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# VOLUNTARY PERMITS FEATURED PROJECTS: *Rebuilding Somerset Lake from the Ground Up*

*by Mike Parker*  
*Communications Director*  
*Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission*

If it is true that good things come to those who wait, then anglers and boaters have a lot of good things to look forward to at Somerset Lake, Somerset County.

On June 10, when the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) officially reopened the 253-acre lake, it was the first time in nearly 10 years that the lake was filling back up instead of draining. The reopening, which was celebrated lakeside by local, state, and federal partners, was the culmination of an \$8 million dam rehabilitation project that was necessary after excessive dam seepage was detected in January 2012. If the immediate partial drawdown of the lake at that time was not discouraging enough for the local community, the true heartbreak was felt when the region's premier warmwater fishery was completely drained in October 2017.

While the dry lakebed that was on display throughout the lengthy dam construction period was a bleak sight for many, PFBC habitat crews saw unprecedented opportunity.

"Unfortunately, with having the lake drawn down, you lose your lake for a little bit," said Ben Page, PFBC Lake Habitat Section Chief. "But, it is a perfect opportunity for us as habitat managers for a fisheries agency to improve that fish habitat. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for us to drive heavy machinery down on the lake bottom and add large amounts of rock and wood that will be utilized by that future fishery," said Page.

To fund a portion of the large-scale habitat enhancement project at Somerset Lake, the PFBC allocated \$20,000 from Voluntary Bass Permits sold during the 2021 season. While the voluntary permit dollars alone were not nearly enough, those funds were multiplied when paired with funds raised by the local Somerset Lake Action Committee, Somerset County Sportsmen's League, and a grant from the National Fish Habitat Partnership supported by the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies and United States Fish and Wildlife Service. With the addition of donated materials, equipment, and labor from volunteers and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, more than \$168,000 was raised for the two-phase habitat project.



photos-Mike Parker

*Camden Conner, Conner Cramer, and Gino Tieteman were ready to help stock Somerset Lake, Somerset County, during the official reopening of the lake on June 10, 2022.*

Under phase one, heavy equipment was used to construct large artificial habitat structures including post clusters, rock rubble reefs, and spider humps made of wood and stone. Natural habitat materials such as felled shoreline trees and root wads were incorporated into the design where possible. Phase Two, which will occur once the lake has refilled, will include sinking hundreds of wooden short vertical plank structures weighted with cinder blocks into the depths of the lake where habitat is otherwise sparse. In a short time, these hemlock structures will be covered with algae and kickstart a food web that will include invertebrates, panfish, Channel Catfish, Largemouth Bass, Muskellunge, and Walleyes.

"As a benefit to our anglers, we map all of these sites on maps that are located on the PFBC website, [fishandboat.com](http://fishandboat.com). So, once this lake is full and the structures are underwater, you can locate the sites with your GPS. We have information on the depth and structure type, and now, you have a fishing hot spot when you take your family out onto the lake," said Page.

While fishing is permitted at Somerset Lake, the lake will continue to be managed under the PFBC's Catch and Release Lakes Program for all fish species until the completion of the multi-year restocking plan. ☐



Tom Wolf, Governor

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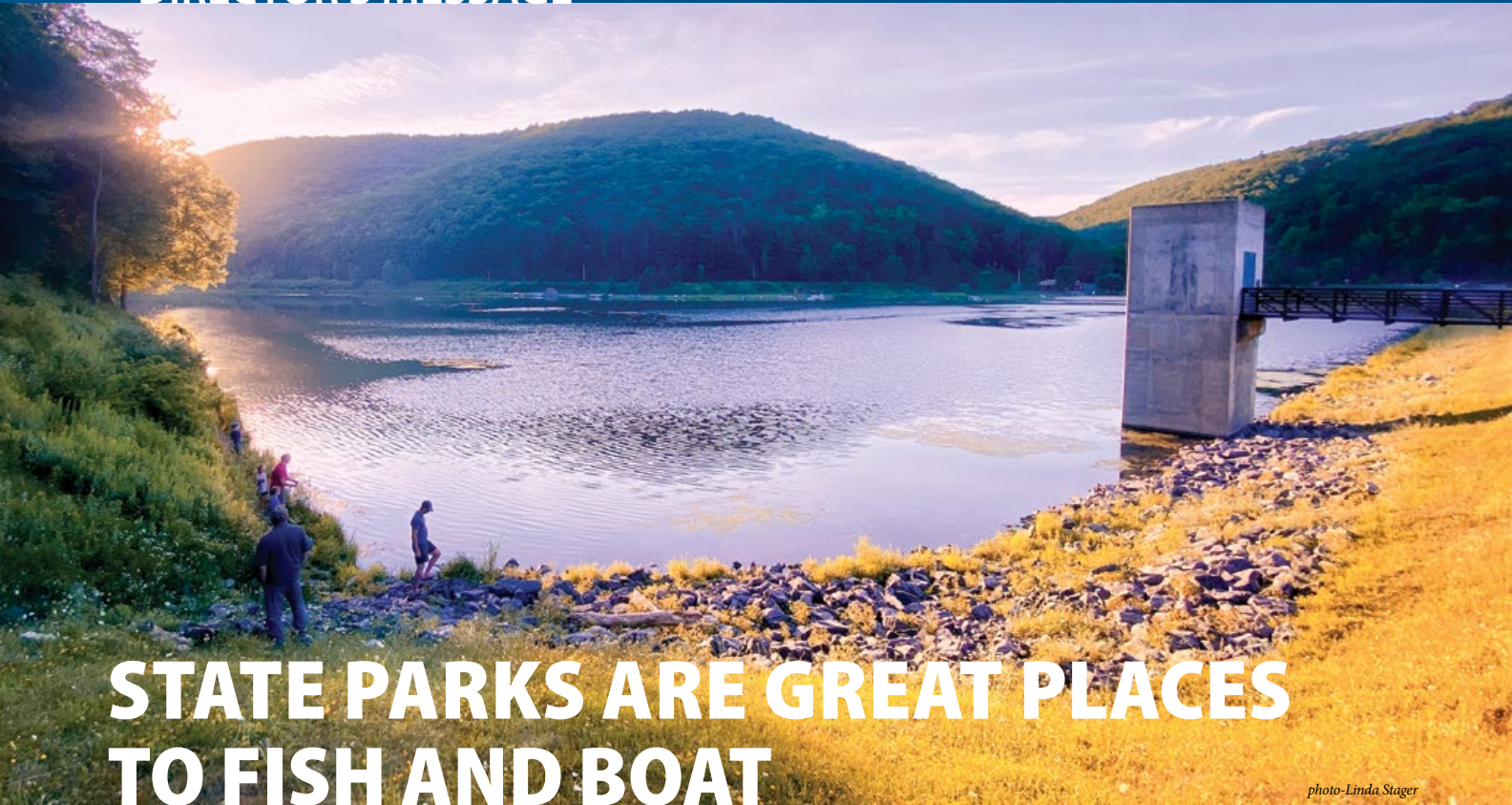
This steelhead on Trout Run, Erie County, traveled from Lake Erie to spawn. Turn to pages 20 and 21 to read more about the steelhead run. *Photo by Linda Stager.*

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## STATE PARKS ARE GREAT PLACES TO FISH AND BOAT

photo-Linda Stager

Lyman Run State Park, Potter County

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

After reading this edition of *Pennsylvania Angler and Boater*, one thing will be abundantly clear. Pennsylvania's numerous state parks are great places to fish and boat. Pine Grove Furnace, French Creek, and Lyman Run state parks are all featured on the following pages, and they just scratch the surface of the waters that await state park visitors.

Statewide, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) collaborates with our partners at the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR) to implement our mission to protect, conserve, and enhance aquatic resources, and provide fishing and boating opportunities. We install fish habitat structures, restore eroding shorelines to improve angler access and protect water quality, stock trout and other fish species, conduct fishing and boating programs, offer fishing tackle loaner sites, and patrol the waters to keep park visitors and the local aquatic resources safe and healthy.

Just last weekend, I met Waterways Conservation Officer Robert J. Bonney, Southern Bucks County, for a ride along at Marsh Creek State Park, Chester County. After a pleasant visit with PA DCNR staff, we boarded the PFBC patrol boat to see the park from the water. I was immediately struck by the beauty of the park. Nestled into a populated area of

Pennsylvania, Marsh Creek State Park is a real gem—and a dynamite Muskellunge fishery. Even more impressive was the degree to which every boater we saw was following the rules of the water, most notably with life jackets. It is hard to recall a lake where I have seen more people wearing their life jackets.

That day, people flooded into the park. In recent years, many state parks have seen historic numbers of visitors, with overcrowding sometimes prompting closing park entrances to ensure visitor safety. If your state park trip ends with a closed entrance, or if you are looking for a new place for your next fishing or boating adventure, try the FishBoatPA mobile app. We have lots of options to choose from, and locations are likely close by.

When you open FishBoatPA, the opening screen has a "Near Me" tab at the bottom. Click on it. Then, scroll down and swipe "Boat Access." The app automatically lists public boat accesses 5, 15, 25, and 50 miles away, waterway horsepower limitations, launch ramp and/or dock areas, shoreline fishing availability, parking, and directions.

After time on the water at Marsh Creek State Park, WCO Bonney and I drove to nearby Struble Lake, Chester County. The PFBC manages the lake in partnership with Chester County and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Struble Lake is a great alternative if Marsh Creek State Park is too crowded. Struble Lake had significantly fewer boats on the water and would have been a nice nearby alternative—and easy to locate just a few clicks away at FishBoatPA.

# PINE GROVE FURNACE STATE PARK



*by Samuel J. Rob*

*photos by the author*

**P**ine Grove Furnace State Park is a 696-acre state park surrounded by the 85,500-acre Michaux State Forest (named after a French botanist sent to America in 1785 to collect plants for the King of France's royal gardens). Located primarily in Cumberland, Franklin, and Adams counties in southcentral Pennsylvania, the park is best known as the midpoint of the 2,186-mile Appalachian Trail (AT). The park is both a historical site and a recreational destination for hikers, anglers, kayakers, cross-country skiers, mountain bikers, all-terrain vehicle (ATV) riders, and snowmobilers.

Park highlights include: the historic furnace for which the park is named, the free AT Museum (located in a 200 year old grist mill and the first museum in America devoted solely to hiking), two lakes (25-acre

Laurel Lake and 1.7-acre Fuller Lake), a campground, a general store (where AT thru-hikers can partake in the store's challenge to eat a half gallon of ice cream at one sitting), and the English Tudor-style Ironmaster's Mansion (built in 1829) that serves as a hiker hostel and a special events venue. Both lakes have swim beaches, and Laurel Lake has kayak and canoe rentals in season. There is also a boat launch for those with their own watercraft—electric motors only. Both lakes contain healthy populations of bass, panfish, perch, pickerel, and trout. Mountain Creek, a beautiful trout stream that flows through the heart of the park, is stocked. The upper reaches of Mountain Creek, as well as tributaries such as Toms Run, contain both Brook Trout and Brown Trout.

This park contains a portion of America's most famous trail, so it is a popular spot for hikers. Whether hiking the steep .75-mile Pole Steeple Trail to the top of Piney Mountain for scenic views, the popular Koppenhaver Trail (1 mile) and Sunset Rocks Trails (8-mile loop), the Buck Ridge Trail (6 miles) connecting the park to the Kings Gap

Environmental Education Center, or hiking south on the AT to Caledonia State Park, the park has trails for every age and level of experience.

Pine Grove Furnace State Park is a year-round destination. Fall brings the hikers and nature lovers to view the bright autumnal reds, yellows, and oranges of the park's hardwood forest. Others come to attend the park's popular Fall Furnace Festival (held annually the third weekend of October) featuring food, live music, demonstrations, and hayrides. Hunting is permitted on 75 acres within the state park and is also permitted in the surrounding Michaux State Forest. Hunters should check with park officials to ensure an understanding of the park and state forest boundaries and regulations. Winter brings cross-country skiers, ice skaters and ice anglers (Laurel Lake only), and snowmobilers. Nature lovers return in spring and summer to watch the wildlife and the mountain laurel and rhododendron bloom in profusion. Summer is for anglers, cyclists, swimmers, water enthusiasts, and all who enjoy picnics with family and friends.

The park is also a boon for the history buff. The namesake furnace was built in 1764 and operated for 131 years until 1895, producing over 6,000 tons of cast iron in 1883 at its peak. While various individuals and companies owned the iron works over the years, the most famous was Jay Cooke, known as the "Financier of the Civil War" and the wealthiest man in America at that time. Cooke and his family often spent summer vacations at the Ironmaster's Mansion. Cooke enjoyed fishing. Sometimes, they would be joined by President Ulysses S. Grant's family. Mrs. Grant's family name was Dent, and she had relatives who lived in nearby Newville, though it has not been established that President Grant personally stayed at the mansion. Another site of historical interest in nearby Michaux State Forest is Camp Michaux, a secret World War II prisoners of war camp. The camp was converted from a Civilian Conservation Corps camp (Camp S-51) that operated on the site from 1933 until 1942. All that remains of the camp today is ruins. ☐



Mountain Creek, Pine Grove Furnace State Park



Appalachian Trail Museum



## Be Safe Outdoors

- Wear sturdy shoes.
- Carry proper safety equipment.
- Stay on well-trodden paths and leave no trace.
- Carry drinking water. Do not drink from streams or lakes without properly treating the water first.
- Observe wildlife from a safe distance.
- Check the weather before you go.
- Tell someone where you are going and when you will return.



Mountain Creek Brook Trout



Pine Grove Furnace, Cumberland County

## For more information

Pine Grove Furnace State Park is open daily. The park can be reached using Interstate 81, Exit 37. Then, traveling south on Route 233 approximately 8 miles to the park. Nearby towns of interest include Carlisle, Chambersburg, Gettysburg, and Shippensburg.

