

# FINNY FACTS

## San Diego Fly Fishers

December 2019

Cleaner Water, Brighter Streams, Better Fishing

Volume 42 No. 12

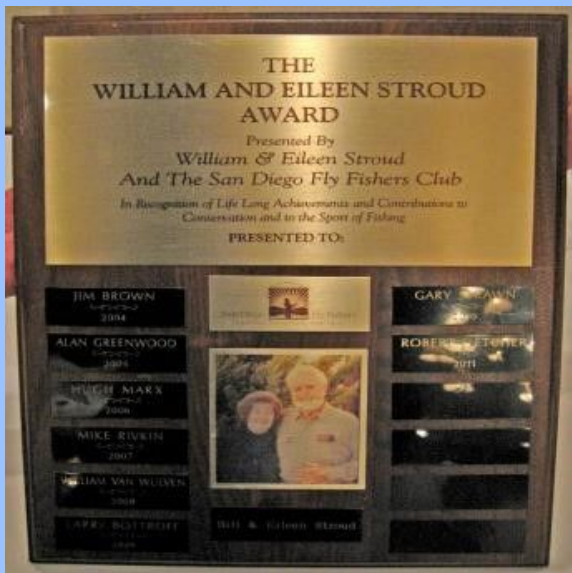
It's time to Garage Sale!  
December 2nd, 6 PM  
Southwestern Yacht Club  
Hundreds of items for sale!

\*\*\*\*\*

Speaker Program at 8 PM:  
Kai Schumann  
Topic: Baja and Estero Coyote

Breaking News  
The annual Stroud Award Banquet is  
ON!

Monday, January 13th 2020  
Tickets go on sale at the December Club  
meeting. Details inside in Happenings



## Currents

[Presidents Message](#)

[Events](#)

[Speakers](#)

[Happenings](#)

[Call to Action](#)

[Fly of the Month](#)

[Rod Building](#)

[Casting Corner](#)

[Conservation & Education](#)

[Southwest Council](#)

[Project Healing Waters](#)

[Women's Program](#)

[Membership](#)

[Feature Articles](#)

[Fishing!](#)

[Resources](#)

[Contact Us](#)

## Don't Forget

Time to renew your membership with San Diego Fly Fishers for 2019.

# President's Message

The holidays are upon us again. We've made it through Thanksgiving and are getting ready for Christmas and other religious holidays, and of course the coming new year.

Since we are at the end of this year, it's time for our annual "Garage Sale" at the club meeting on December 2, 2019. The sale opens at 6 PM. This year's event is full of great items at bargain prices. Quality rods, reels and gear. This event helps us replenish the funding we use to operate the club, so we can put on more great events for you. Project Healing Waters is also holding special raffle for a high quality pontoon boat! Join us for a fun evening with great bargains.

We will also have another local club fishing outing in December, since we are fortunate enough to have weather that allows us to fish in winter. Stay tuned for updates through our various media communications.

And here is another important reason for you to come to the December club meeting with cash or check in hand. The Annual Stroud Awards Banquet is scheduled for Monday, January 13, 2020 at the Admiral Baker Clubhouse again this year. The ticket price is a great deal for good food, good company, and a great cause. Selecting the awardees for the Stroud and Gordon Foster awards is not always an easy task; there are lots of folks doing lots of good work for fly fishing, the fish, the water as well as the larger natural environment and the fishing community.

Last but certainly not least on my list is the recent Women's Program workshop we held on November 16th. Eight of us lady fly fishers attended to learn more about our sport, meet each other, and talk about what we will do next. We are looking at local sites where we can meet to fish and practice our skills over the next few months. The next workshop, aimed at the intermediate skill level, will be planned for some time in the spring, in March or April. You can find more info on this event here in the Finny Facts.

If you have questions about or suggestions for your club, don't hesitate to contact any member of your Board of Directors; they will be happy to listen and talk with you.

Wishing you good fishing,  
Sherry Ashbaugh  
2019 President  
San Diego Fly Fishers

[president@sandiegoflyfishers.com](mailto:president@sandiegoflyfishers.com)



# December Events

## December Events

Membership meeting

Dec 2nd @ 6 PM  
Speaker @ 8PM

@ SWYC on Point Loma

## Club Outings

Bay Fishing @ Grand Caribe (Coronado Key)  
([Kai Schumann](#) / [Jim Castelluzzo](#))

Dec 14th @ 6 AM

## Project Healing Waters

Fly Casting At Santee Lakes  
Contact: [Lee McElravy](#),

Dec 21st @9 AM

## Casting Clinics

### Basic/Beginners Class

- ◆ Every Sunday At Lake Murray @ 9 AM
- ◆ Contact [John Wylie](#) or [Alan Thompson](#)

## Fly Tying Congress

- ◆ Every Thursday at San Carlos Rec Center @ 6:30 to 830PM
- ◆ **No Tying on December 26th due to holidays.**

Contact: [Lucky Ketcham](#)

**SDFF is a service organization.  
Ask yourself  
What service can I provide?  
Get involved.**

# Speaker Programs

## Upcoming Programs

December 2nd	Estero Coyote, Baja Mexico by Kai Schumann
January 13th	Strouds Awards Banquet
February 3rd	Wyoming Outfitters, Liz and Ryan Anderson
March 2nd	Sam Vasily– Eastern Sierras and Pyramid Lake
April 6th	TBD

If you know of someone who would be a good candidate for speaking to the club let us know. For information contact [Jim Castelluzzo](#) or [Tim Huckaby](#)

We look forward to seeing at our next meeting!

