

Pennsylvania's

compiled by Art Michaels

BEST ICE FISHING:

When Where and How Anglers Caught Fish

The end of December, January, February, and the first part of March constitute Pennsylvania's ice fishing "season." The Commission has issued some 390 Angler Awards for catches made during the ice-fishing seasons from January 2000 through early March 2005. Because these catches include those made only in lakes and impoundments, they are considered ice-fishing catches. If you're ready to find the best hard-water action in Pennsylvania this winter, let this information guide your efforts.



Of the 101 largemouth bass caught, 66, or 65 percent, were caught in Lake Arthur, Moraine State park, Butler County. All 101 largemouth bass were caught with minnows, except for two caught with suckers and two caught with chubs.

Photo-WCO Dave Kameski

Awards included 32 Catch-and-Release Awards (C&R), four First Fish Awards, one Husky Musky Award, 78 Junior Angler Awards, 274 Senior Angler Awards, and one state record—Carl Stoltz, of Bradford, caught the current 35-pound state-record northern pike while ice fishing in the Allegheny Reservoir on January 1, 2003.

When

The number of catches anglers have made during the winter months of the last five years depends on ice conditions, for one variable. Nevertheless, during all the data's Decembers, anglers caught 35 fish. During all the January listings, anglers caught 149 fish; during all the February listings, 174 fish; and during all the March listings, 29 fish.

Species

Anglers caught 101 largemouth bass, 88 yellow perch, 66 chain pickerel, 38 crappies, 32 northern pike, 16 walleyes, 10 bluegills, nine lake striped bass, eight smallmouth bass, six muskies, four brook trout, three channel catfish, three white perch, two rainbow trout, two bullheads, and two brown trout.

Where

Largemouth bass. Of the 101 largemouths caught, 66, or 65 percent, were caught in Lake Arthur, Moraine State Park, Butler County. Check the upcoming January/February 2006 issue for detailed information on fishing Lake Arthur through the ice for largemouth bass. Lake Ontelaunee, Berks County, accounted for eight largemouths. Shohola Lake, Pike County, six; Lake Wilhelm, four; Walker Lake and Lake Galena, two each; and accounting for one largemouth each were Black Moshannon Lake, Canoe Lake, Duck Harbor Pond, Glades Wildlife Area, Glendale Lake, Hereford Manor Lake, High Point Lake, Kahle Lake, Koon Lake, Lake Marburg, and Lake Wallenpaupack.

● **Yellow perch.** Of the 88 yellow perch

caught, 33 were caught in Presque Isle Bay, and 21 were taken in Lake Erie. Mauch Chunk Lake accounted for four; Leaser Lake and Pecks Pond, three each; accounting for two each were High Point Lake, Laurel Hill Lake, Marsh Creek Lake, Ridgway Reservoir, Shohola Lake, and Yellow Creek Lake. One yellow perch was recorded from Beaver Pond, Beltzville Lake, Indian Lake, Justus Lake, Kahle Lake, Lake Arthur, Lake Marburg, Little Pine Lake, Minsi Lake, Promised Land Lake, Rose Valley Lake, and Stuckey Pond.

● **Chain pickerel.** Of the 66 chain pickerel caught, 13 were taken in Lake Nockamixon. Eight each were caught in Lily Lake and Shohola Lake. Lake Minisink accounted for six. Accounting for four each were Lake Wallenpaupack and Pecks Pond. Accounting for two each were Lake Ontelaunee, Mauch Chunk Lake, and Minsi Lake. Accounting for one each were Beltzville Lake, Duman Lake, Glendale Lake, Greeley Lake, High Point Lake, Lake Jean, Laurel Lake, Letterkenny Reservoir, Poe Lake, Promised Land Lake, Roamingwood Lake, Stillwater Reservoir, Sylvan Lake, and Tobyhanna Lake.

● **Crappies.** Of the 38 crappies caught, 14 were taken in Lake Arthur, four were caught in Lake Ontelaunee, and three were caught in Leaser Lake. Accounting for two each were Bradys Lake, Lake Chillisquaque, and Walker Lake. Accounting each for one crappie were Donegal Lake, Faylor Lake, Keystone Lake, Lake Marburg, Memorial Lake, Moniteau Glades, Pecks Pond, Ridgway Reservoir, Rose Valley Lake, Shadyside Lake, and Sylvan Lake.

● **Northern pike.** Of the 32 northern pike caught, nine were caught in Lake Arthur, eight were caught in the Allegheny Reservoir, and six were caught in Lake Marburg. Glendale Lake accounted for two. Accounting each for one were Black Moshannon Lake, High Point Lake, Lake Chillisquaque, Lake Ontelaunee, Lily Lake, Presque Isle Bay, and Yellow Creek Lake.

● **Walleyes.** Of the 16 walleyes caught,

the Allegheny Reservoir and Glendale Lake each accounted for three. Youghiogheny River Lake accounted for two. Accounting for one each were Keystone Lake, Lake Arthur, Lake Erie, Lake Wilhelm, Loyalhanna Lake, Prompton Dam, and Woodcock Creek Lake.

