

NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA FISHING REPORT

Published by Blackwolfe Communications LLC

Issue: November 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



Randy with 6.5 lb LMB



Jeff with chunky Allegheny SMB

Landing Net

PA's North Coast steelhead run may be a bit shaky due to lack of water in the streams, but water temperatures on inland lakes and rivers are peaking for the late fall bite . GO FISH!



Capt. Hook with Shenango River 'Eye

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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November 22nd Release

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

Opening week of NW PA Dock Fishing Season



Little doubt the Opening Day of Trout Season in April is the number one “fishing holiday” in the state. I’m not sure what the second most popular fishing opener across the rest of Pennsylvania might be, but in NW PA the #2 position is November 1st each fall: “Dock Day”.



October 31th is the deadline for boats which had been moored at State Park Marinas at Pymatuning, Presque Isle and Goddard State Park (Lake Wilhelm) must be out of the water for the winter. November 1 is the first day that fishing from these three State Park Marinas is allowed until spring (March 31). Anglers from all over Western PA and NE Ohio beat a path to the docks at this time to intercept certain pan-



fish species which move into marina bays to feed on schooled baitfish. The large number of dock support posts serve as artificial fish attractors. The hottest action will last three to four weeks, as which point the bite usually slows down considerably. However, anglers continue to catch panfish from particular marinas through the winter but at a much slower pace.

During this mid- to late fall period, the Presque Isle Marina Docks are known for catches of decent-size yellow perch, hefty crappies and the occasional steelhead. At Lake Wilhelm marina, small to average-size bluegills, yellow

perch and crappies are caught, as well as the occasional musky. Linesville and Espyville marinas at Pymatuning hold chiefly yellow perch, while the Jamestown marina yields respectable crappies, bluegills and pumpkinseeds, plus a few white bass, white perch – and the occasional walleye or musky.

The idea of promoting this hot bite in normally forbidden territory as “Dock Day” (which has morphed into “Dock Week” and likely soon will be “Dock Month”) was initiated several years ago by Mercer County angler Bo Bartholomew, owner of BC Baits. His custom panfish baits were the perfect fit for cold water panfish which were being caught from the docks. You can likely find Bo fishing from the docks at Pymatuning’s Jamestown Marina on November 1st of each year.

Bo provided this dock report: I have fished the Jamestown docks a couple times this year, catching decent crappies and some bluegills. All on BC Bait’s Stinger or Mini Split-Tails. My color of choice has been Eagle’s Milk. I haven’t seen many perch caught at Jamestown this year. I also fished the Lake Wilhelm docks twice; you can catch good numbers of small panfish – makes for a fun day, but nothing picture worthy. (Photo Right)



Brad at @ibeeffishin; filed 11/15: I only had one chance to hit the Pymie docks so far and it went well. My wife Katie caught a 33-inch musky on a small swimbait and 6 lb. line. I got some decent crappies. While most of the anglers drop straight down with their ice rods from the docks, I flip and pitch crappie jigs in the empty slips – just like bass fishing. I’m using



1/16 oz. tungsten ice jigs with BC Bait’s Stingers on a 5 lb. Gamma Touch Leader. The Gamma Touch is fantastic – clear, tough and super sensitive. (See photo above)

Marilyn @ Blackwolfe Communications; filed 11/2: I spent the afternoon of November 2 at the Jamestown docks. My favorite spot was already occupied by others, so I set up in the next boat slip. While anglers only 15 feet from me were catching nice-size crappies, I could only muster a few respectable bluegills and pumpkinseeds on my 1/64-ounce jigs with a BC Bait Split-Tail tipped with Crappie Nibble. Darl caught a couple on a 1/16-ounce blade bait. (See photo right)



CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Dave @ Richter's Bait & Tackle; filed 11/18: Three weeks ago, I was receiving reports of numerous anglers catching legal walleyes on blade baits. However, those reports have dried up in the past two weeks. The bite right now is best for crappies and yellow perch.

