

# NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA FISHING REPORT

Published by Blackwolfe Communications LLC

Issue: May 26, 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



This is the time for big fish. Jeremy's 19 lb hybrid striper from Shenango and Rick's 37-inch musky from the Allegheny River



## LANDING NET by Darl Black

It's that time of year – late May into early June – when many different species are swarming the shallows. It's a fun time to fish. Perfect time for a PF&BC Fish for Free Day, which is Sunday, May 30. Before making fishing plans for the long Memorial Day Weekend, check this Report to see which waters are producing various species for anglers. To help get you on the right track, there is a special section in this issue with some basic tips from regular contributors. These tips are applicable right now for this holiday weekend and into early June: (1) how to approach Lake Erie walleye, (2) inland lake black bass and (3) plentiful panfish. Now GO FISH!

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 May 26, 2021

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### NEWS BITES

The first Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission **FISH FOR FREE DAY** for 2021 is Sunday, May 30. No license is required for this one day; however all other fishing regulations must be followed.

Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission is conducting a **Women's Intro to Fly Fishing Program** – a hybrid program part virtual and part in person at Presque Isle State Park. Option one is June 1 and June 12; option 2 is June 7 and June 12. For details and registration, go to [www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com) Calendar of Events.



Since our last issue of NW PA Fishing Report, the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission has recognized a **new State Record Perch**. The fish was caught on April 9, 2021 by Kirk Rudzinski, owner of East End Angler shop and a frequent contributor to this newsletter. Fishing in the area of the Sunoco Cribs, Kirk and friend Sam Troup positioned their boat some distance from other boats in the area where they noted a strong bottom current and fish on the sonar.

He hooked the fish of a lifetime on a live emerald shiner, taking about two minutes to get it in. Realizing it might be a possible state record, Kirk and Sam took the fish back to the East End Angler to weigh it on the shop's certified scale. The scale weight of the Yellow Perch was 2.89 lbs. In accordance with PFBC State Record Fish Application Rules,

the weight is rounded up to nearest ounce, making it 3 pounds, 0 ounces – exceeding the current state record by two ounces. The length of the fish was 16 7/8 inches with a girth of 14 inches. When mounted, the fish will be on display at East End Angler. (see photo)

There will be a **Lake Wilhelm Triple Crown Panfish Tournament** on Saturday, June 12. For more information on this event, visit the Lake Wilhelm Fisherpersons on Facebook.

## COUNTY BY COUNTY REPORTS

### CRAWFORD COUNTY

#### Pymatuning Lake

**Norm @ Jamestown Marina;** filed 5/24: The bite had been good over the last two weeks; but with the continued heat wave, the shallows are warming more quickly than normal which has slowed catches this past weekend. Water temp at 10 feet is now 68 degrees and surface temp will be well into the 70s unless we get needed rain and bit of a cool down. The best walleye bite I'm hearing is happening in the early mornings in and around weedbeds. Perch and crappies are scattered through the shallows on the South End. It's going to be a tremendous Memorial Day weekend – come out and enjoy Pymatuning.

**Bean @ Richter's Bait;** filed 5/24: While there are walleyes in the weeds at night feeding on spawning alewives, I'm hearing other walleyes are being taken during the day in 12 to 28 feet of water by trolling Hot-n-Tots, Flicker Shads and Shad Raps. Black crappies are finishing up spawning in the shallow wood on the South End and are on the way out. But white crappies have not moved onto their offshore spawning areas as of this past weekend. (see photo)

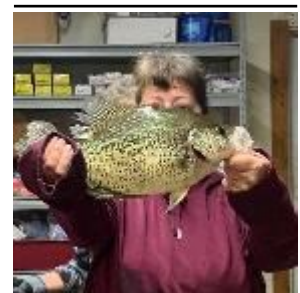
**Laurie @ Duck-N-Drake;** filed 5/24: In recent weeks, we've seen a lot of crappies and walleyes come into the shop, including some nice ones that were entered in Crappie Madness. There is a new Madness leader: 2-pound 4.4-oz caught by Gary Manville. (See Gamma Page for Top Five on the scoreboard). However, fishing reports over the weekend have been slim. Crappies on the North End have moved out of



