

Subject: Member Meeting - Back at the Elks Lodge at the Northway Mall

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From: Alaska Fly Fishers

To: Casey Andrysiak

Featuring this month's speaker, Fish Talk, Tying Clinic News, and more!



FLYLINES

Official Newsletter of the Alaska Fly Fishers

October 2016

OCTOBER GENERAL MEETING



Catching Fish Bigger Than You Are On A Fly Rod



The speaker for our October meeting will be Will Kitsos, a former Bristol Bay fishing guide who now guides bill fishermen in the blue water off Costa Rica.

Will grew up in New England, where he was miraculously transformed into an amateur fishing guide as soon as he got his driver's license. His friends would ask, "So, Will, where are WE going fishing this weekend?"

He worked at various jobs to support a self-taught addiction to fly fishing. He stumbled through casting lessons from a book, fortunately without an excessive number of unintentional piercings, and learned to fly fish -- before it was cool.

From his teens until 1977, Alaska was always in his plans, thanks to a buddy's dad who ventured by camper from Massachusetts to Alaska in '67 and proceeded to torture Will and Rick with stories and photographs of his adventure. Finally they ventured to Alaska and returned, a trip that stretched into four months. That's when Will decided he was going to be an Alaska fly fishing guide.

In the mid-'80s, that dream became a reality. Will began guiding in the Iliamna area, specializing in the pursuit of trophy rainbows or 23 years. Then, 19 years ago, he ventured to Costa Rica with three other fish-a-holic friends for a winter break.

Each winter, the trips got longer and longer. Todd Staley, who had been booking trips for Will and his buddies, became the fishing manager at Crocodile Bay Resort. Will told Todd, "Hey, if you need a hand for a while when the resort opens, I'll mow the lawn or do dishes in exchange for a trip." That led to an offer to fill in for "the fly fishing guy, which turned into the longest two weeks of his life.

Crocodile Bay resort is on Costa Rica's South Pacific Coast, with world-class catch-and-release fishing for sailfish, striped, blue and black marlin.

It's been 18 years since Will learned how to catch billfish on the fly, and taught and guided newbies to their first or old hands to their latest sailfish or marlin on the fly.

So come and hear Will talk about catching fish bigger than you on the fly. The meeting begins at 7 p.m.

PROPOSALS TO BYLAWS CHANGES

2016 AFF Proposed Bylaws Changes

Jan Schnorr

November 7, 2016

During May of this year, the membership approved one Bylaw change that addressed the membership dues cycle thereby enabling club members to join during any month and have 12 months of membership. These proposals that I am presenting to the membership are designed to fix some similar issues. Each of the following proposals will be voted on separately; they are not one proposal.

Proposal #1: The change below is designed to fill vacant positions on the Executive Board as soon as possible if the Executive Board is unable to do so. During the past several years, vacant positions have remained unfilled from four to twelve months.

ARTICLE 4 THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 2. Vacancies

In the event of a vacancy on the Executive Board, either through resignation or any other reason, the President shall **notify the membership of the vacancy in the next newsletter and** fill the vacancy by appointment from the general membership of the Club. Such appointments shall require ratification by the Executive Board. **If no appointment has been named by the next general meeting, the general membership shall fill the vacancy at the next subsequent meeting through nominations from the floor and a ballot vote.***

Proposal #2: The changes below are designed to redistribute duties among the Executive Board who may possess specific skills that improve club-operating procedures. During the past couple of years, several individuals have assumed these responsibilities so this change reflects current operating procedures. The current secretary supports this change.

ARTICLE 5 OFFICERS.

Section 4. Secretary

The Secretary shall act as recording and corresponding secretary of the Club and of the Executive Board. He or she shall have custody of and shall safeguard and keep in good order all properties of the **Club**. ~~and keep the membership rolls.**~~

Section 8. Members-at-Large

There shall be Members-at-Large on the Executive Board. ~~One of the members shall be the Tying Clinic Coordinator who shall be responsible for coordinating all aspects of the tying clinics.~~ **Members-at-Large shall keep the membership rolls and other duties assigned or delegated by the Executive Board.**

Proposal #3: The change below is designed to reference the correct Alaska Statute number that was changed during 2015 and is needed for future Gaming Permit renewals.

