

*Pennsylvania*  
**ANGLER  
&  
BOATER**

The logo for the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission is a blue shield-shaped emblem. It features a yellow fish silhouette swimming to the right, with a yellow boat wake below it. The text "PENNSYLVANIA" is at the top, "FISH & BOAT COMMISSION" is on the sides, and a yellow anchor is at the bottom.

May/June 2022 \$5.00

*The Keystone State's  
Official Fishing &  
Boating Magazine*

*FishandBoat.com*



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BOATING WEEK**  
**May 21-27**

**OPENING DAY  
OF WALLEYE/SAUGER**  
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**FISH-FOR-FREE DAYS**  
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Volume 91 Number 3

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## On the cover



This photo, Woodland Box Turtle eating a Brood X cicada, won second place in the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission 2021 Photography Contest. The Woodland Box Turtle inhabits most of Pennsylvania and matures in 5 to 7 years. Nesting activity takes place in May to July. To learn more, see page 12. *Photo by John Fallon.*



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[www.fishandboat.com/socialmedia](http://www.fishandboat.com/socialmedia)



# THANKS FOR THE HELP!

photo-courtesy of Senator Casey's Office

**by Timothy D. Schaeffer**  
*Executive Director*  
*Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission*

*Volunteers including the Allison Park Sportsmen's Club and United States Senator Bob Casey (center) prepare to stock Pine Creek, Allegheny County, on April 1, the day before the opening day of the 2022 trout season.*

In another return to normalcy this spring, we were thrilled to welcome volunteers back in full force to help stock trout. On behalf of the Waterways Conservation Officers (WCOs) and hatchery staff who form the core of our nearly daily trout stocking efforts from late February through the end of May, thank you.

Trout stocking schedules are just a few clicks away at [fishandboat.com](http://fishandboat.com) or our mobile app—FishBoatPA. The schedules are searchable by county. The schedule for each individual stocking includes the date, time, and where to meet the trucks that came from one of our 14 state fish hatcheries. In addition to telling you which hatchery will deliver the trout, we include the species of fish to be stocked and the latitude and longitude coordinates of the waterway.

All of the stockings are open to the public. Upon arrival, you are greeted by a WCO who offers a safety briefing and other logistical details for the day. The WCO works throughout the stocking to oversee public safety, coordinate volunteer participation, and direct predetermined quantities of trout to specific sections of water.

The hatchery crews start their days by preparing and loading the fish onto the trucks and then driving to the stocking locations—often across multiple county lines. It is a busy day driving the trucks, monitoring the fish and water conditions in the tanks, and dispersing the trout. After the last trout is stocked, they return to the hatchery to get the trucks ready for the next day on the road.

I try to participate in as many stockings as possible throughout the year. It is a great way to get to know other members of our team and to better appreciate the scope of the work they do each day to reinvest fishing

license and trout permit revenues back into Pennsylvania waterways. But, they can't do it alone.

We rely on dedicated and willing volunteers to get the fish from the truck to the water. At the risk of missing some of the groups I spent time with this spring, it was a pleasure to stock with members from the following groups: Allison Park Sportsmen's Club, Arlene Lissner High School, Beaverdam Run Trout Club, Delco Anglers and Conservationists, Doc Fritchey and Mountain Laurel Chapters of Trout Unlimited, Nanticoke Conservation Club, Salisbury Elk Lick Hunting Club, and Yellow Breeches Anglers and Conservation Association. There are too many volunteers and groups who help us to list here, and we are grateful to all of them.

Thank you to all of the volunteers statewide for helping deliver another successful trout season to the anglers of Pennsylvania.



photo-PPBC archives

*Students from Arlene Lissner High School assist with an inseason stocking in Forest County. Kneeling is Xavier who also helped with the stocking but is not from the high school.*



# *Fishing Philadelphia's* **WISSAHICKON CREEK**

*by Carl Haensel* photos by the author

**A**s I parked my car in a lot not far from Forbidden Drive, the Wissahickon Creek bubbled along just out of sight in the forest. Sunlight filtered through the tall trees. The lot was filled with walkers, joggers, families, and other folks looking to enjoy Philadelphia's massive park system. Only one other angler was upstream along a trail. I heard a splash from the stream, and headed to the creek. Fish were rising, and it was time to get my line in the water.

Fishing along the Wissahickon Creek in Philadelphia, it is easy to forget you are in one of the largest and oldest metropolitan areas of the United States. The stream rises in suburban Montgomery County, near Lansdale. From there, it flows roughly south, traversing 23 miles until it reaches the Schuylkill River. Along its route, it flows past stately homes, under historic bridges, and over dam remnants that were built before the Revolutionary War. Wissahickon Creek offers one of the most scenic and enjoyable fishing opportunities near Philadelphia.

From early settlers catching eels in the creek to the more recent trout stockings, Philadelphia residents have long enjoyed their time on the stream. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission stocks Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout, and golden Rainbow Trout into the stream. Wild, naturally reproducing

warmwater fish like Smallmouth Bass and Redbreast Sunfish add to the fishing opportunities. Occasional additional species wander upstream from the Schuylkill River.

## **Wissahickon Valley Park**

The park system in Philadelphia was created to help preserve water quality along primary water sources like Wissahickon and Pennypack creeks. After the Civil War, over 2,000 acres of parkland were created and protected along with other areas throughout the city. This land was preserved to protect the creek valley, limit runoff, and keep the stream clean and healthy. Transferred from the Fairmount Park system and created as Wissahickon Valley Park in 2010, the park continues to provide robust protection to the stream. The shade and other benefits of the mature forest help it remain a viable fishing location in the city. A well-engaged friends group advocates for the park and its upkeep.

Access in the park is excellent with more than six parking lots. Forbidden Drive, an iconic trail that parallels the west bank of the creek, runs for 5.3 miles. It provides an easy way to move up and down the valley. Graveled and pleasant to walk or bike, it is a great way to get around. The stream is stocked over this entire length, from Germantown Pike downstream to Monoshone Creek at Lincoln Drive.



*The Wissahickon Creek has numerous historic structures along its route, like the Thomas Mill Covered Bridge, built in 1855. It is the only covered bridge remaining in Philadelphia.*

The stream gradient in this reach is steeper near Bells Mills, and then slows as it descends toward the Schuylkill River. Anglers looking to find active fish will have their best trout luck below fast riffles, in runs, and along bouldery banks, especially as water warms from late spring into early summer. Trout will also seek out coldwater inputs and seeps as the weather warms, often found at the mouths of small creek valleys and steep bluffs. When trout are not cooperating, abundant sunfish and Smallmouth Bass make for fun fishing. If the stream is clear, try to get a nice vantage point from above to see if there are large fish in the run or pool. There are also plenty of suckers in the stream, so do not confuse suckers with a school of trophy trout.

## **Fort Washington State Park**

Located just upstream of Philadelphia, trout fishing opportunities are readily available on the Wissahickon Creek at Fort Washington State Park. On multiple parcels in Montgomery County, its 493 acres provide access to the stream along West Mill Road and is an excellent place to get on the Green Ribbon Trail. The trail follows the creek in Montgomery County and features numerous parking areas and access points. Anglers targeting trout should note that the stream is stocked from Lafayette Avenue downstream to Stenton Avenue. The stocked trout move within the watershed,

but anglers are more likely to find warmwater species as they proceed upstream.

## **Fly fishing on the Wissahickon Creek**

Fly anglers looking for an excellent place to learn and a pleasant spot to fish will enjoy Wissahickon Creek. Shortly after trout season has opened, small nymphs and streamers work well. Stocked trout are often caught on small Woolly Buggers, rabbit strip leech patterns, or similar flies. Beadhead nymphs like Pheasant Tail Nymphs, Hare's Ears, and Copper Johns are excellent choices. As the season progresses and hatches start, caddisflies are the most important insect in the watershed. Elk Hair Caddis patterns in sizes 12-16 work well, often with olive, tan, or gray bodies. Impacts from suburban runoff have limited the mayfly hatches, but some remain and can be worth fishing in April, May, and June. Keep small Blue Winged Olives in sizes 14-18 around, as well as sulphur patterns. The extensive forest cover of the creek leads to plenty of opportunities to fish terrestrial insect patterns. Pack some Foam Ants and beetles, especially if visiting the stream in May and June. As the season progresses, trout become more scarce. Fly anglers may find success covering water with streamers and other searching patterns to find groups of fish, and then switching to smaller patterns to convince fish to bite.



## Spin fishing on the Wissahickon Creek

Lure and bait anglers will find plenty of action on the creek and can often find success away from the crowds. It only takes a bit of footwork to get away from it all. Small spinners like Panther Martins or Mepps work well when fan casting into deep pools. Small minnow-shaped stickbaits are also good choices. Watch closely for any following fish that don't bite. Sometimes, it will only be a flash in the depths that tells you there are fish nearby. When this happens, try a slower presentation like small marabou jigs or soft plastics. Lures weighing  $\frac{1}{16}$  or even  $\frac{1}{32}$  of an ounce can work well. Suspending bait under a float through a pool may also convince finicky fish to bite. Waxworms are a great bait choice. When the fish seem particularly picky, use lighter line. Directly tying on your jig or hook can also help, though rotating lures should still be fished on a snap swivel. ☐



*Mature trees tower over Forbidden Drive in Wissahickon Valley Park. The forest canopy in the park helps keep the stream cool by shading it during the summer. Trout and other fish feed on terrestrial insects that fall from the canopy into the creek.*



*Work streamers through deep pools on Wissahickon Creek to catch trout. Some fish hold multiple feet down in the depths, waiting for food to float through the deep water.*



*Redbreast Sunfish are spirited and beautiful fighters in the creek when the trout and bass are not biting.*



*Rainbow Trout are stocked multiple times in the Wissahickon Creek in the springtime. Along with Brown Trout and golden Rainbow Trout, these fish make for exciting trout fishing in Philadelphia.*

# PEDAL KAYAK FISHING



by John Allen

photos by the author

Ask any kayak angler, “What is the most frustrating part of kayak fishing?” The answer is almost always related to paddling. Having to negotiate a paddle and fishing rod in sync is a challenge. Remove the paddle for a better experience. Fish hands-free for more fishing time. Pedal kayaks allow anglers to focus on what they want to do—fish.

The kayak industry has evolved in the last 20 years, from a handful of basic models to kayaks made specifically for anglers. Early pedal kayaks needed some work. With so many different kayak companies developing their own pedal systems, it was only a matter of time until a better product was available. Now, there are professional kayak fishing tours where every angler is fishing in either a pedal or motorized kayak.

Most of these kayaks have a rudder system in the back with a hand-controlled mechanism near the seat. Many pedal systems look and function like an

electric motor, with you as the power source. Other systems look and function like snorkel flippers. Practice will make perfect as you learn how to move the rudder to get where you want to go.

The learning curves vary based on the model. Some turn on a dime while others handle like you are turning a semitruck. The average kayak is somewhere in between.

Getting down the timing of your turns may be tricky. Leaning into the turns as you pedal helps, but giving yourself enough space and time to complete the turn is most important.



*Many pedal systems look and function like an electric motor, except you are the power source.*





catches. While I may have caught 10 or 15 fish in my standard kayak, I am now catching 20 or 25, because I spend more time fishing and less time paddling.

My kids love kayaking with me. Paddling with them on board has always been a challenge. On the pedal kayak, I can move the seat back to make more space at the front of the kayak. It has certainly increased their interest and turned the kayak into more than just a fishing machine.

For anglers who kayak fish for exercise, a pedal kayak is like riding a bike. Rather than a sore back and shoulders in a standard kayak, you may have sore legs. For many people, your legs are generally stronger, and it is easier pedaling for several days in a row. When I go on vacation, I have sore legs for the first few days from pedaling, but I can go all day by the fourth or fifth day. A standard kayak wears me down quicker, making the outing shorter.

As the kayak market continues to adapt and evolve, anglers will be the ultimate beneficiaries of the research and development. As pedal kayaks get better and faster, anglers will catch more fish and have more fun on the water. ☐

In case you get stuck, bring a paddle along. You will not need it much, but it may be helpful in some situations.

The biggest challenge with most pedal kayaks is fishing around weeds. When too many weeds get wrapped around the propeller, the system locks up. Make sure you can easily access the propeller or flippers without having to get out of the kayak. Some pedal systems are advertised as weed-free, but you still get some weeds.

Bait selection is limited when using a standard kayak due to the need to stop and start while maneuvering the paddle and bait. With a pedal kayak, you can use any bait in your box. Pedal kayaks allow the angler to move and fish at the same time to cover a large amount of water. I have seen a large upswing in my



*Pedal kayaks allow anglers to focus on what they want to do—fish.*

# Lucky

by Marshall Nych    photos by the author





I am not one of those anglers who attributes the day's catch results to a lucky hat, shirt, or lure. Good fortune with fishing, in my opinion, is a harmonious blend of timing, weather, skill, science, and art.

I have a good dog, two great kids, and the best wife. My grandparents' family farm makes home a slice of heaven. Ample woods grow adventure and wildlife. A trio of farm ponds offers fishing in our backyard. To put it simply, life has been good and that is my luck.

The following is a time-tested invitation to fishy fortune:

When: Late spring to early summer

Where: Any of the many small farm ponds sprinkled across Pennsylvania

What: Soft plastics such as Senko worms, Finesse TRD, and molded swimbaits

Who: Largemouth Bass and your entire family

To prove the credentials of the aforementioned instructions, I have a couple aquatic anecdotes.

Last year, as spring surrendered to summer, my son, Noah, and I serendipitously found ourselves along the banks of our farm pond. We squeezed in some fishing between other activities. Noah slowly brought a sparkling Finesse TRD across a bass-laden bottom, and six consecutive casts yielded a Largemouth Bass. One of the fish became a personal best for the budding angler, each shimmering scale forever converted to memory. The unforgettable bass stretched a formidable 21½ inches.

I spent the rest of the year thinking about that outing. Late summer was too



*Leah's lucky stone.*

hot or its water levels too low to replicate the magic, and fall and winter did not seem as successful with this technique. I impatiently awaited the exact season and conditions. Once our ponds glistened beneath the late spring and early summer sun, our family returned to try our luck.

A handful of small bass, as quick as cooperative, ensured each child happily landed a few fish. Attention waning, little brother, Noah, splashed off in search of frogs, snakes, and some form of mischief. As long as he did not disrupt the fishing, I encouraged his farm pond frolics.

My daughter, Leah, was determined to catch one of these big fish I spoke about with such reverence during the entire previous year. Any normal day, Leah would have been tickled with a handful of small, scrappy fish. Today was different. Leah felt lucky.

The water was warm enough to comfortably wade to the ankles, but not tepid enough to entertain thoughts of purposefully submerging for a swim. The water was high from spring rains, yet clear in the summer sun. As I threw an oversized pink swimbait, Leah disappeared from my side. Given her admirable commitment, this seemed out of character.

Leah returned with something small in her hand. "Here, Dad," she smiled. Extending her sun-kissed arm, "I found the perfect lucky stone. Maybe, it will bring us some luck."

I nonchalantly swapped rod for rock. A kind gesture from a lovely girl, I grinned as the smooth, polished piece rested in my palm. Her ear to ear smirk was a splash of sunshine.

And perhaps it was a lucky rock, because the instant I contacted quartz with my fingertip, the rod was nearly ripped from Leah's grip.

After a sincere scream, Leah mustered, "Daddy help! I got one! It is big! I cannot do this!"

"Yes, you can Leah!" I coached.

With that, my girl discovered a rhythmic pump then reel. For good measure, she even added a few intermitted pauses when the fish made a run or gave a particularly hard pull.

"You know what to do. Great job!" I proudly professed.



Good luck tackle

and a picture that captured a priceless family memory.

I laid the measuring tape carefully across the fish's length and yelled, "Congratulations Leah! You are now a member of the 20-inch club."

As I cradled the prize in the water, Leah touched the greatest bass she had ever caught. Her gentleness instinctively ushered the fish to return

The memory, though it seemed frozen in time, was but a few fleeting moments strung wildly together.

A massive green head with an even larger mouth neared our wading feet. We looked in awe as the brawny, muscular body surrendered sideways to my glowing angler.

With a quick grab, I had the fish. The commotion encouraged cheers from the family

to the pool, its verdant vibrance dissolving into the green depths.

