

Castings Around

Great Fishing Right Now

You'd think angling would be over at this time of year—not so! In this issue you'll find articles about fishing right now for small-mouth bass, steelhead, walleyes, panfish and striped bass.

Take walleyes. Two of the five largest walleyes reported caught in 2003 came from the Allegheny River in December and January. Author Deborah Weisberg says, "Anglers on western Pennsylvania rivers are hoping for an encore to last fall's walleye spectacular. If conditions are right, they won't be disappointed, according to Fish & Boat Commission Area 8 Fisheries Manager Rick Lorson." Check the article details beginning on **page 29**.

How about Raystown Lake striped bass. In fall, the lake temperature drops to the upper 50s and low 60s. Stripers then move into the creeks and along the main river channel. It's a good time to go for stripers because fish can show up in more places than you'd find them, say, in summer. Regular contributor Vic Attardo provides a lot more information in his article "A Year of Raystown Stripers," which begins on **page 8**.

Panfish at this time of year? Absolutely! In late fall, panfish in lakes, especially yellow perch, move to deeper areas. Deep wood is a good place to find them, as are dropoffs that lead to main-lake areas. In his article beginning on **page 42**, author Jeff Knapp explains more about where you'll find the best fall panfish in northwest PA, and how to catch them.

If you love catching smallmouth bass in summer, take heart. In our rivers in fall, bass move "from shallower and stronger current-flow areas to relatively deeper and slower current-flow areas," says author Darl Black. When water temperatures reach the mid-30s, you can forget it, but until then, you can still find river smallies, and starting on **page 21** Black shows us where and how.

Lastly, consider steelhead. On **page 12** regular contributor Mike Bleech offers practical details on scoring in November.

In this issue you'll also find ample reading material for a cozy spell by a warm fire. The annual index of *PA&B* content for the 2004 volume year appears on **page 61**, and on **page 32** you can scan the 2005 seasons, sizes and creel limits.

Now is also the time to gather your best photographs and submit them in the Commission's 2004 Photography Contest. You'll find the rules and an entry form on **page 64**, and hurry—**the contest ends December 31**.

Pack up the rods and put away the boat now? No way! Dress for cold weather, wear your life jacket, and enjoy the fishing.—*Art Michaels, Editor*.

THIS MONTH IN PFBC HISTORY



2002. In November, the General Assembly passed Senate Bill 463, which was signed into law on December 9 by Governor Mark Schweiker as Act 199 of 2002. The new law made it mandatory for all persons born on or after January 1, 1982, to take a safe boating course to operate any motorboat with a motor of more than 25 horsepower. The law became effective February 7, 2003.



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