

# The Conservationist



PPTU.org

## Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

September 2020 • Published monthly except June, July, August and December

# “COVID-19 Issue Number 3”

## September 2020

Usually, September is a welcoming time. The Fall weather is just starting to tease us a little with cooler nights and the rustle of leaves kissed by the wind. Our first chapter meeting for the Fall typically brings us all together to recount our summer adventures while mingling with friends old and new. Well, this year continues to be different. For the time being, we’re going to try and do some virtual meetings and keep our members safe.

For now we still can’t meet at the senior center, but we do plan on holding some fishing outings and perhaps some other events where we can practice social distancing and still have some fun. The chapter’s annual “One Fly” contest will be posted on our website very soon. We also intend on holding our annual campout in Western MD in October. Plenty of room there to spread out safely and enjoy some fresh mountain air mixed with a little fishing.

Make sure you keep an eye on your email for new event postings and keep checking our website for updates to the outings and events being planned. Our on line forum has been fairly active with many interesting posts and pictures. Feel free to join in the fun and post your own notes, questions, or adventure photos. Information on joining the forum can be found on the PPTU webpage.

I hope once again that this newsletter finds you all safe and healthy. We’ll get together very soon though the internet and perhaps an outdoor meeting or two. Our next in person gathering will most likely not occur until a vaccine is approved for the virus. We’ll continue to keep you informed and hopefully a little entertained until that time comes.

Once again, feel free to jump in on our forum and post some notes, ask a few questions, chit chat with your fellow chapter members, and forget about COVID for a while.

Tight lines,

– *Bob O’Donnell*



### Monthly Chapter Meetings – Cancelled Until Further Notice

Time and Day: 7:00 PM, Third Wednesday except June, July, August and December  
Place: Margaret Schweinhaut Senior Center, 1000 Forest Glen Road, Silver Spring, MD 20901

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

## OFFICERS and DIRECTORS 2019 – 2020

President: Randy Dwyer: president@pptu.org  
Past-President: Alan Burrows  
Vice-President: Joe Taylor  
Treasurer: Ron Briggs  
Secretary: Patrick Masler  
Directors: George Opryszko  
Peter Schuler  
Bryan Sirotkin  
Motti Tadmor  
Dennis Tirpak  
Pete Yarrington

### Committee Chairs:

Fundraising: Open  
Forum Moderator: Chuq Yang  
Librarian: Lou Reichel  
Mentor Program: Ken Bowyer  
Membership Secretary: Jay Sheppard  
Conservationist Editor: Bob O'Donnell  
Outings: Lou Reichel: Outings@pptu.org  
Speakers Program: Karan Singh  
Conservation Advocacy: Jim Keil  
Project Healing Waters: Larry Vawter  
Ray Collette  
Publicity: Bob O'Donnell  
Raffles: Joe Taylor  
Trout in the Classroom: Alan Burrows:  
Chuck Dinkel  
Water Quality: Vacant  
Webmaster: Ken Bowyer  
Motti Tadmor  
Youth Program: Vacant

### Stream Committees:

Paint Branch: Joe Robinson  
Northwest Branch: Joe Robinson  
Middle Patuxent: Bryan Sirotkin  
Patuxent: Jay Sheppard

### Mid Atlantic Council Delegates:

Alan Burrows  
Bob Dietz: Secretary  
Randy Dwyer  
Jim Greene  
Marc Hutzell  
Lou Reichel  
Nick Weber

### Contact Us:

mail@pptu.org

## Presidents' Column - Randy Dwyer



It's been a hot hot HOT summer and now that fall is on its way it's great to have started our PPTU Outings once again. Our August Outing, organized by the intrepid Lou Reichel, was a visit to Boiling Springs, PA for the white fly hatch. The evening did not disappoint. Including Lou and myself, we had several familiar faces and first-time attendees join in the fun: Bob O'Donnell, Ken Bowyer, Ron Briggs, Joe Taylor, Dave Pratt and Craig Vander Kohl. To top it off, Dennis Covert, long-time PPTU member and current Boiling Springs area resident fished with us and kindly provided some of his own flies to the PPTU group.

