

# The Conservationist



PPTU.org

## Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

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

## “Maryland and DC Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA3)”

*Sue Muller - Howard County Recreation and Parks  
February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 7:30PM*

Our speaker for February's virtual meeting is Sue Muller, an ecologist with the Natural & Historic Resources Division of the Howard County Recreation and Parks Department.

Sue will speak with us about collecting bird data for the third edition of the Maryland and DC Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA3). The BBA3, which began last year, is a 5-year comprehensive survey of the breeding birds in the Maryland and DC region. Volunteers collect data on the birds and submit them through an online portal called eBird. Both the first and second Maryland and DC atlases (1983–1987; 2002–2006) have been published as books. Sue's work as the Howard County co-leader for the BBA3 comes on the heels of her completing work on the 5-year Maryland Amphibian and Reptile Atlas, for which she recruited over 500 volunteers!

Sue is excited to speak with PPTU because she and the BBA3 naturalists need outdoorsy people to keep an eye out for rare birds -- including a nesting bald eagle pair they are seeking that was seen flying in the vicinity of Triadelphia Reservoir!



More information on the BBA3 can be found at: <https://ebird.org/atlasmddc/about>

Sue is usually mentioned on the PPTU listserve as a source of information on invasive species (such as the snakehead), or on the Howard County Parks' Facebook page when she documents interesting finds, such as a never-before-seen-in-Maryland mayfly (*Ephemera blanda*). A 40-year naturalist, Sue is a fount of information on our local ecology.

Tight lines,

– Karan Singh

### Monthly Chapter Meetings – Virtual Until Further Notice

Time and Day: 7:30 PM unless a new time is stated, Third Wednesday except June, July, August and December

Virtual Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87555903305?pwd=T0JRWFPHaW11cVdEUUd4MVNwN0tPZz09>

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

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## Presidents' Column

### - Randy Dwyer



Great news! Thanks to the hundreds of comments sent to Maryland's Department of Natural Resources by PPTU members like you and others across the Free State, new Brook Trout catch and release regulations are now in place. The comments in favor of these regulations were overwhelmingly positive and went into effect on January 1st and places Brook Trout in a 'no creel' and 'catch and release' protection across Maryland. The purpose is to help protect Maryland's only native trout species and return them to the waters from which they came to keep this fragile population in place. [You can learn more about these regs by visiting Maryland DNR website here](#). Great work by PPTU members! This is quite an achievement.

While COVID protocol is preventing large gatherings, your PPTU chapter continues to bring you excellent programming via our virtual speakers series. January's "Fly Fishing the San Juan River" was excellent and many thanks to Seneca Valley TU President, Noel Gollehon, for giving everyone a first-hand look at a truly remarkable river. This virtual meeting was unique in the sense that it was shared with multiple chapters - Potomac Patuxent TU, National Capital TU, and Seneca Valley TU. It also brought in many other TU viewers from across Maryland and even some attendees from Pennsylvania, too! I suspect we'll continue this trend throughout the spring which will build a network of friends for all of us.

Our strong lineup will continue this month with an update on collecting bird data for the third edition of the Maryland and DC Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA3). Future months will bring us special evenings of cicada fly-tying and much more. Our chapter topics can vary widely and we work hard to bring you interesting TU topics as well as those about the greater outdoors. Karan Singh is your PPTU Speaker Coordinator and does a great job for all of us [Please visit PPTU website to learn about future events](#) and please reach out if you have an idea for a topic or heard a guest speaker and want to share with your fellow PPTU members.

I do want to give you a sneak peek at two near future PPTU speakers we're very excited to tell you about with more details to come shortly: Click on this

## Committee Chairs:

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## Contact Us:

mail@pptu.org

link to [learn more about Bob Clouser](#) and here to learn more about [Tim Flagler and Tightlines Productions!](#)

PPTU's Outing Coordinator, Lou Reichel, has proposed an excellent schedule of outings and I encourage you to take advantage of them this spring. These outings are open to fishers of all ages and we encourage beginners/novice fishers to come along. We'll make sure to match you up with a more experienced member to make the day enjoyable. I've learned several different knots and fishing techniques on outings just like these and encourage you to take advantage of them. The real advantage of these outings is that you'll learn new waters and make fishing buddies that will last a lifetime.

Stay safe and I look forward to seeing you on the water!

