

Hickory, Table Rock, High Country Trout Unlimited January 2025 Newsletter

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This month we will take you down to the Biloxi Marsh in southern Louisiana to catch some giant redfish, black drum, and a few other species and to give you some tips on how to catch those redfish if you want to go out on your own.

With the new year we all make resolutions and the most frequent is to lose some weight. We'll provide you with some information that will encourage you to make that resolution and stick to it.

Welcome to 2025. Thank you for being a TU member and for reading our newsletter.

HIGH COUNTRY TU JANUARY MEETING

WHEN: Thursday, January 2nd at 7:00 PM
WHERE: Blue Ridge Conservancy Community Center
416 Aho Road, Blowing Rock

We will be discussing the state of the trout fishery in the High Country with reports from local guides. Spoiler alert: fishing has been typical for this time of year and aquatic bug assemblages are diverse and in good numbers. So the system seems to have recovered, call your favorite guides and book a trip!

HICKORY TU JANUARY MEETING

WHEN: Tuesday, January 21st, 6:00 PM
WHERE: Old Hickory Station
232 Government Ave SW, Hickory
SPEAKER: Doug Besler
PROGRAM: Status of Hatcheries

Doug is a fisheries biologist with the Wildlife Resources Commission. He will be speaking about the status of the

state's hatcheries and the near term future of stocking of the streams.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Big Horse Creek Cleanup January 25th 10 AM to 2 PM.

We're headed back to Lansing, NC for a clean up on Big Horse Creek. Lansing took quite a beating during Helene and needs many hands to help it recover. Bring food, water and to dress for cold weather.

Meet at Lansing Creeper Trail Park @ 114 S Big Horse Creek Road, Lansing, NC (If weather prevents us on this date, our back up date is February 1, 2025.)

We're stoked that this cleanup is a collaboration between Mountain True, Keep Ashe Beautiful, and Trout Unlimited. We will be partnering with these and many other great organizations to clean up the New River! Keep an eye on this page for updates!

To register please visit: [Big Horse Cleanup](#)

Future Cleanups Planned. Mark the dates on your calendar and watch future newsletters for details.

- North Fork of the New River, on 4/12/25 (back up date on 4/19/25)
- Helton on 3/29/24 with a backup date of 4/5/24

Fishing Classes by NCWRC

January 2025		Volunteer Opportunity
01/02/24	Fly-fishing Basics: Wading Safety and Etiquette - Virtual	
01/04/25	Volunteer Orientation/Basic Fishing Instructor Training	
01/08/25	Fly-fishing Basics: Understanding and Selecting Fly-fishing Equipment - Virtual	
01/09/25	Intermediate Fly-tying Workshop-Morganton	
01/11/25	Basic Fly-Casting Workshop – Patterson School - Lenoir	P
01/22/25	Fly-fishing Basics: Understanding and Selecting Fly-fishing Equipment - Virtual	
01/29/25	The Foreign Language of Nymphing - Virtual	

You are receiving this newsletter either as a member or prospective member of the Blue Ridge Chapter of Trout Unlimited. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please respond by email to BRNCNewsletter@gmail.com and let us know.

February 2025		Volunteer Opportunity
02/08/25	Beginning Fly-tying Workshop – Patter-son School - Lenoir	p
02/14/25	Intermediate Fly-tying Workshop - Morganton	



Save the Date!
2025 Virginia Fly Fishing & Wine Festival
 January 10-11, 2025
 Friday: 10-6 • Saturday: 9-5
 Meadow Event Park
 13191 Dawn Blvd
 Doswell, Va. 23047

[Virginia Fly Fishing & Wine Festival](#)



[Atlanta, GA | The Fly Fishing Show](#)

William L. Arbuckle Memorial Scholarship

This \$1,000 scholarship is available to students accepted to an accredited degree-granting college or university in the Southern Appalachian Region. Eligible candidates should be pursuing undergraduate, graduate, or doctorate degrees in **fisheries, aquaculture, freshwater biology, or related fields**.

Preference will be given to applicants who:

- Express a desire to work in areas related to freshwater fisheries and/or native trout populations.
- Show strong academic potential.
- Demonstrate a personal commitment to preserving cold-water fisheries or a related field.

To apply go to [Arbuckle Scholarship](#).

A CLEAN WILSON CREEK LEGACY ENDS

I sadly report that A Clean Wilson Creek will be ending its program at the end of 2024. Executive director Wes Waugh issued the following statement this month.

