

NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA FISHING REPORT

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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



Randy Hedderick with Shenango Lake smallmouth

LANDING NET by Darl Black

October and November are my favorite months of the year to fish for my favorite species – Smallmouth Bass, big Large-mouth Bass, Crappie and White Bass. Yes, I'm aware that it's also Steelhead season in Erie tributaries, and I really appreciate that because it draws anglers away from my favorite inland lakes to the tributary streams! Without question Smallmouth Bass are at the top of my list and right now is the time for big ones in Lake Erie, the Allegheny River and several inland lakes (including Conneaut, Pymatuning, Shenango and Justus). While anglers wait on rain to feed the Erie tributaries to spread out the steelhead, smallmouth fanatics are having great fall fishing right now!

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

Bean @ Richter's Bait; filed 10/5: On the South End, a few anglers are beginning to pick up walleyes by jigging blade baits. We have those lures in stock in the popular colors. Dedicated musky anglers are still catching them in the shallows. Also hearing about perch and crappie catches; seems it's about time for crappies to start feeding up.

Laurie @ Duck -N- Drake; filed 10/5: Finally heard about some walleyes being caught by a couple of my customers. They were trolling Flicker Shads in deep water – about 22 feet. Some crappie reports from shallow water on North End. Perch and catfish make up the balance of the reports. The final day of the 2020 season for our store will be October 17. We wish everyone a safe and healthy winter season. And when you stop by next spring, be sure to obtain an application and information for the 2021 Crappie Madness event here at Pymatuning.

Patty @ Poff's Place; filed 10/5: Comments from customers on catches now include the word 'Walleye' as the fall bite is starting and will only get better over the next six weeks or so. I'm hearing some walleyes are already being taken on blade baits, while a few anglers are still successful with worm harnesses. The size of perch is improving, and of course some nice catfish are still being caught.



Chris White; filed 10/4: I'm still catching channel catfish from the Causeway area, including my Personal Best Channel Cat which weighed 17 lb. 11 oz. at 33 inches in length. (See photo at left)



Captain Hook (Hermitage); filed 10/4: I made a trip to Pymatuning

for a little wade-fishing and hopefully a smallmouth bass or two. Both accomplished! (See photo at right)

Conneaut Lake



Darl Black; filed 10/5: As usual this time in early fall, Conneaut Lake is turning on. A sleeper lake much of the summer due to outrageous boat traffic, when the frolickers leave and the water temperature drops, gamefish come out to feed. Marilyn and I caught some decent largemouth and smallmouth (see picture) back on September 29th, but our return engagement on Oct 3 yielded only one 12-inch smallie on a windy, cold front day. However, looking at the forecast, a return to normal seasonal temperatures during the next ten

days has raised our anticipation for more action and visions of lunker bronzebacks.

Dale Clemmer (Cochrannton); filed 10/5: I had a successful Sunday on Conneaut for Northern pike. We caught them all on spinnerbaits. Here are pictures of a few of them. (photos)



ERIE COUNTY

Lake Erie and Tributaries

Kirk @ East End Angler; filed 10/5: All the East Side creeks are low and clear. Regardless, some steelhead have made their way into the lower end of Four Mile, Sixteen Mile and Twenty Mile, holding in holes not far from the mouths. Anglers are catching some with maggots, crawlers and egg sacks. We heard they excavated the mouth of Sixteen Mile, which should enable more steelhead to get into the stream. Perch action is picking up on the South Pier; plus, at the very end of the pier, anglers are catching a few steelhead and walleyes. We have not received any reports of perch being caught in the lake this week – but it's been too rough for the last four days or so for anyone to be out. Same with the walleyes – the last reports we had put walleyes in 75 to 80 feet of water off the Lighthouse; however, that report is a week old. Pike are tearing up lures in Misery Bay, and largemouth bass are active in the Bay. Over at Eaton, anglers are catching crappies and small northern pike. We have a good selection of the lures needed for fall as well as noodle rods in a wide price range.

