



April 2009

The Conservationist

April 15 — Chasing Bronzebacks on the Fly



I have chased a lot of things including dogs, cats and even butterflies and the market. But chasing bronzebacks sounds like a lot more fun, particularly if you have a fly rod in your hand. Jamie Gold of the Potomac River Smallmouth Club (PRSC) will share his fly fishing adventures while chasing smallmouth bass. His presentation will cover 1) Equipment – including rods, reels and line sizes and building your own leaders, 2) Flies and Techniques, 3) Local waters and spots to target smallmouth with a fly rod.

Jamie is a lifelong fisherman who has been heavily targeting smallmouth bass for the last 10 years. For the last 8 years he has been chasing them in the Northern Virginia area and as a member of PRSC for the last 6 years. His bronzeback adventures have taken him up and down the state of Virginia, to West Virginia and Maryland, up to Pennsylvania, and as far north as Maine and Minnesota. A fellow with this amount of passion for a species will have much to share with us. So enjoy something special on TAX DAY. Come hear Jamie and then ask all the questions you may have about fishing for Bronzebacks this season. –

Nick Weber

PPTU at the Movies:

In addition to our regular program in April, during the first hour we will be having a special screening of the film *Red Gold*, a one-hour documentary film on the proposed Pebble Mine told through the voices of commercial, subsistence and sport fishermen of Bristol Bay, Alaska. To make time for this showing, we're running the meeting a half an hour longer than usual; we'll end at 9:30. We're also curtailing the raffle for the month; we'll have a 50-50 instead.

Bring your own popcorn.

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Monthly Chapter Meetings

Time and Day 7:00 PM, Third Wednesday except December, June, July, and August

Place Margaret Schweinhaut Senior Center, 1000 Forest Glen Road, Silver Spring, Maryland

Directions From Capitol Beltway: North on Georgia Avenue (Rte. 97). First right onto Forest Glen Road, then go past Holy Cross Hospital and across Sligo Creek Parkway. The Center is on the right.

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	Larry Vawter	410-750-8264
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	Jim Greco	410-997-2787

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	Carl Smolka	301-929-1365

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	Robert Simpson	410-461-8180
	Cathy Nutter	301-384-2431
	Dennis Covert	410-740-8337

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Speakers Program:	Nick Weber	301-774-2806
Listserve Moderator:	Robert Simpson	410-461-8180
Publicity:	Paul Vicenzi	301-650-2087
Membership Secretary:	Arnie Strand	301-490-3450
<i>Conservationist</i> Editor:	Joanne Kla	301-854-5053
Fundraising:	Bruce Eberle	301-854-3142
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Patuxent:	Jay Sheppard	301-725-5559

President's Column

The Trout and the Internet

I'm sure most of you know how much the internet has changed the way we get information about fishing. Everything from shopping for equipment, to getting stream information, to booking our flight for that "trip of a lifetime" is now done on-line. Even much of the business of our chapter's board of directors takes place on a list server, with email used for sidebars.

So, for my penultimate column as president (you didn't think I knew them 50 cents words, did you) I'm going to share some internet resources of which you might not be aware.

I hope you realize by now that we have a PPTU list server. Just in case you're the only chapter member not aware of it, email ppctu-subscribe@yahoogroups.com and ask to join.

Something else you probably know about is our web site, at <http://www.pptu.org/>. While you're there, check out the "Links" section. Several of our sponsors put fishing reports on their sites, so they're worth checking out, especially if you fish the Gunpowder regularly (check the links to Backwater Angler and Great Feathers) And, of course there are links to other TU chapters and conservation groups in the area.

Also notice on our home page a link called "Water Conditions." From here you can find links to real-time data about flow rates in various streams. The latter can prevent you from wasting a long drive to say, Western Maryland, only to find out that the river you wanted to fish is blown out.

What really prompted this article was my thinking about the numerous fishing related fora (or "forums", if you prefer, which I do, and will use hereafter) to which I belong. If you don't know about forums, aka "bulletin boards", they are discussions arranged by topic. Generally, you must belong to a forum before you can post to it, and some forums make you join just to read the posts. Don't worry, they don't make you pay any money; they're just looking to keep spammers out.

