

NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA FISHING REPORT

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The NW PA Fishing Report is brought to you by:



Fishing with Darl Black

Information Service



Landing Net by Darl Black

Maybe that unbearable summer heat is at an end. The humidity is certainly lower and the nights are much cooler. Heck, I had to put on a light jacket this morning when I was outside at 6:30 am. Although inland waters are still warmer than normal for this time of year, I've had reports that most waters have dropped a couple degrees in the past week. Normally, I don't like thinking about the end of summer, but this year I'm looking forward to it. Cooler water will bring better fishing.

Kayaking on the Shenango River. Photo by Ron Donlan

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.

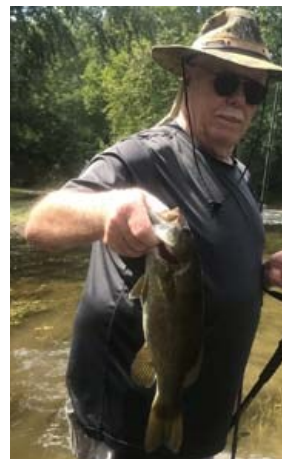
NW PA FISHING REPORT for August 19, 2020

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County by County Reports

FRENCH CREEK – Flowing through all four counties

Pete @ SmalliesontheYough.com guide service; filed 8/12: On one guide trip this past week we fished French Creek in the early morning and landed 15 smallmouth bass up to 17 inches. (See photo)



Cartwright photo

Jerrod Dean (filed 8/15): My nephew Kyler Dean, caught this catfish from French Creek while on a primitive camping trip with his Dad, Jesse. Kyler is 13 years old and lives in Conneaut, Ohio. See photo



Kyler Dean with French Creek Catfish

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Dave @ Richter's Bait & Tackle; filed 8/15 When the winds blow, anglers catch walleyes drifting. When the wind is calm, the bite is tough. Lots of perch being caught as well as catfish. Bluegill bite is pretty good, but no word on crappies. The anglers working at it are still catching muskies. (See photo next page & on Gamma Page.

Laurie @ Duck-N-Drake; filed 8/17: Some walleye action with trolled crankbaits in 15 to 20 feet; top baits have been Rapala Shad Rap and Berkley Flicker Shad – we have both in stock. Perch are biting pretty good on the South End. Live minnows in 18 to 20 feet deep is a good starting point; great reports from around the water treatment plant on the Ohio side. But August is becoming a big catfish month. We just held the catfish tournament this past weekend with 31 teams participating. Winning team had the 3-cat tourney limit going 37.56 pounds. Second place had big fish of the event with a 21.28-pound flathead catfish – they were fishing from shore! (See photo of big flathead.)



21.28 lb Flathead– DnD photo

Brandi @ Poff's Place; filed 8/17: Except for perch and catfish, it's been quiet. Anglers catching walleyes are working hard for them.

Russ@ Gateway Bait; filed 8/17: Good reports on perch and bluegills – but no crappies. A few white bass are being caught south of the causeway. And I've had reports of a musky now and then.



Richter's photo—perch

Conneaut Lake



Jackson Habel

Rocky Habel; filed 8/15: My son Jackson had a good morning on Conneaut Lake this past week. He landed three largemouth bass using a Senko. He was really tickled about his catch. (See photos) **Dale Clemmer** (Cochrannton); filed 8/15: I fished Conneaut Lake a couple times last week, catching a Inice argemouth bass each trip. (See photo)

Darl Black (Cochrannton); filed 8/14: Marilyn and I fished Conneaut twice in the past two weeks. The Lake is busier this summer than I've ever seen it on weekdays. We tried fishing the offshore humps for big bluegills and pumpkinseeds, but 'gills and 'seeds were not schooled up in deep water like past summers and boat traffic made mid-lake fishing rather difficult. So, we went bass fishing. And just like our trips to Pymatuning earlier this season, Marilyn caught the majority of bass – actually, on the last two Conneaut trips, she caught all the bass! This entire year, she has primarily used two baits: a Galida's Grubz and a Ned Rig with 3-inch Dinger – and outfishes me every time. (See photos in Livewell)



Picture caption

ERIE COUNTY

Lake Erie

Jeff @ Poor Richards; filed 8/17: The Lake water temp is 77 degrees. Not much change in the walleye action other than the better bite is out deeper. Best reports have been coming from 60 to 65 feet with fish suspended 40 to 50 feet down. Some anglers are reporting going a little deeper to 70-75 feet where they are catching larger walleyes but not as many.

