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WETLAND PROTECTION

Wetlands, in addition to providing breeding grounds for fish, waterfowl, and other forms of wildlife, also play an important role in controlling floods and replenishing underground water supplies. As such, wetlands represent a critical component of the nation’s ecosystem. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency officials say that development nationwide is causing the loss of between 300,000 and 500,000 acres of wetlands per year.

Wetlands are basically protected under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and without the protection of this law, swamps and other valuable wetlands could be drained and filled; vital wildlife habitat could be turned into housing projects, shopping centers, and the like. The administration of Section 404 has for over 10 years been under the jurisdiction of the Army Corps of Engineers, and in many cases the administration of this important act has been less than desirable. The Corps has tried through regulatory changes to issue nationwide permits, statewide permits, and other means to justify limiting the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act to some boundary less than the full breadth of the wetlands found in the term “all waters of the United States.”

Former Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works William R. Gianelli probably did more damage to wetlands protection in its application than any of the most selfish developers could dream of, and his successor Robert Dawson is perhaps worse. Proposed regulatory changes by the Corps far exceeded the status of “minor changes” in the jurisdictional scope of the pre-1982 nationwide permits, and the National Wildlife Federation and 15 other conservation groups challenged the legality of a number of 1982 regulatory changes. There has been a constant controversy surrounding Mr. Dawson and the Corps’ Section 404 program. For example, the Corps dared to say that placing 60 percent of the wetlands in the Poconos under a nationwide permit program is a significant benefit, ignoring the facts and dismissing the opinions of 38 states and the EPA as being “misinformed” in the Corps’ extreme zeal to jettison the 404 program.

Much lip service has been given to wetland protection by some members of the Congress—so long as it is not in their district and desirable for development by a favored constituent under the guise of economic progress.

At any rate, Pennsylvania has taken a pretty firm position in protection and some of the Corps districts—notably, the Buffalo District—have been better than average in carrying out the mandates of the law.

The classic case, however, of a proposed development took place in Massachusetts when the Pyramid Corporation proposed to fill Sweden Swamp, a valuable red maple wetlands, to make room for a shopping mall in Attleboro. The New England branch of the Army Corps of Engineers initially rejected the project, but in a rare, though not unheard-of event, the Washington headquarters overruled the regional office and gave the project a green light.

The story did not end there, as the Environmental Protection Agency rejected the development plan “because EPA scientists felt the site was an excellent wildlife habitat which has also been reaffirmed independently by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and Pyramid produced no scientific evidence to the contrary.

There was courage exhibited all through the events surrounding this controversial project, and we are pleased to express our gratitude to Lee Thomas, administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Mr. Thomas sustained the EPA regional office’s veto, and for this he deserves the nation’s respect and gratitude for his wisdom. His action did far more than save one specific wetlands from unnecessary destruction.

We hope that his action sent a message across the nation, and specifically to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, that our wetlands are irreplaceable resources, essential to America’s wildlife. Perhaps his action will stand as a landmark decision to save the nation’s remaining 95 million acres of wetlands battered by land conversion plans, and yet vital to flood control, water purification, and wildlife protection.

Ralph W. Abele
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Fish Commission
Pennsylvania Angler

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The covers
This issue’s front cover, photographed by Darl Black, shows the diversity of Pennsylvania anglers—Junie Poux, B.A.S.S. member, hefts a brown trout he caught by downrigger in Lake Erie. This month’s Angler content also reflects that fishing variety. Stream trout tactics are the focus in the article beginning on page 6, followed on page 10 by a float trip feature for central Pennsylvania residents. Wherever you live in Pennsylvania, if you’re a smallmouth bass enthusiast, you’ll want to read the article that begins on page 20.

This month’s back cover, photographed by staffer Russ Gettig, heralds fall, the Keystone State’s season of change, on Little Buffalo Creek in Perry County.

With sorrow we affectionately dedicate this issue to staff assistant Jayne Povleski, who passed away suddenly in August. Jayne’s strengths—her family ties, friendships, and love of life—set an example for all who knew her, and she will be missed by all the Harrisburg headquarters staff and throughout the Commission. She was 28.
Editor's note: The regulations described in this article will go into effect in January 1987.

A new set of regulations for managing lake fisheries in Pennsylvania is now available for the Commission's area fisheries managers. Called "Warmwater/Coolwater Species Special Conservation Regulations," the new package is the first developed for warmwater/coolwater lakes under the Commission's Operation FUTURE.

Fish populations in numerous lakes, ponds, and reservoirs have been studied by Commission fisheries biologists and technicians as part of an ongoing inventory of fisheries in Pennsylvania. Numerous waters have been identified in which fish populations are out of balance. Typically, these unbalanced fish populations have too few large bass, walleye, and other predatory fish and too many small bluegills, crappies, and yellow perch.

Where heavy fishing pressure and the angler harvest of larger gamefish and panfish are a major cause of the unbalanced condition of the fishery, more conservative regulations are an appropriate approach to restore balance to the fish community. More restrictive regulations could be applied either to: 1) bring about an improvement in the abundance and overall size of desired sport fishes in the lake; 2) maintain the nice size and abundance of sport fishes in a lake beginning to show signs of being overfished, or 3) a combination of both.

In many cases, the regulations in effect statewide (shown in the regulation summary booklet as Commonwealth Inland Regulations) did not offer the degree of protection necessary to maintain the desired size and abundance of sport fish simply due to heavy fishing pressure. Commission staff realized that developing a different set of regulations for each water, although appropriate on a biological basis, wasn't practical, because literally hundreds of different sets would then clutter the summary book. Anglers could become confused and, perhaps unintentionally, violate the law.

Thus, the approach taken was to develop a set of regulations that would be applied to a group of lakes which would benefit from more conservative management. The conservation regulations offer the fishery manager the means to work toward the biological objectives of a balanced fish community in waters where angler pressure currently is impacting the size and abundance of sport fish or would do so in the near future. We agreed that while the proposed regulations might not be 100 percent agreeable with each lake in the program, the new regulations certainly offer more protection than the regulations in effect statewide.
We caution readers from drawing the conclusion that regulations are the answer to all problems related to “poor fishing” in a lake or reservoir. Variables other than angler harvest, such as poor water quality, low productivity, drastic changes in water level, and lack of suitable physical habitat, often determine the quality or quantity of fish in a lake. However, where sufficient angling pressure does occur, numerous studies have shown that angling can greatly contribute to unbalanced fish populations often with the result being a few large predators and overabundant, stunted panfish.

The new regulations call for increased minimum size limits and reduced creel limits for some gamefish and reduced creel limits for some panfish. The strategy employed is to increase the abundance of gamefish under the more restrictive regulations and through this protection allow them to prey on the overabundant panfish, thus restructuring the fish community. The intended result is to provide larger panfish and a higher catch rate of gamefish.

For lakes with existing fish populations, we expect the following to occur under the new regulations:

- A decrease in the abundance of panfish but an increase in growth rates. The populations will then be comprised of fewer but larger individuals.
- An overall increase in the abundance of predators, primarily largemouth bass and walleye, under the new size limit but with a decrease in the growth rates.
- A substantial increase in the angler catch rate of protected gamefish. However, most of the gamefish will have to be released as sublegal due to the increase in the minimum size limits.
- A decrease in the panfish catch rate, reflecting their proportional decrease in numbers, but a substantial increase in the size of fish harvested.

The idea behind increased minimum size limits for some gamefish also includes more than the use of gamefish as predators to control panfish. For instance, bass 12 to 15 inches long have greater utility in thinning out bluegills and crappies due to the gape or size of a bass’s mouth. Thus, three additional inches of protection increase the potential to aid in biological control of panfish. There is also the element of not only promoting “shorter time between bites” by increasing the density of gamefish, but also of the catch-and-release idea.

**Waters for the Warmwater/Coolwater Species Special Conservation Regulations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water</th>
<th>Size (Acres)</th>
<th>County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue Marsh Reservoir</td>
<td>1,150</td>
<td>Berks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Redman</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Williams</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opossum Creek Lake*</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Cumberland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conewago Lake</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Pinchot State Park Lake)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Creek Lake</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Arthur</td>
<td>3,224</td>
<td>Butler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyle Lake*</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>Jefferson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Lake</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Crawford</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Recently refilled and fish populations are being initiated through fry and fingerling stockings.*

**Creel & Size Limits for Waters under Warmwater/Coolwater Species Special Conservation Regulations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Minimum Size (Inches)</th>
<th>Daily Creel Limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bass, Largemouth</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smallmouth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spotted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walleye (and hybrids)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskellunge (and hybrids)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Pike</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chain Pickerel</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crappie &amp; White Bass</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>10 (combined)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunfish</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>10 (combined)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow Perch</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>10 (combined)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catfish</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>50 (combined)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carp &amp; Suckers</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>50 (combined)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Perch</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>50 (combined)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All other species: Statewide size and creel limits apply.

Most lakes initially selected for management with the special conservation regulations had to meet certain criteria. The lakes had to be heavily fished. Thus, lakes located near major cities or those owned by the state are known to be most heavily fished. The lakes had to have relatively high fish production potential. The fish-producing potential is related to nutrients in the water, which come from the soils and watershed. The most productive areas of Pennsylvania are in the southeast and western parts of the state. The lakes recommended for these regulations must, of course, be open to public fishing.

Commission fisheries biologists and technicians have been studying the candidate lakes for some time in anticipation of the new regulations for 1987.

Angler counts and creel surveys are occurring at four lakes to document present use and harvest for comparison to what happens after the regulations have been in place a year or two. Angler opinion toward the new regulations as assessed during interviews in the creel surveys has been largely in favor of the change intended to make fishing better. Angler readers can expect to see reports from the studies in future issues.

