



Pennsylvania ANGLER & BOATER

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The Keystone State's
Official Fishing and
Boating Magazine

FishandBoat.com

MENTORED YOUTH TROUT DAY
March 30 (Statewide)

TROUT OPENER
April 6 (Statewide)

DON'T FORGET TO WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET!



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Magazine Staff

Editor—Spring Gearhart

Graphic Design—Andrea Feeney

Circulation—Ashley Nikles and Veronica Walton

Regular Contributors

| | | |
|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| John Allen | Braden Eisenhower | Ralph Scherder |
| Darl Black | Tyler Frantz | Christian A. Shane |
| Marilyn Black | Robert Frye | Linda Stager |
| Jerry Bush | Carl Haensel | Jeff Wolesslagle |
| Charles Cantella | Jeff Knapp | Alex Zidock Jr. |
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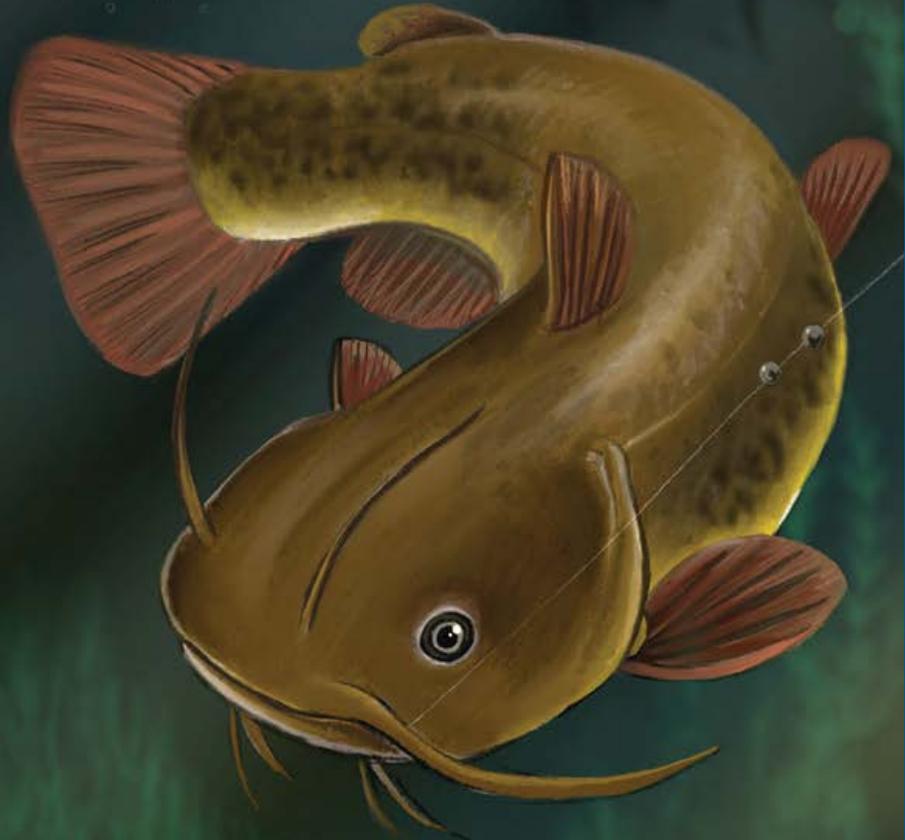
Pennsylvania Angler & Boater adheres to the American Fisheries Society's style guide and the 7th edition of *Common and Scientific Names of Fishes from the United States, Canada and Mexico* in keeping with the capitalization of the English common names of fishes as well as singular and plural fish name usage. In addition, *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* recognizes the standards established by the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles.

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CREATE YOUR OWN *Adventure!*

With the 2024 issues 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 27 for “Experience Southcentral PA!” Look for a keystone symbol in other articles, indicating additional opportunities in this region. Also, find a special Pennsylvania Adventure Map in this issue. 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, log your adventures on the map. 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—Madalyn Kensingor

A perfect companion to our adventure map, purchase the Pennsylvania State Parks and State Forests Passport online at **PaParksAndForests.org**. Click on “Store”.



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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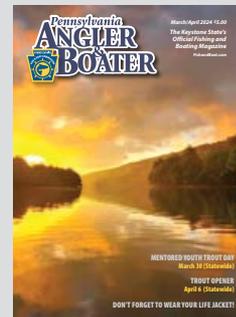
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On the cover



This sunrise photo was taken in Thompsettontown, Juniata County.
Photo by Brad Fridinger



About the photographer:

"I love the outdoors, especially nature photography. Fishing is extremely therapeutic, and spending time on the Juniata River chasing Smallmouth Bass is one of my favorite places to be! This photo means a lot to me, because I want to share nature's beauty to those who may not have the opportunity to be out on the water." **Brad Fridinger, Lititz, Lancaster County.**



¡VAMOS A PESCAR!

photo-PFBC archives

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

“Vamos A Pescar” means “Take Me Fishing” in Spanish. Our partners at the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF) have been making fishing and boating more accessible to more people through the George H.W. Bush Vamos A Pescar™ Education Fund and engaging online content. To broaden its reach, RBFF maintains both a takemefishing.org website in English and a VamosAPescar.org one in Spanish.

As Pennsylvania becomes a more diverse state and as our agency tries to create a more welcoming environment for everyone to fish and boat, we are following their lead to try to let everyone know that the water is open to them.

We are kicking off one new strategy with this issue of *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater*. With each issue of the magazine, we will have an accompanying full Spanish translation of the article on our website. For those articles, there will be a sidebar with a QR code that will direct subscribers to the Spanish version of the article on the website. The inaugural article, “Knotes” on Knots”, page 34, can be found on the website under the title “Notas en nudos”.

Thank you in advance for sharing this feature with friends or family members for whom Spanish is their first language. We hope they like it.

One of RBFF’s current engagement themes is “Find Your Best Self on the Water.” To be your best self on the water, you need to be able to get to the water. And, that is just what is happening all over Pennsylvania as individuals, businesses, community organizations and

local governments realize the transformative power of building connections to local waterways that are welcoming to all.

In our agency’s 2023 Annual Report to the General Assembly, we highlighted several ways that we and our partners are working across the Commonwealth to implement the second part of our mission to provide fishing and boating opportunities through improved public access. Visit fishandboat.com for a link to the Annual Report and examples of ways we are implementing our strategic plan goal to maintain, improve and connect people to public access locations and create new public access to ensure a diversity of sustainable recreational fishing and boating opportunities for all to enjoy.

If you enjoy the Commonwealth’s waters from a boat this spring, wear your life jacket. The current 10-year average for recreational boating fatalities in Pennsylvania is at an all-time low since 1988 when these statistics began being recorded. The most impactful action to keep that momentum going in the right direction is for boaters to wear a life jacket. Here and across the country, about 80% of all boating fatalities were a result of the victim not wearing a life jacket. In some cases, the life jackets were on board the boat, but they did no good without being worn.

And, if you fish from a boat during Mentored Youth Trout Day on March 30 or the Opening Day of trout season on April 6, you are required to wear a life jacket on boats less than 16 feet in length and on any canoe, kayak or paddleboard. The coldwater life jacket requirement is saving lives and remains in effect from November 1 to April 30. ☐



WEAR IT
National Safe Boating Council
Pennsylvania
¡Póntelo!

BIO-SECURE STEELHEAD SPAWN



photo-PFBC archives

by Mike Parker
Communications Director
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

To maintain the world-class steelhead fishery that anglers enjoy annually on Lake Erie and its tributaries, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) conducts multiple spawning operations throughout the winter. While the tried-and-true method for growing the next generation of steelhead remains the same—mixing eggs and milt from female and male fish—the methods for achieving a safe and successful spawn are improving.

For the 2023-2024 season, PFBC biologists and fish culturists enhanced biosecurity during the spawn by initiating a new process that minimizes the risk of spreading pathogens, disease and Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS).

In previous years, a spawning session would begin with the netting of hundreds of adult steelhead from the Trout Run nursery water at Avonia Beach Park on the shore of Lake Erie. Upon collection, the fish were separated by sex, placed in aerated tanks and transported to Fairview State Fish Hatchery about a mile away, and held in concrete raceways. A week later, PFBC staff would process the fish by anesthetizing them, collecting eggs and milt, and returning the live fish to another raceway.

After recovery, the fish were loaded back onto trucks and returned to Lake Erie. Eggs collected during the spawn were transported to both the Tionesta State Fish Hatchery and Linesville State Fish Hatchery, where they were raised to juvenile size smolts until they were ready to be stocked.

While this process for raising approximately one million smolts annually was effective for several decades, changes were deemed necessary, primarily, to eliminate the transport of live fish from Lake Erie to hatcheries outside of the Lake Erie basin. To accomplish this goal, a temporary structure was placed at Avonia Beach, providing a place where fish collected from Trout Run could be immediately processed onsite using the same techniques that previously occurred in the hatcheries. Additionally, no staff or volunteers who had been in the stream to collect fish were admitted into the spawning structure, and all sorting of fish throughout the spawning process was also done onsite using temporary, aerated holding tanks and stocking trucks. Following recovery, the steelhead were returned directly to Lake Erie and its tributaries. Moving forward, all steelhead smolts will be raised exclusively at the Fairview State Fish Hatchery in an expanded raceway facility.

While these changes will have no impact on the average angler in search of a trophy steelhead, its result is a safer process that will further protect one of Pennsylvania's most unique recreational fishing resources for years to come. ☐



FLOOD FISHING

by Marshall Nych photos by the author



My kids love chocolate milk. The darker and thicker, the better. If last year's trout fishing in the rest of Pennsylvania was anything like my northwest corner, the chocolate-colored muddy waters may have turned kids off the creamy treat. Mentored Youth Trout Day was flooded from recent torrential downpours. And, just as the waters receded to a fishable level prior to the statewide opening day of trout season a week later, another inch of rain fell. A pair of wet openers requires anglers, particularly those with youth anglers, to fish smarter. May the following help navigate the difficult outdoor endeavor that is flood fishing.

Slacking off

I have overheard countless theories pertaining to swift flood water carrying helpless fish downstream never to be seen again. Along with personal experience, articles I have read point to a different reaction to rainfall. Stocked trout are stronger and more instinctive than some anglers give them credit. Fish stay out of quick currents and challenging channels. So, I suggest trying the slack water created by rocks, trees and other structures. Knowledge of the physical features when flow is normal can make all the difference. Fish will gravitate towards the shoreline and bank where the water is calmer. Do not let a flood deter you from returning to a preferred fishing spot. The fish will still be there when water levels recede unless some savvy, dedicated anglers braved the flood.

Bright idea

Come torrential, turbid flows, a naturally colored size 20 dry fly will be as effective as no hook at all. Tie on the brightest of baits and most vivid of lures in the arsenal. Fluorescent PowerBaits, glowing jigs, chartreuse spinners and the like should be trusted with the first cast. Vibrations can also save the trip. Something that shakes, rattles or rolls may prompt the lucky strike. Scents may give even the most effective lure or live bait a needed edge. One of the most successful steelhead anglers I witnessed dunked everything in anise oil. The man did particularly well in stained and high-water conditions.

Be still

Trout anglers traditionally enjoy fishing along creeks, rivers

and other flowing water. During high water and floods, swift destinations may prove nearly impossible to fish even dangerous. Lakes and ponds are not nearly as influenced by precipitation. On Mentored Youth Trout Day, after mere minutes of casting into the unforgiving swollen creek, my son and I retreated to a local pond. Though a few others had a similar still water notion, all kids present caught fish. This Plan B saved the season opener. Research local lakes and ponds that are stocked with trout.

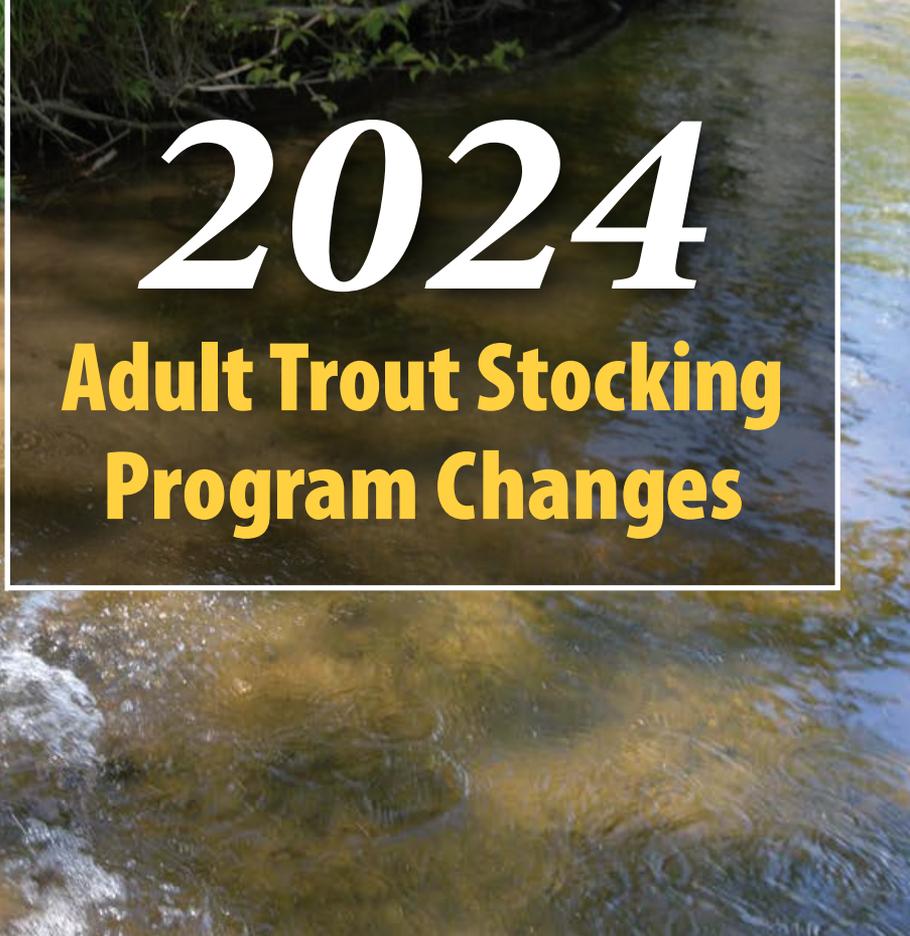
Backup plan

There comes a point, especially when leading young anglers, when waving the white flag is not an action associated with shame. Awareness of the child and a sensitivity to when it is time to stop fishing for the day can ensure a future trip. The kid is there and willing to fish, kudos on recruitment. Now, foster retention, ensuring the fishing experience and aquatic adventure remains a positive one. Fish aren't biting? Go get a bite at a local diner. Waters are a bust? Go for a scenic drive and just talk. Or, play catch or take the dog for a walk together. The budding angler will revere such impromptu fishing memories, placing them alongside ones with actual fish.

