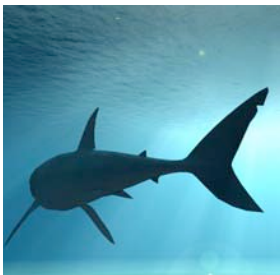


FIRST CAST

NEWSLETTER OF THE FISHERIES CONSERVATION FOUNDATION



A MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DAVID PHILIPP

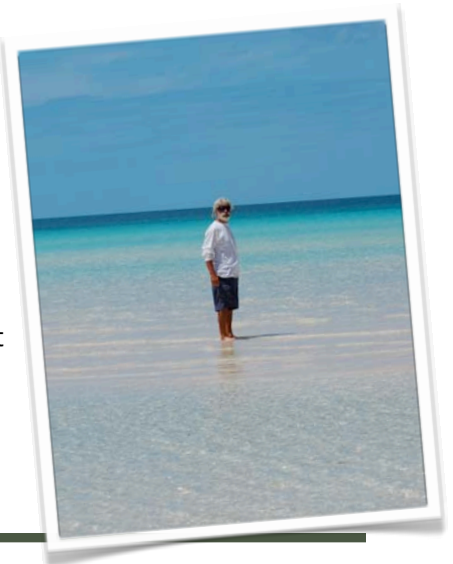
When is the last time you had one of those days on the water full of perfect moments — finding yourself at dawn in a pristine mountain stream or walking along the beach to find a hidden shallow flat without a footprint, much less another soul, in sight? Moments like these leave us reflecting how it must have been 150 years ago in these same places. They remind us of the power of being out on the water and what goes into defining a “perfect day.”

The **GOOD** news is that there are still places left on this earth that give us the opportunity to escape our everyday lives and leave us feeling like an early explorer. The **BAD** news is that the number of these places is indeed dwindling, and rapidly, and those places that do still exist are becoming more and more compromised. If we want to be able to experience our own “perfect day on the water,” and share them with our children, then we have to put a true value on these places, and we need to commit our personal time and resources to protecting them.

So...if you have a wonderful trip, catch some fish, spend quality time outdoors away from it all — that is, you experience the Good News – how easy is it for you to simply forget that the Bad News even exists? Why pay attention to the seemingly never-ending list of gloomy stories? In this day and age of being constantly bombarded via media outlets of all kinds, there are no shortages of reports about how our actions are damaging aquatic environments around the globe. Loss of habitat, overfishing, invasive species, bycatch, declining water quality, coastal development, and climate change are just a few of the issues that try to grab our attention.

As conservationists, I think we all should spend some time thinking about what it will take to convince ourselves and our friends to become more proactive. Where exactly is our own threshold of insult? When do we finally say enough is enough? Do we wait until our personal honey-hole becomes ravaged...or do we choose to become proactive before the danger signs appear? I believe that individuals choose to become involved with FCF because of their passion for the resource and their love of those “perfect days on the water.” To accomplish our mission, however, FCF needs more than our best wishes, moral support, kind words...it needs our energy and our resources.

Continued on Page 10



INTRODUCING A NEW PROGRAM WITHIN FCF: RESPONSIBLE ANGLING

For many anglers, recreational fishing is a passion, sometimes even an obsession. We simply can't imagine this sport not existing for future generations, yet many anglers have experienced a decline in the number or size of fish in our lakes, streams, rivers and oceans. The aquatic world is changing, and a vast majority of anglers are unsure of how they can adapt their angling behavior to help ensure the sustainability of fish populations.

Although governmental agencies have a responsibility to ensure the conservation of recreational fisheries, it is the users of the fisheries resource who control their own angling decisions. Where to fish, how fish are handled when caught, whether a fish is released or kept for consumption — these all are components of the resource picture. Anglers are simply the first line of defense when it comes to the conservation of recreational fisheries...but what does it really mean to practice conservation?

