

NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA FISHING REPORT

Published by Blackwolfe Communications LLC

Issue: July 15, 2022

The NW PA Fishing Report is brought to you by:



Fishing with Darl Black

Information Service



Smallmouth river guide Pete Cartwright loves summer fishing and clients enjoy successful summer trips.

The Landing Net by Darl Black

Summer is here. The hot spring bites are over. Fish-catching for some anglers gets a bit tougher as species change locations. Things will remain fairly consistent until September. In the meantime, here are some of the best bites going during summer: Walleye in offshore waters of Lake Erie; smallmouth bass in rivers and streams; largemouth bass in shallow vegetation & deep structure; big bluegills offshore on hard bottom points and humps; surface schooling white bass at Pymatuning and Shenango Lakes; and catfish just about everywhere!

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 July 15, 2022

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County by county reports for Crawford, Erie, Mercer and Venango

FRENCH CREEK – flowing through all four counties

Angler Al @ Buttermilk Hill; filed 7/10: Hunter Eubanks, Doc Das and brother Buck Bell wade-fished a one-mile stretch on lower French Creek. Hunter fished a wacky pumpkin-colored Senko; he caught and released 23 smallmouth bass, with the largest one 18 inches. Doc took his fly rod. He's been catching a lot of fish on black or brown spring lizards. However, when he switched to a sucker spawn pattern, he landed a 17.5-inch walleye – first walleye on his fly rod. Doc also caught 23 fish. With his spinning rod, Buck spanked one undersized walleye and four smallmouth bass on a jointed Rapala Minnow and a Senko. (See photos below)



Buck



Hunter



Doc'

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Dave @ Richter's Bait; filed 7/13: The good news is anglers are still catching a good number of walleyes; bad news, most are sublegal. Got to wade through a few undersize to get a keeper. Catfish bite is strong; more and more anglers are starting to fish for catfish. Only channel cats caught on South End of lake, with larger cats going 24 to 28 inches; flathead catfish and channels caught in North End at this time. Lots of white bass, too. They are schooling on the surface in early morning and evening, drawing the attention of many anglers; fun to catch. The serious musky trollers are catching fish, too – all from boats; no shoreline muskies this time of year. Perch are being caught all over the lake, but the jumbos seemed to have lockjaw. Not a single word about crappies.

Russ @ Gateway Tackle; filed 7/13: Bite on the North End of Pymatuning has slowed down. Only walleyes I'm hearing about are caught from the Andover causeway at night on stickbaits. No crappie reported worth mentioning. Perch and catfish make up the greatest share of the catch. A few musky reports, too.



One of Stan's LMB

Kayla @ Poff's Place; filed 7/13: Fishing has been slow this week. Hearing about a few walleyes and crappies, but nothing to be excited about.

Stan Teitelbaum; filed 7/3: I caught more than my fair share of bass today. A couple were smallmouth, but the rest were large-mouth. The 19-incher in the photo came to the boat on a Hula Popper. (See photo left)

Tony @ Passionate Anglers; filed 7/11: Moraine and Pymatuning are producing nice eyes! Here are a 29-3/4 and 28-incher I caught this week. (See



Tony's PY walleye

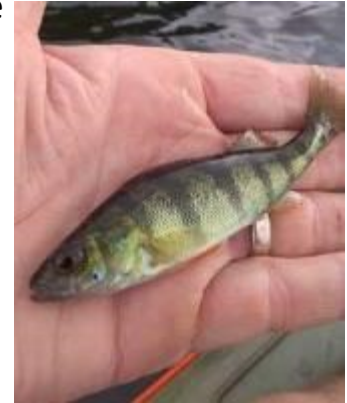
photo right)

Conneaut Lake

Adam Horne (Hartstown); filed 7/8: Got out on Conneaut Lake for some early morning kayak fishing. Lake was calm and morning beautiful. Early morning fishing is some of the best, especially in the cool summer mornings. I got into some small perch, crappie



and landed a few bass. I caught bass on the unweighted plastic worm; panfish were hitting a chartreuse jig with plastic trailer. (See photos left and right)



Canadohta Lake

Jerry @ Timberland Bait; filed 7/13: I've had reports of several muskies being caught in July. Including a 45-incher caught by a friend. Unfortunately, the gill was ripped badly in the battle and fish was not releasable, so he took it to have it mounted. There is a good walleye bite going on, too. Worm harness with a lime green blade is hot right now.