I looked to my daughter, who was as happy as I had ever seen her. I combed through a lifetime of compliments to properly convey the gravity of this wonderful achievement. "Leah, you are a fine angler!"

Leah, still brilliantly beaming, shrugged with her signature smile, "I was just lucky, Dad!" ☐

## Exploring Box Turtles

- Woodland Box Turtles, *Terrapene carolina carolina*, are native to Pennsylvania and much of the eastern United States where box turtles can be found in a variety of habitats from open fields to wooded forests. Woodland Box Turtles live on land, preferring areas with plenty of moist soil and leaves.
- In the spring, box turtles begin emerging from hibernation after spending the cold winter months burrowed far beneath soil and leaf litter.
- In the spring and early summer, female box turtles look for warm, sunny locations to lay eggs. A Woodland Box Turtle uses its hind legs to dig a hole and cover the eggs with soil and soft plant material like leaves or grass.
- Box turtles are omnivores, eating a variety of plant and animal material including berries, slugs, snails, mushrooms, and even insects like the cicada pictured.



photo-John Fallon

For more information on Woodland Box Turtles, visit [FishandBoat.com](http://FishandBoat.com).

# Accessing French Creek



photo-Marilyn Black

*by Marilyn Black*

**F**rench Creek is celebrated as the Pennsylvania “River of the Year for 2022” in recognizing it as one of the most biologically diverse waterways of its size in the nation.

Fishing access, either from shore or by kayak, is easy for Crawford, Mercer, and Venango counties. In Erie County, French Creek has multiple branches often within swamps, presenting challenging logistics when attempting to float this community treasure.

The excellent free Map & Guide brochure available from the French Creek Valley Conservancy (FCVC) for

the official Upper French Creek Water Trail provides information and directions to the few existing public accesses available. Hopefully, the designation of River of the Year will help the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, adjacent municipalities, and privately-operated recreational outfitters in efforts to improve access.

## **South Branch French Creek**

The South Branch French Creek originates in Erie County, near Corry, where it turns west and approaches its first public access on West Main Street/Lovell Road



photo-Marilyn Black

*Todd Daughenbaugh, Erie, preparing kayaks for paddling with his spouse from Lake LeBoeuf to LeBoeuf Creek and then a portion of the main stem of French Creek.*



photo-Darl Black

*This view looking downstream from the Black Bridge access on the South Branch shows the narrow, shallow water and its heavily vegetated banks.*

about 1 mile from Corry. The PFBC and FCVC own adjacent parcels collectively known as Black Bridge access, because it includes an inactive metal truss railroad bridge. Together, the parcels offer a mile of stream with widths less than 15 feet and barely floatable summertime water depths.

South Branch French Creek continues through a marsh south of Elgin and enters Union City. Four municipal parks border South Branch French Creek, offering free parking and shore fishing year-round. Borough Manager Cindi Wells advises visiting anglers and kayakers to park either just off Bridge Street or at streamside parks. Those trailering multiple kayaks are welcome to use the lot behind Union City Municipal Authority at 22 North Main Street.

## **West Branch French Creek**

West Branch French Creek begins in New York, crossing the state boundary close to Ashton Corners, going past Colts Station and Little Hope into extensive wetlands to Lowville, and finally south to Wattsburg, where it joins the main stem.



Western Pennsylvania Conservancy owns 992-acre West Branch French Creek Conservation Area, the sole public access currently on this branch. Non-adjacent land parcels and three parking areas in this conservation preserve are best suited for anglers who like an extended walk before casting a line. The primary parking lot with picnic pavilion is on Route 8 near Lowville. It is the hub for a loop trail, which includes a ½-mile hike before reaching West Branch French Creek.

### The main stem

The main stem of French Creek starts near Sherman, New York and crosses into Pennsylvania close to Lowville, proceeding to Wattsburg. It next goes downstream through State Game Lands #162 near Arbuckle, extensive wetlands including State Game Lands #109, the dry-bed Union City Dam, and under Route 97 to its rendezvous with the mouth of the South Branch French Creek Mile 73.

In 1971, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) constructed Union City Dam for flood control. Unlike most USACE facilities with adjustable gates, this is an uncontrolled detention structure that automatically stores and releases water during periods of peak flow. Paddlers do not attempt navigating upstream of Union City Dam.

Instead, enter the main stem either at the dam outflow or approximately 1 mile downstream where it gurgles under the Route 97 bridge. An unmarked access, which local residents refer to as Troyers Field, has grass-covered parking on the south side of the highway along the east bank of French Creek.

Downstream at about French Creek Mile 68 is Wheelertown Flats, a Western Pennsylvania Conservancy-owned 33-acre preserve. The parcel for kayaking sits on the east edge of Flatts Road, bound on the north by Wheelertown Road. LeBoeuf Creek enters the main stem near French Creek Mile 66.

Private businesses located on the west bank at French Creek Mile 64 (intersection of Routes 6-North and 19) offer the last public access where watercraft may launch within Erie County. Park & Float Kayak Rentals at 13939 Route 19 rents kayaks, charges for parking, and will shuttle customers upstream. Just a stone's throw downstream from this outfitter is Creekside Bar & Grille, 13973 Route 19, which encourages paddlers and anglers to park and eat. Also, there is an antiques store, where you may drop your boat into French Creek but cannot park. Unattended vehicles will be towed away.

## LeBoeuf Creek, tributary to French Creek

LeBoeuf Creek is the final major tributary to join French Creek in Erie County. Most enthusiasts find it convenient to utilize a public launch on LeBoeuf Lake, a 72-acre open-system (no dam) lake. The PFBC's ramp with parking is situated on Hazel Street, reached by Water Street from Route 19 in downtown Waterford. The second access is a gravel launch with parking at the south tip of LeBoeuf Lake, beside Lakeside Tavern on Route 19. Paddlers journey 3 miles before entering the main stem of French Creek. ☐

### Resources for maps and updates

French Creek Valley Conservancy  
[www.frenchcreekconservancy.org](http://www.frenchcreekconservancy.org)  
814-337-4321

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission  
[www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com)  
PFBC's Northwest Region Office: 814-336-2426

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy  
[wpcgis.maps.arcgis.com](http://wpcgis.maps.arcgis.com)  
412-288-2777



*William J. Wiczorek, Union City, fishing the main stem of French Creek beneath the Route 97 bridge.*



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# Polarized Sunglasses Yield More Fish

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*by Braden Eisenhower*

*photos by the author*

**O**ptimistic people see the world through rose-colored glasses. Anglers—grounded and judicious—see through shades of grey, amber, or yellow.

Sunglasses shield our eyes from unforeseen projectiles and intangible ultraviolet rays, unveiling the underwater world.

The best fishing sunglasses have polarized lenses, which reduce glare reflected from the water's surface. Sounds simple, but when it comes to making the most of sunglasses, there is more than meets the eye.

## Specs on specs

The goal is simple—keep your eyes behind a pair of shades. This may be difficult since weather and light conditions change throughout the day. Anglers adapt by adjusting tackle and technique. Varying the color of lenses follows the same logic.

The primary lens options for polarized sunglasses are dark grey, amber, and yellow. Each differs in light transmission, which is the amount of light passing through the lens.

Dark grey lenses are optimal for bright days. Light transmission is the lowest, allowing the wearer to tolerate

extreme light without eye strain. Conversely, grey lenses are poor in low light conditions.

Amber lenses have a marginally higher amount of light transmission. This adequately blocks enough light for sunny conditions. The amber tint also has a brightening effect, so the lens continues to perform well in cloudy weather and around dusk and dawn.

Overcast skies, rainy days, and low light periods of dusk and dawn call for yellow lenses. Light transmission is the highest, thus this niche lens excels in the absence of light. It is a poor choice for sunny conditions. Many yellow lenses lack polarization and will not prevent glare.

To account for changing weather, anglers will benefit by having multiple pairs of sunglasses on hand. Preparedness does not constitute lavish expenditures. I spend a good deal of time in budget-friendly shades that may sacrifice comfort and style, but the polarization is on point.

## Fit and function

The style, shape, and fit of sunglasses is a personal choice. Although eyewear lends itself to fashion, functionality should take priority.

As someone never accused of having style, my chief concern is limiting the light entering around the frame. I pair grey and amber lenses with sport frames that offer a close, comfortable fit.





*For wearers of prescription eyeglasses, fit-over sunglass frames offer a convenient source to polarized lenses without compensating eyesight.*

With long days on the water in mind, it is important to avoid ill-fitting frames that pinch at the nose, temples, or ears. The overall weight is another factor. Lens material plays a large influence, with glass lenses being heavier than polycarbonate counterparts.

## Managing expectations

Tailoring lenses to the conditions is critical. This alone, however, will not improve catch rates.

My heart sank the first day I tried high-end sunglasses. I expected to see the underwater world as if peering through an aquarium. Not so.

I sought counsel from a guide who assured me what I lacked was a trained eye.

Over the years, I have come to understand this “trained eye” as knowing what to look for and where to find it. Polarized lenses reduce glare, so the angler may decode and deduce.

## Reaping rewards

A trained eye identifies irregularities and shading. For example, dark areas in vegetation signify density, perhaps closeness to the surface. Lighter spots show edges or pockets. The ability to see cover—be it vegetation, boulders, or laydowns—allows an angler to position the boat properly and present lures correctly and avoid startling fish.

Fish are usually revealed with a sudden flash. Other times, I have encountered Smallmouth Bass and Largemouth Bass that scrutinize a topwater lure. No glare means I can watch mannerisms of fish and know precisely when to twitch or pause a popper or floating minnow bait.

A Muskellunge angler should not leave home without polarized shades. These predators are notorious followers, unaffected by the boat, and frequently bite at close range. A “trained eye” notices movement in all directions, keen to half-hearted pursuits. I have caught Muskellunge at boatside simply by catching a fleeting glimpse, which was enough evidence for me to keep the lure in the water.

Of course, sunglasses go beyond subsurface use. It is easier to line watch with the appropriate sunglasses. Timing is everything when tightlining dough baits for stocked Rainbow Trout. I set the hook the moment I see the line bounce. Hesitate and the hook is bare.

I even wear polarized sunglasses when float fishing for panfish. Otherwise, I could not detect the subtle bobber movements of light-biting Bluegills, crappies, or perch.

The reduction of glare may help navigate around hazards in shallow waterways. I always wear polarized sunglasses when wading to safely trek to and from my destination.

Polarized sunglasses expose what the naked eye cannot see. For optimal results, fine-tune the lens color to the conditions and develop an eye for movement. ☐



*Some frames have shields to help deflect light from entering around the temple.*

# NOTES *from the Streams*

## Out for a stroll

It was a typical day patrolling the waters of the Commonwealth when I received a call that there was a 100-pound turtle walking down the street in the middle of town. The original caller said it was a huge Snapping Turtle. He did not know what to do with it, so he called 911. When I arrived, I found the massive turtle and captured it. The turtle was actually someone's pet African Tortoise. This big, old tortoise just wanted to go for a walk.—WCO Jonathan R. Stark, Washington County.

## Fish thief

While stocking fish at Twin Lakes Park, Westmoreland

County, I observed an unusual suspect poaching fish. A volunteer and I were tubing thousands of fish into the lake and many bystanders watched as we completed the stocking. I observed the suspect swoop down and snatch a trout from the water and head for the hills. I yelled for the suspect to stop, as trout season was closed at the time, but it continued flying away. Not only did the osprey fail to follow the order to stop as it flew off with the trout, but I am not even sure that it had a fishing license or trout stamp. Better luck next time, I guess.—WCO Daniel J. Wilson, Southern Westmoreland and Northern Fayette counties.

happens that makes these stops memorable.

One day while filling up the patrol truck at a local gas station, two vehicles pulled in along the pumps next to me. As the drivers exited their cars, I heard one woman say to the other that she had been out with her mom for the day since it was her mom's birthday, and they decided to grab some birthday dinner.

Not thinking much of the situation, I continued to pump gas until I noticed the daughter of the "Birthday Mom" walking over to me. She asked me if I could spare some of my time. Her mom wanted to say "hello." I gladly offered to grant the birthday wish. When I approached the woman's mother, she rolled down her car window as I wished her a happy birthday. The birthday girl proceeded to thank me for taking time out of my day while joyfully telling me how today was her 92nd birthday.

The woman told me that she had asked her daughter to see if I would be willing to chat, because she wanted to tell me that the last time she had spoken with a WCO was in 1953 while out fishing with her late husband. She proceeded to tell me how delightful that warden was back in 1953 during their interaction and how she always remembered it, even up to her 92nd birthday. She told me how it made her so happy, and it brought her back to that day with her husband many years ago. She thanked me again for the job that WCOs do and left me with the parting words, "always treat people you meet with kindness. It goes a long way in such a crazy world."

Sometimes, the impression you make on a person lasts a lifetime. And, it can even keep the memories of a time long gone by to be cherished

## Impressions last a lifetime

Patrolling the waters of Pennsylvania as a Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO) results in daily interactions with the public. WCOs cover a lot of ground while engaging in our daily duties. As the need arises, we routinely stop at gas stations and mini marts in our district.

Most of the time, these stops are a "fill it up and go" situation. Other times, we receive a "hello" or a wave from a little kid intrigued by the marked patrol vehicle. Sometimes, someone may see these stops as the opportunity to ask a question about fishing or boating. Occasionally, something



photo-WCO John G. Hopkins

forever.—WCO Frank J. Mehalko III, Northern Montgomery and Eastern Berks counties.

## Shaken

During the course of my patrol at Beltzville Lake, Carbon County, on a warm fall afternoon, I encountered two young anglers fishing from the shore in the vicinity of the Pine Run Cove. Upon approaching the anglers, one of them immediately informed me that he just missed a large Striped Bass while attempting to bring it to the shore. Both of the anglers were using chicken liver as bait. As the anglers were speaking to me, I observed that one of the anglers had his fishing pole resting on a clump of grass with the line in the water, and his fishing pole was about to be dragged into the lake as a result of a fish taking the bait. When I told him he was about to lose his fishing rod, he immediately set the hook. After a good fight, the angler landed a Striped Bass measuring approximately 27 inches.

After the angler removed, measured, and secured the fish, he said, "I guess you want to see my fishing license?" Upon observing him retrieve his fishing license, I noticed he was now visibly shaking, which made me suspicious that maybe his fishing license was expired, or maybe he would be holding a fishing license that was not his own, or he was afraid to reveal his identity.

I checked and verified his fishing license and his identification and asked him why he was so nervous. He immediately explained that he was not shaking or nervous because of my presence, but because of the excitement of catching, fighting, and landing the biggest fish he ever caught. After congratulating him on his prized catch, I wished him well and luck on trying to catch an even larger Striped Bass. I hoped it would not make him any more nervous.—WCO Scott J. Christman, Southern Carbon and Southwestern Monroe counties.

## Bucket list

As spring stocking was nearing an end in 2021, I was filling in for WCO Lupacchini, covering a stocking of the South Branch Roaring Creek, Columbia County. Due to some traffic issues, I arrived a few minutes after the posted meeting time. After hurriedly confirming the stops, an excited woman came up to the Fish Culturist and myself. She was happy to be following along as she used to assist with her father when she was younger. After I gave her and the rest of the volunteers a safety briefing, we headed to the first stop a couple of miles away.

As we were in process of getting everyone organized at the first stocking point, the woman was hovering on the periphery of the group. Since she seemed a bit reticent about stepping up, I approached her to help carry the trout to the stream. She was excited at the prospect.

After giving her brief instructions, she set off for the water exclaiming, "This was on my bucket list!"

At every stop on the stream, she would take a bucket and head streamside to distribute the fish repeating, "this is on my bucket list!" I smiled every time I heard her.

This is a perfect example of how something that may seem mundane to one person, may be a special, significant joy to another. We all need reminders like this every so often.—Sergeant Bryan C. Bendock, Northeast Region.

## What is in the bucket?

One day, WCO Colian and I were patrolling Keystone Lake, Armstrong County. We were paying close attention to Keystone Lake because of some suspicious activity and vandalism around one of the boat launch accesses. We noticed a pile of garbage next to the access. As we were picking up the garbage, an older man approached us to help.

