

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



"Captain Hook" with a hefty Pymatuning Lake smallmouth bass caught from shore.

Landing Net by Darl Black

A landing net. That's something that I did not have the opportunity to use as often this past fishing season as in past years. With our strange unseasonable weather patterns of heat, storms, winds and fronts, chances to fish did not come easy. And when they did, the bite seemed unusually tough – at least for me. Going into the fall, temperature remained much higher than usual in lakes and rivers, and fishing patterns did not move smoothly into cold water. Still, it was an exceptional October for steelhead anglers on the Erie tributaries, and a very strong smallmouth bite on Pymatuning Lake, Shennango Lake, French Creek, Oil Creek and Allegheny River. Just check out the photos to see why I always say October is outstanding for smallies.

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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Angling Bites

— **Regarding State Park Marinas at Pymatuning Lake, Lake Wilhelm and Presque Isle Bay:** With slip renters required to have boats out by the last day of October, as of November 1 the state park marinas' docks will be open to fishing. Panfish catches are usually recorded from docks through November and December.



— November 1 also marks the start date of mandatory wearing of **Personal Flotation Device** for all anglers/boaters when in boats less than 16 feet from November 1 through April 30.

— In early October, the Fish Commission opened public fish cleaning stations at Walnut Creek Access and North East Marina.

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

Editor's note: As I prepare this newsletter, the NW corner of the state has been provided an overabundance of rain once again this season. At the present time, the Lake Erie tributaries are blown out, as well as French Creek and the Allegheny. With more days of rain than dry days in the seven-day forecast, it is hard to predict exactly when Erie streams along with inland flowing waterways will be at suitable levels for fishing.

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Bean @ Richter's Tackle; filed 10/25: Customers continue to report they are catching walleyes on Sonars and similar vibrating blade baits fished on points, deep humps and channel drops. Perch are being caught everywhere in the lake with most anglers using minnows. Reports of crappie being caught are few and far between.



Laurie @ Duck-N-Drake; filed 10/25: In the mid-section of the lake, anglers are reporting catching walleyes in 15 to 20 feet by trolling Flicker Shads. Down by Stocker Island, some anglers are using Rapala Jigging Rap and Sonar-type baits to catch walleyes. Perch fishing is FANTAS-



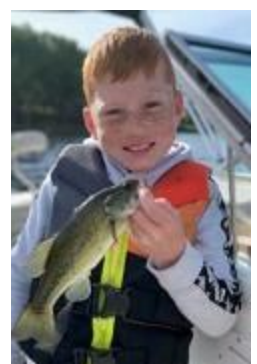
TIC with reports indicating nightcrawlers are taking the larger perch. Very little news on crappie success. The Duck-N-Drake will close for the season at the end of the month. See you in the Spring!

Brock "Captain Hook" Morocco (Hermitage); Filed 10/22: Here are a few recent catches from Pymatuning – fishing from shore. Had some good action casting stickbaits and spinners from shore. These are bigger fish I caught and released. The brute smallmouth (picture #1) gave me an awesome battle on my light tackle; it was 21 inches long. The other smallies were solid, feisty jumpers. The lake has turned on during the stable weather of the last few days. Bass were active at both Pymatuning and Shenango. Also, I missed two muskies that swiped at my lure. I fish early mornings and late evenings, and one day there were 4 deer wading in my spot. (See photos here, cover shot and on Livewell page)



Conneaut Lake

Rocky Habel; filed 10/15: We always enjoy your Fishing Report. I fished Conneaut Lake this past Sunday with a friend and my son. We picked up a few small bass and this musky. (See photos right)



Canadohta Lake

Jerry @ Timberland Bait; filed 10/25. Timberland Bait is closed until ice season. This Saturday night we are holding a Trunk & Treat night at our shop area. Anyone is welcome to stop by.

