

# The Conservationist



PPTU.org

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

May 2021 • Published monthly except June, July, August and December

## “Fly Fishing the DelMarVa Region and Chesapeake Bay.”

Joe Bruce

*May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 7:00PM*

This month's chapter meeting will feature local fly fishing figure Joe Bruce speaking about "Fly Fishing the DelMarVa Region and Chesapeake Bay." With warmer weather around the corner, this will be a timely topic as we prepare to give the local trout a rest! The Chesapeake Bay may not be first place you might picture in your mind for fly fishing, but it presents many great opportunities.

About Joe:

With over 50 years of fly fishing and tying experience, Joe admits he has "a pretty good understanding of fish and a better appreciation of the environment." Joe was the owner of The Fisherman's Edge fly shop in Catonsville, MD, for 15 years before he retired to spend more time fishing.

Joe continues to write many books to help his fellow anglers tackle saltwater, snakeheads, fly tying techniques, chain pickerel - and more! Joe also invents and sells custom leader systems and bonefish, bass, saltwater, and shad flies in his spare time at his website ([joebruce.net](http://joebruce.net)).

Come on out to hear Joe talk about summer fishing opportunities in the Bay and beyond.

Tight lines,

– *Karan Singh*



**Monthly Chapter Meetings – Virtual Until Further Notice**

Time and Day: 7:00 PM unless a new time is stated, Third Wednesday except June, July, August and December

**Virtual Link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84225951350?pwd=bk5ZT04vODU0bmZESjJsZzA0Y3F2dz09>

Visit our website: [www.pptu.org](http://www.pptu.org)

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## Presidents' Column - Randy Dwyer



My grandfather was a career Fireman. He served 30+ years in Utica, New York. As a kid growing up in Central New York, he would tell me and my siblings stories about the fires he fought, 'Hook & Ladder' trucks and he taught us the codes behind the fire sirens that wailed across town.

He also was an avid hunter and fly fisherman. He shared tales about his days hunting pheasant, partridge and woodcock with his old Belgium-made Browning shotgun. He also told many fishing stories, but for some reason I only remember one and it is about the White Miller fly on the West Canada.

The West Canada Creek runs south out of the Adirondack Mountains and meandering through the foothills past his hometown. He fished it often to great success, but he knew it held bigger fish.

There is a tremendous white fly hatch on the West Canada that typically occurs in late August or early September. My grandfather was fishing a back eddy near Trenton Falls when he saw the largest trout one could imagine gulping white flies off the surface by the mouthful. As the story goes, he quickly and nervously tied on a White Miller and tossed it into the eddy. The monster moved quickly to the fly, broke the water to take it and had it halfway down its throat. At this point my grandfather did what any seasoned fly fisher does when confronted with the fish of a lifetime: He pulled back so hard, the fly came out of his mouth and the behemoth was never seen again.

This story did not hook a huge fish, but it did hook the imagination of a little boy wanting to follow in his grandfather's footsteps. We all have someone or something that moves us to try this sport: a friend, a family member, a movie. No matter what it is, it brings us together as members of the Potomac Patuxent Chapter of TU.

My time serving as President of your chapter is at an end. It has been an honor to work with so many dedicated fellow members that want to share their expertise and make PPTU one of the strongest and most active chapters in the region. Thank you to all the PPTU officers and board members, past and present, who shared their advice and guidance along the way. I truly appreciate your help.

We have accomplished much these last two years and will continue to do so into the future. PPTU has a robust Outings program and Speaker series, a website, Listserv and Facebook page for sharing reports and advice with beginners and experienced fishers alike. I am personally excited to see the joint NCC-TU and PPTU effort to place water temperature monitors into the Patuxent get underway this spring.

PPTU's strength is found in its membership and I encourage you to play a role whether it is stocking fish, giving an Annual Supporting Contribution, or mentoring a youth. Every bit helps and you never know whose youthful imagination will be hooked by your story.

Thank you and I look forward to seeing you on the water!

