

# Pennsylvania ANGLER & BOATER

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

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*Have Fun. Be Safe.*



**REMEMBER TO  
WEAR YOUR  
LIFE JACKET  
DURING COLD  
WATER BOATING.**

**Boaters are required to wear  
a life jacket on boats less than  
16 feet in length or any canoe,  
kayak, or paddleboard from  
November 1 through April 30.**



**Life jackets  
save lives  
year-round!**

## Graphic Key

The icons below represent specific article topics.



Creeks



Family Fishing



Fly Fishing



Ice Fishing



Lakes



Paddling



Rivers



State Parks



Tackle

The tags below categorize fishing and boating skill levels related to an article.

BEGINNER

INTERMEDIATE

ADVANCED

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### On the cover



Legendary fly angler, Joe Humphreys, State College, is one of many great instructors who led Penn State's fly fishing program. It became a credited

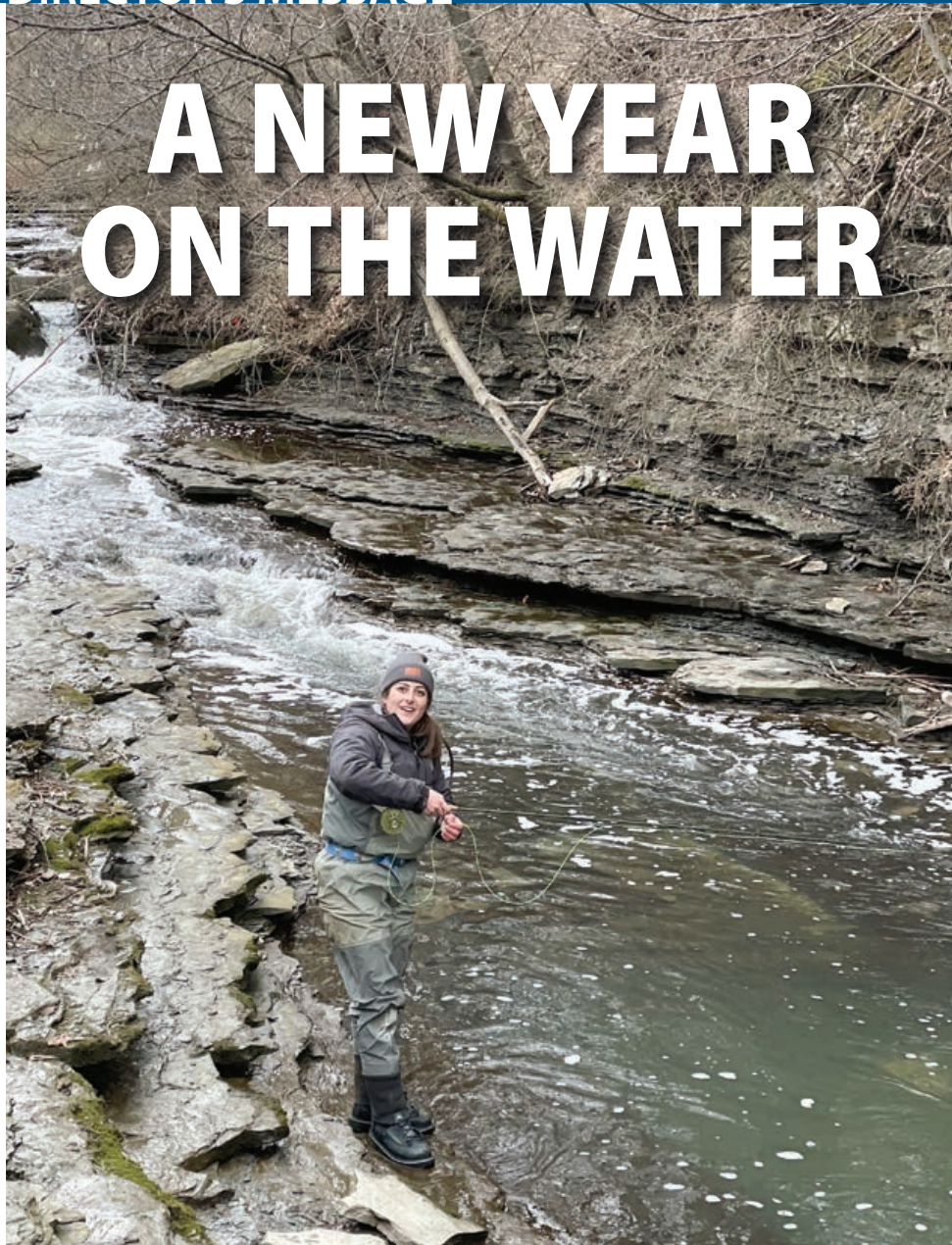
course in 1947. It was the first of its kind in the United States. Today, the internationally recognized program is known as the Joe Humphreys Fly Fishing Program. For more on this deeply-rooted fly fishing tradition, turn to page 26.

*Photo by George Daniel.*



# A NEW YEAR ON THE WATER

Photo: Arnie Capotis



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

As much as we all enjoy the holiday season, there is something about the turning of the calendar and the start of a new year that makes us excited for the promise of a fresh start. A wide open calendar awaits, and we look forward to blocking off as many days as possible for getting out on the water with friends or family.

Just in time, these pages are loaded with information that will help you plan your fishing and boating adventures for the year. There's no need to wait out winter. Check out "How to Use Inclement Weather to

Scout New Waters" on page 30, and get tips on how to make the most of any kind of weather.

Now's the time, too, to make your plans for ice fishing if you are a seasoned ice angler or would like to try it for the first time. We have guidance for gearing up on page 8, catching those chilly perch on page 16, and a peak into the minds of the masters on page 38. We'll help direct you to great places to go, whether it's in suburban stocked streams on page 20 or features on great spots like Yellow Creek on page 28.

Sorting through all the information can be overwhelming, so we have been improving *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* to make your planning easier. The changes reflect our goal to always make your fishing and boating experiences better and more enjoyable. Now, in each issue, you can more easily find the articles specific to your interests and plans.

As you plan for your year on the water, icons placed in the top corner of the page help quickly direct you to your interests with just a flip through the magazine's pages. Catch articles that give you information and advice about family fishing, fly fishing, ice fishing, fishing and boating on lakes, rivers, or in state parks, paddling, and great tips on tackle.

In addition, where appropriate, we help guide you to the articles and information that best suit your skill level, providing you an easy reference with beginner, intermediate, and advanced identified articles. These categories are helpful, too, when you want to share with others interested in developing their skills and learning new techniques.

Thank you to our editorial team for these helpful improvements to the magazine.

Please enjoy what this issue has to offer, and here's to a 2023 filled with amazing moments on Pennsylvania's waters.



# Angler's Alphabet of Lures— From A-Rig to Zara Spook

by Marilyn Black

**A**rtificial baits marketed to anglers span the alphabet. You'll likely recognize classics as well as recent arrivals.

## A-Rig

An offspring of saltwater's umbrella rig, a freshwater A-Rig with multiple flexible wire arms and a jighead with a soft plastic grub or swimbait body creates a baitfish school illusion enticing Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Striped Bass, and White Bass.

## Beetle Spin

For 50 years, this ½-ounce to ¼-ounce safety pin lure with an overhead spinning blade above a grub body produces results in ponds, streams, and larger waterways for all freshwater species.

## Circle Hook

Adapted from saltwater use, this good catch-and-release hook for live bait attaches to the corner of a fish's mouth rather than deep into its mouth.

## Dying Flutter

Topwater by James Heddon, it rests in a vertical position and has a unique fish-arousing sound and spray when its streamlined body with fore and aft propellers is chugged. It is now found on eBay and in tackle boxes of old-timers who treasure its unique action.

## Erie Dearie

Introduced in 1960 by charter boat captain Dan Galbinca, this is a weight-forward spinner for count-down casting while drifting for Walleyes on Lake Erie. It is comprised of a ½- to 1-ounce weight, spinner, beads, and single hook with a nightcrawler.

## Flipping Jig

Bass anglers in the 1970s became enthralled with this long-rod, short-line technique. A heavy jig with stiff weed guard is swung to visible cover and open weed pockets.

## Grub

This 2- to 4-inch molded plastic thick-bodied bait may feature a curly, beaver-tail, or shad-like action tail. Fished on a leadhead, it is effective for all fish species.

## Hawaiian Wiggler

Fred Arbogast introduced this weedless lure around 1940. This inline weighted head with one or two propeller blades and rubber hula skirt is out of production. It was my father-in-law's favorite Tamarack Lake, Crawford County, bass lure.

## Ice Dot

An Ice Dot is a tiny, soldered metal lure featuring a large contrasting painted eye. It is a versatile ice fishing lure worked in subtle vertical jumps or suspended below a small bobber.



photos-Darl Black



## Jitterbug

This topwater plug with a double-cupped lip was created by Arbogast about 1937. Rhythmic gurgling during the retrieve is unmistakable. Offered in sizes for bass and musky, it is popular as a nighttime surface bait.

## Kelly's Original Plow Jockey

A pre-rigged plastic worm with small exposed hooks, it is one of the earliest 'do-nothing' lures; presentation is to let it sink slowly.

## Lucky 13

This concave mouth floating lure from Heddon features a thumping swimming action, or it can walk-the-dog. Especially effective for schooling fish species.

## Moss Boss

This plastic spoon-shape bait glides over and through brush, weed beds, and moss; its upward-pointing single hook makes it weedless.

## Ned Rig

Ned Kehde of Kansas is the namesake for this versatile light mushroom-shaped jighead tipped with a 3-inch plastic worm. Depending on the retrieve, the exposed hook finesse rig can slide along bottom, swim across submerged weeds, or simply deadstick.

## "O"

Introduced in 1967, Big "O" was the original 'alphabet' crankbait of balsa wood carved by Fred Young who sold the rights to Cotton Cordell. This lure started the modern crankbait revolution.

## Plastic Worm

Originally molded of rubber resembling an earthworm, plastic worms evolved into many permutations of shapes offered in every color imaginable in lengths to 12 inches.

## Quill Gordon Fly

Theodore Gordon (1854-1915) created this fly with its stripped peacock quill body, blue dun hackle, and lemon wood duck tail and wings.

## Rapala Original Floating Minnow

Originated in Finland, the lure became an overnight phenom in the United States following a 1962 article in *Life* magazine. Popular for any species, it can be twitched on the surface, retrieved as a shallow runner, or trolled.



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1. A-Rig
2. Beetle Spin
3. Circle Hook
4. Dying Flutter
5. Erie Dearie
6. Flipping Jig
7. Grub
8. Ice Dot
9. Jitterbug
10. Kelly's Original Plow Jockey
11. Moss Boss
12. Ned Rig

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13. "O"

14. Plastic Worm

15. Rapala Original Floating Minnow

16. Slug-go

17. Tube

18. Underspin

19. Vibe-E

20. Wiggle Wart

21. X-Rap

22. Yakima Bait's FlatFish

23. Zara Spook

Not pictured: Hawaiian Wiggler, Lucky 13, and Quill Gordon Fly

## Slug-go

Invented in 1990 by Lunker City's Herb Reed, this was the original soft body jerkbait. Resembling a tailless slug, it is Texas-posed rigged and fished with an enticing twitch across the surface, then paused to sink below the surface.

## Tube

Insert a narrow jighead into this 3- to 4-inch hollow plastic sheath so only the line-tie punches through. Hard to believe something so simple rose quickly to become one of the best Smallmouth Bass baits.

## Underspin

It has a realistic fish head shape with a 360-degree rotating willow blade underneath and a single hook to which the angler adds a shad-shaped soft swimbait. Effective in windy conditions, around standing timber or bridge pilings, and in cooler weather.

## Vib-E

This adjustable-action brass alloy blade bait has been available for 30 years. Its vibration is particularly effective below 50 degrees F. It can be cast and retrieved like a jig, or it may be fished vertically with a lift and drop action.

## Wiggle Wart

This Storm design incorporates an integral lip and features a side-to-side searching action on the retrieve. It is regarded as one of the best coldwater crankbaits.

## X-Rap

Slashbait action is achieved by a thin minnow-shaped translucent body lure with flash-feathered rear treble hook. Usually worked feverishly with rapid snaps followed by long pause.

## Yakima Bait's FlatFish

This lure was popular among Pymatuning Reservoir Walleye anglers in the 1950s-1960s. When slow-trolled, this banana-shaped lure wobbles in a wide swath. Small sizes are available for steelhead.

## Zara Spook

The original walk-the-dog floating cigar-shaped lure, this classic made by Heddon since 1939 still creates a sensation as it slides first to right and then slides to the left on the next jerk, then repeats the zig-zag. □



# GEARING UP FOR ICE FISHING

by Tyler Frantz

photos by the author

Ice fishing in Pennsylvania can be basic or advanced, and anglers can spend a little or a lot of money on this wintertime activity. While there are luxuries that come with high-end gear, it only takes a modest assortment of essentials to get started. Consider the following as a simple guide for breaking into ice fishing without breaking the bank.

## Sled

Most of the gear described in this article can be carried by hand in a 5-gallon bucket, pack basket, or shoulder bag, but it is more convenient to invest in a deep-sided utility sled.