In conversation, we agreed that it is unfortunate when people litter and do not take care of the environment. He went on to teach WCO Colian and I a lesson that will stick with us for the rest of our lives. When he was a young kid, his grandfather would take him fishing. They would both carry a bucket down to the stream to put their day's catch in. His grandfather taught him that you should never carry an empty bucket back to the house. If you had a bad day fishing, on your way back home, you should fill your bucket with garbage. The man told us that as a kid he hated it, because he just wanted to catch a fish. But, as he grew up, he was grateful for the lesson his grandfather taught him. He passed this lesson down to his kids with the hopes that they will follow in his grandfather's footsteps. He said to this day, his kids will come home from hunting or fishing and pull garbage from their pockets.—WCO Nathaniel J. Yingling, Cambria County.

## 8-feet deep

I stopped in at a state access area and approached a couple taking kayaks out of their vehicles, preparing to launch. I asked if they had life jackets, and the gentleman told me he did not need a life jacket, because the water was only 8-feet deep. I made sure to note that he was not 8-feet tall and requested that they obtain life jackets before going out on the water.

A woman coming off the lake offered to allow them to borrow her two life jackets to take out with them. As the gentleman went to retrieve the life jackets to borrow, his wife whispered to me, "Thank you. I told him when we walked past the life jackets in the garage that we need them, but he did not want to listen to me."—WCO Emily R. Borger, Northern Wallenpaupack.



# POST-SPAWN BASS TACTICS

*by Jeff Knapp*

*photos by the author*

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As much as anglers eagerly anticipate summertime bass fishing, the start of the sport is often ushered in with marginal action. It is common for bass to be in a lethargic mood following late spring bedding activities, often referred to as the post-spawn funk. By recognizing and adapting to this slow period, you may continue to catch bass.

Typically, the post-spawn period occurs from roughly late May until mid-June on western Pennsylvania waters. Naturally, the timing depends on the weather. A late spring with persistent chilly water temperatures will delay the spawn. An early spring will do the opposite. On river systems, abnormally wet springs are also a factor as dramatic rises in levels will put the spawn on hold.

Recognizing the post-spawn is key to responding to it. According to Shawn Smith, a skilled bass angler who fishes a variety of bass lakes from spring through fall, the most noticeable difference is the lack of fish activity near the shoreline.

“During the spawn, the fish activity near the shoreline is robust,” said Smith. “As it begins to fade, the spawn is winding down.”

Smith adapts to this change by targeting deeper areas close to shoreline spots that were recently productive.

“As the spawn concludes, fish will move offshore but not into too deep of water. I think the deep water is still too cold for the spawned-out bass at this point. In lakes, this is in 8- to 10-feet of water,” said Smith.

Smith relies on finesse-type lure choices including Ned Rigs, tube jigs, and paddle tail swimbaits.

“The presentation will be slow and subtle. Often, if there is a slight breeze blowing up the shoreline, I will turn the boat perpendicular to the wind and allow it to push the boat along while dragging any of these three

baits on the bottom. You can cover a lot of water using this technique," said Smith.

During the pre-spawn and spawn, catch rates are often high with plenty of quality-sized fish in the mix. Regardless of your approach, this is now likely to change.

"The overall expectation is that the fish will be a little more sluggish, and the females are going to weigh less after dropping eggs. But, it may still be a great time of year to catch bass," said Smith.

On the Smallmouth Bass waters of the middle Allegheny River, where I spend a great deal of time during the spring and early summer, I notice an abrupt absence of fish from shallows. During the pre-spawn and spawn, Smallmouth Bass will often be found in backwaters formed by islands and gravel/sand flats associated with incoming feeder streams. During the pre-spawn, bass will often be in staging areas—somewhat deeper holes in the 1- to 3-foot shallows.

My first response to the post-spawn is to focus efforts in staging areas, targeting fish holding in low-current pools. Ned Rigs, tube jigs, hair jigs, and twister tail grubs may all work on any given day. Another option is either a Senko style stickbait or a Fluke style soft jerkbait fished weightless with little to no added action. This tactic is best used on relatively windless days.

Following the spawn, Smallmouth Bass in free-flowing rivers like the Allegheny River will gradually gravitate to the areas of higher current that will hold bass from summer into mid-fall. Pre-spawn staging areas are often a temporary pit stop along the way. As such, I begin to sample the heads and tails of pools, pocket water along riffles, and boulder shorelines along moderate current runs.

One of my most effective presentation options at this time is a soft swimbait or grub fished with a steady, slow retrieve. A swimbait like Lake Fork Tackle Live Magic Shad or grub like the Galida's Grubz excels when fished on an open jighead in the 1/8- to 1/4-ounce size. If conditions allow, opt for the lighter side as it forces you to slow down the retrieve. Though harder to find, I prefer 3/16-ounce weight in a mushroom-style jighead.



*Tube jigs worked slowly along the bottom may conjure bites from lethargic post-spawn bass.*



*Soft stickbaits like the YUM Dinger are effective for catching post-spawn river Smallmouth Bass.*

Unweighted soft stickbaits and soft jerkbaits come into play in the tailout sections of larger pools. Tailouts are the shallow transitions between a deep, slow hole and the riffle. Tailouts can stretch from 20- to 30-yards long to 1/4 mile, depending on the physical dynamics of the spot. Deadsticking the bait as the boat drifts through the tailout is often a productive approach.

Bass found in the incoming head of a pool and within pockets along riffles are often more aggressive, likely to respond to a twitched fluke or hard jerkbait like a Rapala X-Rap. Throughout the post-spawn period, I check these areas to "test the waters." When Smallmouth Bass start to show up, it is likely the fish have shucked off the post-spawn doldrums, and typical summertime tactics will now be effective.

Usually, the post-spawn period seems to last about 2 weeks. Though challenging, bass can be caught. And, when the switch is turned back on, bass are often extra aggressive, restocking energy lost during the spawning phase. ☐

# Floating Pine Creek



by *Linda Stager*    photos by the author

**I**n northern Pennsylvania, folks say, “Put your hiney in the Piney.” It is an ode to one of our favorite pasttimes—floating Pine Creek.

Locals know that Pine Creek gives visitors numerous opportunities to paddle, tube, and swim in the cold mountainous water of this scenic river. It is all good fun. But, it may also be dangerous, so visitors are warned to be safe.

Pine Creek is a scenic river with different personalities. In the spring, it can drastically increase in volume and flow after snow melt and storms. During the summer and fall, it can slow to a placid, calm, quiet meander.

Pine Creek starts in Potter County and flows south and east out of the mountains into the wide valley along U.S. Route 6. It flows through Galeton and then starts its wider and more earnest journey towards the Pine Creek Gorge, also known as the Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania.

There are three distinct sections of Pine Creek and each has its own personality.

Upper Pine Creek, the 8- to 10-mile section of water between Galeton and Ansonia, is an easier float trip for beginners. It is a favorite trip for young families, novice paddlers, and folks who want a slightly less adventurous day on the creek.

There are two river guide services along this section of the creek where equipment can be rented. River guides can point out the best route for your boat and will caution you about strainers and other river hazards. River maps are available and recommended.

Once Pine Creek heads south at Ansonia, the passage down Pine Creek becomes more exhilarating, especially in the cold weather days of March when the river is high. The 17-mile “canyon” includes the high-rimmed, steep-sided gorge section of the creek. The water is faster through the gorge, and some areas can become Class III rapids. The area is also isolated, so trouble here can be disastrous.

The lower gorge section of the creek is between Blackwell and Waterville. Class I and II waters along this 28-mile section of the creek are great for wildlife viewing and fishing.



*The Owassee Rapids may be Class III in the spring and should be respected.*



*These canoeists are watching for bald eagles.*

Knowing water conditions is imperative no matter where you float on Pine Creek. Both the United States Geological Survey and the National Weather Service monitor streamflow and river height. Most paddlers watch the Cedar Run and the Waterville gauges on Pine Creek. There is also a mobile app that tracks flow on some sections of the creek and gives float reports.

If knowledgeable and cautious, you are your own best guide. Know the river and when it is best to be on the water. According to a local outfitter's website, about 2.5 feet is a nice kayaking or canoeing level. At 4.5 feet and higher, the creek becomes a Class III River. Experience is required.

About 1.6 feet is a minimum level for canoes and kayaks. The minimum level for tubing is around 1.3 feet. At lower water levels, there will be some portaging.

I caught up with Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO) Chad A. Lauer, Tioga County, and chatted with him about floating Pine Creek. WCO Lauer's concern is safety.

The use of well-fitting and Coast Guard-certified personal flotation devices (PFDs or life jackets) is a priority. In some cases, it is the law.

"Cold water shock is definitely a concern, specifically in the canyon. We have encountered a number of recreational boating fatalities over the years. Investigations have shown that people in those accidents were not wearing life jackets. Always wear your life jacket if you are floating on Pine Creek. Pine Creek can be dangerous, even at lower levels," said WCO Lauer.

WCO Lauer is so invested in this message that he secured grant funding to provide loaner life jackets. He also keeps life jackets with him when he patrols the creek. Life jackets can be returned at Blackwell and Tiadaghton.

WCO Lauer suggests that boaters become familiar with the laws related to recreational boating. The PFBC has both online and in-person safe boating courses. Visit [fishandboat.com](http://fishandboat.com) for more information.

There is no substitute for knowledge, skills, and a healthy attitude about the risks of Pine Creek. Spring rafting, canoeing, and kayaking are popular and safe with the right preparation and equipment. Summer tubing is serene and relaxing.

Whenever you visit, it is fun on Pine Creek. Be safe when you "put your hiney in the Piney." ☐

*Tying  
Together*

# LIGHT ON THE VISE: Tying the Light Cahill Pattern Together

*by Christian A. Shane photos by the author*

*“CAHILL, Light. Plate 14. Slant hackles and wings backward to make wet variety...I could easily wax poetic and become boresomely enthusiastic about this fly. If it was necessary to confine my assortment of flies to only two or three, this would be one of them.” Ray Bergman, TROUT, 1938, 1952, 1976.*

The Light Cahill pattern holds special memories for me as some of my early dry fly success came with fishing this fly on the waters of Pennsylvania. While walking the banks of Sinnemahoning Creek, I witnessed trout rising for cream-colored mayflies at dusk. Even with sloppy casts and fumbling presentations, darkness brought more hits on a #14 Light Cahill.

Since then, it is a fly pattern that holds a prominent place in my fly box during the months of May through July as a searching pattern to mimic lighter insects. When your young tier is ready for tying dry flies, try the Light Cahill in dry fly and wet fly form.

## Light Cahill—wet fly

I introduce the wet fly version of this classic pattern to my tiers, so they get a feel for the materials involved and

gain confidence while doing so. The wet fly consists of a tail, body, hackle, and the traditional slanted wing, so tiers can practice their techniques and not get so caught up in the proportions. Every component combines light-colored materials, so I keep the materials separated and organized for this particular fly.

Start with cream, tan, or white thread; a stronger gauge thread is better for the wet fly version. Next, tie in the tail with a pinch of white saddle hackle feathers. For a more traditional look, use some fibers from wood duck flanks. With both the tail and the wet wing, measure the length of the hook shank and match it. Kids tend to want the tail and wing to be extra-long, so allow them to work within a measured range of the hook shank. The body is then formed with cream colored dubbing. For best results, teach your tiers to control the amount of dubbing they roll on the thread. I remind them that “less is more” when dubbing a clean body.

The toughest steps for your tiers will come last with the hackle and wing portion, so give them ample practice and encourage them to be patient with themselves. Use a light ginger, white, or cream hen hackle to add the collar of the wet fly. Find a hackle that allows movement and has fibers about the width of the hook gap. Take 2- to 3-wraps of the feather





around the hook shank and tie off. It does not have to be pretty since they will be adding the wing. If it becomes too cumbersome, they can choose to leave the hackle off.

Lastly, they will add the wood duck fibers for the wing. Using their scissors, cut a slanted “run-way” in the hackle for the fibers to fit onto. Then, lay the bundle of wood duck fibers slanted along the hackle. When tying in, create a head to cover up the end fibers. With practice, tiers get the hang of cutting their thread close but not too close as to cut their thread.

Trail this wet fly off a nymph and allow it to swing freely in the water. Sometimes, it can also be twitched on its own at the end of a drift to trigger a violent take by the fish.

## Light Cahill—dry fly

The dry fly version of this American classic takes a little more skill and finesse for young tiers. When they are ready, pull out the delicate and quality tying materials to represent sulfur and pale morning duns.

With this pattern, start them with the upright wings of the pattern about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the way up the hook shank, closer to the hook eye, represented with wood duck flank fibers. The figure-eight style of tying in the duck flanks can be tricky, but with practice, kids can be successful.

Now, it is on to the tail, dubbing, and adding the hackle. Since they have experienced this with the wet fly version, work on correcting



*Providing printed instructions allows the tier to follow along with the pattern and keep track of the steps.*

proportions with the tail and a tapered dubbing body. For the hackle, tie two wraps behind the duck flanks and two in front of it. The hackle, combined with the wood duck flanks and cream dubbing, will give it that classic Catskill-style look. As always, half-hitch knot or whip finish the fly.

When fishing the Light Cahill, keep a dead drift and allow it to float naturally on the water's surface. Find the bubble lines in the water seams to take it directly to an awaiting fish.

Shine a light on the Light Cahill patterns for your young tiers and spend your evenings finding some willing fish on the stream. Enjoy tying together. ☐



*Light Cahill fly pattern*

## Light Cahill (Wet)

**Hook:** Wet fly hook #10-#16

**Thread:** Yellow, cream, or white (3/0)

**Tail:** Light ginger hen hackle or wood duck

**Body:** Cream dubbing

**Wings:** Wood duck or lemon dyed mallard

**Hackle:** Cream, white, or ginger hackle

## Light Cahill (Dry)

**Hook:** Dry fly hook #10-#18

**Thread:** White, cream, or light tan (6/0, 8/0)

**Tail:** White hackle fibers (stiff)

**Body:** White, cream, or tan dubbing

**Wings:** Wood duck flank

**Hackle:** White hackle

# KAYAK FISHING SHERMAN CREEK— A Perry County Gem

by Jeff Woleslage

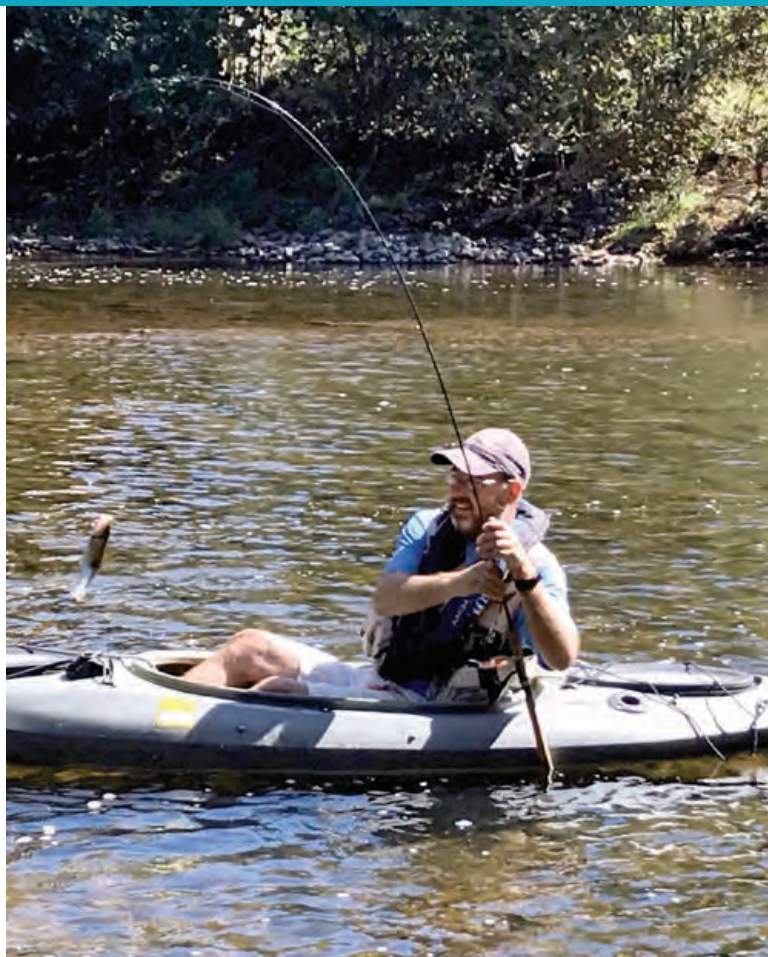
photos by the author

We launched the kayaks on Sherman Creek near the Dellville Bridge, Perry County, looking forward to a leisurely, almost 8-mile summer float to where the creek empties into the Susquehanna River near the borough of Duncannon. The water was a little low and clear. As we readied our gear, there was the anticipation that always comes with fishing a favorite stretch of water. With Sherman Creek, though, it may be difficult to have just one “favorite stretch”. Like a gemstone that reflects and refracts light in multiple ways, there is so much beauty and diversity to this body of water that the more it is explored, the more there is to discover and appreciate. Upper reaches offer superb trout fishing, and the lower stretches have phenomenal Smallmouth Bass and panfish fishing but are also great destinations for Muskellunge, Walleye, and even catfish.