Richard A. Snyder is chief of the Commission Fisheries Management Section in the Division of Fisheries. For their assistance with this article, he thanks Rick Hoopes, Commission Warmwater Unit leader; Blake Weirich, Area 8 fisheries manager; and Mike Kaufmann, Area 6 fisheries manager.

**September 1986**
September Trout Tactics

by Harry W. Murray

September provides some of the best trout fly fishing of the season for Pennsylvania anglers. By selecting the correct type stream, identifying the existing food forms, utilizing the appropriate tactics, and choosing the correct tackle, the cautious angler can make some very impressive catches.

Determining which stream can provide good September fishing is fairly easy if you consider what a trout population needs at this time. Basically, look for streams that sustained reasonable water levels and temperatures throughout the summer for the trout's survival.

These streams fall into two separate categories. Many small headwater mountain streams provide an environment that enables the trout to survive and grow all summer. Admittedly, some of these get so low in August that the trout do not feed well at that time but they still seem to make it. The second type stream that will get trout through the tough summer months has cool springs flowing into it.

I am not talking about limestone spring creeks. Naturally, they provide good carryover, but they require specialized tactics not part of this discussion.

It would be nice if you could anticipate heavy hatches of large aquatic insects on streams in September like those of last May, but on most streams they simply do not exist. You will probably run into a few little olive mayflies, and some little yellow Isoperla stoneflies that made it through the summer. Many of these streams do provide heavy concentrations of Chironomidae midge hatches during September, and the trout feed quite heavily on them.

Terrestrials

However, the main food sources in most of these streams in September are definitely the terrestrial insects. Ants, beetles, wasps, crickets, and grasshoppers are all still out in heavy concentrations and the trout really work on them.

You seldom hear much about fishing grasshoppers in mountain streams, but they can be very productive. Last fall I hiked several miles up into one of these little headwater streams and was very excited about finding one of the thickest concentrations of hoppers I had ever seen.

The real sleeper at this time of the year are the flying ants. I suppose one reason many anglers are unaware of their significance in the trout's diet is their small size. Most of them run from size 18 down to size 24. The colors range from chocolate brown to dark dun to black. I have seen concentrations of these insects on streams that would put the heaviest mayfly hatches to shame.

Several years ago, upon arriving on one of the little spring-fed freestoners, I saw a thick concentration of foam about 3 feet in diameter floating in a back eddy. Wondering if we were getting some type of pollutant coming into the stream, I checked it out. Had I not seen it, I would not have believed it; there were thousands upon thousands of small chocolate flying ants stacked together forming a solid raft floating around and around in that back eddy.

Yes, I knotted on a small ant and had one of the most fantastic days of dry fly fishing I have ever had. Every trout in the stream must have known the ants were covering the water because each feeding station held an actively rising fish.

Beetles also represent a significant portion of the trout's diet during September. I am not referring simply to the Japanese beetle. Some years these are very thick and it is wise to check the shrubs along the stream for their presence before you start fishing.

If, however, you find few Japanese beetles, there are still literally hundreds of other beetles and beetle-like insects on which the trout feed. I would definitely feel ill-equipped on any trout stream in September without a good selection of beetles.

By this time of the year, the crickets have reached a very large size and represent a good mouthful for the trout. These are found along all trout streams, and even though they are excellent jumpers and can evade land predators quite well, they are helpless when they find themselves on the stream. I am constantly amazed at how many of these I see on the stream at this time of the year. I assume many of them end up here due to wind blowing them off course.

Appropriate imitations

The little olive mayflies are well-matched with the standard blue wing olive in sizes 16, 18, and 20. I like to carry flies with several different shades of olive body material to match the specific hatch. For the last five years, I have found that I often get better results with the parachute style tie than with the conventional pattern. Not only do the trout take this pattern well, but it is easy to tie and far more visible on the water to the angler than the regular pattern.

I prefer to wait until I see these flies on the stream surface and trout coming to them before I start fishing the little olive. Once I spot a riser working on this hatch, experience has taught me to approach them cautiously. The low September water levels and the fact that many of the trout move out into the shallows to feed on this hatch produce ultra-spookie fish. A hands-and-knees approach, 6x leaders, and delicate
Regulations

Regulations for trout fishing during the extended season, which begins Labor Day, vary among sections of approved trout waters. Here are some highlights of those regulations. Check your 1986 Summary of Fishing Regulations and Laws to be sure you observe all the regulations for each waterway and stream section you fish.

- **Fly-fishing-only projects.** These areas are open to fishing year-round. The minimum size is nine inches, caught on, or in possession on, the waters in this category. The daily creel limit is three trout, combined species, except during the period March 1 to opening day of the regular trout season when no trout may be killed on, or had in possession on, the waters under this regulation.

- **Delayed harvest fly-fishing-only areas.** These areas are open to fishing year-round, and minimum size is nine inches caught on, or in possession on, the waters under this regulation. The daily creel limit is three, combined species, except during the period March 1 to June 14 when the daily limit shall be no trout combined species, caught on or in possession on the waters under this regulation.

- **No harvest fly-fishing-only areas.** On these areas no trout may be killed or had in possession, and there is no closed season.

- **Delayed harvest artificial-lures-only areas.** There is no closed season on these areas, and in effect is a minimum size of nine inches caught on, or had in possession on, the waters under this regulation. The daily creel limit is the same as that of delayed harvest fly-fishing-only areas.

- **Trophy trout projects.** There is no closed season in these areas, and the minimum size is 14 inches caught on, or in possession on, the waters under this regulation. The daily creel limit is two trout, combined species, except during the period March 1 to the opening day of the regular trout season when no trout may be killed, or had in possession on, the waters under this regulation.
presentation are a must.

The little yellow *Isoperla* stonefly is still on many streams, and because the trout have been feeding on them all summer, they know them well. Two most productive patterns for this hatch are the size 16 little yellow dry stone and the size 16 Mr. Rapidan dry. The natural can often be seen dancing across the water surface, and this latter tie lets you fish it in that manner.

I do not necessarily wait until I locate a constant feeder to fish these two flies. At this time of the year, a size 16 pattern is big enough to use in fishing the water. I get more strikes on a delicate 6x leader than with heavier tippets.

### Midge Fishing

The thick concentrations of *Chironomidae* midge hatches in September are a mixed blessing to the angler. They are good because they supply an excellent food source to beef up the trout before spawning season, and because the trout feed so heavily upon them.

This last aspect also suggests the negative feature. When these hatches are at their peak, many trout feed heavily on them almost to the exclusion of larger insects. If you dislike fishing size 22 and 24 flies on 7x leaders, it is quite possible you will find this very frustrating. My fishing partner puts himself into this group. When we confront these midge feeders, he pulls out a whole set of four letter words to describe their table manners.

However, many anglers enjoy midge fishing tremendously, seeing it as one of the most refined forms of trout fishing. One cannot rely on luck here.

It is truly a game of skill with a one-on-one battle between you and that one trout out there feeding consistently on tiny midges. You must select the correct size and color to match the naturals accurately. Evaluating the line of drift in which the trout is feeding to overcome drag is a must. Only an accurate presentation on 7x or 8x tippets will permit a natural drift, and lastly, you must strike gently to prevent breaking him off on the take. Yes, very demanding but also highly rewarding.

### Hoppers

Hopper fishing is almost the exact opposite of midge fishing. In fact, it is hard to believe that the same trout that sipped midges so delicately the previous evening can put on a water slashing exhibition, as he feeds on hopper the next afternoon that would rival a 10-year-old boy in a swimming pool.

One afternoon last September, the wind was pushing many of these big number 10 grasshoppers into the stream, and several of the larger trout were going for them so forcefully that they were throwing water 10 feet as they nailed them. When you realize that by September these grasshoppers have grown to their full size and are very strong kickers on water, as well as on dry land, it is easy to explain this splashy feeding mannerism. The instant they find themselves in the water, they start kicking to make it back to the land. Sizable trout are attracted by this commotion, and realizing their dinner is trying to make a getaway, the trout swim quickly to intercept them. *Kerboom!*

Keep this natural hopper action in mind as you fish flies at this time of the year. I like to splat my hopper patterns in close to the bank and impart a kicking action by stripping the fly in 3-inch to 6-inch jerks with my line hand. This often takes more fish than the standard dead drift technique, although some days the fish like the quieter drift.

I like to carry hoppers from size 16 up to size 10 at this time of year. Many fly patterns are productive, but because I often apply a hopping action to my flies, I prefer the Letort and Dave’s hopper to the hackled pattern such as a Joe’s hopper.

Because of the size of the hopper I use late in the season and violence of the strike from sizable fish, I seldom use leaders finer than 4x for this fishing. Nine or ten feet long is about right.

### Ants

Ant fishing in September is very dependable. On many waters, both headwater and valley floor streams, this producer may be the most consistent, due simply to their concentration. They are everywhere all the time. I feel lost without a selection of ants in black, cinnamon, and dun from size 12 down to size 24.

One little stream I fished a lot last summer held some of the most educated ant eaters I’ve ever seen. Within 50 yards of where I parked, a big sycamore tree shaded the whole width of the stream. Several of its limbs came down to within two feet of the stream. Why so many ants tumbled from that tree I do not know, but they did. Every time, yes, every time I walked up past that tree there were three trout feeding on ants under it. It would be nice if I could tell you how I skillfully outsmarted all three on every trip, but this was far from the case. If, after fishing to them 15 minutes going upstream and back down again, I landed one fish I felt very fortunate. They were just plain tough.

