

Pennsylvania
**ANGLER
&
BOATER**

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November/December 2024 \$5.00

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

FishandBoat.com





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Conservation



Family Fishing



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Paddling



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State Parks



Streams



Tackle

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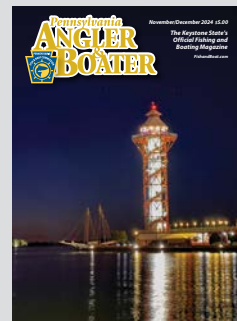
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On the cover



The waterfront in downtown Erie is a special place, especially at night. This photo was taken at Dobbins Landing, named after Captain Daniel Dobbins, an early

19th-century sailing master in the United States Navy. It features Bicentennial Tower. At 137-foot tall, Bicentennial Tower was built in 1995 and opened in 1996 to celebrate Erie's bicentennial anniversary. Shining brightly across the bay is Presque Isle State Park and Perry Monument.
Photo by Linda Stager



GET READY FOR SAFE FISHING AND BOATING FUN

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

When I sit down to write the article for this edition each year, there are always two messages I like to share. They are important throughout the year and are particularly timely in November and December. We will get to them in a minute.

But first, settle in and enjoy the stories and great content in this magazine. We hope you have appreciated the regional spotlights we have offered during 2024. We finish the year with our northwest region, which represents some of the most diverse offerings of our Commonwealth.

The 63 miles of Lake Erie shoreline offers fishing and boating experiences not found anywhere else in the state. Plan a trip for you and your family or friends with the assistance of "Explore Northwest PA!" (page 22). Get some tips on fishing for steelhead (page 30), a uniquely northwest PA opportunity. Learn how one non-profit organization (page 14) is sharing the joy of fishing on Lake Erie with people who, because they are differently abled, would not otherwise get the experience. Plus, get practical tips on inexpensive ways to store your tackle (page 20), plan for winter ice fishing (page 8) and reminisce with a contributor who reflects on his 2024 fishing adventures (page 40), and, like the rest of us, looks forward to what 2025 will bring.

This brings me back to those two important messages I promised to share; messages that get us set for a 2025 loaded with safe fishing and boating fun.

Cold water kills, and life jackets save lives

From November 1 to April 30, life jacket wear is the law for everyone who enjoys paddling activities aboard canoes, kayaks, paddleboards and all boats less than 16 feet long. Data shows that life jackets are effective in saving lives. Eighty percent of boating fatalities each year were not wearing life jackets, and cold water compounds that risk. Ensure that your life jacket and the ones of those boating with you are the correct size and appropriate for the activity (page 44).



photo-PFBC archives

Buy your 2025 fishing license now

Licenses go on sale December 1 for 2025 (page 28), and you can get 13 months for your fishing license dollar if you purchase it then. Get this out of the way now, so you are ready when the first opportunity arises to fish in the new year. While you are buying your license and looking for holiday gifts, consider getting license gift vouchers for the people you think will enjoy a year of fishing. This gesture can be the gift that sparks a lifelong hobby or reminds someone of the joy they find in fishing (page 46).

Thank you for fishing and boating in Pennsylvania in 2024 and for supporting the work that our staff do year round for anglers and boaters like you. The bulk of what we do is a direct benefit of fishing licenses and boat registrations, and we take the responsibility of reinvesting your contributions seriously.

May your final moments of 2024 include some safe fishing and safe boating fun. And, here's to big plans for 2025. ☐

*Gear Up for
Adventure*

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





NOTES *from the Streams*

Between a rock and a hard place

While on patrol one evening in July at Kahle Lake, Clarion and Venango counties, I noticed rocks being thrown into the water by a young kid and his grandfather. I thought it was odd, so I walked down the hill and spoke with them. It turned out the young kid snagged a rock with his fishing line, and his grandfather thought they could get the snag undone by throwing rocks at the line.

I found the attempt funny and offered to get the snag out for them. The kid and his grandfather agreed, and I pulled the line with my hand until it was free. When I reeled in the line, I realized they just tied a rubber crayfish with a shoelace knot around the fishing line with no hook attached to it. The grandfather said, "This is my first time fishing with my grandson, and I figured this set up would work." I gave them a few pointers and showed them some basic knot tying.

They watched and smiled ear-to-ear as I made jokes and showed the kid how to tie a fishing line around a bass lure. After a quick lesson in casting, the young kid cast the lure into a known bass spot near the dam. Within seconds, a huge Largemouth Bass bit his line, and the boy yelled my name asking for help. I coached him on how to reel in the bass and before I knew it, the kid reeled in a 5-pound Largemouth Bass to the bank.

"Beginners luck," I said with a grin and congratulated the young kid and his grandfather. They were appreciative of me stopping to give them a lesson and the kid said, "I want to be just like you when I grow

up". I was caught off guard by his response. All I said in that moment was, "Thanks, little man".

When I left, I got back into my patrol truck and realized how important that moment was for them. Although it was just a quick interaction during a busy day for me, it was a lifelong memory for them.—*WCO Noah B. Grice, Eastern Crawford and Warren counties.*

Birding

While on a boat patrol of Cowanesque Lake, Tioga County, with two fellow officers, we approached a boat to address an expired registration decal. As we motored toward the boat, movement caught my eye along the lake shore in the brush. The movement came from an adult green heron, leaping out from the brush and flying onto a nearby branch. I didn't think much of the bird as I regularly see herons during my patrol along the waterways. However, I noticed more movement from the location where

the adult had just departed. Three baby green herons hopped onto a tree lying on the bank of the lake. Despite seeing a multitude of adult herons, this was the first time I had ever seen their young. I pointed out the birds to my partners to observe. We watched the family of herons and their youthful antics with splendor as we glided by.—*Sergeant Justin D. Boatwright, Northcentral Region.*

Rainy days

Even on rainy days, when most people want to be inside, there are some critters that enjoy wet weather. I decided to visit Opossum Lake, Cumberland County, one of the many Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's access areas. While I was there, a rainstorm was rolling through and people were leaving the area in cars to seek a dryer place. After a few minutes, the parking lot cleared. Then, I saw movement in front of my truck. It was a Woodland Box Turtle enjoying the open lot, wet from the rain. As it passed through, another

Woodland Box Turtle caught up to join it. I watched them continue their stroll through the puddles to the grass and slip away into the tree line.

That moment reminded me that when you may think it's a bad day due to the rain, some critters think it's the best day.—*WCO Lacie N. Mosteller, Cumberland County.*



artwork-Andrea Feeney



SEASONS OF CHANGE ON STEELHEAD ALLEY

by Darl Black

The spawning run of steelhead from Lake Erie into tributary streams is a multi-month event that attracts thousands from numerous states and countries. Many are veteran steelhead anglers; others have little or no experience.

A steelhead is one of the most acrobatic fish an angler will encounter in the Keystone State. Once hooked, these lightning bolts test your ability and equipment. Connecting regularly with steelhead depends largely on understanding how fish react to changing stream conditions.

Based on years of experience, steelhead guide Robert Packey offers input to this basic outline for novice steelhead anglers.

Early fall (September to mid-October)

Steelhead are staged in Lake Erie waters just offshore of creek mouths. Occasionally, a few fish make brief forays into the lowest section of streams. On calm days, the majority of fishing takes place in the Erie surf near mouths of tributaries. Popular presentations for fishing the surf are minnow streamers, 2- to 3-inch flash spoons and scented/brightly-colored dough bait. Along the wall at Walnut Creek Marina, successful anglers use live minnows, a single egg or dough bait below a float.

Fall (mid-October through mid-January)

When water temperature drops and streams achieve sufficient water flow from local rains, staged steelhead begin moving upstream. If rains maintain creek levels, fish will move higher up the stream towards headwaters.



This angler on Twentymile Creek is doing his best to keep one hand warm while fishing a small slack holding a steelhead.

photo-Darl Black

But, lack of rain may trap steelhead at deeper cuts and pools until water level goes up. “Just about anything that works for inland trout will also work for steelhead at this time,” said Packey. “Effective baits include single eggs, egg sacs, egg flies and streamers.”

Winter (stream levels drop and edge ice forms)

“In the winter, there will be limited upstream movement of both fresh fish and fish already in the system due to cold water temperatures. Anglers will start to notice both fresh fish and drop-backs throughout the system,” said Packey. Slowly presented fly or bait presentations are recommended including live minnows, dark-colored nymphs, single egg fly patterns and tiny marabou jigs tipped with maggots and fished with small bobbers.

Spring (streams become ice free and levels rise)

“Although there are some adult fish entering the tributaries, the bulk of the fish will be juvenile males. Most fish will not travel far upstream,” said Packey. “The vast majority of fish have exited the tributaries by the opening of trout season, but there may be a few stragglers in the streams until May, depending

on the water temperature. Spring presentations are pretty much the same as during the fall run.” ☐



photo-Darl Black

Steelhead holding in the current of Trout Run below the weir.



photo-Bob Packey

Robert Packey is a veteran steelhead angler well-versed in steelhead fishing and the dramatic changes during September through April each year.

Tips from Packey

- The most difficult stream conditions are either low and clear or high and muddy. Downsize presentations in low and clear conditions; go with large flashy flies or baits in high and muddy conditions.
- The best fishing happens shortly after a high-water event when the water clears to about 12 inches of visibility. Each stream has a different run-off rate. While one stream may be high and muddy, another may be perfect.
- There is a vast difference in the behavior of steelhead in cold water compared to warm water. In warm water, steelhead will chase a fly or lure and leap multiple times when hooked. In cold water, a steelhead will sometimes not move even a few inches for an offering.
- Care should be taken when releasing fish. Do not drag fish through the mud, sand or gravel. A net is recommended. Limit the amount of time a fish is out of the water. Handle it as little as possible. Do not put fingers inside its gills.

