



The Buzz

www.prsc.org



Volume 32, Issue I

January 30, 2019

Jamie Gold

Upcoming Events

PRSC Meeting
February 27, 2018

Outdoor Shows
Various Dates

In This Issue

UPCOMING P. 2

COLD WATER PADDLING AND FISHING SAFETY P. 3

PRSC ON THE WATER P. 4

DECEMBER ON THE 'DOAH P. 5

FALL STRIPER FISHING ON THE BAY P. 6

BUCKET LIST DESTINATIONS P. 9

CONSERVATION CORNER P. 12

FISHING CONTEST P. 13

Our featured speaker for the January 30th meeting will be PRSC member Jamie Gold. He will discuss his September 2018 trip to Belize in Central America where he targeted Bonefish, Permit, and Tarpon.

Jamie first got into fishing as a kid in Pennsylvania. There was a nearby lake and his father had a john boat with an electric trolling motor he used to chase largemouth bass, sunfish and bluegill. He also spent a fair amount of time stalking stocked trout streams. After being out of fishing for a few years, he got back into fishing while in graduate school at Penn State and has been hooked ever since.

Jamie has been a dedicated member of the club since 2002. He has served as a club board member in the positions of Buzz Editor and Club Treasurer. Jamie is an outstanding ambassador of the club, leading club trips, writing articles for The Buzz, and volunteering for our numerous community outreach efforts educating others about our love of fishing.

A lifelong spin fisherman, over the last 10 years he has crossed over to the dark side of fly fishing, and is rapidly getting addicted to chasing smallies with a fly rod. More recently he has been hearing, and succumbing to the siren song of shallow water saltwater fishing. He has also become an accomplished fly tier of late

and willingly shares his techniques and flies with fellow club members. You don't want to miss what promises to be an informative session from an enthusiastic speaker.



Club Executive Board

President

Steve Kimm
president@prsc.org

Vice-President

Craig Bishop
vp@prsc.org

Secretary

Dave Lockard
 H (301) 656-1964
secretary@prsc.org

Treasurer

Jamie Gold
 C (571) 213-4699
treasure@prsc.org

Trip Coordinator

Marty Burkard
trip_coordinator@prsc.org

Program Chair

Leon Kates
Programs@prsc.org

Conservation Chair

Herschel Finch
 H (540) 635-7636
Conservation@prsc.org

Librarian

Aaron Otte
Librarian@prsc.org

Additional Programs

Fishing Contest

Rick Mrstik
 C (703) 380-7992

The Buzz

Rick Mrstik
 C (703) 380-7992
Buzz_Editor@prsc.org

Merchandise

John Lipetz
Merchandise@prsc.org

Publicity

Ernie Rojas
 H (703) 729-0128
Publicity@prsc.org

Webmaster

Joe Petty
Webmaster@prsc.org

Past President

Steve Moore

Upcoming Events

Join us Wednesday, February 27th, for our monthly meeting. Capt. John Page, a Senior Naturalist at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, will discuss the current state of the Chesapeake Bay. He will cover environmental issues, including climate and agricultural influences and has some surprisingly positive news. 7:30-9:00 PM at the Vienna Firehouse, 400 Center St. S, Vienna, VA 22180.

Bass Fishing Flea Market, Saturday, February 2nd. The show will be 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Hillendale Fire Department, 13511 Hillendale Drive, Dale City VA. Stock up on tackle bargains! For more info click here: <http://bassfishingfleamarket.com/>

Rapidan Trout Unlimited Annual Fishing Show Saturday, February 16th. The show will be 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM at the Highland School, 597 Broadview Ave, Warrenton, VA. PRSC will once again have a table at the show. If you would like to help man the table, please see Herschel Finch or Jamie Gold. For more info click here: <http://www.rapidantu.org/2018-rapidan-tu-chapter-annual-fishing-show/>

The Great American Outdoor Show, February 2-10 is always a great way to spend a winter day when it's too cold for fishing. For more info see: <https://www.greatamericanoutdoorshow.org/>



FEBRUARY 2-10, 2019

PENNSYLVANIA FARM SHOW COMPLEX

HARRISBURG, PA

Cold Water Paddling and Fishing Safety

By Bruce Ingram

The most dangerous incident of my paddling career occurred on the James River when a friend and I overturned in his canoe. Earlier, my water temperature gauge had registered 54 degrees and the air temperature 65 degrees. When I fell in, I felt as if a sledge hammer had struck my chest, and my buddy and I struggled to swim to shore – losing most of our gear.

