The Harris Polls indicate that over 80 percent of the American people want cleaner air, cleaner water, sound management of public lands, and wetlands protection, and that they agree almost unanimously on every major conservation issue on which the Pennsylvania Fish Commission takes positions.

Thus, in an election year environmental issues could make a difference, if the general public believes strongly enough in these issues to vote their choices. Secretary of the Interior James Watt, the lightning rod for controversy, has been replaced by Judge William P. Clark, and the appointment of William D. Ruckelshaus as administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency has restored calm and credibility to the scandal-ridden agency of Ann Gorsuch Burford. Both Clark and Ruckelshaus have blunted the environmental community's political power to some extent by being low-key in Clark's case, and a house-cleaning at EPA by Ruckelshaus has placed real pros in important positions.

On the other hand, the Administration's handling of acid rain is a major disappointment. Ruckelshaus received a clear mandate from President Reagan to protect the environmental quality aggressively, but he found himself undermined by the White House staff and the Office of Management and Budget when he tried to do something about it. Yet, Ruckelshaus has argued consistently that acid rain is a major problem, but that a control program undertaken without more research into its nature and extent would be counterproductive — we are disappointed!

As you know, the Fish Commission considers acid rain to be the most serious, chronic threat to the fisheries in the Commonwealth, and we have pushed with our Congressional delegation and the Pennsylvania Acid Rain Caucus for controls NOW. We have quite widely distributed a graphic report on the threat to over 5,000 miles of headwater streams that we think will be lost as recreational fisheries by the end of the century unless drastic changes take place. In fact, we have already lost streams because of nothing else but acid precipitation.

Thus, we read with dismay that an Administration report which recommends immediate measures to stop acid rain has been suppressed since its completion last March. A panel of nine scientists, hand-picked by the White House to write the report, recommended immediate action to stop ruination of lakes and forests in the Northeast, and denounced the position of calling for more studies before any action is taken.

Scientists simply cannot wait for all the evidence to be presented while doing no more than exploring scientific uncertainties. The processes of acid precipitation are irreversible, and the shortsightedness in delay will in many cases bring action too late. We fear for the future of the children of the race.

Ralph W. Abele
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Fish Commission
Wrangling with redeyes page 20

Autumn, Pennsylvania, and Northern Pike by Dave Ehrig
Here's the where-to and how-to of drumming up some Pennsylvania northern pike action.

Streamers for River Smallmouth Bass by Harry W. Murray
Fooling smallmouth bass with streamers can be productive at this time of year, but the low water in most streams and rivers means you have to use special techniques, which the author explains.

Hidden Trout by Rich Faler
The author knows there's a lot more trout out there than you may think, and here he shares some of his trout-finding secrets.

Fall Hook-Ups with Erie Salmon and Trout by Bob Chandler
This information can help you find a good spot for salmon and trout—angling from shore or from a boat—and it can show you just how to catch more fish, too.

Rock Bass, the Robust Panfish by David R. Thompson
The author shares his ideas on how to up your score fishing for these critters.

Wooly Bugger Magic by Dave Wonderlich
Here's the wooly bugger secret—it's one of the deadliest flies for fooling b-i-g trout—The author explains how best to fish it.

County Features—York and Lancaster Counties by Gary Diamond

Staff photographer Russ Gettig caught this fall fishing scene. Bass, trout, pike, and panfish are some of the Keystone State's quarries that you can tempt this month, and in this issue you'll find practical information on how and where to up your score.
The silvery spoon rode a long arc from the rod and knifed sharply into the water. As the retrieve tightened the slack line, the lure stopped dead. Hung up on a weedy snag, or so I thought, the water soon swirled, and with a mighty slap of its tail, the northern pike signaled that the battle was on. The experts always say that pike fight deep, but this fish obviously didn't read the book. The 38-inch fish charged the boat, it leaped into the air, and repeated this maneuver four times as I frantically tried to wind in the slack line.

After a drag-sizzling 20-minute fight, we were both finished. The beautiful northern pike was a true trophy of the weed beds, and he had beaten me into believing that no other fish could fill my memory with such excitement. The northern pike strikes from ambush, stretches tackle to its limit, and graces the table as one of the finest dishes that can be served from North American waters.

It was back in the trout season opener that I first happened to come into contact with old Esox. After catching a number of fat hatchery-reared trout, my curiosity caused me to wander downstream into a large reservoir north of Reading. There, fishery biologists were conducting a survey of warmwater species. Much to their surprise, and mine, there was a netted 48-inch northern pike among the crappies and carp! Though I have fished this waterway many times, I never saw or heard of anyone actually catching northerns here. But in fairness, rumors did persist of Loch Ness Northern in this reservoir, on which boats are not allowed.
One ticket to pike fishing success is trolling spoons and plugs along the edges of weed beds. A 4-inch red-and-white weedless Dardevle or a 3-1/3-inch floating jointed Rapala (red-and-white or blue-and-silver) can fool the fish. Another plug that scores just outside the weeds is a Creek Chub Pikie Minnow in blue and silver fleck.

Why is it then that good northern pike water seldom receives the attention of warmwater fishermen? Perhaps all the glamour of mighty muskies and big-mouthed bass hawgs tickles the till more than the sleek, secretive, and perhaps out-of-the-ordinary northerns.

I know that in my years of angling, northern pike have always been touted as Canada's trophy, yet Pennsylvania's fishery has yielded some tremendous specimens. Now, with northern pike feeding activity at its peak, it is time to get out among the watery weed beds and do battle!

The Northwest

In the northwest, Kinzua stands out as an outstanding big-pike lake. It probably has earned this title because it lies within the southern limit of the pike's natural range, where these fish find water temperature and forage species ideal. The entire shoreline of this Warren County hotspot is ideal for trophy pike, from the dam north into New York.

Actually, the entire Allegheny River system has historically supported natural reproduction of northerns. In the past, pike from Lake Erie had been stocked in the Clarion River, but pollution and acid rain has taken its toll on this watershed.

Pymatuning (south of Linesville) and Conneaut Lake, in Crawford County, are good northern fisheries, but the best bet for northerns in the northwest is Lake Erie. Specifically, Presque Isle Bay's weedy shoreline consistently yields trophy-sized Esox. Although it is difficult to fish the privately owned shoreline of the Erie area, the Pennsylvania Fish Commission provides excellent boat access areas at Presque Isle.

The lagoons of Presque Isle are a series of ponds, coves, and backwaters (between Marina and Misery bays) with calm, shallow, and weedy areas that are dynamite in the fall. The Fish Commission conducts spring netting operations here to catch the necessary northerns for cross-breeding with muskies to produce the hybrid tiger musky.

Other hotspots

South of the Laurel Highlands in Somerset County is Somerset Lake. Not large by comparison with other pike hotspots, this waterway has been sporting some very good northern populations.
For fishermen in the Northeast, look toward the eastern branch of the Susquehanna River, north of Tunkhannock on Route 6 in Wyoming County. This rocky, island-chocked river has been a well-kept secret, but recent attention toward musky action has turned up surprising catches of northerns.

With a season starting May 12 and continuing until the following March, Pennsylvanians can keep anything over 24 inches, and two trophies if they get lucky! The exceptions to the rule are Lake Erie and Conowingo Reservoir, which are open all year to fishing.

The northern pike (Esox lucius Linnaeus) begins life among the heavy aquatic vegetation along the shores of rivers and lakes. It grows very rapidly the first three years, attaining a length between 6 to 18 inches, depending on water temperatures and available food. Though its rate of growth slows in successive years, the northerns continue to put on weight for the rest of their lives. Usually the females grow faster and achieve greater weights than the males.

Some fishermen confuse the northern with the muskellunge, but the northern can easily be distinguished by looking for the lighter bean-shaped spots that are arranged vertically along its sides. Muskies have darker vertical lines on a lighter background. During their immature stage, the northerns exhibit a light barring along their sides that sometimes causes fishermen to confuse them with a smaller relative called the grass pickerel.

Habitat

Northern pike seem to prefer clear, warm, slowly meandering, heavily weeded rivers, or warm weedy bays of lakes. They are easier to locate in spring and fall when the water temperature in the shallows is below 55° F. With warmer temperatures, the pike are difficult to catch as they seek deeper, cooler holes. Perhaps this is why most pike are usually not caught in less than 15 feet of water.

