

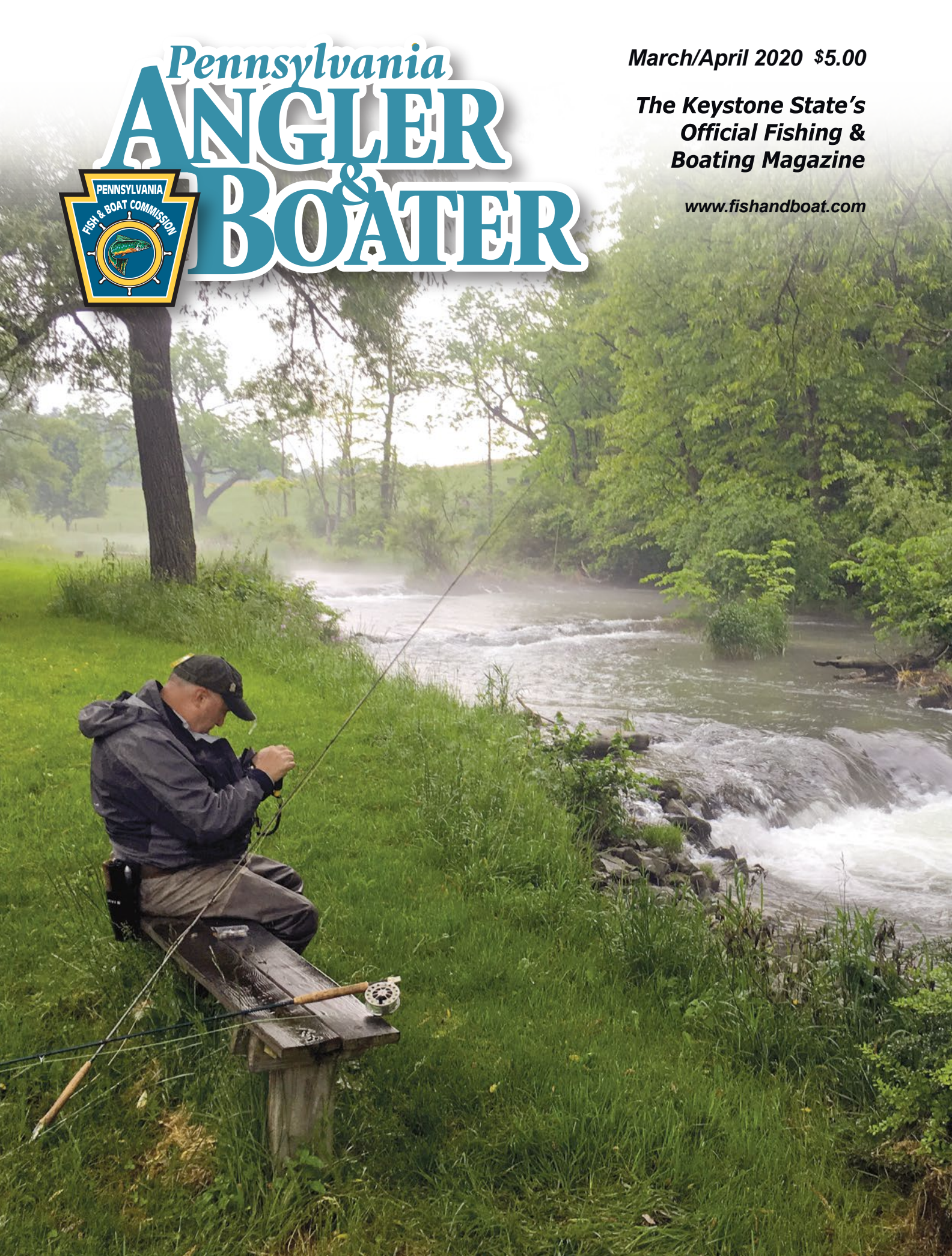
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**The Keystone State's  
Official Fishing &  
Boating Magazine**

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# Pennsylvania ANGLER & BOATER



# 2020 SEASONS, SIZES, and CREEL LIMITS

## COMMONWEALTH INLAND WATERS-2020

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

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

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

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

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

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

\*\*\*\* Lehigh River upstream of the first dam in Easton, Pennsylvania and its tributaries and the Schuylkill River upstream of the I-95 Bridge and its tributaries.

**NOTE:** It is not a violation of the bass regulations if a bass is immediately returned unharmed to the waters from which it was taken. It is unlawful for an angler to cast repeatedly into a clearly visible bass spawning nest or redd in an effort to catch or take bass.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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*Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* adheres to the American Fisheries Society's style guide and the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of *Common and Scientific Names of Fishes from the United States, Canada and Mexico* in keeping with the capitalization of the English common names of fishes as well as singular and plural fish name usage. In addition, *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* recognizes the standards established by the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles.

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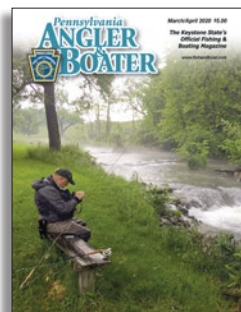
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## On the cover

Peter Ten Eyck selects a fly while on the shore of Spruce Creek, Huntingdon County. Photo by Christian A. Shane.



The PFBC social media and mobile app:  
[www.fishandboat.com/socialmedia](http://www.fishandboat.com/socialmedia)

# What a Day!

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

If the rest of 2020 is half as fun and productive as January 7, it is going to be a great year.

Commissioner Rick Kauffman and I met staff at the Fairview State Fish Hatchery at 5:00 a.m. that day, where we were soon joined by a local news crew for a live broadcast. The reporters and cameraman were there to learn more about the role that the facility plays in Pennsylvania's renowned steelhead program.

Hatchery Manager Craig Lucas took the reporter into a raceway to see steelhead that had already been collected and whose eggs will serve as the building block of the next generation of steelhead that help fuel the Lake Erie Watershed's \$41 million fishing-driven economy.

After three live newsfeeds from the hatchery, we traveled a short distance to Trout Run, a tributary of Lake Erie, for one of the eight steelhead collections that we perform each winter. There is minimal natural steelhead reproduction in Pennsylvania, and we simply would not have the annual world-class steelhead runs without the work of the skilled fish culturists at Fairview and Tionesta state fish hatcheries.

At Trout Run, we were joined by local Commissioner Dan Pastore, State Senator Dan Laughlin, State Representative Bob Merski, and a fleet of volunteers to help collect male and female steelhead. Among the volunteers were groups of students from Oil City High School and Gannon University who helped net the fish to be loaded into trucks and taken to the hatchery. The fish are released back to area streams after spawning.

The news team from the predawn broadcast also made the trip to Trout Run and gave viewers a firsthand view of the collection process. We were soon joined by a second news crew who captured the excitement and then made the return trip to Fairview with the freshly netted steelhead.

Back at the hatchery, the school students participated in handling the fish and left with a greater appreciation of what it takes to spawn a steelhead, raise it to about 8 inches, place



photo-Craig Lucas

it in a local tributary, and see it come back for anglers to enjoy after growing to adult size in the lake.

Waterways Conservation Officer Tyler Soety then showed Commissioners Kauffman and Pastore and me the new patrol boat that will be on Lake Erie this spring and took us on a tour of different fishing access areas.

With a few hours of daylight left, Rick and I met up with Craig Lucas to enjoy the fruits of the agency's labors. Craig graciously loaned me his rod, guided us to some beautiful fish, and helped Rick catch the first steelhead of his fishing career. At one point, Rick and I had a double and landed fish within seconds of each other.

Special thanks to Fairview State Fish Hatchery Foreman Craig Galvin who let me use his computer and printer to buy and print a duplicate fishing license. I did not think I would get an opportunity to fish that day and left all of my gear at home.

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission could not do what we do without the volunteers who assisted us that day. This spring, please consider joining us to help stock trout at your favorite local stream or lake. Simply take a look at the stocking schedules on [www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com) or our increasingly popular mobile app (FishBoatPA). Find a date that fits into your calendar, and help us share in the excitement of the agency's hard work with the anglers of Pennsylvania. All of the stockings are open to the public, and you may get your face on television like the students at Trout Run.

Just like the volunteers who helped us in the cold winter waters off of Lake Erie, you will leave with a better understanding of how we put your fishing license dollars to work for you.

photo-Mike Parker



Fairview State Fish Hatchery Manager Craig Lucas (right) explains the steelhead spawning process to reporter Samiar Nefzi, WJET-TV, Erie.



photo-Mike Parker

Commissioners, staff, and volunteers at Trout Run, Erie County.

# Pennsylvania State-Record Fish

<b>Bass, Largemouth</b> Birch Run Reservoir Adams Co.	11 lb. 3 oz.	Donald Shade Waynesboro, PA 1983	<b>Salmon, Coho</b> Lake Erie Erie Co.	15 lb. 5 oz.	Jack Scheirer McMurry, PA 1985
<b>Bass, Rock</b> Elk Creek Erie Co.	3 lb. 2 oz.	David L. Weber Lake City, PA 1971	<b>Salmon, Pink</b> Elk Creek Erie Co.	4 lb. 8 oz.	David A. Rabatin Bethel Park, PA 1995
<b>Bass, Smallmouth</b> Scotts Run Lake Berks Co.	8 lb. 8 oz.	Robert T. Steelman Havertown, PA 1997	<b>Sauger</b> Susquehanna River Lycoming Co.	4 lb.	Tim Waltz Williamsport, PA 2001
<b>Bass, Striped - Inland Waters</b> Raystown Lake Huntingdon Co.	53 lb. 12 oz.	Robert Price Huntingdon, PA 1994	<b>Shad, American</b> Delaware River Pike Co.	9 lb. 9 oz.	Anthony Mecca Peckville, PA 1986
<b>Bass, Striped - Marine</b> Delaware River Delaware Co.	53 lb. 13 oz.	Donald J. Clark Boothwyn, PA 1989	<b>Suckers</b> Allegheny River Forest Co.	12 lb. 14 oz.	Raymond C. Szalewicz Titusville, PA 2003
<b>Bass, White</b> Conneaut Lake Crawford Co.	4 lb.	Robert H. Hornstrom Meadville, PA 2002	<b>Trout, Brook</b> Fishing Creek Clinton Co.	7 lb.	Vonada Ranck Watsontown, PA 1996
<b>Bluegill</b> Keystone Lake Armstrong Co.	2 lb. 9 oz.	Tom Twincheck Blairsville, PA 1983	<b>Trout, Brown</b> Walnut Creek Erie Co.	19 lb. 10 oz.	Fazle Buljubasic Erie, PA 2000
<b>Carp, Common</b> Juniata River Huntingdon Co.	52 lb.	George Brown Saltillo, PA 1962	<b>Trout, Golden Rainbow</b> Mahoning Creek Schuylkill Co.	13 lb. 8 oz.	Eli Borger Palmerton, PA 2008
<b>Catfish, Bullhead</b> Baltville Lake Carbon Co.	4 lb. 10 oz.	Ian C. Radle Palmerton, PA 2011	<b>Trout, Lake</b> Lake Erie Erie Co.	31 lb. 13 oz.	Keith Miller Cranberry, PA 2019
<b>Catfish, Channel</b> Lehigh Canal Northampton Co.	35 lb. 3 oz.	Austin E. Roth III Bowmanstown, PA 1991	<b>Trout, Rainbow</b> Jordan Creek Lehigh Co.	15 lb. 6 oz.	Dennis L. Clouse Bethlehem, PA 1986
<b>Catfish, Flathead</b> Susquehanna River Lancaster Co.	50 lb. 7 oz.	Jeff Bonawitz Lancaster, PA 2019	<b>Trout, Steelhead</b> Walnut Creek Erie Co.	20 lb. 3 oz.	Corey T. Brown Osterburg, PA 2001
<b>Crappie</b> Hammond Lake Tioga Co.	4 lb. 3 oz.	Richard A. Pino Covington, PA 2000	<b>Walleye</b> Allegheny Reservoir Warren Co.	17 lb. 9 oz.	Mike Holly Bradford, PA 1980
<b>Drum, Freshwater (Sheepshead)</b> Monongahela River Washington Co.	19 lb. 14 oz.	Tim Rogers Finleyville, PA 1994			
<b>Muskellunge</b> Conneaut Lake Crawford Co.	54 lb. 3 oz.	Lewis Walker Jr. Meadville, PA 1924			
<b>Perch, White</b> Delaware River Delaware Co.	1 lb. 12 oz.	James Clark Philadelphia, PA 2008			
<b>Perch, Yellow</b> Presque Isle Bay Erie Co.	2 lb. 14 oz.	Brian Clark Edinboro, PA 2016			
<b>Pickereel, Chain</b> Long Pond Wayne Co.	8 lb. 15 oz.	Dave Wilson Honesdale, PA 2002			
<b>Pike, Northern</b> Allegheny Reservoir McKean Co.	35 lb.	Carl Stoltz Bradford, PA 2003			
<b>Salmon, Atlantic - Landlocked Lake</b> Raystown Lake Huntingdon Co.	17 lb. 2 oz.	Brian Keller Altoona, PA 2001			
<b>Salmon, Chinook</b> Lake Erie Erie Co.	28 lb. 15 oz.	Gregory Lasko Erie, PA 1990			

## Rules for State-Record Fish

For more information on the state-record fish program, visit the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's (PFBC's) website at [www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com). Some of the state record fish rules are below.

- Only those fish on the official state-record fish listing will be recognized. This list is published on the PFBC website ([www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com)).
- Obtain an application on the PFBC's website
- If you believe that you have caught the next state record, have the fish weighed as soon as possible on a scale certified legal for trade. The scale must display a valid seal with an identification. Obtain a receipt of the weight along with the signature of the person weighing the fish (someone other than the angler).
- The weight of the potential new record fish must exceed the current state-record weight by 2 ounces or more to be considered as a new record.
- Fish must be caught in Pennsylvania waters open to the public without charge, fee, special permission or membership. This includes open to the public without condition, restriction or requirement set forth by the landowner

or lessor. Farm and private ponds, regulated fishing lakes, ponds or stream sections or waters restricted to use by club members or their guests are not considered open to the public, even if no fee is charged.

- Fish must be caught by legal methods, using the approach of fair chase, during legally open seasons on the water where the fish was taken. There is no catch-and-release category for state-record fish. Fair chase means the ethical, sportsmanlike, and lawful pursuit and catching free-ranging fish in a manner that does not give the angler an improper advantage over the fish.
- Fish caught by licensed resident and nonresident anglers are eligible. Fish must be caught, hooked and played by one angler, and that angler must be named on the application. Assistance is permissible when landing or boating the fish.

**The PFBC reserves the right to further investigate the identification, methods used in catching, and the accuracy of measuring and weighing. It also reserves the right to reject any application.**

For complete rules and a copy of the application, visit the PFBC's website.

# Fishing Rivers and Streams



*by Carl Haensel*

*photos by the author*

As the grip of winter loosens and snow melts, rivers and streams begin to swirl across the region. Full of fish, the eddies, pools and runs beckon anglers to the banks. Then, the challenge begins—how to find and catch fish in moving water. Complex and challenging compared to lakes and ponds, rivers are always in flux. Anglers have long said, “You never fish the same river twice.” There are plenty of tips and tricks to catch more fish when you are exploring flowing water. Here are a few to get you started.

## **Big fish like big pools**

Anglers often ask me where to find big fish. From trout to Muskellunge, large resident gamefish need two primary types of habitat in rivers and streams—feeding cover and resting cover. Anglers often look for big fish in beautiful looking riffles and runs. Unless fish are migrating, these spots rarely hold truly large fish unless the fish are connected to a big pool. If you are seeking large fish, stick with sections of your

favorite stream or river that are connected to resting cover in deep pools. Large fish will transition from resting areas to locations that bring in lots of feed or hold baitfish. Ambush predators like Muskellunge, pike and pickerel can often be found in log jams and weed beds in or near these deep pools to feed.

## **Suspend your bait in an eddy**

Eddies are sections of rivers and streams that exhibit circular flow along the bank or downstream of objects in the stream channel. Often full of debris and foam, eddies flow upstream along the bank or downstream of boulders or logs in the main channel, and the current is slower than adjacent areas. Along with debris, eddies also capture food and prey in churning waters. Gamefish of all types frequent eddies. These spots may confuse fish, since the currents may be swirling. Suspending your offering often solves this problem and keeps your presentation natural. When spin fishing, try using a jig under a bobber. Tipping your jig with live bait may be effective. Fly anglers may use a strike indicator to suspend small nymphs. Keep your fly line off the water and rod high to avoid drag in eddies that may make fish less likely to bite. Slowly retrieving a fly or lure along the edge of the eddy and the current is a great way to entice fish to bite.



*An angler fishes into an eddy on the Shenango River near Sharpsville. Eddies are great locations to find active gamefish like bass, panfish, and trout.*

## **Get down deep in runs**

Anglers often fish for trout and Smallmouth Bass in runs. Runs are the deep, fast parts of a stream or river between the riffle and a pool. When fishing is easy in runs, fish will leave the protective cover of the rocks and boulders in the swift water and dart upward to grab a fly or lure. Pickier fish may seem absent from these locations. However, these fish are usually deeper, next to the bottom and hanging out in current breaks deep in the run. To catch these fish, get your flies or lures deeper. If you are using a nymph rig on a fly rod, try adding splitshot or a heavier fly to get down to the

bottom. When dead drifting through runs, make sure your fly is ticking along the bottom occasionally to ensure it is deep enough. A longer distance from your strike indicator to your fly also helps. On spinning gear, switch to a heavy jig instead of a crankbait or lighter jig. Cast your jig upstream and hop it down through the run, making sure that you touch bottom as you guide it through the fast water. You will be surprised how many more fish you can catch just by getting deeper in the water. You may snag up more, but the reward can be huge. Often, the largest fish in a stream or river will feed deep in runs when fish are active.



*Get your flies deep into a run to catch big fish near the bottom. Here, an angler fishes a deep run for trout on the Lackawanna River near Scranton, Lackawanna County.*



*Cast to the bank, like this angler on Spring Creek near State College, when the water is high and off-colored. Fish, like the Brown Trout in this stream, avoid heavy currents in the center of the stream and hang in slower waters near the edges.*

## **Fish near the bank in high water**

It is one of the most frustrating parts of fishing on moving water—you pull up to your favorite river, and the water is high and stained, rushing and churning down the channel. Many anglers get frustrated and leave. Some try to fish their same favorite spots, often to no avail. Instead, try a new tactic, and fish the edges. As long as the fish are still able to see your fly or lure, you can have great success in high water. I have great luck casting topwater lures and flies onto the bank and pulling them off to catch big bass and trout when floating rivers all around Pennsylvania. If streams are smaller, cast across high water. Lure fish out with streamers, jigs and crankbaits. Also, try casting upstream and fishing along the bank as you work your flies and lures back down to you.

## **Swing through tailouts**

The section of a pool that gradually shallows before it becomes a riffle is called the “tail” or “tailout” of a pool. Active gamefish often patrol these areas looking for small baitfish and other prey. Tailouts can be challenging to fish due to shallow water. Your flies or lures may snag on rocks. Solve these problems by letting the current in the river or stream work for you. Cast across the current and slightly downstream. Hold your rod tight and low to the water, letting the current catch the line and slowly swim your offering in a broad arc across the shallow area. Lures like floating minnow-shaped crankbaits and light unweighted flies work well for this type of situation. Twitching crankbaits

as they swing or giving crankbaits a small amount of action can elicit savage strikes from trout, bass, pickerel and other fish.

## **Find creek mouths**

If you are having challenges finding active fish in your favorite warmwater river in the summer, try fishing where smaller streams or creeks enter the river. These areas often bring colder water and food into the river, and active fish regularly patrol these areas. Minnow shaped lures and flies are good options to pull fish from these types of locations. If no fish are near the creek mouth, try downstream along the bank below it, where the coldwater influence lingers and can still hold fish for some distance downstream.

