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These icons represent specific topics.



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Boating



Catch and Release



Conservation



Family Fishing



Fly Fishing



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Lakes



Paddling



Rivers



State Parks



Streams



Tackle

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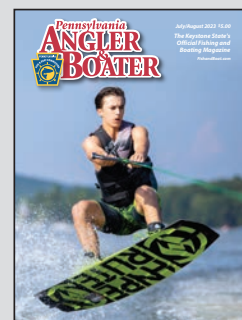
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Nate Semanek, Bedford, catching some thrills on Treasure Lake, Clearfield County. *Photo by Scott Stover Photography.*





ENJOYING PENNSYLVANIA'S RESOURCES TOGETHER

photo-Carl Kimmel

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

I hope that by the reading of this issue, you have found great success on the water this summer. Whether success to you is making your biggest catch, enjoying a great day with friends or family without a single bite, or engaging in a boating journey that treats you to an experience of gorgeous Pennsylvania scenery and wildlife, there are endless experiences you can enjoy with fishing and boating in Pennsylvania. May you enjoy the bounty that July and August bring with warm water fishing, like bass and catfish. And, water temperatures are perfect for fabulous paddling sojourns.

This issue highlights some of the variety of opportunities. For example, you can make your fishing experience as simple as a campground pond (pages 12 and 13) or as involved as a Lake Erie charter (pages 10 and 11). They are different opportunities, but the reward—a fish on your hook—still fun! In these pages, I am reminded that it doesn't matter where you live in the state, in a rural area or a busy urban center, you can jump into fishing and boating. Check out tips on fishing for "city bass" in "A Guide to Bass Fishing in Pennsylvania's Urban Areas" on pages 5, 6, and 7. Then, find some remote areas to paddle and fish with our features on French Creek (pages 28 and 29), Tionesta Recreation Area (pages 32 and 33), and Juniata River (pages 18 and 19).

As I travel across the state, I am also struck by the diversity of experiences and how committed outdoor enthusiasts are about sharing with those who have never enjoyed our waterways. Check out (page 45) the initiative by our partners, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Pennsylvania Parks and Forest Foundation, to ensure Pennsylvanians with limited mobility aren't limited in their ability to fish and paddle. Their work adds to the many accesses the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission owns and is improving with limited mobility accommodations. Also, learn about the work the Outdoor Inclusion Coalition (page 15) is doing to bring underrepresented communities into activities like fishing and boating. And, learn how Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (pages 34 and 35) is doing its part to bring as many people to fishing in Pennsylvania as possible.

You and all the partners featured in these pages bring our mission to life. In carrying out that mission, you enhance communities and the lives of its citizens while doing your part to help ignite passion and concern for the natural resources we are charged with protecting. I am grateful to you all and encourage you to continue to cultivate new fishing and boating enthusiasts. You don't have to be a part of a big group or initiative either. A simple hello to a fellow angler or offering a fishing tip or favorite water trail can make a difference. Our resources are vast, so there's plenty to go around. Let's enjoy together!

I look forward to seeing you on the water. ☐



A Guide to Bass Fishing in Pennsylvania's Urban Areas



by Carl Haensel photos by the author

Pennsylvania has abundant bass fishing throughout the state. Even many urban areas have excellent fishing for Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, and Spotted Bass. Fishing these areas offers easy access, ample casting opportunities, and trophy fish. Make plans today to visit an urban fishery and hook up with some exceptional bass.

Finding your way to the water

When you're fishing in a city, you may need to be a little more resourceful at first to find your fishing spots. A lot of excellent fishing is accessible without even launching a boat. Public parks and green spaces dominate many of Pennsylvania's larger cities and help make fishing easier. Most cities have good maps of their parklands, which are an excellent place to start your urban search. Plan to use hiking, walking, and biking trails to get to some of the best fishing spots. Bridges and roadways offer additional access points on public land, along with good fishing structure. If you have a boat, it

improves your options. Look for boat launches upstream of urban areas to float through some of the best waters on rivers in the state. Paddling a canoe or kayak is a great way to explore many urban fisheries and helps with launching or taking out at public access sites that don't feature ramps.

Gear and tackle for urban fishing

If heading out on foot, use a backpack or sling pack to keep everything with you at all times. It can also help with concerns of leaving your fishing equipment unattended in a high traffic area. If you're spin fishing, a 6-foot, two-piece fishing rod is a good option. A spinning reel spooled with 8- or 10-pound-test line will handle most situations you encounter. Fly anglers should use 7- or 8-weight rods. While bait is useful in some cases, urban fishing lends itself to lure presentations. Casting minnow plugs, spinnerbaits, or swimbaits may produce bass and help anglers cover a lot of water while searching for the next hotspot. Fishing with jigs or weighted plastic worms works well when bass fishing near bridges and other deep water urban areas. Topwater poppers, chuggers, and buzzbaits are vital in urban areas when subsurface debris is abundant and leads to snags.

It's common to have darker and off-colored water conditions in urban areas. If the water is cloudy, bring some bright-colored lures and soft plastics in patterns like chartreuse, purple, or fire tiger. In areas with more fishing pressure, use a lighter weight line and smaller tackle to convince fish to bite. Jigs as light as 1/32-ounce may produce big bass when fish are finicky or when targeting smaller forage species.

Fishing urban structure

Many anglers are familiar with looking for bass structure. While the classic weed lines, downed trees, and drop-offs are still available in urban areas, there is more to explore. Large areas of rocks have been installed in many places along the riverbanks to prevent erosion. Often called riprap, rock placements are excellent bass habitat in urban rivers in Pennsylvania. Similarly, other man-made obstructions like retaining walls and pilings regularly provide prime bass habitat. Fishing directly next to man-made structures may produce big fish. It's easy to snag your lures in structure, so bring spare lures. If you're losing a lot of tackle, use heavier line. Bass can often be found below dams, especially in the spring and fall. Make sure these areas are safe and accessible.

Where to go fishing

Most Pennsylvania warmwater rivers have quality bass fishing. Big cities occupy prime reaches on larger rivers. Look to the Susquehanna River, Harrisburg, as a top location for Smallmouth Bass. Pittsburgh is an excellent urban fishing area with bass fishing on the Ohio, Monongahela, and Allegheny rivers. In addition to Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass, Pittsburgh area anglers sometimes find Spotted Bass, too. Even Philadelphia on the Delaware River can produce good bass fishing for anglers. Tides may be challenging, but focus fishing efforts to when the water levels are actively changing. Medium-sized Pennsylvania rivers also offer plentiful urban bass fishing hot spots. Anglers looking for Smallmouth Bass should visit the Lehigh River in Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton, as well as the Schuylkill River in Reading, Pottstown, and Philadelphia. Cities like Lewistown on the Juniata River are a good example of small, urban areas with good bass fishing. You can fish for bass in urban lakes too, like in the city of Erie on Lake Erie. Plenty of other spots are out there for urban anglers in search of good bass fishing. Grab your fishing pack and start exploring. ☐



The confluence of the Lehigh and Delaware rivers in Easton is an excellent urban bass fishing location.



A kayak angler fishes underneath a bridge adjacent to an old industrial facility on the Susquehanna River. Man-made obstructions and shoreline reinforcement offer great fishing opportunities for urban bass anglers.



Old docks and pilings provide prime bass habitat in urban locations. This Philadelphia portion of the Delaware River hosts Largemouth Bass and a variety of other gamefish.



Bridges and their supports and pillars provide habitat to bass in urban locations.



Spring in Summertime

by Tyler Frantz

photos by the author

Pennsylvania in July and August isn't exactly prime time for trout fishing. Yet, there I was on a mid-August morning fishing 59-degree F water, landing one trout after another on my 3-weight fly rod.

Location was the key to my success. I was fishing a gorgeous limestone stream with plenty of structure and bountiful populations of Rainbow Trout and wild Brown Trout, just downstream from a natural spring of cold fresh water. In the middle of summer, these unique factors make a world of difference.

When most other trout streams fizzle out for the summer, Centre County's Spring Creek still fishes exceptionally well, maintaining safe, fishable temperatures throughout the summer. The fish can be a little pickier than earlier in the season, but anglers making their way to this stream still enjoy fine fly fishing.

Spring Creek is well known for its picturesque upper canyon reaches, as well as the world-famous Fisherman's Paradise stretch, which can be hit or miss by late summer depending on daytime temperatures and water levels. Downstream, below the Bellefonte spring that gives the creek its name, it remains reliably cold to its confluence with Bald Eagle Creek near the town of Milesburg.

Get in early when the fish are most active, and use a stealthy approach to your casting position. You don't need to venture



far to find fish. When you're wading, don't overlook even the most obscure runs and riffles, as there's likely trout lying there.

Try to pick apart the creek in small sections, working the water closest to you first, and then easing your way further across the stream, casting to every "fishy" seam imaginable. Devote extra time and attention to pockets where two currents meet behind structure and along perimeter pools that cut in tightly to the bank, as multiple trout can be plucked from these ideal holding locations.

By this point in the summer, most of the abundant hatches have already come and gone, so you'll find greater success fishing small nymphs, cress bugs, and scuds. During my trip in August, I ran a tandem rig of a caddis sparkle emerger behind a size 18 Perdigon Nymph. Later, I switched to Sunken Ant and Green Weenie patterns and caught even more fish.

By around mid-morning, an occasional hatch of tricos comes off, so you may elect to switch over to a large dry hopper fly as an indicator and run a scaled-down trico under the surface film in deeper pools.

Even with cool water temperatures, it's best to give the stream a break during mid-day when the sun is beating high overhead. Not only does the feeding action diminish with UV rays lighting up the water, but you don't want to risk stressing the trout as air temperatures rise.

By late evening, as shadows lengthen, fish will be eager to feed, and action will pick up again. The largest, most territorial Brown Trout swim the waters after sunset, and those willing to stick around a little longer can be rewarded for their persistence.

Even fishing during the most difficult time of the year, fly anglers can net quality trout on a summer day in Spring Creek. Here, the water runs eternally cold, sustaining a healthy population of naturally reproducing fish year-round. ☐



A Sunken Ant is an effective pattern during summer.



Spring Creek, Centre County, has scenic views and some of the best trout fishing in the entire state.



Charter Your Way **to Erie Walleyes**

by Darl Black

photos by the author

Lake Erie is known for outstanding Walleye fishing. Supplemented by migratory schools from the Western Basin of Lake Erie each summer, untallied numbers of legal-size Walleyes roam the waters until early fall. The Erie charter fleet has expanded to meet the demand of anglers who desire to fish the lake by boat.

“The business has changed over the years,” said Captain Dan Kelly, a 31-year veteran of the Erie charter industry. “In the early years, a bunch of guys would hire a charter to catch and keep as many Walleyes as legally allowed. These days, our bookings include families, church groups, clubs, and corporate outings in addition to groups of friends. Some guests want to limit out on Walleyes as quickly as possible, and some want to spend a day on the lake. Aboard the three boats under the Buckets Fishing Charters banner, we try to cater the trip to what the customer is looking for.”

The required United States Coast Guard Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessels charter captain’s license

restricts the number of paying guests to no more than six (i.e., a “six-pack” license) per boat. However, Kelly and other captains can accommodate larger parties by working in conjunction with multiple charter boats.