Pike are opportunistic feeders and take anything up to half their length! While fishing for walleye this past summer, I watched a beautiful walleye on the end of my line get shredded by a strike out of nowhere. The northern not only slammed into this 20-inch-plus walleye, but refused to let go until I finally had him alongside the boat, and then he unceremoniously spits the remains of the walleye back in my face!

Biologists have studied the contents within the stomachs of northern pike and have statistics worth considering. They found that 90 percent of their stomachs were filled with fish, and the other 10 percent is shared by frogs, crayfish, mice, muskrats, and ducklings. Slower baitfish like suckers, perch, and shiners seem to have the most appeal, but numerous other gamefish like walleye, small muskies, and even other pike are included in their diet.

In prime pike habitat, there is usually between 8 and 25 pounds per acre of northerns. This means that if you do find a trophy-sized fish and are able to land it, don’t waste your time fishing in the same spot. A bay or weedy area has either a lot of smaller pike, or one or two large fish. It is also interesting to note that northerns and muskies do not coexist. Biologists have found that the pike spawn earlier, the fry grow faster, and end up eating the muskies of the same age! But when raised to maturity, the larger musky ends up making a meal of the smaller northerns.

Finding pike

For the most serious pike fisherman, locating the fish is far more important than the kind of lure you choose. But bait fishermen should choose large minnows, shiners, or suckers to attract the larger pike. Even 6-inch baitfish aren’t too large. Early morning and late evening hours are the prime times to catch the peak feeding spurs. Because pike wait in ambush within weedy areas, anglers should not be shy about casting alongside and even into the grasses, lily pads, dead snags, and stumps.

I like to bait the hook behind the dorsal fin because the pike usually grab the fish laterally. Be sure that you have sharpened the hook, because the pike’s toothy, hard palate is difficult to penetrate. Lift the rod upward and set the hook hard at least three times before beginning the retrieve. It also would be wise to use good-quality new line, because the diving, weed-snagging pike stress nicked, scratched line to its limit. Because the northern has extremely sharp teeth, wire leaders or heavy doubled monofilament leaders are almost a necessity.

Trolling

I like to be moving constantly in search of pike, so my usual tactic is to troll the edges of weed beds with surface plugs and spoons until I find activity. At that point, I’ll bomb the weeds and snags with 4-inch red-and-white weedless Dardevles or 3 1/3-inch floating jointed Rapala plugs (red-and-white or blue-and-silver). An old standby of pike fishermen is the blue-with-silver-flleck Creek Chub Pikie Minnow, fished just outside the weeds.

Success for pike is rated at about 1.8 to 2.2 fish per hour, with most of the northerns in the 18-inch to 22-inch class. But if you’re looking for food, larger legal-sized fish are necessary for fillets. Northern pike make delicious, sweet, flaky-white fillets, but be sure to skin the fish to rid it of the muddy flavor of its environment. This also eliminates any possible tapeworm (Diphyllobothrium latum) that seems to seek out the species.

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For more on finding northerns, read "How to Catch Northern Pike" by Bob Price in The Angler magazine. If you can’t find a magazine, contact the Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association.

Freelance writer-photographer Dave Ehrig teaches environmental science in the Whitehall-Coplay Middle School. He is executive director of the Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association.
Streamers for River Smallmouth Bass

by Harry W. Murray
Let this lowdown help you achieve more hook-ups.

The low-water conditions of October present an ideal situation for using streamers for Pennsylvania river smallmouth bass. Less water volume means that the bass are concentrated in the pockets and runs, not spread all over the river as they are in May and June.

This low-water condition places an added onus on the angler for accurate water reading and careful wading. Though the smallmouth are willing to cooperate when you play the game properly, they are equally willing to reject your offerings and spook away, if you are careless and noisy with the approach. Even your casting must be done with extra care and more thought than was required four months earlier.

I have had many nice smallmouth bass spook off feeding stations even before making my presentation cast because I had carelessly done my false casting within their view. Long ago I trained myself not to do this in our small trout streams, but for some reason when I get on our larger bass rivers I have trouble remembering it.

Last summer while guiding a visiting angler on a smallmouth stream I had this fish shyness idea made aware to me in a very vivid way. We had been fishing some flat, slow water all morning with poor results. I got out of the water and walked upstream to check out a heavy riffle. From a high cliff I spotted several very large smallmouth feeding in water only three feet deep about five feet out from the bank. I walked back down the bank 100 yards before going down to the river. Carefully I waded up to the feeding smallmouth and crawled the last 50 feet to get into casting position. Knowing the exact location and using all this care was not enough. I could not take any of these bass, and I felt sure I had spooked them.

Water Clarity

Trying to profit from this lesson to find some worthwhile fishing for my client, I decided to experiment. I could do nothing about the low-water condition, but the crystal clear condition, maybe. There had been some local rains for the previous two days, and although it had not been enough to discolor the whole river, I was pretty sure one small local feeder would be discolored. We drove upstream to where this feeder entered the main river, and sure enough it was muddy. That small stream supplies only about 10 percent of the river’s flow, but that was enough.

We dropped into the river about a quarter-mile below and on the same side as this feeder and had outstanding fishing. We used the same streamers and techniques we had used 15 miles downstream, and the only change I could detect was the discoloration of the water upstream. I was convinced that the discolored water had allowed the bass to be less cautious and more forgiving of our casting and approach. I took advantage of these discolored feeders several times after this last fall with the same good results.

Wading

Another technique I use in late summer and early fall when fishing streamers for smallmouth is to wade upstream. I find that this allows me to approach my bass more closely without spooking them. This close-in approach (30 to 40 feet) enables me to read the water more accurately, cast more accurately, and strike my fish with more control than if I had been fishing downstream with a longer line. I also try to take advantage of ledges, boulders, and grass beds to help conceal my approach. Often smallmouth bass can be found feeding just upstream of these areas and you can sneak up from behind and pick them off with careful casting.

These grass beds and ledges are ideal areas to find smallmouth feeding on damselfly nymphs. The underwater form of this beautiful little fly crawls up the grass to emerge as a flying adult. Though I use several nymph patterns that work well here, I quite often get better results with a size 10 olive wooly bugger fished upstream and retrieved like a streamer (see “Wooly Bugger Magic” on page 23 of this issue). When you consider how these little natural damsel nymphs dart about in the water, it is easy to see why a streamer retrieved in this fashion is productive. Their darting action is more minnow-like than it is like that of a nymph.

Minnows and Streamers

This same upstream approach works well when you find smallmouth feeding on minnows close to grass...
Streamer fishing for smallmouths is best with a 9-foot rod for 6-weight, 7-weight, or 8-weight line. A 9-foot leader tapered to 2x or 3x also fits the bill.

beds. Minnows usually prefer the protection of grass beds to open water. Bass realize this and can often be found along the edges of the grass and occasionally far up into it in search of minnows. By carefully studying these areas as you come to them, it is often possible to spot a good smallmouth either chasing minnows or moving through the grass. Most of the minnows found in these areas have a bluish-silver or greenish-silver color. Two of the most productive streamers I use here are Waterman's Silver Outcast and a black nose dace.

Along these same lines of low-light situations would fall early morning and late-evening fishing. Both times of the day are better at this time of the year than midday. I find I do much better the first two hours of daylight than I do the last two. I think this success is primarily due to the slightly cooler water temperature. At this time of the year a few degrees cooler water can be very helpful. The lower air temperature during the night can drop the water temperature just enough to get the smallmouth started feeding. Of course, many smallmouth feed during the night, and if you can get there at daylight many are still out on the prowl.

**Streamer choices**

There are several other streamers I like in these situations. On heavily overcast days the fur leech is awfully hard to beat. Leeches are much more active on darkish days and are thus more readily available to the bass. I have seen smallmouth pass up many other forms of food to cash in on these ugly little creatures. I use both the white and black marabou muddlers for much of my morning and evening streamer fishing. These are both excellent searching patterns to use in covering the water at these times of the day when it is productive to cover a fair amount of water.

I prefer a nine-foot rod for my bass streamer fishing. The rod should balance with either a 6-weight, 7-weight, or 8-weight line. Lines lighter than a 6-weight will not carry some of the large streamers. Lines heavier than an 8-weight can get very splashy for low-water smallmouth fishing. Most of the streamers I use at this time of the year range from size 10 up to size 6. The leader tippet must be adjusted to the size fly, but a 9-foot leader tapered to 2X or 3X performs well for most of this fishing.

