

F.A.T.C. News



Florida Antique Tackle Collectors Newsletter

Volume 39 No. 1
April 2025



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The Crisis of '53

**Stuart "Stu" Apte - Father of the Tarpon Fly
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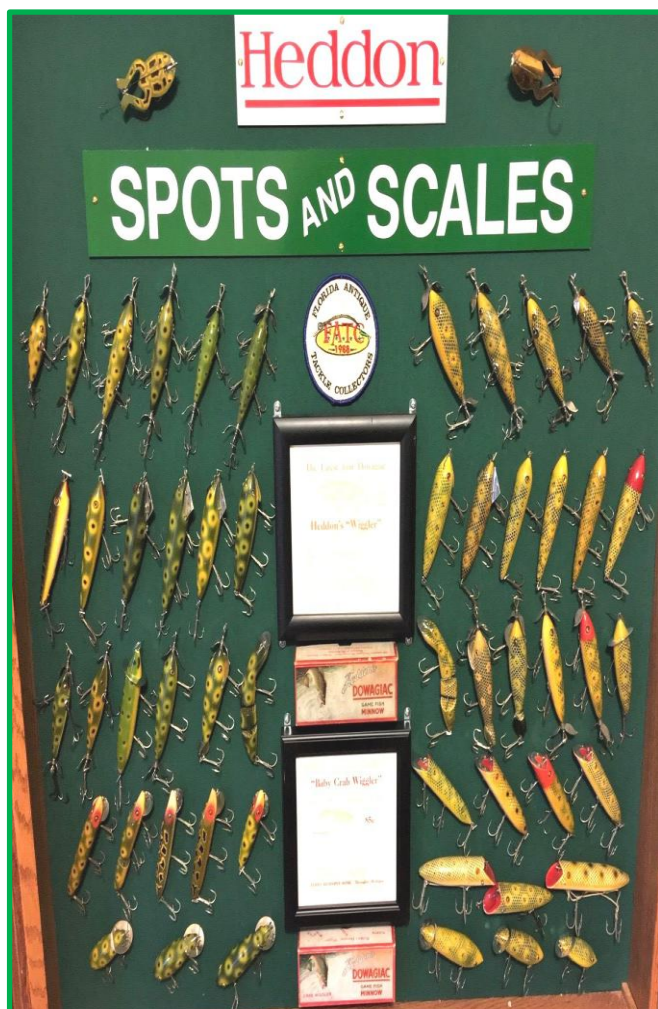
St. Augustine Show Recap

**Southern Bait Company - A Mystery
in the Making**

Additional photos are available online at:
<https://www.fatc.net/Pictures/ShowPictures/St Augustine 2025/album/index.html>

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LURES, LURE BOXES, or PAPERWORK



Joe Yates

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FATC NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
FLORIDA ANTIQUE TACKLE COLLECTORS, INC.
Spring 2025 Volume 39 No. 1

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Cover:

Colorful Florida lures don't have to be rare
or expensive to make for a fun collection

F.A.T.C. News is published tri-annually by the Florida Antique Tackle Collectors, a voluntary "not-for-profit" corporation. Past issues can be viewed online at our website: www.fatc.net

President's Message

Jim Berglund

Greetings and salutations everyone!



I would like to thank everyone for participating in the St. Augustine tackle show, and I would like to extend a special thank you to all of the volunteers who helped make it such a success. It should always be said that without the support and encouragement from our volunteers, we would not be able to have shows. If you didn't know, this was my first year as the host for our St. Augustine show. Thanks for the understanding and assistance from all. After everything was completed, it was a pretty good show with some minor bumps along the way, and I will do my best to make it better next year.

Now to jump on my soapbox and holler about all things upcoming. As we all know the prices of everything are going up and we will have to make adjustments accordingly. Anyone that has been to the grocery store and bought anything knows. This is nothing new. but I am putting it out there so that you as a member understands. We are a not-for-profit group and every one that helps does it of their own accord. Keep that in mind for when you have a complaint about anything changing. The board members don't raise prices for anything if we don't have to. If you see a problem please think about a solution and be patient with each other. All of us have knowledge that can be used to help make the shows better and if you can find a way to improve them let us know.

Jim Berglund



Editor's Corner

Joe Yates

The picture on the cover of this edition shows a half-dozen "wall-hanger" cases of miscellaneous Florida made wood lures. None are especially old, though age is relative and some may argue the point. All of the lures shown were made sometime between the 1950s and the 1980s.

There is not a single bait in these cases that I believe should cost \$100 or more. In fact, many or most of them should be available for \$20 apiece and maybe even less. These and a dozen more cases just like them hang on a wall in my den alongside my desk. Would you believe that they are among my favorite Florida lures to look at? All the bright colors and the spots and the dots make me want to smile when I see them.

Don't get me wrong, I enjoy looking at my more valuable Florida lures too. My point is simply that lures don't have to be super old, super rare, or super expensive to make a good-looking display. You can spend as much as you want or as much as you can, but you don't have to spend a fortune to end up with a pretty box of baits. It doesn't have to cost a lot of money to have fun in this hobby.

I had another real good time at the recent show in St. Augustine. One of the lures I bought for a "wall-hanger" type case only set me back two dollars. Of course, there were some others that differed in magnitude by a scale of hundreds, but they all brought a smile to my face. Among my best takes from the show was a sack of Marty's homegrown tomatoes. What a very nice and unexpected surprise! If you can't find them in the field you can likely find them at the next show. I hope to see you there!

Joe Yates





St. Augustine Show Recap



Another sell-out crowd gathered in St. Augustine, Florida for the 3rd Annual Florida International Tackle Show held over the weekend of February 21-23, 2025. The sprawling Renaissance Hotel and Resort at the World Golf Village provides a fantastic venue for sharing time and tackle with friends.

of the show. Countless stories were told and treasures such as the uncatalogued Barracuda Brand lures shown here changed hands.



Some of the early arriving members opened their rooms for socializing and trading in advance



Show host Jim Berglund arranged a team of volunteers to help with the registration desk, appraisals, awards, and the auction. A big thank you goes out to everyone who gave their time to help! We cannot do it without you.

not exactly as expected. It took a bit of scrambling to put things in order, but it all worked out in the end. Measures have been taken to avoid such confusion in the future.