“Six years ago, five retirees met in Mortimer, NC, to optimistically address the big challenges of cleaning up and better protecting the fifteen miles of Wilson Creek National Wild and Scenic River, from Edgemont to Adako.

We inherited the effort from riverkeeper Bruce Gray, of Betsey’s Ole Country Store and Campground. Bruce had lovingly and painstakingly worked to keep the river clean since 2007, but the problems were growing and the task had become overwhelming in scope. We realized it was going to be a huge challenge, as the issues were complex and every potential solution seemed to present an equal number of roadblocks. However, we remained sure of one thing: many people love Wilson Creek and would be willing to support and help us. By Labor Day 2024, the waterfronts and roadsides were basically clean and beautiful. The future looked exciting: ACWC was part of a partnership with USFS Grandfather District (and other organizations) that had worked with a consulting firm on a months-long study to improve public use and access to Wilson Creek. After our 2024 Labor Day River Patrol ended, we had documented the removal of 101,423 lbs of trash and debris from the watershed since we began keeping records in early 2019.

We all are too familiar with what occurred next in late September. Once again, as in 1916 and 1940, Mother Nature altered the course of the river’s future, and much of Western North Carolina as well. Since the hurricane, ACWC has worked primarily to assist the communities of Edgemont and Mortimer with recovery. We have visited and assessed all areas of the river where we normally conduct our trash-removal events. Our founding leaders have discussed numerous scenarios of our organization adapting, and possibly continuing, along the pathway of our existing model: hosting river patrols and conservation education efforts and events. However, we have been presented with some stark realities: the ecological recovery that will be needed to make the river safe for recreational use will be a large-scale task. One that will require years of planning and interventions of equal magnitude. We have always been an organization that has put safety first for our participants, as the watershed had inherent dangers and risks prior to Helene. We have reluctantly concluded that ACWC is simply not well-suited demographically or physically to address the work to be done.

Therefore, we have decided not to proceed as an active conservation nonprofit into 2025. However, we have had the great pleasure of working closely with other conservation nonprofits in the Grandfather Ranger District that are more robust operations, and we intend to put our support and organizational assets behind these successful entities as needed.

Finally, as ACWC phases out operations in December, we acknowledge the incredible support, encouragement and friendships we have experienced over these past six years. You all will remain with us in spirit. And know that our team will continue to have the interests of Wilson Creek and the communities there in our hearts. Our work as individuals in protecting this watershed will continue forward, and (we expect) will evolve in new creative ways in the years ahead.

Upon viewing the river soon after the flood, our founding member Jim Calore looked over the expanse of a completely

redesigned riverbed and said, “Rivers change, that’s what they do”. We are and always should be guests on a wild river, and in the wilderness that remains. Hopefully, going forward, we can learn to accept the river and its floodplain as a living organism that cannot and will not be restrained or contained by encroaching structures and boundaries.”

We all owe great gratitude to Wes and all of those who have worked together to clean up Wilson Creek and in addition worked diligently with other organizations to create a plan to improve the creek to better handle the large number of visitors. Hopefully that plan can be implemented after the cleanup and restoration of the damage caused by Hurricane Helene.

As Wilson Creek reopens to the public after restoration from Hurricane Helene, the TU chapters supporting it need to play a role in keeping the river clean and helping make it a better place for the public.

LEGENDS OF THE LOWER MARSH
FISHING CHARTERS and GUIDE SERVICE LLC.

LOUISIAN MARSH REDFISH: A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE

By Eric Bonneman



When it comes to redfish, these robust and spirited creatures hold a special place in the heart of every angler. Renowned for their fighting spirit and distinct appearance, they offer a unique challenge that’s both rewarding and intriguing. This guide is about laying down the straight facts on redfish, focusing on their behavior, traits, and how they adapt to the changing seasons, especially in the rich fishing grounds of Louisiana and Mississippi’s Biloxi Marsh.

You’ll find insights into the physical characteristics that set redfish apart, like the striking spot near their tail and their impressive size range. But it’s not just about looks; understanding the behavior of redfish through the seasons is crucial. From the cold retreats in winter to the active shallows in the summer, you’ll get a clear picture of their life cycle and habits.

This guide aims to arm you with knowledge, from the subtle changes in redfish behavior as the waters warm and cool to the best times of year to find them in different parts of the marsh. It’s straightforward, no-nonsense information



started.Redfish

designed to enhance your understanding and respect for these formidable fish.

