



# Virginia Coastal Fly Anglers

**MARCH 2011**

**VISIT US AT VCFA.ORG**

**The next general meeting will be on March 17, 2100. The presentation will be on Trout Fishing Destinations lead by Bill Campbell.**

**FLY OF THE MONTH: Teeny Nymph, tied by Mike Buss**

## **PRESIDENTS MESSAGE**

**T**hanks again to all of you who attended the February meeting. Andrew Stiles gave a great presentation on Joe Brooks and capped it off with a very interesting video of brook trout fishing in Argentina that was shot as an original episode of Wide World of Sports back in the early 1960's. After a few computer glitches, we got the video going and saw some incredible brook trout caught, some over 7 lbs! It was a walk down memory lane for me as I can remember growing up watching those fishing shows on Wide World of Sports with Curt Gowdy. Joe Brooks was one of the pioneers of our sport of saltwater fly fishing, in fact, he was Lefty's mentor. Lefty's "Lefty" so to speak! This month our speaker will be Bill Campbell from Trout Unlimited and he will talk about freshwater trout fishing. I will be demonstrating the Teeny Nymph for the fly of the month. I'm also a member of Fly Fishers of Va., a fly fishing club in Richmond, and Jim Teeny was their banquet speaker in Jan and he said he fishes nothing but a Teeny Nymph for all of his fishing, both freshwater and saltwater! He demonstrated how to tie it and I will attempt to duplicate it for the tying session. I know, I know, this is two months in a row with a fresh water guy for a speaker, but be patient we will be back to saltwater soon! We have been having some problems with our club web site, it seems to be infected with some "non-lethal" virus so we are shutting it down while we explore some new options. In the meantime, check out our page on Facebook. Just use the search part of Facebook and type in VCFA and it will take you to the page. We will be posting club info there until we have a new website up and running. By the way, if you have some things you would like to see on the new website, please let any of us on the board know as we are now in the design phase. Fishing has been very slow unless you make a trip down to N Carolina where the big stripers are just off the beach and have been for most of last month. Problem is, the weather has been blowing so hard it is hard to get a boat out to

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 7**

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

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# MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2011

MONTH	SPEAKER/PROGRAM	FLY OF THE MONTH
JANUARY	CLUB DINNER	
FEBRUARY	ANDREW STILES	FUR STRIP CLOUSER
MARCH	TROUT FISHING 101	TEENY NYMPH
APRIL	LOUIS GUILLINGHAM	HOLLOW FLEYE
MAY	SCHOOL	WHITEBAIT MUSHY
JUNE		CHERNOBYL CRAB
JULY	DUEBER WINTER	RIVER RABBIT
AUGUST	PICNIC/LUAU	EP's BAY ANCHOVY
SEPTEMBER	CHRIS NEWSOME	TURBO POPPER
OCTOBER		BONITO BUNNY
NOVEMBER		EEL
DECEMBER	CLUB HOLIDAY GATHERING	FLOUNDER

**THIS MEETING SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE ACCORDING TO UNFORE-SEEN CIRCUMSTANCES, TECHNICAL PROBLEMS OR OTHER NATURAL PHENOMENON.**



Bob Popovics and Mike Buss, have you seen these two in the same room at the same time? Quite a number of people went up to Mike mistaking him for Bob Popovics at the Sommerset Fly Fishing Show in New Jersey. After telling Bob that, he signed Mike's "Pop Fleyes" book "To my twin brother".



Club members gather prior to the start of the February meeting.



Andrew Stiles was the speaker for February and was captivating as he shared his knowledge of Fly Fishing history. Despite technical difficulties with the media, he did not miss a beat in his presentation.



Kevin DuBois was presented an award to acknowledge his leadership as our president in 2010.  
Thank, Kevin.

# Beat the Drum Quickly (From SaltwaterFlyFishing.com)

Feb 15th, 2000 | By [Capt. John Kumiski](#) | Category: [Saltwater Fly Fishing](#)

“Barry, there’s a tail! And there’s another one, at about one o’clock!” Barry Kent’s demeanor changed instantly when he spotted the two broom-sized tails waving, reflecting the early morning sunlight. They were the only sign of life on a large, otherwise empty flat.

“John, look at the size of them! How deep is it here?” Barry’s questions carried his feeling of excitement. “Almost three feet,” I replied. “They look like big ones. Tell me when you’re in casting range and I’ll try to hold us at that distance.” The fish were tailing intermittently. The tails would disappear, then pop up again 15 or 20 feet away. We chased the fish for at least ten minutes, Barry repeatedly presenting a small brown Clouser minnow to them. Finally, Barry’s line tightened and a large fish began towing the canoe around the flat.

