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January/February 2020 \$5.00

The Keystone State's
Official Fishing &
Boating Magazine

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On the cover

While Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO) Chad Lauer, Tioga County, was on patrol at a lake on Valentine's Day, he was speaking with several couples who were ice fishing together. One couple, Amy and Joe Dawson, were sharing fishing stories when one of Amy's tip-up flags went up. Moments later, Amy pulled a nice Largemouth Bass from the ice. Amy and Joe shared the moment with WCO Lauer. Photo by Joe Dawson.



PFBC social media and mobile app:
www.fishandboat.com/socialmedia

Pennsylvania Tackle

by Timothy D. Schaeffer
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

Pennsylvania Angler & Boater readers know better than anyone about the incredible fishing and boating opportunities that abound in Pennsylvania in every month of the year.

What most people probably do not know is that Pennsylvania is also home to a number of businesses who produce many of the items in their tackle boxes and fishing vests. After a visit to Felmlee Lures, Lewistown, last summer, it immediately became clear that there is a story to tell about what is going on at facilities across Pennsylvania.

Throughout 2020, we will be featuring articles about the following Pennsylvania-based companies and introducing readers to the stories behind the products they sell. The line up will include the following:

- Jan/Feb: Felmlee Lures
- Mar/Apr: Thomas Spinning Lures, Inc.
- May/Jun: Hopkins Fishing Gear, Inc.
- Jul/Aug: Renosky Lures
- Sept/Oct: Grandma Lures
- Nov/Dec: Bay Rat Lures

As you enjoy the articles, it is important to keep in mind that businesses do even more for recreation and conservation than providing equipment to help people catch fish.

“No one cares more about clean water and healthy fisheries than the recreational fishing community, as evidenced by the financial contributions we make to these efforts through excise taxes, license fees and donations,” said Mike Leonard, Vice President of Government Affairs for the American Sportfishing Association (ASA). “Since its inception in 1950, the Sport Fish Restoration program has



See page 22 to read the “Felmlee Lures—A Local Advantage” article.

provided billions of dollars to fund fisheries conservation and public access to aquatic resources, providing opportunities for the nation’s 49 million recreational fishermen to enjoy time on the water.”

In 1950, the Sport Fish Restoration Act (Dingell-Johnson Act) was enacted to provide federal funding to states for the restoration, conservation, management and enhancement of sport fishing opportunities. The Act was expanded in 1984 with the Wallop-Breaux Amendment to provide further funding by including excise taxes on a wider range of fishing tackle and equipment, motorboat fuel, and duties on imported boats and fishing tackle.

Revenues from excise taxes paid by companies like those we will be highlighting are placed in the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service administers the Trust Fund and distributes funding to state fish and wildlife agencies for fish management, species and habitat restoration, habitat protection, land acquisition, scientific study, population monitoring, aquatic education, and access for fishing and boating.

Through this “user pays, user benefits” model, anglers and boaters purchase equipment manufactured by the companies that pay the excise tax, and they receive direct benefits like abundant, sustainable fish populations and safe, accessible boating facilities.

The Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund requires reauthorization every 5 years through the federal transportation bill. The Angling and Boating Alliance, chaired by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies’ Government Affairs Director Jen Mock Schaeffer (no relation), is leading this reauthorization effort for the angling and boating community. Other members of the Alliance include ASA, Association of Marina Industries, Bass Anglers Sportsman Society, Boat Owners Association of the United States, Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation, National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, National Marine Manufacturers Association and States Organization for Boating Access.

The bipartisan Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Safety Act of 2019 (HR 4828) would reauthorize and extend the Trust Fund into 2024. This is likely one of several stand-alone pieces of legislation that will be amalgamated into a comprehensive transportation package and is expected to move through the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure in early 2020.

With this in mind, we hope you have an even greater appreciation of how important our Pennsylvania-based businesses are to the future of fishing and boating in Pennsylvania.



Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

ANGLER AWARD PROGRAM

Qualifying Minimum Weights and State Records

Species	Catch & Release	Sr.			Jr.		State Record	
		Inches	Pounds	Ounces	Pounds	Ounces	Pounds	Ounces
Bass, Largemouth		20	5	0	4	0	11	3
Bass, Rock		8	0	12	0	8	3	2
Bass, Smallmouth		19	4	0	3	8	8	8
Bass, Striped Marine (includes hybrid)		30	23	0	21	0	53	13
Bass, Striped Inland (includes hybrid)		23	10	0	7	8	53	12
Bass, White		14	2	0	1	8	4	0
Bluegill		8	0	12	0	8	2	9
Carp, Common		28	14	0	11	8	52	0
Catfish, Bullhead & White		11	1	8	1	0	4	10
Catfish, Channel		24	10	8	8	0	35	3
Catfish, Flathead		34	20	0	16	0	50	7
Crappie		10	1	4	1	0	4	3
Drum, Freshwater		21	5	0	4	0	19	14
Muskellunge (includes tiger)		40	28	0	20	0	54	3
Perch, White		9	0	12	0	8	1	12
Perch, Yellow		11	1	4	0	12	2	14
Pickereel, Chain		20	4	0	3	0	8	15
Pike, Northern		27	11	0	8	0	35	0
Salmon, Atlantic		21	5	8	4	0	17	2
Salmon, Chinook		30	14	0	11	8	28	15
Salmon, Coho		24	8	0	6	8	15	5
Salmon, Pink		17	3	0	2	8	4	8
Sauger		18	2	0	1	8	4	0
Shad, American		22	6	0	4	8	9	9
Suckers		17	2	12	2	0	12	14
Trout, Brook		15	2	0	1	8	7	0
Trout, Brown		21	5	8	4	0	19	10
Trout, Lake		30	15	0	12	0	31	13
Trout, Golden Rainbow		20	5	0	3	8	13	8
Trout, Rainbow		20	5	0	3	8	15	6
Trout, Steelhead		24	10	0	8	0	20	3
Walleye		23	8	0	6	0	17	9

Rules

- Program open to residents and non-residents.
- All fish must be caught in Pennsylvania waters open to the public without charge or fee. Except for First Fish, fish taken from farm ponds, fee-fishing lakes, ponds or streams, or waters restricted to use by club members or their guests, do not qualify.
- Fish must be caught by legal methods during legally open seasons.
- Kept fish must be weighed and measured. Weight and measurement by fishing license agents, Official Measuring Stations, tackle stores or authorized employees of the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission is encouraged.
- Catch-and-release and First Fish catches must be witnessed.
- Measurements must be made with a metal ruler or tape measure. Measure from tip of the nose (with closed mouth) to tip of the tail.
- Photographs: For kept fish – a clear, side-view photograph is preferred but not required.
For catch-and-release fish – a clear, side-view photograph of the fish IS required. Photographs for catch-and-release category must be taken at the catch site. Driveway, bait shop or kitchen shots are unacceptable for catch-and-release fish. Photos showing mishandling will be disqualified.
- First Fish – need only a witness signature. Photos are encouraged but not required.
- To be considered for the annual "Biggest Fish of the Year" list, applications must be received no later than February 28 of the following year.
- To be considered as a potential STATE RECORD fish, additional requirements must be met and a separate application is required. See any Official Measuring Station or contact the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission at 717-705-7835 for an application. For more information on Official Measuring Stations, visit www.fishandboat.com.
- The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission reserves the right to investigate the identification, methods used in catching and the accuracy of measurement and weighing. It also reserves the right to reject any application.
- Only one patch will be awarded annually to each applicant.
- Each entry becomes the property of the Fish & Boat Commission with all publication rights. The information contained on the application and accompanying photograph may be used in, but not limited to, press releases, published articles and promotional materials. Photographs cannot be returned.
- Parental signature is required when applicant is under 18 years of age.

Application for: (check one)

Senior Angler Award

for those anglers 16 and older.
Award includes certificate and patch.

Junior Angler Award

for those anglers under 16 years of age. Award includes certificate and patch.

Husky Musky Club

anglers who land a musky that is 50 inches or longer. Award includes certificate and patch.

Catch and Release

award for those anglers who practice catch and release. Qualifications based on length.

First Fish

certificate recognizing a new angler's first fish. There are no size qualifications.

www.fishandboat.com

Please print clearly.

Fish Species _____

Only the species with qualifying weights (in table above) are eligible for Angler Awards. Applications for other species will be returned.

Angler's Name _____ Age _____

Street or P.O. Box _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Fish Weight _____ lbs. _____ oz. Length _____ in. Girth _____ in.

Date Caught _____ County Where Caught _____

Water Where Caught _____

Rod _____ Reel _____ Line _____

Name of Bait or Lure _____

Weighed and Measured by _____

Catch Witnessed by _____

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

Parental Signature if Applicant is Under 18 Years of Age _____

Mail application and photograph to: Angler Award · Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission · P.O. Box 67000 · Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000

MAXIMIZING YOUR TIME ON THE ICE



by Jeff Woleslagle photos by the author

We arrived at the lake and loaded the sleds for the drag out onto the ice on a crisp, late January morning with the sun starting to clear the mountaintop to the east. The air temperature was in the mid-20s, and the wind chill was much colder. When our fishing crew hit the water, everyone went to work. Fanning out in several directions,



A pair of Bluegills on the ice.

we drilled holes over different depths, set the tip-ups and began checking the open holes with the sonar units to determine which ones may be productive spots for jigging. The first fish came on a tip-up, baited with a live shiner. It was a beautiful Chain Pickerel. Minutes later, another tip-up produced an even larger Chain Pickerel that took several long runs before coming through the ice. A short time later, a school of active Bluegills was located, and an occasional Yellow Perch was mixed in. By the end of the day, we put a good mix of fish on the ice including a trophy-sized Chain Pickerel. We had steady action all morning long.

I learned a long time ago that ice fishing can be downright uncomfortable at times, and because the weather can often dictate how long you are on the water, it pays to have a game plan to maximize your time outside. Before we even loaded our vehicles, we had a discussion based on our internet research about which area of the lake we would target, what ice conditions we could expect and what other anglers were reporting. Whether you are fishing solo or with a group, you will want to test several depths quickly to zero in on where the fish are located. One of the biggest mistakes I see people make on the ice is remaining in one location for too long. In general, if I do not see action in 30 minutes or less, I know it is time to move on. Of course, there will be days when the barometric pressure

or other factors put the fish in a funk, making it difficult to get bites, but there are usually at least some active fish somewhere.

Much can be done in the comfort of your home before you embark on an ice fishing adventure that will help an angler have more time on ice. Rig your jigging rods and tip-ups before you leave to save cold fingers once you are on the ice. With my fishing group, as soon as the holes are drilled, we are dropping baits. We try a variety of baits, both natural and artificial, and communicate constantly about what is working and where it is working. If we discover that most of the fish are in 20 feet of water and hugging the bottom, we quickly focus our efforts in that zone. If the fish seem to be tight to weed edges or hovering near submerged structures, we will target those areas and move our gear to these spots. Internet research can be a big help as well. Read the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's (PFBC's) regional reports on their website to see where fish are being caught. The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources Bureau of State Parks posts weekly ice conditions for most of its lakes throughout the winter. There are also chat rooms that help ice anglers connect with each other and relay what they are catching and where. When you find fish, mark the location with a GPS, so you can quickly find it again on a future outing. Save the coordinates,



Ben Duncan with a Largemouth Bass.

as spots are often consistently good year after year. Pay close attention to other anglers on the ice as well. Most ice anglers do not mind sharing information. I have learned a great deal by striking up a conversation. The PFBC has placed artificial structures in many lakes in Pennsylvania, and those locations can be great locations to target.

When you get home, prepare your gear for the next outing. It may be tempting to enjoy the inside warmth and put it off, but by reorganizing and restocking your gear, you can be ready quickly the next time an ice fishing opportunity arises. I also like to take a few minutes to write down what was caught, the conditions, the location on the lake and which baits were effective. Keeping a log helps me remember what was productive and to form a game plan the next time I encounter similar conditions.

By planning ahead, being organized and doing a little research, you can maximize your time on the ice this winter. ☑



The author's niece, Sydney Woleslagle, with a Chain Pickerel that took a live shiner.

Getting Started on Lake Erie Walleye



photo-courtesy of Edward Lawrence

by Jeff Knapp

The golden age of Walleye fishing on Lake Erie is now. Lake Erie has experienced exceptional Walleye hatches in recent years. Walleyes live a long time in Lake Erie, so expect the great fishing to continue for a long time. As such, more anglers are gearing up for Lake Erie Walleye fishing.

Shawn Iman, Armstrong County, made such a transition a few years ago, selling the runabout he used for Lake Erie perch fishing and replacing it with a used, but serviceable, 20-foot high-sided, deep-vee boat appropriate for the trolling tactics used on Lake Erie.

“A boat does not need to be fancy or expensive to catch Lake Erie Walleyes,” said Iman. “Walleye are currently easy to catch on Lake Erie. You just have to set up properly with basic trolling gear, decent electronics and an assortment of lures.”

Boating essentials

One of the first modifications Iman made to his 20-foot boat was to mount adjustable rod holders on the boat’s gunnels on both the port and starboard sides in such a way that multiple rods can be trolled with minimal chance of tangles. Since the 90 horsepower outboard trolled at a fast clip, he employed drift socks that when deployed, reduced the speed to



photo-courtesy of Shawn Iman

Trolling rods should be positioned in the boat to allow multiple lines to be run while minimizing tangles.

the 1.8- to 2.2-mph range he prefers. Since then, he has added a 20 horsepower four-stroke kicker that has further fine-tuned things. The two motors are connected with a linkage, so the kicker can be steered from the cockpit wheel.

Iman considers a basic chartplotter with GPS and sonar essential. The GPS screen shows trolling passes and provides an added level of safety. Walleye and baitfish location show up on the sonar screen, though in the clear water of Lake Erie, Walleyes sometimes slide off to the side, out of the view of traditional sonar. The side imaging on Iman’s sonar unit has shown schools off to the side, ones he could then mark with a waypoint and target on the next pass.

Trolling gear

Line counter reels matched with 7½- to 8-foot trolling rods, often marketed as “downrigger rods,” can be purchased as a combination, saving the angler funds that can be used on other gear. Iman loads these rods with 20-pound-test braid and recommends having the reels filled to the level where the line counter is accurate. Videos on the internet are available that demonstrate how to properly calibrate line counter reels. In addition to braid, he has a few outfits spooled with leadcore line.

By summer, when most fishing attention takes place, it is common for Walleyes to be in 40- to 75-foot of water off Pennsylvania’s Lake Erie shore. While fish typically suspend in the water column, it is still often necessary to employ some type of device to get lures down in the 20- to 40-foot range. Like most savvy Erie Walleye anglers, Iman carries a few directional diving sinkers like Luhr Jensen Dipsey Divers to get lures down into the Walleye zone. Dipseys dive and can also plane off to the side, the latter accomplished by angler settings. Other models, such as Jet Divers, only dive. Dive charts supplied with diving sinkers provide a means of placing lures at the depth desired.

“It is important to understand which direction a Dipsey will plane, otherwise, you will get major snarls,” said Iman. “I remember that ‘left’ setting is run off the port side, as both have four letters.”

Leadcore line is another way of getting lures down to the Walleye zone. A thin filament of lead runs the length of the nylon line. Essentially, it is a continuous inline sinker. The more line you let out, the deeper the lures run. Leadcore line is color coded every 10 yards.

Inline planers are another device Erie Walleye anglers should consider. Unlike large planing boards that run off a boat-mounted mast, inline planers clip to the fishing line, a set distance in front of the lure. This allows a wider spread and puts baits in front of Walleyes that move off to the side of the boat’s path.

Lures

Walleye anglers just getting started on Lake Erie should fare well with a section of trolling spoons, such as Michigan Stingers and Dreamweavers, and stickbaits, like Storm Thundersticks, Renosky Crystalinas and Rapala Deep Tail Dancers. It is common to run spoons off Dipseys and stickbaits off leadcore. Deep Tail Dancers, which get down to the 25-foot range, will often take high-riding Walleyes while simply line-line trolled.

Accessories

Iman strongly recommends a landing net with an extendable handle. Trolling rods tend to be long, and there may be an 8-foot leader between a Dipsey Diver and the spoon. A long handle will go a long way, literally, toward getting more Walleyes in the boat. Also, Walleyes taken from the cool Lake Erie depths will generally not survive in the warm water of a livewell. Keep the catch fresh by having a marine grade cooler loaded with ice.

Iman, who worked for years as a meat cutter, immediately dispatches keeper Walleyes, makes a cut along the throat of the fish to allow it to bleed out in the livewell, and transfers it to the ice chest a few minutes later. The result is snow white filets. ☐



Some trolling sinkers dive without the option of planing to the side.



Directional trolling sinkers like Slide Divers and Dipsey Divers both dive and plane to the side.



photos: Jeff Knapp

Rods with line counter reels add precision to trolling and allow the angler to replicate a successful setback.

The Elegant Longhead



Longhead Darter

by Rob Criswell photo by the author

The Longhead Darter, a small, sleek relative of several well-known gamefish—Yellow Perch, Walleyes and Saugers—is being reviewed for listing under authority of the federal Endangered Species Act. Although a decision whether to list the Longhead Darter has not been made as of this article, it is expected soon. But, there is a good chance it will not make the list, because Pennsylvania hosts the mother lode.

Longhead Darters are common throughout the middle and upper sections of the Allegheny River and most of French Creek, and occur in several other tributaries as well. Elsewhere it is a different story. Longhead Darters have also occurred in parts of the Ohio River drainage in Kentucky, New York, Ohio, Tennessee and West Virginia. Fish are rare in all of these states except Ohio, where the species disappeared completely in 1939.

Like Pennsylvania's 21 other darters, the Longhead Darter has an elongated body with two dorsal fins. The air bladder in darters is greatly reduced or absent, relegating these fish to life on or near the bottom. But, the Longhead Darter spends more time than most darters swimming in the water column while hunting prey, and its slender snout enables it to pick small insects from rock surfaces and crevices. It is a medium-sized darter, reaching lengths to 4½ inches.

While many darters sport bright colors, the Longhead Darter projects an understated, elegant appearance. Its streamlined shape is accented by a series of oval or squarish onyx blotches fused together by a coal black lateral stripe. The remainder of the body is a muted combination of browns, tans, olive and straw. A sickle-shaped teardrop accents the head but is sometimes interrupted into two blotches. The dark spot at the base the tail extends downward and is a helpful characteristic in separating it from the similar Blackside Darter.

The Longhead Darter was not always so common in Pennsylvania. Even though it persisted in French Creek and

parts of the Allegheny River through western Pennsylvania's worst pollution era, impacts from lumbering, agriculture, oil and gas activities, industry, and general development affected its numbers. In fact, it was listed as a threatened species in Pennsylvania until 2008. But, with improvements to its occupied waterways, its numbers are now booming. Prior to and during the 1980s, collections seldom included more than a handful of this species from any single location. Today, biologists using trawls may collect 100 or more individuals at one survey site.

The Longhead Darter prefers clear, warm rivers and large streams. The extensive riffles and deeper runs and pools of the Allegheny River and French Creek, with clean rock and gravel bottoms, are just what this darter needs.

Pennsylvania may harbor 75- to 80-percent of the global population of Longhead Darters. Pennsylvania is enabling conservationists to develop recovery projects in waters where these darters no longer occur. In 2018 and 2019, Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) biologists cooperated with personnel from the Ohio State University and Ohio Division of Wildlife to collect Longhead Darters from the Allegheny River. The project, funded by the State Wildlife Grant Program, is designed to reintroduce darters into rivers where fish were historically found in Ohio.

