

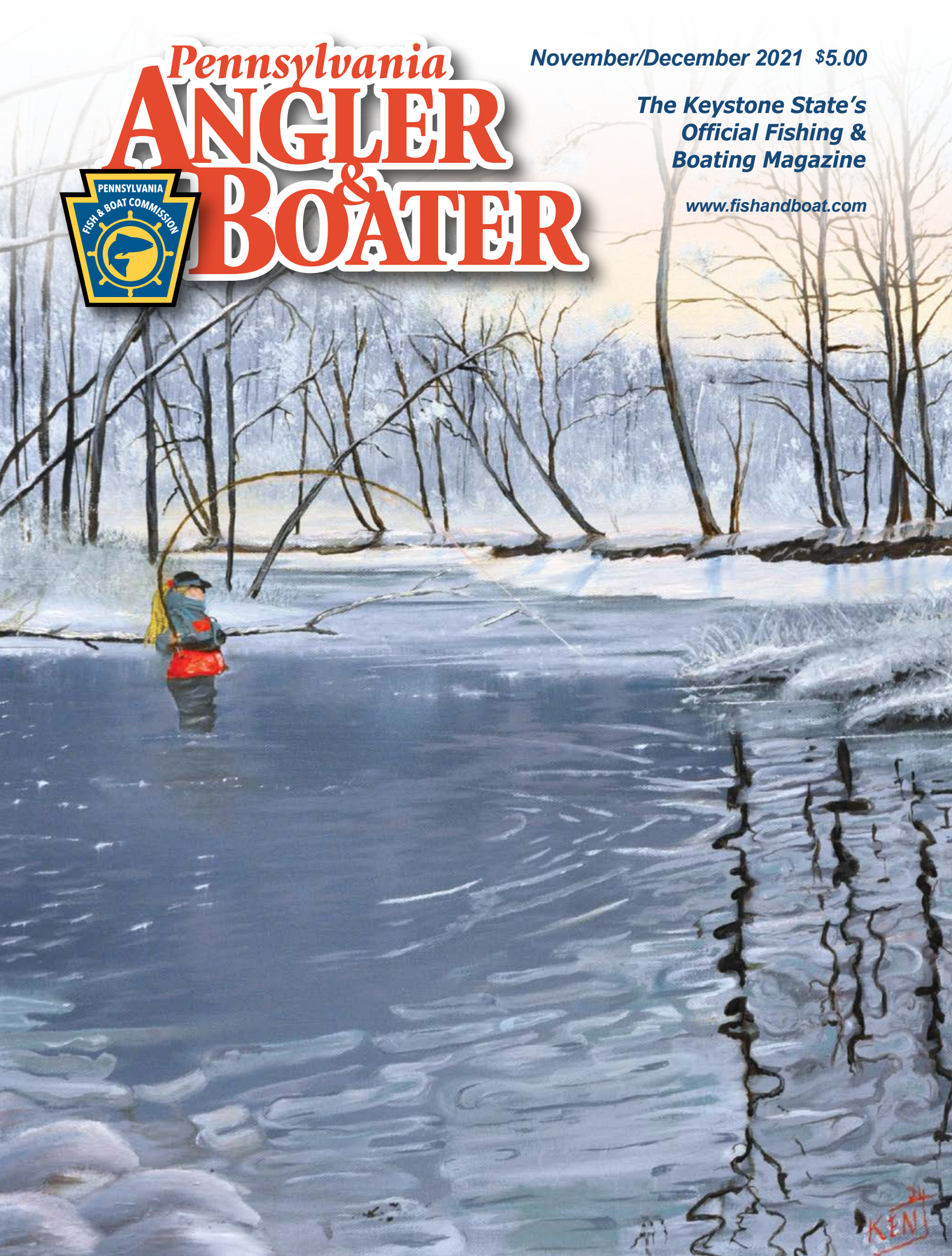
November/December 2021 \$5.00

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

www.fishandboat.com



Pennsylvania **ANGLER & BOATER**



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.

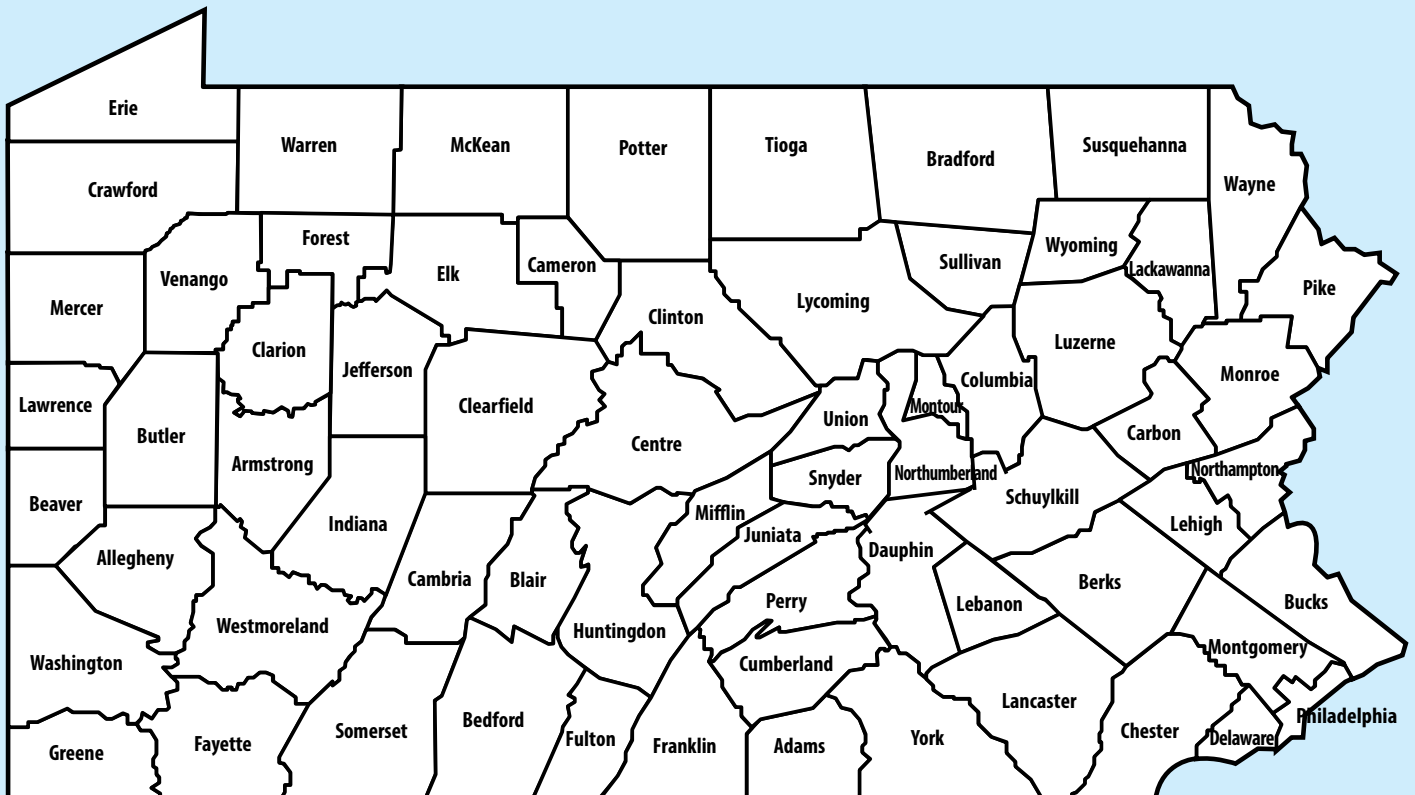


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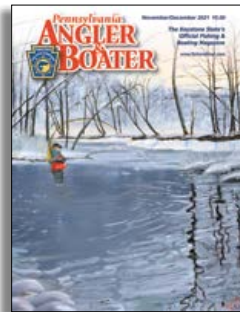
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On the cover

Hearing stories from her friends about a spot on Elk Creek, Erie County, at the Rick Road Access Area, Kayla decided to try it out for herself—to find out the stories are true as she hauled in a steelhead. *Painting by Jim Kent.*



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

Recovering America's Wildlife Act

by Timothy D. Schaeffer

Executive Director

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

Jordan Allison

Fisheries Biologist

Diana Day

Conservation Coordinator

Scott Ray

Fish Culture Station Foreman

Union City State Fish Hatchery

and Christopher Urban

*Nongame, Threatened, and Endangered
Species Coordinator*

A lot has happened since Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) was the focus of this column in the May/June 2019 *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* edition, which highlighted the potential significance of this landmark legislation toward helping the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) implement our mission to protect, conserve, and enhance the Species of Greatest Conservation Need or at-risk species within our statutory stewardship responsibility.

The American system of conservation funding based largely on license sales has long been the primary funding source for most state fish and wildlife management agencies, yet these tremendous financial resources are simply not enough to keep up with the needs of the non-game species that share the same habitats as many game species.

RAWA would complement the contributions of sportsmen and -women by providing state fish and wildlife agencies much needed financial flexibility to proactively manage at-risk species. With dedicated funding to implement State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPs), Congress would ensure that states have the necessary resources to conduct ecologically relevant conservation projects to benefit a broad range of at-risk species and associated species.

The result will be more proactive measures to keep common native species common, prevent species from becoming threatened or endangered, and more aggressively help species on the road to recovery and removal from state and federal imperiled lists. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of



Waterways Conservation Officer Kyle A. Wirick and Executive Director Schaeffer with Timber Rattlesnakes.

cure, and RAWA would provide unprecedented ounces of prevention to the Commonwealth.

Current funding levels are simply inadequate to address the 664 Species of Greatest Conservation Need identified by our agency and the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) in Pennsylvania's Wildlife Action Plan. If enacted, Pennsylvania's RAWA apportionment is projected to be about \$20 million, up from about \$1.5 million currently received through state and Tribal Wildlife Grants. Funds are shared equally between the PFBC and PGC.

This bipartisan legislation will finish the job started by the Great American Outdoors Act in the 116th Congress, complementing new public land investments and benefiting all Americans by creating hundreds of thousands of jobs. Every \$1 million invested in species and habitat conservation creates on average 17 to 33 quality jobs, meaning passage of RAWA will create about 33,600 jobs every year.

Three events led by PFBC staff in 2021 demonstrate work we are currently doing in the spirit of RAWA and that could be greatly expanded with its passage.

In May, six Waterways Conservation Officer cadets joined other members of our team to watch the cadets (now full-time officers) apply their venomous snake training, including learning about the biology of the Timber Rattlesnake, associated regulations, life history and phenology, behavior, and basic safe handling of venomous snakes, by participating in a population monitoring event at one of the PFBC's long-term monitoring study sites.

The cadets learned to identify partially concealed Timber Rattlesnakes among rocks and low-lying vegetation as snakes hid in and around basking and gestating areas along a south-facing slope that followed a 1-mile long ridgeline. That day, the cadets honed their newly acquired skills in identifying basking and gestation habitat, safely capturing, measuring, sexing, and conducting basic health checks on approximately 40 different Timber Rattlesnakes, with about a 60% capture rate (meaning we observed and did not capture another 27 snakes). Given the conditions, 60% was a decent capture rate.

They also assisted in administering Passive Integrated Transponders (PIT) tags into the captured snakes. Very few captured snakes had been previously PIT tagged. This is significant for a study area with several hundred snakes tagged

photos: PFBC archives

within the last 20 years, suggesting a fairly robust population of snakes. Overall, the cadets learned a lot about hunting and handling Timber Rattlesnakes and contributed significantly to our efforts in a long-term monitoring study.

Our agency removed the Timber Rattlesnake from the list of candidate species in 2016, meaning its numbers were headed in the correct direction away from becoming threatened or endangered. This type of field work in alignment with the intent of RAWA keeps the species moving in the right direction.

A few weeks later, members of our Board of Commissioners and staff from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service visited the Union City State Fish Hatchery to learn more about the incredible work our team is doing to conserve freshwater mussels and observe the entire sequence of mussel propagation procedures. The process showed adult gravid (pregnant) females holding baby mussels (glochidia).

Staff then performed a glochidia infestation of host fish (Largemouth Bass), which are needed to complete the transformation from babies to juveniles. We were able to see the various life stages: from newly transformed mussels to mussels that are nearly an inch in length and almost ready to be stocked. Visitors that day were also able to view how mussels are cultured and the numerous technical systems needed to properly grow mussels including the state-listed Round Hickorynut mussel (which is also a candidate for federal listing)—being grown for stocking in the Shenango and Allegheny rivers.

This cutting edge work and the recent improvements to the Union City facility since starting the freshwater mussel propagation in 2019 are perfect examples of the meaningful conservation efforts that could be expanded with RAWA.

Arnold Ortmann, a preeminent naturalist of the early 20th century and curator at the Carnegie Museum, described the Clarion River as “possibly the worst stream in the state.” In one of his publications, he expounded on how the industrialization of the Clarion River and its tributaries made the river run “black like ink” from impacts associated with logging, coal mining, tanneries, paper mills, and other industrial processes. Thanks to environmental regulations such as the Clean Water Act of 1972, water quality in the Clarion River has improved to the point where it once again supports aquatic life. However, the 139-foot



Scott Ray, Fish Culture Station Foreman, explains Union City State Fish Hatchery mussel propagation to the PFBC commissioners.

tall Piney Hydroelectric Dam constructed in 1924 on the lower section of the river has prevented natural recolonization of freshwater mussels from downstream source populations in the Allegheny River.

A unique species recovery opportunity arose as the result of a bridge and a pipeline replacement project that were to impact the Allegheny River. In 2016 and 2018, several hundred thousand freshwater mussels were salvaged from portions of the Allegheny River that were to be impacted by instream construction. From these molluscs, about 37,000 mussels representing 12 species were translocated to the Clarion River in an attempt to restore the mussel community, which has been largely absent since the late 1800s.

In August, Commission staff and our project partners from Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, United States Forest Service, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and Elk and Jefferson County Conservation Districts monitored the translocated mussels, which were stocked at 14 sites along a 38-mile section of the river. The monitoring was completed by recapturing stocked individuals that had been marked with various tags to assess how mussels had survived in new locations and by searching for young mussels (less than 5 years old) to document any signs of natural reproduction.

We found the translocated individuals survived well and exhibited growth since being stocked in 2016 and 2018. We have yet to document successful natural reproduction, which would be an indicator of a self-sustaining population and another positive sign the Clarion River’s mussel community is on its way to recovery. Again, RAWA has the potential to allow for more of this work in more places, improving both mussel populations and all species that rely on corresponding water quality.

As of this writing, more and more Pennsylvania members of Congress are joining their colleagues from across the county as co-sponsors of the House (H.R. 2773) and Senate (S. 2372) RAWA bills. On behalf of our Board of Commissioners, staff, and the species who do not have a voice, we thank our federal elected officials for appreciating the value of proactive and collaborative conservation and for recognizing this generationally significant opportunity to finish the job of making RAWA a reality this legislative session and ensuring the future of Pennsylvania’s natural heritage.



The Clarion River mussel team in action.

FISHING ELK CREEK IN THE WINTER

by Jeff Woleslagle

photos by the author



Leaving from the southcentral portion of Pennsylvania and timing our drive to arrive at the access parking area shortly before daylight, the anticipation was running high even if the temperature was low. In the early dawn, we quickly slipped into our chest waders and wore several insulating layers of clothing both under and over the chest waders. After assembling our fishing rods, we were off through a small wooded area on a path that wound down the hill to Elk Creek, Erie County. Elk Creek is well known and for good reason. It is one of the best locales in Pennsylvania to chase steelhead, and there may be almost no better time than in the winter.

There was one angler ahead of us on the path, and he turned downstream when he reached the water's edge. We headed upstream to a hole at a bridge overpass and found that we had it all to ourselves. In no time at all, the four of us were drifting egg sacs and mop flies in the milky current. The morning started slow, but soon our

first bite came, which told us the fish wanted our offerings drifting closer to the stream bottom. We all added a little more splitshot to weight our lines. Every half hour or so, someone would get to say the magic words, "fish on," which would send one of us scrambling for the net. The air temperature was in the mid-30s, which was not bad for late December, and there was little wind. By the time we hiked out to the vehicle, we landed 12 fish between the four of us and lost a few others. A front moved in overnight, which dropped the temperature down into the teens with a brutal wind chill, but we landed nine on the second day in spite of the snow squalls and the ice that often formed on our line guides. On our third and last day, the weather again moderated, and we landed an additional 14 steelhead and a bonus Brown Trout. It was an epic three days of fishing on a stream that carries a special place in the hearts of many

Pennsylvania anglers. At 30.4 miles in length, Elk Creek has the distinction of being Pennsylvania's longest steelhead stream.

As with most fishing, timing is everything and a steelhead trip to Elk Creek is no different. For the crew that I fish with frequently, that means watching for a three-day window when the weather may be warming or is at least stable. It also means checking local stream conditions online to make sure that the stretches of Elk Creek we want to target are not locked in ice and that the water is not too high for safe wading.

For spin fishing, 8- to 9-foot noodle-style spinning rods with appropriately-sized reels spooled in 6- to 8-pound-test line are ideal. Great baits include freshly tied egg sacs, single salmon eggs, live minnows, and small jigs in both bright and natural colors. Hot colors for egg sac netting are usually bright pink and orange. Wax worms may also be deadly when presented with a natural drift on small hooks.



Despite the snow and ice, winter steelhead fishing can be productive.

For fly fishing, mop flies are difficult to beat some days. Glo Bugs, San Juan Worms, and most other egg patterns may be effective as well, and I have seen more than one angler catch steelhead on nymph patterns as well as streamers.

Look for small schools of fish to be holding at the head and tails of most pools in the winter. By December and January, steelhead are well dispersed throughout the creek and often will be holding near the bottom. A good pair of polarized sunglasses may help an angler pick fish out. Experiment with weight on the line until you figure out the drift that makes the fish react. There are often feeding windows that occur. Sometimes, the fish will turn on and just as quickly shut down. Our group has found that there is usually a feeding window between first light and 9:00 a.m., one in the early afternoon, and then another one about one hour before dark.

A few tips for winter steelhead fishing on Elk Creek include dressing in several warm layers, packing plenty of snacks, as you will be burning through many calories in the cold, and bringing along a thermos of something warm to drink. A large landing net is a big help as steelhead in Elk Creek average between 3 and 8 pounds. I usually pack extra gloves, because I will get at least one pair soaked.

Additional information about Elk Creek and maps of access points are found at: www.fishandboat.com/Locate/Pages/MapResources.aspx.

Visiting Elk Creek in the winter may mean facing cold temperatures. However, for anglers willing to endure the cold, the steelhead fishing is often red hot. ☑



Henry Robinson with a nice winter steelhead.



Thoughtful Gifts for Anglers

photo-Spring Gearhart

by Marshall Nych

Trees mean different things to different anglers. When dogwood trees begin blossoming in spring, crappie anglers know to be on the water with jigs, minnows, and other enticing presentations. Come summer, bass anglers know the day's highlight is lurking somewhere beneath a submerged tree, a fallen sycamore tree from a couple seasons ago. Fall foliage on deciduous trees harkens anglers from across Pennsylvania to make their pilgrimage to the Lake Erie tributaries for steelhead fishing. Let us focus on the beloved tree of winter—the Christmas tree.

Below is a list of gift options you may find helpful this holiday season.

Photo frame

Anglers enjoy reminiscing about fond fishing memories. While a picture of the actual trophy fish is always a nice touch, the subject of the photo may vary. A picture of the trusted boat, rustic camp, family fishing dog, or a candid shot of the fishing crew often find themselves on office desks and mantles. The more personalized the better. I have seen the most simple frame homemade by a child bring a tear to an angler's eye all the way to fancy digital frames that

are able to remotely upload photos. What matters is not the price tag, but the sentiment.

