

Northwest

Pennsylvania

Fishing Report

Reporting Date:

October 20, 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

The weather this past couple weeks has been downright unfriendly to anglers. Windy conditions have played havoc during the couple times I got out, although on one outing I did manage a few Pymatuning crappies without having my hat blown off. Even the lakeshore steelhead anglers have not been able to fish due to high winds. Fortunately, the recent rains have raised the creek flow and lots of steelhead have moved way ups stream. Be sure to check out images on the "PA Steelhead Photo Page." It is looking like a banner fall run according to Erie area shops. The Allegheny River has been hot for smallmouth, but I have not made it down yet...this week for sure. Hope for decent weather from now until Thanksgiving as water temps will be in that magic mid-50s falling to mid-40s. Expect great catches if the weather cooperates.



NW PA FISHING REPORT for October 20, 2014

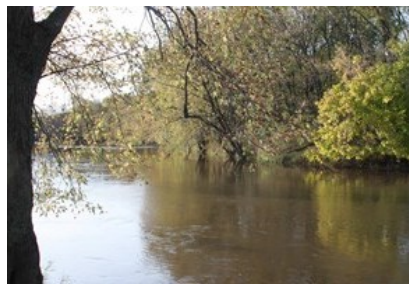
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What's biting in the lakes, streams and rivers of Crawford, Erie, Mercer and Venango counties?

French Creek

Flowing through all four counties

Angler Al (Franklin); filed 10/18: "Rainy and cool afternoon. Slipped into my Simms G3's and headed for French Creek. Figured I'd best get out so I could make a timely report on some of the items received in the prize package won in September through the Fishing Report. I decided to tie on a 3/16 oz. **Bobby Garland Mo-Glo jig-head**. Tipped the jig with a fat creek chub and flung it out. In about 15 minutes the bait got slammed. I brought a very chunky 17" rainbow trout to the net. Next, I tied on a watermelon **Blakemore Road Runner** tipped with a smaller piece of bait. First cast and another rainbow trout. It was also a heavy trout. Surprisingly it took another hour before I caught a walleye. The 'eye fell for a **Rapala Golden Auburnus SCRC-07 Scatter Rap Countdown** that I won. Two casts later and another walleye hit. Both were dinks and my hands were too gone to fish using the camera. Also, I had my rod strung with 6-pound **Gamma** line! Thanks to all the sponsors! (See photo)



French Creek /db photo



Rainbow trout/Angler Al photo

Crawford County

Pymatuning Lake



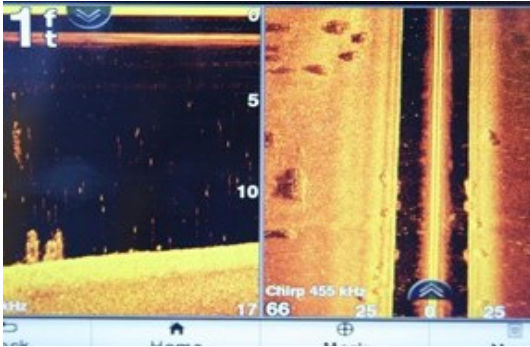
Jamestown Marina/Marilyn Black photo

Patty @ Poff's Tackle, Espyville; filed 10/20: "Given the windy and wet weather, this has not been a busy week. Anglers are catching a few walleye by the bridge on the causeway around dusk. A lot of small perch are being caught. Some anglers are keeping them, but they are not the BIG perch we've seen here in the last few years. I think 2014 is one for the record books – but not in a good way. Fish catches have been up and down; not following the usual seasonal patterns for the most part. There may be a good bite for a very brief period; then it disappears.

Norm @ Jamestown Marina; filed 10/13: "The marina will be closing the end of the month and all boats must be out. Then I get to go walleye fishing!"