On a large sportfishing charter boat carrying six customers, a full spread of trolling rods with crankbaits on planer boards and spoons on Dipsy Divers is difficult to manage. So, a charter includes a first mate to set rigs, deploy lines, insert each rod in its proper holder, and assist clients in fighting and landing fish while the captain maintains control of the boat from the helm.

However, some smaller guide services operate charters with fewer clients. Captain Keith Eshbaugh, Dutch Fork Fishing Charters, runs a 21-foot Ranger boat with a 300-horsepower outboard, equipped with big water fish sonar and all necessary tackle.

“I can carry three adults or two adults and two children. Thirty percent of my customers are families on vacation,” said Eshbaugh. “We primarily drift fish using crawler harnesses, although we troll when needed. Customers can bait their own hook and handle the rod from fish strike to the net. We differ from big boat charters by allowing customers to get in on the entire fishing experience and to be part of the crew.”



Jan Burkness, Bruce Burkness, and Keith Eshbaugh of Dutch Fork Fishing Charters.

Eshbaugh's season starts at the end of May and runs through late September. "I will fish shallow areas in 10 to 20 feet until the water gets too warm and Walleyes move deeper. By August, I will be in 50 to 70 feet."

For Kelly, the season begins in shallow water at the beginning of spring. He follows the migrating

mega schools all the way to the Canadian line by late summer.

Depending on the charter selected, you may depart from Presque Isle Bay, Walnut Creek Access, or North East Marina. Customers need a Pennsylvania fishing license and appropriate permits, sunscreen, sunglasses, camera, food, beverages, plus a cooler for fish. Cleaning a customer's fish at the dock is typically included in the charter fee. ☐



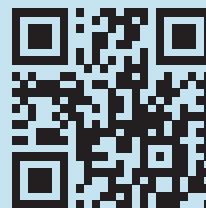
Captain Kelly's ready room aboard the "My Sara" was converted to an oversize tackle box. Often used crankbaits are on one side and spoons are on the other side.

Charter boats and fishing guides:



fishandboat.com/Fish/Pages/CharterBoatsFishingGuides.aspx

Visitor information:



visiterie.com



CAMPGROUND POND FISHING FUN

by *Braden Eisenhower*

photos by the author

A campground pond can often be little more than an amenity crammed between “playground” and “Wi-Fi” on a brochure. But for this camper, the pond is a fixture that makes the campground experience complete.

I visit campgrounds throughout the year when going on overnight fishing trips. Campgrounds provide electricity to charge boat batteries, cabins or tenting grounds, and running water. And, they are affordable, too. Even on trips dedicated to fishing, I can’t resist checking out the pond.

It’s an unhurried environment devoid of boat ramp pressure or boats jockeying for position at the “hotspot”. There’s no pressure to feverishly catch more or bigger

fish. Fishing is simple and peaceful—how it always should be.

What's biting

Largemouth Bass and sunfish are the main species, but don’t be surprised if you bump into a stocked Channel Catfish. No matter what’s biting, there are usually enough fish to provide a few hours of entertainment before an evening meal and campfire, or between other goings-on.

Where to fish

The areas around campground ponds are typically well-groomed and free of casting obstructions, allowing anglers to fish the entire pond from various angles.

Depending on the time of year, the pond may have vegetation in its shallowest zones. Fish use the edge of the vegetation to hide and feed. This cover also provides a terrific casting target, so do your best to fish close to the edge.





Pond fishing doesn't require a wide selection of lures or extravagant tackle.

Beginner pond fishing with live bait

Pond fishing doesn't require a wide selection of lures or extravagant tackle. Any light power spinning or spin casting outfit will do.

The time-tested pond favorite is live bait, and you'll likely be able to get a tub of nightcrawlers at the campground store. A piece of nightcrawler threaded onto a small hook, like a size 6 Aberdeen, is a winner. Place a bobber about 12 inches above the hook, cast along the weed edge, and let the worm work its magic. If there's a breeze, try to drift the worm/bobber parallel to a weed edge or shoreline.

Consider a bottom approach in open areas. With the same hook and worm, add a few splitshot about 24 inches from the hook. Pinch the line with your thumb and index finger to help detect bites.

Using lures

For artificial lures, consider panfish tackle. These bite-size options also appeal to pond-dwelling Largemouth Bass, which can be skittish from fishing pressure.

A small assortment of tackle includes 2-inch grubs, beetle spins, shallow-diving crankbaits,

and topwater plugs. Cast and retrieve the spinners and crankbaits through the open water area in various directions.

The visual appeal from a topwater plug is the most thrilling way to catch fish. Best of all, these lures won't sink and hang up in the weeds. If you don't have a traditional topwater lure, any floating crankbait will work.

Cast parallel to the shore or along weed edges. Wait for the rings on the surface to dissipate, then gently pull the lure forward so that it shimmies and dives 1- or 2-inches below the surface. Allow the lure to return to the surface and rest for a few seconds before repeating.

If traditional bass lures are desired, stick with a finesse approach that's slightly larger than the panfish offerings mentioned. Skirted jigs, Texas-rigged finesse worms, stickbaits (no larger than 4 inches), crankbaits, and poppers are viable options.

Enjoy the pond

Campground ponds are a fantastic environment to initiate kids or new anglers. Even without an overnight stay, many campgrounds welcome visitors for a small fee. When other fishing opportunities are out, the campground pond may provide a sanctuary to wet a line. Keep the fishing simple and enjoy your time on the water. ☐





A Family's Story Reminding Everyone to Always Wear a Life Jacket

photo-PFBC archives

June marked the tenth anniversary of the tragedy that would forever alter the lives of three families and hundreds of loved ones, friends, and a community. The events leading to this accident were innocent and ordinary, but the mundane circumstances do not diminish the impact—the deaths of two young men, and the dismantling of life's happy trajectory for a third. What's more, it's likely that with one or two small alterations of facts, this tragedy was avoidable. And, the easiest fact to change is the same one that may have prevented six of the nine boating fatalities last year in Pennsylvania—wearing life jackets.

It was June 1, 2013. A group of young men were enjoying a weekend at a family cabin along the Susquehanna River. By the end of that day, three of the young men had fallen victim to a boating accident in which only one, Brandon Allen, would survive. The two young men with him, Cody Moyer and Jonny Velez, would be found two and three days later respectively.

While the young men made more than one poor choice that likely contributed to the accident, including mounting a motor too large for the boat and overloading the boat, the most significant was not turning back when they noticed they had left their life jackets behind.

From that day forward, two families would have to go on without their loved ones, a

fact that leaves April Allen, Brandon's mother, with eternal regret. She is grateful that her son survived, but her story and that of her family does not have a happy ending, either, because, in a way, she lost her son too, "our son physically survived the boating accident that day, but he most certainly did not emotionally survive."

Brandon would go on to be charged with the unintentional deaths of his two friends, as he was the driver of the boat. The families of Cody and Jonny called on the judge not to convict Brandon, even traveling to court to support him. "The parents of Cody and Jonny had never once blamed Brandon for the deaths of their sons." While Brandon did not go to jail, the accident has imprisoned him, "the trauma of the accident and the guilt he feels over having survived has led to anxiety, stress, depression, insomnia, anger, reckless behavior, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicidal thoughts," said April. "We have been unsuccessful in getting Brandon the therapy he needs."

While reliving the story of the accident is painful for April, she is committed to telling it to as many people as possible. She wants everyone to understand that education about boating and wearing life jackets all the time is important. And, if you don't want to wear one for you, "wear it for someone who loves you." ☐



WEAR IT
National Safe Boating Council
Pennsylvania

ALWAYS WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET.

Life jacket reminder:



youtu.be/NYjGGDsh5Qw



photo-PFBC archives

OUTDOOR INCLUSION COALITION

by Charles Cantella

Formed in 2019, the Outdoor Inclusion Coalition (OIC) was founded to encourage and promote greater diversity in outdoor activities. Through a variety of collaborations and partnerships, the OIC is committed to making outdoor experiences more accessible for everyone, with a focus on underrepresented groups and minorities. Since the beginning, their mission statement has been “to support Pennsylvanians through programs dedicated to attracting, engaging, and retaining underrepresented populations in the outdoor industry.” OIC seeks to build a coalition of partners from government, for-profit, non-profit, and community organizations to bring diverse individuals with knowledge, experience, and passion for the outdoor industry to the table for development of outdoor recreation spaces and programs. Marcus Shoffner, CEO and President of OIC, notes the momentum of this collective that “will further elevate the intentionality to create a representative industry and community of outdoor professionals and community connections to the environment.”

“Real change happens inside community,” said Shoffner. “Coalition draws residents, industry members, and caretakers of greenspace together to create community spaces for all to thrive. Our engagement strategy is people-centric. We solve

difficult problems by working together.” According to a Trust for Public Land special report, 92% of Pittsburgh residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park. The national average is 55%.



Part of the work is to close the gap between underrepresented populations and their actual or real limit of access to outdoor opportunities. “Here in Pittsburgh, we have a ton of amenities, but there are few collective efforts to activate an urban populous in those spaces. The coalition has the ability to use its collective voice to serve underrepresented populations—creating those spaces and feeling welcomed in those spaces, as well as feeling ownership of these spaces,” said Shoffner.

Although OIC does not currently plan fishing and kayaking programs, they encourage partnerships that bring people into these activities. The camping program brings camping opportunities to the city, in Pittsburgh parks. And, camping is the perfect time to try fishing and paddling.

While OIC is in the work for the long haul, it is already improving access. ☐

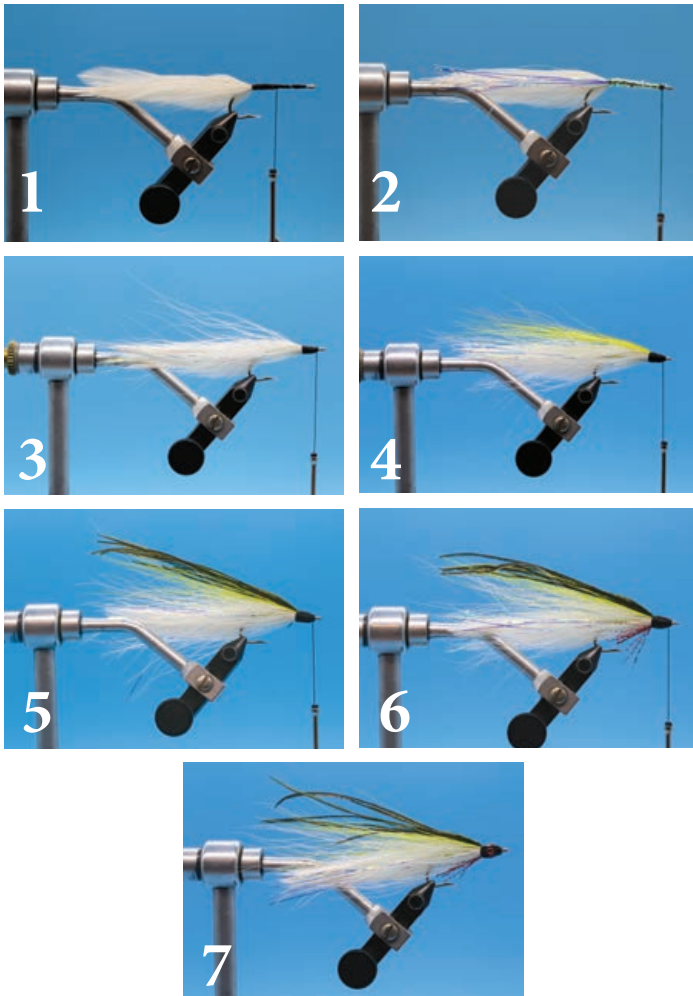


Tying the Deceiver

by Carl Haensel

photos by the author

Warmwater fly fishing during the summer in Pennsylvania is often all about imitating baitfish. Whether you're targeting Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, or more toothy fish like pickerel, muskies, and pike, streamer flies that imitate baitfish are top performers. The Deceiver, a fly fishing standard developed by Lefty Kreh, is a great choice to throw at these fish. You can tie it in a wide range of colors and sizes, and it can easily represent perch, shiners, chubs, dace, and other fish. Lightweight and easy to cast, the Deceiver will make your summertime fly fishing trips successful. Use a sink-tip fly line to get it down in the lake or river you're fishing. If the fly's deer hair is not durable when catching a lot of fish, use craft fur instead. It will make this classic pattern long lasting and keep bringing fish to the net this season. ☐



Smallmouth Bass often aggressively chase baitfish in the summertime. Use a Deceiver to get a large bass on the line.

