



TVFF Club News

February 2023



February 16th Program

FFI Basscatch Project



In keeping with their motto, "All Fish, All Waters", FFI has a project called Basscatch to "help fly fishers appreciate native species diversity and conservation in general and, in this particular case, value the many species of black bass and to understand the sometimes unique differences in their habitat preferences. Presently, 12 species of the genus *Micropterus* exist in some portion of their historic native range". We are especially fortunate that eight of the twelve species can be found in Alabama.

Any fly fisher may qualify for the Basscatch Member award by catching and releasing any four of the bass species. Each shall receive an FFI cap and a certificate that is suitable for framing. A second Basscatch award can be received by catching and documenting 4 additional, different bass species.

Members David Hatfield and Steve Kerkhof will provide additional information about the program, identification tips, and where they are found in Alabama. We plan to have a group fishing day each month to target one of the species. The first fishing trip will be to Aldridge Creek on February 25th to target largemouth and Alabama (spotted) bass. Details to follow.

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Welcome New Members:

Tom Vajentic
Gary Suckow
Rodney Durrett
Ryan & Anna Huffman
Jacob Franklin

This Month

- February 2 – BOD Meeting
- February 9 – Fly Tying, 7 PM
- February 16 – TVFF Meeting, 7 PM
- February 23 – Fly Tying, 7 PM

Officers and Directors

President: Steve Kerkhof
Vice President: Dana Beyerle
Secretary: Gary Jedlovec
Treasurer: Dave Bailey
Membership: Debbie Hill
Activities: Larry Hice
Education: Fred Kaufmann
Conservation: Bob Lowery
Communications: Connor Baker

Board of Directors Meeting

The next BOD meeting is **this month**, February 2, 2022, at 7 p.m. in Room 201.



TVFF Fly Tying Group

Fly tying sessions will be conducted at Faith Presbyterian Church, Room 201, at 7 p.m.

February 9, 7 PM

Zebra Midge – Tyer: Fred Kaufmann

Cost: \$2.00 in person

Small trout fly, perfect for winter midge fishing. This is a fly that should be in everyone's fly box. It is easy to tie with minimal materials.

Materials

Hook: Tiemco TMC 2488 Size 18 (or similar)

Bead: 5/64 inch Silver Cyclops Eye Bead

Thread: Black Danville's 6/0 Fly Master (or color of choice)

Rib: Extra-Small Silver UTC Ultra-Wire

Thorax: Fine Black Dubbing (or color of choice)



February 23, 7 PM

Woolly Bugger – Steve Kerkhof

Another classic trout fly. If nothing else works fishing, put on a woolly bugger. Also an effective bream fly.

Materials

Hook: Daiichi 2220 #1-14

Thread: Olive or black 3/0

Weight: Lead Wire

Tail: Olive Marabou

Rib: Brassie Sized copper wire

Body: Medium Olive Chenille

Hackle: Olive Rooster Saddle



If you would like to help out with our fly tying group and lead a session, email editor@tvff.club

All are welcome! Fly tying equipment is available for new tyers. Come and discover the joy of catching fish on a fly you tied or, better yet, one of your own design. The sessions are the 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 7 p.m.



Fish of the Month

January is typically a slow month when looking for fish! However, TVFF member David Darnell braved the cold and caught this beautiful 33" Brown Trout in a Lake Michigan tributary. Nice fish! Please send any fish pictures to editor@tvff.club





January TVFF Recap

January 19th – Tom Vajentic

[Huntsville Orvis](#) store Fly Champion Tom Vajentic spoke to the club in January and offered helpful information for area smallmouth bass fishing. Tom is a native of New York State and retired from the U.S. Army and federal service.

One of his favorites is fishing in north Alabama creeks and streams, including the Flint River and Briar Fork. “I primarily fish for smallmouth but I don’t care what tugs on my line,” he said.

