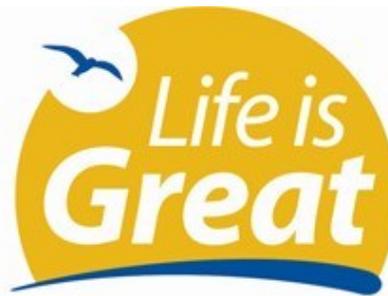


## Northwest

## Pennsylvania

## Fishing Report



**Reporting Date:**

**July 29, 2013**

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

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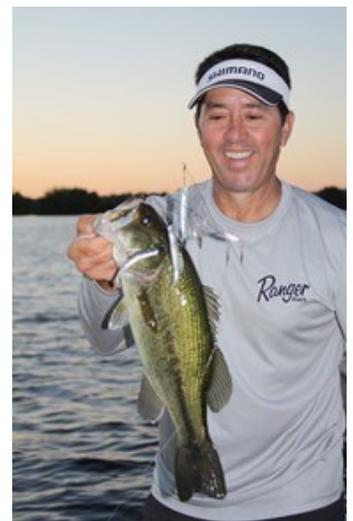
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The NW PA Fishing Report provides timely angling information for Crawford, Erie, Mercer and Venango Counties – covering all species and all waters open to the public. The fishing comments and photos are offered by regional tackle shops and area anglers, 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](mailto: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

It's the middle of summer, and fish are biting...if you know where to go and what to fish for. The Allegheny River smallmouth bite is excellent, offshore walleyes at Lake Erie are raging, crappies are going crazy at Pymatuning and Shenango, Wilhelm has been giving up some big largemouth for the first time in several years, and the white bass are making an appearance at Conneaut Lake. I was on Conneaut this past week throwing an umbrella rig for white bass – what a blast! When I handed it to Bryan to try, he caught this nice largemouth bass which was suspended below the white bass school busting minnow on the surface. No excuses, Go Fish!

**by Darl Black**



## NW PA Fishing Report for July 29, 2013

Sponsored by PA GREAT LAKES REGION tourism

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

### FRENCH CREEK – Flowing through all four counties

Editor's Note: As noted in an earlier Fishing Report, French Creek has been designated as a PA Water Trail. Separate brochures are now available for the Upper French Creek and Lower French Creek, featuring a detailed access map and valuable information. Pick up your Upper and Lower French Creek map/guide at French Creek Valley Conservancy in downtown Meadville or request one from the Crawford County Visitors Bureau at 814-333-1258; [www.visitcrawford.org](http://www.visitcrawford.org).

Dustin Shay (Meadville) filed 7/28: "Even though French Creek has good flow and good color courtesy of our wet summer and it looks perfect for fishing, the bite has been a bit slow for me. I've been trying to catch a big catfish, but it seems I'll have to wait until conditions change in August as the cats don't seem to be biting yet. Getting an occasional walleye, but not many and not of any size. Catching mostly smallmouth in the Creek – which isn't a bad thing, of course, just not what I wanted to target. After seeing those huge carp that were shot with a bow, I'm going to try to catch a big carp on hook and line this week."

John Wilpula (Conneaut Lake) filed 7/28: "Outings have been pretty sporadic due to weather, but the action has been consistent for us on French Creek and the Allegheny. We recently acquired a tandem fishing kayak that has allowed our two boys to tag along now and experience French Creek for the first time. They've been picking up smallmouth and rock bass on Beetle Spins and stick worms – having a blast! So much fun that I doubt I'll be going by myself much from now on – not that's a bad thing."



John Wilpula photo

### Angler Al's French Creek Diary:

Thursday July 18<sup>th</sup> – My guest Buck Kise from the Pocono region of our state timed it perfectly. French Creek had finally come around. From pre-dawn until 9 am we worked the stretch above Polly's Dairy Isle. Buck caught a total of 7 smallies. The biggest was a 3-lb, 16 incher. I released a total of (12) and the largest one was 4-lb at 18 inches. Baits of choice were night crawlers, creek chubs and a **Rebel Crawfish** lure. (See live well).