BEGINNER



Preseason ICE FISHING PREP

by Donald Kelly



photo-PFBC archives

It won't be long until we're ready to bore the first holes in our favorite lakes and ponds. So, it's time to pull everything out of storage and prepare for the upcoming ice fishing season. While we wait for frozen lakes and ponds, here's a checklist to consider to be ready when the first ice hits.

Respool and maintain rods, reels and tip-ups

Fishing line becomes brittle over time, and new line can be the difference between sharing big fish pictures or stories of the one that got away. Also, take a few minutes to clean up any dirt or dust on the reel, and ensure everything is working smoothly. Inspect tip-up line to confirm it is still strong and not dry rotted or heavily faded in color.

Organize jigs and terminal tackle

Between bouncing around in the sled and hurried packing after a day of fishing, ice jigs tend to end up in a jumbled mess. There are many ways to organize them, but I break mine down simply. First, I check for signs of rust on hooks. Rusted hooks break easy, and keeping them with other tackle encourages the rust to spread to other lures and hooks. Light surface rust can be filed off and restored. Deeper rust-pitted lures and hooks should be discarded.

Next, I organize jigs in my box by material, size and color. All Tungsten teardrops get their own box with rows dedicated to each size. Similarly, lighter leadhead jigs and odd round ball jigs get their own spaces.

In another box, I keep my tip-up and JawJacker accessories. I like to check and make sure there are plenty of sinkers, hooks, depth finders and leader material.

Charge batteries and check auger blades

It's good to charge batteries from time to time in the off-season to keep them properly operating. Charge flashers, fish finders, battery-powered augers and cordless drill batteries. If there is a problem, it's best to find it now while there's time to replace batteries or contact manufacturers for a warranty claim. Likewise, look over auger blades and touch up with a sharpener or replace with new ones if needed.

Inspect shelters, clothing and safety gear

Mice and bugs love turning the canvas on ice shelters into building materials for their homes. Set up your tent or shelter in the yard or garage to inspect it for damage. If necessary, patch kits are available.

Make sure your ice fishing clothing still fits properly and is cleaned up for the first trip out. I also like to gather all my safety items and inspect them for any issues.

Watch the lakes freeze

When lakes start freezing, make notes of how the ice is forming. Are there springs coming in, hidden stumps or fallen trees holding heat, which keep the water open? Which areas froze first? Is there debris on the ice? There's no replacement for properly checking the ice with a spud bar, but seeing how the lake freezes gives a good idea of where to start fishing, and where to avoid.

Think cold thoughts

Once the gear's ready, it's time to focus on the season ahead. Our ice seasons can be short and unpredictable. However, with a little pre-season prep, it's easy to be ready to hit the ice at a moment's notice. Think cold thoughts, and get ready for a fun and exciting time on the ice. ❏



Respool and maintain rods and reels.

photos-Donald Kelly



Organize jigs and terminal tackle.

*Gear Up for
Adventure*

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



Check state park ice conditions:



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



HOVERING

by Jeff Knapp

photos by the author



Bucktail jigs



Leadhead jigs



Blade baits



A Smallmouth Bass caught on a jig and fluke combo while hovering.

It's my personal philosophy to show fish the most aggressive presentation they are willing to bite, scaling things back as needed. When conditions include cold temperatures, deeper water and ultra lethargic fish, this means downshifting to the point of presenting a lure or bait nearly motionless, which is where hovering comes in.

Basically, hovering calls for parking the boat over cover or structure where you suspect fish are present. Then, hanging something in front of them that has the potential to motivate a strike without additional action.

This dead sticking method can produce bites even when subtle moving presentations do not.

Hovering baits and lures

This isn't to imply that a bait or lure should appear lifeless but rather invitingly vulnerable without added input from the angler. Options include bucktail jigs, leadhead jigs dressed with 3- to 4-inch fluke-style soft plastic jerkbaits, blade baits and jigging spoons.

Bucktail jigs breathe in the water even when suspended motionless. The pliable body of a fluke-style soft jerkbait presents itself as defenseless prey. A vibrating blade bait or spoon, even when not jigged, will give off reflections as it gently spins from boat movement or current.

Interestingly, all three of these lure choices are typically fished in a more forceful manner. Bucktail jigs and jig/fluke combos can be snap jigged. When fished vertically, blades and spoons are typically worked with sharp jig strokes. As such, hovering isn't so much a separate technique but a presentation adjustment when fish don't respond.

Obviously, hovering isn't a cover-the-water method. It's important that you are confident that fish are present. Such conviction comes from seeing fish on sonar, a history of being productive or having cover or structure that fits the pattern of similar productive spots. Think small, too, like a fishing location with a stump along a creek channel, a brush pile or a rock ledge, places where your lure will be in front of fish.

Classic scenarios

Three late fall and early winter situations come to mind where hovering is necessary.

Bass on deep wood

Visualize a submerged tree—or portion of a tree—that's been washed out into the lake and is now embedded in the bottom. It sits next to a creek channel in 20 feet of water. In warmer water, when active bass tend to suspend over the uppermost branches, they can be caught by working a soft swimbait or jig/worm combo through the area. But, with water temperatures in the upper 30s, the fish are locked in tight to the cover.

Holding the boat directly over the cover, you lower a bucktail jig to the bottom and then gingerly work it upward to where it's just clear of the thickest wood. Then, you give it subtle jigging strokes of a few inches, timed every few seconds. Nothing happens after a few minutes of the jigging approach. The adjustment to hovering is to simply stop jigging it, to start a progression of longer pauses between jigging strokes that can culminate with the lure or bait hanging motionless for a minute or more.

Crappies on deep cribs

Crappies tend to like cribs this time of year. Jigging a ¼-ounce blade bait in and around the cover is a great way of catching them. When my friend and I were on Lake Arthur, Butler County, last winter, the fish wanted a motionless blade bait rather than one actively jigged, something we noticed when we stopped working the lures while in conversation. When the fish speak, listen to them.

Walleyes on ledges

Walleyes are eating machines rarely far from their food source. During late fall, Walleyes key in on schools of Gizzard Shad stressed by the rapidly cooling water. Jig and fluke combos and blade baits hovered along rocky drop-offs, where Walleyes lie in wait for prey, are productive.

Hovering isn't strictly a cold water tactic. It's effective anytime species such as bass, crappies and Walleyes get lockjaw from cold fronts, fishing pressure or other negative influences. □



Rainbows on the Rise

artwork-Michael Kensinger

by Michael Kensinger

In addition to writing and being an artist, I'm proud to hold the position of president in the Juniata Valley Audubon Society. On this particular spring morning, I committed myself to a project where some of our members were donating free native trees to our local community.

While a line formed of people willing to take our leafy offerings, I saw movement down at the stream adjacent to us. Upon closer inspection, it was obvious that fish were taking insects off the water. I glanced pensively in between tree hand-offs at the beautiful stream as fish continually broke the water's surface. After the event ended, I walked to my car and grabbed my fishing vest and rod to see what I could do.

"This one sort of resembles what you want," said my friend, Eric, as he pointed out a couple patterns in my fly box—a box that was found along a streambank last year. Given that I didn't tie any of the flies in this particular box, I had no idea (for the most part) what was in the box. We thumbed through the flies to find the closest resemblance to what was on the water. Eric also kindly showed me how to tie my tippet to my leader—a practice I feel certain I am complicating more than necessary.

"I have no idea how to fish an emerger fly pattern, Eric," I said, as we shuffled down to the stream. All the while, trout were rising all over the place, adding intensity to our approach. We picked a spot where it seemed especially active. The current undercut a large bundle of branches into a deep hole. "Let me show you," said Eric.

That afternoon, I caught about 16 Rainbow Trout using the techniques Eric taught me. I would return the next day with several other fly patterns, including a dry sulphur pattern, which also took its fair share of trout. With each cast, I honed my skills—losing about the same amount of trout as I landed. I found there is an art to hooking a trout on a fly, as much as there is an art to everything else in fly fishing. Luckily, I'm a hands-on learner, and this was as hands-on as you get.

On one drift, I felt a strike from a fish just as I lifted the tip of my rod. The fish was another Rainbow Trout, but it was a bit larger. It measured 15 inches, and I grinned from ear-to-ear as I slipped it back into the water.

The next evening, I returned. A few other anglers shared the spot with me. First, an older man with white hair shared my excitement as I reeled in another trout. He, too, caught several