Sherman Creek is 53.4 miles in length and features eight covered bridges along its majestic course. Its flow begins in the mountainous western side of Perry County and enters the Susquehanna River at the county’s eastern end. Its entire flow is through rural country, so those seeking fishing solitude won’t be disappointed. A typical float on Sherman Creek will take the paddler through fertile farmlands, along beautiful wooded ridges, near bankside camps, and even campgrounds.

Because of the great diversity in Sherman Creek, an angler never knows what will be encountered. For a daytime float, spinning rods with the appropriate-sized reels spooled with 6-pound or 8-pound-test monofilament or fluorocarbon line are perfect to give an angler a fighting chance for big fish.

For the abundant Smallmouth Bass of the lower reaches of Sherman Creek, great baits include 1/8-ounce jigs with 3-inch grub bodies in natural colors, tubes, small jerkbaits, wacky rigged stickbaits, topwater plugs, and inline spinners. Small minnow-shaped topwater plugs may be effective in the early morning and early evening hours. For those who like to fly fish, large black and purple Woolly Buggers are fantastic patterns to use. Great live baits include shiners, nightcrawlers, and hellgrammites. Target areas such as



*Smallmouth Bass are abundant in Sherman Creek.*

bridge abutments, brush piles, large boulders, weed line edges, and the head and tails of pools, as well as the deeper holes found throughout the creek. Do not be surprised to tangle with a Smallmouth Bass over 20 inches in the lower reaches of Sherman Creek. Before Lake Erie became a big bass haven, the state-record Smallmouth Bass came from these waters. This lower stretch also yields some dandy Walleyes every year. The amount and variety of structure and habitat found on Sherman Creek makes about every place a great place to try. For the trout found in the upper reaches, a variety of nymph patterns work well, as well as inline spinners fished across the current.

Interestingly, some of the pools located just upstream from where Sherman Creek flows into the Susquehanna River offer superb fishing for Channel Catfish as well as bullheads. Nightcrawlers, stink baits, and cut baits such as chunks of Fallfish or Creek Chubs fished on the bottom are all great choices for targeting fish. For anglers pursuing these nighttime dwellers, whether from a kayak or on the bank, I recommend stout 7-foot spinning rods in medium to medium-heavy action spooled with 10- to 12-pound-monofilament or braided line. Fish the baits on size 2 to 4 baitholder hooks with just enough weight on the line to hold bottom. Bring along a sturdy net.

Check the stream flow rate before you go as Sherman Creek rises quickly after a heavy rain, and always wear a life jacket. If the creek is low, wear sturdy wading shoes as there may be areas where an angler may need to exit the kayak to get it over shallow spots. Much of Sherman Creek is an easy float, but there are areas that may be challenging in a kayak, so always study the water in front of you, especially in areas with lots of exposed rock where the creek channel gets narrow. There are also a few old dams on Sherman Creek, so map your float ahead of time.



*The upper reaches of Sherman Creek offer great trout fishing.*

By the time we got to our take-out destination, we caught over 30 feisty Smallmouth Bass with a few that measured 18 inches as well as several Fallfish, Redbreast Sunfish, and Rock Bass. We even saw two muskies that gave us an adrenaline rush, although the fish would not bite. As always, the scenery was stunning and the wood ducks and bald eagles we observed made it even better.

Sherman Creek in central Pennsylvania is truly a fishing gem. ☐



*The author targets some brush next to a Sherman Creek bridge abutment.*



# Catching 'Crawlers

by Tyler Frantz

photos by the author

*"It was the day of the worms. That first almost-warm, after-the-rainy-night day in April, when you bolt from your house to find yourself in a world of worms... The sidewalks, the streets. The very places where they didn't belong. Forlorn, marooned on concrete and asphalt, no place to burrow, April's orphans." Jerry Spinelli, "Maniac Magee."*

When author Jerry Spinelli described the "day of the worms" in his famous children's novel, "Maniac Magee," he perfectly captured in words those sunny mornings after heavy spring rains leave blacktopped driveways, sidewalks, and school playgrounds littered with nightcrawlers.

While a paved surface full of wriggling earthworms may come as an inconvenience to a school-aged boy dribbling a

basketball or a high-heeled business professional walking on her daily commute, it presents a wonderful opportunity for anglers to obtain some of the best fishing bait around, at absolutely no cost.

As a fourth-grade teacher, I used to take advantage of these damp spring mornings to have students collect worms on the school grounds, lead a brief focus study on earthworms, and then use the worms as fishing bait. The kids loved it, they learned something new, and I was set for trout season. It was a big win all around.

Now, I have two little worm pickers at home, and we enjoy collecting our own bait as a family – something any angler can do in several productive ways.

## Pavement picking

By far, the easiest way to collect nightcrawlers is to pick up worms in situations as described in "day of the worms." Keep an eye on the weather for a decent overnight rain with fair morning temperatures exceeding 60-degrees F.

Just after sunrise, get outside and search any hard paved surfaces teeming with worms. Obviously, do not enter

active roadways. Instead, explore sidewalks, driveways, unused parking lots, and playgrounds.

Pick up good-sized worms. Then, place worms into a container of loose, damp soil for storage. You can simply grab worms with your thumb and index finger, but it also helps to have a tongue depressor or popsicle stick to gently lift worms for an easier grasp.



*On a mild morning just after a heavy overnight rain, paved lots offer prime opportunities to collect earthworms for bait.*

## Night picking

Large earthworms are commonly referred to as nightcrawlers for good reason. Nightcrawlers are most active above the soil's surface during the nighttime. On mild, damp evenings, nightcrawlers emerge from holes to travel, move debris, and mate. A nightcrawler breathes through its skin. Coming out at night allows nightcrawlers to get a fresh dose of oxygen without over drying in the sunlight.

Those with stealth and quickness can use an artificial light to illuminate nightcrawlers and act swiftly to snatch nightcrawlers before the worms retreat to their underground tunnels. Nightcrawlers are sensitive to light and will try to escape it, so dimming the flashlight or covering it with a green or red lens helps delay departure.

I have found that working uphill helps boost my odds, as the incline allows me to be closer to soil's surface when I cast the light, making my reaction time quicker. It also saves my back from constantly being hunched over. Place captured worms in a tall, slender can while hunting, so the worms don't crawl out. Transfer the worms to a more permanent storage container later.

## Day picking

Earthworms can also be collected during the daytime, but it takes a little extra effort. One can dig in a garden or compost heap and break apart the soil to remove worms. Alternatively, worms can be found by flipping large rocks or rolling logs, although this process can upset the balance of delicate mini ecosystems.

A much easier approach is to make your own cardboard worm trap. Simply break down a cardboard box until it lays flat, soak it until fully saturated with a garden hose, and let it lay in your lawn overnight. Flip it over in the morning and collect any worms that gathered near the surface. It is that simple. ☐

## Storage tips

Nightcrawlers store well in a dark, damp location such as an insulated foam box placed in a cool basement. Make sure the storage container has a few perforations in it, so the worms can breathe. Nightcrawlers last for several weeks in a refrigerator as long as the soil is kept loose, damp, and enriched with organic material such as corn meal.

A larger, more permanent storage bed can be made by layering soil, organic material, and damp newspapers or cardboard sections in a big foam cooler. Keep the bed damp by spraying it with a water bottle on a regular basis. Remove worms for bait as needed.

Nightcrawlers serve as an excellent bait for several game fishes including bass, catfish, crappies, trout, and all species of sunfish. By catching your own 'crawlers, you will save money, always have access to prime bait, and add to the overall enjoyment of the complete fishing experience. Take advantage of nature's bounty by collecting your own worms for the next trip to your favorite fishing hole.



*Nightcrawlers can be stored for a few weeks in a refrigerated foam box. Make sure the box is perforated for air exchange and occasionally rehydrate the bedding soil with water from a spray bottle.*



photo-Juanita Howard

⬅ **Lackawanna State Park, Lackawanna Lake, Lackawanna County**

*Callan Capuano and Scott Gilliland preparing for Mentored Youth Trout Day.*



photo-Kim Garriss

⬆ **Childrens Lake, Cumberland County**

*Maily Veur caught this Rainbow Trout while fishing on Childrens Lake on Mentored Youth Trout Day.*

# MENTORED YOUTH TROUT DAY

**March 26 (statewide)**

**Y**outh anglers and their adult mentors participated in Mentored Youth Trout Day on Saturday, March 26. For more information, visit [www.fishandboat.com/MentoredYouth.htm](http://www.fishandboat.com/MentoredYouth.htm). 📄



photo-Linda Stager

⬆ **Cold Stream Dam, Centre County**

*Nelson Stager, age 6, enjoying Mentored Youth Trout Day.*



photo-Dee Fisher

⬆ **Mahantango Creek, Northumberland County**

*Willow, age 5, and Joel Miller were trout fishing at Mahantango Creek on Mentored Youth Trout Day.*

↓ **Peters Creek, Allegheny County**

Verona Willetts, age 11, fishing Peters Creek with her mother, Tiffany Willetts.

photo-Stover Photography



↓ **Lackawanna State Park, Lackawanna Lake, Lackawanna County**

Nathan Buchinski enjoyed fishing on Mentored Youth Trout Day at Lackawanna State Park.

photo-Janelle Howard



photo-Spring Gearhart



photo-Andrea Feeney

↑ **Lake Rowena, Cambria County**

Jackson Reese, age 4, caught this golden Rainbow Trout while fishing on Lake Rowena with his dad, Scott Reese.

↑ **Sweet Arrow Lake, Schuylkill County**

Lillian Watral, age 3, holding her bait and ready to catch fish on Sweet Arrow Lake on Mentored Youth Trout Day.



↓ **Duman Lake, Cambria County**

Sam Yackovich, age 4, caught this Rainbow Trout trout while fishing at Duman Lake on Mentored Youth Trout Day. This was his first time fishing.

photo-Spring Gearhart



photo-Carl Kimmel

↑ **Muddy Run Park, Muddy Run Reservoir, Lancaster County**

Lauren Wotring, age 7, caught this nice trout while fishing at Muddy Run Reservoir on Mentored Youth Trout Day.



photo-Dee Fisher

↑ **Wiconisco Creek, Dauphin County**

Bennett Miller, age 9, and Emma Miller, age 4, fishing at Wiconisco Creek near the Ned Smith Center on Mentored Youth Trout Day.



photo-WCO Justin L. Schillaci

↑ **Janesville Dam, Clearfield County**

Levi Millinder caught a 20-inch Rainbow Trout, and Lydia Millinder caught a 17-inch Rainbow Trout while fishing at Janesville Dam on Mentored Youth Trout Day.





← Twentymile Creek, Erie County

Daniel Hart, Erie, with a beautiful Twentymile Creek Brown Trout.

photo-Artadine Capotis



photo-Stover Photography

↑ Bobs Creek, Bedford County

Lainie Treece fly fishing on Bobs Creek on Opening Day of Trout.

# OPENING DAY OF TROUT

April 2 (statewide)

The April 2 statewide opening day of trout marked the beginning of trout season in Pennsylvania. Fishing licenses and license buttons can be purchased at [fishandboat.com](http://fishandboat.com). 🗑️



photo-courtesy of Emma Garneau

↑ Hokendauqua Creek, Northampton County

Emma Garneau, Northampton, caught this Rainbow Trout while fishing Hokendauqua Creek on opening day. This was her first time fishing.



photo-Linda Stager

↑ Little Pine Creek, Lycoming County

Trever Brobst and Scott Barton fishing on Little Pine Creek on opening day.

# FISHING

## *Lake Erie's Shoreline*

# WITH KAYAKS



*by Jerry Bush*

*photos by the author*

With its reputation for suddenly turning precarious, you may wonder why anyone would propose launching a kayak into Lake Erie, Erie County. The key is in one simple word, "respect." Just because Lake Erie may be dangerous at times, does not suggest it should never be accessed with small vessels. I grew up along the Great Lake, and there are many days when the lake's waters are calm. At times, even providing mirror-like reflections only expected on small, inland lakes.

Lake Erie holds more freshwater fish than the other Great Lakes combined, making it a hot spot for anglers, regardless of whether they can or cannot afford large watercraft. Included is a healthy population of large Smallmouth Bass.

Smallmouth Bass weighing 5-pounds or more are commonly encountered along Pennsylvania's Lake Erie shoreline. The great news for paddle enthusiasts is that these fish reside within a few hundred yards of shore. My friends and I have caught and released more 4- to 5-pound Smallmouth Bass in a summer of fishing within 200 yards of Lake Erie's shoreline than many anglers will catch in 10 summers of fishing any of Pennsylvania's inland lakes.

Key launch sites east of the city of Erie include the North East Marina, Shades Beach, and Lampe Marina. A launch is also located at the community of Lawrence Park. Elk Creek and Walnut Creek accesses are the most obvious launch points west of the city.

I resist the temptation to mention several boat launches within Presque Isle Bay, which would needlessly involve paddling farther to reach the fish inhabiting the main body of the lake. Besides, Presque Isle Bay itself has more than enough fish to render any such effort unnecessary.

With permission from a willing landowner, a kayak may physically be launched from most of Pennsylvania's 76 miles of shoreline. Acquiring such permission may shorten the paddling distance to some bass hotspots that are usually neglected by paddlers.

The quickest way to locate willing fish from a kayak is by casting and retrieving skirted spinnerbaits of various designs and colors. Kayak accessible water usually signifies bright days with little chop, so light colors produce well. White, yellow, silver, and bright chartreuse skirts work best. Chrome or silver blades outperform bronze or brass colors in my opinion. But, I use chrome or silver blades most often.

Jigs and soft plastic baits are great choices when targeting bass in calm water. Personal favorites include almost any of the scented, soft plastic baits in a multitude of shapes. Most shoreline bass feed near the bottom, so anything resembling a crayfish often works well. There is little need to replicate



*Lake Erie shoreline bass*



*Use chartreuse and white soft plastic lures to catch Lake Erie's shoreline bass.*

the crustaceans. Scented tube baits of various colors work well. Major lure designers claim tubes can be mistaken by bass as leeches, small baitfish, and crayfish.

Jigs are normally bounced off the bottom, but I have learned to tip a jig with a soft plastic minnow or twisty-tail bait and perform cast and retrieve maneuvers when the fish are suspended a few feet off bottom. Realistic color combinations include perch, Bluegill, and the traditional minnow, with a gray back over a white underside.

Natural baits include worms and live minnows, but a benefit to any imitation baits is cleanliness and ease of handling. Natural baits are messy and may be difficult to handle cleanly when in a small vessel.

A fly rod may be used from a kayak. There are few freshwater fishing experiences equal to hooking a huge bass with a fly rod when the fish has such a maneuverability advantage. Most fly anglers strip streamers to lure open water bass. Woolly Buggers work well, as do flashy Clouser Minnows, Mickey Finns, and Lefty Kreh's Deceivers.

Steelhead, which normally reside in distant, deep water, are available to small vessel anglers in September and early October when weather conditions cooperate. Steelhead can be caught from kayaks just off the mouths of marinas and tributaries as early as 4 weeks before the migrating fish enter the streams. However, the weather deserves closer monitoring after Labor Day, and the use of a spray skirt becomes advisable. Days with waves that are 2-feet or less become fewer and farther between, and the cooling water adds the hazard of hypothermia for any paddler who gets wet. Keep extra clothes in your vehicle or in a dry bag.

Life jackets and water-protected cell phones are necessities. Having another kayaker along is advisable. While bobbing in open water, the same waves crash into the shoreline. Stepping out of a kayak that is being battered by 2- to 3-feet of breaking waves is tricky.

