

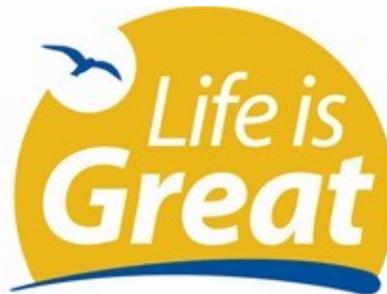
Northwest

Pennsylvania

Fishing Report

Reporting Date:

August 12, 2013



Pennsylvania's Great Lakes Region
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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

Based on reports coming from anglers and tackle shops on the PA's North Coast, Lake Erie is the place to be right now for walleye and perch. If you've complained about inconsistent perch catches on your trips up there this summer, it certainly looks like RIGHT NOW is the time to be on Erie for the BIG summer bite...and walleyes are apparently eating like it's their last meal. (Well, for many, it was!) If seeking crappies, there is no place better than Pymatuning and Shenango right now, with Pymatuning producing bigger crappies and Shenango greater numbers. And the smallmouth & walleye bite is better than expected on the Allegheny given the low, clear water and all the floating weeds! Other than the low Allegheny River, all other area lakes/reservoirs appear above summer pool from all the rain earlier this summer. French Creek is a perfect level for paddling and fishing. Go fish!



Wading French Creek for smallmouth

NW PA Fishing Report for August 12, 2013

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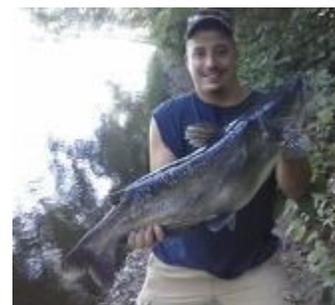
What's biting in the counties of Erie, Crawford, Mercer and Venango?

FRENCH CREEK – Flowing through all four counties

Jerry VanTassel (Timberland Bait) filed 8/12: Jerry says several of his customers are catching northern pike and bowfin in the spillway of Union City Dam, which technically is French Creek. However, it's a long walk from where you park down into the valley to the spillway area.

Mike Horrobin (Jigger Tackle) filed 8/12: "Based on customer comments this past week, the area hotspot appears to be French Creek. There have been a string of reports of smallmouth catches – mostly creek-size smallies, few over 14 inches. Also, reports of walleyes being taken on shiners in the evening.

Dustin Shay (Meadville) filed 8/9: "Legal-size walleyes – not real big ones – have turned over the past week. However, the most effective baits are creek-caught minnows and riffle chubs; if you are not catching the right type of bait, you will not catch many walleyes. Some big cats are biting, too. My buddy Russ caught a channel cat while walleye fishing near Meadville. We didn't have a scale, but it looked like it should have weighed 30 pounds yet didn't feel like 30 pounds. It was still filled with eggs so we released it after I took a photo of it. Another big channel was hooked on light tackle by two friends fishing near Cochran. They had it up to the shore twice but just could not get ahold of it; they guessed the weight to be in the 30-pound range, too.



Russ with cat; Shay photo

Angler Al (Franklin) filed 8/8: "Smallmouth bass are aggressive on French Creek. But not a single walleye in the holes I've been fishing. I understand from the report and others that they're catching them on the river. An old friend of mine I bumped onto said he caught 9 keeper "eyes" in one evening over the weekend."

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Dave Richter (Richter's Tackle Shop) filed 8/12: "Some anglers are catching walleyes by trolling plugs and a few are still getting 'eye by drifting nightcrawlers...but overall the walleye action has slowed some. There are guys fishing from midnight to 2 am and catching walleyes – but that's not for everyone. There are some nice crappies being caught in deepwater brushpiles/cribs. And typical for late summer, channel cats are being caught everywhere. However, no reports of the usual late summer muskies."

