

NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA FISHING REPORT

Published by Blackwolfe Communications LLC

Issue: September 14, 2015



Pennsylvania's Great Lakes Region
crawford • erie • mercer • venango

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. In providing information or pictures, you are agreeing to your comments being edited, and posted to websites and distributed electronically.

The NW PA Fishing Report is brought to you by:

Pennsylvania' Great Lakes Region (www.PaGreatLakes.com)

Black Knight Industries, Oil City (www.GammaFishing.com)

Wiegel Brothers Marine, Franklin (www.wiegelbrothersmarine.com)

The Landing Net

by Darl Black

Sour September. Every year September seems to yield low fishing success for many area anglers. In part, it is due to the transition period as summer patterns fade...but fall's cool water period is still some weeks away. This year, September came in like July – too hot, too humid and too dry...and, with a few exceptions, poor fishing success for many. Lack of success may be as much about anglers tired of summer and looking forward to fall. Despite the Sour September label, you can still find some anglers enjoying success as you read this Report. Don't put away the rods yet. Some of the most exciting fishing of the year will be coming in October and November!



NW PA FISHING REPORT for September 14, 2015

This Report is brought to you by PA Great Lakes Region tourism with additional sponsorship from Wiegel Brothers Marine and Gamma Fishing.

We answer the question “*What’s biting in the lakes, stream and rivers of Crawford, Erie, Mercer and Venango counties?*”

FRENCH CREEK – Flowing through all four counties

Dustin Shay (Meadville); filed 9/14: “We went catfishing the other night on French Creek with big live bait. We caught one northern, one smallmouth and one flathead catfish – only about 20 inches.”

Matt Watson (Franklin); filed 9/3: “Last month you posted a photo of a 31-inch walleye that I caught on French Creek. Alan Bell took the photos and sent it to you. During the 6 day period around the August Blue Moon, I caught 26 walleyes with fifteen of them over 20 inches. I caught the 31-incher two nights before the full moon, a 32 inch 12.5 pound walleye on the night of the full moon and a 30-incher two nights after the full moon. I caught all of these walleyes on a **Rebel Cricket** and **Rebel Frog**, except the last 30-incher hit a **#6 Rapala X-Rap**. Fishing slowed down in that hole because the water is too low for the fish to come upstream. After the last rain I did catch a couple 22-inchers and a couple 18-inchers. Last week I caught a couple nice fat 20-inchers at the mouth of French Creek where it meets the river. The fish in French Creek seem thin, perhaps due to all the muddy water this spring and early summer. I will try to get you some photos soon!”

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Laurie @ Duck and Drake; filed 9/14: “With the heat wave of the last couple weeks and the storms over the weekend, the lake is like a ghost town. No one is fishing. But with cool down and stable weather, anglers will be back for the fall walleye bite.”

Brandy @ Poff’s Bait & Tackle; filed 9/14: “The bad weather over the weekend kept everyone away. The previous week, Patty had reports from anglers who were catching a few walleyes in 5 feet of water.”

Norm @ Jamestown Boat Livery; filed 9/14: “The heat and humidity last week and bad weather this past weekend kept fishing activity down. Plus the lake is down 28 inches and

still dropping due to no rain. Water temp is down to 68 degrees at 10 feet down. Walleyes will be biting soon.”

Dan Bickel, Pymatuning State Park Manager, stresses the draw down at Pymatuning has nothing to do with work on the Gatehouse or at Linesville Marina. “We are required to meet certain water demands downstream as directed by the USACE. With no rain for many weeks, the low lake level is simply a function of mandatory releases. Launch ramps will remain open, although anglers may have trouble getting boats off the trailers due to low water. Use caution.”

Hooker @ Hill Country Store; filed 9/10: “Hey Darl, for those willing to take the chance at launching their boat with the super low water levels, the fishing is almost too easy. Perch are chowing down on worms in 10 feet of water just off Beer Can Island, and guests on Hooker’s Fishing Taxi had great success fishing the stumps and humps that are now 12 to 14 feet on top. **Bobby Garland Slab Docket’s** in Bluegrass is the bait of choice. Dave Kohta shows a nice stringer of panfish.” (See photo)



Hooker photo of Dave

Conneaut Lake

Al Moore (Cochrannton); filed 9/7: “I fished Conneaut Lake for a few hours in the morning of Labor Day. I caught 5 largemouth bass in one weedbed then I moved to a point where my sonar showed fish in the deeper water beyond the weeds. Fishing a slow sinking **Senko**, I finished my day with five smallmouth bass. The smallmouth school was apparently moving back and forth over the point, and I would catch one or two then have a long wait before catching another one.”