According to Doug Fischer, PFBC Non-game Fisheries Biologist, Ohio waters are not the only waters getting attention. "We are studying the feasibility of releasing Longhead Darters in our own waters, where Longhead Darters have been extirpated." If conditions are suitable, these fish may soon swim in the Youghiogheny River. The Longhead Darter was first described to science from specimens collected in the "Yough" in 1869, but it was never seen there again. Other rivers where dams prevent natural repopulation of native fishes after pollution abatement, like the Clarion River and Tionesta Creek, may soon play host to Longhead Darters again, as this elegant river dweller continues to expand its stronghold in Pennsylvania. □

Tying the Orange Scud



by Carl Haensel

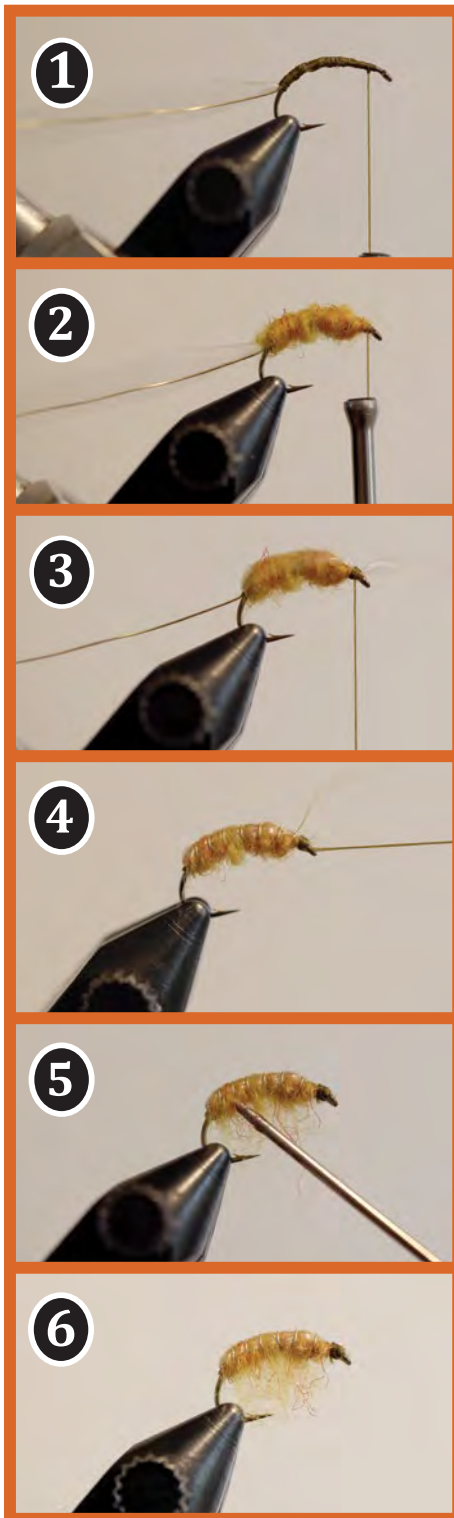
photos by the author

When you are getting ready to go fly fishing in the winter, one of the top flies to add to your fly box is the Orange Scud. An easy fly to tie, the Orange Scud imitates one of the key food sources for trout in Pennsylvania's spring creeks.

When alive, orange scuds are grey or tan in color, which is an excellent variant of this fly to tie. When orange scuds die, these invertebrates turn a shade of orange, similar to a shrimp or lobster, to which scuds are closely related. Sometimes, you may find orange scuds in a similar shade of light pink, which can be another good color choice for your fly.

If you are on your favorite stream, pick up some watercress or similar vegetation, and you will often see it teeming with scuds. Tie on an Orange Scud, and you will be in for some good fishing action. When fishing the Orange Scud, try to drift it naturally with the current. Orange scuds do not move much, and trout will pluck drifting scuds out of the current.

Use a strike indicator on your leader to closely monitor your drift in the current. If you are fishing a deep slow section of stream where trout are in a school during the winter, try fishing the fly along the bottom and occasionally giving it a slow twitch. This can alert a trout to the presence of the fly, and the fish will often swim over to eat it with vigor. When tying the Orange Scud, the key aspect is the thin, plastic scud back. It creates the curved shape of the scud, pulling the dubbing close to the hook and allowing the dubbing to be picked out underneath.



While you can visit your local fly shop or go online to buy commercially available scud backs, it is just as easy to grab a sandwich bag and cut narrow, 1/8-inch strips. Try different widths until you get some that work. These flies are quick to tie, and along with the natural color variation, you should always have a few with you on the stream. ☐

Tying the Orange Scud Materials

Hook: Scud hook in sizes 12-16

Thread: 6/0 tan fly tying thread

Rib: Fine copper wire

Body: Orange Antron/Hare's Ear scud dubbing

Back: Scud back or trimmed plastic sandwich bag

- 1 Start your fly by attaching your thread to the hook. Tie in your fine wire, followed by your scud back material.
- 2 Add dubbing to the thread and wrap it to the front of the hook, just behind the eye.
- 3 Pull the scud back over the top of the fly, tie it off, and trim the excess.
- 4 Wrap the wire around the entire fly to provide a segmented look to the scud. Tie it off behind the eye of the hook, and trim the excess.
- 5 Whip finish the fly behind the eye of the hook. Use a bodkin to pick out the dubbing on the lower half of the scud between the wire ribbing to imitate the legs of the scud.
- 6 Glue the thread wraps behind the eye, and you are ready to fish.



Fly Selection for Late Winter Trout

by John Allen

photos by the author

Who doesn't enjoy a day on a trout stream without anyone around? You have the pick of the best fishing spots. Where you go is solely up to you. Trout fishing in the late winter provides the opportunity to cover a lot of water, which is important. On many stocked trout streams, fish numbers are low. You need to increase the odds in your favor in every possible way. Having the right flies in your box can make all the difference between a successful day or just coming home with cold hands.

Stream conditions

For many anglers, air temperature of 50 degrees F and sunny days will bring them to the stream. For me to venture streamside, I need the minimum temperature to be 38 degrees F with the sun poking through the clouds. Obviously, the warmer the weather, the more active the trout will be, so all of those other anglers do have a point. If you can find trout and, more importantly, feeding trout, you can usually coax fish into feeding with a well-presented fly.

A sunny day on the water allows the water to warm up quicker than a cloudy day. Often, you will see trout in sunny spots actively feeding as the warmer water has activated the movements of food sources. Trout tend to be in shallower water at this time of the year, because the water is warmer. Consider these factors when selecting your flies.

Flies

When you fish a stocked trout stream in late winter, you are most likely fishing over trout that have been in the stream for at least 7 months. These trout are no longer used to feeding on fish pellets. At this point, fish have grown accustomed to the menu of the stream. In most cases, the most abundant food source will be nymphs. You can turn over a few rocks if you want to find out exactly what these fish are eating, or you can use a variety of generalized patterns. This is where the Hare's Ear, Pheasant Tail Nymph, Prince Nymph and Copper John come into play. I carry a range of sizes (14-18) for each of these patterns. For more specific patterns, I carry Blue Winged Olive Nymphs (sizes 16 and 18), Stonefly Nymphs (size 14-16) and caddis larvae (sizes 14-18) as these are usually the first hatches of the new year and are typically the most active nymphs in the water.



This Rainbow Trout was fooled by a small streamer bounced along the bottom.

The cooler water temperature will have fish moving a little more slowly than most other times of the year, requiring you to slow down your drift. I usually like to walk up to a random run in the stream and test the drift. The fly should be moving through the water a bit slower than the flow of the stream. This requires you to hold your rod tip up and follow the drift, which most experienced anglers know as “high-sticking.” High-sticking is the most common nymph fishing style during the winter months due to the speed at which you need to fish. If your guides freeze up, this method requires you to cast no additional line.

For those who live for the thrill of catching a trout on a dry fly, you can look for midges on sunny days until early- to mid-March when the small stoneflies and blue winged olives begin to emerge. Most sunny days above 35 degrees F will see midges gathering, which usually brings out a few rising trout. You will need to be throwing flies in the 20- to 26-size range to be effective. Stalking a rising fish in the winter is much more challenging than in the spring. Being able to accurately cast a small fly and still see it on the water can be tough

for most anglers. It will make the spring sulphur hatch seem like a walk in the park.

Streamers are still effective in the winter months. You will not have quite the success in aggressively retrieving streamers as you would the rest of the year, but you can still work up strikes. I tie my own flies, so I like to make my winter streamers much heavier. This allows the fly to get to the bottom quickly. I prefer woolly bugger-type patterns from sizes 6-10. In the winter months, I usually go with smaller sizes, as smaller sizes are more likely to get a quick strike. I add weight to the body of the fly as well as using a large beadhead or conehead. As with nymphs, I spend most of my time high-sticking. Rather than just letting the fly dead drift down the stream, like with a nymph, give the rod an occasional short jig. This causes the fly to make a small but quick action that can create incredible results.

Late winter fly fishing is a great way to get out of the house and have large amounts of stream to yourself. If you can find fish in the stream and bring along the right fly patterns, you may have a productive day on the water. Just remember to go slow. ☐



During the spring, this stretch of stream is full of anglers. During the winter, there is no one around.

You Can't Beat BLUEGILLS FOR ICE ACTION

by Vic Attardo

photos by the author

When all else fails, go fishing for Bluegills. The cooperative panfish and its cousin, the Pumpkinseed, are the most reliable fish you can pursue in winter, and I love chasing these fish.

I delight in the Bluegills' quick tug, its suspicious, soft nibble, its fighting temperament as it is brought to the surface, its common appearance in shallow water and its appetite for jigs, plastics, spoons and bait.

But, that does not mean Bluegills are winter pushovers or not worthy of veteran anglers.

In the last 20 years, the pursuit of Bluegills has helped popularize a lot of high-tech equipment. Ice fishing rods are more sensitive than ever before, specific ice lures attuned to attracting Bluegills dominate the region's market, and the use of sonars on the ice has increased, because Bluegills are a key winter fishing opportunity.

All three items—rods, ice lures and sonars—have helped me improve my Bluegill fishing with measurable results.

Starting with sonar—flashers in particular—ice anglers can anticipate a strike like never before. There are few unanticipated hits when watching the flasher. Depending on the make, model and screen color, you can watch the red line, which is the approaching fish, come

to your green line, which is the lure, and as it gets near, it grows in width until it is "line to line" or "nose to nose" with your offering. With a flasher, you may even set the hook before the rod twitches. In fact, I often do.

Early in the ice fishing season, I have to retrain my wrist to react quickly, and a flasher helps. On frigid, unproductive days, when inactivity slows reactions, Bluegills may not get the best of me with a flasher.

In the past, I tested for the presence of weeds by dropping a sinker or a lure with a treble hook. If I am moving from fishing hole to fishing hole, I still sometimes test for weeds, temporarily leaving the flasher behind. But,



the flasher confirms the presence, height and thickness of the weeds better than any other device.

You can also see a lot with a good ice camera, but I find cameras difficult to keep steady underwater, and visibility is limited in murky conditions. I like to have a camera along when visiting a new place or an area of a lake for the first time. However, I have not found a camera as indispensable as a flasher.

In addition, tungsten jigs continue to improve my Bluegill and Pumpkinseed catches. Tungsten jigs fall faster than lead.

Small, soft plastic lures are better on bulbous-shape tungsten jigs than traditional lead shapes. The only time I do not use a tungsten jig is when I am seeking a slower fall in shallow water, or I need to stay above high weeds. Even then, I start with a tungsten jig, because it is already tied on to my rod.

Small, soft plastic lures, with a creature-bait appearance, have opened up jigging styles. Not having to fuss with bait lets me get my jig in the water a lot quicker. Bait can certainly help, but reapplying it slows you down. When Bluegills are circulating widely and a school returns, the smell of bait is an incentive.



If you are catching Bluegills under the ice, Pumpkinseeds may be close behind.



Even on the coldest days, Bluegills may bite.

I also like the color contrast between soft plastic lures and painted jigs. Top color choices for soft plastic lures include blood red, pink, purple, chartreuse and white. Team these lures up with a two-tone jig of chartreuse and lime for something special.

In the past, ice rods, even rods intended for Bluegills, were stiff and under-engineered. Now, I can purchase an 18- or 24-inch rod with four or five guides, a comfortable handle, good reel seat and a tip with greater sensitivity. However, during winter when Bluegills are slow, I attach a spring bobber to the rod tip, one designed to telescope in and out of the tip.

The proper use of these techniques leads to more ice action. ☐



photos-Darl Black

Don't Let Your **TACKLE** Control You

by Marilyn Black

Do you typically start fishing by casting your favorite lure? Do you tend to use one pace of retrieve without varying its speed or inserting pauses? At the end of a day on the water, do you leave your used lures tied onto the rods for the next time? If so, you may be in a bit of a rut. Without realizing it, you may be repeating familiar fishing techniques even after having less than successful outings.

When weather conditions change or you are fishing in different water and your catch rates decrease, it is probably time to diversify your fishing gear and fishing habits. Alternating retrieves or experimenting with new products can be fun, and you may come up with a combination that yields good fishing results.

All retrieves are not alike

“Vary your retrieve. I have no idea how many times I have inserted some variation of that phrase into how-to fishing articles in the last 40-some years. It is such a simple statement, yet critical to continuity of success,” said Darl Black, a veteran freshwater angler and fishing writer. “I learned it early on by fishing with expert anglers and reading the works of noted fishing scribes.”

“It is a concept that helps separate good anglers from so-so anglers. Exceptional anglers develop the routine of varying retrieves automatically until they hit on the trigger for the day. If a slow retrieve is not working, speed it up. If a steady retrieve is not producing, then incorporate pauses or erratic jerks to the lure,” said Black.

“Of course, it works in reverse, too. Say a fast-paced buzzbait produced last time, but it is drawing a big zero. Try slowing it down, so it is barely on the surface, or switch to a topwater you can work even slower, such as a walking bait. Let the fish tell you how fast or slow it wants its ‘meal’ to go by,” said Black.



Don't get stuck in a rut using just one type of lure.

Dig out items you already have

Our fishing partner, Dale Black, said, "Anglers are creatures of habit. If it works, I do not change up. A Dinger is a prime example for me. I have a hard time not casting a Dinger. I always keep one tied on a rod ready to throw. Although there are similar plastics, I seem to always go back to what I have confidence in," said Black.

"Some anglers get swept up into lure cycles. A hot new lure comes out. You buy it, and it works. Then, the next new lure comes out, you use that and put the earlier lure back into a box. It takes conscious effort to remember the older lures. For instance, the Jitterbug still works to this day, but few anglers use it now. Many anglers used the Jitterbug as a kid and probably still have one in a dusty corner. Get it out, and use it again. Get out of the mindset that the newest is always the best," said Black.

Swap or bargain shop

You could buy a whole new arsenal of lures. However, shopping for bargains in tackle will ease the strain. Shopping is more fun when you are getting a great bargain and products you need or can put to immediate use. That includes finding lower-cost sources for fishing gear.

When I see a sign for a Fishing Garage Sale or a Tackle Shop that is going out of business, I stop in to see what is still available. Stores with inventory that has not been moving may offer lower prices to sell remaining items, or families whose hobbies no longer include fishing may want to make their gear useful for fellow anglers. Recently, for instance, I purchased for \$1.50 each several still-packaged major brand surface plugs that retail individually for \$5.00 in today's market. I am eager to cast these plugs to active White Bass soon.

Like another friend often says, "trading is better than buying any day." Perhaps your fishing club or neighborhood can organize a "Fishing Swap Shop" event where each household brings no-longer desired fishing items and a philosophy of seeking out different equipment that is worth a try on the water, especially if it is acquired with no funds exchanged.

If your fishing is in a rut, put an assortment of your older lures into your tackle box and give these lures some in-the-water time during your outings. Experiment with pull-pause retrieves in all speeds, and explore money-saving sources of new and unutilized gear as well. Hopefully, these tips will make your fishing even more interesting and productive. ☐



This exhibit is not a store; it is Dale Black's garage where new lures come to age.



Spinning rods suspended from the garage ceiling await assorted lures old and new.

Crappies on Ice



by *Carl Haensel*

photos by the author

When ice forms in Pennsylvania, the fishing can be great. Two of the premier ice fishing species that bite well and can be good to target are Pennsylvania's two species of crappies. Black Crappies and White Crappies are found throughout Pennsylvania, are closely related and exhibit similar behaviors. Commonly found in lakes and impoundments that fish well using ice fishing techniques, crappies can grow big in Pennsylvania.

Finding fish

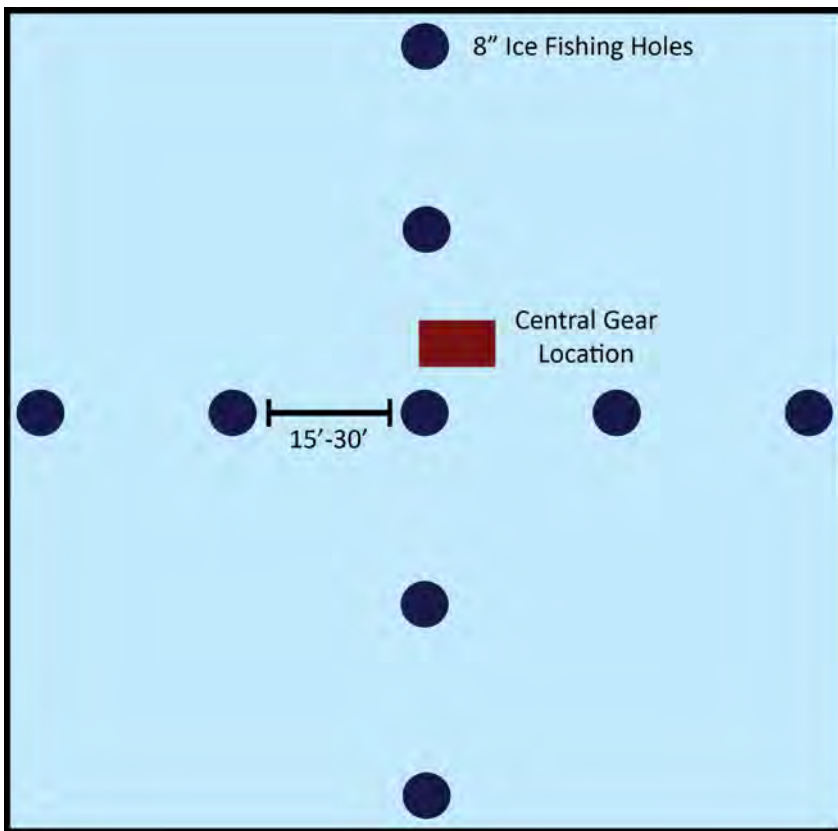
When heading out on the ice during the winter, it pays to maximize the time spent locating fish. While it can be as easy as heading to your favorite summertime hotspots, often fish are in different locations during winter. If you get the opportunity to hit the water at the end of the season before freeze-up, scouting and fishing your favorite lake can pay dividends. Look for remaining submerged vegetation that is green and in good shape. Flats that contain sparse live weed growth can be crappie magnets just after ice-up. If you go ice fishing in the middle of the day and the crappies are not active, do not despair. Crappies are frequently most active a few hours before or after sundown. This can be especially true on bright, sunny days.

Later in the winter, crappies tend to suspend over deep water and holes, often in the deepest part of the lake or reservoir that you are fishing. Look for crappies in deep areas that are near good feeding flats, where fish often move during low-light hours. Use a high-quality sonar unit to look for fish, often suspended 2- to 8-feet off the bottom, though crappies can be found at any depth. If crappies are not feeding, fish may, at times, be found tight to the bottom in deep areas. Fishing for fish here often produces perch, Walleyes and other fish that relate more closely to bottom structure.

Once you have chosen an area, it is important to have a plan to find fish. Pick a central location for your equipment, and drill holes moving out in all directions from that point. Stagger the holes every 15- to 30-feet apart. After you have drilled some holes, move from hole to hole with your depth finder, looking for suspended fish. If you see fish on your finder, drop down an ice fly on a jigging rod to see if the fish will bite. If you pull up a nice crappie, you are in luck. Fish often move, and you may need to shift among your holes or drill an entirely new set of holes to keep up with shifting panfish locations.

Bait for crappies

When you are looking to entice crappies during the winter, you will need bait. While you can occasionally catch active fish on artificial jigging lures and small spoons, it may be inconsistent. Live baits for crappies fall into two categories— minnows and larvae. Minnows are a popular and productive bait for crappies. Small Fathead Minnows are often called “crappie minnows” due to the regular usage



Drill your ice fishing holes in a strategic manner, and check for crappies using a sonar unit quickly and efficiently.

of these fish for bait. Fathead Minnows are durable, live a long time in a bait bucket and are active on the hook. A color variant of Fathead Minnows, called “rosey red” minnows, is often available at bait shops. If you cannot find small Fathead Minnows, small shiners can also work well, though shiners are often a bit large for crappies and are a much more fragile baitfish, in addition to often being more expensive to purchase. As with all baitfish, never release unwanted baitfish into the body of water that you are fishing.

The other category of crappie bait, larvae, consists primarily of waxworms and maggots. Waxworms are more readily available, and the larger size of waxworms work well for crappies. Waxworms also last longer when kept refrigerated. Maggots, also known as spikes, are great when fish are picky and work well when targeting Bluegills in a mixed panfish fishery.

Fishing strategies

When you have found a crappie hotspot, it is time to tempt and tease fish into biting. Most successful crappie anglers use an ice fishing jigging rod with a spinning reel spooled with 2- or 4-pound-test line. Stronger line is not needed for crappies and other panfish. While tip ups can also work, it is extremely common for crappies to trigger a “flag”, drop the bait and be gone before the angler ever reaches the tip up to set the hook. Do not count on tip ups as your primary crappie rig.