The mechanics of fishing ants to rising trout are the same as that of midge fishing. I do, however, use a size 14 or 16 dry black ant to fish the water even if I don’t see risers.
Crowe beetle

The black Crowe beetle is another excellent fly in September and I use it from size 10 down to size 24. One very knowledgeable fishing friend told me this was definitely his favorite fall fly. It certainly is one of the most consistent producers because there are so many natural insects along the streams it will pass for.

One special beetle fishing technique is well worth passing on, although some fellows see it almost like cheating. Occasionally when you have located a big surface feeder working on small flies that is simply too smart to take on tiny flies, put on a big Crowe beetle and “hit him on the tail.” You intentionally splat the beetle down on the water behind him about even with his tail and about six inches to the side. Almost unbelievably that smart old trout will sometimes turn and climb all over the beetle.

Aside from this tricky technique, the dry Crowe beetle is equally effective in fishing to sighted risers and simply covering the water. Be sure to taper your leader down to 6x or 7x for the size 22 and 24 ties, but 4x is fine for the larger sizes.

Crickets

If I were restricted only to one fly for all my September trout fishing, it would definitely be Shenk’s cricket. Crickets are now present in a variety of sizes all the way up to a fat size 10, and they will definitely bring up the largest trout in the stream. I like to start my days trout fishing as close to sunrise as I can. At this time of the day, crickets are very active, whereas hoppers seem to move about more as the sun warms things up.

I use basically the same fishing techniques for crickets that I do for hoppers. However, there are several situations in which I get better results with crickets. It is definitely a better fish-finding pattern. If I am fishing an unfamiliar stream and cannot seem to locate the fish, I always reach for a big cricket. Dropping it in tight to the bank and stripping it to produce a kicking action normally brings up some lookers that neglected every other fly in my vest.

September rains often produce a slight grayish-brown discoloration of some of the largest streams, especially in the northern part of the state. This necessitates the use of nymphs and streamers. Dark flies such as a size 8 black stonefly nymph or a size 8 black marabou muddler often outproduce all dry flies.

Another factor to consider in September trout fishing in Pennsylvania is the size of the state and how the cool nights of late September can affect water temperatures. It is quite possible to have good dry fly fishing in the southern part of the Commonwealth one day and drive up north to Potter County the next day and find the water temperatures cool enough to require switching over to nymphs to move the fish.

Delicacy and accuracy should be the two guides in selecting tackle for September trout fishing. A 4-weight floating line in either weight-forward or double taper is ideal. I like to use a 7½-foot rod for a 4-weight line in the small headwater streams, but step up to a 9-foot rod for a number 4 line on the larger streams.

A lightweight single action fly reel is ideal for the delicate action rods. Be sure it has a very light drag to protect the fine leaders used at this time of year. Leaders should be from 8 to 10 feet long and tapered from 4x for larger flies down to 7x for the smaller flies.

By utilizing a cautious approach and duplicating the existing natural food, you may find the best trout fishing of the entire season in September.

September 1986
The Keystone State has some of the finest float-fishing waters for smallmouth bass. Out of these hundreds of miles of fishable waters, one of the very best is located right in sight of the copper-domed state capitol building. The area is readily accessible, the float is short in overall fishing distance, it is relatively danger-free, and best of all, you catch fish on it.

The float site is on the Susquehanna River just north of Harrisburg. The starting point is from the Fish Commission access at Fort Hunter, below the village of Dauphin. The ramp is located off routes 22 and 322, where Route 443 intersects. It is on the east side of the river, and Fishing Creek empties into the Susquehanna below the ramp. The facility is well-kept, the ramp is adequate in size, and parking is ample.

The take-out point is at the Commission’s West Fairview Access, four miles downstream on the west bank of the river. This launch site is off U.S. Route 11, across the river from Harrisburg. It is situated adjacent to where the Conodoguinet Creek drains into the Susquehanna. It, too, furnishes lots of parking space.
and is perfectly located for easy egress from the river.

Boats used for this trip should be the 14-foot semi-vee type with a matching 9.9 horsepower or similar-sized motor. Because this section of the river is rocky, prop guards are necessary. These devices can be purchased from marine manufacturers like OMC, or you can utilize the kind that are handmade from pitchforks.

**Smallmouth habitat**

Depths in the Susquehanna range from 4 to 6 feet throughout most of the river with a few pools bottoming out at 15 to 20 feet. Be sure to have a good anchor and at least 60 feet of line to allow for plenty of scope when you anchor in the currents. Like any other fishing trip, wear your PFD while on the water.

On this float, from starting point to take-out is only a short four miles, but what a magnificent stretch of bronzeback water it is! Scores of islands sprawl out over the river that range in size from a few square yards to the long and narrow McCormicks Island, which extends downstream for almost a mile. Clusters of islands about the size of football fields are grouped downstream near the take-out point. All these provide a wealth of sensational habitat.

Shale rock ledges in layers or tiers jut up from the bottom and rouse fish. The prime time for floating the Susquehanna for smallmouths is the month of June. River levels are usually at optimum heights, 3.5 feet at the Harrisburg gauging station, and water temperatures are falling toward that magical 60-degree mark when water temperatures are falling toward the month of October.

**Tackle, lures**

If you are a spin-fisherman, stick with the 4-pound-test to 6-pound-test lines for ultralight rigs and 8-pound-test line in larger standard outfits. Many artificials are effective in this float. If your prop isn't protected, bring plenty of shear pins and a spare prop.
off the water before nightfall. It's no fun being out on strange water after daylight so that nighttime fishing is unnecessary.

The Dauphin Narrows, a series of rock ledges that traverses the river shortly after launching, are the only rapids in this 4-mile float. They are swift enough to prevent you from anchoring, but pose little problem to a boat drifting through them. Fishing down through these narrows, use jig and twister combinations or other lures that offer little resistance to the water. You move down through the rapids at a respectable pace.

The Dauphin Narrows is actually upstream from the launch site. Still, the fishing is good there, so you might want to head upstream from Fort Hunter to this area to sample the action.

The piers around the Rockville Railroad Bridge are hotspots that all have some deeper pockets around their bases. Just upstream from this bridge there are remnants of a few deteriorating piers from a long-abandoned railroad crossing. The area around each of these is a notable hotspot. Around the abutments of the I-81 bridge merits a little extra attention as you float on by, too.

Each of the scores of islands here presents pocket after pocket of great-looking bass water that is hard to pass by. The leeward sides of these islands are a lot easier to fish on days when there is a little wind, but the windward sides on days like this are where you will catch fish.

Both sides of the river in this area are fairly well-populated and have hotels, motels, and eating places close to both the launch and the take-out point. Renting a boat here is next to impossible, necessitating bringing your own rig. Just about all the shorelines on both sides of the river are open to fishing, but because of the quick dropoffs and the slick bottom, wading is treacherous. If you intend to take any fish, the limit is 6 bass, and bring along a cooler. You can buy ice at many places along the river.

Have a good time on this majestic waterway that the Susquehannock Indians called "the long reach river."
Reader Survey

The Commission surveys *Pennsylvania Angler* readers so that it can keep fine-tuning magazine content and continue to provide readers with the kind of features they want most. We invite all subscribers to complete this survey. This information will be used in no other way except to understand better our readers’ likes and dislikes.

We’d appreciate your providing us with all the information we seek, but you don’t have to answer questions you find objectionable for any reason. Please also skip questions that don’t apply to you. Our deadline to receive completed surveys is September 30, 1986, and we look forward to receiving your survey by then. Please tear this one page from the magazine and mail completed surveys to: *Pennsylvania Angler* Survey, P.O. Box 1673, Harrisburg, PA 17105-1673. Thank you for assisting us.

1. In the spaces next to the fish species, please number in *order of preference* the species for which you fish. Indicate no more than seven (7) choices.

   - bass
   - pickerel
   - pike
   - trout
   - muskies
   - walleye
   - shad
   - salmon/steelhead
   - panfish
   - suckers
   - eels
   - catfish
   - striped bass/hybrids
   - other species

2. What kind of fishing tackle do you use? If you use more than one kind, number them in *order of preference*, but number only those you use.

   - fly rod
   - spinning tackle
   - baitcasting tackle
   - downrigger

3. Do you fish through the ice?  __ Yes __ No
4. Do you tie flies?  __ Yes __ No
5. Do you use at least one custom-made fishing rod?  __ Yes __ No
6. Do you build your own rods?  __ Yes __ No
7. Do you make your own lures and tackle, such as jigs, plastic worms, and sinkers?  __ Yes __ No
8. Do you own a boat or canoe?  __ Yes __ No
9. How many watercraft do you own?
   - only one
   - two
   - three or more
10. Mark with an “x” the size of your boat. (If you own more than one boat, mark the size of the one boat you most frequently use.)
   - less than 12 feet
   - 12 feet to 14 feet
   - over 14 feet to 16 feet
   - over 16 feet to 18 feet
   - over 18 feet to 20 feet
   - over 20 feet
11. Mark an “x” in the appropriate spaces that describe your boat, or the *one boat* you own and use the most. Be sure to check all that apply.

