



# AUSTIN FLY FISHERS

April 2018  
Volume 20, Issue 4



Club Meeting  
Thursday, April 19  
Filsons at the Domain  
not at NW Rec Cntr

Crooked Island guide Elton "Shakey" McKinney  
and Brandon Rabke with permit caught on  
Long Cay, Bahamas



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# President's Message **Shawn Riggs**

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I have been quite busy these last few months. From fishing expos to film festivals, I have been making the rounds attending events involving one of my favorite things: fly-fishing.

In February I loaded up the family and headed north to attend the Fly Fish Texas Expo, which was held at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center in Athens, Texas. I met the new Texas Council President, Jerry Hamon, along with other officers of the council and the presidents of several new clubs including the Abilene Fly Fishers and New Braunfels Fly Fishers. TFFC is a great facility with rainbow trout stocked ponds and streams as well as educational exhibits and even an aquarium. Even though some thunderstorms hampered the event a bit on Saturday we still had a fun time and Sunday morning we met to discuss council business with a very constructive meeting. Afterwards my wife and kids tried their luck fly casting to hungry rainbows. My daughter, Davie, had several bites but wasn't quite quick enough to set the hook but my wife, Jessica, finally landed one and the kids were very excited to see the colorful fish up close and personal.

In March with my two youngest kids in tow, I attended the Ladyfish event that was put on by local fly shop Living Waters and the City of Round Rock. It was held in charming downtown Round Rock and over 200 women preregistered for this instructional event which was free to attend. The club's very own Kathi Harris was gracious enough to sit at a table for hours promoting the Austin Fly Fishers to the masses. She was joined by the San Gabriel Fly Fishers, Texas Women Fly Fishers, Guadalupe Trout Unlimited and Casting for Recovery,

all of whom had great booths with loads of information about their prospective organizations. There were great presentations and workshops explaining everything from Tenkara fishing to entomology. When my 5 year old daughter wasn't running around the grounds performing gymnastic bridges and hand stands, she enjoyed watching the ladies casting lessons on the lawn, viewing the various aquatic insects under the magnifying glass and of course she loved the fully equipped raft set up with a fake female angler on the stern and a bubble machine on the bow. We even wandered a few blocks over to check out quaint Brushy Creek, which is a picturesque spot to try your hand angling for sunfish and bass in its clear waters.

Also in March I attended the Fly Fishing Film Tour at the historic Paramount Theatre with my brother, Shane. This has become an annual occurrence for the two of us that we look forward to all year. I even spotted a few members of the Austin Fly Fishers in attendance. This is always a huge event with big sponsors from the fly fishing and outdoor industries. There were some terrific films this year and I have to say that my favorite ones were *Atlantius*, which showed tarpon fishing in unusual places, *African Tiger*, which portrayed angling for giant tiger fish in Africa and *Dubai on the Fly*, which showcased the city's traditional Arabic fishing culture along with its booming fly fishing industry. After watching this bevy of films all you want to do is grab your rod and reel as you leave the theater and head straight to the water's edge to chase some fins.

## President's message cont.

In April I made it to the Oskar Blues Brewery's first ever Tie One On Fly Fishing Expo held in their expansive taproom. There were fly fishing presentations from Texas guides and fishing gear raffled off to several lucky people in attendance. They even had fly tying demos and that table was manned completely by members of the Austin Fly Fishers! This motley crew included Matt Bennett, Jim Gray, Jeff Hoelter and Scott Kerrigan who were all tying various flies while imbibing in the process. It was

a great time and my first chance to see the space in person. I really enjoyed the talks and a couple of their craft brews in the process.

One of the great things about Texas is that there are always countless happenings going on for people to enjoy our beautiful state. From the Austin City Limits festival for music lovers to local BBQ cook-offs for carnivores and from college athletic tournaments for sports fans to the Armadillo Bazaar for art aficionados. Now it appears that if you have an appetite for

all things fly fishing that the list keeps on growing of occasions to attend. There are the long tenured events like GRTU's Troutfest Texas and the Fredericksburg Fly Fishers hosted Oktoberfisch along with a new crop of festivals popping up around the state to whet your angling appetite. So clear your calendar and head out to any one of the numerous fly-fishing affairs going on in Texas. You won't regret it and you may learn a thing or two to help you land the big one on your next trip to the water. Fish on.

