

# NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA FISHING REPORT

Published by Blackwolfe Communications LLC

Issue: April 21, 2021

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



Woody Knis with Pymie  
Musky



Randy & FWPA crew with  
Shenango Lake largemouth bass

## The Landing Net by Darl Black

Spring weather in NW PA can really play havoc with fish and fishermen alike. This year we seem to be having more severe cold fronts than usual, complete with rather unusual warm weather for very short periods. Cold fronts beat down shallow crappies and bluegills more than other species, but dropping water temperatures also have dampening impact on smallmouth & largemouth bass, and hybrid stripers. Plus, hard wind plays heck with anglers trying for walleyes, muskies and pike. The spring bite can be very, very good...and it can be very, very bad. It's a matter of timing. Hang in there until things stabilize.

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 April 21, 2021

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### NEWS BITES

- **Pymatuning Lake Association's Crappie Tournament** will be held Saturday, April 24, 2021 starting at 6:00 am. Entry fee is \$5.00 per team of two people. Applications at area bait shops or online at [www.pymatuninglake.com](http://www.pymatuninglake.com). Late registration 6 am to 8 am at Espyville Boat Launch. First place payout \$500.00. Questions? Phone 724-418-1501.
- **Pymatuning Crappie Madness** produced by Northeast Ohio Crappie Club. May 1 to July 31, 2021. Largest single crappie must be weighed and measured at Duck-n-Drake. First Place is 2021 Smokercraft Angler 16 and 20 HP outboard rigged for crappie fishing. Register at Duck-n-Drake; rules online at [www.northeastohiocrappieclub.com](http://www.northeastohiocrappieclub.com). **YOU MUST BE REGISTERED FOR THE CONTEST BY MAY 1<sup>ST</sup>**.
- **Lake Erie Walleye Tournament.** Locally managed and sponsored. Two events this year: June 19<sup>th</sup> and August 14<sup>th</sup>. Go to [www.ErieWalleyeTournament.com](http://www.ErieWalleyeTournament.com) for information.
- **Possible new State Record Perch.** Kirk Rudzinski of East End Angler tackle shop hauled in a monster yellow perch from 44 feet of water off the Cribs earlier in April. It weighed 2.96 pounds on a certified scale. Kirk's perch weighed more than the current perch record of 2 lb. 14 ounces caught by Brian Clark in 2016 from PIB. There was speculation that Kirk's fish could not be a new state rec-



ord because it did not actually weigh 2 ounces more than current record. However, upon discussion with the local WCO, Kirk learned that the PFBC application says "Fish will be weighed to the nearest ounce. The new fish weight must exceed the current state-record weight by 2 ounces or more to be considered as a new state record." Rounding 2.96 pounds to the nearest ounce takes it to three pounds. Kirk completed the paperwork, WCO signed it and as I understand, the application has been submitted to PFBC for determination. – Darl Black

## COUNTY BY COUNTY REPORTS

### CRAWFORD COUNTY

#### Pymatuning Lake

**Norm @ Jamestown Marina;** filed 4/20: (After being closed last season due to pandemic, the Jamestown Marina is open for business in 2021.) We are getting requests for rental information from a wide area, and our booking numbers look good. Lots of visitors want to get back on the water. Reports coming in now are basically about crappies and walleyes...some daytime action on walleyes but the focus right now is night fishing. That will change shortly as walleyes finish up shallow post-spawn activities. The photos are of my granddaughter and daughter catching crappies off their boat. (see photos at right)

**Laurie @ Duck-N-Drake;** filed 4/20: Now that the shallow spawn bite is fading, I've had reports of angler success on the South End trolling Flicker Shads and Rapala Shad Raps. Also, jig & minnow for walleyes and big perch. Bluegills are moving shallow on the North End. But crappies are off and on; nothing consistent with these cold fronts that keep coming through.



**Patty @ Poff's Place;** filed 4/20: Anglers are getting walleyes day and night – that's a good thing. It's been a good walleye spring. Crappies are spotty; I'm not hearing of many 20-fish limit catches.

**RJ Graham** (Tionesta); filed 4/18: Everything is biting at Pymatuning right now. (see photo on left)



**Sara @ Linesville Marina;** filed 4/20: Anglers going out of the marina are absolutely killing the perch in the North End. Bluegill bite is picking up, too. Working a little harder for walleyes during the day, but that should pick up shortly.

