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

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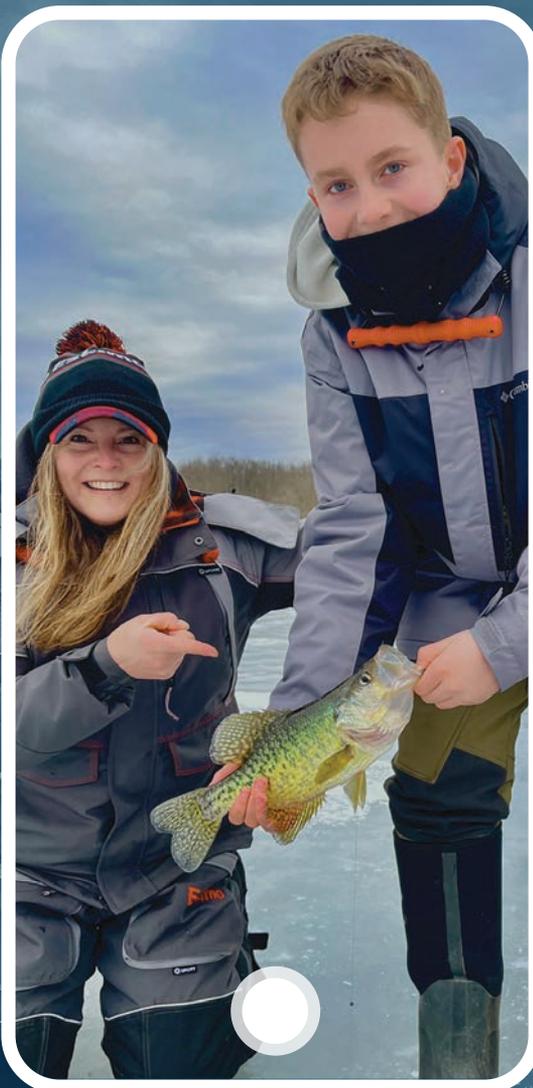
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These icons represent specific topics.



Amphibians
and Reptiles



Boating



Catch and Release



Conservation



Family Fishing



Fly Fishing



Ice Fishing



Lakes



Paddling



Rivers



State Parks



Streams



Tackle

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Volume 92 Number 6

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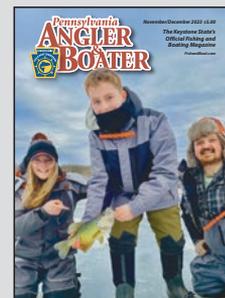
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Logan Daniel
(center), age 12,
caught this crappie
while ice fishing
Lake Nessmuk,
Tioga County, with
his mom, Amidea
Daniel (left),
and their friend,

Don Kelly (right), owner of Wellsboro
Tackle Shack and Pennsylvania Fish and
Boat Commission (PFBC) Fishing Skills
Instructor. There were smiles all around
for the first fish through the ice. *Photo by
Renee Kelly, Don's wife and PFBC Fishing
Skills Instructor.*



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GIVE THE GIFTS OF FUN, LIFE AND TIME

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

Hopefully this issue of *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* has not gotten lost in the pile of holiday catalogs that inevitably accumulate this time of year. If any of those catalogs are from a sporting goods company, the images of fishing rods and boats are probably getting you in the mood to be outdoors.

As you complete the holiday shopping for your friends and family, please consider adding three items to your lists. The first is a ticket to year-long fun, the second could save a life, and the third one is free.

The latest research about fishing license buying patterns supports past findings and suggests that most people do not buy a license every consecutive year. That may be hard to believe for those of us with multi-year fishing licenses (mine is good through 2027), but the data show that to be true. With this in mind, consider giving someone a fishing license or gift voucher and saving them a step toward getting on the water. It is easier than ever to purchase online at fishandboat.com, via the mobile app FishBoatPA or at one of more than 700 license-issuing agents.

Fishing licenses are the single most important source of revenue that we reinvest directly into programs and services that benefit anglers like you. Thank you for your ongoing support!

Rather than wrapping that fishing license in an envelope or hanging it in a stocking, put it in the pocket of a new life jacket. About 80% of boating fatalities every year are the result of people not wearing their life jackets. Make sure that the life jacket is the correct size and properly fits the gift recipient.

This time of year, wearing a life jacket is the law. From November 1 through April 30, life jackets must be worn on canoes, kayaks, paddleboards and all boats less than 16 feet in length. This cold weather requirement has cut fatalities in half in the past 10 years.

And, just when you are afraid to look at that credit card bill, give the gift of time. When people are asked why they do not fish, a leading answer is they do not have anyone



photo-Amidea Daniel

to go with. Take a hike together to scout your next fishing adventure, spend time with someone researching new fishing and boating spots online, head to the store together for some end-of-year gear deals or reserve a few weekends together in the coming year.

Memories of time on the water can be the greatest gift of all. ☐

Gear Up for Adventure

Don't Forget to Wear Your Life Jacket!





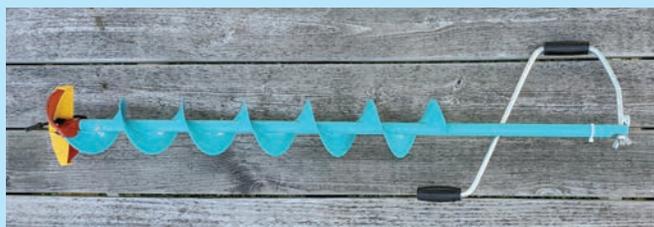
Taking the Ice Fishing Plunge

by Carl Haensel photos by the author

When ice starts to form in the early winter throughout Pennsylvania, it's time to start dreaming of ice fishing. Easy and accessible to anglers around Pennsylvania, ice fishing is a fun way to fish every winter. Having the correct gear is invaluable. Here's what you need to know for a successful time on the ice this winter.

Augers and ice scoops

To fish underneath the ice, you need to drill through the ice. If the ice is thick enough for safe fishing, at least 4 inches, augers work best. Spud and other chisel-style ice tools are heavy, dangerous and hard to handle for beginners. Gasoline, propane, electric and hand-powered augers are available. All get through the ice. Powered augers are beneficial when the ice is over 6 inches thick.



Narrow diameter 5-, 6- and 7-inch hand-powered ice augers are the easiest and most economical way to start ice fishing. Often, they collapse for easy travel.

Plan to drill at least 12 holes each fishing trip to find fish. Beginners may find that ice augers that attach to cordless drills are one of the easiest ways to start drilling holes. Always have an ice scoop to clear ice from your hole and measure ice thickness.

Ice fishing rods and tip-ups

Ice anglers in Pennsylvania have the benefit of using up to five devices including rods or tip-ups. If well planned, these devices help hook plenty of fish. Tip-ups are great for beginners, since a flag raising indicates that a fish has taken the bait. If fishing with kids, tip-ups are also useful. Ice fishing rods are generally 2- to 3-foot spinning rods. Avoid small reels, and use an ice-specific line to ensure flexibility in the cold. It's wise to respool your ice fishing spinning reels each season with fresh line.



Tip-ups are a fun way to start ice fishing. Featuring a spring-loaded flag that announces a bite, tip-ups are an excellent way to spend time on the water with kids as well.

Lures and tackle

Get started with basic lures. Small “ice flies” work wonders for most panfish and trout. Carry a variety of sizes, shapes and colors. Glow-in-the-dark versions are great for murky waters and species that bite after dark like crappies. Circle hooks in sizes 4 through 1 work well on tip-ups for pickerel, pike and Largemouth Bass. Wire leaders are needed for toothy predators. Jigging spoons and minnow lures attract active winter fish like Walleyes and Yellow Perch. Small lead-free weights get your bait down in deeper water and straighten out curly lines in cold weather. A few light foam bobbbers suspend your lure and bait in the water.



A selection of small and medium ice flies and jigging lures is all you need to start ice fishing. Often, smaller lures are better. Adjustable bobbbers are key to suspending your lures.

Sonar units and cameras

Flashers, graphs and other depth finding units show where your lure is located and nearby fish. They can be expensive, but they are a great addition to your ice fishing gear. Most come with a carrying case to enable easy deployment. Flashers offer instant data, easy readability and simple setting adjustments. Graphing units offer scrolling

➔ Bluegills are fun targets and readily take ice flies. Use a flasher-style depth finder to see where your ice fly is underwater and if there are any large fish lurking nearby.





data that show fish and lure movements. Underwater cameras are a luxury for most ice anglers but provide a close-up live video feed. Most cameras are poor at showing fish more than a few feet from the unit, and water clarity plays a large role in what you see.

Sleds, shelters and seats

Comfort is important when you're ice fishing. If you're not comfortable, you won't enjoy your time on the ice no matter how good the fishing. Using a dedicated ice fishing sled designed for hauling gear makes ice fishing easier. Load it up with buckets of equipment, and you're off. Pair your buckets with ice seats, and you'll be ready to fish. Longer, colder trips need more protection from the elements. Pop-up shelters are versatile, light and warm. They are a great choice if you're planning on bringing kids. Seat pads are great for kneeling on the ice next to ice fishing holes.

Bait

Bring bait. Fish in cold water may respond to artificial presentations, but you're more likely to find success with bait. Waxworms and minnows are two of the most common ice fishing baits. Keeping bait alive is important and will save you money. Insulated bait pucks keep your waxworms warm and wiggling. Aerated, insulated minnow buckets keep your swimming baits oxygenated and alive for your trip. Use a minnow net to scoop swimming baits out of the bucket and keep your hands warm and dry.

Life jackets and safety gear

Safety on the water is the most important part of every ice fishing trip. Ice needs to be at least 4 inches thick to reliably support anglers. It's always wise to fish while wearing safety gear. Ice thickness can be inconsistent. Springs, weather changes and melting can change the quality of ice from day to day. Be prepared, and bring a life jacket, ice spikes and a throw bag. ❏

*Gear Up for
Adventure*

**Don't Forget to Wear
Your Life Jacket!**



**Check state park
ice conditions:**



[dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/
WinterReport/Pages/default.aspx](https://dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/WinterReport/Pages/default.aspx)



FIVE LURE TYPES FOR ICE FISHING WALLEYES

by Ross Robertson

photos by the author

Anglers and tackle are like a kid in a candy store. They just can't resist. But, all of the new industry options make it difficult to figure out what to use when on the ice. Here are five categories of must-have lures for your next Walleye ice fishing adventure.



Rattle spoon

It's no secret that you can't cover as much water when ice fishing as during the open water season. A rattle spoon works during most of the ice fishing season and helps get a Walleye's attention from a distance. When no fish are present on your electronics, work the rattle spoon hard and slow down the cadence when they get closer. When Walleyes are barely moving, a rattle spoon can be the difference.

Glide baits

When slowly jigged with just enough slack line, you can get a glide bait to swim in a complete circle just like an injured baitfish. If no fish are present, ripping the lure aggressively has been known to bring fish in. Just subtly jiggling the bait can also be effective.

Flutter spoon

Overlooked by many anglers, flutter spoons are thin in composition, allowing them to fall slowly. The indistinct action typically causes the lure to move unpredictably and helps draw strikes when Walleyes are extra finicky. When fishing flutter spoons, make sure the line isn't too heavy, so the lure works properly. Utilize a light pound-test line.

Don't work the line too fast to keep the lure from moving too much in the water column, limiting the flutter action.

Jig head

Always have a jig head for ice fishing. When fish won't commit to other lures, a basic jig head can be the closer. In most cases, a 1/16- to 1/8-ounce model with a large hook and minnow is best. Hooks on many light weight jigs are too small, so use models with at least a 1/0 gap. This will drastically increase your landing ratio.

Rattle bait

Traditionally called lipless crankbaits, they are now known as rattle baits and appropriately named since most models on the market have a fairly loud rattle. The rattle seems to attract fish. Rattle baits tend to excel in dingy to off-colored water. When selecting a rattle bait, it's important to understand that several brands may look similar, but each manufacturer produces their rattles with different pitches and frequencies. The different sounds matter when it comes to getting strikes. Having a small assortment of sizes and rattle types is beneficial.

Be ready for Walleyes during all conditions with something from each of these categories. ☐



Pictured are (from left to right): rattle bait, flutter spoon, rattle spoon, glide bait and jig head.

