



# AUSTIN FLY FISHERS

October 2021

Volume 23, Issue 10



Dave Bush with Bonito  
caught at the South Pader Jetties



**FLY FISHERS**  
INTERNATIONAL  
Charter Club

# President's Message by David Bush

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Every once in a while, the stars align and you find yourself in the right place at the right time. Such was the case for me recently when I was fishing near South Padre Island. I knew that as the weather cooled, that there was a good chance migrating baitfish would trigger feeding frenzies in nearshore Gulf waters. For several weeks, I checked the area around the Brazos Santiago Pass jetties and beachfront for surface action almost every day, but other than the occasional ladyfish activity, nothing more was happening.

The wind had picked up to over 20 mph which made fly fishing out of the question for my casting stroke, so I opted to target bull redfish at the jetties using conventional tackle. I waited for the tide to start rising after lunch making some special structure I had found along the wind-protected side of the south jetty an attractive location. I caught some good-sized pinfish in the Laguna Madre to entice the bull reds, and they didn't disappoint. Over a period of about an hour and a half, I CPR'ed seven bull reds between 29 and 37 inches. They'd hit the pinfish within seconds of getting into the strike zone, and I'd spend the next five or ten minutes fighting the powerful brutes to the boat. I was worn out from the non-stop action and was about to call it a day.

As I was landing the seventh red, it started. Surface activity and lots of it right around my boat. With the wind being so high, I hadn't brought a fly rod with me for the first time on this trip, but did have a light spinning trout rod to work along the jetty rocks if the reds didn't cooperate. I grabbed the trout rod, made one cast into a feeding frenzy thirty feet off the port side, and it was on. The drag screamed, and I was immediately concerned about getting spooled with only 10 pound line on the small inshore spinning reel. I cranked down the drag hoping for the best and finally started to recover some line. As the powerful quarry got closer to the boat, crack! My rod had snapped, but fortunately the fish was getting tired and I managed to land a nice bonito with my stub of a rod. At that point I was unarmed with frenzies exploding everywhere so I plot-

ted my return for the next day with hopes of similar activity.

According to Orvis, "The false albacore (*Euthynnus alletteratus*) goes by many names—little tunny, fat albert, bonito, spotted bonito—but whatever anglers call it, the species is prized for its blistering runs and sheer power." The next day, I timed my return for the same part of the tide cycle and was blessed with light wind. I came armed with two fly rods, a 9-weight with a floating line and crease fly with hopes of top-water excitement, and a 10-weight with an intermediate sinking line and a Gummy Minnow more similar to the rain minnows that were being targeted the day before.

## Financial Report

by Jim Robinson

9/1/2021 to 9/30/2021

<b>Begin Bal. Checking</b>	<b>\$21,305.41</b>
<b>Income:</b>	
No income	<u>\$00.00</u>
Total Income	\$00.00
<b>Disbursements</b>	
ACH Debit	<u>(\$94.95)*</u>
Total Disbursements	(\$94.95)
<b>Net</b>	(\$94.95)
 Unencumbered:	 \$12,388.11
 Encumbered Funds:	 
Casting for Recovery	\$2,365.52
SKIFF	\$6,456.83
 <b>Ending Adj Bal-Checking</b>	 <b>\$21,210.46*</b>

\*Our previous bank (BBVA) was bought by PNC. I have not been able to get a Sept statement so am relying on reviewing a transaction listing to reconcile our bank balance. This includes determining the purpose of the ACH Debit.



## President's Message cont.

I arrived at the mouth of the pass after lunch, and was pleased to see that a feeding frenzy was already in progress. Eager for top-water action, I started casting the crease fly into the surface activity which got lots of attention, but last moment refusals until I finally got a hook-up followed by a "blistering run", burned stripping fingers, and bruised knuckles when I didn't get my stripping hand clear of the reel handle quickly enough. With plenty of backing and time, the bonito finally resigned and found itself on the cover of this newsletter.

