

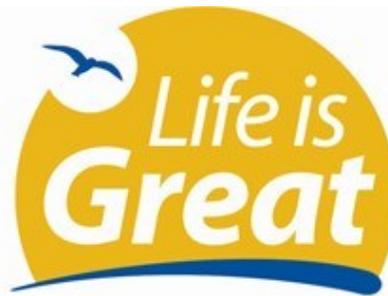
Northwest

Pennsylvania

Fishing Report

Reporting Date:

September 9, 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

For most anglers, September is a slow month. As the water cools, fish are beginning to transition for the fall bite, but they seem reluctant to give up summer haunts. I always stumble through September, looking for something to get excited about. This year, however, according to contributors, there seems to be an early walleye bite on French Creek and an early movement of steelhead into the Erie tribs. Steelheads are not in full fledge run but if we get a good rain event, many are predicting a strong mid-September run. The Allegheny fishes great smallmouth in September if you can put up with floating vegetation coming downstream. Speaking of the Allegheny, will this be the winter/spring when the old stone bridge trestle immediately below Franklin finally falls? Check out the picture. At ice out each year, another stone block erodes away. Anyone taking bets?

by Darl Black



NW PA Fishing Report for September 9, 2013

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

FRENCH CREEK – flowing through all four counties

Ed Lawrence (Union City) filed 9/9: "I caught several nice walleye this past weekend from French Creek. Chubs are providing most of the action, but soft plastics are catching a share of the 'eye, too." (See Livewell photo)

Dustin Shay (Meadville) filed 9/8: "About a week ago when we had the slug of rain that raised French Creek to bank full. I thought there would be no chance to catch the riffle minnow bait that I had been using but I went down to try anyways. I dropped a maggot on a #16 hook right off shore in the high water and started catching bait. I caught them quicker than when the water was low and I stood in the riffle. Even though the water was walleye with the bait and headed to a high and dingy, I planned to fish for favorite spot. But every time I dropped a minnow in the water, a smallmouth bass hit it. Didn't matter a heavy weight in an attempt to get it latch onto it as soon as it hit the water. I lost count of the smallmouth caught, except I used every piece of smallmouths were in the 10 to 13-inch bracket but several of them were 15 to 17 inches. (See photo)



SMB on Bait; Shay photo

Then this past Friday night, with water level down, my brother and I headed out to a favorite hard-to-reach walleye hole with bait. We caught several legal walleye right off the bat. About dusk as I was reeling in a 14-inch walleye, something big grabbed the little 'eye in the middle right as I about to lift it out of the water. The big fish, which looked to be a walleye, pulled it under water. There was no way I could hook the fish, but I did pull it up slowly for a look. Sure enough, it was a walleye that had to be over 30 inches. After our tug of war, the big walleye let go of the little one. You can bet I'll be back at that spot with some bigger creek bait ASAP."

Angler Al (Franklin) filed 9/9: "Back on September 1 when the air temp dropped due to the approaching storm, French Creek was looking good. So I grabbed my rod, lures and net, and beat it down to my favorite rock piles. Within 10 casts of working a #5 Shad Rap, I landed a nice 3-pound smallie. A few casts later, another smaller smallmouth smacked the plug. Then thunder and lightning rolled, so I called it an evening. On the evening of Saturday, September 7, I took to French Creek at dusk. On my first cast with a silver & black #5 Shad Rap, a 12" smallmouth smacked it. Later I switched to a **Torpedo Bomber** and for the first time in many years, I caught an 18" walleye on a top-water plug!" (See photo)



French Creek 'eye; Bell photo

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Dave Richter (Richter's Bait) filed 9/9: "Not much happening at Pymatuning – hardly anyone fishing this past couple weeks. For those fishing live bait or sink bait, the channel cats are biting all over the lake. There are a handful of anglers starting to fish blades on the humps in the evening; they are catching one or two walleyes, but not killing them. The best blade bait walleye fishing will come a little later this fall. I had reports of some musky activity, with one 42-incher being boated this week."

Conneaut Lake

Bob Mohra (Fergie's Bait) filed 9/9: "I've been back to Conneaut for bluegills twice in the past two weeks. The time before the most recent trip, was our best day of the entire summer on Conneaut for bluegills. We were getting them off one of the mid-lake humps in 15 feet of water, just outside the weed edge. They were hitting a white split-tail grub. We had planned to keep a dozen, but the 'gills were so big we ended up keeping 90! Also had a huge white bass up to the boat on most recent trip – must have been close to 20 inches long – but it broke the line as we tried to lift it aboard."

