

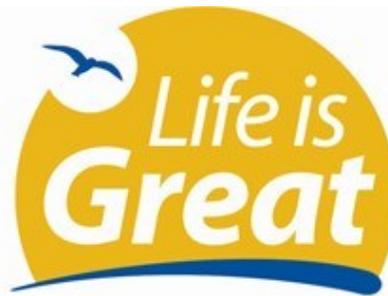
Northwest

Pennsylvania

Fishing Report

Reporting Date:

October 21, 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

Some people like to call good catches a matter of luck, but it's actually a matter of timing. An individual may have mastered fishing skills but there are going to be many times when that individual and everyone else struggles to catch fish. You may spend hours only to get a couple bites. We don't like to think about those days. But when the water temperature, wind direction, barometer, sun angle, prey availability and several other natural ingredients come together, fish are going to feed. It's not a matter of luck, but a matter of timing. For several weeks I've been anticipating the fall bite but the natural order wasn't falling in place as quickly as I had hoped. But with the last big rain and the pending cold snap this week, fall water temperatures are finally arriving...and so is some great fishing. Get out there now and enjoy, 'cause the weather bureaucrats are calling for an early winter.

by Darl Black



Northwest PA Fishing Report October 21, 2013

Brought to you by PA Great Lakes Region tourism

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

French Creek – Flowing through all four counties

Dustin Shay (Meadville) filed 10/18: "No bite really focused, but I've been catching a variety of fish from the creek over the last two weeks, including a few walleyes, some largemouth bass in flooded backwaters, several big crappies and of course smallmouth bass. Walleye bite has not been strong, with more 'eye coming on jigs than riffle minnows right now. Live bait wise, walleyes are in transition from summer riffle minnows to late fall creek bait."



Lou Letterle (Franklin) filed 10/17: "I was fishing French Creek for muskies on two occasions in the past week. We had some top-water action which was pretty exciting. My fishing partner Ken Dudash (Pittsburgh) and I each caught two muskies. The fish ranged between 35 and 40 inches. Photos attached." (See Livewell for additional photos)

Editor's note: Way to go Lou!

Lou Letterle photo

Angler Al Bell (Franklin) French Creek Diary:

- Sat, 10/12: "Warm conditions made wading in jeans more comfortable than one would have thought. It didn't make any difference for my catching a fish however. With no live bait, I tried topwater and crankbait lures. Weeds and moss again made things miserable. Not a strike in an hour, so I went home skunked. A rarity for me on French Creek!"
- Sun, 10/13: With some live bait this time I went back down to French Creek for the end of daylight casts. On the second float using a suspended set-up with bait, I caught a 14-inch smallmouth. Thereafter, I reeled in a small walleye. This method of fishing lessened weed and leaf debris fouling the hook."

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Dave Richter (Richter's Tackle Shop) filed 10/21: "Very few anglers on Pymatuning, but the handful that are going out in boats are targeting walleye...and catching them on blade baits from 10 to 20 feet. Shore-line fishermen are not doing so well on walleyes yet. Perch fishing is picking up, and as well as crappies. Crappies are being caught both shallow (certain marina docks, weeds and wood cover) and in deep water."



Pymatuning shore (DB photo)

Norman "Hooker" Brakeman (Hill's Country Store) filed 10/21: "Pymatuning is waking up from its long summer nap. Gamefish are ganging up on schools of baitfish. We were out last Wednesday shooting video of upcoming winter sport shows. As usual, the wind was blowing and rain was

threatening but crappies were biting **Bobby Garland Slab Dockt'r**. I have some customers who have started wading again at night, and they are amazed at their success. They are catching limits of 20" walleyes on perch-colored **Rapala Minnows** in less than two hours."

Chris Hall (Espyville Outdoors) filed 10/21: "I can't understand where all the fishermen are!! After a bit of a quiet period, the fishing is unreal right now! The perch are on fire! Crawlers and minnows fished on the bottom. We have had the most luck with the **AFF Lucky Seven Hooks** – the small propeller blade and metallic beads are driving fish nuts! There have been some bluegills mixed in with the perch as well. Walleyes are starting to pick up! I talked with couple guys reporting limit catches this past week-end, with **Lindy Shadlings** and **Berkley Flicker Shads** out fishing **Storm Hot N'Tots!** They are being caught anywhere from 10 to 16 feet of water. Some on worm harnesses, too. Crappies appear suspended and have not heard much about success on them yet. Catfish are still eating anything you throw at them."