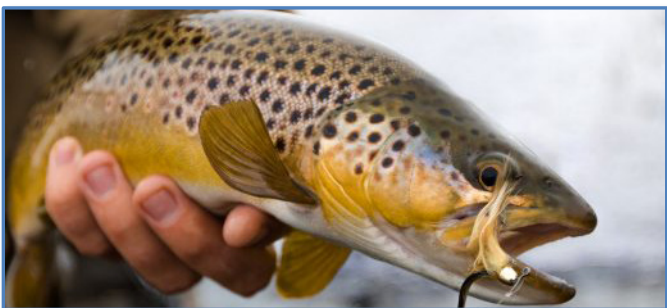
Randy Dwyer  
President, PPTU



## PPTU Mentor Program Beginners & Beyond

PPTU provides one-on-one streamside fly fishing instruction to PPTU members. Participants must show commitment by having waders or hip boots, a rod and reel outfit, and leader. Discussions will include equipment, knots, casting, flies, dry fly and nymphing techniques, entomology, reading water, conservation, etc. on nearby streams. Instruction will be tailored to individual needs. Members who have not made an **Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC)** will be asked to contribute \$20.

Contact us by e-mail: [mail@pptu.org](mailto:mail@pptu.org)



## Patuxent Report - Jay Sheppard

A year ago we were not allowed to fish catch-and-release waters. Only fishing for subsistence was legal. Thankfully, we are now starting to return to normal in our daily lives. At the end of this month there will be cicadas on the waters we fish locally. Am sure we will get a few reports of some large wild browns and perhaps some equally large holdover browns from the upper Patuxent that succumbed to a cicada imitation. They are in the river. Just takes some scouting for the high quality habitat in which they might be lurking.

Please call the Natural Resources Police at their 24/7 call center if you see any illegal activity: 800-635-6124. Lock this number into your mobile phone! I list mine as "N R P [with spaces]" so as soon as I tap "n" it pops up first in my directory. If you see any suspect vehicles, take a picture of their tags. If we do not squelch the onslaught on our resources, then we will have these same people and their friends returning to poach our trout waters in future years.

## Ladies Only! - Bob O'Donnell

Have you been frustrated looking for that perfect pair of waders? Look no further!

Miss Mayfly – Woman's Breathable Waders



Miss Mayfly was founded in 2016 by new fly fisher Kimberly Ranalla. She took up the sport while rehabilitating from multiple spinal injuries, and soon discovered that it was difficult to find waders that fit her properly. Her search to find high-performance



waders with a flattering fit led her to start the company Miss Mayfly. It's now owned by Angler Sport Group, the same company that distributes Chota Outdoor Gear, C&F Design fly boxes, Daichi hooks, Varivas tippet, Vosseler reels, and many other brands.

Miss Mayfly breathable chest waders (\$270, [missmayfly.com](http://missmayfly.com)) come in five different fits, slim, curvy, full, plus, and supreme. Consumers choose from four different bootie sizes, and those five fits, to find waders that are just right for individual body shapes and sizes. The company slogan is, "a custom fit without a custom order."

Miss Mayfly plans to also release a line of matching wading boots in 2021, as well as waders sized for children.



## The Cicadas are Coming! - Jay Sheppard

Registrations are filling fast for the PPTU cicada outing to the Savage and North Branch. Dates are May 31 through June 5, leaving June 6. You can camp for one or more nights: \$10/night/person or \$55 for 6 nights/person.

For more details, see the last issue of the Conservationist AND visit our registration page at <https://www.pptu.org/events/outings#cicada>. Remember: there is a 15 person per night limit, no unregistered walk-ins, last date to cancel a registration is May 27, last day to make a reservation (if space is available) is May 28. Otherwise, you will have to wait 17 more years for the next cicada extravaganza on those waters!! Should be a memorable fishing trip for all who come.