## “In the zone” in the no-motor-zone...



Black drum don’t usually jump to mind when fly fishers think about saltwater gamefish. But when the situation is right, drum will take flies, and sometimes they get downright reckless about it. This piece will discuss fly fishing for black drum- times, tackle, techniques, and a little about locations.

My own black drum fishing occurs in Florida’s Banana River, up in the manatee refuge north of State Road 528. Since no motors have been allowed in this area for several years, the drum have been able to grow to incredible sizes and they freely school up and feed on shallow flats. I had always considered fishing for them a winter activity. I thought the drum I caught last summer was a fluke. But this past summer I’ve seen them on several different outings, and I got one of about thirty five pounds on a chartreuse Clouser minnow under a blazing midday July sun. So perhaps I need to pursue the summer drum fishery more

diligently. There’s no doubt among the manatee refuge regulars that the drum tail much more freely in the winter though. The best kind of day on which to find them is warm and sunny, with a light northwest wind. Under these conditions the water on the flats warms throughout the day, sometimes rising in temperature by as much as three or four degrees. The drum, both black and red, move into the shallows to feed under these conditions. They will tail vigorously. Sometimes literally hundreds of fish will be found tailing, and they give great opportunities to experiment with different flies and fish fighting techniques.

I own a seven-weight fly rod of which I’m not very fond. This particular piece of equipment is sold with a replacement guarantee against breakage. I was using this rod one day when I ran into a large school of big tailing black drum. Since I was using a 15 pound test tippet, I decided to see just how much the rod could take. When I hooked a fish I locked up the reel to see if the fish could break the rod. The fish put so much pressure on the rod that I was afraid I’d get a face full of graphite splinters when it blew up, so I tried to let go. I repeated this sequence with four different fish. This whole episode was a very valuable learning experience. I learned that you cannot get your fingers out of the way of the reel handle under these circumstances. Bruised and bloody digits are guaranteed. I learned that I cannot break that rod no matter how much pressure I put on it. The hook bends or the tippet will give before the rod will break. And I learned that in order to beat the drum quickly you must apply some serious pressure right from the hookup.

## Flies and presentations...for bulldozers



Hooking a black drum is a lot like hooking a bulldozer. While the occasional drum will behave as though it finished bonefish training school, most drum are slow but powerful creatures. Their morphology appears to be designed for power and stamina. So fighting drum can easily become a long, drawn out affair unless you quickly apply the maximum pressure your tackle will stand. You have to be prepared to go toe to toe with a fish that can easily weigh 30 or 40 pounds, or face a fight which could certainly last for over an hour.

Days like the one just described give one a lot of chances to play with fly selection too. Flies that sink rapidly are preferred, and as a general rule dark colored flies perform better than light colored ones.

My own two favorites for black drum are my Fuzzy Crab and a modification of the Clouser minnow that I call the Son of Clouser, which has a squirrel hair wing topped with brown marabou, and a brown chenille head wrapped around the lead eyes. I also usually tie in some copper crystal flash. My favorite sizes are #4 and #2 for both of these flies.

I prefer a chartreuse Clouser minnow for redfish though, and often encounter black drum while searching for reds. If this should happen to you, throw the chartreuse fly. The black drum will sometimes take it. You must cast accurately to catch drum on flies. They feed primarily by smell, using their barbels to locate foods like clams, crabs, shrimp and other crustaceans, various marine worms, or small minnows in or along the bottom. The fly must settle within a few inches of the beast's head or it will never see it.

Knowing where the head is when its tail is in the air and the water depth is three feet is difficult. You often must cast repeatedly in order to capture the drum's attention. Fortunately, the very poor eyesight which makes the repeated casting necessary also keeps the fish from spooking too easily. As long as you don't line it you can keep working the fish for fifteen minutes or more, until it finally sees your offering and decides to take.

Your retrieve should be slow. I've heard some people say you should just cast the fly out and let it sit there until the fish eats it. I never feel like I have enough contact with the fly to identify a take when I try this. Consequently I use a slow retrieve, just crawling the fly along the bottom until I think it is too far from the fish. Then I just false cast once and drop the fly on the fish again.

## Toe-to-toe



When you hook up the fish often appears unaware at first that there's a problem. When it does figure it out though, it will try to make a run. My drum fighting technique, already alluded to, is to palm the reel with as much force as I dare to keep the drum from swimming far. If it gets a head of steam up it will be a protracted battle.

My good friend Joe Mulson hooked a drum of about 60 pounds out of a tightly massed school of fish travelling along the edge of a flat two winters ago. That drum took off against only his reel drag and literally never stopped. When the end of the backing was reached Joe's tippet broke. Fortunately for Joe he uses lighter tippets than I prefer or he would have

lost the fish, fly, leader, line, and backing. As it was he was only out the fish and the fly. It took about ten minutes for him to stop shaking enough to tie a new tippet and fly on, though!

