



President's Message

What's Happening RFFF?

Although we did take July off from publishing our monthly newsletter, the Russian River Fly Fishers are still active during the COVID-19 pandemic. So just to keep you up to date, here is a quick summary of what's going on with the RFFF:

- **General Meetings** – Although we cannot meet in-person, we have been continuing our monthly General Meetings on the second Wednesday of the month using the Zoom video application, and we will continue this method of communication with live speakers for the foreseeable future. Our Program Director, Don Shaw, has arranged to have interesting speakers on fly fishing topics for our enjoyment as the

highlight of each meeting. We have found that attending a live video meeting using Zoom is a bit difficult for some of our members, so in the future we plan to also record the meeting and send out a link to the video afterwards so that it can be more easily viewed later at our members' convenience.

- **Casting Program** – The casting pond at Galvin Park is OPEN for use by individuals, immediate family groups, and other persons practicing strict Coronavirus safety protocols. This includes all Santa Rosa City and Sonoma County health regulations regarding safe physical distancing and the use of face masks. On Thursday evenings, fly casting instruction may be available for those casters who have their own equipment. It will consist of demonstration and verbal instruction only...no physical

contact will be permitted. See more recent and detailed information at

<https://www.facebook.com/russianriverflyfishers>

- **Club Outings** –All club outings previously listed on our club calendar have been marked CANCELLED. With the present COVID-19 situation, the board decided that we could not recommend overnight travel to distant locations. We hope to get this program up and running again when the pandemic situation improves. In the meantime, we recommend our members consider visiting local waters and take all the necessary precautions to stay safe.
- **Membership and Dues** – Our club roster now includes 180 members – an all-time high! Because club expenses (such as the cost of meetings at Veteran’s Memorial hall) are much lower now, the board has decided to forgo requesting member pay their dues until the club can resume its normal operations. That includes new members, so if you have friends who might be interested in joining the club, let them know that they can do that for free (for a limited time) to see if being an RRF member is something they would like to continue.
- **RRFF Board Meetings** – We are continuing our monthly board meetings. In July we welcomed two new members: Penelope Gadd-Coster and Tim Reuling. Let’s thank them for their commitment to helping our club meet our members’ needs.

Here’s hoping that in these challenging times our members are still able to get outdoors and enjoy all the peace and beauty that nature provides.

Tight lines,

~ Ed Barich

Fly fishing 101 – Equipment Basics – The Fly Rod

In the first two installments of this series, we explored the differences between fly fishing and other forms of angling and discussed the benefits of learning to fly fish. If you are considering taking the next step, we should discuss the basics of fly fishing equipment, how to select a rod, reel and fly line based on the quarry that you wish to pursue. Selection of fly fishing equipment does require an understanding of the rating systems used to designate fly rods and fly lines, and your choices (especially as a beginner) should give you the flexibility to pursue a variety of species found in your local waters. As most of us cannot afford to go out initially and purchase a range of fly rods, reels and lines, I will concentrate here on what I believe will be a versatile choice for the fishing opportunities in Sonoma County and within a three-hour driving radius. This article will focus specifically on single-handed fly rods and the equipment that accompanies them.

Regarding Budget

Fly fishing does require a financial investment for equipment. However, it is not necessary to spend a lot of money for your first fly rod and reel. Whereas fly rods (by themselves) can approach \$800 - \$900 for some of the higher end offerings, and fly reels can easily double that figure (again, for the high end offerings), you can purchase excellent “starter” rods and reels for around \$200 total that also include the fly line. In fact, I strongly urge those new to fly fishing to begin with these outfits. Not only do they provide an excellent tool for learning to fly cast (and for your initial forays on the water), they will also provide the same for other friends and family that may eventually wish to follow your addiction. One semantic note before we proceed – fly rods are always referred to as “rods” and never referred to as “poles” (a distinction that could save you “quizzical looks” when discussing fly fishing with other fly anglers).

Your First Fly Rod

Fly rods are technically nothing more than a “flexible lever” that helps you throw a fly line (or fight a fish),

although some rods also exhibit artistry and craftsmanship and can be valuable (and pricey) collector's items. They are produced from a number of materials, the most common these days being graphite, fiberglass and bamboo. These materials offer differing characteristics, may have specific uses, and can require refined techniques to use properly. For the beginner, the graphite fly rod with a "medium-fast action" is the easiest and most common tool for learning to fly cast and for pursuing a wide range of aquatic species. Nearly all starter sets follow this guideline. Fiberglass and bamboo fly rods tend to lean more toward "medium" to "slow" action and require adjustments in casting technique for effective use. (More on fly rod "action" later.)