That day, the air and water temperature combined measured 119 degrees – within the danger zone says Stacey Brown, boating safety program manager for the DGIF. She adds that although many variables exist concerning when the risk of hypothermia becomes more acute, generally if the air and water temperatures together are 120 degrees or below, wet suits are recommended for paddlers. Another major factor, continues Brown, has to do with the amount of time someone is subject to the cold water and air temperatures.

Obviously, one of the most basic acts any paddler can accomplish is to always wear a life jacket. But in my many decades of floating and wade fishing Virginia's rivers and streams, I would wager that most paddlers I have observed – whatever the season from the dog days of summer to the frigid waters of winter – were not wearing life jackets. Many, in fact, did not even have them in their craft or were just using them as seat cushions.

“Wearing a life jacket is the best way to ensure your trip doesn't end in tragedy,” emphasizes Brown. “It would be nice that people think of their life jackets as gear, just like with other sports, rather than required equipment.”

Brown offers the following additional recommendations.

- Carry your whistle or other sound producing device in case you do need to summon help.
- Be proficient in re-boarding your canoe, kayak, raft or other craft – especially if you are in a lake or larger river where getting to the shore to re-board would be difficult. If you end up in the cold water – you start to lose dexterity of movement fairly quickly.
- Paddle with a buddy – not only for more fun – but just in case of emergency.
- Evenly pack your boat to have an even keel (so to speak) – and help mitigate the chances of overturning.
- Let someone on dry land know where you are going and when you plan to return – in other words, share your float plan.
- Check the weather before and during the trip. During the excursion, be aware of changing or increasing winds and/or cloud build up.
- Be honest about your skills – know your limitations. For example, planning a long trip of many miles or hours during unfavorable water temperatures or forecasts could be risky for many floaters.

In the angling realm, there's nothing I would rather do than float and fish the Old Dominion's many outstanding rivers, but I know that my continuing to enjoy this pastime involves making wise decisions. Please consider making these safety tips part of your game plan.

PRSC on the Water



Bill Pearl and Ken Schultz fished the 'Doah on December 3rd, landing nine smallmouth, two walleyes, and one largemouth. Bill's walleye (left) measured 26 inches and Ken's smallmouth (right) taped 19".



Bill Pearl fished the Susquehanna on 19 December—thus the Santa hat—landing 36 smallmouth. The largest was the 19-incher pictured below. With water temps at 38-39 degrees, they had to fish their tubes REAL slow.



Bill got out on the Susky again on 28 December with his grandson Colton, pictured at right with his biggest of the day at 18.5 inches. Tubes and small swim baits fished very slow were the ticket.



December on the 'Doah

By Ernie Rojas



On 12 December Ernie Rojas and Bill Pearl teamed up on Bill's James River Jet for a little cold water fishing on the Shenandoah. With temperatures in the Shenandoah Valley down to 29 degrees that morning, it was time to toughen up! Bill struck first with 17-incher on a Ned Rig. Then it was Ernie's turn with a 16-incher (above left) on a tube. Bill caught the next few, including the 18-incher pictured above right.

That all happened in the first hour or so in a deep eddy with the mercury barely above freezing. The next three to four hours yielded no bites. Finally, Bill announced he was hooked up with a nice walleye (below). This thing was FAT! It was over 25 inches and weighted 8.5 pounds. Not an easy fish to land on a relatively small net!



Fall Striper Fishing on the Bay

By Jamie Gold

Like everyone else in this club, I suffered this past summer due to lack of smallie fishing because of constant rain and high river levels. What saved me during the warmer months was hitting the local lakes and ponds for largemouth bass fishing. In the fall I did one trip to the Susky for smallies, a trip to Belize for bonefish and tarpon, and a trip to Florida for speckled trout, snook, redfish, tarpon and whatever else we could catch. But locally, what saved me was two incredible fishing trips on the Bay for striped bass.