Sulphur Mayfly



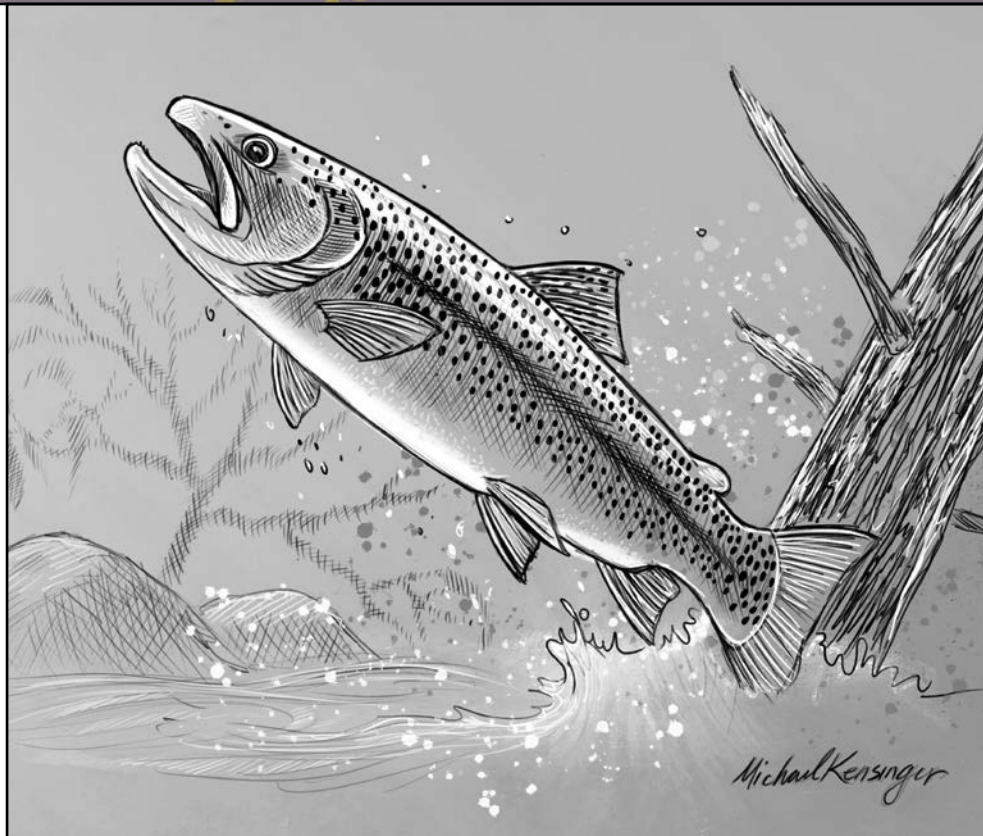
Emerger



Dun

in the stretch just a few yards below me. Eventually, he moved on, and a young man named Dylan stopped by to try his luck. Dylan hung out awhile, and he even gave me some flies. There he was, probably about 16 years old, and already an admirable angler who offered to help me, a novice and stranger, in need of a lesson. At one point, two young girls came down from the playground to watch. The other angler and I let them reel in a trout once hooked. Seeing the excitement in their eyes as they reeled in their first fish was a special moment. Hopefully, one day they will be anglers themselves.

I'll be the first to admit, I'm a person who prefers fishing in solitude. However, on this particular stretch of stream, lined with playgrounds and two baseball fields, gaining attention is inevitable. And yet, I couldn't have been more pleased with my experience along this Blair County creek, and I was extremely grateful to share this experience with the others who had joined me there. ☐





LAKE ERIE ADAPTIVE FISHING CHARTER BOAT—

The Jo-Ann M Sails Again

photo-Darl Black

by Marilyn Black

“It’s been years since I got out fishing,” said 58-year-old Marc Joseph Lott during a July fishing charter coordinated by At The Lake Ministries. Accompanying him on his first Great Lake fishing outing in a long time were Mr. and Mrs. Gail Detar, who encouraged him to go on this charter.

Arthur Kriner describes himself as a former die-hard trout angler. On this, his sixth, venture onboard the Jo-Ann M, he brought along his 22-year-old son Keith and long-time family friend Thomas A. Dickson, a fellow disabled veteran. “The good time keeps bringing me back. Other fishing is just too hard now due to physical problems linked to my leg injuries, plus additional heart and lung difficulties.” Arthur also brought along two spinning rods and a tackle box loaded with Erie Dearies, worm harnesses and similar lures. He predicted his first Walleye on this 4-hour charter would be caught on a chartreuse Erie Dearie, and his prediction came true.

Another friend of the Kriner family made his second voyage on the Jo-Ann M in 2024. An angler since age 10, Donald DaValle worked as a dispatcher at Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority for 38 years. He especially enjoyed fishing for Walleyes from his 18-foot boat, which he sold when his genetic disease eventually required him to be continuously on oxygen.

I met these gentlemen on a balmy summer day when I had the honor of escorting crew and guests on the Jo-Ann M, a steel-hulled vessel initially constructed as a commercial fishing boat. The entire rebuilding of the interior of the ship was completed to facilitate the intended guests—people whose physical disabilities and infirmities limit them to relying on a wheelchair for mobility. Currently, this is the only charter fishing boat on Lake Erie in Pennsylvania that has a custom removable metal loading ramp and related adaptive equipment, which enables guests to wheel themselves in. It’s crewed by staff and volunteers dedicated to providing what Reverend Captain Robert H. Wilson calls “radical hospitality.”



photo-Darl Black

After a charter trip, guests gather on the pier near Cookhouse Pavilion, Presque Isle State Park, Erie County.



photo-Marilyn Black

The Moran family from Loudonville, OH, enjoyed celebrating Josiah's 17th birthday on the water with At The Lake Ministries onboard the Jo-Ann M, where Josiah caught his first Walleye.

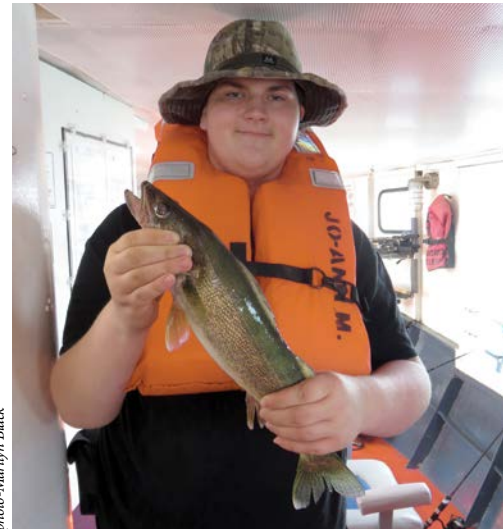


photo-Marilyn Black

Radical hospitality is valuing each person receiving services and thinking first of their needs, values, comforts and ideas. He wants each person who comes on board the Jo-Ann M to feel loved and valued, whether they are “elementary school students with special needs or hospice clients, or anyone in between.”

The crew on the day of my visit included four volunteers, all with the gift of gab—retired nurse Julie Digilio, retired electrician Mick Daub, college student Joel Wilson and Daniel Wilson, who captained the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's research vessel, The Perca, from 1969 through 1978. Retired captain Wilson has been an expert advisor throughout the refurbishing of the Jo-Ann M and has crewed every fishing charter since At The Lake Ministries opened 8 years ago.

Single parent Shannon Moran, Loudonville, OH, sought locations where she could combine her two teenagers' favorite activities in such a way that this family could share new experiences during her son's 17th birthday week after an extremely medically

trying year. Both 53-year-old Shannon and her 17-year-old son Josiah have thyroid conditions, plus neuromuscular disorders and other illnesses, which worsened after having COVID-19.

Shannon explained, “This boat and its crew are a huge blessing not just for us but also for others with similar challenges. Today, I got to watch my son catch his first two Walleyes ever. Evangeline, age 18, did not catch anything today, but this was my daughter's first boat ride. We're blessed to be here, and I thank God every day for each breath.” ☐

More information:

At The Lake Ministries is owned by the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, atthelakeministries.org, 814-657-4024. Registration fee for a charter is \$40 per person. Scholarships are available.



COLD WATER DANGER

photo-PFBC archives

by *Braden Eisenhower*

The first step out of the truck is the most difficult. The cold air races up your spine, and you can't help but wonder why you're saying goodbye to your climate-controlled sanctuary.

Dressing appropriately is critical when the air and water are cold, because cold temperatures pose threats such as hypothermia.

The chill is mostly bitter since you've arrived only in your light, moisture wicking underlayers. Becoming too warm and perspiring during the ride to your destination, makes for an uncomfortable day.

You put on a heavier mid-layer of wool, polyester or fleece. This will keep you warm while actively readying the boat and trailer for launch but not warm enough to sweat.

The morning walk-through of your well-tested rig is second nature. Your batteries are charged, and the terminals are connected. You have plenty of gas for the outboard motor. The horn is in working

order, and a backup whistle hangs on the key fob. The fire extinguisher is onboard, as is a paddle and throwable personal flotation device (PFD).

The destination is familiar water that you've experienced in a variety of conditions. You've accumulated an understanding of safe current conditions and fluctuating water levels, and you understand the effects wind has on this waterway. You know the navigation routes and the limitations of your craft. And, leading up to this trip, you've monitored air temperature, wind speed, water height and current flow trends.

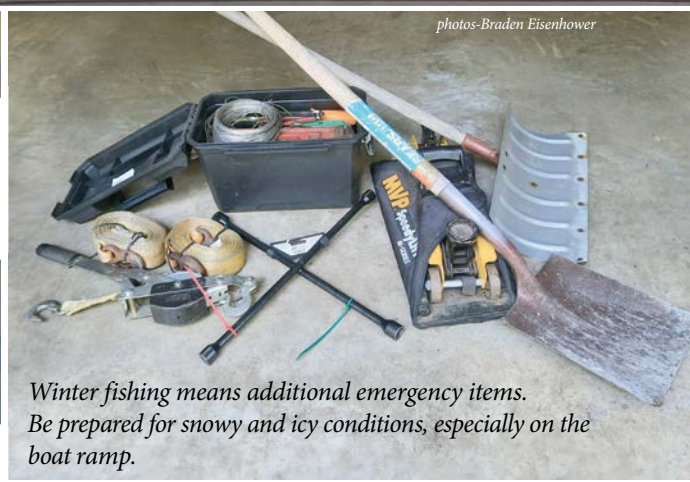
While you have plenty of experience, you're not venturing out alone. You're joined by another angler who has also logged many hours on the water and is no stranger to the area. You've also communicated your whereabouts to others at home.

You and your partner launch the boat. If ramp conditions permit, you pull the trailer just out of the water and allow it to drain for a few minutes. This helps keep water off the ramp, which may freeze in wintry conditions. You've also prepared for worst-case scenarios with shovels, sand or cat litter, tow straps and tire chains.



Proper layering is critical for one's comfort and to lessen the risk of hypothermia and cold water immersion. Being safe and comfortable on the water does not require overly expensive purchases. The items pictured are affordable by industry standards and have been worn for several seasons for a variety of outdoor activities.

Be prepared during the cold water period.



photos-Bradén Eisenhower

Winter fishing means additional emergency items. Be prepared for snowy and icy conditions, especially on the boat ramp.

