

NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA FISHING REPORT

Published by Blackwolfe Communications LLC Issue: February 23, 2022

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



Alex Horne with his first northern pike through the ice at Conneaut Lake

LANDING NET by Darl Black

With less than 30 days until the first day of Spring, we are certainly looking at a mix of weather here in NW PA. Fifty degrees one day, 19 degrees the next. Throw in rain and wind. Streams and rivers blow out ice resulting in flooding. Ice-covered lakes show softening around the edges with some areas showing open water. Yes, there may still be fishable ice on some bodies of water, but conditions are far from comfortably safe. For their most recent tournament, WPA Hardwater required contestants to wear either a floatation suit or a life jacket over their outerwear. It's late winter in NW PA – ice is unpredictable.

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 February 23, 2022

Published by Blackwolfe Communications LLC

County by county reports from Crawford, Erie, Mercer and Venango Counties

News Bytes

PA Fish and Boat Commission: Trout stocking will begin February 22. The Statewide Mentored Youth Trout Day will be Saturday, March 26. The Statewide Opening Day of Trout Season will be Saturday, April 2.

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Editor: The Western PA Hardwater Tournament Series held their Pymatuning event on Saturday, February 19 – See the special page devoted to tournament coverage.

Jake @ FishUSA; filed 2/22: Pymatuning has been producing lots of big crappies if you can get on the right school. Jigging spoons and waxworms have been my go-to baits. Make sure to target off-shore structure. (See photo right)



Jake with PY crappie



Gus @ G&G Marine Electronic: My son Rhys and I fished the Pymatuning Snowmobile Club Ice Fishing Tournament on February 12. Rhys took second place in the Crappie Division with a 15-7/8-inch White Crappie. (See photo left)

Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 2/16: I continue to catch a nice bunch of big bluegills each time I fish the South End of Pymatuning. I'm finding them in deep cover.

Conneaut Lake

Adam Horne; filed 2/19: My son and I fished Conneaut Lake on February 18th with grubs and landed some nice bluegills on the south end of the lake. Fish were moving and active. Tip-ups set for northern pike were active, too. My son Alex caught his first Northern Pike thanks to the kindness of another fisherman. Great day to be on the ice and make memories with Alex. Be cautious as the weather starts to warm. (See photo on cover)

Canadohta Lake

Jerry @ Timberland Bait: Anglers catching crappies in the deep water this week.

Here are your 2022 Timberland Bait's Ice Fishing Tournament winners (2/19 & 2/20).

-- Garrett Ward of Union City, PA; 40-3/4" Musky. This 14-year-old caught his first Musky. Prize \$1,500.

-- Braylen Drayer of Spartansburg, PA; 27-1/4 Pike. This was the eight-year-olds first pike through the ice. Prize \$600.

-- Jason Kimmy of Cambridge Springs 20 in. Walleye \$500.

-- Calvin Bloss of Union City, PA; 12-inch perch. Prize \$200.00

-- Nicole Horvatlt of Northeast, PA. 11-1/4" crappie. Prize \$ 200.

Thanks to everyone who participated in this annual event. I really appreciate it!! Also want to thank all of my friends and family for helping make this tournament a success.

(See Photos below)



ERIE COUNTY

Bill @ Tudor Hook-N-Nook; filed 2/22: Elk and most other streams are wide open and anglers are catching fish. Most reported catches are coming higher upstream between Rt. 20 and McKean. For fly fishermen, both streamers and egg patterns are working. As we get closer to spring and suckers start to run the streams, then it's going to be Sucker Spawn. (See photos from Solitude Steelhead Guide Service—left and right)



Chad Prihode; filed 2/22: Slow bite in the morning. Fought slush until about 1 pm. After that the slush melted and fishing was great the rest of the day. Green egg sacks and Gulp 3" minnows were the ticket. (Photos below)



Lynne @ East End Angler; filed 2/22: Still some fishable ice on Presque Isle Bay. They are catching nice perch off the 2nd and 3rd Parking Lots on the Peninsula, and straight out from Chestnut Street access. However, I'm told the Bay is wide open from the Channel into Misery Bay. And with today's warm temperatures and rain, hard to say what ice will be like by weekend.