   **Power**
   - outboard
   - inboard or I/O
   - electric
   - other

   **Hull design**
   - vee-bottom
   - tri-hull
   - johnboat
   - canoe
   - houseboat
   - pontoon boat

   **Construction**
   - wood
   - metal
   - fiberglass
   - inflatable

12. If you own a boat, do you use a gas motor?  __ Yes __ No
13. Do you use an electric motor?  __ Yes __ No
14. If you use a gas motor, what horsepower is the one engine you own and use the most?
   - 0-5hp
   - 6-10hp
   - 11-35hp
   - 36-75hp
   - 75-110hp
   - 110-150hp
   - more than 150hp
15. Mark an “x” in the space next to the items you own:

   - depth sounder (graph, LCD, flasher, or video)
   - downrigger(s)
   - VHF marine radio
   - CB radio (for boat use)
   - LORAN (navigation aid)
   - compass

16. Do you trailer your boat?  __ Yes __ No
17. Do you read *Pennsylvania Angler* from cover to cover?  __ Yes __ No

*September 1986 13*
18. Rate the following *Angler* columns on how much they interest you and how regularly you read them:

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<th>Column</th>
<th>Low interest</th>
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19. Please indicate with an "x" in the appropriate spaces your ideas on the following kinds of articles:

### How-to-do-it articles
- river fishing
- float fishing
- pond fishing
- stream trout fishing
- bass fishing
- walleye fishing
- panfishing
- large-lake or reservoir fishing
- Lake Erie fishing
- boating (for fishermen) skills, navigation
- rod building
- fly tying
- lure making

### Where-to-go articles
- Fishing in specific waterways

### General information and entertainment articles
- nostalgia/history
- humor
- general entertainment
- articles on fishing
- natural history ("Profile," for instance)

### Conservation
- environmental concerns
- habitat protection
- studies and research

20. In addition to fishing, indicate with an "x" in the appropriate spaces the other activities in which you participate:

- water skiing  white-water rafting
- sailing  canoeing
- cruising  kayaking

21. In what Pennsylvania county do you fish the most?

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22. Are you a member of Trout Unlimited?  
   - Yes  No

23. Are you a member of B.A.S.S.?  
   - Yes  No

24. Are you a member of any other organized sportsmen or conservation club or group?  
   - Yes  No

25. How long have you been fishing?

- 0-3 years  4-8 years  9-15 years
- 16-25 years  25-40 years  more than 40 years

26. What is your age?

- under 13  13-16  16-19  20-24
- 25-30  31-40  41-50  51-64
- over 64

27. How long have you been a *Pennsylvania Angler* subscriber?

- 1 year  2 years
- 3 years  4 years
- 5 years  6-10 years
- 11-15 years  16 or more years

28. Are you a *Boat Pennsylvania* subscriber?  
   - Yes  No

29. In what Pennsylvania county do you live?

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Allegheny County is the home of the nation's steel city, Pittsburgh. Many of the country's largest corporations are headquartered here. In spite of its industrial reputation, fishing opportunities abound in Allegheny County. The Allegheny River, flowing south out of New York state, and the Monongahela River, flowing north from West Virginia, converge in Pittsburgh to form the Ohio River. This "three rivers" area ranks third, behind Lake Erie and Lake Arthur in terms of warmwater fishing in the western part of the state. In addition to its warmwater fishing, the county also has a number of trout waters.

Warmwater fishing in Allegheny County is confined primarily to the four major rivers. Increased gamefish populations are due to improved water quality and an excellent forage base. In general, fishing peaks in all the rivers at about the same time. Walleye fishing is usually best from February, until the season closes in the middle of March. Bass fishing, although good all year, peaks from May to mid-June in all four rivers. Muskies, wherever present, seem to bite best in the fall.
Allegheny River

A series of locks and dams on the Allegheny provides anglers with outstanding walleye fishing from February until the close of the season. Minnow-tipped jigs account for most of the early season walleye. Remember to stay off the lock walls, and remain below the buoys when fishing from a boat. In addition to the walleye, smallmouth bass fishing is also very good along the entire length of the Allegheny, beginning in May. The mouth of Pine Creek is another good spot for walleye and bass, although heavily fished. Minnow-tipped jigs or live bait are the best producers. A fee launch area is located at Chiefo’s Marina below the Highland Park Dam. Anglers looking for channel cats should try fishing around the bridge abutments so common in the Pittsburgh area. These structures draw catfish like magnets.

Continuing upstream, the next dam is the Harmer Dam. The Commission Deer Creek Access is located below the dam. This access area can be reached off Route 28 in Harmenville. A good spot for bass and walleye in this area is the back channel below Twelve Mile Island. Another hotspot for smallmouth is the Sharpsburg area, usually around the first week in June. The Braeburn Dam is next, and from the dam downstream to the mouth of Chartiers Creek is a good area for bass and walleye. In July, the Oakmont area produces big flathead catfish, some going 20 pounds or more. Chicken liver seems to be the best catfish bait. This portion of the Allegheny also produces some nice muskies every year. From the mouth of Bull Creek down to the New Kensington bridge is a musky hotspot in the fall. This area is also good for channel cats most of the year.

Other hotspots on the Allegheny include the Harmer Mine channel, below the Deer Creek Access. This area is posted for shore anglers, but boaters can enjoy fast crappie action in the spring. It also produces good rock bass well into summer. Puckety Creek, outside New Kensington, has good numbers of carp for rod and reel or bow anglers. Below Freeport, walleye fishing is very good in the fall, while lots of crappies are taken during the spring. Concentrate on the back channels. The mouth of Buffalo Creek is another good spring walleye spot. As an added bonus, each pool on the Allegheny also received between 1,500 and 2,000 sunshine bass. Some of these fish should now be in the 5-pound range.

Monongahela River

The Mon River marks a portion of Allegheny County’s southern border, and from here all the way to the “Point” in Pittsburgh fishing for all warmwater species is excellent. Early season boat anglers take walleye and bass in the warm water around the Duquesne Light Company in Elrama, and near the Mitchell Power Station less than a mile upstream. Minnow-tipped jigs will take most of the early season fish. As spring weather warms things up, clouds of baitfish begin appearing around the two dams located on the river. Once the baitfish arrive, smallmouth bass activity around Lock and Dam #3 at Elizabeth begins to improve.

Minnows are the top bait, but small silver or gold crankbaits also take their share of bronzebacks. Anglers might also expect to tie into some of the sunshine bass that have been stocked in the Mon. These hybrids follow the schools of baitfish and feed on them in the open areas close to the dams. Sunshine bass from the original stocking are now in the 5-pound to 7-pound range.

Unlike the bass and walleye fishing, which is good almost anywhere along the Mon, panfishing is hot in some areas, fair in others. The Coal Valley area is one of the perch hotspots on the Monongahela. Yellow perch up to 13 inches and weighing more than a pound have been reported. Farther downstream, in McKeesport, the Youghiogheny River flows into the Mon. The confluence of these two rivers has become a crappie hotspot. Minnows, small twister tails, and white or yellow wet flies all fished parallel to the bank are effective.

Farther downstream, Lock and Dam #2 at Braddock is another bass and walleye hotspot. From early February until the season closes, this area produces walleye. Later in the spring, as the walleye fishing slows, bass fishing picks up. For smallmouth, this is one of the best spots in the county. From here to the point, concentrate on areas where small streams enter the Monongahela, and any of the many bridge supports located in the river.

Boat access along the Monongahela is good, but last year’s flooding left some of the ramps in need of work. The Commission ramp is on the south side in Pittsburgh, off Route 837 (E. Carson St.) at 18th Street. Another Commission access is located off Lyle Boulevard in McKeesport. This ramp has recently been refurbished, and can accommodate two boats at a time. Two public ramps are available in Monongahela, near the Allegheny County line, one in Elizabeth, and one near the Point, maintained by the City of Pittsburgh.

Youghiogheny River

From Sutersville down to the river’s mouth in McKeesport, the Yough produces crappies, smallmouth bass, perch, walleye, an occasional trout, and some nice bluegills. Artificialts as well as live bait get good results.
From Boston on down is a good stretch for taking channel cats, with nightcrawlers and chicken livers the top baits. Shore access along this portion of the Yough is limited. The river is more suited to floating in a small boat or canoe. Depending on water levels, you may or may not have to leave your craft to float over some areas.

Ohio River

The Ohio River, formed by the confluence of the Monongahela and the Allegheny, flows for some 13 miles through Allegheny County. The best fishing is found around some type of structure, either natural or man-made. The Emsworth Locks and Dams on Neville Island provide good early season walleye and bass fishing. Anglers are also starting to pick up sunshine bass, some weighing up to 5 pounds. The back channel of Neville Island is also a good spot for boat anglers if fished early in the morning, before barge traffic becomes too heavy. Jigs and flies can be counted on to turn up smallmouth bass along with crappies and bluegills. The area below Davis Island is a good spot for muskies.

Farther downstream, the Dashields Lock and Dam is another top producer. In the spring, walleye fishing here ranks as some of the best in the state. Walleye in the 22-inch to 24-inch range are not uncommon. Jigs and minnows account for most of the fish, but K-O Wobblers produce well, too. Yellow perch and freshwater drum can be taken with worms, while smallmouth and sunshine bass prefer minnows or minnow imitations. Spotted bass can be found nearby in the Leetsdale area, around the mouth of Sewickley Creek. Shiners and small Rapalas are the best baits.

Trout fishing in Allegheny County is confined to the lakes located in the county parks and to four streams. Stocked before and during the season, these waters produce best from opening day to about mid-June.

North Park Lake

The most heavily stocked trout water in the county, it is also the most heavily fished. Opening day, 10,000 anglers will crowd this 70-acre lake, fishing from small boats to shore. The lake is stocked with browns and rainbows, and baits include worms, cheese, spinners, and mealworms. The lake also has some largemouth bass and panfish. Hours are from 6 a.m. to midnight, and no motors are permitted on the lake. The park is located between Route 8 and Route 19. The best access is off Route 910.

Deer Lakes

Located within a park bearing the same name, these three lakes make up an area specifically designed for fishing. The upper lake, about 7 acres in size, is stocked with browns, rainbows, and occasionally brook trout. The usual trout baits produce here, and sometimes take a good largemouth. The middle lake covers about 5 acres, and the lower lake about 1 acre. The lower lakes are equipped with special piers to allow access for the handicapped.

