

THE BACKCAST



THE BACKCOUNTRY FLY- FISHING ASSOCIATION
OF BREVARD



Volume XXXIV Number VIII

May 2024

**May 7th 6:30 Meeting
Italian-American Club
1471 Cypress Ave
Melbourne, Fl.**

Capt Scott Hamilton is our featured speaker

The information below is off of Scott's website--
<https://flyfishingextremes.com/>

Fishing the Gulf Stream and offshore of West Palm Beach

Here are some particulars about what we do at Hamilton Fly Fishing. First of all, this is NOT about trout. This is about finding the biggest, meanest, fastest fish available, getting them to destroy a fly and pull you all over the ocean. Sailfish, mahi mahi, wahoo and tuna; very much non-typical fly rod targets. After battling with these fish, you'll understand why I affectionately refer to this as "Full-Contact Fly Fishing".

And that is just the tip of the iceberg. We have approximately forty species during the course of the year and twenty possible species at any given time. False albacore, king and Spanish mackerel, sharks, barracuda, jack crevalle, snook, tarpon, permit, the list goes on. Here in Palm Beach, the Gulf Stream makes its closest pass to land, and with the absence of a continental shelf, deep water fish come amazingly close to land. The run to blue water is very short; the reef being about one mile off the beach. And the sheltered waters of the Lake Worth lagoon, Intracoastal Waterway, the Loxahatchee River, (one of only two designated scenic rivers in Florida) and Hobe Sound offer very entertaining fishing for snook, tarpon, jack crevalle, barracuda and more... And for those of you that like the nightlife, after-hours fishing around area docks and bridges for tarpon and snook can be loads of fun.

On the following page Scott goes through the where, when, and how of false albacore fishing here in our own Florida East Coast.

In recent years, false albacore have created quite a stir in the fly rod community. Though, for some time, a few anglers have been aware of the great sport these fish provide, the word has gotten out.

A tougher, faster, harder hitting fish is not to be found wandering the beaches of the northeast, and they cause major delight for anglers finding themselves in a vicinity of a school of the speed demons.

Racing down beaches and surf lines in the fall devouring silversides and sand eels, watching these things feed at twenty miles an hour is a thrill. And they've caught on as a viable fly rod target in the Outer Banks of North Carolina, where a fall fishery has developed for the time that they are there.

Well, here's a small secret that a lot of people, who have gotten addicted to the kind of madness a false albacore creates on the end of a fly line, may not be aware of. While they visit the entire eastern seaboard, they live in Florida. Year round. In all sizes from tiny one to three-pound flocks of so called "bullets" that are perfect four and six weight fish to the trophy, breakout the twelve weight, fifteen to eighteen pound and up beasts. And very few people fish for them. They don't meet the criteria of a "good" fish due to their meat being less than palatable. So, they are largely unmolested and available to the few chasing them.

Where: The area between Miami and Stuart Florida has an almost continuous reef running the length of the coast that varies in distance from less than one mile, (offshore Miami 'till it reaches Palm Beach) to about six to eight miles offshore Stuart. This reef is the main focal point of the false albacore. Often, they can be found running the schools of baitfish along the beach into a panic, but most of the fish will be found in sixty to two hundred feet of water.

When: In the area surrounding Palm Beach where I guide, the first big false albies start showing up in late March. There are roving packs year-round, but the fall and winter fish can be tough to locate with any regularity. What I call fishable numbers of fish arrive in late March, just about the time the cold fronts lessen enough for water temperatures to climb into the mid-seventies. The numbers continue to increase through April until reaching a crescendo in early May. Large schools of fish will remain in the area through July and into August, when they remember that they need to pay a visit to North Carolina and move out for the most part. Which is OK, a four-month season of these beasts is pretty hard on one's body. And just about the time they leave, dolphin fishing as well as other species such as wahoo, sailfish and skipjack tuna heat up.

How: These fish can be caught using the traditional, purist type, techniques. You can cast directly to fish crashing bait on the surface. The predominant prey you'll find them crashing are small flying fish, sardines, pilchards, and small Sargasso fish. You want to approach the action as quietly as possible and set up a drift that will bring you within reach. Running up on the school is a good way to put them down in a hurry, and when they come back up, if they come back up, they'll probably be several hundred yards off. At times, though mostly they'll hammer anything that looks good, they can be very single minded in what they're feeding on, so try to identify what it is they're eating and match your fly accordingly. Blue/ white flies to resemble flying fish, small yellow flies to match the baitfish that hang around the clumps of Sargasso weed and green/ white flies should cover most situations. Clouser minnows take a good number of fish, but the water clarity, often more than a hundred foot, makes a very realistic fly with eyes, such as a Deceiver, 3-D Fly or my own pattern, the EATME more productive patterns. Having some small squid patterns is a good idea also for when they're on the menu.