Tim @ Presque Isle Bay Anglers Group; filed 2/22: We've still got ice, but it can be tricky getting on it from shore in some areas because it is soft. Hot bite for nice (not jumbo) perch in the 9 to 10-inch size is off the 1st and 2nd Parking Lots. It was a tough bite for me early today; had to go to a plain jighead with only a maggot on it, and you had to let the perch chew on it. But then about 2 p.m. someone rang the dinner bell and fooling with live bait was a waste of time. The BC Bait's Scud Bug in Eagle's Milk smashed them. (Tim Tomlin photo)



Jake @ FishUSA; filed 2/22: The ice fishing has been good on Presque Isle Bay with larger perch starting to move into the Bay. This year it seems the better size perch are showing up later in the season. Chestnut Street and the 2nd parking lot on the state park side have been the best producing spots. Misery Bay has been producing big gills and crappies. Early morning and right before dark have been best.

MERCER COUNTY

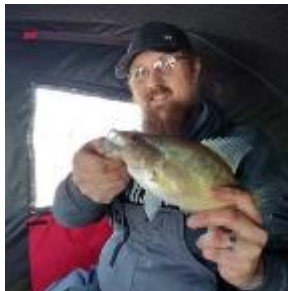
Editor: End of ice fishing on flood-control **Shenango Lake** since run-off from recent storm resulted in lake level rising rapidly and break up the ice.

Lake Wilhelm

Bo @ BC Bait Co.; filed 2/22: I've been catching a lot of nice crappies plus some catfish on BC Mini Pick Worms off Launch #1 in the channel. Due to melting along shore, boards are needed to reach the ice. (See photo below)

Tyler Gannoe; filed 2/20: Wilhelm was good this winter. Figured I'd share some photos. (See photos below)

Shawn Hostetler; filed 2/20: My son Chase caught this nice crappie around noon on Sunday at Launch #1. Good eating size, but we released it. (See photo below))



Bo photo



Tyler Gannoe



Tyle & friend at tourney



Chase Hostetler

VENANGO COUNTY

Editor: no reports from Venango County. Allegheny River, Oil Creek and French Creek are blown out; some flooding continues.

Western PA Hardwater Tournament Series Pymatuning Tournament Sponsored by FishUSA By Gus Glasgow



What an event! Seventy-eight teams from all over the North West. Expectations were high coming onto this lake. Pymatuning Lake is one of the top destinations for big crappie anywhere around. However, when a front hits hard, the weather changed drastically and the bite shut down big time. With gale force winds and significant temperature drop during the event, teams did not move around the lake much.

Several teams had planned on making a 2-mile walk up the lake, but changed their plans as a result of the weather front. (A few teams still made the walk and came out on top – I will not say which ones – lol). Still with the odds against them, some teams were able to pull out beautiful stringers of fish.

Taking the top honors were the team of Gregory Sprowls and Chris Pihou with a 10.00 lb. bag of crappie along with a 2.08 kicker, earning them a check for \$2,000 along with another \$780 for big fish honors. Following close behind were the teams Jeff Snyder and Kyle Uveilo with 9.70 lb. and Ron Wagner and Scott Nelson with a 9.50 lb. bag. In all, 10 places were paid out in cash and as well as prizes from our awesome sponsors. Thank you to all that came out. And thanks to FishUSA for being out headline sponsor. See you in Erie in two weeks.



Gamma Fishing; Striker; FishUSA; Lucky Custom Rods; Jisco Truck and Off-road; John's Power Boxes; ADK Custom jigs; [Vexilar Inc](#); Mr. Heater; BC Bait Co. Custom Baits; Eskimo Ice Fishing Gear; Weigh Safe; Apex Fishing; Robert Stephens Custom Jewelers; G&G Marine



SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL BUSINESS PAGE
BC Bait Co., Hadley, PA
Manufacturer of custom soft plastic baits for panfish.



