



FREE STATE FLY FISHERS NEWSLETTER

Spring 2020

President's Message



Back in February, I had actually written my message for this spring newsletter. It was focused on the 89 and counting different opportunities to get involved with the club that we had scheduled at the beginning of 2020. That was before our lives and the entire world turned upside down.

Well, as I expected, we as a club have gotten back up after being knocked off our feet. Ok, we can't gather together in person for a while, but we are going to keep interacting, seeing each other on the screen and hearing those distinctive voices!

Virtual Club Meeting Presentations In place of our usual first Wednesday of the month meetings at the clubhouse, we will be getting together on-line while we are still at home with family.

Virtual Fly Tying Sessions We are restarting our fly tying sessions using the club's Zoom account to enable club members to sign in so we can see your smiling faces and you can ask questions of the tying session leader.

Virtual Beer Ties Ok, we won't be enjoying the great food and adult beverages in the front porch at Killarney House, but we can still have a similar continuous conversation on a host of topics...some of which are actually fly tying related!

Virtual Movie Night Since we can't get out fishing these days, we will be serving up some much desired eye candy with a series of fly fishing flicks.

Weekly Fly Tying Challenge Every week another club member will be laying out a challenge to tie a fly based on that week's category of flies.

And all of us should take full advantage of the time being afforded to us to do some of those things we just never find enough time to do...and I am not referring to chores around the house or apartment! Here's how we can keep busy and keep focused on fly fishing till the waters reopen...

Inventory Those Fly Boxes First step, find all your fly boxes and get them into one place so you can find them again. Organize them to reflect the types of fishing you plan to do—bass, panfish, trout, Bay, shad, etc. Then make a list of what patterns you want in those fly boxes the next time you head out. Not sure what flies to tie? Turn to a fellow club member—email me if you are not sure who to ask.

Read Those Joe Bruce Books You clearly have more time to read these days so look through all those fishing related books and pull several out to lose yourself in the world of fly fishing for a while.

Take a Virtual Fly Fishing Trip There is an amazing array of fly fishing videos on-line and free for the viewing. And add to your list of flies to be tied!

Get Ready for the Club's Swap Meet Go through ALL your fly fishing stuff and do a reality check on whether you are really going to ever use all 36 of those rods. Find a box and fill it with fly fishing stuff you no longer need but a fellow member will.

Virtual Tight Lines,

Rich

Upcoming FSFF Virtual Meetings, Events and Activities

Thanks to Mark Bange, we have speakers scheduled for all our 2020 club meetings and he is working to line up speakers for 2021! And we have Saturday hands-on sessions scheduled all the way through the winter with more on their way for next year.



All the club sponsored meetings, events and activities which we have had to cancel WILL BE RESCHEDULED. From our Streamside Trout Fishing 101 class to our Icelandic Wool Dyeing Session, your Leadership Team will set new dates once restrictions on getting together in person are lifted.

Until then, we have a great line-up of ways for us to continue to connect up and keep in touch.

Virtual Club Meeting Presentations

Like our regular club meetings, the first Wednesday of the month will be dedicated to hosting a virtual club meeting presentation by one of our fellow club members. You just need to get in front of your computer, laptop, Mac or iPad and click on the Zoom invitation link and turn on your video to be connected in. If possible, we are asking members to use the audio function on your computer versus calling in on a separate phone.

We are still in the process of lining up club members to present—once we have these scheduled, we will email all members as well as post the topics for each upcoming virtual club meeting presentation on the club website's calendar of events. All the needed info to connect in via Zoom will also be emailed out regularly.

So mark your calendars for the following dates for a 7 PM starting time:

- Wednesday, April 15th – Duber Winters presenting on fly fishing for bass
- Wednesday, May 6th
- Wednesday, June 3rd
- Wednesday, July 1st

Virtual Fly Tying Sessions

Join us on the first Saturday morning of every month for our fly tying sessions. We will be using the club's Zoom account to enable club members to connect in. This way everyone can ask questions of the fly tying session leader and everyone can see everyone else. Our virtual fly tying sessions will start at our usual 10 AM start times on the following dates:

- Saturday, May 2nd
- Saturday, June 6th
- Saturday, July 11th (note this is the second Saturday in July—the first is the July 4th holiday)



We are working to line up fly tying session leaders as well as a list of which flies they are planning to tie and what materials you will need. Please contact Luis Santiago and Rich Batiuk if you are willing to lead a virtual session. We know not everyone will have all the needed materials. We are working to select patterns which will help teach techniques as much as how to tie specific patterns.

Virtual Beer Ties

Frank Bowe has been using the Executive Order to socially distance as an excuse to step up his beer brewing hobby. Unfortunately, Amazon Prime has not agreed to deliver 'samples' of his latest batches to club members connecting into our upcoming virtual beer ties. But that won't prevent us from getting together for the fly tying and a lot of conversations. So fill your favorite mug or wine glass with an adult beverage, cook up something delicious (filled with calories and other energy generating nutrients), set up your vise and join with you fellow club members at 6 PM. Our beer ties, virtual until further notice, will be scheduled on the fourth Wednesday of every other month:

- Wednesday, April 22nd
- Wednesday, June 24th
- Wednesday, August 26th

Even if you don't plan to tie flies, please connect in and join the rest of us for the conversation. It's worth the price of admission....free!

Weekly Fly Tying Challenge

One of the admirable traits of fly fishers is their willingness to open up their fly boxes and share their favorite patterns with fellow fly fishers. Knowing that we could not host our annual fly swap this spring, Luis Santiago came up with the idea of a 'virtual fly swap.' Here's how it will work.

