

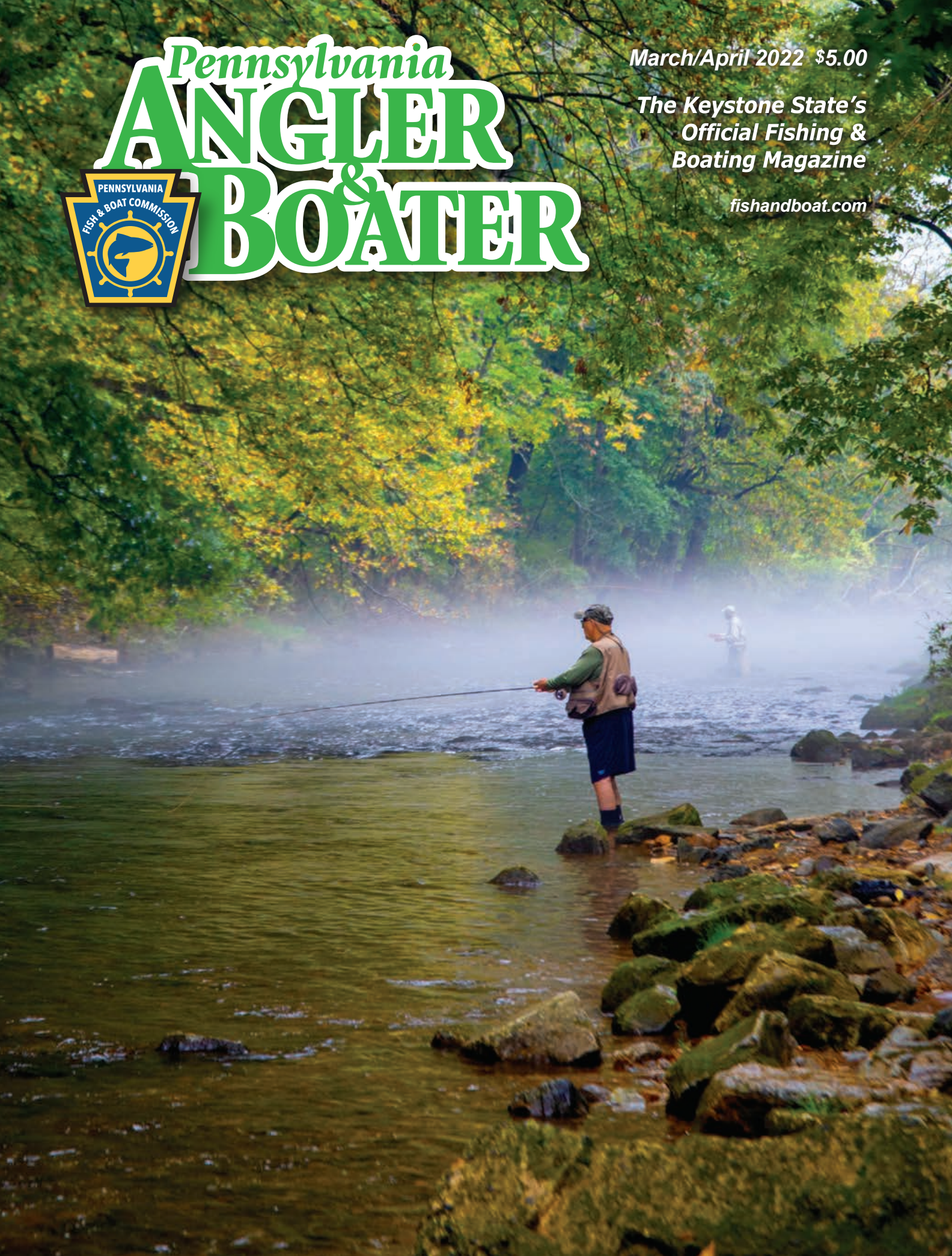
Pennsylvania **ANGLER & BOATER**

The logo for the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission is a blue shield-shaped emblem. It features a yellow border and a central yellow circle containing a blue silhouette of a fish. The text "PENNSYLVANIA" is written in white at the top, and "FISH & BOAT COMMISSION" is written in white along the bottom edge of the shield.

March/April 2022 \$5.00

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

fishandboat.com



BUY A 2022 FISHING LICENSE BUTTON



BUTTON SHOWN AT ACTUAL SIZE

GET HOOKED ON COLLECTING VINTAGE FISHING LICENSE BUTTONS

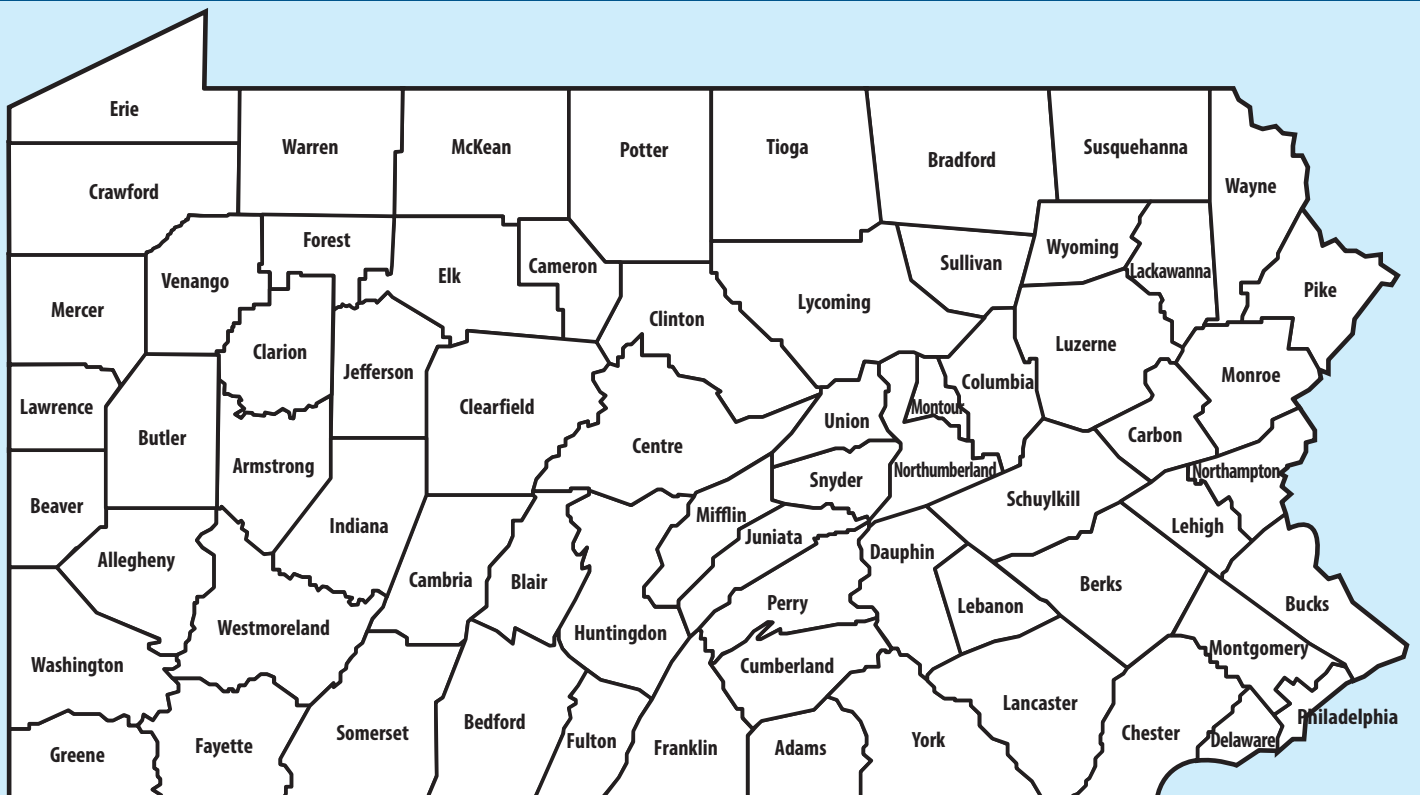


ACTUAL SIZE 1 3/4"

www.PaVintageFishingButtons.com

HuntFish.PA.gov

Pennsylvania County Map





Tom Wolf, Governor

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

Richard S. Kauffman, *President*
Leesport

Robert B.J. Small, *Vice President*
Mechanicsburg

Donald K. Anderson
Meyersdale

William C. Brock
St. Marys

Charles J. Charlesworth
Clarks Summit

William J. Gibney
Honesdale

Eric C. Hussar
Lewisburg

Richard Lewis
Gettysburg

John Mahn Jr.
Charleroi

Daniel J. Pastore
Fairview

Boating Advisory Board

Loren Lustig, *Chairperson*
Biglerville

Scott Ballantyne
Fleetwood

Michael Murray
Philadelphia

Elizabeth Winand
Wrightsville

Ex Officio Members

Timothy D. Schaeffer, *Executive Director*;
Laurel L. Anders, *Director, Bureau of Boating*;
Ryan Dysinger, *Department of*
Conservation and Natural Resources

Magazine Staff

Editor—Spring Gearhart
Graphic Design—Andrea Feeny
Circulation—Ashley Nikles
and Samantha Smith

Regular Contributors

John Allen Braden Eisenhower Ross Robertson
Darl Black Tyler Frantz Ralph Scherder
Marilyn Black Chris Gorsuch Christian A. Shane
Charles Cantella Carl Haensel Linda Stager
Rob Criswell Jeff Knapp Jeff Wolesslagle
Nick DelVecchio Marshall Nych Alex Zidock Jr.

Pennsylvania Angler & Boater adheres to the American Fisheries Society's style guide and the 7th 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.

Pennsylvania Angler & Boater (ISSN1093-0574) is published bimonthly by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, 1601 Elmerston Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17110-9299. ©2022 Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. Nothing in this magazine may be reprinted without the written permission of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. Subscription rates: one year, \$20.97 (includes transaction fee); three years, \$48.97 (includes transaction fee); single copies are \$5.00 each. Periodicals postage is paid at Harrisburg, PA. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* Circulation, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000. For subscription and change of address, use above address. Please allow 6 weeks for processing. Send all other correspondence to: The Editor, *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater*, P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000. Editorial queries and contributions are welcome but must be accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelopes. Material accepted for publication is subject to Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission standards and requirements for editing and revising. Submissions are handled carefully, but the Commission assumes no responsibility for the return or safety of submissions in its possession or in transit. The authors' views, ideas, and advice expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the opinion or official position of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission or its staff. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission receives federal aid in sport fish restoration. Under appropriate federal acts, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or handicap. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire more information, please write to: The Office of Equal Opportunity, Department of the Interior, Washington, DC 20240.



Subscription Inquiries
717-705-7835 • E-mail: ra-pfbcmagazine@pa.gov

March/April 2022
Volume 91 Number 2

Pennsylvania ANGLER & BOATER

The Keystone State's Official Fishing & Boating Magazine

Feature articles

Trout Fishing Strategies for Opening Day by Jeff Wolesslagle 8
Steel City Trout by Ralph Scherder 14
Stony Fork Creek's Legends Abound by Linda Stager 16
Wacky Worming Trout by Braden Eisenhower 18
Caledonia State Park by John Allen 20
Subsurface Fly Fishing for Stocked Trout by Tyler Frantz 22
Migrating River Smallmouth Bass by Jeff Knapp 24
Locating, Luring, and Landing the Apex Predator by Christian A. Shane 26
Fishing the Little Lehigh Creek by Carl Haensel 28
Catching Trout in High Water by Nick DelVecchio 36
FITT Premium Lures by Alex Zidock Jr. 38
Loyalhanna Creek Fishing Opportunities by Bob Frye 40
Rock Bass and Green Sunfish by Marilyn Black 42
The Golden Boy by Marshall Nych 44
Camping and Fishing Kinzua Creek by Jerry Bush 54
Fishing Lake Wilhelm by Kayak by Darl Black 56

Special features

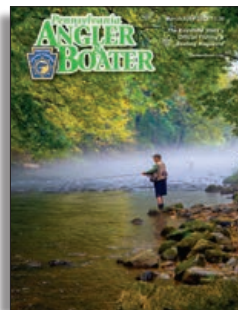
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission 2021 Annual Report 5
Directory 6
Pennsylvania State-Record Fish 7
2022 Adult Trout Stocking Program Changes by David Nihart 10
2022 Seasons, Sizes, and Creel Limits 31
2021 Photography Contest Results 32
Take Part in the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission 2022 Photography Contest 34
2022 Fishing Licenses 35
Governor's Youth Council for Hunting, Fishing, and Conservation by John Bruner 46
Spring PLAY Newsletter by Allan Schreffler 47
2022 Voluntary Permits 60
Voluntary Permits Featured Projects: Voluntary Wild Trout & Enhanced Waters
by Mike Parker 63

Regular features

Customer Convenience by Executive Director Timothy D. Schaeffer 4
Notes from the Streams 12
Currents 58
Angler's Notebook by Jerry Bush 61
Fishin' from the Kitchen by Wayne Phillips 61
Cast & Caught 64

On the cover

Anglers fishing in the morning mist in one of the two regulated Catch and Release Fly-Fishing Only sections of the Little Lehigh Creek, Lehigh County. See page 28 for more on fishing the Little Lehigh Creek. *Photo by Carl Haensel.*



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

Customer Convenience

by *Timothy D. Schaeffer*

Executive Director

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

From time to time, this column focuses on legislative priorities that the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) is working on in collaboration with the legislature. In the November/December 2021 *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater*, we highlighted the federal Recovering America's Wildlife Act, which continues to build momentum in Congress and would dramatically increase Pennsylvania's capacity to keep common species common, remove species from the endangered and threatened lists, and prevent others from becoming imperiled.

At the state level, a bill is making its way through the General Assembly that has not garnered as much attention but would benefit Pennsylvania's registered boaters. Senate Bill 403 is authored by Senator Devlin Robinson, Allegheny and Washington counties. Its companion House Bill 1153 was introduced by Representative Keith Gillespie, York County.

Part of Senate Bill 403 and House Bill 1153 aims to enhance boating customer convenience by shifting our traditional April 1 through March 31 registration year to the calendar year. This new registration period is consistent with the Commonwealth's unpowered launch permit expiration dates, which are also on the last day of December. This eliminates possible confusion for users who simultaneously maintain launch permits and motorboat registrations, and reduces law enforcement interactions with boaters who assume that the year printed on their boat decal indicates that the registration expires at the end of that year, not March 31.

The United States Coast Guard analysis found the proposed change consistent with its federal boat registration guidelines. During the transition between registration periods, the PFBC will engage in an information campaign to make boaters aware of the changes and educate boaters whose registrations may have inadvertently lapsed during the transition.

As of the writing of this article, Senate Bill 403 has passed unanimously out of both the full Senate and the House Game and Fisheries Committee, received

first consideration in the House of Representatives (a bill needs to be considered on three separate days before receiving a final vote in either chamber), and is two legislative days away from being sent to the Governor.

We are scheduled to deliver the agency's Annual Report to the House Game and Fisheries Committee on February 24 at the Capitol in Harrisburg and will be highlighting the bill. A snapshot from the Annual Report is included in this edition of *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* on pages 5 and 6, and the full report may be viewed on our website at fishandboat.com.

We are also happy to share with the committee and you several improvements for the 2022 fishing season. When you purchase your fishing license by visiting the FishBoatPA mobile app on your phone, fishandboat.com on your home computer or laptop, or a local issuing agent for the first time, anglers can select an option to auto-renew their annual fishing licenses and permits. Anglers can sign up, provide payment information on a secure payment platform, and annually receive their fishing licenses and permits. Over 15,000 auto-renewed licenses and permits were processed on day one of the new license year.

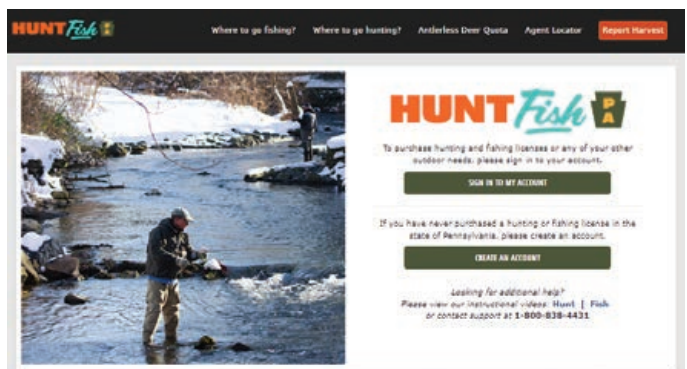
And, do not forget the convenience of multi-year licenses and permits. To date, nearly 60,000 multi-year license holders, myself included, enjoy the convenience of a fishing license that does not expire for 3, 5, or even 10 years.

Based on helpful feedback from customers in 2021, we streamlined the platform to include clearer instructions and added instructional videos to enhance the experience.

With the improvements to the online license buying experience, getting ready to fish in 2022 has never been easier.

In 2022, paddlers may again purchase launch permits for their kayaks or canoes either at local issuing agents or online with their home computer or smart phone. The launch permit will be mailed, but boaters can use their temporary permit to enjoy their paddlecraft.

Thank you in advance for choosing to fish and boat in Pennsylvania in 2022. You will be glad you did!



2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Report (unaudited)

EXPENDITURES

Fish Fund

Personnel	\$25,966,521
Operating	\$11,802,560
Fixed Assets	\$1,452,211
Grants	\$776,409
Fish Fund Total	\$39,997,701

Boat Fund

Personnel	\$12,032,633
Operating	\$4,685,245
Fixed Assets	\$1,466,773
Grants	\$119,198
Boat Fund Total	\$18,303,849

Fish Fund and Boat Fund Total

Personnel	\$37,999,154
Operating	\$16,487,805
Fixed Assets	\$2,918,984
Grants	\$895,607
Fish and Boat Fund Total	\$58,301,550

Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Report (unaudited)

REVENUE

Fish Fund

Licenses and Fees	\$29,839,374
Fines and Penalties	\$357,630
Miscellaneous	\$2,756,990
Federal and State Grants	\$8,713,906
Fish Fund Total	\$41,667,900

Boat Fund

Licenses and Fees	\$10,760,358
Fines and Penalties	\$237,581
Miscellaneous	\$8,492,031
Federal and State Grants	\$3,972,675
Boat Fund Total	\$23,462,645

Fish Fund and Boat Fund Total

Licenses and Fees	\$40,599,732
Fines and Penalties	\$595,211
Miscellaneous	\$11,249,021
Federal and State Grants	\$12,686,581
Fish and Boat Fund Total	\$65,130,545

Trout Stocked by PFBC

Trout Species	Lifestage	Amount
Brook Trout	Adult	371,811
	Fingerling	104,920
Brown Trout	Adult	744,180
	Fingerling	399,782
Rainbow Trout	Adult	2,062,387
	Fingerling	324,000
Golden Rainbow Trout	Adult	15,147
Total Trout Stocked by PFBC		4,022,227

Trout Distributed to Cooperative Nurseries

Trout Species	Lifestage	Amount
Brook Trout	Fingerling to Coops.	75,200
Brown Trout	Fingerling to Coops.	224,175
Rainbow Trout	Fingerling to Coops.	354,328
Golden Rainbow Trout	Fingerling to Coops.	9,580
Total Trout Distributed to Coops.		663,283

Total Trout Species (Stocked and Distributed) 4,685,510

Warmwater/Coolwater Fish Production and Stocking

Species	Lifestage	Amount
American Shad	Fry	65,977
Black Crappie	Fingerling	15,344
Bluegill	Fingerling	67,400
Brown Trout - Erie	Adult	632
Brown Trout - Erie	Yearling	30,173
Channel Catfish	Fingerling	79,590
Channel Catfish	Yearling	10,493
Fathead Minnow	Adult	13,400
Golden Shiner	Fingerling	162,400
Lake Trout	Fingerling	37,728
Lake Trout	Yearling	61,080
Largemouth Bass	Fingerling	18,190
Muskellunge	Fingerling	9,650
Muskellunge	Yearling	40,631
Northern Pike	Fingerling	4,227
Rainbow Trout - Steelhead	Yearling	1,015,986
Spottail Shiner	Adult	250
Striped Bass	Fingerling	377,603
hybrid Striped Bass	Fingerling	1,986
Tiger Muskellunge	Fingerling	7,175
Tiger Muskellunge	Yearling	12,218
Walleye	Fry	12,875,000
Walleye	Fingerling	2,081,360
White Crappie	Adult	23
White Crappie	Fingerling	11,805
Yellow Perch	Fingerling	35,100
Grand Total of all Species		17,035,421

Website Statistics

Top Ten Pages by Page View

1. Buy a Fishing License - 860,355
2. Homepage - 851,842
3. Register/Title a Boat - 516,984
4. Trout Stocking Calendar - 507,229
5. Stocking - 284,453
6. Trout - PA Fishes - 181,966
7. Trout Season Overview - 175,820
8. Fishing Regulations - 167,533
9. Boat Registration FAQ - 157,031
10. Best Fishing Waters - 133,982

Total Sessions

3,719,341

Total Users

2,331,857

Web Page Visits by State

1. Pennsylvania - 1,707,049
2. New York - 159,073
3. District of Columbia - 102,278
4. New Jersey - 84,076
5. Ohio - 73,879
6. Maryland - 33,306
7. Virginia - 28,780
8. Florida - 18,355
9. Texas - 17,447
10. Michigan - 16,468

Social Media 2021

(1/1/21 to 12/31/21)

Facebook

Followers (6% increase)	111,455
Posts	977
Impressions	15,307,474
Engagements	437,973
Engagement Rate	1.08%

Twitter

Followers (2% increase)	12,569
Tweets	835
Impressions	935,305
Engagements	36,905
Engagement Rate	0.80%

Instagram

Followers (11% increase)	20,121
Posts	789
Impressions	4,893,988
Engagements	133,573
Engagement Rate	1.82%

YouTube

Subscribers (64% increase)	2,643
Videos	165
Impressions	1,517,146
Engagements	225,073
Engagement Rate	23.33%

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:
fishandboat.com


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 and 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 and 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 and 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 and 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 and 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 and 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

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

The Visitor Center at Huntsdale State Fish Hatchery is currently closed due to repairs.

