

NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA FISHING REPORT

Published by Blackwolfe Communications LLC

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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



As steelhead season draws slowly to a close, wade anglers can switch to French Creek or the Allegheny River for big Smallmouth Bass now!



The Landing Net by Darl Black

Ready , GO FISH! Reports are coming in from Presque Isle Bay, Pymatuning Lake and Shenango Lake regarding good to excellent crappie, perch and bluegill bites in shallow water. Bass anglers on the Allegheny are having a grand time with smallmouth up and down the river. The Pymatuning wading walleye bite is about to kick in. Check the Report for details. Be sure to check out what the Area 1 Fisheries Manager has to say about certain lakes in this region. Don't overlook the comments on Garmin's LiveScope Plus from Gus on the Garmin Page. And by all means, if a contributor to this Report, check the bottom of the Guide Page to see if your name was drawn for possible prize. Follow the instructions to claim your prize.

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 March 23, 2022

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

In This Issue:

- Comments from PFBC Area 1 Fisheries Manager looking forward for 2022
- Highlighting Richter's Bait & Tackle in Support Local Business
- Special comments from G&G Marine Electronics on Garmin's New LiveScope Plus

News Bytes:

- PFBC Mentored Youth Day for Trout on Saturday, March 26, 2022.
- PFBC Statewide Opening Day of Trout on Saturday, April 2, 2022.
- Edinboro Masonic Lodge Annual Kids Fishing Derby on Saturday, April 2, 2022 from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. below the dam on Erie Street. Prizes in 3 age categories. (See photo from previous Derby)
- PFBC Day at the Hatchery (Linesville Hatchery), Saturday, April 9, 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.



Previous Kids Fishing Derby at Edinboro below the dam.

Instead of launching into the county-by-county reports, we are pleased to have Area 1 Fisheries Manager Tim Wilson offer a look into 2022 based on his trap-netting surveys on select lakes from 2021. In a future issue, Area 2 Fisheries Manager Brian Ensign will look at lakes in his district.

PF&BC Fisheries Management Area 1 Preview of 2022

Presented by Timothy A. Wilson, Area Fisheries Manager

For Pymatuning, there will be a lot of 14 to 15-inch Walleyes recruiting to the fishery this year. Anglers will need to carefully release all sublegal Walleyes they catch.

We captured 9 total White Perch in our trapnets last year, which is a slight increase from the two we caught in 2019. It appears that they can grow to a decent size in Pymatuning and will be worth harvesting for eating.



Channel Catfish are doing quite well in Pymatuning. People keep asking why we stock them. But we don't, and haven't since 1995. The population is maintained entirely through natural reproduction. Both PA and Ohio have studied them; and they are slow-growing and long-lived fish. A few Channel Catfish we aged were in the 25 to 30 years old range.

Flatheads are well established in the Pymatuning Sanctuary, and I'm a little surprised we don't see more in the main lake. We just hear about a few caught here and there. Flatheads are also present in Shenango Lake and appear to be expanding there.

Pymatuning Channel Cat 2022

Shenango is a much more consistent producer of large year classes for both Black and White Crappies, and therefore, it maintains a more consistent high-quality fishery from year to year. It's been a while since we've seen one of those 'boomer' year classes among crappies in Pymatuning, so I don't expect any changes for 2022. Based on our surveys, it appears Yellow Perch are taking over as the number one panfish in Pymatuning Lake. (Tim Wilson, PFBC Area 1 Fisheries Manager)

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Dave @ Richter's Bait; filed 3/21: During the two consecutive warm days last week, the crappies turned on big time in the shallow mud bays of the North End. Perch were eating, too. Surface water temp went from 45 to 50 degrees in those two days. Minnows out fished plastic baits. We caught fish one after another, but only kept enough for dinner both days. Our keepers were all 13 to 14 inchers. Drop in temperature, wind and overcast shut the shallow crappies down over the weekend. But fish will be back feeding when the temp rises. No word on waders hitting walleyes on main lake points.

David Graham (Titusville); filed 3/21: Darl, we hammered them today – Monday, 3/21 - in three feet of water in old pad stems on the North End. Two young kids came and anchored beside me in an open V hull with no trolling motor. They proceeded to put on a show. I was a cast and a half away and caught plenty, but those two boys caught slabs every throw for over 2 hrs. I was that close. Good day. (See photo)



David Graham photo



Linesville Spillway walleye angler

Laurie @ Duck-N-Drake; filed 3/21: Starting spring off with some very good reports! Jumbo perch off the docks at Linesville. Crappies in the shallow northern bays. Walleyes being caught on Sonars and Vib-E at the OH and PA bridges on Andover causeway during low light. We are planning to hold four catfish tournaments this season plus a walleye tournament. And don't forget the big crappie event being held by NE OH Crappie Club; all information available at Duck-N-Drake.