When fishing with minnows, a plain hook or ice fly on the end of your spinning rod line is a great idea. Paired with a

bobber, it can be an excellent “static line” that you do not have to watch closely, until the bobber goes down. If you find fish on sonar, suspend your minnow rig at the top of fish schools as fish move through the area. Crappies will commonly move up to take minnows, but higher fish will rarely move lower in the water column to find bait. Try to have your bobber set nearly neutrally buoyant. It should take almost no effort for crappies to pull the bobber under the water. Buoyant bobbers can startle fish.

If you are using waxworms, or similar bait, try tipping worms on a small ice fly. Ice flies in sizes 10-12 and colors like green and glow-in-the-dark are good choices. Actively jigging in a productive area with 1- to 3-foot rod sweeps may bring fish to your hole that are not initially visible on sonar. When fish are present, lower your lure to the fish that is below the hole. Then, 1- to 2-inch motions can entice fish to bite. Finicky fish may often be convinced to bite by very slowly raising your bait until the fish feels pressured to follow. Be prepared for a hard strike. ☐



Use a sonar unit to locate crappies under the ice. Crappies tend to roam during the winter and are often found suspended over deeper water.



NOTES *from the Streams*

Kittanning down under

As a Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO), I often receive phone calls regarding wildlife that a concerned person has encountered. Calls about alligators and venomous snakes are not uncommon. Recently, I was contacted by the Armstrong County Communications System notifying me that an individual reported a dead platypus on the Allegheny River near Kittanning, Armstrong County. After my initial shock disappeared, I advised the dispatcher that the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission does not typically handle exotic species, however, I told the dispatcher that I would give the reporting party a call to see if I could assist. After contacting the caller and being provided a brief description of the “platypus,” I asked the caller if he could send me a photograph of his find. A few moments later, I received two photos on my cell phone. As I have not had any extensive training in the area of wildlife species from Australia, I knew myself not to be a subject matter expert in the field. However, I have watched a fair amount of the Discovery Channel and believed that I could safely identify a platypus from the photographs. My determination of the animal was reached quickly. The supposed platypus was actually a deceased beaver.—WCO Anthony Beers, Western Armstrong County.

Duck for breakfast?

As I walked a local trout stream on an early morning patrol, I observed a duck flying across the creek and landing on a hillside. A red fox was nearby and interested in having fresh duck for breakfast. The fox

quickly chased the duck, nipping at its tail feathers. However, the duck was fast and was able to keep just out of reach of the fox. The duck flew back across the creek to safety. It is amazing to witness what our natural resources offer.—WCO Darrin W. Kephart, Southern York County.

Class pet

I went to my daughter’s elementary school to present an educational program on amphibians and reptiles. I brought a variety of frogs, salamanders, turtles and snakes. My daughter pleaded with me to bring her pet hamster to school for her friends to see. I reluctantly agreed, despite the fact that a hamster is not an amphibian or reptile. I allowed my daughter to show her hamster to her classmates before I started my amphibians and reptiles presentation. The kids seemed engaged during my presentation, especially when showing the class the snakes. I was feeling good about how the presentation was going, until the kids were asked which animal was their favorite. The hamster was the most popular choice, followed by the snakes. Warm and fuzzy still has an edge over cold and slimy.—WCO Doug Daniels, Eastern Schuylkill County.

Hot pink stringer

While on patrol during trout season, I noticed two young men fishing near the road. I pulled my vehicle over and approached the anglers to check for fishing licenses. Both men quickly showed me their licenses. When I asked if they had any luck, the anglers said that they caught three fish and kept the fish, pointing to the fish on a stringer in the water. A hot pink rope caught my eye with three fish attached to the rope. As I checked the fish, the stringer seemed quite unusual. Before I could say anything, one angler said they forgot a stringer and had to improvise. I then realized the hot pink rope was a phone charger cord. I started laughing and told them I never saw a phone charger cord used as a stringer. They laughed and shrugged their shoulders. I wished them luck and hopefully they would get the full use out of their expensive stringer. As I drove away, I regretted not snapping a photo of the hot pink phone charger stringer.—WCO Rachael Thurner-Diaz, Adams and western York counties.

Fake news

I was watching two men cast and retrieve at a popular fishing spot in Pittsburgh, Allegheny County. Through my binoculars, I could tell that one

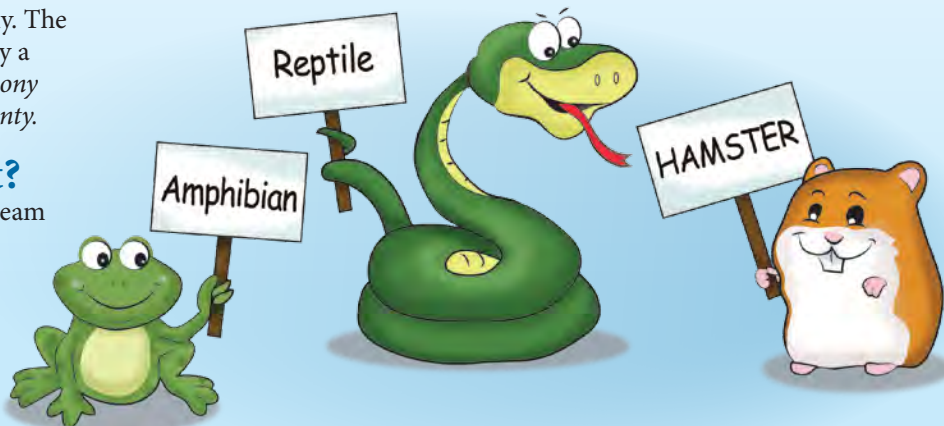


illustration-Andrea Feeny

angler had a license displayed, but the other angler did not. As I approached the anglers, I noticed the man without a license displayed shake his head slowly and curse softly under his breath. I identified myself and asked the angler for his fishing license. He said that he did not purchase one. I asked for his identification, and he provided me with his driver's license. I explained that he would be getting a citation for fishing without a license, and I would be back to explain the process to him shortly. As I finished writing the citation, I walked over to the angler, who was clearly frustrated. He said that he was not mad at me, he was mad at himself, because he knew he needed a license. He went on to explain that he did not expect to see me today. He heard that I did not patrol on Tuesdays, because it was one of my scheduled days off during the week. I explained that our patrol shifts, schedules and days off widely vary given the nature of our work. After explaining and issuing the citation, the man shook my hand and said, "I am not going to listen to any more fake news when it comes to WCO patrol schedules."—*WCO Matthew Raetsch, Western Allegheny County.*

Sorry, but I do not believe you

While patrolling with WCO Chase Rhoades, we stopped by Scotts Run Lake, Berks County, to see the progress of the dam repairs and gauge any impact to the spring trout stocking dates. As we finished checking the status of the project and drove out of the access road, we saw a pile of grocery bags filled with trash and two pieces of mail. Lucky for me (unlucky for the litterer), the name and address, which had been crossed out on the two pieces of mail, was not completely crossed out.

The trash was recently discarded since it was not wet, as it had rained earlier in the morning. We made our way to the address on the mail with a few questions. I rang the doorbell, and an elderly female answered the door. I told her our names and why we were there to speak with her.

Usually, this is the point in the conversation where the false statements tend to pour out, but this time, it was the opposite. I asked the lady in question how the bags of trash ended up at the access. She looked at me with disgust and said, "I threw them out of the car." I was taken aback by the blatant honesty, looked at WCO Rhoades, then back at the lady. I explained the violation for littering and told her she would be receiving a citation today.

After filling out the citation and explaining it to her, she looked at me and said, "You probably won't believe me, but I don't even throw a gum wrapper out the window." I tried to keep a straight face as I replied, "You are correct ma'am, I do not believe you."—*WCO Troy Merrell, Berks County.*

Bringing anglers luck

When I am on patrol, the first thing I typically ask an angler is how the fish are biting. I am always eager for an angler to reply that he or she is catching a lot of nice-sized fish. However, the common replies are that the angler just started, the bite is slow or the fishing was better the previous week. Often, during the interaction or immediately after, the angler catches a fish. I believe there is a correlation to this phenomenon, as it usually happens after he or she told me that the fishing was slow. Maybe, the angler puts the rod down for a second, and the stoppage of the lure or bait triggers a strike. Maybe, he or she tries to show off, but I think it is probably the luck WCOs bring.—*WCO David Raulfs Jr., Wyoming and southwestern Susquehanna counties.*

Everyone likes steelhead

Patrolling for steelhead is an important part of being a WCO in Erie County. Overall, it dominates the work schedule from September to December. We see anglers from all over the country, and some from other countries, visiting Erie for steelhead fishing. Some people like steelhead so much that they are willing to do crazy and illegal things to get these fish.

The locals also like to fish for steelhead. One December day, I was assisting our biologist and hatchery workers with stocking Brown Trout into some of the Lake Erie tributaries. There were a few anglers from West Virginia near where we were stocking the Brown Trout. We told one of the anglers what we were doing, and the angler was impressed by the fish being stocked. He volunteered to assist with stocking. As we were preparing to leave, I asked the other anglers if they had any success. They caught a few steelhead and apologized for not helping with stocking. The anglers said they were watching a local—a river otter—so they didn't want to leave the stream. The anglers observed the river otter take one of the steelhead they had on a stringer, eat the fish and swim away. Most people like to prepare steelhead by smoking them first. However, the river otter preferred these fish raw.—*WCO Tyler Soety, Eastern Erie County.*

Alpaca or llama?

When stocking Sacony Creek, Berks County, we stop the stocking truck at the end of a farmer's lane to take some buckets of fish to the stream. For the last few years, the handsome fella in the photograph below runs over to greet us. As a WCO, I am trained in different fields relating to fishing and boating. I can identify species of fish, frogs, lizards, toads, turtles and snakes. However, we do not receive training on identifying livestock. So, when we make this stop, someone always asks, "Is that an alpaca or a llama?" And, every year, I shrug my shoulders and say, "I have no idea. It's not a fish. I know that for sure."—*WCO Chase Rhoades, Northern Montgomery County.*

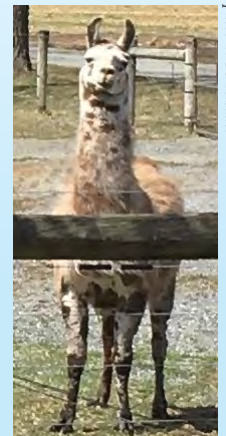


photo-WCO Rhoades



Felmlee Lures— A LOCAL ADVANTAGE

by Alex Zidock Jr. photos by the author

“Under God” was added to the Pledge of Allegiance in 1954, Sports Illustrated magazine appeared on the newsstand for the first time and Elvis Presley’s first single, “That’s All Right” was on the airwaves. Stirring up the waters near Lewistown, that year an avid angler, John Felmlee, began making fishing lures in his garage. With faith and writing a new story for an old company, the new owner of Felmlee Lures sees a bright future.

“John Felmlee had a passion for fishing, and he was an innovative and successful guy,” said Michael Flanagan, C.E.O. and President of Felmlee Lures. “Felmlee made the machinery himself. We are still making lures originated and designed by him, and 65 years later, the machines are still running, and the lures are still catching fish.”

Flanagan is not new to fishing but has only owned the company for about a year. “I sold an investment company I started when I was 28-years-old and was looking to get involved in something I was passionate about. Now, I have the greatest job in America. We get to make lures, and I get to hang out with

other anglers. I travel a lot, and I fish wherever I travel. That helps me know what products work where.”

Spinners for Pennsylvania trout and bass were the first lures Felmlee made. Then, Felmlee bought a soft lure company in Chicago. “He wanted to make the most popular and least labor-intensive lures that worked, so he focused on soft lures. That is what we are producing today,” said Flanagan.

Felmlee Lures continues to make the Redfin Minnow still popular for trout and bass. “Anglers around Lewistown used



Michael Flanagan, C.E.O. and President of Felmlee Lures



One of John Felmlee's original designs, hand-painted Redfin Minnows, look just like live Redfin Shiners.

to take a net and catch 'redfin minnows' (Blacknose Dace and Longnose Dace) to catch trout," said Flanagan. "Our Redfin Minnows are identical to the ones you catch. We mold them, individually paint each one, and before it goes into the packaging, it gets dipped in John Felmlee's 'secret sauce.'"

Every Felmlee lure gets dipped into the 'secret sauce.' A concoction John Felmlee developed to protect the soft plastic lures, so the lures last even after catching a lot of fish.

Production in foreign countries accounts for roughly 85 percent of all the fishing lure products sold in the United States. It would be less expensive to manufacture overseas, but Michael Flanagan is adamant that it will not happen. "I love the history of companies," said Flanagan. "For me, it was intriguing to look at a family business, how they started it and their values. I thought it would be such a great thing to keep those values right here where they started, and it has worked well. With a great foundation, we re-branded, re-packaged and our 5-year plan is not only to become one of the top lure manufacturers but to expand even further outside the United States. Made in the U.S.A. has also helped us with a lot of the major retailers across the country," said Flanagan.

Besides the United States and Canada, Felmlee Lures are now helping anglers catch fish in Greece and Australia.

"Our eels are one of our biggest sellers," said Flanagan. "In Texas, they call it 'Cobia Candy.' Here in the Northeast, it is referred to as 'Striper Candy.' It is the original eel made by melting our special plastic poured into the Felmlee-made molding machines. Then, depending on where it is going, they are hand-painted to match eels of that region. Of course, these lures are also dipped into our 'secret sauce' before packaging and shipping," said Flanagan.

Flanagan notes that there are newer technologies out there and that some manufacturers are stamping images on their lures. Instead, Flanagan has a staff of artists that apply paints to emulate authentic fish patterns.

Felmlee Lures offers retailers 130 different products. Among those listed as big sellers in Pennsylvania is the hellgrammite for trout and bass. Freshwater starter kits for trout and bass that contain different size lures and a S3™ Species Specific Scent fish attractant are packed together for newer anglers. There are Stone Catty Spinners, colorful frogs, crayfish and soft-bodied trout.

For saltwater anglers, there are eels by the bucket and eels with squid heads that come in 8, 11 and 16-inches. You can get



Michael Flanagan offers eels in a variety of sizes by the bucket or individually packaged with jigheads treated with S3™ Species Specific Scent.

sinking bass eels, sinking bass currtails and even an Eel or Curl Tail 8 Count Hooked Umbrella Rig. Combinations with shad and sardines are also popular among the soft plastic assortment.

"Throughout the United States, but specifically in Pennsylvania, people should realize by buying our products, they are employing local people. We have 15 local people working for us who are creating art. These people create lures that worked for 65 years. We are helping the community. It is nice to buy local and support local manufacturing in Pennsylvania," said Flanagan.

Relating a fishing experience more than 22 years ago with his three children, Flanagan recounted, "crossing that flat expanse of water as dawn's first rays creased the sky, those three young children were next to me. The dramatic setting, the presence of my next generation and the heading to fish made me feel a connection to God that remains powerful to this day." □



Felmlee Lures are made and assembled in Lewistown by local workers.

Felmlee Lures

600 Middle Road
Lewistown, PA 17044
www.FelmleeLures.com
717-248-5061



STRUCTURE REVEALED

by Jerry Bush

photos by the author

Conditions were not favorable for a January ice fishing venture, so I opted to take a winter hike around one of Pennsylvania's drawn down lakes. As I hiked toward a favored boat launch, I became intrigued by some objects I noticed in the distance, just off the shoreline. The objects were several discarded evergreen trees, each secured by a couple concrete blocks. Clearly, the structures would later be submerged to attract fish. If I were to stand next to the trees in late-March, I would be neck deep in water.

I surmised the temporary structures were either placed by the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) or an area rod and gun club after obtaining permission from the United States Army Corps of Engineers, which oversees this body of water. The trees were spread to within 75-yards of the public docks.

This was not the first time I made such a discovery. Many bodies of water experience draw down activity before hard freezing occurs, revealing structure that will be submerged and hidden when water rises to normal, summer levels. Knowing this structure exists and understanding its value to certain fish species can later help summer anglers.

There are several reasons water levels are reduced. Water expands dramatically and with great force as it freezes, threatening valuable shoreline habitats. Depleted water levels effectively expose plants along the normally shallow shorelines, allowing the vegetation to dry, freeze and die. Sometimes the goal is to kill weeds that are undesirably overtaking certain shallow areas of impoundments. Occasionally, it may be determined necessary to effectively reduce habitat that aids an invasive species.

Exposing shorelines may be helpful to boaters and anglers, because it also grants opportunity for examination of

permanent docks, launch sites and seawalls. Low water levels permits immediate maintenance and aids cleaning activities and sediment removal.

As the United States Army Corps of Engineers confirmed during my inquiry, the primary reason for winter water reduction in Pennsylvania is to prepare for the influx of water, which is expected to occur when vast spring precipitation combines with melting snow. "We've learned through experience that many floods can be anticipated and prevented by reducing the amount of water staged pre-winter," said John Kelly. There is no way to be certain months in advance how much water a reservoir will be required to hold during a spring thaw. It is easier and safer to control the water level by reducing the outflow of water at a dam and letting it rise slowly to the desired level. The vision of the United States Army Corps of Engineers is "to provide integrated regional solutions that minimize risk and enhance reliability for the nation's infrastructure, water resources and environment."

For many boating anglers, it is adequate that structure shows up on sonar equipment. Sonar equipment improves every year, and some units include underwater cameras. However, there will never be anything better than knowing what you are looking for when leaving the dock.

This strategy of observing low-water lakes does not just pertain to boating anglers. Shore anglers can benefit by observing topographic changes and items that will later be hidden. This information allows purposeful bait placement at expected depths and near specific objects when various species are in season and can be expected to inhabit particular environments. In fact, observing what will soon be underwater may be more pertinent to shore anglers, because sonar units will not help them during the spring and summer months.

Consider the evergreen trees I discovered during my January hike. The trees were placed well within casting distance of some picnic tables that are popular with shore anglers. Even if someone "heard" of the trees existence but

had not seen the positioning, they would likely anticipate the trees would be spread north, away from the nearby boat launch. Instead, the trees unexpectedly spread south, toward the boat launch and the docking area. Shore anglers who know the trees are strategically placed in front of the tables will enjoy a genuine advantage. I laugh at the thought of other shore anglers wondering what secret bait is being used by the successful anglers. The real secret is the structures. Similarly, boating anglers who did not realize the submerged trees existed would never consider moving their boats just 75 yards from the launch to fish.

While scouting, pay attention to tributaries feeding inland water bodies. Most anglers imagine streams flow straight into a lake. That is rarely the case. Creek channels curve toward one shoreline or another, or often snake into the impoundment. Many man-made lakes were created by damming meandering streams that previously existed.

Note any exposed cuts into the banks of streams and lakes that will later be underwater. Fish are almost guaranteed to hide in cutouts when submerged.

Stumps and boulders can be seen at this time, but don't ignore less obvious features. Sand may seem rather boring to an angler, but it is a substrate that attracts bass, pike and sometimes Muskellunge. Gamefish often cruise along sharp ledges cut into the sand, waiting for baitfish to enter water that warms rapidly. Look for drops that resemble foot high steps.

Rocky bottoms are always attractive to gamefish, especially at pre-spawn and post-spawn intervals. Rocks also attract the sun's heat while providing shelter to other food sources. Gamefish will cruise near locations where larger rocks blend with structure consisting of gravel. Some gamefish, like bass, will hang nearby to protect offspring. More voracious predators, such as Muskellunge, will cruise this structure in hopes of devouring young fish.

On winter days when temperatures creep above freezing, another substructure to consider is muck. It may look like mud at this time, but it will get weedy when submerged for weeks and exposed to the warmer temperatures. Vegetation can attract any fish especially Muskellunge. Mucky, weedy habitat is considered the metropolis area for Muskellunge on any lake where the popular predator resides.

I cannot overemphasize the success I have enjoyed by finding downed trees in winter and fishing over or near trees during summer. Just about any species of gamefish is attracted to a log submerged in 5- to 10-feet of water. Bass, catfish and panfish find this structure irresistible.

Also, observe potential habitat outside the impoundment. Trees that are 50-feet from the winter shoreline may later be

at water's edge. Low-hanging branches may later provide shelter for gamefish that not only desire avoiding humans but must be on alert for feathered predators.

Do not depend on your memory to recall all the items you notice during your winter evaluation. Underwater topographic maps of most major impoundments can be purchased. When the maps are not available, sketch your own map. Make notations of items of interest you see now that will later be

submerged. Arrow or circle potential locations, and make a note of why you consider it intriguing. For PFBC Fish Habitat Improvement Plans, visit www.fishandboat.com/Resource/Habitat/Pages/LakeImprovementPlans.aspx.

