

NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA FISHING REPORT

Published by Blackwolfe Communications LLC

Issue: May 20, 2015



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

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. In providing information or pictures, you are agreeing to your comments being edited, and posted to websites and distributed electronically.

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Black Knight Industries, Oil City (www.GammaFishing.com)

Wiegel Brothers Marine, Franklin (www.wiegelbrothersmarine.com)

The Landing Net

by Darl Black

Given the wild and crazy fishing going on right now, it's hard to believe that less than a month ago we had our "final" spring measurable snow fall. (See photo) That cold front plunged Pymatuning from the low 50s back to the low 40s! Things started picking up by the first of May only to suffer a setback on the 12th – 14th with another cold snap. But this week things are back on track with temps in the upper 60s, lots of species feeding in different lakes and the forecast for the coming week looks "normal" with stable temps. Be sure to check out the Gamma Tip Page and...Go Fish!



NW PA FISHING REPORT FOR MAY 20, 2015

This Report is brought to you by PA Great Lakes Region tourism with additional sponsorship from Wiegel Brothers Marine and Gamma Fishing.

We answer the question “*What’s biting in the lakes streams and rivers of Crawford, Erie, Mercer and Venango counties?*”

Upcoming events

From Loby’s Premier Entertainment: **Bluegill Bev 4th Annual Conneaut Lake Fishing Tournament**; June 6, 2015; for information contact loby@zoominternet.net.

From Venango County Coon & Fox Club: The **47th Annual Big Uncle Day** on June 7. This is a day of fishing and outdoor fun for mentally and physically challenged young people of the area. Advance reservations for participation can be made by calling Easter Seals. Volunteers and donations needed. Call 814-437-2696 for information.

FRENCH CREEK – Flowing through all four counties

Angler Al (Franklin); filed 5/17: “Spent a few hours on French Creek last weekend, but only managed 2 smallmouths and 1 walleye. All caught on live bait.

Mike Martin (Cochrannton); filed 5/16: “Last Monday, Mark Posego and I floated French Creek from Utica to Sugar Creek. We caught 18 smallmouths on **Yum Dingers** and tubes.”



Mike Martin Photo

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Dave @ Richter’s Tackle; filed 5/18: “Yesterday my wife and I wanted to go walleye fishing but it was too calm so we fished mid-lake white crappie spawning beds; we caught them pretty good on minnows. My boy has been out several times, catching limits of walleye drifting crawlers in five to seven feet of water. Walleye fishing has been good when we have the right condition. But you need the wind to put a chop on the water to catch them ‘eye. A few anglers are starting to catch walleye at night casting **Bomber Long As** and **Rapala Minnows**. My boy caught three the other night and missed five. He

said the alewife are just starting to come into the shallows to spawn, so the night bite should pick up – if you want to fish until 2 AM and go to work at 7 AM! The musky activity has slowed from previous weeks where some in-the-know musky anglers were catching multiple fish a day; I had one 50 incher reported.”

Norm @ Jamestown Boat Livery; filed 5/18: “It was a good weekend for walleyes. There were numerous limits reported and anglers did well in the PLA Walleye Tournament. One of my dock customers weighed in two 25-1/2 inchers and one 22 incher in the tournament. Crappie bite has been spotty, especially in the South End of lake.”

Laurie @ Duck-N-Drake; filed 5/18: “I heard good reports from the Walleye Tournament. Most fish were taken in the North End of lake on crawler harnesses and **Rapala Shad Raps**. I had a few reports of some crappies around the docks.”

Patty @ Poff's Place; filed 5/18: “It's been a mixed bag of reports from anglers. One day they are successful, the next day not so much. This is due to repeated cold snaps we've had recently. Right now they seem to be catching a lot of perch, crappies and smallmouth bass.”

Brian @ Espyville Boat Livery, filed 5/18: “It has been hit and miss catches due to changing weather systems. Walleyes bite when it is choppy and rainy; crappies bite when it's warm and calm. In the North End, crappies bite is good in the shallows. Walleye bite in the Stumps is slowing but improving in the Tuttle Point to Clark Island area in 17 to 20 feet. The big sand bar north of the Espyville Causeway is producing yellow perch.”