First aid kit

Our passion has many inherent dangers—barbs, propellers, fish teeth, anchors, hooks, and sunrays to name a few. A first aid kit with the basics will be greatly appreciated aboard any fishing boat or in a tackle box. Include sunscreen, bug spray, and hook removal tools. Consider making a compact version for a fly vest.

Customized coupons

My children make these gifts from the heart every year at school. While printed promises are generally a household chore or breakfast in bed, one can get creative with fishing themed coupons. For example: "This coupon is good for a guided trip from yours truly, cleaning your day's catch, and cooking a fish dinner." Even if you do not participate in fishing with the angler in your life, a coupon can grant a "Free Day of Fishing (No Yardwork)." Include an expiration date, fish humor, and have fun.

Festive fish fry

Place all or any elements needed to clean and prepare a fish dinner into a cast iron skillet or frying pan. Options



For stocking stuffers, toss in a colorful assortment of lures, lines, hooks, and sinkers. Hang a new stringer along the tree or from the mantle. Attach fishing gear along the clasps.

include a fillet knife, fillet board, seasoning, bread crumbs, cookbook, or handwritten family recipes.

Hooked on a book

There are enough books on fishing to fill your local lake, let alone a section of the nearest bookstore. Try to personalize the genre. Do the anglers nearest and dearest to you fish for trout or muskies? Would they prefer more technical books on fly fishing or lure making? Is there a certain body of water they hold dear, such as the Susquehanna River? There is a “just right” book for all anglers. When in doubt, go with outdoor humor by Patrick McManus.

Stocking stuffers

Fill a fishing themed item, say a net or wading boot, with an assortment of fishing gear. Toss in a colorful assortment of lures, lines, hooks, and sinkers. Along the same line, hang a new stringer along the tree or from the mantle. Attach fishing gear along the clasps.

Fishing hat

Every self-respecting angler needs a respectable fishing hat. One may want to have a pulse on the angler’s sense of fashion. A safe bet is a high-quality and comfortable baseball style cap. Nearly every trusted fishing brand offers one. Refrain from Santa hats.

Cheesy t-shirt

I do not care how silly some of these shirts read, the angler receiving the gift will smile. Examples include, but are not limited to...

“I Catch More Fish Than My Dad!”

“Grandpa’s Lil’ Fishing Buddy!”

Voucher for professional charter or guided trip

Contact the charter service the angler has enjoyed in the past. Book a surprise trip. If unsure, one can play it safe, presenting a check with the memo reading, “Christmas Fishing Trip!”

Magazine subscription

You do not need to look further than doctor and dentist offices to realize fishing magazines are quite popular. Renew an existing subscription of the *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* magazine or purchase a gift subscription. Or, try a new publication. Anglers are constantly reading to learn new tips, techniques, and tricks.

Mirror image

The staggering selection for rods and reels may be daunting. Not sure to trust “Eeny, meeny, miny, moe” with the ultimate decision? I suggest secretly sneaking out a rod and reel combo the angler currently uses. Most anglers would agree having a quality backup rod is convenient. Many applications, such as trolling or casting two types of lures, lend themselves to numerous rods.

Fishing license

Just in time for holiday shopping, fishing licenses go on sale December 1. Purchase a fishing license or gift voucher as a holiday present. Have the recipient’s information readily available for the clerk behind the desk who recently survived Black Friday.

Follow the above suggestions, and there will be no catch and release with presents this Christmas—no gift receipt needed. Happy Holidays! ☐



photo-Andrea Feeney

Purchase a fishing license or gift voucher as a holiday present.

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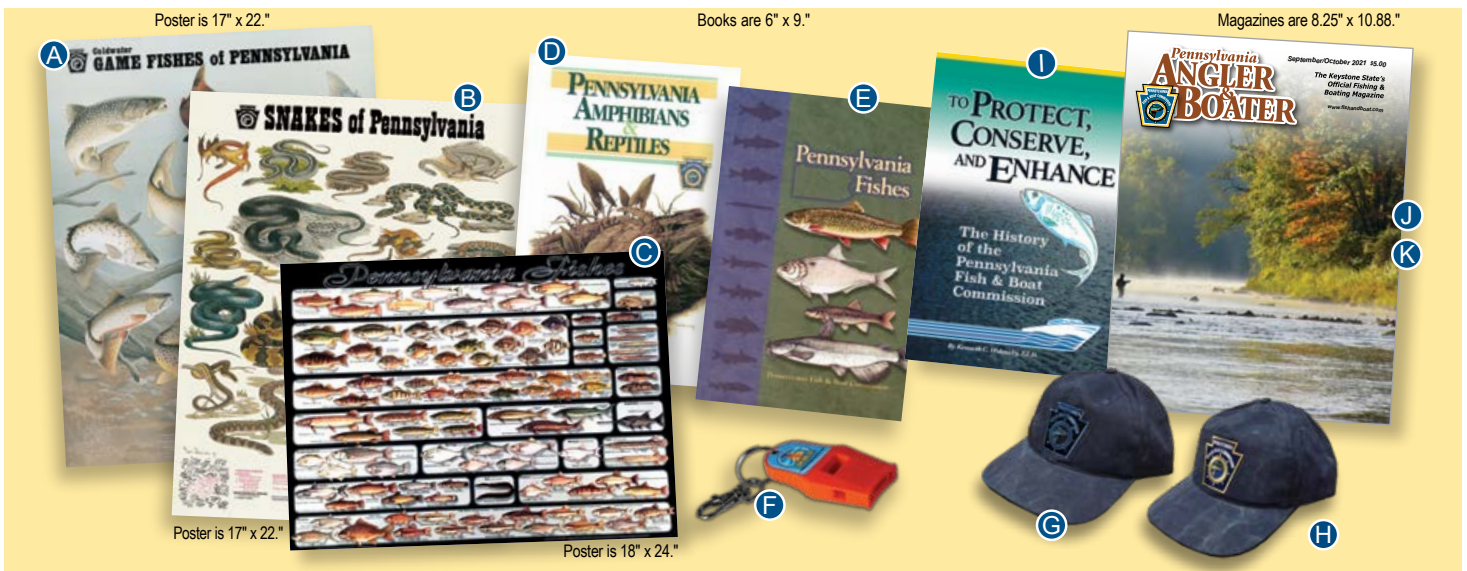
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C Set of: Pennsylvania Fishes Wall Charts (2 posters)	\$ 9.16	_____	_____
D Pennsylvania Amphibians & Reptiles Book (172 pages)	\$14.34	_____	_____
E Pennsylvania Fishes Book (172 pages)	\$14.34	_____	_____
F "Wear It!" Safety Whistle	\$10.22	_____	_____
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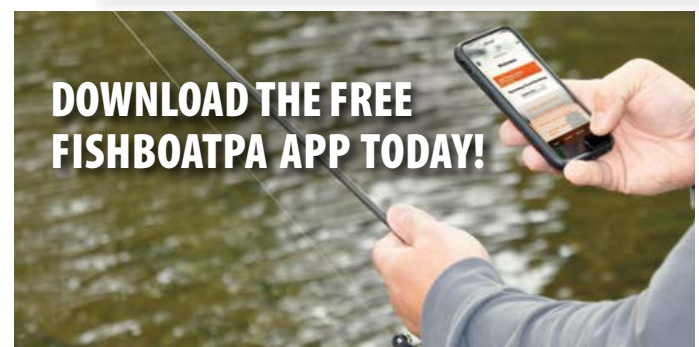
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Killer Egg Patterns for Steelhead and Trout

by Ralph Scherder

photos by the author

When fishing for fall trout or steelhead, an assortment of egg patterns deserves a place in every fly box. Eggs make up a huge part of the diets of fish during this time of year. At times, trout and steelhead will gorge on eggs almost to the exclusion of everything else. Luckily for anglers, egg patterns are not only some of the easiest flies to fish, but egg patterns are also some of the easiest patterns to tie.

The first thing you may notice about egg patterns is the availability of a wide range of colors. The four primary colors I carry are orange, yellow, light pink, and cream. The eggs of spawning Brown Trout are bright orange. Steelhead eggs range from a translucent yellow to yellowish-orange. Unfertilized eggs, or dead eggs, that have been trapped in the rocks tend to have a cream to light pink color depending on how long the unfertilized eggs have been in the water. These four basic colors will cover the largest variety of situations whether you are fishing an Erie tributary, where Brown Trout and steelhead are both present, or a typical freestone stream for just trout.

Of course, the tastes of fish are often fickle, and trying to predict its palette on any particular day can be a frustrating affair. That is where other colors come into play. For instance, there are dozens of different shades of pink, orange, and yellow available, and all of these colors have a time and place. But, if I am looking for change-up colors, it is hard to beat pale blue, chartreuse, and red. These three colors, combined with the four primary colors, cover a large variety of conditions.

As always, presentation is the key to success. In my experience, egg patterns work best when dead-drifted under an indicator. Natural eggs, after all, float freely in the current at or near the stream bottom, and a strike indicator can help you get the proper drag-free drift while allowing you to adjust for changes in depth. Once your presentation is perfected, it is a matter of repetition, drifting your flies past the fish over and over again, and then experimenting with different colors until you find what is working that particular day.

Egg patterns are some of the easiest patterns to tie, and you can whip up a batch in only a few minutes. Most egg patterns require only three materials—hooks, yarn, and thread. Tie egg patterns in sizes ranging from 10-16. Size 12 is my standard go-to size. But, if I find fish are finicky, I will drop down to a size 16.

Here are a few of my favorite fall egg patterns as well as some tying tips. In all cases, lay down a good thread base on each hook before tying in material. This will prevent the finished product from spinning on the shank. Also, I commonly tie these patterns with a bead head for eye appeal, and the extra weight helps get the fly down quicker in fast water.

Glo Bug and Clown Egg

Glo Bug is just a fancy term for an imitation salmon egg. Of all the materials I have used to tie this fly, McFly Foam is perhaps the easiest to work with when tying, and it produces a lifelike appearance in the water. Glo Bug Yarn works well, too, but the material is a little more difficult to cut and will dull your scissors more quickly over time.

Simply take a ½-inch strand of material, and tie it onto the shank near the hook eye. Then, tie off and cut the thread. Trim the length of the material, so each side is approximately one hook gap long. Use your fingers to shape the material into an egg. It does not have to be perfectly round. If needed, trim a few extra strands to give it a more uniform shape or to make it a little smaller.

Clown Eggs are tied the same way except that instead of a single color of yarn, use multiple smaller strands of various colors. This fly shines when fish do not seem to be keying in on any particular color.

Nuke Egg

The Nuke Egg is a Glo Bug with a milky white veil wrapped around it. This veil, when wet, gives the egg a translucent appearance that is similar to how real eggs look in the water. For this pattern, tie a Glo Bug and then add a thin layer of veil near the eye of the hook. Drape the veil over the Glo Bug and then cut the ends of the veil, so the ends are slightly longer than the egg.

Sucker Spawn and Crystal Meth

Sucker Spawn is tied with two or three strands of regular knitting yarn. Tie in at the bend of the hook and create a series of small bumps with the material on top of the hook shank. Basically, the finished fly will look like a cluster of tiny eggs.

Crystal Meth flies are tied the same way except with Dyed Pearl Diamond Braid. The braid is stiffer than the yarn, but it has excellent sparkle in the water, which makes this one of my favorite steelhead patterns.

Estaz Egg

Estaz Eggs are perhaps the easiest egg pattern to tie. For size 12 and 14 hooks, tie in a length of petite Estaz (for size 8 and 10 use standard Estaz) near the bend of the hook and make four or five turns of material until you reach the eye. Then, tie off. This fly is dynamic in the water and catches fish when nothing else will. Like all of the other egg patterns mentioned here, I tie Estaz Eggs in a variety of colors and sizes. These eggs are killer for both trout and steelhead. ☐



To tie a Glo Bug, attach a piece of McFly Foam to the hook shank, and cut it about one hook gap in length.



A Nuke Egg is created by adding a thin layer of Egg Veil over top of the Glo Bug.



Egg patterns can be tied in a variety of colors.



Crystal Meth flies represent tiny egg clusters and are a favorite steelhead pattern.



Estaz Eggs are often an overlooked pattern that performs when nothing else works. Estaz Eggs are also the easiest egg patterns to tie.



NOTES *from the Streams*

Some anglers are just better than others

While on patrol on Green Lane Reservoir, Montgomery County, I stopped to speak with several anglers about the fishing. Many anglers that day reported poor success rates. However, most anglers still seemed energetic and hopeful that they would catch a fish before ending their day.

As I made my way to the last angler, I stopped to chat while he showed me his license. The man told me he was from out of state and in the area visiting a sister. The angler asked me what he could do to try to catch at least one fish, as he was new to fishing. He said, "I tried near everything in the last 2½ hours—from spinners and crankbaits to rubber worms." With a grin on his face, the man proceeded to ask me if there were any fish in the waters where he was fishing the last few hours. Just as I started to give the angler some tips, a female bald eagle swept down to the reservoir from a nearby nest, scooping a nice-sized fish from the water not far from where we stood. The angler smiled as I said, "Well, I guess that will

answer one of your questions." —WCO Frank J. Mehalko III, Northern Montgomery/Eastern Berks counties.

Northern Snakeheads

Cheltenham Township and the Rotary Club of Cheltenham-Rockledge hold a kid's fishing derby annually at Kleinheinz Pond on Tookany Creek Parkway, Montgomery County. I have attended this event 18 times in the past 20 years. I have attended in a combination of my official capacity as a Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO) and also on my personal time as mother of four kids who were raised in the township. The pond is stocked the day before the derby and closed to fishing until the next day when the derby begins. Children 15 and younger may catch and release fish in the pond until noon when the derby ends, and prizes are awarded.

This year, only days before the derby, I received a call from an angler who reported that his son had caught two Northern Snakeheads in the small pond. I was hoping he was mistaken, as Northern Snakeheads are an aquatic invasive species. I asked if the angler's family had photos to send to me. Much to my

disappointment, one photo depicted a young boy holding an 18½-inch Northern Snakehead, and the other photo showed the same boy holding a 30-inch Northern Snakehead. The anglers confirmed that they did not release the fish back into the waterway. Northern Snakeheads of this size were transferred to this small, shallow pond and pose a threat to the pond and the entire Tookany Creek Watershed.

We immediately put up posters informing anglers that there were Northern Snakeheads caught with the proper way of disposing of these fish. On the day of the fishing derby, I met the young man who caught and reported the snakeheads. He was a participant in the derby and said that he believed that there was at least one more in the pond. I could tell by our conversation that this kid was an experienced angler. During the derby, a large Northern Snakehead was visible and came to the top of the water several times to chase a frog lure that the young man was using. Unfortunately, it was not caught during the derby.

The following day, I stopped by the pond and saw the same young man. He informed me that he stayed until late in the afternoon the day before and had caught the third Northern Snakehead. The angler said that he thinks the fish was full of eggs. This young angler may have saved this watershed. He clearly has a love for fishing.

I am grateful that I get to help protect the waterways for future anglers. —WCO Erin R. Czech, Eastern Philadelphia County.

Lost and found

With the cold weather, many anglers have been taking advantage of the ice on High Point Lake, Somerset County. On a busy Sunday, as I was checking fishing licenses of anglers coming in for the day, an angler approached me and handed me an



illustration-Andrea Feeney

iPhone. The angler found it on the lake but did not want to hold onto it in case the owner was still out on the lake. I proceeded back to my patrol vehicle. The phone was locked, which meant I had no way of getting the owner's information. I started asking anglers as they arrived if they were missing a phone. I kept receiving negative answers. At this point, I had the choice of walking the 338-acre lake or to just keep waiting.

As I was sitting in my vehicle, warming up, the iPhone started to ring. That was all I needed to get the phone back to its owner. I quickly realized that it was not a normal phone call but rather a video call. I thought, this is going to be interesting. I answered the phone, and a young girl was on the screen. Her face was priceless—her mouth dropped. I laughed and quickly explained who I was and why I had the phone. She stated it was her dad's phone, and she would try to get ahold of her dad's fishing friend. Time went on and the owner still did not come to claim his phone. It was getting close to the end of my shift, and I checked two more anglers. Luckily, the last angler was the owner of the phone. I told him the story, and he thanked me as we shared a good laugh at his daughter's surprise video chat guest. I guess it is not always a bad thing to have an officer on the other side of the phone.—*WCO Dina M. Cable, Southern Somerset County.*

Gold fever

While patrolling the trout streams, anglers often share stories of catching trout, how the trout were hitting, or the best bait or lure to use. Although not uncommon, a few anglers will sometimes even share stories about their family, work, or health.

One day during my patrol along the Mahoning Creek, after an in-season trout stocking, I came across a group of young anglers I encountered on different occasions during my patrols in the district. Upon speaking with the anglers, they began to tell me that they came to the stream as a group and

quickly spotted a lot of trout in a deep hole. Some of the anglers in the group were just getting their equipment ready to cast their lines when one angler said they had to leave, because their friend was suffering from gold fever.

Although I have heard different names for certain fevers, I was unfamiliar with what they meant by gold fever at that moment, so I asked a member of the group. An angler in the group informed me that his friend developed the gold fever a few years ago. Every trout season, his friend's fever seems to get worse. The young angler explained that his friend was overcome by the fever as a result of his interest of only pursuing and catching golden Rainbow Trout. The young angler continued to tell me that although the stream could have been recently stocked or still had a lot of trout from the previous stockings, his friend would quickly become discouraged about fishing if he did not see a golden Rainbow Trout. Then, his friend's fever would kick in, and the group would have to move on to other areas of the stream or to another stream even if the other anglers in the group did not get a chance to fish until his friend could spot a golden Rainbow Trout. But, when his friend would spot these fish, the group would have a chance to fish and stay fishing in that area until their friend did his best to catch the golden Rainbow Trout and get over his gold fever.

