

# 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**



Randy of Fish West PA page is dedicated to stripers. Pictured here is his largest hybrid this spring was 17 pounds taken during the shad spawn! And released.

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## Landing Net by Darl Black

Weatherwise, 2023 continues to provide a roller coast ride for anglers. Too warm, too cold, then too warm again. Too much rain, now not enough. Water temperatures and water levels go up and down, up and down. No stability, no gradual warming – everything in turmoil, including what fish should or should not be doing under a “normal” spring. As I prepare this report, we’ve had a week of 84 to 88 degrees temperatures with winds from the north & northeast for the last two weeks. Today, June 2, 90-degree is projected. What will summer be like?

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 June 3, 2023

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**Lost and Found:** A reader from Mercer County found a container with a number of quality lures somewhere around Shenango Lake in early May. He made an attempt locally to discover the owner, but has been unsuccessful. He thought by chance it may belong to someone who reads the Fishing Report. If you lost a container of lures, please send an email to [darblack@windstream.net](mailto:darblack@windstream.net) describing the container and naming several of the brand name lures. I will pass the information on to the individual who found them to verify you have the correct collection, and that individual will reach out to you by email regarding picking up the baits.

### COUNTY BY COUNTY REPORTS

#### French Creek – flowing through all four counties



**Angler Al @ Buttermilk Hill;** filed 5/29: During the opening week of walleye season on French Creek, my friend Corey Breene and myself managed to land several keepers 'eyes. We also caught quite a few chunky smallmouth bass. We were casting different sizes and color patterns of Rapala X Raps which dive 3 to 5 feet.



More recently, Mikey Galkowski and I were catching rainbow trout from French Creek. Yep, French Creek. French has a population of

trout that have moved downstream from feeder streams and in French. The number of trout increase in French when feeder streams drop quickly due to early summer heat and no rain. Trout head to the deeper water and faster current sections of French – so don't be surprised should you catch your biggest trout there!

## CRAWFORD COUNTY

### Pymatuning Lake

**Bean at Richter's Bait & Tackle;** filed 6/1: Walleyes are hitting really good during the day in weedbeds on the South End. Anglers are using Erie Dearies, worm harnesses and jigs – as long as lure is tipped with a nightcrawler, you are going to catch walleyes. A few anglers are catching walleyes by trolling shad crankbaits in deeper water, but the shallow water crawler bite is better right now.

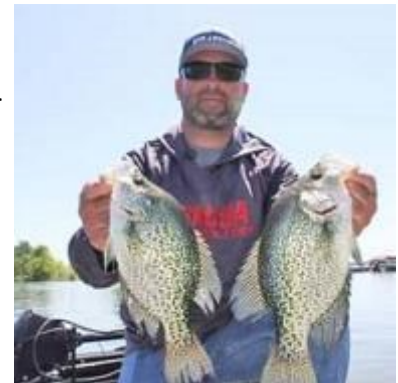
**Jennifer @ Duck-N-Drake;** filed 6/1: The most recent report I received for walleyes was an angler using a hook and split-shot with a crawler and casting it in 8 feet of water to catch a limit of walleye this morning. The Crappie Madness contest has slowed down with entries; have not had a change in the leaderboard for some time. (See photo)



Duck n Drake

**Patty @ Poff's;** Filed 6/1: Some anglers are still catching walleyes up north – some aren't. Only hearing of a stray crappie here and there being caught. Best news is the bluegills are bedding, and reports I am getting refer to some exceptional size ones.

**Gus @ G&G Marine Electronics;** filed 5/30: I spent Friday on Pymatuning with FishUSA doing some promotional crappie videos and working on a new line of crappie rods they are going to launch next year. However, fish-catching was pretty slow, but we managed to get a few good fish over the 1.5 – 1.77 lb. mark. Crappies have started moving out of the shallows and into their normal summertime patterns. Bobby Garland baits tipped with a minnow seemed to work best. I was sniping fish with a slip bobber – locating them on the graph then pitching the float at them. This worked quite well. Then on Saturday, I fished the South End with minimal luck. I did locate a good number of fish in 14' of water, sniping them with my 14' B&M Blue Diamond rod paired with hand-tied jigs that I tied myself. Fish were pretty easy to pick off on the bottom. However, suspended fish were very fickle – which seems to be normal at Pymatuning. (See photo)



**Angler Al @ Buttermilk Hill;** filed 5/29: Dave Feltenberger joined me to troll for walleye at Pymatuning. But all we caught were catfish. My cousin Steve Bell and his comrades spent the past week at Pymatuning. They did well most days. Their success came by trolling Flicker Shads in a perch or shiner pattern. They were also wind drifting while jigging small pieces of nightcrawler. (See photo right)