In addition to trout, all three lakes have good panfish populations. One of the most scenic areas in the county, Deer Lakes Park is not as heavily used as North Park, and offers good access and ample parking. Hours are from 8 a.m. to sunset. The park is located off the Orange Belt, near Russellton.

Big Sewickley Creek

A small stream that forms a portion of the Allegheny-Beaver county line, Big Sewickley is stocked both preseason and inseason with rainbows and browns. Minnows, spinners, worms, and cheese all produce well. To reach Big Sewickley, take the Red Belt west from Route 19. This route parallels the stream for much of its length.

Pine Creek

Pine Creek flows out of North Park Lake, and is heavily stocked before and during the season. Members of the Allison Park Sportsman's Club float stock the stream. Browns and rainbows make up most of the stockings, but the stream also receives some trophy palominos from time to time. Areas off Wildwood Road west of Route 8 offer the best access.

Deer Creek

Deer Creek parallels Route 910 for most of the stocked area. It receives one preseason and two inseason stockings. Float stocked by the Tri-County Trout Club, fish are well-distributed. The best area seems to be around Emmerling Park in Indiana Township.

Bull Creek

Stocked from Millerstown down to the Tarentum Access, Bull Creek gets one preseason stocking and two inseason stockings of browns and rainbows. To reach Bull Creek, take the Red Belt east from Route 8 at Bakerstown. From Millerstown down to where it flows into the Allegheny River, Bull Creek parallels the Red Belt.

For their assistance with the Allegheny County feature, the author thanks WCO George Gerner, Allegheny County (east); WCO Jim Ammon, Allegheny County (south); and WCO Mike Wheale, Allegheny County (north).

Potter County

by Dave Wolf

Potter County, God's Country. The county has been labeled as such for a number of reasons. The deer hunting capital of Pennsylvania is one, and the fact that only 18,000 people live in a county of 1,042 square miles helps as well. The last of the remote areas of the Commonwealth, Potter County attracts more visitors per year than residents. But perhaps Potter's biggest charm is that it boasts over 800 miles of trout water, that it is the home of the native brookie and the wild brown, and that it plays host to a multitude of stocked trout per year.

It holds more than trout, especially in the lower reaches of the Allegheny and Oswayo, but the scattering of muskies, pickerel, and smallmouth bass that reside there attract few. It is the trout that Potter County manufactures, and it is the trout that brings the anglers. It would be impossible to list the names of all the streams within the county, so here are some of the more popular.

Allegheny River

The headwaters of the Allegheny begin above the town of
Some of Potter County's better trout fishing bets include the Allegheny River, Kettle Creek, the West Branch of Pine Creek, and the First Fork of Sinnemahoning Creek.

Cole paralleling Route 49 northeast of Coudersport, the county seat. Brook trout and wild brown trout mingle in the waters from here to eight miles above Coudersport, where stocking takes over and the fishing is excellent. The stream flows through the county seat, where fishing is impossible because of a flood control channel, but below town to the county line things improve.

Big trout water exists below Coudersport, and browns of 20 inches or more are annually taken from these waters. Stocked by the Commission and local sportsmen groups, this section of the Allegheny can be tremendous. It can also be fickle as most good trout water can be, and it gives up its larger trout quite grudgingly.

First Fork of the Sinnemahoning
As with most freestone streams in the county, the headwaters of the Fork provide fair to good angling for the native brook trout, then as it moves downstream it turns into a good wild brown trout fishery, and finally a put-and-take stocked trout stream.

By the time the Fork reaches the small community of Costello, it has taken on the characteristics of a stocked trout stream.

Stocked with browns, rainbows, and brookies, the Fork allows comfortable fishing as the stream widens through some of the nicest country around. There is an annual green drake hatch, and a variety of caddises and mayflies hatch regularly from the opening day to mid-June.

Kettle Creek
Perhaps the most noted of Potter County streams, Kettle parallels Route 144 in the southern sector of the county. Brookies and browns are found in the headwaters. At the Route 144 bridge, a no-harvest, fly-fishing-only area extends upstream for 1.7 miles offering good fishing for wild brown trout populations found there. Downstream from the bridge, stocking takes over and to the village of Cross Forks this waterway offers excellent fishing before flowing into Clinton County.

Kettle, like all the county's freestones, offers a wide variety of fishing opportunities with good pool/riffle ratio. Rains affect the freestones of the county, causing them to rise quickly and often become discolored. Low flows are common after long dry periods, and streams do warm during the summer months.

Lyman Lake
The most popular impoundment in the county, it offers excellent fishing for trout. In fact, a brown of 29¼ inches, 9 pounds, 10 ounces came from this lake a few years ago. The 40-acre lake allows good shore fishing and boating for non-powered and electric motors only.

Heavily stocked by the Commission and local sportsmen's groups, Lyman Lake is an extremely popular fishing spot for those who like still-water fishing for trout. Lyman Lake can be reached just off Route 144 south of Galeton.
Lyman Run
Immediately upstream of Lyman Lake lies the headwaters of Lyman Run. A 4-mile stretch of this beautiful little stream is regulated as fly-fishing-only. The regulations allow three trout per day, nine inches or better except from the period of March 1 to the opening day of trout season, when no harvesting of trout is allowed.

The fly fishing stretch carries an abundance of native brookies and some wild browns of good size. Because of the stream's small size and the difficulty in casting that the wooded area creates, you will find the fishing there uncrowded.

Angling is difficult because of the clear water and the skittish brookie, but for the angler with stealth and patience this can be a little gem. Below the lake, Lyman Run widens and is the recipient of stocked trout—brook, brown, and rainbow—and provides good fishing.

Oswayo Creek
The Oswayo in the northern sector has received wild trout status in the upper reaches above Coneville and just off Route 244. The wild trout section offers excellent fishing with the smaller stream cutting tremendous holes as it weaves its way through the farmland valley. Below Route 244 the stream is stocked with a variety of trout, and again the characteristic of large, deep pools offers interesting fishing on the now larger waters.

Genessee River
The Genessee River has three branches within the county and all offer fishing for stocked trout. The west branch, the middle branch, and the main stem of the river itself. Again, good pool/riffle ratios offer good fishing in this area. At the northern tip of the county, all three branches can be found off Route 449 near Harmontown.

Pine Creek
Pine Creek reminds me of the brawling rivers of the West—a creek that can be hazardous to wade during the high waters of spring and then reduced to a low, mild flow during the summer months. It takes a lot of casting to learn this river, which parallels Route 6. But it is an enjoyable, scenic stream to fish, and does offer quite a variety of stocked trout.

Cross Fork Creek
Just off Route 144 near the town of Cross Fork lies Cross Fork Creek, a stream that is no longer stocked, under the progressive Operation FUTURE management of Pennsylvania trout streams. Good populations of wild browns and a spattering of brook trout exist here. The fact that it is no longer stocked has lessened the crowds here, but anglers in the know realize that fishing on the 5.4-mile fly-fishing-only stretch is excellent.

What few people realize, however, is that just above the fly fishing stretch lies water that is extremely good for both native brookies and wild browns and it is open to all types of fishing.

East Fork of the Sinnemahoning
The East Fork is one of the quality streams of the county that holds wild browns, native brooks, and an occasional rainbow that is held over. It is stocked by the Commission preseason, and a local sportsmen's cooperative nursery stocks it inseason. The Fork is a high-quality stream that offers a wide variety of angling from the lower section, which has all three species of trout, to the upper section, which is classified wilderness, and contains primarily native brookies.

It can be found just off Route 872 near the small town of Wharton in the southern part of the county.

Brook trout
Because of the fragile environment where brook trout are found, and the fact that good brook trout streams are unable to host a large number of anglers, I will refrain from naming brook trout streams as such. But the solution is simple. Pick any small tributary to one of the streams mentioned in this article and you will find wild brook trout.

Fishing for the brookie calls for light lines and the awareness that brook trout will not tolerate anyone stumbling up to a pool and casting a line. A shadow or splatted lure will send the brookie into hiding for an hour or more, as will an angler working the stream before you.

Luckily, however, an angler who can sneak to the water's edge and cast accurately will find the brook trout non-selective. They will take practically any morsel of food cast their way, although the common garden worm will take as many fish as any other method.

Brook trout found in these remote mountain streams will average six to seven inches, and a 10-inch one is a good one, one of 12 inches or more is a lifetime trophy.

Fishing in Potter County in general
Most if not all of Potter County streams are freestone in nature. What this means is that early spring conditions are usually accompanied by high waters that are often off-colored. Fishing deep and slow is required this time of the year. Worms, nightcrawlers, grubs, and salted minnows work best, but nymph fishermen and those lure fishermen who cast and retrieve their lures slowly and deeply also do well.

As the waters recede, hatches of caddises and mayflies become more prevalent. From the end of April to the beginning of June, the fly fishing is at its best with a variety of Cahills, sulphurs, march browns, hendricksons, and blue quills. Of course, adult caddises are also available and the dry fly and wet fly fishermen really shine.

Both nightcrawlers and worms also do well during this period, and the live-minnow fisherman usually scores on the biggest browns of the year.

As summer warms the now low waters, night fishing is the best bet. July and August offer little relief in the way cooling waters and a good number of the larger trout feed after dark. Daytime fishermen who are willing to locate spring holes and search the smaller tributaries will find trout in good numbers as they move to escape the thermal pollution of the larger waters.

Fall finds caddises and pale evening duns over the water, and fly fishing returns on the small and medium-sized streams of the county. Bait fishing and lure fishing works well now also, as the trout begin to search for spawning grounds with the spawning of browns and brook beginning in mid- to late October.