Pine Grove Furnace State Park  
1100 Pine Grove Road  
Gardners, PA  
(717) 486-7174

**pinegrovesp@pa.gov**  
Campground reservations:  
(888) 727-2757

Appalachian Trail Museum  
(open early April through  
late October)  
1120 Pine Grove Road,  
Gardners, PA  
(717) 486-8126  
**info@atmuseum.org**

Ironmaster's Mansion  
1212 Pine Grove Road,  
Gardners, PA  
(717) 486-4108  
**ironmasterspinegrove@gmail.com**

Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau  
(888) 513-5130  
**www.visitcumberlandvalley.com**

## For a map of Pine Grove Furnace State Park and access areas:



<https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/FindAPark/PineGroveFurnaceStatePark/Pages/Maps.aspx>

## Other nearby access areas:

- Children's Lake  
Cumberland County  
Boating is restricted to electric motors and unpowered boats.
- Long Pine Run Reservoir  
Adams County  
Boating is restricted to electric motors and unpowered boats.

# Autumn on the Allegheny



photo-Marilyn Black



photo-Darl Black

The author and Dale Black admire a nice autumn Smallmouth Bass.

by Marilyn Black

September and October are my favorite months to be on 107 free-flowing miles of the Allegheny Wild and Scenic River Water Trail in northwestern Pennsylvania. It is not crowded or buggy. Air and water temperatures are comfortable. Tree-covered hillsides become red and golden mosaics. And, fishing on “La Belle Rivière” (its French name, meaning The Beautiful River) is extremely productive.

During this transitional period, most anglers along the river corridor from Kinzua Dam, Warren, downstream to Emlenton’s Interstate 80 bridge target Smallmouth Bass and Walleyes. Recommended lures and fishing locations for both species in autumn are similar. You may also catch Muskellunge or Northern Pike.

September’s Smallmouth Bass and Walleyes prefer riffles, moving water, and breaks at the head and tail of slower pools.

## Go-to Lures (early fall)

- Wacky Worms (4 inch)
- Soft Swimbait (3½ to 4 inch)
- Tube Baits (2 to 3 inch) (with ¼- to ⅜-ounce heads)
- Buzzbaits

Observe current speed and breaks to determine the weights to employ.

## Go-to Lures (mid to late fall)

- Tube Baits (weighing between ⅛- and ¼-ounce)
- Ned Rigs (start with ⅛ ounce)
- Hair Jigs
- Skirted Jigs with Trailers
- Suspending Jerkbait
- Soft Swimbait (⅜ to ¼ ounce)





photo-Darl Black

*This Smallmouth Bass grabbed a hand tied hair jig.*

This entire water trail is suited for kayaks and canoes as well as jetboats operated by experienced drivers. The only Class III rapids are in Oil City, Venango County, beneath Veterans Memorial Bridge; the portage is on river right.

The best free brochure about the Allegheny Wild and Scenic River Water Trail (previously called the Middle Allegheny River Water Trail) is available by mail from Oil Region Alliance at 814-677-3152; [info@oilregion.org](mailto:info@oilregion.org). U.S. Route 62 hugs the river bank from Warren to Franklin, and the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail lines its east bank from Oil City to Emlenton.

Free primitive camping is allowed by the Allegheny National Forest on 24 islands, which they administer from Kinzua Dam to Tionesta including seven federally designated Wilderness islands. From Franklin to Emlenton, free primitive camping is allowed by the Allegheny Valley Trails Association along the river's east bank between the shoreline and the paved bicycle trail.

More traditional lodging on the river's edge is available. ☐

## Outfitters—Kayak and Canoe Rentals

- Allegheny Outfitters  
[alleghenyoutfitters.com](http://alleghenyoutfitters.com)
- Allegheny Wilderness Outfitters - Canoe/Kayak Rentals  
[alleghenywildernessoutfitter.com](http://alleghenywildernessoutfitter.com)
- Outback Adventures  
[outbackadventurespa.com](http://outbackadventurespa.com)
- OARS—Outdoor Allegheny River Services  
[oarontheallegheny.com](http://oarontheallegheny.com)
- Riverview Canoe and Kayak  
[riverviewcanoe.com](http://riverviewcanoe.com)

## Camping and Access Areas

River Mile	Site Name	Managing Entity
#183.6	Buckaloons Recreation Area	Allegheny National Forest
#153	Tionesta Outflow Camping Area	United States Army Corps of Engineers
#131	Oil City Marina (primitive camping)	City of Oil City
#123	Lower Two Mile Run Primitive Site	Cranberry Township, Venango County
#121.8	Cranberry Township Primitive Camp	Allegheny River Trail
#110	Danners Rest Camping Area	Kennerdell Tract, Clear Creek State Forest
#107.6	Marlowe's Campground	Marlowe Family
#93	Dotter Car Top Boat Access	Allegheny Valley Conservancy



## While You Are Here

The Allegheny National Forest, including Kinzua Sky Walk, is part of visitPA's Leaf Peepers Trips and Trails—the perfect destination for nature lovers, view finders, and photographers to pursue autumn foliage.

Enjoy the beauty of fall while fishing Kinzua Creek, McKean County, a Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission stocked trout water from the dam 0.8 miles upstream SR 3009 Kushequa to 200 meters downstream Allegheny National Forest Road 15.



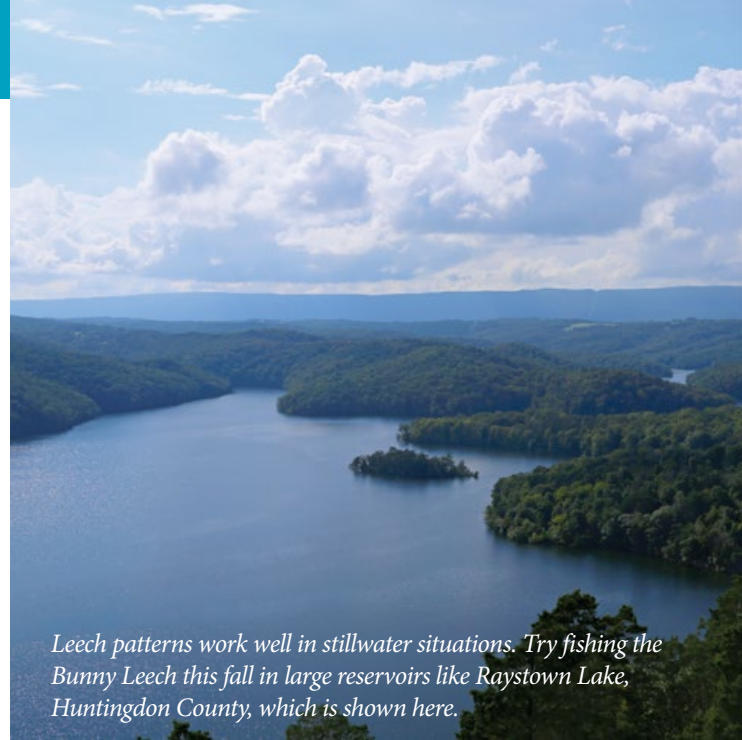
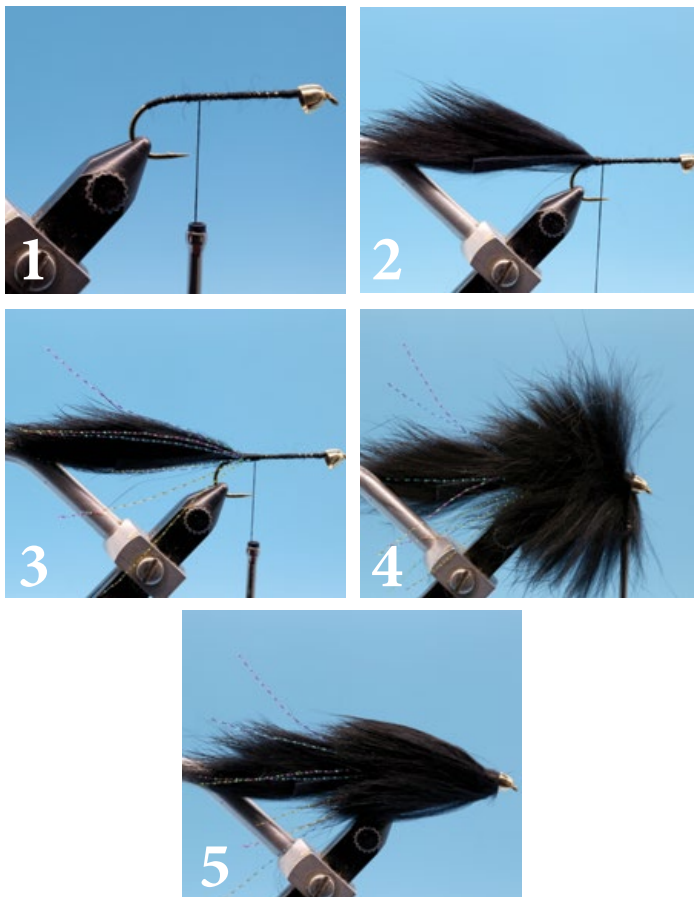
[www.visitpa.com/trip/leaf-peepers](http://www.visitpa.com/trip/leaf-peepers)

# Tying the Bunny Leech

by Carl Haensel

photos by the author

Leeches often bring to mind visions of blood-sucking, squirming aquatic worms. Some anglers are not aware that many fish love to eat leeches. Often found in warmwater rivers, lakes, and ponds, leeches are different colors and sizes. From bass and Bluegills to trout and even Northern Pike, leech flies are effective patterns. Since they are often fished through slower, deeper water, leech flies can be used when fish are at their most finicky. Leech patterns saved the day for me more than once, and fishing a Bunny Leech is a great step to take when nothing else is working. The rabbit hair that these patterns are tied with undulates in the water, even when the fly is nearly still. Try tying it in black, brown, and green to mimic different native leeches. A beadhead or conehead may be added to weigh down the pattern and reach deeper fish. ☐



Leech patterns work well in stillwater situations. Try fishing the Bunny Leech this fall in large reservoirs like Raystown Lake, Huntingdon County, which is shown here.

## Tying the Bunny Leech Materials

- Hook:** Size 2-10 TMC 5263 streamer hook or similar
- Thread:** Gel spun polyethylene in black
- Bead:** Beadhead or conehead
- Tail:** Black rabbit strips or color of choice
- Body/Collar:** Black rabbit strips or color of choice
- Flash:** Rainbow Krystal Flash

- 1** Begin by adding a conehead or beadhead to the hook and securing your hook in the vise. Tie on your thread and wrap it to cover the hook.
- 2** Tie in a length of rabbit strip, with the tail extending at least the length of the hook past the bend. Secure the rabbit strip by wrapping it about 1/8 of an inch above the bend of the hook.
- 3** Tie in a few strands of Krystal Flash on either side of the hook, extending back to the end of the rabbit strip tail.
- 4** Take a second rabbit strip of the same material, and tie it in at the same point as the tail. Make sure the fibers of the fur are pointed toward the tail of the fly, and wrap the strip forward to just behind the conehead or bead.
- 5** Tie off the rabbit strip behind the bead or conehead, whip finish, and add some cyanoacrylate glue for durability and to smooth the fur fibers back.



# NOTES *from the Streams*

## Field training

During spring of 2021, I was selected to be a field training officer for the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's 23rd Class of Waterways Conservation Officers (WCOs). I was excited to show the new officers skills that I learned over 15 years as a WCO.

During my time as a field training officer, I was assigned four cadets throughout the spring of 2021 for trout season and the start of boating season. The cadets experienced scenarios in the field and demonstrated what they learned during the classroom phase of the training. Trout stocking, general patrol, and boating patrol were some of the activities during the training session.

Some cadets participated in details with multiple officers to catch violators during trout season. One particular scenario was to safely remove a Timber Rattlesnake along a popular hiking trail. The snake was caught in a section of bird netting on the edge of the trail. The snake was well-camouflaged and difficult to detect. Thanks to a phone call from a concerned citizen who made us aware of the situation and the location of the snake, a cadet and I were able to secure the snake's head and free it from the netting, which also prevented a potentially dangerous situation to a person or pet utilizing the trail.

The day-to-day patrol of a WCO is unpredictable and is shaped by phone calls from the public about incidents in the field such as pollution, fish kills, stream disturbances, poaching, boat accidents, and venomous snakes. A WCOs day-to-day is far from

routine, involving different scenarios and violations on nearly every patrol.

Field training gives cadets a glimpse of situations they may encounter. It also provides a good understanding of how to apply classroom training to work in the field.—WCO Gregory R. Kraynak, Centre County.

## Attack swan

One of the cool things about being a WCO is working outside in a variety of habitats and seeing a variety of wildlife. Recently, while on a wetland disturbance site along a pond, I noticed two swans feeding in the water. A few weeks later, I returned and noticed that only one swan was in the water. After looking for a few seconds, I spotted the other one perched on a nest in the weeds on the far side of the pond. The male was swimming the perimeter of the pond, constantly keeping guard over his mate and the nest. If anyone got too close, he would charge at them with his wings puffed out, but usually, he would stop short of coming out of the water.