Next time waters rise, welcome such obstacles as teachable moments outdoors. A day in the mud and flood can be just as cherished as a sunny day. ☐



Next time waters rise, welcome such obstacles as teachable moments outdoors.



2024 Adult Trout Stocking Program Changes

photo-Spring Gearhart

by Nathan Walters
Fisheries Biologist
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

In 2024, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) will stock approximately 3.2 million adult trout in waters of the Commonwealth open to public fishing. Stocked adult trout produced by Commission hatcheries will average 11 inches long.

Changes for the 2024 trout season include extensions of stocked stream sections and the addition, reinstatement or removal of waters to the stocking program. Anglers will continue to see a reduction in the number of Brook Trout stocked throughout the Commonwealth. Commission hatcheries shifted production to more Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout to optimize the quality of stocked trout fishing in Pennsylvania in support of innovative stocking and management strategies.

Additional information regarding Pennsylvania's trout fishing opportunities is detailed on the Commission's website at fishandboat.com.

Stocking extensions and waters added or reinstated to the stocking program

Each year, the PFBC adjusts its adult stocking program based on several factors. A waterway may be added, extended, reinstated or removed depending on existing or pending changes to angler access, changes to destinations on streams managed for wild trout populations, water quality issues that may threaten the survival of stocked trout, and maintenance performed on

dams and other infrastructure that result in the drawdown of impoundments or decreased water flow.

Childrens Lake (Boiling Springs), Cumberland County

This 8.9-acre impoundment will be reinstated into the trout stocking program. Maintenance and repairs to the dam have been completed, and the reservoir has been refilled to full pool. Trout will be stocked during the preseason and inseason stocking periods.

Clear Creek, Cameron County

A 5.5-mile section extending from Mud Run downstream to the mouth will now receive an inseason stocking. Formerly, this water had been stocked on a preseason only basis.

East Branch Cowley Run, Cameron and Potter counties

Based on the presence of a Class A mixed wild Brook Trout and Brown Trout population, this stream was re-sectioned to terminate stocking in the headwaters while continuing to stock the 1.34-mile section extending from the Cowley Road bridge downstream to the mouth. Trout will be stocked during the preseason and inseason stocking periods.

Hyner Run, Clinton County

Based on the presence of a Class A mixed wild Brook Trout and Brown Trout population, this stream was re-sectioned to terminate stocking in the headwaters while continuing to stock the 3.0-mile section extending from the power line crossing upstream of Hyner Run State Park downstream to the mouth. Trout will be stocked during the preseason and inseason stocking periods.

Kettle Creek, Clinton County

A 0.7-mile extension of the stocking limits will lead to an increase in the number of trout allocated to this stream section. The revised stocking limits will extend for 2.4 miles from Alvin R. Bush Dam downstream to Slide Hollow. Trout will be stocked during the preseason and inseason stocking periods.

Lake Wilma, Greene County

This 19.3-acre impoundment will be reinstated into the trout stocking program. Stocking was cancelled in 2023 due to construction located on the quarry property that provides access to the impoundment. Trout will be stocked during the preseason and inseason stocking periods.

Limestone Run, Union County

Located in the town of Lewisburg, a 2.4-mile section of stream extending from the second State Route 45 bridge upstream of mouth downstream to the mouth will be added into the trout stocking program. Trout will be stocked during the preseason and inseason stocking periods.

Loyalsock Creek, Sullivan County

The stocking limits were extended 0.25 miles upstream Rock Run Road. The revised stocking limits will extend 8.63-miles from 0.25-miles upstream Rock Run Road downstream to Little Loyalsock Creek. Trout will be stocked during the preseason and inseason stocking periods.

Sheppard-Meyers Reservoir, York County

This 46.9-acre impoundment will be reinstated into the trout stocking program. Maintenance and repairs to the dam have been completed, and the reservoir will be refilled to full pool in spring 2024. Trout will be stocked on a preseason only basis.

Slippery Rock Creek, Lawrence County

The 0.51-mile section of stream managed under Catch and Release Fly-Fishing Only regulations has been extended downstream 0.31 miles to the McConnells Mill State Park lower property boundary. Trout will continue to be stocked during the preseason and inseason stocking periods.

Stony Run Pond, Clearfield County

This 3.2-acre impoundment will be added into the trout stocking program. Located on the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources property at S.B. Elliot State Park, this impoundment provides excellent angler accessibility. Trout will be stocked during the preseason and inseason stocking periods.

West Branch Cowley Run, Cameron and Potter counties

Based on the presence of a Class A wild Brown Trout population, this stream was re-sectioned to terminate stocking in the headwaters while continuing to stock the 0.9-mile section extending from Fee Run downstream to the mouth. Trout will be stocked during the preseason and inseason stocking periods.

Waters removed from the stocking program

When survey data suggests that a waterway is no longer suitable for adult trout stocking based on a loss of angler access, environmental factors or designation as a Class A wild trout stream, the Commission makes every attempt to reallocate fish to a comparable location nearby. When inadequate angler access is the reason for a removal, locations are monitored for improvement, so these waters can be considered for reinstatement to the stocking program if access is improved.

Baker Run, Clinton County

Based on the presence of a Class A wild Brown Trout population, trout stocking will be terminated on the 2.7-mile section of stream extending from the confluence of Shoemaker and Clendenin branches downstream to the mouth. Formerly, this water had been stocked in both the preseason and inseason stocking periods. Fish previously stocked in this stream will now be stocked in Kettle Creek, Clinton County.

Buck Run, Franklin County

An increase in the amount of landowner posting has led to the removal of trout stocking from a 1.7-mile section extending from the spring 100 meters upstream Conrail railroad crossing downstream to the mouth. Formerly, this water had been stocked on a preseason only basis.

Spruce Run, Union County

Based on the presence of a Class A mixed wild Brook Trout and Brown Trout population, trout stocking will be terminated on the 6.5-mile section of stream extending from the Cooper Mill Road bridge downstream to the state forest boundary at Spruce Run Reservoir. Formerly, this water had been stocked in both the preseason and inseason stocking periods. Fish previously stocked in this stream will now be stocked in Limestone Run, Union County. ☐



FishandBoat.com

Mentorship Across the Generations



Few of us learn to fish on our own. Fishing is often family tradition, and we learn from a parent, a favorite relative or an older sibling. At some point in our fishing education, we pretty much have learned all we can from relatives, books and videos. Enter the mentor—that teacher, counselor or advisor—who shares their knowledge with a less-experienced (and usually younger) person eager to learn.

I retired from the Army in 2010, and we settled in southcentral Pennsylvania, home to some of the finest limestone trout streams in the state. From our home in Boiling Springs, we can fish the Yellow Breeches, Big Spring Creek and the famous LeTort Spring Run all in the same day. Not a fly angler, but interested in learning, I enrolled myself and my two young sons in a beginners fly tying class taught by members of the local Cumberland Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited (CVTU). The boys proved to be excellent students, better than me, in large part because of the excellent instructors. Both boys would also attend the week-long Rivers Conservation and Fly Fishing Youth Camp hosted by CVTU. The camp is annually held in June at Messiah University in Grantham, on the banks of Yellow Breeches Creek. The youngest son turned to other interests in time, but Sam, the oldest, stuck with it and quickly surpassed my ability to teach him the finer points of fly fishing. I told him, “I can’t teach you what I don’t know.”

From his contacts with the instructors in his fly tying classes and at the conservation camp, plus chance encounters with good and helpful fly anglers along the local streams, Sam was the beneficiary of great mentorship from local fishing legends such as Steve Parker, Gene Giza and Clark Hall. But, it was Ken Okorn that he turned to most.

The years have passed. Sam is no longer the young 14-year-old boy, but a 27-year-old Army captain with a Master of Science degree from the University of Oxford in Water Science, Policy and Management and a desire to someday help solve some of our country’s critical water issues. And, fish for trout at every opportunity. Ken Okorn is now 81 and, like Sam, still fishing for trout at every opportunity. They don’t fish together much anymore since Sam’s military service and his years spent overseas in England, Korea and Hawaii. But, when Sam gets home, they fish together and time stands still, however briefly, as the mentorship and friendship bond is renewed.

There are many different aspects to fly fishing—casting, entomology, reading the water, fly tying, rod building and the trout. Okorn knows it all. He graduated in 1965 from Pennsylvania State University with a degree in zoology and major course work in aquatic biology and fisheries. He became a Water Pollution Control Specialist in the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection who, before retiring after 31 years, was responsible for statewide management of water quality monitoring and compliance. He is a retired licensed fishing guide. He also holds or has held various leadership positions with CVTU, the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy and the Pennsylvania Fly Fishing Museum.

While Okorn possesses knowledge in abundance, it is the intangibles that make him a great mentor. He is patient, an attribute of immeasurable importance when teaching. He is practical in terms of fishing equipment and tells you what is worth your money and what is not. He is truthful. If he says he caught a dozen trout, he really did. Probably most importantly, every fishing trip is a masterclass in fishing—the trout, the water, the weather and how it all comes together as the line unfurls and the cast draws a strike.

Mentorship is critical to our sport. It passes on the love and respect of fishing to the next generation. My son is lucky, because he had a mentor. ☐



Yellow Breeches, Cumberland County



Winter's Welcome and the Stream's Apprentice

by Michael Kensinger

It was a blustery January morning when I stepped into the warmth of my first fly tying class offered by our local Chapter of Trout Unlimited (TU). Greeted by friendly faces, the folks at John Kennedy Chapter TU prepared a classroom for about 30 students. We were all eager to learn how to tie our first trout flies. I was looking forward to learning what could be an extremely rewarding hobby.

With smiles and wisdom, our instructors welcomed us with hot

coffee and fresh donuts and the opportunity to shake hands with local legends. After dabbling with a fly rod in summer of 2023, I was ready for this step in my fly fishing journey.

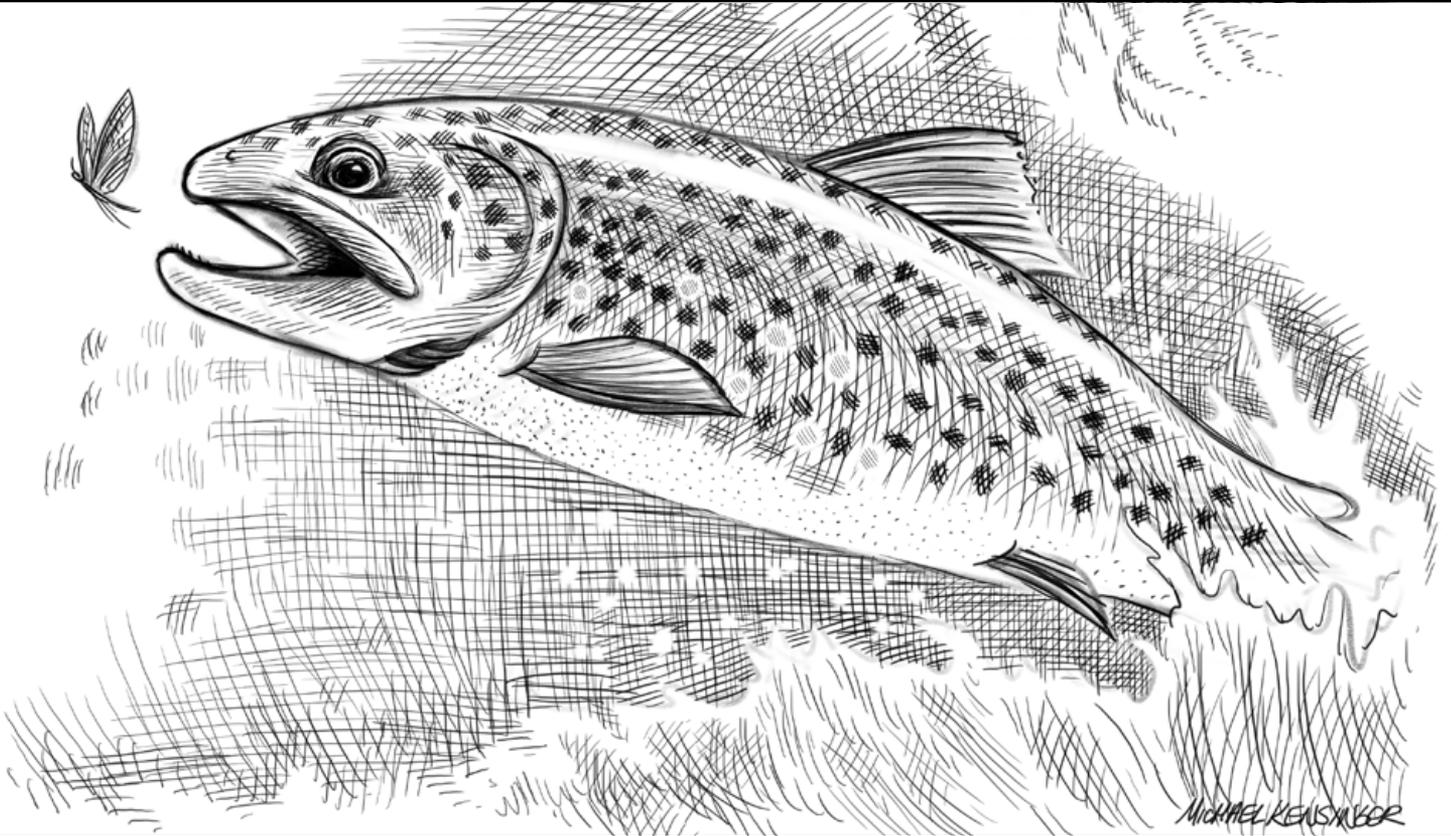
We started with the San Juan Worm. Considered a “basic” fly, it was a great choice to learn the tools and terms in fly tying. Elongated, with a body made of bright red ultra chenille, the San Juan Worm was designed by angler Jim Aubrey for use in the San Juan River, New Mexico, sometime during the 1970s. Designed to look like a bright red bloodworm, I’ve learned that some

fly anglers will tie a pink variety that is also effective.