This valuable information is culled from the 157 Senior and Junior Anglers Award applications for smallmouth bass.
by Art Michaels

In 1985, 157 Senior and Junior Angler's Awards were offered for smallmouth bass catches. Here's the lowdown for Pennsylvania anglers who want to catch the Keystone State's biggest bronzebacks.

When to fish
Citation-sized smallmouths were caught during the entire year, except in January and February. Four were caught in March, 11 were taken in April, 43 were fooled in May, and 28 were caught in June. In July, 21 were caught, 15 were caught in August, and 15 more were taken in September. In October, 17 smallmouths were fooled, two were taken in November, and one was caught in December.

Baits, lures
Live baits, including worms, crayfish, minnows, and hellgrammites, accounted for 51 of the 157 smallmouths caught. Worms fooled 14, crayfish accounted for eight, and two were taken on hellgrammites. Minnows took 27.

Some kind of artificial lure accounted for 104 smallmouths. An unspecified lure, probably some kind of crankbait, took 48. Jigs with plastic action tails took 22 smallmouths, a Jitterbug was used to nail five fish, and swimming or diving crankbaits, including Rapalas, Rebels, Killer Bs, and Big Os, took 23 fish. Plastic worms fooled two, spinners took three, and a spoon accounted for one.

The baits or lures used to take two fish are unknown.

Where to fish
Pennsylvania anglers caught citation-sized smallmouths in 26 waterways in 30 counties. Here listed by county are the specific waterways where smallmouth bass were caught and how many bass were taken at each spot.

Adams County, Birch Run Dam 1
Armstrong County, Keystone Lake 1
Bedford County, Juniata River 1
Berks County, Ontelaunee Reservoir 1
Bradford County, Susquehanna River 1
Butler County, Slippery Rock Creek 1
Cambria County, Hinkston Run Dam 1
Crawford County, Conneaut Lake 1
Crawford County, French Creek 1
Cumberland County, Conodoguinet Creek 2
Cumberland County, Susquehanna River 2
Dauphin County, Juniata River 1
Dauphin County, Susquehanna River 5
Fayette County, Juniata River 1
Fayette County, Youghiogheny River 1
Forest County, Allegheny River 1
Franklin County, Conocochague Creek 1
Huntingdon County, Raystown Lake 1
Lehigh County, Leaser Lake 3
Luzerne County, Harveys Lake 1
Luzerne County, Susquehanna River 2
Lycoming County, Susquehanna River 1
McKean County, Allegheny Reservoir 1
Mercer County, Shenango Lake 1
Montgomery County, Perkiomen Creek 2
Northampton County, Delaware River 1
Northumberland County, Susquehanna River 1
Perry County, Juniata River 2
Perry County, Susquehanna River 1
Philadelphia County, Schuylkill River 1
Pike County, Lake Wallenpaupack 1
Snyder County, Susquehanna River 4
Venango County, Allegheny River 1
Wyoming County, Susquehanna River 1
York County, Lake Redman 2
York County, Susquehanna River 5

To qualify for a Senior Angler's Award (persons 16 years of age and older), a smallmouth bass must weigh at least four pounds. Minimum smallmouth bass weight for a Junior Angler's Award (under 16 years of age) is three pounds. For more details, send a business-sized self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Publications Section, Pennsylvania Fish Commission, P.O. Box 1673, Harrisburg, PA 17105-1673.
Revised, Updated Map Available

The Fish Commission's Fishing and Boating Map with the official PENNDot map has been revised, updated, and reprinted. One side of the map features the full-color PENNDot map of the Keystone State. The other side of the map lists lakes, access areas, streams, fish culture stations, and regional law enforcement headquarters with their locations specially coded on a smaller map of Pennsylvania. The lists include additional useful information on the lakes and accesses in Pennsylvania. The map is available free from: Publications Section, Pennsylvania Fish Commission, P.O. Box 1673, Harrisburg, PA 17105-1673. With requests please include a self-addressed business-sized envelope with two first class mail stamps.

Green, even in September, means largemouth bass. For best action, try your favorite weedless lures in and next to thick aquatic growth.

Fall temperatures cool trout streams, allowing populations to move out of their deep holes. Give the same areas a try that you fished back in May.

The wet metal of your boat trailer can be slippery and hazardous when balancing on the tongue or supports during launch or retrieve. For non-slip footing, glue indoor-outdoor carpeting with contact cement to the surfaces you'll use most.

Early fall brings fast smallmouth bass action. Hellgrammites, stone catties, and shiners are top baits. The Bomber brown crayfish, Rebel perch, and Rapalas are hot lures.

Try grasshoppers or crickets for trout after dark. Cast the bug a short distance to the head of a pool and let it wiggle as it coasts on the surface.

On streams try fishing the water beneath trees. Fish know that insects drop from the limbs and leaves so they take up positions beneath them to feed.

A stream thermometer is a great help in determining where to fish. In September, colder water means fishing for bass deeper in pools, but trout can be taken closer to the surface.

Knots whipped into the line from casting weaken fragile leaders. Take the time to replace a knotted tippet with new material.

Try dry flies for panfish around brushy or rocky structure. Set the hook quickly. Panfish are fast at getting rid of the imitation.

A spinner can provide great action for bass when baited with a nightcrawler.

After putting on bug repellent, wash the palms of your hands before touching monofilament line. The repellent weakens the line and your chances of landing an exceptional fish.

Try trolling for northerns along good cover just off the shoreline with a minnow rigged three feet behind a bobber. The bobber keeps the minnow high and doubles as an attractor.
SSSSSNAKES in Basements and Buildings

Snakes in Basements and Buildings is the title of a one-page explanation of why snakes enter buildings, how to prevent their slipping into places where you don't want them, and what to do if you discover a snake in your home or cottage. For a free copy, contact: Publications Section, Pennsylvania Fish Commission, P.O. Box 1673, Harrisburg, PA 17105-1673. Please include a stamped, business-sized self-addressed envelope with requests.

New Boating Access

The Commission's Frankford Arsenal Access in Philadelphia opened to the public last May. The area features a 6-lane boating ramp and provides boaters and fishermen excellent access to the Delaware River. Parking facilities are available for 190 cars and boat trailers, and the access is open from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily.

The property was conveyed to the Fish Commission by the federal government when the arsenal was closed as a military facility. Funding for completion of the project came from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Funds matched with Fish Commission Fish Fund and Boat Fund money.

The Frankford Arsenal Access was formally dedicated last June.

Anglers Fined

York County Judge Joseph E. Erb recently handed down stiff fines for two Red Lion men convicted on charges related to using dynamite to catch fish. The two men were found guilty of disturbing waterways, criminal conspiracy, disorderly conduct, littering, and polluting waters.

One man was fined $2,400 plus $372 in court costs. He was also ordered to complete 80 hours of voluntary service in the preservation of state facilities in York County during 12 months probation. The other man was fined $2,100 plus $372 in court costs and was directed to serve 50 hours of voluntary service.

Waterways Conservation Officer Brian Burger apprehended the two men last June along Rambo Run in East Hopewell. Burger testified that the two men threw sticks of dynamite into the waterway to stun or kill fish.

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Trolling Live Bait for Muskies

by Mike Bleech

Live baiting for muskies, as traditionally practiced in the native musky range of northwest Pennsylvania, is a trolling method. It involves rowing at a slow to medium pace and trolling with a large live minnow or sucker suspended beneath a float. The system is not well-suited to use with a motor, which will be covered in detail later. It has been practiced less in many areas since the advent of scientific, mechanized angling.

Rest assured, however, that live bait trolling is being abandoned due to laziness—by no means due to any lack of effectiveness! It is still popular on waters where motor trolling is not permitted and among small groups of devotees.

Dave Peterson, my good friend and one of the best anglers I have ever crossed paths with, still practices live baiting as it was taught to him by his father, who had learned it from his father.

Mark the weed line
Live baiting in this manner was developed on natural lakes, where it is used primarily along weed lines. Years ago, live baiters would mark the weed line by driving poles into the bottom and suspending lanterns from the poles. This sport is practiced on both sides of sundown! I still hear stories that muskies do not feed at night, but this idea may just be someone's way of saying he's afraid of the dark or of the bats, or some such thing. As I was taught and as I have observed, night is the time for live baiting.

A more current approach for marking the weed line uses portable buoys made from white plastic jugs. If you want to get fancy, you can place battery-powered lights inside the jugs, but the jugs alone are pretty easy to spot with a reasonably powerful headlamp. A few strips of orange or red reflector tape make the jugs stand out even more.

You can place temporary markers, but when you leave, you must retrieve the buoys. Leaving markers on the water while you are not fishing is illegal.

The jugs should be placed one every 25 yards to 50 yards along the weed line, depending on the shape of the weed line. Points in the weed line should be marked, as should any changes in direction. Bait presentation will not be accurate within inches, but the bait should be kept within a few feet of the weed line. The closer the better, without getting the bait hung in the weeds. Every weed-hung bait falls under suspicion as a hit, so it wastes time.

When to fish
Live baiting is usually thought of as a fall tactic. There is no reason why this tactic would not be good in any other season, with one big exception that Dave pointed out to me. It is downright dangerous to row quietly along in the darkness during tourist season! In its proper place, live baiting is a slow approach for cool to cold water. Though it will get the job done in warmer times, the summer months may be better spent with faster presentations and artificial lures.
Baits

The bait is usually a large sucker, but any other hardy bait can be used. It should be at least 6 inches in length, with an 8-inch sucker being standard. I have heard of live baiters using suckers as big as 16 inches! Most important is that the bait remain lively on the hook for as long as possible.

Baitfish can be netted legally up to 8 inches long. Using larger baitfish is legal, but fish so used over 8 inches long must be caught on hook and line.