FCF's newly formed **Responsible Angling** campaign has the goal of **helping anglers put conservation into practice**. Within the framework of the Fisheries Conservation Foundation, Responsible Angling is working with all of the FCF campaigns to highlight and tackle important issues related to the conservation of recreational fisheries. Beyond that, Responsible Angling is taking a collaborative approach within all sectors of the recreational angling community to determine the most effective ways to reach out and inform anglers how to implement conservation best practices. Through projects that facilitate discussions and networking among members of the

fishing community, anglers will become more informed about the fundamentals of fish biology and conservation, and how the use of scientifically tested best practices can influence the sustainability of recreational fisheries.



The message of how to be a "responsible angler" is not being conveyed effectively by the popular fishing media, regional and state governments, or even angling conservation organizations. To their credit, some organizations and governments do provide some information on best handling practices for recreational angling, but most of the guidelines are based on anecdotal information rather than rigorous, unbiased testing. Quite often, the message of learning how to catch a fish comes before how to care for a fish once it is caught.



Every angler can make a difference and help ensure the future of recreational angling. Conservation begins with good information. To learn more about **Responsible Angling**, keep an eye on the FCF website or contact RA Leader, Andy Danylchuk, at info@responsibleangling.org.

THE BAHAMIAN FLATS FISHING ALLIANCE



The FCF Flats Conservation Campaign has joined with two other FCF Campaigns, Coastal 2100 and the Shark Conservation Campaign, to form a partnership with the Bahamas National Trust and the Bonefish & Tarpon Trust called the **Bahamian Flats Fishing Alliance (BFFA)**. The goal of the BFFA is to build awareness of the need for a comprehensive management plan for flats. This partnership is dedicated to protecting the coastal areas of The Bahamas and the fisheries that depend on them.

THE FLATS ECOSYSTEM: WHY WE NEED TO BE CONCERNED

The flats ecosystem represents a mosaic of shallow habitats that are integral to the structure and function of coastal marine ecosystems. As the interface between land and sea, saltwater flats are critical not only for stabilizing sediments and exporting nutrients, but also for providing vital nursery grounds for numerous fish and invertebrates. Many of the organisms that depend on the flats also have high economic value to The Bahamas through subsistence, commercial, and/or recreational fisheries.

Saltwater flats also tend to be the focus of many human activities that can disturb their natural state through habitat loss, pollution, and overfishing. Unfortunately, even though coastal development for both tourism and housing can provide important sources of revenue for communities in these regions, it can also cause the degradation of flats habitats and the loss of flats species. This issue is especially pertinent to The Bahamas, where recreational angling for coastal fishes is a considerable source of revenue for the country.



THE BFFA STRATEGY

Although saltwater flats in The Bahamas have been remarkably resilient to the impacts of limited development and fishing, some warning signs of damage are becoming evident. The BFFA is working to reduce this trend. To do so, we have formed a proactive team to promote the conservation of these critical habitats and the valuable fisheries they support.

The specific objectives of the BFFA are to:

- ↳ support collaborative research and education/outreach projects addressing the conservation and management of the Bahamian flats environments;
- ↳ develop an effective campaign to communicate the pertinent scientific findings to policy-makers, resource managers, and the general public;
- ↳ assist decision-makers in developing scientifically sound strategies to address relevant fisheries and coastal resource issues; and
- ↳ encourage public support for such strategies.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE BFFA AND HOW YOU CAN HELP, CONTACT:

Dr. David Philipp, Executive Director of FCF, at info@fishconserve.org or visit www.fishconserve.org



LEADING THE WAY TO A FLATS FISHING GUIDE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

The Bahamas is considered by many to be the premier bonefishing destination in the world. As the popularity of bonefishing increases, so does the need for a collaborative effort to ensure the sustainability of bonefish populations, flats habitats, and the tourism-based economy they support. With this in mind, the Bahamian Ministry of Tourism, through their sustainable development initiatives, is developing a guide certification program to help build capacity for the bonefishing industry. To assist in this process, the Bahamian Flats Fishing Alliance (BFFA, the combined forces of the Fisheries Conservation Foundation, the Bahamas National Trust, and the Bonefish & Tarpon Trust) facilitated a workshop in Nassau to bring together bonefishing guides, lodge owners, conservation organizations, and government officials to build consensus on the importance, content, and operational logistics of the certification program.

