

## *Rigging your Fly Rod for Success in the Salt*

Chasing redfish on the shallow flats of the Texas Coast with a fly rod is about as much fun as you can have with a fishing pole! On the other hand it can be one of the most frustrating fishing days you can imagine if your tackle is not correctly set up to fish in the conditions that exist in the coastal environment, namely wind & hot temperatures.

Many of the difficulties that either the “Beginner or Freshwater Convert” fly rodder has begin with the decisions they make when purchasing their tackle for saltwater fly fishing. Fortunately these days saltwater appropriate rods and reels are much more affordable than just a decade ago making it much easier for someone to enter the sport without a large investment of money.

When buying a fly rod for saltwater fishing choose a medium action rod that will be more forgiving for the beginner; stiff or *fast action* rods are expert tools. When making the reel selection you can spend as little or as much money as you want to if your primary target is redfish. Many freshwater reels will perform well in saltwater for redfish but you must be very meticulous with your maintenance to get them to last. There are many inexpensive fly reels that are saltwater ready that have large arbors (spools) and smooth drags that are appropriate for redfish on the Texas Coast or other species in more exotic destinations. Once you have your rod and reel with backing (20# Dacron that goes on the reel before the fly line is spooled up), the critical decisions that will have a huge impact on the quality of your experience are made.

When choosing your fly line, leader and tippet material *always* choose lines and leaders that are designed for saltwater. Saltwater fly lines are designed with a stiff core and hard finish to help maintain the integrity of casting in windy hot conditions. Freshwater fly lines are too supple and will not stand up to the wind; they will also become tacky and tangle into a rat’s nest which will cause much frustration. Likewise use saltwater specific leaders and tippet material as freshwater leaders/tippets are smaller diameter per breaking strength than saltwater leaders/tippets and will not stand up to the conditions making your accuracy suffer.

Fly fishing saltwater for redfish is a sight casting sport and is less about distance and more about accuracy, saltwater specific leaders and tippet have larger diameter per breaking strength and much stiffer to help with accuracy. Saltwater fly fishing is a knee knocking exciting experience and by choosing tackle that is designed for the sport you will improve accuracy and improve the quality of your experience and your success rate.

Re-cap:

- 1) use tropical saltwater fly lines
- 2) use monofilament saltwater leaders, 7.5’-9’ 12#-15# test
- 3) use fluorocarbon tippet material 12#-15#
- 4) use [triple surgeons](#) knot for leader/tippet connection
- 5) use [no-slip loop knot](#) for fly connection.

Good Luck!

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