

What to Bring on Your Next Fly Fishing Trip: Sharing 45+ Years of Packing Experience

Rich Batiuk

Free State Fly Fishers Saturday Hands-on Session

Saturday, December 21, 2024



Pack Better, Pack Less, Pack What You Need...No More, No Less...on Every Trip!

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A Checklist Will Help You Pack Smart (and Light)!

How to be prepared right at the start...work through your own personal checklist and I guarantee you will find something on your checklist which you did not even think to pack

Fishing

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| • Waders | • Wading Staff |
| • Flyboxes | • Wading Shoes |
| • First aid/TP bag | • Fishing vest |
| • Hat | • Stripping basket |
| • Glasses soft cloth | • Raincoat |
| • Sunscreen lotion | • Hook sharpener |
| • Bug spray | • Lip Balm |
| • Camera | • Sunglasses |
| • Flashlight | |
| • Net | |
- Rods
 - Reels
 - Leaders
 - Leader wallet
 - Licenses
 - Forceps
 - Nips
 - Leader straightener
 - Leader tippet material

Kayaks

- Kayaks
- Paddles
- Life jackets
- Fox/ft time downs
- Straps
- Roof racks
- Sponges
- Waterproof bags
- Watershoes
- Kayak paddle holders
- Cameras
- Binoculars
- Step stool
- Anchor

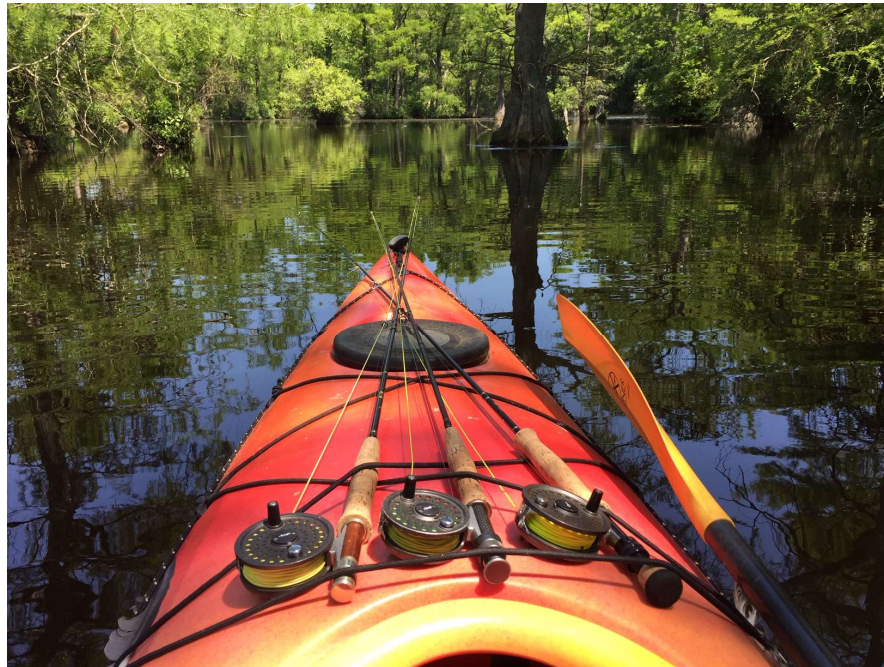
Think Where, When and for What

- **Where** are you going fishing?
- **When**: what time of year and what time of the day (or night) will you be fishing?
- **What** are the specific species of fish which you will be targeting?

Answers to each of these questions will directly inform what you should be packing!

Selecting the Right Fly Rods to Bring

First, ALWAYS bring an extra rod...you and I know what will likely happen if you don't. In fact, bring multiple rods if you are fishing waters requiring very different presentations.



Selecting the Right Fly Rods to Bring

Second, realistically what are the right rods for type of fly fishing you are planning and the species you are targeting...think in terms of:

- What weight rod(s)—e.g., 3 weight versus 8 weight—is needed for casting the flies you will be using?
- What action do you want?
- Is the overall rod length important?
- Will you be fishing with different rods during your upcoming trip?
- For travel purposes, do you need to consider a 2-piece versus a 4-piece rod for example?

Selecting the Right Fly Rods to Bring



Knowing where your fly rods are stored and which one is what weight and length will definitely make your packing process much easier, faster and less stressful!



Narrowing Down on Your Reels

Beyond reels to match your selected rods...what fly lines will you be fishing?

- Floating
- Intermediate
- Sink-tip
- Sinking
- Euro-nymphing



Narrowing Down on Your Reels

Having all your fly reels organized by line weights then by floating, intermediate and sinking will definitely make your packing process much easier, faster and less stressful!