# Happenings

## Annual Stroud Awards Banquet



Monday January 13th 2020

6:00 to 9:00 PM

Admiral Baker Clubhouse

U.S. Navy Recreation Center

(approximately 1 mile east of SDCCU Stadium on Friars Rd. then turn onto Santo Rd. and take the first right onto Admiral Baker Rd.)

Bring a guest and celebrate another successful year for San Diego Fly Fishers

The price is \$32 per person for a great Prime Rib buffet dinner in a beautiful and convenient setting

Door Prizes including two fly rods

Buy your Tickets @

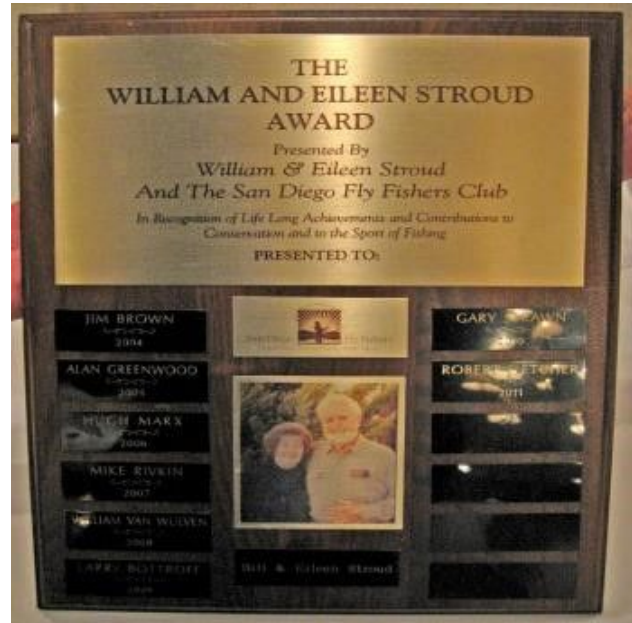
- ◆ The Club meeting on December 2nd
- ◆ At Strouds Tackle (Cash or Check only)
- ◆ By mail to:  
San Diego Fly Fishers,  
12519 Alcazar del Sol, San Diego, CA 92128
- ◆ For Credit Cards Call Bruce Harris @ 858 848 4803

Make checks payable to San Diego Fly Fishers

**Please make your reservations prior to January 6th**

# Happenings

## About our Club's Awards



## The Stroud Award

In 2004, the Board of Directors created this award in recognition of two of Clubs most ardent supporters, Bill and Eileen Stroud. At the time, every fly fisher in San Diego County knew Eileen and Bill as the proprietors of Stroud Tackle. Bill served as President of this Club three times since 1980 and Eileen played a significant role in the admission of women to the Club.

During Bill's first tenure as President, the Club became affiliated with Trout Unlimited and Cal Trout. Bill and Eileen consistently donated thousands of dollars in equipment each year for our various raffles. Most importantly, we know of no single instance when Bill and Eileen have failed to respond, enthusiastically, to some Club request for help, whether large or small. It has oft been said "if were not for the Stroud's, there would be no San Diego Fly Fishers.

In recognition of the Strouds' many significant contributions, in 2004 the San Diego Fly Fishers' Annual Banquet was renamed the "Annual Stroud Banquet."

The Stroud Award is designed to recognize individuals outside our organization who have made a major lifetime contribution to the sport of fishing and/or conservation benefitting the sport of fishing. Nominees need not be members of our Club and, in fact, the intention of your Board is that the Award recognize the achievement of individuals encompassing a much broader scope. In recognition of the Award, the Club will make a donation of \$500.00 to the charity of the recipient's choice, provided that charity has a significant connection to the sport of fishing and/or environmental protection. Finally, the winner will receive an honorary lifetime membership in the San Diego Fly Fishers and a plaque in recognition of his or her achievement.

If you know of a deserving Organization or individual please take the time to nominate them.

Please join us on Jan 13th for the Annual Stroud Banquet.

For more information and or to complete a nomination form visit our website at [Stroud Award](http://www.sandiegoflyfishers.com)

# Happenings

## About our Club's Awards



## The Gordon Foster Award

Each year, the Club presents this Award specifically to a Club member who has demonstrated unselfish and outstanding service to our organization. The recipient is chosen by the past winners of this Award. Gordon Foster was a stalwart of this Club, almost from its inception. A Life Member, he served as Club President in 1966-67 and again in 1975. The Club History reveals repeated references to Gordon beginning with the first published issues of the Finny Facts in 1980. This year, past recipients of the Gordon Foster Award will again be recognizing a worthy honoree. A review of the following list of past recipients reveals the honor and gratitude which accompanies the presentation of this Award.

### Past Winners

1991 - Ned Sewel	2005 - Jim Reeg
1992 - Bob Camp	2006 - John Kasten
1993 - Bill & Eileen Stroud	2007 - Lucky Ketcham
1994 - Ed Velton	2008 - Louie Zimm
1995 - Bob Wisner	2009 - Warren Lew
1996 - Gary Hilbers	2010 - Paul Woolery
1997 - Jack Bentley	2011 - Gary Strawn
1998 - Gordie Zimm	2012 - Lee McElravy
1999 - Gretchen Yearous	2013 - Dave Collins
2000 - Tom Smith	2014 - Lee Anderson
2001 - Rose & Roger Yamasaki	2015 - Jack Duncan
2002 - Larry Sorensen	2016 - Bob Pharoah
2003 - Jim Tenuto	2017 - Alan Thompson
2004 - Joe Bain	2018 - Barry Pechersky

# Happenings

## Bishop/Owens River Rendezvous Feb 21-23



Please join us for this fun annual event!

We will leave San Diego early Thursday , Feb. 20, and stay until Sunday, Feb. 23rd. You can caravan with the group or drive on your own time.

