

## Northwest

## Pennsylvania

## Fishing Report

**Reporting Date:**

**July 21, 2014**



**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

**by Darl Black**

The end of July is near, and NW PA continues to be impacted by storm systems which are keeping water levels in lakes, streams and rivers higher and dirtier than normal. Fly-fishermen on trout streams seem to be the most affected anglers, since they require clearer water for both insect hatches and seeing where to present a fly. Meanwhile most other anglers are adjusting to the ongoing conditions and getting on the water between storm systems. Fish are being caught on most waters, although the yo-yoing of the lake level on flood-control Shenango Reservoir has led to some incredibly tough bites for bass. The somewhat cooler than normal water temperatures and stained water has been a shot in the arm to channel cat fishing on Pymatuning. Wilhelm continues to produce walleye and bass – fingers crossed the shad population has been beat down. It's summer – go fish!



Boat launch at Woodcock. (db photo)

## NW PA FISHING REPORT: July 21, 2014

### Brought to you by the PA Great Lakes Region tourism

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

#### News Items

Winners of Fishing Report Panfish ID Contest: In the July 7 Fishing Report, I posted pictures of three different sunfish species and challenged readers to identify them. Ken Anderson and Chris Wolfgong got all three correct. Correct ID: (A) Rock Bass; (B) Warmouth; (C) Green Sunfish. Congratulations to Ken and Chris! A packet of panfish baits will be headed your way.



Summer trout fishing with bait/ db photo

#### PA Fish and Boat Commission offer Family Paddling Program

Meadville, PA – Kayaks and canoes have been surging in popularity and Commonwealth waters are prime destinations for paddlers. Curious about paddling? Thinking about buying one? The PFBC along with M.K. Goddard State Park will host a Family Paddling Program on Sunday, July 27, 2014 from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM. Pre-registration is required and will be accepted until July 25<sup>th</sup>. For information or to pre-register, visit [www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com) and select "Calendar of Events."

#### Monthly NW PA Greenways E-Magazine Introduced

Oil City, PA – The first issue of a new free all electronic e-magazine showcasing trails and outdoor recreation became available on July 7. It covers Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango and Warren Counties, as well as communities along the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail. To request a free direct subscription, e-mail [beth@westpamag.com](mailto:beth@westpamag.com).

#### FRENCH CREEK flowing through all four counties

James Whitman (Cooperstown); filed 7-21: "Thirty minutes ago my son C.J. caught this 21 inch walleye from French Creek on a **Storm Arashi** shallow diving crankbait in crayfish color."

Dustin Shay (Meadville); filed 7-21: "With French Creek high and muddy for an extended time, I have not been fishing much. I did make two kayak floats on the creek for musky, but without success. Not sure a kayak is the best platform to throw and work musky plugs!"

Jerry @ Timberland Bait; filed 7-20: "Customers report continued reliable catches of smallmouth bass, northern pike and bowfin in French Creek at the outflow of Union City Dam in Erie County."

Bill @ Griffins Bait & Tackle; filed 7-20: "C.J. Whitman caught several nice bass on French Creek near Franklin. The fish ranged from 17 to 20 inches and were taken on nightcrawlers drifted through riffles." (See photo)

Mike @ Jigger Tackle; filed 7-20: "The high muddy water has dissuaded many anglers from fishing. But some fishermen are out there catching fish. I've had some good reports of walleye being taken in French Creek on live bait, including one that was said to be 28 inches long – although I did not see it personally."

Dan Bickel (Jamestown); filed 7-14: "On Saturday, 7-12, a group of 16 friends and family floated French Creek from Utica to Franklin. We had a great trip, and caught many fish – including two very nice 20 inch walleyes. I caught my fish on a tiny homemade spinner! However, most members of the group were not fishing that hard. I wonder how many fish would have been caught if we really tried hard! What a beautiful and productive section of French Creek!"

