

## Northwest

## Pennsylvania

## Fishing Report

**Reporting Date:**

**May 6, 2013**



**Pennsylvania's Great Lakes Region**  
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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

A week ago, Allegheny River smallmouth bass were chowing down. Then one of those unexplained dips in a progressively improving spring bite occurred...just in time for the Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association meeting in Franklin. Following a slow bite on Thursday, smallmouth got a case of lock-jaw on Friday when writers hit the Allegheny with local river rats. Everyone struggled to catch fish. Gamma's Dale Black was trying so hard to put his guests on fish that he ended up going overboard! When Dale laid his rod down to help one of his guests free a line, a bass grabbed the tube jig dangling over the side and pulled the rod into the water. Dale dove in after it, coming up with the rod and the fish still attached. Tyler Frantz snapped this picture of a soaking wet Dale Black - with smallmouth!

**by Darl Black**



## NW Pennsylvania Fishing Report for May 6, 2013

Brought to you by PA Great Lakes Region tourism

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

### FRENCH CREEK: Flowing thought all four counties



Dustin Shay (Meadville) filed 5/6: "On the opening day of walleye, May 4, Justin and I floated French Creek above Meadville seeking walleye with live bait and jigs – but no 'eyes were caught. Fortunately I had thrown in a couple spinnerbaits for northern pike; those lures saved the day – not just for pike but for bass as well. We found nice-size bass on shallow flats in the timber along shore. We landed about two dozen smallmouth from 2.5 to 3.5 pounds on spinnerbaits. During April, I had been having some great mornings fishing tube jigs for smallmouth in deeper water, but a little over a week ago that bite dried up; now they are shallow."

### CRAWFORD COUNTY

#### Pymatuning Lake

Editor's note: Water level is very good at Pymatuning, with water up to the edge of the shoreline grass; plenty of shallow submerged wood cover for crappies.

Dave Richter (Richter's General Store) filed 5/6: "On the southern end of Pymatuning, anglers are catching the heck out of black crappies in the shallow wood cover in one to three feet of water; black crappies are on the verge of spawning right now. I would expect the white crappies to move up from deep water shortly in preparation for spawning – but they spawn deeper than black crappies. Walleyes are biting in 4' to 10' of water; drifting with nightcrawlers is working. A few spawning muskies are being caught by shoreline anglers fishing live bait, but musky anglers fishing plugs are not catching them right now."

Hooker (Hill's County Store) filed 5/6: "I went fishing this evening for about ½ an hour and filled my wire basket with black crappies – really dark colored ones which indicate spawning colors. I was swimming a chartreuse grub on a 1/8-ounce head over the tops of a weedbed. One fellow told me over the weekend that he is so tired of filleting crappies that he isn't going fishing for a week in order to rest up. Last Wednesday, I hopped in the boat with Darl Black for about 20 minutes to do some photos; it only took us a few minutes to catch crappies off wood in about 2 feet of water."



Chub Hornstein (Meadville) filed 5/5: "On Thursday, Dan Wielobob and I fished the North End of Pymatuning. We started out for crappies in the pad stem beds of bays, but never had a bite. We ran out to crib structures on Hemlock Island, catching a couple walleyes. Back to the stem beds outside Blackjack we went. Only now the crappies were biting. Dan took home 10 very nice black crappies."

Eric Heil (Franklin) filed 4/28: "I took my daughter to Pymatuning on April 27<sup>th</sup>. We boated about 20 keeper crappies and a few keeper perch. I was still finding them in the shallow, dead pad stems. Fat-head minnows under a float did the trick. The lake was very busy and we saw everyone catching crappies. It's a great time to take the kids – lots of action to keep them interested. I included a picture of our lunker crappie caught by my 7-year-old Amelia." (See Livewell)

Dan Wielobob (Conneaut Lake) filed 4/24: "Chub and I hit Pymatuning on April 23. Not a bad evening. We kept 9 walleye; the 'eye were taken on chartreuse curly tail jigs and **Rapala Minnows** at dusk. We also caught 10 crappies, a bass and a channel cat by accident." (See Livewell photos)



### Conneaut Lake

Dan Shay (Meadville) filed 5/6: "I have been fishing Conneaut Lake for bluegills and crappies. The crappies seem like they are ready to spawn, moving shallow – only to drop back beyond the weeds when the weather changes. My wife and I kept 30 panfish the other day, but all were from deep water. The pace of the shallow water bite should pick up with extended warm weather."