Most anglers should use eight- or nine-weight rods for this fishing. The drum get big and some serious pulling will be going on. Although I use a six- or seven-weight Redington, the fish have trained me well in how to maximize my pulling. As mentioned earlier, I also use fairly heavy tippets, 15 pound test.

These fish are generally found in about two feet of water. A weight-forward floating line works best here. Leaders can range from nine to twelve feet, depending on wind speed, casting skill, and spookiness of the fish. I usually use a loop knot to tie the leader to the fly, hoping to give it more action than it would have if snugged up tight to the stout tippet. The fish won't always be tailing, either. Sometimes they'll be swimming around in what I can only assume is a mating ritual, splashing and pushing up big wakes and drumming like crazy. Sometimes you can actually hear them before you can see them- a very bizarre experience. The drumming sound comes right through the hull of the boat.

Other times they appear to be laid up, just resting on the flat with very little movement going on. Under these circumstances seeing them before you run them over is quite difficult. Sadly, one spooked fish can blow out the entire school, too.

## Garden of Eden



Drum have big crushing teeth way down in their throats. If you look down into a drum's mouth you'll see them down there. They look like half BB's attached to the surface of the pharynx. Called pharyngeal teeth, these grinders allow them to crush the shellfish which they prefer to eat. They also grind them together to make the familiar drumming sound, using their air bladders as resonance chambers to amplify the sound.

Shallow water drum can be found in other Florida locations besides the Banana River. I've seen them tailing over oyster bars at the northern end of Everglades National Park, although I've never gotten one to take a fly there. Captain Mike Locklear tells me there's a big school of black drum that tails near the mouth of the Suwanee River. These fish will take flies. Captain Jim Dupre tells me there are tailing

black drum that can be successfully fished on flies around the oyster bars in the backcountry areas around Cedar Key. No doubt as the effects of the net ban kick in and the increase in the numbers of fly fishers expand the sport's horizons, more fly fishable black drum will be found by anglers here in the Sunshine State and elsewhere throughout the southeast.

To keep the drum from towing us around for an hour or more, I had Barry hop out of the canoe into the hip deep water and fight the drum on foot. After only twenty minutes or so of hard pulling action I tailed his drum, the biggest fish he'd ever caught on a fly. After he finished whooping and hollering we got some photos, then released the fish to fight again another day.

Black drum. Short of hooking a bulldozer, there's nothing else like them.

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**Tags:** [Black Drum](#), [Capt. John Kumiski](#), [Mosquito Lagoon](#)

## **PRESIDENTS MESSAGE (CONT. FROM PAGE 1)**

get them. With the spawning urge kicking in, they should be heading north soon and we will get a short window to go after them. Remember, you can't keep any of them! Have fun with them and return them to the water! Shad should be starting to show up in the rivers anytime and will provide some very good fishing. As I mentioned at the last meeting, I will be making a number of trips up to Fredericksburg in April to fish for them. If any of you would like to go along, just give me a call or shoot me an email at [mike4519@verizon.net](mailto:mike4519@verizon.net). Thanks again to all of you who volunteered to help us "man" our table at the Mid Atlantic Boat Show and the Bass Pro Spring Fishing Festival. We have a fly tying and fly casting workshop coming up on March 19 with the Virginia Living Museum in Newport News. If any of you would like to help with this, please let me know. I have just started working with the fly fishing club in Richmond on the Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing program and will have more info for you next month, but if you might be interested in helping out with this program, please let me know. The weather is trying to warm up, but Mother Nature can't make up her mind whether to give us some consistent 60 degree days or keep teasing us with a day of warmth followed by a couple of real cold days! But pretty soon the weather will cooperate and we can get out fishing again. If you are able to get out, please share some fishing stories at the next meeting! All I know is my stuff is sitting in the corner all rigged up and ready to go! Thanks again and I hope to see you all at the March meeting. Tight lines to all! mike buss

**On April 12th, Ron Russell will give a presentation to the Tidewater Anglers Club on Shad Fishing the Nottoway River. Everyone is welcome to attend and support Ron and learn from his vast experience and knowledge fishing the watershed. Their meetings are also held at the Bayside Presbyterian Church - 7:00 PM.**

## **ARRIVING SOON**

... to a computer near you! Our VCFA website is in the process of a total revamp. It is estimated to take a month or two to get it up and running. The new site will have club informational pages, articles by club member, pertinent links to other clubs and information on fly fishing and a photo gallery. If you have photo submissions or article you would like posted on the website, you can submit them to [virginiaCoastalFlyAnglers@gmail.com](mailto:virginiaCoastalFlyAnglers@gmail.com). Start gathering the items now!