Marilyn Black (Cochranon); filed 10/13: "On Columbus Day, we headed to Pymatuning in the afternoon hoping to connect with some walleyes. South wind was stronger than the weather report called for. We fished **Heddon Sonars** and jigs on several points, channel drops and the big hump between Jamestown launch and the dam, netting us only a few small – very small – perch. Darl turned the boat north and slid into the mouth of a bay to get out of the building waves. Our first drift on the southern

point of the bay resulted in a nice crappie, but the following drift nothing. Darl ran the **Gamma Side Vu** up and down the point to discover a series of manmade fish structures (looked like cribs) extending from 14 feet to 18 feet on the inside of the point. No fish were observed, but when we started drifting the line of cribs, we began picking up decent black crappies and chunky bluegills. Daylight was waning and we decided not to wait to see if walleyes would come up to feed. Not the biggest catch of panfish of the fall, but enough to call the day a success.” (See photos)



Garmin Side Vu of cribs/db photo



Pymi panfish from cribs/db photo

Conneaut Lake

Bob @ Fergie's Bait; filed 10/20: “My buddy and I made a couple trips to Conneaut Lake this week for bluegills and we were not disappointed. We caught quite a few nice ones in 4 to 6 feet of water around weeds. White split-tail tipped with maggots was hot the most recent time when we caught the largest ‘gill of the season.”

Darl Black (Cochranon); filed 10/17: “Back on Friday, October 10, Hooker and I made a run around Conneaut Lake checking on the smallmouth bite. Sky was high blue and lake surface flat as a pancake. No smallies shallow. Only interest came from a couple small northern pike and a couple of even smaller largemouth bass. The following Friday, October 17, I went solo to the lake. South wind was forceful – pushing to 25 mph according to weather report. Nothing shallow seemed interested, so I explored the deeper water with the **Garmin echoMAP 70dv**. Surface water temp was holding at 58 degrees; I didn’t expect to see fish below about 28 feet which was the late summer thermocline. But there in 38 to 39 feet of water on several different areas of the lake were schools of panfish-size something. Thinking they might be perch, crappies or white bass, I dropped blade baits on them but no response. I did notice that at very slow speed, I was picking up a fuzzy ban of something at exactly 40 feet. Thermocline would not have dropped deeper at this point; guessing was silt suspended in the water. After being tossed about for a couple hours, I left.”



Down scan on right with fish school at 38’

ERIE COUNTY

Presque Isle Bay

Jim @ B.A.C. Bait, Erie; filed 10/20: “Weather up here has been rough. With so much wind, very few anglers were fishing the bay this past week. The few who did reported some perch and an occasional steelhead. Hope for improving weather.”

Thomas Watral (Erie); filed 10/16: "At Dobbin's Landing on 10/11 we caught jumbo perch all day long on spot-tail shiners. The largest was 14" and the smallest was 10". We were casting into 15 to 20 feet of water with Subiki rigs. Three of us limited out by 4 PM. As of October 16, anglers are catching steelhead on single eggs and minnows at 4 Mile Creek. In the Bay anglers are catching nice perch at Dobbin's Landing, plus North & South Pier. I have steelhead flies and perch rigs for sale at 2407 McKinley Ave, Erie."

Editor's note: On Saturday, October 11, BASS and Old Milwaukee beer held the Bass Trek Challenge at PIB & Lake Erie. This promotion event was open to any two-person team. They fished from 9 AM to 1 PM, and could bring two bass to the scales – one smallmouth and one largemouth. Of course each fish needed to meet the 15" minimum size. I went to the weigh-in to visit with Bassmaster Magazine editor James Hall, writer Mark Hicks and several other friends. Of the 50 teams which participated, only about half caught two bass. Smallmouths on the main lake were far more cooperative than largemouth bass in the bay. Quite a few teams were unable to catch a single 15" largemouth. Winners of the event were Danny Jones & Jeremy Limerick with 8 pounds even – one smallmouth and one largemouth. Danny Jones is a contributor to the Fishing Report. Danny and Jeremy won \$2,000, I believe, with the check sent to them later. But at weigh-in the only thing they could hold up in the winner's circle was an Old Milwaukee T-shirt. Reminded me of the old Bass Pro Shop/Tracker ad with picture of girl wearing a Tracker T-shirt which read: "My Dad got a new Boat and all I got was this T-shirt."



First team to weigh in



Mark Hicks arranges Danny & Jeremy fish photo



First Place T-Shirt!

Erie Tributaries

Ric @ Trout Run Bait; filed 10/20: "Fishing is great. Steelheads are way up the creeks and there are plenty of them. Also a few browns starting to show up."

Jeff @ Poor Richards; filed 10/20: "After the last good rain this past week, steelheads are pushing up the creeks. There has been good flow for a couple days and color was right on Sunday, but the tribs are starting to drop. Rain on Tuesday may bring them back up to good flow. The lake shore has been too windy to fish this past week."

