

PPTU MENTOR PROGRAM

BEGINNERS & BEYOND

Available to members of PPTU current with their dues. Jim Feudale will conduct one to one. stream side instruction. Interested members must show commitment of having waders or hipers, rod/reel outfit and leaders.

Techniques, flies reading currents, etc. will be discussed and practiced @ nearby streams.

Contact Jim@301-622-4923 or email jfeudale@aol.com.



May PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Jim Keil

I'm coming to the end of my two year's service as chapter president. It has been a wonderful and very rewarding time for me. I have learned about myself, about other people, and about watersheds, fish, and fishing. I have some people to thank for these blessings. To Jay Sheppard I owe, and this chapter owes, more than we can possibly repay. He's the heart, soul, and institutional memory of PPTU, and without him our local watersheds would not be the fisheries **THEY ARE. PAST PRESIDENTS AS WELL, MIKE POCHEITINO AND ROBERT SIMPSON HAVE BEEN GREAT RESOURCES. IN PARTICULAR, ROBERT'S STEADY PRESENCE AND HIS DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHAPTER LISTSERVE HAVE BEEN MOST WELCOME.**

Dave Piske has had a say in every worthwhile decision I've made for the chapter, and he's made me a better letter writer along the way. I've leaned on him heavily. Jim Greco has suffered my procrastination in returning the board meeting draft minutes to him and put up with my tinkering with his prose. Len Blakley has tolerated more advice than you will ever know to keep well our financial records. The Board of Directors has had some new faces these last two years, and I owe every member of the Board my heartfelt thanks. Most of these directors served the chapter by wearing one or two other hats as well. Tom Allegretti, Lou Boezi, Val Walters, Jason Akers, Jack Dawson, Robert Griffin, Fred Kallmeyer, and Paul Prevost have always stepped forward to help. Mid-Atlantic Council members Bruce Eberle and Bob Plumb have helped connect PPTU to the regional and national TU scene, and Jason Beckstrom has served as MAC treasurer.

OUR WATERSHED COMMITTEE CHAIRS, JAY, CHARLIE GELSO, LARRY COBURN, AND DAVID DUNMIRE HAVE DONE TERRIFIC WORK ON THEIR RESPECTIVE WATERSHEDS. JAY'S LONG TERM STEWARDSHIP OF THE UPPER PATUXENT IS THE STUFF ANGLERS TELL THEIR KIDS ABOUT, AND IN A FEW SHORT YEARS CHARLIE AND LARRY HAVE TRANSFORMED THE MIDDLE PATUXENT INTO A TERRIFIC FISHERY WHOSE BEST DAYS ARE YET TO COME. DAVID DUNMIRE, TOO, WARRANTS SPECIAL RECOGNITION FOR HIS PROTECTION OF THE PAINT BRANCH; I'VE WORKED VERY CLOSELY WITH DAVID THESE TWO YEARS, AND IF JAY IS OUR HEART AND SOUL THEN DAVID'S OUR CONSCIENCE. BILL BARTON HAS, WITH THE AID OF JAY AND TOM ALLEGRETTI, KEPT OUR GROWING MEMBERSHIP RECORDS ACCURATE AND UP-TO-DATE. JACK DAWSON, CHAPTER LIBRARIAN, HAS TREATED OUR VIDEO AND BOOK RESOURCES LIKE ANY GOOD LIBRARIAN SHOULD: HE HAS CREATED A CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM AND CARD CATALOGUE AND MADE US EXPAND OUR OFFERINGS.

Willy Oldes has, with the help of Val Walters, gotten us a lot of bang for our raffle dollars (you should see his eyes gleam when he speaks of the deal he got on this or that rod!; my thanks, too, to the local equipment vendors who've created the gleam in Willy's eyes and thereby helped protect our watersheds too). Jim Feudale has done an exemplary job with the mentor program, and Dave Pratt, in

one of the most important jobs in the chapter, tirelessly has led us on outing after outing to local streams.

