March 2010

The Red Letter
Official Publication of the Red Stick Fly Fishers
RSFF is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the promotion of fly fishing, conservation and outdoor ethics. Programs are held the second Monday of each month at Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries located on Quail Dr. at 7:00 pm. Fly tying is held the fourth Monday of each month, except December. The location currently alternates between Cabela’s in Gonzales and Bass Pro Shop in Denham Springs. These events also begin at 7:00 pm. Dues are $25 for individuals or families, free for students. RSFF is affiliated with the Federation of Fly Fishers (FFF) Gulf Coast Council. Submissions to The Red Letter must be received by the Editor no later than the first Monday of each month. Correspondence or club information can be obtained through the club web site, www.rsff.org, or by e-mail, or by regular mail at:

RSFF  
PO Box 3761  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-3761
In the immortal words of Gene Wildman in Mel Brooks’ Young Frankenstein (Fronkensteen)... “What big knuckers!”

Stumpknockers, that is. Yes, the robins are here, a sure sign that spring is just a few more cold fronts away and 3 or 4 rainy weekends before we can finally say it’s time to go after the wily Bream, aka Bluegill, Redear Sunfish, Stumpknocker, or Shellcracker. Catching these tasty morsels is the easy part. When the water warms above 65 the fish spawn and the big males protect the nest and will hit just about anything.

This is the fish that hooked most kids using a 2 dollar cane pole and a red wiggler, and we’ve spent thousands of dollars since then feeding our habit. Packing the right clothes is a whole ‘nuther matter. Late April has made the weather record books in Louisiana for record cold, record heat, and latest snowfall. Average temperature 73, record low for April 23, 1969 was 40 deg F, while the record high for the same date in 1958 was 89 deg F. Data was for Natchez, MS.

I’ll let you decide what to wear because who can predict the weather, but here’s what you need to take. A 3 wt rod is the most fun, but a 5 or 6wt will work just fine, especially if it’s windy. It doesn’t take much to impress them so a 6 foot piece of 4 # mono will work fine for your leader. Hey, they’re bream! Popping bugs, foam spiders, jitterbees, tusselbugs, wooly buggers, and countless other flies will usually produce nicely. Put a strike indicator on the line about 18” above your fly and you’re cane pole fishin’ with a $600 fly rod.

Bring the usual survival gear such as mosquito dope, sunscreen, wide brim hat, sunglasses, water, more water and whatever you like to snack on.

Friday night we’ll fire up the grill for whatever you want to sacrifice. No tofu! I’m talking about red meat. Remember, we’re hunter/gatherers. Gather up a steak and potato, someone will prepare a salad. We’ll cook breakfast Saturday and Sunday morning, and then the highlight of the trip will be the fish fry on Saturday night. I don’t think it has ever happened, but I’ve heard they sell catfish over in Vidalia if we get skunked.

Contact me to confirm your interest in this fun trip to one of North Louisiana’s prettiest oxbow lakes. I can be reached at 225-362-7901, or email me at jack.lithgoe@gmail.com. We have reserved accommodations at the venerable Lakeview Lodge. Minimum stay is 2 nights. Let me know what you can bring to include in the meals. Let me know if you plan to bunk with a partner, for room assignments.

Lake Concordia is about 110 miles from BR. Take US 61N to Natchez. At the hospital turn left onto US65N for 9 miles crossing back in to Louisiana. Just as you approach Ferriday turn right onto La 3196 for 1.3 miles to Fisherman Drive.
Fly Fishing the Calcasieu Estuary with Ron Begnaud

by Dugan Sabins, Education/Programs Chair

For our March program, Captain Ron Begnaud, delivered a special presentation on fly fishing the unique Calcasieu Estuary. Conveniently located just a little over 100 miles west of Baton Rouge near Lake Charles, the Calcasieu Estuary has gained notoriety for its large speckled trout but is also a shallow water fly fishing paradise for redfish, flounder and sheepshead. Ron Begnaud has been fishing the Calcasieu Estuary for over 14 years and has seen his share of big specks and respectable size reds, flounder and sheepshead. His website www.redchaser.com is the premier site for information on fishing the Calcasieu Estuary. As promised, he gave RSFF members a first-hand, close up preview of the upcoming spring fishing season for the estuary and other basic information on how and where to fish. Captain Ron delivered a wealth of information pertaining to fishing by boat, puddlecraft, and even had some words of wisdom for the would-be wade fisherman. It was an excellent presentation and we thank him for making the trip from Lake Charles to share his knowledge and experience with those in attendance.

Top: Ron with a 22lb drum
Bottom: a pod of redfish stalked by Ron
The following is a list of activities and events for the first half of 2010. Some are non-club.

Asterisk (*) denotes our club's event or an event for which we volunteer. Unless noted as "Open to the public", all our activities are for RSFF members, or members of other FFF clubs, only.

Plus sign (+) denotes conclave. These FFF club or council events are open to the public, and feature programs, fly tying demos, casting instruction, rod demos, exhibitors, raffles and/or silent auction, food and refreshments. Any other activities are designated. Net revenue from conclaves often goes to support education and conservation initiatives.

RECURRING

* Membership Meeting: 7:00 p.m., second Monday of every month, Louisiana Room, Wildlife and Fisheries headquarters, Quail Drive, Baton Rouge. Casting instruction prior to meeting during Daylight Savings Time.


Fly Tying at Bass Pro Shops: 9:30 a.m. - 12noon, fourth Saturday of each month except 3rd Saturday in December. Conference Room, Bass Pro, Denham Springs. Call Harold Henkel (225)271-3100.

