

# 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**



Kevin Burkholder with nice Woodcock Lake largemouth bass. (French Creek Adventures)

## Landing Net by Darl Black

I must admit, August fishing was far from what I had expected. Between the extreme heat, severe storms and too many other appointments, I only fished four or maybe five times. My August largemouth catches were way, way down, landing only a handful of small greenies from area lakes. My best results came from Conneaut...but even those few trips were not ones to be excited about. I talked to many anglers since the last report; the majority were struggling or simply had given up until fall's cooler water temperatures. Of course, Lake Erie continued to produce walleyes like crazy – when the boats could get out. And based on guide reports and handful of other hardcore anglers, the smallmouth bass bite on the Allegheny seemed strong.

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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### FRENCH CREEK - flowing through all four counties

**Angler Al @ Buttermilk Hill;** filed 8/5: Mikey and I wade fished a quarter mile section of French Creek. We were able to catch a variety of fish, including walleye, rainbow trout and smallmouth bass. A 15-inch rainbow was caught on a piece of worm, smallmouth bass hit crankbaits and live minnows. Walleyes came on nice size creek baitfish. It was a beautiful morning to get out and fish. We did keep a 20-inch walleye for lunch. Heading home to enjoy that! Have a great day. Angler Al



Mikey with SMB

### CRAWFORD COUNTY

#### Pymatuning Lake

**Dave @ Richter's Bait & Tackle;** filed 8/30: Not many guys fishing this time of year, but those who are still out there seem to be catching a good number of walleyes with enough eaters to keep them coming back. One customer reported having a musky hit a perch that had been hooked – lost both the perch and the musky. Lots of perch, but few of quality size right now. Of course, the catfish bite continues. Also, seem to be more reports of white bass being caught this season than last. My forecast for Pymatuning walleye come fall? I anticipate seeing a good number of legal walleyes be-

ing caught when the water cools a bit...because there were big numbers of just under 15-inch 'eyes this past spring.

**Jenifer @ Duck & Drake**; filed 8/30: The bite is slow according to our customers. Seems perch is all that I'm hearing about. No mention of crappies

**Patty @ Poff's Place**; filed 8/30: Perch, catfish and white bass seems to sum up the catches this late in the summer. No mention of crappies or walleyes lately. People going out this time of the season are just looking to catch anything, and these customers are telling me they are happy when catching panfish and catfish. They are successful in boats and from the causeway.



**Ken Smith (Sharon)**; filed 8/24: I fished the Jamestown end of Pymatuning twice in the past couple weeks for crappies – one day by myself and another day with buddy Tim Odem. Don't know why some Pymatuning anglers are saying they can't find crappies. I was able to locate



them in deep brush with the fish holding close to bottom. We lost a few jigs, but it was worth it. (Photos left and right)

**Jeff Knapp (Kittanning)**; filed 8/30: I made three trips to Pymatuning during August. Lots of walleyes, with a fair number of keepers in the 15.5 to 19-inch range. Jigging hard bottom structure in the lower basin of the lake has been the key. Lots of white bass, yellow perch and channel cats as well. (Jeff Knapp photos below)



### Conneaut Lake

**Jesse @ Windy's Bait & Tackle**; filed 8/30: Our business is slow right now, coming out of Fair week and into back-to-school prep. Our customers are primarily buying live bait to shore fish at Conneaut Lake. They have been catching mainly panfish with an occasional bass. One guy caught a musky this past week.

**Ronen Horne** (Hartstown); filed 8/5: I fished with my dad at Conneaut Lake for bluegills and we did really well! I was using a bobber with maggots and bits of worm, jiggling them on the way back to the boat. We were up early and finished before most of the other boats were out – almost had the lake to ourselves! (Photo left)



**Marilyn @ Blackwolfe Communications**; filed 8/29: Darl and I fished Conneaut Lake twice in the past couple weeks. Not targeting any species in particular, we went with the flow of whatever was biting. Several 12 to 13 inch largemouth, a few crappies, and a number of bluegills & pumpkinseed. Ironically, our Garmin sonar showed large schools of bluegills in 17 to 20 feet of water off weedy flats and mid-lake humps – but these fish were constantly moving. Catch a couple, then we would have to move around to find the school again. However, the last trip on the 29<sup>th</sup> yielded BIG pumpkinseeds from an old sunken wooden boat in 19 feet of water. By the way, on the 29<sup>th</sup>, there were massive schools of very small bluegills feeding just inches under the surface over several major weed flats – and bowfins were having a field day busting the schools. (Photos below)



Typical CL 'gill



Constantly moving deep 'gill schools



Big pumpkinseed

### Woodcock Creek Lake

**Marcy @ French Creek Adventures**; filed 8/12: One of my customers, Kevin Burkholder, caught this nice largemouth bass at Woodcock on a nightcrawler. (Cover photo)

(Editor note: First LMB I've seen from Woodcock in sometime.)