Kirk @ East End Angler; filed 8/17: The most recent cold front seems to have given walleyes a brief case of lockjaw – I fished yesterday and never caught a single walleye. Reports from other anglers have walleyes out in the 60 to 63-foot depths, suspended around 35 feet in the morning and moving deeper to 50 feet by midday. That big school of perch is still straight out of Shades Beach in 53 to 63 feet of water. Of course, big catfish are being caught everywhere; I can't recall a summer with so many big cats.

Richard @ Someday Isle Tackle; filed 8/17: Seems that the change is starting to occur with more and more walleyes gathering in deeper water. They will stage there before they start the western migration. Not to worry, however, there are still fish shallow, too. Over the past weekend, we found walleyes suspended in 30 feet of water. For a lot of guys, the bite has been tough, and it's not different for us. Keep adjusting depth and speed and direction and presentation until you hit on what they want on a given day. Have fun out there. (See photo)

Scott Selle; filed 8/17: Hey Darl, please see the attached photos of our Erie trip this past week. We put nine in the cooler and lost several fish. Rob's best was 26 inches. We caught them using Dutch Fork Worm Harnesses and Deep Diving Bandits in 70 to 75 feet of water. (See photos)

Tim Tomlin (Erie); filed 8/17: In Presque Isle Bay, panfish have been plentiful on the city-side piers, along with a sudden in-



Nick Wetzek



Someday Isle Tackle photo



Rob Selle



Scott Selle

crease of bowfin and walleyes in the Channel. Of course, sheepshead are plentiful. Very small walleyes are showing up along the outer edges of protected harbors in the Bay so please release them carefully; no walleyes were stocked in Bay this year due to COVID. Perch are showing up between 53 to 63 feet off Shades.

Chad Prihode; filed 8/15: I had a decent day. Starting east of Walnut Creek trolling towards Trout Run in 62 feet of water. Water temperature was 75 degrees. Fish were holding at about 50 feet. I pulled green spoons on Magnum Dipseys on 0 setting at 70 feet back. Also, green shallow divers on regular Dipseys on #3 setting at 130 to 140 feet back. Plus, purple Reef Runners with 5 colors of lead on inline planer boards. We trolled 2.1 miles per hour. Landed 16 walleyes and one nice perch. (See photos)



Chad Prihode & friends catch

Ed Soboslay; filed 8/15: Hey Darl, here are some pictures from recent trips. The fish are deep in the water column – 45 feet down. Five colors working the best, and dipseys. The last picture was a 32-inch 11.96 pound 'eye caught on a downrigger in 65 feet of water. (See photos)



Ed Soboslay photo

MERCER COUNTY



Marina photo

Lake Wilhelm

Bob @ Bubba Mak's Bait; filed 8/17: With the slight drop in lake temperature – back into the high 70s from the 80s, the crappies and bluegills are back to biting. Also hearing a lot about catfish, including some big ones.

Steve Ringeisen; filed 8/17: On Sunday, August 16th, I took 1st place at the Penns Waters Bass Busters Tournament on Lake Wilhelm. My 4-fish tourney limit weighed 10.53 pounds. Two of the fish came in the morning on a Senko, then the action slowed for several hours. The other two bass came in the afternoon as skies darkened. The largest bass (3.6 pounds) rolled on buzzbait so I quickly threw a Senko back to him – which he took. The 3.5 pounder came on a buzzbait about 10 minutes later. (See photo)



Steve Ringeisman

MERCER COUNTY continued



Owen Hefferman

Ryan Hefferman; filed 8/15: Attached are two pictures of my boys on Lake Wilhelm. Owen is holding a bass he caught using a white creature bait that he flipped to the bank near the bridge below Launch 3. The second picture is Tanner with a nice bass he caught around the bridge pillars of I-79. There are no better memories made than fishing on the water with your kids! (See photos)



Tanner Hefferman

Shenango River



Floating the Shenango

Ron Donlan; filed 8/15: It was a great day to be f kayaking with two friends on the Shenango River to escape the blistering heat. We caught a dozen or more fish on artificial lures. Jigs and Ned Rigs took most of the fish, which was a mixed bag of smallmouth bass, crappies and walleyes. All were re-



Floating the Shenango

leased. The paddle from New Hamburg to Big Bend has abundant strainers that can be challenging to navigate. And may require portage. (See photos here and on cover.)