Steve Bell



**Sean & Mara Dougherty;** filed 5/28: My wife and I topped off two days of fishing North End Stumps on Pymatuning with each of us catching a 14-inch crappie. Mine was 1.25 pound and was taken on a Minnow under a slip bobber; Mara's was 1.55 pounds, taken on a minnow on a drop shot rig. (See photos left)

**Captain Hook** (Hermitage); filed 5/25: I got these nice Pymatuning walleyes during the night bite. (See photo)



Captain Hook

**Adam Horne;** filed 5/24: While fishing from shore near the Jamestown Marina with my son Ronen, we caught a number of yellow perch. We were casting small Road Runners tipped with Z-Man plastics and jigs tipped with worms. Worms were not working as well as the Road Runners. Not big fish, but my son really enjoyed the evening.



Ronen Horne

### Conneaut Lake

Adam Horne; filed 5/31: My brother Cash Horne and I fished at first light on Conneaut Lake on May 27. We had some success from kayaks on the north end of Conneaut. We fished in the shallow emerging weeds; landed a few largemouth bass. The most successful bait was a minnow under a bobber; also fished with a bare hook to see what might happen.



Cash Horne on Conneaut

### Geneva Marsh

Perhaps the Marsh best known these days for bowfin, although back in the late 60s I used to catch largemouth bass, northern pike and crappies from sections of the Marsh. And some very, very old-timers had told me back in the 60s, that at one time before the Game Commission put in the lowhead dams in the marsh, walleyes migrated up the



Marsh walleye

stream from French Creek into Conneaut Lake to spawn as the ice was going off the lake. All of that is history. But this spring Brad B provided some new insight into Marsh fishing from his trips to the lowhead dam at Custard's earlier this spring. Turns out he was catching walleyes in the tail race below the dam, as well as some hefty small-

mouth bass above and below the dam. Interesting! (See photos here and more photos from Brad at [@ibeefishin.](#))



Marsh smallmouth

## ERIE COUNTY

### Lake Erie

**Capt. Bob Z @ Perch Pirate;** filed 6/1: We started operating this past weekend, and were confronted with NE winds all weekend. However, our customers managed a few walleyes. Of course, we were fishing in the shallower water for local fish; the western basin schools have not reached us yet. We caught our walleyes in 25 feet of water and shallower. To reserve a spot on the Perch Pirate, call 814-746-5809.

**Kirk @ East End Angler;** filed 6/1: There is a mixed bag of things happening right now. Lake trout being caught in 80 to 100 feet on both sides of the Mountain out of North East. Boat anglers fishing shallower water during the day are struggling. However, the night shift guys are doing okay. There are perch reported in 40 to 60 feet off Shades, 35 to 40 & 60 to 65 off Hammermill, and 55 to 60 off the Point – but catches are sporadic.

**Dominic @ Poor Richards;** filed 6/1: Perch are biting off the Point and off Walnut in 53 feet of water. The night bite for walleyes is very good in 9 to 12 feet of water.

**Pete @ SmalliesontheYough;** filed 6/1: The weather was awesome and the 80s with a nice east breeze for a day on PIB. The smallmouth spawn is pretty much over, but we caught a lot of post spawn bass in 5 to 7 feet of water – mostly largemouth but a few smallies, too. The biggest bass were 19 inches. All taken on soft plastic. (See photos left & right)



**Capt. George Mro**; filed 5/26: May has been a month change on Lake Erie for smallmouth fishing from pre-spawn to spawn, and now most SMB are in the post spawn mode. Smallmouth have been setting up on deeper structure, deeper flats, drop-offs and under water pints in 12 to 16 feet range. Dropshot, Ned Rigs and tubes fished slowly on the bottom have been the ticket. (See photos below)



## MERCER COUNTY

### Shenango Lake

**Randy @ Fish West PA**; filed 5/29: Action on Shenango has been heating up as the temperature increases. I've had reports during latter part of May of largemouth, crappies, white bass and hybrid stripers. Nothing on walleyes. During the shad spawn earlier this month, I caught a 14-pound and 17-pound hybrid stripers. But the shad spawn is over with bait balls forming and gradually moving offshore and deeper. As the bait moves, so moves the stripers. The hybrids will school offshore for summer. (See photos below; 17 lb. hybrid striper is cover shot)



A big Largemouth for Randy



14 lb hybrid striper



Shades of Summer! Chris has first big channel cat already.

