

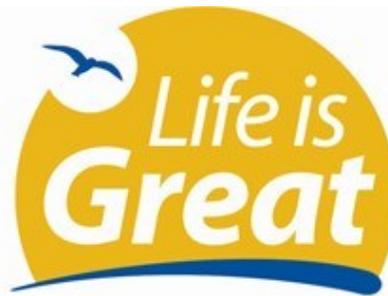
Northwest

Pennsylvania

Fishing Report

Reporting Date:

May 8, 2014



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

by Darl Black

It's the first week of May but it feels more like April. Let's hope May turns out to be a better fishing month than April. Well, maybe that's not a fair statement. April certainly had some high points. The most notable was the outstanding small-mouth fishing on the Allegheny. Walleye fishing at Pymatuning was pretty good once it got going. However, crappie fishing was off the entire month. But recent reports are showing hope for brighter crappie fishing in the coming weeks. Small-mouth bass finally made it into Presque Isle Bay this spring. And the latest word from Wilhelm is that the bass are fat and sassy. And course trout fishermen with bait were successful even if fly fishermen have encountered poor water conditions. All in all, April wasn't that bad. But let's hope May is better!



Ed Atts photo– stunning shot!

NW PA FISHING REPORT: MAY 8, 2014

Brought to you by PA GREAT LAKES REGION tourism

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

NEWS

Birmingham, Alabama – The top **100 Best Bass Lakes of 2014** according to Bassmaster Magazine includes two Pennsylvania waters: Presque Isle Bay in the 28th spot and Pymatuning Lake at 71st. The only two Pennsylvania lakes on the top 100 are in NW Pennsylvania – now that's a feather in the cap for PA GREAT LAKES REGION.

Harrisburg, PA – The **Mentored Youth Fishing Day** will be this Saturday, May 10. Check the PA Fish and Boat Commission website at www.fish.state.pa.us for details. At selected specially-stocked waters, youth can fish for free with a free Mentored Youth Fishing Permit or with a purchased voluntary youth license when accompanied by an adult with a regular PA fishing license. In NW PA the Mentored Youth Fishing Waters are Mercer County's Buhl Lake in Buhl Park. In Erie County the sites are the Basin Ponds on Presque Isle State Park and Fairview Upper Gravel Pit.

Titusville, PA – On May 26, **Oil Creek State Park** will take part in the state-wide initiative allowing everyone to fish for free. The event at the park will take place from 10 a.m. to noon, and anglers will meet up at the Jersey Bridge parking lot, near Drake Well Museum.

Western PA Kayak Anglers will hold a kayak fishing event on Pymatuning on May 18 and another one on Lake Wilhelm on June 28. They are a membership-based non-profit group but anyone can participate, paying a non-member fee if they do not join. For more information, contact Noah Heck noah-heck@yahoo.com; 724-989-1630.

Last Chance to get a free ticket to the **Crappie Fishing Techniques Seminar** at Pymatuning Lake on Thursday, May 15 at 6 p.m. The Crawford Count Convention & Visitors Bureau is only place with remaining tickets; stop by the office during business hours to pick up a ticket. Call ahead to see if any tickets are still available.

FRENCH CREEK – Flowing through all four counties

Dustin Shay (Meadville); filed 5/8: Dustin reports limiting out on walleyes several evenings since the opening day last Saturday. He was not fishing live bait, but soft plastic swim baits.

Angler Al Bell (Franklin):

- 4/24: "I decided to skip what would have been a fabulous night of trout fishing, and went to French Creek for smallies. Didn't take long before one smacked a shiner on a suspended drift. Thereafter, another and another and another - then it slowed. I caught one more before dark. Live bait is all they wanted. Average size was 14 to 15 inches."
- 5/5: "French Creek was a bit muddy but otherwise fishable. However, I did not do great. Caught one small northern and lost something I did not see."



Angler Al photo

Decided to try Sugar Creek for trout – caught 2 walleyes, 3 browns and 2 rainbows. I assisted a young lad, Jeff Orr, of Village of Sugarcreek, with his first walleye catch. Then it fell into the creek while holding it up for a picture. I did get a picture of his nice trout he caught. All fish were caught on 3 to 5 inch baitfish.

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Jon Bobanick @ **Consumer Direct Sports**; filed 5/7: “Our customers are talking about the walleye bite at Pymatuning and waiting for the crappies to start hitting in the shallows. Of course, trout fishing is still going strong in area streams.”