In the meantime you can get current club news and events at our facebook page - <http://www.facebook.com> then search VCFA.

# Legendary Fishing Guide is Driven off His River and into a Fight

By Tom Pelton

**B**ob Clouser works intently under a bright light at his desk, using thread to carefully tie black eyeballs, chartreuse-dyed deer hair, and a golden tail to a hook gripped in a vice.

The 71-year-old is the Leonardo da Vinci of fishing flies. Inside the tiny shop attached to his home in Middletown, Pennsylvania, he completes his masterpiece. Clouser creates the famous Clouser minnow flies which are snapped up by anglers around the world.

A legendary fishing guide on the Susquehanna River, Clouser always dreamed of passing on his bustling business to his son, Bob Jr. But about five years ago, the father-and-son team abandoned their fishing guide work after a massive die-off of smallmouth bass in the Susquehanna River, the Chesapeake Bay's largest tributary.

The elder Clouser still sells thousands of flies over the Internet. But he said it is tragic that water pollution has forced him to leave the Susquehanna and his home state to enjoy fishing—which he now does mostly in Michigan, North Carolina, West Virginia, and Tennessee.

His tone grows wistful and occasionally angry as he describes the transformation of his beloved river and the decline of its bass populations over the last decade.

"When I was a kid, the water sparkled clear. There were layers and layers of blue damselflies across that river, dancing all day long," Clouser recalled, surrounded in his workshop by spools of colorful thread,

boxes of deer and fox tails, hooks, weights, and walls plastered with photos of grinning customers holding fish.

"Back then, you could look down in 10 feet of water and see all colors of rocks," Clouser said. "Today, it looks like an Army blanket down there, because the bottom is polluted with so much algae. There are hardly any damselflies. And the water has a still, dead look."

**“They are like the Paul Reveres of the river. And it is our job to get to the bottom of their observations and then address them.”**

—HARRY CAMPBELL, CBF SENIOR SCIENTIST

The cause of the decline in smallmouth bass is as murky as the Susquehanna River. Harry Campbell, a senior scientist with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, said that researchers have determined that bass are dying more often from infections with a naturally occurring bacteria called *Columnaris*. This might be happening because their immune systems have been weakened by excessive nutrient and chemical pollution, which cause low-oxygen levels and other problems in key locations in the river. "Folks like Bob and his fellow fishing guides are really the people on the front lines, sounding the alarms on water-quality issues like this," Campbell said. "They are like the Paul Reveres of the river. And it is our job to get to the bottom of their observations and then address them."

Researchers are also investigating what mixture of chemicals—from weed killers to prescription drugs that are flushed down toilets—might be disrupting the immune



Bob Clouser, fly fishing guru, shows off his Clouser minnow fly in his workshop located in Middletown, Pennsylvania.

systems of bass on the Susquehanna River, as well as the Shenandoah, Potomac, and other regional rivers.

But Clouser, an outspoken clean-water advocate, has never been one to sit still and wait for others to solve a problem. Back in the 1980s, he and allies successfully pushed Pennsylvania to change the size limit on catching smallmouth bass, so they would be better protected.

These days, Clouser is writing to his Congressional representatives and urging them to pass a new federal law, the Chesapeake Clean Water Act (see page 11). The bill would create new financial incentives for states to create strong pollution-reduction plans, and hold them accountable for meeting their goals.

"We need to get the Susquehanna River cleaned up and the Chesapeake Bay cleaned up," Clouser said. "Every one of my kids loved fishing. But today, I have no grandchildren who like to fish, because they are bored—they can catch no fish. They play computer games, because things outdoors don't interest them. And that's because of the pollution." ➔



Tom Pelton is Senior Writer for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. His daily blog on current Bay issues can be found at [cbf.org/baydaily](http://cbf.org/baydaily).



*Virginia Coastal Fly Anglers*  
**MEMBERSHIP**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Membership is **\$30.00** annually and includes all family members. Please complete this form with a check made payable to VCFA. You can bring the completed form and check to the next meeting, or mail it to or club treasurer at VCFA, P.O. Box 2866, Virginia Beach, VA 23450-2866

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Fish skull heads are an alternative to dumbbell eyes on a fly to add weight and downward movement. They come in various colors and sizes (weights) to fit any fly. These flies will ride hook point down as the tie is a deceiver style fly. The only disadvantage is the cost, they retail for about \$1.10 per head which makes you a little more concerned when losing one. All of us fly tying addicts will want to have a couple in the fly box.

**If you have article, pictures, club announcements, or other information you think your fellow anglers would enjoy, please send them to Larry Clemens at [virginiaCoastalFlyAnglers@gmail.com](mailto:virginiaCoastalFlyAnglers@gmail.com).**