## **Fish outside bends**

Where a stream or river curves, the deep portion of the river is called the “outside bend.” Principles of flowing water always bring the stronger flow to this area and remove sediment, deepening the area. These same consistent flows deposit sediment on the smaller “inside bend” of the curve, often making for easy wading or a good spot to anchor your boat on larger rivers. Strong, deep flows bring plenty of food to outside bends, making outside bends prime areas for gamefish to occupy. On rivers and streams that experience lots of erosion, these bends may be full of downed wood, providing good cover for fish. Cast as close to the wood as you can without snagging, and you will have a good shot at hooking up with big fish. ☐





# 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

## Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Report (unaudited)

### EXPENDITURES

#### Fish Fund

Personnel	\$26,894,813
Operating	\$10,492,159
Fixed Assets	\$1,224,329
Grants	\$632,145
<b>Fish Fund Total</b>	<b>\$39,243,446</b>

#### Boat Fund

Personnel	\$9,981,731
Operating	\$3,282,239
Fixed Assets	\$1,289,125
Grants	\$3,266
<b>Boat Fund Total</b>	<b>\$14,556,361</b>

#### Fish Fund & Boat Fund Total

Personnel	\$36,876,544
Operating	\$13,774,398
Fixed Assets	\$2,513,454
Grants	\$635,411
<b>Fish &amp; Boat Fund Total</b>	<b>\$53,799,807</b>

## Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Report (unaudited)

### REVENUE

#### Fish Fund

Licenses & Fees	\$25,030,710
Fines & Penalties	\$264,568
Miscellaneous	\$4,257,220
Federal & State Grants	\$7,869,320
<b>Fish Fund Total</b>	<b>\$37,421,817</b>

#### Boat Fund

Licenses & Fees	\$8,561,552
Fines & Penalties	\$218,091
Miscellaneous	\$6,136,650
Federal & State Grants	\$3,431,197
<b>Boat Fund Total</b>	<b>\$18,347,490</b>

#### Fish Fund & Boat Fund Total

Licenses & Fees	\$33,592,262
Fines & Penalties	\$482,659
Miscellaneous	\$10,393,870
Federal & State Grants	\$11,300,517
<b>Fish &amp; Boat Fund Total</b>	<b>\$55,769,307</b>

## Trout Stocked by PFBC

Trout Species	Lifestage	Amount
Brook Trout	Adult	545,040
	Fingerling	15,000
Brown Trout	Adult	860,590
	Fingerling	340,700
Rainbow Trout	Adult	1,763,285
	Fingerling	383,300
Golden Rainbow Trout	Adult	10,897
<b>Total Trout Stocked by PFBC</b>		<b>3,918,812</b>

## Trout Distributed to Cooperative Nurseries

Trout Species	Lifestage	Amount
Brook Trout	Fingerling to Coops.	164,270
Brown Trout	Fingerling to Coops.	241,550
Rainbow Trout	Fingerling to Coops.	376,750
Golden Rainbow Trout	Fingerling to Coops.	9,945
<b>Total Trout Distributed to Coops.</b>		<b>792,515</b>

**Total Trout Species (Stocked and Distributed) 4,711,327**

## Warmwater/Coolwater Fish Production and Stocking

Species	Lifestage	Amount
American Shad	Fry	832,000
Bluegill	Fingerling	18,400
Bluntnose Minnow	Adult	700
Brown Trout - Erie	Yearling	40,373
Channel Catfish	Fingerling	75,660
Channel Catfish	Yearling	14,405
Fathead Minnow	Adult	7,000
Golden Shiner	Fingerling	48,500
Lake Trout	Fingerling	3,000
Lake Trout	Yearling	78,284
Largemouth Bass	Adult	12
Largemouth Bass	Fingerling	20,416
Muskellunge	Fingerling	111,706
Muskellunge	Yearling	58,550
Northern Pike	Fingerling	3,689
Rainbow Trout - Steelhead	Yearling	1,002,012
Spottail Shiner	Adult	445
Striped Bass	Fingerling	323,202
hybrid Striped Bass	Fingerling	183,000
Tiger Muskellunge	Fingerling	10,900
Tiger Muskellunge	Yearling	9,250
Walleye	Fry	48,586,110
Walleye	Fingerling	1,626,125
White Crappie	Adult	50
Yellow Perch	Fingerling	28,000
<b>Grand Total of all Species</b>		<b>53,081,789</b>

## Website Statistics

### Top Ten Pages by Page View

1. Home - 67,060
2. Trout Stocking Schedules - 66,892
3. Buy a License - 32,857
4. Register/Title a Boat - 22,205
5. Trout Season Overview - 19,703
6. Gone Fishing Pa - 14,156
7. Fishing Regulations - 12,295
8. Best Fishing Waters - 11,295
9. FAQ - Fishing Licenses - 11,257
10. Trout - Pa Fishes - 11,001

### Total Web Page Visits

2,302,795

### Web Page Visits by State

1. Pennsylvania - 1,604,566
2. New York - 131,342
3. District of Columbia - 113,909
4. New Jersey - 87,376
5. Ohio - 52,831
6. Maryland - 26,481
7. Virginia - 24,218
8. Tennessee - 21,756
9. Michigan - 21,500
10. Illinois - 18,010

## Social Media 2019

(1/1/19 to 12/30/19)

### Facebook

Followers (19% increase)	83,703
Posts	902
Impressions	13,665,846
Engagement	561,736

### Twitter

Followers (9% increase)	10,700
Tweets	973
Impressions	1,871,322
Engagement	42,032

### Instagram

Followers (97% increase)	11,100
Posts	175
Impressions	1,017,185
Engagement	N/A

The PFBC social media and mobile app:  
[www.fishandboat.com/socialmedia](http://www.fishandboat.com/socialmedia)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

### STATE HEADQUARTERS

1601 Elmerton Avenue  
 P.O. Box 67000  
 Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000  
 Phone: (717) 705-7800  
 Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
 Monday through Friday

### CENTRE REGION OFFICE

595 East Rolling Ridge Drive  
 Bellefonte, PA 16823  
 Lobby Phone: (814) 359-5124  
 Fisheries Admin. Phone:  
 (814) 359-5110  
 Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
 Monday through Friday

### FISHING LICENSES:

Phone: (877) 707-4085

### BOAT REGISTRATION/TITLING:

Phone: (866) 262-8734

### PUBLICATIONS:

Phone: (717) 705-7835

**BOATING SAFETY  
 EDUCATION COURSES**  
 Phone: (888) 723-4741

**THE PFBC WEBSITE:**  
[www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com)

  
[www.fishandboat.com/socialmedia](http://www.fishandboat.com/socialmedia)

## REGION OFFICES: LAW ENFORCEMENT/EDUCATION

Contact **Law Enforcement** for information about regulations and fishing and boating opportunities.

Contact **Outreach and Education** for information about fishing and boating programs and boating safety education.

### NORTHWEST REGION

11528 State Highway 98, Meadville, PA 16335  
**Law Enforcement:** (814) 337-0444  
**Outreach & Education:** (814) 336-2426  
**Fax:** (814) 337-0579 **Fax:** (814) 337-0579  
**Counties:** Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, Warren

### SOUTHCENTRAL REGION

1704 Pine Road, Newville, PA 17241  
**Law Enforcement:** (717) 486-7087  
**Outreach & Education:** (717) 486-7352  
**Fax:** (717) 486-8227 **Fax:** (717) 486-8227  
**Counties:** Adams, Bedford, Blair, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lebanon, Mifflin, Perry, York

### SOUTHWEST REGION

236 Lake Road, Somerset, PA 15501  
**Law Enforcement:** (814) 445-8974  
**Outreach & Education:** (814) 443-9841  
**Fax:** (814) 445-3497 **Fax:** (814) 445-3497  
**Counties:** Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Somerset, Washington, Westmoreland

### NORTHEAST REGION

5566 Main Road, Sweet Valley, PA 18656  
**Law Enforcement:** (570) 477-5717  
**Outreach & Education:** (570) 477-2206  
**Fax:** (570) 477-3221 **Fax:** (570) 477-2621  
**Counties:** Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Wayne, Wyoming

### NORTHCENTRAL REGION

595 East Rolling Ridge Drive  
 Bellefonte, PA 16823  
**Law Enforcement:** (814) 359-5250  
**Outreach & Education:** (814) 359-5127  
**Fax:** (814) 359-5254 **Fax:** (814) 359-5153  
**Counties:** Cameron, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Jefferson, Lycoming, McKean, Montour, Northumberland, Potter, Snyder, Tioga, Union

### SOUTHEAST REGION

P.O. Box 9, Elm, PA 17521  
**Law Enforcement:** (717) 626-0228  
**Outreach & Education:** (215) 968-3631  
**Fax:** (717) 626-0486 **Fax:** (215) 968-1610  
**Counties:** Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lancaster, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, Philadelphia, Schuylkill

Office hours from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday

## STATE FISH HATCHERIES

- **BELLEFONTE\***  
1115 Spring Creek Road  
Bellefonte, PA 16823  
(814) 355-3371
- **BENNER SPRING**  
1735 Shiloh Road  
State College, PA 16801  
(814) 355-4837
- **OSWAYO\***  
96 State Route 244 East  
Coudersport, PA 16915  
(814) 698-2102
- **REYNOLDSDALE\***  
162 Fish Hatchery Road  
New Paris, PA 15554  
(814) 839-2211
- **CORRY\***  
13365 Route 6  
Corry, PA 16407  
(814) 664-2122
- **HUNTSDALE\***  
195 Lebo Road  
Carlisle, PA 17013  
(717) 486-3419
- **PLEASANT GAP\***  
450 Robinson Lane  
Bellefonte, PA 16823  
(814) 359-5132
- **TIONESTA\***  
172 Fish Hatchery Lane  
Tionesta, PA 16353  
(814) 755-3524
- **FAIRVIEW**  
2000 Lohrer Road  
P.O. Box 531  
Fairview, PA 16415  
(814) 474-1514
- **LINESVILLE\***  
13300 Hartstown Road  
Linesville, PA 16424  
(814) 683-4451
- **PLEASANT MOUNT\***  
229 Great Bend Turnpike  
Pleasant Mount, PA 18453  
(570) 448-2101
- **TYLERSVILLE**  
43 Hatchery Lane  
Loganton, PA 17747  
(570) 725-3965
- **UNION CITY**  
9450 Route 6  
Union City, PA 16438  
(814) 438-2222

\* Includes visitor center. Visitors are welcome  
 from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily.  
 Groups should make advance arrangements.

[www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com)

# The Rehabilitation of Lake Julia



photo-Darl Black

*by Marilyn Black*

As children, both my future husband Darl and I played along and dabbled in Lake Julia within Buhl Park, Mercer County, as do many families today. Although we were not acquainted with one another at the time, we were both well-acquainted with this weedy lake, then called Buhl Lake. Darl would take his fishing rod to pursue bass and panfish. I

preferred observing and catching crayfish, snails, turtles, and frogs. In recent years, we have come to fully appreciate the park founder's foresight and the lake's recent rehabilitation.

Buhl Farm Park was established in 1914 as a long-lasting gift to Shenango Valley communities. Frank H. Buhl and his wife Julia Forker Buhl made the establishment of this park one of the highlights of their many philanthropic activities.

In 1907, this millionaire industrialist couple began acquiring parcels of farm land in Hermitage bordered by Sharon and Sharpsville, assembling 262 acres. They constructed as the park's central feature what became Mrs. Buhl's favorite section—the ponds that later were renamed Lake Julia. The Casino Ballroom was constructed on the lake's eastern shore. Despite being dredged several times, the 7-acre lake gradually became increasingly fertile and shallower.

## Habitat improvement project

In order to comply with upgraded standards for impoundments, it became necessary to rebuild Lake Julia's outflow

photo-the PFEC's Division of Habitat Management



More than a dozen wooden porcupine crib structures were assembled by fifth graders from Farrell and Sharon.



*Spider-hump structures combine rock-rubble humps and wood connectors. This photograph was taken when the habitat improvements were nearly completed.*

dam/structure through which water exits into Thornton Run. Significant federal funding was appropriated for that purpose. Buhl Park management and related resource agencies opted to concurrently conduct major habitat improvements. Its maximum depth is about 11 feet, near the outlet structure. The drawdown took place in 2012, to less than 4 feet. In 2012 and 2013, not only were habitat structures built, but fish populations were also restocked.

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's (PFBC's) Division of Habitat Management coordinated with Buhl Park personnel to assemble numerous partners. Fifth graders from Farrell and Sharon schools built 16 porcupine crib structures that were placed on the lake bed with assistance from Shenango River Watchers and students from Farrell



*Sara Faylo, South Carolina, caught this Bluegill while fishing at Lake Julia with her grandfather, Ed Faylo, Mercer County.*

High School. The United States Army Corps of Engineers furnished heavy equipment while park staff and volunteers constructed spider-hump structures, rock-rubble humps, post stump clusters and rock star structures. Underwater piping was installed to a central oxygenating fountain spray and multiple gurglers.

In 2015, Kraynak's Nursery provided spent evergreen trees to submerge into the area

between the Casino Ballroom and the road atop the dam. Such evergreen trees help produce algae and provide food for aquatic life as well as shade and hiding places for young fish.

Visitors to Lake Julia will notice turtle basking platforms constructed from wood. These platforms provide safe places for turtles to bask away from human disturbance.

## Lake Julia fishery today

When water levels were reestablished in 2013, the PFBC stocked warmwater species including Bluegills and Largemouth Bass, which are now self-sustaining through natural reproduction. Commission biologists conducted follow-up night electrofishing surveys, which revealed more species that either survived the drawdown or were stocked by others. Lake Julia now contains low quantities of Black Crappies, Yellow Perch, Gizzard Shad, Smallmouth Bass, Pumpkinseeds, Green Sunfish, and Yellow Bullheads.

Channel Catfish fingerlings have been stocked into Lake Julia for the past 5 years, and there are annual stockings of Rainbow Trout before and during trout season. In 2019, the PFBC stocked Bluntnose Minnows to boost the forage base and augment the reproducing Gizzard Shad, juvenile Bluegills, and Pumpkinseeds.

Area Fisheries Biologist Tim Wilson's territory includes Lake Julia, where electrofishing surveys targeted Largemouth Bass. "The Largemouth Bass is holding steady in abundance, yielding an electrofishing catch rate of 122 bass per hour in 2018 and 137 bass per hour in 2019. We saw an increase in larger bass from 2018 to 2019. Only 5% of our catch in 2018 was over 12 inches in length, but that improved to 21% being at least 12 inches long in 2019. In 2019, most of the legal Largemouth Bass were 12- to 14-inches with the largest bass captured measuring 15 inches. Anglers report larger ones than we saw during sampling. We expect the expansion of the Gizzard Shad will likely lead to larger and faster growing bass over the next few years," said Wilson.

Wilson continued, "The panfish fishery is almost exclusively Bluegills and Pumpkinseeds. They are both



*This Largemouth Bass from Lake Julia, Mercer County, took a wacky worm cast by Marilyn Black.*

abundant, but there are not many individuals that exceed 6 inches in length. So far, we haven't seen evidence that stocking the Channel Catfish has produced a fishery."

As a regular Stocked Trout Water, Lake Julia is closed to fishing from March 1 to the opening day of trout. The standard Commonwealth Inland Regulations apply the rest of the year.

The PFBC Executive Director designates the Saturday prior to the traditional opening day of trout season as Mentored Youth Trout Day at Lake Julia and other stocked trout waters in the northern 49 counties in Pennsylvania. Youth anglers less than 16 years of age are allowed to fish for trout and

harvest a creel limit of two trout of at least 7 inches, if they have a Mentored Youth Permit or a Voluntary Youth Fishing License and are accompanied by a licensed adult angler who also has a current trout/salmon permit. At Lake Julia, these dates become popular public educational events coordinated by Buhl Park personnel and volunteers from area service organizations. Visit the park's website or call Katie Nowland at 724-981-5522 for more details about youth fishing events.

## Tips for anglers

Previously, fishing in Lake Julia was done only from the shoreline. Currently, kayaks, canoes and stand-up paddle boards are allowed on Lake Julia from 8:00 a.m. until dusk or 8:00 p.m., subject to a few reasonable restrictions. Prior to launching your own watercraft, you must register for a free annual launch permit. Forms are available at the Casino, in the park office, or online at [www.buhlfarmpark.com](http://www.buhlfarmpark.com).

Anglers seeking trout, Bluegills or Pumpkinseeds should use hooks in size 8 or 10. Maggots, mealworms, waxworms or red worms may be used to tip small jigs or bare hooks suspended beneath bobbers.

"Given the size structure of the bass population, slightly downsizing your lure selection will likely improve your catch numbers. The lake gets weedy during the summer, so weedless lures are advisable. Lures that imitate small Bluegills and Gizzard Shad best match the primary food bass are currently utilizing," said Wilson.

A Carolina rig with a buoyant soft plastic lizard or worm works well. Try shallow subsurface crankbaits in shad or Bluegill patterns that run only 3- or 4-feet deep. To achieve longer casts, use buzzbaits or topwater lures. When weeds reach the surface during mid to late summer, throw a floating frog lure.

It is encouraging to see these ponds restored and the fisheries responding to the more active management of these natural resources. In turn, I encourage you to explore this distinctive waterway within this privately-owned park, which the American Planning Association designated as one of the "2018 Great Places in Pennsylvania." □



*A relaxing way to spend a lovely day on Lake Julia, Mercer County.*



# CHEST CREEK, *Cambria County*

*by Ralph Scherder*

*photos by the author*

Chest Creek rises just south of Bradley Junction, Cambria County, and flows in a northerly direction for almost 40 miles before joining the West Branch Susquehanna River near the town of Mahaffey, Clearfield County.

When most people think of this region of the state, quality trout fishing is not typically the first thing that comes to mind. Rather, this is the heart of Pennsylvania's coal country, and with that distinction comes certain drawbacks. History was not kind to many watersheds throughout Pennsylvania, as trade-offs were often made for the sake of progress, and this region was no exception.

According to the Cambria County Conservation District, 66 tributaries flow into Chest Creek. Many of these are unnamed little trickles, but many are also major water sources. A large portion of these tributaries are impacted by huge concentrations of metals, such as iron and aluminum, that get into the water from acid mine drainage. Remediation projects helped alleviate these effects in recent years. As this area of the state continues to recover, the fishing opportunities will improve.

The presence of native Brook Trout is often the baseline used to assess water quality. That is good news for Chest Creek, because Section 1 of the stream (approximately 3.87 miles), from its headwaters to an unnamed tributary



in Bradley Junction, is designated as a Class A Wild Trout stream, based on its Brook Trout population. From there down to its confluence with the West Branch Susquehanna River (approximately 34.2 miles), Chest Creek is stocked with trout by the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission.

Section 3 is my favorite to fish and is managed under Delayed Harvest Artificial Lures Only (DHALO) regulations. This 2.5 miles of stream is also part of the Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters program and receives both spring and fall stockings. To access this stretch, take Route 36 into the town of Patton and turn east onto River Road. Parking is available at the numerous pull-offs along River Road as well as at the bridge on SR 4022 at Thomas Mills, which serves as the lower limit of the DHALO section.

What fascinates me most about Chest Creek is the variety of fishing situations it presents. In some places, it has a classic mountain stream appearance. In other places, it

offers a low gradient, slow water experience. Both require different styles of fishing that keeps me on my toes and changing up methods to find what works.

Recommending patterns or colors to use in certain streams is always difficult. Everybody has their favorites that work for them and that they feel confident using. I have had extraordinary luck on Chest Creek with three colors more than any others: black, chartreuse, and pink. I believe this has to do with water color and clarity (or lack thereof). In the spring and fall, when levels are up a bit, the water has an almost cloudy green appearance, especially in the deeper holes, a common trait of most Cambria County streams.

I also use a lot of flies with sparkle, whether in the form of Krystal Flash or a gold or silver beadhead. Friends who have fished Chest Creek with me have done well with all types of spinners. But, when water levels are up, gold blades typically produce best. Like fly selection, lure selection has a little to do with personal preference and a lot to do with stream conditions.

In most places, Chest Creek is easy to wade with no issues crossing or changing positions to reach certain pockets or runs. I prefer chest waders over hip waders, because chest waders allow me to better access many of the huge, slow-moving pools that can get deep fast. Also, I enjoy fishing Chest Creek early or late in the season, usually in cold weather, so the added warmth of chest waders is appreciated.

Like most streams in this region, you will not find a ton of mayfly activity on Chest Creek. Although I have witnessed sparse emergences of numerous species, caddisflies seem to be the main fare for trout. You can find hatches of tan and spotted caddisflies beginning in April and running through May.

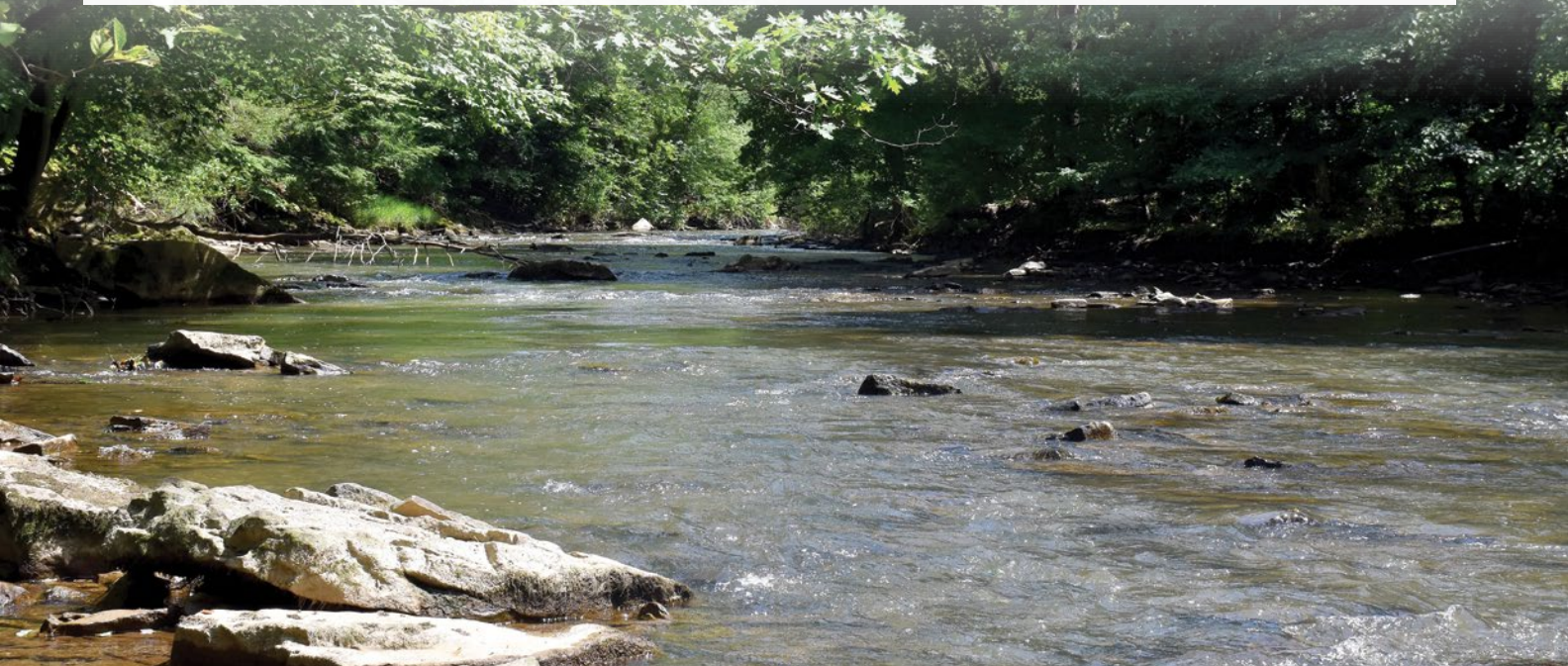
Trout move around a lot in Chest Creek, and it does not take much for fish to end up in secluded pools between



*Greg Harold displays a nice trout he caught on a cold March day on Chest Creek, Cambria County.*

stocking points. If you are with a friend and have two vehicles, you can cover a lot of ground by parking one vehicle at a bridge or other access point several miles downstream of where you want to begin fishing.

