

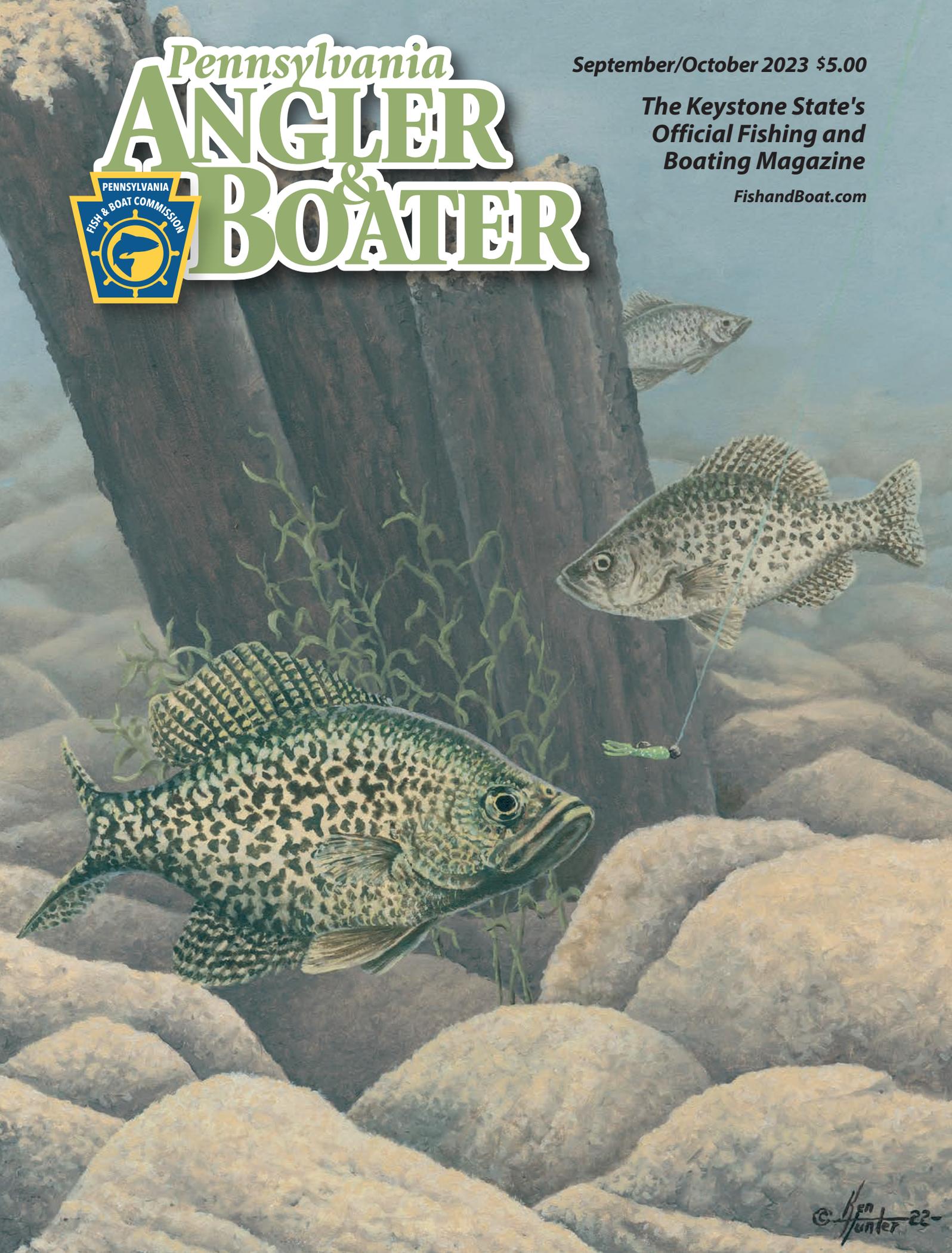
# Pennsylvania ANGLER & BOATER



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The Keystone State's  
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Boating Magazine

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These icons represent specific topics.



Amphibians  
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Boating



Catch and Release



Conservation



Family Fishing



Fly Fishing



Ice Fishing



Lakes



Paddling



Rivers



State Parks



Streams



Tackle

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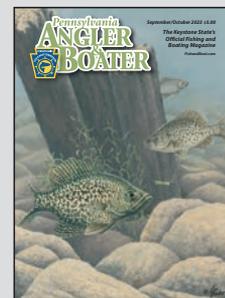
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### On the cover



Working the submerged wooden structure in the back of bays can be extremely productive. Read more about crappies on pages

34 and 35. *Painting by Ken Hunter.*





photo-PFBC archives

# MAKE A DIFFERENCE— TAKE SOMEONE FISHING OR BOATING

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

With the start of a new school year, we are reminded of the difference that a teacher, counselor, coach or other faculty member can make to a student's future. Whether it is an unexpected spark of curiosity, a pep talk at the right time, filling a niche as a role model or simply the discipline of a structured curriculum, people are making differences in the lives of students across Pennsylvania this fall and throughout the academic year.

You can do the same for the future of fishing and boating. It is easy, fun and rewarding to make a difference in whether a person fishes or boats.

Start by inviting someone to go fishing or boating. The Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation's "Take Me Fishing" campaign ([takemefishing.org](http://takemefishing.org)) rings as true as ever, and the water is open to everyone. Online resources at [fishandboat.com](http://fishandboat.com) or our mobile app FishBoatPA make planning for your next water-based adventure in Pennsylvania just a few clicks away.

When you have that new person on the water, teach them some tips for catching and handling fish. *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* readers are a dedicated group and have a lot to offer. You know what works for you, so please share your knowledge.

Model safe boating practices and insist on the same from people around you. Always wear your life jacket, never boat under the influence of alcohol or drugs and require the same from others with you.

Yesterday (I am writing this on a rainy Sunday morning in July), my kids asked if we could take their friend kayaking on the Susquehanna River. It was a picture perfect day on the river,

complete with actively biting Smallmouth Bass, great views and a cooling breeze skimming off the water. In keeping with the theme of making a difference, three things stick out on my mind.

First, all four of us wore life jackets the entire time we were in our boats. Annually, 80% of the boating fatalities in Pennsylvania and across the county involve someone not wearing a life jacket.

As we were unloading the gear and getting ready to walk down to the river, an angler was laboring up the trail pulling his kayak. I asked our one son (they are twins, so I cannot recall which one I asked) to please give him a hand, and, without missing a beat, he walked down and helped the guy get his boat up onto flat ground. The whole interaction probably took less than a minute and ended with a thank you and a smile.

Early on in the day, we were a few hundred yards upstream of the Statue of Liberty in the Dauphin Narrows and taking a break on some rocks. The friend looked around and said, "Man, I love it out here!" It was his second time on the river with us, and it will definitely not be the last. He would not have been there if we had not invited him to come along and use one of our kayaks and life jackets.

Three simple gestures—wearing life jackets, helping a stranger and taking a friend boating—show just how easy it can be to make a difference and make someone appreciate time afield and be more likely to get back on the water.

With advance apologies for those who have heard me say this before, the last thing I used to tell my kids when dropping them off at school was "Be nice to everyone." I even told them that when we dropped them off at college last August.

The same advice applies to fishing and boating. Be nice to everyone along the shore and on the water. It may make the difference in whether they decide to come back to fish and boat again. ☐

# Pennsylvania's TOP FALL FISHING SPOTS



photo-Justin Torok

*by Carl Haensel*

**F**ishing in the fall provides excellent opportunities for targeting large, active fish. Fish feed heartily as they get ready for winter, and some are preparing to spawn. Good fishing can be found in all corners of Pennsylvania. Get outside and explore some new waters, and you never know what you may catch on your next adventure. Top waters are highlighted below for bass, muskies, pike, trout, Striped Bass, Walleyes and other species. If you're ready to hit the water, use the online Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) County Guide to find boat accesses, local parks, special regulation areas, stocked trout waters and more.

## **Northwest**

### **Lake Erie tributaries**

Fall weather starts to bring steelhead into rivers along the shoreline of Lake Erie. With cooling air temperatures, the first major rains bring runs of steelhead into streams like Elk Creek, Walnut Creek and other local waters. Egg patterns are good choices in the off-color water that often brings in the first waves of fall-run fish. If fish aren't in the rivers yet, try fishing the big lake. Steelhead

cruise off the river mouths in Lake Erie and may be caught from boats and shore. Streamer patterns, spoons and spinners perform well. Don't be surprised if you hook up with a Walleye.

### **Upper Allegheny River**

Fall on the upper Allegheny River offers a wide selection of fishing targets. Bass, muskies, pike and trout are available to anglers. You're only limited by days on the water. Some of the greatest fish diversity is downstream of the Kinzua Dam on the Allegheny Reservoir, where trophy fish are regularly caught. Float this large river to reach the best water.

## **Northcentral**

### **Central limestone trout streams**

While some anglers forget stream fishing as the season swings into fall, they should pay close attention to the high-quality limestone streams in northcentral Pennsylvania. Waters like Spring Creek, Penns Creek, Fishing Creek and other similar waters offer wild Brown Trout that are feeding up in the fall, and often chasing minnows and other baitfish. Depending on the regulations, both fly fishing and spin fishing gear works well. Cast streamers, spinners and spoons for big trout.

## Northeast

### Lake Wallenpaupack

Cooler fall temperatures mean good shots at big Striped Bass as they feed in advance of the coming winter. Target fish on the second largest lake entirely in Pennsylvania as they move shallower and provide better access to anglers. Hybrid stripers may also be found in the lake and may be good fishing as well, along with Smallmouth Bass and Walleyes. Spinning anglers using swimbaits may be successful.

### West Branch Delaware River

Quality mayfly hatches like Slate Drakes, Light Cahills and Blue-Winged Olives offer fly anglers excellent attempts at rising trout on this tailwater fishery on the PA-NY border. As fall progresses, Brown Trout preparing to spawn chase larger streamers, adding to the excitement. Head downriver below the confluence with the East Branch Delaware River for more tries at big trout and quality Smallmouth Bass action.

## Southwest

### Three Rivers

Larger baitfish in the Ohio, Allegheny and Monongahela rivers indicate good bass fishing in the fall around Pittsburgh and surrounding areas. Size up your lures and hang on as bass are in prime shape. Look for hefty White Bass to add interest to the mix. Walleye fishing improves in the fall as well, with quality fish available in all three rivers. As the waters cool, try bait fishing with a jig and minnow to increase your odds.

## Southcentral

### Susquehanna River and Juniata River

Fall is prime time to catch hefty Smallmouth Bass in the Susquehanna and Juniata rivers. Lower water levels can concentrate fish, and they're chasing baitfish. Bass will start to concentrate in larger, deeper pools as the water cools, and bait or slow lure presentations become more important as the season progresses. Fishing for catfish is also excellent, with both Channel Catfish and Flathead Catfish in both rivers. Live bait fished in low light periods will produce the most fall catfish for anglers looking for fast action.

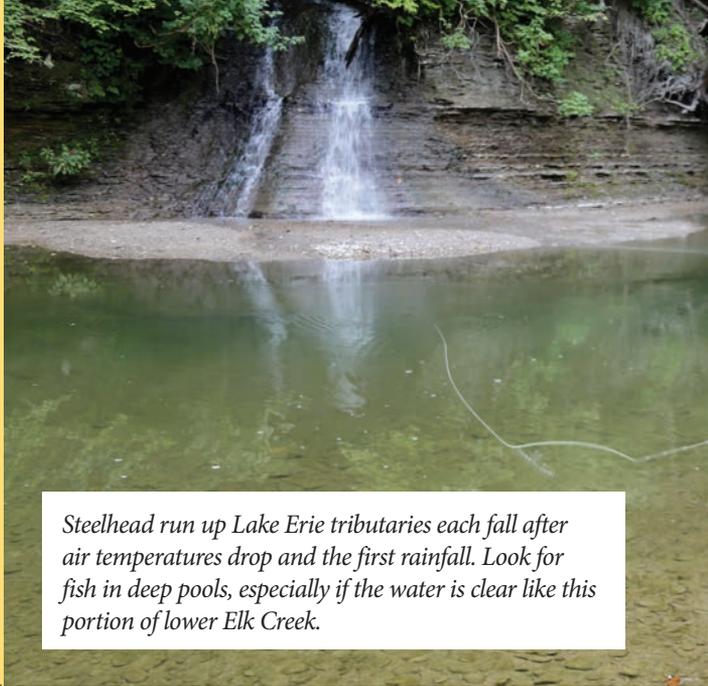
### Raystown Lake

Striped Bass and Lake Trout fishing is great in the fall on Raystown Lake, the largest lake entirely in Pennsylvania. Look for big fish in shallower water to increase when temperatures start to cool as fall progresses. Deep presentations while trolling are likely to produce fish. Other fish in the lake also feed well in the fall and may often be found in similar areas. Don't be surprised if you're targeting one type of fish and hook up with quality bass, Walleyes or other fish.