Tying the Deceiver Materials

Hook: Size 4 to 3/0

Thread: Monofilament thread in preferred color

Tail: White saddle hackle

Body: Wrapped Flashabou or similar material

Flash: Krystal Flash or Flashabou

Topping: Olive Flashabou or peacock herl

Collar: White and chartreuse bucktail or synthetic fibers

Throat: Red flash or craft fur

- 1 Attach the thread to the hook. Tie in three pairs of white saddle hackles on each side of the hook. The feathers should curve inward toward the body of the fly.
- 2 Tie in strands of Flashabou on either side of the fly, alongside the saddle hackle tail. Wrap the excess flash up the shank of the hook to form the body of the fly.
- 3 Tie in a small bunch of white bucktail or craft fur on each side of the hook to begin the collar of the fly.
- 4 Add in a bunch of slightly longer chartreuse bucktail on top of the fly to complete the collar.
- 5 Tie in olive Flashabou or peacock herl on top of the fly to accentuate the back of the pattern.
- 6 Tie in a red throat slightly behind the eye of the hook. Build a thread head that tapers to the eye of the hook.
- 7 Attach eyes. Glue the completed fly at the head.



NOTES *from the Streams*

Muddy Fourth of July

It was a hot, summer afternoon on the West Branch of the Susquehanna River, below the dam in Williamsport, Lycoming County. I was with another Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO), and we were getting ready to participate in a detail for the Fourth of July fireworks on the river. The fireworks display is an annual event that draws hundreds of boats above and below the dam. We arrived on the river early to check anglers and boaters and assess the scene in preparation for the evening activities.

We navigated upriver toward the dam, interacting with a few anglers and boaters. As we continued upriver, we noticed what appeared to be an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) along the river's edge on a large island. I steered the boat toward the ATV. As we approached, it became apparent that the ATV was swamped in the bank of the river past its wheels. The riders had been riding in the riverbank mud while the water level was down, got the ATV stuck, cabled it to a tree nearby, and left it sit. The other officer

and I decided to depart the boat to investigate. I navigated the boat to the shoreline. Enthusiastically, my partner jumped off the bow of the boat onto the shore. Upon landing on the shoreline, the officer quickly realized his mistake. The ground he assumed was stable was actually liquid mud. With both legs buried past his knees, he was immobilized and embarrassed. I could not help but laugh. With several loud suction sounds and some effort, he eventually freed himself from the muddy entrapment. His uniform pants and boots displayed full saturation past his knees of Susquehanna River mud. Fortunately, he was able to reboard the boat physically unscathed, with just a ding to the ego. He gave his legs a quick cleaning in the river and back to patrol we went.

Every day as a WCO provides different experiences, with unique challenges and lessons to be learned. Tough skin, resourcefulness, and humility are mandatory requirements.—WCO Justin D. Boatwright, Clinton and Western Lycoming counties.

Good enough to fool a great blue heron

In our daily WCO duties, we have opportunities to observe a variety of wildlife. On a patrol day, I sat along the North Branch of the Susquehanna River and watched a great blue heron as it worked to gather a meal. The weather was subpar, so there were no other people in the area. I observed the heron work around a gravel bar. The heron caught several small minnows and then worked on a small baitfish. However, the small baitfish seemed to get the better of the heron, and the heron moved on. When the heron was gone, I went over to see what baitfish the heron was interested in. I was surprised to see that it was a soft bait. If it's good enough to fool a heron, you'll likely trick a fish or two with the correct presentation.—WCO Jeremy L. Yohe, Western Bradford and Sullivan counties.

photo-LacChelle Brice

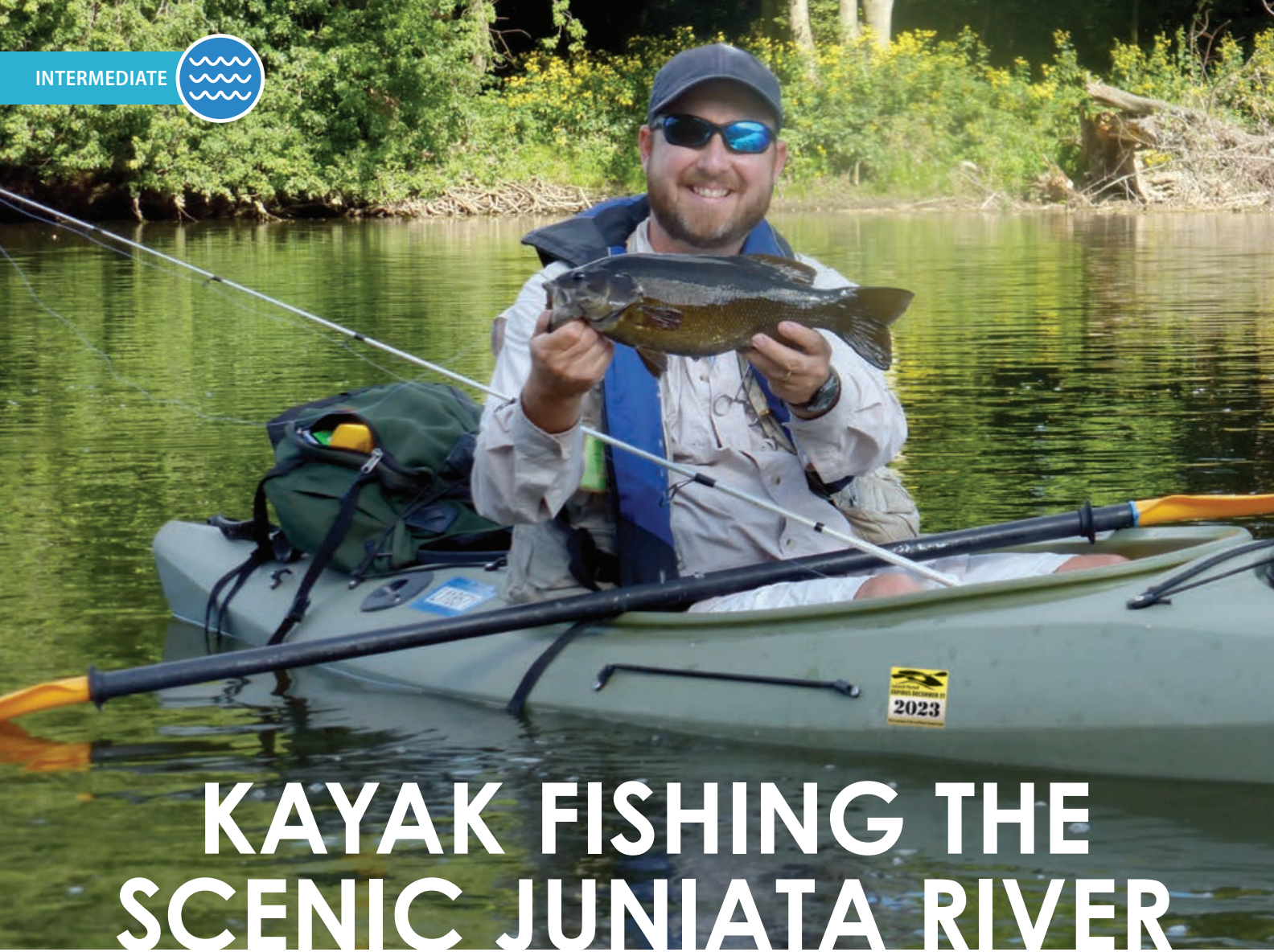


This hen turkey was a random visitor spotted by staff at the lobby entrance of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Headquarters, Harrisburg, Dauphin County.

drawing-Lilah Feeney



Lilah Feeney, age 6, drew this picture of her late grandfather, "Boppy", catching a bass.



KAYAK FISHING THE SCENIC JUNIATA RIVER

by Jeff Woleslagle

photos by the author

We launched our kayaks from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's Thompsettown Boat Access for a float to Duncannon, where the Juniata River meets the mighty Susquehanna River. Our route covered close to 20 river miles of the Juniata River's 102 total miles. The sun was just beginning to rise and it didn't take long to discover that the river's fabled Smallmouth Bass were active. I was dragging a 3-inch black curly tail grub along the river bottom in the first pool we entered and felt a 'tap' at the end of the line. Setting the hook, I knew it was a good fish. Soon, I was releasing a beautiful 18-inch Smallmouth Bass. It took us most of the day to complete the float including a shoreline stop for lunch. The fishing was consistent throughout the day. By the time we took our kayaks out of the water, we had caught and released over 100 Smallmouth Bass and some Fallfish and panfish.

Smallmouth Bass are the Juniata River prize, but Fallfish, Redbreast Sunfish, Rock Bass, Muskellunge, Walleyes, Channel and Flathead catfish, and carp take bait too. There are some stretches that feature river islands, great for exploring or eating a leisurely lunch. Many islands are open to overnight camping on a first come, first serve basis. Wildlife abounds along the Juniata River so don't be surprised to encounter bald eagles, mink, deer, and several species of waterfowl.

On an early summer float, look for fish to spread throughout the river, but target areas where riffles tail out into deeper runs. Also, focus on submerged large rocks and abundant underwater river ledges that are easily spotted when the river is clear. Shoreline brush piles and downed trees hold fish as well as areas around floating docks. It is common to spot bass herding baitfish in the shallow flats around the river islands. Anglers should note that the 31.7-mile stretch of river from the Port Royal bridge to the confluence with the Susquehanna River is catch and release only for Smallmouth Bass.

Much of this beautiful river parallels the route of the historic Pennsylvania Main Line Canal, and you can spot



Large Fallfish can be caught in the Juniata River.

remnants of it in some places. The river is broad and relatively shallow. It passes through many mountain ridges and steeply-lined water gaps along its course. There aren't many rapid areas, but you should map the route you plan to float, check the water conditions prior to heading out, and always wear a life jacket. The Juniata River is part of the Pennsylvania water trail network. For more information, go to fishandboat.com, "Boating," "Where to Boat".