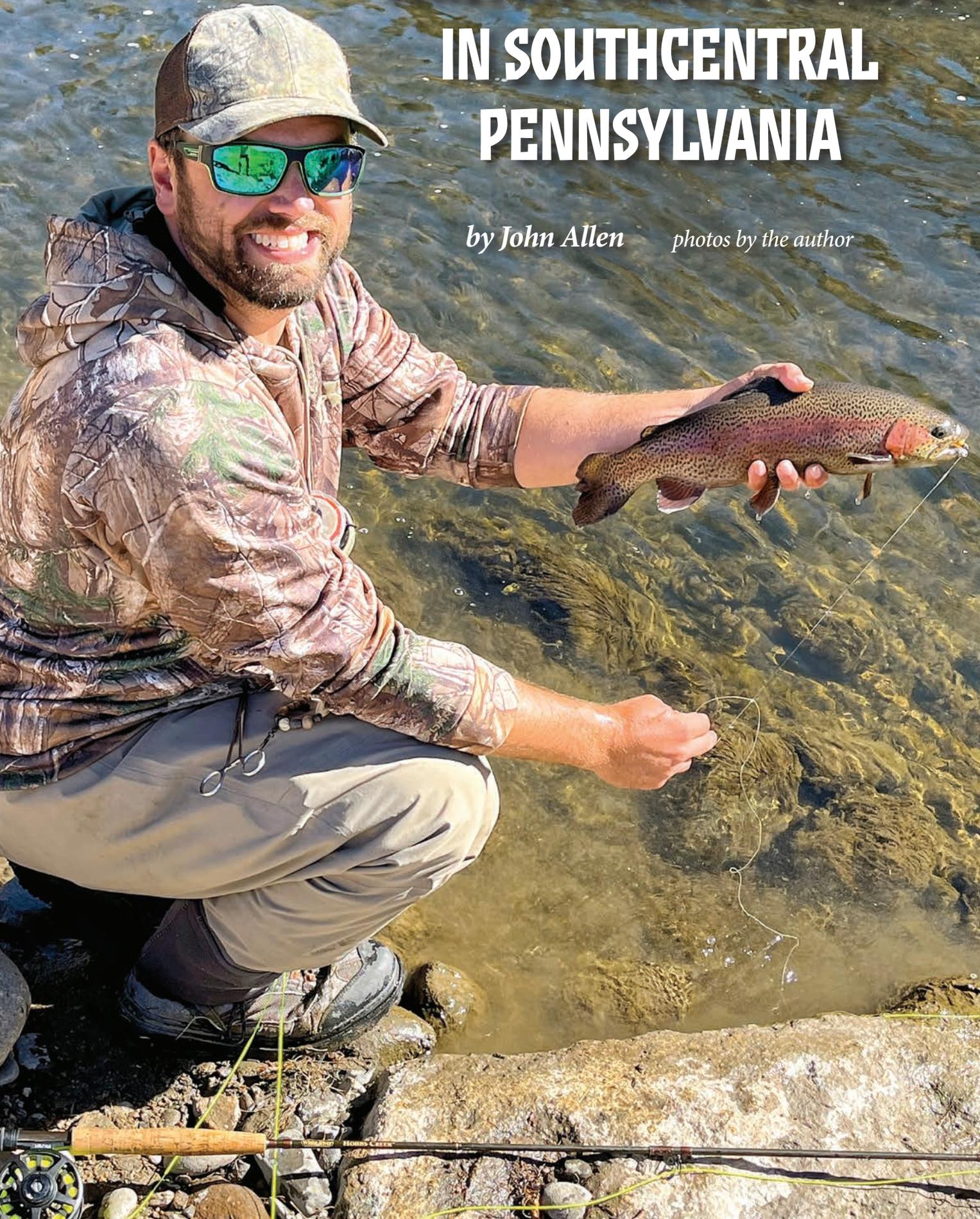
INTERMEDIATE



WINTER TROUT FISHING IN SOUTHCENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA

by John Allen

photos by the author



As the cold weather begins to take over, our thoughts drift to hunting, holidays and the end of the year hustle and bustle. For those who do not want to take a season off from trout fishing, there are still plenty of opportunities. In southcentral Pennsylvania, there are many streams where fishing remains strong even through the winter months.

The best streams to fish in southcentral Pennsylvania during the winter are limestone or limestone-influenced trout streams. They will have the warmest temperatures, which will in turn have the most actively feeding trout. There are several freestone streams where fishing can still be good, but patience is required.



A wintertime fly box selection.

Limestone streams

The three most well-known limestone streams in this area are Letort Spring Creek, Cumberland County, Big Spring Creek, Cumberland County, and Falling Spring Branch, Franklin County. There are plenty of others in the area, but none have the trout populations of these three streams. Each one presents its own set of challenges but has feeding trout. Since the majority of the fishing on these streams is fly fishing, I bring my nymph box. Pheasant Tail Nymphs, cress bugs and freshwater shrimp are all staple flies. Most fish will be in the deepest pools tight to the bottom waiting for food to drift to them. On warmer or sunny days, the fish will move into the shallows more often, and if the temperature gets just right, you may even find yourself among rising fish as the midges come off. I tend to take a high-sticking approach to minimize how much line I'm running through my guides. This reduces ice build up in my guides. A 9-foot rod is excellent to have while high-sticking. It allows you to maximize your reach. At times, winter trout seem finicky, but patient and persistent anglers are often rewarded.

Limestone influenced streams

There are several streams in this region where either the stream begins as a limestone stream or there are limestone

streams that feed into them. This raises the temperature of the stream more than that of a freestone stream but not as high as a limestone stream. The most well-known limestone influenced streams in this region are the Yellow Breeches Creek, Cumberland County, Quittapahilla Creek, Lebanon County, and Little Juniata River. Each waterway sees ice during the year but to a much lesser extent than streams with a lower alkalinity level. The best fishing is in deeper pools. On the fly rod, I throw a mix of nymphs and slow-drifting streamers. In the open regulation sections of the streams, I use smaller baits such as waxworms and small worms on my spinning rod. During warmer days, I tie on a spinner to see how active the fish are that day. Spinners are still effective during the winter months in the right conditions.

Freestone streams

There are too many freestone streams to name, but I tend to focus on streams with a delayed harvest or catch and release section. I'm also looking for streams that were stocked in the fall such as Clark Creek, Dauphin County, Conewago Creek, Adams County, and Muddy Creek, York County, so I don't have to rely on trout that have made it through the summer months. I can narrow my choices down and increase my



A wild Brown Trout in its winter colors.

chances of catching fish. Each of these stream sections are fly fishing only. Again, I bring a series of nymphs to use to hopefully entice a strike. Since the water is colder, I take a low and slow fishing approach. The ideal drift of your flies will be equal to that of the flow of the creek. Since these are mostly stocked trout, adding a little flash will allow trout to spot your flies faster and increase your number of takes.

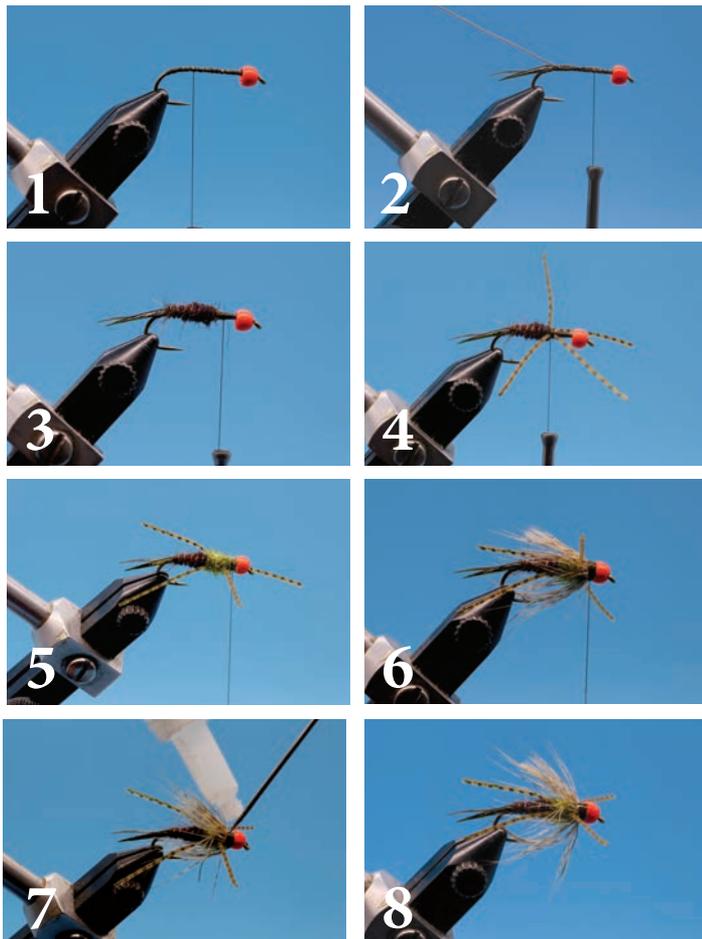
Just because it has become colder outside doesn't mean that trout fishing must stop. Southcentral Pennsylvania has many opportunities available with a winter stream worth fishing near you. ☐



Tying the Hot Spot Stonefly

by Carl Haensel photos by the author

Two of the top fly categories for fishing fall steelhead in Pennsylvania's Lake Erie tributaries are nymph patterns and egg patterns. Nymphs imitate young aquatic insects like mayflies, stoneflies, damselflies and dragonflies. Egg patterns represent the fresh spawn from migratory fish including trout, steelhead and suckers. Including a brightly-colored bead or a dubbing hot spot at the head of stonefly nymph pattern may be more appealing than a pattern without one. Other flies take advantage of this type of arrangement, including the Egg Sucking Leech and other similar patterns. While I find orange to be one of the top "hot spot" colors overall, try other options as well. Chartreuse and pink can also be prime colors for this pattern. Try tying the pattern with a variety of bead colors and see how it works. Dead drifting this fly through deep runs and pools can be a great way to hook up with active fall steelhead. ☐



If you're in search of a trophy steelhead, try using a Hot Spot Stonefly drifted deep and slow this season.

Tying the Hot Spot Stonefly Materials

Hook: Size 1/0 Mustad 34007, 3366 or similar
Thread: Gel spun polyethylene in color of choice
Bead: Orange 5/32 tungsten bead
Tail: Dark brown goose biots
Rib: Fine copper wire
Abdomen: Dark brown stonefly dubbing
Legs: Small barred rubber fly legs
Thorax: Olive or peacock mini chenille
Hackle: Partridge soft hackle
Glue: Gel cyanoacrylate

- 1 Slip the bead over the point of the hook, and move it up to the eye. Wrap your thread to the hook. Then, lay a base layer along the shank.
- 2 Tie in the goose biots as your stonefly tail. Next, tie in the wire for ribbing, allowing it to bend backward.
- 3 Beginning at the tail, wrap dubbing around the abdomen of the pattern. Follow by wrapping wire over the dubbing and tying it off.
- 4 Tie in two pairs of rubber legs, one on each side of the fly.
- 5 Wrap the mini chenille around the thorax of the fly. Weave the material around the legs to allow them to stick out naturally.
- 6 Tie in the partridge soft hackle just behind the orange bead, and wrap it through and around the front legs of the pattern.
- 7 Tie off the partridge soft hackle and finish the fly just behind the bead. Finish with gel cyanoacrylate glue on the wraps.
- 8 The finished Hot Spot Stonefly



NOTES *from the Streams*

Cold weather menace

The winter months are typically our slow season for reptiles. Sometimes, however, you get some odd calls.

It was an ordinary Thursday in January towards the end of my shift when I received a phone call from my cousin. He seemed to be in panic mode and said he believes there's a copperhead in his basement. He went to the basement to load the wood burner, lifted a piece of wood, and there it was—a baby snake. He examined it closely and believed it was a copperhead. I arrived at his house and started laughing as he showed me the snake, because it was just a juvenile Eastern Ratsnake. It's common to confuse a copperhead for a juvenile Eastern Ratsnake or Eastern Milksnake. I explained to him that copperheads have cat-like pupils as do all venomous snakes in Pennsylvania. At times, snakes find their way into basements in the winter to seek warmth. If you have such an encounter, don't panic and give us a call.—*WCO Logan T. Opfer, Western Armstrong County.*

Old habits die hard

On a recent summer day, while patrolling Lake Wallenpaupack, Pike and Wayne counties, my partner and I observed a boating violation we had to address. We conducted an investigative boarding of the vessel and explained to the operator the reason for the stop. As the boarding progressed, everything was business as usual, and there was nothing out of the ordinary. Later in the boarding, it was determined that the boat did not have a wearable life jacket for each person on board. The boat operator did not realize he did not have enough life jackets and was apologetic. I informed the operator that he would be receiving a citation for operating without enough wearable life jackets on board and be given a warning for

all other violations. After writing the citation, we always have the recipient sign for acknowledgement and then hand it back to us to rip their copy off. In this instance, the operator was so anxious, he signed the copy and took it upon himself to rip his copy from the citation book. He not only took his copy, he took all of the copies but one. Being the first time this happened, my partner and I were in shock but shared a good laugh with the recipient. He again was apologetic explaining that he used to work at a bank, so signing and ripping was what he was used to doing. I guess old habits die hard.—*WCO Matthew B. Deitrich, Southern Wallenpaupack.*

Teaching new tricks

While on patrol, I observed an older gentleman fishing from the bank at Long Arm Reservoir, York County. I was unable to see his fishing license, so I approached the man. I asked him, "How's the fishing?" He told me that he caught a White Perch. I asked to see his fishing license, and he showed me the license that was around his neck. I looked down at the stringer and observed a small Bluegill. I told him, "that's not a White Perch; that's a Bluegill." He asked me, "Well, you're allowed to keep them right?" I told him he was allowed to keep it, but a lonely fish wasn't going to fill him up for dinner. He said that he was there for a few hours and was having no luck. I asked him what kind of bait he was using, and he told me worms as he pulled his line out of the water. I asked him what he was fishing for today, and he told me panfish. I told him, "Fishing on the bottom for panfish is not the best way, you should try a bobber." He said, "I have never used a bobber, and I don't even know what they do!"

I said, "Trust me, you will catch a fish." After looking through his tackle box, he found a bobber.

The man had no idea how to put the bobber on his line, so I asked if I could help. He handed me the bobber. I showed him how to put it on his line, and he was ready to go.

His first attempt at casting was not the best as he chalked it up to me making him nervous. He insisted I back up, because he was left handed. I did as he asked, and his second cast was a long, straight one. He continued to ask me questions about the bobber and how to catch a fish with it. I instructed him to jerk and reel when the bobber was fully under the water. Just as he turned his head to ask me another question, I saw the bobber go under. I yelled, "You got one!" With excitement, he jerked and began to reel in a fish. He turned to me and said, "You were right!" As he continued laughing, he pulled in a nice Bluegill. He told me he shouldn't have doubted me and thanked me for taking the time to help him.

As I walked back to my vehicle, I could hear the old man giggling as he caught another fish using the bobber.—*WCO Rachael L. Thurner-Diaz, Adams and Western York counties.*



artwork-Andrea Feeney



FINDING STEELHEAD IN STREAMS

by Nick DelVecchio

photos by the author

One of the most common plights among anglers venturing to the tributaries of Lake Erie is finding steelhead within the streams. Tens of thousands of fish pour into our relatively small waters, but there are times when it feels like there isn't a

steelhead around for miles. Knowing where to look under certain water conditions can help find them, which is the first step towards hooking one.