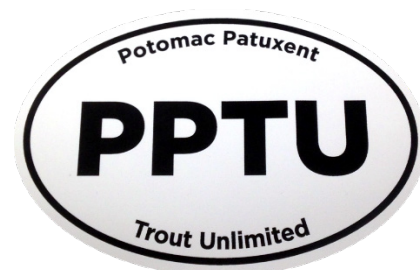
## Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC) - Jay Sheppard

Our annual Supporting Contribution (ASC) drive starts in September, but you can pay it now if you like. If you are unclear if you are paid up through September 2022, please drop a note to [membership.pptu@gmail.com](mailto:membership.pptu@gmail.com), and I will get back to you on your status. We ask our own members to help support the chapter with an ASC, too. TU members of other chapters can also get on the PPTU mailing list for the Conservationist.

You can pay the \$20 ASC in several ways:

- Use our PayPal portal: <https://pptu.org/j-d/donate>
- Mail a check payable to PPTU to our PO Box (see last page).
- At the next chapter meeting (whenever that might be) by cash or check.

Your contributions are most appreciated! Help support PPTU!! Your ASC is separate and apart from your annual dues (if not a Life member) to TU.



If you spot poaching please place a call to the:

**Catch a Poacher Hotline At  
1-800-635-6124**



*Add this number to your cell phone contact list!*



### **Shenk's White Minnow - Pete Yarrington**

Shenk's White Minnow, and its sibling the Shenk Sculpin, made their public debut in an article entitled "Flies Trout Love to Chew" by Pennsylvania angler Ed Shenk in the 1975 edition of the Garcia Fishing Annual. The Fishing Annual was a magazine that you used to find on magazine racks next to the eagerly-awaited Fishing in Maryland Magazine. I wish that I still had the copy of the 1975 Fishing Annual I had back then; I can't remember now if I bought it new or found it somewhere and "borrowed" it. Soon after that article came out, the sculpin, and to a lesser degree the minnow, could be found in many local fly shops. Both flies got a boost in popularity again in 1989, when Shenk's book Fly Rod Trouting was published. The book recounts the development of both flies, and it includes two other versions of Shenk's Minnow: one that was also white but included a white marabou wing ("Minnow #2"); and one that was white with a brown marabou wing ("Minnow #3"). Minnows #2 and #3 did not enjoy the popularity of the standard White (#1) Shenk's Minnow, which has no wing, and I have not seen any references to them beyond Shenk's writings. Interestingly, Shenk illustrated all three minnow flies large thread heads, on which he noted eyes could be painted. Shenk's White Minnow is now seldom if ever seen with a head large enough to apply eyes to.

These days, at least here in Maryland and Virginia, Shenk's White Minnow seems to be used primarily in larger sizes as a smallmouth fly, and there are few references to it being for trout. This is

unfortunate given the fly's continuing attractiveness to trout!

The Shenk's White Minnow has only two main parts – a white marabou tail tied quite full, and a body made of rabbit fur. The rabbit fur to tie the fly needs to be on-skin, which these days can mean



cannibalizing your supply of Zonker strips, since fly shops now seldom carry full rabbit hides. Rabbit hides are still available in touristy gift shops and through Amazon. What can't you find on Amazon? Type in virtually any fly material and see what happens. Anyway, you can also get them at the annual Maryland Renaissance Fair. As long as I have been going to the Renn Fair (no I do not dress up), a shop called Bullseye has been there with baskets of rabbit hides of all natural colors, and some dyed. Also fox skins and tails, and other stuff. Buying these full skins can save you buku bucks, and then you can cut your own Zonker strips and use the rest for cross-cut type flies and for Shenk's White Minnows.





## Shenk's White Minnow

**Hook:** #4 - 10 streamer hook, 3x or 4x long.

**Weight:** Lead or lead-free wire, of similar diameter to the hook. I tie some flies with just a few winds of weight for swimming through shallow areas or where I want a slow sink, and some with lead wound from where the tail is tied in up almost to the hook eye.

**Thread:** White or red pre-waxed, at least 3/0 in size to avoid breakage in the spinning loop process.

**Tail:** White marabou, tied full, about the same length as the hook. Silver or pearl Flashabou can be added, but does not seem to be necessary.

