

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



GAMMA
Lines



Fishing with Darl Black

Information Service



Sixteen year old Brady Welsh caught this 30-inch hybrid striper in the river below Shenango Dam

Landing Net by Darl Black

It's the middle of July and the walleye bite on some inland lakes has slowed. But not on Erie, where the western basin schools have arrived to provide outstanding catches hopefully through the summer. The Allegheny River and French Creek have been up down with all the serious rain storms we have had lately. On most lakes, the best bite is bluegills, catfish and largemouth bass. But in an unusual circumstance the hybrid striper bite in Shenango Lake continues, producing some exceptional size fish. Even some big ones in the river immediately below the dam.

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



French Creek – flowing through all four counties

Pete @ SmallieontheYough.com; filed end of June: It was a very hot day on the creek. There was a slight stain to the water and it was warm. We got into bass on the first cast and it didn't let up all day. We lost count of the high energy smallies in fast water. (See photos)



CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Norm @ Jamestown Marina; filed 7/12: After a lower-than-normal level during the spring, the lake level is now two inches above normal summer pool. Lot of rain recently, and still raining. My boat rental customers are catching mainly yellow perch and bass. Several were observed taking home a cooler full of perch of all sizes. Walleye bite has slowed. No word on muskies caught recently.

Bean @ Richter's Bait; filed 7/12: Big yellow perch coming from the weeds. Several customers are still catching walleyes – no limits but some nice size fish each time out. They are pulling both plugs and crawler harnesses in 12 to 18 feet of water. The same depth is giving up a few muskies, too. (See photo)



Richter's Bait photo

Laurie @ Duck-N-Drake; filed 7/12: This past weekend, I had reports of walleyes being taken by trolling Shad Raps or worm harnesses out by old river channel; trolling at 2.2 mph was key. Anglers are catching small crappies in 12 to 15 feet of water using LiveScope, but the bigger crappies are eluding anglers entered in the Crappie Madness event; the leader board has not changed for several weeks. Crappie Madness closes the end of July; we will announce time and place for awarding the boat rig as well as other prizes.



Red, White & Bluegill

Patty @ Poff's Place; filed 7/12: Anglers are picking up a few walleyes but no limit catches. Some of those hardcore crappie guys in the Crappie Madness contest are going at it hard, but only seem to be catching smaller crappies. They tell me they are using Garmin LiveScope to identify the fish and catch them by watching the bait on the screen.



Red, White & Bluegill

Marilyn @ Blackwolfe Communications; filed 7/5: In cooperation with Pymatuning State Park, Darl and I hosted our annual "Red, White & Bluegill" angling event at the Jamestown Campground for Fish for Free Day on July 4th. We provided instruction for novice anglers and helped them fish with rods provided the Fish Commission and State Parks. Thanks to Jared for assistance. (See photos)



Red, White & Bluegill fishing clinic

Tamarack Lake

Marilyn @ Blackwolfe Communications; filed 7/6: We stopped by Tamarack to see how anglers were doing. The lake is now refilled and was stocked with a variety of fish in 2020. It is completely catch and release until such time the Fish Commission decides the fish populations are well established. Use care in unhooking and releasing fish. (See photos)



Dale Clemmer
photo on Tamarack

Canadohta Lake

Jerry @ Timberland Bait; filed 7/4: Jerry secured a photo of a monster fish caught from Canadohta Lake revealing an unusual species for this lake. Photo may be viewed on Livewell Page.

ERIE COUNTY

Lake Erie

Editor: Walleye catches have steadily improved since about July 4th according to most near-shore tackle shops. The western basin fish have started to arrive, and the experts expect the catches to improve or at least stay steady through July and well into August. To summarize what the tackle shops reported this past week, walleyes may be found from 30 to 70 feet of water now, with some fish on the bottom and other suspended in 20 to 30 feet.

Jake @ FishUSA; filed 7/6: Fishing on the lake is now more consistent as the water temperature warms. Fishing the 45 to 70-foot depths has been hot for most guys going out of Walnut. Five colors of lead core and a shallow plug, or 3-ounces of



Jake @ FishUSA

lead on mono and a deep-diving plug has been steady. Original Bang O Lures and Bandits have been killers so far this season! (See photo)

Tim @ Presque Isle Bay Anglers Group; filed 7/11: Presque Isle Bay is loaded with drum, but some walleyes, largemouth bass and smallmouth bass and rock bass are still available. Perch catches are spotty inside the Bay and on the Lake. Migratory walleyes are showing up in 30 to 50 feet of water across the PA waters, with the occasional school out as deep as 70 feet. Crawler harnesses are getting bites so frequently that some boats are checking the line on a rotation to clear small fish rather than wait until there is an obvious hit. Please be aware of the mortality rate of culling fish in deep water. Nobody should be throwing back legal-size walleye pulled from deep water in hopes of landing larger fish.