As much as I enjoyed the eventual top-water hit on the crease fly, I had to give the Gummy Minnow an opportunity next. I made a cast, let the fly sink for a moment followed by a quick strip, and immediately had another fish on and a screaming reel. Clearly this was a better choice to match the hatch. The surface feeding action continued to move around the ship channel and into the Gulf so it was single-handed run-and-gun boat handling, casting, fighting, and landing, all while dodging tugboats, ships, and tourist boats for the next couple of hours. At the end of this epic day I had landed ten bonito on the fly rods and was exhausted from their "sheer power."

Targeting shallow water redfish is an appealing endeavor for fly fishers for very good reason. Who doesn't like sight-casting to a worthy adversary with a well-placed fly? However, don't overlook the occasional nearshore opportunities that present themselves, especially in the fall of the year. A number of guides along the Gulf Coast offer trips to do so, and you may just find yourself having a very memorable day like I did.

I'm sad to report that our VP, Scott Kerrigan, and his family will soon be returning to New York, but happy that they'll be closer to family now that they have a little one. He'll be missed, and on behalf of the club, please join me in wishing him well in his new endeavors.

My term as president will be coming to an end in a couple of months. With Scott's departure, that will leave a couple of board positions open that will need to be filled for 2022. If you are interested in taking a leadership position in the club, please get in touch with me as soon as possible to discuss any role that might interest you. You can reach me at [davebush@mac.com](mailto:davebush@mac.com).

Thanks and tight lines!  
Dave





# October Speaker – Chris Johnson

Thursday, October 21 at 7:00 pm

[www.facebook.com/atxflyfishers/](http://www.facebook.com/atxflyfishers/)

**Topic: Texas Native:** Fly Fishing for Rio Grande Cichlids

The United States has only one native species of cichlid and thankfully, it makes its home in Texas! Most fly anglers infrequently catch Rio Grande Cichlids while fishing for bass and sunfish. However, to catch them consistently, and on a year-round basis, requires an in-depth understanding of the species. Chris has caught Rio Grande Cichlids for well over 20 years, but for the last four years he has specifically targeted Rios on fly in an effort to demystify and celebrate one of Texas' most unique native fish. This presentation is the culmination of years of study, countless days of fishing, and many long nights of fly design! Chris will cover seasonal behavioral changes, fly selection, fishing techniques, premier fishing destinations, and so much more! Whether you are trying to catch your very first Rio Grande Cichlid or you simply want to expand your knowledge of this largely misunderstood fish species, this presentation has something for you!



**Bio:** Chris Johnson is the owner and founder of Living Waters Fly Fishing, a fly shop and guide service based out of Round Rock, Texas. He has guided the Texas Hill Country since 2006 and has fly fished the heart of the state for over 20 years. Chris has been a licensed guide in Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, and Alaska. Chris is an FFI Certified Casting Instructor, Umpqua Signature Fly Designer, Tenkara USA Guide, and TPWD Angler Educator. He is also a pro team member for Whiting Farms, Scott Fly Rods, Dyna-King, and Scientific Anglers. Chris is dedicated to sharing his passion for the sport and investing in the next generation of fly anglers. He often is a featured presenter and fly tier at fly fishing, outdoor, and community events throughout the state.