Darl Black (Cochranon) filed 10/11: "With assistance from Hooker, I took a run at smallmouth bass on Pymatuning earlier in the week but all we could catch were a couple legal walleyes, some small largemouth bass, bluegills, perch and a rock bass – but no smallmouth bass!" (See Livewell photos)



DB photo

Conneaut Lake

Bob Mohra (Fergie's Bait) filed 10/21: "I fished Conneaut again this week for bluegills. I caught them in 9 feet of water along the weedline with a white split-tail tipped with maggot. Absolutely great 'gill fishing."

Dan Wielobob (Conneaut Lake) filed 10/18: "Went to Conneaut looking for white bass to be schooling deep, but could not find them. However, I did find bluegills in about 25 feet of water. These were some of the biggest bluegills I've ever caught from Conneaut Lake – covered my hand."

Darl Black (Cochranon) filed 10/18: "I fished Conneaut Lake on the 14th and 18th for big smallmouth bass, but struck out both days. Water temp was still in the low 60s (needs to be into the mid 50s) and we had a strong east wind both days (*Wind from the East, fish bite least*)...that's my excuse and I'm sticking with it!"

ERIE COUNTY



PIB crappie

Presque Isle Bay and Lake Erie

Jim (B.A.C. Baits) filed 10/21: "There is some steelhead action in the Bay this week. In addition, customers are catching some nice perch off the North Pier as the schools are transitioning from the Lake. And I'm hearing about crappie in Marina Lake. That's about all for right now in the Bay; focus is on the tributaries for steelhead."

Marilyn Black (Cochranon) filed 10/12: "Darl and I fished PIB today with the expectation of catching largemouth bass for needed photos. The big green ones didn't bite for us, although I caught an 8-pound drum, crappie, bluegill, perch, white bass

and a legal walleye. Yes, a legal size walleye in the Bay – I haven't caught a walleye in PIB for two decades. Most of my fish came on a **Binsky Blade Bait.**"

Rex Heimberger (Venom Lures Pro-Staff Director) filed 10/14: "A week ago I was up your way chasing those brown fish – fishing from PIB to the W's. It was probably the toughest time I ever had on the main lake. Baitfish schools were still out in 50 to 65 feet of water – and so were the smallmouth bass. I ended up fishing in PIB for green fish and caught some real beauties – but that's not what I was looking for. We caught some incidental steelies, too. When the weather changes and cools down a bit, I'll be back for those brown bass!"

Editor's note filed 10/12: Fishermen will travel l-o-n-g distances just to fish Presque Isle Bay. Entered in two-person team Great Lakes largemouth-only championship out of Sandusky, Ohio well-known professional bass angler Dave Lefebre of Erie on the first day of competition drove his boat from Sandusky Bay to Presque Isle Bay (roughly 150 miles one way) just to fish a couple hours in PIB. Dave and partner Barry caught several 3.5- to 4-pound largemouth bass in PIB (bigger than what they would have caught in Sandusky Bay) before setting out for weigh-in back at Sandusky. But they encountered wind shift and had to battle their way back in big waves. The second day of the tournament, they stayed put in Sandusky Bay but could not muster enough weight for a win. They had qualified for the championship by winning a PIB tournament earlier this year.

Erie Tributaries

Gary Heuble, Jr. (Poor Richards) filed 10/21: "After the tributaries were blown out on Sunday the 20th, today we have some good color returning to the water – at least to Walnut. Steelhead moved up most of the streams with the high water. I have reports of fish upstream in Walnut, Elk, Raccoon, Crooked and 20 Mile. Depending on the amount of rain this week, fishing may be very good in the near future – unless we get too much rain. Side note – when tributaries are blown out due to heavy rain, it generally takes 24 hours for streams like 20 Mile and Walnut to clear up, but it may take 48 hours for Elk Creek to clear."



Trib color—Marilyn Black photo

Mike Tome (Trout Run Bait) filed 10/21: "Wow we are busy today! Tributaries are clearing and anglers are flocking to the streams. Until more fishermen get out, it's hard to say how far the steelhead have moved – but they have definitely moved upstream. One angler reports 16 Mile Creek on fire with active fish. The best baits right now with good flow and slight color in the water will be skein and egg sacks."

