



# AUSTIN FLY FISHERS

February 2023  
Volume 25 Issue 2



Rosie Pickworth with redfish caught in Louisiana  
From the French Quarter to the Marsh article on page 4

**Our AFF Meeting Thursday, February 16  
at Northwest Recreation Center**

**- 6 pm Premeeting Fellowship**

**- 7 pm Aaron Reed -Fly Fishing Austin and Centex**



**FLY FISHERS  
INTERNATIONAL  
Charter Club**

# President's Message by Kathi Harris

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Do ice storms cause hearing loss? Maybe that's the reason I don't even notice the continual buzz of chain-saws in our neighborhood these days. I hope everyone got through our latest winter surprise with minimal damage to life and, um, limb. The good news is our area lakes and rivers have received some much needed rain and I'm guessing the stocked trout actually enjoy a little ice melt.

More good news for February is that Aaron Reed, author of the award-winning book "Fly Fishing Austin and Central Texas" will be our speaker at our February 16 meeting. Come

hear Aaron's insights on all aspects of fly fishing our local venues!

The weekend following our meeting, February's fishing calendar will be filled with Troutfest. The Guadalupe River Trout Unlimited Troutfest will be held February 17-19 at the Lazy L&L Resort near Sattler. AFF will have a booth along with lots of vendors, fly tiers and outfitters. Come by and say hi in between presentations by top guides and renowned authors. If you're not there, you'd better be fishing!

Happy Fishing!  
Kathi

## New AFF Shirts Available!



Shirts will be available for sale at AFF monthly meetings.



## Financial Report

by Jim Robinson  
1/1/2023 to 1/31/2023

<b>Beginning Balance</b>	\$26,541.73
<b>Income:</b>	
Sam Perry donation	\$2,000.00
Paypal	\$593.91
FFI Membship	(\$155.00)
AFF Membshi	(\$438.91)
Square (CFR)	\$62.81
<b>Total Income</b>	\$2,656.72

<b>Disbursements:</b>	
FFI Membership	\$1,275.00
ACH Earthlink	\$127.29
<b>Total Disbursements</b>	(\$1,402.29)

December Net Income	\$1,254.43
Ending Bal-Check book	\$27,796.16
Bank Balance	\$27,796.16
Difference	00
<b>Unencumbered Balance</b>	\$20,139.08

<b>Encumbered Funds:</b>	
Casting for Recovery	\$1,106.23
SKIFF	\$6,550.85

## February Speaker

### Aaron Reed – Fly Fishing Austin and Central Texas

Aaron Reed will be our presenter at the Austin Flyfishers monthly meeting that will be held at the Northwest Recreation Center located at MoPac and 2222. Aaron will be speaking to the group about many of the fly fishing venues in our area that are covered in his book. Please come join us for this informative presentation. The meeting is free and you do not need to be a member of the club to attend.

Aaron Reed is an Army veteran and the author of Fly Fishing Austin & Central Texas, a recipient of the 2020 National Outdoor Book Award and a 2021 IBPA Benjamin Franklin Gold Award.

