



American
Fly Fishing
Literature

“Of Flats & Fishers”

2009 Exhibit

Paul and Mary Ann Ford
Fly Fishing Collection

Special Collections
Western Washington University
Libraries

What To Look For: “The “Big Three”

Most books in this exhibit are about three species of fish caught in tropical salt water shallows, called flats, by anglers who wade the beaches or cast from skiffs. These fish are known among many anglers as the “big three” of tropical flats fishing. They are that mighty leaper, the tarpon, reverently called the Silver King; the speed-demon bonefish, sometimes called the Gray Ghost or Silver bullet; and the powerful permit which should probably be called Doctor Wiley—for the permit is the very devil to interest in even the most luscious looking fly. All of the fish can be caught by “sight-fishing.” That means the angler sees the fish to which the fly is to be cast as opposed to “blind-casting” where the water is too murky or deep for the fish to be seen—and so one casts to where fish *may* be!

Anglers search beaches from Panama to Florida, from the Yucatan to the Bahamas and from Belize to the Central Pacific and Indian Ocean for one or more of these species.

Arguments flare among anglers about which of the “big three” is the “best” fish. For this angler, though, there is nothing more awe-inspiring than to “jump” (that means hook) a giant tarpon, a fish of one hundred fifty pounds or so that leaps six feet above surface and is no more than fifty feet away. The Silver King’s “in-your-face” acrobatics are breathtaking. Granted, the literally sizzling run of a six pound bonefish across shin deep flats is beyond belief. Indeed, to touch fly line or backing during that run is likely to incur a deep burn. To lure a permit that may weigh upwards of thirty pounds to a phony crab is an act of sheer brilliance and luck. But neither the “bone” nor the permit jump. Ah, but the Silver King!

Books in this section tell of vast, remote, enchanting pastel hued flats. A.D. Tinkham’s framed poster, displayed with the exhibit and executed for the cover of Jeffrey Cardenas’ **Marquesa** shows where these wondrous fish live.

The “Cool One”

A fine clutch of books is included to describe the “Cool One”—the striped bass, a purple/black-backed and silver-sided brute of summer’s shallows along America’s northern coasts. More about the striper later.

Here are the “big three” books!

Some Storytellers

Wealthy, adventurous east coast fishermen began to fish tarpon in Florida’s canals, mangroves and inshore waters by mid 19th century. Arthur W. Dimock, New York banker, owner of steamship lines and multi-millionaire at age twenty-three, discovered Florida tarpon in 1882 and thereafter pursued them with weapons that ranged from hand line to harpoon, to bait casting tackle to fly rod. What a mix!

His “mother ship” was a large sailing vessel known as the **Irene**. It carried food and potable water to last for weeks and so Dimock did not have to return to port after a day or week of fishing. He could sail Florida’s coast, cruise the Keys or anchor outside his

beloved Everglades and launch a skiff or canoe to take him where the fish swam. In 1911 he published a book that would impact Florida tarpon fishing to this day. There is nothing quite like it.

1

Dimock, A.W. **The Book of the Tarpon.** Meadow Run Press. Stone Harbor, N.J. 1995. Pp. 256. (Probably the fifth reprint of this book since its original 1911 publication by Outing Publishing Company.) Photographs by Julian Dimock. Foreword by Thomas McGuane. Introduction by Lefty Kreh. Cover art by C.D. Clarke. New in new slipcase. Edition of 1500. Dimock's stories are filled with the embarrassments of fishers who are almost always outgunned by the opposition. We see Dimock's canoe swamped by giant tarpon, his fly rods shattered by twenty pound "babies," his fly reels burned out, his lines torn apart, and his adoration for these fish of mythic jumps unabated. How could a reader not love such writing? The book is filled with some of the most gorgeous photos ever taken of jumping tarpon. Bruns, in *Angling Books of the Americas* (1975), wrote that no other book contained tarpon action-photographs to rival those made by young Julian. Dimock was the most famous of the early Florida inshore fishers.

