

Wind Knots

A monthly publication of the Texas Flyfishers

Volume 23 / Issue 8 August, 2004

Jackin' Around

by Corey Rich

Jack fish, crevalle jacks, the yellow peril, *Caranx hippos*, or whatever you want to call them are great fly rod targets. In Texas they grow large. Forty pounds is not unusual in the near offshore waters, and I've never seen one less than about 20 pounds in the bays. Other parts of the country, particularly Florida, have little ones, but we don't.

Jacks have a never-say-die attitude when hooked. They just don't give up. They are strong, tenacious fighters. Fortunately for the jacks, they taste terrible. Don't ask me how I know this. Most are released to fight another day.

Earlier this summer Tira Jane and I had several encounters with large schools of voraciously feeding jacks. The magic took place on a strong incoming tide at the mouth of the big jetties at Port O'Connor at sunrise. Schools of ribbonfish (cutlassfish) and menhaden (pogies) got tumbled in the fast-moving current. That's when the jacks moved in and committed their mayhem. Just before the attack you could see the gulls, terns, and magnificent frigate birds head for a particular spot, and within seconds the surface would explode, with ribbonfish or pogies leaping out of the water, often plucked from thin air by one of the birds, and jacks boiling the surface or leaping out after them.

If you could get a fly into the melee, you had a chance to hook up. But it wasn't a lead pipe cinch. The surface action only lasted about ten to thirty seconds. Unless you were right there, it was over before you could get there. That was the bad news. The good news was that it happened over and over again, so if you hung out in the right spot you had a good chance of being within casting range of the jacks at one time or another.

Jacks aren't at all boat shy – several rammed our boat each day. But the bait fish are. Too many boats crashing the party send the bait down, and the jacks apparently follow or disperse.

Tira caught the first one, a little fellow of about 20 pounds. It took about a minute a pound to bring in on a 10-weight. Her technique was to cast into the mob and let the fly, a large, heavily-weighted Clouser, sink. Once she got the fish to boatside I managed to beat it off with the Boga Grip, so we don't have any pictures of her fish.



I never had a shot that first day after her fish was revived and released. The major feeding period usually lasts about an hour to an hour and a half. It's pretty much done by 8:30. For the next two weeks, Tira drove the boat so I could catch one. Somehow I managed to blow a number of chances. Finally, on the third outing I caught mine – by letting the fly sink into the feeding mass instead of stripping through it, just like TJ told me to do. I'm a slow learner. Mine was another little fellow that Boga'd right at 20 pounds. As soon as it was released, TJ hooked up to another, but this time the fly line had a knot in it and broke early in the fight. With no backup line, and not wanting to risk our high-dollar 8-weights, we called it a day.

Any time from April to November you may find roaming schools of jacks in the bays. Just watch for actively working birds. If you think you'd like to test your skills, keep a heavy rod – and preferably not a really expensive one – rigged and ready. A 9- or 10-weight is a good choice. I like a chartreuse Clouser with heavy eyes like the one



shown. Jacks like chartreuse. Clousers also seem to work well when the jacks are feeding on shrimp, which they do in the fall. A floating line is a fine for jacks schooling near the surface. You'll want a bite tippet. I use 50- or 80-pound mono. Jacks have denticles that will wear through a light leader in a hurry. Keep a pair of gloves handy. The best way to revive one after you've caught it is to hold on to its tail and slosh it back and forth to move a lot of water past its gills, but it has a sharp horizontal fin on the

caudal peduncle at the base of the tail that can cut you.

Gloves also come in handy when you catch a seagull, something that's easy to do when jacks are busting bait at the surface and the gulls are hovering, waiting for an airborne baitfish or shrimp. A trick I learned a long time ago is to reel the bird in and give it a gloved finger to bite. It will hold on to your finger, allowing you or a fishing partner to untangle the line.

If you want to take on a big fish without going to some exotic destination, just try jackin' around in the bay during the summer. Keep a stout stick rigged and look up occasionally from what you're doing. You may well see a pile of jacks busting bait just off that flat you're fishing.

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Club Meeting August 31. 7:30 p.m. (doors open at 7:00) at the Holiday Inn, I-10 Katy Freeway at Antoine.

Joey Lin will present a program on the huge trout and dorado fisheries in Argentina. Joey worked at the Austin Angler for nine years, has guided in the hill country for a number of years, and now guides part of every year in Argentina. He has a great website for previewing his work at www.faroutfishingtrips.com.

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Try a Chandeleur Shower

Here's a tip that can bring some relief from that hot, sticky feeling after a summer day on the bay or the lake, when you still have a three hour drive home and there's no shower available.