**Body:** Soft white rabbit fur trimmed off the hide so the fibers remain aligned, and spun in a dubbing loop to make a fur "chenille," as in the first illustration, then wrapped on the hook and trimmed roughly to shape as in the second illustration. The rear of the body should be almost as full as the center, fading into the tail of the fly with as little "waist" as possible.

There is not much point explaining how to make a fur chenille with a dubbing loop, when YouTube has some good tutorials on the method. I will note that it is difficult to use a single dubbing loop to create the whole body on a fly larger than a #6 or 8, because the length of the loop makes it hard to keep fur from falling out of the loop before you can spin the crazy thing. Also, spinning a long fur chenille can put so much tension on the thread that it will frequently break, even 3/0. Either use two dubbing loops to complete the body on larger flies, or tie in some heavier rod winding thread and use it for the spinning process.



*"Only an extraordinary person would purposely risk being outsmarted by a creature often less than twelve inches long, over and over again."*

~ Janna Bialek



## Temperature Probes in Upper Patuxent - Jay Sheppard

The National Capital Chapter, assisted by PPTU and SVTU, has been placing temperature probes in the upper Patuxent River and its tributaries. These probes might be found by observant fishers using the stream above Rt 97 this spring and summer. Please do not disturb them!! They are a short length of PVC pipe with fittings on both ends. These housings are to protect the actual device from damage. A length of rebar holds them to the bottom. They will monitor the temperatures of the water all summer and be retrieved in early October. We have tried to hide them as best we can, but many are easily seen if you are in the river. If you see one up on the bank or clearly out of place, please contact us at [mail@pptu.org](mailto:mail@pptu.org).



## TIC Release Story - Alan Burrows

This is coming in a little late, but worth the wait.

My December TIC release. The school closed so quickly in March that the fish were still in the tank. A custodian kept them in clean water and fed and we released about 15 12" rainbows.

So the custodian was a real hero here as he also supplied a cooler and aerators to move the fish, netted them and had them ready to go. Susan Higgins told me when she showed up that the custodian was a little sad to see his kids being released but was happy to hear there would be replacements. Interestingly he would have saved more but they kept jumping out of the tank until he was able to get a secure lid on it.

## Elections Time Once Again - Randy Dwyer

Our next chapter meeting is the last one before the summer break and additionally happens to be election time for new board members. The actual election will be done on line again this year due to COVID restrictions. It will either come in the form of a live vote at the meeting or possibly sent out as a survey for members to cast their vote.

It was truly an honor to work with so many dedicated fellow members that want to share their expertise and make PPTU one of the strongest and most active chapters in the region.

The board is always looking for volunteers. Most jobs do not take up too much of your time and your opinions and contributions are valued as a board member of the chapter. If you wish to join or have any questions just reach out to one of us.

A note on the slate - Joe Taylor was set to be president but needed some personal time to sort a few things out. Alan Burrows graciously stepped in and volunteered to hold the position until Joe is ready.

Here is slate for elections for May 2021:

**President:** Alan Burrows \*

**Vice President:** Joe Taylor

**Secretary:** Brian Hepler

**Treasurer:** Adam Fishbein

### Directors

Ray Miller (3-yr term)

Criag Vanderkolk (3-yr term)

Ron Briggs (1-yr Term)

\* **Note:** Alan Burrows will resign as soon as Joe Taylor is ready to take over the reigns of the presidency. *Date TBD.*



## Fly Fishing 101 – The Roll Cast - Spencer Durrant

A roll cast works by using the tension between your fly line and the surface of the water to propel your line forward in a tight loop. This eliminates your back cast completely, as well as any false casting. Roll casts are most often used when fishing multiple flies at once, but are also effective when you have to cast in tight quarters and don't have room around you for a full cast.