We began to do some soil testing and I soon forgot about the

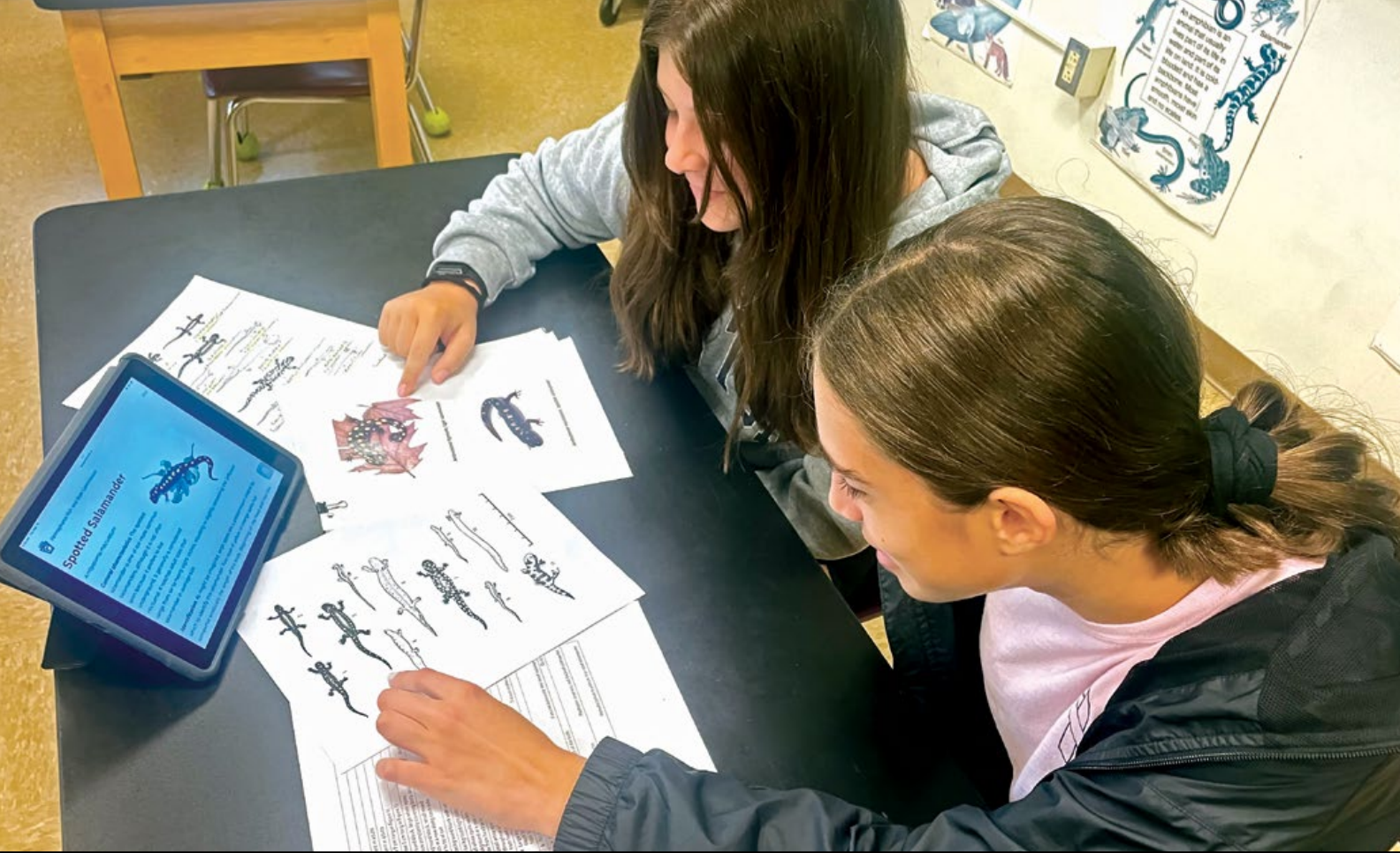
overprotective male swan only a few feet behind us. While kneeling and speaking with a Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection biologist, I heard some close footsteps in the mud behind me. I stood up and felt a thump across the back of my calf. The male swan hit me with the bony part of its wing. The swan seemed very proud of itself, as it strutted back to the water, constantly maintaining eye contact. I told the swan that it could go to jail for assault of an officer, but the swan just swam away and joined its mate at the nest. Everyone who was present had a good laugh, and we appointed one of the nearby kids as the official swan watch. We did not have any more encounters with the pair, and I hoped that the swans had a healthy, successful hatch.—WCO Alec S. DeLong, Southern Monroe and Northern Carbon counties.

## State borders

A valid Pennsylvania fishing license is required to fish in Commonwealth waters. My district borders New York, so I often get anglers who present me their New York fishing license inadvertently, or it is the first license they find. Most of the time, New York anglers know they are in Pennsylvania and have the appropriate license. The Susquehanna River flows in Pennsylvania and New York. However, once in a while, I am presented a New York fishing license. When I ask for the Pennsylvania fishing license, I get a deer in the headlights look, often followed by, "I did not know I was in Pennsylvania." Then, I issue a citation and explain that if you drove to a Pennsylvania State Park, presume that you are in Pennsylvania.—WCO Jeremy L. Yohe, Western Bradford and Sullivan counties.



illustration: Andrea Feeney



# FISHING FOR KNOWLEDGE: A Cast into the Activities & Education Portal

by *Christian A. Shane*

*photos by the author*

*“Initially developed as a response to the challenges that COVID-19 guidance presented for teachers, parents, and Pennsylvania’s fishing and boating community in 2020, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) Education staff has continued to expand the Activities & Education Portal into a one-stop environmental education shop to deliver a meaningful ‘fishing, boating, and aquatic resource experience’ to participants at home.” Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Pressroom, May 2022.*

Even though the 2022-2023 school season has officially begun, the PFBC’s Activities & Education Portal has been in session since 2020. For parents, educators, children, anglers, boaters, naturalists, and outdoor adventurers alike, the free online service offers many programs and content relevant to boating safety, fishing, watersheds, indigenous fish species, amphibians, reptiles, and aquatic macroinvertebrates.

In fact, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection recently awarded the PFBC’s online project with the Governor’s Award for Environmental Excellence for its creativity and innovation in environmental improvement during the pandemic.

Search for the Activities & Education Portal on PFBC’s homepage at [fishandboat.com](http://fishandboat.com). Then, explore the ten content-specific buttons (Amphibians and Reptiles; Aquatic Habitat, Watersheds, and Pollution; Aquatic Macroinvertebrates; Boating and Water Safety; Fishing; Fly Fishing; Kayak Fishing; Paddlesports; PA Fishes; and Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission). Each topic includes educational packages, themed activities, coloring pages, crafts, *PLAY* newsletters, videos, links, and additional publication resources.

The Activities & Education Portal is not only for the outdoor enthusiast, but it also supports the Pennsylvania State Academic Standards for Environment and Ecology as well as Health, Safety, and Physical Education curriculums.

Click on the Aquatic Macroinvertebrates button for varying topics and skill building activities to keep all ages interested and engaged with the outdoors. The Macroinvertebrates Playlist includes videos about aquatic

creatures, publications, and activities such as the Collecting Critters Crossword.

My seventh-grade students and I have first-hand experience using the portal. During a vertebrate adaptation lesson, I had my students work in groups to develop a fictional fish based on creating various realistic adaptations such as mouth parts, egg laying, coloration and patterns, and body shape. My students and I used the Activities & Education Portal (PA Fishes) and Gallery of Pennsylvania Fishes page to find examples of these “fish parts.” Then, students created, named, and presented their new fish species. By comparing and researching Pennsylvania indigenous fish species, my students created a realistic representation of their fictional fish.

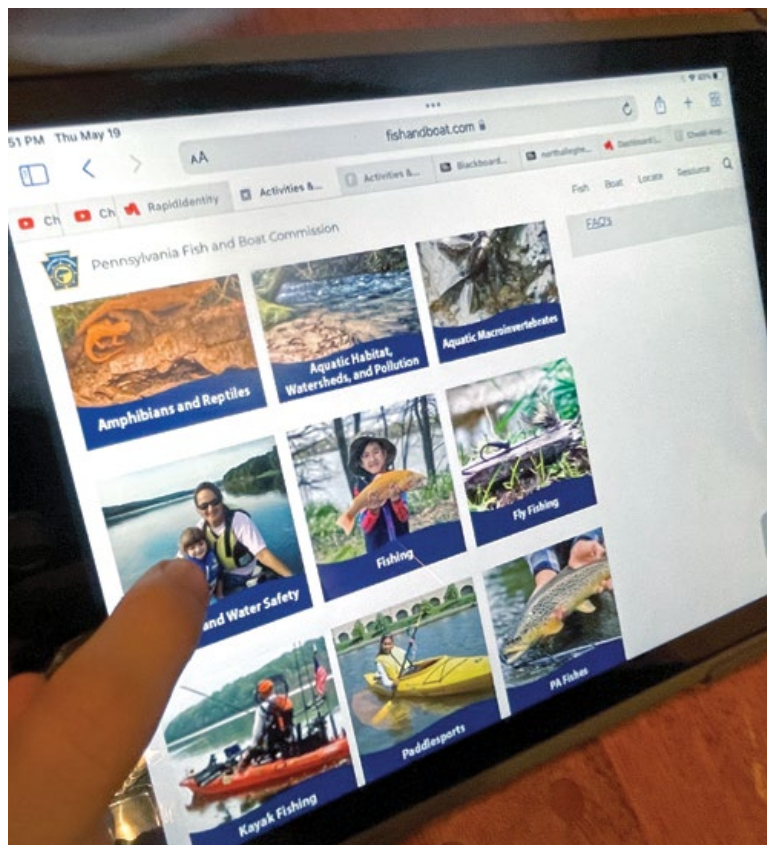
A second curricular example involved salamanders and a dichotomous key for recognizing various native species. When the middle grade students completed a dichotomous key, they checked their work by using the Activities & Education Portal (Amphibians and Reptiles) and the Resources page (Salamanders) as an answer key. There, they searched the common and scientific names for the 22 species of Pennsylvania salamanders. A few students even recognized some of these species in their neighborhoods. There is no better lesson for youth than when they personally connect with the content. The Activities & Education Portal allowed my students to access this free resource from school and home, and they were able to share their learning with their parents and families.

The Learning Center also includes Fishing Fundamentals, Boating Basics, Water and Ice Safety, FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions), a link for Parents & Educators, and of course, the past and current issues of *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* magazine.

The next time you are fishing for information, quality research, and Pennsylvania specific content on the internet, “hook” into the Activities & Education Portal. ☐



Using the Resources and Gallery of Pennsylvania Fishes pages, students created a 'fictional fish' based upon real adaptations of Pennsylvania fish species.



Search for the Activities & Education Portal on PFBC's homepage at [fishandboat.com](http://fishandboat.com).

# STREAMER TACTICS FOR FALL TROUT

*by Ralph Scherder*

*photos by the author*

Streamers imitate baitfish, crayfish, leeches, sculpins, and aquatic insects fish feed on year round. The fall months are great to fish streamers, because species such as Brook Trout, Brown Trout, and steelhead begin spawning runs and aggressively feed on baitfish in order to fatten up for their respective rituals.

In fall, the mantra “big flies, big fish” certainly applies, but it is important to keep things in perspective. Streamers are commonly tied on long-shanked hooks (2XL and larger) and can be bulky, which gives streamers a larger profile than traditional nymphs and wet flies. In recent years, streamers have come to mean big, gaudy, articulated flies (4 inches and longer). Oversized



*A black Krystal Buzzer (size 6) is the author's favorite streamer for fall Brown Trout.*

flies are effective for big fall trout but difficult to cast and retrieve all day. I have more consistent success with streamers size 6 and smaller than I have with articulated flies. The classic streamer patterns—Woolly Buggers, Muddler Minnows, and Bunny Leeches—that have been around for decades are still some of the best.

If you are using a streamer that is too big, you will get a lot of chases or bumps but no hookups. Often, the bumps are trout nipping at the fly's tail rather than committing to the strike and taking in the whole thing. Scale down your fly, and hookups will increase.

Fall is unique, though, because hungry spawning fish do not always take a fly. There is also competition for prime spawning ground, and their territorial nature kicks in. Anything perceived as a threat can draw a strike, so you can sometimes get away with fishing bigger streamers now compared to other times of year. When I am looking to take advantage of these situations, I prefer streamers that have flash or colors similar to that of a spawning fish. Steelhead go for pink and silver. Flies that are orange or black with flash can be deadly for Brook Trout and Brown Trout.

Big fish, big flies, and big water all require a heavier rig. In bigger, fast-flowing rivers, 7- to 9-weight fast action rods are preferred. For smaller streams, 5- to 6-weight fast action rods are ideal. When steelhead are on the docket, bigger is better regardless of stream size.

There may not be a wrong way to fish streamers. The prey streamers imitate are dynamic. They seldom travel in predictable patterns and may head up or downstream on a whim or dart for cover to avoid predators. Most days, I prefer to cast quartering slightly downstream and then slowly retrieving back up through the current. Other days, I dead drift as I would a nymph.

The most common method involves an active retrieve. Streamers are typically stripped, and the speed depends on the mood of the fish. Lethargic fish require a slower presentation, and aggressive fish will attack anything that resembles food. However, this can change quickly. As any avid steelhead angler will tell you, never mind what worked yesterday; this is today. Every situation is unique, and every fish has its own temperament. Some simply will not chase while others attack as soon as the fly hits the water.

In my experience, I miss more trout by fishing too fast than too slow. Sometimes, even in fast water, the trout just need time to identify the fly as food to react. If you are trying to spark a territorial response, allowing the fly to hang near the fish an extra moment or two can trigger a strike.

When fished in a variety of ways and according to conditions, streamers are a great choice for fall trout and steelhead. ☐

# French Creek State Park

by Bob Frye

photos by the author

We were still launching our kayaks and already debating what to do for dinner. Not that we were in a rush to be finished. French Creek State Park, Berks and Chester counties, offers fine and varied fishing. We planned to enjoy as much of it as we could over a week.

But, to fish at French Creek—at 7,730 acres, the largest block of contiguous forest between Washington, D.C. and New York City—is to know temptation.

French Creek is a busy place, especially on weekends. A diverse crowd, coming from the local countryside and more urban centers, gathers to fish and boat, swim in the park's pool, hike footpaths, play disc golf, and explore mountain biking and horseback riding trails. Some walk to adjoining Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site, a 1770s iron-making village with a visitor center, exhibits, and pick-your-own apple orchard.

Many visitors also picnic. Their lunches, typically representing multiple cultures, give the park an international aroma.

But, having rented one of the park's modern cabins—there are also cottages, yurts and a large campground—we could make our own dinner later, so we went fishing. The park's two lakes awaited—68-acre Hopewell Lake and 22-acre Scotts Run Lake.

Hopewell Lake holds nice numbers of Largemouth Bass, managed with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's Big Bass Program, limiting harvest to four fish a day, 15 inches or longer. There are plentiful Black Crappies, Bluegills, White Crappies, and even small numbers of Yellow Perch. Enough of these fish all reach quality size to keep fishing interesting.

