

# Pennsylvania **ANGLER & BOATER**

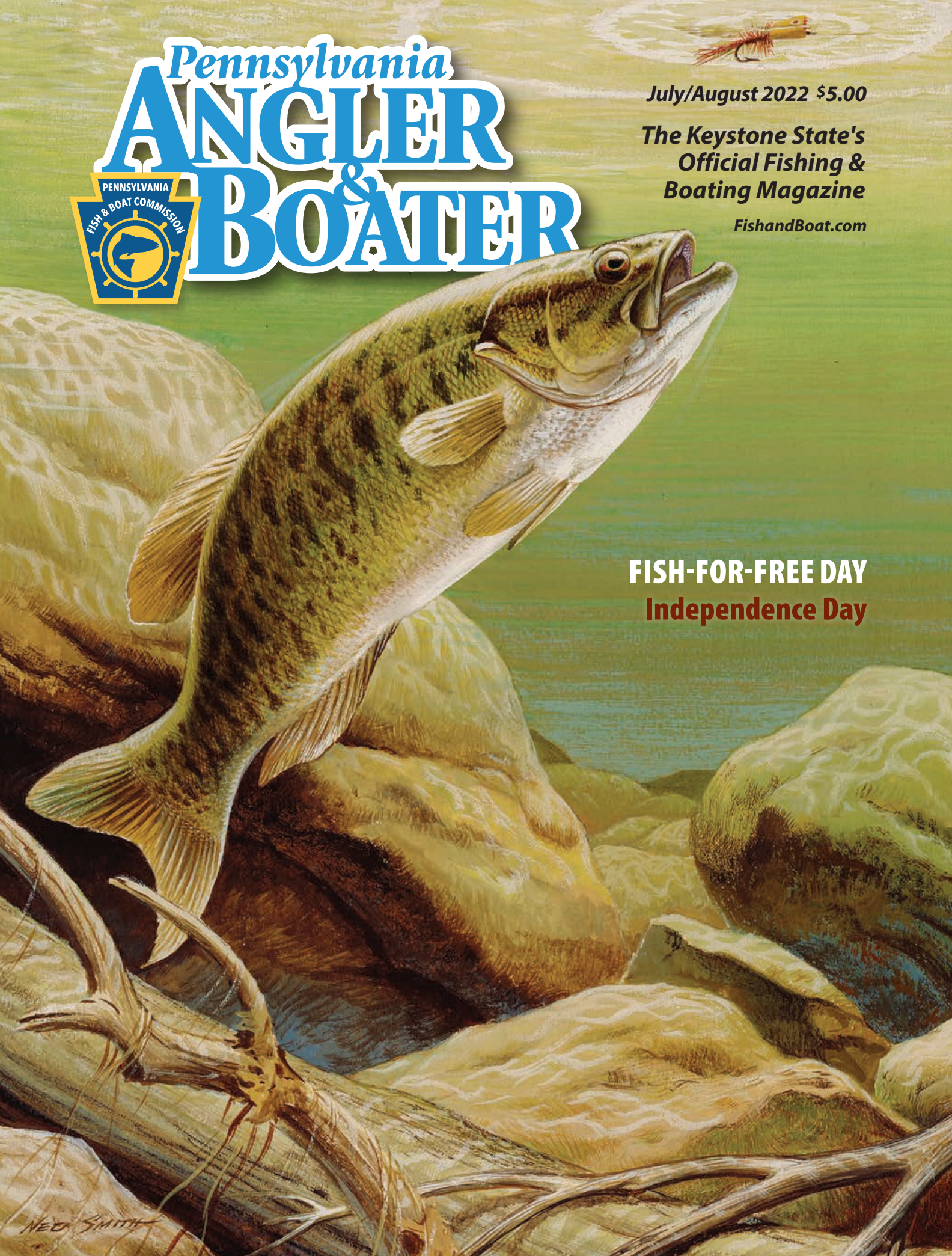


July/August 2022 \$5.00

The Keystone State's  
Official Fishing &  
Boating Magazine

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# Pennsylvania ANGLER & BOATER

The Keystone State's Official Fishing & Boating Magazine

July/August 2022  
Volume 91 Number 4

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## On the cover



During his life, Ned Smith had the opportunity to work with and befriend some outdoor "royalty" such as fly fishing legend Lefty Kreh. They spent hours fishing for Smallmouth Bass on the Susquehanna

River. The watercolor painting on the cover was part of Lefty Kreh's personal collection and is currently on display at the Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art ([nedsmithcenter.org](http://nedsmithcenter.org)). This painting is now part of the Ned Smith Center's permanent collection. *Painting by Ned Smith.*

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### Subscription Inquiries

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photo-Kelly Calhoun

## SUMMER TIME, FUN TIME

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

Summer Time, Fun Time—I cannot recall where I used to hear that phrase, but it was the first thing that popped into my head when I saw a draft of the table of contents for this issue of *Pennsylvania Angler and Boater*. Maybe, it came to mind since there is an article about Yellow Breeches Creek, Cumberland County, where I spent lots of summer hours from middle school through the early years of college (pages 10 and 11).

I can still picture the cutoff shorts and old sneakers that were my uniform for days in a canoe, inner tube, or submerged in the cool, limestone-influenced water. It was worth the poison ivy that inevitably dotted my skin after time at the creek.

Depending on the reader, this issue of the magazine will either remind you of many of the fishing and boating opportunities that make Pennsylvania summer days so enjoyable, or it will introduce a new audience of anglers and boaters to reasons to spend your summer close to home. From the first article about fishing in the Three Rivers (pages 5, 6, and 7) through the entire issue, you will be glad you added this magazine to your summer reading list.

Something that really caught my eye was the reference to using a bike to reach fishing spots on the Youghiogheny River (pages 38, 39, and 40). Again, that was my primary mode of transportation to the creek in the 1980s, and it brought those memories flooding back.

An article about Presque Isle Bay (pages 14 and 15) highlights something that played out all across the country in the past 2 years as millions of Americans took to the outdoors. They went fishing, biking, and camping, and what became clear is that people liked to do all three in one trip or over the course of a weekend. Now, more than ever, marketing images from equipment retailers and regional tourism agencies feature outdoor enthusiasts engaged in multiple activities.

If you have friends, relatives, or coworkers who like to bike, invite them to put fishing rods in their backpacks (if they do not have rods, consider loaning your rods) and pedal to a nearby stream, river, or lake. If you are going to a state park to camp for the weekend, consider renting a canoe or kayak to take in the scenery from the water.

Regardless of where your summer pursuits take you, if you boat, please wear your life jacket. We want you to be around to savor Pennsylvania summers for years to come.



photo-Carl Kimmel

*Wear your life jacket while having fun on the water.*

# Fishing in the Heart of the Three Rivers



photo-Carl Haensel

*by Carl Haensel*

**T**he confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers, coming together in western Pennsylvania to form the Ohio River, is a junction of strategic and cultural importance. Long before George Washington visited the area that would become Pittsburgh in 1753, Native Americans lived, traded, hunted, and fished at what we now call “Three Rivers”. While much has changed over the centuries, local anglers enjoy quality fishing opportunities in the heart of Pittsburgh.

## **Ample public access**

Finding your way to the water is easy in Pittsburgh. The Three Rivers Heritage Trail provides access points for shore anglers in many areas around the city. It lines the north bank of the Ohio and Allegheny rivers,

providing access to miles of waterfront and passing through the city, parks, and private marinas. Shore fishing is steps away from where professional sports teams play on Heinz Field and in PNC Park. Some areas along the trail are easier to navigate to the water than others.

Across the water, Point State Park occupies the historic ground that formerly held French and British fortifications dating back to the 1700s. You are likely to find lunchtime anglers chasing catfish among park visitors. The large fountain at the point of the park provides a landmark for shore anglers and boaters.

Access is more challenging on the Monongahela River, but the Three Rivers Heritage Trail covers a few miles of good access for shore anglers on the south side of the river near the Birmingham Bridge and the Southside Public Boat Launch. The boat launch is the best spot for boating anglers looking to find their way onto the water in the city. Get there early on busy summer days to find a parking spot. For more information about the Three Rivers Heritage Trail, visit <https://friendsoftheriverfront.org>.

## The fish of Three Rivers

Warmwater gamefish species are found in the Ohio, Allegheny, and Monongahela rivers in abundance. A multitude of species fill the water, but a few make the list for anglers looking to fish in the city. Bass fishing is popular among anglers in the area. The fishing has been good in recent years, and the Bassmaster Classic was held on the rivers in 2005. Smallmouth Bass regularly hold next to rubble, breakwalls, and inlets in the rivers. Fishing next to structure is the best way to find the fish, and it may be good to cover ground as you explore. Fishing from a kayak, or even using a bicycle on the trails, is a great way to fish the area and cover a variety of water until you find active fish. Spotted Bass and Largemouth Bass are also found in the rivers.

Catfish are targeted in the area. Both Channel Catfish and Flathead Catfish are found in all three rivers. Fishing with bait is the best way to tempt fish. Flathead Catfish are partial to live bait including sunfish. Channel Catfish will bite on nearly anything. We caught Channel Catfish in Pittsburgh on classic baits like worms and more creative offerings like hot dogs and fried chicken. Soaking bait on the bottom in an area less swift than the main current is a good way to catch fish. Look for eddies and slack areas.

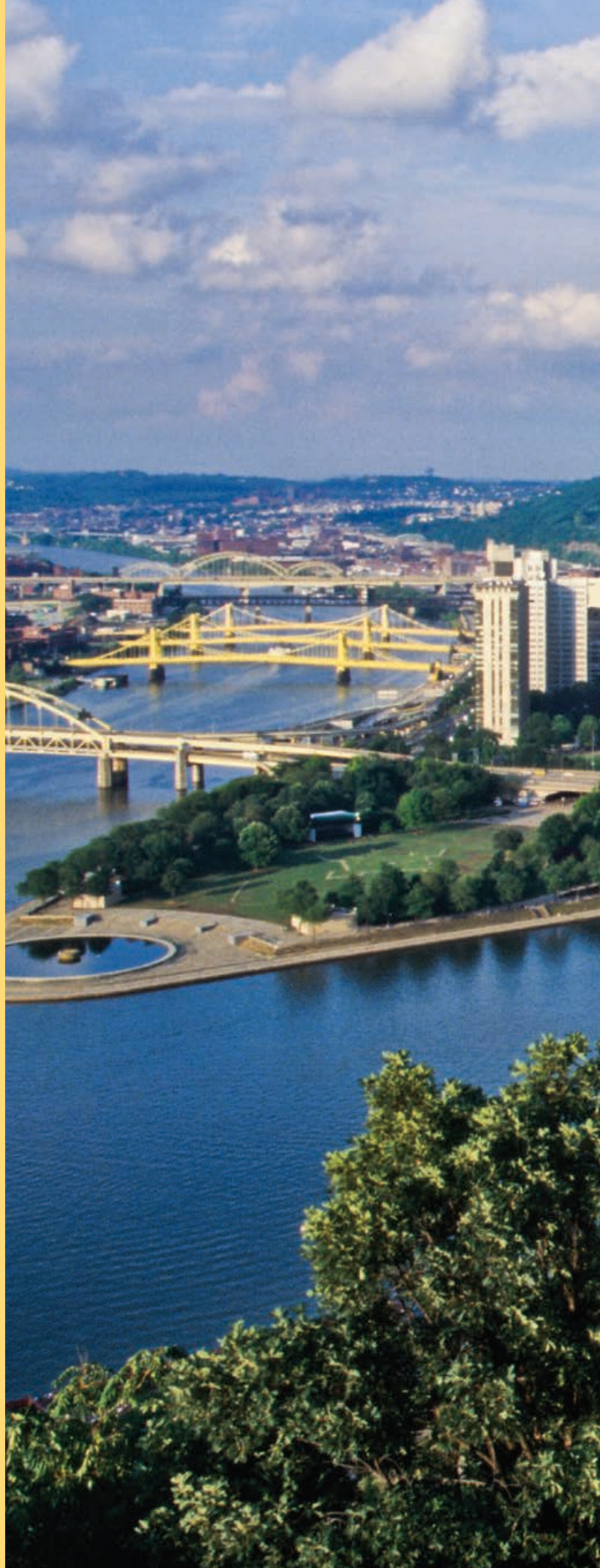
Panfish are found in the calmer areas of the rivers as well. We caught hefty crappies and White Bass. Give these fish a try if you are getting short strikes when targeting bass. Fishing with small and medium jigs produce well. Use white or bright colors when the water is murky.

Common Carp are a highlight for urban shore anglers in Pittsburgh and may grow large. It is not uncommon to catch carp while targeting catfish, and you may not know what you caught until you get it to the surface. Plenty of carp swim in all three rivers. Astute anglers look for carp in the eddies and current breaks throughout the area.

*photo-Carl Haensel*



*Channel Catfish are often found around downtown Pittsburgh. Fishing may be especially good in the evenings and at night.*





## Fishing in Pittsburgh

The City of Pittsburgh is a bustling, lively place, and the waterfront is no different. While any time is a good time to hit the water, anglers looking for a quality experience often do well in the mornings and evenings. Boat traffic and wakes are lower, especially in the early morning. Boating anglers need to pay close attention to barge traffic and navigate appropriately to be safe. Large wakes may occur, and smaller boats may present safety risks, especially in cold water when hypothermia is possible.

