

# NORTHWEST PENNSYLVANIA FISHING REPORT

Published by Blackwolfe Communications LLC

Issue: January 18, 2017



**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.

The NW PA Fishing Report is brought to you by:

**Pennsylvania' Great Lakes Region ([www.PaGreatLakes.com](http://www.PaGreatLakes.com))**

**Black Knight Industries, Oil City ([www.GammaFishing.com](http://www.GammaFishing.com))**

**Wiegel Brothers Marine, Franklin ([www.wiegelbrothersmarine.com](http://www.wiegelbrothersmarine.com))**

## The Landing Net

*by Darl Black*

The third week of January, and so far this has been an On-n-Off winter. At the present time, there is no truly safe ice cover on area lakes – certainly nothing I would consider walking onto. The Allegheny River and French Creek remain extremely high, although receding...but with more rain coming. Erie tributary stream levels have settled down, and with reports of a fresh run of steelhead having moved in during high water so that is where most fishing action will take place in coming days. Of course if you choose to drop a line into small headwater streams, you might enjoy the success that Jeff Knapp did this week with a beautiful wild brown trout!



Photo by Jeff Knapp

## NW PA Fishing Report for January 18, 2017

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

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

### FRENCH CREEK



January 4th



January 7th



January 11th

Warm days during Christmas week resulting in snow melt brought the Creek up. When the Creek receded to fishable level in early January, it began to ice up. But return of rain and warm temperatures this past week caused a massive snow melt. The result was some of the worst flooding along French Creek in a quarter century, including numerous road closings. We are likely over a week away from French Creek being fishable again.

### CRAWFORD COUNTY

#### Pymatuning Lake



**Dave @ Richter's Tackle;** filed 1-16: No one is on ice on southern part of Pymatuning – not safe. A few anglers are fishing through the ice from the Jamestown Marina Docks and catching some crappies and bluegill. I heard that some walleyes are being caught in the Pymatuning Dam outflow area.

**Becky @ Gateway Bait;** filed 1-16: Since the rain and warm up this past week, I've had a few customers attempt to get on the ice, but the edges are too rotten in most places. One customer said there is 6 inches of ice off Alcatraz on the North End but getting to it is a problem. The ice is honeycombed. With rain and warm temps this coming week, not much hope for ice to improve.

## Rich Sari

- Jan 8: I went to Pymatuning today, Sunday the 8<sup>th</sup>. Ice was good on the North End down to Snodgrass – five inches of clear ice. Tried to get out at Jamestown but only three inches of ice when out 50 yards. My grandson Jake and I managed to get 9 good walleyes. See picture. I'm going tomorrow but don't know how long we will have ice with the warm front moving in on Tuesday. (1st photo)
- Jan 9: Set out for Pymatuning by myself today. No luck in the morning because the muskies were roaming around the area. I hooked one and lost it. About noon the wall-eyes moved in and I got my limit in about an hour. I don't know how to take a selfie, so all that's in this picture are the fish! (2nd photo)



(Editor: Who says there aren't walleyes to be caught in Pymie?)

## Woodcock Creek Lake



Editor: With all the rain and snow melt, any ice on this popular ice fishing spot has pretty much vanished with the increase in lake level on this flood control lake. Forget the ice...Check the dam outflow area for possible walleye bite in Woodcock Creek.

## Sugar Lake

**Janice @ Griffin's Bait**; filed 1-16: Our customers are reporting 6 inches of ice on Sugar as of Sunday the 15<sup>th</sup>, but the edges are bad so it is tricky getting on the ice. The four people on the ice said they were catching panfish. A customer stopped in this morning to get bait and was headed to Sugar.

## ERIE COUNTY

### Presque Isle Bay

**Laura @ Presque Isle Angler**; filed 1-16: There is some ice on Head of Bay and in Marina Lake where a few anglers have been venturing out. But it's risky and anyone going should have ice safety equipment with them. They are catching mainly bluegills. With the rain and warm temps expected this week, don't expect improvement in ice conditions.

### Tributary Streams

**Gary @ Poor Richards Bait**; filed 1-16: The creeks are open and have lots of water. Anglers have been catching fish in Elk from Rt. 5 to the lake.