Take a Chandeleur shower. It's what the brave souls who stayed out on the Chandeleur Islands did before the days of fancy mother ships with their hot-water showers. Dust yourself liberally with talcum powder. Pay special attention to places where body parts rub together, like between your upper arms and the side of your chest.

You won't be clean, but you might smell a little better and you'll definitely feel more comfortable until you get home.

President's Corner

by Jerry "Buggywhip" Loring, president, Texas Flyfishers



Tom Lyons has been our VP Programs going on three years now and is responsible for finalizing arrangements for monthly meetings and securing our guest speakers. Tom's accomplishments have been admirable and he deserves a big thank-you. I phoned Tom about scheduling a certain person as a speaker in September. Tom nixed the recommendation when he remembered that the person in question had been a guest speaker at our club just fourteen months prior. I checked the records and sure enough, Tom was right on about the time between appearances.

Timing is one of his major yardsticks and he strives to keep new blood, as he puts it, in front of the membership. Not only does Tom like to have a fresh face for a speaker; he searches for new topics of interest as well. In the past his topics have varied widely, such as knot tying, vendor night, saltwater guides, freshwater outfitters, high country, and rod making.

Here is where club members can pitch in. Since we are always in search of new topics, may I boldly ask you to contact Tom and contribute a topic or two for his consideration? A general rule of thumb has always been, if it is interesting to you, it is probably interesting to others. This is a form of brain-storming for sure but the more input for consideration, the better the output. If you have a speaker candidate to go with your suggested topic, so much the better.

One topic dear to me is conservation. At the Redfish Rodeo, Art Morris from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department gave a ten-minute presentation on catch and release. He presented plenty of numbers and figures and percentages and statistics showing how catch and release helps fisheries. This might make for a full speaker presentation so I am pursuing the concept with TP&WD to see if it can be made into a one-hour program. Anyway, that's how it works. There are any number of topics out there. Should a topic come to your mind, please provide Tom with your thoughts. Then wait and see what happens. (Tom's phone number is 281-379-7944; e-mail address is TFLyons@aol.com.)

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Catch of the day. Jerry Loring with some of the prizes given out at the Redfish Rodeo held in Rockport on August 14. We hope to have a report on the fishing, the festivities, and the tomfoolery at the Rodeo in the next issue.

Dr. Ken "Painless" Creamer

February 18, 1952 to August 12, 2004

Texas coastal fishermen lost a good friend and staunch conservation advocate on August 12 when Dr. Ken "Painless" Creamer died from infection by the salt water bacteria *vibrio vulnificus*.

Ken was a very early member of the Gulf Coast Conservation Association, now Coastal Conservation Association, serving in a number of capacities – Houston chapter board member, state board member, and state conservation committee chair, to name a few. He was a tireless fund-raiser and supporter of the organization.

Ken loved inshore fishing tournaments and participated in many. This year's Poco Bueno was his last. On the day before the tournament he fell and cut his leg. The next day he waded during Poco and was exposed to the bacteria in Matagorda Bay. By that evening his leg was badly discolored. The following day he was taken to the hospital in Port Lavaca and from there transported to a larger hospital in Victoria where they amputated first one, then the other of his legs, trying to contain the infection. Ken fought the good fight for four weeks before he succumbed.

According to a Houston Chronicle article, the CDC has reported 11 confirmed wound-related vibrio cases in Texas from March through July of this year. It is a good idea not to wade in salt water with any open cuts, especially if you have a weakened immune system. Carry a disinfectant such as hydrogen peroxide or a 20% solution of laundry bleach and water, and immediately treat any cuts you receive while fishing.

Ken's family has asked that any contributions you care to make in his memory be made to CCA-Texas, 6919 Portwest, Suite 100, Houston, Texas 77024.

OUTINGS

Our outings schedule is a continuing work-in-progress. Here are the trips we have currently scheduled for the rest of the year. More may be added. Some may be dropped. There will probably be some rescheduling. Use the list for general planning purposes.

To volunteer as a trip leader, contact Fresh Water Outings Chairman Clarke Thornton or Salt Water Outings Chairman Scott Fossum. Their telephone numbers and email addresses are on the Executive Committee listing elsewhere in this issue. Fresh water trips are designated [F], salt water [S] in the listings below.



Clarke Thornton - fresh

September 11. Double Lake, Cold Spring, Texas. Bass and panfish [F].

September 25-26. "Padre Island Surf Fest." Four-wheel down Padre Island and fish the surf with Capt. Billy Sandifer and outing leaders Tom Lyons, 281-379-7944, and Scott Fossum [S]. Optional camping on beach. See the article in the May issue of *Wind Knots* for important details.



