

NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA WEEKLY FISHING REPORT



Reporting Date: 5/7/12

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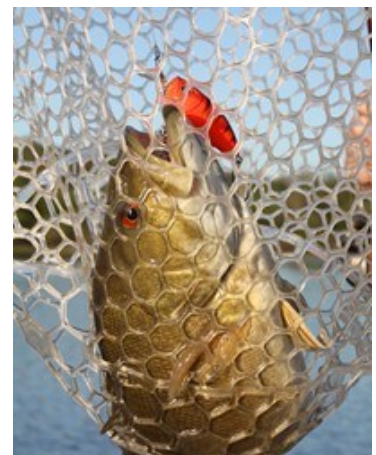
The information in the NW PA Fishing Report is based on the observations and opinions of individuals at the reporting tackle shops and expert area anglers. The information is reliable however it is not independently verified. If you have current fishing information or a picture of your catch from one of the waters in the counties of Crawford, Erie, Mercer or Venango that you would like to share, please send it to Darl Black at darlblack@windstream.net. In providing a picture, you are agreeing to it being posted in the Fishing Report.

The Landing Net

by Darl Black

Oh what a week! The Super Moon brought on the crappie spawn and anglers were catching fish in shallow water in all major crappie lakes through the weekend. Pymatuning Lake has been so hot with huge crappies stringers that some fishermen have expressed concern over the number of crappies being harvested (there is no daily creel limit). Smallmouth bass have moved onto the flats in Presque Isle Bay with shore and wade fishermen are having fun. B.A.C. Bait reports a new state record lake trout from Erie. Live bait trout anglers have found plenty of water in the smaller streams, while Allegheny River anglers are finding the high, dirty river a bit challenging. More rain in the forecast for the coming week.

Finally, I finished rigging a new 10 HP boat so I can get in on all the great crappie fishing at Pymatuning and Shenango. (My river jet just didn't cut it – too much horsepower for Pymatuning/Wilhelm/Woodcock and the jet motor does not handle well in waves on windy reservoirs.) Marilyn and I christened it Sunday evening at Woodcock catching a smallmouth bass on the very first cast!



NORTHWEST PA FISHING REPORT for May 7, 2012

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

Mercer County

Shenango Lake and Shenango River

Laurie Frantz (R&L Bait) filed 5-7: "It was an absolute crazy fishing weekend. Both Shenango Lake and Shenango River are on fire. Anglers are catching crappies and walleye one right after another. Customers report catching hundreds of crappies on Shenango Lake with lots being keeper size, and a few real slabs mixed in. Medium-size minnows are hot. A couple fellows stopped by for 12 dozen minnows; three hours later they were back for more. I sold out of minnows over the weekend – first time that has happened in the five years I've been open. Other customers have been limiting out on walleye at the lake using worm harnesses. The Shenango River is hot, too...for crappie in the Sandy Beach area below the dam and for both crappies and white bass in the river above the lake. They been doing very well in the Hamburg to Big Bend stretch on white bass during the spring run; reports of white bass as far north as Wasser Bridge below Greenville. One more thing, some anglers have been catching pike in Otter Creek on live shiners."

Ken Smith (Sharon) filed 5-6: "I fished the shallow brush on Shenango a couple times this week and did very well on big crappies. I caught them on a jig with **Berkley Crappie Nibble** suspended below a bobber. Biggest crappie was 16-1/4 inch; all filled with eggs. I released over 25 big fish to let them finish what they have got to do this time of year. (See Livewell photo)

Kevin Austin (Farrell) filed 5-7: Kevin reports that he fished Shenango with his friend Mr. Sam on May 7th and caught a number of nice crappies. (See Livewell photo)

Lake Wilhelm



Bob Mohra (Fergie's Bait) filed 5-6: "Wilhelm has finally turned on. I have reports from customers of up to a 100-crappie-a-day catches with 50% of them being in the 9" to 13" keeper size. Most crappies are being taken on a small jig tipped with a maggot or minnow. The number one jig is the **Southern Pro Crappie Stinger** in pearl. Bluegills are biting wax worm or red worm tipped on a **Sam's Ant**. The bluegills are in two to four feet of water. No reports on walleye being caught yet."