## Southeast

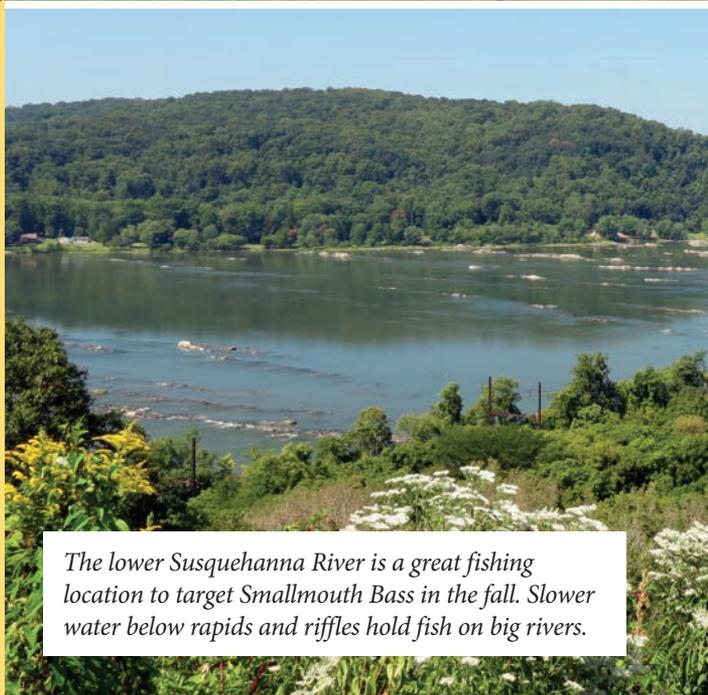
### Delaware River

Smallmouth Bass are active and available in southeast Pennsylvania during September and October. Migrating American Shad are prime targets for bass, and casting lures or flies that imitate shad produce great results. Look for active fish in pools and below riffles. ☐

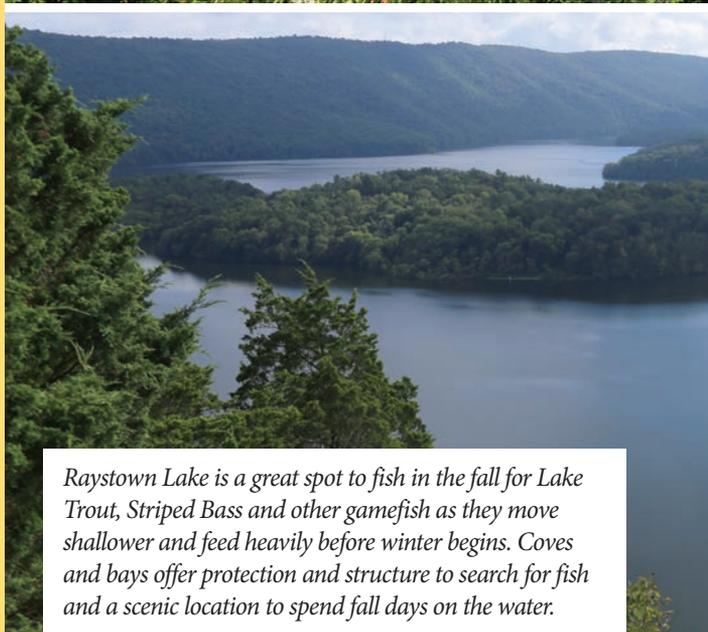


*Steelhead run up Lake Erie tributaries each fall after air temperatures drop and the first rainfall. Look for fish in deep pools, especially if the water is clear like this portion of lower Elk Creek.*

photos-Carl Haeussel



*The lower Susquehanna River is a great fishing location to target Smallmouth Bass in the fall. Slower water below rapids and riffles hold fish on big rivers.*



*Raystown Lake is a great spot to fish in the fall for Lake Trout, Striped Bass and other gamefish as they move shallower and feed heavily before winter begins. Coves and bays offer protection and structure to search for fish and a scenic location to spend fall days on the water.*



photo-Carl Haensel

*If you're looking to hook up with strong, hard-fighting fish in northwestern Pennsylvania, steelhead are great fall fishing targets.*



photo-Carl Haensel

*Wild Brown Trout from a limestone creek in central Pennsylvania are active and feeding during the fall, especially as spawning approaches.*



photo-Justin Tonok

*Walleyes are active in the fall from Lake Erie to the Ohio River, and east all the way to Lake Wallenpaupack and the Delaware River. They are often found in similar areas as steelhead, Smallmouth Bass, Striped Bass and other large gamefish.*



photo-Carl Haensel

*Hybrid Striped Bass are found in the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio rivers as well as Lake Wallenpaupack. They are hard fighters on light tackle. Look for them to be shallower and more accessible as water temperatures cool in the fall.*



# Five Lures for Muskellunge

by *Braden Eisenhower*

*photos by the author*

**T**here's a temptation to go lock, stock and barrel when getting into the Muskellunge game. We think of lures as tools, each meeting a specific need. And, as the fishing needs grow, so do the lure purchases. But, it doesn't have to be that way.

It's possible to build a strong foundation with a conservative approach starting with five lures: a bucktail, plastic, gliding jerkbait, minnow-shaped crankbait and tail-rotating topwater lure.

These five lures offer tremendous versatility. They cover the water column top to bottom. Altering the retrieve speed and cadence tailors to the Muskellunge mood,

whether active, negative or neutral. They can entice fish any time of year, and they won't feel out of place on the smallest tributary creek or the largest lake.

## **Bucktail**

When the bite is on, there is no better lure than a bucktail. Prefrontal conditions with cloud cover, prevailing winds and falling air pressure are signs of fish willing to chase down lures. The strategy is to play the numbers game by covering water and making hundreds of casts to find active fish.

Inactive Muskellunge also fall for bucktails. Playing either end of the speed spectrum may drum up interest. In waters below 60 degrees F, reel so slowly that you can barely feel the thump of the blade. When water temperatures are in the 70s, burn the bucktail at lightning speed to trigger strikes.

## Plastic

Soft plastic baits fulfill the deep water requirement. Their appeal is a big profile with a subtle presence.

A simple pull-pause retrieve creates a jerkbait-like action. Find a weed edge in late spring or early fall and go to work. In warmer conditions, focus on open water areas related to structural elements like points and dropoffs, creek channels and humps.

When Muskellunge are hunkered down in dense vegetation following a cold front, cast into the thick stuff and rip the bait back to the boat.

## Gliding jerkbait

Gliding jerkbaits make excellent search baits. Downward snaps of the rod on a slack line produces its namesake action.

Gliders are overwhelming favorites on moving waters during the cold water period. Slow and deliberate snaps allow the lure to hang in the strike zone.

In early spring, their side-to-side movement proves hypnotic. Even sluggish post spawn fish can't resist it. Erratic retrieves turn followers into biters in warmer waters.

The best retrieve is non-mechanical. Blend quick snaps with sporadic pauses. Tailor the overall speed to fish activity.

## Minnow-shaped crankbait

While cranking for Muskellunge can follow the cast-and-wind discipline, it's common for the angler to impart action. Crankbaits become jerkbaits. Twitch the flat-sided bait down, and let it rise to create the classic "sawtooth" pattern.

Given the minnowbait's floating property, it's feasible to pick apart vegetation or timber. Try this in spring when fish won't chase. Whenever the lip makes contact, halt the retrieve, so the lure may back away unscathed until it's crushed mid-pause.

Even in the absence of cover, river Muskellunge can't resist. Bang these lures into rocks or simply impart a twitch-pause retrieve.

## Tail-rotating topwater lure

Tail-rotating topwater lures complement bucktails. Unlike most lure styles, the topwater lure can be fished in situations where the goal is to cover water.

Being able to mix up lure styles, so everyone in the boat isn't throwing the same bait may help determine the pattern. It also helps set yourself apart from the masses who faithfully throw blades. Topwater lures are underutilized, making them more productive for those willing to put in the time.

Avoid the trap that dozens of lures are necessary. Place your trust in a few and then fish hard. ☐



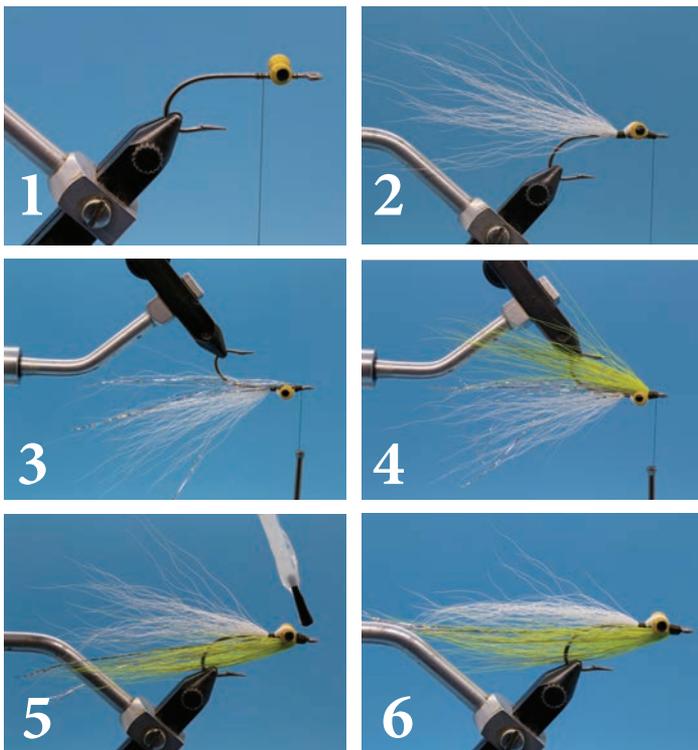
*The starting lineup—five lures that can take Muskellunge in standing or flowing waters at any time of the year.*



# Tying the Clouser Minnow

by Carl Haensel    photos by the author

The Clouser Minnow is a classic Pennsylvania pattern. Developed on the Susquehanna River by longtime fly fishing guide, shop owner and guru Bob Clouser, it has stood the test of time as a top fly pattern. Used around the world for a myriad of species, it continues to perform well on its home waters for bass, muskies, pike and other gamefish. The ability to tie it in a variety of sizes, weights and colors adds to its versatility. Try it in chartreuse and white to imitate minnows and other baitfish when fishing off-color water. Orange and brown are excellent color choices when crayfish are on the menu for actively feeding fish. The standard material choice of bucktail works great in most situations. Some anglers may want to use synthetic streamer materials for increased durability. I've switched entirely to non-toxic dumbbell eyes and find they work just as well as lead. If you're having difficulties tying this pattern, use less material. Sparsely tied Clouser Minnows work well and are easier to tie. ☐



*The Clouser Minnow performs well on the Susquehanna River and throughout Pennsylvania.*

## Tying the Clouser Minnow Materials

**Hook:** Size 1/0 Mustad 34007, 3366 or similar

**Thread:** Gel spun polyethylene in color of choice

**Eyes:** Lead-free dumbbell eyes in color of choice

**Tail:** Bucktail in two colors of choice

**Flash:** Flashabou Tinsel or Krystal Flash in color of choice

**Glue:** Loon UV Fly Finish or similar

- 1 Secure the hook in the vise. Attach the thread and dumbbell eyes, leaving plenty of room in the front for the head of the fly.
- 2 Tie in a section of bucktail about two times the length of the shank of the hook or more. First, tie the bucktail behind the eyes. Then, tie it in front of the eyes.
- 3 Turn the hook upside-down or rotate the vise. Add in Flashabou Tinsel or other flash on the bottom of the fly, tying it in front of the eyes.
- 4 Tie in the second hank of bucktail in front of the eyes.
- 5 Use a UV flexible glue to cover the head of the fly. Then, cure it.
- 6 Smooth the fibers to align them for good underwater action.



# NOTES *from the Streams*

## No pens but a snake

After being in the field for a short period of time, I realized how important it is to have a good pen. While working in southern Lancaster, I was introduced to a quality pen, and I made it a point to get myself some of these pens on my way home. On my way inside the store, I passed a group of teenagers. They told me to be careful as there was a snake in the back of the store under a stocking ladder. I thought they were joking and proceeded into the store to look for the pens.

After not finding my pens, I was curious if the kids were telling the truth. I walked back, and there it was under the stocking ladder staring right at me—a big adult Eastern Ratsnake. As I made my way to the front of the store, the manager was walking back saying she was about to call the police. I told her not to worry as I am a Waterways Conservation Officer. I had my snake hook and bag in my vehicle outside. When I walked back inside the store, the snake was gone. I starting looking around and couldn't find it. Then, I looked behind the lamps, and there it was slithering through the electrical cords. I hooked the snake and put it in the bag. Everyone in the store was happy to see I caught it. I may not have gotten my pens, but I was able to release the snake unharmed to a better location.—WCO Logan T. Opfer, Western Armstrong County.

## Proper identification

On a cold day in late April, I was patrolling Lake Harmony, Carbon County, from shore. I noticed a raft being paddled out into the lake. It launched nearby, and due to the temperature, I figured they wouldn't be out long. Sure enough, about 5 minutes later, they turned and headed to shore. The raft had three passengers, two of which were wearing life jackets. Once it got closer, the passengers appeared to be a father, mother and young girl. The father wasn't wearing a life jacket.

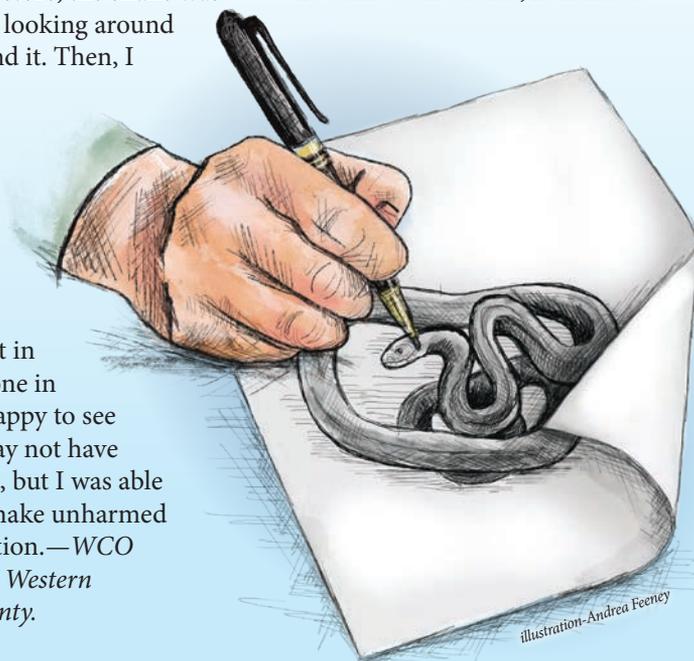
When they reached the shore, I asked the father if he had a life jacket. He replied that he didn't know he needed one, because he was an excellent swimmer and wore extra clothes to stay warm. I informed him that every passenger aboard a boat needs a life jacket, but during the current cold weather wear period he was required by law to wear it. When I asked him for his identification, he said it was in the house by the dock.

We walked to the house, and when he came back outside, he handed

me his "ID" card. I've seen many different state identification cards and a few other national ones but never one like this one. It was white with big red and blue letters with a gold star at the bottom. I told him that I needed his driver's license, because this wouldn't work. He was adamant that this was good enough, because it had his photo and his name on the back. He also said he couldn't find his driver's license in his wallet. I responded with, "Sir, your Costco Gold Star membership card does not count as a legal form of identification." After some back and forth, he went back inside the house and within a minute returned with his New York driver's license. I advised him that from now on, whenever a law enforcement officer asks for an ID, Costco Gold Star membership cards should not be his first thought.—WCO Alec S. DeLong, Southern Monroe/Northern Carbon counties.

## We need more people like this

We run into a wide range of situations on this job. Some are handled with warnings. Others require us to assist other agencies and departments. Some call for us to issue citations for violations that occur. In this particular situation, I was issuing a citation to a gentleman. I was explaining the process to respond to the citation, and he had the right to take a hearing if he wanted one. He said to me, "No, not knowing the law is not a good excuse on my part." It was a nice change of pace when someone admits their wrongdoing.—WCO Timothy J. Haas, Lawrence/Butler counties.



Illustration—Andrea Feeney



# FISHING LYMAN RUN

by *Ralph Scherder*

photos by the author

**L**yman Run begins in the Susquehannock State Forest, Potter County. For a variety of fishing opportunities and beautiful mountain scenery, Lyman Run is a popular destination for all types of anglers. The upper 6½ miles is managed as Class A wild trout, the lower 2.3 miles is a stocked trout fishery and in the middle of it all is a 45-acre lake with a mixture of cold and warmwater species.

## Upper Lyman Run

Lyman Run Road parallels the entire length of Lyman Run, from its headwaters east of Cherry Springs State Park to its confluence with the West Branch Pine Creek. Access is relatively easy with plenty of parking along the upper reaches, which are designated as Class A wild trout waters. The uppermost section has primarily Brook Trout while the 5 miles or so leading to the lake have a mix of Brown Trout and Brook Trout.