Dan Seaman (Elk Creek Sports) filed 10/21: "As you might expect, the creeks were all blown out Sunday following the big rain. They are on their way down today. Fish have moved as far as McKean on Elk Creek. We needed this rain to get the flow moving and the water temp to drop in order to activate the steelhead, which have been sitting in holes near the mouth of the tributaries. We need some rain to keep the water flowing, but not too much to blow them out again. With the high winds projected this week, no one will be fishing the lakeshore. The steelhead focus will be in the streams."

Thomas Watral (Erie) filed 10/20:

- 10/20 – "With the rain and colder temps, the tributaries are running fast, and steelheads are on the move. Steelheads are hitting spinners and live bait. Colder water temps are bringing the big-

ger perch into the Bay. I talked with a few diehards who limited out on nice perch off the South Pier – fish were 12 to 14 inches. Also saw they had a few nice crappies. Perch and crappies are being taken on small minnows fished close to the bottom.

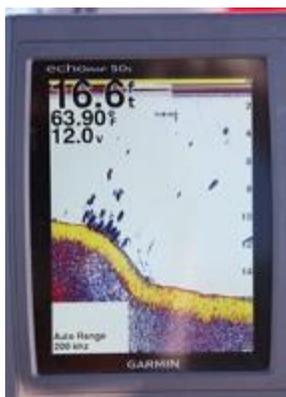
- 10/17 – “I went to Walnut today and slammed the steelhead...hooked 30 in all. Released all of them. Caught fish on a Joe Fly in yellow. Lots of steelhead this year.”
- 10/16 – “I went to Four Mile Creek to see how fishing has been – creek was rising and fish are moving in from the lake. I saw six hooked while there; later saw 10 hooked on the Wall at Walnut. Sucker Spawn and minnows are top baits.”
- 10/15 – “I went down to Bay and Lake today. Bay was on fire with lots of perch being caught in sizes to 13 inches. Hotspots are the Docks, South Pier and North Pier for perch and Border Patrol Dock for crappies. Best time is right before dark.

Ric Gauriloff (Trout Run Bait) filed 10/15; this report came in earlier in the week before the big rain event: “As of the 15th, streams are low and clear. Fish are being caught at mouths of creeks when lake is calm. Small dark Beadhead flies as well as smaller Sucker Spawn and Crystal Meth doing the trick for fly fishermen. Single eggs, skein and smaller minnows for bait fishermen. Perch and walleye still hitting in deeper water, but look for perch to move shallower as water temp cools; twenty five feet is a good place to start looking for them. One customer brought in a 12-pound lake trout today; caught it off the beach at Trout Run. A few coho have also been spotted in Trout Run and Elk. There are plenty of fish around but tough conditions. We need a couple days of nice steady rain.”

Ed Phillips () filed 10/15: “My wife and I went to 20 Mile Creek Thursday afternoon on the 10th, and fished from the 5 Road Mile Bridge to the mouth. As you might expect the water was low and hardly any current. I did see a few fish in the hole just north of the bridge but you can’t fish there because the property is posted. Going down stream, we saw a few fish and wound up close to the mouth, but with the slow, low water, we did not have any luck. I did see a couple fish on stringers, so at least someone was having better luck. The next morning we went upstream to the Tomato Patch and found a few active fish in a long run with faster current. I hooked six fish and landed three, and my wife hooked two and landed one. We kept one for the grill and a couple for the smoker. All fish came on nymphs in hook size #14 or #16 with 4-pound leader at least 9-foot long to get a good drift. Photo attached.”



Ed Phillips photo



Bluegills on Edinboro

Edinboro Lake

Marilyn Black (Cochranon) filed 10/12: “On our way home from PIB on Saturday the 12th we stopped to fish Edinboro Lake. Bite was as tough as PIB. With our Garmin sonar unit, we found a string of brushpiles in 9 feet of water, but could only catch little largemouth and smallmouth bass from them. Off another point, our sonar showed a massive school of bluegills in 12 to 15-foot breakline. After catching a mess of gills, we called it day.”



Edinboro 'gill

MERCER COUNTY

Shenango River Lake

Ken Smith (Sharon) filed 10/8: The government shut down of Shenango Lake last week didn't keep good anglers down. Ken Smith knew the crappies should be turning on at Shenango Lake, so he paid the launch fee at RC Marina at Clark (private marina unaffected by shut down) and went fishing. "I got a boat load of nice crappies. Cost me \$5.00 but I got my money's worth" (See additional photo in Livewell)



Ken Smith photo

Lake Wilhelm

Bob Mohra (Fergie's Bait) filed 10/21: "Not many anglers fishing down here right now. I had reports of bluegills being taken from the Sheakleyville Causeway this week. Best time is just before dark."