**Dan @ Elk Creek Sports**; filed 1-16: We have a lot fresh fish in Elk that came in with the rain. Creek has only receded enough for good fishing as of Sunday. Several guides were out and reported fresh steelheads above the Legion Hole. If we don't get too much rain during the next 10 days, with the warmer forecast we should have outstanding steelhead fishing. Moderate temps and plenty of water (hopefully not too much), so get ready some great mid-winter fishing!

## MERCER COUNTY

### Lake Wilhelm

**Vicki @ Fergies Bait**; filed 1-16: No one is on the ice at Wilhelm. It is not safe. We pretty much lost our ice cover with the rain and warm temps this past week.

### Shenango River Lake

Editor: Rick Como reports being on Shenango ice prior to the rain and warm up. He was having success with crappies, perch and bluegills. However, no reports from Shenango since the big rain; given Shenango is a flood control lake, it is highly unlikely there is safe ice anywhere on the impoundment. Any ice still on the lake is likely unreachable from shore. (Check out Rick's ice fishing photos below before the big rain.)



Rick's big crappie



Mixed bag of Shenango panfish

### Shenango Dam Outflow

Tyler Shaffer (Mercer); filed photos on Jan 1. Tyler finished the year off in style with multi-species catches from the Shenango Dam Outflow downstream to the first bridge (stretch open to year-round trout fishing). In addition to trout, he caught walleye, pike and channel cats. (See his photos below)



### Neshannock Creek

**Bob @ Neshannock Creek Fly Shop**; filed 1-12: Before you know it, spring will be here! And with spring comes our two biggest events of the year.

- Annual Pre-Season Trout Stocking on Saturday, March 4
- Lunker Stock and Rod Raffle on Saturday, March 11

For more information visit the website, or contact Bob at [rashuey5@gmail.com](mailto:rashuey5@gmail.com), or call the shop at 724-533-3212.

## **VENANGO COUNTY**

### Allegheny River

**Jeff Knapp @ Keystone Connection Guide Service**; filed 1-13: I ended the year with a nice largemouth bass on Keystone Lake on December 30. Since then Keystone froze over as did portions of the Allegheny River. Rain/snowmelt of Jan 11/12 pushed the Allegheny to near flood stage, but also flushed the ice out. It might be fishable by the weekend of Jan 21. Until then I'll be enjoying the mild weather while fishing some NW PA wild trout streams.

Allegheny River continued..

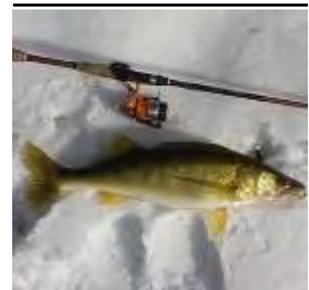
### Steve Udick Diary (Oil City)

Dec 24: I picked up two 22" walleyes in fast running water (2-3 feet deep) by slow rolling Rapala Shad Rap in Regal pattern. The 'eyes were pretty active that day. My son-in-law Guman Gezici landed his first walleye using a Rapala Husky Jerk in Helsinki Shad color. We landed a total of 13 walleyes that week, ranging from 18 to 26 inches. Except for thee taken on live minnows, all fish came on Husky Jerk or Shad Rap. All but three were returned to the river. (Steve Udick photos)



Guman Gezici

Jan 10: I took a look this morning at five of my potential walleye spots. All were iced in – with ice extending out 15 feet from shore in some spots. Oil City Marina is not useable due to shore ice, and the river still has plenty of flowing ice.



Jan 11: River blown out due to heavy rain; rising to flood stage.

### Kahle Lake



**RJ Graham** (Tionesta) had been fishing Kahle Lake during the freeze before Christmas. He was having success on bluegill and crappies, and also getting an occasional bass. During the Christmas thaw, the edges melt and made it difficult to get on the ice. No recent reports. (RJ Graham photos)



### **Foxburg Ice Fishing Tournament on Kahle Lake**

February 4; from 6 am to 4 pm

\$35.00 per team (two person or single – same fee)

Register by mail before Jan 31; registering day of event subject to late fee

For more information contact Chuck Gisselbrecht daytime at 814-227-7697; evenings at 724-659-0196

## Extreme Ice Fishing with Dave Lefebre

I've been experimenting with prototype baits from various companies for years. It forces you to try new things and open your mind. In some cases I am simply going through the motions...but in other instances the new concepts actually surprise you. They work!