Executing a successful roll cast is accomplished by following these steps:

1. Hold your hand high, parallel with your ear. Bring your rod hand up level with your ear. The key to an effective roll cast is getting the angles right. The motion of bringing your rod up this high ensures your roll cast starts and ends with the correct angles. Just like when you're learning to execute a normal overhead cast, the position of your rod is critical here. If picturing a clock face helps you when casting, then your rod tip should be at 2 o'clock when you start a roll cast.
2. Look where you want to cast. Fly casting, once you've mastered the basic mechanics, is an intuitive process – a lot like riding a bike. You don't think about where you want your bike to go. You simply look, and the bike follows. Applying that same thought process to your casting will go a long way towards helping your flies end up where you want them.
3. Push the rod forward and snap the wrist. This is the crux of the casting action – pushing the rod forward and snapping your wrist. As with anything in fly fishing, it's easy to overdo this step by going too far forward, and snapping your wrist too hard. The key here is to remember that it needs to be one fluid motion, instead of two separate actions. As you raise your rod parallel with your ear and look where you want to cast, you forcefully push the rod forward. If you're picturing a clock face, the rod tip should stop between 10 and 11 o'clock. Again, remember that this needs to be a single fluid motion.
4. Hold the rod high. Finally, as you finish your cast, don't let your rod tip fall too low. When you lower the rod tip, your cast won't unroll

above the water – it will unroll on the water. That ruins any subtle presentation you might be going for with a roll cast in tight water. It also increases the likelihood of tangling your flies, if you're fishing with more than one fly.

Still a little confused? Check out these videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vHMfCJINGJM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMUL0FN4HxA>

## **100 Fishermen Ticketed for Catching too many Fish or Fish of Wrong Size - Jeff Goldman**

About 100 fishermen in the New Jersey region were cited in April for violating state regulations on striped bass, officials said.

Conservation Police Officers issued tickets to anglers along the Hudson River, the Newark Bay and the Raritan Bay, according to the state Division of Fish and Wildlife.

## **Pro Tips: 5 Secrets to Nymphing in Off-Color Water - Tim Linehan**

During the fishing season—and especially during spring—river flows can fluctuate and water clarity can change dramatically due to snowmelt, rain, and other weather events. Sure, there is a point where conditions make a river unfishable, but often a little color is no big deal and, in some cases, can actually make the fishing better.

When water clarity is marginal or flows are high, nymphing is often your best chance for success. Here are five tips for fishing nymphs that will improve your chances of getting into a few fish in off-color water.

### **1. Short-leash the banks**

Off-color water generally comes with a pulse in river flows. During high-water, trout often seek cover closer to banks, where visibility is also better. By working the water tighter to the banks, you will increase your odds of finding trout that are more likely to eat. The water is often shallow, so set your indicator about four feet from the top fly and adjust weight accordingly.

### **2. Find and fish structure**

Again, fish will seek cover when their habitat changes dramatically. Look for boulder gardens, woody debris, seams, eddies, and anything else that will provide trout with cover during periods of off-color water.

Fishing along the bank is a great way to catch trout when the water is off-color.

### **3. Don't be afraid to jig nymphs**

When trout can't see well because of off-color water, erratic movement from a potential food source will often attract attention and elicit a strike. Use the tip of your rod to make your bugs jump about six to eight inches through the water column, especially toward to end of the drift.

### **4. Fish dark, dense patterns**

Dark bugs show up better when water clarity changes for the worse. Suspended particles in the water column can reflect light. Darker and more dense flies offer better profiles than slim, lighter flies and even flashbacks, for that matter.

### **5. Super-size bugs**

Upsizing patterns by a size, or even two, can help. When underwater visibility is low, give the fish something they can see easily. Stick with tried-and-true patterns, but don't be afraid to fish bigger sizes.

Nymphing is often the most productive way to fish off colored water. Give these five nymphing strategies a try the next time you face less than perfect conditions and you'll have more success.