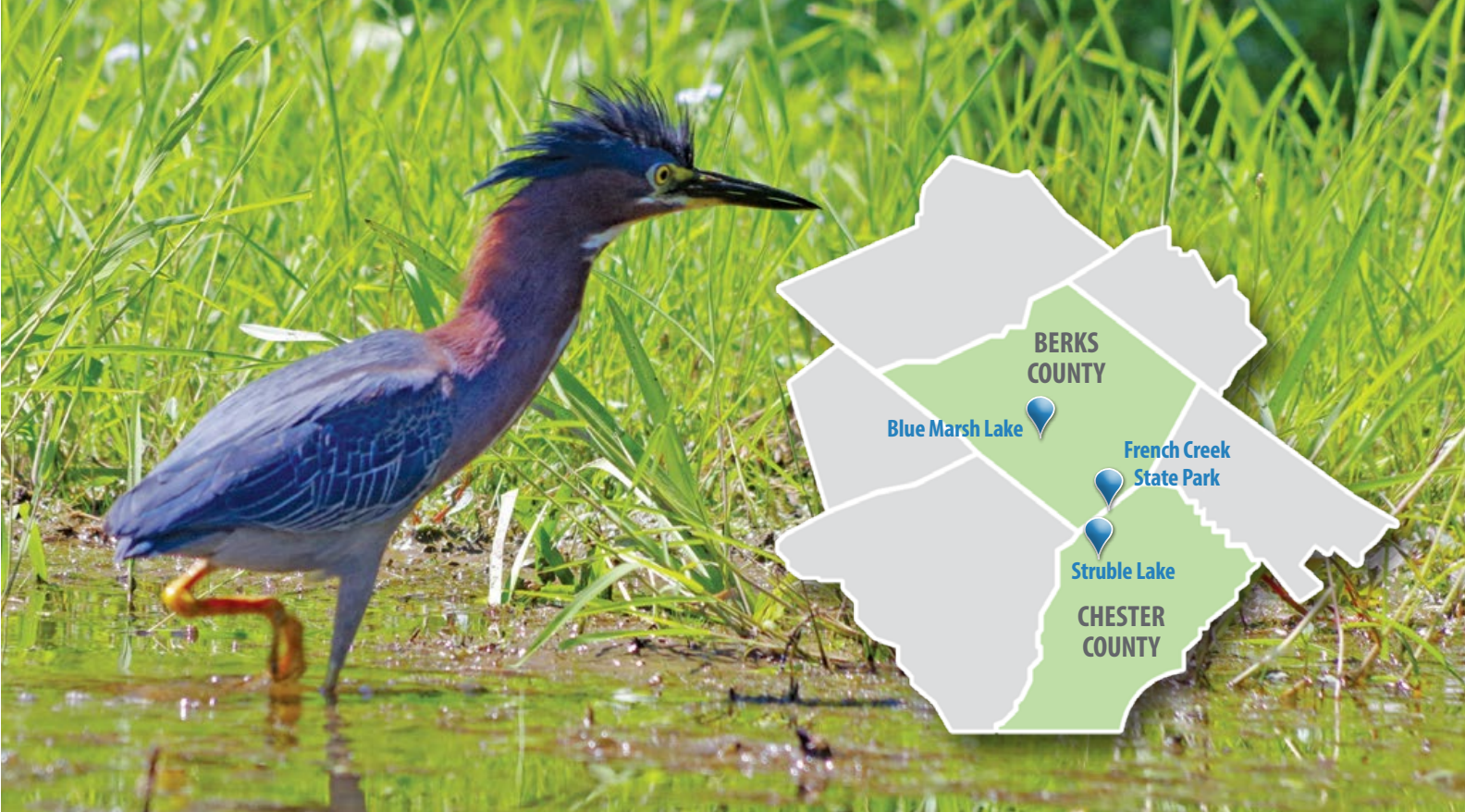
The lake also holds good numbers of Chain Pickerel and the occasional Muskellunge or Northern Pike.

Fish swim in, around, and through Hopewell Lake's vast lily pads. They extend far out from shore, making weedless presentations cast from a boat a must in spots.

You can launch unpowered boats like canoes, kayaks, and cartoppers on the lake, along with boats with electric motors. There is a popular boat concession for those without their own watercraft, too.







*A green heron patrols the shallows at Scotts Run Lake, Berks County. Green herons are anglers, too, often using feathers and insects as lures to attract small fish to eat.*

But, shore anglers do just as well. Submerged stumps near the lake's dam offer promise, and there are generally plenty of fish within reach of an accessible pier in the park's main day-use area, at the lake's opposite end. Trails—official hiking trails and others blazed by anglers—circle the lake to provide additional access.

Scotts Run Lake is less developed—a pond in the woods, more or less—and shallower, sometimes growing thick with underwater weeds by summer. It is best known as a stocked trout water and is best fished in spring and fall. It gets a mix of Brook Trout and Rainbow Trout.

Shore fishing is a bit limited. It is best near the spillway and on the right side of the lake as your go counterclockwise around the lake from the boat launch.

Unpowered boats and boats with electric motors are permitted. That is how many people fish—or just float and explore—Scotts Run Lake.

We caught fish in both lakes. The biggest fish I hooked—a musky, I like to think, though I am not sure—broke me off after a screaming, peeling run as exciting as it was short. In between fish, we watched bald eagles fly overhead, observed beavers at work, and paddled past ducklings. Each night on the water ended with spectacular rose-colored sunsets.

Then, back in the cabin, we ate well. Sometimes, you have to give in to temptation. ☐



*Largemouth Bass are plentiful in Hopewell Lake, Berks County.*

## No Available Parking?

Try nearby Blue Marsh Lake, Berks County, which includes three boat launches. This lake accommodates both powered and unpowered boats. Or, try Struble Lake, Chester County, where boating is limited to boats powered by electric motors and unpowered boats.

## For a map of French Creek State Park and access areas:



<https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/FindAPark/FrenchCreekStatePark/Pages/Maps.aspx>

# Shifting Gears for Fall River Smallmouth Bass

by Jeff Knapp

photos by the author



**F**all may be one of the most enjoyable times to pursue river Smallmouth Bass. Chilly days and longer nights light a spark that activates bigger fish. Quality-sized river Smallmouth Bass over 15 inches become more common.

It can also be a frustrating time. River bass are on the move, transitioning from summer areas to areas where they will eventually winter over. During early fall, where you found fish yesterday may not be where you find them today.

When summer water temperatures are warm and flows are low, river Smallmouth Bass will be holding in and around current areas at the heads and tails of pools, within riffle areas, and in rocky runs with a good flow. These areas hold baitfish, crayfish, and aquatic insects during the summer.

As water temperatures drop into the low 60s and upper 50s, these places become less habitable to Smallmouth Bass. Bass begin gravitating to areas with less current and more depth, a movement brought on

by weather and river flow. Fall cold snaps that quickly drop water temperatures can hasten the movement as do increases in flow that elevate river current. When river temperatures reach the mid-40s, many fish are in deep, protected holes where they remain for the coming winter, making late fall and early winter river Smallmouth Bass fishing good. The fish are concentrated in confined areas and tend to return each fall. But, during early fall, we must search.

Lure selection is important. Horizontal baits, such as hard jerkbaits, spinnerbaits, swimbaits, and soft jerkbaits, are lures that are worked quickly and cover the water. Vertical baits, like grubs, Ned Rigs, tube jigs, and hair jigs, are presentations that are fished in a slower manner.

The first option is to start with a horizontal, moving bait—one where you can cover the water quickly. However, early to mid-fall is not always kind to horizontal baits. Floating leaves can complicate retrieves. And, there are times when bass simply are not in the mood to hit a moving bait.



*The Ned Rig excels when fishing slower, deeper water.*

A moving bait is still my first choice during early fall outings. Unless the flows are up, bass tend to use pool tailouts well into mid-fall. A suspending jerkbait excels at triggering strikes from bass. During the summer, I give an aggressive jerk, pause, and retrieve with such a lure. As the water cools, softer jerks and longer pauses are in order. Likewise, a soft jerkbait can be mildly twitched across pool tailouts and along rocky banks. I prefer to fish a fluke unweighted and allow it to slowly sink between twitches, a movement river Smallmouth Bass often can't resist.

Spinnerbaits and bladed jigs come into their own when flows are up, with fish pushed tight to the bank.

Bottom-oriented vertical jigs are necessary when bass are not willing to chase moving baits, behavior common as water temperatures continue to fall. Soft swimbait, such as Keitech's Swing Impact, Reaction Innovation's Skinny Dipper, and Galida's Grubz, are wonderful hybrids that can function as both moving baits and bottom baits depending on how you work

them and type of water you are fishing. When you are casting along a rocky bank with moderate current, the bait may be worked back in protected pockets with a steady swimming retrieve, relying on the movement of the boot tail or curl tail to evoke strikes. When fishing deeper, slower water, it can be hopped along the bottom in classic jig manner.

The slower, deeper pools that river Smallmouth Bass begin using with greater frequency during the fall months may be plied with bottom baits like tube jigs, Ned Rigs, and hair jigs. While one certain profile may excel on a particular day, a more significant factor is weight. Jig sizes of  $\frac{1}{8}$ ,  $\frac{3}{16}$ , and  $\frac{1}{4}$ -ounce are common. Usually, the lightest jig for the depth you are fishing is best. For depths of 4- to 10-feet, I use a  $\frac{3}{16}$ -ounce jig. This size provides the best fall rate and does not hang in the rocks as much as a  $\frac{1}{4}$ -ounce jig.

Early to mid-fall provides fun challenges and fine fishing for river Smallmouth Bass. It serves as a prelude to what is often the best action yet to come in late fall. ☐

# WATCHING THE STEELHEAD RUN IS GOOD FAMILY FUN



*by Linda Stager*

*photos by the author*

**W**ho wants to go on a great day trip—an outdoor adventure you can take the whole family on that doesn't necessarily involve fishing but sure does involve magnificent fish?

Nestled along the southern shore of Lake Erie is Avonia Beach Park in Fairview, Erie County. It is a beautiful 3.6-acre park that was purchased to allow public access to lakeshore fishing through a set of cooperative agreements.

It is also a nice place to picnic, walk the beach, and of course, fish. Special fishing regulations apply. And, the sunsets are some of the best in Pennsylvania.

In the fall, this little gem of a park becomes a popular place for outdoor enthusiasts to visit. Along the western side of the park, Trout Run, a high-quality trout stream, empties into Lake Erie. Trout Run is nursery waters, so there is no fishing allowed.

During October and November, Trout Run showcases the annual steelhead run.

Steelhead, the anadromous strain of Rainbow Trout, spend most of their time in the ocean and great lakes. But, once a year, they return to tributary streams to spawn. They are big and boldly beautiful fish.



*The walls at the bottom of Trout Run create a long narrow trough that ends with a gate several hundred feet upstream as it empties into the lake.*

Thanks to the foresight of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), a highly successful and popular steelhead stocking program was started 60 years ago. Since then, over a million fingerlings a year are stocked in Lake Erie and its tributaries.

The walls at the bottom of Trout Run create a long narrow trough that ends with a gate several hundred feet upstream as it empties into the lake. The gate keeps the steelhead from swimming further upstream to spawn, and it also makes it easy for fish to be collected.

Like clockwork, in the fall, the steelhead arrive in Lake Erie at the bottom of Trout Run and start their journey to the gate at the top of the stream trough. They arrive by the thousands. One by one, they work their way up to the gate.

In the fall and winter, PFBC staff and volunteers meet for a series of fish collection days. They use nets to scoop up the fish, separate them by sex, and transport them to a nearby hatchery, where the eggs are removed. The adult brood fish collected at Trout Run are later released. The eggs are hatched, the fry are raised in nearby cooperative nurseries, and released about 18 months later as part of the stocking program.

The hustle and bustle of collecting the fish is good entertainment for those interested in seeing steelhead close. But, when the stream water depth is adequate, most fall days are great days to visit and watch the show. This is a trip the whole family will enjoy. ☑

## Virtual Steelhead Fishing Programs

- September 22, 2022 - Introduction to Pennsylvania Steelhead Fishing
- October 6, 2022 - Introduction to Pennsylvania Steelhead Fishing

Register at [register-ed.com](https://register-ed.com). Go to Sport Fishing and click on "View upcoming events."

## While You Are Here

Take a short road trip to Corry State Fish Hatchery, Erie County, or Linesville State Fish Hatchery, Crawford County. Venture to French Creek, the 2022 River of the Year, Crawford, Mercer, and Venango counties, to experience the beauty of fall by kayak or canoe. Or, experience the Upper Shenango River Water Trail. It runs from Pymatuning State Park's Pymatuning Reservoir dam, Crawford County, downstream to Shenango River Lake, Mercer County.



*Steelhead*

For a real time view of Trout Run, visit [www.fishusa.com/avonia-webcam](https://www.fishusa.com/avonia-webcam).

# FALL KAYAK FISHING IN THE MOUNTAINS

*by John Allen*

For many anglers, the lure of fishing is about two things—catching fish and relaxing. Escaping to a beautiful setting makes the perfect backdrop for relaxation. During the fall, more than any other time of year, I escape to the mountainous regions of Pennsylvania. The views from my kayak take my mind to a state of bliss. And, Pennsylvania has no shortage of lakes surrounded by mountainous settings.

What's more, during the fall, boat traffic is lighter on lakes, so there is less fishing pressure, and you have a better chance of finding active fish. Fishing out of a kayak is simple. I am more relaxed in my kayak. Many times, in the fall, I will paddle around and locate the fish before I start fishing. Then, I go back to where I saw the fish and start casting.

Fall has always been my favorite time to go after larger and more aggressive fish. No matter the species you target, the fish will be active and ready for a meal. If you are not familiar with the fall patterns of a lake, having a portable depth finder will help a lot. As fall progresses, most fish will leave their shallow summer haunts in favor of deep water structure or creek channels.