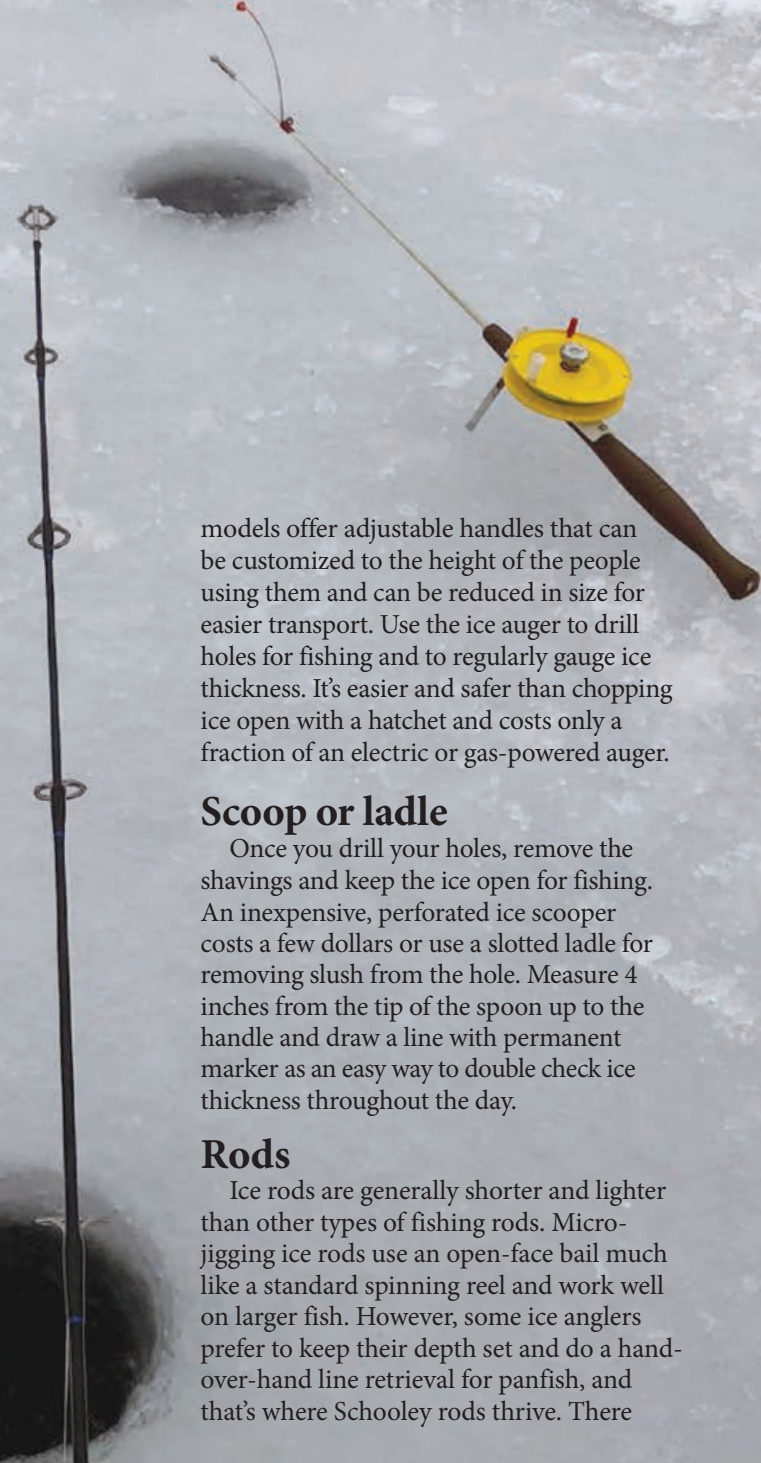
Plastic sleds take a lot of weight off your shoulders and serve as a clean, organized home base for all your gear. They slide well over both snow and ice, making it easy to find what you need when you need it, and most models cost less than \$100.

## Shovel

Put a lightweight snow shovel in your sled to clear a patch of ice for drilling multiple holes. A shovel is also a handy tool for checking for safe ice, which should be a minimum of 4 inches thick to support 200 pounds.

## Ice auger

A manual ice auger can be purchased for less than \$100. Most



models offer adjustable handles that can be customized to the height of the people using them and can be reduced in size for easier transport. Use the ice auger to drill holes for fishing and to regularly gauge ice thickness. It's easier and safer than chopping ice open with a hatchet and costs only a fraction of an electric or gas-powered auger.

## Scoop or ladle

Once you drill your holes, remove the shavings and keep the ice open for fishing. An inexpensive, perforated ice scooper costs a few dollars or use a slotted ladle for removing slush from the hole. Measure 4 inches from the tip of the spoon up to the handle and draw a line with permanent marker as an easy way to double check ice thickness throughout the day.

## Rods

Ice rods are generally shorter and lighter than other types of fishing rods. Micro-jigging ice rods use an open-face bail much like a standard spinning reel and work well on larger fish. However, some ice anglers prefer to keep their depth set and do a hand-over-hand line retrieval for panfish, and that's where Schooley rods thrive. There



are plenty of affordable options for ice-specific rods. Consider buying at least three rods.

## Jigs and bait

Micro ice jigs can be highly effective for enticing fish that are suspended vertically beneath the ice. Most are painted in bright colors and are made of a quick sinking lead or tungsten to get them to drop rapidly. Consider rigging them with a bit of live bait such as a maggot or mealworm.

## Depth finder

A cheap clamp-on depth finder weight is extremely helpful in locating the bottom. Simply pinch it to your fishing line and drop it into the water until the line goes slack. Then, mark your line depth, retrieve and remove the depth finder, affix your bait, and drop your offering back into the hole at the desired depth.

## Add-ons

There are a few add-ons that should be given consideration such as rod holders, a comfortable seat, and even an inexpensive pop-up hunting blind anchored with snow to serve as a makeshift shelter. An emergency rope and throwable flotation device can be lifesavers, too. Everything fits in a sled and start-up costs are minimal. ☐

### To check State Park ice conditions:



[dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/WinterReport/Pages/default.aspx](https://dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/WinterReport/Pages/default.aspx)

*Ice rods are compact, lightweight, and come in a variety of styles. Choose an inexpensive model to get started and buy at least three rods to increase efficiency.*



*A Yellow Perch caught while ice fishing.*

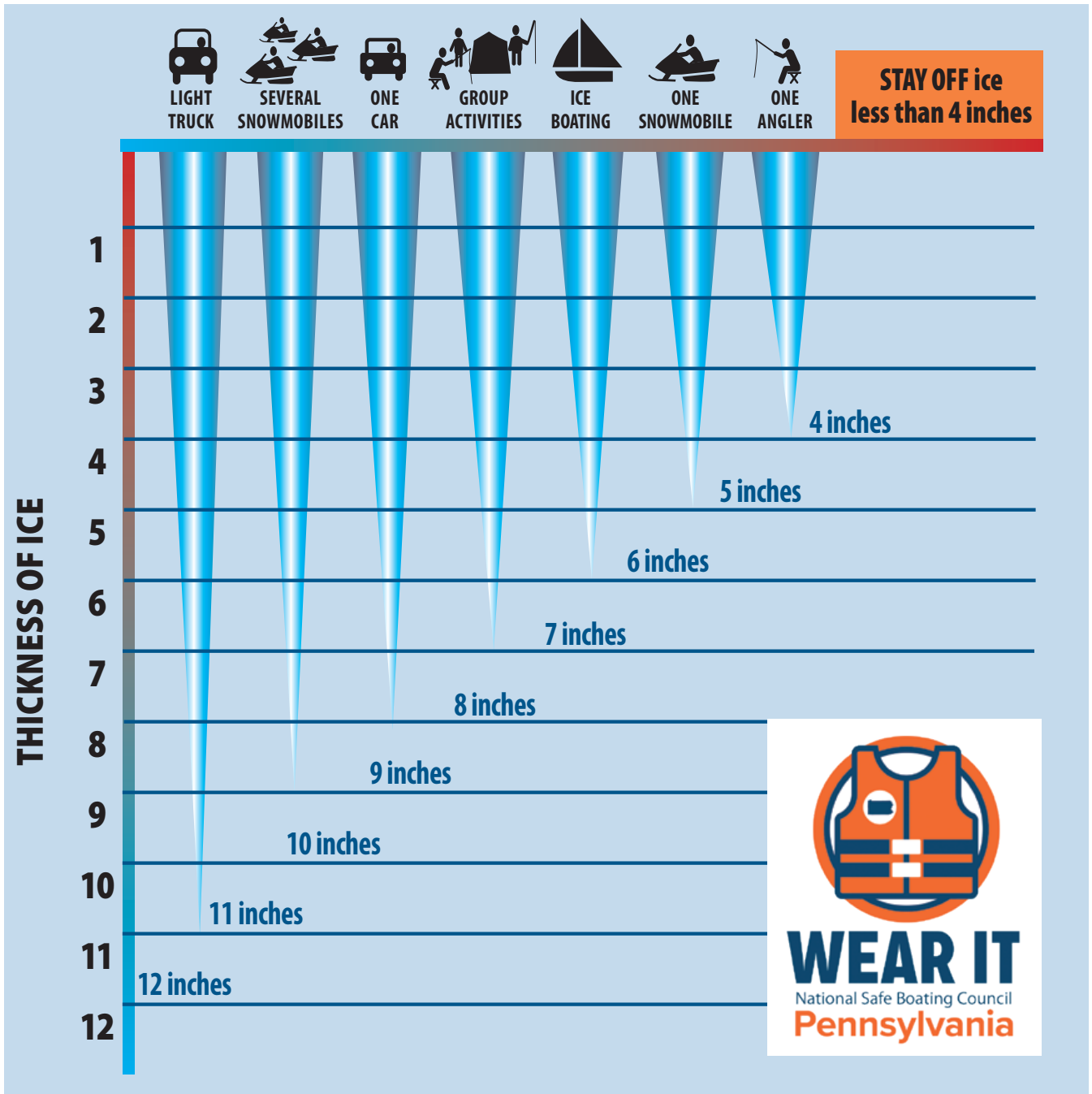


*A deep-sided utility sled simplifies transporting gear across the snow and ice, and it can serve as a great home base for all your equipment.*

# Ice Safety Guide

**Ice is never 100% safe.**

**Minimum ice thickness guidelines for new, clear ice.**



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



# NOTES *from the Streams*

## Fish on!

I patrol the Allegheny River from Freeport to Redbank Township in southwestern Pennsylvania. This section of the river is home to species of fish that can grow to enormous sizes including catfish, Muskellunge, and Walleyes. I frequently get the opportunity to talk to anglers from all over the United States, in pursuit of the catch of a lifetime. While checking fishing licenses and their creels, I always ask how the fishing has been, the type of bait they are using, and what method has been the most successful.

Occasionally, while learning about the angler's experience, I hear a spool singing as line comes off the reel or the jingle of a bell at the end of the rod, which in our world means, "fish on!" Throughout my time as a Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO), I have seen Walleyes put on a stringer for dinner, muskies that snapped lines at first sight, and catfish so big I needed to assist in holding the net. Being there to see the smiles on the faces of anglers when their hard work and determination finally pays off is the most rewarding part of being a WCO.

I often get asked if I ever have the opportunity to fish. I always reply, "I get to go fishing every day alongside Pennsylvania anglers." — *WCO D. Dorian Seibel, Greene/Southern Washington counties.*

## In plain view

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has an enormous problem with litter. It takes a lot of taxpayer dollars to attempt to keep Pennsylvania clean, not to mention

the volunteers who spend countless hours picking up trash.

With that said, littering is a serious violation, especially littering along the waters of the Commonwealth. People seldom litter in front of a WCO. As a result, we spend hours conducting surveillance at a troublesome spot, with varied results.

So, imagine my surprise, while I was sitting at a popular fishing spot in Pittsburgh in my marked patrol vehicle, when the occupants of a vehicle parked approximately 50 feet in front of me decided to throw their litter out of the vehicle.

I waited for the vehicle to depart in an effort to give them the opportunity to pick up their trash. Once they departed, I activated my emergency lights and siren and stopped the vehicle. The vehicle was occupied by four people, and it became a game of "nobody knew anything." In Pennsylvania, the operator is responsible for any litter that is emitted from the vehicle, so the problem was solved.

The moral of the story—leave paper, get "paper." Hopefully, they will think twice before trashing a fishing spot that I protect. — *WCO Michael E. Johnson, Central Allegheny County.*

## Ice ghost

At the end of a long day on the ice, an angler and his son began hoisting up their tip-ups and packing up their gear to head home for some warmth and a hot dinner. With only three tip-ups still deployed on Little Pine Lake, Lycoming County, the angler was in the process of winding up one of his lines when one of the remaining tip-ups sprung. The bright red flag waving in the wind signified that a fish took the bait. The angler rushed to the

device in hopes of catching one final fish before departing.

As he lifted the device out of the ice hole, the line was screaming off the spool. Much to his surprise, the spool was almost out of line. The fish had grabbed the bait and was destined to escape capture. The angler quickly grasped the line and set the hook. Hand over hand, the line slowly came back in with the fish hooked and fighting hard. The task of bringing in so much line became tiring. His son took over, grabbing the line and began the same process. After a few minutes, the fish approached the hole and was successfully landed by the young boy. The elusive fish was a 21-inch Rainbow Trout that had tussled with a few other ice fishing anglers and had persevered. As the angler removed his hook from its mouth, five other hooks with small sections of line attached bejeweled its jaw—trophies awarded through its battles with the previous anglers. Although it was evident other anglers failed, on this day, an angler and his son brought the ghost through the ice. — *WCO Justin D. Boatwright, Clinton and Western Lycoming counties.*



*illustration-Andrea Feeney*



# HOW TO CATCH LATE WINTER STEELHEAD

by *Nick DelVecchio*

*photos by the author*

It's no secret that the late winter steelhead season in Pennsylvania can be a harsh one. Frigid temperatures, howling wind, and blinding snow are more the norm than exception on Erie's tributaries. For those brave enough to battle such elements, opportunity abounds to catch a few more steelhead before the ice locks things up. Steelhead don't always come easy though, so having a plan and knowing what to look for and how to find the fish is critical to success.