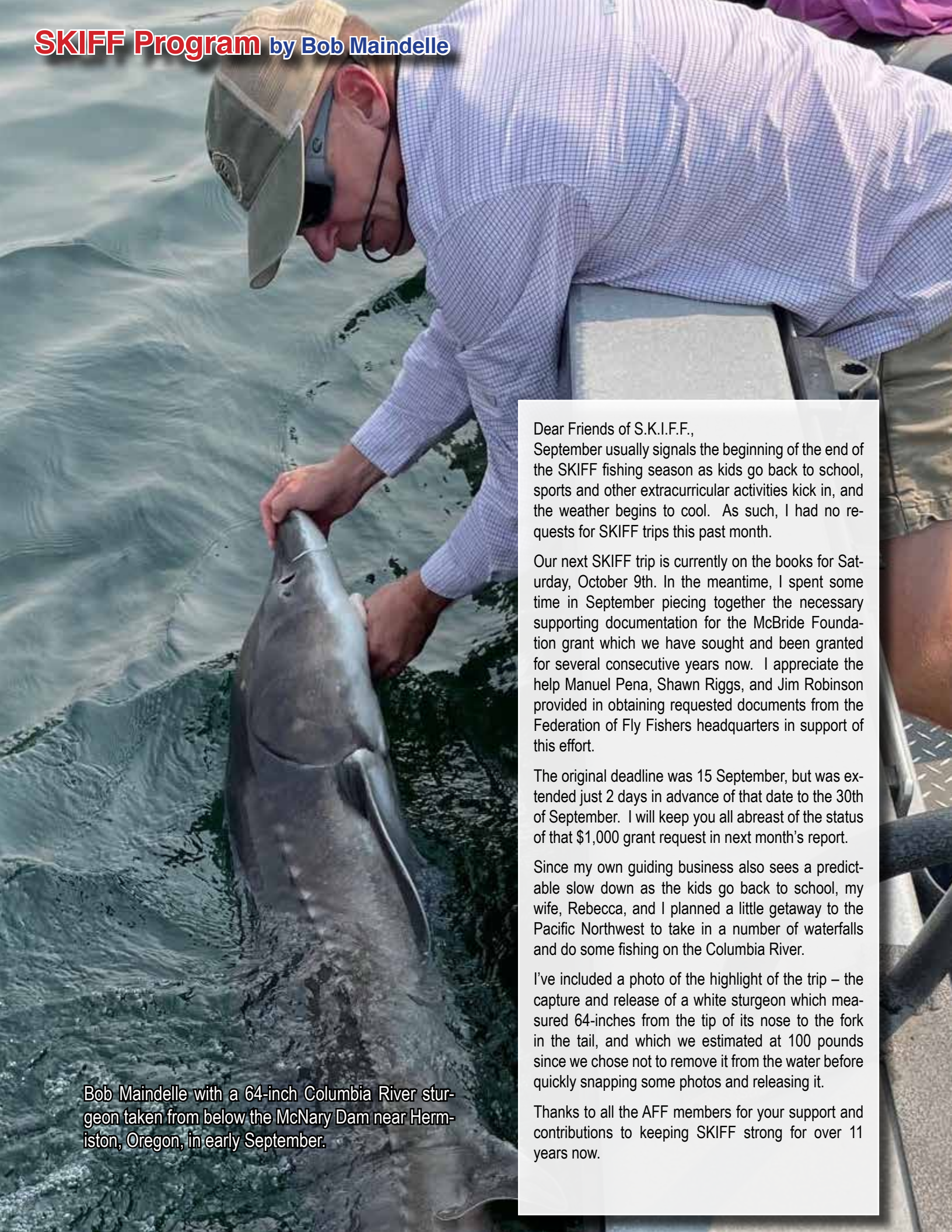
Chris and his shop have also been featured in several outdoor publications including Trout magazine, Garden and Gun, and Tenkara Magazine. He was also awarded the 2014 Man of the Year from the FFI Texas Council, and in the same year, Living Waters was the recipient of the FFI's prestigious Lee Wulff Award.

In addition to fly fishing, Chris is passionate about film and photography. He co-produced the short film "Unspoken," in an effort to raise awareness for Rio Grande Cutthroat trout conservation. As a result, Living Waters is working with Trout Unlimited as a Gold Level endorsed TU Business to restore Rio Grande Cutthroat throughout their native range.

Chris is happily married to his wife Emily and together they enjoy fly fishing the world and raising their children in the sport.



## SKIFF Program by Bob Maindelle

A man wearing a light blue and white checkered shirt, a tan baseball cap, and sunglasses is leaning over the side of a boat. He is holding a large, dark-colored fish, identified as a Columbia River sturgeon, by its head. The fish is partially submerged in the water, and its long, pointed snout is visible. The background shows the rippling surface of the water.

Bob Maindelle with a 64-inch Columbia River sturgeon taken from below the McNary Dam near Hermiston, Oregon, in early September.

Dear Friends of S.K.I.F.F.,  
September usually signals the beginning of the end of the SKIFF fishing season as kids go back to school, sports and other extracurricular activities kick in, and the weather begins to cool. As such, I had no requests for SKIFF trips this past month.

Our next SKIFF trip is currently on the books for Saturday, October 9th. In the meantime, I spent some time in September piecing together the necessary supporting documentation for the McBride Foundation grant which we have sought and been granted for several consecutive years now. I appreciate the help Manuel Pena, Shawn Riggs, and Jim Robinson provided in obtaining requested documents from the Federation of Fly Fishers headquarters in support of this effort.

