

Northwest

Pennsylvania

Fishing Report



Reporting Date:

April 22, 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

by Darl Black

Saturday, April 13, was the opening of trout season in our area. To be honest, I'm really not interested in fishing for trout during the opening weeks...but I sure love to visit stream and lake sites where kids are



enjoying the opening day. I particularly like to see parents teach fishing to their young children. This year I stopped by the Youth Area on Deer Creek and at Buhl Park Lake – both in Mercer County. Buhl Park Lake in Hermitage was the spot I spend many a summer day of my youth in the 1960s fishing for bluegills. Recently rehabilitated, the lake was stocked with trout for the first time. This drew a large crowd of anglers. This week's cover photo is Sharon resident Myron Bundrant helping daughters Mya and Marley on the trout opener at Buhl Park Lake.

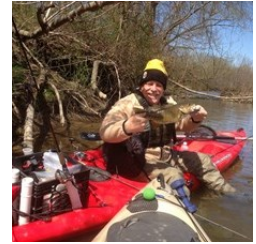
NW Pennsylvania Fishing Report for April 22, 2013

Brought to you by the PA Great Lakes Region tourism

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

French Creek: Flowing through all four counties

John Wilpula (Conneaut Lake) filed 4/21: "Mike Martin and I floated French Creek between Saegertown and Meadville today by kayak. Water was dirty and high. We caught a handful of 10 to 13 inch smallmouth. All fish cam on **Jeff Little' Confidence Bait Series** – the Bird and Finesse Craw on Draggin' Head. See photo."



Mike Martin

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Editor: The extremely hot shallow-water crappie bite in north end bays is fading as crappie move out of the pad stems to wood cover. Focus is shifting to post spawn walleye.

Chris Hall (Espyville Outdoors) filed 4/22: "Perch have been caught at various spots in North End of Pymatuning, including the rocks at the Spillway, Bridge 20, Wilson, Padanaram and causeway; reports of 11" to 13" perch. Most have been caught on crawlers, and some on minnows. Crappies are still being caught around the islands and the mouth of Stewart's Bay. Walleye bite is sporadic – depends who you talk to. Orchard Access has been productive in the evenings using **Rapala F-11** and **Smithwick Rogues**. Some eyes are coming on bucktail jig and minnows. Snodgrass and Birch's Landing have reports of shoreline success. Spawn-ready muskies have been observed cruising the Causeway and Spillway; none reported caught."



Dave Richter (Richter's Grocery) filed 4/22: "It was a miserable, cold and windy Saturday, but a few guys caught walleyes, including a 25.75" in a local tournament. We caught a 19.5" smallmouth while walleye fishing; been lots of reports on bass. Also had report at store on a 39" and a 48" muskies taken by shore anglers fishing for walleye and crappies. Last week, I had a good day on crappies – see attached photo."

Norman "Hooker" Brakeman (Hills Country Store) filed 4/21: "Snow and cold on Saturday – stayed home. But we went out Sunday afternoon in post frontal conditions. Took a while to find fish, but we ended up with 6 magnificent crappies, 4 jumbo perch, a 3 pound smallmouth and respectable largemouth. All fish came in the back of a cove from sun-drenched water only 2 feet deep. All caught on a **Hooker Bug**. At first I went deep thinking the cold would have pushed fish deeper, but I ended up finding active fish very shallow." (See Livewell photos)

Frank Malek (Oil City) filed 4/20: "I was on Pymatuning on Saturday with 30 MPH winds. Between snow squalls, I managed to flip a few green bass from downed timber in bays." (See Livewell photo)

Tom Breene; filed 4/18: "I fished the North End on the 17th, on the Ohio side in 3.5' of water around an island where water temp was 53 degrees. Using a minnow on a small jighead, I caught 6 big crappies and one perch – that was it."

Chub Hornstein (Meadville) filed 4/17: "I fished all day in the pad bays of the North End and only caught a dozen crappies. Tried for walleye in the evening – only caught 3 'eye on jig and minnow, but only two fish were legal size."

