



AUSTIN FLY FISHERS

April 2019
Volume 21, Issue 4

Club Meeting
Thursday, April 18
Northwest Recreation Center
6:00 pm Fly Tying and Social Hour
6:00 pm Casting Practice
7:00 pm Patrick Ireland and Austin Orr will
discuss the results of the recent fisheries
assessment of the Colorado River and ongoing
assessment of Brushy Creek

Shawn Riggs and his daughter
Davie with her first fish



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INTERNATIONAL
Charter Club

President's Message **Shawn Riggs**

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Last month over Spring Break, I went camping with my two younger children. We met up with a good buddy of mine, Patrick, and his son, Caleb, and daughter, Caitlin, who are very close friends with my own kids. We camped at Buescher State Park in Smithville, Texas. This beautiful park escaped the devastation of the wildfires that ravaged Bastrop years ago and its neighboring site Bastrop State Park where the charred remains of once majestic pines are still visible.

We set up camp at a good spot under a canopy of trees and only about fifty yards from the placid waters of Buescher Lake. I had packed my 6WT fly rod hoping to target some bass but there was not ample room for a back cast so instead we focused on putting the kids on some fish. After about thirty minutes, the boys lost interest and opted for throwing the football back at the campsite. But Davie and her fishing buddy Caitlin persisted and remained on the muddy banks hell bent on catching something from the murky waters. The girls haven't quite graduated to a fly rod setup yet so they were using the old standby, a Zebco rod with a bobber, hook and live worms. After several attempts at getting the lines out on the water without snagging the overhanging branches and avoiding multiple tufts of weeds we successfully cast the slimy invertebrates to an open pool of water. The next twenty minutes were filled with the girls singing songs, telling stories and inspecting the remaining worms as they wiggled in the box all while their bobbers remained motionless on the lake.

We were starting to think that maybe this spot just wasn't a place where fish would want to hang out. Perhaps we should pick up and move near the dam and boat ramp a few miles from where we were. Just then, Davie's red and white bobber dipped below the water's surface as she was reeling her line in. We thought at first perhaps she was caught on some submerged stump or other underwater structure. But as her rod tip jiggled we realized that she had hooked something. After reeling for a bit and with assistance to ensure that her rod stayed upright and her line tight

we hauled in the mighty leviathan. Davie had landed her first fish and was smiling from ear to ear. The girls were ecstatic. They couldn't believe that they had finally caught a fish. The boys heard the commotion and ran back from camp to witness this amazing feat. Davie and Caitlin were admiring the bluegill and feeling its scales as we quickly snapped a photo for proof and posterity and then unhooked the sunfish and released him back into the lake to fight another day.

The girls insisted on staying awhile longer to land another one but that was all the catching we did that evening. That little fish was still being talked about hours later over a dinner of grilled hotdogs and s'mores. The girls talking about where we were going to fish tomorrow and how many fish they were going to catch and the boys insisting that they were going to outfish the girls the next morning. It's amazing the sense of accomplishment and pure joy that comes with a gentle tug on the line and the notion that there is always more fish in the sea or in the lake in this case and that the pursuit of these finned adversaries keeps us coming back for more.

Financial Report

by Jim Robinson

3/1/2019 to 3/31/2019

Begin Bal. Checking	\$17,059.04
Income:	
CTotal Income	\$00.00
Disbursements:	
Total Disbursements	\$00.00
Net	(\$00.00)
Unencumbered:	\$8,663.69
Encumbered Funds:	
Casting for Recovery	\$1,047.52
SKIFF	\$7,377.83
Ending Bal-Checking	\$17,059.04

April Presentation – Fisheries Assessment of the Colorado River and Ongoing Assessment of Brushy Creek



Patrick Ireland



Austin Orr

Patrick Ireland and Austin Orr will discuss a summary of the results of the completed fisheries assessment on the Colorado River (from Austin, Texas to La Grange, Texas) and the ongoing fisheries assessment of Brushy Creek (Williamson County, Texas). Focal points include describing the summary data of the fish assemblages and sport-fish populations of the two systems, genetics, size-structure, and age data of the Guadalupe Bass populations, angler utilization of the systems, and management goals for the systems.

Patrick Ireland is a Rivers Fisheries Management Biologist for TPWD Inland Fisheries Division, based in San Marcos. Prior to his Biologist position, Patrick spent nearly a decade in the private sector as an environmental scientist working for various industrial, municipal, and oil and gas clients on water resource based projects throughout Texas. Patrick completed a Master's degree in Fisheries Science at Texas A&M University where he studied the various changes to native aquatic vegetated areas of Lake Conroe, Texas associated with the introduction of triploid Grass Carp.