Fly Tying at Orvis: 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., first Tuesday of each month except for holidays. Orvis, 7601 Bluebonnet Blvd, Baton Rouge. Intermediate level tying, however beginners are welcome. Bring your own vise and tools. Materials provided. Call Jarid Malone at (225)757-7286.

EVENTS

February 12-14 (Fri-Sun) - Little Mo Fly Fishing Fest, Community Center, Murfreesboro, AR. This casual celebration of fly fishing kicks off with the Friday night gumbo, with fly tying, vendors, casting, programs on Saturday, culminating with the annual "State of the Little Mo" presentation by Arkansas Game & Fish biologists Saturday evening. Sunday morning casting clinic. Open to the public, $10 fee. Excellent trout fishing on the Little Missouri River. For more info, go to www.littlemissouriflyfishing.com.

March 12-14 (Fri-Sun) - 30th annual Louisiana Sportmens Show, Lamar-Dixon Expo Center, Gonzales. Exhibitors, seminars, cooking demos, skeet shooting demos, live music, other activities. $8 adults, $5 kids, free admission to military in uniform. Times: Fri 2-9pm, Sat 9am-9pm, Sun 10am-6pm. For more info, go to www.lasportsmenshow.com.

* March 19-21 (Fri-Sun) - RSFF annual "March Brown" fishing trip to the Little Missouri River in Murfreesboro, AR, for rainbow and brown trout. This date coincides with historical hatches of both the March Brown mayfly and various caddis flies, and offers excellent dry fly opportunities. Check this newsletter or the RSFF forum for details.
March 19-21 (Fri-Sun) - Becoming an Outdoors Woman, Camp Grant Walker, Pollack. Sponsored by LA Dept of Wildlife & Fisheries. Women-only weekend of instruction in 20 outdoors activities (including fly tying and casting). Registration limited to 125 women 18 and older, starts mid-January. Scholarships available. Web site: www.wlf.state.la.us or call Dana Norsworthy (318)345-3912.

+ April 8-10 (Thu-Sat) - Federation of Fly Fishers (FFF) Gulf Coast Expo, New Braunfels Civic Center, New Braunfels, TX. Sponsored by the Gulf Coast Council FFF. In addition to general conclave activities (described above), also offers hands-on workshops (free or nominal fee), FFF-CC1 casting certification, kayak tryouts, social activities, and more. Social activities include Thursday evening feast, Friday evening "Fly Fishing Film Tour" and Fajita dinner, Saturday evening Texas-style banquet. Special guests: Chico Fernandez, others TBA. Registration begins December 21. For registration or more info, go to www.gulfcoastfff.org.

* April 17 (Sat) - RSFF annual "Fly Fishing 101" clinic, 8:30am to 2:30pm. FREE and open to the public, ages 10 and older. Location is LDWF Waddill Outdoors Center, 4142 N. Flannery Rd, Baton Rouge. Learn or improve your knowledge and skill in equipment, fly casting, fly tying, knots and leaders. Each 1-hour session is taught by club experts. Handouts, door prizes, food and refreshments are provided. Advanced registration required as class size is limited! To pre-register, please contact Dan Weber at (225) 767-2405 or email dweberg@aol.com. (Note: if you have fly tying equipment and/or fly rod & reel, please bring them! Although we will have equipment available, it’s best to learn on what you own.)

* April 23-25 (Fri-Sun) - RSFF annual Spring Lake Concordia Trip. Freshwater weekend outing to lovely Lake Concordia. Friday thru Sunday. Fly fishing for bass, bream, crappie, other species. Culminates with Saturday evening fish fry. Check newsletter or forum at www.rsff.org for further details.

+ May 1 (Sat) - Caddo Conclave, 10:00am to 4:30pm, Caddo Lake State Park, Karnack, TX. Co-sponsored by East Texas Fly Fishers, Lone Star Fly Fishers, and North Louisiana Fly Fishers, the first-ever Caddo Conclave will feature general conclave activities, plus rod building demos, bamboo rodmaking, canoe and kayak demos. Excellent fishing on premises. For more info, go to www.easttexasflyfishers.org.

May 15 (Sat) - Paddlepalooza VII, annual paddlecraft fishing tournament hosted by the Bayou Coast Kayak Fishing Club. Registration includes Friday night meal, Saturday night fish fry, and captains bag. Weigh-in location is Moran's Marina at Port Fourchon. Entry fees for BCKFC members and non-members. For rules, details, and registration, go to www.bckfc.org.

* May 22 (Sat) - RSFF annual Spring "Catch-and-Eat" marsh fishing trip. Highway 1 corridor. Culminates with Saturday evening fish fry at Boudreauxs Condeaux in Golden Meadow or Boudreauxs Motel in Leeville. For more info, check the April/May newsletters or the www.rsff.org forum.

+ June 10-12 (Thu-Sat) - Federation of Fly Fishers (FFF) Southeast Conclave, Unicoi State Park, Helen, GA. Annual conclave of the Southeastern Council FFF features programs, fly tying, vendors, workshops, raffles, and many other activities. Check the www.ffsec.org website for details and registration.

* July 16-18 (Fri-Sun) - Grand Isle Fly Fishing Weekend, Blue Dolphin Inn, Grand Isle. Co-sponsored by south Louisiana and Mississippi fly-fishing clubs. Registration required. Call Randy Leonpacher (225) 769-1895 or Barry Dauphin (337) 873-8912 . Website: www.rsff.org.
RSFF Board

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