For both trips I was joined by fellow PRSC member Steve Adams, and our guide was Captain Dale Coon of Fishamajig Guide Service (<https://www.fishamajigguideservice.com/>).

The first trip took place on Sunday, November 11. Because of weather and tide, we decided to meet late in the morning with the goal of fishing until late in the afternoon. Launching out of Buzz's Marina, below Solomon's Island, we headed towards the middle of the Bay and immediately found what looked like a two mile long line of working birds. We immediately got excited because that meant the stripers were up near the surface feeding on baitfish. Steve and I are both avid fly fishermen, so the fact that the fish were feeding near the surface lead us to believe that we could fish effectively with our fly rods using floating lines and intermediate lines.

My oh my . . . did that ever turn out to be true. As soon as we stopped and started casting our flies, we started catching fish. I started with a topwater called Bob's Banger, which is a large popper that was invented by noted fly fisherman Bob Popovics. It got a few blow ups on it, but overall the fish were not interested. They were feeding on small silversides, and so wanted a smaller baitfish pattern. So I quickly switched, especially since Steve was doing quite well on his baitfish patterns. After trying a few different flies, I went back to the classic – Clouser Deep Minnow. This fly was invented by Susquehanna River smallmouth guide Bob Clouser. Although originally developed to catch bass, it is one of the greatest streamer flies that has caught a huge diversity of fish in all water types all around the world. The stripers loved it . . . and color didn't matter. I started with white and chartreuse, and stuck with it until they chewed it apart. Then I switched to white and blue, until they destroyed that. Then I switched to white and red, until they destroyed that. I just kept using Clousers on a floating line until the end of the day. Steve tried a greater variety of flies, and used a sinking line a lot more than I did, and he caught as many if not more fish on the fly rod than I did.

All day the pattern was for us to find a group of working birds, stop, cast, and catch fish. Once that fishing slowed, we looked for another group of birds, raced over, cast, and caught fish. We stayed mid-Bay for awhile, and then moved to the Eastern side for a while . . . the pattern was the same.

For the most part we caught smaller, schoolie stripers in the 18- to 22-inch range, like the one pictured above. There is a saying on the Bay that if you want bigger stripers, find bigger birds, and that proved to be true. For most of the day we worked smaller diving birds, and caught schoolie stripers. However, later in the day we started to head back across the Bay towards the boat ramp. Right in the middle of the Bay we came across a large group of gannets, which were much larger birds than we had found the rest of the day. So we stopped



Fall Striper Fishing on the Bay

Continued

and started to fish them, and we immediately started catching larger fish. Now we caught fish in the 25- to 28-inch range, including a few keepers.

When all was said and done, Steve and I ended up catching about 100 stripers . . . which is almost unheard of on a fly rod. Dale did a great job putting us on fish, the fish were hungry, and we had a blast. Truly a special day.

. . .

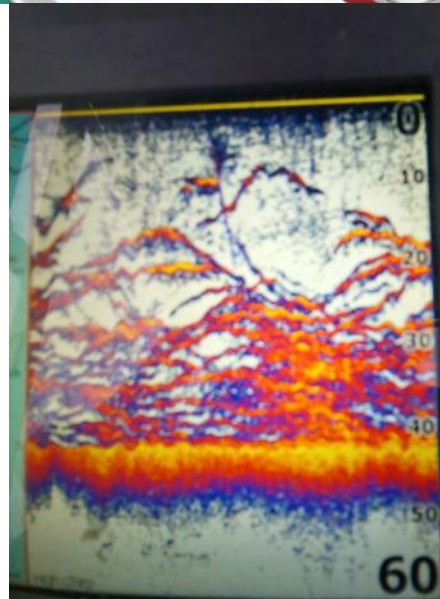
I was only able to wait a few days, then reached out to Dale to set up another trip. After checking calendars, we decided to go again on Sunday, December 2. Steve again joined me, and we did another late morning trip. This time Capt. Dale decided to launch us out of Point Lookout State Park, which is only a little way from Buzz's Marina. This trip turned out to be a very different experience, but was another awesome outing.