Every Sunday, each club member who has signed up to the club's group email system will receive a new Fly Tying Challenge email from that week's leader. In that email, you find out what will be the category of flies for the upcoming week's challenge. Members are asked to tie a fly that fits into that week's category of fishing flies, take a picture of their finished fly, and post their photo using that week's fly tying challenge email. We are asking each participating member to post a photo of their fly by the end of Saturday that week before the next challenge starts on Sunday.

Members are encouraged to write a short narrative description of their fly and any memorable fish that they caught with this fly pattern.



Here's the list of fellow club members who have agreed to lead each of the weekly fly tying challenges:

- Week of April 12: Luis Santiago
- Week of April 19: Mark Bange
- Week of April 26: Mike Mattia
- Week of May 3: Rich Batiuk
- Week of May 10: Wayne Blake-Hedges
- Week of May 17: Joe Bruce
- Week of May 24: Joe DeMeo
- Week of May 31: Wally Marcella
- Week of June 7: Duber Winters
- Week of June 14: Frank Bowne
- Week of June 21: Dick Friis
- Week of June 28: Mark Jacobs
- Week of July 5: Harry Steiner

Thanks to these 13 club members for helping share hopefully hundreds of fly patterns with all our members by other club members sharing photos of the flies they have tied.



This is NOT a competition—it's a means to share our favorite fly patterns across a wide array of target fish species and fishing circumstances. The idea is to share patterns while improving our individual fly tying skills. So get inventive with your patterns and fly tying materials. And as our very own Mike Mattia, reminds us “keeping it simple is good” and “Michaels, the Five Below, and JoAnn Fabrics are great sources of fly tying materials”. So tying patterns using the materials you have in hand now will teach your fellow club members how to be that much more inventive and creative!

Virtual Movie Night



Our fearless FSFF Movie Critic, Luis Santiago, is committed to continuing to serve up some outstanding fly fishing videos. Sorry, but you are going to have to pop your own popcorn as well as get your own sodas and candy. (Rest assured, the

ample stock of all these goodies are safe at the clubhouse just waiting for us to return.)

Our club sponsored Movie Nights, virtual until further notice, will be scheduled on the fourth Wednesday of every other month (beer ties are scheduled for those other months):

- Wednesday, May 27th
- Wednesday, July 22nd
- Wednesday, September 23rd

Please connect in 7 PM and join the rest of us for an hour plus of fly fishing around the world as well as the usual color commentary from the assembled crazies in the now on-line audience.

Featured Fly

John Barr's Meat Whistle

By Luis Santiago



Famed Colorado fly tyer John Barr is most famous for his Copper John, but many streamer lovers are also fans of the streamer/jig hybrid known as the Meat Whistle. Barr originally designed the pattern for bass fishing—sort of a fly-fishing take on the Pig 'n' Jig that conventional anglers use. But the Meat Whistle has since proven to be a killer trout streamer, as well.

John Barr's Meat Whistle Materials List:

Hook: Long-shank jig hook (here a Mustad 32833NP-BN), sizes 1/0-2.

Head: Copper tungsten conehead, large.

Tail/Body: Rusty brown rabbit zonker strip.

Thread: Rusty brown, 6/0 or 140-denier.

Underbody: Copper brown/pearl Sparkle Braid.
Flash: Copper Flashabou.
Legs: Pumpkin Barred Sili Legs.
Collar: Brown Grizzly Saddle Hackle.
Thread dam: Rusty brown, 6/0 or 140-denier.
Adhesive: UV-cure resin, 2 coats

Link to tying video: <https://vimeo.com/315640303>

How to Fly Fish Even Better

Fly-fishing for Deep Water Bluegill & Crappie

By Joe Bruce

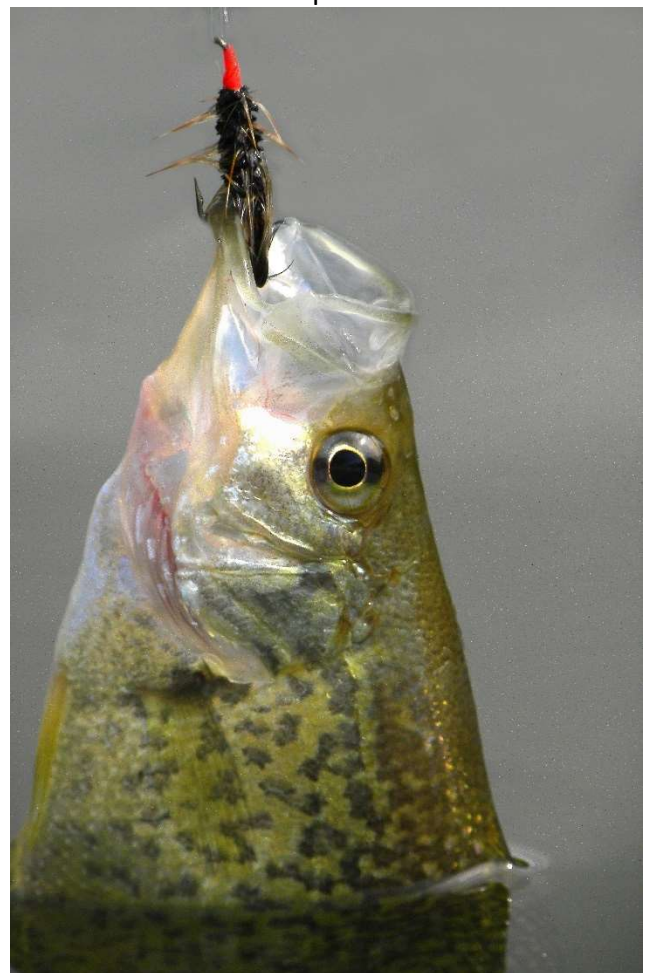


Early spring and very early summer usually find the bluegills and crappie in rather shallow water, but by the heat of the summer both these fish will move to deep water holding spots. They can be caught with the fly rod by the use of a full sinking line. I know some folks will tell you they can catch these fish all year, but I bet they aren't catching the bigger fish with a floating line. Fish like a comfortable water temperature and the shallows in the heat of the summer "ain't" it.