Neshannock Creek

Bob Shuey (Neshannock Creek Fly Shop) filed 10/12: "Our fall stocking happened October 1. Between that stocking and a good carryover from previous stockings, there are plenty of fish in the stream. Check our website for stream conditions (ncflyshop.com). As of this date there are a few seats remaining for our 2014 Fly Tying Class that starts January 7, 2014. Christmas is coming fast, so make shopping easy by picking up Gift Certificates from Neshannock Creek Fly Shop."

VENANGO COUNTY

Oil Creek

Mike Laskowski (Oil Creek Outfitters) filed 10/21: "Well the rain brought Oil Creek up to normal low! A few guys are fishing for trout, catching some on streamers and nymphs – but most fly fishermen are looking to the Erie tributary streams. Fly fishing for smallmouth on Oil Creek was great all summer long, but I don't seem able to get fly-fishermen excited about 'em old brown fish!"

Allegheny River

Editor's Note: The Allegheny River smallmouth fishing was simply amazing all spring and summer long. Recent rains sent the level up and stained the water, resulting in big bass moving to the banks. Check out the reports...



Marilyn Black photo

Marilyn Black (Cochranton) filed 10/21: "Darl and I fished the River yesterday out of Franklin for a few hours. It was on the rise and dingy colored. Big bass had moved into pocket eddies along the steeper shoreline. We had our best day since early spring. We had several four-pounders and some three-pounders and few less than three pounds; only 2 bass were less than 15 inches. I caught my fish on a **Chartreuse Blade Terminator T-1 Spinnerbait**. Darl caught most of his fish on a **Get Bit Baits Crawling Tube**. Hope the river stays up and dingy." (See Livewell photos)



Marilyn Black photo



Winning bait/Duff photo

Duff Kerle (Clarion) filed 10/21: "I fished the last BMCC tournament of the year on the Allegheny yesterday, launching out of Oil City. I drew Jerry Smith Sr. as my rider. Water was murky and high. Day started slow south of Franklin, but I headed back to the Oil City pool and caught round 50 smallmouths on a homemade chatterbait. I won the tournament with 4 bass weighing 14.07 pounds. Jerry took 3rd with just under 13 pounds. Stan Teitelbaum took lunger with a four pounder. Ben Lipiec won Angler of the year for Bassmasters of Crawford County." (See Livewell photos)



Winning catch/Duff photo

Frank Malek (Oil City) filed 10/21: "On Sunday, I had a nice bag of bass for the final tournament, with four fish weighing around 13 pounds. All my bass came on **Cruncher Bait Tubes** and crankbaits. Back on Friday the 18th, I fished for less than two hours and caught 7 bass before the rains started. The largest was a little over 4 pounds. All were caught on Cruncher Bait Tubes." (See Livewell photo)



Steve Udick photo

Steve Udick (Oil City) filed 10/20: "I have spent the last couple weeks throwing frog lures to pockets and shorelines. There was quite a learning curve as I thought these lures were topwater baits. That worked only if bass were aggressive. I had the best hookups using a combination retrieve...swimming it then stopping it – sometimes up to 10 seconds. My best fish was right in front of Black Bear Lodge in the lower part of Rockmere – see picture. Another beauty came above Wye Bridge in Siverly. My best day was 11 bass coming on the **Bass Pro Humpin' Toad** in Watermelon. Water is up and flushing the grass...tests one's patience."

Pete Cartwright (Pittsburgh) filed 10/20: "I fished the Allegheny for two days on the 12th and 13th. The bite was slow on Saturday, but the ones we caught were worth it. We landed five bass in the 18 to 20-inch class. On Sunday the 13th, the bite picked up and we landed 28 smallmouths with the biggest going 19 inches. Leaves and weeds were still a problem but river was fishable. On Sunday the 20th, we fished the Allegheny near Franklin. The water was up and stained a bit. The first hole we came to was loaded with fish so we stayed there for three hours, catching fish the entire time. Moved to a couple other spots and caught a few more fish. By end of day we landed 32 smallies. Most of the fish had fat bellies. Fall action at its best. Bass were mainly in 15 to 17 inch range with a few 18 inchers in the mix. All caught on tubes and jigs. I also caught 27" healthy pike."