High water

High water is perhaps the most challenging time to find steelhead on Lake Erie tributaries. Lack of water clarity makes it difficult to see them, so you've got to know the stretch you're fishing. Experience cannot be understated in these conditions, because knowing ahead of time where fish usually hold

overcomes the negative impact of high water. During high water events, stick to the slower tailouts of pools and little breaks in current in riffles. The fish have to fight harder against the current, so once they reach a pool, they'll rest for a bit before continuing their upstream charge. Slower pools also give anglers a chance to achieve better drifts, which is always helpful. The same principle applies with riffle sections. Fish will take a breather anywhere they can when the water is high, so even the slightest pause in current can be enough to hold a fish or two.

Low water

Veteran anglers of Erie streams are well acquainted with periods of low water. Even a week without rain or snow melt can drop the tributaries down to low levels and make fishing difficult. The act of finding fish during these times usually isn't hard, but finding the "right" fish can be challenging. The right fish is one that willingly feeds and isn't totally distressed due to water conditions. This means getting close and personal with logjams and undercut banks, the deepest pools you can find, or slot trenches within riffles. Even an extra foot or two of depth may give steelhead the security to actively feed. Anywhere you find enough depth and cover from above, you'll find steelhead. Fishing is best before the sun gets high.

Seasonal changes

The first steelhead start showing up in late August and may hang around through April. We're blessed to experience such a fishery, but the constant change of seasons makes it difficult to continuously find fish. During the early part of the season, focus efforts on the sections of streams closest to the lake. Fish will come in for a brief time, realize it may be too early, then head back out to the big water all in a matter of a few days. While a few make it a good way upstream, the bulk of fish will be in the lower reaches of streams. Springtime fishing calls for a similar approach. Once the fish start leaving the streams and heading back to the lake, upper reaches become more devoid of fish, and the lowest sections hold fish longer. In the middle of those two seasons is winter—a time when fish are spread out. However, once ice becomes a factor, anglers should walk as much as they can in search of open water. Slow water freezes first, so a great tactic is hiking the stream while looking for open riffles that hold depth. Find those spots, and you'll find fish.

There's no question tangling with a steelhead is on the bucket list of just about every angler. It's as fun as advertised, but knowing when and where to find fish improves success rates and creates more enjoyable outings. That starts with understanding seasonal changes and identifying stream conditions that will be at play during your trip. Utilizing these tips to find steelhead will lead to more fish in the net and happy anglers. ☐



Understanding seasonal changes and identifying stream conditions improves success rates and creates more enjoyable outings.



Tying
Together

SHINING LIKE AN EMERALD:

Teaching Children to Tie Emerald Shiner Patterns

by *Christian A. Shane*

photos by the author

“The scales, which look higher than they are wide, are very visible and reflect brilliant silver or brassy-gold tints, so the fish have a ‘shining’ appearance. Some shiners display darkish lines along the side and may show tints of blue or green.” Linda Steiner, Pennsylvania Fishes, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (2000).

The Emerald Shiner, *Notropis atherinoides*, frequents Lake Erie and many other Pennsylvania watersheds. In Latin, the species name means “silverside,” and this bright-silver forage fish offers migratory predators of the lake and its tributaries a worthwhile meal.

Many steelhead patterns resemble this baitfish, and shiner instructions can be as easy or challenging as you

want to share. Try some of these shiner imitations with your tier and experiment on steelhead tributaries this fall.

Emerald Shiner (basic)

In tying with children, it’s always good to start easy and build confidence. This simple Emerald Shiner pattern allows the tier to follow steps to create a finished product. Start your tier off on a hook that is large enough to be comfortable for the tier, moving to a larger #6 or even down to the smaller #12. With a 1- to 2½-inch range, this pattern will mimic the sizes of Lake Erie shiners. Attach a gold ⅝-inch bead to give the fly a head-like look. Your tier will then have two tie-in points—at the hook bend and at the hook eye. First, tie in the Poly Flash at the tail for the body. Then, wind your thread to the hook eye and add in the white marabou. Do not extend the feather too far past the bend of the hook. To simulate the lateral line of the shiner, attach a few strands of Krystal Flash. This may blend in with the white marabou, but it will dazzle in the water. Finally, add in a layer of olive marabou. Give the pattern a half hitch or whip finish, and top with some head cement. Your tier

can dead drift this pattern or add a few splitshots ahead of it and jig it.

Snow Ghost (advanced)

This shiner imitation, shared by Bill Nagle, is one of my favorites for steelhead throughout the season and will allow your tier to put many steelhead tying techniques to the test.

After attaching the bead head and lead wire for added weight, select a sparse clump of white Arctic Fox, and add it in for the tail. Next, add in pearl Flashabou. With pearl Diamond Braid, create a body in tight wraps up to the hook eye. Lastly, behind the bead, tie in a 3-inch piece of pearl Palmer Chenille, wrapping it forward in tight wraps one in front of the other while stroking the fibers toward the hook bend. Wrap the narrow collar of red thread to mimic the gills of the shiner. After a whip finish, coat the exposed thread with head cement or epoxy to finish off the fly. Nagle suggests stripping it early in the season and dead drifting it later into the steelhead season for success.

Encourage your tier to shine by tying and fishing some Emerald Shiners for steelhead this fall and beyond. ☐

➔ *Have your tier test fly patterns in and out of water to observe its movement and appearance.*

Emerald Shiner (basic)

Hook: 2XL streamer, #6-#12

Thread: Olive 3/0

Bead: 5/32-inch, gold

Body: White Poly Flash

First Wing: White marabou

Lateral Line: Krystal Flash

Second Wing: Olive marabou

Snow Ghost (advanced)

Hook: 2XL streamer, #4-#8

Thread: Red UNI-Thread 6/0

Bead: 3/16-inch, silver

Weight: 0.030-inch lead wire

Tail: White Arctic Fox

Body: Pearl Diamond Braid

Flash: Pearl Flashabou

Collar: Pearl Palmer Chenille



Brook Trout will strike a shiner pattern.



Three Productive Flies for Great Lake Steelhead

by Ari Capotis

photos by the author



Flies! Flies! Flies! Can you ever really have too many options? Yes, you can. In the spirit of simplicity, this article will discuss three productive steelhead flies that are tried and true for many Erie steelhead anglers. In fact, many locals only carry two genres of flies in their boxes—streamers and eggs. A fail-safe when the egg bite seems a bit off is a nymph. Nymphs are a category of subsurface fly intended to imitate part of the life cycle of an aquatic bug. Have you ever flipped over rocks in a riffle section of a stream and noticed bugs on the bottom or sides of the rocks? These bugs are likely the nymphal stage of mayflies or caddisflies—

bugs that all fish eat. Within this magnificent rationale, there is the need to fish one's flies as naturally as possible within the stream. Fish your flies at the same depth as the steelhead you are chasing. Most steelhead are positioned close to the bottom, near cover and in sections that give lake-run fish a sense of protection. You can control your fishing technique, you can pick your fishing spot, but you cannot make the steelhead bite. Be patient and persistent until you find what works for you.

A productive local favorite, the Little Precious was invented by Karl Weixlmann, author and Erie resident. It is meant to imitate an Emerald Shiner, a prey species of steelhead. Tying instructions for the Little Precious can be found on YouTube and within the pages of Jerry Darkes' "Essential Flies for the Great Lakes Region." When fishing the Little Precious, there is no wrong way to fish this streamer pattern. Many anglers use a bobber (indicator) to suspend the Little Precious and dead drift it through a given section of stream. Others like to swing it broadside across the current.

Steelhead ascend Lake Erie's tributaries to spawn. Egg flies are representative of the various fish eggs found throughout Lake Erie's tributaries each fall. Brown Trout spawn in the fall. Steelhead, which are Rainbow Trout, naturally spawn in the spring. Crystal Meth egg patterns are a Great Lakes steelhead fly. Any eggs that do not hold fast to redds are going to be floating along or close to the streambed. Try to present your egg fly in this manner, or you can tie a Crystal Meth Egg in front of a Little Precious and present it under an indicator. Many anglers tie their Crystal Meth



Clockwise from the top: Little Precious, Walt's Worm and Crystal Meth Egg

Eggs with a beadhead or lead wrapped underneath the Hareline Dubbin Crystal Braid material. The Walt's Worm, a classic Pennsylvania nymph, is intended to imitate a cress bug, but other anglers claim it is a crane fly larva. The Sexy Walt's Worm is a spicier version of the original that uses bright orange thread as a hotspot behind the beadhead. This fly is a great pattern in front of the Little Precious or trailing behind a Crystal Meth Egg. Remember, nymphs cling to rocks, so try to fish the Sexy Walt's Worm close to or along the bottom of the creek.

Streamers, eggs and nymphs all catch steelhead. Good luck, be creative and be appreciative that Pennsylvanians can chase steelhead. ☺

Follow Ari on Instagram
@keystoneflygirl

Crystal Meth Egg fly tying:



youtube.com/watch?v=BwnyfiARONU



Beginner's Guide on How to Hook, Land and Release Fish

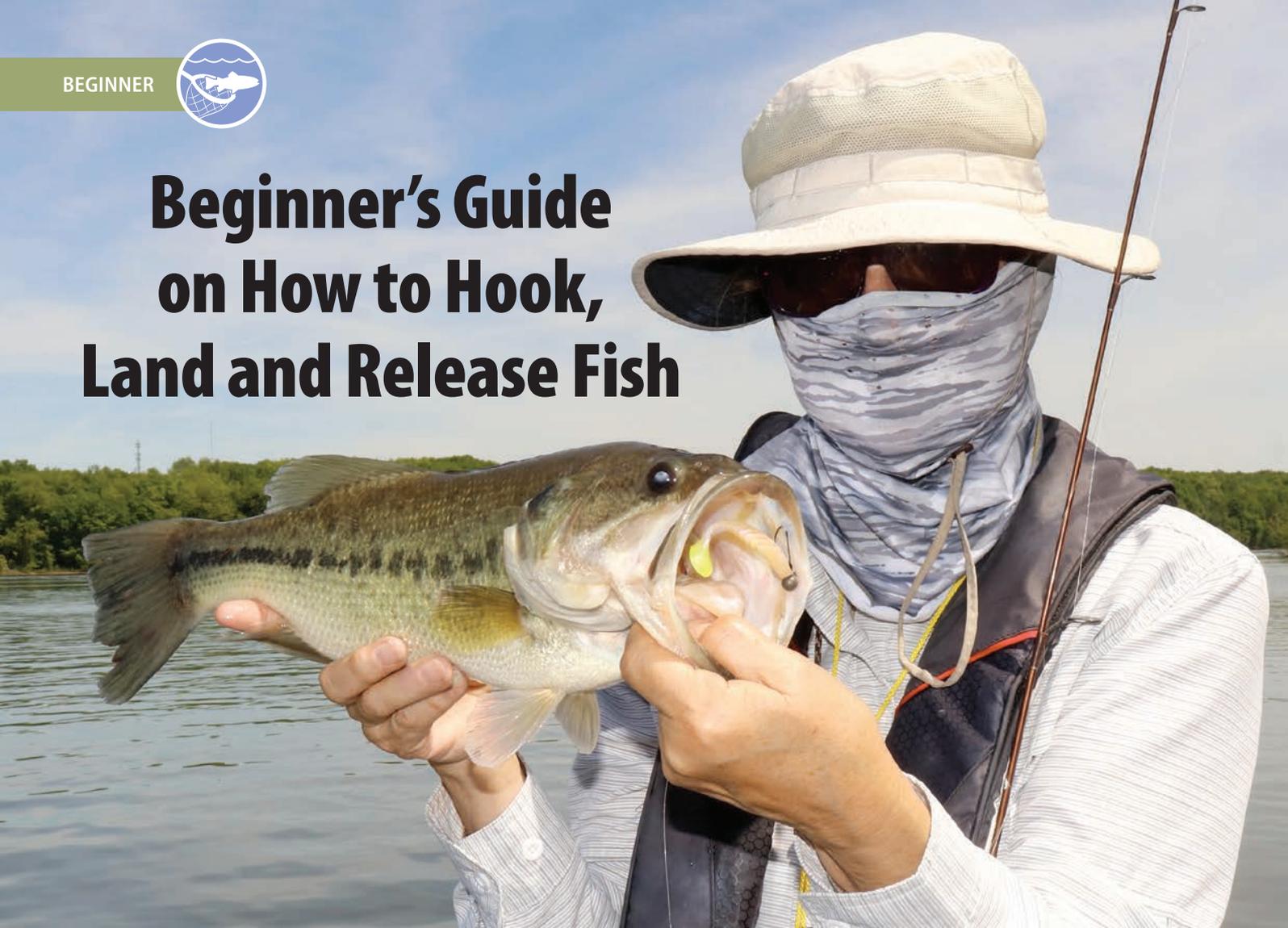


photo-Darl Black

by Darl Black

While it is important for a novice angler to know where to fish and what to use, it is just as important to know how to set the hook, play the fish and eventually land it. With a few basic tips, a beginner can catch like a pro.