Chuck Papinchak (Cochran) filed 5/3: "Last week, my buddy and I went to Conneaut to see what was biting. The big smallmouth bite was on! We caught a number of bass over 3 pounds, but our biggest two were 22 inches and 22-1/2 inches. Didn't have a scale, but these fish were easily over six pounds."

### Canadohta Lake & Woodcock Lake

Jerry VanTassel (Timberland Bait) filed 5/6: "Last week the local anglers were catching crappies like crazy in the canals on the north end of Canadohta Lake. Over the weekend, I had customers stop in with reports of both walleye and crappie catches at Woodcock Creek Lake. The walleyes were being caught in 16' to 20' of water in the lake, plus walleyes were caught in the Spillway below the dam."

## **ERIE COUNTY**

### Presque Isle Bay

Al Nacopoulos (B.A.C. Bait) filed 5/6: "Fishing has been great the last few days. Everything is biting in the Bay. Anglers are getting jumbo perch from the North Pier, as well as catching some smallmouth bass as they move along the channel; one customer reported a 6 pound smallie off the wall. Northern pike are being caught in Misery Bay and Thompson Bay. Largemouth bass and crappies are coming from Misery Bay. And the bluegill bite is getting started."

Paul Stewart (New Castle) filed 5/6: "I fished the North Pier yesterday with a friend. We got 35 perch and a bonus smallmouth bass. We kept 25 of the larger perch." (See Livewell photos)



Thomas Watral (Erie) filed 5/5: "I took my niece to the South Pier on Saturday. We caught perch, silver bass and several smallmouth bass. The perch fishing in the Bay has been good for the past two weeks. On calm days it can be tough to get bites; but with a little wind blowing, the bigger perch are active. One of my better days was on April 30 on the South Pier, when I landed 22 perch from 10 to 14 inches on minnows, 2 silver bass on salted minnows, and 16 smallmouth bass on tube jigs."

Chub Hornstein (Meadville) filed 5/5: "Dan and I headed to PIB this past Wednesday to see what the smallmouth bass were doing. Using soft plastic, we struggled to get bites at first. But later in the day I switched to a small lipless crankbait. That was the ticket. We caught between 35 and 40 smallmouths by ticking the top of the weeds on the flats in about 4 feet of water." (See Livewell photos)



Frank Malek (Oil City) filed 5/1: "The smallmouth bite is finally on at Lake Erie and PIB is on...awesome." (See Livewell photos)

Marilyn Black (Cochranon) filed 4/27: "We made our first trip to PIB on April 27<sup>th</sup>. A nice sunny day but a harsh East lake wind apparently put the smallmouth off their feed – or they simply had not moved into the Bay because of the dirty water. We only boated two smallies. There were so many dead gizzard shad floating everywhere that we hooked gobs of rotting fish flesh while working jerk-baits." (See Livewell photo)

### Lake Erie and Erie Tributaries

Gary Heuble (Poor Richards) filed 5/6: "Lots of fishing action going on. They are catching stocked trout in the Gravel Pit. Smallmouth bass are moving into the creeks from the Lake. Perch are being caught in 38 feet of water off Trout Run. Over the weekend, some anglers trolling offshore at dark are catching some walleye on stickbaits – but the shore casters have not had much success yet; lake shore temperature needs to be 55 to 60 degrees, along with calm nights to get them on the beach."

Mike Tome (Trout Run Bait) filed 5/6: "Steelheads are pretty much back out to the Lake, and the streams are now filled with smallmouth bass. We've had several days of East wind making shoreline fishing for walleyes impossible, but that should change this week. They are getting perch in 30 to 40 feet of water off Walnut Creek. The perch are just getting started. I don't look for good perch fishing until at least Memorial Day weekend."

Dan Seaman (Elk Creek Tackle) filed 5/6: "There are a variety of opportunities right now. In the Lake, anglers are starting to get perch in 37 to 40 feet of water off the PA shore – there are limit catches of jumbo perch being taken. Elk Creek is low and clear, but nonetheless filled with fish – including smallmouth bass, suckers, and few holdover steelheads. Now catfish are moving in. Bass in the creeks are being taken on spinnerbaits, **Rapala Minnows** and **Mepps Spinners**."

