

Northwest

Pennsylvania

Fishing Report

Reporting Date:

August 18, 2014



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

I spent Sunday morning with Ed Atts as he demonstrated the lens he uses for shooting wildlife. Ed's specialty is birds, particularly birds found around water. For the last fishing Report he provided a wonderful shot of an osprey landing on its nest. For this issue he provided the shot of two green herons at the right. The Fishing Report looks forward to future pictures from Ed of birds seen along and above the waterways of NW PA. On the Sunday morning outing, Ed mentioned that birds are migrating early this year. That's not the first I've heard from other anglers and hunters that nature's signs are looking like an early fall and early winter. Someone is predicting snow by end of September! Another winter like the last one, and I'll be considering a move South for December through February!



NW PA Fishing Report: August 18, 2014

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

French Creek – Flowing through all four counties

John @ John's Bait; filed 8/17: "French Creek has been the hotspot around here! They are catching walleyes from above Meadville to Cochranon, as well as smallmouth bass. Customers are buying shiners for walleyes and bass. A girl stopped by the shop the other day with an 18" crappie weighing 3.5 pounds from a pond behind the shop!"

Jerry @ Timberland Bait; filed 8/17: "My customers are reporting catches of northern pike in the French Creek tailrace waters of Union City Dam."

James Whitman (Cooperstown) – (See Livewell Photos)

- 8/9: My son CJ caught a 17" and a 19" smallmouth bass from French Creek today.
- 8/14: Today I caught a 27" freshwater drum from French Creek. Some anglers may not consider it a game fish, but for a fisherman like me, it was the best fight of the whole year so far – and on an ultralight rod and reel.
- 8/15: Today I caught two 16" smallmouth bass from French Creek while my son CJ only got one. He can't believe his dad out did him.

Ed Lawrence (Corry); filed 8/4: "It's been a tough year with all the rain keeping the creeks flowing higher than usual. I've been catching smallmouth bass from French Creek and its tributaries on Rooster Tail Spinners. The flash helps them find the lure in stained water. I've also been catching some largemouth bass in vegetation using weedless frogs worked slowly. Most of the bigger fish are coming from waters less pressured. Gamelands ponds and smaller lakes like LeBoeuf have been producing well. When the creeks are unfishable, I like to target the smaller streams at higher elevations. Most of the spring creeks I fish aren't impacted by the rain as much. If anything it makes fishing for jittery wild trout a bit easier. Some color to the water is better when fishing small streams. The fish are usually actively feeding on food that washes by. I've included a photo of one of the native brook trout I caught the end of July. I caught over two dozen in one trip. These fish were fooled by small flies and red worms. They don't get big, but they sure are beautiful. I also included a photo of a bowfin caught from a French Creek tributary. Many anglers believe these fish to be nuisance fish. On a slow day, they can provide a lot of action! Cut bait on the bottom (like you would for catfish) is a good way to get one to tug on your line."

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Hooker @ Hills; filed 8/18: "Hey Darl, it is getting to the point where I can type the word "WIND" without looking at the keyboard. The wind forced our hand when and his grandson fished with me on the Hooker II, but we did not let it beat us. We had a great day on the water and caught some nice fish using Bobby Garland Baby Shad and Swimming Minnow baits on 1/16-ounce jigheads. We had to keep changing colors to keep the bite going. A few days ago Dave Kohta



Sunset (db photo)

and I got out. Low and behold – NO WIND! I wasn't sure what to do, this being a new experience for the 2014 season. Despite my sarcasm, we had a very productive morning. We targeted yellow perch first. Some people may wonder about that, but once you find a flat full of Lake Erie quality Jumbo Perch on Pymatuning, you will wonder why you have been passing this lake by on your way to the Big Pond. By the end of the day we had caught a nice string of fish that included some very nice crappies. We fished in 6 to 12 feet of water with Garland Baby Shad baits, sometimes tipping them with a meal-worm. Best colors were Monkey Milk and Outlaw. Both baits are available here at Hill's Country Store." (See Livewell photos)

David @ Richter's Tackle; filed 8/17: "Randy Keller and his friend Bob just stopped by with two limits of walleyes, caught before noon on Hot-n-Tots; all the walleyes were over 20 inches. Another customer stopped by to say he has caught four muskies recently by casting bucktails."



Evening on Causeway (db photo)

Patty @ Poff's Place; filed 8/17: "Things are getting ready to change. They have been catching crappies after dark on the Causeway. The bluegill bite has slowed down, but they are still catching channel cats. No word on walleyes."

