

Pennsylvania **ANGLER & BOATER**

The logo for the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission is a yellow shield-shaped emblem. It features a blue circular center with a white fish silhouette. The words "PENNSYLVANIA" and "FISH & BOAT COMMISSION" are written in blue and black around the perimeter of the shield.

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Official Fishing and
Boating Magazine*

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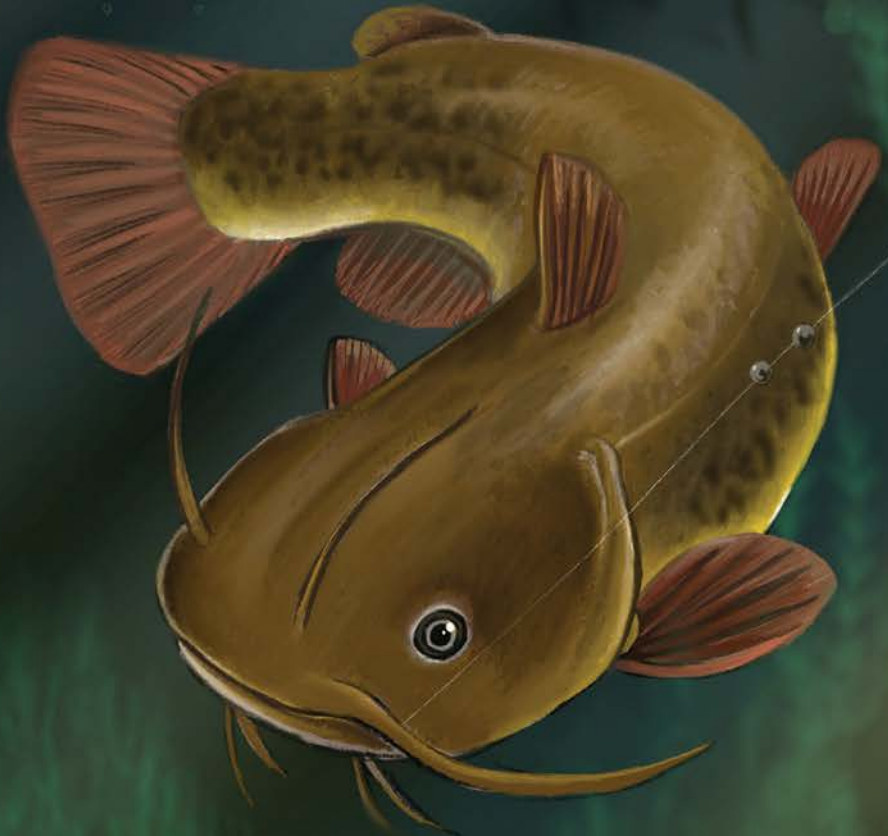
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CREATE YOUR OWN *Adventure!*

With this issue of *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater*, we present a series of articles highlighting regional fishing and boating opportunities throughout Pennsylvania and sharing ideas on how to include fishing and boating in all your outdoor pursuits. Turn to pages 22 through 26 for “Welcome to Northcentral PA!” And, look for a special Pennsylvania Adventure Map in the March/April *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* magazine as well as at select shows. With our Pennsylvania Adventure Map and over 86,000 miles of streams and rivers, 4,000 inland lakes and

ponds, plus 63 miles of Lake Erie shoreline and 735 square miles of waters in Pennsylvania's boundaries for even more fishing and boating opportunities, it's easy to combine fishing or boating into every Pennsylvania destination you visit. As you travel the state, you will be able to log your adventures. Whether you're casting a fishing line, dipping paddles, searching for critters, or hiking or biking a trail with fishing gear or binoculars, you decide how to create your own adventure! For experienced anglers and boaters, this is a great resource to introduce someone new to the sport.



artwork-Michael Kensingner

Graphic Key

These icons represent specific topics.



Amphibians
and Reptiles



Boating



Catch and Release



Conservation



Family Fishing



Fly Fishing



Ice Fishing



Lakes



Paddling



Rivers



State Parks



Streams



Tackle

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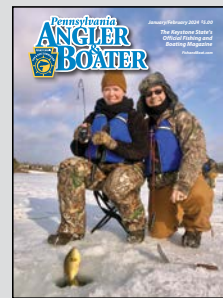
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Jessica and Mario Matos during a Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's Intro to Ice Fishing program on Lake Nessmuk, Tioga County. They had a blast

catching panfish through the ice and later enjoyed the taste of panfish during the fillet and cooking demonstration. Jessica and Mario have since attended virtual Intro to Steelhead and Steelhead Fishing programs. *Photo by Amidea Daniel*





photo-PFBC archives

CHANGES FOR THE BETTER

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

Change is rarely easy, but it can make things better. Two changes highlighted in this edition of *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* illustrate how this can happen.

In 2011, our Board of Commissioners listened to the data and followed the advice of agency staff and the Boating Advisory Board to require that life jackets be worn on all boats less than 16 feet long and all canoes, kayaks and paddleboards from November 1 to April 30. This was in response to a disproportionate number of boating fatalities happening during the cold weather months. If you fall in the water at that time of year, there is a good chance you may not come out alive.

Ten years later, boating fatalities during these months have been nearly cut in half. At the same time, we are experiencing longer boating seasons and seeing more people than ever using unpowered watercrafts. This requirement is making it safer to be on the water.

This change did not come easy—there was a lot of debate leading up to its formal adoption—but it was worth it. Indeed, that change is still

happening as we work diligently to educate people about the rule and the need to follow it.

The new Notice of Stocking regulation generated even more public interest than the cold weather life jacket requirement and will also be worth it. Until now, there was no system in place to ensure the health of the fish being stocked into Pennsylvania waters. In addition, our agency's talented and dedicated fisheries management staff had no idea what was being stocked into waters of the Commonwealth other than the fish that came from state fish hatcheries and cooperative nurseries.

With the Notice of Stocking requirement now in place, we are in a better position than ever to more comprehensively protect, conserve and enhance aquatic resources.

A special word of thanks to those in the commercial aquaculture industry, private fishing clubs and cooperative nursery volunteers—all of whom provided valuable feedback to collaboratively get to where we are today. Thanks also goes to our staff and Commissioners who took the time to listen and come up with a final regulation that worked. In this case, change was certainly not easy, but it showed how partners can come together to achieve a goal.

We still have a long way to go to achieve full compliance with wearing life jackets, and there will undoubtedly be growing pains as anglers implement the Notice of Stocking. Change will be for the better in the form of lives saved and healthy fish. ☐



WEAR IT
National Safe Boating Council
Pennsylvania



ICE FISHING IN THE NORTHERN TIER



by Linda Stager

photos by the author

It's winter, it's cold, and the lakes are iced over. But, you can still go fishing. Tioga and Potter Counties host seven lakes, within an hour of one another, that are all known as premier ice fishing destinations. Whether an experienced angler or a beginner, it may be time to check out this fascinating outdoor recreation.

Tioga County and Potter County, two counties in the northern tier of Pennsylvania, are known for having ice on their lakes before most locations during the winter months. Ice fishing season usually starts in mid-December and lasts into late February or early March.

Potter County's foremost ice fishing location is Lyman Run Lake at Lyman Run State Park, 11 miles southwest of Galeton. It's known for the usual target fishing species, but it's also a fantastic trout fishery. Fishing is one of its most popular activities and it is regularly stocked with trout by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC).

In the winter, ice fishing shines. The 45-acre lake is easily accessed by anglers. Though the ice thickness isn't officially monitored, anglers can ask about local conditions at area tackle shops.

Favorite Tioga County destinations include the 125-acre Hamilton Lake and 47-acre Lake Nessmuk, outside Wellsboro, 137-acre Hills Creek Lake, between Wellsboro and Mansfield, and 67-acre Beechwood Lake, in the western part of the county. All four lakes can be fished for



Ice fishing in Tioga and Potter counties is a great winter sport for those who love the outdoors and want to get outside.

crappies, panfish, perch as well as popular gamefish like Walleyes, bass and pickerel. Hamilton Lake and Beechwood Lake also have healthy trout populations along with the usual target species. Beechwood Lake is also known for its popular annual ice fishing tournament.

Ice fishing is fun! And, there are opportunities for all to learn how.

Regular clinics are held in Tioga County. Hills Creek State Park does seasonal ice fishing lessons and demonstrations, and Lake Nessmuk has been the host to a series of Women's Clinics. The Women's Clinics,

co-sponsored by a local tackle shop and the PFBC, have traditionally been split in two parts. Part One is a series of virtual lessons including the basics of ice fishing and what you need to know to plan your visit to the ice. Part Two is a hands-on experience on the lake, under instructors' tutelage. Individuals interested in participating can check fishandboat.com for upcoming events.

In every case, safety is paramount. The minimum thickness for ice is at least 4 inches. Ice thickness is not officially monitored, but the Tackle Shack, a retailer outside Wellsboro, is active in posting timely ice thickness reports. Packing safety gear including wearable ice picks and carrying a spud bar are imperative. Warm, comfortable clothing will make the fishing experience more enjoyable. Keep your hands and feet warm with well-insulated clothing. Making "camp" on the ice can be as simple as you want. A sled, an ice auger, a few ice buckets, an ice fishing rod and some jigs will work fine. If you want more comfort, ice "huts" can have many of the comforts of home.

With some support and instruction, you can learn what you need to know and get outfitted for safety and comfort. If you're already comfortable on the ice, the perfect spot to drill a hole and try your luck awaits.

Ice fishing in Tioga and Potter counties is a great winter sport for those who love the outdoors and want to get outside.

And, if you catch fish, it's even better. ☐

*Gear Up for
Adventure*

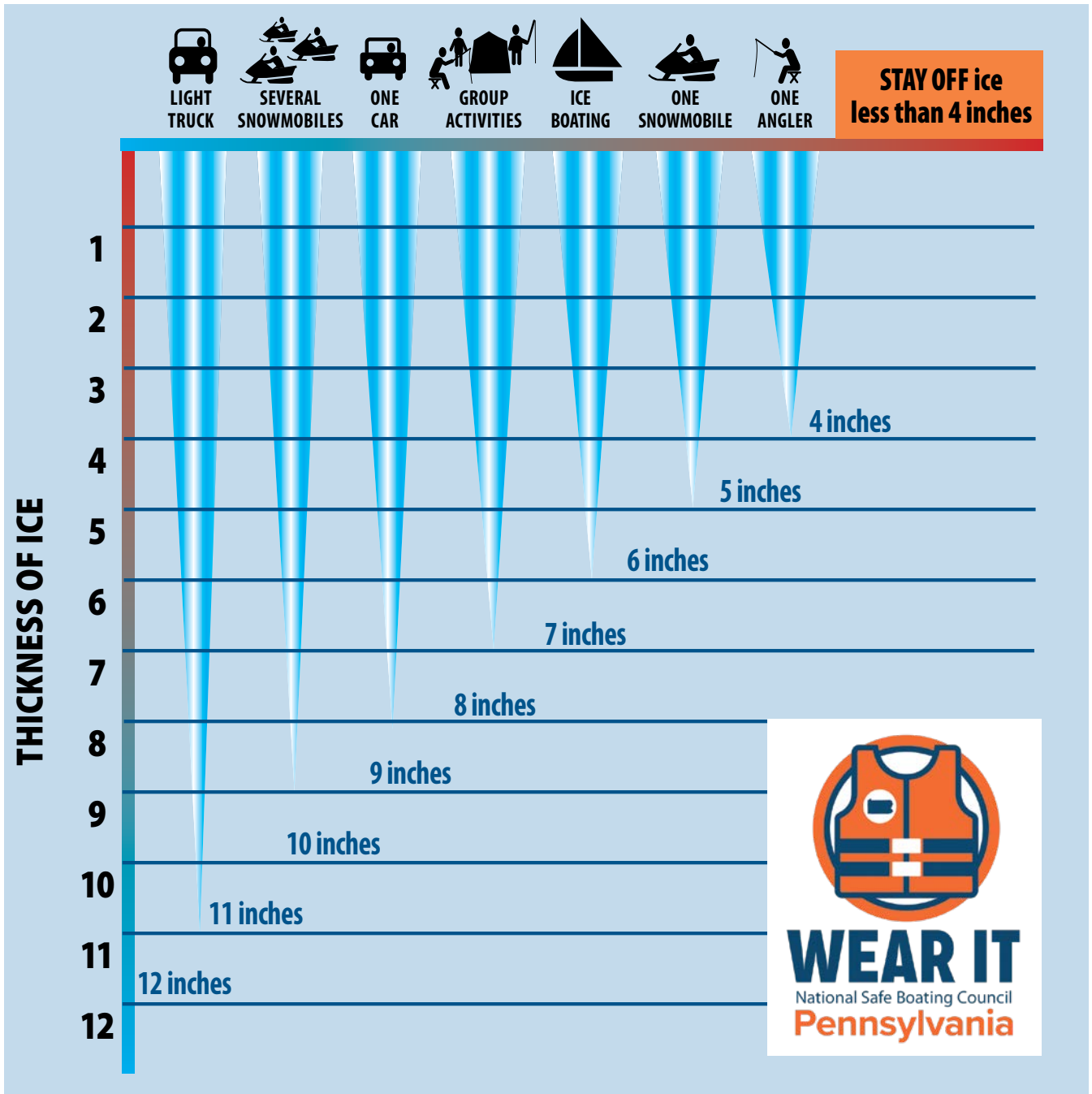
**Don't Forget to Wear
Your Life Jacket!**



Ice Safety Guide

Ice is never 100% safe.

Minimum ice thickness guidelines for new, clear ice.