### Memories of Lefty Kreh by Jeff Hoelter



In 2003 Austin Fly Fishers was honored to have Lefty Kreh as the keynote speaker for our banquet/fund raiser. Earlier in the day, he shared fishing stories and a casting demo on the banks of Lady Bird Lake. When he asked for a volunteer to cast, Jim Gray jumped at the chance. After a short time, Lefty asked him if he ever looked at his back cast. The answer was no. Lefty said "Good, it's not a pretty sight".

That evening, Lefty was most entertaining and incredibly generous with his time. It seemed like the entire room lined up to have a book or picture signed and he patiently spoke to each and everyone of us as if we were old friends. When Jim got to the front with the picture I'd taken earlier, Lefty recognized it was from the morning session. "How do you want me to sign it" he asked. Jim told him "I don't care what you write but I'm going to tell everyone I was giving you a casting lesson". He signed it: To Jim, Thanks for the casting tips. Lefty

Other people you may recognize in the photo are Jack Lehman, Dave Speer (LHD), Phil Dopson, Steve Best and Keith Barnes.

RIP, Lefty. Thanks for all you've done for us.



## April Meeting will be held at Filson in the Domain

Alix Grant, the manager of Filson in the Domain, has invited the Austin Fly Fishers to hold its April meeting at the store. There will be a raffle, snacks, and beer. Big Bend Brewing Company will provide beverages to all in attendance. That's not all! Matt Bennett and Jeff Hoelter will be doing fly tying demonstrations. There will also be a slideshow of a recent outing to Crooked Island, Bahamas. Brandon, Nils, Joe, Jim, and Steven be available to answer questions about fly fishing in the Bahamas.



### Financial Report

by Shawn Riggs

3/1/2018 - 3/31/2018

**Begin Bal. Checking \$12,262.98**

#### Income:

Raffle	\$55.00
Dues AFF FFI	<u>\$248.20</u>
Total Income	\$303.20

#### Disbursements:

S. Riggs event refshmts	\$10.20
S. Riggs hotel council mtg	<u>\$97.74</u>
Total Disbursements	\$107.94
Net	\$195.26

#### Unencumbered:

Unallocated Funds	\$6,148.52
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#### Encumbered Funds:

Casting for Recovery	\$0.00
SKIFF	\$6,309.72

**Ending Bal-Checking \$12,458.24**



During the first week of April, Joe Andrezik, Carroll Hall, Jim Patton, Brandon Rabke, Steven Turner, and I traveled to Crooked Island, Bahamas. This was my second trip to this island and I made my arrangements directly with local island residents Willie Gibson, for housing and meals, and Elton "Shakey" McKinney, for arranging the fishing guides. This article presents a brief summary of our experience of fishing the waters around Crooked Island and interacting with the "locals."

We rented a (recently renovated) modern house in Landrail Point managed by Willie. The house is right on the water and comes with an ocean view, sandy beach, and all the comforts of home (e.g., washing machine). In addition to the managing property, Willie owns and operates the Gibson 2 restaurant. She provided all of our meals during the stay. Breakfast was brought to our house every morning, lunches were provided on our guide boats, and the wonderful dinners were served at her restaurant that was a short walk from the house. At our evening meals, we regularly joined other fly fisherman, folks from other countries doing work on the island, and occasionally vacationers for family-style meals and very interesting conversations.

Shakey McKinney, Jeffery Moss, and Randy McKinney were our guides. Every morning they picked us up at our beach for a day of fishing. We set out with them to visit various flats all along the Bight of Acklins, primarily looking for bonefish and occasionally permit and tarpon. The guides' ability to select promising areas to see and fish for bonefish was incredible. Often, the best I could do is point my rod in the direction the guide indicated, as I waited for these silver ghosts to come into view. More often than not, I would cast in the direction and at the distance that my guide told me without seeing a fish. All too often, I didn't see the bone until the noise of my fly hitting the water spooked the fish and they made a hasty retreat.