**Scott Selle;** filed 4/18: I caught this 28-inch walleye on a jointed Creek Chub Pike in classic red & white color in five feet of water while trolling for muskies this past weekend. (see photo)



Scott Selle

**Brock Morocco;** filed 4/16: I've been catching a few walleyes at Pymatuning by wading in the evenings, but it's been off and on due to the crazy weather. (see photo)



Brock Morocco

**Kevin @ luckis4rabbits;** filed 4/16: I fished the North End and found the bite very good. I caught crappies, perch and bluegills. I used hand-tied jigs by luckis4rabbits, fishing in about 18 inches of water. (see photo)

**Woody Knis** (New Castle); filed 4/18: Musky bite is still strong. I was out last Saturday and caught 4, and lost one. I went for a few hours by myself on Sunday and got one. If you can get out of the wind and put your time in, you are going to catch muskies by trolling. All muskies in my boat have come on Leo Mojoe Shads. This has been a real consistent bait the last two years. I'm not trying to jam this bait down everyone's throat, but it really works! (see photos below)



Kevin's mixed bag



Leo Mojoe Shad

### Canadohta Lake

**Jerry @ Timberland Bait;** filed 4/20: Crappies are biting from shore in lower part of lake. Lake level has not been brought back up, so launching boats is just about impossible.

## ERIE COUNTY

### Lake Erie and Tributaries

**Kirk @ East End Angler;** filed 4/19: The lake perch bite in 40 to 50 feet of water on the Eastside has unexpectedly quit; the packs of fish have disappeared. However, big lake trout are being caught in deeper water; reports have trout hugging the bottom in 70 to 115 feet west of North East Marina. (See photo)

**Gary @ Poor Richards;** filed 4/19: The perch bite is down but the bass bite is going up as smallmouth move into the Bay and tributary streams.



Keith @ Dutch Fork Charters



Chad Prihode photo

**Dan @ Elk Creek Sports;** filed 4/19: There are still some steelhead in Elk Creek. Actually, I have a report from anglers catching fresh steelheads (20 to 23 inches) moving into the mouth of the stream during night or early morning, then moving back out as sun get high. Not enough water to allow them to move upstream. Smallmouth moving into Elk are confronted with the same low water.

**Chad Prihode;** filed 4/18: Suckers have taken over Elk Creek. Some steelhead remain, and a few smallmouth bass at the mouth. (see photos)



Chad Prihode photo

### Presque Isle Bay

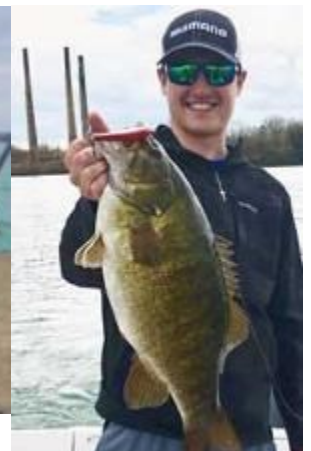
**Tim @ Presque Isle Bay Anglers;** filed 4/17: Following a couple weeks of potential record-breaking perch fishing outside Presque Isle Bay, the focus has turned to smallmouth bass inside. Bass have been caught by boaters along deep ledges from in front of Marina Bay towards the shipping lane, and by shore anglers in the channel and Dobbin's Landing. Pike action remains strong in all the weeded areas around the perimeter of the Bay. Those areas are also producing decent panfish catches coming on BC Bait Co. chartreuse Stingers and white B Bugs. Most perch within the Bay have spawned and are spread out. Carp are being spotted in the usual shallow waters in their pre-spawn activities. Lake trout are turning up outside the Bay in the deeper eastside waters.

## Lake Erie and Presque Isle Bay continued

**Jake @ FishUSA**; filed 4/14: Presque Isle is slowly warming up to unseasonal water temperature as of 4/13, with water temp reading of 57 degrees. (editor - It has since cooled off several degrees due to cold front and can be expected to drop more as snow is expected on the 21<sup>rd</sup>). Smallmouth bass have been moving into the Bay with above average size fish being caught. I caught my Personal Best of 6.05 pounds several days ago. Lake Trout are being caught in the lake on the eastside from 40 to 70 feet; big spoons and dodger spin-n-glow combos have been the ticket. Bluegills, crappies and perch are available but require a little finessing to get them to bite. (see photos below)



Jake Schneider: The Fishing Machine



## MERCER COUNTY

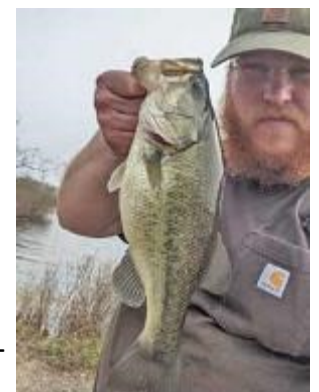
### Lake Wilhelm



Jig bite on Wilhelm

**Bo @ BC Bait Co.**; filed 4/19: I was out once this past week on Wilhelm. I did pretty good on crappies and some perch. The fish I'm catching are still up by the Sheakleyville causeway. Medium size purple Terry Bug fooled them.

