

NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA FISHING REPORT

Published by Blackwolfe Communications LLC

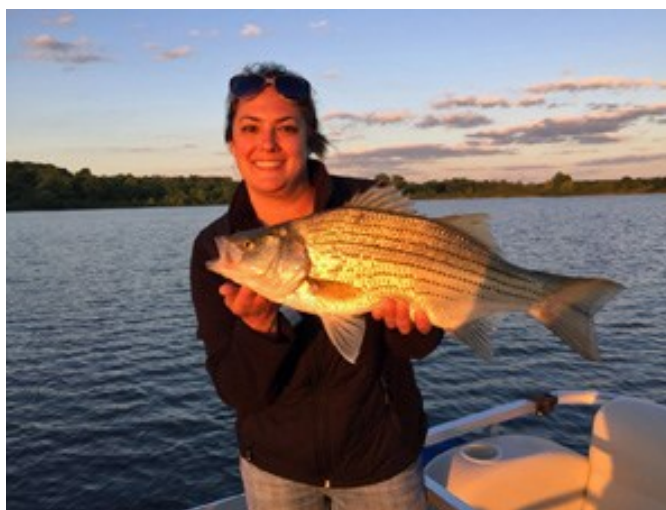
Issue: June 17, 2020

The NW PA Fishing Report is brought to you by:



Fishing with Darl Black

Information Service



Shenango Lake is kicking out nice hybrid striped bass right now, such as this one taken by Neina.

The Landing Net by Darl Black

Summer begins this Saturday, June 20. Where did the spring go? Although there were some rough weather patches, by and large anglers enjoyed outstanding fish-catching opportunities this past spring. Thank goodness we could continue to fish under the COVID-19 restrictions. But now with Bluegills on the beds, we know the shallow water spring bite is on its last leg. Many popular species are presently moving to the summer haunts, which may be deep water, suspended in open water or buried deep in vegetation. The “easy season” is coming to a close. Now the real work begins.

The NW PA Fishing Report provides timely angling information for Crawford, Erie, Mercer and Venango counties. Fishing comments and photos are offered by regional tackle shops and area anglers. The NWPAFR is based on experiences, observations and opinions of individual contributors; information is considered reliable but comments are not independently verified. In providing information or pictures, you are agreeing to your comments being edited for clarity and brevity, and posted to websites and distributed electronically.

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News Items

Father's Day Buddy Tournament Cancelled: Crawford County Bassmasters announced their 2020 Father's Day Buddy tournament scheduled for Sunday, June 21 at Presque Isle Bay has been cancelled. Club spokesperson Eric Marsh stated, "Erie County is still in the yellow phase and the State Park informed us today that we cannot have gatherings of more than 25 people. Therefore, they were unable to issue our permit..."

New State Record Flathead Catfish is now official: The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission announced on June 10, 2020, the 56 lb. 3 oz. Flathead Catfish caught from the Schuylkill River by Jonathan Pierce on May 24th, 2020 has been certified as a new state record. The fish was 50 inches long with a girth of 28.875 inches. Pierce's tackle consisted of a 10-foot surf rod spooled with 50-pound braided line and 20-foot, 60-pound test monofilament leader and an 8/0 circle hook. He was using the head of a brown trout for bait. During the battle, the monster flathead apparently entangled Pierce's fishing line in a rock pile where it sat for several minutes; Pierce could not move it. So, Pierce eased tension on his rod and fed the cat several feet of slack line. The trick worked and the fish moved from the rock pile and started swimming again. Five minutes later, the fish was landed.

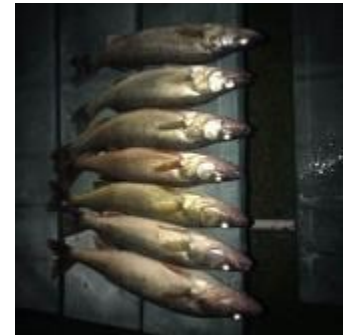


COUNTY BY COUNTY REPORTS

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Dave @ Richter's Bait; filed 6-15: Recent walleye catches are coming from shallow weedbed areas by jigging or drifting with live bait as well as deeper water by trolling plugs in 19 to 21 feet; the deeper walleyes seem to be larger while there are lots of smaller walleyes in the shallows. Crappies are still biting on the South End. Bluegills are on beds all over the lake. Muskies are still biting. Hearing a lot about nice largemouth bass catches from weedbeds. And catfish are everywhere. (See photos – Dutchie & RJ)



Richter's photo

Laurie @ Duck-n-Drake; filed 6-15: Our shop has a walleye tournament scheduled for June 27th. To learn details, stop by Duck-n-Drake or go to our Facebook page.