There are dozens of stocked and wild trout streams to explore in Cambria County. Chest Creek is only one, but it is one of the best and definitely worth the visit. ☐



*Chest Creek, Cambria County, provides a quality trout fishing experience in a beautiful setting.*

# NOTES *from the Streams*

## Who you gonna call?

During a holiday weekend, I was working in an access area, addressing people who forgot to get kayak permits before bringing the kayaks to the boat launch. While explaining the process for acquiring the permits online, I was approached by a gentleman who had a question for me. He asked what a person should do when they are involved in a boating accident. I replied that I would hope they would call 911 to report it. Then, he said, "Well, I guess I am glad I ran into you today."

He told me that his son was involved in a boating accident the night before. I asked him if anyone was injured. He said no. I asked if any boats or property were damaged, and he said that his boat had a hole in the hull. His son was out on the lake the night before and another boat ran into his boat. I asked if he called anyone. He replied that he considered calling the Communications Center for Luzerne County but did not want to bother them on the 911 line. The following morning, he called the Pennsylvania Game Commission, and they directed him to contact the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC). Then, he called the PFBC's Regional Office, which was closed due to the holiday.

I asked him what he would do if he was traveling on the highway and a car ran into his car. He replied that he would call 911. I asked him why that would not be the same for a boating accident. I think he got my point.

If you are involved in a boat accident and your vessel is damaged, someone is injured, a vessel disappears, or someone dies or is lost, call 911 and report it to the dispatchers, so they can dispatch Waterways Conservation Officers (WCOs) if needed. By timely reporting incidents

to WCOs, we can investigate the accident when the evidence is fresher, and parties are onsite.

If you are unsure of whether or not to report your accident to 911, contact your county's Communication Center on the non-emergency line.

If this happens to you, now you know who to call.—WCO John R. Cummings, Northern Luzerne County.

## He did not want to be rude

While patrolling The Point in Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, a popular boating area for both powered and non-powered boats, with WCO Matthew Raetsch, I observed two kayaks traveling up the Allegheny River portion. WCO Raetsch maneuvered our patrol boat into an area, so I could talk to the kayak operators. When I was close enough, I asked the gentlemen, "May I see your life jacket?" The men replied that they did not have life jackets. So, I provided life jackets that we generally carry onboard for such an occasion.

Then, I directed the men to shore. After speaking to the two

kayak operators, one of the operators acknowledged that he had a life jacket, but he left it in his car. I asked, "If you had one, why didn't you bring it?" The man replied that when he realized his friend did not have a life jacket, he did not want to bring his life jacket, because he did not want to make his friend feel bad. Well, at least he was trying to be polite, but you should always wear your life jacket when on the water.—WCO Michael Johnson, Central Allegheny County.

## Duck for breakfast?

As I walked a local trout stream on an early morning patrol, I observed a duck flying across the creek. The duck landed on a nearby hillside. A red fox was nearby, and it seemed interested in having fresh duck for breakfast. With lightning speed, the fox was on the heels of the duck, nipping at its tail feathers. Surprisingly, the duck was fast enough to keep just out of reach of the fox and flew back across the creek to safety. It is amazing the things that our natural resources offer in the "survival of the fittest" game of life.—WCO Darrin W. Kephart, Southern York County.

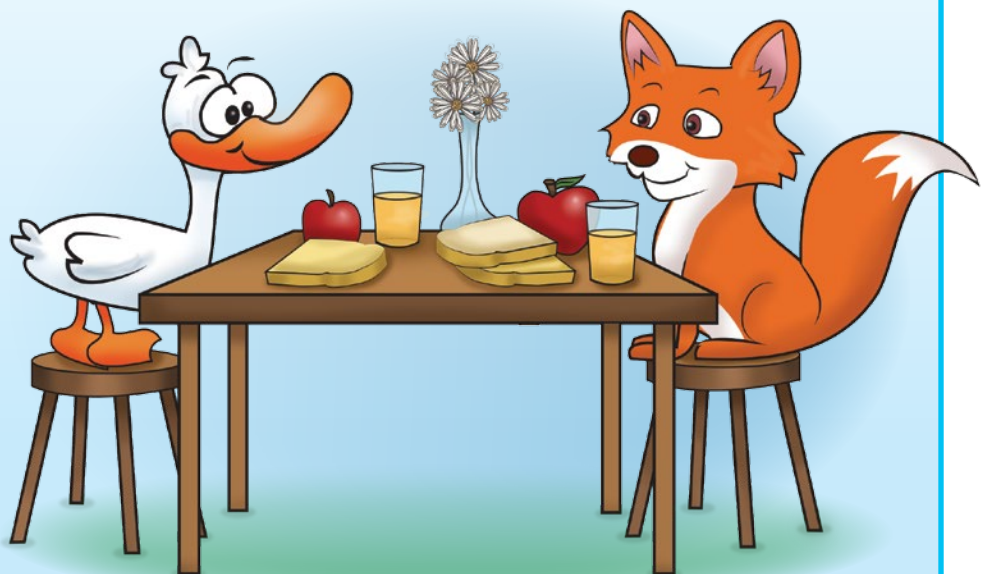


illustration-Andrea Feeney



## A fine education

I was on boat patrol on Blue Marsh Lake, Berks County, with WCO Pisko and WCO Rhoades. While dealing with the operator of a personal watercraft (PWC) on the shoreline at Dry Brooks Day Use Area, we noticed another violation about to take place. Before the individual on the PWC went further out on the water, we called him over to our boat. We informed the individual that his life jacket did not appear to be an approved type and that he needed to wear a proper life jacket. The individual was confused about what we meant by wearing a proper life jacket. While I held the PWC alongside our boat, WCO Pisko and WCO Rhoades educated the individual about the United States Coast Guard label on life jackets. He took off the life jacket to read the label. The individual understood, returned to shore and beached the PWC. He immediately gathered his friends to check all of the life jackets, some of which were not the approved type. Luckily for the group, the Army Corps had additional loaner life jackets available for use, so their day of boating was not cut short, and they now understood the importance of having the proper life jacket type and size.—*WCO Travis Miller, Lehigh County.*

## The smart one

While patrolling a tributary of the Delaware River, a Deputy Waterways Conservation Officer and I spotted three individuals at a popular fishing spot. Two of the men, brothers, were fishing and the third was not. This man was just hanging out with his buddies. As we approached the group, in order to start a conversation, I asked the third man if he was fishing. “I do not have my fishing license yet, and I am not stupid enough to fish without one,” said the man. Unfortunately, his two friends, the brothers, did not take the same approach. They were fishing without licenses. According to the anglers, they were going to buy fishing licenses the following week. Always buy your license before fishing. It is the law.—*WCO Michael Blair, Southern Bucks County.*

## The first time and the last time

While checking some anglers at a local rod and gun club, I spoke to a gentleman from Lancaster, Lancaster County. The gentleman, like many others who are not local to the area, have been fishing a certain creek due to upstream flooding at a “pay to fish” business, resulting in quite a few trophy-sized trout washing downstream. During our conversation, he asked me if the stream was still going to be stocked by the PFBC. I replied that it was still going to be stocked and gave him the date of the upcoming stocking. He replied, “there are too many fish in here already, it does not need to be stocked.” I chuckled and told him he was the first (and probably the last) person to tell me there were too many trout in a stream and not to stock more trout in it.—*WCO Troy Merrell, Berks County.*

## Mission accomplished

I often get asked what I enjoy most about being a WCO. I love being in nature and being a part of conserving resources, but my favorite part of my job happens every now and then.

I was patrolling a lake and noticed three individuals on the shoreline. I made my way to the group. A man and woman were sitting on a blanket with a boy, about 10-years-old, who was 20 yards away with a fishing rod in his hand. I walked to the boy and asked if he had any luck. He quietly said no. I looked at his rod and could see why. The hook was huge with a piece of plastic worm on it, and a bobber was attached to the line, touching the hook. I asked to look in his tackle box. He did not have much to work with. Finding a smaller hook and a splitshot, I had the rod ready for action in a few minutes. We flipped a few logs and found bait. I suggested he cast near the lily pads. He made a good cast and in under a minute, the bobber was under the water. When he reeled in a Bluegill, he began yelling, “Mom, Mom” and took off running to her. He could not wait to

show her the fish he caught. Mission accomplished. I continued down the shoreline feeling like a hero.—*WCO Jeremiah D. Allen, Beaver County.*

## You’re stocking what?

March and April in Pennsylvania brings one the busiest times for WCOs. Being in charge of stocking trout in lakes and streams requires extra preparation prior to arriving to ensure water and road conditions are favorable, determining number of stops, managing the volunteer stocking, and making sure everything is done to promote safety.

Some things are out of our control, such as what WCO Christman relayed to me during a preseason stream stocking. WCO Christman went to the water’s edge to check on the welfare of the recently deposited trout. Peering into the water, WCO Christman saw a creature half-buried in the bottom. Not sure exactly what it was—only a tail and a foot were visible—he apprehensively reached into the water. He extracted a child’s dinosaur toy (pictured below).

Ever the comedian, WCO Christman immediately brought the dinosaur toy back to the distribution truck and confronted our fish culturist, surrounded by an audience, wanting to know what they were raising at that hatchery.

While WCOs may get accused of doing many things, I am sure stocking dinosaurs has not previously been on that list.—*Sergeant Bryan Bendock, Northeast Region Law Enforcement Office.*



photo: Sergeant Bryan Bendock



# Hiking Pennsylvania in Search of Wild Trout

*by Nathan Woleslagle*

*photos by the author*

Pennsylvania contains an abundance of wild trout streams and hiking trails to access these streams. Hiking the Appalachian Mountains in search of wild trout is an adventure for any angler in Pennsylvania. Hiking to access streams often deters heavy angling pressure, so the fishing is excellent. Grab your backpack, lace up your boots, and rig your rod. Let's hit the trail and catch some trout.

Before venturing out to trout fish, it is crucial to lay out a plan and conduct research, especially if you plan on accessing a stream for the first time. The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Interactive Trout Stream Maps are a valuable resource to reference as the maps show access to streams through public land, as well as their classification for wild trout. Researching access before arriving to the stream will help you find a trail.

A great stream classification to consider when researching a stream

to fish is Wilderness Trout Streams. This classification consists of remote streams showcasing wild trout fisheries. Most Wilderness Trout Streams require hiking down a trail for access. In many instances, the further you hike, the better the fishing. Do not be afraid to burn some boot leather and get way back in on Wilderness Trout Streams.

While there are probably too many streams to count that require hiking access, I will name three of my favorite streams. The first is Shaeffer Run, Perry County. This small mountain stream is a gem for native Brook Trout. Shaeffer Run flows through the Tuscarora State Forest. While it can be accessed by scrambling through mountain laurel off of



*The author with a native Brook Trout from Apple Tree Hollow.*

several state forest roads, there is an established hiking trail that leads in and out of it. To access the trail and stream, park at the bridge on Couch Road.

My close second favorite stream to hike and fish is Rock Run, Ralston. A trail is accessible off Rock Run Road within the Loyalsock State Forest. There are three access points: the lower falls, middle falls, and upper falls. All three of these

access areas are within the McIntyre Wild Area. You may hike the entire section of the stream from the lower falls to the upper falls and fish along the way. The hiking is worth it as Rock Run contains wild Brown Trout, native Brook Trout, stocked Rainbow Trout that occasionally immigrate from nearby stocked trout streams, and stunning waterfalls accompanied by crystal clear water. This stream produces well for fly anglers in the summer when trout are feeding heavily on terrestrial insects such as grasshoppers.

My third favorite stream, or streams in this case, to hike into is a series of tributaries to Slate Run, Lycoming County. While Slate Run itself is easily accessed from Slate Run Road, the headwaters of Slate Run are made up of several smaller tributary streams that require hiking to access. The Cushman Branch, Francis Branch and Apple Tree Hollow flow into Slate Run. All three hold plenty of wild trout consisting of mainly native Brook Trout, but Brown Trout are present as well. Because hiking to fish these tributaries is required, fishing pressure is light, and the trout are often persuaded to bite.



*A wild Brown Trout from Rock Run, Lycoming County.*


If you are looking to explore and discover new streams, certain portions of Pennsylvania are better than others. Centre, Clinton, and Potter counties contain a large quantity of Class A Wild Trout Streams and naturally reproducing wild trout streams. The majority of these streams are located within public land, so hiking to access these streams is a legal and an ideal method for fishing. Another portion of the state to consider is northwestern Pennsylvania in Warren and Forest counties.

Within Warren and Forest counties is the Allegheny National Forest. The Allegheny National Forest is full of hiking trails and trout streams.

I am an advocate of hiking to streams to fish. It is great exercise and a ton of fun when others tag along for the adventure. The scenery is stunning, such as the falls on Rock Run, and the fishing tends to be worth the effort. Make sure to always inform others of what trails you will be hiking and what stretches of stream you plan to fish before heading out. Pick a stream, find a trail, wet a line, catch a trout, and enjoy what Pennsylvania is all about. ☑



*Hiking through the Appalachian Mountains offers stunning scenery and productive trout streams.*



# 2020

## Adult Trout Stocking Program Changes

*by David Nihart*  
*PFBC Fisheries Biologist*

photo-the PFBC archives

Changes for the 2020 trout season include extensions of stocked stream sections and the addition, reinstatement, or removal of waters to the stocking program. Also, new for 2020, anglers will notice an increased number of large 14- to 20-inch brood trout and golden rainbow trout stocked in some of their favorite waters. Twice as many brood trout and nearly 40% more golden rainbow trout will be stocked across the Commonwealth, resulting in more opportunities for anglers to catch a “trophy fish” in 2020. This year, some waters will receive golden rainbow trout during the inseason stocking period.

Anglers will continue to see a reduction in the number of Brook Trout stocked throughout the Commonwealth. The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) hatcheries shifted production to more Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout to optimize the quality of stocked trout fishing in Pennsylvania in support of innovative stocking and management strategies: [www.fishandboat.com/Fish/Stocking/Documents/TroutStocking-FactSheet.pdf](http://www.fishandboat.com/Fish/Stocking/Documents/TroutStocking-FactSheet.pdf).

Additional information regarding Pennsylvania’s trout fishing opportunities is detailed on the PFBC’s website at [www.fishandboat.com/Fish/PennsylvaniaFishes/Trout/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.fishandboat.com/Fish/PennsylvaniaFishes/Trout/Pages/default.aspx).

### **Stocking extensions and waters added or reinstated to the stocking program**

Each year, the PFBC adjusts its adult stocking program based on several factors. A waterway may be added, extended, reinstated, or removed depending on existing or pending changes to angler access, changes to destinations on streams managed for wild trout populations, water quality issues that may threaten the survival of stocked trout, and maintenance performed to dams and other infrastructure that result in the drawdown of impoundments or decreased water flow.

#### **Chapman Dam Reservoir, Warren County**

Adult trout stocking will be reinstated on this 68-acre impoundment following the completion of maintenance and repairs to the dam and spillway. The lake will be stocked during the preseason, inseason, and winter stocking periods.

#### **Cold Stream, Centre County**

Due to an increase in accessibility, the stocked portion of the stream was extended 0.3-mile upstream. The revised stocking limits will extend for 1.3 miles from the State Game Lands boundary downstream to the inflow of Cold Stream Dam.

### **Deer Creek, Allegheny County**

Due to an increase in accessibility, the stocked portion of the stream was extended 0.3-mile downstream. The revised stocking limits will extend for 6.8-miles from the lower Rose Ridge golf property boundary downstream to 0.9 km below Rich Hill (T-662) road bridge.

### **Donegal Lake, Westmoreland County**

Adult trout stocking will be reinstated on this 90-acre impoundment following the completion of maintenance and repairs to the dam. The lake will be stocked during the preseason, inseason, and fall stocking periods.

### **East Fork Sinnemahoning Creek, Potter County**

An inseason stocking will be added to the 6.4-mile section of stream extending from Mud Lick Run downstream to the mouth. Formerly, this water had been stocked on a preseason only basis.

### **Minsi Lake, Northampton County**

Adult trout stocking will be reinstated on this 122-acre impoundment following the completion of maintenance and repairs to the dam. The lake will be stocked during the preseason, inseason, and fall stocking periods.

### **Swift Run, Snyder County**

Due to an increase in accessibility, the stocked portion of the stream was extended 0.8-mile upstream. The revised stocking limits will extend for 2.0 miles from Sandhill Road downstream to the mouth. An inseason stocking will be added to this water. Formerly, this water had been stocked on a preseason only basis.

## **Waters removed from the stocking program**

When survey data suggests that a waterway is no longer suitable for adult trout stocking based on a loss of angler access, environmental factors, or designation as a Class A wild trout stream, the PFBC makes every attempt to reallocate fish to a comparable location nearby. When inadequate angler access is the reason for a removal, locations are monitored for improvement, so these waters can be considered for reinstatement to the stocking program if access is improved.

### **Akeley Run, Warren County**

An increase in landowner posting has led to the removal of trout stocking from a 2.3-mile section of stream extending from the confluence of Reynolds and Priest Hollow runs downstream to Widdlefield Run. Formerly, this water was stocked on a preseason only basis. Fish previously stocked in this stream will now be stocked in Jackson Run, Warren County.

### **Brooks Run, Cameron County**

Based on the presence of a Class A wild Brook Trout population, trout stocking will be discontinued in favor of wild trout management on the section of stream extending

from the State Forest road bridge 1.8 miles upstream of the mouth downstream to the mouth. Formerly, this water was stocked in both the preseason and inseason stocking periods. Fish previously stocked in this stream will now be stocked in First Fork Sinnemahoning Creek, Cameron and Potter counties.

### **East Fork Sinnemahoning Creek, Potter County**

Based on the presence of a Class A wild Brown Trout population, trout stocking will be discontinued in favor of wild trout management on the 3.3-mile section of stream extending from Dolliver Trail downstream to Wild Boy Run. Formerly, this water was stocked in both the preseason and inseason stocking periods. Fish previously stocked in this stream will now be stocked in the following Cameron and Potter county waters: East Fork Sinnemahoning Creek, Section 05 and First Fork Sinnemahoning Creek.

Based on the presence of a Class A wild Brown Trout population, trout stocking will be discontinued in favor of wild trout management on the 1.2-mile section of stream extending from Camp Run downstream to Mud Lick Run. Formerly, this water was stocked on a preseason only basis. Fish previously stocked in this stream will now be stocked in the following Cameron and Potter county waters: East Fork Sinnemahoning Creek, Section 05 and First Fork Sinnemahoning Creek.

### **Sheppard-Meyers Reservoir, York County**

This 47-acre impoundment will be removed from the adult trout stocking program due to a complete drawdown of the reservoir to allow for maintenance and repairs to the dam and the spillway. Formerly, this water was stocked on a preseason only basis. Repairs are scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2022, and the reservoir will be reinstated to the adult trout stocking program when conditions allow following refill.

### **Swift Run, Snyder County**

Based on the presence of a Class A wild Brown Trout population, trout stocking will be discontinued in favor of wild trout management on the 3.8-mile section of stream extending from the unnamed tributary at river-mile 6.78 downstream to T-469 bridge. Formerly, this water was stocked in both the preseason and inseason stocking periods. Fish previously stocked in this stream will now be stocked in Swift Run, Section 04 and Middle Creek, Snyder County.

### **Whipple Lake, Huntingdon County**

This 22-acre impoundment will be removed from the adult trout stocking program due to a complete drawdown of the lake to allow for dredging and maintenance to the dam. Formerly, this water was stocked in both the preseason and inseason stocking periods. Maintenance is scheduled to be completed in fall 2020, and the lake will be reinstated to the adult trout stocking program when conditions allow following refill. □

# European Influence Still Works for Thomas Fishing Lures

handmade fishing lures and dies by pounding metal with a hammer and perfected the designs in Rocky Mountain trout waters. His lures caught on,” said Ridd.

