

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



Brandon Hanna of Consumer Direct Sports near Grove City provides more evidence that big bass still reside in Lake Wilhelm. This 6.5 pound largemouth was caught and released while he was crappie fishing.

LANDING NET by Darl Black

Fishing wise, everything is happening right now! However, out strange spring of cold weather and too much rain continues to play havoc with anglers trying to get out. Water temperature has been up and down. Many lakes and reservoir are murkier than usual due to heavy rains. As of today, May 24, the Allegheny River, French Creek and Sugar Creek are high and muddy. But anglers who can pick and choose their days, are being successful. Check out this issue of Fishing Report for some impressive catches. Then make a plan – which must include rain gear! Have a fish-filled Memorial Day Weekend!

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 for Crawford, Erie, Mercer and Venango

FRENCH CREEK – flowing through all four counties



Aaron Williams

Aaron @ French Creek Fishing Company; filed 5/23: Smallmouth fishing is really heating up throughout French Creek. Drifting 1/16-oz. or 1/32-oz. jigs tipped with soft plastic such as French Creek Fishing Company's 2-inch Sand Worm or FC Darter has been working well. Walleye and crappie are still within reach for shore fishermen in Presque Isle Bay, with some quality fish having been taken.



Aaron on French Creek

Al @ Buttermilk Hill; filed 5/23: French Creek smallmouth are thumping just about everything flashy. Gold and silver inline spinners, Rapala Shad Raps in blue/silver, black/gold and chrome.

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Bean @ Richter's Bait; filed 5/23: Daytime drifting with nightcrawlers is hot. A couple anglers staying at our cottages this weekend caught over 40 walleyes doing this, although the vast majority were sublegal. The night bite for walleye has changed from some sporadic post-spawn walleyes wandering in the shallows to full on feeding by walleyes on the spawning alewives – it's topwater time over the weeds instead of gravel points! I'm hearing about nice perch as well as black crappies among shallow cover in the bays down south. Dad went out to look for white crappies spawning on offshore humps but could not find any.

Bobbie Joe @ Duck-N-Drake; filed 5/23: Our customers are catching walleyes in both the north and south ends of the lake. The perch bite remains good. But I have not heard anything about crappies. (See photo)

Becky @ Gateway Bait; filed 5/23: Anglers are catching some nice size walleyes up north in the stumps, and crappies around the northern islands. Bass are all over the shoreline.



Duck-N-Drake photos



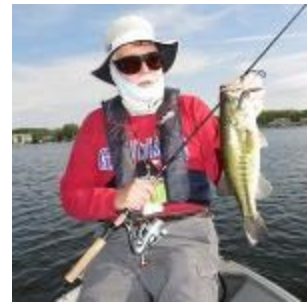
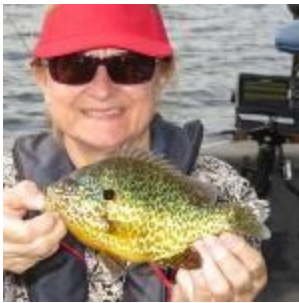
Stan Teitelbaum; filed 5/20: Except for the lightning interruption early this morning, it was good day on Pymatuning. This 19.5 inch largemouth is my biggest for the year so far. Overcast skies, rain and new vegetation made it a comfortable and productive day. This bass was caught on a wacky rig near an old dock. (See photo on left)

Canadohta Lake

Jerry @ Timberland Bait; filed 5/23: The crappie spawn was off-and-on this spring due to wacky weather. Now it's pretty much over. Locals are catching a good number of northern pike right now. I'm having problems getting both live bait and tackle. Our Father's Day Tournament will be back by popular demand; held from 6 AM to 10 AM on the Saturday immediately before Father's Day Sunday. Stop by shop for details.