Richter's photo



Duck-N-Drake photo



Duck-N-Drake photo



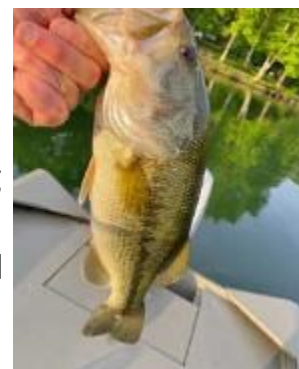
the shallows for the most part, but anglers are not yet catching many in the Stump Fields. Some anglers fishing the weeds are getting walleyes – but not limit catches. I've been told the Flicker Shad & crawler harness trolling crowd had to slow down to 0.7 or 0.8 mph to draw strikes from walleyes. However, the shallows are filled with Bluegills, Pumpkinseeds and medium-size perch. They are catching largemouth bass in the weeds. And the big catfish are hitting at night; we had a very successful catfish tournament over the weekend. (see photos plus more DnD photos on page 13)



Duck-N-Drake Catfish

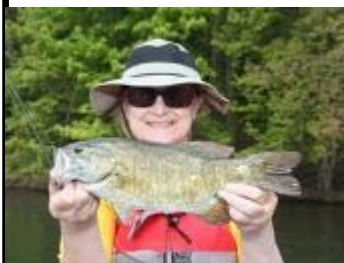
**Patty @ Poff's Place;** filed 5/24: This weekend anglers continued to catch walleyes from the weedbeds – usually with jig-n-crawler during the day, and shallow-running long minnow baits at night when the alewives are spawning. But the fast fun fishing is in the shallows where anglers are getting mixed bags of big bluegills, perch and a few crappies.

**Stan Teitelbaum;** filed 5/24: May 22 was my 2<sup>nd</sup> visit to Pymatuning this year. It didn't disappoint, as I caught 7 bass before noon on the South End. The wind picked up as I had my 8<sup>th</sup> one hooked, and had to decide between the fish and crashing my boat. I chose saving the boat. (see photo)



Stan Teitelbaum

**Marilyn Black** (Cochrannton); filed 5/23: Darl and I made trips to Pymatuning on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, fishing the South End. Water was exceptionally clear, enabling us to see many fish moving about in the shallows. Both days were the kind of fun fishing day I really like. Didn't matter what we caught. We tied different lures to rods and set off down the bank casting. Galida's Grubz, Ned Rig and 2-inch swimming crappie baits caught the most fish – which included numerous smallmouth bass, black crappies in spawning colors, bluegills, pumpkinseeds, yellow perch and even a bullhead. We had a musky swim up to the boat to see what all the commotion was – Darl estimated it to be well over 40 inches. These are the days I love to be on the water. (see photos below)



## Conneaut Lake



**Editor's note:** Dale Clemmer recently caught a very nice northern pike at Conneaut (see photo). Conneaut Lake is slower to warm than Pymatuning and most other area lakes, but fish moving to the main lake shoreline usually happens in late May. Unfortunately, just as shallow weeds and pea gravel are seeing a lot of fish activity, the lake association applies herbicide to kill the weeds. According to the Meadville newspaper, herbicide application is scheduled for the first week of June. The decaying vegetation coupled with the 4<sup>th</sup> of July over population of party goers on the lake, we will not return to the lake until mid-July when vacation frolickers have departed.