Lions, Tigers, Leaders and Tippetts, Oh My!

First and foremost, DON'T wait until you arrive at your fishing location check your leader and tippet!

In the comfort of your home (or hotel room or even your tent), check everything, even re-tie those knots

This way you can pack small leader wallets (or none or at!)



Lions, Tigers, Leaders and Tippetts, Oh My!

Focus on which 2-3 sets of tippet material will you REALLY need on the trip—if you use the loop-to-loop connection for attaching your tippet to your leader, you will only need one spool of tippet material per rod

And don't forget, depending on the species you are targeting—e.g., pickerel, northern pike—you may need a bite tippet as well!



Realistically, You Will Only Fish Up to a Dozen Flies If That Many



If you are Mark Bange, you will fish a maximum of three flies during any fishing trip.

Even if you are Luis Santiago, you will blow through 12-24 flies during a single fishing trip.

But if you are Andy Grosko, you will bring enough flies to fill an entire fly shop, with 120 extra flies still left over to fish with!

Again, Start with Where, When and for What

Build a fly box using the answers to the same set of questions you used started out with in choosing your fly rod, reels, and lines:

- **Where** are you going fishing?
- **When:** what time of year and what time of the day (or night) will you be fishing?
- **What** are the specific species of fish which you will be targeting?

Or choose an existing fly box which targets the same species as you expect to catch on your upcoming trip during the same time of year, adding any flies specific to the waterbody you are heading to.

Again, Start with Where, When and for What

Preparing effectively for an upcoming fishing trip really depends on you having already organized your 5,396 flies in advance in a way which you can quickly access the right handful of flies



Again, Start with Where, When and for What



Again, Start with Where, When and for What





Again, Start with Where, When and for What

Goal: assemble a maximum of 3 (or 4 for longer trips) fly boxes, targeting leaving your house/apartment/tent/cabin with having packed only 1-2 fly boxes with all the right flies

Some Fly Box Building Tips...

Build fly boxes which reflect **each season** and **the species** you tend to target in each:

- **Winter:** pickerel/Eastern Shore ponds and trout fly boxes
- **Early spring:** trout, yellow perch, white perch and shad spawning fly boxes
- **Late spring/early summer:** spawning bluegill/panfish, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass and striped bass/Bay fly boxes
- **Summer:** white perch in tidal waters, early morning bluegill/panfish and float trip smallmouth bass fly boxes
- **Fall:** trout, fall smallmouth bass and largemouth bass, 3 weight sight-fishing for sunfish and stripers chasing baitfish fly boxes

Or start the year with a basic set of fly boxes and then add/remove flies to reflect your upcoming fishing trips and upcoming changes in the seasons.



Some Fly Box Building Tips...

Fall Panfish Fly Box

Fall Pickerel Fly Box



Set Up Your Fly Rods Before Your Trip

Save invaluable amount of time (and an equal amount of frustration) by setting up all your fly rods at the same time as you are assembling all your gear for an upcoming trip

I actually store my pre-set-up fly rods by species I am targeting for each season e.g., during the summer I might have six fly rods pre-set and ready pick up and go at any time

Set Up Your Fly Rods Before Your Trip

Doing this does a host of things for you all at the same time...

- It prevents you from forgetting a reel to match each of your rods
- Makes you look at your leader/tippet as you thread your fly line through your guides
- It prompts you to make your first decision on which fly to start with on each of your rods
- It saves time when you arrive at your fishing location, enabling you to get on the water faster!





Set Up Your Fly Rods Before Your Trip

1. Assemble each rod
2. Thread your fly line
3. Make any leader/tippet changes needed
4. Tie on a fly
5. Reel in all the extra line until your fly hooks on your rod tip guide
6. Separate your fly rod into two equal lengths
7. Wrap the butt and tips with plastic molded wire ties...and you are done!

When you arrive at your fishing location, just unwind the ties and put the two rod sections together.

Making Other Gear Choices

Waders Choices:

- Hip vs. chest
- Regular vs. neoprene



Making Other Gear Choices

Wading Boots/Shoes

Kayak Boots/Shoes



Making Other Gear Choices

Wet Wading

- Shoes/boots
- Shorts/pants



Making Other Gear Choices

Wading staff



Making Other Gear Choices

Fishing Net—Yes/No—and if Yes, Where to Carry It



Making Other Gear Choices

Fishing vest vs. backpack vs. fanny pack vs.
sling pack vs. no pack



Carrying Your Gear to Where You Plan to Fish

Don't forget something on the way from your house to your car/SUV/truck!