The Barkers: Alan, Jr and Alan, Sr.



Big pumpkinseeds



A very happy guest/ db photo

Darl @ Fishing with Darl Black Guide Service; filed 9/3: “The big bluegills and pumpkinseeds continued to bite in 14 to 20 feet of water on hard bottom points/humps through the last week of August. A 1/32 ounce **Road Runner Head** with tiny tube jigged on the bottom worked best for casting; other fish came by drifting drop-shot rigs. (See photos above) However, on my most recent trip, the bite had slowed down somewhat after the

blue moon. With other commitments, I will not be back on Conneaut until the 16th or 17th of September.”

ERIE COUNTY

Lake Erie

Dave Horvath (Mercer); filed 9/12: “Darl, we had a banner day on perch in Lake Erie near the Ohio line in 58 feet of water, fishing from 7 am to 11 am. Bait is still a problem. It has been a strange summer. We ended the day with 78 perch with lots of jumbo fish. Storm chased us off the lake early. See photo of the crew (Grumpy Old Men – Ken and Lee) at the cleaning table.”



Dave Horvath photo

Paul Stewart (Butler); filed 9/6: “Went out Saturday evening on the Danny O. Slow start but then the perch schools moved in and the bite got going. We ended up with 30 perch between the two of us. See Livewell photo.”

Keith Eshbaugh @ Dutch Fork Custom Lures; filed 9/3: “On September 3, we fished Lake Erie out of Lampe Marina Ramp. We headed out to the Canadian Line in 105’ of water. Lots of smelt and shiners out there. All the walleyes and steelhead we caught were big and fat. **Renosky** and **Reef Runner** plugs in Blue Green Sunfish color were hot in the morning. But later the fish preferred our **#5 Ghost Willow Blade Worm Harness** behind a Dipsey tolled at 1.9 to 2.2 mph. Best colors were Pink/Purple, Antifreeze, and Pink Skunk. We did an experiment by adding a rubber squid skirt to a bigger profile harness – worked well, too.” (See Livewell photos)

Lake Erie Shoreline

Ric @ Trout Run Bait and Tackle; filed 9/13: “We had 4 to 5 inches of rain from Friday evening through Saturday night with waves of 7 feet on the 12th and 5 feet today. Streams are high and muddy, and it will likely be Tuesday before they are fishable. Prior to the storm, a few anglers were catching a few steelhead and brown trout – about 50/50 – in the early morning and late evening along the shore or in the mouths of the creeks. On calm mornings, you can see steelhead jumping off shore about 100 yards. With the rain, I expect some steelhead to move into the streams – but it may be too warm for them to stay in the stream. Fish on the shoreline have been hitting spoons, power bait or just about anything.”

Michelle @ Elk Creek Sports; filed 9/13: “Today Elk is muddy but not so high you cannot fish it – but no catches reported. Some anglers report steelhead up to the boat ramp prior to the storm.”

Brian @ Poor Richards; filed 9/13: "Water in streams is about 70 degrees – too warm for steelheads to move in to stay. Few fish are in and out. Prior to the big blow over this past weekend, perch remained inconsistent. One day you catch them but the next day at the same spot the fish are gone."

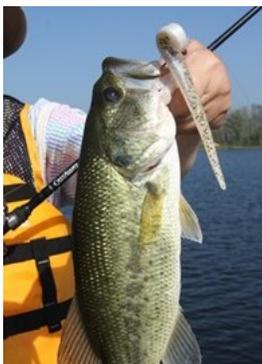
Presque Isle Bay

Paul @ Lake Erie Bait and Tackle; filed 9/13: "The wind and rain ruined this past weekend for fishing. Prior to the storm, customers were picking up a few steelheads at mouths of the creeks. Some perch being caught in the Bay, too. Everyone is looking for better fishing to arrive with cool down in water temp."

Dale Black @ Gamma Fishing; filed 9/13: "I fished the final Fisher's of Men Bass Tournament on PIB on Saturday. Due to the storm, we were limited to fishing the Bay. My teammate and I finished in 5th place, which was high enough to send us to the championship in April at Pickwick!"