During their keynote addresses to over 70 attendees, the Honorable Lawrence Cartwright (Minister of Agriculture and Marine Resources) and the Honorable Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace (Minister of Tourism and Aviation) acknowledged how an internationally recognized guide certification program would help maintain high standards for customer service and conservation. Breakout sessions facilitated by members of the BFFA worked with the participants to

identify angling, conservation, business, and cultural skills that are important to include in the curriculum of the certification program. All attendees then regrouped to collectively discuss the framework of the certification program, including how it would be administered, especially given the wide distribution of guides throughout the family islands of The Bahamas. Presentations of the latest research on bonefish spawning and best practices for catch-and-release angling, as well as a progress report on the economic study (see below), were also made and discussed.

The BFFA is now working with workshop participants to produce a written summary of the workshop to be given to The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism as a way to help direct the next stage of development for the guide certification program. Once in operation, the guide certification program in The Bahamas will be the first of its kind in the world, setting very high standards for the global bonefishing community.



THE ECONOMICS OF BONEFISHING

One of the first activities of the Bahamian Flats Fishing Alliance is to fund a study to assess the economic value of recreational flats fishing to The Bahamas. Although it is generally accepted that bonefish are one of the most prized recreational fishing species on tropical flats, little has been documented on the value of those fisheries to local economies. This information is critical for demonstrating the need for and value of establishing a long-term flats conservation strategy. The study is being conducted by Dr. Tony Fedler. For more information about this study, contact David P. Philipp at dpphilipp@fishconserve.org.

ISLANDS PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

The government of The Bahamas, along with visionary philanthropists, are gathering to share ideas to inspire a more sustainable future for the people and environment of The Bahamas. A second conference in a series on small island sustainability will be held February 19 - 21, 2010, and features special guest speaker Christine Todd Whitman, former Governor of New Jersey and former Head of the EPA. Visit www.ceibahamas.org/cei.news for more information.



CAMPAIGN UPDATES

NORTH AMERICAN BLACK BASS COALITION



The 2009 Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference is being held December 6 – 9 in Springfield, IL. FCF will be sponsoring a symposium at this meeting entitled "Population Regulation in Black Bass" on Tuesday, December 8th.

The goal for this symposium is to provide a forum for the sharing of current research findings examining the forces that dictate the abundance and distribution of black bass. Following the symposium, attendees will not only have an improved understanding of basic biological factors that regulate the abundance and distribution of black bass, but also will be better able to use this basic knowledge to improve the conservation and management of wildlife populations.

The scheduled speakers are: Cory Suski, University of Illinois; David Philipp, University of Illinois & Institute for Sustainability; Geoff Steinhart, Lake Superior State University; Mike Siepker, Missouri Department of Conservation; David Sutter, Humboldt-University of Berlin; and Mike Allen, University of Florida.

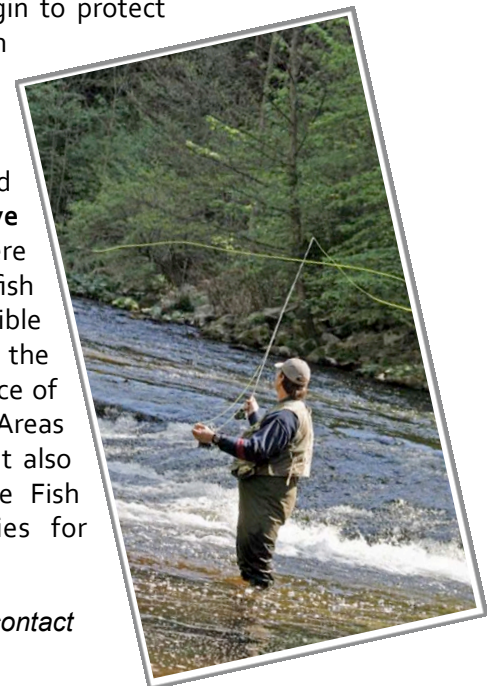
For more information visit www.fishconserve.org or contact Cory Suski at NABBC@fishconserve.org

ALLIANCE FOR NATIVE FISH CONSERVATION AREAS

Across all regions of the United States, the abundance and distribution of native fishes and other aquatic species are declining rapidly. Many of our streams and rivers have been severely degraded by dams, diversions, culverts, thermal pollution discharge, channelization, and other habitat alterations. Add in the explosive invasion of non-native species, and the result is risk of extinction in many of our native fish species. Expenditures for river restoration exceed \$1 billion annually, yet the threat of extinction for freshwater species is five times higher than that for terrestrial species. Unless we begin to protect remaining high quality habitats, along with the healthiest native fish populations, we will lose the ability to protect these treasures, including many trout and salmon populations.