This is Captain Dale in his boat at the ramp before we took off. Dale is a sensible guy who dresses for the weather, so you can see that it was unseasonably warm that day. Notice the thick fog in the background. This turned out to be the theme for the day as it seemed as if we drifted in and out of thick fog banks all the day. Between the prior trip and this trip the water temperatures had dropped quite a bit.



These factors combined to make for a dramatically different fishing experience. Because of the thick fog and limited visibility, we had to go much slower when motoring to find fish. Also we were not able to look for working birds. Finally, because of the cold water temperature, we figured the fish would be deep so we would not be able to use our fly rods. The tactic for the day was vertical jigging with heavy spoons.

So after loading up our gear, we set off at a very slow speed with all of us peering into the fog to look for other boats. At spots the fog cleared a little, and we would look for birds (no luck) and other boats that we stopped and fishing. We found a few spots this way and did catch a few fish. Eventually we just kind of drifted out to the middle of the Bay to look for fish on Dale's fish finder. Bingo!!!! As you can see in the picture at right, we found a ton of fish.



Fall Striper Fishing on the Bay

Continued



The weird thing is that there was no obvious reason for the fish to be there. And this was not a spot marked in Captain Dale's GPS as a hotspot. But I think we drifted out there for three or four hours constantly moving in and out of schools of fish. Even Dale was shaking his head in puzzlement. Not only did we start catching fish, but we started catching bigger fish . . . much bigger than on our previous trip. I don't think we caught anything below keeper size all day long. This fish (left) was about average for the day.

At one point the fishing died off for me and I was starting to get a bit frustrated. Steve was still catching fish. Then I hooked a fish and I knew right away that it was big. She fought differently, and much harder than the other fish I had caught that day. She started taking drag, and fought hard for at least 10 minutes. At one point

she came up to the surface to let us look at her and I got excited. Even the Captain got excited at the look of her. Finally I got her to the boat and Dale scooped her into a net. She measured 35 inches and was probably about 30 pounds (see picture, right). After a few pictures we carefully and gently put her back in the water, making sure she was revived and let her go. She was by far the biggest striper I have ever caught. Dale said she was an ocean run fish, and the first ocean run fish caught on his boat this season.



Not to be left out of the fun, later on Steve also hooked into a very big fish. After another lengthy fight, and a quick scoop of the net, he landed this beauty (pictured left).



Another ocean run fish, she measured at just over 30 inches.

After a few pictures, and gently putting her back in the water and reviving her, she swam off.

Overall we did not catch as many fish as on the prior trip (although we still caught a lot of fish), but we caught much bigger fish. Throughout the day we had our share of double hookups.

Steve and I had two incredible striper fishing trips with Captain Dale Coon. I can't wait to go out with him again, and I hope that you'll consider hiring him the next time you go out on the Bay for striped bass.

Bucket List Fishing Destinations

By Bill Amshey

As I have gotten older and suffered knee and shoulder injuries, I've had to become more selective about how I fish and where I fish. The past few years I have written articles for *The Buzz* on trips to Lakes Erie and Ontario, a week-long trip to northern Ontario with two good friends, and trips to the New and Susquehanna Rivers. I needed some new ideas, so I recently asked several Club members for destinations on their bucket list. Some of the guys responded, and now I have a list of new places to go, and in some cases new fish to chase.

Rick Mrstik, our *Buzz* editor, was the first to respond with some great ideas: "I think binge watching Major League Fishing has influenced my thinking a lot recently. I'm mostly interested in chasing bass, and there are hundreds of places I'd like to do that. Most of these places I'd like to visit for at least a week, with my own boat, and figure them out on my own, instead of hiring a guide."



The California Delta was at the top of Rick's list for largemouth bass. And based on this hog that Vince Borges of Borges Outdoors is holding, I can understand why. Apparently, smallmouth and stripers also are in the Delta.