Be on the lookout for our September Outing. Lou is planning the "PPTU Annual One-Fly Contest" to take place on the Gunpowder River very soon. It's a chance to join some friends, and beginners to learn from others and have some fun. You pick a fly, fish it until it's time to check back in with Lou and tell him how many total inches of fish you caught. Obviously there's an honor code associated with this contest - and we all know what that is among fishers!

Beyond September, we are headed to western Maryland for the October Outing on the Savage River. Lou has reserved the Monroe Pavillion and group campsite at [Big Run State Park](#) in Garrett County. It's a beautiful time of year to fish the Savage River and its many runs and deep pools as well as the nearby tributaries for brookies. Many attendees do pitch their own tent and it comfortably allows for social distancing. There are also local hotels/motels to take advantage of if that's your preference.

Mark your calendar for a November trip to Big Spring Creek, PA for the October Caddis. This is a beautiful spring-fed stream north of Chambersburg and the October Caddis is a large, orange bug something akin to a pumpkin and thus its name. I hope to see you and your friends at one if not all of our future Outings this fall. Remember to register in advance by visiting the [PPTU Outings page and register](#).

Additional information on all these upcoming [PPTU Outings](#) can be found here.

As we all know, we are unable to plan for any in-person chapter meetings but will look for

opportunities to host virtual guest speakers, casting and fly-tying lessons whenever possible. I urge you to register for the PPTU Forum - especially if you are a new member. It's an excellent listserv to ask questions and learn from others. We also post PPTU activities and notices on the listserv. To subscribe to our listserv, simply send an email to the following address: [ppctu+subscribe@groups.io](mailto:ppctu+subscribe@groups.io)

PPTU also has a Facebook page and I encourage everyone to hit the "LIKE" button to follow along. Our page holds chapter information, lots of instructional videos and everyone pitches in to help answer questions. You can find our Facebook page here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/PotomacpatuxentTU>

PPTU has added many new members since the beginning of 2020 and I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome each of you to our chapter. Many are seasoned fishers and some are beginners. No matter which you might be, you are more than welcome and I encourage everyone to join our forum, like our Facebook page and to take a moment to introduce yourself. It's not possible to meet each of you in person, even though I wish we could. We have to find alternative methods of engagement and our socially distanced outing on local streams and our social media platforms are our current gathering places. As such I hope our newer members will reach out and allow your fellow members to say "Welcome to Potomac Patuxent TU!"

See you on the water soon,

Randy Dwyer  
President, PPTU



## PPTU Mentor Program Beginners & Beyond

Ken Bowyer 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. at 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 Ken at 301-627-7154 or by E-mail:

[kenbowyer@verizon.net](mailto:kenbowyer@verizon.net) 



## Welcome NEW PPTU Members! - Trout Unlimited

Welcome to the group! Hopefully we'll get to see you very soon. All new members for 2020:

Robert Bagley, Edwin Berkinshaw, Ingrid Braun, Mark Circo, Sarah Covey, Neil Cox, Alfred Craig, Frank Debord, Nick Demers, Deborah Fagan, Adam Forinash, Yon and Andy Frank, Michael Garman, Andrew Geffken, Jordan Gilbey, David Harding, Jeff Harkcom, Kenneth Harmon, Thomas Hastings, JES Avanti Foundation, James Kehler, Jason Knott, Michael LaClair, Dianne Lash, Raymond Lerch, James McJunkin, Charles Morrison, Brian Mozer, Quang Nguyen, Austin Price, Nathan & Megan Proper, Greg Pugh, John Rankin, Nick Raymond, Ralph Riddle, Jerome Russell, Thomas Slagle, Keaton Stavely, Scott Stroble, Craig Vande Kolle, S Vespoint, Timothy Wallace, Rob Wardell, Terrell Waters, Hunter Wathen, William Wiemers, and Matthew Wilkerson.



## Fly Fishing and Birds - Pete Yarrington

Over the past couple years, my time available for fly fishing has been impacted by the birds. This wasn't an issue during the previous five decades I chased fish in Maryland, though I am not sure why not. Here is what happened.

