

THE BACKCAST



THE BACKCOUNTRY FLY- FISHING ASSOCIATION OF
BREVARD

www.bffa-brevard.com

Volume XXXIV Number IX



November 2023

Oct

Tuesday-November 7th, at 6:30

**BFFA Club Meeting
at the Italian American Club
1471 Cypress Ave
Melbourne**

Duane earned his B.S. in Zoology from the University of Rhode Island (1976) and M.S. (1982), and Ph.D. (1988) in Marine Biology from the Florida Institute of Technology. He did post-doctoral research on the Indian River Lagoon at the University of Florida IFAS (1990-1991). Since that time, he has served in senior leadership roles with government, non-profit organizations, academia, and in industry. Duane currently serves as a Governor-appointed Board member of Florida's Harmful Algae Bloom Task Force. He served nine years as a Governor-appointed member of CareerSource FL Inc. (2013-2022). He is a member of the Board of Directors for the Florida Ocean Alliance, the Association of National Estuary Programs, the Advisory Board for the Southeast and Caribbean Disaster Resilience Partnership, the Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association and a Legacy Campaign Cabinet Member for the Brevard Zoo Aquarium Project. Duane has been an avid surfer for over 50 years and an "I wish I was better at it" saltwater fly fishing enthusiast. Duane puts on one of the most informative presentations on our estuary's here and is a show you will not want to miss.



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Ramblings and Such

We are having a club outing this coming on Nov. 4th at Ballard Park. Chef Steve will be there cooking up some lunch right around 11:00 or so. Some of us will be fishing earlier in the morning there and let's hope for good weather.

Also, on Nov.14th there will be a Rigging Seminar at Harry Goode's for BFFA club members only. The start of the seminar is expected to be about 6:00 to 6:30 and once the exact time is confirmed we will send out another email.

Once again, we have the fortune of including one of Bill Sargent's articles was originally written for the Florida Today paper years ago. The article discussed the October mullet run and the area around the Canaveral Bight. Though October was the month used in the article it mentions November and later in the year as great times to fish there.

Right now, off our beaches, there have been schools of baitfish getting blasted out of the water. I have heard Bluefish and Snook are coming right into the trough off of the beach and while I was out surfing on the 23rd of Oct. a tarpon rolled right in front of me. What I am seeing is that there still is plenty of action going on right now and could very well continue well into November. The trough is close enough for us using typical fly rods. If you are using a two-handed flyrod then so much the better. It's time to get out there and hit the beach. Once the waves from Hurricane Tammy settle down and we get lucky, the fish should be right back along our beaches. Well at least in theory they should be.

Fly Tying with Jeff Ward

The class will be November 20th at 6:00 pm
at the Melbourne Library.

November's fly is the Turneffe Crab Fly

Recipe:

Hook: FTD ST5500 #2/0

Thread: 210 Orange

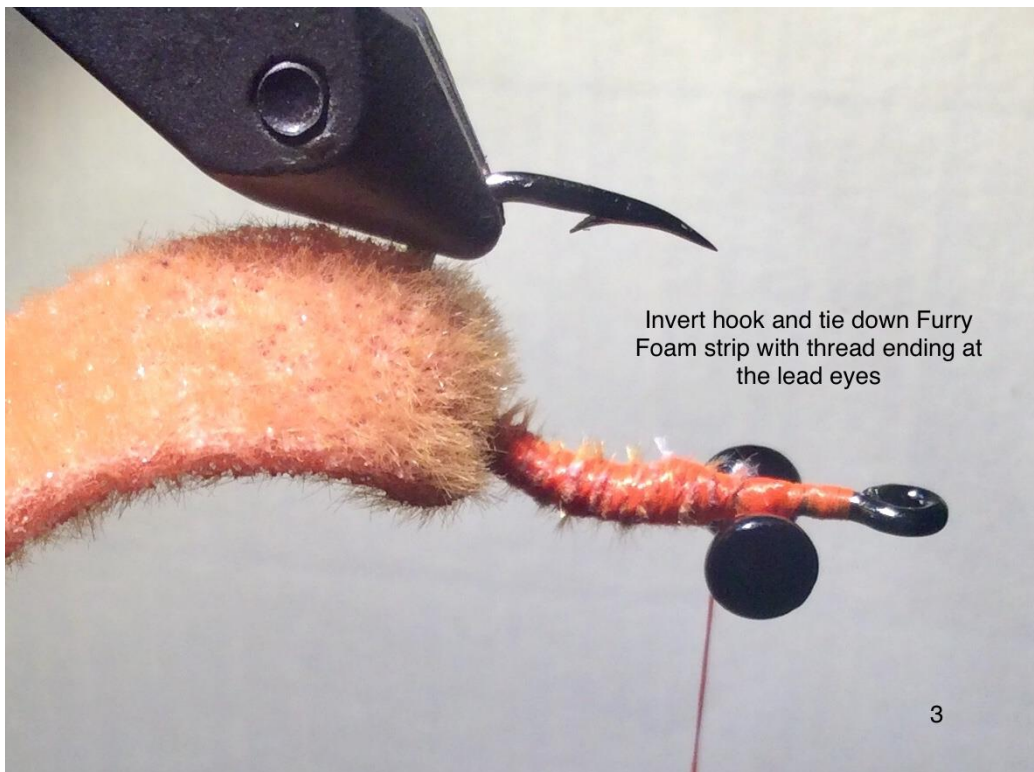
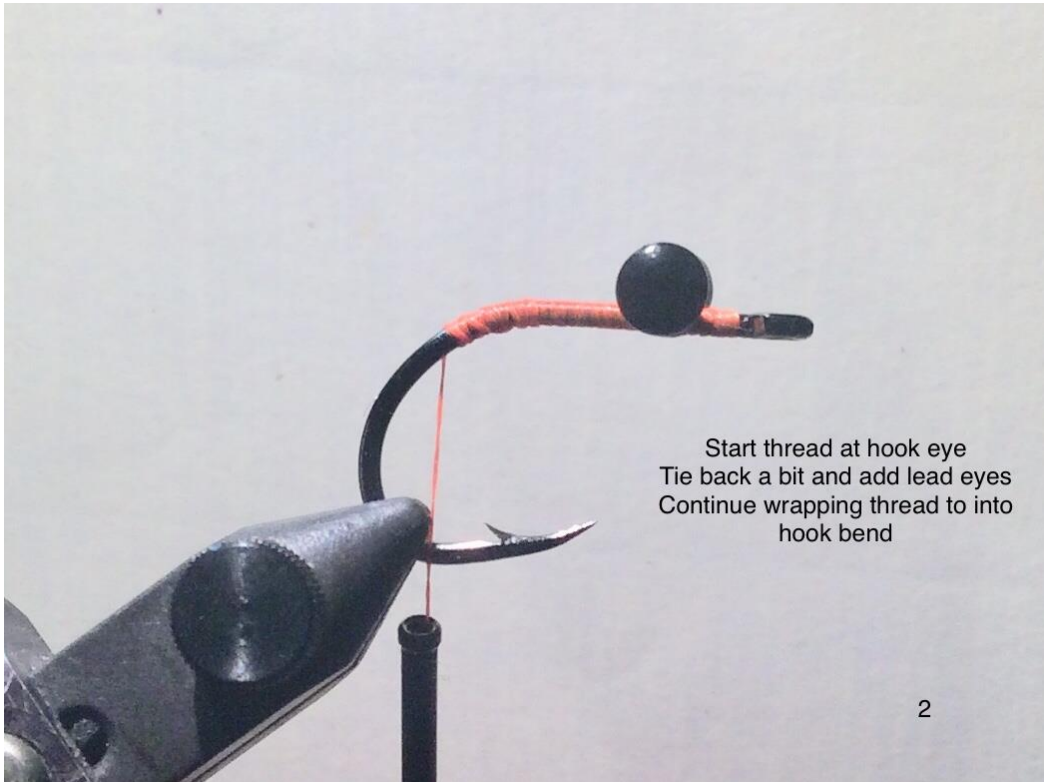
Eyes: Medium Lead Black

Body: Furry Foam Rust

Legs: Grizzly Barred Med Orange

Back: Deer Hair









Redfish picture courtesy of Brandon



Canaveral Bight offers protection, and catches for fly fishermen

This article by Bill Sargent missed last month's newsletter which would have coincided with the start of the mullet run but it is a great article and I decided to get it into November's newsletter as the baitfish are still in.