Great lures for a summer kayak float on the Juniata River include tubes, jigs, grubs, mid-depth crankbaits, wacky rigged stick worms, and minnow style jerkbaits. Small top water lures that mimic injured baitfish can be highly effective in the early morning and evening hours. Live baits such as crayfish, minnows, nightcrawlers, hellgrammites, and madtoms are all good choices. Never transfer live bait from one water body to another water body, and never release unused live bait into

the water. For more information on bait regulations, go to fishandboat.com, "Fishing", "Regulations".

For beautiful scenery and amazing fishing, central Pennsylvania's Juniata River can be hard to beat for an early summer float. ☐



Rock ledges can be found along and in the Juniata River and are great fishing spots.



Sharpshooting Walleyes

by Jeff Knapp

photos by the author

If you are an angler serious about catching some big Walleyes, sharpshooting may bring you desired results from summer through fall. To sharpshoot Walleyes, locate fish on sonar; cast to them with a glide jig with the intention of triggering a reaction bite; then continue the search for more Walleyes.

The basic tools for sharpshooting include a good sonar unit. Traditional 2D sonar is the minimum. Units that also display down and side images are much more useful, as is a map screen. Glide jigs include Rapala's Jigging Rap, Acme's Hyper-Rattle, Moonshine Lures's Shiver Minnow, and others. A trolling motor with spot lock or anchor mode, though not a necessity, is extremely helpful.

A typical sharpshooting scenario goes like this: Idle slowly (around 2 miles per hour) over structure and

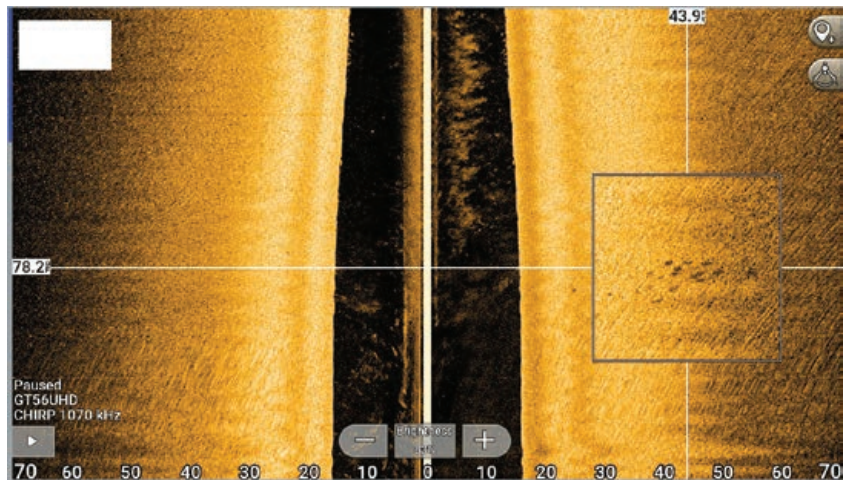
habitat where you expect to find Walleyes on sonar. When fish are spotted, immediately stop the boat and cast (or drop) in the direction of the spotted fish. The heavy, dense glide jig will rocket to the bottom, which can trigger a strike during the initial drop. Then, employ aggressive snaps to shoot the lure off the lake bed, allowing it to fall back to the bottom on a slack line, repeat. Walleyes typically pin the lure to the bottom, so you'll feel the fish when you make your next snap, setting the hook in the process.

Armed with a basic understanding of sharpshooting Walleyes, here are some tips to try that are highly effective.

- This is not a tactic where you camp out on a location. The objective is to put the glide jig in front of fish as soon as they are spotted. Give them a few casts. If they don't strike the jig, making more casts won't change anything. Better to keep moving to find "new" fish.
- It's okay to idle slowly with a bow mount trolling motor deployed, particularly if it's an electric steer

motor. The trolling motor can lock your position immediately. Retract the motor before running to the next spot.

- A major component of sharpshooting is correct sonar interpretation. Higher definition sonar units aid greatly, but it still takes time on the water. For instance, side images of Walleyes that are close to the bottom often display their shadows. Down images can show fish separation from the bottom better than traditional 2D sonar. There are many online videos that illustrate Walleyes on various sonar views that can greatly shorten the learning curve.
- Side imaging is most useful when scanning shallower areas, roughly 15 feet or less. Down imaging and traditional 2D sonar often give the best looks for deeper depths.
- Sharpshooting is only sharp if you're casting to the actual spot where you marked fish. For this reason, having two sonar/chartplotter units networked together is a huge advantage. Use one unit for sonar, the other for mapping. When fish are located, placing a waypoint on their location will also display on the chart screen. Seeing the "fish" icon in relation to your boat position tells you where to cast.
- When you mark fish on side imaging, you'll be casting to them. A glide jig in the ½-ounce size excels. When fish show up in deeper water on down imaging sonar or 2D sonar, it's often best to drop



A magnified view of Walleyes (shadows) on side imaging.

straight below the boat (or just behind the boat, depending on how quickly you stopped). Heavier glide jigs in the ¾- to 1-ounce size are more efficient.

- Glide jigs work best when fished with a medium power, fast action spinning rod, the reel spooled with 10-pound-test nylon monofilament line. The stretchy line gives the jig more life.
- Walleyes can easily throw glide jigs if allowed to thrash on the surface. Have the landing net ready as the fish approaches.

Sharpshooting Walleyes differs greatly from live bait rigging and trolling tactics often directed toward the species. Expect to put in some time learning its nuances. With a few fish under your belt, you'll have an exciting new way to put Walleyes in the boat. ☑



A variety of glide jigs in the ½- to 1-ounce size. Glide jigs sink fast and excel at targeting fish spotted on sonar. Their erratic gliding action triggers strikes from both active and inactive Walleyes.



Fish glide jigs on a medium power, fast action spinning rod, the reel spooled with 10-pound-test nylon monofilament line.



Chambers Lake

by Bob Frye

photos by the author

If you're reading this article, you most likely don't suffer from ichthyophobia. That's the fear of fish or fishing.

But, if you indeed suffer this affliction—if the thought of tangling with lots of larger-than-usual Bluegills, Largemouth Bass, Pumpkinseeds, Yellow Perch, and crappies causes your heart to race, palms to sweat, and throat to tighten, in a bad way—turn back now. Because this is a tale about a great place to mix it up with all of the above.

Chambers Lake is a 94-acre water supply impoundment near Coatesville, Chester County. It's also one of the main draws in surrounding 900-acre Hibernia County Park.

Warm weather and fertile conditions make lakes in the southeastern corner of Pennsylvania extremely productive. Fish have lots to eat and lots of time to do it, with impressive growth resulting.

Black bass at Chambers Lake are managed under Big Bass Program Special Regulations. During the 2016 biologist study, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) observed boat electrofishing catch rates of black bass 15 inches and longer that met program guidelines.

There are other fish, too. Many of them abundant and big. Chambers Lake is full of Bluegills and Pumpkinseeds, with fish of 7 inches and longer common. There are quality Yellow Perch and crappies to make things interesting as well.

Those are all managed under Panfish Enhancement Special Regulations.



A Largemouth Bass caught at Chambers Lake, Chester County.





Anglers will find Yellow Perch in Chambers Lake. Some of them grow to nice sizes, 10 inches and up.



Chambers Lake in Hibernia Park, Chester County, is a wonderful place to paddle, whether to get at its abundant fish or just to explore.

Anglers may keep 50 panfish per day but not more than 20 of any one kind, and all perch and crappies must be at least 9 inches long. All Bluegills and Pumpkinseeds must be at least 7 inches long.

The PFBC also stocks Chambers Lake with Channel Catfish yearlings, stocked at about 8 inches long, which have demonstrated better survival than fingerlings in other lakes where they have been stocked.

My favorite way to fish Chambers Lake is from a boat. This is a lovely place to paddle in a canoe or kayak. Boats with electric motors are also allowed. A public boat ramp is located off Wagontown Road.

Shore anglers also have room to cast, from a public fishing pier located off Lake Trail. There is no fishing off the dam at one end of the lake and limited access to a wildlife propagation area at the other end. It's closed to lake and shore activities from April 1 through June 15.

There's plenty to do, though, and room to do it. Hibernia County Park has hiking, mountain biking, horseback trails, playgrounds, and picnic areas. There's even two campgrounds, plus a group campsite.

The park even loans out fishing equipment, much like a library loans books.

Of course, you'll only want to sign that gear out—or use your own—if you like tangling with fish. If you do, get here. Otherwise, you risk suffering from “fomo,” or fear of missing out. Now, that's really scary. ☹

**Camping reservations,
park maps, and more:**



chesco.org



THIS IS MY QUEST



by Linda Stager

A powerful movement is happening in Tioga County, and it's providing outdoor experiences and a solid understanding of conservation to local youth. The young people who are involved are excited. It helps that the owner is one of the "baddest" women ever, none other than Rose Anna Moore, Season Eight star of the HISTORY® Channel television show *Alone*.

This is my Quest is a Wellsboro, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, headed by Moore who is both a national and a local celebrity. She has a quiet charisma that lets everyone she meets know how much she cares. Her organization takes the specialness of her personality and focuses it on providing opportunities to traditionally underrepresented youth and adults.

I spent some time with the Junior Board of Directors to learn more about how the organization works. These amazing youth, ages 8 to 12, are passionate about their projects—and about This is My Quest.



photo-courtesy of This is My Quest



photo-courtesy of Rose Anna Moore and HISTORY® Channel's *Alone*

Rose Anna Moore from HISTORY® Channel's hit survival series *Alone*.

Trout In the Classroom:



troutintheclassroom.org

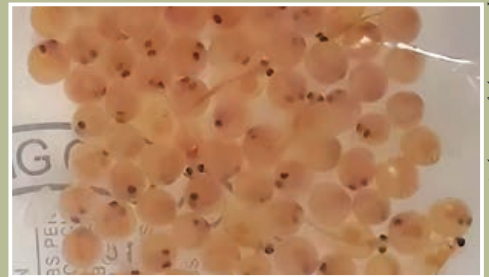


photo-courtesy of This is My Quest

This is My Quest received 150 trout eggs to raise for their Trout In the Classroom program.

The youth are particularly excited about their current project, a collaboration with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission and local organizations. They received 150 trout eggs to raise as a part of their Trout In the Classroom program and are learning about protecting and enhancing Pennsylvania's water resources.



Each youth excitedly told the project's story. Gwen reported that 150 eggs fit in your hand. Katie explained that eggs look like gelled balls. Maddie had notes on her phone that documented the project and added that the eggs were placed in a large aquarium. Joel explained how the sac fry eat their yolk sacs for nutrition. And, Mia announced that the fry are teeny little fish.

Twelve-year-old Noah, director of the program,

talked about the importance of water temperature, water quality, and regularly testing the water. They all explained that after adding plants to the tank, they were able to control toxins and that their fish are thriving.

On May 13, 2023, the trout were released to bigger waters when they reached the appropriate size.

A few days before the release, the group completed a Shade A Trout program—planting shade trees along Upper Pine Creek.

As excited as the youth are about their projects, there is so much more that they are learning. With a quiet smile, Moore comments that each child she teaches will grow up to be a better adult and that's the real goal of her program.

Moore became a hero on a national stage with her skills in *Alone*.