There are many full sinking lines on the market, so, my suggestion is to buy the fastest sink rate you can for your line size. Usually this is around 5" to 6" per second. The faster rate will get you in the zone quicker and allow you more fishing time

instead of waiting for the line to sink with a slower sink line. Remember, this is summertime and the fish are active so an aggressive retrieve is the norm and a fast retrieve will bring more strikes. Almost any fly will do. I personally like to throw a #10 black woolly bugger. This usually will get the job done.

Do you have a depth finder? This certainly makes the job of finding the fish easier, but if you don't start looking on the break lines around the lake or long sloping points descending into deep water. These fish can be at any depth from a foot below the surface to 18 or 20 plus feet down.



The best way to approach these suspended fish is by using the "Count Down Method." This is exactly as it sounds; you cast the fly line and start a slow count and then start your retrieve. I usually start around 5 seconds and if no strike I keep adding a couple second each cast. Once you hit some fish,

just count down the same number, this is a very accurate way of getting to these fish time and again.

One mistake most folks make with a sinking line is using a normal size leader. Monofilament tends to float, so you are defeating the purpose of the sinking line. You only need a tippet. Three to four feet is about right. This will give the fly a slight diving motion each time you strip the line. I try to keep my strips to a six to one foot slow pull with a pretty good pause.

The next time you can't seem to find those bluegill & crappie in the warmer months, give the sinking line a try.

Club News

2020 FSFF Biggest Bluegill Tournament Winner Announced 9 Months Early!

Last December, the club awarded John Rentch an Honorable Mention given he was in third place up close to the end of the tournament, before being knocked out by Mike Mattia's 3rd biggest bluegill. See below photo.



John was overheard muttering at the Holiday Party something about “knocking ole Mikey clear out of 5th place this coming year.” Well John got his sweet revenge shortly before statewide restrictions

were put in place on recreational fishing. John was the first (and only) submitted entry for the club's Free State Fly Fishers 2020 Biggest Bluegill Tournament—see below photo.



Tournament judge (and jury) Mark Bange took one look at the photographic evidence of John's monster 14.5" bluegill and declared John the wiener, I mean the winner. Clearly this likely world record bluegill was caught with a fly on a fly rod.

Later the Honorable Judge Bange was quoted as saying he could do the simple math of subtracting 8". But by that time John was declared the 2020 tournament wiener and was already looking forward to also wiening 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th places, edging Mike Mattia fully out of the picture of the wieners, I mean winners, at the December 2020 Holiday Party.

Meanwhile Rich Batiuk is reported to still be searching Amazon's website for the same fish measuring stick that John used to measure his tournament winning bluegill—that extra 8" makes a difference!

[Editor's Note: Yep, even our own newsletter is occasionally overcome with fake news! John deserves at least a few minutes of fame and glory for catching that monster bluegill! Now where can I find one of those measuring sticks which guarantee wieners on every cast?]

New Club Logo

At the March 2020 club meeting, members voted and approved the below new logo for the club.



Our new club logo will be positioned prominently on our website, our letterhead, and our newsletter. Here's where else you will soon be seeing our new club logo:

- Luis Santiago is working to replace the club's fading super-sized old logo posted to the right of the front entrance to our clubhouse;
- Frank Bowne is working with Hoffman Embroidery on producing patches with the club's updated logo for new members and for sale to all club members;
- Frank is also working with Hoffman Embroidery to have the new logo stitched into a new set of club hats which will be made available for sale to members;
- Luis is working to order and purchase a new club banner highlighting our new logo to replace the old banner currently hanging up on the back wall in the clubhouse;

- Mike Mattia will be building a stand for displaying our new banner at all future club sponsored events and activities located outside of the clubhouse at local and regional fly fishing shows and more;
- Frank will soon turn his attention to ordering fishing shirts with the new logo sewn in a prominent location for sale to members and
- Finally, we will be ordering new coffee mugs and stickers as everyone's kayak needs the new logo placed prominently on their hull!

Thanks to **Luis Santiago** for initiating efforts to update the club's decades old logo; to **Bob O'Donnell** for developing seemingly countless different designs which resulted in six final choices submitted to the club membership for voting; to **Frank Bowne** for working to get our club logo translated into new patches, hats, shirts, stickers and coffee mugs; to **Luis** for working to get new club banners with the new logo; and to **Mike Mattia** for building a stand for the club's new banner to display at future club sponsored events at local and regional fly fishing show and more.



Our remaining stock of club hats, coffee mugs, stickers and patches with the club's original logo (see photo above) will be sold at reduced costs at the club's 2020 Swap Meet when it's rescheduled for later on this year.

Coming to the Club in 2020—FSFF Biggest Pickerel Tournament

Given last year's success with the Biggest Bluegill Tournament, the club will be adding a Biggest Pickerel Tournament this year. The exact same rules for the Biggest Bluegill Tournament apply to the Biggest Pickerel Tournament. This time, Judge and Jury Mark Bange will be keeping an eye out for those attempting to apply the John "Start Measuring at the 8 Inch Mark" Rentsch approach to submitting photos of entries.



This is Mark Bange with a 24" pickerel. Joe Bruce took this photo. Clearly Joe left at least one pickerel in the pond for Mark to catch. With the pickerel tournament now underway, Mark is planning to go back and catch this now 26" pickerel for his tournament entry!