Hooker (Hill's Country Store) filed 4/16: "I took a client out for crappies on the South End after the rain stopped. Using minnows and a float, we put 4 nice crappies in the boat very quickly...then the bite stopped as if someone threw a switch. We tried a different spot and different technique: using a 1/16 oz. **Hooker Bug** tipped with a grub, we fished 8 feet of water and took a dozen quality crappies."

Bryan Stuyvesant (Meadville) filed 4/16: "I fished for crappies a couple times recently but the bite in the North End has fizzled. I went to South End for walleye one evening – nothing."

Conneaut Lake

Steve Hughes (Clarion) filed 4/15: "We took a trip to Conneaut Lake on Saturday. With the wind, we could only fish the east side. We caught 10 to 12 small largemouth bass and 20 small pike on jerkbaits. Matt Hergenroder caught his first musky – a 36 incher – on 8 lb. Gamma Line."

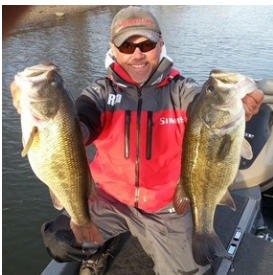
Canadohta Lake

Jerry (Timberland Bait) filed 4/22: "The lake is too cold for any crappie action yet, but guys were doing very well on trout in Oil Creek flowing out of the lake. And I caught a 6 pound brown trout from Oil Creek this week."

ERIE COUNTY

Presque Isle Bay

Al Nacopoulos (B.A.C. Bait) filed 4/22: "The fishing in the Bay is excellent right now. Customers are reporting nice perch on the North Pier, including many limits. Two burbot were caught off the pier this week. Nice perch are coming from 8 feet of water between the 2nd and 3rd Parking Lot on the Peninsula, and around the Yacht Club. Crappies are biting in Marina Lake, and sections of the Lagoons – including by the Boat Livery. Northern pike are biting in the Lagoons and Misery Bay. Bass fishing is picking up. I was out last night fishing for crappies and kept 23 nice ones from the State Park Marina Docks; the Marina Docks will close to fishing at the end of the month."



Dave Lefebre

Dave Lefebre (Erie) filed 4/22: "Danny Jones and I fished the Bay yesterday. With my tackle packed and waiting for the next tournament, I only grabbed a couple **Rapala Countdown** Minnows. In six hours, we caught 101 largemouth bass – including some beauties in the four pound plus range – on that one type of lure."

Chad Templin (Meadville) filed 4/21: "My fishing buddy took me to PIB last week. I managed to catch a 14 pound pike on a pink **Zoom Fluke** from among the dead and rotting shad everywhere in the bay – the smell was awful but the big pike made my day. Water temp was still in the low 40s. My friend

netted, lipped, weighed, measured, photographed and released the fish for me – what a great guy! I'm 0 for two trips at Conneaut this year – still very cold."

Thomas Watral (Erie) filed 4/18: "I went to the South Pier today for perch. Started at 8 AM and had my limit by noon. The biggest was 15 inches and the smallest was 9 inches. They were hitting minnows on perch rigs."

Erie Tributaries

Gary, Jr. (Poor Richards) filed 4/22: "There are a few steelheads still in the streams, especially in Elk and Walnut. But most anglers are catching crappies and perch in PIB."

Gary Seaman (Elk Creek Sports Store) filed 4/22: "Guys have been catching both steelhead and smallmouth bass in the lower part of Elk this week. One customer hooked two big catfish – neither of which he could land."

Mike Tome (Trout Run Bait) filed 4/22: "Because the water remains cool, there are still steelheads hanging in the creeks. And smallmouth bass are starting to move in the streams. That's an odd mix."



Ric Gauriloff photo

Thomas Watral (Erie) filed 4/21: "I went to 4 Mile Creek with my step dad. We landed 20 stocked trout, with the biggest 13 inches. We released all of them. They were hitting minnows. The water is low and clear. Then we went to 6 Mile, where we landed 6 trout on crawlers floated off the bottom. At 7 Mile Creek we landed a few nice keepers in the 14-inch range and lost one steelhead."