Setting the hook and playing fish

1. Before the first cast of each outing, run the first 3 feet of line between your forefinger and thumb to check for nicks or abrasion; if detected, cut the line above the weak spot before tying on a hook or lure.
2. A reel's drag determines how much pressure is required for line to be pulled from the spool. If you set the drag too light, you won't be able to pull in even a small fish. Set it too tight and a powerful fish may snap a light line on its initial run. Avoid these scenarios by adjusting the drag to the point where you can smoothly pull line from the spool with your hand using moderate force.
3. Contrary to what beginners are often told, a hookset should not be a hard jerk. Instead, it should be a smooth, powerful sweep of the rod.
 - When a fish takes a live bait presentation (with or without a bobber), point the rod tip in the direction the fish is moving and give a firm upward sweep of rod towards the 12:00 position.
 - When using a lift/drop presentation (that is lifting and dropping the lure from the bottom) with a jig or plastic worm, you may detect a hit when the rod tip is high. In this case, rapidly lower the rod tip to the 9:00 position while reeling in slack line, then immediately sweep the rod high to the 12:00 position.
 - When using a lure with a steady retrieve (reeling in the lure), the rod is usually held slightly to your left or right side with tip pointed at the surface. To set a hook in this instance, sweep the rod firmly upward to the side while rotating your torso.
4. With a fish hooked, keep the rod tip high and maintain pressure. Let the fish fight against the flex of the rod. If it is a small fish, you will likely be able to reel it in quickly. Larger fish take more time to land. Do not turn the reel handle unless you are able to retrieve line. Never turn the

reel handle if the fish is pulling line against the drag. If you are turning the handle but line is not winding onto the spool, you likely have the drag set too light.

Landing and releasing fish

1. Use a landing net for all mid-size and larger fish, especially if casting a lure with treble hooks. Use a rubber mesh net. Rubber mesh nets are not abrasive to fish and are less likely to snag a hook, allowing a quick release.
2. Trying to net a highly active fish is a mistake. Keep pressure on the fish, and bring it to the net when you are able to lead it into the bag.
3. Position the hoop of the net at a 45-degree angle with half of the hoop under water. Always lead the fish head first into the mesh net. Never chase a fish with a landing net.
4. With the fish still in the net, use long nose pliers or a hook removal tool to grab the hook shank and back it out. If the fish is hooked deep, you may need to hold the fish vertical to get the hook out.
5. Use two hands to hold a mid-size or larger fish for a photo, supporting its body and never bending its mouth. Then, release it immediately, or if taking the fish home for dinner, place it into a livewell or cooler. ☐



photo-Dart Black

Tools for unhooking fish (from top to bottom): long nose pliers, hook removal tool and diagonal wire cutters for cutting bait hooks that cannot be removed without harming the fish.



photo-Dart Black

A rubber mesh net is beneficial for landing and releasing fish.



photo-Miranda Smith

Sophie Slagenweit caught this Smallmouth Bass while fishing at Prince Gallitzin State Park, Cambria County.



photo-Miranda Smith

When a fish is hooked, let it fight against the flex of the rod.



THE WINTER FLY BOX

by Ralph Scherder
photos by the author



It's easy to get into routines with fly selection. We often rely on patterns that have worked well in the past, even if conditions call for something completely different. Winter fly fishing is a great example. Although some patterns work year-round, there are a handful of flies that may be a better options.

Winter difference

First, cold air and water temperatures typically mean shorter feeding windows. Second, the foods available to winter trout are typically smaller and not as abundant. If you're not willing to adapt, these two factors will result in some long days on the water.

Small and sparse

The main food sources for trout in winter are midges and immature mayfly nymphs that fall into the size 16- to 22-range. They are best represented with "sparse" ties, meaning patterns that utilize little material. Zebra Midges are perfect examples, because they're just a thread body with a silver wire rib and a small bead. In the winter, I fish Zebra Midges down to size 22, typically dropped off the bend of a slightly larger fly.

Another important winter pattern is basically a Zebra Midge with a brown-olive body and a rib of a single strand of flash. Sometimes, the addition of a tiny bit of flash triggers strikes when fish are sluggish.

For standard mayfly nymphs, it's hard to beat a size 16 or 18 Frenchie tied with a sparse olive dubbed collar. I use this one on limestone streams in central Pennsylvania, where winter Blue-winged Olive hatches are a possibility.

Another good winter pattern is the Prince Nymph, which imitates a variety of insects including small stoneflies. Sizes 16 and 18 are preferred, and many times I'll tie on a size 20. If you haven't used Prince Nymphs this small, you may be pleasantly surprised all winter and even into early spring.

To round out this portion of the winter fly box, include a selection of Hare and Copper, sizes 14 to 18, and several Perdignons in various sizes with olive quill or thread bodies. Perdignons are great winter patterns that embody the meaning of sparseness, sink quickly and get down to the fish.



Simple thread-body flies with a little bit of flash make great winter patterns.

Eggs and Walt's Worm

Two great all-year patterns that also work well in winter are eggs and the Walt's Worm. In various colors and sizes, these patterns catch trout anywhere at any time.

Y2K egg patterns incorporate two colors, and I believe the contrast is extremely deadly. Almost any egg pattern will work. However, I tie them a little smaller (sizes 14-16) and prefer paler colors in winter. Subdued tones such as peach, salmon egg and white are some of my favorite winter colors. I generally avoid fluorescent colors, although some days these work, too.

The Walt's Worm is a fly box standard no matter where or when you fish. A size 16 sparsely dressed Walt's Worm catches fish anywhere.

I'm also a huge fan of the Sexy Walt's Worm, which is tied on a jig-style hook with a tungsten bead. It includes a Hare's Ear body but also a fluorescent orange thread collar. In sizes 14-20, this fly flat out catches trout everywhere.

Meal flies

Occasionally, it takes a big fly to attract trout in the winter. Trout constantly weigh the cost of energy expenditure versus reward. In other words, trout don't go out of their way to grab something unless it's worth it. That's where streamers come into play.

On small to medium-sized streams, Muddler Minnows and Woolly Buggers in all colors work extremely well. On larger waters, try articulated patterns such as Galloup's Dungeon or the Circus Peanut. These flies get even the most lethargic trout interested.

Bonus flies

Weighted stonefly nymphs are handy in winter when you need a heavy anchor fly to get down in deeper or swifter water. Drop a smaller nymph off the bend of the hook on these larger nymphs.

On streams known for good hatches of winter olives, a good Blue-winged Olive dry fly also comes in handy. I carry parachute-style Blue-winged Olives down to size 22. Carry black and cream midges in similar sizes in case you hit a hatch of midges, too.

There's no pattern that will work best all the time. Often, winter fly fishing success comes with trying a variety of patterns until you figure out what the fish prefer that day. Then again, I guess that's what fly fishing is about any time of year. ☐



This wild Brown Trout took a Frenchie—a great pattern on streams where winter blue-winged olives are known to hatch.



2024 FISHING LICENSES

Annual licenses are valid from December 1, 2023, through December 31, 2024. WHILE FISHING, your license must be, either in digital or print form, 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	\$27.97
104	Senior Resident (Annual)	65 & up	\$14.47
105	Senior Resident (Lifetime)	65 & up	\$86.97
108	1-Day Resident (not valid March 15–April 30)	16 & up	\$14.47
119	Disabled Veterans Reduced Resident License **	16 & up	\$2.97
122	Disabled Veterans Resident Annual License **	16-64	\$0.00
125	POW Resident Annual License **	16-64	\$2.97
102	Non-Resident (Annual)	16 & up	\$60.97
113	Non-Resident PA Student (Annual)	16 & up	\$27.97
106	1-Day Tourist *** (not valid March 15–April 30)	16 & up	\$31.97
103	3-Day Tourist	16 & up	\$31.97
107	7-Day Tourist	16 & up	\$39.47
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	\$14.97
033	3-Year Senior Lifetime Trout Permit	65 & up	\$40.97
053	5-Year Senior Lifetime Trout Permit	65 & up	\$66.97
063	10-Year Senior Lifetime Trout Permit	65 & up	\$131.97
151	Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$9.97
151SLE	Senior Lifetime Lake Erie Permit	65 & up	\$9.97
152	Combination Trout Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$20.97

* Includes issuing agent fee of \$1.00 and \$0.97 transaction fee. Excludes licenses or permits issued at \$0.00. ** Can only be issued if initial license was purchased at a County Treasurer or PFBC offices. *** Includes Trout and Lake Erie permits, not valid March 15–April 30.

2024 MULTI-YEAR FISHING LICENSES

WHILE FISHING, your license must be, either in digital or print form, upon your person and provided upon the request of an officer.

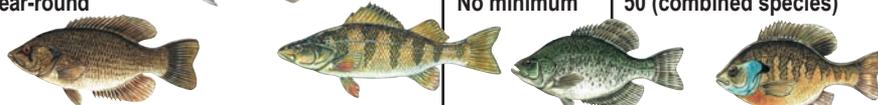
Code	Type of Fishing License or Permit	Age	Cost*
150	1-Year Trout Permit	16 & up	\$14.97
151	1-Year Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$9.97
152	1-Year Combo Trout Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$20.97
030	3-Year Resident	16-64	\$79.97
031	3-Year Non-Resident	16 & up	\$178.97
032	3-Year Senior Resident	65 & up	\$39.47
033	3-Year Trout Permit	16 & up	\$40.97
034	3-Year Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$25.97
035	3-Year Combo Trout Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$58.97
050	5-Year Resident	16-64	\$131.97
051	5-Year Non-Resident	16 & up	\$296.97
052	5-Year Senior Resident	65 & up	\$64.47
053	5-Year Trout Permit	16 & up	\$66.97
054	5-Year Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$41.97
055	5-Year Combo Trout Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$96.97
060	10-Year Resident	16 & up	\$261.97
061	10-Year Non-Resident	16 & up	\$591.97
063	10-Year Trout Permit	16 & up	\$131.97
064	10-Year Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$81.97
065	10-Year Combo Trout Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$191.97

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



2024 SEASONS, SIZES and CREEL LIMITS

COMMONWEALTH INLAND WATERS-2024

Species	Seasons	Minimum Size	Daily Limit
ALL SPECIES OF TROUT  Additional regulations may apply- see Trout Regulations for stream sections that are both Stocked Trout Waters and Class A Wild Trout Waters.	Statewide Opening Day of Trout Season - April 6 at 8 a.m. through Sept. 2	7 inches	5-streams, lakes and ponds (combined species)
	Extended Season: Stocked trout waters Jan. 1 through Feb. 18 and Sept. 3 through Dec. 31	7 inches	3 (combined species)
	Extended Season: Waters not managed as stocked trout waters. Jan. 1 through Feb. 18 and Sept. 3 through Dec. 31	NO HARVEST - Catch and immediate release only	
BASS - Lakes, Rivers and Streams Largemouth, Smallmouth and Spotted Additional regulations may apply	Jan. 1 through April 12 and Oct. 1 through Dec. 31	15 inches	4 (combined species)
	April 13 through June 7	NO HARVEST - Catch and immediate release only (no tournaments permitted). NO HARVEST begins at 12:01 a.m.	
	June 8 through Sept. 30	12 inches	6 (combined species)
Muskellunge and Tiger Muskellunge*	Open year-round 	40 inches	1 (combined species)
Pickereel*		18 inches	4
Northern Pike*		24 inches	2
Walleye and Saugeye (Hybrids)	Jan. 1 through March 14 and May 4 through Dec. 31	15 inches	6
Sauger	Jan. 1 through March 14 and May 4 through Dec. 31	12 inches	6
American Shad**	Open year-round	No minimum	3
American Shad	Open year-round - Lehigh River, Schuylkill River*** and tributaries	NO HARVEST - Catch and immediate release only	
American Shad	CLOSED YEAR-ROUND		
River Herring**	Susquehanna River and tributaries		
Hickory Shad**	CLOSED YEAR-ROUND		
Herring, Gizzard Shad	Open year-round	No minimum	50 (combined species)
American Eel	Open year-round	9 inches	25
Striped Bass and Striped Bass/ White Bass Hybrids	Open year-round 	20 inches	2 (combined species)
Sunfish, Yellow Perch, White Perch, Crappies, Catfish, Rock Bass, Suckers, Carp, White Bass, Bowfin and other gamefish not otherwise listed Additional regulations may apply- see Panfish Enhancement Special Regulations	Open year-round 	No minimum	50 (combined species)
Baitfish/Fishbait**** (except Mudbugs/Includes Crayfish)	Open year-round	No minimum	50 (combined species)
Mudbugs (Dragonfly Nymphs)	Open year-round	No minimum	Unlimited if taken from lakes, ponds, swamps and adjacent areas. 50 per day if taken from moving waters (rivers and streams).
Mussels/Clams	CLOSED YEAR-ROUND		
Paddlefish, Spotted Gar, and other threatened and endangered species	CLOSED YEAR-ROUND		

SEASONS, SIZES AND CREEL LIMITS – Except for trout season, which begins at 8 a.m., all regulatory periods in the fishing regulations are based on the calendar day, one of which ends at midnight and the next of which begins immediately thereafter.
 * Except those species in waters listed in the **Brood Stock Lakes Program**. Tiger Muskellunge is a muskellunge hybrid.
 ** Unlawful to take, catch or kill American Shad in the Susquehanna River and all its tributaries. River Herring (Alewife and Blueback Herring) has a closed year-round season with zero daily limit applied to Susquehanna River and tributaries, Lehigh River and tributaries, Schuylkill River and tributaries, West Branch Delaware River, Delaware River, Delaware estuary, Delaware River tributaries upstream to the limit of the tidal influence and Conowingo Reservoir.
 *** Lehigh River upstream of the first dam in Easton, Pennsylvania and its tributaries and the Schuylkill River upstream of the I-95 Bridge and its tributaries.