Norman "Hooker" Brakeman (Hill's Country Store)

- Filed 8/1: "Hooker's Taxi had David Palovino out for his third trip this year on Tuesday. We had partly cloudy blue skies with moderate breeze. We fished the North End Stumps in 12 to 14 feet of water – not visible above the surface. We tapped into an unmolested treasure of

big slab crappies. Dozens of small jigs were sacrificed to the tangle of logs and roots to boat 80 fish – all released. Wednesday afternoon I had a party of three out on the South End, fishing wood cover in 8 to 10 feet of water. Crappies were not eating the **Garland Baby Shad** which had been working – but they could not resist the larger **Garland Slab Docket** – the bigger profile did the trick. Photos attached.

- Filed 8/8: “Hooker’s Fishing Taxi took Patrick and Joseph Crowe out on Monday, and they caught some very nice fish. On Sunday, I had been asked by ODNR officer why I was catching so many fish and others were having a tough time. Simple – I am adjusting to changes and giving not what the fish want – not necessarily what I want to fish. On Monday my clients had their minds set on taking crappies on a fly rod, but after a long morning we had managed only a couple average crappies and bluegills from visible wood. I offered to extend the trip, switching to spinning tackle and moving to an old road bed in 15 feet of water. The lake was flat calm and I could not get bites with the usual small jigs, so we switched to a chartreuse ball heads with a **Garland Slab Docket** and employed an aggressive lift and drop retrieve. BAM! The bite was on. In the next 20 minutes we caught a dozen crappies over 12 inches.”
- Filed 8/11: Hooker says while fishing with Dr. Crowe and his son on Monday morning, he noted the water seemed shallower over certain stumps, and the fish had moved – but he found them deeper. On Saturday, fishing with Jeff Sampson, hooker checked an isolated piece of wood some distance from shore on an otherwise barren point. He discovered his jig being pulled by current, and realized they were pulling water at the dam. And they caught nice crappies. (See Livewell photos) “I’m going to check out some potential deep main lake current breaks on the next trip.”



Hooker photo

Conneaut Lake

Walt’s Tavern Bass Buddy Tournament scheduled for August 24th. Contact Dan Mincin at 724-986-6557 for more information.

Bob Mohra (Fergie’s Bait) filed 8/12: Bob reports having good success on bluegills on several recent trips to Conneaut Lake.



Umbrella didn’t help Darl.

Marilyn Black (Cochranon) filed 8/11: “A week ago, on the evening of 5th, Darl and I fished Conneaut for white bass. He was anxious to do additional testing with an umbrella rig which had worked the week before. However, I stuck with a **Road Runner** spin-jig head with a chartreuse tail **Brewer Slider Grub**. That evening the white bass didn’t bust the surface, and the bite was spotty. However, I outfished Darl with my single hook Road Runner versus his umbrella rig...and I caught three largemouth bass, too! Sunday evening the 11th, we headed back to Conneaut about 5 PM. A north wind and lots of boat traffic bounced us around, and although we waited until sunset, no white bass schools showed up...and we went home without a single bite – not even a bluegill! Cut/chopped floating weeds fouled every cast; also, we found zebra mussels on long strands of weeds.”

Bryan Stuyvesant (Meadville) reported catching several nice smallmouth bass on topwater just after sunrise one morning past week.

Canadohta Lake

Jerry Van Tassel (Timberland Bait) filed 8/12: "A father and his two sons stopped by the shop to show us a 41" musky and 21.5" walleye that one of the boys caught while slow trolling willow-leaf worm harness. This year's Timberland Bait Kids Fishing Contest on August 10th was a huge success with 92 kids from ages 3 to 16 entered. Kids caught approximately 200 fish and released all of them. The winners for each species follow."

Perch 8-1/2" – Raymond Litz (age 7)

Sunfish 7-1/2" – tie with Madisyn Lapenz (age 10) and Ramond Lapenz (age 5)

Crappie 7-1/2" – Brielle Hart (age 7)

Smallmouth Bass 9" – tie Brad Fairman (age 7) and Steven Hart (age 4)

Largemouth Bass 18" – Marshall Van Tassel (age 8)

Painted turtle 8" – Mason Haskell (age 8)



Timberland Tackle Kids' Day at the Pond

ERIE COUNTY

Presque Isle Bay

Al Nacopoulos (B.A.C. Bait) filed 8/12: "Customers are reporting they are still catching bass off the East and West Pier. On the North Pier, it's a mixture of crappies, perch and sheephead."

