

NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA FISHING REPORT

Published by Blackwolfe Communications LLC

Issue: July 15, 2020

The NW PA Fishing Report is brought to you by:



Pennsylvania's Great Lakes Region
crawford • erie • mercer • venango



Fishing with Darl Black

Information Service



Looking like another ten days of brutal daytime temperatures between 81 degrees and 89 degrees, plus the threat of scattered thundershowers almost every day. Early morning likely best time to be out. By now all fish have settle into summer patterns; however, water temps are higher than usual this year. Appears the best bites going are walleye or smallmouth bass on Lake Erie; smallmouth bass on the Allegheny; hybrid stripers, white bass and crappies at Shenango; largemouth bass at Wilhelm; and catfish at Pymatuning.

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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Fishing News

Oil City, PA: At the present time, the 2020 Western PA Team Bass Series – Allegheny River Division plans to conduct the remaining three events on their tournament schedule. Next event will be August 1, 2020. For more information contact Eric Heil at lt.heil@yahoo.com.

County by County Reports

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Dave @ Richter's Bait; filed 7/13: It's been so hot the last couple weeks that many anglers are taking some time off. But there always will be some fishermen out there. There is a group of hard-working walleye fishermen using planer boards who are catching some fish on worm harnesses and Flicker Shads. Also hearing about some nice bluegills on the South End. But nothing about crappies. Musky fishermen are still trolling up a fish or two. Seeing a lot more bowfin brought to the store with anglers believing they are snakeheads. And if you just want something to tug on your string, the catfish are everywhere up and down the lake. Surprisingly with the low water in the outflow area below the dam, it seems some guys are catching the occasional musky or walleye.

Laurie @ Duck-N-Drake; filed 7/13: The last few days some of my customers have figured out how to limit out on walleyes by trolling Shad Raps in 16 to 17 feet of water right on the bottom in snag-infested areas south of the Causeway. Hanging up a lot, but catching legal fish. Timing is a big factor. The bite is very early in the morning when the sun is low on horizon. Also heard of some nice crappies coming in 11 to 12 feet of water by the Causeway; they were using Bonehead plastics.



39.79 lb. Flathead Catfish

Brandi @ Poff's Place filed 7/13: You've got to really work at it to get walleyes, but some guys are being successful in catching them. And there are few big crappies being caught – but not numbers. Of course, there are a lot of catfish being caught – and some really big ones. We had our second 39-lb-plus flat-head caught on July 4th. The first one was 39.1 pound taken on June 25. This one was 39.79 pound, 39-3/4" and 29" girth. (See photo on left)

Bob Shaw filed 7/9: I was out on Saturday, July 4th during the day and into the early evening. All I caught were channel cats. I caught them while drifting floating jigs with crawler, pulling a warm harness, on a Walleye Wizard and even trolling a crank-bait. Seems I could not avoid them no matter what I tried. Everyone I talked to had a similar story on catfish.

ERIE COUNTY

Lake Erie

Kirk @ East End Angler; filed 7/13: On the East Side, the report is walleyes in 50 to 56 to 65 feet of water from Shades to the New York line. At 65 feet and a little beyond (inside the Mountain), they are catching steelhead plus some lake trout and brown trout. Light green spoons are doing it for steelhead, and dark green spoons for lake trout. On Saturday I fished straight out of the Northeast Marina and caught walleye like crazy in 50 to 60 feet. On Sunday, went back to same area – nothing, no marks, no fish. Discovered they had moved further east.

Jeff @ Poor Richards; filed 7/13: Boats in shallow are still picking up some walleyes in 35 to 40 feet – but a lot of throwbacks. When you move out to 50 to 60 feet, most of what you catch is legal size. One of the biggest concentrations of fish is Trout Run west

to Ohio line. Best colors on crawler harness blades are purple/pink, copper, and purple/black. For plugs, the blues and greens are working.