**Brad Bee**; file 4/19: I had a good weekend on Wilhelm with largemouth bass. Got on a jig. (see photos)



Brad with Wilhelm LMB



## MERCER COUNTY continued

### Shenango Lake



Brock's 6 pound LMB

**Brock Morocco** (Hermitage); filed 4/16: I caught a nice 6 pound largemouth on a stickbait while wading at Shenango Lake. Not bad for an old timer! Still enjoy fishing as often as I can. (see photo)

**Ken Smith** (Sharon); filed 4/19: I was out on Shenango one day this past week before the cold snap. I caught all my crappies in four feet of water near wood. (see photo)



Ken's Shenango crappies

**Randy @ Fish West PA**; filed 4/20: Shenango Lake has come to life during this past warm spell and we've been taking full advantage of it. Series of cold fronts have and will continue to play havoc with the bite, which goes up and down based on the weather. Typical of NW PA in the spring. Got to adjust and take advantage of upswings in the temperature. Largemouth & smallmouth bass, white bass, hybrid stripers, crappies and catfish are hungry and feeding. Here is a sample of our crew's catch on Shenango since the last Fishing Report. (photos below)



## VENANGO COUNTY

### Oil Creek, Sugar Creek and Justus Lake

**Angler Al @ Buttermilk Hill;** filed 4/18: I have been doing a bit of trout fishing, primarily on Venango County's two most popular streams – Oil Creek and Sugar Creek. I've had pretty good success on both. However, **Oil Creek's** artificial only section has proven to show the best catch rate. With my fly rod, trout have been taking egg patterns, green or teal colored Beadhead nymphs, purple and red Squirmies and Gridle Bugs. I even caught one on a top water Gran-

tham Fly! A fellow fly fisherman, George Coleman (visiting from Canonsburg, PA) landed a 4.5-pound 22-inch rainbow. Congratulations to my friend! It was caught on a #14 green & brown colored Beadhead nymph.

**Sugar Creek**, though shallow and clear, still has trout taking small minnows, pieces of crawler and wax worms. Other anglers are catching them on spinners in the faster current rushes. I made it over to **Justus Lake** one day. Caught a rainbow trout while trolling a trout Magnet tipped with a medium size minnow. However, I went mainly for bluegills. I brought home 13 above average 'gills. All were caught on wax worms and pieces of crawler.



George Coleman on Oil Creek

### Allegheny River



**Jeff @ Keystone Connection Guide Service;** filed 4/18: For the past two weeks, I've been off the river sampling the spring fishing on a variety of Western Pennsylvania waters. During that time, Wiegel Brothers Marine installed a stomp grate on my Rockproof Boat, an upgrade likely to see frequent use come late summer and fall for clearing weeds and leaves from my jet intake. I returned to the river for a two-day guide trip with Patrick Browning, after a scouting trip just days prior. The water temperature had dropped from 56 to 48 degrees. We caught smallmouth bass in the 15 to 19-inch range on flukes, finesse tubes and hard jerkbaits. Also, a couple walleyes - 19 and 22 inches - on hard jerkbaits. Most of the bass came from staging areas close to spawning areas. The river is exceptionally clear and low for this time of year. (see photos on left of Patrick Browning)





## VENANGO COUNTY—ALLEGHENY RIVER continued

**Pete @ *SmalliesontheYough.com* guide service**; filed 4/16: April Allegheny Diary

4/5 – Warm up on the way had smallies going. We landed 17 smallies including a huge 23-incher. Used hair jigs and soft plastics.

4/7 – The bite was on! I hooked some really nice fish today using soft plastics and jerkbaits. The biggest one was 22 inches. Bass were all in current.

4/9 – Still catching smallies and big ones. Bite is getting better. If weather holds, we may see spawning at end of month. Biggest one today was 21 inches.

4-12 – Rain and wind made it tough going today. The bite cooled off but still landed a few nice 20-inch fish using 412 Bait Company tubes.

4-16 – Nice sunny day on river had my client Matt looking to catch his personal best smallmouth today. We landed a bunch early in day. As day went on, we started to get a few bigger fish, including his personal best of 20.5 inches. He also landed another one going 20 inches. We used Gamma 8-pound Edge on GLoomis E6X Rods and Shimano 2500 Stradics. (see photos below from above trips)



Matt with PB at 20.5 inches



## Product Highlight:

### Galida's Grubz

By John Galida

Back in the early 1980s, grubs were still relatively new, and good ones were hard to find. A good grub needed to be of the right color and size, and able to stand up to catching numbers of fish and still stay on the jig head.



In those Days, Galida's Sporting Goods was one the original destination full-service tackle shops in the region, and staffed by experienced anglers. John and his fishing buddies figured out that simply by swimming a grub, they could catch numbers of quality gamefish. Because of challenges in finding the right grub, John decided to produce his own grubs to sell in his store. Thus, Galida's Grubz was born.