Richter’s Tackle Shop; filed 5/7: Reports good walleye catches over the weekend with most customers using nightcrawlers.

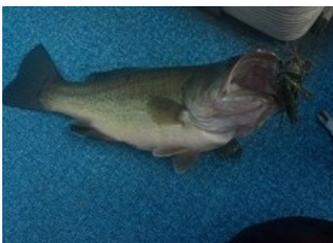
Pymatuning Lake Association; filed 5/3: The Association announced the winners of the May 3 Crappie Tournament. A total of 114 teams participated with 64 teams weighing in fish. Robert E. Wilhite (Prospect, PA) and Lucas Wilhite (Slippery Rock, PA) captured 1st place with five crappies going 7 lbs. 4 oz.; they won \$1,000.00. The Lunker Fish of 1 lb. 13.2 oz. went to team of Kevin O’Rourke (North Tonawanda, NY) and James Janese (Youngstown, NY).

Hooker’s Fishing Log @ **Hill’s Country Store**

4/22: “Jim Morell, Frank Parry and Roger Adamiak fished with Hooker’s Fishing Taxi on Saturday the 19th. Post frontal conditions and wind didn’t prevent them from having fun. We fished places out of the wind but with sun shining on them.”

4/29: “Here we are the end of April and the season has already become a whirlwind of changing conditions. We started out the month fishing the old pads in a couple feet of water, suspending a Hooker Bug below a small bobber, and catching slab black crappies. But cold returned and fish moved out. Crappies have been up and down in depth changes, making them hard to track. But we were able to locate enough crappies to keep Hooker Fishing Taxi guests in quality fish. Crappies were being caught on Bobby Garland Baits – sometimes tipped with a waxworm or small minnow. We start shallow and methodically working deeper. Post frontal fish are still eating, but the bite is light. If your bobber moves even a little, set the hook.”

5/7: “The musky fishermen that have been out with me twice continued to catch some very nice largemouth bass on those musky baits. During April the crappie fishing was spotty, however over the weekend I’ve found black crappies moving back into the shallows to spawn. The lake is high so there is a lot of new cover to fish. Many of the crappies are in the 1 to 1.5 pound range. And out deep the white crappies are finally waking up – I’ve caught them fishing the deeper stumps and brushpiles.”



RJ Graham, Tionesta; filed 4/28: “On Saturday, April 26, the wind made it tough to fish Pymatuning but the bass were hungry. In six hours we caught about 30 bass – it was a great day! I fished the Clarion County Bassmasters Open on Sunday, weighing in 16.77 pounds. I won lunker with a 5.2 pound largemouth, and missed a check for 6th place by under an ounce. I enclosed a picture from practice.”

Jim McClave (Mercer); filed 4/28: "On 4/26, I fished out the North End around Tuttle Point in 4 to 5 feet of water. We caught lots of perch – some nice size ones – and 12 walleyes between my buddy and me; but only 4 eyes were keepers. They measured from 15 to 18 inches. All were caught with crawlers on the bottom. It was windy and cold!"

Scott Kinard (Butler); filed 4/27: "I caught a big musky today while fishing a bass tournament on Pymatuning. It hit a spinnerbait while fishing a row of stumps on a ledge in about 5 feet of water. I didn't have anything to measure it with, but figured it was close to 4-foot long."

Ed Phillips (New Castle); filed 4/22: "My wife and I fished Pymatuning out of Linesville on 4/21. We are fly fishing people so we went into the backwater bays and targeted deadfalls. We didn't have much luck, catching only 4 big bluegills. By early afternoon there was a slight breeze so we got some minnows and drifted them between the two big islands. We had no luck with this method either, but we talked to others who were using worms and catching bluegills and perch. Not sure where the crappies and walleyes are at, but it was a nice day to be on the water."

Canadohta Lake

Jerry VanTassel @ **Timberland Bait**; filed 5/7: "At last! Anglers are catching crappies in the canal and lagoon at the north end of Canadohta. There are lots of crappies being caught including a 15.5" one that was brought to the shop. The walleye bite is slow, although a couple nice ones were reported, including a 24 incher caught on a blue/chrome **Rat-L-Trap** from a dock. Other customers are catching numbers of northern pike in the outflow of Union City Dam (French Creek). Although I could not get them for the walleye opener because of ice on lakes in Minnesota, I now have leeches at the store."