Austin Orr was given his first fly rod at the age of 9 and never looked back. After arriving in the Corpus Christi area in 2008, he spent a decade exploring and fishing all the flats, beaches, jetties and nearshore rigs that he could walk, paddle or motor to. In 2010 he earned his Fly Casting Instructor certification from Fly Fishers International (Formerly the FFF). In keeping with his passion for teaching youth, Austin recently became the Youth Director for the FFI Texas Chapter Board of Directors. In his day job, Austin works with TPWD Fisheries Management in San Marcos, helping assure there are fish and beautiful places in which to catch them for generations to come.

SKIFF Program by Bob Maindelle

KIDS AND COLD WEATHER -- As I write to you on April 1st, I wrapped up a morning fishing trip for a man and his adult daughter earlier this weekend. We launched at 7:10 am with calm winds and an air temperature of 64F. We ended the trip just under 4 hours later with the wind howling out of the NNW at over 20mph, and with the mist-chilled air now only 54F. To say that March was a month of wild weather swings would be an understatement!

This past month's crazy weather has delayed the use of some of the tactics I would normally be employing by now which allow me to offer variety over the course of the S.K.I.F.F. program trips I conduct.

The younger the kids aboard, the more variety they require to keep them engaged. Unlike adult anglers, children will often get fidgety even when fishing is extremely productive, if the means to that productivity has little variety involved with it.

Although I have never turned down a single request for a S.K.I.F.F. program trip, I do suggest that parents with kids aged 8 or younger hold off on reserving a date until the summer months, beginning in early June. At that time there will be shallow water sunfish available, white bass can be caught routinely with downrigging equipment and via casting and jigging, bonus top-water largemouth bass can be landed when they school, and drum and cat-fish will come readily to cutbaits.

Kids aged 9 and older will typically be able to fish at any time of year, as their patience level and ability to consistently use more technical presentations is sufficient by that age.

THEY CAME, THEY CAUGHT, THEY SAW DUMBO – On March 29th I welcomed aboard Mrs. Fiona Williams and her two children, Ashlyn (age 14)



Mrs. Fiona Williams and her two children, Ashlyn (age 14) and Levi (age 3)

and Levi (age 3). Fiona's husband, U.S. Army Master Sergeant Jarrad Williams, is currently deployed as part of the Army's Criminal Investigation Command (CID) to Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan. MSG Williams, a native of Oklahoma, has approximately 3 months left in his deployment, and has been serving for 17 years.

This S.K.I.F.F. trip was originally planned for March 2nd, but rain and high winds foiled those plans.

We worked this trip in after school on a Friday now that sunset comes around 7:45 pm, following the start of Daylight Saving Time.

As Fiona knew Levi would only make it so long, we agreed to keep an eye on him and close out the trip once the novelty wore off for him. We faced some high winds which made the area I had been successful in early in the week quite silty and off-color, so the fishing was pretty tough.

Additionally, both of the kids had post-fishing trip movie plans – Ashlyn was

headed to see "Five Feet Apart" with friends, and Levi and Fiona were considering taking in "Dumbo".

Long story short, we fished just until both kids caught a legal sized fish to take a photo with and share with their dad, and then we wrapped it up. Luckily, two of our first three fish were white bass which exceeded the 10-inch minimum, so we got that scrap-book photo well before dark.

Because the tactic which was working on this trip was flatline trolling (and because that method is not all that engaging for a 3-year-old), I gave Levi a number of "special duties". He was the "rod putter awayer", he was the "thumper turner-oner", he was the "fish in the livewell checker", and he was the "aerator motor operator".

A huge thanks to all of you who have contributed to the S.K.I.F.F. program for helping to make occasions like this happen routinely for our military's families!

Change on the Blanco River

by Charles Cresswell

Ann and I have been fortunate, and unfortunate, owning a river house on the Blanco approximately 7 miles outside of the town of Wimberley here in the Texas Hill Country. I began fly fishing in earnest in 2009, just months after joining the Austin Fly Fishers. Seeing otters living in the river is the standout image, of many, I retain from this past decade on the Blanco. Often by myself in my kayak, I have fished and explored this river. Now, today, at the age of 73, day long solitary fishing and adventure trips have become rare.

The drought of 2012-2014 in our Hill Country not only limited fish to catch, it made traveling the river an endurance test of dragging one's kayak across the deeply rutted and often treacherous river bed. Then the flood of Memorial Day 2015. The interior of our home, with the contents, was destroyed. Had we not been out of town, the eleven mature pecans trees swept down to the gulf, along with my kayaks and Helios rod, might not have been all that was lost.