Brock Morocco (Hermitage); filed 8/15: Not much to report in the heat of summer coupled with low water conditions. River fishing has been slow below the dam with mostly catfish and small gamefish biting in the evening. I hope to get out more as the water temp starts to drop. Thought I would share a pic from earlier this year – my first Longnose Gar from an Erie trib – not what you expect in a trout stream! (See in Livewell)

Shenango Lake

Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 8/15: I fished Shenango on August 13, 14 and 15. The crappie bite stayed pretty consistent each trip. I kept the 9.5-inch black crappies along with some bigger ones. I was hang-gliding for the most part, but also fished a jig under a slip bobber in 14 feet of water – that's what put fish in the box each day. Thanks to Tyrone and Shawn for fishing with me this week. Hope you are enjoying those fish fillets!

MERCER COUNTY — Shenango Lake continued



Randy @ Fish West PA

Randy @ Fish West PA; filed 8/12: With the high-water temperature, Shenango Lake fishing is slow – but some still can be caught. Evening fishing seems best on the warmer days. Hybrid stripers, black bass and catfish are fairly active on the main lake. Panfish, including crappies, are holding tight to structure and we found some good ones in 15 feet. Hybrids can be seen feeding on top and pushing baitfish all over the main lake so keep your eyes and ears open so you can get in on the



Randy @ Fish West PA

fun! The August smallmouth bass has begun but it's slow. The next few weeks should be good so get out there and fish! Tight lines, Randy. (See photos)

VENANGO COUNTY

Justus Lake

Angler Al @ Buttermilk Hill; filed 8/17: My neighbor, Scott Riley, joined me for few hours of fishing on Justus Lake. We arrived late afternoon and stayed until 8 pm. Using several pieces of creek bait that I had trapped, we trolled slowly along the weedline. We landed 3 smallmouth bass and 10 largemouth bass. Four of the bass were 15 inches, with the rest being smaller. In the pic, Scott is holding one bass that was about 14 inches. (See photo on right)



Sue @ Sue's Bait Shop; filed 8/17: Our customers have been catching a good number of trout from the deep water of Justus Lake near the dam. Live bait – worms or minnows – is the ticket. Of course, getting it down into the deeper, cooler water where there is still enough dissolved oxygen to support trout is also crucial. That depth is close to thirty feet. However, if you catch a trout from that depth, be prepared to keep it; it is very unlikely the fish will survive if you release it.

Denny Beggs (Franklin); filed 8/9: My wife Delia and I took the row boat with an electric motor to Justus Lake today. She caught a 16.5-inch rainbow trout using a nightcrawler under a slip float set for about 20 feet of water. In trying to release it, the fish swam away from the boat but then came back to the surface some distance from the boat. We were going to go pick it up to take it home when an eagle beat us to it, dropping down and grabbing it. (See photo)

VENANGO COUNTY continued

Allegheny River

Pam @ Maurer's Trading Post; filed 8/17: Our customers are trying hard but the fish are not cooperating much. Anglers seem to be doing best on panfish area farm ponds and small lakes. The river is sort of quiet, although there are a few guys having success on smallmouth bass with Galida's Grubz. Also, a couple of customers are enjoying success fishing at night on the river with noisy topwater, especially in bone white color. The Whopper Plopper is one of the noisy lures they are using, too.

Jeff @ Keystone Connection Guide Service; filed 8/17: Though conditions on the middle Allegheny remained tough the past two weeks with the extremely low, clear, warm water, I found smallmouth bass a little more cooperative. Catch rates remained lower than usual for this time of year, but we had consistent bites throughout most of the days. Lots of missed fish and lost fish due to less-than-aggressive bites, but we still managed to put respectable numbers of smallies up to 17 inches in the boat. Reaction baits – Zoom Super Flukes and Rapala X-Raps – accounted for all the bass during my last several trips. The river is loaded with eelgrass which will likely become a major issue when it begins to die off and float to the surface in about a month. (See photos below)

Pete @ SmalliesontheYough.com guide service; filed 8/12: On the 11th, I fished the river for 3 hours. The water was very warm and low. The fishing was a bit slower than normal for this time of year. I used Gamma Edge 6-pound test in this low, clear water – landing 8 smallmouths including a 20.5-inch smallie. (See photo below)



3 happy clients of guide Jeff Knapp



Pete Cartwright



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.