Jeff @ Poor Richards; filed 10/5: All tributaries are low and clear. There are steelhead in the lower section of Walnut up to the water-fall above the Manchester Hole and in Elk to about Route 20. Bait anglers are having success with minnows and single eggs, and fly fishermen are using light colored Sucker Spawn and Blood Dot. When conditions allow, anglers are catching fish in the lake at the mouths of the creeks by casting Little Cleo's in blue/chrome and orange/chrome. No really big fish reported – mainly 5.5 to 8 pounders. No one has been able to get out for walleye; the reports we had over a week ago put walleyes in 70 feet on the bottom. (Photo)



Dan @ Elk Creek Sports; filed 10/5: Elk Creek is very low and very clear. We have lots of fish and lots of anglers - but no place for either of them to go. They are moving upstream due to only trickle of water coming down. Most recent report has some as far upstream as the Trestle Hole. There is no rain in the multi-day forecast. Doesn't look good. Usually when fish are not moving, anglers can go to mouths of tributaries to fish the lake, but the wind has been so bad for days that no one can even do the lakeshore thing. As far as walleyes, it's pretty much over. Check your freezer to see what you have because that is likely all you are going to get the rest of this season.

Erie County continued

Bill @ Tudor Hook-N-Nook; filed 10/1: We are in need of lots of rain. Steelhead are stuck low in the creeks. But some fish are scattered throughout in little pockets. Our guide here at Hook-N-Nook has been getting a few. (See photos below)

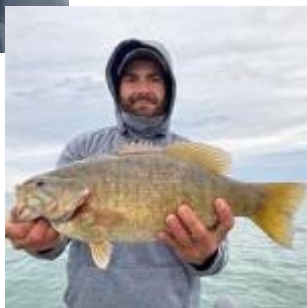
Mark @ Markrosefishing; filed 10/5: Hello guys and gals! Smallmouth fishing in Lake Erie is starting to heat up as cooler temps set in. Nearshore lake temperature is 62 degrees and footballs are hitting. If you are looking for a trip this fall, call me at 888-629-2277 or at www.bassfishinglakeerie.com. (see photos below; additional in Livewell)

Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 9/30: Made my final walleye trip of the season to Erie, going out of Conneaut, Ohio because the fish are on their way home. Did okay, although lake was a bit rough. (see photos below)

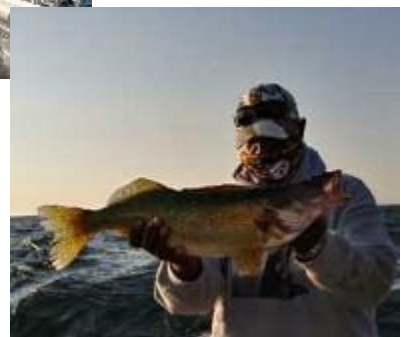
Tudor Hook-N-Nook photos



Mark Rose Fishing photos



Ken Smith photos—last 'eyes



MERCER COUNTY

All catch photos from Mercer County lakes on special next page

Lake Wilhelm

Bo @ BC Baits; filed 10/2 and 10/5; Over a week ago fishing at Wilhelm was flat. Then on Friday the 2nd, crappie and bluegill started being caught on the North end of the lake by the Sheakleyville Causeway in 10 to 12 feet of water; best bait was a white medium size Terry Bug on a 1/32-ounce jighead fished near the bottom. Then on Sunday, I got into crappies and perch 6 to 8 feet deep over 11 feet of water. A chartreuse Stinger was the ticket. It's autumn and the bite is picking up. (See photos on next page)

Shenango Lake

Randy @ Fish West PA; filed 10/5: Shenango has been fishing great! Now with warm temperature sticking around, we are hoping for more of the same. Hybrids, panfish (particularly crappies) and smallmouth bass are very active and continue to feed. Hope to see everyone on the water! (See photos on next page)

Terry Willis (New Castle); filed 10/2: I spend a fair amount of time on Shenango Lake for bass. Attached is a picture of my 16-year-old daughter, Kayce Willis, with a very nice largemouth she caught this past Sunday. (See photo on next page)

Jay Eckler; filed 10/5: An unintentional catch but what fun it was to fight it on bass tackle and successfully land it. Here is a photo my 25-pound flathead from Shenango Lake. (See photo on next page)

