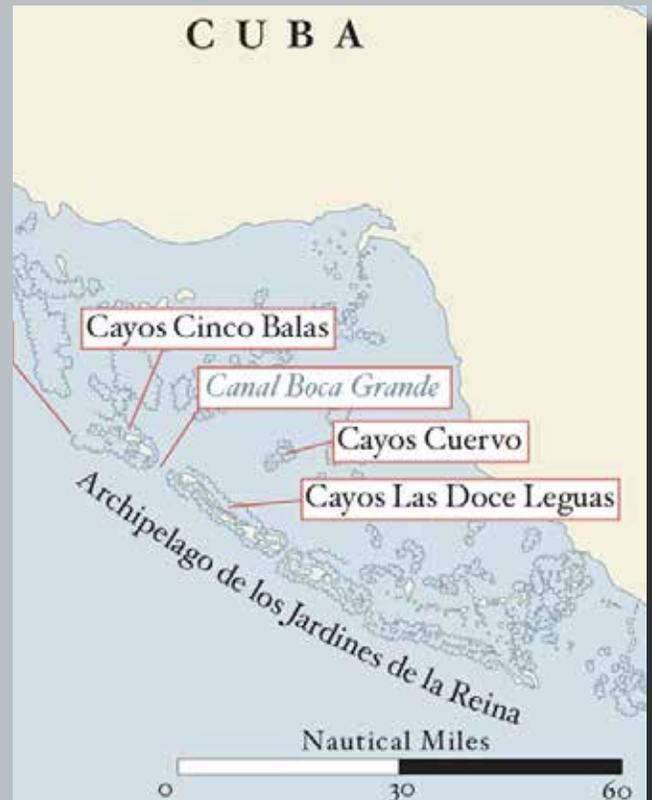


August Speakers – Keith Mars –DIY Fly Fishing Idaho



Keith Mars, AFF Conservation Chair, will present on DIY fishing travel and his recent trip to the Idaho panhandle searching for native Westslope Cutthroat and Bull trout. Keith will share some tips on how to plan, pack, and save time and money on DIY fishing travel. He'll also share some stories and photos of the amazing fisheries in Idaho.

Brandon Rabke and Nils Pearson –Gardens of the Queen, Cuba



Brandon Rabke and Nils Pearson will present information on their recent trip to the Gardens of the Queen, Cuba.

SKIFF Program by Bob Maindelle

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

Since my last update, I conducted the 6th and 7th Soldiers' Kids Involved in Fishing Fun (SKIFF) trips of the 2022 season.

Trip #6 – July 12, 2022

Joining me on this morning trip was Mrs. Serena Flatt and her six-year-old daughter, Sofia. We also had an unexpected guest— U.S. Army Corporal Travis Flatt! Travis literally just returned from his most recent of two deployments to Iraq during his 5-year military career as a drone operator.

When Serena planned this trip for her daughter, she knew Travis would be reaching the end of his deployment, but, for security's sake, exact dates are rarely revealed.

Since both Serena and Travis chose to get fishing licenses, they were able to be very "hands-on" and helped me help Sofia be successful as we cast horizontally, jigged vertically, down-rigged, and fish with bream poles for sunfish on Lake Belton.

Sofia's 70 fish catch included exactly 45 white bass, 1 hybrid striper, 1 largemouth bass, 1 freshwater drum, 6 green sunfish, 1 longear sunfish, and 14 bluegill sunfish.

As we arrived back at the dock, there was another surprise awaiting us. Mrs. Maria Tolleson of the Sun City chapter of Women Helping Others (WHO), escorted by her husband, stopped by in-person to present the SKIFF program with a handsome donation to help keep the program strong. She got to see the dividends of her investment as she met the Flatts and heard Sofia excitedly tell about all the fish she caught.

Trip #7 – July 19, 2022

On this morning, I welcomed aboard 8-year-old Kristyn Torres-Smith, and her mom, Erica.

Kristyn's dad, U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Jason Torres-Smith, has served in the military for 10 years. He has been deployed from Fort Hood since February of this year, serving as a truck driver.

We fished on Stillhouse Hollow Reservoir and used a variety of tactics to keep Kristyn engaged and successful. We targeted white bass first and ended the trip fishing up shallow for sunfish.



From left: Serena Flatt, her daughter, Sofia Lumaye, and U.S. Army Corporal Travis Flatt celebrating Travis' return home from his most recent of two tours to Iraq as a drone operator.



Meet 8-year-old Kristyn Torres-Smith! She singlehandedly landed 40 fish in the "cool" of the morning on Stillhouse Hollow. She was accompanied by her mom, Erica.