## Canadohta Lake



**Editor's note:** Kenny Oaks sent word that within the past week crappies finally moved into the canals in good numbers – roughly two weeks later than normal. Also, Jerry at Timberland Bait has leeches for sale along with his full selection of other live bait. He also has one of the largest selection of musky lures you will find in a local tackle shop. (see photo)

## **ERIE COUNTY**

### Presque Isle Bay and Lake Erie



in

**Tim Tomlin @ Presque Isle Anglers group;** filed 5/24: Presque Isle Bay crappie are on the move after spawning, and their whereabouts now are as much a mystery as Bay perch after they spawn. Smallmouth bass and largemouth bass are being caught the sub-bays and shallow waters in Presque Isle. If you choose to target bass on their beds, please return the fish as quickly as possible to allow them to get back to their guard duty as quickly to minimize nest damage by opportunistic goby and bluegill. Top-water lures can produce tremendous largemouth and pike bites around growing weed-beds mornings & evenings. Rock bass seem to be as abundant as walleye with anglers reporting catching them both jigging and trolling. (see photo rock bass)

## Lake Erie continued

**Kirk @ East End Angler**; filed 5/24: Only a few scattered reports on walleye from this past weekend. Slimy green “snot” suspended in the water got pushed in to shallower water on the East Side from somewhere. Impossible to keep it off lures and line. Still hearing reports of perch in 35 to 52 feet off Shades.

**Brittany @ Poor Richards**; filed 5/24: Here on the West Side the word is the daytime walleye bite just off shore is picking up. The night bite continues strong. We anticipate the walleye to turn on in a big way over the next week or two. Smallmouth are still in the Creeks.

**Bob @ the Perch Pirate**; filed 5/24: We made our first two trips of the season over the weekend. We picked up a few walleyes of the Condos and off the Cribs but it was a slow start.

**Scott Selle**; filed 5/23: Attached photos of Lake Erie smallmouth bass which Rob and I caught this past week on a Z-Man Tubes, Gary Yamamoto Grubs and Ned Rigs. (see photos below)

**Chad Prihode**; filed 5/23: Presque Isle Marina largemouth bass are on beds. I caught some on a Jackhammer Chatter Bait. Smallmouth are in Misery Bay; wife Emily caught some on minnows. (See photos below)

**Mike @ Buckets Charters**; filed 5/19: We are finishing up a very success spring season of lake trout fishing this coming week. Come June 1<sup>st</sup>, we start our walleye charters.



Rob Selle



Scott Selle



Chad Prihode photos



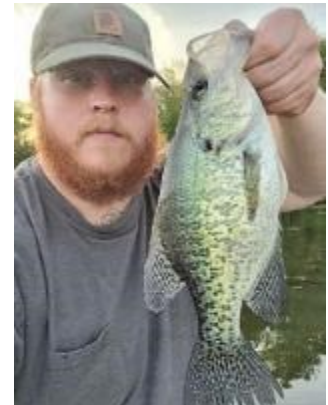


## MERCER COUNTY

### Lake Wilhelm

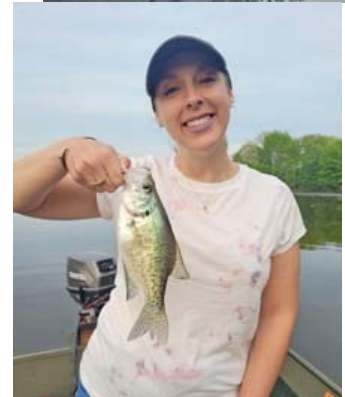
**Bo @ BC Baits**; filed 5/24: Crappies going crazy on Wilhelm. Catching smaller males spawning in 3 feet of water and others as deep as 12 to 16 feet. No word on walleye.

**Brad Bee**; filed 5/24: It's been a rough season for me so far. Boat was down for a while. Got it running, but the only bass I seem able to get to bite are small ones. Picking up a few nice crappies. Water seems really stained and pretty slimy. I've been catching some decent smallmouth from the Shenango River down river of Sharon. (See Wilhelm photos immediate right)