The Fisheries Conservation Foundation, the Federation of Fly Fishers, and Trout Unlimited are partnering in an effort to establish a network of **Native Fish Conservation Areas**. These conservation areas are watersheds where management primarily emphasizes conservation and restoration of native fish and other aquatic species and their habitats, while also managing compatible recreational and commercial uses. The goal of this initiative is to sustain the integrity of key aquatic habitats in an effort to maintain long-term persistence of native aquatic species. Establishing a network of Native Fish Conservation Areas across North America would help not only species conservation efforts, but also provide important ecosystem services as well. Additionally, each Native Fish Conservation Area would provide numerous recreational opportunities for generations of anglers and outdoor enthusiasts.

For more about Native Fish Conservation Areas information contact Rick Williams at RS@fishconserve.org





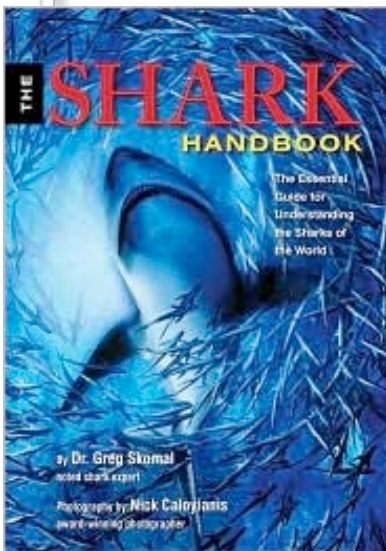
AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 139th annual American Fisheries Society (AFS) meeting was held August 30th through September 3 in Nashville, TN. More than 1,600 aquatic research scientists, resource managers, and agency administrators from around the world attended this international gathering. The annual AFS meetings provides a forum for the exchange of research on natural resource biology and management. The theme of this year's conference was: "Diversity. The Foundation of Fisheries and of AFS: Are We Gaining Ground?" Presentations explored new ideas, management practices, and current research on ensuring a sustainable future for our aquatic ecosystems.

The 140th meeting of the American Fisheries Society will be held in downtown Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania **September 12-16, 2010**, at the Westin Hotel and the David L. Lawrence Convention Center.

The Fisheries Conservation Foundation is planning to hold a Board of Directors meeting while in Pittsburgh.

For more information, go to: <http://www.fisheries.org/afs10/>



NEW SHARK HANDBOOK AVAILABLE NOW!

Our own Shark Conservation Campaign leader and noted shark expert, Dr. Greg Skomal, has recently published ***THE SHARK HANDBOOK: The Essential Guide for Understanding the Sharks of the World***. This handbook is written for the public and promotes the transfer of sound scientific information from the hands-on professional perspective of a shark biologist. Including information on over 450 species, the first section of the book covers shark evolution, general biology and life history, conservation, and the truth about attacks. The second part of the book lists and describes the many orders, families, and species of sharks. The photography, done by award-winning and *National Geographic* professional underwater photographer Nick Caloyianis, adds a vivid, colorful dimension to the text. Whether a curious observer or a true shark lover, this handbook is sure to please. Available now at your favorite bookstore.

See page 8 of this newsletter for a look at the latest work Dr. Skomal is doing for shark conservation and management.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE!

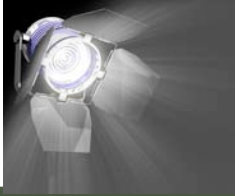
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We love feedback, so please send your comments to jastein@fishconserve.org or jclaussen@fishconserve.org





FCF SPOTLIGHTS

SPOTLIGHT ON A PARTNER: THE BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST

Happy 50th Anniversary to The Bahamas National Trust!