Well, upon learning about gold fever, I believe the best therapeutic treatment for it is to go out and try to catch a golden Rainbow Trout—*WCO Scott J. Christman, Southern Carbon and Southwestern Monroe counties.*

Dedicated angler

While on patrol, on a cold, January day, my state vehicle outside temperature read 29 degrees F. The wind was steady and bone chilling, making it seem much colder. I entered Mangan Cove at Lake Wallenpaupack, Pike and Wayne counties, and quickly noticed the cove was covered with a layer of ice. I progressed to the boat

launch area and was astonished to see a pickup truck with an empty boat trailer in the parking lot. As I gazed toward the lake, I noticed a boat recently launched and cut an approximate 100 yard path through the ice to enter the main portion of the lake. Talk about a dedicated angler.—*Sergeant Walter A. Buckman, Northeast Region.*

Let's put these back

While on patrol of the West Branch Susquehanna River in the Lock Haven area, I noticed a few individuals fishing at the dam spillway. As I approached, it became obvious that the three anglers were young boys. In speaking with the anglers, I learned they were not from the immediate area and that their parents dropped them off to fish for a few hours to return and pick them up later. After talking with one of the boys, I noticed he had a bait bucket next to him. I asked if he was catching anything and what species he and his friends were targeting. He said, "Well, I am fishing for catfish, and my friends are going for whatever bites." He continued on to say that he caught a few bass and some Bluegills. I followed with, "Are you keeping anything?" To which he replied, "Yeah, I have two bass and some Bluegill in the bait bucket." While checking the bucket, I quickly learned the two bass he kept were significantly under the size limit. When questioning the boy about the bass, he calmly replied, "I kept them to use as cutbait for the catfish." As I took the bass from the bucket and explained why he could not keep the fish, I said, "Let's put these back," and returned the bass safely to the river. Following the release, the young boy and I had a conversation about the rules and regulations associated with fishing. He was apologetic about his error and thanked me for the lesson. After our talk, he resumed fishing for the Channel Catfish he sought to catch, hopefully now a more informed and conservation-minded angler.—*WCO Justin D. Boatwright, Clinton and Western Lycoming counties.*

Tying the Intruder



by Carl Haensel

photos by the author

When steelhead enter Pennsylvania's creeks and streams from Lake Erie, fish are transitioning from one world to another. Moving from a lake full of baitfish, migratory steelhead are faced with swift, rocky rivers that hold few prey species. While a steelhead largely focuses on the spawning run, the fish does not entirely lose its aggressive, baitfish-chasing nature. Anglers have long targeted steelhead while fly fishing with streamers like Woolly Buggers, deceivers, and other patterns that imitate baitfish. The Intruder is a similar pattern that offers a few key benefits and differences to anglers chasing steelhead. First, the Intruder is not tied on a long-shank hook. Long hooks allow big fish to leverage weight when hooked, sometimes leading to large fish dislodging the hook. Intruders may be tied on either short-shanked shafts with a wire or braid leading to a small hook, or on a tube, with the fishing line running inside of the fly to a plain hook. Then, this hook is tied directly to the line. Second, Intruders are tied with light materials, allowing for easy casting. This version highlights the tube fly option, preferred by the fly creator and West Coast steelhead veteran Ed Ward. Tubes for the fly can be made of aluminum, copper, plastic, and other materials. Weighted tubes sink faster but are harder to cast. Many steelhead anglers prefer unweighted tube flies fished on a sink-tip line. The colors and materials of Intruder flies can considerably vary. Broadly, Intruders include a significant mix of materials that move well in flowing water and aid in casting.

Fishing the Intruder is often done with spey-style fly rods, though any fly rod will work. Cast the fly in a down-and-across direction on your favorite steelhead water, and let the current sweep the fly across the stream. This works well when the water is up and steelhead are holding in faster riffles and runs. When a steelhead takes an Intruder, hold on tight. Often, the take is aggressive and explosive. Since your

line will be tight to the fly during the cast, a hookset is rarely needed. A tube fly like the Intruder will ride up the leader during the fight, allowing for a greater chance at landing the fish. If you enjoy casting Intruders for steelhead, try fishing these flies for bass, pike, muskies, and other fish that take baitfish patterns well. You may be surprised with the results. ☐

Tying the Intruder Materials

Hook: Gamakatsu octopus size 6 or 8

Tube: Plastic fly tube

Thread: 6/0 in preferred color

Eyes: Painted dumbbell eyes

Dubbing: Pink Ice Dub

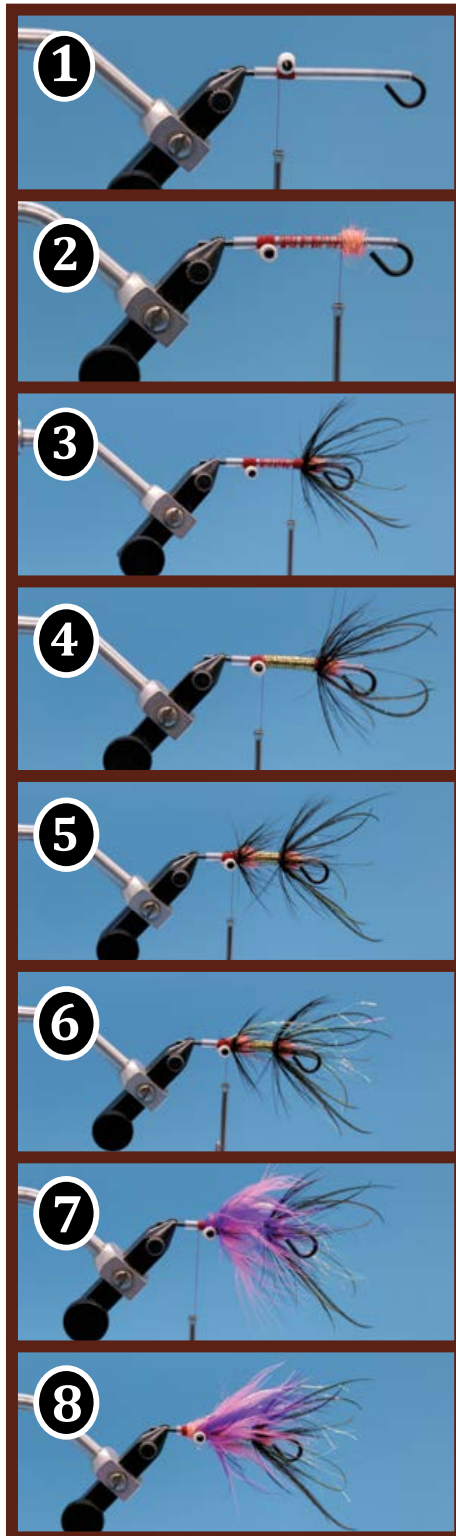
Tails: Peacock or ostrich herl feathers

Flash: Flashabou Mirage in color of choice

Body: Flat medium gold tinsel

Collars: Saddle hackle in color of choice

Marabou: Pink and purple marabou feathers



- 1 Secure a tube attachment or bodkin in the jaws of your fly tying vise. Install a tube, providing a location to tie your fly. Secure your thread on the tube, and attach the dumbbell eyes.
- 2 Invert the fly. Wrap the thread down the tube to the rear of the fly, covering the shank. Add a ball of dubbing at the rear of the tube.
- 3 Tie in the long peacock or ostrich herl feathers at the rear of the tube, just in front of the dubbing, allowing it to splay out. Follow this by wrapping the saddle hackle in the same location.
- 4 Tie in the tinsel as body material. Wrap it forward to the eyes.
- 5 Add a small ball of dubbing slightly back of the eyes, followed by two turns of saddle hackle.
- 6 Add in the flash on the belly of the fly, extending at least to the end of the tail.
- 7 Tie in the marabou feathers at the tips. Wrap two turns behind the eyes of the fly.
- 8 Add a small amount of dubbing over the eyes. Whip finish. Glue in front of the eyes. Trim the tube as needed prior to fishing.

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

by Ripley Kindervater

Applying to become a member of the Governor's Youth Council for Hunting, Fishing, and Conservation has led me down a path, toward what I want to do in life—helping Pennsylvania's beautiful lands and waterways. As a member of the Governor's Youth Council for Hunting, Fishing, and Conservation, it has been an amazing blessing to participate in legislation, conservation, and hunting safety efforts alongside my peers.

Growing up in Pennsylvania's countryside provided me with many adventures. With a multitude of outdoor adventures from hiking, fishing, hunting, and boating, Pennsylvania has it all.

My most treasured memories of fishing in Pennsylvania take me to the Allegheny National Forest, fishing for native Brook Trout. I learned about trout fishing at Farnsworth Fish Hatchery, Warren County. Downstream, I would frequently catch small, native trout. In my opinion, native Brook Trout are more beautiful than stocked trout and more difficult to find and catch. Sneaking up to the stream is always the hardest part of catching Brook Trout. One false move and the trout bolt. Still, I am always able to find fish. It is hard to imagine what Brook Trout populations have seen over the years from the impacts of logging, mining, and other watershed impacts. However, thanks to the efforts of state agencies and national and local organizations, Brook Trout populations are in good hands.

I once encountered a remote stream in the Allegheny National Forest. I hiked a mile into the forest, where I



A native Brook Trout



photos courtesy of Ripley Kindervater

Ripley Kindervater

found deeper waters as a result of multiple beaver dams. Along the way, I observed many reptiles and amphibians including Eastern Red-backed Salamanders and even a Northern Rough Greensnake. It is always a treasure to see the diversity of Pennsylvania's wilds. Upon reaching the beaver dams, I started to catch plenty of Brook Trout, each displaying trademark colors of orange, red, green, and blue. The longer I fished, the more I caught. I have never seen so many Brook Trout before in my life. Each fish I caught was larger. I decided not to harvest any as I felt it best to leave the fish in the wild for others to enjoy. Catch and release is best for all. It keeps fish where fish are meant to be.

It fills me with joy each time I find a stream with Brook Trout or a variety of reptiles and amphibians. Preserving Pennsylvania's streams and wilderness is dear to me. I want future generations to experience Pennsylvania's waters, parks, and forests. Keeping the waters clean for fish and other creatures is especially important for a healthy and diverse environment. That is why getting involved in conservation efforts is rewarding. You get to help what you hope everyone holds dear.

I encourage participating in new things, even if you are not sure about the opportunities. I was not certain about joining the Governor's Youth Council for Hunting, Fishing, and Conservation, but I am grateful that I made the decision to apply. I have learned so much about conservation and state regulations. With that in mind, I implore you to join anything involved with hunting, fishing, conservation, or the enhancement of Pennsylvania's waters and lands. Keep Pennsylvania beautiful. ☐

Tying Together

Know Your Knots: Perfecting Your Line Connections



by **Christian A. Shane**

photos by the author

"A knot is nothing more than a connection...in the line itself, between two lines, a joining of line and leader, or for attaching a lure, hook, swivel, or sinker. The key lies in knowing what knot to use and when to use it." Mark Sosin and Lefty Kreh, Practical Fishing Knots (1991).

On a frigid winter morning on the water, you begin rigging up your rod. As you string your line through the guides, ice forms on the guides. You realize the last time you went fishing, your leader broke off and only half of the leader remains. Now, you have to rerig and retie the whole system just to make your first cast.

This incident is just one of many scenarios anglers face. Knowing knot variations and effective ways to tie

these variations is necessary for all anglers to know ahead of time before encountering weather elements and water conditions. This article explores various knots, techniques to tie knots, and circumstances in which to employ knots (large diameter green/yellow fly line was used in the pictures to simulate monofilament line and/or fluorocarbon line).

Arbor Knot

Whether you are spin fishing or fly fishing, this knot connects your tag line to the spool or reel. Pass about 6- to 8-inches of the tag end around the spool, and tie an overhand knot. Tie the second overhand knot loosely in the tag end, close to the first. Then, pull the line tight. The two overhand knots should jam together. This allows for a low profile to spool the line over and is an important first connector knot.



Arbor Knot

Surgeon's Loop

Create a loop in your line system for various reasons such as interlocking another loop, connecting fly line to a leader, or quickly tying on a lure.

Double up the tag end of your line and create an overhand knot. Pass the loop through a second time for a **Double Surgeon's Loop**. Then, adjust the size by widening or tightening the loop. Trim the tag end. An advantage of this



Surgeon's Loop



A sharp pair of clippers is useful to closely trim knots.

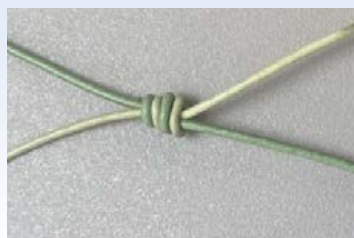
knot technique is in the ability to change loops in your line system.

Double Surgeon's Knot

The Double Surgeon's Knot uses two overhand knots to join two lines. For maximum effectiveness, keep the monofilament fishing line diameters close in size. Pull the tag ends of the lines parallel to each other. Then, twist the ends over to form a loop. Pass the tag ends through once and then twice. After adding some moisture to the knot, slowly pull both ends of the lines. Once tight, pull in all four directions of the X in the line to tighten all sides. Trim the tag ends, and test your line for strength by holding both ends and tugging with steady pressure.



Double Surgeon's Knot



Finished Double Surgeon's Knot

Palomar Knot

This knot can be manipulated on both sides of a swivel or a hook eye. Insert a loop into the hook eye, swivel, lure, or fly. Bring the loop next to itself, and make an overhand knot. Swing the hook, swivel, lure, or fly through the loop, and pull taut. Draw the knot to secure it against your tackle. Trim the tag end.



Palomar Knot

Blood Knot

The Blood Knot can join two similar pieces of monofilament fishing line. Lay the two pieces opposite of each other. Cross the two sections, wrapping one over the other five times. Then, cross the tag end between the two lines and pinch hold. Next, wrap the other line five times and insert the tag end into



Blood Knot



Trimmed Blood Knot

the loop created. The tag lines will be in the gap in opposite directions. Lubricate the wraps, and pull the standing lines taut. Trim the tag ends as this knot should lay straight.

Improved Clinch Knot

Use the Improved Clinch Knot to attach a hook, lure, or fly. Insert the line through the eye, and make four or five turns around the standing line. This can be accomplished by twisting the fly or lure, or by manually wrapping the line around itself. Bring the tag end back through the small loop and continue through to the bigger loop. This creates the "improved" step in the process. Wet the line and seat the knot by pulling on the standing line to cinch it down. Tighten the knot down to the round part of the hook eye, lure, or fly to ensure its strength. Test it with a strong pull on the line.



Improved Clinch Knot



Finished Improved Clinch Knot

Knot-tying notes

- Check your line connections for kinks, wind knots, and curly cues. Take the time to retie these weak points in your line system.
- Add moisture to allow for the knot to tighten properly and reduce friction.
- Test your connections with pressure on both sides of the knot. Simulate a fish by tugging with steady tension on the line. If the knot slips, retie it.
- Practice your knots whenever you are off the water.
- Learn and try a new knot each year to add to your fishing arsenal. ☐

Knot Tying Videos

Berkley

www.berkley-fishing.com/pages/berkley-ae-knot-tying-videos-instructions-on-how-to-tie-fishing-knots

Orvis Animated Knot videos

<https://howtoflyfish.orvis.com/fly-fishing-knots>

BAITS FOR ICING PANFISH



by Darl Black

photos by the author

With developments in winter outdoor wear, newly designed ice fishing rods and reels, plus advances in ice fishing electronics and power augers, today's ice anglers are a confident bunch. But, when you come right down to it, it is what you have tied on the end of your line that may make or break a fishing trip.

Bug versus minnow

Love of fishing propelled Bo Bartholomew, Mercer County, into the lure making business, specializing in small soft plastic baits for panfish. "Many anglers simply go ice fishing and do not care what they catch. However, you will be more successful if you focus your efforts on a specific species with a specific bait," said Bartholomew.

Bartholomew chooses "bug baits" for Bluegills, and "minnow imitators" for crappies. With a ¾-inch maximum length, bug baits are intended to represent the zooplankton, scuds (freshwater shrimp), bloodworms, and small invertebrates, which Bluegills and other sunfish prefer to eat during the winter.

Since crappies generally prefer small minnows, Bartholomew favors plastic baits in the 1½- to 2-inch size,

which have a minnow profile and are sometimes imbedded with sparkle to provide flash.

Bartholomew targets Bluegills around weed beds, brushy areas, and submerged stumps. For crappies, he moves into deeper water on drop-offs and basin areas of Lake Wilhelm, Mercer County.

"I use small tungsten jig heads—usually the 3mm or 4mm size for bug baits and 5mm for minnow baits. Some days Bluegills want the bait hanging motionless, and other days these fish want it dancing a bit. Experiment to determine how Bluegills want it presented," said Bartholomew.

"But, when I locate crappies with my depth finder, there is a presentation that regularly works for me. I lower the jig to the depth of the crappies. Next, I shake it aggressively. Then, I very slowly reel it upward. Crappies do not want a minnow to swim away, and these fish will chase the minnow to eat it," said Bartholomew.

Hardware versus software

As director of operations for the Western PA Hardwater Tournament Series, Gus Glasgow, Butler County, spends a lot of time on different frozen lakes across the region. However, when fun fishing, Glasgow focuses primarily on crappies at Lake Arthur, Butler County, and Yellow Perch at Kahle Lake, Clarion and Venango counties, or Presque Isle Bay, Erie County.

"Whether chasing crappies or perch, I am always looking for the bigger panfish. Therefore, I use a lot of hard baits that



A selection of soft plastics (bloodworms and bugs on the left; minnow-like baits on the right) plus a few different jig heads—both traditional lead and newer tungsten.



(From left to right) (column 1) jigging minnows; (column 2) jigging spoons including a dropper hook to hold a dorsal-hooked minnow; (column 3) flashy blade baits; (column 4) small, compact lipless crankbaits fished vertically similar to blade baits but with different harmonics.

can be fished more aggressively than soft plastic, allowing me to cover more water. I frequently employ a jigging minnow, 1½-inch rattle spoon, and 2-inch mini lipless rattle bait. Color wise, I do best with silver or chrome/blue for crappies and chartreuse, orange, or red for perch," said Glasgow.

"When it comes to soft plastic baits, I narrowed my selection considerably. My primary soft bait is a thin tapered body roughly 1½-inch long. It is effective for both crappies and perch. I use 5mm and 6mm tungsten heads exclusively with my plastic because the compact heavier-than-lead tungsten gets smaller jigs down deeper faster. And, when you are fishing in 20 feet of water, you need to get that bait back to the zone as quickly as possible," said Glasgow.

Always prepared

Dan Wielobob, Crawford County, has accumulated more years on ice than the previous two interviewees together. "These days, I have settled on targeting crappies exclusively, focusing on Conneaut Lake, Crawford County; Pymatuning Reservoir, Crawford County; and Lake Wilhelm, Mercer County," said Wielobob.

With decades of experience on these lakes, Wielobob has a sense of where crappies will be during early, mid, and late ice. Arriving at a specific area, he drills a series of holes, then drops his sonar transducer in each hole to pinpoint exact fish location.

Wielobob always goes prepared with a variety of bait presentations, because you never know what crappies will want on any given day.

"I always have small Fathead Minnows with me and several tip-ups. I carry a supply of ice jigs and soft plastics, plus waxworms and maggots for tipping. Also, in the arsenal are jigging minnows, jigging spoons, and small vibrating blade baits," said Wielobob.

Wielobob tries different baits until the crappies strike. Sometimes, it is shaking a jigging spoon with a minnow on a stinger hook; sometimes, it is sweeping a blade; and sometimes, it is a motionless, tiny tungsten teardrop tipped with a couple of maggots.

It was the latter bait that drew attention of a near-state record crappie late in the afternoon of February 2021 on Lake Wilhelm. Wielobob realized it was a big fish when the hook was set, but he guessed it was a bass. He carefully recovered 2-pound line until a huge mouth appeared in the hole. Wielobob grabbed it. To his surprise, it turned out to be a 20-inch, 4-pound, 2-ounce crappie—his biggest ever. "Normally, I would not expect to

catch a large crappie on such small bait, but you have to be prepared to offer what fish want," said Wielobob. □



Ice fishing for panfish appears to be growing in popularity.

Tie Your Next *Secret Fly*

by John Allen

photos by the author

Regardless of the conditions, we all have that one fly in our box that will find its way onto the line before the day is over. You probably tweaked this fly a few times and one outing changed everything. You have the utmost confidence that this fly will produce anywhere and anytime. When someone asks you what you are catching fish on, you find yourself hesitant to be completely honest and probably just go with a generalized term, “Just using Woolly Buggers.” If any of this matches the description of a fly in your box, then you have yourself a “secret fly.” What goes into making a secret fly? Surprisingly, most secret flies are not all that secret. They all seem to follow one of these patterns. Secret flies are either developed based on fishing experience, keying in on a fish’s instinctive nature, or are stream specific.

