

THE BACKCAST



THE BACKCOUNTRY FLY- FISHING ASSOCIATION OF
BREVARD

www.bffa-brevard.com

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August 2023

Wednesday-August 1, at 6:30

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

Our August 1st speaker will be Dave Olsen, from Vero Beach. David grew up in Vero Beach and has lived in various parts of the state, fishing the flats from the Keys to the Panhandle along the way. Specializing in fly fishing, David is a Fly Fishers International Certified Master Casting Instructor and is experienced in rigging fly equipment for everything from Bluegill to Blue Marlin. David will be giving a presentation on fishing the surf



For those of you who are interested the below information was posted on the FI DEP website.

**Join DEP for an Informational Webinar
on the Water Quality Protection Grant Portal**

DEP's [Division of Water Restoration Assistance](#) is hosting an educational webinar for the newly expanded [Water Quality Protection Grant Portal](#). Local governments, academic institutions and nonprofit organizations are encouraged to attend to learn about grant eligibility, requirements and project specifics for water quality protection grants.

What: Water Quality Protection Grant Portal Webinar

Where: Virtually on Microsoft Teams

When: Aug. 8, 2023
1 to 2:30 p.m. ET

How: Email DWRAFundingPortal@FloridaDEP.gov to request a webinar meeting invitation.

Grant opportunities currently available through the portal include Water Quality Improvement Grants, Indian River Lagoon Water Quality Improvement Grants, Biscayne Bay Water Quality Improvement Grants, Alternative Water Supply Grants, Florida's Coral Reef Restoration and Recovery Initiative Grants, Nonpoint Source Management Grants and Innovative Technology for Harmful Algal Bloom Grants.

DEP is also accepting grant applications through the [Resilient Florida Grant Program](#) for projects to prepare coastal and inland communities for the adverse impacts of flooding and storm surge.

Grant programs have different closing dates, so please review the closing date posted for each grant program on [ProtectingFloridaTogether.gov](#). Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals to all grant programs for which they may be eligible.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person requiring special accommodations to attend this presentation is asked to advise the agency at least 48 hours before the presentation. Contact Traci Klepper at Florida Department of Environmental Protection, 3900 Commonwealth Blvd., Tallahassee, FL 32399; Traci.Klepper@FloridaDEP.gov; or 850-245-2834. If you have a hearing or speech impairment, please contact the agency using the Florida Relay Service, 800-955-8771 (TDD) or 800-955-8770 (voice).

BFFA Officers and Directors

Board Chairman: Frank Catino
777-5706
fcatino@cfl.rr.com

President: Steve Stewart
446-4894

VP/Programs: Frank Catino

Secretary/Treasurer: Ron Winn
Postal distribution of
Backcast 723-3141
ron@winnaccounting.com

Conservation Director: Bill DeLuccia
(Home) 729-8188
deluccias@hotmail.com

Education Director/Fly Tying: Jeff Ward
242-2815 cojeward@gmail.com

Outings Director: Steve Stewart Sr.
Captindianriversteve@yahoo.com

Mike Reynolds
Reynolds123@Bellsouth.net

Auction Chairman: Bruce Jacobus

IT/Media and Email distribution of BackCast:
Craig Smith Craigsmith52@gmail.com

Newsletter Writer/Editor:

Lindsay Rowland 266- 5388

LMRFish1@gmail.com



Ramblings and Notices

Terry Parsons

For those of you that may have not heard, a long-time member and past president of our club, Terry Parsons passed away on Friday July 21st. Terry was living in New Jersey after he moved away from the Wabasso area. Terry owned the Wabasso Bait and Tackle store for years, which was located at the intersection of U.S.1 and county road 510. Terry was well known for his surf casting capabilities and tracking large tarpons from the beaches during the annual fall mullet runs. Terry was a tinkerer and was constantly looking to improve his tackle and techniques. In simpler terms, he was a hell of an accomplished fisherman that continued to hone his skills. He will be missed by many of us. His ashes are to be scattered in Sandy Hook, New Jersey. R.I.P.

After the fly tying section below I have put in an article that Bill Sargent wrote back in 2009 about Terry Parsons and his fishing for Tarpon from the beach. A great article that really shows Terry's dedication to fishing the annual mullet run and going after the big ones.

The heat is on and only the brave or foolhardy are getting out on the water during the middle of the day. Early morning, late evening and into the night hours are the only comfortable ways to be out on the water these days. The fish are still there for action, just most of us have had to adjust our timeframes for getting on the water.

The anticipation for our fall Mullet run looms large as the action can sometimes be off the charts and by then the weather has typically turned cooler. There is a link below of a post someone had on You Tube showing the mullet migration in full bloom. Check it out.

