

# Austin Fly Fishers

A member club of the  
International Federation of Fly Fishers  
January 2016  
Volume 18, Issue 1

Club Meeting  
Thursday, January 21  
Northwest Recreation Center  
6:00 Fly Tying Demos by Mike Morphew  
7:00 Captain Jeff Johnson will be making a  
presentation on winter fly fishing in Rockport

Fly Fishing Rockport  
Photo by Captain Jeff Johnson

# President's Message by Matt Bennett

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I'd like to start 2016 by thanking our exiting President Jim Gray. Jim brought a ton of positive change to our club with a focus on local conservation and other items, leading to numerous local and national awards with both the Texas Council and IFFF. He leaves some large shoes to fill that will require lots of folks to step up. Jim will remain on our Board and assist me as I take over his spot, so he isn't going anywhere.

I'd also like to thank Dave Hill, Doug Kierklewski, and everyone else who assisted with our 2015 Christmas Party. I wasn't able to stay the full time, but heard nothing but positive comments. We again reached our goal of securing funding for two Casting for Recovery participants. We've already begun talks about next year's party and hope to make a few changes to make it better than ever. Thank you also to all of our sponsors and members who donated items to be auctioned and raffled. We couldn't have done it without you.

Dakus Geeslin has graciously taken over my previous spot of Vice President. He and I will continue to strive for bringing some great speakers to our meetings. We're always open for feedback and recommendations for speakers and programs. Mike Mophew has stepped into our Education chair, and we're looking forward to some great programs for this year. Mike recently completed the Bronze Level of the IFFF Fly Tying Group, and is currently working on the Silver, and we hope to offer a few tying courses this year if there is interest.

We're always looking for additional volunteers to assist with club business. Dave Hill has graciously procured refreshments before our monthly meetings and would like to pass the duty to other folks. If you're interested in this, please let me know. It's a small job to do and the club will reimburse your expenses. If there's multiple folks interested, we can get a rotating calendar set up.

We have a lot of exciting things planned for 2016 and I hope you'll work with the board to make this the best year yet. Come to our meetings and outings. Invite your friends and bring your kids. Let's make this a year to remember..



## January Speaker –Captain Jeff Johnson

Capt. Jeff Johnson is a fly fishing guide out of Rockport. He will present information about fly fishing the Rockport area during the winter. His presentation will include information on fishing areas in Rockport, winter fishing tactics, fish attitudes/habits, equipment, and flies.

Jeff's love of fishing began at an early age. He grew up along the banks of the Yakima River, in Central Washington, it became pretty obvious that fishing was in his blood. In 1997, he moved to Bozeman, MT to attend college a little, and fly fish a lot. This is where he really began to hone his skills, eventually trout bumming for entire summers on the Missouri and other area rivers. After years of freshwater guiding and visiting saltier climates, he decided to expand his business to the salt. He had been fishing the flats of Texas of over 10 years and fell in love with the town of Rockport. He decided to expand his fishing operations to Rockport and the Costal Bend of Texas. <http://www.flyfishrockport.com/>



# Wilderness Outpost Camp in Alaska by Captain Rus Schwausch

As many of you know, Captain Rus Schwausch is a member of the Austin Fly Fishers and also one of our sponsors. Each summer he runs 2 camps in Alaska. His Wilderness Outpost Camp is in a remote location off Bristol Bay on the King Salmon River operating from mid-June through Late July. His Wilderness Safari Camp is located on Alaska Peninsula on Nakalilok Bay and operates from mid-July through September. The following article comes from Rus's blog that reports on camp activities for the past summer. Next month, we will find out more about the Safari Camp. -Nils Pearson

## Fishing

Without question, 2015 was another incredibly strong season of fly fishing in Bristol Bay at our Outpost camp. It's hard to believe, but it was perhaps even better than our 2014 season.

Like last year, most notable was the sheer number and large average size of the Dolly Varden we caught in Outpost creek (our home water). Literally nearly all fish were between 18 and 24 inches, with large numbers over 22 inches. They chased top-water mice patterns and crushed both streamers and egg imitations. The new camp record Dolly measured 30.25 inches. Photo on right.

In late June and early July, the trout fishing was excellent in our home creek, but it became overpowered by the incredible Dolly fishing in mid to late July (this was a



good problem to have). One of the small creeks we access with the jet boat had exceptional trout fishing, as usual. Here we predominantly sight cast to rainbow trout from 12" to 24" in a 10 foot wide shallow, gin-clear creek. Overall we had very good luck on top-water mice patterns, traditional trout streamers and eggs.

