

NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA FISHING REPORT

Published by Blackwolfe Communications LLC

Issue: September 8, 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



It's that time of the year to start preparing for the fall bite across NW PA. RJ Graham is one of several outstanding smallmouth bass anglers who regularly contributes to the NW PA Fishing Report. I know I'm ready for bronzeback fishing in the next several months.

Landing Net by Darl Black

You likely noticed the small number of comments from contributing anglers in the last issue. Fish catching in recent weeks has been slow. But now with changes in the weather patterns and cooling temperatures, water temperatures are beginning to drop as well. And fish (as well as anglers) are showing some activity. Check out this issue for updates and what you might expect in the coming weeks. I know that Marilyn and I will be out on a wide variety of local waters starting in September as we move into fall to get in on the hot bites. Be sure to check out Mercer County Pages with photos from Kids Fishing Derby.

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 for Crawford, Erie, Mercer and Venango

French Creek – Flowing through all four counties



Denny Beggs (Franklin); 9/4: I fished French Creek yesterday, September 3. Launched my kayak at Utica and fished all the way to my backyard in Franklin. I caught over 15 small-mouth bass and one walleye – all on a Rebel Crawfish crankbait. French Creek is a beautiful



stream to kayak! What a fun day! (See photos here and in Livewell Page)

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Editor's note on White Perch: The other day on the Facebook Page "For Those Who Fish Pymatuning" someone inquired whether there were white perch in Pymatuning Lake. The answer is yes. However, they were not native to the Shenango drainage and had never appeared in Pymatuning Lake until a few years ago. As I recall, it was April of 2019 when PFBC Area Fisheries Manager Tim Wilson caught the first couple White

Perch in one of his spring sampling nets. In the spring of 2021 (this year), Wilson got 7 White perch from among 34 net sets.

There is valid concern that the invasive White Perch may negatively impact several gamefish populations in Pymatuning including crappies and panfish. In several public lakes in Southeastern Pennsylvania, the unintentional introduction of White Perch decimated thriving crappie and panfish populations. Fisheries studies from several states indicate the introduction of White Perch in a lake has reduced crappie, white bass, largemouth bass and walleye populations. White Perch compete for the same food as crappies panfish, and White Perch will eat the eggs of other fish.

Area 1 Fisheries Manager Tim Wilson provided the following statement for the NW PA Fishing Report:

“PFBC Area 1 Biologist reminds everyone White Perch are non-native to Pymatuning and any caught by anglers should be harvested. However, anglers must be able to differentiate between White Perch and White Bass before harvesting smaller fish. White Bass are native and are a desirable member of the Pymatuning fish community. At the present, there are no creel limits or size limits on either White Perch or White Bass in Pymatuning Reservoir. See attached ID image.”



Norm @ Jamestown Marina; filed 9/6: Anglers are mainly catching perch and catfish. Several musky fishermen report success this past week. The night crew is catching some walleyes fishing blade baits on drop-offs. Following the recent storms, lake temperature dropped from 80 degrees to 74 – indicating better fishing days are coming.

Bean @ Richter's Tackle; filed 9/6: Hearing about some walleyes being taken on Sonars on drop-offs. Plus a few anglers are trolling up walleyes that are suspended at 12 to 14 feet down over 18 feet of water on the South End. And Woody stopped by to report catching two muskies this past weekend.

Laurie @ Duck-N-Drake; filed 9/6: It's the same old story of perch and catfish for most anglers. However, the hardcore walleye guys are still catching a few by trolling. The hot lures had been Shad Raps and Flicker Shads for the last month; but this weekend, guys did better by going back to crawler harnesses.