Award Rules, Application

Visit the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us, for Angler Award Program qualifying minimum weights, rules, and application. On the web site main page's left side, click on "Fishing." At the top of the fishing page, click on "Biggest Fish of 2004" and navigate to the Angler Award Program rules and application. This information also appears on page 55 of the March/April 2005 *PA&B*. The web site includes separate rules and an application for state records, and a list of official measuring stations. The list of current Pennsylvania state-record fish also appears in the May/June 2005 *PA&B* on page 57.

Regulations

The upcoming ice-fishing season straddles 2005 and 2006. Fishing licenses for 2006 go on sale December 1, 2005. The 2006 license is valid December 1, 2005, through 2006.

Regulations on some waterways may change with the new year or thereafter. Be sure to consult both the 2005 and the 2006 *Summary of Fishing Regulations and Laws* for the waterways you intend to fish.

Visit the Fish & Boat Commission's ice fishing pages on the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us. On the main page's left side, click of "Fishing" and navigate to "Ice Fishing/Safety." Be sure to view the "Ice Safety Chart," and heed the recommendations for activities at various ice thicknesses.

● **Bluegills.** Of the 10 bluegills caught, Presque Isle Bay accounted for three. Pecks Pond and Conewago Lake each accounted for two, and accounting for one each were Koon Lake, Lake Ontelaunee, and Minsi Lake.

● **Lake striped bass.** All of the nine lake striped bass were caught in Lake Wallenpaupack.

● **Smallmouth bass.** Of the eight smallmouth bass caught, Lake Arthur and Lake Nockamixon each accounted for two. Accounting for one each were Blue Marsh Lake, High Point Lake, Ridgway Reservoir, and Yellow Creek Lake.

● **Muskies.** Of the six muskies caught, Lake Wilhelm accounted for three, East Branch Lake accounted for two, and Glendale Lake accounted for one.

● **Channel catfish.** Lake Wallenpaupack, Sugar Lake, and Twin Lakes each accounted for one of the three channel catfish caught.

● **White perch.** Hanover Water Company, Lake Marburg, and Presque Isle Bay each accounted for one of the three white perch caught.

● **Brook, brown, and rainbow trout.** Laurel Run Reservoir accounted for three of the four brook trout caught. Five Ponds accounted for the other. Lake

Ontelaunee and Lake Wallenpaupack each accounted for one of the two brown trout caught. Bradys Run Lake and Yellow Creek Lake each accounted for one of the two rainbow trout caught.

● **Bullheads.** Hopewell Lake and Shadyside Lake each accounted for one of the two bullheads caught.

How

● **Largemouth bass.** All 101 bass were caught with minnows, except for two caught with suckers and two caught with chubs.

● **Yellow perch.** Minnows accounted for 56 of the 88 yellow perch caught. A jig accounted for 18 perch (including jig-and-minnow combos and jigs combined with other baits). Waxworms and grubs each took five perch. Ice fishing lures took nine yellow perch.

● **Chain pickerel.** All 66 pickerel were caught with minnows except for two, which were taken with lures.

● **Crappies.** Of the 38 crappies caught, 26 were caught with minnows. Six were taken with waxworms. A worm and a maggot each accounted for one crappie. Lures took two crappies.

● **Northern pike.** Of the 32 northern pike caught, 28 were taken with minnows. Two fell for smelt. A sucker and a chub each accounted for one.

● **Walleyes.** Of the 16 walleyes caught, seven were taken with minnows, and four were taken with jigs. A mealworm, a chub, and suckerspawn each accounted for one walleye. Lures took two walleyes.

● **Bluegills.** Of the 10 bluegills caught, waxworms accounted for five fish, and jigs took three. A nightcrawler and a grub each accounted for one fish.

● **Lake striped bass.** Minnows accounted for all the lake strippers except for one fish, which took a lure.

● **Smallmouth bass.** Minnows took all eight smallmouths.

● **Muskies.** Suckers, shiners, and chubs each took two muskies.

● **Channel catfish.** Minnows took all three.

● **White perch.** Minnows took two, and a lure took one.

● **Brook, brown, and rainbow trout.** Minnows took five, waxworms took two, and a grub took one.

● **Bullheads.** Minnows took both bullheads. ☐

Trout

You may not catch an Angler Award-worthy trout through the ice, even though that's possible (see the "Award Rules, Application" sidebar). Still, the Commission's early season and winter stockings can provide fine ice fishing for trout in selected waterways statewide. Winter stocking takes place in November and December. Early season stocking occurs in January and February. To review a list of these waters and their stocking dates, visit the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us, and navigate to the trout-stocking pages. On the left side of the Commission's main page, click on "Fishing," and on the fishing page under the "Trout" heading, navigate to the stocking pages.



Photo-WCO Dave Kameski

Seven walleyes were caught with minnows, and four were taken on jigs. A mealworm, a chub, and suckerspawn each accounted for one walleye. Lures took two walleyes.