Bo @ BC Baits; filed 3/20: We did very well Thursday at Linesville Marina. Perch bit all day; purple Terry Bug was the ticket. Some monster perch were taken. We also found a good bunch of crappies right before sunset and the bite continued until 10 PM. Many of the crappies were in the 12 to 16-inch range. Purple Terry Bug got the crappies, too.





Marilyn Black (Cochranton); filed 3/18: I caught some very nice bluegills (nine inchers) on the South End in a back corner of a mud bay in less than 2 feet of water; they were taken on a tiny jig with a live maggot. There was a good size school that just kept swimming back and forth across the bay. Three other anglers also there took home about 1-1/2 dozen big 'gills. (photo)

Dale Clemmer (Cochranton); filed 3/17: I had a good day at the Linesville Docks on perch. Caught them on minnows. (photo)



Dale Clemmer photo

Conneaut Lake

Adam Horne (Hartstown): As the ice was starting to come off Conneaut Lake, I was fishing from the docks on the south end of Conneaut. We caught some nice panfish using a jig and float...but the key was patience and slow presentation. The best combo seemed to be a red jig tipped with a small maggot.

ERIE COUNTY

Tributary Streams

Editor: As the end of steelhead season draws closer, Robert Packey (Solitude Steelhead Guide Service) provided his special insight for the remaining weeks of stream fishing.

Solitude Steelhead Guide Service: Although there are only a few fresh fish entering the Pa. tributaries, quite a few wintered over; so, drop back fish still remain in the system. After enduring the rigors of spawning and a long winter with little to no food, these fish can have voracious appetites. Do not be afraid to target these fish with large streamers. Suckers have started to enter some of the tributaries, which is a sure sign that spring is coming. If you want to land a few steelhead before the season comes to a close, now is the time. Please be aware that the annual smolt stocking has begun on many of the steelhead streams. They are our future steelhead runs, so please handle them with extreme caution. (See recent photos on right)



Presque Isle Bay

Lynne @ East End Angler; filed 3/21: Perch are being caught at multiple sites in the Bay from shore and from boat. Crappies being caught in Misery Bay and Marina Lake. The next warm spell should get more fish and more fishermen into play – then we will have lots of reports!

Tim @ Presque Isle Anglers Group; filed 3/21: Presque Isle Bay is firing on all cylinders for panfish right now! Crappies, bluegills, and perch can be had all throughout the sub bays and shallow shoreline areas. Plastics like BC Baits Terry Bugs & Stingers in chartreuse, orange, and purple have been extremely effective suspended a couple feet under bobbers over the weedbeds. Steelhead & northern pike are taking their shots at testing angler skills on those same light presentations. Life vests must be worn at all times in boats under 16' and for all canoes & kayaks. Please keep in mind that No Wake zones are still just that, even if the buoys aren't out yet. Look out for your fellow anglers out there!

MERCER COUNTY

Lake Wilhelm

Bo @ BC Baits; filed 3/20: I got the boat out last Friday and launched it at Wilhelm. With the help of my Garmin, I found a large school of feeding crappies. Orange Terry Bug worked best, followed closely by a Ball Tail in Eagles Milk. For shore and wade anglers, crappies are being caught off the Old Road. Orange Terry Bug was ticket for them, too. (See photos on right)



Shenango Lake and River



John Kolodziejski; filed 3/18: After spending a few days in the D.C. area meeting our beautiful baby granddaughter, it was time to break out the rods and go fishing!

The first stop was at Shenango River to try a few flies I had tied for cold water rainbows. A soft hackled beaded size 14 nymph with a neon orange chenille body was quickly taken by a very scrappy trout on my second cast of the year. The aerial display made me smile. Off to a great start for the season!

(John Kolodzieski on Shenango Lake continued)

I lost the fly after landing a few more rainbows and then tied on a basic sucker spawn pattern in the same general hue. While it wasn't as productive as the lost fly, at least a couple of fish showed interest.

Next on the docket was to dust off my spinning rod for early Spring crappie at Shenango Lake. I had specifically tied a handful of natural squirrel tail 1/16-ounce jigs for the occasion but forgot them at home. Thankfully I did have a supply of 2" twister tail grubs and lead head jigs in the truck. To my pleasant surprise I caught a keeper white crappie on my very first cast! It was another very positive start and I was quite pleased.