Outings by Juan Shepperd

It's hot outside. When the sun beats down on you, find shade. Better yet, find water. Texas is in the middle of one heck of a drought and I know going outside is one the last things most of you would like to do. However, if you can muster the courage and energy, I think you'll be rewarded.

I drove 3 hours to West Texas recently – I call Junction, Texas “West Texas” though I understand that's debatable. It's undeniably West of Austin. It's dry, arid country. Looks like the desert. That is until you climb a ridge or bluff and see a green ribbon below. The South Llano River is a desert Oasis. It's a magnificent river and a welcome sight to the dusty, weary traveler. It's Spring fed, like the San Marcos river, and is a great place to kayak and wade and fish. I did all of that and forgot it was a hundred + degrees. Cool water will do that.

Fish will too. The Austin Fly Fishers recently rambled down to Texas Coast. Kathi highlighted their success in the last newsletter. I can't comment on the weather at the Coast, but the fishing looked excellent.

I will be out of town the 3d week in August. I do not have a Club outing planned. I encourage you to join the Club at the August 18 meeting to hear about other club members' recent fly fishing adventures. I'll be in Utah in June and hope to fish around Salt Lake City. Probably the Provo or Weber. Maybe the Green. If you know these rivers personally, drop me a line.

There are still 2 spots left on the Deschutes River Float in Oregon in October. Please let me know if you'd like to join.

I know some of you prefer Salt. I've mentioned this before, there's a lot of Texas saltwater experience in the Club. Way more than I know. I would love if someone would organize another “local” saltwater outing this Fall. I am happy to help and/or get out of the way. The fishing looks fantastic this year on the Texas Coast. I see lots of smiling faces. Great to see the fish back after last year's freeze killed so many. Kudos to Texas Parks and Wildlife sweeping in to protect coastal fisheries and make changes to this year's regulations.

Finally, I am toying with the idea of a winter Louisiana fly fishing trip. Considering my family and I often drive 12 – 16 hours to New Mexico and Colorado each year – with kids (you remember how much fun that is!) - the idea of an 8 hour Louisiana trip seems almost local. If you're interested in making this trip, let me know. It won't stay hot forever.

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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

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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