Laurie @ Duck-n-Drake; filed 8/17: "I'm getting some exciting reports that crappies are starting to hit in shallower water. One customer stopped by with an impressive catch of crappies taken on minnows in 3 feet of water. Another customer did well on crappies in the Linesville Stumps yesterday, and was headed back there to-

day. Other customers are still catching walleyes by trolling Shad Raps and Hot-n-Tots in 17 feet of water."

Jim McClave (Mercer); filed 8/9: "I fished the south end of the causeway at Pymatuning Lake this afternoon. Beautiful day to be out on the lake whether the fish are biting or not. A soft breeze out of the northeast made it ideal for drift-fishing. The bite was slow, by my wife Terry caught a nice keeper walleye about 17", and I got a 14" walleye I had to throw back. Mixed in were a few bluegills and perch. We fished for about 4 hours, having launched out of the New Bowers launch. We fished 12 to 15 feet of water, bouncing crawlers on the bottom. Great day to be out!"

MahrKi Johnson (Linesville); filed 8/8: "It had rained the day before so the water was a little high. My friend Henry and I decided it would be a good day to go to my secret spot – a good size creek that flows into Pymatuning. When we got there, the water was higher than usual and quite murky. We decide to wade up river while fishing the small coves. Henry was using a small black and green plastic shad we got from Field and Stream store a couple months back. A monster bass followed the lure for three feet before striking." (See Livewell Photos)

Conneaut Lake

Marilyn Black (Cochran); filed 8/18: "Finally got out. The jumbo bluegills are still biting at Conneaut Lake in deep water. The little ones are feeding on the surface above the weeds."



Jeff Reichel (Meadville); filed 8/10: "Jacob and I fished Conneaut lake on Saturday, 8/9, from 9 am until 3 pm. The bass were not cooperating at all but we did catch three bowfins, a small pike and a rock bass all on plastic worms flipped to weeds on points and mid-lake humps. That's the most bowfins I have caught in one outing!" (See Livewell photos)

Jarrold Martin; filed 8/9: "On Monday, 8/4, my friend Nico Summaria and myself fished Conneaut Lake. His best catch of the day was a 19.5" 4.1 pound smallmouth bass caught while drop-shotting. My best catch was a 35" northern pike caught while fishing for musky." (See Livewell photos)

Conneaut Marsh

Dennis Beggs (Franklin); filed 8/16: "My boy, Devin Beggs, caught a 26" bowfin at the Geneva Swamp near Cochranon. He had been hoping to catch a bowfin this summer and accomplished it on the last day before heading back to college. Devin's friend Tom Weaver of Franklin was fishing with us. In all we caught two bowfins, a largemouth bass and a catfish – all came on live minnows. Of course the bowfins were released." (See Livewell photos)



Devin Beggs

ERIE COUNTY

Presque Isle Bay

Al @ B.A.C. Bait; filed 8/17: "This has been a bad week of weather here. Wind and foul weather for last four days has kept most anglers off the Lake and Bay. The Bay has been so rough we have not been able to get minnows to sell."

Lake Erie

Rich Weber @ Erie Sports Store; filed 8/18: "After several days of windy conditions, fishermen are now getting out on the lake again. There have been limits of perch taken between Shades and Freeport in 50 to 60 feet. Limits of perch taken off the Point in 55 to 65 feet, and off Walnut in 50 to 60 feet. Recent walleye fishing turned a bit spotty after the wind but the late summer spots should start to produce any time. Try 65 to 77-feet between Walnut and Elk Creeks. Try off the Point in 75 feet and deeper. At Erie Sport Store our fishing rods, reels and combos are 20% off regular prices...lures and tackle boxes also 20% off. Our Bayou Classic 4 gallon propane fish fryer is now \$50.00 off. It's great for large fish fries!"

Elk Creek Sports; filed 8/17: "The weather has been really rough this week. Elk Creek is high and muddy. No fishing reports coming in."

Karen @ Trout Run Bait; filed 8/17: "When anglers were able to get out some days ago, they were still getting some walleye, and there were perch in 60 feet of water. Some anglers have been picking up a few brown trout and the occasional steelhead at the mouth of the creeks. To be sure, there is no run, so don't make plans to come running up. But we are getting closer!"

Tim @ North East Marina; filed 8/14: "The walleye bite has been good+ in 115 feet of water (fow) from Marina to state line 65 to 55 down lead core 10 colors with worm harnesses slow presentation. Big steelheads are being caught same area 72 down out to 135 fow on spoons. Walleyes inside bite 55 fow off the W's lead core 10 colors Dipseys 155 back 3 one half setting worms and harnesses. Perch off red roof between W's and Shorewood."