Keith @ Dutch Fork Charters; filed 7/11: We have been experiencing very good success with Dutch Fork Custom Tackle Butterfly Blades and Ghost Blades on both bottom bouncers and with inline weights. Catching 'eyes off the bottom and suspended by trolling 1.5 mph in 30 to 40 feet of water. (See photos)



Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 7/11: We fished Lake Erie on Saturday, July 10. We put seven keepers in the box out of 15 fish caught. Dipsy and spoon combo did the trick. The big schools of fish are farther out than I wanted to take my smaller boat. Went as far as the 2 line and trolled back southeast



with the wind. Bite slowed down at 9:30 and we were getting mostly draggers after that. (See photos)

Jeremy @ Blazer Baits; filed 7/10: We caught some nice walleye in 69 to 72 feet of water trolling DD Bandit cranks on wire or on boards with jets. Spoons are starting to get hot. And there are still walleyes that want meat on a harness off a Dipsy. (See photo in Livewell Page)

MERCER COUNTY

Lake Wilhelm – No recent reports, but Dan Wielobob got his 4 pound crappie mount back last week. Fish was taken from Wilhelm through ice in February.



Shenango River

Brock “Captain Hook” Morocco; filed 7/9: I landed this huge hybrid striper in the Shenango River below the dam. The weather has been hot and muggy, but early morning fishing can pay off. Fish was released unharmed after quick photo. (See photo on Page 8)

Brian Luffey; filed 7/6: Sixteen-year-old Brady Welsh caught this 30-inch hybrid striper below the Shenango Dam in Sharpville. (See photo on page 8)

Shenango Lake

Randy @ Fish West PA; filed 7/12: Shenango Lake and River are still producing very nice fish into the summer season – especially hybrid stripers. I caught my 2nd personal best hybrid and second 20 pounder this year on July 10; it was 21.2 pounds and 35.5 inches long. Big catfish, black bass and panfish are still fairly active and feeding before the weekly cold fronts that hit our area. We are fishing in between the fronts and doing very well! It’s summertime so please be easy with your releases. Tight Lines, Randy. (Due to editor error, see Randy’s Shenango photos on page 8)

Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 7/8: I’m having a good week on Shenango. I fished three days and got a limit each day. Majority of fish were caught in 12 feet of water, but got some in 22 feet, too. Hang gliding put them in the boat every day. Even caught a smallmouth bass. (See photo on page 8)

Kevin @ luckis4rabbits; filed 7/9: Here are some pictures of my recent catch from Shenango. I was fishing 14 feet of water using a Garland Baby Shad set at 7 feet below a bobber. Each time I popped the bobber, a crappie would hit as soon as the bait stopped moving. As I like to say “Luck is for rabbits; I’m going fishing” – Good fishing anglers! (S

VENANGO COUNTY

Justus Lake and area trout streams

Pam @ Maurer's Trading Post; filed 7/12: I'm not getting reports of specific success from anglers except from ones who are catching holdover trout in select streams; they are using maggots and wax worms. Other than that, we been selling a lot nightcrawlers to families who are simply taking their kids on fishing outings – baiting up and seeing what they catch on Justus Lake.

Sue @ Sue's Bait & Tackle; filed 7/12: We've been really slow at the shop. Stormy weather and high temperatures have people staying home. The only reports we've had this past week were from anglers catching trout on Justus Lake in the deeper water.

Allegheny River

Jeff @ Keystone Connection Guide Service; filed 7/11: In general smallmouth fishing on the Allegheny has been good the past two weeks. When the water's been clear and low, we've experienced a good topwater bait on Pop R's and Whopper Ploppers during the early part of the day. The more consistent action has been when the river flow been up as it has the past week. Rapala X-Raps, flukes, and Galida's Grubz have accounted for smallmouth up to 19 inches during that time period. I'm booked the remainder of July; now booking for August. (See photos below)



Angler Al's Diary for the first part of July

Fishing on Justus Lake, Lake Wilhelm, Sugar Creek and French Creek

My brother-in-law Doc, my niece's boyfriend Alex and I, fished several days together this past week. The weather elements challenged us. From extremely hot conditions, through wind and rain, overcast and cloudy times and even the cold front, we managed to catch fish.

