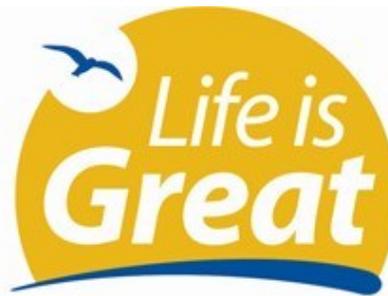


Northwest

Pennsylvania

Fishing Report



Reporting Date:

April 21, 2014

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

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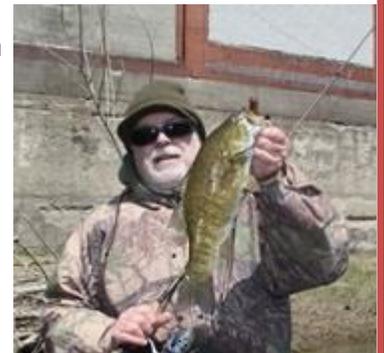
Bronze Sponsor: Wiegel Brothers Marine, Franklin

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

After a wicked winter, we have had a strange spring. Pymatuning crappies went crazy immediately after ice out, then left the shallow mud flats quickly leaving anglers searching the wood cover and wondering what happened to the huge numbers of fish from days before. The trout opener last week was one of best I've ever seen – judged by photos submitted. I could not get on the Allegheny due to flood conditions and poor weather until this past week – but just in time for the most outrageous smallmouth bite most of us river rats have ever seen in mid-April. Between April 15 and April 21, anglers who fished all day and knew what they were doing enjoyed catch and release numbers between 50 and 10 smallmouth per day. Right now the walleye bite along the shoreline is in full swing at Pymatuning. Where we go from here, I do not know!



Darl's first 2014 smallmouth

NW PA FISHING REPORT: APRIL 21, 2014

Brought to you by PA GREAT LAKES REGION tourism

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

NEWS

CRAPPIE-FISHING TECHNIQUES SEMINAR

Linesville, PA – Only a few tickets remain for the May 15th Crappie-Fishing Techniques Seminar at the Pymatuning State Park Environmental Classroom. While there is no charge for the seminar, due to limited classroom seating each individual must have a ticket. All local tackle shops are out of tickets. Only the Crawford County Convention & Visitors Bureau has a few tickets remaining; stop by to pick up one or two. The NW PA Fishing Report has four tickets available; email Darl Black at darlblack@windstream.net with your shipping address to obtain one of these tickets. When they are gone, the classroom will be at capacity for the event.

PYMATUNING CRAPPIE AND WALLEYE TOURNAMENTS

Espyville, PA – The Pymatuning Lake Association will conduct one crappie tournament and two walleye tournaments on Pymatuning Lake this spring. The Crappie Tournament will be Saturday, May 3. The Walleye Tournaments will be Saturday, May 17 and Saturday, June 7. For more information, stop by any local bait & tackle shop to pick up an application or send an email to PymaLakeAs-soc@windstream.net.

BASIC BOATING COURSE

Meadville, PA – The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission will hold a Basic Boating course at the Conneaut Lake Sportsmen Club on Saturday, May 10, 2014 from 8 am until 4 pm. There is no charge. Students who successfully complete the course are eligible to apply for a Boating Safety Education Certificate issued by the Commission. The certificate is required for anyone operating a personal watercraft (Jet Ski, Waverunner, Se Doo, etc.) and anyone born on or after January 1, 1982 operating a boat powered by a motor greater than 25 horsepower. To register, contact Chad Foster at chfoster@pa.gov.

WHEAT CREEK BASS TOURNAMENT

Meadville, PA – The Bassmasters of Crawford County presents an open team tournament at Presque Isle Bay on Sunday, June 15, 2014. Entry fee is \$100.00. For more information contact Darren Potts at 814-463-9256.

Now to the fishing...

FRENCH CREEK – Flowing through all four counties French Creek level and color look ideal for early spring smallmouth bite, but no reports have been received. But tributaries to French Creek and the Allegheny River are overflowing with trout catches!



Photo by John Hummel

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Dave Richter @ **Richter's Tackle**, filed 4/21: "The bite was a bit slow this past weekend. The crappie action has moved towards the southern portion of the lake; crappies have abandoned the shallow mud bays of ice-out. Walleye action was slow during the day, but shoreline waders continue to score fish in the evenings around dusk."