With a cautious approach and a careful analysis of the stream conditions, at this time of year you can expect some outstanding streamer fishing for river smallmouth bass.

Harry W. Murray's favorite quarries are tough-to-catch trout and smallmouth bass, and he prefers to fool them with fly fishing gear or ultralight spinning tackle.
There's more trout out there than meets the eye. Here are ideas on how and where to find them.

Hidden Trout
by Rich Faler

We usually picture a trout's world as clear, swift runs and cascading brooks, so most trout anglers aim for mountain headwaters or famous limestone streams. These fishermen overlook a lot of good fishing.

The hardest concept to grasp is that trout water doesn't have to look like trout water. It can be a mud-banked creek that first brings to mind a cane pole and stringer of catfish, or a river that most anglers note for its sunnies and carp. Yet, these habitats can not only hold trout, they may even have self-sustaining (breeding) populations.

My first experience with these peculiar waters was on the Big Shenango River about five miles south of Pymatuning Reservoir. This river holds everything from muskies and bass to channel cats and crappies. I've never heard of anyone trout fishing on it between Shenango and Pymatuning Reservoir (the state stocks below Shenango Reservoir at Sharon). On this particular occasion I was fishing at Porter's Crossing on the Big Shenango. This spot is two miles upstream from the river’s confluence with the Little Shenango, a stocked stream.

While others were duck hunting, I was fishing three miles and five months from the nearest trout stocking. I immediately caught a rainbow trout just below the falls at the pool's head. To say I was mildly surprised would be an understatement. I was further astounded to catch three more in just a few hours. Trout over 18 inches long have since fallen to live bait both in this pool and downstream.

Finds in feeders
One October I was setting raccoon traps on a creek called Probst Run, a stream fished only with minnow traps. This stream is a feeder of the Little Shenango River, a put-and-take fishery seldom worked after mid-June. While setting a trap under a bridge on Probst Run, a downstream motion caught my eye. Glancing up, I watched as a beautiful 10-inch rainbow glided upstream toward me.

Rolling on its side, it grasped a nymph from the bottom and then drifted back downstream.

One is not allowed to fish for trout in the extended season in creeks upstream from approved trout waters, so I noted this rainbow incident and returned the next spring during the regular season. My wife and I took five trout from one pool and several others upstream, and a friend landed a four-pound brown about a mile upstream from the area my wife and I had fished.

Overlooked opportunities
Fishing a stream usually overlooked by other anglers has quite a number of rewards. The most obvious is less competition. Standing in line for bank space is nonexistent. Having found an unreaped stretch of water is in itself a great satisfaction, and remember—

photos by the author
"strange" waters can also be challenging.

One small stream in southern Mercer County is "strange" trout water. I usually fish it every year as a kind of personal test because it has a uniqueness that I love.

This stream ranges from 10 to 15 feet in width and is from several inches to a foot deep. It has black muck banks and most of it flows over the same thick slime. Skunk cabbage and American hellebore grow in the shallower edges. A channel averaging four feet wide and two feet deep wiggles down the middle, and it often separates and forms two or more smaller channels as clumps of vegetation and root systems create diversions. The channel has many stretches of clean gravel on the bottom. Alders grow on the banks and directly in the shallow water along the channel. The alders grow together forming a canopy over the channel and even bend down to grow in the channel itself. No trout stream is as well guarded by boot-stuck mud and intertwining branches.

Not just the stream is peculiar. The trout in this swampy run are all brown trout of radiant colors, and I've never seen a more consistently beautiful race of browns anywhere else. Of the few I performed autopsies on, the flesh is always as red as a native brookie's.

Browns are documented sippers of midges and devourers of mayfly nymphs. Yet, investigations of these browns revealed oddities such as millipedes and sow bugs along with a variety of other peculiar beasties. What one would consider normal trout fare never seemed to constitute a majority of the stomach contents. Cataloging the intake of these browns would be quite an undertaking.

Of course, browns are opportunistic feeders. When their usual favorites are unavailable, they'll eat what they can get.

The guardian alders eliminate all fly fishing and spinning from the outset. This creek is strictly a rod-tip wade and a bait-drop situation. Every opening in the branches is fished as one would so many augered holes on a frozen lake. Straight down is the only possible cast.

Ancestral question mark

The ancestors of the trout in this creek came from one of two places. The first possibility is from a long past and forgotten stocking, most likely private. The other is that the forebears of these trout worked into this obviously healthy environment from some distant state stocking. The river this creek flows into has stocked waters about 12 miles upstream. A migration of a few breeders is a distinct possibility. No other trout water connects directly to this creek, so the population is evidently self-supporting.

The trout I usually take here are in the seven-inch to 10-inch range, but there are definitely breeders in here of over 20 inches. I've never taken one, and the two other fellows I know who fish here have never taken one. They have been repeatedly observed, though. Give us a little more time, and we'll nail one, if he doesn't tie us to a branch first!

The bottom line to this swamp run is that it contains a race of browns that reproduce and grow, all without a sideways glance from trout-eager anglers. How are these offbeat trout waters found? One can't hit every stretch of all the untried streams. It would be a truly impossible task. The key to hitting the most likely spots is common sense and a bit of luck.

Clues to finding trout

Whenever a newspaper report or word-of-mouth brings information of a large trout being taken from an unlikely creek (such as a five-pound brown from Crawford County's Crooked Creek), take note. Instead of assuming this was a fluke, investigate the water. Are there any aerating falls? How about cold-water tributaries or deep, shaded pools? Carefully work nightcrawlers or a spinner through these trout-attracting features. Try different baits and lures at different hours and in varying weather conditions. Remember, you're searching—exploring—for an uncataloged trout hotspot. Some hard, unrewarding hours will be spent. The prize finally attained will be as equally satisfying. So don't hit and run. Be thorough.

If the suspect creek seems exceptionally suited for browns—slower than rainbows prefer and warmer than brookies tolerate—night fishing tactics on the tail end of larger pools may be the best approach.

Homework

Aside from information sifted from others, researching river systems and listed trout waters can be revealing. Most anglers hit the approved trout waters, yet a stream will not be listed by the Fish Commission as an approved trout water unless it meets certain criteria. These include factors of width, public access, and water quality. Any listed trout water instantly places contiguous portions of the stream and its downstream water and upstream tributaries as possibly overlooked trout hotspots.

Upstream tributaries tend to attract adventuresome anglers. Untapped trout waters in the tributaries are possible, though less likely than in the main stream for this reason.

Larger, warmer, and slower downstream waters generally draw less interest from trout fishermen. These are prime stretches for investigation. Furthermore, tributaries of the downstream waters may hold a virtual hatchery of overlooked trout. Check the entire water system before writing it off as a lost cause. It may only take one slight habitat difference to produce a trout haven, so search thoroughly.

Other finds

Prejudice has no place in these searches. Catching or observing a carp or bluegill shouldn't dampen your enthusiasm. Their presence may have turned off potential competition before they found any trout. Don't let the warmwater species do the same to you. Rough fish and panfish definitely co-exist with trout. I have taken a largemouth bass, a rainbow trout, and a carp on the same fly in the same 20-foot-long pool. All three were taken in half an hour. The "strange" swampy creek detailed earlier has yielded rock bass and bluegills on the same excursions during which I fooled trout. A practiced tolerance toward the non-trout species may actually help you enjoy the grab-bag angling.

Whatever one's "purist" status, discovering an overlooked creek stretch holding large trout brings greater satisfaction than most angling challenges. These waters don't exist at every bend, but a lot more trout share quarters with pike, carp, and pumpkinseeds than the great majority of anglers would ever believe. Why don't you become a believer?
The 1984 fall salmon season in the Erie area should make most anglers very happy. The summer out-deep anglers caught record numbers of salmon, and never have we caught so many coho and chinook as early as this year. When summer fishing is good out deep, we guess that fall fishing will be good, too.
When will the big silvers (coho) and kings (chinook) come in? No one knows what day will be the best or at least what day will mark the beginning of the fall season. Traditionally, a few big chinooks are caught by the end of August. The big kings always seem to come in first. There are not as many of them, but they might weigh twice as much as a coho. The average fall coho this year will weigh around seven to 10 pounds, and the average chinook from 14 to 20 pounds.

For most anglers during the fall season run, Walnut Creek serves as a base of operations. The Pennsylvania Fish Commission has built a marina, and boat stalls can be rented daily upon availability. It is very inexpensive to fish fall salmon compared to deep-water summer fishing. The fish should start to run by the end of August and run the best from September 20 through November 1. Weather conditions are usually very good from mid-September through mid-October. Even though it is fall, it seems like late summer.