Woodcock Dam Spillway

Dale Clemmer (Cochrannton); filed 10/20...Dale may have set a record for the most species caught from the Spillway of Woodcock Dam. Dale sent photos of wall-eye, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, perch, bluegill, catfish, carp and bowfin all caught on live minnows in the tailrace area of the outflow – all taken in a couple trips to the lake recently. (See photos at right)



ERIE COUNTY

Presque Isle Bay and Main Lake

Tim Tomlin @ Presque Isle Bay Anglers Group; filed 10/25: Perch have been showing up in both boat anglers' livewells and shore anglers' buckets all around Presque Isle Bay, which means perch are here but moving around. As a result of perch packs shifting locations, pier fishing has been inconsistent. Walleye, steelhead and smallmouth bass have been caught in 20 feet of water all along the lake shore. Not much talk of steelhead inside the Bay yet, but the tributaries have been productive. The foot bridge crossing Cascade Creek is off-limits due to safety concerns but anglers can still access the stream. (See photo)

Kirk @ East End Angler; filed 10/25: Bank-bound anglers are catching a few perch from docks and fishing piers on city side. But it is still a bit warm for a really good perch bite to start. Watch for better action when water temperature drops below 60 degrees. Bass anglers are picking up smallmouth in 20 to 25 feet of water in the lake.

Erie Tributaries

Jake @ FishUSA; filed 10/25: Steelhead fishing around the tributaries has been phenomenal. This past week I really noticed the fish keying in on eggs. Small, natural bead patterns, egg sacks and patterns like the Blood Dot have been working very well. Fish are spread out through the entire system, so anywhere is fair game!

Kirk @ East End Angler; filed 10/25: Creeks are currently blown out from Sunday's rain, but I got a couple trips in before the water went up. I caught two steelhead while fly fishing an east side stream. Here is my rig: I cut off the end of a tapered leader and tie in a small micro swivel to the end of the leader. Then I attach a 3-foot length of 6-pound fluorocarbon and tie on a minnow-imitating streamer. Two-feet from the streamer, I attach a float indicator.

Brittney @ Poor Richards; filed 10/25: This is the best steelhead season in years. The numbers of fish in the streams are crazy, and they are already all the way up into the headwaters. Right now, creeks are blown out but with dry days forecast for Wednesday and Thursday, the major streams may be fishable by Thursday or Friday – before more rain arrives. With dirty water, the best baits are nightcrawlers, egg sacks and skein; with clear low water, switch to single eggs and minnows.



Sam with 1st steelhead; Poor Richards photo

MERCER COUNTY

Lake Wilhelm



T. Latwin with Wilhelm largemouth bass

T. Latwin; filed 10/10: I caught four bass today at Lake Wilhelm with my good buddy Bo. (See photo at left)

Gus @ G&G Marine Electronics; filed 10/16...editor's note: Gus Glasgow and Dan Druschel made it look easy with another tournament win on Lake Wilhelm on Oct 16.



Dan & Gus for the win at Wilhelm crappie tourney.

"Brutal day for fishing. Rain showers and high winds. But the big girls bit. Worked through it all for a 1st place and lunker with a 2.20-pound black crappie." Garmin LiveScope and Gamma Line helped them secure the win. (See photo at right))

Shenango Lake & River

Editor's note: Shenango Lake has been fishing very well this summer and continues to do into the fall. While some guys are waiting for a fall hybrid striper bite to materialize, bass and crappies are keeping other anglers busy. Also, the Shenango River at New Hamburg received a winter stocking of trout this past week.

Randy @ Fish West PA; filed 10/25: Shenango Lake is cooling down and fish seem to be active in between the cold fronts. Smallmouth bass and crappie fishing have been great in recent weeks. Other species seem to be on and off. Beautiful fall days are here on Shenango as the leaves turn and peak color is near. (See photos next page)

Jeremy @ Blazer Baits; filed 10/22: The past two weeks I have been catching smallies as well as largemouth bass on isolated rock piles, secondary points and rocky drop offs on Shenango. Large fish are active in 6 to 8 feet depths. I noticed on Tuesday the bait is starting to tighten up. This is a good sign. I expect fishing to improve next week. Lures used include flat-sided square-bill crankbaits, small profile diving crankbaits and marabou jigs. Finding active hybrids over 6 pounds has been tough this fall. (See photos next page)

Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 10/22: Crappie fishing has been good. I've had several friends out, including my nephew out last week when we put 40 in the box – crappies, bluegills, white bass and a catfish. We got them deep and shallow on jigs. A friend from Indiana came to visit; got them that day, too. (See photos next page)

Brock Morocco (Hermitage); filed 10/11: I've been fishing several evenings on Shenango Lake now that the weather has cooled some. Nothing oversize, just nice average size bass – smallmouth bass, largemouth bass and white bass. No stripers so far. Lots of cormorants on the lake (too many) feeding on fish. Lake has been murky due to high water from all the rain. As long as the weather holds, I'll keep fishing. (See pictures next page.) I usually go up for steelhead but for some reason I'm not excited this season. Just too many people on the tributaries. I would rather fish local without the craziness. (See photos next page)

Note: Due to large number of photos from Shenango Lake and Shenango River, all images are being posted on the next page.