Pay attention to the weather in Pittsburgh and in the watersheds of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers prior to heading out on the water. Since the flows that converge at Three Rivers originate hundreds of miles apart, it is possible to have one river flowing with relatively clear water, and the other with murky flows or flooding. If one area is not fishing well, move around the city to find good fishing. ☐

*photos-Carl Haensel*



*Common Carp put up a fight for local anglers fishing in the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio rivers. Bait fished on the bottom is a great way to tempt carp to bite.*



*Pusher tugs on the Ohio River are a common sight in Pittsburgh. Watch for wakes when fishing, especially if boats are moving a large group of barges.*

# Tying the Murdich Minnow

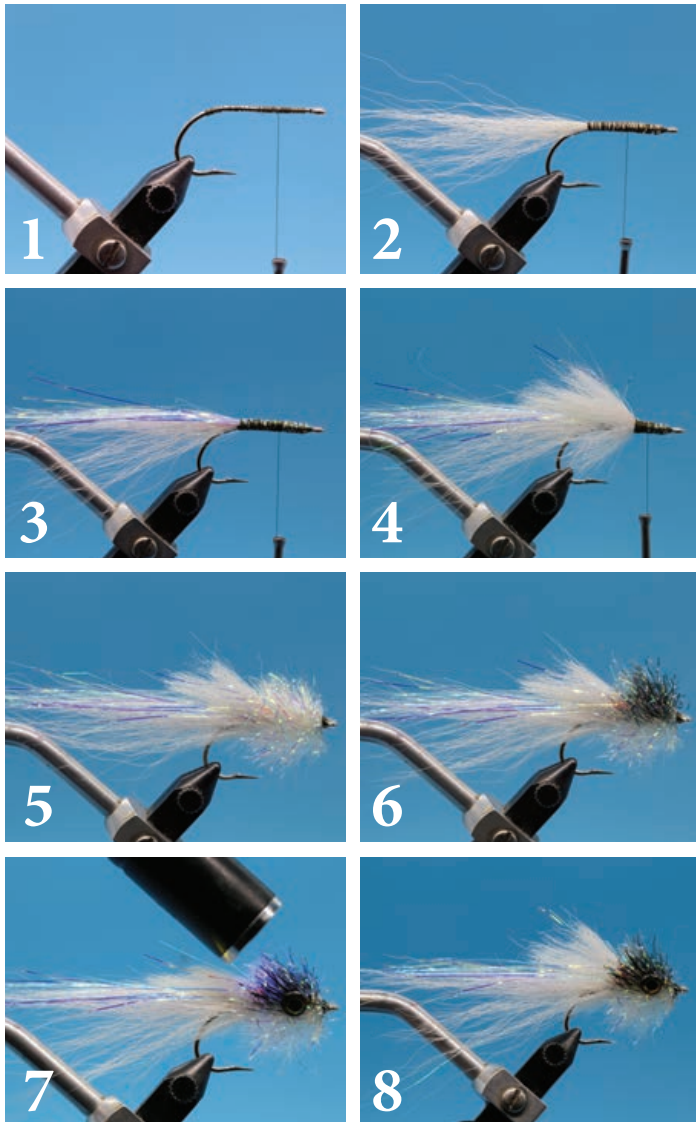
by *Carl Haensel* photos by the author

Smallmouth Bass and Largemouth Bass chase minnow patterns during the summer months. On large bodies of water like the Susquehanna River, Allegheny River, and Lake Erie, bass often pursue baitfish aggressively, herding baitfish into shallow areas and even pushing baitfish to jump into the air. These instances of “busting baitfish” may offer exhilarating fishing opportunities. Birds often try to grab some dinner as well, so look for airborne predators trying to get in on the action to show you where to look. Try casting this pattern when bass are chasing prey and hold on tight to your rod. This lightweight fly casts easily, and works well when fished on both floating and sinking fly lines. Try tying it in a variety of colors and sizes to imitate the types of baitfish found in your local waters. While size 2 is a great option, smaller sizes may be useful and can bring finicky fish to hand quickly. ☐



## Tying the Murdich Minnow Materials

- Hook:** Size 2 Mustad 3366 or similar hook
- Thread:** Gel spun poly in color of choice
- Eyes:** 3D Big Fish or Fish Skull eyes
- Tail:** Bucktail fibers in color of choice
- Flash:** Polar Flash and Flashabou Mirage in color of choice
- Body/Collar:** White Craft Fur, Polar Fur, or similar material
- Head:** Large Estaz or Cactus Chenille
- Glue:** Loon UV Fly Finish or similar glue



- 1 Secure the hook in the vise and attach thread. Wrap back to the bend, covering the hook, then forward again.
- 2 Tie in a section of bucktail fibers about two times the length of the shank of the hook. Tie in the bucktail fibers behind the eye and wrap back to the bend. This adds bulk to the pattern.
- 3 Add Polar Flash and Flashabou Mirage around the hook to mix with the bucktail fibers throughout the tail.
- 4 Tie in the White Craft Fur about halfway along the shank of the hook, facing rearward and ending shortly past the bend of the hook. Add a few strands of additional Flashabou Mirage on top of the White Craft Fur.
- 5 Wrap your thread forward. Tie in the Estaz at the head of the hook. Finish just behind the eye, and add a good number of wraps to force the Estaz back. Whip finish the fly and glue the wraps.
- 6 Use a black permanent marker or shade of your choice to color the top of the head of the fly.
- 7 Place the fly eyes on the sides of the fly using Loon UV Fly Finish or similar glue, then cure.
- 8 Trim the fly as needed, and you are ready to go fishing.





# BLUEGILLS ON THE FLY

by *Ralph Scherder* photo by the author

**T**hink of fly fishing and most anglers envision casting to rising trout or drifting egg patterns to finicky steelhead. While I enjoy those moments, too, once summer rolls around, I have a different species that I love to target—the Bluegill.

Like many anglers, the first fish that ever tugged my line was a Bluegill. I could not get enough of these fish. Bluegills are plentiful in most places, eager biters, and fight well. Bluegills are the perfect quarry for kids, but Bluegills are just as much fun for adults, and even more so when catching on the fly.

The summer months are primetime for Bluegills on the surface. Poppers and foam bugs are typical choices for panfish on top, but do not overlook simple dry fly patterns. Not all panfish are aggressive all of the time, and its eagerness to eat is often a direct reflection of the local fishing pressure. From personal experience, panfish may become just as fly-shy and selective as trout, and nothing will damage your ego as much as a Bluegill shunning your perfectly-decent presentation.

Some of my favorite dry flies for Bluegills and other panfish are the Parachute Adams, Mosquito, Red Humpy, and Madam X. Where shallow enough, I prefer to wade parallel to the shoreline and cast ahead along the edge of the lily pads or whatever structure is present. Sometimes, the fly landing on the water produces an immediate, territorial strike. Other times, I let the fly sit for a few seconds before giving the rod tip the slightest twitch, just enough to cause the fly to skate an inch or two, and then let it rest a few more seconds before repeating the process.

The long pause before twitching the fly is important if fish are a little skittish. I have fished ponds and lakes where Bluegills scattered as soon as my fly hit the water, so you have to give these fish a chance to settle down again.

If fish are more aggressive, a quicker retrieve can be effective. In this situation, I tie on a foam spider or Madam X, both of which have rubber legs, and skate it on the surface 12 inches at a time. The strike typically occurs as soon as the fly stops.

Weather conditions also play a role in how particular Bluegills can be. During cool or overcast days, panfish will feed all day in the shallows. But, if it is going to be a hot day with lots of sun, hit the water early for the best action. You may still catch Bluegills all day, especially in shaded areas, but the size usually gets smaller as larger fish move to deeper and cooler water.

To target larger fish in the middle of the day, switch to subsurface flies such as small Woolly Buggers in sizes 12 and 14, nymphs, and Squirmy Wormies. I let the Woolly Buggers sink down to where the fish are feeding before beginning the retrieve. The nymphs and Squirmy Wormies, though, I often suspend under an indicator the same way I would if I were fishing for trout. If a few minutes pass with no strikes, I lift the rod tip and skate the indicator a few feet to get my fly into new water.

You do not need any special gear to fly fish for Bluegills and other panfish. Whatever you use for trout will work just fine, but lighter, 2- to 4-weight rods and lines allow for a better fight and more enjoyment. When summer rolls around, I enjoy heading to the lake with my two young kids, fly rod in hand, and a box of panfish flies in my pocket. ☐



# Yellow Breeches Creek

by John Allen

photos by the author

I used to spend a lot of time fishing in every corner of Pennsylvania. Whenever I struck up a conversation with a fellow angler, it did not matter where I was in the state. If I told someone I was from southcentral Pennsylvania, the conversation would always steer to one question. “Have you ever fished the Yellow Breeches Creek?” It was not until I moved to Cumberland County that I truly understood how much this stream is cherished by anglers from all over the state and even country.

Yellow Breeches Creek has lots of fish, access, and water. Add in almost every major hatch in Pennsylvania, and you have a

trout angler’s dream stream. The stream is stocked multiple times a year by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission and the local cooperative nursery. The sheer volume of trout and frequency the stream is stocked ensures trout throughout its reaches all year and in excellent numbers.

The highlight of the creek is the 1.7-mile Catch and Release Artificial Lures Only section in the town of Boiling Springs, Cumberland County. This is often the first stop for first-time anglers of Yellow Breeches Creek. This section of the stream, which flows through a picturesque resort on the edge of town, has been in countless books and magazines and is often the big draw. Be prepared though, when you visit this popular section before the trout opener or on a warm spring day, it is often near impossible to find parking. Once the regular season gets underway, the crowds disperse to other areas of the stream.



sheer number of mayflies make this hatch difficult to fish, but it is a spectacle that any fly angler must see. Once the hatches slow down, terrestrial fishing is excellent given the terrain the stream meanders through.

In addition to the excellent fishing opportunities, the stream is also a popular destination among kayakers. During the early summer months, before the streams get too hot for trout, a kayak is a great way for an angler to quickly cover the stream's best holes, while skipping the marginal water.

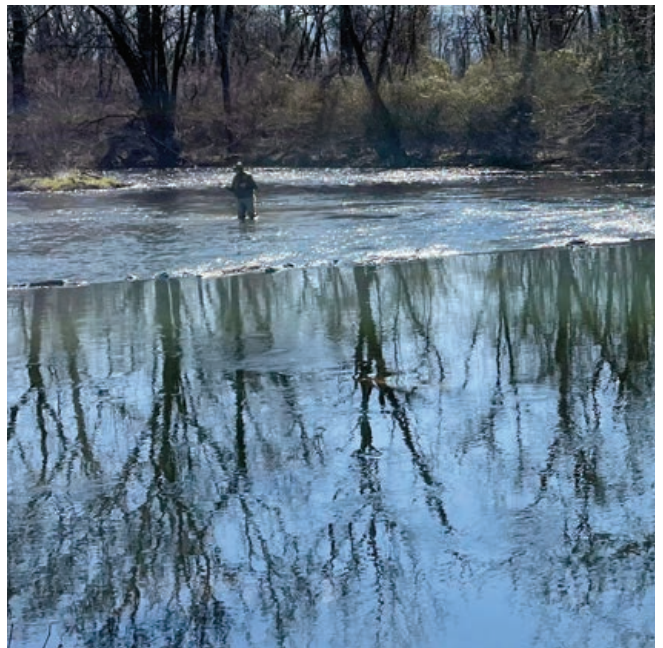
The next time you visit the southcentral region of Pennsylvania, give the Yellow Breeches Creek a try for a fishing experience like no other. ☐



*Yellow Breeches Creek, Cumberland County, as it enters the 1.17-mile Catch and Release Artificial Lures Only section.*

From the start of the regular trout season through mid-May, it may be difficult to find a section of stream to call your own on a weekend. The stream is stocked during this time span, which leads to a lot of anglers ascending upon the stream. Once the stockings begin to slow and other fishing seasons open, the crowds fade, and you finally have some breathing room.

This also happens to be the peak of the hatches in the area, which sometimes lead to small crowds on the easily accessible pools throughout the creek as the mayflies dance above the water's surface and send the trout into a feeding frenzy. Most anglers will concentrate on the hatches in the catch and release area. Anglers willing to venture outside of this area and find a nice pool with an entering riffle will be greatly rewarded. Almost any hatch you find on other streams in Pennsylvania is here to some degree including the white mayfly hatch. The



*An angler works the riffles on Yellow Breeches Creek.*

Tying  
Together

# PANFISH POPPERS: Teaching Children to Tie Bluegill Patterns

by *Christian A. Shane*

photos by the author

*"Bluegills...ounce for ounce, there is no better scrapper in fresh water." Elmer Ransom, Fishing's Just Luck (1945).*

Children love the excitement of topwater action on a lake or pond when hungry Bluegills slash after surface flies or lures with recklessness. I recreate this enthusiasm by allowing kids to create their own "poppers" on the fly tying vise and trying these patterns on the water. With today's plethora of modern tying materials, creating poppers for panfish has never been easier or more fun for kids. Use this four-step process to create perfect poppers.

## Glue-up

Depending on what materials you choose for your tier, it is going to involve attaching the foam, wood, or plastic securely to the hook shank. With a thread wrap along the length of the hook shank beforehand, use a small amount of super glue to achieve this step. Cover the thread wraps with glue, then press

the hook into the precut slot. If you are using foam or wood, a utility knife will do the trick to create the slot.

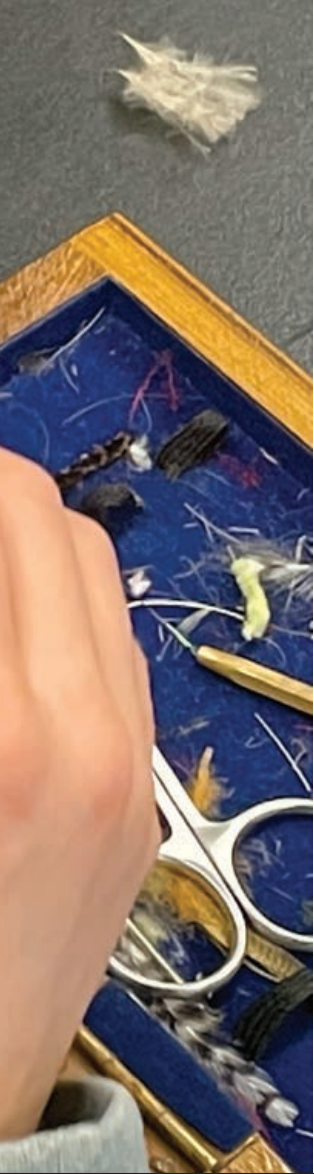
Premade tying kits allow the process to be cleaner and faster. These kits are available in all popper shapes and hook sizes for each pattern (Bream Popper, Tapered-Cupped Slotted Popper, Pencil Popper, and Saltwater Popper). To save time, glue up a bunch of bodies, so your tier can start on step two of creating the pattern. Position your poppers along a paper towel roll and periodically turn to allow for the glue drying process to spread evenly. If your tier has strong enough thread, small foam bodies can also be tied directly to the hook shank without using glue.

