

Catskill Mountains Trout Unlimited

To conserve, protect and restore New York's Trout and Salmon Fisheries and their watersheds



February Meeting:

Thursday February 16th 2017, 6:30 PM

This month's speaker will be **Tracy Brown, Northeastern Restoration Coordinator, Trout Unlimited.**

Tracy has been TU's Northeastern Restoration Coordinator since 2012. She works closely with local TU Chapters and many partners to restore and protect trout habitat coordinating restoration projects in Connecticut and New York.

Note: The meeting will also include the elections for two seats on the Chapter board of directors.

Important Notice: Chapter Meeting Location and Night Change

Due to the recent change of ownership at the Hudson Valley Mall we moved our meeting location to the Marriott Courtyard, Kingston, next to the Hudson Valley Mall. ([map](#)).

This month's meeting will also be on **Thursday February 16th** instead of the usual third Wednesday of the month due to a schedule conflict at the new location. We will be back to the usual Wednesday night meeting schedule at the Marriott in March.

Calendar

- February Chapter Meeting** Thursday, February 16th, 2017, Marriott Courtyard, Kingston NY, 6:30 PM
- Speaker:** Tracy Brown / Northeastern Restoration Coordinator, Trout Unlimited
- March Chapter Meeting** Wednesday March 15th, 2017, Marriott Courtyard, Kingston NY, 6:30 PM
- Speaker:** Chapter Member Ryan Williams, Czech Nymphing
- Tie One On Event** Thursday March 30th, 2017, Keegan Ales Brewery, Kingston NY 6:30PM
- Pre-season: Fly tying Event
- April Chapter Meeting** Wednesday April 19th, 2017, Marriott Courtyard, Kingston NY, 6:30 PM

Enroll Now: Fly Fishing School

Learn to fly fish with CMTU!

No previous experience necessary. If you have your own fly rod, please bring it. If you don't own a fly rod yet, rods will be available for casting.

When: 2-hour classes meet Tuesday evenings from March 7 through April 4, 7:00-9:00PM.

Where: Ulster County Community College, Senate Gymnasium

Cost: Adult: \$100 Youth (16 and under): \$60.

Veterans receive a 20% discount as thanks for their service (\$80).

To reserve a spot [register online](#), contact Catskill Mountains Chapter of Trout Unlimited at catskillmountaintu@gmail.com or call Bob Sills at 845-338-4292.



Enroll Now: Fly Tying Classes

Learn to tie flies with CMTU!

This course teaches novice or beginner fly tying. You will learn how to tie well-proportioned and well-constructed flies for trout fishing. In addition, you'll learn to tie some of the most effective flies for local streams, and many of the basic tying techniques used on hundreds of flies.

No Experience Necessary!

When: Two hour classes meet Thursday evenings from February 23-March 23, 7:00-9:00PM

Where: Gander Mountain in Kingston

Cost The 5-week course costs \$75 for adults. \$50 for youths 16 and under. Individual classes are \$20.

To reserve a spot [register online](#), contact Catskill Mountains Chapter of Trout Unlimited at catskillmountaintu@gmail.com or call Andrew Higgins at 845-802-3861.



Fly Fishing on South Andros in the Bahamas

By Ed Meyer

If you have ever dreamed about catching a large bonefish on a fly you would be well advised to put South Andros in the Bahamas on your list of fly fishing destinations. On a recent trip in January I got my first glimpse of a spot that is well worth a visit.

Andros Island in the Bahamas is a coral limestone archipelago that is located 154 miles southeast of Miami. Sparsely populated, it contains one of the most pristine ocean ecosystems in the Caribbean region. If you like to fish, the Bahamas offer a wide variety of salt water fishing experiences. On the eastern side of the island lies the second largest barrier reef in the western hemisphere. This reef is a true natural wonder with abundant populations of snapper, grouper, spiny lobster, and conch. Just beyond this reef the ocean plunges to a depth of 6000 feet in the "tongue of the ocean" where pelagic species such as wahoo, tuna, sailfish, dorado, and marlin abound. The island is divided by a series of estuaries called "bights," which supply a continual flow of tidal water to a vast expanse of mangrove flats that lie on the western side of the island. This side of the island is a true fly fishing mecca where some of the largest bonefish in the world thrive on an abundance of crab and shrimp.