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



Tying the Rainbow Perdigon

by Carl Haensel photos by the author

Fly fishing during the winter months in Pennsylvania often means fishing subsurface. This easy-to-tie pattern is excellent for wintertime trout fishing anywhere you need to get deep underwater. Originating in competitive Spanish fly fishing events, Perdigon nymphs have become popular worldwide for their simplicity and effectiveness. Tiers should note that bead sizes are variable based on the desired weight of the fly. Since this fly sinks quickly, I like to carry a variety in different bead sizes and weights. Additional weight can also be added by wrapping on lead-free wire underneath the pearl tinsel. Anglers looking to try Euro or Czech nymphing methodologies will find these flies particularly useful. Try fishing Perdigon nymphs in runs, deep slots near cover or other spots with quick changes in depth in the stream. Keep a tight line and lower your nymph into the water just upstream of where you think the fish are holding. Follow the fly downstream through the water with your rod tip and wait for a strike. You'll find these flies get down quickly, and trout love them. ☐



Cast flies like the Rainbow Perdigon into deep winter trout streams like Big Spring Creek, Cumberland County, for excellent attempts at nice trout.

Tying the Rainbow Perdigon Materials

Hook: Jigged nymph hook in sizes 12-18

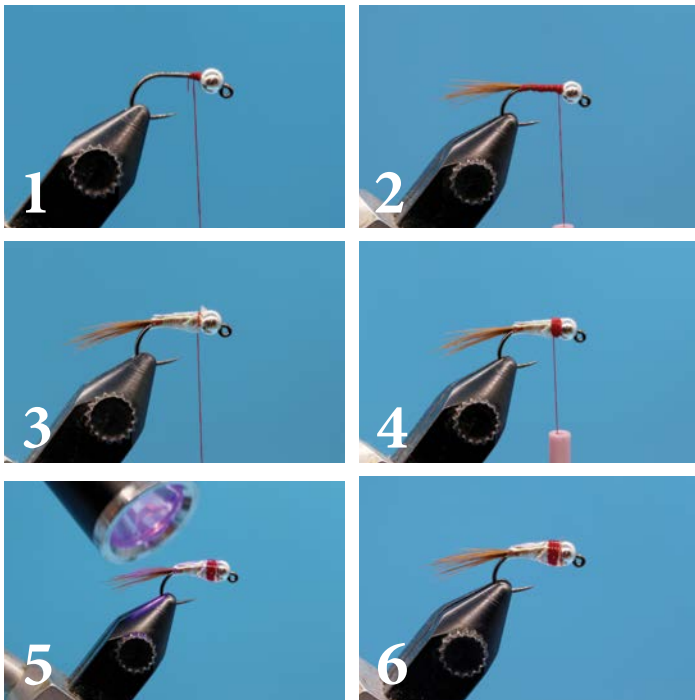
Bead: Slotted silver tungsten bead sized to hook

Thread: Red 8/0 or similar

Tail: Grizzly hackle fibers

Body: Wrapped large pearl tinsel

Glue: UV resin cure glue



- 1 Place the bead on the hook, and attach the thread behind the bead.
- 2 Wrap the thread to the bend of the hook, and tie in the tail. Wrap the thread back to the bead to keep the body of the nymph level.
- 3 Attach the tinsel behind the bead. Wrap the thread over the tinsel back to the bend of the hook. Then, wrap the tinsel back to the bead at the front and tie it off.
- 4 Wrap a small spot of red thread just behind the bead, and whip finish the fly.
- 5 Place a UV resin cure glue on the body and taper it to the bead. Rotate the fly and shine a UV flashlight on the fly to cure the glue.
- 6 Clear the eye of any excess UV resin cure glue.



NOTES *from the Streams*

River of the Year

The North Branch Susquehanna River was named Pennsylvania's 2023 River of the Year. This branch of the Susquehanna River stems from New York and goes through the Endless Mountains area that I'm assigned to patrol, which includes Wyoming County. With the river flowing through scenic mountains, having some amazing history along its banks, outstanding Smallmouth Bass fishing and perfect for paddling, it is easy to see why this river received this recognition. As a Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO), I patrol along the North Branch Susquehanna River most shifts. Being fortunate enough to have the responsibility to help protect and conserve this river is rewarding. Even on the hottest, busiest and most stressful days, being out on the river makes for a good day being a WCO.—WCO David Raulfs Jr., Wyoming and Southwest Susquehanna counties.



photo-PFBC archives

North Branch Susquehanna River kayakers.

Youth

In Washington County, there is an annual kids fishing derby on Buffalo Creek called the Trout Tangle. There have been a lot of kids in the past 2 years participating, but 2023 was the most well-attended event to date. Over 300 youth participated. The stream was stocked with 2,500 trout, with a few trophy-sized fish mixed

in. The kids were provided a free lunch and lots of giveaway prizes. As I walked the stream, all I heard was excitement as the kids caught fish. It was a great event with a great group of people.—WCO Jonathan R. Stark, Washington County.

Best clients

As a WCO, we interact with many people every day from anglers, boaters or people just enjoying the outdoors. Although some interactions are not always ideal, the majority of them are positive. Sometimes, the job gives you a different view of people (not always for the good). But, there have been many occasions when I have been fishing with my son, and it makes me realize that I have a great job. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) has some of the best patrons.

There are two occasions that come to mind. One day, my son and I were kayak bass fishing on a local lake. The bite was slow, but we managed to catch a few nice Largemouth Bass. When we decided to call it quits for the day, we got to the launch where another angler was loading his boat. He asked my son how we did, and my son replied with a short story of the day. The gentleman asked him what lures he was using, and my son told him. Then, the gentleman got in his tackle box and pulled out a topwater lure and handed it to him. He said, "Here, use this next time. I usually crush them out here with this lure".

On the second occasion, my son and I were steelhead fishing in Erie. We were wading down the stream finding holes to fish. A woman and a man were about to leave the hole above us, where they were catching fish. The woman yelled down to

my son and told him to come up and fish. We headed upstream and started talking to them and thanked them for giving us their spot on the stream. Before they left, they gave my son a fly to use—it was the one they had been catching steelhead on.

These experiences have made me appreciate the job and the people who are the customers of PFBC.—WCO Nathaniel J. Yingling, Cambria County.

Attack frog

We received a call from a man who caught a "prehistoric frog". The man had never seen a frog like it before. His first concern was it was poisonous. Unfortunately, he didn't have the means to send a picture, so I was dispatched to his house.

When I arrived on the scene, the man captured the frog in a container. He was worried, because the frog hopped at him several times. I identified the critter as an Eastern American Toad and told him the toad could be released back into his yard. The man replied, "I'm not releasing an aggressive frog in my yard." I then relocated the toad to a nearby creek.—WCO Travis D. Miller, Lehigh County.



photo-courtesy of WCO Travis D. Miller

Eastern American Toad



Snow Day Ice Fishing



by Jeff Woleslagle

photos by the author

The morning alarm clock went off, and I groggily slumbered over to the bedroom window to see a fresh blanket of snow on the lawn, with snow still steadily falling. Turning on the news, I saw that school was canceled for the day and that the wind and air temperatures weren't going to be brutal. This unexpected day off had the makings of the perfect snow day spent on the ice.

After breakfast and allowing some time for the snowplows to clear the main roads, my son and I loaded up our gear and were soon on our way to a pond not far from the house, where we had permission to fish. We checked the thickness and condition of the ice, and in less than 30 minutes, we had several holes drilled and rods set up. The snow was supposed to taper off in a few hours and the wind had completely died down. It didn't take long for the first bite from a fat Bluegill. My son was grinning wildly as it came up through the hole. Almost as soon as

he returned the jig to the bottom, he hooked up with an even bigger one. The action remained steady for nearly 3 hours, at which point it was time to pack up and head home. Falling atmospheric pressure, as brought on by a snowstorm, increases fish feeding behavior and can often lead to success throughout the day.

Of course, even with this increase in fish feeding activity, there are some things to consider to improve your odds of success. Fish relate to structure under the ice. Submerged brush piles, rock piles or artificial structure under the ice are great places to begin the search. If it's early enough in the season, weed edges are fantastic places to target as well.

If you're fortunate enough to take a young angler or two out on a snow day, plan other fun activities in case the fishing is slow. A thermos of hot chocolate and snacks help keep them on the ice, and there is always time to explore or build a snow fort. Make sure kids are bundled up, as nothing can limit time on the ice quicker than getting cold. You want them to have a memorable experience that they will want to repeat.

To take advantage of a snow day, I like to keep my ice fishing gear ready to go. If I see measurable snow in the forecast, I make sure I have ample bait and that all my

rods are rigged up. I strive to be dropping baits down into the depths as soon as the holes are drilled and cleared. Targeting panfish is an excellent way to get youngsters into fish as they are often plentiful and willing to bite. They also make a delicious meal. Small tear drop jigs tipped with a single waxworm or spike are effective. For larger fish, introducing someone to the excitement of line peeling from the spool of a tip-up with a large baitfish can get a young angler hooked for life. I have great memories of my son and my niece pulling large bass and Chain Pickerel through the ice at one of our favorite spots.

The next time you are presented with a snow day and the ice conditions are safe, consider spending it on the water, especially if you take a young one along. ☐

Gear Up for Adventure

Don't Forget to Wear Your Life Jacket!



Check state park ice conditions:



dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/WinterReport/Pages/default.aspx



A Bluegill caught while ice fishing on a snow day.



It's a good idea to have your gear organized and ready, so when a snow day happens, you can take full advantage of spending time ice fishing with young anglers.



From Field to Fly

by Tyler Frantz

photos by the author

If there's anything more rewarding than catching a fish on a fly tied with your own two hands, it is doing so with fly tying material salvaged from game animals you've harvested afield.

Opportunities are plentiful in Pennsylvania to pursue both big and small game ranging from deer, bear and turkeys to waterfowl, upland game birds, rabbits and squirrels. The state also boasts an abundance of furbearing species with hunting or trapping seasons running from fall through winter for qualified license holders.

These animals' fur and feathers may provide excellent fly tying material imaginative anglers can put to good use on the tying vise. Utilizing these natural fibers helps maximize the resources of the harvest, prove highly effective on the trout stream and provide a sense of satisfaction for a full circle experience.

Wing feathers from successful goose hunts offer useful biots—the short, stiff fibers found along the leading edge of a bird's primary wing feathers. These thick strands are good as tails for stoneflies and antennae or legs in various insect imitations. Wild turkey wing feathers, although a bit thinner, can serve the same purpose.

The flank feathers of wood duck drakes are highly prized as speckled wings on dry flies for various fly patterns. Tiers pay top dollar for these feathers, but waterfowl hunters get them for the cost of a hunting license.

For those plying upland fields instead of staking out secluded creeks, the long rump feathers of ring-necked pheasants provide ample supply for one of the most versatile nymph patterns, the pheasant tail, which mimics mayfly nymphs under the surface.

Bird hunters searching laurel flats, timber stands and clearcuts for ruffed grouse can take advantage of the mottled shoulder feathers just off the wings to tie enticing soft hackle wet flies to run on tandem rigs in early spring.

Successful small game hunters can fill their crockpots with wholesome stews and also restock their fly boxes with

useful materials. Squirrel tails can be dried, dyed and used in a variety of streamer patterns.

The pelts of cottontail rabbits can be used as dubbing for Hare's Ear Nymphs. Rib with gold and add a bead head for a little flash, and you have a spectacular all-purpose seeking pattern that imitates multiple macroinvertebrates.

Deer hunters can save their mid-winter hides and stack the hollow furs to tie Deer Hair Caddis and Stimulators with the addition of colored hackle fibers. These are many anglers' go-to dry flies for native Brook Trout streams. The chance to catch our state fish on flies tied with hair from our state animal is a truly special opportunity.

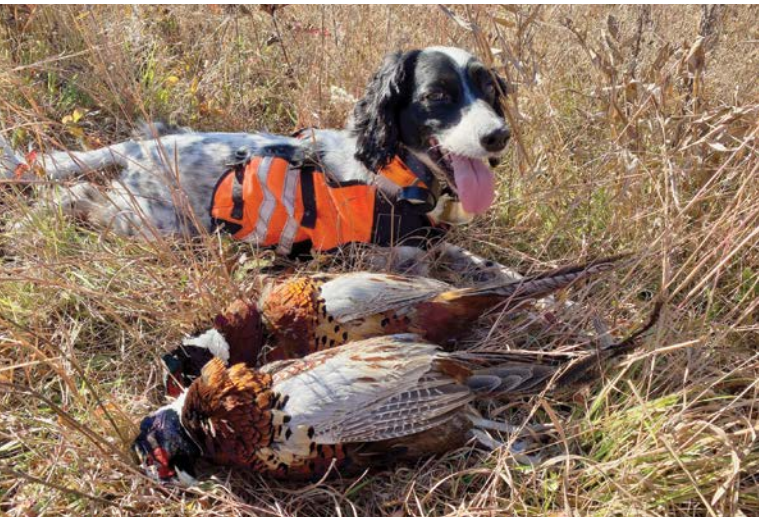
Fur takers can also make good use of their trapline harvests. With depreciated fur market prices, sacrificing a pelt or two of certain species can provide enough tying material to last a lifetime.

For instance, I accidentally overfleshed an opossum hide last season, which ruined its pelt during the drying process. Instead of discarding it, I trimmed down the under fuzz and left a few guard hairs to produce buggy-looking dubbing to tie Walt's Worms, which imitate sow bugs and scuds. They work great on limestone streams, especially when adding hot spots and bodies ribbed with tinsel.

A friend makes his own dubbing from fox and raccoon fibers that are combed out of his hides before stretching the pelts on drying boards. He rolls the fur into little balls, quarters it and runs it through an electric coffee grinder for extra fine dubbing.

Don't overlook muskrat as a quality dubbing material for super small nymphs. The natural colors of the fur range from tan to gray to brown when wet, and trout love them.

Take advantage of Pennsylvania's abundance of game to pursue afield and their natural fibers that extend their contributions all the way to the trout streams. ☐



A successful day of bird hunting can provide a years worth of tying material such as the feathers of these ring-necked pheasants to be used on Pheasant Tail Nymphs.