The king salmon run was strong again this year – we observed even greater numbers of kings in our home creek compared to 2014. The chum salmon run was early and OK, but slightly lighter than average. A few pink salmon moved into our river. Not as many as last year, but this is no surprise since odd years are generally the “off” year for pinks in Bristol Bay. A couple of sockeye salmon were landed.

The grayling fishing was on par with previous seasons – big numbers of fish caught on streamers, eggs and dry flies. The best grayling fishing was prior to mid July.

### **Wildlife**

This year’s wildlife highlight, without question, was a fox den about 1/3 mile from camp. On multiple occasions we watched 2 to 5 fox kits playing, frolicking, and just being cute – many grown men were reduced to “oohs” and “aahs” watching the incredible display.

Bear, moose and caribou sightings were overall lighter than average (all were seen). Frequent wolf tracks were seen along the riverbeds, with two wolves spotted (thanks for the reminder, Rick) on separate occasions mid to late July – one a couple hundred yards from camp, one about a half mile downriver.

### **General**

Mid June to early July was hot, dry and sunny. Air and water temps finally cooled mid to late July with needed rain showers and cloudier days.

Water levels started off lower and warmer than normal due to a light snow pack and warm spring. Levels remained lower than average throughout the season, but stayed healthy thanks to the mid/late July rain showers. We did measure a record warm water temp of 63 degrees F in early July. Water temps usually stay below the mid 50’s. Bugs were very light all season long – we didn’t even set up our screen shelter (about the 4th or 5th season in a row we did not need it, and that’s a serious treat).

<http://www.epicanglingadventure.com/alaska-wilderness-outpost/>



# Texas Trout by Chris Johnson

There are trout in Texas?! If I had a dollar for every time that I have heard that question, I would own many more fly rods! Now, do they naturally occur in Texas? Outside of a possible, past population of Rio Grande Cutthroat in the Guadalupe Mountains, the answer is a definite no.

However, thanks to Texas Parks and Wildlife, there are now recreational trout opportunities across the entire state during the winter months. While these fisheries are primarily seasonal, "put and take" destinations, there is one exception to the rule: the Guadalupe River!

The Guadalupe is the only year-round trout fishery in Texas and is stocked by not only by Texas Parks and Wildlife, but by Guadalupe River Trout Unlimited as well. It is also the only river in the Lone Star State capable of sustaining a population of trout. Contrary to popular belief, the rainbows in the Guadalupe do not all die off in the summer! While the fishery is stocked during the cooler months, many of the trout survive our harsh summers, thanks to the cold water released from the bottom of Canyon Dam. The fish that make it from year to year (holdovers), occasionally spawn successfully and produce first generation, "wild" rainbows in Texas.

The Guadalupe is the southernmost trout fishery in the United States and ranks as one of the 100 best trout streams in the country. The year-round presence of trout in Texas is truly incredible and is a valuable asset to our fly fishing community. It is my hope that you pay the Guadalupe a visit this season and that you are able to meet a few Texas trout up close and personal! See you on the water!

<http://livingwatersflyfishing.com/>



**A wild Guadalupe rainbow. Clearly not a stocked fish**



**A tenkara caught Guadalupe rainbow**



**A holdover rainbow dressed to impress**

# SKIFF Program

by Bob Maindelle

Dear AFF and Friends of SKIFF,

Wow! What a trip! On the afternoon of Saturday, 12 Dec., I conducted a “make-up” fishing trip for 9-year-old Zack Giertz and his 7-year-old brother, Nathaniel.

We originally planned to fish the Saturday following Thanksgiving, but a wet cold front put the brakes on that outing. The timing on this trip was intended to beat the arrival of the next cold front which would arrive around 1:30 AM Sunday morning. We enjoyed grey cloud cover, an unseasonably warm ambient air temperature of 72F, and an even more unseasonably warm water surface temperature of 62F. The only thing that hindered was a bit of rain and the winds — the direction (south) was ideal, but the velocity (20 and gusting higher) was dicey. Seeing the NOAA prediction for calming winds around 15-16 mph for the afternoon, we decided to head out at that time instead of risking a morning trip.

