



Newsletter January 2024

President's Message

Happy, Healthy and Peaceful New Year to all! I have been saying we have roller coaster weather for awhile. It is still valid! Last week we hit 50 and now I know if I go outside, I know I will freeze my tuchas off.

I am proud to announce that we are now a RISAA Affiliate organization. Which means that we have a voice on RISAA Legislative committee on fisheries policy from local ramp issues to federal policy.

[See Page 2 for RISAA Affiliate Organizations.](#)

Did you get your 2024 Fishing licenses? If you are over 60, you can call MA Div of Marine Fisheries 617-626-1520 You can do it for both fresh and salt at no cost. They will email and send it to you at your home address. Ah one of a few advantages of being older!

For those that missed our last meeting, you missed a highly enjoyable Holiday party. There was some excellent food and beverages, camaraderie, and good raffle prizes.

A very important **reminder**: this year is the **Club's 30th Anniversary**. We are planning a special meeting on **Feb. 27th** to celebrate this milestone. Mark this date down. If you have or know someone who has any club memorabilia, please contact Russell Glen at tdsb6078@gmail.com. If you know of any past members who have not been involved in a while, let them know and let myself or a board member know as well.

The club will be holding the annual elections for officers and board members at the February meeting. We would like to have people step up and join the board for the year. The club is only as good as what we as members are willing to put back into it. We have a solid core of individuals who are willing to donate their time and keep the club functioning. The club should not be dependent on the same small group of people year after year. Please think about stepping forward and donating a couple of hours a month to the club.

ED

ATTENTION: ALL MEMBERS

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday January 23, 2024

South Foxboro Community Center

382 South St. Foxboro, MA 02035

Time: 6:30pm to 9:00pm

Calendar

January 23rd Speaker: Dean Clark-Stripers Forever

Presenting what is going on with the fishery

February 27th 30th Anniversary Party & Elections

Any suggestions just see Ed or any board member

March 26th Speaker: Ross Kessler

Presenting a review on Bone Fishing
Gear SWAP / Fly Tying Night also

April 23rd TBD—exciting night in the works

May 28th Annual BBQ

Trips

One day outings are being planned. Any suggestions are welcome. Let myself or a board member know.

If you are interested in our Deerfield trip in early May, please contact Doug Carver at carver3781@aol.com

RHODE ISLAND SALTWATER ANGLER'S ASSOCIATION (RISAA)



AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS

The Rhode Island Saltwater Angler's Association (RISAA) believes in the sensible management of fisheries and the conservation and restoration of all marine resources. RISAA has accepted a leadership role in order to provide a unified voice to preserve and protect the rights, traditions and future of recreational angling. In order to achieve these goals, it is important for organizations who have the same goals to join together, uniting their voices and votes for the good of present and future generations of anglers. Therefore, RISAA is proud to be **AFFILIATED** with these respected organizations:



THIS MONTH'S SPEAKER

Dean Clark—Stripers Forever



seaflycapecod@gmail.com

- Current MA State Co-Chair and National Board member of Stripers Forever (volunteer).
- Former "Conservationist of the Year" awarded by the New England Outdoor Writers of America
- Co-Founder of Trout Unlimited Greater Worcester Chapter (now Central MA)
- Former director and/or board member of: MA and National Trout Unlimited; The United Fly Tyers; MA Coastal Conservation Association; and New England Fly Tyers.
- Creator and former Director of the national, award-winning Trout Unlimited, Fly Fishing Camp/School.
- Auctioneer for many fundraising events: Stripers Forever Banquet; New England Fly Tyers Annual Banquets; The M. Goldfader Conservation Fund, TU.
- Former Marketing and Development Director for the Worcester Natural History Society and the Worcester Science Center
- Former Chair of the Quabbin Watershed Advisory Board
- Created the New England Fly Tyers, Fly Tying Method and Teaching Manual and served as host for their 10-part video series based on the textbook
- Photographer and author: Yankee Magazine, Fly Fisherman Magazine, The Atlantic Salmon Journal, Trout magazine, Salt Water Sportsman magazine and former managing editor of the Roundtable magazine, at the time, the most widely distributed fly tying magazine in the world.

How to Enjoy Winter Without Fly Fishing? Bourbon, BB King, and Tying Flies.

[Ken Baldwin](#)

What are the benefits for fly fishermen learning how to tie their own flies.



A wild Alaskan Rainbow Trout caught on a custom tied Streamer

Should you learn to tie flies? That's not an easy question to answer, but I'll answer it anyway. No, not if you think it's a money-saving venture. Saving money is a good excuse to tell your spouse when you are endlessly buying fly-tying accessories and materials. But it won't lead to a positive cash flow. Like any hobby, it can become a black hole.