The trick with steelhead is usually finding where they are located. As a migratory species, they are constantly moving throughout drainages and a particular run

can be full of fish one day and almost devoid the next day. It's a simple idea, really—shallow water will freeze first and more completely than deeper water. It seems obvious, but it is crucial to remember. Fish will congregate in the deeper, slow pools. Targeting these areas in late winter is a fantastic way to get fish. Once the shelf ice starts to extend into the pool itself, steelhead will hunker down underneath the ice edge, so working drifts right up against that ice is always a productive idea.

Compared to earlier season steelhead fishing, the rigging isn't much different overall. The fish eat what they eat, and there isn't a new or different insect hatch or fly color that captivates fish during this time. However, certain considerations should be given to the manner in which a rig is built and how it's fished. For starters, make the entire setup a little bit deeper since many fish will be hugging the bottom and trying



to conserve calories in the frigid water. Once you feel as though your offerings are in the correct water column level, methodically drift through a particular spot with extreme thoroughness.

The aggressive strikes that characterize fall steelhead fishing can be replaced with a sense of subtlety that can sometimes be misconstrued as just “ticking” the bottom. Don’t be afraid to set the hook on anything that looks even remotely like a hit. You’ll be surprised at how many more fish are waiting on the other end. It’s always wise to be ready for a different type of fight on a hooked fish. While acrobatic jumps and reel-screaming runs still happen, late winter steelhead are much more apt to wage drawn out, deep-water fights that feature slow pulls of line as fish bury down into the depths. Take your time and pick and choose the right moments to apply extra pressure when working fish into more shallow water.

Your gear directly impacts the catching of steelhead in late winter.

Every skilled steelhead

angler has experienced it, but there are few things more heartbreaking than hooking a nice fish and on its first run your line doesn’t feed out. A brief post-fish investigation typically yields a bummer of a result—a frozen reel. Always be mindful of keeping your gear out of the water during this time of year, because the freezing will happen quickly once gear comes in contact with the air. If a reel is frozen, chip the ice off and spool a bunch of line out to make sure a hooked fish can do the same.

In Pennsylvania, some of the best memories of the entire steelhead season involve standing on the banks of a creek and watching snow fall in weather a degree or two above freezing. There’s a sense of tranquility and peacefulness that isn’t always exhibited in other seasons. It can be tough sledding though, so take each fish as an added bonus and try to do things to up the odds of hooking and landing a late winter steelhead. ☐



*Nothing helps you forget about numb fingers quite like holding a nice steelhead.*



*The serenity and calm of winter steelhead fishing cannot be matched by any other season.*



*The proper gear, including a warm hat, is critical to enjoy late winter steelhead success.*

# Preplanning FUTURE Fishing Trips



photo-Jeff Knapp

*by Jeff Knapp*

**L**imited fishing time, high fuel prices, and wanting to get the most from an upcoming fishing trip, all contribute to having a plan when you hit the water.

Apps like Navionics Boating app, Garmin Quickdraw Community (maps posted by users), the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) Habitat Improvement Maps, and Google Earth Pro are all resources one can review prior to a trip. Look them over before your trip, write yourself a checklist of spots to visit and tactics to use, and it's much less likely that during your return from a fishing trip you'll say to yourself, "I should have tried this place, or I should have tried that tactic."

## **Navionics Boating app**

This app, which requires a modest fee, allows one to access Navionics' extensive cartography. It can be

downloaded to a smartphone or tablet. Many of the lake maps feature detailed bottom structure as well as submerged features such as bridges, roadbeds, and more. Rather than transferring coordinates to my chartplotter prior to a trip, I view the app while on the water. That way I can evaluate potential spots and decide if they are worth marking and ultimately fishing. Interesting areas can be downloaded onto a phone or tablet for offline use. As such, you can use the device as a map screen while on the water though it may pay to have a backup power source.

## **Garmin Quickdraw Community**

This website hosted by Garmin Marine shows lake maps that have been uploaded by Garmin users who have created maps using the Quickdraw feature on their chartplotters. To access this site, one must create a free account. Then, one can view all uploaded maps. This is particularly useful for Pennsylvania anglers, as many of our smaller lakes

are not covered by built-in or third party mapping programs. Garmin users can transfer maps of their choosing to their unit. Lowrance has a similar program called Genesis Social Maps.

## PFBC Habitat Improvement Maps

The PFBC posts maps of lakes within the state with habitat improvements. This includes the location of porcupine cribs, particularly ones located well off the bank as these tend to see less attention from anglers. These maps show the general location of added cover. Brush cribs, relatively new to the program, seem to be the biggest fish attractors. While coordinates are provided, I typically print the maps and take them with me on the water, using them as a general searching guide. When I find interesting cover, I mark the spots using an icon that indicates what the waypoint represents.

## Google Earth Pro

This free online resource is particularly useful when evaluating lakes that undergo periodic drawdowns. Clicking on the clock icon on the toolbar allows the user to access historical imagery. By scrolling through the images, one can often locate rock piles, foundations, bridge piers, and roadbeds. The coordinates can be transferred to your GPS unit or chartplotter. This can be done manually by jotting coordinates down and entering them into your unit. If you discover a multitude of spots you would like to save as waypoints, this can be done from Google Earth Pro as well. It requires a file transfer that is outlined in several YouTube videos.

Prior to any exploratory trip to new waters, jot down reminders in a notebook. While fishing, record productive spots for future reference. ☑

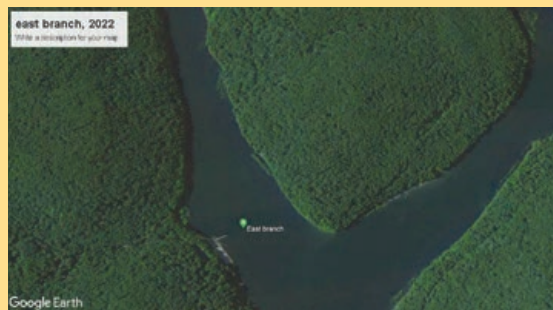
photo: Jeff Knapp



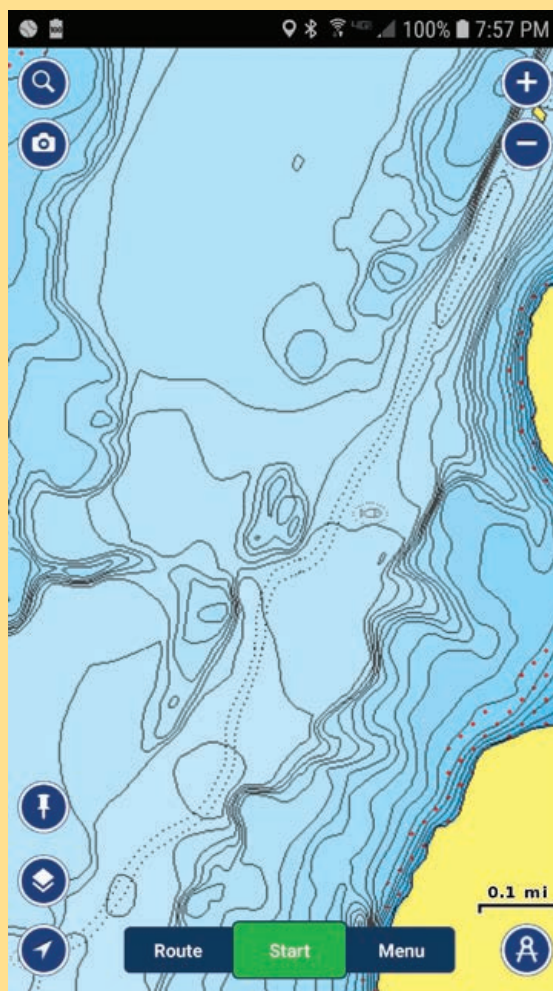
Sid Brown with a Walleye caught on Glendale Lake, Cambria County, the location of which was aided by online resources.



Google Earth image of East Branch Dam (Clarion River) at drawdown (2017).



Google Earth image of the same section of East Branch Dam (Clarion River) at full pool (2022).



A screenshot of Navionics Boating app is shown above with a section of Pymatuning Reservoir, Crawford County.



# Ice Fishing Perch



*by Ross Robertson*

*photos by the author*

**W**hen the weather turns and ice forms, it can be one of the best times to fish for the often elusive but tasty perch. Many anglers who chase perch cannot get away from undersized perch in order to target larger perch or at least keeper-size perch. Here are several things to consider this ice fishing season when you head out for perch.

## Electronics

Knowing what is going on below the ice is critical. Use several different tools to better see what is happening. While flashers have long been known and used by ice anglers, newer systems such as 360 sonar provide a bigger picture of what is going on. The 360 technology allows ice anglers to see more

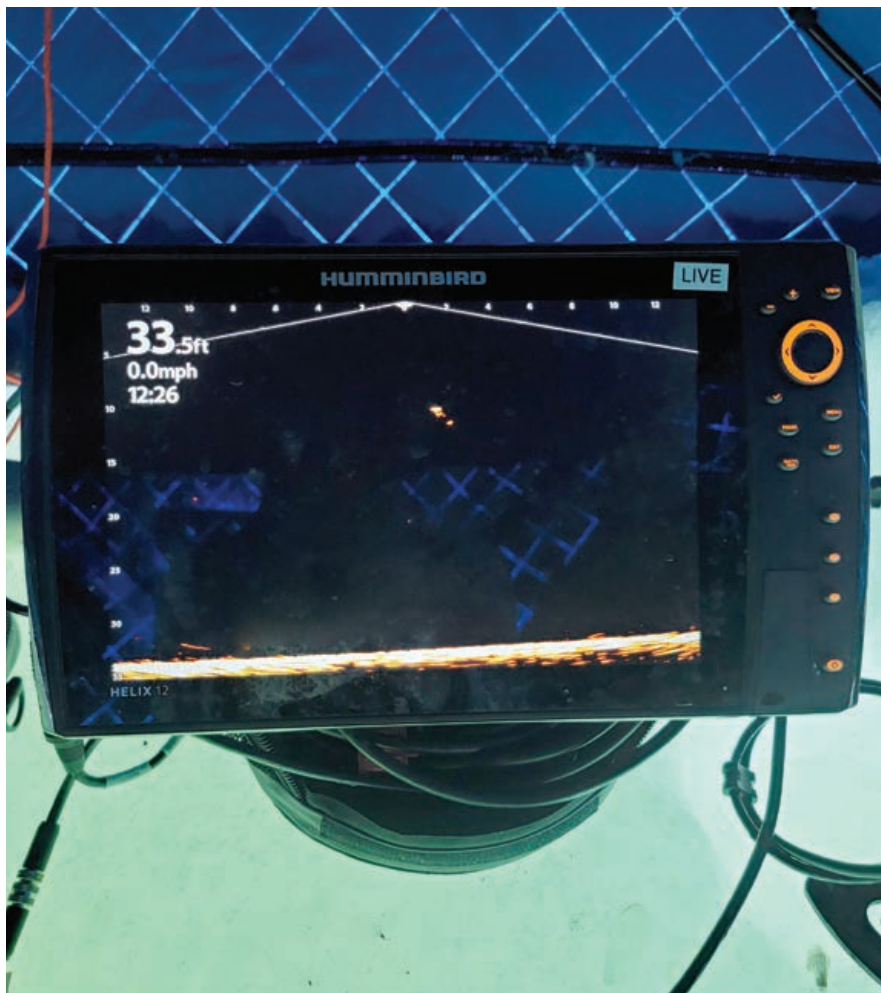
than what is directly below the ice and provides a 360-degree view. While seeing what direction fish are coming from can determine your next move, being able to see changes in bottom composition or small structures like rock piles gives additional essential details.

Newer sonar technology like live sonar helps anglers see fish in larger portions of the water column and exactly how they relate to the lure. Traditional flashers don't show how close a fish is truly swimming to the lure.

The last facet to consider with ice fishing electronics is an underwater camera. I admittedly haven't used a camera as much as others, because the peripheral vision can be limited. However, camera models are now available with either wide angle lenses or even four camera heads to get a 360-degree view.

If you don't own or have the budget for a newer camera, older models can still be useful. One of the most overlooked advantages of an underwater camera is simply identifying the fish below the ice.





*Newer sonar technology like live sonar helps anglers see fish in larger portions of the water column and exactly how they relate to the lure. Traditional flashers don't show how close a fish is truly swimming to the lure.*

While species like Walleye may be camera shy, perch are not. When a traditional flasher lights up, the true size of the fish is still unknown. Using a camera for just a few seconds can help identify not only the species but also the size and if they are big enough to target.

## Better lure options

When small fish have overtaken a lake or you are a trophy hunter at heart, you should overlook traditional dropper chain lures or small jigs tipped with larva or waxworms. While these lures get bites, they will likely keep you busy with small perch.

