

NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA FISHING REPORT

Published by Blackwolfe Communications LLC

Issue: August 4, 2023

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



Angler A's huge northern pike from Justus Lake

LANDING NET *by Darl Black*

It's been a hot July – a record setter in terms of heat. Many anglers of a certain age (myself included) cannot take the extreme sun exposure and unprecedented high temperatures. Nonetheless, for those who ventured out there were some outstanding fishing opportunities: Lake Erie offshore walleye fishing; small-mouth bass on the Allegheny River; and white bass at Shenango Lake. These summer bites should continue through most of August – unless we get a sudden dramatic drop in temperatures. There were also a number of BIG fish caught in August; check these out in the Report.

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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News Bytes

Area Bait & Tackle Shops Added to Report: The NW PA Fishing Report would like to welcome two bait & tackle shop additions to the reporting crew. Kevin and Jesse opened **Windy's Bait & Tackle** on Rt. 6 between Conneaut Lake and Linesville about one year ago, providing live bait, brand-name lures and hand-tied jigs. **French Creek Adventures** in Cambridge Springs opened recently with tackle (including French Creek Fishing Company lures) and live bait, as well as a canoe rental service; stop in to say "hello" to Marcy. (Photos)

Pick Three: Check Gamma Line Page of this Report for details on entering the Pick Three Drawing running through December issue.

FRENCH CREEK – flowing through all four counties

Marcy @ French Creek Adventures; filed 7/23: Check out these great catches by some of customers from upper French Creek. Surprises from upper creek.

(See photos)



CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Bean @ Richter's Bait & Tackle; 8/2: Anglers on the South End fishing just beyond the deep weedline edges in about 10 feet of water with a jig-n-crawler are still catching some walleyes, as well as a few decent perch. Crappies have apparently gone on vacation somewhere as catch-reports on them are non-existent. I've seen some boats fishing for muskies, but no reports of catches.

Laurie @ Duck-n-Drake; filed 8/2: a brisk walleye bite continues for those trolling north of Andover Causeway and mid-section of the lake below the Causeway. Up north they are trolling Shad Rap type lures in 10 to 12 feet of water at 2.4 mph. In the mid-section off Duck-N-Drake & Ohio campground, anglers are successful in 18 feet of water with a slightly slower speed. We heard of some decent bass being caught, as well as bluegills. Crappies are quiet. August 19th is our next Catfish Tournament; tournament hours are 7 p.m. on the 19th to 7 a.m. morning of the 20th. Stop by the shop this week for more information.

Captain Hook (Hermitage); filed 7/28: I caught this nice largemouth bass while fishing from shore last week at Pymatuning. (See photo)



Captain Hook

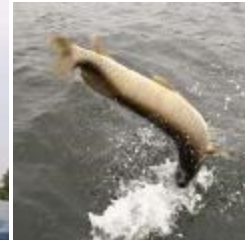
Patty @ Poff's Place; filed 8/2: Oh, they are still picking up some walleyes and perch, in addition to all the catfish. No crappies have been reported – don't know what has happened with them. Reports for all species have slowed in July due to anglers not fishing as a result of the extremely uncomfortable temperatures.

Conneaut Lake

Jesse @ Windy's Bait & Tackle; filed 8/2: Anglers stopping in at our shop are primarily fishing Conneaut Lake and Pymatuning Lake. During the summer, it seems a lot of casual anglers are fishing from shore, with a variety of panfish species and catfish being caught. Boat anglers at Pymatuning report some walleyes and smallmouth bass. Boat anglers at Conneaut seem to be catching mainly bass and perch.

Marilyn Black @ Blackwolfe Communications; filed 8/2: During July and August, Conneaut Lake is our favorite lake to fish. Of course, we only fish it during weekdays – never on a weekend or holiday due to crazy boating traffic. While the bite at Pymatuning and Wilhelm seems to stumble during the hottest part of the year, we find consistent

success at Conneaut for crappies, bluegills, pumpkinseeds, largemouth bass, small-mouth bass and northern pike. Some days are tougher than others, but we always catch something. And there is a new species on the lake you might try to hook when hungry but you will need greenbacks and cell phone to catch it...the boatspizza. Yes, there is a pizza delivery boat! (See photos)



