

Northwest

Pennsylvania

Fishing Report



Reporting Date:

April 8, 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 it being posted in the Fishing Report and distributed electronically to media and websites.

The Landing Net

by Darl Black

It's April, it's finally starting to warm up and fish are biting. The hottest bite this week will be crappies at Pymatuning. Everyone like to fish for crappies! Ask Colin and Bryan Stuyvesant.

Trout season opens this weekend, but deep-fired crappies taste much better than trout!



NW Pennsylvania Fishing Report for April 8, 2013

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

French Creek: Flowing through all four counties

Today, the flow conditions in French Creek are near perfect for springtime smallmouth bass fishing. Expected heavy rain this week will likely increase the flow and create dingy water due to run-off. As soon as the water begins to clear next week, look for a good jerkbait bite.

Dustin Shay (Meadville) filed 4/8: "The smallmouth fishing on French Creek has been excellent in the last couple weeks. A week ago Saturday, I caught 11 bass in less than 2 hours. Yesterday, 4/7, I caught 13 smallies. All fish were coming on tube jigs or hand-tied hair jigs. Incidental catches included a couple walleyes and musky a little over 40 inches long. I'm looking forward to walleye season opening in May." (See Livewell photos)

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

If you are looking for crappie or perch, Pymatuning is the place to be this week. The shallow bays on the north end are giving up big black crappies on minnows or maggots, and jumbo perch on minnows or crawlers; fish are in the old pad beds. Wade fishermen and boat fishermen are successful. The shallow crappie bite likely will not last much longer.



Chris Hall (Espyville Outdoors) filed 4/8: "Perch and crappie were reported from the Padanaram area on Saturday. The key was fishing in less than 6 feet of water, using a bobber to suspend a minnow because the crappies were suspended. Perch were caught on the bottom. Numerous reports of good number of crappies from Stewart's Bay came into the shop. Perch were hitting at Bridge 20. However, there were only a few reports of walleye being caught.

Dave Richter (Richter's General Store and Sporting Goods) filed 4/8: "The best crappie fishing is in the North End of Pymatuning in the various bays and backwater areas; some really nice fish being taken. The walleye bite has been a slow start, and I'm just starting to get reports of decent walleye catches by waders in the evening. The hot lures for waders in the shallows are the traditional **Rapala Minnow** and assorted stickbaits, or a jig-n-tail. Waders don't like to deal with minnows. A couple musky hunters stopped in the shop to say they had fished over the weekend without success."



Norman Brakeman (Hill's Country Store) filed 4/8: "Crappies have gone wild in the North End of the lake – in any bay that has old pad beds just under the surface. A bobber and strong line is required. I was out over the weekend, testing my hand-tied Hooker Bug tipped with a minnow versus just a plain minnow. The **Hooker Bug** and minnow caught more crappies. Over Easter weekend a couple weeks ago, I caught some the biggest crappies I've ever seen from Pymatuning in those shallow North End bays. I love to see wading anglers standing beside boat

anglers, and both catching fish! But before you head out on the lake for a day of fishing, stop by Hill's Country Store for a fisherman's breakfast of crawfish, sausage, sweet corn and potatoes – that will fortify you for the entire day."

Jim Hall (Cochran) filed 4/7: "I fished Pymatuning on the 6th in a bay off Padanaram. Bite was slow but the crappies and perch which I caught were nice size. Crappies came on fathead minnows, and perch on minnows or crawlers. I was fishing 3 feet of water in a bay out of the wind. At one time there were 21 boats fishing in the bay!"

Colin Stuyvesant, age 16 (Meadville) filed 4/6: "Even though it was a windy and a little cool, I convinced Dad to take me crappie fishing. We launched out of Wilson, and found an area of submerged pads not being fished by other boats. In a couple hours we had more than enough crappies for several meals. While all crappies were of nice size, several were exceptionally impressive – going 13 to 14 inches. There were a couple bonus perch in the mix as well. I was using a crappie jig tipped with maggots suspended below a bobber. Dad was using a bobber and minnow-tipped jig. However, the secret was braided line on our reels so we could pull loose from the pads and land the fish." (See Livewell photo)

Conneaut Lake

Scott Lobins will conduct the 2nd Annual Conneaut Lake Crappie and Bluegill Tournament in June. See flyer posted in Report for details or go to Darl Black's Facebook page to see the flyer in his Timeline.



ERIE COUNTY

Presque Isle Bay

Conditions at PIB this spring have not favored fishermen; it was either blowing too hard, raining or just too darn cold to be on Erie. Two weeks ago a few bass anglers ventured up, but their reports were dismal – one or two smallmouth, and tons of dead shad everywhere. A bass tournament had been scheduled for yesterday, 4/7, but that event was reportedly cancelled due to the forecast of 35 mph wind. The best times for the Bay are still ahead.

B.A.C. Bait (Erie) filed 4/8: Customers are reporting perch and crappie being caught from the North Pier, and some nice perch in Marina Lake.