David Feldman, with the help of Andy Schaffer, has put on a spectacularly successful flytying class that this year drew nineteen participants. Remember, the chapter that fishes and ties together...protects watersheds. When he wasn't de-salinating the Persian Gulf, Bill Miller slaked our thirsts (by the way, if you have any doubts as to the supreme authority of the chapter president, recall that in two years of trying I couldn't get a Pepsi from Bill's cooler). Jim Greene turned his back on the NBA to handle chapter publicity and did such a good job that every month two to ten non-members call me up and ask how to get to a chapter meeting. Jon Barnes deserves ample praise for his job in attracting new people to meetings with his outstanding selection of speakers this year. Pete Yarrington and Dave Wong have handled water quality issues for theBoard, and I have turned to them frequently for expert advice.

LAST BUT FAR FROM LEAST, KENT BISHOP EVERY SINGLE MONTH TURNED OUT, ON TIME, A CONSERVATIONIST. DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY TU CHAPTERS WISH THEY COULD ACCOMPLISH THIS FEAT? WITHOUT THIS NEWSLETTER, WE'RE JUST A BUNCH OF ANGLERS WITH AN INTEREST IN CONSERVATION BUT WITH NO MEANS TO SHARE WITH EACH OTHER OUR PASSION FOR AND KNOWLEDGE OF THESE THINGS. WE MIGHT AS WELL DUNK BAIT. THANKS TO KENT'S EFFORTS, WE'RE NEARLY FOUR HUNDRED MEN AND WOMEN WHO NOT ONLY ENJOY EACH OTHER'S COMPANY ON AND OFF THE STREAM BUT WHO PROTECT THE AREA'S WATERSHEDS. I HOPE YOU WILL TAKE A MINUTE TO THANK KENT AND ALL THESE MEN AND WOMEN FOR THE JOB THEY HAVE SO SELFLESSLY PERFORMED FOR YOU AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF PPTU. AND THINK ABOUT JOINING THIS LEADERSHIP GROUP FOR A COUPLE YEARS. TRUST ME: THE REWARDS FOR YOUR EFFORTS WILL RETURN TO YOU TENFOLD.



Patuxent Report by Jay Sheppard

There were three stockings of 2000 browns and 2000 rainbows on the Patuxent. There will be no further spring stockings on the upper Patuxent Special Area. The average stocking rate was about 35 trout per 100 yards, with more in the lower and deeper sections; some trout were fairly respectable in size. Part of the rainbows were not float-stocked any distance, being placed only near the bridges. For the foreseeable future, all stocked trout will be planted in the Special Area between Annapolis Rock (Rt. 94) and Howard Chapel Bridges. The area above the Rt. 94 bridge is now largely devoid of the many deep holes it once had. In addition, there is a good population of wild browns in that section that we do not want to stress any further. Wild browns can be found in good numbers throughout the stream, although most are in the areas with lots of good cover and food.

The overall holdover rate will depend largely upon two big factors: summer flows and poaching. I have had a few reports this spring of poachers in the Annapolis Rock–Hipsley Mill sections of the stream. **Please report these sightings immediately to the Natural Resources Police.**

Some time this fall we expect to do electro-shocking surveys of the trout populations on the Patuxent and other trout streams in our area. If you are interested and not already on my Email list to help stock, send me an E-Mail or see me at the next meeting.

MEMBER'S ASSESSMENT NOW PAYABLE

The annual assessment (see back) is now payable, if you wish. Check your label—if the “PP-” date is “0901” (or there is NO “PP-” and date), you may send your \$15 now, and you will not have to worry about paying in September. Some members have paid twice this year, so they already show “PP-0902.” We do not mail notices in September. Make checks payable to “POTOMAC-PATUXENT CHAPTER - TU” and mail to the chapter mail box on the back of the newsletter. The assessment covers only the newsletter and related administrative expenses; all donations above expenses at raffles, etc. go to the resource and not to support our members with free newsletters, maps, etc. Final issue for those having “PP-0901” will be this next November. Every year many members forget to renew and wonder what happened to their newsletters. Do not wait until then, renew now!

ADDRESS CHANGING or MISSED ISSUE?

If you move over the summer or see any error in your mailing labels (*Trout* or *Conservationist*), please notify **both** the National TU office **and** this chapter with separate notices. Our mailing list is maintained apart from the National list; we do eventually get the

notice of address change from National TU, but it is often a few months before it affects your newsletter and other mailings. If you fail to get one of the eight issues OR are receiving TWO copies of the *Conservationist*, please advise us as soon as possible. They are normally mailed out the first Wednesday of the months of September through November and January through May. Please help us help you. Drop us a post card with your corrected or new address. Thank you.

