

NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA FISHING REPORT

Published by Blackwolfe Communications LLC Issue: October 21, 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



Brad Bee has the cover this week with a 21 inch 4.8 lb largemouth from Lake Wilhelm

LANDING NET by Darl Black

As water temperature on inland lakes and rivers drops into the 50s, it is transition time from mid-fall fishing into late fall fishing. Many species are preparing to head into somewhat deeper water. As fish move into early winter locations, it means they are bunched up in smaller areas – find them deep and you normally find a bunch. Of course, it's a different story for coldwater species such as steelhead; they enjoy the cold water. But for steelhead fishing to really take off right now, PA's north coast needs rain! Some in the forecast for this week. But look out for next week if the future forecast holds true. 50 to 60 percent chance of rain every day.

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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County by County Reports

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Dave @ Richter's Bait; filed 10/18:
Not a lot of anglers on the lake. Wall-eye and crappie bite not as great as it will be in a couple weeks. Some hard-core guys are already catching wall-eyes on blade baits in the South End. Also a few reports of crappies, but mainly a lot of perch being caught.

Laurie @ Duck-N-Drake; filed 10/15:
The most reliable information has perch hitting minnows in 13 to 14 feet around the Andover Causeway.



Pymatuning in fall color. Photo by Darl Black

This will be my last report in the NW PA Fishing Report until sometime in March when we re-open. Come spring, be sure to sign up for the biggest crappie fishing event on Pymatuning in a very long time – 2021 Crappie Madness. You can find information at NortheastOhioCrappieClub.com. You can also get a registration form at Duck-N-Drake when we reopen in the spring. Crappie Madness starts May 1, 2021.

Bo @ BC Bait Company; filed 10/19: I fished the South End of Pymatuning over the weekend. I was targeting 9 to 12 feet of water, and found an abundance of panfish at about 8 feet. Used BC Stingers and Pickworms on a 5mm tungsten jig to catch bluegills and crappies. Plus, I caught my first musky! (See photos)



Bo with Pymie bluegill

David Graham @ Coon Creek Trappers; filed 10/18: RJ and I fished the South End of Pymatuning one day this past week. The bite was slow. We missed several bites on tubes and swimbaits. When we switched to cranking, we finally put several smallmouth in the boat. I was using a FX Cranking Rod model WCB71MMF with 10-pound Gamma Edge. (See photo)



Grahams with smallmouths

Captain Hook (Hermitage); filed 10/16: Big bass are still biting on Pymatuning during mid-October. If you don't like crowds or boat activity, this is your time to catch fish! Smallmouth last week and largemouth this week! (See photo)

Conneaut Lake

Marilyn Black (Cochrannton); filed 10/13: Our search for BIG smallmouths at Conneaut Lake this fall continues. We are catching average size largemouth and smallmouth but so far none over four pounds that we typically tag in late October and early November. Last time out, however, Darl had a couple unusual catches – his first walleye from Conneaut in over a decade, and his first rock bass from Conneaut that he can ever recall. (See photos below) PS: By the way, bluegills are stacking up in a little deeper water outside the weedbeds; see Gamma Tip page for what a screenshot of gills on cover looks like.



Captain Hook with LMB

Dale Clemmer (Cochrannton); filed 10/11: The pike continue to bite at Conneaut Lake. Everyone caught some. I also caught several rock bass. (See photos below)



Marilyn with CL LMB



Marilyn with CL SMB



Chuck with CL pike



Dale with CL rockie

ERIE COUNTY

Editor's Erie Steelhead Report: For many steelhead anglers, it has been a disappointing fall in the tributaries. Lack of water in the streams since early September have the steelhead trapped in holes in the lower sections of the tributaries. Many more steelhead wait just offshore to enter the streams when the flow increases. Every week, the promise of rain has not been fulfilled. However, this week may be different. As this Report is being prepared, it has been raining for over 24 hours – light frequent showers. Rain is forecast for Tuesday and thundershowers on Wednesday. More rain forecast next week—every day at this point. This may finally be the time when sufficient runoff from rainfall increases stream flow and get those steelies moving upstream to spread out. Here are brief comments from this past week from Erie tackle shops:

Dan @ Elk Creek Sports: We've got plenty of fish, but no water! Shoreline fishing at Trout Run has been very good when it's not blowing. Power Bait, crawlers and egg sacks are best.