This section of Lyman Run flows through dense forest, and the stream stays extremely cold into the summer. In the early season, you'll likely find uncooperative trout due to the cold temperatures. When May rolls around and through the fall, trout are much more active and feed heavily.

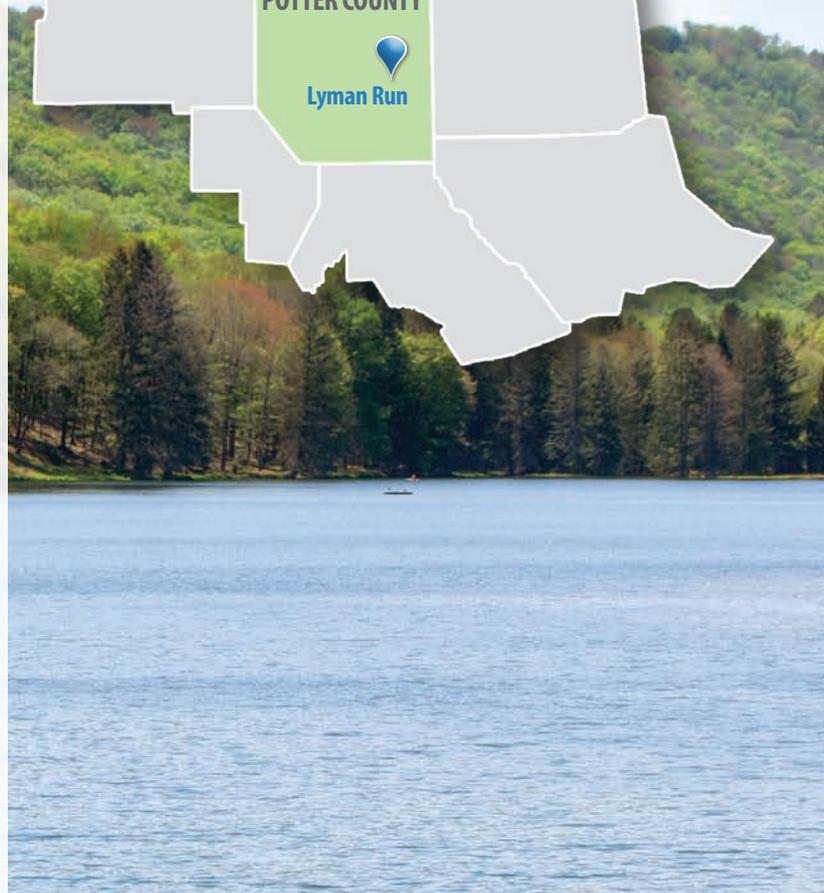
In the spring, Lyman Run sees good hatches of various caddis and mayflies including Quill Gordons, Hendricksons, March Browns, Light Cahills and Green Drakes. When bugs are not hatching, my favorite fishing method is with a size 14 tan or olive Elk Hair Caddis. During the summer months, terrestrial patterns, such as crickets and beetles, also work well.

Just because trout are hungry doesn't mean they're easy to catch. During the lower flows of summer, they dart for cover at the slightest hint of danger. Your approach has to be stealthy and your casting spot on. If you enjoy the challenge of taking wild fish in tight quarters, Lyman Run, above the lake, has lots to offer.

## Lyman Run Lake

Located within 595-acre Lyman Run State Park, Lyman Run Lake is stocked with trout every spring by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. The exceptionally clear water stays cold even in summer,

➔ *Lyman Run above the lake is managed as a Class A wild trout fishery. The first 5 miles or so support a combination of Brown Trout and Brook Trout, while the upper reaches are primarily Brook Trout.*





← *The heavy forest canopy keeps Lyman Run running cold and clear. During summer, water temperatures seldom reach 70 degrees F in this section.*

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and the water seldom reaches 70 degrees F. Although there is a beach sectioned off for swimming, it takes an exceptionally hot day to make me want to spend much time in that frigid water.

Despite that, Lyman Run Lake appears like an oasis in the middle of the forest. Wooded hillsides crowd the lake, and in the fall, the leaf color is amazing.

Lyman Run Road borders the lake's northern shore, and there are several trails that help anglers navigate the brushy hillside to get to the water. From there, I usually work along the banks, casting parallel to the shoreline. Trout and bass often hold just off the edge, in slightly deeper water, and ambush any streamer or lure in the shallows.

Boats are limited to electric motors only, and there is a slow, no-wake speed restriction. Boat rentals and campsites are available within the park, and there are approximately 6 miles of trails throughout the park, which connect to the Susquehannock Trail System.

## Lower Lyman Run

Lower Lyman Run, from the dam outflow to its confluence with the West Branch Pine Creek, is a stocked, put-and-take fishery. It's rare to find any holdover trout, because Lyman Run Lake is a top-release dam. As a result, the water usually warms up too much during the summer months to support trout.

Lyman Run below the lake is still a beautiful stream with lots of access. Here you'll find enough intriguing pools and undercut banks to make for an interesting and enjoyable experience. Also, the fly hatches on these lower 2 miles are just as good as they are on the rest of the stream.

Whatever your fishing fancy, Lyman Run has something for everyone, from its Class A headwaters to the cold and warmwater opportunities within the lake and the stocked fishery below the lake. If you're looking for beautiful scenery with lots of fishing opportunities, Lyman Run is a great destination. ☐



← *Located within Lyman Run State Park, Lyman Run Lake is a true coldwater lake but also has good populations of bass and other panfish.*

# Water Recreation IN WESTERN PA



*by Bob Frye*

*photo by the author*

**I**t is hard to believe artificial intelligence has moved beyond science fiction into today's world. However, some things never change.

Here's one example—It's been almost 40 years and one sequel since Tom Cruise's "Top Gun" character Maverick said, "I feel the need, the need for speed."

But, the sentiment remains true, with boats as well as planes. Now as then, lots of people seek thrills.

Multiple waterways in the western third of the state provide opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts. Seven United States Army Corps of Engineers lakes, all within about a 3-hour drive of downtown Pittsburgh, allow unlimited horsepower boating. That means water skiing and other boat-towed

water sports, like tubing and operating personal watercraft, make hearts race and smiles widen.

The Army Corps lakes—Crooked Creek Lake, Armstrong County; East Branch Clarion River Lake, Elk County; Loyalhanna Lake, Westmoreland County; Shenango River Lake, Mercer County; Tionesta Lake, Forest County; Youghiogheny River Lake, Fayette and Somerset counties; and Allegheny Reservoir, Warren County—range in size from about 400 acres to more than 12,000 acres. On lakes throughout the Army Corps' Pittsburgh District, life jackets must be worn at all times in boats less than 16 feet in length and all canoes and kayaks.

You can explore the Army Corps' Pittsburgh District lakes and Pittsburgh's three rivers—the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio—thanks to plentiful boat launches, both public and private. Boaters in the downtown Pittsburgh area can also find mooring facilities to tie off and enjoy professional sport stadiums, visit Point State Park or check out some of the city's attractions.



If you're new to the region, the Army Corps' Pittsburgh District website and clubs, like the Golden Triangle Water Ski Club on the Oakmont pool of the Allegheny River, are good sources of information. Commercial boat rental businesses offer personal watercraft and other motorboat rentals throughout the region. Search for these outfitters online.

Of course, even those who like to rocket around the water need some down time, and all these waters feature avenues for kicking back, relaxing and recharging.

Six of the seven Army Corps lakes offer campgrounds, some more than one. Like the lakes themselves, they vary in size, as well as amenities. Visitors may choose from sites with full-service hookups to sites with just a fire ring and picnic table.

The lone exception is Allegheny Reservoir; the Corps owns no campgrounds on it. But, it's surrounded by many public campsites available in the surrounding Allegheny National Forest.

There and at Tionesta Lake,

you can camp at shoreline sites accessible by boat only, which is a treat if you enjoy the solitude self-sufficiency brings.

All of the Army Corps lakes provide opportunities to do things like swim and hike, too. Shenango River Lake has an all-terrain vehicle area.

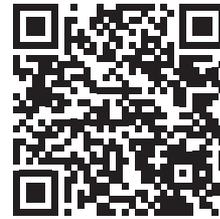
All these waters are also home to good fishing. Allegheny Reservoir holds giant muskies. East Branch Clarion River Lake is one of the few inland waters in Pennsylvania with Lake Trout. The Youghiogheny River Lake is a favorite with Walleye anglers, while Pittsburgh's rivers hold enough bass—Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass and even a few Spotted Bass—to have hosted both the Bassmaster Classic and the Forrest Wood Cup.

These lakes and rivers are busiest on weekends and summer holidays.

So, for some thrills, hurry to one of these waters. You'll be glad you did. ☑

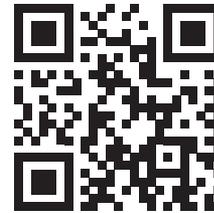
## More information

### United States Army Corps of Engineers Pittsburgh District:



[lrp.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/Lakes](http://lrp.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/Lakes)

### Port of Pittsburgh Commission:



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

### Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission:



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

### Golden Triangle Water Ski Club:

[facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057474407297](https://facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057474407297)

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# Fly Fishing U: One Student's Perspective

*by Matthew Achtziger*

Known as “Fly Fishing U,” Penn State was the first university to offer an accredited fly fishing class. That legacy continues today as the Joe Humphreys Fly Fishing Program under Director George Daniel. This past spring, I was fortunate enough to enroll in the advanced section of the class. While I expected to expand my technical knowledge in the subject, the class also highlighted the holistic benefits associated with fly fishing. Benefits include fostering community, developing lifelong practices and encouraging wellness.

At the start of the semester in January, we learned how to tie new fly patterns. While central Pennsylvania has plenty of fishable water year-round, our evening meet time meant we'd have to wait to fish. We learned nymph patterns like the Peeking Grannom Caddis and the Rainbow Warrior, in addition to streamers like the Articulated Woolly Bugger. Fly tying requires creativity, focus and patience long before hitting the water. Learning as a class helped us get to know each other better. These aspects helped cultivate the creativity and community envisioned by the program and enjoyed by fly anglers everywhere.

As the days were getting longer, we put our new knowledge and fly patterns to the test. Our first field trip was to the Little Juniata River during a cold and windy day with deep, fast flowing water. Success in these conditions was fishing heavily weighted flies under long tippet sections—a size 14 Frenchie with a tungsten bead head and splitshot produced fish for me. The next weekend, we fished along Penns Creek during a warm, sunny day with calmer water conditions. Here, I caught and released my largest wild Brown Trout on a size 16 Lickety Split jig fly fished in tandem with a micro egg pattern.

At each outing, I refined my casting and presentation skills, learning the tuck cast and how to manage my leader more effectively

*Photo: George Daniel*



photo-George Daniel

*Tight line nymphing at Penns Creek.*

in changing water depths. These two trips exemplify the dynamic environments fly anglers constantly face. As we learned, successful fly fishing requires adapting to your surroundings and their specific needs. For the remainder of the semester, we applied these skills to a variety of local streams around State College. The patience and perseverance required of students are traits that will remain valuable well beyond the context of the stream.

Perhaps one of the most rewarding components of the program came towards the end of the semester. As part of a commitment to fostering diversity and inclusion, the Jesse Arnelle Fly Fishing Initiative introduces underrepresented Penn State students to the activity. Students in the advanced section serve as mentors to the Arnelle students, assisting them with tying and casting fundamentals. The program culminated in a trip to Colyer Lake, Centre County, where students applied their knowledge and caught an abundance of panfish using self-tied flies.

When telling others that one of the best courses I took in college was Advanced Fly Fishing, I'm often met with a curious smile. Yet, the intangible benefits associated with the class and fly fishing in general are beyond compare. Moreover, the stress relief that comes with channeling your focus into a rhythmic activity within the sights and sounds of nature is unrivaled, as is the sense of accomplishment that accompanies landing a fish on a pattern you tied. Thanks to Director Daniel and my experience in the Joe Humphreys Fly Fishing Program, I've developed the skill set to ensure that this pastime will remain a source of joy and excitement for many years to come. ☐



photo-George Daniel

*The author's fly box.*

## Jesse Arnelle Fly Fishing Initiative:



[hhd.psu.edu/kines/undergraduate/  
joe-humphreys-fly-fishing-program/  
jesse-arnelle-fly-fishing-initiative](http://hhd.psu.edu/kines/undergraduate/joe-humphreys-fly-fishing-program/jesse-arnelle-fly-fishing-initiative)



photo-Matthew Adzige

*A wild Brown Trout caught while fishing Spring Creek.*



# STAY ROAD TRIP READY

*by Tyler Frantz*

*photos by the author*

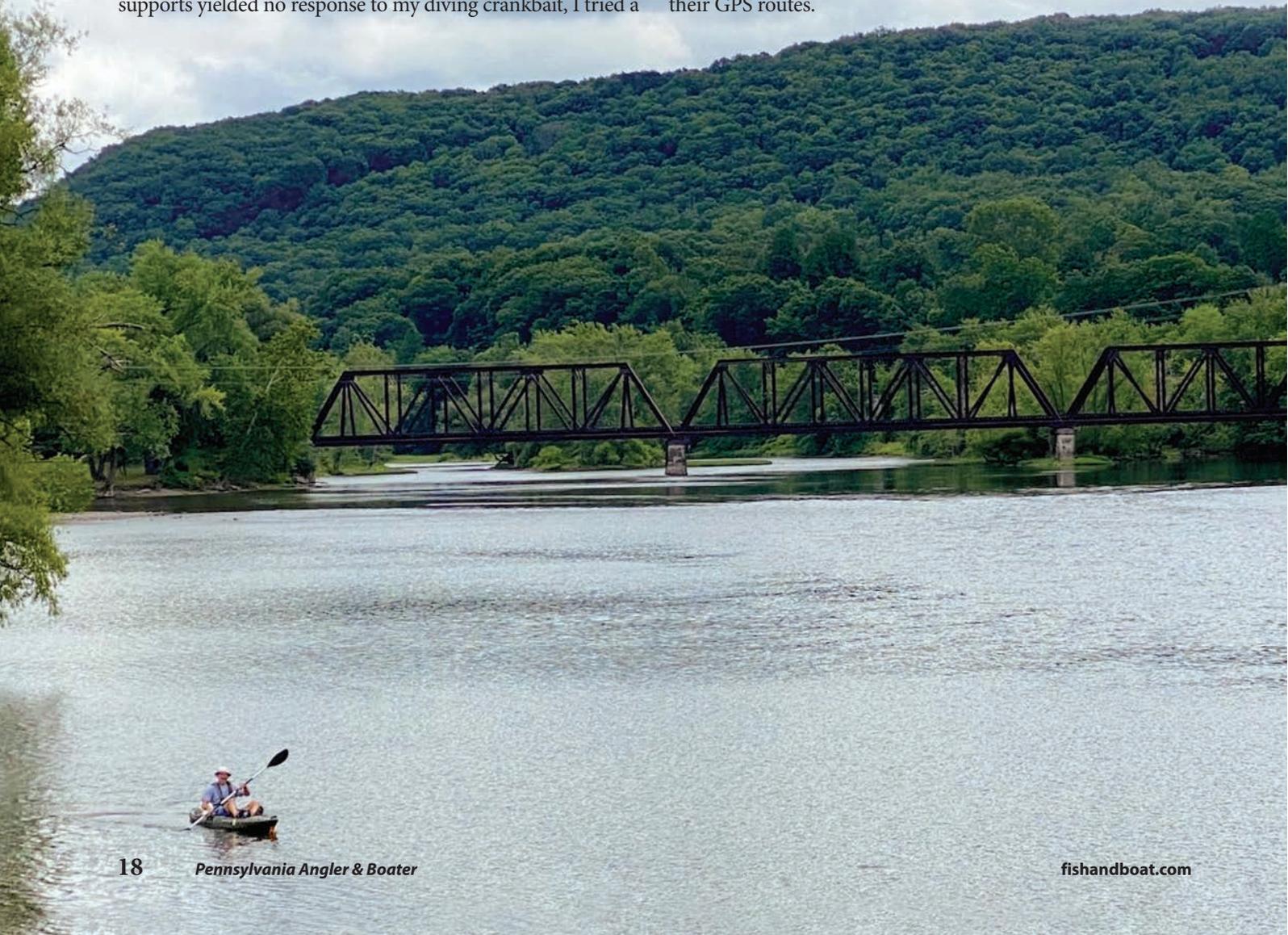
After spending 4 hours in the vehicle traveling from my home in Lebanon County to Lake Erie for a Walleye fishing excursion, I hadn't quite made it to my destination just yet, but my legs were ready for a stretch break.