So, whether you’re a seasoned angler or just getting started, this guide is your go-to resource for getting to know redfish, ensuring that every fishing trip is as informed as it is enjoyable. Let’s get

Introduction to Redfish: Redfish, scientifically known as *Sciaenops ocellatus*, is a species commonly found in the Atlantic Ocean, from Massachusetts to Florida in the United States, and down to the Gulf of Mexico. This species is renowned for its distinctive appearance and behavior, making it a subject of interest not only for anglers but also for marine biologists.

Physical Characteristics: Redfish are easily identifiable by their robust, elongated body, and their most notable feature, a large black spot on the upper part of the tail base. While it’s commonly believed that this spot is a mimicry mechanism to confuse predators into attacking the fish’s tail instead of its head, recent studies suggest it may also play a role in schooling behavior. These fish exhibit a color palette that ranges from a deep, reddish copper hue to a lighter, almost silvery shade, depending on their habitat and age.

The average size of a redfish can vary significantly based on their age and the specific conditions of their habitat. Juveniles typically measure between 10 to 24 inches in length, while adults can grow up to 61 inches and weigh as much as 51 pounds. Their body is covered with large, heavy scales, and they have a sloped forehead with a large mouth and a protruding lower jaw.

Habitat and Distribution: Redfish are commonly found in shallow waters, especially near the coastlines. They have a preference for estuaries, lagoons, and bays – environments where saltwater mixes with freshwater. These areas are rich in resources like shelter and food, making them ideal for the growth and development of redfish. They are also known to inhabit offshore waters up to depths of 200 feet, but juveniles are more commonly found in shallow inshore waters where they can easily find food and shelter from predators.

Diet and Feeding Habits: Redfish are opportunistic feeders with a diet that primarily consists of crustaceans such as shrimp and crabs, in addition to smaller fish and mollusks. They have a unique feeding habit where they use their downward-facing mouth to forage on the seabed, often tailing (showing their tails above the water surface) in shallow waters. This behavior is a sign of redfish feeding on the bottom, where they use their robust bodies to root around in the mud and sand to uncover hidden prey.

Reproductive Behavior: The reproductive behavior of redfish is another area of interest. They reach sexual maturity at the age of 3 to 5 years. Spawning season typically occurs between August and November when water temperatures are between 71 to 75 degrees Fahrenheit. During this

period, redfish migrate offshore to spawn in the nearshore waters. Females release eggs into the water, which are then fertilized by the males. One female can release up to 2 million eggs during a single spawning season, ensuring the continuity of the species despite predation and other environmental challenges.



Targeting Redfish in Louisiana and Mississippi's Biloxi Marsh: Seasonal Strategies

The Louisiana and Mississippi Biloxi

Marshes represent a unique ecosystem offering year-round opportunities for targeting redfish (*Sciaenops ocellatus*). The dynamic seasonal changes in this region demand specific strategies for anglers looking to maximize their success. This section delves into how these seasonal shifts affect redfish behavior and the best approaches to target them throughout the year.

Winter (December – February)

In winter, redfish retreat to the deeper channels, bayous, and oyster bed edges of the Biloxi Marsh, seeking warmer water depths. Anglers should opt for jigs and slow-sinking lures, presenting them near the bottom to match the reduced activity level of the redfish in the colder temperatures.

Spring (March – May)

With the onset of warmer temperatures, redfish return to the shallows, frequenting flats near grass beds and marsh edges. This period, marking the beginning of the spawning season, sees redfish more aggressive and responsive to bait. Utilizing topwater lures and soft plastics can yield great results, and clear conditions make sight fishing highly effective.

Summer (June – August)

Summer's peak spawning season sees redfish at their most active, aggressively feeding in the outer marsh edges and grass beds, particularly during cooler morning and evening periods. Anglers will find topwater lures exciting to use at dawn, while spoons and spinnerbaits become the go-to throughout the day, especially in areas with moving currents.

Fall (September – November)

Regarded as the prime redfish season in the marsh, fall sees a feeding frenzy as the fish bulk up for winter. This period is ideal for a variety of fishing techniques, with clear waters enhancing sight fishing opportunities. Anglers should watch for bird activity signaling baitfish and redfish presence, and be prepared to explore the transitional areas between shallow and deeper waters.