ARTICLE 6 DUES, FEES AND FINANCE

Section 6. Disposition of Gaming Proceeds in the event of Dissolution

Upon the dissolution of the Alaska Fly Fishers, the disposition of net proceeds from charitable gaming conducted under AS 05.15, will go to a charitable organization as defined at AS 05.15.690(~~6~~ **8**) or another qualified organization that is authorized to conduct an activity under AS 05.15.

* All underlined, bold text reflects an addition to the document

** All text that has a line through it would be deleted from the document

TYING CLINIC NEWS



Check out who won Blue Ribbons at the Alaska State Fair, during the first year that our craft was a category in the competition! We really have some talent among our AFF members. Plan on entering the fair next year or representing the club as a demonstrator. That was August.

A September tying highlight, besides our monthly fly tying clinic on the third Saturday of every month, was Pig Farm Ink's IRON FLY. AFF member Eric Booton insured that AFF was part of the festivities along with Trout Unlimited.

The October AFF fly tying clinic will be the second chance to pick up materials and rules for the **One Feather - One Hook** challenge. Though the fly tying clinic is open to the public, only AFF members are eligible to participate in this contest. A chance to win the prize will be well worth the effort to enter and any one of any skill level will have a chance. The winner will be chosen in December based on technique, creativity, originality and fishability. Entry materials, details and instructions are only available to those attending the tying clinics in September, October and November.

Watch your email to find out about other plans for the October 15th clinic besides hearing about giant steelhead and rainbows. The clinic will be at the William Jack Hernandez Fish Hatchery on Reeve Blvd at Post Road between 9am and 3pm. As always, materials and tools will be supplied for those not bringing their own outfit. If it's not already set up and you want to see how your fly behaves in the water, the testing tank is ready to be plugged into action.

Dave Rooker will be ready to provide instruction at his introductory table. But as the season cools off, we will see other members at the hatchery who are always happy to share their special skills or answer questions. This all day event is a wonderful opportunity to spend time connecting with other members and is popular as the season's change. And it may just be the day to tie the Autumn Splendor pattern!

[Cheryl Cline](#), *Tying Clinic Coordinator*

FISH TALK by Bill Hauser

One of the 43 species of fishes I discussed in my book, *Fishes of the Last Frontier*, is the Pacific Halibut, properly known as *Hippoglossus stenolepis*.

I think every Alaskan knows something about Pacific halibut and most probably find them interesting in some way. They are found in Alaska marine waters in depths of about 20 to 3,600 feet but usually in waters less than 1,000 feet. They occur continuously from the Chukchi Sea along our coast and south to Mexico. A near relative, the Atlantic halibut, is found in that other ocean. They have been reported to achieve 15 feet in length, 850 pounds in weight, and 50 years of age.

Pacific halibut spawn in deep water, as deep as 600 to 1,500 feet. Spawning is between November and March. Pacific halibut are broadcast spawners and the female releases a very large number of very small eggs. The number of eggs depends, of course, on the size of the fish and females grow larger and faster than males. The eggs are slightly buoyant, depending on the salinity of the water, and they drift with the currents. As the eggs slowly rise higher in the water column, the embryo hatches in about 15 days, depending on water temperature.

Here is an interesting fact. When Pacific halibut larvae hatch from the egg, they are only about three-eighths of an inch long, transparent, and swim upright like most other fishes. They have one eye on each side of their heads. They drift passively with the current and they eat tiny planktonic organisms. They ride the currents, rise toward the surface, and move to more shallow waters. As they grow, they become pigmented and the left eye migrates to the right side of the head. By the time they are about six months old and one inch long, they appear as a miniature version of an adult. They are pigmented on the right side while the left side remains white, both eyes are on the right side, and they settle out of the currents to take up life as highly adapted bottom fish.

