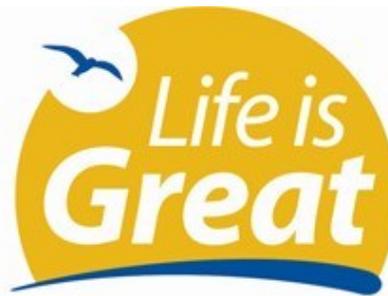


Northwest

Pennsylvania

Fishing Report



Reporting Date:

June 24, 2013

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

Even though the weather has been unsettled recently, fish catches have continued strong across most NW PA waters. The Allegheny has been on fire for big smallmouth through the high water period. The river rose from torrential rains while bass were bedding several weeks ago. Marilyn and I fished the river on Saturday, and noticed a number of smallmouth bass on beds in typical spawning sites south of Franklin – these late spawners waited for the river to drop and clear a bit. Still, I'm concerned about the survival of fry from the early spawn. Interestingly, the smallies Marilyn and I caught on Saturday, as well as the ones Dale and I caught on Friday, were extremely healthy and plump from eating crayfish – best weight I've ever seen for June river smallies.

by Darl Black



NW PA FISHING REPORT for June 24, 2013

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

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FRENCH CREEK (Flowing through all four counties)

Dustin Shay (Meadville) filed 6/23: "On my most recent trip to French Creek this past week, I caught smallmouth bass, largemouth bass and pike. The biggest smallmouth was 3.5 pounds but I lost a real hawg! Several of the fish came on large soft plastic swimbaits with a big boot-tail. Keep in mind these fish were eating even though the Creek was high and dingy." See Livewell photos.

Angler Al (new contributor Al Bell of Franklin goes my Angler Al) filed 6/23: "After church I spend an hour on French Creek. Even though it's still a tad cloudy and flowing a bit higher than I like, it was fishable. Natural baits were the key for me. With the turn of a rock or two, I can usually pick up a few crawfish. That's what worked during the noon hour today. Don, a resident along French Creek at Sugarcreek, was kind enough to snap a picture of one of the smallmouth bass that I caught and released." See Livewell photos.

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Dave Richter (Richter's General Store) filed 6/24: "Walleyes are still going strong on the south end. There are still a lot of 'eye fairly shallow due to cooler than normal water temperature. The 8- to 12-foot depth is producing for many fishermen when drifting nightcrawlers on a jig. Casting crawlers to the deep weed edge is paying off during the day, with some getting a limit doing this. The walleye/alewife deal seems to be happening after midnight, with bait coming shallow late...too late for me to be out and then go to work the next day. Crappies have moved out to deep structure; you can catch them if you like to fish deep cover. There have been a lot of big bluegills recently. And channel cats are being caught everywhere."

Chris Hall (Espyville Outdoors) filed 6/24: "As of this past week, walleyes are still being caught SHALLOW. Successful anglers are saying 8 to 12 feet – some even shallower! Floating jighead and **AFF Walleye Wizards** tipped with nightcrawlers are among the most popular methods. A few limits are reported on **Lindy Shadlings**, **Berkley Flicker Shads**, **Rapala Shad Raps** and **Storm Hot-N-Tots**. Not many reports about worm harnesses yet. The area of Hemlock Island and south of Padanaran are popular with anglers, as well as between Orchard and Snodgrass ramps. Crappies are still being caught along the causeway and the Espyville Marina Breakwall in the early morning and evenings. Try an **AFF Lucky Seven hook** under a bobber.

"We have received a couple new products in the shop recently: **Custom X Lures** and **BioEdge** Fishing scent. Custom X Lures are musky crankbaits made in Illinois. We are carrying the 5" Mini X and the 6" Chubby. These crankbaits can be trolled at 5 mph and will not blow out! BioEdge is 100% natural fishing scents in both a "Potion" (liquid) and a "Wand" (semi solid). They can be used on any artificial lure. The BioEdge Minnow Potion proved productive during Crappie Camp in May!"

'Hooker' (Hill's County Store) filed 6/23: "Pymatuning is being invaded by Hooker Bugs and Monkey Milk! **Hooker Bugs** are small hair jigs, hand crafted by the Yankee Hooker. They can be tipped with live bait, or select plastic. The **Bobby Garland 2" Baby Shad** is a great trailer for the Hooker Bug. The Baby



Hooker provided photo

Shad is available in many enticing colors, but Hooker has found Pymatuning crappies will pass up a live minnow to eat one of these Baby Shad in a color called Monkey Milk. Reservations for Hooker's Fishing Taxi can be made at Hill's County Store at Rt. 322 and SR 7 in Williamsfield, Ohio. I've included pictures of some recent satisfied customers. A week ago I catered to father and son parties both Saturday and Sunday. On the 15th, crappies were cooperative but the bite was light. The father and son duo had to learn line watching and setting the hook at the slightest movement. Four-pound **Gamma Line** made all the difference when fishing the Hooker Bug. On Sunday the 16th, another father and son team wanted to fish bass. We caught several nice largemouths on buzzbaits, wacky worms and Texas-rigged flipping tubes. All bass were found in the backs of coves where wood cover met emergent grass." See Livewell photos.