FINAL ISSUE UNTIL SEPTEMBER

Members are reminded that there are no newsletters during the summer months. The September *Conservationist* should be mailed just after Labor Day for the September 19 meeting.

SHOP CLOSURES

The FLY EMPORIUM closed the end of April in the historic Savage Mill on the Little Patuxent River in Savage, Maryland.

MAY ELECTIONS

We had to go to press with this May issue a little earlier than planned. Therefore, the chapter nominating committee for the May elections was still trying to persuade several of our fine members to join the Board. They expect to have the proposed slate announced at the April 18 meeting, with the actual vote at the May 16 meeting. We hope to post the proposed slate on the chapter web site well before this issue is mailed to our membership in early May.



HATCH TALK

Jay Sheppard

From now until the first frost or so, there will be an abundance of bugs and other prey for the trout to feed upon. The early hatches have come and gone, and we now have the late spring hatches to contemplate. But they are some of the best. The late May and early June period is the time of the prolific sulphur mayfly hatches. These are the hatches where you need two very important items: a good selection of flies to imitate these mayflies and a spot to stand during the hatch. The former include nymphs, duns, and spinner patterns that are very realistic. The local trout see so many naturals and so many fly patterns that they become highly selective. That is caused by the other "hatch" at this time: lots of trout fishers. Because of this latter hatch, finding a good place to fish with little competition from other fishers can be difficult. One must sometimes walk a good distance from the parking lots and be prepared with a small waterproof flashlight to make his way back after dark.

The sulphur hatches are probably the best hatch we have in this area. All the streams have them, although they are most prolific on the Gunpowder and the Savage Rivers in my experience. On a good evening, one has to keep the mouth closed to ensure no unwanted protein gets sucked in! There are two species of mayflies involved. I will not bore you with the Latin names, but the larger one is a more uniform sulphur yellow in color and is best matched by a #14 pattern (nymph, dun, spinner). This is the first of the two to emerge and can start about mid-May on the Gunpowder and late May in western Maryland. About 10-12 days later the second sulphur mayfly starts to emerge. This varies in size as the season progresses and starts at a real #16 and ends up in late June as little #22 flies. They also vary more in color, ranging from as nearly a bright yellow as the larger species to a pale creamish yellow, nearly off white. The wings are as often gray as they are cream.

The larger sulphur mayfly is usually done about 15 days after the hatch starts, but the smaller species easily runs a full month as they get smaller and paler. The larger one will hatch sporadically on a warm, cloudy afternoon and peaks about 1-2 hours before dark. The smaller species tends to hatch more faithfully starting about 2-3 hours before dark and peaking in the final hour of daylight. Late in June, all the activity takes place in the final 30-45 minutes of light and continues well into total darkness.

On a Maryland stream one June evening several years ago, I identified 11 kinds of mayflies, 4 kinds of stoneflies, and at least 5 or 6 kinds of caddis. That is a lot of variety of food to make the trout very selective at times. By the end of June large mayfly nymphs will become relatively scarce as the major spring hatches finish. Fly fishers will need to shift to caddis, terrestrials or minnows and crayfish patterns. The latter two will be hatching large numbers of young as the month of June starts. A couple of years ago, I flushed the stomach of a Gunpowder brown, and the bulk of the items were snails! How does anyone tie a tiny snail imitation?

Besides the major aquatic insect groups (mayfly, stonefly, caddis, and midges), fly fishers need to be adequately prepared to match

the other important hatches on our trout streams. Terrestrial insects are very important in a trout's diet. Beetles, ants, caterpillars, and crickets are the most often taken in this area. Some meadow streams have great hatches of hoppers as the summer proceeds into early fall. The ants may be tiny or large, and they sometimes are the swarming or flying stage. On fast moving sections of streams a sunken ant often works wonders. This latter reproductive stage can happen at any time; I have seen a consistent hatch of large (#16-18) flying ants in the early morning on the Gunpowder in mid-June that stops just before most fishers arrive at the stream. If they had come after a misty dawn, they might find the stream alive with trout taking in the enormous numbers of flying ants.