Soft hackle flies can be tied from a variety of game bird feathers such as the ruffed grouse.



Stimulators and Deer Hair Caddis dry flies can be created from the buoyant hide of our state animal, the white-tailed deer, which has hollow hairs in the wintertime.



The author used the hide of an opossum he trapped to tie Walt's Worms—flies that mimic sow bugs and scuds in limestone streams.



The natural-toned fibers of dense muskrat fur makes excellent nymph dubbing.

FISHING *Daily* FOR A YEAR

photo-Marilyn Black

by Marilyn Black

Ponder this—What if you could go fishing every day? Tony Sobina, Oil City, Venango County, has been living that fishing dream since April 13, 2020. His brother, Christopher Sobina, asked him, “How come you’re not fishing every day now that you’re retired?” Tony decided to see how long he could keep up the consecutive days. The answer is still pending, because when this article went to press, his more than 3-year fishing streak was still uninterrupted.

Even prior to his retirement as a machinist, Tony Sobina was an avid catch-and-release angler, fishing 4 or 5 days a week. A long-time member of the Keystone Fly Fishers chapter of Fly Fishers International, Sobina helped instruct youth and adults in fly casting and tying flies. Now, age 69, he fishes every day of the week in every season, usually with flies he tied.

“I have a passion for it. I never really get tired of it, because techniques are always changing,” said Sobina. “It’s actually a game of problem-solving and trial and error. I love dry fly fishing, wet fly fishing, streamer fishing, and for the last few years, I have been tightline fishing or Euro nymphing.”



photo-courtesy of Tony Sobina

Tony Sobina, Venango County, caught and released this 27-inch Brown Trout while fishing in Potter County.

Sobina keeps an angler’s calendar tracking weather and water conditions, where he fished and fish caught. “I target trout (I prefer wild trout) 90% of the time, plus steelhead. While fly fishing, I caught steelhead, suckers, trout, Bluegills, Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Yellow Perch and lots of chubs,” said Sobina. He doesn’t necessarily catch a fish

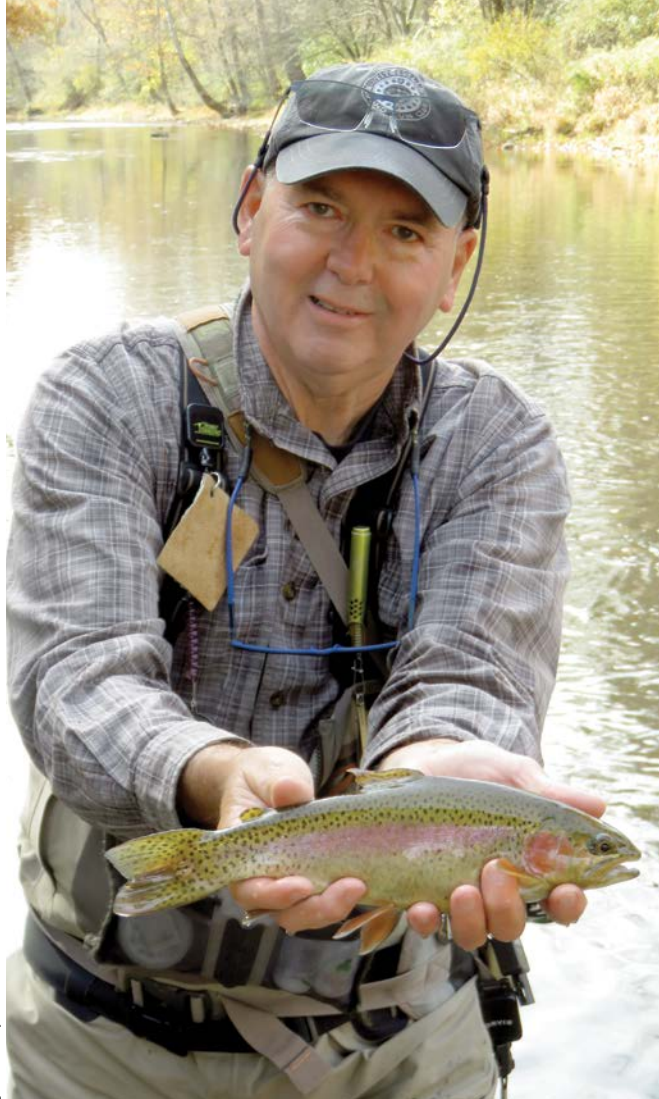


photo-Marilyn Black

Tony Sobina caught this Rainbow Trout while fishing Sugar Creek, Venango County, in October.

Sobina describes his average fishing duration as 2 hours. “If the fish are active, I’ll fish down to dusk.” So far, his briefest fishing time (30 minutes) was in February after he hooked an 18-inch Rainbow Trout. While fighting it, his reel fell off. Sobina waded into icy water, retrieved the reel, and caught and released the Rainbow Trout. Having worn knee-high rubber boots, he was soaked to his waist, and he headed home.

Sobina’s daily fishing challenge puts him on local waters such as Oil Creek, Sugar Creek, Neshannock Creek and tributaries of the Allegheny River. Recently, he has been exploring Upper Pine Creek, Potter County, and Spring Creek, Centre County. He looks forward to fishing limestone waters in Cumberland Valley, where there are good Trico hatches.

When local streams are frozen, Sobina concentrates on fishing tailwaters and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission’s Delayed Harvest Artificial Lures Only areas. At the ice edge of an eddy, he breaks the ice, has a hot chocolate and then returns to fish using tightline nymphs with stonefly or midge patterns. He advises cold water anglers to use barbless hooks and, with a pair of hemostats, unhook the fish beneath

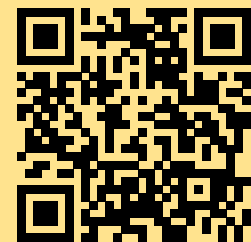
the water surface, so the trout’s gills are not exposed to freezing air.

There was one day when Sobina wasn’t certain he’d go fishing. “I woke up with an extremely painful kidney stone issue. My doctor instructed me to go to the Emergency Room immediately. On the way to the hospital and in pain, I stopped and fished a stream, where I caught one wild Brown Trout and missed two. At the hospital, I was admitted and my physician performed surgery at 3:30 p.m. that afternoon.

I was home by 7:00 p.m. and fished the next morning,” said Sobina.

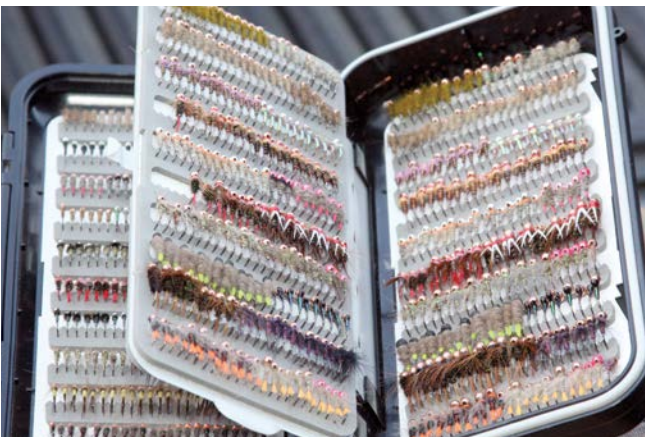
“Every day fishing is an education. Enjoy the good fishing days and laugh at the not so good moments,” said Sobina. ☐

Video interview with Tony and Chris Sobina:



youtube.com/c/PAfishandboat1866

photo-Darl Black



A peek into the fly box Tony Sobina carries with him while fishing for trout.

on every outing. If he had to pick his top three flies for catching trout, those would be the Adams, Prince Nymph and Walt’s Worm.

Sobina fishes by himself most of the time. His brother or a friend may join him occasionally. “My typical fishing partners are eagles, mergansers, herons and otters,” said Sobina.



2024 FISHING LICENSES

Annual licenses are valid from December 1, 2023, through December 31, 2024. WHILE FISHING, your license must be, either in digital or print form, upon your person and provided upon the request of an officer.

Code	Type of Fishing License or Permit	Age	Cost*
101	Resident (Annual)	16-64	\$27.97
104	Senior Resident (Annual)	65 & up	\$14.47
105	Senior Resident (Lifetime)	65 & up	\$86.97
108	1-Day Resident (not valid March 15–April 30)	16 & up	\$14.47
119	Disabled Veterans Reduced Resident License **	16 & up	\$2.97
120	Disabled Veterans Resident Lifetime **	16-64	\$0.00
121	Disabled Veterans Senior Lifetime **	65 & up	\$0.00
122	Disabled Veterans Resident Annual License **	16-64	\$0.00
123	National Guard/Armed Forces Reserve **(NGAFR) (Resident)	16 & up	\$2.97
124	Prisoner of War **(POW) (Senior Lifetime)	65 & up	\$2.97
125	Prisoner of War **(POW) (Resident)	16 & up	\$2.97
102	Non-Resident (Annual)	16 & up	\$60.97
113	Non-Resident PA Student (Annual)	16 & up	\$27.97
106	1-Day Tourist *** (not valid March 15–April 30)	16 & up	\$31.97
103	3-Day Tourist	16 & up	\$31.97
107	7-Day Tourist	16 & up	\$39.47
110	Voluntary Youth Fishing License (Annual)	Less than 16	\$2.97
109	Mentored Youth Permit	Less than 16	\$0.00
150	Trout Permit	16 & up	\$14.97
033	3-Year Senior Lifetime Trout Permit	65 & up	\$40.97
053	5-Year Senior Lifetime Trout Permit	65 & up	\$66.97
063	10-Year Senior Lifetime Trout Permit	65 & up	\$131.97
151	Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$9.97
151SLE	Senior Lifetime Lake Erie Permit	65 & up	\$9.97
152	Combination Trout Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$20.97

* Includes issuing agent fee of \$1.00 and \$0.97 transaction fee. Excludes licenses or permits issued at \$0.00. **Must have been deployed for 60 consecutive days (NGAFR). Initial license sold only at County Treasurer and PFBC offices (POW, Disabled Veterans Reduced & NGAFR). ***Includes Trout and Lake Erie permits, not valid March 15–April 30.

2024 MULTI-YEAR FISHING LICENSES

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


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

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



2024 SEASONS, SIZES and CREEL LIMITS

COMMONWEALTH INLAND WATERS-2024

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTE: For bass regulations, power dam pools and recreational dam pools on the Susquehanna River and navigational dam pools on the Ohio River drainage are "rivers." It is unlawful to conduct a fishing tournament on the North Branch, West Branch or main stem of the Susquehanna River that allows a tournament angler to harvest bass.

NOTE: Stocked trout waters are closed to fishing from February 19 to the opening day of the regular trout season in April, unless included in the **Stocked Trout Waters Open to Year-Round Fishing Program**.

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

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

day of trout season the following year. The exception is those stream sections designated as both Class A Wild Trout Streams and Stocked Trout Waters (Miscellaneous Special Regulations). These stream sections are closed to fishing from February 19 until 8 a.m. on the opening day of trout.

**** **BAITFISH** includes all forms of minnows; suckers, chubs, Fallfish, lampreys; Gizzard Shad 8 inches or less; and all forms of darters, killifishes and stonecats (except those listed as threatened or endangered species). Legally taken gamefish may be used as bait. It is unlawful to use or possess goldfish, comets, koi and Common Carp as baitfish while fishing. **FISHBAIT** includes crayfish, crabs and the nymphs, larvae and pupae of all insects spending any part of their life cycle in the water.

For all crayfish species, the head must be immediately removed behind the eyes upon capture unless used as bait in the water from which taken.



Wintertime River Walleye Tactics

by Jeff Knapp

photos by the author

As water temperatures cool down in late fall and early winter, Walleye action on Pennsylvania's rivers heats up. From early December through the season's temporary closure in mid-March, fishing for river-dwelling Walleyes is often at its best.

With fish confined to select habitat niches that provide optimal conditions over the cold months, there's the strong potential to be fishing over high concentrations of Walleyes. Expect to find Walleyes in areas of slack or reduced current. Examples include deeper holes tucked behind natural barriers such as rock bars, outflow areas below dams, and near the mouths of incoming streams and smaller rivers.

Deeper, sheltered pools allow Walleyes to escape the stronger force of the river's current, particularly when river flows are up. Low current conditions permit the fish more freedom of movement. On river sections that feature dams, expect to find good numbers of Walleyes stacked below the dam provided there's not too much current. Fish will gather in spots off the main current such as the mouths of lock chambers on navigational dams. Dam outflow areas often provide good options for shore anglers. Junction holes—spots where incoming streams join the main river—can be Walleye magnets as these areas tend to hold a lot of baitfish. It's common for foraging Walleyes to move into the shallows during the evening twilight period providing fast action for both shore and boat anglers.

In general, wintertime river Walleye anglers deal with fish displaying two distinct attitudes. "Daytime" fish that are somewhat neutral yet catchable. And, "evening" fish, ones actively feeding. Obviously, this can differ on a



day-to-day basis. Sometimes, you attack them during the day, especially during cloudy conditions. The night bite doesn't always happen, but it's a good guideline.

Boat anglers have the edge for daytime Walleyes, as the fish tend to be in deeper water less accessible to shore anglers. A typical scenario is a sheltered pool below a rock bar formed at the mouth of an incoming stream. The prime Walleye holding water stretches about 75 yards, and a mild current seam is found within it between the main river and the pool, as well as a slight back current that runs tight to the bank. It's likely that Walleyes are scattered within this area.

The boat angler can seek out fish by drifting through the pool, paying particular attention to the current seams. If the depth is over 15 feet, it's often best to simply hang the presentation vertically, placing it within inches of the bottom. In shallower water, short casts can be best.