## CRAWFORD COUNTY

### Pymatuning Lake

Dave @ Richter's Bait & Tackle; filed 7-21: "We are in the summer slump in terms of the number of anglers at Pymatuning right now; however for those anglers who put in the time and know what they are doing, fish are being caught. Chuck Baxendell stopped by over the weekend with a limit of walleye. Another customer brought by a big walleye to be weighed; it went over 8 pounds. The night bite for walleye continues with long minnow plugs (mainly **Bomber Long As**) around the weedbeds. Catfish never seem to stop biting. More anglers are talking about largemouth bass this summer than in past years."

Laurie @ Duck-N-Drake; filed 7-21: "The fishing effort among my customers is uniformly aimed at walleye. Trolling a **Shad Rap #5** or **Hot-N-Tot** in 17 to 23 feet of water is the key right now."

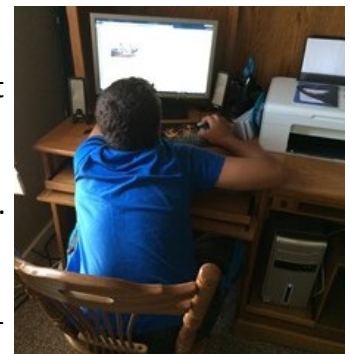


Hooker photo

Hooker @ Hills Country Store; filed 7-21: "Another successful outing on Hooker's Fishing Taxi. With many anglers saying they are having trouble catching walleyes and crappies this summer, I am reminded of an old saying "When all you have are lemons, make lemonade." So we've been focusing on the remarkable catfish population that thrives in Pymatuning. With the water levels still high and temps lower than usual for this time of year, the catfish filets from these Pymatuning fish are still firm and sweet. Just cut the filets into bite sized pieces, soak them in a little milk with lemon juice for about 5 minutes and then dredge them in some "SLAP YOUR MAMA" Fish Fry coating (available at Hill Country Store) and fry 'em up. Serve with coleslaw and crusty bread for a truly enjoyable Cajun Fish Fry. 'Le' bon ton rule' (Let the good times roll!)" (See photo)

Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 7-19: "I fished Pymatuning on 7/14 in the Jamestown area. The crappie bite was good. I caught 15 crappies in 13 feet of water over brush. I used **Bobby Garland Baby Shads** on a 1/8-oz. head."

MahrKi Johnson (Linesville); filed 7-13: "The weather was warm and sunny at the Linesville Livery when I dropped a minnow down by a log and the only thing I saw was a white flash. I knew I had hooked a monster crappie, and reeled in a 15-inch white crappie. It was mid-afternoon so I continued to fish. As usual the catfish were biting along with crappies, bluegills and an occasional walleye. Panfish were being caught around drift wood and weeds. Catfish were everywhere. Walleyes, however, were being caught in deep water on nightcrawlers."



MahrKi working on report

### Conneaut Lake

Jerry @ Consumer Direct Sports (CDS); filed 7-21: "Just a reminder that the Conneaut Lake Bass Classic is this coming Friday, July 25, on the lake. Spectators are welcome to the weigh-in which is 1 PM at the Iroquois Boating and Fishing Club to watch the pros and guest anglers to bring their catch to the scales. For more information, contact Eric Marsh at [epmarsh@zoominternet.net](mailto:epmarsh@zoominternet.net)."

### Sugar Lake

Kirby @ North Country Creations; filed 7-9: "Here is a photo of Linda Shetty with a northern pike she caught at Sugar Lake on July 3<sup>rd</sup>. Photo was taken by Dan Bickel." (See Livewell photo)

### Woodcock Lake

Dustin Shay (Meadville); filed 7-21: "I had been fishing Woodcock with friends for several days about two weeks ago. During a three-day period, we caught four smallmouth over 5 pounds by swimming tubes. I also caught some nice walleye and crappies from the lake earlier this year." (See Livewell photos)