NOTE: It is not a violation of the bass regulations if a bass is immediately returned unharmed to the waters from which it was taken. It is unlawful for an angler to cast repeatedly into a clearly visible bass spawning nest or redd in an effort to catch or take bass.
NOTE: For bass regulations, power dam pools and recreational dam pools on the Susquehanna River and navigational dam pools on the Ohio River drainage are “rivers.” It is unlawful to conduct a fishing tournament on the North Branch, West Branch or main stem of the Susquehanna River that allows a tournament angler to harvest bass.
NOTE: Stocked trout waters are closed to fishing from February 19 to the opening day of the regular trout season in April, unless included in the **Stocked Trout Waters Open to Year-Round Fishing Program**.
NOTE: Landlocked Alewife less than 8 inches in length taken from inland ponds, lakes or reservoirs that are collected by legal means may be harvested for use as baitfish.
NOTE: It is legal to fish for trout in Class A streams year-round, with no harvest beginning the day after Labor Day through the opening

day of trout season the following year. The exception is those stream sections designated as both Class A Wild Trout Streams and Stocked Trout Waters (Miscellaneous Special Regulations). These stream sections are closed to fishing from February 19 until 8 a.m. on the opening day of trout.
 **** **BAITFISH** includes all forms of minnows; suckers, chubs, Fallfish, lampreys; Gizzard Shad 8 inches or less; and all forms of darters, killifishes and stonecats (except those listed as threatened or endangered species). Legally taken gamefish may be used as bait. It is unlawful to use or possess goldfish, comets, koi and Common Carp as baitfish while fishing. **FISHBAIT** includes crayfish, crabs and the nymphs, larvae and pupae of all insects spending any part of their life cycle in the water.
For all crayfish species, the head must be immediately removed behind the eyes upon capture unless used as bait in the water from which taken.



GREENWOOD FURNACE STATE PARK



by Bob Frye

photo-Spring Gearhart

Greenwood Furnace State Park's lake holds much promise for the trophy trout angler. It gets stocked throughout the year, after all. It has lots to offer to those who hear the call to the water for fishing and boating.

This secluded park located in Huntingdon County, about 30 minutes south of State College, was born from the smoke and noise of heavy industry. In the 1830s, Scotch-Irish and German settlers moved in to work Greenwood Iron Furnace. Fueled by charcoal, it created pig iron ingots that were refined and turned into wrought iron products.

The surrounding village featured a gristmill, one powered by 6-acre Greenwood Lake, built in 1842.

Within 5 years, though, the operation was sold at sheriff's sale. It didn't fire back up for nearly a decade. Under new ownership, it boomed, courtesy of a growing railroad industry hungry for tires, wheels and axles. By the late 1850s, this was the first and only charcoal ironworks in the state with two stacks operating side by side. The surrounding community prospered, sponsoring its own baseball team and a brass band.

The boom lasted about 30 years until urbanization, new iron- and steel-making processes, changing

economics, and other factors closed the furnaces for good in 1904.

Out of the ashes, came recreational opportunity. All the soot produced by decades of iron making made this area good for growing trees. In 1906, the state bought this land and established Greenwood Forest Tree Nursery. It operated until 1993, producing as many as three million seedlings a year to reforest Pennsylvania.

At about the same time, old-time residents began holding an annual reunion leading in 1924 to the creation of Greenwood Public Camp, forerunner of the park.

Their legacy is a recreational jewel built on a historical foundation. Evidence of that merger is obvious in Greenwood Lake's spillway. Though old, it remains a visually-striking monument to craftsmanship, one matched only by the captivatingly beautiful lake it holds back, alternately ringed by dark woods and sunny shores.

You can only access the shore on one side, the one with the 300-foot swimming beach. A fishing pier offers opportunities to fish near the spillway with better prospects, given deeper water.

The area along the steeply wooded shore opposite of the beach is likewise deeper on average. Anglers in kayaks and canoes can reach it, permitted year-round except for



A fishing pier located to the right of the swimming beach offers a great spot to fish.

opening weekend of trout, using the hand-carry launch between the spillway and beach.

Anglers can expect to see panfish, but trout are the main attraction. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission stocks the lake twice in spring and again in October. It gets Brook Trout and Rainbow Trout in the spring, and Rainbow Trout in the fall.

When that action slows, there are other family-friendly things to do. The beach has a seasonal concession stand. There's a playground, ballfield, horseshoe pits, picnic tables, self-guided orienteering course, hunting and numerous hiking trails of varying difficulty.

A 51-site campground offers rustic walk-in sites as well as many with electricity.

The park hosts public programs throughout the summer and activities like charcoal making. The wanderer can see many old buildings still standing including a century-plus-old stone church hosting Sunday services for campers. Make a day or overnight trip of it. Have fun and get a look at important Pennsylvania history. ☐

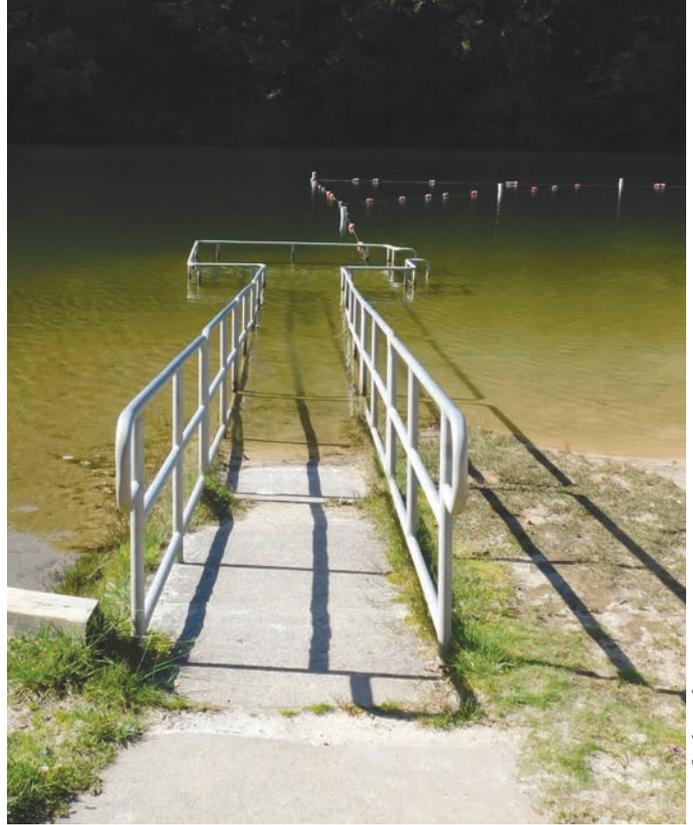


photo-Spring Gearhart

The walkway leading to the hand-carry boat launch.



photo-Spring Gearhart

An iron furnace at Greenwood Furnace State Park, Huntingdon County.



photo-Mike Gearhart

The spillway at Greenwood Furnace State Park. Greenwood Lake was originally built to power a gristmill.

Sharing the Outdoors

by *Linda Stager*

photos by the author



I'm retired these days. And, when I visit our local lakes, I often see anglers and boaters welcoming the sunrise. To me, it's the perfect way to start the day. It's peaceful whether you catch any fish or not.

But, these outdoor enthusiasts look a lot like me—also retired.

Since then, I have been wondering who fishes these days. And, how we can encourage others—those who have not been the traditional angler or boater—to pick up a rod and join our passion for the water.

Statistically, fishing is not an old man's sport. It is true that more men than women currently fish (64% male vs. 36% female). But, according to a "2020 Special Report on Fishing" published by the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation, only about 11% of anglers are age 65 plus. Surprisingly to me, 14% of anglers are 6-12 years old. Adult demographics by age show a steady 14-15% participation rate between the ages of 25 and 54.

I found out that freshwater fishing is the most popular form of fishing (62%) and that people who fished also became interested in other outdoor activities, like biking, hiking, running and camping. That's a lot of people interested in our environment and committed to keeping it clean and safe.

However, other statistics weren't as inclusive. Seventy-nine percent of anglers were white, 7% Hispanic, 7% Black and 3%

Asian. And, urban fishing opportunities aren't as plentiful as rural ones.

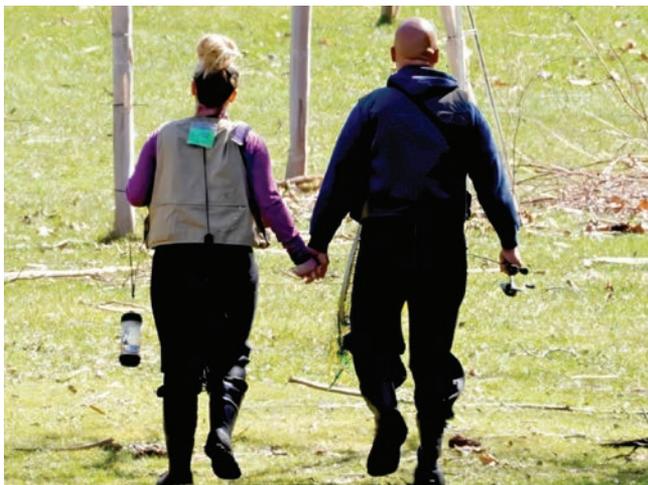
When I was done reading, I concluded that these statistics are a call to action for all of us who currently enjoy fishing and boating. Each of us can do something to support and encourage love for our sport. Now is the time to do it.

Here are some ideas:

- We need to talk the talk. Share how much we have a passion for our sport. Educate everyone—organizations, schools and people on the street about outdoor activities, safety measures and stewardship for our environment. Do it with passion. Let folks know that fishing and boating is fun.
- Let's work with our local leaders to ensure that fishing and boating facilities are accessible for all. Does that fishing pier allow a wheelchair with ease? Can adaptive equipment be provided? Can our local bass groups offer programs specific to those who haven't traditionally had access to our sport?
- Join a local organization to reach out to those who aren't yet fishing or boating. Can something be done around Earth Day activities? What can our communities do to open access to our lakes, ponds and streams? How can we increase opportunities for urban



Mentor those who aren't yet involved in fishing.



Encourage and support passion for the outdoors.

and suburban fishing? Pose questions when groups are planning events for the coming fishing season.

- Volunteer and mentor those who aren't yet involved in our sport. According to the study, 91% of current adult fishing participants started fishing before they were 12 years old. Only 9% of current participants tried fishing at age 12 or older. To me, that means we all need to reach out to youngsters who haven't tried fishing yet. Do it as a family. Do it as a volunteer. While we are at it, reach out to other ethnic populations who aren't yet hooked on fishing.

This is the age of inclusion and diversity. Each of us has an opportunity to encourage and support our passion for the outdoors and for water sports by expanding opportunities for all. ☐



Work with local leaders to ensure that fishing facilities are accessible for all.

Where to fish, boat and paddle:



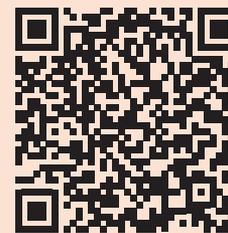
explorepawaters.com/find-a-waterway/

Fishing Tackle Loaner program:



fishandboat.com/About-Us/Affiliates/Loaner-Program/Pages/default.aspx

ADA-accessible recreation facilities:



paparksandforests.org/our-work/recreation/outdoors-for-everyone



Fishing from State Park Marina Docks

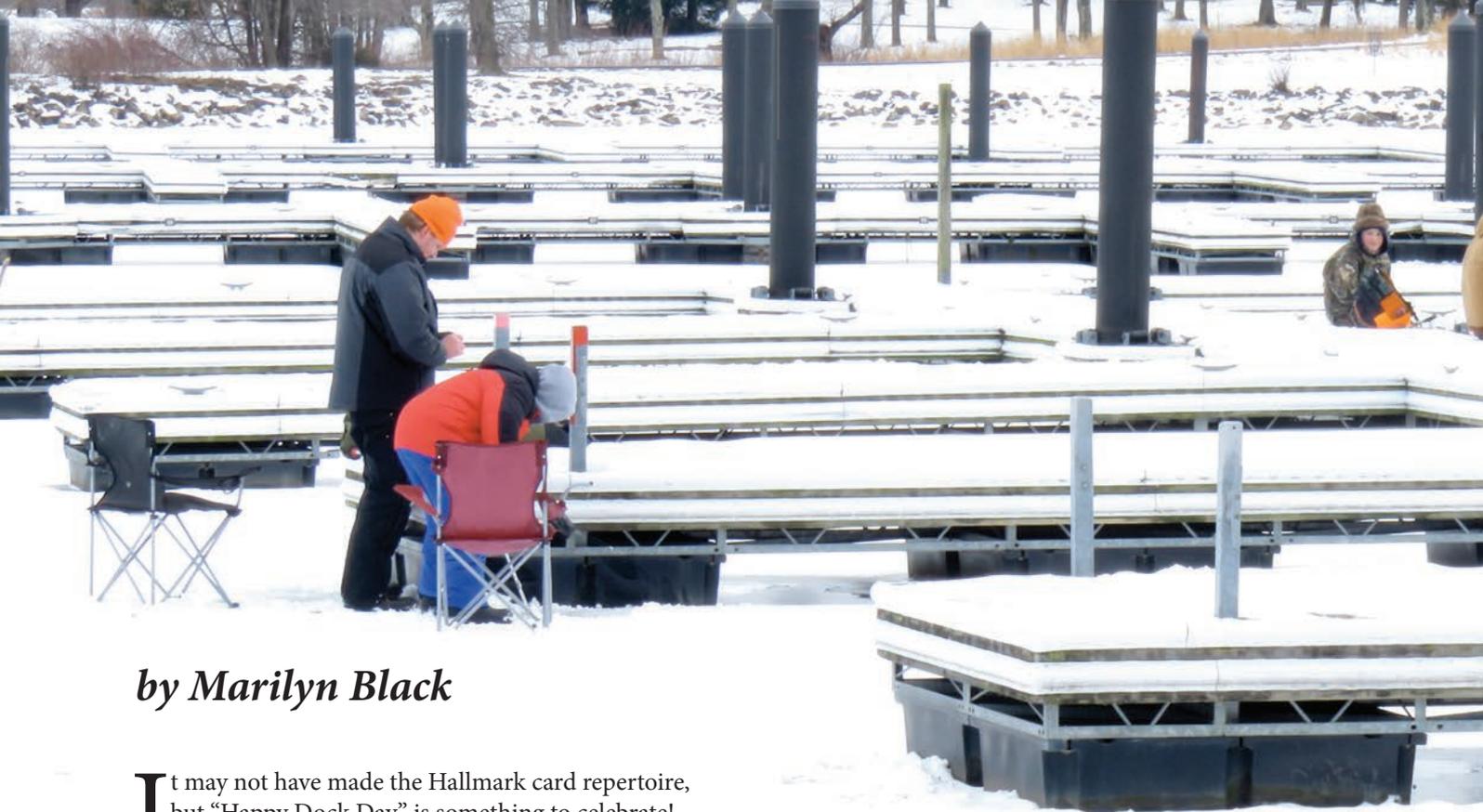


photo-Marilyn Black

by Marilyn Black

It may not have made the Hallmark card repertoire, but “Happy Dock Day” is something to celebrate! Several state parks across Pennsylvania include marina facilities where boats are moored by seasonal renters. The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources regulations require that all boats must be removed from state park marinas on October 31.