Dan @ Elk Creek Sports: filed 10/20: "Fish have moved way above Foley's. The water level and color have been good, but streams are dropping back to clear and low – unless we get some good rain on Tuesday...in which case fishing should be good Wednesday, maybe Thursday. But with no rain in forecast beyond Tuesday, creeks will be low and clear by weekend. You will need to take a walk up or down from

access areas to get to undisturbed holes – where you can catch them on minnow or single eggs. This appears to be one of the best fall returns we have seen in years. Guys walking the streams are seeing far more fish in the holes than any time in recent memory.”

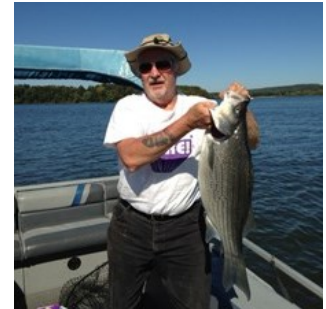
Mercer County



Lake Wilhelm/db photo



Wilhelm Marina/db photo



Shenango Striper/Kerr

Lake Wilhelm

Bob @ Fergie's Bait; filed 10/20: “Reports are bluegills are biting along the upper causeway particularly in the evening. No reports from the main lake. Campers are closing up shop and boaters are pulling their boats from the marina. Boats must be out of marina by end of month.”

Shenango Lake

Editor’s note: No report on Shenango except the Army Corps announced the loading docks at ramps were being pulled this week; ramps will remain open. Ken Smith, who usually has something to report, has been at a Crappie.com get together in Kentucky. But I think it is worth running the Shenango striper photo again from the last report. This is my goal – to catch a Shenango hybrid striper over 10 pounds!

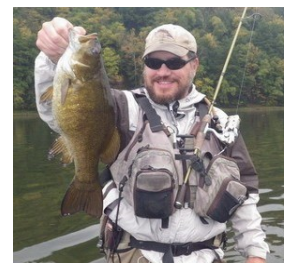
Venango County



Lou Letterle



Gene Winger



Pete Cartwright

Mike @ Jigger Wholesale, Franklin; filed 10/20: “Customers are catching bluegills at Wilhelm. No reports from other lakes. Allegheny River is producing fish.”

Bill @ Griffins Bait, Cooperstown; filed 10/20: “Only a handful of customers in this week, mainly getting bait for French Creek. I’m custom painting several variety of plugs at the shop, including a lipless crank, a deep diving shad crank and a jointed-minnow bait. Stop by and check them out!”

Bill Logan (Pleasantville); filed 10/16: “I got zip on my trip to the Salmon River in New York. Came home and went out to Oil Creek today. Caught 6 trout in short order on Woolly Bugger and Triple Threat Streamer near Drake Well.”



Allegheny River

Gene Winger (Oil City); filed 10/10: "Finally, the fall bite is starting to heat up on the Allegheny River! I've been on the river almost every day for the past two weeks finding mid-day producing some of the best bites. As water temperatures continue to drop, we've been finding nice numbers of larger smallmouth bass stacking up in predictable pockets. Several in the 3.5 to 4-pound range! We've been catching most smallies, including some nice walleyes, using **Winco 3.75" River Darter Swim Bait**; the Amazing River Dace color seems to be preferred by the bass. We've also had some good action this past weekend using **Winco C.W Smallie Delight Jigs** in deeper, slow moving water. Each day on my way back to the marina, I hit a few spots in the Oil City pool, catching smallies in the 8" to 12" range which indicates to me that larger smallmouth haven't moved into wintering pool yet." (See photos)



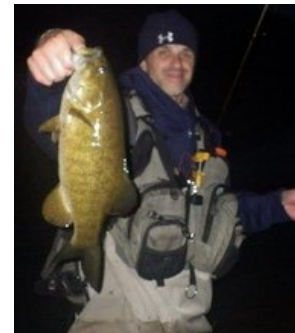
Lou Letterle



Lou Letterle



Bill Lux/Winger photo



Pete Cartwright photo

Louis Letterle (Franklin); filed 10/17: "My wife Donna and I managed a couple fishing trips on the river this week. We caught a number of bass, walleye and pike – we did pretty well on catching weeds and leaves, too! But we enjoyed the absolutely beautiful fall days on the water. Although she caught more fish than me and she certainly is more photogenic than me, I have attached three photos of fish I caught – because my fish were more photogenic than hers! Check out the beautiful coloration on this bass, walleye and pike." (See Photos)

RJ @ Graham Jigs; filed 10/19: "I fished the river on Wednesday, catching 24 bass – all on tubes and drop shot. Today, the 19th, I fished the Crawford County Tournament on the river. I won lunker with a 3.89-lb. smallie. I had only two keepers all day for 7 pounds. However I caught about 50 sub-legal bass (under 15").