Scott Fossum - salt

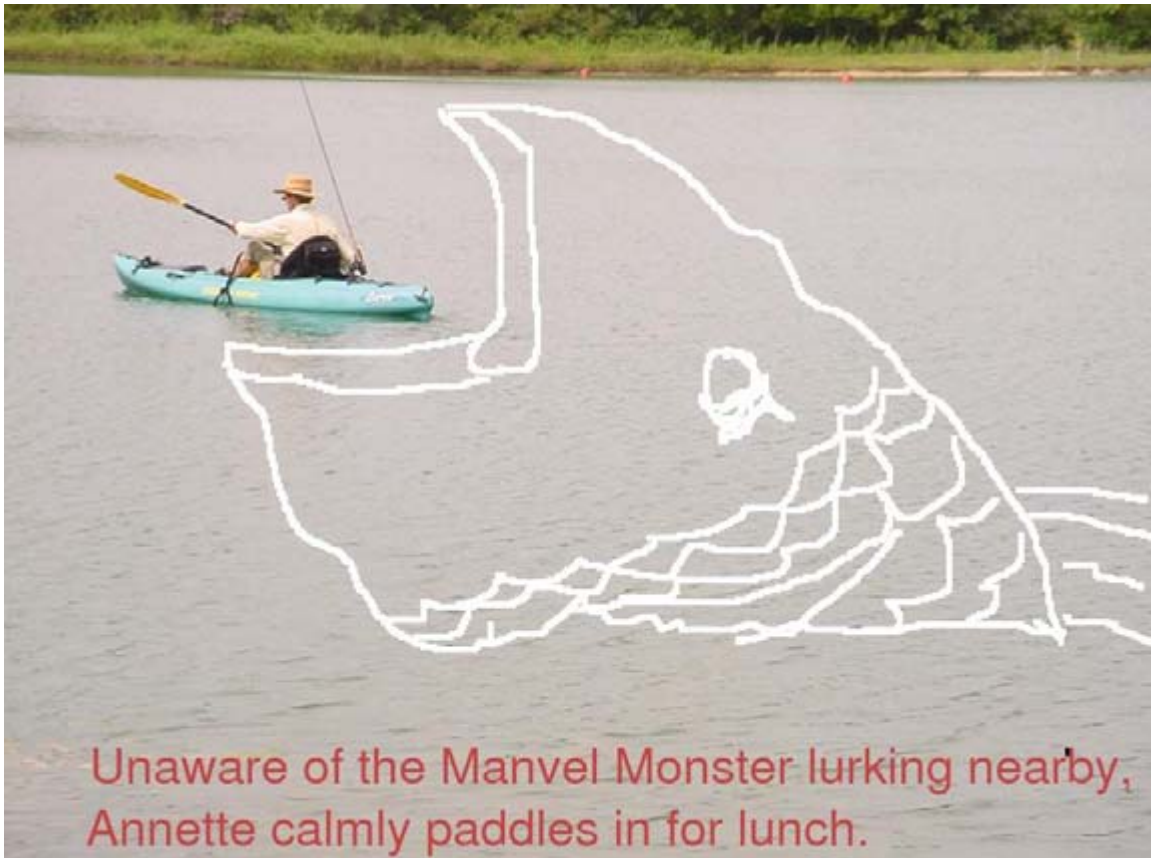
October 15-16 (changed date). South Padre Island, Texas [S].

Rick Rawls, 713-830-5446, rick55@ev1.net, trip leader.

October 10. Damon Live Oaks Lake, Damon, Texas. Bass and panfish [F].

November 7. Guadalupe River, Sattler, Texas. Trout [F].

November ?? Shamrock Bay, Port Aransas, TX [S].



Unaware of the Manvel Monster lurking nearby, Annette calmly paddles in for lunch.

A New Technique

by Nello Armstrong

The other night I was walking along the Concho River in downtown San Angelo, casting with my ultralight, when I happened upon a family "on vacation" in San Angelo. They were from "just outside" Slaton, a town of about 5,000 in the Panhandle halfway between my hometown of Lubbock and Post, Texas. Being this is friendly West Texas, we naturally exchanged howdys and inquiries about each other's fishing success.

There was the 17-year-old son, who smoked like a chimney along with his father. The kid wore a NASCAR T-shirt and a camo jungle hat with several 1/4 ounce red and white spoons stuck in the crown. They had no other lures than the spoons in his hat. His 15-year-old sister was drop dead gorgeous and was dressed and endowed like the girl in the Dukes of Hazard. (I hope she can escape Slaton without being married and pregnant by her 18th birthday.) Her 20-year-old married sister (whom they were staying with in San Angelo) might have once looked like her little sister but it was hard to tell given her present 250 pounds. Rounding out the bunch was Dad with a Wal-Mart straw cowboy hat, a Harley T-shirt, faded Levi's, and worn cowboy boots.

