



AUSTIN FLY FISHERS

February 2020
Volume 22, Issue 2

Club Meeting
Thursday, February 20
Northwest Recreation Center
2913 Northland Dr., Austin, TX 78757
6:00 pm Social Hour
7:00 pm Keith Barnes will be presenting fly fishing
for white bass

Nils Pearson with bonefish caught in
the Gardens of the Queen, Cuba



FLY FISHERS
INTERNATIONAL
Charter Club

President's Message by David Bush

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To contact officers:

Info@AustinFlyFishers.com

As we all know, Austin has been attracting new residents for many years, and the trend continues. I can't tell you how many times I've met new Austinites from other parts of the country who are surprised to learn that Texas offers outstanding fly fishing opportunities. And they're really shocked to learn that there is an excellent trout fishery an hour away along the Guadalupe River tailrace below Canyon Lake. If you've lived in Austin for a while, I'm sure you've had similar experiences. If you're new, come learn and join the fun!

So, what about that trout fishery? Whether you're a displaced trout fishing addict or simply interested in learning more about trout fishing, the Troutfest Texas 2020 expo at Lazy L&L Campground near Sattler is for you. Sponsored by the Guadalupe River Chapter of Trout Unlimited (GRTU), the mostly free event runs from this Friday, February 21 through Sunday, February 23. The expo attracts thousands of folks who come to hear world-class speakers, participate in non-stop casting lessons, learn from skilled fly tiers, and browse through booths rife with fishing guides, fly shops, equipment vendors, rod builders, and more. And don't leave the kids at home since they'd miss out on the casting pond, archery, and airgun activities. Learn more about GRTU's Troutfest Texas 2020 at grtu.org.

Are you passionate about the conservation of our Central Texas fisheries? Are you interested in making a tangible difference in the quality of

our local creeks, rivers, ponds, and lakes? Austin Fly Fishers has long had similar interest and passion and has made numerous contributions of time, energy, and resources over the years. If you'd love to lead our effort in this area, please contact me to discuss becoming the club's Conservation Officer.

We are on the verge of one of the most fun times of the year to be a fly fisher in Texas, the famous white bass run. The run is when large numbers of white bass migrate from large reservoirs upriver into shallow areas where they willingly accept flies when they're not spawning. (Hey, a fish has to eat, too.) Locally, the run typically begins in February, peaks in March, and trails off into April on several nearby rivers as well as many rivers across the state.

On a good day in the right spots with the right gear and flies, catching large numbers of fish is common and a blast. If that sounds like more fun than a day at work, don't miss our speaker at this month's meeting, Keith Barnes. Keith is a well-known local guide who knows how to get on the white bass year after year. And, even if you know all about white bass fishing, Keith will have the latest on all the local conditions that can be the difference between being skunked and having an epic day. See you at the meeting!

February Speaker – Keith Barnes

Our February presenter is Keith Barnes. the following information is about Keith and his presentation.

I live on the Highland Lakes and have been fishing these lakes for over 20 years. Fishing has always been a big part of my life. As a child, I fished every chance that I could. The desire to feel a fish pulling on my line has never dimmed, in fact it grew stronger. While I truly enjoy fishing, I discovered that I also enjoyed taking others' fishing. Putting someone on their first fish, teaching a client a new technique, or just showing a friend a new stretch of water are just a few of the reasons that I started guiding.

While I have been fly fishing for most of my life, I didn't make the transition to dedicated fly fisherman until about 10 years ago. I put down my conventional tackle and really haven't picked it up again. I have concentrated on learning and developing techniques to target fish on the Upper Highland Lakes of Central Texas with a fly rod. Living on the western shore of Lake Buchanan, I have spent countless hours, on more days than I care to admit, pursuing every species of game fish found in Central Texas. –Keith Barnes



Financial Report by Jim Robinson 1/1/2020 to 1/31/2020

Begin Bal. Checking	\$18,422.10
Income:	
Dave Bush (Wepay)	\$293.90**
Square	<u>\$19.83**</u>
Total Income	\$313.21
Disbursements:	
Bob Pool	\$150.00
Earthlink	<u>\$127.29</u>
Total Disbursements	\$277.29
Net	\$4,174.02
Unencumbered:	\$10,586.67
Encumbered Funds:	
Casting for Recovery	\$2,365.52
SKIFF	\$5,505.83
Ending Bal-Checking	\$18,458.02
**Funds to unencumbered	
***Funds to Casting for Recovery	

Beginner Fly Fishing Instruction

Has fly fishing always been something you have wanted to learn, peeked your interest or maybe you just need a refresher course. Learn the basics with this TPWD 3-hour course. All course materials and equipment will be provided. Items to be covered are casting techniques, equipment, rigging the rod, safety, aquatics, lure selection, basic fly tying, reading the water, knots, conservation and stream manners. Members of the Hill Country Fly Fishing Club will assist in the instruction. A certificate and pin will be awarded to those completing the course. Come get acquainted with the sport of fly fishing. All students must be at least 16 years old to participate in class.

Course fee: \$35.00 For facility use and printed material. Reservations required.