Thomas Watral (Erie); filed 9/13: "Steelhead are already making short runs into the mouths of some tributaries during the early morning hours, about 4 am to 7 am; water too warm for the fish to hold in the streams during the day. This rain may help boost the run. Perch fishing has started to pick up on the Bay. Perch were hitting smaller shiners on Subiki Rigs. Crappies and bluegills are being taken on grubs and small red worms on the Borders Dock. Our shop is having an End of Summer Sale on lures and fishing rigs; stop in at 2407 McKinley Ave in Erie to save big. Five bucks worth of gear gets a free bag of salted minnows."

Inland Waters of Erie County



Lake LeBoeuf/ Darl Black photos



Lake LeBoeuf

Marilyn Black (Cochranon); filed 9/6: "We made our annual frog lure trip to Lake LeBoeuf on Labor Day weekend but were surprised at the lack of vegetation in the lake. The normally lush milfoil weedbeds were thinned out, flat lily pads completely missing

and the spatterdock that ringed the lake was less than I remember. Catching something was a challenge, but I did manage a respectable largemouth on a new **Yum Swurm** and another on a **Scrum Frog**. No big bass, pike or bowfin as expected. Few boats on the lake – one boat of musky fishermen, one anchored on crappie mid-lake and a couple kayaks.” (See photos above)

MERCER COUNTY

Shenango River

Dustin Shay (Meadville); filed 9/14: “A fishing acquaintance had been telling me of the big flatheads they were catching in the Shenango River from Sharpsville to Wheatland. So last week ago during the heat spell, my buddy and I made our first trip to the Shenango River for flathead catfish. We landed a couple of channel cats, and lost a big fish that we did not see. The other group, further downstream, landed 9 flatheads that night.”

Shenango Lake

Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 9/10: “I fished Shenango on 9/9. Crappies are still running a little smaller than years past but the bite is real good. I caught over 50 crappies in less than four hours. Most were a little over nine inches but I kept fifteen that were 10 inches or better; the biggest one was 13 inches. I jigged a **Bobby Garland Baby Shad** on 1/8-oz. head in twelve feet of water.”

Lake Wilhelm

Vickie @ Fergies Bait; filed 9/13: “Nothing much to report. There have only been a handful of anglers out during the recent heat wave. Maybe the expected cool down will get the fish biting and the anglers back on the water.”



Pontoon Rental at Lake Wilhelm Marina

Cory @ Lake Wilhelm Marina; filed 9/13: “Catches of walleyes have really tapered off since earlier this summer. A few customers are catching panfish and I’m hearing others are getting a few largemouths. We will be ending our boat rentals at the end of September. Hopefully the next couple weeks will see improved fishing for a few final trips.”

VENANGO COUNTY

Bill @ Griffins Bait and Tackle; filed 9/14: "Pike shiners and crawlers have been the best sellers the last few weeks. Tom Huhfer landed a few nice walleyes at Lake Erie including a 30-incher. Scott Selle landed a few largemouth bass at Lake Arthur, including a healthy 3 pounder." See Livewell photos.

Justus Lake



Angler Al and Stan/ db photo



Justus LMB/ db photo

Marilyn Black (Cochranton); filed 9/7: "To avoid crowds, Darl and I fished Justus Lake on Labor Day. This was our first time to try the new ramp by the swim beach. We were surprised that the concrete pad was not long enough to float a boat off a regular size trailer for our 17' river boat. Back in any further and trailer wheels go over a severe drop at the end of the concrete with the potential of damage to wheels or axle. Darl was extremely upset with this short sightedness in the engineering of the ramp – all the money put into the ramp yet many fishing boats cannot use it. Additional gravel and pre-fabricated concrete ties could be used to extend the ramp for wider use. We launched at the old ramp (which also is in need of repair) and made the long electric motor run down the lake. Fishing was tough, landing only a couple skinny largemouth bass on swim baits. As we were leaving we ran into Angler Al and his buddy. They were preparing to use live creek bait and as noted below they had better success."

Angler Al (Franklin); filed 9/7: "Though slower for us than prior days on Justus Lake, fishing buddy Stan Huefner and I managed to boat a total of 10 fish – 5 largemouth bass, 3 small-mouth bass, 1 perch and 1 bluegill. All fish were taken on live creek bait."

