

# NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA FISHING REPORT

Published by Blackwolfe Communications LLC Issue: June 13, 2024

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**



Rick Conlon BIG pike from Shenango Lake



Walleye bite full throttle on Lake Erie

## LANDING NET by Darl Black

The unsettling spring weather in NW PA continued through May and into June. More storms, wind events, copious amounts of rain, extremes in day-to-day temperatures (both low and high) have impacted many lake/ivers with higher and dirtier water than usual, and with water temperatures that have not followed the normal gradual warming pattern. Altogether, seems like it has contributed to both unusual fishing success at times as well as lack of expected fish-catching seasonal patterns other times. Certainly, a spring of unstable fishing. See what summer brings.

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 13, 2024

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### County by County Reports for waters in Crawford, Erie, Mercer and Venango Counties

#### News Bytes

Harrisburg, Pa. (June 7) – The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) is pleased to announce that it has certified a new state record White Perch. On the morning of Sunday, April 14, 2024, angler Christopher Barrett, 19, and his father, Craig, both of Mohnton, Berks County were fishing the Delaware River just below the Commodore Barry Bridge on a 20-foot center console fishing boat. They were using heavy duty spinning rods fitted with fish finder rigs and circle hooks baited with bloodworms to target Striped Bass and catfish but were also catching White Perch. One of the White Perch was considerably larger than the ones they normally catch. The following morning, they contacted the PFBC's Southeast Region Office, and where a WCO met them at a post office where certified scale was located. At 2 pounds, 1 ounce, this White Perch exceeded the previous state record by five ounces. The fish measured 14.125 inches long with a girth of 12.25 inches. (See photo)



Franklin, Pa – Keith Esbaugh and associates have acquired the **remaining product supply from Jigger Wholesale** in Franklin, Pa. They will be having a **closeout sale** on all fishing equipment on July 19, 20 and 21 at 5097 Georgetown Road., Franklin, Pa. 16323.

Everything is cash and carry; no credit cards or checks. For more information call 724-884-3977.

Erie, Pa – The Bassmasters of Crawford County will hold their annual Father’s Day Tournament on Presque Isle Bay on Sunday, June 16<sup>th</sup>. Applications will be available at the ramp. For more information, contact Eric Marsh at 814-336-9119.

## **FRENCH CREEK – flowing through all four counties**

**Aaron @ French Creek Fishing Company**; filed 6/9: French Creek has been producing some beautiful smallmouth bass and a few walleyes. Bladed jigs and 4-inch Slim Swimmers “pop jigged” through fast current seams and twitched through deeper holes have been effective. Canadohta Lake walleye and muskies have been biting around the weed edges on bladed jigs and 2.75-inch FC Helgies on Ned heads. (see photos below)



## **CRAWFORD COUNTY**

### **Pymatuning Lake**

**Bean @ Richter’s Bait & Tackle**; filed 6/10: Anglers have been catching good number of walleyes on jig & crawler combo in and around weedbeds in 5 to 10 feet of water. Many reports about largemouth bass in the shallows. Peak bluegill seems to be wrapping up as these fish are moving off their beds. Some of the hardcore musky anglers have been tagging a few fish. Have not heard a thing about crappie in weeks.

**Vickie @ Duck & Drake**; filed 6/10: Not much to report because continually stormy weather is keeping anglers at home. I’ve heard some mention of perch catches, but that’s about it.

**Kayla @ Poff’s Place**; filed 6/10: I’ve heard from customers that walleyes are heading to deeper water on the north end. Bass fishing is good, as well as perch fishing.

**Jesse @ Windy's Bait**; filed 6/10: We are not hearing anything positive from our Conneaut Lake anglers, but panfish are biting at Pymatuning. Anglers are catching perch, bluegills and small catfish from the shore on the North End. As far as walleye catches, it seems only about 50% of 'eye anglers in boats are catching fish.

**Angler Al @ Buttermilk Hill**; filed 6/9: Mike and I fished Pymatuning boat last week. We caught crappies, sunfish, walleye and a small-mouth bass – all on pieces of nightcrawler. However, the 4.5-pound smallmouth bass that Mike landed was caught on a 7-inch perch he first caught on a worm. (See photo right)



**Captain Hook** (Hermitage); filed 6/8: Fishing wise, this has not been a good spring for me so far. I've hooked several nice-size largemouth but it seems I've been jinxed lately since most have spit the hook when they jump. But I did get a nice one fishing from shore at Pymatuning. (see photo left)

**Mark Melega**; filed 6/3: Pymatuning largemouth bass have moved into the pads for the summer and are eating frog-type lures. It took -pound Gamma Torque Braided line to get them out of the thick stuff. (See photo right)



