

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



Honoring those six-pound Lake Erie Smallmouth Bass! It is the C&R season for monster SMB!



Keith Eshbaugh above and Chuck Maxon on right.

The spring of discontent continues with another major front for May Day. Those who wanted rain to flush the Erie tributaries of remaining steelhead got their wish. Pymatuning and Shenango Lakes are on the rise, too. We needed rain, but we could have done without the high winds which accompanied the front – just in time for the weekend. Fish species normally shallow at this time of year are most impacted by severe cold fronts. Inconsistent bite results, often spoiling planned weekend outings of fishing. On the other hand, there have been spectacular catches for some anglers when Mother Nature is in the right mood. Let us hope for more stability and consistent catches by Memorial 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

Norm @ Jamestown Livery; filed 5/3: With all the wind, it was a slow weekend for boat rentals at Pymatuning. Some success on walleye day and night and lots of perch, but the shallow water crappie bite on the South End is slow in starting. The fact that water temperature at depth of 10 feet in marina is 52 degrees likely has impact on movement of crappies.

Bean @ Richter's Bait; filed 5/3: Night bite for walleye slowing down while day bite is picking up – roughly 50/50 right now. Daytime walleyes are being caught by drifting jig and crawler or worm harness over mid-lake humps. Reports of smallmouth catches, and that catfish are moving into prepare for spawn.

Vickie @ Duck-n-Drake; filed 5/3: The big news from our shop is Crappie Madness has started. After two days the leading fish is 2 pounds 4.4 ounces at 15-1/2 inches. Contest has only started – lots of time left to beat that. Walleye wise, reports have been sparse. Occasional limit – depth varies from 6 feet to 15 feet. Lots of nice perch. (See photos)



Chad with 7.5 pounder /Richter's



Randy with limit /Duck-n-Drake

Patty @ Poff's Place; filed 5/3: It hasn't been a bad spring of fishing here at Pymatuning – but the bite seems very spotty. One customer will claim to have had a decent day, but the next says he can't catch a thing. At its peak a couple weeks back, night bite for wall-eye was great, but it has tapered off and is switching to a daytime bite – some anglers are getting them but not everyone. The perch catches are impressive. But most anglers would rather catch crappies, and the crappie bite has been hot and cold all spring due to inconsistent weather.

Scott Selle; filed 5/3: Here are a few pics from Pymatuning this past weekend on Saturday. Rob and I caught some perch and a crappie on a 1/32 and 1/16-ounce jig heads tipped with minnow. The lake blew up Saturday afternoon and we were the last boat to come into Manny launch around 6:30 pm...some waves were 3 feet. (photos below)

Shon @ Espyville Marina; filed 4/21: Last week, an angler out of our marina caught his musky on a Flicker Shad while trolling for walleyes. (See photo below)

Don't miss it! **David Graham** provides a very good tip on spring bassin' on Pymatuning on the **GAMMA Tip page**.. More Pymatuning catches below



Duck-n-Drake photo



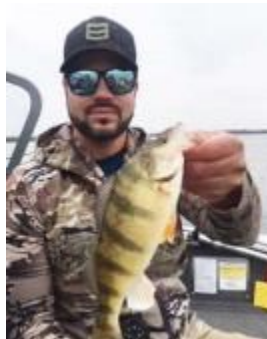
Tracie /Duck-n-Drake photo



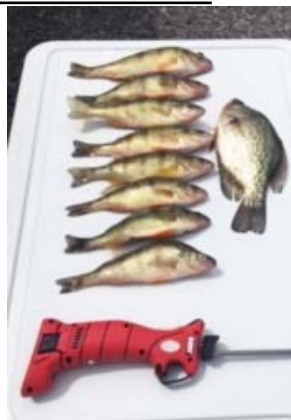
Dale Clemmer



Scott Selle



Rob Selle



Espyville Marina photo

ERIE COUNTY

Lake Erie and Presque Isle Bay

Kirk @ East End Angler; filed 5/3: If it's a Monday, Wednesday or Friday, then it must be another cold front. Bites are on and off moreso than usual. Things are looking good for the past weekend, only to get hit with heavy rain and high winds to screw up the opening of walleye season along the beaches. Heavy seas stir up everything. Not much happening right now. Some anglers are still getting perch in the Bay and in the Channel. There are still some steelhead in Four Mile Creek – that's odd.

Brittney @ Poor Richards; filed 5/3: With all the rough weather lately, we seem to be in another "in between" period. Steelhead in creeks are gone, but some smallmouths are moving into the tributaries from the lake. Walleye bite not strong yet. Whereabouts of perch unknown. Smallmouth in the Bay. Hoping for stable weather.