Add Another Dimension to Your Fly Fishing.

If you are looking for a hobby that will make you a better fly fisherman, add to your joy of fly fishing, encourage you to become more in tune with the insect life around the waters you fish, teach you more about the habits of fish, tap into your creative side, be a way to relax and tune out daily stresses, be an excuse to nurse a bourbon on ice while listening to some good music, add an extra layer of satisfaction when you catch a fish on a fly that you tied, and allow you to take a streamer pattern that works, add a few custom alterations, and now it works better, then the answer is yes, tie away.

Fly Tying as Functional Art

I'm hesitant to call myself a fly tier out or respect to the tiers out there who actually tie great looking flies. A quick deep dive into Instagram and YouTube will show you some amazing examples of tied flies that border on art.

Needing a Better Mouse Trap

I came to fly tying out of necessity. When I guided in Alaska I enjoyed swinging "Bunny Leeches" for large, wild rainbow trout. It's a basic pattern tied up of bunny fur and weighted barbell eyes. It's a simple pattern that has incredible movement in the water.



TIP: I would have my clients swing the streamer and tell them to hold on. These fish were massive and strong. You get one to hit and it's fight on. I loved watching my clients light up with excitement when a 27"+ trout would go airborne.

This is a great pattern, but I prefer it in black.

Making Adjustments that Lead to More Caught Fish

One thing I noticed while using streamers is that, despite how aggressive or violent the wild trout could be, a lot of times they would nip at the streamer's tail instead of engulfing it. You would feel a few light tugs or what I call "taps," and then the fish would be gone. It felt as if the trout was checking out what the streamer was before committing to eating. This was a problem. Most of the streamers I fished had the hook only extending to mid-body, and the tail would extend another one to two inches. The trout was able to nip at the tail, and not get hooked.

The only way I knew to fix this was to tie up my own streamers and put on a stinger hook towards the tail end of the streamer. This way, when the trout would do an exploratory nipping of the streamer's tail, the stinger hook took hold of the fish and we'd have a successful hook-up.

More Reasons to Tie Flies

There's a lot of positives in tying your own flies. I don't do it nearly enough, but when I do I can get obsessed and find myself tying every day for weeks. Especially when I'm prepping for a trip. I find out what patterns work for the water I'm going to fish, watch some YouTube tutorials, and then get at it. This works for both fresh and salt water fisheries.

If you're living in a place where fly fishing gets shut down for the winter, and you're not ready to walk away from the game, tying flies is not a bad way to stay connected. It's not fly fishing, but it can ease the wait till ice-out.

Tools to get you Started

A [basic vise](#) and a few [fly tying tools](#) are enough to get you started. Deciding on the type of flies you want to tie will determine the [fly tying materials](#) you need. Then, find a quiet space, pull up a favorite [podcast](#) or [music playlist](#), pour some sipping bourbon, and ensure good lighting. It's an enjoyable way to spend a couple of hours to close out a day.

Guided Charter Trip Raffle Captain Ray Stachelek or Captain Brian Kelly

**Tickets Available Soon. Ask any board member: \$15.00 a ticket or 2 for \$25.00.
Drawing will be for 1 raffle winner with 1 or 2 guests. Don't forget to ask your fishing buddies if they'd like to purchase tickets too!**

THE DRAWING WILL BE HELD AT THE Spring BBQ MEETING!!

Trip includes 8 hours of fly or spin fishing with Captain Ray Stachelek in RI or Captain Brian Kelly in the Plymouth MA / South Shore region

Fly Fishing's New Fly: A Creative Twist on a Natural Pattern by [Ken Baldwin](#)

One part Lynyrd Skynyrd, one part Bass Fishing, two parts Iceland.

I'm sitting at my desk, looking at a fly tied by fly fishing Guide Dagur Árni Guðmundsson and thinking, "Man, I can't wait to take this to the Brewster Flats of Cape Cod to throw to some Stripers when they are busting rain bait; or to Alaska early in the season, when the monster Rainbows are chasing the Salmon Smolt."

I've never seen a fly like this, but the moment I did, I said, "Yes, 100%, that thing will catch fish." I don't remember the last time I've been as excited about a fly as I am with this one. It's called the *Sweet Home Alabama*, tipping its cap to the Alabama rig of conventional bass fishing and the Lynyrd Skynyrd Band.

