

NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA FISHING REPORT

Published by Blackwolfe Communications LLC Issue: July 12, 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



Young lady with Allegheny River musky, taken on a fly rod while fishing with The Fly Shop Guide Service.

The Landing Net by Darl Black

This continued excessive heat is not the summer I had hoped for. While I find it extremely uncomfortable to be out fishing most days, there are other anglers who claim to love the heat...and some of those anglers are catching fish. Somewhat selective bites for sure, but still rod-bending action. Hands down, Lake Erie is the leading attraction for those who wish to stock up on walleye; anglers and shop managers are saying the bite is better than last year. Smallmouth bass action on the Allegheny River and smaller rivers remains strong. While Shenango Lake's hybrid stripers are not very active during the day, anglers on this lake are certainly enjoying a fantastic white bass bite right now. Of course, big catfish are 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.

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County by county reports on public waters in
Crawford, Erie, Mercer and Venango County

FRENCH CREEK – flowing through all four counties

Angler Al @ Buttermilk Hill; filed 7/7: Due to multiple storms impacting area flowing waters, French Creek has not been smooth and clear recently. But before the storms, Mike Galkowski and I fished French late one evening. The bite was slow, but I did catch an impressive smallmouth bass. It measured 21 inches and weighed four pounds. The smallmouth engulfed a lively four-inch creek bait suspended 5 feet below a weighted float. The fish was released unharmed. (Photo right)



CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Dave @ Richter's Bait & Tackle; filed 7/9: This has been a better than normal summer bite for several species on Pymatuning. Even with exceptional hot temperatures, anglers are still catching good numbers of walleyes along the deep weed edge on jig-n-worm and other baits. There is another group of anglers getting 'eyes in 14 to 18 feet of

water trolling shad-like plugs. I'm hearing about a lot of muskies being caught, as well as nice-size largemouth bass. The white bass and white perch populations seem very high with anglers catching them up and down the lake. Some reports on bluegills, too. But crappie catches are lacking for sure.

Vickie @ Duck-N-Drake; filed 7/9: Anglers are reporting perch and catfish, and some walleyes – but no mention of crappies. One angler stopped in this morning with a nice catch of walleye taken on the North End by trolling a Rapala Shad Rap.

Patty @ Poff's Place; filed 7/9: Seems to be mixed bag of species for most anglers, with catfish, perch, and walleyes. Few positive reports on crappies. However, one regular customer stopped in this morning; he fished from 5 am to 9 am and managed a limit of crappies plus 2 walleyes. Crappies have always been cyclic on this lake, and seems their numbers are down right now – but a few anglers are still able to find keepers. Overall, it's been a strange year of fish catches with the springtime water temps bouncing all over the place, rising and dropping way too quickly with little stability.

Conneaut Lake

Bo @ BC Baits; filed 7/6: I met up with my friend Zeke and did some fishing on Conneaut Lake. Trolling and jigging BC Bait Co. Plastics on the northern weed edge produced a mixed bag of fish. I caught a few of my favorite species: Bowfin! Great Day on water. (See photos below plus in Livewell.)



Brad (@ibeefishin); filed 7/6: I left my Wilhelm comfort zone and headed to Conneaut Lake where I caught some beautifully marked panfish – pumpkinseeds and crappies. (See photos)

Adam Horne (Hartstown); filed 7/1: I fished Conneaut Lake on July 1st before all the visitors for the 4th came to town. Steady fishing and constant action for panfish and perch. Some of the bluegills were large – see photo. All fish were caught with small Road Run-

ners and plain jigheads tipped with piece of worm. I was using Gamma 4 lb. Polyflex. Fish were anywhere in 4 to 12 feet water among the weeds. (See photo right of Adam's big pumpkinseed)



ERIE COUNTY

Dominic @ Poor Richards; filed 7/9: The walleye bite is awesome in 35 to 80 feet of water on the west side. Doesn't matter what lure you troll (spoons, plugs, crawler harnesses), the walleye will eat it. In Presque Isle Bay crappies and other panfish have the attention of anglers.

Kirk @ East End Angler; filed 7/9: Fish are everywhere! There are walleyes in 20 to 305 feet of water, and there is a deeper group in 55 to 70 feet of water all up and down the Pennsylvania waters. At the present time there are perch in 50 to 60 feet of water off Shades Beach and North East.