Britt Stoudenmire (Roanoke, Virginia) filed 5/5: "I came up at the last minute to fish for several days. We hit PIB first, but the Bay was dirty and seemed void of smallmouth bass. We moved out to the main lake at North East. We were marking fish in 20 to 22 feet but could not get them to bite. We concluded our trip on Sunday the 5th. We did okay, but not as great as last year. My best five smallmouths over the three day period weighed almost 30 pounds, including ones at 6.25 pounds and 6.50 pounds. On our best day, we caught 50 bass. But the northeast wind and high pressure put the fish down."

Thomas Watral (Erie) filed 5/5: "I took my niece to 4 Mile Creek on Saturday. She had a blast, catching a brown trout on almost every cast. She landed 45, releasing all but five which she took home for dinner. The trout were hitting salted minnows floated downstream with a fly rod; twitching the line helped get bites."



### Inland Trout Streams

Ed Lawrence (Corry) filed 5/6: "I haven't had much time to fish. But I have made it to the trout streams a couple times. To my surprise, I caught an 18" largemouth bass from a little trout steam, along with stocked trout. The fish were hitting anything with flash – including **Rooster Tails** and **Mepps Spinners.**" (See Livewell photos)



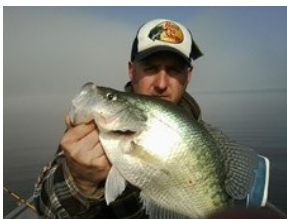
### **MERCER COUNTY**

#### Shenango River Lake

Laurie (R&L Bait & Tackle) filed 5/6: "This has been one very busy and exciting week at R&L. The weather has been beautiful and people have the itch to go fishing. I had several reports of very nice crappies being caught in the Shenango River as well as the Shenango Reservoir. Most of my customers have been using live bait, while a few of them are still firm believers in the jighead-curly tail presentation. Walleye season came in on Saturday, and I had reports of keepers being caught, with a good number coming from the Pymatuning Creek Arm of Shenango Lake towards Orangeville. Also, walleyes are being caught at Pymatuning Lake on crawlers and worm rigs. Greg Ferlin of Fredonia caught a 2 lb. 2 oz., 15-1/4" bullhead from Lake Wilhelm on a minnow. Being the largest bullhead he ever caught, Greg was excited! Eleven year old Aaron Solderich caught a 6 lb. 13 oz., 23" rainbow trout from Ross Run on a **Kastmaster.** So far Aaron is winning our Trout Contest!" (See Livewell photos)

Ken Smith (Sharon) filed 5/6: "I had been fishing Pymatuning out of Linesville ramp all last week and catching a slew of big black crappies drifting a **Lunker City Fin-S-Fish** under a bobber in 5 to 9 feet of water. I had not fished Shenango Lake this spring until today when I took my step-daughter and son-in-law out. We had lots of small crappies; they are not spawning yet."

Terry DeMaria (Sharon) filed 5/4: "I fished Shenango Lake from shore for a few hours on four different times this past week with limited success. I talked to an old timer who fishes the lake all the time; he says the last few years that what he catches are small crappies. The crappies I caught were 7 to 8 inches. I was using my favorite chartreuse curly-tail. Water temperature was 52 to 53 degrees."



Jim Melvin (Sharon) filed 4/29: "I'm sharing a picture of a Shenango Lake 17-inch crappie taken this past week by my friend Eric Thomas of Brookfield, OH. Sorry, I don't have any details on what he was using. The big ones are swimming in Shenango!"

#### Shenango River

Ed Atts (Utica) filed 5/5: "On Saturday, five of us paddled from Pymatuning to Riverfront Park in Greenville. There just isn't enough water being discharged from Pymatuning Lake to make a good trip. The current flow rate was 28 cu/ft/sec. The median discharge for that date based on a 77 year average is 79 cu/ft/sec. The maximum discharge for that date was 925 cu/ft/sec and the minimum is 3.3 cu/ft/sec. Quite a range! We had to get out twice for downed trees blocking the waterway, and at least a dozen times to walk our crafts through shallows. Some walks were only a few feet but others were 100 feet or more. We had 3 kayaks and 2 solo canoes. We only take 3 inches of water to float these crafts and 3 inches of water just isn't there in many places. This trip would be virtually impossible in a 2-person craft."

I would not recommend this as a float fishing trip unless the water comes up significantly. We were not fishing, but the trip took us 5.5 hours on the water.”

Bob Shuey (Neshannock Creek Fly Shop) filed 5/1: “Neshannock is fishing well and everything looks good in the 10 day forecast. The stream levels are good and hatches are on schedule.”