## Lipless baits

When seemingly endless amounts of small perch are present, it can be bittersweet. You get some action and stay entertained, but in reality, a 4-inch perch isn't going to make a sandwich. When this happens, a small lipless crankbait can be your best friend. This lure brings fish to your location, but it also generates strikes and has a good landing percentage. While

it may seem a little morbid, big perch regularly eat small perch. Experiment with several brands and types of lipless crankbaits as each has a different type of wiggle or rattle, both of which can make a big difference from day to day.

## Plastics

A small tungsten jig tipped with a waxworm will catch fish. When tipped with a plastic instead, you get several big benefits. Not using bait will help you get the jig down quicker and stay on the school. It also prevents your bait from being stolen.

When choosing a plastic, look for one with thin appendages that will move around in the water column without having to move the lure much in the water column. When it comes to the jig itself, a tungsten jig is denser and more compact. An oversized hook is also helpful in order to have enough hook gap with the plastic attached, resulting in better hookups.

If you understand and master these tips, you'll increase the number of keeper perch that make it topside this ice fishing season. ☐



photo-PFBC archives

# Selective Harvest Panfish

by *Braden Eisenhower*

**A**lthough the fishing community has embraced the catch-and-release mindset, it is imperative we continue to recognize and maintain our tradition of sourcing local, natural foods by harvesting fish. Equally important, we must carry out this ritual in a practical, purposeful manner to preserve our resources and ensure bountiful populations for today and tomorrow.

Harvesting the most abundant species—Black Crappie and White Crappie, sunfish (specifically Bluegill), and Yellow Perch—is a good starting point. Even so, these species are susceptible to overharvest when anglers treat creel limits as an objective. Without an established code of conduct, we may be unwittingly sending too many fish home.

I practice selective harvest, because it strikes a balance between harvesting and releasing fish.

Selective harvest implores anglers to release large fish, “large” being respective to the species. Not only does this keep trophy-class fish in the fishery for other anglers to catch, it allows fish the opportunity to spawn and pass along superior genetics.

Anglers are encouraged to release undersized fish as well. Small fish are unimpressive on the skillet and difficult to fillet. It simply takes too many of them to comprise a meal.

The sweet spot for harvest is below the trophy threshold, though still of respectable proportion. As a guideline, I harvest crappies between 9- and 10-inches, Bluegills around 7 inches, and Yellow Perch around 9 inches. Fish within these ranges are commonplace in comparison to their trophy-class counterparts.

Limit the quantity of harvest. Most Pennsylvania waters allow an angler to possess a combination of panfish species totaling 50 fish. Some lakes are entirely catch-and-release only, while others operate under Panfish Enhancement



*Through selective harvest, anglers release large Bluegills (as shown above).*

Special Regulations, which place specific restrictions on sizes and/or creel limits on one or more panfish species.

Even in Special Regulation Areas, creel limits far exceed the catch needed to enjoy a hearty meal. With fish of a meaningful size, I only feel it necessary to harvest one or two fish for each person I intend to feed. The filleting process with moderate-size fish is a breeze, and with the manageable workload, I can take my time and avoid waste.

So, selective harvest lessens the total fish harvested for a meal. Pragmatic in theory, but how does that translate to the dinner table? Anglers should not be concerned about leaving the table hungry. The yield from fish taken under the selective harvest protocol is similar, perhaps greater, than the return from harvesting a higher quantity of fish of a smaller size.

While the stringer size for a meal is small, I prefer to obtain each meal from a different lake. Why harvest fish from the same source when nearly every lake has a healthy population of one or more panfish species? If one must harvest from the same waterway, varying the species consumed each meal is preferable to taking multiple meals of the same species. Mix in meals from other gamefish like catfish, trout, Northern Pike, or Walleyes.

Consider the effects of barotrauma when targeting panfish in deep water. Trust that the mortality rate is high for any fish taken from 25 feet of water or greater. Consider harvesting each fish caught under these conditions as even the best-intentioned release often ends in the fish's demise. Be mindful to only catch and keep what can be cleaned and consumed or packaged.

Enjoying a meal of crappies, sunfish, and the like completes the panfishing experience. Selective harvest lays the groundwork. The rest falls on the angler to self-regulate. ☐



*Although it was lawful to possess 50 fish, it only took seven Black Crappies of moderate size to feed four adults.*

**For information on  
Panfish Enhancement  
Special Regulations:**



FishandBoat.com

# SUBURBAN TROUT STREAMS

*by Bob Frye*

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**T**his log wasn't here a few weeks ago and probably wouldn't be much longer. One good spring storm—like the one a year earlier that flooded the creek and left carp swimming under the apple trees in my backyard—would wash it away.

But, it represented opportunity.

I cast a small spinner into the fast-moving channel created by the obstruction and tracked it as it swept into the pool below. That worked, again.

Feeling the strike, setting the hook, I reeled in a colorful Brook Trout. It was a nice trout, one of about a dozen—the rest Brown Trout and Rainbow Trout—caught in the same general area over the course of early evening.

I was preparing to release that fish when two elementary school-aged boys asked to see it. I looked over my shoulder, startled a bit. Focused on fishing—exhibiting the selective hearing my wife marvels at to this day—I hadn't noticed them approach.

That's not uncommon for me.

Once through my yard, this stream runs past a pair of busy youth ballfields, through a community park, and by

a school playground. I often start downstream of there and fish my way home.

The action is usually good enough to leave me lost in my own world, oblivious to who or what else is around, fishing in virtual solitude if not the real thing.

Lots of anglers can experience the same thing all across Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) stocks miles upon miles of streams across the state with trout, of course. How many trout each gets, and how often, depends on various resource-based factors, including stream size, amount of public access, and wild trout classification.

But, human populations factor in, too.

All things being equal, a stream classified as "suburban" is stocked at a higher rate (trout per acre) than one ranked as "rural."

"Urban" and "metro" waters, meanwhile—those closest to the greatest masses of people—get stocked at an even higher rate.

"It's all about stocking trout to meet relative demand as fairly as possible," said Nate Walters, PFBC's Coldwater Unit Leader.

"We want see people catch our stocked trout, so we definitely try to put them where people can go catch them, where we think those streams and those fish will see good use," said Walters.

*photo-Bob Frye*



*Mingo Creek, Washington County, seen through the window of a covered bridge, is a top suburban trout stream in southwestern Pennsylvania, offering easy access in a county park close to plenty of people.*

*photo-Bob Frye*

Suburban streams offer a nice middle ground. They are neither as remote as some trout streams nor as heavily stocked as others.

But, that's their beauty. They're typically close to home, easy to get to and yet still contain lots of fish without too much competition.

Another of my favorite suburban streams flows through a fairly deep valley. Four lanes of traffic—two going east, two west—flank it. Plenty of vehicles regularly speed by, in sight in some places, not in others.

I see deer, along with other wildlife like the occasional mink, waterfowl, bald eagles, and great blue herons. I catch fish, too. But, never do I fish the stream and really hear, let alone remember, anything about the human buzz.

It's fun to fish spots where others can't or won't go. But, restrict your fishing to that alone, and you'll suffer lots of fishless days in between adventures.

Suburban trout stream fishing offers the chance to wet a line often. ☐

## Suburban Trout Streams

If you're looking for a suburban trout stream worth exploring, consider these examples.

- Beaverdam Creek, Blair County
- Beaver Creek, York County
- Clarion River, Clarion County
- Delaware Canal, Bucks County
- Harveys Creek, Luzerne County
- Locust Creek, Schuylkill County
- Loyalhanna Creek, Westmoreland County
- Manada Creek, Dauphin County
- Mingo Creek, Washington County
- Muncy Creek, Lycoming County
- Northkill Creek, Berks County
- North Fork Redbank Creek, Jefferson County
- Slippery Rock Creek, Lawrence County
- Tobyhanna Creek, Carbon County
- West Branch Lackawaxen River, Wayne County
- Wiconisco Creek, Dauphin County



*photo-Dee Fisher*

*Wiconisco Creek, Dauphin County*



*photo-Bob Frye*

*Commissioner Donald K. Anderson, PFBC, stocks trout. The PFBC determines how many trout to stock in a particular water on a number of factors including how many potential anglers live nearby.*

Poster is 17" x 22."

Books are 6" x 9."

Magazines are 8.25" x 10.88."



Poster is 17" x 22."

Poster is 18" x 24."

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<b>C</b> Set of: Pennsylvania Fishes Wall Charts (2 posters)	\$ 9.16	_____
<b>D</b> Pennsylvania Amphibians & Reptiles Book (172 pages)	\$14.34	_____
<b>E</b> Pennsylvania Fishes Book (172 pages)	\$14.34	_____
<b>F</b> To Protect, Conserve, and Enhance Book (400 pages)	\$25.02	_____

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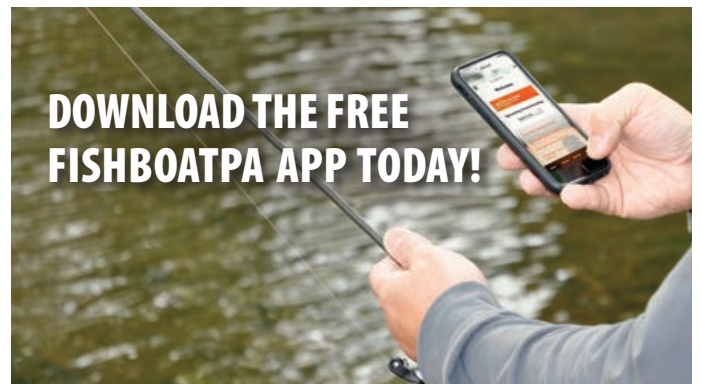
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# 2023 SEASONS, SIZES, and CREEL LIMITS

## COMMONWEALTH INLAND WATERS-2023

Species	Seasons	Minimum Size	Daily Limit
<b>ALL SPECIES OF TROUT</b>  Additional regulations may apply- see Trout Regulations for stream sections that are both Stocked Trout Waters and Class A Wild Trout Waters.	<b>Regular Opening Day of Trout Season</b> - April 1 at 8 a.m. through Sept. 4	7 inches	5-streams, lakes, and ponds (combined species)
	<b>Extended Season: Stocked trout waters</b> Jan. 1 through Feb. 19 and Sept. 5 through Dec. 31	7 inches	3 (combined species)
	<b>Extended Season: Stocked Class A wild trout stream sections.</b> Jan. 1 through Feb. 19 and Sept. 5 through Dec. 31	<b>NO HARVEST</b> - Catch and immediate release only Class A stream listing: fishandboat.com	
<b>BASS - Lakes, Rivers, and Streams</b> Largemouth, Smallmouth, and Spotted Additional regulations may apply.	Jan. 1 through April 7 and Oct. 1 through Dec. 31	15 inches	4 (combined species)
	April 8 through June 9	<b>NO HARVEST</b> - Catch and immediate release only (no tournaments permitted)	
	June 10 through Sept. 30	12 inches	6 (combined species)
<b>Muskellunge and Tiger Muskellunge*</b>	Open year-round	40 inches	1 (combined species)
<b>Pickeral*</b>		18 inches	4
<b>Northern Pike*</b>		24 inches	2
<b>Walleye and Saugeye (Hybrids)</b>	Jan. 1 through March 14 and May 6 through Dec. 31	15 inches	6
<b>Sauger</b>	Jan. 1 through March 14 and May 6 through Dec. 31	12 inches	6
<b>American Shad**</b>	Open year-round	No minimum	3
<b>American Shad</b>	Open year-round - Lehigh River, Schuylkill River*** and tributaries	<b>NO HARVEST</b> - Catch and immediate release only	
<b>American Shad</b>	<b>CLOSED YEAR-ROUND</b> <b>Susquehanna River and tributaries</b>		
<b>River Herring**</b>			
<b>Hickory Shad**</b>	<b>CLOSED YEAR-ROUND</b>		
<b>Herring, Gizzard Shad</b>	Open year-round	No minimum	50 (combined species)
<b>American Eel</b>	Open year-round	9 inches	25
<b>Striped Bass and Striped Bass/ White Bass Hybrids</b>	Open year-round	20 inches	2 (combined species)
<b>Sunfish, Yellow Perch, White Perch, Crappies, Catfish, Rock Bass, Suckers, Carp, White Bass, Bowfin, and other gamefish not otherwise listed</b> Additional regulations may apply- see Panfish Enhancement Special Regulations.	Open year-round	No minimum	50 (combined species)
		No minimum	50 (combined species)
<b>Baitfish/Fishbait****</b> (except Mudbugs/includes Crayfish)	Open year-round	No minimum	50 (combined species)
<b>Mudbugs (Dragonfly Nymphs)</b>	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).
<b>Mussels/Clams</b>	<b>CLOSED YEAR-ROUND</b>		
<b>Paddlefish, Spotted Gar, and other threatened and endangered species</b>	<b>CLOSED YEAR-ROUND</b>		

**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.

\* 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 February 20 to the opening day of the regular trout season in April, unless included in the **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 February 20 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.**



# 2023 FISHING LICENSES

Annual licenses are valid from December 1, 2022, through December 31, 2023. WHILE FISHING, your license must be, either in digital or print form, upon your person and provided upon the request of an officer.

