

NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA FISHING REPORT

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The NW PA Fishing Report is brought to you by:



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



Fishing with Darl Black
Guide Service



David Graham above at Pymatuning and RJ Graham below at Lake Erie. October starts the fall bass bite for big fish.



Landing Net by Darl Black

October at last! If you are a serious angler, you know that October is the start of about 8 or 9 weeks of fabulous fall fishing for a variety of species. Lack of flow in streams is holding up the steelhead run, but there is plenty of other action. Exceptional bass, pike, musky, wall-eye and crappie fishing begins now, too. The regions impoundments, natural lakes and flowing water offer some of the best fishing of the entire season. And because so many summer fishermen have turned into fall archery hunters, you will find a lot more room to fish exactly where you want to. With safe ice unlikely until sometime in January, that means Ice fishing is almost 3 months away. Get off the sofa and GO FISH!

The NW PA Fishing Report provides timely angling information for Crawford, Erie, Mercer and Venango counties. Fishing comments and photos are offered by regional tackle shops and area anglers. The NWPAFR is based on experiences, observations and opinions of individual contributors; information is considered reliable but comments are not independently verified. In providing information or pictures, you are agreeing to your comments being edited for clarity and brevity, and posted to websites and distributed electronically.

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County by County Reports

FRENCH Creek – Flowing through all four counties

Darl @ Fishing with Darl Black; filed 9/27: To shoot photos for a PA ANGLER article, I waded a small section of French Creek with Pete Cartwright of SmallieOnTheYough.com guide service below the mouth of Sugar Creek. Pete did all the fishing, landing seven or eight bass; three of them were photo-worthy. All fish came on a wacky dinger. What struck both of us was the complete lack of baitfish in the stream – same situation as on a mid-September wading excursion on French Creek near Meadville and Saegertown.



CRAWFORD COUNTY

Pymatuning Lake

Dave @ Richter's Tackle; filed 10/7: Hardly a soul on the lake this past weekend. Maybe everyone is in tree stands. A few reports this past week that walleyes are being picked up on blade baits and casting lipless crankbaits. Bass continue a strong bite, too. No news on crappies. Better days are coming. (photo)



Richter's photo

Becky @ Gateway Tackle; filed 10/7: We've had reports of catfish, white bass and yellow perch being caught from the Causeway. Some nice-size perch. Hearing about some musky action on South End of lake.

David Graham (Fryburg); filed 9/29: I won a club tournament today with four very nice large-mouth bass. All taken by flipping a jig into weed cover and downed trees with my FX 7'1 FX Heavy Action Rod. On this day, RJ Graham had to settle for a spot further down. (photos)



David Graham



RJ Graham

ERIE COUNTY

Lake Erie and tributaries

Kirk @ East End Angler; filed 10/7: The ¼ inch of rain we got the last three days wasn't enough to get the steelheads moving upstream. Steelhead are holding off the mouths of the creeks, sometime making nighttime runs into the mouths. An occasional fish is caught in the early morning. Twenty Mile has a few fish in the mouth as does 12 Mile – but certainly not enough for anyone to make a long drive up here with expectations of catching a steelhead. The main lake has been torn up for the last 10 days due to winds so very few anglers have been out on the lake to give any bass, perch or walleye reports.

Tim @ Lake Erie Bait & Tackle; filed 10/7: The cold rain the last two days could have helped the streams – but it wasn't enough. Steelhead are being caught from shore in the surf near stream mouths when weather permits. Smallmouth are moving shallow in the lake, with catches being made in 15 feet of water. Perch are being caught from the North & South Pier, and from the East & West Pier.

Jeff @ Poor Richards; filed 10/7: The lake has been rough so no report from boat anglers. We needed far more than a ¼-inch of rain to bring steelhead into the stream. Right now, it's not worth making a long trip if you want to fish the streams. When the wind is from the south, anglers are catching them in the surf with the usual Power Bait, egg sacks, spinners and spoons. With streams low, when fish do move in, the best bait is a single egg or small nymph.

Dan @ Elk Creek Sports; filed 10/7: WE NEED WATER! Without more flow and drop in stream water temp, steelhead will not enter and move upstream. Any fish in the streams right now are very skittish. Crooked Creek is the only stream actually holding steelhead right now.