Despite its ominous reputation, Lake Erie is often calm enough for a shoreline kayak adventure. Just give it the respect it has earned. ☐



*The author's friend with a steelhead caught from a kayak.*



# Mimic Baits Hand Poured

by Alex Zidock Jr. photos by the author

With 95 custom colors and a few unique baits, Ed Zampelli and his 12-year-old son, Matt, found a niche that makes Mimic Baits a source for the discriminating angler. "I have customers who want a specific lure in a specific color, and that is what we do," said Zampelli. "Anglers cannot walk into a major box retailer and get the colors they want, in the lure they want, and that is where my son and I fit in. That is what makes us different."

Zampelli's family owned a television shop and cable television company in Lewistown, Mifflin County. As a youngster working with his father, they would always pack fly rods in their work vehicle and, after a service call, would stop at a local stream and

fish. "I was an avid fly angler, and during high school, I tied flies for Dan Pierce Outdoor Shop in town," said Zampelli.

Zampelli's family was friends with Walter Felmlee (Felmlee Lures), and Ed worked at Felmlee Lures for one summer, where he painted thousands of jig heads. "I was interested in how they made plastic baits, and I finally saw that process that started me thinking that I could do that, but it took me about 10 more years to figure out how," said Zampelli.

About 20 years ago, Zampelli was working at a sporting goods store and had the opportunity to talk to many Susquehanna River anglers. "I bought my first jet boat, and after a few tournaments, I said to my partner, 'I can make my own baits, and maybe we can have baits that no one else has in their tackle boxes.' So, I started making plastic baits mostly for myself and



*Ed Zampelli displays the packaging of Mimic Baits.*

friends," said Zampelli. "I bought a few new molds, and I got a few old molds from Walter Felmlee. I started making hand-dipped tubes in colors that were not out there. One unique color that I still sell is called Bass Candy," said Zampelli.

"Our niche in the industry is our custom colors. I had a gentleman call me from Texas who said a popular manufacturer of plastic baits did not make a specific color anymore. So, he asked me if I could match the color and make him some baits. He sent me pictures, and it took me about a week to get them exactly how he wanted them. He called one day and said, 'I just wanted you to know your stuff works,'" said Zampelli.

Another feature of Mimic Baits is the formula for the plastic that Zampelli uses. "A friend of mine is a biochemist, and I asked him to develop a formula that I could add lots of salt to and still make the baits float. Every angler wants salt in their plastic baits, but salt makes them sink. You can put a Ned head jig on our salt-infused hellgrammite, and it will stand straight up in the water," said Zampelli.

Since everything for bass fishing in the spring is small, anglers wanted something to tip small hair jigs with, and they wanted something that could also be fished alone. "I found a guy out West that had a mold that was just what I wanted, so I bought the mold from him. Anglers are tipping our 2-inch Spring Beaver on a small hair jig head, or they are fishing it alone. I have a buddy who wanted some in white and pink, and he used them successfully to catch some big trout. Another two lures unique to Mimic Baits is our Boss Hog and our Hellgrammite designed to meet our specifications," said Zampelli.

"It was an easy choice to become a major sponsor of Pennsylvania B.A.S.S. Nation High School and Junior Fishing programs. Even though my son is only 12 years old, he is active in the business and calls himself the number one salesman. My goal is to build this business, so that someday he will have a business we both started together," said Zampelli. ☐



*A selection of Mimic Baits.*



*Acrylic single pour molds, many dating to the 1970s, are sometimes used to fulfill a custom order for a customer.*

**Mimic Baits Hand Poured**

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

# MORaine STATE PARK (LAKE ARTHUR)

by *Darl Black*

photos by the author

Located a short drive north of Pittsburgh is 3,225-acre Lake Arthur, the centerpiece of Moraine State Park. Moraine State Park gets over 1 million visitors each year—people anxious to participate in the diverse outdoor recreation of this 16,725-acre park.

## So much to do

Lake Arthur is a noted fishing destination, but there is much more to Moraine State Park. Visitors can enjoy sailing, swim beaches, windsurfing, a disc golf course, 28 miles of hiking trails, a 7-mile paved multi-use trail for biking, 6 miles of mountain biking trails, 20 miles of horseback riding trails, and wildlife watching around every bend of a trail or jiggle in the shoreline.

While the park does not have a family campground, there are several private campgrounds nearby. The park does offer 11 modern cabin rentals year-round. Pontoon boats, motorboats, kayaks, canoes, and rowboats are available to rent at Crescent Bay Boat Rental on the South Shore of the park.

In addition to sledding and ice skating sites in Moraine State Park, winter opportunities include cross-country skiing on Pleasant Valley and Sunken Garden trails, plus 26 miles of trails for snowmobiling.

## Back to fishing

Lake Arthur has a reputation as an exceptional Largemouth Bass and hybrid Striped Bass fishery, but with little first-hand experience in the last 20 years, I reached out to Lake Arthur



*The paved multi-use trail along the North Shore is popular for biking. A bike rental concession is located on North Shore Drive.*



*Davis Hollow Marina*





*Glasgow frequently uses a slip bobber to present a small jig to the precise level that crappies are observed on a sonar holding near cover.*



angler Gus Glasgow to learn what species now give anglers a thrill.

"Panfish," said Glasgow. "The crappie population is phenomenal in terms of both quantity and quality. I have caught several in the 1.75- to 2.50-pound range. It also hosts a healthy population of Bluegills and Yellow Perch. Come with me and I will show you how easy it is to catch crappies in the middle of summer."

Weeks later, I met Glasgow at the Route 528 ramp for an afternoon fishing session.

As we motored up, I shared some of my bass fishing adventures including using an 8-inch black grape straight tail worm to probe brush piles, bridge abutments, deep points, and channel drops that held big bass back in the 80s and 90s. I also told him about spending night shifts on the lake retrieving a long minnow plug while listening intently for the repeated "swoosh" of stripers attacking Alewives within inches of the surface.

Then, it was Glasgow's turn to share memories. "My most memorable fishing experience was at age nine, catching my first Largemouth Bass on a purple worm fishing from shore with my dad. But, my biggest bass from this lake is an 8-pound fish caught on a spinnerbait. Over the years, I have taken several hybrid Striped Bass in the 30-inch range and some big catfish. My largest Lake Arthur fish was a 52-inch musky," said Glasgow.

Acknowledging that large Channel Catfish, trophy Largemouth Bass, muskies, and stripers still roam the lake, Glasgow now finds catching crappies and big perch as enjoyable as chasing large gamefish.

"You have to work hard to catch big predators in this lake. But, by focusing on panfish, I spend my time actually catching fish instead of fishing for fish. With its strong panfish population and ample shoreline access, this is the perfect place to take a family with young children, so they can catch something from the bank," said Glasgow.

Approaching a line of submerged brush piles leading from shallow

to deep, Glasgow turned off the outboard, lowered the bow electric motor, and turned on the scanning sonar.

"This is like watching a live television show," joked Glasgow, as he pointed the forward-looking transducer towards the first brush pile. Although we could clearly see the pile of limbs, there was nothing moving. "We are seeing a live view of that pile. If there were crappies here, you would see them moving in and out of the screen around the cover," said Glasgow.

He redirected the forward-looking transducer at the next brush pile in slightly deeper water. The screen looked entirely different as fish marks blinked on and off, while others moved across the screen as the boat remained stationary.

Adjusting the setting on his slip bobber, so his jig rode about 5 feet deep, Glasgow cast beyond the cover and slowly retrieved the bobber. His first six casts connected with crappies of assorted sizes before switching to a crankbait to catch a couple more.

With both of us now casting and catching, "If these fish wear you out, I challenge you to a round of disc golf—one of my favorite activities at Moraine State Park when I am not fishing," said Glasgow. ☐

## For more information

For information on activities and additional information, visit [www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/FindAPark/MoraineStatePark/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/FindAPark/MoraineStatePark/Pages/default.aspx).

For a map showing trails and boat access ramps, request a copy of "A Pennsylvania Recreational Guide for Moraine."



*The Route 528 ramp on the east end of the lake is a popular launch site for bass tournaments.*



*A family from Pittsburgh enjoys shoreline fishing at Lake Arthur near the swim beach on the North Shore.*



*Watts Bay Public Boat Ramp*





# Fishing Tionesta Creek

by **Ralph Scherder** photos by the author

I love fishing small streams, but every now and then, I get a hankering to explore larger waters. When I do, one of the first ones that comes to mind is Tionesta Creek.

Tionesta Creek forms just south of Sheffield, where the West Branch Tionesta Creek and East Branch Tionesta Creek meet. Much of Tionesta Creek's 60-plus miles flows

through the heart of the Allegheny National Forest, picking up numerous tributaries along the way, before joining the Allegheny River near the town of Tionesta.

From its origins downriver to Kellettsville, Tionesta Creek is stocked with trout both preseason and inseason. Tionesta Creek is also stocked with trout inseason from Tionesta Creek Reservoir outflow downstream to the mouth and is open to year-round fishing. The rapidly increasing water temperatures of



*The view downstream from the bridge at Henrys Mills. Tionesta Creek is big water with lots of opportunities for both coldwater and warmwater species.*

Tionesta Creek limit the inseason stocking opportunities. Last May, for instance, water temperatures near Lynch, Forest County, were in the low 70s by Memorial Day weekend. In contrast, the past 2 years have seen unusually low water levels and prolonged periods of dry weather, which have shortened the window for trout fishing. During some springs, you may still find plenty of trout throughout Tionesta Creek into early June. The lack of summer trout fishing is often offset with an abundance of warmwater species including Smallmouth Bass and Muskellunge.

In most places, Tionesta Creek is well over 100 feet wide, and the current can be deceptively strong. This is, by all accounts, large water until after spring runoff. At times, it can be difficult wading. If wearing chest waders, put on a wading belt, studded boots, and carry a wading staff to help you navigate. If you have only fished small streams, you will learn quickly that wading big water such as Tionesta Creek is a whole different experience. Always proceed with caution.

Big waters have certain advantages over small streams. The size of Tionesta Creek is great for anglers fishing

from canoes or kayaks. Many stretches make a great day trip, putting in at one bridge and pulling out several miles downstream. The majority of Tionesta Creek above Tionesta Lake is closely paralleled by State Route 666, with numerous access points to put in or take out a canoe or kayak.

Floating Tionesta Creek, you cover a lot of territory and fishing spots that most anglers cannot reach from shore. Water levels are good for float trips into summer. If there is an early drought, you may find more shallow spots.

On Tionesta Creek, stocked fish are spread out well, and the fish tend to move around a lot. It is common to catch Brook Trout even though the creek is stocked only with Brown Trout and Rainbow Trout. The Brook Trout were originally stocked in many small tributaries throughout the watershed—Salmon Creek, Bluejay Creek, and others—eventually flowing into Tionesta Creek.

My favorite fly fishing rig for Tionesta Creek is a 9-foot, 6-weight, fast action rod with 4x-5x leaders and tippet. This rig provides enough backbone to set the



*During the summer months, Tionesta Creek is a great warmwater fishery with lots of opportunities to catch Smallmouth Bass.*

hook in heavy current. For spinning gear, a longer rod allows you to cast farther and gets your bait or spinner through hard-to-reach pockets, where fish like to hold.

Tionesta Creek offers little in terms of mayfly hatches, but it does have a lot of stoneflies and caddis. In early spring, Little Brown Stoneflies are seen in large enough quantities to get trout feeding on the surface. In mid-May, the black caddis (sizes 12-14), known locally as the “Mother’s Day Hatch”, may come off in droves, with enough bugs on the water to render fishing with any other bait or fly almost futile.

The majority of the time, I fish attractor nymphs such as stonefly nymphs, Prince Nymphs, Hare’s Ears, and Copper Johns. My spin fishing friends prefer all types of spinners and the typical

assortment of baits such as waxworms, mealworms, minnows, and various colors of PowerBait.

After Tionesta Creek transitions from a coldwater to a warmwater fishery, it can be an exciting time to fish, because you never know what you may encounter. Everywhere you go, you find rock outcroppings and the long, slow runs and pools that Smallmouth Bass prefer. There is always the possibility of latching onto a musky, especially once you get downstream of Kellettsville. That section down to the Tionesta Lake has been known to harbor some nice-sized muskies.

Many miles of stream flow through secluded back stretches away from roads and access points, and almost all of it is good fishing. Even if the bite is slow, the scenery is its own reward. The Allegheny National Forest is one of Pennsylvania’s most beautiful destinations any time of year. ☐

# MAURICE K. GODDARD STATE PARK

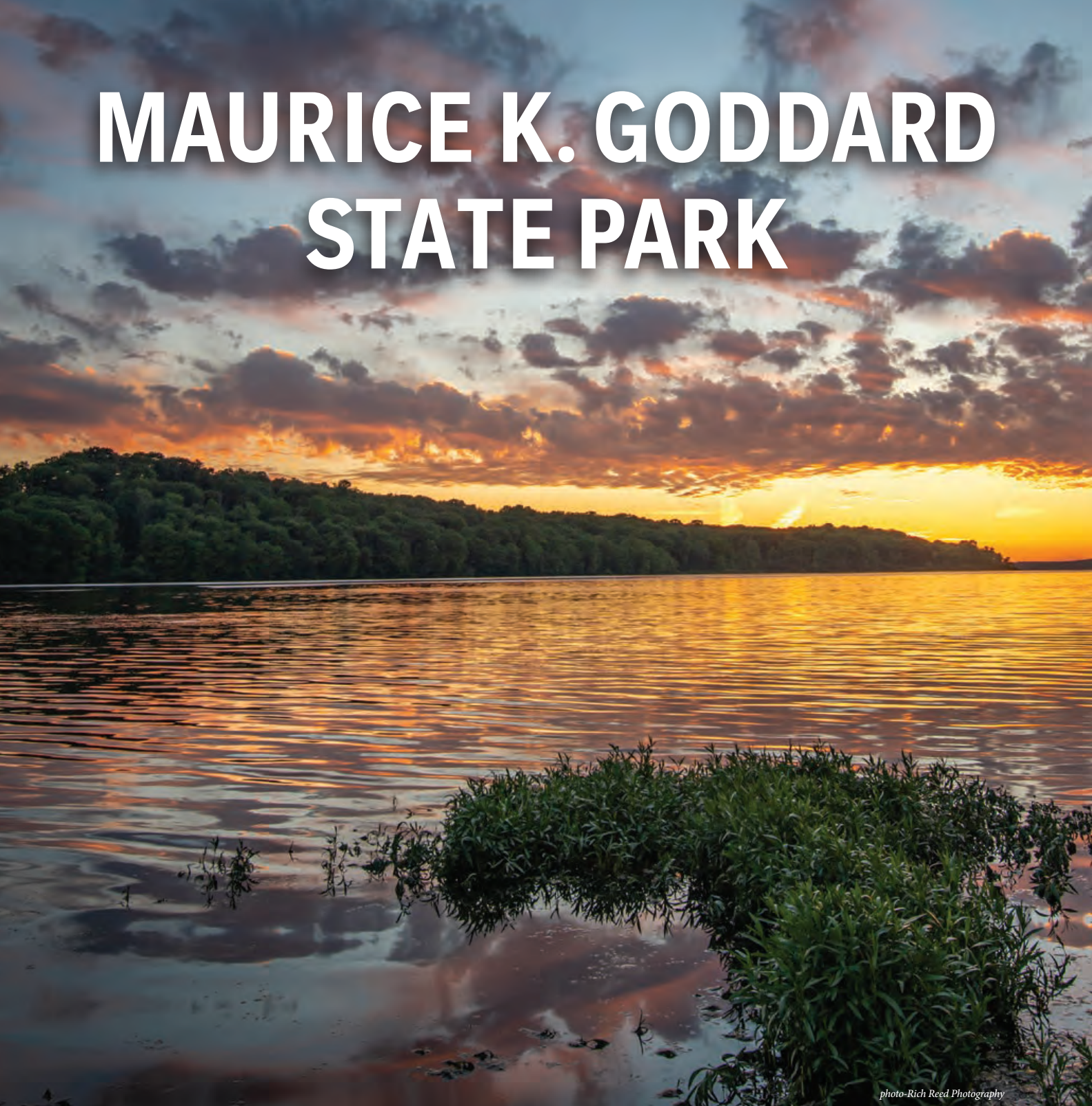


photo-Rich Reed Photography

*by Caleb Ritenour*

**W**hen Maurice K. Goddard was appointed Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Forests and Waters in 1955, he set a goal to have a state park within 25 miles of every Pennsylvanian. By 1979, Goddard added 45 state parks and an additional 130,000 acres of state park

land. “Doc” Goddard paved the way for outdoor enthusiasts across Pennsylvania. It is fitting one of the 45 state parks he fought to establish is named after him, although he humbly protested against the honor.