## VENANGO COUNTY

### Allegheny River

Chris Wolfgang (Oil City) filed 5/1: “I hit the river with Dale from 6 PM to 8:30 PM. Fishing was slow. I caught six bass – all small – on hair jigs. Dale was throwing tubes and caught a few more than I did. Smallmouths were not where they were on Friday, April 26, when we had an awesome evening. On the 26<sup>th</sup> we could not keep the fish off! I lost track of the number caught after releasing my 35 fish. Dale finished ahead of me in the count. I got all mine on hair jigs; Dale was throwing his favorite tube.” (See Livewell photos)

Gene Winger (Oil City) filed 4/30: “On Thursday, April 25, George Sisul and I launched at Franklin and fished to the Belmar Bridge. With water levels up and stained, we worked hard to boat three bass. French Creek was running high and muddy so we decided to run the river north of Franklin to find clearer water. We headed to a deepwater stretch, positioned the boat along a current break and landed 25 smallmouths in 8 to 10 feet of water using Winco’ 3.25” Predator Craw and C.W. Smallie Jigs. With water temperature was below 50 degrees and a cold front was moving in, small jigs on the bottom produced nice bass – most were in the 3 pound range. George had the biggest one of the day – 20-1/2 inch, five pounds.” (See Livewell photos)

### Kahle Lake

Duff Kerle (Clarion) filed 4/26: “Steve Hughes and I fished Kahle on Thursday, April 25. We ended up with around 10 bass, catching them on jigs, **Shad Raps** and spinnerbaits. I caught one over 5 pounds, and Steve caught on pushing 3 pounds. The 5 pounder came in 24 feet of water on a brushpile. Conditions were rough with wind blowing about 30 mph.” (See Livewell photos)

### Justus Lake

Steve Udick (Oil City) filed 4/26: “Austin Siar, one of the students at Venango VoTec, caught and released this huge musky at Justus Lake this past week. Austin didn’t have anything to measure it with, so I estimated the size of the fish based on Austin’s shoulder to shoulder measurement. I came up with a 50 to 52 inch length with a 24 to 27 inch girth. Some of the tail section is wrapped around his body and hidden from the camera shot. It was suggested the upper jaw may have been deformed or torn from being caught – but it didn’t seem to affect its eating habits.” (See Photo)



# The Livewell

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## French Creek



Dustin Shay

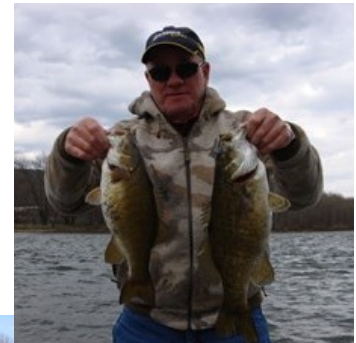


Tyler Walters



Boat of the Month: Fishing-ready Polar Kraft river boat with a 60/40 Evinrude Jet.

## Allegheny River

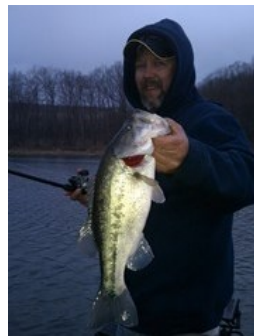


George Sisul and Gene Winger

## Kahle Lake



Duff Kerle



Steve Hughes



# Livewell Overflow

## Mercer County



Greg Ferlin—Wilhelm

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Aaron Solderich—Ross Run

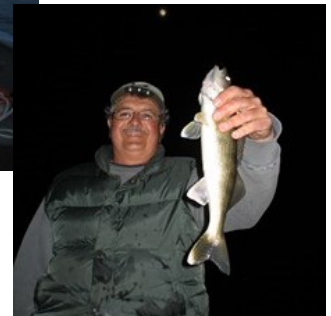
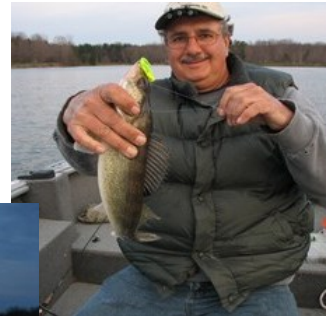
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## Pymatuning Lake