My route had taken me through the city of Warren, where the Allegheny River flowed within clear view of the roadway. Figuring this was as good a place as any for a quick pitstop, I detoured into a parking lot, broke out my fishing rod and descended the riverfront steps to the water's edge.

After a handful of casts toward the concrete bridge supports yielded no response to my diving crankbait, I tried a

Ned-rigged soft plastic instead and pitched it toward a nearby outflow pipe. A feisty Smallmouth Bass hit it immediately on the drop, making my brief travel diversion worthwhile.

With 86,000 miles of streams, and countless ponds, lakes and other impoundments harboring fish across the state, Pennsylvania has plenty of fishing opportunities not far from its more than 120,000 linear miles of paved highways. By planning ahead and staying road trip ready with a handful of versatile fishing supplies, motorists can easily build some fishing fun into their travel plans without straying far from their GPS routes.



Modern technology makes it easier than ever to figure out how to seamlessly travel from Point A to Point B and strategically plan routes that will take you past places to fish.

A smartphone or computer can supply travel routes in mere seconds by typing in the address for your destination. Closer inspection of the routes reveal lots of blue lines and ovals. Zoom in on the blue areas, and you can easily identify the waterways. Then, research online what type of fish are in them. Perhaps, you may even find local tackle or fly shops that suggest what's biting or hot lures and flies to use for that time of year.

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's website, [fishandboat.com](http://fishandboat.com), is also helpful as anglers can discover multiple quality fishing locations in every geographic region of the state. Think about where you're heading, what waters are close to the travel route and pack your vehicle accordingly.

If trout are my intended target, I always have a fly kit ready at a moment's notice. A travel bag houses my fly vest, various rods, reels, flies and a net, while a vented bag holds my boots, waders and wading staff. Each are easy to throw in the truck and are always ready to go. When traveling through central Pennsylvania's limestone country, at least an hour or two will be added to the trip.

For bass, panfish or multi-species side excursions, a telescopic spinning rod and small tackle bag with an assortment of jigs, spinners, spoons and soft plastic lures take up minimal space in the vehicle and are easy to retrieve for versatile fishing opportunities.

If time affords a layover at nearby lakes, a kayak travels quite well on a rooftop carrier and can be locked in place with a bike cable. I recently had the opportunity to fish Holman Lake, Perry County; Colyer Lake, Centre County; and Foster Joseph Sayers Reservoir, Centre County, in two days by taking my kayak along for an extended stay in the State College area for business.

With a little pre-planning and the right equipment, you can turn work or personal travel into a side fishing trip, no matter where you're headed in Pennsylvania. Be sure to build-in some time for fishing. ☐



The author caught this Largemouth Bass while stopping to fish Holman Lake, Perry County, on his way elsewhere.



Keeping gear in one transportable location makes it easy to throw in a vehicle for any road trip.



A telescopic spinning rod and assortment of versatile lures can add excitement to anyone's travel plans.



A kayak travels well on a rooftop carrier, making it easy to explore nearby lakes along your travel route.

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# Catching BIG Autumn Catfish



*by Jeff Woleslagle*

*photos by the author*

The leaves on the trees were in full autumn splendor, and the evening was clear and calm as we anchored the boat on the edge of a deep river channel. After we got the battery powered lanterns in place, my fishing partner and I casted our baits to where the water depth transitioned from a shallow river flat to the deeper water in the channel. We watched the rod tips for any indication of strike and waited in anticipation. It took less than 20 minutes until we had our first Channel Catfish in the boat, and the action remained steady throughout the evening. By the time we were ready to

head back to the dock, we had landed and released six nice Channel Catfish and two Flathead Catfish.

When the nights turn crisp and cool, and the days are still relatively warm, you can find some of the best catfish fishing of the year in Pennsylvania's rivers and lakes. The fall is a time when catfish normally begin their annual transition from shallower feeding flats to edges that drop off into deeper water. It is also a time when they start to congregate together and roam in groups. I've witnessed Channel Catfish traveling in schools of close to 100 in rivers in the southeast part of the state. The catfish fishing can be phenomenal when the water is in the 60-degree F range, but once it gets below 50-degrees F, it gets noticeably tougher. Sometimes throughout the fall, fishing is highly productive during the day, eliminating the need to chase catfish in the dark.



*Creek Chubs make excellent fall catfish bait.*



*White Suckers are a great fall bait for big autumn catfish.*

Catfish rely heavily on their sense of smell when feeding, which is less acute in colder water. Fresh cut bait such as chunks of Fallfish, White Suckers or Creek Chubs are excellent choices for colder water as the natural scent disperses well. Cut baits also stay on the hook well. Live and dead crayfish may also be excellent bait, but make sure they come from the same waters you will be fishing. Large shrimp can be effective, and it is a bait the fish don't see often. If you're targeting Flathead Catfish, live bait such as small Bluegills or Fallfish are tough to beat, even in the fall.

Stout medium-heavy to heavy action rods in the 7- to 8-foot range paired with the correctly sized spinning reels are good choices. A 14- to 20-pound-test line in braid or monofilament work well in most conditions, but go with heavier line if big Flathead Catfish prowl the waters you fish. Use just enough weight to keep your offering stationary on the bottom. Depending on the current and water conditions, a ½-ounce to 1-ounce weight normally does the trick. Hooks in sizes 1/0 and 2/0 are perfect for cut bait. Slip sinker rigs that allow the catfish to take the bait freely and not feel the resistance of the weight are ideal. This is an easy and effective rig to use. All it takes is threading a ½-ounce egg sinker above

a barrel swivel. Then, attaching a leader of about 20 inches to the end of the swivel and tying your hook to the end of the leader.

As always, wear a life jacket when spending time around the water, especially when the temperatures start to drop. The fall season in Pennsylvania is a beautiful time to spend on Pennsylvania's rivers and lakes. It is also a great time to tangle with some big autumn catfish. ☐



*A Flathead Catfish*



# Sweet Ole Sugar Creek

by **Darl Black**

**D**riving south on Route 322 from Cochranton to Franklin, I have a bird's eye view of Sugar Creek, Venango County, from the bridge at Wyattville. During the opening weeks of trout season, you will see dozens of anglers wading this section of the stream. By the end of May, everyone disappears. I often thought to myself, typical stocked trout stream—fished out and forgotten until next April.

Then, a few years back, I met Alan Bell, a local angler who grew up fishing Sugar Creek. With the nickname Angler Al, I knew we would hit it off.

Bell began contributing photos to the online fishing report I publish on behalf of area tourism agencies. While trout catches from other contributors dwindled by June, Bell continued to supply photos of Rainbow Trout and exceptional Brown Trout he caught and released throughout the summer, fall and winter from Sugar Creek.

"I concentrate almost 100% of my fishing time on local creeks and the Allegheny River, but the greatest percentage of that time

is vested in sweet ole Sugar Creek. At a very young age, my Grandfather Oakly Snyder started me fishing for suckers in French Creek. Then, at age 10, my dad finally let me accompany him on opening day of trout to the McCandless Hole on Sugar Creek, where my uncles lined up elbow to elbow. When I caught my first trout, I was hooked," said Bell.

Over time, he discovered there were more opportunities for success on Sugar Creek than the trout opener.

Sugar Creek rises near the village of Townville, Crawford County, flowing south towards Fauncetown. The first stocking point is Center Road Bridge (a.k.a. Terrill Road) about 3 miles north of Route 27. Stocking continues (primarily at bridges) to Red Bridge in the village of Sugarcreek. A little further downstream, Sugar Creek joins French Creek.

As would be expected along the 22 miles of stream, some land is posted 'No Trespassing'. These stretches are not stocked.

"Nonetheless, there is ample access to the stream. Many property owners are part of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission cooperative landowners' agreement, permitting anglers access to the stream. Some areas may be marked with signage and offer limited parking. The most popular



photos-Darl Black

*The opening day of trout 2023 on Sugar Creek, Venango County. It is a very popular stream in April and May.*

access sites are the bridges on public roads," said Bell. However, Bell usually focuses his fishing on stretches of the stream that require a little exercise to reach, particularly when looking for big Brown Trout.

Sugar Creek supports trout through the summer due to deep flowing pools and numerous stretches of oxygen-enriching riffles. Stream temperature is also impacted by an influx of cooler water from numerous spring-fed, canopy-protected feeder streams. Several of these feeder streams support wild Brook Trout populations, as well as reproducing Brown Trout.

In addition to trout, Bell also catches quality Smallmouth Bass and Walleyes that move into the lower portion of Sugar Creek from French Creek during high water periods. He occasionally encounters Northern Pike, which likely swam down from the Lake Creek tributary.

"For dry fly anglers, there are several good hatches on Sugar Creek including Grannom Caddisflies, Hendricksons, Alderflies and Little Brown Stoneflies. But, I focus my presentations closer to the bottom. I fish nymph patterns with my fly rod in the spring and early summer. However, I also enjoy catching trout on a piece of nightcrawler every bit as much as using any artificial. By mid-summer, drifting an indigenous live shiner or dace is extremely exciting, because it always produces. With Brown Trout becoming very active for their fall spawn, I switch to large chubs to catch oversized Brown Trout," said Bell. □



*This about-to-be-released Brown Trout is the result of a stealthy presentation of live creek bait.*



*Threading half a nightcrawler on a hook and drifting it with the current just off the bottom is one of Bell's most successful live bait presentations for stocked trout during spring and summer.*

**“Read the water current before making a cast in order to determine the most likely spot for the biggest brown to hold. Then, using the largest piece of creek bait from your bucket, make that first cast-n-drift your best one. The commotion from a sloppy cast or catching a smaller trout will alert a wise old Brown Trout. You might as well move on,”** said Bell.



# Wagon Rides *and* Fishing Rods

by *Linda Stager*

*photos by the author*

Family vacations are the best. In the fall, we gather the kids and grandkids together and head to a rental cabin in the Pennsylvania woods for a weekend. It's become a tradition.

Our "go to" spot is Elk County, situated in the central-northwestern part of Pennsylvania. It's known for its wild elk herd, the Allegheny National Forest, rattlesnakes and its big woods tracts of land. It's a big county with few large towns and an off-the-grid area with little cell service or GPS coverage.

But, along with its wildness comes the wonderfulness of being there, with the whole family taking part in the fun.

We settle in at our rental, usually chosen to put us near the town of Benezette. Benezette has a couple of little stores, a winery, a restaurant and the Elk Country Visitor Center, which is operated and managed by the Keystone Elk Country Alliance (KECA).

We always take a drive up Winslow Hill Road and head through the gates to the Visitor Center that sits at the top of the hill along 245 acres of private lands. We walk along the walking paths, buy souvenirs in the shop and visit the exhibits. We also take the kids to the 4-D movie experience that explains KECA's work and the reintegration of the elk herd in Pennsylvania.

We keep a lookout for the 1,000 or so wild Pennsylvania elk that live in the area. The Visitor Center maintains food plots through their entire acreage, and the wild elk are often drawn to these locations.

Elk are big animals, and bull elks are huge with massive antlers. In the fall, the male elk follow the females during the "fall rut"—the mating season for elk. Much like white-tailed deer, elk are often seen during the early morning hours as well as the late hours before nightfall. It's exciting and noisy, with bull elk bugles echoing loudly through the area.

Our grandkids love seeing the elk and sometimes herds of them have visited our yard, allowing us to see them up close through the windows. It's all great fun for everyone.