Maurice K. Goddard State Park located in Mercer County sits halfway between Pittsburgh and Lake Erie. Lake Wilhelm makes up the majority of Maurice K. Goddard State Park. The United States Army Corps of Engineers built Lake Wilhelm in



*Lake Wilhelm, Mercer County*

the late 1960s to manage the flooding of Sandy Creek. The dam was finished in 1971, which makes the lake over 50 years old.

Lake Wilhelm is a trove of outdoor recreation activities, especially boating. The lake allows up to 20 horsepower motors and has a well-maintained marina open from May through October. In addition to the marina, there are seven boat launch sites around the lake (four inside the park and three adjoining state game lands). Interstate 79 carves through the northwest tip of the lake. The separated portion is included as state game land and is maintained by the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Consequently, only electric-powered and non-powered boats are allowed in this 240-acre section. While motor boating fanatics may see this as a small blight, anglers and kayakers see a slice of heaven.

The fishing at Maurice K. Goddard State Park is incredibly diverse, just like the anglers who arrive to dip a line. From smaller fish like crappies and sunfish to larger fish like Muskellunge and Walleyes, the lake has a robust and healthy underwater ecosystem. It is common to see families enjoying a cast from the bank or gravel bed. The dock is often the scene of a joyful child reeling in a Bluegill. More seasoned anglers cast into inlets around the perimeter of the lake in

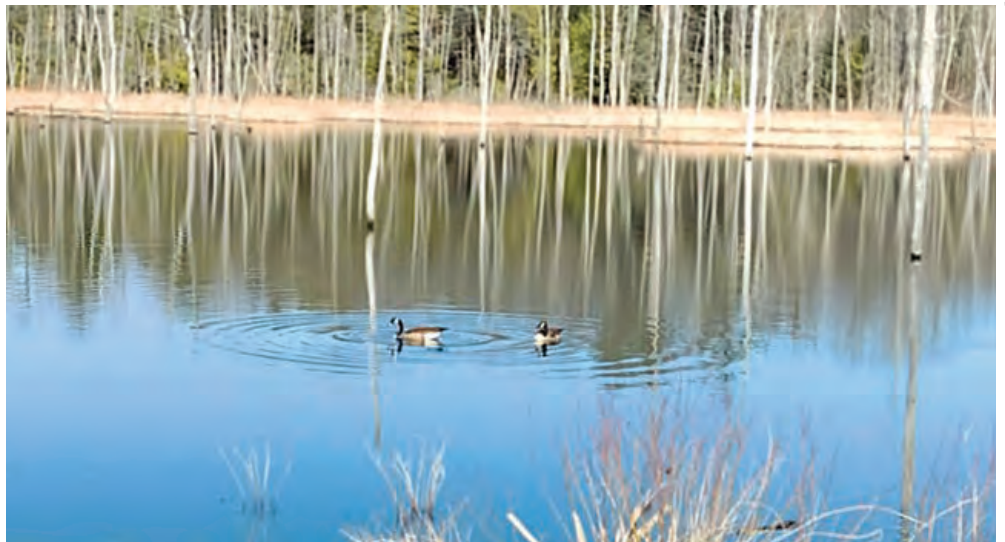
search of Largemouth Bass or perch. Lake Wilhelm has been known to hold some remarkably large catfish that will give even the strongest angler an earnest workout.

One of the best fishing locations on the lake is an area aptly nicknamed “The Sticks.” Accessible only by boat, a short cruise (or paddle) toward the northwest corner of the lake from the Sheakleyville Road Boat Launch will reveal a beautiful scene. A few feet above the water’s surface are

hundreds of tree trunks scattered across a few acres of the lake. The tree trunks serve as nests to osprey and many other bird species. The unique structure also provides a suitable habitat for Walleyes.

Out of the water, the John C. Oliver Multi-purpose Trail Loop is a well-maintained path spanning 12 miles from the dam to Lake Wilhelm Road.

Maurice K. Goddard State Park has been a huge blessing to me as a native of Mercer County. It only takes 20 minutes to be inside the state park from my home, which makes it a convenient trip for the family to enjoy some quality time outdoors. I fondly remember the days when my dad took me fishing on Lake Wilhelm. As we ventured through the park looking for a new place to cast, I would plead with the sun to stay in the sky a little longer. My dad and I spent hours exploring the edges of the lake in our old green canoe. Although we were often unsuccessful in the catch, we never left the park disappointed.



photos: Cade Rittenour

*Lake Wilhelm, Mercer County*

Pretty soon, my dad and I will be out on Lake Wilhelm again, but we will not be alone. We will have a new member of our fishing crew—my son, Campbell. My dad will watch as I struggle to untangle lines and attach worms. I am confident, out of a fishy sense of nostalgia, he will even offer to help bait Campbell's hook a few times.

It is exciting to share the traditions of my childhood with the next generation. ☐



*Lake Wilhelm Marina*

# GOVERNOR'S YOUTH COUNCIL for Hunting, Fishing, and Conservation

by Will Nichols

One of Pennsylvania's most popular fish is the Smallmouth Bass. Also known as a "smallie" or a "bronzeback," Smallmouth Bass are a common fish sought by many anglers. Typically, Smallmouth Bass are between 12- and 16-inches long. Bass are found in rivers, creeks, and some of Pennsylvania's deeper lakes. With most fish living in moving water, Smallmouth Bass put up a thrilling fight notorious across the country.

When out on the water, it is important to understand where Smallmouth Bass are found. In the warmer months, look to shallow water, preferably by shade or underwater cover. Once the water begins to drop in temperature, look for deeper pockets, where the Smallmouth Bass spends most of its time. During this part of the year, the bass's digestive system will start to slow down, and fish will not be as hungry or willing to strike. Even so, bass will still bite if using the correct presentation.

Anglers should fish natural lures. My biggest bass have come from imitating what these fish see every day, by using things like a Texas rigged crayfish or fluke. I suggest green pumpkin or white color patterns, depending on the water clarity and other factors. With these two lures, try to twitch two or three times, then give a pause. If this does not work, change the speed of your twitches or give



Photo-courtesy of Will Nichols

Will Nichols with a Smallmouth Bass.

a longer pause. You may be surprised by the importance of the pause when fishing these types of lures. Although it may not appear effective, some of the more finicky bass will not bite when the bait is still in action, only striking it when the bait is falling. If fish are more aggressive, try to shorten your pause and put more speed into your twitches.

For experienced anglers, fishing tournaments may be found throughout Pennsylvania. From fishing on a bass boat to a kayak, many local water bodies have open tournaments that you may enter. Rivers like the Susquehanna River have large tournaments year-round.

No matter what style of Smallmouth Bass fishing you pursue, get out on the water. Talk to local anglers and learn how to catch Smallmouth Bass. Most importantly, keep fish healthy. Giving fish a quick, gentle release may help raise the life expectancy and help people find Smallmouth Bass in the future. ☐

## Protect Yourself Against Tickborne Diseases.



- Spray repellent on skin (such as DEET).
- Spray Permethrin on clothes and shoes (read all labels).
- Wear light-colored clothing.
- Tuck shirts into pants, and tuck pants into socks.
- Stay in the centers of trails, away from wooded and brushy areas with low-growing vegetation and tall grasses that may harbor ticks. DO NOT SIT on downed logs, leaf piles, and mossy stones.
- Once inside, place clothing into the dryer on high heat to kill any lingering ticks and take a shower. Examine gear such as backpacks for ticks.
- Do a full-body tick check, especially behind the knees, groin, armpits, and neck.
- Check any pets exposed to tick habitats each time pets return indoors.
- If a tick is found attached to your skin, use tweezers to carefully remove it including the head. Monitor for symptoms and contact your doctor with any questions.

For more information on ticks and tick-borne diseases, visit the Pennsylvania Department of Health website at [www.health.pa.gov](http://www.health.pa.gov).



photos-courtesy of Brian Wisner

## Summer Smallmouth Bass on the Susquehanna

*by Brian Wisner*

*Hatcheries Director*

*Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission*

The Susquehanna River is well known as a world-class river for Smallmouth Bass fishing and draws people to its waters year-round. As with most river fisheries, water levels fluctuate based on rainfall and weather patterns. This rise and fall of river levels can create flow conditions that are dangerous to boaters and kayakers pursuing river Smallmouth Bass. One of the best times to plan a Susquehanna River Smallmouth Bass fishing trip for kayakers is in late summer—end of July or early August—when river levels are historically lower and more stable due to less rainfall. Even so, rivers are unpredictable, and water levels may be shallow and clear or high and muddy.

Clear warm shallow waters mean that bass are startled by movements and shadows. Anglers must be cautious and make long casts to get their lures in front of the bass before fish notice the angler floating their way. Even with a stealthy kayak, it is typical to see giant Smallmouth Bass quickly scooting away in clear water as you approach a prime fish holding area. These conditions mean that fish will be moving and on the hunt throughout the day. Some good areas to target include grass islands, fast water eddies, shallow flats, and shade during the heat of the day. Get your favorite topwater lure out for early morning or cloudy conditions, but have a follow up lure ready. There is nothing like a topwater bite as the sun peaks over the hills bordering the river. Target areas just upstream or downstream of chutes and ledges. This is also a great lure for fan casting around flats and to use as a search bait. Buzzbaits and plover types are perfect topwater lures for these areas.





*Spinnerbaits are a staple on the Susquehanna River.*

Grass islands are numerous in the Susquehanna River and offer shallow water kayak anglers a great place to slow down and focus on targeting around this habitat. A soft body fluke is a great lure to throw into clear water on the edges of the grass or in front or behind islands. A nose hooked fluke is best for the shallowest areas while a weighted extra wide gap is preferred for deeper and faster waters. Flukes are also a good lure to cast into shady areas where bass are hiding from the sun in the afternoons. Smallmouth Bass will seek shady areas and provide a direct target for anglers. Shady areas under trees are prime spots and concentrate fish to increase your chances. This is where your skipping skills come in handy, so skip the fluke as far under the branches as possible. If you can, get it right up to the bank.

High temperatures mean that the water cannot hold as much dissolved oxygen, and bass will seek areas where the oxygen levels are higher. Targeting faster, turbulent water around ledges and chutes, which hold more oxygen, will help you find the bigger bass. Throw your lures along the ledge or eddy lines. Flukes, swimbaits, spinnerbaits, stickbaits, and almost any type of water column or bottom bait can work well in this situation.

When a hard summer rain hits, causing the water

level to rise and get muddy, the situation is completely different. Faster muddy water does concentrate the fish more, but you must fish the correct spots, or you will come up empty handed. Fish move to the banks and cover to get out of the major current. Target rock and wood structure along the banks or areas of current breaks in the main channels. Use lures that get attention in muddy water; noisy lures or high vibration lures are best. Do not rule out topwater lures, but most fish will be hugging the bottom tightly. I prefer bladed jigs with a big trailer to get the most bites. Throw lures as tight to the shore and cover as possible. Bladed jigs produce a tremendous amount of vibration, which helps the bass locate the lure in muddy conditions. Noisy, big bladed spinnerbaits are also an excellent choice in dark water. Choose a color that is most visible in brown water; white/chartreuse and black are good options. Crankbaits and rattletails are great lure choices for search baits, because both make a lot of noise and can bounce off the bottom. Finally, jigs with large-sized soft plastic trailers are terrific to work around the structure where fish are holding.

Summertime bass anglers must be prepared to fish a variety of conditions for hungry bass. For example, kayak anglers come from all over the country during late summer for the national kayak bass fishing tournaments held here. In 2020, conditions were low and clear. In 2021, the opposite occurred, and it was muddy. Opposite techniques were used, but the river showed it is a great fishery, and large Smallmouth Bass were caught despite the difference in conditions. Late summer is an excellent time to get out on the river and target Smallmouth Bass, especially from a kayak. ☐



*Susquehanna River summertime lures (from left to right): nose hooked fluke, plover, bladed jig with trailer, and a lipless crankbait.*

# Recap of 2021 Pennsylvania Boating Fatalities



**WEAR IT**  
National Safe Boating Council  
**Pennsylvania**

by *Ryan C. Walt*

*Boating and Watercraft Safety Manager  
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission*

The “Recap of 2021 Pennsylvania Boating Fatalities” is a summary of all fatal recreational boating accidents in the Commonwealth that year. This recap is intended to provide information to illustrate the importance of safe boating practices and help improve boating safety in Pennsylvania.

## 1. 1 Fatality

**Private Pond, Erie County**

**2/21/21, Time unknown, Sunday**

A 70-year-old male is deceased as a result of falling overboard from a kayak on a private pond. The victim observed his dogs having problems swimming in an area of open water on his private pond and attempted a rescue. There were no witnesses, but Pennsylvania State Police officers who were on the scene believe the victim saw the dogs struggling then went to his garage and took his kayak out to the pond with his utility vehicle. They believe the victim dragged the kayak across the ice to the open water where the dogs were located and entered the kayak to reach the dogs, then capsized. The victim was later found deceased along with the two dogs. The victim had no formal boating safety education and was not wearing a life jacket nor were there any life jackets onboard or at the scene. Sudden coldwater immersion may have been a factor.

## 2. 1 Fatality

**Private Pond, Mercer County**

**3/20/21, 3:37 p.m., Saturday**

A 44-year-old male is deceased as a result of capsizing a 6-foot kayak while fishing on a private pond. The victim had no formal boating safety education and was not wearing a life jacket nor were there any life jackets onboard. Sudden coldwater immersion may have been a factor.

## 3. 1 Fatality

**Private Pond, Lancaster County**

**4/3/21, Time unknown, Saturday**

An 84-year-old male is deceased as a result of capsizing a 12-foot open motorboat on a private pond. The victim

was reported missing late in the day, and his boat was discovered adrift on the pond. The victim was recovered the following day in 8 feet of water. The victim had no formal boating safety education and was not wearing a life jacket nor were there any life jackets onboard. Sudden coldwater immersion may have been a factor.

## 4. 1 Fatality

**Muddy Creek, York County**

**5/24/21, 5:00 p.m., Monday**

A 53-year-old male is deceased as a result of capsizing a 9 ½-foot kayak on Muddy Creek. The victim was drifting in the kayak when it capsized. High and swift water conditions forced the victim under the water, where he was pinned against rocks and drowned. The victim was wearing a life jacket at the time of the incident but had no formal boating safety education. Sudden coldwater immersion may have been a factor.

## 5. 1 Fatality

**Pymatuning Reservoir, Crawford County**

**5/29/21, 10:30 a.m., Monday**

A 55-year-old male is deceased after presumably falling overboard from a 23-foot pontoon boat on Pymatuning Reservoir. The victim had gone fishing by himself and the boat came aground, empty, with the engine still running and fishing lines out. There were no witnesses to the incident. The victim had no formal boating safety education. The victim was not wearing a life jacket at the time of the incident, and his body was recovered the next day. Sudden coldwater immersion may have been a factor.

## 6. 1 Fatality

**Lake Marburg, York County**

**7/3/21, 5:54 p.m., Saturday**

A 24-year-old male is deceased after departing the 16-foot pontoon boat on which he was a passenger. The operator had brought the boat close to shore and

did not beach or anchor it. At that time, three passengers disembarked to be in the water while two passengers remained on the boat. When the party was ready to reboard the boat and depart, they noticed the victim was missing. After looking around, they saw him face down in the water. Attempts at resuscitation were unsuccessful, and the victim was later pronounced dead. The victim was not wearing a life jacket and was an inexperienced swimmer. Alcohol was a factor.

