

NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA FISHING REPORT

Published by Blackwolfe Communications LLC

Issue: November 24, 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



Dale Black
with 8-lb 7-
oz Allegheny
River
walleye

The Landing Net by Darl Black

We are on the downhill slide of fall fishing. With the exception of Lake Erie, all inland lakes and rivers are in the 40s. Still some good fishing left before the ice arrives. But once we hit 40 degrees on inland water, the bite slows considerably, with river walleyes and trout being exceptions.

In addition to walleye, there are opportunities still available for bass, crappies and perch. Check out the Thanksgiving Fishing Forecast in this issue.

And if you can stand the foul weather expected for the weekend, and want to catch a steelhead, now is the time!

Bill Logan with
8-lb 13-oz Allegheny
River
walleye



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 FROM CRAWFORD, MERCER AND VENANGO

NEWS BYTES – As issued by the PFBC

NEW STATE RECORD WALLEYE announced by PA Fish and Boat Commission.

On the evening of October 28, 2021, angler Richard Nicholson, 62, of Connellsville, Fayette County, was fishing from the bank of the Youghiogheny River along with his son, Richard Nicholson, Jr.



Nicholson was targeting Walleye using a spinning outfit spooled with 6-pound test and a live creek chub attached to a #2 hook, weighted with bb-shot and a slip sinker.

“We were fishing the bottom along the edge of a sandbar,” said Nicholson. “Conditions were good and we were catching fish right away.” Around 6:45 p.m., something was tugging hard on his line. “I knew right away it was something big, and I thought maybe it was a Musky. It fought for about 25 minutes before I got it up on the bank.”

The walleye measured 34 inches, with a girth of 21.5 inches. A self-described “meat eater”, Nicholson was going to fillet the fish. But his son convinced him to get it weighed.

Tipping the scales at 18 pounds 1 ounce on certified scales, Nicholson's fish appeared to beat the 41-year-old record held by Mike Holly of Bradford, Warren County; Holly's 17-pound 9-ounce state record came from Kinzua Reservoir in 1980. WCO Scott Opfer inspected Nicholson's fish and verified the species. Paperwork was completed, and after a review, we have a new State Record Walleye.

PFBC MANDATORY LIFE JACKET REQUIREMENT NOW IN EFFECT. Beginning on November 1 and last through April 30, boaters are required to wear a US Coast Guard approved life jacket while underway or at anchor on boats less than 16 feet in length or on any kayak, canoe or paddleboard. This requirement applies to all Pennsylvania waters.

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Dave @ Richter's Bait & Tackle; filed 11/22: Anglers have been catching walleyes on blades, but mostly sub-legal ones. Water temperature has finally dropped into the range that usually triggers larger walleyes to bite. But now everyone is thinking about hunting and not so much about fishing; there are only a handful of trailers in the parking lots. The serious musky anglers have been hitting Pymatuning hard – both trollers and casters. Must be catching numbers of smaller muskies because I'm not hearing anything about the big brutes. And then there are yellow perch, and more yellow perch – they are everywhere.



Marilyn @ Blackwolfe Communications; filed 11/19: We stopped to check out the action on the docks. There were about 18 people fishing from the docks at Jamestown. We talked to many of them. One angler had a half a bucket of nice crappies; another had a basket of decent bluegills and pumpkinseeds. Most of the others were catching panfish too small to keep. Apparently, we missed Kevin Austin, who left before we arrived; he informed us by email he had three nice crappies for his morning efforts. (Photos above)

ERIE COUNTY

Lake Erie Tributaries



Bob @ Solitude Steelhead Guide Service; filed 11/21: The heavy “leaf hatch” made finding a good drift over the past week challenging. Fishermen who were able to overcome the leaves were rewarded with excellent fishing. We will likely see a bump or two in the flow over the long Thanksgiving weekend depending on the amount of rain and snow received. But each time stream levels come down, expect fantastic fishing to continue. If you want to catch a steelhead this fall, the time is now! **(See Solitude Guide Service photos above)**

Bill @ Tudor’s Hook-N-Nook; filed 11/22: I recommend everyone to go hunting over Thanksgiving weekend so I have the streams to myself! (LOL) Fishing has been tremendous. There are fish through the entire length of every stream, and the water levels have been fairly stable – rising with rain and snow melt, but not too bad, and dropping back, but not too low. My advice: whether a pool or riffle, if you cannot see the bottom of the stream – FISH IT! There are likely steelhead in it.

Doug @ Elk Creek Sports; filed 11/22: Tributaries have been up and down, but anglers are still catching fish. The forecast for the holiday weekend includes strong winds, cold temps and mixed precipitation. Cold doesn’t seem to bother steelheaders. However, floating leaves have been the major obstacle to successful fishing.