The rating system for fly rods is a "weight" system. The weight of your fly-rod specifically refers to the weight of the fly line that the rod is designed to throw. These components are designed to integrate with each other, so when starting out it is always best to match the weight of the fly line to the weight of the rod you will be using (the weight of the fly rod is usually noted on the blank, just above the handle). If you are using a 6-weight fly rod, it should be throwing a 6-weight fly line. The weight system also indicates the type of quarry you will be pursuing. Fly rods range from "0-weight" all the way up to "14-weight" (and higher!). Smaller fish species can be pursued with the lower weight (lighter) fly rod, whereas larger species require the higher weight (heavier, with more backbone) rods. ****An important consideration here, especially if you are practicing "catch and release", is that the weight of the fly rod should be strong enough to allow you to land your catch quickly without excessively tiring the fish! An overly tired fish has a significantly reduced chance of surviving after it is released.***

Following is a very general guide to the weight class of fly rods and what they are used for. Typically, the higher the weight of the fly rod, the larger the fish it can handle quickly and the bigger the flies it can throw (especially in windy conditions).

"0-weight" - "3-weight" - Panfish and small trout (typically these rods are 6 – 8.5 feet in length)
"4-weight" – "6-weight" – Large trout, small bass, shad (typically these rods are 8.5 – 9.5 feet in length)
"7-weight" – "9-weight" – Bass, steelhead, salmon, bonefish, permit, Dorado (typically 9-feet in length)

"10-weight" – "12-weight" – Large salmon and other big saltwater game fish (typically 9-feet in length)
"13-weight" and up – The largest gamefish (tuna, marlin, etc.)

The weight system also refers to the actual physical weight of the fly rod and reel combination. The heavier (higher weight) rods are balanced with heavier reels that hold heavier fly lines and more backing, necessary for fighting large fish. The higher weight rods are also easier to cast in the wind, and offer more power and backbone when battling anadromous and saltwater fish species. Wind is an important consideration in fly rod selection as is the size of the flies that you will be using. The heavier rods allow you to handle both concerns more effectively and with less effort.

Fly rod action refers to where the fly rod bends when a load is put on it (whether while fly casting or fighting fish). Most graphite fly rods tend to be "medium-fast" action, which means that the rod bends in the upper third to quarter of the rod length (closer to the tip top). The butt section (closer to the handle and reel) is firm and offers more power. Most beginning fly casters find the graphite "medium-fast" fly rod to be the easiest, and most forgiving, tool for learning to fly cast. A "medium" action fly rod bends more toward the middle section of the rod and is less firm in the butt section. Fiberglass fly rods (especially older ones) can be in this category, although today there are new fiberglass rods that are also in the medium-fast range. A "slow" action fly rod bends far deeper into the butt section, from the mid-section down closer to the handle. These rods are also said to have a "soft" action, as opposed to the "stiffer" action of rods that bend closer to the tip. They are also referred to as "whippy". You can get an idea of the action of a rod by sweeping the tip from side to side and observing where the rod bends. Faster rods bend closer to the tip, slower rods bend closer to the butt section. The action of the fly rod will affect your ability to throw tight loops (desirable in windy conditions), so medium-fast action fly rods often become the choice in saltwater, where wind is prevalent.

So as a Beginner, What Fly Rod Should I Buy?

Following is my recommendation on what to buy if you can only purchase one fly rod to begin your fly fishing adventure. This is based on where we live, the fishing opportunities that are available to us within a three-hour radius, and the versatility of pursuing multiple species.

Unless you will only be fishing for steelhead or salmon, I like the **9-foot, 6-weight, graphite, medium-fast action** fly rod for Sonoma County and Northern California. Why? The 6-weight fly rod offers you the versatility of pursuing anything from small to large trout, shad in our nearby rivers, and small bass on local farm ponds and lakes. Although a little heavy for panfish and small trout, it can still be fun and is flexible enough for mountain streams and lakes, but also offers the backbone and stiffness to cast large flies (like poppers, frog patterns, big streamers, etc.) in the often windy conditions found on our local farm ponds and lakes. For bass fishing, you may also need to drag your flies (and fish) through weed growth, and the 6-weight offers you those capabilities. It is a good choice for pursuing large trout in Putah Creek or the Sierra, and for shad fishing in the Russian River and the Central Valley. If you can only purchase one fly rod to begin your fly angling initiation, a 6-weight would be my first choice.