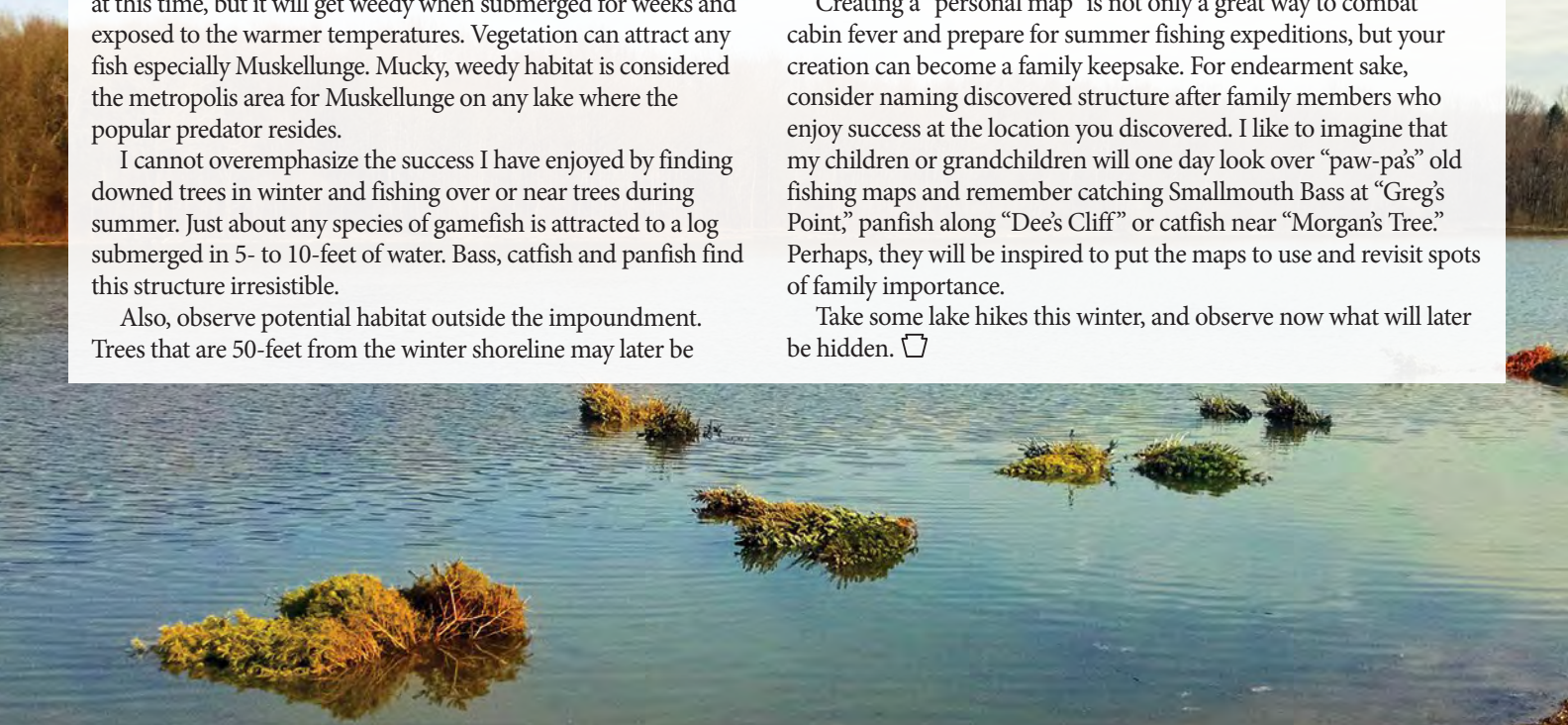
A personal investigation of visible structure can confirm information that is obsolete and no longer relevant. For example, one map available for purchase includes a legend of man-made structures, but many of the structures listed have rotted away.

Creating a "personal map" is not only a great way to combat cabin fever and prepare for summer fishing expeditions, but your creation can become a family keepsake. For endearment sake, consider naming discovered structure after family members who enjoy success at the location you discovered. I like to imagine that my children or grandchildren will one day look over "paw-paw's" old fishing maps and remember catching Smallmouth Bass at "Greg's Point," panfish along "Dee's Cliff" or catfish near "Morgan's Tree." Perhaps, they will be inspired to put the maps to use and revisit spots of family importance.

Take some lake hikes this winter, and observe now what will later be hidden. ☐



Creating a "personal map" is not only a great way to combat cabin fever and prepare for summer fishing expeditions, but your creation can become a family keepsake. Pictured are (left to right) the author and his grandson, Lincoln Wiseman.



These trees will soon be submerged and will attract fish.



WINTER PERCH of Presque Isle Bay

by *Darl Black* photos by the author

Presque Isle Bay, Erie County, may be the most popular winter destination for Yellow Perch in Pennsylvania. This 3,800-acre bay off Lake Erie not only gives up large numbers of Yellow Perch during cold weather months, but it also yields many “jumbos”—perch of exceptional size. Anglers from Ohio, New York and Pennsylvania travel to Presque Isle Bay for ice fishing season.

While small perch inhabit Presque Isle Bay all summer, a massive influx of larger Yellow Perch takes place in the late fall and winter as schools from Lake Erie migrate into the bay to wait for an early spring spawn.

The current Pennsylvania State-Record Yellow Perch came from Presque Isle Bay. This 2-pound, 14-ounce perch was caught in 2016 by Brian Clark shortly after ice-out.

Kirk Rudzinski is a long-time ice angler and owner of East End Angler, one of several “mom and pop” bait and tackle shops that dot the Erie area.

“When the water temperature drops below 65 degrees F in the early fall, the first perch schools begin to show up,” said Rudzinski. “These fish move through the channel and gradually filter to all parts of the bay. As the water continues to cool, more perch enter Presque Isle Bay.”

This veteran angler explains that until safe ice forms, usually mid-January, shore-bound anglers catch perch at North Pier, South Pier, Dobbins Landing, foot of Holland Street, Liberty Park, Ferncliff and several other sites. Of course, boat anglers have flexibility for offshore fishing sites, generally launching from the Chestnut Street Boat Launch on city-side or Niagara Boat Launch and Presque Isle Marina on the peninsula.



Until sections of Presque Isle Bay freeze solid enough for ice fishing, usually not until sometime in January, perch anglers fish from docks and piers primarily on the city-side of Presque Isle Bay, as well as from the north and south channel breakwalls. Many pre-ice-cover perch are holding in deeper water, and these sites typically have water depths of 15- to 27-feet.



Misery Bay and Head of the Bay are usually the first areas to obtain safe ice. If cold weather continues, ice gradually forms all over Presque Isle Bay, opening many areas to ice anglers.

Rudzinski points out that safe ice does not occur across the entire Presque Isle Bay at the same time, nor does it necessarily remain safe once it freezes. The current movement back and forth through the channel to the main lake keeps the eastern end of Presque Isle Bay from freezing until sometime after the rest of the bay.

Furthermore, as long as Lake Erie remains ice free, lake freighters may arrive at port for winter repair work. The water surge created by a ship coming into Presque Isle Bay often fractures and upheaves what was safe ice in certain sections of the bay. Add unpredictable winter temperatures of recent years, and a frozen Presque Isle Bay in January may completely melt by early February and refreeze in late February.

If traveling a distance to fish Presque Isle Bay, a phone call to a local bait shop to learn the ice conditions is a good idea. Also, the East End Angler Facebook page regularly posts ice conditions based on customer reports.

So, where do you fish on the ice? Many new anglers head to the concentration of anglers already on the ice. Others may want to locate their own spots.

“There is mistaken notion by many anglers that deep water is the only place for perch. Not true,” said Rudzinski. “During the winter, perch are all over the Bay. You may find them as shallow as 7- or 8-feet in the weeds to as deep as 27 feet. Perch are located wherever its prey is found.”

Some anglers use tip-ups, but most anglers use a short ice rod with a small spinning reel. Rudzinski recommends 2- or 4-pound-test line.

“Emerald Shiners are the best bait if you can get them. However, the Emerald Shiner population is currently depressed. If we cannot find these shiners and stock up our tanks by winter, then area bait shops will offer small Golden Shiners. Simply tip an ice jig with a minnow and lower it down into the hole. Or, you can try tipping the jig with maggots. It is that simple,” said Rudzinski.



An underwater camera shows that perch groups or small schools in shallow water roam through an area rather than hold at a specific location. The screen may be blank for 10- to 20-minutes, then it may suddenly fill with perch passing through.

Gus Glasgow is a hardcore ice angler with specialized electronics and a host of modern lure presentations.

“Based on my experience, I know Presque Isle Bay perch travel in packs under the ice, constantly moving and hunting for food. If you want to find them, you have to roam, too, especially if fishing shallow,” said Glasgow. “My go-to perch lures in recent years have been a Jigging Rap and an ice spoon in bright colors, tipped with a minnow head.”

“However, last season during the Western Pennsylvania Hardwater Tournament Series on the Bay, I learned about catching big perch. I observed the winning team work their lures in shallow water in the western corner of the Bay—much shallower than the majority of anglers on the ice.”

“Their odd-ball presentation of erratically working a Jigging Rap yielded numbers of jumbo perch. They were constantly snapping the lure. Usually, this type of lure is fished much slower and methodically. However, erratic was working for these anglers.”

Even though perch fishing on Presque Isle Bay is steeped in tradition, keep an open mind to new possibilities. ☐

Using the PFBC Interactive Trout Stream Maps



stream, PFBC has attached information such as species of trout living within the stream, percentage of public access and the length of the stream section. With all this information available from the click of a mouse, it makes planning a fishing outing easy.

I spend a considerable amount of time referencing the Interactive Trout Stream Maps. I have been blown away with the accuracy of the

information conveyed. During the summer months of 2019, I would identify multiple Class A trout streams, those with the highest density of trout sampled, within proximity to one another with public access and then spend the day exploring the waters in search of wild trout.

Not only did the streams I located using the Interactive Trout Stream Maps contain wild trout, but by limiting the search to Class A trout streams, I focused on streams where trout were most plentiful. With a 3-weight fly rod in hand and a small fly box of dry flies, I often brought many trout to hand, with many more missed bites in the process.

If a stream looks conducive to containing wild trout, but is not classified as a Class A trout stream, it is still worth fishing. On many occasions, myself and other anglers had great success on streams designated as naturally reproducing trout streams, which contain wild trout but not at the density of Class A trout streams. On these streams, skip pocket water, and focus on big, deep holes where trout are most likely holding.

by Nathan Woleslagle

photos by the author

Pennsylvania has many streams including naturally reproducing and stocked trout waters. With so many stream options to choose from, deciding where to fish may seem overwhelming. Luckily, the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) developed a useful resource for anglers to reference before going trout fishing.

The PFBC Interactive Trout Stream Maps can be found on the Commission's website, www.fishandboat.com, underneath the "Fish," "Trout" tab. Before accessing the Interactive Maps, browsing the "Trout" tab contents of the website is worthwhile for information regarding trout water classification types, stocking schedules and helpful fishing articles.

Scroll down to the "Interactive Maps" section on the page. After clicking the "Trout Streams: Regulations and Designations" link, a new browser window will load a map of Pennsylvania, with information on streams across Pennsylvania. The map can be filtered to show the types of streams you are looking to target. If you want to fish streams that are part of the Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters program, where specific sections are stocked with exceedingly large trout, you can filter the maps to show you those streams and the sections that are part of the program.

In addition to being able to identify stream classifications, the Interactive Trout Stream Maps offer other valuable information for anglers. When clicking on a specific



A native Brook Trout that fell for a dry fly in a small Class A trout stream in central Pennsylvania.



Reese Kyler and Aaron Morder with a Brown Trout caught while fly fishing a Keystone Select Stocked Trout Water.

development and preservation of native Brook Trout fisheries. Wilderness Trout Streams can be found from the northwest corner of Pennsylvania in Warren County and all the way to the southeast portion in Adams County. Most Wilderness Trout Streams are located within the central portion of the state in Centre, Clinton and Potter counties.

Special Regulation Trout Streams also appear in the map as a filter. These special regulation areas vary but mainly contain Catch and Release, Trophy Trout and Delayed Harvest Artificial Lures Only sections. To see what special regulations are in place for a stream highlighted as such, click on the stream and the information will be displayed. Special Regulation Trout Streams offer a variety of different fishing opportunities for both wild and hatchery trout. Special regulation areas are worth exploring and fishing as much as other stream classifications.

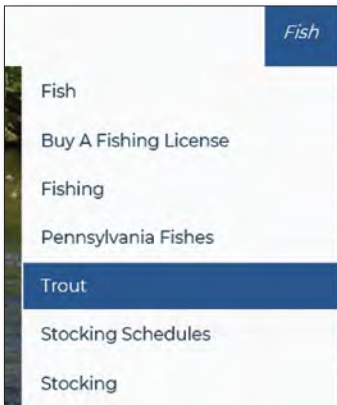
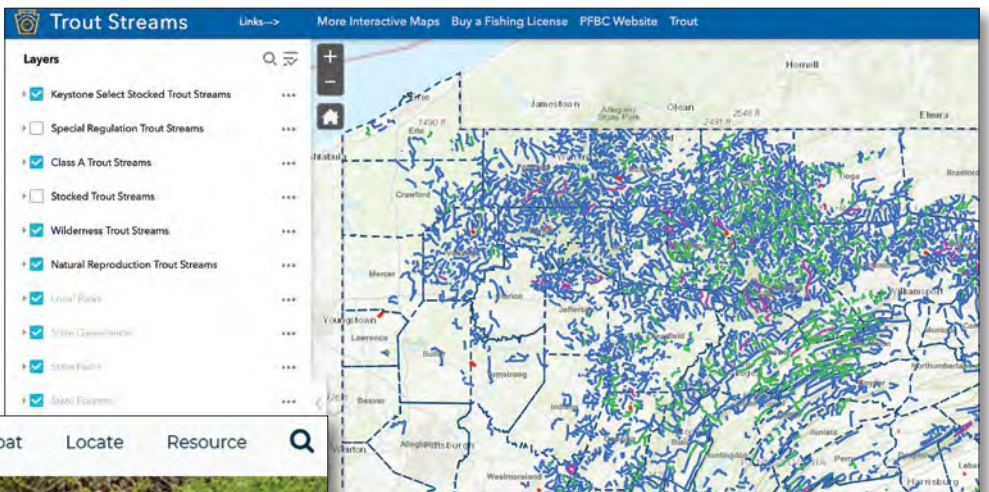
The PFBC Interactive Trout Stream Maps offer incredible insight into the vast amount of trout water within Pennsylvania. Due to the maps' many filters and information displayed on individual streams, anglers can learn a lot about where to catch trout. This map system also opens the door to new anglers looking to explore the types of trout fishing available. Whether fly fishing for native Brook Trout or searching for

Another interesting stream type to explore using the maps is Wilderness Trout Streams. The Wilderness Trout Streams classification was established in 1969 to protect pristine trout waters throughout Pennsylvania. These streams are designated as Wilderness Trout Streams due to their remoteness, lack of

Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters, the information to plan a fishing outing is available. With several stream classifications and regulations, there is truly a trout fishing opportunity on a Pennsylvania stream for everyone. The Interactive Trout Stream Maps will help you find it. 🏠

For Trout Streams: Regulations and Designations:

1. Visit www.fishandboat.com.
2. Click "Fish" from the main menu.
3. Select "Trout" from the drop-down menu.
4. Scroll down to "Interactive Maps."
5. Click the "Trout Streams: Regulations and Designations" link.



INTERACTIVE MAPS

Find waters by using one or more of our interactive maps:

- [Trout Streams: Regulations and Designations](#)
- [Special Regulation Areas](#)
- [Biologist Reports](#) for reports on waters surveyed by Commission biologists
- [County Guide](#) for access points
- [Trout in the Classroom](#) - view participating schools (patroutintheclassroom.org)

THE KEYSTONE FLY BOX: 20 Flies for 2020



by *Christian A. Shane*

photos by the author

*"About the only certainty, other than uncertainty, in fly fishing is that a fly won't catch fish if it stays in its box."
Arnold Gingrich, editor and publisher.*

Welcome to 2020. The winter fishing season gives Pennsylvania's fly anglers a plethora of time to organize fishing gear, tie up secret flies and stock fly boxes for the upcoming year.

What patterns will we include in our multitude or meagerness of fly gear in 2020? I surveyed the chapter members from Penn's Woods West Trout Unlimited on their favorite Keystone flies and their fly pattern preferences. This informal data from veteran fly anglers and tiers may be a great start to stocking your Keystone Fly Box for the varying seasons in 2020.



Test your Keystone Fly Box favorites on Pennsylvania's waters.

1. Pheasant Tail Nymph

An overwhelming choice for Pennsylvania anglers and number one on our list is the popular Pheasant Tail Nymph. Tied in many adaptations, this fly designed by Frank Sawyer simply utilizes pheasant tail fibers and wire to mimic shadowy nymphs. Some variants, like the Frenchie include dubbing and a hot thread spot to spark a strike.

2. Elk Haired Caddis

In a close second, the Elk Haired Caddis dry fly pattern mimics many surface creatures in Pennsylvania. Created by Al Troth, a fellow Pennsylvania fly tier, its light wing, palmered hackle and buggy profile make it alluring to fish under the surface.

3. Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear Nymph

Rounding out the trifecta of patterns, the Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear Nymph represents the paler insects located within Pennsylvania's waters. Though it imitates nothing in particular, it is an impression of many things such as a shell-building caddis or a mayfly nymph.

4. Adams Dry Fly

Another dry attractor accounting for many trout, this traditional fly with grizzly hackle and grey dubbing continues to be a Keystone all-time favorite. The Adams Dry Fly varies in the classic version, parachute, or in the floating deer hair dessert, the Irresistible.

5. Woolly Bugger

Does the Woolly Bugger imitate a leech, a crayfish, a minnow or something else? Regardless, variations and different sizes of the Woolly Bugger are a must-have pattern in your fly box.



Keystone pattern selections from the author's fly box. Pictured are (top to bottom) Soft Hackle, Stimulator, Crystal Meth, Copper John, Beadhead Mop Fly, Beadhead Prince Nymph, Blue Winged Olive, Adams Parachute, Hare's Ear Nymph, Elk Haired Caddis and Jig Head Pheasant Tail.

6. Blue Winged Olive

Many Pennsylvania dry fly anglers mimic the dainty Blue Winged Olive. Baetis imitations go through many stages that fly anglers include in their boxes such as the Blue Winged Olive Comparadun and the Looped Wing Emerger.

7. Zebra Midge

Go small or go home. A simple pattern to tie in sizes #16 through #22, this wired nymph pattern packs a punch in your gear. Keep several colors handy such as black, olive, cream and red to match the situational emergence.

8. Prince Nymph

Using contrasting colored turkey biot tails, this searching nymph produces well with a bead head or on a jig-style hook.

9. San Juan Worm

With just a snippet of chenille material, some may say it isn't a fly pattern at all. Others may keep its effectiveness quiet as a top ten fly pattern. Also, a shout out to the Squirmy Wormy pattern.

10. Mop Fly

This jig-style pattern has rocketed to the top twenty flies of recent popularity. Try the Mop Fly in different colors and even in the smaller version of the Micro Mop Fly for those finicky fish.

11. Muddler Minnow

A traditional pattern, the Muddler Minnow does what a streamer should do. It fishes the entire water column and provides a great profile. With the sculpin species in Pennsylvania, the Muddler Minnow makes a great imitation.

12. Soft hackles

A Keystone wet fly favorite, soft hackles work well in clear water and double as effective trailer flies. Try them in varying colors such as Caddis Green, Grey Fox Emerger, Hare's Ear Soft Hackle, Partridge and Yellow, and Woodcock and Orange.

13. Light Cahill

This pattern simply imitates many Pennsylvania hatches. The Light Cahill, tied in both dry and wet, includes a spot on the 20 for 20.

14. Foam Beetle and Ant

Available in many sizes, shapes and colors, foam material allows the fly tier to create many inviting terrestrial patterns.

15. Copper John

This pattern sinks effectively into the strike zone by using wire as body ribbing. Tied in a colorful palette, it mimics many nymphs.

16. Green Weenie

Whether it mimics a green inchworm or a caddis pupa, the Green Weenie is another easy-to-tie pattern and worth the space in your fly box.

17. Griffith's Gnat

With a palmer of grizzly hackle over peacock herl, this minuscule fly will land gingerly in the water film. Tie it in hook sizes #16 to #24.

18. Sucker Spawn and 19. Crystal Meth

For steelhead anglers, don't leave home without these egg patterns when fishing Lake Erie tributaries.

20. Stimulator

This large dry attractor pattern rounds out the top 20 flies.