Fishing experience

The best secret fly pattern will not be developed the first time you sit down at the bench. It takes trial and error

Flash, color, and movement all in one fly.



both at the bench and on the water. Before fly fishing, I fished mostly gold spinners and spoons. When I started fly fishing, I wanted to find a fly that would match that same level of success. I soon realized I was not going to find it in a fly shop, so I had to get to work and figure it out on my own. It took about 6 years of trial and error with different materials to come up with what is now my go-to gold streamer. I started out with about six different pattern types, all with minimal success. A few years later, I was steelhead fishing, and a fellow fly angler showed me a flashy white streamer pattern. He let me have one, and it did everything I wanted in a gold pattern. I spent time finding the same materials in gold, and even then, I went through about four variations. A successful morning on a heavily fished trout stream confirmed that I found my pattern. From there, I had the confidence to try that pattern anywhere. I caught dozens of different species on it, and it is always found inside my fly box no matter



The author's box of fly experiments.

where I am fishing. Anyone who fished with me in the last 15 years knows this pattern.

Instincts

When it comes to the makeup of these “secret” patterns, I do see a few trends. Most of these flies are excellent at triggering a fish’s primal instincts. In the world of fly tying, this means adding flash, color, or movement. Flash is the most obvious. You can tie flash into the tail of a streamer or use it for the cap of a nymph, and it will stand out more to a fish than a pattern that does not have it. Color can be as simple as using a different shade of green or using a bright color like orange or chartreuse within the fly to make it stand out. Typically, if you want movement in your fly, it is the angler who needs to make the fly dance. However, take some marabou and stick it in a sink full of water. Watch how it moves around. Rabbit and fox hair are also good at moving on its own. I have even seen anglers make fine deer hair come alive. Incorporating these traits into a fly will also lead you in the right direction when developing new patterns.

Stream specific

If you fish enough streams, turn over enough rocks, and learn the waters you are fishing, you will find yourself seeing things differently. What does that mean? A sulphur nymph at one stream may seem to have a completely different hue at another stream. There are many factors that go into color traits, and it is completely

plausible for something to look different from one stream to the next stream. The best example I can give is freshwater shrimp at Falling Spring Branch, Franklin County, versus Letort Spring Run, Cumberland County. Both are “close enough” to being the same but look distinct enough to me that I carry two different colored shrimp patterns.

While fishing one of the shrimp patterns at Falling Spring Branch early in my fly fishing life, I caught a Creek Chub that had a vastly different coloration from those in the nearby Conococheague Creek, Franklin County. A few weeks later, I had a streamer pattern that after trial and error matched what I saw that day. It has become an absolute fish catching fly for me on limestone creeks. Many anglers would keep slinging the same Olive Woolly Bugger hoping for the best, but you can change the game for yourself. No one actually gets into fly tying to save money. You get into fly tying for the ability to create your own artistic interpretations of what you think will catch fish. Do not get caught up trying to match every fly in a fly tying book. Get

good at the various tying techniques; then, set yourself free. Many hook packages come in sets of 25. I see that as 25 opportunities to create your next secret fly. ☐



The best fly patterns take trial and error both at the bench and on the water.



Lure Fishing for Erie Steelhead

by Nathan Woleslagle

photos by the author

Fishing for steelhead in Pennsylvania is a treat. The tributaries to Lake Erie provide no shortage of access to prime steelhead waters, plentiful fish, and the opportunity for all anglers to have a chance at landing a true trophy. Lure fishing for steelhead is an overall effective method, especially as some fish become wary after seeing bait offerings time and time again. By mixing up your lure selection and getting creative

with the presentation style, you may coax even some of the wariest steelhead in a stream to take a bite at your lure offering.

Walnut Creek and Elk Creek are two of the most well-known tributaries to Lake Erie for targeting steelhead, and these tributaries are my favorites. I consistently locate fish, find areas of public access with light pressure, and have an enjoyable experience when fishing these waters. Before you begin fishing, identify an area with light fishing pressure from fellow anglers. Check the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's public access points, and find a section of your own. There are no shortages of steelhead in these waters,



Rich Morder caught this steelhead using a Black Marabou Jig.

and having your own section of water makes a huge difference to your success.

Fall and late winter are my favorite times to target steelhead with lures. The months of January and February may offer brutal weather conditions, but I find that by braving the cold, I can escape the pressure of other anglers. Fish with a buddy in cold weather, have hand warming devices, and wear a life jacket when close to the water. Cold water in the winter is no joke, and with ice being abundant, slips and falls do happen.

When you locate an area of water that looks promising, select a lure. Your choices are seemingly limitless and so comes the fun of targeting steelhead with lures. Try a spoon or inline spinner to cover water and draw reaction strikes from migrating fish. I also use white and black marabou jigs drifted through the current and lightly bounced off the bottom. Strikes will come if there are fish moving through water.

If you locate a pool with several steelhead holding, switch to a more finesse presentation. Small $\frac{1}{16}$ - or $\frac{1}{8}$ -ounce jig heads paired with small grubs or plastic worms can be irresistible to aggressive steelhead. I wear polarized sunglasses to spot steelhead while the fish are holding in an area. Then, I cast a jig upstream of the steelhead and let it drift in its direction. Once close to the fish's mouth, I begin to lightly bounce the jig in a fast, repetitive action. This triggers a reactionary strike time and time again.

If the fish are finicky and dodging your drifted lure presentations, it is time to get creative. If you are not familiar with the presentation, I recommend reading about the drop shot rig. It is a common presentation for bass anglers targeting Smallmouth Bass in clear water. When Walnut Creek and Elk Creek are clear, I adopt this presentation to use on steelhead. For your drop shot lure selection, opt for a small baitfish, soft plastic hellgrammite, or leech. Use a light drop shot weight as well. Cast your drop shot upstream of a group of holding steelhead. Once it drifts into an area with fish around, let the weight settle into the bottom. Maintain tension on your line to keep the drop shot lure up, and let the stream current do the rest. The current will wash your soft plastic lure around, making it look alive. After a few minutes, steelhead may become convinced and rush in to take the lure.

Lure fishing for steelhead is an exciting way to target hard fighting and aggressive fish. Due to the steelhead seeing egg sacs and live bait options so often, lures may be more effective on some days when the fish are looking for something different to catch its interest. Get creative with your lure selection, have fun when you hook into a fish, and you will have a memorable day. Pennsylvania steelhead fishing is something to experience, and targeting fish with lures adds a twist to the experience. □

How to Fish Multiple Flies for Steelhead



by Nick DelVecchio

photos by the author

The return of the annual steelhead run brings with it some of the most exciting action of the year for Pennsylvania anglers.

As these large fish emerge from the depths of Lake Erie and move into the tributaries for migration, imaginations run wild with anticipation of acrobatic jumps and strong, powerful runs that have reels screaming. Steelhead are sometimes difficult to catch, and anything anglers do to increase their chances of hookups is worth the effort. One of those things is using multiple flies to increase the odds that something on your rig is the flavor of the day and will result in a fish on. It is not as easy as just tying on a second fly. There are techniques and strategies that should be considered and planned to ensure that having multiple flies helps your efforts rather than hurts your endeavors.

How to rig

Tangles are one of the challenges of fishing multiple flies. Tangles may occur by the sheer nature of having

more hooks and more line out in the water. While it is often legal to use three flies, most anglers targeting steelhead usually stick with two lines until they get the hang of things. Building the rig itself is pretty simple. Starting at the fly line, tie a 7½-foot leader on with a tippet ring attached at the end of the leader using a clinch knot. Then, attach a 12- to 15-inch section of tippet onto the tippet ring down to your first fly. Another section of tippet is tied onto the first fly leading down to where the second one will be placed. When set up correctly, anglers need to know nothing except a clinch knot, and it is an easy and effective way to fish multiple nymphs at a time on one rig.

Types of flies

For the fly angler, nymphs are typically the name of the game in order to find success. Streamers also provide some action, but nothing will produce quite like nymph rigs imitating stoneflies, caddis, or egg patterns. When running a rig with multiple nymphs, varying the flies may be an effective strategy. A stonefly tied down to an egg or caddis is a great way to find what fish are after that day. Since eggs are often the best choice, running a Sucker Spawn tied to a single egg is a good bet. It is not just fly selection that matters but also colors. Even on days when fish are keying in on eggs,

the exact color may still be an unknown variable. By throwing a pink pattern down to an orange (or chartreuse, white, red, etc.) fly, you may efficiently cover multiple color options on one rig. At that point, if the fish are targeting one color specifically, switch to two flies with that hot color and take advantage of the information learned by using multiple flies.

Water type

The type of water steelhead are holding in will also play a role in how the multi-fly rig is built. For fish moving through structured riffles or tiny pockets, two-nymph setups can be more challenging. It is simply a matter of having enough surface area for the flies to land and effectively sink down to the bottom. In a 3-foot pocket behind a rock, it is much more difficult to land both flies in a spot where the flies will drift in front of the fish. To combat this challenge, anglers should shorten the distance between the nymphs to increase the odds that both flies land in a position to be seen by the fish. Consider cutting the distance down to 10- to 12-inches for better accuracy, and even though that short length is not ideal, it is more ideal for that type of water. Conversely, deeper, slow pools may call for greater length between the flies to decrease startling fish. In



Few fish match the impressive power of a steelhead, and using multiple flies may help you land more fish.

deeper areas, you have the luxury of time and area, where the flies can take a few seconds to sink. If the pool is big enough, there are likely multiple steelhead holding in a few different locations.

Steelhead are without a doubt one of the most sought-after gamefish in Pennsylvania. Steelhead leaps are jaw-dropping, and the long, powerful runs make you think the fish is literally trying to make it back to the big water of Lake Erie. Those daydreams are fun, but the reality is catching steelhead may be a difficult endeavor. Everything and anything you can do to improve the odds is well worth it. Fishing multiple flies is perhaps at the top of the list of things to try. Knowing how to rig, what flies to use, and what water to fish with each setup is important to consider, so the exciting daydreams become a reality each fall and winter. ☐



Landing a steelhead from Lake Erie is a well-earned victory.

Winter Warmer



by Tyler Frantz

photos by the author

While fly fishing for steelhead one snowy, winter morning with my childhood friend Bobby and his college friend Billy, we all agreed to head back to the truck to try a new location. Billy, who had been fishing the opposite bank from us, set out for the same stretch of shallow rapids he had crossed just an hour earlier to return to our side of the river.

As he approached mid-stream, the swift current pushed heavily against his legs. When his next step in the rocky bottom unexpectedly dropped into a steep bowl, the force of the water proved too powerful to maintain his footing, and he was suddenly swept downstream.

With fly rod in hand and body completely submerged, Billy did his best to keep his head above water, finally swimming to the safety of a shallow outcropping roughly

100 yards from where the river nearly claimed his life. Once out of the water, however, concern was far from over, as we all knew the dangers of hypothermia in such icy conditions.

Bobby ran to aid a stunned Billy, encouraging him to keep moving despite the terrifying shock he just encountered, while I sprinted for the truck. Blaring the heat on full blast, I drove closer to their position and left the vehicle running to warm up as I pulled dry clothes from a duffel bag in the back seat. We helped Billy, by then nearly immobilized from the extreme cold, strip down from his wet gear, change into dry clothes, and planted him in front of the heater vent, where he spent the next several hours thawing out.

Every time you fish or boat in cold temperatures, you run the risk of suffering the same fate as Billy, or even worse. The expression “cold water kills” is not to be taken lightly. That does not mean you cannot still enjoy the water in wintertime, but it is a stern reminder to be sensibly prepared for any situation and to take necessary precautions when doing so.

The first step to being prepared is selecting the right gear. When fishing in cold temperatures, it is essential to wear clothing that will keep you both warm and comfortable during the winter months.

Starting with your feet, a light pair of nylon stockings with wool blend socks over top will insulate your toes without cramping space in your wading boots, potentially impeding circulation. Next, wear a breathable polyester or polypropylene base-layer as long underwear, with lightweight but thermally efficient fleece or even wool on top.

Then, add a water repelling outer layer such as waders and a wading jacket to keep things dry. Cover your head with a warm hat, and use fingerless gloves to retain heat in your extremities.

Try to stay out of the water as much as possible. Use a net and pliers to handle fish, so your hands and gloves stay dry. If you absolutely must get into the water, be sure your boots have metal studs for extra grip, and use a wading staff—not only for added stability but to test for unexpected low spots that may drop out in front of you. Only cross in safe



A wading staff not only adds stability when navigating the water, but it also allows you to test for dangerous spots before you take your next step.

locations, where the water is shallow and not too swift for safe passage.

If boating, wear a life jacket. Life jackets are life savers in accidental plunges into the water, when the body's first response is to gasp for air in frigid shock. Not only will a life jacket help you stay afloat while you gather your wits, but it will make it easier to swim for safety while providing insulating qualities.

Always be prepared with a spare set of dry clothes and a readily accessible heat source. Whether something as minor as slipping on snow near a stream bank or as major as a capsized vessel or breaking through thin ice, accidents can happen, and you need to be ready.

If you do get wet, change into dry clothes as quickly as possible and get somewhere warm—be it a vehicle, home, cabin, sleeping bag, or makeshift fire. You need to bring your core temperature back to safe levels. Sip on hot tea or broth to help speed up the process.

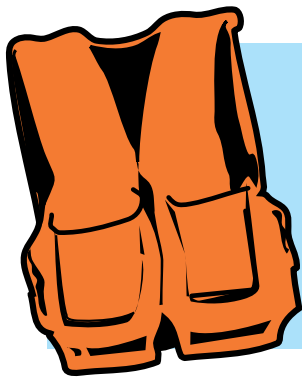
Most importantly, do not fish or boat alone, especially in the cold winter months. Having someone with you to render aid in the event of an emergency can be the difference between life and death in certain circumstances.

While Bobby and I were helpless watching Billy get swept downstream, I know he was grateful for our decisive action and assistance immediately after his mishap. This scary situation could have ended far worse, and it further demonstrated the importance of always using caution and being prepared when fishing in wintry conditions. Take heed, and be careful. ☐



Dressing appropriately for the conditions including wearing multiple layers will help keep you dry and comfortable.

COLD WATER KILLS!



WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET!

Boaters are **required by law to wear a life jacket** while underway or at anchor on boats less than 16 feet in length or any canoe, kayak, or paddleboard during the cold weather months from **November 1 through April 30.**

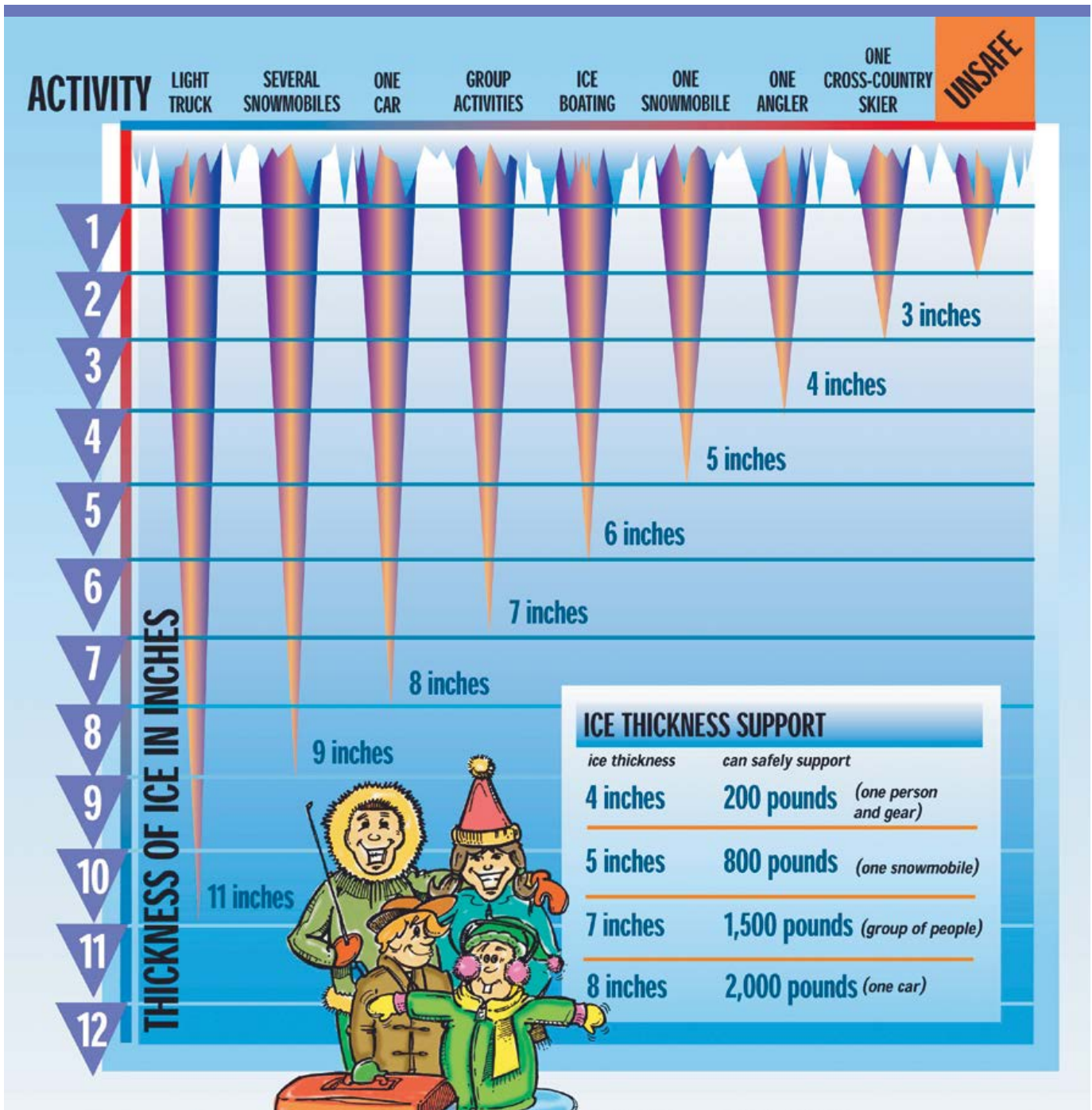
Life jackets save lives year-round!
The Commission strongly encourages all boaters to wear their life jackets at all times on the water.



www.fishandboat.com

Ice Safety Thickness

For ice anglers this winter, be safe on the ice and know the proper thickness.



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

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	16 & 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.

Searching for the Perfect Gift?

For your conservation-minded relative or your go-to fishing friend, invest in a holiday gift that supports the things they care about. Purchase a voluntary permit.

You can choose from the following permit categories: Bass, Musky, Habitat/Waterways Conservation, and Wild Trout and Enhanced Waters. All permits are available in 1-year, 3-year, 5-year, and 10-year options.



See pages 2 and 34 for pricing and more information.

www.fishandboat.com



VOLUNTARY PERMITS: *The Proof is in the Projects*



by Mike Parker
PFBC Communications Director

photos by the author

It is no secret that the outdoor community is a generous one.

Whether it is a local sportsman's club sponsoring a free trout rodeo for youth, a conservation-minded individual donating his or her time as a Deputy Waterways Conservation Officer, or simply an angler sharing a piece of advice (and probably some bait) with a stranger on a stream, these displays of goodwill are especially frequent among the fishing crowd.

These days, the spirit of that streamside generosity is translating into actual dollars. For the second year, Pennsylvania fishing license buyers have gone out of their way to support several of their favorite programs through the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's (PFBC's) Voluntary Permit Program.