Sugar Creek

Al Bell; filed 9/13: "Pittsburgh area fisherman Mitch (blue shirt) caught this 15-inch brown trout on a yellow **Rooster Tail Spinner** and his buddy Chris caught this 17.5 inch brown on a red worm. While fishing for baitfish in the stream, Stan Huefner also caught a nice rainbow trout. Sugar Creek is still producing good quality trout late in the summer!"

Allegheny River

Dale Black @ Gamma Fishing; filed 9/14: "My son Jake and I finished 2nd in the Allegheny River Tournament on Sunday. We had five bass for 13.25 pounds; Eric Heil and his partner beat us by about ½ pound. Jake caught the tournament lunker of 4.25 pounds. I also caught a 6 to 7 pound walleye. All our fish came on **Booyah Baby Boo Jig** with **Yum Craw-Bug** trailer."

RJ Graham (Tionesta); filed 9/14: "Since I cannot fish due to a broken fibula, I went to weigh-ins over the weekend. On Saturday, Vaugh and Martin Ralston won the Tidioute Bass Tournament with six fish for 17.73 pounds. Eric Heil and John Ringle won the Oil City Bass Tournament on Sunday with 5 fish going 13.54 pounds."

Gene Winger (Oil City); filed 9/13: "Since the last Fishing Report, my boat has been on the water almost every day to explore new areas. With the Allegheny River level being so low my passengers have made good use of the dash grab bar as we jetted through some really skinny water. Uprooted weeds are also becoming an issue, especially for inboard jets. Ask Darl, since he volunteered to take a dip last week to clear my jet...thanks Darl! The good news is the low water levels seem to have concentrated bass in predictable locations. As daylight hours get shorter, the fishing continues to improve with each passing week. We've had our best luck catching smallies in shallow fast moving water riffles and in the 3' to 5' deep transition water between riffles, and deeper pools areas. A good number of smallies are in the 17 inch to 19 inch range. For Bill Lux, Denny Watson and me, our most productive baits have been **Winco Solid Body River Darters**, **Tastee Tube Supreme** and **Winco Wacky Worms** rigged Texposed with 1/8-oz sinker. With the cooling trend predicted over coming weeks, I'm expecting the bass fishing will continue to get better and better!" (See Livewell photos)

Angler Al; filed 9/11: "Stan and I fished the river for catfish on Friday night. Stan's big fish was a 22 inch channel cat. I landed a bruiser of a flathead about 11 pm. It weighed 15 pounds and measured 34.5 inches. What a battle it put up...spun the boat even with boat anchors down. Stan missed the first net attempt but got it the second time around!" (See Livewell photos)

Pete Cartwright @ Smallies on the Yough; filed 9/10: "I fished the Allegheny River from 9/5 to 9/7. The bite was pretty good at times on the river, employing a slow drift with **Senkos** and **Small Jaw Craws from 412 Bait Co.** I caught most of my fish in knee deep water or shallower with current. The kayak and float boat traffic was heavy all three days." (See Livewell Photos)

Upcoming Events:

Antlers & Anglers Sportsmen Show presented by Armstrong

Armstrong will once again host Antlers and Anglers this year – providing a venue for Sportsmen to share their expertise and showcase their products to hundreds of attendees. Antlers and Anglers Show kicks off on Saturday, September 26 and the event continues through Sunday, September 27th. Pro-staffers and professionals will conduct seminars, and will be available for one-on-one advice on outdoor topics. Among the speakers are Field and Stream's Chris Snyder and Chris Sutton representing archery and fishing along with professional outdoor writer, photographer and PA certified fishing guide Darl Black. Be sure to stop by to visit with the experts at the Crawford County Fairgrounds.

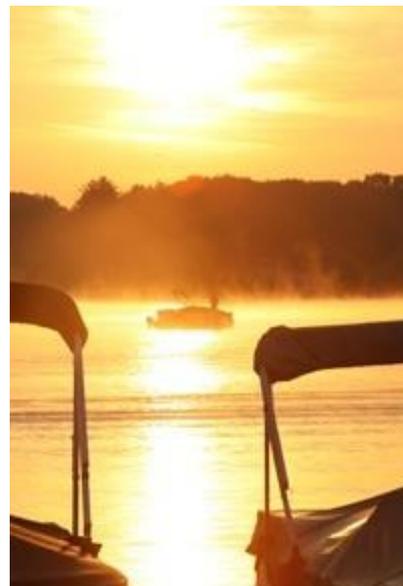


Shenango River Watchers, Inc. present



FALL FOLIAGE PADDLE FEST – OCTOBER 10TH

On the Shenango River from Pymatuning Dam Outflow to Riverside Park in Greenville. Shuttle and lunch included in registration fee. For more information, call 724-342-5453 or email info@shenangoriverwatchers.org.



