

NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA FISHING REPORT

Published by Blackwolfe Communications LLC

Issue: December 10, 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



Learn more about Chris McVey's river musky in the Mercer County section of report/

The Landing Net by Darl Black

Mild warm-up in the forecast. Any hope of ice fishing before Christmas is a pipe dream, although ramps on inland lakes may be sketchy for launching. However, with above freezing temperatures in the 10-day forecast, you should be back on the steelhead streams, the Allegheny River, Shenango River, French Creek, trout streams that are open for winter season, marina docks at Pymatuning & Wilhelm, and various Presque Isle Bay sites. Good Fishing in 2025!

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 December 2024

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

This December 2024 issue of the NW PA Fishing Report is the final one. The NW PA Report started in 2012 as the Crawford County Fishing Report. Within a couple years, Venango, Erie and Mercer Counties came onboard as sponsors under the regional tourism group of Pennsylvania's Great Lakes Region. For 12 years this Fishing Report promoted regional fishing on all public waters in NW PA through comments/photos from contributing anglers and guides, as well as weekly updates from tackle shops in the four counties. However, for 2025 the Pennsylvania's Great Lakes Region tourism group decided to promote regional fishing through another format.

I am most appreciative to all the contributors to the Fishing Report over its long run. Your catch reports and photos made the NW PA Fishing Report the go-to newsletter for what was happening in Crawford, Erie, Mercer and Venango Counties. It was a showcase of fishing success, clearly showing the variety of species in our corner of the state and where/when to fish for them. Thank you for your support.

Ironically, the December 2024 issue NW PA Fishing Report will be the shortest report in ten years. While the November 2024 issue discussed how the fall fishing bite was in full swing with many photos of impressive catches, the situation changed rather abruptly with the huge Thanksgiving snow storm, dumping a load of snow across the region (up to six feet in areas of Erie County) and cold temperatures which created slushy ice in flowing water and skim ice on bays of impoundments. Fishing ground to a stop, and it

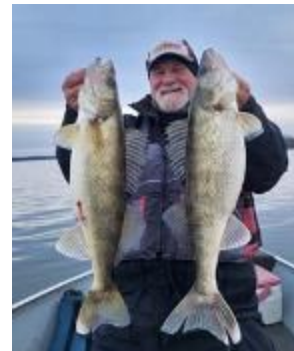
will be a while before waterways return to normal seasonal conditions. All catch reports in this issue occurred in the week leading up to Thanksgiving holiday.

CRAWFORD COUNTY

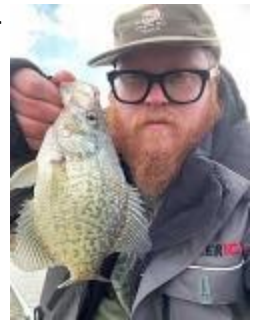
Pymatuning Lake

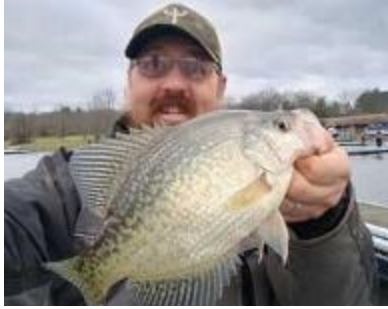
Bean @ Richter's Bait & Tackle; filed 12/7/24: Given all the snow and cold, we haven't had anglers stopping by for days. No one on the lake, docks or in the Shenango River below the dam – at least no one that has been in for bait or tackle. If we get a warm up, river flow should be good. Marina docks are likely treacherous with snow and ice cover; may be awhile before it melts.