**Ken Smith** (Sharon); filed 5/29: the crappie bite on Shenango over Memorial Day weekend was tough. I caught a few keeper crappies, but mainly small ones. Look forward to crappies sitting up on summer spots now. (See photos below)

**Marilyn @ Blackwolfe Communications**; filed 5/30: Darl and I spent Friday and Saturday of Memorial Day weekend on Shenango looking for smallmouth bass and hoping for a hybrid striper. But our results were less than stellar. I caught a 3-pound largemouth – the only bass in two days. Balance of our catch consisted of few incidental white bass and black crappies here and there. (See photo below)



Ken Smith photos



Ken Smith



Marilyn Black photo

## Lake Wilhelm

**Brad B**; filed 5/29 – check out more of his photos on social media at **@ibeefishing**.

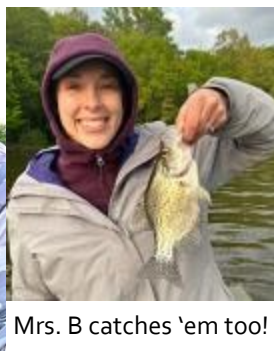
Fishing success has been picking up at Lake Wilhelm, including musky, largemouth bass and crappies. If you can use your sonar properly, you can find some groups of extra nice crappies, like ones Rich and I caught in the Memorial Tournament last week. (See photos)



Rich's first musky of the year



Bassmaster at work



Mrs. B catches 'em too!



Tournament catch

## VENANGO COUNTY

### Trout Streams of Venango

#### Sugar Creek

**Angler Al**; filed 5/29: Sugar has remained a fun place to catch rainbow and brown trout. Mikey and I are catching a good number of them. Most are recently stocked fish, but I did hook up with a couple larger hold overs. Minnows, wax worms, pieces of nightcrawler work best. I did have fun casting a dry fly (cream color #14) with my rod; caught several before losing all the creams.



#### Oil Creek & Big Sandy

**Denny Beggs** (Franklin); filed 5/25: Kory Slye of Russell PA (originally from Cranberry) caught some nice trout on the weekend of April 22/23. He and a college buddy fished Oil Creek and Big Sandy Creek. (See photos)



#### East Sandy

**Denny Beggs**; filed 5/23: A buddy and I biked Sandy Creek Trail this morning and fished East Sandy Creek. No trout rising but we caught a couple rainbow on maggots and a brown trout on a salted minnow. Fun outing with my friend Larry Kladney. (See photos)



Editor: All trout photos on this page are of KorySlye during a return visit to Venango County for trout fishing. Photos provided by Denny Beggs.





## Allegheny River

**Jeff @ Keystone Connection Guide Service**; filed 5/30: As is common, the month of May provided good action for river smallmouth bass along with challenges driven by changing conditions and transition from pre-spawn to spawn. Early May found smallmouth bass in pre-spawn locations with lots of quality fish up to 20 inches taken, namely on soft and hard jerkbaits. This was followed by a period of higher/colder water that moved smallmouth bass to deeper, slower water where Ned Rigs and Galida's Grubs came into play. The water then warmed, quickly dropped, and fish moved to spawning locations. My most recent river guide trip was May 25, after which I suspended river trips until mid-June so as to not target bedding bass. As the same time the river was unseasonably clear and low with an abundance of suspended algae. (See photos below; Jeff Knapp photos)



## **Quick Tips for June and July from Our Seasoned Anglers**

### Angler Al on Stream Trout during the Summer

Extremely warm temps and low water levels make catching trout during the summer months most challenging. However, you can get it done. Use very light line. I prefer 2-pound Frog Hair leaders from Gamma. Also, small hooks – no bigger than #10s or #12s. Cast upstream of a current rush and let your bait ride naturally with the flow. I use red worms and wax worms for bait, and sometimes small minnows. When fly fishing, the general advice is always 'match the hatch' – if there is one. Otherwise, I like a small #14 chrome beadhead Prince Nymphs, Copper John's or Hair's Ear.

## Summer Tips from Seasoned Anglers—continued

### Ken Smith on Crappies During the Summer

I'm using my Kenny Catchem Hand Ties in numerous patterns – but this one is the hottest. I call it Killin' Time. My summer pattern isn't much different from my fall pattern. I target crappies in 8 to 12 feet of water around wood. If they are not on my usual spots, I'll try deeper.



### Pete Cartwright on Wading for River Smallmouth During the Summer

I carry as little as possible. A vest with lures, snacks, water and small first aid kit/survival kit, and a packable rain jacket. Those items go with me every time out. I wear quick-dry long pants or swim trucks, wade boot with studs, long sleeve sun shirt (blue or green), hat and sunglasses. I fish with a G. Loomis Rod and Shimano Stradic 2500 Reel spooled with 6-pound Gamma Edge line.