Honorable Mentions

- Blood Dot
- Brassie
- Cased Caddis
- Clouser Minnow
- Crystal Egg
- Damselfly Nymph
- Deep Sparkle Pupa
- Eggstasy Egg
- Egg Sucking Leech
- Flashback Pheasant Tail Nymph
- Flying Ant
- Foam Beetle
- Grannom
- Green Inchworm
- Hellgrammite
- Hendrickson
- Joe's Hopper
- Marabou Midge
- Muskrat Nymph
- Pale Morning Dun
- Peeking Caddis
- Quill Gordon
- Rainbow Warrior
- Royal Coachman
- Rusty Spinner
- Scud
- Steelie Golden Stone
- Tent-Wing Caddis
- Tricos
- Variant
- Walt's Worm
- Wiggle Nymph
- Woolly Worm
- X-Caddis
- Yellow Humpy
- Yellow Stonefly
- Zonker
- Zug Bug

Like most fly anglers, we probably overstocked our fly box. Were your favorite flies forgotten? Add your own patterns to your Keystone fly box during these winter months. ☐

2020 FISHING LICENSES

LICENSE YEAR

Annual licenses are valid from Dec. 1, 2019, through Dec. 31, 2020. WHILE FISHING, your license must be signed in ink and must be displayed on an outer garment. In addition, anglers must be prepared to furnish positive proof of identification.



Code	Type of Fishing License or Permit	Age	Cost*
101	Resident (Annual)	16-64	\$22.90
104	Senior Resident (Annual)	65 & up	\$11.90
105	Senior Resident (Lifetime)	65 & up	\$51.90
108	1-Day Resident (not valid March 15–April 30)	16 & up	\$11.90
102	Non-Resident (Annual)	16 & up	\$52.90
106	1-Day Tourist ** (not valid March 15–April 30)	16 & up	\$26.90
103	3-Day Tourist	16 & up	\$26.90
107	7-Day Tourist	16 & up	\$34.90
110	Voluntary Youth Fishing License (Annual)	Less than 16	\$2.90
109	Mentored Youth Permit	Less than 16	\$0.00
150	Trout-Salmon Permit	16 & up	\$9.90
140	1-Year Trout/Salmon Permit ***	16 & up	\$9.90
143	3-Year Senior Lifetime Trout-Salmon Permit	65 & up	\$25.90
144	5-Year Senior Lifetime Trout-Salmon Permit	65 & up	\$41.90
145	10-Year Senior Lifetime Trout-Salmon Permit	65 & up	\$81.90
151	Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$9.90
152	Combination Trout-Salmon/Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$15.90
136	Alternate Display Annual Fishing License Button	Any Age	\$10.00

* Includes issuing agent fee of \$1.00 and \$0.90 PALS transaction fee. Excludes the 109 Mentored Youth Permit.

** Includes Trout-Salmon and Lake Erie permits, not valid March 15–April 30. *** Applies to Senior Lifetime purchased on or after 1/1/2015 or may also be purchased as a trout program donation.

2020 MULTI-YEAR FISHING LICENSES

Code	Type of Fishing License or Permit	Age	Cost*
140	1-Year Trout/Salmon Permit **	16 & up	\$9.90
141	1-Year Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$9.90
142	1-Year Combo Trout/Salmon Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$15.90
030	3-Year Resident	16-64	\$64.90
031	3-Year Non-Resident	16 & up	\$154.90
032	3-Year Senior Resident	65 & up	\$31.90
033	3-Year Trout-Salmon Permit	16 & up	\$25.90
034	3-Year Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$25.90
035	3-Year Combo Trout-Salmon/Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$43.90
050	5-Year Resident	16-64	\$106.90
051	5-Year Non-Resident	16 & up	\$256.90
052	5-Year Senior Resident	65 & up	\$51.90
053	5-Year Trout-Salmon Permit	16 & up	\$41.90
054	5-Year Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$41.90
055	5-Year Combo Trout-Salmon/Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$71.90
060	10-Year Resident	16 & up	\$211.90
061	10-Year Non-Resident	16 & up	\$511.90
063	10-Year Trout-Salmon Permit	16 & up	\$81.90
064	10-Year Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$81.90
065	10-Year Combo Trout-Salmon/Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$141.90

* Includes issuing agent fee of \$1.00 and \$0.90 PALS transaction fee. ** May also be purchased as a trout program donation.

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2020 VOLUNTARY PERMITS

LICENSE YEAR

The new Voluntary Permits are designed to help maintain funding levels for several key fishing-related programs. Revenues generated from the sale of these permits will be reinvested into their respective program.



Code	Type of Voluntary Permits	Age	Cost*
073	Voluntary Bass Permit	Any	\$11.90
077	3-Year Voluntary Bass Permit	Any	\$31.90
081	5-Year Voluntary Bass Permit	Any	\$51.90
085	10-Year Voluntary Bass Permit	Any	\$101.90
071	Voluntary Musky Permit	Any	\$11.90
075	3-Year Voluntary Musky Permit	Any	\$31.90
079	5-Year Voluntary Musky Permit	Any	\$51.90
083	10-Year Voluntary Musky Permit	Any	\$101.90
070	Voluntary Habitat/Waterways Conservation Permit	Any	\$11.90
074	3-Year Voluntary Habitat/Waterways Conservation Permit	Any	\$31.90
078	5-Year Voluntary Habitat/Waterways Conservation Permit	Any	\$51.90
082	10-Year Voluntary Habitat/Waterways Conservation Permit	Any	\$101.90
072	Voluntary Wild Trout & Enhanced Waters Permit	Any	\$26.90
076	3-Year Voluntary Wild Trout & Enhanced Waters Permit	Any	\$76.90
080	5-Year Voluntary Wild Trout & Enhanced Waters Permit	Any	\$126.90
084	10-Year Voluntary Wild Trout & Enhanced Waters Permit	Any	\$251.90

* Includes issuing agent fee of \$1.00 and \$0.90 PALS transaction fee.

www.GoneFishingPa.com



Fishing the **UPPER WEST BRANCH SUSQUEHANNA RIVER**

by Ralph Scherder

photos by the author

Think of the West Branch Susquehanna River, and you will likely imagine the waterway as it appears downstream of Williamsport, Lycoming County—a wide, gentle giant teeming with Smallmouth Bass. Upriver some hundred miles or so, that is certainly not the case. Although you will still find a scattering of bass above Curwensville Lake, Clearfield County, the river takes on a whole new character. This section of the West Branch Susquehanna River is trout country.

The Upper West Branch Susquehanna River is a comeback story that is, thankfully, becoming rather familiar in Pennsylvania. As we invest millions of dollars to correct the environmental damages of decades ago, many of the once-polluted waterways in Pennsylvania are being re-established as viable fisheries. Two projects, in particular, are responsible for the West Branch Susquehanna River's return—the removal of the Barnes-Watkins Refuse Pile and the installation of an

Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) treatment facility on Barnes and Tucker's Lancashire 15 mine, which closed in 1969.

Prior to the AMD treatment facility, the inactive mine discharged almost 15 millions of gallons of water laced with iron pyrite and other mining chemicals into the river every day. Today, the facility captures the water that naturally rises from within the mine, neutralizes the chemicals and pumps it into the river. Since the water originates several hundred feet below the surface of the earth, it is very cold, creating a fishery that can support trout year-round.

The water quality is excellent, too. In fact, the first 8 miles or so, from the plant down to the beginning of the flood control section in Cherry Tree, Indiana County, are classified as Class A Wild Trout Streams. In 2018, this section, combined with the additional 18 miles of river down to Dowler Junction, began to be managed under Catch and Release All Tackle regulations. The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) does not stock this section with trout, but fishing is open year-round.

The West Branch Susquehanna River is an interesting and challenging river to fish. Although there is a scattering

of Brook Trout present throughout its upper reaches, the predominant species is Brown Trout. Given the Brown Trout's finicky nature, some days the river can seem full of fish, and other days it can seem void of life altogether. I do best on dark, overcast days. But, even then, I seldom catch more than a handful of 10- to 12-inch fish and an occasional 16-inch fish on any single outing. However, the river is loaded with small Brown Trout in the 4- to 6-inch range, which speaks volumes about the West Branch Susquehanna River's future.

Much of the river consists of long, flat stretches with lots of woody structure. Fallen trees provide numerous fish holding areas. I have no doubt that there are some lunker trout living under many of these structures. I have yet to catch a 20-inch wild Brown Trout from West Branch Susquehanna River, but PFBC stream surveys indicate such fish at these spots.

The first time I fished West Branch Susquehanna River, I started at the bridge in Stifflertown, Clearfield County, and worked downstream. About 200 yards down from the bridge, I came to a deep run between a fallen tree and the far bank. I worked a size 8 black Woolly Bugger slowly up through the current when my line stopped like I had snagged the bottom. To my surprise, a long, lanky Rainbow Trout came to the surface, shaking its massive head. That fish measured just over 22 inches, and it is the only Rainbow Trout I caught in the West Branch Susquehanna River, but that does not mean there aren't more big Rainbow Trout. I suspect it migrated from Chest Creek, which is part of the Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters program. Chest Creek enters the West Branch Susquehanna River near the town of Mahaffey, Clearfield County, several miles downriver from Stifflertown.

Many of the tributaries in this region are either stocked with trout or have wild populations. It is common for stocked fish to swim into bigger water, and the streams with wild trout often serve as nurseries for the river. In the fall, Brown Trout run up into streams to spawn, and those offspring eventually return to populate the West Branch Susquehanna River.

Stripping and swinging streamers through the low, slow flats is my favorite technique for covering lots of water. Some sections of the river offer more gradient and better current for nymphing. On many occasions, I have seen anglers have luck with spinners. West Branch Susquehanna River trout are not necessarily selective, but these fish care a lot about how your fly or lure is presented.

When I am nymphing, I find myself tying on more bright-colored patterns than usual such as Copper Johns, Mop Flies and Squirmy Wormies in various colors. Much has to do with the water color. The treatment facility uses large doses of lime to neutralize toxic chemicals, leaving the water slightly cloudy. Chartreuse, hot pink, yellow and black are my go-to colors for fishing the West Branch Susquehanna River.

The West Branch Susquehanna River rises in Cambria County, just west of Carrolltown. The upper section, from its headwaters to Curry Run, are paralleled by U.S. Route 219, and from Curry Run to Curwensville Lake by PA Route 969. The river can be accessed using bridge crossings off of both routes as well as pull-offs directly along the water.

Most of the upper West Branch Susquehanna River runs through public or private property where landowners have granted access. That means there is a lot of water to explore along one of Pennsylvania's newest success stories. ☐



The Upper West Branch Susquehanna River is a medium-sized waterway that is easy to wade with lots of productive pools, runs and riffles.

RATTLE

Your Way to More

ICE

WALLEYES

by Ross Robertson

photos by the author

If you think fish in open water are finicky, wait until you see fish when ice hits. Walleyes are known to be even more finicky under the ice. Generally, better visibility and lures restricted in one place give Walleyes more time to inspect presentations, often making for difficult catching.

In the last few years, many serious anglers rely on baits with rattles more to lure in and trigger Walleyes to bite. Rattles are such a buzz word in ice fishing that many classic lures that have gone unchanged for decades now offer the classics in rattling versions. Science has even shown us how rattles can help while fishing.

Several years ago, researchers at Berkley Fishing in Spirit Lake, IA, conducted a study with a lipless crankbait in a large test pond. An identical lipless crankbait was used in different sizes, types and quantity of BBs to create a different pitch and frequency of sound. Overwhelmingly, the results showed that certain species would hit specific lures that had a particular frequency and pitch. By changing the type of rattle in the same lure, they knew what species would hit the lure.

While working with a lure manufacturer 5 years ago to develop a rattling ice lure, five different rattle chambers were tested to see what produced best. The results were amazing. A brass chambered rattle with midsized rattles drastically outproduced glass chambers or those with smaller BBs. While both of these experiences have proven to me that rattles are a good thing in most ice fishing scenarios, knowing when and how to implement rattles will help even more.

The call in

On large bodies of water, like Lake Erie, getting fish under your fishing spot can be challenging. Unlike the



warmer months where a boat allows you to cover lots of water, ice fishing is different. It is easy to feel like you are chasing a needle in a haystack, only being able to fish directly below your fishing hole. A rattling lure allows you to “call in” fish from greater distances than you would think. On an underwater camera, I have watched a few shakes of a rattling spoon move fish from at least 40 feet to a friend’s lure in a matter of seconds. Much like the results from Berkley Fishing, the trick is to know how often and how hard you want to shake the lure to call fish in. Experiment with several different cadences to see what works best that day. In most cases, once fish are close enough to be seen on electronics, it is often best to slow down the cadence.



On large bodies of water, getting fish under your fishing spot can be challenging.

Clarity

In my experience, underwater cameras are tough to fish with in water over 6 feet, but underwater cameras are an incredible tool to learn and understand what is happening below the surface. For instance, when the wind blows, bottom currents can stir up the sediment and make it very mucky near the bottom where fish are typically located. With our eyes, this is difficult if not impossible to see in most cases as the surface water can still remain clear. In other circumstances, such as dark water lakes, low light or excessive snow on the ice,

rattling lures shine. In short, rattling lures help increase the strike zone dramatically.

Switch up

Years ago, when there were not as many lures available with rattles, some anglers glued rattles onto their favorite lures. While this is still an option, it is not necessary with the plethora of rattling lures.

When you want to add a rattle to a finesse or flutter style lure that cannot handle the added weight, do not permanently add the rattle to the lure. Small rattle beads can be added to your

main line and still provide some noise and a little color.

Aside from an actual rattle, do not overlook lures that have chains or beads, which allows lures to produce noise. These nontraditional noise makers may not create enough noise to call Walleyes in from a great distance but have proven to be a good way to get finicky Walleyes to commit.

Rattles bring Walleyes in and make these fish commit more often than not. ☐



Rattle beads added above an action spoon (top) provide attraction without changing the action. A lipless crankbait (bottom left) is an effective way to lure Walleyes closer. Lead rattle spoons (bottom right) can be fished both aggressively or slowed down for neutral fish.

A GIANT RESTORATION EFFORT



photo-Anna Scime

by Deborah Weisberg

A giant fish with a prehistoric past could roam the waters of Lake Erie once again if efforts to restore Lake Sturgeons succeed.

Nearly 6,000 sturgeons were stocked in the Maumee River, a Lake Erie tributary, over the past 2 years, in the hope to jump-start a naturally reproducing population of sturgeons.

“The stream-side rearing work on the Maumee River has the potential to restore sturgeon throughout Lake Erie,” said Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Biologist Chuck Murray. “The stocking last fall was the first time ever that sturgeons were stocked in the Erie Watershed.”

Lake Sturgeon date back to the Jurassic Period and are native to the Great Lakes as well as the Mississippi River drainages. Sturgeons can live at least 100 years and grow to more than 6-feet long and 200 pounds.

Although sturgeons were once considered nuisances and wantonly destroyed, sturgeons were later prized for their caviar and overharvested by commercial fishermen. Sturgeons also suffered impacts from pollution, habitat loss and dam construction. Today, sturgeons are state-listed as endangered or threatened throughout the Great Lakes.

One of the last known sturgeon sightings in Lake Erie was in 2001, when an 87-inch fish washed up on Freeport Beach.

Historically, Erie supported 1 million sturgeons—the largest population in the Great Lakes. There have also been a couple of reports over the years of anglers landing smaller sturgeons while fishing off the Yellow Perch head boats running out of Erie. These fish are transients. But today, there are fewer than 10,000, according to Justin

Chiotti, a United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) fish biologist, who is helping lead the restoration project. While 19 rivers on Erie once served as nursery waters, today just two—the Detroit and Niagara rivers—support sturgeon spawning and recruitment.

“We want to increase the number of rivers where populations exist, which is how the Maumee River stockings got started,” said Chiotti, noting that the Maumee River was selected, because it has enough fast-moving water and large-cobble habitat conducive to a spawn.

A team of biologists constructed a 10 x 40-foot trailer, operated by the Toledo Zoo, pumped it with water and planted it with fertilized sturgeon eggs that had been collected at Port Huron and delivered in oxygenated bags. The eggs will develop into juvenile fish within the trailer for eventual stocking in the Maumee River.

“It could be decades, though, before scientists know whether their efforts will bear fruit since sturgeons are slow to sexually mature,” said Jim Boase, a USFWS fish biologist partnering with Chiotti on the project. “They imprint as larvae, so they will return to the trailer. For males, it will take 10- to 14-years, but females will not return for 20 years, unless climate change speeds up the process.”

“Erie’s western basin warms up more quickly now and stays warmer longer, but that is not expected to be a problem,” said Boase. “One of the promising things about Lake Sturgeons is that these fish have been in fossil records for millions of years, and when you think about all the climate change that has occurred in that time, it gives us high confidence that we will have success with this project.”

In the open lake, sturgeons feed on bottom-dwelling insects, quagga and zebra mussels, round gobies, and small fish. “Sturgeon may range far from the Maumee River. We caught



Justin Chiotti with juvenile sturgeons.

sturgeons in Huron last spring that had been tagged in Buffalo. Some sturgeons are homebodies, staying close to their home range, and others are roamers,” said Boase.

A study of sturgeon movement being collected in Lake Erie, near Buffalo, is yielding valuable clues about where sturgeons spend their time in different seasons of the year.

Sixty-two sturgeons—mostly males—were tagged in the main lake at the headwaters of the Niagara River over the past 5 years. Scientists track the fish with acoustic telemetry. “Although two of the fish proceeded to the Detroit River, the majority stayed close to their natal range,”

said John Sweka, the USFWS fish biologist leading the study.

“In spring, the sturgeons spawned near Buffalo, and then dispersed throughout the lake, traveling in fall to the shallower waters on Erie’s Canadian side, presumably for food, and then returning to Buffalo in the spring,” said Sweka.

“It shows they have some fidelity to an area, but the fish will move around the entire lake,” said Sweka.

Sweka is hoping his research will also provide insight into how long juvenile sturgeons remain in the river where spawned. “At what point do they migrate to the lake? We do not yet know,” said Sweka. “But, it is important to determine, so we can protect their habitat.”

Sweka is confident that Erie sturgeons will rebound, although it will take decades. “A lot of historical threats to sturgeons have been alleviated, and sturgeons are a sturdy species,” said Sweka. “They are tough.”

As the public becomes familiar with the work being done on sturgeon recovery, he believes they will be rooting for these charismatic mega-fauna.

Boase is also optimistic and eager to return sturgeons to their rightful place in the ecosystem. “These fish lived here before T-Rex was roaming the earth, they were here after T-Rex was gone, and they are still here, having survived everything we have thrown at them,” said Boase.

Boase likens sturgeons to another iconic species—American bald eagles—which faced extirpation at about the same time but are now thriving in Pennsylvania and elsewhere due to restoration efforts.

“I think of sturgeons as the bald eagles of the Great Lakes aquatic system,” said Boase. ☐



Pictured are (left to right) Jeff Kalie and Jonah Withers with a sturgeon from the Buffalo Harbor area.



Lighten Up

photo-courtesy of Jeffrey Rabbitt

by Braden Eisenhower

“What will the Smallmouth Bass want today?” I thought to myself, staring at the menagerie of tackle strewn across the floor. In a few hours, I would meet my friend for an afternoon wading trip on the Susquehanna River.

My heap of lures had all the good stuff. But, as the pile grew, I began thinking less of which lures may produce and more about carrying it all. And, with all these options, I would waste a lot of time cycling through these lures.

I concluded it was best to select a few probable lure choices.

Overpacking increases physical and mental clutter. The minimalist approach is mandatory when wading or shore fishing, and when invited on another angler’s boat. Here are a few tips to help pack light, without compromising tackle selection.

Choose the quarry

I reduce my assortment for an outing by selecting a target species. In the example above, narrowing my desired catch to Smallmouth Bass allowed me to eliminate specialized tackle for other species. This strategy also keeps me honest by the same virtue that I cannot spend money that is not in my wallet. I am forcing myself to commit to one species, usually leading to success.

Plan for the season

I can trim most of my tackle by planning based on the season. Calendar periods provide a general measure of water temperature, vegetation growth, river height and discharge. Next, I make preliminary judgements on fish location and activity level of fish. Then, it becomes easy to set aside lures that fit within these parameters.

For early-season Smallmouth Bass, pack hair jigs or suspending jerkbaits. These lures work well when presented slowly to lethargic coldwater bass. My topwater lures and spinnerbaits, staples in a Smallmouth Bass arsenal, would not fare well under these conditions. So, I save these lures until the waters warm, and fish become active.

This thought process is universal. Apply it to any species at any point of the calendar period.

Developing seasonal patterns also removes on-the-water guesswork. Once I have established a pattern, I am successful each year with the same approach.

Evaluate the weather

My final drill-down assessment is based on perceived fish activity. Weather patterns provide the best short-term judge. I categorize weather patterns as pre- or post-frontal, and tailor my fishing style to suit each scenario.