Several falls ago, a friend invited me to come along when he helped monitor migratory raptor flights at a site in Washington Monument State Park in Boonsboro. It turned out that most days mid-September to Christmas someone counts hawks, eagles, falcons and other raptors as they fly south along the ridgeline past the stone tower in the park. In a nutshell, you use high-power binoculars to watch a point in the sky to the north, waiting for these migrating birds, some very, very high in the sky, to appear like pepper grains, then grow larger and soar past you on their way south to warmer climes. I was surprised that it was almost as exciting as fishing. As each of those "pepper specks" got closer over the course of several minutes, they resolved into Red-tailed Hawks, Bald Eagles, even Peregrine Falcons that filled your binoculars-and then flew right over us! And I liked that I was able to experience each bird through my binoculars just like the experienced folks, even if I could not identify everything. I was awestruck, and hooked.

It took a while for my birding to extend beyond hawk watching. (Some hawk watchers never really pursue non-raptors, and they form a sort of cultural subset. Kind of like monster streamer anglers.) I was helped along by several things: First, bird trips take me to pretty places, but with one-tenth of the gear involved in fishing! Also, my wife Pam took to birding just like I did, and most bird trips involve us both. And there is [eBird](https://ebird.org/home), (<https://ebird.org/home>) a web site where you can log and track your bird sightings, and also read what other people are seeing. eBird organizes sightings with maps of "Hot Spots"—just like a map of good fishing spots! But it doesn't much matter if several people show up at the same place. You will actually be more successful with more people looking.

We were soon knee-deep in a pastime I never thought would intrude on my fishing. Knowing when certain migratory birds arrive in our area was suddenly as important as knowing when to replace the dun-colored dries in my box with terrestrials. I

soon learned that almost every birder has a Gee-Whizz bird – a bird that they saw early on that sucked them in to serious birding. For me, besides the birds in my early hawk-watching, it was probably my first springtime Blackburnian Warbler. These birds, like many of the other warbler species that show up for a few weeks every spring, are ping-pong-ball-size packets of energy that migrate at night and stop to feed in mature trees during the day. The first time I saw one, I was standing with a little gaggle of birders who materialize at Wheaton Regional Park every morning to stand and scan the groves of promising trees. I was looking where a new friend of ours told me to, when, for a second or so, out popped a little bird with a fluorescent orange head and black stripes. Then it was gone. I was thunderstruck. Have amazing little birds been around the whole time I have been out prowling local woods and streams? How had I not noticed!



Now, a couple years later, I have gladly ceded some of my fishing time to the birds. I like to think that we are doing pretty good at identifying woodland birds, but we may never really conquer the many gulls and wading species. Also, we have started to learn bird songs. My tin ear may prevent me from ever being good at it. But I have finally learned the identity of some of the birds whose songs I have heard while fishing since my youth. It turns out that the song I know from still spring mornings along the Patuxent belongs to the plain little White-throated Sparrow. Two slightly crazy songs of wet summer days along the Upper Potomac belong to Pileated Woodpeckers and, of all things, Yellow-billed Cuckoos. And some of the loudest songs from woodland trails come from the wonderfully named little Eastern Wood-Pewees.



I encourage anyone who hasn't tried it to take along a small pair of binoculars when afield. It turns out that our streams are wonderful places to see birds as well as fish. Birding can be just fine when the fishing is slow!



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!*



## Patuxent Report - Jay Sheppard

Flows were fair this summer on the upper Patuxent; not bad but not great. We had one report of a 21" wild brown caught and released recently. Very nice fish!! There was a belated report of a similar sized trout back in May. (Photograph comparison showed these were two different fish.) So there are some respectable trout one would write home about in the Patuxent above Rt 97! It simply takes a little patience and a lot of time, as well as some luck, to find these big trout in this small a stream. The next two or so months are great times to

explore and maybe find a big trout! Be stealthy! Look before you move!

There may be a few holdover trout from the stocking of trout last December. There were no other stockings except for a few hundred rainbows about 9 months ago. Rainbows have always had a very low holdover rate (near zero!). In the tailwater below Brighton Dam there should not be any holdovers. Between the low flow, warm water temps, and likely very low oxygen, it would be hard to imagine any trout surviving the summer. We expect to stock again in February and March, but nothing definite!