More sunrises to come! - db photo

The Livewell

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Boat of the Month: A happy couple with a new boat from Wiegel Bros. Marine.

The Allegheny River is rocking with smallmouth if you fish the right bait in the right areas, and avoid both shallow rocks and the floating weeds which clog jet motor intakes.

Gene Winger Photos:

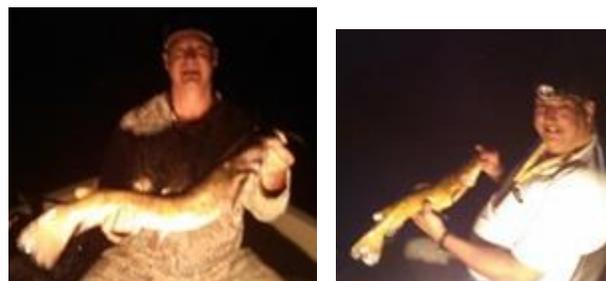


Pete Cartwright Photos:



Gene's 10 lb. drum

Don't Forget the Catfish!
Cat Winner is Angler Al
With 34.5" flathead



Livewell Overflow—catches from Lake Erie, Sugar Creek & more

Dutch Fork Custom Lures on Lake Erie—three 'eye photos by Keith Eshbaugh:



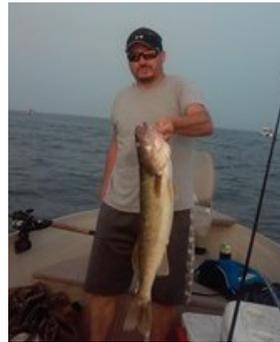
Erie Perch



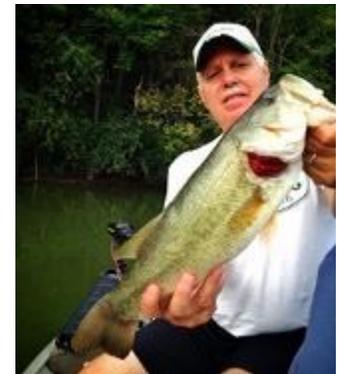
Paul Stewart



Dave Horvath



Tom Huhfer with 30" eye



Scott Selle with 3 lb. LMB

Sugar Creek—photos by Angler Al



Mitch with Brown trout



Stan with 17.5" brown trout

Justus Lake—Photos by Angler Al



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Oil City, PA 16301

www.gammafishing.com

www.froghairfishing.com



Gamma Fishing Tip

You can find GAMMA line locally at the following tackle shops:

Consumer Direct Sports – Grove City, PA

Griffins Bait & Tackle – Cooperstown, PA

Hill's County Store – Williamsfield, OH

Maurer's Trading Post—Franklin, PA

Robinson's Bait & Tackle — Espyville, PA

Matt Watson is the winner a spool of Gamma Line of his choice for this issue of the Fishing Report. Please email your shipping address to Darl Black to claim your prize.

Angler Al is the winner of the Tru-Turn Blood Red Hooks for the photo of the longest catfish in this issue of the Fishing Report.



SMB expert Pete Cartwright on Allegheny River near Franklin/ db photo

Line Tip from Darl Black: "During recent weeks I have been accompanying several experienced river anglers to obtain photos for an article in the 2016 In-Fisherman Bass Guide. Although each is an excellent angler, most are using 8-pound test on their jig spin outfit. Here is my river smallmouth tip regarding line...switch to 6-pound Gamma Edge! Using a thinner diameter line will allow further casts and better bait control by reducing line drag in current. Before being introduced to Gamma lines, I used 8-pound on my smallmouth river jig rod. But with Gamma I could step down in line diameter and still have all the strength needed in a line. Whatever pound test of another brand you have been using, when you switch to Gamma you should drop down to the next lower pound test. Six-pound Gamma Edge actually breaks at 8.2 pound but with the diameter of competitors 6-pound. Gamma is one strong line – in both regular monofilament and fluorocarbon."