Where this type of fishing is practiced, suckers are usually available in local tackle and bait shops. Be prepared to pay $1.50 to a few dollars for each musky bait. You will understand why the price is high if you try to catch and keep your own.

The bait is hooked through both lips, starting at the under-side. It is critical to have a hook with a gap larger than the diameter of the bait (while looking at the bait head-on). Otherwise, when you set the hook you will likely bury it into the bait rather than into the musky! Like many fish, muskies swallow other fish head-first. When the musky turns the bait to swallow it, the hook swivels so that the point aims toward the tail of the bait. (see Figure 1)

Expect to have trouble finding good hooks, so start looking now!

Hooks, rigs

The hook is attached to a wire leader about 36 inches in length. Most live baiters make their own, because that is often the only way to get them. If you are lucky, a local tackle shop will have some hooks rigged and for sale. Braided, coated wire and crimping sleeves are the most common material for these rigs, but I prefer a single-strand, uncoated wire. I tie on the hook and a swivel at the other end with a haywire twist. (see Figure 2)

Hook harnesses are popular in some areas. An argument in favor of harnesses is that the hook can be set almost immediately, making the chances of hook removal better. But Dave does not like the harness for a number of reasons. He figures that it injures the musky more than a single hook. Also, the harness may discourage takers, and it certainly gets hung in the weeds more often and picks up more junk.
Four or five pinch-on sinkers are attached to the leader near the swivel. Use as many as it takes to keep the bait down. The bait swings back as it is trolled, and the sinkers must counteract most of the swing. It may take somewhere in the neighborhood of an ounce or two of lead.

The float is positioned on the line so that if the bait were hung straight below it would be less than a foot off the bottom. Not all muskies are located at the base of the weed line, of course, but generations of experience have shown that this is the most productive set-up.

The float is a key piece of equipment! Its primary jobs are to keep the bait off the bottom and to signal strikes. It is critical that it slips through the water with as little resistance as possible, once a tinge grabs the bait. A torpedo-shaped balsa float, 10 to 12 inches long, is the best I have found. Unfortunately, the manufacturer of our local supply has gone out of business, but they are not hard to make.

Good floats can be fashioned from round balsa rod with coarse sandpaper in minutes. The tricky part is sealing and painting the floats. Balsa sealer is probably available wherever you find balsa. Try a hobby shop. The line cinches can be cut from soft plastic tubing. A friend with a small wood lathe can cut you a lifetime supply of these floats in just minutes!

The float is a visual tool, so it should be as visible as possible. A glossy white finish dressed up with a few strips of glow tape or prism tape is perfect. This combination shows up nicely underwater, which is a big help while trying to figure out when to set the hook, or while trying to follow a hooked musky through the weeds.

**Line, reels, rods**

Line is of no special concern with this job. My live bait rig is spooled with 50-pound dacron. Any good tough musky line will do.

Reels are another matter, because the need is so special. The reel must have a clicker! While the bait is trolled, the reel is left in free spool—with the clicker on. The reel must be set so that normal trolling does not strip line from the reel, but any little extra pull, even the bait thrashing more than normal, will pull line from the reel. It is important that the musky does not feel anything unnatural when it takes the bait. A fine reel for this job is a Penn Levelmatic, which I use.

Live baiting rods are also specialized tools. Some of the rods used by oldtimers were 12-foot bamboo rods. The length serves two purposes; first, because the float is normally attached 8 or 9 feet up the line, the musky cannot be reeled closer than that same distance to the rod tip. This makes it very difficult to boat a musky with a shorter rod.

Second, the usual practice is to troll two baits. The long rods keep the baits separated. Five-foot rods would be plenty long if they could be positioned so that they stick straight out from the sides of the boat. But they cannot. The rods must be angled back to keep friction between line and guides to a minimum so that the musky does not feel anything unnatural.

**Bait presentation**

The actual presentation involves steady, though not fast, rowing. The baits are trailed about 15 feet to 50 feet behind the boat, depending on the complexity of the trolling pattern. When two baits are trolled, they are placed at different distances behind the boat.

The bait is always moving, covering a lot of water, and it is that jerking motion that muskies find so irresistible. Each stroke of the oars gives the bait a burst of speed. The bait is always in potential fish-holding water, except when the rig is occasionally raised to be cleared of weeds. It is inevitable that some weeds will be picked up, because live baiting is usually done near weed cover.

It is at this point—the rowing—that traditional live baiting loses much of its following, and the culprit is the electric motor. The reason is simple... it is much easier to use an electric motor than it is to row. Electric motor users point out that their motors cause less disturbance underwater than do oars. However true this may be, I am sure that the nature of the underwater noise may be at least as important as the volume, be it pitch, tone, or whatever. I appreciate tradition, so rowing just seems to be the way to live bait for muskies.

If rowing is out of the question for you, then by all means use the electric motor if it is legal on your lake. It is a viable alternative, though a second choice.

Another case against the electric motor can be made as the musky grabs the bait. There is no set way for a musky to act after it grabs a bait. But one thing is for certain—the angler should stop the boat as soon as possible and get it moving in the direction of the musky. A competent oarsman can change direction almost instantly, while an electric motor cannot. It is easier to stay close to a musky with oars.

It is important to keep a short line between angler and musky for a couple of reasons. First is a point we have covered with other aspects of live baiting—to keep the musky from feeling anything unnatural! This is so important because all but the most aggressive muskies drop a bait at the first sign that anything is out of order. A long line surely gets wrapped around weeds, and the weight of a long line is enough to slow down a submarine! The second important reason for a short line is hook-setting efficiency. No musky angler need be reminded how hard it is to set a hook into this fish. Don't forget to sharpen your hooks!

Figuring out just the exact instant to set the hook is a problem. If forced to give a formula, I would suggest setting the hook when the fish begins its second run. But this does not accurately portray the situation. There may be no second run. A musky may grab and swallow a bait in one motion. The first dozen muskies you catch while live baiting may all behave differently. In actual practice, experienced live baiters set the hook by intuition. This skill is something you have to learn on your own.

**Prime time for live baiting will** come soon after the first frost. The most productive evenings will probably come just before a front or a storm, or even after a storm moves in. Calm, bright nights are usually not productive. Dave Paterson thinks that the best time to try for a trophy is on a windy, stormy, dark night. But then, what better time is there to go after a water wolf?
Better Fishing?
Gimme a Break!
by Linda Steiner

My friend Kathy sat at the water's edge, chin on palm, watching the minnows nibble her worm away. As the slowpoke of our fishing party, I had spent half an hour assembling my gear and had gotten to the streambank just in time to see her lay down her pole and take up a book.

"How are they biting, Kath?" I asked, though I didn't need to. Her luck was obvious.

"Nothing yet," she answered, smiling. Kathy was certainly brighter than I would have been.

"Is that where you've been fishing?" I asked, pointing to her baited hook. It hung limply in a foot-deep backwash, while the chubs played tag with it.

"Sure," she said, then, doubting, "Why? Isn't that a good spot? You said that creek was full of trout."

Yes, "this creek" was the famous Loyalsock and it's got plenty of fish, but I knew that to catch them an angler had to work at it. He, or she, must cast to the eddies behind boulders, prospect for pockets in the riffles, and plumb the heads and tails of the pools.

I looked up and down the stream for either of our husbands, but they were out of sight. It was obvious I'd gotten the job of breaking in this new fisherman, or rather, fisherwoman, by default. Like many beginners, Kathy had a lot of enthusiasm, but not much practical knowledge of fish or fishing. As she turned back to her book, I knew she'd be lost to the sport, and I'd lose a fishing partner, if I didn't help. I sat down on the rocks beside her and sighed.

Most novices know the rudiments of tackle, whether they're starting with baitcasting gear, fly rods, spinning tackle, or cane poles. They know how to cast because they've practiced at home. But in catching fish, the type of equipment used is secondary to knowing where to find fish.

Gazing across the Loyalsock, at its variety of fish-holding terrain, I solved the puzzle of stream fishing mentally, planning my casts. I wondered how I could explain to Kathy, or any new angler, that ability which a veteran

Breaks offer gamefish cover and concealment from which they ambush prey. Breaks offer baitfish hiding places, too.
fisherman considers intuition: knowing the “fishy-looking” spots. It’s the result of experience, of course, of catching or not catching on each cast, but how to give that knowledge instantly to a beginner? I knew I didn’t want to burden my friend with a lot of hard-to-remember information about fish habits and habitat preferences. If I were going to help Kathy be a better angler, I needed a break.

Suddenly I realized that was it, what all the places I’d pick to cast to have in common: they are breaks. Perhaps Webster explains the idea of the break best in calling it “an interruption of regularity.”

Hunters use the thought of the break in picking “gamey-looking” spots. The grouse hunter tightens his grip on the shotgun when he nears the edge of a thick stand of aspen. He knows this border between open and tangled woodland is the most likely spot for a flush. All wildlife, including fish, tends to associate itself with edges, or breaks, that mark a change in the prevailing physical terrain.

Any body of water, still or moving, is more than a featureless pothole or trough filled with liquid. There are many structures in a lake or stream that break up the monotony of water, and around these intrusions is where the fish will be found. Without knowing anything about a particular fish’s requirements, without wading through the dynamics of river flow or limnology, with knowing only how to get a worm on a hook and that hook into the water, the angler has an above-average chance of catching a fish if he keeps the idea of the break in mind and casts when he finds one.

It’s the theory of the break that counts in recognizing one, but let me give a few examples. Most breaks are hard and readily seen. Many are wood. Stumps, sunken logs, submerged brush, and even branches create changes in the watery landscape that draw fish.