Richter's crappie catch from early April

Hooker @ **Hill's Country Store**, filed 4/21: "Although Hooker's Fishing Taxi has been hitting 1000 so far, I must admit this has been a strange spring. Crappies have moved from the pads in two feet of water. On Easter, fishing south of the causeway in 43 degree water, I found crappies on the first breakline outside the bays in about 4 to 5-feet of water, catching a dozen 12" to 14" fish in 20 minutes with live minnows. On Good Friday, I caught two nice largemouth on a **Garland Baby Shad** while looking for crappies in wood cover."

Chris Hall @ **Espyville Outdoors**, filed 4/21: "Although the lake was busy this past weekend, the fish were not biting enthusiastically. Sporadic crappies reported; mainly walleyes reported taken along the shore, plus some nice perch."



Pymatuning anglers looking for crappies

Robert Nypaver (Williamsfield, OH) filed 4/21: "I made it out last evening to Pymatuning. I caught five walleye on a green **Road Runner** tipped with a minnow. I was wading off a point. There were a number of fishermen doing likewise up and down the shore. The walleye bite is good right now!"

Marilyn Black (Cochran) filed 4/19: "Darl and I fished Pymatuning on Friday, the 19th, running shallow bays on the North End and slight deeper wood in bays on the South End. It was a *run and gun* trip looking for crappies, but we could not catch a single fish."

RJ Graham (Tionesta), multiple reports

Filed 4/19: "Today my father and I returned to Pymatuning to pre-fish for an open bass tournament next weekend. I flipped a **Graham Jig** along much of the shoreline from Stewart Bay to Tuttle Point with great success. I also spanked some smallmouth on **Strike King KVD 1.5 Square Bill** in Sexy Shad. All together we picked up 46 bass. A very subtle presentation was needed for bigger fish. I started with a **Zoom Ultra Vibe Speed Craw** but found a smaller trailer better as the day went on; I did best with a **Yamamoto Fat Baby Craw** with tail colored with pink with **Spike It dye**."

Filed 4/15: "Dad, Granddad and I went to Pymatuning for crappies on April 12. We had one of the best days for crappie fishing ever. We caught 42 BIG slabs – the largest was 15.5 inches. Most came from wood at the mouth of Stewart Bay. Then we went bass fishing, and caught about 15 largemouth bass on a **Strike King Hack Attack Spinnerbait** in 8 feet of water."

Bryan Stuyvesant (Meadville) filed 4/18: "I went to Pymatuning the evening of the 17th and picked up a nice limit of walleyes on a **Lucky Craft Pointer**. All six fish were over 18 inches. All strikes came during a pause in the jerkbait retrieve."



Pyme 'eye/Stuyvesant

Jim McClave (Mercer) filed 4/13: "I was back at Pymatuning in one of the North End bays again today. We caught only perch, bluegill and a catfish in shallows – no crappies. So we went by boat to the causeway to jig **Sonars** for walleyes. I caught 2 two sub-legal eyes. About 25 boats there, but only a few keepers were observed caught. The crappies are a mystery to me."

Trout Streams

Harvey @ **Harvey's Hook, Line & Sinker**, filed 4/21: "My customers are reporting nice catches of trout with nightcrawlers from Little Sugar Creek and with butter worms on Woodcock Creek."

ERIE COUNTY

Erie Tributaries

Jeff Staaf @ **Poor Richards**, filed 4/12: "Anglers are enjoying action on stocked trout in the creeks, as well as some steelhead. There are lots of fresh run steelhead in the lower parts of the stream, and larger hold-overs further upstream. Best baits with the water low and clear include minnows and single eggs."

Rick Gauriloff @ **Trout Run Bait & Tackle**, filed 4/21: "There are so many steelheads jammed up at mouth of Trout Run that it reminds you of fall down there. Lots of steelheads are still moving into the tributaries. This past week, pink egg sacks and our custom P-Flash Fly were top fish getters. Smallmouth bass are moving into lower Elk. Water temperature is about 48 degrees; bass are being caught on **Rapala Minnows**, spinners and live shiners. They are getting perch in Presque Isle Bay, too."

Dan Seaman @ **Elk Creek Sports**, filed 4/21: "There is a mix of species in Elk Creek right now. Steelheads are in the lower creek – females moving in from the lake have loose eggs so they will not be in the stream long. There has been a big surge of smallmouth into the creek, with fish in the 4 to 5 pound range. Suckers are in, too. This week will see the season stocking of brown trout in the lower Elk Creek from Legion to the mouth of creek. The creek is low and clear, and the little rain we may get tomorrow will make conditions perfect."

Presque Isle Bay

Jim at **B.A.C. Bait**, filed 4/21: "The smallmouth bass bite in the Bay has not caught fire yet. Over the weekend I caught several largemouth bass around the lagoons with live shiners. The Waterworks Ponds are producing stocked trout. The shad die off is still littering the shoreline – some of the biggest gizzard shad I've ever seen in Erie. Still a lot of ice chunks floating around the main lake."