Big Bass Anyone

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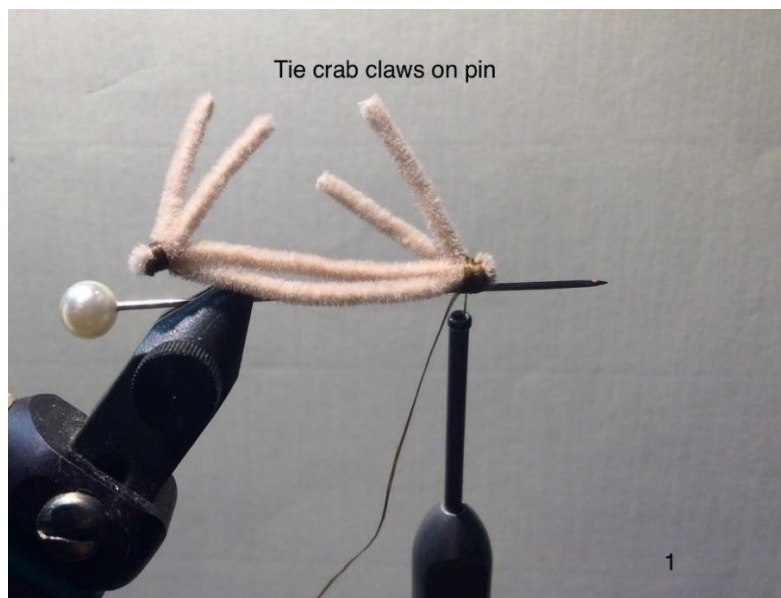
Trying to keep up with the permitting process of which fish you can keep is always a challenge. Factors such as what length, what time of year, what body of water you are in, and what color of hat you are wearing that day seem to always be in a constant state of flux (except the hat color, which is always beige or is it green? Okay, take the hat color out of the equation) Hmm, this could be part of why some of us are now C&R disciples as we just cannot keep up with the regulations. So recently I noticed on the FWC website "[FWC approves modifications to two freshwater fisheries permits govdelivery.com](#)" that they had posted new rules which applies to Black Bass tournaments. It is totally worth noting that one of these permits includes that the boat must have a live well for the bass. [Black Bass Tournament Exemption Permit](#).

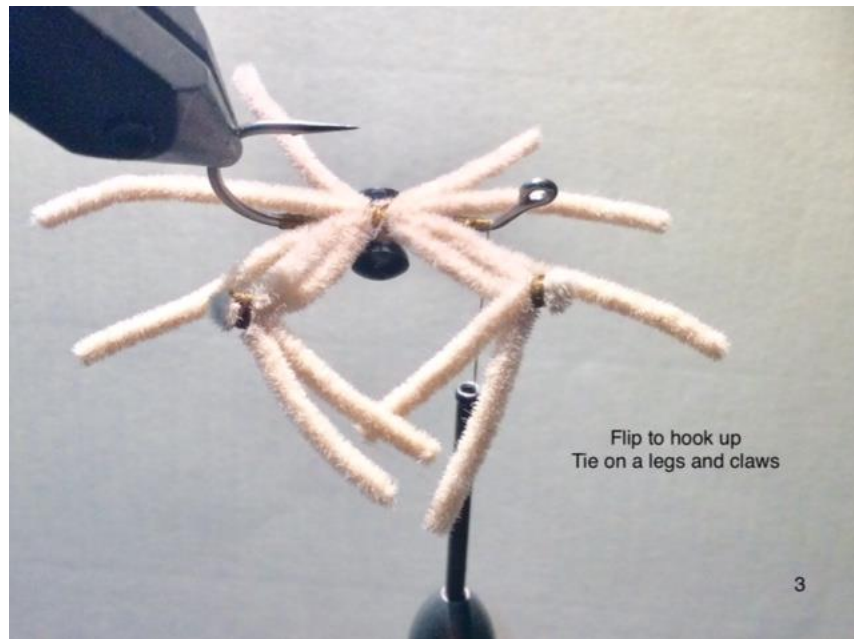
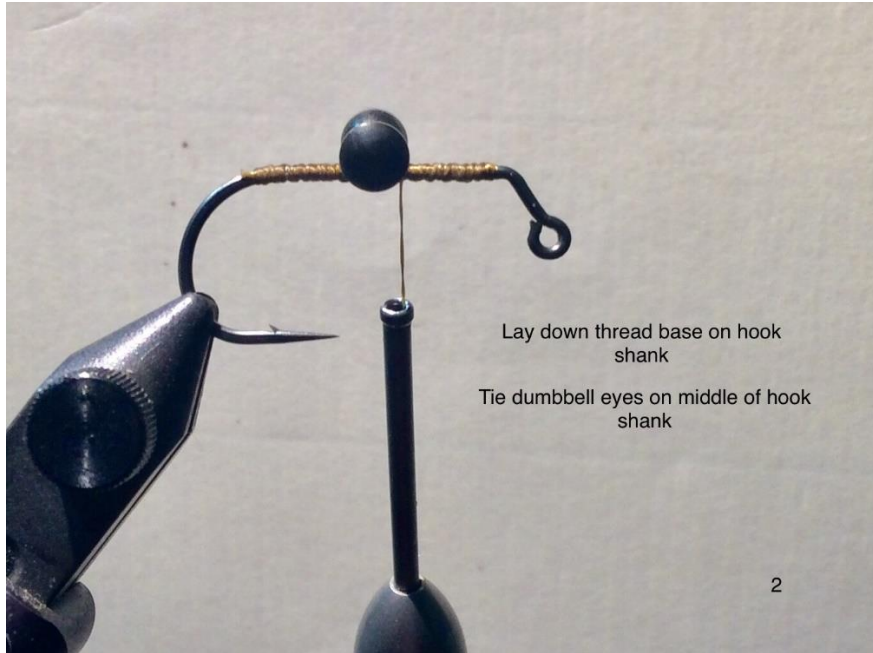
There is another link which is for the Scientific use folks that might want to take either the fish or the roe for research purposes. That link has the title of being a: [scientific collector's permit application](#).