-Savvy East Coast anglers, including club members who consider themselves in that category, know October marks the fall kickoff for some of the best ocean catches of the year along the Canaveral Bight, a 4½-mile stretch of protected inshore water immediately north of Port Canaveral. While most anglers will be using conventional gear in the Bight area, fly fishermen can score from boats positioned outside the surf line. The beach is off limits because of security measures for the adjacent Canaveral Space Force Station, a missile launching site, so in this case a boat is necessary.

This seasonal action, which can continue into November and the winter months, relates to the fall baitfish run by the schools of black and silver mullet that will be moving south along our coast in quest of warmer climes. Even the slightest water temperature drop to our north is the signal for the mullet, menhaden, glass minnows and other baitfish to head south. All become prime forage.

Historically, the Canaveral Bight has stood as a premier fall and winter fishing ground for small boaters who need the protection offered by the Bight from strong northerly winter winds. At varying times the Bight offers snook, redfish, Spanish mackerel, bluefish, sometimes even cobia and tarpon. As fall moves into winter, pompano and whiting can be added. Chuck Bauer says he makes the drive from his Orlando home a couple times a week to specifically target the Bight in his 14-foot boat. "I've found it's a great spot for small-boaters like myself," Bauer said. "The wind can be howling from the northwest and I can still get in a day of good fishing." Bauer is not a fly fisherman, instead using live mullet on weighted bottom rigs exclusively for snook and redfish early in the season before switching to lipped plugs that he slow trolls parallel to the beach when the supply of bait diminishes in late November and December.

Noted inshore guide Troy Perez is another fan of the Bight. Snook can be phenomenal up there in October when the finger mullet come around the tip of the Cape and head down that shoreline," Perez said. "Reds can be there as well." Flyrodders target the snook and reds by throwing streamer or crab patterns. Look for darker shades of water showing troughs, runouts and holes where weighted line offers a deeper presentation. For live-baiters, Perez suggests a live mullet on a 1-ounce split shot and 40-pound mono leader. "The snook are 10 to 12 pounds, but we've released 20-pounders," he said.

A technique by guide Capt. Jim Ross is casting lipped plugs toward the beach. "I use 7½ foot rods with 6-pound braided line and large Rapala plugs for long casts," said Ross who positions his bay boat with a trolling motor. "We try to hit the sand and retrieve the baits off the beach. The strikes sometimes come within the first 15 to 20 feet." Here's a challenge for you spey casters.

As for the bluefish and Spanish mackerel that school outside the surf line, flyrodders can reach them with ease. Tom Ference, a retired schoolteacher from Merritt Island who started fishing the Bight in 1971, waits until December and January when the greater numbers of pompano and whiting appear. For the pompano, Ference rigs two 1/8th-ounce chartreuse-colored commercial-grade jigs in tandem and tips the hooks with small pieces of peeled shrimp. For the whiting he switches to small circle hooks on sliding-sinker flounder rigs and again uses pieces of peeled shrimp. Those in the club who tie "magical pompano patterns" can get in on this bottom-feeding action.

Bight fishermen must pay special attention to incoming swells when positioning a boat because of the dangers of being swamped or even rolled. Obviously, there are days when the inexperienced should not get close to the beach. For launching, the Freddie Patrick Park ramps on the south side of the port immediately west of Jetty Park provide close access to the Bight and the open Atlantic. There's no charge for launching.

BFFA November 2023 Events

Monthly Dinner Meeting:

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

Fly Tying:

Melbourne Library
November 20th at 6:00 pm

Outings:

November 4th at 11:00
Ballard Park 924 Thomas
Barbour Drive, Melbourne

Board Meeting:

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



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