Beetles can vary in size from microscopic to over an inch in length. I would suggest #12 and #16 patterns in the usual black color, but other colors and sizes can work, too. Start using crickets in late May and June that are tiny #18-16 and gradually increase their size to the #10 adults in late August and into October. For caterpillars or inchworms, the chartreuse San Juan Worm on a #12 hook and about 1.5" in total length is hard to beat, but the Green Weenie and other similar patterns work well, too. Also try the San Juan worms in gray, brown, and red. As another 'terrestrial pattern' try a very large rusty spinner in the #8-10 size. There are a lot of flying insects that occasionally drop on the water that a general buggy looking pattern such as this may work.

To quickly review the past seven "Hatch Talk" columns, make sure you have a good reference book or two and are able to identify the main stages and groups of the insects found in and around a trout stream. Match the captured insect to a pattern of the same or smaller size and as close in coloration as possible. All this combines to make for both the fun and the frustration of fly fishing. Many rightfully argue that fly fishing is about 80-90% presentation and the rest fly selection. Whatever the ratios, it is all a mental challenge and physical exercise to fool the wary trout. Good luck this summer!



Paint Branch Report

By David Dunmire,

Paint Branch Chair

Agencies to Restore Paint Branch

Restoration projects abound throughout the Paint Branch watershed with several projects by the Army Corps of Engineers (COE) as well as the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection. The COE's contractor, Golden Eagle Construction, is in the process of finalizing the stormwater management pond in the Tanglewood area. After those close-out activities are complete, Golden Eagle is not to perform any additional work on these projects. The COE is in the process of getting another contractor in place to perform the necessary repairs to the embankment problems in the Snowden's Mill I and II ponds.

In addition the COE is beginning the next phase of their restoration projects, which involves significant in-stream construction in the main stem between Fairland Road and Columbia Pike (Rte 29). Years ago when the COE first drafted their plans, we emphasized the need for restoration of aquatic habitat to complement their stream bank stabilization plans. We have reiterated this need throughout the review process, as has the Paint Branch Technical Team. We all walked the stream in January with the COE, and once again it was necessary to point out the need for habitat restoration.

Habitat restoration is difficult to get right, and the potential for damage is always present. Frequently small changes in implementation can make the difference between successful habitat restoration, and what amounts to a well-intentioned but wasted effort. That is one reason why we feel so strongly that someone with fisheries expertise and first-hand experience with restoration of wild trout habitat needs to be in a leadership capacity for at least the critical habitat sites.

There have been far too many problems on the first three Corps' projects in the Paint Branch, namely the Gum Springs Parallel Pipe Project, and the Snowden's Mill I and II projects, which has subjected the stream to unnecessary risk as a result. The importance of properly implementing the habitat restoration aspects of the Main Stem projects can not be over emphasized. We have made it clear that an individual with fisheries expertise and first-hand experience with the management and implementation of habitat restoration projects on urban trout streams needs to be involved in the key habitat sites. The support of the Eyes of Paint Branch, the Potomac-Patuxent chapter of Trout Unlimited, and the Audubon Naturalist Society is contingent on this.

The Corps' initial response was something like "Thanks for the suggestion, but we've got it covered." We then wrote letters to the District Engineer, Congressman Al Wynn, and Senators Sarbanes and Mikulski asking for their help. We've received letters from these officials requesting that the matter be looked in to, but have not yet heard from the COE.

In addition to all this, the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will also be conducting their own restoration projects. DEP will be initiating construction of a stormwater management pond retrofit to control the runoff from

approximately 70 acres of developed area in the upper Good Hope watershed. This is a particularly difficult project because it involves in-stream construction, water and sewer lines, and must be shoe-horned in among existing homes on three sides. This area drains to the primary wild trout spawning and nursery area, the Good Hope tributary, which is degrading due to increased storm flows.

Some time later DEP will be doing in-stream restoration in the Gum Springs tributary, as well as constructing a stormwater pond in the lower Gum Springs sub-watershed.