Why do we go this time of year?

- ◆ The main reason is flow on the Lower Owens is generally lower and allows us to wade the river.
- ◆ The Upper Owens holds Snowbows (very large rainbows holding over during the winter months).
- ◆ The gorge area flows are lower and fun to fish. We also get discounted rates on lodging.
- ◆ The entire area is beautiful with snow capped peaks and the fishing can be epic!

Where will we fish?

Typically small groups scatter and fish from Hot Creek to Lower Owens. All are welcome to join in and fish some new waters. Don't be shy to ask to join in a small group.

Remember it's winter in the Sierras. Bring adequate clothing for cold, snow and windy conditions.



# Happenings

**Bishop/ Owens River Rendezvous  
Feb 21-23**

**What motel do we stay at?**

Historically the Club bases out of the Elms Motel located in Bishop, California. If you choose to stay elsewhere we gather at the Elms in the morning and after fishing each day.

**Here are the details:**

Contact the Elms Motel and ask for Harry at: 760-873-8118 or 800-848-9226. There are 9 rooms with a one bed and 7 rooms with 2 beds ( includes 2 smoking rooms). Call the Elms directly to reserve your room. Say you are with SDFF and get a discount on the room. If the Elms is full, contact the Travel Lodge next door at 844-422-5811. Each person is responsible for booking lodging. There are a lot of choices for hotels in Bishop.

**We gather each night for group meals around 6:30PM**

**Where will we eat our dinners ?**

Unless there is a change, Thursday night– The Brewery on Main Street, Friday Night– The Bowling Alley, and Saturday night– La Casita Mexican, on Main Street.

**PLEASE let Alan know if you will be joining in the meals so he can make reservations.**

**What if I have some questions ?**

**See or contact the Event Coordinators Lee McElravy or Alan Thompson.**



# Happenings

**Bishop/ Owens River Rendezvous  
Feb 21-23**

## **Guides In the Bishop/Mammoth Area**

**We want to encourage you to take advantage of the experience and current knowledge of the local guides. People who have made use of guides for this trip typically have more success than those who do not. Below is a partial list of guides. Book early.**

**Sierra Drifters– 760-935-4250**

**Eastern Sierra Guide Service– Pat Jaeger– 760-872-7770 (Tenkara)**

**The Sierra Troutdoorsman -Sam Vasily– 951-764-7146**

**Performance Anglers Guide Service -Joe Contaldi– 760-965-6527**



# Happenings

Let's fish in December

December 14th @ 6 AM

Where: Grand Caribe on Coronado Keys

Questions Contact us at [outings@sandiegoflyfishers.com](mailto:outings@sandiegoflyfishers.com)

Stay tuned for dates for a local fishing outing on the bay. Follow us on Facebook for announcements



# Happenings

## San Diego Fly Fishers Support the STAR/PAL program In October



Club volunteers helped make the annual Star/Pal youth fishing derby another success! This annual event is held at Chollas Lake Park. This is a two day process. Day one requires the assembly of over 300 rods and reels. Day two is the fishing derby itself.

This year our volunteers manned 4 repair stations located at convent locations around the lake. Children with problem rods and reels are directed to take them to the closest repair station where the rod is replaced. This way the child can return to fishing as quickly as possible. Meanwhile the volunteers make repairs to the rod so that it can be used as a replacement for the next child.

Thanks to the following members the children enjoyed a great day of fishing. Todd McGovern, Lee McElravy, Dan McKirnan, Lew Walsh, Lucky Ketcham, Steve and Amy Dagampat, Ray and Sheron Mehl, Gary Strawn, Warren Lew and Paul Woolery.



# SDFF Women's Program



On a recent, warm Saturday morning, eight women met at Lake Murray for the first Women's Workshop the club has had in many years. Attendees were lucky to be taught by one of our own, Certified Casting Instructor Gretchen Yearous, ably assisted by Shelly Wagner. Since this initial workshop was aimed at the beginner and lower intermediate skill levels, the morning began with learning the parts of a fly rod and how to assemble the rod, reel and line. Gretchen also demonstrated fly line straightening, and described the different types of "action" that fly rods can have.

The group then made good use of the Lake Murray shoreline, to receive casting instruction from Gretchen and Shelly. Instruction focused on the mechanics of the basic loop cast, as well as using your other hand to manage the fly line. Participants practiced their own technique, and received individual attention from the instructors. The roll cast was also demonstrated including discussion of when to use it, with some additional practice time. Then the group traveled to the San Carlos Recreation Center for the remainder of the workshop, that included a gear and equipment session to help explain terminology and how specific items of gear and equipment are used.

Topics included types of rods and reels, with examples of which to use and where and when to use them. The group learned about rod, reel, and line weights and how and why to match them. The types and purposes of various lines, leaders, and tippet were also reviewed.

The workshop concluded in the early afternoon with time for observing and practicing knot tying. The instructors demonstrated several types of knots and explained the use of each type, while workshop practiced their knot tying skills.

All participants agreed it was a great learning experience, and thanked Gretchen and Shelly for their time and talents, as well as their dedication to women in the sport of fly fishing. THANK YOU, GRETCHEN AND SHELLY!

# Volunteers are needed

San Diego Fly Fishers is a service organization.  
So please ask yourself...

“What service can I provide to my Club”?

## Service Opportunities

### Fishing Outings

This is a chance to help run a fishing outing for Club members. We are seeking volunteers to organize a day of fishing on our local waters. It's fun and easy.

Pick your favorite water and contact

[Jim Castelluzzo](#) or [Mike Gilroy](#) and we will help you get started.