Don @ Northeast Tackle; filed 7/9: We are a new bait and tackle shop in the newly reopened Northeast Marina. Currently our hours are 6 am to 4 pm Monday through Thursday, and 5 am to 4 pm on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. As for fishing, it's great straight out of the marina with easy limits of 17" to 18" walleyes in close, with some bigger 'eye out in 62 feet of water. Best baits for walleyes will have a worm on it – crawler harness or Worm Burner, but everything is taking fish. Perch are in 40 feet of water off Freeport, and a few lake trout are being caught on the far side of the Mountain.



Mark Melega; filed 6/20: I fished Lake Erie out of Walnut Creek on June 18 and 19. Plenty of walleyes in the 35 to 40-foot range, and some larger fish at 55 feet. Pulled spoons by running the trolling motor on my bass boat. Also drifted with crawler harness and 2-ounce weight. I was using 16-pound Gamma Edge line on my rods. (See photo on left)

MERCER COUNTY

Lake Wilhelm

Brad (@ibeefishin); filed 7/6: We have been catching some decent size bass on football jigs. (Note: Brad's great photos were in a file format that my computer could not recognize. Sorry)

Stan Teitelbaum; filed 6/22: I only had a couple of hours to fish during my last two visits to Wilhelm but on each occasion, I caught a chunky 15-inch largemouth bass. I'll have more time and hopefully bigger fish in future visits. (See photo right)



Shenango Lake and Shenango River

Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 7/9: Fishing for crappies at Shenango Lake is tough right now. It's been an early morning bite for me lately. I'm averaging 10 keepers per outing. Lots of smaller fish being caught, even when using bigger baits. I don't use Livescope so I don't know what scopers might be doing. I don't think there was a good crappie spawn this season – likely due to the up and down lake level, and up and down water temperatures. Maybe bigger fish next year.



John and Dianne Kolodziejki; filed 7/9: White bass fishing has been productive in our last two Shenango outings. A slow troll with medium diving crankbaits has been very successful. We generally have the most action while focusing on points and drop-off locations. We've also had some hard-fighting channel cats take our lures, too – which can be exciting. On the other hand, crappie fishing has been quite disappointing in terms of both size and quantity. An observation: last year we were catching many white and black crappies but the majority were sub-legal. I recall one outing in which we caught over 70 crappies but ended up releasing the few legal fish we had at the end of the day since it wasn't worth the filleting effort. This year, we've noted a further decline in the overall crappie size. (See photo left of white bass)

Randy @ Fish West PA; filed 7/9: Shenango is still producing some nice hybrid stripers during these hot summer months. Most fish are deep but some pop up shallow in the early morning. Lures which resemble shad are catching the most hybrids and white



bass. However, I would say that this July is a little tougher than a normal July mainly because of high water temperatures. Yesterday, the surface water temp on Shenango was 87 degrees. We catch a few incidental crappies when fishing for hybrids and whites, but for those targeting crappies I hear it's been a tough season. (See Randy's hybrid photo on left and Brian with



white bass on right. Additional photo in Livewell)

Chris McVey catches a variety of species while doing his night-fishing thing on Shenango Lake and River. (Photos below)



Captain Hook: With assistance of the Captain Hook Fishing Team (my daughter and son), we waded the river below the dam in order to catch some big summer fish – flathead catfish, channel catfish and the occasional hybrid striper. Of course, the catfish bite is best given the water temps. We only fish an hour or so – that's enough in this heat. (See photos here and one more in Livewell)



VENANGO COUNTY

Sugar Creek

Al @ Buttermilk Hill; filed 7/7: Mike and I are still catching trout from Sugar Creek. Smaller minnows and pinched off 2-inch piece of a nightcrawler are the best baits. We dead-drift the bait with a BB shot sinker about 18 inches up the line – catching a lot of trout in skinny flowing water. Recently we have caught several brown and rainbow trout averaging about 13 inches. All released.

Justus Lake

Al @ Buttermilk Hill; filed 7/7: My brother-in-law Doc Das and my niece's husband Hunter Eubanks were in town for the holiday. We fished Justus Lake. Together we boated



a total of 42 largemouth bass. Many of those fish reached the 15-inch mark, and several were in the 3 to 4-pound category! All were released. Except for 23.5-inch walleye that Doc caught; it provided a wonderful lunch when we returned home.