Thomas Watral (Erie)

- Filed 8/2: "Went to the West Slip Marina early, and got a lot of sunfish plus crappies. They were hitting grubs and minnows under a bobber; caught 30 sunfish and 25 crappies."
- Filed 8/6: "We slammed the perch using very small pinhead minnows on perch rigs; they measured 8 to 11 inches."
- Filed 8/9: "Went down to the South Pier and Border Dock this morning. Anglers fishing these locations are getting crappies from 10 to 12 inches; some limits."
- Filed 8/10: "My step dad and I caught perch, sunfish and silver bass on today. Picture attached." to the Convention Center today and got some crappies from 10 to 12 inches, plus some nice perch. Perch were hitting **Mister Twisters**. Twisters were fished on a crappie rig with dropshot as weight. Tipped the Twisters with grubs."



Watral photo

Lake Erie

Gary Heuble (Poor Richards) filed 8/12: "Walleye are out on the south side of the First Trench in 60 to 70 feet, from Walnut Creek to Conneaut Harbor – best walleye fishing of the entire year right now. Perch reports are good, too; they are in about 55' of water up and down the lake. And I don't want to call it a run, but there are a few steelheads showing up at the mouths of the creeks; some guys are catching a couple early and late in the day."

Mike Tome (Trout Run Tackle) filed 8/12: "Erie fishing is on fire! Why go anywhere else? Perch and walleye catches are at their peak. The last two days it's been non-stop on the perch in 55' to 62' – crazy. Drop a line down and if you don't get bit in a few seconds, you need to move. It's been tough keeping bait, but we have shiners right now – but do not know for how long. For walleyes, get out to the 62' to 72' foot depths. Pull deep running plugs on leadcore, or run worm harnesses or shallow plugs on Dipsy Divers or boards. Color doesn't matter. Walleye are hitting everything."

Dan Seaman (Elk Creek Sports Center) filed 8/12: "The last couple days has seen the biggest perch catches of all season – maybe in a couple seasons. About 58 feet is the magic number I'm hearing from customers. The shallow water walleye bite has faded but the keep water is very good at 65' to 80'. With the water low and clear in Elk, the catfish bite has slowed. While we usually see some brown trout move to the tributaries in July, this year they were late in coming...and they brought some steelhead with them. Some anglers reported catching steelhead as far upstream as the Trestle on Elk over the weekend; strange year."

Kurt Sitler (Cochranon) filed 8/11: "We were on Erie yesterday and brought home 18 walleyes. The average size was 8 pounds. We figured we had about 144 to 150 pounds of 'eye. We had one solid 10 pounder and several others pushing over 9 pounds on the scale. We were out in 75 feet of water using **Reef Runners**. The photo is my son-in-law Josh Yost, holding a 9 pound walleye." (See Livewell)

Keith Eshbaugh (Dutch Fork Lures) filed 8/9: "I went to Erie this past week. Fishing in 62' to 64' of water on the south side of the First Trench out of Walnut Creek, I trolled **Ghost Blade Harnesses** in the morning at 1.5 mph at 110 to 115 feet back on boards. Then I switched to crankbaits on 5 colors of leadcore at 2.2 mph. Results: Lots of walleye and perch. Best patterns were our custom Krome Krappie and Green Gator. We caught 2 to 5 pound eaters with the occasional 7 to 9 pounder thrown in. We also caught steelhead on spoons and walleyes on harnesses and crankbaits over 110 feet off the Peninsula."



Hooker photo

Norman "Hooker" Brakeman (Hill's County Store) filed 8/1: "Lesley Hill, Dave Kotta, John Cecelic and I did a perch charter on Erie this past Wednesday, fishing with Capt. Dan Dryna. All were using cut bait supplied by the Captain, while I played with plastic. I rigged a **Bobby Garland 2" Swimming Minnow** on a #2 Aberdeen hook with a ¾-oz. inline sinker. I was catching perch as fast as the others. In 1 hour and 20 minutes the four of us had our limits and we were back at dock eating breakfast at 9:30 AM."