Woodcock Lake

Marilyn @ Blackwolfe Communications; filed 7/4: Because Woodcock Lake has been receiving very little fishing pressure after the lake was drained in winter of 2021, we fished the lake on Memorial Day and again on July 4th trying to assess the status of the smallmouth bass population. PA Fish Commission survey stated sufficient smallmouth had survived the dewatering that they would not stock it. But Fish Commission did stock fingerling walleye and fingerling musky in fall 2021 because very few of these species survived. We wanted to see if there were adult smallmouth or small fingerling smallmouth that the Fish Commission said survived. Memorial Day we caught two 2-pound smallies and lost two larger ones near spawning habitat. On July 4th Darl managed to catch 3 smallmouths in the 4 to 8-inch range. The smallest smallmouth tried to eat a huge crankbait. It was like hunting a needle in a haystack – perhaps only a handful of bass in a 500-acre lake. Probably will skip this lake for two years before checking again. (See photos left & right)



ERIE COUNTY

Lake Erie & PIB

Tim @ Presque Isle Bay Anglers Group; filed 7/10: Presque Isle Bay is under full summer heat – both with temperature and with fishing success. Largemouth bass and pike are hitting in most sub-bays and shallows. Topwater action being hot around any vegetation. Sheepshead (drum) have been plentiful for anglers



just looking for something bigger

to fight than a bluegill. Some drum have been over the two-foot mark. They put up a great fight, and more people are harvesting the thick backstrap from the young drum for table fare. Walleye fishing outside the Bay was tremendous for boaters targeting suspended fish in 50 to 60 feet of water across the entire PA portion of Lake Erie...until a current fluctuation cooled the near surface water. However, the cold water pushed to the top of water column might bring some silver jumpy fish up along with shaking up the walleye schools. (See photo on left))

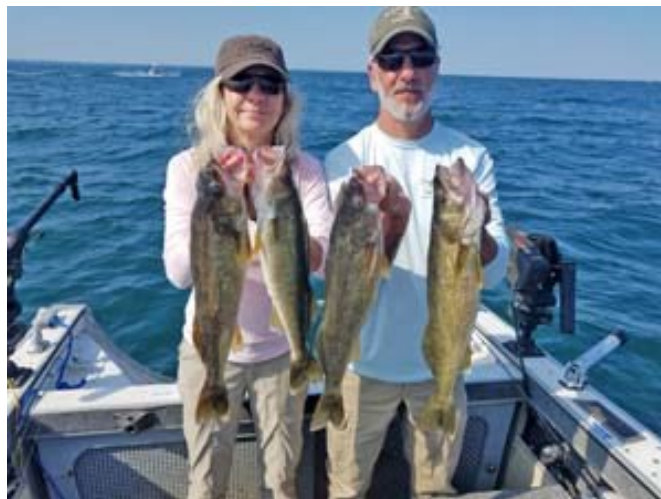


Photo from Tudor's Hook & Nook

Capt. Bob @ Perch Pirate; filed 7/13: We've had some good drifts the last couple days near the Dump, even though there was a temperature shift in the upper water column as cold water pushed out warmer water on the East Side.

Kirk @ East End Angler; filed 7/13: Last week the lake rolled over between the Point and the NY line (and further east). West side not impacted as much; surface temp dropped from 74 degrees to 66 degrees. It scattered the walleyes and gave them a case of lockjaw. We had been doing well in 45 feet of water, but now I'm hearing about better catches out in 70 to 80 feet. It's a slow recovery, but I expect by the weekend, there should be walleyes eating in the 45-foot range again. Also, they are catching 8 to 11-inch perch in Presque Isle Bay. Not jumbos, but a good size for eating. Anglers at Eaton Reservoir are using topwater Rapala plugs to catch largemouth & smallmouth bass, plus some decent walleyes in the evenings.

Bill @Tudor's Hook & Nook; filed 7/13: With the warmer temperatures the fish in PA waters are starting to move a little deeper. The 40' depth still has a lot of fish but many smaller walleyes and junk fish are mixed in. Fish in the 50' to 60' have started to suspend off the bottom and the size has been better – and fish are more spread out. Fish in deeper water are being caught on a regular basis, with some reports of steelhead in the mix. We expect fishing to continue to get better as water continues to warm. Good luck to all. Fish on!