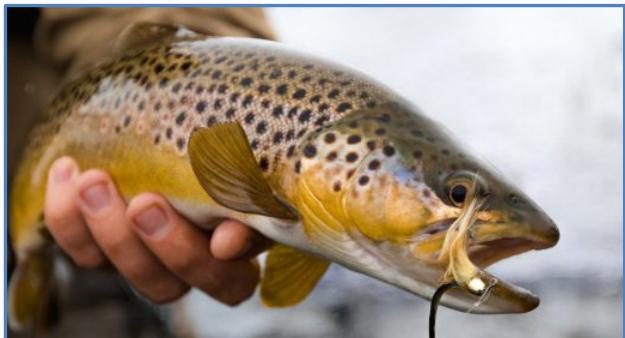
Randy Dwyer  
President, PPTU



## 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)



## How to Choose the Right Nymph - Phil Monahan

One of the first things that a fly fisher learns is that matching the hatch is important. But how, exactly, do you do that—especially when there are no insects on the water's surface?



Here's a two-part video lesson that demonstrates four methods for sampling the water, which will show you what's available to trout right now and what food items are generally available. After you've determined the most likely bug, the video offers a simple and effective way to choose a fly that will accurately imitate the insects in your sample.

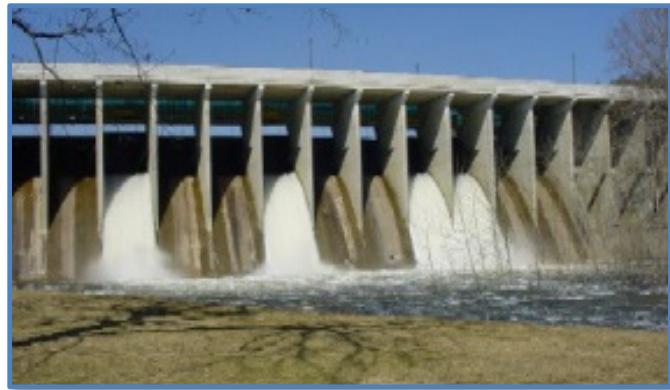
<https://news.orvis.com/fly-fishing/video-pro-tips-choose-right-nymph-2>

## Patuxent Report - Jay Sheppard

We do not have the DNR preseason stocking dates for our local waters as we go to press. They typically are the last 10 days of February and the first week or so of March. Because of Covid, I am also not sure if we will be allowed to float stock our home waters like we usually do each year. If you are not on my emailing list of volunteers for such work OR you have changed your email recently, please email me ASAP: <mailto:jaymsheppard95@gmail.com>. You need chest waders, able to easily walk up or down the middle of a stream for a mile or two, and be free to help on a week day. All stockings happen only Tuesday through Friday. The waters we float stock are the upper Patuxent special area (above rt 97), the Brighton Dam tailwater of the main

Patuxent, and the Middle Patuxent Delayed Harvest section in south Columbia.

We have no information yet of the prospects of Brighton Dam turbines being turned on this year. If the turbines get operational, then the likelihood of having dead water being released this summer is high. The water the turbines release in the summer has no dissolved oxygen. Trout require a lot of oxygen compared to most other aquatic life. Without the turbines, we should have some holdover trout all summer. If you are just tuning into this issue, be advised PPTU has been diligently working with the hydropower owner, WSSC, DNR and other parties for many years to make sure we have properly oxygenated water released when the turbines are running.



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!*



## **The cicadas are coming!!!—Part III - Jay Sheppard**

In the November issue, I described a durable fly pattern for imitating the 17-cicadas that will be popping out of the ground about May 20 this spring

in our area. This article provides a little more information about the bug and the fly, as well as fishing tips.



In the first week of the emergence many predators are still learning what this insect is! There are very few predators who live more than 17 years, so they all have to learn if the bugs are edible (some insects taste terrible!) and how to handle them. It does not take long. Then every predator will try to eat them. Dogs, birds, snakes, fish and many more will try to consume them. This is why the cicadas emerge in such prodigious numbers—billions and billions! They simply are too numerous for all the predators to have any significant effect on the cicada numbers.

Fishing this hatch is about as easy as sitting in a chair. First, these are very large bugs and trout smaller than about 11" will be totally full after only a few bugs have been inhaled. Medium sized trout and bass might be able to consume four or five each day. Only larger fish (trout, bass, carp, catfish, etc.) will be able to gorge themselves on more than a half dozen in one day. If the stream has a lot of forest out of the flood plain next to it, then literally hundreds of cicadas might float past in an hour. The bugs do not get really active until midmorning. Simply put, by Noon, most trout in our waters are going to be stuffed! Fishing later in the day will still produce fish, but they will be mostly the few larger fish that still have room in their stomachs for more bugs. Fishermen who get on the water at first light and plan to stop for a long rest about Noon will do much better than a fly fisher working the water in the afternoons. The latter might catch a few large fish, but the former fishing in the early AM may catch all sizes and have 50–75 fish to hand before noon. The early bird gets the worm! Late risers get leftovers.