*" More than half the intense enjoyment of fly-fishing is derived from the beautiful surroundings, the satisfaction felt from being in the open air, the new lease of life secured thereby, and the many, many pleasant recollections of all one has seen, heard and done."*

~ Charles F. Orvis

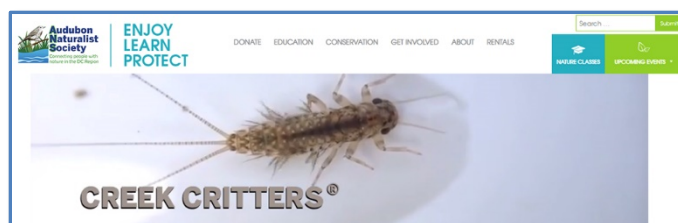
## Creek Critters - Gregg Trilling

This little nugget of fun was passed on to us from Gregg Trilling of the Audubon Naturalist Society in Chevy Chase. Thanks Gregg! This looks awesome. Kudos to our own Pete Yarrington for passing the info along to include in the Conservationist.

Some PPTU members may be interested in Audubon Naturalist Society's CREEK CRITTERS app (<https://anshome.org/creek-critters/>). We've also started an Instagram account targeted toward those new to aquatic macroinvertebrates and/or interested in macros ("[anscreekcritters](https://www.instagram.com/anscreekcritters)").

While not directly related to stream education, PPTU members may also be interested in some of the ANS's "Naturalist Hourly" programs if they haven't previously been discussed over the listserv:

<https://anshome.org/naturalist-hour/>



## Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC) - Jay Sheppard

September starts our annual cycle and now is the time to consider making your Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC). As a Chapter we are not allowed to assess dues or fees for membership. Along with our other fund raising events, we ask for a \$20 ASC each September to sustain the chapter's administration costs, educational programs, and community service projects including:

- Room rental for the monthly Chapter meetings at the Schwienhaut Senior Center.
- Trout in the Classroom program that teaches primary & middle schoolers the importance of cold water fisheries to our environment.
- Support to TU fly fishing & conservation camps in both Virginia and Pennsylvania, sponsoring attendance by high school students.
- Support of the Project Healing Waters program at Ft. Meade and Walter Reed that provides recreational activities to wounded warriors.
- Support the Mayfly Project for foster kids being taught to fish and use fly rods.
- Free copies of the Conservationist for local fly shops, State agencies and other conservation organizations.
- Conservation projects that restore trout habitats in rivers & streams across Maryland.

To be clear, PPTU does receive a tiny amount back for members' annual dues to the national TU. This only amounts to a few hundred dollars. Your annual dues to national TU are separate and apart from any ASC, which is a donation to the chapter to help cover its expenses each year. PPTU does not mail renewal notices to anyone. If you see a renewal notice in the mail regarding TU, it is from the national offices. PPTU no longer handles renewals of national membership fees.

You can pay the ASC in several ways:

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

Your contributions are most appreciated!

## Shop Amazon Smile! - PPTU

Don't forget to shop Amazon Smile! Add the *Potomac-Patuxent Chapter* as your charity of choice to your Amazon account. If your company purchases through Amazon, ask them to help support us as well. Its free money in support of the chapter.



## Fly Tying Tips - Jay Sheppard

If two or more materials are going to be wound around the shank or a wing post, etc., the rule is simple: First tied in is the last to be wrapped AND the last to be tied in is first to be wrapped. Example: ribbing a body—first tie in the ribbing material, tie in the body material or dubbing, wrap the dubbing or body material forward and finally wind the ribbing over the body. If there was a third component (e.g., hackle), it would be tied in second and wound second.



Hackles have two sides: top (bright) and bottom (dull). If palmering a hackle or winding it as the hackle, one should select which side faces the hook



eye, Hackle wound with the dull or underside facing forward leave the hackle barbules cocked forward and vice versa. For most ties, I prefer the dull side facing the eye to add a degree of stiffness that helps a dry fly float longer. For wet flies, especially soft hackles, I want the bright side facing the eye when I am winding the hackle. One needs to practice tying the hackle stem on the hook in the right manner to obtain the correct side when winding. I find tying the desired side to face downward (and away from me) works well, but others may find a slightly different manner works for them.



Tails for duns and spinners should be sparse and split, if feasible. Wings on spinners also need to be sparse. Bulky tails and wings laying on the surface can give the wrong impression to the trout—naturals have a maximum of three tails and wing ribs are few. This does not preclude the use of two or three fibers per side for the tail; I almost never have a middle tail on any mayfly pattern. Never ever use deer hair for tails! It is hollow and very fragile! If one ties in a trailing shuck on a dun, great, no tails needed; but the shuck needs to be fairly sparse, too. The shed exoskeleton of a nymph is translucent and very fragile. Probably the single most common fault I see with beginning tiers is bulk. Most insects are THIN. Keep everything THIN! That also includes wing posts—less is often better.