Jeff @ Poor Richards; filed 11/22: Creeks are on the way down today, but given forecast they will likely be on the way back up by Friday. Just be prepared to fish the conditions. Clear water means minnows and single eggs. Murky water means ‘crawlers, egg sacks, and skein. For fly fishermen it’s light and natural egg patterns for clear water, and bright/bold colors in streamers for murky water.



T Latwin/ brown



Mark Megela /brown

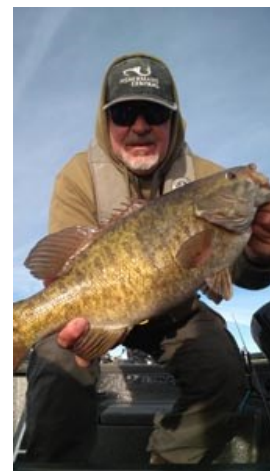


Luke Stevenson

Lake Erie and PIB

Kirk @ East End Angler; filed 11/22: More and more reports of lake trout being caught in the shallows by casting spoons and jigs. They are even inside the Northeast Marina, with anglers catching them from the wall walkway. A bunch of brown trout showed up at Four Mile Creek this week. Fish in Four Mile are above Rt. 5. The perch bite in the Bay continues to pick up at North and South Piers, public fishing docks on city side and in some spots at Head of Bay. And customers have confirmed that walleyes are being caught at night inside the Bay from shore on suspending stickbaits. One buddy took six walleyes home in the 25-inch plus range. I'm not discussing exact sites.

Capt. George Mro; filed 11/14: During the week of November 7, weather was nice and the lake fishable. The water became ultra-clear and made the smallmouth very finicky. It is important to follow the baitfish as they are on the move throughout the day. Smallies may be shallow, then an hour later they can be found in deep water. Multiple baits put big fish in the boat. A small finesse blade bait worked the best for me. My guiding season on Erie is over for the year, but there will be smallmouth to be caught if you can get on the main lake. See you in the spring. **(Capt. Mro Photos below)**



MERCER COUNTY

Lake Wilhelm

Isaac Smith, filed 11/14: I recently moved to the area and started fishing Lake Wilhelm this fall. I'm not going to lie – it's been tough. Looking for bass and musky. Only caught one fish in four trips out. I caught this musky while fishing for bass. I was using a 3/8-ounce football jig with a Yamamoto Flippin' Hog trailer – both jig and trailer were green pumpkin in color. (Photo at right)



Shenango Lake

Randy @ Fish West PA; filed 11/21: Shenango water temperature dropped into the 40s but fish were still feeding before the cold fronts. Bass, walleye and crappie hit during the warmth of the day. The lake is drawn down so be safe if you go out. (See photos below)



Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 11/20: I had the pleasure to get out three times in the last week. Great fishing every day on Shenango Lake. First day I took Tim Odem with me. We got two limits with 25 of the crappies being over 12 inches. Second day I went by myself. I put a limit of good eaters in the box by noon. All 11 to 12-inch black crappies. Third day, I took Tim Odem again. We couldn't keep the largemouth bass off our crappie jigs; we caught and released 14 bass. The crappie bite was good, too. But the wind would not let us fish our big fish spots. We put 37 crappies in the box plus three perch. None over 12 inches. I used the 2-pound Gamma Panfish Line I won on the Fishing Report with 1/32 and 1/16-ounce heads with either white Twister Tails or Bobby Garland Baby Shads tipped with nibbles. I hope to get out a couple more times before I put the boat away next week. (See photos)



VENANGO COUNTY

Oil Creek

Angler Al @ Buttermilk Hill; filed 11/21: A fish friend from Butler I call Fisherman Bill met me at the Artificial Only Section of Oil Creek. Together we caught several rainbow trout. The trout like an orange salmon egg pattern and an artificial wax worm. (See photo on right)



Allegheny River

Bill Logan (Pleasantville) filed 11/10: On November 10th, I caught an 8-pound 13-ounce walleye on a tube jig. I also got 12 bass on a variety of lures, including Rapala X Rap, tubes, Galida's Grubz and spinnerbait. (See cover photo)

Pete @ Smallies on the Yough.com; filed 11/16: I fished the Allegheny for a few hours today. The bite was soft. I caught a few nice fish up to 19 inches. The smallest was 16 inches. I used hair jigs to land them in 45-degree water. The river was on the rise with large number of floating leaves. (See photo below)

Dale @ Gamma Fishing; filed 11/13: Clifford Weidman joined me for three days of fishing on the Allegheny. During the three-day period, we caught and released fifteen dozen smallmouth bass and several walleyes. My largest walleye was 8 pounds 7 ounces. (See photos here and on cover)

Mike @ Mikes Custom Tackle; filed 11/21: Dale Black of Gamma Line and I fished together today. The water temperature was 44.5 degrees and great color. Fish are still tearing it up in the Oil City pool and caught them on Mike's Custom Tubes and Mike's Ned Rigs. We caught and released 25 and 30 fish between the two of us. (See photos below and Livewell)



Pete Cartwright



Clifford Weidman



Dale Black

THANKSGIVING WEEKEND FISHING FORECAST

During the long Thanksgiving holiday weekend, those with extra time off work usually plan to go hunting or going fishing. Guess which I do...