NSWC/FRC/FDA

Apparently the Basewide Ecological Risk Assessment for the White Oak facility was recently completed (March 2001). The full report is supposed to be available at the White Oak Library, but it is not there yet. I have seen two sections from the study (the Exec. Summary, and Conclusions sections) and will send these to any interested individuals. You should contact Walter Legg of the Navy if you want to see the full report and you can't find it in the library. (202)685-0061 or walegg@efaches.navy.mil



THE CADDISFLY SOLUTION

by

JIM GRECO

Each spring the daffodil blooms in my back yard whisper to me to start looking for sporadic hatches of caddis the next time I travel to one of our local streams, and the impending onset of warm weather signals even more prolific caddis hatches. At times, caddisflies are so abundant trout will often ignore major hatches of other insects such as sulphurs, Hendricksons, green drakes or blue winged olives. Adding to our frustration are the many thousands of species of caddisflies that are known to exist in our waters. Fortunately, of the thousands of species cataloged by academics, only fifty or so species are of *major* importance to fly fishers. Even so, you may still witness a major hatch of caddis you have never seen before. On the stream, it is virtually impossible to have in your possession flies that exactly imitate all the species and stages of their development. You can, however, limit the number of flies you carry and still be able to fish *most* of the caddisfly hatches you encounter.

The life cycle of the caddisfly is complex, and many references are available to the fly fisher who wants to learn about it in detail. Two good references I use frequently are Caddisflies, by Gary LaFontaine, Lyons & Burford Publishers, and The Caddisfly Handbook, by Dick Pobst and Carl Richards, Lyons Press. Since it would take an entire book to characterize all the aspects of the caddisfly life cycle for all species, I will only try to relate a few important points in the space allowed here.

After mating, adult female caddisflies return to the water to lay eggs. They do this either by flying into the surface of the water and swimming to the bottom or crawling into the water from shore and swimming or crawling to the bottom. Females may lay eggs several times, but when they have exhausted their supply of eggs they invariably end up floating on the surface of the stream as a spent caddis. When the caddis larvae, resembling small worms, hatch out of their eggs they will find a convenient rock or other form of shelter, which provides protection and food. As the larvae mature, just before entering the pupa stage, they will build cases from bits of grass, weed, sand or small gravel, or they will spin cases from the silken threads the larvae can produce. Often, usually during the early dawn hours and late evening hours, free swimming larvae and cased larvae will drift along the bottom of the stream to locate better habitat. Once the pupae are mature and ready to hatch, they leave their cases and drift in the water column. Pupae use strong swimming strokes to propel themselves toward the surface where they will hatch into adult caddisflies, ready to begin their life cycle again.

Over the years I have experimented with many different patterns to imitate the various stages of the caddisfly life cycle. As more patterns are developed and different materials become available, I suspect my choices will change, but for now, here are my most productive caddisfly patterns. For imitating the adult caddis normally found in the Pennsylvania and Maryland waters I normally fish, I use two patterns. I carry them in sizes 12 through 20 in body colors of tan, light olive, green, black, and brown. My favorite is the hairwing caddis. This pattern is tied on a Tiemco 100 hook for sizes 12 and 14 and a Tiemco 101 hook in smaller sizes. The only difference being the 101 has a straight eye, which gives you more of a hook gap for better hooking. The hairwing caddis, tied with four or five turns of very stiff hackle at the front of the hook, floats like a cork and skitters well when I want it to. This pattern,

highly visible with a bleached wing, also serves double duty as my pattern of choice when I want to use a dropper and there is no significant hatch activity taking place. To imitate a spent caddis, I merely squash the hairwing and splay it to the sides to better imitate the dead females. The other adult pattern I carry is the now famous *REALISTIC CADDIS* pattern Charlie Gelso and Larry Coburn have given us in their excellent book, Guide to Maryland Trout Fishing. For quiet water, where the fish can take their time to scrutinize your presentation, this pattern is without equal. Since this pattern is not known to float well in fast water, be sure to tie it on the Mustad 3x fine, 94833 hook as suggested by the authors.

For the pupa stage of the caddisfly, I use Gary LaFontaine's deep sparkle pupa and his emergent sparkle pupa. I also carry these in sizes 12 through 20, in tan, light olive, green, black, and brown. There may be other patterns that work as well, but these work so well I haven't yet found a reason to change my choice.