As we got going, I tried to learn a bit about the Giertz family. Matt, the boys' father is currently deployed with the U.S. Army in Kuwait. Liz, the boys' mom, is a 1997 U.S. Military Academy graduate who left active duty when she and Matt started their family. Liz was attending a fundraiser in support of Fort Hood's Santa's Workshop when one of the vendors there, Beads for Life entrepreneur LeaAnn Crawford, saw Liz alone with her boys and mentioned the SKIFF program fishing trips I offer. Ft. Hood Chaplain Bill Shelnuttt had also mentioned this program to Liz, so, she decided to give me a call.

The fish were in a strong, pre-frontal feeding mode, so much so that we saw light surface action at 2 of the 3 locations we fished, and bird action at one of these locations. The fish were so aggressive that there were times when I watched on sonar as bottom-oriented fish rose 6-8 feet off bottom to attack our descending slabs.



As we used i-Pilot technology to hover over the first area I'd chosen to try, I attempted to give the boys instructions on the slow jigging tactics we'd be using with spinning tackle. I first instructed Nathaniel on how to open his bail and ensure his line was on bottom, then, I turned my attention to Zack. By the time I was half-way through tutoring Zack, Nathaniel had his first fish on and was shouting in excitement on the port side. As I went over to Nathaniel to unhook his fish, Zack hooked and landed his first fish and was now shouting in excitement over on the starboard side.

And so it went for nearly four hours of fish-catching fun in the blowing rain.

Zack got the idea early that we might be able to catch 100 fish, after our first stop of the trip yielded 26 fish in under 40 minutes. He kept mentally comparing our “catch to date” with the time remaining in the trip, and kept his eyes set on that 100 fish goal.

As we steadily caught fish, including white bass, hybrid striped bass, large-mouth bass, and freshwater drum, the boys really got the hang of jigging, and rarely required much coaching after the first hour.

In our third hour on the water, Nathaniel hooked into something much larger than the average white bass we'd been catching up to that point. He was grunting and groaning as he tried to keep his

rod tip out of the water and keep his line from contacting the boat. When we “saw color”, I realized he had a record-class white bass on the line. I scrambled for the net and we landed a new Belton Lake record!!

Nathaniel's white bass measured 15.75" and weighed 2.00 pounds on a certified Boga Grip scale. This beat the previous Junior Angler record of 1.50 pounds which measured 14.88 inches and which was caught by another young client of mine, Alex Harman, back in November of 2010.

Both boys caught numerous hybrid stripers and freshwater drum in the 2-3 pound class, as well.

As the daylight dimmed and the window for catching fish was closing at around 5:15pm, our fish count stood at 98. I put my own rod away and told the boys that if we were going to hit 100 fish, it had to be through their efforts alone.

Zack did his part, bringing in an 11" white bass. The count was now 99. Things got really quiet as the boys concentrated on jigging and feeling for a bite. Finally, Nathaniel spoke up and said, “I've got him! I've got him!” and in came a short hybrid striper — our 100th fish of the trip. Then, with the pressure off, we landed one more fish for good measure and, as the sonar screen when clean and the day turned to night, the bite died and we called it a great day on the water!

# The Fly Tyer's Corner

Photos and Recipe by Mike Morphew

## Mylar Shad

This pattern accounted for many bass last year in both Lake Fayette, Bastrop and the Colorado. It looks so good in the water even I would eat it!!!!!! It fishes hook point up which helps with weed areas.

### Materials

Hook: any wide gape long shank size of your choice here I have used a 2/0

Thread : UTC white 140

Underbody: silver tinsel

Body: ¼ inch mylar tubing in pearl is the best

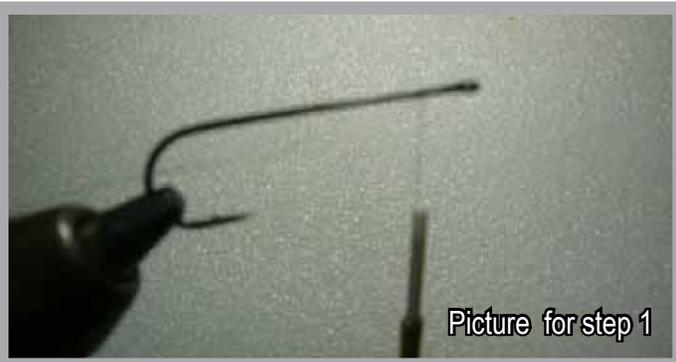
Tail: white marabou

Eyes: Real eyes (size to suit your hook choice)