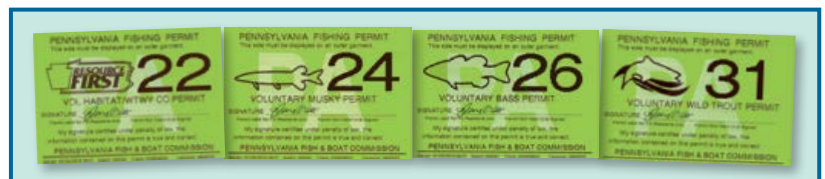
When voluntary permits first became available for purchase during the 2019 license year, the goal was to generate additional funding, above and beyond regular fishing license dollars, towards programs many of the most passionate anglers cared about the most. Permit categories and pricing were selected to include **Bass** (\$10), **Musky** (\$10), **Habitat/Waterways Conservation** (\$10),

and **Wild Trout and Enhanced Waters** (\$25). Like other fishing licenses and permits, voluntary permits were made available in 1-year, 3-year, 5-year, and 10-year options. It was decided that any funds generated in 2019 would be used towards projects in the respective categories beginning in 2020.

While expectations were tempered during the initial offering, public support for the program was extremely encouraging during the 2019 fishing license year, generating a combined \$129,000 across the four categories of voluntary permits. These 'bonus' dollars were put to good use, funding 14 projects across the Commonwealth in 2020.

In 2020, amid the uncertainty of a pandemic, anglers turned out in large numbers, not only to purchase fishing licenses but to keep the momentum going with voluntary permits. When the dust settled on an unprecedented season, a total of \$289,940 had been donated through the Voluntary Permit Program. Through these funds, 18 projects will be funded in 11 counties in 2021, and multiple projects will have statewide benefits.

Many of the projects being funded through voluntary permits over the last 2 years have been completed, while



others remain in various stages of planning and construction.

As an agency, the PFBC is committed to transparency and constantly demonstrating how angler dollars are spent effectively and responsibly. The *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* is the perfect place to feature many of the successful projects funded by voluntary permits, and the PFBC will be shining a spotlight on these projects in each issue.

Learn more about the Voluntary Permit Program, and purchase voluntary permits at www.fishandboat.com.

Lake Habitat Structures Lake Wallenpaupack, Pike and Wayne Counties Voluntary Permit:

Bass Investment: \$10,000

On August 31, 2021, the PFBC Lake Habitat Section staff deployed 62 wooden, short vertical plank structures into several shallow water sections along the shoreline at Lake Wallenpaupack. Locations for these 3-foot-tall, manmade structures were identified through habitat assessments and fish population surveys, revealing areas that were void of quality, natural fish habitat such as rock piles, stumps, or fallen trees.

Over time, these structures will become covered in algae, creating a food source for macroinvertebrates such as dragonfly larvae, midges, and snails, which form the base of the aquatic food web.

"The presence of those macroinvertebrates then attracts smaller fish such as baitfish and panfish," said Vinnie Lessard, Lake Habitat Manager, PFBC Division of Habitat Management. "That increased activity then attracts the larger fish, including Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass, which eat both the smaller fish and the



Pictured are (left to right) Kyle Schlittler, PFBC Fisheries Biologist Aide, Stream Habitat Section, points to the location where habitat structures will be placed along the shoreline of Lake Wallenpaupack. Vinnie Lessard, Lake Habitat Manager, PFBC Division of Habitat Management, navigates the boat, while Paul Cinkan, PFBC Fisheries Biologist Aide, Stream Habitat Section, looks on.

macroinvertebrates. These structures provide a great place for the bass to carry out their ambush-style predation," said Lessard.

As fish activity flourishes, anglers are the real winners. Lake Wallenpaupack is annually home to several large bass fishing tournaments, and these habitat structures attract a lot of attention.

"Our habitat maps are updated yearly, letting anglers know exactly where we've placed these structures," said Lessard. "You may locate the GPS coordinates on www.fishandboat.com and by using the FishBoatPA mobile app. If you are watching on a fish finder as you travel across the lake, these structures really stand out and typically hold a lot of fish," said Lessard.

The impact of lake habitat structures is long-lasting and represents a tremendous value. Each structure is built from rough-cut hemlock and weighed down with nine concrete blocks, ensuring structures will immediately find a solid footing on the lake bottom. If the structures remain under water and are not continuously exposed to sunlight, ice, and wave action, structures have been known to last 30 years or longer.

The project was completed in partnership with the Lake Wallenpaupack Watershed Management District, which provided additional equipment and manpower to assist with placing the structures. ☐



Habitat structures to be placed along the shoreline of Lake Wallenpaupack, Pike and Wayne counties.



Man of Steel

by Caleb Ritenour photos by the author

Navigating the brackish waters between boyhood and manhood is one of life's greatest challenges. If you have at least three decades under your belt, I am sure you recall a time in your late teens or early twenties when someone came along and changed the course of your life. These people are often referred to as mentors, role models, or influencers. Finding a good one makes all the difference in a young person's life.

Fresh out of college, I was hired to teach third grade at Mercer Area Elementary School—a small school district located halfway between Pittsburgh and Erie. I did not realize it at the time, but I was about to meet my mentor. Marshall Nych was only a decade ahead of me in years but a lifetime ahead of me in outdoor experience. He was a game warden, avid hunter, angler, and lifelong country boy. On

paper, we looked like opposites. I had never met a game warden, held a rifle, and rarely visited the countryside. Despite our contradicting backgrounds, our friendship blossomed immediately.

Nych knew I had been trout fishing a fair number of times as a boy, so he welcomed me on a trip down the Allegheny River. It was my first taste of a “misadventure” (as Nych's trips are aptly nicknamed). We caught a variety of species including Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike, and Walleyes. I had never physically seen the latter two species before that trip. Once I had a taste, I knew I was destined to become an angler. The mystery and excitement of catching a majestic monster made me say yes to every trip Nych invited me along.

We traveled to Spring Creek, Centre County, to catch wild trout. He took me out on Pymatuning Reservoir, Crawford County, to catch Walleyes and Muskies. Nych taught me how to fly fish on a pristine section of Neshannock Creek,



The author's first steelhead in "Manchester Hole" at Walnut Creek, Erie County.

Unfortunately, the crowd of anglers got bigger, and my hands got colder. I picked a terrible day to forget gloves, but it was just as well. I had my excitement, and it was time for somebody else to get a chance. As we slid our waders off at the truck, Nych asked me if I enjoyed my first steelhead trip. I told him all the details as he smiled along. He knew I was hooked, just like a younger version of himself.

I have nearly a decade of fond memories exploring the wilderness and waters of Pennsylvania since exiting boyhood. Nych is still a mentor, but I prefer to call him my best friend these days. Perhaps, you know someone who could benefit from dipping a line in the water? Sometimes, to catch a fish of steel, you need a man of steel to guide you. And, that has made all the difference. ☐

where I caught a Brown Trout that measured 24 inches long. Each experience made me fall more in love with the flora and fauna of Pennsylvania.

When Nych discusses his past fishing experiences, he always lights up when talking about steelhead. I heard legends about these fish growing up, so when he finally asked me to catch steelhead in the tributaries of Lake Erie, I nearly jumped into my waders.

Like most outdoor pursuits, waking up early is pretty much a requirement—a small sacrifice for such a rewarding opportunity. Any good angler knows to pack their gear the night before, because 4 a.m. is never an ideal time to try and remember everything one needs for a fishing trip. I made this critical error the first time Nych took me to Erie, forgetting my gloves on the counter.

We were the first car in the Walnut Creek Access Area at the crack of dawn. "Early bird gets the worm" was jokingly replaced with "first angler gets the hole." As I learned later in the day, this quip was more serious than comical. At one point, there were 12 other anglers within 20 yards ogling my spot.

After Nych instructed what rig to tie on and a few steelhead pointers, he let me cut my teeth in the famous "Manchester Hole". According to the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, if there are steelhead in Walnut Creek, there will be some in this hole—a promising opportunity for a rookie. I had it all to myself, and the next few hours were a blur. Nearly every cast ended with a Rocky Balboa-sized fight. I quickly learned not to "horse" the fish and to let my tackle do the work. Navigating the slick bank was a challenge as the mighty silver bullet pulled my line to its backing. Each victory was earned, and all trophies were released back into the creek after a quick photo.



Marshall Nych with a steelhead he caught while fishing Elk Creek, Erie County.

Magic Happens at the Triple Divide



by Linda Stager

photos by the author

Sometimes, there are things that can be seen with more than the eyes. There is nothing to see and everything to see. "It" is more felt than seen, but there is no doubt that "it" is there.

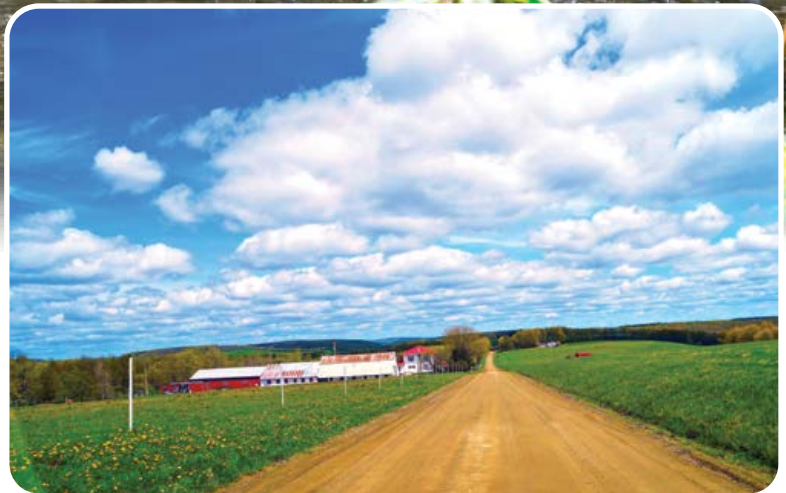
That is the way it is on top of a high plateau section in the hills of Potter County. They call it "God's Country," and it is easy to imagine why. Potter County is a unique area—a land of mountains and rivers, woods and farm fields, and dark skies peppered with thousands if not millions of stars. Wildlife is abundant, and the waters run pristine clear.

It is also a land of legend. At an elevation of 2,308 lies a vast mountaintop under a huge sky. The views are panoramic across the fields of the 900-acre Triple Divide Farms.

In fact, the waters from this farm travel far, because this land sits on the only triple divide east of the Mississippi River and is at the northern terminus of the Eastern Continental Divide.

A geological wonder exists at this location. Every rain drop that falls here undergoes a magical journey defined by where on the farm it falls.

A native legend, called "The Three Rivers," recounts the original story of a Native American Seneca chief named Nahimen and his family who lived at this very location. Recounted in a 1915 book titled, "Black Forest Souvenirs: Collected in Northern Pennsylvania," by Henry W. Shoemaker, the story stands out among those gleaned from the memories of old-timers.



"Headwaters mountain" sheds water in three different directions and is the birthplace of three mighty rivers.

A paraphrasing of the legend follows: Nahimen's wife died and left him to raise their three young daughters, named Allie-gay-nay (Allegheny), Gay-nay-sayo (Genesee), and Tya-dahg-tun (Tiadaghton, the original name for Pine Creek). In a vision from his deceased wife, he saw the destruction and corruption of the land and ultimately his daughters' loss of tradition and their unfortunate destinies.

His beloved, deceased wife suggested that the three daughters be turned into less corruptible forms—a tree, a rhododendron bush, a rock, or a river. Together, he and his daughters decided that the daughters would be turned into rivers.

When the time came, each daughter was visited by the sorceress sent by the Great Spirit. The witch asked Nahimen where he wanted his daughter's rivers to be formed. He chose the land near his lodge house. The skies darkened that day, and drops of water, like tears, fell from the clouds. As the sorceress put her hand on each daughter's forehead in turn, the rains fell harder and harder, and the form of the human girl began to liquify and fade. Each daughter, in turn, became one of the three springs on the Triple Divide, bubbling freely as they tumbled off the mountain, forming the three mighty rivers that bear their names.

This geological wonder and fascinating story have since been documented by mapmakers and scientists, as well as staff from state and federal agencies. There is truly nothing much to see on top of "headwaters mountain" except vast skies, woods, fields, and a profound sense of nature populated by monarch butterflies, fireflies, deer, and bear who thrive on this pristine and ecologically protected mountain.

A raindrop that falls within a thousand yards of another raindrop here will be absorbed to return to the surface in one of the three springs on "headwaters mountain."

One raindrop may start its path off the mountain in little rivulets that head north through the rolling farmlands and woods of New York. It becomes the Genesee River at the base of "headwaters mountain" and grows in strength to become the mighty waterfalls of Letchworth State Park and Rochester, New York, as it flows into Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence Seaway on its 160-mile northward path to the north Atlantic Ocean.

Another raindrop may follow a different path off the mountain and form the 320-mile Allegheny River. It also heads in a northern direction until it meets the Allegheny Mountains and turns to follow its southwestern path along the western slopes of the mountain range, past the Kinzua Dam and Allegheny Reservoir and on past Point State Park in Pittsburgh. From there, it follows the Ohio River to Illinois, where it joins the mighty Mississippi River on its way to the Gulf of Mexico.

The third raindrop heads a different direction and works its way off the mountain to the valley below, where it becomes the headwaters of Pine Creek (or Tiadaghton). From here, the tiny foot-wide stream gathers force as it plunges through the Pennsylvania Wilds along the Pine Creek Gorge (the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon) and to the Susquehanna River. The Susquehanna River sprawls its way through Pennsylvania, past the state capital and on to



The start of the Genesee River off "headwaters mountain."

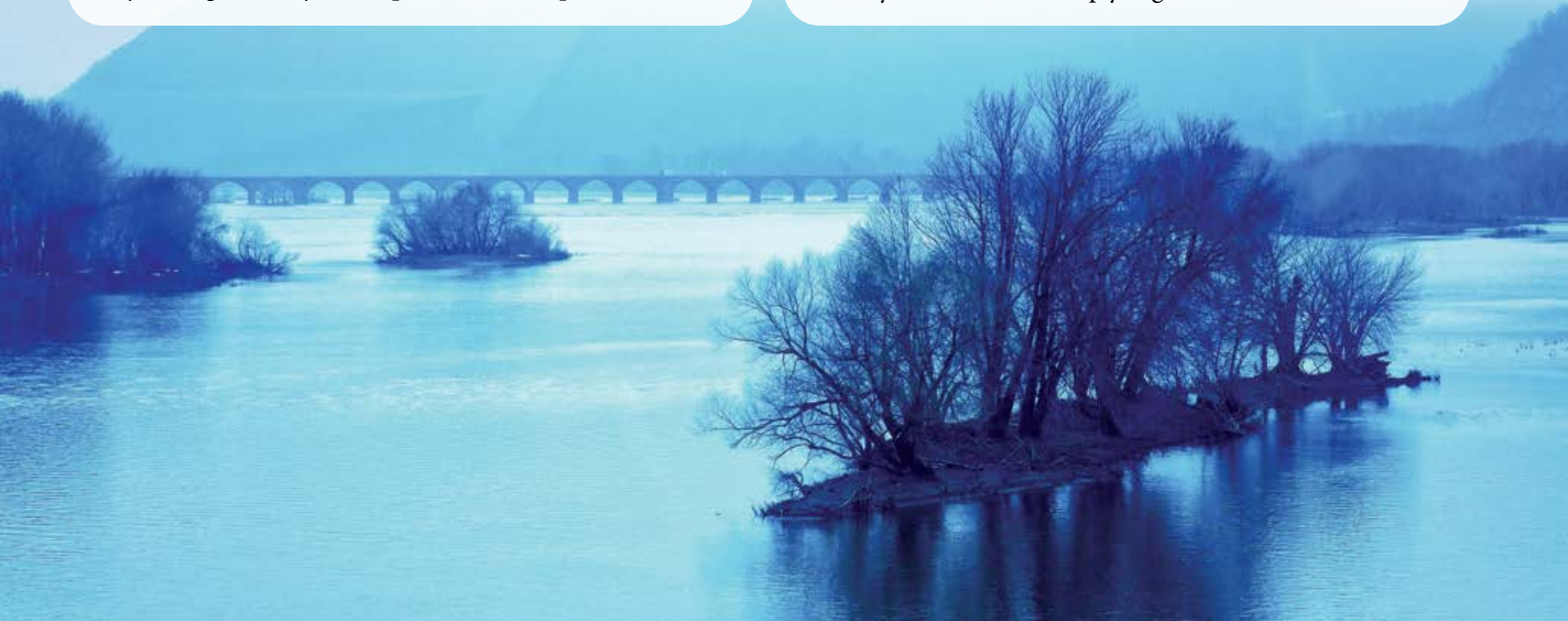
Havre de Grace, Maryland, where it joins the Chesapeake Bay and empties into the Atlantic Ocean. The 440-mile Susquehanna River is the longest river on the east coast.

Each raindrop gains in strength as little rivulets become three of the major rivers in North America. And, each river forms within a space the size of a football field from this little inconspicuous area in Potter County, where there is truly nothing much to see but everything to feel.

It simply feels special here. The county's tribes saw this land as sacred. And, on this mountain, there is a strong sense of how important it is for each of us to protect and sustain this special land.

Conservation is the responsibility of all of us. And, good stewardship has resulted in continued pristine waters.

The next time any of us are fishing or boating in one of these mighty rivers, whether it be north to the Atlantic Ocean, south to the Gulf of Mexico, or southeast to the Chesapeake Bay, remember this special place in Potter County, where it all so simply begins. ☐



The spirit of Tya-dahg-tun lives in the mighty Susquehanna River.

Against the Current River Walleyes



by Jeff Knapp *photos by the author*

It is commonly thought that the best way to catch river Walleyes during the cold months of late fall and early winter is to present a bait—generally a jig-n-minnow or jig-n-plastic combo—with the current. Lethargic Walleyes do not have to move much to take a bait.

And, it works. During over three decades of serious late season river Walleye fishing, this approach put thousands of Walleyes in my boat. But going against the current—and in this case against the grain of traditional thinking—can also dupe river Walleyes. In many cases, anglers catch bigger fish.

Here are three scenarios where I commonly work upriver. Two truly present the bait/lure against the current. The third is more of a boat control maneuver that increases efficiency.

Suspending jerkbaits over flats and edges

Come late fall and early winter, river Walleyes tend to gather in deeper holes that protect fish from the force of the main current. During periods of inactivity, these fish tend to be scattered throughout the depths of the pool.

Typically, Walleyes become more aggressive during the evening twilight period (or drizzly days) and move to edges to feed. If the downriver edge of the hole abruptly gives way to a shallow flat, it is a situation tailor made for pulling a suspending jerkbait upriver.

For example, if the downriver end of the pool is 15 feet deep. The flat below runs 4- to 6-feet deep. Though the prime spot is the ledge, where the transitional occurs, foraging Walleyes will scatter along the flat during this feeding spree when the current is mild.

Once the sun has settled below the horizon, I setup anywhere from 100- to 200-feet below the ledge, depending on the situation. Then, using the bow mount trolling motor, I creep upriver with just enough speed to inch forward. A suspending jerkbait is trailed behind the boat. The key is to be close to the bottom with about a cast's length of line out. If it takes a deeper running lure, I use a Rapala X-Rap Deep 10. If the X-Rap is dredging bottom, I go with a shallower runner like a Bomber Suspending Pro Long A. The rod is handheld, instilling occasional pumps to trigger a following fish. Once the lure has pulled past the edge of the hole, I circle back around and setup another pass.

In my experience this tactic is for quality fish in the 20- to 26-inch range, not high numbers. There is something about



The Rapala X-Rap Deep 10 and Bomber Suspending Pro Long A both excel at upriver slow trolling.

having a jerkbait hovering in front of fish that triggers the bigger Walleyes.