On our trip in January we took a direct flight from Newark to Nassau on United Airlines but due to icing conditions in Newark we missed our short hop to South Andros and had to spend the first night in Nassau. In the morning, the 25-minute flight to the Congo Town airport gave us our first glimpse of life on the island. To my



surprise, South Andros is an impoverished community that has suffered a population exodus during the last ten years. A third of the houses lie abandoned and there are no restaurants that you would expect at a tourist destination. After speaking with the caretaker of the house that we rented, we learned that most of the young people upon graduating from high school migrate to Nassau for employment. The primary sources of income on the island are government employment, a few small businesses, and service jobs at the bonefish lodges that cater to well-heeled fly fisherman. Many of the people on the island lead a subsistence lifestyle supplemented with part time seasonal employment. A local artist I visited told me the advice his grandfather had given him: "If you keep your freezer full of conch, spiny lobster, fish, and land crab and you have a few banana trees in the backyard, you will get by just fine."

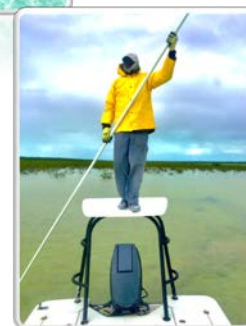
My initial plan for our trip was to spend time fishing for a variety of different species. In the month prior to our trip I contacted two guides and scheduled two bonefish charters and one offshore trip to fish for wahoo. The house that we rented came with two ocean kayaks so we also brought spinning gear to fish the reef. On the first

day of our visit our plans for a full week of fishing were quickly dashed. On the day of our arrival, the winds were howling at 30 mph, 5-foot waves were pounding the beach, and the weather reports predicted that the cold front would be with us for the entire week. With these conditions, we were forced to cancel the offshore trip, and snorkeling and fishing the reef were no longer an option. In the Bahamas during the winter months you can have beautiful sunny weather with gentle breezes and you can also expect an occasional front to move through. We were told, "You should have been here last week." When I asked our guide what he recommended as the best time to schedule a trip, he told me that March, April and May offered the best weather to fish for bonefish in the Bahamas.

Even though the conditions were difficult, we did manage to make two trips to the mangrove flats on the leeward side of the island. On day one, clouds with a spattering of light rain periodically gave way to bursts of sunlight and the winds continued to blow. In the morning, I hooked one large bonefish and despite a 16 lb. fluorocarbon tippet and a tight drag, the fish ran straight into mangroves and quickly broke off. Another fish broke off with the hook set and in the afternoon, I landed one fish that was about 3 pounds. Our guide, Bonefish Doug, informed me that I lined and spooked about a half dozen fish that I casted to but never saw. On day two, the weather improved, the sun stayed out, and the wind dropped to about 15 mph. It was on this day that I got a sense of how good the fishing can be on Andros Island. Throughout the day we had numerous shots at cruising fish but missed many of these opportunities due to poor presentations. I thought that I had a decent cast until I attempted to put 60 feet of line

accurately into a gusting 15 mph wind. Most of the time bonefish are moving targets and the guide on his elevated platform is the first person to spot the fish. Following the guide's instructions, you need to present your fly 10 to 15 feet in front of the fish and then strip the fly away from the fish. It was a humbling experience but I did manage to land 7 fish that ranged from 2 to 5 pounds. When you hook a bonefish, the explosive runs will leave an indelible impression in your psyche. According to our guide, bonefish up to 10 to 12 pounds are fairly common on Andros. If you are lucky enough to hook a fish like that, you better hope that you are in open water, just far enough from the mangroves.

On a flats trip in the Bahamas there are a variety of other species of fish that can round out your day of fishing. While planning our trip, the guide told me about the secret "Tarpon Hole" where clients have caught tarpon up to 175 pounds. He warned me that



hook ups at this spot often lead to “very long and painful struggles that test both man and tackle.” Since I do not own a 14 weight fly rod, I bought along a stiff spinning rod loaded with 60-pound braid with a 60-pound fluorocarbon leader. The guide recommended two-ounce white buck-tail jigs for the deep hole where the main channel out of the mangroves meets the ocean. When we arrived early in the morning, a number of tarpon were rolling on the surface but none showed any interest in the white jig. As I dug through my tackle bag looking for other options I happened upon a fresh bag of five inch white and pink gulp from a previous striper trip. When I added this to the jig the lure sprang to life with an enticing flutter. On the first cast, I had a hit that nearly took the rod from my hands. On the next cast I had another solid strike and this time I was able to set the hook. After two head shaking leaps and long drawn out fight I landed a 50-pound silver beauty.

