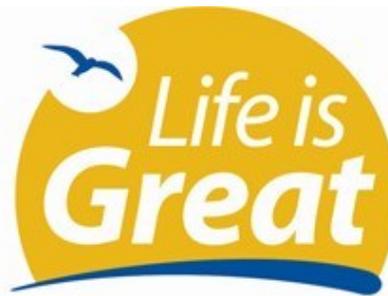


Northwest

Pennsylvania

Fishing Report



Reporting Date:

April 8, 2014

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 your comments being edited, and posted to websites and distributed electronically.

The Landing Net

by Darl Black

Finally, this week I caught my first 2014 fish from open water – crappies at Pymatuning! This is probably the first time in 20 years I had not fished open water during the first three months of the year. Heck, ice-out on lakes was less than a week ago. I had fished the Allegheny for smallmouth on April 1, but never had a bite in the high, dirty water. But the crappie bite at Pymatuning is out-of-sight right now, as fishing buddy Jim McClave can testify to! If you want a few more details than found in this NW PA Fishing Report, visit my blog at www.darlblack.blogspot.com. However, outside of steelhead streams, it seems all other lakes are slow starters, and right now the Allegheny and French Creek are very muddy – not much to report. Trout season opens this weekend – that should bring out the fishermen!



Jim McClave; db photo

NW PA FISHING REPORT: April 8, 2014

Brought to you by PA GREAT LAKES REGION tourism

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

NEWS

The Fishing Report Prize Packet Giveaway for this coming season is BIG!

Anyone who contributes fishing comments and/or photos is eligible to win. If you contribute twice a month, your name goes in the hat twice for the monthly drawing.



First the Lure Packet: With some late additions, the value of each Field Test Lure packet is now approximately \$100.00 retail. Thanks to friends at Rapala, Tru-Turn, Road Runner, Uncle Josh, Get Bit Baits, Bobby Garland, Gene Larew, Scum Frog, Lake Fork Tackle, Yum, PRADCO classic baits, Thill and Lindy. One Field Test Packet will be awarded each month from April through November – if you spot your name beside a lure photo located somewhere in the Report. I'll draw a name, post in the [second issue of the Fishing Report each month](#), and you must email me with your shipping address when you see that

you are a winner. (You may want to have your friends watch for name, too, so you don't miss receiving the packet of baits.) Field Test Packet awarded only once to an individual each season.

Second Gamma Giveaway: Instead of giving away a particular spool of Gamma Line provided by the company as in past years, this year if your name is drawn, you will be able to select a filler spool of the pound test and kind of Gamma Line you desire. You may choose from Polyflex, Edge, Touch or Torque. Now if you are uncertain of the different Gamma Lines, visit their website at blackknightindustries.com to learn more. One spool awarded each month; look for your name on the Gamma page. Gamma Line prize awarded only once to an individual each season.

Mentored Youth Fishing Days Rescheduled

Due to late ice-out, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission rescheduled mentored Youth Days to May 10th. Only sites in northwest Pennsylvania are Buhl Park Lake in Mercer County and the Waterworks Ponds on Presque Isle Bay. Go to GoneFishingPA.com for more details.

Now to the fishing...

FRENCH CREEK – Flowing through all four counties

French Creek is currently blown out due to rains. Creek may be fishable in backwater tributary mouths by the weekend, but more heavy rain expected Monday and Tuesday.

Pymatuning Lake

Chris Hall at **Espyville Outdoors** (filed 4/7): “Lots of crappie action on the north end of lake. Use medium minnows below a bobber in shallow bays around dead weed cover. Some anglers are also catching crappies and perch off the docks at Linesville Boat Livery. Of course, there are guys fishing for walleye at the wire on the Linesville Causeway, and at the bridges on the Espyville Causeway. I have not heard of anyone successful with wading in the evenings for walleyes.”

Dave Richter at **Richter’s Tackle Shop** (filed 4/7) reports some anglers at Pymatuning are focusing on catching crappies in the bays on minnows, while other anglers are wading the shoreline in the evenings for walleyes using topwater minnow baits and jigs-n-tails. The crappie bite is dependent on stable or increasing water temperature; cold snaps put the crappies off the feed. Dave was out Monday evening with Ethan Adams for crappies, keeping 39 nice ones.