### Conneaut Lake



**Darl @ Blackwolfe Communications**; filed 5/22: Marilyn and I had the opportunity to squeeze in a day on Conneaut before those who control the lake poisoned the weeds. We had high expectations of lots of crappies, bluegills, pumpkinseeds and some nice incidental bass. Instead, it was a tough day of fishing. Not sure exactly why. Very few panfish on beds – although we caught a few very nice ones milling in the shallows. Crappies were in spawn/post-spawn mode; scattered and difficult to find, but they hit a slow-moving hair jig if you found the right pocket. Did not see or catch a single largemouth or smallmouth bass, or even a northern pike. We caught more very small rock bass than all other panfish together on that day. (photos left and right)



## Tamarack Lake

**Darl @ Blackwolfe Communications**; filed 6/8: Tamarack Lake remains total catch and release for 2024. Back on Fish for Free Day over Memorial Day weekend, Marilyn and I visited Tamarack Lake for the first time this year hoping to get catch some panfish. However, shoreline at each of five access areas were lined with anglers. Not wanting to crowd anyone, we observed...observed almost every individual catching largemouth bass (mostly all on the small size) on just about anything that was being fished. Never in my life had I seen so many bass caught in such a brief time by anglers with practically no experience – and not one single other species. On opening day of bass season in June, we returned to Tamarack with some bass gear to see if bass were still biting. They weren't. Only a few anglers on the shore. We fished two different access sites with a variety of bass presentations, but not one bass was caught. Interesting to say the least. (photo)

## Conneaut Marsh

**Darl @ Blackwolfe Communications**; filed 6/2: We made a quick trip to the marsh below one of the lowhead dams to try to bowfin. Marilyn could not recall catching one before – although I thought she had landed a small one at Conneaut years ago. While I stood by with the camera, Marilyn tried a worm ball (cluster of 2 crawlers jammed on a hook) for 15 minutes without a bite. Meanwhile a husband and wife on the other side of the bridge was hauling in bowfin after bowfin. They were using thawed shrimp. After 15 minutes, the wife came over with a couple shrimp which she offered to Marilyn. Thanking her, Marilyn cut one in half and baited her hook. On her second drift, she had a hit. Given the limited room on unstable gravel slope where she was standing, Marilyn was still able to net (after it jumped out of the net three times) it so I could get a photo. We estimated it about 25 inches, making it her PB bowfin. Since the bowfin had taken the hook really deep, we simply cut the line. Now she is on the scoreboard this year with a bowfin. Next time we will go better prepared. (photo above)



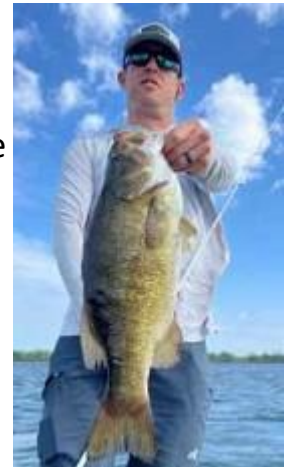
## ERIE COUNTY

### Lake Erie

**Kirk @ East End Angler;** filed 6/10: Due to Small Craft Advisories, no one was on the big lake this past weekend, However, prior to the big blow up, perch were biting good every day – or at least every other day. Before the blow, perch were being taken at 52 fow west of Shades; 50 fow out of Shorewood (12 Mile); 62 fow off Northeast harbor (20 Mile); and 55 fow off The Point. Perch had been feeding on concentrations of water fleas. But with rising water temps and turbulent water, plus walleyes from the West starting to show up, the perch are starting to disburse. I've been fishing for local walleyes since the season came in, but just recently I've seen a big push in the numbers of 'eyes seen on the sonar. I think these are early arriving Western Basin fish, but not everyone agrees. I had been getting walleye in 50 to 60 feet of water between 4 Mile and 12 Mile Creeks – area was loaded. Worm Burners, crawler harnesses and some stickbaits – variety of stuff was working; color choices changed daily. See what the story is this week when the lake settles down. (photo perch right)



**Cory @ XTR Charters;** filed 6/8: Smallmouth productivity has slowed down in the shallows of Presque Isle Bay. Females can still be found in the deep areas of the Bay in either post-spawn recovery or in a late deeper spawn. Lots of males are still up shallow making a push towards weeded areas in anticipation to parent their soon to be or already hatched fry. Cooler temps in the lake still yielding some spawning bass in the main lake. Post spawn females in the lake are starting to feed more aggressively in the 20-foot range. Finesse techniques are starting to show their effectiveness as fish move into deeper water. Summer seems to be here. (SMB photo right)



Walleye are being caught fast and furious in 60-65 feet of water in decent size. The shallower walleye bite is even better; however, the size difference is noticeable. The smaller fish ahead of the migration are in bigger numbers in the 35-foot plus depths. Many captains are seeing 36 fish limits by 8 am. Summer seems to be here. Jet 30s with 2.5-inch spoons 70 to 100 feet back is a hot presentation! Five color lead color with 2.5-inch spoons are great at first light and then con-

sider your Bomber 25A's once the sun is high. Darker colors in the early morning and lighter colors as the sun rises.

