Windknots

Monthly Publication of the Texas FlyFishers Volume 40, Issue 3, March, 2021

One Week in February

34, 21, 20, 36. Usually, when you hear that, it's followed by "HIKE" but, not here. These were the low temperatures in Houston for the first four days of the week of February 14th, 2021. Some of the other highlights of the week were: 44 consecutive hours of below freezing temperatures (with a low of 13°F); 8 consecutive days with temperatures of 45 degrees or less; 4.3 million homes without electricity (mine was one of them) and, 159 of 254 counties in Texas placed under some form of water restriction. There were broken pipes, houses flooded and, unfortunately, people died. That's one hell of a week that I'm sure none of us will soon forget.

But, with all this going on around us, social media was all abuzz as conversations revolved between how much the coastal water temperatures would drop and, the extents of the inevitable fish kill. It didn't take long for both of these questions to get answered. The answer to the first question was the water temperatures got "too cold, too quickly for too long", 31.9°F as far south as Port Mansfield. Then, judging from the reports, photographs and videos that began hitting the web as early as Monday, the fish kill was going to be ugly. While some of the first shots didn't look too bad, with every additional day and location, the outlook got worse and worse. *Continued*

March Monthly Meeting
Tuesday, March 30, 2021
Coming To You via Zoom

Fishing for Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in Yellowstone's Lamar Valley and Wyoming's Greybull River presented by Jerry Coviello.
The general meeting begins at 7:00 pm and Jerry's presentation will beginning shortly after.

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What's Coming Up:

March Monthly Meeting, Tuesday, March 30, 2021 - *Fishing for Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in Yellowstone's Lamar Valley and Wyoming's Greybull River* presented by Jerry Coviello.

First a little bit about our speaker, Jerry Coviello. A long time fly fisher and Fly Fishers International (FFI) member, in 2017 Jerry was selected as Chairman of the Board of Governors of FFI's Fly Tying Group (FTG). In that position, Jerry has been a driving force in updating the FTG's website and, developed the Beginner Fly Tying Workshop, a downloadable product for chapters/clubs and individuals to download and learn about fly tying and how to get started tying flies. For additional information on the FTG and all that it offers, visit the FFI website https://flyfishersinternational.org/Tying/Fly-Tying-Group Jerry also hosts a weekly tying class on his Facebook Page, "Jerry's Fly Tying Tips".

Jerry's presentation will open with a brief discussion on the FFI Tying Programs and then cut into his presentation, *Fishing for Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in Yellowstone's Lamar Valley and Wyoming's Greybull River.*

Through the miracle of video technology, Jerry will walk us through Yellowstone National Park and, a reminder that the park sits on top of a volcano caldera. Wyoming's Greybull River runs through some of the most remote backcountry in the Greater Yellowstone. Along its 90-mile corridor, water travels from snow-capped peaks in the Absaroka Mountains to sagebrush flats at its confluence with the Bighorn River. The Greybull River watershed is famed for supporting the best genetically-pure populations left of Yellowstone cutthroat trout, a species decimated elsewhere in the West by non-native species and altered water flows. The river's high-quality aquatic habitat is spurring efforts among many landowners to join with partners to protect and restore this biologically-important watershed.

Warning: music cannot be used on Facebook.

To join our Zoom Meeting

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82020994647?pwd=cW1WU2w2ZHNYVW82ZWxISUhnQVBvZz09

Meeting ID: 820 2099 4647

Passcode: 970102

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One Week In February – *Continued:*

When taken at a distance, the shots appeared to be mostly mullet, piggy perch, hard heads and croaker. But, upon closer inspection, the bodies of redfish, black drum, snook, tarpon and, trophy speckled trout seemed to be showing up everywhere. +

While it will be a while before we get the various reports from the Texas Parks and Wildlife biologists, I think it is safe to say that the outcome will not be encouraging and, we can expect some changes coming down. However, there are some moves that we, as a club, can make now and on our own. They will be painless and, they shouldn't cost you a dime. First, begin by flattening the barb on your hook. This can make it easier to remove the hook from your catch, especially when deep hooked and it requires less handling of the fish. Secondly, handle your catch with care and, if at all possible, keep them wet and take a few extra minutes to make sure your catch is revived before releasing them, especially when the water temperatures begin to rise. Lastly, follow the lead of the "Empty Stringer Catch and Release Program". While I'm sure you would not be ostracized by the Club for keeping a legal catch for the skillet, when possible, keep your stringer clean and practice catch and release.

As noted earlier, it may be a while before we know the exact damage to the fishery but, we know the damage has been done. And, as we roll into spring and then summer, more anglers will be hitting the water, adding fishing pressure on the resource. Here is where we can make a difference. One of the tenets of the Texas FlyFishers is promoting good conservation practices so, here is our chance. Will we be part of the problem or, will we be part of the solution? I hope it's the latter and we all do our part to help the Texas coastal fishery recover to the extent that people won't be talking about how great the fishing was "before the freeze of '21".