Bo removing a run baits from mold

BC Bait Co. might not exist today if Bo Bartholomew had not been given a Creepy Crawler molding kit back when he was a youngster. “I always thought the kit was one of the coolest presents I ever received as a kid. I had fun pouring home-made worms for trout fishing in the Little Shenango River.” Years later, Bo and friend Chris (the “C” in BC) had the idea to pour plastic to create small baits for panfish. “In 2017, I acquired the professional equipment to melt plastic and inject molds, and started off just making them for friends. Then in 2020, I began marketing them to the

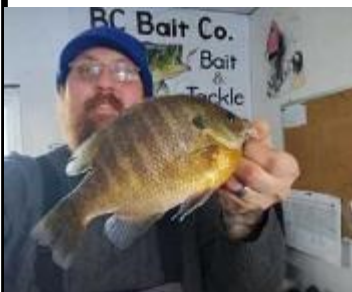
general public,” explained Bo.

Today BC Bait Co offers about 15 different models of panfish-sized baits in 14 colors that are effective year-round for crappies, bluegills, perch and more. The most popular bait is the Original Terry Bug. The latest bait, called a Tad, has been an immediate hit on ice. “Since introducing it in time for this season’s hardwater season, the Tad accounts for the greatest proportion of our sales in the last month. What sets our baits apart is our own scented oil made from natural ingredients...boiled down gizzard shad.”

BC Bait Co. products are currently in 12 stores in NY, OH and PA (including Tudor Hook-N-Nook and East End Angler in Erie County).



However, the bulk of his sales are mail order. Visit his website www.bcbaitco.com for selection and pricing, and follow BC Bait Co on Facebook for the latest catches by Bo and friends. Order through the website, or phone 1-724-704-1723.



Bo sez “BC Baits for big ‘gills.”

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

CHECK HERE TO SEE IF YOU NAME WAS DRAWN FOR A PRIZE

Names drawn for prizes. To claim a prize, you must email Darl at darlblack@windstream.net with your shipping address. If you do not claim the prize before the next Fishing Report, the prize goes back in the hopper.

Cover shot—Bay of Galida's Grubz: Adam Horne

Spool of Gamma Line—Your choice: Tyler Gannoe

Species Lure Pack— Bass, Walleye or Panfish: Chad Prihode

5-pack Kevin Austin Hand-tied Panfish Jigs: Chase Hostetler

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

Spring will be here before you know it. If you didn't get your motor winterized last fall, make an appointment now with Wiegel Bros Marine to have your boat and motor go through a spring check-up before hitting the water.





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



Ice fishing is coming to a close soon. Open water in area lakes is around the corner. Now is the time to purchase fresh GAMMA Line of your choice — Polyflex, Optic Yellow Panfish, Edge, Fluorocarbon, Touch Fluorocarbon or Torque Braid—to spoon on your reels. Don't lose the big ones this year, use an exceptionally strong and reliable line: GAMMA!

(Gamma Fishing headquarters right here in Franklin, PA)

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

G&G pro-staffer & guide Bo Bartholomew showed a recent ice-fishing client how Garmin Livescope can help you bring more crappies through the hole during a tough bite day. Book a trip with him this spring to learn more.



Next issue, Gus Glasgow of G&G Marine Electronics gives up the break down on the new Livescope Plus.

DIRECTORY OF FISHING REPORT SUPPORT

The following agencies and business may be found on Facebook pages.

PENNSYLVANIA GREAT LAKES REGION (Regional tourism association is prime sponsor of the NW PA Fishing Report)– County organization listing provides information on Activities, Shopping, Lodging, Restaurants and Special Events

- Crawford County Convention & Visitors Bureau
- VisitErie
- Visit Mercer County PA
- Oil Region Alliance

AREA TACKLE SHOPS – Regularly provide information to NW PA Fishing Report on status of the public waters fished by their customers. Support these shops.

Erie County

- East End Angler
- Elk Creek Sports
- FishUSA
- Poor Richards Bait & Tackle
- Tudor Hook-N-Nook

Crawford County – Pymatuning

- Duck-N-Drake
- Poff's Place
- Richter's Bait

Crawford County East

- Timberland Bait

Mercer County

- Consumer Direct Sports Supplies (CDS)

Venango County

- Maurer's Trading Post



Photo by Ed Atts

LOCAL TACKLE MANUFACTURERS – They supply the prizes for giveaways on the NW PA Fishing Report.

- B.C. Baits Custom Tackle
- Dutch Fork Tackle
- French Creek Fishing Company
- Galida's Grubz
- Luckis4rabbits
- Mike's Custom Tackle