- ◆ Pick a local lake
- ◆ Pick a location for the bay
- ◆ Pick a location for the surf

The whole idea is to involve more members in creating fishing events and get us on the water monthly.

### Fundraising

- ◆ We need 2 or 3 more volunteers to help serve on the committee
- ◆ Contact: [Jim Castelluzzo](#)

Greeters are needed at our Monthly meetings!

We are planning to have 2 or 3 greeters at each event to help new people into our Club.

It's a great way to serve the Club and meet new Flyfishers.

Please contact [Jim Castelluzzo](#) or [Sherry Ashbaugh](#)

### Project Healing Waters

- ◆ Help with this important program that serves Veterans in need.
- ◆ If you know of a Veteran in need Please let us know!
- ◆ Contact: [Lee McElravy](#) to learn how you can contribute

# Fly of the Month

## December 2019



### The Illegal Fly-Modified Beaded Carey Special

John Beckstrand learned this fly at the 1998 FFF Conclave from Randy Stonebreaker & Randy Jones. Blast from the Past – Remembering John Beckstrand and all he taught us.

**Hook:** 2XL nymph hook size #12 or 14, TMC 5262, Mustad 9671, Dai-Riki 730 or Daiichi 1710. Try some on shorter TMC 100's

**Head:** Clear glass with silver lining. Craft bead - 2mm or 3 mm

**Thread:** Black or brown 6/0 or 8/0

**Tail:** Teal, Pheasant tail or Mallard Flank – three options.

**Rib:** Gold Wire or Copper Wire

**Body:** Peacock herl 4 strands, or Pheasant tail

**Hackle:** Partridge or Pheasant breast feather or Mallard Flank – soft hackle style – length to the hook barb

Mix up the options with either Pheasant tail or Mallard Flank tail. The pattern works with no bead but; John thinks the bead is “the thing” about this fly that makes it work. John bought some special silver lined beads at an Indian reservation. They are a little larger than the beads found at our craft stores.

Mash the barb and slip a clear glass bead to the eye of the hook. Attach the thread and build a small thread bump to hold the bead in place. Head cement the thread base. Select some well marked teal, mallard or pheasant tail, about 6 fibers, sized to 1-½ hook gaps and attach to the rear of the hook. Trim excess. Attach the gold or copper wire to the rear of the hook. Attach four strands of peacock herl or 6 pheasant tail barbs to the rear of the hook and marry to the thread. Wrap the herl forward to the back of the bead and tie off. Counter wrap the gold or copper wire forward and tie off behind the bead. Trim excess herl and wire.

Select and prepare a soft hackle from partridge, pheasant or mallard. This soft-hackle is attached by the tip, with the dull side to the rear - wet fly style. Fold the feather or tear off one side to make it sparse. Tie the hackle tip in behind the glass bead, wrap the thread back a few turns. Make two adjoining wraps of hackle back toward the bend.

Stonebreaker taught a trick to make the soft hackle more durable. Wrap and wiggle the thread forward through the hackle fibers, securing the quills without mashing the barbs down, then tie off and whip finish behind the bead. It is a little tricky but makes the fly more durable and keeps the desired “umbel shape” of the soft hackle. Another trick taught was to “double rib” the delicate peacock herl. Tie in the copper wire at the front of the fly, behind the bead and spiral wrap back to the bend and then forward again.

For more information contact [Lucky Ketcham](#)

# Rod Building

We will plan another class in March of 2020. Stay tuned. Space will be limited to ensure quality time for each student.

In the interim, if you are beginning your own project and would like some advice or recommendations please free to contact [Jack Duncan](#)

Rod Building help is an important benefit of being a San Diego Fly Fisher. In the coming editions of Finny Facts and on the Website look for "Tips from Jack" to help those who want to build their own rod.

**JACK'S TIP OF THE MONTH– Keep your Thumb Clean!**



Contact: [Jack Duncan](#)



# Casting Corner

## San Diego Fly Fishers Casting Program 2020

We are please to announce our casting instruction program for 2020. Led by our certified casting instructor John Wylie, we hope that this will provide a more focused approach to help improve your casting skills.

Note: These lessons replace our legacy "intermediate sessions". The SDFF beginners casting sessions held at Lake Murray on Sundays remain unchanged. These lessons are intended to build skills over a two class course. Participants will gain the most by attending both class sessions per focused area.

These classes are open to all members of San Diego Fly Fishers and Golden State Flycasters. Sign up early to reserve your place.

For questions and to sign up please contact: [John Wylie](#) or look for a sign up sheet at the monthly meetings.

### Casting 101 (two sessions)

Will cover the basics of Equipment, Knots and Fly Casting.... Good for an introduction or review of the basics.

February 1 & 8 (Saturday)

8:30 am to 11:30 am

Session 1 Location TBD

Session 2 Lake Murray

Cost: \$20

Limit 20

### Teach the Teacher- Review

March 7th (Saturday)