Conneaut Lake

Bo @ BC Bait Co.; filed 9/2: I fished both ends of Conneaut Lake this morning. We picked up a bunch of nice bluegills and a ton of small perch – along with a surprise northern pike. A yellow medium size Terry Bug fished 4 feet below a float over 10 feet of water along shallow weed edges was the ticket to all the fish. (See photos below



ERIE COUNTY

Lake Erie

Jake @ FishUSA; filed 9/1: Fishing out of Erie has been spotty. Your favorite deep diving crankbaits on 5 colors of lead core is getting it done for some anglers. I think it's a matter of finding the active school of feeding fish. Steelhead are being caught in the 65 to 75-foot range by walleye trollers. In the coming weeks, steelhead fishing will be taking off for pier and shore casters. Be sure to stop by FishUSA to get your Kastmasters and Cleos for fall steelhead casting. (See photo of Jake Bryant with his 1st steelhead)



Keith @ Dutch Fork Fishing Charter; filed 9/1: Prior to last week's Big Blow on Erie, we were catching walleye all over the lake. We caught them from 12 feet of water to 60 feet of water. But the big fish were concentrated in 40 to 50 feet. We had been pulling butterfly blades on bottom bouncers and in-line weights at 1.5 mph. We limited out with fish ranging from 17 inches to 7 pounds. Best colors were Wonder Bread, silvers, purples and chartreuse. The Dipsy bite has been off and on. Guys pulling crankbaits on lead core are doing well by trolling faster than usual. Example: 5 to 7 colors with a Bay Rat Deep Diver is a good setup. Weighted crankbaits on monofilament line can also be used, too, with 2-ounce Snap Weight. (See photo at right)



Jeff @ Poor Richards; filed 9/6: Anglers are still catching walleyes when they are able to get out. Seas have been rough quite a bit. Best catches on West Side are coming from 50 to 80 feet. In terms of colors, it's all about the purples, greens and blues. I am hearing about perch catches in 50 to 60 feet, but no limits; anglers are coming back with 10 to 12 perch. Perch availability and catches often pick up this time of year as walleyes begin moving west again. However, the lake winds are unsettling going into the fall, making it too rough for most anglers to get out.

Kirk @ East End Angler; filed 9/6: We had a storm roll through last night, and today, Monday the 6th, we have 3 to 5-foot rollers out there. It's getting to be that time of year when anglers aren't able to get out so much. That said, I was out fishing Friday and found a ton of walleyes sitting over 63 feet of water north of the dump. Walleyes were crammed from 30 feet down to the bottom, and biting like crazy. I have included a snap shot of my screen. All fish came on crankbaits, with chrome the best color. Then I headed back out Saturday morning to the same spot and nothing. Saw little on the screen and could only catch a couple small fish. However, a buddy of mine was out Saturday morning east of Shades and did very well. Go figure...maybe fish east of Shades in the morning and west of Shades in the evening? Also had a couple customers who came up to go bass fishing, but instead got a mess of walleyes on the bottom in 30 feet on bass baits. Nothing new on perch – hardly anyone is fishing for them.

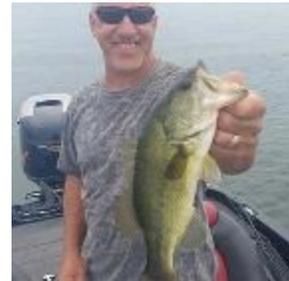
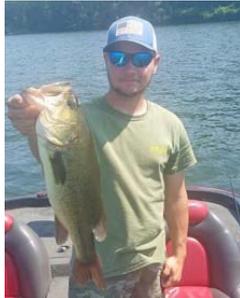
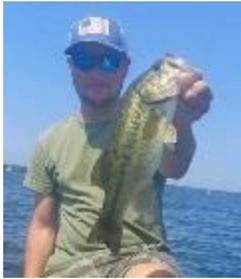


Bill @ Tudor's Hook-n-Nook; filed 9/4: Continuing with our commitment to provide a larger selection of steelhead gear, we are adding another root to the #TudorHooknNook tree...Coming this fall, #ECHO rods and reels. The shop is closing after the Labor Day holiday to do some major remodeling to make room for a mountain of inventory upgrades. We will be announcing a Grand Re-Opening date in the next few weeks, hopefully around the second week of October. More to come.

