

## Take The Next Step

Perhaps you have been considering fly fishing in saltwater. You are not alone. Saltwater fly fishing is the fastest growing segment of fishing all along the Texas coast. For me fly fishing means sight fishing. I see fly fishers blind casting into deep channels in hopes of a hook up. This has to be laborious and, quite frankly, very boring. The excitement comes from seeing the fish, making the cast, and watching her take your fly. To help get you started I'd like to offer the following advice.

**Take Lessons:** Fly casting has some basic fundamentals you will need to learn. Just like a golf swing, if you develop bad habits they will be very difficult to correct later. Look for a certified instructor with saltwater experience.

**Practice:** To be successful in salt water you should be able to make a quick accurate cast out to at least 40 feet.

**Equipment:** You can spend a small fortune but you don't have to. I advise you spend your money in this order.

1. **Rod:** This is your most important tool. I suggest a 9 foot, 8 weight rod. You can fish a lighter rod on calm days and a heavier rod on the really windy days but for daily use the 8 weight is the ticket. A good rod to get started with is the TiCrX from Temple Fork Outfitters
2. **Sunglasses:** Yes, I said sunglasses. A good pair of polarized sunglasses is an absolute must. If you can't see the fish you can't cast to it. Costa Del Mar offers several styles of quality sunglasses. I prefer the vermilion colored lenses for all around use.
3. **Fly Line:** You will need a quality, weight forward, floating line matched to the weight of your fly rod. I suggest the Professional Series, Flip Pallot line from Jim Teeny Fly Lines. This line is designed for a quick, accurate 40 foot cast. Spool it with 100 yards of 20# backing.
4. **Reel:** In salt water the reel is not just a place to store your line. You will need a reel that can stand up to the saltwater environment and has a decent drag. Check out the reels from Temple Fork Outfitters.
5. **Flies:** Here is where I feel local area knowledge is a must. Check the fly shops in the area you will fish for specific flies. General recommendations include shrimp, crab and minnow patterns, poppers and spoon flies. Boone Spoons makes great spoon flies and their Butter Rum Sand Flea is one of my go to shrimp patterns.

My next suggestion would be to fish with a guide that specializes in fly fishing. This will enhance your odds of catching a fish as the guide will take you to the fish and teach you how to catch them. There are several techniques in fly fishing that differ from conventional fishing. The retrieve, the hook set and playing the fish just to name a few. A guide will work with you to perfect these techniques. In my novice package trips I meet with you the day before we fish to go over several of these techniques in an effort to increase your odds of a hook up.

If you decide to go it alone think shallow. Sight fishing for red fish is usually done in water less than a foot deep. I have caught reds with their backs out of the water while I was standing only ankle deep. The fish in water that shallow can be very spooky so stealth is the name of the game.

For the angler that has progressed from live bait to lures and is ready for a new challenge fly fishing can be the next step. Take the step. With some practice and perseverance fly fishing will take you into a totally new world of fishing.