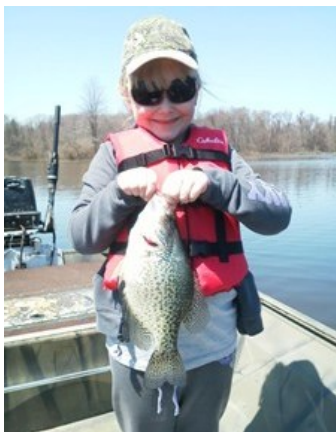
Chub Hornstein

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Dan Wielobob

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Amelia Heil

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# Livewell Overflow

## Lake Erie and Presque Isle Bay



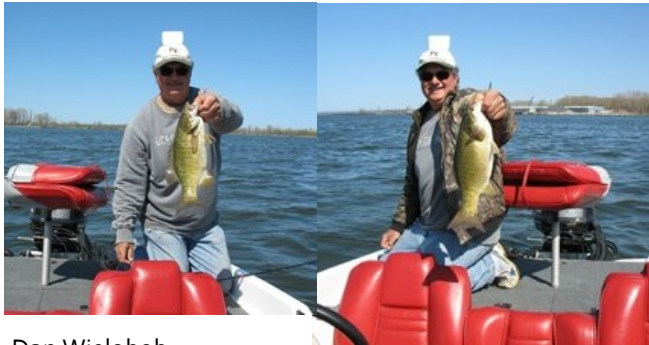
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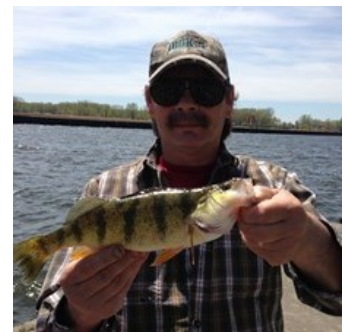
Frank Malek

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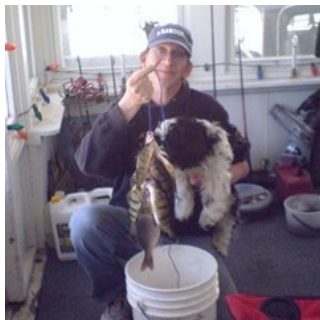
Dan Wielobob

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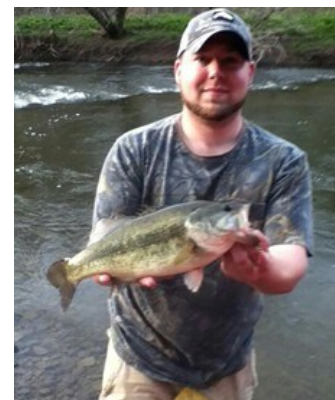
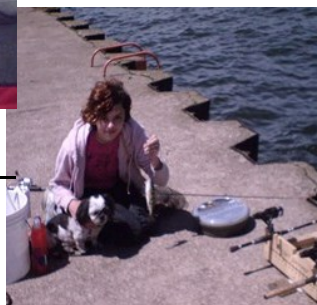
Paul Stewart

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Thomas Watral

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Ed Lawrence—LMB from  
Erie trout stream

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## Gamma Line's Fishing Tips

Editor's Note: During May, the crappie and bluegill bite hits the springtime peak here in Northwest Pennsylvania. Having the correct line spooled on your reel is a big plus in hooking and landing crappies and jumbo 'gills. A thin diameter line will improve line manageability on the spool and increase casting distance with small baits used for panfish. Years ago, my crappie rod was spooled with six-pound test because going lighter resulted in breaking off too many lures and bait hooks when snagged. These days, I have complete confidence in spooling my panfish rods with 4-pound Gamma Polyflex Line. Gamma 4-pound test is the same diameter as another company's 4-pound-test monofilament, but Gamma 4-pound has a Break Strength of 8.5 pounds – due to a special treatment process at the molecular level. How can a line that breaks at 8-pounds-plus be classified as a 4-pound test? Because the American standard of line classification is based on diameter, not break strength. Therefore, Gamma Polyflex 4-pound is classified by its diameter; the angler gets the performance benefits of a thin line for small baits but the Break Strength of an 8-pound test line. Go Gamma!

Fishing Report contributor Dean Waldbaum offers this tip for spring fishing: If you put away your tackle last fall without cleaning the reels, you've got some work to do right now. Take time to clean and lubricate your reels to insure you don't have a breakdown when you start fishing. A clean, smooth drag and drive train gearing (along with fresh line) is your best insurance against losing a big fish or having a mechanical breakdown of the reel along the stream or out in the boat. Dean will receive a spool of Gamma Line for this tip.

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

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

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