Ed Lawrence (Corry) filed 4/9: "A friend and I went steelhead fishing the other day. We walked miles of streams. Doesn't look like much of a spring run, although I had heard of staging fish in the lake. I did manage to catch a 24" female that spawned in a smaller stream."

Mercer County

Laurie (R&L Bait & Tackle) filed 4/9: "Except for trout fishing, not a lot is happening due to the cold, windy weather. We had a 20.25" rainbow trout checked in at the shop. Ken Kopp reported catching a 19" palomino trout from Sandy Creek. Crappies are biting in the Shenango River in the backwater around Big Bend. White bass are running up the Pymatuning Creek arm of the Shenango Lake to Orangeville. We have expanded our business to open a special Musky Pro Shop."



Deer Creek Youth Area

Lake Wilhelm

Bob Mohra (Fergies Bait) filed 4/20: "Shore anglers are catching bluegills and crappies off the Sheakleyville Bridge, at Launch #3 and in the little bay at Launch #4. Ice jigs and ants tipped with maggots and wax worms are working best. Also crappies are being taken on **Southern Pro Stingers**, too."

Deer Creek

The special designated Youth Fishing Area of Deer Creek saw plenty of activity on opening day. The Boy Scout Troop 254 Saeger-

town camped there over the weekend, and worked on their fishing merit badges. Volunteers from Trout Unlimited were on hand to provide assistance to youngsters fishing in the special stretch. Bob Mohra at Fergies Bait supplied the live bait for the Scout Troop. (See Livewell photos)



Buhl Park Lake

With restoration of Buhl Park Lake completed and the lake once again filled, the PA Fish Commission stocked the lake with trout for the first time ever. The lake drew a good crowd of anglers on opening day, and Buhl Park volunteers were on hand to sell refreshments and special T shirts. The Fish Commission will stock warmwater species in the lake at the beginning of summer. (See Livewell photos)

VENANGO COUNTY

Allegheny River

Steve Udick (Oil City) filed 4/20: "I managed to get down to the river after 7 PM twice this week. With the high water, there is no shoreline, but water color is very nice. With bank full, I was restricted to what I could fish. On the 18th, I landed six smallmouth bass – all on my favorite **Rapala Shad Rap** – taken at the grass line. On Friday night, wind was whipping waves on the river. I caught one bass on a **Zoom Fluke** and one on the **Shad Rap** – again at the grass line in about 10 feet of water." (See Livewell)

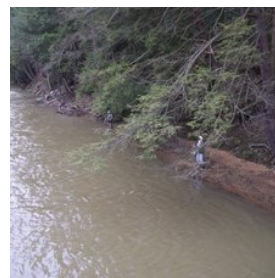
Gene Winger (Oil City) filed 4/2: "I had a great day on the river with my son-in-laws Chris and Jeremy. We landed 20 bass with several in the 3 to 4-pound range. I was very impressed with quality of smallies considering coming out of winter. We were using **Winco's 3.25 Predator Craws and Chillee Willies** in 12 feet of water."

Oil Creek

Mike Laskowski (Oil Creek Outfitters) filed 4/22: "Right now Oil Creek is too high, too dirty and too cold for fly fishing. However, given the forecast this week, I am anticipating the creek level to recede and stabilize. There should be good fishing by the weekend."

East Sandy Creek

John Hummel (Kennerdell) filed 4/16: "With heavy rains pushing area creeks over their banks on Friday, and then the cold and wind on the morning of Saturday the 13th, trout opener was tough this year. But friends J.V Varhola, Ray Mazanek, Josh Varhola, George Grimes, Tim Hummel and I managed to catch some trout on East Sandy on live bait and have a lot of fun in the process. On Monday we shifted to Pine Run where conditions were better." (See Livewell photos)



John Hummel photo

The Livewell

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Boat of the Month:

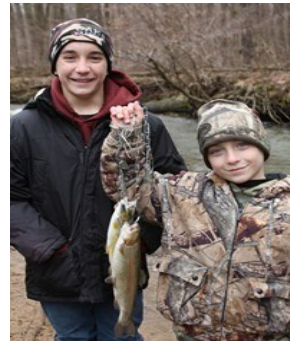
Deer Creek Youth Area Opening Day



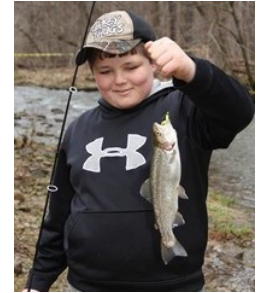
Scott & Larry Elder



Scott Shelenberger



Peyton & Collin Hearn



Logan Nemeth

Buhl Park Lake Opening Day



Dave Hasson



Shay Miller

Conneaut Lake



Steve Hughes

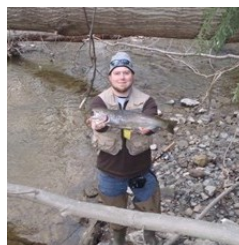


Matt Hergenroder

Erie County—PIB and Tribs



Chad Templin



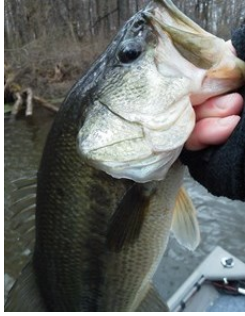
Ed Lawrence



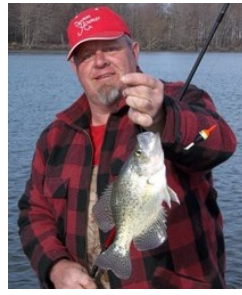
Ric Gauriloff

Livewell Overflow

Pymatuning Lake



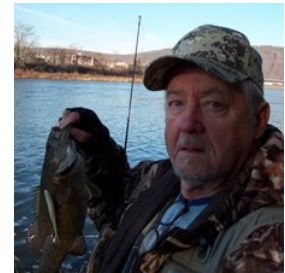
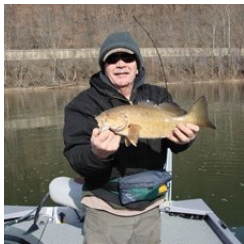
Frank Malek photo



Leslie Hill

Three Hookers in a row—three Pymatuning species

Allegheny River— Gene Winger photos



Steve Udick

Venango County Trout—John Hummel photos



Shenango River trout



High water at Sandy Beach

PROCESSED FOR PERFORMANCE



Dale Black with Pete Gluszek

Gamma Line's Fishing Tips

Gamma Pro Tip

Tip from Gamma Pro Randy Howell: "One of my favorite techniques is cranking shallow-running crank-baits through heavy cover to catch big bass. Line choice is critical in this technique, and I choose Gamma Edge fluorocarbon in 14 and 16-pound test. This line is extremely abrasion resistant and offers a very low stretch rate so you can hook and land the big ones with ease! Good luck and God bless." Randy Howell

Contributor's Tip

From Ed Phillips: "For those of us who love to catch more than anything on a fly-rod, spring bluegills and crappies are a riot – and not bad in the frying pan! I've found larger bluegills and crappies are generally in slightly deeper water than the smaller fish, and the bigger fish like the presentation a little slower, too. To get past the smaller fish, I use an 8 or 9-foot straight piece of 4 or 6-pound monofilament as my tippet. Then I add a very small split shot about a foot from the end of the tippet. I tie a small #12 or #14 dry fly to the tippet. Yes I said dry fly. With this presentation the split shot will be pulling the fly down but the fly itself will actually be somewhat higher. The downside is detecting the strike with the long tippet, so watch the line closely. Bluegills usually like very bright colors, while crappies like more natural colors. I've had good luck with the old Micky Fin."

Ed Phillips receives a spool of Gamma Line for his tip.

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

Lures for the Fishing Report Prize Pack supplied by: Case; Gene Larew; Get Bit Baits; Road Runner; Yum; Zipper Worms.

Follow Darl as he fishes with angling experts around the country at

www.darblack.blogspot.com

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