Chuck Papinchak (Cochranon) filed 9/9: "I fished the Conneaut Lake Family Tournament Saturday and Sunday. On Saturday, we had lots of action catching 5 largemouth bass on topwater and spinnerbaits, plus numerous small pike on spinnerbaits. With the cold front and north wind on Sunday, it was a different story. I had a big pike bust my spinnerbait apart, and I lost a 20-inch plus smallmouth bass on a topwater popper – but no other hits. If only I had landed those two big fish..."

Canadohta Lake



DB's SMB; Al Bell photo

Angler Al (Franklin) filed 9/9: "I was invited to fish with Darl Black on Saturday. Around 9 AM we started throwing soft plastic baits for bass on Canadohta Lake. Only one fish cooperated with us in three hours of fishing. But it was a hefty smallmouth bass which gave Darl a great fight. Although I didn't catch anything at Canadohta I enjoyed the day with Darl, and I had the opportunity to meet Jerry Van Tassel of **Timberland Bait**; I could have spent the entire afternoon swapping stories with him. I also learned of a Sportsman's BBQ event with guest speaker Steve Chapman this coming Saturday and I plan to attend; contact Jerry for more info."

Jerry Van Tassel (Timberland Bait) filed 9/7: "Not much happening at Canadohta after Labor Day. The few anglers who are out on the lake say the fish are suspended out in 20 feet away from the shore cover. However, my boy caught his largest walleye this past week. Hope to send a picture of it."

Sugar Lake

Bill Logan (Pleasantville) filed 9/2: "Fished Sugar Lake. Water was clear with minimal milfoil around pads. Using **Zipper Worms** and **Northland Slurpie Creature Bait**, I took six largemouth bass."



Sugar LMB; Logan photo

ERIE COUNTY

Lake Erie & Tributaries

*Correction: In the last report incorrectly referred to several impressive walleyes as being caught on Custom Ghost Blades on worm harness made by Dutch Lake Lures. The correct name of the company is **Dutch Fork Custom Lures**. Check them out at www.DutchForkCustomLures.com. Phone 724-884-3977.*

Gary Heuble (Poor Richard's Bait) filed 9/9: "It has been too windy all week for anyone to be out on the lake so there is no perch or walleye report. However, steelheads are moving into the streams. Need rain to actually get a run moving up the tributaries."

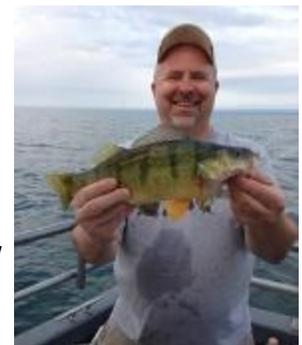
Dan Seaman (Elk Creek Sports Center) filed 9/9: "No fishing on the main lake this past week due to high winds. The last word on the walleye before the blow was they had made the turn and were headed back to Ohio. However, when anglers can get back out on the big water, the perch should still be there. Perch fishing remains good through October. Also encouraging, there are steelhead being caught in the lower sections of the tributaries. Fish are jumping which gets everyone excited. Guys are catching one or two a day. Best baits are single eggs, minnow, and **Power Bait**. This is the time of year you can get them on spoons and spinners, too, because these early fish are hot and feeding. As soon as it cools down, they slow down aggressive feeding and go into that early prespawn mode. If we would get a good rain to raise the level in tribs, expect a good run.

Ric Gauriloff (Trout Run Bait) filed 9/9: "Walleye and perch fishing still remains good when fishermen have been able to get out, but stiff winds this past week made it tough. Anything chartreuse has been a good color for walleye. It looks like the walleye have made the west turn most recent reports had them in 62 feet of water near the Ohio line. No jumbo perch this past weekend, but all we cleaned were good size ones. A fair number of browns and steelheads can be found at the mouths of Walnut and Elk; they are bunched up offshore. Elk had a couple hundred showed up yesterday. They can be found from the mouth up to Uncle John's Campground, and some were reported in the Legion Hole. We had a 32" brown checked in this past weekend. (See photo) Not a major run by any means, but with cold nights and rain this week, maybe something happening next weekend."