## Color-up

In this process, decide how complex or simple you want the popper. To create a simple prey-like pattern, use permanent markers in a variety of blacks, greens, reds, and yellows. I



*Foam or wood may also be used for the popper body.*



remind tiers to use a lighter color along the belly and darken the color as it moves up along the dorsal side of the pattern. They can also add camouflaging marks using larger and smaller dots.

Painting with acrylic hobby paints and small brushes offers the opportunity for creativity and unique designs, but it makes the pattern a little more tedious and time-consuming. From an educational standpoint, I will share various color examples of fish and amphibian skins, so nature's skin tones and patterns can be recreated. Give popper bodies ample time to dry before going onto the next step.

### Eye-up

Though it is not necessary to add eyes to the pattern, kids love adding realism to their patterns. This may be achieved by using a marker or even by adding pre-bought sticker adhesives to the pattern. Peel off the sticker and apply it to the sides of the popper material.

### Tie-up

Last in the popper process, tying creativity really shines in this step. Add a tail, legs, and hackle behind the popper body. Have tiers start their thread at the bend of the hook, and then tie in the tail material. Marabou, sparse bucktail, or even a small feather works here. Next, add in the rubber legs, followed by hackling a feather around two to three times. Tiers may need your



*Pre-purchased popper kit bodies come in various shapes and hook sizes from #2 to #12.*

help at whip finishing or half hitching behind the popper body since it is sometimes difficult.

### Fish-it

Ken Crawford, an avid fly tier, popper designer, and fly angler, suggests using sizes #8 and #10 when fishing poppers for Bluegills. "Bluegills are different. These fish like a more subtle retrieve. Bluegills like to inspect the meal. After the popper lands, let it sit. You will see a shadow lurking under the fly, inching closer to the surface. Then, the fish will suck it in," said Crawford.

Enjoy "Tying Together" and catching pan-size critters with these perfect panfish poppers. ☐



*A plethora of panfish poppers.*

## Panfish Popper

**Hook:** Sizes #2-#12

**Body:** Plastic, foam, wood, or cork

**Tail:** Marabou, deer hair, Krystal Flash, or feather

**Hackle:** Saddle hackle feather

**Optional:** Rubber legs

# Presque Isle State Park

by Marilyn Black

*“Presque Isle State Park—it is unique, it is beautiful, and it is changing all the time.”* Matt Greene, Presque Isle State Park Operations Manager, 2022.

This 3,200-acre sandy peninsula arches into Lake Erie forming Presque Isle Bay, creating a protected harbor sheltering Erie, Pennsylvania. Currently, the peninsula neck is four miles west of downtown. However, during the past 11,000 years since its formation while glaciers receded, its connection with the mainland gradually inched three miles east. Several times storms and longshore drift temporarily turned the “almost an island” back into a string of islands and wetlands. It is still creeping eastward.

Designated a state park in 1921 after having been considered briefly as a potential National Park, Presque Isle State Park consistently has the highest visitation figures of any Pennsylvania state park, with nearly 5 million visitors annually in 2020 and 2021. Why? Seven miles of surf beaches, diverse ecological zones, and active management for four seasons of outdoor recreation make it an ultimate example of multiple uses on a fragile natural resource.

Boats in Presque Isle State Park waters and Presque Isle Bay range from kayaks and canoes, to personal watercraft, sleek bass boats, other fishing boats, pontoon boats used for educational tours, ski boats, sailboats, and yachts up to 42 feet long, which may moor at the marina. From the North Pier, you may gaze upon Great Lakes freighters, the full-size working replica of Flagship Niagara, and other craft using the shipping channel to Lake Erie.

Presque Isle State Park has a full-service marina (located in Marina Bay) with sales of fuel, fishing bait and tackle, dockage, and related services for long-distance boaters. Boaters towing motorboats have three



photo-PPIC archives

ramps—Niagara Launch, West Pier Launch, and Lagoon Launch. Paddlers have additional options. Even if you plan to navigate the Bay only, stay attentive to Erie's sometimes dramatic changes of weather and boating conditions.

Anglers access the waters of the bay and lagoons not only by boat but also from piers and by wading sandy shorelines. Prime fish species they catch vary by season including Smallmouth Bass during late spring and early summer, Largemouth Bass in the summer, Rock Bass and Bluegills most months, Yellow Perch from late fall through early spring, Walleye in autumn, and exceptional Northern Pike particularly in October through November. Black Crappies congregate in Misery Bay and Presque Isle Bay around an area locals call "The Stinkhole." Incidental catches of steelhead, Bowfin, Brown Trout, Pumpkinseed, and White Bass keep anglers curious as to what their next catch will be.

Presque Isle State Park is strictly a day-use park. Its few overnight visitors are residents of 24 houseboats moored in Horseshoe Pond and military personnel at the United States Coast Guard station on the North Pier. A private campground sits along the park entrance road just short of state-owned property, and Lampe Campground and Marina are across the shipping channel. Motels and bed and breakfast facilities are nearby on the mainland.

If the numerous boating and fishing opportunities are not enough to fill your next outing to Presque Isle State Park, I recommend visiting the free-admission Tom Ridge Environmental Center at the park entrance to learn more about this National Natural Landmark.

Additional outdoor recreational experiences and facilities abound in Presque Isle State Park. Swimming is allowed when lifeguards are on duty. Additional family amenities available are bicycle trails, hiking trails, lighthouse tours, public environmental programs, sand volleyball courts, playgrounds, kite flying, sand castle building, wind surfing, scuba diving, observing and photographing wildlife, and terrific sunsets. There are recreational equipment rentals, plus docks for water taxis that crisscross Presque Isle Bay from downtown Erie. With all these options and more, a multiple-day visit to Presque Isle State Park should be in your future. ☐



Photos-Dart Black

*Evan Komoroski, age 12, caught this Smallmouth Bass while fishing from the North Pier near the Coast Guard station in Presque Isle State Park, Erie County.*



*Kayaks, canoes, and small V-bottom fishing boats are available for rentals from the shop inside the lagoons of Presque Isle State Park near the Perry Monument.*



*Surreys and regular bicycles may be rented at the concessionaire at the Waterworks Recreation Area at Presque Isle State Park.*



*Horseshoe Pond in Presque Isle State Park has about 24 floating houseboats year-round. Anglers may fish this area from boats and paddlecraft, but be cautious of the mooring and utility cables, and respect the privacy of houseboat occupants.*



photo-Chad Bauer

# WHERE TO FIND SUMMER BASS WITH A FLY ROD

by *Nick DelVecchio*

For anglers well-acquainted with Smallmouth Bass on a fly rod, these fish need no introduction. The strong hit and powerful fight leave quite an impression, quickly becoming a favorite species for anglers looking to switch gears from trout. Big or small, Smallmouth Bass pack a punch. Numbers are plentiful in a wide array of waters around Pennsylvania. Some bass habitat may be intimidating to fly anglers, though. Knowing where to find Smallmouth Bass in larger bodies of water may be challenging, but looking for several key features may increase success on your next warm water adventure.

Understanding the biology of a fish is the first step in figuring out where to locate Smallmouth Bass. When it comes to bass, it is all about the ambush. Knowing that fish lurk in wait for unsuspecting prey is one of the most important concepts when breaking down a river or lake to find the best areas. As such, structure is one of, if not the most, important things to find. Submerged logs and large boulders are fantastic starting points since bass can use these places as prime ambush locations. When fishing these ambush spots, work your flies with a slow retrieve to start. The goal is to imitate a baitfish that is not worried about falling victim to a Smallmouth Bass lying in wait.

One of the hallmarks of summertime is low, warm flows in rivers. It is a natural part of the Pennsylvania summer as infrequent rain drops water levels. That may create a large amount of “frog” water, which is just another way of describing long stretches of

barely moving current. Do not overlook these spots on your local river or creek. Bass will consistently prowl up and down the frog water looking for a meal. It may not be productive to spend all day in these locations, but it is worth some casts before you move on to the next ambush areas. These spots may also be great opportunities for sight-fishing. When looking at rivers specifically, smaller creeks entering into the main water are also prime holding areas for bass. The influx of cooler water (even if it is just a few degrees) may bring with it baitfish and other sources of food.

When targeting stillwater, some of the same principles apply, but there are a few twists. Weed beds should be a high priority for fly anglers since they offer bass good ambush opportunities, but underwater drop-offs count for this as well. The latter becomes especially true when water temperatures increase considerably later into summer. Bass may be more tolerant of heat than trout but have limits, too. If it gets really hot, focusing on deeper water may yield good results. Most lakes will have some sort of inlet/outlet stream, and this is another great spot to try. Schools of baitfish may swarm to moving water accompanying these features, which will bring in bass.

Targeting bass with a fly rod is a fantastic summertime activity for those looking to be out on the water. There are most certainly challenges to this type of fishing, though. It may be difficult to find fish some days, and the sheer volume of water on many rivers and lakes may be intimidating. Breaking each body of water down into smaller, more manageable components and knowing what features to look for is often the difference between a great day of fishing and a head-scratching boat ride. ▣





# NOTES *from the Streams*

## Honored

During the trout stocking season, Waterways Conservation Officers (WCOs) travel thousands of miles a month to make sure all the stocked trout waters are ready for Pennsylvania's Opening Day of Trout. With multiple trucks of trout and traffic concerns on local streams, many WCOs help cover multiple counties.

I was assigned to cover a trout stocking in the spring of 2021 in Cameron County. I was unfamiliar with this particular section of stream. I arrived at the meeting location and met a retired Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission employee with extensive knowledge of the water being stocked and the stocking locations.

At our first stocking point, I was approached by an angler who politely asked about stocking fish at a particular location downstream. He explained that it is his favorite place to fish. The angler explained that he lives with medical conditions that limits his mobility, but this spot is easily accessible for him. I was not sure if we would be stocking this location but told him I would find out and let him know.

We decided to make sure to stock this location. As we exited our vehicles to begin stocking fish, I was again approached by the angler, who had a big smile on his face. He repeatedly thanked me for stocking his favorite spot. I noticed he was wearing a pin from the United States Army 1st Calvary Division. He told me that he served in the 1st Calvary in Vietnam, and he showed me the medals he received in Vietnam, which included a Purple Heart. The angler also shared with me that his current medical conditions were a

result of his time spent in Vietnam.

I thanked the angler for his service to his country and for sharing some of his story with me. I thought back at the smile on his face and how thankful he was that we were stocking his favorite fishing spot. I felt honored to make this angler's day as a small token of appreciation for the selfless service he made for his country.—*WCO Gregory R. Kraynak, Centre County.*

## Just holding the fish

At Lake Greeley, Pike County, I encountered two men fishing from the docks. I approached the anglers, asked about the fishing, and requested to see their fishing licenses. As one of the men went back to the car to search for his fishing license, I looked in a bucket he had at the end of the dock. The bucket contained six under minimum length pickerel. The angler said he was keeping them in the bucket while he continued to fish so he did not recatch them when attempting to hook a legal-sized pickerel. I let him know that temporarily holding onto the fish that were below the size requirement was not how this worked, and he would be receiving a citation. The fish survived being in the bucket and were released back into the lake.—

*WCO Emily R. Borger, Northern Wallenpaupack District.*



illustration-Andrea Feeney

## New reptile discovery

One evening in June, a fellow WCO and I were patrolling Long Arm Reservoir, York County. The lake has parking areas and a boat launch, but these access areas are closed daily from 9:00 p.m. - 5:00 a.m. When finishing patrolling for the evening, we made our rounds at each access area to ensure that there were no vehicles or persons in the areas after hours. The last access area is located at the top of the reservoir with elderly and handicap parking access. After ensuring that no one was in the parking area, we exited the parking lot. As I reached the road, I heard my fellow WCO over the radio. He exclaimed, "Get back here, something just crossed the parking lot!" I laughed and asked, "What is it?" He answered, "Some kind of lizard."

I parked my truck and started walking back to his vehicle. He got out and said that it crossed in front of his truck and ran into the bushes. I searched the bushes, found the lizard, and removed it from the bushes. The other officer said that it must be a new species of lizard, because he had never seen one like it before. Before I could say anything, I broke into laughter then said, "Are you kidding me? It's a gecko you buy at a pet store." Before trying to explain to him in more detail, I emptied my lunch box and placed the gecko in it. I then searched the internet for leopard gecko on my phone to show the officer. He laughed, and we concluded that someone must have let the gecko go. Because it is not a native species to Pennsylvania and would not survive the colder months ahead, I took the gecko home. Even though my husband loves reptiles and wanted to keep the gecko, we were able to find a good home for the gecko in a few days.—*WCO Rachael L. Thurner-Diaz, Adams and western York counties.*

# Fly Fishing for Trout in Midsummer

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by *Richard Tate*

July and August are generally considered the toughest months to fly fish for trout, but it is possible to catch trout.

The most important thing to consider when fly fishing during the heat of midsummer is the stream temperature. Anglers should locate streams that do not rise over 68 degrees F. Trout are most active in water temperatures in the low 60s. Temperatures of 70 degrees F and above are unhealthy for trout, and streams approaching 75 degrees F and above are lethal for trout.

However, water temperatures in many Pennsylvania streams do not exceed 68 degrees F during even the hottest summer heat waves. These are the streams a savvy trout fly angler wants to fish.