Course date and start time: APRIL 4, 2020 at 1 PM

Class size: 10

Location: THE DIETERT CENTER, 451 Guadalupe Street., Kerrville

Contact: Dorothy Beene

Dietert Club Ed

451 Guadalupe St

830-792-4044

INSTRUCTOR: Daniel Wheat

Certified Volunteer Fly Fishing Instructor. Texas Parks and Wildlife Angler Education. Assisted by members of the Hill Country Fly Fishers Club

Gardens of the Queen, Cuba by Nils Pearson

It all began on a Thursday evening in early 2019, after a presentation by Nick Streit to the Austin Fly Fishers. Nick spoke to our club about fly fishing in Northern New Mexico and Southern Colorado. During this talk, his pictures of fly fishing in idyllic settings along the rivers and streams of this area were catnip to fishermen <https://taosflyshop.com/flyguide/main>. As often happens after a presentation, my friend Brandon and I congratulated Nick on his presentation and struck up a conversation. I happened to be wearing a Crooked Island hat and upon seeing it, Nick told us that he spent part of his childhood living on Andros Island where his father Taylor Streit was working as a guide. As our conversation continued, the topic of bonefish came up and Nick told us that he was putting together a trip to Los Jardines de la Reina (The Gardens of the Queen), Cuba in January.

Over the past few years, I had been looking into fishing this location. It is a 60-mile long chain of small islands that is located 50 miles off the south eastern shore of Cuba that was designated as a marine sanctuary in 1996. Limited access is allowed by the government for fly fishermen and divers. The sanctuary is well known for bonefish, tarpon, and permit. I immediately asked Nick the cost and upon hearing the reasonable price inquired whether there were any openings. As luck would have it, there were some spots available and he extended an invitation to us. Without hesitation, Brandon and I sent Nick our deposit checks the next day to secure our spots.

As you may know, travel to Cuba is difficult. In order to visit our southern neighbor, you must show that you will be making the trip for one of various specific reasons. Fortunately, Nick was arranging the trip with an Italian company, Avalon, that has set up numerous trips to Cuba for Americans and they provided guidance in preparing all of the necessary paperwork.



Rush hour on the Paseo del Prado
in downtown Havana

Our trip began in Havana where we spent Friday night. You may have seen pictures of Havana, but walking around the city on that first afternoon was very moving. Except for a few new hotels, it was as if most of the city has not been repaired, renovated, or painted in the past 50 years. Nonetheless, the bones of this city were a testament to its former beauty. The Cubans themselves were unrestrained in their love of the outdoor life, walking the crumbling streets and sidewalks all over town. Quite often, we were greeted by locals asking where we were from as a means for striking up short conversations. Fortunately, Brandon is fluent in Spanish, and from what I could tell there were no hostile attitudes toward Americans. On the contrary, everyone we met was quite friendly and provided helpful directions.

The following morning after a breakfast at the Sevilla hotel, we boarded our private bus for our 5-hour ride to the port town of Jucaro. Most of the 16 people in our group were from Taos, NM. Nick and his guides made up the largest contingent along with other fishermen from the area. After we left Havana, our bus was usually alone traveling east on the highway. The lack of traffic allowed our driver to snake across the 3-lane highway to avoid pot-holes. From time to time, we passed through small towns and villages that reminded me of my travels through the Yucatan. I was most surprised by the number of horse and ox drawn carts sharing the highway with us.

The paved road ended just outside Jucaro and our driver slowly maneuvered our large bus through narrow streets of the town. We entered a compound at the dock and boarded our mother-ship, the Avalon III, for our 50-mile journey to the Gardens of the Queen. On board, our living conditions were very comfortable. We had individual rooms with baths and numerous outdoor decks for relaxing. For our week at sea, we were



Sharing the near vacant highway with draft animals pulling carts

completely disconnected from the rest of the world with no cellphone coverage or internet connections.

Each morning after breakfast we boarded the skiffs and scurried away from the mother-ship in various directions in search of tarpon. Before long, the vhf radios on each skiff would blast out messages when a guide had located our prey. Of the 8 skiffs searching, usually a couple would come upon schools of silver kings each morning. It was up to the fishermen to quickly cast, strip, hook up, and bow to the King every time the tarpon jumped. There were quite a few hookups every morning, but most of us were far less successful in getting these creatures to the boat.

After this morning foray, depending on the tide, our guides turned their attention to either bonefish or permit. The bones were plentiful. Our guides located school and individuals moving to and from the flats. Each day while fishing from our skiffs and wading, we probably encountered at least 100 bones. For me, my greatest success came on our first day of fishing when Brandon and I traveled to the entrance of the Chocolate Lagoon. Brandon and I went in different directions as we waded this area. Coky, our guide, spent his time shuttling between us and pointing to bones hiding in the turtlegrass. Fortunately, there was a long sandy strip at the entrance to the lagoon that cut through turtlegrass on either side. While Brandon and Coky went in another direction, I stood in the current of the outgoing tide in this strip of sand about