FSFF Biggest Bluegill Tournament Continues in 2020

Keep on tying your favorite bluegill fly patterns to get full prepared to get back out to your favorite bluegill fishing place. You might have to break the 10" barrier this coming year in order to secure first place from the reigning 2019 champion (who will remain nameless but whose picture is somewhere else in the newsletter!). We have officially kicked off the second annual Free State Fly Fishers' Biggest (Darn) Bluegill Tournament. So if you have already caught a whopper, please see the below tournament rules for how to submit your tournament entry.

The rules are very simple:

1. Must be a FSFF member
2. Must be caught on fly with flyrod in 2020
3. Entries by photo (with ruler if possible, to measure catch) [see the illustrative photo below]
4. Longest bluegill mouth to tail wins

Start submitting your photos of your big bluegills to Mark Bange at mbange54@gmail.com. A running tally of all entries will be posted on-line on the club's web site throughout the year, with updates at the monthly club meetings. The prize will be the winning member's name on clubhouse plaque on the wall next to the rear door in the clubhouse. And each winning member will receive a small trophy to keep.



The prize and the trophy will be awarded to the winning member at the club's annual Holiday Party in December.

Access to Kayak Fishing Class Presentation

If you missed Mark Bange's February 15th truly outstanding four hour Kayak Fishing class, you can still access his in-depth presentation on-line via the club's website. Below is the link to Mark Bange's kayak fishing class presentation on the FSFF website: <http://fs-ff.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Kayak-Fishing-Course-for-FSFF.pdf>

Mark will be teaching another very similar class at Anne Arundel Community College. Once that class gets rescheduled, we will alert club members.



Captain Chris Dollar Offering Club Members Discounts on Equipment, Kayaks and Fishing Trips

Free State Fly Fishers member and regionally recognized light tackle and kayak fishing guide Captain Chris Dollar is making a special offer of discounts to club members only. Chris has presented to the club several times and authors a regular outdoors column in the Annapolis Capital newspaper. Here's what Chris is offering members:

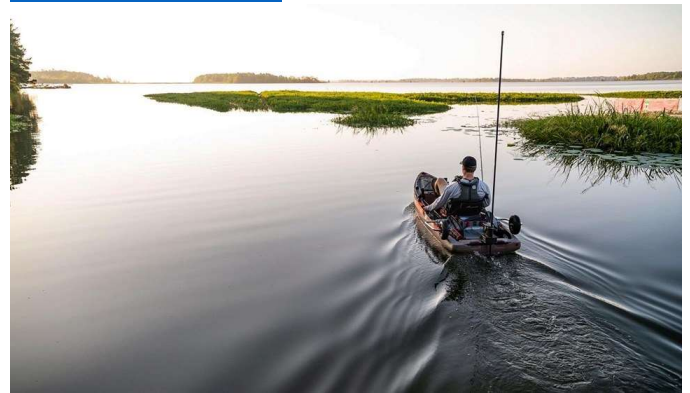
- 10% Off items on Tacklecove.com
- 15% Off for walk-ins to the shop at 101 Water Way at The Wharf, Centreville MD 21617
- 5%-10% Off Kayak packages
- 15% Off Guided Fishing Trips



For more details, please feel free to contact Chris directly at:
Capt. Chris Dollar
CD Outdoors
Guided Fishing & Outdoor
Communications

(410) 991-8468

cdollar@cdollaroutdoors.com
cdollaroutdoors.com



CD Outdoors, a full-service fishing outfitter based on Chesapeake Bay. Owned and operated by Capt. Chris Dollar who has 25 years' experience as an outdoor professional, he's eager to share with you his passion for fishing and kayaking the Chesapeake and its rivers.

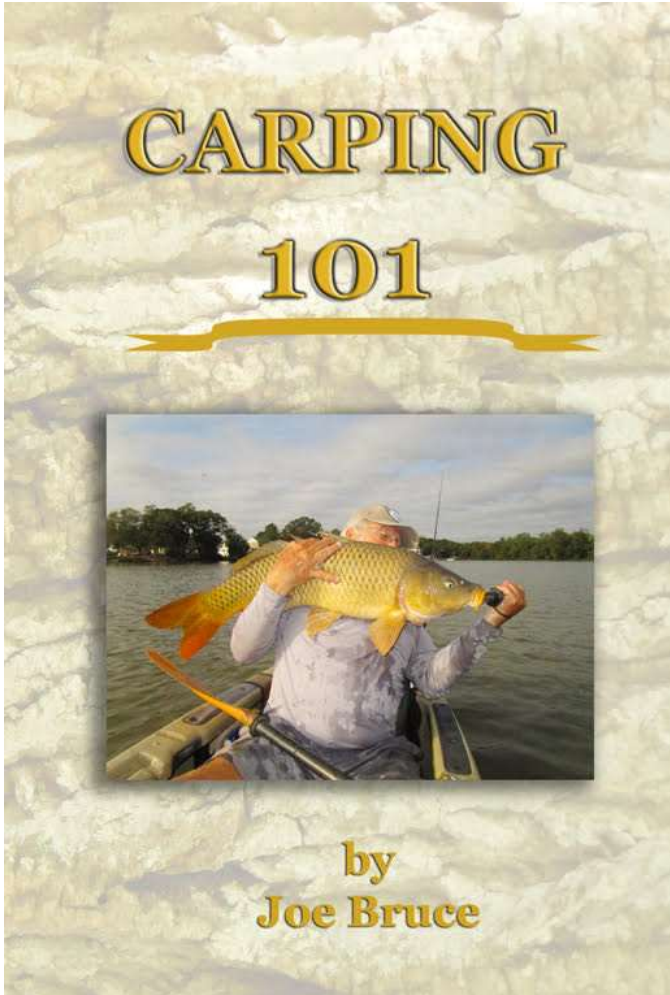
Free State Fly Fishers is very fortunate to have several fly fishing professionals as members, each of whom has been very willing to share their experiences with the rest of the club's members.