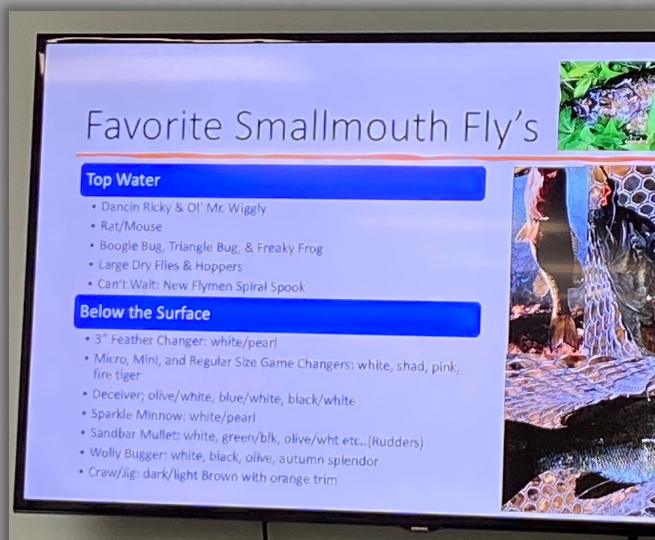
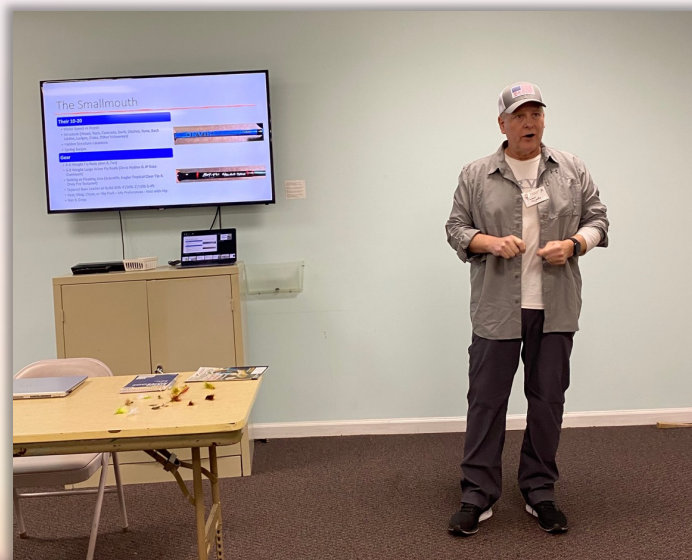
Tom also fishes local lakes such as at Sharon Johnston Park. “There are a lot of bass in Sharon Johnston,” Tom said. And he fishes the Elk and Duck rivers in Tennessee.

Tom said smallmouth like streamers, large topwater flies, poppers, wooly buggers, crawfish patterns with orange, and hoppers. Fishing the current, he said of top water presentation, “No movement is better than a lot of movement.”

Smallmouth like swift water and structure, including rocks, narrow channels between rocks, and downed trees. He said a good fly leader setup for a 6-to-8-weight rod for smallmouth is four feet of 30-pound test, four feet of 20-pound test, and two- to-four feet of 6-pound test, followed by a tippet.

Tom said the [U.S. Geological Survey](#) provides great water condition information for anglers.

Huntsville’s Orvis store in the [Bridge Street Town Center](#) has the second-largest fly tying section of any Orvis store, Tom said.





Improve Your Fly Casting

By Todd Tanner

Hatch Magazine, December 29, 2022

We can all improve our fly casting abilities. The following excerpt is from a Hatch Mag article (can be found [here](#)) and it lays out some tips for improving your cast. Some of us are content with mediocre casting, but learning how to cast well can really improve your fishing experience.

- **Know good casting from bad casting** – A lot of folks can't tell good casting from bad casting. It is very hard to be a good caster if you don't know what a bad (or good) cast looks like. Go online and look at a good fly cast. Notice the tight loops of the line, the arm movement, etc.
- **Practice** – Spend time in your backyard practicing your cast. Film yourself and see how you cast and make adjustments as you go. Practice a little bit every week to really hone in the skill.
- **Avoid bad advice** – Anyone can upload a video to YouTube and claim they know how to cast well. Do not follow someone's advice unless they actually have a good cast. If their cast isn't good, do not take their casting advice.
- **Observe what the experts do** – It is good to learn from friends and other fishermen, but really focus on how a fly casting expert casts. They know how to describe things and can provide solid advice that is tested and true.

Casting is a fun part of fly fishing that truly makes it unique to conventional fishing. You don't need to be an expert caster to successfully fly fish, but it does make the experience much better!



Photo: Todd Tanner, HatchMag.com

Alabama Father and Son Catch Record-breaking, 162-pound Alligator Gar

By Courtney Moore

Fox News, January 26, 2023

The following excerpt is from Fox News. Alabama has some of the best fishing in the country. Opportunities for many diverse fish, both salt and freshwater. Enjoy this article on a state record! Find the entire article [here](#).

A father and son from Alabama caught a massive alligator gar on Thanksgiving, and the pair only recently learned that their holiday catch broke the state's fishing record.

Keith Dees and his son, Huntley, reeled in a 162-pound alligator gar from the Mobile-Tensaw Delta, the Yellowhammer State's largest river delta and wetland, according to the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR).

In a press release issued on Thursday, Jan. 19, the ADCNR announced the pair's alligator gar broke the state fishing record by 11 pounds.

Dees told the ADCNR that he and his son traveled to the Mobile-Tensaw Delta to fish for bass. They reportedly caught "several redfish" and "numerous largemouth bass" before they caught their alligator gar.