Hunter Eubanks is a professional bass fisherman who uses only artificial lures. So, fishing live bait with Angler Al was a different experience for him. After catching a number of largemouth on live



creek baits trolled behind the boat, I asked him to show me how he puts money in the bank while on tour. WOW! He matched the total number of bass we caught with live bait (21 fish) in three hours...but he did it in only 1 hour. Very Impressive! (See two photos here and one more in Livewell)

Allegheny River

Jeff @ Keystone Connection Guide Service; filed 7/9: River report for the 9th of July –



Smallmouth bass action on the middle Allegheny continues to be excellent. My full day trips are producing as many as 70-plus smallmouth up to 20 inches. When the water has been relatively clear, Rapala X Raps and Soom Super Flukes have been most productive. During periods of higher flows and



discolored water, it's been spinnerbaits, blade jigs and lipless crankbaits. (See two photos here and one more in Livewell)

Aaron @ French Creek Fishing Company; filed 7/7: We did a mid-June float trip on the Allegheny. Smallmouth fishing was excellent plus a few bonus walleye and brown trout. Most fish were caught using 1/16 oz. jighead with 2" FC Split Tail Shads in Pearl White or Pink fished in deeper riffles. We also encountered a phenomenal top water bite using Heddon Torpedoes. (See photos to right)



Pete @ Smallies on the Yough Wade Guide Service; filed 6/27

- Allegheny River 6/19/24: Sweltering day in the Allegheny. We fished a full day of 10 hours. The bite was on and off, with smallmouth scattered in the faster water. We used cigar worms, swimbaits and tubes. Overall, an enjoyable day to be in the river
- Allegheny River 6/22/24: Another hot day temperature wise. My wife and I hiked the Allegheny Trail and stopped to fish about an hour. We caught six decent fish with one smallmouth going 19 inches. All were caught using soft plastics in faster current. (See photo right and in Livewell)



Regional Fly-Fishing Report



Mark @ The Fly Shop (Oil City); filed 7/9: The fishing has been good for our warm water species, with the smallmouth bite hot for us on the smaller rivers like the French Creek and Shenango River. Topwater and bait pattern imitations around 2 to 6 inches have been best when fish are active and chasing, just got to find the structure where they can seek shelter when water is low. Musky fishing has been good, but we are watching those

temps, so with the lower water and higher temps we haven't been doing much of that. We had a good day with a client at the beginning of June, catching a 40" musky on fly rod in the figure 8!



Trout fishing has been primarily the smaller, colder streams. Oil Creek has been pretty warm - around 75+ degrees. (See photos left and right, and cover shot)

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

Check the Gamma Page for drawing winners.

The Livewell

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Email: Debbie@riverjetpro.com



Allegheny Smallmouth (Knapp photo)



Justus Lake Walleye



Conneaut Lake Bowfin



Shenango Hybrid Striped Bass



Shenango Lake Channel
Catfish (Capt. Hook photo)



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

Normally the prize winners are found on the bottom of the Guide Page, but for this issue I am listing the names on the Gamma Page. If you see that your name was drawn for a spool of Gamma or a lure pack, you must send me an email at darblack@windstream.net with your shipping address. Only then will you receive the prize in the mail.

Cover picture: A pack of Mike's Custom Tackle Tubes. I do not have the name of the angler. Angler was client of The Fly Shop trip, Fly Shop to ID angler, then notice will be sent.

Galida's Grubz pack: **John Koloziejski**

Spool of Gamma Line—your choice of line type and lb. test: **Stan Teitelbaum**

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 News from G&G Marine Electronics:



Livescope is still the hot topic in the shop. We have been doing two to three installs a week. I welcome all of my customers to wait & watch, and often help out while doing their installs. I treat all my customers how I would like to be treated and that's learn while I wait. I teach customers proper installation and setup on all systems. We discuss your boat and what will work best for you. I have options for all anglers. Lately we have seen a good many walleye and muskie anglers taking the dive. The walleye guys are learning to pick out individual fish to avoid spending so much time trolling and thereby saving money on gas. Mus-

kie anglers are saving their arms; the fish of a thousand cast can now be hunted down. If you have any questions from graphs to lithium batteries, I'm glad to help. Gus Glasgow



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