Lake trout have made it to their 100-foot-plus summer home. You can still catch a few in PA water but the masses seemed to have made their way into NY water or off the Mountain in PA. (See Laker right)



**Keith @ Dutch Fork Charters**; filed 6/9: Walleye fishing has been really good on Erie! The 30-40-50 and even 60-foot depths have fish. Crawler harnesses on bottom bouncers, Flicker Minnows run 100 to 120 feet back, Bay Rats, Reef Runners are among the other baits doing well. Don't forget Jet Diver and spoon – seems everything is working right now. If you get into smaller walleye, MOVE until you get bigger fish. Those little buggers run in packs and eat everything in sight!

Some guys are running shallow crankbaits on 5 colors of leadcore, and limiting out. Go with your preferred method. You can even get them jigging! My best baits have been #9 Flicker Minnows in Firetiger, Slick Blue Alewife, Purple Bengal. Harness colors were chartreuse/blue, chartreuse green blades #5 Colorado at 1.7 mph.

Tudor Hook-N-Nook has great walleye special going on, too: 50% off crawler harnesses, \$1 off Renosky lures, and bunch of other deals. Check them out! (photos below)



**Brittany @ Poor Richards**; filed 6/10: Walleye fishing has been fantastic in 35 to 55 feet of water, plus out in 65 feet. Weather has been up and down, keeping many anglers off the lake. Nothing to report on perch on the West Side. Don't forget our annual Erie Walleye Bash on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Check in at the shop for details.

**Bob @ Perch Pirate**; filed 6/10: We have started the season off strong, catching a good number of local walleyes by drifting and count-down casting forward weight spinners. We are running public trips on Friday, Saturday and Sunday plus private charters earlier in week until July when our schedule will change.



**Adam Horne** (Hartstown); filed 6/9: On May 26<sup>th</sup>, I fished out of Walnut Creek launch and even though the water was rough, the fish were still active. We trolled west with plugs and downriggers to the Ohio Line. The bite was active,



and fish were aggressive in about 30 feet of water. We did not have to move deeper to find active fish. (photos left and right)

## MERCER COUNTY

### Little Shenango



**John Kolodziejski**; filed in May: Dianne believes the Penna. Fish and Boat Commission is doing a very good job stocking the Little Shenango. These fine trout were caught on separate days in April using live minnows. (photos left and right)



### Lake Wilhelm

**Brad B** (Cochrannton); filed 6/7: Rich and I have been crushing crappie and winning tournaments. My Big Crappie went 17 inches at 2.96 lbs. Bass are biting good, too; no giants as of the 7<sup>th</sup>. Caught a 27-inch walleye cranking for bass. (photos below)





## Shenango Lake

**Randy @ FishWestPA**; filed 6/9: Shenango is lit up right now. A lot of fish species are shallow and feeding, including but not limited to white bass, hybrid stripers, largemouth & smallmouth bass, and even catfish on the muddy flats. Soon many species will be dropping into their deeper summer holding areas so now is the time to get on the shallow bite! (Randy and Chris photos below)



Shenango River angler Chris McVey is a night fishing machine...



**Ken Smith** (Sharon); file 6/10: Yesterday, for the first time since early spring, I managed a legal limit of crappies on Shenango. I also caught white bass, bluegills, catfish and bass – everything was biting except northern pike, which was fine with me. Even though the wind was howling, I focused on protected shorelines while applying my Hang-Gliding technique using Garland Baby Shads with a Crappie Nibble. It's been tough fishing for crappies since late March; I've been catching number of sublegal crappies but only getting three or four legal ones. Never happened before – usually get a limit every day I'm out in April, May and June. Never encountered crappies spawning this year. Furthermore, crappies I cleaned yesterday all still had eggs in them, although the eggs were in state of decay. The lake has been exceptionally dirty since March, and the level has been rising and falling every other day along with water temperature due to violent weather swings. No stable water level, fluctuating water temperature and dirty water may have led to a failed crappie spawn this year. (photo)