Bill Logan (Pleasantville) filed 4/21: "I went to Presque Isle Bay over weekend to fish for bass. I never had a hit. Turned around, headed to river and caught 14 smallmouth bass."

Mark Hughes (Saegertown) filed 4/15: "I was up to PIB on Saturday, 4/12. I fished for both largemouth and smallmouth bass for about five hours for bass and never had a bite. I talked to Danny Jones; he said this was his third time out and he has only caught three bass so far – not a good bay report!"



Stewart photo

Paul Stewart (Butler) filed 4/14: "It was a slow day of perch fishing on Saturday, 4/12. We caught 2 dozen perch between two of us, but only six keepers. But I got one nice bonus smallmouth bass!"

Thomas Watral (Erie) filed 4/12: "My step-dad and I went to Cascade Creek for opening day of trout and did very well. It was the most fun we had together in a long time. We managed to get our limits in an hour's time – on the perch rigs that I make. They work as well for stocked trout as they do for steelhead and trout. We baited the rigs with small red worms or small minnows. Stop by 3024 Homes Street, Erie, to stock up on my hand-made perch rigs."

Ed Phillips (New Castle) filed 4/11: "My wife and I went to 20 Mile Creek on Wednesday and Thursday for steelhead before stocked trout season opened. We first checked the mouth but did not see any fish coming in. Nor did we see any in the holes or pools. One angler said there were some in the Tomato Patch so we headed there. My wife managed to land one (see photo), and I landed one later in the day. The next day we fished from the Tomato Patch downstream to the "no fishing" cable. Neither of us had a hit all day. The two we landed the previous day were older, marked-up fish. I concluded the spring run was either over or had not started yet. My wife's fish came on a Blood Dot, and mine on a Peacock Hurl Nymph. All things considered, the nice weather was hard to beat even if there weren't many fish to be seen or caught."

MERCER COUNTY

Lake Wilhelm

Nick McElhinney (Cochranon) filed 4/20: "On Saturday the 19th, I took six kids fishing from shore at Access #3. In two hours we caught over 100 panfish."

Dave Lehman (Espyville) filed 4/19: "I caught my first largemouth bass of 2014 on Friday at Lake Wilhelm, and it was a giant! I cast to a spot I had not fished in 40 years, had a hit and set a hook into 7.75 pound largemouth...the biggest bass I've ever taken from Wilhelm. I also caught several other nice bass, including a 4 and 3.75 pounder."

Editor's note: Looks like the big bass are still in Wilhelm – just as the PA Fish Commission fisheries biologists have said. Maybe the cold, long winter had knocked down the troublesome gizzard shad population making bass somewhat easier to catch.



Almost 8 pounds!!

Bob Mohar @ [Fergies Bait & Tackle](#), filed 4/16: "Fishing appears to be starting to turn around with reports of nice crappies and bluegills. The best spots seem to be the Sheakleyville Bridge and the bay at Launch #3. **Southern Pro Stingers** tipped with a maggot and minnows seem to be doing the best for crappies, split-tails and Guinea Jigs for Bluegills."

Shenango River Lake

No reports

Winner of the April Prize Package of Lures is Fishing Report contributor Ronald Cartwright.

To claim your prize, email your shipping address to Darl Black by May 9, 2014.

Shenango River

Hugh Clark of the Shenango River Watchers announced that the kayak/canoe launch at Hamburg has been completed and is now open. This will give paddle boat anglers easy access to the river section from Hamburg to Big Bend – just in time for the white bass run up the river!

Trout Streams

Jon Bobanick @ **Consumer Direct Sports**, filed 4/21: “The talk from customers in the store has been about trout fishing this past week. Everyone seems to be catching trout in the local streams. This week in -season stockings will be taking place at Volant on the Neshannock Creek and on Coolspring Creek. Other than trout, the buzz is about walleye at Pymatuning. We have the stickbaits anglers need for casting the Pymatuning shoreline in the evening for ‘eye – stop in and check out our selection.”

Myrle Knickerbocker (Cochranon) filed 4/16: “The annual opening day at the North Deer Creek Trout Unlimited Kids area was a great success. Weather was nice for a change. TU had 50 grab bags to hand out to the kids who came to fish. We also grilled hot dogs for the kids too. Boy Scout Troop 254 camped overnight Friday, with many boys cooking their own meals for a merit badge. Enough fish were caught that all boys learned out to clean their own fish. Special thanks to TU for organizing the event, Brad Stallsmith for use of his property and to Fergie’s Bait and Tackle for supply the scouts with bait.”