2

Spencer-Churchill, Edward, G. **Tarpon Fishing in Mexico and Florida.** Meadow Run Press. Far Hills, NJ. 1998. Pp. 77. Introduction by Randy Wayne White. This short narrative, includes sixteen stereoscopic, 3-D view cards—no record of reprints since the first printing in London in 1906. Meadow Run edition has a leaping tarpon, gold-embossed, on the book's cover and John Rice art on slip case. Edition of 1500. New in new slipcase. Spencer-Churchill was retired British military and of some wealth who, while visiting Mexico City in 1904, discovered the lure and lore of tarpon fishing in the Gulf of Mexico off Tampico and on to Florida's west coast. He was humbled by great fish and sometimes he was victorious. He was a bait caster. Most notable, he learned to use a gaff so as not to kill Silver Kings. Dry humor pervades this well-wrought narrative.

3

_____. **Tarpon Fishing In Mexico and Florida.** Meadow Run Press. Far Hills, NJ. 1998. Pp. 77. Introduction by White. Number 7 of a deluxe limited edition of forty-five numbered copies and five presentation copies. Signed by White. Quarter bound in brown leather with gold-embossed title on spine and unique wave design on boards with gold embossed tarpon on cover. Letter-press printed on Strathmore Pastelle paper. Pages are uncut. Stereoscopic plates are included in a separate folder and may be viewed with the included lens. New in new drop-spine blue linen box with title gold-embossed in black leather on spine. This is a work of art.

4

Brown, Tosh. **Megalops: An Angler's Affair With Tarpon.** Meadow Run Press. Far Hills, N.J. 2001. Pp. 65. Photographs by the author. First edition of 1500 copies. New in new slipcase with jumping tarpon gold-embossed on book's cover. Brown is a professional journalist and publicist who has fished the Silver King from Aransas Pass in Texas to the Florida Keys to the Yucatan and Costa Rica. Interesting experiences and superb photographs drawn from distant past and immediate present.

5

_____. **Megalops: An Angler's Affair With Tarpon.** Meadow Run Press. Far Hills, N.J. 2001. Pp. 65. Number 3 of a deluxe limited edition of twenty-six. Signed. Quarter bound in green leather with silver embossed title on spine and pale green linen

boards with silver tarpon head embossed on cover. Printed on Mohawk Superfine. Separate folder contains four original Iris prints. New in new drop-spine box covered with Dartmouth green cloth with title embossed in green leather on spine.

Cardenas, Jeffrey. **Marquesa: A Time and Place with Fish**. Meadow Run Press. Stone Harbor, N.J. 1995. Pp. 121. Illustrated by A. D. Tinkham. First edition of 1500 copies. Gorgeous, inflected hand-made end-papers. New in new slipcase with A.D. Tinkham illustration on slipcase cover. Jeffrey was tired of guiding, tired of his fly shop and the rich dudes who pestered his sensibilities, and bored with the “schedule” imposed on him by obligations to magazine publishers. So, he took a sabbatical aboard his little houseboat, Huck Finn. He learned about “a time and place with fish”—tarpon, bonefish and permit. Too, he learned about a life on the water that he had only imagined, but never experienced, even after all those years as a guide on that very same water. More than a story, this is a meditation—a remarkable book.

6

_____. **Sea Level: Adventures Of A Saltwater Angler**. Meadow Run Press Inc. Far Hills, N.J. 2002. Pp. 196. Introduction by Jimmy Buffett. First edition of 1500. New in new slipcase. Inscriptions by the author to Paul Ford who edited the book. A letter to PF from the publisher is included. This is a potpourri of Texas redfish, Cuban bones, Cape Cod stripers, and sharks, barracuda, and non-flats fish. Many of these short stories were previously printed in *Fly Rod & Reel* or other magazines.

7

Cleveland, John, M. **Mangrove Tarpon: 40 Years**. National Coalition for Marine Conservation. Savannah. 1993. Pp. 95. Bound in brown leatherette with title and a hooked tarpon embossed in gold on the cover. New. This is a family fishing history from 1953 to 1993 that includes fish of Florida’s Everglades, Coot Bay, Shark River, Tarpon Bay and Lostman’s River. Snook and “sea trout” (weakfish) fall into the fisherman’s bag, along with the splendid tarpon—all caught on bait casting tackle. An important history of the changing mangrove environment.