Two More Members Step Up to Help with Operation of the Club

John Rentch has agreed to become our new clubhouse coordinator, taking over from John Scarborough. Mike Mattia will be taking on the responsibilities as our Davidsonville Family Recreation Center or DFRC coordinator. John Scarborough was the prior DFRC coordinator. Thanks to John for the many, many years of service to the club, most recently for both of these coordinator roles which John recommended having two separate club members take on these roles given their importance to the club's operation.

Joe Bruce's New Fishing for Carp Book

He has done it once again, written an easy to read book, filled with outstanding recommendations for improving your fishing experiences. His latest book entitled "Carping 101" is now available on his website www.joebruce.net. Joe will bring copies of the book to our next in-person meeting. The book costs \$19.95 each and includes is a color insert showing baits, carp and gear, plus a hair rig personally tied by Joe.



Every fly fishers' library is truly incomplete without copies of other books written by Joe including:

- Fly Fishing for Smallmouth Bass
- Fly Fishing for Striped Bass
- Joe Bruce's Fly Fishing for Shad
- Fly Fishing for Chain Pickerel by Joe Bruce
- Joe Bruce's Smallmouth Bass Fly Patterns
- Joe Bruce's Panfish Fly Patterns & Tying Tips
- Freshwater Fly Patterns

- Saltwater Fly Patterns by Joe Bruce
- Fishing for Chain Pickerel & Shallow Water Fishing Techniques
- Fishing & Tying the Bullethead Darter
- Tips & Techniques for Fishing Flukes in Fresh & Saltwater
- Joe Bruce's Wire Bender—Make Your Own Wire Forms any Length and Size for Pennies
- Shallow Water Tips & Techniques
- Fishing for Snakeheads
- Common Sense Bonefishing
- Funny Things Happen Fishing

Fly Fishing Equipment: Making Better Choices

Choosing a Fishing Kayak

By Mark Bange

There is no perfect fishing kayak. The kayak you choose will be the result of analyzing a series of tradeoffs and finding the one that best accommodates your angling styles and the waters you fish. You will thoroughly enjoy the good points in the boat you select. You will learn to compensate for the factors that are not optimum about your boat. Most important, you'll be on the water kayak fishing and having a great time doing so.

What are those factors? I categorize them as: Control, Comfort, Carrying, and Cost.

Control

All boats from fly fishing float tubes to vessels of the U.S. Navy are subject to the laws of hydrodynamics. For kayaks that means the following. The longer the boat, the better it tracks. That is, steers straight and holds its line in the water as you paddle or pedal it. Longer boats are faster both in the speed you can attain and the ease of paddling or pedaling. Longer boats have more weight capacity. Note that most fishing kayaks can safely hold between 350 and 450

pounds. That may sound like a lot, but remember that includes you, your tackle and ancillary gear. It adds up fast. On the negative side, longer boats are more difficult to turn. It will take more effort to use them in tight quarters – like when fishing close to docks, riprap and downed trees. Longer boats weigh more. I'll address that later.

Similar relationships occur with the beam or width of the hull. Wider hulls provide more stability. Some wide-hulled boats allow you to stand, although I advise against that. Wider hulls provide more capacity. On the downside, extra beam means the hull weighs more. A wider boat is also harder to propel through the water and slower than boats with narrow beams.



As a general rule of thumb kayak hulls from 10 to 14 feet in length will provide a safe ride for most of the waters we fish – from ponds to the Chesapeake's tidal creeks. A good compromise length is 12 feet and a beam of 34 inches or less. Boats of that length and width will cut nicely through choppy waters. They will be fast, stable and will have sufficient capacity for most kayak anglers. Also, they will be manageable on land. More to come on that.

Comfort

A kayak fishing outing can last from a few hours to an all-day event. Regardless of the length of your trip, you'll want to remain comfortable. In a kayak, comfort is foremost related to the seat. Recent years have seen the popularity of lawn-chair-style

seats in fishing kayaks flourish. They are made of mesh material on a metal frame with high backs for added support. Most recline to adjustable angles. Some even have lumbar support. And some have high and low seat settings. Each feature adds greatly to your comfort on the water. However, there are tradeoffs.



Lawn-chair-style seats are most commonly found on Sit-On-Top (SOT) kayaks. Those are kayaks that have a reinforced deck covering the hull. The airgap between the deck and hull provides floatation and storage (good things) but the addition of a deck also increases the overall weight of the boat (a bad thing). Also, since the seat sits on top of the deck, you are higher from the water. Your visibility may improve. But the fish you are targeting may see you easier too. Also, the higher the seat is from the water, the less stable your boat will become, all other aspects being equal. Finally, a higher seat will make you more subject to wind. An SOT kayak may therefore be more difficult to propel in certain weather conditions than a traditional "Sit-Inside" kayak where the seat rests on the floor of the hull and your overall profile is lower.

Carrying

It would be nice if we each had waterfront property where all we had to do before and after outings is to drag our kayaks a few feet to and from the water. That's not the case for most of us. Kayak fishing requires us to load our boats onto a vehicle from a storage area at our houses and drive them to a launch site. There we may have to transport our boat hundreds of feet from the

parking area to the water. A kayak cart is therefore a necessity for most anglers.

The above is why hull-weight matters. Indeed, for some kayak anglers, it is their foremost consideration when purchasing a boat. Fishing kayaks can range from 50 pounds to over 100 pounds depending on length, width and style. An SOT, because of its reinforced deck, will generally weigh more than a Sit-Inside kayak of the same length. For example, a 12-foot Sit-Inside kayak will range from 45 to 55 pounds. An SOT of the same length may weigh from 65 to 75 pounds. Indeed, those extra pounds get much heavier if you have to transport your kayak by cartopping, or after a long exhausting outing as you load to go home.