32" Brown; Gauriloff photo

Paul Stewart (Butler) filed 9/3: "On Saturday, August 31, we fished an evening perch charter aboard the Danny O. It was a light bite early on, but the bite picked up as the sun went down. My buddy and I both ended up getting limits. **Sabiki Rigs** and **Berkley Fireline** are the way to go. My very last perch was the best the year – 14-1/2". Nice way to end the evening!" (See photo)



Perch; Stewart photo

Dave Lefebre (Erie) filed 8/28: Two weeks ago upon returning home from the FLW Bass Tour, Dave made a run out on Lake Erie last week. Fishing in about 50 feet of water, he caught a 7 pound smallmouth on a drop-shot rig. On August 28 he was back out on the lake. "I caught a 23-1/4" smallmouth in 47 feet of water on a watermelon/white **Yamamoto Shad Shape Worm** while testing the new **VMC**

Spinshot dropshot hook. This is a deadly combination!" (See Livewell photos) *Editor's note: Dave, when are we going fishing on Erie? I'm still looking for my first 8-pound smallmouth!*

Presque Isle Bay

Thomas Watral (Erie):

- 8/28 "My step dad lost his second rod to a steelhead while fishing for perch on the docks. Anglers are getting a few crappies and panfish on the docks. Perch are hitting on crappies rigs.
- 9/3 "I'm seeing steelhead at the mouths of the creeks. Try tossing small spoons out into the lake if you want to connect with a steelhead."
- 9/5 "Tall Ship festival has restricted where we can fish from shore. Still getting some perch and crappies."
- 9/7 "One of the winners of the SONS Perry Fishing Challenge is my step-father Ron Dittman of Erie with a 23" bullhead that weighed 4 pounds. He caught it while fishing nightcrawlers for perch."

MERCER COUNTY

Lake Wilhelm

Notice: DCNR and PF&BC are holding a free Family Fishing Program on September 15 from 4 to 7 p.m. at Maurice K. Goddard State Park, 648 Lake Wilhelm Road, Sandy Lake. Pre-registration is required. Contact Chad Foster at 814-683-5126 or chfoster@pa.gov.

Notice: Friends of Goddard will be holding a clean-up day on September 28 to clean up around shoreline fishing sites. For more information, contact William Wasser, Park Manager at 724-253-4833. Check out www.friendsofgoddard.com.

Bob Mohra (Fergie's Bait) filed 9/9: "Anglers are reporting bluegills moving into the stumps on north end of lake. Fishermen will be lining the upper causeway in the evenings now. One customer at the campground reported catching a 16" crappie, 24" walleye and a 26" walleye in the main lake."

Shenango Lake and River

Laurie Frantz (R&L Bait & Tackle) filed 9/8: "Several customers are reporting that the flathead catfish bite is hot in the Shenango River between Big Bend and the backwaters of the Shenango Lake. Also, I saw a phone picture of a 48" northern pike caught by 16 year old Andy Bonnano from the Shenango River south of Greenville. Finally, anglers are catching crappies in Shenango Lake as the fish are moving into shallow water to feed for the early fall."

Ken Smith (Sharon) filed 9/9: "I'm still fishing but doing it mostly at Mosquito and on Lake Erie for perch and walleye with friends who have big boats. I fish Shenango about once a week. Size on crappies is down but the bite is great. You can catch 50 crappies in a few hours almost anywhere on the lake. I did it this morning – 50 crappies but only 5 big enough to keep. It's been catch and release for the last three trips on Shenango. I'll be back on Shenango this fall looking for bigger fish." And look out for next year when these smaller crappies should be keeper size!

Mike Kuna (Pittsburgh) filed 9/4: "While fishing from my kayak, I caught an 18-1/4" smallmouth bass – my Personal Best." (See photo)



Smallmouth; Kuna photo

VENANGO COUNTY

Allegheny River

Gene Winger (Oil City) filed 9/9: "On August 27, Peg and I fished the evening below Oil City, picking up eight smallies, mostly dinks in the 14 to 16 inch range. All fish were caught on Winco **Solid Body River Darters** and **Laminated Wacky Worms**. Thursday morning I was running the Oil City eddy when I hit something submerged in 15 feet of water, ripping the intake scoop of my OB jet. I was anticipating a few weeks of down time but thanks to **Wiegel Brothers Marine**, I was back on the water the same day. Thank you Kneal and crew for great service and fast repair!"