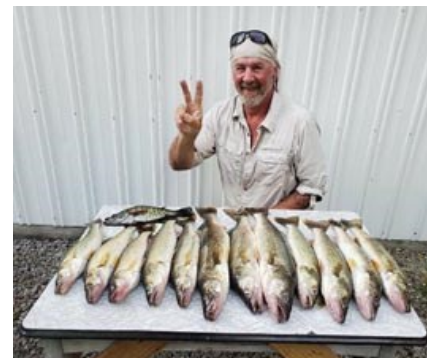
RJ Graham photo

Brook @ Gateway Bait; filed 6-15: Crappies and white bass are being caught off the Andover Causeway both early and late in the day. Big perch are still being caught from 20 feet of water not far from the causeway. With the warmer water temperature, bluegills and catfish are everywhere. The big cats are being taken on big live bait. Customers are also reporting an abundance of bowfin catches.



Poff's photo

Brandi @ Poff's Place; filed 6-15: Anglers are catching a little bit of everything. The walleye bite is good, but not great. However, Chuck Bowman and his buddy had a very good multi-day outing to the lake, catching a bunch of nice walleyes along with an assortment of fish. (See photos)



Poff's photo

PYMATUNING CONTINUED

Sara @ Linesville Marina; filed 6-15: Our customers are slamming the walleyes in the stumps right now. It's the typical June bite. Drifting the stump field with a worm harness is one way to do it. (See photos)

Tim Tomlin (Erie): About a week ago, I made a quick trip to Pymatuning for muskies to get away from the weekend Bay traffic. Diehard angler Jesse Smith invited me for a day of shallow water trolling, and a course on tactics and ethics all anglers should be aware of. He's put together a tremendous program and we went 4 to 10 on muskie strikes. I landed a 42.25-inch muskie which is my personal best. (See photo)



Tim Tomlin photo 42.5 in musky



Linesville Marina photo



Linesville Marina photo

Conneaut Lake

Bo @ BC Baits; filed 6-14: I fished Conneaut Lake a few times over the last week in preparation for Bluegill Bev Tournament. I caught a lot of nice bluegill and rock bass on the weed edges in 6 to 8 feet of water. Bubblegum medium size Terry Bugs worked best for us. We also caught a number of bowfin and perch. (See photo)



Bo's Conneaut bowfin



Conneaut Lake 'seed

ERIE COUNTY

Lake Erie and Presque Isle Bay



1st place team main event



Big Fish main event



Winning team Big Fish Friday



Walleye Bash sponsors

Tim Tomlin @ Presque Isle Bay Anglers; filed 6-15: While PIB had a flotilla of bass anglers and the piers saw families out fishing, the big focus this weekend was the 1st Annual Erie Spring Walleye Bash. Nearly 80 boats competed for approximately \$22,000.00 in prizes. Big Fish Friday was a big hit, but the Saturday main event turned into the largest walleye tournament ever held in Pennsylvania waters of Lake Erie. The tournament committee would like to thank major sponsors Poor Richard's Bait & Tackle and East End Angler, as well as the other sponsors for getting this event done while facing pandemic restrictions. Congratulations to the winners, and thanks to all who participated. Friday Big Fish winners were Team EyeCon with a 9.84-pound walleye. On Saturday main event, 1st place and Big Fish went to Team Ranger Danger. Saturday's Big Fish was a 9.88-pound walleye caught by Chase Cominsky of Ranger Danger. (See photos above)

Richard @ Someday Isle Tackle; filed 6-14: The migratory western walleyes are trickling



29 inch 'eye on Water
Puppet jig

back to our eastern basin and the fishing will get better with every passing weekend. Our resident fish are still really active in the shallow water and are fairly plentiful. Being in water 10 feet or less makes them a bit tricky. Try drifting or as we have done lately, anchor and cast bobbers to them. This technique allows you to fish a wide area without continually passing over them. Use a 1/8-oz. Water Puppet with half a crawler; position the jig below the float at a depth out of reach of most gobies. We've taken many eaters and trophy 'eye, as well as other species. Have fun out there!