Crappies have moved back into the bays, including Jamestown marina bay where dock anglers are doing well on panfish. (Photo right)



Chris McVey (Hermitage); filed 11/12: With cooler temps, I've been doing some crappie fishing from the shore at Pymatuning. (See photos left and right)



Darl @ Blackwolfe Communications; filed 11/7: Marilyn and I made our last boat outing to

Pymatuning this week in search of a few walleyes. Struck out; not even a sublegal one. The only fish that came over the side of our boat were a smallmouth bass, a white perch, couple skinny yellow perch and some crappies – all taken on blade baits.

Conneaut Lake

Darl @ Blackwolfe Communications; filed 11/8: Fished Conneaut Lake for the last time this season on the 8th of November. Water temperature was only 54/55 degrees. For the first full week of November, water temp should have been in the high 40. We started fishing Conneaut the last week of September this year, making one outing to the lake each week until the final one on November 8th. Water temp was 61 degrees last week of September, but for the next three times out, the water temp remained a constant 56 degrees – too warm for too long. Never could figure out what the smallmouth were doing. No topwater bite in late September/early October; no jerkbait/spinnerbait/swim jig bite in mid-October; no jig or blade bait bite first of November.

Not even a smallmouth on a Ned or Galida's Grubz the entire six weeks. My last fish at Conneaut this season was a log perch caught on a blade bait in 22 feet of water. (Photo)



Tamarack Lake

Denny Beggs (Franklin); filed 11/8: I fished Tamarack today, the 8th, and caught this largemouth bass on a circle hook with nightcrawler. I was using a Gamma Edge 6-pound leader. (See photo right)



ERIE COUNTY

Lake Erie, PIB and tributaries



Lynn @ East End Angler; filed 11/18: In 20 feet of water straight out of Northeast Marina, anglers are catching Lake Trout. Even though the east side tributaries are low and clear, anglers are nonetheless catching steelhead in Four Mile, Sixteen Mile and Twenty Mile. Minnows, egg sacs and 'crawlers are what they are using. Hopefully the fore-

cast of rain will bring the creeks up. In Presque Isle Bay, the hot bite is crappie and perch off the Border Patrol Dock, South Pier, Liberty Park and in the State Park Marina off the docks. There are reports of walleye coming from Border Patrol Dock and the wall along the Marriott Hotel during the night and early morning hours; 'eyes are being caught on long minnow plugs.

MERCER COUNTY

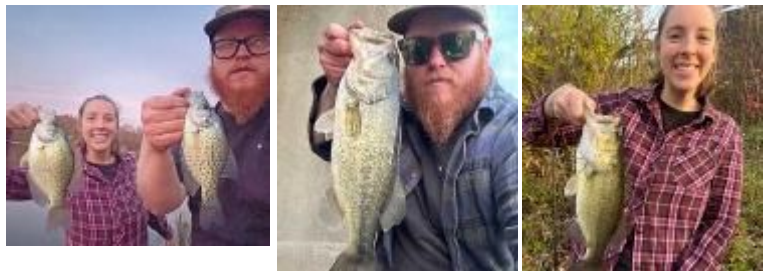
Lake Wilhelm

Brad B at @ibeeffishin; filed 11/5:

My wife and I caught some bass and crappies the past few weeks. Most came on jigs of course, tipped with BC Bait's Stinger or Pic Worm.

Also got some on the Mini spinner-bait that I helped design, The Clippy by Death Shim-

mer Spinnerbaits. All fish came from shallow water. (See photos above)



Rich Conlon; filed 11/6: With extended warm weather and higher than usual water temps, largemouth bass at Lake Wilhelm are still on the prowl. I managed a half dozen yesterday afternoon, with the largest weighing 3 pound 15 ounces. Spinnerbaits and Beaver creature bait seemed to be the ticket.

Shenango Lake



Chris McVey (Hermitage); filed 11/12: Unfortunately, I haven't been out much lately. The times I did go out I had positive results. I got a nice flathead catfish a few weeks ago – but I think the cats are pretty much done at least for me until spring. My last one was pretty decent one to close out the year. (See photos of flatheads left & right) Also been crappie fishing at Pymatuning.