For caddis larvae, I have chosen only two colors, creamy tan and insect or caddis green. Lots of experimentation has failed to produce a clear winner in this category, so I stick with the basic dubbed body with a peacock collar, with or without a bead head. Again, I carry sizes 12 through 20. I use brass beads on cloudy days and black beads on sunny days.

In addition to these colors and sizes that make up my basic caddisfly box, I also carry a few other colors for those streams where I have run across hatches consisting of colors I left out. For instance, the Gunpowder has a nice hatch of cinnamon caddis in sizes 14 through 18, and one of the streams I fish in Pennsylvania has a nice hatch of a size 12 caddis with a dark dun body and dark dun wings.

I know; my large caddisfly box is overflowing. I never have enough room for all the flies I want to carry. If I could just talk my wife, Pam, into carrying a few more boxes, I'd have it made. However, with just one large box filled with the flies mentioned here you can successfully fish almost every caddis hatch you are apt to encounter in Pennsylvania and Maryland. Considering the vast number of caddis species that abound in this area, it's great to be able to reach into one box and have a reasonable certainty you will find the right pattern for the caddisfly hatch you want to fish. After all, in a previous article on fly tying I did tell you one of the things you would get to do if you started tying flies would be to carry 7 or 8 fly boxes instead of one or two. Next time you see fish flashing in a run but not rising to the abundant sulphurs floating downstream and ignoring your sulphur nymphs, don't hesitate to try a caddis pupa on a dropper, just to see what happens.



April Outing Trip Report

by Mike Lee

Where: Middle Patuxent River, starting at Kindler Road, worked downstream about 2 miles.

When: Saturday, April 7, 7:30-4:00

Who: Jim Keil, Dave Pratt, Dave Quill, Jack Benoit, Mike Lee

Weather: Overcast, with a light shower, temps comfortable, above 60 degrees

Water stats: 54 degrees in the morning, pretty clear.

Since there were no reports of Hendricksons at the Gunpowder River, the group took advantage of reports of a recent stocking in the Middle Patuxent River, braved a forecast of light rain, and pulled into Kindler Road at around 7:30.

We had a great day. Fish were every place they were supposed to be, and even some places they weren't. As a relative newcomer to the sport of flyfishing, the willingness of these trout helped overcome some of the frustration of learning fishing's finer details. A recent stocking of rainbows and browns probably helped, but Jim and Dave P. averred that the years of fly fishing they have under their belts and their sage advice helped us all a great deal. Because they were fresh, the fish were willing to play our game.

We didn't see many rises, and there was no major hatch, but that didn't stop them from taking a variety of nymphs and streamers quite readily. Dave Quill and Jack had to leave early in the afternoon, but they each brought at least a half dozen trout to hand, I managed to more than quadruple my best so far, with 17 (one of them a nice 16 inch rainbow), and Dave P. and Jim must have each landed at least a score. And that's not counting fallfish!

PPCTU Listserver

A good way to stay current with fishing news during the summer months when The Conservationist is on hiatus is to join the chapter listserv. Joining the list means you will automatically receive messages posted to the group, and you will have posting privileges as well. To sample past message traffic, visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ppctu/messages>. If you like what you see and wish to join, send an email to ppctu-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Be sure and send it from the email account where you would like to receive the listserv messages. It's a fast, simple and easy way for members to stay informed about fishing and conservation news, and to find people able and willing to answer all kinds of fishing-related questions

Other Fishes - A Trio of Books Worth a Look

By Pete Yarrington

As mid-Atlantic fly fishers, we usually have one of several fish species on our mind. If you're like me it goes like this: "If this is May, brown and rainbow trout on the upper Patuxent or Big Hunting Creek. If this is July, smallmouth bass on the upper Potomac." And if its any time and your pal has a boat and you have a free day, "striped bass, bluefish, seatrout, weakfish - - the bay." But sooner or later, every fly fisher asks a certain question while on the water: "What the heck was THAT thing?" For some fly fishers, that question marks the beginning of an interest in fishes, not just fishing. It happened to me on our own upper Patuxent near Annapolis Rock Road, back when you could keep 2 trout a day over 15 inches (mid 70's, I think?). I had noticed slight movements on the bottom of the stream, each time I moved my oversized waders. Looking close, I saw something I hadn't seen in any fishing book. A small, finger-sized fish that zipped from spot to spot, occasionally resting on the bottom, in the tail of a pool. In the clear water, I saw it had saddle-like markings on its back, and fine, dark lines, like woodduck flank feathers, on its fins. And there were a dozen or so of these guys, right there. I was amazed that I, an expert like most teenage trout fishers, had no idea what I was looking at. After return trips with a dip net and searching through books that were NOT found in the sporting book section at the library, I identified "my" fish: the tessellated darter, apparently common in the Patuxent and Potomac drainages, but a mystery to me, till then. Twenty years later, I spent many sleepless nights at a local university studying tessellated darters under a microscope, still fascinated. Local streams had their revenge on me: Hooked by a Fish.