Venango County

Oil Creek

Mike Laskowski (Oil Creek Outfitters) filed 5-1: "We don't normally get excited about fish caught on flies as we do it all the time. But when a young boy catches a nice trout on a dry fly, well, that is news and is exciting! Max McAllister caught this nice rainbow trout on Oil Creek the last day of April." (See Livewell photo)

Bill Logan (Pleasantville) filed 5-7: "I was out waving my fly wand around on Oil Creek yesterday and this morning, and darn if I didn't magically catch 8 trout each day from the project area at Drake Well Museum."

Allegheny River

Jeff Knapp (Keystone Connection) filed 5-6: "On a guide trip this past Thursday, we boated 20 smallmouth bass – all but two were quality fish in the 15 to 18.5 inch range. Also, we lost several good fish. Everything was caught on **Winco's Wacky Worm** and **Winco's Predator Craw**. The heavy rains upriver Friday night left the river a foot higher and muddy. We worked hard for smallmouth on guide trips both Saturday and Sunday, spending only part of each on the river. We moved to Kahle Lake each afternoon where we caught high numbers of largemouth bass. Most were in the 12 to 15 inch range, although one pre-spawn bass pushed four pounds." (See Livewell photo)

Bill Logan (Pleasantville) filed 5-7: "I headed to the Allegheny on Saturday morning only to find it high and muddy. I launched my boat, on my first cast I caught 20 inch walleye on a rattle bait. But then I fished for the next hour without a hit. So I packed up and headed to Justus Lake – but there were so many boats on the lake, I turned around and headed home."

Trout Streams

Mike Horrobin (Jigger Wholesale) filed 5-7: "We have been busy! Seems everyone is fishing, and catching fish. The trout fishing has been very good across all area streams. However, it's the live bait guys who are scoring most of the trout because the streams are running high and off color."

Crawford County

Pymatuning Lake



Dave Richter (Richter's General Store) filed 5-7: "This was an unbelievable weekend for crappie and walleye. Anglers were catching so many black crappies I got to wondering if there are going to be any left. The blacks have moved into spawn and they are catching them in 2 to 4 feet of water; the white crappies are out deeper. And other fishermen were pounding the walleye – some getting limits in as shallow as 3 feet and other guys trolling or drifting out deeper as well; the most successful presentations were either drifting a crawler rig or trolling a **Storm Hot N-Tot**."

Chris Hall (Espyville Outdoors) filed 5-7: "The crappie bit is heating up! Crappies are being taken all over the lake using various methods. Lots of success has been simply a plain hook with a minnow, as well as a jig tipped with a minnow. **The American Freshwater Fisherman's "Maxi" Wiggle Right** and **Lucky Seven Hooks** are producing crappies. The walleye bite is still hot, too! Ball of crawlers on a hook or a single worm on a crawler harness is producing fish. **Storm Hot N'Tot**, **Berkley Flicker Shad** and **AFF Walleye Wizards** have yielded limits of 'eye. Some success reported with live shiners and suckers, too. Most walleye are reportedly being caught in less than 8 feet of water. Many sublegal walleye taken that must be released so handle with care – those short fish are the future of the lake."

Norman Brakeman (Hills Country Store) filed 5-7: "The Lake is on fire this week! Everyone is catching crappies in the shallow water. I was out for two hours the other day, keeping 17 crappies that were 12 inches or bigger, throwing back many more. Most fishermen are using a 1/16-ounce jig tipped with a minnow for crappies. Walleyes are being taken on spinner and worm rig, particularly in 3 to 4 feet of water around scattered vegetation. And the bass are biting like crazy. I've been catching bass up to almost 20 inches with jig-and-creature bait on shallow wood. If I could be this successful on bass all the time, I would quit the retail store and become a pro guide!"

Chub Hornstein (Meadville) filed 5-1: "Dan Wielobob and I fished the south end of the lake. We were seeing crappies around deep brush on the sonar but they were not biting. We tried drifting for walleye in deep water, and only caught couple. Then we moved very shallow on a point with a lot of wood, we started catching fish – perch, crappie and walleye. We each caught limit of walleye drifting over the point with jig-n-crawler or jig-n-minnow."

Darl Black (Cochranon) filed 5/1: "I fished with Jim Hall for several hours on the south end of Pymatuning. We caught a couple nice white crappies deep on minnows, but the bite was slow. Then we tried anchoring off some deadfalls on the bank for black crappies, but no luck. But when we drifted along a shelf in 4 to 10 feet that had a lot of wood cover, we caught seven different species of fish in one pass – white and black crappie, largemouth and smallmouth bass, yellow perch, walleye and a rock bass. All these fish came on chartreuse **Road Runner** head with purple tube body. But all the shallow fish were washed out – lacking color – you could not tell the largemouth from the smallmouth or the black crappie from the white crappie simply by color pattern – apparently washed out due to the dirty water (result of high winds a couple days earlier. Angler from Greenville in photo at right had better success on shallow black crappies than we did."