WAS YOUR NAME DRAWN FOR POSSIBLE PRIZE?

Names drawn for possible prizes. To claim prize, you must email me at darlblack@windstream.net with you shipping address...

Cover shot: pack of Galida's Grubz to Ron Donlan

Spool of Gamma Line: Jackson Habel

Lure packet: Nick Wetzek

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



Dale/bowfin Woodcock



Brian Evans/LMB Clarion R.



Brian Evans/Gamelands



Jamie Moton/PY/walleye



Paul Nicklin/Shenango



Channel Cat



Jesse Burdette/Shenango



Chuck @ Conneaut Lake



Dale @ Conneaut Lake

Livewell Overflow—Special Lake Erie Page



Photos above from recent charters with Ed Soboslay



Carrie Marie with walleye



Big drum earns crown of shame for Carrie Marie



20 lb .9 oz. pending state record brown caught by Dr. Bob Ferraro



Chad sez perch out there



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 salutes the success of young anglers below!



Brady Welish at Pymatuning



Jackson Habel at Conneaut Lk



Richter photo/ angler unknown

Special Notice



Kevin Austin



Austin photo



Fishing friend and frequent contributor to the Fishing Report Kevin Austin from the Shenango Valley recently opened a fishing apparel business. He offers T-shirts and caps with the logo "Luckis4rabbits I'm going Fishing" and wanted to let everyone know that he now take payments on-line with a cash app. Check out his Facebook



page at luckis4rabbits to learn more.

Three for the road...I received so many photos for this issue that photos from our outing on Conneaut were squeezed out. But I found a little white space to plug them in! Like I said earlier in Report, Marilyn has been catching most of the bass this season, while I'm stuck on 'gills and 'seeds. That's all folks! Darl



Ned Rig smallie



Galida's Grubz largemouth



Captain Pumpkinseed

GARMIN INFORMATION PAGE

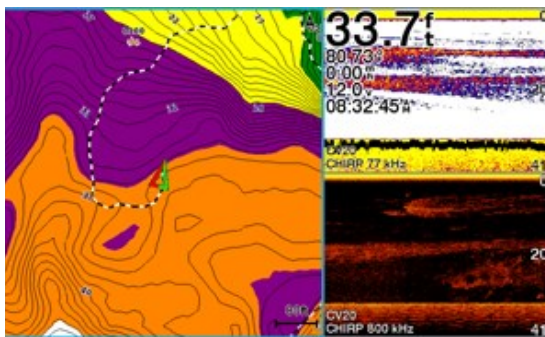
- Real anglers share actual fishing experiences with Garmin units



Garmin Tip from Jeff Knapp of Keystone Connection Guide Service

Garmin chartplotters figure heavily in my summertime lake fishing. Consider deeper, clear water lakes that host both bass and open water baitfish such as emerald shiners and/or rainbow smelt. From mid-summer well into fall (pre-turnover) bass will key on suspended baitfish over main lake basins.

At times you'll see surface activity as bass – likely swimming up from cooler, deeper water – intercept forage fish hovering in the five to 10-foot range. But I've found bass can often be foraging in this manner with little to no evidence on the surface. Marking schools of high-riding bait increases the likelihood bass will be nearby and lessens the feeling of looking for the proverbial needle-in-a-haystack when casting shallow running lures over deep water basins.



Another Garmin feature I find extremely useful is depth shading. With my Echomap Plus and UHD units I customize depth ranges of my choosing from a variety of color options. Typically, I encode a color change at the depth of the weedline (inside as well as outside) making it easy to hold my boat just off these edges which are often fish holding areas.

Above screenshot of Garmin Echomap unit showing high riding baitfish on 2D and ClearVu Down Imaging on right; chartplotter with depth shading on left.

Pictured on right is Cole Remaley with a 4.5-pound large-mouth bass taken on a Zoom Fluke while fishing over a 40 foot deep basin.