Conneaut Lake

Marilyn @ Blackwolfe Communications; filed 5/21: We slipped out late in the afternoon to Conneaut Lake. With outboard not working properly, we did not stray far from ramp in case we had to come back on electric motor to ramp. Two days after hard rain storm and colder than normal temperatures, the lake water was murky and there was no visible activity in the shallow water of multiple species which would be normal for this time of year. Discovered the best bite was pumpkinseeds is some stage of spawning. Actually, we caught some 8 to 9-inch females on Ned Rigs which we typically do not catch when males are guarding beds. Darl was blind casting a wacky worm and caught a couple apparent res-spawn largemouths. (See photos below)



ERIE COUNTY

Lake Erie and Presque Isle Bay

Bill @ Tudor's; filed 5/23: Right now, walleye fishing is all about the west side of the Erie shoreline after dark. Weather permitting, fishermen have been scoring good numbers of walleye from 10 to 12 feet of water by trolling and wade fishing from shore at creek mouths. Of course, the long minnow plugs are catching walleye, but trollers are also using bottom bouncers with Butterfly Blade worm harnesses. Daytime bite? Not so good yet.

Kirk @ East End Angler; filed 5/23: I'm still getting reports of decent lake trout bite out in the 50 to 100-foot depths. Also had a couple reports of nice size perch from around 65 feet of water – no other details. The perch bite on the North and South Piers has dwindled to almost nothing. But some anglers are catching sporadic walleye from those piers after dark, as well as at the foot of East Avenue. Other anglers are trolling the shoreline after dark and catching some nice 'eye. Crappies still biting in Marina Lake and Misery Bay in 6 to 10 feet of water.

Jake @ FishUSA; filed 5/23: As long as the lakers keep chewing, I recommend Cowbells with spinning glows and Dreamweaver Mag Spoons. The spoon color of choice has been a FishUSA exclusive called Undertaker White back. (See photos)



Jake with big lake trout

Capt. George Mro; filed 5/23: It's been a slower than normal bite for late May. Some smallmouths are bedding although you can't see them, and some fish are in pre-spawn while others are in post spawn. As far as baits, it's all the usual suspects: Ned Rigs, tubes, drop-shot and swimbaits. Being in areas where you know there are fish and being persistent is key to success. (See photos below and in **Livewell**)

Pete Cartwright; filed 5/21: We fished the bay and the lake today. The winds were around 20 mph out of the SSW. The water was stained a bit, and 60 degrees in the Bay and 57 degrees in the main lake just outside of Bay. We used soft plastic on or near the bottom. We landed a few decent fish, but overall, it was a slow day. (See photo below)



Pete Cartwright



Capt. George Mro clients



Chad Prihode; filed 5/21: I fished PIB today. Large-mouth bass were on beds in Marina Lake and Lagoons. (See photos on left)

Eaton Reservoir

Aaron @ French Creek Fishing Company; filed 5/21: If interested in northern pike, you can have very good success at Eaton right now. Three to five-inch swimbaits and inline spinners are good choices. (See photo)

Lake LeBouef

Dave Ohmer; filed 5/15: I caught 31 crappies at LeBouef today from my kayak, and one goby. I did my civic duty as prescribed by the Fish Commission and killed the goby.



LeBouef Creeper!

MERCER COUNTY

Lake Wilhelm

Linda Steiner (Cooperstown); filed 5/11: Bob and I spent a couple days crappie fishing on Lake Wilhelm the second week of May. Fishing from our canoe, we picked up some nice crappies from up in the "Stumps" on the north end. Also picked up some bluegills. The largest crappie was 17 inches and weighed 2-1/2 pounds. I never caught a crappie that big before – amazing fish! (See photo)



Linda Steiner



Brandon Hanna @ CDS; filed 5/17: I landed a 6.50-pound largemouth bass while crappie fishing at Lake Wilhelm on Saturday, May 14th. Caught it on a Big Bite Baits Fat Grub with 6-pound test Gamma Line. Crappie bite has been pretty decent on Wilhelm, but have not found a lot of good size ones this past week. (See photo; on cover, too)