Chuck Papinchak (Cochranon) filed 5-7: "My buddy Kevin Bruno and friends were fishing the Andover/ Espyville causeway the other day from shore. They caught half a dozen walleye and enough crappies that they had 40 pounds of crappie fillets."

Ken Smith (Sharon) filed 5-7: "I spent the weekend at Pymatuning. We caught over 100 nice crappies and nine walleyes, with six of the 'eye being keepers. Sunday we caught four walleyes and over 30 crappies. All the fish were taken in the shallows. At times we were only fishing 1 to 3 feet of water." (see Livewell photo)

Jeff Knapp (Keystone Connection) filed 5-7: Last minute message from Jeff says "On the water at Pymatuning. Filling the boat with walleye."

Conneaut Lake

Bryan Stuyvesant (Meadville) filed 5-7: "I took my kids to Conneaut over the weekend. Bluegills were everywhere in the shallows, and they had fun catching fish on light tackle and small jigs. Crappies appeared scattered as we only managed a couple."

Tamarack Lake

John Ensworth (John's Bait) filed 5-7: "Anglers were catching crappies at Tamarack like crazy the last several days. Small fatheads were the ticket, and I was sold out by Friday night. They then started buying up all my maggots – using a small jig tipped with maggots. One customer caught a 38 inch musky from the spillway area of Tamarack – how about that!"

Chuck Papinchak (Cochranon) filed 5-7: "Ran down to Tamarack one evening this week. In 1-1/2 hours we had 40 crappies to take home. Fish were taken on jig and minnow."

Woodcock Lake

Marilyn Black (Cochranon) filed 5-6: "I got home at 6 PM Sunday evening from a week long business trip, and at 6:10 PM we were on the road to Woodcock Creek Lake. Darl had finally finished rigging our new little boat and this was its maiden voyage. We planned to shoot that Super Moon rise over the lake. But first we needed a fish for the photo. Darl shut down on a stump row in seven feet of water and began working to-

wards shore. Before I had my first cast back to the boat, Darl had a smallmouth hooked up on a square lip **Sebile Crankbait**. We snapped a photo of the bass in the net but before Darl had the fish out of the net and back in water, I hooked up with a nice walleye on a **Booyah Boogie Bait**. Darl put down the treble hook bait and picked up a **Blakemore Rollin' Runner** head with a 4-inch **Lunker City Swim bait**. For a few minutes we had a hit on every cast, landing small walleyes until I tagged a 30 inch musky which seemed to spook the walleye school. Unfortunately, the sky clouded over and there was no visible moon rise. Walleye released."



Erie County

Presque Isle Bay

Al Nacopoulos (B.A.C. Bait) filed 5-7: "Smallmouth bass are all over the Bay; they are moving onto the shallow flats and everyone is catching them. A few anglers are catching crappies in the middle of Marina Lake from boats. Bluegills and perch in the 11 to 12 inch range are being taken in Misery Bay. Perch are also being caught on the North Pier. Lots of action from a variety of different fish."

Chub Hornstein (Meadville) filed 5/1: "I was up the Bay for a few hours. I caught 20 bass on a **Venom Super Doo** fished on a **Charlie Brewer Slider Head**. I didn't see any signs of bedding yet."

Joe Nichols (Underground Angler) filed 5-7: "I went to PIB on Friday. Water temp was almost 60 degrees with air temp pushing 80. Catching was a little slow, but we did okay. Smallies are in pre-spawn but moving shallow. I would anticipate spawn to start in 10 days if weather holds. We caught them on an **Ima Flit 100 and 120 jerkbaits**, as well as **TMC Spinner Baits** and **Rapala DT6 Crankbaits**. We caught and released a total of 44 bass – mostly smallmouth." (See Livewell photos)

Thomas Watral (Erie)

Filed 5-2: "Perch are hitting in the Bay but the action is slow with longer time between hits; they are nice size, and some still have eggs in them. Crappies are hitting **Brewer Crappie Sliders** in Marina Lake; some are as big as 13 inches."

Filed 5-5: "The perch bite is slow. Sunfish are hitting good, and pike are being taken on **Snag Proof Frogs** and tubes. Catfish are hitting stink baits in the backwater at South Pier."