Code	Type of Fishing License or Permit	Age	Cost*
101	Resident (Annual)	16-64	\$25.47
104	Senior Resident (Annual)	65 & up	\$13.22
105	Senior Resident (Lifetime)	65 & up	\$76.97
108	1-Day Resident (not valid March 15–April 30)	16 & up	\$13.22
119	Disabled Veterans Reduced Resident License **	16 & up	\$2.97
122	Disabled Veterans Resident Annual License **	16-64	\$0.00
125	POW Resident Annual License **	16-64	\$2.97
102	Non-Resident (Annual)	16 & up	\$56.97
113	Non-Resident PA Student (Annual)	16 & up	\$25.47
106	1-Day Tourist ***(not valid March 15–April 30)	16 & up	\$29.47
103	3-Day Tourist	16 & up	\$29.47
107	7-Day Tourist	16 & up	\$36.97
110	Voluntary Youth Fishing License (Annual)	Less than 16	\$2.97
109	Mentored Youth Permit	Less than 16	\$0.00
150	Trout Permit	16 & up	\$12.47
033	3-Year Senior Lifetime Trout Permit	65 & up	\$33.47
053	5-Year Senior Lifetime Trout Permit	65 & up	\$54.47
063	10-Year Senior Lifetime Trout Permit	65 & up	\$106.97
151	Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$9.97
151SLE	Senior Lifetime Lake Erie Permit	65 & up	\$9.97
152	Combination Trout Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$18.47

\* Includes issuing agent fee of \$1.00 and \$0.97 transaction fee. Excludes licenses or permits issued at \$0.00. \*\* Can only be issued if initial license was purchased at a County Treasurer or PFBC offices. \*\*\* Includes Trout and Lake Erie permits, not valid March 15–April 30.

# 2023 MULTI-YEAR FISHING LICENSES

WHILE FISHING, your license must be, either in digital or print form, upon your person and provided upon the request of an officer.

Code	Type of Fishing License or Permit	Age	Cost*
150	1-Year Trout Permit	16 & up	\$12.47
151	1-Year Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$9.97
152	1-Year Combo Trout Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$18.47
030	3-Year Resident	16-64	\$72.47
031	3-Year Non-Resident	16 & up	\$166.97
032	3-Year Senior Resident	65 & up	\$35.72
033	3-Year Trout Permit	16 & up	\$33.47
034	3-Year Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$25.97
035	3-Year Combo Trout Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$51.47
050	5-Year Resident	16-64	\$119.47
051	5-Year Non-Resident	16 & up	\$276.97
052	5-Year Senior Resident	65 & up	\$58.22
053	5-Year Trout Permit	16 & up	\$54.47
054	5-Year Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$41.97
055	5-Year Combo Trout Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$84.47
060	10-Year Resident	16 & up	\$236.97
061	10-Year Non-Resident	16 & up	\$551.97
063	10-Year Trout Permit	16 & up	\$106.97
064	10-Year Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$81.97
065	10-Year Combo Trout Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$166.97

\* Includes issuing agent fee of \$1.00 and \$0.97 transaction fee.



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## 2023 VOLUNTARY PERMITS

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 Fishing License or Permit	Age	Cost*
073	Voluntary Bass Permit	Any	\$11.97
077	3-Year Voluntary Bass Permit	Any	\$31.97
081	5-Year Voluntary Bass Permit	Any	\$51.97
085	10-Year Voluntary Bass Permit	Any	\$101.97
071	Voluntary Musky Permit	Any	\$11.97
075	3-Year Voluntary Musky Permit	Any	\$31.97
079	5-Year Voluntary Musky Permit	Any	\$51.97
083	10-Year Voluntary Musky Permit	Any	\$101.97
070	Voluntary Habitat/Waterways Conservation Permit	Any	\$11.97
074	3-Year Voluntary Habitat/Waterways Conservation Permit	Any	\$31.97
078	5-Year Voluntary Habitat/Waterways Conservation Permit	Any	\$51.97
082	10-Year Voluntary Habitat/Waterways Conservation Permit	Any	\$101.97
072	Voluntary Wild Trout & Enhanced Waters Permit	Any	\$26.97
076	3-Year Voluntary Wild Trout & Enhanced Waters Permit	Any	\$76.97
080	5-Year Voluntary Wild Trout & Enhanced Waters Permit	Any	\$126.97
084	10-Year Voluntary Wild Trout & Enhanced Waters Permit	Any	\$251.97

\* Includes issuing agent fee of \$1.00 and \$0.97 transaction fee.



# Welcome to Fly Fishing U

by *George Daniel*

*Director of the Joe Humphreys Fly Fishing Program*

*photos by the author*

One goal of higher education is preparing students for their future careers in what appears to be an endless array of career paths. At Penn State, we understand the importance of preparing our students for the workforce. But, we also understand the absolute necessity to provide our students with the tools they need to live a healthy life (both physically and mentally) when away from work. This is why Penn State students have the option to earn college credits while learning to fly fish.

Fly fishing is not a major. Instead, our fly fishing courses are electives and count towards a GHW (General Health and Wellness) credit. Fly fishing for credit is not a new concept at Penn State as students have had the opportunity to earn college credits while enrolling in a fly fishing course for 75 years. George Harvey, a fly fishing legend, began teaching fly fishing at Penn State in the 1930s and later fly fishing became a credited course in 1947—the first in the nation and possibly the world. During his 30-year career at Penn State, George Harvey taught more than 36,000 students how to fly fish. Eventually, living legend Joe Humphreys took over the program and taught the course for 19 years. During his career, Joe Humphreys developed an international reputation as one of the best fly anglers in the world and brought much acclaim to the Penn State's Angling Program. As a result of a generous donation in January 2022, the program was renamed the Joe Humphreys Fly Fishing Program. After Humphreys retired, the program was carried on by other excellent instructors including Vance McCollough, Mark Belden, Greg Hoover, and Steve Sywensky. Today, the program has a full-time director/instructor and a part-time instructor with one goal in mind—to continue the world-renowned fly fishing legacy at Penn State.

Besides fooling the occasional fish with a fly students tie themselves, the mission of the Joe Humphreys Fly Fishing Program is:

1. **Use fly fishing as a tool to break down racial, socioeconomic, and cultural differences to help build a stronger and more unified community.** Fly fishing communities are similar to university alumni associations, where members of each group support members of their own community. Fly fishing



is one activity that normally unites instead of separating groups. By the simple act of introducing underrepresented groups to the wonderful world of fly fishing, we hope to create a collaborative culture of fly anglers.

2. **Develop a lifelong pursuit.** Although we hope many of our students continue to pursue fly fishing after graduation, the real purpose of the Joe Humphreys Fly Fishing Program is exposing our students to one of countless outdoor leisure pursuits. As 93-year-old Joe Humphreys continues to say, “the secret to life is having something to look forward to.” The basic fly tying and fly fishing skills each student learns with our fly fishing program will provide a lifetime of enjoyment.
3. **Allow the act of fly fishing to organically create the next generation of stewards and conservationists.** Fly anglers are major stockholders of our natural resources and public lands. All fly anglers have a vested interest in preserving and protecting natural resources and clean water. The greater our angling community becomes now and in the future, the stronger our efforts will be towards protecting vital resources.



*Students enrolled in the advanced fly fishing course take part in a guided fly fishing experience each semester.*



*Students prepare rigging in preparation for a field trip to Fisherman's Paradise, Centre County.*



*A student shows off a beautiful Brown Trout caught during a rainy outing. Students learn that sometimes the best fishing occurs during rainy days.*

**4. Create outreach initiatives for staying connected to alumni and friends of the Joe Humphreys Fly Fishing Program.** Virtual and in-person fly fishing events, along with a social media presence, will occur to stay connected with our fly fishing community.

Countless academic programs, famous sport programs, athletes, and coaches come to mind when people hear “Penn State University.” However, within the small fly fishing community, Penn State is known as “Fly Fishing U.” We are proud of our deep academic fly fishing history. We are thankful for the handful of amazing fly fishing instructors who helped build, mold, evolve, and promote our fly fishing program over the years. We are enthusiastic about continuing to expose our students to one of life’s greatest leisure activities. We are passionate about providing our students the tools needed to not only achieve success with their professional lives, but perhaps, more important, live exceptional personal lives. We are Fly Fishing U.

In future issues, current Joe Humphreys Fly Fishing Program students will be sharing their fly fishing experiences with you as they learn fly fishing, fly tying, conservation, angling ethics, and other skills throughout the course. We hope you enjoy their stories and experiences just as much as we enjoy teaching fly fishing skills to these future anglers and conservationists. ☐



*A Penn State fly fishing student with a box of flies tied during a semester.*



# FLY FISHING YELLOW CREEK



*by Ralph Scherder    photos by the author*

**Y**ellow Creek, Bedford County, is perhaps the least-known of Pennsylvania's limestone streams, but it just may be the best. Of course, least-known doesn't mean least-fished, and it can be intimidating pulling into the parking lot of the Fly-Fishing Only section to find a dozen other vehicles already there during the Sulphur emergence in May. That's why one of my favorite times to fish Yellow Creek is late winter and early spring. Often, I have the stream, and the fish, all to myself.

In fact, the first time I ever fished Yellow Creek was a cold, snowy late-February day. Temperatures were in the mid-30s, I knew trout would be sluggish, so I followed the well-worn foot trail upstream along the Fly-Fishing Only section until a slow-moving pool caught my eye. It didn't take long, and I don't know who was more surprised, me or the fish, but on the sixth cast, I hooked an 11-inch Brown Trout. That one trout would have made my day, but the day only got better. It was a great introduction to Yellow Creek.

Yellow Creek is a 20.9-mile tributary to the Raystown Branch Juniata River that rises near the town of Woodbury and flows in a southeastern direction toward the town of Loysburg. It starts out as a small, pastureland limestone stream but undergoes a drastic transformation as it passes through the Loysburg Gap. Cold springs pour into the stream throughout the gap, setting the stage for a tremendously fertile fishery downstream.

The most popular section of Yellow Creek is the 0.9-mile Catch and Release Fly-Fishing Only section that begins at Red Bank Hill and extends downstream to the mouth of Maple Run. Almost a mile of stream isn't much on paper, but it is when that stream is Yellow Creek. I've rarely encountered a stream where every pocket, run, riffle, and pool harbors good numbers of trout. You can spend an entire day working over only a couple hundred yards of stream. I know, because I've done it.

To access this part of Yellow Creek, turn east onto Jacks Corner Road by the New Frontier Restaurant on State Route 36. In approximately 2 miles, you'll see a sign on the



*Although the Catch and Release Fly-Fishing Only section is designated Class A wild trout waters, it still receives stockings of Rainbow Trout.*



right for the project area, and a narrow gravel road winds back through the woods to a good-sized parking lot. All of this area is privately-owned land, open to anglers through special access agreements and maintained by the Yellow Creek Coalition. Several times per year, the Yellow Creek Coalition also holds stream improvement and stream cleanup events. As a result, Yellow Creek and its surroundings are unmarred by litter. Please help keep it that way.

The Catch and Release Fly-Fishing Only area was established in 1957, when local Waterways Conservation Officer Bill McClnay worked with landowners to ensure access to this stretch for future generations. I, for one, appreciate his foresight, as every year in Pennsylvania, and all across the country, we lose access to more and more quality trout water due to posted no trespassing signs.

In the parking lot, there is a stream map labeling every named stretch of water, referred to as project runs and holes. Along many of these places are benches, which provide a nice respite from standing all day or simply a place to sit and wait for a hatch to start.

Yellow Creek is a hatch-matcher's dream later in the season, but winter and early spring anglers will have the best results with nymphs. Fish slow and deep with stoneflies and nymphs with a little bit of flash in them. Although Yellow Creek has a great population of wild and stocked trout, these fish are no pushovers, and they will humble you some days.

Yellow Creek boasts three designated Class A wild trout sections, two of which are stocked, including the Catch and Release Fly-Fishing Only section. A short section immediately downstream of the special regulations section is not stocked due to a private fly fishing club whose upper boundary begins at the bridge on Yellow Creek Drive. Below the club, Yellow Creek is stocked again all the way to its confluence with Raystown Branch Juniata River.

There's never a bad time to fish Yellow Creek. Occasionally, during extended periods of extreme cold weather, the stream can ice up in winter, but it's not often that you can't find at least somewhere to fish. And, as long as you can find open water to cast, you can rest assured you'll be fishing over trout. ☐

# HOW TO USE INCLEMENT WEATHER TO SCOUT NEW WATERS

*by Ariadne Capotis*

*photos by the author*

**I**t is disheartening to plan a fishing excursion just to wake up to inclement weather in beautiful Pennsylvania. However, unfishable weather does not mean a wasted day. It's always possible to put a positive spin on the day by using it to prepare for future fishing expeditions. Whether an angler is near home, at a family cabin, or in Erie County chasing steelhead, they ought to brainstorm waters and locations that have always piqued their curiosity. A bad day to fish is a great day to scout new waters.

Create a general game plan for the day. How many streams do you intend to investigate? If the creeks you intended to fish are flowing too high and dirty, try to find smaller water. That may mean a small stream that feeds into the main branch or even the headwaters of the main creek. If you are feeling adventurous, look for smaller watersheds or shorter drainages. Streams and creeks differ from one another. Some may have significantly smaller drainages than others. Therefore, flows differ from one spot to the next. Use your curiosity to grow into a more informed angler.

