

# Rockport Fly Fishers

Volume 2 Number 7

July 2008

## The President's Note

**By Mike Cook**

Well, we are going to try again. Last month our guest speaker, Captain Brandon Shuler, had a personal problem and was not able to make the trip up from Port Mansfield. He agreed to give us his presentation this month. Brandon is with Get-Away Adventure Lodge in Port Mansfield and specializes in offshore fly fishing. The time is right for some offshore action so the timing could not be better. Fortunately Captain Jack Campbell had some recent tarpon action up in Port O'Conner and filled in for Brandon last month. Jack had some great photos of the tarpon he raised off the beach front. He hooked 16 silver kings and landed two. Fourteen of them were hooked on a fly. Somehow he managed to snap a few photos during the action. Way to go Jack! I'm just waiting for conditions to get right and run up for a day of tarpon fishing with him.

I'm still looking for guest speakers for the August and September meetings so if you have any suggestions please let me know. I have some feelers out but have not gotten a commitment from anyone yet.

My trip down to the Lower Laguna Madre did not go as well as planned. The wind blew pretty hard most of the time and fly fishing was a little difficult. I had two novice fly fishers on my boat down there and they had a tough time of it. Eventually they both caught some fish and it turned out okay. One of them had 4 or 5 shots at a giant trout. He made some really good casts but the big sow trout showed no interest at all in eating his fly.

The wind has backed off a little of late and that sure has made fly fishing easier. There were several schools of reds in South Bay and Brown and Root Flats over the past several days tailing and rooting around. Hopefully some of you had the chance to see them. The tailing action has slowed some but there are still plenty of fish out there. As conditions improve look for jacks along the Lydia Ann Channel and tarpon at the jetties or off the beach front. Get out there and catch some fish so we can hear some new fish stories.

## **JULY MEETING**

**"Offshore Fly Fishing"**

**With Captain Brandon Shuler**

**Thursday, July 31, 2008 7:00 pm**

**Rockport Senior Center  
912 S. Church St.**

**Bring your own beverages and snacks**

# Meeting Schedule

Our meetings are on the last Thursday of each month. Fly tying and casting from 6 to 7 and General Meeting from 7 to 8:30.

## July 31—Meeting

6:00p-7:00p Casting & Tying Demonstrations, Socializing.

7:00p-7:30p General Club Business

7:30p-8:15p Program

8:15p-8:30p Wrap-up/Door Prize/Raffle/Auction!

(Donations for door prize/raffle/auction needed and appreciated!)

Program Title: "Offshore Fly Fishing". Captain Brandon Shuler is a true waterman in every sense of the word. From the time he was little using a bleach bottle as a floatation device to now chasing the largest species of fish and waves around the world, Brandon has been drawn to the water. A dedicated conservationist and educator, Brandon, strives to teach others about the beauty, wonder, and fragility of the ocean.

Brandon grew up fishing freshwater with his dad until 18; then in New Hampshire and Charleston, South Carolina, he was turned on to fishing the back rivers and offshore environs of the Atlantic Ocean. After the College of Charleston, he moved to Colorado Springs, Colorado as a USA Triathlon coach at the Olympic Training Center and was introduced to the art of fly fishing. As they say, from there, the rest is history.

Since returning to Texas from years abroad, Brandon has thrown himself into saltwater fly fishing. Brandon is Getaway Adventures Lodge's resident fly aficionado. Brandon led his clients, in 2006, to two IGFA WR's and 12 Texas State Bluewater Records. Taking Texas Offshore Fly Fishing to new heights, Brandon launched the Deep Blue Fly Experience to create a community of like minded individuals. Brandon is quickly making a name for himself in tight fly fishing circles and strives to push the sport beyond its current limits.

Outside of his fishing pursuits, Brandon is a published writer in a number of regional and national publications. Currently, fishing partner Stan Nabozny and Brandon are working on a book covering their fishing exploits in the Gulf of Mexico hoping to lure more fly fisherman into the deep blue. Brandon is also the current fly fishing editor for castnshoot.com.

**August 28—Meeting.** Speaker: TBA

# Calendar of Events

## Fly Tying Roundtable

1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays (Aug 6 and Aug 20).

All Welcome! No Charge!

6:00pm to 9:00pm

Rockport Senior Center

912 S. Church St. (Loop 70 - south of Market St.)

Featured Tyers and Beginner's Table each Roundtable

BYOB&S (Bring Your Own Beverages & Snacks)

BYOFTS (Bring Your Own Fly Tying Stuff!)

**August 6th**—Open tying - Bring your material and show us how to tie your favorite fly.

**August 20th**—I am currently looking for a tyer. If anyone is interested, please let me know. If I can't find anyone, I will tie one of my favorite flies.

We need featured tyers for the round table. If you know someone who would be interested please let me know.