Jake @ Fish USA: Check forecast and look for cool nights and rain for optimal conditions. Streams which are low and clear call for light line and stealthy presentations for those finicky trout.

Jeff @ Poor Richards: Fish have been spooked with so much fishing pressure. For pressured fish in clear water go with single eggs or minnows in the streams. Fly-fishermen use Sucker Spawn and Blood Dot in light colors, black or brown nymphs, and black or green Woolly Buggers.



Kirk @ East End Angler: On the East Side, steelhead are in lower sections of Four Mile, Sixteen Mile and Twenty Mile. Baits include single eggs and maggots. Picture on the left is Isaac Hesom with a trophy brown trout from an East Side stream. The fish measured 26.5 inches and weighed 13 pounds.

Darl @ Blackwolfe Communications (Cochrannton);

filed 10/18: Marilyn and I spent the afternoon visiting a couple tributary attractions and photographing anglers doing their thing. First, we checked out the lower end of angler-packed Walnut Creek at the Wall. Just upstream a bit, Jerry Penk of Pittsburgh hooked a steelhead while we were watching; he was fortunate to have a net man handy.

At mouth of Trout Run, the lake was rolling. Two anglers from State College and one from Philly area sat on the guard rail watching the fin-to-fin steelhead in the pool; headed home after three days attempting to fish, they indicated they would return sometime in the future.

Meanwhile, Timothy Smith of Culpepper, VA wasn't going to let the rough lake keep him from fishing – he had traveled too far. While we watched, he cast a spoon into the turbulence and hooked a steelhead. He had to chase the fish east for at least 50 yards before finally beaching it; says he now has a fish story for his military father away on overseas assignment.



Jerry Penk



Net man for Penk



Three wishful anglers on the rail

Presque Isle Bay

Kirk @ East End Angler; filed 10/16: dock and pier fishing for perch is picking up on the Bay, including South Pier, Cascade Slip, Donjon and Liberty Park. Smallmouth bass fishing in the lake has been good when anglers can get out.

Tim @ Presque Isle Bay Anglers; filed 10/16: Bigger perch are coming from deeper water that can only be reached by boat. Try the 19 to 23 feet depths near the shipping channel. Largemouth bass are active in the Bay right now. Steelhead are also in the Bay.



Tim Smith running down a battling steelie in big surf.



Smith wins the fight!

MERCER COUNTY

Lake Wilhelm

Bo @ BC Baits; filed 10/19: Large bluegills and 10 to 12-inch crappies are being caught in the Stumps and from the upper causeway. Bubble Gum colored Terry Bug in medium size has produced for me. (See photo below)

Brad Bee; filed 10/18: Fishing has been exciting at Wilhelm in the past week. All panfish species are biting shallow and deep. I caught a really nice crappie on a small jighead with Shadpole plastic body. Also caught a carp on a crappie jig – that was a lot of fun. I am catching bass on spoons, spinners, jigs and Chatterbaits. Bass are hitting a little odd for October – they are not smashing the baits. (See photos below & on cover & Livewell)

T. Latwin; filed 10/19: I was kayak fishing on Lake Wilhelm with my fishing partner Bo Bartholomew. We knew the crappie were hitting. Using a BC Bait called the Terry Bug, we made a nice catch. We kept 29 crappies and released many more. This was indeed an amazing catch for me from Lake Wilhelm. (See photos below)



Bo knows Wilhelm crappies



T. Latwin photo



T. Latwin photo



Brad Bee has enjoyed catching a variety of species at Wilhelm in recent outing on the lake. Check out Livewell for his crappie, and of course, the cover of this issue.

MERCER COUNTY continued

Shenango Lake

Randy @ Fish West PA; filed 10/18: Shenango Lake is cooling off slowly but fish are still active, especially before a cold front. If you like fishing in the fall, now is the time because I believe the beauty of this lake is unmatched by any other in NW PA. Good-size bass – especially smallmouth – are hitting both in the river and in the lake, along with hybrids, catfish and panfish. Crappies are on fire! Tight lines...Randy. (See photos on next page and in Livewell)

Bo @ BC Baits; filed 10/18: I fished the river below the dam in Sharpsville. Caught crappies, bluegills and rock bass near brush and downed trees. I was using a medium-size white Terry Bug.