Sydney @ Robinson's Bait; filed 5/18: “Robinson's was kind of crazy this weekend on the north end of Pymatuning with the walleye tournament Saturday, and the bite for crappie being hot. We had reports of large female crappie being caught in the brush all along the shoreline, yet the males were still out in deeper water. Walleye reports were scarce as everyone wanted to keep their spots secret for the tournament, but we still received reports of limits taken on **Storm Hot-n-Tots** as well as bottom bouncers with crawler harnesses – both which we have in stock. We also had one gentleman who did not leave his name, bring in an 8 lb. 7 oz., 27-1/2 inch walleye to be weighed; he caught it on a 1/16-ounce jig and minnow while crappie fishing. On Saturday and Sunday the bluegills turned on with several people reporting 50 plus large bluegill being taken. Pictures include the Mitchell family, Beaver County Fishing Club Pro Staff member Terry Schneider and “Hillbilly Catfish” Ed with their catches. Take a kid fishing!”

Mike Tullai @ Pymatuning Lake Association; filed 5/178: Mike reports 100 teams competing with 47 teams weighing in. The winning team at the Walleye tournament was Tre-

vor Eash and Chris Bradway with a total weigh to 14 pounds and 1.5 oz. Mel Morang and Dan King, Jr came in second. “We had the biggest Big Fish winner in the history of PLA,” says Mike. “It was an 8 pound 3.5 oz. walleye caught by the team of Patrick Erhardt and Patrick Erhardt, Jr. Photo attached.”

RJ Graham (Tionesta); filed 5/18: “I fished a club bass tournament yesterday. I had 5 bass for 10.5 pounds, which was good for 4th place. The fish were scattered, but the best bass were in the grass; I caught them on a **Brush Hog.**”



Lloyd Carlson/db photo



Jim & John Braymer/db photo



Russ Bailey & Dale Black/db photo

Darl Black @ “Fishing with Darl Black” Guide Service; filed 5/17: “The crappie bite in the shallows was good both in North and South ends of the lake during the week of May 3rd through the 9th; guests that week took home plenty of crappies for planned fish fries. Crappies were taken with slip bobber-n-minnow, **Brewer’s Crappie Slider** and **Bobby Garland’s Baby Shads**. Following the major cold front of on 12th – 14th, crappies shut down and fishing was really tough putting us in hunting mode – catching a little of everything but no quality-size crappies. By Friday, the crappies were starting to turn back on; in addition to bobber-n-minnow, crappies came on **Road Runner Heads** with either a Bobby Garland Baby Shad or **Kalin 2” Lunker Grub**. I also landed several nice smallmouths on **Gamma 4-pound Optic Yellow Panfish line**. On Sunday the 17th, I assisted Brushpile Fishing host Russ Bailey and Gamma Line President Dale Black in finding crappies they needed to film a TV show – read more on the GAMMA Tip Page.”

Jim McClave (Andover); filed 5/16: “Walleye action is really picking up south of the causeway. Evening hours seem to be best. You have to battle your way through a lot of 14-1/2 inch fish to get a few keepers. Nightcrawler on a jighead is working for me; I add split-shot if needed to keep it near bottom. Also plenty of perch, catfish and a few crappies are biting.”



Tex/ Hooker photo



Bobby/Hooker photo



Jim/Hooker photo

*Hooker @ Hills Country Store; filed 5/16: "It has been a very busy time on Pymatuning for Hookers Fishing Taxi. On Thursday, 5/7, Bobby "Tex" Lag from White Plains, New York made a 7 hour drive to fish with Hooker. His plan was to fish a new lake and learn a new way to catch crappies so he can bring his sons and grandson for a fishing trip. We started the morning on a hard bottom hump in a spawning cover that topped at 6 feet and never left the spot. We caught and released more than 50 crappies in the 10 to 14 inch range using a Bobby Garland jig under a slip bobber. On Saturday, 5/9, Hooker's guest was Jim from Michigan. The biggest crappie he ever caught was 10 inches – I told him that was about to change. Using a **Bobby Garland Baby Shad** under a float, we fished **BnM long poles** in the pads, catching and releasing black crappies. Taken on **4-pound Gamma Line**, Jim's new best crappie is now 16 inches! Tom Williams and his son Bobby arrived Tuesday the 12th in time to experience Pymatuning after a major spring cold front. Wind and rain made for tough fishing. We had to start from square one and adjust our presentation to catch fish. All the equipment and baits used on the fishing taxi are available at Hills County Store in Williamsfield, OH. We also offer the best fishing maps available for Pymatuning Lake."*

Dean Waldbaum; filed 5/15: "I fished Pymatuning last weekend. Very strange things going on. A rocky point that has always produced walleye and smallies is now occupied by bowfin. I caught two and saw more. Then even more strange were the dozen of warmouth we caught in Red Cross Bay. Some were colored like crappies, some had red ears like sunfish and a couple had white on their fins like a brook trout. They all had big mouths like a rock bass. Where have all the walleye gone? Did pretty well on crappie but they were scattered everywhere from 2 to 10 feet."