In 1959, The Bahamas National Trust (BNT) was established by an Act of Parliament. The BNT is a non-governmental, non-profit organization mandated with the development and management of the National Park System of The Bahamas.

Since its establishment 50 years ago, the accomplishments of the BNT have been both diverse and impressive: The first marine replenishment area in the Wider Caribbean was established by the BNT in 1986 at the Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park. The West Indian Flamingo and other endangered species have been rescued from extinction. Hundreds of thousands of acres of valuable wetlands, forests, marine environments, and tropical ecosystems have been protected.

The BNT has made a number of innovative, award-winning contributions to Bahamian environmental education and curriculum development. Several thousand Bahamian school children participate in BNT educational programs each year. With a reference library described as "the best in the region," the BNT continues to be a major resource center and clearinghouse for scholars, organizations, government agencies, teachers, and students conducting research on conservation in The Bahamas.

Some of the earliest promotion for protecting the environment as the foundation of tourism originated from the BNT. The Trust makes vital contributions to fisheries and wildlife management, environmental protection, historic preservation, coastal zone management, sustainable development, environmental impact assessment, game bird management and tourism development.



RECENT PROJECTS

In June of this year, The Bahamas National Trust began construction on a wooden boardwalk and covered observation viewing platform at Bonefish Pond National Park, a 1,280 acre mangrove wetland located on the south central coast of New Providence. This National Park is an important marine nursery for the island, providing a protective nutrient-rich habitat for juvenile stocks of fish, crawfish, and conch. The area supports a wide variety of wetland birds and provides critical protection from storm surges for the communities along New Providence's southern shore. It is one of 25 national parks and protected areas managed by the Trust.



The Fisheries Conservation Foundation is proud to have such an innovative and effective organization as the BNT as a partner in our global conservation efforts.

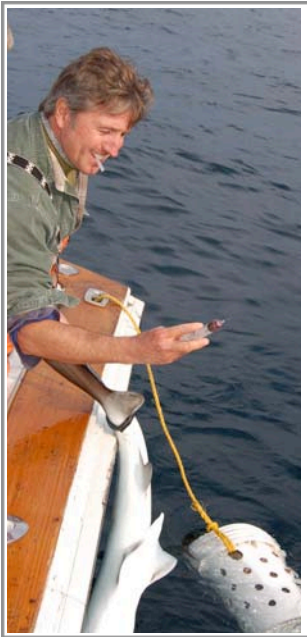
Consider becoming a member of the Bahamas National Trust and assisting them in their management of the 26 National Parks and protected areas in The Bahamas. To learn more, please visit their website at www.bnt.bs.

IN HONOUR OF THEIR 50TH ANNIVERSARY PROCLAMATION, THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS, RT. HONOURABLE HUBERT A. INGRAHAM, DECLARES 2009:

THE YEAR OF THE BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST

SPOTLIGHT ON A SCIENTIST: DR. GREGORY SKOMAL

Dr. Gregory Skomal is a marine biologist with the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries and heads the Massachusetts Shark Research Program. His research efforts have included the study of life history, ecology, movement, and physiology of sharks. He has also been involved with many educational programs for television, including the Discovery Channel, National Geographic, and ESPN. Greg was recently in the media when he led the effort to put satellite tags on five great white sharks that were sighted in the Cape Cod Area in September.



When talking about sharks, most people focus on their bite or their teeth, however, sharks have some pretty amazing biological features.

Although the sharks represent a relatively small group of fishes, they display incredible diversity in how they look and how they live. You've got the hammerhead sharks with the oddest head shape of any fish species, the lamnid sharks (like makos and whites) with their unique ability to elevate their body temperature above the surrounding sea water, and the thresher sharks with tails as long as their bodies, which they use to stun prey. And sharks have penetrated all the waters of the world from the frigid polar seas to freshwater rivers, from the surface down to thousands of feet deep. We have five senses; sharks have at least six, including the ability to sense the tiny amounts of electricity generated by other fish. These are remarkable creatures that have persisted on earth for no less than 400 million years, outlasting such great beasts as the dinosaurs. But the attributes that make them so unique, including mammalian-like reproduction (few young, slow growth), also make them particularly susceptible to overfishing. Hence, many shark populations are in trouble worldwide and we need to build an international effort to conserve these species.