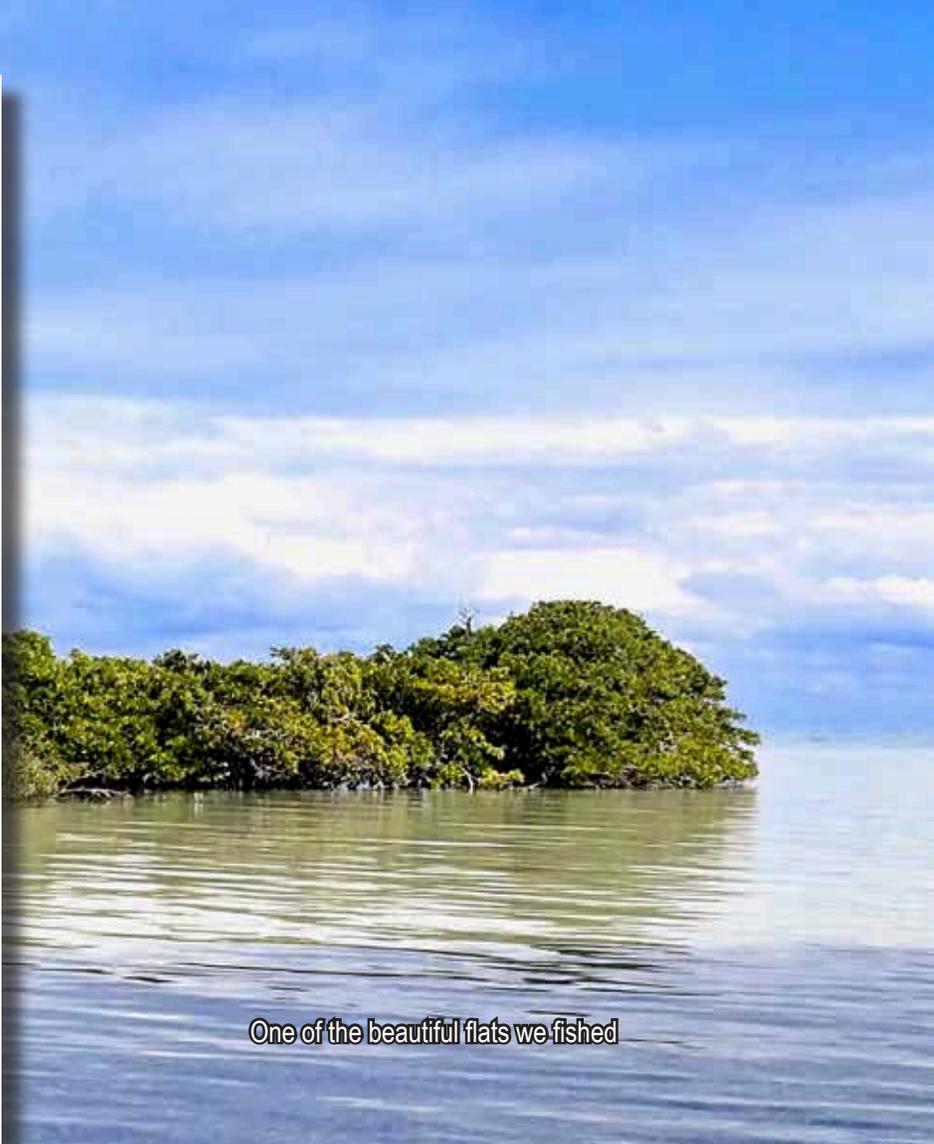
Skiffs being prepared for a day of fishing



On our first day, Brandon broke his rod fighting this bonefish and successfully hand-lined him to the boat

100 feet from the lagoon entrance. The white bottom was the perfect background to spot bonefish exiting the lagoon –they don't call bonefish grey-ghosts for nothing. Before long, I noticed a couple of bones heading toward me. As they approached, I put a 40 foot cast about 5 feet in front of them. When the fish were 2 feet from the fly I gave it a couple of small strips and the bigger bone headed straight to my fly and sucked it up. I set the hook and couldn't believe the strength of this guy. He went into my backing 3 times as I attempted to land him. Yes, he is the one you see on the cover of the newsletter. Coky estimated that it was an 8 ½ lb fish –the biggest bone I have ever caught. It was one of those wonderful moments for me when I realized that I had just landed a prize fish and that all the other fish I would catch for the rest of the trip would simply be a bonus.

The fishing was great in the Gardens of the Queen. Everyone caught bones, most folks hooked up tarpon, but no one landed a permit. In other words, everyone had great success. But it wasn't the number of fish that I caught during the week that left a lasting impression on me. Gliding around the mangrove islands as the guide poled my skiff. Hearing only the squawking birds defending their territory as we approached and the pulse of the waves as they landed on the sandy shores. Transported me as deep into an undisturbed shallow-water preserve as I could ever hope to get. What a beautiful place!