Incidental channel cat

Keith @ Dutch Fork Charter Service; filed 6-14: Walleye fishing is booming with limit catches out of all ports from Ohio to New York. Bottom bouncers with harnesses, butterfly blades trolled or drifted at 1 – 1.7 mph work well. Crankbaits and spoons behind jet divers catching a ton of fish, no need for dipsys yet as fish are not really deep. Fish are ranging from 20 feet out to 50-60 feet. Most of our catches are in the top 25 feet of water column. Top crankbaits are Bandits, Reef Runners and Flicker Minnows. Basically, if you get your baits to the correct depth, you will catch fish! Bass fishing in Bay and main lake remains good, with soft plastics doing the trick; bass are on structure and weeds with some open water bass caught too. (see photos here and on Livewell page)



Keith with Erie smallmouth

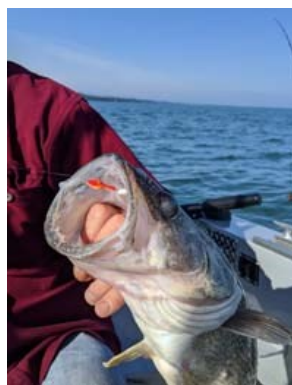
Captain Bob @ Perch Pirate; filed 6-11: The best color blade for us on Erie Dearies has been gold or bronze.

Kirk @ East End Angler; filed 6-11: There was a good perch bite off Shades in 35 to 40 feet this past week. Bass have been active in relative shallows on the main lake. Walleyes are spread out, as well as catching a few off the South Pier at night.

Jeff @ Poor Richards; filed 6-11: On the West Side, walleyes are reportedly being caught from two depth ranges: 10 to 25 feet, and 40 to 45 feet – with bigger fish out in the 40 to 45-foot range. Most productive plug colors have been blues and greens.



Dutch Fork Charter catch



Water Puppet walleye

Dan @ Elk Creek Sports; filed 6-11: Seeing more limit catches, thus Ohio fish are likely moving into Pennsylvania waters. Lots of incidental big catfish being caught while fishing for walleyes. Mainly just catfish in the lower section of Elk Creek now, with a few smallmouths still lingering.

MERCER COUNTY

Lake Wilhelm



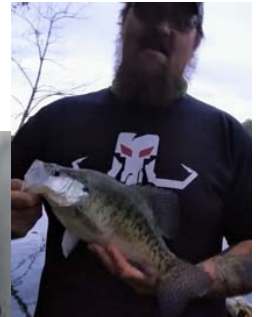
Brad Bee know bass



Jess's 8 pound walleye



Brad knows crappie, too.



Bo with nice crappie

Editor's note: Based on discussion with anglers, Wilhelm is producing crappies, bass and walleyes. Jess Reed caught her first walleye at Wilhelm on Sunday; it measured 28 inches and weighed 8 pounds. Congratulations Jess. (See photo) Our friend Brad Bee had a good week at Wilhelm with a number of nice bass including the one pictured here.

Bo @ BC Baits; filed 6-14: We are still catching crappies on both ends of the lake. Submerged brush in 10 to 12 feet of water has been holding the bigger ones. A black medium-size Terry Bug has been working best. (See photo above)

Shenango Lake

Brock Morocco (Hermitage); filed 6-14: Captain Hook and daughter Neina continue to enjoy landing nice Shenango stripers. The bite has been very good throughout the lake as the water temperature heats up. All species of bass are fairly active and should continue to bite. River action has also been very good especially the night bite for walleyes, stripers and smallmouth bass. (See photo next page and Cover photo)

Rick Como (Sharpsville), filed 6-14: It has been a great week fishing here on Shenango Lake. Hybrid stripers are feeding all day long in the lake, and can be caught trolling lures along points and humps. These fish are averaging about 10 pounds with a few pushing the 15-pound mark. Big white bass are schooling and feeding in the lake now that the spawn is winding down; lots of schools showing up. Walleyes are still being caught but the shallow bite is slowing down. Big channel cats are biting all over the lake. Pike and crappies still hitting well. Fishing should just keep getting better. (See photos next page)

Randy @ Fish West PA; filed 6-14: Shenango Lake has been fishing well up until the recent cold front which slowed things down a bit. But the bite is picking up again. Many species are in transition, moving from shallows to deeper water haunts for the summer. The evening bite is going well. (See photos below)

