

Austin Fly Fishers

A member club of the
International Federation of Fly Fishers
April 2016
Volume 18, Issue 4

Club Meeting
Thursday, April 21
Northwest Recreation Center
6:00 Fly Tying Demos by Mike Morphew
6:00 Casting Instruction (weather permitting)
7:00 Marcos De Jesus will talk about local fisheries,
management strategies, and ongoing projects with
collaboration potential with the Austin Fly Fishers.

Ed Parsons with the bonefish he
caught on his first cast on his
first day on Great Inagua, Bahamas
Photo by Brandon Rabke

A \$25 off coupon with a \$50 pur-
chase has been provided by Orvis
on our Sponsors Page

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President's Message by Matt Bennett

TApril typically marks the consistent return of warmer weather and spring in our area. While we didn't have much of a winter to speak of this year, we received ample moisture to help recharge our lakes and river. Lake Travis is full for the first time in a long time, and Buchanan is creeping up into the low 90th percentile as well. As I sit here and look at our upcoming weather, we're predicted to get anywhere from 3" to upwards of a foot of rain over the next three days. It's starting to look like last spring all over again. Hopefully we can avoid the flooding this time around, but I will always take the rain. Many of you remember the drought in 2011 when we had 100 degree days starting as early as March and no rain to speak of. Our fish populations really suffered then, especially on places like the Llano which lack deeper holes for the fish to escape into. The population is recovering, but it will take quite a while to return to what it once was. The consistent rain we are receiving will definitely go a long way to help with that.

Our annual Brushy Creek Crawfish Boil and cleanup was last weekend, in conjunction with Living Waters and several

other local organizations. I'm told it was a big success, but was unable to be there myself. Thank you to those of you who were able to participate - this is a great event that I look forward to each year. Another clean up event we have scheduled next month will be on the Lower Colorado River, on May 21st. I'll have some additional information about that at the meeting.

I'm planning on trying to host a few outings to the Llano and the Colorado in the upcoming months after I see what the water situation ends up looking like for us after this next big rain event. Outings are the lifeblood of our club and we've had a really hard time scheduling them the past couple of years with the excess rain we've gotten. I'd encourage you to sign up to host an outing this year - it is not a big commitment at all. If you have any questions about what it means to host, talk to our outing chair Dave Bush, or myself.

Financial Report by Shawn Riggs

3/1/2016 - 3/31/2016

Beginning Bal. Checking \$11,757.50

Income:

Dues (AFF&FFF)	\$218.55
Auction	\$250.00
Merchandise	\$25.00
Advertising Revenue	\$240.00
Total Income	\$852.15

Disbursements:

Speaker Expense	\$150.00
Colorado Bend Campsites	\$150.00
Colorado Bend Extra Fee	\$35.00
Total Disbursements	\$335.00

Net \$517.15

Ending Balance-Checking \$12,274.65

Casting for Recovery	\$2,670.30
SKIFF Total Donations	\$23,811.54
SKIFF Total Disbursements	\$20,307.57
SKIFF Balance on Hand	\$3,3503.57



Steven Turner with bonefish on Inagua

April Speaker

Marcos De Jesus

At our next meeting, Marcos De Jesus – District Supervisor, San Marcos-Austin District. Inland Fisheries Management. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will be our speaker.

Marcos has worked as a fisheries scientist for 18 years, the last 10 of which have been in San Marcos working for TPWD Inland Fisheries Division in the Management and Research Branch. Marcos graduated with a Master's Degree from Southern Illinois University. His main fisheries interests include urban fisheries management and fisheries habitat and access management. Some might know Marcos and his work on the Guadalupe River, Colorado River, Llano River and area impoundments. Marcos has worked closely with many local angler groups, particularly fly-fishing groups (Austin Fly Fishers, Central Texas Fly Fishers, GRTU, Alamo Fly Fishers) to conduct conservation work in area waters. In recent years, he got the Guadalupe River trout slot limit and the Lake Kyle catch-and-release regulation passed, which will benefit many fly anglers. He also worked with locals in Castell to establish a rainbow trout winter fishery in the Llano River using local hotel tax dollars. Marcos has a passion for making fishing better and looks forward to working with all angler types to help public waters reach their full potential. Marcos' personal angling interests include light tackle fishing in rivers and small impoundments.