While the trailer drains, you put on additional clothing layers as needed before the outer shell. The outer shell is a waterproof, two-piece garment that covers the entire body and aids in blocking the wind.

Next, you don your life jacket; always wear it. Before leaving home, you loosened the straps and checked the fit. Remember, don't use inflatable life jackets in cold water. Instead, consider a float coat. You finish with a warm hat that covers the ears and plenty of gloves to change as they get wet from fishing.

You're wearing comfortable footwear that is warm, waterproof and has a stable tread. Maintaining balance becomes more difficult in bulky layers.

In addition to hypothermia, going overboard presents the dangers of cold water shock and drowning. Sudden immersion in cold water can trigger hyperventilating and spikes in heart rate and blood pressure, which may lead to emergencies like cardiac arrest.

A properly fitting life jacket prevents submersion—lessening the risk of

drowning—by floating the head and airways above the water's surface. Wear a life jacket, even when ice fishing. It's a mandatory requirement for canoes, kayaks, paddleboards and boats less than 16 feet long from November 1 through April 30.

You proceed to the spot with caution, every movement taken with thought and care. In the cold water season, safety is the priority. ☐

Gear Up for Adventure
Don't Forget to Wear Your Life Jacket!

Check state park ice conditions:

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

Planning a FAMILY GETAWAY

by Bob Frye

photos by the author

Sometimes, unpredictable surprises amble into your world. Once, my family and I went to Prince Gallitzin State Park, Cambria County, eager for a weekend of camping. We planned that outing because of its location and mix of paddling, fishing, hiking and wildlife viewing.

At our campsite, we set up our tent, then climbed inside to unfurl sleeping pads and bags. Things were going well.

But, we didn't count on the black oil sunflower seeds that previous campers had dumped in a large mound at the base of a tree just a few feet away. Unnoticed by us, they drew other attention.

A peek through the tent flap revealed four skunks, feeding side by side at those seeds like hogs at a trough. They didn't leave for hours, but the kids were fast asleep. My wife and I joined them soon after.

Still, we had a great time that weekend. Likewise, you can have fun by planning trips that link fishing and boating with other activities you enjoy.

Saddle up

There are hundreds of miles of equestrian trails across 30 state parks that also offer fishing and boating. French Creek State Park, Berks and Chester counties, for example, is home to two lakes—one is a warmwater fishery; the other is stocked with trout and includes a portion of the 140-mile Horse-Shoe Trail.

There are trails crisscrossing state forests, too. Many are near lakes or streams. The all-volunteer Fort Armstrong Horseman's Association operates a 97-acre horse park (crookedcreekhorsepark.com) adjacent to the United States Army Corps of Engineers' Crooked Creek Lake, Armstrong County. You can camp, ride, fish and boat.

Treasure hunt

Many state and local parks with fishing and boating also host geocaching, where players use GPS units or apps to seek or leave tokens and other treasures. It's a hobby with a huge reach; there are nearly 3 million caches in nearly 200 countries, according to geocaching.com/play.

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources periodically offers "learn to geocache" programs. Check its events calendar at events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Pedal and paddle

A big fish on the line gets your heart pumping. So, too, can leaning into the curved dirt bank of a mountain bike course.

Visit the United States Army Corps of Engineers' Raytown Lake, Huntingdon County, which boasts tremendous fishing and also has a mountain bike park.



Thirty-two state parks include mountain bike trails, and there are numerous rail trails—many paralleling fishable rivers and streams.





There are many equestrian trails across Pennsylvania, where you can also go fishing and boating.



Geocaching is a popular hobby. Many parks with lakes and stocked streams are also geocache sites.



Family outings to paddle Pennsylvania's many rivers can include all kinds of other fun, generally in the same places.

Thirty-two state parks include mountain bike trails, and there are numerous rail trails—many paralleling fishable rivers and streams.

Powersports

Maybe, your idea of fun involves motors and speed. In that case, consider mixing powerboating with riding an ATV (all-terrain vehicle) or dirt bike.

There are many trail riding tours held around the state each year, often traversing public land. Beyond that, many private off-road vehicle facilities offer skills courses.

Check out visitpa.com/article/atv-tours-pa. Then, look for nearby lakes allowing unlimited horsepower boats.

Swimming

Want to get your zen on? Catch fish by becoming one with them? Thirty-five state parks offer swimming in fishable lakes. At Presque Isle State Park, Erie County, you can even experience swimming that's almost ocean-like, with gentle waves and sand.

Another 15 state parks have pools. Then, there are United States Army Corps of Engineers lakes with beaches.

Of course, there are other things you can do on a family fishing and boating trip like hiking, picnicking, orienteering and hunting. You're limited only by your imagination.

And bumps aside, plan ahead and you won't get totally skunked. ☐

Raystown Lake Mountain Bike Skills Park:



raystown.org/listing/raystown-lake-mountain-bike-skills-park/288/

TrailLink:

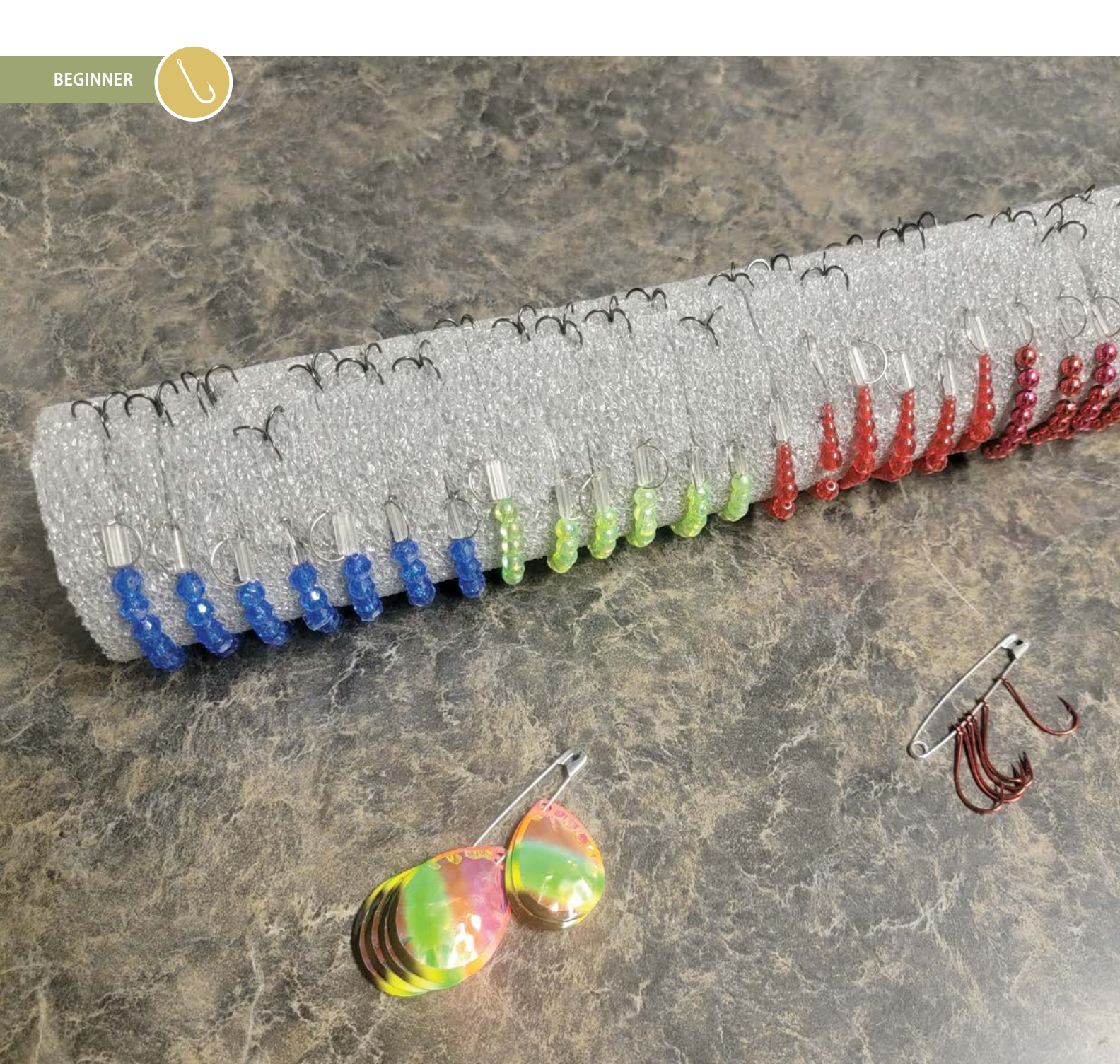


traillink.com

Swimming in state parks:



dcnr.pa.gov/Recreation/WhatToDo/Swimming/Pages/default.aspx



THREE SIMPLE DIY TRICKS TO STORE YOUR FISHING GEAR

by Ross Robertson *photos by the author*



Finding a place for the small or unique items anglers use is a challenge as tackle boxes and bags aren't always a good fit. Here are three simple hacks that will keep your frequently used items organized and closer at hand when you need them.

Pool noodle

A pool noodle may be the cheapest and most versatile tackle storage for an angler. Try this favorite hack. Mark a 12-inch pool noodle lengthwise every ½ inch. Next, with a utility knife, cut a ¼-inch groove all the way around the noodle at each mark. In the end, you'll have nearly 24 slots that will allow you to wrap crawler harnesses, leaders, snells or anything made out of fishing line in a way that it won't get tangled up, yet make it easy to access.

I also use a pool noodle cut to the width of my boat's rod locker to keep my reels off the floor as the boat goes down both the road and waterway. You'll be able to get an extra row of rods in your locker and stagger the reels for less tangles and easier access.



Use a pool noodle cut to the width of your boat's rod locker to keep reels off of the floor.

Safety pins

Spinner blades, hooks and swivels can get lost in storage compartments. Use safety pins to organize the aforementioned items by size or color. Aside from organization, the pins keep small items from combining into other compartments when stored in utility boxes.