FishandBoat.com

Pennsylvania State-Record Fish

Bass, Largemouth Birch Run Reservoir Adams Co.	11 lb. 3 oz.	Donald Shade Waynesboro, PA 1983
Bass, Rock Elk Creek Erie Co.	3 lb. 2 oz.	David L. Weber Lake City, PA 1971
Bass, Smallmouth Scotts Run Lake Berks Co.	8 lb. 8 oz.	Robert T. Steelman Havertown, PA 1997
Bass, Striped - Inland Waters Raystown Lake Huntingdon Co.	53 lb. 12 oz.	Robert Price Huntingdon, PA 1994
Bass, Striped - Marine Delaware River Delaware Co.	53 lb. 13 oz.	Donald J. Clark Boothwyn, PA 1989
Bass, White Conneaut Lake Crawford Co.	4 lb.	Robert H. Hornstrom Meadville, PA 2002
Bluegill Keystone Lake Armstrong Co.	2 lb. 9 oz.	Tom Twincheck Blairsville, PA 1983
Carp, Common Juniata River Huntingdon Co.	52 lb.	George Brown Saltillo, PA 1962
Catfish, Bullhead Beltzville Lake Carbon Co.	4 lb. 10 oz.	Ian C. Radler Palmerton, PA 2011
Catfish, Channel Lehigh Canal Northampton Co.	35 lb. 3 oz.	Austin E. Roth III Bowmanstown, PA 1991
Catfish, Flathead Schuylkill River East Falls	56 lb. 3 oz.	Jonathan Pierce Philadelphia, PA 2020
Crappie Hammond Lake Tioga Co.	4 lb. 3 oz.	Richard A. Pino Covington, PA 2000
Drum, Freshwater (Sheepshead) Monongahela River Washington Co.	19 lb. 14 oz.	Tim Rogers Finleyville, PA 1994
Muskellunge Conneaut Lake Crawford Co.	54 lb. 3 oz.	Lewis Walker Jr. Meadville, PA 1924
Perch, White Delaware River Delaware Co.	1 lb. 12 oz.	James Clark Philadelphia, PA 2008
Perch, Yellow Lake Erie Erie Co.	3 lb.	Kirk Rudzinski Erie, PA 2021
Pickereel, Chain Long Pond Wayne Co.	8 lb. 15 oz.	Dave Wilson Honesdale, PA 2002
Pike, Northern Allegheny Reservoir McKean Co.	35 lb.	Carl Stoltz Bradford, PA 2003
Salmon, Atlantic - Landlocked Lake Raystown Lake Huntingdon Co.	17 lb. 2 oz.	Brian Keller Altoona, PA 2001
Salmon, Chinook Lake Erie Erie Co.	28 lb. 15 oz.	Gregory Lasko Erie, PA 1990

Salmon, Coho Lake Erie Erie Co.	15 lb. 5 oz.	Jack Scheirer McMurry, PA 1985
Salmon, Pink Elk Creek Erie Co.	4 lb. 8 oz.	David A. Rabatin Bethel Park, PA 1995
Sauger Susquehanna River Lycoming Co.	4 lb.	Tim Waltz Williamsport, PA 2001
Shad, American Delaware River Pike Co.	9 lb. 9 oz.	Anthony Mecca Peckville, PA 1986
Suckers Allegheny River Forest Co.	12 lb. 14 oz.	Raymond C. Szalewicz Titusville, PA 2003
Trout, Brook Fishing Creek Clinton Co.	7 lb.	Vonada Ranck Watson, PA 1996
Trout, Brown Lake Erie Erie Co.	20 lb. 9 oz.	Robert J. Ferraro Erie, PA 2020
Trout, Golden Rainbow Mahoning Creek Schuylkill Co.	13 lb. 8 oz.	Eli Borger Palmerton, PA 2008
Trout, Lake Lake Erie Erie Co.	31 lb. 13 oz.	Keith Miller Cranberry, PA 2019
Trout, Rainbow Jordan Creek Lehigh Co.	15 lb. 6 oz.	Dennis L. Clouse Bethlehem, PA 1986
Trout, Steelhead Walnut Creek Erie Co.	20 lb. 3 oz.	Corey T. Brown Osterburg, PA 2001
Walleye Youghiogheny River Fayette Co.	18 lb. 1 oz.	Richard E. Nicholson Connellsville, PA 2021

Rules for State-Record Fish

For more information on the state-record fish program, visit the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's (PFBC's) website at 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 (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.



photo-Jeff Woleslagle

Trout Fishing Strategies for Opening Day

by Jeff Woleslagle

As is usually the case, some friends and I were greatly looking forward to the opening day of trout season. It rained intermittently for three straight days leading up to that Saturday, and I had the sinking feeling that the stretch of stream we wanted to target, which flows through some low-lying farmland in Huntingdon County, would be a raging torrent the color of chocolate milk. I drove to the stream and confirm my suspicions. My friends insisted on fishing the pool on this stream that had long been our tradition, but I felt that fishing a nearby stream at a higher elevation would be a good call, as not only would the water level

drop faster following all that precipitation, but it would also be less impacted by sedimentation. It was a good decision, as I caught and released close to 12 trout that morning. When I met up with my friends for lunch, they did not even see a fish landed. Scouting a few different locations ahead of opening day may help you have a contingency plan if stream conditions change. You cannot control the weather, but you can have a plan to accommodate it.

Preseason scouting when the streams are low and clear may also help find where a lot of the fish are holding and could pay big dividends on opening day. I typically make a trip to the stream I want to fish a few days before the season opens to make sure fish are still in the water. Sometimes in high water, fish migrate, and when the water comes back down, the holes that were previously sure bets suddenly do not look as good.



photo-courtesy of Sabatey Kep

Sabatey Kep with a Rainbow Trout caught while fishing Meadow Run, Fayette County.

It is often said that the early bird gets the worm, but it is also true that the early angler gets that worm in front of the most trout. It is no secret that the best spots along the stream or lake get taken early. If possible, try to be along the water at least 2 hours before the 8:00 a.m. start time. I prefer to get to my chosen spot and at least get my fishing gear in place around 5:00 a.m. Later in the day, when the fishing pressure starts to subside, look for small pockets and runs that may have been overlooked by other anglers who chose to target larger holes. Do not be surprised to catch multiple fish from a small area such as a deep trough in a run or small section of undercut stream bank.

Another key to success on opening day is carrying a wide range of baits. Nothing can be more frustrating than seeing anglers enjoy success all around you and not having whatever the fish may be hitting. On a typical first day, I will pack some paste baits, waxworms, nightcrawlers, canned sweet corn, salmon eggs, and I may even bring along some live Fathead Minnows.

Some highly successful anglers I know also swear by butterworms and mealworms. For artificial baits, I always make sure I have an ample supply of small inline spinners, jigs, and spoons in a variety of colors. If I am carrying a fly rod on the opener, I usually fish a double nymph rig with a strike indicator.

Thinking ahead about how to keep warm also makes for a more productive opening day. It is a good idea to dress in layers and pack hand warmers. I never mind shedding a few layers if it starts to get warm. However, once you get chilled, it can be hard to recover and focus on fishing. Packing a thermos of coffee or hot chocolate as well as snacks goes a long way in keeping the cold at bay. Pack rain gear if the forecast looks questionable.

Most of Pennsylvania will likely see water temperatures in the 40s or lower on opening day, so it should come as no surprise that offerings fished slowly and drifted near the bottom are normally the way to go in those first few hours of the season. Even trout can act sluggish when the water is frigid, so offering something that the fish do not have to work hard for often yields bites. Look for the fish to get more active throughout the day, especially in areas where the stream gets some direct sunlight.

If you adapt to the weather, do a little pre-season scouting, arrive early, and bring a variety of baits, you can have the perfect opening day this year. ☐



photo-Jeff Wolski

By packing a variety of baits, an opening day angler will be prepared for whatever the fish may be biting.



2022

Adult Trout Stocking Program Changes

by David Nihart
PFBC Fisheries Biologist

photos-Spring Gearhart

In 2022, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) is stocking approximately 3.2 million adult trout in waters of the Commonwealth open to public fishing. Stocked adult trout produced by Commission hatcheries average 11 inches in length.

Changes for the 2022 trout season include extensions of stocked stream sections and the addition, reinstatement, or removal of waters to the stocking program. Anglers will continue to see a reduction in the number of Brook Trout stocked throughout the Commonwealth. Commission 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.

Additional information regarding Pennsylvania's trout fishing opportunities is detailed on the Commission's website at: 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. 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 on dams and other infrastructure that result in the drawdown of impoundments or decreased water flow.

Dunbar Creek, Fayette County

Due to improved access, the stocked portion of the stream was extended 0.6-mile upstream. The revised stocking limits will extend 2.3 miles from 1.7 miles upstream of Furnace Hill Road bridge downstream to the Sheepskin Trail crossing downstream of the ballfield.



Mugser Run, Columbia County

An inseason stocking will be added to the 4.7-mile section of stream extending from Fisherdale Road bridge downstream to the mouth. Formerly, this water had been stocked on a preseason only basis.

Oswayo Creek, Potter County

Located near the Borough of Shinglehouse, an 8.1-mile section of stream extending from Post Hollow Road bridge downstream to Horse Run Road bridge will be added to the adult trout stocking program. Brown Trout and Rainbow Trout will be stocked during the preseason and inseason stocking periods.

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 Commission 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 the waters can be considered for reinstatement to the stocking program if access is improved.

Cold Stream, Centre 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 1.3-mile section of stream extending from the State Game Lands boundary downstream to the inflow of Cold Stream Dam. Formerly, this water was stocked in both the preseason and inseason stocking periods. Fish previously stocked in this stream will now be stocked in Black Moshannon Creek and Cold Stream Dam, Centre County.

Eddy Lick Run, Centre County

A decrease in stream access has led to the removal of trout stocking from a 3.2-mile section of stream

extending from the first unnamed tributary 1.4 miles upstream of Fetzter Hollow downstream to the mouth. Formerly, this water was stocked on a preseason only basis. Fish previously stocked in this stream will now be stocked in Black Moshannon Creek, Centre County.

Middle Branch Genesee River, 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 5.7-mile section of stream extending from the Gazdag Road bridge 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 Oswayo Creek, Potter County.

Neshaminy Creek, Bucks County

A consumption advisory issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection has led to the removal of trout stocking from the 1.9-mile section of stream extending from the second unnamed tributary 0.25 mile upstream of Valley Road bridge downstream to the second unnamed tributary 0.53 mile downstream of Mill Road bridge and from the 1.0-mile section of stream extending from the dam above the Tyler State Park causeway downstream to the Richboro Road 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 the Delaware Canal and Tohickon Creek, Bucks County.

West Branch Genesee River, 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 4.9-mile section of stream extending from the confluence of Rose Lake Run 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 Oswayo Creek, Potter County. ☐



NOTES *from the Streams*

Good timing

I was assisting Deputy State Game Warden Jeremy Elliot with a deer poaching complaint in Bedford County. We were looking for individuals hunting in a safety zone, attempting to take game after legal hunting hours, and failing to meet fluorescent orange requirements while firearms deer hunting. The investigation appeared to be going nowhere. We spoke with several neighbors in the area and got the description of the offender's vehicle. As if on cue, the violator's vehicle drove past the house where we were standing. One of the witnesses yelled, "That's the truck, just like I described. That's the truck!" We quickly stopped the vehicle, and the two violators were inside. Sometimes, a successful day of law enforcement just comes down to good timing.—*WCO Brendan J. Ryan, Bedford and Western Fulton counties.*

The "Slow No Wake" buoy at the end of the rainbow

A large portion of the work of a Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO) is that of law enforcement. For that reason, on the water, we are often viewed as a floating headache or potential fine. The best parts of my day are when we connect with the boating community and show them that we are out on the water to do more than just write a ticket. These opportunities are not as common as I would like. People who are recreational boating do not often get to talk to us as they boat around the lakes and rivers of Pennsylvania unless we are checking for a violation.

One day, a rainstorm unexpectedly rolled through the Youghiogheny River Lake, Somerset County. Every boat in sight, including my boat, headed to the Route 40 bridge for cover. Packed like sardines, we maneuvered to make room for as many boats as possible under the bridge. We had a great time with the stack of boats that surrounded us and had the opportunity to interact with a lot of boaters. For many, rainstorms may be off-putting during a day of boating, but I now look forward to them.

We also solved the age-old question of what is at the end of the rainbow. Not a pot of gold, but rather a "Slow No Wake" buoy.—*WCO Tyler M. Crooks, Northern Somerset County.*

Flashing signs

I heard many stories stemming from trout season, and I was not quite sure what to expect. My

first experience as a WCO during trout season had ups, downs, and everything in between. While stocking thousands of trout brought about many memories, one memory I will never forget occurred during the closed season on a Stocked Trout Water.

While on patrol, I routinely ensure signs are posted to warn anglers of closed waters. This includes trying to anticipate every possible direction an angler can access a stream and attempting to have a sign posted within eyesight of these access points. One morning, I observed a male actively fishing in closed stocked trout waters. This particular area was along a bend in the road, so naturally the stream had some bends as well. Due to the bends, I placed four signs at different angles in a small area to let anglers know that the area was closed fishing waters. During my interaction with the angler, I asked



illustration-Andrea Feeney

the angler to walk back to his truck the same way he walked to the stream. As we walked back to the truck, which was a short distance away, I asked the angler to read each sign that we passed. The first sign he read out loud with a neutral look on his face. Then, I pointed out the second, third, and fourth signs that we passed on the way back to his vehicle.

Even though some people may think differently, WCOs understand that people make mistakes. When I inquired why the angler did not abide by the signs, he gave me an interesting reason. The angler stated that he saw the signs, but he said if the signs were “lit up” with flashing lights, then “maybe” he would have read them. Unfortunately, the signs I post and maintain as a WCO do not come with flashing lights. We will see if I receive new and improved signs for next trout season, so “maybe” this angler will read the signs.—WCO Brandon J. Young, Eastern Allegheny County.

She is not fishing

While patrolling Lake Wallenpaupack, Pike and Wayne counties, with WCO Emily R. Borger, we observed two boats anchored near Shuman Point. We drifted about 100 yards from the boats trying to ascertain who was fishing and who was not. When we were comfortable with knowing who was fishing, we approached and checked the fishing licenses of everyone on the first boat. As we checked each license, we continued to watch and monitor the two people fishing from the other boat, which was about 50 yards from us. Once our interaction was complete with the individuals on the first boat, we slowly approached the other vessel with a male and female occupant. At some point, the female occupant stopped fishing.

When we pulled up alongside of the boat, I informed the occupants that we wanted to check their fishing licenses. Immediately, the male individual said, “she is not fishing.”

Obviously, we knew she was fishing, as we had been watching both of them fishing for at least 10 minutes. As I chatted with the male individual, WCO Borger proceeded to write the female angler a citation for fishing without a license. During my conversation, I asked if they caught any fish. He responded, “she caught a perch.”—Sergeant Walter A. Buckman, Northeast Region.



photo: Spring Catcher

WCO Emily R. Borger and Sergeant Walter A. Buckman

Work smarter, not harder

While on patrol with WCO Nathaniel J. Yingling, we came upon an individual who was leaning over the side of a bridge that runs over Laurel Hill Creek, which is one of many stocked trout streams in Somerset County. Being that the individual was practically bent at a 90-degree angle reaching down over the side of the bridge, it was difficult to see what was taking place. As we approached, we noticed he was holding a fishing rod. I pulled the patrol truck up alongside the individual and WCO Yingling asked him how he was doing and if he had any luck that day. He stated that he was not fishing. WCO Yingling and I immediately looked at each other, because it was not the first time we heard that line. We exited the patrol vehicle to investigate what was really going on. As the individual reeled up his line out of the water, I noticed a homemade contraption on the end. It was not a hook, or any device used to fish, but rather a pair of nail

clippers and a plastic ring all tied together. He said he was trying to get a spinner unstuck from between rocks. Upon looking down at the stream, there was, in fact, a gold spinner wedged between the rocks. Laurel Hill Creek was running quite low that day. Noticing that the water level was knee-deep at maximum, I recommended it would be much easier to walk in and grab what he was trying to retrieve. He questioned my recommendation and proceeded to try to retrieve the spinner. Before we left, we informed him that if he did want to fish that day or in the future, he would need a valid Pennsylvania fishing license. He acknowledged our comment, and we went on our way.—WCO Dina M. Cable, Southern Somerset County.

Pocono Plateau pendulum

Living and working on the Pocono Plateau presents some unique challenges. The elevation, topography, and proximity to the coast causes some drastic fluctuations in weather patterns. I also want to thank all the stocking help that showed up again this year, wearing masks and gloves due to the COVID-19 pandemic, braving some extremely cold, snowy conditions, as well as rain, sleet, and sweltering heat. On March 5, 2021, we stocked Lake Minisink, and the Bush Kill, Pike County, cutting through 20 inches of ice on the lake, with an air temperature of 18 degrees F and 30-mile-per-hour wind. On April 28, the pendulum swung the other way. As we finished stocking the Bush Kill for the season, I jumped into my patrol truck, drank the last of my water, and saw on the truck’s air temperature gauge that it was 93 degrees F.—WCO T. Curt Tereschak, Southern Pike and Northeastern Monroe counties.



Steel City Trout

by Ralph Scherder

photos by the author

By 1840, Pittsburgh had grown into one of the largest cities west of the Allegheny Mountains due in large part to its production of iron, tin, glass, and brass products. In 1875, entrepreneur Andrew Carnegie opened the Edgar Thomson Steel Works mills in Braddock, Allegheny County, along the shores of the Monongahela River. For the next century, this region played a major role in steel production as Pittsburgh became known as the “Steel City.”

Given its industrial history, Pittsburgh is not the first place that comes to mind for trout fishing, but just a short drive from the city limits will put you onto several nice streams. Deer Creek, Pine Creek, and Bull Creek may not boast the mayfly hatches and wild trout of Pennsylvania’s most famous waters, but these streams are stocked heavily, and any day of the week, provide a nice respite from busy city life.

Deer Creek

Deer Creek’s headwaters begin just west of Pheasant Ridge Golf Club in southern Butler County and flows south into Allegheny County. It remains a small stream until it joins West Branch Deer Creek near Middle Road in Gibsonia,

Allegheny County, just off of State Route 910. This is also the uppermost stocking point along Deer Creek. The stream is stocked down to approximately ½ mile downstream of Rich Hill Road.

Deer Creek is home to a 1.9-mile Delayed Harvest Artificial Lures Only (DHALO) section that begins at the bridge on State Route 910 near the intersection of Martin Road. It is an easy spot to miss, because there is not much access to it. The best access to the DHALO section is in two locations.

The first access location is the parking lot for the Narcisi Winery. If accessing the stream here, park off to the side and out of the way of customers.



Deer Creek, Butler and Allegheny counties

The second way to access the DHALO section is off of Campbell Road, which is a short distance from the winery on State Route 910. Once you turn onto Campbell Road, go about ¼ mile and look for a pull off on the right. If that gets crowded, you may also park on the other side of the road. This is not a well-traveled road, and it is full of potholes and rough patches, which makes it a fairly safe place to park.