In some state parks where docks remain in the water all winter long, anglers are encouraged to fish from the docks starting November 1, which Bo Bartholomew, Mercer County, has coined “Happy Dock Day.” He and other fishing buddies make a point of gathering at their favorite state park marina to be among the first to cast a line into the newly available fishing zone, which was off-limits during the active boating season.

Open water months

In Pennsylvania, the water adjacent to marina docks generally does not freeze during November and most of December, and it thaws in early spring. The wide floating gangway dock surfaces are well-suited to anglers and their fishing gear.

All three marinas in Pymatuning State Park, Crawford County, become magnets for anglers at the start of November. The Jamestown Marina docks are in deeper

water than those at the Espyville and Linesville marinas. Anglers are allowed to fish until March 31 from these docks.

The fishing ending date at the marina on Lake Wilhelm in Maurice K. Goddard State Park, Mercer County, Presque Isle State Park, Erie County, Lake Marburg in Codorus State Park, York County, and Prince Gallitzin State Park, Cambria County is April 30. At Bald Eagle State Park, the dock mooring does not begin until May 15, so the dock fishing remains available through May 14 yearly on Foster Joseph Sayers Reservoir, Centre County. Be careful. Wave action makes some of the docks bouncy, and wet dock surfaces are slippery.

Ice around docks

The docks provide even more advantages for anglers once the ice sets, typically in January and February. Anglers who fear walking on the ice can sit or stand on the wide docks and lower their lures or live bait through ice openings they cut with augers. Or, they may re-use holes already made by others earlier in the day.

Be aware that sunlight warms the upright metal posts, and ice close to the posts tends to be thinner than ice away from the docks.



⬆ Several inches of snow cover the ice and docks at Jamestown Marina, Pymatuning State Park, in December, yet anglers keep fishing.

Some ice anglers even bring ice shanties and set up on or right beside the dock to get out of the winter's winds while they concentrate on fish bites below the frozen surface.

Fishing from marina docks

Dock support pillars and accumulated bottom debris attract crappies, Bluegills, Pumpkinseeds and Yellow Perch. Most fishing for panfish is achieved vertically, with or without a bobber. Small jigs with size #14 to #8 hooks tipped with a minnow or larva bait are most successful.

- Check if fishing is allowed from docks.
- Respect your dock neighbors' space, property and privacy.
- Wear a life jacket.
- Use mobile electronic depth finders.
- Bring a chair or a sit-upon bucket. ☐



photo-Marilyn Black

Danny Boles (left) holds a Black Crappie, and Kevin Austin (right) holds a Bluegill on the dock at Jamestown Marina.

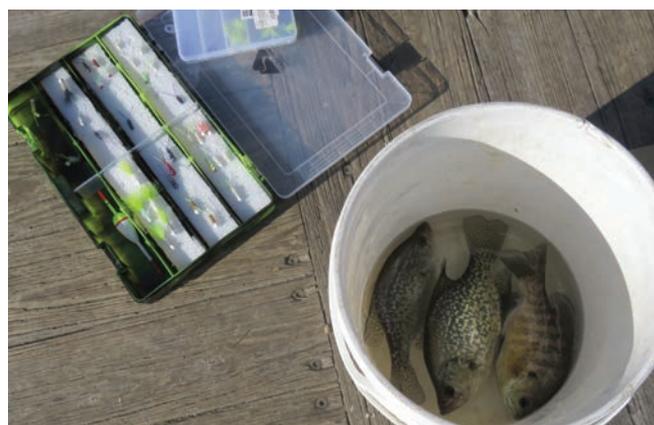


photo-Marilyn Black

Jigs weighing 1/32-ounce make up the fishing arsenal used to catch the Black Crappies and Bluegill in the bucket.



photo-Dan Black

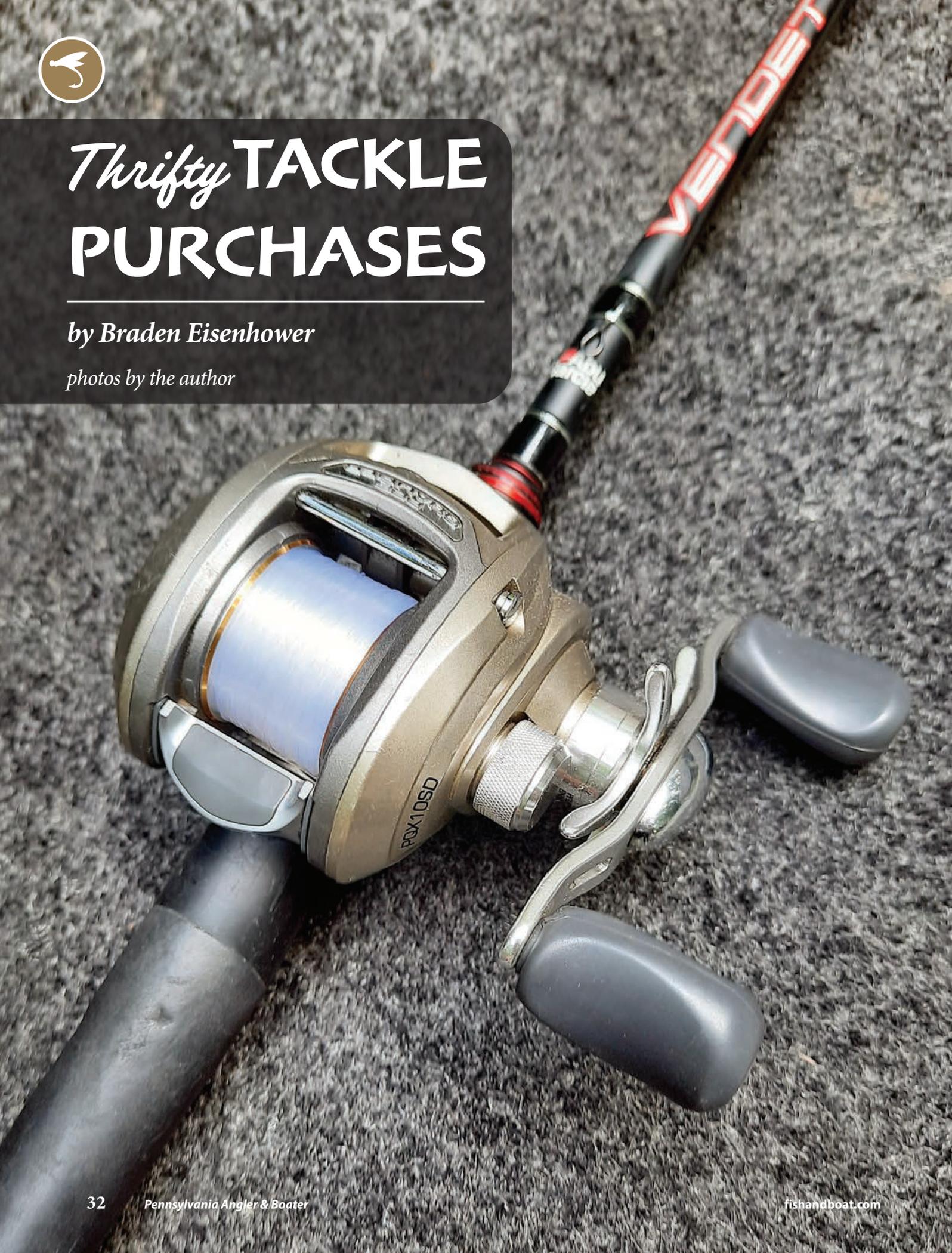
Annica Rabowski proudly displays a Yellow Perch she caught, while her sister Maya keeps fishing on the Linesville Marina docks.



Thrifty TACKLE PURCHASES

by Braden Eisenhower

photos by the author



I have accumulated a healthy supply of tackle over the years. Many items have been gifted to me. But, I've also amassed a heap of rods, reels, lures and everything in between by bargain hunting.

This offseason, I purchased an inexpensive bass reel at a local sport show, found a matching rod at a flea market, stockpiled Muskellunge lures from an auction and stumbled upon a kayak cart at a church bazaar. And, that only skims the surface of my findings. These items were preowned, in like new condition, and I'm happy they can be repurposed.

If the expense of outdoor equipment has limited your purchasing power, here are some ways to get gear for a fraction of the retail price.

Local sport shows

Throughout the winter months, many sporting clubs, fire departments and non-profit organizations host fishing and hunting flea markets as fundraisers. Proceeds from entry fees, food sales and raffle prizes support local organizations and help fund outreach programs. In return, attendees can attend seminars, shop for the upcoming season, catch up with friends and ward off the symptoms of cabin fever.

These shows offer a wide selection, and I'm guaranteed to walk away with something. Usually, this is the place to find oddities, like difficult-to-find or discontinued lures.

The downside: I expect to pay a bit more for whatever I find. The attendees comprise a market entirely of anglers, and sellers are aware of the prices they once paid and what the item is worth. It also pays to bundle a few items and make an offer.

Rummage sales

The best deals I've found were at ordinary flea markets, church bazaars, yard sales or garage sales. Since these are general sales, it takes a bit of luck to find something fishing-related that's of interest. Many of these turn out to be busts. Ads boasting large quantities of fishing items at upcoming sales can be underwhelming in person. But, the payoff for looking through ads comes eventually, and it's often in unsuspecting places.

Most rummage sales are on weekend mornings when I'm hopefully fishing. But, I try not to pass these up when time allows. Sellers are often ready to



Sport shows offer a fantastic opportunity of scoring hard-to-find lures. Sometimes, the action of older lures, like this Mann's Baby 1-Minus, is better than their modern versions.

cut ties with whatever has been cluttering the garage, and they aren't overly concerned about current market value.

Online platforms

If on-site sales don't fit your schedule, there's no need to panic. There are several web resources ranging from auctions sites to classified advertisements on dedicated web pages, forums or social media.

Search classified for items nearby and pick them up or pay a fee to have items shipped. Experiment with keywords when searching as many listings are generic and sometimes misspelled. Buyers should exchange money cautiously, though many sites are reputable. I prefer to arrange pick-ups in public places like stores or gas stations.

Auctions are fun and addicting. I find bidding sites to be nerve wracking as the closing seconds tick away, and that adrenaline rush and competitive mindset sometimes causes me to overextend.

Retail stores

Those seeking deals on new items or the latest trends should monitor incentives from retail stores or manufacturers. Given the year round need to continuously attract business, there is always something available at a discounted rate. That said, the best deals usually come around holidays or preseason promotions. Also, check virtual or physical clearance sections for end of year closeouts.

Bargain hunting is like any outdoor opportunity—it all comes down to timing, research and striking while the deal is hot. Going in with a clear budget and a shopping list of predetermined wants helps me avoid overspending or purchasing unnecessary items. ☐



DEEP WOOD FOR LATE SEASON CRAPPIES

by Jeff Knapp

photos by the author

Some of the year's best crappie fishing is in late fall, from the time the water temperature drops into the low 50s to when the access areas ice over. It's a simple pattern that involves finding deep wood cover holding fish—brush piles, cribs, shoreline laydowns along creek channel swings—and then picking them apart with different presentations until you discover the choice of the day.

- Deep is relative. In clear water, cover may be in 30- to 40-foot of water, whereas 15- to 20-foot depths can attract fish in a dingy water environment.

- Sonar reveals wood cover and the fish in hiding. Basic 2D traditional sonar will show deep wood. More advanced units using down imaging and side imaging—commonplace on many anglers' boats—offer more information. Down imaging provides the target separation necessary to determine if fish are present in deep wood. Side imaging also allows you to scan a much wider area when searching for cover.
- Shoreline laydowns are easiest to spot since they are exposed. Ones found where the channel swings tight to shore tend to be best and are common since these areas often have steep shorelines. As banks erode root systems, mature trees fall into the lake. Crappies will often congregate on the tips of this cover and are visible on down imaging, even more so on side imaging as you idle along the cover.
- Typically, what we call brush piles are trees imbedded in the bottom, deposited there by





Crappies may be finicky, calling for a variety of jig colors and soft plastic offerings.

drifting ice or high-water events. While laydowns can be productive, offshore brush piles can also be rewarding holes you have to yourself.

- Cribs of various sizes and designs are found in many of our lakes, resulting from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's (PFBC's) habitat improvement efforts. Maps showing the general location of cribs can be found on PFBC's website at fishandboat.com.
- Side imaging is most efficient in locating fish in deep brush piles and cribs. Transducers that feature higher resolution provide better detail.
- It's common for crappies to stack up on one or two cribs among a cluster of 12 or more. The same can be said for a group of laydowns or offshore brush piles. Crappies are mobile fish, so location can change from day to day. It pays to look for cover holding fish before wetting a line.
- Presentation-wise, fishing vertically is most effective given the depths being fished and the unlikelihood of the boat disrupting crappies.
- A bait selection that includes light jig heads ($\frac{1}{16}$ - to $\frac{1}{8}$ -ounce), a variety of soft plastic profiles in several colors, nibble-sized scent/flavor attractors, artificial minnows in the 1- to 2-inch range and $\frac{1}{4}$ -ounce blade baits will provide lots of options for optimal productivity.
- When hovering over deep wood, my first bait option is a 2-inch soft plastic bait on a light jig head. Often, I apply scent attractant before lowering it down, being patient as it can take a while to reach the cover below. Thin "nano" braid provides the feel for light bites, which are often just a heaviness on the line. Usually,

the most active fish are suspended in the uppermost part of the cover. When light jigs snag up, the hook will often straighten enough to pull free.