I enjoy targeting bass from my kayak in the fall after the spring and summer pressure of fishing the species has subsided. In fall, fish do not have someone casting over them every single day, an angler's advantage. For bass, I throw baits that move quickly and get noticed such as jerkbaits, spinnerbaits, and bladed jigs. I have experienced some of my best days in my kayak during the fall, slowly floating from spot to spot and fishing the waters in

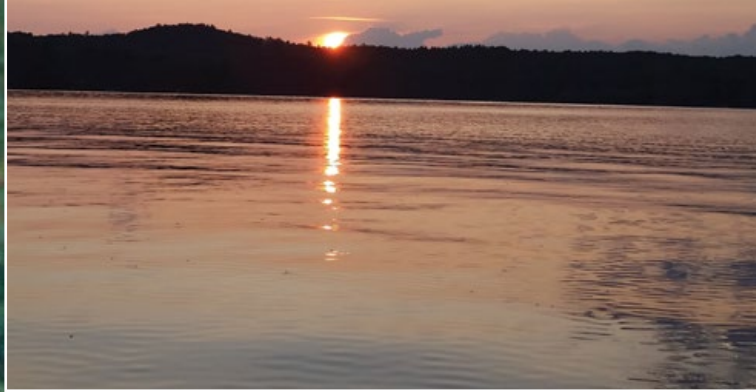


photo-John Allen

*Nothing caps off a day of relaxation on the water like the perfect sunset.*



photo-Janelle Howard

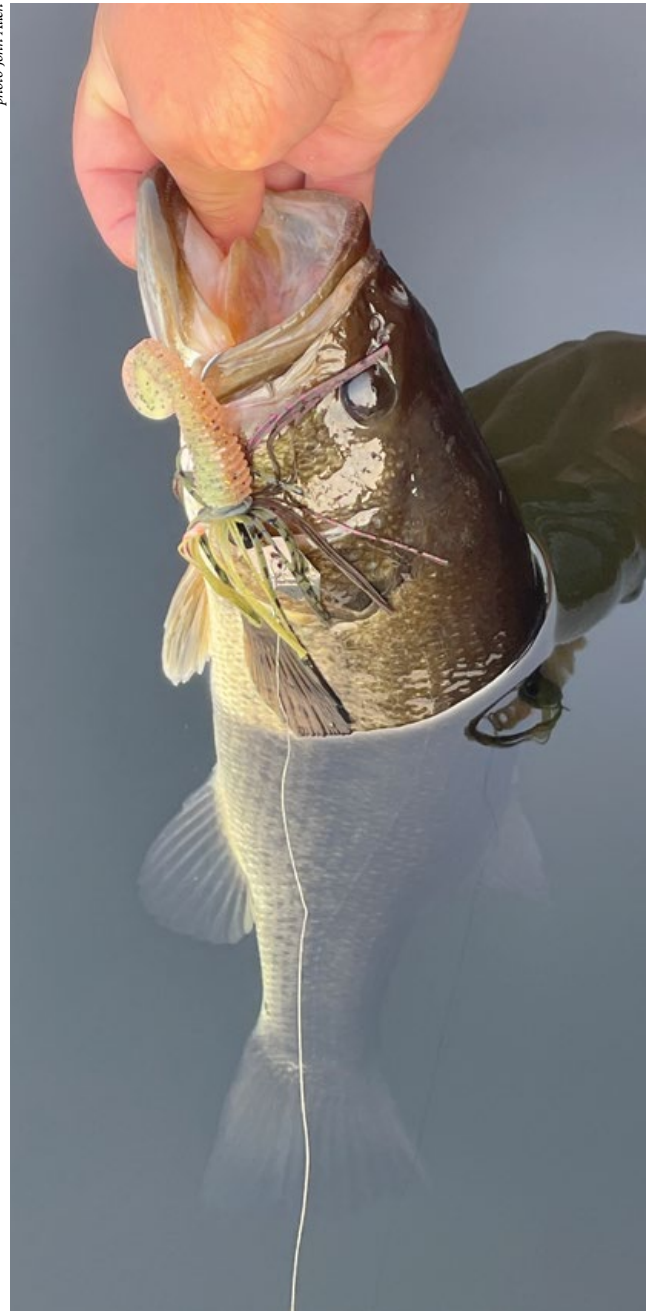


photo: John Allen

*Pennsylvania has a lot of lakes surrounded by mountainous settings.*



photo: John Allen



*A fall Largemouth Bass on a bladed jig.*

between. During the warmest part of the day, bass tend to move to shallow waters to feed on baitfish, opposite of what happens in the summer. I cast around the edges of heavy vegetation during this time. The edge acts like a transition point between the deeper haunts and shallower midday water.

This fall, when the stresses of life start to kick in, plan an escape to one of the many mountainous lakes in Pennsylvania. The air is cool, the leaves are turning, the views are breathtaking, and the fish are biting. ☐



photo-James Swearingen

# TACKLING MUSKELLUNGE

by *Braden Eisenhower*

**W**ith the rapid advancement of Muskellunge fishing tackle, my affliction began during the “big bait craze” in the late 2000s. Many rods and reels of the era were undermatched for the trend in outsized lures. But, rods got longer and carried various powers and actions—more refined for technique-specific applications. Reels became faster or more powerful and sometimes both.

The modern Muskellunge angler ditched the “pool cues” of the past and armed themselves with specialized equipment capable of completing desired retrieves, executing perfect figure-eights at boatside, and delivering solid hooksets.

## **Rods: long versus short**

I use 7-foot, 6-inch and 9-foot, 6-inch rods. Short rods work best whenever downward snaps of the rod manipulate the bait. I feel in control of every movement with 7- to 8-foot rods when walking topwater lures or twitching side-to-side (gliding) jerkbaits. Here, longer rods are too cumbersome.

Long rods (9-foot and longer) prevail with straight-moving baits, namely bucktails. With straight retrieves, Muskellunge are apt to follow and pounce once the lure makes the first directional change, usually at boatside during the figure-eight maneuver. Success in the figure-eight hinges on the ability to execute large, fluid movements that keep the lure in front of the fish. Long rods work best.

An 8-foot, 6-inch rod is suitable as a general purpose rod. Then again, these rods also fill a valuable niche for dive



and rise jerkbaits, crankbaits, and plastics. I sweep these lure styles forward with crossbody pulls rather than downward snaps. The additional length improves figure-eights and allows the rod to flex better to secure hooked Muskellunge.

Rod power varies by manufacturer, but there are basic guidelines. Medium-heavy power rods toss lightweight lures when downsizing. Heavy and extra-heavy power rods handle standard lures (6- to 8-inch, 2- to 5-ounce lures). Heavyweight lures like plastics and high-resistance lures like big crankbaits and bucktails require stout extra-heavy or extra-extra-heavy power rods.

## Reels: slow, medium, fast

All but one of my Muskellunge reels are 400-size baitcasters. In simplest form, reels with low gear ratios (4:1 or 5:1) are the slowest yet most powerful. Conversely, higher gear ratio reels (6:1 or 7:1) recover more line but often compromise the ability to retrieve hard-pulling baits.

In Muskellunge fishing, a major consideration is lure resistance (and subsequent fatigue) from hard-pulling lures.

My large bucktail reel is a 500-size baitcaster. Besides gear ratio, the size of the reel spool affects the amount of line recovered, measured as inches per turn (IPT). The larger reel allows a lower gear ratio (4.9:1) for the power, while maintaining a line recovery rate of high-speed reels (30 IPT).

Gear ratio and IPT work together to precisely dial in lure speeds. When crawling surface baits after dark, I look for reels with 22 IPT. I prefer mid-speed reels—25 to 27 IPT—for gliding jerkbaits. Many anglers like 30 IPT, but I find faster reels hinder lure cadence. I move to faster reels with plastics and dive and rise jerkbaits. Remember, longer rods, necessitate faster reels, and 30 IPT is about right. To get the lure moving at blazing speeds for “burning” retrieves, 40 IPT is the answer.

## Line and leader

No need to overthink line selection. Braided lines are the rule, and 80-pound covers nearly every application. Downsizing calls for 40-, 50- or 65-pound line, depending on lure size and weight.

I use 150-pound fluorocarbon leaders for most applications. Some side-to-side lures perform better with solid wire leaders. I pair standard Muskellunge lures with 174-pound wire. When downsizing (lures smaller than 6 inches), I choose 124-pound leader. My leaders come pre-tied from the manufacturer.

Anglers don't need all of this gear to catch Muskellunge. But, with growing popularity, the knowledge and specialization helps. ☐



photos: Braden Eisenhower

I use 7-foot, 6-inch and 9-foot, 6-inch rods. The six baitcasting outfits pictured above cover most casting applications.



Retrieve speed and angler fatigue should be considered when selecting a reel. The model 400 (left—5.8:1 gear ratio, 30 IPT) recovers a hard-pulling lure easier than the 400HG (right—7.6:1, 40 IPT). However, the 400HG retrieves lighter lures faster.

# BIKE FISHING BASICS



*by Tyler Frantz*

*photos by the author*

**P**edaling along the shaded gravel of the railroad grade, a steady breeze cooled the light sweat on my brow. Mixed hardwoods towered overhead, deer bounded from the trail in the distance, and the steady churn of the creek sang in harmony with the hum of rolling tires. It was a perfect day to take a bike ride, enjoy the scenery, and catch some fish.

Pennsylvania has a rich history of railways traversing the landscape; many have been converted into recreational trails that provide remote access to prime waterways. Anglers can take advantage of these well-maintained trail

systems to bike into ideal fishing destinations closed to motorized travel. It is a great way to get some exercise and find unpressured fishing.

To make the most of any bike fishing excursion in terms of comfort, convenience, and safety, anglers will want a reliable mountain bike with multiple gear speeds for easier pedaling. A comfortable seat is a must for long distance rides, and an accessory rack either on the handlebars or above the rear tire will come in handy for stowing gear.

Certain accessories are designed specifically for attaching gear to the frame of the bicycle. I prefer u-shaped handlebar clamps that makes it easy to snugly fit a rod case and packable waders between the handles. My friend has a cargo rack behind his seat that allows him to stack and fasten gear with a bungee cord.



Likewise, a rod or wading staff can also be secured to the main frame of the bicycle with zip ties or heavy, rubber twist ties, offering excellent flexibility.

Room for a water bottle is a plus, as well as an emergency pump and patch kit. A flashlight, mounted somewhere on the bike, may come in handy, too, if you find yourself still pedaling after dark. Round out the accessories with a basic strap-on first aid kit.

You can carry it all in a backpack, but that means the backpack weight will press against your lumbar region with each rotation of the pedals. The more surface area you can allow body heat to escape from as you ride, the more comfortable you will be. Transferring as much load to the bike as possible helps.

Depending on the distance and temperatures, biking anglers may choose to wet wade, wear breathable waders as they ride, or pack lightweight waders to put on once they reach their destination. I prefer the latter, as it allows me to cover a greater distance more comfortably.

Once I arrive where I wish to fish, I stash my bike at a takeout location, attach a cable lock for security, and swap out my sneakers for fishing gear. Then, I walk a half mile or so downstream and fish my way back to the bike.

Allow ample time to get back to your vehicle. Pack a few snacks and plenty to drink, as the energy used for this type of remote destination fishing will need to be replenished along the way. Take a friend along in case of emergencies, and always let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return. If fishing during hunting season, wear fluorescent orange for safety.

Bike fishing provides access to some of Pennsylvania's best waterways. Plan ahead for comfort and safety, and let the good times roll. ☐



*Gear can be attached to the bike frame with rubber twist ties. Transfer as much of the load to the bike as possible for comfortable riding, and do not forget a cable lock.*



*Morgan Flamm displays a Rainbow Trout caught in Stony Creek, Dauphin County.*

# Fall Bluegill Secrets



*by Darl Black*

*photos by the author*

**A** popular Pennsylvania species, Bluegills are primarily targeted by anglers during late spring and early summer when quality-size fish can be caught in shallow water.

Interest in Bluegills wanes by mid-summer on big lakes, because large fish have moved to deeper offshore water, where many anglers do not like to go fishing.

But, as temperature starts trending downward in the early fall, small summer packs of offshore Bluegills regroup into mega schools before sliding back to shallower water. Catch these fish on the fall feed with small artificial lures.

## **Where to find Bluegills**

In northwestern Pennsylvania, fall movement of Bluegills begins in September. I cruise main lake points with sonar to pinpoint the large schools near the bottom.

My best success is on lakes with abundant weedbeds. Large Bluegill schools generally form a short distance from the edge of deep weeds. Water clarity determines how deep weeds grow, which in turn impacts the location of these mega schools. On clear water Conneaut Lake, Crawford County, with weed growth to almost 12 feet, the gathering of Bluegills may be quite deep. In dingier water impoundments, the annual Bluegill reunion will be shallower—about 12 feet.

Many Bluegills gradually move into the weed fringe or other available submerged cover to continue feeding. Bluegills do not return to extreme shallow spawning sites. Depth range to investigate in autumn would be 6- to 10-feet of water. If the weather turns nasty, Bluegills may hunker



*Above is a selection of fall Bluegill baits. Column 1: Makings for drop shot rigs to effectively fish Bluegill schools in deeper water. Columns 2 and 3: Lightweight jig heads and subtle action bodies for jig and bobber fishing. Column 4: Heavier jig heads with small hooks and action tail soft plastic bodies for casting. Column 5: Tiny crankbaits with splitshots to get crankbaits deeper.*

down in the vegetation or fall back to slightly deeper water, but they will quickly return to feeding.

On flood control reservoirs lacking vegetation (such as Shenango River Lake, Mercer County), the gathering of Bluegills in deep water appears less intense. In shallow water, Bluegills stake out foraging grounds around a cluster of stumps, manmade cribs/brush piles, old building foundations, shoreline deadfalls, or other submerged debris.

## How to catch Bluegills

Bluegills feed predominately on insects, larvae, nymphs, aquatic worms, and other small invertebrates; large Bluegills also eat small fish. It doesn't matter whether your lure imitates a bug or a minnow.

The overall length of the lure and the size of the hook are critical. One to 2-inch lures are optimum. A #8 hook is best in a jig head; one size larger or smaller is okay. If you choose a tiny crankbait, it should carry a #10 or #8 treble. Always debarb both single hooks and treble hooks, making hook removal quick and easy.

Shallow water presentations to consider include: (1) casting and retrieving a small swim-tail grub or tiny crankbait, although a small crankbait will require additional weight; and (2) presenting a small subtle-action jig suspended below a weighted bobber over submerged vegetation or brush pile.

Use a #00 duo-lock snap with a crankbait to improve its wiggle. Adding one #7 splitshot or two #7 splitshots several inches in front of the crankbait provides additional weight for casting as well as helping the bait run deeper.