Jeff Knapp; filed 12/2: I fished Pymatuning several days during mid to late November, catching numerous quality-sized walleyes, white bass and crappies. The best day was the Wednesday before Thanksgiving when Sid Brown and I caught 18 legal walleyes from 16 to 23 inches; 15 white bass up to two pounds; four smallmouth bass up to 20 inches; and a 40-inch musky. Nearly all fish came off hard bottom structure in eight to 16 feet of water, mostly on blade baits. Plus a few on Ned Rigs and hair jigs. (See photos below)



Brad at @ibeeffishin; filed 12/2: I caught some good crappies with Bo and other friends at Pymie the other day, just before the big storm. Big winter tip for me when fishing docks is the good old jig and plastic fished slowly – sometimes just letting it sit still. Also works in moving water for brown trout. Tiny jig always tipped with BC Baits' Stingers. (See photos left & right)





Bo @ BC Baits; filed 12/2: I hit the docks with a few friends last week before the snow. Caught some exceptional crappies in the deep water near brush. Purple BC Bait Co Pickworm on a 4 mm tungsten jig was my most pro-



ductive presentation. Ended the day with 38 crappies. (See photos above) I'll be guiding on Wilhelm pending lasting safe ice. Thanks to Darl for his years of service to the angling community! Bo

Marilyn @ Blackwolfe Communications; filed 11/27: We squeezed in our last day of fishing the docks in open water just before the cold front hit. Struck out in the river for walleye, but met with success on crappies and bluegills on the Jamestown marina docks. We used kernels of corn to lure the biggest crappies of the day; bluegills liked the corn as well!



ERIE COUNTY

Lynne @ East End Angler; filed 12/7: Not much to report. We have not had a customer at the bait store for a week due to all the snow. Roads are finally open, but the tributary streams are slushed up with shelf ice on edges, and I have not had any reports on steelhead. We've got warming temperatures for Sunday and Monday (snow melt big time), with good deal of rain for Monday's forecast. Additional light rain for several days after that. Streams will likely be a mess until late in week. Kirk had reports of a few walleyes being taken from pocks and piers in Presque Isle Bay around dusk, but's all iffy.

Randy @ Fish West Pa; filed 12/4: I made it up the fish for steelhead just days before the big snow. Always nice to catch a few steelhead each fall! (Photo)



MERCER COUNTY

Shenango Lake and Shenango River

Randy @ Fish West PA; filed 12/4: November fishing with its warm temperatures (before the big cold front) was great fun. Variety of good fish from Shenango Lake. (Photos below) But it all ended with the big snow storm. Thanks to Darl Black for all the years of hard work with these reports! ...Randy, FISH WEST PA.



Captain Hook; filed 11/22: Well, I thought I was done for the season but I gave it one last shot right before the cold front hit. I had only one hour of daylight so I headed to the lower Shenango River below the dam for a few final casts. I grabbed my spinning outfit with 6 lb. Gamma Polyflex line on just for good luck. I was pleasantly surprised with my results. Two nice walleyes, several crappies and a really nice-fighting hybrid striper! Not bad for an hour of fishing. All fish were released unharmed. I am now closing the book on 2024 fishing. It's been nice reading the reports and sharing photos that you assembled in each issue of this Fishing Report over the years. I'm sure all NW PA fisherpersons enjoyed the Report, too. (See photos right)



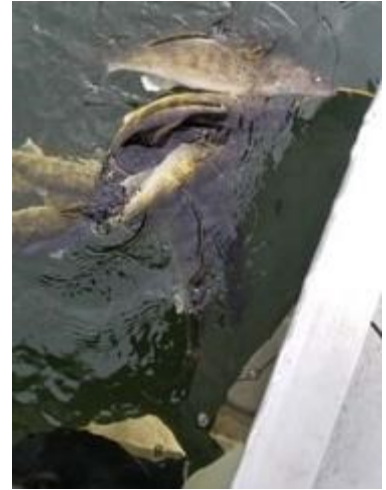
Chris McVey; filed 12/7: If I don't catch another fish in 2024, I'm satisfied. Length wise this was not my PB muskie, but if I were to guess, I think this would have to be the heaviest one. At 44 inches, I'm guessing this Shenango River fish weighed at least 27 pounds. The fish hit on the pause and I only knew not because I could feel it but because I could see the wake just under the surface. I set the hook – prematurely I thought, but it turned out the musky already had my bait t-boned in its mouth. Hook sets are free, and it can sometimes pay off. (Photo left)

VENANGO COUNTY

Angler Al's Report

Allegheny River & Sugar Creek

Darl. Let me first start by saying how appreciative I am of the time vested by you to promote these fishing reports of ours each month. The venue has been an honor for me to share information with others. I've also valued the knowledge from your other contributors and the sponsors who have helped make this all come together over the years.