The upriver jig drag

A classic river Walleye location is where a large creek joins a larger river. On the lower Allegheny River good examples include the junctions of Buffalo Creek, Crooked Creek and Mahoning Creek.

Walleyes often gather in deeper water in proximity to junction holes. While there may be a good twilight bite at the creek's mouth, fish can be taken by drifting with the current during the day in the adjacent water. Jigs are fished vertically as the boat drifts with the flow.

If there is not too much current, it is often possible to drag the jig back upriver—behind the boat—once you covered the prime area during the downriver drift. This option is only viable when river flows are normal to low. At higher flows, the jig will not reach bottom with a reasonable amount of line out. The same holds true regarding depth. This works best in depths of 15 feet or less.

Once you have reached the end of your junction hole drift, rather than firing up the outboard to run upstream for another pass, use either the electric trolling motor or the outboard motor to creep back upriver. Cast behind the boat with enough line for the jig to be near the bottom. You may need to use a heavier jig. For example, a 3/8-ounce jig for the upriver drag and 1/4-ounce jig for the downriver drift. In this case, have a second rod rigged.

Like the upriver jerkbait slow trolling tactic, the upriver jig drift often takes the biggest Walleyes of the day.

The back eddy circle

Another classic late season river Walleye location is the pool formed below a rock or gravel bar. Again, using the Allegheny River as an example, such places exist near Garretts Run and Lowrey Run.

Such rock or gravel bars function as wing dams of sorts, pushing the river's force away from the bank. The pool below often is in the form of an eddy, where the "outside" of the pool has a mild, downstream current, but near the bank, the current washes back upriver.

As a river Walleye angler, use this dynamic to your advantage. Work with the current along the outside current seam, drifting downriver while presenting a vertical jig. As you reach the end of the pool, the current will swing toward the shore and wash back upriver. If there is enough water to float the boat, go with this flow, and allow the boat to drift upriver. Short casts out into the pool can be made as you cover the water missed during the downriver drift.

Wind plays havoc with this approach, but it is an efficient and effective way of working an eddy pool when conditions are good. ☐



Jigs dressed with either soft plastics or natural minnows may be used for both the upriver jig drag and the back eddy circle.

Hofmann's Lures Inc



by Alex Zidock Jr.

photos by the author

It was music to his ears when he heard Hofmann's Lures Inc was for sale, and it happened at a time he was ready for a career change. Dave Dunbar gave up his seat on the band bus, gave up his cyber security codes, and is now marching to the beat of a different drummer.

"When I was 18 years old, I moved from a small town in Pennsylvania to center city Los Angeles and went to school to study music. I was a drummer. I did anything to make a living. When you hear the term 'starving musician,' for me, it was a true experience," said Dunbar.

However, it was not all bad times for the young drummer who was fortunate to have Dave Bluefield of Three Dog Night fame as his landlord. "I did meet a lot of good musicians and was even able to do some work with Mark Portmann of the Rippingtons. He was the number one jazz pianist at that time," said Dunbar.

Playing the casino circuit in the east, the band bus broke down near the Breezewood exit on the Pennsylvania turnpike near his hometown of Butler. "I called my father and asked him to come and pick me up. I was at my wits end of being that starving musician, and my mother suggested it was time to go to college. I selected Lock Haven University, because it was close to home, and the trout fishing in the area is second to none. I did fish across the country when I was on the road with various bands," said Dunbar.



Dave Dunbar, owner of Hofmann's Lures Inc, is proud of their "Made in the USA" quality. With more than 130 SKUs, Dunbar continues to add new products to the lineup.

Right out of college, with a degree in Information Technology (IT), he would secure work as a network engineer. He also worked as a tier-three cyber security engineer for the government.

"The company I was working for lost a major government contract, and when they went under, I decided it was time for a career change. I started researching patents, because I was going to start my own fishing lure business. I found that Hofmann's Lures was for sale, and after a few months of negotiating, I made the purchase, and we moved it from Greenville, Ohio, to Greenville, Pennsylvania, in 2018," said Dunbar.

Jack Hofmann began making fishing spoons in 1952 in Lakeside, Ohio. "To develop his unique spoon design, in his fishing creel Hofmann carried a hammer to tweak the wobble he wanted for the blade. And, since he was a tool and die maker, he made his own dies, and they are the same ones he and his brother 'Frizz' used to produce



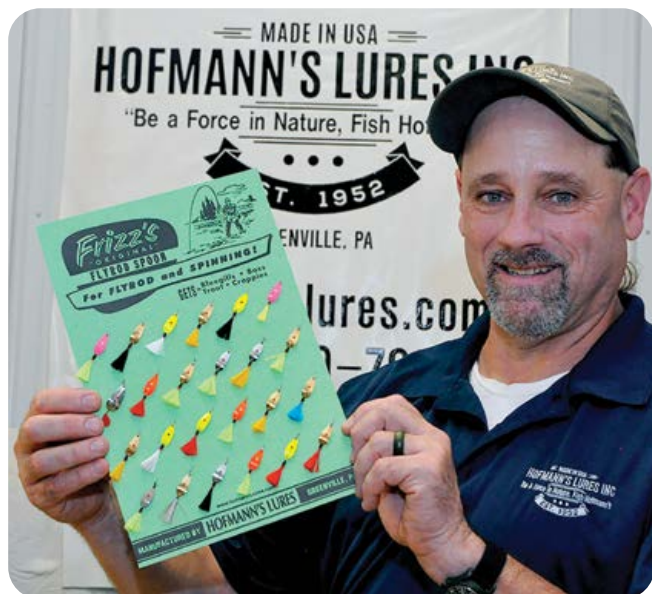
Each spoon is handcrafted to ensure the best quality. Extra heavy wire is used in all spinning lures to reduce bending.

popular lures for many years. We still use those dies," said Dunbar.

The company's major claim to fame was the 3/32-ounce spoon they called Frizz's Spoon after Jack's brother. When Dunbar purchased the business, it consisted only of spoons from 3/32- to 1/4-ounce. Frizz's Spoon is still the biggest seller.

"The Frizz's Spoon is a fly fishing spoon that trout anglers fish like a streamer. It also caught on with panfish anglers. On a spinning rig, you can run it 18- or 24-inches below a bobber and pop it along. It comes up and then flutters back down. It is so popular, we also sell it with 24 lures on each card. We do quite well with it, and in the Upper Midwest, we basically have a cult following," said Dunbar.

According to Dunbar, they are still in transition. "We press our brass, and we ramped up that process. We



Dave Dunbar, owner of Hofmann's Lures Inc, offers assorted colors of Frizz's Spoons on a card of 24.



Superior Spinners were added to the Hofmann's Lures Inc lineup after the company was purchased and moved from Ohio to Pennsylvania.

purchased new equipment, so instead of pressing one lure in a die, we now have progressive dies, so the steps are happening automatically without changing the die set. We are getting much more efficient," said Dunbar.

Business is booming too, and the company currently has more than 130 SKUs. "We were shipping to nine Bass Pro Shops and Cabala's when I purchased the company, and now we ship to every one of their distribution centers. And, we brought on Big 5 Sporting Goods and support 432 of their stores. So, we are growing while there are also a lot of changes happening," said Dunbar.

Hofmann's Lures Inc added a line called Superior Spinners and are introducing a new trout pattern for their Mitey-Mite. They are in the prototype development stage of larger spoons for the steelhead market called the King XL's.

All of Hofmann's spoons have a rivet that attaches the hook to the spoon. "Every spoon gets a hole in the center, and we basically slide the eye of the hook through the hole and then rivet the hook to the spoon, so you do not have to worry about solder breaking or the hook coming loose. We use an extra-thick wire for our spinners, so they do not bend as easily as some of those made overseas," said Dunbar.

Their lures are powder coated and acrylic painted, and the nickel and gold plated finish on their lures is jewelry quality. "My wife and daughter use some spoons to make necklaces and earrings that they sell online and at fishing shows. They are a big hit," said Dunbar.

"This is a family-oriented business. We are very proud about what we produce here. Made in the USA quality is important to us, and while we understand that some companies want to make the dollar, we believe there is more to it," said Dunbar. ☐

Hofmann's Lures Inc
www.hli.fish

Crappies of Pennsylvania



Black Crappie

by Bob Michelson

photos by the author

Crappies are a medium to large sunfish that are a lot of fun to catch. Crappies are found in numerous waterbodies throughout Pennsylvania. These fish are native to the Great Lakes and Ohio River drainages of Pennsylvania but were introduced to the Susquehanna, Delaware, and Potomac drainages. Crappies were not historically found along the East Coast of the United States north of the James River in Virginia until widespread stocking efforts distributed this species widely across North America.

There are two species of crappies in Pennsylvania—Black Crappie, *Pomoxis nigromaculatus*, and White Crappie, *Pomoxis annularis*.

Black and White crappies live in ponds, lakes, and slow-moving areas of low- to medium-gradient streams and rivers. Both species of crappies commonly utilize aquatic vegetation and other cover such as submerged brush, logs, and stumps. White Crappies are more tolerant of turbid conditions than Black Crappies. Black Crappies may be found in swamps



White Crappie

with acidic conditions, where White Crappies are not found. Even though there are some differences in preferred habitats between species, crappies have many similarities in habitat usage. White Crappies tolerate, and seem to like, turbid and silted waters over clear, clean environments.

Black Crappies appear to be black and white, but when looking closer, these fish actually give off iridescent colors. When you look at Black Crappies head-on, the body is taller than it is wider. A side view shows the fish to be deep-bodied and not as elongated as White Crappies. The back is olive to bright metallic-green or a bluish gray. The sides are silvery

with dark spots, which are scattered and seem as though the fish was hit with a paint gun, with black blotches all over the sides with no obvious pattern. There are also similar looking blotches that make a wavy pattern on its dorsal, anal, and caudal fins. White Crappies are olive to bright green on the back and silvery with greenish or yellow hints on the sides.

One way to tell Black Crappies apart from White Crappies is to count the spines on the dorsal fins. Black Crappies have seven or eight dorsal spines while the White Crappie have six.

Black Crappies that live in clear, healthy, and well-vegetated water have darker body markings on the sides, while those from turbid water tend to be lighter, looking more faded as if fish were bleached.

Both crappie species have the same general body shape and are laterally compressed or flattened from side to side. Despite this similar shape, White Crappies are more elongate than Black Crappies. Black Crappies appear to be black and white, but when looking closely, these fish actually give off iridescent colors. The back is olive to bright metallic-green or a bluish gray. The sides are silvery with dark spots, which are scattered and seem as though the fish was hit with a paint gun, with black blotches all over the sides with no obvious pattern. There are similar looking blotches that make a wavy pattern on the dorsal, anal, and caudal fins. White Crappies are olive to bright green on the back and silvery with greenish or yellow hints on the sides. White Crappies often have mottled marking arranged into 8 to 10 vertical, dark, broken bars found along the sides, starting just behind the gill plate or operculum. Coloration patterns and intensity of crappies can be influenced by turbidity, where fish are often faded in turbid water and more pronounced in clear water, and during the spawning period when males are generally darker in color. Males during the breeding season become darker, which is true for most members of the sunfish family. White Crappies are the only member of the sunfish family that have 5 or 6 spines on its dorsal fin, as well as 5 or 6 spines on its anal fin.

Both species of crappies grow to as much as 20 inches in length and weigh several pounds. However, in Pennsylvania, crappies are most commonly 6- to 12-inches long but occasionally larger fish 14- to 16-inch individuals are caught.

Both Black Crappies and White Crappies spawn in the spring to early summer. Both species spawn at water



Black Crappies live in cooler, clear waters with solid, clean substrate.



White Crappies live in ponds, lakes, low-flowing streams, and rivers. White Crappies prefer turbid and silted waters over clear, clean environments.

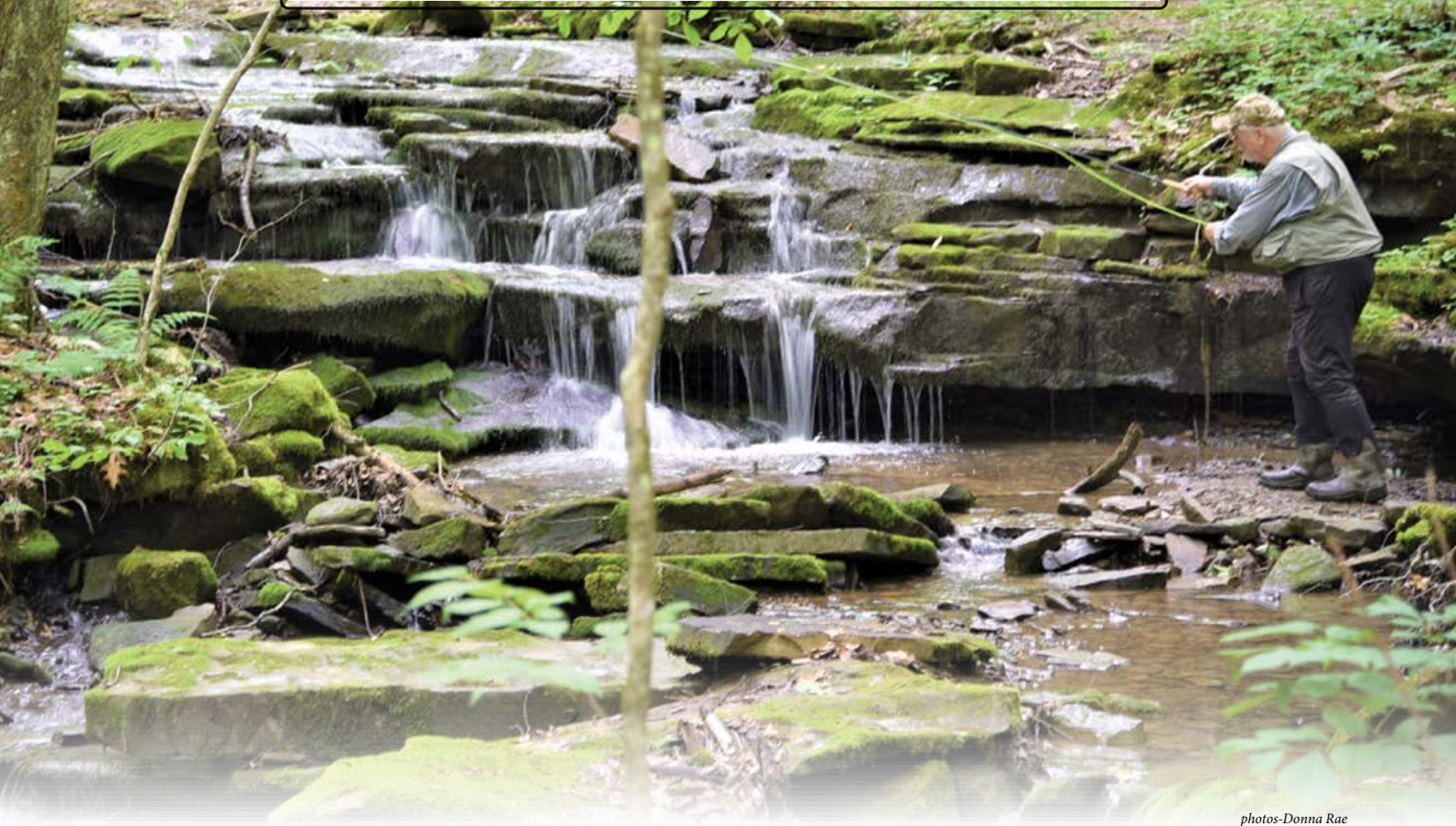
temperatures between 60 and 70 degrees F. Male crappies prepare one or several nests using fins to fan sand and silt away from plant roots and other substrates including small stones and gravel. Frequently, crappies will spawn in a couple feet of water up to moderate depths (18-20 feet). The nest may be individual or occasionally quite crowded

Females produce anywhere from 10,000 up to 200,000 eggs, depending upon the size and age of the female. Females of both species will spawn in the nests of several different males during the spawning season each year. Fertilized eggs will hatch in 2 to 5 days, depending upon water temperatures. Male crappies will guard nests until the juveniles disperse a few weeks after hatching. Male crappies may not feed for several weeks until the juveniles leave the nest area.

Both species of crappies feed on leeches, crustaceans, insects, and small fish. Small fish comprise the majority of a crappie's diet.

The best bait for catching crappies in Pennsylvania waters are artificial lures, jigs, and small minnows. Crappies are also caught using streamers and nymphs with a fishing technique similar to jigging. □

An Angler's Path to the Waterfall



photos-Donna Rae

by Don Feigert

When you walk into a Pennsylvania forest along a wild native Brook Trout stream, something magical happens, and you are transformed. You may be a 45-year-old veteran angler, but you feel like a youngster experiencing this stream for the first time ever. That is what wild Brook Trout fishing does to us—it makes us feel like a kid in the woods, seeing new and beautiful surroundings and streamside features like we have never seen before.

You hike in on a cool summer morning and marvel at the sun's rays shimmering down through the hemlock branches and listen to the melodic, clear, cold waters tumbling over rocks and around boulders and feel the gentle carpet of green moss and pine needles underfoot.

You catch the earthy fragrance as a wisp of breeze tousles the hay-scented fern, and you smell the early morning freshness of the big woods. And, it does not matter how old you are or whether your life is touched by riches or how well liked or loved you are in this world. It is just you and the woods and the waters.

A part of you wants to stay right where you are and stare all around for hours, but the angler inside you launches you upstream, and your eye narrows down from the awesome environment to a sharp focus on reading the waters. You walk up on a classic trout location, a fast riffle running down into a deeper flow and an undercut bank protected by the exposed roots of a streamside hemlock. You toss an olive drab Woolly Bugger into the current and let it drift into the pool. And, you feel the tug, set the hook, and got a trout on the line, bouncing your rod and thrashing the



A path to the waterfall.

waters. The fish is over 8 inches long and heavy, a big fish for this small stream. You wet your hand and hold the fish for a moment and gaze at him. You have caught a thousand of these fish over the years, but each Brook Trout seems unique, fresh, and vividly alive. You release it and watch it dart back to the cover of the cut bank.

And, you move on upstream. You fish two more promising spots with no success. Then, your peripheral eye catches a splash of bright white in the distance. You hear the faint rushing sound of fast waters, and you know it is a waterfall, so you hike briskly in that direction, ignoring potential fishing spots along the way. You arrive and stop again and take it all in. You love how the current races straight at you above the falls against the peaceful background curve of the hillside and how the stream bends away enticingly in the distance. There is always a yearning to know what lies beyond that bend, especially if you never fished the stream before. The vertical thrust of tree trunks above the shoreline make pleasing contrast with the horizontal flow of the waters.

There is greenery, the mottled moss on the streamside boulders, the light green hay-scented fern waving in the breeze, the emerald branches on the overhanging hemlocks, the small pale shoots of plant life above the shoreline, the verdant tone of the stream water itself.



Perry Magee Run, Warren County

All these comprise a green promise of new life and new beginnings and a whole new season of wandering wooded streams for trout. The fish hide among the rocks at the base of a waterfall, where rushing waters often carve a deep pool, even during the lean flows of autumn. And, the waterfall represents a natural downstream progression of minnows, worms, flies, and insects to the hungry trout hunkering down in the pool. When you cannot find trout anywhere in a low-water creek, try the pools below waterfalls.