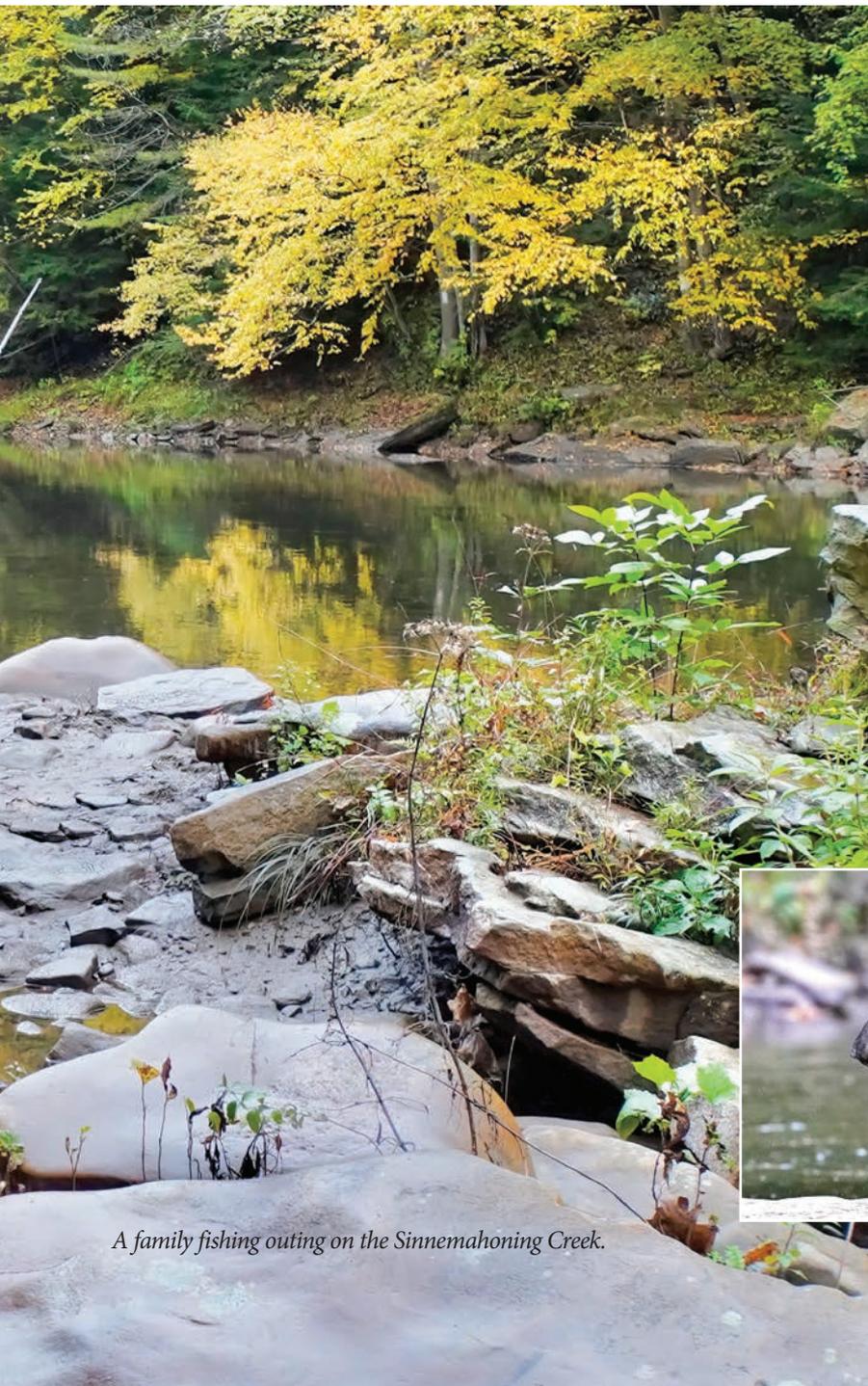


*A wagon ride moves past elk at the Elk Country Visitor Center.*





*A view of elk from a wagon ride at the Elk Country Visitor Center.*



*A family fishing outing on the Sinnemahoning Creek.*

Our best elk watching activity is when we get reservations on the wagon rides that leave from the Visitor Center in the early evening and take visitors into the food plots. Elk sightings are abundant from the wagon ride, and the children love being close to the big animals. Of course, the idea of a horse drawn wagon appeals to everyone, too.

Tickets are difficult to get, and the wagons fill quickly. Check out the ticketing process as it occasionally changes. When getting tickets at an outside ticket window on the day of the wagon ride is the process, expect long lines. But, the effort is worth it.

Around elk watching, we go fishing. Sometimes, we head to the Bennett Branch of the Sinnemahoning Creek, well known for its great fishing. We give the kids fishing rods and fish from the shore. At times, we catch fish, most of the time we don't. But, the kids practice their casting skills, learn fishing ethics, and we make memories together.

We also go to Kettle Creek State Park, Clinton County, and Sinnemahoning State Park, Cameron and Potter counties, as well as Parker Dam State Park, Clearfield County. Each park's lakes are stocked with trout by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission and have good populations of Rock Bass and Smallmouth Bass. Boating is available at each lake, as is picnicking, camping and hiking. Check fishing regulations wherever you fish.

Sinnemahoning State Park has a fabulous wildlife center with a life-sized eagle nest.

The wild elk herd is moving into each of these state parks, so you may even spot elk while you are visiting.

We love combining fishing with our tourist activities. We get to visit an area of the state that we love, spend time together and go fishing. Every fall, its wagon rides and fishing rods for us. ☺

**Keystone Elk  
Country Alliance:**



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



*You never know what wildlife you'll see in Elk County.*



# OPOSSUM LAKE—BACK AGAIN

*by John Allen*

*photos by the author*

When I think of Opossum Lake, Cumberland County, I am reminded of the incredible topwater bass fishing at dusk. I used to make frequent trips here in the late summer and early fall to get my fill. When the lake was drained for dam work between 2008-2012, it became an afterthought in my fishing spot repertoire. I kept an eye on its refill progress since the project was finished, but it wasn't until 2020, with most things shut down due to COVID-19, my kids and I ventured over to this lake to give it a try. We have not stopped going back.

The new lake pool is 47-acres (formerly 59 acres), but lily pads, cattails and heavy grass still cover a lot of the shoreline. The lake has two boat launches on the eastern side within 200 yards of each other near the pavilion area. In the northwestern part of the lake, there are two other launch sites for those launching only a kayak or canoe.

The lake was drained around the early stages of what I like to call the “kayak boom.” From Memorial Day to Labor Day, the lake sees quite a bit of recreational kayaking traffic. Once you experience the scenery here, you will understand why boaters choose the lake. Then,

apart from the peak of early trout season, the pressure on the lake is minimal.

The restocking plan, which continues today, has been a success. Many of the species are now thriving. In addition, several other species that were not stocked, like Black Crappies and Yellow Perch, have recovered as well. The bass population is coming back slowly. I've caught them up to 18 inches. I've seen a few in the 20-inch range, but 8- to 12-inches tends to be the norm. The lake falls under the Big Bass Program Special Regulations, which requires a bass to be at least 15 inches prior to harvesting. The lake is also stocked with trout a few times a year. The real story of this lake in its current state is the panfishing. The bullheads, crappies and Bluegills are thriving. The crappies are protected under Panfish Enhancement Special Regulations and must be at least 9 inches, which has helped protect this growing population.

One of my favorite features is the Anglers' Access Trail, which circles the entire lake. There are few spots that cannot be fished from shore. When you come to the lake, just look for the blue blazes. I have found myself coming to the lake just for hiking. I usually carry a fishing rod along just in case I run into something worth targeting.

While Opossum Lake is not yet the former glorious topwater bass fishery that it was in the early 2000s, it is a great spot to take your kids fishing. With ample access and lots of fish ready to be caught, it is worth the trip. ☑



*A view of the upper end of Opossum Lake, Cumberland County, where the creek enters.*



*A view of the boat launches on the eastern side of the lake.*

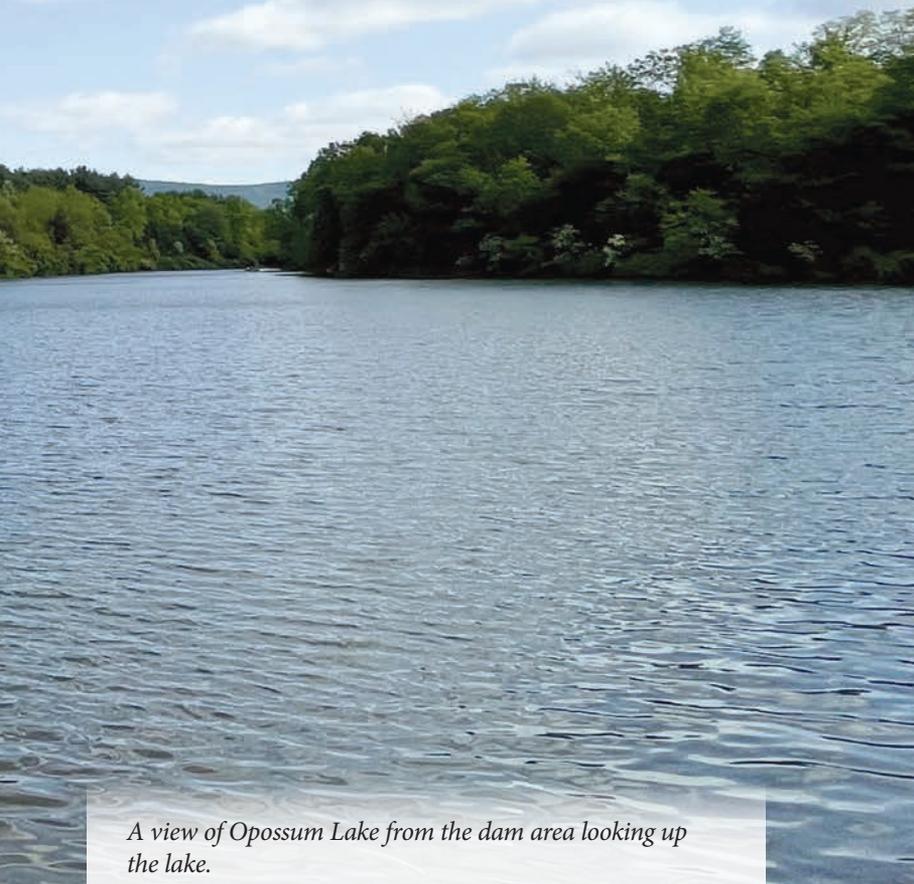
### Anglers' Access Trail map:



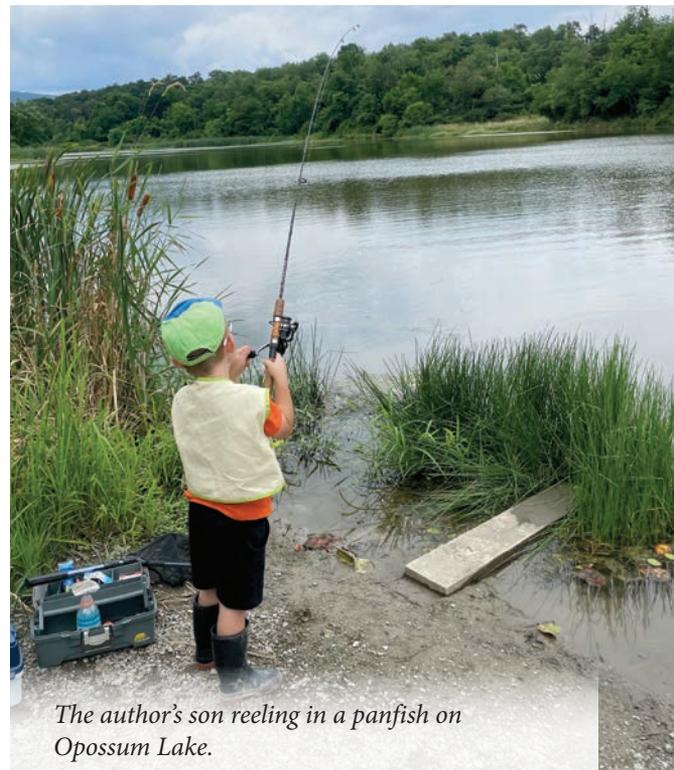
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*The author's daughter with a Bluegill caught in Opossum Lake.*



*A view of Opossum Lake from the dam area looking up the lake.*



*The author's son reeling in a panfish on Opossum Lake.*

# Bullheaded

by Marshall Nych

“I wanna’ catch a catfish Daddy!” The declaration surfaced as Noah compared fishing photographs to his trove of fishing books. He noticed one glaring discrepancy. My young angler had never landed a catfish.

How could I be so bullheaded? I had taken my son for trout along scenic streams, pursued panfish in local parks and casted to bass in farm ponds, but I had never offered my son the opportunity to stay up late for whiskered critters of the night. I allowed bedtimes and routines to prevent cherished memories. So, it became a personal mission to get Noah a catfish.

I backed the vehicle to the still farm pond. Overlooking the tailgate, Noah comfortably awaited a strike. Strategically set were rods, upright at an angle somewhere between 45 and 90 degrees. This September night was in the mid-60s. Ideal degrees for rod angle and temperature.

While Noah nestled into the promises of an adventurous night, I prepped the campfire. A true catfishing adventure, particularly a son’s first, requires a good fire. To avoid confusing snacks for bait or, far worse, bait for a snack, I placed snacks on the bench near the crackling campfire. Its coals preemptively reddened to ensure future success with s’mores.

My experience told me we would see fishing success when it was dark. Noah pondered why the rod had yet to bounce. I explained the best I could, while offering sweet treats and entertaining fishing stories.

With time, day surrendered to dusk, and dusk gracefully slipped into nightfall. The instant nature’s light faded, the fishing immediately brightened. The rod nearest Noah jumped. Using circle hooks, I advised Noah to calmly pick up the rod and slowly reel, as to hook the bullhead in the corner of its mouth. Nodding with my instruction, Noah promptly grabbed the rod and thrust it like a sword into the September sky. I smiled. His work worked.

The fish were cooperative. My son’s first catfish did not let go. On light tackle, Noah excitedly pumped and reeled with everything he had.

Bullhead flopping along the bank, he shouted, “I got him! I got my first catfish Daddy!” Noah was in awe of his fish’s unique beauty, as if discovering a new species. In a way, he had. I pointed out the spines along the



artwork-Michael Kensinger

pectoral and dorsal fins. I was the designated handler this night. I wasn’t going to let anything taint his first catfishing trip or celebratory s’mores.

Following a photo, where boy and bullhead wiggled before the campfire’s glow, I detected a song from joyous Noah. “When the sky turns gray, the catfish come out to play”, my son cleverly hummed. He repeated the newly coined chorus with each of his catfish.

Before I knew it, Noah’s thoughts of first catfish were distracted by his first bullhead double. Watching my buddy juggle two rods was something a father will never forget. I hadn’t chuckled that hard since I was a boy fighting fish.

The late summer night offered more feisty bullheads, and we delightfully exhausted our bait. Getting late, I led Noah to the campfire. A rite of passage for young anglers who land their first catfish, he roasted marshmallows as I prepared the graham crackers and chocolate. Smiles and s’mores gave way to sleepy eyes.

As I tucked in my tired angler, I couldn’t recall such happiness following a fishing trip. Noah was now a catfish angler. Stubbornly, I’d strive to bend bedtimes and curve curfews in the future. ☐



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 TACKLE LOANER  
 PROGRAM**



photo-Spring Gearhart

by Jessica Aiello

Fishing is a wonderful outdoor activity for people of all ages and abilities, but getting started requires an investment in some equipment unless you first give it a try for free. Many Pennsylvania state parks have fishing tackle that you can borrow for free. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) and Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources have teamed up to supply fishing rods, reels and tackle boxes full of bobbers, lures and sinkers. All you need to provide is a willing spirit and maybe a few worms.

Thirty-eight state parks participate in the program. Visit [dcnr.pa.gov/Recreation/WhatToDo/Fishing](http://dcnr.pa.gov/Recreation/WhatToDo/Fishing). Give the park office a call to inquire about borrowing some gear for your next visit.

“With 101 state parks and all 20 state forests offering fishing opportunities, everyone can find a great place to try their hand at fishing,” said Marci Mowery, President of Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation.

Some of the areas offer Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible areas, which are perfect for anglers in wheelchairs or with other mobility needs. You can find a map of ADA-accessible fishing docks, kayak/canoe launches and other amenities at [paparksandforests.org/our-work/recreation/outdoors-for-everyone](http://paparksandforests.org/our-work/recreation/outdoors-for-everyone).