“When Shubert moved back to New York City, the family opened a shop on the Lower East Side, based on the sales successes he achieved in Montana,” said Ridd.

Of the first lures Richard Shubert developed was the Thomas Buoyant patented in 1946 as “a Fish Bait Spinner.” The buoyant is still the most popular of the Thomas lures and manufactured in four different sizes and 22 different color patterns.

There was some family wealth, and Richard’s mother purchased a lakefront property on Lake Wallenpaupack in the early 1950s. “Once she saw the beauty of the area and all it had to offer, the nearby Delaware and Lackawaxen rivers and the 5,700-acre Lake Wallenpaupack, I think she decided it was a better place to have a lure company than in Manhattan,” said Ridd. “Richard was getting much too involved in the social life in New York City, and she wanted to get him more concentrated on the business.”

“While I would say that 1946 is the unofficial beginning of the company, they incorporated in New York in 1952 before moving the company into this building in Hawley in 1960,” said Ridd.

Shubert had a goal to retire at age 65. “He had a mantra that he was going to retire at age 65 no matter what. So, in 1985, he let the company go. My dad, a banker in the area and one of the few people who got along with the eccentric Shubert, approached him about purchasing the company.

My dad took a leap of faith and bought the company, knowing I had some prior manufacturing experience. My then-current employer wanted to move me to another location. My dad knew I did not want to move. He said, ‘I am a banker, you run



photo-Alex Zidock Jr.

*by Alex Zidock Jr.*

On the Eagle Watch Bus Tour, the Delaware Highlands Conservancy guide explains bald eagles congregate at the confluence of the Lackawaxen and Delaware rivers because of the clean water abundant with fish, surrounding expansive forests and comfortable living space. For somewhat the same reasons, a concerned mother moves her son from the big city to rural Wayne County to foster his lure-making business.

“The story starts with the birth of Richard Shubert in 1920,” said Peter Ridd, owner of Thomas Fishing Lures, Hawley, Wayne County. “He was born in the United States, but his mother was married to a Czech immigrant, and they moved back to Czechoslovakia. When Shubert was 14, he was sent to a technology school in Austria and trained as an apprentice tool and die maker. When he was about 18 years old, World War II was about to start, so he and his mother moved back to the United States. Shubert once told me when he arrived in New York, he could not speak English. And, when his mother asked him what he wanted to do, he said he was going to make fishing lures. So, she sent him to live with a relative in Montana, where for 8 years, he was tutored in English. Shubert



photo-Peter Ridd Archives

*Richard Shubert with some of his original European-style lures he perfected more than 60 years ago.*

the business.' I took it and ran with it and bought the company from my father. Thirty-five years later, we are profitable and we continue to meet increasing demands for our products," said Ridd.

There are 20 basic designs that Shubert developed before his retirement that Peter Ridd has turned into 325 different lures or SKUs. Retailers are responsible for selling about a half-million lures a year. Western states, where Richard Shubert developed the original designs nearly 75 years ago, still account for over half of the yearly sales. "Marketed as trout and salmon lures, they have caught everything from panfish to Northern Pike and some saltwater species too," said Ridd. "Our lures are sold throughout the United States, Canada, and several foreign countries, including Russia."

At one time, all of the base colors were silk-screened one color at a time, then colors were airbrushed, and later the company advanced to pad printing. Currently, the company is using a UV laser printer that allows increased production doing 154 lures of any pattern at one time.

"I am a firm believer in 'Made in the United States,' and since I am a lifelong Wayne County resident, I am a steadfast believer in 'Made in PA' as well," said Ridd. "In my personal experience, I purchase 'Made in America' products as much as I can, and I am willing to pay more for those products as well, because typically, they are a much better product."

"Part of the sales agreement Shubert made with my father was that he would stay around to teach me the intricacies of lure making. He lived on-site for 9 years before his passing. Looking back, while diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic,

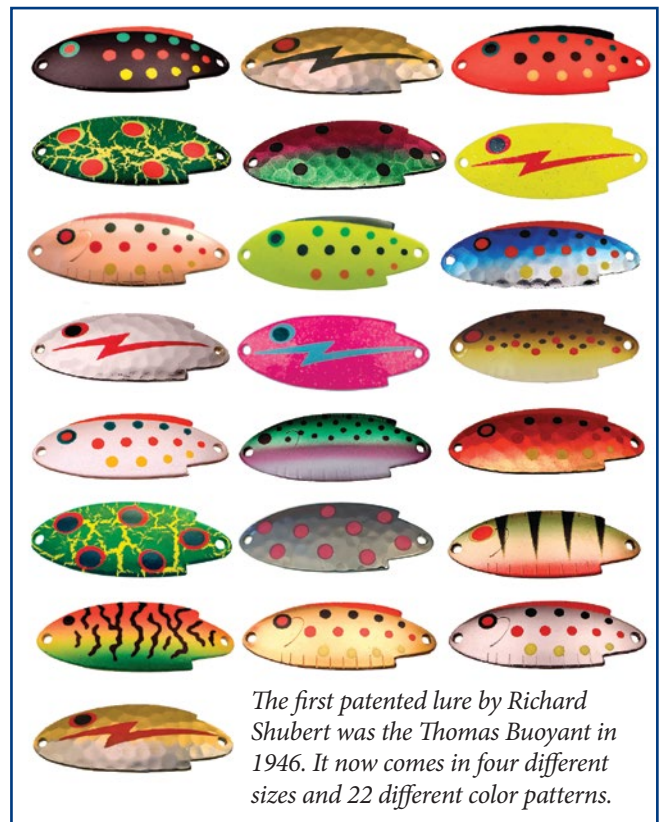


Peter Ridd, owner of Thomas Fishing Lures, holds the original patent granted to Richard Shubert in 1946 for what is now the Thomas Buoyant.

Richard Shubert was a genius," said Ridd. "He could write in six or seven different languages, he was a master die maker, and he understood what attracted fish to strike a lure. I learned a lot from him, and one thing, in particular, was there is no need to change the basic designs he developed 70 years ago, because these designs are still the go-to lure for many anglers, and they catch fish," said Ridd. □



A tray of 154 buoyant lures comes out of the laser printer.



The first patented lure by Richard Shubert was the Thomas Buoyant in 1946. It now comes in four different sizes and 22 different color patterns.

### Thomas Fishing Lures

www.thomaslures.com

E-mail: info@thomaslures.com

# High Water— the New Norm for Spring Trout



by *Vic Attardo*      photos by the author

During the last few years, we have been in an extended period of high water in the spring. I spent many late nights tying “high water flies” for myself and friends, so our patterns matched the conditions. Using high water fishing techniques worked much better than ignoring the situation.

To prepare for high water again this spring, consider ways to improve your catch. To clarify, I am not talking about high, muddy water. If you are standing ankle deep in a stream and cannot see your feet, catching trout is almost impossible. However, if the water is clear or you can see the bottom at knee-depth, the following fishing tips will help.

When fishing high water, the color, size and speed of the flies you are using is important.

When fishing streamers in high water, I use ones that do not rush by sitting fish. Streamers made with little weight or made without water absorbing materials are not good in high water. Instead, I prefer streamers solidly front-ended



*Absorbent materials for streamers include (clockwise from the top left): barred marabou, rabbit fur zonker strip, coneheads, marabou dun and brown, and sculpin wool.*

with weight and constructed with a heavier material such as rabbit fur, marabou, goat hair, wool or similar materials that can be worked slowly, not bucktail or slick synthetics.

My best high, stained water fly is a brown all-marabou streamer. I add a gold conehead to it in water deeper than 3 feet. This fly is tied with a marabou tail and a semi-fat dubbed marabou body. It is a mess to make, but it works.

For high and clear water, I use all-marabou grey/white, barred olive, orange, and black streamers. When water is over 3-feet deep, I use a conehead with it. Patterns such as Slump Busters, Moldy Burnt Toast, Zonkers and Matukas are high water workers.

The goal is to present a broad profile fly that can be worked with small steps. I do not use bucktail streamers





*Fishing high water in the spring requires special skills, which may include high-sticking with multiple nymphs.*



*Goat hair, available in patches or clumps, is an excellent absorbent material spun and dubbed for a dense body.*

that will not absorb water and will be rapidly pushed by the current. Instead, the fly should dip and dive with lots of inherent action with its material filaments waving all over the place.

Do not expect trout to chase a streamer far in high water. Instead, make presentations that put the fly at full profile in all the little creases, divots, doorstops, and current seams. In high water, trout will be hiding behind structure. Do not make the fish come out—let the fish hit at home.

If you are tying nymphs, make the bodies with water absorbing materials—materials that the water can be squeezed out of when the flies are pulled from the stream. Flies built like this will bounce and drag. Stoneflies and burrowing nymphs using leech yarn, mohair, and raffia work well. If the fly sinks like a dish cloth, it is probably better for high water.

With nymphs in high water, use two or three flies on your leader. A double or triple nymph rig gives the trout multiple looks, adds weight to the leader without using excessive splitshot and slows the presentation.

Multi-nymphs give you the ability to work a vertical line—high sticking the flies through a wide space in the water column. This is an excellent presentation for working slowly through fast water.

Good fly choices are a size 8 to 10 stonefly, dragonfly or hexagina nymph as the bottom or point fly, followed by a size 12 or 14 beadhead Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear or Prince Nymph in the middle, and the top fly is a size 16 or 18 beadhead Pheasant Tail Nymph.

This triple set used to be called a “cast.” It used classic wet flies made with feather wings. If you can work classic flies with a slow presentation, high-profile flies are effective in high water. However, if you cannot drag the “cast,” go with the weighted, more modern flies.

During hatch times when the water is high, go where the trout are rising and offer duplicates of what fish are taking. However, in high water, trout will not often favor the faster water for rising. So, look for fish in slow currents and be aware that “foam is home.” ☐



*Absorbent materials for nymphs include (clockwise from the top left): leech yarn, swiss straw, beads, mohair, and variegated mohair.*



# The Wild Brook Trout Experience

*by John Allen*

*photos by the author*

Who doesn't love aggressive fish? Who doesn't love having an entire stream all to yourself? Who doesn't enjoy seeing vibrantly-colored fish? Who doesn't love soaking in all the sights a day in the wilderness brings? Who wouldn't love to capture all of this in one day on the water, because this is what the wild Brook Trout experience is all about in Pennsylvania?

I often get asked, "Why chase such a small fish?" This argument usually tends to lean towards the better fighting and bigger options found in Pennsylvania. I always respond it is not about the fish itself, it is the experience that is so enjoyable. As a fly angler, there is no better way to practice casting in tight situations. Assuming you choose a Class A stream, you should have a legitimate opportunity to catch over 10 trout per hour of fishing. So, what you may not find in size, you most likely find in volume.

The two best parts of wild Brook Trout are its amazing coloring and the aggressive strikes these fish will give you on a dry fly. Along with

plenty of casting practice, you will also get a lot of practice at setting a hook on rising trout.

A typical wild Brook Trout outing consists of finding a stretch of stream at least one-quarter mile long. This gives me plenty of water to fish. If the fishing is not good, I leave after I cover about 200 yards. Then, I turn to my predetermined backup plan. Once I finally get to a stream with fish that are willing to cooperate, the rest is the true experience.



*Wild Brook Trout live in beautiful places.*



*Wild trout fishing becomes a rhythm. Before you know it, you will be burning through the stream subconsciously.*

I break the stream down into pools by current breaks. Everything in between is fishable water. I always make my first cast in the back half of the pool. If that does not drum up a strike, then I will make a cast to the head of the pool. I usually aim for either the right or left side of the inflowing run. For the next cast, I go to the other side. After three or four pools, it becomes a rhythm. Before you know it, you are burning through each hole subconsciously. There are few things in life that clear my mind better than a trip on a wild Brook Trout stream.

The real addiction sets in when that first Brook Trout runs out and smashes your fly within milliseconds of hitting the surface. This is where having a lightweight rod is important. If you are throwing a 5-weight rod and slinging these fish across the surface with each hookset, you are missing out on a significant portion of the fun. If you use a 3-weight rod or lighter rod, these fish can be an absolute blast to fight.

After a day of catching Brook Trout between 4- and 7-inches, you may find yourself thinking that maybe this is not for me. That is until you hook into a 10-inch wild

Brook Trout. It will seem like a giant compared to what you have been catching. After catching a handful of larger trout, you will understand the size of these fish is all relative. It is like catching a 12-inch bass vs. a 20-inch bass. Catching a bunch of 12-inch bass on 6-pound-test line is fun, but throw a 20-inch bass into the mix, and it will be all you think about for the next week.

Catching trout may make for a nice day, but in my opinion, spending a day wandering through a trout stream deep within the wilds of Pennsylvania is one of the most soothing experiences you will encounter. Between the ever-humming flow of the stream and its never ending bends, there is always so much wonder when going through one of these streams. I find myself pausing between pools to take in the scenery around me. I often see other types of wildlife using the creek. Usually, it is a mixture of deer and squirrels, but I have seen bears, beavers, elk, fishers, grouse, and turkeys. Being deep in the woods, the sightings are often different from what you may encounter elsewhere. Many times, the flow of the stream masks your sounds, and the wildlife does not detect your presence. This is another

moment where I find myself just taking it in. It does not matter if I am going to see 200 more deer this year, this experience is still special to me. Add in the streamside spring flora and fall leaves, and you realize that wild Brook Trout live in beautiful places.

What wild Brook Trout lack in size, these fish make up for in strength. But, for most wild trout anglers, this is not the main reason they pursue these fish. Until you have fished a wild Brook Trout stream, you will not truly understand what it means to have the wild Brook Trout experience. ☐



*What wild Brook Trout lack in size, the fish make up for in strength.*

# Getting Jiggy with Trout



*by Jeff Wolesslagle*

*photos by the author*

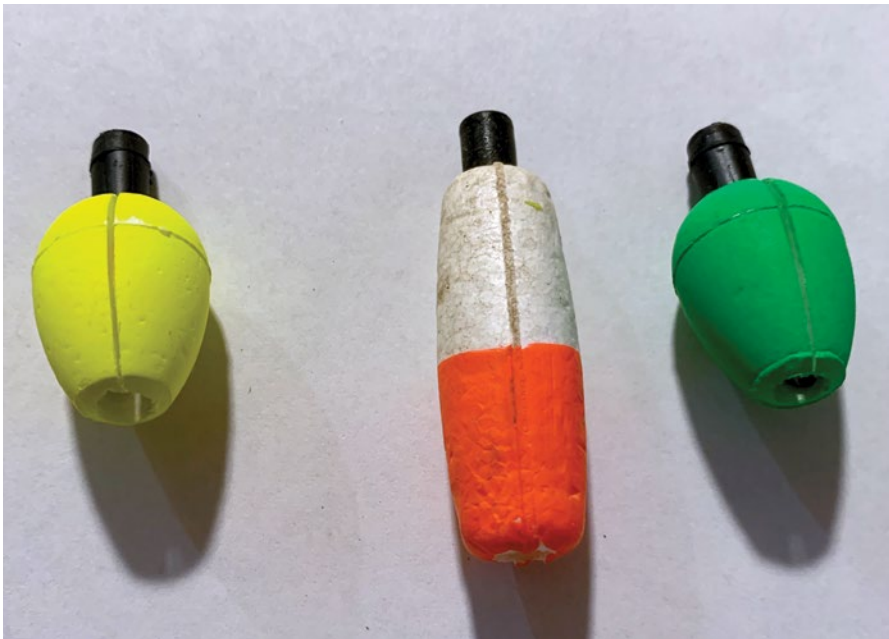
To say I was frustrated would be an understatement. The water was low and clear, and the trout were completely uncooperative. Every bait I presented was turned away, no matter how much of a natural drift I was able to present. Figuring I had nothing to lose, I tied on a small, white micro jig and casted upstream of a pod of fish that were facing into the current. The small bait landed with a subtle disturbance to the surface of the water that was not enough to disturb the trout. I gave the jig one short hop, and it was aggressively rushed by one of the lead fish. I set the hook into a fat Rainbow Trout that immediately went airborne as it attempted to throw the hook. Upon bringing the fish to the net, I was not sure at that point if it was just a rare occurrence or if other fish would respond to the lure. At the next bend in the creek, that question was answered when I tied into a respectable Brown Trout. I landed six trout that morning and lost a few others. It was obvious to me at that point that jigs would always have a place in my trout fishing vest.

In my jig fishing for trout, I prefer spinning rods in the 7-foot range in light- to ultra-light action, matched with the appropriately sized reel and spooled with 4- or 6-pound-test monofilament or fluorocarbon line. I opt for shorter rods in the 6-foot range on smaller streams where shoreline cover is dense. Fluorocarbon line tends to sink



*This Brown Trout was holding near an undercut bank and darted out to take a jig.*

faster than monofilament line, so anglers should adjust the retrieve accordingly. Fluorocarbon line has less stretch than monofilament line, so it allows for quicker hooksets and is less visible to fish in low, clear water.



*A trout jig drifted below a small float can be productive.*

There are a variety of ways to fish small jigs for trout. Casting upstream and across the current and working the jig back with short hops can be productive. I try a slow retrieve at first. If that does not work, I speed the pace of my hops and retrieve. Jigs do not have much natural action or movement, so it is up to the angler to impart that movement with the rod tip. Sometimes, simply drifting the jig with or without a small float can be effective as well.



*The author caught this trio of trout all on jigs.*

One of my largest wild Brown Trout last season hit a jig drifting with the current suspended about 14 inches below a small float. Just like a fly angler fishing a nymph with a strike indicator, an angler should watch the float closely for any odd movements or sudden stops and set the hook immediately. Jigs seem to work best in clear to moderately stained water. Generally speaking, in clear water, smaller jigs tend to be more effective than larger ones. In stained water, larger and darker colored jigs are usually more productive. When trout fishing, stealth is important. Precise casts made from a distance and that produce little disturbance to the water are often critical to jig fishing success.

Fish jigs around large rocks, near brush, and the head and tails of long pools. Key in on areas where the current makes a sharp bend, as trout will often congregate in these feeding lanes. Also look for undercut banks and submerged logs as they serve as good ambush points and often hold fish. Jigs are great baits for pockets of deeper water in between runs in streams as well.

Jigs that tempt trout are made by a variety of manufacturers and come in an array of designs and colors.

I like  $\frac{1}{16}$ -ounce all the way down to  $\frac{1}{64}$ -ounce jigs, and I have experienced success on a variety of styles. Soft plastic and synthetic jigs can be effective, but anglers should not overlook small marabou jigs as well as ones tied with other natural materials. My "go to" color is white, but black, brown, chartreuse, purple, bubble gum, and clear are also productive. Some jigs have small, compact bodies resembling aquatic insect life that is naturally occurring in a stream. Other jigs are long and slender and are meant to look like both earthworms and aquatic worms while still others resemble small baitfish. It pays to experiment with the jig design, color, size and retrieve until you figure out what presentation is best. The beauty of fishing jigs is that they may be fished fast or slow and in shallow or deep water, depending on the conditions. Often, when it seems as though trout have grown accustomed to just about every type of bait and presentation, these fish will respond to a jig.

The next time trout are reluctant to bite, try getting jiggy. ☐

# Life Jackets for Fishing



**by Jeff Knapp**

*photos by the author*

It is important to wear a life jacket while fishing from a boat, especially during the colder months of spring, fall, and winter. It is well documented that wearing a life jacket increases the odds of surviving an unplanned plunge into the water, particularly when the effect of coldwater immersion is in play. The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) estimates that 80% of drownings could have been prevented had the victim been wearing a life jacket.

So, why don't folks always wear a life jacket? I suspect 9 out of 10 would respond that life jackets are too constricting, uncomfortable, and/or hot. While that may have been somewhat true in the past, boaters now have a wide variety of styles and models to choose from, nullifying such an argument.

Over the years, I have experimented with a wide variety of life jacket designs, some of which I liked, others not so much. Here is what I have garnered from those experiences.

Flotation life jackets marketed as fishing life jackets are not my first choice. In general, there are too many pockets. The pockets are not so much the issue but rather the zippers. Zipper pulls have an uncanny way of snagging fishing line. Somehow, the line from the rod finds its way behind the slim opening where the pull attaches to the zipper. And, when you stack pockets on top of pockets, it becomes an egg hunt every time you need something.

I dislike life jackets with multiple pockets and line-grabbing zipper pulls, but I do like life jackets with streamlined hand warmer pockets. Such pockets often feature fleece lining. When combined with a chemical hand warmer, these life jackets provide your hands with a welcome reprieve during a cold early spring, winter or fall day and allow the use of lighter gloves. I have found life jackets of this type more common in what is often classified as paddle sport life jackets. The added freedom of movement designed into such life jackets, done so to allow unencumbered paddling, is also a plus in casting and retrieving.



*Higher-end inflatable life jackets are designed to be less likely to accidentally deploy.*

Having noted the downside of life jackets overadorned with pockets, I will point out the benefit of such a design when fishing from a kayak, canoe, or other small boat with limited storage space. It is beneficial to have your common tackle essentials readily available, rather than tucked away in a tackle box on a boat with limited stability. Paddling life jackets feature a modest number of hard shell pockets that are an asset rather than a liability.