**Walnut Creek**

Erie County is only a little over 40 miles wide. It is bordered by Ohio on the west and New York on the east. The city of Erie sits just about smack dab in the middle of the county. The best access to fishing is on the west side of the city. Anglers with boats should plan on trying for Walnut Creek. Come north on I-79 to the end of the road. This will put you on West 12th Street. Go west on 12th Street to Manchester Road. Here you will see the Walnut Creek Access signs. Go north about a quarter-mile and you are there.

With the Walnut Creek Access area as your base, you can learn the 40-mile front in one trip. Give yourself another time to check out the best fishing areas. West of Walnut about seven miles is another great area to fish from shore. In the last few years the Elk Creek Access area has been developed with the shore angler in mind. Route 5 runs east and west all along Lake Erie. All the creeks and runs flowing north to the lake cross Route 5. Be especially careful not to trespass or litter. There is considerable private property along the lake front.

Fishing from shore is best from Walnut Creek, Elk Creek, and Presque Isle Bay. Fishing from boats changes, but the action off Trout Run, Godfrey Run, Elk Creek, Four Mile Run, Sixteen Mile Run, and Twenty Mile Run is usually good to excellent. Off the main channel from Lake Erie to Presque Isle Bay is either great, or forget it! This fall, around September 15 through the 30th, this area should be the best bet. Launch boats from Lampe Marina at the foot of East Avenue. Come off the north end of I-79 to 12th Street, go east to East Avenue, and north to the marina.

**Tackle**

For shore fishing salmon action I recommend at least 12-pound-test line. We used to throw 8-pound and 10-pound line, but have learned that 12-pound or even 15-pound line is better. Most cohos can be landed on the lighter line, but the kings are very tough. Spoons and spinners are all you need. Roostertails are a must, and black outproduces all other colors. Sizes 5 or 6 blades work best on 12-15-pound test. A size 4 works better on lighter line. A good swivel is a must or your line will get twisted. Some other good producers in Roostertails are chartreuse or silver/blue. My two favorite spoons are the Little Cleo and the K-O Wobbler. Marathon spoons that are copies of these two work, also.

A checklist for shore anglers must include waders or at least hip boots. Chest waders have assisted me in landing several salmon and hip boots a few others. If you have to buy one or the other, buy waders. When you are up our way most anglers own a pair of waders sooner or later. A good short-handled landing net and a pair of needle-nosed pliers are a must, too. It probably will not rain, but just in case, bring rain gear.

For fishing from boats I prefer using plugs over the spoons and spinners. The two best plugs stand out like a sore thumb. The Blakemore Troubleshooter is number one, and a close second is the Heddon Tadpolly. Black is great, reds are hot, and chartreuse always seems to fool the salmon. Two other very good producers are Bill Norman shallow runners in reflecto blue and size 3A fire tiger Bombers. Make sure you have a big landing net on board, because your average fish will be about 28 inches and weigh around 10 pounds. Some of you will tangle with 15-pound steelhead, and others with 22-pound chinook.

Tackle should be in great shape. The better local anglers use 7-foot to 9-foot rods. Seldom do you find a local big gun with a shorter rod. Reels on the boats are usually level winds such as the Daiwa 27H or Penn 109 or 209. The García level winds do a great job, too, such as the 6000, 6500, and 7000. These reels hold around 250 yards of 20-pound-test monofilament.
The medium-weight rods, long with a medium-light tip, are my favorite.

Shore fishing
While fishing from shore, a 7-foot rod and medium-sized spinning reel is most practical. You will probably toss hardware over a thousand times a day, so think just heavy enough to do the job. I use a 7-foot, 9-inch rod blank and a Zebco Cardinal four reel. Every now and then a slight rest helps my wrist from tightening. Once in shape, I can throw lures with this outfit all day long. Snap on a spoon, throw out, retrieve at a medium-steady speed, and hang on. The strike comes when you least expect it. Set the hook firmly, not hard, and play your trophy. Remember to keep your rod high, causing the salmon or trout to fight the rod. A coho fights well, a steelhead fights super, and a chinook will tear you apart. When you land a king, you deserve a pat on the back.

Trolling
The king usually hang out about three feet from the bottom, and the coho the same from the top. Every now and then a king will hit right on the surface. Trolling for the cohos, we fish no deeper than three feet under the surface. Remember to keep your rod high, causing the salmon or trout to fight the rod. A coho fights well, a steelhead fights super, and a chinook will tear you apart. When you land a king, you deserve a pat on the back.

The Elk Creek Access area should provide great steelhead fishing from late October through spring. Several trout over 10 pounds will be caught. When trolling, pull your plugs from 75 to 125 feet behind the boat. Try to fish near the top for coho and deeper for kings. Fresh schools of coho should come in on most days from mid-September through late October.

Because the 1984 fall prospects are very easily spooked. They are as different as day and night. The steelhead are usually up near the top in the early fall. When they go on a feed, they love salmon eggs off the bottom, too. The Elk Creek Access area should provide great steelhead fishing from late October through spring. Several trout over 10 pounds will be caught. When trolling, pull your plugs from 75 to 125 feet behind the boat. Try to fish near the top for coho and deeper for kings. Fresh schools of coho should come in on most days from mid-September through late October.

Because the 1984 fall prospects are very exciting, this could be your year to catch a trophy.
New Drunk Boating Law

Pennsylvania's new drunk boating law took effect on July 30, 1984. The new law makes major changes in the enforcement and penalties for operating a watercraft while under the influence of alcohol and controlled substances.

Fish Commission Executive Director Ralph W. Abele hailed the new drunk boating law as an important tool for promoting safety on Pennsylvania's waters.

"Fish Commission law enforcement personnel are ready, willing, and able to enforce the new drunk boating law when it takes effect," Abele declared. "This tough new law should act as a strong deterrent to boaters who would drink too much and then operate a boat. Although we're prepared to take necessary enforcement action, we hope there will be no need for arrests. The new law will have done its job if it deters operation of watercraft under the influence of alcohol or drugs," Abele noted.

Drunk boating has been against the law in Pennsylvania since 1963, but the new law makes operating while under the influence a misdemeanor that carries a potential fine of $2,500 and up to 90 days in jail, and loss of boat operating privileges for one year. What's more, the law provides that all persons who operate watercraft on Commonwealth waters are deemed to have given their consent to chemical tests of their blood, breath, or urine for purposes of determining the level of alcohol or controlled substance in their body. "A person arrested for drunk boating who refuses to take a chemical test will lose his or her boating privileges for one year," Abele observed.

The act also provides for chemical tests to be administered at local police stations, state police barracks, or clinical laboratories, and for pre-arrest breath tests. If a boat operator is stopped by an officer having reasonable suspicion that the boater is operating under the influence, the officer may ask the operator to take a pre-arrest breath test by blowing into a small device. The test, which is not used in evidence, indicates whether there is a probability that the operator is under the influence.

How much is too much? If your blood alcohol content is .10 percent or more, you are boating under the influence of alcohol under the new law. The rule of thumb is simple: If in doubt, don't operate a boat. "For a person of average weight, as few as two drinks could put him over the top," Abele noted.

The new law also identifies and sets penalties for the crime by homicide by watercraft operated under the influence. This crime now carries a fine from $2,500 to $15,000 and imprisonment of up to seven years, with a minimum sentence of three years in prison. This tough penalty should make everyone think twice about drinking and boating, because on the water almost any accident has the potential to become a fatal one.

Safe boating is everyone's business, and excessive drinking and boating just don't mix. "The tough new drunk boating law should help us rid Pennsylvania's waterways of drunk boaters and make boating safer for all," Abele concluded.
In my opinion, the article "Siltation—Less Murky Future" by Dave Wolf (July 1984 Pennsylvania Angler) presents the current water quality-lumbering scenario concisely, directly, and accurately. Industry through necessity, education and enforcement has made considerable progress in stream protection, but there is a long way to go.

I appreciate references to the Bureau of Forestry’s timber management program and the provisions for stream protection. One of our program objectives has been to provide education by example to primary wood products manufacturers. I would like to believe that we have been moderately effective with consistent purchasers of state forest timber sales, but we deal with only a relatively small portion of the industry, and these are usually the larger, most responsible producers. Also the reference to the PFA’s "Timber Harvesting Guidelines" is most appropriate.