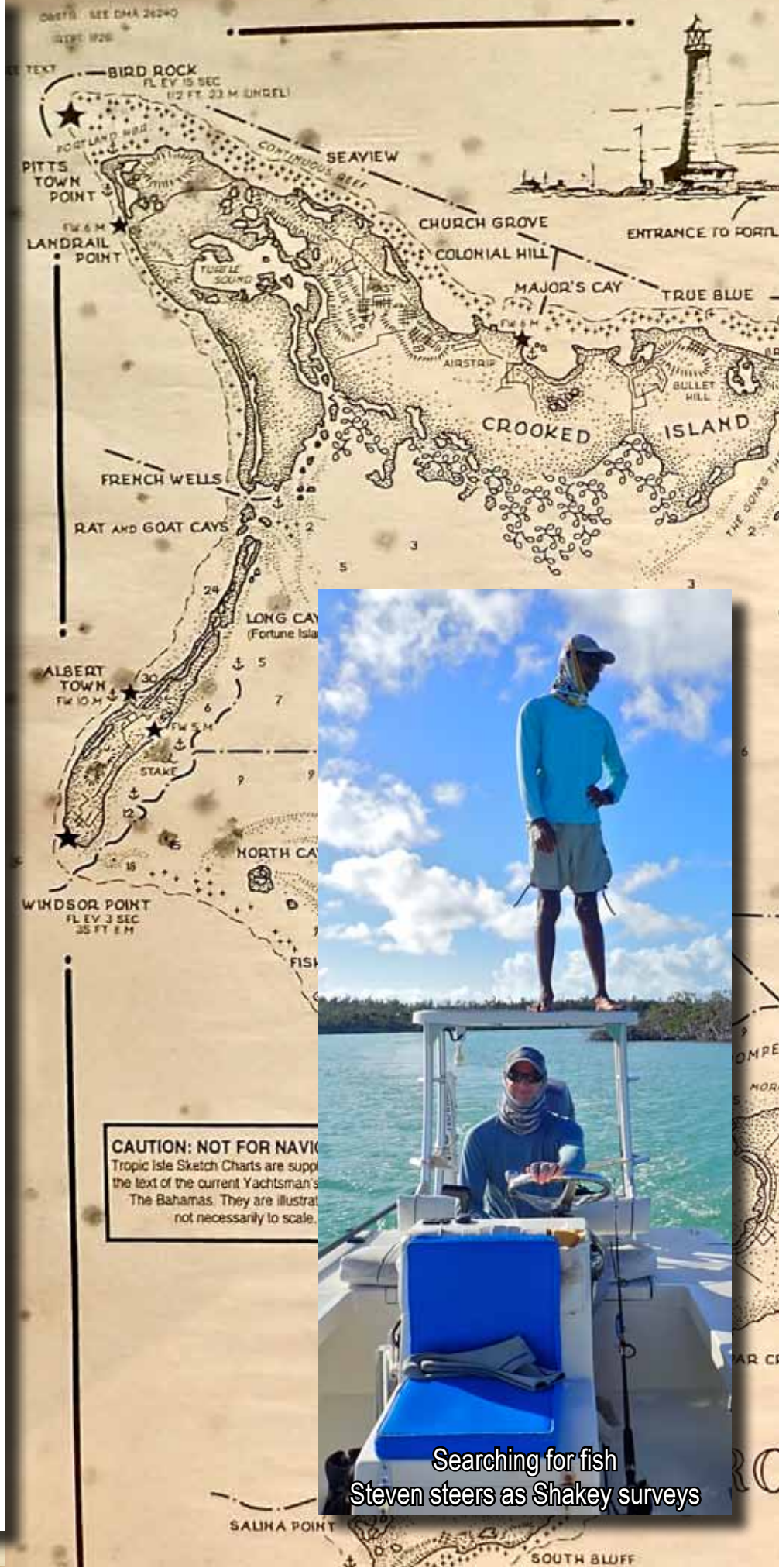
Beachfront pickup  
Jim and Steven board Randy's flats boat



## Crooked Island cont.

Crooked Island is approximately 250 miles south of Nassau and is considered an "out-island" -- in other words, off the beaten path. There are only two flights from Nassau to Crooked Island every week (Saturday and Wednesday). With a population of only 200 residents, it is an island visited primarily by fishermen. As you may see in some of the photos that accompany this article, there are numerous dead mangroves, uprooted trees, and boarded-up homes. These are the lasting scars from the devastation caused by hurricane Joaquin in September of 2015. Hurricane Joaquin sat over the island for 2 days with intense winds and a storm surge of up to 30 feet. Fortunately, all of the residents survived, but not without harrowing experiences, that forced many persons to leave the island and never return. The residents who remained are some of the friendliest and most accommodating people you will ever meet in one's travels. Without getting into all of the details, one person in our party had his reservation for Saturday flight to the island and his return flight canceled. After appealing his plight to the airline supervisor, it appeared that there were many persons in standby status ahead of him and nothing could be done. With no apparent way to get him on this flight, I called Willie to see whether she could help. I don't know what she did, however, just before take-off, our fishing mate climbed aboard our flight. Yes, we all cheered upon seeing our fishing buddy enter the plane, sit down and buckle his seatbelt. Crisis averted. During our stay on the island, Willie found a way to get him back to Nassau on the following Saturday. All I can say is that this woman is connected and can work miracles.