Jake @ FishUSA; filed 4/28: Smallmouth bass are staging up in Presque Isle Bay but have not yet moved onto beds. Jerkbait, Ned rigs and tubes are most productive. (See photos)

Chad Prihode; filed 5/3: Had a good weekend fishing for pike and smallmouth bass in Thompson Bay (Presque Isle). Jackhammer Chatterbait and spinnerbaits were the ticket. (See photos)



Chad Prihode

Chad Prihode



Jake with PIB pike



Jake @ FishUSA photo

MERCER COUNTY

Lake Wilhelm

Bo @ BC Baits; filed 5/3: Wilhelm was slow to wake up, but finally the decent-size crappie bite in the shallows kicked in on Saturday. We caught and released over 50 crappies – mostly females with eggs – from 3 to 4 feet of water on the lower end of the lake using white Terry Bugs from BC Baits. But the wind kicked in on Sunday, making fishing difficult around the lake. From my kayak, I checked the upper end of lake but could only catch bluegills and pumpkinseeds here and there in the shallows. (see photos on right)

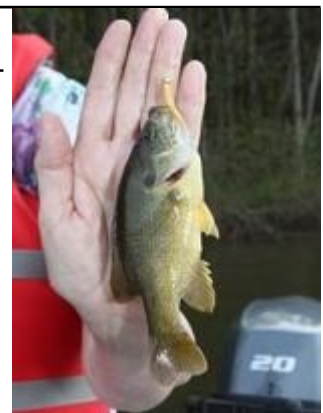


Bo with Wilhelm crappie



Photo by Bo @ BC Baits

Marilyn Black (Cochrannton); filed 5/3: Darl and I launched at Ramp #4 late Sunday afternoon with the expectation of going crappie fishing. However, high winds that shifted from the west to the north were a pain, and our depthfinder decided to take a vacation from reality. Could not find a crappie concentration, but I was pleased to catch over three dozen assorted panfish – bluegills, pumpkinseeds, perch and a couple green sunfish (which surprised me) – inside the weeds along a shallow shoreline on the main lake out of the wind. (see photos on right)

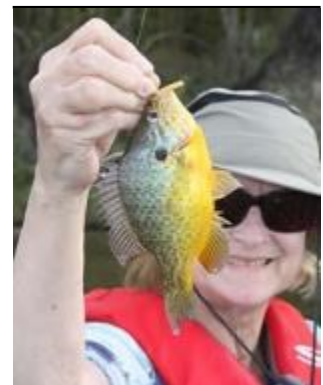


Green sunfish

Shenango Lake



Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 5/3: I fished Shenango on Saturday. Got a nice limit of crappies using a Bobby Garland Baby Shad on a Roadrunner 1/16-ounce head casting to brushpiles in 12 feet of water. Landed my first two-pounder of the season – a 15-inch white crappie full of eggs. Unfortunately, I forgot my camera – discovered when I went to take a picture of the 2-pounder on the scale. Only have sink photo. Sorry. (see photo)



Marilyn with pumpkinseed

SHENANGO LAKE continued

Brock "Captain Hook" Morocco (Hermitage); filed 5/1: I caught several nice Shenango Lake pike this past week while fishing with my grandson. Also, got into some nice crappies. The lake was nice and low with lots of shoreline exposed making it easy for shore fishing all over the lake. With the latest rain, the lake should be on its way back up...time for the boat. (See photos below)

Randy @ Fish West PA; filed 5/2: Randy says the crew at Fish West PA had a rather awesome week for hybrid stripers on Shenango Lake. On April 28 all the signs for optimal big fish bite had fallen in place. They landed 20 hybrid stripers with 7 of them over 10 pounds along with some walleyes and 40-inch pike – most fish came on crankbaits and jerkbaits. The biggest striper went 14.5 pounds! Then, on May 1, they found the bite slower than the "slam" day of the 28th, but still landed a number of big hybrids and large-mouth bass despite the high winds. (See photos here and in Livewell)



Randy & Fish West PA first mate



Captain Hook & grandson

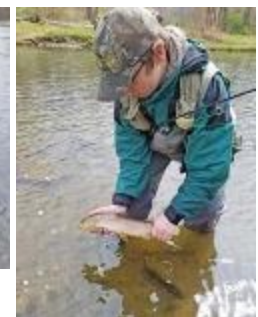
VENANGO COUNTY

Oil Creek

Angler Al @ Buttermilk Hill; filed 5/2: I only got out fishing a few times in recent weeks. Once on Oil Creek's artificial lure only section and once on Sugar Creek with my spinning rod. Mikey caught several nice trout on orange trout magnets on Oil Creek. I landed my fish with a fly rod using bugs and brown midges. A fellow angler fishing near us – Tom from Wexford – caught a nice palomino trout. (see photos on right)