Once tied, I noticed the rather flat ends on the chenille-bodied worm. The instructor told us we could singe the tips with a lighter to make it more lifelike, giving the worm dark, pointed tips. Whether it matters to a trout, I don’t know, but it definitely made me feel better about it.

The Green Weenie was my favorite of the two flies we learned. This nymph was designed to look like a caddisfly larva or inchworm, which we have in the streams of Pennsylvania. I heard it was an

Day 1 - John Kennedy Chapter TU
"Fly Tying Class"



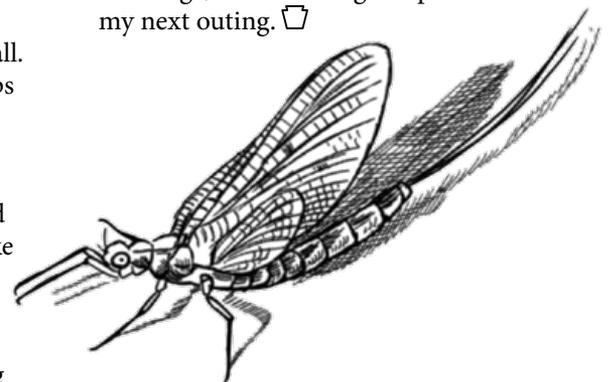
effective nymph. This fly was created by Ken Igo and Russ Mowry in the 1950s and was developed just a few hours from the classroom where I sat. The instructor told us the Green Weenie can be effective year-round.

With a snowstorm headed our way, we finished a little early. Once I was in the comfort of my home, I thumbed through the class packet to read about the flies we would be tying in the remaining seven weeks. As snow covered the world outside my windows, I could hardly wait to fill a fly box with my own flies and hit the stream when weather and water levels permitted.

When the water was finally clear, I headed to one of the smaller streams. This was my first time fishing this creek, and with a hopeful heart, I cast my fly into the depths of a plunge pool, just below a waterfall. The current was swift and clumps of leaves were making their way downstream, likely startling any trout in the pool.

After a dozen or so casts, I did have what I believed to be a strike or it may have been a branch. Whichever, it caused my fly to unravel, along with my hopes of catching a trout. Understanding

that conditions were not ideal, I made my way back to the car. I knew this journey was going to be a challenge, and I had high hopes for my next outing. ☐





Creating Healthy Habitats for Fish

by Jeff Woleslagle

On any body of water, fish have the same essential habitat needs when it comes to overall survival. They require good locations for feeding, reproduction, growth and shelter. These specific habitat requirements change depending on the life stage of the fish. If you or a family member have a pond, small lake or waterfront property, there are things you can do to improve the habitat and also improve the fishing.

If you ask any guide or angler where they target fish on new water, they will tell you that fish almost always relate to some type of structure. That structure can be in the form of plants, rocks, wood or depth transitions such as drop-offs. Smaller fish tend to prefer denser, tighter cover; larger fish may utilize larger more dispersed types of structure.

That means you can improve your water in a variety of ways. Adding native aquatic plants is the most natural way to improve habitat. Species such as lily pads can provide both great overhead shade for fish and shield them from aerial predators. American white water lily is native to the eastern United States and benefits many species of both fish and wildlife. They provide cover areas for Largemouth Bass in particular and create areas for young fish to live. Lily pads also provide important food sources for beavers, some species of beetles and several pollinators. Before you add any aquatic plants though, you want to make sure they are native species. Dense patches of plants with distinct weed edges and areas of sparse vegetation are best on a pond.

You can also construct and install a wide array of different structures that will increase the available cover for fish and provide spawning habitat. Providing rock and rubble areas can be a good option. These areas

hold and retain heat in the colder months and provide habitat for crayfish and other bait species. Cinder blocks and large rocks are a good way to introduce a place for fish to hide and algae to grow. Piles of boulders or concrete blocks can act as fish attractors for a variety of fish, as well as provide a place for beneficial bacteria and string algae to flourish. When using large boulders in your pond, it is most effective to place them away from the shoreline. Boulders can be beneficial if you have small streams leading to your lake or pond, as they can break fast-moving currents and provide a resting place for fish. If taking rocks from another water, let them dry prior to introducing them to your water.

Wood structures are also a good option. Docks provide cover on water. Black Crappies often stage and spawn near docks, especially when riprap or cobbles and boulders are around, and many species of fish congregate near them. Logs and even whole trees can be used to improve habitat in ponds. Recycled Christmas trees provide good structure, and I've witnessed heavy use by bass and panfish on ponds that have them. They should be weighted, so they sink, and they should be placed at a variety of depths. It is important to remember that if you're using organic material for fish habitat in water, it will eventually decompose. There are also many types of commercial habitat structures that are available and can be ordered online. These should be thoroughly researched before use.

A combination of the right plants, rocks and wood structure can help maximize the habitat, fish and wildlife holding potential for any water.

For more information and habitat plans, go to fishandboat.com. ☐

photo-Linda Stager



photos: Linda Stager



A beautiful Pennsylvania pond



Docks provide shade and overhead cover for fish, as well as places to spawn.



Healthy habitat provides fishing opportunities for more than just people. This green heron is looking for food.

American white water lilies are native to Pennsylvania and provide excellent habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife.



Ways to Get Involved on Your Local Trout Stream

by Nick DelVecchio

photos by the author

In Pennsylvania, we are blessed to have more trout fishing opportunities than just about anywhere else in the country. There are thousands of miles of streams to explore, and anglers flock to every corner of the state in search of trout throughout the year. With this wonderful resource, there are also some challenges. While there is no shortage of water flowing through public land, many streams are only open at the courtesy of the local landowner. It is through their kindness, generosity and desire to allow folks to experience the outdoors that we are able to have so many terrific trout fishing spots. The challenge lies in understanding how we become better stewards of our trout streams and find ways to get involved to ensure future generations can enjoy the same luxuries we have today. The good news is getting involved may be a lot easier than you think.

Pennsylvanians have a deep appreciation and connection to the outdoors, and that is evident in more than just angler participation while fishing. There are countless conservation groups that spend time stocking fish, completing stream cleanups and assisting with habitat improvement projects. These groups

are usually regional such as Trout Unlimited, and it's the first place to look to get involved. Go to meetings, events or banquets, and it's usually easy to find ways to lend a hand. Some groups operate their own cooperative nurseries to stock trout, and those that don't are usually present on local streams during Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission stockings to help Waterways Conservation Officers in whatever way they need. Not only is this a way to get involved, but it's a chance to be around like-minded anglers who have a desire to improve local watersheds. The local fly shop is a great way to find these groups. Often times, the shop will be coordinating some of these efforts.

Getting involved doesn't have to be nearly so formal, though. Anyone who has fished a trout stream in Pennsylvania has almost assuredly seen garbage in and around the water. For starters, don't add to it. At the end of the fishing day, take 30 minutes and fill up a garbage bag. Leave the area better than you found it, and make a more pleasant experience for those who come next. It's easy to plan for, too. Just throw a few garbage bags in your fishing vest or pack. At the end of the day, pull one out and start filling it up. It improves the local watershed, and it goes a long way in terms of landowner relations. We lose some good water every year to postings, and it's hard to blame the owner in some cases. After all, it's through their good nature that fishing is allowed. If anglers continuously litter on the



Brook Trout are some of the most stunning fish found in Pennsylvania, and making sure their watersheds remain healthy and clean is the responsibility of all trout anglers.

property, it's only natural for them to become upset and post the ground.

If we're going to spend time enjoying Pennsylvania trout streams, it's only right that we spend time ensuring we leave them better. Getting involved at any level helps,

whether with a quick little parking area cleanup at the end of a fun day or spending a morning lending a hand on a habitat project. You do great service that improves the ecosystem, creates more personal connections to places we love to fish and helps keep the trout healthy. ☐



3.2 MILLION REASONS TO FISH

That's how many **adult trout** we will stock in **2024** in **695** streams and **128** lakes.

Average size: 11 inches



2.3 Million

Rainbow Trout



702,000

Brown Trout



132,000

Brook Trout



14,000

Golden Rainbow Trout
(75% stocked before opening day)

72,000

trophy-sized Rainbow Trout, Brown Trout and Brook Trout.

Trophy size: 14 to 20 inches
(70% stocked before opening day)

FishandBoat.com

Five Places to Fish Near Gettysburg



by Ralph Scherder

photos by the author

Some of my most memorable fishing trips have been where I've combined fishing with learning about our country's history, and there's no better place to do that than Gettysburg, Adams County. This quiet little town played a major role in our country's history, and the battle that occurred here is often referred to as the turning point in the American Civil War. Everywhere around town are placards and memorials that detail the events. Many people have spent lifetimes studying this battle alone. Although I visited Gettysburg on several occasions, it wasn't until I fished

the streams around the battlefield that I truly got a sense of the place itself.

The streams and lakes near Gettysburg aren't world-class waters by any stretch. They don't have the major hatches that limestone streams only an hour away experience. They don't have an abundance of native or wild trout. And, the lakes don't even offer spectacular warmwater fishing. But, they do provide an opportunity to connect with the land in a way that most tourists do not—to step into the same water and feel the same earth where many soldiers gave their lives for the cause they believed in. Most served as travel routes for each army as they made their way to and from Gettysburg before and after the battle. The five places mentioned here provide the best opportunities for anglers to experience good fishing.



Sachs Covered Bridge is a historical destination that provides excellent access to Marsh Creek, Adams County. It's also a popular place for ghost hunters.



Adams County and the surrounding area has several streams that receive spring trout stockings.

Marsh Creek

Marsh Creek is relatively small. Like most streams in Adams County, it has a gentle gradient that makes it easy to wade. The stream is stocked multiple times throughout the spring with Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout from the bridge on Cashtown Road, Biglerville, down to the bridge on Route 30. Trout fishing generally stays good here until early June.

Once the water starts to warm, I focus my fishing efforts downstream near Sachs Covered Bridge, which is the bridge the Confederates used during their retreat from the battlefield. There's a long, deep pool created by a small dam downstream of the bridge, and the pool stretches several hundred yards upstream. Here you'll find a variety of bass and panfish.

Sachs Covered Bridge is also a prime location for ghost hunters, so if you fish late and notice an increase in human activity before dark, don't panic. It's the non-human activity you should worry about.

Little Marsh Creek

Little Marsh Creek is located just a few minutes west of Gettysburg, where it meets Marsh Creek just downstream of Knoxlyn Road. Little Marsh Creek is about half the size of Marsh Creek and also has a steeper gradient. Several parts of this stream have some interesting geological formations, which make it a neat place to fish.

The stream is stocked with trout multiple times every spring. The main appeal, though, is that it takes a literal monsoon to flood this creek. It runs off fast, and when bigger streams in the area are too high, Little Marsh Creek is generally the first to be fishable. However, it also gets real small real quick during prolonged periods of dry weather. By late spring, you'll find few trout left. Like Marsh Creek and other area streams, the best time to fish it is early spring when water levels are still up a bit.

Rock Creek

Rock Creek flows around the eastern edge of the battlefield, directly behind Culp's Hill, and joins Marsh Creek south of Gettysburg. Rock Creek is primarily a warmwater fishery for bass and panfish. Downstream, toward the Maryland border, Rock Creek is known as the Monocacy River but should not be

confused with the Monocacy Creek found in the Lehigh Valley. If you're planning to fish this stream, that's a key distinction to make when searching for more information.

Conewago Creek

Conewago Creek originates in western Adams County and flows just north of Gettysburg, and it is one of the few area streams offering a chance to fly fish over rising trout. It has some good mayfly hatches including Blue Winged Olives, Blue Quills, Hendricksons, March Browns and Sulphurs to go along with a variety of caddis. There's a 1.1-mile Catch and Release Fly-Fishing Only section located 0.1 mile below Russell Tavern Road downstream to PA 34.

The stream is stocked heavily with trout multiple times every spring, and trout fishing stays good until late spring or early summer, depending on the weather and how much rain we receive to keep flows fishable. Later in the year, downstream of U.S. 15, Conewago Creek becomes a good warmwater fishery.

Long Pine Run Reservoir

Perhaps, the best public access lake in the area is Long Pine Run Reservoir, the 151-acre lake located within the Michaux State Forest. The lake is restricted to unpowered and electric motorboats only, and no swimming or wading is permitted. However, the lake is home to a number of warmwater species including Largemouth Bass of substantial size. Long Pine Run Reservoir is a great place to paddle and fish.

Although the streams and lakes around Gettysburg aren't as well known as those in other parts of the state, they still provide an excellent opportunity to experience the area in a way that most tourists do not. More than anything, they allow you to slow down and not get caught up in jumping from one placard to the next. In the quiet moments spent fishing, we can reflect on the events that transpired here and how they have shaped our country. Make fishing a part of every Gettysburg visit with the waters mentioned here that provide plenty of time to appreciate history. ☐



Levittown Lake

by Alex Zidock Jr.

photos by the author

Casting spinners and catching no fish, anglers on both sides of me squinted to catch my technique. In just 20 minutes, I landed the last trout for my creel limit. Fish were ignoring spinners and minnows, but they were taking insects past fly rod reach. I've used this technique shared by Uncle Charlie Hoffman for decades. Levittown Lake, lower Bucks County, was no different, and I left the lake with anglers in awe and fish in tow.

Levittown Lake is a 20-acre former gravel quarry. A result of Levitt and Sons need for aggregates from 1952 until 1958, when they built more than 17,000 single-family houses they called Levittown. Housing was in demand as folks found employment at the sprawling United States Steel Corporation Fairless Plant that ramped up to a peak of 8,000 employees. Levitt's 'total community' offered several home models, a theatre,

shopping centers, recreation areas that included ball fields, swimming pools, basketball courts and Levittown Lake for fishing and boating.