They had come well equipped to fish for the famous Concho River catfish. (San Angelo has a yearly catfish derby each summer and dumps thousands of channel cats as big as 10 pounds in the Concho. Catfishing has a big following here.) They had corn, worms, stink bait, and cut up perch. The hook of choice appeared to be about a 4/0 baitholder which went well with the 1 1/2 oz. bell sinkers they had tied on. The father, who was constantly giving fishing advice, had armed himself and each of the kids with new softball-size Zebcos mounted wrong side up on new medium heavy spinning rods.

They made several casts while I was there and I was puzzled why they could get no distance given the large spinning guides and, counting bait, the two-ounce projectiles they were heaving with all their might. It was then I noticed the new technique I had not seen before. If you are fishing for trophy Concho Channel Cats with heavy spincasting gear, it is imperative that on each rod you run the line through the hook-keeper before you go through the rest of the rod guides.

They were having so much fun I didn't say anything but just went on down the river.

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Port O'Connor One-Fly Tournament Report

by Scott Fossum

At least thirteen flyfishers braved the heat and calm conditions on Saturday, July 31, for a successful outing with all but one catching fish. The announced rules were simple, total inches of fish caught on the first fly tied on.

Strategy seemed very important. Some talked of using 15-pound Big Game as a leader to preserve the precious first fly. I revised my strategy after hearing this and used a braided wire tippet. Some talked about, or more accurately refused to talk about secret spots. Some had the strategy of fishing the lights after midnight but failed to wake-up. Some used a strategy of stealth by sticking their heads in a bucket. Some thought they could convince the judges that sea grass is a type of fish. Our esteemed president ran three circles in a cove, then had the audacity to tell me to go fish there because he "saw a lot."

At the dinner and awards ceremony, the first liar doesn't have a chance. This was compounded by the fact that all previous winners of the One-Fly were present and all were trying to give their results last. Catching seemed higher than usual with only one honest flyfisher admitting to no fish (the infamous "head in the bucket" strategy). Billy's 10 feet of weeds were not added to his redfish total (the-judges-are-dumb strategy). Jeremy couldn't convince the judges to add my 70-inch height to his total for nailing me in the head with a Clouser (another the-judges-are-dumb strategy).

The strategy choice that made the difference was quantity versus quality. The birds were very active in Espiritu Santo Bay and those of us who went pat them in search of large fish on the flats were not the winner. It was Australian Jeremy Cottrell's first time saltwater fly fishing in Texas with a new rod, reel and line. He had 12 fish (120 inches) under the birds that was good for third place. Jerry Loring's eight redfish, good for 168 inches, was only good for second place. Mike Eberhard's forty-plus fish for 310 inches won first place. Both Mike and Jerry

thought they had won but refused to give their totals until the end. They both even brought a fly they found run over in the parking lot claiming its maimed state was evidence of using only one fly. The judges didn't actually fall for their stories, but none better were offered.

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About Wind Knots

Wind Knots is your monthly newsletter, and it needs your help – otherwise we'll run out of things to print. E-mail your articles, photos, artwork, graphics, fishing news, tall tales, lies, and letters to the editor to corey.rich@aya.yale.edu or fax to (713) 864-7488 not later than the 10th of the month for that month's issue. **Be sure to put the words *Wind Knots* in the subject line of your e-mail.** If you don't, I might think it's spam or worse and delete it before opening.

If you have digital photos, please send them in .JPG format. If you have paper photos, mail them to Corey Rich, 1900 N. Memorial Way, Houston, TX 77007. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for their return.

The preferred form for text – stories, letters, and so forth – is in WordPerfect or Microsoft Word. Please turn off "smart quotes" or "curly quotes." Please try to keep your offerings in the 800 to 1,000 word range, or less. If you send photos along with an article, proposed captions are appreciated.

Wind Knots is posted on the club's Web site as soon as it becomes available. Check www.texasflyfishers.org regularly for the latest newsletter and other news of interest.

Old Dogs Can Learn New Tricks

by Frank Budd

"Nine o'clock, no ten o'clock – 35 feet. Eleven o'clock – a rod length. Eleven thirty to the boat!" These were directions barked out by Captain Chuck Naiser on a recent trip that the Prez and I had out of Goose Creek State Park. Jerry and I had the winning bid for this trip at the club's annual auction.