Now, she inspires, teaches, and mentors our next generation through her organization. For every youth who grows up with a sense of stewardship for our environment, Moore has accomplished what she has set out to do. Her junior board members are great examples of that vision and have been given the gift of healthy values that will serve them well the rest of their lives. ☐



Rose Anna Moore and the junior board members of *This is My Quest*.



Trout fingerlings



Noah checking the trout fry.

photos-courtesy of *This is My Quest*

More information:



thisismyquest.org



Crazy for Cattfish



by **Ross Robertson**

photos by the author

Catfish may be the Rodney Dangerfield of the fishing world; they don't seem to get the respect they deserve. But, give 'em some respect. They have healthy populations in so many lakes, rivers, ponds, and reservoirs that they make good targets on your next fishing outing. Here are a few areas to consider to make a catfish outing more successful.

Location

Regardless of the species you chase, even the best setup in the wrong area will not be productive. On waterways with current, look for a slight eddy or place for the catfish to get out of the current and still be close to available food. While catfish are notorious for being in large holes below dams, on river bends, or even on a large open lake, something as simple as a slight depression can also be fish holding structure.

GPS mapping known as chartography has contours and precise depth measurements that make seeing fish holding areas much easier than in the past, including graphs called depth highlights. This feature emphasizes different depths in different colors on your GPS screen, so you can see everything from slight depth changes to drastic ones at a quick glance, making it much easier to find both deep holes or slight depressions.

Boat control

Most catfish fishing revolves around rods being deadsticked or placed in rod holders. When fishing from the bank, this technique is somewhat easy. However, it can be slightly more complicated from a boat. In the past, this meant using a large

anchor and chain that made your back hurt just looking at it. Some new models of trolling motors have a built-in GPS system. One version of this system is called Spot Lock. When activated, it records the coordinates of your location. Then, the system adjusts the speed and direction of the motor to maintain position. This is like an auto-pilot for trolling motors.

Rigging

Catfish rigging could quite literally be considered a hook, line, and sinker with some slight tweaks. Traditionally, a Carolina rig consists of a short leader connected to a barrel swivel with a small bead to protect the knot from the sliding sinker, which keeps the bait on or near bottom. Though, the bait is limited in movement. For better movement, take a traditional egg or round sinker and smash it with a hammer before using. While this may sound graphic, the flat spot on the sinker keeps it from rolling around as much in the current or on a harder bottom.

A sliding sinker rig is an alternative method to a barrel sinker. The nylon sleeve slides along the line, so you have less line wear. You can change sinker sizes without cutting and retying the rig. A flat pancake weight is also preferred.

Hook style is always important for any species. When fishing bait for catfish, it is no different. A kahle hook is popular with anglers, but many hardcore catfish anglers prefer a circle hook. A circle hook has an inward facing hook point, so it doesn't



Sliding sinker rig

become dull as easily from bottom rubbing. When using a circle hook, instead of setting the hook when you feel pressure, just reel. The circle hook rotates into the corner of the mouth of the fish for better hookups, allowing easier hook removal and release.



Circle hook

Bait

Although catfish aren't usually picky, it is wise to bring several bait options on each trip for the exceptions. Different regions and species of catfish often prefer different offerings as well. Popular options

include frozen shrimp, worms, cut shad, skipjack, chicken liver, and Bluegills. If you haven't heard the not-so-well-kept-secret, hot dog chunks soaked in garlic and Kool-Aid overnight make great catfish bait. This relatively inexpensive bait option is also easy to store and have on hand.

The simplicity of catfish fishing is a break from an overcomplicated life. A little bit of know how and a hook, line, and sinker are all you need to be a successful catfish angler. 🎣

New state-record Flathead Catfish

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission certified a new state-record Flathead Catfish. Michael Wherley, Fayetteville, caught this 66-pound, 6-ounce Flathead Catfish while fishing in the Susquehanna River, Lake Aldred section, Lancaster County. The catfish was successfully released back into the river after the in-person fish inspection was completed.



photo-courtesy of Michael Wherley

State-record fish information:



FishandBoat.com



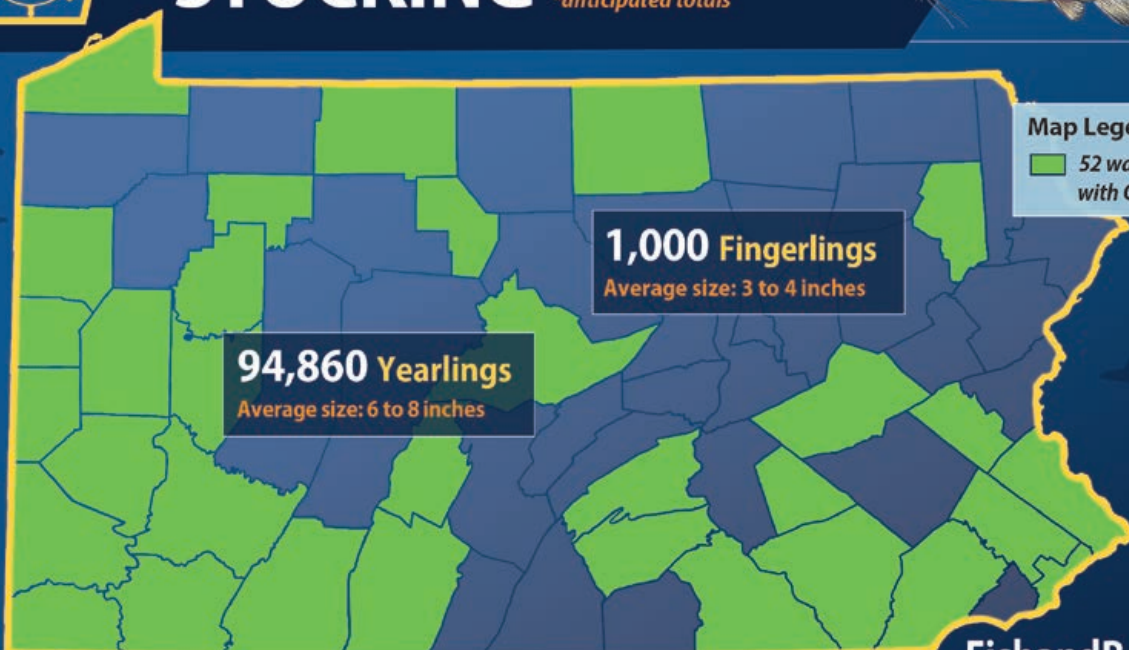
2023 CHANNEL CATFISH STOCKING

**anticipated totals*



Map Legend

52 waters stocked with Channel Catfish



FishandBoat.com



photo-Marilyn Black

Accessing French Creek in Crawford County

by Marilyn Black

A float on French Creek, Crawford County, treats paddlers to all the offerings of Pennsylvania's 2022 River of the Year. The pristine water provides abundant recreational opportunities and encounters with some of the most biologically diverse aquatic wildlife and plants east of the Mississippi River.

The French Creek Valley Conservancy (FCVC) works to protect the watershed and develop the French Creek Water Trail. "A goal for FCVC is to have an access location every 5 miles along this community treasure," said Brenda Costa, FCVC Executive Director. State, municipal, and nonprofit-owned launch areas come close to achieving such intervals along the 42-mile stretch within Crawford County from Cambridge Springs to Cochranton.

When to paddle

A frequent sojourner, Costa stays off French Creek when it is 5 feet or above at the Meadville United States Geological Survey gage. Most of the creek is good for kayaking as low as 1.7 feet, with a little scraping and possibly walking. However, she recommends keeping canoes off the creek when it is below 2 feet. ☐

More information

French Creek Valley Conservancy
814-337-4321
frenchcreekconservancy.org

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
Northwest Region Office
814-336-2426
fishandboat.com

Launch areas for downstream paddling

River Mile	Details
56	French Creek flows from Erie County into Crawford County at Miller Station Road Bridge, 3.5 miles east of Route 6/19 just north of Cambridge Springs. Last year, this FCVC access was expanded and renamed John Anselmo Launch. It now includes a launch ramp, more parking, and newly planted trees and shrubs.
50	The next public access with a paved ramp and plenty of parking is a Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) property along Miller Station Road.
49	Cambridge Landing within Firemen's Park in Cambridge Springs, offers nearby picnic pavilions, extensive parking, a paved ramp, playground, and restrooms. From Route 6/19 after crossing French Creek north, turn left onto Poplar Street and left onto Hickory Alley to this FCVC access area.
47	A carry-in access with limited parking is at the mouth of Conneauttee Creek on McClellan Street, 1.3 miles west of the Route 6/19 intersection in Cambridge Springs.
39	WARNING: Between the Bertram Park access and the next access at river mile #37, paddlers need to be aware of the Saegertown Dam at river mile #38. It is not advisable to go over the dam. Paddlers can pass the dam along the shoreline either paddling or portaging in the shallow water.
37	Saegertown Access owned by the PFBC at the mouth of Woodcock Creek, on Route 6/19, has a gravel ramp and parking.
32	Joe Cat Launch on Meadville's Wadsworth Avenue river right, owned by FCVC, is strictly carry-in. Unload your watercraft; then park your vehicle at Wadsworth Avenue Evangelical Church or Lincoln Avenue Sports Complex.
31	The PFBC Cussewago Boat Ramp is a gravel drive path located river right off Route 102 (Cussewago Road), approximately 1.4 miles north of Mead Avenue Bridge at Bicentennial Park. Downstream of Cussewago Creek, where it empties into French Creek, and immediately past Mead Avenue Bridge, Meadville, paddlers will notice Bicentennial Park on river left. This city-owned public park includes launch ramp, parking, kayak and canoe storage rack, picnic pavilion, interpretive panels, and a replica of David Mead's log cabin.
26	PFBC-owned Wilson Chutes Boat Ramp is a popular bank and wade fishing site. It has a gravel ramp, parking for ten vehicles, and a pebble/rock beach. From Meadville, proceed south on Route 322 for 2.3 miles; turn west onto Wilson Chutes Road. The parking lot is on your left.
22	Shaw's Landing owned by the PFBC at the mouth of Conneaut Outlet, which flows out of Geneva Marsh, includes a large unpaved parking area, gravel ramp, and interpretive panel. From Route 322 six miles south of Meadville, turn downhill onto Creveling Road, crossing active railroad tracks and French Creek, then immediately go left onto Wightman Road.
18	The final public access on French Creek, Crawford County, is borough-owned Cochran Landing, just before the Route 173 bridge. This recently enhanced site has a gravel ramp, picnic tables, flags, garbage containers, seasonal portable toilet, bike rack, historical markers, fishing line recycling station, and diagram showing hospitality services.

photo-Annamata Hooter, French Creek Valley Conservancy



During a ribbon cutting ceremony, the John Anselmo Launch opened for public use on October 21, 2022.

photo-Marilyn Black



The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's Saegertown Access along Route 6/19.

photo-Marilyn Black



At Joe Cat Launch, Meadville, paddlers must carry-in to French Creek.

photo-Marilyn Black



Shaw's Landing is located where Conneaut Outlet joins French Creek.



FISHING TIPS

for Low Water Strategies

by **Christian A. Shane**

photos by the author

"There's a new normal in river fishing, and it has nothing to do with moderation. Now more than ever, anglers are encountering extreme flows, whether it be monsoon floods or a drought-induced trickle." Steve Culton, Connecticut angler, guide, speaker, and blogger—currentseams.com.