## Fall Bug Guide - Bob O'Donnell

Fall fly fishing is some of the most enjoyable fly fishing of the year. The crowds get less in many areas as temps decline and people begin to focus on hunting and football more than the pursuit of trout.

The folks at the Flymen Fishing Company put together a bug guide that walks you through the major differences in the fall season and why they matter for your fly selection and fishing decisions. They also take you through the major hatches including sizes and colors, finally wrapping it up with the top six flies they recommend for fly fishing in the fall. Check it out.

<https://flymenfishingcompany.fliesforsale.com/all-bug-guide/?ffst=7sb7q-3k9l>

## Fly Fishing Life Hacks - Louis Cahill , Gink and Gasoline

Everyone wants their life to be easier and everyone loves to save money. Louis Cahill offers up 10 handy and inexpensive items you can repurpose to accomplish both. You can pick all of them up at the local Home Depot or order them online. Some of them are so obvious you're probably using them already, but I guarantee there's at least one thing on the list that you haven't thought of and will love.

<https://www.ginkandgasoline.com/fly-fishing-gear/10-inexpensive-fly-fishing-life-hacks-from-the-home-depot/>

## National Day of Service & Remembrance - Trout Unlimited

Each year since 2009, September 11 has marked a federally recognized National Day of Service and Remembrance.

In appreciation, Trout Unlimited is offering free one-year introductory memberships to military, fire service, medical and law enforcement members.

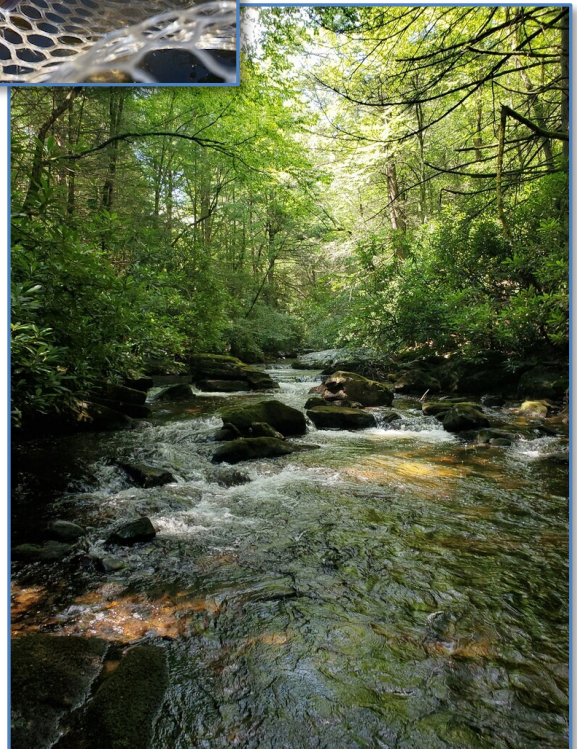
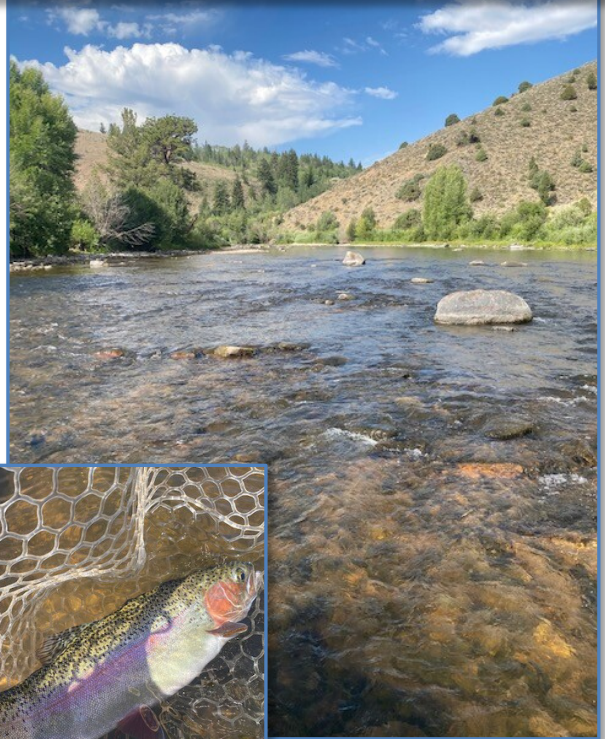
Check out the information on TU's website and help get the word out to the local heroes you pass every day in your community.