## VENANGO COUNTY

### Sugar Creek

**Angler Al** @ Buttermilk Hill; filed 6/9: Mike and I have done exceptionally well recently on trout in Sugar Creek by drifting pieces of nightcrawler. I have also caught several trout on small minnows, wax worms and mealworms. Most of the trout we caught were rainbows averaging 13 inches. However, I landed a brown, a rainbow and two palominos which stretched the 20-inch mark. (photo right)



### Justus Lake

**Angler Al** @ Buttermilk Hill; filed 6/9: At Justus Lake, we are catching largemouth bass, smallmouth bass and an occasional trout using large size creek minnows. My friend Dave Feltenberger and I caught 16 fish, and Mike and I also caught 16 on another occasion on Justus. No real lunkers, but a couple of largemouth were in the 3-pound class. (photo right)



### Allegheny River

**Jeff @ Keystone Connection Guide Service**; filed 6/8: Early to mid-May provided exceptional action for pre-spawn river smallmouth bass on the middle Allegheny River. Guide trips averaged around 40 fish per outing, with bass up to 21 inches caught and released. The vast majority of fish came on soft jerkbaits. By the third week of May it was obvious bass were starting to nest, just in time for my self-imposed hiatus from guiding to allow smallies to spawn and recover. I'll resume guiding activities this week. (photos below)



## **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

### **Winners of various drawings:**

**Sunnie photo drawing—winner of spool of Gamma Line is Matt Hrycyk**

**Bass photo drawing—winner of \$50 package of bass baits is Mike Galkowski**

**Cover photo winner is Rich Conlon**

**To obtain the prize, send me an email with your shipping address.  
Send address to darblack@windstream.net.**

# 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)

June is a big month for bass fishing. We asked readers to send a photo of recent Largemouth or Smallmouth Bass. Anyone who did so had their name in the hat for a drawing a \$50 value prize pack of Mike's Custom Baits, Galida's Custom Grubz, and more. Here were the entries. Winner listed on Page 11.



Captain Hook—Pymie

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Brad B—Wilhelm

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Mike G — Pymie

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Mark M—Pymie

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Randy—Shenango Lake

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Angler Al—Justus Lake

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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

For June line give away, Gamma asked readers to send in photo of recently caught "Sunny" - bluegill, pumpkinseed, green sunfish, red ear, rock bass, warmouth, etc. Name drawn will receive choice of Gamma Panfish Line in either 2-pound or 4-pound. Winner of Gamma Line listed on Page 11.



Matt Hrycyk

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Mike G — Pymie

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Denny B — Lake Wilhelm

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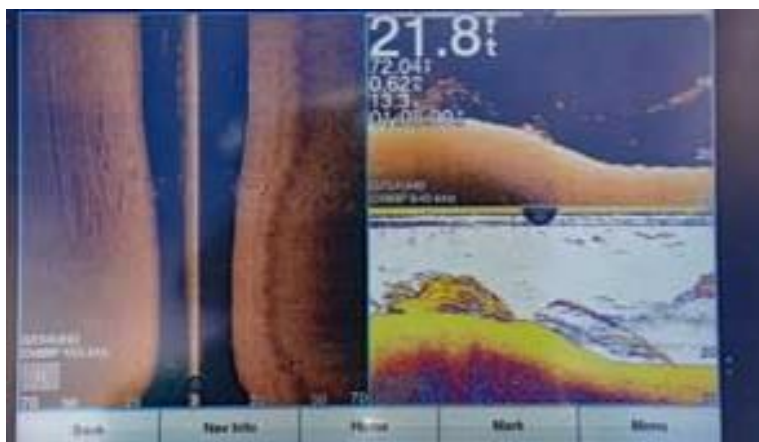
## GARMIN INFORMATION PAGE



- 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

Gamma Tip from Marilyn Black:

We made quick trip to Shenango Lake for white bass just over a week ago. We had been informed white bass were biting all day long on the two previous days with anglers getting high numbers of fish. But upon arriving mid-morning the next day, we discovered the hot bit was pretty much over for the day. So our trip then became an exercise in sonar reading. Shenango has many submerged road and railroad beds, as well as a raised canal towpath. In late spring and early summer, shad schools move to several road beds that are adjacent to deep water. White bass set up around the road beds, too. When gizzard shad move shallower (closer to surface to feed) to feed, white bass move into action which makes for exciting fishing. But when bait schools drop down, white bass sit back and wait. This is what we were confronted with; therefore we relied on our Garmin to identify resting shad schools and resting white bass in order to pick off scattered non-feeding white bass. We worked soft swimbaits in front of the resting white bass to get bites.



Screen showing raised roadbed with rest school of shad, and resting white bass sitting on the down slope in about 18 to 20 feet water.



## **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