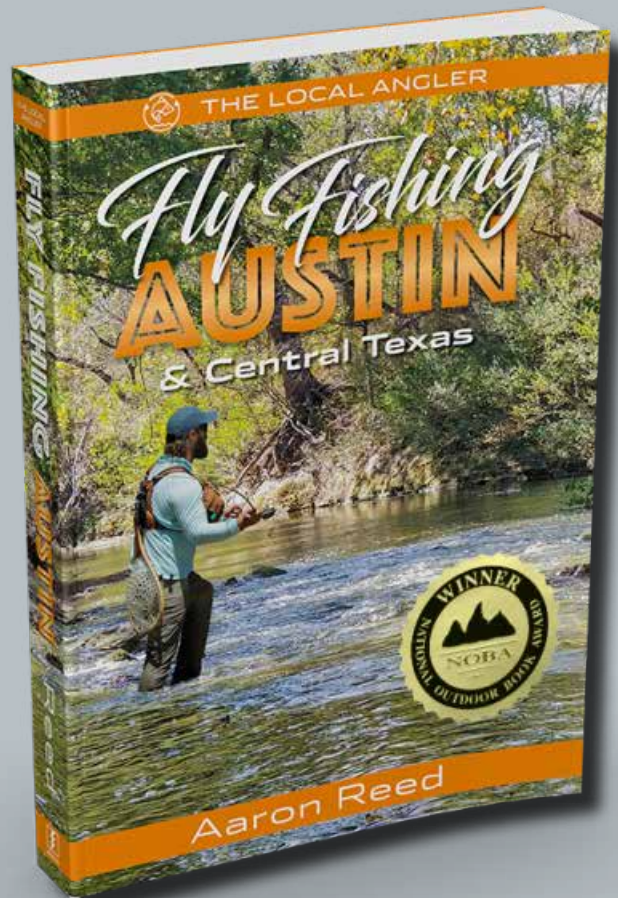
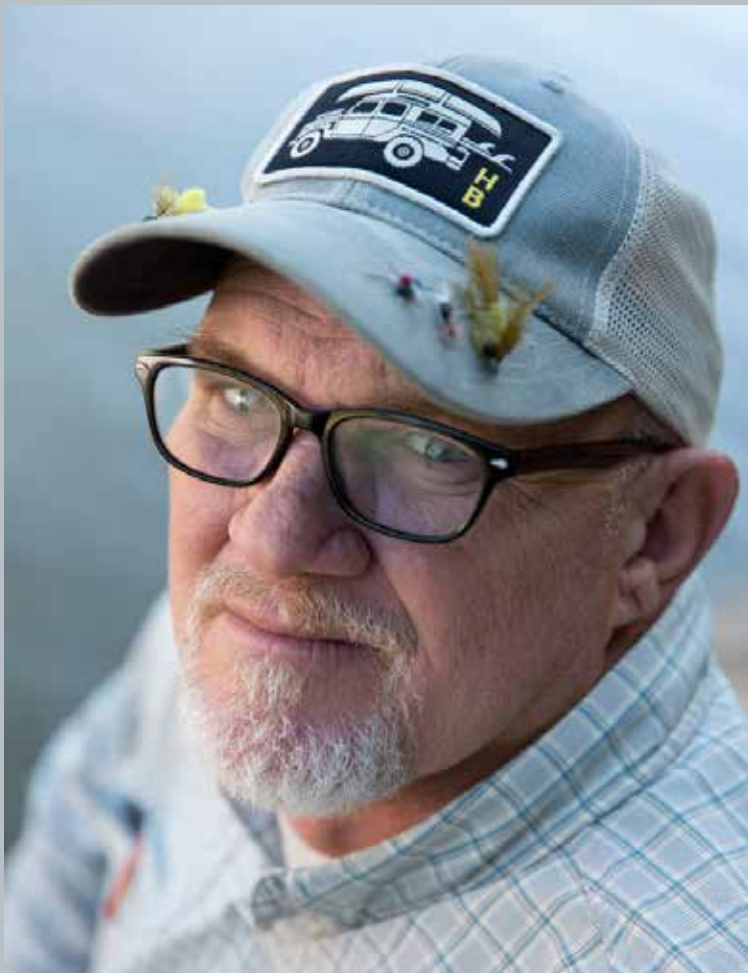
Fly Fishing Austin & Central Texas highlights more than 100 legal access points on 18 creeks and rivers from just north of San Antonio to just south of Belton, Texas. The book includes 49 detailed wades or paddles on a dozen of those streams and features a comprehensive “getting started” section as well as recipes for 14 proven local fly patterns.

Aaron makes his home in Georgetown, Texas. Formerly, he worked as the news editor at Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, as a daily newspaper reporter, and as a magazine editor. Currently in his day job he works as a tugboat captain in New York City.

<https://flyfishingaustin.thelocalangler.com/>

<https://www.bluecollarflyfishing.com/>

<https://instagram.com/texasaaron>



# From the French Quarter to the Marsh

## by Brandon Rabke

Rosy Pickworth and I spent a few days in New Orleans, in the French Quarter over the Christmas Holidays. I enjoy being in the Quarter this time of year; the atmosphere everywhere is generally lively and festive; the balconies are all adorned with Christmas decorations and the cooler temperatures make for pleasant sightseeing and strolling along the streets.