Dagur Árni Guðmundsson is a fly tyer and guide from Iceland who divides his time between guiding in Iceland and the central coast of California. During the summers in Iceland, he guides for Atlantic Salmon and brown trout. In the fall through spring, he shifts his guiding focus to California, where he targets carp, surf perch, largemouth bass, spotted bass, and striped bass.

Dagur developed the Sweet Home Alabama by adhering to a basic rule of fly fishing: match the hatch. According to Dagur, "The main forage in the bass lakes around me is shad, mostly Threadfin shad, which are around 0.5 inches to 3 inches in size." He explains, "I needed a fly that would imitate the Threadfin shad but have the drawing power of a larger fly. Something that would capture the attention of big bass while still imitating smaller forage. I've often observed bass and stripers busting on schools of bait. A single baitfish is often not enough to grab their attention when they're focused on the schooled-up bait. So, I'm essentially matching the hatch."

It's a tube fly that comes in two parts. The first part is the business end of the fly, consisting of the body with the hook that ties to the leader, mimicking a singular minnow. The second part is a tube fly made up of four smaller 'minnows' branching off the tube, with a singular lead fly at the top—no hooks. To assemble, you slide the tube section onto the line first, then tie on the section with the hook. Now, here's the cool part: you can stack more than one tube section onto the leader to increase the size of the mimicked school of minnows. With a simple addition of another tube section, you can transform from a school of 5 baitfish to a school of 9 baitfish. Dagur has knocked it out of the park with creativity.

It has to be difficult cast. I had the same concern when I first saw it. However, I quickly discovered that it's not a difficult fly to cast at all, no more challenging than some of the big streamers that have gained popularity in the last 10 years. Dagur ties both a 6-inch version and a 12-inch version of the Sweet Home Alabama. He uses a 4-weight and a 6-weight rod for the smaller pattern and fishes the 12-inch rig on an 8-10 weight rod. Personally, I practiced with the 6-inch version on a 7-weight rod and was able to cast it out 60 feet with a crosswind happening. While it's not like blasting a small shrimp pattern 90 feet, 60-70 feet is more than sufficient for most situations. When Spring arrives, I plan to fish the 12-inch pattern for Striped Bass on my 8-weight rod.

How to fish this rig is limited only by one's imagination. Cast it into a ball of bait. Throw it across and down the stream and let it swing. Tie it to a sinking line and strip it back. Tie it to a floating line and strip it back. Retrieve it fast, slow, jig it—basically, get on the water and work it as if it's a small ball of bait, doing what small balls of bait do.

Any fish that feed on small baitfish is worthy of a try. This is a relatively new fly, so the learning curve is steep. Dagur has listed 22 species of fish that have been caught on the Sweet Home Alabama. Spring time can't get here soon enough.

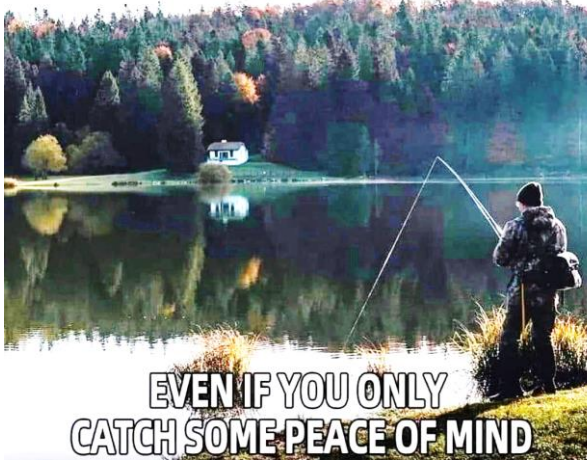
Video [DAGUR'S SWEET HOME ALABAMA | Loon Outdoors](https://loonoutdoors.com/blogs/fly-tying-videos/dagurs-sweet-home-alabama) (<https://loonoutdoors.com/blogs/fly-tying-videos/dagurs-sweet-home-alabama>)



MATERIALS

Hook	15mm shank, Ahrex Universal Hook 1/0
Thread	Semperfli Nano Silk 100 Denier - White
Arms	Super Glue 40# Monofilament
Body	Tube Fly Tubing Flashabou
Head	Rubber Legs - Red
Eyes	UV Clear Fly Finish - Thick 4mm or 5mm

SOMETIMES THE BEST THING
YOU CAN DO IS JUST GO FISHING



EVEN IF YOU ONLY
CATCH SOME PEACE OF MIND



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Please visit our website:

www.crossroadsanglers.com

For contact info on any Club Officer

This is our monthly newsletter for the 2023-2024 season. Best
Wishes to All to Continue to Stay Safe and Stay Well!
See you Soon!!