Levittown Lake is owned by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and managed by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC). It has no natural inlet or outlet. The water level is maintained by a balance of natural groundwater and absorption. Mostly 10 feet deep, there are some areas that dip to near 20 feet. Vegetation grows around the perimeter, and a walk-worn footpath lines the shore. Anglers descend a low bank to reach the lake, or they use the launch ramp. The lake is restricted to electric and unpowered boats. There is ample parking near the launch for vehicles and boat trailers. Community roads that circle most of the lake offer curb parking and a short walk to any lake area.

A warm water impoundment, the lake is home to Black Crappies, Channel Catfish, Largemouth Bass, Pumpkinseeds, Yellow Perch and White Perch. The PFBC stocks the lake with Rainbow Trout and golden Rainbow Trout preseason and inseason.



Levittown Lake is an ideal fishing spot for many reasons. It's easy to access for anglers of all ages, a great place to mentor children, and it does not get fished hard the rest of the year, except for the opening day of trout season. The put-to-take philosophy is more apparent here than in other, more rural stocked streams, and fresh stocked trout are the main dinner fare at many Levittown and surrounding community homes.

Any of the methods anglers typically use to catch trout work at Levittown Lake. Anglers successfully use minnows, worms, bobbers, small spinners and prepared baits. In the few areas where there is fly rod space for casting and the wind is in your favor, any assortment of flies work well. But, like many impoundments, be prepared to try anything in your tackle box, because some days the fish in the lake can be finicky.

But, anywhere I see trout taking flies past a fly rod's reach, I rely on Uncle Charlie's method, and it helps me land fish when others are not. With 6-pound-test line spooled on my spinning rod, I tie a teardrop bobber, add about 6 feet of 4X or 5X leader, and a small artificial ant or my "go to" Black Gnat. Fishing flies with a spinning rod is easy, and the method can make the day anywhere you need extra reach to seize the action. ☐



Many years ago, mentor Uncle Charlie Hoffman introduced me to the bobber and an artificial fly setup on a spinning rod that I still use today. The Black Gnat and bobber are part of my spin fishing arsenal.



An angler enjoys some quiet time at Levittown Lake, Bucks County.



Lots of locals turn out on trout stocking day at Levittown Lake, Bucks County. Youngsters get a chance to help too.

Experience SOUTHCENTRAL PA!

by Linda Stager

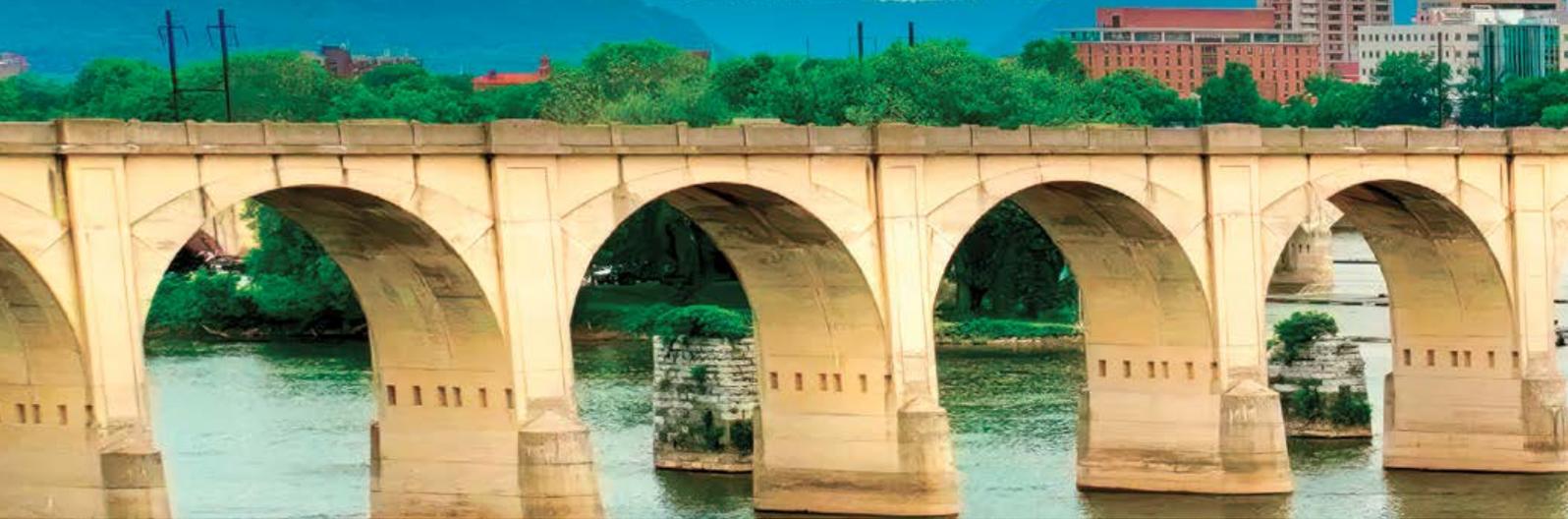


photo-Linda Stager

Rooted in history, thriving in diversity—the southcentral region of Pennsylvania has something for every visitor. Part of the Allegheny Mountains, this 13-county area is known for its quaint towns, farmlands, narrow ridges and rolling hills. Peaceful rural scenes and exquisite farms line the historic Lincoln Highway that traverses the southern part of the state. Yet, the region's cities offer not only a similarly rich heritage, but a vibrant, culturally diverse environment. Galleries, theaters and cultural events showcase a wide variety of activities.

And, for the angler or waterway lover? This region surely has everything one wants.

Come experience our region. Visitors are sure to find scenes from the old and the new; it's a chance to create the perfect adventure for the entire family.

Treasured trail

Mid State Trail: Pennsylvania's own long distance trail covers 327 miles of the state from north to south. Called Pennsylvania's "longest and wildest footpath", hikers can section or through hike the trail.

With plenty of natural fishing opportunities along the way, pack a lightweight rod. There is nothing quite like cooking trout over a campfire.

The Mid State Trail Association, a hearty cadre of volunteers, maintains the trail and provides guidebooks and maps. The trail crosses parts of Bedford, Blair and Huntington counties in this region as it heads to the northern border of Pennsylvania.

Popular waterways

The major rivers of southcentral Pennsylvania are conservation success stories. Once barren of fish, these rivers are clean and healthy now, due to the efforts of federal, state, local and private partnerships.

Susquehanna River: At almost a mile wide in Harrisburg, the mighty Susquehanna River flows south through the region on its 400-mile journey to the Atlantic Ocean. Harrisburg, home of the state capital city, is located adjacent to the Susquehanna River.





Susquehanna River, Harrisburg

Harrisburg's City Island, located in the middle of the river, not only provides panoramic views of the Harrisburg skyline, but the park also provides boat launches for private watercrafts, canoe, kayak and paddleboard rentals, and river cruise tours. Several river guides offer fishing services in the area.

Anglers can fish for a variety of gamefish. The river is well known for its Smallmouth Bass fishing. Muskellunge, Walleyes and catfish await those who like big fish. Picnic facilities, a minor league baseball field, and family-friendly hiking and biking paths can also be accessed here.

Harrisburg is also home to the State Museum of Pennsylvania and the architecturally significant Pennsylvania State Capitol Complex; both well worth a visit for those interested in history. And, while you are in town, check out the Harrisburg Mural Trail, using their mobile passport.

Harrisburg Mural Trail:



visithersheyharrisburg.org/trails/murals

photo - Karen Navagh



There are camping opportunities along the Mid State Trail.

photo - Sherri Sellers



A scenic view along the Susquehanna River.



photo-Brad Fridinger

The Juniata River provides long stretches of picturesque fishing underneath overhanging trees along the riverbanks.

Raystown Lake: Pennsylvania's largest lake, contained entirely within the state with 118 miles of shoreline, is a Huntingdon County gem. It is popular for all types of watercrafts, including kayaks and jet skis. The Raystown Lake marina includes boat rentals as a part of its facilities and services.



The lake is well known for its diverse and robust fish population including carp, crappies, muskies, Bluegills, Channel Catfish, Lake Trout, Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Striped Bass, Walleyes, White Perch and Yellow Perch.

Individuals and families who want to explore beyond the lake will find many opportunities. Nearby, the oldest narrow gauge railroad in the United States, the East Broad Top Railroad offers 1-hour scenic train rides.

Rothrock State Forest and numerous state parks offer outdoor recreation activities for the whole family.

Juniata River: the beginner-friendly, 104-mile-long Juniata River flows eastward from near Hollidaysburg, Blair County, to the Susquehanna River, north of Harrisburg.

This slow-moving river drifts through rolling hills, wooded areas, farmland and along a magnificent

mountain ridge. It's an excellent warmwater fishery and provides long stretches of picturesque fishing underneath overhanging trees along the riverbanks. Experienced river guides are available to help navigate the river and its many islands and to help anglers find trophy bass. Bring a shallow drift boat, a canoe or kayak; any are a great choice. There are several boat access points along the river.

The Juniata River is a nationally recognized water trail.

Little Juniata River: Nationally known for its number of wild trout, this world-class fishery has one of the highest densities of wild trout in the state. A 2010 biologist report states that there are likely 2,900 catchable trout per mile. These wild fish provide the unique challenge of fly fishing the scenic pools and moderate



photo-Linda Stager

The East Broad Top Railroad offers 1-hour scenic train rides. It is located near Raystown Lake, Huntingdon County.

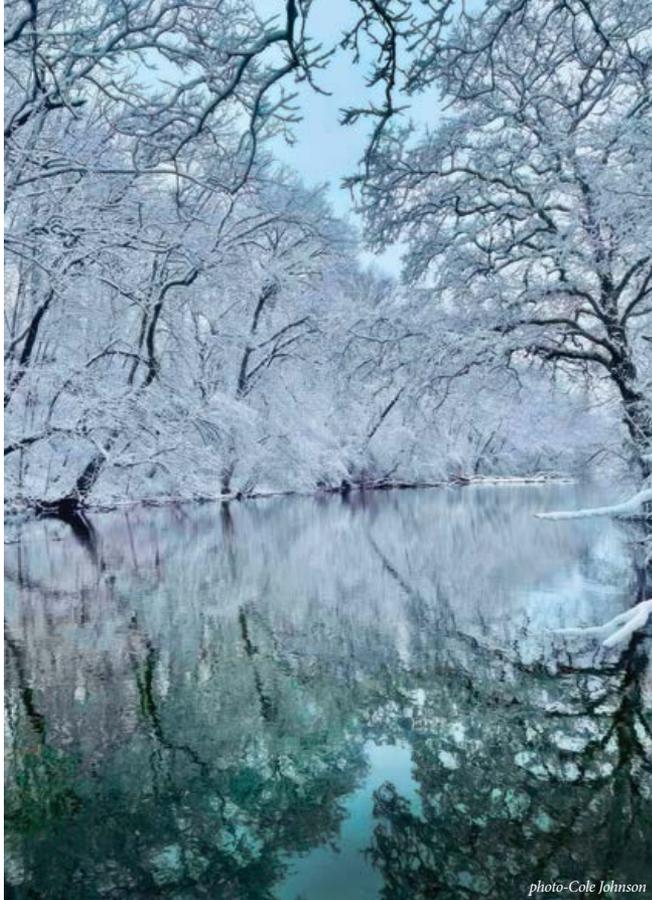


photo-Cole Johnson

Yellow Breeches Creek, Adams, Cumberland and York counties, is famous for its trout populations.

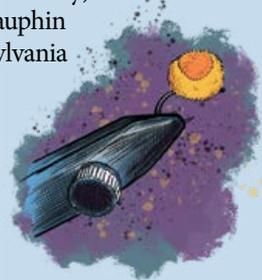
riffles below the river's limestone cliffs, giving anglers excellent results for the effort.

"Little J" as it's known is dotted with stone arch railroad bridges, which makes it extremely scenic. A popular section of the river flows through Barree Gorge in Rothrock State Forest and is only accessible by walking trails.

Yellow Breeches Creek: This stream originates in Michaux State Forest, Cumberland County, and flows 49 miles eastward to the Susquehanna River through fertile agricultural lands. Wildlife abounds in this area, from rare warbler migrants in Michaux State Forest to endangered Bog Turtles in the creek's wetlands. Yellow Breeches Creek, a cold water fishery, is famous for its trout populations, which contain wild and stocked trout in this area.

Points of interest

- 1,000 Steps Hiking Trail, Huntingdon, Huntingdon County (built into the side of Jack's Mountain, steps were used to mine rock)
- Appalachian National Scenic Trail (enters Pennsylvania near Pen Mar, Franklin County)
- Mason Dixon Trail, Cumberland and York counties (connects the Appalachian Trail with the Brandywine Trail, passing through Gifford Pinchot State Park, York County)
- Pennsylvania Farm Show, Harrisburg, Dauphin County (held every January at the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex & Expo Center)
- Pennsylvania Fly Fishing Museum, Carlisle, Cumberland County
- Railroaders Memorial Museum/Baker Mansion History Museum/Horseshoe Curve National Historic Landmark, Altoona, Blair County



Best-loved adventures

The southcentral region has excellent fishing and boating opportunities. But, if the family is interested in other things to do, put these activities on your "Must Do" list, too.

- **Hershey**, Dauphin County: Widely known as the "Chocolate Capital of the World", it's fun to learn about chocolate at Hershey's Chocolate World. Hershey Park, a popular amusement park, features one of the best family entertainment venues and rides for every age. View a wide variety of animals at ZooAmerica including reptiles, desert critters, grassland herbivores, carnivores, birds and nocturnal animals. Delight in 23 acres of botanical beauty at Hershey Gardens, and enjoy Hershey Theatre, a premier performing arts center.
- **York**, York County: Naturalists will delight in a visit to Kiwanis Lake, the location of

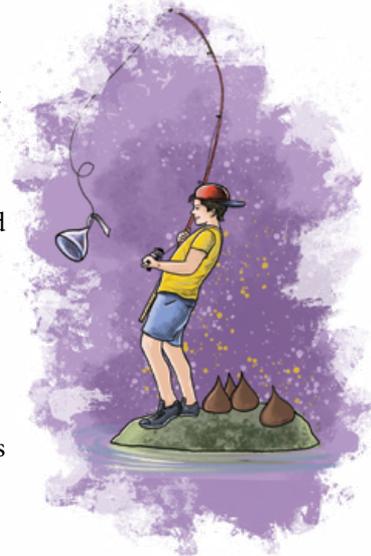


photo-Linda Sager



Gettysburg, Adams County

photo-Linda Sager



Lincoln Highway Mural on Bison Corral Barn, Bedford County

Take a better fish photo

Smartphones are commonplace items for many anglers, and the improved built-in camera technology puts the potential for quality photographs at your fingertips.