MERCER COUNTY

Lake Wilhelm

Bob Mohra (Fergie's Bait) filed 8/12: "The locals are picking up a few walleyes – not limit catches, but two or three each trip out which is better than earlier in the summer. Seems an orange blade on worm harness is the ticket. Usual summertime crappies and bluegills – nothing to get excited about yet until water cools down some. I have not heard anything on bass, however."

Shenango Lake

Darl Black (Cochranon) filed 8/13: "After our lackluster performance on Conneaut Lake on Sunday, Marilyn and I decided to give Shenango Lake a try this morning before finishing up the Fishing Report. Under

heavy cloud cover and threat of rain, we arrived at the lake about 9 am. I headed directly to a favorite stump-covered point within sight of the launch, and caught three crappies on my first three casts. After Sunday's Conneaut Lake fiasco, it felt good to catch fish...and not have to contend with floating weed strands! I was using a white marabou/silver tinsel jig pattern that old timers on French Creek anglers recognize as the Eddie Gray Special. Marilyn asked to use my rod with the marabou jig (the only EG Special jig I had with me), and she never surrendered the rod the rest of the morning. Although I caught crappies on a **Road Runner** head with **Garland 2" Swimming Minnow** and a hand-tied gray hackle jig, the white marabou stole the show. We lost count the number of crappies caught between us the first hour, but then things slowed down as the sun came out and the wind picked up. Crappies were in 9 to 16 feet of water. Besides beating me on crappies, Marilyn also captured the green sunfish award with three of cuties from the rip-rap on one of the bridges. As Ken Smith had mentioned in a report last month, crappies seemed to be on the small size at Shenango. Maybe bigger ones will show up this fall as water cools. Twenty-mile hour gusts drove us from the lake and to the Corral for a lunch of a Hi-Boy and coffee stir."



Fishing Pier at Shenango Lake

Ken Smith (Sharon) filed 8/10: "I've been fishing Erie for perch and walleye. However, I did sneak out one morning this past week for crappies on Shenango. Caught a few decent size ones on brushpiles up by Shenango Arm by Clark."

Laurie (R&L Bait & Tackle) filed 7/30: "Reports of limit catches of walleye in 12 to 14 feet of water with fish taken on medium size minnows. Also some nice channel cats in the Shenango River on shiners and stink bait at night."

Neshannock Creek

Bob Shuey (Neshannock Creek Fly Shop) filed 8/3: Effective August 4th, we are on Fall and Winter hours. Now open 6 days a week from 9 am to 5 pm except Wednesdays from 10 am to 5 pm. We are closed Sundays until the first weekend in March 2014. The ncflyshop.com website is the best source for up-to-date conditions of many trout streams in PA, OH and NY, as well as hatches on Neshannock Creek and boundaries of the Artificial Lure Only section of Neshannock, too.

VENANGO COUNTY

Justus Lake

Angler Al (Franklin) filed 8/9: "Rainy morn'n. I met my fishing buddy Stan around daylight at the boat launch Two Mile Run Lake (Justus Lake). I hadn't fished there in years. I brought along a mix of shiners & creek chubs to present, and he went to drown crawlers. It was a two fisted kind of day! We lite'em up – 25 largemouth bass that is! Two Mile Lake is part of the Big Bass Program, whereupon a length of 15" is required. Though we were practicing catch & release, 5 of those would have met that standard. See 'Livewell' for a shot of my "dandy double" and a picture of Stan's smaller double. Location Note: the transition from weeds (8'-12') and open water (down to 20'), the stretch behind the swimming area, produced big. Crappies were feeding on the surface near the swimming area, too."