Beginning on Sunday, we spent 6 days fishing the waters around Crooked Island. We broke up into pairs and rotated among our guides. We began our fishing at the tail end of a cold front. That meant sporadic rain, high winds, and persistent cloud cover. For fly fishermen, these are the most difficult conditions for finding and casting to fish. Needless to say, that first day was rough. Fortunately, the front moved on, the winds diminished, and the cloud cover dissipated.



Searching for fish  
Steven steers as Shakey surveys

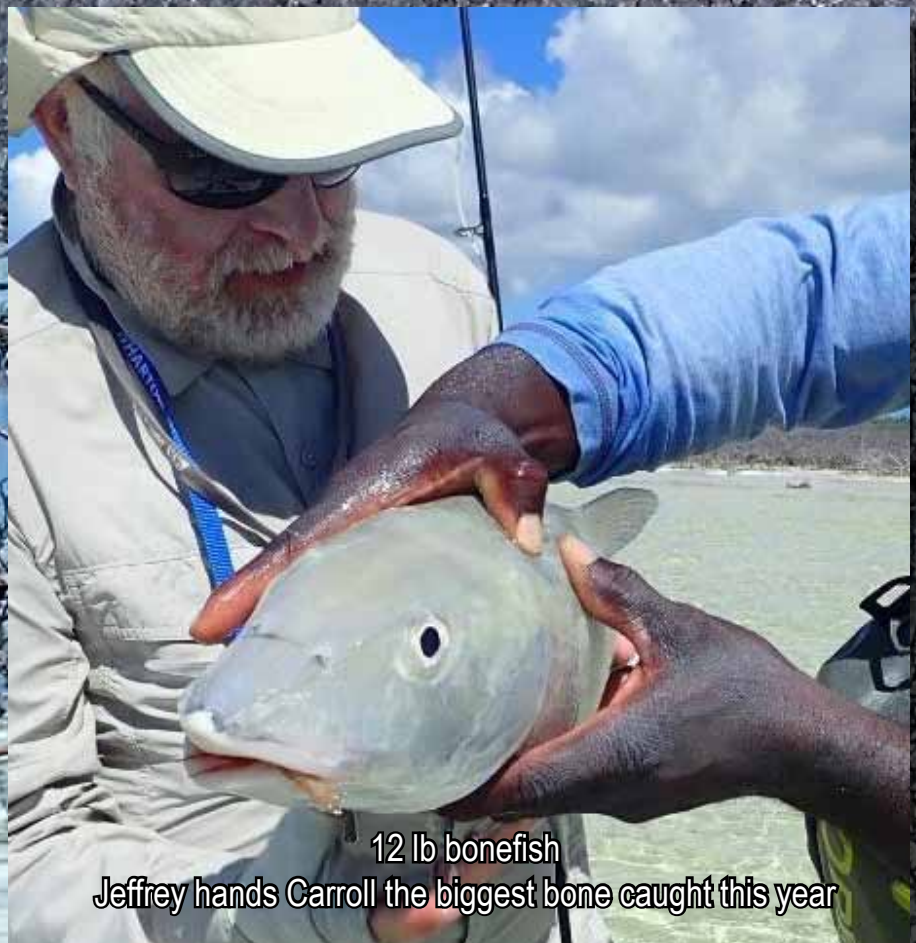


## Crooked Island cont.

For those unfamiliar with fishing for bonefish, the overall process is rather simple. Bonefish migrate in and out of large shallow areas, flats, with the tides. On an incoming tide, as the water on the flat increases the bones move in to feed. The flats may have hard sand bottoms, grass covered muck, or vast estuaries dotted with mangroves. Typically, the smaller bones travel in groups and the larger ones seem to travel alone or in pairs. Bonefish have two natural predators: sharks and barracudas. These predators can't enter the flats until the water level is high enough for them to pursue their prey. On the outgoing tide, the water level on the flat decreases and the bonefish leave the flats for deeper water.

One of the best opportunities for catching bones is when they are traveling along the channels leading to the flats when they are either entering or leaving. During this time, the bones are more concentrated and easier to find. This where the guide's familiarity with the island and the tides comes into play. Because it takes longer for the tidal flow to reach some flats, guides will move from one fishing spot where the tide is slacking to another spot where there greater tidal movement.