Marilyn Black (Cochranon); filed 7-12: "After a long day at the office, I told Darl that I absolutely needed to go fishing. We headed to Woodcock after I got home from work. The water was high and dirty. We fished about 2.5 hours until dark. I caught three very chunky smallmouth bass in very shallow water – one on a brown/black **Chatterbait** and two on a **Terminator Swim Jig** with a **Kalin Lunker Grub**. I think it was the very same swim jig I used last year on Woodcock to catch a smallie over five pounds one evening. I really like Woodcock at dusk with full moon rising!" (See photo)



Marilyn likes Woodcock (db photo)

### Canadohta Lake

Jerry @ Timberland Bait; filed 7-21: "It was a slow weekend on Canadohta, but I've had reports of particularly good catches of crappies at Eaton (Bull Lake) and Lake LeBoeuf. Timberland Bait's 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Kid's Tournament is coming up on August 16<sup>th</sup>. For complete details, check out [www.timberlandbait.com](http://www.timberlandbait.com)."

## **ERIE COUNTY**

### Lake Erie & Pleasant Lake

Rich @ Erie Sport Stores; filed 7-21: "At Lake Pleasant, the trout are hitting grubs below a slip bobber. Perch fishing has been solid on the West Side of Erie from Walnut Creek to Elk Creek in 50- to 60-feet; bring lots of bait 'cause silver bass, sheephead and white perch are at record levels in the lake. On the East Side, try Shades Beach to Freeport in 50- to 60-feet. Walleye fishing is hot in 50 to 70 feet between Walnut and Elk. Many trollers are fishing right near the perch packs. On a personal note, on July 12<sup>th</sup>, I took out four boys ages 7, 9, 13 and 18; we boated 95 keeper perch and one walleye – plus lots of junk fish. What a day!"

Gary @ Poor Richards; filed 7-21: "Customers are catching perch in 45 to 50 feet of water out of Walnut Creek access. Walleyes are scattered in 55 to 65 feet of water, hitting plus in green, purple or orange."

Dan @ Elk Creek Sports; filed 7-21: "They are still catching catfish in lower Elk Creek at night; some channels are going to 10 pounds. The 'local walleyes' are in 35 to 45 feet off Camp Sequoia, while the nomadic schools of big fellows are out at 65 to 75 feet. Customers are reporting lots of 8 pound plus walleyes – limits of them – out deep. Perch bite has slowed; it is spotty in 40 to 45 feet. Expect the perch to pick up again in late August."

Paul Stewart (Butler); filed 7-21: "We went perch fishing on the Danny O on the evening of the 18<sup>th</sup>. The dreaded east wind showed up and shut down the fishing until sunset, when we caught 15 perch. Back on the evening of 11th, we were on the Danny O. Slow start due to East wind then the sunset bite kicked in, too. Mike and I got our limits. The biggest perch that evening was caught by an 8 year old boy – it was 14 inches." (See Livewell photos)

Thomas Watral (Erie); filed 7-14: "Fishing has been on fire all week long in Erie for all kinds of fish, including perch, crappies and catfish on the South Pier. Hot baits for me have been minnow, crawlers and wax-worms – plus crayfish for catfish. Lake Pleasant has been giving up bass and crappies and a few trout. Stop by 2407 McKinley to check out my homemade crappie and perch rigs."

Bill @ Griffin's Bait; filed 7-20: "Customers Mark and Matthew Ringwelski had a productive day at Lake Erie this week catching some nice walleyes." (See Livewell photo)



Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 7-19: "On the 18<sup>th</sup>, I fished for walleyes out of Walnut Creek with my buddy Bill from Pittsburgh. We trolled Dipsy Divers in 58 to 74 feet of water, catching 9 walleyes of various sizes. Then we went for perch, putting 40 of them in the box. The best depth for perch was 54 feet." (See Livewell photo)