The Conference Center was filled with hundreds of tables of all kinds of antique fishing tackle. A portion of the large showroom is shown here.



(continued on next page)

Someone posted an online query after show pictures had been posted on the FATC website. He commented about “many displays of collections that are wonderful to see” and asked “What is it that brings out the displays at this show. It would be nice to see more displays at all of the shows.” He received the following answer:

The purpose of the Florida Antique Tackle Collectors, Inc. is education through the collection and distribution of historical and technical data regarding fishing equipment, its development, its inventors and manufacturers from the earliest times through the present day, and to assist other groups and individuals having a similar purpose. In order to enhance the knowledge of these subjects the collection and preservation of examples of fishing tackle is to be encouraged for the benefit of present and future generations.

FATC encourages members to bring displays in order to educate fellow members and the public, which is allowed to come to all FATC shows. Awards are given at all shows in a variety of categories to recognize the best displays.

Thanks to everyone who brought a large or small display to this show. At almost every show it seems that people come up with some rare items that most of us have never seen before. It is always good to see new things and it is no easy task for the awards committee to select the best displays. This year's winners are shown here along with a small portion of the display they brought.

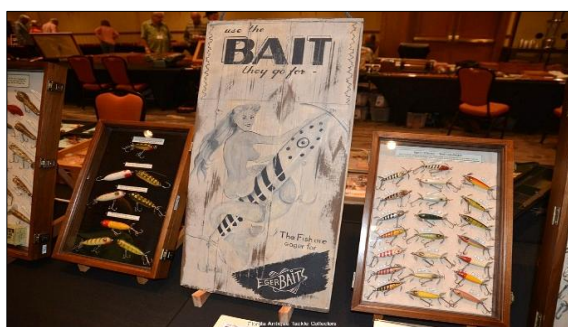
Best Educational Display: David Lindsay for his early Shakespeare collection



Best Florida Display: Lew Marshall for his Porter Bait Company display



President's Award: Jack Fenwick for his Eger collection

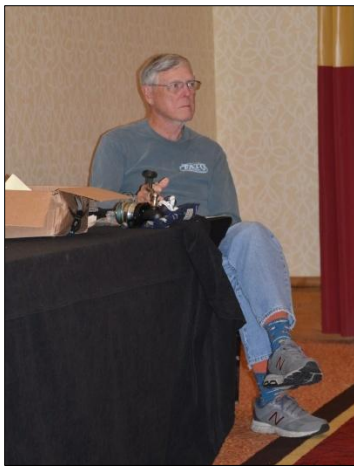


Best of Show: Arthur & Karen Edwards for their outstanding Jan Cummings display



A full house gathered for Saturday night's auction. Mike Hall and his team organized over a hundred lots of tackle for sale. Some of the items came in from the public, while the rest was donated or consigned by club members.

Rich Hart put on another entertaining performance as he efficiently ran through the evening's catalog.



Chuck Heddon recorded the auction results in real time as Patti Carey and Grace Chlastawa handled all the numbers on the back end.

Not shown here are several other folks who helped as auction runners and also Barbara Brace, who sold raffle tickets for the 50-50 drawing. As you can see, it takes a lot of



people to make this event work. They volunteer their time so the rest of us can have a good time. Please take a moment of your time to offer a word of thanks the next time you get a chance. You might also want to raise your hand to volunteer to help at the next show. It would be greatly appreciated.

Plans are being made to return to St. Augustine in February 2026 for the 4th Annual Florida International Antique Tackle Show. Details will be announced as they become available. We hope to see you there!

News From The 2025 FATC Business Meeting

The FATC Board of Directors met in St. Augustine, Florida on February 22, 2025. Among the things discussed were options for future show locations. We expect to hold a show in Altamonte Springs, Florida in September 2025 and are currently working on contract details. The Board voted to create a Show Committee to work with the Show Host and the hotel for next year's St. Augustine event. The Committee will ensure that the showroom is configured correctly before it opens. Committee Members include Larry Lucas, Mike Sims, and Tom Wilkerson. Jim Berglund volunteered to assume the open position of FATC Awards Chairman.

The 2025 Annual Business Meeting was held in St. Augustine, Florida on February 23, 2025 with the following results:

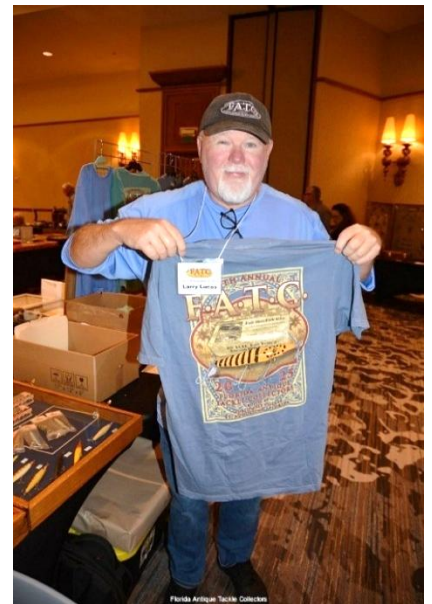
- Grace Chlastawa was re-elected as Club Treasurer for a two-year term
- Marty Concannon was elected as Club Vice President for a two-year term. Marty withdrew from the Board of Directors to serve as an Officer
- Chuck Heddon was elected to represent the South East Region on the Board of Directors



2025 FATC Shirts

A small number of the 2025 shirts made for the St. Augustine show are still available. These are very high-quality shirts and they feature a colorful graphic of an Eger Florida Special fishing lure. Contact Larry Lucas to order yours now:

Theporterguy1@gmail.com



Venue Change for the Crystal River Antique Tackle Show

FATC had originally planned to hold the Spring Antique Tackle Show scheduled for May 9-10, 2025 at the Plantation Resort on Crystal River. Unfortunately, the facility was damaged by hurricanes Helene and Milton and is not scheduled to re-open until later this year. Bernie Schultz scrambled around and came up with a new venue for the show. It will be held at the National Guard Armory in Crystal River. This is an upscale facility that hosts many events such as ours. Lodging will be at Paddletails Waterfront Lodge. The resort offers a variety of dining and recreational opportunities. The lodge is named for the graceful and lovable manatee that can be seen year-round from their docks. Guests enjoy close-up encounters with these magnificent and endangered creatures, an experience only possible in Crystal River. Activities include swimming and snorkeling with manatees, boat tours, kayaking, pontoon rentals, paddle boarding, fishing charters and much more. Look for a show flyer in this newsletter and please make your show reservations as soon as possible.