Legends of the Lower Marsh: Your Destination for an



Unmatched Redfish Experience

After soaking in all the details about redfish, you're probably keen to put that

knowledge to real use. That's exactly where Legends of the Lower Marsh steps in. Known for their expertise in Louisiana Marsh fishing, they don't just offer a regular fishing trip; they craft a journey that takes you to the core of the Biloxi Marsh. With them, you're not just a spectator; you're an integral part of an immersive experience. They guide you through the intricate maze of waterways, revealing hidden spots where redfish thrive, and ensuring that every moment on the water is packed with potential and the promise of vibrant life.

The Biloxi Marsh: A Fisherman's Paradise

In the Biloxi Marsh, every cast is a story waiting to unfold. This place isn't just about redfish, though they're certainly stars of the show. It's about the whole cast of characters — speckled trout, black drum, flounder, and triple tail — each adding its own twist to your fishing tale. And the marsh itself? It's a place of quiet beauty, where the water whispers stories of life below the surface.

But don't let the calm scenery fool you. The marsh is a hub of action, and with Legends of the Lower Marsh, you're in the hands of folks who know these waters like their own backyard. They're not just guides; they're locals who live and breathe the marsh, ready to share its secrets and make your fishing experience one for the books.

Choosing Legends of the Lower Marsh

Going with Legends of the Lower Marsh means you're choosing more than just a fishing trip. You're choosing guides who respect the marsh and everything in it. These guys are pros, not just at finding the best fishing spots but at understanding the rhythm of the marsh. They know that every angler is different, so whether you're a seasoned pro or someone who's just starting, they've got your back.



When you're out there on the water with Legends of the Lower Marsh, it's not just about landing the biggest catch. It's about feeling the pulse of the marsh, understanding its moods, and becoming part of the story that unfolds with every cast. It's about those quiet moments on the water just as much as it's about the thrill of the catch. It's fishing, sure, but it's also about connecting with nature in a way that's genuine and respectful.

So, if you're ready to turn your redfish knowledge into action, Legends of the Lower Marsh is the way to go. It's not just about the fish; it's about the experience, the

environment, and the memories you'll create. The marsh is calling, and Legends of the Lower Marsh is ready to show you its wonders.

Ready to take the plunge? Book your trip today with Legends of the Lower Marsh. Cast your line into waters rich with life, guided by the best, and make your next fishing story one of legend. Don't just fish – experience the marsh with the very best. Book now and make your mark in the world of redfish fishing.

ADVICE FROM THE VISE

Chick gave me a heads up that this month would focus on saltwater fly fishing. When I lived on the Gulf Coast speckled trout and redfish were in abundance and an absolute blast to pursue on the fly rod. I thought this month I would pick a pattern that both crossed over to salt as well as fresh, and that would be the Clouser minnow pattern. This pattern was developed by Bob Clouser, who was a guide in Pennsylvania. He developed the fly to target smallmouth in the Susquehanna. Lefty Kreh took the pattern to the mainstream and claimed to catch over 80 different species in fresh and salt on it. This was my pattern of choice in the grass flats in both the North Carolina coast and in Florida and Alabama. In freshwater summertime pattern for smallmouth in the rivers and largemouth lakes.



Traditionally this fly is tied with a white belly and a contrasting color on the top. Pink, blue, red and, of course, chartreuse are great choices for the salt. In fresh, olive, brown, black all work well. There're no rules, so it's up to yourself as to what colors to try out. It's also traditionally tied with bucktail. For this one, I'm using craft fur. I like the movement I get with it in the water on the strip. There are so many new streamer fibers, you can't go wrong, and the basic simple design stays the same.



I'm using a #4 2x1 2x strong streamer hook. Fish target the eyes when they strike and having the hook long enough but not too long results in more hookups. The dumbbell eyes (these are 5.5mm) are heavy to get it down and allowing the hook point to ride up, minimizing snags on the bottom.

I also use GSP thread on these streamers, they need some torque on holding they eyes tight and the hair compressed, and you can really crank down on this stuff. I use a scalpel blade to trim thread rather than kill my good scissors on the GSP. It's tough stuff and is pretty hard on the scissors edge for your more delicate work.



Start by dressing the hook from the eye to the 1/3rd point on the shank. I use a couple swipes of wax on the thread, the GSP is slippery stuff, and a little tack goes a long way to curb frustration when the eyes go on.



Set the eyes on the top of the hook and use a figure of 8 wrap, taking wraps across and then under the eyes, left to right, then again right to left. Build up a few of those wraps, then around the bottom of the eyes using the post wrap-that is staying under the eyes in a circle. Snug wraps here pull the eye tight to the wraps- GSP takes a fair amount of your torquing without breaking.