The loaner gear is free, but anyone fishing who is 16 years or older is required to obtain a fishing license, even if you are just trying the sport for the first time. Buy a license online ([HuntFish.PA.gov](http://HuntFish.PA.gov)) from the PFBC or at one of 700 locations across Pennsylvania. ☐

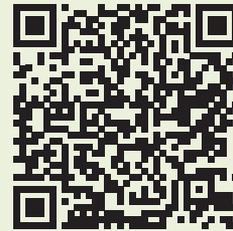
#EXPLOREPAWATERS



Lackawanna State Park, Lackawanna County

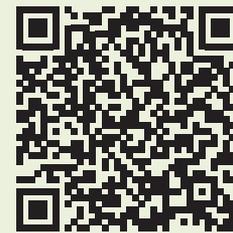
photo-Linda Stout

**Fishing Tackle Loaner program:**



[fishandboat.com/About-Us/Affiliates/Loaner-Program/Pages/default.aspx](http://fishandboat.com/About-Us/Affiliates/Loaner-Program/Pages/default.aspx)

**ADA-accessible recreation facilities:**



[paparksandforests.org/our-work/recreation/outdoors-for-everyone](http://paparksandforests.org/our-work/recreation/outdoors-for-everyone)

**Where to fish, boat and paddle:**



[explorepawaters.com/find-a-waterway/](http://explorepawaters.com/find-a-waterway/)

INTERMEDIATE



# Lake Erie Perch Tactics

*by Ross Robertson*

*photos by the author*



**P**erch are fish that everyone seems to like. They taste great, they are fairly plentiful and catching them only requires a little bit of know-how and limited gear. A successful Lake Erie perch trip is just a few details away.

## Location

Perch are usually found on the large mudflats that are famous on Lake Erie. This is not to say that they can't be found on nearshore structure, but the bulk of the population spends its time on these basin flats. Perch often school in tight clusters, so it's important to eliminate water quickly to find the clusters. While many anglers rely on the pack method, a much better and effective way to locate them is to mark fish at high speeds before you even think about fishing. Look for slight "V"-shaped marks to almost a "BB"-like mark at higher speeds. In most cases, marks are within 3 feet of the bottom.

## Boat control

Perch fishing is an up and down affair and requires you to anchor or hold your boat in one place to feel a bite and stay on small schools of active fish. Keep a sufficient size anchor, chain and long enough rope to hold your boat in the waves you feel comfortable fishing in.

If you are fishing from a smaller boat with an electric motor, the Spot Lock option is easier on your back and makes changing spots easier. Once Spot Lock is activated, it takes a waypoint. The electric motor will work to keep you within a few feet of that marked location.

## Rigging

Traditionally, anglers on the lake used a spreader rig to fish for perch. Anglers could fish two separate baited hooks near the bottom easily. Over the years, as lake waters cleared up, many hardcore perch anglers switched to a crappie style rig with several staggered hooks that keep a bait at several different heights off the bottom.

The advancements in braided fishing line also make perch fishing easier. The low stretch from the braided line makes it simple to feel a light bite

## Bait

Emerald Shiners are the predominate small forage in Lake Erie, and Lake Erie perch are fond of them. While Emerald Shiners are the preferred bait, they can be difficult to get during the peak season. When they sell out, shops will sell Golden Shiners as an alternative bait. Perch will eat Golden Shiners but not as much. They are often too large. To improve your chances, carry scissors, and cut the minnows in half or quarters. In most cases, the perch will show a preference for the head or tail sections, so try both.

## The count

The perch limit varies by location across the lake so read the regulations closely for the areas you are fishing. To keep count, buy a basic and inexpensive hand clicker. Attach it to your cooler's handle, and hit the counter every time you drop in another fish. You can automate the process with an aftermarket cooler add-on that is almost like a fish slide. Bolt it to your cooler, and as the fish enters the cooler, it automatically trips the door and adds a fish to your total.

Perch fishing is a great family activity that doesn't require too much gear, and the best part may be what fills your table afterwards. ☑



*Cooler counter for perch.*

*Gear Up for  
Adventure*

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



# Legend of the Trout Beard

by Charles Cantella

“You got some schmutz on your face.”  
That was Pap’s greeting to me on that cold, winter morning.

“Naw Pap,” I drawled out, “I’m growing out my beard, like you.”

He chortled, smiled, leaned back in the chair and began to stroke his magnificent chin mane.

“Do you know why I grow my beard out? I mean other than to irritate your grandmother?”

“Nope. I pretty much thought that was it.”

“Nah, that’s just a bonus. I think you’re old enough now for me to tell you about the trout beard and the secret behind it. Stand up. I’m going to teach you the secret handshake.”

We stood up and faced each other. A serious look covered his face. “Just do what I do. And, try and keep up.” He winked, and then, with speed and agility not common for a man of his age, he whipped his hands up, down, high fived me, spun in a circle, faced me again, did a double high five and a bunch of other maneuvers that left my head spinning before he finally stopped.

“That’s all there is to it. That’s the secret handshake. Now, it’s your turn. Just do what I did!”

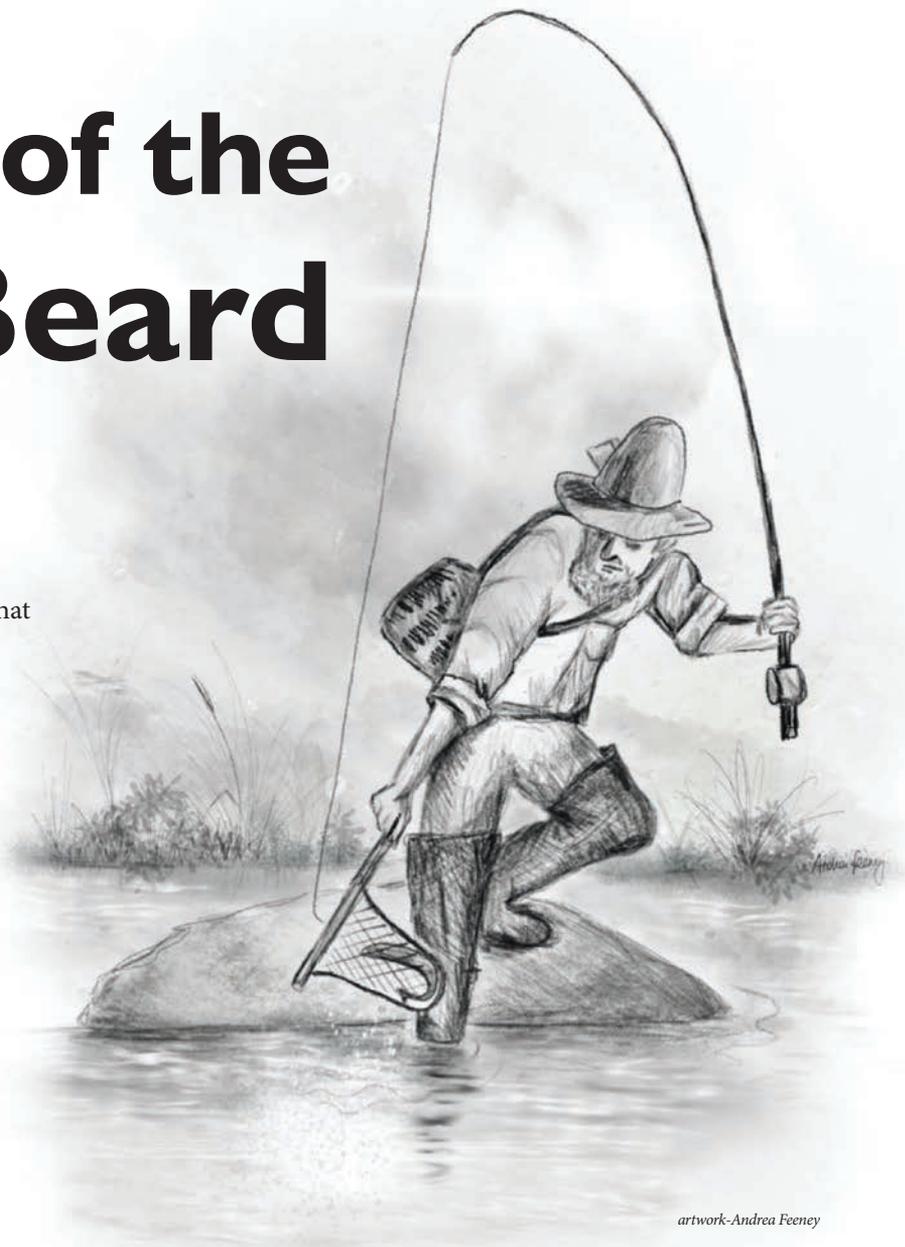
I was floored. Do what he just did? Um, I think I remember a high five and a spin move, but that’s about it. I lowered my eyes to the floor and shook my head dejectedly, unable to look him in the eyes, ashamed at my failure to replicate the secret handshake. It was obviously something that meant a lot to Pap, and I was dropping the proverbial ball.

“Can’t remember it? Good. Then, the secret’s safe,” he laughed. “Truth is we make up a new handshake every time we meet. We’re getting too old to remember all that razz-ma-tazz.”

“Then, how will you know who the members are?” I asked, puzzled, yet pleasantly surprised by Pap’s sunny mood.

“There’s only eight of us, that I know of. Seven actually, MacPherson died 2 years ago. Maybe six, Wilson was in the hospital not long ago.”

He called upstairs to grandma, “Hey Ma! Did Wilson get out of the hospital?”



artwork-Andrea Feeney

Grandma’s voice boomed out, belying her diminutive size and 82 years, “Did you shave that thing off your face yet?!”

“No!”

“Then, I’m still not talking to you!”

He looked at me and shrugged, “Well it’s either six or seven, depending on how things work out for Wilson. At any rate, I need to pass along the legend of the trout beard to someone before it’s too late. Your dad wasn’t outdoorsy, and he never understood the appeal of things like crickets, pocket knives, box turtles or just being outdoors, so I didn’t even bother trying to explain the whole beard thing to him.” We sat back down at the kitchen table, refilled out coffee mugs, and Pap proceeded to tell me the legend of the trout beard.

“Fishing,” he smiled, “fishing was conducive to competition. You could brag on number of fish, length, weight, species, and the best part is that every day during the season you could start all over again.”

“But, the first fish of the new season was always magical, and as such, deserved a special ritual. Since trout were one

of the first fish to bite in the spring, they became our fish of choice. Oh sure, we'd fish for bass and catfish and whatever else came in to season later on. But the spring belonged to the trout."

"Charles! Charles!" said Grandma, breaking the magic of the story, "You need to split some more wood for the fireplace. I don't know where the ax is. Ask your grandfather." "Ok Granny!"

"And, don't call me Granny. You make me sound like an old woman!" She slammed the door to confirm that she did not, indeed, consider herself to be an old woman.

"Anyway, so enamored with trout were we that we even created our own special club—the Secret Salmonid Angling Brotherhood or S.S.A.B, bass spelled backwards. Now, I'm not saying that this is where Ray Scott got his idea for the whole Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.), but you have to wonder." His voice trailed off as if he were seriously contemplating that he and his goofball friends had somehow inspired the B.A.S.S. organization.

"Pap...Pap" I nudged him back to reality, "the trout beard?"

"Oh, right, anyway, we needed some sort of signal to alert each other that we had gotten our first trout of the season. So, we decided that starting at the end of trout season in October, we'd grow out our facial hair, and we couldn't shave until we got our first trout of the new season. Thus was born the Trout Beard! With one simple glance, we could tell who had caught their trout and who had not." He sat back with the smile and relief of one who had just unburdened himself of one of life's great mysteries. A quiet calm overtook the kitchen as I processed this new found knowledge until a thought hit me.

"Did you guys even have facial hair in high school?"

"That was the tricky part, and it led to a lot of awkward, up close examinations of chins and cheeks to

see if shaving had taken place, or if the lack of hair was merely the result of follicle insufficiency. You see, anglers are notorious liars. You did know that didn't you?"

"Heck, yeah!" And, with that, we both laughed. Pap's thundering laugh filling the kitchen.

Granny's voice trumped Pap's laugh, "Are you two laughing at me? Charles, tell your grandfather that I don't appreciate being laughed at! And, you get busy on that firewood!" Again, Grandma slammed the door to assert her dominance.

"Pap, do you think any of your friend's kids or grandkids grow trout beards?"

He sighed, "Things change. The off season isn't months long anymore. It's maybe a month at the most. So, people can pretty much fish year round. And, there's a lot of people whose jobs won't let them grow a beard. I'm afraid it's pretty much a fading fad," a bit of melancholy tinged his voice.

"What about my beard, Pap? Is it coming in okay?" I asked, saddened that I may not get to be part of the trout beard legacy.

"It sure is, tiger." And, he gave me a big hug, the scent from his flannel shirt smelled of sawdust and pipe smoke. We were having a genuine Hallmark moment.

"Charles! Are you still in the house? That wood ain't gonna split itself!" This time when she slammed the door the pictures on the wall shook.

I stroked my cheek, pleased at the progress my fledgling whiskers were making. I gently massaged my fuzzy chin, trying to encourage the emerging facial hair to grow. "So, Pap," I began, with a sly smile crossing my face, "it seems that Grandma doesn't like beards." We both gave each other a knowing grin and a nod. ☐

photo-Diana Day



*Kaley, Ryder and Levi Romberger fishing with their grandfather.*

## September 10 is Grandparents' Day!

Grandparents' Day is celebrated to show the bond between grandparents and grandchildren.

Celebrate Grandparents' Day with your grandchildren by:

- Going fishing or paddling
- Having a streamside picnic
- Planting a tree
- Taking a hike or nature walk
- Visiting a state park
- Looking for aquatic insects in streams



photo: Ken Hunter

## CRAPPIES—THE YEAR-ROUND FISH

by *Ken Hunter*

**T**here are several species of fish that can be taken throughout the entire year in Pennsylvania, but I suspect most anglers would agree that crappies are probably at the top of the list. In addition to being fun to catch, they are also a treat at the dinner table. Fishing for crappies is a great way to introduce young people and those new to fishing to the sport of fishing since crappies are often willing to take your offerings.

While it's true that crappies can be caught every month of the year, there are times when fishing is more productive. One of the best times to fish for them is in the spring. Crappies will move from deep water into bays and shorelines to spawn, making it easier to locate them. If you are without a boat, you can fish from shore. Spawning crappies

like gravel bottoms, rock piles, wood structure and weed edges in water 2- to 10-feet deep.

Following the spring spawn, crappies will begin to move to deeper water, more preferred temperatures and less penetrating sunlight. Crappie fishing usually remains good throughout the summer months, but finding them in the deeper water requires some searching since schools may be suspended at various depths, and some crappies may be near the bottom. If you utilize a sonar device to detect schools at various depths, you may improve your chances.

Crappie fishing often remains good well into the fall months and throughout the entire winter. Some of my best crappie fishing has taken place on frozen lakes. But, admittedly, it's a bit more challenging to find schools moving about on an ice covered lake. Locating moving schools on frozen lakes takes more effort than drifting about in a boat. While ice fishing for crappies, tip-ups baited with live minnows can

be effective. Moving from hole to hole with an ice fishing jigging rod and a small ice fishing jig tipped with a waxworm or some other live bait may produce a nice batch of fish.