One of the beautiful flats we fished

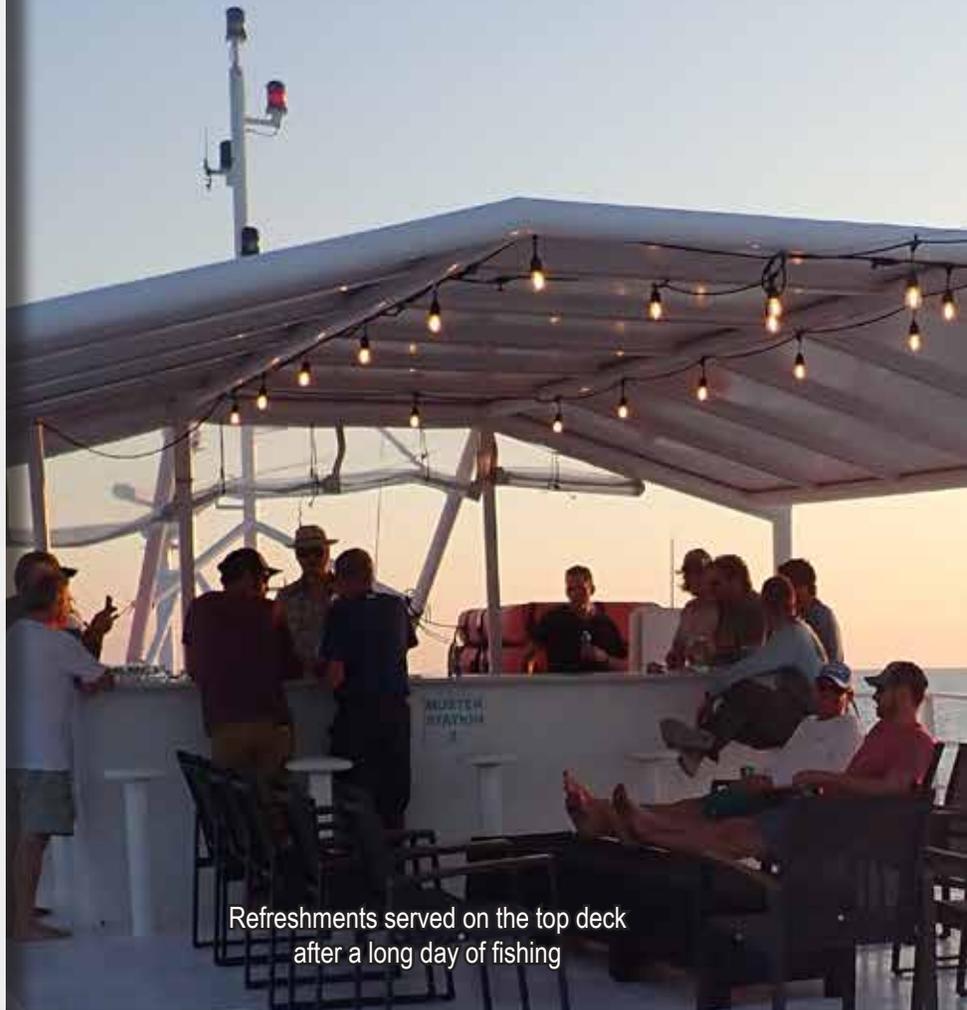


Nick Streit with a 9 lb bonefish

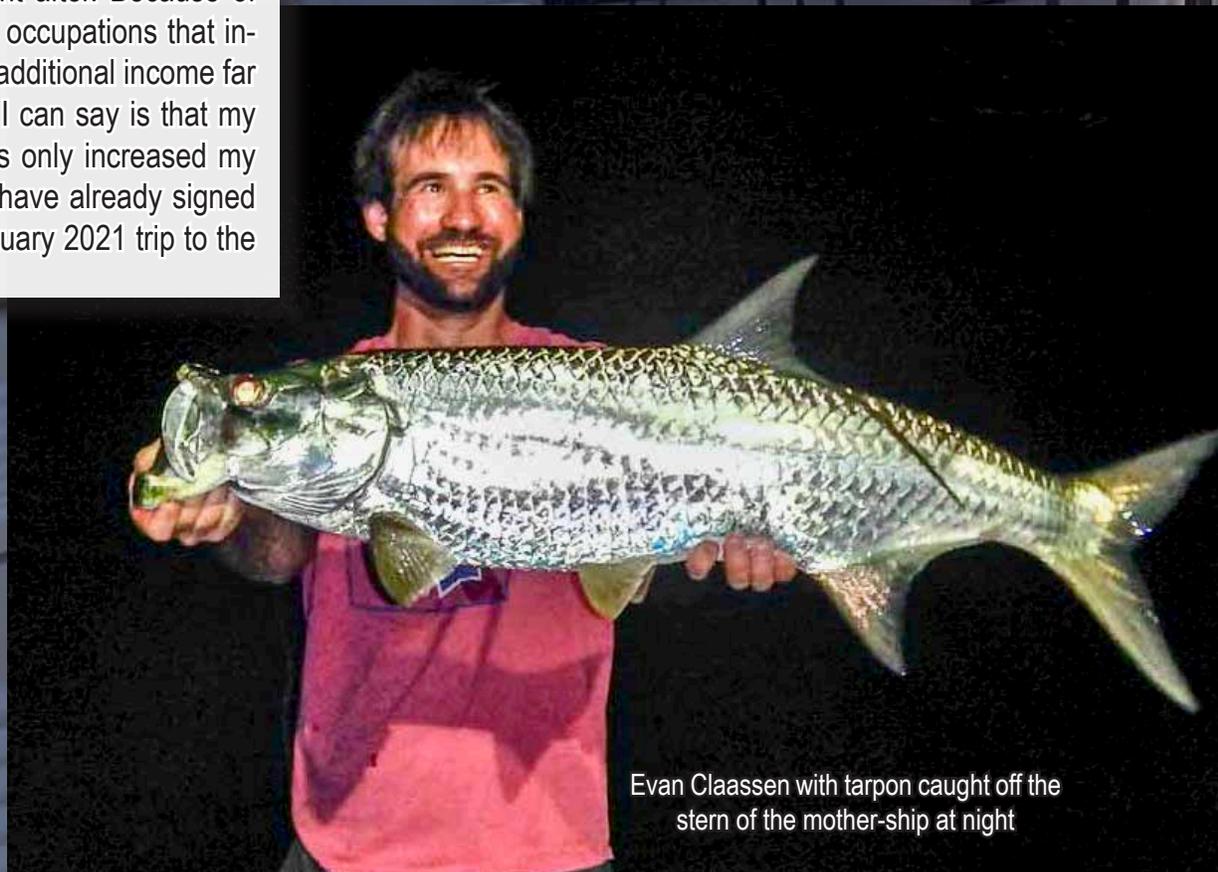


Late in the afternoon, when we returned from fishing we had refreshments and dinner on the mother-ship. The crew could not have been more accommodating and the meals were always excellent. The individual overseeing the Avalon operation in the Gardens of the Queen, Tony, was great. As Americans, we peppered him with all sorts of questions about Cuba –its economy, the revolution, and relations with the USA. In addition, Tony presented a workshop on the ecology of the sanctuary using his expertise in marine biology.

After our six days of fishing ended, we returned to Havana for a day of sightseeing before our return to the USA. The Cuban people live on a small socialist island country with a population of 10 million that provides universal healthcare, education, and food allotments but very low wages. As far as I could tell, a number of small private businesses are making their way into the economy, typically restaurants and taxis. From what I was told by residents, US dollars are prized and highly sought after. Because of this, persons in service occupations that involve