Once the eyes are fairly tight and they may still have a little play-don't worry about that- tie in 6 or so strands of Krystal flash. Pearl is what I'm using, but any color would fill the bill. Again, no rules. Start that from behind the hook eye, across the eye and to about halfway mark of the shank. It's

one more layer to stabilize that dumbbell. Leave them long- we can trim the ends once we build the body.



Comb out the craft fur and get a hank about half a pencil in diameter. Lay that just behind the eye, with enough on the butt end to fold down over the dumbbell to form the head. Wax the thread and securely tie in the fur behind the eye. Then pull the butt end across the dumbbell and wrap the front of it. Trim the remaining butt ends to taper to the hook eye, then compress that with more wraps to form the head.

Now that the belly is done rotate the vise or flip the hook so the belly is down and cut your hank of fur for the back. Lay that so that the fur is just a slightly bit longer than the belly side. We won't folding the fur over the dumbbell, so the butt ends don't need to be as long. Stroke the fur to ensure equal portions on each side of the hook.



Secure that fur in and trim out the butt ends and tidy up the head using tight wraps to compress the hair.



Trim the Krystal flash in line with the ends of the fur, and whip finish. I hit the head with some UV resin to just give it a tad extra strength, ACA glue is also a good choice. I also like to give it a few strokes with the dubbing brush to blend the fibers once out of the vice.

It's a great baitfish pattern, easy to tie in any size, and you can take advantage of the myriad of synthetic fibers using the same design to build a box of these for the summer.

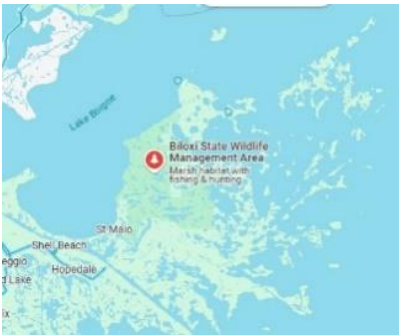
If you have a pattern you would like to see in the column, shoot me an email and we can feature that in an upcoming month. As always, I'm honored to answer questions, give a lesson, or just talk fly tying and fishing. Don't hesitate to contact me at Jacobsforkflytying@gmail.com Please check out some of my current ties on Facebook and Instagram at Jacobs Fork Fly Tying. Dave Everhart

ANOTHER ITEM OFF THE BUCKET LIST



A couple years ago my son Michael and I went down to Wilmington to try out some fly casting for redfish with Captain Jud Brock. It was a fun trip on an absolutely beautiful sunny day with light wind. We saw many schools with over a hundred redfish but never got a one to take the fly. Jud had mentioned that he guided in Louisiana in November and December. I had been doing some reading about fishing the Louisiana marshes in the Mississippi delta that time of year and it was very intriguing so we added that to our bucket list. This year in early September we decided to make the trip. I contacted Jud who said he no longer guided there so he gave me the name of a friend. The friend was fully booked and gave me the name of Captain Adam DeBruin. Adam was almost fully booked, but had two days open in mid December and we locked them in.

In my research I had found that redfish were in the marshes year around, but in late October through December the larger fish moved in from the Gulf and that there were a lot of them in the 20-40 pound size there. That turned out to be a fact. The potential downside of that time of year is the weather. Late October into November there is still a risk of a hurricane, although quite small and by the end of November you can get a fair amount of rain or perhaps a cold front coming down from the north. As we watched the forecast we saw a fair amount of rain and some cool temperatures, but we were unbelievably blessed with sunny skies and daytime temperatures in the low 70s.



Adam guides in the Biloxi Marsh which is southeast about an hour from New Orleans. We stayed downtown and drove out in the morning to meet him at the Hopedale Marina. From there we made about a half-hour run out into the Marsh. Even with the nice weather, the water temperature was only 61 and running at 30 mph causes quite a wind chill. We had been warned in advance and dressed for it. Once in the marsh it becomes a normal flats trip. Adam poles the boat and spots the fish for you. And he has an amazing talent for spotting fish, even in murky water, that that really impressed us. We did pole for about an hour without the first fish and then went into Fish Smack Cove. (every spot in the marsh has a name that someone has given it on the map) Smack was the key word. We were no sooner in the cove than my son caught a nice black drum. I took over and missed a couple fish and in ten minutes landed my first redfish on a fly. I thought it was a great fish at about 5 pounds, but Adam teased it was tiny.