### Shenango Lake

**Randy @ Fish West PA**; filed 5/20: Shenango fishing has been fantastic! Crappie have moved shallow and have been on fire. Bass in the lake are both in spawn and post-spawn. Great time be out! Hybrid stripers are in the fake spawn run. They are running the rocky points in small packs, and hitting topwater and jerkbaits. We have been catching some really nice ones. Jeremy Heavener got a 19 pounder, and I got a 20 pounder – my second largest ever from Shenango. (see photos on next page)



to

**Kevin @ Luckis4Rabbits**; filed 5/22: I've been out often the past couple weeks fishing with different friends, including Ken Smith. Crappies are shallow; we are catching them on my hand-tied jigs. (see photos on next page)

### **Ken Smith** (Sharon)

- May 11: Even though the lake was three feet over summer pool, I found some spawning crappies. Tried anchoring and casting but that didn't work. Went to hang-gliding. Best depth was 7 to 9 feet right on the bottom. First day, I got a limit of males in less than two hours. Most were over 12 inches. Next day I took a friend. Same area. He had fish in the boat before I even had a rod ready for myself. We had a good bite early before wind chased us off the spot. Fished other areas until 2 pm but could not take cold any longer. Finished with 29 crappies.

- May 15: Fished by myself. Caught and released around 40 crappies. Some were big females with eggs. All were in nine feet of water near wood. Cast jigs to them.
- May 23: Went to the lake this morning with a friend. We had 40 keeper crappies in boat in just over two hours. Fish were in 6 to 7 feet of water in backs of bays.

## **Shenango Lake photos from Randy @ Fish West PA, Ken Smith, and Kevin Austin**



Randy's 20 pound hybrid



Jeremy's 19 pound hybrid





## VENANGO COUNTY

**Pam @ Maurer's Trading Post;** filed 5/24: Our customers are informing us that the crappie bite at Wilhelm is fantastic right now. Also, we've had a number of anglers asking for Thundersticks for walleye fishing – likely at Pymatuning and Shenango – and the baits are in. We have a huge cloud of Thundersticks in 16 different colors. I doubt any other shop has near the selection that we do.

### Justus Lake

**Sue @ Sue's Bait Shop;** filed 5/24: Our customers are catching some nice crappies at Justus Lake. Anglers are also getting trout at mid-depths as water temperature increase. These trout are no longer running the shore, but they have not moved to the deeper water yet either – they are in between.

### Oil Creek

**Editor's note:** They are still catching trout in Oil Creek. My wife took a picture of this angler at Jersey Bridge during her lunch break. Randy said all his trout came on maggots.

**Pete @ SmalliesontheYough.com;** filed 5/16: We checked out Oil Creek one afternoon after fishing the Allegheny near Oil City. When the water is up, there are some nice smallies to be caught. (See photo on right

### Sugar Creek

**Angler Al @ Buttermilk Hill;** filed 5/24: It had been a month since I last wet a line. When Darl's report reminder arrived, I knew I needed to get out. Since our last report, my best friend and fishing buddy, Stanley Huefner passed away. I was able to obtain one of his rod and reel set-ups, along with a ballcap I bought him for Christmas. It was labelled with the word Stanley on it. I transferred my license to it and respooled that reel. Then, in Memory of Stan I left at daylight for the mouth of Sugar Creek. On the very first cast using a large minnow on a suspend-



Oil Creek trout



Oil Creek Smallmouth



Al's Sugar Creek Smallie

ed float rig, I hooked into a smallmouth. I took selfie picture of it and then released it! After catching two others I headed upstream on Sugar Creek, a favorite spot of ours to catch trout. The bite was fantastic. It was an emotional morning, a fitting tribute to the many years we shared catching fish together. Big Stan was certainly a blessing my life. He is sadly missed! But I'm sure he has already caught and released many on the pristine waters in Gloryland! Until we meet again....Always, Angler Al (See photo previous page)

### Allegheny River

**Jeff Knapp @ Keystone Guide Service**; filed 5/23: This spring's action on the river has been a strange tale of Jekyll and Hyde. When it's been good, it's been very good. Unfortunately, the opposite has also been true. Two weeks ago, the river was benefiting from much needed rain. Numerous guide trips produced dozens of quality-sized bass up to 20-plus inches, and 4.5 pounds. Most were pre-spawn females. As the river dropped, cleared and warmed up rapidly due to the heat wave, the action tailed off dramatically. By Sunday (May 23) the smallmouth bite was back on with fish up to 18 inches boated. Spawning flats and summer locations near fast water both produced. Flukes, Dingers, Rapala X-Raps and finesse tubes have all been productive at times. (see one photo here and more in Livewell page)



Rob with smb/ Knapp photo



Bill Logan 34in Allegheny R.