By the time July rolls around in Pennsylvania, the summer has taken hold, and the heat of the season is upon us. For anglers, it means facing the lack of rainfall, low water conditions, and bright blue sky days. Employ the use of these low water tips, strategies, and adjustments on your next summer fishing trip.

Light and small

One of the first tricks anglers use in low water is utilizing the lightest tackle and gear possible. Fishing lines startle fish in drought-like conditions, so moving down to the smallest line weights pays off. For spinning gear, rig up with light lines such as 2-pound-test line. If using bait, use

smaller hook sizes such as #12, #14, or #16 and attach less bait. When experimenting with lures, move down a size to a ¼ or ⅝ weight. Also, try a topwater lure such as a popper or Jitterbug to attract lethargic fish.

For fly anglers, lowering to 5X or 6X tippet may be the difference between fish avoiding your flies or a successful day on the water. While you're at it, lose the indicator and try a hopper-dropper combination. A big, bushy attractor pattern as an indicator may entice a fish to come up to the surface or strike the connecting fly below. Large terrestrial patterns (ants, beetles, and hoppers) tied with foam or floatable material (deer or elk hair) work well since bugs will fall in the water from the shore or trees. Attach a trailing tippet about 12- to 18-inches to the bend of the hook with a small nymph or wet fly for a more natural presentation.

Shadows and shelter

The high placement of the sun in the summer can be an angler's worst enemy. Pay attention to where your shadow falls on the water and make position adjustments when entering the fish's view. Sometimes, it's best to use the sun to your advantage. Kneel if your profile is too high or use other obstacles such as downed trees and large boulders to hide your position. Polarized sunglasses also cut down on the glare and give the angler an edge.



This Brown Trout chomped a grasshopper meal on the surface.

Using light gear and smaller patterns can be effective in low water situations.

When approaching the water, look for highly oxygenated areas like riffles, bubbly water, and fast-moving currents. These areas will be the lies that fish find, sometimes being highly concentrated in one area.

Early and late

Starting your fishing early in the morning or later in the day is the optimal time for biting fish. Look for active feeders who aren't stressed in the low water. If you release them, make sure they have ample time to recover. In catch and release situations, using a net gives time for the quarry to restore and swim away unharmed.

Scout and explore

Sometimes a trip to a watershed in the summer doesn't go as planned due to a lack of water. This becomes the perfect opportunity to scout for future trips and take pictures of the land features, cuts, and other hiding spots, which fish will be using when the waters rise again in the fall.

While the water is low, try turning over rocks and checking the local aquatic life during this time frame. You may get some inspiration for a new pattern or discover a color that may be beneficial for your next fishing outing.

Take advantage of low water conditions this summer, and you may yield high dividends. ☐

Dog Days of Summer July 3 - August 11

Stay cool and take your dog on a motorboat, canoe, kayak, or even paddleboard ride. Make sure you both wear your life jackets!

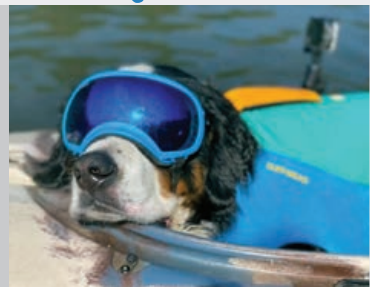


photo-Laura R. Kennedy

Enjoy National Dog Day August 26

Show your love by exploring the outdoors with your furry friend. Dogs are excellent fishing companions. Then, share a photo with us on Facebook.

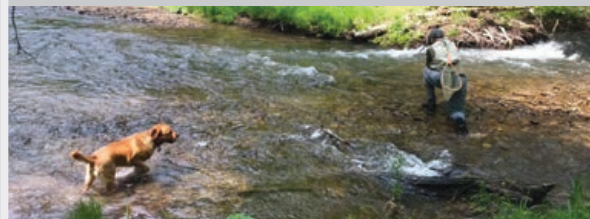


photo-Carrie Vinglish



Camping and Fishing in Tionesta Recreation Area

by Jerry Bush

photos by the author

As the sun settled behind the mountainous terrain surrounding the Tionesta Recreation Area, a crackling campfire illuminated the smiling faces of family members each evening during a camping trip. Our adult children and their children joined my wife and I at this fun area where we always enjoy several days of camping, fishing, hiking, and kayaking adventures. The grandkids insist a salamander hunt must also be on the agenda during any trip to this neck of the woods.

Located in the northwest corner of Pennsylvania, nestled near its namesake town in Forest County, the Tionesta Recreation Area is a prized destination for

outdoor enthusiasts. Do not think that its proximity to town diminishes its wilderness flair. Whether on a boat crossing Tionesta Lake, fishing the reservoir's outflow, walking along one of its hiking trails, or sitting around a roaring campfire, visitors rarely consider that the town is only a couple of miles down Route 36.

A large, manmade, earthen dam holds the water back to create Tionesta Lake, which is a 570-acre pool that settles at nearly 45 feet in depth during the summer months. The reservoir, open to all boating, contains bass, catfish, panfish, and Muskellunge. Muskies are the big prize here, and there is ample opportunity to catch them in the lake as well as the outflow waters. It is great for campers who also fish, because the outflow runs next to the campground as it moves toward the Allegheny River. Being any closer to the water would require houseboats, rather than recreational vehicles (RVs) or tents.

One of my grandsons caught a few Bluegills early. Later in the day, I slipped away on my own to seek muskies, which is



It is common to see a camper and boat parked at a Tionesta campsite.

an activity I don't advise for young children. Most youngsters require continual action, which is rarely provided by the fish widely referred to as "the fish of 10,000 casts".

I failed to lure a fish with the spoons I was casting, but I was privileged to observe a few anglers who enjoyed success. The first angler hooked a nice Muskellunge near me, which eventually came close enough for me to guess it was nearly 3-feet long. Just as I offered to help the angler net his prize, the musky freed

itself. Later, on the opposite creekbank, my son hoisted a decent bass before releasing it.

The next day, we led the children to a nearby hiking trail, but we paused at the passage over the spillway where water escapes from the reservoir. Due to its oxygen-enriched water, the hole directly below the large drainage tube is a pool targeted by anglers. Wading into the water at that point is not an option, but some anglers attempt to catch fish from the concrete walls that rise about 20 feet above the creek, at the sides of the drain. I imagine lifting a large fish would require a helping hand, but one angler captured our attention.

As we watched, he battled a small Muskellunge that I guessed to be 14- to 16-inches long. He fought the fish until it grew tired and then pulled it close to the concrete wall. That's when I noticed a bucket-shaped, metal mesh net, dangling slightly above the water, held in place by a rope tied to the protective railing above the wall. The angler hoisted

the fish into the device, before setting his rod aside to pull the mesh net and fish to his position. He removed the hook from the toothy creature and, using the rope, lowered it back into the water. I found his determination worthy of admiration.

As we hiked the Tionesta Summit Trail, the grandchildren discovered many orange-colored salamanders hiding under decaying leaves covering the forest floor. The adults were equally pleased to observe several white-tailed deer, including a mature, 6-point buck. We returned to the campground for another campfire and more unwinding.

Items still remained on our to-do list. The next day we launched kayaks near the outflow pool, before floating past the RVs lining the creekbank. This is great water for young, novice paddlers, with its shallow, controlled flow. Some locals advised us to limit our downstream floats with the grandchildren, to where the park ends at the Route 36 bridge, before the creek flows into the Allegheny River. It worked well.

For the opportunity to combine boating, fishing, hiking, salamander hunts, and wildlife viewing during an all-inclusive, camping adventure, the Tionesta Recreation Area is a worthy destination that will be tough to beat. ☐



A child hangs from the fish measuring stand at the Tionesta Recreation Area to compare his size to a large Muskellunge.



BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS AND ANGLERS

by Ralph Scherder

In 2004, seven anglers sat around an Oregon campfire after a day on the water, discussing not just the day's events, but also the future of the outdoors. They identified access to public lands as the greatest threat to outdoor enthusiasts. Instead of waking up the next morning and going about their normal business, they decided to start a grassroots movement known as the Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (BHA).

Fast forward almost 20 years and that group of seven has grown into thousands with a mission to advance legislative and administrative efforts



photos-courtesy of BHA



Backcountry Hunters and Anglers is involved in various projects that introduce adults and youths to the outdoors.

to secure access to quality hunting and fishing on our public lands and waters.

“Nobody was yelling at us to stop, so we just kept working at our mission,” said Don Rank, the Pennsylvania chapter chairman of BHA. “We have a very active membership who likes to show up and do things, which makes it so much easier to get things done.”

“Here in Pennsylvania,” said Rank, who lives near Philadelphia, “we are very fortunate to have large quantities of public lands, and many miles of streams flow through those lands. We’re not fighting a lot of access issues that some western states have to fight.”

The BHA strongly supports the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) in acquiring new areas of stream frontage or access easements such as recently announced on Twentymile Creek, Erie County. The easement opened up nearly 9,000 linear feet of public access along this popular destination for steelhead anglers.

The BHA also works to introduce people to the outdoors through an annual Learn to Fish program,

which matches new adult anglers with mentors who guide them through the whole process of starting out and catching their first fish.

“We do a Learn to Fish for kids, too, in conjunction with the PFBC. They provide the equipment, and we provide the mentors,” said Rank. “We also started a rod lending program at local libraries.”

Money can play a big role in whether someone can purchase fishing gear. It can be hard to justify the initial expenditure on something that you’re not sure you’ll want to continue doing. “So, instead of checking out a book, you can check out a fishing rod and go fishing,” said Rank, “and it can be a great way to introduce them to the outdoors without them having to make the financial investment right from the start.”

The BHA introduces new hunters and anglers to the outdoors through their R3 program, which stands for Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation. The program’s goal is to spur new, conservation-minded outdoorswomen and men while also engaging with college students who already hunt and fish.

Last year, the BHA piloted the PFBC’s Adopt An Access program, which provides volunteers the opportunity to help keep Commission-owned fishing and boating access areas clean and beautiful by conducting litter pick up. Program volunteers are encouraged to visit these access areas and boat launches frequently throughout the year, especially during busy fishing and boating seasons. BHA has adopted PFBC access areas on the Delaware River, Big Spring Creek, Penns Creek, and many other areas, although the Adopt An Access program offers opportunities statewide. Litter pick up at these sites ensures they are appealing and inviting to all who wish to access the water for years to come.

The BHA also conducts cleanup projects on other public lands as well as habitat improvement projects.

They are a strong voice for hunters and anglers everywhere. “The main component of what we do is advocacy,” said Rank. “Whether it’s on the state or federal level, we help get people involved in the issues that matter most to ensure that future generations will have access to the many public lands and waters that we all love.” ☐



photo-courtesy of BHA

Cleaning up and maintaining access areas are a key component of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers.



photo-courtesy of BHA

It's never too early to get kids involved. Board Member Samantha Lutz and her daughter cleaning up an access.



photo-Adam Spangler

On June 5, 2023, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission recognized Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (BHA) during the Boating Advisory Board meeting in Harrisburg for their partnership in implementing the Commission's Adopt An Access program. Nick Long accepted the award on BHA's behalf.



photo-courtesy of BHA

A camping and fishing outing sponsored by the organization. This year's event will take place on Pine Creek.