Hooker Brakeman at **Hill’s Country Store** (filed 4/7) “On April 1st, Hooker’s Fishing Taxi made its first trip of the year on Pymatuning with Dave Kota. Portions of the lake were still ice covered, but we were able to find a ramp free of ice and get out to some open water on the main lake. The plan was to fish 16 to 18 feet of water on the channel break. But rolling white caps changed our plans. Actually, being forced to fish a small shallow pocket was fortuitous ‘cause that is where we found the crappies – soaking up sun rays in the shallow water. Fishing a 1/32-ounce **Hooker Bug** (a.k.a. Fly) tipped with a small wax worm and suspended 18 inches under small bobber, we cast against the rocky bank and slowly twitched the rig. Letting it sit motionless between movements convinced half a dozen keeper crappies to take a boat ride. On April 2^{dn}, Hooker’s Taxi was on the water again with another guest. Believing the rocky shoreline would produce, we hit again. But conditions had changed. After two hours of fruitless effort, my bobber twitched and I set the hook. It was no crappie on my 4-pound **Gamma line** and **BnM Ultralight Rod**, but a huge musky. I gently persuaded it to side of the boat, but after a violent thrust of its tail, the Hooker bug pulled free. My guest for the day said ‘That explains why the crappies are not here.’ Oh well, there goes the neighborhood. Don’t forget, the tackle shop at Hill’s is fully stocked with BnM Crappie Rods, Bobby Garland Baits, Gamma Line and Hooker Bugs to meet your crappie fishing needs.”



Dave Kota/Hooker photo

RJ Graham, Tionesta (filed 4/7): “My dad and I had a pretty interesting day at Pymie on Sunday. We launched at Linesville and headed for Stewart Bay. We fished in the mouth of the bay in 4 to 5 feet of water, catching a dozen slab crappies plus jumbo perch and bluegill. Later we went to the stumps and started pitching a jig. I caught 3 largemouth bass and missed several others. The bass came on **Graham Bass Jigs** – check out my page on Facebook to learn about these custom jigs. I had not expected the water temp near 50 degrees and lake level as high as it was. (See Livewell)

Darl Black, Cochranon (Filed 4/7): “Jim McClave and I had a great afternoon on Pymatuning for crappies on Sunday, April 6. We caught some of the largest black crappies I have ever seen immediately after ice-out at Pymatuning. I’m hoping it is foreshadowing a great spring and summer on Pymatuning. For more information, visit my blog at www.darblack.blogspot.com.”



Harvey at **Harvey's Hook, Line and Sinker Bait Shop** (filed 4/7): "The only word we have had from customers is about the crappie bite at Pymatuning. However, we are busy getting ready for trout season. We are planning a Grand Opening that weekend, including a Fishing Contest for the longest trout caught by one our customers; you must be registered ahead of time. We are located at the corner of Rt. 27 and Rt. 198; call 814-795-5796 for more information. We will open at 5:30 am on April 12."

Jerry VanTassel at Timberland Bait & Tackle (filed 4/7): "Canadohta Lake is still ice covered, but not safe for ice fishing. Our customers report catching crappies in the *Fingers* at Edinboro Lake – that's about it. We are gearing up for trout season."

Conneaut Lake

Annual Bluegill Bev Memorial Tourney
Saturday, June 7th



ERIE COUNTY

Presque Isle Bay

Jim at **B.A.C. Bait** says not much is happening in the bay the past week, except a couple anglers brought in 29 pounds of perch they caught off the old Border Patrol Dock.

Paul Stewart, Butler (filed 4/7): "Mike LeDonne and I had absolutely great perch fishing at PIB. We both limited out!" (See Livewell)

Tributary Streams

Jeff Staaf at **Poor Richards Bait** (filed 4/7): "There are lots of steelhead in the creeks including holdovers in the upper portions and fresh run in the lower portions. Creeks have been up and down. When dirty, fish egg sacks. When low and clear, fish minnows and single eggs. There have been some brown trout taken from in front of East Avenue access. There was a 28.5 pound brown taken this past week."

Dan Seaman at **Elk Creek Sports** (filed 4/7): "We are seeing and catching large number of chomes in the lower creeks – more spring fish than we have seen in years. Creeks are going to go up with rain expected this week, but should be clear by opening day of trout on April 12. There are going to be lots of fish, fish, and more fish everywhere this weekend."

Ric Gauriloff at **Trout Run Bait and Tackle** (filed 4/7): "It's been a slow start with all the ice blocking the streams earlier, but now things are shaping up. There's a surprising number of steelhead waiting to come in. Guys have been catching at the creek mouths early in the morning, especially at Trout Run. Nick Lohrer, one of our guides, landed a very nice brown trout from the Gravel Pit this past week."



