

Fishing the Waters of the Southeast Council - Fall 2025

Sea Island Fly Fishers will host the FALL 2025 Fishing the Waters of the SE Council in historic Beaufort, SC. The event will be held from October 3-5, 2025.

The officers, board, and membership all welcome you to the Fall SEC FFI event in the Lowcountry of South Carolina here in Beaufort, SC. Beaufort is surrounded by some of the best flats fishing for redfish in the Southeast. A list of guides will be made available for those who want to hire one, but anglers are welcome to bring their own boats, kayaks, or flats wading booties and fish on their own. If you are attending and booking a guide for your fishing endeavors your guide will provide all you need but if you're planning on fishing from your own boat or wading tidal marshes the following will be of interest to you.

Our original plan for Friday evening had to be abandoned when it was realized that that Friday is the monthly observance of First Friday Downtown shopping event and our venue, Bay Street Outfitters, will not be closing at their normal time, 5:30pm, but will remain open until 9:00pm. We've moved the event to a local micro brewery, [Shell Ring Ale Works](#) in the neighboring town of Port Royal where hors d'oeuvres will be served in a meet and greet setting. There will be a short presentation regarding fishing the Lowcountry followed by a question and answer session.

Before arriving, there are some important and unique characteristics of this fishery that you, as an angler, need to know.

First, East Coast tides run 1-3 feet where our tides average seven feet between mean low and mean high tides with some tidal swings as large as 11 feet. For the weekend event that difference is eight plus/minus feet. While these tidal differences create our unique fisheries, they also create particular hazards for those boating, and to a lesser degree, those wading.

Pluff mud is endemic here. If you're not familiar with this substrate, it is mud comprised largely of detritus, not silt or soil particles. Detritus is the decomposed essence of organic material and the excrement of all the micro and macro organisms that have acted on the organic materials to break it down. The majority of this organic material is derived from spartina grasses. Anywhere the tide covers the land there is some degree of pluff mud. In places that the tides covers twice a day, pluff mud can be measured in feet. In other locations, where tidal reach only covers the marsh intermittently, it may be less than inch. But pluff mud will be found at some level wherever tides have inundated the tidal marsh. Knowing where to wade is critical to staying off the evening news due to rescue.

If you are boating:

Beaufort County has a number of boat ramps to choose from. Here is a link to the county launches; [Boat Landings, Public Water Access, Bluffs, Piers](#). It is highly suggested that you load navigation apps for this area on your navigational systems. If you don't have navigational equipment it is suggested that you procure navigational charts or the Top Spot map for the area. [Amazon.com : Topspot Fishing Map from Port Royal to St. Helena Sound,white : Fishing Charts And Maps : Sports & Outdoors](#)

Two Hazards:

The first is becoming stranded up a creek. Often, boaters go up tidal creeks in search of fish on the high tides, often finding them, then lose track of time and the tide. Tides come and go at the rate of 1.2-1.7 feet per hour. Often, 2 hours after the high tide, a boat may not be able to exit and is stranded till the next high tide with enough water to flood the creek. That next high tide sufficient to exit the creek may a full 13 hours later.

The second hazard are the numerous oyster rakes and reefs in the area. Anytime you're working a shoreline, proceed with caution. Oysters only exist where they are covered by tidal waters twice daily so what you saw at low tide is now submerged. Some areas, like the Harbor River area is nothing but a maze of oyster reefs, mounds and structure. Caution is advised or bring an extra prop.

If you are wading:

Wade fishing opportunities are nearly endless for those with a shallow draft boat but are also available to those without. Wading a tidal marsh can be tricky but once you learn where you can wade and where you can't it's a lot easier and a lot of fun.

Here are two hard and fast rules for wading;

1. Do not go into the tall thick spartina grass for any reason! (This is where you'll encounter the most and deepest pluff mud)
2. When in doubt, back out! (If your feet are beginning to get stuck you're heading into pluff mud, back out the way you came). Of all the equipment needed to wade the most important is your footwear. A flats style of wading boot is needed. These boots can not be pulled off when on and fit tight enough at the top to keep the periwinkle snails out of your boot. Bay Street Outfitters has just what you need.

At this time of year water temps are still in 70s so waders are not needed.

This weekend was chosen because of the tides for wading. Saturday morning at first light, Saturday late afternoon and again Sunday morning early. [Beaufort Tides | October 2025 | 30 day calendar | TideTime.org](#)

If at all possible, it is best to be in the marsh two hours before high tide. If you're not experienced in wading a flooded tidal marsh it is best to have someone with experience go with you. While you won't drown if you get stuck in the pluff mud of a tidal marsh you may have to have emergency services get you out.

The fish:

At this time of year you'll find reds on the flats, creek mouths as well as in the tidal marshes on the high tides. Trout will be present and often in numbers as will flounder. Spanish mackerel will still be with us too as will the fun to catch ladyfish. If you like your quarry a bit larger, both crevalle and amber jacks can be found in the sound region and tarpon will still be here too.

Fly tackle:

Six, seven and eight weight rods all work well while an eight weight is probably best overall. Floating lines are best but it always pays to have either a sink tip to add or another spool of sinking line. Eight feet of leader is sufficient with a 12-15# tippet. Weedless flies are mandatory! Fishing a flooded tidal marsh is like fishing a flooded cow pasture and much of the shorelines and creek mouths have a good

amount of grass and oyster structure. Don't fish without weed guards unless you're fishing in open waters or the middle of one of the rivers or sound.

Flies:

Bait fish, shrimp and small crab flies work well here in the Lowcountry. Surface popper and poppers with droppers also work well. Here's a good place to start, LC means Lowcountry. Again, if you need flies, Bay Street Outfitters has them with many being tied by locals that know what catches fish. [Flies for the lowcountry - Search](#)

We look forward to meeting you. A number of our membership will be available to answer questions, share experience and maybe even accompany you on your fishing endeavors.