Ed Phillips (New Castle); filed 8/12: "My wife and I fished walleyes out of Northeast marina on Thursday afternoon, August 7th. We started on the north side of the mountain in about 70 feet of water straight out from Freeport. The reports were walleyes in 105 to 110 feet of water the day before so once we set down and set up, we headed north. We trolled out to 115 feet and back to 90 a number of times slowly zig-zaging west towards Erie. We didn't see many marks and the only releases we got was an occasional junk fish. Then late in the afternoon we finally found a small school of active fish in 112 feet of water in front of the W's. We trolled back over our waypoint a number of times in a very tight figure 8 and managed to pick up four nice walleyes and lost one at the boat. I was running a combination of crawler harness, plus and spoons; there didn't seem to be a clear favorite. But the depth needed to be 55 to 65 feet down. The following morning we headed back to our waypoint and set up. But as the saying goes "They have tails so they moved." About noon we finally found another active school in front of Shades Beach in 100 to 105 feet of water, boating six nice walleyes and losing two. Once again the presentation needed to be between 55 to 65 feet down and a chartreuse crawler harness was the hands down favorite. Out of the 10 fish, we had two in the 3 to 4 pound class and the other eight were in the 5 to 8-pound class. Needless to say, we ended up with a nice bunch of walleye fillets. In my opinion we had a pretty successful trip, but it did require quite a bit of picking up and running in order to find active schools. And when you did locate a school, they were tightly concentrated. So if you were not in the right zone, you were just straining a lot of water – as I've done many times before!"

MERCER COUNTY

Jon @ CDS; filed 8/17: "We are deep into our archery promotions right now, so customers aren't talking much about fishing – with the exception those headed to Lake Erie for walleye charters. The hot bait they are asking for is the Reef Runner – only we don't have any in stock...but next year we will!"

Lake Wilhelm



Fishing the "Stumps Area" (db photo)

Vicki @ Fergie's Bait; filed 8/15: "Lake Wilhelm fishing has been pretty good with cooler temperatures. I've had reports of 4 to 6 largemouths, as well as several walleyes between 7 and 8 pounds. Crappie hotspots have been around the main causeway, Launch #3 and #4, the shoreline along Creek Road; most catches are being made in the mid to late afternoon."

Angler Al (Franklin); filed 8/15: "On Monday August 4th, I took 14 year old Jessica Lahey from Tampa Bay, Florida, fishing for the first time. I taught her casting techniques in the yard before we went. On her first presentation of a large creek chub, a 13-inch large-mouth bass responded. Another angler was born! Jessica told her 12-year-old sister Victoria how much fun she had. On Thursday, August 14th, I took both of them to Lake Wilhelm. Windy and cool, Vic managed to catch her first fish. Although only a dink panfish, she too was smitten with fishing. Later that day we all went to The Pond, and did the girls catch fish!" (See Livewell photos)

R.J. Graham (Tionesta); filed 8/12: "Yesterday I went to Wilhelm. I flipped the trees, catching 15 bass in 5 hours. All were taken on a 3/8-poz. Jig. I caught three off the causeway and four more cranking the river channel. Bass were mostly shallow because of the high, dirty water."

VENANGO COUNTY

Mike @ Jigger Wholesale; filed 8/17: "Customers are reporting a few nice walleyes and panfish at Wilhelm. Also smallmouth bass on French Creek. I'm hearing the catfish are still biting on the Allegheny River, with one customer reporting a flathead of over 40 pounds! I've walked Two Mile Run and Little Sandy this week – with high water over the summer, there are lots of trout in both streams, but no one fishing for them."

Janice @ Griffin's Bait; filed 8/17: "Customers have been buying catfish stink bait and catfish tackle, so they are catching catfish somewhere! Trout bait has been going out too; suspect they are fishing Sugar Creek."

Allegheny River

Steve Udick (Oil City); filed 8/18: "My wife Sharon I finally got on the water – just because it was a beautiful Sunday. River was high and color murky, but we got some bass by fishing current breaks. She got a nice bass on her first cast (see photo) and I got a 19.5" fatty north of Oil City. In all, we landed four and missed several others. We caught them on Right Bite Tubes in Black."