Friday July 19<sup>th</sup> – From 6:30 am until 1 pm, Buck had a great day catching & releasing trout on Sugar Creek. It took him around 2 dozen nightcrawlers, but the end result was several rainbows, a brown trout and a couple good smallies. Seeing I sell crawlers they'll be plenty more of them to use tomorrow morning on Frenchy, if we beat the storm front predicted to cover the region.

Saturday July 20<sup>th</sup> – At daylight bad weather prevailed. We changed gears for the day and decided to go late evening. I threw out the traps so we'd have some live bait. During the last half hour of daylight, we hooked up on a total of 7 average size smallies and 1 beauty.

Tuesday July 23<sup>th</sup> – Beat it for French Creek just before dark. Put out a floating jighead w/shiner on one set up, and started casting a **Tiny Torpedo** top water plug on another rod. Thought I had a trophy-size smallmouth take it, but ended up being one of those gosh darn bowfins – 26-inches of fertilizer is what it became. In my opinion they're seriously hurting the eco-system on our waterways!!! Angler Al

## CRAWFORD COUNTY

### Pymatuning Lake

Dave Richter (Richter's Tackle Shop) filed 7/29: "From the Espyville Causeway to the Dam, walleyes are still hitting hot and heavy for the guys drifting with nightcrawlers in 7 to 12 feet of water. An unusually strong walleye bite for this late in the summer. A few anglers are targeting crappies on the deep brush of the South end and still catching nice ones. Big bluegills are being taken as well from deeper wood cover, and channel cats are everywhere – but still no reports of muskies being caught."

Chris Hall (Espyville Outdoors) filed 7/29: "Walleye bite is still strong! Many limits have been reported from 8 to 12 feet of water... all over the lake. **Lindy Shadlings, Berkley Flicker Shads and AFF Walleye Wizards** were the hot baits this week. Crappies are eating like crazy along the Causeway! A minnow on **Lindy Fuzz-E-Grub** is the ticket, as well as minnows on a plain hook."

Hooker (Hill's County Store) filed 7/27: "On Tuesday I had David Polovian and his guest for the second time on Hooker's Fishing Taxi. We went to the North End of Pymatuning for an afternoon trip. While launching, a dark thunderstorm rolled in. We waited for the hardest rain to stop and then headed to the Stumps. We were fishing light line and jigs. There was a vicious bite going on for about 20 minutes. We caught over a dozen thick slab crappies to 14 inches. Then it stopped as if someone threw a switch. A few minutes later, David set the hook into something big on a 4-pound test line. After a several minute fight, we slid the net under a 22 inch largemouth – which we released after measuring it. On Saturday, I had Jeff Sampson out on the South End, focusing on wood in 8 feet of water. But the fish were finicky so we went to vertical jigging to keep the bait in front of them longer. We caught several nice crappies and bluegills. Then we moved to an offshore hump that topped at 12 feet, where we fished vertical for additional crappies. That is where Jeff got his big fish of the day – a 21-inch walleye on a **Bobby Garland Baby Shad** in Screamer color. We moved to deeper water and started catching perch on almost every cast. Then it happened – three boats moved in next to us and dropped anchors. However, they could not catch fish at the rate we were, and when we left, I suggested to them to stop in at the shop to see what magic bait we were using. Seems the invitation was taken seriously because an hour later one of the boats pulled into the shop's parking lot just as we were photographing Jeff's catch. Seeing what Jeff caught, they bought a bunch of Bobby Garland baits!"



### Conneaut Lake

Steve Hughes (Clarion) filed 7/29: "This past week I fished Conneaut on Thursday and then again on Friday in a tournament. Both days I caught decent bass on a Fat Free Shad crankbait along the weed-line before the sun got too high. But once the sun was up, I had to go to drop-shot rigging of small plastic to catch any additional bass – but they were small largemouth." (See Livewell)

Ernie Pate (Butler) filed 7/26: "I fished the charity tournament at Conneaut Lake on Friday, but our boat only had five fish. Sixteen pounds won it, and Steve Hughes' team came in second with 14 pounds. It was a tough day at Conneaut."