VENANGO COUNTY

Trout Streams

Chris Wolfgang (Oil City) filed 4/20: “I fished Oil Creek at Petroleum Center with my uncle, John Skiba of Mechanicsburg. He caught one trout on a spinner...I got skunked with my fly rod!”

Jody Maurer @ **Maurer’s Trading Post**, filed 4/19: “The trout fishermen had a great opener weather wise. It was one of the nicest openers in years. Both Big and Little Sandy were high but clear and very fishable. Most fishermen were catching trout on spinners like **Rooster Tail**, **Mepps** and **Swiss Swings**. The hottest live baits were wax worms and meal worms. **Trout Magnets** were also popular. The fly fishing only area on Little Sandy was producing nice trout, too. This stretch of stream is stocked heavily by both Fish Commission and Trout Unlimited. You normally can see the trout in the stream with a good pair of polarized glasses. Streamers and wet flies were catching fish.”

Bill Griffin @ **Griffins Bait & Tackle**, filed 4/18: Bill reported that anglers on Sugar Creek had very good success this past week. He provided a number of photos of his customers’ fish which are posted on Livewell Page.

John Hummel (Kennerdell) filed 4/14: “Great weather brought out a substantial number of fishermen to East Sandy Creek on opening day of trout.



John Hummel photo

Incredibly, there were still large chunks of ice here and there along the creek. The stream was high and muddy in the morning, but conditions improved as the day went on. A variety of bait and techniques proved successful. We had a full weekend of fun and fishing; it felt good to be back out there. Attached is a picture of Raymie Mazanek, Jr of Kittanning and other anglers on East Sandy."

Angler Al (Franklin), multiple reports...

Filed April 12: "Although water temps were colder and showers raised stream levels, area trout fishermen found success on the East Branch of Sugar Creek. My friend Stan was one of them. He caught three. The largest was an 18-inch rainbow which took a piece of crawler. The other two hit mealy worms. Though Stan's catches were impressive, the greatest excitement of the morning was had by 11 year old Reese Hays. This young lad from Indiana, PA, landed a dandy 17-inch palomino on a red worm. Congratulations Reese. I took great pleasure in seeing many fathers with their sons on the streams. The opening day tradition lives on!"

Filed April 13: "A 25-inch 6.2 pound Big Daddy Brown took a snake-size crawler I offered up. Sure was a fine battle. I won! I also caught a palomino on a mealy worm and another brown on a mini **Rapala Minnow**." (See Livewell)

Filed 4/19: "The trout bite has picked up. My friend Larry Gindy emailed me with this photo of the 20-inch 4-lb. Palomino he caught on the East Branch of Sugar Creek. It hit a piece of nightcrawler tipped with a wax worm. A guest of mine caught 8 trout on mealy worms, wax worms and crawlers this afternoon. I put fresh 4 pound **Gamma Line** on her reel before we went fishing. The line held up during a battle with 20-inch plus brown trout, however it slipped off at our feet as we tried to get a photo!"

Allegheny River



Dale Black/db

Dale Black (Oil City) filed 4/21: "Chris Wolfgang and I made it out yesterday, the 20th. I was out for about 6 hours and landed 79 smallmouth bass, and Chris joined me for the last three hours, catching 33 bass. Our total was 102. On Saturday, 19th, I landed 41 smallmouths."

Chris Wolfgang (Oil City) filed 4/21: "I fished the river with Dale on Sunday evening from about 6 pm to 8:30 pm. To set the record straight for the time I fished with him, the final count – Chris with 33 smallies (including the biggest at 19.5 inches); Dale at 28. Bass were hitting anything you tossed their way...tubes, jigs, jerkbaits, crankbaits...you name it,



Chris Wolfgang

they hit it. Great Day!"

Darl Black (Cochranton) filed 4/20: "Bryan Stuyvesant accompanied me to the river on Saturday. We got off to a slow start about 1 pm...until we got out; then we found a huge number stacked expected, on the inside of a current seam in other boats were catching fish on action baits who landed over 30 bass on white chatter-and hair jigs. The Get Bit Tubes in crayfish col-hands down top fish getter. We ended up hours."



Bryan Stuyvesant

the fish figured out. Bass were spread near faster flowing water than I expected about 4 to 5 feet of water. Friends in – including Steve Hughes and his son baits. But all our fish came on tubes or on a 3/16-ounce head was the landing around 35 smallies in four

Joe Nichols @ **Underground Angler**, filed 4/21: "Lots of great smallmouth fishing on the river right now. Water temp is cold but I was catching them shallow and deep. Pike are biting too. Caught most of my bass on a **Tylor Mans Elite Spinnerbait** with double willow-leaf blades; fish seemed to prefer white."