The downstream property line of the Rose Ridge Golf Club serves as the lower boundary of the DHALO section. The Deer Creek DHALO section has lots of pockets and creases where trout like to hold. At first, the stream appears fairly shallow, but there are trout doing a good job of hiding. The trout also disperse well throughout the stream, and you will even find fish in areas that are not necessarily known stocking points.

Pine Creek

Not to be confused with the other dozens of streams across Pennsylvania also named Pine Creek, this particular Pine Creek begins at the outflow of North Park Lake and travels in a southeastern direction before joining the Allegheny River in Etna, Allegheny County. The stream is stocked intermittently from the dam at North Park Lake downstream to Butler Plank Road in Glenshaw, Allegheny County. Please consult the *2022 Pennsylvania Fishing Summary/Boating Handbook* for better details on the specific reaches of Pine Creek that are stocked.

The DHALO section on Pine Creek spans 1.4 miles, from the abandoned railroad bridge near the T-575 and Duncan Avenue intersection downstream to 150 yards downstream of the SR 4019 bridge. Much of it parallels Route 8, and access is readily available along most of the stretch at various turn-outs, parking lots, and anywhere you see signs that allow access. When fishing any of these three streams, be courteous of landowners who grant access to anglers.

Pine Creek is a small- to mid-sized stream, ranging in width from 30- to 40-feet, and it has some nice pools and runs. It is also stocked heavily multiple times throughout the spring as well as once in the fall.



Pine Creek, Allegheny County



Bull Creek, Allegheny County

Bull Creek

Of the three streams mentioned here, Bull Creek is perhaps the least known. At only 20 feet wide or so, it is considerably smaller than both Deer Creek and Pine Creek, but it does have some nice pools and offers a pleasant outdoor experience a little off the beaten path. Bull Creek flows through some nice wooded and scenic areas, and pretty much all of it is stocked several times each spring except for two sections, one above and one below the DHALO section, that are posted no trespassing.

Bull Creek's 1-mile DHALO section begins at the first bridge on T-721 (above the T-721 and T-719 intersection) downstream to the T-721 bridge in Millerstown. T-721, also known as Thompson Road, parallels the entire length of the DHALO section and allows for easy access along this stretch.

Deer Creek, Pine Creek, and Bull Creek are all tributaries to the Allegheny River and are some of the first streams in this area to get stocked with trout every spring. Water temperatures typically stay good for trout until around mid-June. Although I have caught trout in Deer Creek in late-August, it was during an exceptionally cool and wet summer. By mid-June, you may find some good Smallmouth Bass fishing in all three of these streams, as fish often travel up from the Allegheny River. I have even heard reports of Walleyes in Pine Creek, but I have not encountered these fish myself.

Generally speaking, tactics that catch trout anywhere will also catch trout here. The lack of major mayfly hatches often means the trout are not too finicky, and I had some great days on a basic variety of nymphs, streamers, or egg patterns. For the most part, these areas are stocked trout streams, but that does not diminish the value as great places to enjoy nature and find peace just a short drive from the Steel City. ☑



Stony Fork Creek's Legends Abound

by Linda Stager

photos by the author

Stony Fork Creek, southern Tioga County, is a place of legends. It is said that panthers roamed here in the 1800s, that wood nymphs peer from trees and rocks at unsuspecting visitors, and that rattlesnakes wait for every footstep in this isolated place.

The fast whitewater sections of Stony Fork Creek inspire stories of kayaking the Class II and Class III-rated narrow chutes along 4.2 miles of this tiny stream. Pennsylvania's longest footpath, the rugged Mid State Trail, also follows the far side of the creek for almost 2 miles before it makes its largest water crossing and continues on its cross-state journey. The country swimming holes on the stream are legendary for rope swings, parties, lazy picnics, and deep cold water pools, where the biggest fish lurk.

Stony Fork Creek is also one of Tioga County's best kept trout fishing secret locations. Come to Stony Fork Creek on a spring day and catch trout all along the 9.3-mile stream. That is the legend—and a fact.

Stony Fork Creek runs from the village of Stony Fork south to Babb Creek along Route 414 southwest of Morris. The upper portion of the stream is placid. After the east branch and west branch merge in Tioga State Forest, it is a fierce, turbulent few miles of water rushing over smooth bedrock. In this section, the creek weaves its way along tall

rock ledge walls and big boulders, through an isolated steep-sided mountain glade. Waterfalls dot its journey downwards through the deep hemlock and hardwood forests along State Game Lands 268.

This part of Stony Fork Creek is wild, isolated, and pure.

A spot named "Blueberry," below where the two branches of the stream merge, has no obvious markings, but locals know it is a great place to fish. Little Falls, distinguished only by a small pull off along a forest road, hosts great trout fishing and beautiful, rugged scenery. A little further south is Big Falls, home of rope swings and deep cold pools.

Between the two falls is a petroglyph carved into a boulder, right along the stream. Legend says a miner in the 1800s carved it. But, no one knows the true story, only that it is there for the astute visitor to find. No matter what the backstory, the subject of the stone carving is clear—it is a fish. Maybe the rock carving was chiseled into the big boulder by the secretive wood nymphs who old-timers say still live in the forest. Wood nymphs lure visitors to the creek to torment them with trickery. Watch carefully for them in photos taken here. They just may show up to perpetuate the legend.

The road is narrow and almost one lane in spots. It is also a dead end of sorts. It ends at Babb Creek and requires a fording of the wide and sometimes high creek with your vehicle. Chose carefully which vehicle you take across the creek. Most folks turn around at Painter Run and return to Draper the way they came.

The stories go on, but what most anglers know is that this creek holds a promise for a good day of fishing. Come



An angler on Stony Fork Creek reels in a golden Rainbow Trout.

for a relaxing day and get away from the hubbub of the everyday world.

Golden Rainbow Trout are visible in the deep pools. Good-sized Brown Trout and Rainbow Trout are also stocked.

Mike Spencer, Tioga County, is an avid angler who fished Stony Fork Creek since he was a youngster. These days, he

and his adult daughter, Sydney, make quite the angling duo.

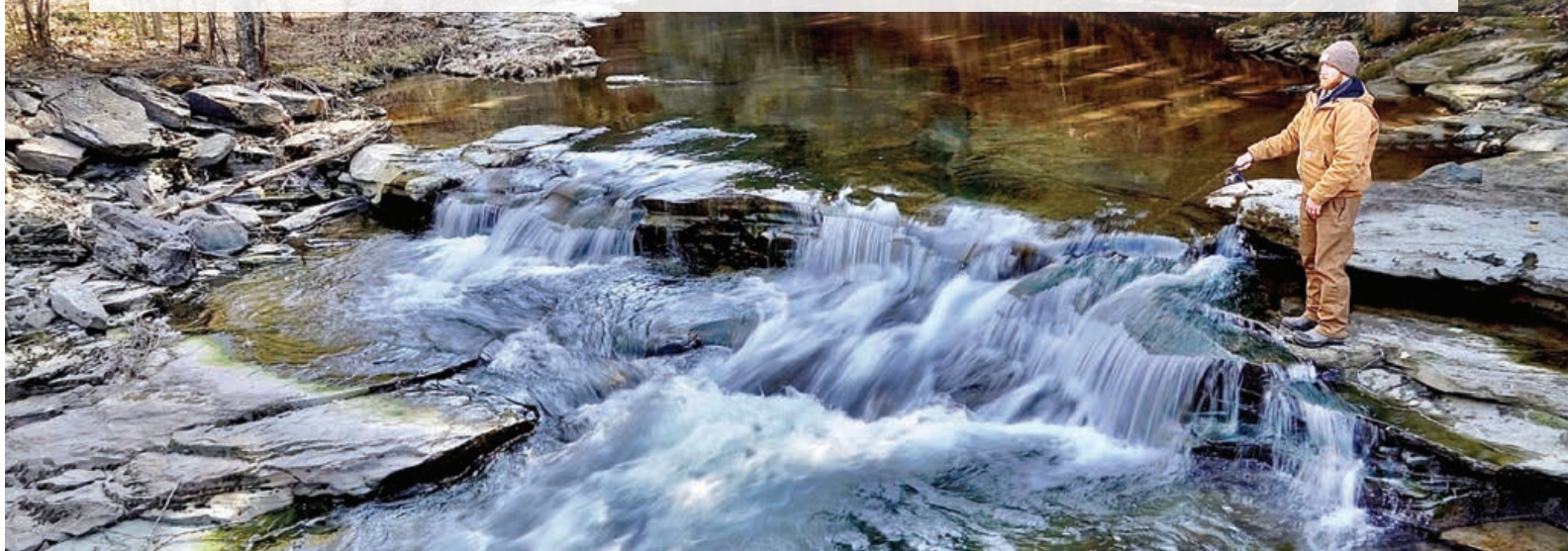
"The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission does a really nice job of stocking the creek. There are nice, big pools on the creek and easy access to get to these pools. If you work your way downstream from the big pools, there are pockets of cold water where trout can survive. It is a cold enough stream that trout can hold over into the summer and fall fishing seasons," said Spencer.

However, Stony Fork Creek often requires picking your way along huge boulders and keeping a sharp lookout for rattlesnakes.

James Clarke, currently living in Florida, only comes back to visit these days. He eloquently remembers fishing here. "I would go there early as the sun was just breaking over the mountains. The mayflies would be hanging low over the stream. Looking for rapids just in front of a pool, I watched the stream bubbling with trout. The air was full of

aromas, not unlike Christmas but better. It was fresh and filled my lungs with life," said Clarke.

Legends aside, this is simply a magical place. Fish it anytime, and you will see its magic. And, you will probably come home with fish. It is Tioga County's legendary tiny trout stream. ☐



An angler fishes at the waterfalls on the East Branch Stony Fork Creek.

Wacky Worming Trout

by *Braden Eisenhower*

photos by the author



Look through the tackle bag of a bass angler and one is certain to unveil soft plastic stickbaits. These cigar-shaped plastic baits are potent fish catchers when rigged wacky-style with the hook perpendicular through the worm's center.

Underwater, the worm quivers with a seductive, horizontal fall that attracts nearly any species crossing its path from bass to bullheads and pickerel to perch. But, will it fool a trout?

Familiar territory

On many occasions, I found stocked Rainbow Trout eager to take a wacky worm and prove my hypothesis correct. I am far from the innovator of the pattern. In fact, manufacturers have long produced specialized worms with trout anglers in mind. These are more slender than bass counterparts and range between 2- and 3-inches in length.

The trout angler's wacky worm bears closer resemblance to popular fly patterns like the San Juan Worm or Squirmy Worm and its variants. There is also a following among steelhead anglers, though their preference seems to be toward larger worms.

Trout worms come in a variety of natural and vibrant colors. Taking cues from the fly patterns above, I primarily fish with hot pink (bubblegum) or fluorescent red.

Tackle

The wacky rig is a no-frills approach and requires minimal terminal tackle. Size 8 or 10 hooks work for all rigging methods. Hook style and brand is a personal preference. Knowing the likelihood of snags and lost rigs, I am content with inexpensive baitholder hooks (barbs pinched for easy release). I also keep a generous supply of splitshot in B, BB, and 3/0 sizes on hand.

Ultralight spinning gear remains the standard. I spool with 2-pound-test copolymer or 4-pound-test monofilament lines.

Drifting

I present wacky rigs in two manners: drifting and stationary. The drifting wacky rig's greatest attribute is its versatility. Drifting wacky worms may take trout from strong riffles to undercut banks.



Wacky rigging requires little terminal tackle. My complete kit includes micro jigheads (1/80- or 1/64-ounce), a plain hook (size 8 or 10), an assortment of splitshot (sizes B, BB, and 3/0), and some small floats.

The most common area I choose a drifting wacky rig is in pools below riffles. Cast upstream, directly into the riffle. Current takes the worm to the most active trout at the head of the pool and continues to drift through the entire area.

The goal is a natural drift. Simply cast and allow the current to do all the work. This is not a typical retrieve with a swimming motion. There is no need to jerk or twitch the worm either.

I keep my rod at the 10 o'clock position, which keeps a slight bow in the line. I follow the worm with my rod tip as the rig glides downstream.

To control the depth, I add a single shot about 10 inches above the hook. I like the worm to drift 12 inches or so above the bottom. It may touch the bottom throughout the drift, but it should not rest in one place. The weight also improves casting distance and accuracy.



Plastic worms are not just for bass fishing. Trout worms (bottom) share a likeness with popular fly patterns like the Squirmy Worm and San Juan Worm (top).

Float-assisted drifts

A small float is especially useful in straight runs where streams deepen and current speed slows. Without strong current, the wacky rig will fall instead of moving downstream. Floats solve this problem by keeping the worm at a fixed depth.

While floats have kid-like implications, presenting a float in current is anything but child's play.

The goal is a natural drift with minimal drag. Even in slow moving waters, the float will outrun the worm. Remedy this challenge with multiple splitshots between the float and hook. This is where tiny splitshots come in handy. Rather than grouping the splitshots together, space the splitshots apart. In deeper holes, I substitute the plain hook for a 1/80- or 1/64-ounce jighead. The result is a rig that sits vertical and moves inline downstream.

Cast upstream and allow the current to carry the rig. This creates slack, which requires constant reeling at the speed of the current. I prefer 7-foot, 6-inch rods. The long rod allows me to steer the rig if needed.

Stationary

Another rigging method is a splitshot rig to hold the worm in a fixed position. This is the same rigging method and presentation I use with dough baits. As such, wacky worming is a great alternative once trout have become

conditioned to dough baits. Plastic trout worms also come without any mess, require infrequent rebaiting, and never spoil in the pack.

For the rig, simply place splitshot 18- to 24-inches above the hook. Use just enough weight that the splitshot remains on the bottom. One or two 3/0 splitshot are often sufficient. With the rig pegged, the current carries the worm downstream and holds it off the bottom.

Position it upstream of a hole, generally near the riffle, and slip the rig downstream. The worm tosses and turns, swaying side to side in the current. Trout cannot resist it.

The wacky rig is simple, yet effective. Keep a pack ready when traditional trout lures fall short. ☐



CALEDONIA STATE PARK

by John Allen

photos by the author

We all have a place in our memories where we keep our love of all things fishing and outdoors. Caledonia State Park, Adams and Franklin counties, is that place for me. As soon as I turn off Route 30 and see the waterfall on the bend followed by the seemingly endless hemlock and rhododendrons, my mind and body begin to relax. I spent a large part of my youth exploring this park. When I was old enough to fish on my own, a lot of that exploration went to fishing. While there are only two stocked streams on the property, the quality of the fishing and overall experience is well worth the trip.

Conococheague Creek

The main focal point in this park is the Conococheague Creek. Most know this creek when it gets considerably larger in and around Chambersburg. At Caledonia State Park, the creek is still in its beginning stages. Above Route 233, you get the feel of a wilderness stream as it flows out of Michaux State Forest. Even on the campground side of Route 233, you get a similar feel as you wander through the back trails. It is not until the stream nears the ranger station and runs past the pool that it starts to take on the appearance of a larger stream. Even after it goes by the pool, it reenters another heavily wooded area that allows you to escape again. The creek

is stocked multiple times per year by both the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission as well as the local cooperative nursery. The heavy cover of hemlocks and overhanging rhododendrons provide excellent cover for trout and keep the water cool. The rhododendrons create a unique fishing experience that force you to develop distinct fishing tactics. It is not uncommon to find stocked trout well into the fall and even into the next spring. These excellent conditions also allow for a decent wild Brook Trout population.

Carbaugh Run

A much smaller stream meanders through the golf course on the southern side of Route 30. Carbaugh Run receives several stockings of trout each year. This stream is narrow and is intricate to fish. As with Conococheague Creek, there is a wild Brook Trout population as well as a stocked trout population. Once the creek merges with Rocky Mountain Creek and crosses under Route 30, the stream becomes a Children Fishing Area for anglers 15 years old and younger. The Children Fishing Area winds for about 1,000 feet before entering the Conococheague Creek near the pool. This is an excellent spot to take your kids to escape crowds in other areas.

Hiking trails

My favorite part of Caledonia State Park is the hiking trails that either lead to an area of stream or wander along it. Ramble Trail leads through the western end of the park



A pond along Route 233.

once it exits the picnic area near the pool. Whispering Pine Nature Trail leads you into a section of stream that is completely covered by rhododendrons near the ranger station. Midland Trail and Chambersburg Water Line lead you along either side of the stream between Hosack Run Campground and the ranger station. Both trails have small offshoot trails that will lead you directly to the stream.

Camping

Caledonia State Park has two main camping areas, Chinquapin Hills and Hosack Run. Chinquapin Hills is up the hill from the pool and picnic area and provides you with excellent access to that section of the park. Hosack Run is to the east and sits at the end of the Chambersburg Water Line. This is typically the campground that most anglers choose, as it is a short walk to a pleasant stretch of trout stream. At many of the campsites, you can sit outside and listen to the babbling of Hosack Run or the springtime roar of the Conococheague Creek.

Other waters

In addition to the streams in the park, a 1-acre pond can be found along Route 233 between the ranger station and Hosack Run that has a mix of warmwater fish species. While the park itself lacks boating opportunities, you will find the picturesque Long Pine Run Reservoir about 3 miles from the Hosack Run Campground. In the summer months when trout fishing becomes difficult, Long Pine Reservoir is

always a great alternative for fishing. This lake provides excellent fishing for panfish and Largemouth Bass.

Overall, Caledonia State Park is an excellent fishing escape with opportunities for the whole family. As a parent, I find Caledonia State Park to be fun to share with my children. From searching for various frogs and salamanders to hiking down a trail to lesser fished areas, the possibility of outdoor adventures is endless. Seeing my children find excitement in the same things that brought me joy when my parents brought me here for the first time will keep me coming back year after year. ☐



The rhododendrons create a unique fishing experience that forces you to develop distinct fishing tactics.



Subsurface Fly Fishing for Stocked Trout

by Tyler Frantz photos by the author

For every fish that rises to a dry fly, there are presumably more fish feeding underwater. On any day absent a phenomenal hatch, anglers may increase catch rates by probing the water's depths with subsurface flies—especially when targeting stocked trout.

Stocked fish may be predictable. Stocked fish like flash, occasional movement, and opportunistic morsels when hungry. Stocked fish also hold position when conditions are right, react to sensory stimuli, and put up a good fight when hooked.

Anglers who know how to catch stocked trout well on spinning gear may replicate the same basic tactics, only with a fly fishing twist—by presenting hand tied offerings underwater. These anglers catch more trout and have a good time in the process.

Jigging a Green Weenie

The popular Green Weenie is a favorite fly for two primary reasons.

First, it is easy to tie with simple chartreuse micro chenille, a weighted beadhead, and some thread to match. Secondly, it catches fish, plain and simple. What additional convincing does an angler need?

When cast upstream and allowed to sink and dive with the current, a Green Weenie is significantly eye-catching. As it hits bottom and continues to drift, fly anglers should keep a taut line and bounce it off the bottom, much like one would fish a Trout Magnet.

This action drives stocked trout wild. If presented in the right zone, it often prompts a strike. Since Green Weenies are easy to see underwater, these flies are an excellent choice when sight fishing for trout. Put it in front of the fish and convince the fish to grab the bouncing bead.

Stripping a streamer

Anglers who enjoy fishing minnows or spinners know how eagerly stocked trout chase swimming food passing through the feeding zone. Streamer anglers may be successful in duplicating this occurrence by casting downstream with a Woolly Bugger or Clouser Minnow fly.



Tied with angora yarn, Sucker Spawn flies work well in early spring.

Both may be built with a weighted head near the hook eye or wrapped with lead beneath the fly material to help reach desired depths. Generally, these flies are cast downstream and worked upstream or in a diagonal manner to replicate a minnow that flees, then holds, and flees again to escape predators in currents.

Dead sticking a worm

A San Juan Worm or Squirmy Wormy may be highly effective when dead stuck through a stream with minimal drag. Made with chenille or other synthetic materials, these flies look like an earthworm tumbling through a fast-paced run.

This is another fly that is a cinch to tie, and an optional tungsten bead may be added for quick sinking power to spare anglers the need of attaching sinkers to leaders. Simply cast upstream, take in any slack, keep the rod tip vertically in line with the weighted fly, and lift at the slightest indication of a take.

Drifting droppers

One of my favorite ways to fish subsurface is to attach a foam football-style strike indicator as far up my leader as necessary for my fly to tick bottom. I love to run two flies—a point and dropper—beneath this indicator, offering the fish a choice between two different options.