Canadohta Lake

Jerry @ Timberland Bait; filed 5/18: "Crappie action at Canadohta has slowed. The lake seems overrun with bullheads. Everyone is catching bullheads. Customers are catching crappie at Lake LeBoeuf, northern pike at outflow of Union City Dam (on French Creek), and assorted panfish at Union City Reservoir. My daughter landed an 18 inch brown trout from Oil Creek this past week when I took her fishing. She was thrilled!"

ERIE COUNTY

Presque Isle Bay



Destin DeMarion photo



Destin DeMarion photo



Paul Stewart photo

Jim @ Lake Erie Bait & Tackle (formerly B.A.C.); filed 5/18: "It is smallmouth crazy up here right now in the Bay! Customers have been catching gills on the North Pier, and pike in Misery Bay. And after a long absence from the Bay, I've heard a couple anglers say they are catching a few muskies once again."

Paul Stewart (Butler); filed 5/17: "Yesterday was tough fishing for perch in the Bay right after the cold front, but I got a PIB Smallie!"

Mike Martin (Cochranon); filed 5/16: "I was joined by John and Alex Wilpula on a trip to PIB today. We landed 7 smallmouth bass and 3 largemouth bass. All fish came on soft plastics in shallow water."

Thomas Watral (Erie); filed 5/16: "Fishing is pretty good in Presque Isle right now. Anglers are catching nice 10 to 14 inch perch from Liberty Park to Border Patrol Pier. Creeks still have lots of stocked trout in them; hotspots have been Four Mile, Severn Mile and Twenty Mile. Best trout baits being minnows and larval grubs; best lures are the **Muddler Minnow Joe Fly**. Anglers have been catching walleye by the mouths of tribs on **Rapala Minnows** and **Bomber Long As**. As a reminder, the South Pier is undergoing repairs and will be closed until July 2015."

Destin DeMarion (Grove City); filed 5/14: "The weather was too perfect not to go fishing on Monday the 11th, so I hooked the boat up and went to PIB. I arrived in the late morning for the impromptu trip to find many other anglers had the same idea. With air temperature into the 80s and the recent warm spell, the water temp was in the upper 60s – having jumped 20 degrees in matter of only a couple weeks. I fished some deeper areas, catching a few smallmouths but nothing exciting. So I headed to shallow water. In no time that proved the right move. *Tons* (did you weigh them all? - editor) of smallmouths

were up on the flats either spawning or roaming. I soon figured out color didn't matter at all; fish were aggressive and fairly easy to trick. It was an incredible day – many quality fish and few in the upper four and five pound class. They bit until I got off the water at 8 pm just before the storm came in. Tubes and drop shot baits were the ticket; size and color didn't seem to make a difference.”

Lake Erie and Tributaries



Photos from Uncle Johns Campground on Elk Creek

Brian @ Uncle Johns Campground; filed 5/8: “The fishing has been steady here at Uncle Johns. Smallmouth bass are in the stream right now along with some remaining steelhead and stocked trout. A lot of our guests are switching to lures, but fly fishermen are still successful too. Attached are some recent photos of guys with their fish. For humor I included one shot of a couple guys trying to retrieve a **Live Target plug** from a tree after a bad cast; they were having a good deal of success with that lure and wanted it back!”

Jeff @ Poor Richards Bait; filed 5/18: “Bass fishing has been up and down in the creek depending on temperature. There are a few straggler steelheads in the streams. The evening/night walleye bite has been improving along the lake shore near tributary mouths. They are casting **F-18 Rapala Minnows** from shore and trolling **Bagley Minnows** in 6 to 15 feet just off shore. During the day, boat anglers are picking up some walleye in 15 to 20 feet. Anglers report perch in 35 feet one day but gone the next. It's spring on Erie!”

Tim @ North East Marina; filed 5/18: “fishing out of North East Marina has been excellent for Lake Trout and Smallmouth Bass. The lakera are on the move north of the mountain from Freeport to the state line in 65 to 105 feet of water. Presentations: spoons on down riggers within 10 feet of the bottom, and Dipseys at 1-1/2 setting 165 feet out. Smallmouths are in the marina big time and running into 20 and 16 Mile Creeks. Tube baits in goby color work best. Some incidental walleyes are being caught during the day. Night bite is good in 7 to 10 feet of water between marina and Gay Road. **Bay Rats** glow stick is hot.”