Whether practicing CPR (Catch, Photo, Release), documenting your success to share on social media or preserving the memory of a lifetime with a classic portrait for the wall, learn to take a better fish photo with these helpful tips.

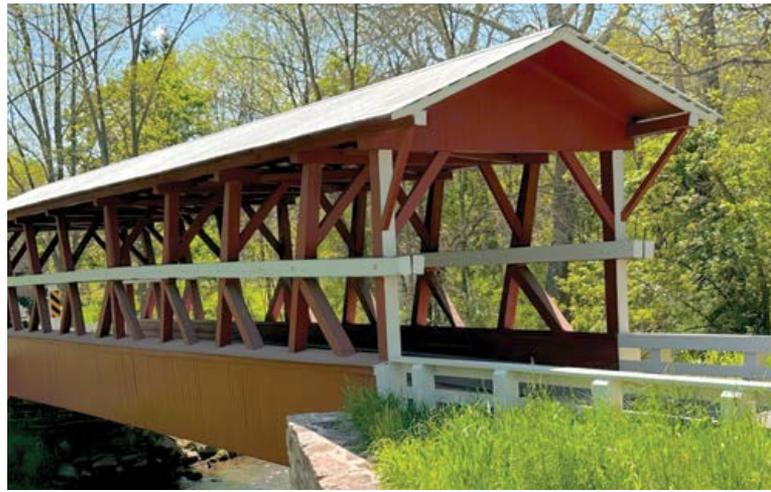
1. Upon hooking up, retrieve your catch quickly to minimize stress. Avoid playing with the fish too long, and steer clear of any obstacles while reeling it in.
2. Use a rubber-coated landing net to secure the fish. Keep it underwater as you remove the hook. Gently place your rod in a secure location.
3. Be sure to wet your hands before handling the fish to avoid damaging its skin's protective coating.
4. Gently lift the fish out of the water with fingers tucked low on the belly. Tilt the fish slightly toward the camera to reduce sun glare. Remember to smile!
5. If a fishing companion is taking the shot, make sure your friend avoids casting a shadow across the frame of the photo, gets low to capture the best angle and includes some background scenery.
6. If using a self-timer, place your phone in a dry, stable location. Set the timer for a 3-second countdown before lifting the fish from the net just in time to capture your priceless memory.

Written by Tyler Frantz



photo-Rocky Carpenter

Brown Trout



A covered bridge in Bedford County.

photo-Linda Stager

a large heron rookery. The whole family will enjoy the city's annual York State Fair, one of the oldest agricultural fairs in the United States and the town's historic architecture.



- **Gettysburg**, Adams County: A visit here is fun for folks who like ghost tours and battlefield monuments. A variety of tour options are available. The Visitor Center provides information and exhibits, and the Eisenhower National Historic Site provides a glimpse of 1950s life at the former president's home. There are also numerous hiking and horse trails in the area.
- **Covered Bridges**, Bedford County: Bedford County is home to 14 covered bridges. A driving guide is available. While in the area, stop at Old Bedford Village near Bedford, the amazing 1806 Old Log Church and Lincoln Highway Mural on Bison Corral Barn near Schellsburg.

Whatever pursuit your family follows, there's a lot to savor in southcentral PA for both novice and experienced anglers and boaters, as well as the rest of the family.

Create your Own Adventure here! 

photo-Linda Stager



Old Bedford Village, Bedford County

Popular waterways

Southcentral Region:

- Conococheague Creek
- Juniata River
- Lake Marburg
- Letort Spring Run
- Quittapahilla Creek
- Raystown Lake
- Susquehanna River
- Tulpehocken Creek
- Wiconisco Creek
- Yellow Breeches Creek



Pennsylvania state parks

Southcentral Region:

- **Big Spring State Park**, Perry Co.
- **Blue Knob State Park**, Bedford Co. (fishing)
- **Boyd Big Tree Preserve Conservation Area**, Dauphin Co.
- **Buchanan's Birthplace State Park**, Franklin Co. (fishing)
- **Caledonia State Park**, Adams and Franklin counties (fishing)
- **Canoe Creek State Park**, Blair Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Codorus State Park**, York Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Colonel Denning State Park**, Cumberland Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Cowans Gap State Park**, Franklin and Fulton counties (fishing and boating)
- **Fowlers Hollow State Park**, Perry Co. (fishing)
- **Gifford Pinchot State Park**, York Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Greenwood Furnace State Park**, Huntingdon Co. (fishing and paddling)
- **Joseph E. Ibberson Conservation Area**, Dauphin Co.
- **Kings Gap Environmental Education Center**, Cumberland Co.
- **Little Buffalo State Park**, Perry Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Memorial Lake State Park**, Lebanon Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Mont Alto State Park**, Franklin Co. (fishing)
- **Pine Grove Furnace State Park**, Cumberland Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Reeds Gap State Park**, Mifflin Co. (fishing)
- **Samuel S. Lewis State Park**, York Co.
- **Shawnee State Park**, Bedford Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Susquehanna Riverlands State Park**, York Co.
- **Swatara State Park**, Lebanon and Schuylkill counties (fishing and paddling)
- **Trough Creek State Park**, Huntingdon Co. (fishing)
- **Warriors Path State Park**, Bedford Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Whipple Dam State Park**, Huntingdon Co. (fishing and boating)

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

artwork-Michael Kensinger

Popular State Game Lands

- **State Game Lands (SGL) 67**, Huntingdon County: Covering 5,770 acres of mountainous, forested habitat, it is home to deer, grouse, bears, turkeys and squirrels. The Allegheny woodrat, a non-game species, is a threatened species found here. Prior to becoming SGL, it was the site of a strip-mining operation and several deep mining sites, which suffered from acid mine drainage. Kennedy, Miller and Shoup runs have been restored and now support native Brook Trout.
- **SGL 261**, Bedford County: Consisting of 3,220 acres, most of it is forested with about 150 acres of a reclaimed strip mine. Reclaimed mines offer diverse vegetation used by wildlife such as the endangered short-eared owl and declining populations of grassland birds. Hunting includes deer, grouse, bears, turkeys, small game and waterfowl. The nearby Raystown Branch Juniata River offers excellent fishing and boating.



photo-J. Dingel

Short-eared owl

- **SGL 290**, Dauphin County: With just over 1,040 acres, the largest track is Haldeman Island on the Susquehanna River. A foot bridge offers access to Haldeman Island year-round, but there are some public access restrictions. A kiosk on the island-side of the bridge provides additional information. The entire island is accessible by boat and offers fishing. Hunting, hiking and birdwatching are popular. A wildlife viewing platform offers panoramic views of wetland habitats, wildlife and remnants of a hacking tower.
- **SGL 230**, Cumberland and Perry counties: Encompassing nearly 1,300 acres, enjoy hunting, hiking, birdwatching, bike riding and horseback riding. The newest acquisition is Waggoner's Gap. Waggoner's Gap Hawk Watch, the second oldest hawk watch in the United States, sits atop Kittatinny Ridge. It is a migration corridor for at least 16 species of hawks, eagles, falcons, vultures and more than 150 species of songbirds. A public shooting range and an archery range are onsite.
- **State Game Lands 211**, Dauphin, Lebanon and Schuylkill (Southeast Region) counties: Covering an impressive 44,000 acres, this amount of land for wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation is a conservation success story. Deer, grouse, squirrels and turkeys are the primary game species. The Appalachian and Horse-Shoe trails offer hiking and wildlife viewing. A public shooting range is available.



Sweet Fishing

by Bob Frye photos by the author

You can fish hot chocolate-colored crankbaits, chocolate thunder flies, chocolate snowflake spinnerbaits, even chocolately-looking soft plastics.

But, there's only one place where you can fish them and, in the same day, get a cocoa massage, create a 1-pound peanut butter cup, tour a chocolate factory and enjoy a chocolate martini. That's Hershey.

The self-proclaimed "Sweetest Place on Earth," home to the famous candy company, boasts all kinds of chocolate-themed attractions targeting adults, children and families. And, it's located in Dauphin County, a county central to some really good fishing and boating.

Here are five spots to check out, all within 30 minutes of Chocolate World.

Memorial Lake State Park

The highlight of this park, located north of Hershey and surrounded by Fort Indiantown Gap, is 85-acre Memorial Lake. It's

➔ *Memorial Lake State Park, Lebanon County, is a great place to paddle. It has two boat launches and a seasonal boat rental concession.*

a warmwater fishery, with Bluegills and Largemouth Bass most common. But, you can catch muskies, pickerel, Black Crappies, White Crappies and Yellow Perch.

The lake's north side offers the most shore fishing and has two boat launches, a seasonal boat concession, restrooms and picnic areas. There's a parking lot, trail and some shore fishing on the south side, too.

Quittapahilla Creek

Much of the nearly 17-mile "Quittie," all just east of Hershey and accessible off Route 422, gets stocked with trout. Three sections—3, 4 and 7, running from near Palmyra upstream to Cleona—are managed under stocked trout water regulations and get stocked at least twice a year with Brown Trout, Rainbow





People who visit Hershey can find good fishing nearby. Rainbow trout are one of the main draws when it comes to fishing Stoevers Dam, Lebanon County.

Trout and golden Rainbow Trout. Section 3 flows by Cleona Community Park and is kid-friendly.

Section 4 is managed under Keystone Select Stocked Trout regulations, meaning it gets stocked with a higher number of trophy-sized trout. It largely flows through Quittie Creek Nature Park and is open to artificial lures only.

Stoevers Dam Park

A 23.5-acre lake gets stocked with trout—Rainbow Trout and golden Rainbow Trout—each March, in time for opening day of trout season. It's home to panfish and Largemouth Bass, too, so there's usually something biting.

It offers good shore access, as well as one boat launch suitable for canoes, kayaks and other unpowered boats.

The surrounding park offers permits for primitive camping on a first-come, first-serve basis for tents and recreational vehicles. Hiking trails and a 125-year-old "Nature Barn" entertain with natural history displays and educational programs.

Swatara Creek

Forty-two miles of the creek known as "the Swattie" constitute an official water trail, flowing from Swatara State Park past Hershey on its way to the Susquehanna River.

It's a Class I water, suitable for beginners, flowing through a mix of woodlands and farm country. There are a couple of low-head dams to be aware of, but it's otherwise a peaceful float.

Anglers can expect to catch Smallmouth Bass, as well as Channel Catfish, panfish and, close to the mouth at the Susquehanna River, additional species.

Lions Lake Park

Located almost due east of Hershey, just off Route 72, Lions Lake is perfect for those with young children.

Its 13-acre lake gets stocked twice each spring with Rainbow Trout and golden Rainbow Trout, and it holds plentiful-if-smallish Largemouth Bass and panfish. But, if attention spans fizzle, there's also a playground, paved walking path, picnic areas, modern restrooms and lots of open space. There's a small boat launch suitable for unpowered boats and electric motors, too.

So, whether you prefer stream or lake, trout or bass, big water or small, serious fishing or family-friendly fun, there are options aplenty around Hershey. That's sweet, as you'd expect. ☺

"Sweetest Place on Earth"

Hershey is a chocolate-lover's delight, as anyone who visits here can get their fill of all things tasty and good. And, where else do the street lights resemble Hershey kisses?

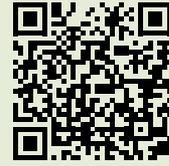
Many of those who come here take in the rides at Hershey Park, explore the attached ZooAmerica, visit the Hershey Story Museum, learn about falconry in programs featuring live birds at The Hotel Hershey, eat at places like the Chocolatier, delight in Hershey Gardens and enjoy Hershey Theatre.

Memorial Lake State Park:



dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/FindAPark/MemorialLakeStatePark/Pages/default.aspx

Quittapahilla Creek:



visitlebanonvalley.com/business/quittie-creek-nature-park/

Stoevers Dam Park:



visitlebanonvalley.com/business/stoevers-dam-park

Swatara Watershed Association:



swatarawatershed.org

Lions Lake Park:



northlebanontwppa.gov/lions-lake

Hershey, PA:



hersheypa.com



Tying the Partridge and Orange

by Carl Haensel photos by the author

The start of the spring trout fishing season is one of my favorite times of the year. Insects are in the air, streams are up and warming water temperatures bring trout chasing bugs to the surface. While matching a hatch with a specific fly works well to catch trout throughout the year, anglers have not always imitated specific organisms. Instead, classic soft hackle flies like the Partridge and Orange were used to imitate movement and action of a more generic escaping insect. The Partridge and Orange originated in England. It has been used extensively on Pennsylvania streams for over 150 years. The partridge hackle gently moves and sways in the water's current, imitating insect legs, wings and tails. Some anglers like to tie other color versions including yellow and green. With an added bead, it works well in faster water. The green variant is particularly useful during spring caddisfly hatches. Anglers often find that fishing the Partridge and Orange down and across produces excellent results. Try giving it some motion during its swing across the current to entice finicky fish. ☐



Springtime feisty Brown Trout chase soft hackle flies like the Partridge and Orange.