For one fly, I typically opt for a weighted nymph, emerger, or scud that simulates generic aquatic insects. For my second fly, I like to include an egg pattern, especially in early spring.

Sometimes, I use Sucker Spawn flies made with angora yarn, but a simple McFly foam glow bug, representing a single colorful egg, is effective for all species of stocked trout in Pennsylvania, particularly Rainbow Trout. It is the same size and profile of hatchery pellets,

it looks like a salmon egg, and it certainly catches fish.

This rig generally requires a little extra weight in the form of splitshots attached to the leader between or just above the flies. It is fished by casting upstream, presenting a drag-free drift, and keeping an eye on the indicator, much like dough bait under a bobber. As soon as it shows any indication of movement, simply lift and let the weight of the fish set the hook.

Fishing subsurface flies for stocked trout may be extremely effective, especially when borrowing standby spin fishing strategies. Do not get me wrong; it is exciting to catch trout up

top on traditional dry flies, but you may find more fish when you dive a little deeper with your presentations. ☐



A simple egg pattern using McFly foam may prompt strikes from Brook Trout, Brown Trout, and Rainbow Trout.

Migrating River Smallmouth Bass



by Jeff Knapp

photos by the author

The river temperature was a chilly 40 degrees F when we launched my boat on a relatively mild, mid-March morning. Up until a few days prior, the focus had been on Walleyes, but now, with the season closed on Walleyes, it was time to check out the Smallmouth Bass situation.

I eased the boat into a quiet eddy, the same basic area where we last caught river Smallmouth Bass the previous late November. My partner dropped a blade bait into the 18-foot depths while I casted a finesse-sized tube jig toward the bank. It was not long until we both caught our first river Smallmouth Bass of the year.

During that outing, we landed about 36 Smallmouth Bass, mostly from 15- to 19-inches. While we tried several areas, all the fish came along the 100-yard stretch where we started. One week later, spots that were vacant of fish during our initial outing became the hotspots of the day. It is the same with springtime river Smallmouth Bass as the season changes.

In general, when river Smallmouth Bass first become active enough to feed, typically when the water temperature exceeds 40 degrees F, the fish will still be in wintering holes. If you are an angler who pursued the species into the prior

late fall, the probability is good the fish will be in the same basic spot come early spring. As the water warms up and the days become longer, river Smallmouth Bass will begin to disperse, eventually ending up in spawning areas. This transition may take from 4- to 8-weeks, depending on the weather and river conditions. Consistently catching river Smallmouth Bass calls for realizing the here-today-gone-tomorrow nature of the period, recognizing various habitat types, and using the best presentation options to find and catch fish.

Before delving into these items, an important one to ponder is, how far will river Smallmouth Bass travel? I suspect this has much to do with the availability of various habitat types. Based on my own observations on the Allegheny River and several smaller western Pennsylvania rivers, in certain situations, the fish move significant distances. My experience is not scientific; however, it is based on thousands of hours on the water at this time of the year. Furthermore, a tracking study conducted by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources during the early 2000s on the upper Mississippi River documented fish movement more than 30 miles between wintering and summer ranges.



Blade baits are particularly effective during early spring when bass often hold in the deeper areas of wintering holes.

Wintering habitat

From late fall until early spring, Smallmouth Bass occupy deeper river holes with mild current. Depth is relative. It could be 10 feet on a smaller, shallow river and over 20 feet on another waterway. It is also important that the area offers protection from the current if the river rises significantly. The depth may occur naturally or be the result of dredging or an impoundment. Good wintering spots tend to collect fish every year. The larger the spot, the greater numbers of Smallmouth Bass potentially use it.

Spawning habitat

River Smallmouth Bass prefer a gravel or sandy substrate to spawn on, ones out of the main force of the river's current. Such places are often found in backwaters created by islands and downstream from incoming creeks.

Bass will often show up in staging areas close to spawning sites 2- to 3-weeks prior to the actual spawn, even longer if nesting is delayed due to high flows or colder water temperature.

Staging areas tend to be pockets of nearby deeper, slower water. I expect to find Smallmouth Bass in staging areas once the water reaches the low to mid-50s.

In-between habitat

As touched on earlier, productive spots tend to run hot and cold based on the movement of the fish. The habitat for both wintering and spawning tends to be readily identifiable, particularly after some experience on a given river. The wild card is finding Smallmouth Bass after fish vacated wintering spots and have yet to arrive at spawning areas. I find that bass will temporarily hold in pockets of protected current as fish move, particularly if the movement is upriver. Explore pocket water created by bankside boulders and rocky points. If the river flows into a reservoir section, fish can stack up in high numbers prior to moving upriver.

Spring river Smallmouth Bass tactics

During early spring, finesse tubes, grubs, hair jigs, and Ned Rigs are all productive, particularly during warming trends when fish move shallower. When you must dredge off the bottom, it is hard to beat a blade bait. Working a suspending jerkbait painstakingly slowly over the shallows is also productive.

As the water warms and Smallmouth Bass are on the move, suspending hard jerkbaits and soft jerkbaits may quickly comb spots.

Once bass show up at staging areas, expect to catch bass on tubes, grubs, and Ned Rigs when fish are in deeper water. Smallmouth Bass will often cruise over the shallows where fish will spawn several days before nesting. Check these areas with soft jerkbaits and Senko stickbaits.

Whether it be a wintering area, spawning area, or one of those in-between spots, Smallmouth Bass may be present in high numbers during this period and make for some of the best fishing of the year. ☐



Hair jigs are effective for river Smallmouth Bass, particularly during the early spring.



Locating, Luring, and Landing the Apex Predator

by *Christian A. Shane*

photos by the author

“Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity.” Roman philosopher Seneca.

Have you ever been to a water at the right time, the right place, the right moment, and have taken advantage of the right opportunity to catch the fish of a lifetime? Successful anglers spend time and effort locating, luring, and landing the dominant fish of their targeted species to accomplish this feat.

In Latin, “apex” means peak or top. Apex predators, also called top or alpha predators, make up the highest level of the trophic pyramid and have no natural predators within its food chain. With preparation, skill, and luck, anglers may take advantage of the opportunity to catch an apex predator in Pennsylvania and beyond.

Locate

Anglers should research and study the characteristics of the target species. They need to understand the

size ranges, creel limits, regulations, habits, prey, and habitats of their quarry before hitting the water. Anglers will match this knowledge with their fishing tackle and equipment to catch the largest of the species. Those who investigate and explore the waterbody ahead of time will find ideal spots for big fish. Nothing beats time logged and lessons learned on the water.

Upon arrival to your fishing destination, take time to “read” the water. Look for structure, changes in depth, and places for big fish to find cover. Rob Walters, Laurel Highlands Guide Services, shares that “prime feeding lanes, with adjacent deep soft water nearby, undercut banks, and structure,” provide a great place to start. Walters caught some massive apex predators with his clients in southwestern Pennsylvania and beyond. “If you think there is a big fish living in that stretch of river, there probably is,” said Walters.

Pay attention to changes in the weather. Patterns in weather conditions also provide the angler with good opportunities to chase after the biggest of the species. Gigantic fish will come out to feed when the weather patterns change, and smaller prey are on the move. Time your fishing trip right, and the weather may be in your favor to discover fish that are not afraid of high water conditions or oncoming storms and pressure systems.

Lure

Be prepared with tackle and equipment including the rod size, reel, line pounds, and bait/lure/fly combinations. Your rod/reel/line should handle the largest of the species. Do you have an idea what food source your targeted predator frequently eats? Anglers who match their tackle to the quarry and its largest prey are more successful at consistently catching fish.

Anglers should be ready on the first cast. Large fish feed first in the prime spot. Therefore, make that first cast count. Check reel drag and line attachment knots beforehand and cast accurately to the designated spot.

Once you have searched for the predator without any results, change things up. By varying locations, retrieval speeds, water depths, colors, patterns, sizes, and even presentation, anglers increase their chances of coming across one of these large specimens. As always, show patience and have a positive attitude on the water, and it will display in your casting and overall fishing experience.

Land

Once you have done all your homework, it is time to land a large fish. First, know your exit strategy. Once the fish is on the line, where will you lead it to successfully fight and land it? This is information the angler should know before getting into the battle. Will you keep the fish or allow it to swim again? Having a large net handy is necessary and convenient for both methods.

Once the fish bites and is solidly on the line, maintain steady pressure. Don't give it time to recover. Getting the fish under control quickly gives it less time to find ways to escape. Keep away from any obstructions or obstacles that could break the line or tangle the fish, such as logs, sharp rocks or ledges, boat anchors, and even other anglers' lines. When the prize is to hand or net, have a phone or camera within arm's reach. Most anglers like to snap some photos of their catch, so the memories of the trip and the fish live on.

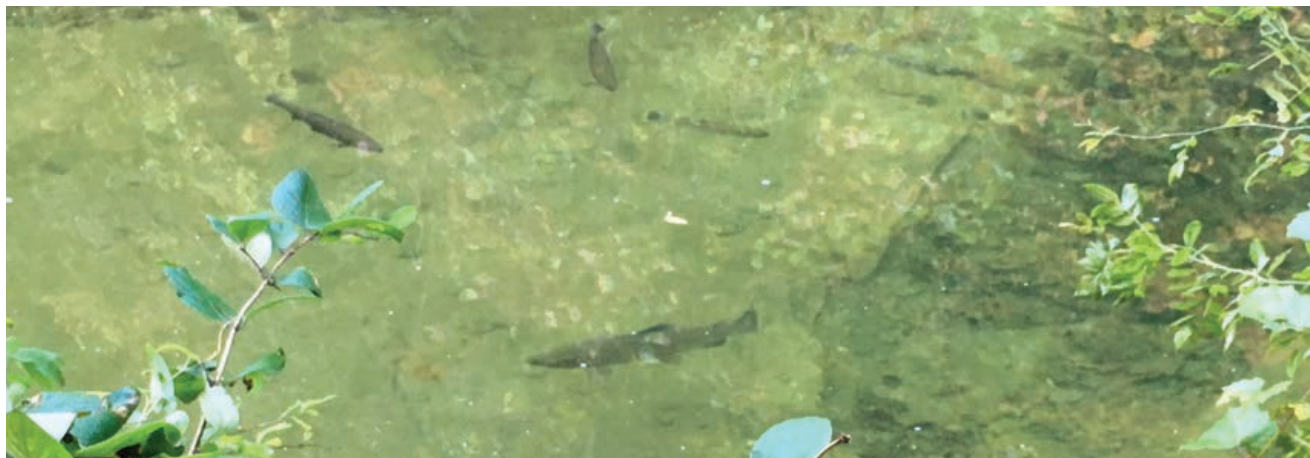
In addition, to allow the prime specimens of apex predatory species the opportunity to survive and flourish to



Leading a large fish headfirst into an awaiting net allows for a smooth catch.

meet full potential, water quality is always important. Anglers may help their cause by assisting with water clean-up days, joining and getting involved in water-friendly organizations, and sharing their opinions about clean water with local, state, and federal representatives.

Visit the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's website at fishandboat.com for helpful tools through the "Angler Award Program," "Pennsylvania's Biggest Fish," and other links and information to measure, estimate, and weigh your catch. Seize your next fishing opportunity with a lot of preparation and a little bit of luck. ☐



Do not hesitate to cast into tight spots as the apex predator may be lurking nearby.

Fishing the Little Lehigh Creek



by Carl Haensel

photos by the author

Through the heart of Allentown, Lehigh County, a wide ribbon of parkland twists and turns, leading from the west and ending at the Lehigh River. Flowing through the park system is the Little Lehigh Creek and some of its springs and tributaries. This high-quality trout stream offers easy access and excellent trout fishing to the anglers living in the Allentown metropolitan area. Its quality is well known beyond the local area, and it regularly draws anglers from across the region. While the parkland reach of the creek is what many anglers visit,

there are many additional miles of quality water available to anglers upstream.

Little Lehigh Creek rises southwest of the city of Allentown near Trexlertown. Flowing through a largely suburban and developing landscape, it offers good fishing access and both wild Brown Trout as well as stocked trout. With a watershed that spreads out over roughly 100 square miles, the stream drains a broad reach of Berks and Lehigh counties. Small, high-quality trout streams, like Iron Run, Spring Creek, Trout Run, and Cedar Creek, feed the Little Lehigh Creek cold water and contribute to the wild Brown Trout fisheries within the watershed.

Wild trout in the Little Lehigh Creek

The Little Lehigh Creek is unique in that it features both a Class A fishery for wild Brown Trout in the main



Wild Brown Trout are abundant in a number of reaches of the Little Lehigh Creek and its tributaries. Visit fishandboat.com to learn more about the Commission's Class A Wild Trout streams.

stem of the stream as well as stocked trout in the same reach. Additional Class A water is found upstream in the headwaters. With wild Brown Trout found in most areas, nearly the entire stream offers the opportunity to hook up with wild fish. These Brown Trout may be more difficult to convince to bite than stocked trout. Often, these fish are in the stream when it is stocked, and many manage to avoid harvest, even while stocked fish are removed in the same areas. Fly fishing for wild trout using small, natural patterns may convince finicky fish. In late spring and summer, terrestrial patterns like ants and beetles work well on fish that are suspended in pools, sipping insects underneath the shade of large trees.

Lil'-Le-Hi Trout Nursery

A longtime angler and family favorite in the Allentown area, Lil'-Le-Hi Trout Nursery, located in the Allentown park system on Hatchery Road, is always worth a visit. It is one of the many cooperative nurseries in the state that partner with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. Trout are raised from fingerlings until the fish are stocked. Stop by to feed trout and enjoy a pleasant walk in the park system. One of the fly fishing only areas on the stream is located adjacent to the nursery and provides excellent fishing opportunities for fly anglers looking to wet a line.

Bogert's Covered Bridge

Anglers looking to fish in the park system and find less pressure should head downstream of the lower fly fishing only area and try the reach below Bogert's Covered Bridge. As spring moves into summer, this reach tends to see fewer anglers and holds fewer stocked trout. Wild trout are common, and some are particularly large. Using a streamer pattern on a fly rod or minnow-shaped stickbaits on spinning tackle may bring the big Brown Trout out of hiding.



The Lil'-Le-Hi Trout Nursery is a landmark on the stream and a popular stop for families and anglers. A cooperative nursery since 1951, the facility raises trout from fingerlings.



Stocked Rainbow Trout commingle with wild Brown Trout on the Little Lehigh Creek and provide great fishing action throughout the year.

Cedar Creek

This small stream is a major tributary to the Little Lehigh Creek. It is a fine trout stream in its own right and well worth visiting when you are in the area. Upstream of Lake Muhlenberg, there are plenty of wild Brown Trout in a beautiful stream in the park system. Do not expect these Brown Trout to be easy to fool. These fish are regularly shy about venturing far from cover. Terrestrial fly patterns like beetles and grasshoppers may bring trout up along undercut banks, or anglers may try nymph presentations. This stream is also a great location to visit after a rainstorm, when the Brown Trout throw caution to the wind, and both fly and spin fishing gear can be effective in bringing fish to hand. If the stream is slightly off color, the trout will be less startled and more likely to chase larger presentations.

Fly fishing the Little Lehigh Creek

The Catch and Release Fly-Fishing Only reach of the Little Lehigh Creek near the trout nursery on Fish Hatchery Road is a destination for anglers around the region. Offering easy wading and a mix of both hatchery and wild fish, the fishing is well worth the visit. However, do not expect the fish to jump into your net. With plenty of anglers plying the water, many fish have often seen dozens, if not hundreds, of flies. Focus on matching the hatch. If there is no surface hatch, provide the trout with a natural imitation that mimics what the fish are eating. Thankfully, the stream in this reach is productive, and there is a wide array of food that trout are willing to eat. Mayflies, caddisflies, scuds, and midges are all common throughout the entire stream. Using smaller patterns in sizes 16 to 20 may be effective, even if challenging to tie on light tippet.

The fact that this reach, along with another reach below Wild Cherry Lane, is open year-round, provides great fishing even on the coldest days. The spring flow on the stream keeps it open in sub-freezing temperatures. Clouds of moisture often hover over the stream on cold mornings, highlighting the temperature differences. During cold spells, small nymph patterns may be particularly productive. Carry patterns like

Zebra Midges, RS2s, and other midge patterns, as well as small mayfly nymph imitations like Pheasant Tails in sizes 16 to 20.

Spin fishing the Little Lehigh Creek

Outside of the two Catch and Release Fly-Fishing Only reaches of the stream, the entire watershed is open to spin fishing, and the Little Lehigh Creek is a great place to catch trout on a spinning rod. Both lures and bait work well on the stream. Anglers looking for top lures should try small, dark jigs, in addition to the regular

array of spinners and minnow-shaped lures. Working a jig through a deep hole, especially in the earlier parts of the season may be particularly effective. Bait anglers will find that worms, waxworms, and prepared baits will fool stocked trout in the watershed. When fish are picky, floating natural baits through the deeper pools and near log jams produces well. These areas may be difficult for other anglers to reach effectively, and a slow float past cover may tempt trout into leaving its safety area.

New Zealand Mudsnails

Invasive species are a possibility in many of the waters that anglers fish and the Little Lehigh Creek is no different. Unfortunately, the stream has become colonized with the New Zealand Mudsnail. This invasive species can be spread by anglers and boaters to other waters. It is worth being cognizant of ways to avoid spread of this invasive species to other waters in Pennsylvania. The snails are tiny and easily transported. Only 1/8-inch long, New Zealand Mudsnails are easy to miss on your wading gear. The best way to prevent transport of New Zealand Mudsnails to other waters is to decontaminate your waders and boots before visiting another trout stream, river, or lake. Decontamination methods that are effective for New Zealand Mudsnails include freezing gear for at least 6 hours, soaking gear for at least 5 minutes in hot (greater than 120° F) water, or soaking gear for at least 5 minutes in a 1 to 1 solution of Formula 409 Cleaner Degreaser Disinfectant and water. ☐

National Invasive Species Week

February 28, 2022 - March 4, 2022

**STOP
AQUATIC
HITCHHIKERS!**








See page 59 for more information. www.fishandboat.com/AIS.htm

2022 SEASONS, SIZES, and CREEL LIMITS

COMMONWEALTH INLAND WATERS-2022

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

Species	Seasons	Minimum Size	Daily Limit
 ALL SPECIES OF TROUT Additional regulations may apply- see Trout Regulations for stream sections that are both Stocked Trout Waters and Class A Wild Trout Waters.	Regular Opening Day of Trout Season - April 2 at 8 a.m. through Sept. 5	7 inches	5-streams, lakes, and ponds (combined species)
	Extended Season: Stocked trout waters Jan. 1 through Feb. 20 and Sept. 6 through Dec. 31	7 inches	3 (combined species)
	Extended Season: Stocked Class A wild trout stream sections. Jan. 1 through Feb. 20 and Sept. 6 through Dec. 31	NO HARVEST - Catch and immediate release only Class A stream listing: www.fishandboat.com/classa.pdf	
BASS - Lakes, Rivers, and Streams Largemouth, Smallmouth, and Spotted Additional regulations may apply.	Jan. 1 through April 8 and Oct. 1 through Dec. 31	15 inches	4 (combined species)
	April 9 through June 10	NO HARVEST - Catch and immediate release only (no tournaments permitted)	
	June 11 through Sept. 30	12 inches	6 (combined species)
Muskellunge and Tiger Muskellunge*		40 inches	1 (combined species)
Pickereel*		18 inches	4
Northern Pike*		24 inches	2
Walleye and Saugeye (Hybrids)	Jan. 1 through March 14 and May 7 through Dec. 31	15 inches	6
Sauger	Jan. 1 through March 14 and May 7 through Dec. 31	12 inches	6
American Shad**	Open year-round	No minimum	3
American Shad	Open year-round - Lehigh River, Schuylkill River*** and tributaries	NO HARVEST - Catch and immediate release only	
American Shad		CLOSED YEAR-ROUND	
River Herring**		Susquehanna River and tributaries	
Hickory Shad**		CLOSED YEAR-ROUND	
Herring, Gizzard Shad		Open year-round	No minimum
American Eel	Open year-round	9 inches	25
Striped Bass and Striped Bass/ White Bass Hybrids	Open year-round	20 inches	2 (combined species)
Sunfish, Yellow Perch, White Perch, Crappies, Catfish, Rock Bass, Suckers, Carp, White Bass, Bowfin, and other gamefish not otherwise listed Additional regulations may apply- see Panfish Enhancement Special Regulations.		No minimum	50 (combined species)
		Open year-round	No minimum
Baitfish/Fishbait**** (except Mudbugs/Includes Crayfish)	Open year-round	No minimum	50 (combined species)
Mudbugs (Dragonfly Nymphs)	Open year-round	No minimum	Unlimited if taken from lakes, ponds, swamps, and adjacent areas. 50 per day if taken from moving waters (rivers and streams).
Mussels/Clams	CLOSED YEAR-ROUND		
Paddlefish, Spotted Gar, and other threatened and endangered species	CLOSED YEAR-ROUND		

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

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

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

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

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

NOTE: For bass regulations, power dam pools and recreational dam pools on the Susquehanna River and navigational dam pools on the Ohio River drainage are "rivers." It is unlawful to conduct a fishing tournament on the North Branch, West Branch, or main stem of the Susquehanna River that allows a tournament angler to harvest bass. **NOTE:** Stocked trout waters are closed to fishing from February 21 to the opening day of the regular trout season in April, unless included in the **Stocked Trout Waters Open to Year-Round Fishing Program**.

