

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



Keith Eshbaugh photo of Captain Bob



James Swearingen on Pymatuning

The Landing Net by Darl Black

It's been roller coaster spring on the lakes and rivers of NW Pennsylvania. Cold, windy and sometimes snowy days followed a little warmth for a day or two until another severe cold front pushes water temperature backwards. On the positive side, the weather has prolonged the steelhead run in Erie tributaries; guides expect steelhead to still be in stream first of May. Up and down weather apparently has prolonged the normally short Pymatuning early-crappie-mud-bay-bite; bite started mid-March and five weeks later crappies are still being caught extremely shallow in mud bays. Spring is also BIG fish time. Check out the monsters at the left.

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 April 27, 2022

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

French Creek – flowing through all four counties

Aaron Williams @ French Creek Fishing Company; filed 4/24: With continued high-water conditions, fishing has remained challenging. It's important to always use caution while wading or attempting to cross the creek. Trout were caught using small crankbaits such as Rapala Ultralight Minnows and Rapala Original Floaters. Some trout came on inline spinners and spoons. Drifting French Creek Fishing Company Sand Worms under a float also brought trout to the net.

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Dave @ Richter's Bait; filed 4/23: After Easter weekend's setback in weather, this past weekend brought tons of anglers to Pymatuning. Boats all over the lake. Anglers are catching fish – including walleyes, perch, crappies, bass and muskies. It's a great time to be on Pymatuning!



Duck-n-Drake photo

Randy @ Fish West PA; filed 4/24: Here are some photos of this muskies taken by my buddies James Swearingen and Mark Graziano on the 24th. They had landed six muskies the last I heard from them that day. (See photo here, on cover & in Live-well Page.)



Mark Graziano

Laurie @ Duck-N-Drake; filed 4/25: It wasn't an easy bite for crappie tournament anglers on the 22nd. But some guys got it done in the shallows at the north end. However, the perch bite is phenomenal – both in the north end and off the causeway; they have been getting some big ones. There is still a walleye night-bite going on, but more shorts are being caught than legal 'eyes right now. The Crappie Brawl got off to a good start; check out the leader board. This coming weekend the Duck-N-Drake will be holding a walleye tournament on Saturday during the day, then a catfish tournament Saturday night until early morning. Stop by the shop to get full details and to register. (See photos)



Duck-N-Drake photo

Dale Clemmer (Cochrannton); filed 4/24: I caught nice perch (up to 11 inches) and crappies (up to 14 inches) on a minnow and bobber from the fishing pier at Linesville Marina. Good time! (Photos to right)



Conneaut Creek



Adam Horne; filed 4/22:

- I fished Conneaut Creek near Conneautville on April 20th. Steelhead are still in the streams and at least all the way up to Conneautville. They were active and biting. I landed several on small spinners and spoons. The biggest was 25 inches. They have not all returned to the lake yet. F

- Fished Conneaut Creek again on April 21st. Fish were active despite the rain early in the morning. Trout fishing was steady, and they were willing to bite small spinners and spoons. Water was slightly stained and made for good creek fishing. Fish On! (Photos on left)



Canadohta Lake

Jerry @ Timberland Bait; filed 4/25: The crappies have finally moved into the canals and lagoons at Canadohta Lake. Everyone has smiles on their faces while catching them. Pike have showed up, too! Trout fishing in area streams remains very good. During spring, the shop is open on weekends.

Geneva Marsh

Bo @ Fishing with Bo; filed 4/25: I was scouting bowfin spots yesterday in the marsh. I caught 13 bowfins, and my friend got 15. We were using a mixture of baits, including soft plastics from BC Baits. Whatever we used, white was the hot color that triggered the most bites. Interested in this exciting fishery? Contact me to book a trip. (See photo on right)



ERIE COUNTY

Lake Erie, PIB and Tributaries

Tim Tomlin @ Presque Isle Bay Anglers Group; filed 4/25: It's transition time in Erie. The perch bite is winding down in the Bay. There are still some left, but they are hugging the bottom and not as active as earlier. According to reports, northern pike are now active in some of the same areas where perch had been hitting; 10 to 12 feet seems to be the best depth. Smallmouth are in the Bay in good numbers. It's hit and miss on crappies. But the big news is walleye season opens on May 1st...it's a whole new ball game and we can't wait! Best time of the year to be fishing in Erie. (See photo)



PIB Perch

Kirk @ East End Angler; filed 4/25: Lake trout are on fire! They are catching them in 55 to 65 feet of water out of Northeast Marina. Steelhead are still in the tributaries, including decent numbers in Twenty Mile and Four Mile; fewer fish in Sixteen Mile and Twelve Mile. Perch are being caught on both North and South Piers, and a few anglers have hit perch in the lake on rock piles just outside the Bay. Some reports of crappies in Misery Bay and Marina Lakes. Northern Pike are hitting in the Bay; even reports of some being



Tim Tomlin on Elk

caught in the Channel. And of course, smallmouth bass are showing up everywhere – in the tributaries, in the Bay and shallow in the Lake, too.