tipping may earn additional income far beyond their peers. All I can say is that my experience in Cuba has only increased my desire to return. Yes, I have already signed up with Nick for his January 2021 trip to the Gardens of the Queen.



Refreshments served on the top deck after a long day of fishing



Evan Claassen with tarpon caught off the stern of the mother-ship at night

SKIFF Program by Bob Maindelle

On Tuesday, January 7th, it was my honor to provide a SKIFF fishing trip to Gold Star family member Bradley Warner. In military lingo, a Gold Star family is a family which has lost their service member while he or she was on active duty.

Here is an excerpt from our local newspaper about Bradley's father ...

The last time Bradley Warner spent with his father was one of those perfect father-son weekends.

It was Labor Day, and the two drove to Belton for a carnival at the Bell County Expo Center.

Bradley said they rode all the big rides, and he even threw up on one after eating too much funnel cake.

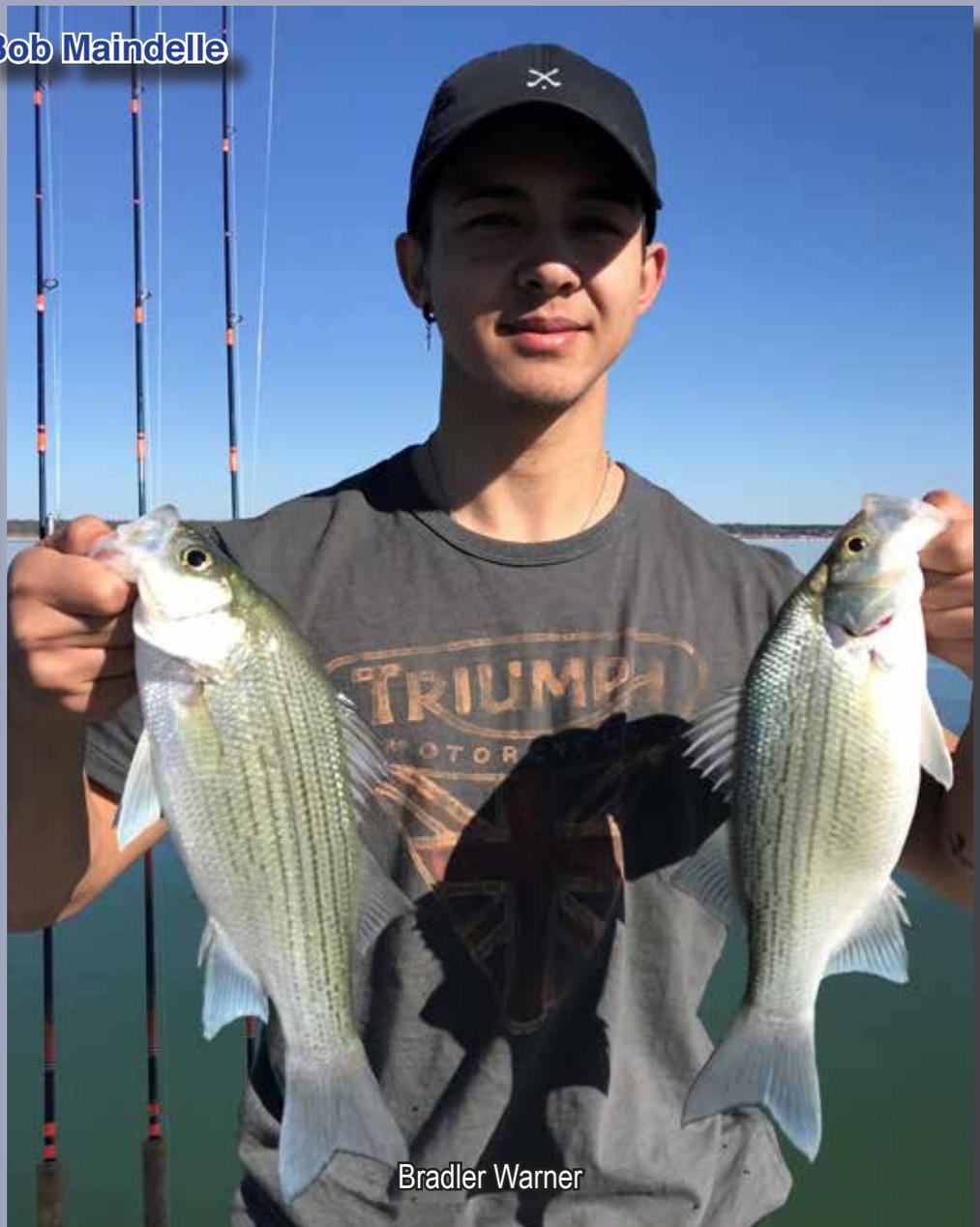
When Staff Sgt. Daniel Warner prepared to leave Killeen and drive back to his new duty station of Fort Polk, La., he said to his son, "When I'm not here, you're the man of the house."