John @ Poor Richards; filed 7/13: Walleyes have been moving deeper, with catches being made anywhere between 45 to 65 feet. Worm harnesses and spoons are best baits. Harness blade colors are watermelon and purple/chartreuse. For spoons, it's blue/silver and purple/chartreuse. The biggest walleye this past week was a 6-3/4 pound 'eye taken from 35 feet of water by a customer in small boat, letting us know we don't need to go way out there.

Chris @ Elk Creek Sports; filed 7/13: Customers are saying worm harnesses in 50 feet for walleye. We are selling a ton of nightcrawlers. Not one word about perch.

Scott Selle; filed 7/11: My son and I went to Lake Erie on Sunday, July 11 in search of



Rob Selle

walleye. Two-man limit in a couple hours, keeping the 18 to 22 inchers while releasing larger ones. Fished 50 feet of water using purple blade worm harnesses and purple colored walleye deep-diving Bandits. The walleyes were suspended around 34 to 38 feet of water for the most part. We launched out of Presque Isle Bay and

headed north. Here is picture of Rob with 27 incher and a 19 incher that I got. (See photos left & right)



Scott Selle

MERCER COUNTY

Lake Wilhelm

Angler Al @ Buttermilk Hill; filed 7-4: On Fish for Free Day, from cousin Steve Bell's boat, Alex Moses and Hunter Eubanks went for bass. Using Texas rigged soft plastics, they caught several nice large-mouth. From dad's pontoon boat, dad and other family members used red worms below a float indicator to catch 40 panfish. Enough for a family fish fry!



Buttermilk Hill Crew

Jeff @ Keystone Connection Guide Service; filed 7/7: My long-time client Dan Brown of Northern Virginia fishes with me annually when he and his family are visiting family in Armstrong County. Typically, he brings his boat to fish some of the local lakes while in the area. During his latest visit (which spanned the July 4th weekend) he visited Lake Wilhelm for the first time – due to the recent positive reports in the NW PA Fishing Report which I share on my business page. Dan's report for July 6th was "I fished Wilhelm for six hours. Couldn't get an offshore bite going, but stained water, clouds and wind made for a pretty good bite around shallow cover. I landed nine largemouth, most in the 1.5 to 2.5-pound range, with biggest one being 3.5 pounds. Almost everything hit a War Eagle Buzz Toad." (photo right)



Dan Brown of Virginia

Brad B @ Wilhelm campground; filed 7/10: The past ten days have been great bass fishing. Fish are still hitting jigs, cranks, spinnerbaits, chatterbaits and Texas rigged worms. I had family in from out of town; took my niece and brother-in-law out on the boat to catch a few. It was my niece's first time on a boat. I also took them to the Falling Run Hiking Trail – they loved Wilhelm. I'm really liking the 6-pound Gamma Edge I received from the drawing. (Photo right & more in Livewell)



Brad B

Shenango Lake

Randy @ Fish West PA; filed 7/12: Shenango's water is warming but fish are still hitting fairly well. Most anglers report doing their best in early mornings and late afternoons until dark. Most species have transitioned into summer spots in deeper water. Bass hybrid stripers, catfish and most panfish are still active. White bass have been chasing bait pods and this year so far fishing has been exceptional for them. Look for whites on top busting shad throughout the main lake area. Tight lines, Randy. (See photo here & more in Livewell)



Randy with White Bass



Ken's crappie catch

Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 7/10: I had the weather and the pleasure of fishing Shenango lake three times last week. The water level has been very stable and the bite has as well. The white bass have been chasing baitfish up to the surface in many bays including Mahaney, early in the morning, almost every morning. They're a blast to catch using four-pound test Gamma hi vis line and a 1/16 oz jig with any color twister-tail you throw at 'em. Most are twelve to fourteen inches in size. They're perfect eating size. Just make sure you take as much of the red meat off the fillet as you can. They're delicious fresh, baked, broiled in foil, or deep fried.

The crappie bite is good when you find them schooled up. You don't have to have LiveScope to do so. Trust your locator. When you see marks eight to ten feet deep over fifteen or even deeper water, put your crappie baits at that depth. I'm catching over forty fish daily doing this. I'll hang glide two rods at eight and ten and use my seven-foot light action setup in my hand to probe a little higher or lower in the water column. This is in case the bigger fish are above or below the school. For bait I use 1/8 oz heads and Bobby Garland Baby Shads in various colors. Most of the crappies I'm catching are 9 to 13 inch black, with a few whites mixed in daily. Guys trolling crank baits, hot and tots and shad raps mainly, are getting some good size whites while walleye fishing.