Fishing with a cicada fly is about as simple as it gets. There is no careful planning on where to cast it. No fine tippets on super long leaders. No delicate presentation, careful dead drift or special retrieve. Just plop the fly in the water and hold on. This is

probably the very best opportunity to get beginning fly fishers into the sport. Please try to encourage any young person to come out and try fly fishing in its most basic form. Any farm pond, reservoir, river and stream should be fished with a beginning fly fisher. Plan now!

I recommend no lighter than a 4X tippet for trout, and definitely 2X for where bass, carp and other less wary gamefish might lurk. We did not have snakeheads here in 2004; I suspect they will take one of these flies like any other predator. The main reasons for heavy tippet is not so much the large fish as simply getting your fly back when it finds itself (accidentally, of course) in a tree or the grass nearby. Check your hook point regularly. One morning in 2004, I fished a cicada fly without a point for almost 30 minutes on the lower Savage. After a dozen takes and no hookups, it dawned on me to check the fly. It was a pointless exercise in futility!

The distribution of the cicadas in Maryland and nearby states is filled with a few gaps that are mostly the result of the loss of trees in the past several decades. As mentioned earlier, flood plains may not produce many, if any. The nymphs can withstand brief floods but not extended ones. One will know by midmorning if he is fishing a water body with cicadas singing nearby. The din can be easily heard for a mile or more. Cicadas readily fly a mile or more from where they emerged from the ground. So flood plains will gain a chorus of cicadas over a short time. In turn, many will flutter to the water during the day.

Brood X(Ten) emerges from the western shore of the Bay west to the eastern Continental Divide in Garrett County. I am not sure if they go all the way south to Point Lookout. They can be found across much of the southern half of Pennsylvania east of that Continental Divide and nearby portions of northernmost Virginia. The northeast quarter of West Virginia also has this brood, as does the middle Ohio Valley of southern Ohio and Indiana. Any reservoir, pond, river, or stream in this area will likely have some cicadas nearby—some more than others. Alert any friends or relatives in nearby areas to not miss this great fishing opportunity. One might



live only a few miles from where they are emerging and not know.

Many have had a hard time finding some of the odd materials I listed in the October and November Conservationists. Rubber legs need to be sturdy. They are not flimsy, wiggly rubber legs like we often use on nymphs. These represent the stiff, front main vein of the cicada's wing. About a 1 mm diameter leg is perfect. The only ones I have found locally are within the skirts for bass lures. One gets the skirts in bundles that have a mix of colors. I got a brown and orange bundle; former for hopper legs, latter for cicadas. One can get two cicada flies out of one leg; one bundle will make a couple dozen cicadas. The other item folks are having a tough time finding is the 3 mm (1/8") black foam rubber sheet. Sheets of 2 mm are everywhere. They will work but I expect them to be far less durable than 3 mm foam. If you use the 2 mm, plan on tying twice as many flies. Nick Weber had reported that he found the 3 mm foam sheets on line at the J Stockard site <https://www.jsflyfishing.com/hareline-fly-foam-3mm>



The two small sheets will make 16 flies. This should allow everyone to gather up the needed materials—crystal flash, orange and black chenille, orange heavy tying thread and some airplane dope. I wish I had a viable alternative to the contact adhesive I suggested. Undoubtedly, there are some alternatives out there, but I have not been able to find one.

In March, we plan to have a virtual demo of tying this cicada pattern by Matt O'Neal. He has both the tying talent and the video equipment to make a great presentation. Please stay tuned for the announcement of this online event. Matt will also record a video of

tying this pattern that will then be available on the web for folks to refer to as we get closer to May.



Our outing chair, Lou Reichel, has reserved the Monroe Run pavilion in [Big Run State Park](#) on the upper end of the Savage Reservoir for a whole week! The reservation starts Memorial Day night through the following weekend (May 31–June 6). This will be a prime time for fishing the Savage and the North Branch. The Casselman and Yough are not in the range of this emergence—no cicadas. Further details on the costs and how to make a reservation to use this group campsite will be made later this spring. The number of campers will be limited. There are certainly many alternative camp sites and motels in the area.