Inflatable life jackets are also a good choice, particularly during the warmer months, when the insulating value of traditional life jackets is not seen as a plus. Inflatable life jackets come in both automatic and manual models. The former deploys automatically when immersed in water. Manual models rely on activation by the user by a pull cord. Automatic models can also be inflated manually. Both types have an oral inflation tube. It is important to note that inflatable life jackets must be worn to comply with the PFBC's regulations, unless other standard life jackets are onboard.

The advantage of automatic inflatable life jackets is not having to rely on the wherewithal to activate it in a stressful situation. The downside is that automatic inflatable life jackets are prone to accidental deployment. Most units use a water-soluble wafer to shield the CO<sub>2</sub> cylinder. When the wafer dissolves, the cylinder is triggered, inflating the vest. It is not uncommon for the



*Many inflatable life jackets use a water-soluble wafer to trigger the inflation cylinder. Extra care must be taken to prevent accidental deployment.*

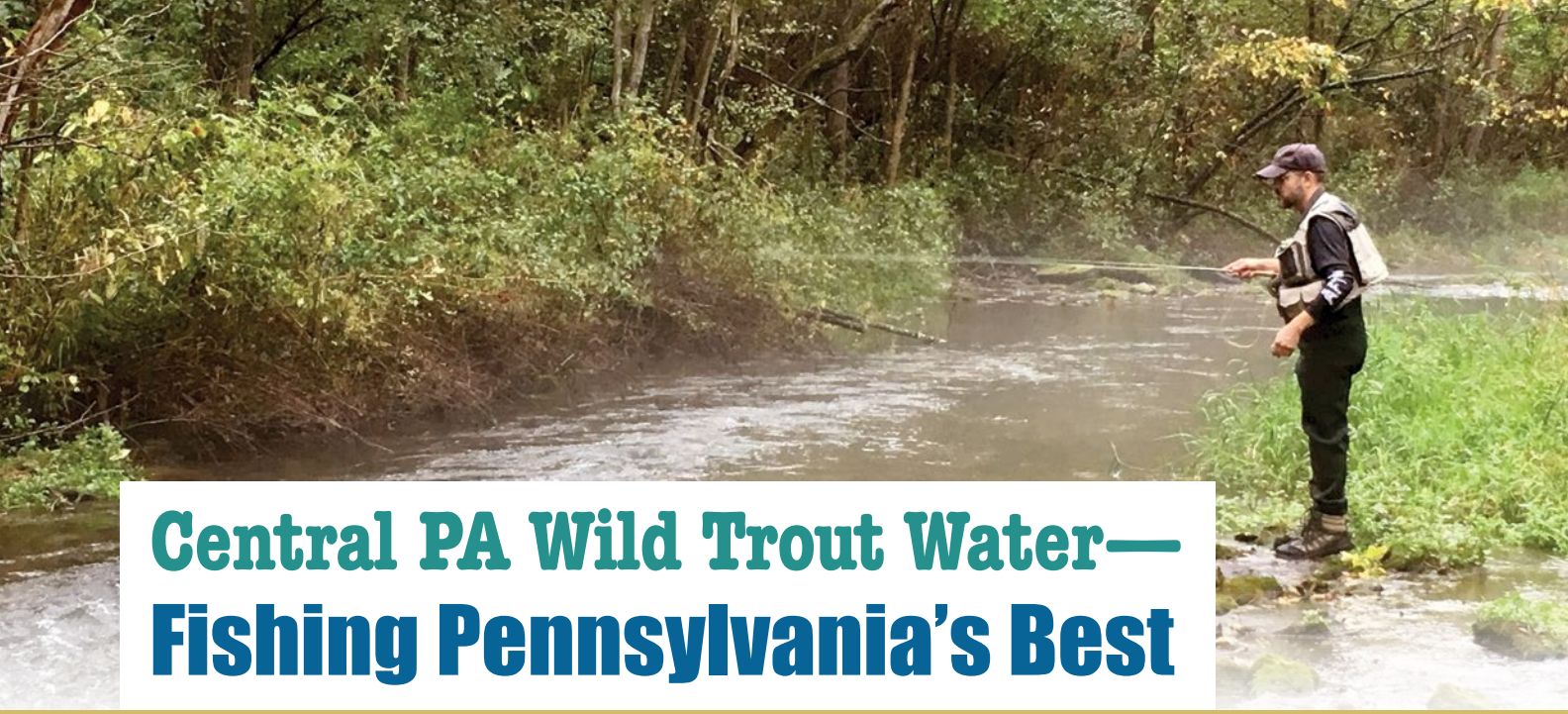
vest to accidentally inflate when repeatedly exposed to humid environments, in my case the enclosed bed of my truck. Rearming an automatic life jacket can get expensive, and it is not easy to purge all the CO<sub>2</sub> from the life jacket to return it to its original, streamlined profile.

Higher-end inflatable life jackets use Hydrostatic Inflator Technology, triggered from water pressure, making them less likely to accidentally deploy. However, this advantage comes at a comparatively higher price.

One other consideration regarding inflatable life jackets is that these life jackets do not offer as much buoyancy during extremely cold weather. In general, however, inflatable life jackets offer higher levels of buoyancy than standard life jackets and can turn an unconscious person face up.

Sizing is another issue to consider. Most flotation life jackets include straps that allow the device to be tailored to the wearer. While it is important for the life jacket to be tight enough to provide optimum protection during a mishap, be sure there is enough slack to allow freedom of movement while fishing. Life jackets worn over cold weather fishing clothing will likely need to be a larger size to accommodate layered clothing. I wear a paddle sport life jacket from fall through spring and switch to an inflatable life jacket during the warmer months.

While my observations on the best life jackets for fishing are admittedly subjective, they are meant to inspire readers to choose their own 'best' life jackets—ones they will actually wear, which is what is most important. □



# Central PA Wild Trout Water— Fishing Pennsylvania’s Best

by *Christian A. Shane*

photos by the author



*“Pennsylvania’s Best Fishing Waters is a program established by the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) to serve as a valued resource*

*to address anglers’ needs and to increase the accessibility of proven waters with the result of a more successful fishing trip.”* [www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com) website.

With a break in the cloud cover and looming thunderstorms in the distance, we quickly waded up for some wild trout fishing in northcentral Pennsylvania on Piney Creek, Blair County. Though the drizzle was a welcome sight, my friend and I knew that the water levels were down in most of the surrounding streams. Hoping that water levels would rise as the day progressed, we chose our fly patterns and tippets for clear water conditions. I tied on a CDC Micro Caddis with a #18 Zebra Midge dropper, and my friend tried a #16 weighted Wet Ant.

After I arrived to my fishing spot, I looked downstream to see his rod bent. Since my focus was on watching him reel the fish in, I missed a flash striking at my fly. I reeled in and dropped

down to the next hole to net a 12-inch wild Brown Trout for him. As we admired the stunning colors, the Brown Trout swam out of the net and splashed back to its hiding spot.

Locating a wild trout stream, testing different fly patterns, figuring out what is working, landing a wild trout, and releasing it back into the water—this is the excitement of fly fishing for wild trout in Pennsylvania. Our state offers accessible, unpressured, and secluded wild trout water.

It is no surprise that many of Pennsylvania’s quality wild trout water is located in central Pennsylvania from Blair, Huntingdon, Mifflin, Clinton, Union, and Centre counties. Through the “Pennsylvania’s Best Fishing Waters” program, the PFBC offers a Pennsylvania map to highlight, locate and fish these unique places in Pennsylvania. For more information, visit [www.PaBestFishing.com](http://www.PaBestFishing.com).

The PFBC Area Fisheries Managers use certain criteria to locate these designated areas. They research water systems that can sustain increased fishing pressure, have healthy fish populations, and have desired location amenities such as public access, water quantity and quality, and the ability for natural reproduction.

Along with other fish species categories, the PFBC has spotlighted Best Fishing Waters for wild trout. Anglers can access the website by visiting [www.fishandboat.com/Locate/BestFishingWaters/Pages/Trout-Wild.aspx](http://www.fishandboat.com/Locate/BestFishingWaters/Pages/Trout-Wild.aspx) and clicking on the statewide interactive map or by choosing waters individually from the wild trout waters list. Utilizing the red lined map coupled with individual directions for each stream and tackle regulations, anglers can pinpoint where the designated Best Fishing Water is located.

With the PFBC’s emphasis on wild trout waters through the Voluntary Wild Trout & Enhanced Waters Permit, help the PFBC protect, conserve, and enhance wild trout and its habitats by purchasing a Voluntary Permit. Visit [www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com) for more information on Voluntary Permits. ☐



*Pennsylvania offers accessible, unpressured, and secluded wild trout fishing.*





Bridges, such as this bridge on the Little Juniata River, provide shade and cover for wild trout.

## Central Pennsylvania's Best Fishing Waters (Wild Trout):

For an interactive online map of Pennsylvania's Best Fishing Waters, visit [www.PaBestFishing.com](http://www.PaBestFishing.com).

### BLAIR COUNTY

#### Clover Creek

##### Section 3

6.3 miles from LR 07009  
Bridge near Larke downstream  
to mouth

### BLAIR COUNTY

#### Piney Creek

##### Section 2

6.2 miles from mouth  
of Poverty Hollow Run  
downstream to mouth at  
Gannister

### CENTRE COUNTY

#### Spring Creek

##### Section 2

10.7 miles from SR 3010 bridge  
at Hanson Quarry downstream  
to adjacent to Stackhouse  
School Pistol Range  
*Catch and Release All Tackle*

### CENTRE COUNTY

#### Spring Creek

##### Section 3

1.3 miles from adjacent to  
Stackhouse School Pistol Range  
downstream to lower boundary  
Bellefonte Hatchery grounds  
*Catch and Release*  
*Fly-Fishing Only*

### CENTRE COUNTY

#### Spring Creek

##### Section 4

3.6 miles from lower boundary  
Bellefonte Hatchery grounds  
downstream to railroad trestle  
100 meters upstream dam  
*Catch and Release All Tackle*

### CENTRE COUNTY

#### Spring Creek

##### Section 6

2.6 miles from High Street  
Bridge downstream to mouth  
*Catch and Release All Tackle*

### CLINTON COUNTY

#### Fishing Creek

##### Section 7

0.8 miles from private bridge  
Tylersville State Fish Hatchery  
downstream to 300 meters  
downstream SR 2002 bridge  
*Trophy Trout Artificial Lures Only*

### CLINTON COUNTY

#### Fishing Creek

##### Section 8

2.3 miles from 300 meters  
downstream SR 2002 bridge  
downstream to 1.3 miles  
upstream lower SR 2002 bridge  
*Catch and Release*  
*Artificial Lures Only*

### CLINTON COUNTY

#### Fishing Creek

##### Section 9

2.2 miles from 1.3 miles  
upstream lower SR 2002 bridge  
downstream to Fleming's Bridge  
on SR 2004 Lamar  
*Trophy Trout Artificial Lures Only*

### HUNTINGDON COUNTY

#### Little Juniata River

##### Section 6

6.9 miles from railroad bridge  
at east (downstream) border of  
Ironville downstream to mouth  
of Spruce Creek  
*Catch and Release All Tackle*

### HUNTINGDON COUNTY

#### Little Juniata River

##### Section 7

3.6 miles from mouth of Spruce  
Creek downstream to Barree  
Road Bridge (SR 4004)  
*Catch and Release All Tackle*

### HUNTINGDON COUNTY

#### Spruce Creek

##### Section 3

0.1 mile from the upstream  
boundary at the PFBC property  
(Indian Cavern) downstream to  
the downstream boundary at the  
PFBC property (Indian Cavern)

### HUNTINGDON COUNTY

#### Spruce Creek

##### Section 5

0.5 mile from upstream  
boundary Penn State  
Experimental Fisheries Catch  
and Release Area downstream  
to lower boundary Penn State  
Experimental Fisheries Catch  
and Release Area  
*Catch and Release*  
*Artificial Lures Only*

### MIFFLIN COUNTY

#### Penns Creek

##### Section 3

7.0 miles from confluence  
Elk Creek downstream to 600  
meters downstream Swift Run  
*Special Regulations*

### UNION COUNTY

#### Penns Creek

##### Section 4

3.6 miles from 600 meters  
downstream Swift Run  
downstream to 500 meters  
downstream Cherry Run  
*Catch and Release*  
*Artificial Lures Only*

# Launching *and* Loading Tips



*by Chris Gorsuch*

*photos by the author*

The saying goes, “Experience is often the best teacher.” Launching and loading a boat is really no different. Although, some helpful tips can add insight and help shorten the learning process. I have collected a few tips and tactics over the years that can add insight no matter what the experience level.

Annually, I launch and load my boat over 200 days per year from more than a dozen different boat ramps on various rivers and lakes across Pennsylvania. This provides a lot of opportunity for observation and has helped me compile a list of helpful tips and tactics for fellow boaters.

## **Be ready and courteous**

Prep your boat for launching in the staging area. Everyone wants to get on the water as soon as possible. Courtesy and preparation go a long way. Getting the boat ready in the staging area is a critical part of launching a boat. Removing transom tie-down straps, putting the transom plug(s) in, getting life jackets ready, and loading fishing tackle, coolers, and day bags all need to be done while in the staging or prep area.

Make a checklist that you can go through until the process becomes second nature. We have all forgotten to remove a transom tie-down strap or put the transom plug

in. It is easy to get distracted at the boat ramp, so a short checklist will help.

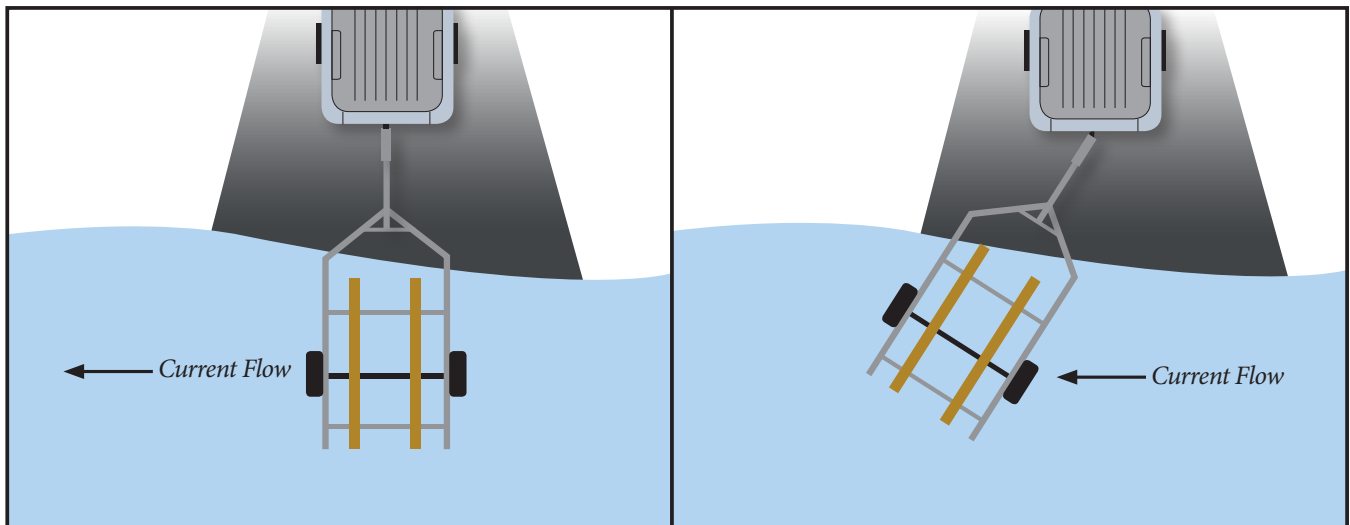
## **Backing up**

If you are new to towing and boating, the boat ramp on a crowded morning is not the time to hone those skills. The added pressure of other boaters waiting in line only compounds mistakes and makes the whole process more difficult. Practicing with the boat and trailer in an empty parking lot is one of the best ways to get this vital time in. Setting up cones or empty boxes to simulate the ramp area is a big help.

Visibility is an advantage to backing up a boat trailer. Since boat trailers and tow vehicles vary, there are several possible solutions. Lowering a tailgate, raising the hatch on your vehicle, installing wider tow mirrors and adding tall post guides on smaller trailers are just some ways to improve the operator’s sight. Keeping your trailer visible while backing up is key.

Another best practice, especially for new boaters, is to line the trailer and tow vehicle as straight as possible before backing up. While this is not possible at all access areas, many boaters do not take advantage of longer pull-up areas. Going the extra distance will straighten the approach and make backing up easier.

When backing your trailer into the water, place your hand at the bottom of the steering wheel. If you want the trailer to turn right, move your hand right. If you want the trailer to turn left, move your hand to the left. Whether you



*When loading, the current flow works to hold boat position steady as you slowly approach the trailer from downriver. If the ramp does not already face downriver, try angling the trailer slightly downriver. Angling the trailer is also helpful when rope launching. The “angling” is not always possible on narrow ramps, but any angle downriver helps loading and unloading, especially in swift current.*

use your mirrors as I do, or turn your head to back up, it is a simple tip until it becomes second nature. Another tip for backing up—slower is faster. Meaning, back up slowly; turn the steering wheel slowly. Moving slowly allows operators to make small corrections and keep the boat trailer straight.

## Launching and loading tips

The mistake I see most often is that boaters do not put the boat in the water far enough when launching, and then put it into the water too far for loading. The general rule is to launch deep and load shallow. When launching, the boat should be in just far enough to start lifting at the stern and take weight off the bow. If the trailer is not in the water far enough, it is a struggle to push the boat off the bunks. For roller trailers, it is a different issue. When the trailer is not in the water far enough, all the rollers are in contact with the boat and the full weight of the boat wants to drop into the water. Putting the trailer further into the water lifts the boat and makes it easier to manage for both trailer styles.

Not all access areas and boat trailers are created equal. Some trailers fit the boat well and some do not. Also, when it comes to access ramps, water levels and launch site depths are always different. However, bunk and roller trailers are designed to self-center and align the boat. If the trailer is too deep when loading the boat, bunks or rollers cannot assist in aligning the boat. Whether power-loading the boat on the trailer or using a guide rope, wetting the back 3 feet of the trailer bunks is generally far enough to allow the bunks and rollers to center and align the boat.

Use the wind and current to your advantage. Most of my access areas on the river are crude. Many are gravel with the levels constantly changing, and it can be difficult in extremely low or high water. When possible, instead of backing the trailer straight in, I point the trailer slightly downriver for launching and loading. For launching, the

current helps release the boat from the bunks or side guides. When loading, the current pushing against the bow versus the side of the boat helps align it to the trailer.

On a lake on a windy day, this works the same way. When possible, pivot the trailer slightly downwind. This angle helps align the bow of the boat instead of fighting the crosswind backing the trailer in completely straight (see diagram above).

## Launching and loading ropes

There are times when powering on and off the trailer is not possible or permitted. Whether its debris in the launch area or being on a lake that does not allow boaters to drive the boat on the trailer with the engine running, a set of launch and load ropes come in handy. This is especially useful for lakes and launch areas with docks.

A single bow line works well, but working a line off the bow and another line off the stern will give the boater more control when launching and loading. The two-line method gives control to the bow and stern and will keep the stern from swinging.

Other useful tips for launching and loading come in the way of making small improvements to the boat trailer. Adding a small catwalk down the center of the trailer to keep your feet dry and secure will help to launch and load boats, especially when using a rope. Installing side guide rails or rollers will also help with boat alignment. Retractable transom tie-down straps are a nice addition to any trailer. Since the straps are mounted directly to the trailer, they are never misplaced and always at arm's reach when getting the boat ready for travel. Many of these aftermarket items are designed to fit most trailers and will improve launching and loading.

These tips will help boaters simplify launching and loading the next time out. ☐

# When and Where to Use LIPLESS CRANKBAITS



by *Darl Black* photos by the author

I bought my first lipless crankbait in the early 1970s, because it was designated in a magazine article as one of a dozen must-have lures for bass fishing. The photo caption read something like “Cast it out and wind in. So simple that anyone can catch fish with this crankbait.”

However, it would be a few years before I finally caught my first fish with it. In the years since, I learned lipless vibrating rattle baits actually catch a variety of freshwater fish and may be fished at just about any depth. But, to be successful, more guidance is needed than that simple cast-and-wind tag line.

While the combination of lure body vibration and internal rattles of the lipless crankbait are key to attracting fish to strike the lure, the angler must have an understanding of lure size, color patterns, and specific retrieves for a given situation. There are over a dozen different brands of lipless rattle baits on the market today, with weights ranging from about  $\frac{1}{8}$ -ounce to 1-ounce, and in lengths from  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inches to almost 4-inches. Let's take a look at seven presentation possibilities through the seasons.

1. During warm, sunny days of early spring, anglers plying the shallows for Largemouth Bass should have a  $\frac{3}{16}$ - or  $\frac{1}{4}$ -ounce lipless crankbait in a baitfish pattern tied on one rod. While it may seem odd to be cranking so soon after ice out, if the water warms rapidly on shallow flats, Largemouth Bass quickly acclimate and start chasing. Do not wind

steadily. Instead, pull the lure with your rod, then pause momentarily to quickly take up line and pull again. In northwest Pennsylvania, this presentation is effective from mid-March through mid-April, depending on the weather.