One Last Cast

by John Allen

photos by the author



I pulled into the dock of our weekly rental after a productive morning of solo fishing. I was met by my daughter and son, who wanted to see if I took any photos while fishing. On our walk to the cabin, my 4-year-old son asked, "Dad, when can I catch a big bass?" I told him once we ate breakfast, we could give it a try. He no sooner finished his breakfast, threw on his life jacket, grabbed his fishing rod, and proclaimed he was ready to go. I gathered my gear and we made our way out on the lake.

We arrived at my favorite spot. I tipped both of our rods with different colored 4-inch plastic sinking worms for visual ease of the line when a fish grabbed the bait. It did not take long before my son was scooping the first 10-inch bass of the outing and insisted on being the one to release it and every fish that day. We used the wind to drift us from spot to spot, and the bass were more than cooperative. I enjoyed watching his face light up with each fish that hit the net, even more than the fishing itself.

He had plenty of questions, laughter, and goofiness, but soon the bite slowed down. I told my son that we would do one last drift across the creek channel in hopes of picking up one last fish before making the journey back to the cabin. As we approached the weedline, neither one of us really wanted to quit, so I said, "One more cast." He agreed,

and with a little assistance, his bait found its mark in the center of a deep, winding creek channel. I packed up the boat and prepared the motor as the words, "I got one!" came shrieking out of his mouth.

As he had insisted with most of his catches on this day, he claimed this was a big one and asked me to keep one hand on the rod in case the fish fought more than he could handle. The bass dove for the thick grass on bottom, so I applied extra pressure and hoped the 12-pound-test line would hold. We avoided the grass before feeling the line rise towards the surface. The large bass launched out of the water and landed with a thunderous splash. For the first time all day, he was right. This was a big fish. And, the battle was on to bring it in. With extra pressure applied to the rod and the net in hand, the fish was now making headshakes just under the surface. As soon as I felt it was close enough, I extended my reach with the net, which found its mark on the 5-pound, 23-inch Largemouth Bass.

The pure joy and excitement of that moment cannot be matched. We admired the large fish before taking several photos and measurements. Yet again, he insisted on being the one to return it to the water. It was everything he could do to even lift the net, but the fish escaped after being submerged a few seconds and vanished into the depths of the lake as giggles of joy continued. "Hey, Bennett", I said, "I guess today is the day that you are going to catch a big bass." ☐

CAST & CAUGHT



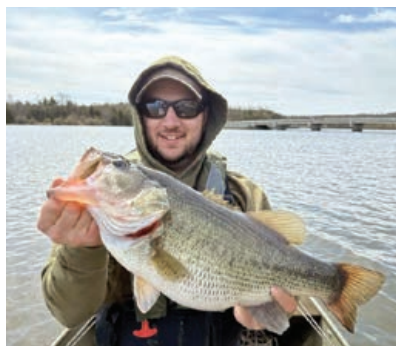
Austin Moyle, age 17, caught and released this Muskellunge while fishing at Bald Eagle State Park, Centre County.



Derek Lengyel, Bellefonte, caught this Largemouth Bass while fishing on Black Moshannon Lake, Centre County.



Gianna Krivanek, age 11, caught this 5-pound, 5-ounce, 25¼-inch Walleye while fishing on Cross Creek Lake, Washington County.



Nicholas Warriner, Phoenixville, caught this 8.45-pound Largemouth Bass while fishing with his wife Maria on Green Lane Reservoir, Montgomery County.



Jeannine and Lee Jones caught and released this 25-inch golden Rainbow Trout while fishing Kettle Creek, Clinton County.

For the "Cast & Caught" column, send only prints (no larger than 8"x10") and a completed "Model Release form" available at fishandboat.com. Click on "About Us", then "Angler & Boater". Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want your photograph returned. People aboard boats must be wearing properly fitted and buckled life jackets. Mail to:

**Editor, Pennsylvania Angler & Boater,
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photo-Samuel J. Rob

Thom Glace— *The Art of Fishing*

by Samuel J. Rob

Thom Glace, a renowned watercolor artist who calls southcentral Pennsylvania home, is one of those lucky few whose passion is their work. Glace was born in Harrisburg and grew up on a farm outside of Carlisle. He left home at 17 to attend prep school out of state and then college at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

After college, He worked in newspapers, advertising, and marketing, while also creating his own graphic arts production company. As a successful international businessman, Glace lived and worked in multiple states, the United States Virgin Islands, and the Netherlands, before returning to Pennsylvania. The stress of his job and its worldwide travel to over 65 countries took its toll. In 2004, at age 53, he suffered a massive heart attack that left him clinically dead for a few minutes and bedridden for a year. Disabled, Glace turned to art. His father was an excellent amateur oil painter, so Glace inherited artistic skills and taught himself to paint. He started his art career by painting the Susquehanna River basin fish and insects he knew. Glace has painted over 100 fish species including salmon and Marble Trout from the Julian Alps in Slovenia. Glace's



artwork-courtesy of Thom Glace

Glace's art sells nationally and internationally, and he has used his commercial success to support conservation and fly fishing.

art portfolio includes songbirds and insects. He consults with Texas A&M University entomologists to create his exquisitely detailed watercolors of dragonflies.

An avid fly angler ever since his wife, as a gift, enrolled him in an Orvis fly fishing course at Boiling Springs years ago, he was crestfallen when his doctors informed him his disability would force the end of his fly fishing. So, he bought a Tenkara rod and became highly proficient with it. Glace was good enough with both rod and paint brush to be selected as the Tenkara USA Magazine 2016 Artist of the Year. His favorite Pennsylvania trout streams are his local home waters: Yellow Breeches Creek, Letort Spring Run, Mountain Creek, and Big Spring Creek. His "go-to" fly is a Black Ant in a size big enough to see (sizes #10 or #12).

Glace's work has appeared in "Fly Life Magazine", "Harrisburg Magazine", "Southern Trout Magazine", "Montana Trout Magazine", "Mid-Atlantic Fly Fishing Guide", and numerous other publications. Glace has been honored as a

festival artist at various art festivals on the East Coast. His art sells nationally and internationally, and he has used his commercial success to support conservation and fly fishing. Among the benefactors of his charity are Trout Unlimited, the Pennsylvania Fly Fishing Museum, the Yellow Breeches Anglers and Conservation Association, the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy, Project Healing Waters, and Casting for Recovery.

Glace and his wife, Mary, make Mechanicsburg home, but his work displays in galleries throughout Pennsylvania and across the nation. ☐

Thom Glace artwork:



thomglaceart.com



HIDDEN RIVER LURES

by *Alex Zidock Jr.*

photos by the author

The river mouth was covered in dense vegetation at the confluence with the Delaware River. So, when an agent for the Dutch West India Company purchased land along the waterway, he used the Dutch name "kil" meaning river and "schuylen" meaning "to hide" or "hidden." The Schuylkill River flows 135 miles from Pottsville to Philadelphia and through the Montgomery County town of Royersford, where Mike DiGuseppe first wet a line.

"As kids, we used to fish the Schuylkill River a lot for Channel Catfish, Smallmouth Bass, and carp," said DiGuseppe. "I hooked a 30-inch carp when I was about 10 years old, and I thought it was the biggest fish in the world. That's what really got me into fishing. And, when I was about 12, I accidentally caught a 24-inch tiger muskellunge, which started the muskie craze for me." Born from this fond childhood memory of fishing the Schuylkill River, Hidden River Lures was a natural name choice when DiGuseppe began his wooden lure-making business.

DiGuseppe spent many years fishing with his two sons, Kevin and Christopher, locally and in Canada. He chased fish on charter boats and did a lot of surf fishing along the New Jersey shore. "I was doing a lot of striper and Smallmouth Bass fishing and was making smaller wooden lures for bass." He bought a wood lathe and went from making smaller baits to larger baits for stripers.

"In about 2007, as I got older, I realized I was having trouble keeping awake after fishing the tides and then driving home from the Jersey Shore. I remembered that childhood range of years catching tiger muskies, and I thought I really have to get back into it," said DiGuseppe.

DiGuseppe and his wife Kim live in Chester County, not far from Marsh Creek Lake. "I knew there were muskies in Marsh Creek Lake, Lake Nockamixon, and the Susquehanna River, all not too far from home, but I needed to know more about muskie fishing." He joined the



Mike DiGuseppe's best year fishing for Muskellunge was in 2013 when he had 27 catch and release fish. This was good enough to covet a first place in the regional MI50 Chapter of Muskies, Inc. The pike in the background was caught in Canada on lures he made.



regional chapter of Muskies, Inc., headquartered in Wisconsin. He is a recent past president and can't say enough good things about the organization.

"Our Chapter MI50 covers most of eastern Pennsylvania and some of southern New Jersey. I always tell people as you get involved with the organization, you meet people who like to fish, you learn how to fish for muskies, and that's what happened to me," said DiGuiseppe. "We raise money for conservation projects and stock muskies in regional impoundments approved by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC)."

The long drive from striper fishing at the New Jersey shore to muskie fishing in Pennsylvania allowed DiGuiseppe to transition from striper lures to muskie lures. Hidden River Lures for muskies imitate perch, suckers, and other soft-finned, freshwater baitfish. DiGuiseppe makes his one-up lures out of raw wood as well as store-bought kiln-dried wood.

"I like to do things differently," said DiGuiseppe. It's not how many lures he can make, and he doesn't use a duplicator on his lathe. While his lures may not have a fancy paint job as some other lures, "I always say to people I build lures that catch fish and that are durable," said DiGuiseppe. Although many of his lures may be the same size and have similar patterns, they are all uniquely different.

"For example, when I use a piece of raw chestnut wood, I won't paint the lure, because it has nice natural grains. I predominately make swimmer baits with lips using the more dense maple. For topwater baits, I like cedar, because it has a great buoyancy. There are plastic baits on the market, but nothing can match the buoyancy of wood on the water," said DiGuiseppe. ☐

According to the PFBC, Muskellunge populations are maintained through natural reproduction in some waterbodies, but most are managed through stocking of hatchery-reared fish spawned from wild-caught broodstock. Hatchery-reared yearling Muskellunge are stocked during early summer at 12-to 14-inches long. Muskellunge can reach 50 inches or more in length.



Using store-bought kiln-dried wood on the wood lathe is easier. This piece of maple is being made into a swimmer bait with a lip.



Calipers are used to mark the location of the eyes. A special drill is used to hollow the eye sockets.



After the eyes are placed and the lip is put in position, a stainless rod is inserted and positioned to hold the hooks.



A finished lure has final markings, coating, and hooks.

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AQUATIC PLANTS AND ALGAE IN PENNSYLVANIA—

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

by Sean Hartzell

Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

Aquatic plants and algae play important roles in aquatic ecosystems, providing food for aquatic herbivores and omnivores such as crayfish, turtles, waterfowl, and fish. However, some aquatic plants and algae are considered aquatic invasive species and may pose threats to aquatic recreation and aquatic ecosystems in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania's waters are home to a vast number of native aquatic plants. One common species in lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams is American waterweed (*Elodea canadensis*), sometimes also called common waterweed. American waterweed is a simple stalked aquatic plant with leaves arranged in "whorls" of three leaves. It often grows in clumps immersed in the water but will produce small white or purple flowers during the summer that emerge from the water. While many other aquatic plants die back in the winter, American waterweed persists and provides habitat for fish during the winter months.