Chuck Sair (Franklin) filed 6/23: "I made several trips to Pymatuning for walleyes in the past two weeks. On the 16th, I fished the North End near Linesville with son Kevin and six-year old grandson Reece. We caught nine walleyes of which seven were keepers. It was extremely windy so we could not troll. Instead we drifted with walleye rigs and floating jigs tipped with crawlers. The wind was so strong we even drifted with **Storm Hot-N-Tots**, catching several crappies and perch. We ended up getting blown off the lake. On the 20th, my son Reece and my brother Frank joined me. We caught seven walleyes with four being keepers. There was no wind, so we trolled Hot-N-Tots in silver; in addition to walleyes we caught crappies and perch. Water temp was 75 degrees. On the 23rd, again with Kevin and Reece, we caught four walleyes of which two were keepers. Trolled Hot-N-Tots until wind picked up then drifted with walleye rigs in yellow and green for a couple more 'eye. Water temp was 78 degrees which is making it difficult to find and catch fish."

Woodcock Lake

Dustin Shay (Meadville) filed 6/32: "Two weeks ago at Woodcock, I landed a BIG smallmouth – photo attached. This past weekend I lost a MONSTER smallmouth beside the boat that had hit a musky top-water. It jumped twice and threw the plug. Estimated it at 6.5 pounds plus." See Livewell photos.

Oil Creek

Jerry VanTassel landed this 23.5" 6-pound rainbow trout from Oil Creek several weeks ago.

Canadohta Lake

Jerry VanTassel (Timberland Bait) filed 6/24: "No further word on the big musky – must still be swimming in the lake. There will be a lot of musky fishermen up over July 4th, so maybe someone will connect with it. Also, some customers say that walleyes turn on in the lake during the 4th Fireworks display. Let me know if you catch walleyes during the fireworks show this year!"



VanTassel photo of big trout

ERIE COUNTY

Union City Dam

Jerry VanTassel (Timberland Bait) filed 6/24: "During the recent high water, several of my customers have been fishing from shore and making some nice catches of smallmouth bass, pike, and bluegills at Union City Dam – not Union City water reservoir. One customer brought in a 22.5" largemouth bass from there. But hundreds of fish got trapped in a pool when the water went down – a variety of species were stranded according to one of my customers. I also have reports of excellent bluegill fishing at Edinboro Lake."

Presque Isle Bay

Al Nacopoulos (B.A.C. Bait) filed 6/24: "There are still a lot of smallmouth bass in the Bay; my customers are catching them off the North Pier. Anglers are also catching largemouth bass in Misery Bay. Crappies are being caught in the Marina Bay early in the morning and late in the evening. There are lots of bluegills everywhere. The Bay perch bite is declining, with a few being caught on the piers in the morning and evening. Out in the main lake, walleyes are at 37 feet off the Condos, with another bunch in 56 to 70 feet off the Point.



Paul Stewart (Butler) filed 6/24: "I fished the Erie piers on Sunday. Nothing on the North Pier but East Pier gave up some nice perch. Looks like the pier perch fishing is done for the summer." Paul Stewart supplied photo on right of PIB Pier Perch.

Al Moore (Cochranton) filed 6/23: "The Bassmasters of Mercer County fished the Bay this weekend. It was windy and hard to hold. There was a good spinnerbait and crankbait bite, with a ½-oz. **Strike King Sexy Shad** getting a number of fish. My biggest fish, a 3 lb. 3 oz. smallmouth, came on a **Sweet Beaver**. I took 1st place and lunker in the tournament. Smallmouths were in 9 to 11 feet of water; largemouths were everywhere."

Thomas Watral (Erie) filed 6/23: "I fished the Bay a number of times this past week. On the 15th, I had a great time with crappies in the Lagoons on salted minnows and **Slider Jigs**; fish ran 8 to 9 inches. On the 20th, I fished the Border Patrol Dock and got 6 nice perch on crawlers. One angler has 29 perch and 6 crappies. Later in day I moved to the Public Dock and got 10 bass with the biggest one going 18 inches, taken on a buzzbait. Then at the West Slip, I got into rock bass – landing 30 of them on a Slider Jig and **Love Bug**, with the biggest one going 15 inches. On the 22nd, I went to the West Slip for panfish. Fishing was so good I ran out of bait. On the 23rd, I fished live bait from the piers and caught 8 bass, 30 sunfish and 5 rock bass."