Some forums are very general in scope, while others are quite specific. Fly Fisherman's Magazine sponsors a forum (at <http://outdoorsbest.zeroforum.com/zeromain?id=8>) which deals with all aspects of fly fishing. The Flymph Forum, <http://www.flymphforum.com/>, deals only with soft hackle wet flies, and the Classic Streamer Tying Forum, <http://www.classicflytying.com>, deals only with tying wet flies, streamers and Atlantic salmon flies. (You may have guessed that I subscribe to both.)

There are also rod build forums, and bamboo rod forums. (You'll have to Google to find them, however, since I don't have them bookmarked.)

Some of the on-line stores that also "destination" shops have forums associated with them as well (Great Feathers and FlyFishers' Paradise come to mind, and there are others.) They tend to have great local information, if you happen to fish "their" rivers.

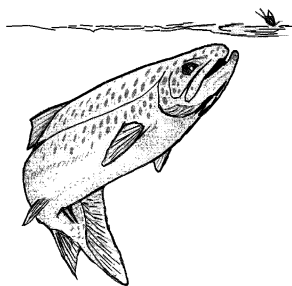
If you participated in our recent fly swap, these forums are great places to join other swaps. Two that have dedicated swap sections are the Fly Tying Forum (<http://flytyingforum.com/>) and Fly Anglers On-Line ([http://www.flyanglersonline.com/bb.](http://www.flyanglersonline.com/bb/)) Other forums have swaps, too, but they tend to be sporadic.

A couple of final sites I'd like to mention is completely different. One is another forum, but it's not fishing related as such. It's the forum of the North American Native Fishes Association (<http://forum.nanfa.org/index.php>). NANFA is an organization composed of aquarists and fishermen, dedicated to all freshwater fish in North America (many are both.) It's an interesting hodge-podge of how to raise native fish, and how to catch them. If you're interested in finding out just what that minnow that grabbed your fly was, this is the site.

The other is a site about id'ing insects that you might find trout feeding on. is troutnut (<http://www.troutnut.com/>) and has pictures of most the important mayflies, caddisflies and stoneflies east of the Rockies.

Enjoy!

Bob Dietz



Have an idea for an article, or something you'd like to share with other chapter members? Material is welcome (and cheerfully accepted).

The deadline is the 12th of the month for the next month's issue. Please send articles, ideas, etc, preferably in MS Word or in the body of the e-mail to earthmomjo@att.net.

*Thanks,
Joanne Kla, Editor*

The 2008 Annual Fundraiser

Our 2008 Annual Fundraiser and "Ask The Experts" Forum was held on November 19, 2008 and the drawings for the Grand Raffle Prizes were held on January 21, 2009. Thanks to the efforts of Bruce Eberle who organized the fundraiser, PPTU raised over \$3000 that will be used to fund future conservation efforts.

Bruce Eberle won the Grand Prize, 2 days guided drift boat fishing/3 nights lodging at West Branch Anglers (Delaware River, NY).

Steve Fletcher won the 2nd prize, an Orvis TLS Matrix 9' 6 wt. Rod (donated by Great Feathers) and an Orvis Mid-Arbor Battenkill Reel.

Joanne Kla won the 3rd prize, a Pentax Waterproof Digital Camera.

The following establishments donated items or gift certificates to our fundraising event. Please stop by and thank them. [Your patronage was not a condition, but would be appreciated.]

Chapala Restaurant, Burtonsville
Safeway, Burtonsville
Great Feathers
Sierra Trading Post
Giant Foods, Clarksville
Stone Bow Inn, Grantsville
King's Contrivance Liquor & Smoke Shop
TU Tri-State Conservation & Fishing Camp
Orvis
Nissaquogue River fishing,
Long Island Vintage Cellars, Clarksville
Olde Hickory Grill, Burtonsville
West Branch Anglers

The annual fundraising event could not have happened or been a success without the help of many PPTU Chapter members and friends; who are too numerous to mention individually.