Photo: foxnews.com

The pair theorized that they might have hooked a large redfish or black drum, according to the ADCNR.

Dees and Huntley reportedly realized the fish was an alligator gar after about 30 minutes of reeling.

"When it comes up, I knew it was big, but I didn't even remotely know it was a state record," Dees recalled to the ADCNR. "That never crossed my mind."

Dees attempted to reel in the record-breaking fish for another hour and a half. Eventually, he and his son managed to lasso the alligator gar, which is known for its broad snout and sharp teeth, and hauled it onto their bass boat.



Photo: foxnews.com

Trout Stocked at Madison County Public Fishing Lake

Trout fishing season at Madison County Public Fishing Lake (PFL) will begin on **Friday, November 25, 2022**. The Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries plans to stock over 3,000 pounds of rainbow trout in Madison County PFL during the trout season with trout ranging in size from one to two pounds. A \$5.00 Daily Trout Permit in addition to a valid freshwater fishing license is required to fish for trout. Trout anglers may also fish for bass, bluegill, catfish, and crappie. The daily creel limit is 4 trout per angler. Check their [website](#) for directions and hours of operation, **which are limited, so check before you go**.



The Fly Fishing Show in Atlanta, GA

The Fly Fishing Show will be back in 2023. The Atlanta dates are coming up soon. Set for February 3, 4, and 5 at the Gas South Convention Center. Adult tickets are \$18 for one day passes, \$28 for two days, and \$38 for three days. Tickets can be purchased on their [website](#). There are a lot of neat items for sale and many opportunities to learn. If you have time, make the three and a half hour drive from Huntsville!



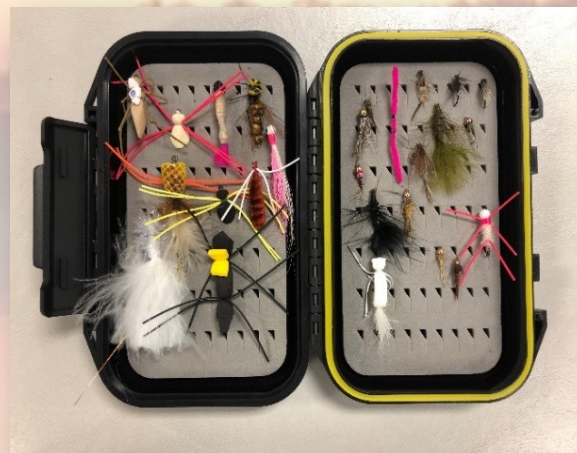
Fly Line Recycling

Flyvines is a Montana company that “upcycles” used fly line into bracelets, lanyards, dog collars, sunglass straps and other useful items that give used fly line a second life. The picture shows used fly line collected by TVFF in 2019 that didn’t end up in a landfill. The pandemic kept us from doing that in 2020 but we’d like to participate again this year. If you respool your fly reels with new line then please coil it up and bring it to us. TVFF will pack it in a box and send it Flyvines. It is a small thing you can do to be kind to the environment and support our conservation efforts.



Casting for Recovery Fly Boxes

On the right is one of the 14 fly boxes that TVFF donated to the Alabama Casting for [Recovery](https://castingforrecovery.org/) retreat. TVFF is always looking for more flies to add to the box for future events. If interested, choose a fly and tie or purchase 14 of them. When you have your set or multiple sets of 14 flies ready for collection, bring them to any club activity or contact Casting for Recovery [volunteer Debbie Hill](https://castingforrecovery.org/). TVFF will provide the boxes for your donated flies. This fall we will be filling the fly boxes that will be donated to the Alabama Casting for Recovery retreat. Debbie keeps a list of flies that have been tied or purchased, but duplicates are welcome. <https://castingforrecovery.org/>



Food Drive Box

Faith Presbyterian Church has a community food drive box outside of the church, in their parking lot. This box receives and distributes food staple items to members of the community in need. If you would like to help, please bring non-perishable items to place in the box. Faith Presbyterian Church has generously let us use Room 201 for years. The least we can do is provide food to members of their church community in need.



Fill-A-Box

February Holidays

Clean Out Your Computer Day

February 10th

It is a good time to do some spring cleaning on your computer. A hard drive that is over 90% full can cause slowdowns. Delete unneeded files and folders, Create new folders to organize the stuff you have collected this year. Check that antivirus software is up to date. Uninstall programs and apps you no longer use. Perform a backup.

And if computers are not your thing you can make this clean out your fly box day instead.



Do a Grouch a Favor Day

February 16th

It is self explanatory. Find a grouch and do them a favor. Maybe you can find someone who is having a bad day and turn their frown upside down.

Can't find a grouch? If you notice that everyone is doing you a favor this day, then it could be that the grouch is you!





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