About a month later, two Army officers were at the Warners' door. Their soldier had fallen in his barracks room and died.

"It took a while for them to go into his dorm and see if he was all right," Bradley said, recalling the day he realized his dad was gone. He had actually become the man of the house at age 10.

Now a 15-year-old freshman at Shoemaker High School, Bradley is into swimming and soccer.

Though he is an average teenage boy — concerned that his hair parts in just the right way and meeting his friends at the soccer field — he is keenly aware that his life is different today from what it would have been had his father lived.



Bradler Warner

"It's changed a lot, of course. There's certain things we can't do anymore," he said.

For one, his mother hates roller coasters, so he doesn't get to ride them much anymore.

It was something he and his dad enjoyed together. "Roller coasters were his favorite thing," Bradley said. "I would be on the side when it would turn, he'd squish me. I tried to squish him — nope.

"I try to remember them," he said of those good memories.

'He was really fun'

The two also spent time at the on-

post pools together.

"He swam with me. He'd lift me up and I'd jump off his hands," Bradley said.

"Not that many people got to know him. One thing (about him), he was really fun."

Bradley's mom said she works to ensure that Bradley continues to live his life, but also remembers the man his father was and the life he created for them.

Bradley and I landed 57 fish on this very special outing.

Thank you, SKIFF supporters, for making this happen.

AFF Outings by Juan Shepperd

For the Benefit and Enjoyment of the People

First, let me thank Dave Bush for his years of service as Outings Coordinator. Second, thank all of you who provided feedback on some places you'd like to fish at the last meeting. Third, quick intro and invitation. I've been fly fishing for many years (though you wouldn't know it from my casting or the number of fish I catch). I enjoy nature and being outside. I almost always learn something. Even on a bad fishing day, I always appreciate fishing and the opportunity to get outside, relax and have fun. I am committed to conservation (protect it to use it, admire it, learn about it, my thoughts only). I like diversity, inclusion and open communication. I'm excited to see things like 50/50 on the Water, an industry-wide initiative to promote and recognize the efforts and contributions of women in fly fishing, conservation and our environment. I like fishing with my kids. I believe the more people we get outside, the more we observe up close and personal the environment, the more we will enjoy it, appreciate it, and want to protect it.

This group, The Austin Fly Fishers (AFF) is a group of people - men and women - who enjoy fly fishing. We all have that in common. As a group, I like to think we're friendly, helpful, open minded, respectful, committed to conservation, clean water and having fun. We don't judge. We don't claim to know everything. We like to learn, spend time outdoors, and I invite you to come join us. Some of us like freshwater fishing. Some of us prefer saltwater. Some people in the group tie flies. I say this because if you've never fished with the group, please understand, everyone is welcome. As Outings Coordinator, I want to serve you and help the club attract new people who may be curious about fly fishing and interested in joining an outing. We're lucky to live in Austin, a place with an incredible amount of wonderful places to fish. I want to take advantage of that. I scheduled outings on local waters. Many featured in the book Fly Fishing the Texas Hill Country. I also stretched it a bit. My schedule offers a little bit of everything: Freshwater, Saltwater, wade and surf fishing, 1 and 2-day float trips on local rivers, regional trips, and on the wish list (if I can pull it together) maybe a destination trip or two. Scheduling is always tough. Personally, I get more done when I am organized, have a plan, and know what's on my calendar as far in advance as possible. I suspect you do too. I'm keeping the AFF Outings schedule simple: The Saturday after our Thursday club meeting. Meetings are the third Thursday of the month, lets fish that weekend. I know this isn't perfect. I know we'll have bad weather occasionally. Rivers will blow out. Conflicts will happen. However, having a regular set schedule for Club Outings will allow us to plan ahead and hopefully give more people a chance to join.

Here is the AFF Outings Schedule:

February 20-22

Guadalupe River

Unofficial Outing - On Your Own

GRTU hosts Troutfest (I go every year – great event!)

Sattler, TX

<http://www.grtu.org/troutfest/>

March 21

Pedernales River (wade and float)

Milton Reimers Ranch

Reimers Ranch

Dripping Springs, TX

April 18

Colorado River (float)

Little Webberville Park to Big Webberville Park

[https://www.lcra.org/parks/Documents/](https://www.lcra.org/parks/Documents/2013-05-15-River-Users-Guide.pdf)

[2013-05-15-River-Users-Guide.pdf](https://www.lcra.org/parks/Documents/2013-05-15-River-Users-Guide.pdf)

Austin, TX

May 1-3

Nueces River (wade and float)

unofficial outing - On Your Own

(I went last year and had a ball!)