The following PPTU Chapter members contributed items to our fundraising event:

Craig Falk	Jim Greene	Cathy Nutter
Bob Dietz	David Haidak	Bob Serran
Charlie Gelso	Richard Lewis	Robert Simpson
Jim Greco	Bruce Eberle	

Patuxent Report

Jay Sheppard

The final float stockings of the main Patuxent River and the Middle Patuxent were for March 30 as we go to press. The February stocked trout ought to be more than willing to play by now. Bugs are getting more abundant and active. Seek some nice pools and catch some trout!

Mayfly Identification Key

A laminated card is available at the chapter meetings that will help anglers identify mayflies they typically encounter on eastern trout streams. Cost is only \$3, and all proceeds go to the chapter. The identifications are made by using the key, which asks the user to look at one or two features of the insect in hand (such as number of tails: 2 or 3?). Fishers are encouraged to have one in their vests so they can report back what they see hatching on the streams. If you are unable to make a meeting, contact Jay Sheppard (jmsheppar@aol.com) and other arrangements can be made.

Tackle and Tactic Tips

Jay Sheppard

Winter is over! April is the real start of great trout fishing in Maryland. The early hatches of mayflies and late winter stoneflies are upon us. Large fat nymphs work the bottoms of the streams. Crayfish crawl around the shallows. Water temperatures are now well into the high forties and low fifties. Trout want to eat, and they now see more and more choices.

We have many new fly fishers in our chapter. I thought a few suggestions for matching the hatch might help them, as well as reinvigorating some of the members who have been around for a long time. One does not need to be an entomologist who can spout all the Latin names of the insects we see on our streams. The trout do not use Latin, they only respond to the abundance of the various insects they are seeing each day. If a brown mayfly is the most common and easiest to capture, then that will be a primary target for the trout, even if there is a much larger insect present. The larger prey needs to be common and easy to capture. If it only floats or flutters past the trout every 20–40 minutes it may be ignored. Trout want to take some assured prey and not hope that something larger might float past later. A small bird in the hand is worth more than two big ones in the bush.

Trout cannot see the top side of most floating insects, so they will be more likely to select a fly that has the same bottom coloration, as well as overall size and shape as the insect they are preferring. Masking hatches are where a smaller insect appears to be overshadowed by a much larger one, but the latter are

only infrequently passing over the trout. This is often the case later in May and June when many species of insects hatch on the same day. A nice large mayfly (e.g., Green Drake) is hatching but a much smaller mayfly is much more abundant (e.g., one of the little sulphurs). I once identified a dozen kinds of mayflies one evening on the Savage (Green Drakes to tiny blue-winged olives), as well as six or more kinds of caddis and four kinds of stoneflies. The trout were almost exclusively fixated on the #16–18 sulphurs that were floating all over the water. An emerger, dun, spinner, or nymph that matched that mayfly were the only flies the trout would take.

Identifying insects to a general group is useful. Different groups have different behaviors that need to be known by the fly fisher if he wants to hook up with a trout. Typical mayflies float along after emerging from the nymphal shuck until their new wing muscles can carry them (dun) off the water. They molt into the adult reproductive stage (spinner) while resting in the nearby vegetation and return about 24 hours later to mate and lay their eggs before dying and falling to the water. Typical stoneflies crawl up on some structure at the water's edge and emerge to then fly up into the bushes to harden and later mate. Stones may live for several days mating and laying their eggs by fluttering across the water. Caddis may blast to the surface and emerge as they erupt from the water; others may take their time for a few seconds before flying off. Caddis may survive a week or more.

Mayfly duns or spinners hold their wings high over the body when at rest; when flying their long fragile tails are longer than their bodies. Caddis adults are most likely to be confused with small moths, but the former's antennae are thin and not feathery. Caddis hold their wings over their bodies like tiny pup tents and have no tails hanging off their abdomen. Stonefly adults hold their wings flat over their long bodies. Midges and other true flies usually hold their single pair of wings flat and slightly out from the body (like a jet fighter).