- If fish jump on initial efforts, fine. Normally it takes some experimentation. Adding a "nibble" to the hook will most likely do the trick. Then, try different colors and profiles. If the fish still won't bite, show them a $\frac{1}{4}$ -ounce blade bait fished with short snaps and lengthy pauses. If all fails, put down a 1- to 2-inch minnow such as a Gulp! Alive!® Minnow. I've experienced days where fish ignored all other offerings but bit the tiny pseudo minnow.
- Crappies taken from deep water may not be releasable due to the pressure change. Harvest fish when they struggle on the surface following release. ☐



This crappie was caught using a $\frac{1}{4}$ -ounce blade bait.

DREAM WEAVER CUSTOM FISHING RODS

by Alex Zidock Jr.

Necessity is the mother of invention, but she also bears the power to provide. Barry Weaver, Elizabethtown, never fished as a youngster. In his early 20s and newly married, his father-in-law, who worked in a Michigan tackle shop, brought him a busted rod and suggested he take it home and practice wrapping it.

“One day, the guys I worked with asked me to go trout fishing with them. I never fished, and I didn’t own a fly rod. I decided to check them out and see what they cost. And man, I wasn’t going to spend that kind of money and not like doing it,” said Weaver.

Out of necessity, he went home and decided to build his own rod from the parts his father-in-law gave him. “My brother-in-law told me it wasn’t rocket science. So, I began wrapping, and I soon found out I enjoyed wrapping rods as much as I enjoyed fishing,” said Weaver.

Weaver’s new hobby quickly produced several rods. “My wife asked what I was going to do with all the rods? That’s when I decided to start selling them, and Dream Weaver Custom Fishing Rods took life. Since then, for the last 35 years, there has not been a time when I have not been building a fishing rod,” said Weaver.

Fifteen years ago, Weaver took early retirement from the Mars facility, and his profitable hobby shifted from part-time to full-time.

“That’s pretty much what I do now. I came into this shop with another friend. He had an internet business, and I had to move from building rods at home, because the major rod

parts suppliers said they could not sell me their top-shelf stuff unless I had a brick-and-mortar location,” said Weaver.

His friend moved south 10 years ago, and Weaver has the entire space. He put in some tackle and expanded his custom rod-building business.

“I’ll repair any rod, but when the customer brings a rod in for repair, I give them my 25-cent pitch on why a custom rod would be better for them,” said Weaver.

“I build anything from ultralight to offshore. I have rods in Russia, South Africa, Australia, several other foreign countries and the United States. If somebody told me 15 years ago I’d have rods worldwide, I would say they were out of their mind,” said Weaver.



photo-Alex Zidock Jr.

Every piece of Dream Weaver Custom Fishing Rods is custom to the individual customer.



photo-Alex Zidock Jr.

For 35 years, Barry Weaver has been building custom fishing rods.



photo-Alex Zidock Jr.

“Because of the internet, it amazes me that some guy in some foreign country will send \$700 or \$800 to a guy in the United States they never met for a custom fishing rod. And,

while I build rods from the information I can get over the internet, when someone comes in the shop for a custom rod, they don’t realize it will take about an hour to go over everything and discuss all the options,” said Weaver.

“They come here, because they want something they can’t buy. The kayaker wants a rod with a short handle for maneuverability, the tuna guy wants a short, heavy broom stick-like rod, and a surfcaster may want something 13 feet long to enjoy his sport,” said Weaver.

“I set up each rod for the type of fishing they’re going to do, select the right blank and put guides on it. I would say, on average, most factory rods are one or two guides short, because if the bean counters can save a dollar on a million rods, they will take the chance the rod may break, because they didn’t quite have enough guides,” said Weaver.

It’s becoming increasingly important to his customers that what Weaver builds is made with American products. “There are some things in rod building you can’t buy in the United States. I use as many American-made products as possible,” said Weaver.

Family is essential to Weaver, and while he has three grandchildren, only one lives close enough to fish with regularly. “My son and grandson, Asher, fish with me, and my wife Coleen. She is my biggest asset. When I get swamped here at the shop, she takes care of all the day-to-day things at home,” said Weaver.

If you love what you do, it’s never work. And, Weaver’s rod building is a hobby of love. “While I fish many places for trout and big fish in the surf at the Outer Banks, I mostly just love building custom fishing rods,” said Weaver. ☐

photo-courtesy of Dream Weaver Custom Fishing Rods



A custom design with a unique feather is embedded in each rod blank.

photo-courtesy of Dream Weaver Custom Fishing Rods



Barry Weaver provides custom built fishing rods for the winners of the Capital City Bassmasters high school tournament.

photo-courtesy of Dream Weaver Custom Fishing Rods



Family is important to Barry Weaver, and he spends as much time as he can fishing with his grandson Asher.

Dream Weaver Custom Fishing Rods
dreamweaverrods.com



Flag Waving on Ice

by Jerry Bush

Thirty minutes after sunrise, a bent, metal spring is freed from its latch, and a fluorescent orange flag leaps upward, a clear indication that a predatory fish has accepted an angler's offering. The angler sprints to the hole. He lifts the device and observes that the fishing line is rapidly unspooling. As he grasps the line to set the hook, a wide smile appears on his face. He realizes immediately that he hooked a potential trophy. Just as suddenly, a look of concern and concentration replaces the smile. The fish feels large enough to test the strength of the fishing line. Would it hold? As the large fish thrashes below the ice, the angler realizes he must use nothing more than the sense of feeling in his cold hands to correctly determine when to hoist the line and when to slowly release a bit of it. Too much or too little pressure at the wrong moment could allow the fish to swim free. That's the challenge of fishing with a tip-up.

Though sometimes rigged for panfish, most tip-up users target larger species like big bass, catfish, Muskellunge, Northern Pike and large trout. Tip-ups are usually spooled with a strong, braided nylon line and often tipped with a monofilament leader rated for 10- to 20-pound fish. To discourage smaller fish from rearranging the setup, use larger baits or lures than usual for panfish, suspended below the rig.

Using lures that look similar to crankbaits may be more successful. Instead of being tied to an eyelet at the mouth, they are attached to an eyelet above



photo-Linda Stager

the body, where a fish's dorsal fin would be located. The dorsal fin eyelet allows the lure to suspend horizontally, the natural position of an idle fish. Some manufacturers include an additional hook protruding from the mouth, and many include angled tail fins, which react to gentle movements under the ice to attract predators.

Muskellunge and Northern Pike often swim with prey in their mouths for a brief time before issuing a hard bite. Experienced anglers develop a sense of when to stop the line and set the hook. It's better to set the hook a few seconds late than several seconds early.

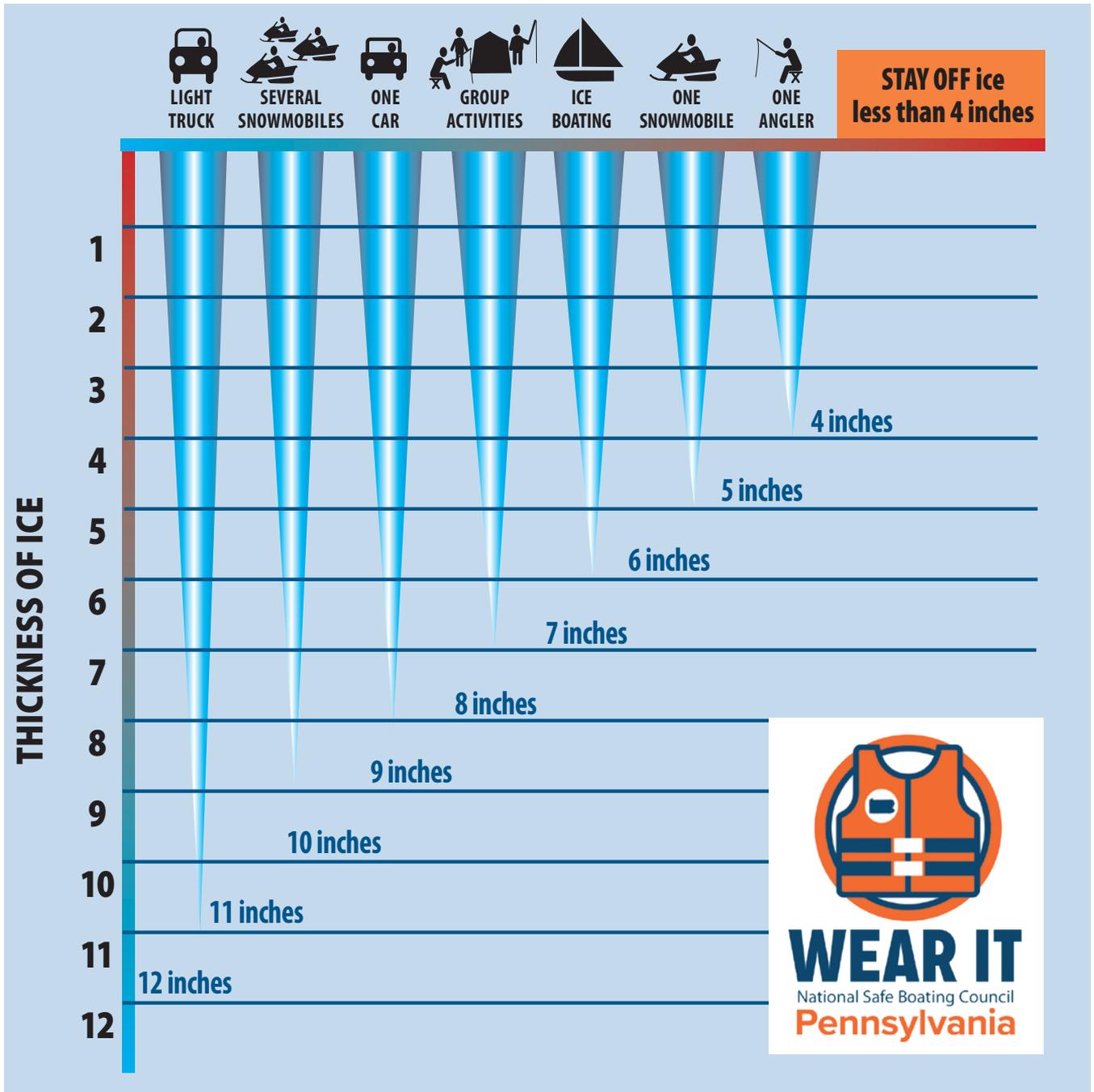
Tip-ups take advantage of the simple designs of the past to serve today's ice anglers. Tip-ups are nothing more than two sticks forming a cross large enough to span a hole in the ice, with a third vertical stick. A 3- to 4-inch diameter spool is attached at the lower end, and a springy, metal band and flag at the top. Submerging the reel prevents it from freezing during use. After the bait is lowered to a desired depth, the arm is bent against a clasping point that releases the spring and flag if line is pulled from the spool.

Emerging improvements include the use of lighter, stronger, plastic rails to span openings. Units manufactured with solid bodies that completely cover the hole are growing in popularity. The full cover absorbs sunlight and protects the drilled hole from icing over, which is a benefit for anglers who don't want to disturb their setup. □

Ice Safety Guide

Ice is never 100% safe.

Minimum ice thickness guidelines for new, clear ice.



There are many factors that influence ice strength including water chemistry, wind and sunlight.

Please note: these are general ice thickness guidelines. Carefully check ice conditions before venturing onto the ice.



The Elegant Satinfins

by Rob Criswell

photos by the author

The colors of minnows vary from the flashy, bedecked in brilliant reds and yellows (Redbelly Dace and Redside Dace) to the drab (Fathead Minnow). In between, the genus *Cyprinella* (meaning “little carp”), known collectively as the “satinfin shiners”, distinguish themselves by their sleek lines and silvery sheen. During spawning season, the males are downright handsome.

Two species of satinfins pervade Pennsylvania’s waters. The nominal Satinfin Shiner, *Cyprinella analostana*, swims in our Atlantic Slope drainages—the Delaware, Potomac and Susquehanna. It’s close relative, the Spotfin Shiner, *Cyprinella spiloptera*, is more cosmopolitan, occupying Pennsylvania’s major watersheds and extending from North Dakota and Ontario south to Alabama. They live in medium-sized streams, large rivers and lakes. They are frequently the most common fish species in their waterways and often form large schools. They are tolerant of a wide range of bottom types but prefer life over clean sand and gravel.

Satinfins are small, reaching no more than 4 inches. They sport pointed snouts and laterally compressed bodies. The scales are distinctively diamond-shaped

and taller than wide. They are highlighted by black pigment on their edges.

Coloration varies, depending on viewing angle and light conditions, and is elegant but not striking. Dorsally satinfins are bluish- to olive-grey, transitioning to silvery on the sides and whitish underparts. They may as well be known as the “spotfin shiners”, as both species exhibit pigmentation on their dorsal fins that appear as vague to distinctive blotches, until they are breeding males. They are bedecked with small, horny tubercles from head to tail. The upper sides are an iridescent bluish-violet, a wide lateral stripe may appear greenish, and the undersides are silvery. The fins may become yellow and even green, and the tails are tipped in white.

Satinfins are crevice spawners, finding narrow gaps between rocks and pieces of debris as protection for their eggs. They spawn from May to mid-August in the Keystone State, during which time things can get testy.