If unable to locate active Bluegills around shallow cover, then use sonar to scan the points leading from deep water to bays and flats. Upon finding a large school, drop a buoy near the fish. The most effective presentation is a drop shot rig with a 1/32- or 1/64-ounce jig tied inline approximately 12- to 15-inches above a 1/4- or 3/8-ounce drop weight. Fish vertically around the school by lowering the rig until it hits bottom, then slowly raise the rig with your rod. Repeat until a Bluegill smacks it. ☐

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

by *Garrett Rogos*

When fishing in September and October, steelhead are the fish to pursue. Although steelhead and Rainbow Trout are the same species, Rainbow Trout live their entire lives in freshwater; steelhead spend the early part of their lives in freshwater streams but spend a large portion of their lives at sea or in larger waterbodies, like the Great Lakes, and return to streams to spawn. In Pennsylvania, steelhead swim up Lake Erie tributaries every October through April to spawn.

Steelhead are a trophy fish for anglers, and they eat insects, crustaceans, smaller fish, snails, leeches, and fish eggs. Some of the best lures for steelhead are spinners, spoons, plugs, and crankbaits. In my experience, steelhead and other trout often take shiny, gold lures. When going after a steelhead, I never seem to fail when using a classic gold rooster tail.



photo-courtesy of Garrett Rogos

*Garrett Rogos*

Hopefully, you have good luck the next time you seek these incredible fish. From one angler to another, see you out there! 🐟

## 2022 FISH ART CONTEST WINNERS

Wildlife Forever announced the winners of the 2022 Fish Art Contest in May. Included were the works of Pennsylvania winners.

Wildlife Forever is a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to preserving America's wildlife heritage.

### Fish Habitat Writing Award Winners

- Muai Li, 1st Place, Grades 4-6
- Millie Gelnett, 1st Place, Grades 7-9

### Pennsylvania 1st Place State Art Contest Winners

- Xuanyu Liu, *Brook Trout*, Kindergarten-Grade 3
- Muai Li, *Brook Trout*, Grades 4-6
- Norah Marchionda, *Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout*, Grades 7-9
- Charlotte Simpson, *Betta Fish*, Grades 10-12

### Pennsylvania 1st Place State Essay Winners

- Sanvi Kotian, Kindergarten-Grade 3
- Muai Li, Grades 4-6
- Millie Gelnett, Grades 7-9
- Halen Beck, Grades 10-12



*Brook Trout, by Muai Li*

To view all artwork winners, essay winners, entry requirements, rules, and guidelines, scan the QR code.



<https://www.wildlifeforever.org/home/fish-art/>



# PLAY

Fall  
2022

Pennsylvania • League • of • Angling • Youth

## Be OPEN to Something New

**W**hat comes to mind when you hear the term open-faced spin fishing? Do you think of someone with an open mouth, spinning around in circles while fishing? Or, do you think of fishing gear?

Open-faced spin fishing is a style of fishing gear you may have seen before. The fishing line is visible on open-faced gear. This style can usually hold more fishing line and a heavier weight line than closed-face gear.

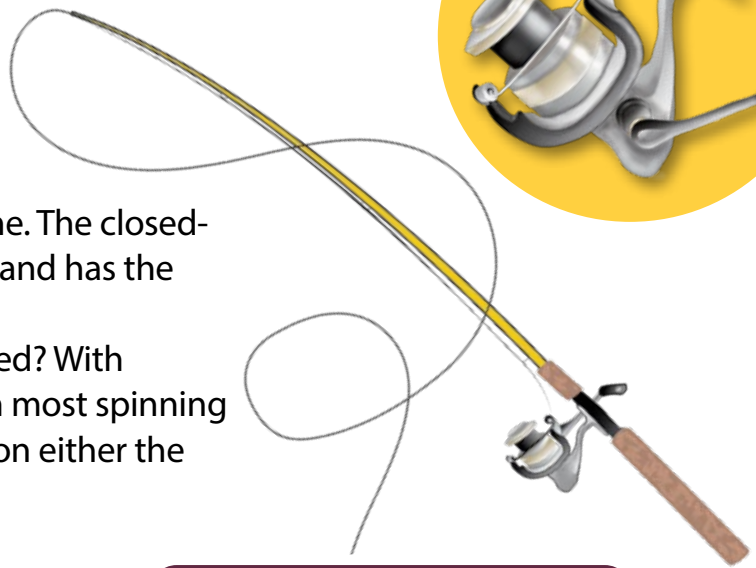
Be open to a new experience. Give open-faced spinning gear a whirl. This issue of *PLAY* will cast out some information about spin fishing. Reel-y!



# Open-faced Spinning Gear

Look at the spin fishing gear. The open-faced and closed-faced styles have different reels. The open-faced reel is attached below the rod and has a **wire bail** to hold the fishing line. The closed-faced reel is attached above the rod and has the fishing line inside a **spool cover**.

Are you right-handed or left-handed? With spinning gear, it does not matter. On most spinning reels, the reel handle can be placed on either the right or left sides to fit your needs.



**Open-faced Reel**



**Closed-faced Reel**



## Spincasting



1. Hold the fishing **rod** near your waist with the **reel** facing down.
2. Hook the fishing **line** with your forefinger. Then, open the **wire bail**.
3. Pull the fishing **rod tip** back towards your shoulder and quickly bring it forward.
4. Let go of the fishing **line** with your finger as the fishing **rod** comes forward.
5. While pointing the fishing **rod tip** at your target, watch the line spin off the reel.



# Lures for Open-faced Spinning Gear

**Lures** come in many colors, shapes, sizes, and weights. Smaller lures work great for panfish and trout. Larger lures are best for bass, Muskellunge, and Walleyes. Here are some types of lures you may want to try with open-faced spinning gear:

- Spinners and spinnerbaits have a metal blade that flashes and vibrates when retrieved.
- Spoons wobble to look like small baitfish.
- Crankbaits and jerkbaits imitate small minnows.
- Surface plugs and poppers break the water's surface to attract gamefish.

## Open-faced Rigs for Live and Artificial Baits

Most types of rigs work for open-faced reels. Go to **fishandboat.com** and search "Putting It All Together" to learn about topwater, mid-water, and bottom rigs.



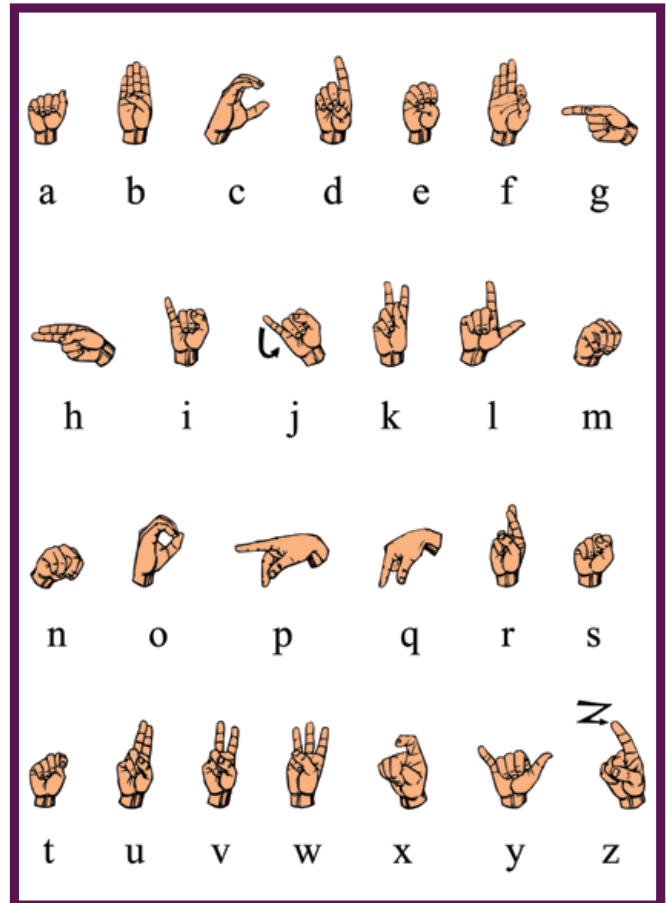
## Learn More

Whether testing new gear, catching a new fish species, or trying a new fishing spot, keep your head from spinning by visiting **fishandboat.com**.

# A New Spin on Fill-in-the-Blanks

September is Deaf Awareness Month, and September 23 is International Day of Sign Languages. Using the American Sign Language (ASL) alphabet in the box to the right, fill in the blanks to see if you can remember what you learned about spin fishing in this issue of *PLAY*.

## ASL Alphabet



1. An open-faced reel has a



\_\_\_\_\_.

2. A closed-faced reel has a



\_\_\_\_\_.

3. Spinning reels are mounted below the



\_\_\_\_\_.

4. Many types of work great to catch different fish.



\_\_\_\_\_.

**Answer Key:** 1. wire ball; 2. spool cover; 3. rod; 4. lures



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 © Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

# Bass Fishing in the Wyoming Valley

by Carl Haensel

photos by the author

The waters of the North Branch Susquehanna River swirled around old tree stumps as we launched our kayaks. It was a beautiful day and not another angler could be seen up and down the river. After paddling up a side channel and around the tip of an island, we started fishing the bank, targeting logs and rocks, along with riprap and other bank stabilization. Almost immediately, Smallmouth Bass started hitting. The bass chased our lures without restraint, even jumping out of the water while pursuing our topwater baits. The action continued through the afternoon, and we were able to catch and release plenty of bass until the sun fell below the horizon to the west.

## Getting on the water

Fishing for Smallmouth Bass in the North Branch Susquehanna River can be excellent in the Wyoming Valley of northeast Pennsylvania. With ample access up and down the river, there are

plenty of places to launch a canoe, kayak, or motorboat on this water. With a center around Wilkes-Barre, anglers are likely to find plenty of bass throughout this reach of the river. One of the best ways to cover the water on the North Branch Susquehanna River is by floating the river. River bass fishing is often effective when anglers target the bank and structure. If you are planning a float, stay within casting distance of the bank and work the shore as you gently make your way downstream. If you have success, anchoring near





*Fishing a run while wet wading the North Branch Susquehanna River is a great way to relax on a warm day on the river.*

the structure where you caught fish may work well. Smallmouth Bass often hold in schools in the river. Where there is one bass, there are often more fish.

Anglers looking to fish on foot are in luck as well, with locations including Nesbitt Park, Kingston, Riverfront Park, Pittston, and the Luzerne County Levee Trail, providing shoreline access to get on the water. Wet wading on a warm day is a fun way to explore the river, and when the water is low, there are a number of locations up and down the valley where you can catch fish. Look for islands and drop-offs that are near gravel bars to hold fish. Bridges and other structures often hold bass as well. In some reaches, bedrock outcroppings provide fishable structure. Bass regularly hold below riffles and rapids, and these faster reaches of water are good targets for shore-bound anglers to work.

## River tackle

Crankbaits, inline spinners, spinnerbaits, and swimbaits are all good lure options for spin fishing anglers targeting Smallmouth Bass on the North Branch Susquehanna River. Fast moving and aggressive baits are a great choice when

the river is high. Bass often explode on topwater options like buzzbaits or chugging lures when the river is off-color, or near dusk at the end of a day of fishing. When covering water, top water options are also great searching lures to find active fish. Try them in bright colors when the water is murky. Then, switch to more neutral and natural tones when the water clears. If the fish seem finicky, jigs may work well. Tipping your jig with a minnow is a good way to hook fish in deeper pools, especially as the water cools in the fall. In the slowest pools, a jig fished under a bobber can bring in fish as well. Lightweight spinning rods spooled with 6- or 8-pound-test work well for most applications when targeting Smallmouth Bass. Anglers can achieve long casts and realistically land even big bass that they may hook.

Fly fishing anglers will find that poppers and Dahlberg Divers will produce well for bass if throwing topwater flies. Subsurface patterns like Clouser Minnows, Deceivers, Murdich Minnows, and other similar streamer patterns are effective choices any time on the river. Anglers fishing deeper pockets, pools, and runs should try casting these flies with a sink tip fly line to get deeper and reach active fish. Use flies tied in brighter colors when the water has low



*Low light conditions may produce big bass on the North Branch Susquehanna River in the Wyoming Valley. Try topwater lures or flies to convince larger fish to bite as the sun sets.*



*A Smallmouth Bass caught on the North Branch Susquehanna River.*

clarity to motivate fish to swim over and check out your offering. Try using a 7- or 8-weight fly rod with floating line to fish most flies. Fluorocarbon tippet in 1x or 2x will handle the abrasion along the banks well and help you pull fish out of obstructions easily. When floating the river when the water is high, try casting at the bank and retrieving only a few short strips out before casting again. In these conditions, bass often stick tightly to the shore, and this method maximizes the time your fly is near fish. In low water, bass spread out. Fishing longer casts that work broader pools and riffles can be more productive.

## Other species

In addition to quality Smallmouth Bass fishing, a variety of other gamefish are available on the river. Anglers should expect to catch Channel Catfish, Walleyes, and even muskies. Rock Bass and other panfish are also a possibility. Slower pools and side eddies seem to hold the most diverse mixes of fish in the river. Often, they are marked by swirling foam, downed trees, and branches. Using stouter line is a good idea, especially for Channel Catfish. □



*Rock Bass often take a jig, crankbait, or fly when you are in search of Smallmouth Bass.*

# To the Surface



*by Marshall Nych*

*photo by the author*

The downstream disturbance was impossible to ignore. Though our trio had tricked a few trout from our favorite spot, the bite slowed down considerably after a particularly splashy bout. My 6-year-old son brought a wriggling 14-inch Rainbow Trout to my 9-year-old daughter. Leah's steady net swooped Noah's frisky fish. We had strategically placed ourselves slightly downstream from a bridge. Not only did the structure carve out an ideal fishing hole, it held promise of being a focal point during trout stockings.

"Did you see that?" Noah squeaked. His reeling hands raced to catch up with his mind. In his imagination, the fish already had a hook in the corner of its mouth.