Being a couple of die-hard waders we had a little trouble adjusting to a guide spotting the fish and directing us where to cast. The biggest mistake I made at the onset was not visually finding the fish before I made the cast. About mid-way through the day I figured it out. Chuck helped out by positioning the boat so that the fish were at twelve o'clock most of the time.

After about a ten-minute run from the State Park we idled into the back of a shallow bay and on the way in we spotted the bulges of red fish along the shoreline. After we settled in we could see several schools of fish swimming slowly along, with an occasional splash as one of the fish took a shrimp or minnow.

By some miracle I ended up on the bow first, which is an accomplishment when fishing with Jerry. A school of fish was working toward us and when they were about 50 feet away I threw a Horners' shrimp in front of them at Chuck's command. As I started stripping the fly a huge head of a red came halfway out of the water (Chuck whispered to Jerry that it looked like the Arnold Schwarzenegger of redfish) and then "Bam!" I had a strike. The strike turned out to be a speck about 16 inches long. He beat Arnold to the fly.

We worked these fish for a while and had several shots but the fish just weren't in the eating mode. Chuck and Jerry both agreed that we should move, and off we went.

After another ten minutes we lined up on a shoreline where the setup was perfect. The sun and wind were at our backs and loads of redfish were present. This is where we really had our indoctrination in guide-directed casting. Surprisingly, when we managed to get our flies near a fish, the fish seemed to have trouble locating it even in the gin-clear water. It turns out the problem was the grass and small sizes of our offerings made it hard for the fish to see or feel the flies. Shifting to a seaducer or larger fly fixed that problem. We managed to land a few fish after the fly change. We poled down that stretch for several hundred yards and constantly saw fish.

At one point Jerry took over on the poling platform and I gave my 8-weight RPLX to Chuck and let him have a few shots. I'm not sure, but it seemed like Jerry was giving bogus directions on fish. I'm certain that I saw Jerry waving the pole around while a huge redfish was nearing the boat.

Chuck was still not satisfied with our location and said that it could be better, which I found hard to believe. Well, . . . it got better.

After checking out another spot and pulling on shore to have some lunch we found the spot that Chuck was looking for at about 11:30. As we were approaching a duck blind we could see dozens redfish tails plus some drum tails about 50 yards away. Again we approached the fish and this time Jerry and I both cast at the same time and "Wham!" I had a strike and a nanosecond later Jerry had a strike. Another speck for me and a red for Jerry. We had a few more shots at singles. The fish were getting into a tailing mode. Chuck wouldn't let us cast at the drum because he's strictly a redfish fan, so off we went.

We didn't travel very far when we hit a spot where we could see school after school of tailing reds. The schools ranged in numbers from a dozen to 50 fish. One school that we spotted later numbered at least a hundred. God, it was a sight to see. I asked Chuck what fly he would use and he said that a Clouser with bead-chain eyes would be his choice. The only bead-chain-eyed fly I had was a fly that I use in fresh water that had a chartreuse ice chenille body and a white marabou tail. They loved it!

There were at least four times when Jerry and I simultaneously hooked fished. Many times one would hook up soon after the other hooked up. The secret was to use a calm strip-strike and not panic the school. To insure a strike we had to start stripping our flies as soon as they hit the water. Being quiet and not moving around while fighting a fish also helped in keeping the schools calm. Oh yeah, . . . by this time Chuck gave us nothing but twelve-o'clock casts.

We worked the pods of fish just a couple of times at the most and gave them a long break before we went back to a pod. When we left, the fish were still tailing and relaxed and not spread out. It was a great way to leave them.

This was a trip that you could only hope for. It exceeded all my expectations and I'll never forget the sight of that many tailing redfish. I smile whenever I recall that sight.

I want to express my thanks to Chuck for donating the trip to the club, sharing his knowledge and his schools of redfish and being patient with a couple of old dogs who had a hard time with the clock concept. I wholeheartedly recommend taking a charter with Chuck. I know that I'll fish with him again.

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Texas Flyfishers
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Texas Flyfishers Membership Application

Please check one: New Application Renewal

To join Texas Flyfishers or renew your membership, please complete this form and mail it with your check to the address below, or bring it with you to one of our monthly meetings. All memberships expire June 30th of each year, and renewals are due July 1st. New members, please pro-rate your payment for the number of full months between now and the end of June, inclusive. Our monthly meetings are at the Holiday Inn on the Katy Freeway between Antoine and Silber on the last Tuesday of every month (except December), beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Dues are for (check one): Individual at \$24 a year Family at \$32 a year Student at \$16 a year

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