Catches this week from Shenango Lake



Captain Hook with hybrid



Nathan McDowell with Largemouth



Rick Como with hybrid



Jerrod Dean with walleye



Jerrod Dean with pike

VENANGO COUNTY

Al Bell @ Buttermilk Hill; filed 6-14:

Sugar Creek: Although the temperature soared and the water table dropped last week, trout fishing was still fairly good on Sugar Creek. The two times I went were during evening hours. I drifted crawler pieces and minnows to land a few trout; however, most were caught on the fly rod. The patterns used were olive Woolly Bugger, Prince Nymph, cream & chrome Bead Head Nymph and a red San Juan Worm. My neighbor Allen Byler caught a couple on a shrimp nymph and a Cress Bug. Before we left, Ed Wolfgang came along; he had caught a nice 17-inch brown trout on a tiny beadhead nymph.

I fished French Creek only once. In the hour before dark, using a perch colored #8 X-Rap, I caught two smallmouth bass and a small walleye.

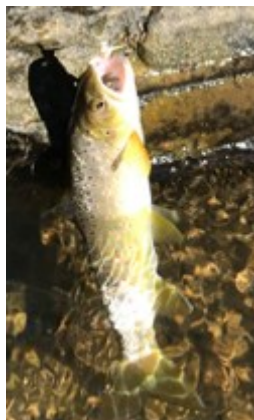
Justus Lake: Opening day of bass, my buddy Stan Huefner and I went to Justus Lake. Air temp was a cool 45 degrees. The early morning breeze made it feel even cooler. The fishing was great. We caught a total of 11 largemouth bass. Six of them were 15 inches or longer. Largest one weighed 5 pounds. Two were caught on trolled nightcrawler. The others came drifting big creek baits. Bonus catches included bluegills, a rainbow trout and a big perch. When reeling in the perch, a 4-foot musky nearly broke water to smash it! Sadly, that game didn't get to take place... (see photo)



Angler Al with 5lb lmb

Big Sandy

Denny Beggs (Franklin); filed 6-15: Saturday the 13ths was a beautiful morning to be on a trout stream anywhere in our area. I caught a couple trout on a dry fly – a home-tied Elk Hair Caddis. It sure is fun to have them boil up and take the fly from the surface.



Allegheny River

Editor's note: normally the reports from the Allegheny River are numerous...but not this week. **Mike @ Mike's Custom Tackle** says the walleye fishing is way off due to the low, clear water. Bass guide **Jeff @ Keystone Connection Guide Service** avoided the river because smallmouths have been spawning; he plans to return to the river next week. **Dale @ Gamma Fishing Line** has been out several times fishing for catfish at night; he had caught several but nothing particularly impressive size wise. **Pam @ Maurer's Trading Post** had a customer report catching a musky this week from the Allegheny River but exact size was unknown.



Even the Great Allegheny River has a dry spell now and then.

Area Guide Services contribute to the NW PA Fishing Report

Looking for a trip on a Crawford, Erie, Mercer and Venango county water?
Check them out!

Dutch Fork Guide Service: Lake Erie Walleye trolling, casting and jigging. Keith Eshbaugh; 724-884-3977; www.dutchforkcustomlures.com

Keystone Connection Guide Service: Allegheny River Smallmouth, Walleye and Musky plus Pymatuning Walleye. Jeff Knapp; 724-902-6082; keystone-connectionguideservice@gmail.com; www.facebook.com/keystoneconnectionguideservice.

Mark Rose Fishing Pro Guide; Lake Erie Smallmouth Bass. Contact 724-333-3898; markrose@bassonline.com; markrosefishing.com.

Smallies on the Yough LLC: wading for Smallmouth Bass on the Yough River, Allegheny River and other streams. Pete Cartwright; 412-215-6254; pete@smalliesontheyough.com; www.facebook.com/smalliesontheyough/.

Wildwood Outfitters: Fly fishing for Trout, Steelhead and other species. Nick DelVecchio; www.wildwoodoutfitterspa.com/; www.facebook.com/wildwoodoutfitters.

Names drawn for tackle prizes. To claim prize, you must contact Darl at darlblack@windstream.net with your shipping address.