Generally, if the fish are somewhat active, they will respond to a bucktail jig, twister tail grub and even a Ned Rig. Often, though, it takes a jig and minnow or metal



Blade baits are often effective when Walleyes ignore other jig style presentations.



Walleyes often respond to colorful bucktail jigs. Bucktail jigs can be fished with or without the addition of minnows.



Twister tail grubs are effective when Walleyes are aggressive.

blade bait to get a response. Be willing to experiment with various lure options and colors as Walleyes may be particular.

The game often changes as the sun gets ready to set. During the twilight period, these same negative-to-neutral Walleyes make short feeding binges into the shallows. This can be toward the shoal at the mouth of a smaller stream, an ideal scenario for the shore angler, or up into the mouth of a larger incoming stream or river, which can be better for the shore or boat angler depending on the size of the area. Edges of shelter holes—such as where the depths give way to the shallows—can attract Walleyes, locations often better accessed by boat.

Twilight Walleyes can be approached with the same options, but add a couple more to the mix, such as suspending jerkbaits and soft swimbaits. Present these lures slowly, with just enough movement to keep them working. Often, the biggest bites come on larger profile baits.

Naturally, the availability of wintertime river Walleye fishing is dependent on the weather during this time of the year. But, even during harsh winters, there is usually a window of opportunity that occurs during the last few weeks of the season. □



Suspending hard jerkbaits work best during twilight or cloudy days, and may result in bigger Walleyes.



EARLY PENNSYLVANIA LURE MAKERS

by Alex Zidock Jr.

photos by the author

The town of Dowagiac, Michigan, sprang up in about 1831 when William Renesten dammed the Dowagiac Creek and made Mill Pond to harness energy for his mill. About 50 years later, James Heddon tossed a hand-made fishing lure into Mill Pond and caught several fish. His “Dowagiac Casting Bait” is credited with being the first commercially successful fishing bait sold in the United States. The Heddon company is still producing fishing lures. “I’ve collected other things,” said Larry Ott, Northampton County, “But, what fascinated me about fishing lures is the history. And, there’s a rich history of lure makers right here in Pennsylvania. From tinkerers to major manufacturers, some have changed the course of fishing history.”

Ott is a retired biology teacher, fly angler, and for 30 years, an avid collector and curator of fishing tackle. His extensive collection enhances his primary residence and spills over into a spacious outbuilding, where walls are covered with an assortment of categorized lures. There are also many boxes and stacks of lures on the floor and in filing cabinets, waiting for his attention.

“The Yale reels were made in Strasburg, Pennsylvania, in the 1920s. They all have a unique, utilitarian tulip design on

their sides. They also manufactured several bigger saltwater reels,” said Ott.

“Another old Strasburg company was the Pequea Company. They date back probably to the early teens or 20s, and they made many wooden plug-type lures. They made a lure called a Quillbee. It had some weight on it, and it had a feathery tail. They were manufactured up to the early 1950s,” said Ott.



Larry Ott, collector and curator of fishing tackle, shows a reel made by the York Company, Lancaster County, with unique tulip design side cutouts to aid in drying old silk fly lines.



“Elwood Fries was a painter from Nazareth, Pennsylvania. But, he decided to make a few of his own fishing lures. And, they’re all unique. They’re what collectors call folk art, because they were manufactured in small numbers,” said Ott.

“You may be interested in Ward Bond out of Brodhead. He manufactured what looked like a Lazy Ike, but he had a unique paint job on them. If you were to see some of them, there’s no question that this is a Bond lure,” said Ott.

“The other Pennsylvania lure that comes to mind is the Pocono Minnow. A lot is still to be learned about the Pocono Minnow. Some say the earliest ones were made by Shipley out of Philadelphia,” said Ott.

“The Cedar Bait Company, Allentown, made lures, including one that looked similar to the Pocono Minnow,” said Ott.

While many fishing related items were made in Pennsylvania, some had significant ties to specific regions. “There were two early fly reels manufactured by Meisselbach in Newark, New Jersey, in the early 1900s for

a tackle shop in New York owned by William Mills and Son, which are essential to collectors interested in old Pennsylvania tackle. Mills had many clients who fished the famous Pocono Mountains streams, so he stamped two different styles of fly reels. One was the “Cresco” and the other the “Brodhead,” and he shipped them to Pocono area tackle shops suggesting anglers buy them, because that’s what they should be using on those streams,” said Ott.

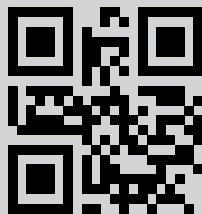
Ott goes to flea markets twice a week, and he fly fishes in local streams. Every summer, he and his wife head to Cody, Wyoming, for a month of fishing places like Yellowstone, Shoshone and other prime area waters.

“I used to be able to go to a flea market and pick up an entire tackle box with a pile of old lures for ten dollars. Now you go, and some people overcharge, because they really don’t know the value. Occasionally, I still find a good deal,” said Ott.

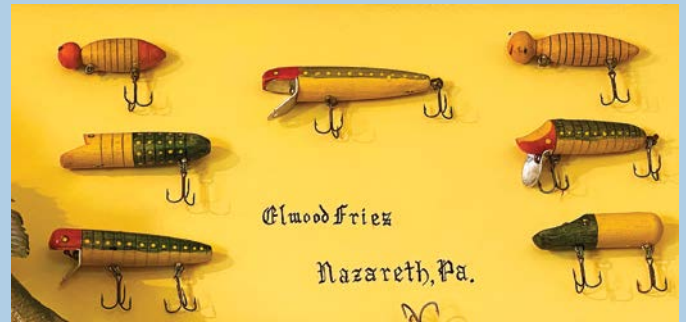
If anyone is interested in collecting old fishing lures, Ott recommends joining the National Fishing Lure Collectors Club (NFLCC). “I’m a life member. The NFLCC says their goal is to foster an awareness of fishing tackle collecting as a hobby and to assist members in the location, identification and trading of vintage fishing related equipment,” said Ott.

“If you find your grandfather’s old tackle box and want information about fishing-related items, e-mail me at fishlott@frontiernet.net. I’m always interested in adding to my collection,” said Ott. □

NFLCC:



nflcc.org



Elwood Fries’ handcrafted fishing plugs are considered folk art because of their limited production.



A lure made and offered by the Pennsylvania Fish Commission celebrating 125 years in 1991.



Ott shows an original large Pocono Minnow next to a box of smaller Pocono Minnows made specifically for fly fishing. Much is to be learned yet about the production of the Pocono Minnow.



Welcome to NORTHCENTRAL PA!

by *Linda Stager*

photos by the author

Home base to the only wild elk herd in the state and the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon, northcentral Pennsylvania's rugged region mixes an abundance of forest with small town life. It's home to 1.2 million acres of public land to explore, known as the PA Wilds, and thousands of wild and native trout streams! Rich in history, the ancient mountains here give rise to the sacred headwaters of three of Pennsylvania's largest rivers—Allegheny River, Clarion River and Susquehanna River.

Visitors are treated to unspoiled natural beauty, vast tracts of forest and public land, dark skies, and some of the best watersport-related activities in the state. Waterfalls and ravines, lush valleys, scenic rivers, diverse wildlife, and a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities await.

A mixture of adventures will satisfy the angler or boater in the family and the rest of the household. Whether you are an experienced angler or boater or just learning, we have something for you. Come explore the region and see what adventure awaits you, too.

Treasured trail

Pine Creek Rail Trail: This award-winning 62-mile former railroad path runs between Wellsboro, Tioga County, and Jersey Shore, Lycoming County. It's flat, scenic and an easy way to access one of the best flowing waters in Pennsylvania.

The trail closely follows Pine Creek for most of its route. Pine Creek is superb for fishing and paddling. Even better, several sections of the river are stocked with trophy-size trout. Anglers

love Pine Creek for its bass, occasional Walleyes, trophy-sized Fallfish and trout populations.

In the spring, Pine Creek can turn into a raging challenge for adventurous paddlers with whitewater sections approaching Class II rapids.

In winter, the rail trail is groomed for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

Walk the trail to your favorite fishing spot and look for wildlife along the way. If you want to travel farther on the trail,





The Pine Creek Rail Trail runs between Wellsboro, Tioga County, and Jersey Shore, Lycoming County, and has great views of Pine Creek.



Pine Creek Gorge at Leonard Harrison State Park, Tioga County.

hop on your bicycle and ride to that perfectly secluded spot to fish. Primitive campgrounds, bathrooms and picnic areas are spaced along the trail.

The trail is well groomed and perfect for all ages and abilities. Pedal assist e-bikes are allowed, but check regulations for limitations.

Wellsboro, near the northern trailhead, is a quaint Norman Rockwell type town. Victorian gaslights line its historic Main Street boulevard. Wellsboro is a fun place to shop, experience a vibrant arts community, eat and stay. Events are scheduled throughout the year including the Victorian themed Dickens of a Christmas festival.

Popular waterways

Besides Pine Creek, other stand-out places to explore include:

Bald Eagle State Park and 1,730-acre Foster Joseph Sayers Reservoir: The Centre County park offers camping, warmwater fishing, paddling, birding and powerboating. It is one of the few unlimited horsepower lakes in the state. Fish for bass and panfish. Enjoy the scenery and the nesting bald eagles.

Consider a stay at The Nature Inn, the park's lakeside hotel, voted the #1 eco-lodge in the nation. The inn often hosts educational and nature-related programs with a focus on sustainability and conservation.



To travel farther on the Pine Creek Rail Trail, hop on your bicycle and ride to that perfectly secluded fishing spot.



Wellsboro, near the northern trailhead of Pine Creek Rail Trail, is a quaint Norman Rockwell type town.



Stocking Brown Trout

In October, a unique family-friendly Punkin' Chunkin' Fall Festival takes place at Bald Eagle State Park.

West Branch Susquehanna River: The Susquehanna River is Pennsylvania's longest river and is a testament to how conservation and partnerships bring an unhealthy river back to life. The 228-mile West Branch Susquehanna River travels through several counties before it joins the North Branch Susquehanna River, the 2023 River of the Year, in Northumberland County.

There are notable towns and small cities along the river route. Visitors have many opportunities to enjoy amenities such as lodging, restaurants and shopping. Hyner, Clinton County, hosts one of Pennsylvania's famed trail runs, the Hyner View Challenge, in which hundreds of runners traverse the unique and wild terrain along the river. Lock Haven hosts a powerboat racing regatta every Labor Day and another great trail run, the Megatransect, where hundreds of runners maneuver through wild areas just outside of town. Williamsport hosts the Little League World Series every August, and Renovo hosts the PA State Flaming Foliage Festival in October. Susquehanna State Park, Lycoming County, has a boat launch, and the water is deep enough for waterskiing.

Susquehanna Greenway:



susquehannagreenway.org

Fishing opportunities abound in this huge watershed with crappies, trout, Fallfish, Muskellunge, bronze-back Smallmouth Bass and White Suckers. The Clean Water Institute at Lycoming College has documented 42 different species of fish in the West Branch Susquehanna River.

The Susquehanna Greenway website supplies several paddling itineraries as well as maps and guides to boat launch access sites.

Fishing Creek: Fishing Creek, a tributary to Bald Eagle Creek, Clinton County, is popular for trout fishing. Much of the stream supports a robust population of wild Brown Trout. A small section of the stream meanders through the small town of Mill Hall. Through town, this section of stream is stocked with trout and is a popular destination on the first day of stocked trout season. Many



Williamsport, Lycoming County, hosts the Little League World Series every August.

anglers prefer the “Narrows”, a 5-mile section of water between Lamar and Tylersville supporting a population of beautiful wild Brown Trout. Fishing Creek has cold water that rarely gets warmer than 65 degrees F.

Spring Creek: Spring Creek, Centre County, is an infamous catch and release trout fishing destination. It’s great for fly fishing and easy creek access. Spring Creek Canyon is especially beautiful with its walking/biking path along the stream connecting two of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission’s state hatcheries. This is one of the most densely populated trout streams in Pennsylvania. It may have more trout per mile than anywhere in the state!

Penns Creek: Penns Creek, Centre County, is Pennsylvania’s longest limestone stream. It starts at Penn’s Cave & Wildlife Park, a great family attraction that visitors access by boat. The stream has been called by experts some of the best fly fishing on the East Coast. It has 35 miles of fishable waters.

Fishing Creek, Spring Creek and Penns Creek may be exciting for the avid fly angler, but these locations also hold a special attraction for families. They are just minutes from State College, Penn State, shopping, diversity and great restaurants. There are entertainment opportunities for the whole family. It’s known as “Happy Valley” for good reason. Be sure to stop at the Penn State Berkey Creamery when in town.

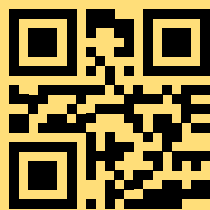
Best-loved adventures

If your family enjoys camping, consider staying at a state park campground near a fishery.

Among our favorites are:

- **Lyman Run State Park**, Potter County: A beautiful place for campers who want to combine fishing, paddling and ATV trail riding.
- **Hills Creek State Park**, Tioga County: The lake has a strong bass population, is easy to fish from shore, has a pretty lakeside hiking trail and has a wide range of camping options.
- **Little Pine State Park**, Lycoming County: This park is just a short drive from Pine Creek Rail Trail, has a

Penn’s Cave & Wildlife Park:



pennscave.com

45-acre lake, and offers an off-the-grid experience with limited Wi-Fi and cell phone coverage.

- **Sinnemahoning State Park**, Cameron and Potter counties, and **Kettle Creek State Park**, Clinton County: Both offer a combination of fishing, camping and hiking as well as a chance to glimpse wild elk that live in the area.

Winter fishing pursuits:

Ice fishing reigns in this region. Programs are held on these lakes.

- **Lake Nessmuk and Hills Creek Lake**, Tioga County, freeze over more quickly than most locations in the state and are found near small town amenities.
- **Black Moshannon State Park**, Centre County, holds ice longer than many places and is close to State College and other larger communities.