2. If you are a Walleye angler who chases the early summer nighttime Alewife spawn on Pymatuning Reservoir, Crawford County, Lake Arthur, Butler County, or other Walleye/Alewife lakes, you may want to substitute the traditional long, slender minnow bait for a lipless crankbait, which has been making progress into this night fishery. Use a floating model lipless crankbait, so it does not sink into the weeds. Wind at a slow to moderate speed with an occasional pause.



*Lipless crankbaits are versatile and come in a variety of styles (sinking, fast sinking, floating, and suspending models) as well as a wide array of color patterns. Some anglers are known to go overboard when stocking their tackle box with this type of lure.*



Lipless crankbaits are available from many different manufacturers in a range of sizes and wide array of color patterns. Pictured are (left to right): Column 1: Ultralight lipless crankbaits suitable for Bluegills and other small sunfish; Column 2: A selection of 3/16- and 1/4-ounce models, especially suitable for crappies; Column 3: A selection of the standard 1/2-ounce models; Column 4: The odd lot including a floating model and suspending model, particularly useful for fishing submerged grass that is almost to the surface. The bottom two are “heavyweights”—fast sinking models, especially useful for vertical jigging in deep water.

3. During the summer, a 1/2-ounce lipless rattle bait can be retrieved quickly over submerged grass beds to draw strikes from Largemouth Bass, Northern Pike, and the occasional Muskellunge. This presentation, called burning the bait, helps cover a lot of territory to find fish.



Rick Como with a Shenango River Black Crappie taken by vertical jigging of a lipless rattle bait.

4. Any time you are fishing a lake with Smallmouth Bass, White Bass, Striped Bass, or hybrid Striped Bass plus Gizzard Shad as a major baitfish, it is a good idea to have a 1/2- or 3/4-ounce lipless rattle bait tied on an extra rod. As soon as you see gulls circling and diving or observe fish busting baitfish on the surface, move quickly into casting range and fire the fast-sinking rattle bait. When the bait touches down, burn the rattle bait for several yards. Then, pause, and let it sink for about 10 seconds. Hold onto the rod tightly.

5. Dan Dannenmueller, one of my southern crappie-fishing buddies who travels to Pennsylvania to fish, likes to pull crankbaits during the summer. One of his most productive baits is a 2-inch, 1/4-ounce lipless rattle bait. He rigs the crankbait on a

4-foot leader off a 3-way swivel with up to 1-ounce drop weight on the third arm of the 3-way. Then, Dannenmueller cruises large mid-lake flats to locate schools of Gizzard Shad. Next, crankbaits are deployed off small planer boards and trolled at 1.1 to 1.2 miles per hour through the baitfish schools. According to Dannenmueller, it is one of the best ways to catch big crappies in mid- to late-summer.

6. As water temperature declines during autumn from the mid-60s to mid-50s on lakes and rivers, lipless crankbaits in bold color patterns will produce a variety of gamefish with a reel-pause retrieve in the shallows.
7. With water temperature hitting 50 degrees F on large reservoirs during the later stages of fall, baitfish and most gamefish relocate to deeper water. Last fall, Rick Como invited me to join him on the Shenango River during this deep water bite. Using his fish finding sonar, he located schools of shad suspended along the submerged river channel and pointed to various size arcs below the bait at 18- to 22-feet. With reel bails open and our eyes on the sonar screen, we let our 1/4- and 1/2-ounce lipless crankbaits descend to the level of the larger fish. A brief pump of the rod tip followed by a pause was the presentation that yielded a cornucopia of fish species including White Bass, Black Crappies, White Crappies, Largemouth Bass, hybrid Striped Bass, and a Channel Catfish.

That is the way to end an open water season with lipless crankbait. □

# OPENING DAY OPTIONS



*by Richard Tate*    *photos by the author*

Pennsylvania offers two opening days for trout season—one in the southeastern counties and another statewide. No matter which opening day a trout angler chooses as the beginning of the traditional trout fishing year, there are several options to begin the season.

Probably the most common way for a trout angler to begin the season is to visit a trout stream that has been stocked with hatchery trout. For many years, these stocked trout included Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout, and Brook Trout. However, the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission eliminated Brook Trout from the stocking program, because stocked Brook Trout can spread gill lice to wild trout. So, this year, stocked trout waters will be stocked with Brown Trout and Rainbow Trout, mainly Rainbow Trout.

When an angler chooses to begin his or her trout season on a stocked trout water, the angler needs to recognize that he or she will be sharing the water with many other anglers. This is especially true in more urban areas.

When fishing a stocked trout water, it is helpful to know the locations trout are stocked. These are often pools near bridges or near other roadside pull-offs, where it is generally easy to stock trout in the water. However, these are not the only locations where stocked trout will be found. Trout often migrate upstream or downstream

from stocking locations. If there is high water, the trout may migrate away from stocking areas. Two years ago, I found a large golden rainbow trout more than 1 mile downstream from the last bridge where trout are stocked on that stream. Though I failed to catch it, I did manage to land several Rainbow Trout that were probably stocked at the same time.

The option of fishing a stocked trout water on opening day allows an angler a number of opportunities for catching trout. The most popular live bait is still probably the worm in sizes ranging from small red worms to large nightcrawlers. Earthworms probably account for more opening day trout than any other bait. Even so, some first-day anglers prefer to use smaller mealworms that they believe are more effective on stocked trout. Some live-bait anglers prefer to use minnows for their opening day exploits, hoping to catch larger-than-average fish.

Other baits that are popular on opening day are Powerbait and salmon eggs. Some anglers vow that one color of egg is more effective than another and like to attach kernels of corn to their hook for opening day trout.

Besides stocked trout waters, many Pennsylvania lakes and ponds are also stocked with hatchery-raised trout. When fishing these still waters, set up along the shoreline and cast to areas where you suspect there may be trout. On larger lakes, it is advantageous to have a boat where you can escape the crowded conditions that exist along the banks of many stocked lakes. For instance, this is true of Blair County's popular Canoe Lake. Anglers



*A large crowd, mainly kids, on a stocked pond on opening day.*

with rowboats and canoes often head for a deep channel where trout sometimes congregate after being stocked. In addition, anglers can use their watercraft to fish some of the more isolated areas of the lake that bankside anglers cannot reach.

Bank anglers have smaller ponds mostly to themselves, though conditions are often crowded. I have spent several recent opening days on a small, popular Blair County pond. For the most part, adults are there accompanying children, so the kids can experience an exciting opening day. At 8:00 a.m., hundreds of lines are cast into the pond, and many of the baits and lures are grabbed by hungry trout. The interaction between kids and their parents help make this pond one of my favorite opening day locations each spring.

Most of the baits that stream anglers use can be effective in stocked ponds and lakes.

Another opening day option is to fish a wild trout stream. Many of these streams are remote mountain brooks and runs, which are the homes of our state fish, the Brook Trout. Anglers who cherish solitude when fishing may choose to visit these streams on the regular opening day of trout. The use of live bait, such as a small earthworm, may tempt Brook Trout. However, many of these wild trout enthusiasts will toss small spinners or cast artificial nymphs or even dry flies in their efforts to deceive wild trout. When they land a wild Brook Trout, most of these anglers briefly pause to admire its explosion of colors before releasing it.

The opening days of trout season are truly special days on an angler's calendar. ☐



*A remote wild trout stream that some anglers favor when seeking opening day solitude.*

*Anglers are drawn to wild trout streams on opening day in search of wild Brook Trout.*

# LINN RUN IS LINN-SANELY FUN



photo-Jeff Contillo

*by Charles N. Cantella*

Nestled among the mixed hardwood and evergreen trees of the Laurel Highlands, you will find Linn Run State Park, Westmoreland County, and the park namesake, Linn Run. At 612 acres, Linn Run State Park offers more than you might guess at first glance. Due to its location in the heart of the Laurel Highlands, Linn Run State Park is proximal to a variety of fishing opportunities. From the nearby running waters of Youghiogheny River, Laurel Hill Creek, Meadow Run, to Kooser Lake, Laurel Hill Lake, and Loyalhanna Lake, there are a multitude of available fishing opportunities. What Linn Run offers that some of the other waters may not offer is the chance for anglers to catch native Brook Trout.

Sometimes native Brook Trout can be reckless when it comes to attacking an angler's offering. At other times, native Brook Trout are skittish. Averaging 6- to 8-inches, these small fish match the small waters of Linn Run and require anglers to stealthily approach and accurately cast to avoid startling the fish. If startled, it takes some time before the fish resume feeding. Small, dark lures and flies work well for me, while other anglers prefer small spinners, green mop flies, or small white worms.



But, if you think Linn Run is just for fishing, you are missing out on a great deal of fun. Picnicking is popular, and there are picnic tables throughout the park. There are also playgrounds and restrooms. The picturesque Adam Falls offers a pavilion that may be rented. Horses are permitted along Linn Run Road and on designated trails in the adjoining Forbes State Forest. Snowmobiles are also permitted along Linn Run Road and in the cabin area, which allows access to the Forbes State Forest snowmobile trails. Hunting is permitted in designated areas. Consult





The park office at Linn Run State Park, Westmoreland County, is centrally located.

Local catch-and-release angler Jeff Contillo fishes Linn Run regularly and throughout the year. Many people, he feels, don't believe the stream is capable of maintaining and supporting fish year round. But, they are mistaken. The cold water of the stream allows the wild Brook Trout to stay within their temperature tolerance. But, the small nature of the stream does not allow the fish to grow very big, rarely exceeding 10 inches in length. Wild Brook Trout tend to have brighter and bolder coloring as well. Contillo enjoys walking along the stream and dropping his hook where fish may be hiding. It does not take much cover to provide a hiding spot for an 8-inch fish, which fight like much bigger fish.

the Pennsylvania Game Commission regarding hunting regulations. Camping facilities are also available.

The park is open every day of the year from sunrise to sunset. Hikers, campers, day trippers, and anglers are just some of the people who visit the park. One gentleman I spoke with is so enamored by the park, not just during the summer peak, but throughout the entire year, that he even chose a cold, sunny February day to propose to his then-girlfriend at Linn Run.

The stream is stocked in the spring with Rainbow Trout, starting 500 meters upstream of Grove Run Spring (Lat: 40.153889, Lng:-79.219444) downstream to the park boundary (Lat: 40.172222, Lng:-79.235278). Many people wrongly believe this stream is just a springtime fishery. While it is true that the majority of the pressure does come in the spring for anglers seeking stocked trout, there are wild Brook Trout in the stream year round.



Cabins are available to rent at the park.

If you enjoy the technical aspects of fishing small water, combined with the opportunity to camp close enough to have a gurgling stream lull you to sleep, then Linn Run should be on your list of places to visit in 2020. ☑

### More information

Facebook: Friends of Linn Run State Park

### Camping

Linn Run offers an Americans with Disabilities Act accessible cabin and nine rustic cabins that are available to rent year-round. Call 888-PA-PARKS (888-727-2757), or visit [www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/FindAPark/LinnRunStatePark/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/FindAPark/LinnRunStatePark/Pages/default.aspx) for more information.

### Directions

Linn Run State Park  
770 Linn Run Road  
Rector, PA 15677

- **From the East:** Take the turnpike to Donegal Exit.
- Follow Route 31 toward PA-711 (Ligonier).
- Turn right onto PA-381 (Darlington Rector Road) toward Kregar.
- Stay on PA-381 to Rector.
- At Rector, turn right onto Linn Run Road.
- **From the West:** From Ligonier take U.S. Route 30 East for 2 miles.
- At PA-381 intersection, turn left toward Rector.
- At Rector, turn left onto Linn Run Road.



# The Pre-Spawn Crappie Dance

by *Braden Eisenhower*

*photos by the author*

In and out, one leads, the other follows. This dance is not set in a ballroom or high school gymnasium, and there is no loud music.

The pre-spawn crappie dance begins in late March or early April, when waters warm near the 50-degree F range. It is the time of heavy feeding in preparation for the first spawning wave in late April or early May. During this 4- to 6-week span, crappies transition back-and-forth between mid-depth staging areas and shallow water, where fish eventually spawn.

## The spring dynamic

Many people associate spring with progress. Days lengthen, the hours of available sunlight multiply and the air and water temperatures warm. Budding leaves and bug hatches reveal new growth and new life. All of these factors distract from the repetitive setbacks to the advancing season.

Springtime fishing is volatile, and crappies are a good example. The location and activity level of this here today, gone tomorrow species exposes the daily and weekly highs and lows.

Dancing is best with a partner. But, where are these slabs on any given day? The primary challenge of pre-spawn crappie fishing is finding the quarry. Fortunately, weather patterns help pinpoint likely hangouts. Warming trends

coax crappies into shallow water, while cold fronts push fish to mid-depth areas.

## Knowing the steps

Crappies winter in the basin, or deepest part of a lake. When lakes thaw, some fish will move into the shallows. This surge is in response to feeding and is unrelated to the spawn. Otherwise, crappies will gradually migrate to mid-depth areas between the wintering areas and eventual spawning flat.

Mid-depth areas are the first significant depth change off the spawning flat. Generally, this zone is 8- to 12-feet deep and related to structural elements like drop-offs, points, and creek channels. It is the site of good fishing early in the pre-spawn period.

Water temperatures spike rapidly in response to a trend of seasonably warm weather. At these times, crappies may be found in numbers in shallow water, actively feeding on small insects or fry. On cloudy days, crappies hang high in the water column and feed near the surface. Under bright conditions, expect to find fish a few feet deeper but equally willing to bite.

The aftermath of storm fronts dampens the fun of the shallow bite. Air and water temperatures backslide, and crappies return to the staging area. The ease of catch is often related to the density of the school size. In general, the bite loses intensity, so there is a greater need for slow presentations.

To some extent, there are crappies available near shore throughout this period. The best odds for catching a shallow dweller on any given day is near dusk, when crappies move in to feed.



Connect with crappies in mid-depth staging areas by casting, trolling, or vertical jigging. Cast floats or minnow-shaped crankbaits to shallow pre-spawners near cover.

The distinct shallow movement occurs when water temperatures hold steadily in the mid 50-degree F range. Indications above water include a sudden abundance of green grass and flowering trees. There is a noticeable increase in the fishing interest, too. And, below water, the presence of emerging vegetation. Expect a high percentage of the lake's crappie population to be on flats, in 2- to 6-feet of water. Cold fronts issue a temporary decrease, but it is unlikely crappies will vacate the area.

### Targeting staging areas

Sonar units remove the guesswork in locating schools and determining the crappie numbers at hand.

Trolling is effective when crappies are loosely grouped together or when schools are sporadic. Use the electric motor to tow a crankbait or jig and grub combination through the mid-depth zone at slow speeds. The goal is to cover water until you encounter bites.

When crappies are bunched together, switch to a horizontal approach. Cast a suspending jerkbait or jig and plastic combination into the school. Start with a steady retrieve. Then, incorporate pauses for unresponsive crappies.

If this tactic fails, present a lure vertically. This can be done by vertical jigging with a spoon or tube jig.

Alternatively, break out a float to suspend a jig and plastic combination or live minnow. Select a slip bobber rig to target crappies lower in the water column. This float setup allows deeper depth control due to a bobber stop set on the line.

### The shallow bite

Look for shallow crappies around cover—emergent vegetation, laydowns or reeds. This is the prime time to take crappies on jigs under floats. Consider downsizing to micro jigs to “match the hatch” of insects and fry. Floats aid in casting and allow the jig to hover in the strike zone. Impart subtle wrist action to make the jig hop and shimmy.

Some impressive slabs can be taken with floating minnow-shaped crankbaits. These crankbaits can be straight retrieved or fished as a quick-rising jerkbait, perfect around vegetation. Or, twitch the lure in place to catch surface biters near dark.

Spring is everchanging. Stay in tune with weather patterns, remember these steps, and you will always have a willing dance partner. ☐

*In the spring, micro jigs appeal to more fish and better imitate a crappie's food source.*





# PURE GOLD

*by Tyler Frantz*  
*photos by the author*

Waking to bitter mid-30s air temperatures, icy wind chills, and swollen, chocolate-brown creeks on the morning of the Southeast Region's 2019 Mentored Youth Trout Day did not seem like a golden opportunity for a boy, not yet 4-years-old, to catch trout. However, after a light breakfast and heavy bundling by Mother Frantz, our son Foster was eager to hit the stream and give it a try, despite Mother Nature's best efforts to spoil the fun.

Around 8:30 a.m., we arrived late to the scene at "Pappy's Farm," which hosts a Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission stocked trout waters section of the Lower Little Swatara Creek near Rock, Schuylkill County. My father maintains a handicap-accessible fishing ramp, which we recently repaired from winter flood damage a few weeks earlier, so the public could enjoy the Mentored Youth Trout Day and the regional opening day of trout season.

This was a nice, easy-access location to get my fish-loving son out for a bit, with the added insurance of a nearby retreat to Grandma's warm and cozy living room if required.

Approaching the ramp deck, we encountered a man in his early twenties, mentoring his grade-school aged brother. The younger sibling wasted no time in proudly lifting his metal stringer from the rushing water to reveal a beautiful golden rainbow trout he landed a short time before our arrival.

My son's eyes lit up with delight as he gazed upon the trophy fish. Its glistening, writhing body rattled the chain

link clasps. Sunlight illuminated its pink, striped flank. It was a gorgeous fish.

"Daddy, I want to catch an orange fish," he announced with youthful enthusiasm.

Apprehensively, I glanced at the high, muddy water and back at the fish on the stringer. It was the only bite anyone experienced here all morning. The odds were against us.

"Ok, buddy, we will try, but these water conditions are tough," I explained. "And, it is called a golden rainbow trout. You caught Rainbow Trout before. These are similar but a different color. They can be tricky to catch."

"Golden rainbow," he repeated without hesitation. "I am going to catch a golden rainbow, and we are going to mount it to hang on my bedroom wall."

The boy spoke with conviction, and I was nervous. I did not want to break his spirit, but I doubted we would have any luck, and I did not want to give him false hope. The water visibility was nearly non-existent. I had no idea if another golden rainbow trout was in the creek, and my hands were already numb.

"We will give it our best shot, bud," I said with forced optimism.

I eyed the creek again as I balled up a dab of the smelliest dough bait in my vest—garlic-scented with glitter to catch the light—and added it to his hook. Two splitshots completed the rig. I tossed it over the wooden railing and handed my son the rod.

At first, I had to coach him not to reel it back right away. He is always quick to crank.

“Let it sit. We need to give the fish time to find the bait. Just be patient, buddy. You are doing awesome,” I said with fatherly encouragement.

He took my advice, and I watched his line settle near the middle of the pool. Moments later, while chatting with fellow anglers, I glanced at Foster’s rod tip, which bounced subtly at first and then bounced again rapidly.

“Set your hook. You have a fish on there,” I said excitedly as I rushed to help him secure the fish. “Reel buddy, reel!”

He was giggling and squealing as he bore down on the reel’s handle. I soaked in the innocent look of joy and anticipation on his face as the drag worked on the trout. He was having a blast, and so was his dad.

When the fish splashed to the surface and dove again, both our eyes widened. We only caught a quick glimpse before the fish disappeared again



*The author hands over the rod to his determined 3-year-old son after making the first cast.*

into the stained water, but there was no mistaking the distinct color at the end of Foster’s line—bright orange. I could not believe it.

I quickly snapped into action and grabbed the net as my 3-year-old reeled in the fish of his dreams—a golden rainbow trout. Several tense seconds later, the fish was cleanly netted and wriggling on the wooden deck boards. My son was so excited that he jumped up and down, his footsteps echoing my pounding heart.

I hugged my little boy and smiled in disbelief. “Do you realize what you have just done?” I asked proudly. “I caught my golden rainbow!” he proclaimed with a grin larger than his little body. “And, we are going to mount him.” Who was I to disappoint?

My son’s fish was promptly dropped off at the local taxidermist, so this special memory could be preserved for the both of us. The taxidermist was kind enough to finish it in time for Christmas, and it now hangs on Foster’s bedroom wall.

Fishing has a way of strengthening a bond between loved ones, and I am grateful for the opportunity to share this experience with my son. The weather may have been less than ideal, and it was the only bite we received during our frigid hour at the stream, but I would not change a thing.

The father-son moment we shared together was just like Foster’s fish—pure gold. ☐



*Foster wished he would catch a golden rainbow trout to mount for his wall. He made good on the catch, and Bruce Wilson’s Taxidermy, Lebanon, helped fulfill the second half of his wish.*

# 2020 MENTORED YOUTH TROUT DAYS

March 28 (regional)  
and April 11 (statewide)

Take part in the Commission's Mentored Youth Trout Days. Youth under the age of 16 can join a mentor (adult) angler who has a current fishing license and trout permit to fish on Saturday, March 28, on stocked trout waters within the 18 southeastern regional counties for regional trout season and to fish stocked trout waters in the other counties on Saturday, April 11. Youth (less than 16 years of age) must obtain a Mentored Youth Fishing Permit or Voluntary Youth Fishing License from the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission.