Randy @ Fish West PA; filed 11/19: As Shenango water temperature drops, big fish get hungry. Pretty much all species are on the fall feed right now before heading for deep water for winter. Fish are both shallow and semi-deep now depending on the daily weather. I landed my biggest largemouth bass from Shenango two weeks ago (6.5 lbs.) and lost the largest smallmouth bass I ever hooked at Shenango one week ago. Get out now! Winter is coming! (See photos below — 6.5 lb largemouth on cover)



Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 11/17: I fished Shenango a few times the last couple weeks and did pretty good. Crappies have been on the flats, eight feet deep on wood. Using jig with Nibble – either hang gliding or with a slip float – has worked every day. (See below)





William Schultz; filed 11/9: Here is an 18-1/2-inch crappie I caught at Shenango Lake recently. (See photos left & right)



Captain Hook (Hermitage); filed 11/5: This will likely be my last photos to share since I don't fish much in colder weather – which is in the forecast next week and into December. On a warm fall day, I caught and released this nice walleye in the Shenango River below the dam; lake fishing has been slow for me, so I change up and hit the river current. It's been nice sharing catch photos and reading all the reports over the years. I sure will miss the Fishing Report. (See photo left)



VENANGO COUNTY

Allegheny River

Angler Al's Report; filed 11/8: Since my last report, I haven't fish much. Archery deer season gets more attention right now. Nonetheless, Brian Perry, several friends and myself have spent some evenings when it's too hot to hunt (and on Sundays), fishing the Allegheny for walleyes. We've caught 75 legal walleyes in recent trips; most were males ranging from 16 to 22 inches. We have harvested some. Our group is known as live bait fishermen. Either straight hook with live creek bait or a twister tail jig tipped with live creek bait. We anchor up on the low end of deep current runs and light 'em up.

Mike and I waded Sugar Creek recently. Mike used a half piece of nightcrawler and I used small minnows. We did catch a few trout; however, the stream is dramatically low making any remaining fish in the creek very, very difficult to catch. Happy Thanksgiving to all!
Angler Al

Jeff Knapp @ Keystone Connection Guide Service; filed 11/12: Smallmouth bass action on the middle Allegheny has been good during the past month. Extended mild weather and low river flows delayed fish movement to mid-fall locations. Summer spots were still productive through late October with fish chasing both hard and soft jerkbaits. Starting in





late October bass began showing up in areas of reduced current, responding to Galida's Grubz and Ned Rigs. Dying eelgrass and floating leaves dramatically hampered fishing most days and limited my middle Allegheny outings. In response my friend Dave Keith and I targeted several areas of the lower Allegheny -- which is far less impacted with surface debris -- scoring bass up to 20 inches. As fall progresses and water temperatures drop below 40 degrees, I will switch my focus from smallmouth bass to walleyes. Contact keystoneconnectionguideservice@gmail.com for more information.

Smallmouth Guide Pete Cartwright's Allegheny Notebook

Allegheny 10-09-24: Another sunny day today. The water level was perfect; temperature was 65 and the fish were eating. My clients were catching smallmouth with soft plastics. My client even got a flathead on a swimbait. Wonderful day on the river.



Allegheny 10-13-24: The bite was great today; we found smallmouth in moderate current. Cloudy with drizzle. Water level was good with some weeds floating. A bunch of nice fish today, again on soft plastics.

Allegheny 10-22-24: Sunny bluebird skies today on the river. The bite was soft today; we had to be patient and fish slow. The bite picked up later in the day. Tons of floating weeds made it a big challenge.



Allegheny 10-31-24: Another sunny day here in western PA. I am getting used to this. The fishing was slow to start but picked up later in the day. It was very breezy today, and weeds and leaves in the water made it tough at times.