If you are **only** going to fish for steelhead or salmon, I might be inclined to consider a 9-foot, 7-weight, graphite, medium-fast action fly rod instead. This weight selection offers a bit more power for the bigger steelhead and salmon, and for casting in the windy, winter conditions on our local Russian River and other coastal rivers. The trade-off is that it would be overkill for fishing smaller panfish and trout. Although quite good for larger bass and throwing big poppers on some of our larger local lakes, this size is generally not quite as versatile for smaller species. Having just said that, if I could only afford to buy one rod for steelhead, salmon, shad, bonefish, big bass, permit, etc., I would most likely choose a 9-foot, 8-weight, graphite, medium-fast, fly rod for the greatest versatility of species and wind performance.

Good news! Many of the “starter outfits” that I mentioned earlier are available in the **9-foot, 6-**

weight, graphite, medium-fast size and are balanced with a fly reel and 6-weight floating fly line already included (perfect for the beginning fly fisher). Our last local fly shops (*Sportsman’s Warehouse* and *Outdoor Pro Shop*) carry these products from reputable rod manufacturers (SAGE, Orvis, G-Loomis, to name a few) and the entire package is usually less than \$200.00. If you are looking for your first fly rod package, you could contact RRFF board member Jeff Cratty (who works at *Sportsman’s Warehouse*) about what is available at his store. Other fly shops can also provide starter set-ups online, if you have a particular vendor that you are partial to. For a beginning fly angler, I would recommend using a floating fly line while learning to fly cast, and this line will also offer a tremendous amount of versatility when learning to present dry flies on the surface as well as wet flies within the water column.

I would like to end this article on fly rod selection with the reminder that I am providing you with my opinion based on my personal experiences (reflecting 30 years of fly fishing and fly casting instruction), and that this is only a smattering of what is available. It is impossible to summarize all aspects of fly fishing equipment in a few pages. Other fly anglers may have differing viewpoints and offer additional rationale for your consideration. My focus in this installment of **Flyfishing 101** has been to suggest what I feel to be the most versatile fly rod for our area, and an equipment set-up that will allow you the widest range of angling opportunities as you learn about fly fishing. As we proceed, we will discuss fly reels and fly lines, and what you may wish to look for when considering these components moving forward.

I hope that this brief summary continues to provide you with information to consider as you begin your fly fishing journey...

~ *Steve Tubbs*
RRFF Fly Casting Director

Jon Baiocchi's Lost Sierra Creekin Tour

In June, a friend and I went on Jon's Lost Sierra full day Creekin Tour (\$160/person). The tour covered four creeks in the Graeagle area of Northern Ca. – Jamison, Little Jamison, Frazier and Gray Eagle Creeks.

First, Jon showed us how to access Jamison Creek Canyon and where to exit the Canyon. Next, we fished Jamison below the bridge that crosses it near the Eureka Plumas Campground where we camped. After lunch Jon showed us how to access Frazier Creek and then we fished Gray Eagle Creek. Jon is very helpful and full of knowledge about the area and other areas that he guides. He answered all our questions patiently and was lots of help with rigging and fishing techniques. The tour also includes an eight-page informative handbook with tips, techniques, flies, gear, and tactics for this type of fishing (he sells these on his website).

We brought our own food and used masks whenever we were close to each other and otherwise maintained proper social distance. We drove our own cars and used our own equipment, though Jon does provide tackle if you want it. He did let me try his \$700 Sage Dart 0 wt. rod which was very nice but out of my price range.

I used a 7 ft. 3 wt. with a short leader. The idea is to try to keep the line off the water so that all the fish sees is the fly. This technique also helps to minimize unwanted drag from the tippet being pulled in a different direction than the fly. This requires you to be relatively close to the fish, so some stealth is required so that you don't spook the fish. Moving water or wind on the surface gives you some cover, as do larger rocks. Flies included Stimulators and Adams (#12 and #14). The fish would probably hit anything that was well presented, but the smaller size flies are harder to see and the larger flies make it harder for the dinks to eat.

