

Northwest

Pennsylvania

Fishing Report

Reporting Date:

October 15, 2012



Pennsylvania's Great Lakes Region
crawford • erie • mercer • venango

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The NW PA Fishing Report provides timely angling information for Crawford, Erie, Mercer and Venango Counties – covering all species and all waters open to the public. The fishing comments and photos are offered by regional tackle shops and area anglers, compiled and published twice a month. The NW PA Fishing Report is based on experiences, observations and opinions of individual contributors; information sources are considered reliable but comments are not independently verified. If you would like to share your fishing experiences or photos from any waterway in the four counties, please email to Darl Black at darlblack@windstream.net. In providing information or pictures, you are agreeing to it being posted in the Fishing Report and distributed electronically to media and websites.

The Landing Net

by Darl Black

It's mid-October. The next four to six weeks will be some of the best fishing of the entire year. Steelhead and brown trout are moving into the Erie tributaries. Largemouth bass in Presque Isle Bay will be chasing emerald shiners until ice up. The walleye and perch catches at Pymatuning Lake will be astonishing. Trophy smallmouth bass will make an appearance at Conneaut Lake. The coldwater smallmouth bass bite on the Allegheny will be second only to the early spring. French Creek and the Allegheny River will give up more walleyes than any other time of the year. Shenango Lake catches will be dominated by large crappies. Wilhelm may yield largemouth over six pounds. It's the cooling water that triggers all these reliable bites. And while cooling water is the anglers' friend, it is also a killer. Fall overboard this time of year and the shock of hitting the cold water will immediately leave you gasping for air, disorient you, and sap your body heat. Argue if you wish about wearing a PFD during the heat of the summer...but only fool will go fishing in the fall, winter and spring without a PFD securely strapped on.



NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA FISHING REPORT for October 15, 2012

Brought to you by PA Great Lakes Region tourism

What's biting in Crawford, Erie, Mercer and Venango counties?

French Creek – Flowing through all four counties

Dustin Shay (Meadville) filed 10/15: "Fishing in French Creek is very good right now. This past weekend, my brother-in-law and I caught over a dozen smallmouths with the largest going 17-inches and weighing 2.5 pounds – they are putting on weight; all were taken on live chubs and all were released. Little over a week ago, I had 4 days of fishing in a row, landing 31 walleyes, again taken on live bait. These were good-size fish; I released the bigger walleyes and kept several in the 15" to 18" range to eat. I lost a big musky south of Meadville. A little rain to bring the Creek up a tad and give it some color will help the walleye bite; the small-mouth bite should remain strong through October." (See Livewell)



CRAWFORD COUNTY

Conneaut Lake

Bill Logan (Pleasantville) filed 10/5: "I made two trips to Conneaut Lake last week, but didn't catch a bass. I did, however, land 8 northern pike on large spinnerbaits, including a **Strike King Bottom Dweller** spinnerbait." (See Livewell)

Jim Hall (Meadville) filed 10/3: "It's October so I'm chasing muskies hard right now. Saw another one surfacing on the Conneaut the other day. I heard the Fish Commission took some of the muskies from the Tamarack Lake salvage operation and put them in Conneaut. However, this week all I saw caught on Conneaut were bluegills!"

Pymatuning Lake

Chris Hall (Espyville Outdoors) filed 10/15: "Perch have been reported off the causeway – most in the 9" to 11" range although some in the 13" range. Use a jighead with #4 or #6 hook, and chunk of crawler or medium-size fathead minnow. Some crappies are being picked up as well. Walleye have taken along the causeway, too, using various methods. Jigheads with white or chartreuse curly-tail and tipped with minnow are very good, plus **Lindy Fuzz-E-Grub** and **Crooked Mouth Tackle Shad Head** tipped with minnow. Other anglers are using blade baits. Several limits of walleye reported out of Snodgrass area this week."

Norm Brakeman (Hills County Store) filed 10/15: "The word at Pymatuning this week has been perch – jumbo perch. One of the best presentations is the small **Hooker Bug** jig tipped with maggots or minnow, and fished around gravel points or deep weedlines. Crappies are also hitting in the mid-lake section. With the perch shallow, I expect walleyes to show up on the points this week."