The original deadline was 15 September, but was extended just 2 days in advance of that date to the 30th of September. I will keep you all abreast of the status of that \$1,000 grant request in next month's report.

Since my own guiding business also sees a predictable slow down as the kids go back to school, my wife, Rebecca, and I planned a little getaway to the Pacific Northwest to take in a number of waterfalls and do some fishing on the Columbia River.

I've included a photo of the highlight of the trip – the capture and release of a white sturgeon which measured 64-inches from the tip of its nose to the fork in the tail, and which we estimated at 100 pounds since we chose not to remove it from the water before quickly snapping some photos and releasing it.

Thanks to all the AFF members for your support and contributions to keeping SKIFF strong for over 11 years now.



# 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 Rodriquez** – <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 Fishig the lower Colorado River

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

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

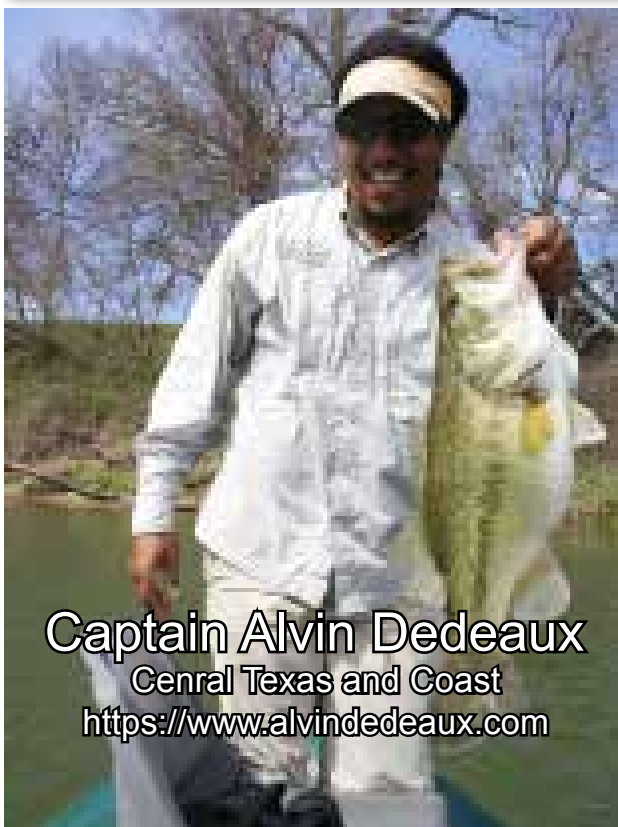
**Nick Streit** – <https://taosflyshop.com/flyguide/main> New Mexico and Southern Colorado