Bill Logan (Pleasantville); filed 4/18: Slow bite on Erie the other day, but I scored a big one on a Galida's Grubz; smallie weighed 5 lb. 11 oz. (See photo)

Jake @ FishUSA; filed 4/19: Smallmouth bass are in the Bay to spawn. Jerkbait have been catching numbers of fish., along with swimbaits. Jake says to stop in at FishUSA to check out their bass bait selection.

A 5 lb 11 oz SMB for Bill Logan

Elk Creek Sports; filed 4/25: Smallmouth bass, suckers and steelhead are in Elk Creek keeping the stocked brown trout company. It's a full stream! The creek is low and clear so fish may be skittish. However, with rain later today and Thursday, stream levels could be good. One of our customers went out on the lake out of Walnut looking for perch, but could not keep the walleyes off their lines. With walleye opening on Erie this coming weekend, everyone is making plans. We are fully stocked for walleye season.

Bob @ Solitude Steelhead Guide Service; filed 4/24: Steelhead fishing continues to be excellent up and down Steelhead Alley. It's been an incredible season that just keeps going. Expect steelhead to be in some area streams into May! (See Bob's Steelhead photos next page)

Keith at Dutch Fork Custom Lures; filed 4/25: Lake Erie's lake trout are on a strong bite. Several of our outings have produced lakers upwards of 20 pounds. We are trolling Dutch Fork Cowbells, flashers and laker rigs on downriggers and dippy divers. Spoons and Dutch Fork Tahoe blades are our top producers. Fish can be anywhere from 40 feet to 80 feet deep. The winds have made the water dirty and the dirty water has been constantly moving so we always look for cleaner water. We have openings for a trip of a lifetime reeling in these dinosaurs! www.dutchforkcharters.com. (Photos Keith's Lake Trout photos next page)

TROUT OF LAKE ERIE FEATURED THIS WEEK IN THE NW PA FISHING REPORT

Bob Packey of Solitude Steelhead Guide Service says it is unusual to still have so many steelhead still in the tributaries this late into spring.



Keith Eshbaugh of Dutch Fork Charters says right now it the time to catch a Lake Erie Lake Trout. Twenty pounders pull like a dinosaur .



MERCER COUNTY

Lake Wilhelm

Bo @ Fishing with Bo; filed 4/25: On Wednesday evening on Wilhelm, we got the crappies good. Very nice-size crappies taken from 5 feet of water along weed edges on the northern section of the lake. Orange Terry Bug on a 1/32-ounce jig produced 63 crappies in 1.5 hours. (Photo right)



Bo's Wilhelm crappies



Jim Duer

Shenango Lake & Shenango River

Randy @ Fish West PA; filed 4/25: The nice weather over this past weekend warmed the water, but fishing remained tough on Shenango Lake. Yes, fish were caught, but you had to work for them. Crappie, white bass, black bass and pike seemed to be most active. I did manage a few smallmouth bass from the River on



Randy with white bass

Monday before the cold front hit. Cooler temperatures this week could make things even tougher. Tight Lines, Randy. (Photos)



River SMB

VENANGO COUNTY

Sugar Creek

Angler Al @ Buttermilk Hill; filed 4/24: Trout fishing has been extremely good this year. Even during those days of unseasonably cold weather, the trout seemed to have responded. On occasion I will head out with a fly rod. I'm getting better at my presentations so I'm catching more fish. Different variants of patterns work great on most any stream in our region. Egg patterns, Price nymphs, Crazy Legs and Squigly's produce. However, most of the time I'm catching fish with a spinning rod. Drifting pieces of a nightcrawler, wax worm, or mealworms all work. Trout are averaging 13 inches. I have caught a few nice ones but nothing over 20 inches yet.

Justus Lake



Angler Al @ Buttermilk Hill; filed 4/24: At Justus Lake, Mikey and I fished for 4 hours. We managed to fill my livewell with bluegill. Fish came mainly from shallows where there was wood cover. Small ants tipped with maggots under a float did the trick! We also caught nice crappie and two 14-inch largemouth bass. (Photos)



Allegheny River

Spanning 10 days, timeline in chronological order...