Marcos' will talk about local fisheries, management strategies, and ongoing projects with collaboration potential with the Austin Fly Fishers.



The Great Inagua Adventure

by Nils Pearson

After listening to Brandon Rabke and Steven Turner's tales of bonefishing in the Bahamas, Phil Dopson, Carroll Hall, Ed Parsons, and I decided to join them on their next trip to this island country. As you may not know, this country consists of more than 700 islands, cays, and islets in the Atlantic Ocean. We all wanted to visit a remote island that offered bonefishing opportunities with little pressure on fishing. We decided to go on a trip sponsored by Cattaraugus Creek Outfitters <http://www.ccoflyfishing.com/greatinagua.html> for an off-the-beaten path DIY adventure to the island of Great Inagua. This island has a population of about 800 is located some 60 miles from the eastern shore of Cuba and 60 miles the western shore of Haiti. On the website, our outfitter described numerous fishing venues for bonefish and tarpon with little pressure from other fishermen.

We left Bergstrom Airport on a Thursday carrying our fishing gear and fully dressed in fly fishing clothes ready to walk out onto the flats and fish. We took this precaution because we all feared that our luggage wouldn't find its way to Nassau. We had only a 12 hour overnight layover before we took the weekly flight to this remote island. Fortunately, all of our luggage arrived. Early Friday morning we left the Orange Hill Hotel, squeezed our luggage and fishing paraphernalia into our taxi, and headed to the airport. In addition to our group, that first night in Nassau we met up with Jim Dowd who would be our outfitter's host and would accompany to Inagua.

After landing on Inagua, we met with Henry Hugh the proprietor of the Outback Lodge. He and his life-long-friend, Eddie, would be running the lodge, our transportation, and cooking meals during our visit.



Phil, Nils, Steven, Brandon, Jim, Ed, and Carroll at the loaded taxi in route to the airport for our flight to Great Inagua



Eddie fills our tank as Jim looks on

Soon after landing on Inagua, we came face to face with the realities of living on a remote island. It was a 10 mile trip from the airport to our lodgings. Before leaving town, we needed to fill our vehicle with gas. The gas pump at the only gas station on the island had seen better days. In its present state, it could pump gas but the metering system for measuring the fuel it dispensed didn't work. In typical island style, a simple work-around was implemented. The station attendant would measure your gas using a 5 gallon container marked in 1 gallon increments. After the container was filled, you poured your fuel into your car's tank and you paid about \$7.50 for each gallon. Yes, on an island that gets deliveries by boat every 7 to 10 days, everything not produced on the island is expensive.

The Outback Lodge where we stayed for the next 7 days is a testament to Henry Hugh's dedication, talents, and resourcefulness. Everything on his site was transported down an unimproved 10 mile road. Henry is an expert in reusing materials and equipment. To power this compound, he purchased the generator from the local clinic when it upgraded its equipment to power the air conditioning in the 2 cottages at night. The decking on the boardwalks came from materials discarded by the U.S. Coast Guard station on the island. Using his building skills in carpentry, electricity, and plumbing, he built a fully functioning lodge 10 miles from nowhere on a largely uninhabited island. In my opinion, Henry Hugh is Inagua's MacGyver.

Each morning we got together in the dining area and talked about our fishing options for that day. Typically, we split into 2 groups of 3 with Eddie driving one group and Jim driving the other to the fishing locations of the day.

All started out well with Ed catching a nice bonefish on his first cast of the first day at the Palm -a location about 5 miles west of the camp on the southern coast of the island.

Each morning, we broke into groups and drove to our locations along the coast and waded the clear waters looking for bonefish. Although we all covered mile after mile of



The road to Outback Lodge



The two cottages at Outback Lodge



Steven, Carroll, Nils, and Ed eating breakfast in the dining/kitchen building

coastline, we encountered very few bonefish. That all changed when Henry launched his boat and took my group to the lagoon system. Using a series of pvc pipes as rollers, Henry, Ed, Brandon, Jim, and I pushed his boat into the water. We all got aboard and made the 3 mile trip east along the coastline. We then went another 2 miles into the lagoon system. As soon as we got to our destination and began wading, Henry was spotting bonefish. We walked up to an intersection of 3 or more small lakes and all began to hook up bones. At one point, Brandon, Ed, Jim, and I had all hooked fish at the same time. Now that is what we were hoping to see. Each one of us must have caught 8 or more fish that day.