If you buy a boat that is too heavy for you to comfortably move on land, even with a cart, you will not use it often. That is a sad fact. I believe that is why many of the kayaks for sale on the secondary market are the longer, wider ones that folks thought they needed for stability. Instead, they found out they were unwieldy to handle on land.

Cost

There is significant price variation in fishing kayaks. A boat's size, its materials, its amenities for easy rigging, and quality of construction are primary cost determinants. However, the method of propulsion is perhaps the major cause of price

differences. Pedal driven boats made popular by Hobie and Native Watercraft have been on the market for years. They are proven, well made and reliable. Other companies have recently joined the fray as the original patents on pedaling technologies have expired.

Be prepared to pay from \$2000 to over \$4500 for the popular pedal offerings from Hobie and Native Watercraft. In comparison, there are many new 12-foot paddle-driven fishing kayaks on the market today ranging from \$800 to \$1400. Of course, used kayaks are always available. Craigslist offers many pre-owned fishing kayaks for sale -- often the larger heavier ones. Even there, pedal boats hold their value well and will get premium prices. And please note that FSFF club member Chris Dollar of Chris Dollar Outdoors in Centerville, MD is offering exclusive discounts to club members on his inventory of Native Watercraft and other outdoor gear (see the article on page 9).

Since cost is a significant factor, the question arises as to whether you need a pedal boat to enjoy kayak fishing. The answer is absolutely not. For most FSFF pond and tidal creek club outings a paddle boat is a better choice. The reason for that is that pedals, or more precisely, the flippers or propeller under the hull, can become an impediment in the shallow waters that we commonly visit. Additionally, the pedal mechanism itself takes up valuable deck space that can hinder your fly casting. Actually, those topics are better reserved for another article – Pedal vs. Paddle! Suffice it to say, that there are many affordable kayaks that will satisfy the criteria I discussed above. I hope you found this information useful as a starting point if you are contemplating a fishing kayak. Most of all, I hope to see you on the water.

Mark Bange
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410-591-5254

Featured Article

Travels with Humphrey

By Mark Jacobs

The morning of Saturday, April 11, 2020 was bright and clear. My buddy Humphrey had finished his breakfast and was pretty antsy. We both needed to be outside. With the recreational fishing ban still in effect, we decided to clear our minds and get some fresh air by visiting the closest fishing spot we could reach on foot to lay plans for our next outing. [Spriggs Farm Park](#) in Arnold on the Broadneck Peninsula was our destination. It has water access, parking and a small craft launch area for canoes and kayaks. The shallow water at the launch is probably wadable far enough out to reach some fish but I haven't tried that yet. Available fish species include yellow and white perch, catfish, rockfish, pickerel, bluegills, carp and snakeheads, among others.



Entrance applications are submitted and approved online on the spot.



There are several marked trails through the wooded 53 acre park. The parking area is a short portage from the launch site. And an information kiosks provide general site information. A short downhill trail leads to the water level launch site.



Thanks to my buddy Humphrey I got out to enjoy the beautiful day in the park. We are looking forward to the next outing!

Where to Fish

Delaware Delights! My top five Delaware Ponds I Love to Fish!

By Mike Mattia

I have only been fishing Delaware Ponds for a few years after having purchased a 2nd home in Selbyville, Delaware and wanted to see what the fishing possibilities were close to home. I was amazed at how many Public Ponds there were in close proximity to my new “base camp”.

If you can find the “DeLorme Atlas & Gazetteer for Maryland and Delaware” with the detailed topographic maps, this is an outstanding resource to help you find local ponds and rivers in both states. This book map gives you more information than any other “off the shelf” asset that I’ve found. Myself, being an “Old Map Rat,” I find this atlas to be the “gold standard” for Maryland and Delaware pond hoppers. It gives you the name of the pond, page and grid number, fish species, launch location via icon and a fish icon to tell you where the fish are waiting for you!



The Internet is also a very valuable tool for the computer savvy. My wife is very fond of telling me that I'm "technology challenged" and I wear that badge proudly!

Delaware's Public Freshwater Fishing Ponds is another asset you can pull up online and it will give you links to the ponds also. It contains various other links that will prove useful to in your journey to finding other venues to try out. These ponds are some of the best I have ever encountered with regards to public access.

All of the ponds that I have either fished in or scouted as potential destinations for club outings have decent parking and launch ramps for small boats and kayaks. They all seem to be very well maintained and amazing enough almost litter free! Yes, you will find some small litter, however for the most part they are in wonderful shape for a public area.

If you are someone who fly-fishes from a kayak, canoe or other small watercraft, you owe it to yourself to check these ponds and the facilities each has to offer. One of the things I've noticed is that most of the ponds that are somewhat close to each other are linked together by a small stream. The only real drawback is these ponds have very limited shoreline fishing opportunities. Economically, a Delaware non-resident fishing license is only \$20 per year.

For those that 'Pond Hop' as we do, there's always, within reason, a venue to get a lunch nearby. A great favorite of mine "Pizza Palace" in Millsboro for a sit down with a group of our fellow FSFF members to talk about the morning success (lie like the devil doesn't exist) and relax before heading to the next destination. Or lunch can be as simple as a stop at Royal Farms or one of the many 'sub stops' for a quick rest and nourishment.

Now for the meat and potatoes—here are my picks and reasons for my choices of my top 5 Delaware Ponds I love to fish.

#1 Trap Pond State Park

Trap Pond, located near the town of Laurel, is one of the southernmost ponds in the state. It has the famous cypress trees growing across much of the pond and on its banks. Delaware is host to the northern most stand of these trees. You can reach the pond it via Route 404 to Route 13 south or from Route 50 via Route 13 north from Salisbury, Maryland.