**Bill Logan** (Pleasantville); filed 5/23: Yesterday on the river, my friend Rick Shrout and I each boated a musky within a half an hour and had a follow in between. We were fishing near Tionesta. Mine was 34 inches and Rick's was 37 inches. It was Rick's first musky in 40 years. (see one phot here, Rick's fish on cover)

**Pete @ SmalliesontheYough.com**; filed 5/19: Taking a break from river fishing. Here is a picture from my last guide trip until after the spawn is over. (see photo)



Pete Cartwright photo

## **SPECIAL TO MAY 26<sup>TH</sup> NW PA FISHING REPORT**

### **Fishing Tips for Memorial Day Weekend**

Memorial Day Weekend is the first outdoor holiday of the summer season. Many individuals – young and old – will be grabbing a fishing rod for the first time this year and heading to a lake. Furthermore, Sunday, May 30, is Fish for Free Day. Anyone can fish on this day without a fishing license, but all other fishing regulations are still in effect. I have called upon three Fishing Report contributors – each an expert for specific species – to provide some basic tips appropriate for late May and early June for (1) Lake Erie walleye, (2) largemouth & smallmouth bass, and (3) panfish. Good Fishing this weekend!

#### **Lake Erie Walleye by Tim Tomlin**

Right now, the best walleye bite is at night in shallow water of Lake Erie. The abundance of walleye and their closeness to shore make them easily accessible to powerboats of all sizes, the growing community of kayak anglers, and even shore casters. Jigging large curl-tail grubs on ¼ ounce jigs and bucktail jigs, or casting and trolling shallow diving stickbaits are all highly effective tactics. Whether casting a floating F18 Rapala or trolling shallow Bay Rat Lure in glow pattern, speed is the key, with slower being better. Daytime trolling in 15 – 30 feet of water with medium diving lures, or shallow divers with a couple ounces of lead can be very productive at 2.3mph. When trolling at night in depths of 8' – 14', it is extremely important to get the lure away from your boat. This past week, clearer than normal water has created skittish fish, thereby forcing longer leads than usual for typical shallow water trolling. Flatlines set 150 feet back, and planer board lines 80 feet back and as far out as possible, with boat speeds from 1.4 – 1.9 mph have been most successful. Give yourself extra time for busy boat launches and be sure of all lighting working properly when boating at night. Other boats really rely on unobstructed view of anchor lights from a distance to avoid crossing board lines, or even worse boat collisions. Be safe and good luck!





### **Inland Lake Black Bass by David Graham, FX Rod pro-staffer**

Here are two sure fire bass fishing tips for this upcoming Memorial Day that can be used all summer long:

First use a long medium-light spinning rod with light tip (such as an FX Custom Rod 7'4MLF) to throw a Hair jig. I use 3 sizes of jigs, but the 1/16 is my go-to; step up or step down in weight from that. As for color, with basic black you can fish anywhere. I carry white and chartreuse, too, but 90 percent of the time it's black. Keep that hair jig moving; just swim it along just off the bottom. My favorite area is the outside edge of a weedbed. Black hair jig will catch any fish – bass, crappie, pike, and more. Nothing looks alive like hair in the water.



A second outfit should be a medium power casting tackle (such as my favorite FX Rod 7'2 Medium action with an extra fast tip). I spool that with 16-pound GAMMA EDGE fluorocarbon, thereby allowing to you to handle several different baits perfectly. During this post-spawn period for bass, I would go with a buzzbait. Work it over and around grass, pads, docks, logs, stumps and whatever cover you encounter in the shallows.