## MERCER COUNTY

### Lake Wilhelm

Ken Anderson (Tionesta); filed 7-21: "I've been fishing Lake Wilhelm recently. I had a 19.5 inch walleye take a **Strike King KVD crankbait** on the 12<sup>th</sup> and I also boated several quality bass. I returned on the 13<sup>th</sup> with my daughter. She was smoking the green sunfish, bluegills, and pumpkinseeds; she also caught a crappie and yellow perch on a 1/32 oz. jig. For me – only two dink bass. She probably caught 20 panfish in 1.5 hours before a storm shortened our day. On a third trip on the 20<sup>th</sup>, my brother needed 5 bass for me, while he got four bass. My fish were taken on a variety of **Yum plastics** while my brother got his on a **Chatterbait**. Bass were scattered, shallow and mostly small. Catch probably had a lot to do with cool water and wet weather." (See Livewell photo)



Shore angler at Wilhelm (db photo)

Vicki @ Fergie's Bait; filed 7-20: "I had reports of 19- to 25-inch walleyes this week, coming from about 9 feet of water. Walleyes seemed to have moved up lake from the dam according to where customers

were catching them. Saw a lot of crappies up to 14 inches, taken in 9 to 11 feet of water around the Marina, Launch #3 and the Causeway.”

Mike @ Jigger Tackle; filed 7-20: “I’ve had reports of a few walleye and some nice bass from Wilhelm.”

### Shenango River Lake

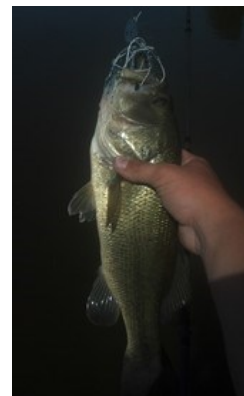
Jerry @ CDS; filed 7-21: “Not hearing a lot from customers, although they are buying up all my **Bomber Long As** in any blue pattern – which usually means the stripers are hitting at Arthur and possibly Shenango.”



High Shenango (db photo)

RJ Graham (Tionesta); filed 7-20: “I pre-fished Shenango on the 16<sup>th</sup> for upcoming bass tournament; a tough day, I caught only 2 bass and 1 crappie. Pre-fished on the 19<sup>th</sup>, catching only four small bass on a Carolina rig. However on the 19<sup>th</sup>, Steve Hughes caught 3 keeper smallmouth bass in the Shenango River arm of the lake. During the tournament on the 20<sup>th</sup>, nobody had a limit of bass. Rob Genter won the event with 3 bass for 5.4

pounds. My biggest bass didn’t make 15 inches. Shenango has been really tough the last two weeks – likely due to the rising and falling level and dirty water.”



RJ photo

Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 7-19: “I fished Shenango on the 17<sup>th</sup> for crappies – catching and releasing over 60 crappies from 7” to 13”. The smaller fish are on blow downs along shore and the bigger fish are on brush in open water. Boat traffic makes it hard to fish the open water brush, so I settled for casting to the blow downs. Casting & counting the jig down, as well as a jig-n-bobber are working.”

### Neshannock Creek

Bob @ Neshannock Creek Fly Shop; filed 7-21: “Sunday, July 27 will be the last Sunday we will be open for 2014. We will be closed every Sunday starting August 3, reopening for Sundays on March 8, 2015. That March 2015 weekend is also our Annual Pre-season Trout Stocking on March 7<sup>th</sup> so mark it down. Based on availability and conditions, we are offering Fly Fishing Lessons on Neshannock Creek; go to [www.ncflyshop.com](http://www.ncflyshop.com) for info.”

## **VENANGO COUNTY**

### Oil Creek

Mike Laskowski @ Oil Creek Outfitters; filed 7-21: “Finding decent water level to fish on Oil Creek remains a challenge due to ongoing thunderstorms. Creek may be fishable with fly rod one day a week. Last week when water was fishable, guys were getting an equal number of trout and smallmouth bass. This week, things look better if not too much rain on Wednesday.”