You toss a Beadhead Nymph into the deep, roiling waters. Then, you feel the hit and briefly see the trout, a small, wild Brook Trout but a treasure nonetheless. You watch it get away, so you throw it in again. The fish strikes immediately, the same Brook Trout you just lost, but this time you bring the trout to hand. It is only 6 inches long, but that is okay, because it reaffirms the fact that these fish are born in this stream in waters healthy enough to nurture delicate creatures, and that means everything to you. The fish is a beautiful, colorful, small trout, you think as you gently place it back into its native waters. Catching the fish, admiring it, and releasing it is the most important thing you will do that whole day. ☐

Tamarack Lake— On Its Way Back



by Marilyn Black

In the summer of 2021, my husband and I were delighted to catch a 9-inch Largemouth Bass, multiple Bluegills, Pumpkinseeds, and Green Sunfish within just an hour of fishing from the shore of Tamarack Lake, Crawford County. This 3-mile-long lake, owned by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), re-filled with water after it sat as dry land for nearly 7 years. But, this was not the first time Tamarack Lake was drained and then re-populated with fish.

History of Tamarack Lake

Tamarack Lake located southeast of Meadville, Crawford County, forms the headwaters of two small streams—Mill Run, which continues into Meadville where it joins French Creek, and Mud Run that links up with Little Sugar Creek and then enters French Creek at Cochranon.

For flood control purposes, the Soil Conservation Service in 1963 constructed two dams and two corresponding outlets, with the midpoint of the new 562-acre lake being a 6-foot-deep shallow ridge between the two watersheds. Pools at the two outlets contain the greatest depths at 13- to 15-feet. The PFBC manages it for public fishing and boating, with no gasoline-powered motors allowed.



Eleven-year-old Braeden Kranz caught this 14-inch Largemouth Bass on a minnow lure on July 3, 2021.

photos-Dart Black

When the outlet control structures had to be re-engineered to comply with the Dam Safety Act, the PFBC decided to drain the entire lake, so both towers could be repaired during the same construction season. In March 1999, the PFBC began an extensive fish salvage operation with crews capturing and transporting live Largemouth Bass, Muskellunge, Walleyes, and literally tons of panfish to other waters in Crawford and Forest counties.

After repairs, the lake refilled during the winter of 1999-2000. From late 1999 through 2003, Tamarack Lake was stocked to reestablish gamefish, panfish, and prey. Anglers and a growing number of kayakers and canoeists returned to explore Tamarack Lake on its 'second time around.'



Kayakers frequent the refilled Tamarack Lake, Crawford County.

Dam inspections revealed serious seepage problems at both outlet structures, which necessitated a second draining in 2012. This time, the PFBC encouraged anglers to focus fishing efforts at Tamarack Lake, including harvest. In addition, the PFBC personnel coordinated fish salvage efforts. Again, live fish of many species were transported to other area waterways. However, fiscal constraints put the restoration of Tamarack Lake low on the totem pole. What had been the fertile lake bed became a vegetation covered expanse for years.

Repopulating the lake

The repairs to the dams at Tamarack Lake were slated for 2018. In June 2019, a ceremonial valve-turning ceremony was attended by neighbors and elected officials, celebrating the end of the \$12.2 million rehabilitation project. By spring 2020, water depths returned to traditional levels. The PFBC classified Tamarack Lake as “Catch and Release” for all species, allowing public fishing and boating but no fish harvest.



On July 3, 2021, the handicapped fishing pier was a busy fishing site.

Meanwhile, in the summer of 2019, PFBC personnel stocked Golden Shiners and Fathead Minnows as forage for the 6-inch long Largemouth Bass also delivered in 2019. This combination was repeated in 2020. In 2021, Muskellunge fingerlings, Walleye fingerlings, Bluegills, and Largemouth Bass were stocked. Planned for 2022 are Black Crappies, White Crappies, and Yellow Perch. Brian Ensign, PFBC Fisheries Biologist, explained, “This is a long undertaking. We will still stock Bluegills and Largemouth Bass for several more years until there is evidence of natural reproduction

occurring. You can expect Walleye fingerlings annually and Muskellunge fingerlings on alternating years.”

This past autumn, Ensign conducted a cursory survey of nighttime electrofishing to see how the various species are doing. “There will be a full routine fish survey before we can entertain whether we can allow harvest to occur. It is way too soon to predict when the regulation may change,” said Ensign.

Current conditions and tips

With the repairs to the dams underway, area organizations including Friends of Tamarack Lake, the Crawford County Conservation District, and student groups joined the PFBC in providing enhancements at the seven boat launches along its shores. Six of these boat launches are along Tamarack Drive. Every access area now includes a “Fishing Line Recycling Station,” and most also feature a “Dry Hydrant” for convenient hook-up for rapid transfer of lake water into fire trucks as needed.

The handicapped fishing pier is a popular spot for anglers of all ages. Decent ramps for launching boats from trailers are found off Tamarack Drive, sharing a parking lot with the fishing pier, and off Spring Road on the northeastern portion of the lake.

As the fish grow and multiply in Tamarack Lake, the number of anglers, paddlers, and boaters will likely grow, too. So, add Tamarack Lake back on your fishing destinations list. ☐

For more information

Read Richard A. Snyder’s detailed article entitled “Fish Salvage at Tamarack Lake” published in the November/December 1999 issue of *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* online at www.fishandboat.com/Transact/AnglerBoater/AnglerBoater1999/NovemberDecember/Documents/tamarack.pdf.



Meet the Artist Behind Farm Girl Graphics: Tiffany London

by Charles N. Cantella

For many of us, fishing provides the opportunity to step outside of our daily routine, and step into the great outdoors. It allows us to experience adventures, refine our fishing skills, create new friendships, and solidify old friendships. It is no wonder that many anglers try to recapture those moments. Many people find that displaying outdoor art allows them to recall those fond memories and marvel at the talent of the artist who brings that memory to life. Pennsylvania offers a wide variety of waters to fish, a multitude of fish to pursue, and an abundance of artists who share their vision with us. Recently, I got to meet and chat with one such talented Pennsylvania artist, Tiffany London of Farm Girl Graphics.

Charles: Good morning. Today, I am talking with Tiffany London, the Pennsylvania native artist behind Farm Girl Graphics www.farmgirlgraphics.com. Tiffany, let us start off with who you are and how you got into the art world.

Tiffany: My mother is an artist. She got me into painting ceramics and everything I could get my hands on at an early age. She always encouraged me to be creative and has always been a huge supporter of me and my artwork. She encouraged me to pursue an art degree while attending Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana.

C: How would you describe your art?

T: Colorful, fun, and expressive. I love to take a subject (mainly fish) and paint or draw it how I perceive it. I like to turn up the colors and go from there. Although, many fish species rarely need much help in the color department.

C: I was visiting your website, www.farmgirlgraphics.com, and it seems you have items for almost everyone. I saw some pillows,



Tiffany London

photos and artwork-courtesy of Tiffany London

a hand painted Yeti tumbler, and other cool items decorated with your art on it. What other kinds of things can we find your artwork on?

T: After getting back to my artwork full-time in 2015, I began slowly and then added some techniques that I learned in college. Like the pillows, which are traditionally hand screened from screens that I make and then run the ink through. I wanted to make some home decor items that I would want to have in my home but could not buy in a retail store. Around the same time, 2015-2016, Yeti came on the scene as the go-to drinkware and cooler for the outdoor enthusiast. My dad asked me to hand-paint a Yeti cooler, and it progressed from there. I enjoy that each Yeti I paint is an original. I never paint the same thing twice, and it is an

affordable way to have a custom piece of functional art. I also started collecting chairs and furniture to paint. I took our old kitchen table for my studio and painted the four chairs that went with it. I have been playing with the flanks or sides of different fish and hand-painting the design onto the chairs. So far, I have chairs in Canada, Utah, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania. I also just finished an order for terracotta pots that I painted a Brown Trout and Brook Trout design on for a client to put their house plants in. I had never thought of that, but they turned out great.

C: I saw some of your art at International Angler (www.internationalangler.com). Where else might we see your art?

T: International Angler is one of the first fly shops that picked up my artwork and decals. They have been great, and I stop in every time I am in the Pittsburgh area. Recently, the Neshannock Creek Fly Shop (www.ncflyshop.com) started carrying my artwork and decals. It is about 20 minutes from my shop, and I enjoy supporting another local small business and fishing when I head up to restock my decals and artwork. I also have some prints available at Myers Flies (www.myersflies.com). They just opened their first brick and mortar store in Dallastown, York County. We met at the Lancaster Fly Fishing Show in 2019, and I was very excited when they asked to carry my artwork this year. I recently started collaborating with www.yellowsallyfishing.com, so I am also excited about that.

C: It sounds like you have quite a few irons in the fire. Thank you so much Tiffany for taking time out of your day to chat.

Outside of the studio

London is a Pro Staffer at Semper Fly Rods (www.semperflyrods.com). Semper Fly Rods is a United



Brown Trout and Brook Trout chairs that were hand-painted by Tiffany London.

States Marine Corps service, disabled veteran-owned rod builder based out of Canal Winchester, Ohio. They specialize in made-to-order rods and custom fly rods. Each custom rod is built to the client's unique specifications, utilizing the highest quality components. The rods are built one at a time and personalized to the owner's specifications and shipped worldwide. All of the rods are backed by the Lifer Program guarantee.

In addition to her support of Semper Fly Rods, London is also a mentor for the Mayfly Project (www.themayflyproject.com). "The Mayfly Project is a 501(c)(3) national organization that uses fly fishing as a catalyst to mentor and support children in foster care. The Mission of The Mayfly Project is to support children in foster care through fly fishing and introduce them to their local water ecosystems, with a hope that connecting them to a rewarding hobby will provide an opportunity for foster children to have fun, build confidence, and develop a meaningful connection with the outdoors."

More than just art for the wall

One of the things that impressed me with London's art is the functionality of much of it. There are glasses, pillows, clothing, and more decorated with her art. But, her talent does not stop there. As a graphic designer, London uses her skills to design logos for businesses as varied as the Beaverkill Angler to www.theflyfishingcoach.com to Don Martin Trucking. ☐



As a graphic designer, Tiffany London used her skills to design logos for businesses such as the Beaverkill Angler.

More information

Instagram: [@farmgirlgraphics](https://www.instagram.com/farmgirlgraphics)

Facebook: [Farm Girl Graphics](https://www.facebook.com/FarmGirlGraphics)

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Eliminate Line Twists

by *Braden Eisenhower*

photos by the author

Nothing puts the brakes on a fishing outing like line twist or a gnarly wind knot. The limpest line and smoothest reel will not save you—line twists do not discriminate.

If you use spinning equipment, these headaches are part of the game. But, there are measures to avoid recycling a significant chunk of knotted line.

Preemptive actions

Prevention begins by selecting a reel with a large spool. Small spools create tight coils and cause loops and twists. At minimum, choose the second smallest reel in a manufacturer's lineup.

Properly spooling the reel is also critical. The reel spool needs to be suited for the line diameter. Line should go on the reel in a clockwise direction, which means it must come off the filler spool in a counterclockwise direction.

If you see twists developing, flip the spool. Line should be wound tightly on the spool and filled to about $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch below its outer edge. Overfilling will cause excess line to uncoil and “jump” off the spool.

Casting refinements

Some tangles stem from casting mistakes. Wind knots develop from loops that form on the reel. To prevent wind knots, it is crucial to limit the amount of excess line in your cast. Execute gentle casts rather than home run swings, allowing the rod to load and the lure's weight to naturally pull line off the reel. Be mindful of your casting trajectory. Arcing casts pull more line than needed from the reel.

As the lure is airborne, apply slight pressure to the reel spool with your index finder. This slows the line coming from the spool. Then, as the lure touches down, apply enough pressure to stop the line from exiting the reel. This is like “thumbing the spool” with baitcasting equipment.

Lastly, close the bail by hand, and lift the rod tip to remove slack line in the guides. This ensures a taut line at the line roller. This is especially helpful with light lures that cannot pull the line taut under its own weight.

Fighting fish

A line twist can also happen when reeling while the fish is pulling drag. If you hear the drag, allow the fish to run and enjoy the fight. When the fish stops its run, reel.

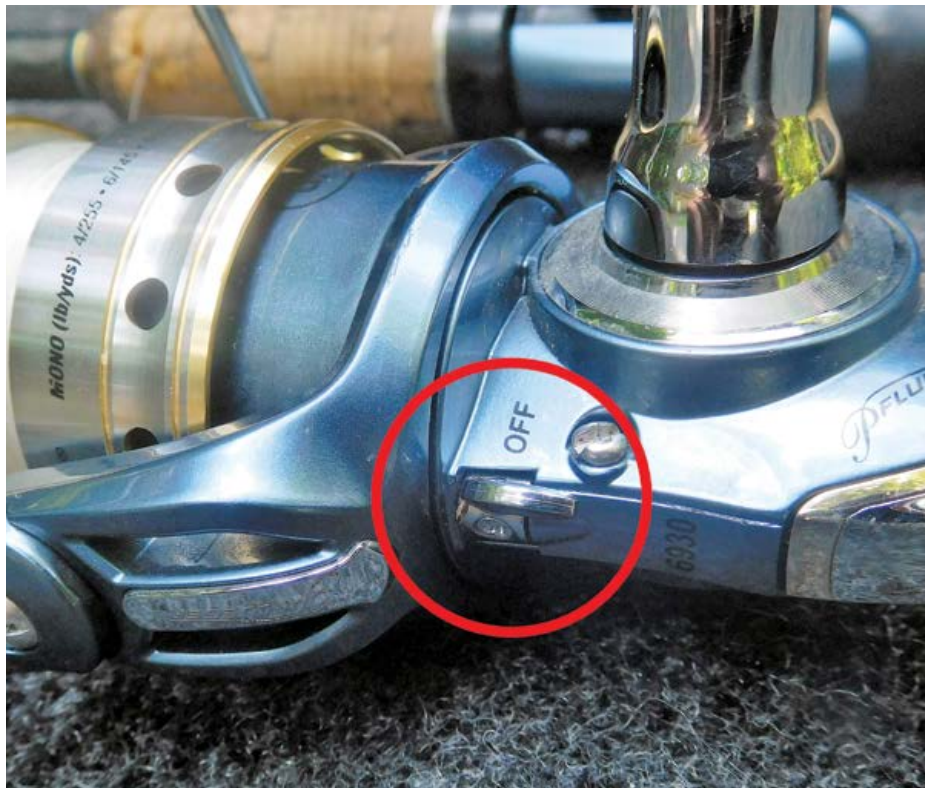
Your drag should be set properly. Drag is set according to the rod stiffness and the amount of stretch in the line. I typically keep my drag tight enough that it will not slip during the hookset. But, it should not be so tight that a moderate fish is unable to take line. The drag tension is not a fixed setting, so remember to fine-tune as needed.

To up your game, try backreeling. When fighting a large fish, flip the anti-reverse switch on the reel body. This allows the reel handle to move in either direction. Now, you can maintain line tension with the reel handle by recovering line (reeling in the normal direction) or by paying line (reeling in the opposite direction). These are small adjustments based on feel. If a fish makes an aggressive run, the drag will take over.

Backreeling was a necessity prior to my lifetime. With improvements to drag systems, backreeling has become a lost art. Some high-end reels no longer include an anti-reverse switch. That said, it plays a role in landing large fish on light lines. Plus, backreeling is a bit like driving a manual transmission—it is fun to feel 100-percent of the fight.



Incorporating a small crane or ball bearing swivel will help reduce line twist with some lure types.



Reeling against the drag is a leading contributor to line twist. Try backreeling. Flip the anti-reverse switch (found on the reel body of most spinning reels), and keep tension with the reel handle while fighting a fish.

Precautions

Line twist may be the result of a lure's action. Tube jigs (with internal jig heads) and drop shot rigs are known culprits.

Some lure types, like spoons, allow for a swivel tied 18 inches or so up the line. Choose a quality crane or ball bearing swivel that spins freely. Avoid snap swivels, which add weight to the nose of the lure, deadening its action.

When using soft plastic lures for bass, panfish, or Walleyes, ensure that the plastic is rigged straight on the hook shank. Otherwise, the lure may corkscrew.

Embrace and resolve

The final stage in line twist is acceptance. Fortunately, we can fix this on the backend.

From shore, make a long cast with a bank sinker. Pinch the line between thumb and forefinger as you reel. Submerge the rod tip to lubricate the line. This method requires a few repetitions, but you are back to fishing in minutes.

Water resistance can also remove line twist. From a boat, remove the lure and place about 100 yards of line in the water. Troll with the outboard or electric motor at a constant speed for a few hundred yards. Then, recover the line while the boat remains under power.

Line twists and tangles are an unpleasant reality. Be proactive, and most issues disappear or are easily remedied without reaching for a pair of scissors. ☐

Redhorse Roundup

by **Rob Criswell** photos by the author

Each spring, Pennsylvania hosts a rodeo of sorts. Groups of male participants, bearing equine-shaped head profiles and sporting carmine and crimson fins, attempt to corral fillies in close quarter action. Welcome to the Redhorse Roundup.

Six species of redhorse suckers occur in Pennsylvania—Silver Redhorse, Smallmouth Redhorse, River Redhorse, Black Redhorse, Golden Redhorse, and Shorthead Redhorse. All but the Shorthead Redhorse occur in the Ohio River drainage. The Black Redhorse, Silver Redhorse, and Golden Redhorse also occur in the Lake Erie system, and the Golden Redhorse is found in the Potomac drainage and appears to have been introduced to the Upper West Branch Susquehanna drainage as well. There are two subspecies of the Shorthead Redhorse, with one occurring in Lake Erie and the other in the Susquehanna drainage.

The profile of the head is somewhat horse-like in appearance, and the body is elongate. Some fins of three species are reddish and intensify during the spawning “roundup.” Redhorse bodies are usually silvery to golden (not black, in spite of the name of one).

These bottom dwellers are typical suckers. The genus name for the group, *Moxostoma*, breaks down as Moxo- to suck, and stoma- mouth. These fish generally feed on insect larvae. The River Redhorse has strong, crushing molar-like teeth that allow it to augment its diet with mollusks. Redhorses dwell in a variety of habitats from large, sluggish rivers to smaller, swift creeks. The redhorse species are most commonly found in clean, clear, small to medium-sized rivers.

These suckers may be difficult to tell apart, particularly those without red fins. Black Redhorses and Golden Redhorses are most similar, and it is usually necessary to count lateral line scales and measure the depth of the body near the tail to confidently identify the fish. Although both have red fins and are found in the same waters, the River Redhorse has a longer head than the Smallmouth Redhorse and grows considerably larger. The specific structure of the lips of each species are different and are also useful in identifications. The Silver Redhorse and River Redhorse may rarely reach 10 pounds, and frequently exceed 5 pounds, but the others are considerably smaller.

The spawning season, during which redhorses often move into small tributary streams in large numbers, occurs in April and May, usually in riffles and runs with gravel and rocky bottoms. As many as 3,000 redhorses have been observed in a single riffle-run complex.

Most reports of actual spawning involve one receptive female escorted by two males mating together over a rough nest or depression. A single female may produce more than 40,000 eggs, which hatch in 3- to 8-days, depending on water temperature.

Spawning aggregations in these smaller streams during the spring often represent the only time redhorses are present there all



year. Spring sucker anglers and some early trout anglers may be the only witnesses to this spectacle.

There is a dedicated cadre of non-game anglers who target the redhorse group, especially the larger species. The Silver Redhorse is well known for its strong runs and flashy leaps. The River Redhorse is just a bulldog with fins. Both are more than willing to inhale a nightcrawler or doughball, or, if you are a fly angler, a good nymph imitation. The River Redhorse is also fond of crayfish.

If you are willing to deal with all the bones, redhorses are fine food fish. The larger the fish, the easier the bones are to remove. The flesh is firm, white, and tasty. Many anglers maintain that redhorse flesh is superior to that of many gamefishes. As with other suckers, one method of preparation includes pressure cooking and grinding the meat for making delicious fish patties.