October on Shenango Lake—catch photos from Randy, Brock, Jeremy and Ken



Randy with a dandy SMB



Brock with Shenango



Jeremy with LMB



Ken with Smallmouth Bass



VENANGO COUNTY

Oil Creek

Al Bell @ Buttermilk Hill; filed 10/22: The artificial lure only section of Oil Creek was recently stocked. I have been catching mainly rainbows averaging 13 to 14 inches. The trout are taking egg patterns, purple squiggly and mop patterns. I see several spinner fishermen also doing well, as well as fishermen floating Trout Magnets in Pink, orange and red. The most recent rains increased the stream level and stained, but the high density of fish concentrated in that area should still produce. (See photo)

Justus Lake

Justus Lake will receive a winter stocking of trout on November 2, 2021.

Allegheny River

Editor's note: Although I have not received email reports/photos from any of the regular crew on the Allegheny River, during informal conversations with Mike, Dale, Jeff and RJ, they made me aware that the smallmouth bite on the river has been very good when conditions are suitable for fishing. However, the river has been up and down all month. As of today, it is flowing high and dirty. But look for it to drop and clear by next week.

Woodcock Creek Lake on the Come Back Trail

On March 8, 2021, the US Army Corps of Engineers discovered there had been an unintended rapid release of water from Woodcock Creek Lake in Crawford County resulting from malfunction of outflow gates. Ice cover on lake prevented discovery of the dewatering of the lake until only a very small pool remained in front of the gate tower. A substantial portion of the fish population in the lake was lost as rushing water carried them through the open gates and into Woodcock Creek.



It fell to the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) to assess the fish population. With water level restored, in May of 2021 Fisheries Manager Brian Ensign conducted an assessment study, and determined that walleye and musky had been more impacted than other fish species.



Forage siners being stocked

“Smallmouth bass, yellow perch and black crappies populations seemed to withstand the drawdown with less impact,” said Ensign. “But musky and walleye would require stocking because they do not spawn naturally in the lake.” In June the PFBC stocked 20,000 walleye fingerlings plus 12- to 14-inch musky yearlings to rebuild stocks. Early in October, Ensign did another assessment survey, and determined that smallmouth bass, crappies and other panfish had reproduced. However, the walleye numbers were low. So, the Army Corps decided to work with the PFBC to do an additional stocking by purchasing walleye, musky and forage fish from a private certified Wisconsin hatchery. On October 12 with both PFBC and USCOE personnel present, the stocking took place with 325 Walleye (6-8 inches), 250 Muskellunge (10-12 inches), Golden Shiners and Fathead minnows.



Walleye being stocked

In response to a question about future unexpected escape of water from the dam, Joseph Arnett, Resource Manager for Woodcock Creek Lake, said, “There is a process that has been developed across all the ACE reservoirs that allows for a third method of measuring the volume manually when we suspect something may have gone wrong.” He indicated this would be a triple check to prevent future episodes.

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; keystoneconnectionguideservice@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/.

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

Names drawn for prizes—contact Darl at darlblack@windstream.net with your shipping address in order to collect your prize.

Spool of Gamma Line: Rocky Habel

Cover photo prize: Brock Morocco

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



Allegheny River smallmouths



RJ with Allegheny smallies



Brock with Shenango River LMB



Ace with Shenango River SMB



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

Dale Black, owner of Gamma Line, has enjoyed a very busy year filling orders for line from across the US and other parts of the world. His move to a larger facility in Franklin little over a year ago has worked out nicely. He certainly likes hearing from anglers about how well they like Gamma Line. And when Gamma line helps anglers do well or win a tournament, Dale is thrilled with that news, too.



The success of Gus Glasgow and Dan Druschel in team crappie tournaments across the region this year really puts a big smile on Dale on Dale. In the last two weeks, Gus and Dan won the October Lake Wilhelm crappie event, as well as winning the NE Ohio Crappie Club end-of-season event on Sandusky Bay. In one of the winter issues of the Fishing Report, we will have Gus review his winning season,

which in part is attributed to Gamma Line and Garmin electronics.

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

If you are slowly cruising across the lake in October and you see this on your Garmin screen:



You might expect to catch a bunch of bluegills here:



Guess what else might be lurking down in that debris as well:

