



## “NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH FLORIDA FLY FISHERS”

### APRIL MEETING

MONDAY, April 19, 2004

### **NORTH FLORIDA FLY FISHERS**

#### **MAILING ADDRESS:**

P.O. BOX 357044  
GAINESVILLE, FL 32635

#### **MEETINGS HELD**

*3<sup>RD</sup> Monday of each  
month at Westminster  
Presbyterian Church,  
1521 NW 34<sup>th</sup> Street.  
Socializing begins at 7:00  
PM. Program starts at  
7:30 PM.*

#### **2004 CLUB OFFICERS**

##### **President**

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##### **Vice President**

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##### **Treasurer**

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352-372-9803

##### **Secretary**

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[nthomas@co.alachua.fl.us](mailto:nthomas@co.alachua.fl.us)

##### **NFFF Club Website**

[www.nfff.netfirms.com](http://www.nfff.netfirms.com)

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### **WHAT'S HAPPENING**

**NEXT CLUB MEETING:** Monday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2004

**6 PM-** Dana Griffin will hold a fly tying session. Bring your vise and tying kit. Dana will supply hooks and materials for the patterns he chooses to demonstrate. If you wish to participate, please bring some monies to reimburse Dana for materials provided at the meeting.

**7:30 PM -** John Holtom will present a program on "Fly Fishing in Great Britain." John has given regular talks to the NFFF during past years about his fishing experiences in Great Britain. Come listen to a master angler who plies the shores of the River Wye for salmon and grayling and also regularly fishes a reservoir for trout. Learn how they do it in the "old country" from a master.

**So please join us for an informative program.**

### **SATURDAY APRIL 24<sup>TH</sup>, 2004**

David Lambert will conduct a **fly casting clinic** for current NFFF membership at the Veteran's Memorial Park. This will be an all-day affair and the cost is \$30 per person. David is a member of the Jacksonville Fly Fishing Club and he has led fly casting clinics for a number of fly fishing clubs, for kids for the Federation of Fly Fishers and Trout Unlimited and he has taught casting for Orvis as well. He has written a book called "Smart Casts: A New Approach To Efficient Fly Casting and Practice." Copies will be available for purchase. To participate, please register and pay by April 19<sup>th</sup>. Contact Jodi for more information.

### **CLUB OUTINGS**

#### **Sunday, April 18<sup>th</sup> - Santa Fe River**

Interested members should meet at the SR27/20 boat ramp at 8 AM. Contact Jodi for additional particulars. Please make suitable boating arrangements for the outing.

#### **Saturday, June 26<sup>th</sup> - Fort Pierce/Stuart**

A club outing to Ft. Pierce with Capt. Marsha Foosaner is currently being planned. Mark the date on your calendar. Information to follow.

# BLUES on the ROCKS

*By Robert  
M. Craig*

Although I've caught a load of them enough to fill a skiff or two, bluefish are not one of my favorite fish to target; that is until last year. Every spring and fall for the past ten years or so my friend Chuck and I run the beaches of Florida from Jacksonville to Wabasso looking for cobia, tarpon, reds, snook, kings and sharks on the baitfish schools. This is a hit or miss proposition as conditions can change dramatically from day to day. Tide, wind, temperature, and water conditions seem to have dramatic effects on the pogie and glass minnow pods and the feeding habits of predacious fish. Clear windows of opportunity present themselves when conditions are right and become painted over a day later under similar conditions. More often than not we don't find the glamour species and settle for Spanish mackerel and blues. These schoolies are easy to catch as there are thousands of them on bait pods that at times can be found several hundred yards apart along long stretches of the beach.

The first time I caught blues on the bait schools I caught so many that I started getting careless in removing them from my fly. Bluefish are particularly rapacious. I've never known them to refuse a glass minnow or a particular baitfish that looks interestingly enough like my thumb. Ever since I got chomped by that blue I've lowered the bluefish in my estimation. I usually have a boat rod on board and always send one down in hopes of nabbing a big fellow. I had a shimmers mentality towards blues for a long time. They were a by-catch suitable for bait and chum but hardly worth perusing. They were easy, small, pesky and thirsted for my blood; then came April 7<sup>th</sup> of last year.

On the sixth I called Chuck and asked him "What is the water temp?" "I don't know, should it matter?" he replied. "Is there any bait moving off the beach?" I inquired. "Hell, I don't know. Do you want to go fishing or not?" he enjoined with impertinence. "Let's run the beach and look for bait. If we see some fining rays we'll check them out and look for cobia. The trolling motor is charged and I'm gassed up.", he continued. "Ok, I'll meet you at 6:00. Be ready this time." The next morning we were greeted with an incoming tide, 3 foot seas and an early morning land breeze, making it difficult to get outside of the Vilano Beach Inlet in the 18 foot skiff. Our early season of running the beach would have to wait for better weather, wave conditions and tide.

But, something had to be going on. After trying a few of our redfish spots with no luck we decided to give the inlet another look to see if conditions had improved for another try at the beach. After deterring that it was too sloppy to try and fish in the Atlantic we started looking around for a plan c and damned if we didn't find it. Albeit with the aid of another angler who told us that the blues were on the rocks but that they had slacked off. Good boat position and a keen eye helped us spot a school of about ten fining blues. These fish were right on the rocks and would disappear when waves would wash them out diverting them from their search and destroy mission. Once the water settled they popped up again working about a fifty yard section of the breakwater inside the jetty. This was going to happen the only question being could we keep the boat off the granite boulders. Motor into position, idle, drift, cut the engine, measure the cast and hit the spot. If the fish appeared, the cast was a few inches off the rocks and in front of the fish you were hooked up to a 10 to 15 pound blue.