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### 7. 1 Fatality

#### Susquehanna River, Clearfield County

9/7/21, Time unknown, Tuesday

A 52-year-old male is deceased after his 15-foot canoe was found capsized on the West Branch Susquehanna River. The victim was dropped off by a friend and then launched his canoe for a multi-day float beginning Saturday, September 4, at Cherry Tree Access. He was supposed to call his friend when he wanted to be picked up. The friend returned on Monday, September 6, to find a capsized canoe and several of the victim's belongings including fishing gear and a life jacket. The friend did not immediately report the findings and waited until Tuesday, September 7, to contact emergency services. An extensive search ensued, and the victim's body was recovered in a remote section of the river approximately 1 mile downstream of the recovered canoe. The victim did have a life jacket onboard but was not wearing it. The victim had no formal boating safety education. High water conditions in addition to drugs and/or alcohol may have been factors.

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### 8. 1 Fatality

#### Allegheny River, Allegheny County

10/20/21, 4:30 p.m., Wednesday

A 64-year-old male is deceased after a 14-foot motorized canoe capsized on the Allegheny River while he and another passenger were boating. The operator was rescued by a passing boater and taken to a hospital for care. An extensive search ensued to find the victim, and his body was recovered approximately 4 hours later. The victim was not wearing a life jacket and had not taken a formal boating safety education course. Alcohol may have been a factor.

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### 9. 1 Fatality

#### Susquehanna River, Lancaster County

10/21/21, 8:53 p.m., Thursday

A 42-year-old female is deceased after a 14-foot open motorboat, in which she was a passenger, capsized. The boat was operating in an area of high-flow discharge from a powerplant. The boat operated too close to the discharge. Water came over the transom, which caused the boat to capsize with its three occupants. The operator was not wearing a life jacket at the time of the incident, but the two passengers were wearing life jackets. The operator and one passenger were able to get to shore. The victim was washed down river, where she was found unresponsive. CPR was administered. She was pronounced deceased at a local hospital. The operator had no formal boating safety education. The victim was wearing a life jacket and sudden coldwater immersion may have been a factor. ☐

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## When boating, remember to . . .

- Wear your life jacket. It floats, even if you don't. Wear it buckled and/or zipped.
- Never operate your boat while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Look around. Avoid a collision by keeping a proper lookout.
- Watch your wake. It is the wave behind your boat and can cause damage.
- Stay away from manmade and natural hazards like dams and strainers (trees in the water).
- Never overload your boat. Keep your weight and gear centered.
- Stop that prop. Turn off your engine before picking up a skier or swimmer.
- Never anchor from the stern (back) of your boat—always at the bow (front).
- Stay with your boat on the upstream side if you capsize.
- Carry onboard a wearable life jacket for each person on a boat.
- Never boat alone. Boating safety increases with numbers.
- Never take your boat over a low-head dam.
- Carry a whistle that is audible for ½-mile.

# LESSONS LEARNED

photo—Chris Callhoun

**by Laurel Anders**  
**Boating Director**  
**Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission**

The muddy, rain-swollen river tempted the paddlers with its fast current and lively rapids. The paddlers had floated this stretch of river many times during summer months without incident. Eager to get on the water after a long, cold winter, their excitement and adrenaline soared as they pondered the thrill and challenge of a whitewater adventure on an unusually warm spring day.

The paddlers—a man and woman in their late 20s — grabbed their gear, shuttled a vehicle to the take-out point, put on life jackets, and carefully launched their kayaks into the fast-moving water. As they navigated the first set of rapids and the 40-degree F water splashed their hands and arms, their pulse quickened, and they let out hoots of excitement. They swiftly entered the second rapid and noticed standing waves (also known as haystacks) that were 5 to 6 feet high, dead ahead of them. Despite their powerful paddle strokes, the kayakers were unable break out of the strong current which drove them right into the standing waves, throwing them off balance and rolling their small boats.

The cold water took their breath away. They shimmied out of their kayaks as their life jackets quickly carried them to the water's surface. One paddler was immediately separated from her kayak by the fast-moving water and fought against the strong current to swim to shore. The other paddler was able to grab a line attached to his kayak, but his hands were so cold that he quickly lost grip. He threw one arm into the cockpit to secure his boat and used the other arm to back stroke to shore. By the time he got to shore with his kayak, it was nearly 10 minutes since they had capsized. Both were starting to recognize the early effects of hypothermia—the skin on their hands and arms was turning from bright red to blue, and their shivering had become uncontrollable.

They managed to drain the water out of the kayak and together carried it along the uneven shoreline to the take-out point. As they approached their vehicle, feelings of relief were quickly replaced by frustration as their cold fingers fumbled with the keys to unlock and start it. They successfully accessed the vehicle and huddled together, waiting impatiently for the heater to warm their cold and exhausted bodies. Thanking their lucky stars, they rehashed the day's events and lessons learned:

- **Always wear a life jacket when boating. It saved their lives in the cold, fast water.**
- **Dress appropriately for water and weather conditions. Synthetic fabrics insulate, shed water, and dry faster than cotton. Wear a wet or dry suit as conditions warrant.**
- **Bring a change of clothes in a drybag and keep some warm layers in the vehicle.**
- **Check water levels. Boating conditions can change dramatically with only a few inches difference in water level.**
- **Know your skill level. Challenging water conditions require advanced skills.**
- **Match the boat and equipment to the types of water to be paddled. Whitewater paddling requires special considerations.**
- **File a float plan with a trusted family member or friend. Let them know what to do if you don't return on time.**

Learn more about boating safely at [fishandboat.com/Boat](https://fishandboat.com/Boat). ☐



**WEAR IT**  
National Safe Boating Council  
**Pennsylvania**

Submit your story of boating lessons learned at  
<https://pfbc.pa.gov/forms/savelives.htm>.

# 2021 Deputy Waterways Conservation Officer Awards



## Statewide Deputy of the Year Program

**D**eputy Waterways Conservation Officers (DWCOs) assist Waterways Conservation Officers (WCOs) in the performance of specialized law enforcement duties to carry out the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's mission of protecting, conserving, and enhancing the Commonwealth's aquatic resources.

Deputies work long hours, usually on weekends and holidays, and at times by themselves. As volunteers, they receive a small stipend to help with expenses; otherwise, they are not compensated.

One DWCO is annually awarded the prestigious Statewide Deputy of the Year Award. Deputies are nominated by a WCO or other DWCOs in each law enforcement region. The Statewide Deputy of the Year is then selected from six nominees by a committee comprised of law enforcement and other supervisors at headquarters. The Deputy of the Year receives an engraved badge plaque to honor the achievement.

The six region nominees are reviewed for a final selection of the Statewide Deputy of the Year Award winner.

DWCO Robin D. Brandt, the Southcentral Region's Deputy of the Year Award Nominee, received the 2021 Statewide Deputy of the Year Award.

The Deputy of the Year Award Nominees are:  
DWCO Michael J. Eismont, Northwest Region  
DWCO Thomas C. Wesoloski, Southwest Region  
DWCO Michael J. McSkimming, Northcentral Region

DWCO Robin D. Brant, Southcentral Region  
DWCO Theodore C. Smith Jr., Northeast Region  
DWCO Maurice M. Williams Jr. and  
DWCO Joseph B. O'Neill Jr., Southeast Region ☐



photo-Captain Anthony J. Quaracino Jr.

*Deputy Waterways Conservation Officer Robin D. Brant was selected as the Bureau of Law Enforcements 2021 Deputy Waterways Conservation Officer of the Year.*

## Years of Service Recognition

The Commission recognized the following DWCOs for their years of service.

### Northwest Region

*Deputy Retirement:* Brian C. Beliveau

### Northcentral Region

*Deputy Retirement:* David A. Martin

### Southcentral Region:

*40 years:* Robert C. Houser Jr.

### Southeast Region:

*15 years:* Michael S. Rau Jr.

*15 years:* James S. Yerger Jr.

*Deputy Retirement:* Richard J. Sodouski

## Becoming a DWCO

DWCOs share a common commitment: to safeguard the public along our waterways and to protect, conserve, and enhance the Commonwealth's aquatic resources. Many DWCOs use their training and experience to move to other law enforcement occupations.

Anyone interested in learning more about becoming a DWCO should contact the nearest Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Law Enforcement Region Office listed on the Commission's website at [fishandboat.com](http://fishandboat.com) and in the *Pennsylvania Fishing Summary/Boating Handbook*.



photo-Marilyn Can

# STAYING ALIVE:

## High Survival Rates for Clarion River Translocated Freshwater Mussels

*by Marilyn Can*

*Master's Biology Candidate*

*Indiana University of Pennsylvania*

Freshwater mussels are one of the most imperiled groups of organisms in the world. In Pennsylvania, 13 of our 67 species are federally endangered or threatened. Part of the solution is reestablishing mussel populations. Between 2015 and 2018, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC), United States Forest Service (USFS), and others methodically translocated and collected data on 37,518 mussels moved into the Clarion River from the Allegheny River in what was the largest relocation of mussels in the Pennsylvania history. My job was to take information, collect new data, and help determine what it means.

### Backstory

The Clarion River was deemed lifeless in 1909 when various sources of pollution caused its waters to run "black like ink". Environmental regulations have since led to improved water quality and scattered reports of Clarion River mussel detections since 1993. The mussel observations likely came about from baitfish hitchhikers,

because Piney Dam on the lower Clarion River acts as a barrier between the Clarion River and mussel-rich Allegheny River.

About this hitchhiking: Mussels are unique, obligate parasites on fish. Each mussel has a variety of host fish species that its larvae must attach to in order to transform into juveniles and drop off. Fish become vessels for spreading and expanding mussel populations. In turn, mussel beds filter the water and stabilize the stream bottom, engineering a better habitat for fish and other critters. Mussels and our interests align—any waterway with mussels is a place worth recreating, as mussels indicate stream health, clean water, and a stronger ecosystem.

Helping mussels helps us, and there was a prime opportunity to save mussels and establish mussel communities in the Clarion River. Allegheny River mussels faced risks from planned bridge and pipeline construction, so these projects served as a source of mussels to repopulate the Clarion River. Since mussel translocation, the PFBC, WPC, and USFS have carefully monitored their survival and growth. This performance data is vital to mussel conservation, as long-term studies are lacking, especially in Pennsylvania.

For my master's thesis at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), I had the opportunity to contribute to the ongoing monitoring of these translocated mussels. I analyzed, surveyed, and monitored data, examined



*A Wavy-rayed Lampmussel displaying a mantle lure.*

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environmental conditions, aided partner agencies in searches for juvenile mussels, and surveyed for host fish in connected tributaries.

## What is new

In 2021, we collected data at each mussel translocation site on environmental conditions relevant to mussel survival, growth, and reproduction including how much food was in the water, the amount of gravel substrate for mussels to burrow into, water quality, flow, and depth, and presence or absence of a potential competitor, the invasive Asian Clam.

The ultimate measure of translocation success—and river health—would be finding evidence of juvenile mussels near the translocation sites, demonstrating that the Clarion River mussel populations could naturally reproduce. Detecting juvenile mussels is difficult—this year's youth would be close in size to a grain of salt, thus we expected that any juveniles that we encountered would be at least one year old.

We set off searching for young mussels, an important yet tedious effort, likened to finding a needle in a haystack.

Looking towards the future of mussel conservation, we also surveyed nearby tributaries for host fish to see if fish may be able to repopulate with mussels one day.

## The results are in

The translocations have been successful in terms of survival and growth, showing that the Clarion River's health has taken a turn for the better, though recruitment of juvenile mussels has yet to be seen. The high survival rates bode especially well for future translocations, which may be necessary to build mussel populations up, so populations may start to multiply, exponentially increasing the impacts of the translocation efforts.

*A Wavy-rayed Lampmussel and its foot.*

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While we did not find any young mussels in the Clarion River, we observed a Wavy-rayed Lampmussel displaying her mantle lure. The lure is a pulsating protrusion of mussel tissue bearing a striking resemblance to a minnow. This behavior, meant to lure in a host fish, indicates that the mussel was gravid (pregnant)—a sign that some mussels in the Clarion River are reproducing.

It may be too soon for the translocated mussels to reproduce juveniles, as many species live a long life over 20 years. Some of the mussels had only been in the Clarion River for 3 years, not giving them much time to procreate.

Another positive finding of my research and good news for the Clarion River's health is the lack of Asian Clams. The Asian Clam reproduces at a faster rate than native mussels and can compete with native mussels for food and space.

Additional good news was the presence of mussel host fish in Spring, Bear, and Big Mill creeks. These waterways lack mussels but may be recolonized by juveniles from the translocated populations, thus extending the translocation's restorative impacts further into the Clarion River watershed. Overall, there are many positives for the Clarion River's mussel community, and we hope to observe recruitment of juveniles in the future.

## Acknowledgements

Many people aided this project including PFBC, WPC, USFS, Elk County Conservation District, Jefferson County Conservation District, and Dr. Janetski and the IUP Biology Department and alumni. ☑

# Pennsylvania's Flying Fish



by **Rob Criswell**

*photos by the author*

**I**t's a bird. It's a plane. It's a fish? The Brook Silverside is not faster than a speeding bullet. It does not soar through the skies, either. But, the Brook Silverside is fast and agile. What this fish can do is leap from the water in a graceful arc up to 10 times its body length—no small feat for a fish 4- to 5-inches long.

This leaping display may be repeated one to four times before the fish dives from sight. Jumping Brook Silversides may be escaping predators, catching food, or engaging in spawning activities. Or, they may just be playing. This behavior has earned Brook Silversides the nickname of skipjack.

The Brook Silverside's body is beautifully translucent, olive-greenish above, with, as its name implies, a

bright silver stripe underlain with black along its sides. Organs are clearly visible through the flesh. It is quite long and slender, with large eyes and a beak-like mouth. It has two separated dorsal fins and an extremely long anal fin. The pectoral fins are positioned high on the body and may give the suggestion of wings.

The Brook Silverside belongs to the family Atherinopsidae, one of 56 known North American species. Most live in marine environments. One other species, the Inland Silverside, is found in Pennsylvania, but it has only been collected in the Delaware Estuary.

The Brook Silverside is found in slower sections of larger brooks and creeks but often reaches greatest abundance in rivers, lakes, and reservoirs, where it schools near the surface of open waters. In Pennsylvania, it plies the waters of the Three Rivers system (Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio rivers), French Creek and its tributaries, Shenango River, and Lake Erie.



Most spawning occurs in June and July, when water temperatures approach 70 degrees F. Males and females dart about frantically, sometimes leaving the water before gliding toward the bottom as the female releases her eggs. Eggs hatch in eight to nine days, and the rapidly growing larvae reach ½ inch in length in 2 weeks. It grows about 80% of its total length in its first year. Its total life span seldom reaches 2 years, and fish do not survive into a second breeding season.

The diet is variable but consists generally of aquatic insects. The Brook Silverside's affinity for the surface and shallow water allows it to seasonally augment this menu with terrestrial and flying insects, as well as spiders. Fry of sunfishes and even its own offspring have been found in the stomachs of these fish. Fish stop feeding when waters become discolored.

Inland Silversides are active during daylight hours but lie suspended and motionless on dark nights. Fish are positively phototropic, and moonlight often precipitates activity. One account describes observations during a full moon: "The silversides seem to go crazy, as if they were moonstruck. The fish darts about at a most startling speed, dashing here and there, leaping out of the water again and again, bumping into each other, splashing, circling, behaving in a most exaggerated manner."

Brook Silversides are also attracted to the artificial lights of nighttime anglers—spotlights, headlamps, and lanterns. One biologist led a school of silversides nearly a mile across a Wisconsin lake with his flashlight.

In another account, silversides basked in a spotlight beam while Yellow Perch lurked in the shadows. When the spotlight was moved, the skipjacks "en masse" would rapidly follow to keep within the illuminated area. Any unfortunate skipjack that was



*Those are not wings on the Inland Silverside—just high-positioned pectoral fins.*

unable to adjust rapidly enough and follow the beam of light was immediately taken by perch, which remained in the darker zones.

In areas where fish are common or abundant, silversides are important forage fish and support populations of gamefish. Silversides have been reported in the stomachs of Bowfin, Cisco, Largemouth Bass, Longnose Gar, Northern Pike, Smallmouth Bass, White Perch, Yellow Perch, and at least four species of sunfish. These fish are likely fed on by Saugers, Walleyes, and other larger species. Unfortunately, silversides are difficult to keep alive in captivity and have little value as baitfish.