Bill Logan (Pleasantville); filed 4/18: Rick Shrout and I fished 5 hours on the river on Easter Sunday. We landed 27 bass. The majority were caught on Galida's Grubz and Rapala X Raps.



Pete @ SmalliesontheYough.com; filed April 21: The Allegheny was a little high and still cold. Smallmouth were scattered in spots. The bite was soft – like winter fishing; had to use very slow retrieves. We landed 40 total and a few of the bigger fish went 19 to 20 inches. The largest one was 21 inches at five pounds. (See photo to here and on next page)

Mike @ Mike's Custom Tackle; filed 4/23: On the 20th, I got out for three hours. Water temp was up to 45.5 degrees. Fishing was a little slow but still managed to get some bass. Nothing huge, but good fat healthy fish. Bass preferred tubes. Hopefully things are finally looking up. On the 23rd, I was back on the river. Fished from 4 p.m. to dark. Caught a ton of little smallmouths on tubes, Neds and jerkbaits. Fish are everywhere but no size. Still, some in deep water and lots of small males in the shallows. Water temp was 50.5 degrees. So, temperature is coming up, and should get better.

Jeff @ Keystone Connection Guide Service; filed 4/24: Despite heavy river flows and bipolar weather, I've managed to run several guide trips during the past two weeks. We're getting good numbers of smallmouth bass along the edges of deeper holes on Ned Rigs, Galida's Gurbz, and hair jigs. Trips are producing fish up to 19 inches with the majority being chunky 13 to 15 inchers. As the water warms and the river drops, I expect smallmouth bass to be showing up in pre-spawn staging areas soon. (See photo here and on next page)



ALLEGHENY DREAMING

When river conditions are right this time of year, smallmouth bass fishing in the Allegheny can be fabulous. But rising and falling water temperatures as was as muddy conditions can make it difficult to catch bass...unless you are with a professional guide. Check out Jeff Knapp and Pete Cartwright contact information on the Guide Page of this Report.



Pete Cartwright photo



Pete Cartwright



Jeff Knapp photo



Jeff Knapp photo

Choosing Your FX CUSTOM ROD

By David Graham

One of the pleasures of fishing is breaking in a new rod/reel combo. That just never gets old because there are always little improvements to a new rod that make it such a joy to fish.

Quality Precision Performance. If you examine an FX rod you will see that nothing has been left to chance in quality of components, craftsmanship, fit and finish and balance/feel. There was a time when I was steadfast set on cork grips on all my rods and that wasn't going to change...until FX actually sent me rods to try with their Winn Grip. Now 95% of my rods are Winn Grip. Wow what a fantastic grip and feel this is and under wet conditions it's even better. Super comfortable, and still has that great grip in cold weather also. Winn grip is definitely a winner.



FX makes a full line of rods to cover any situation or technique you are doing. If you are looking for a new outfit this season, I can suggest two different rods that can handle quite a range of situations. My first pick for spring fishing is the WMB72MXF. This rod is a Jerk bait technique specific outfit but it is my favorite for chatterbaits and spinnerbaits, and it can handle a 3-4 ½ inch swimbait with ease. The MXF is a Medium blank with an extra fast tip. Handles any of these baits. Spool this rod with 12 to 16 lb. test Gamma Fluorocarbon, making a perfect combo for all these baits. Lots of backbone for crushing hook sets, and a fast tip to load and fire a monster cast.

My 2nd pick is used for working jigs, creature baits, worms, frogs, and my go to umbrella rig rod. The WMB77HF, this is a heavy blank with a fast tip, handles floro or braid situations and with that fast tip can cast a mile if the need arises, or that tip will work great for flipping /pitching presentations. This is as close as you will get to a rod that can do it all. I have five of these for myself, each rigged with a different bait. It's easy to cycle through these rods because they all feel the same. Just an awesome fishing rod.

So, if you're looking to try some new outfits this year, give one of these two a shot. If you have any questions get ahold of me at cooncreektraps@gmail.com. I have a good selection of FX Custom Rods on hand you can try out. To learn more about FX rods, visit www.fxcustomrods.com.