Hope that the article will enlighten at least some who need it.

R. R. Thorpe  
State Forester  
Bureau of Forestry

I’m an officer in a very active fishing club. We meet frequently, and we’re always conducting seminars, membership drives, fundraising events, and special programs for our members. Do you have any back issues of Pennsylvania Angler that we could hand out to members at these events and get-togethers?

Peter Kellner  
Philadelphia, PA

Of course. We'd be delighted to provide free copies of the Angler as hand-outs for your event. For details, call or write to: The Editor, Pennsylvania Angler, Pennsylvania Fish Commission, P.O. Box 1673, Harrisburg, PA 17105-1673. 717-657-4520.

**Commission Officers Receive Awards**

Three Fish Commission law enforcement officers received the American Red Cross Certificate of Merit Award while attending the Fish Commission meeting held in Harrisburg last July.

The Certificate of Merit is the highest award given to an individual who uses Red Cross-learned skills to save or sustain the life of a fellow human being in distress. The actual certificate is signed by the president of the United States, who serves as honorary chairman of the American Red Cross.

Law Enforcement Division Deputy Chief Perry D. Heath and Deputy Waterways Conservation Officer James R. Burkepile, both from Cumberland County, were on routine patrol when they were summoned to the aid of a man who had suffered apparent cardiac arrest. Heath and Burkepile administered cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) until the ambulance arrived. The attending physician at the hospital reported that both men had done everything possible under the circumstances to sustain the victim’s life until more advanced intervention could be made.

Deputy Waterways Conservation Officer Donald E. Wagman of York County and his wife were leaving a local shopping mall when they witnessed an automobile cross the vehicle lanes into oncoming traffic and come to rest along an embankment. Wagman stopped his car and immediately went to the vehicle to offer assistance. Upon determining that the victim was not breathing, Wagman administered artificial respiration, and after approximately 10 minutes, the victim began breathing again and regained consciousness. A member of the advanced life support crew said he believed that Wagman’s quick response could have been instrumental in saving the patient’s life.

Every Pennsylvania Fish Commission law enforcement officer completes a CPR course each year during inservice training.

"Although we recognize that CPR will not save the life of every person who suffers cardiac arrest, we want our officers to be well-trained and ready in the event that these life-sustaining skills are necessary," explains Edward W. Manhart, Law Enforcement Division chief. In the cases of Heath, Burkepile, and Wagman, that training proved its value.

**Night Fishing for Bass**

BY KEN HUNTER

FISHING AT NIGHT FOR BASS CAN BE EXTREMELY REWARDING, ESPECIALLY IF YOUR FAVORITE LAKE HAS BEEN CHURNED TO A FROTH ALL DAY.

FISH THE SHORELINES, BASS AND OTHER GAMEFISH THAT WERE INACTIVE DURING THE DAY WILL OFTEN FEED IN THE SHALLOWS ON MINNOWS, FROGS AND OTHER FAVORITES, ON CALM NIGHTS, NOISY SURFACE LURES SUCH AS JITTERBUGS OR LURES WITH PROPELLERS IN FRONT AND BACK CAN PROVIDE SOME ARM JOLTING STRIKES.

BLACK SEEMS TO WORK BEST SINCE IT PRODUCES A MORE VISIBLE TARGET AS FISH LOOK UPWARD AND VIEW THE LURE AGAINST THE LIGHTER SKY.

A SMALL LIGHT ATTACHED TO THE BILL OF YOUR HAT OR TO YOUR TACKLE BOX COMES IN HANDY WHEN CHANGING LURES OR REMOVING SHARP HOOKS.

BOATING LAWS REQUIRE THAT FISHERMEN HAVE AT HAND A LIGHT WHICH SHOULD BE TEMPORARILY EXHIBITED IN TIME TO PREVENT COLLISIONS.

October 1984
Bumper Sticker — Boat Decal — Truck Decal

The Fish Commission has available colorful decals that measure 5¼ inches by 4 inches. You can use them as bumper stickers, boat decals, truck decals, or place them on your tackle box and other gear. These decals are free, but please include with requests a business-sized stamped, self-addressed envelope. Contact: Angler Decal, Publications Section, Pennsylvania Fish Commission, P.O. Box 1673, Harrisburg, PA 17105-1673.

Lines colored tan or light green are disliked by some anglers, who figure they are highly visible to fish. But they are a great boon to the nymph fisherman. His only signal of a strike may be a slight twitch of the line, movement to one side or the other, or a slight pause in the drift.

Shun bass bugs mounted on hooks of the spear-point type. Look for bugs with needle-sharp hollow point hooks. They penetrate the tough flesh of the mouth of a bass better than other hooks.

Marabou dressings on a jig and marabou wings on some type of large flies make them very effective. The fragile fibers of marabou give it lifelike action in the water, even when the lure is at rest.

Surface fly rod lures for bass are mostly of two types, and each has its advantages. A lure made of clipped deer body hair absorbs some water and can be worked more delicately, so it is excellent for use in water where bass can easily be frightened. Bugs made of plastic or wood float high and dry and can be retrieved with violent action and still remain on the surface.

Don’t just pile your waders or boots in a heap or tuck them into a drawer when not in use. Boot hangers can be purchased at most sporting goods stores, or if you are handy you can make one for yourself out of a stout coat hanger. Keeping them on a hanger lets air inside and prevents damage to the lining.

A rocky point extending out into a lake attracts gamefish. The slope of the rock extends down into the water, often to a considerable depth, and usually in steps. These points attract forage — minnows and crayfish, for example — and the gamefish dote on them. Fish all around a point.

Be sure to put mothballs or some other protective material into storage with your flies during the winter.
Book Review

A Fishing Guide to Lake Erie

Mike Simmons, 72 pages, $5.95, Northwoods Publications, Inc., Box 5196, Harrisburg, PA 17110.

Lake Erie—Large and mysterious, 240 miles long, 50 miles wide, and 200 feet deep in places. Intimidating, yes. Add to the size of the lake the fact that yellow perch, walleye, bass, musky, northern pike, steelhead, coho and chinook salmon, plus a wide variety of lesser sought-after fish swim there, and there is little wonder that the majority of fishermen walk away scratching their heads.

While Mike Simmons has not written a "cure-all" for the Lake Erie fisherman, he has given us a down-to-earth guide filled with tactics for all species. The book is broken down into seasons and when and where to catch fish, and it's well illustrated with enticing photographs, maps, and drawings. Mike is an experienced Lake Erie fisherman who has had to adjust his own tactics to cope with the wide variety of gamefish introduced into the lake in recent years.

Certainly, A Fishing Guide to Lake Erie is worth the tariff for the beginner and seasoned veteran because it's written about a body of water with which the author is well experienced. Somehow nothing beats down-to-earth experience. Mike has that experience plus the talent to put his skills in writing.—Dave Wolf
Rock Bass, the Robust Panfish

by David R. Thompson

It doesn't take long for a fisherman to have enjoyable memories. Still, there's no reason for an angler to live in the past. For me, fishing experiences that made boyhood memories reoccur every autumn, and the panfish that kindled those memories are as appealing now as then.

My memories span generations. My father learned to fish in the same Conodoguinet Creek where he taught me and where I taught my young sons. We represent three generations of fishermen who have relied on a particular fish, the rock bass, to learn both fishing techniques and the pleasures of angling.

It is no wonder, then, that we have affection for this species, which frequently is underrated as a panfish without prestige. Yet, the fish is an ideal one to help a beginning angler advance from catching anything that bites to the more sophisticated gamefish. The rock bass also is perfect for seasoned fishermen who simply like plenty of action, not to mention the meals that follow.

It is tempting to describe the rock bass as the robust representative of the sunfish family to which it belongs. I appreciate how “ole goggle-eye” strikes lures and baits with gusto. The fish isn't a finicky eater and rarely just nibbles. No, a rock bass attacks its prey with a hit-and-run tactic that makes my light tackle vibrate. Often when the fish strikes, I can't immediately tell if I'm playing a smallmouth bass, as both species occupy similar habitat.

I appreciate how, when the rubber Femlee minnow I fish in October hits the water, an alert rock bass grabs it instantly. I watch my line where it enters the water and see it move away as the fish carries the lure. Four seconds seem an eternity for me to refrain from setting the hook and then feel the thick panfish begin the tug-of-war among the rocks where it lives. In fact, the Latin species' name literally means “of the rocks.”