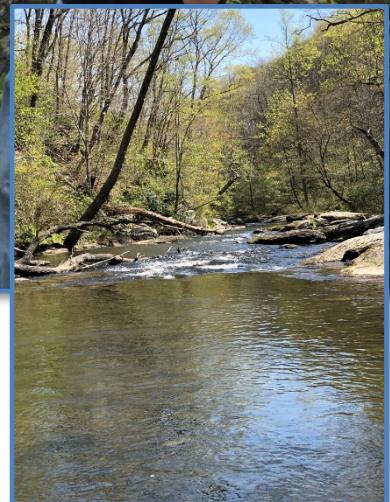
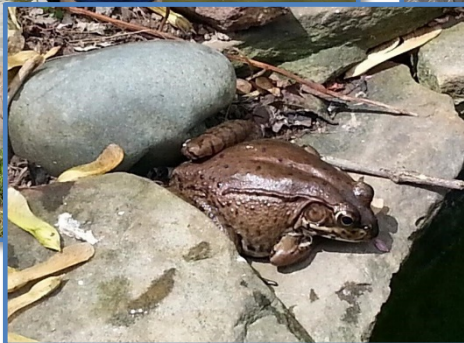
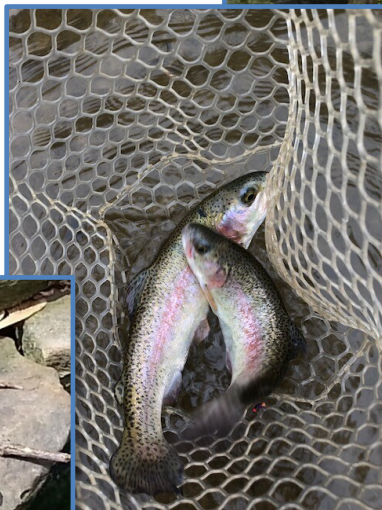
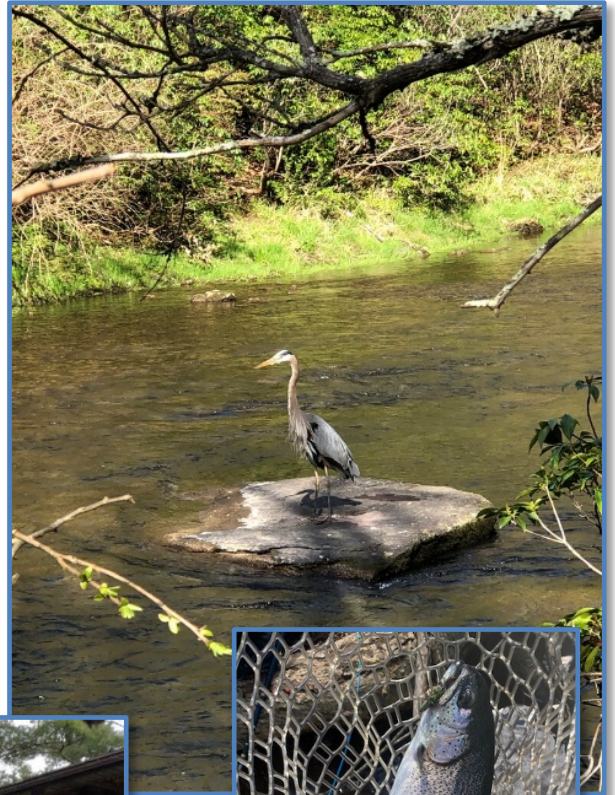


Anyone recognize Dan Davala? He spoke at one of our chapter meetings a while back.



## Members Catch - Bob O'Donnell

Everyone is catching fish and getting outside.  
Hope to see some of you at our next outing!





## Contributions Welcome!

Send your contributions or article suggestions to the Editor in an email or as an MS Word.doc attachment. The deadline for submissions is the twelfth (12th) day of the month prior to the month of publication.

**Editor: Bob O'Donnell**

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## Shenk's Minnow

This is Shenk's Minnow with a twist.

This version takes a slightly different approach by using baby blanket yarn as a fly tying material. You can also tie some amazing sculpin imitations with the stuff. The yarn's thick pile makes it extremely shapable.

<https://midcurrent.com/videos/how-to-tie-a-shenks-minnow/>



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