Also on Rick's list are Stick Marsh, Florida, for largemouth; Thunder Bay, Alpena, Michigan, for smallmouth; Toledo Bend Lake in Texas for largemouth; Lake Champlain in New York for smallmouth and largemouth; the St. Lawrence River for smallmouth; Minnesota's too many lakes to mention and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area between the U.S. and Canadian border for smallies, bucket mouths, walleye, and pike; a remote Canadian lake for smallmouth, walleye, and pike; the Yellowstone River fly fishing for trout (really any western river); and Lake El Salto in Mexico for largemouth.

I can see why Rick wants to fish the Yellowstone. But it may be too pretty to fish!



Our long-time treasurer Jamie Gold responded that there are a number of places he'd really like to go, especially for fly fishing. Jamie's first stop would be Christmas Island, which is an Australian territory in the Indian Ocean about 220 miles south of Java and Sumatra and about 1,000 miles northwest of Australia.

On Christmas Island, Jamie wants to target giant trevally. At left is one that has been brought to hand, but if

Bucket List Fishing Destinations

Continued



you go to the following link, a BBC series Blue Planet video, you will actually see this crazy fish jumping out of the water to catch and eat birds <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANxlmqF0wj8>

I am not kidding!

Continuing his worldwide tour, Jamie wants to go to Mongolia to fish for taimen. This is the world's largest trout. It is frightening and eats whatever it wants. Taimen attack ducklings, mice, and gophers that fall into the river. They chase desperate trout across the surface, often driving fish onto the bank. Adult taimen caught on the fly usually measure between 30 and 40 inches.



After his exotic stops, Jamie will be satisfied to fish for salmon in Alaska, tarpon in Costa Rica, and peacock bass anywhere where the fishing is good. Based on experience, I can recommend the upper Amazon and the Panama Canal.

President Steve Kimm said: "I would love to fish in the White Marlin Open in Ocean City, Maryland." This big event is always held

the first week of August. Judging by the size of these fighting fanatics, I can see why Steve would like to take on this challenge.



Steve said that for his 50th birthday, he fished off the Outer Banks. He wanted to catch tuna but had to settle for dolphin.

Steve noted that he "truly enjoys" fishing any free flowing river that has smallmouth bass and that a guided trip where he's not paddling is even better. He added that he would "love to fish any of the Mexico lakes that have 10-pound large mouths."

Steve said that he has fished Canada once and would love to go back. He said that he loves the mixed species that can be caught there. Steve also noted that he has an old college friend who is a Captain in Costa Rica and that he is scheming to figure out how to go visit him.

When I asked Ernie Rojas for his input, he showed again that he embodies the true spirit of what it means to be a fisherman:

"As I thought about your question, I really could not come up with a specific answer. I really don't have a bucket list. Destination fishing is great, but it needs to be a warm place. While I do fish when it's a bit chilly, it's not my favorite thing to do."

"As you know, fishing is one of my passions, and sharing a day on the water with friends is the ultimate! For me, it's a great form of relaxation, renewal, and fellowship. And sometimes we even get to catch a few fish!"

Bucket List Fishing Destinations

Continued



“My good friend, Carl Johnson, who passed away in 2010, got me back into fishing in the early 80s. He influenced me by his passion for fishing. But it was the simple things . . . the ‘process.’ From getting ready, riding in the car to our location, stopping at a special place for breakfast, observing nature, catching a small, medium or large fish . . . everything. It was going to be a special day because we were going fishing.”

“He also taught me to teach others with passion, which I try to do to this very day.”

“Not sure if this helps with your project but each of my fishing expeditions is as special as the last one or next one.”

I think Ernie’s comments sum up the true essence of being a fisherman.

Hope the rains slow this year and that everyone has a great fishing season.

Conservation Corner

By Herschel Finch

Well, here you go again, spending precious time with a bunch of ne'er do well fisherman, talking about, listening about, and going fishing. Aren't you ashamed of yourself? Well, WE'RE not! We're glad you're here. Welcome to another great year with Potomac River Smallmouth Club.