From the beginning, Galida's Grubz have been made in the USA. They boast deep ribs, a slightly stronger plastic that feels soft because of those ribs. First time users of Grubz often say "Fish hit, and swim off with them, refusing to let go!" People often refuse to believe it...until they try it for themselves.

Galida's Grubz are most often fished on a ¼-ounce jighead with the swimming tail rigged down. The key to fishing a grub is a slow, steady retrieve. No lifting or dropping is needed. One vital aspect of presentation is to count a grub down to the desired depth before beginning the slow & steady retrieve. Smallmouth Bass, Largemouth Bass, Walleyes, White Bass and oversized Crappies are commonly caught with Galida's Grubz. However, Northern Pike, Musky, Stripers and other gamefish are caught as well.

Due to the quality of the plastic and the deep ribs, Galida's Grubz have become a favorite trailer on spinnerbaits, chatterbaits, buzzbaits and A rigs. Give them a try to see for yourself. For more information, check out our Facebook Page or go to our website [www.galidasgrubz.com](http://www.galidasgrubz.com).—John

Editor's note: I was introduced to Galida's Grubz in the early 1980s on an early May on my first smallmouth bass trip to Presque Isle Bay. About noon, I ran into brothers Ernie and Ken Pate, friends from the bass club in Butler. During our chat,



Marilyn's first PIB smallmouth of 2021 on Grubz

they mentioned catching a good number of smallmouth bass. I was simply casting a spinner-bait, having only success with small pike. Back in those days, it was not uncommon for bass fishermen to share information – even before a tournament. “Here, try these from Galida’s tackle shop,” said Ernie as he tossed an opened bag of Clear Smoke Grubz onto the front deck of my boat. “Rig them on leadhead or a Charlie Brewer Slider Head.” I thanked and went back to fishing a deep weedline, but now casting and slowly re-

trieving a Galida’s Grubz. Darn if I didn’t start catching smallmouth bass. From that day forward, I’ve always had a selection of Galida’s Grubz in my boat. Galida’s Grub has become my wife’s go to bait if she doesn’t immediately get a hit on what she had tied on. —Darl

### More recent photos from friends of the NW PA Fishing Report...



Mark Melega with huge pickerel from Yough Res.



Dale Clemmer with largemouth from pond.



## **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](http://www.dutchforkcustomlures.com)

**Keystone Connection Guide Service:** Allegheny River Smallmouth, Walleye and Musky plus Pymatuning Walleye. Jeff Knapp; 724-902-6082; [keystoneconnectionguideservice@gmail.com](mailto:keystoneconnectionguideservice@gmail.com); [www.facebook.com/keystoneconnectionguideservice](http://www.facebook.com/keystoneconnectionguideservice).

**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](mailto:pete@smalliesontheyough.com); [www.facebook.com/smalliesontheyough/](http://www.facebook.com/smalliesontheyough/).

**Wildwood Outfitters:** Fly fishing for Trout, Steelhead and other species. Nick DelVecchio; [www.wildwoodoutfitterspa.com/](http://www.wildwoodoutfitterspa.com/); [www.facebook.com/wildwoodoutfitters](http://www.facebook.com/wildwoodoutfitters).

Look for names drawn for prizes on the Gamma Page. Watch this space for...



# 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](mailto:Debbie@riverjetpro.com)



Ken with Shenango Crappie

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Randy with Shenango  
hybrid striper

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Keith with Erie lake trout

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RJ with Pymatuning  
largemouth bass

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Dale with Conneaut Lake  
northern pike

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Kayak master Russell Johnson  
with crappie just shy of 4 lbs.

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Black Knight Industries

Oil City, PA 16301

[www.gammafishing.com](http://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
- East End Angler, Erie, PA

East End Angler now carries Gamma Line. Be sure to stop in to see Kirk for your Gamma Line when in Erie. And congratulate Kirk on his huge yellow perch—pending new state record!



GAMMA is a sponsor of the Northeast Ohio Crappie Club's **Pymatuning Crappie Madness** big fish contest being held between May 1st and July 31. First place is a 2021 Somkercraft Angler 16 with 20 HP outboard and rigged for crappie fishing. However, **you must be registered in person before May 1st at the Duck-N-Drake on the west side of Pymatuning Lake. You cannot enter once the event starts.**

Contributors names drawn for prizes in this issue of NW PA Fishing Report

Gamma Line — Brock Morocco

Prize Pack of lures — Al Bell

Cover shots—Randy Hedderick and Woody Knis— choice of either Galida's Grubz or Mike's Tubes

To claim prize, email me at [darlblack@windstream.net](mailto:darlblack@windstream.net) with your shipping address.



# GARMIN INFORMATION PAGE

- Real anglers share actual fishing experiences with Garmin units



Get a Garmin and see what you have been missing...