"Yeah, I heard it too!" Leah affirmed. She also brought in her line, far more cautious and methodically. Leah was still glowing with pride from learning how to independently use a spinning reel.

The feeding fish clearly erupted from the refuge of a large root system on our side of the stream. I admired how two children who fight over the remote control at home worked together to formulate a game plan. The siblings snuck along the steep bank. Once the trail ended, the duo slinked across stones.

During these fishing trips, so much more comes to the surface than trout. On the water, kids are more comfortable and wonderfully themselves. When given the freedom of outdoors and abundant space nature affords, personality traits and quirks surface.

One adventure in particular, I witnessed my son's interesting range of behavior. In under a minute, I watched a serious naturalist turn to perseverant sportsman only to morph into a playful goofball with an acute sense of humor. The transformations occurred alongside family friends, as we dunked minnows on ultralight tackle to ravenous trout. It was a scrapbook kind of day. Everyone was smiling and catching fish. Noah found a hot spot in the pool. After his cast, the curious scientist in my son decided to experiment with the minnows in the cooler.

Simultaneously, a fat Brown Trout was examining the minnow at the end of his line.

Though Noah's bail was closed, his eyes were wide open as the rod lifted off from the grassy takeoff. At once, Noah dropped the bait and raced to his sliding rod. I was quick enough to capture Noah before he took the plunge, for he was fully committed to getting his favorite rod back or, more likely, wanted a crack at the fish who dared challenge.

Precariously, we watched as his rod and reel submerged. Unbalanced, I managed to place Noah down. I fell at least 5 feet before splashing into the chilly water. Then, I dove to retrieve Noah's gear. As I emerged to the surface, rod in hand, I will never forget the swelling pride on my boy's face.

What Noah said, between the most good-hearted chuckles ever heard was, "Daddy! Daddy! There goes your hat!" His finger followed the floating cap. Noah hopped along the bank, cheering me on downstream. The Brown Trout never came to the surface.

Less saturating, yet equally satisfying experiences are days fishing with my lovely daughter. At school, Leah tends to be sweetly shy and kindly reserved. However, set her along our favorite stream, and she is chatty and playful. Each time we fish, I sense my daughter's trusting nature.

Though not as frequent, for it surfaces during the off chance we encounter a fellow angler, I also observe Leah's genuine friendliness. "Hello! My name is Leah. Catching anything?" And, if the passerby happens to have a dog, I can kiss the idea of fishing goodbye. I am then privy to another of Leah's wonderful traits: her unfiltered, unapologetic love for animals, which extends to her appreciation of a fish's beauty. I have never looked at a living creature the way she does, admiring every one of their features.

As my children teamed up on this unsuspecting trout, part of me wanted to join in the fun, carrying one kid in each arm to get the fish. But, I resisted and let this opportunity for growth unfold.

I would like to finish this tale with a storybook ending, but fishy tale endings surpass fairy tale ones. Leah slipped off a rock and filled her boots with cold creek water. Such commotion likely tipped off the trout. If not, Noah was there to seal the deal, forgetting to open the bail as his father taught.

The two joys of my life returned undefeated and undeterred by tangles, wet feet, and startled fish. Fitting their character, they smiled, ready for home but eager to fish another day. ☐

# A QUARTER CENTURY FOR BIGDADY RODS



by Alex Zidock Jr. photos by the author

In the early days of television, talk show host Art Linkletter made his living from the simple revelation, "Kids Say the Darndest Things." For Randy Emerich, it was his young daughter's darndest spelling error that he is proud to affix to his fishing rods.

"When my daughter was in kindergarten, the teacher said, let's make a picture of your mom or dad to take home. My daughter drew a picture of me, and because she was learning to spell, she wrote across the top of an image of a big me, 'To My Big Dady I Love You.' I am big in stature, so when it came time to name my rod building company 25 years ago, the name was a natural," said Emerich.

Emerich has been building fishing rods in Pottsville for more than a quarter century. He started by asking many questions and much trial and error. "When I was a teenager, we had many mom-and-pop fishing shops in the area. There was one shop I frequented, and one day I asked Ed, the owner, if he would show me how to build a rod, and he agreed. He made fly rods," said Emerich.



Randy Emerich, Bigdady Rods, with a finished rod.

Over the years, Emerich made everything from 4-foot ultralight rods to offshore big game rods for his customers.

"If there was a mistake to be made, I made it. And, even after more than 2,000 rods later, I am still learning how to do things better and more efficiently," said Emerich.

The basics for good fishing rods begin with the rod's core. "There are a lot of manufacturers out there, and some try to cover the whole spectrum of rod blanks. One company might make a good spinning rod blank for a trout rod, another the best bass blank, and still another makes a superior fly rod blank, so I pick and choose to get the best blank for the rod I want to build," said Emerich. He can determine characteristics that





*Sanding a piece of cork to make a custom handle.*

make one blank better than another for specific applications.

Emerich is diligent in selecting handles, guides, and other rod-building components. Combining the best blanks, guides, threads, reel seats, grips, and everything else moves his cost above mass-manufactured big-box store rods, but his repeat business affirms his success.

"I am a custom rod builder, and that means I like to talk to my customers and find out exactly how they intend to use the rod," said Emerich.

More guides than usual, custom-shaped cork handles, a wide selection of thread and color combinations, and applying the customer's name or logo rounds out what makes Bigdady Rods unique.

"More recently, I have been building fly rods for euro nymphing. These are much longer rods—10 and 11 feet and even a little longer—built on lightweight rod blanks, and guide placement is different from standard fly rods," said Emerich.

Fishing at Pine Creek and standing near his truck with his logo on the back window, a couple of younger anglers approached and asked if he was advertising for Bigdady Rods. "I told them I was Bigdady. The one guy went to his vehicle and retrieved two of my rods and said he was so happy with them that he wanted to order a third. That made me feel really good," said Emerich.

"I love to fish, and I fish a lot. While I have pro-staffers out there testing and giving me feedback, if you cannot reach me right away, I am probably out there fishing, testing—somebody has to do it," Emerich said, smiling. ☐



*Bigdady fly rods ready for shipping.*

## **Bigdady Rods**

Randy Emerich

570-622-1252

Bigdadyrods@comcast.net

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

# PIKE ON THE EDGE



*by Jeff Wolessagle*

**A** well-defined edge of submerged weed growth was clearly visible where the water transitioned from a depth of about 4 feet to 10 feet. It stretched for over 100 yards down the lake and was exactly the type of location we wanted. We set our trolling rods out, set up with 4-inch mid-level diving crankbaits. We positioned the boat parallel to the weed edge and began trolling the baits along it as close to the growth as we could get without bogging the lures down into the vegetation. About midway through our first pass, the rod closest to the weed edge bent sharply, and we stopped the motor to the cry of “Fish on!” At first, the

missile of a fish darted out into open water and made a drag-screaming run. When that strategy of escape did not work, it turned back toward the weed edge, but we kept it clear. After a few more sweeping runs, we had the first of almost 12 nice Northern Pike that we would land that day.

Pike are true ambush predators, and nothing provides more perfect cover to lie in wait for a feeding opportunity than heavy weed edges. The lanes of open water adjacent to dense growth typically congregate forage fish such as Bluegills, Yellow Perch, and other baitfish, and the pike key in on these locales. We normally troll along the deeper outside weed edges or cast parallel to them from a boat or kayak. Sometimes, the fish will be staged along shallower weed growth, so do not be afraid to probe these areas as well, especially in the early morning and evening hours.



photos-courtesy of Andy Whitcomb



If you have a GPS, mark locations where you get bites and save them for future fishing outings. Nothing is more fun than tangling with pike from a kayak. A kayak angler should make multiple retrieves along each weed edge encounter.

Baits of choice for fishing weed edges include medium to large crankbaits, large spinnerbaits, inline spinners, and swimbaits. Stout spinning rods in the 7-foot range in medium heavy action accompanied by the appropriately sized reel are perfect. Twenty-pound braided line is ideal with an 18- to 24-inch fluorocarbon leader in 30-pound-test or higher. If there is a good possibility of tangling with some bigger than average pike, leaders of up to 50-pound-test are good. Check the leaders after each fish for abrasion and replace damaged ones. Steel and titanium leaders can also prevent pike from cutting the

#### *An angler with a nice Northern Pike.*

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line, but I recommend experimenting with them to see how different baits run in the water.

Vary the retrieve or trolling speed until you key in on what triggers the most strikes. On some days, pike may want the bait fished as slowly as possible. Other times, a blistering fast retrieve will draw the most bites. Also, experiment with the size and color of your baits. On days when the fish are extremely active, it may not seem to make a difference. Other times, it will be the difference between loading the boat and not catching any fish. If the area receives heavy fishing pressure, try downsizing your lures.

If you are on the hunt for nice pike, look on the edge. ☐

# Lyman Run State Park



photo-Linda Stager

by *Linda Stager*

Potter County sits on Pennsylvania's northcentral border with New York State. It is a county crossed with hills and mountains, deep woods, and few people. The common expression is Potter County may have more white-tailed deer than people.

And, it is an outdoor recreation paradise.

In autumn, Potter County puts on one of the best leaf peeping shows in the northern tier of Pennsylvania. The hardwoods here, especially the maples and cherry trees, are brilliantly bright in some years.

As much fun as the autumn reds and oranges are to experience, one of the best kept secrets in Potter County is the premier destination, 595-acre Lyman Run State Park. Camp and fish for coldwater trout and lake bass in a freshwater lake rimmed by mountains.

If you love ATV trails, some of the best public ATV trails in Pennsylvania are at Lyman Run State Park, a product of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resource's ATV Regional Trail Connector Pilot.

Scott Morgan, assistant park manager for Hills Creek State Park, is partly responsible for day-to-day operations in seven state parks including Lyman Run State Park. Morgan loves

Lyman Run State Park, "as our visitors meander their way into Lyman Run State Park on Lyman Run Road, they wind their approach to one of the state park system's unique facilities and our main feature, which is the Labyrinth Weir Spillway that holds back the waters of the spring-fed Lyman Run Reservoir. Lyman Run Lake features 45 acres of a coldwater fishery frequented by locals and non-locals alike, for its excellent trout fishing opportunities. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) stocks Lyman Run Reservoir on average about four times a year, three times between March and April to provide plenty of trout fishing opportunities during the spring and summer. The PFBC return once in October to prepare the lake for fall and ice fishing during the winter," said Morgan.

The PFBC stocks Lyman Run Lake with golden Rainbow Trout and Rainbow Trout. Upper Lyman Run holds native Brook Trout. Add in panfish and Largemouth Bass fishing and anglers get a lot of fun with their visit.

A 60-boat mooring area near the lakeshore concession area welcomes unpowered boats with either a boat registration or launch permit.

Hikers can enjoy 6 miles of trail varying from easy to more difficult. The Susquehannock Trail System adds another 85 miles for the hardest of hikers. Two



*The boat mooring area at Lyman Run Reservoir at Lyman Run State Park, Potter County.*

*photo-Linda Stager*

campgrounds in the park offer rustic camping. One of the campgrounds is ATV friendly. The campgrounds are open from the second weekend of April through early December.

“We have plenty of room in a day use area as well, with a pavilion, a playground that was donated by the Friends of Lyman Run, and picnic areas with tables and grills for your late afternoon enjoyment. Trees provide plenty of shade to take refuge during those hot summer days. The pristine waters of Lyman Run Lake also make it a great place to enjoy our beach and designated swimming area. The beach area provides plenty of sand and green grass to catch a summer tan or enjoy the gentle breeze that comes from the surrounding hills,” said Morgan.

Lyman Run State Park is a combination of quiet along with the sounds of regulated ATV activities. It is a paradise for lovers of trail riding, hiking, fishing, and camping. Check out the dam labyrinth when you walk the trail around the lake. Spend a lazy day of some of the best fishing around, either from shore or boat. Watch the sun come across the mountains as its rays make its way to lake level. Spot the local eagle pair and the ospreys as they fish throughout the day. And, if you are a registered camper, you can even do a little dark-sky stargazing over the quiet nighttime lake.

It is all good fun here in the mountains of Potter County. 🏠

## While You Are Here

Cherry Springs State Park, Potter County, is nearby and has awe-inspiring night skies for stargazing.



*photo-DCNR Bureau of State Parks*



<https://www.visitpa.com/article/7-epic-stargazing-spots-pennsylvania>

## For a map of Lyman Run State Park and access areas:



<https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/FindAPark/LymanRunStatePark/Pages/Maps.aspx>



# 24<sup>th</sup> WCO CLASS GRADUATION

**Sixteen members of the 24th Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO) class graduated from training during a commencement ceremony held June 24, 2022, in the Pennsylvania State Capitol Rotunda, Harrisburg.**

Lieutenant Colonel Thomas J. Burrell, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) Bureau of Law Enforcement (BLE), was Master of Ceremonies. Executive Director Timothy D. Schaeffer, PFBC, and Colonel Clyde N. Warner, PFBC, delivered the keynote addresses. Major George Bivens, Pennsylvania State Police, retired, was the guest speaker. Cadet Matthew R. Scott spoke on behalf of the graduates. Presentation of diplomas and recognition awards followed, presented by Richard S. Kauffman, former PFBC President, Board of Commissioners, PFBC Executive Director Schaeffer, and Colonel Warner.

The Edward W. Manhart Academic Achievement Award was presented to Ty C. Moon for maintaining the highest grade point average during training. The Sergeant Brook R. Tolbert Firearms Excellence Award was presented to David H. Knight II. Graduates completed 21 weeks of municipal police officer training with the Pennsylvania State Police. This training included all aspects of police work, basic law, investigation techniques, first aid, CPR, firearms, patrol vehicle operation, crimes code, and unarmed self-defense.



Photo: Janelle Howard

24th WCO Class

In addition, graduates completed conservation officer training at the Commission's H.R. Stackhouse School of Fishery Conservation and Watercraft Safety, Bellefonte. The conservation officer training curriculum included boat operation, boating-under-the-influence detection and apprehension, accident investigation, fish, reptile, and amphibian identification, water pollution investigation, public speaking, standard operating procedures, Pennsylvania fishing and boating laws and regulations, federal fish and wildlife law, and field training. The WCO training program is nearly a year long.