Tying the Partridge and Orange Materials

Hook: Size 12-18 1x long wet fly hook of choice

Thread: 8/0 orange

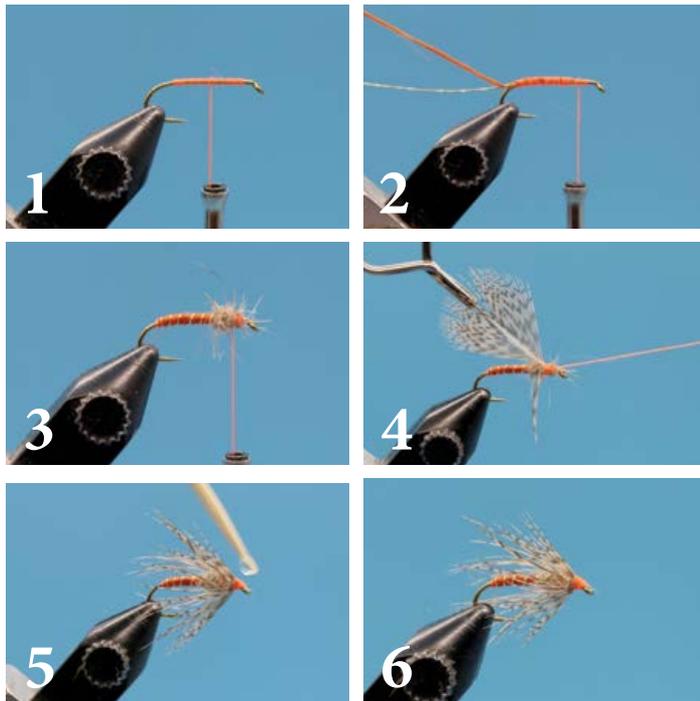
Rib: Fine gold wire

Abdomen: Orange floss

Thorax: Tan sparkle hare's ear dubbing

Hackle: Hungarian partridge soft hackle

Glue: Classic head cement



- 1 Wrap your thread onto the hook. Place a base layer along the shank.
- 2 Tie in the gold wire and orange floss at the bend of the hook, facing rearward. Wrap the floss and then the gold wire forward. Tie them off; trim the ends.
- 3 Wrap on a small ball of hare's ear dubbing at the thorax of the fly.
- 4 Tie in the partridge feather ahead of the thorax dubbing. Wrap it with the barbules facing rearward.
- 5 Build up a thread head behind the eye of the hook, whip finish and glue with head cement. A toothpick or bodkin works well on these small flies for application.
- 6 The finished Partridge and Orange.

Pennsylvania State-Record Fish

| | | | | | |
|--|---------------|---|--|---------------|---|
| Bass, Largemouth Birch Run Reservoir Adams Co. | 11 lb. 3 oz. | Donald Shade Waynesboro, PA 1983 | Salmon, Coho Lake Erie Erie Co. | 15 lb. 5 oz. | Jack Scheirer McMurry, PA 1985 |
| Bass, Rock Elk Creek Erie Co. | 3 lb. 2 oz. | David L. Weber Lake City, PA 1971 | Salmon, Pink Elk Creek Erie Co. | 4 lb. 8 oz. | David A. Rabatin Bethel Park, PA 1995 |
| Bass, Smallmouth Scotts Run Lake Berks Co. | 8 lb. 8 oz. | Robert T. Steelman Havertown, PA 1997 | Sauger Susquehanna River Lycoming Co. | 4 lb. | Tim Waltz Williamsport, PA 2001 |
| Bass, Striped - Inland Waters Raystown Lake Huntingdon Co. | 53 lb. 12 oz. | Robert Price Huntingdon, PA 1994 | Shad, American Delaware River Pike Co. | 9 lb. 9 oz. | Anthony Mecca Peckville, PA 1986 |
| Bass, Striped - Marine Delaware River Delaware Co. | 53 lb. 13 oz. | Donald J. Clark Boothwyn, PA 1989 | Suckers Allegheny River Forest Co. | 12 lb. 14 oz. | Raymond C. Szalewicz Titusville, PA 2003 |
| Bass, White Conneaut Lake Crawford Co. | 4 lb. | Robert H. Hornstrom Meadville, PA 2002 | Trout, Brook Fishing Creek Clinton Co. | 7 lb. | Vonada Ranck Watsontown, PA 1996 |
| Bluegill Keystone Lake Armstrong Co. | 2 lb. 9 oz. | Tom Twincheck Blairsville, PA 1983 | Trout, Brown Lake Erie Erie Co. | 20 lb. 9 oz. | Robert J. Ferraro Erie, PA 2020 |
| Carp, Common Juniata River Huntingdon Co. | 52 lb. | George Brown Saltillo, PA 1962 | Trout, Golden Rainbow Mahoning Creek Schuylkill Co. | 13 lb. 8 oz. | Eli Borger Palmerton, PA 2008 |
| Catfish, Bullhead Beltzville Lake Carbon Co. | 4 lb. 10 oz. | Ian C. Radler Palmerton, PA 2011 | Trout, Lake Lake Erie Erie Co. | 31 lb. 13 oz. | Keith Miller Cranberry, PA 2019 |
| Catfish, Channel Lehigh Canal Northampton Co. | 35 lb. 3 oz. | Austin E. Roth III Bowmanstown, PA 1991 | Trout, Rainbow Jordan Creek Lehigh Co. | 15 lb. 6 oz. | Dennis L. Clouse Bethlehem, PA 1986 |
| New Record! Catfish, Flathead Lake Aldred Lancaster Co. | 66 lb. 6 oz. | Michael Wherley Fayetteville, PA 2023 | Trout, Steelhead Walnut Creek Erie Co. | 20 lb. 3 oz. | Corey T. Brown Osterburg, PA 2001 |
| Crappie Hammond Lake Tioga Co. | 4 lb. 3 oz. | Richard A. Pino Covington, PA 2000 | Walleye Youghiogheny River Fayette Co. | 18 lb. 1 oz. | Richard E. Nicholson Connellsville, PA 2021 |
| Drum, Freshwater (Sheepshead) Monongahela River Washington Co. | 19 lb. 14 oz. | Tim Rogers Finleyville, PA 1994 | | | |
| Muskellunge Conneaut Lake Crawford Co. | 54 lb. 3 oz. | Lewis Walker Jr. Meadville, PA 1924 | | | |
| Perch, White Delaware River Delaware Co. | 1 lb. 12 oz. | James Clark Philadelphia, PA 2008 | | | |
| Perch, Yellow Lake Erie Erie Co. | 3 lb. | Kirk Rudzinski Erie, PA 2021 | | | |
| Pickrel, Chain Long Pond Wayne Co. | 8 lb. 15 oz. | Dave Wilson Honesdale, PA 2002 | | | |
| Pike, Northern Allegheny Reservoir McKean Co. | 35 lb. | Carl Stoltz Bradford, PA 2003 | | | |
| Salmon, Atlantic - Landlocked Lake Raystown Lake Huntingdon Co. | 17 lb. 2 oz. | Brian Keller Altoona, PA 2001 | | | |
| Salmon, Chinook Lake Erie Erie Co. | 28 lb. 15 oz. | Gregory Lasko Erie, PA 1990 | | | |

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NOTES *from the Streams*

Unlikely fishing partner

For almost all Waterways Conservation Officers (WCOs), trout season marks the start of the busy season. Many anglers and boaters have cabin fever and want to get onto the water as the days get longer and warmer. Some outdoor enthusiasts bring their pets along to get them out of the house and into the fresh air.

The most common sight is a dog walking with their owner. And, a cat is more common than most people may think, either on a leash or in a carrier by the water with its owner. At the start of trout season in Berks County, I encountered a pet I have never seen on a stream before.

While patrolling the stream, I noticed a car parked next to a bridge—a good indication of anglers nearby. As standard practice, I began walking over the bridge and looking down at the water for the angler. I knew the angler was down there, because I saw a backpack and tackle box sitting on the bridge. When I saw the man, I asked for his fishing license and how the fishing was so far.

He showed me his license and replied that the fishing was good. I told him to have a good day. As I turned to leave and walk past the backpack, I heard someone say something to me. As I looked at the backpack for the source of the voice, I noticed it wasn't just a backpack. It was a pet carrier with a clear front and breathing holes. Inside of it was the angler's pet parrot saying hello to me.

Being an animal lover, I spoke with the angler again and told him that it was an excellent way to get the parrot outdoors. He agreed, and told me he had been taking his parrot with him everywhere. It loved meeting new people. As people who spend every day in the outdoors, WCOs see a lot of animals in their patrols. Now, I can add a parrot to that list.—WCO Derek A. Norman, Northern Montgomery and Eastern Berks counties.

Teaching opportunity

One day, I was walking along the banks, talking to every angler I came across. Checking license

after license, everyone seemed to be obeying the fishing rules and regulations. It was a good day. As I kept walking, I noticed two individuals along the bank that were frustrated with their fishing gear. As I got closer, I saw that their line was badly tangled. I offered my help, and they gladly accepted. During this time, I found out that it was a mother and son

duo who were completely new to fishing, and they had no idea where to begin. Then, I untangled the line and gave them a crash course on how to fish. I taught them how to rig their line, how to cast and how to bait their hooks. Afterwards, as I was about to walk away, I witnessed the son catch his first fish—a Bluegill—and he was extremely happy. Then, I showed them how to take a fish off the hook and release it to the water unharmed.

Teaching other people how to fish and sharing my love for the outdoors is probably my favorite part of the job. It made my day watching him catch his first fish. Hopefully, it made their day, too.—WCO Seth J. Strawser, Perry and Juniata counties.

Everywhere you go

I have traveled a large portion of Pennsylvania. Since I lived in Cumberland, Fulton and now Elk counties, I never expected to see an individual who once taught me in middle school.

On my first stocking while patrolling Fulton County, I met a middle school teacher. Months later, we bumped into each other again. He came up to me and said, "I was with you stocking in Fulton County." I replied, "Yes sir, how have you been?" We started to talk, and we both realized I was a student at the middle school where he taught. Turns out you find old friends and faces everywhere you go.—WCO Wyatt D. Peiper, Elk County.



artwork—Andrea Feeney

photo-Denise McCann



WCO Robert J. Bonney (center), Northern Chester County, retired after 26 years of service. Pictured are (left to right) Colonel Clyde N. Warner Jr., WCO Bonney and Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey R. Sabo.



photo-courtesy of Captain Anthony J. Quarracino Jr.

DWCO Ronald Myers (center), Clinton County, retired after 21 years of service. Pictured are (left to right) Sergeant Justin D. Boatwright, DWCO Myers and Captain Anthony J. Quarracino Jr.

photo-courtesy of Captain Anthony J. Quarracino Jr.



Deputy Waterways Conservation Officer (DWCO) Chrisr Brower (center), Centre County, retired after 13 years of service. Pictured are (left to right) Sergeant Justin D. Boatwright, DWCO Brower and WCO Gregory R. Kraynak.



photo-courtesy of Captain Anthony J. Quarracino Jr.

DWCO Lawrence E. Krest (center), Clearfield County, was honored with the statewide Deputy of the Year Award for 2023. Pictured are (left to right) Captain Anthony J. Quarracino Jr., DWCO Krest and WCO Zachary T. Christy.

photo-PFBC archives



WCO Erin R. Czech, WCO Abigail G. Luteri and WCO Michael Z. Blair were presented with Lifesaving Awards during the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's (PFBC's) quarterly Commission meeting on January 22, 2024. Pictured are (left to right) WCO Czech, Colonel Clyde N. Warner Jr., WCO Luteri, Sergeant Ronald J. Evancho, WCO Blair, PFBC Executive Director Timothy D. Schaeffer and President William J. Gibney.



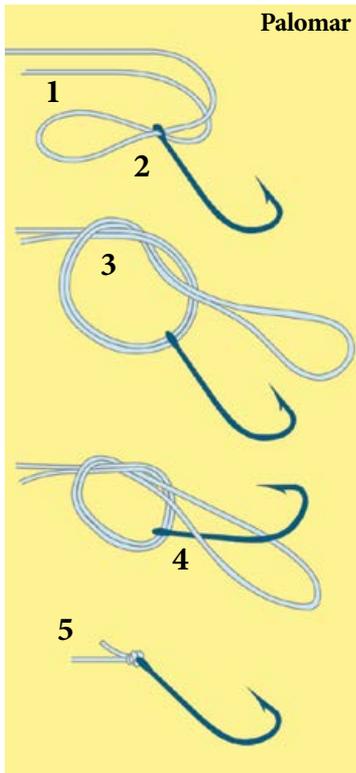
"KNOTS" ON KNOTS

En español:



fishandboat.com/Fishing/Basics/Gear/Pages/Notas-en-Nudos.aspx

*A poorly tied knot can weaken line strength by 50 percent or more.
For example, fishing a lousy knot on 4-pound-test line is like fishing with 2-pound-test line.*



Palomar

KNOTS FOR ATTACHING LURES AND HOOKS

Palomar

1. Make a loop of 4 inches or so of line.
2. Put the loop through the eye.
3. Tie an overhand knot with the loop. The hook should dangle from the middle of the knot.
4. Put the loop over the hook.
5. Pull both lines to tighten.

Note: This is one of the easiest and strongest knots to tie. It is not a good knot for attaching crankbaits or lures with lots of hooks. It is an easy knot to teach beginners and children.

Improved Clinch

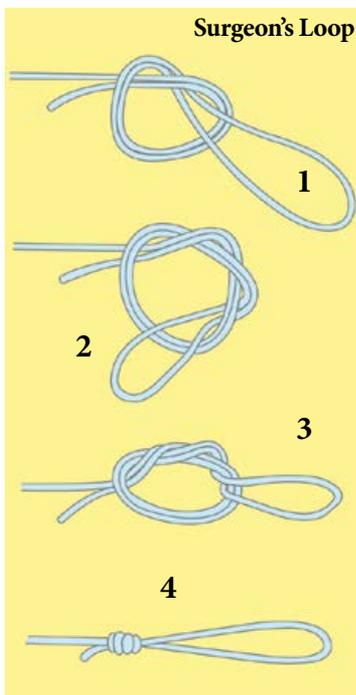
1. Thread the line through the eye and double back on the line.
2. Wrap the loose end around the line to the reel five times.
3. Thread the loose end through the first loop above the eye.
4. Thread the end through the big loop made in step 3.
5. Pull tight.

Note: To tie a regular clinch knot, skip step 4.

Surgeon's Loop

1. Make a loop about 1 to 2 inches long.
2. With the loop, tie an overhand knot. Don't tighten.
3. Thread the loop through the knot again and tighten.
4. Attach the hook to the line by threading the loop through the eye and pass the loop over the hook.

Note: This knot is useful for attaching snelled hooks, swivels and lures that have lots of action.