Richard @ Someday Isle Tackle; filed 7/13: I spent the holiday weekend casting a 1/8-ounce Water Puppet tipped with half a crawler. Sheepshead galore plus a few smallies and walleyes. I gave this young man in the picture and his father a couple Water Puppets to try. Both caught fish right away and the boy got a 29-inch beauty. The main lake is loaded right now. The best bite is early and late in the day. Lots of short eyes – but that's a good sign for future years. (See photo at right)



Tim Tomlin of Presque Isle Bay Anglers on Facebook; filed 7/13: High heat and humidity has come with a great walleye bite on Lake Erie. Fishing has been tremendous outside the Bay for giant sheepshead, walleye and smallmouth, plus for steelhead in deeper waters off the Point. Walleye can be caught suspended in deep as well as relatively shallow water. The warm waters of Presque Isle Bay are providing a challenge for anything more than sheepshead and a few bass.

We have been experiencing a terrible boating season in regards to rescues and recoveries. Officials are concerned people aren't familiar with their boats, equipment and safety procedures. Use all available weather and wave apps and websites, but also pay attention to visible signs and other boats. Debris can damage the best boats, and equipment failure can create more than just a repair bill. Watch out for your fellow boaters, use your radios, and avoid drinking alcohol while boating. Be safe everyone!



Keith @ Dutch Fork Custom Lures; filed 7/11: Erie fishing has been good in some spots and poor in others. Walnut Creek access has good fishing, with most boats fishing the 30 to 60-foot range. Our charter customers are limiting out because we keep moving to find the best fishing – we do not fish one spot. Custom colors on crankbaits and Dutch Fork Worm Harnesses are our top producers. Out at North East, walleye fishing is good, but the fish are always moving so staying on them can be challenging. If you are catching sheepshead and 8-inch walleye, you have got to move! A lot of anglers are catching sub-legal



Dutch Fork Charters

fish, which of course is good for the future but bad for your freezer. Big pods of small fish are roaming all over now. (See photo previous page and in Livewell Overflow on Gamma page)

Kevin Austin (Farrell); filed 7/12: We were on a Lake Erie charter on Saturday. We used planer boards with spoons and stick baits in 45 to 40 feet of water. Good time! Our best colors were Wonderbread and Gold. Pictured here is Dennis Slater and myself. (See photo here and in Livewell) Overflow on Gamma page)



Kevin Austin

MERCER COUNTY

Lake Wilhelm

Angler Al @ Buttermilk Hill; filed 7/12: While trolling a Flicker Shad, Greg Feltenberger from Polk hooked a 43-inch 22-pound muskellunge. The brute battled for 15 minutes before Greg was able to land him. Congratulations on your nice catch Greg! (See photo at right)



Wilhelm musky

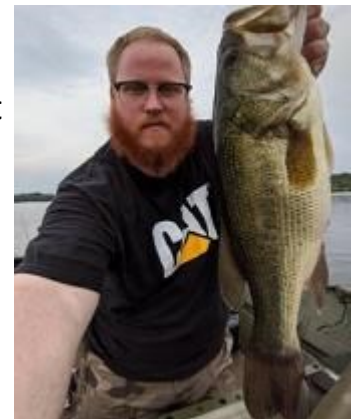
Walter Jones; filed 7/12: My friend Ben Ishman of Stoneboro caught these nice walleyes from Wilhelm over the weekend. (See photo at right of six 'eyes')



Wilhelm walleyes

Brad Bee; filed 7/10: The largemouth bite on Lake Wilhelm has been very good. It takes extra effort to catch a trophy, but as you can see by the pictures there are nice largemouth in the lake. This past week all my bass came on jigs and crankbaits. (See photo at right and in Livewell)

Jim Holland; filed 7/9: You were asking for photos of fish caught at Lake Wilhelm. Here is an 18.5-inch largemouth bass I caught during a recent Kayak tournament on the lake. (See photo in Livewell)



Wilhelm bass/ Brad Bee

MERCER COUNTY continued

Shenango Lake & River

Randy @ Fish West PA (filed 7/12: Shenango's water temperature is high but fish are still active – mostly in the mornings and evenings. Good bite with hybrids, largemouth bass and panfish throughout the lake. Catfish bite is really picking up. Good times on our beautiful lake the last few weeks. Hoping it keeps going through the dog days! Tight lines! Randy (See photo at right and in Livewell)