Tell us what you have found to be effective when talking to the public about shark biology and conservation.

In my experience, building the bridge between scientists and the general public has been the most effective tool for educating the latter about sharks. Most people are genuinely interested in sharks and want to learn more about them. In almost every public lecture I give, I place a lot of emphasis on translating scientific discovery into everyday terms so the average person can understand the importance of these animals to our marine ecosystem. I find this very rewarding.

When did you first become interested in sharks?

I've been interested in sharks since I was a young child growing up in the 1970s watching underwater pioneers like Jacques Cousteau on TV. By the time I entered high school, I knew I wanted to be a marine biologist and, hopefully, some day have the opportunity to work with sharks. I am very fortunate to have this dream come true.

In the last few years, what are the biggest advances in research that have been made in understanding shark biology?

The invention of new technologies has allowed scientists to make some remarkable new discoveries about shark movements and behavior. These new tools include long-term acoustic transmitters, satellite-based tags, and animal-borne cameras. In almost every instance where these gadgets have been deployed on sharks, we find that the sharks are doing things we never imagined. A good example is our basking shark work. By attaching satellite-based tags to these coldwater sharks, we discovered that the wintering grounds of the world's second largest fish is actually in the tropics, forcing us to redefine the established distribution of this species. As technological advancements continue to evolve, I can only imagine the tools to which future shark scientists will have access.



For a more in-depth look at the many classifications of sharks and their features, check out Dr. Skomal's new book, entitled ***THE SHARK HANDBOOK: The Essential Guide for Understanding the Sharks of the World***, featured on page 6 of this newsletter.

FCF JOINS THE 1% FOR THE PLANET PROGRAM

FCF is pleased to be a part of the 1% for the Planet program. The environmental challenges we face are enormous. The need for businesses to lead the way is even bigger. 1% for the Planet offers a simple, tangible and proactive way for the business community to be a part of the solution. Through this program, member companies commit to donating 1% of their sales to support environmental groups around the world. In return, the growing alliance of companies is recognized as understanding the connection between a healthy economy and a healthy environment. Companies who join 1% for the Planet embrace the notion that the sustainability of the natural environment is fundamental to the sustainability of business.



www.onepercentfortheplanet.org

Companies interested in supporting our mission should visit the 1% for the Planet website to become a member company and indicate that they would like all or some of their donation to the program to be dedicated to the Fisheries Conservation Foundation. Visit www.onepercentfortheplanet.org to learn more.

iGIVE: A SAFE, SECURE & SMART WAY TO GIVE TO FCF

Did you realize you can raise money for FCF every time you shop online? With iGive.com, you don't have to choose between buying something or sending a donation to Fisheries Conservation Foundation. Now you can buy the things you need, save money with exclusive iGive coupons and deals, and feel good knowing that a portion of each purchase benefits our organization. And it costs you NOTHING. All you need to do is go to the website listed below and create your free iGive account. After that, shop through the iGive.com website. It's all automatic, and it's all free of charge. iGive values your privacy and will never release shopper information without consent. And there are no hidden fees or extra costs when you shop through iGive. Please join today!



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WE CAN ALSO SEND YOU INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO WIRE YOUR DONATION.

A MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DAVID PHILIPP

Continued from Page 1

The focus of much of this newsletter highlights work the Fisheries Conservation Foundation is doing in areas like The Bahamas, where pristine waters are for the first time encountering the "Bad News" issues of habitat loss or overfishing. It highlights efforts where we are trying to retrieve some sense of the wilderness by establishing a network of Native Fish Conservation Areas. It also introduces us, as individual anglers, to the concept of Responsible Angling.

I ask you to spend some time as the Holidays approach thinking about how you can contribute to the causes FCF is promoting. That is, think about where you feel your attention is needed most right now, and how best you can focus that attention to make a real difference.

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