RIVER BOOTS

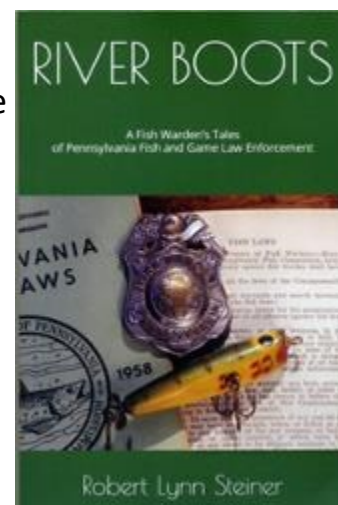


Every outdoors person will enjoy reading a new book by retired County Waterways Conservation Officer Robert Lynn “Bob” Steiner titled RIVER BOOTS – “A Fish Warden’s Tales of Pennsylvania Fish and Game Law Enforcement”

Old timers will remember the “Notes from the Stream” pages from the Pennsylvania Angler and Boater Magazine; this gives you a pretty good idea of the type of anecdotal short stories which make up this book. Some humorous, some serious, some thought provoking – all together an enjoyable casual read. This is a book you can pick up to read a few shorts, lay it down and come back to it in an hour, another day, or anytime you need a good chuckle to lift spirits. While not a coffee table book, a copy of RIVER BOOTS belongs in the reading shelf in everyone’s hunting-and-fishing cabin or RV.

Seeing that Bob did most of his service in Venango County before retiring in 1999, a few of you might recall some of the incidents which Bob reflects on in the book. Heck, if you had a close encounter with a Conservation Officer, you might even recognize yourself in one of the stories!

The perfect gift for the fisherman or hunter in the family. Softcover \$14.95 and Kindle eBook \$5.99 available from Amazon.com.



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 Bartholomew 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

If your name is posted below, contact Darl at darlblack@windstream.net with your mailing address to receive your prize.

Spool of Gamma Line: **Bill Logan**

Pack of Kevin Austin hand-tied jigs: **Dale Clemmer**

Species select lure pack (panfish, bass or walleye): **Adam Horne**

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 Allegheny River is filled with mystery



David Graham used FX Rods and Gamma Line (and some assistance from RJ) to land these PY bass.



Gus Glasgow and Dan Druschel captured gth at NW OH Crappie Club event on Pymatuning.



Lake Erie lake trout—NOW!



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

As a contributor to the NW PA Fishing Report, your name may be drawn for a line or lure packet prize for any issue you submit a photo or report. A spool of Gamma Line is awarded each issue, along with a lure pack prize from among the items below provided by local tackle makers. Check the Guide Page; if you see your name, send an email to Darl.



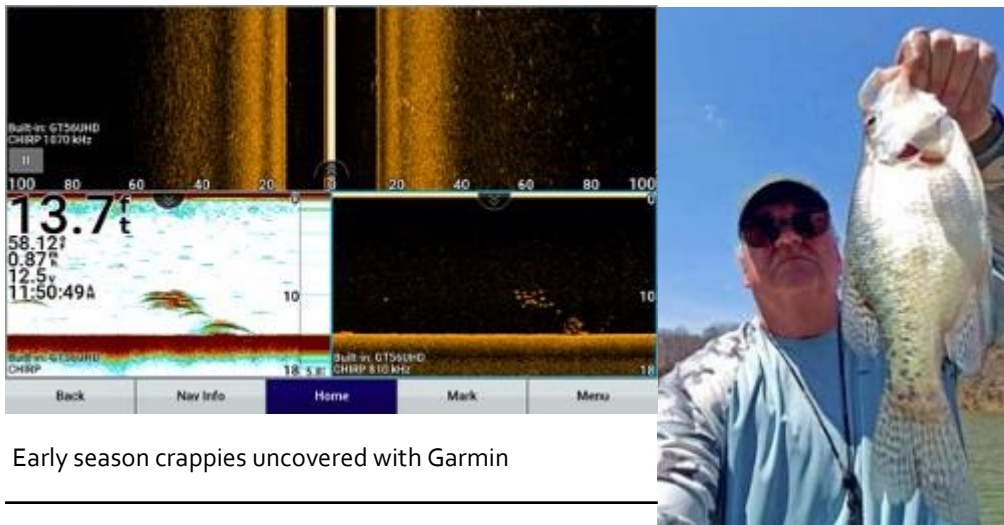
GARMIN INFORMATION PAGE



- 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 from guide Jeff Knapp

When the mercury rose rapidly this past Sunday, I headed to a local reservoir to check out the crappie action. My Garmin Echomap Ultra revealed schools of fish I suspected were crappies cruising the upper, soft bottom basin of the lake where the water warms very quickly. Fish marked anywhere from the bottom to the mid-depths on this 12 to 14-foot deep basin. Slow trolling Bobby Garland Stroll'R jigs at various depths quickly produced a dozen crappies including several 12.5 to 13.5-inch white crappies. Note the presence of crappies on the accompanying screenshot with fish markings on 2D, Clear Vu and Side Vu.



Early season crappies uncovered with Garmin



Even Garmin Sales Representative Mark McQuown has an opportunity to catch crappies with Garmin fish finders.

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