Marilyn Black @ Blackwolfe Communications; filed 5/17: Darl and I went to Lake Wilhelm on Sunday, May 15th. Ended up fishing near the ramp when motor would not start. I thought this approximate 3.5-pound largemouth bass would be big fish of the day...until Darl caught one twice as large on wacky rig from 7 feet of water. It was 24 inches long, based on several other approximately 24-inch bass taken at Wilhelm over the years that weighed 7 pounds give or take an ounce or two, we judged this to be just about 7 pounds. Had to get it back in water after quick picture. (See pictures; see big bass in LW)



Brad Bee; filed 5/19: I had a good day at Wilhelm catching largemouth bass and crappies on Texas rigged plastic fishing around shallow wood. (See photos left and right)



Shenango Lake

Kevin @ Luckis4rabbits; filed 5/16: Here are pictures from our success in the Sharpsville Booster Tournament on the 14th and 15th; both tournament days and our catches leading up to event. William Shultz and I fished together. We were in 4th place end of day one, then moved up to finished the tourney in 2nd on final day. Our largest crappie was 2.1 pounds. (See photo here and on Livewell Page)

Brock Morocco (Hermitage) filed 5/20: Got a couple nice Shenango Lake 15-inch slabs today. (See photo)

Randy @ Fish West PA; filed 5/22: Hybrid catches on Shenango Lake have picked up! Good-size fish have been caught in the last two weeks. Bass, crappie, catfish, walleye and even bluegills have been active since the recent Blood Moon. Spring is in full swing so it's time to get out and fish! Tightlines, Randy. (See photos here and in Livewell)

Shon Derr (Hermitage); filed 5/23: Jigging and trolling on Shenango today produced a two-person limit of walleyes. (See photos)



Shon Derr



Brock Morocco



Randy @ Fish West PA



Kevin @ Luckis4rabbits

VENANGO COUNTY

Sugar Creek

Al @ Buttermilk Hill; filed 5/23: Trout fishing has been premium this spring! Drifting pieces of worm or nightcrawler, wax worm, mealworm or different colors of Trout Magnets are working great. When using a fly rod, a tandem rig with a stonefly or girdle bug at the bottom with a cream-colored fly on top has been working great as many Mayfly hatches are coming off. Wishing a Happy Memorial Day Weekend to all!

VENANGO COUNTY

Allegheny River

Pete @ Smallies on the Yough guide service; filed 5/11: We fished the Allegheny today, May 11. What a great spring day to be on the river. I landed a bunch of nice smallies using several different soft plastic baits. The water is warming fast but I didn't see any beds yet, and the females were still full of eggs. When the smallies go on beds, I will suspend guiding trips for a period. (See photos)

Alan Shrout; filed 5/15: Bill Logan and I found some bass last Tuesday (the 10th), ending the day with over 60 bass caught and released. One of our favorite spots yielded 40 smallmouth bass, and we missed several more. That day I also landed an 18-inch brown trout, a 20-inch walleye and a 30-inch northern pike. Most fish came on a Rapala, Galinda's Grubz and swimbaits. What a fun day! (See photo)

Mike @ Mike's Custom Tackle; filed 5/20: I've been out a few days on the river. Starting to see some bass on beds finally. We are still not getting fish over 3 pounds. It keeps getting better as the water is dropping and water temperature is coming up. Water was 62 degrees on Friday, May 20th. I was accompanied by my buddy's 6-year-old Gentry Deeter the other day; he loves to go fishing. (See photo)

Jeff @ Keystone Connection Guide Service; filed 5/22: Over the past two weeks, we've had excellent fishing for Allegheny River smallmouth bass on Ned Rigs, finesse jigs and soft swimbaits. A good number of the fish were 19-inchers. Most fish have been pre-spawn, though I've seen some evidence of post spawn fish on my most recent outing. With the peak of the river bass spawning season taking place, I'll be reducing river trips during the next couple weeks and concentrating on other angling options. (See photos in Livewell Page)



Pete Cartwright



Pete Cartwright



Alan Shrout



Gentry Deeter

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; 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 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

PRIZES! The following names were drawn for prizes. To claim your prize, you must email me your shipping address. If you won a spool of Gamma Line, you must provide the type of line (hi-vis Panfish, Polyflex, Edge or Torque) and the pound test desired. If I do not receive an email with shipping information, the prizes go back in the hat to be awarded another time.