This pond has the top spot for several reasons because even though it does require either a season pass or Delaware State Park pass or daily pass, it has amenities that other ponds do not have. This Park/Pond is one that has family orientated facilities around both sides of the pond. Picnic tables, a pavilion, watercraft rental and family cabins and tent spaces for overnight camping for folks to rent. This is the location for Free State Fly Fishers' annual fishing trip and picnic and it has served us well. Although it can get crowded during the warm months it is a place to bring our families along with us for the yearly event.

The fishing is home to our first designated "LDR" made famous by a certain member who shall remain anonymous at this point. The "LDR" stands for "Long Distance Release" short for I hooked that fish then lost it #@%#@\$%! This term has morphed into another version the "SDR" Short Distance Release...Lost at the

Boat! We've had a lot of enjoyment at this pond over the years and because it brings our fly fishing family together with all those facilities, it has my #1 Spot.



#2 Ingram Pond

Located in Millsboro, just a short distance from Route 113 in Millsboro, it's very close to "Pizza Palace" ...need I say more! This pond was the first Delaware pond that I fished and it got my attention on the first trip I made here. Working the shoreline with a small popper, I was rewarded with a very close to 1 lbs. bluegill—the biggest I had ever caught at that time. This pond, like the other ponds on the list, is very "easy on the eyes." It has a lot of structure to cast to and is shaped so that even on the windiest of days, you can usually find a spot out of the wind to fish. We have had a lot of success on Ingram Pond as a club outing as well as fishing it solo. Bald eagles roam the skies there

and otters will let you get within 4-5 feet of them before they scare the dickens out of you with a splash. The fish population is very good here for most species with decent sizes and numbers.

#3 Concord Pond

Located just off of Route 13 on Route 20 in Seaford, Concord Pond is fast becoming the "go to" pond for the club for pickerel fishing. I would be remiss if at this time I didn't mention the club member that turned us on to the outstanding pickerel fishing here was none other than Joe Bruce. Thank you, Joe, from all of us as it was just another pond, we haven't fished it yet until you turned us on to it. WOW WHAT A POND! With Joe's system for winter pickerel fishing and some cold weather gear, the action has kept us warm this past year and out on the water doing what we enjoy, kayak fly fishing. Other species—bass, bluegills, crappie, yellow perch—are doing very well in Concord.



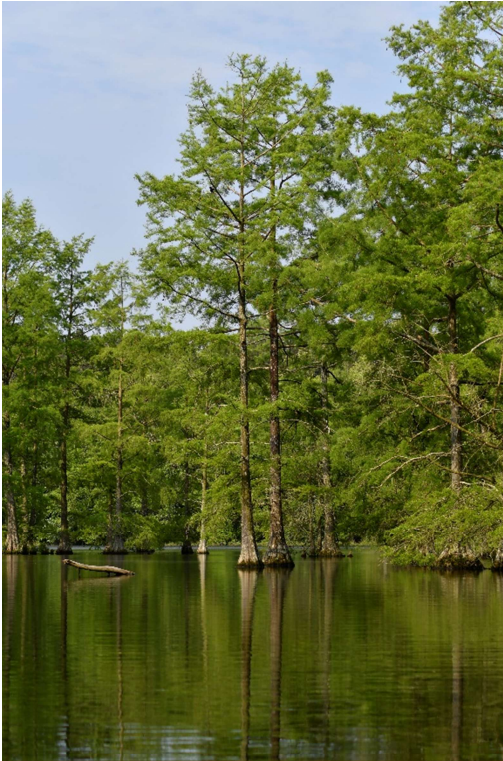
The pond is also is the home of the first place bluegill in the FSFF Biggest Bluegill Tournament taken in November last year. This fact goes to show you the you never know what will come out of the water when you go fishing. If there is a drawback to this pond it's the steep launch ramp but that is easily handled with a little respect for the conditions especially in cold temps where there might be some ice on the ramp. The abundance of shoreline structure on all sides and lily pad beds located around the pond make for lots of hiding places for fish.

#4 Wagamons Pond

Located in Milton off of Route 404 to Route 16 east to Route 5 south, Wagamons Pond has parking, good boat ramp and even has a Porta potty on site. Legend has it that a few state record bass come out of this pond, however, as yet I've never seen any real big bass come from this pond but it is home to some very nice bluegill, crappie and pickerel.

One of the drawbacks to this pond is during the hot summer months it gets thick with weeds and algae. The state, from what I understand, used to cut and harvest the weed growth a few years back. But for some

reason, the state didn't harvest the aquatic weeds last year and the times I went to fish it there was no way to get even the Kayak on the water. If the state decides to harvest the weed growth again this year, it will be a true "hot spot" to fish. After this virus quarantine is lifted and travel from out of state is legal once again, I do plan on exploring this venue soon. For those who don't know Delaware is not admitting any out of state license plate vehicles into the state and if you are caught you are under a 14-day quarantine (if I could fish those 14 day's I might just try it!).



#5 Trussum Pond

This choice for number 5 might surprise some of you so I'll explain. This pond is located 1 mile from Trap Pond west toward Route 13. Trussum Pond has a primitive ramp unless they had replaced it or upgraded it as it was a "soft launch" only ramp if you wanted to call it that. The reason why it's not #1 on my list is because most folks wouldn't use it as a destination to fish due to the ramp. My reason for listing this pond is its absolute beauty. It's thick with Cypress trees located in the pond itself, more so than any of the other ponds I've seen. The spring to early summer has this place jumping with mother nature's finest it has to offer...yea the old man has a soft spot for this place.