Ken Smith (Sharon) filed 10/6: "I fished the Jamestown area of Pymatuning on 9/24 and had a pretty good day. I fished deeper brush by hang gliding jigs, catching nice crappies. I drifted for

walleye – but no luck. The walleyes should be moving in and turning on very soon with the cooler water temps. I tried again on 10/4 – still struck out on walleyes but caught nice perch, crappies and gills. Jig tipped with a **Berkley Power Minnow** was the best lure.” (See Livewell)



Ken Smith photo

ERIE COUNTY

Lake Erie

Joe Nichols (Undergroundangler.com) filed 10/5: “The past couple weeks, monster smallies are feeding up shallow on Lake Erie. Crankbaits and **IMA Flit 120** jerkbaits have been my best lures. This past Sunday the fish were hot – even in wind and waves we managed 30 bass from 3 to 5.5 pounds.” (See Livewell photos)

Presque Isle Bay

Al Nacopoulos (BAC Bait) filed 10/15: “Crappies is the hot bite this past week in the Bay, fishing small jigs and live emerald shiners in 8 to 12 feet of water around docks. Personally, I’ve had my best success with **Berkley Gulp! Minnows**. Although there are not big numbers of steelhead in the tributaries due to low water, my customers are reporting lots of jumping trout in the Bay. A few steelheads have been taken on minnows from the East and West Piers; with a boat, trolling minnow plugs can be successful. Customers have been catching northern pike and perch from the Ferry Dock at Waterworks; perch on the North Pier; and largemouth bass on city side around the Yacht Club.”

Thomas Watral (Erie) filed 10/13: “With the colder weather, the perch bite is starting to pick up nicely in the Bay. Crappies are also hitting shiners on **Eagle Claw Crappie Rigs** with some limits being taken.”

Erie Tributaries

Matt Hycyk (Poor Richards) filed 10/15: “It’s been fairly good start to steelhead season with big fish being taken, even though the overall numbers of trout in the tributaries is way down. Here at Poor Richards, in the past week we had three steelhead over 15 pounds, one over 14 pounds and two over 13 pounds. We are faced with unusually low water so fish are not moving into the streams – lower than normal flow for this time of year. And when we do get a little burst of rain and creeks come up a tad, the fish that come in are moving upstream rapidly. I’ve had reports of trout already 10 miles up Elk Creek, and there are numbers of fish way up Walnut – further than in recent years. They are also catching good numbers of brown trout in the 5 to 7 pound range, so that stocking program seems to be working. To make this a great steelhead season, we need periodic good rains that will bring the creeks up but not blow them out, but enough precipitation that they will remain at a good fishable flow.”



Walnut Creek mouth

Mike Tome (Trout Run Bait & Tackle) filed 10/15: “The former BAC Trout Run store is under new ownership, and is now called Trout Run Bait & Tackle. I’m now working for the Gauriloffs, and the store is open 7 days a week. Again this fall we are faced with low, clear streams. There are decent amounts of fish moving in but difficult to catch because they are spooked easily. Steelheads in the streams have spread out. We’ve also seen a number of brown trout – they seem to come in waves along with the steelhead. Stream wise, no serious rain expected for the next several days. Late week may bring some change. We need rain, not little showers.”

Dan Seaman (Elk Creek Sport Store) filed 10/15: "Streams are low and clear, resulting in lower catch rates than we would like to see. Anglers are catching steelhead, but in the fast water rather than pools. And you need to get away from the parking areas on the streams where the fish have been under pressure. Fish are spread out, so take a walk. The successful baits change day to day, including single eggs, live minnows and flies. Trout are in the lake at the mouths of streams, and on decent weather days, anglers in boats and surf casters are getting fish. But yesterday and today, the winds are blowing on shore with heavy surf."

Thomas Watral (Erie) filed 10/13: Thomas Watral (fishes daily on the tributaries and PIB) began sending in periodic reports of steelhead moving into the tributaries starting on September 28. In the last two weeks, he has been to several east side creeks, and observed steelhead in all of them, with his largest catch to date being a 29 incher. "We are suffering from low water in the tributaries once again. When the water is low and clear, catching steelhead is difficult. There are steelheads already south of I-79 on some of the longer creeks. The baits have been live minnows, small flies and single eggs on 8 or 10-pound test. When the water is very clear, you need to drop to 6-pound test. Down on Four Mile, I observed anglers catching limits of fish on black Woolly Buggers. Remember, most areas of the tributaries are on private property; observe the no trespassing signs, and when you have permission to enter, respect the property owner, don't litter, and pick up any new litter on the creeks to help keep them open to fishing."

Ed Lawrence (Corry) filed 10/1: "My first steelhead of the season was 26 inches long and bit a worm!"

MERCER COUNTY

Neshannock Creek

Bob Shuey (Neshannock Fly Shop) filed 10/15: "Trout were stocked in Neshannock Creek's special regulation area on October 2. But low water and leaves are making it very difficult to fish. Now the fish commission wants to stop fall stocking of trout – that's a bad move!"