8

Cole, John. **Tarpon Quest**. Lyons & Burford Inc. New York, 1991. Pp. 106. First edition, first printing. New in new dust jacket. Cole was a former Long Island commercial fisherman and had a successful career as owner/publisher of Maine newspapers. At age sixty-three, he and his wife Jean moved to Key West so he could catch tarpon. This tragi-comedy is about a fine fly fisher who suffers every imaginable indignity a fish could visit on his stalker. Constantly and for more than three years, Cole thrashes on the flats, often in the company of world class guide Jeffery Cardenas, and to no avail until he makes the right mistake! A wonderful bit of writing. Some of Cole’s other fine books include: *Striper*; *Salmon*; *Fishing Came First* and *Away All Boats*. Cole, who died two years ago, is among our finest storytellers.

9

Cole, John and Hawk Pollard, eds. **West of Key West**. Stackpole Books. Mechanicsburg, PA. 1996. First edition, first printing. Pp. 206. Paintings by Peter Corbin; sidebar paintings by David Harrison Wright. Frontispiece “AIRBORNE” by John Rice. Signed by John Cole. New in new dust jacket. This “coffee-table” sized book includes reminiscences of a tropical, inshore fishing paradise. Thirty-two gifted modern writers including Tom McGuane, Russell Chatham, John Cole, Jeffery Cardenas Lefty Kreh, George Reiger and Jim Harrison contributed. The art, especially

10

that of Peter Corbin is stunning. Thought-provoking, the book is for those who dream the dream of "fishing the flats."

11 McGuane, Thomas. **Nine-Two in the Shade.** Farrar, Straus and Giroux. New York. 1973. Pp. 197. First edition with portions previously printed in 1972 in *Fiction* and in *TriQuarterly*. Fine in fine dust jacket. This novel is about a fledgling Key West guide in search of bonefish, permit and himself in an age when booze and stronger stuff were part of the search for self. McGuane was one of the "gang" of roistering fishers/writers/artists who "rocked" Key West in the "sixties and seventies," but then "got religion" and moved on. This novel, like his previous two, received glowing notices in the *New York Times*. McGuane became an immensely successful novelist and screenwriter.

12 _____. **Sons.** Lord John Press. Northridge, California. 1993. Pp. 8. Unnumbered. Limited edition 106/265. Signed. Blue linen slipcase New. A moving and yet humorous short story about the father/son relationship—much of this within the context of fly fishing the flats for bonefish and permit.

Some Storyteller Technical Writers

13 Brooks, Joe. **Salt Water Fly Fishing.** G.P. Putnam's Sons. New York. 1950. Pp. 200. First edition, first printing. Fine in slightly chipped dust jacket. This is the first book written about American salt water fly fishing. Brooks wrote fishing stories for the *Miami Herald* and popularized bonefish and permit fly fishing with his columns in national magazines, *Outdoor Life* and *Field & Stream*. Brooks describes fly tackle, techniques and locales for many saltwater species, and with interesting anecdotes along the way. Joe Brooks was a world class angler/writer.

14 Babson, Stanley, M. **Bonefishing.** Harper & Row, Publishers. New York. 1965. Pp. 114. Foreword by Lee Wulff. First edition, first printing. Very fine in very fine dust jacket. This brief, but detailed account of tackle, techniques and some of the best geographic locations for bonefish in Florida and throughout the Caribbean and central America includes some attention to fly fishing, although he is more a spinning tackle type. But in those days most fishers were. Many of the so-called bonefish flies he displays, such as the Grey Ghost, are more appropriate to landlocked salmon or other freshwater species rather than anything a bonefish would ever see! Good anecdotes.

15 _____. **Bonefishing.** Winchester Press, New York. 1973. Pp. 144. Reprint. Fine in slightly chipped dust jacket. This is an enlarged version of the first edition. A detailed "Contents" has been added—thank heaven! A good read for those interested in the early popularization of bonefishing.

16 Davidson, Tom. **Bonefish B.S. and Other Good Fish Stories.** Hudson Books. Canada. 2004. Pp. 204. First edition. Signed. New in new dust jacket. This is an excellent introduction to salt water flats fly fishing. Its first chapter describes the sport's origins in the Florida Keys. Davidson writes of characters such as Capts. Billy Smith and Jimmy Albright and Albright's wife, Frankie—a lady fly tier and fisher of great distinction. Chapters by Stu Apt, Chico Fernandez and Billy Pate blaze wakes to the Seychelles, Bahamas and Christmas Island to fish for bones, permit, trevally and

tarpon. Lots of technical advice and colorful anecdotes are included together with pictures of some of the sport's finest fishers and innovators.