Bryan Stuyvesant (Meadville) filed 7/25: "Darl and I fished Conneaut Lake for a few hours this evening looking for a big smallmouth, but had to settle for average size fish. But just as we were headed into the ramp at sunset, we observed fish busting the surface near one of the mid-lake humps. I cast a **Rico** topwater thinking it was smallmouth and came up with a white. Darl threw a **Yumbrella Ultralight Flash Mob rig** with **Gene Larew 3" Lon John Minnows** (3 hook baits and two dummies as allowed in PA) and almost had the rod yanked from his hands. After catching another white or two, Darl handed the umbrella rig to me. On my first cast, I thought I was going overboard from a powerful hit – thought it was a huge smallmouth but turned out to be a white bass! Incredible! On a later cast, I counted the rig down several feet below the surface activity and caught a nice largemouth on it – pretty exciting." (See Livewell)

Dan Mincin (Finleyville) filed 7/20: Announcement of the *4<sup>th</sup> Annual Walt's Tavern Bass Buddy Tournament* for Saturday, August 24; \$100.00 per 2-person team. For more information and an application, contact Dan at 724-986-6557.

### Canadohta Lake

Jerry VanTassel (Timberland Bait) filed 7/29: "Guys are catching bluegills, crappies and perch tight to the weedline on Canadohta; no musky reports. Over at Clear Lake (i.e. Sparty Pond), the northern pike are hitting like crazy late in the evening according to some customers."

## **ERIE COUNTY**

### Lake Erie

Jeff Staaf (Poor Richard's Tackle) filed 7/29: "Good news! Walleyes are strong out at 60 to 80 feet, with fish suspended at 40 to 50 feet. Plugs, worm harnesses and spoons are all producing. Color is important...purple, purple-pink and purple-black on spoons and harness blades. Best plug colors are green, blue or purple. There's a lot of perch at 52 feet straight out of Walnut."

Dam Seaman (Elk Creek Sports Center) filed 7/29: "We've been having a lot of wind lately on the lake, but when boats can get out, they are catching fish. The hottest walleye bite out of Elk Creek launch has been in the rocks at 28 to 30 feet down by Virginia Beach. This is great place for the guy with a smaller boat, fishing the old fashion way with crawler harness bouncing among the rocks – hook a fish, stop the boat and fight the fish – real fishing! Guys have been limiting out in this shallower water. Of course the big pack of walleyes is out at 60 to 80 feet, but you need a big boat. Perch fishing has been off and on – the smaller schools are still moving and have not set up anywhere; usually can find some at 38 to 42 feet out of Elk Creek. But here is some exciting news...some guys stopped in to show off their hand scars from noodling channel catfish from downed tree snags in Elk Creek. Yes noodling! They claim to have taken cats up to 30 pounds by sticking their hand in dark holes and letting the cat clamp down – just like on TV show, which where they likely got the idea. But if you are not into noodling, you still catch catfish

at night with hook & line and a crawler for bait around the ramp at the township park on the west side of Elk Creek near the mouth.”

Ric Gauriloff (Trout Run Tackle) filed 7/28: “Walleye fishing has been good this past week. The chop from the waves has been beneficial to those chasing walleye. One day they are finding them in close at 38 feet and the next morning the bite is out at 60 to 70 feet. Worm harnesses are working, with watermelon and copper blades getting the most attention. Worm harnesses of course draw non-targeted species, too. Plugs in purple or blue are working as well. I’ve done well with a rainbow trout pattern put out by **Renosky’s Lures**. Perch bite has been slow, with fish here and there. It takes time to find them. The head boats have been catching fish but not the jumbos. Plenty of catfish being caught in the lake and in Elk Creek. A variety of baits are working, but usually the more scent you get in the water, the better your success.”

Keith Eshbaugh (Dutch Fork Lures) filed 7/26: “Friends and I caught a bunch of walleyes out of Presque Isle in 62 to 65 feet of water; most of fish were 4 to 8 pounds. We were trolling **Dutch Fork Ghost Blade harnesses**, with a 6-foot lead, 2 ounces of inline weight, 70-90 feet back behind a planer board at about 1.2 mph. Conditions were cold front, sunny, NE wind, waves 2-4 feet.” (See Livewell)

#### Presque Isle Bay

Thomas Watral (Erie) filed 7/27: “I talked to a number of anglers yesterday and today. I’m told most of the smallmouth bass had headed back out to the lake. But anglers are catching a few bass on live minnows, buzz baits and Bomber plugs. The crappies are hitting just about everywhere around the Bay; most are being taken on live minnows and Power Bait minnow jigs. A few perch are still being caught on the North and South pier – but they are on the small side. On July 24, I talked to a guy who caught 28 nice crappies from the Docks by fishing a jig straight down along the wall. Back on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, I caught nice crappies, large sunfish and over 63 perch on minnows and crawlers on perch rigs. On the 20<sup>th</sup>, I got 20 silver bass, 20 perch and 9 crappies fishing from the docks.”