## ERIE COUNTY

### Lake Erie, PIB and Tribs

**Rob @ FishUSA**; filed 8/30: **Walleye** – fishing has been great the past month (when you can get out on Lake Erie). Weather has not been super cooperative over the past month, but when you get out there, there are plenty of walleye to be caught.

Most reports have the fish in the 60 to 80 feet of water. No surprises what people have been using – Bandits, Bombers, Michigan Stingers and Dreamweaver Spoons have been popular choices. Personally, I have found success over the last two weeks in

shallower depths in 20 to 30 feet. I was bottom bouncing a Colorado blade crawler harness; purple and copper have been my go-to colors. (See photos) While walleyes are everywhere right now, the bite will start to slow down by the middle of September as migratory 'eye start heading back west. But we will still have resident walleye hanging around.

**Steelhead** – Steelhead season is creeping in, witnessed by few early runners being caught. Guys have had success casting hardware off of Avonia Beach and the channel wall at Walnut Creek in early morning hours. The hardware varies but some options include Kastmasters and Little Cleos in nickel/blue and nickel/green. I would like to mention that if you not planning on keeping steelhead there is a chance that they will die if caught and released due to current warmer water temps. There have also been reports of a few brown trout caught at Walnut, too.

**Smallmouth** – The majority of reports have the bass still holding in deeper water (30 to 50 feet), but in the coming weeks they should start moving into shallower water as temperatures continue to drop.

**Kirk @ East End Angler**; filed 8/30: As summer draws to a close, walleyes on scattered. Strongest reports are putting them in 40 to 50 feet of water, and out in 73 to 85 depths as well. The shallower fish were close to the bottom, being picked up by drifters. Further out, walleyes are hanging tight to around 65 feet in the 73 to 85 depths. Spoons and plugs are working for some, but the good old crawler harness seems to be the best producer. Trollers are picking up steelhead as well. Some steelhead are beginning to stage near creek mouths, making short nighttime forays into the streams; some steelies have been caught off the Walnut Creek Wall. The crappie fishing in the Bay is exception-



FishUSA photo

al for this time of year, with numerous anglers catching fish off the city-side piers and docks. If we get some decent rains and little cooler temps, we could see a steelhead migration to streams start in mid- September this year.

**Brittany @ Poor Richards**; filed 8/30: Walleye action continues in 65 to 75 feet of water – when you can get out on the lake. No reports of perch. Some steelhead are being caught off the channel wall at Walnut Creek in the early mornings. We need rain and cooler temps to trigger any serious start of the run into the streams. We are excited to announce we have the Quick Minnow bait container back in stock. This minnow carrier for wading anglers dispenses one live minnow at a time without getting your hands wet. Steelhead anglers love this product! (Photo of Quick Minnow)



## Edinboro Lake



Marcy @ French Creek Adventures; filed 8/29: There has been some musky action at Edinboro Lake recently. Jackson Green caught a 44-inch musky and Elliott Williams caught a 39-inch musky. One fish was taken on a Lungen Alley Cat and the other on a Wander Shad. (See photos)



## MERCER COUNTY

### Lake Wilhelm



**Stan Teitelbaum** (Mentor, OH); filed 8/16: It started out as a really slow bite on Wilhelm today. But mid-morning a 21-1/4 inch largemouth nailed my wacky-rigged black-n-blue Senko, pulling drag from the start. I thought it was a big catfish until I was able to see it. Very little sun made for comfortable fishing, and wind was very light. Water color was murky and water temp was 75/76 degrees. After this first big one, the bite picked up with a few chunky bass and a few smaller ones. (photo)

## MERCER COUNTY continued

### Shenango Lake

**Randy @ Fish West PA**; filed 8/30: With summer of 2023 coming to an end, Shenango Lake has been giving up some good fish to remember. Big cats, big hybrids and good numbers of nice white bass as well as some big largemouth bass all being caught during a stormy August. Fall is right around the corner – but first a heat wave coming the first week of September. We can't wait. Tight lines...Randy. (Fish West PA Photos below)