Kaufmann, Randall. **Bonefishing! Fly Fishing the Flats—Bonefish, Permit, Tarpon, Trevally.** Western Fisherman's Press. Moose, Wy. 2000. Pp. 415. Photography by Brian O'Keefe. Illustrations by Mike Stidham. First edition, first printing. Signed. New in new dust jacket. Book's cover has gold-embossed print. This 11 ¼ by 8 ¾ tome is Randall's masterpiece follow-up to his *Bonefishing With A Fly* (1992). Pp. 180. This 2000 publication includes attention to important science, tackle, techniques, and worldwide fishing locales. For each locale, specific information is provided regarding weather, best months to fish, where to stay, tackle and flies to use, and the guide situation. This reader's thought was: How could any one person know so much and then put it all together with the right photos and original art to create this one-of-a-kind book? Magnificent!

17

Kreh, Lefty. **Fly Fishing in Salt Water.** Crown Publishers. New York. 1974. Pp. 252. Introduction by Frank Woolner. First edition, first printing. Fine in fine dust jacket. "Lefty" is famous, indeed beloved, in the international fly fishing world for his many world-record fish, his innovative approaches to fly casting, his casting records, and hundreds of "how-to-do-it" articles and a score of books—and his good-natured manner and willingness to share his knowledge and skill. Aside from a booklet on knot tying he did with Mark Sosin, this was Lefty's first book. It explains fly-casting and ways to catch both inshore and offshore fish. Casting, tying, stalking and playing the fish—"Lefty" tells all.

18

_____. **Fly Fishing in Salt Water.** Lyons & Burford. New York. 1986. Pp. 242. Updated reprint with some copy changes and added color photos. Line drawings by Barbara Lewis. Very fine in very fine dust jacket.

19

_____. **Fly Fishing In Salt Water.** The Lyons Press. New York. 1997. Pp. 321. Third revised and fully augmented edition. First printing. New in new dust jacket. Lefty has learned some new stuff and passes it on—stalking, casting, new flies and ways to tie and how to cast from the deck of a skiff without falling overboard.

20

Samson, Jack. **Saltwater Fly Fishing.** Stackpole Books. Harrisburg, PA. 1991. Pp. 212. First edition, first printing. New in new dust jacket. Signed. Samson, a dean of American salt water fishing, writes superbly of flats fishing and we get the bonus of his words about offshore fishing.

21

_____. **Permit.** Stackpole Books. Mechanicsburg, PA. 1996. Pp. 202. Signed. New in new dust jacket. This volume is already in Special Collections in the Ford Collection. It is comprised of history, anecdotes and technical advice. Samson is a world-class fly fisher and writer whose books always attract national attention. This is a must read for the permit angler.

22

23 Sosin, Mark and Lefty Kreh. **Fishing the Flats.** Nick Lyons Books. Winchester Press. New York. 1983. Pp. 160. First edition, first printing. Very fine in very fine dust jacket. Expert writing that includes a useful chapter on fly-fishing the flats. But there is much on spinning. Nevertheless, techniques for poling and stalking hold up for one who would flats fish.

24 Sutton, Richard. **Silver Kings of Aransas Pass and Other Stories.** The Brown-White Company. New York. 1937. Pp. 352. First edition, first printing. Fine. Of prime interest to the fly fisher is Sutton's description of flies being used for tarpon at the east approach to the Panama Canal in 1909. Mostly, though, the book is of other fish species, and of hunting. Still, the references to tarpon to the fly (pp.128-136) are significant.

25 Swisher, Doug and Carl Richards. **Backcountry Fly Fishing in Salt Water.** Lyons & Burford. New York. 1995. First edition, first printing. Where do what fish hang out in warm water estuaries and mangrove swamps and how do we catch them? The authors stake us out on bonefish, snook, "baby" tarpon, sea trout, permit and redfish—all of which are good game. Accurate hand-drawn maps are included. In fact, this writer, (PF) found the very place where he spent three weeks on Great Harbour Cay in the Berry Islands as the guest of WWU Professor Emeritus Richard O. Starbird in 1976. Thanks to the authors for including that "backcountry" salt water fly fishing hangout!