The other group had fished Lake Rosa. They reported that the lake water in the lake was low and the tarpon that lived in the lake and surrounding canals were in poor condition. It seems that the Morton Salt refinery, the main employer on the island, had stopped pumping seawater into its evaporation ponds that fed the lake for the previous 3 weeks. That meant that our fishing options were along the island's coast or a trip to a large lagoon system 3 miles by water east of our lodge.

The next day, Steven, Brandon, Jim, and I went on a 6 mile wade along the southern coast of the island from the Hatian wreck to the Lighthouse. The water was beautiful, the bottom was mostly hard, but in all those miles we encountered very few bonefish. The other group, Carroll, Steven, and Ed went with Eddie to fish another location along the coast. They too had seen very few bonefish. After my wading trip, I came to the conclusion that if I wanted to see fish, I would have to get to the creek and enter the lagoon.

That evening after fishing, we had a discussion with Jim. A number of us had come to the conclusion that the most productive area for bonefish was the lagoon system. If at all possible, Brandon, Ed, and I would like to make our way down to this area on Tuesday when the other group was scheduled to go. Jim told us that he had fished this area before and knew of a way for us to walk from the mouth of the creek to the far southern edge of



Phil, Jim, and Carroll begin wading along the southern coast of the island



The entrance to the lagoon



Carroll with bonefish caught in the lagoon

the lagoon system. Because the boat could only hold 5 people, Henry suggested that we attach his tandem kayak and single kayak to the boat and he could taxi us to the out put-in-point. If we didn't get back to this site at the same time as the boaters were leaving, we would have to paddle back.

For the remaining days on the island, Jim carefully drove the boat along the shore and took all of us to the lagoon. Brandon, Steven, and I rode in kayaks tethered to the boat, bushwacked into the back lagoon, and at times waded in knee deep muck. But, that is where the fish were. On one evening heading back to our take out point, we must have seen over 50 bonefish in groups of 2s and 3s tailing on the mucky flats. The other group that traveled up the creek by boat also caught bones while wading on a hard bottom.

As many of you know, fishing in remote locations can be difficult and with all sorts of un-anticipated problems. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Henry, Eddie, and Jim for all of their efforts to make our stay enjoyable. They went out of their way to make sure that our accommodations, meals, and fishing experiences would be remembered for the rest of our lives.