Fish West PA photo

Rick Como (Sharpsville); filed 7/12: The fishing the past couple weeks during the heat has still been fairly good. Early mornings and late afternoon have been very good for white bass and hybrid stripers. Lots of young-of-year shad are in baitfish balls all over the lake. White bass and nice size crappies are feeding on them all day long. The intense heat from the sun has been chasing us off the lake each day by noon. Stripers are feeding on the larger size shad. You've got to get out early for success and search around. Catfish bite has been extremely good with fish caught all over the lake. Trolling flicker Shad crankbaits early in morning works for all species. This coming week has a few days of overcast and cooler temps so fishing should be better than last week in the heat. We have been blessed this year with steady lake levels and very clear water...so far.



Kevin Austin photo

Kevin Austin (Farrell); filed 7/10: Today instead of crappie fishing, I went after bluegills in the river below the dam. Caught some nice ones with red worms on light line. (photo at right)



Brock Morocco

Brock Morocco (Hermitage); filed 7/9: When temperatures climb so high, sometimes night fishing is the way to go. Big fish tend to feed after dark on rivers and lakes. Bugs can be your biggest problem. But sometimes around midnight the big stripers turn on. Be prepared with all your gear ahead of time so you are not fumbling in the dark. (See photo at right)

Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 7/13: It's been hot and so has the crappie bite I've found crappies shallow and deep – both depths around brush. I catch them early then get off the lake. (See photo on GARMIN Page)

VENANGO COUNTY

Sugar Creek

Angler Al @ Buttermilk Hill; filed 7/5: The temperature was high and the creek was running skinny, but my brother-in-law, Dr. Amal Das, and I spent our annual day on Sugar Creek from sun up till sundown. Fishing was slow and our numbers were low compared to years past. Our primary presentation was red worms and nightcrawlers. However, I did hook into a palomino with a wax worm. Our end-of-day totals were: 11 rainbow trout, 7 brown trout, 1 brook trout, and 7 smallmouth bass.

Justus Lake

Sue's Bait Shop; filed 7/13: Our customers are catching nice trout on Justus in 30 feet of water near the dam using live minnows and nightcrawlers.



Angler Al @ Buttermilk Hill; filed 7/12: Around 7 am on Monday, July 6th, Chad Jaco of Titusville caught a 24.5-inch 7.5-pound largemouth bass from Justus Lake in deep water. The bucketmouth hit a Yo Zuri Banana Boat trout pattern lure. Personally, I've caught a fair share of largemouth at the lake, but Chad's fish may be the biggest one I've seen come out of Justus. Congratulations on your fine catch!

Allegheny River

Jody @ Maurer's Trading Post; filed 7/3: Due to the heat of past week, we have not had many people through the store who have been fishing. The few reports we have received include smallmouth bass biting in the Allegheny River, French Creek and Oil Creek, plus some trout caught in Oil Creek and Big Sandy. It would seem wade fishing is a better way to stay cool than baking in a boat. Like many tackle shops, we are having a difficult time getting terminal tackle and line. Appears to be a nationwide issue with things not coming into the country. Fortunately, with its headquarters just a few miles away, we have been able to get Gamma Line. **This is the perfect time for anglers to try Gamma Line** because we cannot get other lines right now. If you need line, stop in and pick up some Gamma. Try Edge fluorocarbon, Polyflex Monofilament or Torque braid – Gamma offers all three types.



VENANGO COUNTY continued

Allegheny River

Jeff @ Keystone Connection Guide Service; filed 7/12: The middle Allegheny has been running low, clear and exceptionally warm since the July 4th weekend, with water temperatures running in the low to mid 80s. Still, we are catching plenty of smallmouth bass up to 20 inches, along with the occasional walleye. Reaction baits like the Rapala X-Rap are accounting for most of the fish, with the balance coming on flukes and top-waters. (see photos below and on Livewell page)

Mike @ Mike's Custom Tackle; filed 7/11: I have not been out fishing due to a heavy work load. A few of my customers have, and they say it's been tough with the water low and clear. It's been a different bait each day. One day flukes, next day tubes, next day Ned rig. Wacky rigged stick worms are doing well. Stay safe.