I also used my 10ft Tenkara rod and found that it allowed me to stay further back and still get a good drift. This rod packs down to 2ft which makes it easy to carry in and out of the creek, especially if you have to bushwhack to get there. If it is a bushy creek the shorter rod provides an advantage, otherwise I would prefer the longer Tenkara rod. Also, since the Tenkara rod doesn't have a reel, it is much simpler.

The next day my friend and I hiked down into Jamison Creek Canyon. Using Jon's tips, we found the access. There is no trail, so we scrambled down the hill until we hit the creek. The Creek is beautiful with clear water except in the deeper pools where it had a bit of a blue tint. There was no sign that anybody had been there this season; it had been a while since these fish had seen a fly. We fished only dry flies on 5 and 6X all day. There were plenty of fish and they were eager to hit our flies as long as we had a good drift. We spent about 4 – 5 hours working our way up the canyon. I probably rose 75 fish, hooked about 50 of those, and had to unhook about 25 fish. Most would spit the hook as soon as I released tension. My friend fared similarly. The fish were beautiful, as was the creek. Most of the fish were Rainbows with a few Browns. Biggest fish was probably 10 inches, but they all fought like wild fish. It has been a while since I have fished a place where there wasn't any evidence of humans – a real treat.

~ Gregg Wrisley

Club Website Update

The club website <https://www.rrflyfisher.org/> has a few items that may be of interest while you are staying home.

- Slide show of members fishing Spring Lake and catching fish!
- More additions to the video collections <https://www.rrflyfisher.org/mikes-video-page.html>

- Updates to Fly Fishers International Live Online weekly zooms and recordings of past recordings (flyfishing, fly tying, etc).
<https://flyfishersinternational.org/FFI-Online>

Dues Update: 7/12/2020 to 6/30/2021

Dues payments are delayed for existing or new members. New members can join for free. We are considering a partial billing later in the year.

Given the uncertainty of being able to safely reopen our club sanctioned activities (General meeting with speakers, organized fishing trips, casting clinics), the RRFB Board plans to delay billing for membership dues for the July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 fiscal year.

- We intend to bill members when it is possible to safely resume.
- The amount would be determined and based on the fraction of the new fiscal year we will be open and we will give credit for prior payments for being closed since March 18.
- We will welcome new members now without requiring a payment until we reopen, again with the amount to be determined based on the future reopening date. In the meantime, we will continue to publish the monthly Cast newsletter to our membership. **Please stay safe.**

Casting Pond Under Coronavirus

The RRFB Casting Pond in Dan Galvin Park is OPEN for use by individuals, immediate family groups, and other persons practicing strict Coronavirus safety protocols. This includes all Santa Rosa City and Sonoma County health regulations regarding safe physical distancing and the use of face masks. We ask that anyone using the Casting Pond keep at least one fly rod length (approximately 10 feet) between themselves and other casters. Sharing of equipment is not permitted (except for among immediate family

members). All Casting Pond users must have face masks available for use whenever they are within 6-feet of a nonfamily member. Please maintain an unquestionable safe distance between yourself and all other users. COVID-19 cases are spiking in California and in Sonoma County; so, demonstrate your respect for others by wearing your face mask when near them. It is always best to maintain your distance well beyond the advised minimum whenever possible. On Thursday evenings, fly casting instruction may be available for those casters who have their own equipment. This instruction will be performed at a distance with at least one fly rod length (10 feet) separating all participants. It will consist of demonstration and verbal instruction only...no physical contact will be permitted. A minimum of 10 feet is advised between individuals.

The RRFB will not provide equipment for public use until it is determined by Sonoma County Health Officials that sharing equipment can be done without risk.

Fly fishing is a wonderful way to practice social distancing and to get out in Nature. Please practice your fly casting safely and watch out for others. Your respect and regard for those practicing with you will help all of us stay healthy.

The Casting Pond is Open to the public. Limited instruction is available on Thursday evenings beginning at 4:30 p.m. Dan Galvin Park is located at 4910 Bennett Valley Rd, Santa Rosa, CA 95405

Virtual Zoom General Meeting

The club will be offering Zoom meetings in place of the 2nd Wednesday monthly meetings. Members will receive an email with access instructions. We are continuing the suspension of all fishing outings.



Support Our Local Fly Fishing Businesses!

Archuleta's Reel Works

Custom fishing reel repair, servicing, and manufacturing.
733 Detrick Drive, Grants Pass, OR 97527
(541) 956-1691
Bill Archuleta, owner
www.archuletasreelworks.com

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(707) 869-2156.
www.kingsrussianriver.com

Outdoor Pro Shop, Inc.