Striped Bass: "The "Cool One"

Atlantic coast salt water striped bass were found first from Nova Scotia to Texas and served as a major food source for New England colonists. Late 19th century plantings were made near San Francisco and Coos Bay, Oregon. Stripers are voracious feeders slashing through schools of herring and other bait fish and they are especially fond of sand eels. Their fight is powerful and bullish, but they do not jump. Cape Cod guides "discovered" stripers to be splendid summer flats fishing targets twenty years ago and have since plastered salt water fly fishing magazines with articles and "big fish" pictures. (Note: Frank Forester was taking stripers on flies in the 1840's!) A large summer fish will weigh upwards of thirty pounds. These brutes are found on the east coast from Maine to the Carolinas and in the west, most notably from San Francisco to Oregon.

Some Storyteller Technical Writers

26 Chatham, Russell. **Striped Bass On the Fly.** San Francisco Examiner. San Francisco. 1977. Pp. 97. Paperback. First edition, first printing. (Rare signed copy.) New. This is one of the earliest American books written specifically about fly fishing for striped bass—and San Francisco waters were its birthplace. Russell's introductory paragraph subtly snubs a snob who would have nothing to do with any fish other than a trout or (Atlantic) salmon. In 1968 Russell broke Joe Brooks' record for the largest striper taken on a fly—thirty-six pounds. Over a drink Russell will claim he caught 4999 other stripers from the same place. That's true! Chatham is also a distinguished artist whose work hangs in the White House.

Cole, John. **Striper: The Story of a Fish and A Man.** Atlantic–Little-Brown. Boston-Toronto. 1978. Pp. 269. Illustrated by Marvin Kuhn. New in new dust jacket. This is a man’s life as a commercial fisher and sport fisher for his beloved striped bass. It is of a time filled with hard work, humorous stories and great fishing on northeast Atlantic beaches. More—it is a tribute to the “basse” that, as a food fish, helped America’s earliest colonists survive. Now, that very special fish needs protection if it is to survive. Superb narrative and description.

27

Gartside, Jack. **Striper Flies.** PP. by Jack Gartside. Boston. 1993. Pp. 137. Paperback. First edition of 500. Wraps Two inscriptions to Paul Ford. New. Here is everything you need to know about striper flies and how to tie them. From poppers to bucktails, to floating minnows and sliders and deep-sunk flies, Jack has them all. He has included patterns created by this country’s great striper tiers including Letcher Lambuth, Lou Tabory, Eric Leiser, Lefty Kreh, Bob Clouser, Bill Catherwood, Dave Whitlock and many others as well as Jack’s own truly innovative creations. A humorous anecdote describes new materials found in an “old woman’s” stall in an Amsterdam “flea-market.” Though he has fished the world, he most loves native waters close to his Boston home. Cigarette hanging from a lip, a drink in hand, he can tell you about stripers.

28

Karas, Nick. **The Striped Bass.** Karrmapco and Lyons & Burford. St. James, NY and New York, New York. 1993. Pp. 480. Stated first printing of second edition. (First edition published in 1973.) New in new dust jacket. This *magnum opus* contains everything anyone would want to know about the fish, its history and oceanic and freshwater distributions, catch records and fishing tackle and techniques—even what vehicles will make traction on promising beaches!

29

Meyer, Deke. **Saltwater Flies.** Amato Publications. Portland, Or. 1995. Pp. 119. Photographs by Jim Schollmeyer. Paperback. Fine. More than seven hundred flies are pictured in color together with tying instructions for each. Gorgeous pictures of everything the flats fisherman needs and, more for the off-shore fisher. Meet “Crazy Charlie” and “Black Death.” Lots to see here.

30

Mitchell, Ed. **Fly Rodding the Coast.** Stackpole Books. Mechanicsburg, PA. 1995. Pp. 322. First edition. New in new dust jacket. This is a wide-ranging “how-to-do-it” with instructions about how to “read a beach,” as well as the right tackle and flies for the right fish at the right time. A very useful “Planner” regarding when to fish New England beaches is included.