John @ Uncle John's Elk Creek Campground; files 10/7: We have seen a few fish in the stream as far as the Tubes. One of our campers caught a nice Brown Trout this past week. Things will start happening any day. (photo)



Uncle John photo

Richard @ Someday Isle Tackle; filed 10/7: I haven't been on the open lake recently but the walleyes have moved out as the steelhead are moving in. I fished a local reservoir and caught plenty of bluegill and perch. Nothing big, but glad to see a bobber go down. Also spent a few hours steelhead fishing at a local marina; still a little early – water temp needs to drop to turn them on. Better days are coming.



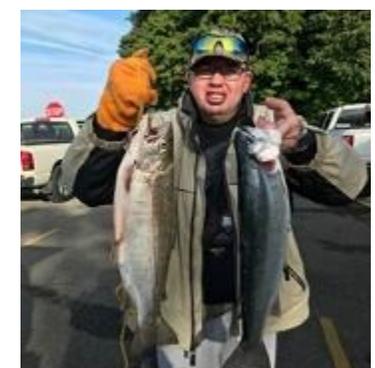
Dutch Fork Lures photo

Keith @ Dutch Fork Custom Lures; filed 10/6: My buddy Marvin joined me to fish Erie on Oct 5th. Getting out to 72 feet of water with dipsies and Custom Dutch Fork painted Renoskys did the trick. Details: 145' back on a #2 setting and 165' back on a #3 setting at 2.6 mph was best. Custom Lemon Line color and white/orange belly Renoskys. Weather report was of course wrong again and we were in 3 to 5 footers. Awesome. Most guys quit fishing Erie now, but walleyes will be around all winter – you have to try! (photo)



RJ Graham photo

RJ Graham (Fryburg); 10/5: The fall smallmouth bite is on! We fished 15 to 20 feet of water. Caught 30 smallmouth on green pumpkin tubes on ½ ounce heads. Used GAMMA 7 lb. Touch – so sensitive you could feel the smallmouth sitting there and thinking about hitting before taking the bait. (photo)



Dale Clemmer photo

Dale Clemmer (Cochranton); 10/5: First trip of year for steelhead. Fished surf with white Roostertail spinner. Landed two.

MERCER COUNTY

Jerry @ CDS at Grove City; filed 10/7: John Galida and I had looked forward to the Keystone Classic on Lake Erie all summer; held the last weekend of September. But we fumbled – fished relatively shallow all day on our traditional early fall waypoints. Turned out the big ones were still out beyond the 30 feet mark. However, we did land a half dozen walleyes from a rock pile in four feet of water on spinnerbaits. Those walleyes are everywhere!

Lake Wilhelm

Brad Bee; filed 10/6: Had an awesome day on Wilhelm. The big boys came out to play. Caught over 20 largemouth bass in deep water working jigging spoons and blade baits along the channel. ([See photos on special Mercer County photo page](#))

Shenango Lake

Ken Smith (Sharon); filed 10/7: I fished Shenango three times in the past week. On Monday and Wednesday, the crappie bite was little tougher than normal. Bigger white crappies seem to be moving into the bays. On Sunday the 6th, I gave up on the Steelers and went fishing. I had a good day despite the wind. I found crappies holding on a deep point. Put together a nice limit using soft plastic baits. (See photo)



Beats watching Steelers

Corey Bice (Sharpsville); filed 10/7: Corey had an opportunity last week to take his two children and his nephew out fishing together. It turned into one of those days you always hope for when taking kids fishing. Everyone caught fish. They landed 15 to 20 crappies, 3 hybrid stripers, a bunch of white bass, couple catfish, several bluegills, one largemouth bass, one yellow perch and one carp. A total of 8 species! All fish (including the carp) fell for soft plastic baits – except the yellow perch which fell victim to a minnow. ([See the special Mercer County photo page](#)).

Shenango River

“Captain Hook” Morocco; filed 10/4: Not much happening lately. But I did wade the Shenango River below the dam. Caught a nice variety of fish – but most on the small side, except for decent size catfish. Nice catch and release action for few hours. With no rain lately, all rivers and streams are fishable.



Captain Hook

VENANGO COUNTY

Sugar Creek

Angler Al @ Buttermilk Hill; filed 10/6: I needed a few hours on the water, so after watching the Steelers fumble a loss to Baltimore, I slipped down to Sugar Creek – same place Darl and I fished a few weeks back. I drifted live creek bait through the hole. Once again, those indigenous minnows & chubs worked. I caught several small-mouth bass around 15 inches and other smaller ones. Finished up fishing the bridge in the village. I caught a couple more smallies and a few rock bass. However, the big surprise came when I hooked largemouth bass. This stream is so diversified!