The northcentral region of Pennsylvania is full of opportunities for family-friendly adventures that combine watersports with a sense of wilderness and opportunities for the whole family.

Pick your adventure and a time to visit. Encourage and support passion for the outdoors. ☑

Points of interest

- Benezette, Elk County (Elk Capital of Pennsylvania)
- Cherry Springs State Park, Potter County (some of the best stargazing in PA)
- Kinzua Sky Walk, Kinzua Bridge State Park, McKean County
- Pine Creek Gorge “The Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania”, Wellsboro, Tioga County (National Natural Landmark)
- Punxsutawney, Jefferson County (known for its famous Groundhog Day celebration)
- World of Little League Museum and Little League World Series, Williamsport, Lycoming County



Lyman Run State Park, Potter County is a beautiful place for campers who want to combine fishing, boating and ATV trail riding.



A view of the dam at Kettle Creek campgrounds, Kettle Creek State Park, Clinton County.

Popular waterways

Northcentral Region

- East Branch Clarion River
- Fishing Creek
- Foster Joseph Sayers Reservoir
- Hammond Lake
- Hills Creek Lake
- Lake Nessmuk
- Penns Creek
- Pine Creek
- Spring Creek
- West Branch Susquehanna River



Northcentral PA state parks

Northcentral Region:

- **Bald Eagle State Park**, Centre County
- **Bendigo State Park**, Elk County
- **Black Moshannon State Park**, Centre County
- **Bucktail State Park Natural Area**, Cameron and Clinton counties
- **Cherry Springs State Park**, Potter County
- **Clear Creek State Park**, Jefferson County
- **Colton Point State Park**, Tioga County
- **Cook Forest State Park**, Clarion, Forest and Jefferson counties
- **Denton Hill State Park**, Potter County
- **Elk State Park**, Elk and McKean counties
- **Hills Creek State Park**, Tioga County
- **Hyner Run State Park**, Clinton County
- **Hyner View State Park**, Clinton County
- **Kettle Creek State Park**, Clinton County
- **Kinzua Bridge State Park**, McKean County
- **Leonard Harrison State Park**, Tioga County
- **Little Pine State Park**, Lycoming County
- **Lyman Run State Park**, Potter County
- **McCalls Dam State Park**, Centre County
- **Milton State Park**, Northumberland County
- **Ole Bull State Park**, Potter County
- **Parker Dam State Park**, Clearfield County
- **Patterson State Park**, Potter County
- **Penn-Roosevelt State Park**, Centre County
- **Poe Paddy State Park**, Centre County
- **Poe Valley State Park**, Centre County
- **Prouty Place State Park**, Potter County
- **Ravensburg State Park**, Clinton County
- **R. B. Winter State Park**, Union County
- **Sand Bridge State Park**, Union County
- **Shikellamy State Park**, Northumberland County
- **S. B. Elliott State Park**, Clearfield County
- **Sinnemahoning State Park**, Cameron and Potter counties
- **Sizerville State Park**, Cameron and Potter counties
- **Susquehanna State Park**, Lycoming County
- **Upper Pine Bottom State Park**, Lycoming County

Regional designations are based on Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Law Enforcement regions.

Capture your memories

Photos keep memories fresh, so here are some tips to make the most of your adventures.

If you don't have a "real" camera, no worries. That cell phone in your pocket is a great camera. We photographers say, "The best camera to use is the one you have with you."

Don't forget to take photos of the people you are with. We all love landscape scenery photos, so take that photo. Then, invite your friends and family to join the scene. If you are making memories, part of the fun is taking those cheesy photos. You will cherish them more in the long run.

Pay attention to the light. Move around, so the sun—or light source—is shining on your subject's face. Use a similar tactic for scenery photos. Keep the light behind you if you can.

Learn a little—or a lot—about composition. There are some simple rules about where you place your subject. The "rule of thirds" is a good place to start. On the other hand, most of these rules are fun to break, so do what looks good to you, first and foremost.

Last, put the phone or camera down once in a while. Sometimes, it's good to immerse yourself in the activity at hand. If that fish is jumping on the end of the hook, you can take that photo or you can smile, cheer wildly, and not take the photo. Don't forget to enjoy your trip, not just document it.

Most of all, have fun!



Pine Creek Gorge, Tioga County

artwork-Michael Kensinger

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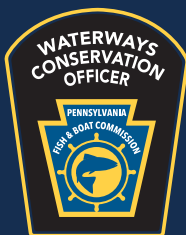
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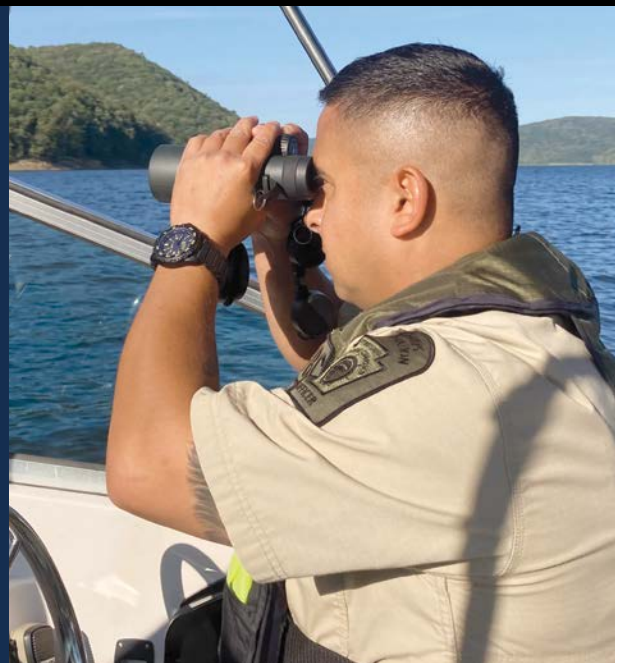
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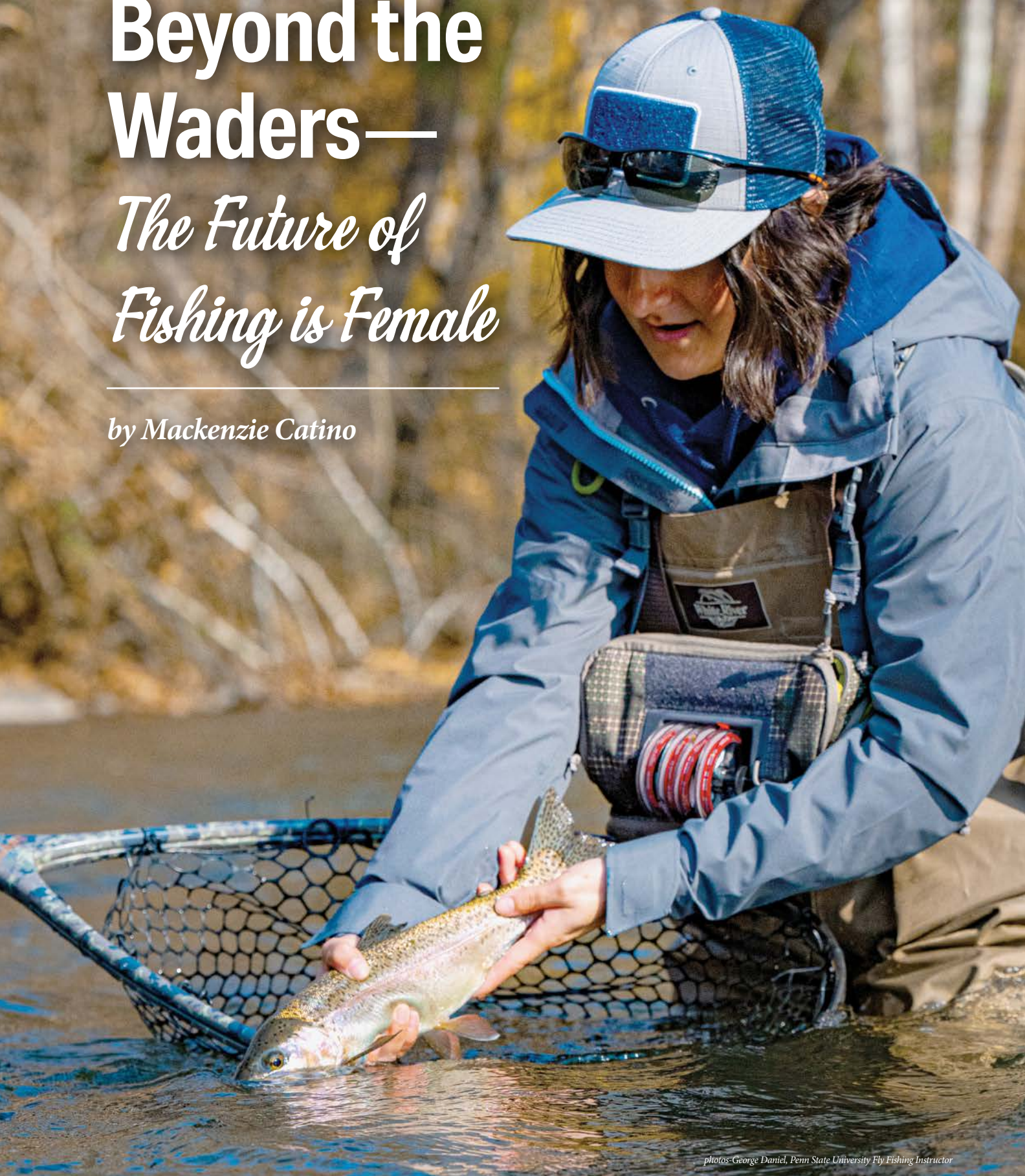
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Beyond the Waders—

The Future of Fishing is Female

by Mackenzie Catino



photos: George Daniel, Penn State University Fly Fishing Instructor

In Pennsylvania, of all licensed anglers, just 36% are female, an increase of only 4% from the last decade. I am proud to be part of that statistic. Women are beginning to redefine the sport of fishing as we know it, and we are seeing new influence and enthusiasm on a traditionally male-dominated sport. Being a woman in the fishing industry is a unique and rewarding experience. Yet, it also comes with its own set of challenges, as it is about breaking the traditional stereotypes as well as proving that women are just as good as male anglers.

I have been fishing since childhood, a skill my dad taught me as soon as I could hold a rod. I have spent my entire life in the fishing community. But, it wasn't until I grew up that I realized that being a female in this sport would force me to face some unexpected challenges. From struggling to find the gear that is both functional and fits the female body to feeling judged when walking into fly shops that I may not be taken seriously, to just being scared to ask questions for fear I will look uneducated. Women are pushing the boundaries of what it takes to be an exceptional angler, evidenced by the powerful women in this sport.

Amidea Daniel, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Northcentral Region Outreach and Education Coordinator, has been working in the industry for decades. "Surround yourself with women. It is a fantastic time to be a female angler. Women are starting to form connections statewide, nationwide and worldwide", said Daniel. Daniel explained that the fishing and boating industry brings women friendships, encouragement, empowerment and overall builds community. Local and state organizations are making big gains when it comes to educating women of all levels in the sport. Organizations such as Lancaster Fly Girls and United Women on the Fly (UWOTF) are taking the time to bring female anglers together in a safe environment to learn about the sport and find people who love it just as much as they do. Daniel is now seeing women who go through these

programs as participants return as instructors, a positive for the future of the industry. She also emphasized that we should be lifting up the next female anglers.

Kelley Kirsch, UWOTF Resource Coordinator and founder of Lancaster Fly Girls, shared that as a female angler, she feels empowered, confident and stronger on the water. Maintaining the conservation of the fish and our waterways is crucial to keeping this sport alive.

I am lucky enough to go to Penn State and was introduced to KINES 04 and 93, Principles of Fly Tying and Fly Fishing for Trout and Enhancing Mastery in Physical Activity, both led by instructor George Daniel. These classes gave me the opportunity to learn alongside dedicated male and female anglers to improve our skills in fly fishing. The most valuable lesson, though, was how much the younger generations are breaking that stereotype of the sport being male-dominated. In a class of 75% male anglers, not one of them has ever looked at me or my female anglers as "competition" but as resources to learn alongside, improving my overall outlook on the sport. George Daniel has been a huge part of my continued success as a female angler, from perfecting the skill of fly fishing to simply being more confident in my abilities when fishing with my fellow anglers. Penn State's Bass Fishing Club has also been breaking social norms. These anglers educated me on the basics of the sport and empowered me to join their fishing community without hesitation or judgment.

It is important to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions that women are making to the sport of fishing, from beginners to professionals. The stories and experiences of women in fishing serve as a testament to their resilience, dedication and urge for community within the industry. Empowering women in fishing not only benefits us individually but has positive impacts on generations to come, as well as the overall success of the sport. So, next time you see a female angler, appreciate her passion and dedication to the sport. She earned it. ☐



Younger generations are breaking the stereotype of fishing being a male-dominated sport. Male and female anglers are learning alongside each other and improving their skills together.



WHY DO WE FISH?

Getting to the **HEART** of Fishing

by *Christian A. Shane*

photos by the author

“We fish to remember, and we fish to forget. We fish when we’re happy, and when we’re sad. We fish to bond with friends and family, or to be alone. Whatever our motivation, no matter where we are on the success spectrum, fishing makes our lives better in ways we never could have imagined.” Robert U. Montgomery, Why We Fish: Reel Wisdom From Real Fishermen (2013).

February marks a reminder to wear red and raise awareness that heart disease is the leading cause of preventable deaths in the United States. As you begin your new fishing season in 2024, examine your own heart health and what keeps you coming back to the water year after year.