Paddle for one minute and close your eyes for a for seconds then open them up and you would think you were in a Louisiana Bayou waiting for an alligator to surface. This is my "go to" spot to relax and enjoy what Mother Nature has to give. Every downed tree will have a ton of turtles on it sunning themselves and the flowers are blooming around the area. As for fishing yea you are going to "donate some flies to the trees," but that is a small price to pay as there are fish everywhere around the Cypress Knees. All the regular species—bluegill, crappie, bass and pickerel—are all here waiting. This area gets less pressure than any of the other ponds due to the closeness of the trees, the hidden stumps just below the water's surface and somewhat primitive ramp. In all honesty, I've never made it out of the Cypress forest to the main body of the pond—I just don't leave fish to go find fish! At some point this year if we ever get out of this lockdown, my goal is to get out to open water of this piece of Heaven on earth!



[Editor's Note: Like Delaware's ponds, we have hidden gems among the members of Free State Fly Fishers—one of them being Mike Mattia. He's the first one to offer flies to strangers, to share information on the latest Delaware pond he has 'discovered', lead a fly tying session where most of the materials were purchased at Michaels, ensures everyone has gotten off the pond safely before packing up himself, always has a place to eat lined up on each outing so members can share fishing stories and counts of LDRs, and has a vast collection

of Sally Hansen's Hard as Nails that is the envy of the rest of us! Mike, thank you for sharing your excitement about life and fly fishing with the rest of us...and never, ever change young man!]

FREE STATE FLY FISHERS LEADERSHIP TEAM

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First Vice-President: [Gary Grey](#)

Second Vice President: [Luis Santiago](#)

Secretary: [Frank Bowne](#)

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Directors: [Mark Bange](#) (Past President)/ [Mike Mattia](#)

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Clubhouse Coordinator: [John Rentch](#)

DFRC Representative: [Mike Mattia](#)

Club Librarian: [Luis Santiago](#)

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Pond-of-the-Month Outings Coordinator: [Mike Mattia](#)

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Publicity Coordinator: [Cliff Young](#)

Raffles Coordinators: [Bob Ruck](#) / [Mike Mattia](#)

Newsletter Editor: [Rich Batiuk](#)

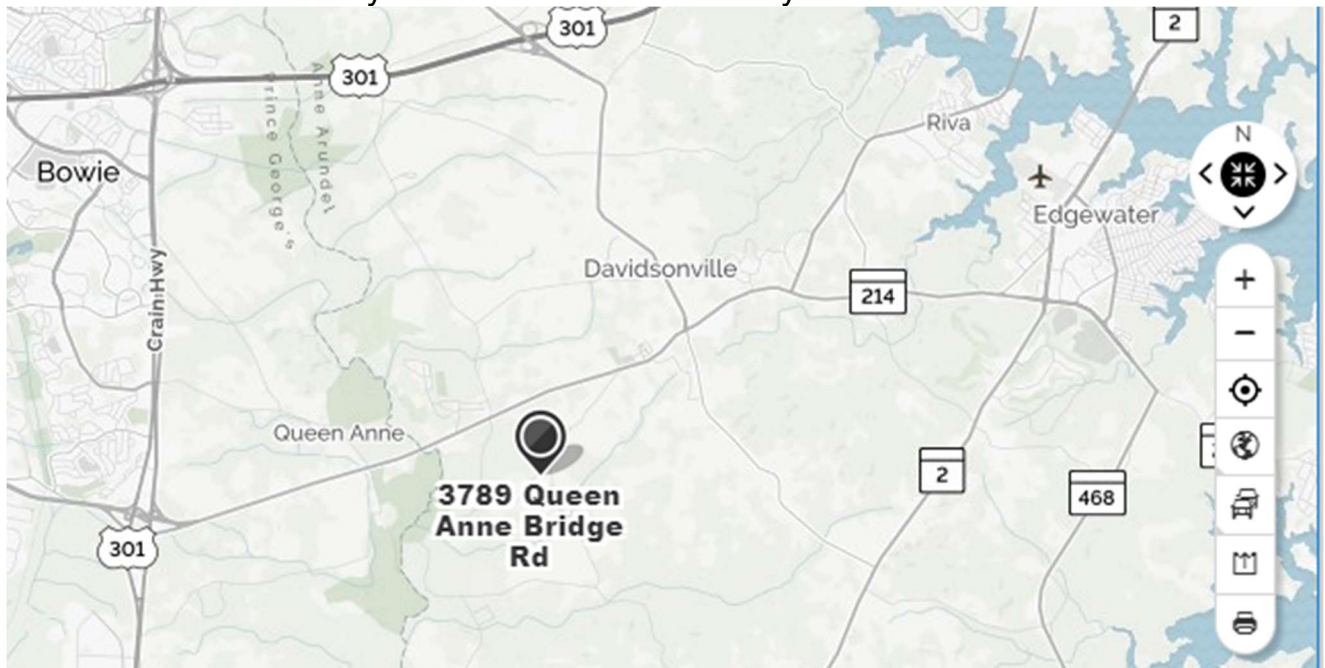
Please contact the appropriate FSFF leadership team member to get answers to any questions about Free State Fly Fishers and upcoming club sponsored events.

“Fellowship Through Fly Fishing”



Directions to the FSFF Clubhouse

Free State Fly Fishers (FSFF) meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month, September through June (except December), starting at 7:00 PM, at our **clubhouse** located at 3789 Queen Anne Bridge Rd., Davidsonville, MD 21035. The club house is on the grounds of the Davidsonville Family Recreation Center, an Anne Arundel County Recreation & Parks facility.



Directions: From Route 50, take Exit 16 to Route 424/ Davidsonville Road South. At the second traffic light, take a right turn onto Route 214/Central Avenue West and then take a left turn on Queen Anne Bridge Road. Take a left-hand turn into the Davidsonville Family Recreation Center through the open gate. Walk along the

parking lot and around and past Ford Hall to the clubhouse using the above map.

Our Website: <http://fs-ff.com/>

Our Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/FSFFMD/>

Email Us: info@fs-ff.com