Presque Isle Bay

Tim @ Presque Isle Anglers Group and Kirk @ East End Angler: Both report surprise catches of crappies in PIB on city-side. Anglers fishing from boats as well as docks and piers are catching crappies suspended over deeper water using bait below a bobber. The new SONS Fishing Pier and the area of the Sloppy Duck Saloon are two of the better bank-based areas.

RJ Graham (Tionesta); filed 9/4: I've been spending a lot of time fishing Presque Isle Bay for largemouth bass, and it's been a BLAST! Zack Bezack and John Rigel have joined me on different occasions. We've just been flipping weeds with a 2-ounce weight and a Mike's Custom Tackle Creature Bait! And using Gamma Torque Braid line, of course. (See photos below)



MERCER COUNTY

Lake Wilhelm

Editor's note – This summer, I've received very few reports from Lake Wilhelm. The last two reports I don't think I've had a single comment from Wilhelm. Don't know fishing is that poor at Wilhelm this season, or if the amount of aquatic vegetation along the shore have anglers not fishing the lake. However, this week Latty Lat came through with a photo showing there are crappies in Wilhelm to be caught. And I just received a phone call from Bo at BC Baits saying he was catching some crappies this morning at Wilhelm. "Not real big ones, but crappies nonetheless. Cooler water bigger fish." Thanks for sharing!



Latty Lat

Shenango Lake



Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 9/6: The best crappie lake in NW PA is still producing slabs even with this up and down weather. It's only going to get better as the water temperature cools down. I fished Shenango on August 26, 27 and 29 with friends and family. The crappie bite was very good all three days. Warm temps in the morning heated up to over 80 degrees as the morning went on. The fish were holding on drops along the river channel, and biting aggressively. Multiple limits each trip (two to three people in boat each time out). Hang gliding BG Baby Shads did the trick. (See photo)

Randy @ Fish West PA; filed 9/5: The extreme water temperature and back-to-back cold fronts have the hybrid stripers shut down. We have been catching a few largemouth bass, and the other day, a number of walleyes – much to our surprise. Better fishing is ahead as the water temps cool. This past weekend, we attended the Annual Kids Fishing Derby held on Lake Julia in Buhl Park. There were many prizes given away to kids in different age groups. It's a great effort by the organizations which sponsor this event. Check out some pictures below and many more at our Facebook Page "Fish West PA."

**Kids Fishing Derby 2021, Lake Julia in Buhl Park
Photos by Randy @ Fish West PA**

A great day at lake Julia! Kids had an absolute blast and lots of fish were caught. Thanks to Matt Kolesar for a great morning. We couldn't have asked for better weather! - Randy



VENANGO COUNTY

Angler Al @ Buttermilk Hill; filed 9/6...

Sugar Creek: I finally made some time to spend a few hours on Sugar Creek. It helped that current conditions were just right with a tint of stain after a morning rain. I drifted red worms instead of minnows this time, although I had both. I landed a total of 7 rainbow trout and one native brown trout. The nicest 'bow was nearly 20 inches. All were released. (See photos at right)

Justus Lake: This trip produced several undersized largemouth and smallmouth bass. All the bass came from outside edge of weedbed on various sizes of live minnows. A minnow was suspended below a float on a #4 hook and with split-shot for weight.



Allegheny River



Rick Shrout; filed 9/6: The river is finally getting back to normal levels so Bill Logan and I gave it a go Friday morning. I ended up with 4 keeper bass, 2 dinks and a 27-inch northern pike that hit a spinnerbait. Biggest bass was 2 pounds 13 ounces; all bass came on soft plastics. (See photo at left)

Jeff @ Keystone Connection Guide Service; filed 9/3: During the past two weeks the level of the middle Allegheny has been higher than normal for this time of year, with fluctuating degrees of water clarity. During murkier outings we've done well on spinnerbaits, including a guide trip that included five smallmouth bass in the four-pound range. As the water cleared, Rapala X-Raps and Flukes have come into play. (See photos below and in Livewell)

Pete @ Smalliesontheyough.com; filed 9/6: On Saturday, September 5th we took a trip north to fish the Allegheny. Rain had stained the water some. We got into nice fish. The bite was soft. But our 412ubes and stick baits fished on 8-pound Gamma Edge carried the day. Eight of bass were over 15 inches. (See photos below)



Jeff Knapp photo



Jeff Knapp photo



Pete Cartwright photo



Pete Cartwright photo

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.