Gills: red Senyo's laser dub

Head : white Senyo's laser dub

**Step 1:** Place the hook in the vise and add a base of thread



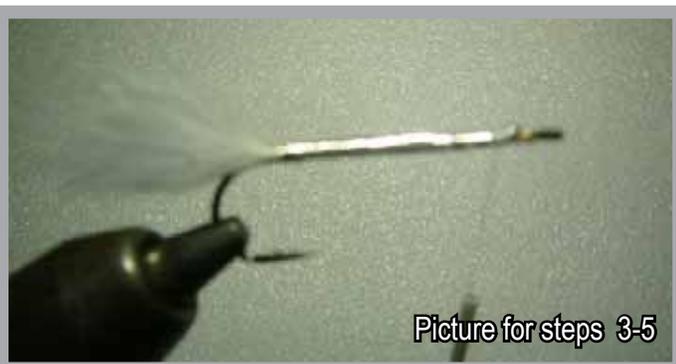
**Step 2:** Select a piece of white marabou and tie in as a tail about 2/3 the shank length



**Step 3:** Bind down the butt ends all the way to the eye as this will ensure a good base for your underbody

**Step 4:** At the eye tie in a length of silver tinsel and wind to the hook bend and back to the eye

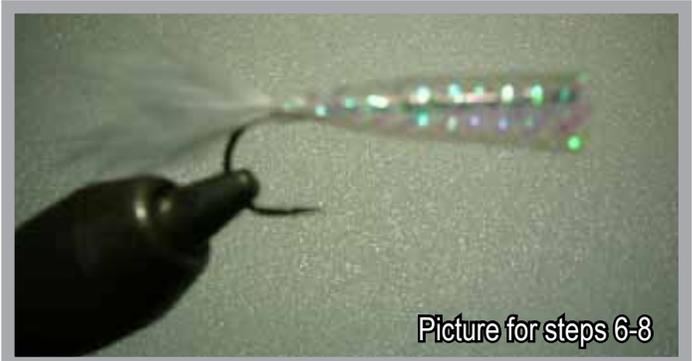
**Step 5:** Whip finish



**Step 6:** Cut a length of the pearl mylar a little longer than the hook shank

**Step 7:** Attach your tying thread at the bend of the hook

**Step 8:** Slide the mylar over the hook eye and down to the thread

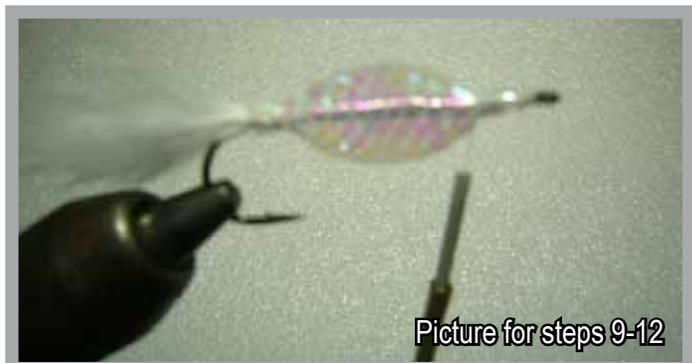


**Step 9:** Tie the end of the mylar and whip finish

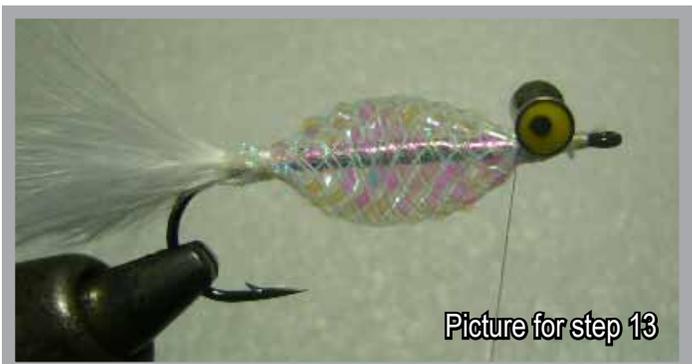
**Step 10:** Tie the thread on again at the eye