Kevin Austin (Farrell); filed 10/16: I caught these crappies on Shenango Lake fishing from shore in 6 feet of water. I was using hand-tied jigs and live minnows. (See photos on next page)

Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 10/15: Crappies are still biting at Shenango. The last time out, I found them in 12 to 14 feet of water near cover. Small jig with Baby Shad body tipped with Berkley Crappie Nibble.

VENANGO COUNTY

Allegheny River

Jeff @ Keystone Connection Guide Service; filed 10/18: I've noticed a marked movement of smallmouth bass from shallow summertime current areas to slower, deeper, protected areas. Since the water temperature has dropped into the mid to low 50s, we're catching most of our smallmouth bass in rocky, shoreline pockets in three to 10 feet of water. Low current flats near deeper pools are also producing smallmouth up to 19 inches. We're also seeing more walleyes in the mix. Finesse tube jigs and suspending jerkbaits have accounted for nearly all our fish during recent trips. Long pauses on the jerkbait will trigger the bigger bass. (See photos next page and in Livewell)

Pete @ smalliesontheyough.com; filed 10/13: Tough day yesterday on the Allegheny River with the wind, leaves and floating weeds. I got into a nice bunch of smallies. I used a Scared Fishless Tackle Company **Rude Tube** to land over 25 fish. All feed is on! Hopefully the wind will lay down for future trips. (See photo on next page)

Photos of catches from Mercer County's Shenango Lake and

The crew from Fish West PA loves fall fishing on Shenango



Kevin Austin 's shore catch

Venango County's Allegheny River



Jeff Knapp photo



Jeff Knapp photo



Pete Cartwright photo

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.

PRIZE WINNER??? Check here...

If your name is listed below as being drawn for a prize, you must email Darl at darlblack@winstream.net and supply your shipping address in order to receive the prize.

Cover photo— pack of Mike's Custom Tackle tubes: Brad Bee

Spool of Gamma Line: Kevin Austin

Lure pack: David Graham

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



Allegheny River—Knapp photo



Shenango Lake—Hedderick photo



Shenango Lake—Hedderick photo



Lake Wilhelm—Brad Bee



Get your new boat from Wiegel Brothers ordered for spring now!



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

It's moving week for Gamma Fishing! Not to worry. They are not leaving the area. Just moving from north of Oil City to larger facility on Rt. 322 in Franklin. But since Dale has his hands full with the move, we called on Mike McFadden at Mike's Custom Tackle to provide a Gamma Tip for this issue of the Fishing Report.

Mike: Fall is one of my favorite times for fishing. Right now, on the Allegheny River it is Tube and Ned Rig time for me. Of course, my plastics of choice are the tubes in two sizes and that little 3-inch Ned-style worm that I turn out in standard and custom colors. We also offer a Ned-style leadhead.

My smallmouth rod is spooled with Gamma fluorocarbon of course. But I prefer 9-pound Gamma Touch over 8-pound Gamma Edge. Touch is softer than Edge – which I find to be a little stiff. Touch therefore handles better on the reel, and I find it even more sensitive than Edge.

However, my walleye rod is spooled with 10-pound Gamma Torque braid. I employ a leader of 10-Gamma fluorocarbon, attached with a swivel. I do a lot of jerkbait fishing for river walleye, utilizing a pull-pause retrieve. With braid I get better strike detection during a pause when the line is slack. To improve all your slack line presentations, go with Torque and a short leader.



Mike knows river smallmouth

GARMIN INFORMATION PAGE



- Real anglers share actual fishing experiences with Garmin units

Marilyn Black: Tis the time of year for late fall bluegills at several area lakes. It's hard to find another lake with the number of quality bluegills you can catch at Conneaut Lake right now. We focus on schools of bluegills holding around isolated pieces of cover (sunken logs-boards— parts of boats—parts of docks—a few man-made brushpiles) in 14 to 18 feet of water. You can either cast a small jig, count it down and swim it back, or you can do a drop-shot presentation right over top of the bluegill school. Our Garmin GPSMAP unit uncovers the cover and shows the bluegills holding beside and above the object. Garmin SideVu sonar is extremely helpful in locating these sites. Lots of fun!



Side-Vu shows logs or planks likely leftovers from ice cutting days. Bluegills on right school up on debris.



If the smallmouth are not biting, then I go for 'gills.