In April, the sun is still low, and most insects are active in late morning and most of the afternoon—the heat of the day. As the days get longer and warmer, the insects may find it too hot for them to be active in the middle of the day. Some species move their main activity period to the mornings and others move their main activity periods to the evenings. Overall, most aquatic insects prefer to fly when the air temperatures range between the mid-fifties and the mid-seventies. By mid-June, nearly all insect activity and trout surface feeding takes place before Noon and after 5 PM. A month later and most insect activity is done by an hour or two after sunrise and restarts an hour or so before sunset; many insects are even active during the hours of darkness in July and August. This pattern reverses as the season cools, such that hatches in September are timed like May's and October's are like April's. Enjoy the coming fishing!

POACHER CARDS

The chapter has some business-sized cards that carry the two **toll-free** phone numbers for reporting poachers in Maryland 24 hours a day. The DNR number is for any problem; the PARKS number is to be used only when on State lands. Be sure to pick up a card at the monthly meetings or your nearby tackle shop to carry in your wallet. Remember, there may not be an immediate response to your call, but it is logged. When the reports start accumulating, then more patrols and better response times can be expected. The DNR Natural Resource Police number is 800-635-6124 and the State Parks number is 800-825-7275. These both are answered in the same communications room at DNR, so do not be concerned about which one to use. Try to get a license plate number and description of the individual(s) involved. Keep two cards in your wallet or vest, as you might pass one to another fisher complaining about the poachers that he saw recently. Poaching and other related activity needs to be reported. The misdeed may go unpunished that time, but the event will be logged and noted. Squeaky wheels get the grease!

CAUTION TO ANGLERS

Note of caution to all anglers: over the past decade there have been a small number of break-ins of vehicles at public parking lots used by anglers. Valuables have been taken. We all have seen a number of cars at many parking lots where the angler was clearly in a hurry and left a door unlocked or even a window down. We must not only secure our vehicles but also remember to not leave any valuables in the car. Take only the rod and tackle you plan to use. Do not leave any valuables in plain sight; if the rod case must remain visible, leave the end cap off to show that it is empty. Take your wallet with you at all times; if concerned about getting it or your cell phone wet, drop them into a zip-lock bag. Do not leave any keys in or under the vehicle for a buddy—bring spares for them. Watch for unusual activity and immediately report it. Get the tag number! Overall, the number of cases has been low, but those suffering the loss had no fun that day.

Jay Sheppard

Remember to return your videos and books on time. Many fellow members would like the opportunity to rent the books, tapes and DVDs that you rented. Late fees will be applied if they are not returned by the next chapter meeting.

PPTU MENTOR PROGRAM

BEGINNERS & BEYOND

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

Contact Ken Bowyer at 301-627-7154

or e-mail kenbowyer@verizon.net.

Contact Tim Pawlowitz at 410-203-0369

or e-mail tpawlowi@msn.com.

ADDRESS CHANGE?

If you moved or if the information on the mailing label on *The Conservationist* is wrong, please email Arnie Strand at ArnzMail@Verizon.net.

You may also drop us a post card with the correction. PPTU maintains a mailing list separate from the national TU list.



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Existing members should renew their TU membership using any of the following methods:

- Mail your Renewal Statement to TU National
- Call Customer Service at 1-800-834-2419
- Navigate to www.tu.org. Click on the **Join/Renew** tab at top, then click on the "Renew Membership" link on the left.

You will need your login name and password.

Help!

Grant Faller was fishing the Patuxent off of Havilland Mill Road (near the lower stocking point) on Thursday March 26:

The good news is — the fishing was pretty good

The bad news is — when the rain started he drove off with the rod, with reel, and wooly bugger on the roof.....the rod fell off somewhere between where he was parked and Olney.

If you happened to pick up the rod, please give Grant a call at 301-864-4248 he will give you the particulars about the rod and reel.

Yes, those are his signs posted in the area asking if you found a rod!

Thanks, everybody !



Return Address:
Potomac-Patuxent Chapter TU
P.O. Box 2865
Wheaton, MD 20915

FIRST CLASS MAIL