The recovery of the Blanco has been slow by human standards, but change has been rapid by nature's yardsticks. March 30th of this year, 2019, I decided I'd give fly fishing the Blanco a try. A couple past tries this year have been unsuccessful, so I limited my fishing area to a few hundred yards downstream from the house. For those not familiar with Variable Milfoil, you will be. This highly invasive water plant has now formed floating mats within what had been the pristine waters of a truly wild Hill Country river. Apparently the 2015 flood spread the awful nuisance from ranch tanks, where it was grown as cattle feed, to the farthest reaches of the river basin.

I had settled my kayak into one of the floating mats in order to stabilize it, as well as keep the river current from moving my position as I tried to fish. The water itself had returned to its crystalline state, and while not over my head anywhere, was several feet in depth. I really saw very few fish until I noticed a water channel through the mats of Milfoil. Bass and others were using this channel. I threw my popper towards the open water edge of the mat, and I knew a decent sized bass had hit. My effort was used almost solely in keeping the fish from disappearing into the gnarly and mucous Milfoil.

I had landed a red ear sunfish. Not just any sunfish, but the largest sunfish I have caught, anywhere or any time. By this time, I was despairing if the Blanco would ever return to anything close to the prime years of 2011 and 2010. This day produced this amazing to me, 12.5 inch and 1.5 lb. Red Ear. An hour later, I landed a second red ear of about a pound. I had seen a King that day as I describe the smallmouth bass that cruise the Blanco with impunity. I've hooked a King, but never landed one in the decade of fishing my home river. My estimate of a King is a 5 lb. smallmouth.

Thanks for the opportunity to show my fish. This near in time fishing experience reminds me as it should, change outweighs stagnation. I'm ready to try more adventures On The Blanco.





Steven Turner and Brandon Rabke traversing the falls at Reimer's Ranch

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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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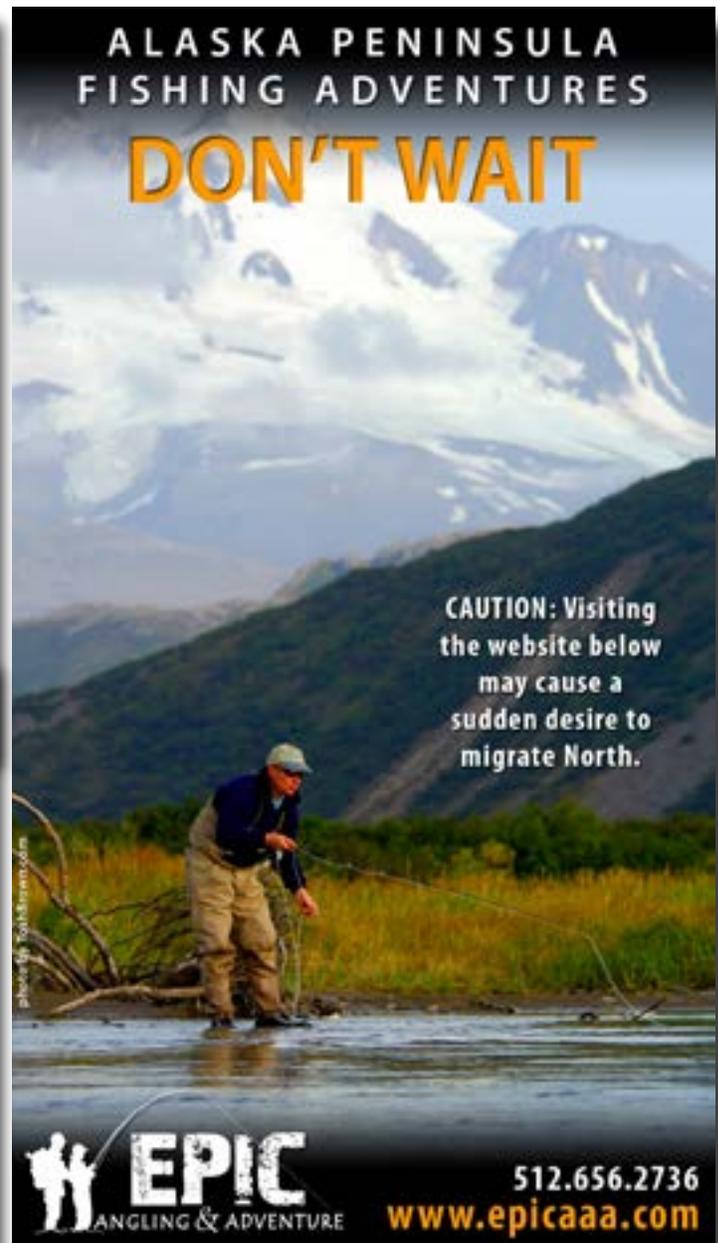
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