### **Panfish Potpourri by Marilyn Black**

Whether the water is clear enough to see them in the shallow or not, every lake in our area currently has a variety of panfish in the shallows, from a depth of a few inches out to perhaps four or five feet. This puts crappies, bluegills, pumpkinseeds, rock bass, green sunfish and perch within reach of anglers fishing from shore as well as those with a boat. Some species are currently bedding or in post-spawn, while others are getting ready to bed. And other



species have completed spawning and are simply feeding in the shallows.

I like to rig up two 6.5 to 7-foot light action spinning rods spooled with either four or six-pound hi-vis GAMMA PANFISH LINE. One rod will have a 1/16-ounce jighead with a 2-inch action tail panfish grub, and the second one with a 1/32 or 1/64-ounce jighead with a 1.5 or 2-inch straight tail body such as a Terry Bug, Garland Baby Shad or twin-



tail; a clip-on weighted bobber will be positioned between 12 and 30 inches above the jig. The bobber rig is used to fish extremely shallow with an ultra-slow retrieve. The 1/6-oz jig is used to work a little deeper water such as around the outside branches of deadfalls. No minnows are needed. However, I will tip each jig with either a couple live maggots or a Berkley Crappie Nibble. If not getting strikes, keeping moving until you find a bank with lots of action.

**More pictures from Duck-N-Drake. Laurie's customers have been having a great May!**



Must have been Mother's Day  
after the snow storm!

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## **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).

## **Names drawn from this issue for prizes:**

Spool of Gamma line: Stan Teitelbaum—email shipping address

Since several contributors had not responded to prize notification in earlier issues, I have extra packs of lures to give away. Each of the following names will receive a package of Galida's Grubz or Mike's Custom Tackle Tubes if you send me your shipping address no later than June 4th. TO CLAIM A PRIZE YOU MUST SUBMIT YOUR SHIPPING ADDRESS TO ME BY EMAIL AT [darlblack@windstream.net](mailto:darlblack@windstream.net) even you have sent your address before.. Names below:

Bill Logan, Scott Selle, Ken Oaks, Brad Bee



# 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)



Roger's river smb; photo by Jeff Knapp

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Evan's river smb; photo by Jeff Knapp

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Shenango hybrid striper; photo from Fish West PA

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Oil Creek or French Creek? Only wade guide Pete Cartwright knows for sure.

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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

ID#	NAME	lb.	oz.	Length
49	Gary MANVILLE	2	44	15 1/2"
183	Frances D'Rourke	2	30	14 3/4"
315	Terry Sowards	2	20	15 7/8"
236	Howie Moore	2	12	15 3/4"
267	Steve Whinn	2	10	15 7/8"

Current Crappie Madness Scoreboard. Gamma Lines is a sponsor of Crappie Madness.

On the right: Father and son team of David and RJ Graham has been tearing up the local buddy bass club tournaments this spring with wins or high placements in each event. This past week they did it again at Pymatuning with a 5 bass limit going 16.5 pounds for the win . They use Gamma Fishing Line because it's the best you can spool on your reel. If a national father and son buddy circuit opens up, our money would be on the Grahams.



# GARMIN INFORMATION PAGE

- Real anglers share actual fishing experiences with Garmin units



## GARMIN TIP from Jeff @ Keystone Connection Guide Service

During a spring that's featured wild swings in weather and air temperature, it's no wonder fish patterns have been all over the place. Therefore, an unusual location for crappies wasn't a surprise during a recent trip to a federal flood control lake, one that had just returned to normal pool following a high-water event. Crappies didn't seem to be loaded in shoreline laydowns or deeper wood as expected, but rather roaming out in slightly deeper open water not far from the cover. The fish were easily identified on my **Garmin Echomap UHD unit**. Using an 1/8-ounce underspin jig dressed with a Bobby Garland plastic trailer, I caught a couple dozen crappies (a dozen were 10 to 12 inches) slow trolling the open water just out from the woody cover. (Photos by Jeff Knapp)