That's been the case with the new Rapala Slab Rap. Crappies are my favorite ice target, and though I've always gravitated toward bigger baits, I honestly thought the Slab Rap was too big. What starts as another "Go through the motions" obligation turned into one of my new approaches over the past two ice seasons, especially for bigger slabs. This bait, as well as the newer tiny version of the Rippin' Rap will catch crappies, not only when they are actively feeding but even when fish are looking but tough to entice. I'm getting bigger bites in a crowd routinely and I'm able to cover more water quickly than with lighter weight jigs. These baits get a reaction bite, but what surprised me even more is that they also trigger bites during tough bites, outperforming soft plastics many times over. I'll always use my Yamamoto twisters and VMC tungsten heads, but what really excites me for ice excursions lately are these little vertices vibration killers.



### **Fishing with Darl Black Guide Service is currently booking trips for 2017.**



We start the season in April on *Pymatuning* for **Walleyes** in April. Then focus on **Crappies** and **Bluegills** at *Pymatuning* during May, June and early July.

From mid-July through early October, I focus on *Conneaut Lake* with trips for **Crappies** and **Bluegills**. During October and November, the focus is **Largemouth Bass & Smallmouth Bass** at *Conneaut Lake* or **Crappies** at *Pymatuning*. All tackle and bait provided, including rods and reels.

Visit my guide page at [www.BlackwolfeCommunications.com](http://www.BlackwolfeCommunications.com). Also "Like" my Facebook Page "Fishing with Darl Black" for more information. Then email me direct at [darlblack@windstream.net](mailto:darlblack@windstream.net) to discuss a date or call me at 814-720-1407.

Once again this season in cooperation with GAMMA FISHING, each booked guide trip in 2017 will receive a sample spool of **GAMMA's Optic Yellow Panfish Line** in 2 or 4 pound-test – the best light line I have ever used.

# The Livewell

## Brought to you by:

Wiegel Brothers Marine  
704 ½ Elk Street  
Franklin, PA 16323  
814-437-2077

[www.wiegelbrothersmarine.com](http://www.wiegelbrothersmarine.com)  
[Debbie@wiegelbrothersmarine.com](mailto:Debbie@wiegelbrothersmarine.com)



Wiegel Marine handles the following boats:  
G-3; Kingfisher; Xpress, Rogue and the new  
Skinny Water Jet Boat



Boat of the Month: Latest addition at Wiegel Marine—the new Skinny Water Jet Boat

## Get in on the Allegheny River Walleye action!



Steve Udick



Steve Udick



G-3 River Jets



Yamaha motors



Chris Daugherty



Kingfisher Extreme Shallow

PROCESSED FOR PERFORMANCE



Black Knight Industries

Oil City, PA 16301

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

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



## 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

Maurer's Trading Post—Franklin, PA

Robinson's Bait & Tackle — Espyville, PA

**Rich Sari** is the winner of spool of Gamma Line of your choice for this issue of the Fishing Report. Please email your shipping address to Darl Black to claim your prize.

GAMMA TIP from Professional Guide & Outdoor Writer Jeff Knapp:

Wintertime river walleye fishing is a favorite of mine, one that demands attention to line. It is jig fishing, mostly, and I prefer 10 or 15-pound test Gamma Torque braided line if the air temperature is above freezing. The no-stretch qualities of Torque allow me to feel light walleye bites, even in 35 feet of water. I use a 3-foot leader of 10-pound Gamma Edge fluorocarbon as a leader. Because braided line absorbs water, when the temperature is below freezing, braided line freezes and gets as thick as rope. Then I switch to spools loaded with 8-pound test Gamma Copolymer in Hi-Vis Gold. The added visibility broadcasts light twitches, and thus helps offset the loss in sensitivity. For more information on Allegheny River wintertime walleye fishing, visit [www.keystoneconnection.com](http://www.keystoneconnection.com) or Keystone Fishing Guide Service on Facebook.