Pete @ Smallies on the Yough:

- Filed 10/10 – "Chilly weekend on the Allegheny but the bronze were eating. Now that the water temps are dropping the big girls are starting to munch. We fished for two days and got some nice fall smallies; the biggest was 21". Fish came on tubes and stick worms. The bite was moderate and sporadic. They were crushing baits on Saturday as the rain and cold moved in but Sunday the bite was soft and slow. In the evening the bite picked up."
- Filed 10/20 – "We fished the river on October 18 near Tionesta in rain showers all day. The fish were eating when we found them. I landed a few 19" fish along with several 17" to 18" bass. Caught them on tubes and stick worms in shallow water." (See Livewell Photos)

The Livewell

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Boat of the Month: Wiegel's most popular PolarKraft V-hull for all-around fishing .

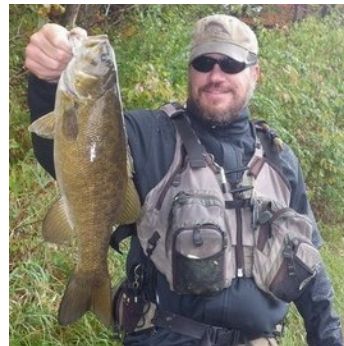
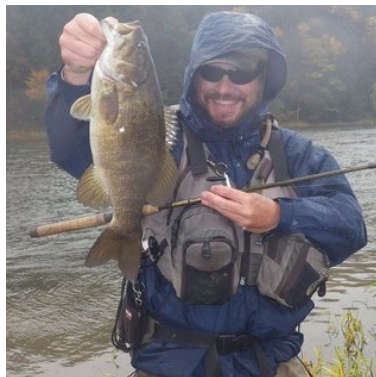


Lou Letterle with walleye



Jeremy Hayes/Winger photo

Pete Cartwright with some big Allegheny smallmouth!



PA Steelhead Season October Page — Photos by Darl Black



Fishing the surface



Trolling the shoreline



Photographers at Trout Run



Steelies waiting at Trout Run



The Wall at Walnut



Walnut Creek



David Podlesnik



Ed Reick, Jr.



Rick Zack

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Black Knight Industries

Oil City, PA 16301

www.gammafishing.com

www.froghairfishing.com



Gamma Fishing Tip

Chalk up another first place victory Gamma Line. In the last Fishing Report, Gamma Line President Dale Black detailed BASS and FLW champs who were recently aided by Gamma in their victories. Now it's crappie time. Russ Bailey, host of "Brushpile Fishing" TV show and Gamma pro-staffer just returned from filming the Cabela's Crappie USA Classic on Cumberland Lake in Kentucky where the team of Richard Williams and David Jones captured the first place title under very difficult fishing circumstances.

"The water was so clear on Cumberland that spider rigging was not producing because fish were skittish," explains Bailey. Richard and David went to casting small jigs to very deep crappies. They positioned their boat over 90 to 100 feet of water and threw to a rock wall that dropped straight down. Fallen trees littered the wall. The anglers cast, counted the jig down and very slowly swam it back to the boat. Fish were position along the wall but not at 90 feet! David was using the Gamma Polyflex Clear to make those incredibly long casts."

Also, at the request of crappie anglers, Gamma is introducing a new hi-vis Polyflex crappie line. Watch for it on store shelves by spring. More details in a future Fishing Report

You can find Gamma Lines locally at the following NW PA Tackle Shops:

Consumer Direct Sports: www.cdssports.com

Hill's County Store: www.facebook.com/hillscs

The winner of the Prize Pack of lures for this issue of the Fishing Report is **Lou Letterle**.

Prize Pack Lures are 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; and Yum.

If you are the winner of this issue's Gamma Line or Prize Pack of Lures, please email your shipping address to Darl Black to claim your prize.