Education:

While The State of Texas has relaxed the Covid restrictions, Harris County and, the City of Houston has not. So, until further notice, the regularly scheduled classes offered by the Texas FlyFishers are still on hold. Once the local restrictions have been relaxed, the Club plans on starting up the regular series of classroom courses, Beginners and Intermediate Fly Tying, The Academy and, The Saltwater Academy as well the casting classes. So watch the website and *Windknots* for further information. *Thanks, Marcos*

Trout in the Classroom:

The Texas FlyFishers sponsored Trout in the Classroom project has started in the Houston area with the arrival of our trout eggs from Guadalupe River Chapter of Trout Unlimited. In a normal year we have 14-15 tanks running in various high school science classrooms all over the Houston area.

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Trout in the Classroom – *Continued:*

However thanks to Covid-19, many schools currently have bans on live animals in the classrooms. This has mean we have only one of last year's schools participating in 2021, Westbury HS. However we also gained one new classroom at the Memorial Private High School, near Dairy Ashford and Memorial Drive, giving us two tanks running. The upside is we got a lot of trout eggs for these two tanks and so hopefully we have a bunch of young fish to release into the Guadalupe River in early May.

Mark Your Calendars:

Club Activities Calendar for April through May, 2021

April:

Saturday, April 10, 2021 (SW): Shoalwater Bay, Port O'Connor, Texas. Launch out of Charlie's Bait Camp for bay fishing, boat or kayak. Currently, we are in need of a leader for this outing. *This event is tentative and subject to reschedule.*

Wednesday, April 14 thru Sunday, April 18, 2021: The Annual Houston Fishing Show 2021, George R. Brown Convention Center, 101 Avenida De Las Americas, Houston, Texas. For times, visit their website at houstonfishingshow.com

Saturday, April 17, 2021 (FW): The Annual John Scarborough Sunfish Spectacular, Damon 7 Lakes, Damon, Texas. This is *THE* family friendly event of the year! Join us for the chance to capture the Annual John Scarborough Sunfish Spectacular Trophy and a good shore lunch. *This event is confirmed.* Outing Leader: Tracy Quigley

Tuesday, April 27, 2021: Texas FlyFishers Monthly Meeting via Zoom. This month's meeting will host biologists from the Texas Parks and Wildlife to bring us up to speed on the damage done by the February freeze and the TPWD plans moving forward.

May:

Saturday, May 1, 2021 (FW): The 11th Annual World Championship Bass on the Fly Fishing Tournament, Lake Fork Marina, Alba, Texas. Additional details and entry information can be found at www.bassonthefly.org. *This is not a Texas FlyFishers outing*.

Friday, May 7 thru Sunday May 9, 2021 (SW): Yarborough Pass Padre Island National Seashore, Corpus Christi, Texas. Outing Leader: Tim Stokley. *Watch the Texas FlyFishers website details.*

Thursday, May 20 thru Sunday, May 23, 2021 (SW): Chandeleur Islands, Louisiana. Enjoy a 2½ day trip, living aboard a mothership anchored minutes from the rich fishing grounds of the Chandeleur Islands. Fish from one of the fully rigged skiffs for speckled trout, redfish, jacks and the other species that call the Chandeleur's home. Outing Leaders: Scott Fossum and John Eldred Note: *Currently, this trip is full*.

Friday, May 21 thru Sunday, May 23, 2021 (FW): The Annual South Llano River Trip, Junction, Texas. Float and paddle the South Llano River targeting Guadalupe Bass, Rio Grande Perch, and feisty sunfish. Outing leader: Don "Puck" Puckett

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Mark Your Calendars – *Continued:*

Tuesday May 25, 2021: Texas FlyFishers Monthly Meeting via – Zoom. This month's speaker is Capt. Sally Black of Baffin Bay Rod and Gun.

Note: All events, outing dates, times and locations are subject to change without notice. Keep your eye on the Texas FlyFishers website for updates, texasflyfishers.org

Fishing Reports:

Editor's note: This took place prior to the February Freeze

From the Peskador Pete Chronicles:

2021 Winter fishing report

The best of times and the worst of times …….. Texas winter can be rough on a fisherman's soul. Cold fronts twice a week with accompanying high winds makes it difficult to plan a trip……. Unless you just decide to go fishing and attempt to turn lemons into lemonade.

I've made 2 fishing trips down south to the salt.

The first to Rockport in late January for 3 days had winds from every direction from calm to 30 mph. Both sun and rain. 2 of us were able to find willing fish from the refuge flats to the Ingleside flats. Redfish, black drum and trout were both released and fried. Wading and drifting both worked. Size 2 and 1/0 baitfish flies worked for me.