Spring Antique Tackle Show

Crystal River, Florida

May 9-10, 2025



Hosted by the Florida Antique Tackle Collectors

**Location: Crystal River National Guard Armory
8551 West Venable Street, next to the Airport**

**Lodging: Paddletails Waterfront Lodge
614 NW Highway 19, Crystal River 34428
Discounted Room Rate is \$140 Nightly.**

For Reservations Call 352-795-3171 and Mention "F.A.T.C."

**Show Schedule: Friday 8 a.m. — 5 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m. — 5 p.m.
General Public Access 9 a.m. — 4 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m. — 4 p.m. Saturday**

Online Pre-Registration: Go to www.FATC.net

Check In/Onsite Registration: National Guard Armory, Friday 8 a.m.

\$20 for Active Members (one guest admitted free)

Table Rental: 8-Foot Tables are \$40 each (no limit)

80 table show, with 20 tables being wall tables. There will be no table coverings.

**There will be a Saturday afternoon auction, time to be determined,
Breakdown will be Saturday after the show closes at 5p.m. We have to be out by 7 p.m.**

Show Hosts: Tom Wilkerson 352-209-9654 oldstufflures@gmail.com

Grace Chlastawa 352-546-5828 gatorgrace@live.com

**Area Attractions include Diving with Manatees, Fishing, Golf, Historic Landmarks,
On-the-Water Sunset & Sightseeing Tours. Many Great Area Restaurants.**



Register online at: <https://www.fatc.net/OlpCrystalRiver.htm>

or mail check payable to: F.A.T.C.

Mail to: Grace Chlastawa, Treasurer

133 Lake Susan Road

Hawthorne, Florida 32640

The Crisis of '53

A story in the December 16, 1953 edition of *The St. Petersburg Times* featured a startling headline:

OPEN SEASON ON CORK *Jewelry Fad Poses Crisis For Anglers*

The story began by saying "You can't win, Gentlemen. First it was your trousers...then it was your dress shirts...Now the little ladies have seen fit to appropriate your fishing gear. And if firm masculine steps aren't soon taken, there'll be nary an angler on Bay Area waters come trout 'season' this year."

It turns out that a new fad in women's jewelry was sweeping across the southwest part of the country. "In a move unprecedented, as far as the fishermen are concerned, the ladies have latched onto angling corks as costume jewelry accents for winter ensembles. Invading the last masculine domain, they've raided husband's tackle boxes to get raw materials for their newest craze."

A problem was noticed by Florida Fishing Tackle, Inc. when they began to receive unseasonably large orders of fishing corks from the state of Texas. The orders were pouring in by "mail, wire and telephone from scores of Texas jobbers not even listed as regular customers on Florida Fishing Tackle's rolls." Company Sales Manager, Paul Staake, learned that novelty stores had already wiped out the supply of corks normally produced by Texas manufacturers. Demand soon spread to Oklahoma and California. "The total fishing cork order from Florida Fishing Tackle had reached a record 6,000 dozen and requests were still flooding Staake's desk." While he was being interviewed for the newspaper story, "a rush order crossed Staake's desk for 18 gross to be shipped 'air express' to the area."



St. Petersburg lassies found the plain cork, sprayed with glitter, had as much charm as sequined variety.



This half cork with sequins added was sent from Texas as sample of earring fad that's swept the area.



Local variations of the bait box earring theme include this earbob made from a de-hooked spoon.

"Seriousness of the situation was pointed up by Staake in his statement that most of his stock of corks put in for the approaching season already had been virtually exhausted. 'We've been able to keep up with the demand so far because we just happened to put in an extraordinarily large supply this year, but at the rate things are going, there'll be a real shortage of fishing corks for fishing come spring'".

"On getting hold of rumors that earbobs were being made from the fishing corks in Texas, the feminine crew around the Florida plant extended the fad to include de-hooked spoons, bugs and lures and now not a bauble in the bait box is safe from the women."

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Florida made
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Papers
together or
separate**

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Call: (321) 432-9287 12 noon-11 pm Eastern only

Text or call: (321) 446-6177 anytime

Email: RobertChaffiotJr@gmail.com

GONE FISH'N

Milo Kenton Watson

West Palm Beach

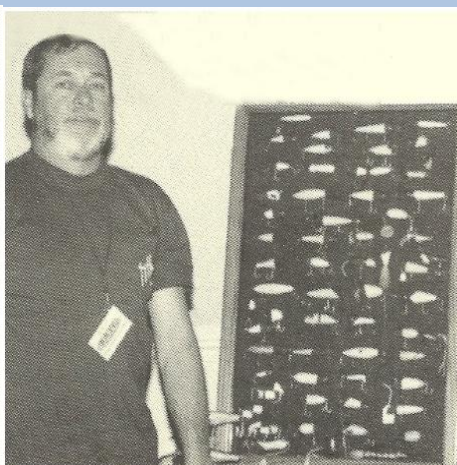
August 17, 1946 - August 29, 2024

Sadly, last summer the F.A.T.C. lost member Milo Watson from its ranks. Milo experienced a lifetime of fishing. He was an electrician by trade operating Milo's Inc., of West Palm Beach, along with his wife Marie. Both graduated Palm Beach High School in 1964. Milo was well-known to the areas tackle shops like Kleiser's and DeBay's Sport Shop; he was also active in West Palm's Flotilla Club.

At the F.A.T.C. Ft. Myers show in December 1995, Milo accepted the award for "Best Shrimp Lure" display and at Daytona's 2000 show he was recognized for his Red & White collection.



December 1995



April 2000

Neptune Society handled the services.

Billy G. Prince

Decatur, Alabama

August 7, 1943 – December 27, 2024

Lifetime F.A.T.C. Member Billy G. Prince, age 81, passed away on Friday, December 27, 2024, at River City Center in Decatur, Alabama.