# 2020 TROUT SEASON • 2 OPENING DAYS

April 4  
(18 Southeastern Counties)  
and April 18  
(Regular Opening Day for Trout Statewide)

To obtain Mentored Youth Trout Days permits, Voluntary Youth Fishing Licenses, and other fishing licenses online:

[www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com)

Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission  
invites you to



Open House

Saturday, April 4, 2020 • 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Linesville State Fish Hatchery

Exhibits • Demonstrations • 10,000 gallon aquarium

Free to the Public / [www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com)

**Bring your family and catch some fun!**

GET YOUR MENTORED YOUTH FISHING PERMIT  
BUY YOUR VOLUNTARY YOUTH FISHING LICENSE



The Mentored Youth Fishing Permit is free, and the  
Voluntary Youth Fishing License is \$2.90 (including fees).

# PLAY



Spring  
2020

Pennsylvania • League • of • Angling • Youth

## The Perch Family

Did you know that the Perches and Darters family is one of the largest family of fishes in North America? In Pennsylvania, this family includes darters, Yellow Perch, Sauger, and Walleye.

Perch are elongated, so these fish have a long, narrow body shape. Perch have two separate dorsal fins or the dorsal fins are just barely joined. The first dorsal fin is spiny, while the second dorsal fin is soft. Most perch prefer cool, flowing water with a clean, unsilted bottom.

Visit the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's website at [www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com) to learn more.



Yellow Perch, *Perca flavescens*

# Darters

You may be less familiar with darters, but there are 146 North American species of darters, and at least 21 species have been recorded in Pennsylvania. Several darters are endangered or threatened in Pennsylvania.

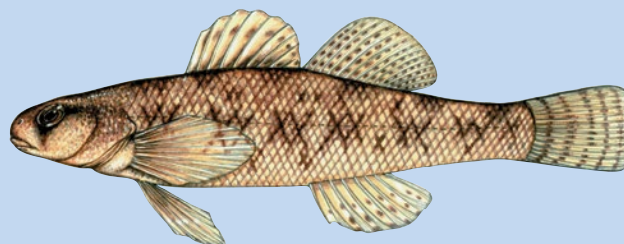
Some species of darters require such clean, clear water that these fish are indicators of water quality. There is high quality water when these species are present in a stream, and there is degraded (poor) quality water when these fish disappear from a stream.

The darter gets its name from its behavior of resting on the bottom of the stream and then quickly darting away under a rock or similar hiding space. Darters behave this way and lurk near

the bottom, because these fish have a small swim bladder or no swim bladder at all. As a result, darters cannot easily move up and down from the surface to the bottom.



Greenside Darter (*Etheostoma blennioides*)



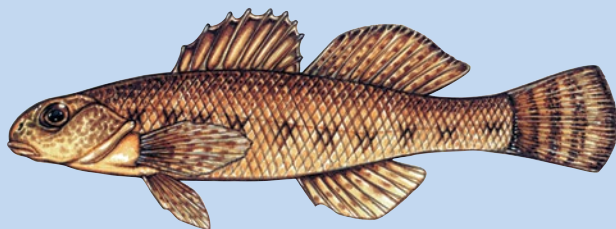
Tessellated Darter (*Etheostoma olmstedti*)



Rainbow Darter (*Etheostoma caeruleum*)



Banded Darter (*Etheostoma zonale*)



Johnny Darter (*Etheostoma nigrum*)



Logperch (*Percina caprodes*)



# Yellow Perch

Yellow Perch, a popular gamefish, are distributed across Pennsylvania, where perch can be found in warm or cool lakes, ponds, and even streams. Yellow Perch are considered shallow-

water fish that are usually not caught more than 30 feet deep. Perch feed on small fish, insects, and crustaceans, so live bait or imitation lures are great options for fishing for these fish.

Yellow Perch have a long-looking body. However, these fish are not as slim as some other perch family members. The heads, backs, and sides of Yellow Perch range from olive to golden brown with darker, vertical tiger stripes. The undersides of Yellow Perch are white.



Yellow Perch (*Perca flavescens*)



# Fishing for Yellow Perch

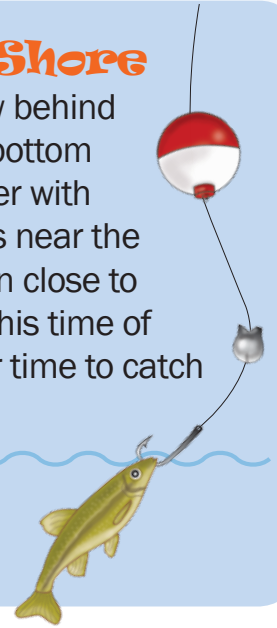
Yellow Perch forage during daylight hours. Perch are soft biters, so

light rods and sensitive line are an advantage.



## Fishing from Shore

Cast a worm or minnow behind splitshot to get near the bottom or fish bait under a bobber with enough line, so the bait is near the bottom. Perch will move in close to shore to spawn in April. This time of the year can be an easier time to catch perch from the bank.



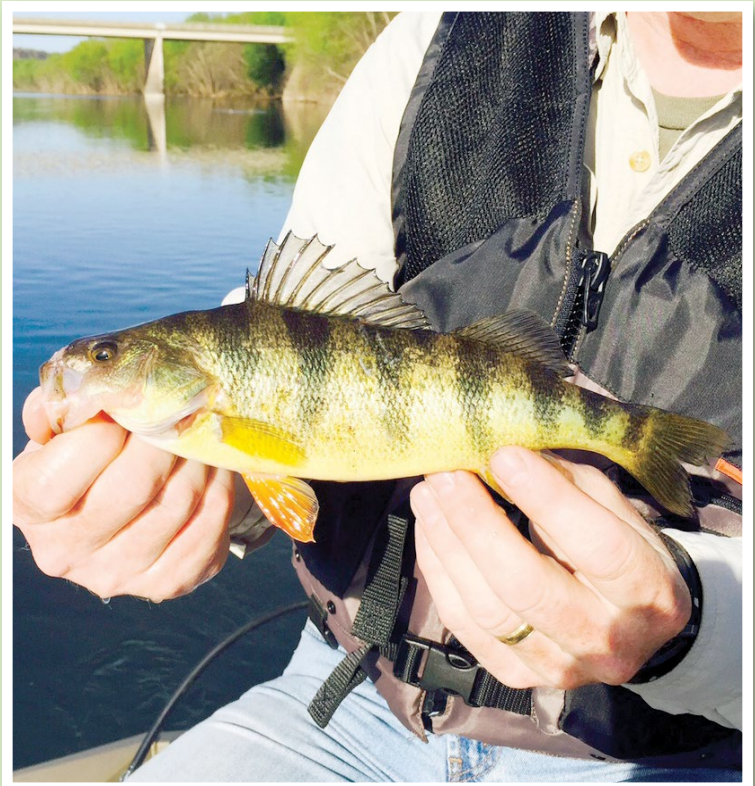
## Trolling from a Boat

Trolling jigs or small spinners baited with worms can help locate schools of perch in the summer. Troll along shorelines with rocky structure and weed beds. Try different depths with each pass to locate a school.



## Jigging from a Boat

After locating a school of fish while trolling, you can switch to jigging or bobber fishing and drift over the school to pick up fish.



# Sauger and Walleye

Walleyes and Saugers are the largest members of the Perches and Darters family. They both have long bodies, forked tails, visible sharp teeth, and large, glassy eyes.

A light-reflective coating behind the retina gives the eyes a glassy look. This adaptation helps fish see at night.

## Walleye

Walleyes have a dark spot at the rear edge of the spiny section of its

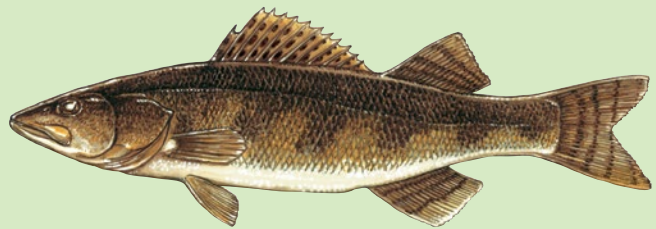
dorsal fin and a white marking on the bottom of the tail fin as well as the bottom of the ventral fin. Walleyes live in large lakes, big streams, and rivers in water that is cool and where the summer water temperatures do not exceed 85 degrees F.



Walleye (*Sander vitreus*)

## Sauger

The Sauger is closely related to the Walleye and looks similar. The big difference between these two fish is their habitat preference. Saugers prefer large, muddy rivers and big, silty lakes.



Sauger (*Sander canadensis*)

# Fishing for Sauger or Walleye

## Jigging from a Boat or Shore

Both Walleyes and Saugers may be caught using a vertical jigging method. Heavy jigs are recommended to get into deeper water where fish tend to school. Flashy jigs often help draw attention in hot pink, chartreuse, green, and yellow colors. Jigs tipped with minnows or nightcrawlers are especially enticing.

## Trolling from a Boat

Trolling nightcrawler harnesses with willow leaf spinning blades are great ways to catch Walleyes in open water. Deep diving crankbaits may also be trolled behind boats if you make sure crankbaits have the depth range to get down to where schools of Walleyes are holding.



# The Perch Family WORD SEARCH

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

## Word List

YELLOW PERCH  
 SAUGER  
 WALLEYE  
 DARTER  
 ELONGATED  
 DORSAL  
 SHORE  
 ICE

(Hint: Some words may appear backwards.)

Answer Key

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

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# RETURN OF THE CHESSIE



Chesapeake Logperch,  
*Percina bimaculata*

photos-Rob Criswell

## by Rob Criswell and Douglas Fischer

On two dates in late summer and early fall 2019, a historic benchmark was realized in the Keystone State's nongame fishes conservation program. Chesapeake Logperch were documented in the Safe Harbor pool of the Susquehanna River for the first time since 1842. Separated by obstructions from the main population in the lower river for a century or more, its return made quite a splash.

But Chesapeake Logperch did not navigate the gauntlet of tall power dams on the Susquehanna River on its own, or otherwise inexplicably appear in this section of river. These fish were the early fruits of an ambitious project to return the diminutive fish to its native range. The Chesapeake Logperch Recovery Project, led by the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC), is a 4-year effort funded by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's State Wildlife Grant program and includes Penn State University (PSU), the Susquehanna River Basin Commission, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and Conservation Fisheries, Inc. (CFI) as partners.

The Chesapeake Logperch, *Percina bimaculata*, has an elongate body and tiger-like vertical bars along its entire length. At a maximum size of 4 inches or so, this darter is a small relative of the well-known Yellow Perch and Walleye.

Its original distribution is presumed to have been confined to the Potomac and Susquehanna rivers below the fall line, an abrupt geologic change between the Piedmont and Ridge and Valley physiographic provinces. It has never been reported above Great Falls on the Potomac River or Conewago Falls (at York Haven Dam) on the Susquehanna River. It disappeared from the Potomac River, where it had been reported to be

common at some locations in the District of Columbia and Maryland, by 1940 or so, a victim of siltation and pollution.

The Chesapeake Logperch was originally described to science from specimens collected at Columbia, Lancaster County, in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Rampant pollution eliminated the Chesapeake Logperch from much of the Susquehanna River. A state health official, referring to conditions in and around Harrisburg, stated in 1937 that, "The liquid between the river banks in most of our industrialized sections is no longer water in its strict sense but a conglomeration of human excreta and industrial wastes." The logperch did survive the onslaught near the Mason-Dixon line and remained in the lower river, a few of its tributaries, and the nearby upper Chesapeake Bay.

These losses account for approximately 70% of the original range. It is listed as a threatened species in Maryland and Pennsylvania and is currently being reviewed for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act. The primary objective of the logperch project is to restore this fish in its historic Susquehanna River territories in Pennsylvania.

Biologists and technicians involved in the recovery project hope to establish wild populations above each of the dams between Holtwood and York Haven, which should keep Chesapeake Logperch from being federally listed. The first steps were taken when 256 wild logperch collected elsewhere were released in Conewago Creek, Dauphin and Lancaster counties, on August 21. Subsequently, approximately 700 hatched and reared fish at the CFI and PSU aquaculture facilities were liberated in Chiques Creek, Lancaster County, on September 26, and another 200 were released the following day during a well-attended media event.

The work leading to these releases was intensive. Adult fish that would serve as brood stock were collected and transported to the CFI facility in Knoxville, TN, in March 2019. The partners were then involved in status surveys



Marking a Chesapeake Logperch with an elastomer tag.



Chesapeake Logperch showing elastomer tag.

of occupied waters in Pennsylvania and Maryland to determine where wild fish could be removed without damaging existing populations.

In April, PSU personnel again made the trip to Knoxville, TN, to work with CFI staff developing techniques and protocols for hatching and raising logperch at the PSU campus. Success was almost immediate at both facilities, and soon nearly 1,000 Chesapeake Logperch fry were swimming in brood tanks.

Chesapeake Logperch occupy the mainstem river, as well as the lowermost section of a few tributaries. The recovery team determined that logperch releases in the unoccupied pools needed to occur in tributaries, in order to minimize the dilution effect of putting several hundred small fish directly into a half-mile wide river. Therefore, habitat and water quality assessments were first made on these occupied tributaries for comparison with the upriver candidate streams.

Candidate streams in the release/re-establishment pools were then examined for suitability. A rigorous assessment was subsequently conducted on streams exhibiting the most potential. Conewago Creek and Chiques Creek were determined to possess characteristics most similar to those of the occupied streams.

In addition, these streams were surveyed to determine the composition of fish communities prior to releases. If releases succeed in establishing new populations, additional surveys will be conducted to identify changes to the communities with integrated logperch.

Research to determine specific habitat preferences, seasonal movements, spawning behavior, and diet were also initiated in the first year of the project.

To facilitate these and other studies, each logperch to be released during this project is marked with an elastomer tag.

These tags are injected beneath the skin of fish as a liquid and cure into a small, flexible marker. Each group of logperch is tagged with a distinct color, so biologists who subsequently capture the fish are certain of origin and age. Representatives of each group are also tested for disease prior to release and thus far have received a clean bill of health.

Commission biologists are quite pleased with the progress made during the first year of the project and look forward to additional releases and work that will help ensure the success of these stockings. Future studies will look at how the logperch respond to and avoid predators, and how they interact with other species of darters already present in the streams. Most importantly, the recovery team will look at the survival of the fish released in 2019. With luck, they will find not only tagged fish but unmarked juveniles resulting from spawnings that will occur this spring.

Dr. Jay Stauffer, Jr. of PSU summed up the first year by saying, "What we accomplished was far beyond our expectations, but it seems that the more information we gather, the more questions we have about the conservation of this fish."

The recovery team is optimistic, however, that the most important questions will be resolved, and Chesapeake Logperch will once again swim throughout the lower Susquehanna River.

For more information on the Chesapeake Logperch, read "Chessie", by Rob Criswell in the November/December 2013 *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater*, at [www.fishandboat.com/Fish/PennsylvaniaFishes/GalleryPennsylvaniaFishes/Documents/07chessie.pdf](http://www.fishandboat.com/Fish/PennsylvaniaFishes/GalleryPennsylvaniaFishes/Documents/07chessie.pdf). A video about the recovery of the Chesapeake Logperch is available at [www.youtube.com/PaFishandBoat](http://www.youtube.com/PaFishandBoat). □



Collecting wild Chesapeake Logperch (from left to right) Zach Shumber, PSU, Douglas Fischer, PFBC, and Mitch Bargo, PFBC.

# Creating a Cooperative Nursery for Trout



*by John A. Punola photos by the author*

This is the private account of the Gyory family, Tom and Maureen Gyory, who live on the outskirts of Slatington, Lehigh County, and have been residents in a historic home built before the days of the Civil War. Tom has always loved the Lehigh River and has lamented that the river has never fully become a prime trout stream since it depends upon the Frances E. Walter Dam to furnish precious cold water releases during summer months.

The area from the town of Jim Thorpe down to about Walnutport needed additional trout to maintain a viable trout population and fortify the wild trout, Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout. Since the Lehigh River receives a limited stocking in the upper reaches, Tom pondered a remedy to the number of trout that survive in the river. Additional trout needed stocked into the area between Jim Thorpe and downstream.

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) has a long history and excellent record to keep Pennsylvania a leader in trout fishing with well managed streams. In addition to licensed Pennsylvania anglers, sportsmen from neighboring states are faithful visitors who make numerous trips to Pennsylvania to seek out abundant opportunities for quality trout fishing.

Although the Lehigh River heavily promotes its non-fishing recreations such as rafting, canoeing and sightseeing, there are also numerous faithful anglers. I was mildly surprised to learn it is still a favorite target for area anglers, both fly fishing anglers and spin fishing anglers.

Both groups tend to be “Catch-Photo-Release” anglers who return the fish unharmed to the river.

The Lehigh River begins as a trout stream that passes through the Frances E. Walter Dam, then continues below Route 80, where the PFBC maintains a stocking of Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout, downstream from Route 80 to the entry of Hays Creek, near White Haven, Luzerne County. The remainder of the Lehigh River from that point and downstream is not stocked due to concern of high temperature water that threatens the vulnerable trout population during the hot days of July and August. If there is hot weather, releases may be possible from Frances E. Walter Dam but not guaranteed. If so, good trout fishing can be attained from a drifting boat or from a choice shore location.

A local group of concerned trout anglers wanted to do something to help the Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout population. The Lehigh River Stocking Association became the host of the Lunkerfest—a one day event in May—to raise funds to purchase and release Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout. The trout are stocked from Bowmanstown, Carbon County, downriver 20 miles to the Northampton Dam on the lower Lehigh River. The event has been a popular attraction since 1990.

Tom is a dentist in the Allentown area, Lehigh County, and a strong voice in the Lehigh River Stocking Association. He is also a skilled fly angler. Tom and Maureen wanted to do something more to boost the trout population in the Lehigh River to create more interest in the availability of Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout in the river.

One evening, as Tom and Maureen looked at their private pond below their house, the thought occurred,



“let’s convert a portion of our pond into a trout nursery. The amount of trout we raised would complement the amount of trout currently being stocked by the Lehigh River Stocking Association.” Tom and Maureen knew little about raising trout, but they had a dream and were now in the trout nursery business.

Tom knew he had a great source of water and adequate space to house the nursery. Their pond was built many years ago and served as the location for an annual Childrens Fishing Derby founded 30 years ago. The derby welcomes parents and children. The children fished, parents supervised and introduced their children to fishing. The pond was stocked, and each family kept a fish for dinner.

The pond is of modest size, 10-feet deep, 60-feet wide and 100-feet long. The average water temperature is 68 degrees F, maintained by the use of aerators located within the pond. Tom and Maureen agreed they could manage the nursery without a disruption in their fulltime, professional jobs.

Tom and Maureen eagerly went to work to make the nursery a reality. Tom knew some private hatchery operators within driving distance. He quickly visited those hatchery owners/operators and found them to be helpful, giving him ideas on how to construct the proper housing pens for the trout. Tom was fortunate to find housing pens for sale in good condition, and immediately made the purchase. He also found a suitable trout delivery tank and added it to the inventory.

The next and most important step, contact the PFBC to discuss the guidelines to become an approved cooperative nursery.

The final step was an onsite visit of the nursery location, which included rigid testing of water flow, water temperature, clarity, and source of water. The feeder stream was examined and water samples taken. After a month-long waiting period for the results of the inspection, Tom received the good news that his application was accepted and approved. The process started to make this new venture operational and thriving. This new cooperative nursery was not restricted to stocking only the Lehigh River. The juvenile Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout can be released into any Pennsylvania trout stream that is open to the general fishing public.

Fertilized eggs were purchased from another private nursery located near the Lehigh River. This initial order was for 10,000 Rainbow Trout eggs received in April 2016. The availability of fertilized trout eggs are governed by supply, weather condition, and temperature.

After the eggs are received, the eggs are put into the hatching pens for hatching and development. Trout will hatch within a week and development as fingerlings begins. The juvenile

Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout will mature at a rate of 1-inch per month. About the middle of May, the trout will enter the second stage in development.

During the month of May, juvenile trout will grow to 2-inches and be relocated to select locations in the Lehigh River. Here, trout are placed in secure protective containers and anchored in locations offering steady, free running water that safely protects the fingerling trout from natural predators.

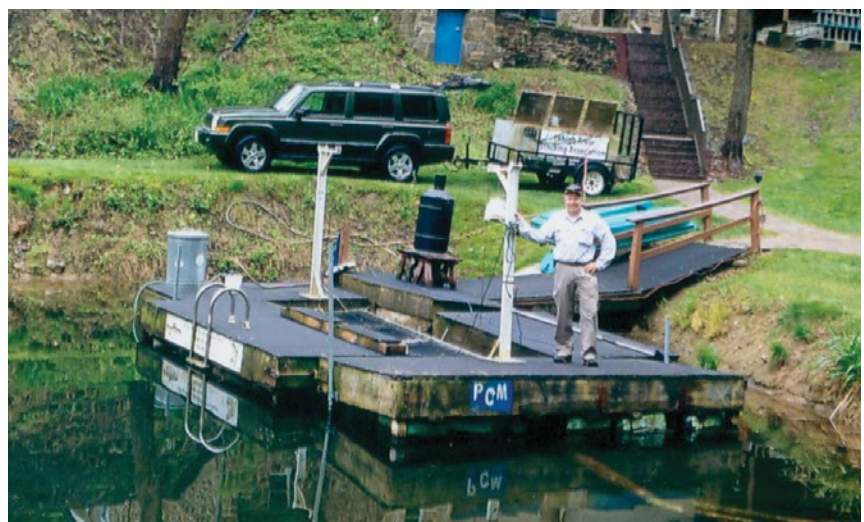
As trout continue to mature, the fish will leave the protection of the boxes and enter the main waters of the Lehigh River to mature into the trout population.