Magnets

When you lose small tackle items in the cracks of the boat or on the carpet, keep a magnet nearby. I keep a few magnets in my boat to recover loose items and keep small items at hand. Search online for magnets with an adhesive backing. Look for a thin piece of trim around your console or wherever you spend a lot of time in your boat to place magnets back-to-back, so they hold each other in place. The rear magnet is out of sight. You can leave a few tackle items on the front magnet for easy accessibility.

Simple solutions are often more efficient and less expensive alternatives to fancy bags, boxes and other storage solutions on the market. With a little creativity and ingenuity, stretch your tackle budget and cut the time you spend on keeping up with tackle. ☐



When you lose small tackle items in the cracks of the boat or on the carpet, keep a magnet nearby.



Explore NORTHWEST PA!

by *Linda Stager*

The nine counties of northwest Pennsylvania are havens for water lovers. From the majestic expanse of Lake Erie to hidden rivers and serene lakes, the region offers a variety of activities to quench your thirst for adventure and relaxation.

Presque Isle State Park, a sandy peninsula jutting into Lake Erie, is a paddler's paradise. Here, calm, protected waters are ideal for beginners, while the peninsula's outer reaches offer gentle waves for a more exhilarating experience. For those who crave adrenaline, motorboating and sailing are popular options on Lake Erie.

Anglers also have much to explore. Northwest Pennsylvania boasts some of the best freshwater fishing in the state. Whether fishing for Rock Bass or other Great Lake species, boating for bass on the region's many lakes or fly fishing in the quiet waters of the Allegheny National Forest, anglers will be delighted.

And, beyond the grandeur of Lake Erie, the rest of the region offers fun for every family member.

Treasured trail

Clarion River Water Trail: The nationally recognized "wild and scenic" Clarion River is the 2019 Pennsylvania River of the Year. This 110-mile trail winds through the

Allegheny Mountains of western Pennsylvania and is both recreational (the river is easily accessible by road) and primitive (the shorelines are largely undeveloped). There is a section of the water trail for everyone, but it's important to research and choose a section that matches your skill level.

The section that runs from the north through Cook Forest State Park, Clarion, Forest and Jefferson counties, suits the whole family. Known for its old-growth white pine and hemlock forests, this part of the trail offers easy canoe access and good fishing and picnicking spots. Paddle to Cooksburg, Clarion and Forest counties, where the gentlest section of the river trail ends. Further south, the river trail eventually flows into the calm, deep waters of Piney Reservoir, Clarion County, where paddlers join power boaters and anglers.

This river is a Pennsylvania conservation success story. Once declared the state's most polluted river, through the efforts of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat





*The Erie Harbor
North Pier Light,
Presque Isle State
Park, Erie County.*

photos-Linda Stager



A father and daughter fishing at Bayfront Landing on Lake Erie, Erie County.

Commission and partnership groups, it's now a pristine water for everyone to enjoy.

Popular waterways

Lake Erie: This is one of the Great Lakes, and it's perhaps the crown jewel of waters in northwest PA. It's massive, dwarfing other regional lakes and rivers, and a fishing paradise.

Walleye and steelhead fishing rule here—the two big fish of the lake's shallower waters.

Anglers have many options, from shore fishing to charter fishing and personal boat fishing. Charter

guide companies provide all the gear and expertise needed for a fun day on the water. Of course, having your own boat opens up a whole world of possibilities for exploring different lakes and targeting specific fish.

Lake Erie visitors should remember safe boating practices. Awareness of changing weather conditions and the use of life jackets are of utmost importance.

Pymatuning Reservoir: This 17,088-acre manmade lake, on the Pennsylvania-Ohio border, offers diverse fishing and boating opportunities,



Clarion River and Piney Reservoir



Adaptive kayak launch, Pymatuning State Park, Crawford County



Allegheny Reservoir, Warren County

photos-Linda Stager

making it a popular destination in Crawford County for seasoned anglers and casual boaters. It's a warm-water fishery, boasting good populations of Channel Catfish, Largemouth Bass, Muskellunge, Smallmouth Bass, Walleyes, Yellow Perch and crappies. Both shore fishing and fishing from a boat are permitted and offer unique advantages.

Boats on the lake range from pontoon boats and jet skis to fishing boats, kayaks and canoes. Pymatuning State Park has multiple campgrounds around the lake, offering opportunities for hiking, biking and picnicking. The Jamestown Marina features an adaptive kayak launch.

Lake Wilhelm: Located in Maurice K. Goddard State Park, Lake Wilhelm, Mercer County, is a smaller lake and hidden gem for those who want a peaceful, relaxing escape. This state park offers easy access to a 12-mile multi-use trail that circles the lake. Wildlife viewing opportunities are plentiful.

Allegheny Reservoir (also known as Kinzua Lake): This is another massive lake near the New York border, Warren County.

The impressive 27-mile reservoir offers plenty of places to explore calm coves along the lake or head out for a full-out powerboating experience. The dam



forms the lake, an impressive feat of engineering. Learn more about the dam at the Big Bend Visitor Center.

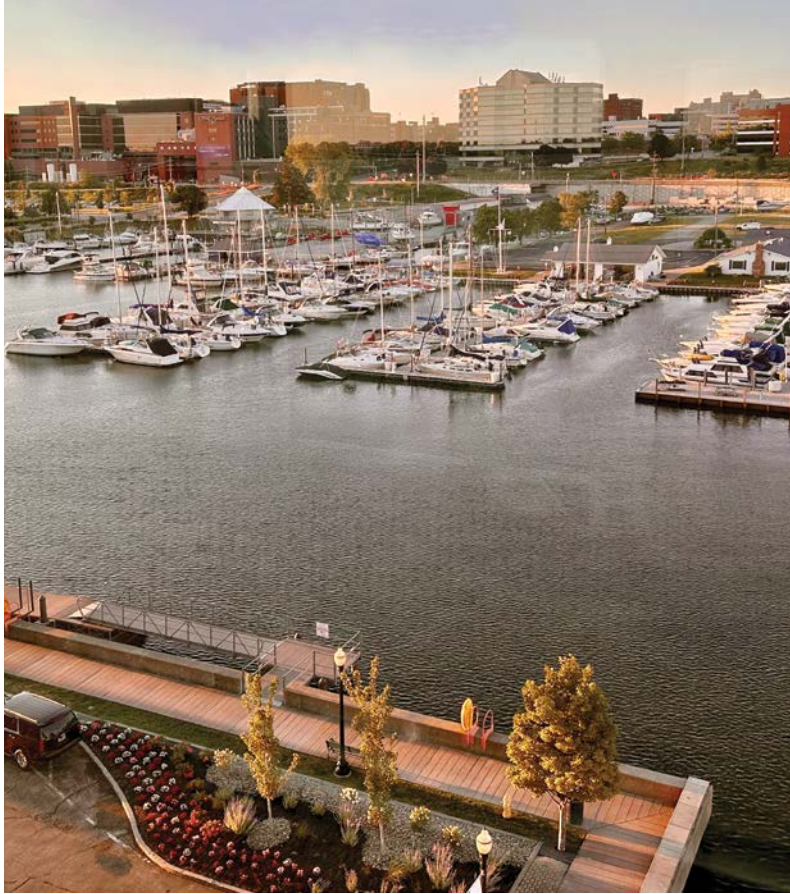
And, be sure to drive through nearby historic Warren, PA. The Warren Historic District is on the National Register of Historic Places and includes 587 contributing buildings. The ages of the buildings range from the late 1800s to the early 1900s.

Best-loved adventures

- **Erie and Presque Isle State Park:** Bring the family to see what this charming city has to offer. The lakefront has stunning views and hosts a variety of boat tours, scenic attractions and festivals. The landmark Bicentennial Tower offers panoramic views of the city. Visit the Erie Maritime Museum, catch a performance at the Erie Playhouse all year



Presque Isle State Park, Erie County



Lake Erie, Erie County

photos-Linda Stager

Points of interest

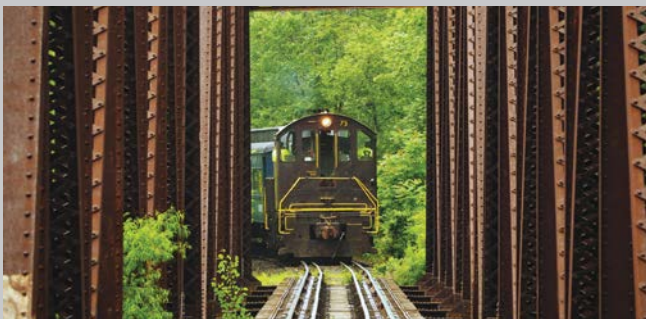
- Cascade Park, New Castle, Lawrence County (waterfalls, wildflowers and boulders)
- Hunter's Station Bridge Overlook, Tionesta and Forest counties (history, archaeology and endangered mussel relocation)—More than 100,000 mussels were salvaged and moved during the bridge replacement project for purposes of species recovery.
- Keystone Safari, Grove City, Mercer County (interactive animal and adventure park)
- Linesville State Fish Hatchery, Linesville, Crawford County
- Samuel Justus Recreation Trail, Venango County (7-mile trail segment connecting Oil City and Franklin)
- Sandy Creek Trail, Venango County (12-mile trail)

long and sample Erie's cuisine including fresh perch, a local favorite. While visiting, throw a fishing line in at the bayfront, just like the locals do. Some great locations are Holland Street Fishing Pier and Lampe Marina Fish Cleaning Station. Nearby Presque Isle State Park offers sandy beaches, beautiful views, extensive bike paths, freshwater coves, wildlife watching and two lighthouses. On the way into the state park, stop at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center to learn about the



different forms of life that live in Erie. Climb the 75-foot tower; then, watch a movie in the Big Green Screen theater, the first of its kind in a state park. Across the street is Waldameer & Water World.