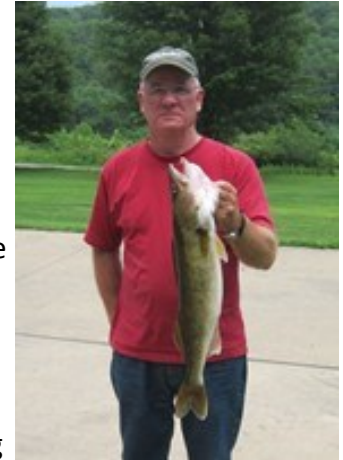
### Sugar Creek

Bill @ Griffins Bait; filed 7-20: “Foggy mornings have held fishermen off the water until later. Mother Nature has not been on our side this summer, throwing frequent thunderstorms our way resulting in muddy water. John Ohl caught some sizeable crappies at Justus Lake this week. (See Livewell photo)

Angler Al's Report: "On Friday, July 18<sup>th</sup>, my brother Steve and his son, 14 year old Riley, went trout fishing on Sugar Creek. Red worms and nightcrawlers worked to catch 2 rainbow trout, 2 brown trout and one smallmouth bass." (See Livewell photos)

### Allegheny River

Gene Winger (Oil City); filed 7-21: "The past two weeks have been tough on the Allegheny River, with heavy rains the water has been high and stained most of the time. The good news is there have been a few days where the walleye bite has been pretty good. I'm catching most on a **Winco Spinnerbait** and the new **Winco River Rascal**. Hopefully the heavy rains are done and the river will settle down so we can get some serious summer smallie fishing!" (See Livewell photo)



Winger's Walleye

Dale Black @ Black Knight Industries; filed 7-20: "I returned from ICAST early on Sunday and then took Ron Carr and Luchi (my Japanese line supplier) out on the river for smallmouth in the evening. We had a good couple hours on big fish, catching seven bass greater than 17 inches plus another 13 bass in the 12" to 16" range. All fish came on **Yum Dingers**."

RJ Graham (Tionesta); filed 7-19: "I had fished the river pool at Tionesta last week, and caught a surprising number of smallmouths in the dirty, high water on a square-bill crankbait. I need to get back on the river!"

Pete Cartwright (Pittsburgh); filed 7-15: "We fished a wide area this weekend from East Hickory to Oil City. The fish seemed to be scattered but we caught fish around islands using jigs. The water was stained but warm. We almost got caught on the river in a storm but made it back to the launch in time. We landed a lot of fish but most were small, with the biggest one a fat 19-incher taken on a jig. Maybe we can get lucky and get the levels down and so some clear water fishing soon." (See Livewell photos)

John Hummel (Kennerdell); filed 7-13: "Pete and Karen Wojtechko went to their family camp, the P & T Line Shack, located on the Allegheny River in Kennerdell, PA, with their three handsome sons, each more handsome than the other. Pete and Karen fished for four days during that week in July. They ended up catching 37 fish by Saturday, including 27 smallmouth bass and 10 walleye. The majority of bass were legal with at least two of them being 16 inches. Of the walleye, one was 21 inches, one was 20 inches and at least three were 15 inches. Pete and Karen followed the "catch & release program." Each fish caught was returned safely to the mighty Allegheny." (See Livewell photos)



The Fishing Report would like to welcome first time contributor MahrKi Johnson. He fishes Pymatuning from shore every chance he gets. Thanks for the photos and Pymi report!



# The Livewell

Brought to you by:

Wiegel Brothers Marine  
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## Allegheny River fishing is picking up

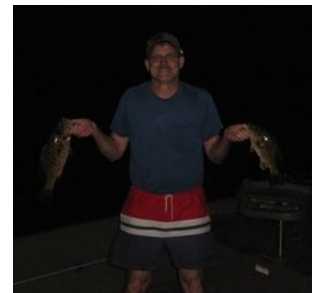
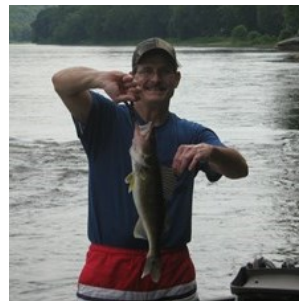
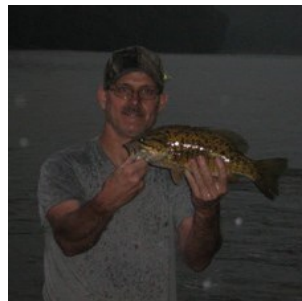