We later learned how true that was. As the day went on we moved around to a few different places. For the first time in a long time, I finished the day with bigger fish than my son with a 24 pound redfish and a 26 pound black drum. My son on the other hand managed a Cajun slam of a redfish, black drum, and sheepshead. By the end of the day we had landed about a dozen fish.

The second day was even a little warmer than the first and the run out was not quite as chilly. After such an extraordinary first day we teased Adam on how he planned to beat it. He did!! During the day I again managed the biggest drum at 30# and the biggest redfish at 34#.



You cannot imagine the strength of those fish until you stand on the deck struggling to land it. They don't have the speed of a bonefish, but they will still take you into your backing and when I got home the next day, I could still feel a slight ache in my arm muscles from the pull. I did

actually get another redfish over 30#, but we were in an area that actually had dead trees in the water where the marsh had been washed away. The fish had taken the line against the tree and weakened it so when Adam tried to pull it into the boat the line snapped.

My son on the second day also broke his record from the first day. He again caught a few redfish over 20#, but in addition managed to get a Super Cajun Slam by also catching a black drum, another sheepshead...and a speckled trout.

My son and I both deeply recommend that you add a trip to the Louisiana marsh for some fall redfishing and we highly recommend you contact Adam as a guide. Your best bet is to book nearly a year in advance as things book up quickly. You can contact him on his website at [Red Hook Fishing](http://RedHookFishing.com).

For the record, my fish in that first picture is bigger than my son's. The angle of the photo made his look bigger. 😊

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"To my mind, hunting and fishing is the big lure that takes us into the great open spaces and teaches us to forget the mean and petty things in life.L. L. Bean

Bonefish VS Redfish

by [Louis Cahill](http://LouisCahill.com)



Cast Owen Player releases a nice bonefish. Photo by Louis Cahill By Owen Plair

Over 12 years of working in a fly shop and 10 years of guiding for Redfish I have heard the comparison of Redfish and Bonefish more than any species out there.

They are so similar in many ways but also very different. You can target redfish on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean from Massachusetts to Florida and the Gulf Coast from Florida to northern Mexico. That is ton of area for Redfish to live and thousands of miles of flats which is why its such a favorite target species for fly anglers in the United States. Bonefish on the other hand are not as abundant in the U.S., because they inhabit warm tropical waters and can only be found in South Florida and Hawaii. There are a few myths of Bonefish going a little father north at times but not targeted. Bonefish can also be found around the world in countless other countries that have tropical waters, from the Bahamas all the way to the Seychelles, unlike the Redfish, which are only found in the US. I would say that bonefishing has a more exotic feel because in most cases you have to travel pretty far to fish for

them. Redfish, on the other hand, can be caught in multiple states through out the year, in different weather patterns and completely different ecosystems. They are both amazing fish to target with a fly and offer great opportunities for sight fishing.



I fished for bonefish a few times down in Biscayne Bay and Islamorada, FL with my friend Capt. Honson Lau. Taking a break from Tarpon, I was fortunate enough to hook one nice fish, which broke off before we could land it.

I've been catching redfish since I was a 3 year old kid and have been a full time guide for Redfish in Beaufort, SC since 2009. I always had the urge to catch bonefish but just never found myself able to go on a destination trip for them. I always felt like it was so similar to Redfish, which I had spent countless hours targeting. Finally, the right opportunity came and I was on a plane down to South Andros to join Louis on his South Andros Bonefish School back in November 2016. Man, what an incredible trip learning about bonefish. After 6 days of fishing the flats of South Andros I was very lucky to experience some amazing fishing. Everything from schools of fish, tailing fish, mudding fish, big singles coming in from the ocean, deep water schools, and fish weaving through the mangroves. I lost count of fish that week but did not lose count of all the memories and techniques learning through experience even after a few too many Kaliks. One thing I realized after years of Redfishing was that targeting the two species was very similar in a lot of ways but also very different in ways I've never thought of.



Seeing the Fish- Bonefish and Redfish have a lot of the same characteristics on the flats. They swim in schools, singles, tail, mud, flash, and just about everything in between. I felt that Bonefish

were definitely easier to see from a distance simply because of the gin clear water where they live. They also showed up darker on the white sand flats and the shadows they cast. Most of my red fishing has been on darker, mud bottoms, or fish floating under the service giving off a red glow. I felt that everything else when sight fishing for both of these fish was exactly the same.