One of the biggest mistakes anglers make when fishing for crappies is using equipment that is too heavy to detect the quick tick, tick of a crappie strike. A good approach is an ultralight rod of about 7 feet equipped with a light open-faced spinning reel and about 4-pound-test line. I like the braided line with a 6- or 7-foot piece of 4-pound fluorocarbon line attached to the end. Keep a tight line when casting to feel the hit. Set the hook immediately. Don't rule out the use of small regular bobbers or slip bobbers for deeper water.

Live minnows are always a good choice. But, spinners and small minnow lures also work. Small jigs tipped with a 1- to 2-inch soft plastic grub are a top producer. White, chartreuse, yellow, brown, black and almost any other color work at different times. ☐



Live minnows are always a good choice. But, spinners and small minnow type lures also work.

photo-courtesy of Ken Hunter



Some of my best crappie fishing has taken place on frozen lakes.

photo-Ken Hunter



Larissa McGhee, Centre County, caught this crappie during her first fly fishing experience at one of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's Women's Intro to Fly Fishing programs at Foster Joseph Sayers Lake, Centre County.

photo-PRBC archives

## HIGH ROD



## HIGH ROD TACKLE

by Alex Zidock Jr. photos by the author

If you live in southeastern Pennsylvania, when you head to the New Jersey coast, you go “down the shore” (not “down to the shore”). However, once you get there, you can go to the beach or find many other things to do, like fishing. And, if you fish the saltwater a lot like Bob Millett, Delaware County, you know what’s biting and how to catch them. If the current tackle selection isn’t to your liking, do what Millett did. Design and patent something that works better. His High Rod Tackle continues to attract anglers and fish alike.

“I fish a lot and target fluke, stripers and tautog,” said Millett. “The first rig I developed was our Legend High Low fluke/flounder rig. They are made with two hooks and clear neoprene tubes to eliminate tangle and offer real bait swimming action. These are especially nice for beginners and excellent for anglers seeking big fluke,” said Millett. According to Millett, his rigs boat more fish because of how the hooks are positioned. “The other thing that makes us different is our hooks are molded in the lead jig sideways and not facing straight up like others. Flounder are on the bottom, and the way their mouth is positioned makes for easier hook-sets with our sideways rigs,” said Millett.

“I started fishing with my father about 5 minutes from Broomall, Delaware County. I did a lot of freshwater bass



Steve and Bob Millett work together to manufacture High Rod Tackle. Steve is Bob’s son who oversees filling orders, packing and shipping.



fishing in Pennsylvania. We're less than ½ hour from Philadelphia and the Delaware River, where there are some big catfish around the bridges. My friend caught a 51-pound striper just below the Commodore Barry Bridge, and the Delaware Bay has nice flounder and Striped Bass too," said Millett.

Millett seriously got into saltwater fishing about 15 years ago when he bought his first boat. He keeps his third and newest boat on a trailer to follow the fish from New York to his favorite New Jersey summer fishing grounds near Sea Isle City.

"Our baits primarily target flounder, tautog and striper fishing, which are saltwater species, but we have anglers tell us they use some of our baits for Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass, and we even have guys telling us they are successful using our rigs fishing Lake Erie," said Millett.

One bait unique to High Rod Tackle is their RamZHead, which is patent pending. "It's a double hook, powder coated for durability, lead jig for tautog fishing that increases your chance of landing trophy fish," said Millett. Anglers familiar with tautog know they are finicky feeders. They have a soft bite and can strip bait much easier than most fish.

"With the double hook setup, if the tog strips bait on one hook, it's going to go back for the second bait, so it increases your chances for the catch. And, our tog rigs, the RamZHead and the single hook Assassin have a lifetime warranty. If you purchase either lure in the special offer box and lose it, just send the box back to us, and we'll replace the lure for life. All you pay is the postage," said Millett.

Another unique offering from High Rod Tackle is their egg sinker with a hole for the line. "Anglers use it as a "knocker" rig or for a slip sinker setup. We powder coat our sinkers, and they are a little different than others as we mold an eyelet in our egg sinkers that you can attach another hook to increase your chance of catching more fish," said Millett.

"Our newest product is a swimbait used for stripers. We make it in a tandem style for trolling and a single hook setup for casting and retrieving from a boat or shore. It has a fluorescence skirt and comes in sizes from 3- to 10-ounces," said Millett

"We sell online and at regional shows for the past few years, and it's very satisfying to talk to anglers and get their reaction once they have fished with these lures. Offering quality products and being made in America is important to us," said Millett. ☐



*The Legend High Low fluke/flounder rig introduces a neoprene tube that eliminates tangles, and the hooks are set sideways in the jig head for better hookups.*



*One of High Rod Tackle's newest designs is an egg sinker with an eyelet for an additional hook.*



*Anglers selecting the special offer box (round box) when purchasing the RamZHead qualify for a lifetime warranty. If you lose the lure and send the package back, High Rod Tackle will replace the lure for free.*

**High Rod Tackle**  
highrodtackle.com



# THE LONELY PUG

by **Rob Criswell**

photos by the author

Fishes are rare for a variety of reasons. Their habitats or other requirements may be naturally scarce. They may have suffered declines due to pollution, or they may have been displaced by invasive species. Populations may be separated from their kind by distance or barriers (falls, dams, watershed divides, etc.). The Pugnose Minnow, one of Pennsylvania's rarest fishes, falls into the last category. The nearest populations to the sole Keystone State occurrence are in the Lake Erie drainage in Ohio and Ontario.

The Pugnose Minnow is a slender, 2-inch member of the Cyprinidae (carps and minnows family). It is silvery with a light olive to yellowish cast and a dusky lateral stripe that may appear faint or bold. The dorsal fin is peppered with tiny black spots (melanophores), except for a thin, clear area in the middle of the fin. Its mouth is nearly vertically oriented, somewhat uncharacteristic for Pennsylvania fishes.

The Pugnose Minnow is a bit of an enigma in Pennsylvania. It was not discovered here until 2000, when two were found in Cussewago Creek, Crawford County, in the Allegheny River drainage. Four more were collected in 2001. Then, they seemed to vanish. Surveys directed toward

this species from 2006-2015 failed to yield a single specimen. In 2016, 10 were detected in the same section of waterway as before, confirming an established population. Subsequent surveys have again failed to find this elusive fish.

It is somewhat unusual for a fish considered to be native to have been recently discovered. However, this section of Cussewago Creek, where the species occurs, does not divulge its treasures easily. It is deep, chronically turbid, literally strewn with woody debris of all sizes and shapes from top to bottom, and extremely difficult to survey. It was pure luck that it was discovered at all.

The Pugnose Minnow dwells in sluggish streams, lakes, oxbows and wetlands. It prefers dense cover, such as that provided by submerged vegetation and woody debris, including fallen trees, branches and limbs, and submerged root wads. The bottom usually consists of sand or organic material. The occupied stream section is extremely short.

The strongly oblique orientation of the mouth allows it to feed in mid-water and at the surface. Its dinner fare most frequently consists of crustaceans, small insects, fish eggs and algae. Its generic name—*Opsopoeodus*—is interpreted to mean “teeth for dainty feeding”, a reference to serrated choppers hidden in the throat that are well-suited to a diet of crustaceans.

Pugnose Minnows breed in June and July when males select and defend their territories from intruders. At that time,



*A spawning male Pugnose Minnow, Opsopoeodus emiliae*

the dark peppery areas of the dorsal fins are intense black blotches that contrast markedly with the unpigmented adjacent areas of the fins. In addition, the tips of the first three dorsal fin rays turn whitish and become thickened. It is believed that they mimic eggs and may help stimulate females to spawn.

The male selects a spawning site under a rock, log or floating vegetation and induces a female to the nest to lay 30 to 120 eggs. He then guards the adhesive eggs until they hatch.

Due to its rarity, the Pugnose Minnow was listed as an endangered species by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) in 2019. Increased siltation and runoff from nonpoint sources are considered ongoing threats. These threats are believed to have eliminated another Pennsylvania endangered species, the Hornyhead Chub, from this same waterway. There is also concern that a single pollution event or natural catastrophe could wipe out this tiny population.

The Pugnose Minnow presents a conservation conundrum. Despite its name, it is rather frail and does not respond well to sampling techniques

required for this difficult section of stream. Considering this vulnerability and its here-today-gone-tomorrow unpredictability, PFBC biologists are taking a bit of a hands-off approach by limiting monitoring efforts and weighing the welfare of one of our rarest fishes against the need to know its status over time. Finding the proper balance will ensure optimal protection for the lonely Pugnose Minnow. ☐



*Cussewago Creek, Crawford County, is the only stream harboring Pugnose Minnows in the state. It is deep, turbid and filled with debris, making it difficult to sample.*



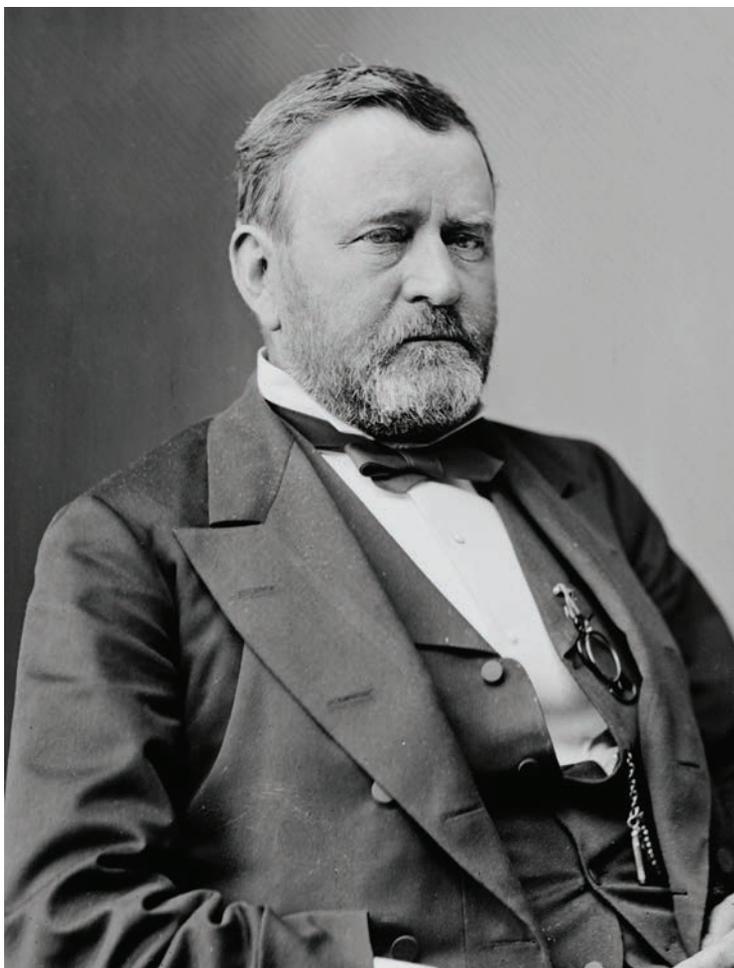
*Pugnose Minnow*

# EXECUTIVE ACTION—

## President Ulysses S. Grant Gets Hooked in the Pennsylvania Wilds

by Brady J. Crytzer

photo-Brady-Handy Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



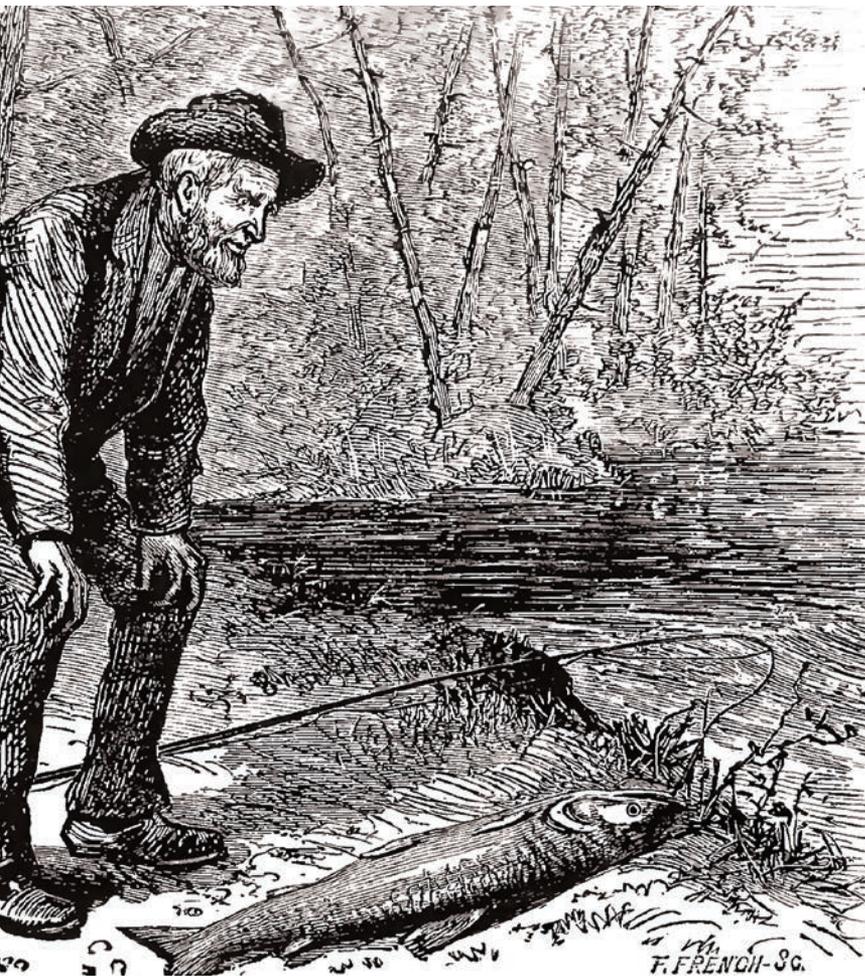
↑ Ulysses S. Grant



illustration-Wikimedia Commons

In August of 1869 President Ulysses S. Grant made his first journey into the Pennsylvania Wilds. Just 5 months after his inauguration as the nation's 18th Commander in Chief, Grant paid a visit to his old friend Thomas Leiper Kane in search of a much-needed vacation. With the weight of a nation on his shoulders, Grant spent his time trout fishing on the creeks and streams of McKean and Elk counties. The journey prompted the President to say, "I have never enjoyed myself more since I was a boy, than I have this day."

On August 15, Kane hosted Grant in the city that bore his name. Kane, McKean County, was small and named in honor of his service as commander of the famed Pennsylvania Bucktails in the Civil War. Despite its humble beginnings, it was well known for its abundant trout streams at the time. On their first fishing excursion, the President's party was escorted to a stream outside of town, and Grant was given the honor of riding Kane's prized horse. Named "Old Clarion," the horse handled the terrain well but rolled over in the water with the President on his back. Grant was an experienced horseman and jumped to safety, and while most onlookers were terrified,



Digital Image - © 2004 Utah State Historical Society

⬆ General Thomas L. Kane

⬅ Although he struggled at first, President Grant was hooked after landing his first trout.