[Incredible Footage of the Florida Mullet Migration - YouTube](https://youtu.be/iH2NeaOJGJw) <https://youtu.be/iH2NeaOJGJw>

Fly Tying with Jeff Ward

August fly is a Crystal Clouser Glass Minnow

Recipe:

Hook: FTD OS700 #1

Thread: Mono

Body: Clear Crystal Web

Pearl Z Braid

Back: Clear Crystal Web and Color Choice

Eyes: Brass Bead Chain Medium

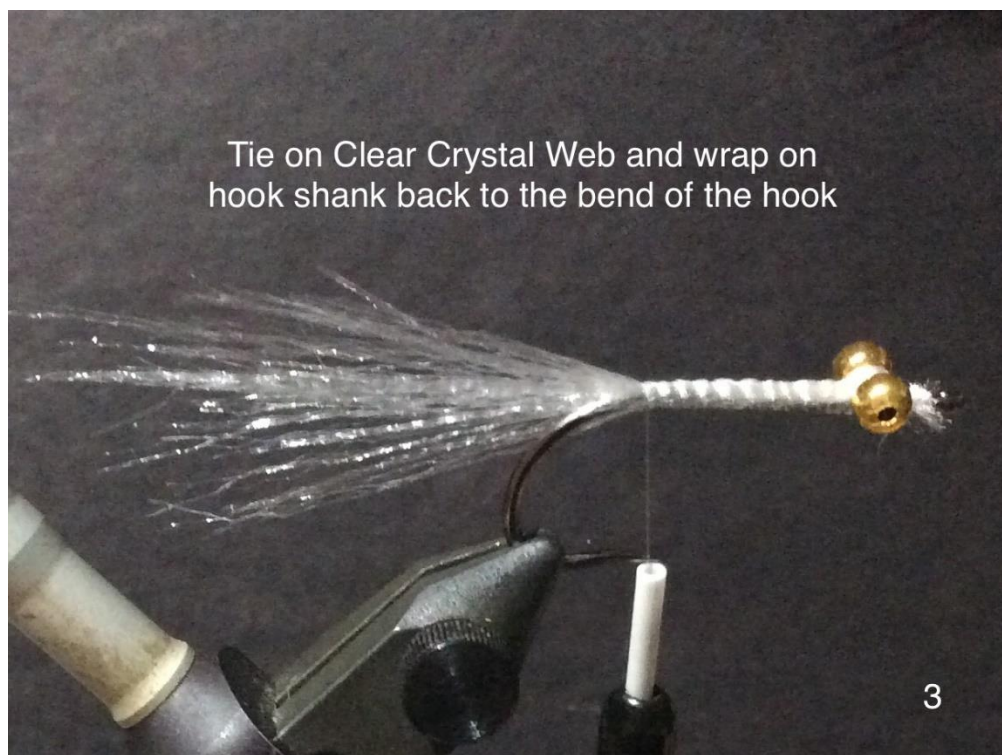
Flash: Holo and Fish Scale Mix





Tie on eyes spaced
a bit back from the
hook eye

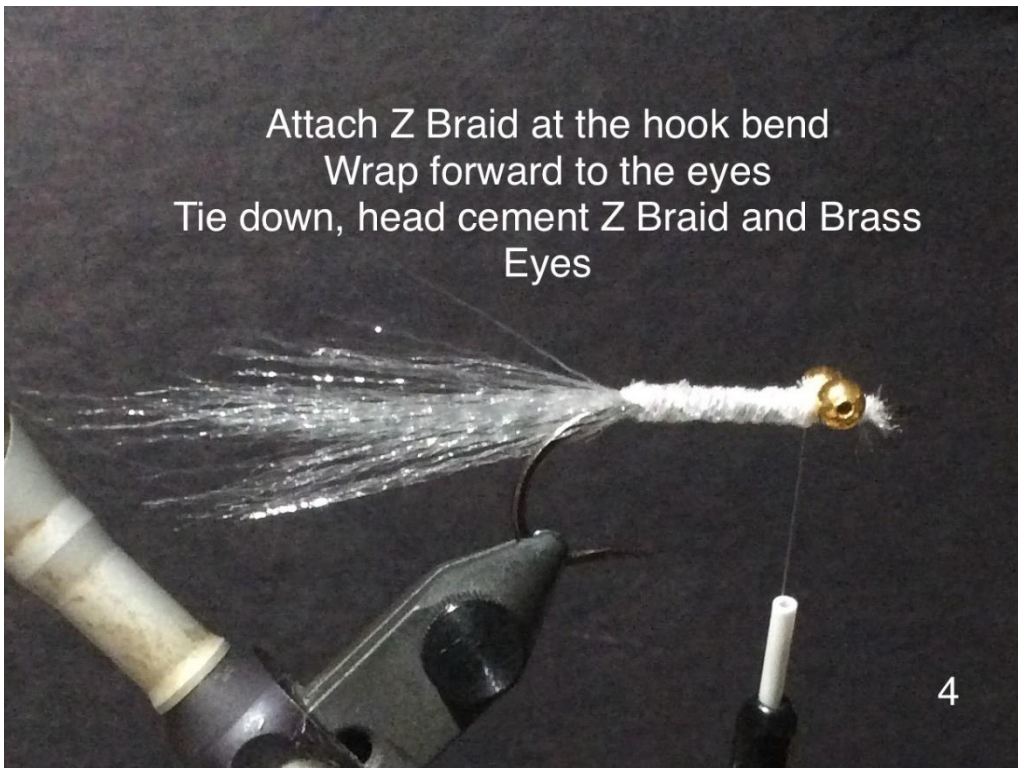
2



Tie on Clear Crystal Web and wrap on
hook shank back to the bend of the hook

3

Attach Z Braid at the hook bend
Wrap forward to the eyes
Tie down, head cement Z Braid and Brass
Eyes

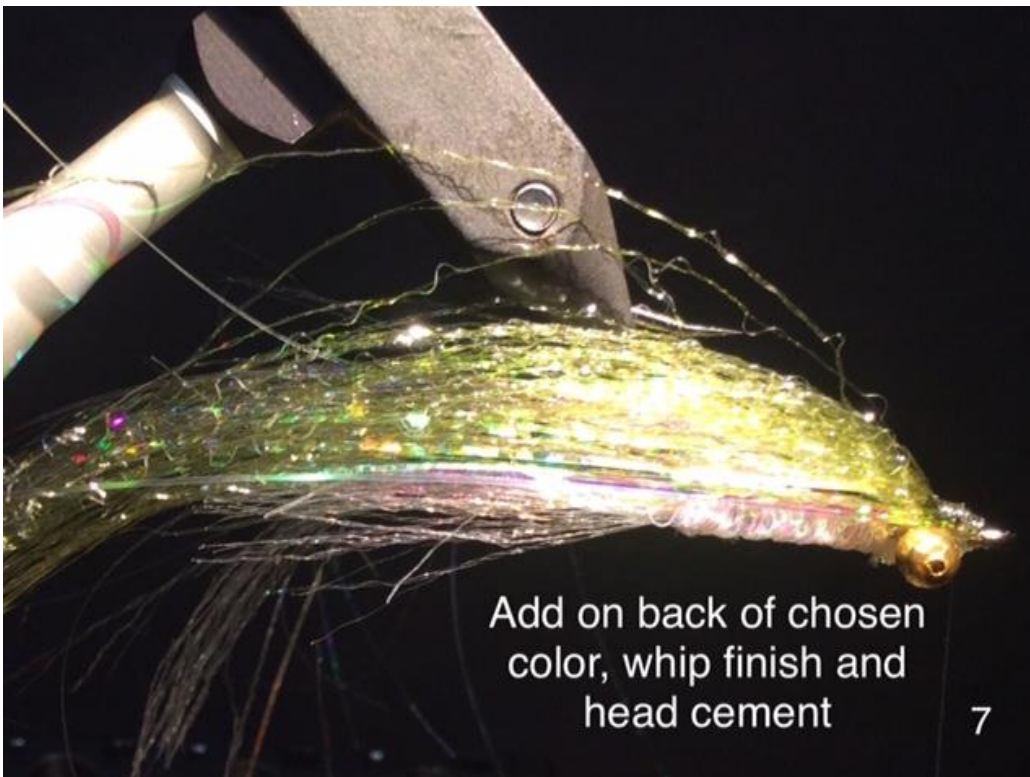


4

Flip to hook up
Add clear Web on top of
the shank



5



Sargent column for Sept. 20, 2009

By Bill Sargent

Terry Parsons is spending his mornings checking the surf between Melbourne Beach and Wabasso Beach, a 20-mile stretch along SR A1A that includes Sebastian Inlet.

It's a ritual the Sebastian angler has been following for nearly 40 years and almost any day now Parsons expects to see the first schools of 8- to 12-inch silver mullet signaling the start of the fall mullet migration.

He knows that with the mullet run also come big tarpon -- heavyweights of 75 to 125 pounds.

The annual north-to-south mullet run also includes black mullet, or striped mullet, which move through this time of the year as smaller 4- to 6-inch fingerlings.

"The bigger silvers are the key for the tarpon," the 66-year-old Parsons explained. "The tarpon will get into the fingerlings at times but as soon as we see the silvers we'll see the tarpon."

Usually by the first week in October Parsons and a band of dedicated surf casters start hitting the beaches at first light three or four mornings a week. They have favorite spots which they know hold mullet. They'll continue their quest through mid November. when most of the mullet will move farther south or around the mouths of inlets like Sebastian.