As I explained earlier, the bonefish move in and out with the tides. On more than one occasion, we found ourselves in a channel surrounded by enormous shallow-water estuaries with hundreds of bones slowly meandering among the dead mangroves. In this situation, you are looking at bonefish in easy casting range but with no way to extract the fish without getting tangled in the mangroves. In this situation, the best strategy is to wait for the bones to move into the channel that is clear of growth, make a cast, and hope you can keep the bone from running back to the mangroves. For those of us who grow impatient, the urge to cast among the obstacles is unbearable. Yes, that's me. I was standing on the deck looking as a school of bones 30 feet away swimming among the mangroves. As I started to make a motion to cast toward the fish, our guide Shakey said, "what's the plan, man?" Upon hearing that, we all cracked up. Of course, I had no plan to hook up that bone without becoming hopelessly entangled. That put an abrupt halt to my cast.



12 lb bonefish

Jeffrey hands Carroll the biggest bone caught this year



Bonefish meandering in the mangroves  
What's the plan, man?



## Crooked Island cont.

Everyone caught bonefish! Many were in the 3 to 4 lb range but several pushed into or exceeded the 5 to 7 lb bracket. While every bonefish is an exciting experience, we had two noteworthy catches during our trip. First, Carroll Hall caught the largest bonefish. It is not easy to land a 12 lb bonefish. The hook set, knots, lines, and retrieve must all hold up under the pressure of this racehorse. As Carroll recalled later, he knew that he a special catch when his guide pulled out his camera and noted that this might be the catch of the season. Second, on the last day, in the final hour, Brandon Rabke caught a permit. Shakey spotted the permit that was hovering over a large stingray and that was hunting for crabs and shrimp that the ray had missed while churning up the bottom. In order to enable the 70 foot cast, Shakey maneuvered our boat to the upwind side of this duo and Brandon got his cast right on the mark and landed a fish that very few fly fishermen catch. A few high-flying barracuda were caught. Jim and Joe caught enough mutton snapper to feed all the guests at the Gibson 2 restaurant. Willie's youngest brother brought back an enor-