Angler Al on Sugar

Allegheny River

Jeff Knapp @ Keystone Connection Guide Service; filed 10/6: Summer-like conditions existed on the middle Allegheny for much of the past two weeks. As such, we continued to catch smallmouth bass up to 19 inches in areas typical of warm water conditions: pocket water close to riffles, tail-outs and heads of pools, shallow weed flats with current. Soft swimbaits and soft jerkbaits have been the main presentations, along with Rapala X-Raps. Water temperatures are dropping with the onset of more fall-like weather. Bass (and walleyes) will soon be moving towards slower current, deeper areas. (photos on next page)

Mike @ Mike's Custom Tackle; filed 10/5: I got out on the river Saturday evening. Caught a bunch of 3 to 4-pound bass mainly on Mike's Custom Tubes and jigs in deeper flowing water. The Oil City pool was packed; folks must have been pre-fishing for a Sunday tournament. Most guys said they caught fish but were tight lipped on size – I tried the area a bit but only got small ones. Big bass are not loaded up in pool yet – too early. I keep forgetting my camera – hope to take it next time. Here's a pic of a four-pounder caught by my buddy Todd back on Sept 26. Wind was blowing hard that day, and bites were few and far between. Todd was pleased he got his first 4 pounder this year. (photo)

Pete Cartwright @ SmalliesOnTheYough guide service; summary of three trips...

- 9/27: Fished the Allegheny today. The bite was on. Caught a bunch of smallmouths up to 19 inches using soft plastic tubes. Although the first days of fall, bass are still in summer pattern.
- 9/30: I like to get on the water as much as I can even if I do not have guide trips. The last day of September was great on the river. Perfect with showers in the

morning then cloudy in afternoon. The water was clear and 73 degrees. I used tubes to catch smallmouths to 20 inches. The bite was fast and furious. This is the start of fall feeding – get out there and fish!

- 10/5: Went to the Allegheny today after the big weather change. The bite was slow in the morning. It got a little better during the afternoon and I was able to catch a dozen decent ones. I have a few open dates for wade trips on the Allegheny left in my season. Email smallmouthfish@yahoo.com. (Photos below)

Dave Ohmer (Erie); filed 9/28: Water conditions were about as good as they get today, and when it clouded up the action near shore heated up for this kayak angler. Topwater was not productive, which was odd for this time of year. I caught 22 smallmouths ranging in size from less than 10 inches to a tad over 18 inches. All came on Z-Man soft plastics. ([See photos on Livewell Page](#))

Gamma Guides at work on the Allegheny River:

Jeff Knapp boat guide photos



Pete Cartwright wade fishing guide



Special Mercer County Photo Page for this issue

Wilhelm catches by Brad Bee & Shenango family catches via Corey Bice

Lake Wilhelm



Shenango Lake



October Forecast sponsored by Garmin

Darl Black: It's beginning to feel a lot like fall. Water temperatures are finally on the way down, which in turns signals the start of the fall bite for many species. October through early November has always been an excellent timeframe for BIG largemouth bass and BIG smallmouth bass in lakes. I will be spending a lot to time on Conneaut Lake searching for big LMB & SMB over the next five weeks or so. I hope to make a run at both Woodcock Lake and Justus Lake to see if I can connect with a big smallmouth in these two lakes. Wilhelm would be my pick if looking for a largemouth bass over 7 pounds. If weather cooperates and a buddy with a big lake boat offers a ride, I might get out on Erie for a day of smallmouth fishing, too; eerie smallmouth fishing can be outstanding in October. By the end of October, I'll be looking for big smallies in the Allegheny as well as crappies stacked-up at Pymatuning. In between those trips, I'll hit Shenango Lake once or twice for white bass, big crappies and hybrid stripers. Lots of possibilities in October if you just get out and fish. And a great sonar unit such as Garmin will help you improve your catch.