Please respect the no wake zones and do your best to keep the lake clean of debris. If you see trash that blew out of someone's boat, please pick it up and dispose it later. Get there early to fish as the pleasure boats will be on the water by 9 a.m. most days. Stay safe and enjoy your day at Shenango lake. (See photos)

Captain Hook (Hermitage); filed 7/10: Captain Hook Fishing Team with some nice-size late night Shenango Lake stripers. Scott G. with a huge 15 pounder. Lots of big catfish, too. Brock/Captain Hook. (See photos on Livewell Page)

VENANGO COUNTY

Angler Al @ Buttermilk Hill; filed 7/10: **4th of July Extended Holiday Diary...**

- On the afternoon of July 4th, brother-in-law Doc Das from Hendersonville, NC and Alex Moses of SC, fished Sugar Creek. With their fly rods they presented black and brown spring lizards. Several rainbow trout and numerous smallmouth bass were caught.

- Morning of July 5th, Doc took his fly rod and I picked up my spinning rod. I toted a bucket of live creek baits. Beginning on Oil Creek just below the artificial-only area, we fished downstream to the ice/flood control dam. Twenty-one smallmouth bass were caught. Most were under 12 inches, but a few made the 12-inch mark. Rain moved in, prompting us to move underneath Veteran's Bridge at the mouth of Oil Creek confluence with the Allegheny River. There we caught a few nicer-size smallmouths – but nothing exceptional.

- Afternoon of July 5th we went to upper Sugar Creek near Cooperstown to catch bait fish. Using a #10 Aberdeen hook with a piece of 'crawler below a float, we quickly filled a bucket with 3 to 4-inch creek bait and headed off for French Creek. Wow! The last hour before dark was lights out! Tremendous bite! I caught a couple 3 pounders as did Doc. Grand total for the day – 48 smallmouth bass.

- Wednesday, July 6th on Justus Lake. With leftover shiners and blackside creek dace, Doc, Alex and I went to Justus Lake. We were the first boat on the water. Practically had the lake to ourselves for three hours. What a beautiful fishery it is! We boated 10 largemouth bass. Biggest one was 17.5 inch largemouth by Alex.

- Friday evening July 8th. We met my friends Brian Perry from Franklin at the Third Street Ramp. We jumped in his jet boat and headed for fast, shallow weedy zones that held the premier minnow – the riffle runner. We caught 2 dozen with a #12 hook tipped with a maggot. Wit heavier rods, we pinched sinkers on the line 18 inches above a #2 hook, anchored above current runs with average depth of 7 feet and slowly retrieved the minnows. Final count was 7 smallmouth bass, one 28-inch channel cat and one 23-inch flathead catfish. (See photo in Livewell)



Buttermilk Hill Crew on Justus Lake



River Smallmouth

Allegheny River

Dave Ohmer (Erie); filed 7/1: I floated the Allegheny River from Franklin to Fisherman's Cove yesterday, landing 29 smallmouth and a northern pike. Water levels are low, so the bass appear to be concentrated around oxygenated water. I caught the vast majority of my fish on a white size 60 Whopper Plopper, worked as slow as it could be moved while still having the prop rotate. Later in the day, there were a ton of bass hanging just below scum lines in slack water, although one has to accept that weeds will be collected on treble hooks while doing so.

In wider stretches of moving water, especially in the push above a strong riffle or light rapid, Ned rigs were rather effective. Light colored baits were more productive, but there was a definite preference for a smaller presentation. I used the UV added Case Lil Magic Stik in the JTs Jewel color rigged on an Owner 1/8-ounce Ultra Finesse hook. Casting at an angle upstream so that I wasn't dragging the lure directly behind the kayak and keeping the rod tip as steady as possible were keys to getting them to bite. All Ned rigs were deployed using Gamma 5# touch fluorocarbon, while my Whopper Ploppers were rigged with a Gamma 10# Torque main line to a 30" leader of 8# Gamma Edge fluorocarbon. (See photos right)