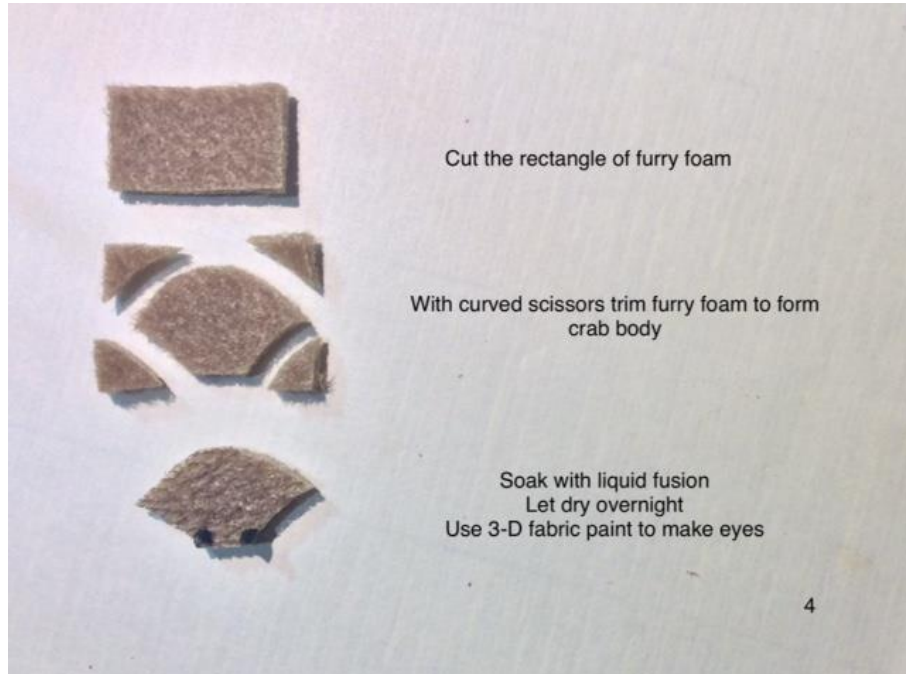
I noticed on one of the forms in that application, there was reference used about recording the fish as either being sacrificed or removed. Now as most of us who grew up around here in the 60's and 70's will attest, there was quite a lot of fish caught (check off the box for that removed option) and then put into a cast iron pan (now there is a conondrum, as that might be considered a sacrifice so now both boxes would have been checked?!). It's a good thing these forms weren't around back in those times as some of the final information collected might be questionable. This all leads once again to another influencing reason some of us have reached the C&R stage of our fishing.

So those links will take you to the sites where there are other clues to keep you in the ever information loop and also further confuse people like me.

May's fly is a Furry Foam Fly
Recipe:
Hook: Mustad J60AP #4
Thread: 210 Brown
Weight: Dumbbell Small
Legs/Claws: Ultra Chenille Tan
Body: Furry Foam Tan treated with
Liquid Fusion
Eyes: 3-D Fabric Paint Black







BFFA May 2024 Events

Monthly Dinner Meeting:

Meeting starts at 6:30 pm.

This month's meeting is May 7th
at the Italian-American Club

1471 Cypress Ave
Melbourne

Fly Tying:

Melbourne Library-May 20th

6:15 pm

Day Event:

TBA

Board Meeting:

May 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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