

# ***THE BACKCAST***



THE BACKCOUNTRY FLY- FISHING ASSOCIATION OF  
BREVARD



Volume XXXV Number IV

January 2025

**January 7th Meeting:  
at the Italian American Club  
1471 Cypress Ave  
Melbourne**

## **Captain Mark Benson**

An active U.S.C.G. Master Captain since 1999, Captain Mark Benson offers inshore light tackle and fly-fishing trips in the famed waters of the Indian River Lagoon system. He has also earned the Certified Casting Instructor (CCI) designation through the International Federation of Fly Fishers, a non-profit organization dedicated to the betterment of the sport of fly fishing through conservation, restoration and education. As a Certified Florida Master Naturalist from the University of Florida/IFAS, Mark enjoys sharing his knowledge and appreciation of the state's ecosystems. Mark's website is a true reflection of his interests and talent, from fishing to photography. Here is a link to his website-- [www.markbensonoutdoors.com](http://www.markbensonoutdoors.com). Marks' knowledge of the annual shad run that occurs on the St. Johns River is invaluable and a great way for us to start this year's meetings.

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## Ramblings and Such

### January

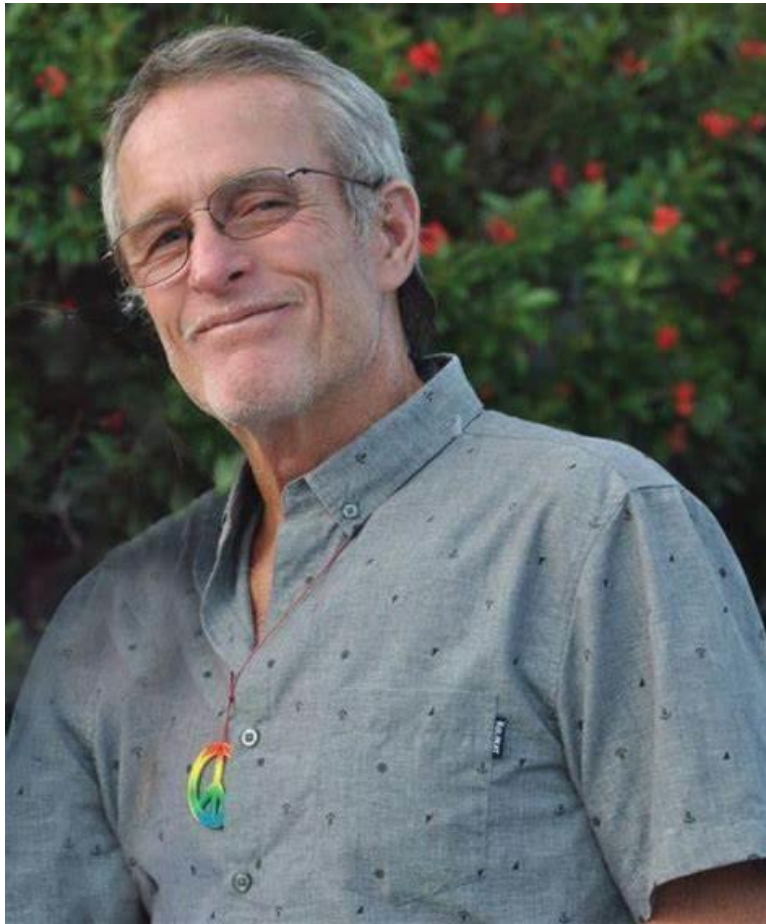
Here we go again with a new year upon us. We are looking forward to 2025 and will be starting out the first month with Capt. Mark Benson and a presentation on fishing the St. Johns for Shad. The timing of this program could not be better if the Shad cooperate as late January and then all of February are typically prime times for the migration of Shad to start coming into the river south of State Road 46 and migrating even further south.

### March Auction

We will be having our annual auction on March 8<sup>th</sup> at Billy Kempfer's ranch. This is our one and only auction which raises the money we use to bring in our annual speakers, such as the recent program headed by Jeff Currier. So, we need everyone to dig into their treasure trove of items that they no longer use and donate them to the club auction. The premise will be the same as last year and we will put that information in our next newsletter. Remember that the items you bring should be new or gently used.

## **Capt. Rodney Smith**

It is with great sadness that we learned of the recent passing of one of our own club members, Capt. Rodney Smith. From the website of the Coastal Angler there was a tribute to Rodney and a small part of it read as follows “ Lifeguard, fishing captain, surfer, author, entrepreneur, and friend to all, Rodney Smith’s time on this earth was well spent helping others and showing love to Mother Nature and the marine environment”. If a person is remembered in life with those endearing words, then in my book, that is a life well spent. Rodney had an unparalleled passion for both the Indian River and Banana River Lagoon. As well, he was the publisher and founder of the periodical called Coastal Angler. He and his wife, Karen, started the Hook Kids on Fishing Program. Rodney was a member of our fishing club from very early on in our history as well as working with the Ban the Nets movement. There is a planned Celebration of Life planned for Rodney to be held on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 11:00 – 4:00 at the Pelican Beach Park in Satellite Beach. There will also be a paddle out there if the weather co-operates. RIP Rodney



## On the Water

The water has cleared up quite a bit in areas lying in the northern areas of the Banana River Lagoon. Even though the picture below doesn't show much clarity the water that day was easily 4-6 ft visibility. I am seeing Spartina grass growing close to the shorelines up in the NMZ area and let's hope that trend continues. Below are two pictures I took on different days, one in the NMZ of the redfish and then the trout is still in the Banana River area but south of the NMZ. As you can see, the redfish has the tail of another fish sticking out of its mouth. I saw this fish floating from a distance away and pulled it out of the water as it was already dead. The smaller fish had wedged into the mouth of the redfish and could not get out. As the saying goes, "don't bite off more than you can chew". Once I took my pictures I slid him back into the water and let nature take its course.







### **Attention: Printed Newsletter**

For those of you who have been getting a printed copy of the newsletter mailed to them please note that this month's newsletter is the very last paper copy that will be mailed to you. Starting in February all newsletters will be emailed to club members as well as posted on our website [www.bffa-brevard.net](http://www.bffa-brevard.net). With that in mind, if you haven't already been receiving an email copy of the newsletter that most likely means we need your email address. If you would send your email address to [craigsmith52@gmail.com](mailto:craigsmith52@gmail.com) I will add you onto our distribution list.



# BFFA January 2025 Events

## **Monthly Dinner Meeting:**

**January 7th at 6:30  
Italian American Club—  
1471 Cypress Ave. Melbourne**

## **Fly Tying:**

**Melbourne Library—6:15 p.m.  
There will not be a fly-tying class in January  
due to the holiday on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the  
month. We will resume in February.**

## **Outings:**

**We will keep an eye out for the shad  
run this year and hope to meet up in  
February.**

## **Board Meeting:**

**January 14th 5:00 meet at Ron Winn's  
office 2103 Grant Place Melbourne All members  
are welcome to join. We typically eat at Megs  
first and then rejoin at Ron's office around 6:00**



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