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

NOTE: It is legal to fish for trout in Class A trout streams year-round, with no harvest beginning the day after Labor Day through the

opening day of trout season the following year. The exception is those stream sections designated as both Class A Wild Trout Streams and Stocked Trout Waters. These stream sections are closed to fishing from February 21 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.



2021 Photography Contest Results

From 163 entries, judges selected grand, first-, second-, third-place, and honorable mention winners in the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) 2021 Photography Contest.

The grand prize winner will receive a framed Ned Smith "Sting of the Hook" print; the first place winner will receive framed trout stamps; the second place winner will receive a *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* subscription voucher and hat; the third place winner will receive a

prize package; and the honorable mention winner will receive a set of *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* patches. Winning entries also appear at fishandboat.com. Any photographs submitted for the contest may appear in issues of *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* and in other PFBC publications, exhibits, projects, website, or social media platforms.

See page 34 to view the 2022 Photography Contest rules. **The entry deadline is December 31, 2022.**



Grand Prize:

Ethan Oakes, Sunbury, Northumberland County
Fly fishing on Penns Creek, Snyder County, for Brown Trout in early autumn.



First Place:

Travis Wisniewski, Norwood, Delaware County
Ethan Wisniewski, age 1, enjoying the Schuylkill River, Philadelphia County.



Second Place:

John Fallon, Furlong, Bucks County
Woodland Box Turtle eating a Brood X cicada.



Third Place:

James Walker, Annville, Lebanon County
A great egret at Wildwood Lake, Dauphin County.



Honorable Mention:

Jay K. Stokes, Trafford, Allegheny County
Peace and quiet while bass fishing at North Park Lake, Allegheny County.



Take Part in the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission 2022 PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) Photography Contest aims to develop an appreciation of Pennsylvania's fishing, boating, and aquatic resources. Image contribution can include anglers, boaters, reptiles, amphibians, and waterway scenics. Winning entries will appear in a feature article in a future issue of *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* and on the Commission's website and Facebook page. All entries may be used elsewhere in the magazine, in the PFBC publications, on the Commission's website, on the PFBC's social media pages, and in Commission exhibits and other projects. **The contest will run from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022.**

Prizes

Grand Prize: Framed Ned Smith "Sting of the Hook" print

First Place: Framed trout stamps

Second Place: *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* subscription voucher and hat

Third Place: Prize package

Honorable Mention: Patch set

Contest rules

Employees of the PFBC, volunteers, their immediate family members, and contractors of the PFBC and their immediate families are not eligible. No purchase is necessary. All federal, state, local, and municipal laws and regulations apply. Void where prohibited.

- Entries must be original works taken in Pennsylvania on **waterways with public access**, and photos must have been taken by the person entering the contest.
- Entries must show proper fish handling practices. Photographs should not show fish being held by the gill plates, eyes, in a horizontal position or at a 45-degree angle by the jaw or tail region alone, or being held with gloves (harvested ice fishing photographs are the only exception).
- Entries must show adherence to Pennsylvania fishing and boating laws and regulations.
- Entries showing an angler holding a fish must have a valid license at the time the fish was caught. However, the license does not need to appear in the photo. If the angler does not have a valid license, the entry will be disqualified.

- Entries must show all boaters and anglers in boats wearing properly fitted, buttoned, and zipped life jackets. Boats must have a valid boat registration or launch permit at the time the photo was taken or the entry will be disqualified.
- Entrants are responsible for securing photo releases from identifiable subjects.
- Entrants must submit high-resolution digital photos (300 dpi or higher resolution) with a minimum file size of 2 MB or larger
- Entries that are retouched or electronically manipulated are not allowed.

The PFBC shall have the right to use all submissions for any purpose in the future without compensation. All submissions become the property of the PFBC. **The deadline for entries is December 31, 2022.**

Entries must be e-mailed to sgearhart@pa.gov. The following information must be included in the e-mail.

- Entrant's Name
- Entrant's Address
- Entrant's Phone Number
- Entrant's E-mail
- Photo Description (location, county, species, etc.)
- Date of Photo

Winners will be determined by review from various PFBC staff from several different bureaus. ☐

New for 2022

Additional entry categories are being developed. Watch fishandboat.com for more information.



All entries may be used to promote fishing and boating in Pennsylvania. An entry of a Muskellunge by James Swearingen, Allegheny County, and a boating entry by Debbie Smith, Beaver County, were used for the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's exhibits.

photo-courtesy of Purpose 1

2022 FISHING LICENSES

LICENSE YEAR

Annual licenses are valid from Dec. 1, 2021, through Dec. 31, 2022. WHILE FISHING, your license must be upon your person and provided upon the request of an officer.



Code	Type of Fishing License or Permit	Age	Cost*
101	Resident (Annual)	16-64	\$22.97
104	Senior Resident (Annual)	65 & up	\$11.97
105	Senior Resident (Lifetime)	65 & up	\$51.97
108	1-Day Resident (not valid March 15–April 30)	16 & up	\$11.97
102	Non-Resident (Annual)	16 & up	\$52.97
113	Non-Resident PA Student (Annual)	16 & up	\$22.97
106	1-Day Tourist **(not valid March 15–April 30)	16 & up	\$26.97
103	3-Day Tourist	16 & up	\$26.97
107	7-Day Tourist	16 & up	\$34.97
110	Voluntary Youth Fishing License (Annual)	Less than 16	\$2.97
109	Mentored Youth Permit	Less than 16	\$0.00
150	Trout Permit	16 & up	\$9.97
033	3-Year Senior Lifetime Trout Permit	65 & up	\$25.97
053	5-Year Senior Lifetime Trout Permit	65 & up	\$41.97
063	10-Year Senior Lifetime Trout Permit	65 & up	\$81.97
151	Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$9.97
151SLE	Senior Lifetime Lake Erie Permit	65 & up	\$9.97
152	Combination Trout Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$15.97

* Includes issuing agent fee of \$1.00 and \$0.97 transaction fee. Excludes the 109 Mentored Youth Permit.

** Includes Trout and Lake Erie permits, not valid March 15–April 30.

2022 MULTI-YEAR FISHING LICENSES

Code	Type of Fishing License or Permit	Age	Cost*
150	1-Year Trout Permit	16 & up	\$9.97
151	1-Year Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$9.97
152	1-Year Combo Trout Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$15.97
030	3-Year Resident	16-64	\$64.97
031	3-Year Non-Resident	16 & up	\$154.97
032	3-Year Senior Resident	65 & up	\$31.97
033	3-Year Trout Permit	16 & up	\$25.97
034	3-Year Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$25.97
035	3-Year Combo Trout Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$43.97
050	5-Year Resident	16-64	\$106.97
051	5-Year Non-Resident	16 & up	\$256.97
052	5-Year Senior Resident	65 & up	\$51.97
053	5-Year Trout Permit	16 & up	\$41.97
054	5-Year Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$41.97
055	5-Year Combo Trout Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$71.97
060	10-Year Resident	16 & up	\$211.97
061	10-Year Non-Resident	16 & up	\$511.97
063	10-Year Trout Permit	16 & up	\$81.97
064	10-Year Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$81.97
065	10-Year Combo Trout Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$141.97

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



Catching Trout in High Water

by Nick DelVecchio

photos by the author

Many anglers have limited time to get out on the water, so fishing in all sorts of conditions is necessary when vacation days or weekend trips are planned well in advance. Knowing how to find productivity when water conditions are not ideal is critical for early season fishing. Weather may be volatile, going from 65 degrees F and sunny to 45 degrees F and pouring rain in a matter of hours. So, during the spring trout season, high water must be addressed. Combatting it is sometimes tricky, but there are things anglers can do to minimize the impact of the swollen streams and still catch some trout.

As a general rule of thumb, the lower you go in a watershed, the higher the water. More tributaries will

enter main stems of streams as you go, so moving upstream will get you above surges of water from recent rainfall or snowmelt. If water conditions are an issue, cutting out two or three tributaries can help improve things enough to find some good fishing. Water clarity will usually be a bit better upstream as well. Generally speaking, the headwater sections of a trout stream will run off quicker and clearer than areas downstream.

One of the greatest challenges of trout fishing in high water is not so much that the water is up, it is that clarity typically becomes an issue. A trout has limited visibility when water gets murky, so adjusting accordingly is critical to finding continued success. Going up in fly size and possibly going to something with some flash on it is a good first step. Showing the fish something it can see that will catch its attention from some distance away. The fly may literally have to bounce on the trout's nose, but repetition casting in a likely area will usually be rewarded with some action.

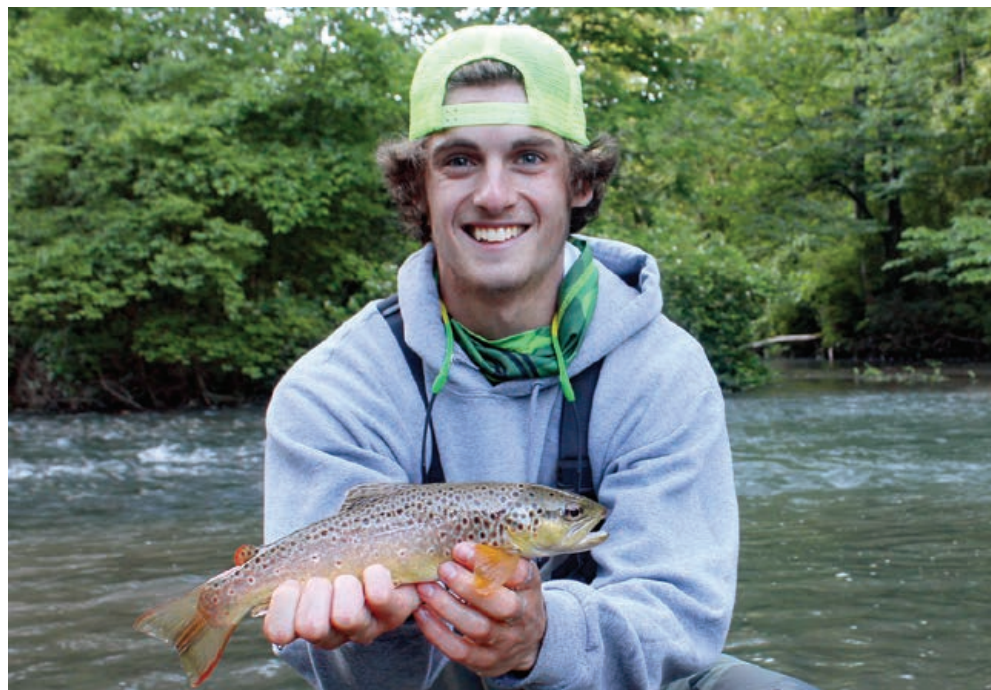
Fish water you are familiar with when the water is high to avoid water that looks good but is only a few inches deep. There is no substitute for experience on a given waterway. Try to remember a favorite deep hole where you caught trout before, and head there when the water is high. Most likely, it will still be a good spot. It is certainly possible to catch fish in all sorts of water, but riffles and runs may become a bit fast in higher water and less desirable areas to fish. The slower, deeper holes give trout a chance to escape the faster currents of high water and offer anglers better drifts in the high water conditions.

Staying safe is paramount when the water is up especially when fishing alone. The power of currents cannot be understated, and being swept off your feet and carried



Flashy flies are critical for success in high water.

downstream is extremely dangerous. Carry a wading staff and have an understanding of where to cross and where shallow areas may be located, and fish familiar water.



Heading upstream from incoming tributaries is a good start to combating difficult water conditions.

Anglers not accustomed to trout fishing in high water may find the task daunting at first, but these situations can trigger feeding activity and lead to some stellar days. Adjusting tactics and decision-making is important. Getting upstream of tributaries, switching up flies for something flashier, and targeting familiar water is a great start towards taking a bum day and turning it into something terrific. ☐



FITT Premium Lures

by Alex Zidock Jr.

photos by the author

Al Winco introduced his Stone Catties fishing lures to lower Susquehanna River anglers nearly 15 years ago. Winco's passion for producing superior quality and durable lures live on in the company's new owner Stan Brooks who bought the company from Winco before he died 4 years ago. "It was an impulse buy," said Brooks, owner of FITT Premium Lures. "My brother-in-law and I decided to buy the company, because we used the lures and knew how good they worked. And, we had a desire to continue the traditions Winco started."

According to Brooks, Winco fished the Susquehanna River with many different guides, and he got a reputation



Stan Brooks is the owner of FITT Premium Lures. FITT stands for Fishing Improved Through Technology.

as a guy who developed lures that caught Susquehanna River bass.

"Winco did soft baits, hair jigs, and some short-arm spinners. But, he became known as a cold water specialist. He designed lures for anglers who fish in colder temperatures. The first lure Winco developed was called the Chilly Willy. That lure can catch fish down to 35- degrees F water temperature," said Brooks.

FITT Premium Lures is currently producing 23 different products in the plastic line and has 15 more molds they bought with the company that they will slowly introduce. "Our smallest lure is the Willee Wanna Be, which is downsized for the cold water temperatures. And, we have molds smaller than that one. We are also producing the jig heads to go with them for crappie anglers. We have a mold for a large 10-inch plastic worm that will be coming out soon. Plus, we have an assortment of spinning baits that we are finalizing colors on. I spent the last 4 years learning how to make the lures the way Winco did. He had a reputation for quality," said Brooks, and he is getting phone calls and e-mails confirming the quality and durability of the new soft baits.

"Our lures are different, because we use quality plastic, and we do everything in-house, so we control all aspects of the production. We deliver a product in a shorter turn-around time, because everything is done here. I prefer making products in the United States, even if it costs me a little more money to produce," said Brooks.

"We use a basic plastic, but we add things to it. For example, all our plastic lures have salt added. Then, we do something a bit different and add something more like Gatorade instead of scents or worm oils. We work more toward electrolytes and body salts that mimic those things in a fish. So, when the fish grabs it, the fish



Allowing the plastic to cure for a longer period of time makes the lures more durable.

hold onto it. We use a lot of different glitter combinations, all according to Winco's original designs," said Brooks.

"There are certain things we do, like leave our baits out to cure for a longer time. If you bag the plastic too soon after it is made, it compromises the integrity of the product. Some mass lure manufacturers work under different time constraints and bag product as soon as it is made and not fully cured, so it does not last long. They want you to buy more bait. We are not interested in doing that. We want to deliver a quality product at a fair price. Durability and catchability are a big part of our product. And, I think we can compete with other products on any given day. I have faith in our products," said Brooks.

"We are making changes while we are increasing production and looking to expand our line. People love our stonecats and asked for a larger model. We were told that the way it is designed, they cannot make a mass production mold and get that particular profile, so some compromises would have to be made. We are currently testing different prototypes," said Brooks.

"The designs we make for our jig heads were custom made by Winco to go with particular lures he was designing. We



Small batch hand molds allow for precise quality control.



Short arm spinner baits are among the products sold by FITT Premium Lures.

make generic ball heads and Midwest Finesse Jig Heads too, but we also can create any custom jig mold we want with our 3-D printer and Roto-mold," said Brooks.

"We are primarily a bass angling company, but I caught groupers, skipjacks, muskies, and even pike in Canada. We make a short arm spinner bait called the River Rascal, and it performs excellently on the river, and I caught skipjacks with it at Siesta Key in Florida. People tell me they use the Willee Wanna Be and our Krinkle Cut Worm for trout," said Brooks.

FITT stands for Fishing Improved Through Technology. "Another aspect of our company is to work with a lot of younger anglers to give them a good start in fishing. We support several programs and tournaments involving the kids. So, sometimes FITT stands for Fun Intended To Teach," said Brooks. ☐

FITT Premium Lures
www.FITTLures.com

Loyalhanna Creek Fishing Opportunities



by Bob Frye

photos by the author

For the better part of 2 hours, I was casting into Loyalhanna Creek, which runs about 50 miles through Westmoreland County, from the Laurel Ridge to Saltsburg, where it joins the Conemaugh River to form the Kiskiminetas River. The action was consistently good. Not a fish-on-every-cast good but exciting fishing by alternating between live baits, like nightcrawlers and butterworms, and artificial tackle, like inline spinners and crawfish crankbaits. I caught Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout, quite a few Rock Bass, several Smallmouth Bass, and a crappie.

Then, nothing. As I debated whether to move upstream, I caught a glimpse of movement under the water.

You know how it is with every shark movie you have ever seen? One moment, all is quiet. Then, without warning, there is a shadowy hint of something intimidating. I peered into the water and saw it again. There are big carp in the stream, but this was too streamlined for a carp. When it cruised by a third time, I switched baits to a floating minnow crankbait and cast out.

One cast, two casts, then, wham! I hooked the fish and held on as it peeled the 4-pound-test line from my reel. I reeled in, it peeled line back out, then I reeled in again. In between, it jumped clear of the water four times.

Finally, I got the fish to my feet. It was a musky, about 24-inches long. Not the stuff of “husky musky” club standards but an unexpected battler all the same.

It spit my lure at the rocks at my feet. Then, in the split second it took to realize it was free, there was a hasty retreat.

But, what fun it provided in the meantime—leaping, shaking, splashing, and diving. It fought hard—a fierce thing, wild and alive.

I never expected to catch a musky when I set out that day. That is the allure of Loyalhanna Creek.

If this waterway were a musician, it would sing, strum the guitar, blow on its harmonica, crash cymbals between its knees, and maybe even shake some maracas. It would be a one-man band, offering a little bit—and sometimes a lot—of everything.

There are big trout here. Anglers who like catching trophy trout on flies or artificial lures can hit the 1.67-mile section of the Loyalhanna Creek that is in the Delayed Harvest Artificial Lures Only program, which sets limits on harvest and equipment. This stretch is also in the Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters program. It goes from the bridge at State Route 711 downstream to the bridge at State Route 2045, known locally as Two Mile Run Road.

Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters get many more 2- to 3-year-old trout, averaging between 14 and 20 inches, per mile than typical waters in the stocking program.

But, this stretch is popular and easily accessible. It is no wonder the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission



Multiple sections of Loyalhanna Creek are stocked with trout for anglers to enjoy.

lists it as one of “Pennsylvania's Best Fishing Waters” for stocked trout.

Bait anglers and anyone else who wants to catch trout in general may also fish the Loyalhanna Creek from Two Mile Run Road downstream to its confluence with Monastery Run near Saint Vincent College.

Parking along Route 30 as far downstream as Kingston Dam makes it easy to get to it. It is possible to catch Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout, and golden Rainbow Trout throughout this section, sometimes in one day even in the less-pressured lower stretches of the stream.

Once impacted by acid mine drainage, water quality here has greatly improved.

Beyond trout, the Loyalhanna Creek holds lots of warmwater fish, too, with the best fishing from Kingston Dam downstream. I caught Smallmouth Bass up to 18 inches long, though fish 10- to 14-inches are more common. In addition, Loyalhanna Creek ranks among the best places in this region of Pennsylvania, if not the entire Commonwealth, for Rock Bass.

Though not many, you will find muskies that were once stocked in Loyalhanna Dam, a United States Army Corps of Engineers lake, and have moved upstream.

The creek offers plenty of shoreline access for those who prefer to wade.

The Loyalhanna Creek is an official water trail, and those who float it seasonally may get to spots few other anglers ever reach. The 9-mile stretch from Cardinal Park in Latrobe to New Alexandria is especially nice.

The Loyalhanna Creek is definitely worth a visit. Even on those rare occasions when the fishing suddenly goes dead, there may be a surprise waiting for you. ☐



Rock Bass are plentiful in Loyalhanna Creek.



A Rainbow Trout in Loyalhanna Creek.