R.J. Graham (Tionesta) filed 10/15: "I went to the Allegheny twice this week. On Sunday, the 13th, I fished Oil City pool. I managed a couple nice bass but the bite was tough. All my fish came on a drop shot with **Crosstail Shad** and a **Rapala Scatter Rap** crankbait in the fast water. The big fish are not active yet, current is too slow and the water is warm. The bass should turn on in the next couple weeks. On the 15th, I

fished in the evening on the river and picked up about 15 smallies; once again only a couple big ones – two over 3 pounds. The cool weather is going to put river smallmouth on fire!” (See Livewell photos)

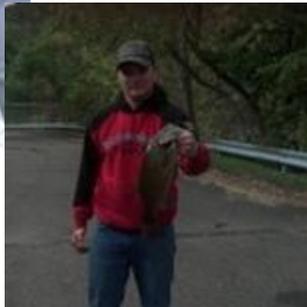
Gene Winger (Oil City) filed 10/21: “Sorry I missed sending my report last time; got busy at work and forgot. Here are my recent outings...

- For the Week of October 7th – During evening outings early in the week I was averaging 10 to 12 good-sized smallies on **Winco Solid Body River Darters** and **Tastee Tube Supreme tubes**. But mid-week the temp took a plunge and the bite slowed down. With the FOP tournament on the 13th, I decided to take a break from fishing and spend time with my granddaughter.
- For the Week of October 14th – I had a great week on river with Thursday being one of my best days of season – landing 40 quality smallies using Winco River Darter Swim Bait and Tastee Tube Supreme tubes. With a storm predicted for late afternoon on Thursday, I was on the river by 10 AM and fished until heavy rains started around 4 PM. By midday the smallies were stacked up and on fire, with most fish weighing over 2.5 pounds and several in the 3.5 to 4 pound range. However, my best was a 21.5 incher weighing in at 4.5 pounds. Truly an amazing day on the river.”

Livewell Overflow starts here with Allegheny River Success



R..J. Graham success -
Graham photos

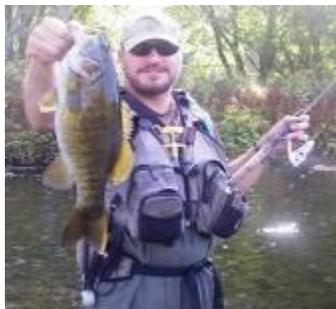


Frank Malek success/Malek
photo

Photos from Pete Cartwright on the Allegheny River:



Mike



Pete Cartwright



Pete Cartwright

The Livewell

Brought to you by:



Boat of the Month: Kingfisher Extreme Shallow inboard—ideal Allegheny cruising boat

There's still a couple months of fishing remaining in 2013. Wiegel Brothers Marine has these three boats in stock and ready to fish.

Kneal and Debbie Wiegel also reminds everyone that if you are done fishing and boating for the season, it's time to make an appointment for winterizing your boats and motors. Call 814-437-2077.

French Creek Muskies - Letterle photos



Lou Letterle



Ken Dudash

Shenango River Lake - Smith photo



Ken Smith's crappie catch

Pymatuning Lake

Hooker says "Eye"



DB photo

Allegheny River

Marilyn says "Bronzebacks"



DB photo

PROCESSED FOR PERFORMANCE



Gamma Fishing Tips

The NW PA Fishing Report and Black Knight Technology would like to welcome Consumer Direct Sports in Grove City onboard as a contributing tackle shop. Located near the Grove City Factory Shops, the store's slogan is "We're talkin' serious Hunting and Fishing." Among the many national fishing and hunting brands offered at the shop, you will find a full selection of Gamma's Polyflex, Edge, Touch and Torque fishing lines. Stop by to say hello to manager Jon Bobanick or owner Jerry Hanna, and let them know about your fishing success on Shenango River Lake, Lake Wilhelm or any other waterway/lake in Mercer, Crawford, Venango or Erie counties so we can hear about it in the NW PA Fishing Report.



Within NW PA region, Gamma Line can also be found at:

- Poor Richards, Erie County – Frog Hair and 100% fluorocarbon for leaders
- Hill's County Store, near Pymatuning at corner of Rt. 322 and Rt. 7– specializing in Gamma line for panfish and walleye

Winner of the spool of Gamma Line for this issue of Fishing Report: Ed Phillips

Winner of the Prize Pack of Baits for this issue of the Fishing Report: Steve Udick

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