Filed 5-6: "I went fishing to the docks and the West Slip today. Had all kinds of panfish plus a few bass and a pike. The panfish were hitting worms while bass and pike hit large fathead minnows. Fun day, but too bad the perch fishing in the Bay is slowing down."

Lake Erie

Dottie Heuble (Poor Richards) filed 5-7: "Perch schools are in 35 to 40 feet of water out of Walnut Creek. Some smallmouth bass are still in the creeks but seem to be on the way out. They are catching smallmouth in the lake on the East side at about 30 feet. The night time walleye shoreline bite is in full swing; guys are fishing the creek mouths after dark with large minnow baits – cranking them very, very slowly. The **Original Rapala #18** is a particularly good one. The walleye are running about 8 pounds."

Al Nacopoulos (B.A.C Bait) filed 5-7: "They are catching perch out in the lake in 30 feet of water both east and west of the Peninsula. There is a report of a new state record lake trout taken out at the Mountain off North East."

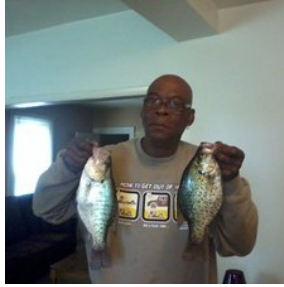
Thomas Watral (Erie) filed 5-5: "My brother-in-law called to say he caught some nice walleyes on the beach at Trout Run this evening. He said they were hitting a trout pattern **Bomber Long A** – simply casting it out as far as possible and reeling it back slowly. He got three walleye with the largest being 26 inches. He was using **Gamma Line**; he says it is a line which works great for casting long distances and has less stretch."

Todd McKinney (Wolfman Charter) filed 5-7: "On Friday night we fished west of Walnut Creek in 10 to 15 feet. We went 6 for 11 on walleye; fish ranged from 4 to 8 pounds. All taken on shallow stick baits off the boards. Sunday night, 2 days of northeast wind dropped the water temperature 7 degrees. We fished a couple hours until wind and waves got too bad; boated 4 walleye from 2 to 5 pounds, on the same program as Friday."

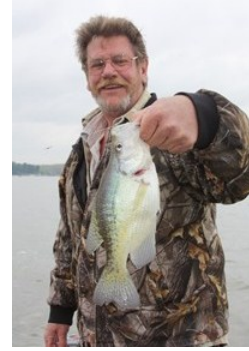
The Livewell



Smith's Shenango catch



Mr. Sam's crappies



Jim Hall—Pymi



Smith's Pymi walleyes



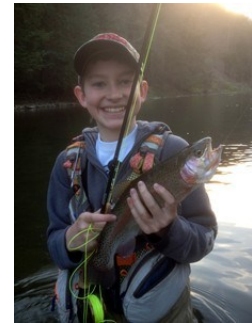
Ken Smith—Pymatuning



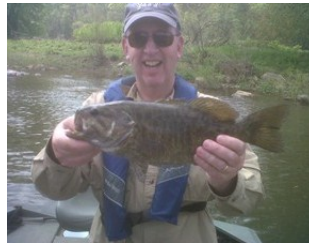
Kevin Austin—Pymi



Underground Angler
Team on PIB



Max McAllister on Oil Creek



Al Schmidt with Allegheny River smallmouth



Gamma Winner

The photo drawn as the winner of a spool of 2-pound test Gamma Polyflex Line is Max McAllister. Max can pick up his spool at Oil Creek Outfitters.

Bulletin Board

Monthly	Free fly-tying classes; 2 nd Tuesday; 6 PM to 7:30 PM; 814-590-1366 Farrell's Hook, Line & Stitch; At the Bank Mall, Meadville
May 19	PLA Walleye Tournament; Pymatuning Lake; 724-927-9493
June 2	PLA Walleye Tournament; Pymatuning Lake; 724-927-9493
June 9	Crappie & Bluegill Tournament; Conneaut Lake; Walt's Tavern; 814-510-9056
June 17	BMCC Father's Day Open; Presque Isle Bay; 814-463-9256

The May 7th winner of a Blakemore Road Runner lure packet is contributor Chub Hornstien of Meadville. TTI-Blakemore Fishing Group will send the package directly to Chub.



Crawford County Convention & Visitors Bureau at www.visitcrawford.org

Oil Region Alliance at www.oilregion.org

VisitErie at www.visiterie.com

VisitMercerCountyPA at www.visitmercercountypa.com