Brian Perry and I entertained my brother-in-law Doc Das, to an afternoon on the Allegheny River for walleye. Using live minnows some bigger than the average, flat lined with lots of weight behind the boat or vertically jigged with white or orange trailers, got the job done for him! I took a pic of the walleye stringer in the river and I did share a video on my Facebook page, Angler Al's Adventures.

Doc and I also trout fished Sugar Creek. We didn't do as well as we'd hoped. Using pieces of nightcrawler or smaller live minnows, we were able to release a few.

Wishing everyone a safe and most enjoyable Christmas season and Hope for a wonderful New Year! PTL from Angler Al

Allegheny River

Alan Shrout; filed 11/23: Attached is a photo of my 4 lb. 6 oz. Smallmouth Bass I recently caught in the Allegheny River. I also have caught a bunch of 2 and 3-pounders this fall. I want to thank you for the newsletter as it has helped me become a better fisherman in the last 5 years since I retired and got serious about fishing! But I still have a lot to learn. Lol (See photo on Facebook Fishing With Darl Black)

Jeff @ Keystone Connection Guide Service; filed 12/2: Guide trips and scouting trips in November produced big numbers of smallmouth bass up to 18 inches. Movement to classic late fall locations had been delayed by extended warm temperatures and low river flows. Walleyes up to 20 inches were also caught and released. Productive baits included Ned Rig, Galida's Grubz, Berkley Flatworms, and blade baits. The water temperature was 44 degrees during my last trip on Thanksgiving afternoon, just prior to the cold snap that's dominated the weather ever since (as of Dec 2). I never store my boats for winter and will continue fishing and guiding as weather permits; the focus being river walleyes, and crappies & bass on select west-central PA lakes. (See photos below)



Pete @ Smallies on the Yough.com: For the winter, I've suspended wade trips to Allegheny River for smallmouth, but I am booking for spring guide trips. Also have gift certificates available on my website.



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

Final Prizes

Drawing for the Gamma President's Package as well as the three mega bags of Mike's Custom Baits and Galida's Grubz will be held at Gamma Office in the near future. All entries from the October, November and December issues will be notified of the drawing date, and winners will be announced on Fishing With Darl Black Facebook page.

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

You still have a short time purchase this near perfect all-around fishing rig for our local lakes in time for under the Christmas. Contact Wiegel Brothers Marine for details.





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

Gamma Line Tip from Brad B at @ibeefishin

I exclusively use Gamma 5 lb. Touch fluorocarbon for leaders with my ultralight baitcasting setups. I love the sensitivity and strength, and of course the nearly invisibility of the line. I tie the 5-lb. Touch leader to 10 lb. braid. This enables me to cast tiny 1/16-ounce ice jigs over 60 feet with ease.



I truly believe I feel bites better with Touch, even the slightest little crappie nibble. Some of the biggest crappie I've caught were ever so light biters; I'm sure you know what I'm talking about if you fish for crappies.

Gamma Edge fluorocarbon is my go-to line for jig fishing with my regular rod and reel setups, filling the spool completely with this sensitive, high-strength, abrasion resistant line. But for light-biting panfish and trout finesse applications, I believe the sensitivity of Touch is better than Edge. In other words, Touch has the edge over Edge. (LOL)



I favor the sensitivity of Touch for finesse presentation and the strength of Edge for my regular bass fishing.

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

For ice-fishing electronic needs or to upgrade your boat's electronics for next spring, be sure to give G&G Marine Electronics a call for all your Garmin needs.

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