#### Edinboro Lake

Steve Hughes (Clarion) filed 7/28: “I fished a benefit tournament on Edinboro this past Saturday, the day after a Conneaut Lake benefit event. The young person fishing with me got land all the fish hooked. We won the tournament with 5 bass for a total of 10 pounds by cranking **Fat Free Shads** in 7 to 8 feet of water. There were no weeds in the lake.”

#### MERCER COUNTY

#### Shenango Lake

Ernie Pate (Butler) filed 7/28: “Unlike my last tournament on Shenango, the one today was tough. The water fell 3 feet over the week and then came up a foot overnight. Most bass were caught shallow – 5 feet or less on crankbaits, jigs, **Chatterbaits** and **Senkos**. I saw big fish on structure in 12 to 16 feet of water but could not get them to bite. There were several nice smallmouth bass caught during the tournament.”

Ken Smith (Sharon) filed 7/26: "The crappie bite at Shenango has really been good this week. Although the size of crappies is down from the previous year, they are still fun to catch. In three trips this week, I caught and released over 100 crappies. I kept six 9" fat black crappies on Wednesday, and threw back the bigger fish because it's a down year. Jigs caught all the fish this week."

Ken Anderson (Tionesta) filed 7/22: "I fished Shenango Lake from sun-up for three hours on Sunday, 7/21. I caught a 16.5" largemouth on a crankbait, a 14" bass on a jig-n-pig, a 10" crappie on a crankbait and lost a smallmouth. Effective fishing was limited due to battery issues, but I did see schools of gizzard shad being chased by smallmouth bass."

### Lake Wilhelm

Bob Mohra (Fergie's Bait) filed 7/28: "I've talked to a few people fishing for walleye, and they have been catching some nice ones – mostly on worm harnesses with orange blades. Also they are taking a few walleyes on **Storm Hot-N-Tots** in silver and black. Crappies are being caught on **Southern Pro Stingers** tipped with maggots. Bass fishermen are happier this year, too, since the largemouth catches have improved over recent couple years. Locals like the purple worm for bass."

Joe Nichols (Underground Angler) filed 7/28: "Took a trip to Wilhelm today because the waves were too big at Erie. I caught a nice largemouth on a ½-ounce **Fatratz Jig** with green pumpkin **Fury Craw** by New Wave Plastics. The other nice largemouth came on a **Rapala DT Crankbait**. Not a lot of bass, but good size ones." (See Livewell)

### VENANGO COUNTY

#### Allegheny River

Dale Black (Oil City) filed 7/29: "I've been sneaking off to the river several times the past week. Earlier in the week, I landed a 30 inch musky in the Oil City pool which tore up my hand. Fishing injured on Saturday morning near Fisherman's Cove, I still caught the bigger smallmouth while fishing with Darl Black. We expected a good day for big fish with the approaching storm, but got fooled, landing only about 8 bass in two hours. Really didn't have pattern during the few hours we fished. Darl caught fish on a buzzbait and **Case Salty Shad jerkbait**. I had a tube, **Skippy Fish** soft jerkbait, and crankbait tied on, and got fish on all of them. But Sunday, I took my friend Jimmy Jackson from Texas out on the river, fishing from Oil City to Belmar. We landed approximately 40 smallmouths with a number of them in the 15 to 18 inch range. Almost all were taken on tubes." (See Livewell)