Lake Erie

Gary Heuble (Poor Richards) filed 6/24: "There are good perch at 38 to 40 feet off Trout Run and the Clay Banks. Walleye fishing has been up and down with the cold fronts. The migratory schools of walleyes are starting to show up suspended 15 to 20 feet down over 55 to 65 feet. These walleyes are basically from Trout Run to the Ohio line. Fish are being taken with **Reef Runners** and **Bagley's** on flatlines, and with crawler harnesses behind cookie-size **Dipsy Divers**."

Mike Tome (Trout Run Bait) filed 6/24: "Fishing is good and getting better on the lake. Today, perch are at 42 feet. Walleyes are stretched from Trout Run to the Ohio line in 55 to 65 feet of water. The bigger schools are over in Ohio and hopefully moving this way. Also, there are walleyes in close at about the 30-foot depth, which makes a safer run than going 5 miles out to deep water when there is threat of thunderstorms."

Dan Seaman (Elk Creek Sports) filed 6/24: "Elk Creek is still filled with smallmouth bass from the Legion Hole to the mouth; the best bait is live crayfish. There are also big cats in the creek. Yesterday a 7 year old brought in a 30" catfish. The ramp on Elk is good for launching boats up to about 18 feet to get out on the lake. On the main lake, walleyes are in the rocks at 15 to 25 feet, and there are suspended schools out at 50 to 60 foot depth all along the PA waters."

MERCER COUNTY

Lake Wilhelm

Bob Mohra (Fergie's Bait) filed 6/24: "Anglers are catching nice bluegills all over the lake. The size of bluegills is much nicer this year than the past couple seasons."

'Angler Al' (Franklin) filed 6/22: "Stan Huefner and I were on Lake Wilhelm this morning from 5 AM to 9 AM. I trolled a **Hot-N-Tot** and he trolled a crawler harness. We were hoping to catch a walleye or two. They didn't cooperate. The crappies on the other hand did. Stan landed nearly a dozen decent fish, and I picked up a couple too. A chartreuse and orange colored blade on the harness did the trick as well as a perch color Hot-N-Tot. See photo."



Al Bell supplied photo

Shenango Lake

Ken Smith (Sharon) filed 6/22: "I fished Shenango today, the 22nd. With all the boat traffic from a bass tournament and water skiers out as early as 7:30 AM, it was next to impossible to enjoy being on the lake. I caught some crappies and bluegills, but they were small. Caught them on **Southern Pro Plastics** tipped with **Crappie Nibbles**. Fish came from 8 to 15 feet over and near brush-piles."

VENANGO COUNTY

Sugar Creek

'Angler Al' (Franklin) filed 6/19: "There isn't much traffic on the trout streams now, but there are still fish to be caught. Back on June 12, I fished Sugar Creek one evening, landing 3 rainbow, 2 browns and 2 spitfire smallies, and lost another four fish at my feet. The largest was a 21-inch rainbow. Then on the 18th, I was afforded the opportunity to take 9 year old Aaron Burkhardt trout fishing. I chose a stretch of Sugar Creek near Sleepy Hollow golf course. Considering the rain we've had, the creek was low. With a tin of red worms and crawlers, we looked for rushes of current which fed small pools. I instructed him how to handle the rod and how to identify a bite. When he got the first bite, the kid made a brilliant, sweeping hookset, and managed to bring a 10 inch rainbow to the rocks. He caught three other trout around the same size plus a smallmouth bass on a **Rooster Tail**. His father had already planted the angling seeds in him, and I helped that along. Above all, we had fun...Always, Angler Al."



Justus Lake

Chuck Papinchak (Cochranon) filed 6/23: Chuck reported on an exceptional day this past week at Justus Lake when fish were very active. Fishing with a spinner-bait, he caught 8 bass and two muskies, plus he missed two additional muskies. The largest musky was 45 inches. Landing the muskies without a net while fishing alone was a challenge, and getting a photo even more difficult. See photo.

Papinchak supplied photo

Allegheny River

Dale Black (Oil City) filed 6/24: "This past weekend, fishing two to four hours on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, I enjoyed a very good streak on the river. On Friday, fishing with Darl Black, we landed about 30 smallmouth – all very chunky from eating crayfish. Several were dripping eggs which surprised me so late in June. I also landed two nice walleyes and a 20-some pound channel cat – thank goodness for 8-pound Gamma Line. All my fish came on **Skippy Fish** soft jerkbait on a swimming head (including the channel cat) while Darl caught his fish on a **Lunker City Swim Bait** and a **Larew Sweet Swimmer** on a **Road Runner Rollin' Runner** head. On Saturday, I caught 15 smallmouths on a Skippy Fish; on Sunday I added another 15 to 20 smallies to the total – again on a Skippy Fish."

Bill Logan (Pleasantville) filed 6/23: "On the 22nd, I boated 11 smallmouths on a **Lucky Craft Pointer 100**. Eight more came up for a topwater chugger in the afternoon when the wind kicked up and it was white-capping."