Low-water action

On a classic late autumn morning last year, when wearing a flannel shirt was comfortable, I waded quietly into Shermans Creek in Perry County, just upstream of the picturesque Dellville Covered Bridge, located off L.R. 50014 about three miles north of New Bloomfield. I noticed footprints of a raccoon that had hunted along the stream and where a creature had devoured a crayfish, leaving the shell on a flat rock. Seeing the crustacean reminded me that rock bass are as fond of eating crayfish as are smallmouth bass. The only difference is that rock bass prefer smaller crayfish about two inches long.
color and smell.

Flavor

When we're hungry for a fish meal, there's no dispute about what to fish for. "Ole goggle-eye" becomes our quarry.

Susquehanna hot spot

One of the first places my dad took me as a boy for rock bass was the Susquehanna River at Marysville, near the historic stone Rockville Bridge where there's a boating access. In autumn, grass patches attract fish and upriver are large rock formations. These formations are ideal for both rock bass and smallmouth. Our favorite baits, as we waded wearing shorts and sneakers, were hellgrammites and crayfish. We used size 6 hooks and enough splitshot to hold our bait near the bottom. I remember well how the red-eyes would hit and run.

Another productive place on the Susquehanna is Duncannon between the confluences of Shermans and Little Juniata creeks. Here, in water along the "cinder banks," is rubble from the iron mill that once operated in Duncannon. Today, the rubble provides good "structure" for rock bass. We caught a stringerful last year on minnows.

When we want to float fish for goggle-eyes, we take the canoe to the Juniata River or join a friend who has an 18-foot john boat. Drifting from the Fish Commission access at Thompsonstown down to the Greenwood Access below Millerstown, we catch dozens of panfish primarily in rocky habitat. We use the rubber minnow having a red lateral line; Mr. Twisters in motor oil, purple, yellow and black colors; and spinners.

The Walker Access to the Juniata at the town of Mexico is another choice place to catch red-eyes. The railroad rip-rap along the river's south side provides good habitat, and the way to fish it is start at the upper end and drift along shore. Short casts work fine.

Also, above the railroad bridge at Granville are two good eddies on the east side, and local panfish experts fish the railroad piers, too. At Barrel Springs at the upper end of Lewistown are ledges that yield goggle-eyes as do the rocky eddies in the area. At Port Royal, fishermen follow First Avenue and drive the dirt road down along the river to the mouth of Tuscarora Creek. A riffle there resembles a small falls where rock bass fishing can be exciting.

Habitat

Although it may seem as if river rock bass are plentiful everywhere, that's not the case. The key to finding large numbers of this species is learning to identify their habitat. During autumn when rivers and creeks are ideal for wading, rock bass are often found in still water below riffles. Rip-rap shores, rock ledges, and rock piles are good prospects as is the current along the edge of rocky eddies. The current washes food into the eddies and the fish wait there.

In Cumberland County's Conodoguinet Creek, goggle-eyes can be routinely caught in water only knee deep. Chances are, however, it will be below a riffle or have rock structure. In any event, give such places more than a cursory inspection when hunting for rock bass.

Fly rod gear

When fishing warmwater creeks for red-eyes in autumn, I enjoy using a fly rod. Trout fishing gear is fine. Seducing the fish to take topwater offerings is a change of pace from using live bait or lures. Small poppers and deer hair flies are my favorites.

About one mile east of Carlisle where the Conodoguinet flows beneath Wolf's Bridge is a parking place off the quiet country road. Downstream on the south side is a large tree overhanging the creek. It's a good rock bass spot. In fact, from there down to Middlesex, where Letort Spring Run meets the creek, is worth exploring.

The rock bass isn't touted as a glamorous, sophisticated fish. It isn't one of the heavyweights that demands heavy tackle and a wide net or gaff to land. Rather, the fish is reliable, an enthusiastic hitter, and spunky enough to earn my respect. To me, the rock bass is indeed the robust member of the panfish clan, and now that autumn is here I intend to strengthen the rock bass relationship that began during my boyhood. I'm counting on having more good memories of 'ole goggle-eye.

Writer-photographer David R. Thompson's angling specialty is fishing small- to medium-sized streams for bass, trout, and panfish.

PA
The lush autumn meadow was bathed in the bright sunlight of an early October morning. The fabled limestone creek meandered sleepily before us as if it were embraced by the many-colored surrounding foliage. Cat-o'nine-tails stood golden in the sun against a background of tangled thistles and golden-leafed sycamore.

To our 6-pound tippets we each cinched a different colored fly. With heightened anticipation mixed with a fair amount of apprehension we stepped to the hallowed water, reputed to be the most demanding and difficult to fish of all our Pennsylvania creeks.

The 7-foot leaders straightened and our flies plopped into the chalky water across-stream next to the cress. We began working them in jerks crosscurrent and upstream.

"One just rose; came up right next to the cress; he missed the fly!"

Don Bastian, the third partner in our fishing trio, and I looked over as T.G. cast again. Moments passed.

"He rose again, missed it, he wants it," hollered the normally stoic Truman.

"Got one," Don said, as his arched graphite pointed toward the slab-sided brown trout.

His reel sang as the brownie fought downstream. Don followed the fish and worked him to the net as quickly as possible. With a final few turns, flips, and an untangling of the heavy leader from the elodea, the beautiful brownie was netted.

"What a trout. Just look at those colors," Don called.

T.G. and I added our praise to the big brown. Don cradled the heavy red-spotted trout in the current. It finned, then disappeared into the depths.

"Got one!—Missed one!—Turned one!—Got another one, look at him jump!" echoed between angling friends throughout the day. It was as if the trout had awaited the arrival of their preferred table fare with explosive anticipation. What we used that day was an offer they could not refuse.

What fly did we use? The Wooly Bugger.

Dressed in their fineries of orange, red, dun, olive, black, yellow, white, and brown, our imitations seemed unlikely offerings for such normally snooty trout. But in hook sizes 6 and 8, 4x shank, it was just what they wanted. In meadow and mountainous limestone water as well as in brooks, runs, and in large freestone streams, trout take the fly without reservation.

It is a fly that is unequalled in its ability to fool fall trout. And for that matter, it is quickly becoming the hottest underwater producer in all four seasons.

We’ve all heard of the wooly worm and know of its trout-taking ability. The Bugger is somewhat of a wooly worm that completed its metamorphosis. With its large marabou tail and bushier palmered hackle, it seems to come alive as it swims through the water.

Bass fishermen have long known of
the possibilities of the Bugger to fool their warmwater quarry. A few mail order houses and tackle shops have offered the fly, but in limited patterns.

Bob McCullough, nationally known expert on night trout fishing, experimented for years to find special colors for particular streams. Don Bastian produced other versions in circus-like combinations that have been fooling trout with uncanny consistency. Both anglers introduced me to their patterns and methods of fishing the Bugger.

The two basic methods for fishing the Wooly Bugger are the natural drift after an upstream cast, and “working” the Bugger after a cross-stream method in which you cast and immediately begin stripping line in with the left hand while twitching the rod with the right. It seems when the fly is worked faster, more trout are actually hooked. With a slower retrieve the trout tend to “bump” or “roll” the Bugger in its rest between the hit. He says it is particularly productive to twitch the Bugger just as it enters the pocket water.

In early season when the water is higher the trout sometimes hug the banks in the slower current. A Bugger (white/badger) cast downstream and worked upstream parallel to the water’s edge just three or four feet from shore can also be highly productive. This is also an excellent method when fishy looking structures such as roots and stumps, undercut banks, brush piles, and drop-offs are located below your casting position but on the same side of the stream.

**Upstream method**

The second method is also productive but does not produce the attacking strikes. In this approach, which McCullough prefers, the Bugger is cast upstream and allowed to bounce along the bottom while the angler carefully retrieves line to keep it as tight as possible without interfering with the drift. When the line stops or pauses, set the hook; the pause is probably a trout hitting the fly. McCullough prefers this method when fishing pocket water on smaller streams. Fishing upstream, he casts the fly above the pocket water. As the fly drifts into the pocket, he expects the hit. He says it is particularly productive to twitch the Bugger just as it enters the pocket water.