Lake LeBoeuf

Jim Simonelli (Erie); filed 5/16: "While fly fishing for musky, I picked up two nice surprises. The largemouth was 22 inches and just under 8 pounds."

MERCER COUNTY

Lake Wilhelm

Vicki @ Fergies Bait; filed 5/16: "Wilhelm temp is in the low 60s. There have been nice walleyes caught, and bunches of crappies brought into the store, too. Everything has been caught in shallow water up to 9 feet deep. The area from the I-79 Bridge to the Access #3 has been hot for walleyes. Wilhelm started off slow this year, but the bite is on. Fergies has new worm and leech lodges to keep bait. I have also heard that anglers in French Creek and Geneva Swamp are catching crappies and bowfin."

Neshannock Creek

Dave Horvath (Mercer); filed 5/16: "I fished Neshannock Creek on May 8 and 15 for trout. Fishing is still great. I caught mostly rainbows. Once again, a gold spoon tipped with a live maggot was the ticket."

Shenango River Lake

Jon @ CDS near Grove City Outlet Mall; filed 5/18: "We have had reports of walleye limits from Shenango Lake this past week. Also walleyes are being caught below the Sharpville Dam on **F-11 Rapala** and **Bomber Long A**. Jerry Hanna and his son Brandon took a little trip to Erie this past week. They caught about 15 smallmouths in the four to five pound range on **Galida Grubz** – Jerry's old standby lure for smallmouth. We have Galida Grubz in stock."



Wild Brown Trout taken by Justin Schillaci of Greenville from Venango County

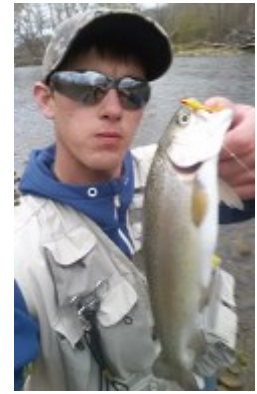
VENANGO COUNTY



Alex on Sugar Lake



Livie on Sugar Lake



Jonathan with 'bow

Bill @ Griffins Bait and Tackle Shop; filed 5/16: "Here are some pictures for the Fishing Report: Alex is at Sugar Lake, Johnathan with 15.5 : rainbow is on Sugar Creek and Kelly is on Pymatuning, and Scott Selle was on Lake Erie. Hopefully I will start getting some River and French Creek reports soon."

Oil Creek

Angler Al (Franklin); filed 5/17: I caught and released numerous rainbow and brown trout on a #12 Elks Hair and #14 Stone Fly while fishing the fly-fishing only section of Oil Creek last week."

Allegheny River

Gene Winger's Allegheny Diary

- Week of May 4th: What a great week for Allegheny River fishing! Bill Lux, Denny Watson and I average twenty-plus smallies on various outings; most were large females full of eggs. The majority were found stacked in 4 to 6 foot deep current breaks and faster water. The hot baits for the week were Winco Tastee Tube Supreme and 3.25 Predator Craws jigs in deeper water, and Winco Solid Body River Darters for shallow, slow moving water. Also picked up some really nice walleyes on tubes; most were in the 24 to 26 inch range. One walleye we released had a deep cut on its face – 20 minutes later we caught the same fish again! He really wanted to be someone's dinner so we obliged him!
- Week of May 11th: Denny Watson and I fished on Wednesday. The first five smallies we boated were all over 18 inches with largest one going 20 inches. All came on Winco Tastee Tube Supreme. The rest of the day was hit and miss but we managed 25 smallies and a couple walleyes. Friday, Bill Lux and I had trouble getting on bass but did manage 10 bass and two nice walleyes at 26 and 18 inches. But the trophy for the day was landing a 42 inch musky on 8-pound Gamma Edge and light tackle – what a rush! After 15 minutes of playing the fish we finally got him into the boat to

measure him then released him. Inspecting the Gamma Edge we found the musky had shredded it but the line still held to get the job done! Thanks for a great product, Dale!