After bushwacking into the lagoon, Ed and I survey the potential fishing areas



Bonefish



Nils, Carroll, Steven, Phil, Brandon, Ed, Eddie, and Henry



Fin Clippings for the Bonefish and Tarpon Trust

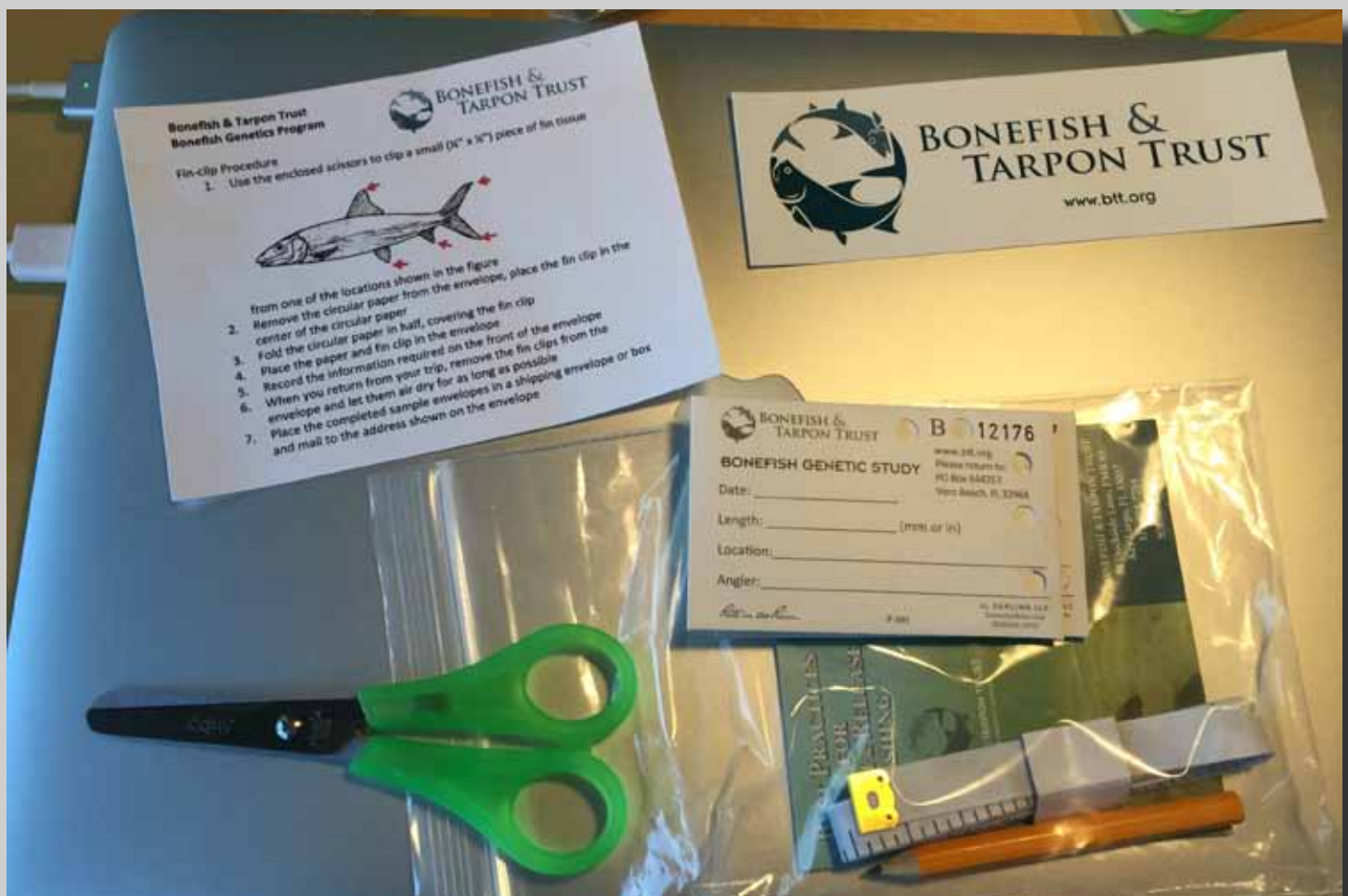
by Ed Parsons

As a member of the Bonefish & Tarpon Trust, I am very aware of the research they are involved in for the conservation and sustainability of bonefish, tarpon, and permit. So when my trip to Great Inagua with Nils, Phil, Brandon, Carroll, and Steven was growing near I reached out to BTT for six fin Sample kits. The goal was to contribute to the BTT genetics program.

The six kits arrived each with an instructions card, a small pair of scissors, a plastic tape measure, a pencil, and five fin sample envelopes. Basically the instruction card gives you information of where to collect a quarter inch square (very small) of a fin. The samples are placed on a circular piece of paper then returned to the sample envelope. On the outside of the envelope you record the date, length of bonefish, place fish was caught, and angler's name. Once you have returned home and dried the samples, you send back to BTT for their genetics study program.

BTT works with collaborating genetic scientists to analyze the samples to determine the level of connectivity among bonefish and tarpon populations throughout the region. If they collect enough samples from enough places, they will have a better idea of the mix of local and regional conservation that is needed. The challenge is collecting enough genetic samples from throughout the geographic ranges of bonefish and tarpon in the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, and the Gulf of Mexico. This is where we all come in, if you are not a member of Bonefish & Tarpon Trust (<http://www.bonefishtarpontrust.org/>) I recommend you consider joining. If you enjoy perusing bonefish, tarpon, and permit you should consider helping this conservation group by contributing to them to further their research into conservation of these species.

I returned the samples that we gathered in the waters of Great Inagua to BTT from our group. I hope our samples will help their genetics study program.