Woodcock Lake

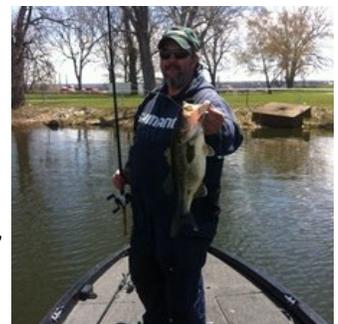
Jerry VanTassel @ **Timberland Bait** reports numbers of small and occasionally legal walleye taken in the spillway of Woodcock Dam.

ERIE COUNTY

Presque Isle Bay

Al @ **B.A.C. Bait**; filed 5/7: "Smallmouth bass are finally in the Bay in good numbers. Some anglers are catching crappies in the Lagoons. Perch are spotty, but some have been reported off the North Pier. There are still a number of steelhead and brown trout in the bay, with catches made off the East Pier and at the Water Works."

Steve Hughes (Clarion); filed 5/5: "I made a trip to PIB on Sunday. It was very windy but we managed to fish the first break outside of the flats for an hour or so. Smallies are there waiting to move up. We caught a dozen smallmouths on tubes. After getting blown off the open bay we went to Misery Bay and threw **Rat-L-Traps** for largemouth bass. Things are really heating up. The young fellow I had fishing was Ryan Markel; this was his first experience with Erie smallies. He caught his biggest smallmouth of life so far – see the photos."



Hughes photo

Thomas Watral (Erie); filed 5/2: "Fishing in the Bay has been on the slow side. Most catches have been crappies at the Head of The Bay and around the marinas. Lake Pleasant has been hot for trout. Still some steelhead in the streams along with stocked trout."

Paul Stewart (Butler); filed 5/1: "Not much to report. Last Sunday we fished all over PIB with no luck. The cold front on Saturday had the fish shut down. No one we talked to was doing any good. Weather has got to improve."

Erie Tributary Creeks

Jeff @ **Poor Richards**; filed 5/7: "Smallmouth bass are in the lower part of Elk in good numbers. There are still some steelhead filtering back downstream as far up as Foley's Campground. Suckers are in Elk, too. The water temp along the lake is only 47 degrees so there is not much happening with the walleye along the shore at night; walleye should come in at 50 to 55 degrees. No boats going out here on the West Side, but I hear reports of boat anglers getting smallmouth around old Hammermill plant on the East Side. And one of my customers was in stocking up on lake trout lures; he informed me the lake trout were hitting off Northeast, reporting a 17 pounder."

Ric @ **Trout Run Bait**; filed 5/4: "Steelhead fishing has been good in most of the creeks from East to West. Nice size fresh fish are still arriving; the rain we had the past week brought in more fish. Shiners, crawlers, prince nymphs and 2-inch **Berkley Power Minnows** are catching fish. Soon crayfish and leeches will be the hot ticket. Fair numbers of smallmouth present in Elk Creek. Anglers are catching these on live bait and small **Rapalas**. The bass fishing will get better as the weather warms. Very high winds made casting for walleye off shore a bad choice. Those in boats trolling at night have caught some walleye but fishing is limited due to high winds. Good sign the 'eyes are waiting to hit the shore. The ice is finally gone and lake trout are being caught off North East. Spoke to one young man who landed 29 lakera this morning."

Thomas Watral (Erie); filed 5/6: "I went out to check the creeks on the East Side. Each one I stopped at had good amount of trout in them – 4 Mile, 7 Mile, 10 Mile and 20 Mile. The water is very clear, so it's best to stay out of the water and cast crawlers, salted minnows or corn from the shore. For steelhead, my best fly is the Zug Bug."

MERCER COUNTY

Lake Wilhelm

Mike Horrobin @ **Jigger Tackle**; filed 5/7: "Guys report catches of somewhat better size crappies at Wilhelm this past week. The bass seem to have more weight to them as well this spring. Let us hope the improved fishing at Wilhelm continues through the season."



Kinard photo

Fergie's Bait reports catches of crappies and bluegills on jigs tipped with maggots. Shore anglers around Launch 3 and at Dugan's Run area seem to be doing best.

Scott Kinard (Butler); filed 5/5: "I decided to give Wilhelm a try for the first time this year on Saturday 5/3. Only had about 4 hours on the water and that included sitting out a hail storm on shore! I found the water temp around 54 degrees, and with the sonar I observed plenty of fish stacked up on the deeper drop-offs

around schools of shad. After unsuccessful attempts to catch these suspended fish, I went shallower around weeds and found bass in specific areas. I managed to land three largemouths in the 4-pound class along with several smaller bass. All bass were fat! Looked like they had eaten softball-sized shad! I figured the shallow bass were there to feed up since the areas which held bass were on the backsides of secondary points creating current breaks from the wind. It was a decent, fun-filled day at Wilhelm. Lots of shad dead around shore. Hopefully this is a positive sign of a Wilhelm on the road back!"