Territorial males often face off with opponents, threatening with erected dorsal fins and stiff swimming motions. Occasionally, they will get more aggressive with adversaries repeatedly striking with their snouts, sometimes even grabbing an intruder by one of its lower fins. If the intruder grabs back, they swim in an ever-faster circle in blurring speed. One poor interloper was dragged by a dominant male about 12 inches away from a spawning boulder by the fin.



Satinfin Shiner,
Cyprinella analostana



A breeding male Spotfin Shiner

When a male locates a suitable crevice, he coaxes a female to the site, where they may spawn upside down depending on the orientation of the opening. An observer noted that the eggs are “sprayed out, somewhat like a shot from a gun”, releasing

10 to 100 eggs each time. Active spawning may continue for 5 days. Both species are known to communicate with each other through a series of knocking and purring sounds when courting and fighting.

The eggs usually hatch in 6 to 8 days, and the offspring are sexually mature the following year with a maximum life expectancy of 4 years. As adults, they usually forage in the water column searching for aquatic insects.

The abundance and widespread distribution of the Spotfin Shiner assures that it is sometimes used as bait. It makes a good aquarium fish and will spawn in captivity.

The elegant satinfin appear to have stable populations in the state, although the Spotfin Shiner has replaced the Satinfin Shiner in some southeastern streams. The Spotfin Shiner remains abundant in all our drainages.

There have been a number of reports of collections of the Steelcolor Shiner, *Cyprinella whipplei*, from the Ohio River. This fish is similar in appearance to the Satinfin Shiner and Spotfin Shiner. Misidentifications are common. None of the Steelcolor Shiner reports are supported by specimens, so these reports cannot be confirmed. The nearest confirmed record to Pennsylvania is from approximately 150 miles down the Ohio River. □



Spotfin Shiner, Cyprinella spiloptera



FISHING FINDS OFF THE BEATEN PATH

by Jessica Aiello photos by the author

While there are many wonderful opportunities to walk a few hundred yards from your vehicle, cast a line and catch a fish, there is something to be said for taking the time to find that ideal fishing spot. Hiking into Penn's Woods with your gear is a great way to find peace, quiet and the next "big one."

Where to go

Most anglers have their perfect fishing spot and are unlikely to share where it is, but a few employees from Pennsylvania's Bureau of Forestry thankfully were not so tight-lipped. Here are a few of their favorite places where great hiking intersects with great fishing.

"The Pine Creek Rail Trail immediately comes to mind," said Jeff Wolesslagle. "Pine Creek is such a beautiful and diverse fishery, and the scenery is amazing. It has multiple easy access points in the Tiadaghton and Tioga state forests, and the fishing can be amazing. Also, I have hiked portions of the Mid State Trail, mostly in the Rothrock State Forest, and there are areas along the trail that run close to pristine mountain streams that have great wild populations of our state fish, the Brook Trout."

"The Mid State Trail also passes through two special state forest management areas, where incredible fishing can be found on the Little Juniata and Penns Creek, respectively," said Ryan Reed. "The Little Juniata Natural Area is part of Rothrock State Forest, and the Penns Creek Wild Area is found in Bald Eagle State Forest. Both bodies of water support wild populations of trout. Other fantastic fisheries that are accessible by numerous state forest and state park trails include the Clarion River, Clear Creek State Forest; Sinnemahoning Creek, Elk State Forest; and Quebec Run, Forbes State Forest."

"Penns Creek is particularly noteworthy to me too," said Matt Beaver. "Along the Centre County and Mifflin County sections of the creek—which is Pennsylvania's longest limestone stream—the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission has established an artificial-lures-only slot limit regulation to manage a stretch to enhance the trophy trout potential, where year-round trout fishing is permitted. An artificial-lures-only catch-and-release area is located downstream. Penns Creek is as close to a wild and remote limestone stream as exists in Pennsylvania. Vehicular access is limited. Significant hiking on Fisherman's Path from the Coburn footbridge is necessary to sample the entire length."

Things to consider

While great fishing may be a reward for a long hike, there are certain things to keep in mind as you venture from your vehicle.



Pine Creek at Hamilton Bottom Boat Launch



Penns Creek



A Brown Trout caught while fishing Penns Creek.

“Cell phone reception may be spotty or non-existent, so fishing with a buddy and letting someone know where you will be and when you expect to return is important,” said Marci Mowery, Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation President. “Packing all the fishing essentials, as well as plenty of water, snacks, insect repellent, sunscreen, a first aid kit, and a map and compass for the likely time your phone’s GPS signal is lost can mean the difference between fun and failure.”

Speaking of packing it all, there are many lightweight rods that pack easily for a hike.

“You never know what opportunities you may discover on the trail. I once stumbled onto a new beaver dam close to a trail that was full of native Brook Trout. I caught and released so many I lost count, and it is a great memory that I revisit often,” said Wolesslagle.

Hiking provides anglers with the opportunity to access some remote locations that may not receive as much fishing pressure while enjoying the scenic beauty and abundant wildlife of Pennsylvania’s state parks and forests. ☑

More information:



paparksandforests.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Fishing_GOPA_14.pdf

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Waterway Steward Program

If you are a water trail user, angler, boater or waterway enthusiast and interested in community science and building long-term stewardship of Pennsylvania’s water trails, register with Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful to be a waterway steward. Collect litter and stream health data while cleaning your favorite waterway. You choose where you want to clean—it can be a different waterway each time. Being stewards of our waterways and other shared public spaces benefits the whole community. It reduces hazards associated with litter, it creates a more inviting place for residents and visitors, and it reduces costs associated with maintenance. Cleanup results are added to statewide totals and help measure progress towards reducing litter.

More information:



keepabeautiful.org/programs/waterway-stewards/

'Tis the Season to Give the Gift of Fishing!

**Fishing Licenses and
Gift Vouchers Available
December 1, 2023.**

*Buy Pennsylvania Angler & Boater
gift subscriptions for family and friends.*

Purchase and redeem gift vouchers
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700 issuing agents or online.

FishandBoat.com

Gear Up for Adventure!

DON'T FORGET TO WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET.



Life jackets save lives year round and are required to be worn November 1 through April 30.

Regulations:



fishandboat.com/Boating/Regulations/Pages/default.aspx

photo-Anna Topper



photo-courtesy of Harry Wade

On September 21, 2023, the Bedford County Chamber of Commerce recognized the Reynoldsdale State Fish Hatchery, Bedford County, with the Excellence in Education Award for activities that enrich the community through learning.

2024 Upcoming Fishing Dates*

Mentored Youth Trout Day:
March 30, 2024 (statewide)

Statewide Opening Day of Trout: April 6, 2024

Fish-for-Free Days:
May 26, 2024 and July 4, 2024

**Dates subject to change by regulation until publication of the 2024 Pennsylvania Fishing Summary.*

EXPLORE PA WATERS

ExplorePAWaters.com is for those who haven't experienced the thrill of hitting a hole of eagerly biting fish or the peace of a meandering paddle trip with an up-close encounter of native wildlife. Check out our maps and find fishing gear to borrow, boats to rent and access to water. Share the site with friends and family who are looking to get started and invite them on your next adventure.



explorepawaters.com



Purchasing your fishing license is now easier than ever!

AUTO-RENEW

Your Fishing License/Permit

In your HuntFish.PA.gov shopping cart, enable the products you want to renew each year and "opt-in" to the auto-renew feature.



Auto Renewal Enabled

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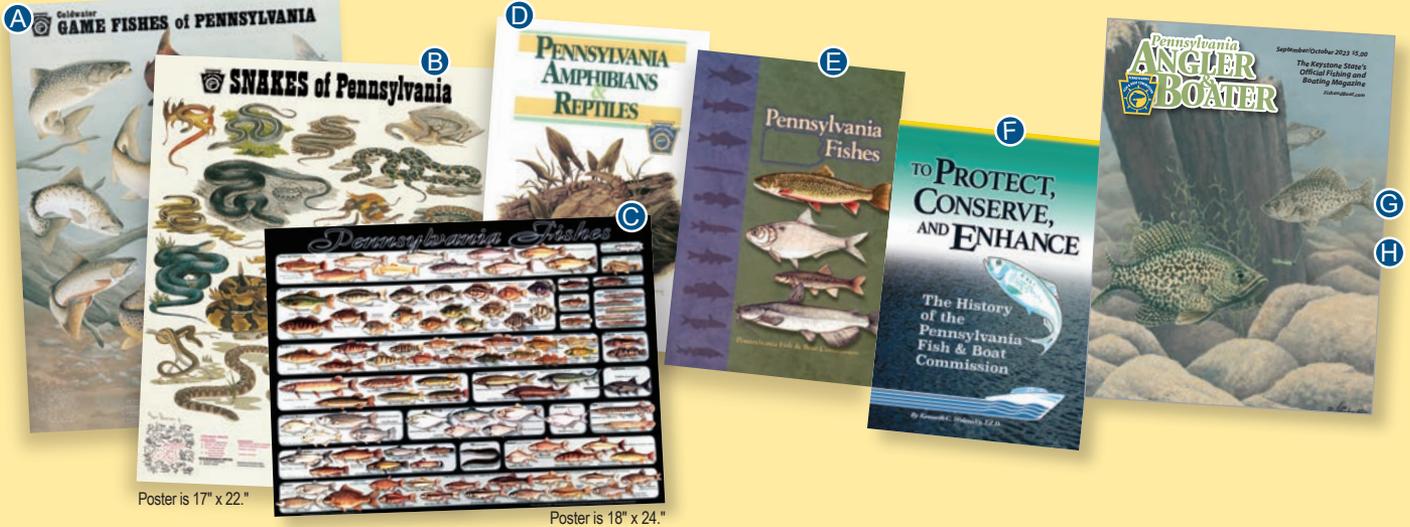


HuntFish.PA.gov

Poster is 17" x 22."

Books are 6" x 9."

Magazines are 8.25" x 10.88."



Poster is 17" x 22."

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D Pennsylvania Amphibians & Reptiles Book (172 pages)	\$14.34	_____	_____
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G Pennsylvania Angler & Boater Magazine One-Year Subscription (6 issues)	\$20.97	_____	_____
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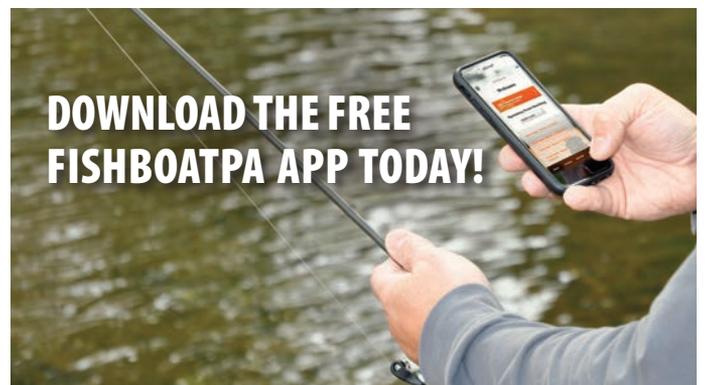
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photo-Mike Parker

BUILDING A BETTER BLUE MARSH LAKE

by Mike Parker
Communications Director
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

Anglers who frequent Blue Marsh Lake, Berks County, have hundreds of new reasons to expect better fishing and boating in the future.

On a hot and humid morning in July, staff from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's (PFBC's) Lake Habitat Section, United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Berks County Conservation District and community volunteers partnered to complete the final phase of a multi-year project to improve fish habitat, water quality and fishing opportunities from both boat and shore.

The project included adding more than 320 wooden short vertical plank and porcupine crib structures to various sections of the lake bottom, as well as the construction of several large rock deflectors along more than 1,500 linear feet of shoreline at four different sites.

The improvements were made possible through funding from a \$134,000 United States open grant from Bass Pro Shops organized by the National Fish Habitat Partnership, matching funds from the PFBC, and in-kind services from the USACE and others. The grant was awarded to and administered through the Berks County Conservation District.

"This is a popular, high-use lake for fishing and boating in this region, and these improvements will both protect and enhance the experience here for everyone," said Vinnie Lessard, PFBC Lake Habitat Manager. "The high volume of boat traffic at Blue Marsh Lake has resulted in some deterioration of the shoreline, which we've now repaired in several sections. It not only looks better, but it protects

against further erosion, creates prime shoreline habitat for fish, and gives shoreline anglers safer and overall better access to the lake."

Volunteers assisted with stuffing fresh tree trimmings into the wooden structures prior to being loaded onto boats and deployed underwater at various locations within the 1,150-acre lake. When continuously submerged beneath the surface, similar habitat structures in other lakes have been known to last up to 30 years.

"These structures immediately add character and refuge areas to the bottom of the lake that fish will flock to," said Lessard. "Within a fairly short period of time, the wooden planks will be covered in algae, attract macroinvertebrates, smaller fish and eventually larger fish. Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass, for instance, will take advantage of these areas as they hunt for food and seek out spawning habitat."

Along with local anglers who frequent the lake for recreational fishing, Blue Marsh Lake annually hosts about 24 fishing tournaments. Competitive anglers should research the submerged habitat structure locations in advance of their visit to find some of the best fishing in the lake. ☐

Fish habitat improvement maps:



fishandboat.com/Conservation/Habitat/Pages/Lake-Habitat.aspx

CAST & CAUGHT



Lawson Powell, age 14, caught this 17-inch crappie while fishing at Glendale Lake in Prince Gallitzin State Park, Cambria County.

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

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



Brett Nesbitt, Cranberry Township, caught this Largemouth Bass while fishing with his dad at Porters Cove in Lake Arthur, Moraine State Park, Butler County.



Steve Halko, Coatesville, caught and released this 4-pound, 20-inch Rainbow Trout while fishing the East Branch Brandywine Creek, Chester County.



Eric Yarnell caught this 27-inch steelhead while fishing Walnut Creek, Erie County.



Brody Dodd, age 15, caught this 9-pound, 11-ounce, 36½-inch Northern Pike while fishing Woodcock Creek Lake, Crawford County.