Jim and Randy with Barracuda



Shakey and Steven with bonefish



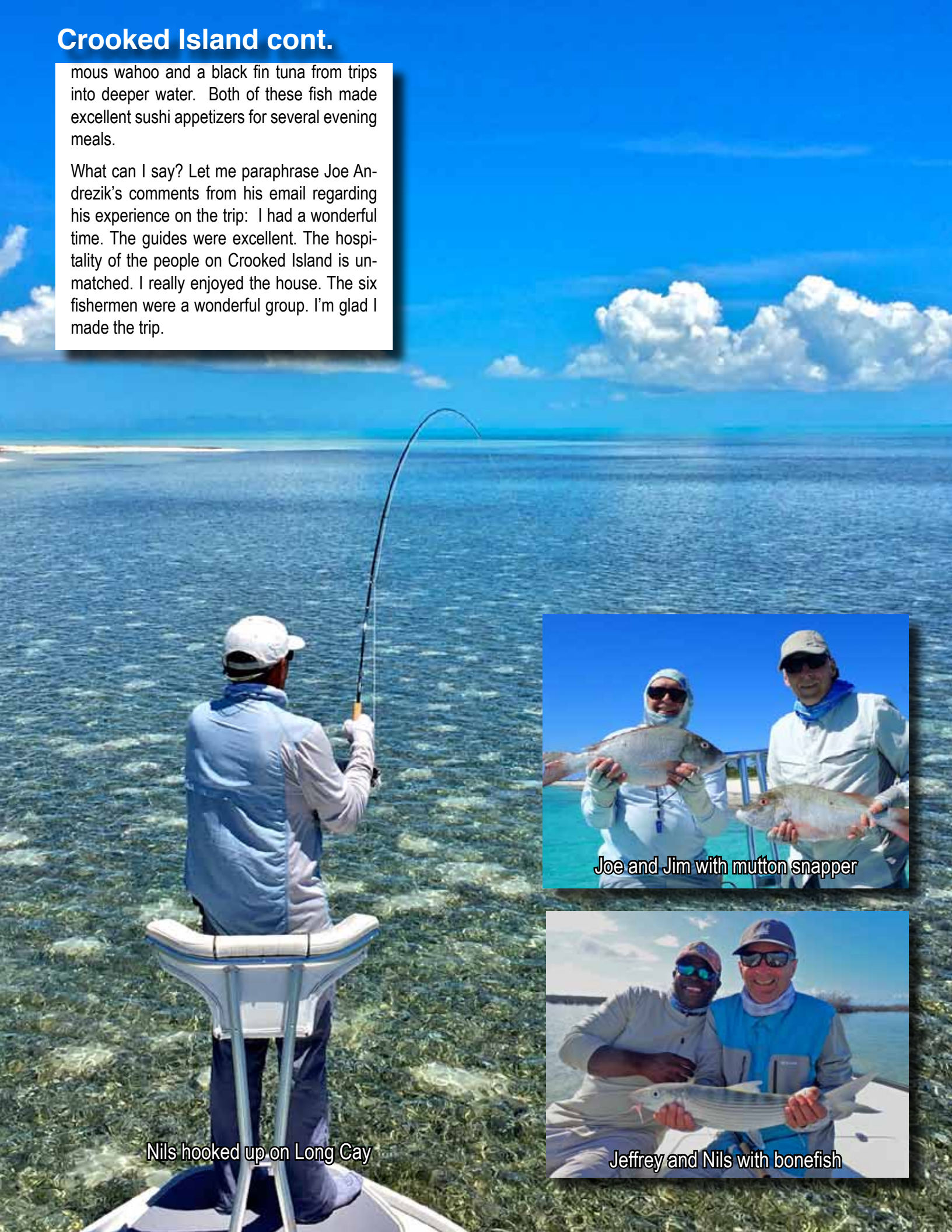
Flamingos on Long Cay



## Crooked Island cont.

mous wahoo and a black fin tuna from trips into deeper water. Both of these fish made excellent sushi appetizers for several evening meals.

What can I say? Let me paraphrase Joe Andrezik's comments from his email regarding his experience on the trip: I had a wonderful time. The guides were excellent. The hospitality of the people on Crooked Island is unmatched. I really enjoyed the house. The six fishermen were a wonderful group. I'm glad I made the trip.

A large background photograph showing a man from behind, wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt, dark pants, and a white cap. He is standing on a boat, holding a fishing rod that is bent into a large arc, indicating he has hooked a fish. The boat is on a body of water with a sandy beach and turquoise water in the distance under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds.

Nils hooked up on Long Cay



Joe and Jim with mutton snapper



Jeffrey and Nils with bonefish



# The Fly Tyer's Corner by Matt Bennett

## Craft Fur Baitfish

This is my take on a Craft Fur Baitfish. While I didn't come up with the original fly, I've fished it for quite a while and have tweaked it over the years to my liking. It's a great mixed-use big baitfish fly for the Lower Colorado or off the jetties on the coast. This is an easy fly to cast and uses a tying method known as hollow tying to get bulk without much weight.

Hook: Patridge Attitude Extra 4/0

Thread: .006 Mono

Tail: SF Blend, EP, or other synthetic, and Flashabout

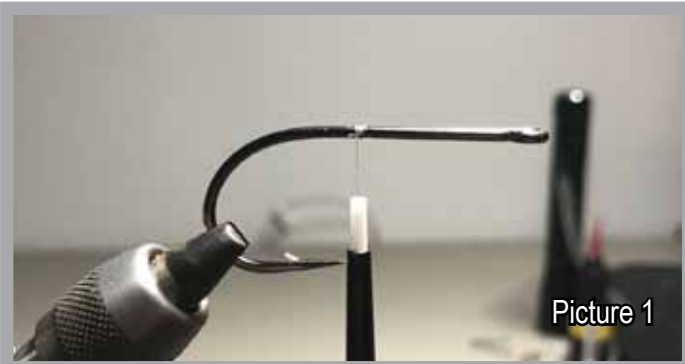
Body: Craft Fur, reverse tied

Gill Color: Polar Chenille

Eyes: 10MM Mirage Eyes

Adhesive: Loctite Gel Super Glue and Loon UV Flow

**Picture 1:** Place your hook in the vise and create a jam knot with the thread. Mono is slick so take extra care to ensure it's secure.



**Pictures 4:** Using a hollow tub or straw, push the club of craft fur back towards the bend and tie it down to secure.



**Picture 2:** Take a hank of SF Blend and secure it in the middle. Reverse the forward clump back over the bend of the hook and secure. Top with half 6-8 strands of Flashabout.