Garmin Tip by Jeff Knapp



Quickdraw feature

The Quickdraw feature available on many Garmin chartplotteres is an outstanding tool. With it one can create their own high definition maps. I've mapped much of Keystone Power Dam (Armstrong County) and Conneaut Lake (Crawford County). The accompanying photo shows my guide client Rich with his 3-1/4 pound largemouth bass taken along a weed edge of Keystone Lake recently. Using my Quickdraw map, and utilizing depth shading

feature of my Garmin Echomap unit, I'm able to precisely work weed edges on clear water lakes like Keystone and Conneaut, where the outside weed edge is well below the surface.



Rich with 3lb plus lmb taken from weed edge above

Area Guide Services contribute to the NW PA Fishing Report

Looking for a trip on a Crawford, Erie, Mercer and Venango county water?
Check them out!

Dutch Fork Guide Service: Lake Erie Walleye trolling, casting and jigging. Keith Eshbaugh; 724-884-3977; www.dutchforkcustomlures.com

Fishing with Darl Black Guide Service: Crappies, Big Bluegills, Bass at Pymatuning Lake, Conneaut Lake and Lake Wilhelm. Darl Black; 814-720-1407; darlblack@windstream.net; www.facebook.com/fishingwithdarlblack.com.

Keystone Connection Guide Service: Allegheny River Smallmouth, Walleye and Musky plus Pymatuning Walleye. Jeff Knapp; 724-902-6082; keystone-connectionguideservice@gmail.com; www.facebook.com/keystoneconnectionguideservice.

Smallies on the Yough LLC: wading for Smallmouth Bass on the Yough River, Allegheny River and other streams. Pete Cartwright; 412-215-6254; pete@smalliesontheyough.com; www.facebook.com/smalliesontheyough/.

Wildwood Outfitters: Fly fishing for Trout, Steelhead and other species. Nick DelVecchio; www.wildwoodoutfitterspa.com/; www.facebook.com/wildwoodoutfitters.

Names drawn for prizes for this Oct 9, 2019 issue NW PA Fishing Report

Double cover shots automatically win a pack of Galida's Grubz or Mike's Custom Tubes:

David Graham and RJ Graham

Name drawn for spool of Gamma Line: Brad Bee

Name drawn for Lure pack 1: Corey Bice

Name drawn for Lure pack 2: Dave Ohmer

All individuals must email Darl Black with shipping address in order to claim their prize. Failure to contact Darl Black means the prize is rolled over to the next Fishing Report.

The Livewell

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Wiegel Brothers Marine
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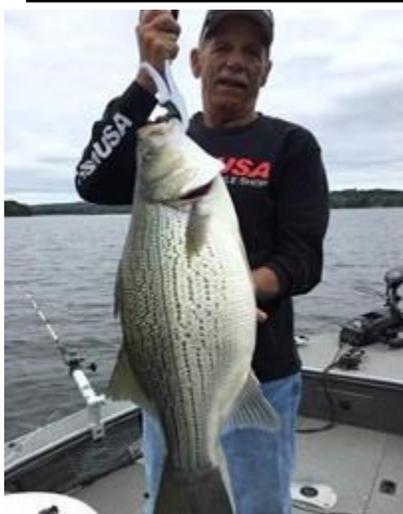


Email: Debbie@riverjetpro.com



Todd with 4lb river SMB

Dave Ohmer's kayak float on the Allegheny



Rick with Shenango Striper



Ken Smith photo on Shenango



Dale Clemmer with LMB



Black Knight Industries

Oil City, PA 16301

www.gammafishing.com

Gamma Line may be found locally at the following tackle shops:

- Consumer Direct Sports (CDS) near Grove City Outlet Mall
- Maurer's Trading Post, Franklin, PA

Gamma Tip by Jeff Knapp

Fishing gets me fired up year-round, but especially from the period from late October into early December. The lakes have turned over, which means great fishing for big smallmouth bass and walleyes. The same is true on the middle Allegheny. Smallies, walleyes, muskies and northern pike are all in the same general area. You never know for sure what's going to bite.



My go-to line setup at this time of year is 15-pound test Gamma Torque, a braid, finished off with a three to four-foot length of 10 or 12-pound Gamm Edge fluorocarbon as a leader. It's important that the connection of braid-to-leader be strong. I use either an Albright or Triple Surgeon's knot. Both are easy to tie when your hands are chilly and finger stiff. I find that the Albright is more streamlined, but will resort to the Triple Surgeon if

the wind makes tying the first option challenging. Plenty of online videos are available to show you how to tie each.