8:30am to 11:30

Lake Murray

No Cost

### Intermediate Casting Skills (two sessions)

Focus is on Fly line Control, Loop Control, Accuracy and Presentation Casts

May 31st (Sunday) & June 6th (Saturday) 8:30 am to 11:30

Mission Bay/Ski Beach

Cost \$20

Limit to 20

### Advanced Casting (2 two sessions)

Learn/Review the Double Haul and casting for distance

October 10 & 17 (Saturdays) 8:30 am to 11:30 am

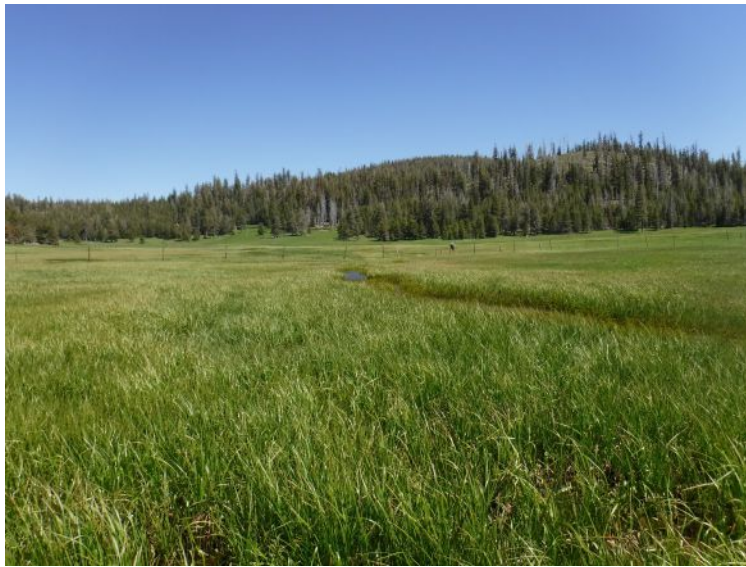
Mission Beach/Ski Beach

Limit to 10

Cost \$10

# Conservation & Education

San Diego Fly Fishers is a service club with a long history of supporting a variety of conservation, habitat and educational programs. The Club's primary focus is to support projects that serve our local habitats, fisheries and schools. We also support other conservation organizations with projects in California. Our activities are supported by Club members through "boots on the ground" volunteer work and via the donations received at Club fundraising events. We work closely with a number of local, regional and national organizations to support research, improve habitats and foster a conservation ethic for future generations. We are very proud of our work and the ongoing support from our membership. If you wish to join us in this service work please contact the Committee Chair, [Gary Strawn](#)



Please continue to support SDFF and our conservation, education and outreach programs with your participation and donations at our fundraising events. You make all this possible.

If you know of good conservation project that needs some support, please share you ideas with the committee.

[conservation@sandiegoflyfishers.com](mailto:conservation@sandiegoflyfishers.com)

# Trout in the Classroom

Your Club continues leading the way in an exceptional conservation learning experience for Children in our local schools via the Trout in the Classroom (TIC) program. This past November we successfully completed a cycle of rearing trout from egg to a releasable fry. The children and there teachers love this program and gain a great deal of knowledge. During this most recent release at Lake Murray over 100 students participated. In addition to the learning experience related to the fish, they are also shown the basics of Fly casting and fly tying. Many thanks to all our volunteers who make this happen! TIC is but one element of our Conservation, Education and Outreach program made possible by the generous support of our fundraising activities.



# Southwest Council FFI

San Diego Fly Fishers is affiliated with the Southwest Council of Fly Fishers International (FFI). Look for more happenings in the SW region in future editions of Finny Facts.

## Southwest Council Fly Fishers International

Who or What is the Southwest Council ?

The Southwest Council of Fly Fishers International represents all of Southern California and Nevada. Fly Fishers International is a 54 year old international non-profit organization dedicated to the betterment of the sport of fly fishing through Conservation, Restoration and Education. Fly Fishers International and its Councils are the only organized advocate for fly fishers on a national and regional level.

For more information Contact [John Wylie](#) our Representative for FFI

<https://flyfishersinternational.org/>

<https://www.swcffi.org/shop>



# Project Healing Waters

Project Healing Waters (PHW) Fly Fishing is dedicated to the physical and emotional rehabilitation of disabled active military service personnel and disabled veterans through fly fishing and associated activities including education and outings. San Diego Fly Fishers (SDFF) is proud to be a local affiliate of PHW. Our San Diego based program, serves veterans locally by providing opportunities to learn fly casting, fly tying and fly fishing. We are a service organization and are pleased to offer opportunities to our veterans to help them find out more about the arts associated with fly fishing. If you are looking for a good way to contribute to our veterans and your Club, please let us know.

Help us find Veterans in Need!!

Our Club has an exceptional team of dedicated volunteers who commit time to helping disabled Vets learn about fly fishing, tying and casting. Over the course of the past year our program has struggled to gain reliable access to Vet's from the VA, etc. Currently the program leaders are working with local VFW's and American Legions to let people know about this service. If you know a disabled veteran who would benefit from spending some time with us please contact [Lee McElravy](#)

Please look at our Club's PHW Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/PHWFF.SDFF/>

Join in and help the Club support our PHW program. Lee McElravy is now running this page and has indicated he will be doing regular updates. Share it to any one you know who may benefit from our programs or would like to help. Contact: Lee McElravy for more information

## Fly Tying

PHW leaders are revisiting the fly tying location and time. Expect a new schedule in January to include an evening tying session.

## Fly Casting

Where: Santee lakes, Santee CA  
When: third Saturday at 9 AM



Follow all the action on the Clubs [Facebook page!](#)

# Membership

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO RENEW YOUR 2020 dues soon.**

2020 is just around the corner and time to renew your membership with San Diego Fly Fishers. From Alan Thompson:

I'm too tired and lazy to list all the great things this organization does for our members, for the youths of our community, for the conservation of San Diego County and beyond, and yes, we even have time to have fun.

You can renew your membership on-line though the website: [www.sandiegoflyfishers.com](http://www.sandiegoflyfishers.com); or you can renew in person at our monthly programs; or you can download an application on our website and mail a check.