Based on the information I have received this week from NW PA Fishing Report contributors along with my own Thanksgiving experiences in, I have distilled the following list of recommended species and fishing spots for this coming weekend.

Steelhead: Erie tributaries, of course. According to those in the know, this has been an absolutely great steelhead season so far. According to reports, there are still good numbers of steelhead in the streams. And water levels, although bouncing up and down, are for the most part within parameters for fishing. This weekend will be cold, windy and wet – just the way steelheaders like it – so I've been told. Tributaries are a good bet!



Walleyes: Normally, the automatic answer would be Pymatuning this time of year. However, the walleye bite has not progressed along a normal timeline this fall. Lots of small 'eyes, but not that many keepers – although it might happen any time. The Allegheny River or French Creek would be my suggestion. You will not catch as many walleyes as on Pymatuning, but you'll likely get some very nice ones.



Smallmouth Bass: By this time of the fall, there are only three places I would go smallmouth bass fishing: Lake Erie, Allegheny River and Conneaut Lake. You'll be blown off Erie this weekend. The Allegheny is a good choice if you have a jetboat to move from wintering pool to wintering pool; bring your tube jigs, Ned rigs and suspending jerkbaits. This time of year, Conneaut Lake often offers a very good blade bait bite for smallmouth in depths of 12 to 20 feet.



Yellow Perch: Two choices – Presque Isle Bay or Pymatuning. At PIB there are ample public fishing docks on city side, plus North and South Piers, so you don't need a boat. At Pymatuning, you can try the Linesville docks but the reports from there are small perch. To get the jumbos at Pymatuning, you will need to launch a boat.

Crappies: There is only one lake to head to if you want to get a possible limit of crappies this weekend – Shenango Lake. Shenango has been putting out crappies all year. Right now some are still reasonably shallow while other are deep on channel drops.

Area Guide Services contribute to the NW PA Fishing Report

Looking for a trip on a Crawford, Erie, Mercer and Venango county water?

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/.

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

Solitude Steelhead Guide Service: Fly-fishing the tributaries of Pennsylvania. Bob Packey; 724-972-8813; solitudesteelheadguide@yahoo.com; www.solitudesteelheadguideservice.com

PRIZE DRAWING: Names drawn for prizes must contact darlblack@windstream.net and provide shipping address in order to claim your prize.

Cover photo: **Bill Logan** wins a pack of either Galida's Grubz or Mike's Tubes.

Gamma Line (type and lb. test of your choice: **Mark Megela**

Lure pack: **Isaac Smith**

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 chilled waters of late fall draw the big bass out to feed for winter slow down.



Randy on Shenango Lake



Shenango produces SMB



Capt. Mro guides for
oversized Lake Erie SMB



Mike McFadden produces tubes
and Ned rigs that catch SMB



Dale's Gamma Line lands the
biggest river smallmouths.



Clifford Weidman intro to River



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, President of Black Knight Industries: I've always encouraged newcomers to Gamma Line to drop down at least one step in pound-test our line has a high break strength for its diameter. Going to lower diameter line means better manageability.

Two of the best regional crappie anglers I know are now spooling their reels for casting jigs with 2-pound Gamma Panfish line instead of 4 pound or 6-pound, and are catching more fish. All my small-mouth bass jig/tube rods are spooled with 5-pound Touch fluorocarbon.



Touch is a smaller diameter line than Edge fluorocarbon of the same pound test. Smaller diameter translates to a more natural presentation, where the jig/lure is in control, rather than a heavier line controlling – or mis-controlling – the lure. Smaller diameter line transmits a bite signal more effectively – you can “feel” better with the small diameter.

Breaking off fish? Hardly. During six bass trips on the river for smallmouth this November, my guests and I (all using Gamma Line) caught and released over 300 smallmouths up and down the river. Not even once did a line break when fighting or landing a fish – bass to five pounds and even heavier walleyes.

Try Gamma Edge or Touch fluorocarbon, or Polyflex monofilament, and discover the Gamma difference.

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

If you only have a fish-finder with traditional view sonar, you'll see a lot of things on the bottom that you have no idea what they are. But when you have a Garmin fish-finder with Clear Vu down scan, you can actually see what's down there.

Check out photos below: With traditional view (bottom half of picture) you can only guess what this object is; you cannot even see fish. But with Clear Vu it becomes apparent that a section of steep shoreline washed away many years ago, taking a tree with it. The tree slid into the depths. Now each fall crappies load up on the tree as winter approaches.

