

Northwest

Pennsylvania

Fishing Report



Reporting Date:

July 7, 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



Major rain storms continue to hammer NW PA. Rivers, creeks and stream continue to run way higher than normal and much dirtier. I've never seen the Allegheny and French Creek so high and chocolate for so long – since mid-May; I'm afraid the smallmouth spawn was not successful this year. Lakes are on the highs side, too. Being a flood control reservoirs, Shenango ramps have been closed off and on since mid-May. State Park impoundments (Pymatuning and Wilhelm) are high,

which seems to have a negative impact on crappie fishing but has enhanced the largemouth bass fishing. Channel catfish are hitting everywhere in NW PA. Best bet – if you like to troll – is the walleye bite at Lake Erie... when you can get out; winds howl and storms roll the lake regularly. Another option is to fish the smaller natural lakes in the area; they are high but not nearly as dirty and over the banks as the reservoirs.



NW PA FISHING REPORT: July 7, 2014

Brought to you by **PA Great Lakes Region** tourism

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

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Dave @ **Richter's Bait**; filed 7/7: "Things at Pymatuning are in the summer patterns. Customers are still picking up a few walleyes, but you got to work for them. Catfish are being caught everywhere. There's been a lot more mention of largemouth bass being caught than in past years; bass are in the weeds. The Shenango River below the dam is giving up good crappies and walleyes due to the high water."



Scatter Rapala is hot for walleyes

John @ **Espyville Outdoors**; filed 7/7: "The only catches that guys are talking about are catfish – lots being caught at night. Also perch around the causeway."

Patty @ **Poff's Place**; filed 7/7: "This time of year, it's the same old same old. Anglers who know what they are doing are catching crappies. Walleyes have been biting off and on. Bluegills are still on a strong bite. And catfish are going crazy."

Hooker @ **Hill's Country Store**; filed 7/7: "With all this high water, I'm still catching a few walleyes relatively shallow around weedbeds. Crappies are really scattered – I'm catching a few here and there in 8 to 10 feet of water, but you really got to scout them out with sonar before dropping baits. With this high water, I'm not finding crappies are not ganged up on deepwater humps and stumps as usual. Store customers are complaining about catching too many channel catfish – if you are from Louisiana that isn't a reason to complain!"

Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 7/7: "On Sunday, 7/6, my buddy T.O. and I fished Pymie. We targeted deep brush and boated some real nice crappies; **Southern Pro Hot Grubs** in crawdad color produced best." (See Livewell photos)



Ken Smith photo

Robinson' Bait; filed 7/6: "It's a great day on the North End of Pymatuning Lake. The word is walleyes are hitting crawlers for drift anglers around Harris and Whaley Islands in the stumps. In the deeper water south of Clark towards Tuttle Point, anglers are reporting walleye catches on **Storm Hot-N-Tots** (purple or black/chrome and **Berkley Flicker Shads**. Perch are said to be biting along the old river channel. We also have reports of nice largemouth and smallmouth bass taken in the North End, too. Bluegills are being caught in good number with maggots and red worms at Wilson's Launch and Alcatraz. Catfish are hitting anything you throw. Stop in and see us at 2629 US Rt. 6 about 3 miles west of Linesville, PA. Look for the big white and blue sign. We have all your bait needs, including over 100 Hot N Tots to choose from, ice at \$1.25 for ten pound bag, snacks, drinks, buckets, nets, tackle and always friendly staff from 5 AM to 8 PM every day of the week."

Chuck Sari (Franklin); filed 7/6: "I fished the North End Pymatuning near Linesville on 6/29 with my son Kevin and grandson Reece. We trolled **Hot-N-Tots** and drifted floating jigs tipped with night-



crawlers weighed with a couple large split-shot. We managed only one nice 23" walleye along with several catfish. The fishing at Pymatuning this year for some reason is way off from last year. We are catching a fraction of walleyes this year compared to last year; I think the low number of boats on the lake reflect the poor bite. We went again to Pymatuning on the 4th of July with similar results. But we had a good wind so we drifted. We managed to catch several catfish and one 19" walleye; we also had a 14" crappie on a Hot-N-Tot. Next week we are going to try for the first time the area around Snodgrass in deeper water." (See photo)

Reece Sari/Sari photo

Angler Al (Franklin); filed 6/27: At daylight my fishing buddy Stan and I headed northwest on Pymie to one of our favorite spots north of Jamestown State Park ramp. Trolling double chartreuse and orange worm harnesses in the 10 to 14-foot range, at roughly 2.5 mph, we immediately caught fish. When the sun started to burn, the bite stopped and we went home. We caught channel cats, perch, bluegills and walleyes."

ERIE COUNTY

Lake Erie

Rich Weber @ [Erie Sports Stores](#); filed 7/7: "Walleye fishing in Lake Erie has been pretty solid. Try drifting with crawler harnesses in 35 to 40 feet, or trolling with stick baits. Large walleyes can be found in 50 plus feet using lead line with stick baits or deep diving stickbaits. Perch fishing has been solid in 45 to 55 feet. Hot lures for walleye are the **Bandit diving plugs** in chrome and black/chrome. **Matzuo Kinchou Minnows** have been selling well. All lures are 20% off for month of July."

Dan @ [Elk Creek Sports Store](#); filed 7/7: "Given conditions of rain and wind, fishing has been okay this past week for walleye and perch. My customers are catching walleyes relatively shallow – suspended in 40 to 45 feet. But be alert: Some mornings the bait schools are very shallow and the walleyes will be very high in the water column...maybe only 12 feet down. Nor are they getting limit catches off the PA shore. But over on the Ohio line, they are getting limit catches of big walleyes – however you need to be putting boards down at 6 AM to get that early bite. Perch are scattered in 35 to 40 feet off Trout Run and Elk; not hearing about any off Walnut Creek. Smallmouth bass are all out of Elk Creek and catfish are doing their thing. Elk is running high and with more rain this week, it could be rolling – which will likely bring in more catfish."

Andy @ [Trout Run Bait & Tackle](#); filed 7/7: "I'm hearing the walleyes are suspended 25 to 40 feet down over 50 to 70 feet. They are hitting plugs, including **Reef Runners** and **Bagley's** deep divers. Perch are hit and miss in about 50 feet – lots of silver bass around them."

Jeff @ [Poor Richards](#); filed 7/7: "Some walleyes are super shallow at 37 feet, while others are out at 60 to 70 feet. Best plugs are **Reef Runners**, **Bagley's**, **Bay Rat** and **Renosky** plugs. Hot colors are purple/blue and purple/pink. Perch bite is slow; best depth is 54 feet, but they are not getting limit catches."

Keith @ [Dutch Fork Lures](#); filed 7/3: "Jeff Behr and I fished Erie out of Walnut Creek on July 1st and caught a limit of walleyes all on **Reef Runners**. Plugs were 125' to 140' back on 12 pound mono. Water

depth was 45 to 50 feet. All lures were custom painted by Dutch Fork Lures. Chrome Crappie, Chrome/Purple Back, and Chrome/Chart Belly worked best. If you are catching white bass the best advice is to MOVE. Guys are experiencing white bass schools at all depths. When you encounter them, leave the spot to find walleye.” (See Livewell photo)



Keith Eshbaugh photo

Presque Isle

Jim @ **B.A.C. Bait**; filed 7/7: “Some customers are still catching smallmouth in the Bay, but most bass have moved back to the main lake. We had two big pike reported this past week in the Bay. Catches of everything are up and down – like the weather we are having.”

Thomas Watral (Erie); filed 7/7: “Perch and crappies are hitting at the North Pier and South Pier, along with a few bass here and there on crawfish. Perch are hitting wax worms and small minnows. Crappies are hitting small minnows and crawlers. Big catfish are biting in Elk Creek at night near the mouth on dough ball and crawlers.”

MERCER COUNTY

Shenango River Lake

Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 7/7: I fished Shenango on Saturday, 7/5, with a couple of my grandkids. We threw jigs for crappies in the blow downs. Caught over 40 and released all of them. **Bobby Garland Baby Shads** were the best baits. I had a great time with JJ and Mya.” (See Livewell photos)



Grandkids on Shenango/Ken Smith

Mike Martin (Cochranon); filed 6/30: “John Wilpula and I fished Shenango Lake on Saturday, June 28. We were on the water at 5:15 AM and fished until 11:00 AM. We only boated one smallmouth but John and I each lost a pig just around the corner from the ramp. Daylight had just broken. Both fish were in wood along shore. John hooked his big bass on a square-bill crank. It was a good largemouth, and we had it almost in the net when it shook loose. Bummer. Less than 5 minutes later, I hooked up with a dandy largemouth on a spinnerbait. I had it to the boat only to see the fish say ‘see ya’ as it shook loose also. Darn!”

Lake Wilhelm

Bob @ **Fergie’s Bait**; filed 7/7: “I had reports of some nice walleyes being taken down by the dam end of the lake – 25 to 27 inches is what I’ve been told. Customers are also reporting a good number of decent bass being caught. There are mixed reports on the crappies – some guys are saying the size is much better this year, while others say the panfish are still small. One customer reported catching 60 crappies over the weekend but didn’t keep a single one because they were too small.”