The 2018 Farm Bill was finally passed out of committee just before the Christmas break and is now approved by Senate. Only a few more things to hash out between the House and Senate and it will go to the full vote. Funding for many of those elements near and dear to conservation-minded anglers hearts were preserved. Most of the funding for protection of clean water is still in there as is funding for fencing and erosion mediation and education. Yeah, I know . . . I'm as surprised as you. Bipartisan effort and action is still possible in DC apparently. Overall, the funding is down, but not by a significant amount. And speaking of things political . . .

A hearty thank you to Mrs. Barbara Comstock, wife of our own Chip Comstock, for her years spent in the US Congress serving our country and specifically, the constituents of the 10th District of Virginia which includes our homebase of Vienna, and all the way out to Winchester, Virginia out by me. Regardless of your politics, anyone willing to do the sometimes thankless and always difficult job of serving in elected office deserves our respect. Barbara lost her seat in the recent election, but I have a feeling she is already planning her next move. The PRSC sends our heartfelt thanks for her years of service and good luck with whatever comes next.

Due to the government shutdown, the redefinition of the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) by the EPA was put on hold, so now we're all waiting with bated breath. Obviously lots of folks, including yours truly, is watching this one very closely. You can bet our friends at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, EarthJustice, and the Potomac Riverkeeper Network are sharpening the legal swords and axes in anticipation. Keeping our representatives' feet to the fire over this is also going to be our part of the effort to make sure the redefinition of WOTUS is as comprehensive and scientifically sound as it needs to be.

Now, I'm sure all of us have had psychological issues due to lack of fishing opportunities since last Spring. For me, an ugly facial tic has been hard to get rid of, and apparently, I chewed the bottom of one of my end tables (or maybe that was Izzy). But in any case. I am praying to every God and Goddess I can think of that water levels will be better for 2019. And as things do get back to normal, be aware that our local rivers will have changed. Log jams and piles will have moved, and new obstacles and strainers will have been moved into place. But that's a big part of the appeal of river fishing isn't it? It's different in some regard almost everytime out there. It's also going to be different environmentally. There could be new point-sources of pollution, collapsed banks or other issues that have cropped up in the almost entire season we've been kept off our rivers. So keep your eyes open for all these and let PRKN know about them. And don't forget the app: Water Reporter. It's the easiest way to report issues to our riverkeepers. You can also send them pictures of big fish too. They like to look at "Fish Porn" as much as we do!

PRSC
P.O. Box 685
Vienna, VA 22183

Last Bass of the Year

On December 30th, I hit a favorite winter spot on the tidal Potomac for my last outing of the year. The mercury rose to 48 degrees that afternoon, and with little wind made for nice fishing conditions. And the fish cooperated; I caught 10 largemouth and one crappie in a little over three hours. Finesse worms and small creature baits fished slow on the bottom did the trick.



2018 Fishing Contest Is Final

Fishing Contest

Visit our contest page to check out the complete rules or to submit an entry for the 2019 contest.
<http://prsc.org/fishing-contest/>

2018 Winners

Section 1, Biggest Fish:	Jamie Gold	20"
Section 1, Best 5 Fish:	Jamie Gold	80"
Section 2, Biggest Fish:	Len Jenkins	20.5"
Section 2, Best 5 Fish:	Len Jenkins	82.5"
Section 3, Biggest Fish:	Bill Pearl	20"
Section 3, Best 5 Fish:	Bill Pearl	91.5"
Largest on Fly:	Jamie Gold	15"

The Potomac River Smallmouth Club was founded in 1988 as a non-profit recreational club in accordance with IRS section 501(c)(7). Dues are \$40/year. Monthly meetings are held at 7:30 PM on the last Wednesday of each month (except December) at the Vienna, Virginia Fire Station. Club by-laws and member rosters are published once a year and available during meetings or upon request. The Club newsletter, "The Buzz," is emailed to all members prior to each month's meeting. Articles, photographs and general information relating to smallmouth bass fishing are solicited. The Buzz reserves the right to edit all materials submitted for publication. Observations, conclusions and opinions expressed in The Buzz are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the club, its officers, or the editor. All materials submitted become the property of the club.