River smallmouth/Dave Ohmer



Dave Ohmer success on the Allegheny



Jeff @ Keystone Connection Guide Service; filed 7/12: River smallmouth bass have been chewing the paint off lures the past couple weeks. Full-day trips are producing 60 to 70 bass of all sizes, from dinks up



to 18/19 inchers. In general, the fish are extremely fat this year, often regurgitating crawfish or minnows on the way in. We're finding them in a variety of locations; but with the river low, clear and warm, the most consistent areas have been pools with modest depth and moderate current. Fish are happy to move to hit Rapala X-Raps, Rapala Rip Stops and soft jerkbaits. (See photos here & in Livewell)

Pete @ Smallies on the Yough:

Pete's July Diary on the Allegheny River—Photos here & in the Livewell.

July 5th - Happy Fourth! We fished the Allegheny River today. Conditions were perfect. The smallies were eating all day. We used a variety of baits to catch them. Summer patterns were working in 77-degree water.

July 7th – It was cloudy today and smallmouth were active all day long. Bass were on the banks in shallow water. I used a variety of lures to catch them. The largest bass was 18 inches.

July 10th – Another great day on the Allegheny River. The river is running low and clear, and warm. We used soft plastic baits to land a bunch of smallies from 8 to 18 inches. These fish were aggressive and fighting hard when hooked.

July 11 – I had to stay on the Allegheny River bite. The weather was perfect today and I caught numerous bass. There were shallow in some spots and deeper in others. I used 412 Bait Company Tubes to land smallies up to 20 inches.



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

PRIZE WINNERS—The following names were drawn for prizes indicated in this issue of NW PA Fishing Report. **To claim your prize, you must email darlblack@windsream.net with your shipping address. If you do not contact me, the prize goes back in the hopper.**

Gamma Line: Scott Selle

Galida's Grubz pack for cover shot: Pete Cartwright

Panfish pack: Dave Ohmer

Walleye pack: 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



Buttermilk Hill Crew goes catfishing



Jeff Knapp's client with nice river smallie



Mr Gamma goes for crappies
on Shenango Lake



Randy with Shenango Lake LMB

Wiegel Brothers Marine presents more...

LIVEWELL catch photos

Brad B and family celebrates the 4th of July at Lake Wilhelm:



Captain Hook's Shenango Lake Crew's Catch from the dark of the moon...



Scott with a 15 pounder



And Catfish, too



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



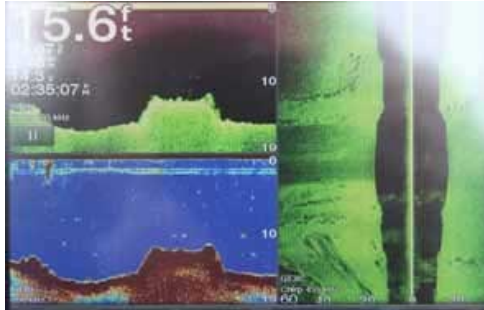
Darl Black: This year Marilyn and I were invited to provide a fishing demonstration at the 2nd Annual Pymatuning Lake Onion Festival conducted by Pymatuning State Park. Not knowing exactly what to expect, we prepared a couple demonstrations for the water's edge. Between scheduled presentations, we put out a sign on a picnic table to stop by and chat about fishing. Of course most people were interested in Pymatuning. Fortunately, I cut my fishing teeth on Pymatuning, starting in 1956 when my parents drove from Clark (now under Shenango Lake) to picnic and fish at Pymatuning. Except for a few years at college and my first 3 year job in Philly, I've been fishing Pymatuning for over 60 years. We look forward to the 3rd Annual Onion Festival next July!

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

Darl Black: I have only been fishing once since mid-June in my boat due to motor problems. Now have a new Yamaha on the boat, and expect to be back on the water. But I did not have an opportunity to take Garmin shots of screen and fish. And no one sent anything in for this issue. So I am posting four Garmin screens that appeared in the Fishing Report in the past 1-1/2 years, and turning into a contest. The first person who **emails** me the lake location (all in Crawford, Erie, Mercer or Venango) and a couple word description of what is seen on the screen will receive package of baits including something from Mike's Custom Tackle, Galida's Grubz, BC Bait, French Creek Fishing Company and Dutch Fork Custom Tackle. Only one winner—first person to correctly ID each of the four images. Email darlblack@windstream.net



Screen One



Screen Two



Screen Three



Screen Four

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