In early season when the water is higher the trout sometimes hug the banks in the slower current. A Bugger (white/badger) cast downstream and worked upstream parallel to the water’s edge just three or four feet from shore can also be highly productive. This is also an excellent

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Here is a list of many of the colors a fly fisherman should include in his bugger box, with the hottest patterns starred.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>marabou tail</th>
<th>chenille body</th>
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<tr>
<td>limestone</td>
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<tr>
<td>*black</td>
<td>orange</td>
<td>black (McCullough Special)</td>
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<td>*smokey grey</td>
<td>orange</td>
<td>dun</td>
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<td>red</td>
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<td>black</td>
<td>yellow dyed grizzly (or yellow)</td>
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Dave Wonderlich best enjoys fishing low, clear water with a dry fly and catching trout in all four seasons. Pine Creek (Lycoming County), Pine Creek’s tribs, the Delaware, and the Leitort get most of his attention.
One thing's for sure—it would be impossible to list every lake, stream, river, and pond in Lancaster and York counties, but if you're a newcomer to Pennsylvania or if you are just looking for another place to go fishing, you'll find this article beneficial.

Susquehanna River
The dividing line between York and Lancaster counties probably holds more varieties of fish than just about any body of water in Pennsylvania. The Susquehanna is noted for its superb smallmouth bass fishing throughout...
its range, but the lower end of the river, above the Mason-Dixon line, provides the angling public with great diversity.

Conowingo Lake, a reciprocal boundary lake in both Maryland and Pennsylvania, provides some fantastic fishing for a variety of species throughout most of the year. As early as the first week in March, when the river is relatively ice free, anglers head for the hot water discharge of Peach Bottom Nuclear Power Plant to fish for a relative newcomer to Pennsylvania waters—the hybrid striped bass. Although this particular species looks like the striped bass of the Chesapeake, its body is fuller, and a 17-incher weighs up to five pounds.

These fish hit a lure like a freight train and often cause anglers to have second thoughts about whether the fish can be landed on anything other than a jeep winch hooked to a tree. Pound for pound, the hybrid white bass is one of the toughest critters in fresh water. One of the main reasons these fish are congregated in this particular area is that the warm water discharged from the plant attracts baitfish. Where there's baitfish, you're bound to find gamefish. In fact, just about every species

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of fish in Pennsylvania waters has been caught in this one small area.

Walleye, often weighing up to eight pounds, are year-round residents of Peach Bottom. Although most anglers prefer fishing for them during the early spring or late fall, you can catch these toothsome rascals throughout the summer months, too, if you're willing to work a bit and be prepared to lose a few lures.

The fish are usually deeper during the warmer months, and the bottom of the Susquehanna, especially Conowingo Lake, is a maze of logs and boulders that eat fishing tackle. In the Deep South, this is called structure, a place where you might lose a plastic worm or two, but if you're fishing close to the bottom of the "Susky," you're considered an expert if you have half the tackle you started with at the end of the day.

Mixed in with the hybrids and walleye are striped bass, smallmouth bass, crappies, bluegills, largemouths, muskies, and occasionally a brown trout. The trout wander in from one or more of the nearby streams that empty into the lake, and most are taken by anglers fishing for another species. It's not unusual to go home with a limit of both bass and trout when fishing Conowingo Lake, but there's two other fish that many do not consider gamefish. Often maligned for their fighting ability, the carp and catfish populations in the Susquehanna have saved many a day for the diehard angler.

Holtwood Dam

One of the best areas for the catfish is at the base of Holtwood Dam. On any given day, throughout most of the summer months and into the fall, the shoreline on the Lancaster County side of the river is dotted with fishermen trying to catch a mess of channel cats with a variety of tackle. You'll see everything from tiny graphite ultralights to surf rods used to cast that special, old-home recipe. Chicken livers, shrimp, nightcrawlers, cheese, corn, and mixtures of all of these are used. Most are effective baits, and it's rare indeed that someone doesn't catch his or her share of cats in this stretch of water.

The Pennsylvania Fish Commission has provided access to Conowingo Lake with an excellent launch ramp that accommodates boats up to 18 feet in length. It's located on River Road approximately three miles south of state route 372. Although most of the road is unpaved, it is well maintained by York County's highway department, and you'll have no trouble trailering your boat the short distance from the main road. The closest city is Lancaster, from which you would head south on route 272 approximately 13 miles to route 372. Turn right and go about five miles to the Norman Wood Bridge. On the York side of the bridge, just 50 feet from the end, River Road intersects the main highway. Turn left and follow the signs to the Muddy Creek Access Area. The ramp is open year-round and there's no fee for the use of the facility.

Holtwood Pool

This waterway is a carbon copy of Conowingo Lake without the nuclear plant. This particular stretch of the Susquehanna can be hazardous to the unknowing or unwary angler. The southern portion of the lake is 12 to 20 feet deep, but the bottom comes up quickly just a few miles above the dam, and most of the obstructions are in the form of granite boulders. If you're unlucky enough to hit one at any speed other than an idle, you'll definitely have to perform major surgery on your boat and possibly suffer some personal injuries to boot. However, if you're cautious and use a bit of common sense, you'll be able to navigate the pool with little or no difficulty.

Because Holtwood Dam is not a high structure, the pool itself is not nearly as long as Conowingo, but this offers the smallmouth bass fisherman some excellent opportunities to get in on some fantastic fishing for the bronzebacks. The upper end of the lake is a maze of deep pools, cuts, and riffles that all hold good populations of these fish. During the dog days of summer and often late into the fall, when water temperatures are not conducive to any kind of fishing, the bass readily hit most lures that resemble a minnow or gizzard shad. Apparently, the dissolved oxygen levels are high enough in these areas to keep the fish active. The lower end of the lake is always a good bet for some big crappies, commonly running 10 inches to 13 inches. The slabsides congregate just above the dam in about 15 to 20 feet of water and feed on the tiny baitfish that take refuge among the sunken trees and brush. Small shad darts, trimmed with a live minnow and worked vertically among the sunken debris, fill a stringer in just a few hours. In addition, Holtwood Pool has been stocked with white bass hybrids in recent years.

You'll find another excellent boat launch facility here on the York side of the river that accommodates boats up to 18 feet. Driving south from York on route 74, you'll see a sign at the intersection of route 624. Turn left and follow your nose for about 10 miles and eventually the river will come into view. Turn right, follow the signs, and you'll see the launch ramp. It has ample parking for several cars with boat trailers, and there is no charge for the use of this facility. Several private ramps are in the same area, but there is a small fee for their use.

York Haven, Safe Harbor

These spots are ideal for the small-boat fisherman as well as the shorebound angler. In most cases, both offer similar fishing to that of the upper end of Holtwood Pool, with one exception—the water is considerably shallower, and if anything, the smallmouth bass fishing is better. Safe Harbor has also been stocked with white bass hybrids in recent years. Because the Susquehanna is merely a thin body of water rushing over boulders and logs, it's recommended that you install a fork, cage, or some other type of prop guard on the lower unit of your motor. This device prevents the loss of or damage to an expensive prop if you hit one of the submerged rocks. The pitchfork is probably one of the best gadgets because it lets the motor simply lift, if it's in the unlocked position, and also affords some protection to the lower unit.

If you're a catfish buff, the many pools between the
York and Lancaster Counties' Best Trout Streams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stream</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Length/Miles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beaver Run</td>
<td>Windsor, Rt. 624</td>
<td>2.0 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blymire Hollow</td>
<td>Winterstown, Rt. 24</td>
<td>2.0 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codorus Creek</td>
<td>Sinsheim, Rt. 516</td>
<td>2.5 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codorus Creek</td>
<td>Jacobus, Rt. 111</td>
<td>4.0 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing Creek</td>
<td>Windsor, Rt. 624</td>
<td>5.0 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing Creek</td>
<td>Goldsboro, Rt. 920</td>
<td>3.0 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furnace Run</td>
<td>York Furnace, Rt. 124</td>
<td>2.0 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muddy Creek</td>
<td>Red Lion, Rt. 74</td>
<td>12.0 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Branch</td>
<td>Red Lion, Rt. 74</td>
<td>7.0 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Branch</td>
<td>Red Lion, Rt. 74</td>
<td>8.0 M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Otter Creek</td>
<td>New Bridgeville, Rt. 124</td>
<td>6.5 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehmayer Run</td>
<td>Jacobus, Rt. 111</td>
<td>2.0 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toms Run</td>
<td>Red Lion, Rt. 74</td>
<td>2.0 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bald Eagle Creek</td>
<td>Woodbine, Rt. 425</td>
<td>2.0 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octoraro Creek</td>
<td>Octoraro, Rt. 896</td>
<td>6.0 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conestoga Creek</td>
<td>New Danville, Rt. 324</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pequa Creek</td>
<td>Smithville, Rt. 272</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conestoga Creek</td>
<td>Hinkletown, Rt. 897</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hammer Creek</td>
<td>Brickerville, Rt. 322</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codorus Creek</td>
<td>Seven Valley, Rt. 616</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are just some of the well-stocked streams in both counties, but if you want to get away from the crowds, a few of the smaller tributaries to these creeks are native brook or wild brown trout waters. The smallest streams often give up some of the largest trout. The big difference is that you'll have to be a bit sneaky and in many cases crawl within casting range of the bank and gently flip your bait a few yards upstream. Then, and only then, do you have a chance of fooling a wary brookie.

