

NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA FISHING REPORT

Published by Blackwolfe Communications LLC

Issue: October 17, 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



Bill Logan with Allegheny SMB



Jeff Frischkorn with Erie Lake Trout near PA/NY line

Landing Net by Darl Black

The NW PA Fishing Report will not be returning for 2025. You can read the details inside. But before we go, there are two more issues to put out—November and December. And we are going out some super giveaways—details inside. Don't forget those reports and photos for the next two issues...you could be a big winner.

Appears water temperatures are finally dropping to bring on the magic fall. Get out and fish!

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 for October, 2024

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County by County Reports for Crawford, Erie, Mercer & Venango Counties

Important Editor's note: The Pennsylvania Great Lakes Region tourism group has decided not to renew the contract for the NW PA FISHING REPORT going into 2025. This October 2024 issue, along with the November and December issues will be the final Reports. The NW PA FISHING REPORT had a good run for 15 years, but all things eventually come to end.

Marilyn and I here at Blackwolfe Communications LLC wish to thank all the readers who enjoyed the Report over the many years as we strived to provide information on area waters as to the best bites happening in a timely manner through the comments/photos of contributing anglers and tackle shops.

Regular contributors and product supporters for the NW PA Fishing Report were advised last week that only three issues remain. Now, all current readers of the Report have been informed. However, we are going out in style with some impressive giveaways.

First, the remaining supply of Galida's Grubz and Mike's Custom Tackle soft plastic baits have been divided into three giveaway packages with each containing 15 packs of assorted Grubz, Mike's Tubes & Jigs along with some of Mike's swimbaits and Ned baits. Everyone who contributes a single report for any of the final three NW PA Fishing Report will have their name entered in the hat for the December drawing. A name will only be placed once into the hat, so you still have two more issues to get a report in. Re-

port/photos are to be sent to darlblack@windstream.net; please do not text or use messenger.

Second, when the president of Gamma Line was informed of the final issues of the Report, he decided to go big. Dale said he will put together a super sampler of Gamma products for a single giveaway. To qualify for this drawing, you may send up to three photos of fish you or your buddy caught on Gamma in the last 12 months. Each photo must be a different species. You must identify the individual in the photo, the species of fish, and which Gamma Line (type and lb. test) was used. The name of individual sending the photo is the name that goes in the hat. Three entries maximum, each of different fish species. Drawing in December at Gamma office in Franklin. Email photo entries to darlblack@windstream.net; please do not text or use messenger.

Good fishing in 2025!

News Bite: Keith Eshbaugh informs us the Jigger Wholesale liquidation in Franklin, PA continues. "We are liquidating all fishing tackle at 30% off with bigger savings on selected items. We still have tons of hooks, nets, buckets, lures, for catfish, crappie, trout, bass, carp! Rods and reels, fly fishing, fly tying, lure components, harnesses and more. Call Jason (814-671-8675) or Keith (772-884-3977) to schedule an appointment."



Now to the fishing reports...

FRENCH CREEK – flowing through all four counties



Pete @ Smallies on the Yough.com; filed 10/1: On September 20, 2024 my clients and I started hit French Creek late in the morning and got into smallies good. We caught some decent fish, and the bite was great all day long. (see photos)



CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Dave @ Richter's Bait & Tackle; filed 10/15: Some anglers are catching decent walleyes on blade baits in deeper water. Hearing about lots of Yellow Perch, however most of them are on the small side. Also, lots of White Perch. A couple fishermen are reporting crappies on deep structure, but generally the crappie bite is off.

Laurie @ Duck-N-Drake; filed 10/15: Loads of Yellow Perch being caught off shore in the mid-section of the lake. Hearing of a few crappies on the Docks at Jamestown. Nothing on walleyes. We had another successful catfish tournament a few weeks back. (Photo)



Captain Hook (Hermitage); filed 10/6: Last week while fishing from shore at Pymatuning, I messed up my hand badly while landing a small musky. I had forgotten my landing net. I tried lifting the fish near shore and as I did the musky went to head shaking. Well, free-swinging treble hooks went into my arm – with the fish still hooked to the plug on another treble. Talk about a mess! With hooks buried in my arm and still connected to the fish, and I realized I had also forgotten my pliers. After a few foul words and some sharp pain, I managed to get the hook out of the musky – but the other hook was still embedded in me. It took a while but I finally get the treble out. Man, that smarted. (Last year I put two trebles in my hand, and I'm still plagued from that damage.) And to top it off, my camera screwed up and the photos came out terrible! (see photos)