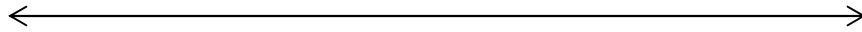
31

Reiger, George. **The Striped Bass Chronicles: The Saga of America’s Great Game Fish.** Lyons & Burford. New York. 1997. Pp. 194. Illustrated by Christopher Reiger. First edition, first printing. New in new dust jacket. This is the history of the American striped bass, fishing for this intrepid fighter and conservation measures needed to insure its future. The book is partly historical, but more important, it is the story of Reiger’s personal relationship with a fish he treasures—a brilliantly told story.

32

Tabory, Lou. **Inshore Fly Fishing.** Lyons & Burford. New York. 1992. Pp. 312. First edition, first printing. New in new dust jacket. This is a complete “how-to-do-it “ book about how to fly fish the middle and northeast Atlantic beaches and flats for striped bass, bluefish, albacore and more. Tabory’s advice covers everything from “reading” rips to selecting the proper fly tackle. The book contains a multitude of pictures and illustrations. First rate!

Introduction & Annotations by Paul Ford



Enjoy the accompanying display featuring related items, including:

A loose-leaf book of images entitled **Of Flats and Fishers**

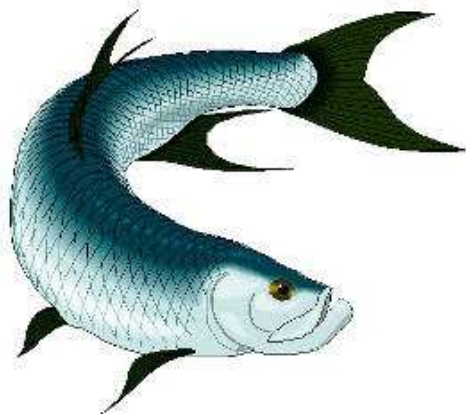
The framed A.D. Tinkham poster that illustrates J. Cardenas’ *Marquesa*

Sets of flies used for tarpon, bonefish, permit, trevally and striped bass

Examples of tarpon and bonefish taper

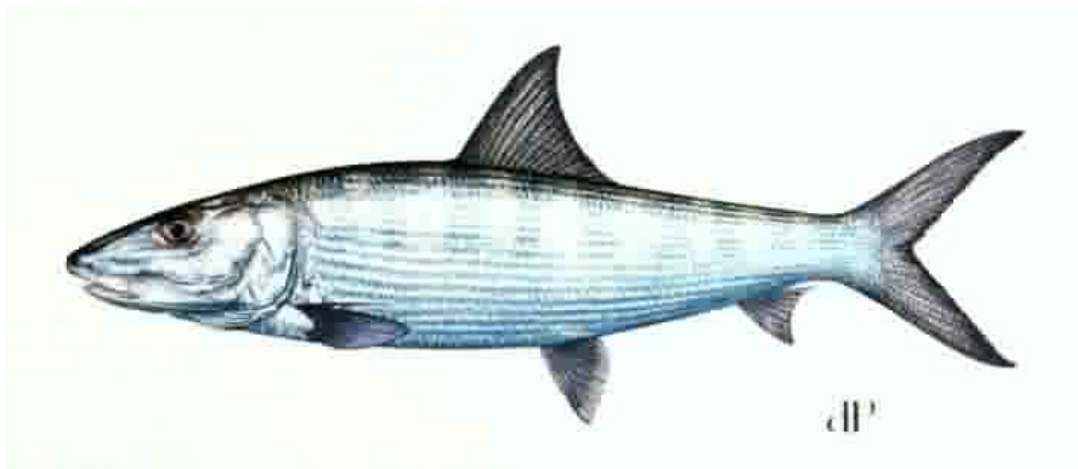
A framed map of Kiritimati (Christmas Island), South Pacific mecca of bonefish fishing, with memorabilia, including postage stamps, flies, and photographs

Rods and reels for tarpon and bonefish fishing



TARPON

STRIPED BASS



BONEFISH



Paul & Mary Ann Ford Fly Fishing Collection

Special Collections

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Bellingham, WA

www.library.wvu.edu/specialcollections

360-650-3193