Kevin Austin (Farrell); filed 10/2: I caught these crappies from Shenango Lake while fishing a black/chartreuse and red Bobby Garland Baby Shad on a pink 1/16-ounce jighead. I trolled back and forth over the school of fish which was holding at 6 to 12 feet over 14 feet of water. My cousin Keith Cooper was with me. (See photos on next page)

Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 10/1: I've been having consistent success for big White Crappies on Shenango Lake. We were fishing a Bobby Garland Baby Shad in 12 to 14 feet of water just 2 feet off the bottom. Limited out the last couple days of September in 2.5 to 3 hours. Good crappie bite should last several more weeks. (See photos on next page)

Special Photo Page of catches from Mercer County lakes

Shenango Lake—crappies, largemouth, hybrid stripers, flathead catfish



Ken Smith photos—all three



Kevin Austin



Kayce Willis

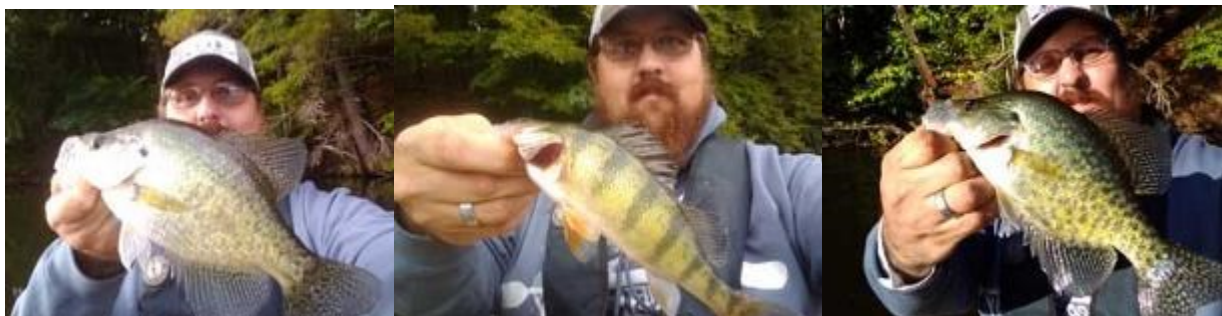


Jay Eckler



Randy Hedderick

Lake Wilhelm—all photos from Bo @ BC Bait Co.



VENANGO COUNTY

All catch photos from Venango County waters on next page.

Justus Lake

Angler Al @ Buttermilk Hill; filed 10/5: In recent weeks, I've taken a few friends fishing with me to Justus Lake. Happy to inform all that the water temperature is dropping. This has turned on the bite. Catching some bigger bass – primarily smallmouth bass. Using the largest creek minnows/chubs I can obtain we drift the weed lines and points nearest deep water. This has brought some dandies to the net. (See photos)
From years of submitting reports, you likely know that I primarily use live bait. I invest considerable time in pursuit of catching bait from our streams. Whether I toss out a minnow trap or use rod and line to catch them, I catch them and keep them until time to go fishing. Recently while catching baits in Sugar Creek with a small piece of crawler on a #10 Aberdeen hook, I fooled a trophy size rainbow trout instead. The 20-inch-plus 5-pound fish eventually slipped off the hook. However, I certainly enjoyed the moment!

Sue @ Sue's Bait shop; filed 10/5: Our customers are still reporting catching trout in deep water on live bait. However, it's almost that time of year when the lake's water temperature is cool enough to draw trout into the shallows and they will cruise the shoreline. At that time, trout are very susceptible to small spinners.