<https://www.tu.org/blog/september-11-national-day-of-service-remembrance/>

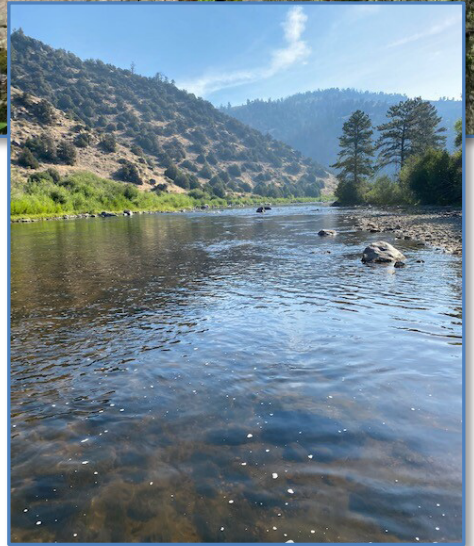
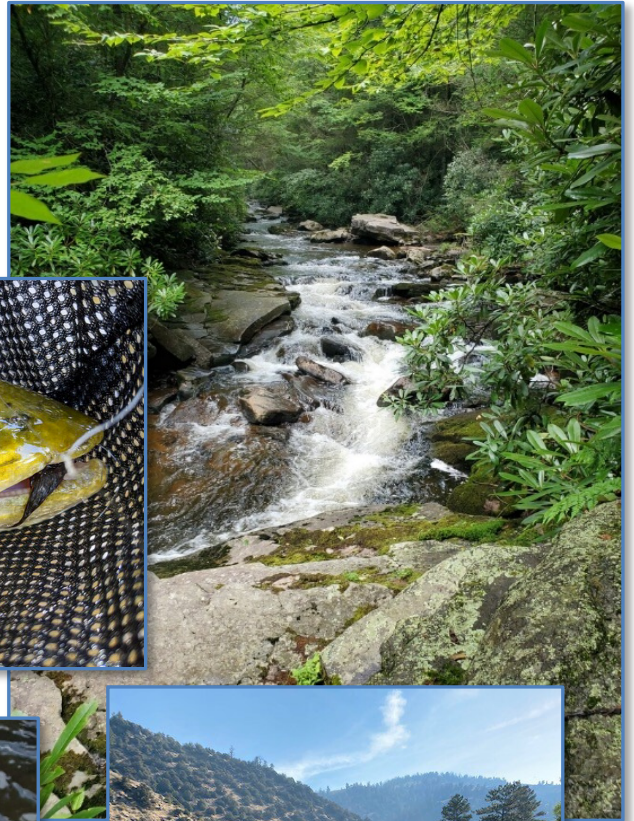


## Members Catch - PPTU

We had a lot of folks turning in some really nice photos from their fishing adventures during the summer period. Including some gorgeous shots that made many of dream of going West. Below are just a handful. Become a TU member, join the PPTU forum, and post some of your own adventures!









Contributions should be sent to the Editor as plain text 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**  
Phone: 410-733-0638  
Email: [TroutWrangler@Yahoo.com](mailto:TroutWrangler@Yahoo.com)



## The Renegade

The Renegade Dry is an attractor pattern that has been around since the late 1920's and works great in smaller sizes to imitate a mating ball of midges, or as a searching pattern in the larger sizes.

The Renegade doesn't necessarily look like anything in nature but has consistently caught fish for decades. With fore and aft hackles the Renegade floats well in rough water and looks buggy enough to bring fish to the surface. Plus, the contrasting hackles make the fly easy to see in all kinds of light.

<https://news.orvis.com/fly-fishing/video-tie-renegade>



*Note: If you have or are about to change your email address please let us know. If you currently get the print copy and wish to get the electronic copy send us a note.*



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