I wasn't originally thinking about fishing, but as our departure date approached, I began to entertain the idea of getting out into the coastal waters of the marsh to try to catch a redfish. As many of you may know, winter fishing in Louisiana is popular because this is the season when the bull reds leave the deeper waters of the ocean and move into the marsh to root through the briny mud in search of crabs, shrimp and small fish. The opportunity to catch one of these big bull redfish attracts anglers from all over the country.

So, I decided to email a few of the local guides just to see if there was any availability. As luck would have it, I got a positive reply and was able to book a trip with an outfit called Marsh on the Fly. We were supposed to go out on the Tuesday after we arrived, but then that day became a scratch due to lousy weather. Fortunately Captain Peter Scafaru was available to take us out the next day and he told us to meet him the following morning, at 8 AM, at the marina in Hopedale.

Hopedale is a small fishing community located along Bayou La Loutre about 30 miles south of New Orleans. Rosy and I headed out early Wednesday, stopping along the way for breakfast sandwiches and po-boys to take with us for lunch, at a place recommended by Captain Pete. Once we arrived in Hopedale, we hopped into Peter's waiting skiff with our fishing gear and sandwiches and took off through the bayou. We kept going until we reached the edge of the Gulf of Mexico.

It didn't take long to find our first pod of reds cruising along the edge of the marsh grass. With the helpful aid of a bright sun, and even though the waters that day were somewhat brownish and stained, we could still spot the large, moving bronze patches in the water that marked where the redfish were. We ended up with five or six reds; Rosy landed the largest and I cast to, and missed, several that were even larger.

We were back at the dock by around 4; in time to drive back to the Quarter and get cleaned up for our dinner reservations at Galatoire's that evening. Life is good!



# Casting Tips for Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced Casters

by Austin Orr



1. The fastest way to gain control over your cast is to understand that efficient fly casts are mainly composed of straight-line movements with pauses in between.

Most casting instructors will tell you that the main casting fault that they see, especially with beginner casters, is the dreaded 'bent wrist' fault. This is most easily noticed when the caster picks line up into a backcast, with the hand tilting and the wrist bending backwards prior to the stop. This typically results in large, rainbow-y loops that have a tendency to hit the ground or water behind the caster and have little ability to straighten out on the presentation cast. I typically have these folks concentrate on making sharp, straight lines that feel a bit robotic compared to the more rounded, wrist bending style they were using before. By exploring this more condensed style of cast, people often feel increased efficiency and loops that tend to roll themselves out in straighter lines. A small adjustment, but an important one to get to the next level.

2. Uncontrolled slack is your enemy. Try to get as much slack out of the line as possible, especially just before and during the cast.

Intermediate casters have typically worked past most of the problems stemming from bending their wrists too far, but they still have efficiency issues to smooth out. I typically see folks that have one or both of the following problems that ultimately end up being related to slack control.

First (and most obvious), is when the rod tip is too high while picking up into a backcast. For the most efficient positioning (read: that which eliminates the most slack), the beginning rod tip position should be near or even in the water. Many of us, myself



included, will violate this suggestion now and then, but it's one I closely adhere to when casting heavy flies or sinking lines of any kind. Just that small adjustment – elimination of the slack between the rod tip and the water – can immediately bring about surprising efficiency improvements.

Second, a similar problem can happen during the backcast when the caster brings their cast back at a low angle behind them but uses a higher angle when moving towards the target. This causes the forward cast to climb up and over the caster's body, which can put unwanted slack into the forward cast and cause it to lose energy. Practicing with different angles of straight line paths will help the intermediate caster gain more control over the entire process of the cast, pushing them onward towards the advanced caster realm.

Note that controlled slack is very much a part of actual fishing, even at the intermediate level. Aerial mends are probably the best example, but the so-called 'pile' or 'puddle' cast is another relatively common controlled slack technique used to create drag-free drifts in moving water.