The pre-frontal period is most desirable. Fish are noticeably aggressive and may often be fooled



When outfitting yourself with a minimalist approach, be sure your lures cover the entire water column. Pictured are (top to bottom) a surface lure (popper), mid-depth lure (crankbait) and a bottom bouncer (jig-and-plastic) set for a Smallmouth Bass fishing outing.

with fast-moving presentations. This is the time to toss spinnerbaits and cover water in search of active Smallmouth Bass.

When faced with post-frontal conditions, it is best to pack finesse lures. I expect to grind through areas with a methodical approach. Fish activity screeches to a halt and strike zones shrink. This is when I rely on a jig and plastic trailer to draw bites.

Final considerations

Having defined my essential lures, I ensure that I have fulfilled a few standard requirements.

First, I confirm that I am able to cover the entire water column. This means my lure selection must consist of a surface bait, a bottom-bouncer and a mid-depth lure. Naturally, the specific lures for each requirement are subject to the fish location.

Second, I have chosen crossover tackle to capitalize on multi-species action whenever possible. This generally means fishing for like-species. So, on a Smallmouth Bass trip, I may bump into Walleyes while using the

same tactics intended to catch the target species. Standard catch-all picks include grubs, crankbaits and spinnerbaits. By choosing smaller offerings, it is likely I will hook into panfish and gamefish.

Lastly, I have cut the clutter. Most anglers hold color in high regard. I seek to first satisfy factors like presentation, speed and depth. So, I have no difficulty limiting myself to one natural pattern and one fluorescent pattern. This will accommodate most water clarity and sky condition scenarios. When in doubt, black is a good choice. Black is effective in clear or stained water, works throughout the water column, and appeals to panfish and gamefish. On minimalist trips, I also stick to techniques I have mastered and have confidence employing. No need to tote along lures that never see the water.

The “safe box”

For added security, I find it helps to carry extra lures in my vehicle. A small stowaway box stashes seasonal options that did not make the final cut and spares of favorite lures. This is particularly helpful when wading or shore fishing, where I am prone to lose lures to snags.

Most fishing outings require few lures. The rest come along for the ride. With proper planning, it is possible to drill down to what the fish are biting. That translates to more time fishing and less time searching for the “hot” lure. ☐



The author with a Susquehanna Smallmouth Bass caught in post-frontal conditions. Planning for current conditions allows an angler to dial in on the “hot” technique. This means more time fishing and less time guessing.

KEEPERS OF THE STREAM

Volunteers Breathe Life into Broken Trout Waters



by Tyler Frantz

photos by the author

It is an amazing story of commitment, dedication and teamwork—one that is more than 30 years old and continues to be scripted each week in the remote pages of Saint Anthony's Wilderness. It is a story of a crippled but rehabilitated trout stream, the delicate life that thrives at the hands of its keepers and the devoted few that faithfully pledge to sustain it—humbly, dutifully and with care. Without a doubt, it is a story worth sharing.

Saint Anthony's Wilderness, Dauphin and Lebanon counties, is the largest forested wilderness adjacent to a metropolitan and suburban area in the nation. Situated within 30 miles of more than 700,000 citizens and just a 3-hour drive from approximately 7,000,000 people, the heartbeat of this 44,373-acre wilderness is a waterway known as Stony Creek.

"Stony Valley is a special place," said Lebanon County native Larry Herr. "Where else can you find something so unique so close to that many people? There is a lot of history in that valley including an abandoned railroad, the Appalachian Trail and four ghost towns. If it is not preserved for the future, it will be lost."

Thankfully, there is a conservation collaborative that determinedly breathes fresh life into the heart of Stony Valley on a regular basis—and that pulse flows outward.

Located just north of the old railroad bridge over Rausch Creek in Pennsylvania State Game Lands #211 is believed to

be the first limestone diversion well ever built in the United States, which has helped neutralize acidic water flowing from Stony Creek's largest tributary to support the main stem for more than three decades.

The Dauphin Chapter of Trout Unlimited in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit of Penn State University began construction of the original circular well in 1986. Then, in 2000, volunteers of Trout Unlimited's Doc Fritchey Chapter, successor of the Dauphin Chapter, completed a second square well. The intakes are positioned so that the circular well functions year round, and the square well is activated during periods of high stream flow.

Patterned after a Swedish design, part of Rausch Creek's flow is diverted from the primary stream channel to a treatment structure approximately 100 yards downstream by means of two intake pipes, which feed the water through pressurized nozzles into limestone gravel. These highly alkaline limestone particles reenter the stream and chemically react to neutralize acidic water originating upstream from old coal mine drainages and acid rainfall.

Treating this water results in significant increase in pH, the greater the number, the less acidity, from an average of about 4.0 above the wells with no fish life present to over 6.0 below the discharge, where healthy Brook Trout can often be observed a few yards downstream from the old bridge.

Moreover, pH routinely averages over 6.0 for several miles downstream—adequate for supporting year-round populations of Brook Trout and Brown Trout, making Stony Creek an incredible fishery for anglers to enjoy.



Doc Fritchey Chapter of Trout Unlimited members work to loosen frozen limestone from the pile, a chore they complete weekly through the wintertime.

But, these results come at a cost. Members of the Doc Fritchey Chapter of Trout Unlimited and other local volunteers maintain these wells weekly, through gritty manual labor. They fill the wells by hand-shovel with high-cal limestone, which has been graciously donated by Pennsy Supply from its Lebanon Quarry for the duration of the original well's existence, and delivered by Reigel Trucking for 30 years, and Mike Sensenig recently.

Since the wells are located several miles from the nearest State Game Lands 211 parking lot off Goldmine Road, Lebanon County, their work requires special access permission from the Pennsylvania Game Commission to drive in along the old railroad grade once a week (Sundays



Doc Fritchey Chapter of Trout Unlimited members Joe Connor and Andy Link work to clear the intake pipe of debris.

in fall/winter, Mondays in spring/summer) to maintain the wells, a privilege for which they are grateful.

"It has been a community effort," said Doc Fritchey Chapter of Trout Unlimited's Dennis Coffman, who has volunteered at the well for 17 years, knowing full well the nature of the work at hand. "Sometimes the wells clog up; we have to keep the intakes clear of debris; and the stone is frozen. Trees fall across the road, snow or ice makes it impassable. So, I have cross-country skied or walked into the wells. You never know what

Mother Nature will throw at you, but it is never hard to go back there. When I cannot go, I miss it."

"Hurricanes have made a mess in recent years, and one time we even had a tree fall and puncture the pipe, which made a lot more work for us," said Fran Barilar. "But, you go, because you know you are making an impact. You can see the results."

Jim Rauch, who cut his teeth fishing Stony Creek 50 years ago, said, "the fishery is more viable now than ever." George Dobson said, "giving back is the right thing to do." Joe Notarangelo joked that he shows up for the donuts, though the camaraderie through conservation is as appealing to him as Joe Connor, who pointed out this legacy has no end as long as there are future volunteers to sustain it.

At age 37, Andy Link is one of the youngest regulars on maintenance day. Two years ago, he stumbled upon the group while fly fishing Rausch Creek. They showed him the wells, and he was amazed by how something so simple but influential could be sustained with no electric pumps, only gravity and dedicated manual labor, for over 30 years. Link is now a Doc Fritchey Chapter of Trout Unlimited board member and brings along his 4-year-old.









"It is an awesome group of guys, and I look forward to contributing to the preservation of this amazing place every week," said Link. "If anyone wants to help, Trout Unlimited member or not, we happily welcome you into the fold. Check the www.DFTU.org website for meeting times. We would love to have you join us for this meaningful conservation work."

Indeed, there is hope for the future as this success story continues to unfold. ☐

2020 SEASONS, SIZES and CREEL LIMITS

COMMONWEALTH INLAND WATERS-2020

(includes the Youghiogheny River Lake and does not include special regulation areas)

Species	Seasons	Minimum Size	Daily Limit
 ALL SPECIES OF TROUT AND SALMON Additional regulations may apply- see Trout Regulations for stream sections that are both Stocked Trout Waters and Class A Wild Trout Waters.	Regional Opening Day of Trout Season* - April 4 at 8 a.m. through Sept. 7 (only 18 southeastern PA counties)	7 inches	5-streams, lakes and ponds (combined species)
	Regular Season - April 18 at 8 a.m. through Sept. 7	7 inches	5-streams, lakes and ponds (combined species)
	Extended Season: Stocked trout waters and all waters downstream of stocked trout waters. Jan. 1 through Feb. 29 and Sept. 8 through Dec. 31	7 inches	3 (combined species)
	Extended Season: Class A wild trout stream sections. Jan. 1 through Feb. 29 and Sept. 8 through Dec. 31	NO HARVEST - Catch and immediate release only Class A stream listing: www.fishandboat.com/classa.pdf	
BASS-LAKES Largemouth, Smallmouth and Spotted Additional regulations may apply.	Jan. 1 through April 17 and Nov. 1 through Dec. 31	15 inches	4 (combined species)
	April 18 through June 12		NO HARVEST - Catch and immediate release only (no tournaments permitted) See catch-and-release guidelines.
	June 13 through Oct. 31	12 inches	6 (combined species)
BASS-RIVERS AND STREAMS Largemouth, Smallmouth and Spotted Additional regulations may apply.	Jan. 1 through April 17 and Oct. 1 through Dec. 31	15 inches	4 (combined species)
	April 18 through June 12		NO HARVEST - Catch and immediate release only (no tournaments permitted)
	June 13 through Sept. 30	12 inches	6 (combined species)
Muskellunge and Tiger Muskellunge**	Open year-round		40 inches 1 (combined species)
Pickereel**		18 inches	4
Northern Pike**		24 inches	2
Walleye and Saugeye (Hybrids)	Jan. 1 through March 14 and May 2 through Dec. 31	15 inches	6 
Sauger	Jan. 1 through March 14 and May 2 through Dec. 31	12 inches	6
American Shad***	Open year-round	No minimum	3
American Shad	Open year-round - Lehigh River, Schuylkill River**** and tributaries	NO HARVEST - Catch and immediate release only	
American Shad		CLOSED YEAR-ROUND	
River Herring***	Susquehanna River and tributaries		
Hickory Shad***		CLOSED YEAR-ROUND	
Herring, Gizzard Shad	Open year-round	No minimum	50 (combined species)
American Eel	Open year-round	9 inches	25
Striped Bass and Striped Bass/ White Bass Hybrids	Open year-round		20 inches 2 (combined species)
Sunfish, Yellow Perch, White Perch, Crappies, Catfish, Rock Bass, Suckers, Carp, White Bass, Bowfin and other gamefish not otherwise listed	Open year-round		No minimum 50 (combined species)
Additional regulations may apply- see Panfish Enhancement Special Regulations.			
Baitfish/Fishbait***** (except Mudbugs/includes Crayfish)	Open year-round	No minimum	50 (combined species)
Mudbugs (Dragonfly Nymphs)	Open year-round	No minimum	Unlimited if taken from lakes, ponds, swamps and adjacent areas. 50 per day if taken from moving waters (rivers and streams).
Mussels/Clams		CLOSED YEAR-ROUND	
Paddlefish, Spotted Gar and other threatened and endangered species		CLOSED YEAR-ROUND	

SEASONS, SIZES AND CREEL LIMITS - Except for trout season, which begins at 8 a.m., all regulatory periods in the fishing regulations are based on the calendar day, one of which ends at midnight and the next of which begins immediately thereafter.

* Includes only those waters in 18 southeastern PA counties and four waters crossing from those counties listed in the Regional Opening Day of Trout Season Program.

** Except those species in waters listed in the Brood Stock Lakes Program. Tiger Muskellunge is a muskellunge hybrid.

*** Unlawful to take, catch or kill American Shad in the Susquehanna River and all its tributaries. River Herring (Alewife and Blueback Herring) has a closed year-round season with zero daily limit applied to Susquehanna River and tributaries, Lehigh River and tributaries, Schuylkill River and tributaries, West Branch Delaware River, Delaware River, Delaware estuary, Delaware River tributaries upstream to the limit of the tidal influence, and Conowingo Reservoir.

**** Lehigh River upstream of the first dam in Easton, Pennsylvania and its tributaries and the Schuylkill River upstream of the I-95 Bridge and its tributaries. NOTE: It is not a violation of the bass regulations if a bass is immediately returned unharmed to the waters from which it was taken. It is unlawful for an angler to cast repeatedly into a clearly visible bass spawning nest or redd in an effort to catch or take bass.

NOTE: For bass regulations, power dam pools and recreational dam pools on the Susquehanna River and navigational dam pools on the Ohio River drainage are "rivers." It is unlawful to conduct a fishing tournament on the North Branch, West Branch or main stem of the Susquehanna River that allows a tournament angler to harvest bass.

NOTE: Stocked trout waters are closed to fishing from March 1 to the opening day of the regular trout season in April, unless included in the Regional Opening Day of Trout Season Program or Stocked Trout Waters open to Year-Round Fishing Program.

NOTE: Landlocked Alewife less than 8 inches in length taken from inland ponds, lakes or reservoirs that are collected by legal means may be harvested for use as baitfish.

NOTE: It is legal to fish for trout in Class A trout streams year-round, with no harvest beginning the day after Labor Day through the opening day of trout season the following year. The exception is those stream sections designated as both Class A Wild Trout Streams and Stocked Trout Waters. These stream sections are closed to fishing from March 1 until 8 a.m. on the opening day of trout season.

***** BAITFISH includes all forms of minnows; suckers, chubs, Fallfish, lampreys, Gizzard Shad 8 inches or less; and all forms of darters, killifishes and stonecats (except those listed as threatened or endangered species). Legally taken gamefish may be used as bait. It is unlawful to use or possess goldfish, comets, koi and Common Carp as baitfish while fishing. FISHBAIT includes crayfish, crabs, and the nymphs, larvae and pupae of all insects spending any part of their life cycle in the water.

For all crayfish species, the head must be immediately removed behind the eyes upon capture unless used as bait in the water from which taken.

PLAY



Winter
2020

Pennsylvania • League • of • Angling • Youth

The “Lure” of Being a Mentor



What was your first experience on Pennsylvania waters? Was it:

- A hike along one of Pennsylvania’s 85,000 miles of streams and rivers?
- A canoe trip on one of Pennsylvania’s 4,000 inland lakes?
- Hearing frogs sing after a summer rain?
- Catching your first fish?
- Feeling pride while planting trees along a streambank?

Behind each experience is the reflection of your **mentors**. **Mentors** help you learn and guide you through each experience. Some examples of famous **mentors** are: Yoda (*Star Wars*), Mufasa (*Lion King*), Mary Poppins and Minerva McGonagall (*Harry Potter*). The people who are helped by **mentors** are called **apprentices**.

Fishing and boating **mentors** introduce others to the importance of conservation.

Being a **mentor** does not require you to be older, wiser or have years of experience. This *PLAY* issue introduces you to **mentoring**.

Becoming a **mentor** provides an opportunity to:

- Help others connect to Pennsylvania waters through activities
- Reflect and share experiences and skills
- Learn something new
- Share the responsibility of aquatic resource protection and enhancement
- Make a difference and have fun doing it

Vocabulary (*Watch for these words!*)

- **Apprentices** - beginners being guided by mentors
- **Mentors** - people who provide advice, guidance or inspiration to another person
- **Observant** - quick to notice things
- **Protege** - a person supported by a more experienced person
- **Encourage** - give support to someone

WHO Can Be a Mentor? YOU Can!

You have a lot to offer, just by being you. Whether you take someone:

- Hiking to a waterfall
- Exploring for amphibians and reptiles
- Planting trees
- Paddling or fishing



Who you are, where you live and your interests shape your experiences on Pennsylvania waters.

Your experiences and skills can help others connect to Pennsylvania's waters.

What Does a Mentor Look Like?

You can be a **mentor**. Share your interest in fishing with your friends by being their **mentor**. You can even **mentor** an adult by introducing a non-fishing family member to the sport.

Why are young people good **mentors**?

- Young people are spontaneous and curious, notice what is happening now and want to learn more.



Look at the frog hopping across the trail. What kind of frog is it? Where does it live?



- Young people may see mistakes as opportunities. He or she learns by doing, even if something does not work out.
- Kids may be more **observant** and notice details missed by adults.
- Young people use their imagination and creativity and sometimes find a better way.
- Kids like to play. Kids remind adults that the journey is just as fun as getting to the destination.

Mentors of All Ages

Young anglers can **mentor** other young anglers or non-anglers. When your friends see you doing something, they feel more confident.

Young **mentors** also like to have fun and be with friends, learning together. When the **mentor** and **apprentice** are young, they know it is more about becoming an angler than about learning to catch fish.



Beginners Can Mentor Experienced Mentors by:

- Observing new things about an activity the **mentor** is teaching.
- Reconnecting with “Why”- Reigniting the reasons a **mentor** participates in an activity.
- Curiosity - Asking a lot of questions. Some questions deepen a **mentor’s** interest, while other questions teach **mentor’s** new ways of teaching.



Mentor Notes

This page includes some ideas to help **mentors** plan an experience on Pennsylvania waters.

Have an Activity Plan

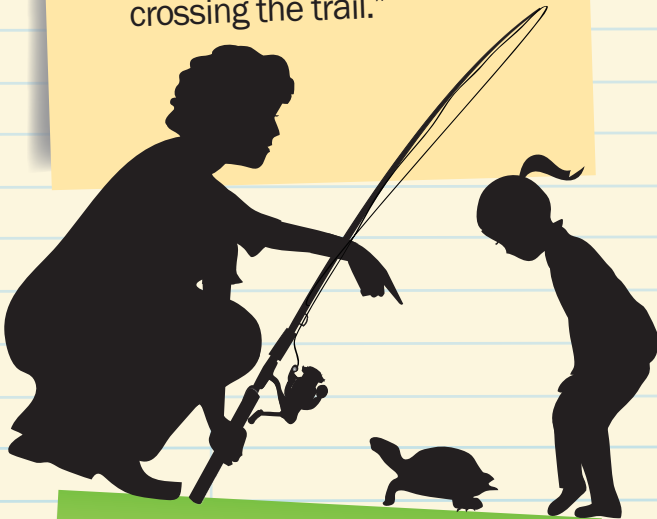
Help create an activity plan to share with family or friends.



Ask Questions

Make sure you understand what your student or apprentice wants from his or her experience on Pennsylvania waters. Their idea of success may be different than yours.

- **Mentor's** idea of success—"catch a fish." Example: "Let's get to the stream before the fish stop rising."
- **Protege's** idea of success—"the journey." Example: "Check out the box turtle crossing the trail."



ACTIVITY PLAN

TYPE OF ACTIVITY: _____

LOCATION OF ACTIVITY: _____

NAME OF OTHERS PARTICIPATING: _____

TIME OF DEPARTURE: _____

TIME OF EXPECTED RETURN: _____

VEHICLE DESCRIPTION: _____

Share Safety Importance

Share the importance of safety and gear needed for a safe experience. Review safe fishing, boating and conservation practices.



Provide Encouragement

Stay positive. Mistakes are opportunities to learn more about the activity and yourself.

Inspire Conservation

Encourage and model good conservation practices. Share ways to get involved. Instill the importance of regulations that protect waterways and animals.

Build Excitement

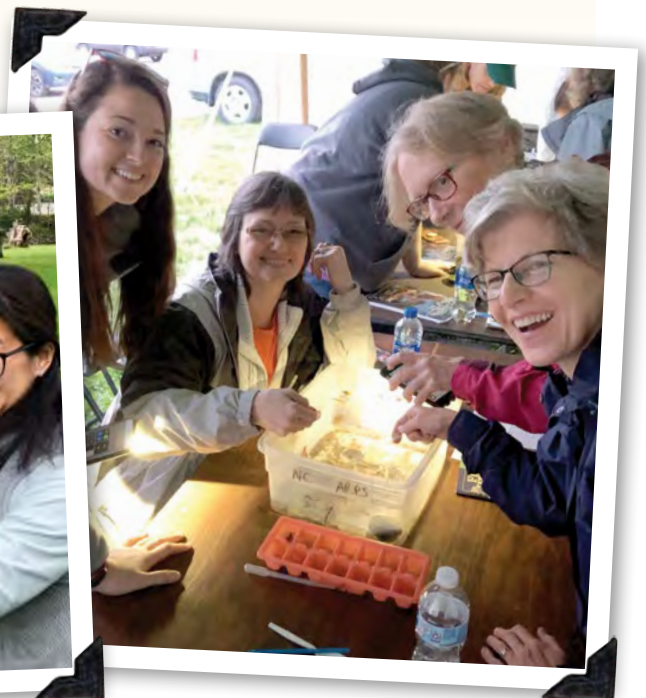
Involve new participants with planning and preparation. Be prepared for weather and other expectations. Decide where you want to fish and what you want to catch. Together you can research regulations and fishing equipment.

Mentor Pathways— Where Do You Start?

With a variety of backgrounds and experiences, people **mentor** in different ways.

You Can Mentor Others By Getting Out There!