Males usually reach maturity at about eight years of age and females become mature when they are about 12

years. Females grow faster and longer than males and nearly all Pacific halibut over 100 pounds are females. The largest Pacific halibut was nearly 9 feet long and reported to weigh nearly 800 pounds.

Pacific halibut are carnivorous ambush feeders. They can adjust their skin color for camouflage to match the color of the bottom and, as they settle, they do a quick flutter to create a cloud of silt and sand that settles back onto the fish to improve their camouflage even more. They eat a wide variety of foods, but bigger Pacific halibut become more dependent on other fish. On occasion, Pacific halibut rise from the bottom to feed pelagically.

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) has the responsibility for coastwide management of Pacific halibut. The IPHC needs information about the population stability and movement of halibut populations to manage effectively. Some of the more interesting research tools the fishery scientists rely on are electronic tags. These tags are much “smarter” than many other types of tags and, as the ICPH report queries, what makes the Pacific halibut researcher’s heart go pitter patter? Answer: PITs and PATs.

A PIT is a Passive Integrated Transponder tag and a PAT is a Pop-up Archival Transmitting tag. The PIT is much like the microchips that are inserted in animals for identification. Each has a unique identification signal and is inserted under the skin of a Pacific halibut. A scanner device elicits a response from the transponder and the recovery date, size, and location can be compared to release data to determine growth rate and movement. Early results are still somewhat unclear, mainly because of a low rate of returns. Nevertheless, in some areas along the coast, some migrations were substantial.

A PAT tag is even smarter. These store or archive a series of data points that include depth, water temperature, and light. They are attached to the fish externally by a thin wire that is programmed to break on a prescribed date. After it floats to the surface, the PAT transmits the stored data to a satellite along with its final position. Results from these studies confirmed that Pacific halibut migrate to deep water for overwintering and return to shallow water for summer feeding. Other results showed that some Pacific halibut moved very little in a year but others traveled long distances. One was tagged near Unimak Pass in the Aleutian Islands and a year later it was near Grays Harbor, WA. It traveled a minimum of nearly 1,900 miles.

Why is this important? The basic ingredients of any management plan include some sort of an inventory or assessment of the size and distribution of the resource. In addition to the size and distribution of the resource, it is vitally important to understand how and when fish move through various habitats and how discrete the individual populations may be so each population can be managed individually. In other words, the assessment will be made at a particular time and location and the scientist can make a harvest plan to fish in particular areas and seasons for some harvest quota of fish. However, if the fish move to some other location before or during the harvest, the plan will be bogus and under—or over—harvests of particular stocks will occur.

Although these electronic tags have not been deployed for long, they are already providing more insight about halibut migration and behavior than scientists were able to get before. Here are some results from halibut tagging studies.

Although scientists have known for some time that Pacific halibut migrate during winter from shallower water to deeper water to spawn, they have now learned that rather than moving directly offshore, they may move considerable distances adjacent to and parallel with the shore before moving to deep water. Some fish may spend two or three winter months at a depth of around 1,000 feet. Thus, extended fishing seasons may intercept fish that may have been inventoried in different fishing zones.

After about a year, 60 per cent of recaptured Pacific halibut were caught within about 6 nautical miles from their tagging site and 80 per cent within 13 nautical miles. These results suggest seasonal homing and site fidelity rather than broad-scale, general dispersal.

Are Pacific halibut of interest to Alaskans? The answer is obvious. Pacific halibut are harvested in commercial, sport, and subsistence fisheries. Pacific halibut are savored as a food fish and the halibut fishing industries, both sport and commercial, create a huge economic benefit.

(For this FISH TALK, I consulted the Fishbase website, IPHC website and the book, Fishes of Alaska.)

Do you have a question for FISH TALK? Contact Bill at karelbill@gci.net.

Bill has published *Fishes of the Last Frontier, Life Histories, Biology, Ecology, and Management of Alaska Fishes* and *Letters from Alaska, The Inside to the Outside*.

Read sample chapters – and more - at www.billhauserbooks.com.