Allegheny River

Dale Black (Oil City) filed 8/12: "I took my brother-in-law Justin Bolfek of Washington, DC out fishing for smallmouth on Saturday morning. We caught around 20 bass up to 18" on **Skippy Fish** soft jerkbaits and **Yum Dingers**. Saturday night we went after catfish with live chubs. We landed 6 flatheads from 17" to 25" but could not get a big one."

John Conroy (Pittsburgh area) filed 8/12: "I didn't have a camera and I was fishing alone over the weekend. I caught 6 smallmouth bass on Saturday, but nothing of notable size; one bass on a **Zoom Fluke** and 5 on live hellgrammites. Weeds were troublesome when fishing lures; even making the Fluke weedless didn't help. So I fished hellgrammites on a slip bobber. Sunday morning didn't produce, but late in day on Sunday, I caught six which would have made a great photo – five were over 17"! I got them on hellgrammites and a stonecat. I floated one section of the river three times with same techniques. Didn't catch anything on the first two floats but on the 3rd time I picked up the six bass, one right after another. Makes you believe in the Solunar Tables!"

Gene Winger (Oil City) filed 8/12:

- Week of July 29 "Peg and I took our 5-year-old granddaughter Olivia fishing on Wednesday evening. She caught her first smallmouth! Except for removing the hook, she did it all – casting, setting the hook, landing the fish and releasing it. I'm not sure who was more excited – the grandparents or Olivia! On Thursday I fished below Franklin, landing seven nice smallies using Winco Laminated Wacky Worms in 8 to 12 feet of water. With the water low and clear, the good fish seemed to be in the deeper pools while smaller fish were shallow. Saturday I fished from Franklin to Belmar Bridge with my son-in-laws Chris and Jeremy, landing over 20 smallmouth and 5 walleyes. **Winco River Darters** and **Rapala X-Raps** worked best with the bigger smallies caught in the head and tail of deeper pools."
- Week of August 5..."I was on the river almost every day this week, with the river running low and clear, the morning and late evening fishing seemed to be most productive. Targeting fast moving shallow water with **Winco Solid Body River Darters** and the deeper pools with **Winco River Swim Baits** has been working. Picking up smaller bass, but also several smallies in the 17 to 19-inch range by working the swim bait with a slow, pause- drag-pause retrieve."

Chuck Sari (Franklin) filed 8/11: "I fished the Allegheny four times so far in August, twice with my son Kevin and twice with Lloyd Rodgers, and of course grandson Reece was with me all four times. We caught and released 61 bass and 23 walleyes, with the largest walleye being 25 inches. All were caught on **Rapala SR-5** and **SR-7** plugs in various colors. On August 10, my son Kevin and Lloyd along with Reece decided to try their hand at catching catfish. Using chubs as bait, they caught and released 25" and 28" flatheads." (see Livewell photos)



Sari photo

Angler Al (Franklin) filed 8/10: "Stan and I hit the Allegheny. We started out underneath the Veterans Bridge. Rocks ended up getting the best of us, as we were cut off on a few too many. By night fall we put ourselves in position below the marina. Using a **Rapala SR-5** (crab pattern) & **SR-7** (shad black/silver colored), I picked up two nice smallies and a 22-inch walleye after dark. Sadly my camera's flash wasn't work'n properly, so snaps didn't take. I send a note of thanks out to fellow angling contributor Chuck Sari...the tip you provided us in the last report ended up being what put fish in the boat. And also I want to

give a shout out to Darl for a wonderful job creating this report. I sure do appreciate the efforts you put forth. Thanks again.”