For a time, the Inland Silverside was considered a "candidate species" for listing as threatened or endangered by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, but with improvements in water quality, Pennsylvania's flying fish now plies the Commonwealth's waters in healthy numbers. □

## Keeping Pennsylvania Streams Clean and Beautiful

Participate in Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful's Pick Up Pennsylvania through May 31 and make a difference in your local waterway. You can help by picking up litter that you encounter while fishing or boating along your favorite waterway or by organizing a cleanup of larger items that have been dumped into the water or along the shoreline. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful partners with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and PennDOT to provide free trash bags, gloves, and safety vests to registered participants, as supplies last. Register at [keppabeautiful.org](http://keppabeautiful.org). For more information, contact Michelle Dunn, Pick Up Pennsylvania Program Coordinator, at 877-772-3673 ext. 113 or [mdunn@keppabeautiful.org](mailto:mdunn@keppabeautiful.org). Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful recommends following all current federal, state, and local health and safety guidelines for COVID-19.



photo-courtesy of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful

Organize a cleanup of larger items that have been dumped into the water or along the shoreline.

## Boating Advisory Board Recognizes Mahn and Raudabaugh

On February 7, the Boating Advisory Board (BAB) recognized two individuals during their meeting. John Mahn served on the BAB for 4½ years before taking a new role as District 2 Commissioner for the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. Mahn brought a unique perspective to the BAB with his extensive powerboating experience and desire to increase awareness of Pennsylvania's boating opportunities and improve accessibility to residents. In his new role, he will continue focusing on improving boating safety, especially the use of

life jackets, with the goal of reducing the number of recreational boating fatalities.

Richard Raudabaugh served as the State Liaison for the United States Coast Guard (USCG) Auxiliary, 5th District, Northern Region for more than a decade before his retirement. During that time, Raudabaugh provided a consistent presence at BAB meetings and took an active role in many facets of the USCG Auxiliary's efforts in Pennsylvania including public education, vessel safety checks, and safety patrols. A lifelong boating enthusiast, Raudabaugh first joined the USCG Auxiliary in 1974.



Pictured (left to right) are Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) Director of Boating Laurel Anders, John Mahn, PFBC Executive Director Timothy Schaeffer, and Boating Advisory Board Chairperson Loren Lustig.



Pictured (left to right) are Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) Director of Boating Laurel Anders, Richard Raudabaugh, PFBC Executive Director Timothy Schaeffer, and Boating Advisory Board Chairperson Loren Lustig.

photos-PFBC archives

## 2022 Daily Creel Limits for Lake Erie Yellow Perch and Walleye

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) announced that the 2022 creel limit for Lake Erie Yellow Perch will remain at 30 per day, and the creel limit for Walleye will stay at 6 per day.

The PFBC Lake Erie Research Unit annually evaluates the populations of Yellow Perch and Walleye in Lake Erie. If populations reach critically low levels, management actions are taken to prevent overharvest and rebuild the numbers of Yellow Perch and Walleye in the lake. All jurisdictions on Lake Erie adhere to this system.

For the complete story:



[www.media.pa.gov/  
Pages/Fish-and-Boat-  
Commission.aspx](http://www.media.pa.gov/Pages/Fish-and-Boat-Commission.aspx)

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[https://pfbc.pa.gov/  
anglerboater/ezone/](https://pfbc.pa.gov/anglerboater/ezone/)

## Stop the Spotted Lanternfly

- The Spotted Lanternfly (SLF), *Lycorma delicatula* (White), is an invasive planthopper native to China, India, and Vietnam.
- The Spotted Lanternfly was first discovered in Pennsylvania in Berks County and has spread to other counties in the Commonwealth. This insect has the potential to greatly impact agricultural crops such as grapes, hops, and hardwoods.
- If you are in the quarantine area, please "Look Before You Leave." Inspecting your vehicles, trailers, or any outdoor items for Spotted

Lanternflies before you move around or out of the quarantine is important.

- If possible, do not park in tree lines, and keep windows rolled up when you park your vehicle.
- Know the life stages of the insect and when to look for it.



For more information on the Spotted Lanternfly visit [www.agriculture.pa.gov/Plants\\_Land\\_Water/PlantIndustry/Entomology/spotted\\_lanternfly/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Plants_Land_Water/PlantIndustry/Entomology/spotted_lanternfly/Pages/default.aspx).

photo-courtesy of Forest Service of the United States Department of Agriculture

## 2022 FISH-FOR FREE DAYS!

Sunday, May 29

Independence Day, Monday, July 4

No fishing license is needed to fish on either of these days. Introduce someone to the world of fishing. Visit [FishandBoat.com](http://FishandBoat.com) for more information. Remember that all other regulations apply.

## CONVENIENT MULTI-YEAR FISHING

Anglers can purchase a license for 3 years, 5 years, or 10 years with just one purchase. That's right, no more remembering at the last minute to buy a license before opening day or that weekend fishing opportunity with friends and family. To order and for more information on licenses:



[HuntFish.PA.gov](http://HuntFish.PA.gov)





# Take Part in the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission 2022 PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) Photography Contest aims to develop an appreciation of Pennsylvania's fishing, boating, and aquatic resources. Image contribution can include anglers, boaters, reptiles, amphibians, and waterway scenics. Winning entries will appear in a feature article in a future issue of *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* and on the Commission's website and Facebook page. All entries may be used elsewhere in the magazine, in the PFBC publications, on the Commission's website, on the PFBC's social media pages, and in Commission exhibits and other projects. **The contest will run from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022.**

## Prizes

**Grand Prize:** Framed Ned Smith "Sting of the Hook" print

**First Place:** Framed trout stamps

**Second Place:** *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* subscription voucher and hat

**Third Place:** Prize package

**Honorable Mention:** Patch set

## Contest rules

Employees of the PFBC, volunteers, their immediate family members, and contractors of the PFBC and their immediate families are not eligible. No purchase is necessary. All federal, state, local, and municipal laws and regulations apply. Void where prohibited.

- Entries must be original works taken in Pennsylvania on **waterways with public access**, and photos must have been taken by the person entering the contest.
- Entries must show proper fish handling practices. Photographs should not show fish being held by the gill plates, eyes, jaw, or tail region alone, or being held with gloves (harvested ice fishing photographs are the only exception). No stringers of any type should be shown.
- Entries must show adherence to Pennsylvania fishing and boating laws and regulations.
- Entries showing an angler holding a fish must have a valid license at the time the fish was caught. However, the license does not need to appear in the photo. If the angler does not have a valid license, the entry will be disqualified.

- Entries must show all boaters and anglers in boats wearing properly fitted, buttoned, and zipped life jackets. Boats must have a valid boat registration or launch permit at the time the photo was taken or the entry will be disqualified.
- Entrants are responsible for securing photo releases from identifiable subjects.
- Entrants must submit high-resolution digital photos (300 dpi or higher resolution) with a minimum file size of 2 MB or larger.
- Entries that are retouched or electronically manipulated are not allowed.

The PFBC shall have the right to use all submissions for any purpose in the future without compensation. All submissions become the property of the PFBC. **The deadline for entries is December 31, 2022.**

Entries must be e-mailed to [sgearhart@pa.gov](mailto:sgearhart@pa.gov). The following information must be included in the e-mail.

- Entrant's Name
- Entrant's Address
- Entrant's Phone Number
- Entrant's E-mail
- Photo Description (location, county, species, etc.)
- Date of Photo

Winners will be determined by review from various PFBC staff from several different bureaus. ☐

## New for 2022

Additional entry categories are being developed. Watch [fishandboat.com](http://fishandboat.com) for more information.



All entries may be used to promote fishing and boating in Pennsylvania. An entry of a Muskellunge by James Swearingen, Allegheny County, and a boating entry by Debbie Smith, Beaver County, were used for the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's exhibits.

photo-courtesy of Purpose 1



# Angler's Notebook

by Jerry Bush



photo-Jerry Bush

**A** good dry bag has sealed seams all around it with thick, reinforced bands at the opening, so it can be folded multiple times to protect items such as cameras, phones, automobile fobs, and wallets. After the opening is rolled over several times, the bands can be pulled together and secured with snap clips. If folded correctly, enough air is left inside the bag, so it remains buoyant. The best bags will include a D-ring or waterproof grommets. A lanyard keeps the dry bag with the vessel if it is accidentally dropped overboard. Size up, because dry bags can be folded multiple times to decrease the bag's space. Making a large bag work for smaller items is easy.

Paddlers should include a dry bag to hold a change of clothing. Water colder than 70 degrees F is a trigger for hypothermia. Extra clothing should also be included for any overnight trip.

Many Pennsylvania lakes offer great fishing at shallow water inlets, outlets, and coves where "no horsepower" regulations are mandated for a variety of

environmental and safety issues such as controlling erosion, controlling access in sensitive habitats, or reducing noise. On many occasions, I have crossed paths with canoe or kayak anglers who outfished anglers with large horsepower motors, because they accessed fish in waters where big boats were banned.

A net with a telescoping handle is beneficial for fishing from canoes or kayaks. When the handle is shortened, the net will be out of the way. When extended, the angler can reach fish without tipping the vessel. Oval-shaped net frames work well from a kayak, and a round or square opening works best from a canoe.

Anglers may be tempted to save money by using a primary tackle box when going on fishing trips with a canoe or kayak. However, if they prepare dedicated tackle boxes for manually-powered vessels, anglers may experience more success.

## Fishin' from the Kitchen

### Walleye Pizza

by Wayne Phillips

For a fun-filled dinner, make individual pizzas, so everyone can choose their own toppings.

*Ingredients for four servings:*

- 12- to 16-ounces Walleye fillets
- 4 large tortillas
- Olive oil
- 1 cup tomato sauce
- 1- to 2-cups shredded mozzarella cheese

*Pizza toppings:*

- Red onion, thinly sliced
- Garlic, thinly sliced
- Mushrooms, sliced
- Roasted red peppers, thinly sliced
- Grated mozzarella cheese
- Crumbled goat cheese
- Fresh basil leaves

### Procedure

Sauté Walleye in olive oil until the fish is cooked through. Cool and cut fish into pieces. Brush tortillas

with olive oil and place oil side down on a baking sheet. Evenly spread tomato sauce on top of the tortillas. Add pieces of Walleye and other preferred toppings. Sprinkle with mozzarella cheese. Bake in a 425-degree F oven for about 10 minutes until cheese is melted and crust is brown. Cut into slices.

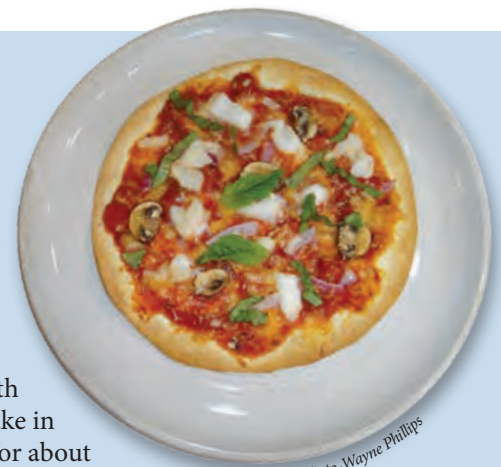


photo-Wayne Phillips

### Serve

Ideal as an appetizer or add a salad for a complete meal.

### Tips

Use a pizza crust from a supermarket rather than a tortilla. Children will enjoy making their own customized pizza. Prepare your favorite toppings, and let diners select what they want on their pizza. Avoid strongly flavored ingredients such as black olives, strong cheeses, and sausage, which overpower the fish.



# VOLUNTARY PERMITS FEATURED PROJECTS: *Rehabilitated Lake Fisheries Rebound with Manmade Habitat*

*by Mike Parker*  
*Communications Director*  
*Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission*

*photos-courtesy of Vinnie Lessard, PFBC Lake Habitat Manager*

In a world where technology is at our fingertips and it is difficult to break away from computers and smartphones for even an hour, a fishing trip to your local lake can be the perfect opportunity to disconnect. It is ironic that there is some shared terminology between the tech we so desperately wish to escape and the watery wonderlands we flock to for a little R&R.

For example, lakes must go “offline” sometimes. Inevitably, the dams that create the lakes we love have a lifespan, and when infrastructure begins to show signs of age or present safety issues downstream, it is time for a reboot. While anglers and boaters will miss the water, usually for a year or two but sometimes even longer, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) lake habitat experts are busy developing Version 2.0.

Because most lakes across Pennsylvania have flat, muddy bottoms that are nearly void of natural habitat features, adding manmade habitat is crucial to restoring a fishery once a lake is refilled. Short of old stumps, or the trees and high grasses that have grown while the ground was not covered by water, fish and macroinvertebrates have few places to hide, cling to, or spawn. Habitat structures added to the lakebed can result in active zones with large numbers of fish that anglers can key in on for a great day on the water.

In June 2021, the PFBC invested \$14,634 from the sale of Voluntary Bass Permits sold during the 2020 license year to enhance habitat at Donegal Lake, Westmoreland County. This 90-acre PFBC lake, which is fed naturally by Four Mile Run and was historically enjoyed by anglers for its robust Largemouth Bass population, was drained in 2016 to complete a \$5.5 million dam rehabilitation project that was completed in 2019. In partnership with the Loyalhanna Watershed Association, 100 short vertical plank structures were purchased and placed into the lake by boat.

“With the lake still freshly refilled following construction, we are truly starting with a blank slate, to not only restore



*Because most lakes across Pennsylvania have flat, muddy bottoms that are nearly void of natural habitat features, adding manmade habitat is crucial to restoring a fishery once a lake is refilled.*

the renowned Largemouth Bass fishery, but hopefully make it even better,” said Vinnie Lessard, PFBC Lake Habitat Manager. “The voluntary permit program has made a world of difference in waters like Donegal Lake, not only because the permits fund their intended projects, but because these projects tend to grow. When someone sees that we are investing in bass habitat for the lake, for instance, they want to get involved and piggyback their own efforts and funding to create an even larger project that benefits the resource, the fish, and the anglers even more.”

To enhance Donegal Lake’s habitat in 2021, students from Salisbury-Elk Lick High School constructed 45 Channel Catfish spawning boxes that were funded through the PFBC’s Cooperative Habitat Improvement Program. In 2022, the PFBC will partner with Greater Latrobe High School to construct and place an additional 30 short vertical plank structures in Donegal Lake. ☐

# SOCIAL SHORTS



Below are some "Social Shorts" from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC's) Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/PaFishandBoat](http://www.facebook.com/PaFishandBoat).



**Find the PFBC  
on Social Media**

[www.fishandboat.com/socialmedia](http://www.fishandboat.com/socialmedia)

**1**  
What makes fishing such a great hobby for thousands of Pennsylvanians?

**2**  
Yes, we're open! Our state fish hatcheries are open to the public, and now is a great time to stop by to see and learn about all the different fish species we raise. Find your local hatchery, visitor hours, and contact information.

**3**  
Take up fly fishing and capture memorable moments with your family. Get started with our playlist of videos that covers basic fly fishing equipment, an introduction to fly tying, and more.

**4**  
Do you and your family want to try fishing this year? Not sure where to start? We have you covered. Launch your new favorite hobby from our fishing learning center.

**5**  
Macroinvertebrates are an important part of the aquatic ecosystem, serving as both predator and prey. Macroinvertebrates tell scientists and anglers a lot about the quality of the water.

## CAST & CAUGHT



*Lydia Pierce, age 12, caught and released this golden Rainbow Trout while fishing the Delayed Harvest Artificial Lures Only section of Neshamock Creek, Lawrence County.*

For the "Cast & Caught" column, send only prints (no larger than 8"x10") and a completed "Model Release form" available at [www.fishandboat.com/Transact/AnglerBoater](http://www.fishandboat.com/Transact/AnglerBoater). Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want your photograph returned. Persons aboard boats must be wearing properly fitted and buckled life jackets. Mail to:  
**Editor, Pennsylvania Angler & Boater,  
P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000**



*John Primus, Coatesville, caught this 3.69-pound, 19-inch Largemouth Bass while fishing Chambers Lake, Chester County.*



*Austin Kelly, Norristown, caught this 10-pound hybrid Striped Bass while fishing the Schuylkill River, Montgomery County.*



*Sean Cabry caught this 23-inch Rainbow Trout on Wissahickon Creek, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties. For more on Wissahickon Creek, see page 5.*



*Shara Brown, Las Vegas, NV, caught this Largemouth Bass while fishing on her family's private lake in Wayne County, during vacation in Pennsylvania.*