3. A smooth transfer of energy throughout the cast is usually best. Herky-jerky movements are inefficient and often lead to knots in your leader. Check for knots often, and re-tie as needed.

Once anglers become proficient at controlling the angle and tension of a cast, they can still benefit from pushing themselves further. One of the ways that I push students is with drills that require concentration on two distinct aspects of their cast. For instance, asking someone to be accurate with their cast at 50 feet, but to do so with as little effort as possible. Many of my students have spent a good portion of their fly fishing career in saltwater, and some of them are exceptional casters. One of the areas where I can help them further their skills is by asking them to stop hauling; this forces them to focus completely on what they can accomplish with only their rod hand. This isolation enables them to observe and polish their energy transfer skills without the complication of hauls. The subsequent energy transfer improvements are amplified when they later add hauls back into the equation, and the result is a holistically better cast.

One of the things I find most fascinating about fly casting in general is the endless path of things to learn and improve upon. It truly is a sport and a vocation that one can take as far as they'd like, pushing themselves and their equipment as far as they'd like. I get no greater satisfaction than helping people along on that journey.

Austin Orr, Certified Casting Instructor

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# Conservation Report

by Keith Mars

## EPA Restores Clean Water Rules

Earlier this year the Environmental Protection Agency published an updated Rule clarifying the Waters of the United States. The wonkiness of the prior sentence notwithstanding, this Rule is a big deal. In plain language, this rule defines the waters in our country subject to protections of the Clean Water Act. The scope of how we define our waters has a significant impact on what can be dumped, graded, drained, etc in and on our nation's waters. This revised Rule essentially restores long standing protections in place until 2016. That means intermittent creeks, headwaters, wetlands, and other waters that clearly have a connection with larger waters receive protection under the Clean Water Act. Clean water is reflective of watershed health, and watershed health is indicative of how well we see the waterway as a system and not just a single blue line.