Shenango River Lake

Jon @ **CDS**; filed 5/7: "Several of our customers were talking about decent catches of walleye at Shenango over opening weekend."

Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 5/7: "I fished Shenango for a few hours on Monday. I found some nice crappies in deep water. Nothing shallow yet but after this warm spell, crappies should be on the move next week – just in time for Crappie Camp."

VENANGO COUNTY

Trout Streams

Mike Laskowski @ **Oil Creek Outfitters**; filed 5/7: "Oil Creek has been high and discolored more often than not this spring. We had a couple good days of low water for fly fishing the past two days, but more rain is on the way. The only way to catch trout in these conditions is to sling hardware, such as **Rapala Minnows** – but no fly-fisherman wants to do that!"

Mike Horrobin @ **Jigger Tackle**; filed 5/7: "Customers have been catching a lot of trout in local streams on bait, but I'm not hearing of any big fish."

Bill @ **Griffins Bait & Tackle**; filed 5/5: "Trout stocking occurred on Sugar Creek on Tuesday, 4/22. This round of stocking brought out trout fishermen in full force, as all pull-offs along Rt. 427 were full of vehicles. Sugar has been flowing strong from the rains this past week. All fishing has slowed since the last stocking due to inclement weather. Creek clarity is changing and the flow has receded as of May 3. Stocking occurred again on Monday, 5/5. Sugar Lake reported as 55 degrees."

Chuck Sari (Franklin); filed 4/29: "I caught a 21-inch brown trout on 4/24 in upper Big Sandy on a brown trout colored **Rapala**."

Allegheny River

Dale Black (Oil City); filed 5/7: "I got out for a few hours yesterday, but fishing wasn't so great. I caught 10 or 12 bass, but no pattern. Some shallow, some deep – hit and miss. I'm thinking that hot bite of late April is over."

Frank Malek (Oil City); filed 5/6: "Bass catching was non-stop the other evening – I lost count of smallmouth caught. I did get three bonus walleye, including a 30" 8.5-pound 'eye."

Al Bell (Franklin); filed 5/6: "My neighbor Cory Breene asked me to join him on the river, but I could not make it. He sent me a photo and said a blue/chrome **Rat-L-Trap** in 4.5 feet of water did the trick for a total of 10 smallmouths."



Malek photo

Scott Kinard (Butler); filed 4/28: "Frank Malek and I went to the Allegheny last Sunday and did very well. Everyone I know that has been over to river in the past week has been hammering big numbers. The place is amazing. Photos included."

Pete Cartwright (Pittsburgh); filed 4/28: "We fished the Allegheny River on Saturday, 4/26 near President and Sunday 4/27 near Oil City. On Saturday we had a guest with us and fished from a jet boat. The winds were howling, which made for not so great conditions. Calmer areas were hard to come by. We did find some bigger bass in slack water – they all were over 4 pounds with the biggest going 4.7 pounds, and all were 20 inches long. Our total was 39 fish. In the evening, we bank-fished for a few ours and caught another 26 fish. On Sunday we got out early, and caught some walleye. The biggest eye was 21 inches. We also got several 18-inch bass. After a break, we went out wading and the action picked up, with Mike Lapkowitz landing the biggest smallmouth of the trip at 21 inches."

Editor's Note: Since that report, Pete informed me that he caught some smallmouths on the **Get Bit Bait Tubes** which he won in the Tackle Prize Pack from the Fishing Report.

Chris Wolfgang (Oil City); filed 4/28: "I hit the river with Dale yesterday morning until about noon. Dale had 25 smallmouths and I caught 26 fish, including a rainbow trout. I caught all my fish on jigs and tubes. Most of the bass were in the 17 to 19-inch range; only a few were smaller."

Gene Winger (Oil City)

- 4/26: "My son-in-law Chris Wehr and I did morning fishing between Oil City and Franklin, picking up 25 good-size smallies with the best one going 20 inches. All came on **Winco C.W. Smallies Delights** and **3.25" Predator Craws**. Most fish were stacked in backwater breaks and deeper shoreline pockets."
- 4/27: "Chris and I did the morning run between Oil City and Franklin, picking up 20 smallies on the same baits as Saturday. Fish were in the same places."
- 4/28: "I started the morning in the Oil City eddy, but things were slow – picking up only a few smallies along the Rte. 8 flats. Mid-morning I moved to the IA eddy where I found smallies stacked on backwater breaks...game on! Between Oil City and IA eddy I boated 40 smallies on Winco baits – Smallie Delights in deep fast water and River Darters in shallow pockets. Great morning on the river!"



