

# 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**



Bill at Hook-N-Nook with early run 2021 steelhead

## The Landing Net by Darl Black

September. A month of transition for fish. A month of opportunities for anglers – especially for me. Should I go steelhead fishing to Erie tributaries? Should I go to Pymatuning for the start of the early fall walleye bite? Should I go after big 'gills and 'seeds at Conneaut Lake? Should I wade fish French Creek for smallmouth, or hitch a ride on a friend's jetboat for smallmouth on the Allegheny? Should I standby for a call that informs me the hybrid stripers have turned on at Shenango Lake? September, month of indecision. The answer is probably...Just Go Fish!

Tom Hays with heavyweight Oil Creek smallmouth bass



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 September 22, 2021

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### County by County Reports for Crawford, Erie, Mercer and Venango

#### French Creek – flowing through all four counties

**Pete @ Smallies on the Yough.com**: filed 9-14: The day started out great. I landed a bunch of nice smallies in 15 to 16-inch range. I had about two hours of fishing and then the storms came. I fished awhile after the rain stopped and caught a few more. (See photo on right)



#### CRAWFORD COUNTY

##### Pymatuning Lake

**Norm @ Jamestown Marina**; filed 9/20: The State Park has started dropping the lake level for winter already. Anglers are catching some nice perch during the day, jigging up walleyes on blades in the late evening into early dark. People are catching white perch and do not know what they are. (Editor's note – See September 8 issue of Fishing Report for ID chart on white perch vs white bass, and why the Fish Commission recommends harvesting all the white perch you catch.)

**Dave @ Richter's Bait & Tackle;** filed 9/20: The big news is the low light walleye bite by casting blades – very early morning and very late evening. Not limits, but some decent fish. One customer stopped by to say the smallmouth bass were hitting best in the evening. Musky man Woody has been back at it; landed several in recent weeks by trolling – but says the fish are scattered. The other day he got one in 7 feet of water and another in 20 feet. With discharge up in tail race, anglers are catching a few walleyes in the river.

**Laurie @ Duck-N-Drake;** filed 9/20: Same old late summer/early fall story...anglers are catching a few walleyes by jigging and trolling, with reports coming in walleyes are on the bottom in 20 feet, and other walleyes are suspended at 12 to 16 feet. Perch taken with live minnows on the bottom in 12 feet of water. And more catfish. Our final catfish tournament of the season is September 25-26; you can register at Duck-N-Drake up until 5:30 pm on Saturday, September 25.

**Patty @ Poff's Place;** filed 9/20: It's pretty quiet on the northern front of Pymatuning. Perch and catfish. Sporadic catch of walleyes but no limits. An occasional musky reported. Waiting on some colder water temperatures to get more walleye action.

**Darl @ Blackwolfe;** filed 9/17: Marilyn and I fished South End of Pymatuning for a few hours on the 17<sup>th</sup>, looking for smallmouth bass. Struck out. Only came up with some small largemouth and jumbo perch. Tough day on the Big P. (See photo on right)



### Conneaut Lake



**Darl @ Blackwolfe;** filed 9/16: We hit Conneaut Lake the day after a serious cold front. I didn't expect much, but wanted to check in on the status of the lake. During previous trips in July and August, we had not been able to locate the deep-water bluegills and pumpkinseeds on hard bottom humps as in past years. Part of the problem was the boat traffic on the lake – can't fish where you want to. This time, we looked around for smallmouth – struck out. Started looking for the big 'gills and 'seeds which are generally re-locating towards the outside weedlines during early September. Only small ones on the weedline. Probed deeper and found them on the Garmin. Caught a few to verify what was down there, then probed around for largemouth – no lunker bass this trip. (See photo on left)

## ERIE COUNTY

### Erie Tributaries

“They are here!” reports **Bill @ Tudor Hook-N-Nook**. “Numbers are moving into lower Elk and Walnut with some fish moving on upstream. If planning to release your fish, please handle with care in these warm stream temperatures.” (See photo right)



“You can catch these early steelhead in the streams on just about anything – spinners, spoons, jigs, flies, nightcrawlers and minnows,” says **Dan @ Elk Creek Sports**. “But with anglers rushing to the streams, it will not take long for them to become skittish.”



Poor Richard's smoker working hard

“For pressured steelhead right now, the best presentations are eggs and mini sacks,” advised **Jake @ FishUSA**. “Remember to check out FishUSA’s home page for daily deals or to sign up for daily emails on exclusive deals!”

“The East Side streams are not getting the number of early fish that West Side streams are,” according to **Kirk at East End Angler**. “I’ve only had reports of a few in Four Mile and Sixteen Mile. But fish are in the surf at the mouth of every stream. Tossing a spoon is one of the best presentations – Kastmaster, KO Wobbler or Little Cleo in either Blue/Chrome or Green/Chrome. Also, Berkley Power Bait under a bobber.”