**Picture 5:** Move up the hook shank, and repeat this process.



**Pictures 3:** Move up the shank slightly. Prepare a clump of Craft Fur and clean out the underfur. Tie it in by the butt section so that it encompasses the entire hook shank with the tips facing towards the eye.



**Picture 6:** Move up and repeat yet again, but this is where you'll start to add in a top color.



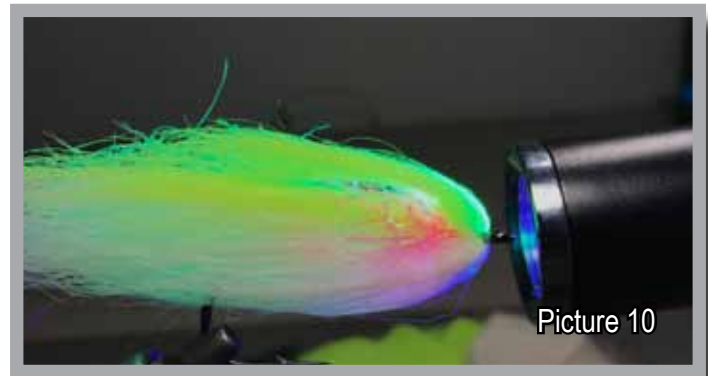


# Fly Tyer cont.

**Pictures 7:** Tie in a small section of Polar Flash and wrap 3-4 times. Secure and trim.



**Pictures 10:** Cover the section near the hook eye in a small amount of UV glue, 360 degrees around the shank. "Push" the craft fur towards the eye to create a bump for the head. Cure with a UV Torch.



**Picture 8:** Move up to the eye of the hook and tie in another two clumps. You will whip finish this as the tie in point, leaving the



**Picture 11:** Glue on your eyes. Press and ensure they are secure.



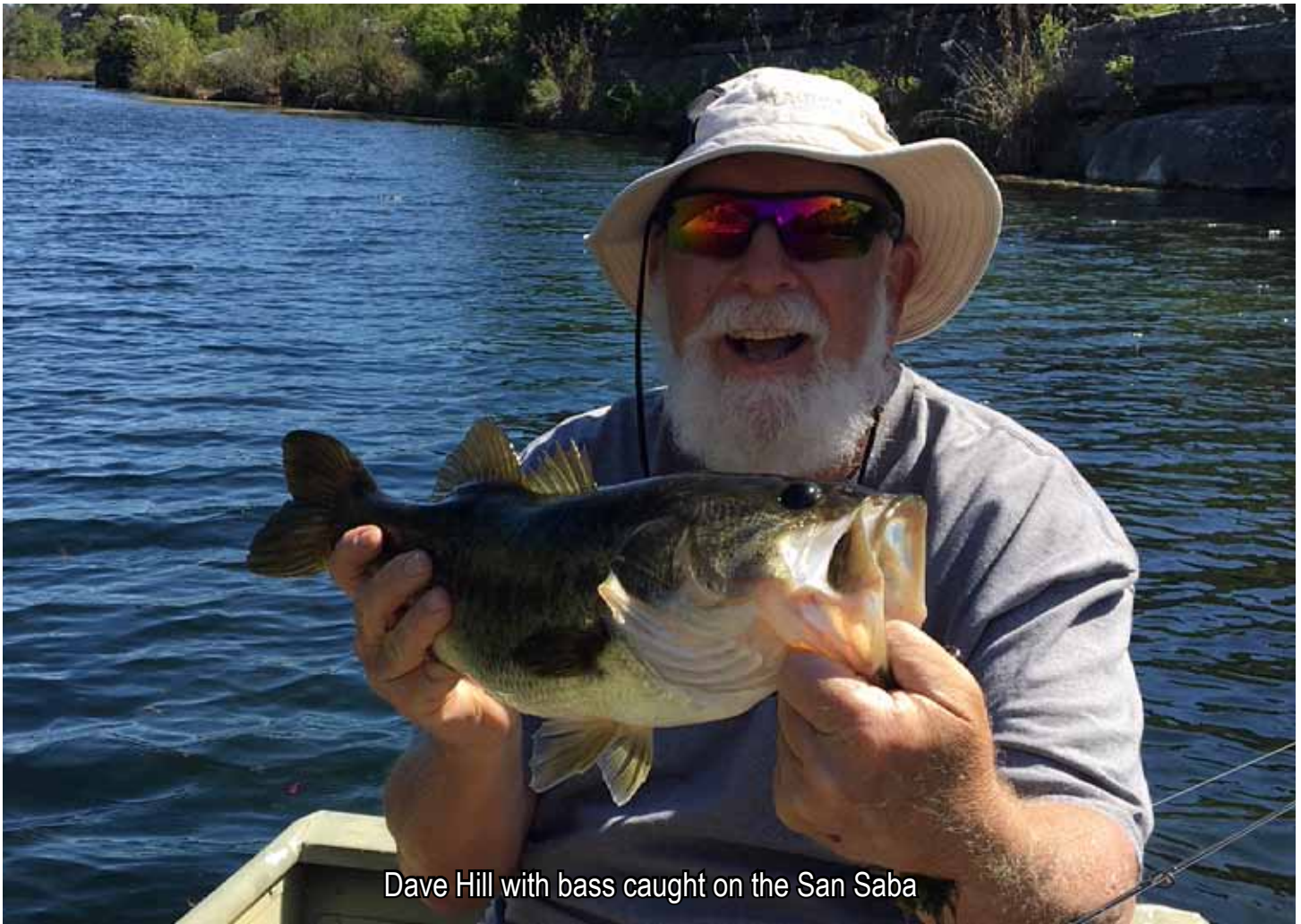
**Picture 9:** Use a tube or straw to push back the front-facing pieces.