Although most of these fish are less than minimum size, it's not unusual to see some brightly colored wild trout topping the two-pound mark in a creek small enough to step across. I do, however, recommend releasing any native trout that is uninjured and handle them as little as possible.

In 1984, Lancaster County received more than 70,500 trout stocked in season and preseason, and York County received more than 79,000 trout. Big winners in both counties include Muddy Creek (17,350 trout), Hammer Creek (9,900 trout), Fishing Creek (9,900 trout), Codorus Creek South Branch (8,300 trout), Beaver Creek (8,000 trout), Codorus Creek (6,800 trout), and Muddy Creek North Branch (5,800 trout).

Some of these waterways have special regulations, so before you fish these spots, check your summary and fishing regulations and laws. — Gary Diamond
stretches of rapids are catfish heaven. One of my favorite methods to catch them is by using a spawn bag made from cheese cloth and filled with chicken liver. You can make them up ahead of time, put them in the freezer, and they'll be ready when you are. When you arrive at your favorite fishing hole, simply rig it with a size 1/0 hook and just enough lead to keep it on the bottom. The cheese cloth holds the gooey chicken liver together, and the catfish, especially some of the larger ones, inhale the whole thing readily.

This type of rig has some distinct advantages over fishing with nightcrawlers. The small fish are not able to swallow the spawn bag, although they attract some of the larger fish to it because of their curiosity. The bait also lasts several months in the freezer.

**Lake Marburg**

The rolling hills near Hanover provide a scenic backdrop for beautiful Lake Marburg, where yellow perch, crappies, muskies, and walleye abound. Yet, this lake is often overlooked by many, simply because they are in search of trout or some other coldwater species. This waterway holds good populations of all fish, but my favorite is the walleye.

Five-pound walleye are not at all uncommon at Marburg, but the average size is more like one or two pounds. This toothsome critter can be somewhat finicky when the weather gets warmer, but as soon as that first frost is on the leaves, they'll go on a feeding binge and eat anything that won't eat them first. One of the best methods of catching walleye is by trolling with a shallow-running plug. Small Rebels in the two-inch or three-inch range, worked about five or six feet beneath the surface, are very productive.

The walleye are usually found stalking small perch or baitfish along the edges of rocky dropoffs, so your trolling pattern should parallel the ledges to be successful. As the water temperatures drop to the low 50s or upper 40s, change to a minnow/jig combination and work it slowly across those same areas—the results can be excellent.

Marburg also holds a good population of one of Pennsylvania's most sought-after gamefish—largemouth bass. Several areas of the lake have large grass beds, and every pothole seems to hold at least one bucketmouth. Early spring and late fall are the most productive times for the bass, but if you're persistent, you can manage a limit during the dog days of summer. Needless to say, a weedless lure is a must when fishing under these conditions. Action-tailed plastic worms in black, purple, motor oil, and white are all good bets for these fish, but you'll have to work your offerings as slowly as possible to drop it in one of the potholes. Once you feel the lure fall, let it sit for a few seconds, then slowly pick up the rod tip and take up the slack. Usually, the fish hit the lure as you lift the rod tip. Some anglers prefer striking as soon as they feel tension, while others let the fish turn the worm in their mouth. Which method you choose is up to you—they both work.

**Lake Redman**

This lake is one of York County's newer lakes, and it parallels Interstate 83, just south of York. This particular body of water has a few distinct areas of structure for bass fishermen, and in the few years it's been open, several five-plus-pounders have been taken from its clear waters. It also is one of those lakes that's overlooked, mainly due to its location. Most avid anglers usually head for one of those out-of-the-way places in search of good fishing, but this one is in plain view of the interstate and several small housing developments, so a lot of people think it couldn't possibly hold many fish.

To reach Lake Redman from York, head south on I-83 and exit on the Leader Heights cut-off, route 182 west. Turn left on Jacobus Road, head south for about three miles, and you'll see the lake on your left. The best
fishing is usually from a boat. No motors are allowed, but the lake is well protected from the wind and rowing is not difficult.

Lake Williams is immediately downstream from Lake Redman and contains an excellent musky population with good largemouth bass action, too.

**Muddy Creek**

If you're a smallmouth buff and enjoy trout fishing, Muddy Creek is one of my favorites. The headwaters begin well above the town of Red Lion, and the stream grows quickly in size as it meanders southeast toward the Susquehanna. The entire length of the creek is stocked with trout by the Fish Commission, providing spring fishing for browns, brookies, and rainbows. A few of the brown trout are holdovers, and at times, quite wary, but on opening day, many six-pounders are taken from some of the deep pools above the route 74 bridge.

The last five miles of Muddy Creek are one of the most picturesque areas of York County. It's a series of deep pools, raging rapids, and beautiful waterfalls. The closer you get to the Susquehanna, the more big smallmouth bass you'll find—some topping the five-pound mark. About 100 yards above where the creek enters the backwaters of Conowingo Lake is a unique falls of six or seven feet in height. This particular spot holds an unbelievable population of smallmouth bass, brown trout, and often a huge musky. Anything that resembles a minnow tumbling through the torrent is immediately ambushed by one or more of these gamefish.

The majority of the designated trout streams of York and Lancaster counties are freestone streams that provide good trout action in the spring. Some are fly fishing only waters, while others allow the use of both live and artificial baits.

**Chester-Octoraro Reservoir**

The dividing line between Chester and Lancaster counties is Octoraro Creek, the main tributary for Chester-Octoraro Reservoir. This waterway holds a large variety of fish. Although the upper end of the lake is silted in, the springtime fishing here can be fantastic. Armed with a lightweight fly rod and an assortment of wet and dry flies, you can get good catches of brown trout, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, and huge bluegills from the sunken logs above the route 472 bridge at Mount Vernon. This area only averages about six to eight bluegills from the sunken logs above the route 472 bridge.

This 106-acre lake is located six miles north of Lititz off Route 501.

**Muddy Run Lake**

Another lake in Lancaster County that offers similar fishing is Muddy Run Lake. Although it's not quite as large as Octoraro, the action and numbers of fish rival most larger Pennsylvania lakes. One of the problems, however, is that the lake feeds the Muddy Run Pumping Station—a hydroelectric facility just below Holtwood Dam. When the plant is operating, the water levels fluctuate dramatically—sometimes as much as 10 feet, so you have to adjust your fishing techniques to compensate for the changing conditions.

Still, Muddy Run Lake offers good family fishing opportunities with easy access, and trout are stocked in spring and in the fall.

There's one species of fish Muddy Run Lake has a lot of—carp. If you're a dyed-in-the-wool carp angler, this is the place to be. Fifteen-pounders are not uncommon, and I've seen some that would top 20 pounds cruising the shoreline in search of an easy meal.

There are two more major lakes in Lancaster County, one of which, Speedwell Forge Lake, offers family angling possibilities for bass and panfish. This 106-acre lake is located six miles north of Lititz off Route 501.

**Middle Creek Waterfowl Management Lake**

This 340-acre impoundment is in Gifford Pinchot State Park, off Route 177 between Rossville and Maytown. The lake offers good year-round bass and panfish action, and boats (electric motors only) can be launched from several spots. The concession on the southeast side of the lake offers rowboat rentals, too.

**Pinchot Lake**

This 340-acre impoundment is in Gifford Pinchot State Park, off Route 177 between Rossville and Maytown. The lake offers good year-round bass and panfish action, and boats (electric motors only) can be launched from several spots. The concession on the southeast side of the lake offers rowboat rentals, too.
You’ve got a fishing friend in Pennsylvania.