### Lake Erie

Reports of walleyes in the lake have fallen off. Both **Captain Bob on the Perch Pirate** and Kirk report the Dump area in 40 to 55 feet of water seems to be the best close in spot in PA waters – most likely homebody ‘eyes. Kirk ran to the Canadian line over the weekend, and found a mass of marks suspended at 55 to 65 feet over 89 feet. Charters out of Conneaut, Ohio are still reporting decent walleye catches as the western basin schools make the homeward bound journey.

No recent reports of perch schools in the lake.

### Presque Isle Bay

**Tim @ Presque Isle Bay Anglers**; filed 9/20: The hottest bite in the Bay continues to be crappies. Anglers on city-side docks and piers are catching crappies. Boat fishermen an-

choring near cityside docks and piers are catching crappies. We had a report of a single walleye taken off the South Channel Pier – may not seem like a big deal, but it could signal initial start of walleyes moving into the bay. South and North Channel Piers have not produced much this summer. Seems like the channel has been overrun with gobies. Let's hope perch and walleyes eat their way into the Bay!

## MERCER COUNTY

### Lake Wilhelm



Brad Bee with LMB

Editor's note: For the most part, anglers on Wilhelm have been struggling to catch fish since mid-summer. Brad Bee, a regular on Wilhelm for bass and panfish, told me a week ago that he had not caught a decent size largemouth from the lake for weeks, and had not even experienced a good panfish bite for some time. (Since then, Brad sent in a nice bass photo, and reported catching a few crappies with the slight dip in water temperature.) A group of anglers organized a Wilhelm walleye tournament recently; however not one walleye was caught. I did not receive

a single photo/report of a walleye from Wilhelm for the Fishing Report all season long, until this past week when Bo @ BC Bait Co. landed a 23.5-inch walleye while fishing a BC Stinger plastic for panfish on September 14.



Bo @ BC Baits with 23.5-inch 'eye

Anglers were blaming the thicker-than-usual weeds, the low water level, unusually high lake temperature and so forth. What will the fall bring?



Steve with Wilhelm LMB

My call for any reports of good fishing at Wilhelm in the last Fishing Report generated this report and two photos from R.J. Graham of Tionesta: "Steve Goslaw and I drove up to Wilhelm on the evening of September 8. We caught 16 keeper-size bass and 9 shorts – plus a giant snapping turtle. All caught by fishing a Carolina Rig on offshore structure." (See photos left & right)



RJ with Wilhelm LMB

(Editor's note: Offshore structure...oooh, just like the old days on Wilhelm!)

## MERCER COUNTY continued

### Shenango Lake

**Randy @ Fish West PA**; filed 9/19: Shenango Lake water temps are finally dropping and fish are starting to feed for the upcoming winter. Autumn is here and the weather shows it with highs in the 60s even chillier night lows. It's time to fish! This past week our gang caught walleyes, largemouth bass, crappies, white bass and small hybrid stripers. (See photos below)



Hybrid striper



Walleye



Hybrid striper



Crappie



Walleye



White bass

## VENANGO COUNTY

### Oil Creek



**Al @ Buttermilk Hill**; filed 9/18: Tom Hays and I had great time catching smallmouth on Oil Creek on the 18<sup>th</sup>. We were using fresh-caught creek minnows, drifting them with the current on four-pound Gamma Line. In less than two hours, we caught 10 bass, including two that went about 3.5 pounds and a heavyweight giant 20-1/4-inch smallmouth that was pushing 5 pounds (on cover). Tom landed that beast on 4-pound Gamma. (See picture here & cover)

## VENANGO COUNTY continued

### Allegheny River

**Al @ Buttermilk Hill**; filed 9/14: Fished with my friend Brian from his jet boat. First, we caught bait – riffle runners. Then we drifted the live bait in a current run with big rocks. We landed 37 smallmouths, 6 walleyes and 2 white bass. (Photos on next page)

**Pete @ Smallies on the Yough guide service**; filed 9/14: A warm September day today on the Allegheny. The water was warm and not many floating weeds. Yet the water was clear. I fished for five hours and caught fish all day long. The bite was great using 412ubes, catching bass in the 13 to 19-inch range. (Photos on next page)

**Mike @ Mike's Custom Tackle**; filed 9/17: Yes sir, the bass are feeding in the shallow current flows. Lots of them. Starting to get a few walleyes as well in the same areas in 3 to 5-foot range with current. Weeds starting to flow now, so getting tougher to fish some areas. Any type of moving bait has been producing fish. Swimbaits and active jigs have been doing best so far.