Steve Udick (Oil City) filed 4/20: "Caught these two (see photos) and two more the same size today on the river at Oil City. Strong East wind had the bass pushed into protected pockets. I got one under the pontoon of the ice device and the others at Sage Run. All were inside the current line. I missed several others that hit tubes. All my landed fish came on a **Rapala SR7 Walleye Shad Rap**."

Ronald Cartwright (Tionesta) filed 4/20: "If this past weekend was a glimpse of things to come on the Allegheny this year, then it should be a banner year!. We fished Oil City and Tionesta sections of the Allegheny on Friday the 18th and Saturday the 19th. It was a feeding frenzy; we found them on current seams and slack water. Using tubes and jigs we got a lot of nice healthy bass. The biggest one was a huge 23 incher; also landed five bass that were 20 inches long plus many 17-18 inchers. The bite was on for us and produced two days of fishing as good as any that I have had. Can't wait to get back on the river."

Frank Malek (Oil City) filed 4/18: "Today was crazy on the river. It was almost a smallmouth on every cast. Here is a picture of my 4th five-pounder! Bass were eating tubes and spinnerbaits."

Bill Logan (Pleasantville), filed 4/17: "In five hours on the river today, I landed 53 smallmouths!! All on grubs and tubes. I had to quit when my right hand started to cramp!"

Livewell Overflow Photos from Allegheny River



Steve Udick



Bill Logan

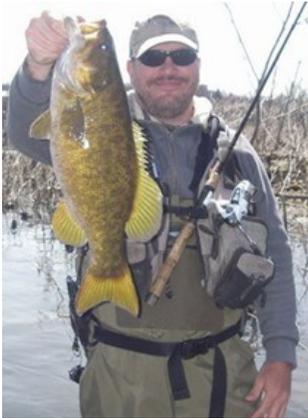
Photos from Joe Nichols—Underground Angler



The Livewell

Brought to you by:

Allegheny River and Pymatuning are hot right now!



23" smb for Pete Cartwright

Fish with Pete on the river!



Boat of the Month: Rogue River Jet with kicker outboard— Fish the river effectively and putt around Wilhelm or Pymatuning, too!

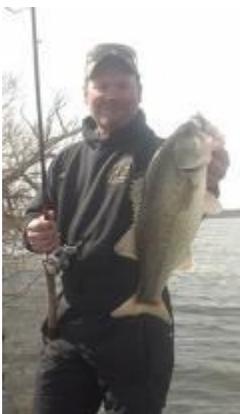


Pymatuning crappie



Frank Parry on Pyme

Photos from RJ Graham on Pymatuning



Trout, Trout and more Trout!

Photos supplied by Al Bell, John Hummel, Bill Griffin and Myrle Knickerbocker



Reese Hays



Cole Ritchey



Conner Ritchey



3 yr. old Tyler Painter



Justin Knickerbocker



Sam Shelenberger



Lake Erie Trib Steelhead—last of the run



Mrs. Phillips



Chris Fuller

PROCESSED FOR PERFORMANCE



Gamma Fishing Tips

Steve Hughes, Gamma Pro Staffer: "In the early spring I like to slow roll vibrating jigs and spinnerbaits for bass – both in lakes and rivers. I've found Gamma Edge Fluorocarbon is a big help with this technique. The line sinks and keeps the baits down, plus the sensitivity of Edge is unsurpassed for feeling light bites.

Dale Black, President of Gamma Lines: "When I first started fishing tubes on the river in cold water of spring, I thought 8 or 10 pound test was needed. Then I learned about Gamma Line, and discovered it was so strong that I could drop down to 6-pound test Gamma Edge and never worry about breaking off fish or not recovering snagged baits. Actually if get snagged when using 8 pound Gamma Edge, you might as well considered your boat anchored! Gamma is incredibly strong for the diameter...that's why I bought the company!"

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 a filler spool of Gamma Line for this issue of Fishing Report is **RJ Graham**.

Notify Darl by email that you saw your name and include the type of Gamma & pound test your desire along with your shipping address.

Lures for the Fishing Report Field Test Prize Pack supplied by: Bobby Garland; Gene Larew; Get Bit Baits; 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 Fishing Report, email Darl with you shipping address.

Follow Darl as he fishes with angling experts around the country at www.darlblack.blogspot.com

Darl is on Facebook

Obtain the PGLR fishing brochure "Reel It In!" at www.pagreatlakes.com