Fishing gear, supplies, fly fishing, flies, rods and accessories.
412 Houser Street, Cotati, CA 94931.
(707) 588-8033,
Fax (707) 588-8035
www.outdoorproshop.com

Sportsman's Warehouse

Top brands for hunting, fishing, and more at America's Premier Outfitter
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(707) 585-1500
www.sportsmanswarehouse.com

August Calendar of Events

BEGINNING 3/18, BECAUSE OF THE CORONAVIRUS SHELTER IN PLACE ORDER, ALL CLUB MEETINGS, OUTINGS AND FLYCASTING CLINICS ARE CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. PLEASE ALL STAY HEALTHY AND SAFE.

RRFF Board of Directors

RRFF Board of Directors

President: Ed Barich

539-4608 ebarich@sonic.net

Vice President: Doug Mackay
575-5709 demackay@sonic.net

Secretary: Vacant

Treasurer & Webmaster: Mike Spurlock
(415) 599-6138 mikerrff@gmail.com

Casting Instruction Chairman, Facebook: Steve Tubbs
765-1787 steve@inspiri2.com

Program Chairman: Don Shaw
477-5928 donjanshaw@comcast.net

Outings Chairman: Chris Castellucci
763-2017 chrslucci@aol.com

Membership Chairman & Pond Steward: Doug Mackay
575-5709 demackay@sonic.net

Raffle Committee: Paul Matzen
795-8885 gbridgeman@att.net

Newsletter Editor: Marcus Pipkin
(615) 969-9200 marcus.pipkin@comcast.net

Raffle Coordinator: Gregg Wrisley
823-5572 gwriss@yahoo.com

New Member Mentoring Coordinator: Jeff Cratty
796-3691 rjcratty@yahoo.com

Steelhead in the Classroom: Karl Joost
978-3897 joosts@pacbell.net

Member at Large: Brendan Galten
364-1671, galtenb@gmail.com

Member at Large: Penelope Gadd-Coster

Member at Large: Tim Reuling

Coordinators

Day Fishers & Fly Tying: Lee Soares
974-2651 frommewee@comcast.net

Casting Pond Steward: Doug Mackay
575-5709 demackay@sonic.net

Casting Pond Monitor: Binky Castleberry
477-2805 fsh2xslc@att.net

Conservation Chairman: Charlie Schneider and Tom Greer

Russian River Fly Fishers
c/o Mike Spurlock
20 San Domingo Way
Novato, CA 94945



Russian River Fly Fishers Membership Application

I acknowledge in this agreement, and fully understand, that it is a release of liability. I further acknowledge that I am waiving any right that I may have to bring legal action or to assert a claim against Russian River Fly Fishers (RRFF) for its negligence. Any member who invites a non-member (including member's spouse and family) agrees that such guest is bound by the same conditions and agrees to so advise the guest. I have read this statement and agree to its terms as a condition of my membership in the Russian River Fly Fishers. This agreement is valid for all RRFF sanctioned events, (fishing outings, picnics, meetings).

Name _____ Date _____ Referred by _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home Phone _ _____ Work Phone _ _____ E-mail Address* _____

Main Interests in the Club? _____

Occupation _____ Signature _____

*Required for e-mail newsletter

Please mark one of the following categories:

I apply as a new member: **Single membership** - \$50 annual dues **Gold membership** - \$1,000.00 (one-time)

Family membership - \$55 annual dues

[JOIN ONLINE @ www.rrflyfisher.org](http://www.rrflyfisher.org)

Junior membership - \$25 annual dues

Existing membership renewal: **Single membership** - \$50 annual dues

Gold membership - \$1,000.00 (one-time)

Family membership - \$55 annual dues

[RENEW ONLINE @ www.rrflyfisher.org](http://www.rrflyfisher.org)

Junior membership - \$25 annual dues

Choose any areas you want help with:

I would like help learning or improving my cast. I would like advice on fishing equipment. I would like a lesson in tying knots

I would like a lesson in tying flies. I would like to have an experienced member mentor me on local waters or on a club outing.

Dues paid by a new member joining the RRFF after March 1st of any year will cover the balance of that year and also the membership dues for the following fiscal year. The RRFF fiscal year runs from July 1st to June 30th

Please mail this application and your check payable to: **Russian River Fly Fishers**
c/o Mike Spurlock, 20 San Domingo Way, Novato, CA 94945