Spool of Gamma Line: Jess Reed

Cover pic (pack of tubes from Mike's Custom Tackle): Neina Morocco

Pack of Galida's Grubz: Nathan McDowell

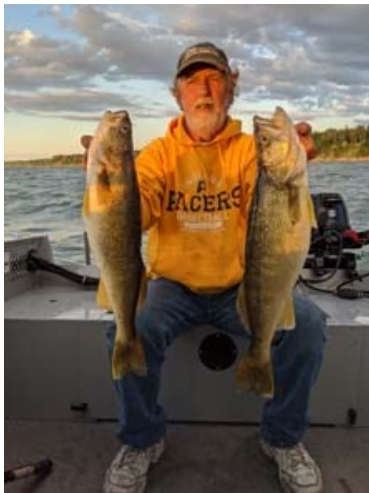
The Livewell

Brought to you by:
Wiegel Brothers Marine
704 1/2 Elk Street
Franklin, PA 16323
Phone 814-437-2077



Email: Debbie@riverjetpro.com

Lake Erie is spitting out walleyes right now, and it will likely get even better soon!



Someday Isle Tackle photo



Dutch Fork Charter Service photo



Corey Bice photo



Galida on Erie



Someday Isle Tackle photo



Woodcock Creek 20" smb

Dale Clemmer

John Galida says "Don't forget the smallmouth fishing"



Black Knight Industries

Oil City, PA 16301

www.gammafishing.com

Gamma Line may be found locally at the following tackle shops:

- **Consumer Direct Sports (CDS) near Grove City Outlet Mall**
- **Maurer's Trading Post, Franklin, PA**

Tip from Darl Black: When I do and when I don't use braided line

In the last decade there has been a shift by many pro bass anglers to spooling with braided line and then attaching a fluorocarbon or mono leader several feet long. This combo certainly has its place in certain presentations, particularly ones with mid-depth retrieves (such as a single swimbait) or drifting/darting retrieve (such as with a jerkbait), and this is the set up I use for these presentations.

But braid's lack of stretch can be a drawback, too. When snagged, it impossible to sling-shot the lure free by the bow technique because there is no stretch. When it comes to a bottom bouncing or bottom dragging or snaking-through-cover presentation, I want fluorocarbon on my reel from arbor to lure – whether it's a spinning reel with 6 lb. for Ned Rig or casting reel with 12-pound for a swim jig.

While some crappie anglers sing the praise of using braid to retrieve most every snagged lure by using a heavy pound test braid the same diameter of 4 or 6-pound mono, I do not follow that train of thought. If fishing open water with a above the bottom presentation for crappie, braid it fine. But when casting, dropping or poking around cover, I don't want a line that won't break – or rather I don't want a line that will break apart the cover. I want the cover left intact. I want my snagged line to break, therefore I use mainly 4, 6 and sometimes 8-pound test mono on most crappie rods.

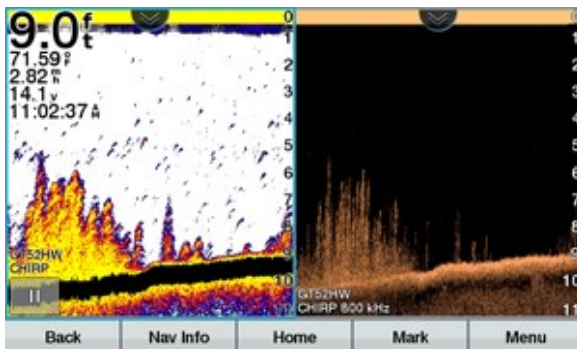
But there are two presentations that I want braid all the way to the lure: (1) when fishing floating frogs, and (2) on a buzz bait. In both instances, immediate no-stretch reaction is needed to set the hook and to get the fish out of cover quickly.

GARMIN INFORMATION PAGE

- Real anglers share actual fishing experiences with Garmin units



Set up at the tiller motor with down and side image



Jeff's bow unit showing traditional 2D and Clear

Jeff Knapp (Keystone Connection Gide Service) offers this suggestion: During early summer, when lake dwelling bass are transitioning from spawning to summer locations, inside weedlines are often a key location in clear water lakes and reservoirs. Currently I'm running two Garmin Echomap units on back of my tiller Lund. When working inside weed edges I use one unit to display both traditional 2D and Clear VU down imaging, and the on the other unit I run side-imaging. Having side-by-side comparison of all three views enables me to accurately distinguish submerged weeds from other bottom cover such as low-lying wood. On the bow I run another Echomap unit, again splitting the screen between traditoinal2D sonar and Clear VU.



And early summer success with Garmin set up.