Mr. Prince was born in Morgan County, Alabama on August 7, 1943. He became a Tool S Millwright in the automotive industry by trade. He was a member of Decatur Baptist Church for 32 years and served as the Chaplin for Decatur Police Department for many years.

Billy enjoyed fishing as an avid Bass Tournament Fisherman and collector of antique fishing lines and poles. He was former NFLCC Region 3 Vice President and hosted numerous NFLCC Regional Shows in Decatur, Alabama. When he wasn't fishing, he was involved in Car and Truck Shows, entering many and winning several awards.



GONE FISH'N

Richard (Dick) Arthur Braun

November 4, 1948 - December 9, 2024

Richard (Dick) Arthur Braun, 76, of Lake Placid, formerly of Punta Gorda, FL passed away on Monday, December 9, 2024, at home with his wife. Dick was born on November 4, 1948, in Fort Wayne, Indiana and was the son of the late Jack Braun and Marilyn (Miller). He was preceded by his late son David. He was a Vietnam war era U.S. Air Force Veteran. He worked several years at Jack Braun Ford, Warren, Indiana and Magnavox G&I in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. He went on to Classic Car Center in Warsaw, Indiana where he sold antique and collectible cars. He retired to Florida and owned two businesses.



Dick was known for his extensive knowledge and collection of the Zebco closed faced reels. He was called "That Zebco Guy". Dick's friends at Zebco described him as "a living legend, a walking encyclopedia of Zebco history, and a beacon of passion for the brand. He knew more about Zebco's history and products than anyone we could imagine making him an invaluable asset in cataloging and identifying reels in the Zebco museum."

Dick could be found at many local and National fishing and tackle shows. He was a member of the FATC, NFLCC, and ORCA organizations. Dick hosted several F.A.T.C. shows in Punta Gorda, Florida. He was instrumental in arranging for Zebco to sponsor the ORCA Nationals in 2019 and they produced a reel that year (their 70th Anniversary) with a limited edition of the reels with an emblem honoring ORCA given to the attendees. This year, they sent Dick the prototype for their 75th anniversary reel. They said they couldn't think of a better person to have it.

Dick was also a member of the American Legion and a lifetime member of the Vietnam Veterans of America. Through Zebco, he always enjoyed passing out fishing products like hats, tackle boxes and many other fishing related items to the children that came to the tackle shows. Dick also enjoyed collecting fishing lures and eclectic vintage rods and reels to add to his collection. He was also known for being a great storyteller. He had a story for almost every moment of his life's adventures. He enjoyed hunting and looked forward to deer season every year. He loved to be with his family and friends any time they could get together. Dick never knew a stranger. He is survived by the love of his life since childhood, Sherrill, four children, Kirk Braun (Kim), Brian Waikel (Kim), Brent Waikel (Jen), and Becky Wells (Kenny). He is also survived by his sister Dana Bearden (John) of Nashville, TN and sister-in-law Michele Hartzell (Jack); Eleven grandchildren; and eleven great-grandchildren; and many cousins, nieces, and nephews.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date in Punta Gorda as well as in Indiana. His was a life well lived, and he said he was so proud of all of his children and didn't have any regrets. He will always be remembered for the beautiful man he was. He will be missed!

Stuart “Stu” Apte - Pilot, Fishing Guide and Saltwater Angler “Father of the Tarpon Fly”

Ralph J. Hecht

A few of the anglers that were fishing in Florida in the early to mid-1900s found fly rod fishing to be very effective for catching a wide variety of saltwater species of fish that abounded there...leading Florida to becoming the epicenter for the growth of saltwater fly fishing into the sport it is today. Some of these anglers designed flies specifically tailored for a specific species, while they, and others, thrilled readers with their angling stories published in the articles and books they wrote...thus giving worldwide attention to Florida and the sport... one such angler that did both was Stuart “Stu” Apte. He is one of three people most responsible for the growth of salt water fly fishing. Many are aware of him through the article written in Volume VI of *Florida Lure Makers and Their Lures* published in 2004, as well as in the articles and books written by Stu, and the volumes written on his life’s accomplishments published on numerous internet sites. This article will focus on some of his key contributions as an author and on the flies he designed specifically for catching tarpon. Stuart Charles “Stu” Apte was born on May 11, 1930 in Miami, Florida. He graduated from Miami High School in 1948. While in high school he earned spending money tying bonefish flies for local tackle shops and won several divisions in the Metropolitan Miami Fishing Tournament. There he met Joe Brooks. Stu, like Lefty Kreh, became Joe’s protégé. As he did with Lefty, Joe taught Stu saltwater fly rod fishing, forming a close relationship that lasted until Joe’s death in 1972. After leaving the University of Miami in 1951, he became a Navy fighter pilot assigned to the USS Wasp during the Korean conflict. He developed a love of flying, and after leaving the Navy in 1955 took a job flying with Pan American World Airways, known the world over as Pan Am. Unfortunately, he was forced to leave after only two years due to over-hiring. Out of work, he decided to become a fishing guide. He got his boat captains license...starting a lifelong career in saltwater fly fishing...it became his true passion.

He moved from Miami to Little Torch Key, and later to Tavernier, becoming a guide throughout the Florida Keys specializing initially fishing for bonefish and later for tarpon and permit in the shallow waters, called locally the “Flats”. He went back to flying for Pan Am taking 90 days off to guide in the peak fishing season. In 1959 he became a full-time fish guide, fishing with such accomplished anglers as: Joe Brooks, Ted Williams, Jimmy Albright, Chico Fernandez and Lefty Kreh (Figure 1). Here he learned the skills of sight fishing in the clear waters of the Flats that harbored bonefish and especially tarpon. Here you could see the fish, but

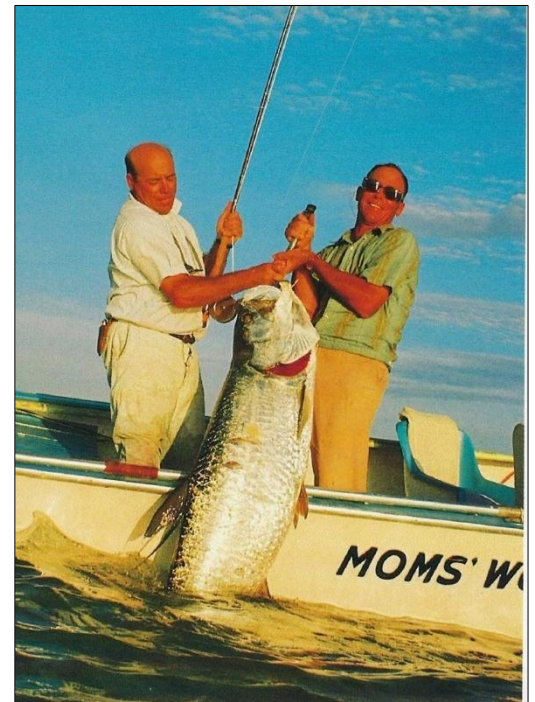


Figure 1. Stu Apte (right) and Lefty Kreh with Lefty’s big tarpon.