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

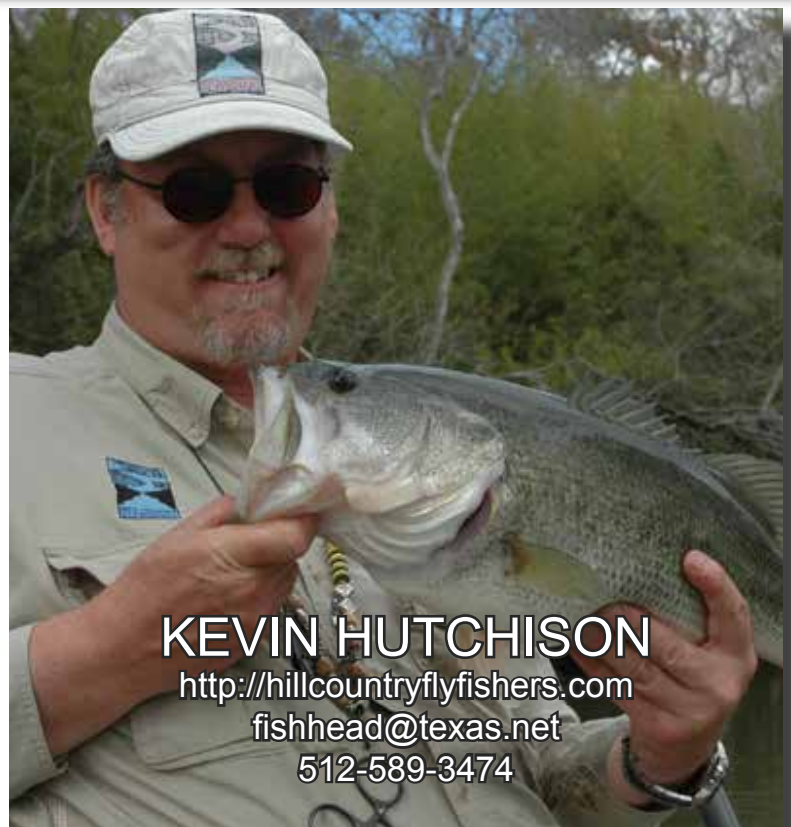
Lower Laguna Madre

**Pat Vanek** – [BousqueValleyFlyFishing@gmail.com](mailto:BousqueValleyFlyFishing@gmail.com) Rivers of Central TX

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



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Capt Randy and Truette Cawfield  
956-371-3036

Email: [kingfisherinnarroyocity@gmail.com](mailto:kingfisherinnarroyocity@gmail.com)



**Captain Eric Glass**

South Padre Island, Texas

<http://www.captainericglass.com>





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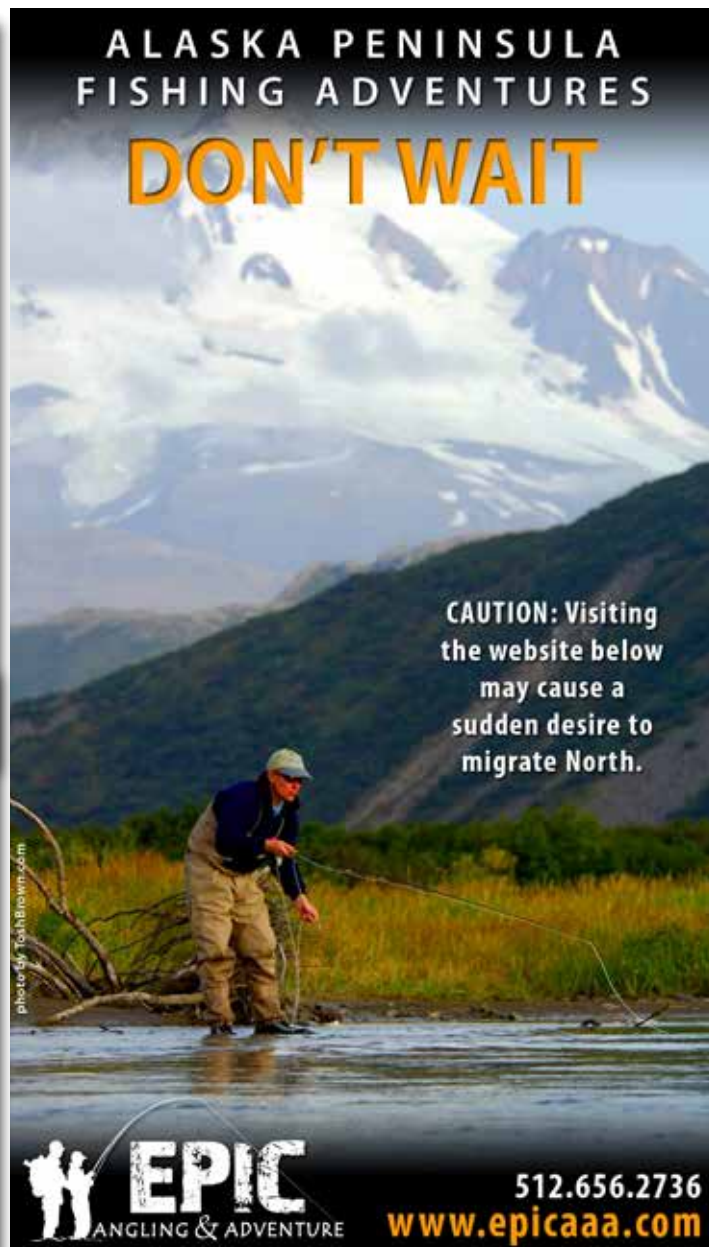
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