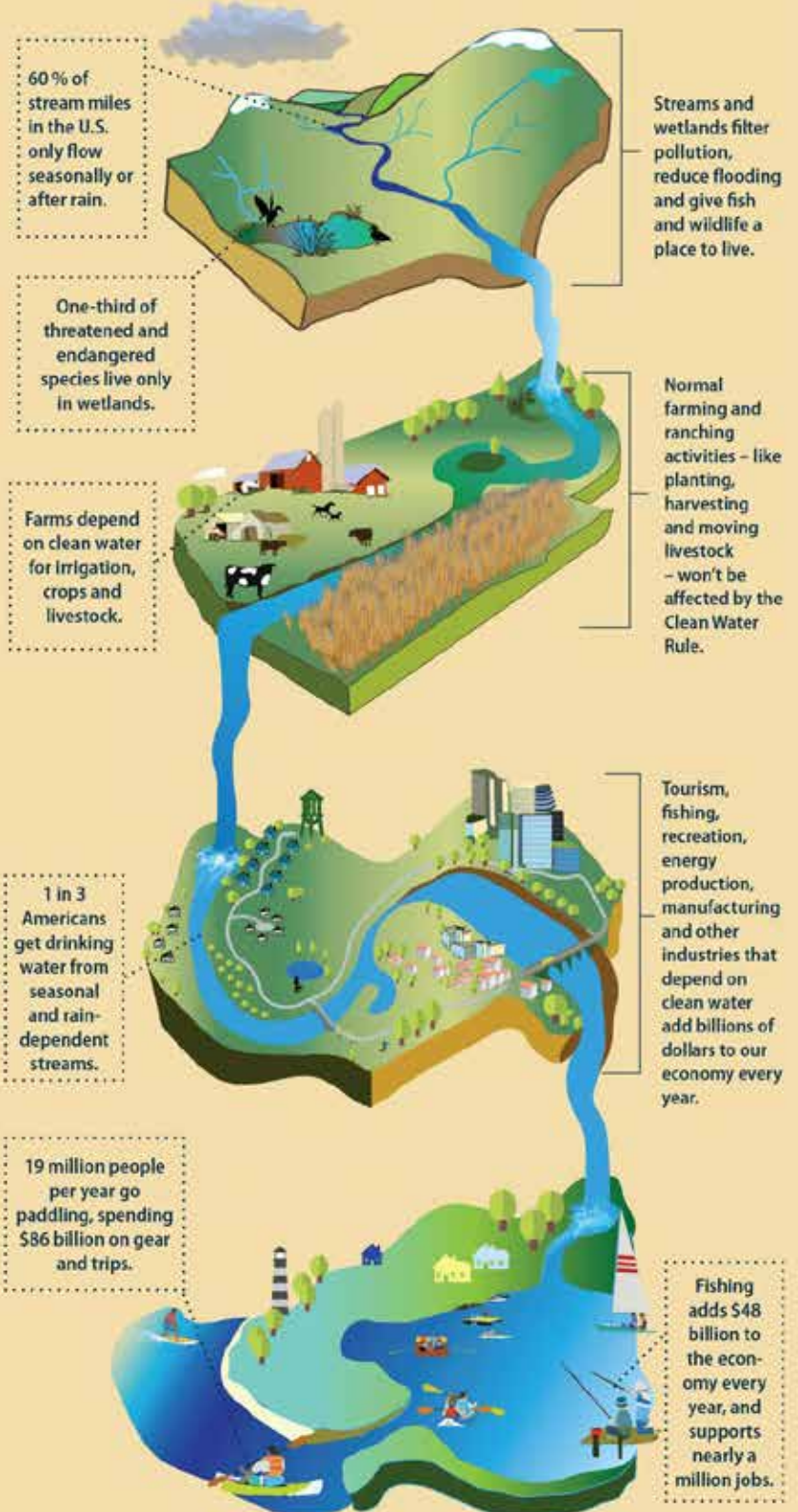
Further challenges await the Clean Water Rule as we wait on a ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court on the Sackett vs. EPA case. This case has considerable consequences to potentially limit our ability to protect waterways and contributing sources, such as wetlands. In this case Sackett contends the EPA does not have regulatory authority to limit impacts to a wetland. The EPA contends wetlands are considered Waters of the United States and therefore subject to the Clean Water Act. As conservation-minded flyfishers, we know how critically important wetlands and headwater, intermittent streams are to the rivers, creeks, and bays that we fish. These areas are critical nurseries, storm-water and water quality infrastructure.

Regardless of SCOTUS's ruling, do what you can to lobby your elected representatives for clean water. Clean water equals healthy fisheries.

KeithMars@conservationonthefly

## WHY #CleanWaterRules

**Clean water upstream means cleaner water downstream.**  
Our Clean Water Rule protects the streams and wetlands that feed our rivers, lakes, bays and coastal waters. These waters are critical for agriculture, healthy communities, our economy and our way of life.



[www.epa.gov/cleanwaterrule](http://www.epa.gov/cleanwaterrule)

## SKIFF Report for January 2023 by Bob Maindelle



While their fathers are deployed, the Peet kids and the Diaz kids got to enjoy a fishing trip provided free of charge via the Soldiers' Kids Involved in Fishing Fun (SKIFF) program. From left: Jack & Rowan Peet, and Alexander and Violet Diaz.

During the month of January 2023, SKIFF conducted the first trip of the New Year. Accompanying me were four kids from two families, each currently impacted by the deployment of their fathers. This would be the final day of Christmas break before the Killeen Independent School District went back in session.

From U.S. Army Sergeant John Diaz's family I had 10-year-old Violet and 13-year-old Alexander join me. SGT Diaz has been in the military for 11 years and serves as a wheeled vehicle mechanic.

From U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Matthew Peet's family I had 8-year-old Rowan and 12-year-old Jack join me. SSG Peet has been in the military for 13 years and serves in the field artillery.

The homefront parents, Jonelle Diaz and Theresa Peet, are back here in the Fort Hood area essentially managing as single parents while their husbands are deployed.

I had four young, inexperienced anglers I truly wanted to do well, and at a time of year when (due to cold water and inconsistent weather patterns) the fishing is typically neither consistent nor overly productive.