**Ken Smith** (Sharon); filed 8/24: I took my buddy Junious out on Shenango to teach him my hang-gliding technique for crappies. We had a pretty good day, catching plenty of fish including a few nice white bass. The fish were suspended over deeper water. Bobby Garland Baby Shads in various colors produced best. (photos)



Junious



Angler Al

## VENANGO COUNTY

### Angler Al's Report for August 30 –

#### French Creek, Sugar Creek, Allegheny River, Justus Lake

Smallmouth bass are munching. My bud Brian shared that he had been slamming smallies on the Allegheny. Personally, I've been nailing them on French Creek as well as Sugar Creek. Our presentations have been with live minnows and larger indigenous creek baits. I also caught and release several rainbow trout on Sugar Cree – smaller minnows working there. I took Mikey to Justus Lake this past Sunday; we caught and released 23 smallmouth and largemouth bass. Many of them exceeded 15 inches. Go Fish...and have an enjoyable end of summer weekend. PTL from Angler Al.

## Allegheny River

**Denny Beggs** (Franklin); filed 8/5: Fished the Allegheny River on August 4<sup>th</sup>, launching at Emlenton. I fished with a friend in his 14' 9.8 hp prop boat. We used river minnows and hellgrammites we caught from the river. (Photo right) Went up river about 3 miles and drifted back to Emlenton. We caught and released 12 smallmouth bass. My friend Larry Kladney (photo on Livewell Page) grew up fishing the river with his dad and grandad – started 70 years ago. A unique attachment on his outboard is a 4-prong pitchfork mounted in front of the propeller to protect it – it works well! (See Denny's tip on fishing Gamma Line on the Gamma Page.)



**Pete @ Smallies on the Yough.com**; Allegheny Diary (See photos)

8/16: The weather and water were perfect today. We waded all day; the bite was on and off but we managed to land some nice fish, including a big 20-inch smallmouth.



8/19: Another great day weather wise and river flow was perfect as well. The bite was great for smallmouth. They were attacking our tubes from 412bait Company in the slightly deeper runs as we dragged baits on the bottom



### **Jeff @ Keystone Connection**

**Guide Service**; filed August 30: During guide trips and fun trips with friends the Allegheny provided excellent fishing during August. Trips produced 40 to 50 bass per day with lots of 15 to 20 inchers in the mix. Topwaters, flukes and Rapala X Raps were all



productive. (See photos)





## **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—See your name below?**

**Email [darlblack@windstream.net](mailto:darlblack@windstream.net) to provide your address and claim your prize.**

Cover Picture wins pack of Mike's Custom Tubes: Kevin Burkholder

Spool of Gamma Line: Ronen Horne

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](mailto:Debbie@riverjetpro.com)



Caleb—30in, 9.5lb eye!

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Larry Kladney—Hellgrammite man

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Shenango hybrid striper

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Shenango crappie

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# GAMMA Lines

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



Capt. Hook; Pymatuning, 6 lb Polyflex



Angler Al; Fr Creek; 6 lb Edge



Denny; Allegheny; 6 lb Edge



Mikey; Justus Lk, 6lb Edge



Brad; Wilhelm; 2 lb Edge

**Denny Beggs: I always use 4 feet of 6 pound Gamma Edge as a leader from my main line to the hook.**

## 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

### Tip from Gus the Garmin Guy:

#### The Debate

The ongoing debate about the latest technology — specifically forward-facing sonar (Garmin LiveScope) is that it's taking the challenge out of fishing. I can't find this further than the truth. The truth is the technology makes you more efficient and does not guarantee you catch anything. I still have bad days on the water where I catch few or no fish. When you can see the fish and you can't catch them, I think it's worse than not seeing fish at all.

Garmin LiveScope has made me more efficient. You'll hear me say over and over, being more efficient catches you more fish. Understanding your electronics and learning how to properly use them will make you a better angler. In the pictures I shared with this article you can see a tree on my side imaging (Garmin GT-56 transducer) and the tree on my LiveScope (Garmin LVS-34 transducer). When I am fishing a new lake (or an area of a lake I am not familiar with), I turn on my side imaging and start working over the lake. When I see something interesting (in this case a tree), I mark a waypoint and continue on. I then circle back later on and check the mark. In this case the tree was full of bass and crappie.



Finding success is more about understanding your equipment and being efficient during your time on the water. If you have any questions at all in regard to Garmin products, installation, and proper setup, please call me and I would be more than happy to get you pointed in the right direction. – Gus Glasgow, G&G Marine Electronics.



## **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