Well, reader, I'm now actually circling the advertised subject of this article. There are several available books that weren't around when I was trying to identify that beautiful little darter. And all have excellent color illustrations, text on life history, and range maps. The number of fish species in our waters and their colors and variety continue to floor me. Factoids: Depending on whose published counts you read, and whether that author includes introduced, estuarine, and yet-unnamed species in their enumeration - - freshwater fish species in Maryland and Delaware: 88 to 100. In Virginia: 300+. The Carolinas plus Maryland, Virginia, and Delaware: 262 (strictly freshwater). And really close to home, in the Patuxent River from below Rocky Gorge Reservoir downstream to Bowie: 31 species. Fishes that are NOT native to the Potomac: smallmouth or largemouth bass, channel catfish, carp or bluegill. And did you know that some larger local minnow species build large nests for their eggs out of gravel they pick up with their mouths? And American eels, very common in many local streams, are ALL spawned in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, and drift/migrate here as juveniles.

In the end, this didn't turn out like a standard book review, but I hope your interest in our native fish species is piqued. Three books I would recommend to anyone looking for good reading (and amazing color pictures) one step outside our normal fly-fishing fare are: Freshwater Fishes of the Carolinas, Virginia, and Delaware by Rohde, Arndt, Lindquist and Parnell; Fishes of Chesapeake Bay by Murdy, Birdsong and Musick; and Freshwater Fishes of Virginia by Jenkins and Burkhead. The first and second books, and maybe the third, are available through Audubon Naturalist Society Bookshop in Chevy Chase; the bay book is available through its publisher, the Smithsonian Institution, downtown; the Virginia book is available through its publisher, the American Fisheries Society, on Grosvenor Lane in Bethesda. If necessary go to a big chain mall store. The Virginia book is not cheap, but it is considered by many to be the best book of its kind ever done. Period. If you are into fishing and local conservation issues, I really cannot recommend these books highly enough.

Don't forget to visit our web page

At www.pptu.org

Help add to our fishing reports, hatch information database and join in with our listserv

Also if you are in the market for the new breathable waders check out the link to an excellent review of eleven different brands .

MEMBERSHIPS: The Potomac-Patuxent Chapter of Trout Unlimited has two membership categories: Regular/Family (\$15/year assessment) and **Student (free)**. The Chapter operates on a September-to-September basis. Assessment is totally separate from dues paid to Trout Unlimited National. Send correspondence or assessment payable to POTOMAC-PATUXENT TROUT UNLIMITED at the return address listed below. Your Chapter (and National TU) expiration date is indicated on the mailing label as PP-0901 or NTU-0901. First-time visitors receive two issues of this publication free.

THE CONSERVATIONIST is a publication of the Potomac-Patuxent Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Contribution in the form of fishing news, tying tips, new book reviews, articles, letters and even gossip should be mailed or faxed to the Editor. Items received by the 15th of the month will be published in the next issue.

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Chair:		
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Chair:		
Outings Chair:	David Pratt	301-498-2427
Program Chair:	Jon Barnes	410-965-4946
Patuxent Chair:	Jay Shepard	301-725-5559
Paint Branch Chair:	David Dunmire	301-989-0331
Publicity Chair:	Jim Greene	301-652-3848
Raffles Coordinator:	Willie Oldes	301-868-3508
Refreshments:	Bill Miller	301-926-3590
Mentor Program:	Jim Feudale	301-622-4923
Water Quality Chair:	David Wong	301-681-6425