Figure 2. Stu Apte tied APTE TARPON FLY (photo courtesy of Ed Prichard)

easily spook them with the large flies used at that time. In the late 1950s he designed and perfected a tarpon fly for clear shallow waters...called the “APTE TARPON FLY”. It was dressed on smaller size hooks, typically size 1/0 to 3/0, and made originally in six color patterns that represented a small bait fish (Figure 2). Stu preferred using a smaller size fly that would minimize spooking the tarpon. He, like his close friend Lefty Kreh did with Lefty’s Deceiver, tied the hackle collar and tail feathers further back on the hook shank to prevent fouling the hook in casting. The body of his original fly was built of

(continued on next page)

wrapped thread coated with clear cement or epoxy. The fly became the standard fly for catching tarpon. His design was copied and altered by many tyers, and still is today (Figure 3).



Tied by Lefty Kreh



Tied by Larry Nazzaro



Tied by Doug Kimberly



Tied by Bob Kay

Figure 3. Variations of APTE TARPON FLY

Later he designed two other flies...called the "APTE TOO" and "APTE TOO PLUS" ...to be more visible in less clear waters. The APTE TOO fly was dressed with a squirrel hair collar in place of a hackle collar and had a tapered head of wrapped thread also coated with clear cement or epoxy and dressed with painted eyes (Figure 4). The APTE TOO PLUS fly had a



Figure 4. APTE TOO fly (reference Lefty Kreh *Saltwater Fly Patterns*)



Figure 5. APTE TOO PLUS fly tied by Stu Apte

rabbit hair tail in place of the feather tail, a feather hackle collar and a bulbous epoxy head with painted eyes located way forward on the hook (Figure 5). Starting around 1980, the McKenzie Fly Tackle Co. of Glide, Oregon made and sold Stu Apte tarpon flies for over ten years. In 1991 the United States Postal Service issued a block of First Day of Issue stamps commemorating fishing flies designed by John Scott, Lee Wulff, Don Gapen, Lefty Kreh...and Stu Apte. The stamp pictured one of the APTE TARPON FLY color patterns...the

(continued on next page)

yellow and orange, "Chuck Ripper" pattern (Figure 6). For Stu to be in the company of such renowned anglers was quite an honor.



Block of Stamps



Commemorative Stamp



Mr. Jason V. Elliott
563 Riverview Drive
Marshall, Wisconsin 53559

Commemorative Envelope

Figure 6. First Day of Issue stamp - APTE TARPON FLY

What will endure through time, beyond the flies he designed, will be the articles and books Stu Apte wrote on his experiences in the early days of saltwater fly fishing. He was an expert in fishing the Florida Keys, and provided documentation of his knowledge in the numerous articles he wrote for such national sporting magazines as *Field & Stream*, *Sports Afield*, and *Outdoor Life*. The book he published in 1976, entitled *Fishing in the Florida Keys*, became the must have book for the saltwater angler wishing to fish those waters (Figure 7). Stu went back to flying for Pan Am and ended his career as a Boeing 747 captain flying round trip from New York to Tokyo...a most prestigious position. After 34 years of service, he retired in 1990. In retirement, Stu continued popularizing salt water fly fishing as editor and writer for *Fly Fishing in Salt Waters* and *Shallow*

Water Angler magazines. Beyond his article and books, Stu received three Teddy awards for “excellence in film and video production devoted to the outdoors”. He gave numerous interviews on saltwater fly fishing and was a proactive champion for protecting Florida waters, especially for tarpon. In total he was credited for over 44 salt water light tackle and fly rod world records. In 1969 Stu was inducted into the Fishing Hall of Fame and in 2005 inducted into the International Game Fish Association (IGFA) Hall of Fame. In 2014 Stu published the book entitled *My Life in Fishing* (Figure 8) ...his autobiography told in “*Favorite Long Stories Told Short*”.

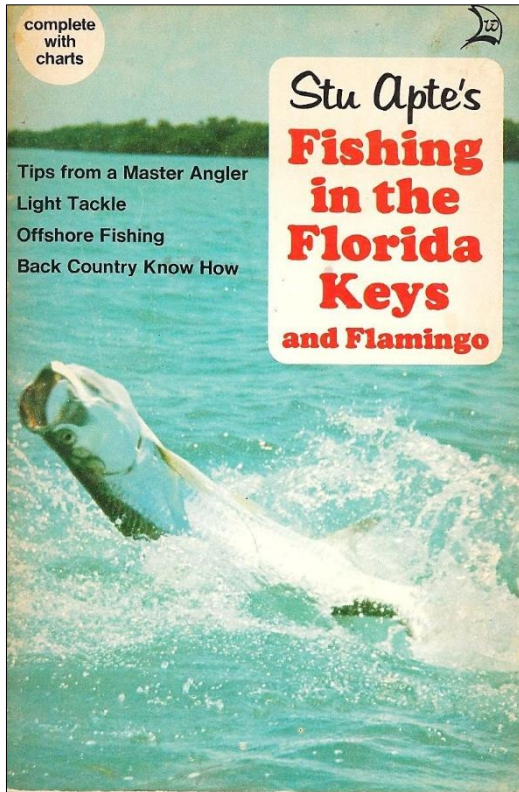


Figure 7. *Fishing in the Florida Keys* (1982 edition).