MEMBERS' CORNER

If you have an item to sell, something to share, or even a picture to post, please share it with the club. Contact the editor at aff.flylines.ed@gmail.com



PROJECT HEALING WATERS NEWS

APHW Update

Jan Schnorr

PHW Tying Clinics

Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing (PHWFF) is dedicated to the physical and emotional rehabilitation of disabled active military service personnel and veterans through fly-fishing and fly tying education, rod building and outings. The Anchorage program offers weekly tying classes at the William Jack Hernandez Sport Fish Hatchery located on Reeve Blvd on Thursdays from 5:30 to 7:30 PM and in Wasilla at the Wasilla Veteran's Center on West Point Drive on the first and third Tuesday of the month from 5 to 7 PM. Refer to our Facebook page located at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Project-Healing-Waters-Alaska/123753750975528> to obtain updates on activities. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at PHWAlaska@gmail.com.

Volunteers Needed

PHW Anchorage is seeking volunteers who are willing to help staff tying clinics in Anchorage and Wasilla. If you know how to tie flies and want to share your expertise with others and be able to talk about fishing, please stop by one of our tying clinics and check out the action. You will meet some new fishing partners who are eager to learn and have fun fishing.

PHW AFF Kenai River Clean-Up Trip (Reported by Bob Pawlowski)

A Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing Alaska team joined in on the 24th AFF Kenai River Clean-up on September 10th. Travelling to Cooper Landing on September 9th, Bob Pawlowski (Leader) and Todd Green and Jason Boyd spent the next two days participating in the Clean-up and fishing. Bob helped Jason on his fly fishing techniques for the Kenai

River while Todd led a group on an evening fishing along the river. On Sunday, Bob, Todd and Jason were guided by retired Army Sergeant Travis Price of Fish Em charters for rainbow and dolly fishing on the middle river. Although the weather was wet and windy, everyone caught plenty of fish. And it was so nice to have the 4 veterans share their time, stories, and



comradeship on the middle river.

The trip was made possible through donations of lodging by Kenai River Drifters Lodge and the fishing charter by Fish Em LLC. Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing Alaska wants to thank both Bob and Travis for their generosity in helping our participants and volunteers to help and heal through fly fishing.



PHW Trip to Kenai River September 18th

PHW Alaska took six program participants on a trip to fish for rainbows and Dollies on the Kenai River below Skilak Lake on September 18th. It was an awesome day that started with a gorgeous sunrise on Skilak Lake where we motored to the Kenai River and proceeded to enter "trout alley" and non-stop catching action. All participants had the thrill of landing 20 inch and larger bows and Dollies plus lots of smaller fish!

Since this is a pink (Humpy salmon) year, we also caught lots of pinks. For individuals not familiar with Alaska salmon, pink salmon are not a highly prized fish especially this late in the season because they are spawning. During the spawning period, the males that average eight to ten pounds develop large heads with big shark-like teeth and huge humps on their backs. There are probably over 500,000 pinks in the river. Fortunately, they are not actively taking the beads targeting rainbows and Dollies, but they are easily snagged in the dorsal fins, tail, and hump so you have to drag them into the boat while fighting a strong river current. We fish in schools of pinks because the rainbows and Dollies co-mingle with them to eat the eggs that the pinks drop. Everyone had lots of good arm exercise during the day...



On the drive back to Anchorage, we also saw the two-foot high bore tide rolling through Turnagain Arm, which was very impressive and we were delighted to see four large pods of Beluga whales snorkeling and spouting behind the bore tide. It was truly a magical, fun filled trip.

Jan Schnorr coordinated this trip along with the help of Frank Stevens. A special note of thanks goes out to businesses and guides who helped to sponsor the trip including Alaska Fishing and Lodging (Tyland Vanlier and Damond Blankenship – guides), Alaska Fishing Service (Kevin Thurman), Ryan Hughes – guide for Ninilchik Charters, the Aspen Hotel in Soldotna, and Don Jose's in Soldotna.

To see additional photos from this trip visit the Project Healing Waters Facebook page.

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