The bones of these suckers have frequently been found in archaeological excavations, evidence that redhorses were important in the diets of early Native Americans. Early farmers in the Mississippi River valley fortunate enough to live streamside seined and trapped Shorthead Redhorse in large numbers during spring spawning runs, and salted these fish for food in the winter.

Juvenile redhorses provide forage for many of Pennsylvania's gamefishes and are sometimes used as bait for Muskellunge, Northern Pike, and Walleyes. Juvenile redhorses keep well in the bait bucket or live well.

So, this spring saddle up your rod and hitch up your wading spurs and ride out to the Redhorse Roundup. ☐

National Hunting and Fishing Day Recognized

The Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) and Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) joined with other fish and wildlife conservation agencies across the country to recognize Saturday, September 25, 2021, as National Hunting and Fishing Day!

"It's hard to imagine Pennsylvania without the full slate of hunting, trapping, and fishing opportunities it provides," said Game Commission Executive Director Bryan Burhans. "It's part of the very fabric of our Commonwealth, and on National Hunting and Fishing Day, we all can reflect on the importance of conservation and celebrate spending time in the Great Outdoors. With millions of acres of public land to hunt and trap, and 86,000 miles of streams and 4,000 lakes and ponds to fish, opportunity is around every corner. And, with hunting opportunities ramping up, there's no better time to take part."

"Pennsylvania is second-to-none when it comes to year-round fishing opportunities and the variety of ways to enjoy the outdoors," said Timothy Schaeffer, PFBC Executive Director. "There is truly something for everyone, whether you enjoy casting a line on your favorite wild or stocked trout stream, motoring or paddling on our beautiful rivers and lakes for big bass, testing your skill with steelhead or muskies, or the solitude of ice fishing on a frozen lake in winter. Pennsylvanians are passionate about their long-standing fishing traditions, and this day serves to motivate us even more, to protect, conserve, and enhance our aquatic resources for future generations to enjoy."

To commemorate National Hunting and Fishing Day, Burhans and Schaeffer recorded a joint video message, which is shared on each agency's website and social media platforms. The video can also be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=TS6Vfi59NM0

A proclamation from Governor Tom Wolf recognizing Hunting and Fishing Day in Pennsylvania stated that "Hunting and angling offer participants an opportunity to connect with nature on a personal level while simultaneously providing food security, a sense of self-sufficiency, and both mental and physical health benefits."

The Governor's proclamation also recognized that "To this day, the Game Commission and Fish and Boat



Photo-Andra Fenney

Commission are funded primarily by sportsmen and women, through this American System of Conservation Funding: a user pays-public benefits approach that is widely recognized as the most successful model of fish and wildlife management in the world."

Wolf credited the state's hunters, trappers, and anglers as being among the first in the nation to support the establishment of fish and wildlife conservation agencies and pioneering a self-imposed federal excise tax on hunting, fishing, and boating equipment to raise additional conservation funds. The proclamation recognized that more than 1.4 million Pennsylvania hunters and anglers contribute to the state's economy through more than \$1.5 billion in annual spending, and support more than 24,000 jobs, creating \$181 million in state and local taxes.

The PGC and PFBC makes it easy for individuals and families to get involved in hunting and fishing through a wealth of programs, educational resources, and tools for connecting with local lands and waters available at www.pgc.pa.gov and www.fishandboat.com.

To purchase a Pennsylvania hunting or fishing license, customers can visit either the PGC or PFBC website to connect to the HuntFishPA licensing system (huntfish.pa.gov) or visit more than 700 retail license issuing agents.

National Hunting and Fishing Day was established by Congress in 1971. For more information, visit www.nhfd.org.

**Winter
Fishing
is Here!**

www.fishandboat.com

Clean Your Gear!

Before leaving a waterway, check for and remove any aquatic life (plants and animals), mud, and other organic debris.

STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!

For more information, visit www.fishandboat.com/AIS.htm

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Bureau of Law Enforcement Awards

photo-Colonel Clyde N. Warner Jr.



The 2020 North East Conservation Law Enforcement Chief's Association (NECLECA) Officer of the Year Award was presented to WCO Rachael Thurner-Diaz, Adams and Western York counties. Each year, NECLECA recognizes an outstanding officer from each agency as that agency's Officer of the Year. During 2020, WCO Thurner-Diaz's enforcement efforts were outstanding. She investigated 27 incidents, which included 13 environmental issues, 3 boating accidents, and 1 boating-under-the-influence case. WCO Thurner-Diaz participated in 25 educational events, which included school programs, boating safety courses, sportsman club events, and legislative office visits.

photo-Sergeant Chase D. Rhoads



The 2020 Gerald L. Greiner Environmental Protection Award was presented to Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO) Ronald Evancho, Delaware County. This award is presented annually to the WCO who best exemplifies the ideals of "Resource First"—the protection, conservation, and enhancement of our Commonwealth's aquatic resources. WCO Evancho investigated 14 environmental incidents during 2020, which included a mix of pollution and waterways encroachments

photo-WCO Boatwright



While Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO) Justin Boatwright, Clinton and Western Lycoming counties, was conducting a boat inspection at Rose Valley Lake, Lycoming County, Camden Corter caught this Largemouth Bass. The excitement he and his grandfather experienced getting the bass into the boat was indescribable. It was a perfect photo opportunity. Pictured (left to right) are Bryson Lundy and Camden Corter with their grandfather, Richard Wahl.

photo-Tyler Frantz



During the Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association's (POWA's) annual conference on Saturday, July 31, 2021, Tyler Frantz received two POWA Excellence in Craft Awards for feature articles in Pennsylvania Angler & Boater magazine. He was awarded the Trout and the Cold Water Resource Award, sponsored by Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited, for "Keepers of the Stream - Volunteers Breathe Life into Broken Trout Waters," published in the January/February 2020 issue. Frantz was also presented the Youth Fishing Award, sponsored by Expositions, Inc., for "Pure Gold," published in the March/April 2020 issue.

Erratum

On page 14 of the September/October 2021 *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* magazine, the photo at the bottom right of the page was incorrectly credited. The photo credit should have read *photo-Jeff Knapp*.

Grants Awarded for Sinnemahoning Watershed Restoration Projects

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) announced nearly \$380,000 in grants to develop and implement projects that benefit fishing, boating, and aquatic resources in Cameron, Elk, Potter, and McKean counties.

The funding is available through a 2007 settlement agreement with Norfolk Southern as restitution for environmental damages from a June 30, 2006, train derailment in rural Norwich Township, McKean County. Under the settlement, Norfolk Southern agreed to pay the Commonwealth \$7.35 million as restitution for environmental damages. The PFBC received \$3.675 million through the settlement and created the Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed Restoration Grant Program.

The funds received through this damage settlement have been used to improve public fishing and boating access, fish habitat, water quality, and stream health and to restore stream connectivity through the removal of barriers to fish movement such as dams and culverts.

The nine external projects funded total approximately \$330,000 and include:

- **Cameron County Conservation District, \$48,625 – “FIN-74 Mine Pool Reclamation Phase II”**
As part of the effort to restore the historic wild Brook Trout fishery within the Sterling Run watershed, a passive treatment system will be constructed at the abandoned and unreclaimed FIN-74 coal surface mine discharge to remediate acid mine drainage to Finley Run, a major tributary to Sterling Run.
- **Jay Township, Elk County, \$15,500 – “Kersey Run Streambank Restoration Phase II”**
In accordance with an existing stream channel evaluation and repair plan, implement instream habitat and streambank stabilization structures on one property to repair approximately 300 feet of severe bank erosion, minimize future erosion, and channel deposition of sediment and gravel. The proposed measures are intended to prevent property damage resulting from flooding, and to improve water quality and physical habitat for wild and stocked trout.
- **McKean County Conservation District, \$23,625 – “Fish Habitat Improvement and Stream Restoration Program”**
Improve fish and wildlife habitats in streams and riparian buffers with a primary focus on improving habitat for aquatic Species of Greatest Conservation Need by installing instream structures, stabilizing eroded streambanks, and planting native trees and shrubs in riparian corridors on at least three different properties.
- **Potter County Conservation District, \$33,625 – “Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed Streambank Stabilization”**
Stabilize at least three severely eroded streambanks for a total length of over 800 feet on both public and private properties on First Fork Sinnemahoning Creek and its tributary of West Branch Cowley Run. The project will reduce stream sedimentation, improve water quality, and benefit both Brook Trout and Brown Trout.
- **Potter County Conservation District, \$28,625 – “Bittersweet Lane Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP) Restoration on Little Portage Creek”**

Little Portage Creek is a high-quality cold water fishery and a Class A wild Brook Trout and Brown Trout stream. The single barrier to upstream passage of fish is a timber deck bridge on a steel frame with a poured concrete stream bottom as its floor. The project will replace the existing bridge with a bottomless arch structure and thereby restore fish passage and habitat connectivity to nearly 9 miles of good habitat upstream.

- **Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, \$22,880 – “East Branch Clarion River Fish Habitat Improvement”**
East Branch Clarion River is a high-quality cold water fishery supporting stocked and wild Brook Trout and Brown Trout. The proposed fish habitat improvement reach is approximately 0.5 mile downstream of East Branch Dam and is on Pennsylvania Game Commission property (State Game Land 25) in Elk County. The project involves replacement of six old, dilapidated, log-framed cross vanes to improve habitat within a 2,600-foot stream reach.
- **Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, \$24,070 – “Kinzoa Creek Fish Habitat Improvement”**
This project will install multiple fish habitat improvement structures along approximately 3,000 feet of Kinzoa Creek in the PFBC’s Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters section within the Allegheny National Forest in McKean County.
- **Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, \$30,000 – “West Branch Hicks Run AOP Restoration”**
This project will replace two culverts with timber deck bridges on tributaries to West Branch Hicks Run that are currently barriers to AOP. This stream has a Class A wild Brook Trout population and is located on Pennsylvania Game Commission State Game Land 14 in Cameron County. By replacing these two barriers to fish movement, approximately 3.5 miles of currently isolated headwater habitat will be reconnected to the lower sections of these tributaries.
- **Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, \$100,000 – “Purchase of the Kelsey/Taylor property at the confluence of Prouty Run, Borie Branch, and First Fork of Sinnemahoning Creek”**
This 90-acre property in Potter County has long been closed to public fishing access and has a Class A wild Brown Trout and Brook Trout population. There are over 3,000 feet of stream frontage within a mature stand of trees that has not been cut for decades. Following the property purchase by the Conservancy, the deed will be transferred to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources as an addition to the Susquehannock District Forest, which is contiguous on three sides of the property. This property acquisition will provide access to these streams for public fishing.
In addition to these grants, the PFBC has committed \$52,120 from the Sinnemahoning account to leverage additional funds from Pennsylvania Sea Grant for an internal research project on Brook Trout and Rainbow Trout.
Including the current grant announcement, the PFBC has awarded over \$3.4 million in grants to external partners from the Sinnemahoning Creek watershed settlement fund since the start of the grant program in 2008. This current grant round will be the last, because the entire restoration account has been utilized for completed projects or committed to projects yet to be implemented. Forty-five projects have been completed, and 14 projects remain active.



Adventure Awaits at the Activities & Education Portal

Have you heard about the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's (PFBC's) Activities & Education Portal (A&E Portal) yet? It is an expansive resource for anyone interested in aquatic resources and fishing and boating opportunities. The A&E Portal includes videos, activities, printable documents, *Pennsylvania League of Angling Youth (PLAY)* newsletters, crafts, coloring pages, background information, and more. Topics include: Amphibians and Reptiles; Aquatic Habitat, Watersheds, and Pollution; Aquatic Macroinvertebrates; Boating and Water Safety; Fishing; Fly Fishing; Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Kayak Fishing; Paddlesports; and PA Fishes.



We can even help with your Physical Education (PE) and Arts curriculums. Our staff can train you or your PE teachers to become Fishing Skills Instructors and Boating and Water Safety Awareness Instructors. And, we provide educational videos that show you how to go fishing and boating. For art enthusiasts, we provide step-by-step instructions on how to draw a variety of fish species. Plus, we can show you how to tie basic flies for fly fishing.



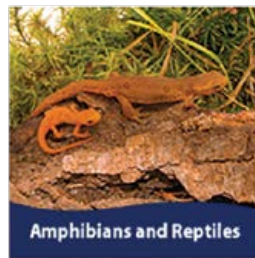
Other videos offer free virtual field trips for anyone interested in aquatic conservation.

We are now making *PLAY* educational materials more accessible to people with vision impairments by releasing audio versions of our most popular *PLAY* newsletters.

Looking for an educational package? Find one that you can use for an in-person or virtual Career Day, for example, on our PFBC Overview Page.

Whether you are a student or teacher participating in the Trout In the Classroom (TIC) program or Pennsylvania's Envirothon, you will find a plethora of valuable resources.

The A&E Portal includes an overview page.



Amphibians and Reptiles



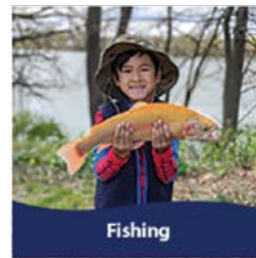
Aquatic Habitat, Watersheds, and Pollution



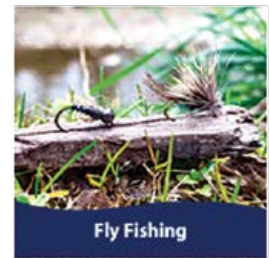
Aquatic Macroinvertebrates



Boating and Water Safety



Fishing



Fly Fishing



Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission



Kayak Fishing



Paddlesports



PA Fishes

Upcoming Shows in 2022



Pennsylvania Farm Show	January 8-15	Harrisburg, Dauphin County
Early Bird Sports Expo	January 27-30	Bloomsburg, Columbia County
The Fly Fishing Show	January 28-30	Edison, New Jersey
Great American Outdoor Show	February 5-13	Harrisburg, Dauphin County
Allegheny Outdoor, Sport, and Travel Show	February 18-20	Monroeville, Allegheny County
Philadelphia Fishing Show	February 18-20	Oaks, Montgomery County
Jaffa Sports Show	February 25-27	Altoona, Blair County
Erie RV and Sport Expo	March 4-6	Erie, Erie County
Western Pennsylvania Muskie Max Plus	March 5-6	Canonsburg, Washington County
The Fly Fishing Show	March 5-6	Lancaster, Lancaster County
Greater Philadelphia Boat Show	March 11-13	Oaks, Montgomery County



www.fishandboat.com



**The length of a fishing rod is a good measure
of social distance when fishing with others.**



www.fishandboat.com





Angler's Notebook

by Jerry Bush



Photo-Jerry Bush

Most fly anglers understand that the most appealing presentation for luring a bite from any gamefish with an imitation insect or egg is to avoid drag, and let the offering move at speed equal to the current. There are two exceptions. One exception occurs when retrieving streamers intended to imitate baitfish. The other exception occurs when some insects occasionally fight current before being swept away. Therefore, a twitch or a few sudden movements from a large terrestrial may be the ticket to attract a healthy gamefish otherwise ignoring common presentations.

Inspect life jackets before storing for the winter. Search for tears or holes in the primary encasing material. Look over seams and straps for any signs of tearing. One component often assumed to be intact are plastic buckles, but the buckles may crack, so look carefully. Throw away any life jacket in less than optimal condition. Most life jackets may be washed by hand with a mild detergent before storing. Never dry life jackets near a radiator, heater, or other direct heat sources. Instead, hang life jackets in a well-ventilated area to dry.

Proper storage of fishing line will greatly determine its usefulness the next season. Line that "remembers" tight coiling will be difficult to cast and will almost certainly cause snarls within the fishing reel. It is best to snip 3- to 6-feet from the end and properly dispose of it before winding the remaining line around a large diameter item

for long-term storage. This tactic will minimize coiling next season.

Empty 1-gallon milk cartons work well. Simply tape the lead end of line to the plastic carton and carefully wind it while removing it from the fishing reel. Use another piece of tape to secure the tail end.

Whether fly fishing or using spinning gear, a long rod is almost always better when targeting steelhead. This is especially true as ice forms along tributary edges. A long reach will allow baits, flies, and lures to be placed into the strike zone while avoiding traversing frozen edges. Longer rods will normally flex more to absorb shock, which helps prevent broken lines after a hard-fighting steelhead is hooked.

Ice fishing and steelhead are not the only opportunities to fish during the winter in Pennsylvania. Many of the state's waters fail to freeze over or only freeze for short periods of time. The fish do not disappear but become less active due to a slower metabolism. The key is to be patient and slow your presentations. By nature, fish will determine if the nutrient gain of food is worth expenditure of energy. Get the bait close and keep movement of the presentation slower than normally performed during warm weather conditions.

Fishin' from the Kitchen

Pistachio Crusted Walleye Fillets

by Wayne Phillips

Bring back memories of summer with baked Walleye fillets crusted with bright green crushed pistachios.

Ingredients for four servings:

- 4 6-ounce boneless, skinless Walleye fillets
- 1 cup fresh basil leaves
- 1 to 2 cups pistachio nuts, shelled and crushed
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. canola oil
- Juice and zest of 2 oranges
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Procedure

Zest and juice the oranges. Roll the basil leaves into a cigar shape and thinly slice. Mix juice, zest, basil, and olive oil. Let stand, so the flavors combine. Shell the pistachios, and place the nuts in a heavy plastic bag. Crush the pistachios. Season the Walleye fillets with salt and black pepper. Oil a glass baking dish with the canola oil. Place the fillets in the dish, and gently press

the nuts onto the fish. Bake in a 350 degree F oven until cooked through, about 15 to 20 minutes. Do not attempt to turn the fish while it bakes. Remove from the oven and drizzle the fish with the orange/basil sauce.

Serve

Serve over a bed of steamed rice. If you wish, drizzle some sauce on the rice. Roasted beets or carrots go well with this dish.

Tips

Try not to make the crushed nut pieces all the same size. Leave some bigger pieces for extra texture.

Crusting fish with nuts gives the fish crunch and flavor. Pecans, hazelnuts, pine nuts, and almonds all work well with fish. Feel free to combine two different nuts. Finely chopping the nuts increases the flavor. For more crunch, leave some nuts chunky.



Photo-Wayne Phillips

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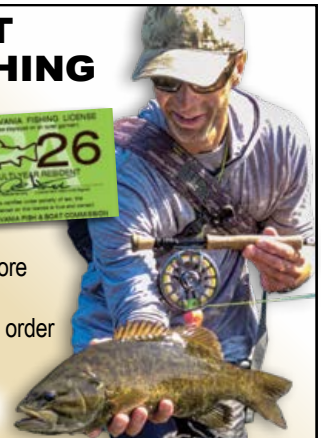
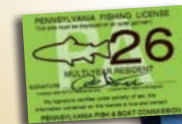
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CAST & CAUGHT



Justin Carson, age 11, caught this Brown Trout while fishing the Little Lehigh Creek, Lehigh County.



Paul Frye caught this 2-pound, 16-ounce, 16½-inch long Black Crappie while fishing Glendale Lake, Cambria County.



Lydia Freethy, Hawley, caught and released this nice Largemouth Bass while fishing a private lake in Wayne 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



Daniel Salter, Saint Marys, caught and released this 25-pound, 45½-inch long tiger muskellunge while fishing Keystone Lake, Westmoreland County.



Bebe Roland, Age 11, caught and released this golden Rainbow Trout while fishing with Quinley Roland, age 9, on Wiconisco Creek, Dauphin County.



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