Pete Cartwright & friends

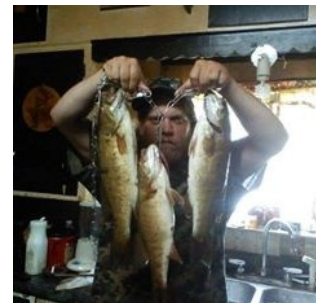


Boat of the Month: The river is on the way down. Now it is the time to get that jet boat!

## Pete Wojtechlo fishing up a storm at Kennerdell



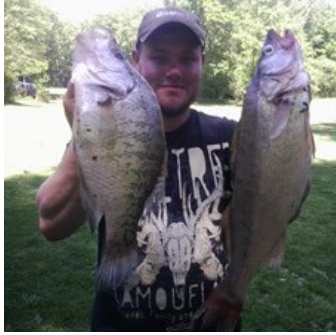
## C.J. Whitman on FRENCH CREEK





# Livewell Overflow

## Woodcock Lake—Dustin Shay photos



Dustin with crappie & 'eye

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Woodcock smallmouth

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John Ohl with Justus Lake crappie

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## Lake Erie — Griffins Bait and Paul Stewart photos



Mark Ringwelski

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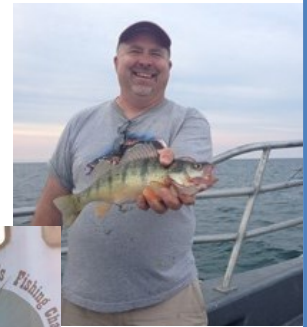
Matthew Ringwelski

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Paul Stewart

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## Sugar Lake and Sugar Creek



Linda Shetty with pike from Sugar Lake

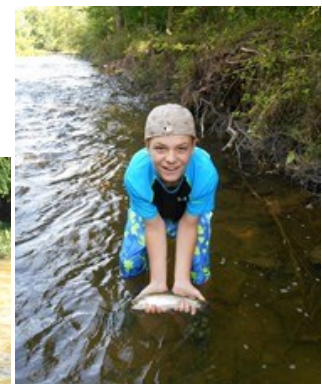
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## Angler AI Photos



Steve with SMB

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Riley with rainbow trout

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Black Knight Industries

Oil City, PA 16301

[www.gammafishing.com](http://www.gammafishing.com)

[www.froghairfishing.com](http://www.froghairfishing.com)



## Gamma Fishing Tips

Catfish Fishing with Gamma Line...During mid to late summer, Dale Black, president of Black Knight Industries, targets flathead catfish in the Allegheny and Hooker Brakeman fishes for channel cats on Pymatuning.

Dale Black: I use an 11.5 foot **Predator Rod** from Cabela's and a **Shimano Bait Runner Reel** spooled with **14 or 17 pound Gamma Polyflex Clear Blue Line**. Using a black light at night allows me to see the clear blue line because it glows. I slip on a heavy egg sinker (3/4- to 2-ounces) then tie a swivel to the line. My leader is 15 inches long of the same Gamma pound test. I use a 5/0 bait hook with a 5- to 9-inch river chub, although sometimes we use bluegills. If we expect to encounter a really big flathead, I'll switch to a leader of **Gamma Torque 10/40** because the fine teeth of really big flatheads roughen monofilament like a rubbing a file on it.

Hooker: Pymatuning is overflowing with eating size channel cats ranging from 15 to 24 inches, with the chance of a bigger one. I use a 3/4-ounce worm cone sinker on **8-pound Gamma Polyflex** with a swivel as a sinker stop. My leader is the same 8-pound test – Gamma is one tough line! However, if the action is fish after fish, I will switch to a **17-pound Gamma Torque** braid as leader material because catfish have such a rough mouth they can eventually wear through monofilament. My bait is chicken liver on a 1/0 circle hook.