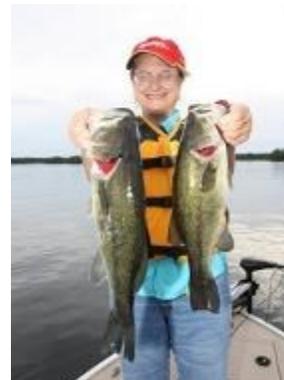
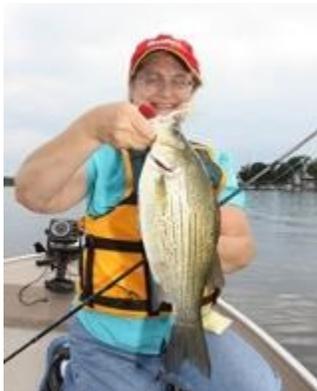
Steve Udick (Oil City) filed 8/5: “A group of us floated from Tionesta to Rockmere over the weekend. Big bass of the trip went to Dave Marczak for a 20” smallmouth caught on a Right **Bite Green Pumpkin/ Orange Flake tube**. We caught 199 bass. Terry Corbett of Rockmere landed 41 bass and his son, T.J. Corbett of Pittsburgh, put 29 in the boat – mostly on a white **Mepps spinner**. They gave a spinner to 12 year old Chris Marczak and he promptly landed 14. Bill Miller and Mark Miller (of Meadville) boated 27 bass and 20 bass respectively. Fishing near Rockmere, Terry Corbett caught a 29” walleye on his first cast of the next morning with **Mepps white spinner**.” (See Livewell)

Livewell Overflow starts here...

Catches at Pymatuning this week — photos from “Hooker’s Fishing Taxi”



From Conneaut Lake on August 5th - Marilyn beats Darl, again.



The Livewell

Brought to you by:



From Lake Erie this week



Josh Yost's 'Eye; Sitler photo



Boat of the Month: Stop by to check out the Express Bass XT with 90/65 Yamaha jet.



John Cecilic; Hooker photo



Dave Kota; Hooker photo

Shenango Lake this week:



Green sunfish; db photo



Allegheny River catches this week:



Dave Marczark; Udick photo



Terry Corbett; Udick photo



Olivia's 1st; Winger photo



Jason Fulmer; Fulmer photo

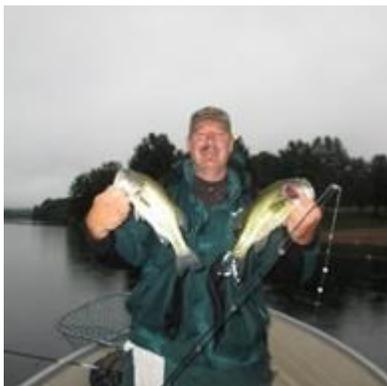


Chuck Sari; Sari photo



Reece with flathead; Sari photo

Justus Lake's largemouth bass this week (photos from Angler Al Bell):



PROCESSED FOR PERFORMANCE



Gamma Fishing Tips

Dale Black, president of Gamma Line, says August and September is a favorite time to fish for catfish and carp in the Allegheny River and French Creek. "The late summer transition towards fall can be an unpredictable time on the fishing front. So this is a great time to do a little bank fishing for predictable species... carp during the day and catfish after dark. With the potential of 30-pound-plus carp, 20-pound-plus channels, and 30-pound flatheads, you need to be prepared with tackle that can handle these fish. Also, the rigs used for carp and cats generally involved heavy sinkers so your rod must be able to throw these a long distance. I use a set of three 11' European Predator Rods from Cabela's. Remember, we can now fish with three rods. These rods are perfect for handling big cats and carp, and are relatively inexpensive compared to fancy European carbon rods used for carp – less than \$90.00 each for Cabela's rod versus \$300 each for imported carbon rods. I spool my bait-runner reels with 14-pound Gamma Edge Fluorocarbon leader. Many carp and cat fishermen prefer fluorocarbon because it holds up better to bottom abrasions. My set up is simple: 1-oz. egg sinker on the main line, a swivel to act as sinker stop, and a 12" braided line leader to the hook. For catfish I use a large hook to match the size of chub being used. For carp, I use a #4 x-strong carp hook, usually baited with canned sweet corn."



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Winner of the spool of Gamma Line for this issue of Fishing Report: Kurt Sittler

Winner of the Prize Pack of Baits for this issue of the Fishing Report: John Conway

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

Road Runner Caps for Crappie Reports go to: Thomas Watral, "Angler Al" and "Hooker"



Unloading for French Creek paddle

Obtain your French Creek Waterways brochure at Crawford County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

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