Well-known limestone creeks in the Cumberland Valley offer numerous opportunities as do some freestone runs that are tucked into the mountains of northcentral Pennsylvania. To find healthy coldwater streams, visit [paflyfish.com](http://paflyfish.com). A number of participants on this site's forum are willing to share information about Pennsylvania trout streams. You can also buy one of



photo-Donna Tate



photo-Terry Malloy

*Trout are most active in water temperatures in the low 60s.*

Pennsylvania's trout-stream guide books. Studying one of these books, such as *Keystone Fly Fishing*, will help you find streams that remain cold enough to keep trout healthy all summer.

Once you locate a stream, you have to come up with some flies that will fool midsummer trout.

Since most fly hatches have ended by midsummer, subsurface flies are the main tickets to fly fishing action. When I was young, I relied on Black Ant and Leadwing Coachmen wet flies. The ant was particularly effective. However, over the past 25 years, I have come to rely on several nymphs to deceive midsummer trout. If the water is flowing well, I continue to use my favorite size 12 beadhead Hare's Ear Nymph. As the water shrinks, I knot on smaller nymphs. Among these nymphs are size 14 Copper Johns, in both copper and green, and size 16 beadhead Olive Nymphs.

Last July, I drove to a small creek and arrived at 6:30 a.m. My fishing journal reads, "I fished until 8:30 a.m. Using a green Copper John, I caught and released 18 Brown Trout. I landed a fine 19-inch Brown Trout at 8:30 a.m., a good trout to end on. The morning's air temperature was already up to nearly 80 degrees F and was becoming uncomfortable. The water temperature, though, did not rise above 59 degrees F."

Dry flies work in various situations like using attractor dry flies to "fish the water." My favorite midsummer attractor dry fly is a size 14 tan version of the Fluttering Caddis. This type of fly fishing is especially effective on mountain brooks and runs.

If you run into rising trout and do not see any flies on the water, a good strategy is to toss a size 14 or 16 Black Ant or Foam Beetle dry fly.

I would be remiss if I did not mention *Tricorythodes* mayflies. Where found, mainly on limestone streams, these tiny mayflies are best imitated by size 22 and 24 flies.

Trout fishing in midsummer can be tough. By paying attention to water temperatures and by using effective flies, fly anglers may find success. ☐



*Black Ant wet fly (with a beadhead)*

photos-Richard Tate



*Foam Beetle dry fly*

## Five Great Spots to Fly Fish in the Cumberland Valley

1. Yellow Breeches Creek—Learn more about Yellow Breeches Creek on pages 10 and 11.
2. LeTort Spring Run
3. Big Spring Creek
4. Susquehanna River
5. Children's Lake



## WATCH FOR THIS TEEN FISHING PHENOM

*photos-courtesy of Jan and Dinata Stiner*

*by Linda Stager*

**W**atch this 15-year-old cast a long line, and you will want to know his name—he is that good. Meet Colegan Stiner, Tioga County. And, if he catches his dream, you will someday know him well.

Colegan lives (and loves) to fish. “I fish almost every day. The number of days I do not fish in a year I can count on two hands,” said Colegan. Colegan’s dad, Jan Stiner, teases his son, “I would say 355 days of the year you are on the water someplace. He is not a fair-weather angler.”

It feels like it has always been that way with Colegan. “One year, when he was about 9-years-old, we went to the top of Rattler Mountain to one of his favorite fishing spots. It was a huge sluice pipe, and he would sit on top of it. He loved the native trout there. Just the way he held the fish and the way he took them off the hook, he was very passionate. He had a special love for fish,” said Colegan’s mom, Dinata.

Colegan remembers how this passion started. “Ole Bull State Park is where I really got into trout fishing. We would go there the first weekend after I got out of school for the summer. I always thought of it as a reward for completing the school year.”

Over time, his fishing world expanded. His favorite spots are anywhere he can cast a line into water. Slate Run, on Pine Creek, is a favorite spot. He enjoys the other anglers, the camaraderie, and of course, those trophy Brown Trout in the stretch on the Pine.

At age 15, Colegan’s favorite skill is center pinning. This old-school, new-style, no-drag technique, which is more popular in the western states and among older anglers, uses a long 11-foot rod and a special ball-bearing spool with a center pin to cast at longer distances than usual. “When I use a center pin, I can really get it out there past where you can usually



*Colegan Stiner as a young child, showing gentleness with a fish he caught.*



*Colegan Stiner fishing Pine Creek, Tioga County.*



*Colegan's dad, Jan Stiner, shows Colegan fishing techniques on Pine Creek.*

cast, and I present it to the fish in different ways than just a fly bouncing off the bottom. I present it floating suspended in the water. I can hit the right angle for the fish. And, I can catch more fish," said Colegan.

That's Colegan's goal—to catch more fish. He is a catch-and-release angler and believes firmly in protecting the fish. It goes back to that early gentleness his mom saw in him and his father's mentoring. He has a sound attitude about fishing.

In 2020, Colegan's goal was to catch 1,000 trout. He did that easily. In 2021, he caught 1,900 trout.

Wellsboro High School has a school-sponsored fishing team. Colegan will get his Letterman's jacket for the sport of fishing when he is a Junior. He and his team also attend bass fishing tournaments and are currently ranked in the top 10 statewide.

In his spare time, Colegan works after school at the local hardware store. Then, he studies fishing techniques by the great masters. And, he fishes.

Colegan is working on a YouTube channel of fishing stories and videos with a friend and is looking to go to college on a fishing scholarship. He hopes to one day become a Bassmaster.

Watch for his name. Colegan is going places. 🏠

**Follow Colegan on Instagram**  
[@colegan\\_on\\_the\\_pin](https://www.instagram.com/colegan_on_the_pin)



*Colegan with a Striped Bass.*

# DOUBLE RIGS



*by Jeff Knapp*

*photos by the author*

**P**resenting multiple patterns is a commonplace tactic in fly fishing for trout but not usually for warmwater species such as bass, crappies, and Walleyes. This does not mean such options do not exist.

Consider the following options that may be used to fish multiple profiles, colors, and, in some cases, depth ranges.

## **Bass**

For bass, try the double fluke rig, also known as the Donkey Rig.

The Donkey Rig incorporates a tandem of unweighted flukes to imitate a school of minnows.

You need two 4- to 5-inch flukes (soft plastic jerkbaits), two appropriately sized wide gap hooks, two barrel swivels, and a short piece of fluorocarbon or monofilament line for leader material.

Tie one swivel to a 14- to 15-inch length of leader material and the other to a 20- to 21-inch piece. Thread the open end of the shorter leader onto the main line. Then, tie the open end

of the longer leader to the main line. This acts as a stopper for the short leader. Tie hooks to the end of each leader and rig with flukes.

While seemingly cumbersome, the double fluke rig is surprisingly tangle free in the water. Fish the combination in the same scenarios as you typically do with the possibility of doubling up on both Smallmouth Bass and Largemouth Bass.

Another bass-related tandem option is to replace the sinker on a drop shot rig with a jig-type offering such as a tube jig. This rigging shows fish two different profiles—a bait tight to the bottom and one 12 inches or so above it.

## **Crappies**

Crappies tend to be a mobile species, moving from one place to another based on the availability of habitat and forage. A slow-trolling approach that covers different portions of the water column and habitat zones often outproduces a more stationary one, particularly when you present multiple baits.

In this situation, I like to use a three-way rig that offers up a larger and smaller jig, both in weight and profile.

For this rig, you need a three-way swivel, a ¼-ounce jig, a ½-ounce jig, a 3- to 4-inch grub body, a 2-inch soft plastic body, and leader material.



*A tandem set of jigs slowly trolled is a great way to catch summer crappies suspended over lake basins.*

Tie one eyelet of the three-way swivel to the main line. To the second eyelet, tie an 8- to 10-inch length of leader material. To the third eyelet, tie a 16- to 20-inch length of leader. Tie the heavier jig to the short leader and the light one to the long leader. Dress the heavier jig with a grub such as a Galida's Grubz and the lighter one with a finesse profile like a Bobby Garland Baby Shad.

Slow troll this combination at around .8 to 1 mile per hour. I like to place the rod in a rod holder. Varying the amount of line out will determine how deep the lures run. Experiment

with colors and lure profiles to discover what the crappies prefer.

## Walleyes

A productive Walleye double rig is also a three-way rig, one that shows a tandem of shallow-running minnowbaits to bottom dwelling river Walleyes.

Creating this rig requires a three-way swivel, leader material, a bell sinker in the 1- to 4-ounce range, and two shallow running minnowbaits such as original floating Rapalas, Rebel Minnows, and Storm Thundersticks.

Three-way rigs are typically pulled against the current during the late fall and early spring and require a moderately heavy, soft action trolling rod. Tie the end of the line to one eye of the swivel, an 8- to 10-inch dropper to another, and a 2-foot leader to the third. The sinker goes on the short dropper and a minnowbait to the longer one. This is the standard three-way Walleye rig. By removing the tail hook and replacing it with a 12-inch long dropper, you can add the second minnowbait.

These are just a few of the tandem options to try for bass, crappies, and Walleyes. Under the right circumstances, incorporating these options may up your catch rate. □



*Double Fluke Rig*



*Three-way crappie trolling rig*



*Three-way Walleye rig*

# The Realistic Flies of Ed Burgholzer



pattern or that pattern and try and create something new, and my vest keeps growing," said Burgholzer.

Burgholzer is credited for a pattern he developed called the West Branch Alewife. In the 1980s, while fishing the West Branch Delaware River, the wild Brown Trout he was catching were spitting out Alewives that ran the dam. "The fly is mostly white marabou, with sparkles and a little red to imitate the Alewives in the river."

"Tying for fishing is one thing. Tying realistic flies is very different and takes a lot more time and imagination. You could work at putting on the legs or a tail for a half-hour or more. The whole fly could take several hours, because it is very detailed," said Burgholzer.

by Alex Zidock Jr.

photos by the author

On your fly tying bench, do you have house wrap, cereal box liners, and twist ties? If you are a realistic fly tier like Ed Burgholzer, Pike County, you do. For Burgholzer, matching the hatch takes on a deeper meaning.

"For 29 of the last 30 years, I exhibited at the International Fly Tying Symposium in Parsippany, New Jersey. Just before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Tony Lolli stopped by my booth and examined some realistic flies I had on display and asked if I would consider having my flies included in a book he was preparing. I sent him 12 realistic flies, all of which are in his book, *The Fly Tyer's Art: 33 World-Famous Tyers Tie Their Realistic Flies*, published January 2022," said Burgholzer.

Burgholzer is a fly angler who fishes mostly every day from ice-off to ice-on. He catches and releases trout from several rivers and streams in the Pocono Mountains, and some of his favorite spots are the salt ponds in Rhode Island, where he lures Striped Bass, Albacore, and Bluefish with flies from his vise.

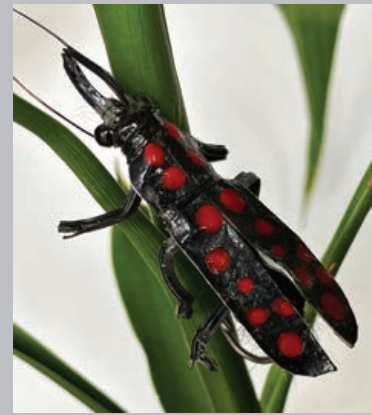
"I tie flies all year long, because I fish almost every day in the summer. I think my fishing vest weighs more than I do. I have every conceivable fly I may need, but I continually modify this

People produce realistic insects to display in glass domes including butterflies, praying mantises, and even scorpions, but these insects are not usually tied to fishing hooks.

"I concentrate on actual insects that you would use to catch fish. I tie the basic nymphs, wet flies, dry flies, and other insects on correct-sized hooks that you could fish with but do not," said Burgholzer.

Burgholzer says since you cannot take bits and pieces of actual insects and paste the pieces in place, you have to find suitable substitutes for body parts. "Some of the stuff I found in the last 30 years of tying realistic flies is simple, but it works. I use Tyvek, which is normally used as house wrap. It is a waterproof material that takes markers well, and you can cut it to shape and make bodies or other animal parts with it. I also use cereal box liners. You can cut it to shape, make wings out of it, take a needle and cut veins in it, and stain it with a marker. You can use twisties from bread packages and shape it into legs or feelers. The sky is the limit to what you can use to make realistic looking insects," said Burgholzer.

"We had friends over for Thanksgiving Day, and one of the folks who does not fish saw a display and asked if I went out and caught these bugs and put the insects in the dome. He said they look like some insects or bugs that you may see at a natural history museum," said Burgholzer. Burgholzer's work is that good. ☐



The spotted beetle is tied on a size 2, 6x long hook. The body is black dubbing over body form, and the legs and pincers are pheasant tail. The wings are Tyvek paper, and the antennae are stripped woodcock hackle.



The eastern dobsonfly is the adult stage of the hellgrammite. Its wings are made from a plastic cereal box liner and tinted green. Its head is made from Tyvek paper, and the pincers are Tyvek paper painted black. The antennae are stripped hackle.



Tied on a size 2 hook, the thread is Danville black 6/0. The body is foam under black dubbing, and the wings are Bill Skilton wasp wings. The wing case is Tyvek paper colored black, and the legs are clipped pheasant feathers.



# (Back) Home on the Range

by Rob Criswell

photos by the author

Most historians agree that the last buffalo living in Pennsylvania met its demise sometime during the 1790-1800 period. But, that is not precisely accurate. Buffaloes still inhabit the large river valleys of western Pennsylvania. Unlike the humped, bullish mammals, these humpbacked bulls are fish that ply the waters of the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio rivers.