Spool of Gamma Line: Brad Bee

Lure pack (bass, walleye or panfish): Shon Derr

Luckis4rabbits hand-tied crappie jigs: Alijah Latwin

Pack Galida's Grubz: Gentry Deeter

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



Jeff Knapp's guide Clients on the Allegheny River.



Randy with Shenango hybrid striper

Capt. Mro's clients on Lake Erie



Kevin Austin's photo
Of winning catch at
Tournament on Shenango.



Darl with 7 lb Wilhelm largemouth



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

Gamma Tip



T Latwin is very proud of his 10-year-old son Alijah Latwin, who loves to fish as much or more as his father. "Alijah caught this crappie all by himself. He cast his own rod & reel, hooked the fish and reeled them in," said Lat.



(I wouldn't be surprised if Alijah doesn't have a junior pro staff position with a soft plastic bait company before long if he keeps this up!)

GARMIN INFORMATION PAGE

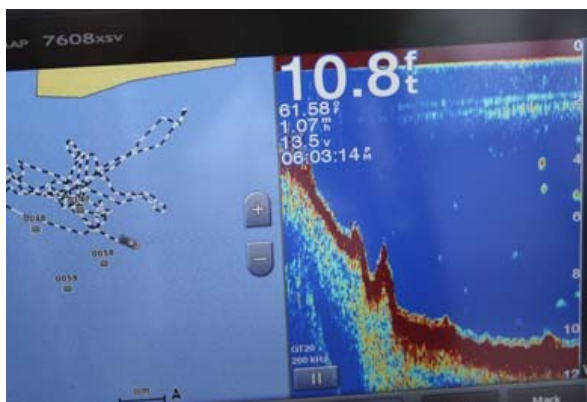


- Real anglers share actual fishing experiences with Garmin units
- For professional local installation of Garmin units, contact G&G Marine Electronics at 724-290-9045

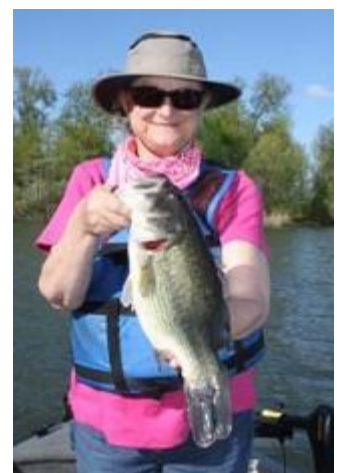
GARMIN TIP

It's that time of the year in NW PA when largemouth and smallmouth bass are spawning. There has been chatter on Facebook pages about catching bedding fish. In Pennsylvania the Fish Commission regulation is clear – right now during spring “Catch & Release season” on Lake Erie and inland waters (exception is Pymatuning), any bass caught must be released immediately; no bass may be held in a livewell or on a stringer. Furthermore, the regulation states that anglers may not make repeated casts to a bass on a bed...which means any angler who lowers power poles and keeps casting to a bed is in violation.

For years I've been puzzled why does someone keeps casting at a bass on a bed. It is the smaller male which guards the nest after eggs are laid. It is uncommon to actually see a big female and male on a bed fertilizing eggs. Larger females are sitting in little deeper water – either waiting to return to a bed to drop more eggs or, if empty of eggs, simply recovering.



Here's my tip: If come up-on an area of bass nests, make a short punt to slightly deeper water. Use your Garmin electronics to spot an object or break that is holding a larger, worthwhile bass. As seen in this screen shot, two stumps on the drop-off



just off a spawning flat held this respectable largemouth bass, which has already deposited some or all of her eggs.

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