Angler Al's July Diary continued

The catch rate seemed to be best during the hours when it was mild and overcast, right before that cold front.

At Justus Lake we trolled and drifted large size creek baits. With the size minimum of 15 inches for largemouth bass, we managed to net 11 that size and bigger. Most were 2.5 -3.5 pound. I also caught a fine 22-inch walleye. It, as well as most of the bass, were caught in and around weed lines. A vibrant colored, 14-inch perch gave Alex a nice fight.



Hunter Eubanks



Alex Moses

Lake Wilhelm was family fun for everyone. Dad took the pontoon boat. Enough pan fish was caught to feed a dozen of us a fish fry. Red worms and pieces of nightcrawler 3 foot beneath a bobber was lights out in most coves and eddies.



Angler Al



Doc Has

Then it was off to Sugar Creek for trout. Doc and Alex did exceptionally well. I had to work, but I stayed in touch with them by text and photos they were sending. They drifted red worms with little to no weight in the clear and very low stream; landed mainly rainbows. On occasion a brown. Doc found that using his fly rod with very light tippet and no weight, worked best for him.

On French Creek at first light, smallmouth bass were feeding aggressively. But by the time the sun broke the cloud cover, they began to shut down. I used live creek baits and a Rapala lure. Doc used red worms. We also discovered fast current rushes held rainbow trout.

Totals for the week all bodies of water.

- 67 trout (mostly rainbows)
- 17 smallmouth bass
- 19 largemouth bass
- 1 red tail sucker
- 1 walleye
- Several limits of bluegill, small crappie and perch.

Angler Al July Diary concluded

We as fisherman here in northwestern Pennsylvania, are truly blessed with such highly prized fisheries! I appreciate Darl Black providing these Fishing Reports as an opportunity to share photos and information on the sport we love.

And thanks to Gamma line. Great line. I am using Gamma on all my reels now.

Regards,

Angler Al

Due to editor error, PHOTOS FROM SHENANGO LAKE & RIVER are below:



Captain Hook with river hybrid



Brady Welsh with 30" hybrid from river



Randy Hedderick



Randy with 21 pound hybrid



Ken Smith get Shenango SMB

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.

Bo's Guide Service: Operating on Lake Wilhelm for panfish and in Geneva Marsh for bowfin. Call Bo at 724-704-1723 for information.

Names drawn for prizes:

Pack of Galida's Grubz: Brian Luffey for supplying the cover shot of Brady with striper in this issue.

Spool of Gamma Line: Jeremy Heavener

Pack of Crappie baits: Kevin

To claim your prize, you must send you shipping address via email to darlblack@windstream.net.

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



Dutch Fork Charter



Buckets Charters



Monster of Canadohta—
released to be caught again



Joe came to catch a n Erie walleye



French Creek Smallmouth / Pete
Cartwright Guide Service



Jeremy @ Blazer Baits



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**
- **East End Angler, Erie, PA**

GAMMA TIP

Jeff Knapp, Licensed Guide...I love it when Allegheny River smallmouth bass are up and at 'em, happy to chase moving baits such as hard and soft jerkbaits. Sadly, they aren't always in such a mood. At these times I've found a great presentation to be a Galida's Grubz rigged Texas-style with a #2 Gamakatsu EWG worm hook and 1/8-ounce slip sinker. Rigged in such a manner the grub is quite snag resistant. Hopped/jigged along the bottom, it suggests a crayfish. When retrieved at steady pace it mimics a baitfish. I fish the Galida's Grubz on 15 pound test Gamma Torque braid, with a two to three foot length of Gamma Edge fluoro-carbon line as a leader.



GARMIN INFORMATION PAGE

- Real anglers share actual fishing experiences with Garmin units



GARMIN TIP



It used to be so simple to install a simple sonar unit and transducer. But today's sophisticated and power-draining fish-finding electronics can make for installation complicated. After reading on Facebook about all the problems encountered installing the newer Garmin units and necessary power source, I decided help was needed. Fortunately, anglers in NW PA have G&G Marine Electronics LLC operated by Gus Glasgow. Having problems getting the installation correct?



See Gus. Don't want to screw up expensive electronics doing it yourself? See Gus. Want to buy a new Garmin unit? Well, you'll have to wait a bit longer on direct purpose until Gus receives authorization as a dealer. But in the meantime, he can put a unit and power source in the right way. For the time being, contact Gus on Facebook. – Darl Black



New Garmin Echomap Ultra 126sv showing the way