- **Tionesta Lake and Kellettsville:** Tucked into the deep forests of Forest County, this off-the-grid camping and boating experience is known for its beautiful scenery and its isolation. Also, magic happens at night in this area. Kellettsville is in the heart of a rare natural phenomenon: the synchronous firefly. Every June, these lightning bugs show off their beauty in one of the only spots in the country that plays host to them. The PA Firefly Festival is in June, giving visitors a chance to experience a first-hand look at these rare nocturnal bugs.



Oil Creek & Titusville Railroad, Crawford County



A firefly in Kellettsville, Forest County.

There's so much to explore in northwest Pennsylvania. So, pack your swimsuit, sunscreen and sense of adventure. This watery wonderland awaits, promising unforgettable experiences for every kind of water enthusiast while giving the land lover plenty to explore, too. ☐

Teachable moments

Learn the basics (and more) about fishing and boating through a series of free educational events.

Events and Programs:



explorepawaters.com/events-programs

Questions? Find answers to your fishing and paddling questions.

FAQS:



explorepawaters.com/faqs

Common fishes of PA

The most common gamefish in Pennsylvania are bass, catfish, panfish and trout. Muskellunge, Walleye, carp and pike are also popular with anglers.

Catch a PA fish:



fishandboat.com/Fishing/All-About-Fish/Catch-PA-Fish/Pages/default.aspx

Be safe anytime day or night

- Be familiar with the waterway and shoreline you're fishing.
- Take a friend along.
- Use a headlamp at night.
- Wear a life jacket anytime you're on the water and take a wading staff for safety, especially if you're in a new area or moving water.
- Leave a float plan if you're on a boat.
- Pack sunscreen and insect repellent.



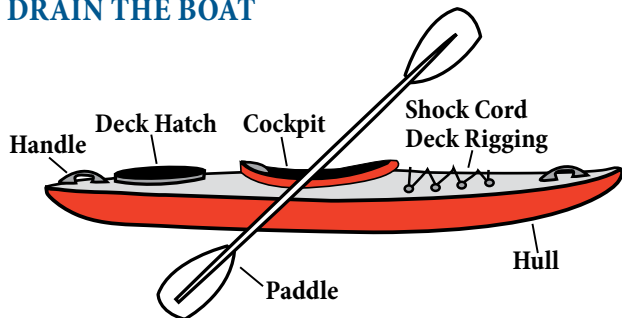
WEAR IT
National Safe Boating Council
Pennsylvania
¡Póntelo!



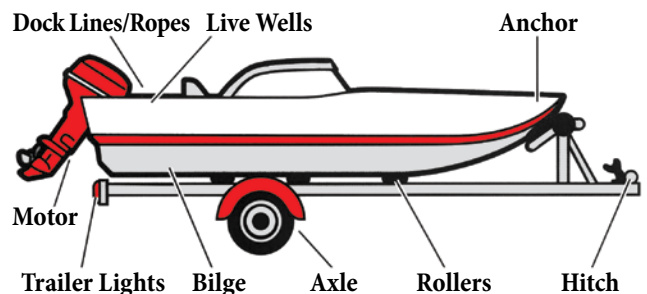
INSPECT YOUR WATERCRAFT

Boaters are required to inspect and drain boats and trailers before leaving waterways to help stop the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species.

DRAIN THE BOAT



REMOVE THE PLUG



FishandBoat.com

Popular waterways

Northwest Region:

- Allegheny Reservoir
- Lake Arthur
- Lake Erie
- Lake Wilhelm
- Neshannock Creek
- Oil Creek
- Pymatuning Reservoir
- Shenango River Lake
- Slippery Rock Creek
- Tionesta Lake



Pennsylvania state parks

Northwest Region:

- **Chapman State Park**, Warren Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Cook Forest State Park**, Clarion, Forest and Jefferson counties (fishing and paddling)
- **Erie Bluffs State Park**, Erie Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Jennings Environmental Education Center**, Butler Co.
- **Maurice K. Goddard State Park**, Mercer Co. (fishing and boating)
- **McConnells Mill State Park**, Lawrence Co. (fishing and whitewater)
- **Moraine State Park**, Butler Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Oil Creek State Park**, Venango Co. (fishing and paddling)
- **Presque Isle State Park**, Erie Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Pymatuning State Park**, Crawford Co. (fishing and boating)

Key:

fishing=fishing, no boating of any type

fishing and boating=fishing and powered and unpowered boating

paddling=unpowered boating

whitewater=whitewater paddling



McConnells Mill State Park, Lawrence County

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

artwork-Michael Kensinger

Popular State Game Lands

- **State Game Lands 330**, Clarion County: This land looked much different historically. It was mined for coal during World War I through its peak in the 1970s. As a result of mining and the reclamation process, the farm fields and woodlots of yesterday have been replaced with cool-season grasslands and shrub and pine plantings, attracting many species of wildlife and providing good hunting and trapping. Fishing opportunities are limited due to poor water quality in this area. There are several miles of hiking opportunities.



Ring-necked pheasant

- **State Game Lands 213 (Geneva Marsh)**, Crawford County: Panoramic views from Interstate 79 and Route 19 bridges reveal a glimpse of this marsh. More than 5,500 acres of the mixed wetland habitats are preserved. This extensive wetland, including emergent marsh, open water and wooded swamps, is extremely valuable to breeding and migrating birds. The wetlands offer foraging, nesting and stopover opportunities for a diversity of birds. There are several launch points to put in a canoe or kayak. Fishing and birdwatching opportunities are abundant.
- **State Game Lands 214 (Pymatuning)**, Crawford County: Known for its excellent waterfowl habitat, extensive management has produced quality fields, swamps and impoundments for ducks, geese and several other species of wildlife. Nearly 200 species of waterfowl, marsh birds, raptors, shorebirds and songbirds migrate across the Great Lakes. Eagles are another popular species to be viewed. Several outdoor recreation activities such as hiking, birdwatching, paddling and fishing are popular.
- **State Game Lands 314**, Erie County: Located in the extreme northwest corner of Pennsylvania, bordering Ohio and Lake Erie, it's often referred to as Roderick Wildlife Reserve. This site constitutes the largest undeveloped section of shoreline along Lake Erie's southern boundary. Management practices such as timber sales create and maintain vital early successional habitat. These early successional habitats are critically important for several declining migrating raptors, songbird species and the American woodcock. Hunting, birdwatching and hiking are popular.



2025 FISHING LICENSES

Annual licenses are valid from December 1, 2024, through December 31, 2025. WHILE FISHING, your license must be, either in digital or print form, upon your person and provided upon the request of an officer.

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

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

2025 MULTI-YEAR FISHING LICENSES

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







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

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



2025 SEASONS, SIZES and CREEL LIMITS

COMMONWEALTH INLAND WATERS-2025

Species	Seasons	Minimum Size	Daily Limit
ALL SPECIES OF TROUT  Additional regulations may apply - consult the current <i>Pennsylvania Fishing Summary</i> .	Statewide Opening Day of Trout Season April 5 at 8 a.m. through Sept. 1	7 inches	5-streams, lakes and ponds (combined species)
	Extended Season: Stocked trout waters Jan. 1 through Feb. 16 and Sept. 2 through Dec. 31	7 inches	3 (combined species)
	Extended Season: Waters not managed as stocked trout waters Jan. 1 through Feb. 16 and Sept. 2 through Dec. 31	NO HARVEST - Catch and immediate release only	
BASS - Lakes, Rivers and Streams Largemouth, Smallmouth and Spotted Additional regulations may apply.	Jan. 1 through April 11 and Oct. 1 through Dec. 31	15 inches	4 (combined species)
	April 12 through June 13	NO HARVEST - Catch and immediate release only (no tournaments permitted)	
	June 14 through Sept. 30	12 inches	6 (combined species)
Muskellunge and Tiger Muskellunge*	Open year-round 	40 inches	1 (combined species)
Pickeral*		18 inches	4
Northern Pike*		24 inches	2
Walleye and Saugeye (Hybrids)	Jan. 1 through March 14 and May 3 through Dec. 31	15 inches	6 
Sauger	Jan. 1 through March 14 and May 3 through Dec. 31	12 inches	6
American Shad**	Open year-round	No minimum	3
American Shad	Open year-round - Lehigh River, Schuylkill River*** and tributaries	NO HARVEST - Catch and immediate release only	
American Shad	CLOSED YEAR-ROUND		
River Herring**	Susquehanna River and tributaries		
Hickory Shad**	CLOSED YEAR-ROUND		
Herring, Gizzard Shad	Open year-round	No minimum	50 (combined species)
American Eel	Open year-round	9 inches	25
Striped Bass and Striped Bass/White Bass Hybrids	Open year-round 	20 inches	2 (combined species)
Sunfish, Yellow Perch, White Perch, Crappies, Catfish, Rock Bass, Suckers, Carp, White Bass, Bowfin and Other Gamefish Not Otherwise Listed Additional regulations may apply - see <i>Panfish Enhancement Special Regulations</i> .	Open year-round 	No minimum	50 (combined species)
Baitfish/Fishbait**** (except Mudbugs/includes Crayfish)	Open year-round	No minimum	50 (combined species)
Mudbugs (Dragonfly Nymphs)	Open year-round	No minimum	Unlimited if taken from lakes, ponds, swamps and adjacent areas. 50 per day if taken from moving waters (rivers and streams).
Mussels/Clams	CLOSED YEAR-ROUND		
Paddlefish, Spotted Gar and Other Threatened and Endangered Species	CLOSED YEAR-ROUND		

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTE: Stocked trout waters are closed to fishing from February 17 to the opening day of the regular trout season in April, unless included in the **Stocked Trout Waters Open to Year-Round Fishing Program**.