Join Alamo Fly Fishers and Texas Women Fly Fishers for Bud Priddy Fly Fishing at Big Oak River Park,

[https://www.visitvaldecountry.com/events/2017/2019-](https://www.visitvaldecountry.com/events/2017/2019-bud-priddy-any-fly-flyfishing-contest)

[bud-priddy-any-fly-flyfishing-contest](https://www.visitvaldecountry.com/events/2017/2019-bud-priddy-any-fly-flyfishing-contest)

Camp Wood, TX

May 23-25

Frio River and Sabinal River (wade and float)

Frio River - Garner State Park

Sabinal River – Lost Maples Natural Area, Campground Reserved

<https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/lost-maples>

Vanderpool, TX

June 19 – 22

Llano River (wade and/or 1 – 2 day float)

South Llano River State Park (sites reserved)

<https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/south-llano-river>

Junction, TX

June 20 – 21

Texas Coast w/Shawn Riggs

July 18

San Marcos River

**Need an Outing Coordinator

San Marcos, TX

August 22

Brushy Creek

September 19

TBD

October 16-18

Llano River

Oktoberfish (Hosted by the Fredericksburg Fly Fishers)

Junction, TX

Club Sponsors

The following individuals who made presentations to our club in 2017/2019. Please follow the links to get more information on the services they provide. You won't be disappointed.

Marcus Rodriguez – <http://livingwatersflyfishing.com/> Central Texas Guide

Capt. Billy Trimble – <http://trimbleflyfishing.com/> Fly Fishing Rockport/Texas Coastal Bend

Chris Johnson – <http://livingwatersflyfishing.com/> Living Waters Fly Shop and Central Texas Guide

Pat Dorsey – <http://www.bluequillangler.com/> Fly Fishing Colorado

Capt. Scott Hamilton – <http://www.flyfishingextremes.com/> Fly Fishing Florida's Atlantic Coast

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

Kevin Stubbs – <http://www.expedition-outfitters.net/> Fly Fishing the Devils River

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

Capt. Steve Soulé – <http://www.theshallowist.com/index.asp> Fly Fishing Galveston

Jeff Davis – <http://allwaterguides.com/jeff-davis/> Fly Fishing the lower Colorado River

Jud Cole – <http://centraltexasflyfishing.com/> Central Texas and Colorado

Capt. Rus Schwausch – <http://www.epicanglingadventure.com/> Fly Fishing Southwest Alaska

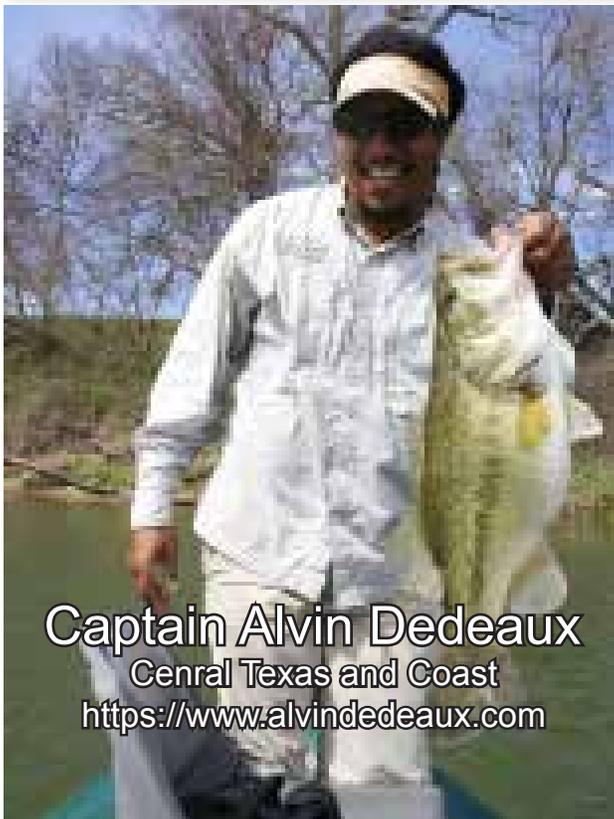
Nick Streit – <https://taosflyshop.com/flyguide/main> New Mexico and Southern Colorado

Capt. Randy and Truette Cawfield – <http://www.lagunamadre.net/styled-33/index.html>