My approach was to keep it very simple so far as the kids' part was concerned, and do my darnedest to find abundant quantities of fish. Whenever white bass are found grouped together in great numbers, even if they are not very "hungry", the sheer numbers of fish present can generate competition. A given fish may not be proactively feeding, but, I do feel it will swat at a bait just to keep another fish from grabbing it first. This was the kind of bite I needed to get the kids into, and, it worked out!

Violet was our first lucky contestant. Once she hooked and landed a fish, the three boys got competitive and started listening (that is, listening as well as Violet did right off the bat!!!) to what I was telling them they needed to do to be successful. Violet's first bit of success also "broke the ice" and showed everyone else that this thing called catching fish could really be done.

For 3.5 hours the kids worked white, 3/8 oz. Bladed Hazy Eye Slabs with stinger hooks vertically using a slow-smoking tactic while watching Garmin LiveScope. They amassed a catch of 51 fish during this time, including 1 legal hybrid striper, 1 short hybrid striper, 2 freshwater drum, 1 largemouth bass, and 46 white bass, of which 3 were short.

P.S. – I injured my left rotator cuff and underwent surgery on 13 Jan. 2023. Although recovery is going well, I know I will not be conducting any SKIFF trips in the month of February 2023.



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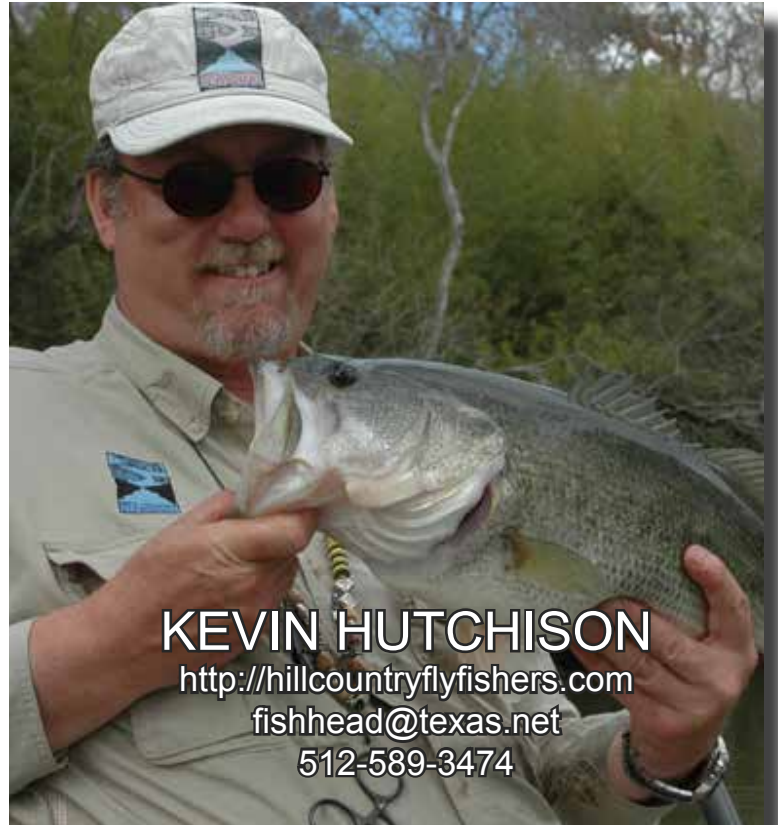
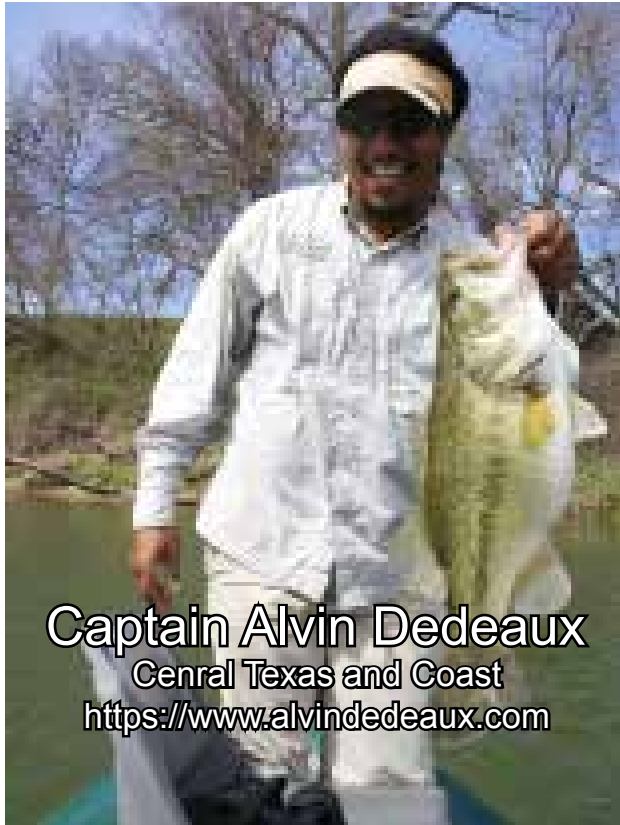
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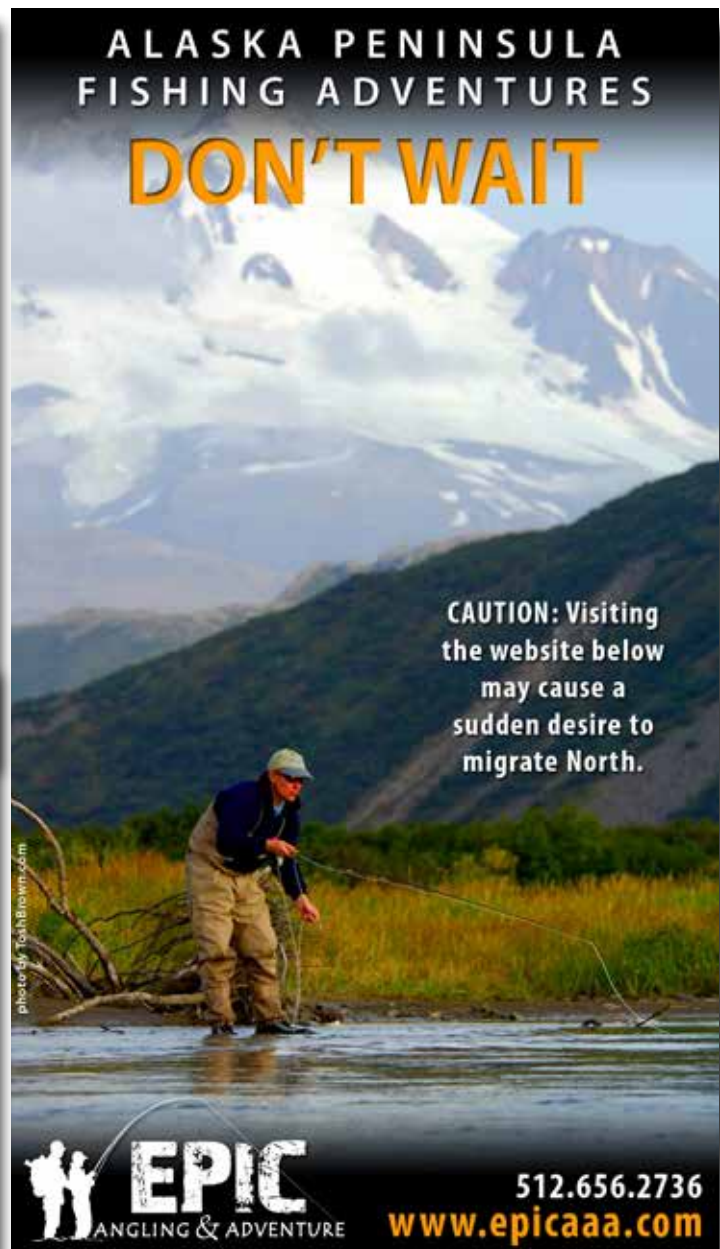
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