Casting to the Fish- When casting to Bonefish I felt they could definitely see the fly a lot better than a redfish. There were times when I would be 5 feet or more in front of the fish and it would still find my fly. The redfish I target, you have to be within a 1-2 foot window, sometimes even closer in muddy water situations. Overall the presentations of the fly and distance of the cast were all the same.



Feeding the Fish- This was the most important part of what I learned about Bonefish and Redfish. With Redfish, Tarpon, Snook, Jacks, and almost all saltwater species I always found myself

keeping the fly moving with steady strips to keep the fish turned onto the fly. The feeling you get when a fish is behind your fly chasing it down is one of my favorite feelings and one of the main reasons I love sight fishing. I had stopped the fly before for permit and bonefish in South Florida but always thought it was for the situation, but I soon learned a lot about stopping the fly for bonefish. It amazed me how odd it felt to stop stripping the fly to get the bite when thousands of times I have told my anglers to keep stripping the fly to get the bite. What I learned with bonefish is how they eat on the flat and like to pin their food to the bottom when they eat. Not that they are lazy or lethargic if you keep stripping, but when the fly stopped, and dived to the bottom, it would turn the bonefish on. They'd swim up and kill the fly!

Watching the mud flow through there gills after the bite was always a sight to see. With Redfish you always want to keep the fly moving because most times if the fish is on your fly and you stop stripping, it will turn off, and not bite because of lost of interest. It was a great experience learning how to feed a bonefish because I felt that, in a way, it was more technical than feeding a redfish. Not only because of the stop, but also because you cant see the fish open its mouth to eat! You have to learn when you get the bite by reading the body language of the fish instead of looking for its mouth to open up on the fly.



A bonefish eating a fly on the stop is very fast, efficient, and most of all obvious because of the little wiggle of their body when they stop. Seems like it's almost orgasmic how

these fish eat on the stop and even put off a purple blue glow at times when they eat. When Redfishing you can almost count on seeing the bite and watching the fish open its mouth to swallow the fly. Being able to adapt to this was crucial and saved me a lot of missed fish. In some ways I missed seeing the bite but also enjoyed the challenge of reading the bonefish and anticipating the bite.

The Fight- There is no doubt that the bonefish is famed for its fast and long runs for a reason! The shear power and speed of these fish is amazing and will make your drag scream. Most every fish I hooked over 3lbs would take me to the backing and some over 5lbs would take me to the backing multiple times. Redfish do not run near as fast and long as a bonefish but they do fight a little harder than a bonefish with a much harder tug of war.



The Gear- Most of the gear is all the same stuff with 7wt, 8wt, and 9wt rods with large arbor reels. Floating weight forward lines and 9-10ft leaders. There are some

lines made specifically for Bonefish or Redfish but most any saltwater tapered line will work perfect for both fish. I actually used my 7wt and 8wt Redfish line while bonefishing and then used my 9wt Bonefish line while redfishing and couldn't tell a difference. If your fishing the colder months for redfish, I wouldn't recommend using a tropical line because you'll get some memory build up in the line from the colder water. Bonefish flies are lot smaller than redfish flies and also a lot lighter in color due to the gin clear water bonefish thrive in but I did notice a few flies could blend for both fish in certain situations.



The Size of Fish- Bonefish are by far a lot smaller species only ranging between 2-15lbs when a redfish can be anywhere from 1-40lbs. If you get a bonefish in the double digits its considered a huge fish but when redfishing a double digit fish is lot easier to accomplish. The

biggest bonefish I caught on my trip to south Andros was around 6lbs and you could really see the difference in overall girth of the fish compared to smaller 2-3lb. The biggest Redfish I've ever caught on fly is 24lbs in Louisiana and the difference was almost unreal compared to my average 5-10lb fish.

Overall I feel like Bonefish and Redfish just like any other species have there own unique characteristics but are still very similar when targeting them on the fly. I wouldn't say that bonefishing is easier than redfishing because they both have there ups and downs depending on conditions and fishing. As an angler and guide I can honestly say I will be doing a lot more bonefishing in the near future but Redfish will always have my heart! They are both amazing species and will bring you to some amazing destinations in search of them.

Let me know your thoughts on comparing the two. I'm looking forward to hearing what you think!

Owen Plair

Gink & Gasoline

www.ginkandgasoline.com

hookups@ginkandgasoline.com

Adam graciously agreed to let me share the fly I used to catch that 34# bonefish.



GET SKINNY - CATCH MORE FISH

Can Fasting Make You A Better Angler?

BY LOUIS CAHILL



Photo by Louis Cahill

Science is finding evidence that the ancient practice of fasting offers a host of mental health benefits.