Barracuda is another game species that prowls the flats looking for unsuspecting prey. After sighting a number of large specimens cruising the flats I rigged my back up fly rod with a steel leader haywire twisted to a chartreuse half and half. I had a number of fish chase and snap at the fly but a solid hook up eluded me on this trip.

Before venturing to the Bahamas be sure to practice your double haul and tie a dozen size two tan gotchas with pink rubber legs.

I will be going back and as you probably know, if you put in the time in, the reward will be yours.

Volunteer Opportunity: CMTU Stream Restoration Project

Mark the date: April 22nd 2017.

In collaboration with AWSMP and Trout Unlimited, CMTU is organizing a tree planting project along Stony Clove Creek at Wright Road on Earth Day in April.

Native trees and shrubs will be provided as part of grant TU received from Arbor Day Foundation. The goal of this project is to plant along critical coldwater streams in the Catskill Mountain Region.

Volunteers will be needed to help. More details will be shared once they are in place.

Please make your resolution to get involved in 2017. Contact catskillmountaintu@gmail.com to sign up.

Volunteer Opportunity: 2017 AWSMP Family Fun & Fish Day – Mark the Date

The 2017 AWSMP Family Fun and Fish Day Event for **Saturday, May 20, 2017** at Kenneth Wilson Campground.



CMTU Winter Fly Tying Circle

Kenco Outfitters, Kingston NY

Looking for something to do to get you through the winter and prepare for opening day. CMTU is organizing a Fly Tiers Circle each Sunday from 1PM to 3PM, from Feb 12th through March 26th. Bring your tying gear to Kenco Outfitters just off in Route 28 west of the Thruway.



Interested in becoming a Member of Catskill Mountain Trout Unlimited

Trout Unlimited is America's leading coldwater conservation organization. Our hope is that clean, cold, fishable water exists for generations to come, but we can't do it without the support of committed anglers and conservationists like you. Click here to [become a new TU member](#) and see all the great benefits of membership, or click here to [renew your existing membership](#).

Articles for CMTU Monthly Newsletter

We are always looking for articles, photos or stories for our monthly newsletter. If you have an article, photos, news for the Catskill Mountain TU community please contact Ted Hoover at the chapter email. catskillmountaintu@gmail.com

Chapter Meeting Location

February's meeting will be held at the Marriott Courtyard, Kingston NY [map](#)



From the President

Catch and Eat Fishing

I'm guessing that almost everyone reading this column practices catch and release fishing. And rightly so. As Lee Wulff said many years ago, "game fish are too valuable to be caught only once." Catch and release is a key part of maintaining healthy fish populations. Without catch and release, it wouldn't be possible to carry out Trout Unlimited's mission of preserving, protecting, and restoring North America's coldwater fisheries.

So it may sound strange when I say that it's also important, now and then, to kill a fish and eat it.

Last spring at one of my daughter's soccer games a group of parents were talking about eating meat. In the course of it, hunting and fishing came up, and several parents said they could never kill an animal. At first I thought they vegetarians, but it soon became clear that all of these people were meat eaters. They couldn't kill an animal because they thought the idea was gross. Mind you, these were people who likely ate animals every day of their lives. It's just that the animals they ate came wrapped in plastic on little Styrofoam trays.

This summer we took our annual canoe trip in the Adirondacks. On these trips, I always make sure a few of the meals on the list are fish. As I was cleaning a small bass for dinner one afternoon, my teenage daughter grabbed the head and guts and said, "let's see what it ate for dinner!" Without a pause she pulled open the stomach and found a 4" golden shiner. Faye, I'm pretty sure, will never see meat as just a product you buy in a store.

As she grows up, Faye will know intimately how her choices, even choices about the foods she eats, will impact the world she lives in. Maybe even more importantly, she'll know that she's a part of the environment, a part, even, of the food chain! And she'll know that the way to live well in the world isn't to just



stop doing things, like not eating meat, but to do things responsibly.

Let's face it, none of us are pure. We all impact the environment. Even people who don't eat meat! When I'm feeling ornery, I like to tell my vegetarian friends about all the deer shot in the fields where their soybeans grow (never mind the habitat loss caused by creating the soybean field). While modern culture likes to pretend otherwise, we're still animals, and we're still part of the environment. Nothing reminds you of that quite like eating an animal you've caught and killed.

And that's why, while it's vital to practice catch and release fishing, I think it's also important, now and then, to kill and eat a fish you've caught.

Tight lines,

Andrew

Chapter Information

President: Andrew Higgins

Vice President: Ted Hoover

Secretary: Ryan Williams

Treasurer: Ron Urban

Directors: Bert Darrow

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