Lake Wilhelm

Bob Mohra (Fergie's Bait Shop) filed 10/15: "Bluegills are being caught from shore around Launch 4 and off the Sheakleyville Causeway. Use a small jig or ant below a bobber, tipping it with maggot or wax worm. Bluegills are biting from around 2 PM until dusk, then the crappies start up. A few anglers are catching bass from shore, too; a black buzzbait had been the hot lure."

Wilhelm shore anglers

Destin DeMarion (Grove City) filed 10/8: "I was on Wilhelm last week for a few hours of fun fishing. There was a lot of shad activity in the shallow water. I managed to land a dozen largemouth bass in the 2 to 3-pound range, but nothing really impressive. Most of the fish came on a **Strike King KVD 2.5** crankbait. Also caught a couple on a **Whip Em Baits Whip Rig** (Alabama rig) and got one on a Whip Em Baits prototype flipping jig." (See Livewell photo)

Shenango Lake

Laurie Frantz (R&L Bait) filed 10/15: "A couple of my customers reported catching a mess of nice channel cats from shore at Big Bend area on the Shenango River. Two other customers caught 30 keeper crappies at the Jamestown end of Pymatuning using both minnows and crawlers. There was some talk of stripers being taken on Shenango Lake but it was second hand information. Other customers were buying large shiners and **Jitterbugs** to fish for northern pike on Otter Creek – pike seemed to have kicked back on with the cooler water temperatures."



Ken Smith photo

Ken Smith (Sharon) filed 10/12: "I fished Shenango Lake on 10/11 with Sean Gross. We had a very good day, catching 75 crappies; Sean kept a limit for his freezer. Two of the crappies were 15 inches, and the majority of them were 9 to 11 inches. Most of them were blacks, although a few white crappies were mixed in. We got them in the shallow brush by hang-gliding **Southern Pro Jigs, Micro-Spoons** and **Road Runners**. We lost quite a few jigs but it was worth it. John Kolodziejewski snapped the photo of me with the big crappies at the ramp."

Ken sent in a report on 10/6 as well, talking about how strong the big crappie bite was shaping up at Shenango in the shallow water. He made good catches on 9/29 and 10/5 by pitching crappie jigs to cover and with live minnows. (See additional Livewell photo)

Mike Kuna (Pittsburgh) filed 10/3: "I was at my lake house in Mercer County for a couple days and invited Darl Black to fish with me. I had found a large school of black crappies on a hump. We anchored and cast to the fish. I was using a **LFT Live Baby Shad** below a bobber to land fish after fish. Darl was using a variety of other baits, including **Bobby Garland Baby Shad, Charlie Brewer Slider Grub** and a small long minnow crankbait. It was a crappie on almost every cast for two hours." (See Livewell photo)

VENANGO COUNTY

Allegheny River

Mike Horrobin (Jigger Tackle) filed 10/15: "While testing a new prototype musky spinner this week in the river at Franklin, I caught a couple smallies and rolled a very large walleye!"

Jeff Knapp (Keystone Connection Guide Service) filed 10/15: "A minor boat problem and opening of grouse season has kept me off the water this past week. Prior to that, we'd been catching 25 to 30 smallmouths a day, up to 19 inches, plus a few walleyes. When water temperature dropped to around 60 degrees, bass were starting to show up in classic fall spots – deeper, rock areas – although nicer fish were still in summer shallow spots near current, too. **Rapala X-Raps** continue to produce, along with **Winco's River Darter** and **Undulator**. I'll be grouse hunting the next two weeks and will resume guiding on October 27."

Chris Wolfgang (Oil City) filed 10/14: "During Sunday's FOP bass tournament, Dale and I had a pretty good day on the water. We had a limit of five smallmouth going 14.66 pounds. We caught many fish between 14 and 14.5 inches. Our largest was 18.5 inches, with three over 3 pounds. Just could not get that really big kicker fish. Bass came on **Yum Dingers**, tubes and my largest one came on a hand-tied bucktail/rabbit fur jig. Fish were in deep, fast water."