All successful scouting missions begin by looking at a map of target areas. An outdoor atlas of Pennsylvania, such as a DeLorme Atlas & Gazetteer,



*Walk locations you have not previously explored. Then, mentally review your observations.*

can show brooks that go into a larger stream. If you do not have a map, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's (PFBC's) website has an interactive ArcGIS map. The ArcGIS map can be manipulated to locate best fishing waters, access, and parking. Users can select waters for popular gamefish and even print screenshots of the website. Make use of Google Maps or Waze to investigate how much time it will take to



*When investigating new waters, look for access to the water and parking availability.*

travel to the access points you have selected for your scouting mission. Before disembarking, consider where you want to stop for lunch. Focusing on other important aspects of the fishing experience will benefit future enjoyment. Be on the lookout for public restrooms and the size of the parking lot. Is the parking lot muddy or surrounded by any nefarious looking ditches? Pay attention to your surroundings and do not be afraid to take notes on the side of your map printouts. Look at the printouts and consider walking to unexplored bends in the stream or locations where a road used to cross. Your basic goal is to walk to interesting locales you have not previously explored. When you have completed your walk, mentally review what you observed. Would you go back there? Was the spot relatively easy to get to? Did you have to hike into this access point? How long did it take? Sometimes, simply eyeballing the parking lot and path to the creek can tell you a lot.

Maintain positivity when unfavorable fishing conditions arise. Instead, try to salvage the day by investigating potential new fishing spots. Grab a map and pick out creeks or rivers of interest. Remember, today is a day for learning. Can you park easily and safely? Is it easy to get down into the water with the conditions? A good day scouting for fishing spots is not the same as fishing, but it sure beats staying inside. If weather conditions are not suitable, get on PFBC's website and start investigating maps of access points and go explore. ☐



*While scouting, pay attention to your surroundings and take notes.*

**For maps of access points:**



FishandBoat.com



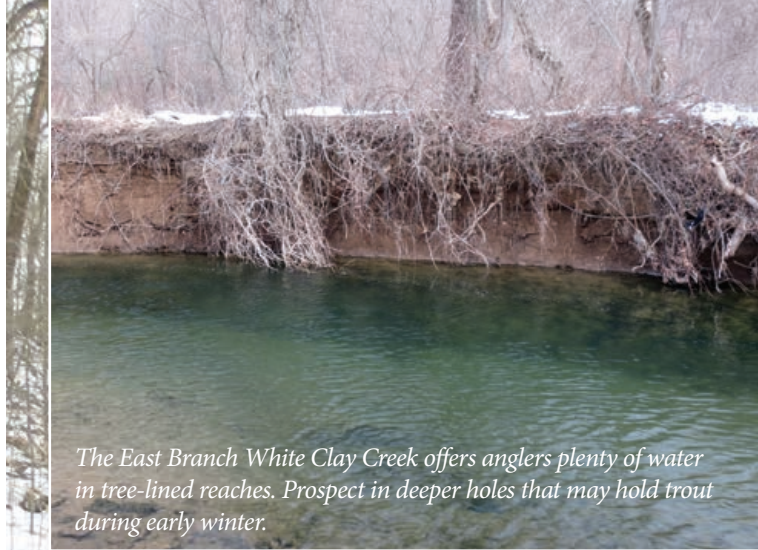
# FISHING WHITE CLAY CREEK

by Carl Haensel

photos by the author

If you are looking for a great afternoon on the water in early winter, look no further than White Clay Creek, Chester County. Located just northwest of the Delaware state line, White Clay Creek has long been a favorite destination of wintertime anglers. It offers opportunities for both fly fishing and spin fishing for trout and hosts a broad suite of options depending on the season. While the stream lies within an hour's drive of millions of people, it still feels distinctly rural when you pull up to a trailhead along the creek. Much of this feeling of remoteness is due to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources White Clay Creek Preserve. Many of the 3,212 acres of parkland is along the stream, and protected land continues into Delaware across the state line into another state park. The stream has been so valued that it has even been protected nationally by an act of Congress in 2000 and is a National Wild and Scenic River.

While all of these attributes make for a picturesque experience, the trout fishing is the main wintertime draw. With waters that ice over only in the coldest conditions, the creek is a good choice when winter is in full force elsewhere in Pennsylvania. Importantly, the Middle Branch White Clay Creek is managed as a Delayed Harvest Artificial Lures Only (DHALO) fishery, offering stocked trout for anglers throughout the year. Under DHALO regulations, fishing may be done only with artificial lures or with flies and streamers on spinning or fly fishing gear. Live bait is prohibited and a current trout/salmon permit is required. The protective regulations only allow for harvest from June 15 through Labor Day, ensuring that wintertime trout stay in the stream for anglers to catch and release. Additionally, the



*The East Branch White Clay Creek offers anglers plenty of water in tree-lined reaches. Prospect in deeper holes that may hold trout during early winter.*



*The main stem of White Clay Creek is larger trout water with great fishing opportunities. The main stem and both the East Branch White Clay Creek and Middle Branch White Clay Creek are managed as stocked trout waters, with extended season fishing opportunities available in the winter.*





*An angler fishes a section of the Middle Branch White Clay Creek. This DHALO section offers excellent winter fishing.*



*Brown Trout may be active during the coldest days of the season.*

stream is part of the Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters program. Under the program, 2- to 3-year-old trout, measuring between 14- to 20-inches, are spread among select waters under the DHALO regulations. Anglers should keep their eyes open for these bigger trout in the creek. Bring along a good net in case you hook up with one.

Trout can often be found elsewhere in White Clay Creek, both in the East Branch White Clay Creek and in the main stem of the creek below the confluence of the East and Middle branches. Trout are stocked in all three streams by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC). Larger trout filter downstream from Middle Branch White Clay Creek stockings by the PFBC, and other fish head upstream from stockings in Delaware. The Middle Branch White Clay Creek hosts 1.67 miles of DHALO water, located from State Route 3009 (Good Hope Road) downstream to the confluence with the East Branch. Trail access is available by the Mason-Dixon Trail, Pennel Trail, Edwin Leid Trail, and other trails. Parking is available on Sharpless Road and provides good access to nearby streamside paths.

On a previous warm late February morning on the stream, I found success in fishing tandem rigs of small nymphs through deep holes and near large boulders. Small streamers also brought some trout out of the depths, with olive and black patterns producing the most strikes. Hatches are slim in the winter, though I've had good luck on midges. Spin fishing anglers will do well fishing jigs and smaller inline spinners. On the broader, larger portions of the main stem of White Clay Creek, minnow plugs, spoons, and large spinners can bring big trout to hand. ☐

**For more information on fishing regulations:**



[FishandBoat.com](http://FishandBoat.com)

# HELLBENDER LOVE—

## Meet Pennsylvania's Official State Amphibian

photo-Michelle R. Herman

by *Linda Stager*

**H**ave you ever seen a gigantic salamander in a pristine stream and wondered what it was? Meet Pennsylvania's Eastern Hellbender, *Cryptobranchus alleganiensis*, the largest-bodied salamander in North America and our official state amphibian.

This distinctive salamander has been around for perhaps 500,000 years or more (its ancestors go back at least 100 million years). And, it's unforgettable once you see it. It has a dull greenish-brown flat body and head with small beady eyes and loose, slippery skin. Its squat body has a long tail for quick escapes, but they rarely swim and instead crawl along the creek bottom. It's also big—growing to an adult length of 12- to 29-inches.

Dr. Peter Petokas with the Clean Water Institute at Lycoming College, Williamsport, is a locally known expert on hellbenders and has been one of their most persistent champions.

Petokas has been studying these unusual and fascinating animals. He considers them unique among salamanders because of their huge size and physical characteristics. "They have lots of skin folds for gas exchange and a flat body form that allows them

to squeeze beneath the big rocks where they live. And, they are the sentinel species for water quality. The environment must be just perfect for them, or they are not going to survive. They are found in large streams and rivers, where the water is very clean with very little fine sediment in it. There must be good current and really large rock slabs, big rocks that these animals hide under. That's where they live," said Petokas.

According to the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), Pennsylvania has more hellbenders and occupied waterways than most other states. But, like in other areas of the country, hellbender populations are likely nowhere near historical sizes. Petokas points out that historic practices like logging, mining, excavation, and general runoff over the last century have released fine sediment into streams burying the rocks that hellbenders need.

Petokas estimates that 90- to 95-percent of the population in Pennsylvania may have disappeared. Encouragingly, recent surveys in Pennsylvania have shown that the hellbender may be in a larger portion of the state than previously thought. The species has also recently been documented in counties it was not historically known to occur.

Currently, there are only a handful of hellbender populations that Petokas monitors in northcentral Pennsylvania, and although he doesn't disclose specific locations, he does say those populations are in Pennsylvania's largest river system. Part of his monitoring



includes studying their habitat, the water quality where they live, and the crayfish population—the hellbender’s primary diet. According to Brandon Ruhe, President of the Mid-Atlantic Center for Herpetology and Conservation, and a Principal Investigator for the Pennsylvania Amphibian and Reptile Survey (PARS), which is a citizen science driven collaborative effort with the PFBC to atlas amphibian and reptile locations in the Commonwealth, anglers have recently submitted a number of riverine records from areas where we thought the species was extirpated (locally extinct). These habitats remain unsampled, because they are harder to survey due to depth and size.

Petokas’ newest projects, have him shifting to more proactive work. Those projects, currently in New York state, include building stream habitat, raising young hellbenders from eggs, microchipping them, and releasing them into the wild. He reports that many of the young hellbenders are surviving and perhaps even thriving. He hopes similar restoration projects can be replicated in Pennsylvania.

Just as importantly, each of us can help the fragile hellbender population. Don’t build stone sculptures that are often seen in creeks and rivers. When we disturb the streambed and the hellbender’s environment, it’s detrimental to them. Hellbenders and their prey rely on flat rocks as their home.

Secondly, if you accidentally hook one when fishing, remove the hook and carefully return the hellbender quickly to the stream. If you can’t remove the hook easily, it is probably better to just cut the line as close to the hook as

possible or break the hook. Fish and amphibians are rather resilient, and the hook will dissolve over time. The hellbender’s fragile skin is key to its survival, and it can quickly become damaged with excess handling.

If you ever see an Eastern Hellbender, consider yourself a lucky person. “Leave it be, and don’t share its location. Instead, report your observations to the PARS at [paherpsurvey.org](http://paherpsurvey.org),” said Petokas.

These unique creatures are sentinels that can tell us if we are doing things right in our waterways—that we are good stewards for our environment. Let’s all do our part for conservation. ☐

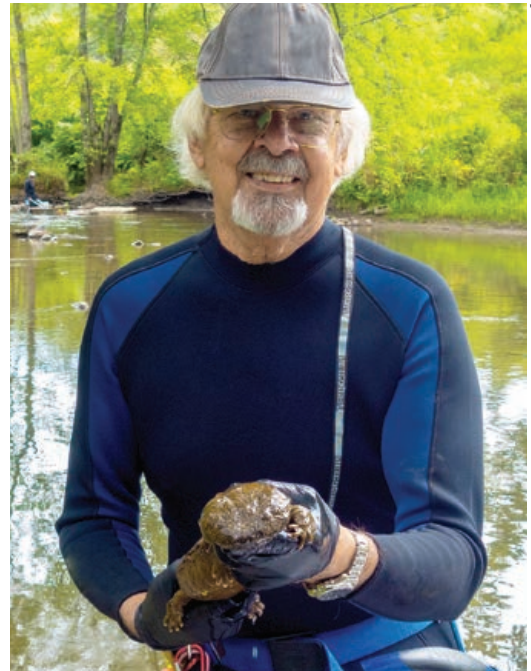


photo-Michèle R. Herrman

Dr. Peter Petokas with an Eastern Hellbender.



photo-Linda Sager

Eastern Hellbender, *Cryptobranchus alleganiensis*



# FISHING PRACTICE FOR KIDS

*by John Allen*

*photos by the author*

**P**ractice? Yes, we're talking about practice. We have all been there. On opening day of trout season, you make that first cast and your line ends up in a tree. For a kid, it has typically been 6 to 8 months since last casting a rod. While they may have been good last summer, that will completely change after a long layoff. Practice goes a long way to allow for a better first outing. You can't make it "fishing practice," but rather a fun activity that involves using their favorite fishing rods.

My kids usually get the fishing itch just as it starts to get warm in the early spring. It also happens to be close to trout season. I like to capitalize on this desire by getting them out of the house and a fishing rod in their hands.

## Equipment

When practicing, it should be as close to fishing as possible. To increase safety, do not use any hooks attached to the line. There are rubber practice fish that come with most

kid-style fishing rods, or you can take an old rubber bait and thread the line through it. Both come close to simulating the normal amount of weight on the line while fishing with a piece of bait, some weight, and a bobber.

## Open casting

The first practice is just getting used to the motion again. This is the biggest and sometimes most frustrating obstacle for kids who have not used a fishing reel in a while. In this case, we go into our yard with plenty of room around us and just cast and not worry about where it goes. If it doesn't go well, walk through the steps and let them keep trying. If they get too frustrated, try moving to something else or just stop for the day.

## Targets

After the initial practice, I work on accuracy by putting several targets about 10- to 20-feet in front of them and see if they can hit them. Hitting the target is not the important concept here, but getting them to focus on a spot will help hone their casting skills. Casting to the targets is a game where I get out a rod and participate as well. My kids, however, seem to like a game they came up with on their own.



*A proud, young angler with his hard-earned catch.*

## Cornhole game

My kids are always interested in playing cornhole at various family events but cannot quite throw far enough to participate, so we trade the bags for fishing rods. I keep the rules simple and safe. Each kid gets three turns to cast at the board, while the other stands back. Then after three turns, they trade places. We stand about 15 feet back but move closer if needed. Each player gets one point for hitting the board and three points for making it in the hole. We usually complete up to five rounds, and whoever has the most points wins the game.