Surgeon's Loop

KNOTS FOR JOINING TWO PIECES OF LINE

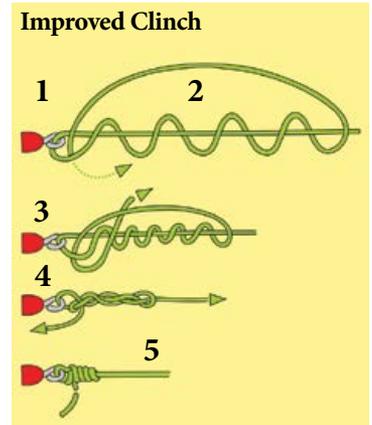
Blood Knot

1. Overlap two pieces of line by about 2 inches.
2. Wrap loose end #1 around line #2 five times.
3. Put loose end #1 between line #2 and line #1.
4. Wrap loose end #2 around line #1 five times.
5. Thread loose end #2 through the loop made between #1 and #2.
6. Holding the loose ends and the running lines, tighten.

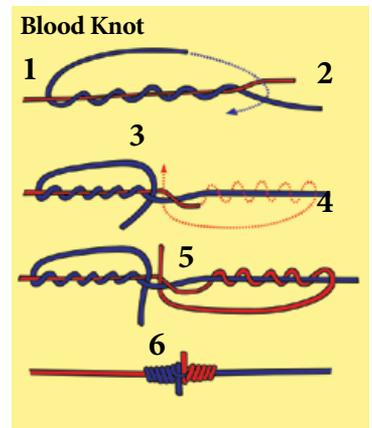
Surgeon's Knot

1. Lay pieces of line side by side, overlapping about 6 inches.
2. Tie an overhand knot, using both pieces. Don't tighten.
3. Pull the loose ends through the knot again.
4. Holding line, tighten.

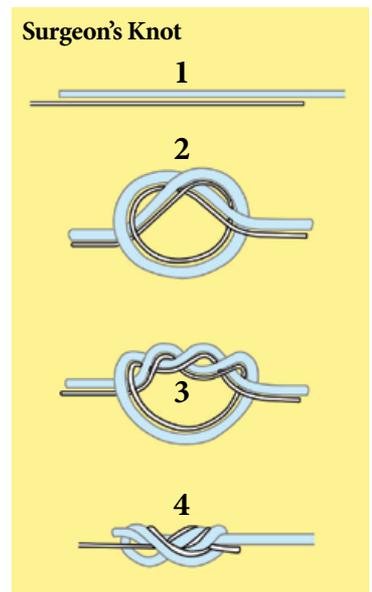
Tips: Wet the knot with saliva or water before drawing the knot tight. Don't trim too close to the knot. Clippers can nick and weaken line.



Improved Clinch



Blood Knot

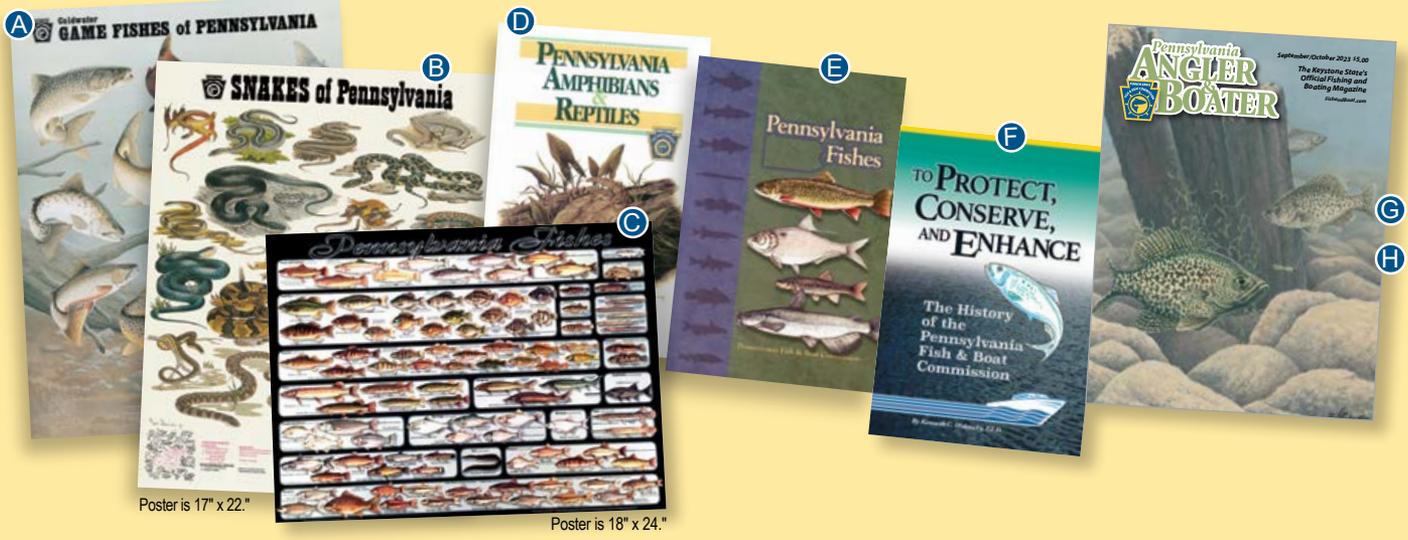


Surgeon's Knot

Poster is 17" x 22."

Books are 6" x 9."

Magazines are 8.25" x 10.88."



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| B Set of: Frogs, Salamanders, Snakes, Turtles (4 posters) | \$12.11 | _____ | _____ |
| C Set of: Pennsylvania Fishes Wall Charts (2 posters) | \$ 9.16 | _____ | _____ |
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Opening Day Trout with Dough Baits

by *Braden Eisenhower*

photos by the author

It's go time. Buzzing alarms awaken anglers from their Saturday slumber. Reservoirs and streams across Pennsylvania swell with freshly stocked Brook Trout, Brown Trout and Rainbow Trout. Today, we greet them.

While catching enough trout to form a meal should not be the priority of the day, breaded fillets crackling in oil weigh on each angler's mind. It's no surprise that when 8 o'clock rolls around and lines enter the water, many anglers trust dough baits.

Luring trout with dough baits is a straightforward approach. Rigging methods require minimal terminal tackle, and scented dough attracts fish without imparting action.

Several manufacturers produce ready-to-fish dough baits in an array of colors. When fresh, the material floats.

Mold a pinch of dough around a size 12 or 14 treble hook. Use just enough material to conceal the hook.





Applying the correct amount of material to the hook, as shown on the left, can be the difference between limits and empty skillets. Yes, there is a hook inside the dough.

This ensures there is sufficient material to float the hook, but not so much that trout may peck at the dough without becoming hooked.

Add weight 18 to 36 inches above the hook to anchor the line. The space between the weight and the hook determines the distance the bait suspends off the bottom.

In streams, crimp one or two 3/0 size splitshot to the line at the desired depth. This method is inexpensive and quick to re-rig when snags occur. In lakes, consider a heavy worm weight ($\frac{1}{8}$ ounces or $\frac{3}{16}$ ounces) to reach depths exceeding 10 feet.

Many anglers prefer the worm weight method, better known as Carolina rigging, because the line passes through the weight, allowing trout to take the bait without feeling the resistance of the weight.

Tie in a swivel to stop the weight. As before, run an 18- to 36-inch leader between the swivel and the hook.

Any ultralight spinning or spincast outfit will perform well. Spool with 4-pound monofilament line and you're set. Pennsylvania allows three lines per angler.

It is important to maintain a semi-taut line to detect bites. This is easiest in creeks and streams, because the current provides constant tension.

Position yourself upstream from a pool, run or bridge. Approach from afar to avoid disturbing fish,

and settle into the spot a few minutes before casting.

Cast ahead of where you think the trout are holding. Watch for the line below the rod tip to jump. If there is no sign of a bite after a few minutes, lift the rod tip, and feed a bit of line from the reel. The current will drift the bait downstream. Make repeat casts to thoroughly cover the area.

When fishing reservoirs from a boat, use the wind to push the boat, removing any slack line. The goal is to drift along a breakline where the depth changes from shallow to deep. This requires constant adjustments with the trolling motor to stay on course.

From shore, employ a rod holder to keep the rod at a 45-degree angle. Reel in slack line once the rod is in the holder and the weight reaches the bottom. Periodic adjustments may be necessary depending on wind conditions.

Dough baits are prohibited on Delayed Harvest Artificial Lures Only waters. Anglers should be mindful of regulations and uphold catch and release ethics and safe handling practices. If intending to release all or a portion of your catch, a spoon or spinner may be a better option. Dough baits often become hooked too deep to allow for a healthy release.

When it comes to harvesting legal limits of trout from put-and-take waters, dough baits are the *crème de la crème*. ☐

Voluntary Public Access– Habitat Incentive Program

by Marilyn Black

Linda and Bob Steiner have allowed the public to fish from their private land along Sugar Creek, Venango County, ever since they acquired the land about 20 years ago.

Sugar Creek flows through a scenic valley that stretches from central Crawford County to its confluence with French Creek at the village of Sugarcreek. A stocked trout stream, anglers pursue Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout and Smallmouth Bass from its waters.

When the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) in 2021 initiated the Voluntary Public Access-Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP), the Steiners decided to ensure anglers can forever use their land along both sides of Sugar Creek for fishing. “We have always been anglers and enjoy the sport. We know that access has become a problem, because much fishing occurs on private land. We can perpetuate the sport for generations, knowing this permanent easement will always be available to anglers wading this creek or casting from its shore,” said Linda Steiner. “Linda and I are happy to give this legacy to the sport,” added Bob Steiner.

Mackenzie Hogan, PFBC’s Chief of Real Estate, describes this program, which results in a permanent Public Fishing Access and Conservation Easement, as being executed and attached to the land deed, so even when ownership of the land parcel changes over time, anglers and boaters may still legally be on the property for fishing and boating purposes. This model is currently subsidized in the Commonwealth as a result of a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that provides a one-time monetary payment to the landowner in exchange for permanent public access to the easement corridor, typically extending about 35 feet from the shoreline of a stream or river, depending on the land contours and property lines.

For instance, the VPA-HIP easement on the Steiner property reaches from the Route 427 bridge (just south of the borough of Cooperstown) for approximately 1,000 linear feet on both the east and west banks, with a width of 35 feet from each shoreline. It also includes a primitive parking area on the east side of the bridge as an extra



photo-Darl Black



photo-Marilyn Black

This fishing spot in the shadow of the Route 427 bridge will soon become a permanent Public Fishing Access corridor in the Voluntary Public Access-Habitat Incentive Program.



Al Bell, Franklin, concentrates on watching his line while he fishes on Sugar Creek.

benefit for anglers. “Kayakers are welcome, too, although water levels are generally suitable for that sport about 2 weeks per year,” said Bob Steiner.

This pair of outdoor writers and photographers in turn shared information about VPA-HIP with creekside neighbors, Cindy and Michael Bennett, who applied in 2022 to enroll their slightly shorter section, which reaches beneath the roadway bridge and continues downstream on the west side of Sugar Creek. They, too, have since 1993 allowed anglers to walk into this corridor. “We figured if money was available and since we were already letting people fish, then we wanted to make the access a more permanent solution beyond our lifetimes,” said Cindy Bennett.

Hogan indicated that the application and due diligence process can take up to 2 years from the time a person initiates an inquiry until the permanent easement is fully executed. Once closed, the PFBC surveyor affixes small boundary markers labeled “Conservation Easement” on the corridor perimeter. She anticipates both Sugar Creek easements will be finalized in the spring 2024.

The current USDA grant as well as matching funds from the PFBC enabled the start of this program in the Commission’s repertoire of cooperative agreements to provide anglers and boaters with access to Pennsylvania waters. The USDA funds will be fully consumed when the 12 already active program applications are brought to fruition, thereby protecting approximately 45,000 linear feet of additional public access to high priority waterways.

“We will continue to seek partnerships to increase and improve long-term public access opportunities,” said Hogan. To learn more about the VPA-HIP and other programs, visit fishandboat.com. ☐



photo-Darl Black



photo-Marilyn Black

During the 2022 opening day of trout season, anglers of all ages fished from the Steiner property along Sugar Creek, Venango County.

SHAD DARTS AND FLUTTER SPOONS

by *Alex Zidock Jr.*

photos by the author

There is a thread, or better, a fishing line, that ties together almost all articles I've written over the past years about fishing tackle manufactured in Pennsylvania. Virtually every creator of Pennsylvania tackle is an angler who was not satisfied with what was already being made and decided to build a better fishing lure.

"For years I made rigs and jigs for ocean fishing," said John Augustine, Northampton County. "When we got into shad fishing in the 1980s, flutter spoons were hot—some worked and some didn't. A lot of folks were still using the old 'go to' shad darts," said Augustine.

Shad darts have been around for many years, and the standard is the 1/8-ounce red and white with a yellow bucktail hair over the hook. "We make our shad darts in 1/16, 1/8 and 1/4-ounce sizes. We make the darts in various combinations of colors, and we make a unique one we call the 'stubby,'" said Augustine.

"But, those early willow blade spoons we used never performed the same. We took on the task of making flutter spoons for shad fishing that all perform precisely the same," said Augustine.

"We're one of the longest manufacturers of willow spoons for shad. We sell on our website, to supply guides and to tackle shops along the East Coast and West Coast. You can

recognize our spoons, because each has a hand-painted eye near the split ring," said Augustine.

After 4 or 5 years in the ocean, shad return to the river, where they were born, to spawn. In the Delaware River, male shad move from Delaware Bay when the water temperature reaches 40 degrees F. By the time the water reaches 55 degrees F, the annual spring run is well underway. Females follow males to the spawning grounds as far north as Hancock, New York. Most of the spawning takes place when the water temperature reaches



John Augustine with the big and small of his lure making business called Hard Core Fishing. He makes shad darts, flutter spoons and an 8-inch flutter spoon for ocean stripers.



An assortment of flutter spoons made by Hard Core Fishing with the distinct hand-painted eye near the split ring.

65.5 degrees F. From late March, anglers line the shore and launch boats to intercept fish.