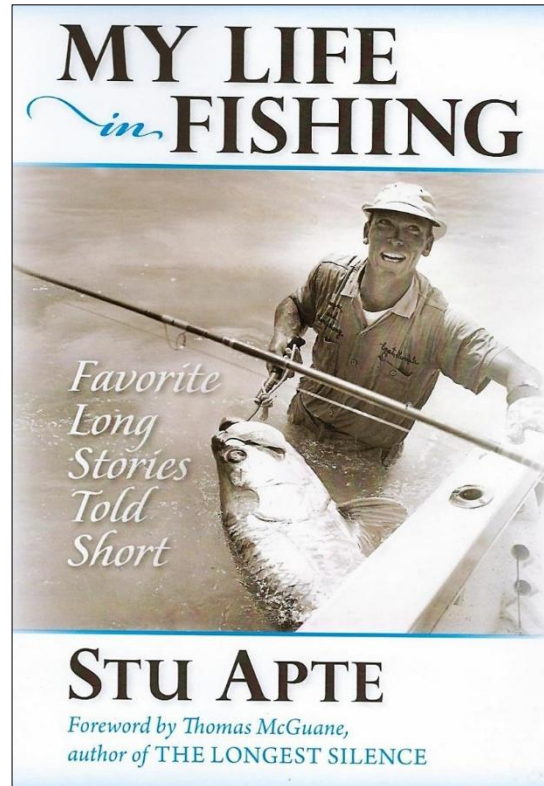



Figure 8. *My Life in Fishing*

Stu Apte lives in the Florida Keys with his wife Jeannine. Stu has left behind a legacy of his angling accomplishments through the articles and books he has written. He will long be remembered for the flies and knots he developed. The “Stu Apte Improved Blood Knot” has become one of the most durable knots used today for joining heavy monofilament to lighter monofilament. His APTE TARPON FLY and variations of it have endured through time and are still being tied and used by many anglers today. Along with Joe Brooks and Lefty Kreh, he was one of the individuals most responsible for the growth of saltwater fly fishing, especially in Florida. His passion for fishing was an inspiration to the many he fished with and to those who learned about his life and accomplishments through his writings. He has lived a life following his dreams...flying and fishing.



Tom Wilkerson
Collector & Preserver
of Antique Fishing Tackle

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Creek Chub
Pflueger
Shakespeare
South Bend

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Southern Bait Company — A Mystery in the Making

Bernie Schultz

On page 154 of Dr. Harold Smith's book titled *"Collector's Guide to Creek Chub Lures & Collectibles,"* a frog-colored lure is identified as a rare, glass-eye example of the company's No. 2000 Darter. The description goes on to say that the lure was found in a box marked "2000 Special." While it is possible the lure was packaged in that box, it's highly unlikely that it was produced by the Creek Chub Bait Company (CCBCO).

Dr. Smith's attribution went unchallenged until a recent discovery made by F.A.T.C. member Scott Jedd, when he happened upon a lure matching the description of Smith's darter. Although the paint treatment looked quite similar to CCBCO's stylized frog pattern, none of their darters ever featured glass eyes. Realizing this, Scott posted the lure on the Creek Chub, Shur Strike Facebook page, hoping to learn more.

That post sparked an immediate response, which stretched into a lengthy debate.

When I found the thread, it grabbed my attention. And upon seeing the darter in question, I quickly realized it was like one in my Florida collection. However, the example I have was found in the field in a two-piece cardboard box, identifying the maker as Southern Bait Company of Minneola, Florida.

Although this small company remains somewhat of a mystery, enough boxed lures have surfaced to confirm their true origin. Further confirmation came when F.A.T.C. Honorary Member, Joe Yates acquired a cache of Southern lures, many in various stages of production and some with glass eyes. Among them are examples of the same paint and eye treatment as the darter found by Scott Jedd, as shown below.



More on the Subject

According to an article published in the Daytona Beach News Journal in the late 1930s, the Southern Bait Company originated in Minneola, Florida. Later it was relocated to Ormond, where owner H. A. Thomas

(Continued on next page)

contracted Richard “Dick” Porter (Porter Bait Company) to produce his lures.

Over time and through the efforts of several club members, numerous Southern Bait Company boxes have been found with the towns of Minneola, Ormond and Baltimore printed on their labels. Although the company’s connection to the City of Baltimore is unclear, what is certain is that the change in designated cities occurred when Dick Porter took over production. Prior to that, the boxes were printed with “Minneola.”

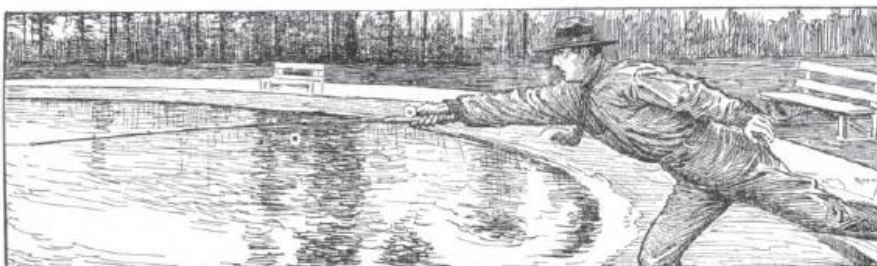
The lures contained in those various boxes range in style and treatment — some featuring glass eyes, others painted. Of the glass eye models found, some indicate the wooden bodies were drilled prior to painting, others after ... which is consistent with those found in Joe Yates’ collection.

Adding more to the mystery is a lure (pictured) that strongly resembles a Paw Paw Aristocrat Shiner. In fact, if not for having glass eyes, it could easily be confused as such. But like the darters, which were made in the late 1930s to 1940s, it too was found in a period-correct box.

Besides featuring Southern’s smaller glass eyes, what also distinguishes the lure is its very fine scale pattern and singular front prop. Aristocrat Shiners were painted with a larger scale pattern and fitted with twin props. Since Paw Paw didn’t introduce the Aristocrat Shiner until 1948, it must be assumed they patterned their lure directly after the Southern Bait Company Shiner.



One thing is certain, Southern lures possess strong eye appeal and are considered quite scarce ... especially when accompanied by an original two-piece, cardboard box.



Casting Image from American Angler – February 1918

Ron Gast
Collector of
Antique Fishing Lures & Reels



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<https://reelsnlures.com>

Thanks to all who helped with my collection!