Last year, I had a heart scare. Not only did it force me to focus on my own heart health, but it also prompted me to start a blog called “Fly Pulse” to get to the heart of my own passion for fishing. I prompted the question “*Why do you fish?*” to my fishing friends. *Do any of these reasons ring true to your angling hobby and habits?*

Fishing provides time to unplug. Sometimes, the best medicine and therapy for your heart is to get away from work, distractions, technology and the busyness of life. Explore the boundless wonders that Pennsylvania’s watersheds have to offer with a therapeutic escape. Whether you enjoy time alone or with others, take efforts to disengage with the stressors of everyday life, reflect, and just be around nature and water.

Fishing allows for exercise. If you’re like most anglers, you retreat from the beaten path and explore settings away from others. This act takes us walking, hiking, biking, climbing and trail blazing through the woods of the Commonwealth and beyond. Whether you’re taking a solo trip or with others, give your heart the gift of physical activity on your next fishing adventure.

Fishing takes you to beautiful places. Before the internet, I researched the robust *Pennsylvania Atlas & Gazetteer* and Charles R. Meck’s familiar *Pennsylvania Trout Streams and Their Hatches* to find spots in Pennsylvania that were tough to find on my own. My research took me Brown Trout fishing near Poe Paddy State Park, native Brook Trout fly fishing on Kinzua tributaries, Smallmouth Bass fishing on the



Fishing takes you to new places.



Fishing allows us to spend time with family and friends.

Sinnemahoning Creek, bass fishing on Raystown Lake and many more amazing locales. Visiting old fishing spots and locating and exploring new water is invigorating.

Fishing offers challenges. Spending time pursuing your quarry sometimes takes problem solving, flexibility and a willingness to change under varying conditions. Every day brings a new opportunity to the water. Whether it's weather-related, high/low flows, finicky fish or pressured waters, fishing calls on your skills to adjust your fishing tackle and gear to match. Figuring nature out is a reward all on its own.

Fishing enables quality time with friends and family and creates memories. When we're fishing with others, the shared experience is what it's all about for me.

Whether casting on a lake during an evening sunset, experiencing a spontaneous hatch, seeing fish boiling at the surface, getting skunked together or the catch of a lifetime, we'll smile and remember these times.

I hope 2024 offers you time to reflect, time to reconnect and time to do what your heart desires. The next time your family or friends wonder why you're heading to the stream, let them know fishing is good for the heart. ☺



Sometimes, the best heart therapy is taking a walk in the woods to your favorite fishing spot.

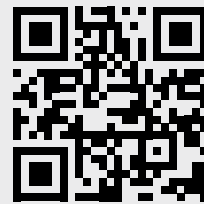
February is American Heart Month! ❤️

Heart Health Tips:

- Balance calories with physical activity.
- Reach for a variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Choose whole grains.
- Include healthy protein sources, mostly plants and seafood.
- Use liquid non-tropical plant oils.
- Choose minimally processed foods.
- Subtract added sugars.
- Cut down on salt.
- Limit alcohol.
- Keep this in mind wherever you eat.

Adapted from the American Heart Association

American Heart Association:



heart.org



Skunked on Panfish

by *Braden Eisenhower*

photos by the author

Relying on seasonal markers, like when my grandmother's dogwood tree blooms—usually by mid-April, help set the fishing calendar. At that point, I expect water temperatures to be nearing 60 degrees F and the prespawn Crappie bite to be in full swing, especially on smaller waters.

But, don't wait for the telltale signs of spring to indicate great panfish fishing. Instead, let your nose tell you when to go.

The pungent aroma of the striped skunk hangs in the air at winter's end, but it is not because they

are emerging from a winter's nap. They don't hibernate. Their increased activity aligns with their mating season.

For me, the February and March smell of skunk sends me back to my youth, my dad and when black and white crappies, Bluegills, Pumpkinseeds and Yellow Perch occupy shallow backwater areas.

The days are still short. Skies are famously gray. Hats and gloves may be necessary. Yet, fish are tight to shore.

The shallow movement away from deep water wintering areas begins well before lakes thaw. By the time ice-out occurs, expect to find fish in shallow vegetation and less than 6 feet of water.

Most years, ice thickness is unfit for safe ice fishing in the southern portion of the state. Anglers



Cold water panfish fishing requires a no-nonsense approach that relies on live bait and subtle soft plastics.

can seek out green vegetation that hasn't decayed in the mild climate. Green vegetation will give off more oxygen and contain microorganisms, the main food source for fish in cold water.

Sun penetration plays a major role in warming backwater areas like coves and bays. The best spots, usually those along shorelines, get direct sunlight during the warmest period of the afternoon, offering water temperatures several degrees warmer than surrounding areas.

Small lakes are generally warmer than larger reservoirs. Pay attention to regulations; many small waters participate in trout stocking programs and have a brief closed season prior to opening day.

Variations of a micro jig-and-float work best throughout the "skunk bite." Water temperatures fluctuate in the 40-degree F range with warm pockets exceeding 50 degrees F. Slow-falling jigs that can suspend indefinitely stay in the strike zone long enough for weary panfish to become active and strike.

In late February, shortly after ice-out, I tip exclusively with waxworms. Maggots, mealworms or redworms are popular alternatives. As the weeks progress (and my live bait stockpile depletes), I incorporate biodegradable plastics. If the bite is especially hot, I switch to a tiny marabou jig.

Marabou jigs really shine in late March and into April as bug hatches are more prevalent.

Although I reserve traditional horizontal presentations for warmer waters, they have their

moments in the early season. On windy days, when float rigs move too fast to be effective, a suspending jerkbait casts well and mimics disoriented minnows.

I stay away from action-tail plastics in cold water. However, I'm still swooning over micro Ned Rigs after experimenting last season. Fished through the water column (Midwest finesse style), the no thrills, horizontal "swim" of the subtle plastic is deadly for a variety of panfish and gamefish.

When skunk odor triggers your olfactory receptors, dust off those ultralight lures and head for open water. ☐



Black Crappie



Yellow Perch



SHOULD YOU BE USING CIRCLE HOOKS?

by *Darl Black*

photos by the author

One afternoon some years ago, I accompanied two local anglers who had the reputation for using live bait to catch Smallmouth Bass from French Creek. I was interested in their technique. Together, we collected hellgrammites from the creek, which they presented to the stream's Smallmouth Bass.

Using regular J hooks with live bait, they caught bass after bass with the hellgrammites. But, the fish were often hooked deep in the throat or gills. The result, a trail of injured and dying Smallmouth Bass floating downstream below each spot they fished.

It sent me on the hunt for a better live bait hook. I recalled reading about how circle hooks reduce hooking injuries to gamefish. I ordered some and began experimenting with them for Smallmouth Bass and Walleyes in French Creek and the Allegheny River.

After a season of testing, I confirmed that when the hookset is employed properly with a circle hook, there is a better probability of the hook penetrating

the corner of the jaw than anywhere else in the mouth or throat, reducing serious damage to the fish.

There is a learning curve to fishing with circle hooks. Here are some tips for success:

- When fishing flowing water for Walleyes and Smallmouth Bass, use circle hooks with hellgrammites, crayfish and various baitfish up to 5 inches long.
- A simple drift rig works best with a hook tied at the terminal end of the line and one to three splitshot about 12 inches up the line.
- With the rod tip held at the 10 o'clock position, keep a semi-tight line to the bait, so you can feel when a fish picks up the bait.
- As soon as a fish begins moving off, make sure the rod tip is pointed at the fish.
- Let the fish take up the slack line until the line is tight. Then, raise the rod upward with a calculated slow motion pull.
- Keep lifting until you feel the fish on the line. Due to the inward curve of the point, a fish rarely comes loose from a circle hook.

With a J hook, the hook point may embed anywhere in the mouth or throat when an angler uses a standard hookset. The turned-in point of a circle hook will slide into the corner of the mouth, where



Al Bell employs a slow motion upward pull of the rod to ensure a solid hookup of a Largemouth Bass in the corner of its mouth.

the point pivots and embeds around lip tissue. The fish hooks itself.

With the hook in the jaw, it is easy to remove. Grabbing the hook with small bent nose pliers makes extraction easier.

Initially, you will likely miss some fish on circle hooks until you get the hang of the hookset—or rather lack of hookset.

Al Bell, a fishing friend who favors live bait for just about all species, encourages the use of circle hooks. “Circle hooks mean less gut hooking and greatly improve chances of lip-hooked fish. When using 3-inch to 6-inch baitfish for Walleyes, I go with a 1/0 or 2/0 circle. For Largemouth Bass and Smallmouth Bass, a #2 to #4 is preferred. When targeting panfish or trout, I drop to a #6 or #8.”

Bell’s circle hook technique has landed large Channel Catfish, Muskellunge and Northern Pike. ☐

➔ *Circle hooks (top row left to right): size #6 through size 2/0. Bottom row: another style of circle hooks, size #6 through 1/0.*



When it comes to fishing hellgrammites, circle hooks work best. Smallmouth Bass of all sizes go crazy for hellgrammites, leading to many small bass being caught. Circle hooks save undersized Smallmouth Bass from hooking injuries.



A crayfish on a circle hook, ready to fish.





PREPARING FOR SPRING STEELHEAD

by Ariadne Capotis photos by the author

Preparing to chase spring steelhead in Erie County is a splendid winter affair. Maps can be consulted, flies can be tied or bought, bags should be reorganized, daydreams celebrated, and the weather forecast consulted. Preparation is the key to success, but anglers should be prepared to face unruly weather from day-to-day, and surprisingly un-steelhead-like fish on the other end of their line.

Visit weather.gov, and peruse the various links to gain a general sense of the weather forecast. Use the forecast to dress accordingly and bring spare clothes, just in case. It's always best to have more layers than needed. Wading for spring steelhead can be dangerous. If flows are consistently up, be safe and use a wading staff. Studs or metal bars on the soles of wading boots are commonplace. Polarized sunglasses serve as eye protection and one's Magic Mirror into the waters being fished. Polarized sunglasses reduce the glare on the surface of the water and allow better sight at what lies and swims beneath the surface. Contacting a local bait, tackle or fly shop in Erie County is another option for checking the forecast. Be polite, ask about the fishing conditions in the region, discuss fly selection and find out what flies they have in stock. Consider purchasing a few local flies and stashing one for the fly tying desk.

Next, consider what fish may hit the landing net. Springtime is exciting, because there is a mix of steelhead in the creek systems. Some of the fish are "spawned out" and exiting the streams. Many steelhead anglers refer to these as "dropbacks." In addition to dropbacks, fresh dime bright steelhead continue to ascend the streams with each serious precipitation event. However, the pushes of steelhead will not be as generous as during the fall. In between these two mainstays of spring steelhead are stocked smolts, the future of Steelhead Alley. Smolts are one part of the life cycle of steelhead, and they are approximately 7 inches in length when stocked. If anglers begin catching smolt after

smolt, they ought to be as gentle as possible handling and releasing them and consider moving away from them. Smolts will eventually swim into Lake Erie, spend 2 to 4 years eating and maturing, before making their first spawning attempt as adult steelhead.



A Sucker Spawn with diamond braid material in Sucker Spawn orange will hook steelhead, Smallmouth Bass and, oddly enough, suckers.

There are two other species of fish spring steelhead anglers should be prepared to meet. The first species is the Smallmouth Bass, a native fish and one that is naturally self-sustaining in Lake Erie (non-stocked). Anglers will also likely encounter suckers, such as the Golden Redhorse, which are a native species that is completely self-sustaining, too. There are also other species of suckers and carp that ascend the tributaries to spawn in spring.

For spring steelhead, San Juan Worms, Pheasant Tail Nymphs, Soft Hackle Hare's Ears and other classic trout flies are good fly choices. If the water is dirty, consider tying on a streamer such as a Little Precious, Whitlock's Hare Sculpin or some other minnow-mimicker—using 2X leader or heavier, working the streamer through the chosen drift zone. A Sucker Spawn with diamond braid material in Sucker Spawn orange will hook steelhead, Smallmouth Bass and, oddly enough, suckers. In addition to terminal tackle, bring water or a hydrating sports drink, snacks, and a can-do attitude. Review these steps, and have a wonderful time chasing springtime steelhead in Pennsylvania. ☐



Steelhead smolts are approximately 7 inches long when stocked.



COLD WATER BOATING

by Ross Robertson

photos by the author

Fishing during the cool water months can reap the rewards of better fishing and much less traffic on the water. The catch is that when it's cold, nothing seems to work as well. Colder temperatures can challenge equipment and our brains. Here are six things to consider to make your next cold water boating trip safer and more productive.

Salt

A thin layer of ice can be as slippery as it gets and can make for treacherous conditions at the boat ramp. Look out for boaters who haven't drained their trailers at the water line. The water coming off their trailer up the ramp can be a hazard. A small bag of salt or ice melt sprinkled onto the ramp goes a long way. Sand, cat litter or a section of chain link fence can also be used to give you traction for getting out at an icy ramp.

Jump starter

Batteries can be temperamental in the best of conditions. The cold exacerbates battery problems. Carrying a lithium jump starter designed to revive dead batteries can be a lifesaver. These new age starter boxes are smaller, lighter and pack a much bigger punch than previous technology.

Tow rope

If you have ever hit a patch of ice and slid down a ramp, you know a tow strap can be your best friend. In certain circumstances, you will need assistance to get out of trouble. A synthetic tow strap is recommended, because it is more compact and safer in the event the rope breaks or becomes unhooked. Attach synthetic shackles to each end that are easily accessible.

Clothing

Life jackets are vital for safety and are legally required to be worn from November 1 through April 30. But, take another step for safety and invest in the right clothing. Cold water shock is a major factor in fatal accidents during this time of the year. Wear a flotation suit that is designed for ice fishing for warmth and safety. Other

items such as hand warmers, neck gaiters and ski goggles can make the day much more enjoyable.

Float plan

A float plan tells someone exactly where you are going and what time you expect to return. While this is always a good thing to do when you go boating, it is especially important in the cold water season, where both cold water and less traffic on the water complicate emergencies.