“To catch shad, you have to be in the right spot. If you are fishing from shore, you should be at a location where strong current runs within casting distance. You should cast upstream and try to get the dart in the seam, where the fast water meets the slower water. Let the dart drift in the current while lifting and lowering the rod. The dart should bounce near or off the bottom. When the dart gets past you in the current, retrieve the dart and cast upstream again, repeating the process,” said Augustine.

“The object is to get the dart or spoon where the fish are moving in the current. If you are fishing from a boat, the flutter spoon can run 6 or 8 feet behind a lead weight lowered to the location where the fish are holding. A dipsy diver can also get the lure in the correct position, where the fish are swimming upstream,” said Augustine.

Augustine’s Hard Core Fishing also makes a massive 8-inch flutter spoon for jigging stripers from deep holes in the ocean. “We make a large spoon that you can drop right down over the stripers and jig them up. We make it in silver, gold, all chartreuse, and one we call the Bunker Blitz, which is glitter blue and chartreuse on a silver spoon,” said Augustine.

While John and I talked primarily about darts and spoons for shad fishing, he said he’s had great success fishing with spoons and darts for other species. “In Canada, we use shad darts and dress them with a minnow and even put some fish attractant on the hair, and they work fantastic for Walleyes and other fish. Our flutter spoons are excellent to catch Pennsylvania crappies too,” said Augustine.

“If you wonder if shad fishing has seen a resurgence in the past few years, just ride along the Delaware River during April and May, and see the many anglers. The Bi-State Shad Fishing Contest, held in Easton, PA/Phillipsburg, NJ, at the end of April, draws anglers from all over. We’re happy to say our lures are regularly represented in the winner circles,” said Augustine. The Bi-State Shad Fishing Contest is an annual event. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) is working with the event director to solicit participating anglers for voluntarily submitting their fishing trip information. Log books are available online at fishandboat.com and can be returned to Daryl Pierce, PFBC Area Fisheries Manager, P.O. Box 155, Bushkill, PA 18324, to help with conservation management. Visit shadfishingcontest.com for more information. ☐



The large 8-inch striper spoon weighs 4 ounces, and it is dropped into deep holes in the ocean for Striped Bass.

Hard Core Fishing
hardcorefishing.us



Tying Together



FROM EGG TO FINGERLING— Tying and Rigging for the Trout Life Cycle

by *Christian A. Shane*

photos by the author

“The Blood Dot Egg fly is a pattern that was developed back in the early 80s, and it came about because of the investigation of looking at trout eggs and noticing that trout eggs had a very distinct yoke in them. So, I attempted to imitate those eggs, and I noticed there was translucency around it. That’s what I’ve tried to accomplish by tying the Blood Dot Egg.” Jeff Blood, describing his Blood Dot Egg pattern.

At the heart of every fly angler or fly tier lies a curious and innovative spirit. Witnessing the amazing process of the trout life cycle during the Trout In the Classroom (TIC) project within my classroom prompted me to experiment a little on the vise and on the stream.

Each January, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission ships Rainbow Trout eggs to over 400 classrooms and learning centers throughout Pennsylvania. These eggs are part of the TIC project. Our classroom aquariums, running at a cool 50 degrees F, are ready and waiting for the orange eggs to arrive. After just a few weeks, the eggs hatch into alevins (sac fry). These creatures have their bellies attached and do

not need food for a while. When more weeks have passed, the alevins (sac fry) become slender and lose their bellies. This is when the students begin feeding the fry. Later, the fry (under an inch) grow to fingerlings (over an inch) and are later released into the wild.

If this life cycle can occur within an aquarium, it surely is happening in nature. When trout spawn and begin the egg laying process, eggs, alevins (sac fry) and fry are present within the watersheds of Pennsylvania. Other trout are omnivores and will feed on other living organisms, including fish, along the bottom of the stream, creek or river.

Using the actual specimens as my fly tying examples, I studied pictures of the project to develop plans for each stage of the trout’s life cycle: eggs, alevins (sac fry) and fry. In researching existing patterns, I also found a variety of materials, techniques and tools to create each stage relevant to Pennsylvania trout.

Eggs

One of the main attributes of the eggs is their orange glow. Also, two dotted eyes are clearly visible within the egg sac. If they are not alive, they have a pearl white color to them. A go-to pattern in my fly box is the Blood Dot Egg. It mimics the newly fertilized egg and has its distinct glow. Using two varying glo-bug materials, the Blood Dot Egg is a good start; it is also easy to tie.

Another hot fly pattern that is simple to tie, called the Sucker Spawn with Diamond Braid, provides more of a sparkle and can be tied in a variety of assorted colors such as chartreuse, pink, cream and orange roe. It mimics a cluster of eggs and works in murky colored waters.



Healthy fertilized eggs have a bright color to them.

Alevin (sac fry)

The alevin's belly sack, long tail and larger eyes make it an interesting pattern to tie. For many, this stage is overlooked in fly tying. As the sac fry matures, it elongates. When tying a more recently hatched alevin, use bright orange, roe and yellow glo-bug materials for the egg sac. As it ages, the colors will start to dull on the alevin. At this stage, switch up to more subtle colors such as dark orange, red and pink. One realistic alevin pattern, called the Furled Alevin by Ken Hanley, incorporates the components of the dark eyes, elongated body and bright belly.



After hatching into alevins, sac fry have distinct eyes, an elongated body and a protein-rich belly.

Fry and fingerling

The fry stage has two distinguishing features—its eyes and its parr marks. This stage of the trout's life cycle demonstrates its ability to swim and navigate the water column. Many streamer patterns mimic an immature trout fry with its large black eyes and parr marks along its lateral line. Don't overcolor this pattern as the fry typically have a dull and drab color when they are immature. These flies can be fished in movement like a streamer or dead drifted in the subsurface like a nymph pattern. One easy pattern is a Clouser Minnow. 📄



In the fry and fingerling stage, fish develop parr marks along their lateral sides.

Blood Dot Egg

Thread: Danville 210 Flat Wax in orange
Hook: Size 12-20 heavy wire scud
Body: Glo-bug material in egg/yoke

Fishing Tip: When fishing egg patterns, rig a weighted or bead head egg on the bottom with a smaller egg trailer pattern off the bend of the hook. If the fish suspend deeper in the water column, they will strike the weighted egg.

Furled Alevin

Hook: Size 8-14 wide-gape scud
Thread: 8/0 white
Eyes: Black monofilament nymph eggs
Egg sac: Glo-bug yarn in Alaskan roe or light roe
Extended Body: Furled Antron

Fishing Tip: When fishing an alevin pattern, swinging or jiggling the fly deep in the water column gives it a little life. Allow the pattern to sink. Then, swing it all the way through the end of the drift.

Clouser Minnow

Hook: Size 8 streamer 3X hook
Thread: 140 Denier Ultra Thread in white
Gills: 70 Denier Ultra Thread in red
Eyes: Small silver bead chain
Top Wing: White bucktail
Bottom Wing: Olive bucktail (barred with black permanent marker)
Flash: Pearl Krystal Flash

Fishing Tip: When fishing with fry and fingerling streamers, switch up retrieves and find one that works. Many times, tying a trailing baitfish off the back of an egg pattern or alevin (sac fry) simulates a minnow chasing its prey.



photo-Dave Myers

The Role of Quiet in Our Health and Habitats

by *Jessica Aiello*

You find the perfect spot—a clear, babbling stream. You cast your line, you stand and wait. Suddenly, the silence is disturbed by the sound of loud voices. There goes that record-setting trout. Unfortunately, quiet time in nature is becoming more difficult to find. In *The Nature Fix*, Florence Williams writes that “Noise may well be the most pervasive pollutant in America.” Human-created noise pollution not only negatively impacts our outdoor experiences, but it can also be a hazard to our health. Thankfully, some things can be done to enhance the soothing sounds of nature while minimizing unwanted noise.

What too much noise does to us

Multiple studies show that prolonged exposure to too much noise (defined as greater than 55 decibels at night or 65 decibels during the day by the World Health Organization) can lead to heart attacks and strokes, among other health impacts. Even reading comprehension, memory, hyperactivity and quality of sleep can be negatively impacted by too much human-created noise.

“When we hear a negative sound, our body responds to that as a potential threat,” said Joshua Smyth, a biobehavioral health psychologist and professor with Pennsylvania State University. “We will respond as if we are becoming stressed. This is the ‘fight or

flight’ response. This can disrupt a moment of calm, but it can, over time if that happens frequently, even create a situation where the body perceives it as chronically stressful. If that happens too frequently or for too long a period of time, we can become, in essence, exhausted.”

Fish and other wildlife are also negatively impacted by too much noise. They can have trouble finding mates, have difficulty staying asleep, which affects their health and ability to avoid predators, and suffer from the same trickle-down health effects caused by too much stress, like a compromised immune system. Research discussed in the American Association for the Advancement of Science noted that there is some evidence that fish don’t school well in noisy environments and avoid areas where man-made noise is high. That can cause fish to avoid key spawning sites or alter their migration routes. Too much noise can also mask natural sounds that are important to fish such as the sounds produced by approaching predators or prey. The National Park Service defines masking as the process by which the ability to hear a sound is reduced by the presence of another sound. They use the example of how smog limits our ability to see a landscape, so too does a loud car noise alter our ability to hear a bird singing or a brook babbling.

That is why the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation (PPFF) developed a new video, “The Role of Quiet,” which dives into how the pleasant sounds of nature enhance our time outdoors and how we can overcome the threats from too much human-created noise through some simple solutions.



photo-Suzanne Enos

How the sounds of nature nourish us

The sounds of nature help in stress recovery, cognitive function and emotional health improvement according to research published in the article, “Ecosystem Services Enhanced through Soundscape Management Link People and Wildlife” in the journal *People and Nature*. Peter Newman can attest to that. Newman is the department head and Martin Professor of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management at Pennsylvania State University and is featured in PPF’s “The Role of Quiet” video. His research looks at the positive human health impacts that come from hearing the sounds of nature including how being exposed to those sounds can improve the rate of restoration after a stressful event.

“Instead of taking an aspirin, take a forest or take a park,” said Smyth, “and those walks or those sits in those spaces can absolutely be restorative.”

How we can be stewards of quiet

Many anglers have always been quiet aficionados. After all, silence and stillness are generally required for a successful fishing trip. However, not every outdoor enthusiast is so perceptive when it comes to the noise they may be making. That is why PPF offers a few easy suggestions to reduce noise, so everyone can benefit from quiet.

Use earbuds or headphones when listening to music or try going without music and listening to nature instead.

- When paddling, use quiet strokes. Be cognizant of other users nearby—both anglers and boaters.
- Turn off your cell phone. If you must have it on, set it to vibrate instead of ring.
- Use your inside voice.

You can also seek out high-quality natural soundscape areas, of which there are many in Pennsylvania, to enjoy time outdoors.

“Pennsylvania is fortunate to have 124 state parks and 20 state forests that are open to residents and visitors alike for quiet fishing and paddling opportunities,” said Marci Mowery, President, Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation. “The peace and relaxation we gain from quiet time in nature is invaluable. That is why we must work together and remain diligent to protect these special places from noise encroachment. As our new video points out, both humans and wildlife need quiet for optimum health.”

For more information:



PaParksAndForests.org



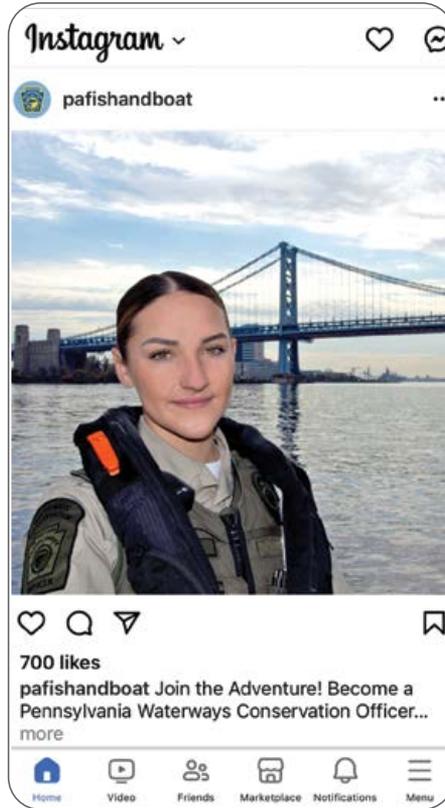
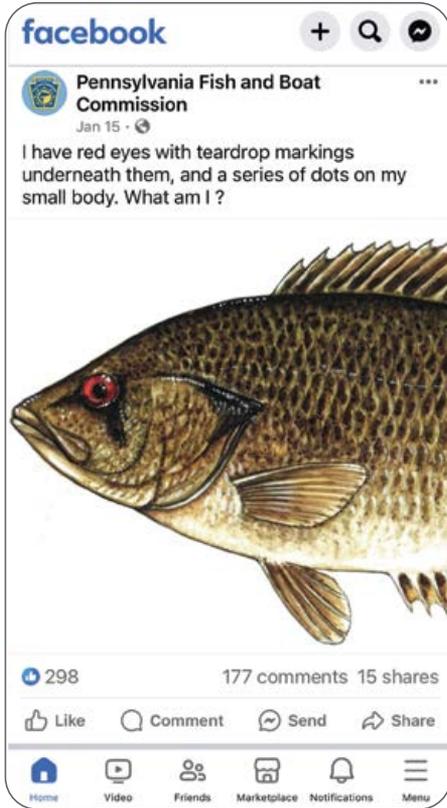
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The Role of Quiet:



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photo-Anna Topper

CAST & CAUGHT



Keith Pierce, Port Allegany, caught and released this 27.5-inch golden Rainbow Trout while fishing at Simmemahoning State Park, Cameron and Potter counties.



Jayson Contino caught this Rainbow Trout while fly fishing Jacobs Creek, Fayette and Westmoreland counties.



Brock Morocco, Hermitage, caught and released this 43-inch Muskellunge while fishing on Pymatuning Reservoir, Crawford County.



Donovan Beaver caught this 20-inch Brown Trout while fishing the Wiconisco Creek, Dauphin and Schuylkill counties.



Brady Gaab, age 7, caught this 7-pound, 28-inch Muskellunge while fishing in the Allegheny River, Forest County.

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

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