We caught these fish for two days, sight fishing them with all the fun and excitement of poling the flats. We didn't have to use the thumb pattern but rather caught these fish on Clousers in chartreuse and white, yellow and red and red and white attached to 40 pound fluorocarbon. Never did we get bit off but did have to clip our leaders after every fish and tie on a new fly.

An eight weight was plenty of rod but our sixes and sevens were more fun. I rigged mine with an SA Wet Cell 2 # IV shooting head lined two sizes up with about five feet cut off the end section attached to a running line. I use the shortened sink tip to load the rod quick and to get the fly down rapidly in the wave action. The running line is a floater thus, keeping only about twenty five feet or so of line under the water.

Once the fish were on we used the boat to help back the fish off the rocks in order to fight them in the opened water. The blues jumped, pulled and gave a nice accounting of themselves. If you're over on the Atlantic in the early spring and fall give the inlets of northeast Florida a look. The inlets and beaches can be fish rich at these times of the year I've taken tarpon, reds, snook, sharks, Spanish and wonderful bluefish on the fly no more than a few feet off the rocks and within reaching distance of surfers along the beach. If you try this in a small boat make sure that all anglers on board are adept at how to operate the water craft of choice and that your power supplies are in good working order. The rocks can take a chomp out of your boat just like the blues can take a bite out of your thumb. I've been reminded of this by Chuck every time we raise the motor on his boat to inspect the nicked and dinged skeg.

# Announcements

**Lake Logan Episcopal Center to offer  
Fishing with Faith  
A retreat with The Rev. Dr. John Freeman,  
author of**

***Fish Deep: Angling's Lessons for Christians  
and Other Seekers***

Lake Logan Episcopal Center, located in Western North Carolina 40 miles west of Asheville will hold a **Fly and Lake Fishing Workshop/Retreat May 24-27, 2004**. This workshop/retreat will include instruction on fly fishing and lake fishing by a qualified instructor, a casting workshop, and sessions about fish ecology. Lake Logan Center is located on 300 acres and includes a pristine 87 acre lake surrounded by over 5,000 acres of national forest. Trout, bass, and walleye are legendary at Lake Logan. Plenty of free time will be included during the week for you to practice fishing, hike, read, or simply relax. The workshop will begin with registration at 4:00 p.m. on Monday evening and will end after lunch on Thursday. **Cost for the workshop/retreat which includes program, housing, and meals is \$325.00 per person/double occupancy.** Please add \$70.00 for a single room. Participants will be limited to 25 and registration will be on a first come, first served basis **To register or for more information, please call the LLEC Reservations office at (828) 646-0095 or (800) 616-0095.**

**NFFF FLY CASTING CLINIC  
SATURDAY APRIL 24<sup>th</sup>  
VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK  
Tower Rd. & SW 41st Place  
9:30 AM**

David Lambert will lead an all-day casting clinic for current NFFF members. Cost for the session, including lunch is \$30 per person. Please register and pay by April 19<sup>th</sup> to secure spot. Number of participants is limited. Notify Jodi of any dietary restrictions and don't forget your fly rod. **Information packets will be emailed to registered participants.**

**FFF SOUTHEASTERN CONCLAVE  
AND FLY FISHING SHOW  
May 13-15th**

Taken From FFF SEC  
website at: [WWW.FFSECC.ORG](http://WWW.FFSECC.ORG)



**Bob Clouser** will be one of our two conclave headliners. The name says it all. In addition to the greatest all-round baitfish imitation of all time, the famous Clouser Minnow, Bob has created numerous patterns for fresh, cold, and saltwater fishing. He's on the Advisory Staff for St. Croix rods and Rio Products. His reputation as a smallmouth guide is sometimes overlooked given the many articles and photos we've seen of Bob fishing the salt. He's certainly a master in that environment, but his contributions to freshwater remain part of his legacy. Joining Bob as headliner will be Yellowstone guide and writer, **Tom Travis**. "Breakfast with Tom" has become a FFF-SEC tradition.

## *Santa Fe River Outing*

**Sunday April 18th.** Let's all meet at about 8 am at the US 27/20 boat ramp in High Springs and fish for bass and bream on the Santa Fe River. If you're traveling from Gainesville, exit from I75 onto US 441 toward High Springs. About 5 miles up 441 turn left onto US 20/27. The boat ramp is on the right directly after the Santa Fe River bridge (a few miles up the road). You'll need a kayak or canoe. I hope to see you on the river!

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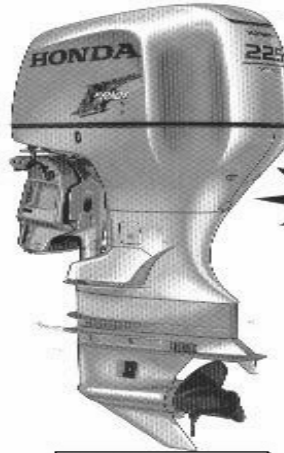
### FLY FISHING DAY AT THE TACKLE BOX

host

**Jack Montague of Rogue Rods**  
April 17, 9AM-4PM

Help support the folks at The Tackle Box and help promote your club by attending **Fly Fishing Day**. Rogue Rods factory representative, Jack Montague, will conduct a seminar covering gear, tactics and fly casting. Jack is a former vice-president of the Federation of Fly Fishers, a noted author and a master certified fly caster.

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