- Invite someone to plant trees, fish or boat with you.
- **Encourage** attendance at learn to fish programs. State, county and local parks offer these programs. Visit the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's (PFBC's) website at www.fishandboat.com, and view the events calendar or have an adult follow PFBC on Facebook.
- For more information about events at state parks and forests, visit Pennsylvania Department of Natural Resources's website at <https://events.dcnr.pa.gov>.



Take Action

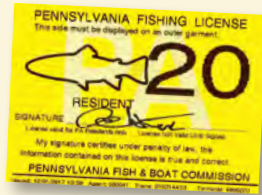


Connect to Pennsylvania waters. Join PFBC and partners to protect, conserve and enhance aquatic resources. Here are a few activities to get started.

Purchase a Fishing License

Fishing license purchases help support Pennsylvania's aquatic resources. Your fishing license also helps PFBC provide the following services:

- Public access areas
- Maintenance and management of access areas



- Waterway and dam improvements
- Fish habitat enhancement projects
- Amphibian and reptile (herp) and fish studies and management
- Aquatic resource protection and regulation
- Education programs and instructor training

Conservation Projects

Connect with local organizations assisting PFBC with habitat or tree planting projects such as:

- County Conservation Districts
- Other State Agencies
- Trout Unlimited Chapters
- Watershed Associations
- Sportsmen Organizations
- Conservancies



Take a Hike and Discover Pennsylvania Herps



A diverse population of herps live in Pennsylvania. While looking for amphibians and reptiles, explore Pennsylvania's waterways.

- Pennsylvania Amphibian and Reptile Survey (PARS) – Photograph and report what you find. Learn more at: <https://paherpsurvey.org/>.
- Visit www.fishandboat.com for PFBC's amphibian and reptile page.

Get Started with Fishing

Connect to Pennsylvania waters by fishing. Below are resources to get you started.

- Visit PFBC's "Fishing Fundamentals" page at www.fishandboat.com for

equipment basics, tackle loaner program, where to fish and more.

- Visit www.takemefishing.org for fishing tips, blogs and more.



Mentor Circle— First Steps Begin with You!



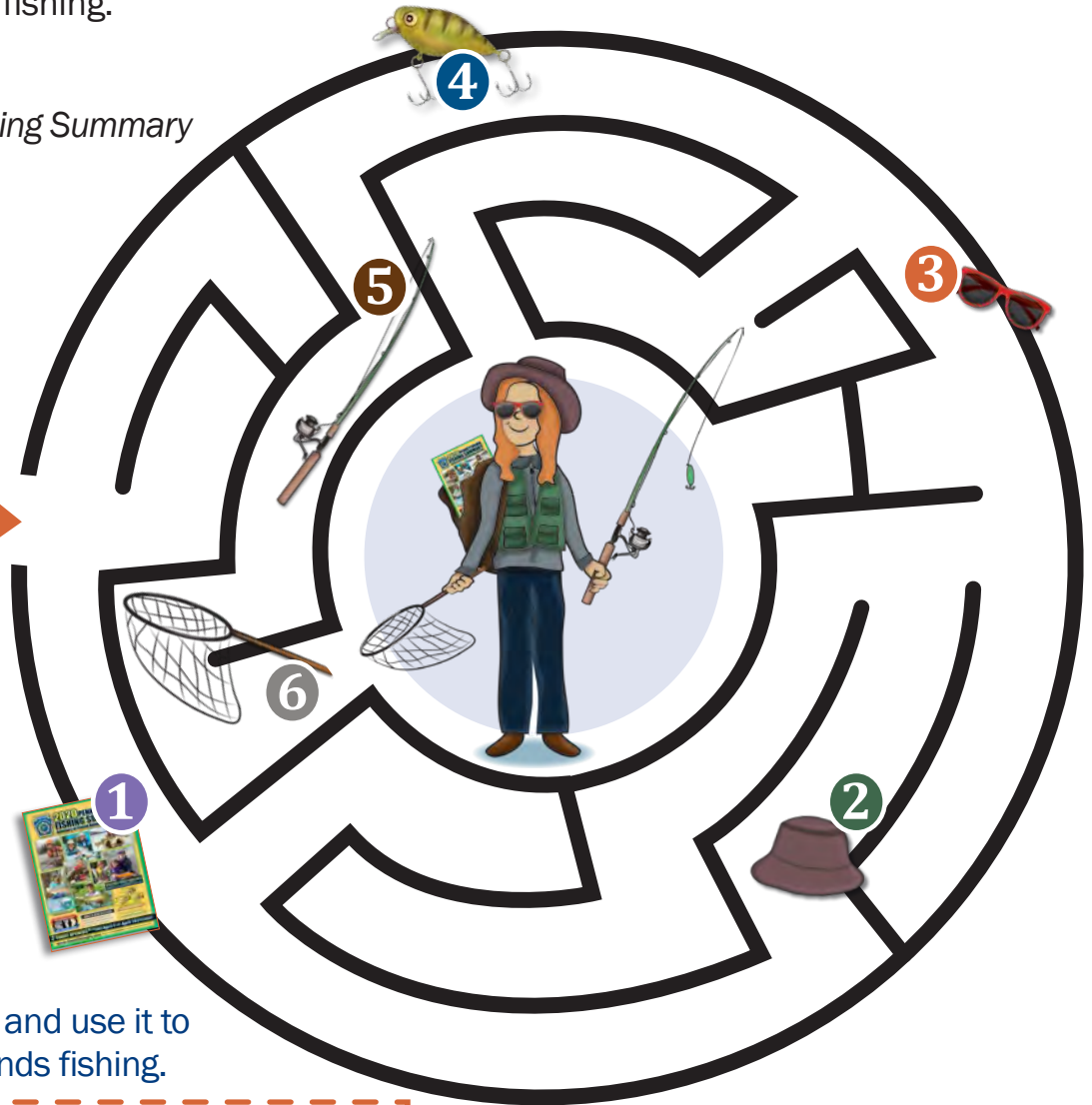
Help guide the angler to the center of the maze and collect the items she needs to go fishing.

Items to collect:

- 1 Pennsylvania Fishing Summary
- 2 Fishing hat
- 3 Sunglasses
- 4 Fishing lure
- 5 Fishing rod
- 6 Net



Start →



Cut out this coupon, and use it to invite family and friends fishing.

TAKE ME FISHING COUPON

Date: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

Types of fish: _____

Equipment needed: _____

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PFBC archives
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artwork-courtesy of Alessio DeLuliis

MEET THE ARTIST: **ALESSIO DEIULIIS**

by *Charles N. Cantella*

Alessio DeLuliis is a busy man. In addition to his full-time job, his responsibilities as a dad and husband, and making time to wet a line, he manages to find time to put paint to paper and turn out extraordinary art. The fact that he is a native Pennsylvanian is icing on the cake.

I got a chance to meet and chat with Alessio DeLuliis.

Charles: Hi Alessio. I have been following your art on your Facebook page, Alessio DeLuliis, Art and Fly Fishing, for several years. You seem to veer away from tradition in both your fishing and your art. Tell us about the fish you like to chase and the fish you like to paint.

Alessio: I have always enjoyed going to the beat of my own drum. I grew up fishing the urban rivers in and around Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, with traditional fishing gear. I was getting bored and needed to reinvent what I was doing. I picked a fly rod for steelhead and decided to take it down to the Ohio River one day. It was a challenge at first. Unlike more traditional fly fishing settings, fly fishing around the three rivers was uncharted territory for the most part. I had to come up with my own patterns to match the baitfish I was seeing the fish feed on. I also worked to match the gear to what I observed a



Alessio DeLuliis at Penn's Woods West Trout Unlimited Cabin Fever.

few other anglers having success. I quickly started getting the hang of it, and I have had a lot of success ever since. My favorite fish I like to target in the rivers in the spring and summer are Northern Pike, Muskellunge, Smallmouth Bass, Striped Bass Hybrid and the occasional Flathead Catfish. I would get lucky

enough to eat my streamer. In the fall and winter, I spend my time mainly fishing Lake Erie and Lake Ontario for steelhead and big lake run Brown Trout.

When it comes to the fish I paint, I mainly work from photographs of the fish I catch. I occasionally work from photographs of others.

C: Your art has a very real look to it. The fish in your paintings look like photographs. Did you formally study art? Who or what influenced you?

A: I started oil painting when I was 15 while taking pre-college art classes at Carnegie Mellon University. I continued my training at the Corcoran College of Art and Design in Washington D.C. where I received my Bachelor of Fine Arts.

After college, I lost my focus and quit painting for over 10 years. Eventually, I started joining fly fishing groups on social media and starting seeing fly fishing artists with interesting and creative ideas that were not the typical watercolors that I saw in the past. Some of the artists I saw who inspired me included Andrea Larko, Jason Bordash and Travis Sylvester to name a few. After seeing everyone's amazing work, I made the decision to give fish art a try.

My process begins at the vise. It starts with tying a fly, then catching a fish worthy of a picture I can work with. So, in a lot of ways, the fly tying and the fly fishing are a big part of my creative process.

C: I also understand you are a Pittsburgh native. When you are not out fishing or painting, what kinds of things do you like to do?

A: When I am not fishing, making art or working, I am spending time with my wife and kids or tying flies.

C: I have seen a few of your pieces that resonated with me, because they are so far outside of traditional sporting art. The first one is the Misfits piece with the ghost skeleton holding what appears to be a large trout or salmon. Tell me a little bit about that one.

A: The Crimson Ghost holding a rotting zombie is a tribute to my younger self. When I was 11-years-old, the Misfits were one of my favorite bands. I do not think fly fishing should be a one size fits all. Fly fishing has evolved in the past 20 years and there are different types of fly anglers. I don't fit the old mold, along with a lot of the new generation of fly anglers.

C: Another piece that caught my eye when I stepped into Tim Reddinger's shop, Reddi-Bait, Bridgewater, was a catfish with the tail of a smaller fish sticking out of its mouth. Can you give us some background on this?

A: The painting hanging at Reddi-Bait is based off a photograph I took of a Flathead Catfish with the Bluegill I caught it on hanging out of its mouth. The photograph gave me the idea of creating a Flathead Catfish coming out of the darkness, eating a Bluegill.

At International Angler, Pittsburgh, I have several pieces hanging, including a large steelhead painting of an Erie steelhead I caught.

C: Is there anywhere else we can see your art?

A: I am a featured artist on MidCurrent online magazine.

C: I think you are being a bit humble. I did some research and found out that a fly fishing magazine from Poland, Sztuka Lowienia, featured you and your art. Congratulations! Thank you for taking time to chat. 📧



Musky madness



This catfish wasn't finished eating yet.



Steelhead

More information

Instagram: [alessio_fly_fish_art_](#)

Facebook: [Alessio DeLuliis, Art and Fly Fishing](#)



Highlights from the

2020

Boating Regulations Recap

Information All Boaters Must Know

This article reviews key regulatory and safety information that boaters must know before venturing out on the water. The annual Boating Regulations Recap brochure also highlights new regulations that were recently approved by the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC). The Boating Regulations Recap paired with the *Pennsylvania Boating Handbook* provides boaters with comprehensive safety information to use when operating watercraft on Pennsylvania waterways.

Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

- A United States Coast Guard approved wearable life jacket is required for each person on board. In addition, one throwable device is required on boats 16 feet in length or longer.
- Children 12 years of age and younger must wear an approved life jacket on Commonwealth waters when underway on any boat 20 feet or less in length and in all canoes and kayaks.
- All water skiers and anyone towed behind vessels, personal watercraft operators and passengers, and sailboarders must wear a life jacket. Inflatable life jackets are not acceptable for these activities.
- Wearable life jackets must be “readily accessible” or in the open where they can be easily reached. Throwable devices must be “immediately available” or within arm’s reach. A PFD that is stored in a protective covering or sealed in its original packaging is not readily accessible or immediately available.

Mandatory cold weather life jacket wear

From November 1 through April 30, boaters are required by law to wear life jackets on board boats less than 16 feet in length or any canoe or kayak. This regulation went into effect in 2012 and is intended to protect boaters from dangers of cold water shock if they fall into the water. Recreational boating fatalities that occur in Pennsylvania from November through April are primarily due to the effects of cold water immersion. When water temperatures are less than 70 degrees F, cold water shock is a major factor in boating fatalities. Victims who wear a life jacket when exposed to cold water have potentially life-saving advantages such as insulation from the cold, buoyancy for victims who are unable to tread water and reduced risk of aspiration of water. In an effort to reduce the number of fatalities related to cold water

Mandatory boating education

HP OF MOTOR	RESTRICTIONS OF USE
PWC	All PWC (personal watercraft) operators, regardless of age, must have a Boating Safety Education Certificate. Persons 11 years of age or younger may NOT operate. Persons 12 through 15 years of age may NOT operate with any passengers on board 15 years of age or younger or rent a PWC.
0-25hp	None
Greater than 25hp	Persons 11 years of age or younger may NOT operate. Persons born on or after January 1, 1982, may not operate unless they have obtained and have in possession a Boating Safety Education Certificate.

immersion, PFBC has amended regulations to require life jackets to be worn on small and unstable boats during the period most noted for cold temperatures.

Boating accidents

Boating accidents must be reported in writing by the boat operator or owner to PFBC when:

- A person dies or disappears.
- A person is injured and requires advanced medical treatment beyond first aid.
- Damage to the boat and other property totals more than \$2,000, or there is a complete loss of the vessel.

Boating accident reports can be downloaded from PFBC’s website at www.fishandboat.com/Boat/BoatingBasics/Documents/pfbc260.pdf or obtained from any of our regional law enforcement offices.

Water-skiing and similar activities

- It is unlawful to operate a motorboat at any speed with a person or persons sitting, riding or hanging on a swim platform (teak surfing) or swim ladder attached to the motorboat, except when launching, retrieving, docking or anchoring the motorboat.
- It is unlawful to operate a motorboat at any speed when towing a person on water skis or other devices using a tow rope of 20 feet or less.
- Wake surfing is excluded from the 20-foot tow rope requirement.
- Boats engaged in the activity of wake surfing are limited to slow, no-wake speed when within 200 feet of the shoreline, docks, launch ramps, swimmers or downed skiers, persons wading in the water, anchored, moored or drifting boats and other marked areas.
- It is unlawful to operate a motorboat propelled by an outboard motor, inboard/outboard motor or water jet while a person is wake surfing in or on the wake of the motorboat, **unless the propulsion system is specifically designed by the manufacturer for that activity.**
- Skiing is illegal between sunset and sunrise.
- In addition to the operator, a competent observer must be in the boat in a position to observe the towed person.
- Conventional water-ski tow ropes may not exceed a length of 80 feet.

Specially regulated waters

Additional regulations such as speed limit and slow, no-wake areas affect boaters on specific waterways. Boaters should read all regulations posted on the bulletin boards at access areas. Know the waters you plan to boat before you go.

By understanding boating regulations and safety information, you will be prepared while on the water. Visit www.fishandboat.com. ☐



NOTICE

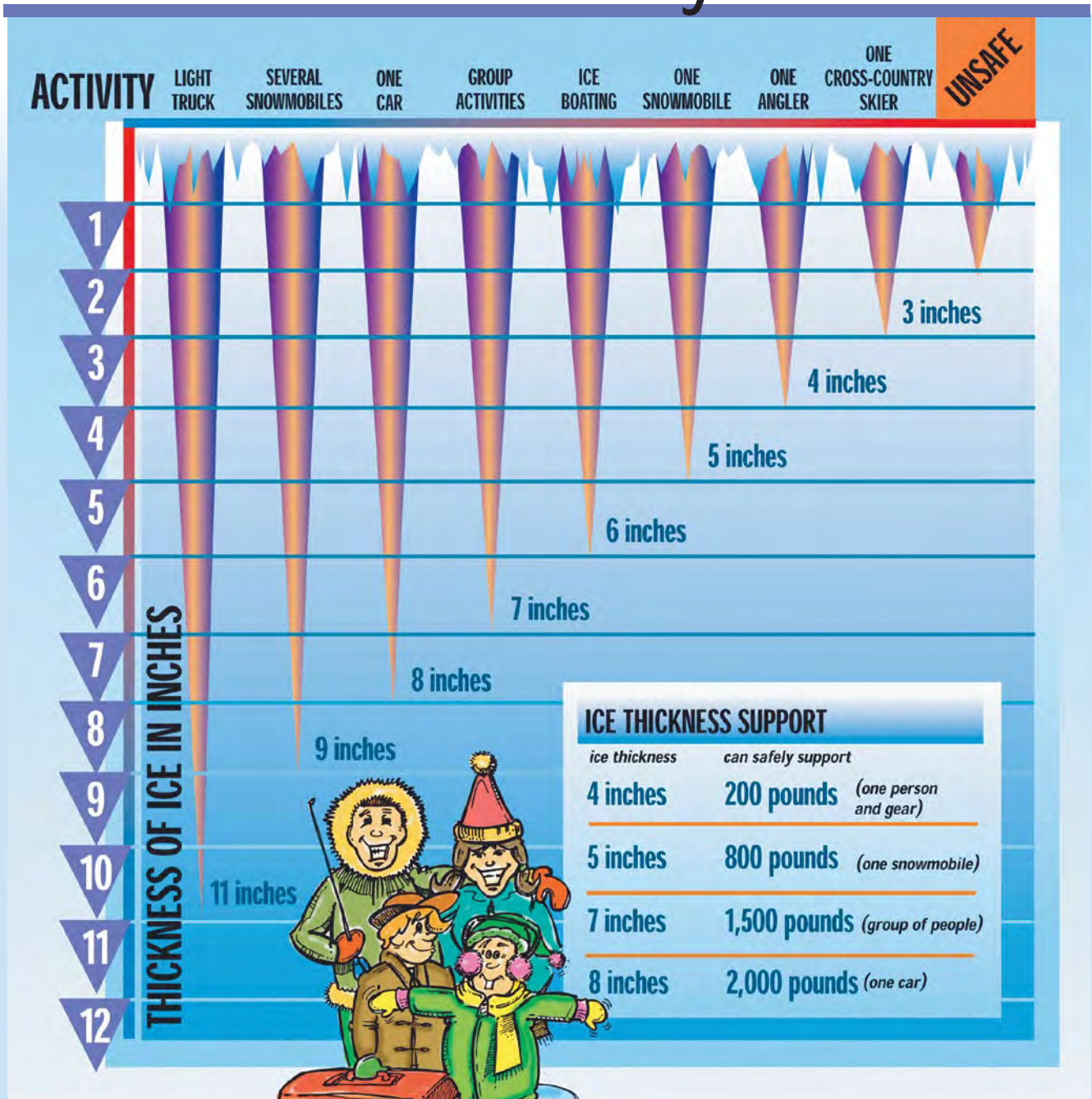
COLD WATER KILLS!

WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET!

Boaters are required by law to wear a life jacket on boats less than 16 feet in length or any canoe or kayak during the cold weather months from November 1 through April 30. Life jackets save lives year-round. In addition to this regulation, the Commission strongly encourages all boaters to wear their life jackets at all times during the other months of the year.

For ice anglers this winter, be safe on the ice and know the proper thickness.

Ice Safety Thickness



There are many factors that influence ice strength including water chemistry, wind and sunlight. Please note that these are general ice thickness guidelines and carefully check ice conditions before venturing onto the ice.

October Commission Meeting Held

During the October 22 formal meeting, the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) took steps towards replacing a long-standing regulation that requires anglers to display their fishing license on an outer garment while fishing.

Under a proposed amendment to Section 63.2 (PA Title 58), the current display requirement would be replaced with a possession requirement, which would require only that an angler carry the license on their person while fishing and present the license to a PFBC law enforcement officer upon request. Under this proposal, anglers who still wish to display their fishing license on an outer garment may continue to do so. While the PFBC seeks legislation that would allow for the display of a fishing license on a mobile device, this amendment would still require a printed and signed license to be possessed. The Commission acted to approve the publication of proposed rulemaking containing the amendments to the fishing license display regulation and, following publication in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*, the proposal will be considered for final rulemaking at a future meeting of the Commission.