ERIE COUNTY

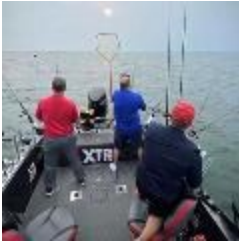
Lake Erie

Kirk @ East End Angler; filed 8/2: Lots of walleyes on the east side, especially off Shades. Lots and lots of walleyes. They are everywhere from 30 feet depth out to 80 feet depth, mostly holding in water column between 40 and 60 feet. Guys are catching them from canoes and kayaks! Ridiculous numbers of fish. Most anglers are getting limits of keepers but must wade through a lot of short ones – which hold promise for next year. I can barely keep up with the demand for crawlers. I was at a seminar the other night where the PFBC biologist for Erie said their sampling nets in 48 feet of water are loaded with yellow perch – but no one is fishing for them since the walleye bite is so good. For a change of pace, I am also hearing of some anglers catching crappies off the South Pier simply casting a hook bait with a minnow or couple maggots, and weighted with only a couple split-shot; cast out and let it drift in the current.

Bill @ Tudor's Hook N Nook at Elk Creek Sports; filed 8/2: Walleyes are everywhere. Shallow, deep and in between – it's unreal. If you can float a boat on the Lake, good chance you will get a limit. Of course, crawler harnesses continue to produce, but small spoons trolled fast are working as well.

Capt. Bob @ Perch Pirate; filed 8/2: Walleyes are here and we are catching them on the Perch Pirate. If you know how to fish an Erie Dearie on the sweep, or are willing to learn, you'll catch walleye with us, too. We have been picking up incidental perch as well. I understand some of the charter boats are catching steelhead in the 90-to-100-foot depths; these steelhead are starting to stage for the fall run.

XTR Fishing Charters; filed 7/28: Lots of good walleye being caught outside the pack of smaller fish; targeting 65' – 75' and as deep as 90' at times. With lots of fish staying high in the water column. Out into the 85'-90' we have been running additional lines for steelhead. 400 weighted steel and 300 weighted steel with spoons. Five core and Bomber 24s have been the bread winners. Jet 30s and small spoons to target the bug eaters at first light have added to the box. Out speed at ball has been picking up 2.6 to 2.8 mph average. 3.0 divers 110' back as far as 160'. 1.5 divers 65' back. Riggers have been producing well at 45' down and deeper. I anticipate the high fish to fall down soon and the river bite will dominate. Stay safe. XTR Fishing Charters. (Photo left)



Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 7/28: Couple friends and I fished Lake Erie in late July. Nice morning but the waves picked up just as we finished our three-man limit. We went out as far as 71 feet as we were marking fish constantly. Puts the dipsys down. Number one was set at 125 and number three was at 165, post and starboard. Headed south and finished in 58 feet of water. Good day with Ron and Ed! (photo right)



Dave Ohmer (Erie); filed 7/26: I went out on Erie from Walnut Creek in my kayak to locate walleye in 50 to 60 feet. Vertical jigging a SteelShad on 10-pound Gamma Edge produced 6 walleyes. (photo left)



Denny Beggs (Franklin); filed 7/28: Nice 12-inch perch from Presque Isle Bay. (photo right)

Capt. George Mro @ Bass Fishing Charters; filed 7/31: Lake Erie bass fishing is in full summer patterns. Smallmouth are all in the main lake. Bigger fish are in the 25-to-30-foot depths on isolated boulders and rock piles. Don't expect great numbers but quality fish are there. Fish are coming on dropshot, tubes and some on swimbaits. Expect to catch some bonus walleye as well as bass. Walleyes are everywhere. The largemouth bite in the Bay has been great. Texas rigged plastics, jigs and Chatter baits on deep weed edges have been the way to go, plus topwaters early mornings with calm surface...who does not love a topwater blowup! These patterns should hold through August. Tight lines, Capt. George. (Photos next page and in Livwell)

Capt. George Mro— bass charter on Lake Erie



MERCER COUNTY

Lake Wilhelm

Brad at @ibeefishin; filed 8/2: I have not been out on Wilhelm much this July. Photos to share include nice largemouth bass (throwing cranks and jigs for bass), a 17-inch crappie, fun day with niece and nephew on the water, and a big carp caught by Rich on a small crappie jig. Better fishing coming. (Photos below)



Stan Teitelbaum; filed 7/28: Although I generally fish Pymatuning, I spent a day exploring Lake Wilhelm. I caught a couple chunky 18-inch largemouth on a wacky Senko. The sun was in and out; wind did not pick up till late morning. I got off the lake early afternoon when heat became uncomfortable. (Photo left)



Shenango Lake

Randy @ Fish West PA; filed 7/31: It's been a fun summer on Shenango so far- but it's going quickly! Hybrid stripers, bass, crappies and catfish have all been feeding well. Both good numbers and big fish have been reported, and we have experienced it firsthand. August should bring more of the same...so go fish! The cold winter winds will be blowing before you know it. (Photos next page)

Shenango Lake photos from Fish West PA



Randy with LMB



High-water Hybrid Striped Bass



Chris with Flathead

(I believe Chris caught this monster flathead on the night of Aug 1 full moon.)



Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 7/29: My friends from Pittsburgh came up to fish Shenango with me again. We had a pretty good day on crappies. Boated 28 keepers, and 6 white bass. We cleaned them in the shade and packed them for the ride home. Good day with good

friends.



VENANGO COUNTY

Angler Al's August Diary for Justus Lake, Sugar Creek and French Creek

- 7/9: for many years the week of the July 4th holiday has been a fishing reunion for my brother-in-law Doc Das and I. It was nice that Mikey could join us on a few of those days as well. Together we fished French Creek, Justus Lake and Sugar Creek. I kept count of our catch:

- 77 Rainbow Trout
- 66 Smallmouth Bass
- 8 Brown Trout
- 5 Largemouth Bass
- 1 Northern Pike
- Total catch for the first week of July was 157 gamefish – All released!

We drifted red worms and small pieces of nightcrawler, plus small live minnows for trout in Sugar Creek. Used larger creek bait for bass at Justus Lake and French Creek. Using a fly rod, the following presentations worked great for smallmouth bass: #8, #10 and #12 brown and black spring lizards.



Doc Has with SMB



Mikey with LMB

For trout we used brown caddis nymph, bead head prince nymph, San Juan worm, and black or olive wooly bugger.

At Justus Lake I caught a northern pike. (See cover) I've been fishing Justus Lake since the late 70s. I've caught a lot of fish from this body of water, but never hooked up with a northern pike. Never heard of a northern pike being caught from Justus Lake. So, when I hooked into the monster 40-inch pike, I immediately assumed it was a big pure-bred muskellunge or a tiger musky, having caught both from Justus before. Wore the fish down some, got it to the boat, Mikey quickly netted it and very quickly a photo was snapped so I could immediately release it. Only after the fish swam away did I review the photo. I was shocked to see the markings indicated a purebred northern pike rather than a musky! This fish had huge proportions for a pike. I didn't get it on a scale, but I would say it was a solid 25 pounds but could have been more. Mikey did a fantastic net job and Doc captured the event on my GoPro. Thanks to both. PTL from Angler Al.



During late July trips to Justus, I caught two exceptional largemouth bass – a four pounder and a five pounder on one trip and several smaller bass one evening with Darl Black. All came on large live creek bait fished in 22 to 30 feet of water.

The last day of July, I fished Sugar Creek for trout. I took my usual nightcrawlers and minnows. Caught 11 rainbows on pieces of crawler and 3 on minnows. None were larger than 12 inches. All were released. (See photos of some August catches here, and the big pike on the cover.)

5-lb 1mb Justus Lake

Allegheny River

Jeff @ Keystone Connection Guide Service; filed 7/31: July provided outstanding fishing for smallmouth bass on the middle Allegheny River. My guide trips produced excellent numbers of all sizes of bass up to 20 inches. Soft jerkbaits, Rapala X-Raps, and topwater have all been good. (See photos below)





Mike Jones; filed 7/19: Friends and I canoed the Allegheny last week from Franklin to Em-lenton. Lots of decent-size smallmouth plus a few that went 4 to 4.5 pounds. We used vintage plugs (Beno's) and black Mann's Worms on 1/8-oz jig heads. We concentrated on

pools most people cannot get to without a canoe or kayak. However, there was a lot of grass in the river. (See photos left & right)