Conneaut Lake

Bo Bartholomew (Clarks Mills); filed 10/14: Fished Conneaut Lake this past weekend with a friend to catch a couple fishes! (photo)



ERIE COUNTY



Kirk @ East End Angler; filed 10-14: The big water has been rolling for almost two weeks; too rough to fish, so no reports from the Lake. But they are catching perch in the Bay from the North & South Pier, Dobbin's Landing and Border Patrol Dock. However, the big news is the steelhead, of course. The rain from Sunday and Monday raised the stream levels, and those holding fish at the mouths are now moving up the creeks on the East Side. This morning, Tuesday, there are steelhead in Four Mile, Twelve Mile, Sixteen Mile and Twenty Mile. The other big thing right now is the upcoming Walleye Fall Brawl across the entire US side of Lake Erie. It starts October 19th and runs to December 8; you must be registered by October 18 to be eligible (do it online). There are some hefty cash prizes in this event. Here at the East Side Angler, we are the furthestmost eastern weight station on the Lake for the Brawl.

Dominic @ Poor Richards; filed 10-13: Steelhead are at mouths of creeks with anglers catching them on live bait and Power Bait. This rain should raise the level of creeks and make them muddy. Fish are waiting to move. In a day or so, creeks will clear and it should be good fishing later in week. (photo)



MERCER COUNTY

Lake Wilhelm



Stan Teitelbaum; filed 9-14: It was comfortably cool most of the morning today on Wilhelm. I picked up this 17-inch largemouth plus a few others before noon. Most of the bass were caught just a few feet from shore. (photo)

Shenango Lake & River

Chris McVey (Hermitage); filed 10-14: I don't know what my problem was this past month but I was just mentally and physical exhausted from work, therefore did not fish as much. However, I did get a few really good ones the times I did go out – especially once the water temps dipped into the 60s. Some nice Flatheads to end the season. (see photos below)



Randy @ Fish West PA; filed 10-14: Over past month, Randy has reported mixed results for a variety of species: hybrid stripers, white bass, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass and the occasional walleye. However, in his report today, October 16, he is looking for a big change with the surge of cooler temperatures. "Shenango Lake cool-down has be-

gun and all species will be on feed. With some decent air temperatures for the rest of October, fishing should remain good.” (photos below)



VENANGO COUNTY

Angler Al's Venango Diary (Justus Lake, Allegheny River, Sugar Creek)

Autumn has arrived. Cooling overnights have brought water temperature down. Fish instinctively feed up. With winter right around the corner, it's prime time for us to fish lakes and flowing water. Perfect time for current water fishermen to indulge.



Brian Perry, Mike Galkowski and myself, on several times over the past months, have fished the Allegheny River. Smallmouth bass have been non-stop munchers of our live minnow baits. Most fish are ranging around 15 inches. However, there have been some that exceeded 4 pounds and a few over 5 pounds.

We have been primarily targeting walleye but, on most trips, we would catch 10 smallies before the first walleye! But once the final hour before sunset arrived, just about every bite is a walleye. With that said, we have boated over 40 walleyes. We lost track of the number of smallmouth bass caught.

Justus Lake is a personal favorite of mine. I find surreal beauty on the lake, basking in the stillness of its tranquility! But above all, I catch lots of fish! I introduced my friend Greg Wolbert to fishing there. Greg was fishing with a friend on Justus a couple weeks ago when he caught, measured and weighed, then successfully released a near 8-pound smallmouth bass. The big bass ate a large live creek minnow. Congratulations Greg! That was an exceptional catch.



I recently caught and released another good musky at Justus. It was 43 inches long. I was actually fishing for musky, slow-drifting a 7-inch creek chub in 25 feet of water.

Although the stream levels are low, I'm still catching trout. On occasion I've waded Sugar Creek, taking along a bucket of smaller minnows, and a tub of nightcrawlers. Both are working for rainbow and brown trout.