[Renew online](#)

Contact: [Alan Thompson](#)

Or Renew at the next Monthly SDFF Meeting

SDFF has four membership levels

Individual.....\$40

Family.....\$50

Individual Military.....FREE (Active Duty Only)

Family Military.....FREE (Active Duty Only)

**Please welcome our newest members!**

## FAMILY

## INDIVIDUAL

None

[Kyle Dewey ..... Military](#)

[Jay W. Edmonds](#)

[Mick Hager](#)

[Richard Johnson](#)



# Feature Article

We welcome anyone who wishes to contribute an article.  
Send to [Mike Gilroy](#)

Arabian Royalty  
by Joel Stewart  
photographs and art by Brenton Sharp



Burj al Arab at sunrise.

Sun rays lanced through a forest of concrete and steel, only to ricochet off glass before illuminating the waking waterfront like it was a magical land. Despite being an artificial setting with everything, except the sun, creating the scene made by man, it was none the less spectacular. I took in the light show from the bow of a skiff. As the center console came up on plane, I was jolted back to reality. The captain was at ease, fully in his element. He twisted from the helm, Cannon in hand, to capture the light as it streamed through the iconic bridge of Atlantis, The Palms. The morning was not a typical start to a fishing trip, but this was no typical fishing location. I was in Dubai, racing out into the Arabian Gulf with Ocean Active Charters. It is quite a city. Known for the tallest building in the world, the Burj Kahlifa, Dubai also is home to some unique architecture, as showcased by the Burj al Arab. Top performing artists from around the world headline here regularly. It is no surprise to find the rich and famous in the clubs or at the beaches. Life in the fast lane does not appeal to me however. I am far more comfortable with less populated places. The best way to do that here is to put to out to sea; exactly as I was doing to escape the urban glitz and glamour, though it nearly always remains in sight.

At the controls of the boat was Capt. Brenton Sharp with his deck hand Ramesh. Our target for the day was, *Scomberoides commersonianus*, commonly known as queenfish. It is a member of the Carangidae family, comprised of jacks and pompanos. Examining their sleek body, with deep shoulders, leathery skin, and sharply forked tail, the resemblance is obvious. Like their cousins, they are fast and powerful predators. When feeding, they terrorize schools of bait, dashing and slashing to leave a cloud of their victim's blood and scales glittering in their wake. Best of all, they take flies. To be honest, they will hit just about anything, when they are in the mood, as long as it is moving; the faster the better.

# Feature Article

Arabian Royalty  
by Joel Stewart  
photographs and art by Brenton Sharp

No stranger to queenfish, I have kept myself occupied by catching juveniles in the waters around the island of Bahrain, where I am stationed with the Navy. These smaller models are great fun, often cartwheeling out of the water once hooked and fighting for freedom until the moment they are back in the water. Their dorsal fin rays and two small dagger-like anal rays are toxic; when they score a hit, it feels like a mild bee sting, letting the angler know he was messing with the wrong fish as I have discovered on a number of occasions. I was very much looking forward to tangling with the bigger fish that patrol the waters off Dubai, feeding on the bait that congregates once the water cools off from the summer temperatures, which can be in excess of 85 degrees Fahrenheit at the surface. Fall had arrived, so the heat was gone and queens were waiting. I was in Dubai over a weekend on official duties. I almost always travel with a fly rod and this trip was no exception. I had one day off, and I put it to good use. I wrote Nick Bowels at Ocean Active Charters in hopes he had an opening. I was in luck, he did and I ended up in a boat at dawn in Dubai.



Bahrain Queenfish



## Feature Article



Ready to travel.

Brenton brought the boat alongside an old warship to check in with the Emirate's Coast Guard. Security is taken very seriously in the middle-East, especially on the water. Getting cross-threaded with the Coast Guard or any other government organization is not a good idea. Papers verified and chit in hand we cleared the harbor.

Keeping a sharp eye out for feathered fish finders, we made our way past anchored dhows and the Palm Resort. Ramesh, a dark, deeply weathered Sri Lankan, was busy rigging up my rods. I had on leaders with a 40lb hard mason butt and a 25lb fluorocarbon tippet. They run straight 25lb flouro here because the fish will hit the knots in a regular leader. While doing that, Ramesh kept one eye on the sky. I've been at sea most of my life, and Ramesh has the sharpest eyes I've ever seen. Brenton has learned not to question, he just turns the boat where Ramesh points. Barely a mile off shore, we spotted the first few birds holding over fish. Brenton skillfully brought the boat in, cutting the motor as we drifted into the fish. The fish were moving so Brenton broke out the "persuader," a spinning rod with a teaser on it. He cast until he caught the attention of a pod of queenfish that followed the teaser long enough to get within fly casting range. Meanwhile I was peeling line off my reel and limbering up with my 10wt. I was false casting and waiting for Brenton to tell me when to deliver my offering. He yelled "cast." I did. He hollered "strip, strip!" I already was. I saw a fish closing in on my fly. I promptly did what I knew not to do, what I've counseled others on not doing – I trout set. The fly was yanked out of the fish's face before it could attack it. Brenton's hands went up in the air and his moan verbalized the chastising I was giving myself. I hung my head for a moment. I gave my disappointed guide a sheepish smile. He turned back to finding fish. He'd done his job, I had not done mine. Waiting for him to bring in another fish I repeated to myself "don't trout set, focus on the strip set, don't be an idiot." Brenton conjured up another target. I dropped the half-Clouser in front of another worked up fish. This time I did not trout set, the fish just flat out refused my offering. Encouraged that there were fish about, we set out in search of another school.

While Brenton scanned for signs of activity, I took a closer look at the fly they prefer here. It is a Clouser style streamer with a tan body, chartreuse eyes, and sparse bucktail, grey (or olive) over white with 2 strips of flash between the bucktail. The bucktail is tied only on one side, under the eyes. When tied traditionally, the sharp teeth of the queenfish cut the hair pulled over the eyes. With the hair splayed out, the fish won't take them. So, a bit of modification to the pattern makes sense. All that really matters is that it catches fish and that it does.