Jeff Knapp (Keystone Connection Guide Service) filed 6/23: "With higher flows and cloudy water, it's been a big fish bite for smallmouth the past couple weeks. All of my trips have produced numerous quality fish including many in the 19 to 20.5 inch range. Productive baits have included spinnerbaits (**Strike King Midnight Special** and **Jimmy D's**); **Winco's Predator Craw**; and **Rapala X-Raps**. As of June 23, the Allegheny was falling, clearing and warming rapidly."

Steve Udick (Oil City) filed 6/17: "With the river high and murky, we were the only boat to launch at Oil City on this day. I managed six bass – all on tubes. They were in very fast current, not in the relief areas where I figured they would be. All were good size, and full of fight, but none jumped as the water temp was in the mid-60s. I also caught a 25" bullhead on a **SR7 Shad Rap**. I had caught channel cats on lures, but never a bullhead. All fish were released."

Last Friday, Dale Black had a bent rod for four hours on the Allegheny; the strikes never stopped!



4th of July Week Forecast — Looking for the best bite

The week of July 4th sees many anglers out for single day outings as well families taking week-long fishing vacations. Make no mistake, if the weather is good, the lakes, creeks and rivers will be crowded – not only by anglers but by general recreational boaters; this will be true for all popular waters in NW PA. So if you don't like crowds, consider your options carefully – such as going to a smaller lakes that do not have first class ramps or a cottage community around it. If fishing the popular lakes, GO EARLY.

The Pymatuning walleye daytime bite is dwindling, but you might consider a late night run at the alewife-walleye connection around weedbeds. Crappies are plentiful at Pymatuning and Shenango if you fish deeper. Don't forget the white bass and hybrid stripers at Shenango – both should be active in evenings around main lake points or humps. Reports of some of the biggest bluegills seen in years are coming in from Conneaut Lake, Edinboro and Pymatuning. Play to the gizzard shad at Wilhelm...try night fishing for big bass with surface baits over open water. The Allegheny River smallmouths await, but if fishing by jetboat over the holiday, you might reconsider; kayakers and canoeist (mostly novices) will form a steady line on the Allegheny if the weather is nice making power-boating a risky venture.

Typically, the first part of July signals the initial summer musky bite. Few reports have come in this week, but with steady warm temps this could change. Look to Shenango, Pymatuning, Woodcock, Justus, Edinboro, LeBoeuf, and Canadohta...especially for the monster reportedly roaming Canadohta.

The Erie perch fishing is getting into full swing, and the western walleye schools are moving into Pennsylvania waters. But running out deep during unsettled weather that is forecast through this weekend is very risky. There are walleyes being caught in the 20 to 30-foot depths, so try close. With the main lake being slow to warm, it seems the smallmouth bite should be very good this coming week; likely a lot smallmouth still in relatively shallow water.

Livewell Overflow

Pymatuning: Photos supplied by Hooker of satisfied fishermen stopping by Hill's County Store



Sugar Creek: Photos supplied by Angler Al



21" Rainbow



Aaron Burkhardt

The Livewell

Brought to you by:



Allegheny River

Steve Udick with Shad Rap success (Udick photos)



Boat of the Month: PolarKraft Sportsman 1860SC with 90/65 jet...a perfect river rig. See this at Wiegel Brothers Marine.

French Creek



Smallmouth—Al Bell photo

Dustin Shay



French Creek largemouth



BIG French Creek smallie

Woodcock Creek Lake

Shay's Woodcock smallie



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Gamma Line's Fishing Tips

Gamma Pro-Staff Tip

Britt Stoudenmire, New River Smallmouth Guide Britt Stoudenmire is a member of the Gamma Pro-Staff. "I use Gamma Edge 12-lb. fluorocarbon as a leader all season long on all my bottom rigs while fishing the New River in Virginia for smallmouth. I like to start by attaching an eight- to ten-foot piece of Edge to 20/6 braided line via a double Uni knot; I'll attach a new leader after retying baits shortens the lead to about six feet. I take special care to moisten the knot before pulling it tight to maintain line strength and to trim the tag ends down as far as possible so the knot passes through the guides with ease. I always use a Palomar knot for connecting the Edge to the baits. The leader affords me some flex for presentation and has better abrasion resistance than straight braided line, while giving me all the positive benefits of braided line: no stretch, sensitivity, long casts, etc."

Winner of the Prize Pack of Baits for this issue of the Fishing Report: Angler Al Bell (Franklin) and Steve Udick (Oil City)

Lures for the Fishing Report Prize Pack supplied by: Case; Gene Larew; Get Bit Baits; Road Runner; Yum; Zipper Worms.

Follow Darl as he fishes with angling experts around the country at www.darblack.blogspot.com

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