Pete Cartwright (McKeesport); filed 5/15: "Fished the Allegheny River around West Hickory on May 9th. Weather was 88 degrees and sunny. Water was low and clear, reading 4.1 at West Hickory; water temp was 68 degrees. I caught 10 fish, with 18 inches the biggest. Could not get many hits; saw a few spawning and few on beds but it was rough. We fished faster water and head of pools, using **412tubes** and **Rapala Jerkbaits**."

Marilyn Black (Cochranon); filed 5/10: "I finally got out on the river for the first time this year, and caught my first smallmouth. Bite was tough. There was a heavy caddis fly hatch coming off. Bass were not active. Only caught a few and all bass were less than 14 inches. Each bass came on a wacky rigged **Dinger** in shallow water. Did not see any beds, but there were a few male bass probing traditional spawning sites. Darl and I tried deeper edges and fast water but never caught a fish there."



Don't miss the region's biggest panfish tournament on Conneaut Lake, June 6th

The Livewell

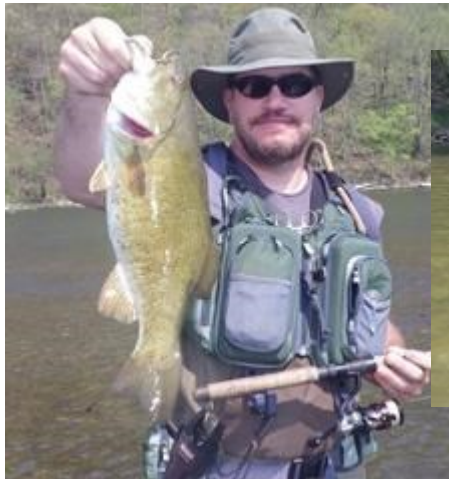
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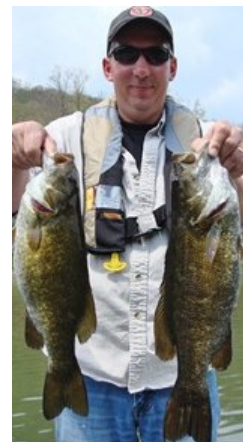
Pete Cartwright on the Allegheny River—smb & trout



From Big water Lake Erie boats to 20 HP Pymatuning boats and river jet boats — Wiegel Brothers Marine has them all!



Gene Winger and friends on the Allegheny River



Livewell Overflow brought to you by Wiegel Brothers Marine

Pymatuning catches from Robinson's Bait in Linesville



Mitchell Family



8 lb 7 oz walleye



Terry Schneider



Hillbilly Catfish Ed

More Pymatuning Results



Jim McClave



Lesley Hill & Zac



PLA Big 'Eye winner



Kelly/Griffins supplied

Uncle John's Elk Creek photos



Jim Simonelli on Lake LeBoeuf



Angler Al with friend on trout stream



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Oil City, PA 16301

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Gamma Fishing Tip

You can find GAMMA line locally at the following tackle shops:

- Consumer Direct Sports – Grove City, PA
- Griffins Bait & Tackle – Cooperstown, PA
- Hill's County Store – Williamsfield, OH
- Maurer's Trading Post—Franklin, PA
- Robinson's Bait & Tackle — Espyville, PA

Dave Horvath is the winner of Road Runner Lure Pack for this issue of the Fishing Report. Please email your shipping address to Darl Black to claim your prize.

GAMMA TIP: Look up in the sky! Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Is it an alien spacecraft? No, it is Brushpile Fishing's camera drone!



If you were fishing Pymatuning Lake on Sunday, May 17, you may have seen a wrapped vehicle or wrapped boat. It was Russ Bailey, host of Brushpile Fishing TV show filming an episode with Dale Black, President of GAMMA Line. "We had planned to film fishing crappies in the pads, but the crappies were not there," Dale Black. "So we adjusted and did a show on fishing pre-spawn crappies in weedbeds. Russ and I had spooled our BnM Pro Reels and Russ Bailey Signature Dipping Poles with GAMMA's new Optic Yellow Panfish Line in 6-pound test. With actual break strength of 13 pounds on the 6-pound category line (by diameter), we were not worried about breaking off in the pads. However, switching to weedbeds required long casts so not to spook the fish. Fortunately, with a diameter of regular 6-pound test, the GAMMA Panfish line cast beautifully. We caught perhaps 70 crappies, and the 25 fish I took home all had firm eggs inside. The spawn is yet to come. And you had better get spooled up with our new GAMMA Panfish Line – it will handle walleye, bass, catfish, musky or just about anything makes a snack out of your crappie jig!"