Allegheny River

Jeff @Keystone Connection Guide Service; filed 10/11: Late September through early October provided excellent action for Allegheny River smallmouth bass. Guide trips and fun trips produced 40 to 50 bass per outing up to 21 inches. With the water still in the upper 60s, fish were still holding shallow water with current, chasing Rapala X Raps and Zoom Supper Flukes. Floating weeds were an issue in some areas and will likely get worse with the cooling temperatures. (see photos below)



Pete Cartwright Allegheny River Diary; submitted 10/1:

- 9-13-24 – This was a perfect day on the river. Sunny, 80 degrees air and 75-degree water temp. No weeds yet. We used soft plastics to lure a bunch of smallmouth bass and even a few walleyes. They are extremely aggressive and feeding in shallow water.
- 9-15-24 – Another wonderful day. Conditions perfect. Smallmouth were very hungry eating every soft plastic bait we used. Still not a ton of weeds, but some floaters.
- 9-17-24 – Again, the weather hasn't changed, and the river has been in perfect condition for weeks. The bite has been great. We have been catching them everywhere. Small ones, big ones and everything in between. It is a great bite! Increase in floating weeds are now a factor in presentation. (see 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



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



Over the last 53 years, Marilyn and I have owned 9 different fishing boats – 8 with outboards and one jet drive – all aluminum, all for serious fishing, all practical boats that get the job done economically. In that time, I've learned a thing or two about boat layout, storage, roominess, and pricing.



Large front deck

If you are a multi-species species angler on a budget, you will be looking for an economical, do-everything, go-everywhere (well, almost everywhere) fishing boat. You want something that is roomy with sufficient storage and can fish two or three adults (or up to five if two parents are taking 2 or 3 youngsters). A boat that can get up and run on a 20-horse outboard (the HP limit on most PA State Park Lakes like Pymatuning, Wilhelm and Arthur). A boat and outboard that can carry you safely across the nearshore waters of Lake Erie on calm days, and yet be powered perfectly with a 24-pound thrust bow electric motor for electric motor-only lakes (such as Tamarack Lake or Justus Lake).



Bow storage

In my opinion, the 2024 G3 Guide V167 is as good as it gets for an all-around craft built for a wide variety of fishing situations – from bobber fishing for crappies to pitching jigs for bass to trolling for muskies.



Bow battery compartment

(Continued next page)



Livewell on left

The G3 Guide V167 has a roomy front casting deck which can comfortably accommodate a cabled bow trolling motor yet allow the angler to fish comfortably without being placed in an awkward position. You can pitch or flip for bass from the front. There is ample storage under the front deck, plus space for a battery. A live-well is located on the port side and a rod locker on the starboard side.



Rod box on right



Instrument panel

I always preach that tiller steering is best in boats up to 17 feet with horsepower under 50 HP. Without a console, there is more room for anglers to move about to fish effectively. However, I know some people are hesitant to run a tiller (why I don't know), so a steering console can be installed. The V167 can be launched and re-



Battery & gas tank

trieved on secondary ramps that may be somewhat shallow. And that 20 HP Yamaha will quickly put the boat on plane with two adults aboard.



Foldaway tongue & winch

Right now, Wiegel Brothers Marine in Franklin has two 2024 G3 V167 models with 20 HP Yamaha still in stock. These are their last two 2024 model year boats (one is a tiller and one has a steering console); both are discounted to sell. If you really want a do-



Console mode- roomy layout

everything angling boat, don't wait until spring when new models will be priced considerably higher. Buy new right now and save big!

GAMMA Lines

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



Enter the final Gamma drawing by sending your photo of Gamma Line-caught fish for the November or December issues.



Angler Al; 4 lb Gamma Edge



Brad B; 5 lb Gamma Touch



Chad Prihold; 4 lb. Gamma Panfish

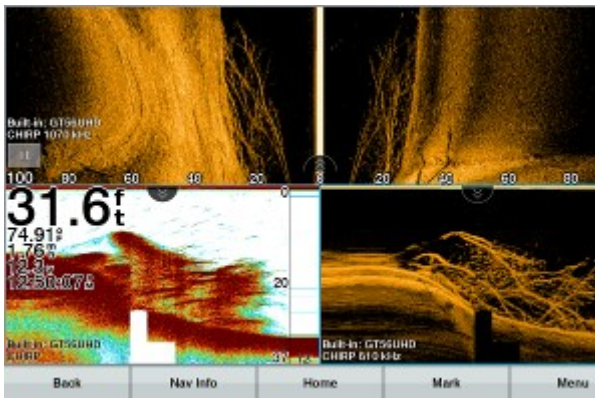


Hook; 6 lb Gamma Polyflex

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



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