Contact: Ron Head

[fishinginrockport@yahoo.com](mailto:fishinginrockport@yahoo.com)

361-386-0110

## OUTINGS

August 23 — Fence Lake/St Jo Island in conjunction with Austin Flyfishers

September 19-21 — Surf Outing/PINS in conjunction with Austin Flyfishers

October 4-5 — TPWD Expo/Austin

October 17-19 — Oktoberfisch/Junction

If you wish to participate in any of these events, please contact Walter Laas at 512-294-3150 or e-mail

[wjlaas@charter.net](mailto:wjlaas@charter.net)

Walter Laas, Vice President -- Outings

## Can Fish See Above the Water?

By Mark Fisher

We've all spooked fish by letting them see us, but just how much can they see above the water? Is there anything we can do to avoid being seen?

The answer lies in a phenomenon known as Snell's Window, named for the mathematician Willebrord van Roijen Snell who first described it in 1621. Snell's Window is a round portal from which the surface world is visible from underwater. The window is formed by the refraction of light as it enters the water, causing a  $180^\circ$  view of the world to be condensed into  $97.2^\circ$ . This is because light that enters or leaves the water within the "critical angle" of  $48.6^\circ$  will be refracted and can be seen underwater; outside of the critical angle, it will be reflected away. A fish can see anything within the  $97.2^\circ$  (twice the critical angle) sight window, known as Snell's Window, but objects near the edge of the window will be severely distorted and out of focus. The greater the angle, the greater the distortion. Objects directly above the fish will appear almost completely undistorted.

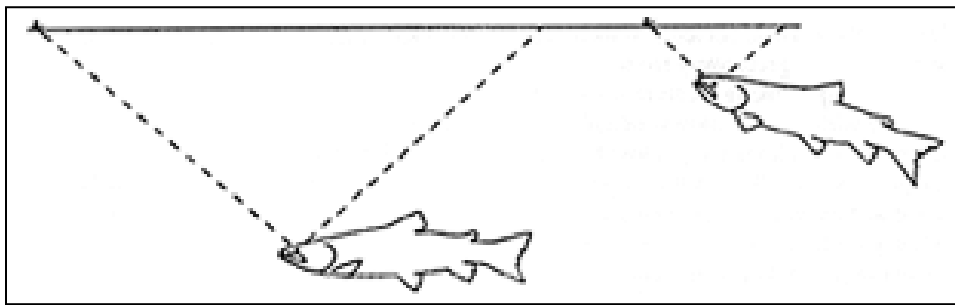


Figure 1 (from <http://www.greatoutdoors.com/published/fishing-snells-window>) depicts Snell's Window. The deeper a fish is, the larger the diameter Snell's Window becomes, although the  $97.2^\circ$  angle remains constant. The diameter is 2.26 times the water depth of the fish. Outside Snell's Window the surface of the water appears as a mirror, reflecting the bottom. If the surface is choppy, the "mirror effect" is reduced.

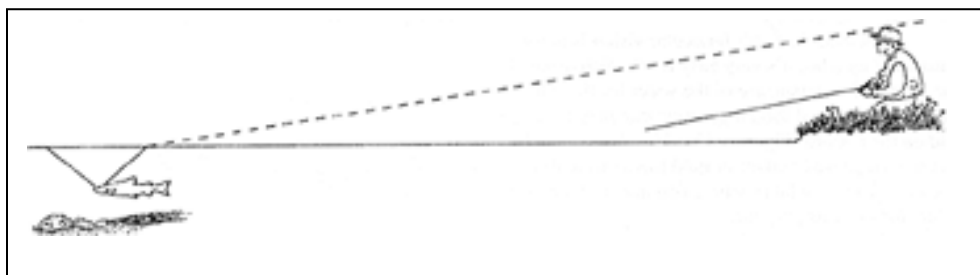


Figure 2 (from <http://www.greatoutdoors.com/published/fishing-snells-window>) shows the best defense we have against being spotted by a fish—stay low! If you can stay below about 20 degrees above the horizon, you'll be distorted and difficult to see. Avoid bright colored clothing and try to limit your movement. Remember, a fish's eye is adapted to see movement over detail. One of my favorite brown trout pools had to be slowly approached on my hands and knees; otherwise, I'd be spotted and they wouldn't take anything I offered.

Surface flies must land within Snell's Window for the fish to see it. Outside the window is a "mirror" that reflects the bottom, and a fly floating outside the Window can't be seen. We all know what happens when our fly lines land within Snell's Window!

The next time you are in a swimming pool, go underwater and look up. You can see Snell's Window for yourself!

In summary:

- Fish can see above water via Snell's Window.
- The refraction of light in water condenses the  $180^\circ$  horizon into a  $97.2^\circ$  window.
- Stay low if you do not want to be seen. Objects at a low angle will be severely distorted and difficult to see.
- A waving 9' fly rod will be visible to fish, even if you are low. A side-arm cast would be less noticeable than an overhead cast.
- Don't wear bright colored clothing that stands out from the background.



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