I'm starving. Quite literally. I've been on a pretty intense diet recently and as of today have lost 55 pounds in a little over four months. There are many health benefits to keeping that weight off but I really believe it's helping me be a better angler, if for no other reason than I can hike to better water. In all seriousness though, I've seen a difference and it got me doing a little research. It seems I'm not alone in the idea that fasting changes your mental performance.

My initial theory was this. If I am hungry when fishing, my natural predatory senses could be enhanced. My body needs food and my mind could be sharpening my senses to help me provide it, helping me spot fish and focus on catching them. After doing some reading, I think there's merit in that idea but there may be more going on.

Studies have shown that fasting can finding improvements in mood, mental clarity, vigilance, a sense of improved well-being, and sometimes euphoria. An interesting article from "Mind The Science Gap" gets into some of the physical details.

The mood-boosting effects of fasting may be an evolutionary adaptive mechanism for periods of famine. In other words, when food is scarce our bodies release chemicals to help protect our brains from the negative effects. These chemicals can put us in a good mood—but, as you know if you have skipped a meal or two, it takes a few days. During the first week of fasting, the body begins to adapt to starvation by releasing massive amounts of catecholamines including epinephrine (adrenaline), norepinephrine, and dopamine as well as gluco-corticoids, steroid hormones involved in regulating the immune response and glucose metabolism. All of these chemicals are also released during the infamous 'fight or flight' response. After a while, our body responds to this stress through a boost of feel-good and protective chemicals." -<http://www.mindthesciencegap.org>

There is also research which suggests that these chemical changes in the brain help in the long term to ward off neurodegenerative disorders like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, so the number of fish you catch may not be your greatest concern. Groups like Wefast are popping up around the globe to support and promote the health benefits of therapeutic fasting.

I'm not suggesting that you take on a Gandhi like hunger strike for fly fishing, but maybe try skipping lunch on a couple of fishing days. See if you feel a difference. There are several types of fasting which are not extreme and you may find some benefit from it, even if it's just looking better in your waders. Countless cultures and religions have used fasting as a way to seek higher states of mind. Why not fly fishing?

Let us know what you think.

ADDITIONAL REDFISH INFORMATION

I found a great deal more information about how to catch redfish, but it was just too much to include in the newsletter. If you want to learn more, check out the following articles:

FLY FISHING FOR REDFISH TIPS AND TACTICS

September 18th, 2022

Sight fishing for redfish in shallow water is one of the biggest thrills in fly fishing—I can say this based upon personal experience. Redfish can attain a massive size, they're *very* willing to take a fly, and they can be readily found throughout much of their range.

In essence, redfish (also called "red drum") are the perfect gamefish for fly anglers to chase.

Whether you're stalking redfish in a bayou, a flat, a delta, or in brackish or saltwater, the tactics I'm going to teach you remain the same.

- [Table of Contents](#)
- [Redfish Range](#)
- [How to Find Redfish](#)
- [Redfish Fly Fishing Tactics](#)
- [The Best Flies for Redfish](#)
- [Recommended Gear](#)
- [Hiring a Guide](#)
- [Redfish Conservation](#)
- [Summary](#)

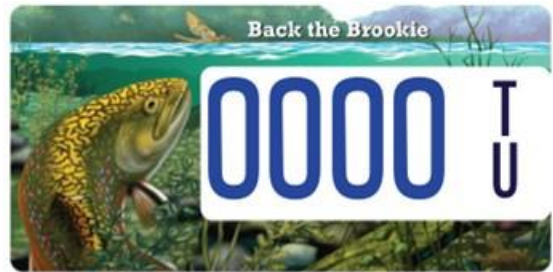
[The 8 Best Redfish Flies - Trident Fly Fishing](#)

[Fight Big Fish with the Butt Section of the Fly Rod Not the Tip](#)

[Beach Redfish: 5 Tips To Catch Redfish From The Surf - Flylords Mag](#)

GET YOUR NCTU LICENSE PLATE

When it comes time to renew your license plate this year, consider getting a Trout Unlimited "Back the Brookie" plate for your car. With each plate there is a \$20 donation that goes to NCTU to help support their programs.



Hickory TU President

Gary Schnick garthies007@earthlink.net

Table Rock TU President

Alan Clark alan@hattarasgroup.com

High Country TU President

Ben Wayne benw2791@gmail.com

Editor....Chick Woodward HkyNCTU@gmail.com