Nick Lohrer

MERCER COUNTY

Lake Wilhelm

Bob Morha at Fergie's Bait & Tackle (Filed 4/7): "The bluegill bite is on in the upper part of the lake off the Sheakleyville Causeway using small jigs tipped with maggots. A few anglers are catching crappies around beaver lodges in the bays on pearl-colored **Southern Plastic Stinger Shads.**"

Shenango River Lake

No reports from Shenango since ice went off the lake. Lake is likely high and muddy from all the rain in recent days.

Jon Bobanick at **Consumer Direct Sports** (filed 4/7): "Everyone is itching to get out; lot of customers in buying tackle but not very many out fishing yet due to late spring. The only thing we have heard about from customers is the walleyes and crappies at Pymatuning. Don't forget, we got everything you need for opening of trout season, including **Gamma Line.**"

VENANGO COUNTY

Sugar Creek

Griffins Bait & Tackle Shop Report (filed 4/7): "With PF&BC stocking of trout and the season less than a week away, the buzz is all about trout. Fishermen of all ages and gender have been stocking up on their fishing supplies and gear at Griffins Bait & Tackle Shop in Cooperstown, PA. On Sugar Lake the fishing success slowed as the ice went out this past week. This coming weekend, Sugar Creek will be hatching with fishermen elbow to elbow trying to catch that one nice trout. Sugar Creek is a premier trout stream drawing fishermen from Ohio, West Virginia, New York and Maryland."



Allegheny River

Frank Malek, Oil City (filed 4/3 and 4/4): "I've been catching smallmouth bass this week each time out on the river. Black tubes and green drop shot worms fished on 8-pound Gamma Touch has been doing it for me." (See Livewell)



Chris Wolfgang, Oil City (filed 4/1): "It was a tough April Fool day on the river. However, I did manage to best Dale Black with one fish – Chris (1), Dale (0). My fish was a small pike about 15 inches. Darl insisted on more details...I cast towards shore, retrieving a red hair jig that I tied last summer slowly back to the boat when the pike crushed it. Even though the wind was blowing Mach 2, there was no mistake it was a fish! However the fish had little fight. I believe the fish's name was Charlie, and he was swimming with another pike called Ralph. They had not eaten in two days which is why he hit so hard...Happy April 1st."

The Livewell

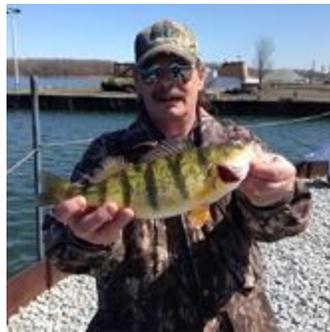
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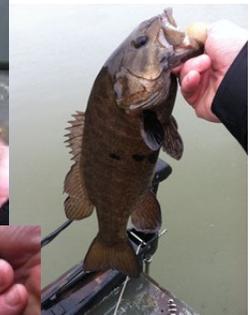
RJ Graham at Pyme



Boat of the Month: This PolarKraft Classic 156 is the perfect boat for crappie fishing at Pyme. This boat is in stock at Wiegel's Marine right now!



Paul Stewart and Mike LeDonne at PIB



Bill Logan on Elk Creek



Frank Malek on the River



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Gamma Fishing Tips

Darl Black: When friends go crappie fishing with me, they are always surprised at the infrequency of my line breaking when snagged. It's not because I use heavy pound test. It is because I use a very strong, thin line: Gamma! On any rod I use for casting 1/32- to 1/8-ounc jigs, I have the reel spooled with four-pound Gamma Polyflex – a very supple-yet-strong monofilament. On my long dipping rods for pitching into cover situations, I spool with 8-pound Gamma Polyflex; it will pull loose from almost any situation. I prefer supple Polyflex because it lays and casts nicely on small-spool reels. However, when it comes to fishing emerging lily pads in the late spring (where black crappies often spawn) even 8-pound Polyflex has met its match. For pads I break out a rod with 10-pound Gamma Torque, tying the live bait hook or jig directly to the line. A braided line, Torque is the only match for those incredibly tough pad stems.



Jim McClave/ db photo



Learn more about the Oil Creek Classic by going to

www.TitusvilleChamber.com

Lures for the Fishing Report Field Test Prize Pack supplied by:

Bobby Garland; Gene Larew; Get Bit Baits; Lake Fork Tackle; Lindy; PRADCO Classic hard baits; Rapala; Road Runner; Scum Frog; Thill; Tru-Turn Hooks; Uncle Josh; Yum. Read the Report (second issue of month) to see you are a winner. If you find your name listed as Prize Pack winner, email Darl with you shipping address.

Follow Darl as he fishes with angling experts around the country at

www.darblack.blogspot.com

Darl is on Facebook

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