Bilge pump

Time, fishing line and other small fishing items tend to destroy bilge pumps. Carrying an extra cartridge for your pump that has quick connect fittings is beneficial. In some cases, exchanging pump cartridges may not be possible or the problem may be bigger. So, carrying an external bilge pump with a long hose and alligator clips to hook to a battery can save the day. This will allow you to quickly get water out of your boat or assist in an emergency.



A jump starter, tow rope and extra bilge pump are just some equipment to consider when boating during cold water seasons to make your trip safer and more productive.

While many factors can lead to trouble when boating, these six items are a good start in ensuring you will be safer on your next cold water boating adventure. ☐

A photograph of a kayaker in a red kayak navigating white water rapids. The kayaker is wearing a red helmet and a dark jacket. The water is turbulent and white with foam. The background shows a forested shoreline under a bright sky.

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 to April 30.

Regulations:

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

photo-Anna Topper



photo-PFBC archives

A DECADE OF CHANGE

by Laurel Anders

Boating Director

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

Last year marked a decade of Pennsylvania’s cold water life jacket wear requirement. The regulation went into effect January 1, 2012, and requires everyone onboard boats less than 16 feet long and all canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards to wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket while underway or at anchor from November 1 to April 30.

Many people consider the late fall through early spring season as the “off” time of year for boating. In fact, cooler air and water temperatures drive many boaters off the water shortly after Labor Day. Fewer boaters on the water generally means a lower number of boating incidents during this timeframe. However, a closer look at the data from 2002 to 2011 reveals the percentage of deadly recreational boating incidents in these colder months was disproportionately higher than the rest of the year. And, most of the incidents occurred in small, unstable boats—mostly less than 16 feet long—and canoes and kayaks. This data analysis caused the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission to consider a strategic approach to saving lives.

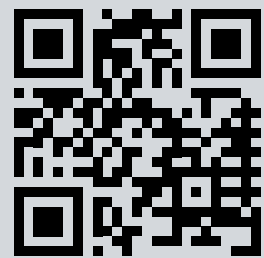
Cold water shock was a major factor in nearly all fatal incidents. Cold water shock causes an involuntary gasp (often resulting in the aspiration of water), hyperventilation, breathlessness, and a reduced ability to control breathing and swim. Wearing a life jacket greatly increases a person’s chance for survival in cold water. Most importantly, a life jacket keeps

a person’s head above water. Depending on its design, a life jacket may provide insulation against frigid water and air. The added buoyancy (or lift) of a life jacket allows a person to preserve precious energy to focus on next steps for survival rather than frantically treading water. With fewer boaters on the water in the cooler months, a life jacket helps extend the amount of time for a person to be rescued before they become exhausted or hypothermic.

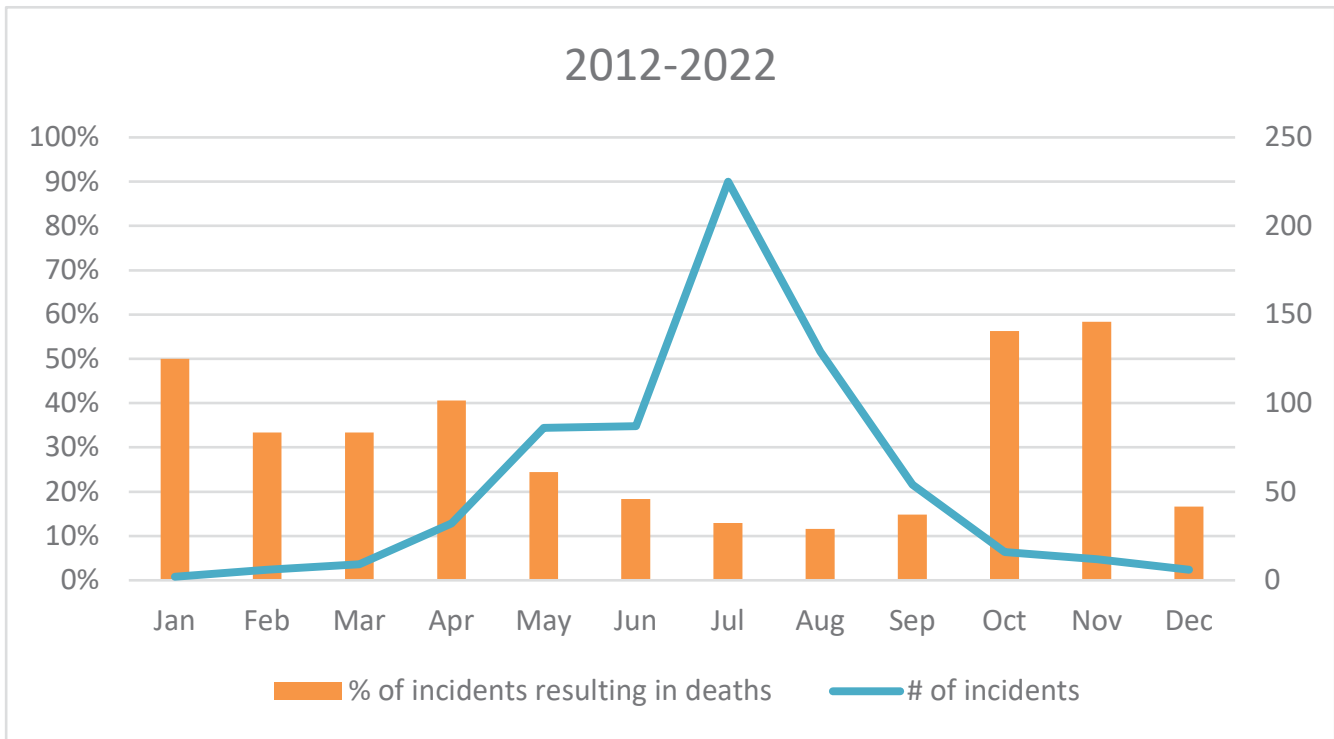
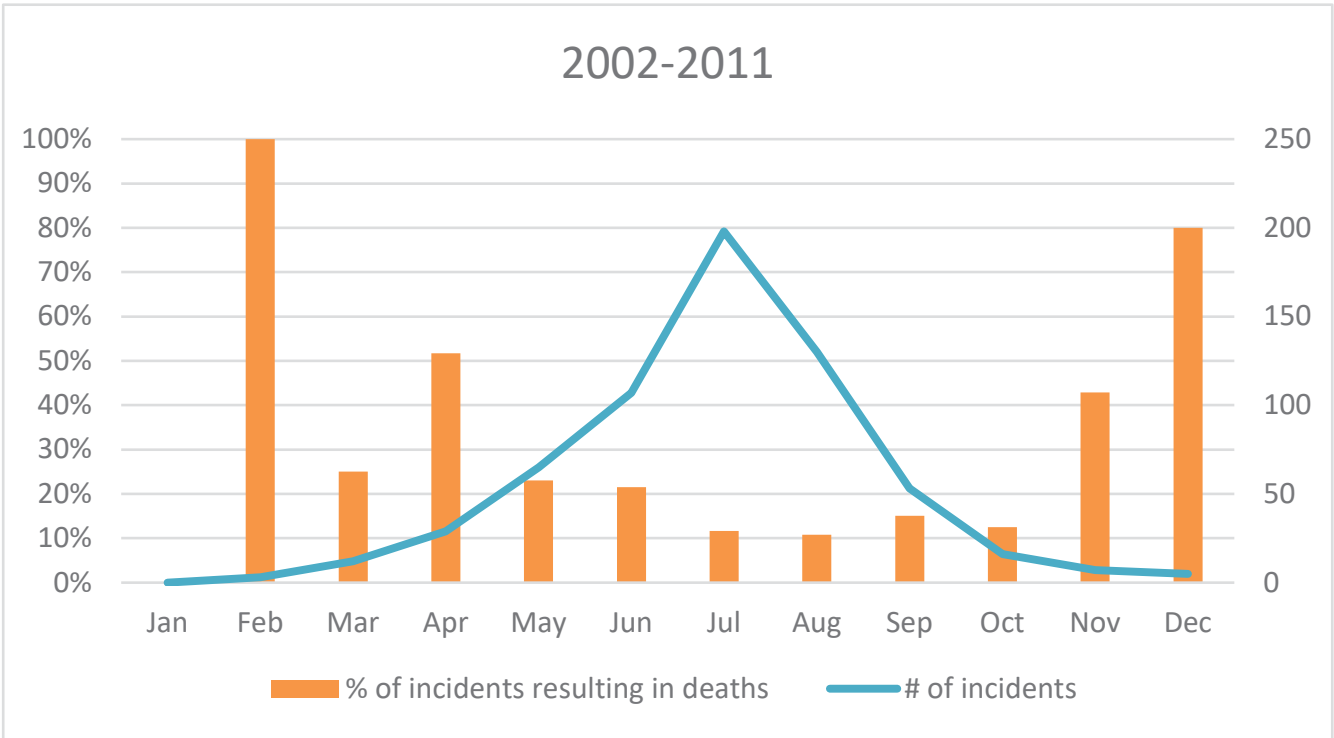
With these benefits in mind, the Commission crafted the cold water life jacket wear requirement to help save boaters’ lives. Now, 10 years since the requirement went into effect, the Commission has sufficient data to analyze its impact. Prior to the regulation, the percent of boating incidents resulting in deaths from November 1 to April 30 averaged 58%. While the number of incidents increased in the following 10 years after the regulation was enacted, the average of the incidents resulting in deaths dropped to 39%. The cold water life jacket wear requirement saves lives!

Every year, more lives could be saved if boaters would wear life jackets. Boating incidents can happen to anyone and in all types of water conditions. Wearing a life jacket at all times is the number one action boaters can take to prevent drowning. ☐

Boating regulations:



fishandboat.com



The number of boating incidents (blue line) peaks during the height of the boating season when more boaters are on the water. However, the percent of incidents resulting in deaths (orange bars) is generally highest from November to April due to the effects of cold water. Once the cold water life jacket wear requirement was enacted, the orange bars were cut nearly in half, indicating the percent of accidents resulting in deaths decreased.

Source: United States Coast Guard Recreational Boating Accident Report Database





FISHING *and* FLINGING

by Bob Frye

photos by the author

I never expected to get hooked. We had rented a cabin for a week at French Creek State Park, Berks and Chester counties, one summer. With a son in school in New Jersey and another working in Philadelphia, it was a convenient place to gather and fish for Bluegills and Largemouth Bass, paddle kayaks and paddleboards, hike, sit around the fire, and just have fun.

We had such a good time we returned the next summer.

This time, though, there was something new on the agenda—disc golf. It's played like regular golf but with Frisbee-type discs—some of them distance and fairway drivers, some of them mid-range discs and putters—replacing clubs and balls. Courses often have 18 “holes” with baskets perched on poles and hung with heavy chains.

French Creek State Park has a course meandering through woods and open areas near Hopewell Lake. We saw other people playing there the previous year. This year, my older son wanted to give it a try.

I'll admit to being skeptical. I never play “regular” golf, because every day described as being good for that seems better for being on the water. But, my son had invested in a backpack's worth of discs, meaning there was enough gear to go around, and we would still have plenty of time for on-the-water fun, too.

We indeed spent a lot of time paddling—French Creek has two lakes, 22-acre Scotts Run Lake and 68-acre Hopewell Lake—and fishing, with Hopewell Lake giving up enough fish to keep us coming back for more every evening.

➔ Fifteen Pennsylvania state parks have disc golf courses, and 14 of those parks also offer opportunities to paddle and fish.



In disc golf, players have to get their discs into baskets. Each basket represents a “hole” on the course. Courses often have 18 “holes.”





Just as there are different fishing lures for different fish and conditions, there are also different discs for different parts of the course. “Putt and Approach” discs are used when close to a basket. Driver and fairway discs are used coming off the tee.



Many parks with disc golf courses have lakes with stocked trout.

But, we played lots of disc golf, too.

Now, have you ever tried sending a disc 300 feet or more, through trees, around doglegs, perhaps over a water hazard and into a basket? In three throws, or maybe four, you try to make par. It’s sweet when you send a disc downrange on a beeline, so it almost hums. It’s humbling when, like me, you spew discs every which way like an open choke shotgun sprays pellets. But, it’s that experience, alternately exciting and infuriating, that makes the game addicting. So, these days we often pack both tackle boxes and backpacks of discs. I have my own discs now when we visit parks also offering fishing and boating.

UDisc, an app that offers information on more than 14,000 disc golf courses worldwide, ranks Pennsylvania as the 11th best state for places to play, with more than 336 courses. About half are 18-hole courses.

There are 15 Pennsylvania state parks—all but one of which also have lakes, rivers and/or streams—with courses. Many county parks around the state do, too, like Sweet Arrow Lake, Schuylkill County, Deer Lakes Park, Allegheny County, and Mammoth Park, Westmoreland County. You can golf at each while also fishing for everything from stocked trout to warmwater species.

Generally, all these courses are open to the public, free of charge. You can carry around a few discs or a bunch, just as you can fish with a tackle box stocked with a little gear or a lot. And, unlike regular golf courses, you don’t need to reserve tee times. You just show up and play.