Fishing with Bo Guide Service: Specializing in panfish in area lakes and kayak swamp trips for bowfin. Bo Bartholomew at bcbaitshadley@gmail.com; 724-704-1723

The Livewell

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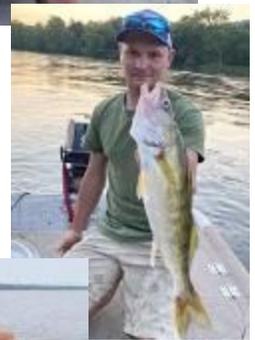
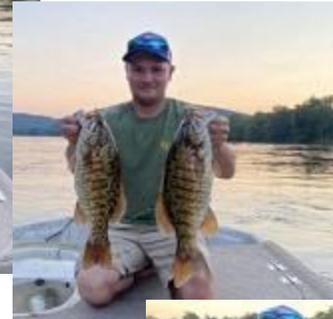
The Allegheny River bite is heating up. Get Ready for the Fall bite!



Jeff Knapp photo



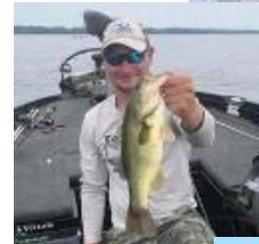
RJ Graham



Jake @ FishUSA



Ryder Roule with 9.32-lb Erie walleye



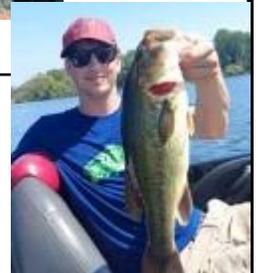
PIB Largemouth



Bo with 30.5-lb Shenango cat



Denny n French Creek SMB



PIB Largemouth



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, Harborcreek, PA; 814-898-3474

Darl Black Even though I have retired from guiding for crappies and bluegills on Pymatuning and Conneaut Lake, I still receive phone calls. However, I had to inform callers that I was not aware of anyone guiding for panfish on inland lakes of our area. Well, there is someone to refer them to now. Bo Bartholomew of BC Baits has obtained his guide license and is now operational on Lake Wilhelm for panfish, and the Geneva Swamp for bowfin. Yes bowfin! They are a lot of fun to catch. And since Bo knows bowfins, you are bound to have an explosive time on the water! Next spring, he will be adding Pymatuning and Conneaut Lake to his list. Check him out at Fishing with Bo on Facebook, or call 724-704-1723. Oh, by the way, his rods are strung with Gamma Line!



Handle with care...



...bowfin are toothy critters

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

Darl Black: When it comes to electronic fish finders these days, seems everyone is talking about Garmin LiveScope.—with good reason. However, to purchase the large screen unit, black box and necessary separate battery to run it all, you are looking at big financial investment. Lets say you want a less expensive unit for your ordinary simple fishing needs? What choices do you have?

I suggest you take a look at the Garmin Striker series. I have been running a Striker Plus 5CV unit as my bow unit for a couple years. The unit has received an upgrade and is now called Striker Vivid 5CV. This unit would be a perfect for either a transom unit or bow unit. It is easy to use (as long you read the basic instructions carefully) and does not require all the power that LiveScope demands. You can run this off your starting battery without any drain problem. It provides traditional sonar view, clear-vu down scan and use of way points with mapping. Plus it has a flasher sonar mode, too. All this for around \$300.00. The seven inch model is a bit more.



Everything the beginning angler needs



You can run 3 screens at time.



Even has a flasher!