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

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

trout season the following year. The exception is those stream sections designated as both Class A Wild Trout Streams and Stocked Trout Waters (Miscellaneous Special Regulations). These stream sections are closed to fishing from February 17 until 8 a.m. on the opening day of trout.

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

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



HOW TO FIND OPEN SPACE IN STEELHEAD ALLEY

by *Ariadne Capotis*

photos by the author

Lake Erie's southern shore is one of the most productive stretches of steelhead water in the country. It's nicknamed Steelhead Alley. The moniker is often credited to author, fly tier and regional guide Rick Kustich. Of the five Great Lakes, Lake Erie is the shallowest and most productive as a sport fishery. So, it's no surprise that finding a fishing spot is challenging at the height of the fall season. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's (PFBC's) website offers useful information and maps. And, you can also discover more about steelhead fishing and Lake Erie's tributaries. Print and laminate the interactive maps. Then, create a binder of fishing locations, adding notes for each stream section.

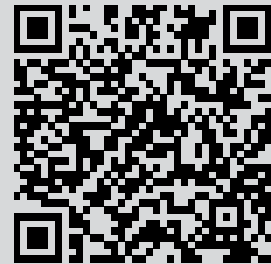
Being prepared and flexible goes a long way in avoiding crowds at Steelhead Alley. Here are a few tips to help you find your spot on the stream.

- Start early—Walking into your fishing spot before first light is a good idea. Take a headlamp.
- Take a lunch—Eating streamside will allow more time on the water.
- Be nice—Treat others how you wish to be treated. If you don't like the behavior of other anglers, consider moving.
- Be prepared to find a new location—Do not park in an already overcrowded parking lot. Some locations allow public access for fishing by landowner permission and are not PFBC properties. Disregarding basic parking etiquette can lead to landowners withdrawing access.
- Be willing to walk into public access—If you see the parking area is at the bottom of a mile-long stretch, make a beeline to the top of the stretch, where fewer anglers are likely to travel.
- Hire a Pennsylvania-licensed guide—Guides are teachers, coaches and others who teach you skills and shorten your learning curve. ☐



Steelhead fishing

Steelhead information:



fishandboat.com/fishing/All-About-fish/Catch-PA-Fish/Pages/Steelhead.aspx

Interactive map of public water:



pfbc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=30d3c4cdaae74096b565da19cbc061d3

Charter boats and fishing guides:



fishandboat.com/About-Us/Affiliates/Charters-Guides/Pages/default.aspx



Chasing Away the Winter Blahs

by Tyler Frantz

photos by the author

It's easy for cabin fever to set in early during the window between late fall's final casts and the first fishable ice of mid-winter. Yet, there's still plenty to prepare in the tackle shed, garage or basement as anglers anxiously await additional days on the water.

Chase away the winter blahs with this helpful checklist of important tasks to complete when the daylight shortens, but your enthusiasm for future fishing excursions is as bright as ever.

Reorganize tackle

No matter how organized my tackle boxes are each spring, they're always a mess by early fall. When the fish are biting, there's no time to put things back in their proper locations. Now is the perfect time to reorganize tackle. Sort by species, color and lure type into readily accessible containers, making it an easier search when you're looking for the just-right lure while on the water.

Clean, fix and update gear

Give your fishing gear a good once-over. Clean waders, boots, sunglasses and boats of any dirt and debris. Resharpen hooks. Repair, patch or replace anything that requires immediate attention now to prevent problems later.

Tie flies

A favorite pastime of mine, especially when the weather outside is frightful, is to start a wood fire, cozy up to my tying bench and restock my fly box well ahead of trout season. Tying your own flies is incredibly satisfying, relaxing and fun. Many local organizations offer beginner fly tying instruction during the winter months. Take advantage of it.

Educate yourself

While you can't get on the water, you can improve your fishing techniques. Attend one of Pennsylvania's many outdoor trade shows and sit through a seminar. Read a good book or magazine, like *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater*. Watch one of the hundreds, if not thousands, of fishing-related YouTube videos online. Take a virtual course with a Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission educator. There's a wealth of knowledge out there if you're willing to learn.

Renew permits and licenses

Renew your boat registration, get your launch permit and purchase your fishing license. As the calendar flips to a new year, check your account at HuntFishPA to ensure you are up-to-date



to participate in the many outdoor opportunities we have on the water here in Pennsylvania.

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PaVintageFishingButtons.com

FishandBoat.com



Now is the perfect time to reorganize tackle, check gear and add a few new lures to your assortment.



Refilling the fly box with some hand-tied flies is an enjoyable way to spend a cold, winter day.



Renew launch permits, boat registrations and fishing licenses for the new calendar year.

Respool reels

Fishing line has a shelf life. If it's been some time since you've removed your lines from your reels and replaced them, it's a good idea to buy some fresh line and respool them. You'll avoid the risk of snapping off a fish upon hookup. Match the size of the line to your rod, reel and target species. Most brands list suggestions on the equipment.

Build a rod rack

Are your rods a tangled mess in a corner somewhere? Get organized and build a designated rod rack to safely store your rods up and out of the way.

Plan a fishing trip

Look ahead now and pick a few open weekends on the calendar and block them off for fishing. Otherwise, your schedule may fill up, leaving you little time to enjoy this activity you love. ☐



Tidy up your storage space by building a hanging rod rack to keep your fishing equipment secure, organized and out of the way.



photos-William Blausier

SPRING-LOADED FISH HOOKS & LURES

by Alex Zidock Jr.

The colonists found America the Beautiful was also America the Bountiful. The Delaware, Susquehanna and Ohio rivers and the lakes and ponds in between were gorged with fish of all types. As late as the 1880s, there were so many shad in the Delaware River that an angler could catch as many as 15,000 in a season, pay all his bills and still have money to spend the rest of the year.

Fishing was big business for some. For others, it meant feeding a hungry family. In any case, it didn't matter how small or how many fish were taken.

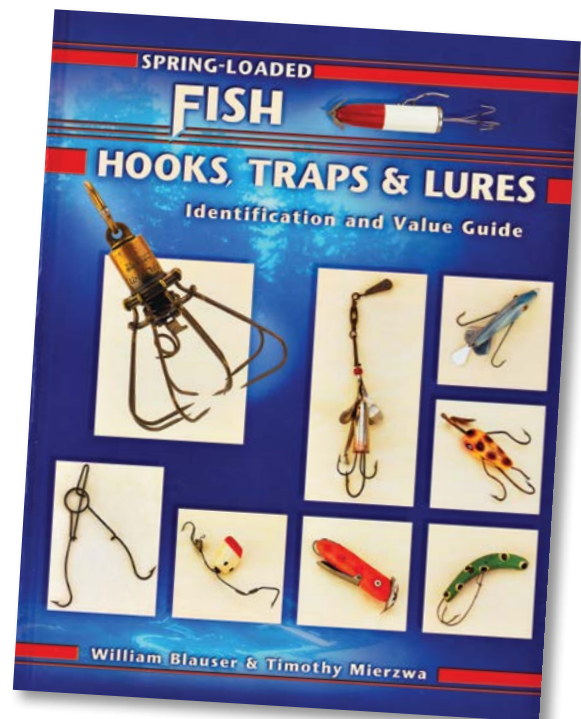
According to William Blausier, the first seven United States patents pertaining to catching fish were for mechanical spring-activated fish hooks that "guarantee the catch and keep of fish." A few of those ingenious devices were invented in Pennsylvania.

Blausier and Timothy Mierzwa authored the tome "Spring-loaded Fish Hooks, Traps & Lures," which includes historical information, value, patent drawings and photographs of many spring-activated, fish-catching devices.

"The Engelbrecht & Skiff Fish Hook is the first invention ever patented in the United States that had to do with catching a fish, on July 28, 1846. Its historical significance is profound," Blausier writes in his book.

For the most part, spring-loaded fish hooks and fish traps employed one baited hook and as many as 12 other hooks

that were spring-deployed once the fish triggered the bait holder or baited hook. Fish could not escape, and in many cases, they were killed in the process. Size didn't matter. Any



"Spring-loaded Fish Hooks, Traps & Lures" includes historical information, value, patent drawings and photographs of many spring-activated, fish-catching devices.

← Made in Pottstown, Montgomery County, in 1946, the claim is that this hook will cause all kinds of fish from 1 to 30 pounds to hook themselves and stay hooked.

fish could feed a family or be sold. It wasn't until 1925 that Pennsylvania set creel limits. After that, the minimum legal size was established, making indiscriminate traps illegal.

Blauser has been collecting spring-loaded fish hooks for more than 30 years. "When my co-author, Tim, passed away 10 years ago, I purchased his collection. I have the largest collection of these devices," said Blauser.

An umbrella manufacturer in Frankford (a section of Philadelphia) patented the Evans Eagle Claw, a 3-inch and a 4-inch size for catching fish. An advertisement in the 1877 issue of *Field & Stream* magazine for that trap reads, "For fishing and all kinds of small game and animals." In his research, Blauser found a larger third size "would be available to catch bears, wolves and panthers." He said there is no record of that larger trap being built.

In a tackle box found in Pittsburgh, Blauser discovered what he calls the "Pittsburgh Rake Trap." This trap for smaller fish is little known, but that's not unusual. "There are some traps we call 'Folk Art', where maybe only one was made, and they were never patented or mass-produced. This trap may be one of those traps. It has no marking and is definitely handmade," said Blauser.