But then I won't mention the non-action on my next few dozen casts. However, I did take note the crappie took the lure a mere few feet from shore. I assumed it must have followed my jig in...until I spoke to another fisherman. He was having very good success and shared that he was catching slab crappies two rod lengths from shore in the turbid water. I thanked him for the friendly tip and proceeded to catch several 10" to 12" chunky crappies just off the water's edge before dark. (See photos)

Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 3/18: Shenango Lake this past week

- Thursday 3/1: my friend Shawn Hailstock and I walked the shoreline at the swim beach for some crappies. Got seven in the bucket. Minnows for him, jigs for me.

- Friday 3/17: Took the boat out for the first trip of the season. Went to area south of Golden Run with my bro in law Tim Odem. We caught close to a hundred good size crappies and perch on jigs and bobbers. Kept our limits and 8 nice perch. Best first day I can remember. I'm usually in Kentucky at this time of year. The fear of Covid has kept me home these last three seasons; but I might head down late next month. (photos at right)

- Saturday 3/18: I headed back to same spot but the fish have moved. Completely gone from the area. As a matter of fact, they were nowhere to be found. We put 4 crappies in the box along with one decent perch. We fished from the Golden Run area all the way to Parkers Landing area and couldn't find the schools of crappies. The lake had dropped over a foot and a half overnight; and those fish just disappeared on us. The water had



turned muddy lake wide. Made for a humbling day but still enjoyed the outdoors as we saw 8 eagles enjoying themselves and a couple deer walking the shoreline in the Mahaney area. It's going to rain all weekend so I'll wait a few days to get back on the water. Even with my rain gear on, I'm too old to sit in the cold rain this early in the season. Prayerfully, better days are ahead for all of us. (See photos)



Kevin @ Luckis4rabbits; filed 3/19: On the 18th, I was fishing three feet deep with a clip-on bobber from shore. Using one of my custom-tied jigs (pink and white head with green body), I caught crappies by popping the bobber. The next day I found the crappies on my previous day spot had moved into 18 inches of water. I used the same jig to catch more fish. (See photo at left)

VENANGO COUNTY

Allegheny River

Mike @ Mike's Custom Tackle; filed 3/18

- Thursday, 3/17: It was a decent day on the river Thursday, the 17th. But we struggled early between the current and cold water. The water warmed late in the day and fish started to eat. We found a shallower slack water pocket out of the current so we didn't have to fight snags constantly. Once the water temp hit the 45-degree mark around 5 pm, smallmouths turned on and fishing was very good. It lasted about an hour and a half. Then the water temp started to drop again and fishing action started slow. The river was still high and visibility less than a foot. We did our best on Ned Rigs and some jigs. It is early, but it will get better. (Photo at right)



- Friday, 3/18: We got out Friday for about an hour and half. Several boats in the OC pool, but hardly anyone catching a fish from what we observed. We put 50 smallies in the boat in less than two hours. Not sure what's wrong with people sometimes. They just sat there and watched us catch fish and fish – then got up and left. We had one 4-pound bass and several in the 3 to 3.5-pound range. Still high and dirty but water temp had come up a tad. (See photo at right and in Livewell)



(Allegheny River continued)



Jeff @ Keystone Connection Guide Service; filed 3/19: With the middle Allegheny finally dropping to an acceptable level, I made my first scouting trip of the year. We found river smallmouth feeding along the edges of two wintering holes. Water temperature was 42 degrees. The two productive baits were Ned Rigs and bucktail jigs. Provided the river remains in good shape I plan to start my guiding season the week of April 4. (See photo on left)

Pete @ Smallies on the Yough Guide Service; filed 3/20: We fished the Allegheny on the 18th. The bite was soft and required a slow presentation. We landed some of the bigger smallmouth using soft plastics, and we also got bit off a few times from toothy fish. The largest Smallmouth Bass was 22 inches. Only going to get better from here. (Photo on right and in Livewell)



Farewell to Ice Fishing ...

The Western PA Hardwater Tournament Series finished up their season in early March with their Presque Isle Bay tourney. However, ice conditions on the main bay were deteriorating so the event was held on Marina Lake, a protected area where ice cover was still fishable — undisturbed by the wind and current breaking up the main Bay. Many anglers were surprised at the number of panfish caught from Marina Lake—an area ignored by many PIB ice anglers.



SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL BUSINESS

Richter's Bait & Tackle, Jamestown, PA

Wide range of fishing tackle and supplies, plus food for the fisherman

For 44 years, the Richter family has been serving the needs of anglers, campers, and vacationers to Pymatuning Lake from their store on Rt. 322 about ½ mile from the main Pymatuning State Park Entrance



“When we bought the store in 1978, it was a grocery/ convenience store, but we soon added fishing tackle and bait because this was the center of the most popular lake for angling in the entire region,” stated Dave Richter. Today, tackle displays account for roughly 50% of store space, while souvenirs, camper needs, and a well-stocked deli fill of the rest of the floor space. Besides tackle, the store is known for its fresh hoagies and pizza.



Being an accomplished angler, Dave knows precisely what to buy in order to meet the needs of local anglers. “We provide a wide spectrum of artificial lures, reasonably-priced reels & rods, live bait rigs, bobbers, bait & minnow buckets, nets and emergency boat supplies. Our live bait offerings include three sizes of minnow, shiners, suckers, nightcrawlers, red worms, maggots, mealworms, wax worms, and leeches depending on availability. Our artificial lure choices are based on what produces here on Pymatuning for walleye, crappie, bass and panfish. With the increased interest in muskellunge and catfish, we have recently expanded tackle.”



Dawn Richter mentioned some currently best-selling products: “We have a solid stock of Bomber A and Rapala Minnows in the hottest Pymatuning colors – baits that are in high demand by shore fishermen as walleyes move shallower to spawn. We provide crappie fishermen an excellent variety of the in-demand Bobby Garland Crappie Baits – especially their Baby Shad. Oh, don’t forget our rental cottages. But the spring and early dates go fast, so don’t wait.”

Phone 724-932-5372; Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/richtersbaitandgrocery/>



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 of the following contributors to this issue were drawn for a Prize. To claim the prize, you must send an email to darlblack@windstream.net with your shipping address. If prize not claimed before next Report date, the prize goes back into the hopper.

Spool of Gamma Line: [John Kolodziejski](#)

Species Specific Lure Packet from Sponsors: [David Graham](#)

Special drawing for Kevin Austin' Hand-tied Crappie Jigs: [Tim Tomlin](#)

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 Smallmouth Bass bite in the Allegheny River is on!



Mike McFadden at Mike's Custom Tackle



SmalliesOnTheYough Guide Service on the Allegheny.



Mike Cartwright with 22 inch Smallmouth Bass.

Don't overlook the crappie bite at Pymatuning and Shenango Lake, plus trout on special reg area at New Hamburg on Shenango River.



Pymatuning (BC Bait Company)



Shenango (Luckis4rabbits)



Shenango River

(John Kolodziejski)



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

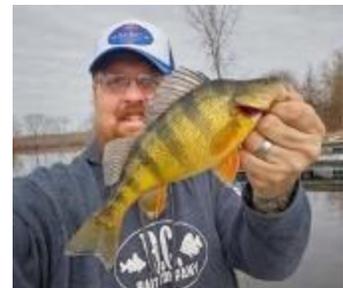
Photos on this page are “First panfish caught after ice out” and entered in a special drawing for a pack of hand-tied crappies jigs from Kevin Austin’s **Luckis4rabbits**. See bottom of Guide Page this issue for name drawn.



Tim Tomlin (PIB)



Dale Clemmer (Pymie)



Bo Bartholomew (Pymie)



John Kolodziejski
(Shenango Lake)



David Graham (Pymie)

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

Recently with the introduction to the new LiveScope Plus, I have been getting the same questions over and over. What's the difference? And is it worth it? With an MSRP of \$1,699.99, I completely understand the concern. According to Garmin, you will see a higher resolution picture, reduced noise/interference, clearer image, and better target separation.



One interesting fact is that you do not need to replace your GLS10 (black box). You can just upgrade your transducer only from the LVS32 to the LVS34 for \$1,199.99. The new system utilizes an LVS34 transducer which replaced the LVS32. The 34 stands for the degree of area covered or some refer to this as the cone.



Is it worth it? Well, that depends on your wants/needs. If you are an serious fisherman, an avid tournament angler, or just an electronics junkie looking for the best, this may be for you. If you are a recreational fisherman who enjoys catching a few more fish than others, there is nothing wrong with the LVS32 system. If you already have LiveScope and just want to upgrade your transducer, you can just buy the transducer only. If you have never had LiveScope and you want to save a buck, I suspect you will see a ton of used LVS32 systems for around \$1,000 very soon due to the number of individuals upgrading.



Garmin got swamped with orders the day they officially made the announcement with the first batch shipping on 03/25. This date was quickly pushed to approximately 05/01 after about two weeks of initial orders. Of course, if you have any questions or would like to place an order, I am here to help. Gus Glasgow G&G Marine Electronics 724-290-9045.

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

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