Buffaloes are members of the sucker family—Catostomidae. There are three species living in Pennsylvania—the Bigmouth Buffalo, Black Buffalo, and Smallmouth Buffalo. Its body shape begets its common name, and genus name—*Ictiobus*—is Greek for “bull fish.” The Smallmouth Buffalo and Black Buffalo exhibit the typical sucker form, with downward facing mouths and fleshy lips. The Bigmouth Buffalo is an exception to the rule and unusual for a sucker. Its mouth is considered terminal—located midway between the top and bottom of the head.

Buffaloes truly meet the bull fish epithet, typically ranging from 15- to 25-inches and 1- to 10-pounds as adults. But, fish weighing up to 80 pounds have been caught further down the Mississippi River drainage.

Not unlike the American Bison, our aquatic buffaloes were driven from native habitats during the 1800s. In 1909, Arnold Ortmann, a scientist with the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, wrote that “both the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers are as badly polluted as they possibly could be, and, consequently, it is not astonishing that the Ohio immediately below Pittsburgh is also in a deplorable condition.”

However, the condition of the rivers improved immensely, thanks to the Clean Water Act of 1972, which placed stringent limits on the amount of sewage and industrial waste that could be discharged into the state’s waterways. And, the buffaloes came stampeding back. Between 1820 and 1977, not a single buffalo was documented from our Ohio drainage waters, but the Smallmouth Buffalo is now one of the most common suckers in the Three Rivers. The Black Buffalo is also common now, but the Bigmouth Buffalo remains elusive. The Smallmouth Buffalo and Bigmouth Buffalo



Black Buffalo, *Ictiobus niger*



Bigmouth Buffalo, *Ictiobus cyprinellus*



Smallmouth Buffalo, *Ictiobus bubalus*

also swim in Lake Erie. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission lists the Bigmouth Buffalo as an endangered species.

Although difficult to catch on hook and line, anglers seek these fish with worms, nightcrawlers, and dough balls. Buffaloes are considered sporty when hooked and tasty when cooked. Those interested in stalking these humped bulls should consult the 1990 book, *Fishing for Buffalo: A Guide to the Pursuit and Cuisine of Carp, Suckers, Eelpout, Gar, and Other Rough Fish*.

When making the effort to catch one, it is good to know Pennsylvania’s buffalo “herds” have returned home on the range. □



# WILD *and* FREE

*by Tyler Frantz*

*photos by the author*

A faint, translucent mist hovers above the surface as cool water trickles downward from an unnamed spring high in the remote headwaters of the rugged mountain terrain.

Cascading through vibrant summer greenery, the stream meanders past laurel thickets and hemlock hillsides, tumbles over branches of fallen birch and waving ferns. Powered by gravity, its flow traces the path of ancient boulders and tiny pebbles, carved and displaced from a landscape altered by time itself and the water that transcends it.

Amid these cyclical waters thrives a bespeckled jewel, a constant relic that has lived in harmony with the rolling freestone streams it favors through generations.

Wild as the water itself and free as the rounded rock that courses its descent, native Brook Trout fin contentedly in the shadows, thankful for the cool flows, moss-covered boulders, and lush vegetation that have nourished trout since the earliest days of its glacial ancestry. Today, these fish continue to ebb and flow with the ever-changing streams.

As the seasons change and larger, more exposed trout waters warm for the summer, anglers find delight by targeting the wild freestone natives. In these mountainous retreats, plunge pools and pocket waters remain vivaciously cold, teeming with insect life, and the scenery is second to none. Much like the regal trout sought within, these places are wild and free and are a real treasure to all who pursue them.

What a wild Brook Trout lacks in size is made up for in spirit. Tenacious and eager to feed, unsuspecting native Brook Trout will fervently strike a dry fly inconspicuously



drifted down a spillway and through the riffles. A sharp splash sends the message to gently set the hook, and a resulting battle ensues—one that is best enjoyed on a light, fast action fly rod with thin tippet.

Presenting one's fly—perhaps a caddis, stimulator, or ant pattern—must be done in a covert manner, as natives are easily startled. Built for survival, a vermiculated Brook Trout blends in perfectly with a streambed, and anglers may not even know one is present until it is seen darting for rocky cover.

Keep a low profile, avoid casting shadows, and use vegetation or turns in the creek as cover. Cautiously work upstream, meticulously floating a fly into every pocket holding more than a few inches of water. Always assume trout are waiting and stay ready for the take.

Allow time to slow down and draw in the breadth and totality of the surrounding landscape. Breathe in the freshness of the dampened earth. Follow a ray of

*Slowing down and thoroughly working a promising spillway from downstream cover rewards anglers with more hookups and a full display of the aesthetic beauty that comes with the territory.*

sunlight to a wildflower in bloom. Listen to birdsong complemented by the ceaseless dance of falling water on stone. This experience represents nature in its purest form.

If success is granted with a wriggling hookup, greet the halo-flanked gem with a wet and gentle hand, returning it promptly to the cool, flowing depths from which it came and should remain.

Native Brook Trout have been a vital part of this living, changing system long before mankind learned of its delicate blessing. With a little mindfulness and care, native Brook Trout will continue to swim wild and free as the cyclical waters these fish inhabit for generations to come. □



# ACME DAM

*by Bob Frye*

*photos by the author*

**I**t isn't because of better air quality or healthier lungs or a nature-inspired sense of peace on earth. But, I can always breathe easier at Acme Dam, especially when fishing with my kids.

Acme Dam is a 24-acre lake, the centerpiece of Chestnut Ridge Park. It is a Westmoreland County-owned flood control property, impounding Jacobs Creek off Route 31 near the Fayette County border, and it is rarely crowded.

Westmoreland County owns a number of parks, including several—Twin Lakes Park, Mammoth Park, and Northmoreland Park—featuring lakes holding

stocked trout and warmwater species. They are all nice and hugely popular with features such as multi-use facilities, playgrounds and pavilions, ballfields, tennis courts, and walking trails.

Some amenities hug the banks, mere feet from the water, as they circle the lakes. When fishing with children, you worry frequently about children snagging others on the backcast.

That is not so at Acme Dam.

You may walk all around Acme Dam and fish from shore almost anywhere. Some banks are wooded, some edged by high weeds, some mowed grass. But, there is no trail per se, which limits walkers. The result is anglers—kids and parents—may fish without fearing barbed hooks catching tender flesh.

That is not the only reason to visit Acme Dam, though, or even the main one. This lake offers good fishing, which is why it is a favorite of mine.



*Young boaters fish Acme Dam, Westmoreland County.*

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) lists Acme Dam among “Pennsylvania’s Best Fishing Waters” for Bluegills and Pumpkinseeds. I spend many evenings catching those fish on everything from worms to small jigs to tiny poppers.

Bluegills, the lake’s most common gamefish, outnumber Pumpkinseeds 10 to 1 or better. But, both reach nice sizes.

A 2021 PFBC survey of the lake tells that tale. Then, 80 percent of Bluegills and 90 percent of Pumpkinseeds handled exceeded 7 inches in length. More impressively,

the lake produced about 2.5 times as many quality-sized sunfish per hour overall as statewide guidelines for a “quality” fishery.

The lake is equally good at churning out nice bullheads, hence its ranking among the state’s “Best Fishing Waters” for those species, too. Brown Bullheads predominate Yellow Bullheads, but Acme Dam holds both, with fish of 15 inches or larger. We almost always get plenty big enough for the frying pan.

The fishing for two other species, meanwhile, is good and getting better.

Black Crappies, the lake’s second-most abundant fish, have undergone a transformation. There was a time, in the 1980s, when Acme Dam held a lot of Black Crappies, although small or stunted.

These days, while the total number of crappies is down slightly, the number of quality fish is up, higher than it has been in decades. Whoppers—crappies 15 inches or so—are still rare, but there are lots of 9- to 11-inch crappies available.

Then, there are Acme Dam’s Largemouth Bass. That 2021 survey found as many as in 2010, when biologists last looked. But, the number of chunky fish increased considerably. Three out of four fish exceeded 12 inches long and one out of two fish exceeded 15 inches long, with some stretching 21 inches long.

The lake is relatively shallow and may get weedy in the summer, but it does have one boat launch. Using a canoe, kayak, or small boat—electric motors are allowed—gets you to more potential hot spots.

That can up your odds of hooking into a nice fish while minimizing the chances of hooking someone else. So, you can fish while breathing easy. ☐



*Bluegills are the most abundant fish in Acme Dam. Acme Dam is considered one of “Pennsylvania’s Best Fishing Waters” for the species.*

# GOVERNOR'S YOUTH COUNCIL for Hunting, Fishing, and Conservation

by *Will Nichols*

In the heat of summer, it is the ideal time to be out on the water. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Pennsylvania saw a 40% increase in both boat registrations and launch permits. From kayaks to boats to jet skis, the use of watercraft was at an all-time high. Since so many people have recently found this new passion, now is a great time to join the fun.

If you were born on or after January 1, 1982 and plan on operating a motorboat with more than 25 horsepower, you are going to need a Pennsylvania Boating Safety Education Certificate (PA BSEC). Anyone who operates a personal watercraft is also required by the Pennsylvania Fish and



*Kayaking is easy to learn.*



photos: Will Nichols

*Will Nichols*

Boat Commission to have a PA BSEC. To get this certificate, you must attend an online or in-person boating class. These classes teach you everything you need to know about safety on the water. If you pass the test at the end of the class, you will be eligible for your certification.

One of my favorite water activities is kayaking. It is easy to learn and you can do anything from fishing to riding whitewater rapids in kayaks. Unlike most watercraft, you do not need a trailer to transport your kayak or canoe. Depending on your car, you may already have a roof rack to put it on. If not, roof racks are simple to install and may be purchased from many places.

If kayaks are not your thing, there are many other options. If you are into fishing, consider a bass boat. If you want to hang out with your friends, try towed water sports such as water skiing and wake boarding. A pontoon boat ride is another relaxing option. No matter what you choose, staying safe is the most important part. Always wear your life jacket. ☐

## Boating Safety Tips to Remember this Summer

1. Always wear a life jacket.
2. Never boat under the influence.
3. Create a float plan.
4. Take a boating safety course.
5. Have proper registrations and launch permits.
6. Never boat alone; it is safer and more fun with a friend.
7. Learn CPR and first aid.
8. Know the water you are boating; check the water level and weather forecast.
9. Carry a throwable flotation device to toss to someone in need.
10. Maintain a proper lookout and avoid distractions.



# PLAY



Summer  
2022

Pennsylvania • League • of • Angling • Youth

## Summertime Fishing



Have you ever thought about going fishing? You will never forget your first catch! Can you imagine yourself spending a warm, sunny day exploring the surroundings and fishing?

Let's plan a fishing trip! What items do you need to consider?

1. Location
2. Fishing Gear
3. Rules
4. Proper Clothing

### Location

Where should you go? The best places to begin are calm waters like ponds or small creeks in a nearby park. When you become more experienced, you can try fishing in lakes, and even from a boat. You can

find a great spot to fish close by on **fishandboat.com** or the PAFishandBoat app. It is best to always take an adult or friend with you!



# Fishing Gear

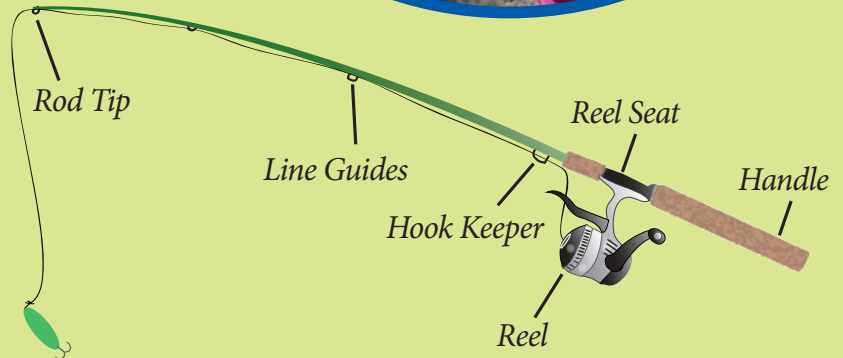
## Rods

Fishing rods come in many sizes to catch different sizes and types of fish. Some rods are longer, shorter, or more flexible. Stiff rods work well to catch large fish, and flexible rods work well to catch small but strong fish.



## Parts of a Fishing Rod

- Rod Tip
- Line Guides
- Hook Keeper
- Reel
- Reel Seat
- Handle



*Spincast Reel*



*Spinning Reel*



*Baitcasting Reel*

## Reels

There are different reels to use for fishing. The easier ones to use are push-button (spincast reels), and you may need more

practice to use spinning and baitcasting reels. Baitcasting reels allow better line control than spincast or spinning reels.



## Tackle

To catch fish, you will need hooks, weights, and bobbers—known as terminal tackle.

### Hooks

Hooks come in different sizes to hold fish of different sizes!

### Weights

Weights help keep your bait or lure weighed down in the water to be easily seen by the fish. Weights are usually made of soft metal to wrap around the fishing line.



Hooks



Weights



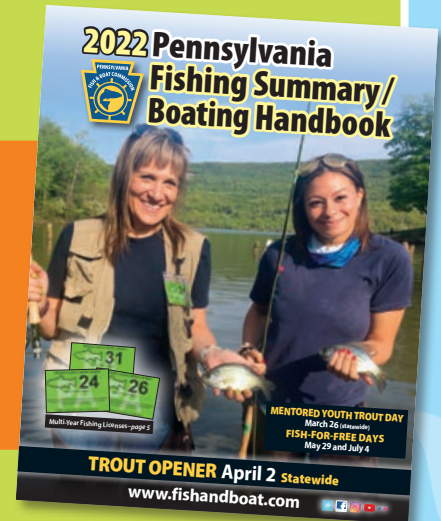
Bobbers

### Bobbers

A bobber is a floating piece that will "bob" or move when a fish pulls your fishing line. You can also place your bobber higher or lower on the fishing line to keep your bait higher or lower in the water for fish to see.