Kane laughed at his friend from the bank. Soaked and embarrassed, the President came up empty handed. “I am a poor fisherman,” said Grant, “but I should at least like to catch one trout.”

After Grant had a chance to dry off, the party moved east to the Elk County line in search of better action. Using the Smethport Road, the party found a creek that was busy with trout and unpacked their rods. They had no sooner baited their hooks when a local constable stopped them and arrested the men for fishing out of season. Clueless to the fact that he had just apprehended the President of the United States, the police officer escorted the men to nearby Wilcox and fined them \$125.

Despite their bad luck, the President returned to Kane for a night of dining and ceremony. Later in the week, Grant expressed interest in fishing again. The party decided to ride back to Wilcox, this time without any law enforcement involved. Grant’s fishing party was a who’s who of dignitaries including his son Jesse Root Grant, Pennsylvania Senator Simon Cameron and former Captain A.A. Clay of the Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry. Once at their destination, the party split into two groups: Senator Cameron fished alongside the Clarion River, and the President and his son fished on nearby Straight Creek. Throughout the day, Grant commented on the

beauty of the wilderness all around him and praised the Commonwealth’s outdoor treasures.

Posted up in Rasselas Hollow (modern day Jones Township, Elk County), the men found success quickly. Much to the delight of the party, the 11-year-old Jesse caught four sparkling trout within the first hour of fishing; the bad luck continued for his father, however. Amused, the President said, “I had plenty of bites but no fish.” As the day wore on, the Clarion River and Straight Creek lived up to their reputations by producing nearly 130 fish for the party including one large, speckled trout for the Commander in Chief. As he wrestled the fish into his net, Grant fell in love with the sport. By the end of the day, the President was knee high in the middle of the creek, casting like a seasoned angler.

Following a day of successful fishing, President Ulysses S. Grant was hooked. After returning to Kane for the evening he was met by a throng of onlookers. “I have been with you several days in these wild woods,” announced Grant. “I have enjoyed a pleasant visit here and thank you for your kindness.” ☐

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*Brady J. Crytzer teaches history at Robert Morris University. The author of seven books studying the early history of Pennsylvania, he lives and fishes outside of Pittsburgh.*



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

**Thirteen members of the 25th Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO) class graduated from training during a commencement ceremony held June 23, 2023, in the Pennsylvania State Capitol Rotunda, Harrisburg.**

Resident Staff Officer Chad A. Lauer, 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 Jr., PFBC, delivered the keynote addresses. Commissioner Robert B.J. Small, PFBC, was the guest speaker. Cadet Noah B. Grice spoke on behalf of the graduates. Presentation of diplomas and recognition awards followed, presented by Colonel Warner, PFBC, Commissioner Small, PFBC, and Executive Director Schaeffer, PFBC.

The Edward W. Manhart Academic Achievement Award was presented to Cadet Seth J. Strawser for maintaining the highest grade point average during training. The Sergeant Brook R. Tolbert Firearms Excellence Award was presented to Cadet Kristian M. McNamara. 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.

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. ☐

photo-PFBC archives



*H.R. Stackhouse School of Fishery Conservation and Watercraft Safety, Centre County.*

<i>Graduate</i>	<i>Assigned To</i>
Sarah R. Bartle	Franklin/Eastern Fulton
Brendan M. Borne	Bedford/Western Fulton
Zachary T. Christy	Southwest Region
Caleb A. Cramer	Northern Wayne
Gaven M. Danneker	Delaware
Noah B. Grice	Eastern Crawford/Warren
Abigail G. Luteri	Southwestern Montgomery/ Western Philadelphia
Kristian M. McNamara	Lackawanna/Wayne/Susquehanna
Michael Noon III	Clarion/Butler/Armstrong
Logan M. Schuller	Eastern Erie
Jacob M. Schwartzmiller	Western Erie
Seth J. Strawser	Perry/Juniata
Luke E. Walter	Butler



photo-courtesy of Pennsylvania State Democrats

Pictured are (front row, left to right): Zachary T. Christy; Sarah R. Bartle; Caleb A. Cramer; Michael Noon III; Seth J. Strawser; and Luke E. Walter; (last row, left to right): Abigail G. Luteri; Gaven M. Danneker; Noah B. Grice; Brendan M. Borne; Kristian M. McNamara; Logan M. Schuller; and Jacob M. Schwartzmiller.

photos-Mike Parker

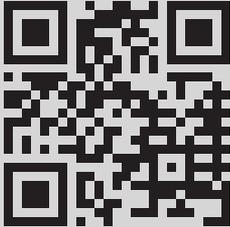


The Edward W. Manhart Academic Achievement Award was presented to Cadet Seth J. Strawser for maintaining the highest grade point average during training.

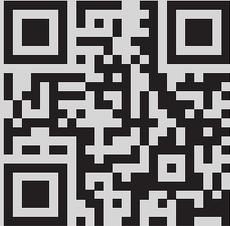


The Sergeant Brook R. Tolbert Firearms Excellence Award was presented to Cadet Kristian M. McNamara.

To Become a WCO:



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[scsc.pa.gov](http://scsc.pa.gov)



Photos courtesy of CorpsTHAT

# Deaf Power! Deaf Youth Crew Works in Pennsylvania Forests

by Sam Forshay

This past month, a deaf-led conservation corps crew worked on a rerouting project on a small section of the Heritage Trail in Raccoon Creek State Park, Beaver County. This is the third year that CorpsTHAT, the Student Conservation Association and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources's PA Outdoor Corps partnered to run an American Sign Language Inclusive (ASLi) crew. The focus was to develop job and life skills for deaf and hard of hearing high school youth ages 15-19 years old in Pennsylvania.

This year, Crew Leaders, who are also deaf, came from California and Kentucky. Before their corps members arrived, they joined CorpsTHAT's 2-week Crew Leader Training in West Virginia, where they worked alongside two other fellow Deaf Crew Leaders for CorpsTHAT's young adult crew. During the training, they learned how to build and maintain trails, remove invasive species, and manage and lead a crew while completing a project for the West Virginia Land Trust. The ASLi Conservation Corps Crew program consists of two 3-week sessions during July and August. This is the second year the crew has been a camping crew.

The first session consisted of two crew members who were both returning alumni from last year's program. The crew of four worked on a .3-mile reroute of the 9.5-mile Heritage Trail, which is part of the park's 24-mile backpacking loop. When the crew finished work for the day, they returned to their campsite and completed daily chores such as cooking, cleaning their tools and cleaning their vehicle. The crew leaders also led environmental educational activities for the corps members to learn more about how their work positively impacts the local parks and environment.

If you know someone who is interested in joining next year, go to [corpsthat.org](http://corpsthat.org) in early 2024. To learn more about this program and partnership, contact CorpsTHAT at [info@corpsthat.org](mailto:info@corpsthat.org). ☐

## Heritage Trail

Heritage Trail is a 9.5-mile hiking trail with blue blazes, most difficult hiking. It is the longest trail in Raccoon Creek State Park and passes through land once inhabited by Beaver County's first European settlers. Heritage Trail follows some of the first wagon roads from the early 1800s. In addition to the main trailhead, Heritage Trail can be accessed by connector trails at the boat trailer parking lot, campground, Camp Trail trailhead parking, Camp Trail and at two points along Raccoon Park Road near the roadside picnic areas. A variety of options exist for loop hikes using these access points and connecting trails.

## Fishing

Raccoon Lake is open to year-round fishing. Brown Trout and Rainbow Trout are stocked in the lake. Other species found in Raccoon Lake include catfish, crappies, Bluegills, Largemouth Bass, Muskellunge, Smallmouth Bass, Walleyes and Yellow Perch.

## Boating

The 101-acre Raccoon Lake has two boat launches. Canoes, rowboats, kayaks and hydrobikes can be rented at the Raccoon Creek Boat Rental.

## Raccoon Creek State Park Map:



[elibrary.dcnr.pa.gov/GetDocument?docId=1737302&DocName=RACR\\_ParkMap.pdf](http://elibrary.dcnr.pa.gov/GetDocument?docId=1737302&DocName=RACR_ParkMap.pdf)

## More information:



[dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/FindAPark/RaccoonCreekStatePark/Pages/default.aspx](http://dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/FindAPark/RaccoonCreekStatePark/Pages/default.aspx)

# NORTHERN SNAKEHEADS

## Report and Harvest or Report and Dispose

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission encourages anglers who catch invasive Northern Snakeheads anywhere in the Commonwealth to report and harvest or report and dispose of any fish caught.

This advisory follows multiple Northern Snakehead captures in Conowingo Reservoir by anglers and natural resource agency biologists this summer including the first evidence of reproduction in the reservoir.

As an aquatic invasive species, the Northern Snakehead may cause declines in important fisheries and harm native species. Anglers in possession of a snakehead must immediately kill the fish. To ensure snakeheads are dead, remove the head, gill arches or internal organs.

### Northern Snakehead:

**AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES**



#### More information and regulations:



[fishandboat.com/Fishing/All-About-Fish/Catch-PA-Fish/Pages/Snakehead.aspx](https://fishandboat.com/Fishing/All-About-Fish/Catch-PA-Fish/Pages/Snakehead.aspx)

#### To report:



[forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=QSiOQSGb1U2bbEf8Wpob3t8k4QmrNRNjvUtHK5cfs05UNzFPMEFOUkIDMzFQ1VHUKJMTEzXSUdYQI4u](https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=QSiOQSGb1U2bbEf8Wpob3t8k4QmrNRNjvUtHK5cfs05UNzFPMEFOUkIDMzFQ1VHUKJMTEzXSUdYQI4u)



**FishandBoat.com**

# Gear Up for Adventure!

**DON'T FORGET TO WEAR  
YOUR LIFE JACKET.**

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

Regulations:

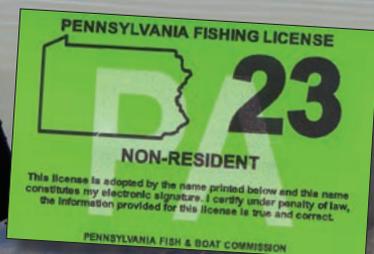


[fishandboat.com/Boating/Regulations/Pages/default.aspx](https://fishandboat.com/Boating/Regulations/Pages/default.aspx)

photo-Anna Topper

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

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



**FishandBoat.com**

photo-Spring Gearhart

## Stanley Long Outstanding Volunteer Service Award

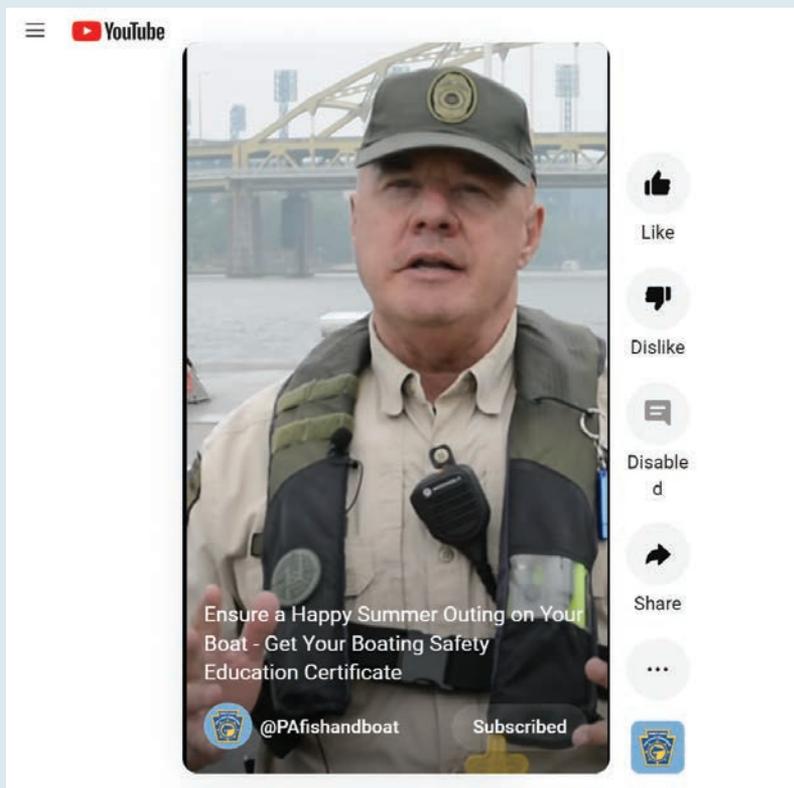


photo-courtesy of Captain Justin L. Schillaci

John Duck is the 2023 recipient of the Stanley Long Outstanding Volunteer Service Award. Duck stocked trout with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) in Clearfield County for 50 years, participating in over 1,500 trout stockings. Duck's passion for volunteering with PFBC is fueled by his love of fishing and his military background in ensuring people's safety. Pictured are (left to right): State Representative Dallas Kephart, Captain Justin L. Schillaci and John Duck.

# SOCIAL SHORTS

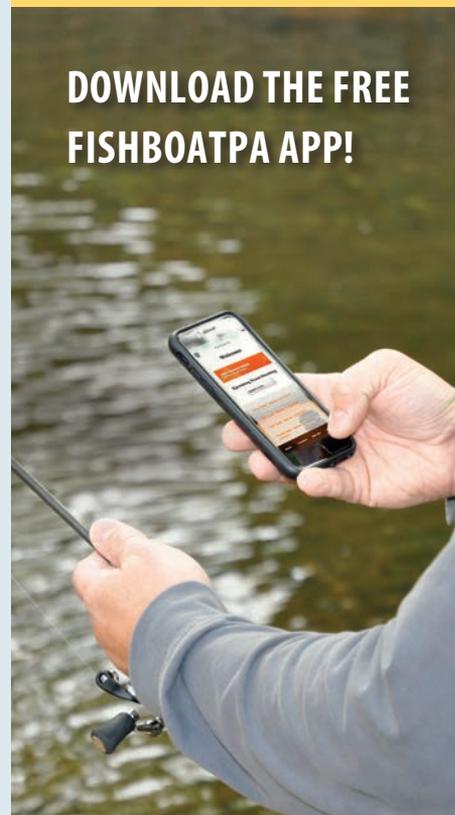
Below are some "Social Shorts" from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's (PFBC's) social media pages.



PFBC Social Media:



[fishandboat.com/socialmedia](https://fishandboat.com/socialmedia)



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## CAST & CAUGHT



*Dimitri Aletras, age 16, caught this Muskellunge while fishing from shore at Blue Marsh Lake, Berks County.*

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

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



*Lincoln Biggs, age 3, caught and released this Brown Trout while fishing at the Zelienople-Harmony Sportsmen's Club, Butler County.*



*Malakai Leadbitter, age 3, caught and released this trout while fishing at Chapman State Park, Warren County. This was Malakai's first fish.*



*Aubrey Allen, age 13, and Ava Jones, age 12, were fishing together when Ava landed this Largemouth Bass on her first cast while fishing a private pond in Cumberland County. This was Ava's first fish.*



*Trey Gill, age 5, caught and released this golden Rainbow Trout while fishing in Little Clearfield Creek, Clearfield County.*