**Picture 12:** Add barring or other accents.







Dave Hill with bass caught on the San Saba

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The following individuals who made presentations to our club in 2017/2018. Please follow the links to get more information on the services they provide. You won't be disappointed.

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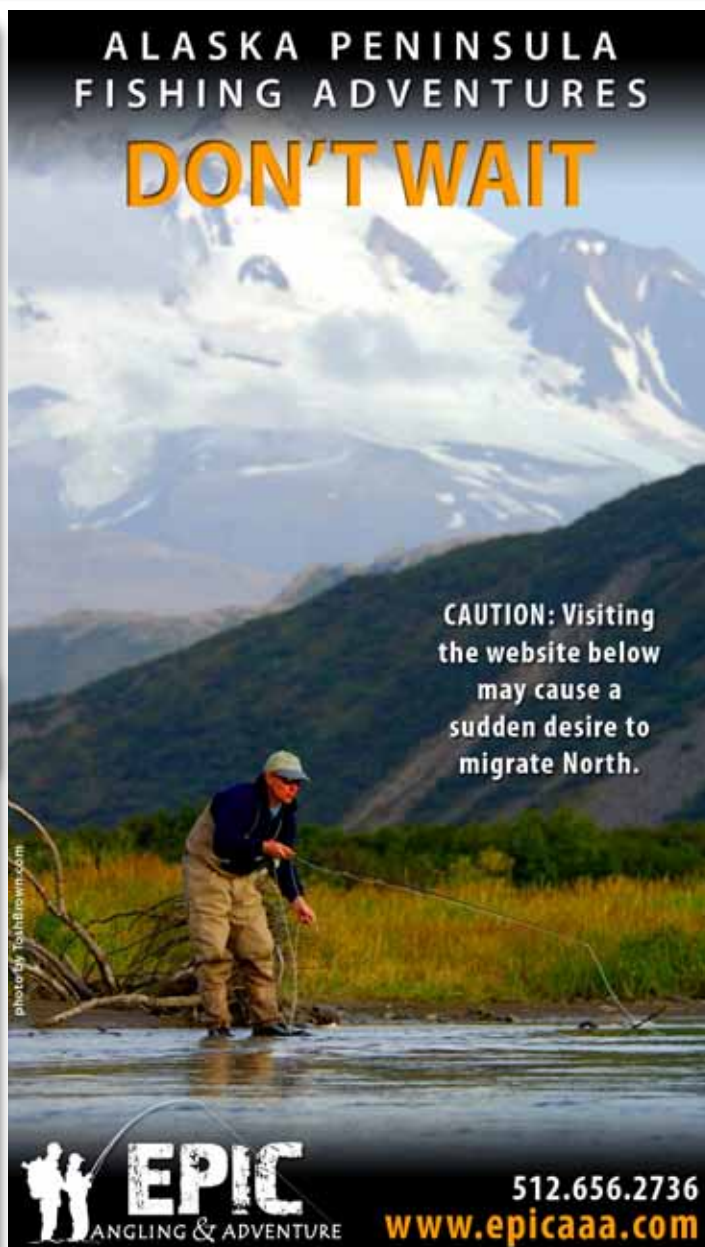
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