Winger continues: "On Saturday, 8/31, Chris Wehr and I fished the morning below Franklin. With water heavily stained from Wednesday's rain, the fishing was slow, landing only 2 walleyes and a couple small bass. We ran above French Creek (which was bringing in the dirty water) to the headwater of the K-Mart Eddy where we landed 7 smallmouths – all on **Winco Predator Craws**. Saturday evening, I fished with my granddaughter, who landed a walleye and several nice bass – all on Winco Predator Craws and Wacky Worms. I fished several evenings during the first week of September averaging a dozen smallies on each outing. Winco Solid Body River Darters seemed to work best. Water conditions are good, but floating weeds are making things challenging." (See Livewell photos)



Winger on River; DB photo

Jimmy & Dawn Whitely (Kennerdell) filed 9/9: "We went catfishing in the Allegheny River twice in the last week. August 31 was a great night. Our poles were not in the water for 5 minutes, and we were slamming flathead nonstop for two hours until we ran out of bait. We landed 15 and lost several others, including one that snapped 30 pound test line. The largest cat of the night was 31 inches and weighed 12 pounds. We kept that big one but released the rest. We went again on September 7 but it was slower going. No bites for the first hour, then they started slamming baits. Several times we had two poles with cats on at the same time. Got a little wet from the rain, but had a great time. Caught and released 13 that night." (See Livewell photos)



Flathead catfish;
Whitely photo

Ed Lawrence (Union City) filed 9/9: "Friends and I drifted fished the Allegheny River last Monday after a rainstorm. We caught several smallmouth bass by jiggging **Yum soft plastics** in bright colors, and watched another fisherman bring in a dandy 17" 3-lb. smallmouth. Its acrobatics provided an exciting moment to a peaceful float." (See Livewell photo)

Bill Logan (Pleasantville) filed 9/3: "I caught a 13 pound 7 ounce drum on a bass jig while fishing the Allegheny. Thought I had a record walleye for initial seconds!" (See Livewell photo)

Steve Udick (Oil City) filed 9/5: "I met up with Terry Corbett from Rockmere Friday afternoon. We had been catching a lot of small smallmouth prior to Friday. I think the barometer finally dropped and the bigger fish turned on. Terry landed a 20" heavy bass (see pic) on a **Zoom Baby Brush Hog**. We ended up

the day with four bass in the 17- to 18-inch range. Most came on **Zoom Super Flukes**. Terry has since landed another 20 inch and a 19 inch smallmouth, both above Rockmere. On Labor Day I took 12-year old Chris Marczak (from Waterford) out to teach him how to fish Super Flukes. He picked it up quickly...on his forth cast he had a big bass on but the monster won the battle and got off near the boat. He then went on to catch five bass in the first hour. On his last cast of the day, he landed a 17-1/2" smallmouth. We ended the day with 10 nice fish and a couple smaller ones." (See Livewell photos)

RJ Graham (Clarion) filed 9/3: "Over Labor Day, I fished the Allegheny River with Duff Kerle. We launched in Oil City and went downstream to the K-Mart riffles where we drifted crawfish-colored tube jigs. We picked up good numbers of smallies and lots of smaller ones. We also had luck throwing a **Super Fluke** around the shore rocks." Duff added: "We hooked and lost a lot of bass that day – they were hitting when the lure touched the water. Total in the boat was 15 bass." (See Livewell photos)

Angler Al (Franklin) filed 9/4: "On Wednesday, 9/4. I met my fishing buddy Stan at 6:45 p.m. at Oil City marina. We motored south and anchored on a spot we like. On my first cast using an orange floating jig-head tipped with spunky creek bait, a spitfire smallie hammered it. Battle won. Stan joined in with a catch of his own – a 16" flathead cat on live bait. After landing it, he boated his 1st legal walleye of the year. By the time we left, I landed 3 good size cats and Stan added another one to this total. A great evening on the Allegheny!" (See Livewell photos)

Livewell Overflow starts here

Allegheny River this past week

Al Bell and buddy Stan on the Oil City Pool



The Whitley's
Catfish Fever



The Livewell

Brought to you by:



French Creek:



Ed Lawrence photos



Boat of the Month: New Kingfisher river jets are in. Stop by to see the hottest boats .