Pete @ Smallies on the Yough; filed 7/10: Air temperature of 90 degrees today on the river with water temperature of 80 degrees and clear. The bite was good early as we got into some nice-size fish using finesse lures. Most bass were 13 to 15 inches with one going 18 inches. (see photos)



Jeff Knapp photo



Jeff Knapp photo



Pete Cartwright photo



Pete Cartwright photo

Jeff Knapp and Pete Cartwright —
Gamma Guides on the Allegheny

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; keystoneconnectionguideservice@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.

Results of prize drawing:

Cover shot pack of Galida's Grubz goes to David Graham.

Brad Bee drawn for Bass baits pack

Walter Jones drawn for Walleye baits pack

Kevin Austin drawn for Panfish pack

Jim Holland drawn for Gamma Line

To claim prize, you must email me with your shipping address. darlblack@windstream.net



Scott Selle with pike

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



Lindsey with Shenango white bass



Brad with Wilhelm largemouth



Michael with Allegheny smallmouth /Knapp



Jim Holland with Wilhelm largemouth via kayak



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**

Gamma Tip from Mr. Gamma himself: I love to chase big flathead catfish on the Allegheny during warm summer nights. However, there are many waterways in the region with big channel catfish populations, including Pymatuning Lake, Shenango River, Shenango Lake and Lake Wilhelm. Flatheads have always been in the Shenango River and Shenango Lake. But now big ones are turning up in Pymatuning Lake. There were two different 39 pound-plus flatheads caught from Pymatuning in the last three weeks. If you want to target big catfish, here is my rig.

I use a sliding sinker rig for both channels and flatheads. The weight is a flat sinker so it does not roll. For flatheads, my bait is a big creek chub on a 7/0 to 9/0 circle hook – depending on size of the bait – from Team Catfish or Mustad. For channels, I use cut bait (a chunk of bluegills, creek chubs or gizzard shad) on a 4/0 to 7/0 circle hook. Flatheads like live prey while channels are more likely to take dead bait.

Never use a small hook for either species when you are using big live bait or big chunks of cut bait. Small hooks will not penetrate big baits on hook sets.

I always use a Gamma Edge 20-pound fluorocarbon leader for either species. Fluorocarbon does not fray against the sandpaper-like teeth of catfish when fighting them for a period of time.

I've been experimenting with my main line on the reel, using 60-pound Gamma Torque Braid on one rod and 20-pound Gamma Polyflex monofilament on the second

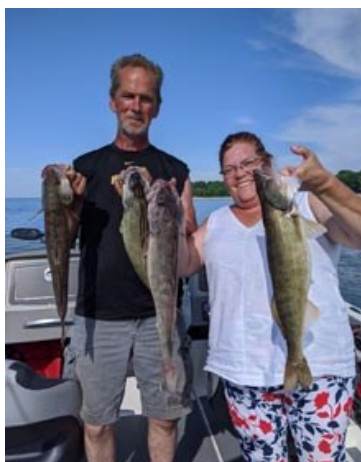
rod. By fishing both under same circumstances, I'm finding that I'm leaning towards Polyflex for both rods. The monofilament does not fray as easily as the braid when rubbed against rocks and other snags where you find big catfish.

With several good catfish lakes in the region , be sure to give it a try this summer. – Dale Black, president of Gamma Fishing

OVERFLOW OF LAKE ERIE WALLEYES



Dutch Fork Charters



Dutch Fork Charters



Kevin Austin Photo



Kevin Austin photo

GARMIN INFORMATION PAGE

- Real anglers share actual fishing experiences with Garmin units



Garmin report from Ken Smith: I recently had Garmin LiveScope installed on my boat. It is great! I fished Shenango on the morning of July 5th. It was going to be a very hot day, so I didn't want to be out any longer than necessary. Using LiveScope, I found large groups of crappies on two different spots – one shallow and one deep. Fish were schooled up heavily in both spots. I used a jig and bobber on the shallower spot, and then Hang Glided the deeper water. I caught well over 70 crappies from these two spots in a short time. Most were 9 to 11 inches. I kept 15 of thick bodies black crappies. Likely I would have caught some

crappies without LiveScope, but with LiveScope I was able to stay on each school as they repositioned slightly, and caught fish in short order.