The Crew, 6 flyfishers, met in Port O'Connor early February for the start of 2021 Crew Tall Tales season. We met with varying wind and everything from fog to sun to drizzle. We had great meals that we cooked. We had some adult beverages. We played pool, ping pong and shuffleboard at night. We told stories of all the great fish that got away. We made fun of everyone there. We laughed and smiled a lot. We ……. did everything but catch fish. 6 experienced flyfishers in 2 days zero-ed.

Texas winter fishing can be frustrating, but also can be great. Get out on the water……

Lagniappe:

From the diary of Peskador Pete:

The Man in the Grey Suit

Peskador Pete was rudely interrupted while fly fishing offshore by a rude visitor, The Man in the Grey Suit. The Man demanded a "fishing tax" for trespassing I his lair. The Man stole his tax when Pesky refused to pay up. Pesky has encountered the Man in the Grey suit multiple times and paid his tax many times.

Pesky's 1st encounter was at the Mansfield Rocks 8 miles offshore from PIN's with East Coast Ralph and Mississippi Bud. While offshore fly fishing for red snapper in 65 feet deep water, a nice red snapper ate his Lead-Ass fly. After a good 5 minute fight, the line went slack.

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Lagniappe – *Continued:*

How could that happen, Pesky thought? While reeling in the line, it felt like something was still on the hook, but there was no fight. A red snapper fish head was all that remained. Easty and Mississippi both proceeded to reel in fish heads. A look on the surface showed many fins cruising along the surface. Pesky and crew switched to catching King Mackerel. King Mackerel are great fly rod fish that fight very hard on the surface and have the bonus of tasting so bad that the Man in the Grey Suit won't even eat them. Pesky paid his tax.

Pesky's 2nd encounter was more strategic. While fishing out of San Luis Pass with 1st time offshore fly fisherman, Trouty from Montana, a 3.5 foot shark ate the fly. A steel leader had been strategically used and the shark was brought boat side. Brave but foolish Monty quickly grabs the shark by the tail and throws it into the boat. The shark is thrashing on the deck of the boat with 4 fly rods inches from its jaws. Luckily, the shark was ejected before causing any damage. Sharks in the boat are more trouble than bananas. No tax was paid.

While wading off the Louisiana Coast, Pesky caught a nice 27 inch trout and strung it up. 20 minutes later, the stinger was yanking Pesky around. Upon retrieving, Pesky saw that the tax had been paid again. Only the trout head remained, the accompanying redfish were untouched. Pesky paid the tax.

Later that summer in the same Louisiana wading spot, the Tax was paid again to the Man in the Grey Suit. This time the stringer was not tied to his wading belt, only looped around the belt. The Tax Man took both the fish and the stringer. Pesky had to wade 40 yards to get the stringer with not even a fish head left. Pesky paid the tax.

There are high tax states in the US and there are also high tax fishing areas. Pesky discovered the high fishing tax 2nd sandbar while fly fishing the surf. A stringer was emptied of trout while he watched the Man in the Grey Suit 4 feet away. A new rule was developed, no stringing fish while on the 2nd sandbar. Pesky paid the tax.

Last summer while wading the old state park shoreline in POC, Pesky saw a huge wake that he thought was a Jack Crevalle. After a couple of unsuccessful casts, Pesky rested and was rudely awakened by a huge splash 3 feet away. Upon turning, Pesky saw the 5 foot shark and thought: I ain't paying no stinking tax. I've caught nothing all day. The shark must be a Democrat.

About the Author:

Peskador Pete can be found up and down the Texas coast. He knows all the secret spots such as Lake X, The Corner, The Side Channel, Naked Man Cove, The Mudhole and the ultra-top secret 13 Fathom Russian Submarine Wreck. Pesky occasionally attends the Texas FlyFishers monthly meetings and outings. Pages from his diary can occasionally be found in the Windknots.

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The Texas FlyFishers Executive Committee:

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Reel Recovery

For additional information, check out the Texas FlyFishers website at **https://texasflyfishers.org/** or, the Texas FlyFishers Facebook page at **https://www.facebook.com/TexasFlyfishers/** .

Texas FlyFishers Membership Application

Please Check One: ☐ **New Application** ☐ **Renewal**

To join the 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 August 31st of each year and, renewals are due by September 1st.

The Texas FlyFishers monthly meetings are held electronically via Zoom app. Log On information will be posted on the club website and members will receive an e-mailed notice with log on information each month. The meetings are held on the last Tuesday of every month (except December) beginning at 6:30 pm, unless otherwise noted.

Dues are for (check one): ☐ Individual at $30.00/year; ☐ Family at $50.00/year; ☐ Student at $15.00/year

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: ( ) _____ - _____ Work / Cell Phone: ( ) _____ - _____

E-Mail:_____ Are You a FFI Member: _____

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