Thomas Watrall (Erie) filed 4/6: "I went to the SONS of Erie clean-up day on Cascade Creek on Saturday. We gathered a dozen bags of trash. After some work last fall, there is a new look to the creek with new trees on the bank. It would be great if more people were involved in this sort of clean-up day. I went fishing afterwards. Anglers are getting some very large perch around the condo slips and marina docks – perch in the 14 to 15 inch range on minnows. On April 1, I fished Dobbins Landing for a few hours, catching 30 perch in the 9 to 12 inch range on minnow rigs. On March 31, I went to Perry's Marina all day, and just had a great time with perch, using minnows on crappie rigs and grubs to catch them; I also lost a steelhead."



Watrall photo

Erie Tributary Streams

Karen Gauriloff (Trout Run Bait) filed 4/8: "Anglers had a pretty good weekend on some of the streams, especially Elk. A 15-pound steelhead was brought into the shop from Elk. There are a lot of aggressive males still in the streams, and if we get the forecast rain this week, we might see more jacks move into the streams in time for opening day of trout season next weekend."

Jeff Staff (Poor Richards) filed 4/8: "With the low, clear water, the steelhead bite is slowing. Some larger winter hold-overs further up Elk and Conneaut Creek; but closer to creek mouths there are lots of 14" to 20" jacks. Steelheads are falling for the typical egg pattern or small nymphs for the fly-fisherman, and single eggs or minnows for the spin anglers. If we get decent rain, I would expect more fish to come into the creeks. Stream water temperatures are still cool enough due to the extended winter weather. It could be a wild day of trout season next weekend. Don't forget all tributary streams close to all fishing at 12:01 AM Friday and do not open until trout season comes in on Saturday."

MERCER COUNTY

Lake Wilhelm

Bob Mohra (Fergies Bait) filed 4/6: "I expect a much better year on Wilhelm than the past few seasons, based on the bigger panfish and greater numbers of fish caught through the ice this winter. So far this spring, the fishing has been better than previous years with nice perch, crappies and bluegills being caught off the Sheakleyville Causeway; maggots and wax worms are the best baits."

VENANGO COUNTY



Allegheny River

Due to the extended winter weather into April, smallmouth bass in the river have been hanging in winter sites longer than usual. Only in the last couple days with water temperature finally climbing into the 40 degrees are we seeing some movement. However, even in the cold waters, river rats were making some impressive late winter catches.

Jeff Knapp (Keystone Guide Service) filed 4/8: "Smallmouths were quite active on April 7. We were catching lots of bass in the 15 to 19 inch range. Lure of choice were tube jigs in the pools, and hard jerkbaits on nearby rocky flats. Water temperature was 46 degrees." (Jeff was fishing the southern section of river below Emlenton.)

Duff Kerle (Clarion) filed 4/8: "I fished with RJ Graham on Saturday, 4/6, on the Allegheny. We caught around 20 smallies; biggest was around 3 pounds. Most fish were caught on **Power Team Food Chain Tubes** in green pumpkin. We caught two nice bass on a **Silver Buddy** and one on a jerkbait. Water temp hit around 44 degrees in the afternoon." (See Livewell photo)

Gene Winger (Oil City) filed 4/8: "On Thursday, April 4, George Sizul and I fished the Oil City eddy. With water temperature below 40 degrees, we were anticipating a slow day. To our surprise our first three casts netted two nice bass. Over the course of the day we added another 18 to the tally, all on Winco's

Baby Predator Craws and **Willie Wanabee** jigs. Fishing directly off the side of the boat helped keep the small jigs on the bottom in 18 to 20 feet of water. Working as slow as possible was the trick. On Saturday, April 6, I arrived at the landing at noon and counted 10 boats – most I've ever seen in the eddy at one time! With water temperature breaking 40 degrees in the afternoon, the bite was a little stronger than earlier in the week. But working small jigs on the bottom seemed to be the trick, landing 15 smallmouths."

Joe Nichols (Titusville) filed 4/7: "I fished the Allegheny on Friday and Sunday. We really got into smallmouths. Folks around me were catching them too. All bass were nice size. After temp on Friday was 38 degrees, and on Sunday it was up to 44 degrees by late afternoon. The river bite is hot! We caught most of our fish on tubes and vertical presentations." (See Livewell photos)

Steve Udick (Oil City) filed 4/7: "I went down to the river yesterday. The fire department has taken down the Ice Boom so the river is not passable for boat traffic going north. Bass are apparently starting to leave the winter holes as I caught several in 2 to 3 feet of faster water – smaller ones. Still catching smallmouth on a **Shad Rap** with a twitch and pause retrieve." (See Livewell photos)

Chris Wolfgang (Oil City) filed 4/6: "I fished the river this afternoon with Dale from about 4 to 7:30 PM. I caught 13 smallies and one hammer-handle pike. All my fish came on my hand-tied red bucktail jig. Not sure how many bass Dale caught, but it was less than 13 while I was with him. He had been out most of the day, having caught 16 smallies before I got there. All on tubes and finesse jigs."