The Fly Tyer's Corner

Photos and Recipe by Matt Bennett

The Rio Getter

The Rio Getter is a fly I specifically developed to target our Rio Grande Cichlids native to this area. It's a small subsurface nymph designed to ride hook point up. It's turned into one of the best all-purpose Texas Hill Country flies in my fly box today. It started out as a beadhead, but Chris Johnson made the recommendation that I flip the hook with lead eyes. I tie these anywhere from a size 14 for panfish and cichlids, up to about a size 8 for bass, carp, etc. I do change the hook to something more stout if I've targeting carp with it, these smaller hooks will

bend out on a big fish. Feel free to experiment with colors, I tie it in Black, Olive, Rust, and Tan.

Materials:

Hook: Gamakatsu B10S #14

Thread: Lagartun 74 denier, Olive

Eyes: Plated Brass Eyes, X-Small

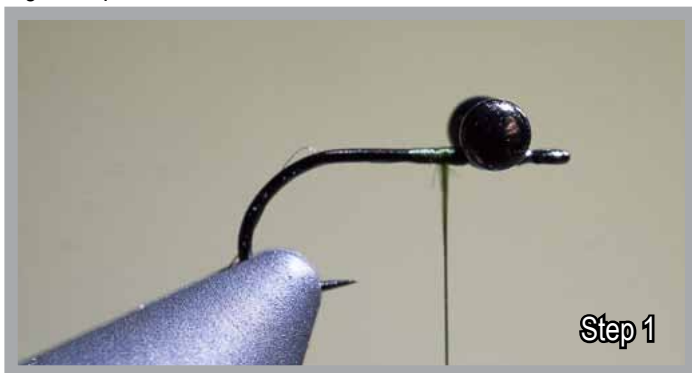
Tail / Wing: Whiting Coq de Leon Chickabou, Natural

Legs: Grizzly Micro Legs, Root Beer

Dubbing: Whitlock SLF Near Nuff Sculpin Olive

Rib: Ultra Wire, Small Chartreuse

Step 1: Place the hook in your vise. Lay down a small thread base, making a slight bump around 1 hook-eye length back from the front of the hook. Tie in the eyes on the bump using figure-eight wraps.



Step 2: Lay down a thread base halfway down the hook bend. Tie in the tail and ribbing wire.



Step 3: Dub a body from the tail to the eyes, and counter-wrap the wire to rib the dubbing.



Step 4: Take one rubber leg, cut in half. Lay one piece aside for the next fly, and cut one half in half yet again. Tie in the legs on the top of the hook, right next to the eyes and secure. Dub back over the legs a bit to sweep them back.



Step 5: Moving in from of the eyes, tie in a wing, being careful not to leave material over the hook eye. Cut the waste flush as close as you can to the shank without cutting your thread. Whip finish and coat with Loon UV Flow and cure for durability.



Step 6: Finished Fly



Tying Tips by Mike Morphew

Ann Mike's Tying Tip

For all my small flies and realistics, I like to use a reduced size bobbin of thread. For the larger flies I find a normal bobbin to be fine, but I like the feel of the smaller bobbin in my hand is very easy to control thread throughout the tying process.

It's very easy to dispense thread from an ordinary bobbin onto a small one. I buy sewing machine bobbins and use my wife's sewing machine to transfer the thread and it takes a short time. (hope she is not reading this!!!!) If you do not have access to a sewing machine then it can be done using an electric drill. For this you just need to place the large bobbin on a piece of dowel and secure the dowel so the bobbin runs freely. Cut a small piece of dowel and fit it tightly into the small bobbin and then into the drill jaws. Turn on the drill and there you go!



Brandon Rabke with bonefish

AFF Outings by David Bush

Colorado Bend

Well, we finally worked in an outing to Colorado Bend State Park last month and the white bass cooperated fairly well. Thanks to Eddie Richardson and Alex Parma for hosting in less than ideal conditions. The good news is Lake Travis is full and Lake Buchanan will probably be full shortly due to recent rain.

Additional Outings

There are currently no outings scheduled for the spring or summer so please contact me if you'd like to host an outing. With plenty of water we have more opportunities than we've had in a few years so let's take advantage of it.

Club Sponsors

The following individuals who made presentations to our club in 2015/2016. 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

Capt. Jeff Johnson – <http://www.flyfishrockport.com/> Fly Fishing Rockport

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