No one likes to practice, especially kids. When you combine something fun with the thought of something not so fun, it can deflate the excitement. However, when you make the act of practice fun by turning it into a game itself, you bring about a whole new family activity. You end up honing your kids' casting skills, so when the first cast is made on the opening day of trout season, you know that it should be right on the money. ☐



*Starting off with warmup casts is a fun activity for kids.*



*The author's daughter found herself on the cornhole board with this cast.*



# INSIDE THE MINDS OF SOME ICE FISHING MASTERS

*by Jeff Woleslagle*

*photos by the author*

To help anglers prepare for time on the ice, I interviewed two Pennsylvania anglers to pick their brains on ice fishing. Byron Eckardt is a popular ice fishing lecturer and Northeast Ice Tour tournament angler. Ron Wagner is a winning ice angler who fishes the Western PA Hardwater Series and the Champlain Hardwater Series. Here is what I learned from them:

*Jeff: What is the biggest mistake most ice anglers make?*

Byron: Two things come to mind. First, fishing with tackle that is too heavy. Many anglers don't realize how sensitive to heavy lines and large baits fish can be through the ice. The second one is staying in one place. I tell folks new to the sport, "If you're not on the fish, go find them."

Ron: Definitely staying in one spot for too long. My rule of thumb is not to give a hole more than 5 minutes to produce.

*J: What advice would you give to someone just learning to ice fish?*

B: Follow the crowds to find the fish. It can save you search time. Folks tend to congregate in specific areas, because the fish are there. Use light line, 2-pound-test, on a jigging rod with small jigs. Be willing to move around. Start with the bait about a foot off the bottom and move it up the water column by a foot every 2 minutes. I'll give a hole 10 minutes, and if nothing happens, it is time to move on. Also, a flasher unit is a great investment for a beginner. It can act as your eyes under the ice.

R: Study maps and lake structure and learn to use electronics. Once you learn how to use flasher units and other electronics, they can be a game changer.

*J: When is the best time to go?*

B: The first 2 hours of morning daylight are often magic. The fishing typically slows down



by 9:00 a.m. The first 3 weeks of safe ice conditions are usually the best as far as the season goes.

R: I always say anytime you can go fishing do it. Mornings and evenings are generally best on the ice though. Keep in mind that changing weather and barometric pressure can have an effect, and they often trigger some good midday action.

J: Any secrets you are willing to share?

B: There are no secrets really. Have a willingness to constantly move around until you find the fish. Be willing to drill a lot of holes and learn to use electronics. If you can, check out lakes you plan to ice fish from a boat during the summer. Mark structure with a GPS, and you can use those coordinates when it comes time to hit the ice.

R: If the bite gets tough, downsize your baits. Keep changing jigs and baits until you find what is working.

J: Any advice on structure related to ice fishing?

B: Any structure at all is good. Fish will always go to it. If there is a plain lake bottom with just one small rock pile, there will be fish. Fish often suspend higher off structure than many people think. Early in the season, weed growth is the number one structure element. Later in the season, as the weed growth dies and decays, which consumes oxygen in the water, the fish move out of those areas.

R: I like weed growth early in the season. I also like to find flats adjacent to deep water. Anytime you can locate an irregularity on the bottom of a flat such as a ridge, hump, rock pile, or depression, there is a great chance you will find fish holding.

Both Byron and Ron are hardcore ice anglers, and they are amazing at finding fish quickly. Hopefully, this insight from them will help you enjoy success this ice fishing season. ☑



*This young Pennsylvania angler found success on the ice.*



*Ice fishing lecturer and successful tournament angler Byron Eckardt knows how to find fish quickly.*



*The author with a Bluegill that he coaxed to bite after trying several different baits near a weed bed.*



Grass Pickerel, *Esox americanus vermiculatus*

# THE LITTLEST PIKE

by Rob Criswell

photos by the author

If you are an avid Pennsylvania angler, you are probably aware of the state record for the Muskellunge, arguably the top-of-the-heap finny predator of the Commonwealth. That Muskellunge, caught on Conneaut Lake, Crawford County, in 1924, weighed 54 plus pounds, and is a benchmark that may never be broken. The pike family, from which the musky hails, also includes two other sportfish heavyweights—the Northern Pike and Chain Pickerel. Although not in their larger cousin’s class, they are both good-sized fighters and popular sportfish.

But, did you know that a fourth pike also plies Pennsylvania waters? It is as obscure as the musky is famous, and most Pennsylvanians have probably never seen it. And it goes by two common names, depending on where you find it.

*Esox americanus* comes in two subspecies. Subspecies *americanus*, the Redfin Pickerel, occurs in the Delaware River drainage and subspecies *vermiculatus*, the Grass Pickerel, occupies the Ohio River and Lake Erie drainages. They may be considered “mini-pikes,”

generally reaching only 6- to 10-inches as adults, with a maximum “trophy” size of 14 inches.

They retain the typical torpedo shape of their larger relatives and are similar enough in appearance that they can be confused with the young of their larger kin. The Redfin Pickerel is true to its name, with a reddish or orange hue on its pelvic and anal fins. The fins of the Grass Pickerel are yellowish-green or dusky.

These fish enjoy a secluded existence in clear streams, ponds, and wetlands and are never far from submerged vegetation or woody debris. This cover suits them well, for they are ambush predators.

Pickerel are not early risers, usually feeding in the late afternoon or early evening. Young *americanus* feed on small crustaceans, insects, and small fish. In one study, as they grew larger (2½- to 4-inches), they fed almost exclusively on fish, then (4- to 6-inches) a mixed table fare of fish and crayfish, and larger individuals (6 inches and up) dined primarily on crayfish. Elsewhere adults usually rely on fish to keep their bellies full. And, they can be voracious. A 9½-inch Wisconsin pickerel ingested a 4-inch sunfish, and a 3-inch perch was found in an 8-inch adult.

Pickerel spawn during April and May in shallow vegetated waters or overflow areas after heavy rains. A second, smaller spawning effort may occur in late summer or early fall. They breed in small groups by dispersing their



adhesive eggs over vegetation and debris. Each female may produce 800 to 4,500 eggs and hatching occurs in 12 to 14 days. These pickerel reach sexual maturity in 1 to 2 years and may live for 5 to 7 years.

They are tough fish. They can withstand extremely low oxygen concentrations and high water temperatures. These abilities make them ideally suited to small, shallow marshes, swamps, and bogs with fluctuating water levels that are often low during summer months. Unfortunately, low water sometimes strands many fingerlings during dry periods and may significantly impact reproductive success.

Grass Pickerel and Redfin Pickerel are not only predators but prey as well. Catfish, sunfish, Yellow Perch, and other fishes that share their habitat, including larger pickerel engaging in cannibalism, have them on the menu.

Although too small to be important economically or for sport, the Redfin Pickerel once appeared in fresh fish markets in the eastern United States and Quebec. It was reported to be “worthwhile food.” South of Pennsylvania, older literature reports state that it was often targeted by anglers with ultralight tackle and small spinners. It was said to be “gamey” and would leap from the water after artificial flies. These pickerel will also take baited hooks and are occasionally sought by micro-anglers.

There is some concern that there has been a reduction in the Redfin Pickerel population in southeastern Pennsylvania. In the Schuylkill River drainage, it apparently declined significantly during the period 1976-1994, probably as a result of floodplain development, increased turbidity, and lower flows. Elsewhere in its Pennsylvania range, the littlest pike seems safe and secure, at least for now. ☐



Northern Pike, *Esox lucius*



Muskellunge, *Esox masquinongy*



Chain Pickerel, *Esox niger*

### For more information on the pike family:



FishandBoat.com



Redfin Pickerel, *Esox americanus americanus*

# FROM ALASKA TO PENNSYLVANIA— Lessons Learned in the Last Frontier



by *Christian A. Shane*

*photos by the author*

*“It’s not called catchin’. It’s called fishin’. Nothing comes easy...especially in Alaska” - Salmon Survivor, 2022.*

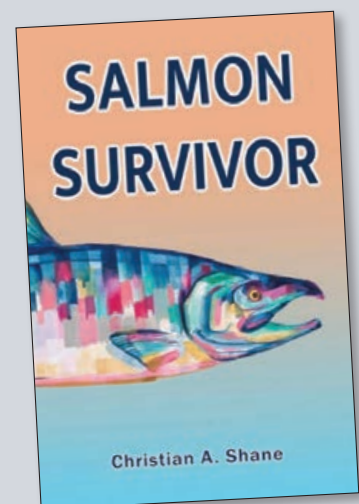
Pennsylvanians would be impressed with the rough nature of Alaska and all its wilderness has to offer. On my first trip to Alaska in 2008, I backpacked and camped from Denali all the way down to the Kenai Peninsula and then cruised south along Alaska’s coastline cities with multiple land excursions along the way.

It inspired me to visit Alaska a few more times to fish the salmon runs and the amazing Rainbow Trout fisheries.

A trip to a Juneau salmon hatchery sparked an idea for a middle grade children’s book, recently published in summer 2022, called *Salmon Survivor*. In the story, the main character, Jack, discovers the challenges and obstacles of Alaska’s weather, wilderness, wildlife, and more. He learns many lessons while fly fishing in Alaska that can apply to fishing in Pennsylvania.

## Weather

As Jack faces Alaska’s unpredictable weather, a Pennsylvania angler would also be wise to look over the weather forecast ahead of a trip. Be on the lookout for storm surges and possible flooding conditions as well as a lack of water. Hitting the water when levels are optimal ensures



*A trip to a Juneau salmon hatchery sparked an idea for a middle grade children’s book, recently published in summer 2022, called Salmon Survivor.*



*Whether fishing a familiar river in Pennsylvania or a new river in Alaska, research and hire a fishing guide in the area.*

greater success. Check the United States Geological Survey for water levels on individual watersheds and the Weather Channel for accurate weather updates in your area.

## Wilderness

Fly Bob, a grizzled guide in the story, lends a hand to Jack in attempting to catch the Salmon Slam, all five salmon species in one summer. If you are trying new waters in the Commonwealth or fishing one of its amazing hatches, employ a local guide and learn what you can from them. Not only do they spend a lot of time on their familiar water, but they also have vast knowledge of the species and water conditions. Be willing to learn, and make sure to give your guide a healthy tip for their efforts and inside knowledge.

## Wildlife

Bears, bears, bears... Alaska's bear population outnumbers its residents. In Alaska, anglers must be mindful of their surroundings. Jack's vigilance helps him survive a narrow escape. In Pennsylvania, anglers have a lot to pay attention to in their surrounding environment. Above the water, look for spontaneous hatches, bird behavior, and weather patterns. Also, use polarized sunglasses to study what's happening below the water's surface before casting a line.

## Experiment

On his quest for the slam, Jack changes things up while fishing for each salmon type. After 15 to 20 minutes of casting and searching, try something new. Maybe a different sized lure or fly will do the trick. A unique retrieve or casting style may also lead to success. Changing fly patterns or lure colors can trigger a bite.

The waters of Alaska and Pennsylvania sometimes flow at an amazing rate. Getting down to the fish can be the angler's most challenging task. Experiment

with varying levels of weight, either on the line itself or built into the pattern. Adding a little more leader length can extend a drift and allow for the fly or lure to be in the strike zone longer. Other times, it may be prudent to keep a tight line to have a feel for the drift in the water column.

## Techniques

Alaska anglers are successful by utilizing a variety of fishing styles such as streamer fishing, bead fishing, tight lining, trolling, and lure casting. Pennsylvania offers the same types of water to modify and adapt fishing methods. Don't hesitate to try a new fishing technique once and a while. Just as Jack and his quest for the Salmon Slam, you may be surprised with successful results. ☐



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



# WHAT'S NEW WITH BOATING?

**W**ith a new year comes new information on how to have a safe and enjoyable time on the water.

With new, higher horsepower electric boat motors coming on the market, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) updated its regulations to be consistent with the original intent behind electric motor restrictions. Horsepower limitations on waters listed in the PFBC's regulations now apply to both electric and internal combustion (i.e., gas or diesel) motors. On waters that are electric motor only (i.e., those that do not permit internal combustion motors or have horsepower restrictions in the PFBC's regulations), electric motors are restricted to slow, no-wake speed. If an electric motor is marked with kilowatt-hour (kW) but not horsepower (hp), simply multiply kW by 1.341. For example, a 15-kW electric motor converts to approximately 20 hp, which is a common limitation on lakes.

For boats required to carry fire extinguishers, the United States Coast Guard has clarified maintenance of the extinguishers. A fire extinguisher must be in "good and serviceable" condition, meaning:

- It must not be expired. Fire extinguishers are good for 12 years from the date of manufacture, which is often stamped on the bottom of the unit or printed on the label.
- If it has a pressure gauge or indicator, it must be in the operable range or position.
- The lock pin must be firmly in place.

- The discharge nozzle must be clean and free of obstruction.
- There cannot be visible signs of significant corrosion or damage.