Winger photo

Typo Corrections: In the April 21st Report, in the Landing Net in reference to the Allegheny River bite, the line should have read "catch & release numbers between 50 and 100 smallmouth per day" (100 not 10). In the earlier April Report, a caught Erie brown trout was mentioned as being "28 pounds" but it should have read "28 inches."

Win a Lure with a big bass photo! Steve Monoyoudis of Pennsylvania-based Hubs Chub topwater lure company wants to see photos of Big Bass. For the next issue of the NW PA Fishing Report, Steve will provide a 3-inch Hubs Chub for the longest smallmouth and a 4-inch topwater for the longest largemouth. Fish are to measured to the nearest 1/4" and the photo must show the entire fish held by an angler.

The Livewell

Brought to you by:



Allegheny River



Boat of the Month: Don't wait any longer!
Now is the time to get that jet boat!

Photos from Scott Kinard



Cory Breene



Photos from Pete Cartwright



Livewell Overflow

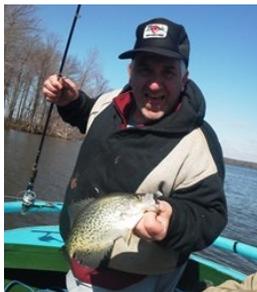
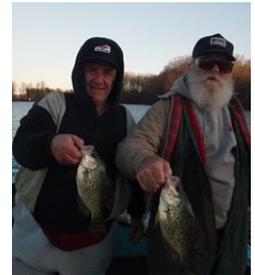
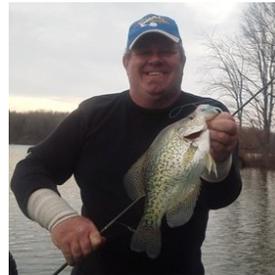


Pymatuning musky—Scott Kinard



Wilhelm largemouth bass—Scott Kinard

Pymatuning Lake gallery of fish—courtesy of Hooker at Hills County Store

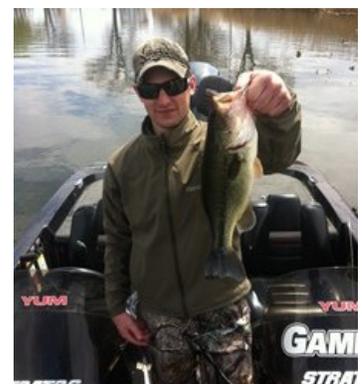
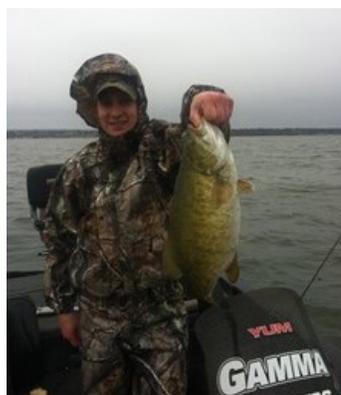


Presque Isle Bay

Ryan Markel's PB smallmouth

And chunky largemouth

Steve Hughes photos



PROCESSED FOR PERFORMANCE



Gamma Fishing Tips

Darl Black: On behalf of area tourism agencies, I'll be hosting an outdoor writer event next week on Pymatuning Lake and Shenango River Lake. The focus will be on crappies. I anticipate black crappies to be in very shallow cover, while white crappies will likely be holding in 10 to 18 feet of water on deep stumps and man-made fish structures. I'll have three rods in boat. First rod will be a light action 6-foot spinning rod with 4-pound Gamma Polyflex Line for all-round casting of 1/16-oz jigs. Second rod will be a 10-foot stiff-tip dipping rod with 8-pound Gamma Polyflex for dipping a jig-n-minnow around beaver lodges, deadfalls and emerging lily pad beds. Finally, for drifting over deep offshore cover, I'll have a special 9-foot rod with a forgiving action which will be spool with 8-pound Gamma Torque Braid and a 3-foot leader of 6-pound Gamma Edge Fluorocarbon. This combination of braid and leader will provide excellent sensitivity, yet if hung-up on deep cover the leader will break before the braid. Go Gamma!

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

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.darblack.blogspot.com

Darl is on Facebook

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