## Rules

Check the rules and regulations for fishing in Pennsylvania by reading the current year's *Pennsylvania Fishing Summary/Boating Handbook*, available where Pennsylvania fishing licenses are sold. It is also found at [fishandboat.com](http://fishandboat.com) and on the FishBoatPA app.



## Proper Clothing

Having the right clothing makes a big difference on an outdoor trip.

Check the weather before going on a fishing trip to pack what you will need for a fun and safe day. A hat and sunscreen are needed on sunny days.

Sunglasses protect eyes from the sun and flying hooks. Polarized sunglasses help to better see fish in the water. Bring snacks, water, insect repellent, and a first aid kit to better enjoy your time outside.

# Fishing Trip Word Search

Find these fishing-related words in the following word search.

X E V A T P P B K U B O O T S  
 A Y L N E E R C S N U S J Y E  
 E L K C A T O W A I U X V J S  
 U O Q T W M R N K Q X G A V S  
 K F I S H I N G J Y L C Q W A  
 Z J F B A L L C A P K G V L L  
 O G H F R K Q H Y E D X W O G  
 V Z J F F V G A T T J T L G N  
 J I G L M N R N P K C D O R U  
 W Y N I U E O D A T M Y R I S  
 Y Z N F E K Y L Q S T L X I H  
 C X W L G W L E Q I K J J Z O  
 I R Z B G C E G D W E G X I Q

## Word List

**SUNGLASSES**

**BALLCAP**

**FISHING**

**SUNSCREEN**

**BOOTS**

**JACKET**

**REEL**

**HANDLE**

**ROD**

**TACKLE**

*(Hint: Some words may appear backwards.)*

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Written by: Anneli Frank Langer

Editor: Spring Gearhart

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Photos: Andrea Feeney, Anneli Frank Langer, and PFBC archives

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X E V A T P P B K U B O O T S  
 A Y L N E E R C S N U S J Y E  
 E L K C A T O W A I U X V J S  
 U O Q T W M R N K Q X G A V S  
 K F I S H I N G J Y L C Q W A  
 Z J F B A L L C A P K G V L L  
 O G H F R K Q H Y E D X W O G  
 V Z J F F V G A T T J T L G N  
 J I G L M N R N P K C D O R U  
 W Y N I U E O D A T M Y R I S  
 Y Z N F E K Y L Q S T L X I H  
 C X W L G W L E Q I K J J Z O  
 I R Z B G C E G D W E G X I Q

Answer Key

# RIVER SMALLMOUTH BASS IN UNDERWATER GRASS

by Braden Eisenhower

photos by the author

The Susquehanna River, a casualty of seasonal drought, often has limited flow in the summertime heat. Low waters provide an opportunity to wade, but the Smallmouth Bass bite suffers.

My plan was to get out before sunrise and target fast moving sections of streams. These spots would hold fish seeking refuge in cooler, oxygenated water.

My friend and fishing partner for the day had other ideas. Just days before, he stumbled upon dozens of bass while trekking through a stretch of shallow, grassy river.

I ignored my skepticism, agreeing to depart after noon and follow his game plan.

I have never been more pleased about being wrong. River grass—formally known as American eelgrass—looks more like an ungrazed lawn than the aquatic vegetation many are accustomed to in lakes. For much of the outing, my rod was doubled over as I wrested behemoth Smallmouth Bass from the broad grass blades.

Together, we tallied nearly 150 Smallmouth Bass, many nearing the 18-inch mark. I certainly never expected to find Smallmouth Bass in soft bottom areas where the current seemed undetectable, but river grass did not disappoint.

Eelgrass grows to about 6 feet. In hip-high water, the lengthy blades shielded bass from the direct sun. Minimal current allowed bass to conserve energy, yet it did not negatively impact oxygen levels or the food source.

On this day, I concentrated on edges, casting to the clumpy patches forming the canopy. Many lures work in this scenario, but the best options hovered or sank slowly. Weightless worms,



An array of lures for Smallmouth Bass in underwater grass.

and minnows rigged Texas-style remain weedless and effectively drop. Poppers will disrupt the surface without venturing beyond the strike zone. Jerkbait suspend along edges and in open pockets.

Although vegetation is part of the equation, there is little need to adapt from standard river Smallmouth Bass equipment. Because eelgrass is free-flowing, there is no need for heavy-duty equipment to lure bass from dense cover.

Medium and medium-light spinning rods carrying 6, 8, and 10-pound monofilament or fluorocarbon lines suffice. Small diameter braided lines (3- or 4-pound monofilament equivalent) slice through grass even better. With light line, simply maintain pressure and allow the bass to wiggle itself away from cover. Adjust the drag and backreel as needed. I caught many incidental Flathead Catfish in these areas and have yet to suffer a break off.

Since that trip, I have taken to extracting bass from the grass. Frog imitations are notorious lures for Largemouth Bass, but smaller sizes are also effective for Smallmouth Bass. I prefer the soft-bodied models over hollow-bodied versions. River grass has lots of open areas; the legs of soft-bodied frogs create commotion and take on the attributes of a buzzbait in open water.

I also pitch and swim weedless jigs. Fishing style determines jig weight. Swimming near the surface calls for 1/16-ounce jigs. For shallow water with minimal current, use 1/8-ounce jigs.

Light jigs work well with the spinning gear outlined above. Frogs demand upsizing to medium-heavy baitcasting rods. With clear water in mind, I choose 15-pound monofilament line, though 20-pound braided line works well too. ☐



American eelgrass blades are approximately 1/4 inch wide and may reach lengths of 6 feet. Eelgrass thrives in soft bottom areas with little current.

# ROCK BASS for Family Fun

by Jerry Bush

photos by the author

Rock Bass are considered a trash fish by some anglers, but I find this species of sunfish worthy of more respect. Yes, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) identifies Rock Bass as a “bass like, sunfish.” My family members think Rock Bass are among the best fish to provide fun for anyone who enjoys feeling a tug in the rod handle and a bend at the final line guide. We have caught and released as many as 50 of these cooperative fish during many outings for some fun times.

Rock Bass are seldom finicky. When on the bite, fish attack some surprising offerings. If you find yourself fishing a school of Rock Bass, you will catch at least a few, even without targeting these fish and regardless of bait or lure choice. I have unintentionally caught Rock Bass casting big spinner baits to large Smallmouth Bass or Largemouth Bass. The lures were often larger than the Rock Bass that attacked it. When fishing hotspots of Smallmouth Bass or Walleyes, we found it challenging to keep hungry Rock Bass off the hook. Rock Bass attack most lures and baits that are also attractive to Smallmouth Bass or Walleyes.

When one of my daughters was about 10, she made us laugh creating the most obnoxious jig and bait concoctions imaginable. She proudly declared, “I am going to show you how to get past those Rock Bass daddy, and I am going to catch a big Walleye!” I watched as she tipped a jig with a string of about six soft plastic scented grubs. Then,





*Rock Bass are often so aggressive, children can watch bass strike jigs submerged within eyesight.*

she added a good-sized earthworm, before somehow squeezing a lime colored twisty-tail lure. She cast her oversized creation into the lake. I doubt it went below the surface 5-feet before a Rock Bass hit it so hard the twisty-tail lure was knocked free, and the aggressive fish took its place on the hook.

Most rivers, manmade reservoirs, and natural, warmwater lakes within Pennsylvania contain self-sustaining populations of Rock Bass. These fish are most encountered during the warm months of summer. The PFBC research shows most Rock Bass inhabiting rivers are caught between May and September, while most in large lakes and reservoirs are encountered in May through August. Rock Bass habitat is easily identified. Rock Bass are almost always found where a shoreline of natural or manually placed boulders are present. The best locations will include rocks at one side of a bay that blend into timber cluttering an adjacent shoreline.

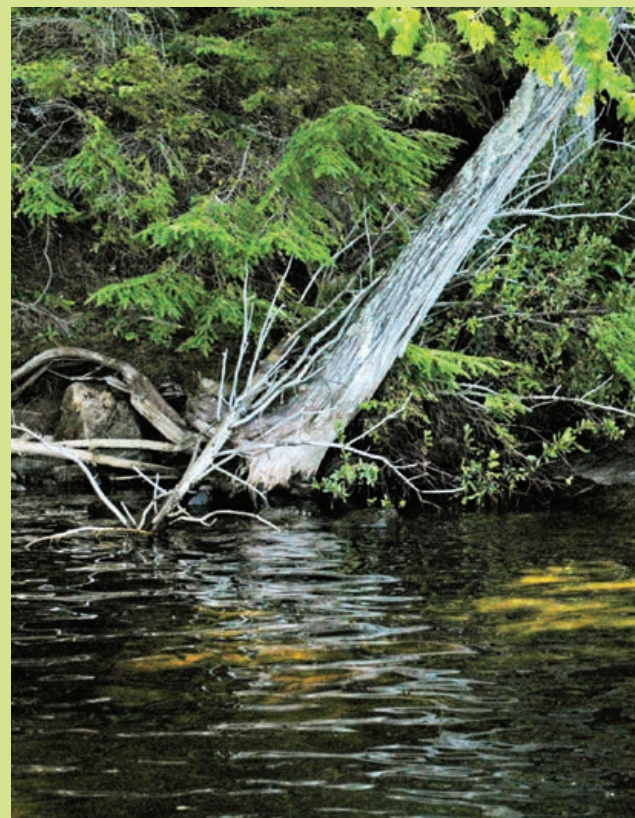
If you are not losing a few jigs, you are not fishing where Rock Bass are found. A 12- to 16-foot long, flexible rod is helpful. With the aid of polarized sunglasses, a long rod allows a light-colored jig to easily and accurately be dropped near visible boulders, which is where most Rock Bass are found. After mooring my boat near a rocky shoreline, a 12-foot or longer rod allows me to reach out and accurately drop a weighted jig near as many as 24 boulders without moving the boat. Most pesky snags are avoided, because the jig is dropped straight down and lifted, rather than casting into boulders and reeling.

Before moving the boat, adequately explore the water on the lake side of the vessel. I am often surprised that fish, which are supposed to be nestled in the boulders, are resting in deeper water, about 20 yards away from the boulders. This is an excellent reason to have a second, shorter rod rigged for casting into areas where snags are less likely.

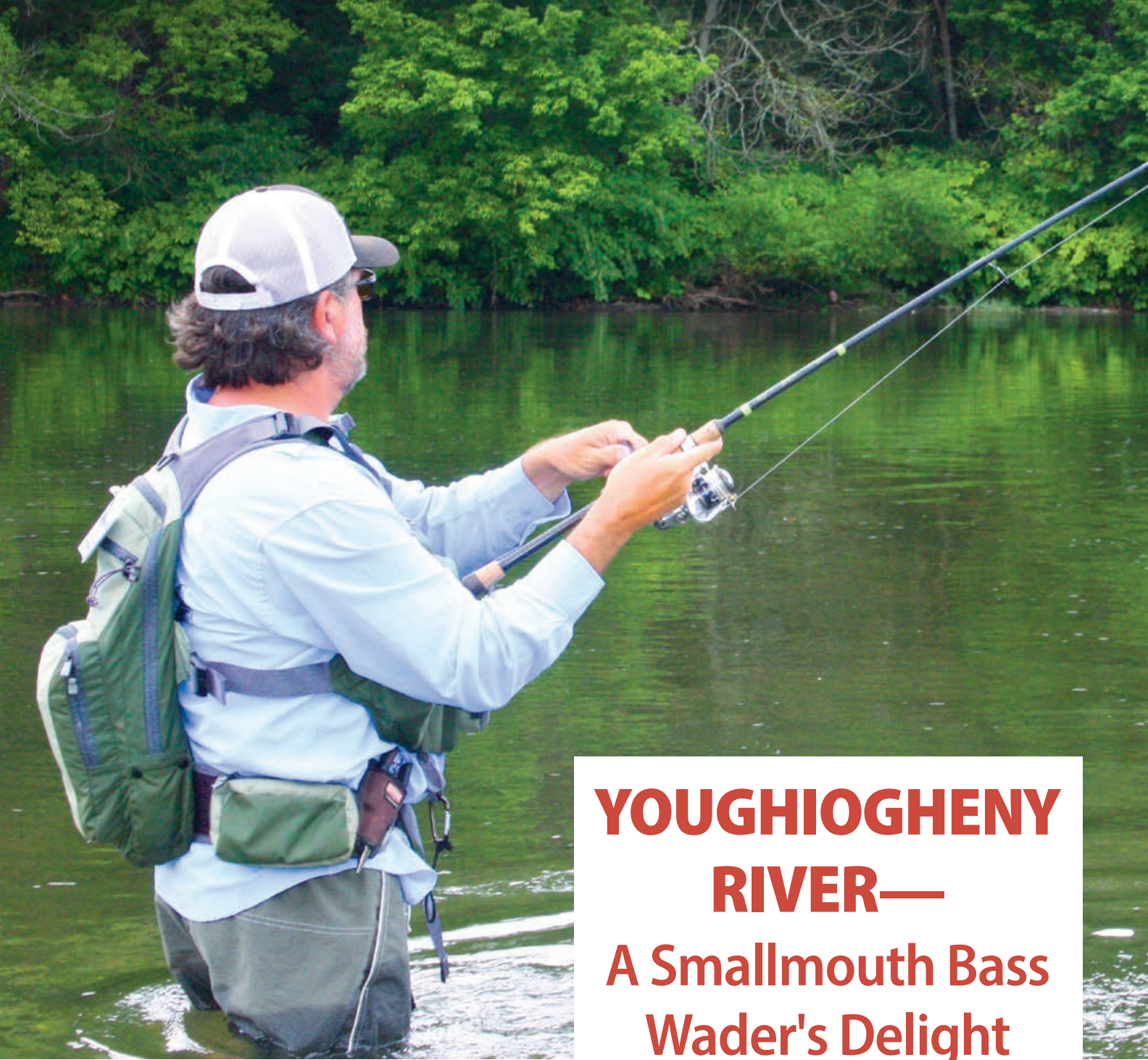
Whether anglers are young or simply young at heart, Rock Bass are fun. ☺



*A long rod enables jigs to be dropped and lifted near boulders that attract Rock Bass.*



*A deep bay with rocks and timber is attractive habitat for Rock Bass.*



## YOUGHIOGHENY RIVER— A Smallmouth Bass Wader's Delight

*by Darl Black*

*photos by the author*

The Youghiogheny River was the one remaining Pennsylvania Smallmouth Bass water on my bucket list until last summer when Smallmouth Bass aficionado Pete Cartwright invited us to come for a day on the river. Marilyn and I grabbed our rods and headed south.