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

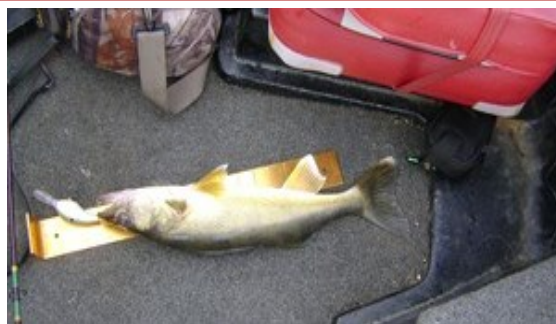
Consumer Direct Sports: [www.cdssports.com](http://www.cdssports.com)

Hill's County Store: [www.facebook.com/hillscs](http://www.facebook.com/hillscs)

The winner of the NW PA Fishing Report Field Test Tackle Pack is Ken Anderson. Ken, notify Darl Black by email to receive your prize; include your shipping address.

## Tackle Box Forecast...

- Current top selling baits for area lakes
- New lures & presentation tips on old favorites
- The anticipated hot bites for the next couple weeks



Ken Anderson caught Wilhelm 'eye while basin'

## What's Hot?

Top selling lures this past week at local tackle shops

The Lake Wilhelm walleye bite continues!

Richter's Tackle Shop, Jamestown: **Storm Hot-n Tot** and **Bomber Long A** for walleyes

Duck n Drake, Andover, OH: **Shad Rap #5** for walleyes

CDS, Grove City: **Bomber Long A** in Blue Prism for stripers; **Live Target Frog** for bass

Poor Richards, Fairview: **Reef Runner**, **Renosky** and **Bay Rats** long minnow plugs for walleyes

Fergie's Bait, Lake Wilhelm: **Jigger Worm Harnesses** for walleyes

Timberland Bait, Canadohta Lake: **Power Bait Worms and Tubes** for bass

Elk Creek Sports, Lake City: **Reef Runner** for walleyes

Jigger Wholesale, Franklin: **Jigger Worm Harness** for walleyes

## This Week's Spotlight Lure: Jigger Worm Harness

Worm harnesses are produced by several national tackle companies including Northland and Lindy. However, Jigger Worm Harnesses are locally made at the Jigger Wholesale Tackle in Franklin PA and sold to regional tackle shops from the Jigger Jobber Trailer. Jigger makes the colors that local anglers ask for.

The worm harness leader is comprised of either flexible wire (Jigger models) or heavy monofilament. Two or three hooks are tied to the leader, next beads and blades on clevises are added to the leader. Colorful metal blades are used as an attraction; these may be willow, Colorado or Indiana style blades. Another Pennsylvania company, Dutch Fork Lures, offers Ghost Blades – translucent plastic blades with unique color patterns. The worm harness is intended for trolling, and may be used in conjunction with a heavy inline keel weight, a bottom bouncer weight or behind a Dipsy Diver. A worm harness is a primary tool for walleye anglers during the summer months, and is always in play at this time of year on any lake where walleyes are sought – both on Lake Erie and inland lakes.

## Next Week's NW PA Hotspot Forecast

**Catfish:** (1) Channel cats at Pymatuning; (2) flatheads in the Allegheny River at night

**Walleye:** (1) Lake Erie; (2) Pymatuning; (3) Wilhelm...trolling worm harnesses or minnow plugs

**Smallmouth Bass:** (1) Allegheny River and French Creek as the flows drops and the water clears

**Largemouth Bass:** (1) Pymatuning Lake with swim jigs; (2) Lake Wilhelm, LeBoeuf and Edinboro – hollow-belly frog bite in the pads and slop; (3) Presque Isle Bay with drop-shot

**Bluegills/sunfish:** (1) Conneaut Lake; (2) Justus Lake; (3) Shenango