"October is when it happens," said Parsons who spent 25 years fishing for stripers in the Northeast before moving to Florida and landing his first tarpon in the surf in 1970. Parsons is a life-time angler who operates an inshore guide business and owns Wabasso Bait and Tackle along with his brother Steve Parsons.

Those pursuing the surf tarpon in Brevard and Indian River counties include Charlie Fornabio, who landed a estimated 140-pounder three years ago, Larry Starr, Wade Boyken, Mark Reynolds, John Ravara, John Schauer, Phil Smith, and Clint Walker.

"It's a little bit like a club," Parsons explained. "You're not in officially until you land a tarpon. For some it takes awhile," Parsons added with a laugh.

Other casters work the beaches around Fort Pierce and Stuart.

It takes luck, skill, and good tackle -- in that order -- to land from shore one of these powerful deep-bodied gamesters known for their head-rattling jumps and uncanny ability to throw a plug. The difficulty often is compounded by a rough surf and stiff wind.

"You have to be lucky to land one or two a season," Parsons said. "You jump a lot of them and that's exciting, but there are also a lot of disappointments."

Usually the better numbers of tarpon feed along the surf during the first couple hours after daybreak. So wake-up comes early.

Fornabio's 140-pounder was an exception. It came late in the afternoon.

Needless to say the tackle has to be stout. Most use 9 ½ to 10-foot one-piece rods with heavy backbones and strong spinning reels like the model 650 or 750 Penn or the Daiwa Saltiga capable of holding 300 yards of 30-pound braided or mono line.

"You can equip yourself for about \$250 if you stick with a less expensive reel and rod," Parsons said.

Those like Parsons and Fornabio use the finest tackle consisting of custom rods they build themselves and expensive Van Staal spinning reels.

The casters are close-nit and exchange information. Most use similar lures, usually 7- to 8-inch hard-body surface or lipped swimming plugs or 5- to 6-inch plastic swim baits. The latter work best when the tarpon move close to the beach to feed in the deep trough that parallels much of the beach south of Melbourne Beach.

"Almost any large generic plug you can cast in bad conditions will catch tarpon," Parsons said, "but generally poppers and swimmers are best."

Many of the preferred hard-body baits are carry-overs from northern striper fishermen. who fish basically the same way, in heavy surf, for large stripers. They include the Super Strike Swimmer, the Super Strike Popper, the Atom Popper, the metal-lipped Atom 40, the Yo-Zuri Mag Popper, and Parsons' favorite the Super Strike Little Neck Popper.

Favored swim baits include the 6-inch Berkley PowerBait Mullet and Calcutta-brand swimmers. A mullet imitation of black back and silver sides is the better color combination.

Casts of 70 to 80 yards often are necessary to reach the tarpon which sometimes are seen rolling, so the heavier solid plugs work best. Parsons is a former Stren Longcasting champion who uses long, sweeping casts out to 100 yards in calm conditions.

"Actually the rougher the surf the better for tarpon," Parsons pointed out. "And they still feed in dirty water. So, don't let that stop you."

Leaders, strong knots and sharp hooks are critical elements. Two- to three feet of 100-pound mono or fluorocarbon leader is attached to the 30-pound main line with a double Uni-Knot. Most casters want the knot to extend beyond the tip of the rod to ensure a smooth cast. Parsons prefers Cortland Master Braid or Sufix Braid for his 30-pound main line.

The tarpon aren't alone. You'll get strikes from a variety of sharks, larger bluefish and Spanish mackerel, jack crevalle, plus the occasional barracuda or even big redfish. Two years ago Parsons landed a 45-pound king mackerel.

"Sharks fight just as hard as the tarpon. Most just don't jump," Parsons said. "The exceptions are spinner sharks which spin and tangle the line around their bodies. I've hooked at least 35 spinners and never got one to the beach."

One of Parson's larger sharks was an estimated 100-pound bull shark, and for 11 years he held the Florida record for redfish with a 51½-pounder he pulled from the surf.

Those wanting to learn more detail about this brand of fishing should stop at Wabasso Bait and Tackle on U.S. 1 in Wabasso, or call (772) 589-8518 and talk to one of the Parsons.

BFFA August 2023 Events

Monthly Dinner Meeting:

**August 1st at 6:30
Italian American Club—
1471 Cypress Ave. Melbourne**

Fly Tying:

**Melbourne Library
August 21st at 6:00 pm**

Outings:

**Nothing scheduled till Sept
and that will be determined by
the annual mullet run.**

Board Meeting:

**August 8th 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**



Backcountry Fly Fishing Assoc. of Brevard
P.O. Box 524
Melbourne, FL. 32902-0524