There are about 100 commissioned officers throughout Pennsylvania. To become a WCO or for more information, contact the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission at 717-705-7861, visit the Commission's website at [fishandboat.com](http://fishandboat.com), contact the State Civil Service Commission at 717-783-3058, or visit the State Civil Service Commission's website at [www.scsc.pa.gov](http://www.scsc.pa.gov). ☐

Graduate	Assigned To
Tyler C. Balla	W. Allegheny
Brock A. Benson	S. Huntingdon
Nikolaus A. Black	Jefferson
Shane C. Casey	N. Wayne
David H. Knight II	W. Erie
Neal S. Kokatay	N. Wallenpaupack
Carl A. Maiese	Cumberland
Ty C. Moon	N. Susquehanna/E. Bradford
Lacie Mosteller	SW. Montgomery/W. Philadelphia
Derek A. Norman	N. Montgomery/E. Berks
Logan T. Opfer	W. Armstrong
Wyatt D. Peiper	Franklin/E. Fulton
Sean P. Rae	S. Chester
Matthew R. Scott	Delaware
Charles H. Shoemaker	Lycoming
Thomas J. Watson III	Potter



*Pictured are (front row, left to right): Derek A. Norman; Tyler C. Balla; Shane C. Casey; Lacie Mosteller; Carl A. Maiese; and Charles H. Shoemaker; (middle row, left to right): David H. Knight II; Brock A. Benson; Neal S. Kokatay; Nikolaus A. Black; Sean P. Rae; and Wyatt D. Peiper; (last row, left to right): Logan T. Opfer; Matthew R. Scott; Ty C. Moon; and Thomas J. Watson III.*

photos: Janelle Howard



*The Edward W. Manhart Academic Achievement Award was presented to Ty C. Moon for maintaining the highest grade point average during training. Pictured are (left to right) Ty C. Moon, Colonel Clyde N. Warner, and PFBC Executive Director Timothy D. Schaeffer.*



*The Sergeant Brook R. Tolbert Firearms Excellence Award was presented to David H. Knight II. Pictured are (left to right) David H. Knight II, Colonel Clyde N. Warner, and PFBC Executive Director Timothy D. Schaeffer.*

## July Commission Meeting Held

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission held its July Commission meeting on Tuesday, July 26, 2022, at its Harrisburg headquarters. The meeting

was open to the public. Read more at [fishandboat.com](http://fishandboat.com). Click on "News".



Commissioner Richard Kauffman was recognized for his time as Board president at the meeting. Pictured are Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Executive Director Timothy Schaeffer and Commissioner Kauffman.



photos: Mike Parker

Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO) Jonathan R. Stark received a Lifesaving Award at the meeting. Pictured (left to right) are Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Executive Director Timothy Schaeffer, WCO Stark, Commissioner Richard Kauffman, and Colonel Clyde Warner.

## eDNA from Invasive Silver Carp Identified in Presque Isle Bay

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) announced that it has conducted targeted invasive carp sampling in Presque Isle Bay, Erie County, after the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) detected the presence of Silver Carp environmental DNA (eDNA).

On July 11, 2022, the PFBC was informed by the USFWS that laboratory results from routine eDNA sampling conducted by the USFWS in May 2022 detected Silver Carp eDNA in one of the 100 sample locations in Presque Isle Bay. In response to this detection, the PFBC conducted targeted boat electrofishing sampling near the detection location on July 14, 2022. No Silver Carp were collected or observed. In addition, boat electrofishing sampling operations conducted by the PFBC in the same area of Presque Isle Bay on May 18, 2022, for another purpose prior to the positive eDNA findings, did not capture any invasive carp.

While no physical invasive carp specimens have been detected, the PFBC has requested that the USFWS collect additional water samples from Presque Isle Bay when more favorable environmental conditions are present for eDNA sampling. Learn more at [fishandboat.com](http://fishandboat.com).

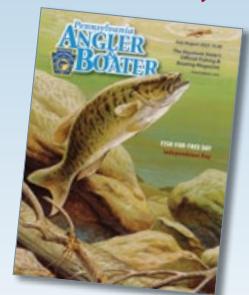
## Did You Know?

Boaters are required to wear life jackets on boats less than 16 feet in length or any canoe, kayak, or paddleboard from November 1 through April 30 due to risks associated with cold water. Don't let a moment of carelessness ruin your day. Wear a life jacket, be safe, and have fun. Learn more at [fishandboat.com](http://fishandboat.com).



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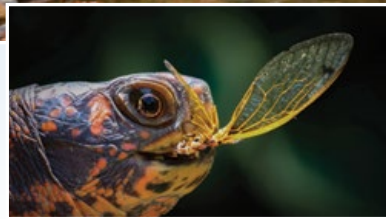
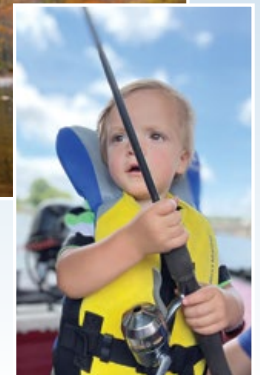
# Take Part in the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission 2022 PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

Winning entries will appear in a feature article in a future issue of *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* and on the Commission's website and Facebook page. All entries may be used elsewhere in the Commission's magazine, publications, website, social media pages, exhibits, and other projects. **The contest will run from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022.**

Entries must be e-mailed to [sgearhart@pa.gov](mailto:sgearhart@pa.gov). The following information must be included in the e-mail.

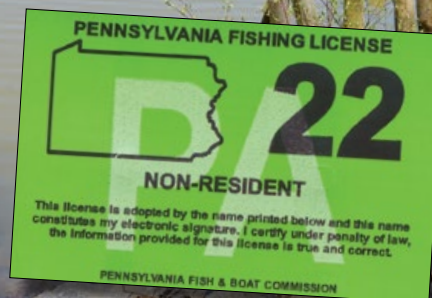
- Entrant's Name
- Entrant's Address
- Entrant's Phone Number
- Entrant's E-mail
- Photo Description (location, county, species, etc.)
- Date of Photo

Winners will be determined by review from various PFBC staff from several different bureaus. For more information, [fishandboat.com](http://fishandboat.com).



## Know a Student Who is Back on Campus in Pennsylvania?

### Buy a Non-Resident PA Student License as a Gift!



[FishandBoat.com](http://FishandBoat.com)



# ANGLER'S NOTEBOOK

by Jerry Bush

**C**olorful ants are underrated flies that autumn fly fishing anglers should include in their fly fishing box. Green, orange, pink, purple, and especially red ants attract attention of steelhead and trout.

Mid-September through mid-October may provide lucrative adventures for Walleye and steelhead enthusiasts. Though for different reasons, both species swim the waters closer to shore at this time. As big lakes cool, Walleyes seek the warmer water still offered in the shallows. Spoons, spinners, and marabou jigs are effective lures for shore anglers and those wading in shallow water.

As water temperatures cool, oxygen levels rise, and the instinct of reenergized fish is to devour food before winter arrives.



photo-Jerry Bush

Ant flies of various colors attract trout.

## FISHIN' FROM THE KITCHEN

### Hoisin Muskellunge Fillets Over Wide Rice Noodles

by Wayne Phillips

**T**urn Muskellunge fillets into something rich and exotic by baking them with a Hoisin sauce coating.

*Ingredients for four servings:*

- 4 6-ounce boneless, skinless Muskellunge fillets
- 2 Tbsp. canola oil
- ½ cup soy sauce
- ½ cup Hoisin sauce
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 2 Tbsp. Hoisin sauce
- 2 Tbsp. water
- Wide rice noodles
- Stir fry vegetables

#### Procedure

Oil the bottom of a baking dish. Add soy sauce to pan. Lightly season fish with salt and black pepper. Brush both sides of the fillets with Hoisin sauce. Bake in a 350 degree

F oven for 15 to 20 minutes until fish is cooked. Combine 2 Tbsp. Hoisin sauce with 2 Tbsp. water. Brush on the baked Muskellunge.

#### Serve

Serve over wide rice noodles. Stir fry broccoli, carrots, celery, onions, mushrooms, and red peppers. Toss with a bit of soy sauce.

#### Tips

Brushing on the diluted Hoisin sauce after baking ensures that the fish will be moist.

Asian style noodles come in many different forms. They are ideal for family dinners, because they are easy to prepare. In most cases, simply put the noodles in a bowl and top with boiling water. Let sit for a few minutes, drain, add some soy sauce, and serve.

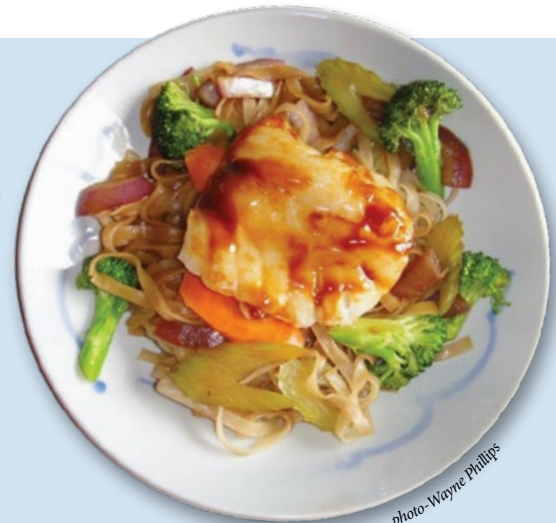


photo-Wayne Phillips

# SOCIAL SHORTS

Below are some "Social Shorts" from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's (PFBC's) Facebook page.



facebook



**Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission**  
June 7 at 2:00 PM · 🌐

American Shad play a foundational role within oceanic, coastal, and connected inland waters. They annually return to the Delaware River during the spring months for spawning.

Recent PFBC surveys showed spawning run assessment catches below the long-term average. However, exceptional 2017 and 2019 juvenile classes indicate that future spawning runs of adult shad should return in increased numbers.

PFBC biologists monitored American Shad in the Delaware River in 2019, 2020, a... [See more](#)

👍 196    💬 18 Comments    ➦ 376 Shares

👍 Like    💬 Comment    ➦ Share

facebook



**Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission**  
June 13 at 4:00 PM · 🌐

Have you seen any turtles while recently enjoying Pennsylvania's outdoors? Many females are on the move this time of year to lay their eggs.

You can help them safely cross roads in the direction they were heading, but otherwise you should let them go about their business. Turtles are determined little creatures committed to following their instincts!

Learn more about Pennsylvania turtles: <http://ow.ly/vRKU50JwbQB>

🐢 The cute, petite Bog Turtle is Pennsylvania's smallest tur... [See more](#)

👍 654    💬 70 Comments    ➦ 240 Shares

👍 Like    💬 Comment    ➦ Share


**Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission**  
June 29 at 3:00 PM · 🌐

Timber Rattlesnakes are one of the most misunderstood and fascinating creatures in Pennsylvania. Rattlesnake sightings are common from July to early September. Males are searching for mates during this time and may travel up to several miles in search of receptive females.

Most rattlesnakes rattle when they are approached or feel threatened. If you hear rattling nearby, retreat calmly and allow the animal to continue its course or to seek cover. Do not kill or attempt to displace or capture the snake. Timber Rattlesnakes are rarely aggressive and will avoid human contact if given the opportunity to flee or retreat under cover.

Read more on the Dos and Don'ts if you encounter a timber rattlesnake: <http://ow.ly/j4j850JJOQC>

📸 John Mallios captured these photos of a beautiful timber rattlesnake in Lycoming County. The cloudy eyes are known as the "opaque condition," and this snake will be shedding its skin soon.



👍 1K

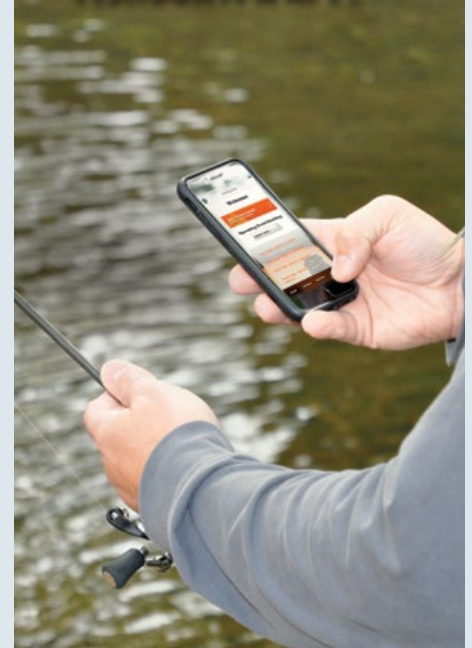
💬 174 Comments    ➦ 592 Shares

Find the PFBC on Social Media



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

DOWNLOAD THE FREE FISHBOATPA APP!



## CAST & CAUGHT



*Lynn Merrell, Huntingdon, caught this 12-inch Brown Trout while fishing on the Frankstown Branch Juniata River, Blair and Huntingdon counties.*

For the "Cast & Caught" column, send only prints (no larger than 8"x10") and a completed "Model Release form" available at [fishandboat.com/Transact/AnglerBoater](http://fishandboat.com/Transact/AnglerBoater). 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**



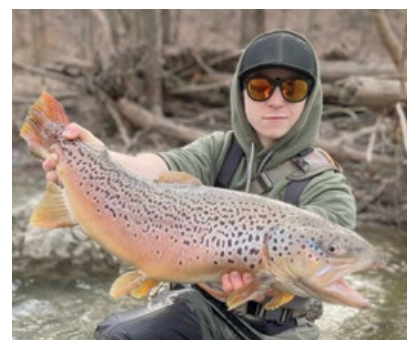
*Terry Graver, Bath, caught this 4-pound, 8-ounce, 20½-inch golden Rainbow Trout while fishing Hokendauqua Creek, Northampton County.*



*Chad Bauer, West Middlesex, caught this hybrid Striped Bass with a fly rod while fishing in the Shenango River Watershed, Mercer County.*



*Evan Swab, age 8, caught this Rainbow Trout while fishing at Lake Perez, Huntingdon County.*



*Hunter Perok, Coal Center, caught this lake run Brown Trout on a fly while fishing Elk Creek, Erie County.*