Gene Winger (Oil City) filed 10/15: "On Thursday, September 27, George Sisul and I fished from Franklin to the islands below Belmar Bridge. I fished the newly improved **Winco's River Darter Soft Jerkbait** and George used **Winco's Solid Body River Darters**. Thirty minutes into the trip, I had already landed 2 walleyes and couple nice bass, while George was batting zero. After a day of fishing, we netted numerous bass and walleye with George landing the largest bass – a four pounder. To our surprise, the 3.75" River Darter Soft Jerkbait was catching bass 3 to 1 over the 4.75" Solid Body River Darters...very impressive. The next morning I was on the phone with Al Winco to order more baits. Over the next couple weeks, we fished a couple more times. On both trips we found the fishing a little slow but were able to land several nice bass. With water temperatures dropping we're finding most bass in deeper water near the bottom. Working the River Darter Soft Jerkbait on the bottom with a slow retrieve was a key factor. We are also seeing some action with the **Winco C.W. Smallie's Delight** – fishing near the bottom with slow retrieve as well."

Steve Udick (Oil City) filed 9/30: Steve's report was from the last week in September..."With rain and cool temperatures, the grass problem was a little less. Water temps were in the low 60s. I decided to throw a **Zoom Super Fluke** over scattered weed edges. It turned into a numbers – not size – night; I picked up 22 bass on seven different colors. Several fish were in the 15 to 17 inch range. The next day there was a harsh NE wind. I only managed two bass in open water, floated behind a protected point and caught two more including a 19 incher. I ended up with eight bass for the afternoon, all which I had to work for." (See Livewell photo)

Venango trout waters

Mike Horrobin (Jigger Tackle) filed 10/14: "Some stream fishermen are doing nicely on trout. While at Justus Lake, I saw a couple with two nice rainbow trout; she pointed out that hers was the larger fish! The enclosed brown trout photo was taken by Mr. Ferringier." (See Livewell photo)

Mike Laskowski (Oil Creek Outfitters) filed 10/14: "Oil Creek is very low and clear. It is difficult fishing at this time with lots of leaves in the water, but anglers are catching fish on **Triple Threat Streamer** and nymphs. We should get some Blue Wing Olive and Midge hatches soon."



Oil Creek/Hummel photo

John Hummel (Kennerdell) filed 10/8: "With my youngest son home for the weekend, we decided to try some fall trout fishing on Oil Creek and East Sandy Creek. We had hot and heavy action from creek chubs but no trout. We had the streams to ourselves on perfect October days."

The Livewell

Brought to you by:



Allegheny River Photos: Smallmouth Heaven in October



Al Schmidt with 19" SMB



Shay on French Cr.



Dale Black with 17" SMB



Boat of the Month: Rogue Fastwater, 22' 6L V8 380 HP; top, side curtains, and heat; Perfect wintertime walleye river jetboat.



George Sisul with 4 pounder



Lou Letterle with hands full



Steve Udick with 19" SMB

Livewell Overflow

Mercer County:



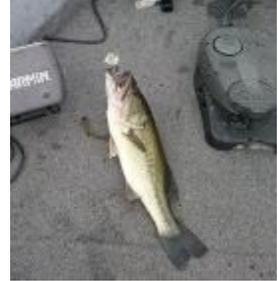
Mike Kuna



Ken Smith



Ken Smith/ 15" crappies



Destin DeMarion/LMB

Erie County:



Kirstin Neely with first steelhead



Underground Angler

Joe Nichols & Friend



PI State Park Family Day fishing instructions

Crawford County:



Bill Logan with Conneaut Lake pike

Venango County trout:



Mr. Frerringer with brown trout

PROCESSED FOR PERFORMANCE



Gamma Line's Fishing Tips and Forecast for NW PA Waters

Gamma Pro Tip

Professional bass angler Stephen Browning, member of the Gamma Pro Staff: "Hey guys, one of the things I love to do in the fall is burning a spinnerbait. Use the same size spinnerbait, such as a ½ oz. with double #4 blades but adjust your line size to make it run shallower or deeper. If you want closer to surface, run it on reel with 16-pound line. If you want it running 2 to 3 feet below the surface, go with 14-pound test. When I'm burning the bait, I'm going with Gamma Edge fluorocarbon line because its tough to beat — not a lot of stretch so you get good hook up."

Prize Pack for this issue of Fishing Report is being supplied by: Gene Larew Lures

Included are a packet of Biffle Bugs, packet of Rattlin' Crawler and packet of Hardhead hinged football heads—the bait which BASS Pro Tommy Biffle has used the last four years to win over \$400,000.00! Tommy says it is an easy lure to fish: "Rig a Biffle Bug or Rattlin' Crawler on the Hardhead, cast it out, let it settle to the bottom, and simply wind it back in keeping contact with the bottom."

The winning contributor of the prize pack is: Norman Brakeman

Obtain the PGLR fishing brochure "Reel It In!" at www.pagreatlakes.com