I hope the readership is juiced up awaiting this major event that is 17 years in the making! Be ready! Do not miss these 6 weeks this year!! No family events allowed. Fishing only!!

## Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC) - PPTU

Reminder, you can pay the Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC) in several ways:

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

Your contributions are most appreciated! Help support PPTU in the New Year!!!



*"There is certainly something in angling that tends to produce a serenity of mind."*

~ Washington Irving

## Pheasant Tail Emerger - Pete Yarrington

One of my number-one trout flies has long been the time-honored original Sawyer Pheasant Tail Nymph, as tied by its originator Frank Sawyer. The first time I saw the pattern was at Barry Serviente's Anglers Art shop, off River Road in Chevy Chase before it moved to Georgetown. There were several of the flies, tiny and perfect, stuck to a small piece of driftwood under a glass bell jar. They were tied by Tom Baltz, who has now become one of the keepers of the Cumberland Valley flyfishing tradition.

The original Sawyer's Pheasant Tail nymph, or "PT," is an unusual fly in that it is tied with fine copper wire rather than thread. The only modification I make in tying my own PT nymphs is the addition of a few winds of tobacco brown thread over the copper wire head for security, followed by a very small drop of head cement. The easiest way to understand how an original PT nymph is tied is to watch Matt O'Neal tie one in his recent posting to his YouTube channel, Savage Flies. Matt includes some history of Sawyer and the fly that all tiers will find interesting.



When the importance of emergers to trout fishing was being realized, I created my own emerger based on the successful little PT nymphs. The resulting pattern is a PT nymph with three changes: (1) addition of a tiny bit of spiky hare's ear dubbing over the copper wire thorax, (2) replacement of the wing case over the thorax with a small clump of fluff from the bottom of a large natural dark rooster hackle, and

(3) tying the fly with brown 6/0 thread rather than copper wire. The fluff should be dark gray to black, as it is on most undyed dark hackles. These changes imitate the enlarged thorax and emerging wings of live or drowned emerging mayflies. I have found this fly to be every bit as effective as the original PT nymph, and it seems to sometimes work when the nymph does not. It is often effective when there are small dark mayflies hatching. In sizes 16, 18, and 20, I think it imitates the little olive mayflies in the family Baetidae that emerge throughout the year, as well as the dark little springtime Blue Quills and Mahogany Duns in the Prong-gilled mayfly family Leptophlebiidae.

I fish the PT emerger the same way I fish the PT nymph. I put it on a 6x or 7x leader, with the smallest strike indicator I can find set at about 1.5 to two times the depth of the water. I often put a very small amount of weight on the leader, maybe 4 or 5 inches above the fly. For adding tiny weights like this, I use lead-free flytying wire. I take a couple-inch piece of 0.020 or 0.025 wire, wrap the leader around it two or three times, then fold the wire back on itself and wind the ends together like a twist-tie, and then clip off the ends to create the exact amount of weight I am looking for.

### **Pheasant Tail Emerger**

**Hook:** Dry fly hook, standard length or 1x long.

**Thread:** Tobacco brown 6/0 or 8/0 thread. I tie the fly entirely with this thread, rather than copper wire as in the PT nymph, to allow dubbing of the thorax and placement of the wing tuft.

**Tail:** Three to five ringneck pheasant tail fibers, short.

**Abdomen:** Two or three ringneck pheasant tail fibers, wound thinly.

**Ribbing:** Fine copper wire, 4-5 open wraps over the abdomen, wound in opposite direction from the pheasant fibers.

**Thorax:** Built up slightly with several layers of copper wire, then covered with a thin layer of spiky hare's ear dubbing. Some copper should show through.

**Wing tuft:** Small clump of gray to black fluff from the bottom of a large natural dark rooster hackle.

**Head:** Tying thread



### **Members Catch - Bob O'Donnell**

Keep fishing! Hope to see you at the next PPTU outing to Big Hunting Creek.



## 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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## Frenchie

The Frenchie is a favorite pattern of competitive fly fisherman and Euro nymphers. It's really nothing more than a heavily-weighted pheasant tail with a hot spot.

This pattern is often tied on competition-style barbless hooks but mashing down the hook barb on a regular hook works too and makes it easier on the fish, it also makes it easier to add a bead. To really get the fly down deep, tungsten beads are the way to go.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWsL\\_XDtX5I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWsL_XDtX5I)



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