As we fished our way across a knee-deep flat towards a slight channel depression, Cartwright provided commentary on the "Yough." "As a youngster, I fished the tributaries to this river

for trout. But, when I caught my first Smallmouth Bass at the mouth of one of those tributaries, I immediately forgot about trout," said Cartwright.

For 34 years, Cartwright chased Smallmouth Bass year-round on the Youghiogheny River, eventually establishing Smallies on The Yough Guide Service, licensed by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's Charter Boat Fishing Guide program.

The shallowness of this north-flowing river during the summer is not suitable for prop-driven outboards. Even jet boaters find it difficult to navigate the Youghiogheny River due to many skinny-water riffles that extend shore to shore with no defined channel. This river is suitable for canoes and kayaks; however, only the most experienced paddlers should attempt



*Pete Cartwright with a Smallmouth Bass caught on the Youghiogheny River.*

the river section south of Connellsville in the whitewater stretch below Ohiopyle.

"In my opinion, fishing from a kayak or canoe on a river means you miss a lot of good bass-holding water. Wade fishing the Youghiogheny River is more advantageous. Anglers can precisely hit the obvious spots they expect to find feeding and resting Smallmouth Bass. Also, wading reveals minor bottom changes impossible to see when seated in a paddlecraft. For example, a slight wash-out pocket or trough only inches deeper than the surrounding bottom can be a bonanza during the summer," said Cartwright.

According to Cartwright, what really excites visiting anglers on the Youghiogheny River are the number of Smallmouth

Bass you can catch during a summer day. "This is not a place for trophy-size Smallmouth Bass, but there are lots of 12- to 14-inch Smallmouth Bass throughout the river, plus decent numbers in the 15- to 18-inch range. I occasionally get a 20-incher or two during colder water," said Cartwright.

With water low and clear during summer, finesse soft plastic baits are Cartwright's go-to lures. Weightless 4-inch stick worms rigged wacky style, 2.5-inch tube jigs, and 3.8-inch soft paddle tail swimbaits occupy the top spots.

A wacky rig drifts along with the current, until an angler-applied rod tip twitch gives the worm an enticing wiggle; Smallmouth Bass find this tantalizing presentation irresistible. If confronted with a stained river resulting from rain runoff,

Cartwright ties on a 1/8-ounce brown green/copper flake skirted jig with matching craw trailer—an alluring color for Youghiogheny River Smallmouth Bass. Regardless of the lure, Cartwright covers the water meticulously, leaving no suspect shadow, seam, saddle, or large stone untouched by his bait.

Given that the new Pennsylvania State-Record Walleye was taken from the Youghiogheny River less than 3 months after our visit, I followed up with Cartwright for his insight about Walleyes in the river.

“Our incidental catches of Walleyes throughout the year have grown in the last 5 to 8 years. Although I am not a biologist, two noticeable changes in the river are likely responsible for more Walleyes and larger Walleyes—considerable improvement in water quality and increased number of baitfish. Both of these changes should impact Smallmouth Bass in a positive way. Maybe, we will be seeing more 18- to 20-inch Smallmouth Bass in the future.” ☐



Marilyn Black with a Youghiogheny River Smallmouth Bass.

## For more information

Learn about the Youghiogheny River Water Trail by visiting [fishandboat.com](http://fishandboat.com). Click on Boat, then Water Trails.

The Great Allegheny Passage follows the Yough from Ohiopyle to McKeesport. Anglers willing to hike or bike can gain wading access to the river at select sites along the trail.



Pete Cartwright covers the water meticulously, leaving no suspect shadow, seam, saddle, or large stone untouched by his bait.



# LESSONS LEARNED

photo-Cris Calhoun

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

Summertime is boating fun time! Each summer, two best friends made this their motto and spent every Sunday afternoon on their personal watercraft (PWC) on the lake. By the end of each summer, their sun-faded swimsuits were proof positive of the many hours spent on the water perfecting their PWC skills. This summer season, however, they discovered how things can change in the blink of an eye.

In great physical condition, the 20-something men launched their PWCs at the lake, a local hotspot for boating activity. With the warm temperatures and blue skies, the lake was buzzing with activity by early afternoon. Their patience was tested as the young men motored away from the dock at the painfully slow, no-wake speed required by law. Not a foot past 100 feet from the shoreline and dock, they glanced around, hit the throttle, and immediately accelerated to an adrenaline-rushing speed. Oh, how they had missed the warm air rushing past them, the cool spray of water coming off the bow, and the thrill of the ride! They traveled to separate areas and gave their skills a quick test. Tight turns and spins pushed the limits of their grip on the handlebars while their fingers gave the throttle a workout.

After several minutes, they caught each other's eye and gave a quick smile. This was their secret code. At a high rate of speed, they came toward each other, zipped past each other, and immediately turned into the wakes created by their boats. The wakes were unsuccessful at bucking the operators off their PWC, so the men steered toward each other again, ready for another challenge. This time, however, their PWCs bounced awkwardly off the mass of wakes they had created, tossing the boats in unintended directions, forcing the operators to attempt quick steering maneuvers. In the blink of an eye, the two PWCs collided. The impact knocked one of the operators off his PWC and into the water. His life jacket quickly carried him to the water's surface while his PWC shot forward then slowed to a stop. Still in disbelief about what just happened, the other operator cautiously approached the downed operator, assessed his condition, then carefully brought him onto his PWC. Other than

being shaken up, there were no apparent injuries. Together, they slowly motored to the unmanned PWC and quickly noticed a large crack in its hull where the impact had occurred. It was beginning to take on water, so they tied a rope to it and gently towed the damaged PWC back to the dock. Their heads hung in shame and disbelief that their summertime boating fun had so quickly come to an end due to their own disregard for safe boating. As they loaded their PWCs and gear into their trucks, they rehashed the day's events and lessons learned:



- Always wear a life jacket when boating. It is required on PWCs and could save your life.
- Boating safety education certificates are required for PWC operators. Boating safety courses provide valuable information to help ensure safe and legal operation on the water.
- Review the *Pennsylvania Fishing Summary/Boating Handbook* before each boating season as a refresher of the most common rules and regulations.
- PWCs handle differently from other boats, and it takes practice to become skilled at using the throttle and steering.
- Always attach the engine cut-off ("kill") switch lanyard from the PWC to the operator's life jacket, clothing, or body. It shuts the engine off if the operator falls off.
- Operating too close to another boat is dangerous. All boats must abide by specific regulations that require a safe speed and distance from other boats that are underway, anchored, or drifting.
- Maintain a proper lookout and be alert to your surroundings including other boats that are operating around you.
- A Boating Accident Report is required to be submitted in certain instances that include injury or damage. The data collected from these reports is used to improve boating safety.

Learn more about PWC-specific regulations, accident reporting requirements, and boating safety at [fishandboat.com/Boat](https://fishandboat.com/Boat). 📄

Submit your story of boating lessons learned at  
<https://pfbc.pa.gov/forms/savelives.htm>.

# SUMMER PRIME TIME CATFISH FISHING

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*by Jeff Woleslagle photos by the author*

There was a quarter moon shining in a clear sky filled with stars as we anchored our boat on the edge of a 3-foot deep flat adjacent to a deeper river channel. A screech owl sounded off in the distance and bullfrogs bellowed along both banks as I readied the rods. Sending two lines baited with small live Bluegills out the back of the boat and four other rods baited with chunks of fresh cut bait set in holders out the sides, it was time for my friends and I to settle in and wait for the big catfish to go on the hunt. We did not have to wait long before the action started and by the time it was over, we had landed four Channel

Catfish over 20-inches long and two Flathead Catfish in the 15- to 20-pound range.

When the sultry nights of summer arrive, there is nothing like pursuing big catfish under the cover of darkness. Waters across the state offer great fishing for these denizens of the dark, and warm water temperatures have metabolisms set on high, which means most of the time catfish are actively feeding.

Whether fishing from a boat or the bank of a lake or river, look for shallower flat stretches in close proximity to deeper water as prime areas to find catfish foraging after dark. Locales that feature underwater rock ledges as well as logjams provide catfish a place to hole up during the day. When you find productive areas, keep a record as good spots do not change much from year to year.



*Fallfish make excellent cut bait for summer catfish fishing.*



*Grace Ansley with a large Channel Catfish.*

If you are fishing an area where you may hook into a big Flathead Catfish over 20-pounds, make sure your gear is up to the task. Eight-foot or longer, heavy action spinning rods with appropriately sized reels spooled with 30- to 40-pound braid with a 20-pound fluorocarbon or monofilament leader are ideal. Small Bluegills in the 4- to 6-inch range hooked behind the dorsal fin are a great choice when targeting Flathead Catfish. Fish Bluegills on a size 1 circle hook with a slip sinker positioned above a barrel swivel about 18 inches up the line. The slip sinker will hold the Bluegill near the bottom, and it will allow the Flathead Catfish to take the bait without feeling the weight. Unless the current is strong, a ½-ounce slip sinker is normally enough to hold the bait in place. Good cut baits are usually

whatever forage fish naturally occur in the area you are fishing. In the rivers near my home that means chunks of Fallfish, Creek Chubs, or small White Suckers. Cut the baitfish in ½-inch chunks and use size 2 or larger baitholder or circle hooks with the same slip sinker arrangement previously mentioned. Make sure the drag on the reels is not set too tightly. Pull some line and test the drag on each rod once the baits are set. These are large, powerful fish. If there is not enough give when a catfish makes an initial run, the result can be a broken line. A sturdy landing net and rechargeable or battery-operated spotlights are also helpful. Fishing in the dark makes it difficult to know your surroundings, so wear a life jacket.

There is much to love about evenings spent in pursuit of big catfish, and summer is the prime time to do it. ☐

## Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence

photo-Pennsylvania Environmental Council



On behalf of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), Dee Fisher, PFBC Southcentral Region Outreach and Education Coordinator, accepted the Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence for its online Activities and Education Portal. In 2022, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection honored 15 projects statewide, which were completed by schools, businesses, and community organizations that exhibited creativity and innovation in environmental improvement. Pictured (left to right) are Davitt Woodwell, Pennsylvania Environmental Council President; Dee Fisher; Cindy Adams Dunn, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary; and Patrick McDonnell, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Secretary.

## Law Enforcement Officers Recognized for Years of Service

photos-courtesy of Captain Anthony J. Quaracino Jr.



Retired Deputy Waterways Conservation Officer (DWCO) Robert Houser, who served the anglers and boaters in Cumberland County for 41 years, received Honorary Lifetime DWCO status.



Colonel Clyde N. Warner Jr. presented retired Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO) Thomas J. McMann with his retired WCO credentials to officially recognize 21 years of dedicated service to the anglers, boaters, and citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

## 2022 FISH-FOR-FREE DAY!

**Independence Day  
Monday, July 4**

No fishing license is needed to fish on this day. Go fishing with someone. Visit **FishandBoat.com** for more information. Remember that all other regulations apply.

## CONVENIENT MULTI-YEAR FISHING

Anglers can purchase a license for 3 years, 5 years, or 10 years with just one purchase. That's right, no more remembering at the last minute to buy a license before opening day or that weekend fishing opportunity with friends and family. To order and for more information on licenses:

**HuntFish.PA.gov**



## Pennsylvania Envirothon Held

On May 25, 2022, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) participated in the 39th Pennsylvania Envirothon state competition held at Camp Mount Luther, Union County. High school students from 62 counties participated in this year's event. Five-member teams completed a series of field station tests on five topic areas including soils and land use, aquatic ecology, forestry, wildlife, and environmental issues. The PFBC developed aquatic ecology learning topics, objectives, resources, county tests, and the state test. Commission staff also assisted with staffing

the aquatic ecology station at the state and county Envirothon events.

The 2022 champions were from Penncrest High School, Delaware County. The team scored 556.3 out of 600 possible points and received first place in the aquatic ecology station with a score of 94 out of 100 possible points.

Penncrest High School will represent Pennsylvania at the 33rd National Conservation Foundation Envirothon on July 24 through July 30, 2022, at Miami University of Ohio, Oxford, Ohio. More than 45 teams from the United States, Canada, and China are expected to compete.

photo-Kristie Smith, Perry County Conservation District



Pictured (left to right) are Pennsylvania Agricultural Education Excellence Commission Director Stephon Fitzpatrick, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) Northeast Region Education Specialist Allan Schreffler, PFBC Southwest Region Education Specialist Mandy Smith, Penncrest High School Advisor Mark Samilenko, Arun Mohan, Zaid Salaria, Sara Kristiansen, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding, Sophia Murphy, Jordan Knox, PFBC Northeast Region Outreach and Education Coordinator Walt Dietz, Penncrest High School Advisor Chrissa Kuntz, and PFBC Executive Director Tim Schaeffer.

## Grant Funding to Establish Lackawaxen River Trail

On June 3, 2022, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) joined with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and Wayne County Commissioners to announce grant funding that will help establish a Lackawaxen River Trail, Wayne County.

Through its Boating Facility Grant Program, the PFBC has awarded more than \$559,000 towards the development of three access areas that will provide

safe and convenient access to approximately 10 miles of the Lackawaxen River from Honesdale to Hawley.

The event was held at the future site of Industrial Point River Access Park, Honesdale. Other projects include the White Mills River Access Park in Texas Township and a river access at Indian Orchard, Hawley.

*Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and Lackawaxen River Trail supporters at the event.*



photo-Mike Parker

## Waterways Conservation Officers Recognized

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) announced several awards presented to Waterways Conservation Officer (WCOs) in recognition of outstanding achievements.

The PFBC Bureau of Law Enforcement 2021 Officer of the Year Award was presented to WCO Chad E. Doyle. WCO Doyle, whose district includes southcentral Crawford and eastern Mercer counties, is credited with establishing an exemplary Boating Under the Influence (BUI) and summary violation detection program within his district. In 2021, WCO Doyle successfully apprehended four individuals for BUI, assisted with the apprehension of three BUI arrests, and successfully investigated five environmental violations. In addition, WCO Doyle investigated three boating accidents including a fatal incident and an accident that caused more than \$200,000 in damage to other boats and docks.

The Top Gun Award was presented to WCO Sean D. Lake. This award is presented annually to a WCO who displays outstanding effort in the detection and apprehension of impaired boaters. WCO Lake, whose district includes southern York County, facilitated the apprehension and prosecution of 20 individuals for BUI and assisted in one arrest in 2021. Most of the arrests occurred while WCO Lake was patrolling the Susquehanna River.

The Gerald L. Greiner Environmental Protection Award was presented to WCO Rachael L. Thurner-Diaz. This award is presented annually to the WCO who best exemplifies the ideals of 'Resource First'—the protection, conservation, and enhancement of our Commonwealth's aquatic resources. In 2021, WCO Thurner-Diaz, whose district includes Adams and western York counties, investigated 12 environmental incidents, which included four pollution cases and eight disturbances of waterways violations. One high profile investigation in York County led to the offender paying over \$50,000 in restitution.

A Lifesaving Award was presented to WCO Justin D. Boatwright. On February 9, 2022, WCO Boatwright was attending a law enforcement meeting at Tiadaghton State Forest, Lycoming County, when screams for help were reported coming from the mountain nearby. WCO Boatwright, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources staff, and a Pennsylvania Game Commission State Game Warden responded to the area of the Waterville Rail Trail, where the calls for help were pinpointed, and a victim was found to be struggling to cling onto a steep slope above them covered in ice and



photos: Spring Grant/Art

WCO Chad E. Doyle received the 2021 Officer of the Year Award. Pictured (left to right) are Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) President Richard Kauffman, Colonel Clyde Warner, WCO Doyle, and PFBC Executive Director Timothy Schaeffer.



WCO Sean D. Lake was awarded the Top Gun Award. Pictured (left to right) are Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) President Richard Kauffman, Colonel Clyde Warner, WCO Lake, and PFBC Executive Director Timothy Schaeffer.



WCO Rachael L. Thurner-Diaz received the Gerald L. Greiner Environmental Protection Award. Pictured (left to right) are Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) President Richard Kauffman, Colonel Clyde Warner, WCO Thurner-Diaz, and PFBC Executive Director Timothy Schaeffer.

snow. WCO Boatwright sprinted up the slope to assist the victim, who indicated he had been walking his dogs atop the mountain when he fell and slid approximately 100 feet down the slope and believed he had broken both of his legs. The victim's hand had turned purple, as it was squeezed tightly by a lanyard, which he had wrapped around his hand to help him hold onto a small tree. WCO Boatwright was able to alleviate the pressure on the victim's hand and help him hold on while he called for additional help. While waiting for other rescuers to arrive, the snow beneath WCO Boatwright and the victim gave way, sending them sliding even further down the slope. Under treacherous conditions, WCO Boatwright kept the victim secure for several hours while coordinating with other rescuers, who were eventually able to transport the victim to a hospital for treatment.



photo-Spring Gearhart

WCO Justin D. Boatwright was awarded a Lifesaving Award. Pictured (left to right) are Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) President Richard Kauffman, Colonel Clyde Warner, WCO Boatwright, and PFBC Executive Director Timothy Schaeffer.

## Excellence in Craft Award Winners Recognized

The Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association presented its annual Excellence in Craft Awards on Saturday, May 21, 2022, at Mansfield University, Tioga County. Awards Chair Brad Isles presented first-place awards to 18 winners across a total of eight Core

Award and 20 Specialty Award categories. Overall, 39 members submitted a total of 347 entries across a combined 225 categories. For a complete list of award winners, go to <https://paoutdoorwriters.com/powa-recognizes-craft-award-winners>.



photo-Spring Gearhart

Linda Stager, Pennsylvania Angler & Boater contributor, was awarded Best Published Magazine Photo, Color or Black & White for her trout photo on the March/April 2021 Pennsylvania Angler & Boater cover.

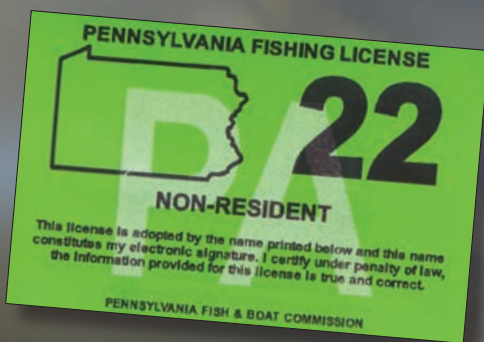


photo-Tyler Frantz

Bob Steiner received Best Published Pennsylvania Fishing Or Boating Related Newspaper Photo, Color Or Black & White, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, for "Trip Around Allegheny Reservoir". It was published in the Derrick/News-Herald on July 30, 2021. Pictured are (left to right) Spring Gearhart, Pennsylvania Angler & Boater Editor, and Bob Steiner.

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# ANGLER'S NOTEBOOK

by Jerry Bush



photo-Jerry Bush

**I**nland lake Walleyes go deep during the bright, warm days of summer. Fish as deep as possible with jigs tipped with minnows, leeches, and nightcrawlers. Fish a few hours before dark until midnight. Walleyes will rise as darkness falls and suspend near schools of baitfish. Cast or troll crankbaits that will dive into and through expected strike zones.

## White Bass

White Bass are indigenous to rivers, lakes, and streams of the Ohio River and Lake Erie drainages. Popular western Pennsylvania hotspots include the Allegheny Reservoir, Pymatuning Reservoir, Conneaut Lake, Shenango River Lake, and the Allegheny, Monongahela, Ohio, and Shenango rivers. Average lengths are 10- to 12-inches. A favorite tactic for catching White Bass is to troll through waters that are 15- to 35-feet-deep during the first couple of hours of dawn.

## Paddling

A canoe paddle should fit the paddler using it. As a general rule, the shortest paddle that allows a paddler to reach the water efficiently is best. Hold the grip (upper portion of the handle), so your hand is about the height of your nose when midway through the stroke. The entire blade should contact water midway through the stroke.

## FISHIN' FROM THE KITCHEN

### Grilled Bass with Grilled Red Onion and Peach Salsa Topping

by Wayne Phillips

**F**ire up the grill for a terrific summer dinner featuring Largemouth Bass with red onion and peach salsa.

*Ingredients for four servings:*

- 4 6- to 8-ounce skinless, boneless Largemouth Bass fillets
- 2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 2 red onions, in ¼-inch slices
- 2 fresh peaches, halved
- 4 Tbsp. canola or corn oil
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 2 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- ¼ cup minced fresh basil leaves

### Procedure

Brush bass, red onions, and peaches with canola or corn oil. Grill red onions and peaches over medium heat until lightly charred. Remove onions and peaches, coarsely dice, and place in a bowl with basil, vinegar, and

olive oil. Season lightly with salt and black pepper. Allow flavors to blend for 15 to 20 minutes. Grill bass over medium heat until cooked through. Remove bass and season with salt and black pepper. Top the bass with the warm red onion and peach salsa.



photo-Wayne Phillips

### Serve

Serve with a crisp green salad or coleslaw. Crunchy artisanal rolls finish the meal.

### Tips

Charring the red onions and peaches on the grill gives food a smoky quality. Allowing them to stand in a bowl for a few minutes gives the flavors an opportunity to fully combine.

Rather than using traditional tomato-based salsa, use seasonal fruits. Fruits add flavor, acidity, crunch, and a special sweetness. Besides peaches, try nectarines, apricots, or plums. Tropical fruits like pineapple or mango are also good.



# VOLUNTARY PERMITS FEATURED PROJECTS: *Shoreline Restoration at Yellow Creek*

*by Mike Parker*  
*Communications Director*  
*Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission*

*photos-PFBC archives*

There is an old saying when it comes to buying land—implying that it is almost always a wise investment, because “they are not making any more of it.”

The latter part of that saying went out the window during a recent project at Yellow Creek State Park, Indiana County, where the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) Lake Habitat crews did make more land, or at least restored some that had been lost. The project was funded in part by the sale of Voluntary Bass Permits.

Beginning in December 2020, the PFBC partnered with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR) for a large-scale shoreline stabilization project at Yellow Creek Lake that included the construction of 33 shoreline deflector structures. After identifying areas where severe erosion had resulted in the loss of up to 15 feet of shoreline near the lake’s North Shore Boat Launch and McFeaters Cove camping area, crews designed and constructed the stone and earthen structures, filled in dangerous 3- to 4-foot drop-off areas, and stabilized a total of 1,300 feet of shoreline.

“These shoreline deflectors are meant to blend into the environment while providing benefits to fish habitat, water quality, public safety, and create expanded recreational opportunities for all park users,” said Mike Swartz, PFBC Lake Habitat Manager, Division of Habitat Management. “Not only will the enhanced shoreline be safer for anglers and others to walk on, but these structures will prevent unwanted sediment and nutrients from entering and polluting the local watershed. Deflectors make great rock habitat for crayfish, minnows, young bass and other gamefish, and macroinvertebrates that attract larger bass that anglers love to target.”

Completed in two phases, Phase One of the project included the construction of 21 shoreline deflectors and was funded with \$35,000 from the PA DCNR Resource Section and \$8,000 from the PFBC’s Cooperative Lake Habitat Improvement Program. Phase Two, completed in April 2022, was funded by \$30,000 from Voluntary Bass Permits sold in 2021. To reduce costs



*A section of Yellow Creek State Park, Indiana County, before the shoreline restoration project completion.*

and maximize the benefit to anglers and park visitors, heavy machinery operation for the project was provided by the PFBC’s Division of Construction and Maintenance and PA DCNR’s Yellow Creek State Park maintenance staff.

“For the second phase of the project, we added another 12 deflectors and installed additional rock armor to further protect vulnerable sections of shoreline. While this was a multi-year team effort between the PFBC and PA DCNR, anglers who purchased the Voluntary Bass Permits in 2021 really took this project across the finish line. We cannot thank them enough,” said Swartz.

The shoreline deflectors, which protrude approximately 15 feet into the lake, will make casting into deeper water easier for shoreline anglers and benefit boat anglers casting towards shore. Areas of shallow water between structures will warm in the spring and summer months, providing ideal spawning habitat and protection for bass and other species, and contribute to the overall health of the fishery and angler success. ☐

# SOCIAL SHORTS

Below are some "Social Shorts" from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's (PFBC's) Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/PaFishandBoat](http://www.facebook.com/PaFishandBoat).



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**Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission**  
April 25 at 6:00 PM · 🌐

Knowledgeable boaters are safer boaters!

Make sure you're ready for this boating season by getting your Boating Safety Education Certificate. Certificates are good for life, so find an online or classroom course near you and bring the whole family!

<http://ow.ly/2zki50IQgoy>

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**Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission**  
April 21 at 2:00 PM · 🌐

Do your youngsters love the outdoors? The PFBC event calendar features lots of activities and programs this spring to get them active and outside!

Check back regularly for recently added events near you: <http://ow.ly/v7q501OKIV>

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**Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission**  
April 12 at 6:00 PM · 🌐

Emma caught her first trout on opening day and — if the smile doesn't give it away — made a memory she'll never forget.

With warmer weather ahead, make sure you're ready to make your own lifelong memories on the water! Get your Pennsylvania fishing license and trout permit at [huntfish.pa.gov](http://huntfish.pa.gov).

#Pennsylvania #fishpa #getoutsidepa #hikepa #visitpa #PaFishing #PaTrout #troutfishing #fishing #trout #outdoors #getoutside #nature

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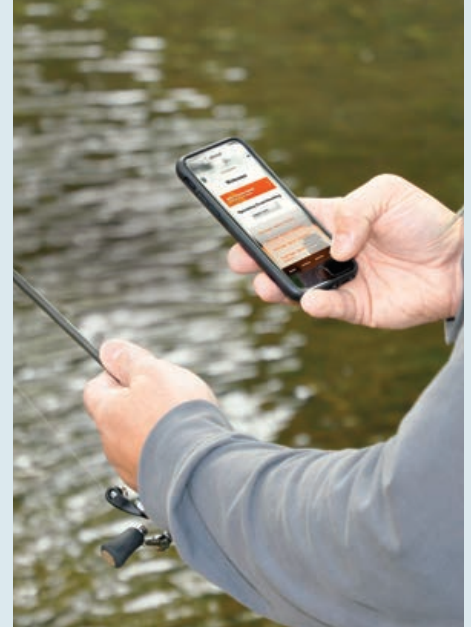
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## CAST & CAUGHT



*Addison Starr caught this 9-pound, 26-inch golden Rainbow Trout while fishing on the Little Aughwick Creek, Huntingdon County, on Mentored Youth Trout Day.*

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. Persons aboard boats must be wearing properly fitted and buckled life jackets. Mail to:  
**Editor, Pennsylvania Angler & Boater,  
P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000**



*Gauge Gulvas caught this 7-pound, 23-inch Brown Trout while fly fishing.*



*Martin Sipe, New Castle, caught this 31-pound Common Carp while fishing Moraine State Park, Butler County.*



*Mila Kmetz, age 10, caught this 22-inch Rainbow Trout while fishing Loyalhanna Creek, Westmoreland County. This was Mila's first fish.*



*Eli Vincent, age 17, caught this Smallmouth Bass while fishing at Sixteenmile Creek, Erie County.*