Rock Bass



Green Sunfish

Rock Bass and Green Sunfish

by Marilyn Black

While I enjoy fishing for all panfish, I must admit that I get a special kick out of catching Rock Bass and Green Sunfish.

Rock Bass and Green Sunfish are rarely more than 1-foot long, but these fish are hard hitters and feisty tuggers when hooked. Rock Bass and Green Sunfish have big appetites and big mouths compared to most panfish. These panfish are found throughout Pennsylvania waters.

Rock Bass

Mottled brown and bronze sides set Rock Bass apart from most brightly-colored sunfish. A Rock Bass' large red/orange eyes give *Ambloplites rupestris* its nicknames including 'redeye' and 'goggle-eye.' In Pennsylvania, Rock Bass at age 6 average 9 inches and ½ pound. It takes a bit over 10 years for a Rock Bass to achieve 11½ inches and 1 pound.

According to Tim Wilson, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) Area 1 Fisheries Biologist,

"In Area 1, there is only one water with a Rock Bass population substantial enough to support a directed fishery, and that is Presque Isle Bay, Erie County. It has excellent numbers and grows large Rock Bass." Brian Ensign, PFBC Area 2 Fisheries Biologist, mentions the Allegheny Reservoir and East Branch Clarion River Lake as having good Rock Bass populations.

Green Sunfish

A 'typical' Green Sunfish has a thick body and a large mouth with its jaw lining up with the middle of its eye. Biologists report much variation in color among *Lepomis cyanellus*, although almost all have olive sides, a blue-green iridescent sheen, and small, scattered spots and the head often adorned with bright blue lines and a black gill flap. An average Green Sunfish will measure 5- to 8-inches long. At 10 inches, it will reach about 0.8 pounds.

"Green Sunfish are common in most of the waters in Area 1, from small warmwater streams to large reservoirs. There is no specific waterway I would recommend for these fish. Green Sunfish are ubiquitous but not necessarily in high densities anywhere," said Wilson.



The left-hand column of lures is great for Green Sunfish. The center column and right-hand column are excellent lures for Rock Bass.

Ensign concurs, with one exception. "Of all my lakes, the largest population of Green Sunfish is Tamarack Lake, Crawford County, where zero harvest is permitted while fish populations rebuild after a multiple-year drawdown. We do not know whether the numbers of Green Sunfish will remain as gamefish grow," said Ensign. Green Sunfish often share spawning sites with colonies of Bluegills and Pumpkinseeds in shallow water near shorelines.

Tips for catching each species

Rock Bass and Green Sunfish are not picky eaters. Green Sunfish eat aquatic insects, small fish, minnows, small crayfish, worms, leeches, snails, and other mollusks. Rock Bass have similar tastes and will smack insect larvae and grasshoppers on the water surface. When using live bait, an Aberdeen light wire hook in size 6 or size 2 for Rock Bass is recommended, but for Green Sunfish, do not go larger than size 6.

My husband, Darl Black, enjoys catch-and-release fishing for both these species, particularly from mid-May through early July, because fish are scrappy. We plan a trip to Presque Isle Bay each June when chunky Rock Bass are active. His largest Green Sunfish catch to date came from the Shenango River Reservoir, Mercer County.

"A light action spinning rod intended for 1/32- to 3/16-ounce lures and spooled with 4-pound-test line is a good match for panfish. Rock Bass readily attack 2- to 3-inch crankbaits, spinners, and jigs. You may need to downsize a bit more for Green Sunfish. A 1/8-ounce jig (hair or plastic) is a great choice for summertime Rock Bass," said Darl Black.

Dale Black, Oil City, provides these seasonal tips for Rock Bass. "In the spring, I go with a plain nightcrawler or minnow, fished in areas with lots of big rocks. For summer, fish topwater lures such as a small Jitterbug in shallow rocky water. In autumn, tie on your standard crappie baits to catch a Rock Bass."

Anglers seeking panfish should concentrate fishing efforts on mixed habitat combining weeds, gravel, rocks, and wood debris. Green Sunfish prefer dam breasts, riprap, causeway areas, shale-bottom streams, and heavy vegetation. Green Sunfish tolerate siltation and environmental extremes. Rock Bass shift in summer to deeper spots like points and offshore humps in lakes. In flowing water, Rock Bass stake out shoreline eddies, deadfalls in moderately slow flows, and mid-stream current breaks around debris piles of rock and wood.

Since 2003, the Juniata River and its tributaries have been under a special Miscellaneous Waters fishing regulation of a daily creel limit of 10 harvested Rock Bass. Elsewhere across Pennsylvania, Rock Bass and Green Sunfish are addressed under panfish. ☐

More information

To learn more about Pennsylvania's goals for Rock Bass, see the "Rock Bass Management and Fishing in Pennsylvania" report updated in 2018. This document includes Pennsylvania-based length/weight/age charts. See FishandBoat.com for a link to the full report.



The Golden Boy

by Marshall Nych

photos by the author

Proudly affixed to a youth size fishing vest, my son's bright, yellow fishing license flapped in the gentle breeze. Like a secret lure safely stowed away in a tackle box, Noah's blonde hair was tucked beneath his favorite fishing hat. The sun shone brightly that opening day of trout season. At no time of the year are the warm rays more appreciated or noticeable than late March and early April when the Mentored Youth Trout Day is celebrated each year.

Gold was seemingly everywhere. Flowing limbs of sparkles from the forsythia peppered the lush landscape. In coming weeks, a fierce pride of territorial dandelions would take over these very banks. Finning gracefully in the emerald depths of a pool before my hearty little

angler was a large brick of gold. A massive golden Rainbow Trout effortlessly consumed the premier spot in the run. A dogged pack of youth anglers (including my son) dunked lure after lure and bait after bait behind, below, beside, and before the flashy fish.

Perseverant as he is stubborn, Noah took 3 hours and 36 minnows trying to entice the trophy. The cast of characters eager to cast a line changed several times throughout the morning. By midday, most kids quit. Noah sensed a lunch break was nearing. On a whim, my son frantically swapped to PowerBait. He was eager to try out the product he had picked out himself on the annual fishing supply run. For those unfamiliar with the bait, my boy best described it when he declared it, "Smelly Play-Doh the fish can eat."

On Noah's first cast, the golden Rainbow Trout that seemed in a state of hibernation all morning erupted wildly from the pool towards Noah's bait. My son's eyes were wide as he yelled, "It's coming!" With that

exclamation, the golden Rainbow Trout was hooked. The trout wanted the offering so savagely, there was no setting the hook.

The fight, a spring fling, ensued as line tightened and boy cranked. When the rod doubled over, Noah tripled his efforts. As the reel spooled with 6-pound-test line screamed, so, too, did my son. "Got him, Dad! I got him!"

Surprising even myself, I remained quiet. I did not bark orders nor did I summon commands. This was my son's fight. Win or lose, I would let him finish it on his own. I grabbed the net and prepared for what would be one of the most memorable netting jobs of my life.

When Noah raised the rod and trout's head from the water, I seized my opportunity. I quickly scooped my son's best fish ever into the mesh.

As we hoisted the treasure, a small crowd of kindred spirits clapped and cheered for Noah. Instantly, one boy asked what Noah was using. One memorable chant from a fellow father echoes in the back of my mind to this day. "Golden Boy! Golden Boy!"

I will never forget the tender moment Noah leaned into me with his signature smile, the one reserved for big fish and great adventure. Fortunately, Papa John had been there to experience the memory. He snapped a picture of the moment. A prouder father or grandfather there was not.

As soon as the trophy was secure, Noah's gears began turning faster than his ultralight reel had minutes ago. His big brown eyes looked to the fish, then, to his Papa, "That sure would make a great Easter present." The holiday literally the next day, 6-year-olds simply do not understand taxidermists' timelines.

Audibly chuckling, Papa John replied, "Easter and Christmas."

Noah nodded in agreement. I nudged my little man in the side as I laughed, "Nice try little man."

For the duration of the drive north to the taxidermist, a studio in Linesville, Crawford County, Noah revisited the morning's unforgettable events.

The effects of adrenaline and early Easter candy finally wearing off, Noah became a bit more reflective. "This is definitely going to be my weekend share."

As I grinned, delightfully envisioning this fishy show and tell and how Mrs. Gawne's kindergarten class would never be the same, we arrived to our destination.

Stepping into the studio was like entering a threshold of a wild new world. Daddy's modest man room was no longer tops. Noah marveled at the magnificent menagerie of mounts. I preferred observing my son and his genuine reaction to the incredible trophies. All critters, be it big game from African plains or small game from Pennsylvanian backyards, were welcome. Each specimen, at least to my sweet 6-year-old, seemed equal. Ironically, four golden Rainbow Trout finned along the walls or held tightly within glass displays. None compared to Noah's catch.

A fine first impression solidified. About the time it took for Noah to take in the magical gravity of the place, a tall and skinny middle-aged man entered from a back room. Through a beard, he asked, "What do we have here lil' fishing buddy?" Though the man had handled bucket list fish his entire career, I appreciated him displaying excitement for my son's trophy.

Noah proudly heaved his golden fish onto the board. I learned the only time an angler does not stretch the length of fish is when dropping it off at the taxidermists.

"Nice fish. How big is it?" said the wildlife artist.

"Twenty-one inches!" Noah proudly replied.

Under his breath, Papa John corrected, "May want to measure it again, the boy is only in kindergarten. The fish may be 19- or 20-inches."

Back on the road, headed home to tell a mother and sister of his triumph, I looked over at my son. Though I assumed Noah would be tuckered out from the day and quickly asleep in Papa John's truck, he was wide awake. His brown eyes stared out the window. With an eternal curiosity, he scanned every backyard for critters, mud, or possible adventure. The sun was completely absorbed by his blonde hair. I ran my hand through the shocks of gold.

Through determination, dedication, and a little bit of luck, my son had seized a golden opportunity. On that fateful day, if he was not already, he had become The Golden Boy. ▣



The author's son, Noah

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

by *John Bruner*

My name is John Bruner. I am a new member of the Governor's Youth Council for Hunting, Fishing, and Conservation. The purpose of this council is to encourage youth to get involved in conservation issues and to increase teen involvement in outdoor activities. I enjoy shooting competition archery, hunting (archery and rifle), fishing, trapping, and hiking throughout Pennsylvania. But, before participating in these outdoor activities, I know the importance of knowing the rules.

Thousands of Pennsylvania anglers, me included, will take to the streams on Saturday, April 2, thanks to a new law announced by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC). Prior to 2022, opening day of trout season for most of the state was usually the first Saturday after April 11th. Additionally, since 2007, 18 counties in southeast Pennsylvania got a one-week jump on trout season. Because trout are coldwater fish, and waters east of the Blue Mountains warm up quicker, the season started sooner in these counties. However, as with most things in our world, COVID-19 changed the way outdoor enthusiasts took part in trout fishing. Early in the pandemic, to help prevent anglers from traveling across Pennsylvania to fish, and to attempt to control crowds along stream banks, one statewide opening day was announced in the spring of 2020, repeated in 2021, and, last October, the change was adopted into the PFBC code.

The change in the law to having a statewide opener occur on the first Saturday of April, beginning in 2022, came about based on responses from a survey of anglers on opening day options. "Anglers liked the one-day trout opener," said the PFBC Executive Director, Tim Schaeffer. Governor's Youth Council for Hunting, Fishing, and Conservation member Brenden Leahy agrees, "I think that the single opening day for this year's trout season is a beneficial change that will provide anglers across Pennsylvania an earlier opportunity to go out and fish their favorite streams."

One result from an earlier opener, though, included the need for hatchery staff to get fish ready for stocking in streams sooner, which allows for an earlier start on growing the next generation of fish. Trout cannot be



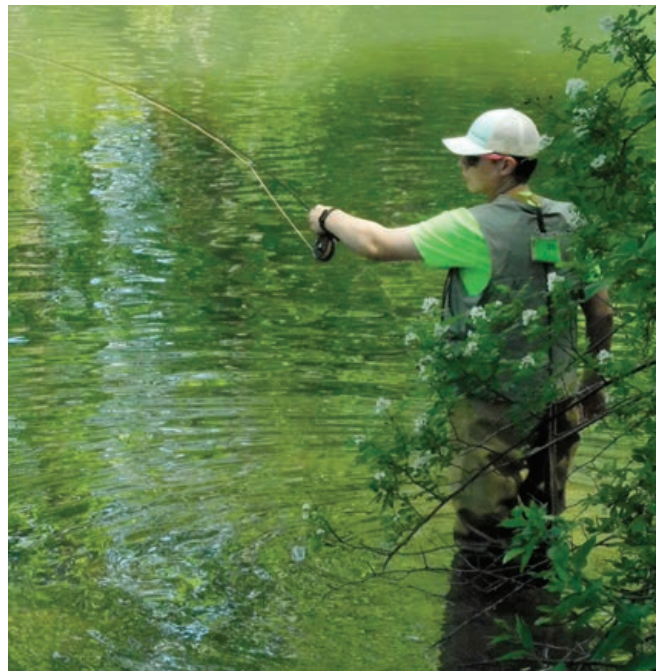
photos courtesy of John Bruner

John Bruner

stocked until fish are large enough to survive in the streams. "We are now seeing better quality and a larger size of fish leaving the hatcheries," said Schaeffer.

The change to the opening day also impacted the date of Mentored Youth Trout Day. The single statewide Mentored Youth Trout Day is now the Saturday before the opening of the regular trout season; this year, March 26.

With this change to the rules, anglers, like myself, can enjoy an extra week of fishing in some of the most beautiful streams Pennsylvania has to offer. If you or someone you know would be interested in serving on the Governor's Youth Council for Hunting, Fishing, and Conservation, we welcome new members throughout the year. Stay safe, and see you on the water. ☐



John Bruner enjoys fishing throughout Pennsylvania.

PLAY



Spring
2022

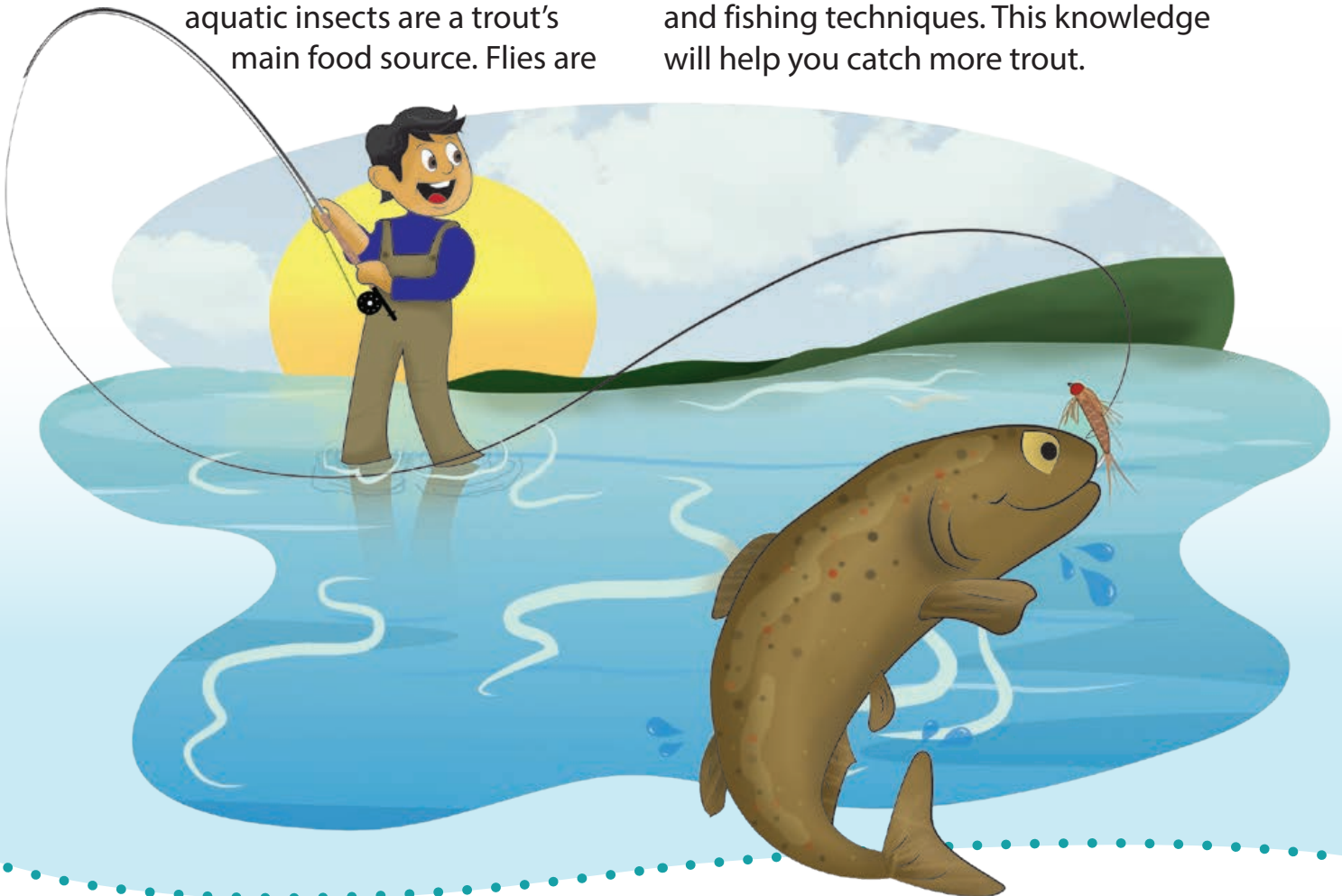
Pennsylvania • League • of • Angling • Youth

Trout by Fly

Fly fishing is a fun and challenging way to catch many types of fish. Trout are the most popular fish to target when fly fishing. Flies usually imitate aquatic insects, baitfish, and worms. These aquatic insects are a trout's main food source. Flies are

lightweight and cannot be cast with baitcasting or spinning rods. A specialized fly fishing rod, reel, and line is needed.

This article will introduce you to fly fishing equipment, types of flies, casting, and fishing techniques. This knowledge will help you catch more trout.

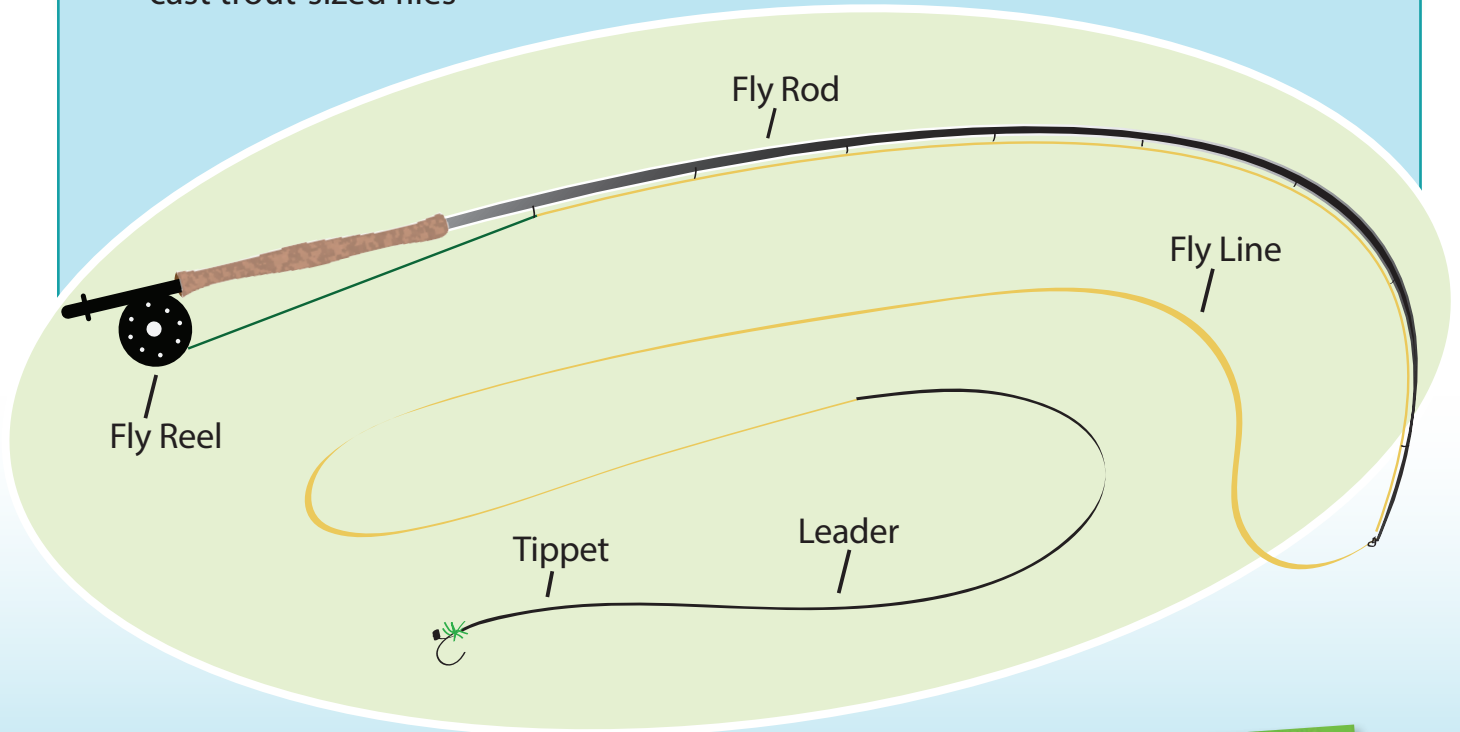


Cracking the Code

The list of equipment needed to start fly fishing for trout does not have to be long

or confusing. The list below will help you "decode" confusing terminology.