The Gyory Pond Cooperative Nursery has a superb water supply from a 2-foot wide, shallow running stream. The stream maintains a constant, yearly flow at an even temperature. The water flows from numerous fresh water springs on Gyory property. The water enters the nursery by a secure, heavy, screen pipe, maintaining a steady, even flow. Water temperature within the nursery will rarely exceed 72 degrees F, even during hot summer days.

Gyory Pond Cooperative Nursery became successful in quick order. The resulting success has been so profound that Tom and Maureen have left hints of expansion. At its inception in 2016, Rainbow Trout were the sole product. In 2019, Brown Trout were added to the production schedule.

In the process of preparing this Pennsylvania success story, I became aware of the presence of other cooperative nurseries in Pennsylvania that have similar success stories. For more information on establishing a PFBC-approved cooperative nursery, contact Brian McHail at 814-353-2225 or [bmchail@pa.gov](mailto:bmchail@pa.gov).

The Gyory Pond Cooperative Nursery is a story with a happy adventure from beginning to present. The original intent was to enrich the trout population of the Lehigh River, and it has already reached that goal. All trout from the nursery will continue as a donation of stocked trout to enrich a public stream for the enjoyment of all. They have done a fantastic job in a short time. ☐



*The cooperative nursery is located below the Gyory residence. The delivery vehicle and tank are poised for delivery to the Lehigh River.*

## January Commission Meeting Held

During the January 28 formal meeting, the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) approved the removal of a long-standing regulation that requires anglers to display their fishing licenses on an outer garment while fishing.

Under the amendment to Section 63.2 (PA Title 58), the outer garment display requirement will be replaced with a general possession requirement, which would require only that an angler carry the license on their person while fishing and present the license to a PFBC law enforcement officer upon request.

Anglers who still wish to display their fishing license on an outer garment may continue to do so. Additionally, customers are reminded that when they purchase a fishing license online through The Outdoor Shop ([www.pa.wildlifelicenses.com](http://www.pa.wildlifelicenses.com)) an electronic version of their fishing license is issued and may be saved and reprinted at no cost. Anglers should note that the regulation change is not immediate and will take effect upon publication in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*.

In other action:

- The Board voted to amend the section of the Pennsylvania Code related to the enforcement of Motorboat Noise Control (Title 58, Chapter 119). Under the proposal, which was approved by the Boating Advisory Board, the regulation will become less subjective and more enforceable through a more highly defined set of standards. The amendment will go into effect upon publication in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*.
- Commissioners adopted changes to the seasons, sizes, and creel limits within Lake Erie, its tributaries, and Presque Isle Bay including peninsula waters, Erie County. To maintain regulatory consistency and simplicity, Lake Erie, Lake tributaries, Presque Isle Bay, and peninsular water Walleye seasonal opening days were scheduled to coincide with Commonwealth Inland Waters. The amendment will go into effect upon publication in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*.
- The Board approved the publication of a notice of proposed rulemaking containing an amendment to regulations regarding the importation of Tautog into the Commonwealth. Currently, Tautog, also known as Tog or Blackfish, which are a popular coastal Atlantic Ocean recreational marine species, are prohibited from being imported, sold, offered for sale, or purchased in Pennsylvania when measuring less than 15 inches. The proposed amendment adds an additional requirement that all Tautog possessed for commercial purposes or sold in Pennsylvania should be properly tagged with a serial numbered metal band on the gill cover, as approved by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Pennsylvania is an important marketplace of commercial seafood including Tautog, and this regulation change will provide PFBC Waterways Conservation Officers with the authority to inspect for and enforce Tautog tagging regulations and advance Tautog conservation along the Atlantic Coast. If adopted on final rulemaking at a future meeting, the amendment will go into effect upon publication in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*.
- In other action, Commissioners approved the designation of 36 stream sections to the list of Class A wild trout streams. The board also approved the addition of 49 new waters to the Commission's list of wild trout streams and a revision to the section limits of one water. These additions and revisions will go into effect upon the publication of a second notice in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*.
- Pertaining to real estate matters, Commissioners authorized the disposition of an approximately 1.4-acre property located in Chapman Township, Clinton County, known as the Hyner Access to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). Within three years, PennDOT will transfer property ownership to Chapman Township, which will incorporate the access road into its existing public road system.
- The Board approved a resolution urging Congress for the Reauthorization of Collection Fees to the Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Fund. The language in this Resolution is identical to that contained in Senate Resolution 191.

## Protect Your Favorite Fishing Spot

### Participate in Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful's PICK UP PENNSYLVANIA

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful invites Pennsylvania anglers to participate in PICK UP PENNSYLVANIA, supporting the Great American Cleanup from March 1 through May 31. You can help by picking up any litter encountered while fishing or organizing a cleanup of larger items that have been dumped into the water or along the creek. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful partners with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and Keep America Beautiful to provide free trash bags, gloves, and safety vests to registered participants, as supplies last. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and Pennsylvania Waste Industries Association sponsors free or reduced cost disposal from April 1 through April 30. During this time, registered cleanups are eligible to take their trash to participating landfills free of charge or for a reduced rate.

Register at [www.gacofpa.org](http://www.gacofpa.org). Questions can be answered by Michelle Dunn, PICK UP PENNSYLVANIA Program Coordinator, at 1-877-772-3673 ext. 113 or [mdunn@keepbeautiful.org](mailto:mdunn@keepbeautiful.org).

Registered events can also win cash for a nonprofit or charity by entering the PICK UP PENNSYLVANIA Video Contest. Visit [www.gacofpa.org/video-contest](http://www.gacofpa.org/video-contest) for more information.



photo-courtesy of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful

## Award Presentations at the January 28 Commission Meeting

photos-Andrea Feeney



Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO) Robert J. Bonney, Northern Chester County, presented the Stanley Long Outstanding Volunteer Service Award to Damian and Mary DiEuliis. The award honors exemplary and inspiring volunteers. Damian has been volunteering for the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) over the past 40 years, and Mary has been volunteering for 36 years. Huntsdale State Fish Hatchery staff also attended the award presentation in support of Mary and Damian. Pictured are (left to right) Huntsdale State Fish Hatchery staff Daniel Beckey, Andrew Wagner, Heath Ausherman, award recipients Mary and Damian DiEuliis, Huntsdale State Fish Hatchery staff Joe Tusing, Nicholas Goble, and WCO Bonney.



Denise Enders, retired United States Army Colonel, presented the Patriotic Employer Award to Colonel Corey L. Britcher. A member of the Guard or Reserve may nominate a supervisor for the Patriotic Employer Award, which reflects the efforts made to recognize the supervisor for support provided directly to the service member or their family. SSGT Ryan Walt nominated Colonel Britcher. Pictured are (left to right) Denise Enders and Colonel Corey L. Britcher.



Ashley Nikles, Clerk Typist 2, was presented the "Wave of Excellence" Award. This award allows employees to recognize other employees who have gone above and beyond in performing their work or who have provided extraordinary customer service. Co-worker Tim Klinger, Telecommunications Specialist 2, nominated Nikles. Pictured are (left to right) Tim Klinger and Ashley Nikles.

## Winter Fishing and Boating, Safety, and Stocked Trout at Restored Lake

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) joined with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR) to promote safety related to statewide winter fishing and boating activities. The event took place in conjunction with a winter trout stocking at Chapman State Park, Pleasant Township, Warren County.

Tim Schaeffer, PFBC Executive Director, and staff reminded the public to take precautions when ice fishing this winter. Ice anglers are encouraged to wear life jackets when venturing onto the ice. Never go ice fishing alone, avoid areas that have visible cracks, and keep a safe distance between other ice anglers to avoid too much weight in one area.

During the cold weather period from November 1 through April 30 annually, anyone riding on a boat less than 16 feet in length, including all canoes, kayaks, and standup paddleboards, must wear a United States Coast Guard approved life jacket at all times. This regulation is in place to prevent fatalities associated with cold weather shock and hypothermia for those who fall into cold water.

Chapman State Park was chosen as the backdrop for the event to highlight Pennsylvania State Parks as great places to fish and boat but also because the lake was only recently reopened after a lengthy dam reconstruction and sediment removal project. This was the first trout stocking at the lake since March 2016. A 3-year restocking plan is also underway at the lake to restore the population of warmwater fish species including Largemouth Bass, Yellow Perch, Bluegills, and other sunfishes.

The PFBC stocks approximately 3.2 million Brook Trout, Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout, and golden rainbow trout annually into public waterways across Pennsylvania. More than 113,000 trout are stocked during the fall and winter months to replenish dozens of select, high-use waterways, many of which will provide ice fishing opportunities.

Video of this event is available at [www.youtube.com/PaFishandBoat](http://www.youtube.com/PaFishandBoat).

photo-Mike Parker





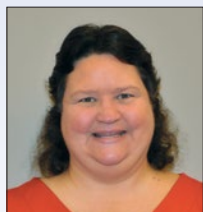
## Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Recognizes 25, 30, and 35 Years of Service

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) Years of Service Recognition Pin Program recognizes employees with 5 years of service to the Commonwealth. Employees are recognized every

5 years thereafter and are acknowledged with a pin in the presence of their peers.

Below are the employees who were awarded pins for 25, 30, and 35 years of service.

### 35 Years



*Marie Chubb*  
Budget Analyst 3  
35 years

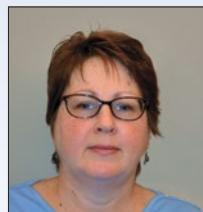


*Robert Lorantas*  
Fisheries Biologist 3  
35 years

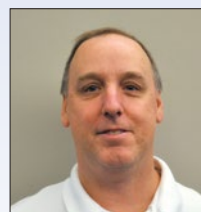


*Jeffrey Schmid*  
Fisheries Biologist  
35 years

### 30 Years



*Gail Burkholder*  
Administrative  
Officer  
30 years

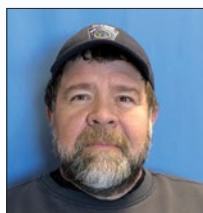


*Timothy Klinger*  
Telecommunications  
Specialist 2  
30 years

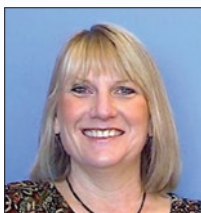


*John Sinclair*  
Chief, Construction  
& Maintenance  
30 years

### 25 Years



*Donald Alters*  
Fishing & Boating  
Facilities Maintainer  
25 years



*Colleen Henning*  
HR Analyst 2  
25 years



*Sean Sauserman*  
Waterways  
Conservation Officer  
25 years



*Michael Walsh*  
Waterways  
Conservation Officer  
25 years

Not pictured: *Gisele Klimovsky*, Administrative Officer, 30 years; *Karen Hill*, Accounting Assistant, 25 years; *Barbara Walker*, Clerk Typist 3, 25 years; and *Henry Walker*, Construction Foreman, 25 years

## 2020 FISH-FOR-FREE DAYS!

**Sunday, May 24**

**Independence Day, Saturday, July 4**

No fishing license is needed to fish on either of these days. It's a great way to introduce someone to the world of fishing. Check the Commission's website for more information. Remember that all other regulations apply.

## Fish-For-Free Days



**May 24 & July 4, 2020**

## Somerset County Sportsmen's League Recognition Awards

The Somerset County Sportsmen's League recognized retired Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) Waterways Conservation Officer Daniel D. McGuire for his many years of service to the PFBC and the angling and boating public. McGuire retired from the PFBC in 2019.

The League also recognized Lenny Lichvar for over 40 years of ongoing service to the sportsmen of Somerset County and the conservation of natural resources of the region and the state through many professional and volunteer capacities including District Manager for the Somerset Conservation District and Commissioner on the PFBC Board of Commissioners for 12 years.



photo-Logan Lichvar

Pictured are (from left to right) retired PFBC Waterways Conservation Officer Daniel D. McGuire, Somerset County Sportsmen's League President Rich Berkley, and former PFBC Commissioner Lenny Lichvar.



# Angler's Notebook

by Jerry Bush



photo-Jerry Bush

Fly anglers are permitted to use two hooks in Pennsylvania. It may seem logical to double the number of offerings to increase the number of fish caught. However, using two imitations increases the likelihood of experiencing wind knots, casting tangles and submerged snags. Consider only using one imitation until casting skills are developed. When rigging a second imitation, add enough tippet material to space the two flies apart. Tie the tippet for the second fly to the curve on the lead hook, allowing the front imitation to swing naturally. Use a thinner tippet between the imitations than the line attached to the lead fly. If the rear imitation drags and snags, the rear tippet will break free.

Safe wading is important. Always expect the current to be stronger than it appears. Carefully evaluate your surroundings, and never put yourself in a position where water pressure can pin you against an obstruction. Many anglers fear slipping in waist-deep water, but access to shallow water may require more care. While a slip in waist-deep water may be embarrassing, a fall on moss-covered stones in shallow water may cause broken bones. A wading staff is important. Secure the waist belt on chest waders to keep water from rushing into the waders. Trapped air will add buoyancy. Keep dry clothes in your vehicle.

Wading boots with felt soles may transfer whirling disease, Didymo, and other communicable fish diseases from one waterway to another. Many manufacturers make wading boots

with high-traction rubber. Some wading boots have hard plastic hex studs within the high-traction soles. Wading boots may also have metal hex-head studs designed to dig through moss to improve gripping. Metal hex-head studs can be replaced as the heads wear and become less effective.

Crappie fishing is popular in April on many Pennsylvania inland lakes. These gamefish are fond of minnows, but waxworms and red worms also work well. Small, wire-hook jigs tipped with soft plastic tube baits provide a great option when fish are finicky about various colors. An angler in a boat may catch the limit while another angler on the other side of the boat may see little action when using the same bait. Crappies have the tendency to stack in tight, vertical groups. Larger crappies are often at the bottom of the school. Getting bait to fish through the suspended, smaller fish may be difficult. Add weight or a heavier jig to quickly drop the bait through the school. After hitting bottom, bounce the offering, then raise it a foot or so at a time until encountering fish.

A more relaxed experience with less human competition awaits anglers who plan a steelhead adventure between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Fewer anglers may be on the streams, and the fish have adjusted to the reduced fishing pressure. An additional bonus is that spring steelhead often respond positively to the warming rays of a higher sun.

## Fishin' from the Kitchen

### Rainbow Trout Poached in Red Wine

by Wayne Phillips

Poaching Rainbow Trout in red wine produces a moist, flaky, flavor-packed fish dish.

Ingredients for four servings:

- 16- to 24-ounces boneless Rainbow Trout fillets, skin on
- 2 cups red wine
- 1 small onion, thinly sliced
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- Lemon juice to taste
- 2 Tbsp. fresh or 2 tsp. dried tarragon leaves
- Salt and black pepper to taste

#### Procedure

Add wine, onion, garlic, lemon juice, and tarragon leaves in a pan with a tight fitting lid. Bring the mixture to a gentle simmer. Season the trout with salt and black pepper, and add in the liquid. Cover the pan and simmer for about 15 minutes or until the trout is cooked through. Remove the trout to a plate and take off the skin. Strain and reduce the poaching liquid until it is syrupy. Ladle sauce over the trout.

#### Serve

Serve the trout over steamed rice. For extra flavor, add some of the reduced poaching liquid to the rice. Sugar snap peas, carrots or broccoli are ideal vegetables to serve with this dish.

#### Tips

Leaving the skin on the trout while poaching it adds more flavor to the finished dish. If you prefer a milder trout flavor, use half wine and half water.

Poaching fish produces a moist, flaky fish. Poaching liquids include red wine, white wine, citrus juices, or water flavored with herbs and vegetables. Use your favorite herbs and vegetables in any poaching liquid. The more strongly flavored the fish, the more intensely flavored the poaching liquid you may use.

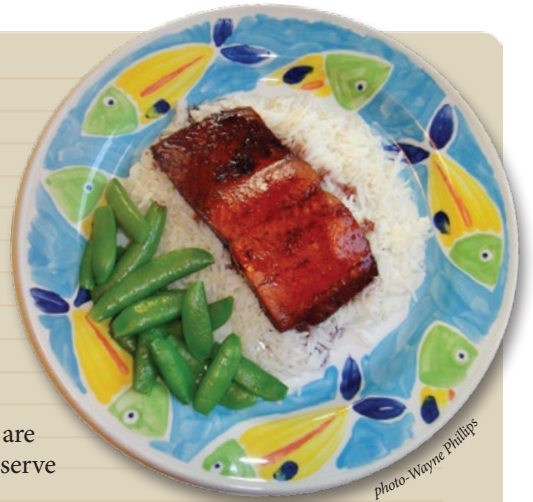


photo-Wayne Phillips

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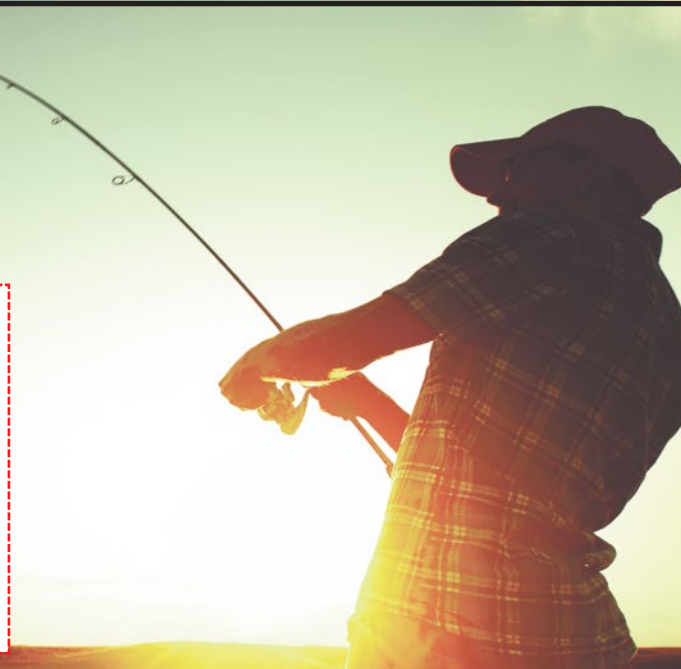
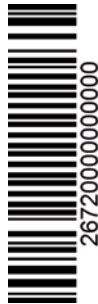
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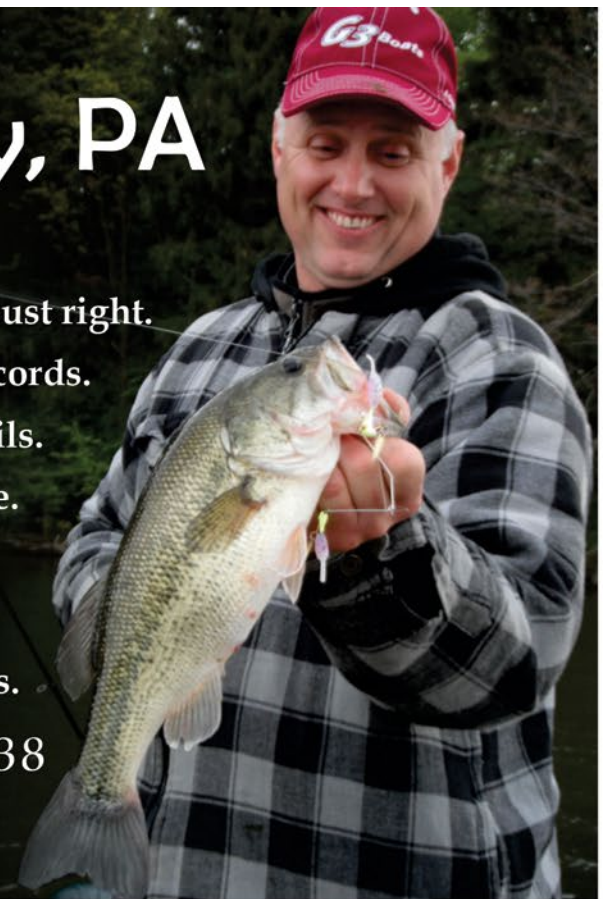
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## Advertising Opportunities for 2021



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Advertising space is available on a first come, first serve basis. For more information, deadlines and discounts: TCG Design, 717-569-7705 or [pafish@tcgad.com](mailto:pafish@tcgad.com).

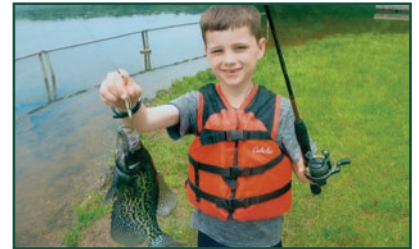
## CAST & CAUGHT



**Ellie Gilpin**, age 11, caught this 11½-inch White Perch while fishing Lake Mineola, Monroe County.



**Edward Henry**, Hatboro, caught and released this 21½-inch Brown Trout while fishing Spring Creek, Centre County.



**Brody Howsare**, age 6, caught and released this Black Crappie while fishing at Gifford Pinchot State Park, York County.



**Callum Borbidge**, age 7, caught this Largemouth Bass while fishing a private farm pond with his dad.



**Noah**, Age 4, caught and released his first 14-inch Brown Trout while fishing in Penns Creek, Section 5 (Catch and Release Artificial Lures Only), Union County, with a spinner.

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



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