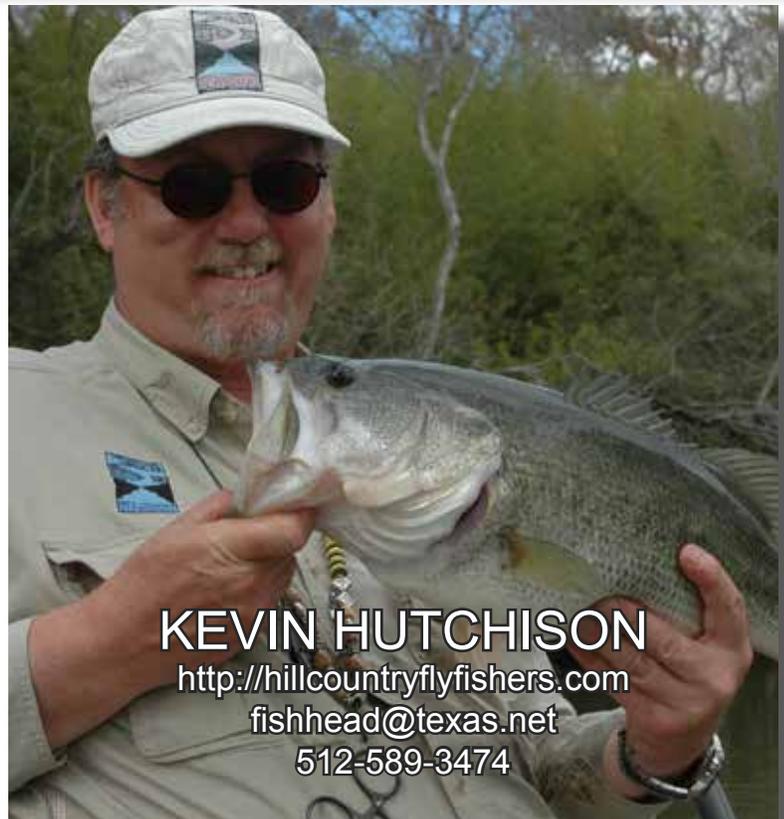
Lower Laguna Madre

Pat Vanek – BousqueValleyFlyFishing@gmail.com Rivers of Central TX

Capt. Alvin Dedeaux – <https://www.alvindedeaux.com> Central Texas and Texas Coast



Captain Alvin Dedeaux
Central Texas and Coast
<https://www.alvindedeaux.com>



KEVIN HUTCHISON
<http://hillcountryflyfishers.com>
fishhead@texas.net
512-589-3474

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Capt Randy and Truette Cawfield
956-371-3036

Email: kingfisherinnarroyocity@gmail.com



Captain Eric Glass

South Padre Island, Texas
<http://www.captainericglass.com>

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Capt. Billy Trimble
Shallow Water Flats Fishing
Texas Coastal Bend

<http://trimbleflyfishing.com/>
361-205-1266



Capt. Scott Hamilton
Fly Fish Jupiter, Florida

<http://www.flyfishingextremes.com/>
blueh20fly@aol.com



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Nick Streit

New Mexico and Southern Colorado
<https://taosflyshop.com/flyguide/main>



Capt. Fred Lynch

Fly Fish Corpus Christi

<http://www.flyfishcorpus.com/>
(361) 533-4227



Kevin Stubbs

Expedition-Outfitters.net

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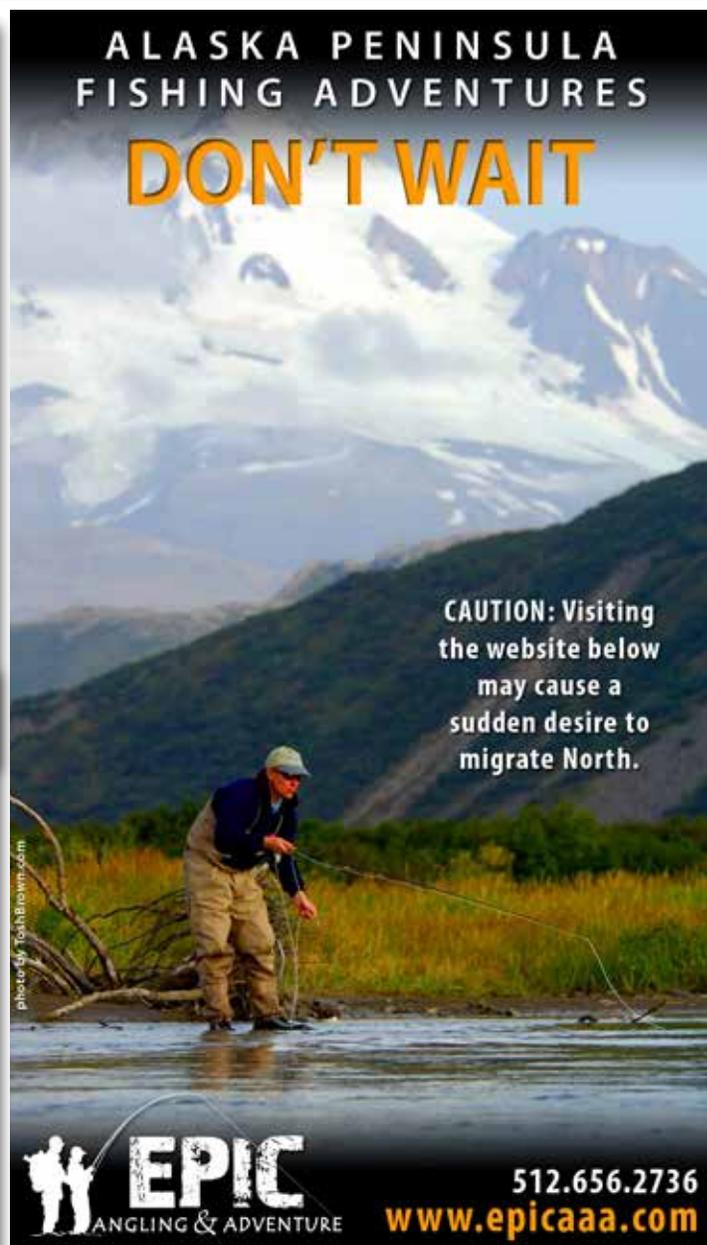
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