## Feature Article

We soon found more fish, thanks again to the birds. This time, everything came together. Brenton brought a fish in for me to target. I cast and the fly fell right. I stripped line as fast as I could as a dark form dashed to my fly to inhale it. The line went tight and my rod tip came up. The line I'd worked so hard to strip in was now melting off the deck; I felt a couple coils whip across my feet as the fish headed for the bottom. In seconds the fish was on the reel and I was using my new rod as it was meant to be used. In my hand was the new TFO Axiom II and I couldn't be more pleased. The fish ran deep, and I used the full length of the rod to turn it. It came to the surface and showed us its acrobatic side.

The morning sun flashing its sides is a sight I will never forget. It made a few more leaps before settling into a tug of war match. Back and forth we went until soon my prize was alongside. I didn't have to force a smile as Brenton worked the camera. I grabbed it by the tail with my right hand, slung it to my left hand, and snap – hero shot complete.

Brenton is a guide who really knows how to put you at ease on the water. Originally from South Africa, he now lives in Dubai with his wife and daughter. He spends every moment he can on the water, learning about the area off Dubai or the other locations Ocean Active operates out of in the United Arab Emirates and Oman. Because of his dedication, he knows the water and how to put clients on fish. In addition to being the kind of captain one always hopes to hire on a charter, he is also a gifted artist with a budding art company, Pointing Projects, showcasing his watercolors and sketches. He applies his talented eye to the photographs he takes for his clients. I know when I'm unable to make the globe-trotting trips to fish exotic locations; I can look at the picture with that first queenfish and hopefully recall the wonderful details.



Arabian Gulf Queenfish.

## Feature Article

The moment that first fish was in the water, we were off after another bunch. The fish in front of the Palm Resort were not as active as Brenton hoped, so he spun the wheel, pressed on the throttles, and we came about. We raced towards Jebel Ali, the entrance to Dubai's commercial port.

Here we found fish that were more cooperative. Brenton set up a drift and there was no need to tease these fish into range. The boat was surrounded by frenzied fish. They were darting about in every direction. I cast into the mob and that's all it took. One strip and I was fast into another Arabian Gulf speedster. The fish continued to madly cavort about the boat. Brenton was watching all this mayhem while I fought my fish so I hollered at him to grab my other rod and get in on the action. My TFO BVK 8wt was loaded and ready. He worked out line and laid a beautiful back cast in front of a fish and BAM! He tied into a queenfish and we were doubled up. We danced around the boat playing our respective fish without getting tangled up. Ramesh started photographing us as we both worked fish. Ramesh handed me my fish so he could run the camera again. Our smiles are not exaggerated in the picture. We were reaching over the side to wash the slime off our hands when Ramesh spotted the next bunch of fish. We immediately pursued.



Occasionally guides catch fish.

I was locked and loaded when Brenton brought another fish into range. I double hauled and launched a cast towards the plug he was cranking in with a big queen hot on it. No luck, the pernickety fish snubbed the offering. Once more, then twice Brenton brought the fish, but they weren't taking the fly. Persistence pays off though and he delivered another fish into my cast zone. This time, the fish didn't hesitate to nail my fly when the teaser disappeared. I pulled back hard, driving the hook in. The fish ran deep and then I could feel it coming up, fast. It cleared water in a spectacular leap, twisting and turning like mad to get rid of the object in its maw. The tactic worked; the fish went left, the fly went right, and my line went slack. It was the best fish of the day, but isn't that always the case with the one that got away?

## Feature Article

The activity slowed of Jebel Ali, so we headed back towards the water off the Palm. Maybe those fish were feeling frisky. Moments later, the question was answered as we came up on a feeding school. Brenton cast the teaser and started dragging it back when a fish exploded on the plug. His line went slack. A Narrow-barred Spanish mackerel (*Scomberomorus commerson*), known locally as kingfish, had attacked the teaser and nipped the line. The fish continued to feed and Ramesh tied on another teaser. In moments, Brenton brought in a hot fish. I repeated the scenario: cast, strip, hookset, and hang on. This was also a fish bigger than my previous two. I could feel its power transmitting down the rod. It was on a serious mission to test my tackle. I was looking forward to the battle. Then, like wind leaving sails, my line went slack and luffed in the water. The leader was cleanly cut; that's how the big ones get away.

We had a short time left to find more fish. The scene was now routine: Ramesh spotted birds, Brenton maneuvered the boat, fish chased the teaser, and I lobbed a cast out in hopes of a hook up. We had some more shots, but no takers. The fish were still around so Brenton heaved the plug out and started dancing it across the surface. It was almost to the boat when it rocketed into the air, in the teeth of another kingfish that hit it 20 feet from the boat. I could clearly see the namesake vertical stripes on the fish as it arched through its attack trajectory.



Kingfish by Brenton Sharp - Pointing Project Art

It was a remarkable site to take in. I wish I could have captured the look on awe on Brenton face. Airborne fish of another kind were on my mind now as we drifted into fish again. No teaser this time, these fish were close enough for my mediocre casting. The first few casts were to no avail, but finally, a fish came unseen out of the depths and ate the fly. Line shot through the guides as the fish made for the bottom, then changed its mind and altered course to Iran. That plan didn't work, so it sought the sun. This fish was a jumper. Four fantastic leaps into the sky and it finally came to the boat. Ramesh lifted it in the boat. Brenton took some great shots of me releasing the fish before we got back to it.