In other action:

- The Board considered numerous property access and real estate matters intended to provide more public fishing and boating access.
- Under one agreement, Commissioners authorized the acquisition of an easement on a 6,460 linear foot parcel of property along Conneaut Creek in Spring Township, Crawford County. Pending further due diligence, the Commission will pay \$90,000 for the land along Jerusalem Road north of Springfield to be used for public fishing, boating, and riparian and fishery management. This easement would be funded using monies collected by PFBC through the sale of special Lake Erie fishing permits. To date, PFBC has acquired 28.71 miles (151,594 linear feet) of public fishing access in the Lake Erie Watershed through easements and land purchases under the Erie Access Improvement Program.
- In Huntingdon County, the Board authorized the acquisition of a lease of 4,690 linear feet of property along the Little Juniata River to provide public fishing access and fisheries management opportunities. Under the agreement, PFBC will utilize funds provided by the Little Juniata River Association to pay an initial fee of \$5,000 to New Enterprise Stone and Lime Company, Inc. for access to multiple parcels of land in Warrior's Mark Township, near Tyrone. The terms of the lease will be revisited annually. The Little Juniata River provides significant wild Brown Trout fishing opportunities in the area.
- In separate real estate matters, Commissioners authorized the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with Wayne County for the conveyance of approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ (+/- 40.7 acres) and the lease of approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ (+/- 81.3 acres) of the Hankins Pond property located in Mount Pleasant Township. This agreement is the result of ongoing negotiations between PFBC, Wayne County and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) aimed at addressing concerns about the safety of the Hankins Pond Dam while also protecting the structure, which has local historical significance.
- In September 2018, when the Commission was preparing to remove a 150-foot section of the Hankins Pond Dam, as

required by PA DEP's Division of Dam Safety, Wayne County filed a legal action to stop the breach. The Commission filed preliminary objections to the complaint forcing the County to join PA DEP as an indispensable party since the issue before the court involved a hazard determination made by PA DEP. The County, PA DEP and the Commission have spent the past year negotiating a settlement that will preserve the historical structure of the dam while eliminating the danger of a catastrophic failure should the lake refill in a flood event. Additional details about the settlement can be found within the full meeting Agenda.

- In Northampton County, the Board approved final rulemaking to amend fishing regulations for Minsi Lake, requiring catch and release/no harvest for all species except trout, and to apply Commonwealth Inland Waters regulations for trout. This reservoir was completely dewatered in June 2017 to complete dam and spillway repairs and modifications per PA DEP dam safety standards. The application of this special regulation is intended to protect fish populations during the restocking process beginning in spring 2020 or as soon as refilling conditions allow with fingerling plants of select fish species to establish a high quality warmwater and coolwater fishery. Once the warmwater fishery has been reestablished, the lake will be recommended for removal from the miscellaneous special regulation and inclusion in one of the Commission's existing warmwater regulation programs. The amendment will go into effect upon publication in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*.
- In Westmoreland County, Commissioners approved final rulemaking to amend fishing regulations for Donegal Lake, requiring catch and release/no harvest for all species except trout, and to apply Commonwealth Inland Waters regulation for trout. This reservoir was completely dewatered during fall 2016 to complete control tower, dam and spillway repairs and modifications per PA DEP dam safety standards. The application of this special regulation is intended to protect fish populations during the restocking process beginning in spring 2020 or as soon as refilling conditions allow with fingerling plants of select fish species to establish a high-quality warmwater and coolwater fishery. Once the warmwater fishery has been reestablished, the lake will be recommended for removal from the miscellaneous special regulation and inclusion in one of the Commission's existing warmwater regulation programs. The amendment will go into effect upon publication in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*.
- Commissioners approved the publication of a notice of proposed rulemaking regarding seasons, sizes and creel limits within Lake Erie, its tributaries and Presque Isle Bay including peninsular waters, Erie County. Past Commission actions gave authority to the Executive Director to adjust harvest limits for Walleye and Yellow Perch based upon adaptive management methods for these water bodies to maintain consistency in angler catch rate given the vagaries of weather and other biotic and abiotic influences

upon recruitment or production of young for these species. Following that approval, staff identified a slight discrepancy in the start date of Walleye season for Inland Waters and Lake Erie waters. In both cases, the start date occurs within one week of one another. To maintain regulatory consistency and simplicity, staff recommend the Lake Erie, Lake tributaries, Presque Isle Bay and peninsular water Walleye seasonal opening days be the same as that for Commonwealth Inland Waters (January 1 – March 14, 2020; and 12:01 a.m. on the first Saturday in May to midnight, December 31, 2020). This small housekeeping change is expected to be unnoticed by anglers and have negligible impact upon fishing opportunity but will serve to simplify and make clear harvest rules applicable to Walleyes across much of the Commonwealth. If adopted on final rulemaking, the amendment will go into effect upon publication in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*.

- In other action, Commissioners approved the designation of three stream sections to the list of Class A wild trout streams. The board also approved the addition of 36 new waters to the Commission's list of wild trout streams and a revision to the section limits of one water. These additions and revisions will go into effect upon the publication of a second notice in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*. A list of waters proposed for wild trout stream and Class A Wild Trout Stream designation can be found on the PFBC website.
- The Board voted to extend the limits to nine stream sections managed under the Delayed Harvest Artificial Lures Only Program. Extensions would go into effect on January 1, 2020 on the following stream sections: (1) Chest Creek, Section 03, Cambria County, Ridge Avenue downstream to Thomas Mill Road; (2) First Fork Sinnemahoning Creek, Section 04, Potter County, Rt 872 bridge at Schoolhouse Run downstream to Berge Run; (3) Kinzua Creek, Section 04, McKean County,

Guffey Road Bridge (Rocky Road) downstream to Westline Road Bridge; (4) Loyalsock Creek, Section 05, Lycoming and Sullivan counties, 1.0 mile upstream Sullivan County line downstream to unnamed tributary located 0.9 mile upstream of Plunketts Creek; (5) Lycoming Creek, Section 04, Lycoming County, 0.5 mile upstream Daugherty Run downstream to 0.1 mile downstream of the SR 0015 bridge (Old Route 15) near Haleeka; (6) McMichael Creek, Section 05, Monroe County, 0.13 km downstream from the Turkey Hill Road (T-416) Bridge downstream to Glenbrook Road (SR 2004) Bridge; (7) Middle Creek, Section 04, Snyder County, 0.3 mile upstream of Pine Swamp Road downstream to Covered Bridge Road; (8) Pine Creek, Section 06, Tioga County, Marsh Creek downstream to Bear Run; (9) Little Pine Creek, Section 04, Lycoming County, Little Pine Creek Road bridge located 1.0 mile upstream Otter Run downstream to inflow of Little Pine Lake.

- The Board voted to authorize the Executive Director to enter into a 3-year agreement with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the collection of American Shad eggs from the Potomac River during the spring spawning runs of 2020, 2021 and 2022. Since 2006, the Commission has maintained Memoranda of Agreement with USFWS for the collection of fertilized American Shad eggs from the Potomac River for use in American Shad restoration efforts in the Susquehanna River.
- The Board approved future regular meetings of the Commission to occur on January 27-28, 2020; April 27-28, 2020; July 20-21, 2020; and October 19-20, 2020. The January and July 2020 meetings will be held at the Harrisburg Headquarters located at 1601 Elmerton Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17110. The April and October meetings will be held at locations still to be determined by the Commission.

Award Presentations at the October 22 Commission Meeting



Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO) Sean Sauserman and Sergeant Craig A. Garman were recognized with Lifesaving Awards. On March 14, 2019, while facilitating a preseason trout stocking in Blair County, WCO Sauserman and Sergeant Garman utilized basic life support training and skills to assist a volunteer stocking assistant who suffered a cardiac event. Pictured are (left to right) Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Board President Eric C. Hussar, WCO Sauserman, Sergeant Garman and Executive Director Tim Schaeffer.



An eel print was presented to retired PFBC Commissioner G. Warren Elliott for his years of service as an elected Commissioner. Pictured are (left to right) Pennsylvania State Representative Keith Gillespie, G. Warren Elliott, Executive Director Tim Schaeffer and Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Board President Eric C. Hussar.

PA Trout In the Classroom “Kicks-Off” a New Year

Trout In the Classroom (TIC) has grown from less than 60 classrooms in 2007 to 415 participating classrooms in 2019-2020. Each year, teachers connect over 30,000 students to Pennsylvania’s coldwater resources. Teachers and program partners (e.g. Trout Unlimited Chapters, conservation districts, watershed groups, sportsman groups and conservancies) conduct conservation projects (e.g. tree planting, habitat work, water monitoring and school ground watershed projects), implement TIC release day programs and events, and introduce students to recreational opportunities (e.g. fishing, boating, hiking).

On October 7, 2019, TIC eggs and food were packaged and sent to TIC classrooms across Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) and Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited (PATU) would like to thank volunteers and PFBC staff for helping “kick-off” this year’s TIC program with an egg shipment day. PFBC Executive Director Tim Schaeffer and Commissioner Rocco S. Ali also expressed appreciation for the time and dedication TU volunteers and PFBC staff devote to TIC.



photo-courtesy of Amidah Danit

Young-of-Year Shad Collection on the Delaware River

photo-courtesy of Executive Director Tim Schaeffer



Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) Executive Director Tim Schaeffer recently joined PFBC Area 5 fisheries staff along the Delaware River near Milford, Pike County, for a young-of-year netting survey. Students from Wallenpaupack High School assisted with the work, which is labor intensive and performed at night.

Bureau of Hatcheries Meeting



photo-fish both, PA Lumber Museum

On September 24 through September 26, 2019, Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Bureau of Hatcheries biologists, managers and administrative staff met at the Pennsylvania Lumber Museum, Potter County, to present and discuss issues vital to fish production and stocking programs in Pennsylvania. Topics included the new mussel culture program, fish marking, fish health, alarm systems, aquatic invasive species, stocking trucks and infrastructure projects.

Erratum

On page 64 of the November/December 2019 *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* magazine, “Cast & Caught”, an incorrect name was used in the photo caption for the Northern Pike photo. The photo was of Gerald Grove. The photo caption should have read: “Gerald Grove, Verona, caught and released this 33-inch Northern Pike while fishing on High Point Lake, Somerset County.”

Rivers Conservation and Fly Fishing Youth Camp

The Cumberland Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited is holding the 26th annual Rivers Conservation and Fly Fishing Youth Camp on June 21 through June 26, 2020, at Messiah College, Grantham.

Admission is limited to 32 selected qualified students, ages 14 to 17. The applicants must have been born between June 26, 2002 and June 21, 2006. The 32 students will be selected through an application process where they must state why they want to attend camp.

New for 2020—Early Acceptance. The deadline for early acceptance is December 31, 2019. Students selected for the early acceptance will be notified in early January 2020. Applicants who apply during the regular application period of January 1, 2020 through February 29, 2020 will be notified in early March 2020. Applying through the camp website is preferred.

The camp tuition is \$550 per student. There is no cost to apply, and no money is required until a student

is accepted. Financial aid may be available to qualified students. All meals and accommodations are included for the residence camp.

The structured curriculum is based on college level classes. Students are instructed in ecology, aquatic biology, geology, hydrogeology, erosion and sediment control, ichthyology, riparian corridor protection, watershed management, entomology, and more. Students participate in a hands-on stream habitat improvement project. There are 10 fishing sessions, casting and fishing instruction and fly-tying classes. Over 25 instructors teach the various classes.

A student does not have to be an accomplished fly angler or a budding aquatic biologist to attend. The student needs to be highly motivated and willing to learn.

For more information, a camp brochure or to apply, visit www.riverscamp.com. Questions may be submitted through the website or by e-mail to riverscamp@gmail.com.

Lititz Sportsman's Association Dedication Ceremony

photo-Captain Raymond A. Becharnik



The Lititz Sportsman's Association held a dedication ceremony on September 16, 2019, for a new pavilion

and handicapped accessible fishing dock at the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's Speedwell Forge Lake, Lancaster County. The pavilion and fishing dock were built through the generous efforts of many local businesses and community groups, all of which was coordinated by Lititz Sportsman's Association. Many people were involved in making this project a success. Ken Hess, a longtime member of Lititz Sportsman's Association, was indispensable. Hess's work included soliciting donations, coordinating with various agencies to obtain permits and approvals, and helping with construction work. The project was dedicated in Hess's honor.

Days of Summer Kayak Winners

photos-Andrew Desko



Marissa Watson, Spring City, won a Bonafide SS127 sit-on-top kayak and accessory package courtesy of FishUSA as part of Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's (PFBC's) 2019 "Days of Summer I" giveaway.



Brian J. Downey, Coatesville, won an Ascend 10T sit-on-top kayak, Ascend tournament kayak paddle and Ascend life jacket courtesy of Bass Pro Shops as part of PFBC's 2019 "Days of Summer II" giveaway.

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Upcoming Shows in 2020

Event	Date	Location
Pennsylvania Farm Show	January 4-11	Harrisburg, Dauphin County
Greater Philly Sportsmen's Expo	January 9-12	Oaks, Montgomery County
Pittsburgh Boat Show	January 16-19	Monroeville, Allegheny County
Early Bird Sports Expo	January 23-26	Bloomsburg, Columbia County
The Fly Fishing Show	January 24-26	Edison, New Jersey
Great American Outdoor Show	February 1-9	Harrisburg, Dauphin County
Washington County Sport Show	February 7-9	Washington, Washington County
Allegheny Sport, Travel and Outdoor Show	February 14-16	Monroeville, Allegheny County
21st Annual Valley Outdoors Cabin Fever Expo	February 15-16	Mifflinburg, Union County
Philadelphia Fishing Show	February 21-23	Oaks, Montgomery County
Jaffa Sports Show	February 21-23	Altoona, Blair County
Erie Sport and Travel Show	February 28-March 1	Erie, Erie County
Greater Philadelphia Boat Show	March 6-8	Oaks, Montgomery County
Great Lakes Walleye University	March 7	Girard, Erie County
The Fly Fishing Show	March 7-8	Lancaster, Lancaster County
Western PA Muskie Max	March 7-8	Canonsburg, Washington County

For more information on the Commission's 2020 show season: fbweb.pa.gov/calendar



Angler's Notebook

by Jerry Bush



photo-Jerry Bush

Some ice anglers carry only a 5-gallon bucket, a few small fishing rods and jigs and a manual ice auger. Other anglers bring an ice fishing shelter, heater and motorized auger. Many ice fishing shelters are manufactured with hard-plastic floors formed into sled shapes, which helps transport equipment. Augers, hooks and other gear may pierce expensive materials. Therefore, many anglers choose to transport gear in sleds.

If an ice fishing angler does not own an ice fishing shelter, it is important for the angler to wear clothing that blocks mist and wind. Add a hard shell, hooded jacket to your ice fishing wardrobe.

Tear drop jigs are hard to beat when ice fishing for panfish in water that is 15 feet deep or less. Tear drop jigs are small and unobtrusive, yet heavy enough to reach the bottom in relatively still water. Tear drop jigs can be tipped with waxworms, red worms, meal worms or minnows. Tear drop jigs are available in many colors, allowing anglers to discover which color attracts panfish in different lighting.

Perch are voracious feeders often targeted by ice anglers. Perch are schooling fish—if you catch one perch, there may be more of these fish nearby. Perch can be found early in the season around weeds growing below the ice in water that is 15 feet deep or less. As temperature decreases and weeds diminish, perch are likely to move into deeper water

or drop-offs bordering deeper water. Perch schools roam as they hunt, sometimes making their whereabouts difficult to predict. However, sometimes schools of perch can be lured to an area. Bounce heavy, chrome lures and oversized weights off the bottom to disturb sediment along the floor. After stirring up the bottom for several minutes, switch to an appropriately sized jig tipped with live bait. Minnows are often the chosen bait by winter perch.

Sometimes, steelhead fishing is so good, it seems unbelievable. During those times, anglers should consider the amount of photographs taken. After obtaining an adequate number of trophy fish photographs, resist the temptation to needlessly handle more fish. Fish have a greater opportunity to survive catch and release tactics if left in the water during hook removal and allowed to swim back without being hoisted.

During winter months, there is little advantage to fishing early in the morning when conditions are the coldest. Gamefish are typically more active when the sun warms the water at least 1- to 2-degrees F during this time of year. According to author and fly fishing expert Tom Rosenbauer, “Winter’s fly anglers will see the most activity mid-afternoon on sunny days, or surprisingly, all day long on gray days absent of wind.” Another benefit of fly fishing after temperatures reach at least 30 degrees F is the reduced icing of rod ferrules.

Fishin’ from the Kitchen

Walleye Pie Topped with Butternut Squash

by Wayne Phillips

Nothing takes away the chill like a rich Walleye pie topped with creamy butternut squash.

Ingredients for four servings:

- 12- to 16-ounces cubed boneless, skinless Walleye fillets
- 2 Tbsp. butter
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1 cup diced carrots
- 1 cup frozen corn kernels
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 Tbsp minced fresh herbs (dill, tarragon or thyme)
- 1 butternut squash, baked and mashed with butter and milk
- 2 cups basic white sauce
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Procedure

Bake butternut squash in a 350-degree F oven until soft. Remove the flesh and mash with a little butter and milk. Over medium heat, sauté onion, peas, carrots, corn, garlic and Walleye in butter until cooked. Remove from heat. Make the white sauce, and add the sauce to the fish mixture. Season with herbs, salt

and black pepper. Place in a casserole dish. Spread the mashed butternut squash over the top. Bake in a 350-degree F oven until bubbling, about 15- to 20-minutes.

Serve

Make this recipe in either a large casserole dish or individual small casseroles. Serve with a green salad and a hearty, crusty bread like ciabatta or dark rye.

Tips

Margarine may be used instead of butter. For a richer white sauce, replace some of the milk with cream or half-and-half.

There are many other toppings for fish pies. Stronger fish flavors can stand up to rutabaga. Yams or sweet potatoes provide richness. For wild color, try blue potatoes mashed with sour cream. There are other types of squash, but butternut has a rich, buttery taste.



photo-Wayne Phillips

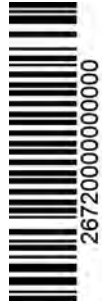
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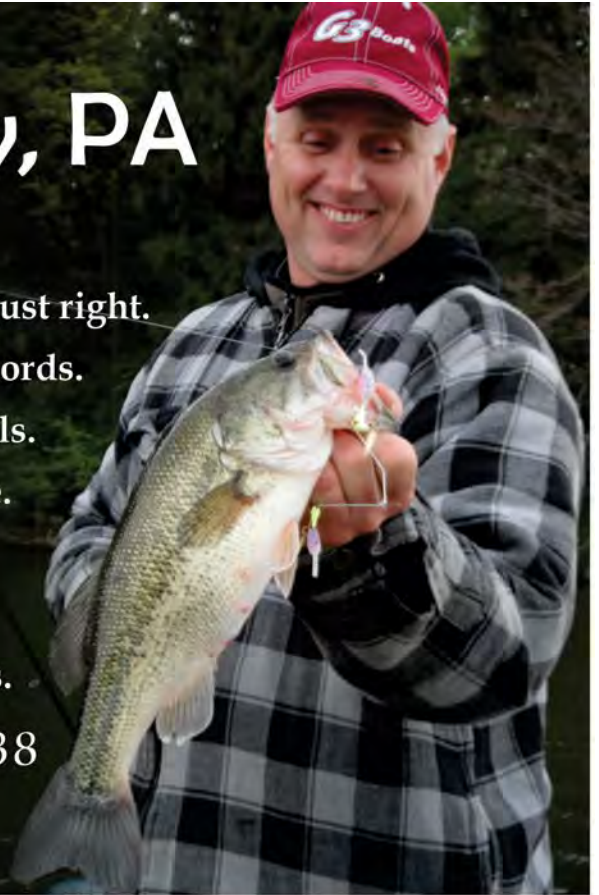
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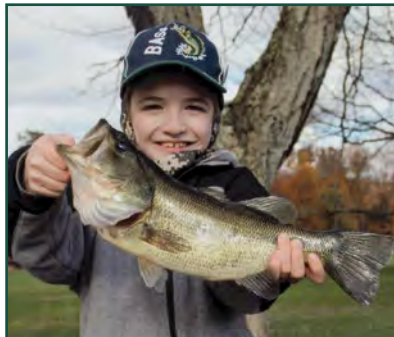
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CAST & CAUGHT



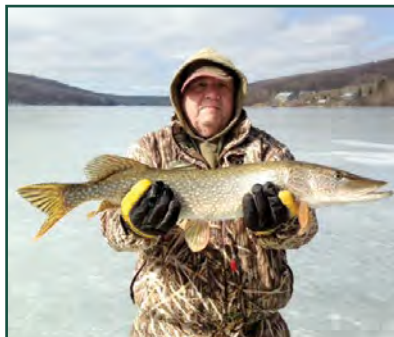
Morgan Silberman, age 12, caught and released this 33.3-pound, 39-inch Flathead Catfish while fishing on the Shenango River, Mercer County.



Mikey Prentice, age 13, caught this 2.8-pound, 17-inch Largemouth Bass while fishing at a pond in Fayetteville, Franklin County.



Alan Stover caught this Brown Trout while fishing at Raystown Branch Juniata River, Huntingdon County.



Gerald Grove, Verona, caught and released this 33-inch Northern Pike while fishing on High Point Lake, Somerset County.



Donald Merritt, Erie, caught this Brook Trout while fishing Farnsworth Branch, Warren County.

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



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