~Chuck



Cell: 321-439-4011

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2025 FATC Membership Directory

We expect to prepare a new FATC Membership Directory for distribution in April 2025. The Membership Directory is now being sent as a PDF file by email only to all active members. A copy will be emailed only to paid members. Please check the contact information we have on file for you, **especially your email address**. Any changes should be sent to FATC Secretary by email at: secretary@fatc.net



FATC Membership Dues

Club dues are payable on March 1st of each year. Now is the time to renew your FATC Membership. For your convenience, FATC can accept online payment for membership. Payment can be made with PayPal or credit card. You can pay online at the FATC website using this link: <https://fatc.net/Membership.htm>.

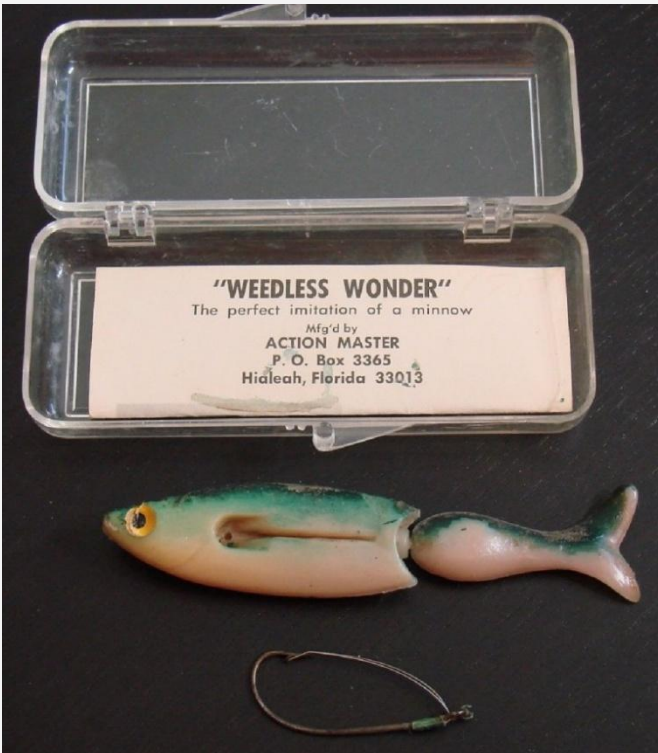
You can also mail your check for \$35 to our Secretary, Grace Chlastawa. Her address is:

FATC
Grace Chlastawa
133 Lake Susan Road
Hawthorne, FL 32640-6404

Please remember that you must be an active paid member to register or have a table at FATC shows. Your membership also must be current in order for your information to appear in the FATC Membership Directory. If you are not paid by March 31st your information will not be listed and you will not receive a copy of the Membership Directory.

Action Master Weedless Wonder

Most of everything that we know about a fishing lure called "Weedless Wonder" comes from the product packaging. The bait was manufactured by Action Master and their address is shown as P.O. Box 3365 in Hialeah, Florida.



The Weedless Wonder is seen here. The jointed body of the bait is made of soft vinyl. The two body sections are joined together by a nylon swivel. The rear section of the body spins as the lure is retrieved through the water.

A fisherman's line passes from a hole in the mouth of the lure through the body cavity and is tied to a weedless hook which is held in place by a slot in the lure body. When a fish strikes the bait the hook is free to separate from the body of the lure, making it less likely that the fish can throw the hook.

The Weedless Wonder was packaged in a hinged plastic box.

A folded paper insert described the bait as "an all new concept in fishing lures....the 'Weedless Wonder' is a fully corrosion resistant, beautifully decorated salt or fresh water lure that will bring the old moss backs to your frying pan."



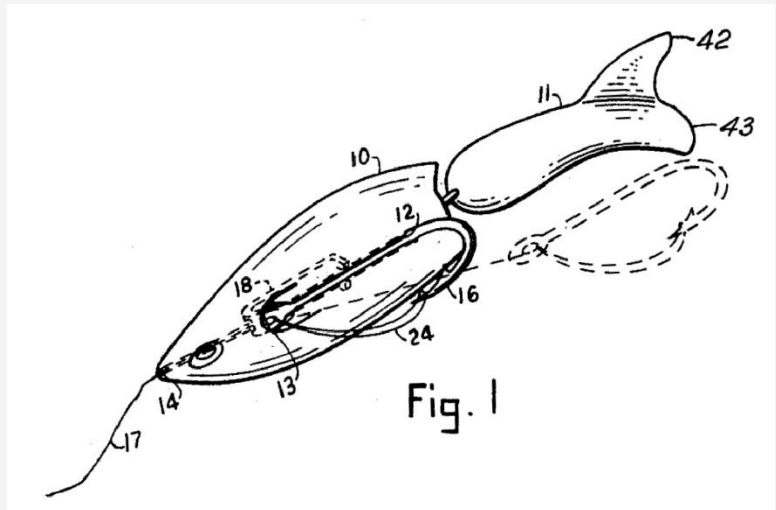
The Weedless Wonder appears to be identical to the lure pictured on the left. This bait was manufactured by Heddon and was called Commando. The Commando lure was series number 2020 in Heddon catalogs and was introduced in 1967. It was part of the Heddon product line into the mid-1970's.

(continued on next page)

We have found a patent for the lure assigned to William M. Roberts of Winchester, Kentucky. Roberts filed a patent application on August 16, 1966. Patent number 3,427,744 was granted on February 18, 1969. This illustration comes from the patent application.