American waterweed (*Elodea canadensis*) with cross section of a single whorl with three leaves.

photo: Christian Fischer, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons



photo: Brian Pilarcik

Hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*) showing toothed leaves.

Similar in look to native American waterweed, the non-native hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*), sometimes also called waterthyme, is native to parts of India and Eurasia and was introduced into parts of North America decades ago, likely from the aquarium trade. Hydrilla can be distinguished from American waterweed, because it has four to eight leaves per whorl unlike the three leaves in American waterweed and has small serrations or spines on the leaves. Hydrilla is considered an aquatic invasive species in Pennsylvania and can grow to major nuisance levels in lakes and ponds. During the warmer months, hydrilla can create dense mats, which may preclude infested areas from boating activities. It grows aggressively, sometimes several inches per day, and may also impact habitat for native species, reducing the breeding habitat and foraging habitat for sportfish. Scientific studies have shown that abundance and quality of fish such as Largemouth Bass and Bluegills may be reduced when hydrilla takes over an aquatic habitat. Unfortunately, hydrilla can be easily spread to other waterways on uncleaned boats, trailers, and fishing gear. Even a small fragment of hydrilla, if introduced into a new waterway, can grow a new colony.

Algae species are abundant in Pennsylvania. Algae are a group of organisms separate from plants that make food through photosynthesis using green chloroplasts in their cells. Most algae will grow in the form of thin layers of "slime" on submerged surfaces such as mud, stones, and aquatic plants, or form scum at the water's surface. One unusual species of alga in Pennsylvania is the didymo (*Didymosphenia geminata*) or "rock snot." Long considered an aquatic invasive species, didymo was recently found to be native to some parts of eastern North America, such as New York. However, it is presently unknown if didymo is a



photo-Brian Blazek

Hydrilla and other aquatic invasive plants have a high risk of being introduced into new waterways by fragments on uncleaned boats or trailers.

native “nuisance” species or a non-native species in Pennsylvania. When nutrients in streams are low, didymo will form “nuisance blooms” consisting of long, hairlike algal filaments, sometimes several inches thick, which can cover a stream bottom. Didymo blooms are often temporary and may “slough” off during heavy rain events. Recent research suggests that didymo blooms may not have major impacts towards other aquatic life, and didymo is not harmful to humans. Unlike many other algae species in Pennsylvania, didymo can feel “rough” or “gritty” to the touch (similar to wool) instead of slimy. Didymo appears to prefer cool or coldwater stream and river environments.

Making sure boats, trailers, and fishing gear are clean before their next use can prevent further spread of aquatic invasive species. Simple measures such as checking boats, trailers, and gear to remove mud, debris, and aquatic life before transporting, draining water from gear, live wells, motors, and bilges, and either drying for at least five days or cleaning with hot water can prevent the spread of most aquatic invasive species. For more information on aquatic invasive species, how to report them, and how to clean boats, trailers, and gear, visit fishandboat.com/Conservation/AIS. ☐



photo-Tim Daley PA DEP

Clump of didymo (Didymosphenia geminata) nuisance bloom.

CHECK. CLEAN. DRAIN. DRY.

STOP AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

Plants and animals that compete with native species and damage fishing and boating equipment.



✓ CHECK

Check your boat, trailer, and fishing gear for plants, mud, and aquatic life.

✓ CLEAN

Remove visible plants, fish, aquatic animals, mud, and dirt from your fishing gear and boats onsite.

✓ DRAIN

Drain the water from all equipment before leaving.

✓ DRY

Dry everything before entering new water. Allow equipment to dry to the touch. Then, allow it to dry another 48 hours.

Never release plants, fish, or animals into a body of water unless they came from that water.

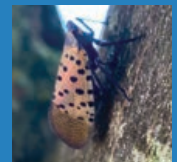
Learn more at FishandBoat.com

Stop the Spotted Lanternfly

These invasive insects were first discovered in Pennsylvania in 2014.

The Spotted Lanternfly feeds on the sap of many plants and trees.

Use the QR code below to learn more or report a sighting.



More information:



extension.psu.edu/spotted-lanternfly



LESSONS LEARNED AT SOMERSET LAKE

photo-Mike Parker

by Mike Parker
Communications Director
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

Excitement filled the air at Somerset Lake, Somerset County, in May when the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) hosted hundreds of local high school students for a field trip that, for many of the teens, was the culmination of years of hard work.

Through a program first conceptualized by District 4 Commissioner Donald K. Anderson in 2017, students at Berlin Brothersvalley High School started raising Channel Catfish in a tank as part of their agricultural science curriculum. The successful pilot led to interest from other schools, and within a few years, small catfish cooperative nurseries were set up in several other districts across Somerset County. Adding to the program, Anderson successfully incorporated the idea for students to construct fish habitat structures as part of their wood shop classes.

Of course, these finished products needed somewhere to go. In previous years, student-raised catfish were stocked in local waterways, and habitat structures were placed in Quemahoning Reservoir, Somerset County, to benefit fish population and anglers.

When the time came for the latest round of catfish stocking and habitat structure placement during the 2023 school year, the timing could not have been better for students to see their work come to fruition at a beloved, local waterway. After a lengthy dam rehabilitation project that left Somerset Lake dry for four years from 2018-2022, students from Berlin Brothersvalley, Meyersdale, Rockwood, Salisbury-Elk Lick, Shanksville-Stonycreek, and Turkeyfoot

Valley school districts would have a chance to make a lasting impact with their projects.

Over two days, students participated in an activity rotation that included stocking hundreds of catfish, putting finishing touches on habitat structures, and deploying the structures by boat to the bottom of Somerset Lake.

“This contribution from the students is really significant, especially with a newly refilled lake,” said Ben Page, PFBC Lake Habitat Section Chief. “What we see in a lake like this, often times, is a flat and muddy bottom with very little natural habitat for fish. The addition of these wooden structures to the lakebed will provide refuge and spawning areas for the rebounding fish population.”

Payge Lytle, a senior at Rockwood Area High School, recalls the challenges of raising catfish in the classroom since last fall, and feeling pride when she and other students released the 4- to 8-inch long fish into the lake.

“We would go into school every morning and feed them and make sure the chemicals and water temperature were right,” said Lytle. “The catfish were really small when we got them from the PFBC, but they’ve grown a lot. It was one of the most fun parts of school this year.”

In addition to stocking and habitat work, Anderson recruited help from the PFBC, Somerset County Sportsmen’s League, Somerset Lake Action Committee, and Salisbury Elk Lick Hunting Club to host the students in other fun and educational activities during their visit to the lake, including canoeing and a walking tour of the newly built dam.

“I really believe that these young people are the future of conservation and possibly our agency,” said Anderson. “When we’re able to bring these programs to the schools, the students jump at the opportunity to get involved, and some have expressed interest in a career doing the things they’ve learned here today.” □

Inclusive Fishing and Paddling Opportunities in Pennsylvania State Parks and Forests



photo-Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation

Little Buffalo State Park, Perry County

by Jessica Aiello

You may know that Pennsylvania’s state parks and forests provide diverse fishing opportunities. In fact, 101 of the 124 state parks and all 20 state forests have waterways open for fishing. Yet, did you know that there are many accessible and inclusive places that allow wheelchair access to fish within these public lands? The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR) and the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation (PPFF) are working together to make sure anyone who wants to fish can do so.

In recent years, PPFF has placed or upgraded Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible fishing piers at Maurice K. Goddard State Park, Mercer County; Ricketts Glen State Park, Columbia, Luzerne, and Sullivan counties; Tobyhanna State Park, Monroe and Wayne counties; and Gouldsboro State Park, Monroe and Wayne counties, with more on the list, pending funding. These docks allow individuals in wheelchairs and motorized scooters to fish alongside their friends and family, enhancing relationships while benefiting from healthy outdoor activity. Other accessibility projects completed by PPFF include additional handicapped parking spaces and paved trails from the

parking lot to fishing spots, as well as ADA-accessible kayak and canoe launches for those who prefer to fish from the water rather than the shoreline.

“The opportunities to fish and paddle within Pennsylvania state parks and forests are abundant and available to everyone, regardless of income, skill level, and mobility,” said Marci Mowery, President of PPFF. “We encourage anglers and paddlers—from novice to expert—to give these public lands a try. We also welcome feedback on how we can continue to make our parks and forests inclusive to all.”

So, grab your fishing license, gather your gear, and get to a Pennsylvania state park or forest today. ☑

ADA accessible amenities:



maps.dcnr.pa.gov/dcnrinteractivemap

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LIFE JACKET.**



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Pennsylvania

American Sign Language
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fishandboat.com/Pages/ASL.aspx



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July 1-3

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FishandBoat.com

SOCIAL SHORTS

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



Click it or zip it – just wear your life jacket!

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
3.87K subscribers

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738 views Apr 18, 2023 #BoatingSafety
Life jackets save lives!

Ensure your life jacket is United States Coast Guard (USCG) approved, matches your intended use, is in good condition, and fits properly.


Life jackets are required to be worn on boats less than 16 feet long and all canoes, kayaks and paddleboards from Nov. 1 through April 30.

Learn more: <http://ow.ly/tQOH50NjKEf>

PFBC Social Media:



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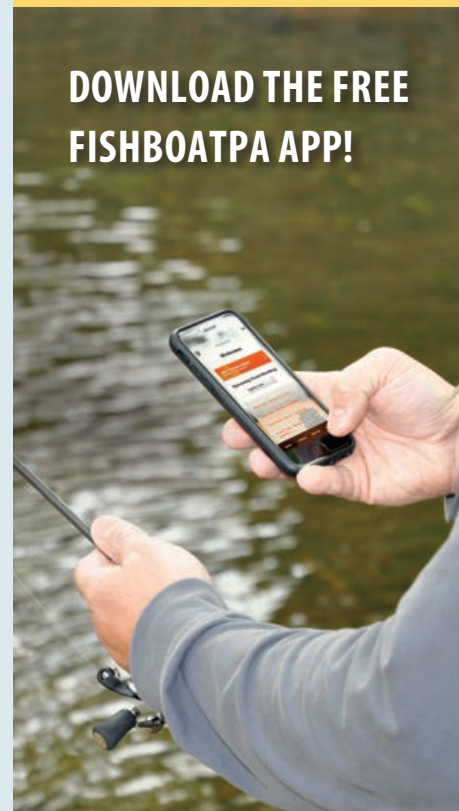
pafishandboat Snakes, including Timber Rattlesnakes, are emerging from their winter dens.

If you encounter a snake, do not panic. Retreat calmly and allow the animal to continue on its course or to seek cover.

Jarren Uplinger (@jarventur)

#PAHerping #PAHerps #HerpingPA #Herpetology #PASnakes #PAOutdoors #PennsylvaniaOutdoors #TimberRattlesnake #Rattlesnake #Rattlesnakes #TimberRattler #RattlesnakesOfInstagram #SnakesOfIg #SnakesOfInstagram

Credit: Jarren Uplinger





CELEBRATE INDEPENDENCE DAY!

Fish-for-Free Day is Tuesday, July 4.