Steve Knebel (Cranberry Township); filed 7/3: “I went fishing this past week at Lake Wilhelm during low light conditions. The water temperature was in the low 80s and I didn’t get many bites. But one of the bites I did get was really a quality one – an 8 lb. 5 oz. largemouth bass taken on a crankbait. The fish was released, along with the other one, after this picture was taken.” (See Livewell photo)

Noah Heck @ [Kayak Anglers of Western PA](#); filed 7/1: "Our kayak bass tournament on Wilhelm was a success. We had thirteen 3-bass limits; a total of 73 largemouth bass were submitted. The average bass submitted was over 15 inches; 12% were 18 inches; 3 fish were 19 inches or longer. The single longest bass was 19.75 inches. We will be back in your area on September 21 for an event around the confluence of French Creek at the Allegheny River." (See photos)



Noah Heck photo



Noah Heck photo

(Editor's note: The Kayak Anglers bass events are completely catch-measure-photograph-immediate release. The ranking of places is determined by the total length of 3 best bass photographed and submitted via cell phone. With no fish to see, weigh-ins are anti-climactic compared to a regular bass tournament – but the survival of released bass is 100% - no bass dying from being carried in a livewell all day long!)

Bill Logan (Pleasantville); filed 6/28: "I fished Wilhelm today. Caught 3 bass – biggest was 2.5 pounds. But I lost a hog!"

VENANGO COUNTY

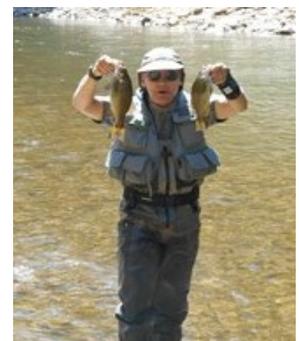
Bill @ [Griffin's Bait & Tackle](#); filed 7/7: "With the terrible spotty storms we have had these past few weeks seems most local fishermen have turned to lake fishing. Here at Griffin's Bait we have been selling lots of nightcrawlers, red worms and spikes, as most fish are being caught on live bait. We've had reports of trout caught at Justus Lake, and some largemouth bass at Sugar on buzzbaits. Bowfins have been caught at Sugar Lake and Geneva Swamp off Rt. 19. Catfish anglers are reporting catches on the Allegheny River near Reno on nightcrawlers and chubs."

Mike@ [Jigger Tackle](#) (cltackle@hotmail.com); 6/27: "The guys who are fishing the feeder streams for trout are doing pretty well with nice brown trout topping the list. With heavy flows, live bait seems to be the order of the day. Most of the main branches are still plenty high and more rain is expected. Wilhelm is producing some nice bass and walleyes. Conneaut is producing nice bluegills."

Sugar Creek

Angler Al (Franklin)

- Thursday, July 3: "My nieces Milena (14 yr.), Hannah (11 yr.) and Abigail Nelsen (8 yr.) were home from South Carolina. It was perfect day to pond fish. Uncle Al's stash of emerald shiners was the key, with all three girls slamming decent large-mouth bass. Bluegills bit on anything they saw, including maggots, salmon eggs and worms." (See Livewell)
- Friday, July 4: "My brother in-law Doc was home for the holidays. He and my brother Buck fished Sugar Creek on Friday, catching 4 trout, 2 small-mouth bass and a bluegill. Some on red worms and other fish on tandem fly presentation.
- Saturday, July 5: "Doc and I revisited the same stretch on Saturday. We tried a new presentation to us called "Czeck Nymphing." My cousin Nick Bell, a leading performer on Team Headwaters, a team associated with



Doc's double/Al photo

the Trout Legends league, schooled us on the how-to at the 4th July picnic. Nick knows his stuff! Doc's first catch was actually a double. The "Sheep Fly" on the bottom dropper fooled a 12" smallie, and the "Griddle Bug" on the top of the tandem rig, deceived a 13" smallie! The set-up I choose – a weighed down "Muddler Minnow" on the bottom and a "Green Weenie" on top, caught me an 11" brown and a 14.5" rainbow. (See Livewell photo.)

Oil Creek

Mike @ [Oil Creek Outfitters](#); filed 7/7: "Rain, rain and more rain. Oil Creek has been blown out most of the spring, fishable for fly fishermen about 1 day every two weeks it seems. This is the worst season on Oil Creek that I've ever seen. It's so bad all I can do is laugh about it...and more heavy rain expected this week." (See photo)

Justus Lake

Mike Martin (Cochran); filed 7/6: "John Wilpula and I fished Justus Lake on the 5th. We landed 8 large-mouth bass – nothing of any size, but plenty of fun. Most fish came on crankbaits. Water is stained."