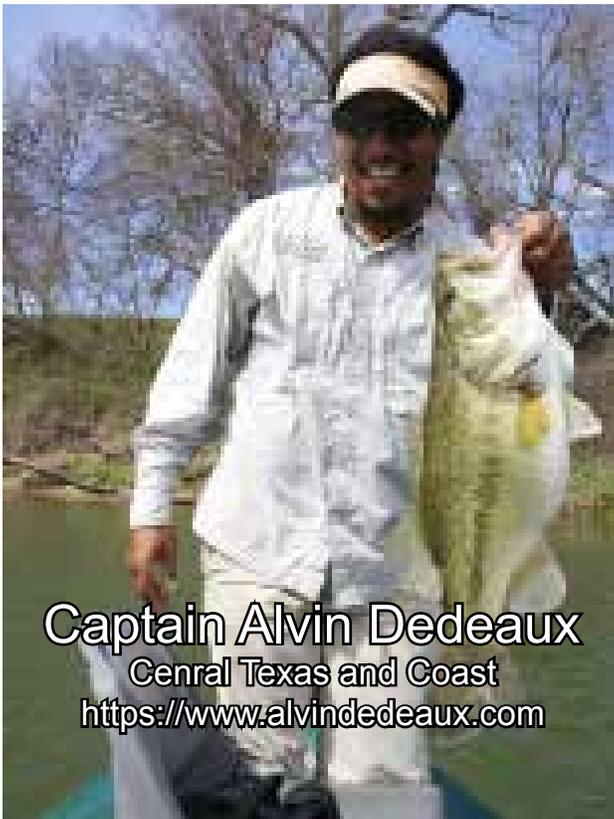
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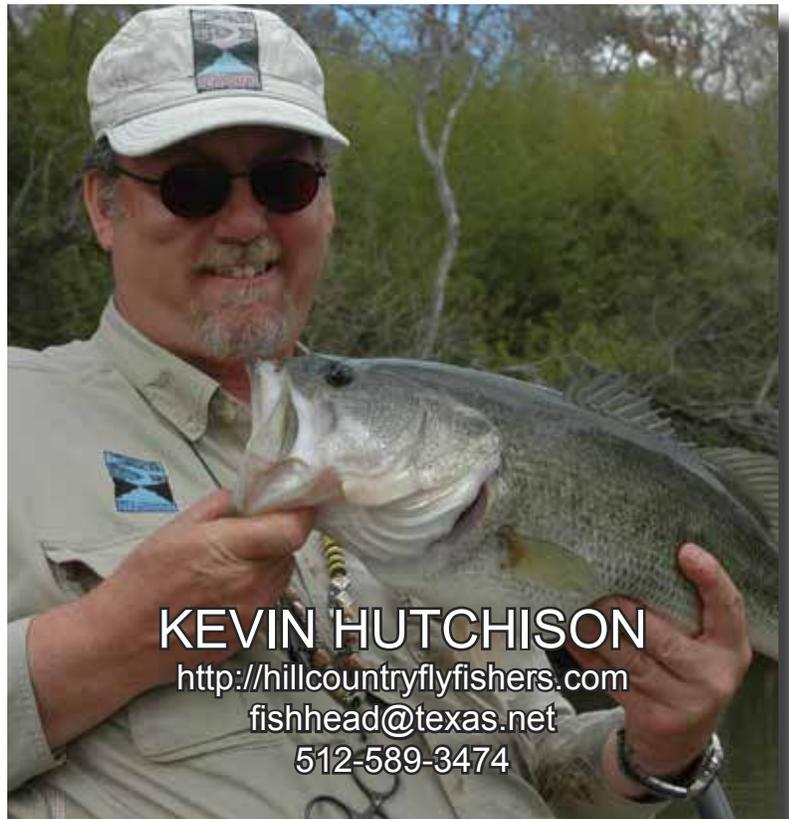
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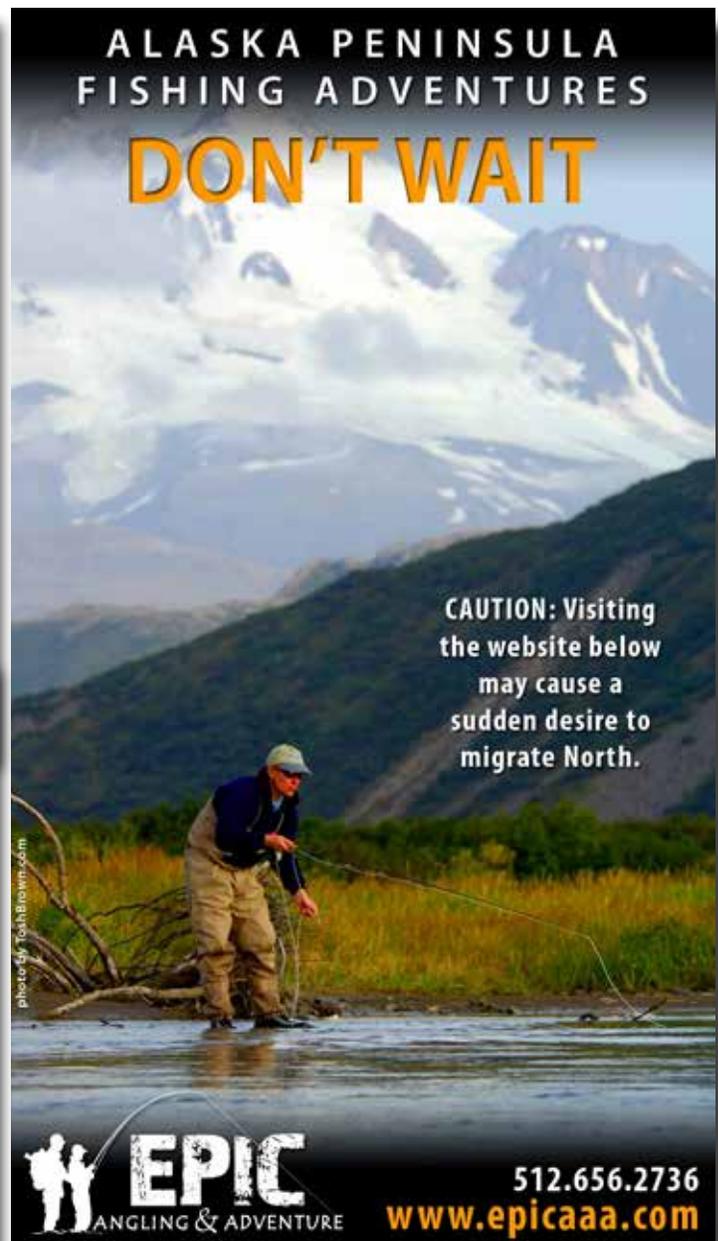
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