Bill Logan (Pleasantville) filed 4/4: "I was on the river today...it was s-l-o-w bite. I caught 5 bass on tubes and blade baits. Fishing a **Silver Buddy**, I set the hook on a strike, but it felt weird. Turns out I had hooked two bass at once – one on each hook of the blade. I landed them both!"

Steve Hughes (Clarion) filed 4/1: "Duff, my son and I fished the river on March 30. We ended up with 36 smallies between us. We got into a good flurry right at the end of the day. Everything was caught on tubes. I tried a few other lures but the bass wanted it right on the bottom. Early in the day, they were biting soft, but late in the day bass were more aggressive in smacking the tubes."



Chris Wolfgang (Oil City) filed 3/30: "Dale and I caught some fish after you left. I had 6 and Dale had 4. My biggest was 19-¾ inches. We really had to slow down the presentation to get bites. Frank Malek was fishing beside us for a while. He was catching them regularly but I don't know how many he caught and released. Back on the 27th, Dale, my dad and I fished from 4 PM to 7:30 PM. It was a great night. Our count was 25 smallmouths, although we may have landed a few more because things got hectic at times. We missed a number of bass, too. All fish were caught on tubes or hair jigs (in black or brown). Every bass was over 15 inches." (See Livewell photos)

John Wilpula (Conneaut Lake) filed 3/25: "Nothing epic to report on my first trip of 2013 to the river, except I managed to catch my first fish of the season on an olive hair jig."

Special Note from Eric Marsh with the Bassmasters of Crawford County:

“Our Fathers’ Day Buddy Tournament on PIB will be Sunday, June 16. This year we are donating all proceeds to benefit Deb Genter. Many of you know Deb and her husband Rob from fishing or all the community work they do – they are always there to help. Deb has been involved in many District, State and Buddy tournaments throughout the region. She was recently diagnosed with cancer and is undergoing treatment, but is not currently insured. If you cannot be at the tournament, please consider sending a donation.” For more info, Eric’s email is epmash@zoominternet.net. Or go to Benefit for Deb Genter Facebook Page. There is a special dinner benefit in May, too.

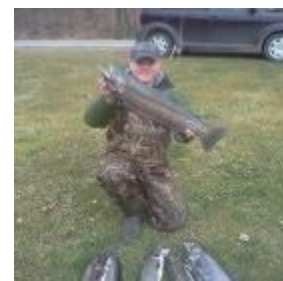
Wiegel Bros. Marine’s LIVEWELL OVERFLOW



Happy new owner of a river jet



French Creek fishes great in March and April for variety of fish.



Steel-head

catches in Erie Tributaries were strong in March and continues into April.



The Livewell

Brought to you by:



The late winter smallmouth bite on the Allegheny River this year has been awesome!



Boat of the Month:



PROCESSED FOR PERFORMANCE



Gamma Line's Fishing Tips

Tip from Gamma Pro Pete Gluszek:

"Cold water means Jigs and Jerkbait. When water temperatures are ranging from the low to upper 40s, these two baits offer the angler the best chance for numbers of bass and perhaps the biggest bass of the year.

"When the water is in the low 40s, I like to use small profile jigs like the Bitsy Bug in 1/8 or 1/4-ounce size, with a Yamamoto double tail trailer. Fish it around steeper, deeper rocky areas with little or no current. Allow the jig to sit longer than during warm water times. I typically fish finesse jigs on spinning tackle rigged with 10-pound Gamma Torque braid with a 12-pound Gamma Edge leader.

"When water warms into the upper 40s, it time for the Mop Jig. Big bass are moving to shallow wood as temps near 50 degrees, and I love this larger profile jig around shallow wood. I use a 5" Yamamoto Double Tail as a trailer. Because I'm fishing around heavy cover, I use 65-pound Gamma Torque with a 25-pound Edge leader. This is a powerful combo that gets the big ones out of heavy cover."

Pete is a professional guide and bass fishing instructor on Chesapeake Bay and New York's Lake Champlain. Get more details at www.petegluszek.com and on YouTube and Facebook.

Contributor's Tip from Thomas Watral of Erie:

"Trout season opens this coming weekend. Here's a trick for those stocked trout: canned corn resembles the pellet food used in hatcheries. For lake or pond fishing, slip on a light egg sinker, tie on a barrel swivel and add a 14" leader to a small hook. Squeeze the corn to release the juices, stick several kernels on hook and cast out. Steelheads like corn, too." Thomas will receive a spool of Gamma Line for this tip.

This year, lures for the drawings are being supplied by the following companies:

Get Bit Baits; Case; Zipper Worms; Road Runner; Gene Larew; and Yum.

The winning contributor of the prize pack for this issue is: Colin Stuyvesant

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

Follow Darl Black as he fishes around the country at

www.darblack.blogspot.com