## Feature Article

We still had time before he had to drop me off and pick up his next client. We intended to make the most of our time. The fish however, had other ideas. We chased a few more schools, but none were takers. With a shrug of his shoulders Brenton spun the wheel. We leaned away from the turn as the props dug in to bring the bow around; it was over. The skyline of Dubai loomed larger and larger as we closed the distance to the regrettable end of an awesome day on the water. Looking at the majestic building, I knew that I would be back for another audience with Arabian Royalty – queenfish have that effect on an angler.



Back into the Arabian Gulf.

Trip notes: Queenfish are available year-round in Dubai, but the peak season is when the weather cools in the fall through the end of spring (Oct-Mar). Dubai is in the United Arab Emirates and has all the amenities of a world-class city, along with world-class prices. Currency is the dirham, which at the time of publishing was about \$0.27 USD. Many flights to the Seychelles and other African destinations pass through Dubai. An angler headed to those destinations would be well served by planning for a day layover in Dubai to book a trip to chase queenfish. Nick Bowles runs a top-notch business and is the only charter that caters to catch and release fly fishing in Dubai.  
[www.oceanactive.com](http://www.oceanactive.com) telephone: +971 504 592 259

# Proposed BOD 2020

Here is the list of proposed members of the SDFE Board of Directors for 2020. At the December meeting, ballots will be available for members to vote or submit a write in candidate for the Board. We are still looking for someone to serve as Vice President.

## 2020 Board of Directors Roles and Responsibilities

James Castelluzzo	President
Vacant	Vice President
Bruce Harris	Treasurer
Mel Ochs	Secretary
Sherry Ashbaugh	Fundraising
Mike Gilroy	Media Coordinator
Mark Hedderson	Editor, Finny Facts/ Indicator
Tim Huckaby	Speaker Programs
Warren Lew	Fundraising/At Large
Lee McElravy	Project Healing Waters
Kai Schumann	Monthly Outings
Gary Strawn	Conservation
Alan Thompson	Membership
Paul Woolery	Outreach Event Coordinator
John Wylie	Casting Instruction

## Other Programs and Chairpersons

Sherry Ashbaugh	Women's Program
Jack Duncan	Rod Building
Lucky Ketchum	Fly Tying Congress

Web Master  
Web Site Manager- David Collins

Follow all the action on the Clubs [Facebook page!](#)

# Fishing!!!!

Here are some pictures from the Club trip to Lake Cuyamaca. It was Cold!



Alex's first Trout



Follow all the action on the Clubs [Facebook page!](#)

# Guides and Resources

San Diego Fly Fishers does not endorse or recommend any particular Guide or Business. This Information is intended to provide the reader with known providers of services related to fly fishing in our local area and in California. This is not intended to be a complete list of available services.

## Guides

### Eastern Sierra's

[Sierra Drifters](#)

[Sierra Troutdoorsman](#)

[Pat Jaeger Fly Fishing](#)

[Kern River Fly Shop](#)

### Northern California

[Acosta Fly Fishing](#) (Steelhead)

[Fine and Far Fly Fishing](#) (Steelhead/Spey Trips)

[Baiocchi's Troutfitters](#)

### San Diego Bay/Surf/Lakes

[Conway Bowman](#)

[Alex Cady @ Fly Stop](#)

## Fly Fishing Equipment

[STROUD TACKLE](#)

[THE FLY STOP](#)

[Flies by Favorite](#)

## River Flows and Reports

[Dreamflows](#)

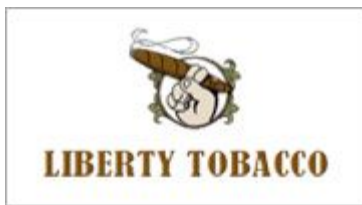
[USGS Flows](#)

[California Data Exchange](#)

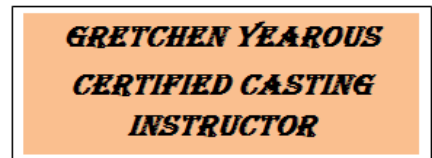
[Lower Owens River](#)



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**Bob Berry Fish Carvings**



**We need your help getting rid of Carp at Lake Cuyamaca!**



**CARP ANGLERS WANTED, CONVENTIONAL ROD AND REEL, SPEAR, OR BOW**

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# Tailing Loops

## San Diego Fly Fishers Board of Directors 2019

- Sherry Ashbaugh.....[President](#)
- James Castelluzzo [1st Vice-President](#)
- Bruce Harris .....[Treasurer](#)
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- James Castelluzzo .....[Speaker Programs](#)
- James Castelluzzo.....[Outings/At Large](#)
- Jack Duncan.....[Rod Building](#)
- Mike Gilroy.....[Media Coordinator](#)
- Warren Lew .....[Fundraising/At large](#)
- Lee McElravy .....[Project Healing Waters](#)
- Gary Strawn .....[Conservation](#)
- Alan Thompson.....[Membership](#)
- Paul Woolery.....[Fly tying/At-Large](#)
- John Wylie.....[Casting Instruction/  
SWC-FFI](#)

### Other Chairpersons

- Alan Thompson .....[Sunday Fly Casting](#)
- David Collins .....[Web Master](#)

The Board meets at 6:30 PM on the last Monday of each month at the San Diego River Park Foundation Office on Pacific Hwy.

For Directions to all Club Meetings, Clinics and Fly tying classes visit our website at: [Activities Maps](#)

**The Indicator**  
 Emailed twice a month with updates and breaking news!  
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[San Diego Fly Fishers](#)

Cut-off date for the Finny Facts is the 15th of each month  
 Send submissions to: [media@sandiegoflyfishers.com](mailto:media@sandiegoflyfishers.com)