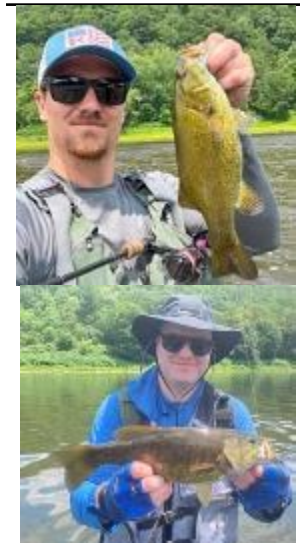


Pete @ SmalliesontheYough Guide Service – Pete's Allegheny August Diary

- 7/6: I did some scouting today on the river for upcoming trips. The bite was pretty good for a hot sunny day. I was catching fish in the 13-to-16-inch range, but nothing bigger. I did lose one about 18 inches as I was landing it. As I was leaving, I thought to try one more spot where I have caught a few bigger smallies. Well, it worked! I landed a river giant of 21 inches, and got the picture!
- 7/14: A great day today. We started catching fish on the second cast of the day. It didn't stop. We had action all day long in typical summer spots. We used Gamma Edge in the clear waters of Allegheny.
- 7/16: Another great start! First cast caught a 20-inch smallmouth. The river is on fire right now. We had hook-ups with all sizes of fish today, landing a bunch in the 17-to-18-inch range with a few in the 19-to-20-inch range.
- 7/19: This was a fantastic day on the Allegheny from start to finish. The smallies were eating everything from topwater to tubes. We crushed them. I also landed a huge 22-inch smallmouth. What a river!
- 7-24: Great Day to be fishing for river smallmouth. There were patterns throughout the day that worked with summer peak in effect. These fish are fat and eating everything. I used Gamma Edge 6-lb. test in the ultra-clear water. If interested in a wade trip, contact me at pete@smalliesontheyough.com.
- 7/26: A different day on the river. Tons of floating algae in the entire water column. It was bad. Every cast we had to clear it off the line or the lure. We did catch fish in the 12-to-15-inch range with one hitting the 19-inch mark.



21 inch river Smallmouth



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

Prize Drawings this issue. To claim a prize, email your shipping address to darlblack@windstream.net.

Cover photo (pack of Mike's Custom Tubes: **Angler AI**

Spool of Gamma Line: **Mike Jones**

Pack of Galida's Grubz: **Stan Teitelbaum**

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

And Big Fish Just Kept on Coming all July...On 4th of July, Woody Knis' mother wanted to catch her 1st musky; Woody grated her wish. Charter Boat on Lake Erie in PA waters caught an honest-to-goodness Great Lakes Spotted Musky. River guide Pete Cartwright caught an a massive 22-inch Allegheny smallmouth bass. On Shenango, Randy was on a dry spell for a big hybrid—until the massive rain storm sent Shenango high; he got a 12.5 lb. hybrid striper from shore.



LIVEWELL PAGE TWO — Contributors take a trip in July

Below, Nijya Justice, Sr. decided to sample the Crappie fishing at Mosquito Lake



Aaron of French Creek Fishing Company decided to field test some of his baits on Kinzua:





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 LINES PICK THREE Drawing on NW PA FISHING REPORT

Have you been wanting to try a different GAMMA Line? Here's a chance to try three! Send us your photo of a fish taken on Gamma Line and your name goes in the hat for a drawing of three sample spools of different Gamma Line.

It's simple to enter. Simply email a photo of a fish you caught on one of Gamma's excellent lines along with a little information. Your photo and comment will be posted on the GAMMA Page on the NW PA Fishing Report. Include "GAMMA drawing" in the email title. Name of individual submitting the entry goes into the hat - one entry per-month. Drawing will be at Gamma's Franklin Office sometime in January.

You may enter one photo per monthly NW PA Fishing Report for the remaining of the 2023. Reports will be published in August, September, October, November and December; therefore, you can send one entry each month. Entry must be sent to following email: darlblack@windstream.net. No Text or Messenger.

Each photo entry must be accompanied by the following information: identification of fish species; name of angler catching the fish; waterway where fish was caught; lure or bait used and specific Gamma line used. You may also include estimated length or weight of the fish; however, size of fish has no bearing on drawing. **August entries on the next page.**

This Pick Three promotion is brought to you by **Gamma's** Edge, Touch, Polyflex, Panfish, Torque and ESP Ice & FC Ice lines. August Entries below.



Kyla; smallmouth; Allegheny R.; 8lb Edge



Capt. Hook; LMB, Pymatuning; 6lb
Polyflex



Larry Kladney; musky;
Pymatuning; 6lb Edge



Denny Beggs; white bass;
Pymatuning; 6lb Edge



Dave Ohmer; walleye; Lake Erie; 10lb Gamma Edge

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

Looking for contributions to the Garmin Page of anglers' success stories. Need a clear focused shot of the Garmin Screen showing some combination of bottom structure, cover, fish, baitfish—whatever...and photo of fish you caught as result of the screen. For this issue, I am posting three of PA lake images previously used on this page. To the first three individuals who can identify the western PA lake location of each screen (A, B, C), I'll send you a packet of Galida's Grubz or Mike' Custom Tubes. Email your response to darlblack@windstream.net. One response per individual.



Lake A



Lake b



Lake c

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