- **Fly rod** - available in different lengths and is rated by "line weight"; common lengths range from 7½- to 9-feet
- **Fly line** - rated by weight on a numbered scale, with smaller numbers being thinner and larger numbers being thicker; 4, 5, or 6 weight line are all good options to cast trout-sized flies
- **Fly reel** - rated by line weight, the fly reel stores line and helps balance the rod near the handle
- **Leader** - tapered section of fishing line tied between the fly line and the tippet
- **Tippet** - Thin section of fishing line after the leader; flies are tied to the end of the tippet



A Pennsylvania fishing license and trout stamp is required for anyone 16 and older. Purchase fishing licenses and trout stamps at HuntFish.PA.gov.



- **Fly box** - for storage and organization of flies
- **Hemostats** - a tool that assists with fly removal from a fish's mouth
- **Line clipper** - tool that cuts fishing line
- **Micro splitshots** - small weights attached to the leader that sink flies
- **Fly floatant** - powder, gel, or liquid that helps dry flies float
- **Strike indicator** - small float attached to leader and used for underwater fly setups

- **Fishing vest** - provides storage for tackle and equipment
- **Waders, hip boots, or knee boots** - keep you dry in the water
- **Net** - helps you land and release trout



Types of Flies

It may be difficult to narrow down all the options for your fly box. There

are three main types of flies: dry flies, nymphs, and streamers.

- **Dry flies** float on the surface and imitate adult insects.



- **Nymphs** are fished below the surface and imitate immature life stages of insects.

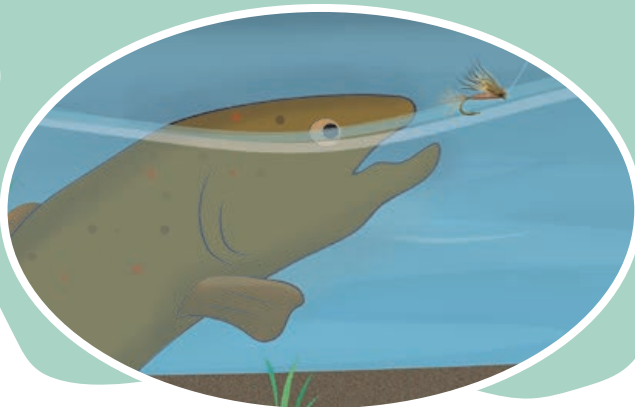


- **Streamers** are fished under the surface and imitate small fish and other swimming food.

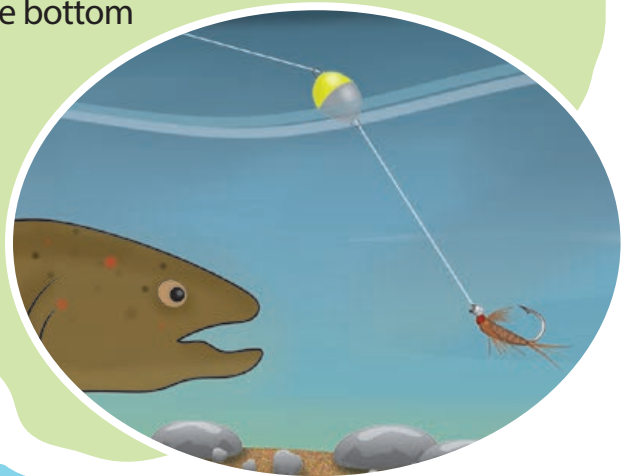


Techniques

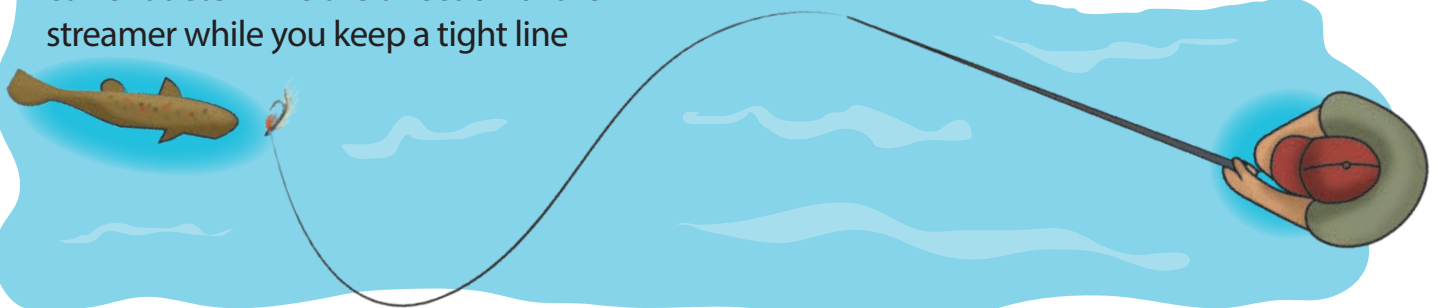
Dry fly fishing - casting upstream and allowing the fly to pass over feeding fish



Nymph fishing - allowing the nymph to tumble with the current, along the stream bottom after you cast; use a strike indicator on the leader to set the nymph at proper depth; splitshot on the tippet allows the nymph to sink to the bottom



Streamers - may be fished multiple ways in different water conditions; cast and work the streamer back towards you, or let the current determine the direction of the streamer while you keep a tight line



Where Trout Live

To find where trout live, you need to learn about a trout's habitat. Trout need cold water (less than 68 degrees F), cover, and food to survive. Cover is provided by large rocks, woody debris, undercut banks, and vegetation. Trout food is

moved around by the stream current in the riffle, run, and pool sequence.

The "stream reader" illustration below shows this sequence, where trout may be found, and what type of flies typically work best.

Stream Reader

1 Riffles - rocky, shallow, and choppy water

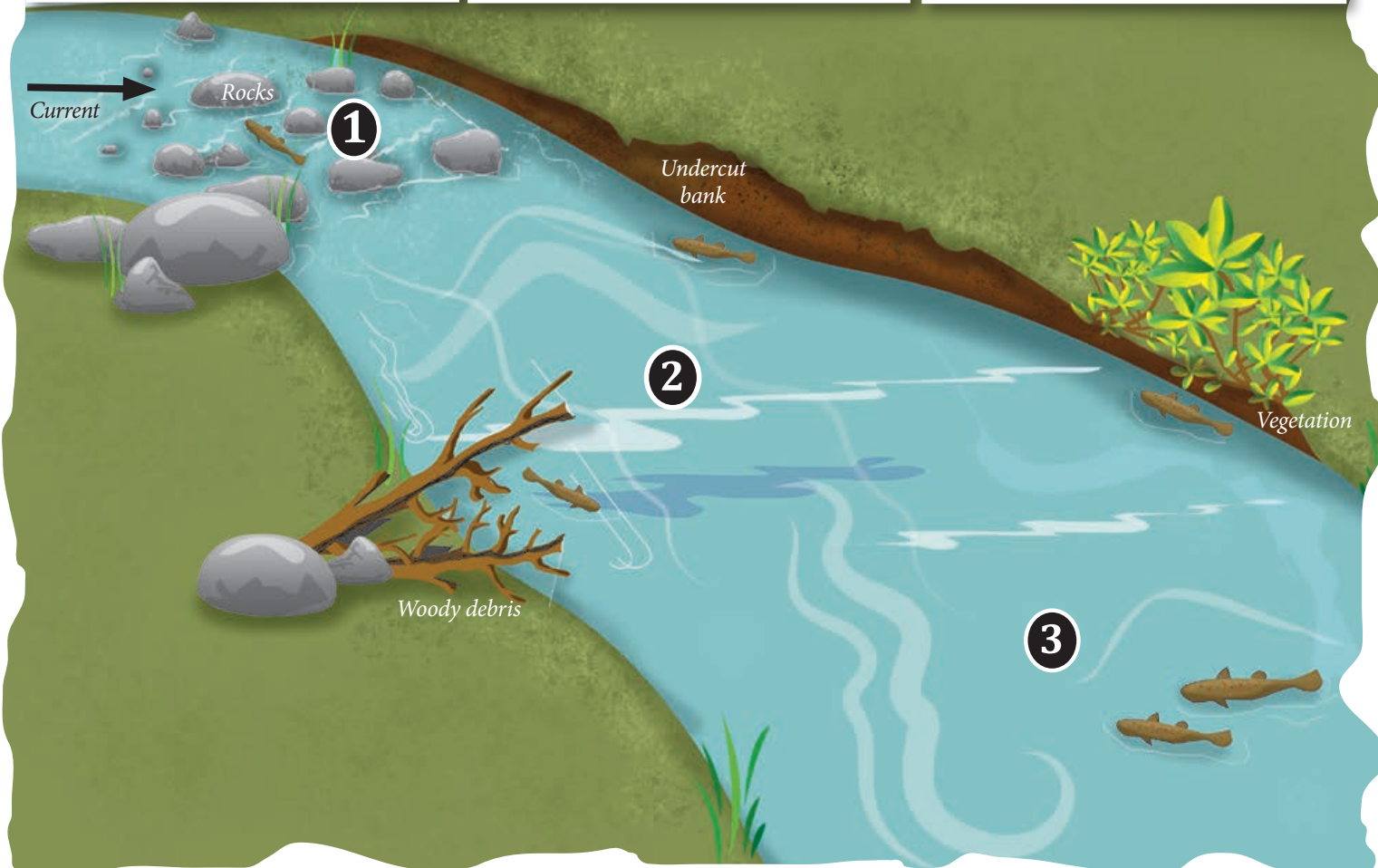
Types of flies:
nymphs and streamers

2 Runs - slightly deeper water with even current

Types of flies:
nymphs, streamers, and dry flies

3 Pools - deep water with little current

Types of flies:
dry flies and streamers



Casting Class

There are a few important steps to casting a fly rod. Put these steps together and make your first overhead cast.

Starting Position

Stand with your feet at shoulder width and grip the rod lightly with your thumb on top of the handle. Your hand will be at waist level with the rod tip angled down.



Casting Sequence

1. **Backcast** - quickly lift the rod from the starting position to get the line moving off the water; continue to lift your hand and forearm to the side of your head; stop abruptly once the rod handle is almost in line with your nose
2. Pause
3. Hold your hand still and allow the line to travel overhead and almost straighten out behind you.
4. **Forward cast** - with your line behind you, quickly push your hand and forearm forward and stop suddenly and pause to allow the line to straighten out in front of you; to finish the forward cast, follow the line with the rod as it drops down onto the water.



Learn more about fly fishing at www.fishandboat.com/LearningCenter/ActivitiesAndEducationPortal/FlyFishing/Pages/default.aspx.

Fly Fishing Word Search

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



Word List

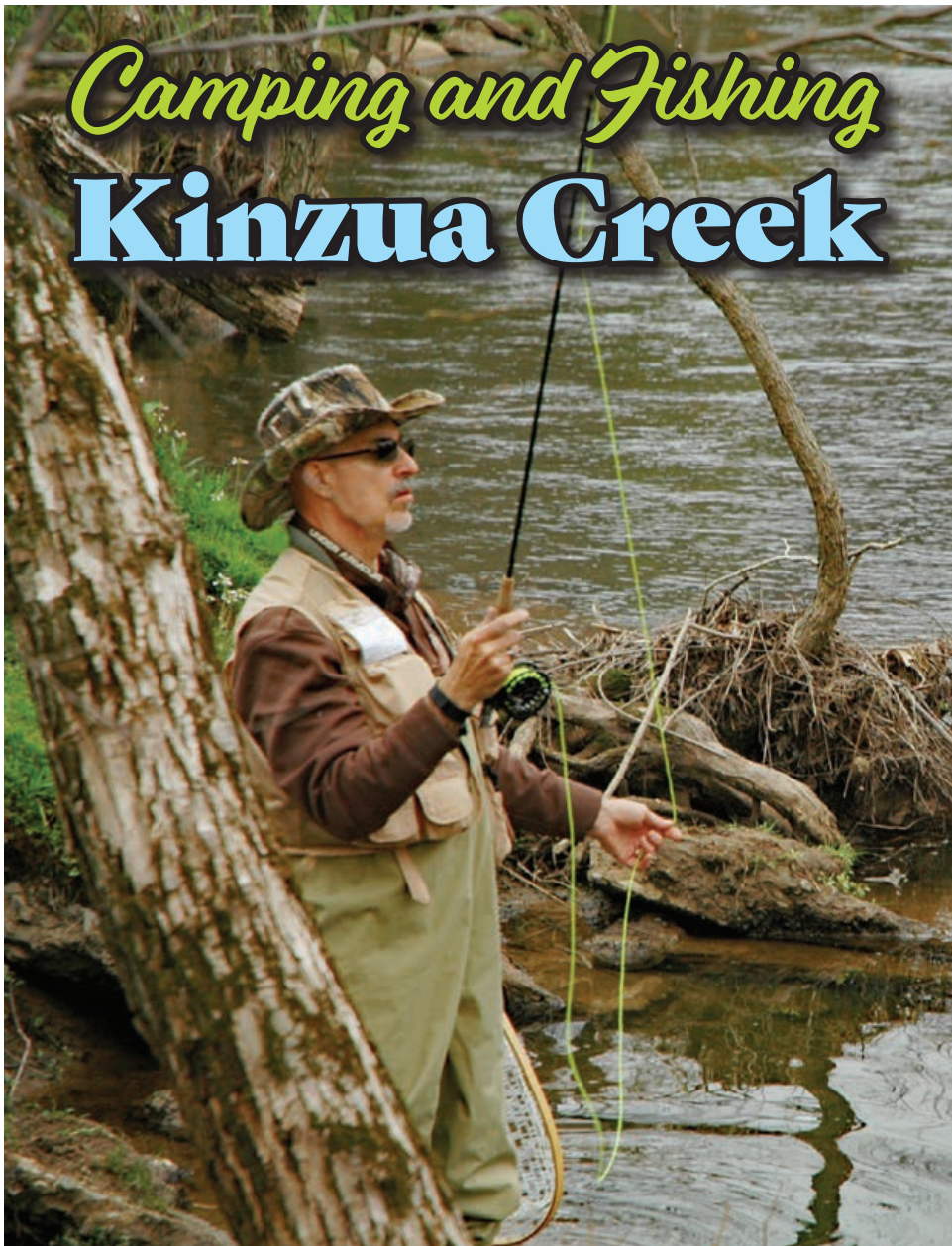
- NYMPHS**
- STREAMERS**
- HEMOSTATS**
- LEADER**
- TIPPET**
- WADERS**
- NET**
- CASTING**
- TROUT**
- FLY**

(Hint: Some words may appear backwards.)

**Produced by: the Bureau
of Outreach, Education and Marketing**
Written by: Allan Schreffler
Editor: Spring Gearhart
Design and illustrations: Andrea Feeney
**Photos: Amidea Daniel,
Andrea Feeney, and PFBC archives**
 © Pennsylvania Fish
and Boat Commission



Camping and Fishing Kinzua Creek



by Jerry Bush

photos by the author

Kinzua Creek, McKean County, is a major tributary to the Allegheny Reservoir, which provides great fishing opportunities for stocked trout as well as native Brook Trout and wild Brown Trout. As a bonus, its wild waters flow through the Allegheny National Forest, a treasure to be admired and protected. Outdoor enthusiasts are drawn like magnets to the “Land of Many Uses,” where an abundance of outdoor activities provide a welcome link to Pennsylvania’s outdoor legacy.

Kinzua Creek is a premier, mid-size stream that provides good quantities of Brook Trout and Brown

Trout in an exceptional environment. At Kinzua Creek’s headwaters, the creek flows through grasslands and brushy swamps. The swamps keep mature trees a bit distant from the creek, but plenty of shade is offered by the thick vegetation along the banks and the tall, forest-covered mountains that dominate the landscape. After the waters reach and pass through Kinzua Bridge State Park, the water narrows, deepens, and most of the stream from here to its mouth at the Allegheny Reservoir remains heavily shaded by a mix of coniferous and deciduous forest, adding to the shade produced by the still prevailing peaks. The foliage and tall mountains keep the water cool, providing good trout fishing throughout most of the summer when many waters in Pennsylvania are too warm. This aspect is particularly important to trout anglers who pride themselves in safely releasing fish to preserve a bountiful, year-round fishery.

A Delayed Harvest Artificial Lures Only (DHALO) section flows downstream Guffey Road

bridge (Rocky Road) to the Allegheny National Forest boundary near Westline. The approximate distance is 4.8 miles. The DHALO section may be the best location during summer for trout anglers who are hoping to encounter a mix of holdover stocked fish as well as native Brook Trout and wild Brown Trout.

Research indicates Kinzua Creek’s native fishery was once nearly decimated by logging and other industries. My personal experience indicates Kinzua Creek has made a strong comeback and, barring something unforeseen, its future looks bright. In the past, Kinzua Creek struggled to produce significant hatches, but that has changed. Automobile drivers who frequent the area and experience windshields splattered with large March brown mayflies and other insects as they pass the creek from early May to mid-June may argue hatches are occurring.



Both developed and undeveloped camping areas are plentiful in the Allegheny National Forest, near Kinzua Creek.

Organized and wilderness camping opportunities abound near Kinzua Creek. Structured camping is available at Dewdrop, Kiasutha, and Red Bridge, which are positioned around the nearby Allegheny Reservoir. Privately owned campgrounds are also in the area. Some are members of the Pennsylvania Campground Owners Association, and visiting PACamping.com will help locate encampments and the facilities and services they provide.

Recreational vehicle (RV) campers who enjoy boondocking will find the Allegheny National Forest offers designated “dispersed” campsites to “get away from it all!” These “no-fee” sites may be occupied for up to 14 days, but energy must be supplied by batteries, “quiet-run” generators, or solar panels to provide some of the creature comforts normally enjoyed at developed campgrounds. Owners of RVs longer than 20 feet will find advanced research vital, because the quantity of larger sites is limited. Dispersed sites are equally cherished by tenting fanatics wanting to rough it in a wilderness setting.

“Camping is prohibited along Kinzua Creek from Red Bridge to Meade Run,” said Christopher Leaser, Forest Service Public Affairs Officer. Leaser advises to better understand pertinent regulations, and where designated dispersed sites are available, campers should

check online at www.fs.usda.gov/activity/allegheny/recreation/camping-cabins. There is a link for dispersed camping. Help is also available by phone at Forest Service Headquarters 814-723-5150.

This is an area where advisements to store food in a manner that will discourage black bears should be taken seriously. During a 2021 fly fishing experience, I looked up to see what I estimate to have been at least a 400-pound black bear, standing just above the creek’s bank, watching me cast.

Hikers, bikers, cross-country skiers, and anglers benefit from the Kinzua Valley Trail, which is a crushed stone pathway that parallels approximately 6-miles of Kinzua Creek, from near Red Bridge to the town of Westline. The trail, provided by and maintained by the Kinzua Valley Trail Club, was formerly a railroad bed. It provides easy passage for anyone who may struggle to hike otherwise rough, timber-laden, uneven turf.

People who enjoy combining the three activities of camping, trout fishing, and turkey hunting may want to know that “Kinzua Creek” is interpreted as “they gobble” by some Native Americans. This interpretation is apparently attributed to the sounds often echoing through the valley, of large game birds that share the watershed’s habitat. ☐

Fishing Lake Wilhelm by Kayak



photo-Darl Black

by Darl Black

Lake Wilhelm, Mercer County, is the centerpiece of Maurice K. Goddard State Park. The 20-horsepower impoundment is known as an exceptional fishing lake, producing Black Crappies, Bluegills, Channel Catfish, Largemouth Bass, Walleyes, and White Crappies for over 50 years.

The lake is gaining a new reputation as a destination for kayak anglers.