Allegheny 11-08-24: This warm weather sure has the smallmouth active and eating a variety of baits. The leaves and weeds are not as bad as they have been, but at times they are still annoying. With water temp in the 50s, the smallmouth lure bite is better for me late in the day.

My guide season starts in April next year and runs through September. I have wade trips on the Allegheny and French Creek for up to two people. Contact pete@smalliesontheyough.com

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



Sunset on the Allegheny. Photo by Denny Beggs.

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

There is still time to take advantage of the super end of season deal on a 2024 G3 Outfitter V167—one of the best laid-out mid-size all-around fishing boats available. Don't wait for the 2025 model to arrive with a significant higher price. Buy now!



Looking for a great deal on jet boat? Wiegel's has a used one on consignment. It's ready to fish so you can get in on the late fall/winter walleye bite. See below.





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

Each of these photos is an entry in the Gamma Presidents Package Drawing.

Final December Fishing Report is the last chance to enter by sending one to three photos of fish taken with Gamma Line. Specify the exact line.



Gamma 8 lb Edge



Gamma 5-lb. Touch



Gamma 8 lb. Edge

More on next page



Gamma 5-lb. Touch

Gamma Catches Continue...



Gamma 6 lb Polyflex



Gamma 6 lb. Polyflex



Gamma 6 lb Edge



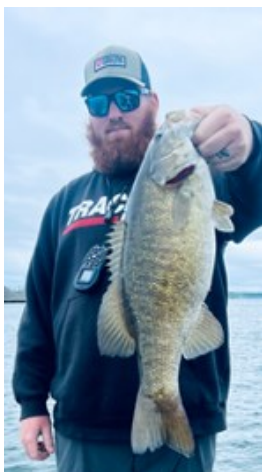
Gamma 6 lb Edge



Gamma 6 lb Edge



Gamma 4 lb Panfish



Gamma 8 lb Edge



Gamma 8 lb Edge

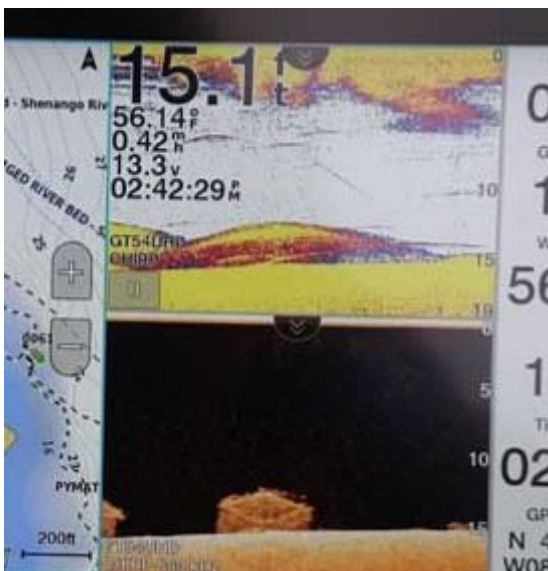
GARMIN INFORMATION PAGE



- 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

GARMIN TIP from Gus Glasgow at G&G Marine Electronics

Something that I see time and time again is bad pictures/quality images on LiveScope. Most people don't realize you need to keep the transducer clean for a perfect image. Lake slime just from taking the transducer in and out builds up over time and dries on the screen – no different than how the side of a boat looks after you take it out of a dirty lake. You just have to get used to wiping them down and cleaning them with a light cleaning solution or something I like to use is lens cleaner. Also, road grime from going down the road also can cause a bad image. A new product that helps with that is Transducer Saver by Apex Outdoors. Andrew Hanes is the owner. He's a small business and former military. Great guy and a great product. You can buy through me, FishUSA, and through his website. It's a great product to keep your transducer safe from road grime and rock chips from your vehicle.



Editor: In bottom DownVu screen you can see individual fish sitting immediately above man-made crib at Pymatuning Lake; much more detail than traditional sonar. Marilyn slowly lowered her Cicada Blade Bait, lightly pumped it and connected with crappies on the first three drops.



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