Pete Cartwright @ Smallies on the Yough; filed 8/12: "Great weekend floating the Allegheny for the first Annual Smallies on the Yough float. We would like to thank H.C.Baits, 412 Bait Co by Donald Corbett, Kayak Anglers of Western PA, Gamma Fishing Line and Darl Black. More to come about the float later. Conditions were not the best for the float with cool, muddy water but the weather was great. Big fish, a 17.5 incher, came on a 412 Bait Co bait. Most of the fish caught were in the 12 to 14 inch range. After the float we hit the river in Mike's jet boat to find a better bite. Just as it was getting dark, the water was clearing and the full moon rising, we caught about 20 fish near islands with two going 18" and 19". Sunday the bite was a little better with several fish in the 18" category."

Oil Creek

Darl Black (Cochranon); filed 8/17: "Friday afternoon I met Pete Cartwright in Oil Creek State Park for a little fishing on Oil Creek, photos and an interview. Pete did most of the fishing, and all of the catching. Of course he caught the biggest smallmouth before I arrived, but took a photo for the Fishing Report. The fish caught in the Blood Farm area were from very small to about 14 inches, on tubes." (See Livewell)



Pete's selfie



Smallies can jump (db)



Oil Cr smallie (db)

Chris Wolfgang (Oil City); filed 8/11: "I took advantage of the nice day and did some wade-fishing. I fished the mouth of Oil Creek and worked up river for about 1-1/2 hours. I caught two fish right off the bat, both about 8 inches. But the river was almost too high for my wading preference. With the slow bite, I moved further up Oil Creek where the water was lower. I fished the Rynd Farm rea for about an hour, catching several more small bass. I tried a handful of different baits, but in the end, the tube worked best."

The Livewell

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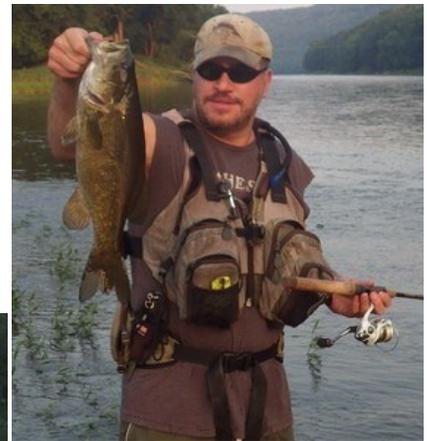
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Sharon Udick



Steve Udick



Pete and friends on the River



CJ Whitman



James Whitman



Hooker's Crew at Pymatuning



Conneaut Marsh with the Beggs and Tom Weaver



Angler Al introduces young people to fishing



MahrKi and Henry with Pymatuning bass



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Gamma Fishing Tips

In the last Gamma Tip, I had mentioned that R.J. Graham was using Gamma Torque as backing on his reels. I mistakenly thought he was using the braid as a main line with a fluorocarbon leader. R.J. corrected me this past week.

R.J. likes to use braid (Torque) to fill the spool of casting reels from $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ full, then tie in the desired Edge Fluorocarbon line – which varies from technique to technique and on water conditions. “With braid as backing the spool spins more freely and faster. It will add 5 to 10 more feet to a cast. Torque is stretch free and I can spool the line on top that I need for the day and bait I plan to use on that rod. Then on the next outing when conditions are different, I can strip the fluorocarbon or monofilament off the first $\frac{1}{4}$ of the line down to the braid and then tie in fresh line. It certainly saves money!”



End of a wonderful day of fishing (db photo)

You can find Gamma Lines locally 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 Field Test Prize Pack of Lures for this issue of Fishing Report is MahrKi Johnson.

To collect your prize, notify Darl by email that you saw your name and include your shipping address.

Tackle Box Forecast...

- Current top selling baits for area lakes
- New lures & presentation tips on old favorites
- The anticipated hot bites for the next couple weeks

Best Selling Baits this Past Week at Local Tackle Shops

- Hill's Country Store: Bobby Garland Baby Shads
- Duck & Drake: Storm Hot-n-Tots
- Poff's Place: Floating jigheads
- Richter's Tackle: Hot-n-Tots
- Griffin's Bait: Jitterbugs

Best Bite Forecast for Coming Week

- Bluegills – jumbo size: Conneaut Lake
- Crappies: Shenango River Lake, maybe turning on at Pymatuning
- Smallmouth Bass: French Creek and Allegheny River is the rains hold off for a few days
- Largemouth Bass: Should be good Frog bit in the thick weed mats at Lake LeBoeuf, Edinboro Lake, Lake Wilhelm
- Yellow Perch: Pymatuning, Lake Erie
- Walleye: Lake Erie, French Creek with live bait
- Channel catfish: Pymatuning
- Flathead catfish: Allegheny River



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