Pack everything in a canvas bags, leaving your other hand to carry your pre-assembled/broken down rods



Bringing Your Gear on the Water

Shore fishing? No need for a tackle box sized set of gear!

Wade fishing? Simplify what you load into your fly fishing vest or fanny pack or swing pack—you don't need to fill each pocket!

Kayak fishing? You can fit everything beside your net in small canvas hold-all

Boat fishing? Keep it all in a single fishing canvas hold-all





Here's all the fly fishing gear I take when I go kayak fishing besides my fly rods, net and anchor.

Bringing Your Gear on the Water



1. Hook sharpener
2. Lip sunscreen
3. Lanyard
4. Nippers
5. Pocket knife
6. Glasses cleaner cloth
7. Leader straightener
8. Finger protector

Bringing Your Gear on the Water



1. Tippet material
2. Leader wallet
3. Multi-tool
4. First aid kit in waterproof bag

Bringing Your Gear on the Water

1. Waterproof bag
2. Thermometer
3. De-hooker
4. Forceps
5. Sunglasses
6. Fly patch
7. Fishing licenses in waterproof sleeve
8. Extra line
9. Fly boxes



Bringing Your Gear on the Water



Going on a Multiple Day Trip?

Rod/gear travel case



Large gear bag/carry-all



It All Starts with Organizing Your Gear and Flies

And remember, effective packing starts with having all your fly gear and flies already organized and stored in places you know where they are located!





At a minimum, have a closet set aside for storing and helping you organize your fly fishing equipment



In my closet devoted to my fly fishing equipment, I store my wading boots, waders, rain jackets, rain pants fishing storage accessories, hats and more— everything is visible and easy to access



You can even organize your fly fishing related footwear and other wading related gear so you can find everything you need without searching around!



1. Coldwater wading boots
2. Warmwater wading boots
3. Kayak cold weather boots
4. Kayak warm weather boots
5. Wading boot socks
6. Wading staff
7. Nets



**You can also
organize your fly
fishing related
waders,
raincoats,
storage bags and
more so you can
find what you
need when you
need it!**



1. Coldwater dry pants
2. Waders
3. Neoprene waders
4. Wet waders' storage bag
5. Rain jacket
6. Assorted fly gear bags in order of size
7. Kayak fly gear bag
8. Canvas bags
9. Wading boots changing mat



**You can even
organize your fly
fishing hats!**

**I hang my on the
back of my
closet
door...again, I
will always
know where
they are even at
4 AM in the
morning!**



**In addition to my closet,
I use my fly tying/
fly fishing desk for
storing and organizing
my fly fishing
equipment, fly tying
materials and fly tying
books**



The left-hand side drawer contains other, less often used fly fishing tools and small gear—again, it's all in one place so I know exactly where everything is when I am preparing for a fishing trip, single day or an entire week



There are three separate plastic bins stored here to further organize my fishing tackle including all my fly boxes



One of my built-in bookcases is devoted to storing and organizing my fishing books, fishing gear and fly tying materials

Bookshelves are not just for books!

Look at all the ways you can use bookshelves to store and organize your fishing stuff, including your gear



**I use a series of
bead storage
boxes to store
and organize all
my flies**



**I store my fly
reels in a series
of reel carriers**



My reels are organized the different line weights and then by floating, intermediate and sink tip, from 3 weight...



**...all the way
up to 10 weight
lines**

What to Bring on Your Next Fly Fishing Trip: A Summary

- A Checklist Will Help You Pack Smart (and Light)!
- Think Where, When and for What
- Selecting the Right Fly Rods to Bring
- Narrowing Down on Your Reels
- Lions, Tigers, Leaders and Tippets, Oh My!
- Realistically, You Will Only Fish Up to a Dozen Flies If That Many
- Again, Start with Where, When and for What
- Some Fly Box Building Tips...
- Set Up Your Fly Rods Before Your Trip
- Making Other Gear Choices
- Carrying Your Gear to Where You Plan to Fish
- Going on a Multiple Day Trip?
- Bringing Your Gear on the Water
- And Remember, Effective Packing Starts with Having All Your Fly Gear and Flies Already Organized and Stored in Places You Know Where They are Located!

Accessing Today's Presentation and My Prior "Organizing Your Fly Fishing Everything...Tackle, Books, Flies and Fly Tying Materials" Presentation from December 2023

On the website's front page, click on "Library" then "Past Meetings or <https://fs-ff.com/index.php/past-meetings/>

Scroll down to and click on "12/21/24 Packing for Your Next Trip – Rich Batiuk"

Scroll down to and click on "12/16/23 Organizing Your Fly Fishing Stuff – Rich Batiuk"