### Capt. George Mro on Lake Erie Smallmouth During the Summer

The upcoming month of June will find all the smallmouth in the main lakes by the end of the month (including those that spawned in PIB). Zman TRD's on a Ned Head, tubes and Berkley Max Scent Baits on dropshots will be the ticket. Use natural colors in green pumpkin and browns to mimic gobies. I will start looking in 15 feet of water and progress deeper. I find the smaller fish schooled up by end of June, but the bigger smb are more of loners, traveling groups of 2 or 3. Sunny, breezy days are best. Tight Lines!

### Randy Hedderick on Shenango Lake Hybrid Stripers During the Summer

During the summer months, we concentrate on locating hybrid stripers in deeper off-shore water. The river channel is a favorite spot this time year. Our favorite lures include Zoom Super Flukes, Storm WildEye Swimshads and Berkley Max Scent Minnows. First, we search for baitfish concentrations, then look for hybrids suspending in the midwater column near the bait.

## **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; fishinkeef5132@gmail.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

# 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](mailto:Debbie@riverjetpro.com)



Chris Slozat; 26.5 in Pymie walleye

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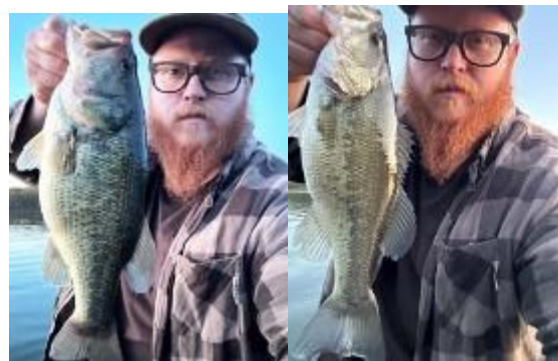
Lippy; 14 lb. hybrid striper, Lake Arthur

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Ben Heasley; 5lb 10oz smb, Erie

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Brad B with Tamarack Largemouth Bass

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Black Knight Industries

Oil City, PA 16301

[www.gammafishing.com](http://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

Dale Black, president of Gamma Fishing Line, wants to see this page filled with fish caught on Gamma Lines. If you have tried Gamma yet, it really is time to so. You can buy it locally at Consumer Directs Sports near the Grove City Mall; Maurer's Trading Post in Franklin; or East End Angler in Harborcreek. If they don't have what you want, give the Gamma production facility on Rt 322 in Franklin and order exactly what you want. (Phone number available from their Facebook Page or website.)



## 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

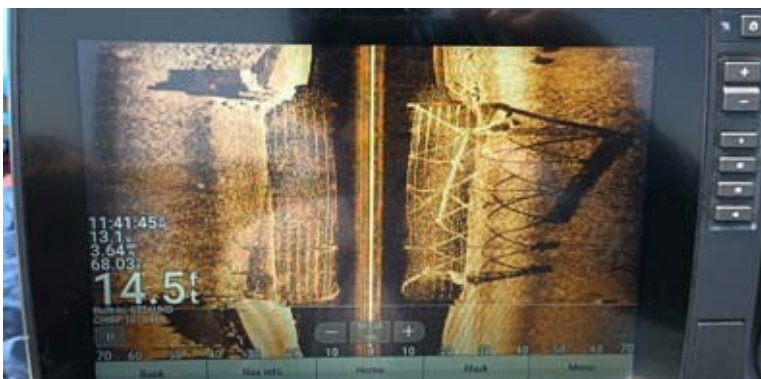
### Garmin LiveScope Tips from Gus Glasgow:

May 23 – I made a quick trip to Arthur this afternoon. Had not been on the lake in a while. The crappies were in spawn/post spawn patterns. Worn out males were still glued to shallow structure guarding nests, and the occasional female full of eggs was caught – but that’s coming to an end fast.



Water temp was 63 degrees and rising. I fo-

ocused on the shallow off shore structure in 2 to 4 feet of water commonly overlooked on large flats. Sticks, stumps and small brush piles were my primary focus. I scanned with my LiveScope and moved on fast if I didn’t see anything. Fish were short striking and angry at the lures, but not necessarily hungry. I was using Bobby Garland plastic from FishUSA under a slip bobber. I pitched to cover from 25 to 30 feet away and worked the jig quickly.



May 30 – after two days of a tough bite at Pymatuning, slipped over to Mosquito Lake. I lost count the number of fish we caught. However, all but two were under 1 pound. Tons of fish in that lake with massive schools swimming just about everywhere. I kept upsizing my baits but kept getting small fish. Check out this sunken bridge on Garmin.

## **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

FishUSA

Poor Richards Bait & Tackle

Tudor Hook-N-Nook At Elk Creek Sports

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

French Creek Fishing Company

Galida's Grubz

Luckis4rabbits

Mike's Custom Tackle