“Our estimated visitor counts do not separate kayakers from other boaters, but we have noted the surging interest in kayaking that exploded in 2020,” said Mark Scarpitti, Park Manager. “A quick drive through Launch #3 on a busy day is testament to the number of paddlers who are enjoying Lake Wilhelm.”

A few years back, Maurice K. Goddard State Park started encouraging kayakers to visit the lake by installing kayak racks at Launch #3 and #4, available to visitors through a reservation process.

“This past season, we also improved and highlighted paddling access at either end of the lake—one near the dam along Creek Road and another near Falling Run Nature Trail on the northwest end of the park. We are also working with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission on permitting

and planning that will enhance paddling access in 2022 and beyond. Our education staff also worked with our partners to increase the number of paddling programs we offer to the general public as well as groups,” said Scarpitti.

Lake Wilhelm has been the site of several major kayak bass tournaments in recent years and more events are anticipated.

Bo Bartholomew, a local angler, purchased kayaks for himself and his son 4 years ago, so they could fish Lake Wilhelm more effectively. “Even though it is a small reservoir, there are many different areas to fish. With a kayak, I can target acres of stumps on the northwest end of the lake, offshore weedbeds in the lower lake, and the many laydown trees along the shore—particularly in the southern section near the dam. Plus, with the aid of a simple fish finder installed on my kayak, I am able to locate crappies and Bluegills suspended above brush piles and stumps in deeper water,” said Bartholomew.

Bartholomew generally focuses on panfish but occasionally fishes for bass. The largest Lake Wilhelm bass he landed was a 24-inch fish taken during the summer in the stumps.

“Spring and fall are the best time for Black Crappies and Bluegills in the shallow stump area. During the summer, my panfish focus is the lower lake. Unlike fishing on shore or using a motor on a boat, a kayak provides a stealthy approach,” said Bartholomew.



A crappie caught while kayak fishing on Lake Wilhelm, Mercer County.

Kayak fanatic Dave Ohmer, Erie County, is a frequent visitor to Lake Wilhelm. “I like Lake Wilhelm because of the variety of options available to fish. If one area is not working, it is easy enough to try somewhere else. With multiple access sites, you can move easily to any section of the lake,” said Ohmer.

Ohmer carries both bass and crappie rods onboard. He has caught numerous Lake Wilhelm bass between 18- and 20-inches.

“I do very well for bass with a Ned Rig worked around individual stumps. But, my favorite bass lure is a wacky rigged stick worm skipped under low overhanging branches and partially sunken deadfalls laying on the bank,” said Ohmer.

Ohmer’s crappie outfit is a light action rod, reel with 2-pound-test line, and a small soft plastic bait on a 1/2-ounce jig. He encounters crappies all over the lake, but the majority

are less than 9 inches. His two largest crappies came on back-to-back casts in the stumps—a 15-inch crappie followed by a 15½-inch crappie.

“One of my favorite situations for catching crappies occurs on quiet, calm evenings in the summer just before dark when crappies are drawn to the surface to feed on an emerging insect hatch or perhaps schooling minnows. I cast to the water and let the 1/2-ounce jig drift downward slowly. I watch the line as if it were a bobber, and when the line twitches a bit, I set the hook,” said Ohmer.

Visitors to Lake Wilhelm often double up on the trip, bringing kayaks and bicycles. The 12-mile paved John C. Oliver Multi-Purpose Loop Trail is extremely popular with bikers and hikers. Another available trail is the Falling Run Nature Trail. Whether on the water or on a trail, have binoculars



A main hub for launching kayaks and organized kayak events is located on the north shore at the narrower end of Lake Wilhelm near the park office.

within reach to view bald eagles, ospreys, and dozens of other woodland, meadow, and water bird species.

“Our staff, partners, and volunteers understand the commitment that is required to maintain field habitat and young forests, improve water quality and fish habitat, and monitor and promote various species. We appreciate when people ask about the wood duck boxes, purple martin houses, or even mowing practices, because it gives us an opportunity to highlight the value of this work and the impact it has on the park and the region,” said Scarpitti. □

Teaming Up With Pennsylvania Beekeepers

During the 106th Pennsylvania Farm Show, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) Executive Director Tim Schaeffer and Communications Director Mike Parker participated in the Pennsylvania State Beekeepers Association Celebrity Honey Extraction Contest. The fun, educational event spreads the word about the importance of bees and shows how much work goes into just one jar of local honey. Schaeffer and Parker were the fastest team to fill a jar of honey from a raw honeycomb, but the Pennsylvania State Police were awarded first place for quality control. In return for the PFBC's participation, the Beekeepers promised to help stock trout this spring.



Pictured are (left to right) PFBC Communications Director Mike Parker and PFBC Executive Director Tim Schaeffer.

photo-Dana Nurenmacher, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

Winter Ice Safety

On January 28, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission held a news conference at the Fort Hunter Access in Harrisburg to warn the public about the dangers of walking onto the frozen Susquehanna River. Due to an extended period of freezing temperatures this winter, the Susquehanna River and many other rivers and streams have become covered with a thick crust of ice. However, unlike frozen lakes and ponds which can provide safe recreational opportunities such as ice fishing, it is never safe to walk on the frozen surface of moving water.

photo-Mike Parker



2022 Fishing Licenses On Sale

Pennsylvania State Representative Dan Moul, Adams County, visited the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Harrisburg, in January to purchase his 3-year fishing license. Representative Moul encouraged anglers to buy their licenses early, get their gear ready, and prepare for the statewide Mentored Youth Trout Day on Saturday, March 26 and Trout Opener on Saturday, April 2.



Pictured are (left to right) Carolyn Wenger, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Division of Licensing and Registration, and Representative Dan Moul.

photo-Mike Parker

TROUT OPENER April 2 Statewide

2022 MENTORED YOUTH TROUT DAY: MARCH 26 (Statewide) 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Take part in the Commission's Mentored Youth Trout Day. 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 26 (Statewide)**. For more information, visit www.fishandboat.com/mentoredyouth.htm.



CONVENIENT MULTI-YEAR FISHING

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

HuntFish.PA.gov



"Reel in Success" Fishing Program

The Dauphin County "Reel in Success" Fishing Program is run by the Dauphin County Court and Probation Services. It won the 2021 Juvenile Court Judges Commission Court Operated Program of the Year. The program consists of one day of classroom instruction and three days of hands-on fishing. It introduces juveniles to the S.M.A.R.T. (Safety, Manners, Appreciate, Release, and Teach) Angler's Program. "Reel in Success" is taught by probation officers and children and youth caseworkers, who are certified Fishing Skills Instructors by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. The S.M.A.R.T. Angler Program introduces juveniles to the basic skills, equipment, techniques, and safety of freshwater fishing in Pennsylvania. The youth also learn how to measure, weigh, and record their catches. Youth have the opportunity to develop the skills they have been taught, so they will continue with this lifelong prosocial hobby.



photo-courtesy of Joe Gifford

Probation officers and youth caseworkers (from left to right) Cale Hoover, Dan Kinsinger, Joe Gifford, Kirstin Breeden, Shayla Holland, and Tanya Zinn. Not pictured is Hillary Haines.

**2022
TROUT STOCKING
Schedules**

Available Online

www.fishandboat.com/stocking

National Invasive Species Week

February 28, 2022 - March 4, 2022

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) are plants and animals that have been introduced into new ecosystems and have environmental, recreational, economic, or health impacts. These invaders may damage equipment and compete with native species. Anglers and boaters may unknowingly introduce AIS into new waters.

These are some of the AIS in Pennsylvania.



photos-PTBC archives

New Zealand Mudsnail



Northern Snakehead



Red-eared Slider—Remember, do not release pets into the wild.

**STOP
AQUATIC
HITCHHIKERS!**



www.fishandboat.com/AIS.htm

Pennsylvania's Trout In the Classroom Egg Packing

Pennsylvania's Trout In the Classroom's (PA TIC) Rainbow Trout shipment was a success. On February 7, 2022, packages containing Rainbow Trout eggs and trout food were shipped to nearly 350 participating PA TIC classrooms. A big thank you to the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) staff, Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited Program Director Rachel Kester, and Spring Creek Trout Unlimited volunteer Judi Sittler for their help in packing the PA TIC eggs and food.



photo-Janelle Howard

Special thanks to:

- Troutlodge of Washington state for providing a 50% discount to the PFBC for the purchase of Rainbow Trout eggs.
- Bio-Oregon for donating all of the trout food for the PA TIC program.
- Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited for providing lunch for the helpers.

Learn more about PA TIC at patroutintheclassroom.org.

Pennsylvania ANGLER & BOATER

Subscribe today!



Pennsylvania Angler & Boater is your guide to great fishing and boating in Pennsylvania. Get the informative and entertaining magazine that readers have enjoyed since 1931.

- **Full-color magazine, six times a year.**

One-Year Subscription (6 issues) \$20.97

Three-Year Subscription (18 issues) \$48.97

- **NEW FOR PRINT SUBSCRIBERS!**

Free digital subscription of *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* when an e-mail address is provided.



<https://pfbc.pa.gov/anglerboater/ezine/>

2022 VOLUNTARY PERMITS

LICENSE YEAR

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



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

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

HuntFish.PA.gov



Angler's Notebook

by Jerry Bush

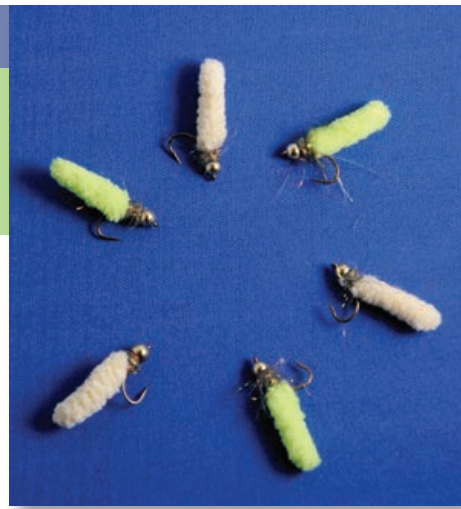


photo-Jerry Bush

There is no denying a Mop Fly attracts and catches trout. To humans, a Mop Fly looks like a 3/4- to 1-inch long nub of material cut from kitchen mops or car wash mitts attached to a hook. However, to the fish, the Mop Fly is believed to resemble several types of high protein grubs or small baitfish. Tiers begin by attaching a weighted bead head at the eye of a size 14 or size 12 curved hook. Add a drop of glue to the lead portion of the mop material to stiffen the end fibers before attaching behind the bead. The main body of material wiggles freely. Flash marabou, glitter chenille, or peacock herl is added over the material behind the bead for extra attraction. The Mop Fly is easy to tie and use.

During the early stages of trout season, 2- to 3-inch spinners quickly cover a lot of water to locate trout. The color, flash, and vibration attract trout. Many of these lures include the added attraction of a colored marabou covering with trailing treble hooks. Some anglers switch the treble hooks for single hooks if they are experiencing too many entanglements. Include similar spinners with red coloring to the inventory. If a trout strikes a spinner but is not landed, that same fish may bite again if the angler replaces the original spinner with another one. A red

spinner may convince the gamefish that it wounded its prey during the initial strike.

As exciting as it is to catch trout with dry flies, fly anglers will have the most success during the early season by fishing nymphs, streamers, and Woolly Buggers. Use dry flies later in the season when bugs are in the air and on the water surface. Even if some surface interruptions are noticed, it will usually be an occasional stonefly or similar critter caught up in the current. More likely, the early season fly angler misinterprets a dorsal fin breaking the surface as fish feeding.

As surface water temperatures approach 55 degrees F, crappies leave the deepest holes and start toward shallower ledges. As temperatures rise above 58 degrees F, fish reach shallower haunts. Slow trolling is suddenly a viable tactic to catch actively feeding crappies. Mark the spot where crappies bite, so lures may be repeatedly trolled through the exact location.

Fishin' from the Kitchen

Rainbow Trout Quesadillas

by Wayne Phillips

If you are cooking for youngsters who are picky eaters, a Rainbow Trout quesadilla is an ideal meal.

Ingredients for four servings:

- 12-ounces cooked Rainbow Trout pieces
- 1 lemon, zest and juice
- 1 Tbsp. canola oil
- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced
- 4 large tortillas
- 12 cherry tomatoes, halved
- 4-ounces cream cheese, room temperature
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Procedure

Season Rainbow Trout with salt and black pepper. Sauté trout in oil until cooked through. Cool and break trout into smaller pieces. Add a tablespoon of lemon juice to the cream cheese and blend it together. Spread the cream cheese mixture on the tortillas. Scatter the red onion slices, pieces

of trout, halved cherry tomatoes, and lemon zest on half of each tortilla. Fold the tortillas in half. Bake in a 350 degree F oven for 10 minutes or until heated through.

Serve

Cut quesadillas into wedges. Serve with a variety of raw vegetables like carrots, broccoli, radishes, and celery.

Tips

For children, keep toppings simple. For adults, consider adding sliced mushrooms, sun-dried tomatoes, thinly sliced garlic, or fresh basil to the toppings.

If you are using strongly flavored fish, consider using mozzarella or feta cheese. Lime zest and juice adds an extra element of zing.



photo-Wayne Phillips



	Price	Quantity	Subtotal
A Set of: Coldwater Fishes, Coolwater/Warmwater Fishes, Migratory Fishes, Miscellaneous Fishes, Panfishes, Forage Fishes (6 posters)	\$13.99	_____	_____
B Set of: Frogs, Salamanders, Snakes, Turtles (4 posters)	\$12.11	_____	_____
C Set of: Pennsylvania Fishes Wall Charts (2 posters)	\$ 9.16	_____	_____
D Pennsylvania Amphibians & Reptiles Book (172 pages)	\$14.34	_____	_____
E Pennsylvania Fishes Book (172 pages)	\$14.34	_____	_____
F Denim Blue Hat with Blue Logo - non-taxable	\$18.56	_____	_____
G To Protect, Conserve, and Enhance Book (400 pages)	\$25.02	_____	_____
Taxable Merchandise Subtotal			_____
Non-Taxable Merchandise Subtotal			_____
Merchandise Subtotal			_____
Pennsylvania Residents Add 6% State Sales Tax (Taxable Merchandise Subtotal) Unless All Items Ordered are Non-taxable.			_____
Merchandise Total			_____

Processing and shipping/handling charges are included in the prices.

Complete the information below. Please print clearly.

Name _____

Phone (include area code) _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

E-mail (optional) _____

Please mail entire form to: **Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Media Productions, P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000.** Use check or money order made payable to: Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. For credit card orders, use the form below. **DO NOT SEND CASH!** Prices subject to change without notice. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

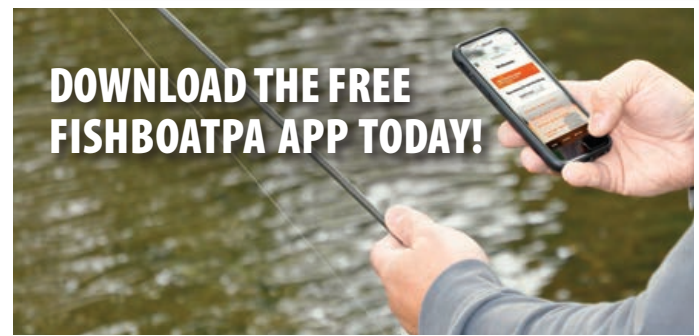
Credit Card Purchase: VISA Mastercard Discover

Credit Card # _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

H Pennsylvania Angler & Boater Magazine One-Year Subscription (6 issues) (64 pages)	\$20.97	_____	_____
I Pennsylvania Angler & Boater Magazine Three-Year Subscription (18 issues) (64 pages)	\$48.97	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> RENEWAL	(Found above your name on your address label)		
Account # _____			
Magazine Subscription Total			_____



TOTAL AMOUNT OF PAYMENT \$ _____
(Merchandise Total + Magazine Subscription Total)

MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS DO NOT INCUR SHIPPING FEES OR SALES TAX. PROCESSING FEE INCLUDED IN PRICE.
Subscription prices subject to change without notice.

For more products and to order fishing licenses and boat registration renewals, visit HuntFish.PA.gov.



VOLUNTARY PERMITS FEATURED PROJECTS: *Voluntary Wild Trout & Enhanced Waters*

by Mike Parker

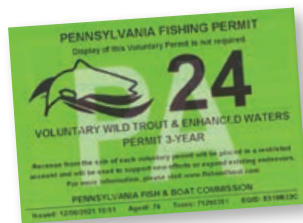
PFBC Communications Director

With the spring season just ahead and many anglers eyeing the statewide Opening Day of Trout Season on April 2, 2022, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) continues to provide a variety of world-class trout fishing opportunities across the Commonwealth.

While 3.2 million hatchery-raised trout will be stocked into popular waterways throughout 2022, thousands of miles of streams are also bursting with wild Brook Trout and Brown Trout that present a different type of challenge that many anglers prefer.

The pursuit and preservation of wild trout is a passion that many anglers have chosen to support since 2019, when the PFBC began offering Voluntary Wild Trout & Enhanced Waters Permits. In 2020, this category of voluntary permits accounted for nearly 40% of overall voluntary permit sales, producing \$115,750 dedicated to five wild trout specific programs and projects that were begun, completed, or planned during 2021. No funds from the proceeds of these permits benefit stocked trout programs or projects.

Voluntary Wild Trout & Enhanced Waters Permit
Annual Cost: \$25 plus \$1.97 issuing agent/transaction fee



West Branch Susquehanna River
Cambria County
Stream Habitat Improvement Investment: \$25,000

This stream habitat improvement plan included the removal of a low-head dam in 2019, followed by the restoration of stream habitat on 700 linear feet of stream in the former dam impoundment. Project partners include West Branch Susquehanna Rescue, Cambria County Conservation District, local landowners, and American Rivers.



A modified mudsill is one of 26 habitat structures installed on the West Branch Susquehanna River to reduce erosion, provide cover, and reestablish the stream channel to enhance habitat for wild trout.

Spring Creek
Centre County
Stream Habitat Improvement Investment: \$10,000

These funds will be combined with additional grant funding to complete projects on two Commission properties in the Spring Creek Watershed. While more funding is required, construction could begin in 2022. Project partners include Spring Creek Chapter of Trout Unlimited and ClearWater Conservancy.

Unassessed Waters Initiative
Cooperating Partner Funding
Investment: \$22,000

Funding for the Unassessed Waters Initiative restricts cooperating partners from sampling outside of geographic areas in the western and northcentral regions of Pennsylvania. However, this funding will contribute to the sampling of up to 75 high-priority watersheds in the eastern and southcentral regions of Pennsylvania.



photo-Mike Parker

The PFBC and Trout Unlimited staff survey a tributary of Tulpehocken Creek, Berks County, as part of the Unassessed Waters Initiative.

East Branch Hicks Run
Cameron County
Culvert Removal Investment: \$4,000

Still in the planning stages, removal of a culvert would connect an additional 10 miles of water on this Class A wild Brook Trout stream. Cameron County Conservation District and Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources would be project partners.

Little Portage Creek
Potter County
Bridge Removal and Stream Channel Restoration
Investment: \$46,800

Replacement of an aging bridge and stream channel restoration would improve fish passage and connect an additional 6 miles of water on this Class A trout stream, which is a tributary to Freeman Run. Still in the planning stages, the project would be partially funded through the PFBC's Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed Restoration Grant Program. A partner would include Potter County Conservation District. □

CAST & CAUGHT



Cydni Loveridge, age 14, caught this 14-pound, 8-ounce, 31-inch steelhead while fishing Walnut Creek, Erie County.



Ebony Montgomery, Pittsburgh, caught this steelhead while attending the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's Women's Intro to Steelhead Fishing Program in Elk Creek, Erie County.



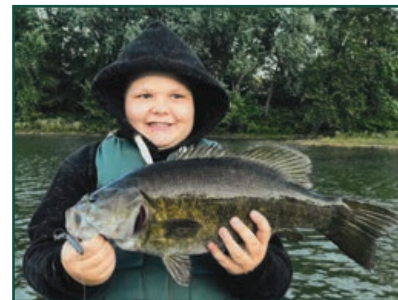
James Swearingen, Pittsburgh, caught and released this beautiful Brown Trout while fishing Elk Creek, Erie County.

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

**Editor, Pennsylvania Angler & Boater,
P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000**



Rich Frollini, Pittsburgh, caught this 45-inch Muskellunge while kayak fishing Lake Arthur, Butler County.



Jonathan Lyons, age 11, caught this 4-pound, 10-ounce, 21-inch Smallmouth Bass while fishing the Ohio River, Beaver County.