Tom on Oil Creek



Mikey on Oil Creek

VENANGO COUNTY continued

Allegheny River

Jeff @ Keystone Connection Guide Service; filed 5/2: During much of the last two weeks, the Allegheny has been unseasonably low and clear. The smallmouth bite was finicky. However, during my guide trips we were still able to boat smallmouth up to 19 inches, mostly on Rapala Husky Jerks and finesse tubes. River conditions changed dramatically when heavy rain descended on the area late last week. I suspect river smallmouth will soon be bedding if the river stabilizes and water temperatures continue to rise. (See photos below)



Hunter / Jeff Knapp photo



Jenn /Jeff Knapp photo



Ron /Jeff Knapp photo

Mike @ Mike's Custom Tackle; filed 5/1: I got out Saturday on May 1st for the opening day of walleye. But the river was high and muddy. No walleye to speak of – same as last year's opener. We caught brook trout out of the river – same as last year. It's crazy at times – you never know what is going to eat your tubes. Trout ranged from 15 to 19 inches. (See photos below)

New Trout Guide on the Allegheny at Oil City? - editor



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.

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.

Due to limited space on Gamma Page this issue, **names drawn for prizes** are being listed here. If you see your name, you must email me with your shipping address in order to receive your prize. darlblack@windstream.net

Gamma Line: Randy Hedderick

Lure pack: Dale Clemmer

Package of Galiad's Grubz for cover shot: Keith Eshbaugh and Mark Magla/Chuck Maxon (one pack each)

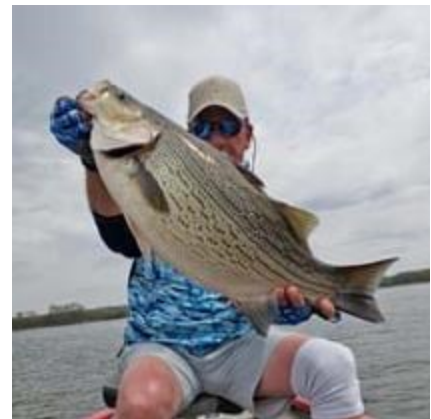
The Livewell

Brought to you by:
Wiegel Brothers Marine
704 1/2 Elk Street
Franklin, PA 16323
Phone 814-437-2077



Email: Debbie@riverjetpro.com

The Livewell salutes what **Shenango Lake** has to offer anglers...Photos from this past week of fishing by the Fish West PA crew. One of these hybrid stripers weighed 14.5 pounds. Do you know which one? This lake also has a good largemouth and small-mouth bass population, as well as outstanding crappie population.



Captain Hook's dinner



Black Knight Industries

Oil City, PA 16301

www.gammafishing.com

Gamma Line may be found locally at the following tackle shops:

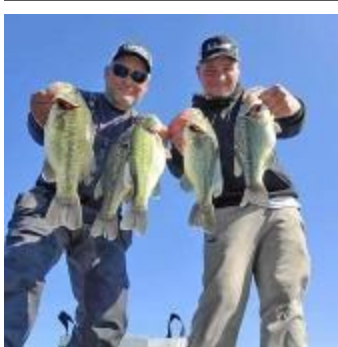
- Consumer Direct Sports (CDS) near Grove City Outlet Mall
- Maurer's Trading Post, Franklin, PA

GAMMA TIP FROM DAVID GRAHAM:



April 25

The last two weekends, my son RJ and I put together back-to-back 20-pound-plus-bags of bass in both the Clarion County and Crawford County bass clubs spring open tournaments on Pymatuning Lake. We used spring fishing patterns targeting largemouth moving into old stem lily pad fields to gorge on baitfish preparing to spawn. We were throwing 3/8-ounce spinnerbaits on FX Rods (6'9') spooled with 16-pound Gamma fluorocarbon. The lake level is on the rise and bass are starting to move into the usual shoreline cover, but the bigger fish are still not up tight to cover. Slow rolling that spinner with a bulky trailer worked for us. We used the exact same pattern on Mosquito Lake for a 2nd place finish the day before the Crawford tournament, working old stem fields around rattlesnake Island; causeway also gave up some fish for us.



May 3

GARMIN INFORMATION PAGE

- Real anglers share actual fishing experiences with Garmin units



Danny Thompson (Garmin RSM) and Steve Pennaz (host of Lake Commandos TV show) show how it's done with Garmin.