**Step 11:** Gently push the mylar towards the tail to form a fish shaped belly

**Step 12:** Tie it off at the eye and trim the waste



**Step 13:** Tie on the real eyes on top of the hook



## Fly Tyer's Corner Continued

**Step 14:** Take a good pinch of the red laser dud and secure in front of the eyes and stroke it over the eyes

**Step 15:** Do the same with the pinch of white laser dub under the eyes

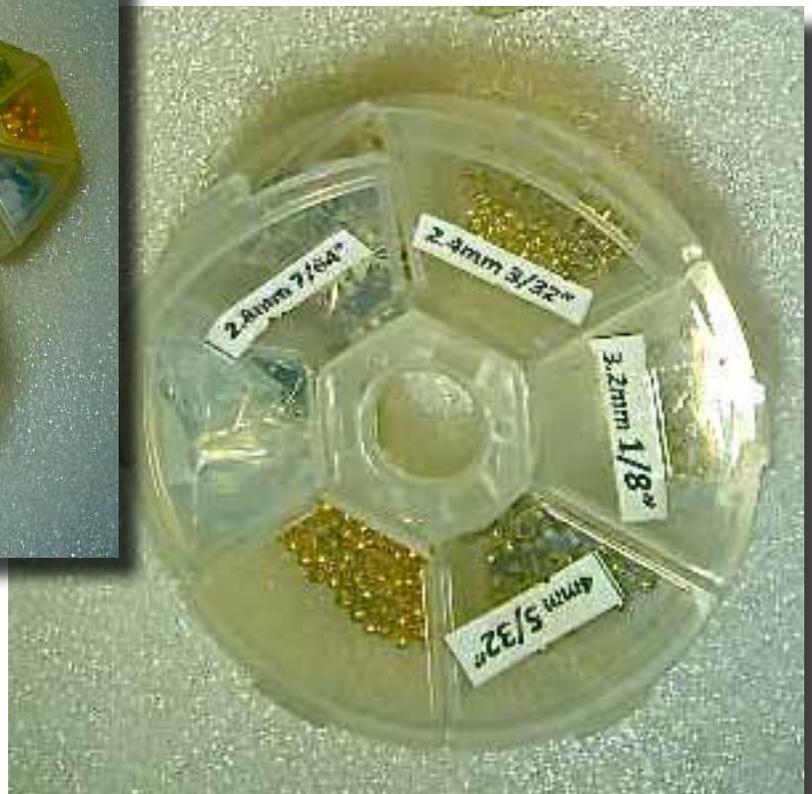
**Step 16:** Take a small brush and brush the fibers of the dubbing towards the tail



## Mike's Tip by Mike Morphew

Here is another storage tip for you fellow tyers

I am sure that a lot of you have already found these containers in the beading section of that well known store beginning with a "W" really cheap I brought several at 99 cents I think they now run at about \$1.50. I love them because each compartment has its own lid for easy use and the lids can be labeled for ease of reference and they stack well on the bench.



## AFF Outings by David Bush

### 2016 Outings

We'll be handling outings the same way in 2016 as we did last year. Therefore, if you're interested in hosting a club outing this year, be sure to get in contact with me so we can put the outing on the club calendar. I always like to try one or two new locations, so if you know of a place we should try, please let me know.

It's trout time on the Guad so I'm looking for a host to help arrange a trip in January or February. Be sure to see me at this week's meeting or contact me by email if you're interested.

We have much more water this year than we've had for several years, so we should be able to fish some waters that haven't been available for a while. For example, we can expect a much-improved white bass run in Central Texas this spring. The action should get started in February and peak in March. I've made reservations for the club at one of the group campsites at Colorado Bend State Park for three different time periods in March. Depending on water and weather conditions, we'll choose the best reservation(s) to take advantage of and cancel the others.

As much as I'd like to schedule a trip to the Sabine River, reports from East Texas indicate that the river is still above flood stage, a condition that has existed for over a month. The river is flowing at 13,000 cfs, down from a peak of about 35,000 cfs. As a point of reference, we've safely fished it from a kayak below about 500 cfs.

## Club Sponsors

The following individuals who made presentations to our club in 2015. Please follow the links to get more information on the services they provide. You won't be disappointed.

**Kelly Galloup** – <http://www.slideinn.com/> Fly Fishing the Madison River

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

**Tim Cole** – <http://www.austinreptileservice.net/> Information and presentations on snakes

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

**Banning Collins** – <http://www.classv.net/> Outdoor Marketing Services



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