Allegheny River:



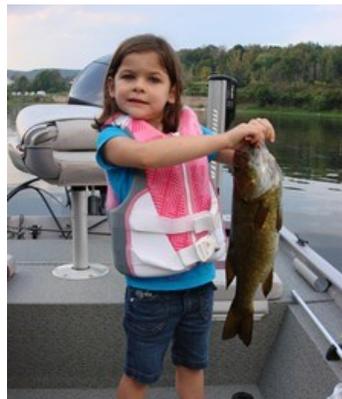
Terry Corbett; Udick photo



Chris Marczak; Udick photo



Chris Wehr; Winger photo



Olivia Wehr; Winger Photo



13 lb. drum; Logan photo

Smallmouth Explosion

Allegheny River this week:

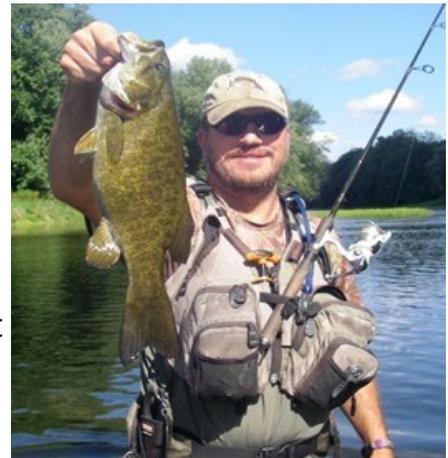


Duff Kerle



RJ Graham

Pete Cartwright spent 4 days this week fishing the Allegheny between Tionesta and Franklin. He caught good number of bass, including several 17inches; biggest one was 20 inches.

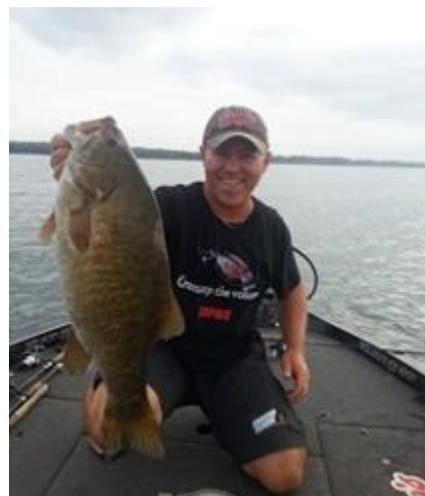


Pete Cartwright

Lake Erie deep:



Lefebre's 7-pounder



Lefebre's 8-pounder

PROCESSED FOR PERFORMANCE



Gamma Fishing Tips

Darl Black: Over the weekend, I fished both Canadohta Lake and Conneaut Lake. I had a tough time on both lakes. No action on the Canadohta docks or weedbeds; with my Garmin echoMAP 50 I found what appeared to be some crappies stacked on point at 15 feet in Canadohta but could not get a bite. However, with sonar I did pinpoint the current thermocline on the lake at roughly 19/20 feet – should not be any fish below that depth until lake turns over. I caught one big smallmouth in about 2 feet of water on a soft jerkbait and not another bite. Puzzled where the fish are in Canadohta right now.

On Sunday, the catching wasn't any better on Conneaut Lake than Saturday on Canadohta. On deeper Conneaut Lake, the thermocline was clearly visible on the Garmin at 28 feet – the traditional depth for late summer on Conneaut. If you look closely at the Garmin photo you can see faint specks on the screen starting at about 28 feet and going deeper; looks like someone did pencil point pricks below 28 feet. That reading is likely suspended particulate that has been trapped down deep all summer. Notice a massive fish school on the left several feet above the thermocline. Look closely and you can see arches of individual fish arcs near top of mass. I think this is a tight school of white bass, rather than crappie. Found similar schools on several drop-offs around the lake, but no takers when we dropped spoons to them. I'll be looking for that deepwater white bass bite in mid-October



Sour September bites happen when the first noticeable cold fronts hit the area; one was rolling on Sunday morning. Pike seem to be more active than any other gamefish in this situation. When targeting tight-lipped largemouth under these circumstances, drop-shotting small worms on six-pound Gamma Edge is one of the best presentations...although that didn't even help me on Sunday!

Winner of the spool of Gamma Line for this issue of Fishing Report: Pete Cartwright

Winner of the Prize Pack of Baits for this issue of the Fishing Report: AJ Graham

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.darlblack.blogspot.com

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