These days, we are fans of fishing and flinging, often in the same places on the same day. ▢

For more information:



[dcnr.pa.gov/Recreation/
WhatToDo/DiscGolf/
Pages/default.aspx](https://dcnr.pa.gov/Recreation/WhatToDo/DiscGolf/Pages/default.aspx)



[discgolf.com/disc-golf-
education-development/
how-to-play-disc-golf/](https://discgolf.com/disc-golf-education-development/how-to-play-disc-golf/)

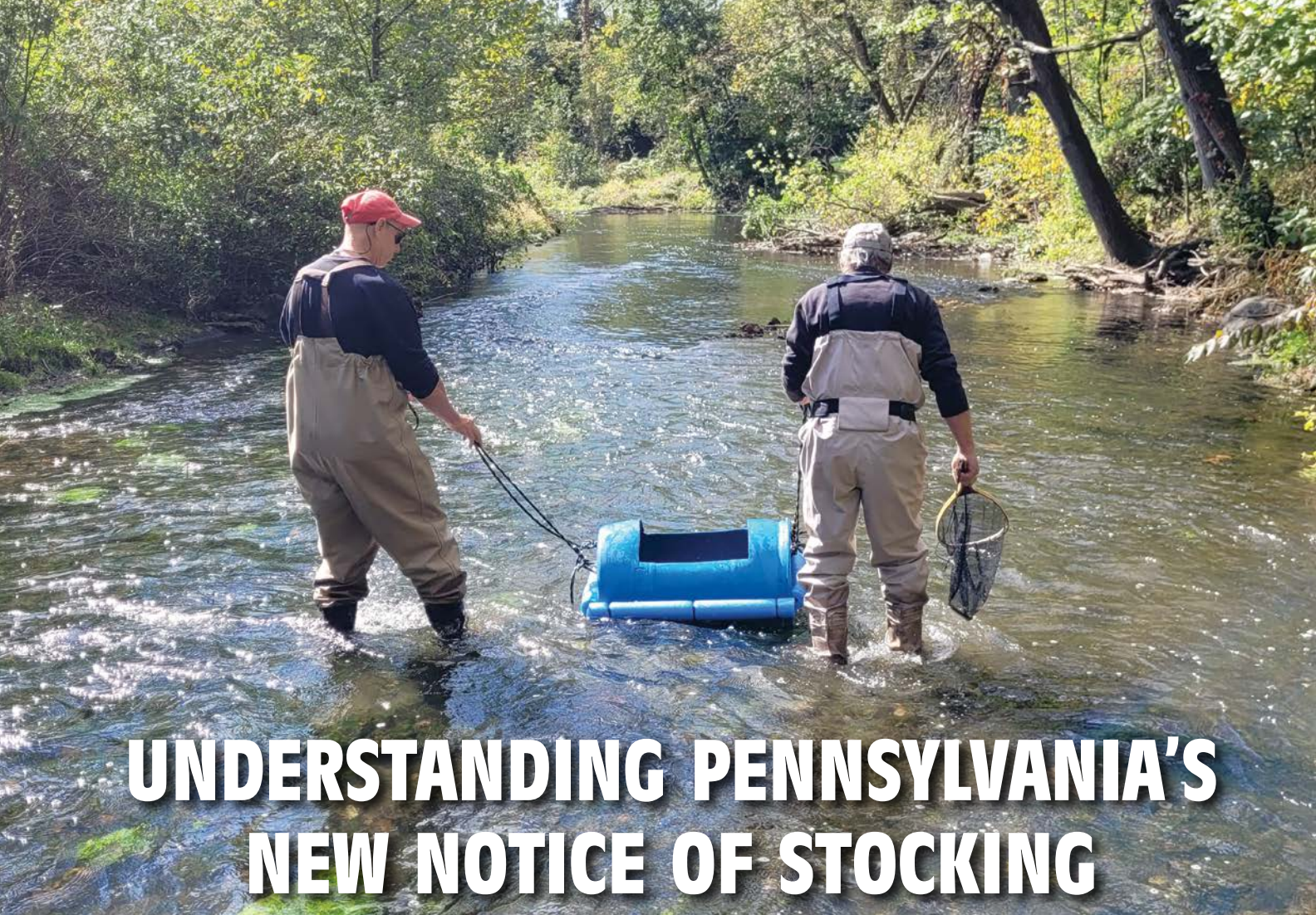


photo-Mike Parker

UNDERSTANDING PENNSYLVANIA'S NEW NOTICE OF STOCKING

by Mike Parker
Communications Director
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

Whether you are part of a local conservation club that purchases thousands of trout for an annual fishing rodeo, a landowner who likes to catch bass and Bluegills from a nearby lake and bring them back to your private pond, or just an angler who occasionally uses live bait and releases your unused minnows into the stream, there is a new regulation you should know.

Beginning January 1, 2024, as part of an updated section of the Pennsylvania Code (Title 58, Chapter 71a) that deals with the propagation, introduction and transportation of fish in Commonwealth waters, every angler who moves live fish from one water to another is now required to submit a Notice of Stocking (NOS).

To be clear, the NOS is not a request for permission—it's simply letting the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) know about your legal stocking activity.

There are already long-standing regulations that govern which types of fish are allowed to be stocked

in Pennsylvania, and which are prohibited. This list, "Species by Watershed Approved for Open System (Flow Through) Propagation and Introduction," can be viewed on the PFBC website and specifies, by watershed, which species are suitable for stocking, and which are not, based on invasive qualities and threat of disease.

However, until now, Pennsylvania has been among just a handful of states that had no method of tracking most stocked fish, which left our waters increasingly vulnerable to the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species and pathogens. Additionally, without knowing when and where many private stockings were occurring in both public and private waters, PFBC biologists were missing valuable data that could help them form the most effective fisheries management plans that benefit fish and anglers alike.

With the new NOS requirement now in effect, please consider how this regulation may impact you, and take time to familiarize yourself with the new regulation.

How does it work?

The NOS is required for anyone who introduces live fish into any Pennsylvania water, public or private, with the exception of fish baited on a hook for

fishing purposes. You do not need to submit an NOS if you are placing fish into a closed system backyard ornamental pond, such as a koi pond, which does not contact any other surface waters and is not used for fishing or raising baitfish.

Completing the NOS is a fast, free and user-friendly process that can be done with a few clicks on your smartphone or computer using the **HuntFish.PA.gov** website or by filling out a .pdf form and submitting it by e-mail or traditional mail. You will need to submit the NOS form prior to every stocking event, large or small, or you may submit one form to report multiple stockings occurring within the same calendar year on the same body of water.

Information required for the NOS includes your name, address, any associated organization (such as a conservation club), stocking locations and dates, fish species, sizes, and approximate number or pounds of fish. If you purchased the fish from a commercial producer, the name and address information for the hatchery or dealer should also be included.

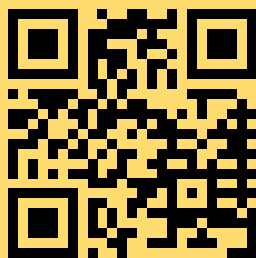
When you submit your NOS electronically, you will receive a confirmation receipt from the PFBC through e-mail. An electronic or hard copy of your completed NOS is required to be present at the time of a stocking event and should be presented to a Waterways Conservation Officer upon request. Failure to submit an NOS before stocking fish may result in a summary citation and fine of \$150.

Protect the resource

For most anglers, this new regulation will have little impact, unless you plan to move live fish from one water to another. Anglers who use live bait such as minnows or Bluegills can avoid submitting an NOS and help protect other fish by properly disposing of their unused bait instead of releasing it into the water at the end of their fishing adventure.

For more information on the NOS requirements and a video guide to completing the form, visit fishandboat.com. 📄

NOS requirements:



fishandboat.com

Pick Up Pennsylvania— A solution to waterway pollution

No angler wants to see trash while trying to land a large bass. We all know pristine waters are healthier for fish, birds, other wildlife and people, too. Participate in Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful's Pick Up Pennsylvania program and make a difference in your local waterway. You can help by picking up litter that you encounter while fishing or boating along your favorite waterway or by organizing a cleanup of larger items that have been dumped into the water or along the shoreline. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful partners with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, PennDOT and Keep America Beautiful to provide free trash bags, gloves and safety vests to registered participants, as supplies last. Additional community improvement events can include community greening and beautification, special collections and anti-littering education events.

Registration begins in January. Register your event at keeppabeautiful.org, choose "Programs", then "Pick Up PA". Questions can be answered by Michelle Dunn, Pick Up Pennsylvania Program Coordinator, at 877-772-3673 ext. 113 or mdunn@keeppabeautiful.org.



Schuylkill River, Chester County

More information and to register:

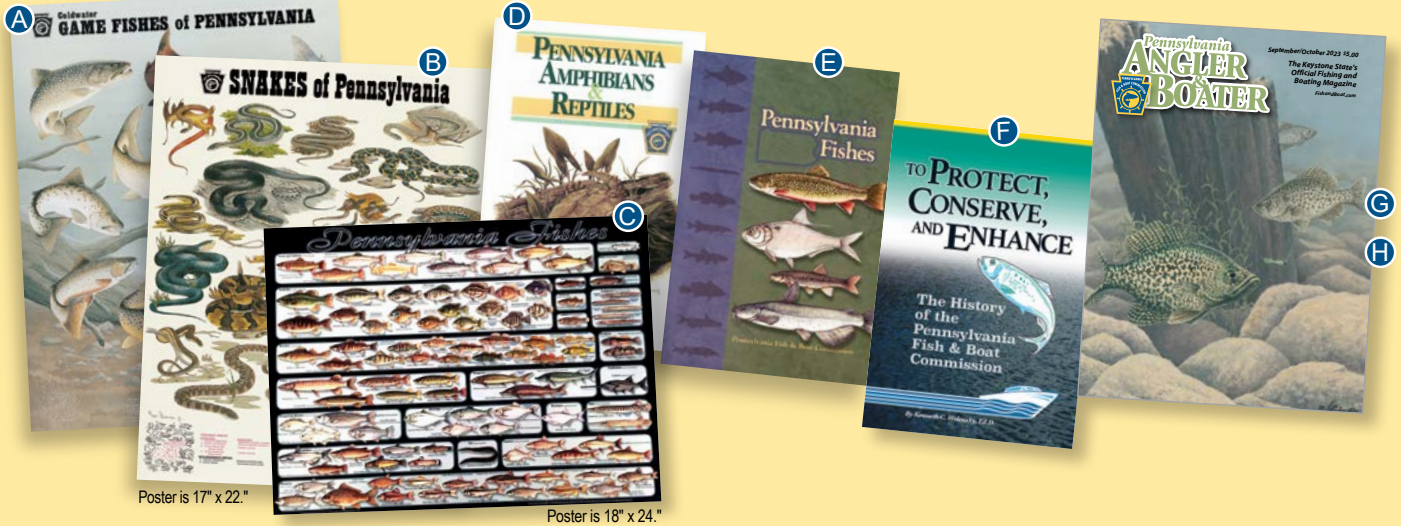


keeppabeautiful.org

Poster is 17" x 22."

Books are 6" x 9."

Magazines are 8.25" x 10.88."



Poster is 17" x 22."

Poster is 18" x 24."

Price Quantity Subtotal

A Set of: Coldwater Fishes, Coolwater/Warmwater Fishes, Migratory Fishes, Miscellaneous Fishes, Panfishes, Forage Fishes (6 posters)	\$13.99	_____	_____
B Set of: Frogs, Salamanders, Snakes, Turtles (4 posters)	\$12.11	_____	_____
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D Pennsylvania Amphibians & Reptiles Book (172 pages)	\$14.34	_____	_____
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(required for electronic magazine access)

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

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H Pennsylvania Angler & Boater Magazine Three-Year Subscription (18 issues) \$48.97 _____

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SOCIAL SHORTS



Reel in the New Year with resolutions worth hooking onto! Dive into Pennsylvania waters and cast away your limitations in every season.

Let 2024 be the year you explore new angler horizons and unforgettable outdoor adventures with family and friends.



(January/February): Michelle Talbot caught this steelhead while fishing at Twelvemile Creek, Erie County.



(March/April): Grady caught this golden Rainbow Trout on Indian Creek, Fayette County. He enjoys fishing with his dad and uncle.



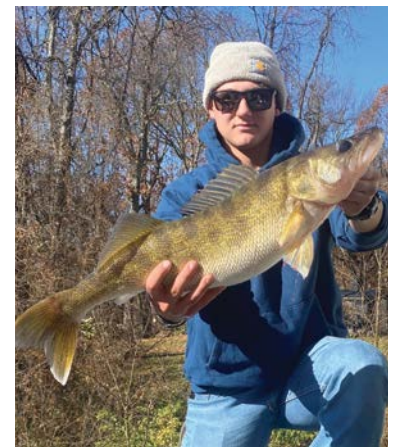
(May/June): Jaziah and his sister Jaylah enjoy the day catching fish in Shohola Lake, Pike County.



(July/August): John and Justin Powell, father and son, caught this Smallmouth Bass near the confluence of French Creek and the Allegheny River.



(September/October): Rafal and Emily Wlazlo caught these carp while fishing in the Delaware River. They travel from Long Island, NY, because they love to fish in PA!



(November/December): Shawn Kramer caught a 30½-inch, 11.64-pound Walleye in the Allegheny River.

EXPLORE PA WATERS

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



explorepawaters.com

PFBC Social Media:



fishandboat.com/socialmedia

CAST & CAUGHT



Gavin Reed, age 16, caught and released this 46-inch Muskellunge while fishing the West Branch Susquehanna River, Lycoming County. Reed set a goal of catching a musky on a fly rod. After thousands of casts over a series of months, he met his goal.

For the "Cast & Caught" column, send only prints (no larger than 8"x10") and a completed "Model Release form" available at fishandboat.com. Under "About Us", click on "Angler & Boater". Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want your photograph returned. People aboard boats must be wearing properly fitted and buckled life jackets. Mail to:
Editor, Pennsylvania Angler & Boater,
P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106-7000



George Anthony, Kittanning, caught and released this 29-inch Walleye while fishing the Allegheny River, Armstrong County.



Todd Bertsch, Coplay, caught and released this 21-inch golden Rainbow Trout while fishing the Little Lehigh Creek, Lehigh County.



Hunter Simon, Pleasant Gap, caught this 40-inch tiger muskellunge while fishing the Juniata River.



Sabatey Kep, Marianna, caught and released this 11½-inch crappie while fishing the Youghiogheny River Lake and Dam, Fayette County.