**Denny Beggs** (Franklin); filed: 9/17: Fished the Allegheny River today, and caught some nice smallmouth bass. (Photo on next page)

**RJ Graham** (Tionesta) filed 9/17: Fishing was tougher today, landing only 20 smallmouths. Fish are scattered right now. I think their move towards wintering locations was stalled due to the warmup in temperatures we had. I've noticed the past few days there are fish shallow and in fast water like summer, as well as fish deep where they normally would be for winter. No huge bass today, with most fish coming on Mike's custom Ned head and Ned plastic. (Photo next page)

**Jeff @ Keystone Connection Guide Service**; filed 9/19: Action on the middle Allegheny the past two weeks has been outstanding. Lots of smallmouth bass caught and released including one of the summer's largest at 20.75 inches. The flow has been up a bit for this time of year with temperature in the high 60s and low 70s. Floating weeds have not been much of an issue. Both Rapala X Raps and Zoom Super Flukes have been producing fish. (Photos next page)

## Allegheny River photos from September 22nd Report contributors



Denny Beggs

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Pete Cartwright

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Brian with white bass

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Jeff Knapp photo

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RJ Graham

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Al Bell with walleye

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Jeff Knapp photo

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Pete Cartwright

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Jeff Knapp photo

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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; [keystone-connectionguideservice@gmail.com](mailto:keystone-connectionguideservice@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/).

**Fishing with Bo Guide Service:** Specializing in panfish in area lakes and kayak swamp trips for bowfin. Bo Batholomew at [bcbaitshadley@gmail.com](mailto:bcbaitshadley@gmail.com); 724-704-1723

Names Drawn for Prizes—if your name is mentioned below, to claim your prize you must send me an email with your shipping address. Failure to respond means the prize goes back into the drawing.

Gamma Line —Randy Hedderick

Cover photo — Tom Hayes/Al Bell—pack of either Galida's Grubz or Mike's Custom Tubes

Lure pack — Denny Beggs

# 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)

Florida retiree Tom Allen, former Crawford County resident, returns north to spend the summer at local campground with a pond. As a former Bassmaster, he routinely makes a few casts into the pond. He posted photos of two recent catches, saying his largemouth bass were more the size of sardines. Sounded like a challenge to two of his former bass club members, Marilyn and Darl Black, as to who could catch the smallest largemouth.



Presque Isle Bay Photobomb

Darl Black photo

Tom and his buddy Wilson call his catches sardine bass. However this week on Conneaut, Darl goes smaller with a 5" bass on a 4" dropshot



worm . But never count Marilyn out when it comes to competitive fishing. The next day at Pymatuning she lands a monster of a tiny bass—so small we did not have bump board that could measure that small.





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, Harborcreek, PA; 814-898-3474

### Gamma Tip

When you hook a big smallmouth that is not the time to wonder if your line is up to snuff. Use Gamma Polyflex or Gamma Edge so you can fish worry free.

Al Bell's buddy Tom Hays was using 4-pound Gamma Optic Yellow Panfish Line when he tagged a near 5-pound smallmouth in Oil Creek. Al had won the line through the Fishing Report



Denny Beggs

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Denny Beggs also uses Gamma Line which he won through the Fishing Report. This week his combination of Gamma Line and a Galida's Grubz (also won on the NW PA Fishing Report) helped him land several Allegheny River smallmouths, including the one pictured here.

Get Gamma and get those fish in. Go to [www.GammaFishing.com](http://www.GammaFishing.com) for more information or to buy line.



Tom Hayes

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## GARMIN INFORMATION PAGE



- Real anglers share actual fishing experiences with Garmin units
- For professional local installation of Garmin units, contact G&G Marine Electronics at 724-290-9045

### Garmin Tip from Darl Black

Marilyn and I love to catch big bluegills and pumpkinseeds from deep water during the summer. During previous trips in July and August of this year to Conneaut Lake, we had not been able to locate deep-water bluegills and pumpkinseeds on hard bottom humps as in past years. Strong breezes and boat traffic kept us from fishing the offshore humps and long points. (Covid travel restrictions have generated a lot more local boating traffic on Conneaut.) Generally, the big 'gills and 'seeds move from the hard bottom humps to the outside weedlines during early September. On this trip we checked weedlines but only caught small panfish. We began probing deeper off the weedlines with Garmin Down-Vu. Eventually we found a large school of small fish apparently on the move. Caught a few to verify they were 'gills and 'seeds. Lots of fun with light line and small baits dropped straight down to the fish. On to the next Garmin adventure!



In tradition view (left) fish appear as mass. In Down-Vu on right you can see individual fish—which turned out to be 'seeds & 'gills.



To catch big 'seeds down deep, get GARMIN!