Bill Logan (Pleasantville); filed 7/6: "I fished Justus Lake recently because the river has been blown out. I caught a number of small largemouth bass, but none of any size worth mentioning."

Allegheny River

Gene Winger (Oil City); filed 7/7: "Finally in time for July 4th weekend – It's been a long time coming but finally the water clarity is improving on the river every day and levels are below 8 feet! We are back in the game! My son-in-law and I fished on the river both Saturday and Sunday between Oil City and Belmar, averaging around 12 smallmouths each day. Most were caught on **Winco Specialty Spinnerbaits** in the fast moving shallow water and **Winco 3.25" Predator Craw Jigs** in 3' to 5' pockets in back water eddies. It was great to be back out on the river and seeing everyone enjoy a perfect 4th of July weekend!"



Gene Winger photos



Mike's 21 incher

Pete's 19 incher

Pete Cartwright @ [Smallies on the Yough](#); filed 7/6: "The 4th of July weekend produced some nice smallies for us on the muddy water of the Allegheny River near Tionesta. With the water starting to clear a bit, we began picking up bigger fish, including Mike's 21 incher and Pete's 19 incher. Fish were scattered; picked them up on jigs and tubes."

Dale Black (Oil City); filed 7/6: "I fished the river from 8 am until 4 pm today. It was an extremely tough day. I managed about 10 more fish with four of the smallmouths being over 15 inches. I caught them on a chartreuse **Model A Bomber** crankbait, **Skippy Fish** soft jerkbait and **Yum Dingers**. Chris fished with me in the morning; he caught four smallmouths and a walleye on a hair jig." (See livewell Photo)

Youngsters Love to Go Fishing



On Saturday, July 5, Marilyn and I conducted a fishing seminar for kids and fishing-novice parents at the Pymatuning State Park Campground at Jamestown. There were 12 youngsters and 13 parents in attendance. We focused on panfish instruction, including explanation of different sunfish species we are finding in Pymatuning. Here are some photos of youngsters fishing shot with a cell phone.



ID These Colorful Panfish & Win a Panfish Lure

Most youngsters can identify bluegills and pumpkinseeds. However, how about other sunfish? Below are photos I shot earlier this spring of several sunfish species Marilyn caught at Pymatuning one evening. Can you identify all three species? Each reader who sends an email which correctly identifies each fish in photos A, B, and C by the next Fishing Report on July 21 will receive a panfish lure from Road Runner or Bobby Garland.



Sunfish species A:



Sunfish species B:



Sunfish species C:

Angler Al's Pond for Kids — Al knows how important it is to take youngsters fishing!



The Livewell

Brought to you by:



Pymatuning Crappie/Ken Smith photo



Boat of the Month: Debbie is declaring July as Express Jetboat month at Wiegel Brothers. Stop in to



Check out Wiegel's used boats, too.



Shenango Lake Pike/Ken Smith photo



Wilhelm 8 lb. Largemouth/Knebel photo

Dale's Allegheny smallmouths/db photo



Dale says his new Spotters Sunglasses with 100% SPF, aided him in seeing cover in muddy water.

PROCESSED FOR PERFORMANCE



Gamma Fishing Tips



Chris Wolfgang, Gamma Pro Staff: "I finally had an opportunity to get out on the Allegheny the other day for the first time in weeks. I must say the water wasn't what we are used to this time of year. Instead of the usual low and clear water, it was high and stained. I was throwing jigs on 8-lb. Gamma Edge fluorocarbon. I really love this stuff, especially in these types of conditions. The sinking properties of fluorocarbon helped get the jig down and I had the extra sensitivity that I needed to feel the lite bite. The abrasion resistance of the line is phenomenal! With the river being up and stained, it was hard to see rocks and debris. I managed to fish through the stuff all day without a single break off. I landed several smallmouth including an 18-incher which spit up a live crayfish! Great castability, high abrasion resistance and outstanding strength...what more could you ask for in a line!"

Dale says find the spool of Gamma Line you need at the following NW PA Tackle Shops:

Consumer Direct Sports: www.cdssports.com

Hill's County Store: www.facebook.com/hillscs

Winner of the spool of Gamma Line for this issue of Fishing Report is **Steve Knebel**. Notify Darl by email that you saw your name and include your shipping address.

Lures for the Fishing Report Field Test Prize Pack supplied by: Bobby Garland; Gene Larew; Get Bit Baits; Hubs Chub; Lake Fork Tackle; Lindy; Rapala; Road Runner; Scum Frog; Thill; Tru-Turn Hooks; Uncle Josh; Venom; Yum. Read the Report to see you are a winner. If you find your name listed as Prize Pack winner within the body of the July 21 Fishing Report, email Darl with you shipping address.



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