Also, new fire extinguishers will now include the Underwriter Laboratories (UL) fire performance rating classification system on the label. One 5-B extinguisher is equivalent to one B-1 extinguisher, and one 20-B extinguisher is equivalent to two 5-B extinguishers.



photos: Spring Gearhart

*For boats required to carry fire extinguishers, a fire extinguisher must be in "good and serviceable" condition.*



photo-Carl Kimmel

*New life jackets will display updated labels and icons to assist boaters with choosing the most appropriate device for their activity.*



photo-Water Sports Foundation

*“Boat-towed watersports” now replaces “waterskiing”, and it includes any activity that involves being towed by a boat or riding in or on the wake of a boat such as waterskiing, wake surfing, and tubing.*

Life jacket terminology has been simplified. The United States Coast Guard eliminated the use of type codes to categorize life jackets (i.e., Type I, II, III, IV, and V). Life jackets are now simply referred to as wearable or throwable. New life jackets will display updated labels and icons to assist boaters with choosing the most appropriate device for their activity. Boats must still carry one wearable life jacket in the appropriate size for each person on board.

For many years, the PFBC used the word “waterskiing” in its regulations to describe any activity where a boat towed a device across the water. Surprisingly, it included not only conventional water skis but also aquaplanes, kneeboards, inner tubes, inflatable hot dogs, air mattresses, parasails, kite skis, and other similar devices, which the boating public did not generally recognize as waterskiing. The PFBC updated its regulations to improve clarity of the terms and definitions relating to these activities. “Boat-towed watersports” now replaces “waterskiing”, and it includes any activity that involves being towed by a boat or riding in or on the wake of a boat such as waterskiing, wake surfing, and tubing. “Boat-towed devices” includes water skis, aquaplanes, kneeboards, inner tubes, inflatable hot dogs, air mattresses, parasails, kite skis, and similar devices. These changes reflect nationally recognized terminology and are intended to clarify the regulations but not modify what’s currently prohibited or allowable relating to these activities.

Learn more about boating regulations, where to go, and how to be safe at [fishandboat.com](http://fishandboat.com). ☐

## The Gift of Boating

It’s the gift-giving season! Did you receive a kayak, stand-up paddleboard (SUP), or other unpowered boat as a gift? Did you make a resolution to spend more time on the water in the new year? If so, now is a great time to begin preparing for your next paddling season.



Paddling is a fun activity and a great way to enjoy and explore Pennsylvania. It’s important for paddlers to have required safety gear including a wearable life jacket for each person onboard, a whistle, and a light to display between sunset and sunrise or when visibility is poor. Paddlecraft like kayaks, canoes, and SUPs are categorized as “unpowered boats” along with rowboats and sailboats, as long as they are not equipped with a motor (gasoline or electric) or other mechanical propulsion. Depending on where you’re boating, unpowered boats may need a launch permit or boat registration.

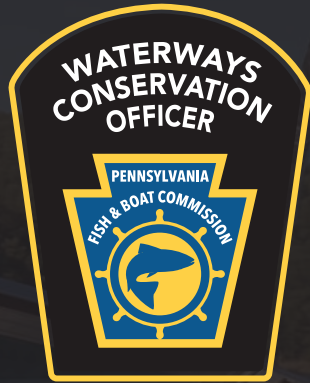
Unpowered boats using PFBC access areas or Pennsylvania State Parks or Forests must have a launch permit or unpowered registration. An unpowered boat may have a launch permit or registration, but it is not required to have both. Fees from boat registrations and launch permits are used to provide services and programs that benefit boaters including the development and maintenance of access areas.

Launch permits may be purchased online at [HuntFish.PA.gov](http://HuntFish.PA.gov) and can be used immediately. Launch permits are available for one- or two-year time periods. The boat’s hull identification number (HIN) must be provided at the time of purchase (if readily available). Launch permits cannot be used to establish legal boat ownership; therefore, it may be challenging for a boat owner to recover their lost or stolen boat with only a launch permit as a reference. Renewal notices are not sent when a launch permit nears expiration. The PFBC does not recognize launch permits from other states.

Boat registration applicants must provide information about the seller and buyer in addition to boat data. Applicants may take their registration application and required documentation to a PFBC regional office or an issuing agent\*, where they can get a completed copy of their application to carry with them as a 60-day temporary registration and begin to use their boat immediately. Initial boat registration applications may also be mailed to PFBC with the required documentation. Mailed applications may take up to 60 days to be processed and are not issued a temporary registration. Boat registration applicants may also bring all required paperwork to PFBC Headquarters to receive a registration card and decals. Boat registrations are valid for up to 2 years. Renewal notices are mailed prior to expiration and may be completed online. A boat registration can be helpful for the recovery of a lost or stolen boat and can facilitate return to its registered owner. Registrations are recognized by the PFBC as well as all other states. Visit [fishandboat.com](http://fishandboat.com) for step-by-step instructions on how to register an unpowered boat in Pennsylvania.

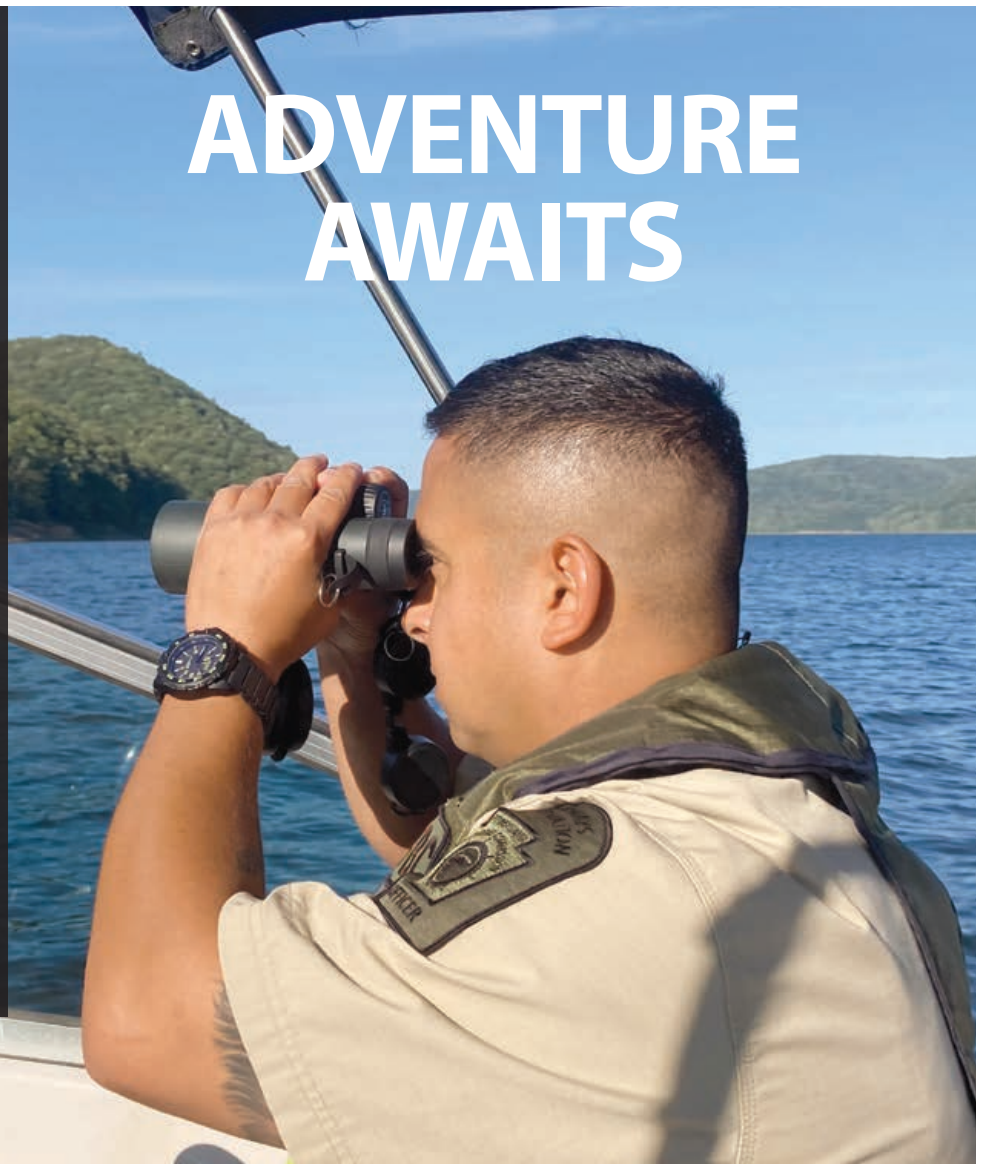
*\*A list of authorized issuing agents can be found at [fishandboat.com](http://fishandboat.com). Issuing agents may apply service fees and charges in addition to boat registration fees.*

PENNSYLVANIA  
FISH AND BOAT COMMISSION



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# SOCIAL SHORTS

Below are some "Social Shorts" from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's (PFBC's) social media pages.



facebook



**Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission**  
November 8 at 6:01 PM · 🌐

Have you seen habitat structures like this in any Pennsylvania streams you've visited?

This is a rock cross vane on Plunketts Creek, Lycoming County. Structures like this help establish pool habitats for the fishery. Plunketts Creek is a naturally reproducing trout stream, and this section runs completely dry during long periods of dry weather during the summer months. Modified mud sills, log-framed deflectors and rock vanes were also installed in the stream channel to provi... [See more](#)


👍 372    💬 27 comments 33 shares

👍 Like    💬 Comment

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## COLD WATER SAFETY TIPS

- 👉 Always wear a life jacket.
- 👉 Never boat alone.
- 👉 Leave a float plan and know the waters you plan to boat.
- 👉 Bring a fully charged cell phone with you in case of emergency.
- 👉 Wear clothing that still insulates.
- 👉 If you are about to fall in cold water, cover your mouth and nose with your hands to reduce the likelihood of inhaling water.
- 👉 Stay with the boat. Get back into or climb on top of the boat.
- 👉 If you can't get out of the water, get into the Heat Escape Lessening Posture (HELP).
- 👉 Do not remove your clothing in cold water.
- 👉 Once out of the water, get out of the wet clothes and warmed up as soon as possible.



© Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

**Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission**  
November 12 at 8:01 AM · 🌐

There are still plenty of ways to enjoy Pennsylvania waterways this winter.

But please be prepared if you're going out — always wear a life jacket, never boat alone, know the waters you plan to boat and follow these cold water safety tips.

Find more information on cold weather life jacket wear: <http://ow.ly/3iO050Ly3e2>

#wearitpa #wearyourlifejacket #paddlepa

👍 57    💬 3 comments 65 shares

👍 Like    💬 Comment

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**Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission**  
November 15 at 2:00 PM · 🌐

Let's do a little Trivia Tuesday!

What two kinds of crayfish live in Pennsylvania?

This Blue Crayfish — photographed last weekend by Jeff Keifer at Raccoon Creek State Park, Beaver County — is a rare find, as this type of crayfish doesn't spend much time above ground during the daytime. But you've maybe seen one of its chimneys, which are made of mud balls that the crayfish brings to the surface.

So what kind of crayfish is this Blue Crayfish? It's a burrowing crayfish! Th... [See more](#)

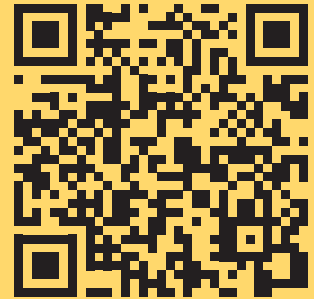
👍 505    💬 42 comments 83 shares

👍 Like    💬 Comment

Most relevant ▾

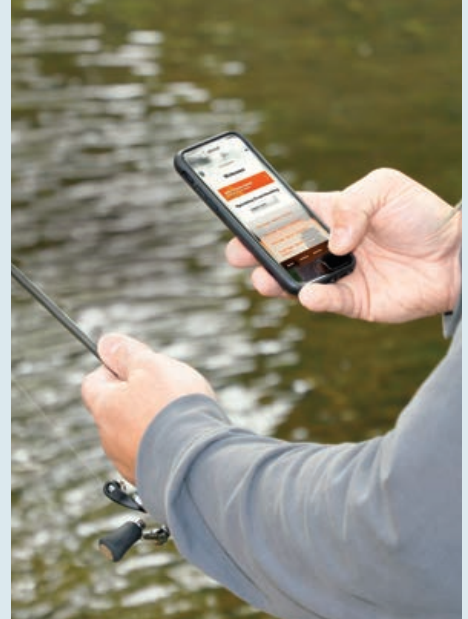
Credit: Jeff Keifer

Find the PFBC on Social Media



[fishandboat.com/Pages/socialmedia.aspx](http://fishandboat.com/Pages/socialmedia.aspx)

DOWNLOAD THE FREE FISHBOATPA APP!



## CAST & CAUGHT



*Hunter Wolfe, Brookville, caught this 22-inch golden Rainbow Trout while fishing Bennett Branch Sinnemahoning Creek, Cameron County.*

For the "Cast & Caught" column, send only prints (no larger than 8"x10") and a completed "Model Release form" available at [fishandboat.com/Transact/AnglerBoater](http://fishandboat.com/Transact/AnglerBoater). Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want your photograph returned. People 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**



*Julia Perry, Honesdale, caught this 2-pound, 17-inch Rainbow Trout while fishing Prompton Dam Spillway, Wayne County.*



*Michael Fechke, Pittsburgh, caught this 28-inch steelhead while fishing Elk Creek, Erie County.*



*Dan Shacreaw, Blairsville, caught this 23-inch Rainbow Trout while fishing Ferrier Run, Indiana County.*



*Parker Griffith caught and released this 20-inch golden Rainbow Trout while fly fishing Little Chartiers Creek, Washington County.*