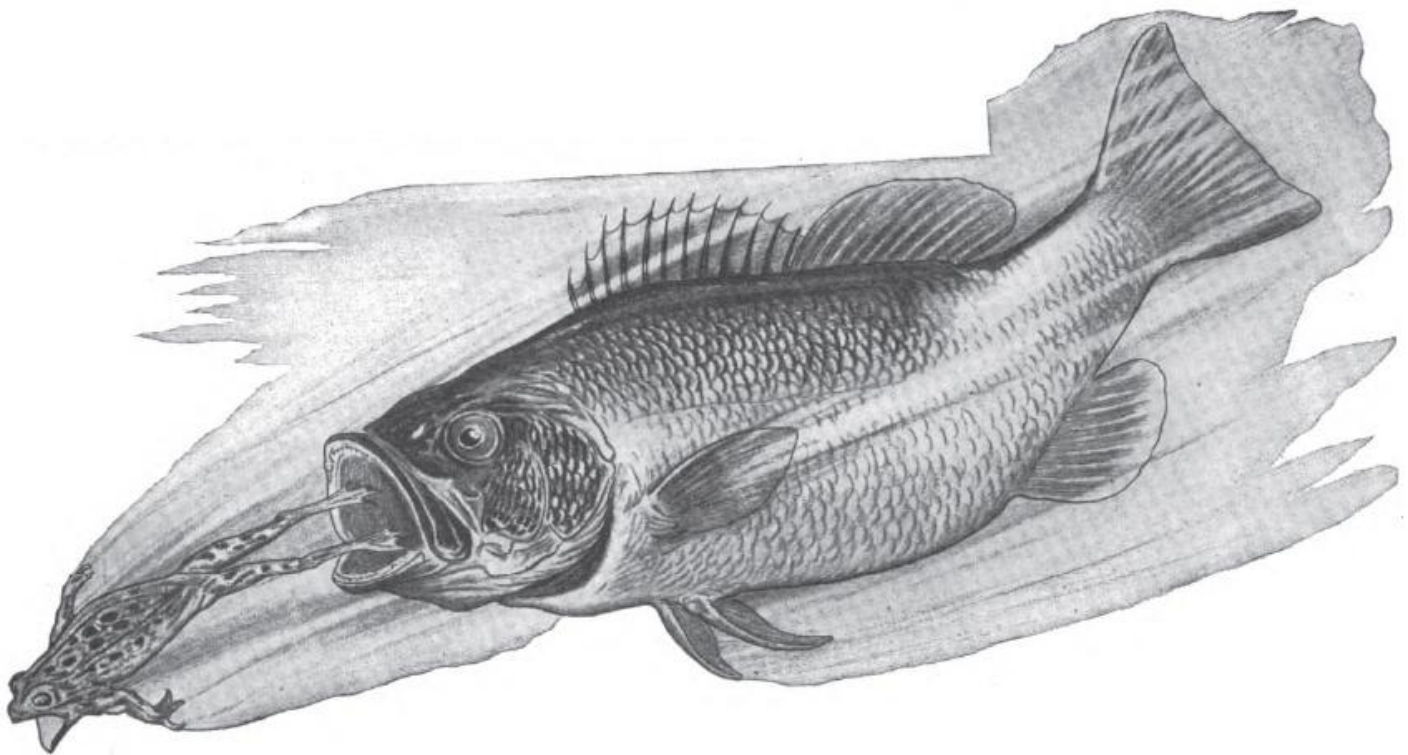
Roberts described his invention as having a "means for effecting a rotary motion to the rear or tail section of the lure and a laterally wiggling or swimming motion to the lure body as it is retrieved."

"When a fish strikes and is hooked, the hook leaves the slot and the fish can run with the hook leaving the body of the lure behind...In this way, the body of the lure stays behind as the fish is played and there is much less danger of the fish becoming unhooked."



We have not been able to find any information that connects William M. Roberts to either Heddon or Action Master in Hialeah, Florida.

It would be very difficult or impossible to tell the difference between the Heddon Commando and the Weedless Wonder unless the latter was found in its box. While the Commando lure sold by Heddon is rather common, it is very rare to find the Action Master Weedless Wonder in a box.



The Bass Almost Invariably Takes the Frog From Behind (Drawn for Forest and Stream by Louis Rhead)

This illustration appeared in the August 1916 edition of Forest and Stream

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FATC AD RATES – Effective 2020

Classified "Tackle Box" Ads {Black & White}	\$3.50	1x	\$10.00	3x
Classified "Tackle Box" Ads {Color}	\$5.00	1x	\$12.50	3x
Business Card Ads {Black & White}	\$10.00	1x	\$29.00	3x
Business Card Ads {Color}	\$15.00	1x	\$40.00	3x
1/4 Page Ads {Black & White}	\$50.00	1x	\$120.00	3x
1/4 Page Ads {Color}	\$75.00	1x	\$200.00	3x
1/2 Page Ads {Black & White} "Horizontal"	\$200.00	1x	\$450.00	3x
1/2 Page Ads {Color} "Horizontal"	\$300.00	1x	\$679.00	3x
1/2 Page Ads {Black & White} "Vertical"	\$160.00	1x	\$380.00	3x

FLORIDA ANTIQUE TACKLE COLLECTORS INC.

A NOT-FOR PROFIT EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION DEDICATED
TO THE PRESERVATION OF OUR ANGLING HERITAGE

Florida Antique Tackle Collectors Inc. [FATC] is a not-for-profit educational corporation in the state of Florida. The Purpose of the FATC is educational through the collection and distribution of historical and technical data regarding fishing equipment, its development, its inventors and manufacturers from the earliest times through present day and to assist other groups and individuals having a similar purpose. In order enhance the knowledge of these subjects, the collection and preservation of examples of fishing tackle is to be encouraged for the benefit of present and future generations.

FATC was founded in 1987, the founders felt that a statewide organization would provide additional opportunities for residents of Florida and others to learn about history of angling in Florida and elsewhere. FATC sponsors three exhibitions, open to the public, annually at different locations. At the exhibition members display their collections, interact with the public and engage in other activities in keeping with the purpose of the FATC. The FATC publishes a newsletter tri-annually and annual membership directory. FATC is not affiliated in any way with the National Fishing Lure Collectors Club [NFLCC] or the Old Reel Collectors Association Inc. [ORCA], but encourage FATC members to support those organizations.

FATC annual membership dues are \$35 Domestic, \$40 Canada, \$45 Foreign or \$700 Life Membership [Domestic], \$800 Life Membership [Canada], \$900 Life Membership [Foreign] 20x Annual dues. Please direct membership inquires or applications [with your dues] to the FATC Treasurer listed above. For membership applications, visit our website at: www.fatc.net



Spring Antique Tackle Show



May 9 -10, 2025

Best of Show

Crystal River, Florida

Calendar of Events

Crystal River Spring Antique Tackle Show

May 9-10, 2025

Paddletails Lodge & National Guard Armory



4th Annual Florida International Antique Tackle Show

February 4-7, 2026

World Golf Village – St. Augustine Florida