Franklin ramp busy with paddle sport people

Gene Winger (Oil City) filed 7/29: "During week of 15<sup>th</sup> with midday temps exceeding 90 degrees and water temp at 80 degrees, I fished mornings and evenings. Smallies seem to be scattered all over the river and patterning them was a challenge. Fishing deep pools using a **Winco 3.25" Predator Craw** and **Winco River Darter** in shallow riffles produced the most fish. I averaged six to eight smallmouths during the week, but things picked up on Sunday with 12 smallies and 2 walleyes. During the week of July 22, I fished every evening, averaging a dozen smallmouths. With the heat wave subsiding and water temperatures dropping into the mid-70s, larger smallmouth started to come out of hiding. On Wednesday, I

landed a 20-inch smallie weighing 5 pounds; it hit a **Terminator Spinnerbait** with a **Winco 3" Swimming Grub** trailer. The brute fought hard; thankfully I was using **Gamma Edge 8-pound Fluorocarbon leader!**"

Chuck Sari (Franklin) filed 7/28: "On the 21<sup>st</sup>, I fished the river with my son Kevin and grandson Reece. We caught 29 bass and 7 walleyes, with the largest 'eye going 25 inches (see photo). All were caught with **Rapala #5 Shad Raps** in silver or gold; all were released. On the 24<sup>th</sup>, I fished with my brother Frank and grandson Reece. We caught 23 bass and 3 walleye. All on Rapala SR5 and all released. On the 26<sup>th</sup>, I fished with Lloyd Rogers; we managed 6 bass and a walleye. On the 28<sup>th</sup>, I fished the river with Kevin and Reece. We caught and released 17 bass, 5 walleye and a northern pike – all Rapala SR5s and SR7s in gold and crab colors." (See Livewell)

Louis Letterle (Franklin) filed 7/26: "We have not fished much this summer due to family commitments, sports for the kids, etc. Be we did manage to fish the river on Tuesday. Using soft jerkbaits and jigs, we caught several nice fish in a very short time. Attached is a picture of Corey with a 19" 4-pound smallmouth – not bad for an 11-year old!" (See Livewell)

Ken Anderson (Tionesta) filed 7/22: "On the 13<sup>th</sup>, I caught several nice smallmouth bass and two walleyes (16.5" and 23.25") on a white crankbait from the river."

## LIVEWELL OVERFLOW starts here!

This week on the **Allegheny River**



Dale Black

DB photos



Darl Black



John Hummel photo



Tim Hummel's walleye



Reece with smallmouth



Chuck Sari Photos

Kevin with 25" 'eye



Corey Letterle with 19" smb

Lou Letterle photo

# The Livewell

## Brought to you by:

If you are looking for something different in a jet boat—more of a performance bass jet, check out the special order at Wiegel's...



### Lake Erie walleye — Keith Eshbaugh photos



Boat of the Month: Express Bass XT 180 with 90/65 Yamaha Jet. Brand new offering .



Al Bell photo on French Cr.

### Lake Wilhelm largemouth bass — photos by Joe Nichols

The big bruisers are biting!



# LIVEWELL OVERFLOW

## This week at Conneaut Lake

Darl Black photos



Marilyn Black

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Steve Hughes

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Umbrella rig white bass

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Bryan Stuyvesant

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## This week at Pymatuning Lake—Photos courtesy of Hooke and Hill's Country Store



Hooker hold

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Jeff Sampson

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PROCESSED FOR PERFORMANCE



## Gamma Fishing Tips

### Gamma Pro-Staff Tip

Gamma Pro Kota Kiriyaama: I use a Palomar knot when drop-shotting. It is strong and easy to tie. The key is to take the line end after tying the knot and run back through the top of the hook eye before adding the drop shot weight. If you do this procedure, the hook will stay in an upright position making your hookset more efficient. I used this drop-shotting technique to win the Bassmaster Elite on Lake Erie and broke the record for heaviest limit weight of smallmouth bass in a tournament! Here are the details of my drop-shotting...

Line: Gamma Touch 7#

Rod: Shimano ML action 6'8"

Reel: Shimano Stella

Lure: Jackall Crosstail Shad and other prototype drop-shot baits.

Also, visit my home page at [www.kotakiriyaama.com](http://www.kotakiriyaama.com) and connect to my blog, Facebook, Twitter, American Dream tournament, Ninja Tackle Box, etc.

Thank you,  
Kota

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

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

**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](http://www.darblack.blogspot.com)**

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