Allegheny River

Pete Cartwright @ smalliesontheyough.com:

- 9/24: Clear low water. We used a bunch of soft baits to land 22 smallies, with an 18 incher being the biggest. Fish were in fast water at the head of pools. (photos)
- 9/28: Still clear low water. Weather is going to change tomorrow. The action has been at top of pools in faster water but they may start shifting to deeper, slower water if the water temperature drops. Biggest one today was 18.5 inches. (photos)
- 10/2: Cool day on the Allegheny. The smallmouths were eating. Not many floating weeds or leaves today. I used tubes to land a bunch of smallies including a thick-bodied 21-inch one. Fishing for smallmouth should be good the next few weeks. (Photos)

Jeff @ Keystone Connection Guide Service; filed 10/5: Smallmouth still hanging at summer locations. The river has been fishing quite good...until today. I'm out on the river right now, and the floating grass has become a nightmare between yesterday and today! (See recent photos)

Special photo page of catches from Venango's Justus Lake and Allegheny R Smallmouth Heaven!

Angler Al and friend on Justus Lake SMB bite



Allegheny River—Jeff Knapp photos



Allegheny River—Pete Cartwright photos



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.

Prize Drawing...Has your name been drawn for a prize?

If you were a contributor to this issue of the Fishing Report, check to see if your name here. If yes, immediately send your shipping address to darlblack@windstream.net to claim your prize. Prizes not claimed before next Report will go back into the prize pot.

Gamma Line: **Jay Eckler**

Lure pack of baits: **Terry Willis**

Cover Shot—pack of Galida's Grubz: **Randy Hedderick**

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



Erie SMB—Mark Rose photo



Allegheny River SMB—Jeff Knapp photo



13-pound Shenango hybrid striper—
Randy Hedderick photo



Shenango Lake SMB—Randy Hedderick
photo



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 by Darl Black: Fall is lunker time for many species including Smallmouth Bass, Largemouth Bass, Northern Pike, Musky, Walleye and Hybrid Striper, as well as Steelhead season on the Erie tributaries. When you go after hard-fighting fish – perhaps hooking a PB – you want to have the best line spool on that reel. Gamma Fishing (headquarters right here in NW PA) offers exceptional copolymer line (Polyflex) and fluorocarbon (Edge) plus the fly-fisherman's favorite leader material in Frog Hair. Since I've been using Gamma lines – almost two decades – I have complete confidence in my line. I know that it has a higher break-strength for its pound-test diameter than any line I've used. I throw a lot of finesse-style jig baits, and I've been able to drop down in pound-test on my finesse rod, going from 8-pound fluorocarbon to 6-pound Edge. I can't say enough positives about 6-pound Gamma – I know it will handle any size bass, walleye or hybrid striper as long as I get good hookset. I recall mentioning to smallmouth guide Pete Cartwright when he started using Gamma line that he should drop down from eight-pound to six-pound Edge and get better line performance without losing break-strength. It took him one season of testing 8 vs 6, but today his line is 6-pound Edge.



Gamma guide Pete Cartwright

GARMIN INFORMATION PAGE

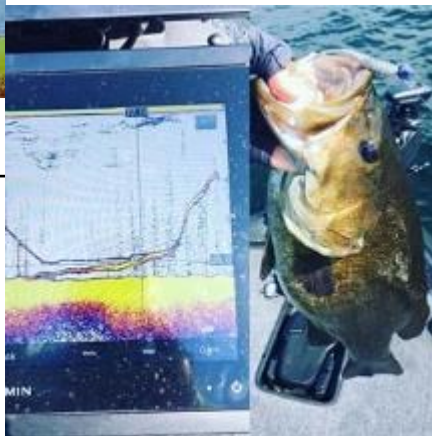
- Real anglers share actual fishing experiences with Garmin units



Professional angler Paul Mueller of Connecticut know quality and also what performs for his work as a tournament angler and guide. Paul is both a Garmin and Gamma pro-staffer. He also makes many of his own baits—soft plastic and leadheads — with molds from Do-It. These are Garmin images from a post earlier this year. The first image shows a school of smallmouth bass immediately below a large school of baitfish. As I recall the bait school was alewife—but I may recall incorrectly. The second image show Paul's jig worked past smallmouth lying near the bottom—at least one of the bass could not resist it. The third shot is Paul with a 5.25 pound smallmouth from one of these groups of smallmouth on the screen.



Picture 1—bass below bait



Picture 2—jig worked past bottom sitting smallmouth



Picture 3—Paul with a 5.25 SMB thanks to Garmin.