Some breaks are rock, like boulders in a streambed, interrupting the water flow, or rock jumbles in a mud-bottomed pond. Cliff edges plunge deep below the surface; the border of an island falls away; a flat or gently sloping bottom drops off sharply. All are breaks in the established water depth that mark great places to lower a bait or jig.

photos by the author

Other breaks are softer, their edges of greenery, like the borders of forests of underwater weeds or the open water in the midst of a mat of lily pads. Even small groupings or single weeds, in a sparsely vegetated lake, are enough of a break in a routine of unobstructed water to draw fish.

Some of the best breaks to fish are manmade, such as the concrete cliffs or bridge abutments or wooden spars and docks. The floating hulls of anchored boats are good obstacles around which to make a few casts. Along a line of submerged metal fenceposts in Shohola Lake, for instance, I had strike after strike from bass, as my canoe drifted the flooded field edge.

The most unusual breaks are on a large scale, so large they involve the movement of the water itself. A creek or river’s straight flow is marked by the place it widens into pools or narrows into rapids, all changes in speed, depth and width. The head of the pool, where the stream breaks from fast to slow motion, is an excellent spot to cast, as well as the tail of the pool, where the water picks up speed again. There is another fish-holding edge, the border between a quick current and still backwash, which is often the best break of all to fish.

In lakes or rivers, the entrance of a feeder stream marks an area of good fishing. By knowing that the intruding flow, often colder, does not mix immediately but extends into the larger body of water, it’s easy to cast to an unseen but fish-producing edge.

An alert angler on a sunny day will notice that there are additional breaks in the pattern of sunlit water. These are shadows that move as the sun moves, caused by both overhead objects and underwater structures. The comparative darkness of shade provides a change in the sun-drenched water. By casting to a sunken stump’s shadow, for example, rather than the snag itself, a fisherman can get some unexpected bites.

There are solid, scientific reasons why all these breaks are good places to fish. They mean cover for concealment, or from which to dart out and seize prey, or they may attract baitfish and other food. They might be places of change in water temperature or oxygen content that the target fish prefer.

But for most beginning fishermen, and a lot of us longtime anglers, thinking about each cast technically is too much bother. For us, fishing should be good, but simple. I couldn’t say I made an expert angler out of Kathy, but at least she now sees some sense in where she throws her hook and her catching is definitely better. All she needed, as I told her, was a break.

Breaks, changes in the physical terrain, are places where you’ll find fish.
n 1883 Germany it was called the bachforelle, in Italy, the trota, and in France, la truite. It was, and still is, the common brook trout of Europe where it lived in many large rivers, notably the Rhine and the upper Thames. It was known as the brown trout in England to distinguish it from the bull trout. Soon it would be known in the United States as the brown trout or von Behr trout, in honor of Baron von Behr who was, until his death in 1887, president of the German Fishery Association and who was very active in the acclimation of the fish in America.

Although a few brown trout eggs were received in Pennsylvania as early as 1883, it was not until 1886 that a shipment officially was consigned here and kept here. Thus, this year marks the hundredth anniversary of the introduction of the brown trout into Pennsylvania's hatchery system and ultimately its streams. Fish Commission hatcheries this month are in the midst of their busy spawning activity, an annual autumn event, so it is appropriate that we look back 100 years to when and how this favorite of many trout anglers first came to Pennsylvania.

In the “Report of the State Commissioners of Fisheries for the Years 1885 and 1886,” John Gay, of Greensburg, who was then president of the Commissioners, wrote to “His Excellency James A. Beaver, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania: Through the kindness of Prof. Spencer F. Baird, U.S. Fish Commissioner, we have received 10,000 German trout eggs direct from Germany.”

En route from Germany, the eggs were repacked at New York state's Cold Spring Harbor Hatchery and then delivered to Pennsylvania's Western Hatchery at Corry, Erie County (the Commission’s oldest hatchery still in use). When unpacked by fish culturists at the western facility, a mere 65 dead eggs were found, a feat perhaps unrivaled even today. The surviving eggs were later to be carefully hatched, the fish kept for breeders.

Introduction of the brown trout into Pennsylvania, and in fact to the United States, actually began several years earlier. While in Germany in 1880, as a staff member of the American commissioners attending the International Fisheries Exhibition, Gay had an opportunity to fish for and catch his first brown trout. He was “so struck with their vigor and game qualities that I resolved to introduce them into America at the very first opportunity, and so expressed myself to my friend, Herr von Behr, president of the German Fishery Association.”

In 1883, Gay reported receiving as a personal present from his friend, von Behr, a small lot of brown trout eggs, “some of which I kept and some were distributed.” This annual gift of eggs went on for several years, with most of the eggs distributed to a New York state hatchery on Caledonia Creek where they hatched. The new fish were kept for breeders.

At the time, Pennsylvania simply did not have hatchery pond space available for this new species. But in spite of the lack of space, Gay was able to raise a few brownies and quickly observed that they were “a quicker growing and gamier fish than our own native trout, the S. fontinalis (brook trout), but I do not think they are quite as handsome.”

By the time the 10,000 eggs were received in 1886 at the Corry station, Pennsylvania had constructed sufficient ponds and troughs so that it could effectively deal with this newly imported species. That trout eggs could be delivered all the way from Europe was one thing. That only 65 out of 10,000 would be lost between Cold Spring Harbor and Corry is another, especially when portable pumps and cooling systems had yet to come along.

But by now, brown trout eggs were being shipped from Germany on a regular basis. Arriving at New York on steamers, as many as 80,000 eggs at a time made the 10-day to 12-day crossing of the Atlantic. The survival rate between Germany and New York could not be expected to be as great as the shorter distances between states, however. In fact, many times large numbers of eggs arrived so mature that they had already hatched and died, while others simply dried out. In spite of seemingly insurmountable odds, propagation of the brown trout in this country continued to make progress, and it wasn’t long before the first brown trout were planted in Pennsylvania waters.

By June 1, 1888, 700 year-old brown trout were reported at Corry ready to be stocked, and it was just 27 days later that 135 of those fish were consigned to a Harry Peators, who met the Fish Commission’s railroad car at Bushkill, Pennsylvania. Thus, Pike County was to receive the first planting of the brown trout in Pennsylvania. Other stockings followed until five different waters in Pike and Monroe counties had received their first brown trout.

During that same year, some 1.7 million brook trout fry and 420,000 rainbow trout fry along with 1,325 two-year-old rainbows had been raised for “the re-stocking of depopulated streams.” A year later, in August of 1889, 30,000 brown trout fry were planted in Westmoreland, Pike, Wayne, and Dauphin counties. By 1891, brown trout were well established in New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Missouri, Michigan, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Colorado, and several other states.

In 1892, nearly 124,000 brown trout were stocked in 15 Pennsylvania counties, and in just two years that grew to almost 400,000 brownies planted in 27 counties, most of them carried in “milk cans” on a Commission-owned railroad car especially built for the purpose. In most cases, these trout were stocked during the fry stage, shipped when just over three months old. Carried in cans to which ice was added to keep the

The Brown Trout: by Larry Shaffer

Pennsylvania Angler
Immigrant from the Old World

water cool, instructions to those responsible for caring for these young fish also included the need to add air "by dipping the water from the can and letting it fall into the can from some height, so as to force air into the water," a crude, but apparently effective means of adding life-giving oxygen to the water.

By the early 1890s, sufficient brown trout stock had been gathered at the western station in Corry so that the Commission fish culturists could transfer several brood fish to the new eastern station built in Allentown. In 1894, 18,000 brown trout were shipped from this facility destined for waters in five counties.

After several years of swimming in Pennsylvania waters, the brown trout had evoked mixed emotions from those anglers who regularly fished for trout in those early days. William Meehan, who was an associate editor for the Philadelphia Public Ledger, wrote about it in "Fish, Fishing and Fisheries of Pennsylvania," a booklet distributed by the Fish Commission at its exhibit at the Columbian Exposition, the 1894 World's Fair in Chicago: "The alien has made itself perfectly at home and has drawn to it a multitude of angling friends and raised up a host of enemies among those who believe that there is no fish the equal of the American brook trout, and who are fully convinced that the introduction of the foreigner will work injury to their favorite."

As proof of its tendency to do dastardly deeds, opponents of the brown trout noted the "marvelous rapidity with which it grows . . . its well-known voracity . . . its reputed strong cannibalistic tendencies . . . and the belief that it has a unique fondness for spawn." But perhaps the final insult was leveled in the observation that "where there is plenty of good, pure, cold water and abundance of food, brown trout grow with almost the marvelous rapidity of the German carp."

Actually, the brown trout did not haphazardly trample into the haunts of the brook trout. Rather, preferring somewhat warmer water, he very conveniently filled that void somewhere between the brook trout's favorite cooler headwater sections and the warmer waters preferred by the black bass, which by now occupied the lower reaches of many streams. In addition, the brown trout often was able to inhabit that section of stream now warmed following the intense lumbering operations of the period.

Concerning its great game qualities, there is no question that Izaak Walton alone would have made the fish famous, but for more than 1,000 years, Englishmen and others have justly sung its praises. Ansonius, a writer in the early part of the fifth century, wrote strongly on the beauty of the fish, and Dame Juliance Berners, authoress of "The Treatyse of Fysshynge," which was written in 1496, speaks in no uncertain language of her fondness for the brown trout.

Today, almost all the angling literature written in this country as well as abroad is directed toward the brown trout. Trout anglers themselves often forget, or don't even realize, that the brown trout is not a native species, that this most wary of all trout first came to the Keystone State from a long way off thanks to those early, innovative fish culturists who had the foresight, ambition and perseverance to make it happen — 100 years ago.
You have a fishing friend in Pennsylvania