

## June Forecast

As I sit here writing Junes forecast the weather has taken an abrupt turn. This weather is so extreme that it could have an effect on Junes fishing. Last Sunday it was normal May weather, high eighty's mostly sunny. Then Monday arrived

with winds out of the Northeast 25 to 30 mpg and sixty degree high temperatures. Since then we've had gusts to 50 mpg and over 12" of rain. Three solid days of a Northeaster...



June is an exceptional month for backing reds. Normally you would look for low tides early in the morning. I like early mornings low a tides because this is when the wind is (usually) nonexistent and water temperatures are the coolest. But with this cold front we are having, it could be it won't matter what time of day the low tide is. The best fly fishing is two hours before and after low tide. This is when everything is concentrated into a much smaller area. Baitfish and crabs are no longer hidden in the oysters because the oysters are high

and dry. This gives the Redfish an opportunity for an easy meal. If they're willing to expose themselves in the shallow water around the oyster beds there is plenty of food for them to feed on. This is what fly fishermen are looking for! Feeding Redfish in 6" of water...

The best flies are ones tied with bead chain or mini lead eyes. The fly need to sink but it can't make too much of a splash or it will spook the fish. The bead chain Kwan, the Johnny Rocket and the Fox Clouser are all great flies that will work.

This is also one of the best months for fly fishing the surf. The last couple years there have been large schools of puppy drum right in the breakers at the north tip of Talbot Island. Puppy drum are small black drum in 3 to 10 pound range. They will hit flies if you present the fly in the right manner. You need to cast up current so the fly drifts naturally in the current. You must keep a straight line so that you're in contact with the fly at all times. This is not easy to do in the rolling surf. Long slow strips seem to work the best. The Stripper Swiper and the Action Crab have been two of the best flies.

There should be some reds along with the puppy drum. The reds won't be in the school drum but along the outside edges. It's usually a good idea to make a couple of casts to that deeper edge before trying for puppy drum. You might be surprised with a 10 pound red.



Blues and Ladyfish are also found in the breakers at this time of the year. Look for diving birds or spraying bait and you'll find these marauding game fish. Make sure you have a shook tippet or you're going to lose a lot of flies. I use 30lb. fluorocarbon.

The near shore waters along Florida's northeast coast is home to world class Jack fishing. Every June 25lb to 50lb Jacks can be found crashing poggy pods along with Tarpon, Sharks and everything else that love pogies. The last couple of years haven't been the best because of shortage of bait pods but this year that could change. There have already been numerous reports of poggy pods between Jacksonville and St. Augustine. If you plan on trying for these bruisers you will

need a heavy weight fly rod. A 10 weight is a minimum and a 12 weight isn't over kill. A clear intermediate sinking tip or full sinking line works best.



The first thing is to locate a bait pod. I usually zig zag back and forth between the beach and two miles out. Bait pods are easier to locate if the sun is out so it's best to start looking around 9:30 AM. Once you locate a bait pod it's best to approach it with a trolling motor. I find that a trolling motor doesn't spook the bait pod or any game fish that might be in the area. Even if you don't see a fish you still want to make several casts along each edge of each bait pod. You never know what's there. Big minnow patterns like the Surfn' Woolly, Puglisi Off Shore Minnow or The Major Bunker will all work if presented in the right way.

All the rain we've had these last couple of weeks will slow down the night fishing for Trout under the lights. It should pick back up later in June after the water clears. I'll cover this topic in next month's newsletter.

Capt. John Bottko