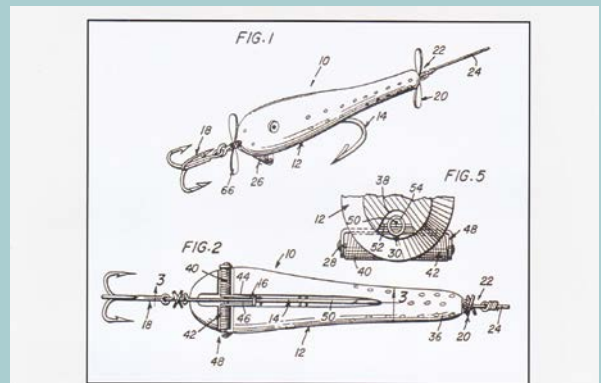
The Automatic Safety Fish Hook is a spring-loaded fish hook manufactured and sold by Schwarzer Experimental and Manufacturing Company, Pottstown. According to the paperwork, it will cause all kinds of fish from 1 to 30 pounds to hook themselves and stay hooked. This hook was patented on September 3, 1946.

One of the most interesting metal killer fish traps was patented in 1957. The "Sure-Catch Device," invented by Big Emmitt Y. Scott, Swainsboro, Georgia, fired .22 caliber and .32 caliber ammunition. It consists of a hollow brass tube barrel attached to a fish hook. Inside the barrel is a spring-loaded hammer. A fishing line is connected to the end of the barrel. When force is applied to the fishing line, a retaining pin is released, causing the hammer to strike the bullet's firing pin, sending the projectile into the head of the fish. In a newspaper article in 1956, Scott is quoted, "Blanks will stun 'em until you get them into the boat; live ammo will stun 'em until frying time." When asked if it was legal, Scott's reasoning was, "must be legal, because the fish is already caught when it goes off. Just helps you land 'em."

Since Blauser's book was published nearly 20 years ago, he's collected more unusual fish traps and is always on the look-out for more. "I continue to issue addendums to our current book, and I'm preparing the second edition. I'm happy to help identify any spring-loaded fish traps people may find," said Blauser. □



In 1877, an umbrella manufacturer in Frankford patented the Evans Eagle Claw, a 3-inch and a 4-inch size for catching fish.



Patented in 1976, this lure is a more modern style. However, when the fish pulls on the treble hook, the second hook is spring-loaded and deployed to catch the fish's jaw.

More information:
springhook.com



Training Tomorrow's Conservation Professionals

by *Jessica Aiello*

The green technology industry is growing. That is due in part to the 2021 Federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which authorized \$550 billion for new investments and programs related to transportation and infrastructure, and the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, which created 210,000 new solar, wind and other clean energy jobs in 2023.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics defines green jobs as “jobs in businesses that produce goods or provide services that benefit the environment or conserve natural resources or jobs in which workers’ duties involve making their establishment’s production processes more environmentally friendly or use fewer natural resources.” These sectors are growing for several reasons including the United States’ aging infrastructure, an increased interest in outdoor recreation, businesses looking to adapt to climate change and governments setting renewable energy targets. Youth conservation corps are at the heart of this rapidly growing green and conservation job development boon.

Youth conservation corps operate across the country and include the National Parks Service Corps, the United States Youth Conservation Corps and the Federal Climate Corps, among others. In Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps is leading the way in preparing young people for green jobs. The Corps was formed in 2016 by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR) to provide up to 9 months of paid work experience, skills training, professional development and environmental educational opportunities to youths and young adults ages 15 to 25. Corps members complete recreation and conservation projects on public lands across the Commonwealth. More than 1,100 individuals have participated in the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps, which has grown from six crews in 2016 to 27 crews in 2024.

“The Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps can be a great way for youth to learn about conservation careers and start building their professional network,” said Mike Piaskowski, Manager of the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps for PA DCNR. “The



photo-courtesy of Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps



photo-courtesy of Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps

2023 Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps crew members

Corps' on-the-job training offers participants the chance to learn alongside conservation professionals to develop work skills, while education days expose participants to conservation topics, challenges and opportunities. Through participation in the Corps, members organically meet and interact with conservation professionals, which facilitates knowledge transfer to the next generation of leaders."

Given the growing interest in green jobs, the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation (PPFF), with funding from the Richard King Mellon Foundation, worked with PA DCNR to hire Strategic Consulting Partners to engage in a strategic planning process to expand the reach of the Corps and ensure its longevity. This 3- to 5-year strategic plan, being finalized as this article goes to press, outlines suggested objectives to enhance the overall program, participant experiences, program sustainability, conservation partnerships, marketing and outreach. These objectives were developed through one-on-one interviews, focus groups and steering committee meetings.

"This strategic plan is a continuation of an overall program assessment that has been going on for the past few years," said Marci Mowery, PPFF President. "People across the Commonwealth recognize the significant role the Outdoor Corps plays in developing a youth conservation workforce, but at the same time, people recognize that there are opportunities for growth and improvements. The strategic plan outlines key goals and objectives to help make the Outdoor Corps Pennsylvania's premier youth conservation workforce training program."

One goal outlined in the strategic plan is to "increase the diversity and inclusion of the program." During the focus groups, stakeholders noted that many youths living in cities, like Allentown and Harrisburg, do not even know what a state park is or think they are too far from home to work there. Most current crew work is done on state park and state forest lands, although county and municipal parks can participate through a cost share program. Therefore, one strategic plan recommendation is to develop work crews within city parks, while another is to have crews focused

specifically on English as a Second Language or LGBTQ individuals to reduce unconscious barriers to participation.

What happens to Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps alumni after the program ends is just as important, if not more so, than what they do within a crew. Being able to find a full-time, living wage job in the conservation field is essential. Therefore, another focus within the Corps' strategic plan is building partnerships with organizations like PA CareerLink offices, Workforce Development Boards and others to connect alumni to jobs in their desired field.

Another item addressed in the strategic plan is consistent funding for the program. In his 2024-2025 budget, Governor Shapiro included an investment of \$5 million for the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps to diversify and strengthen conservation careers for the youth of Pennsylvania over the next 5 years. That increased funding will help hire additional staff, increase outreach and partnership development, increase the number of individuals who can participate in a crew and help pay for certifications and trainings, among other program enhancements. In comparison, the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps received approximately \$1.6 million in state funding in 2023.

"New generations of trained conservation professionals are needed to continue Pennsylvania's rich history of natural resource stewardship," said Piaskowski. "The Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps invests directly in our youth to help them become engaged citizens, stewards and leaders. Our youth are our most valuable natural resource. Investing in their success is the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps' highest priority." ☐

More information:



dcnr.pa.gov/outdoorcorps/Pages/default.aspx

ENDANGERED





OUTDOOR MOMENT



The Eastern Massasauga, *Sistrurus catenatus*, is one of three species of venomous snakes in Pennsylvania. The smallest of Pennsylvania's venomous snakes, it's a rattlesnake.

Size: 20 to 30 inches long.

Field Notes: The biggest problem facing the Eastern Massasauga is loss of habitat. They prefer swampy areas, but much of its habitat has dried up.

Did you know? Massasauga is said to be derived from the Chippewa Indian word meaning great river mouth. Sometimes referred to as the swamp rattler, it's only found in portions of five or six counties in Pennsylvania.



photo: Brandon Rulife

End of Season Reflections



by Jeff Woleslagle

photos by the author

Each year, before I look ahead to next year's fishing adventures, I like to take some time to look back on the year. There are always memories of the first fish of the season. Many times, it's a trout from a local stream that is often neglected in the early winter months, but it has also been a fresh run steelhead from a Lake Erie tributary. Sometimes, it is a feisty Bluegill pulled through the ice of a nearby pond or lake. The species doesn't really matter, it's the excitement of getting that first one and knowing it marks the beginning of another year on the water. Looking back through my records, it's obvious that I certainly don't fish as hard in the winter as I do in the warmer months, but I do like to get out there.

I relish catching White Suckers in the early spring from streams that are not stocked with trout and that remain open to fishing in the month of March. Watching for the line to twitch as a sucker takes a piece of earthworm fished on the creek bottom excites me as much now as it did when I was far younger.

The first day of trout season in April is a much anticipated event across the state. These days, I find more enjoyment helping a young angler on the opening day than I do fishing myself. There will be plenty of time for my own adventures as the weeks move along. Once trout fishing begins in earnest, I know that it won't be long until lake waters warm and crappies, Bluegills and Yellow Perch begin to move to shallow water and congregate in areas that provide cover. There isn't much that makes for a better fish fry than a few dozen fat crappies, and I like to reflect on the camaraderie of a shared meal as much as I do on the fishing.

As the water continues to warm and the calendar moves along to late June and early July, I and many Pennsylvania anglers begin to chase both Largemouth

Bass and Smallmouth Bass. I haven't missed an opportunity to fish with my dad on Father's Day in a long time, and those are always cherished memories each year. Once bass season is underway, I find myself staring out the office window far too frequently wondering if the bite is getting good and when I'll get my next opportunity to fish.

In any year, there always seems to be fish that were completely unexpected, and they make for some of the best memories. There may be the Muskellunge that someone in the boat hooked while drifting the river or a big Walleye that fell for a jig that was meant to target a Smallmouth Bass. Some years, it has been a big golden Rainbow Trout that showed up seemingly out of nowhere.

Of course, there are always the ones that got away and some that almost did. It seems that every year there are at least a few fish that I witness coming unhooked just as they end up in the net. Sometimes, luck is on your side and sometimes it isn't, but both usually make lasting recollections.

Summer also means catfish fishing, and they grow big in the rivers of southcentral Pennsylvania. Many years, a Channel Catfish or a Flathead Catfish will be my biggest fish of the season. I love to reflect on the nights spent in the boat, listening to a ball game on the radio and anxiously waiting for a rod to bend.

In the fall, as the streams start to cool, I often turn my attention back to trout and images of fish that are as brilliantly colored as the autumn leaves. I think about the sadness I felt as I put the boat away for the season, and I consider how grateful I am for the all the opportunities that the past year provided. As the season winds down, take time to reflect on your own experiences on Pennsylvania's waters. The best memories are always the shared ones. □



Many times, my first fish of the new year is a trout from a nearby stream that is rarely fished in the winter.



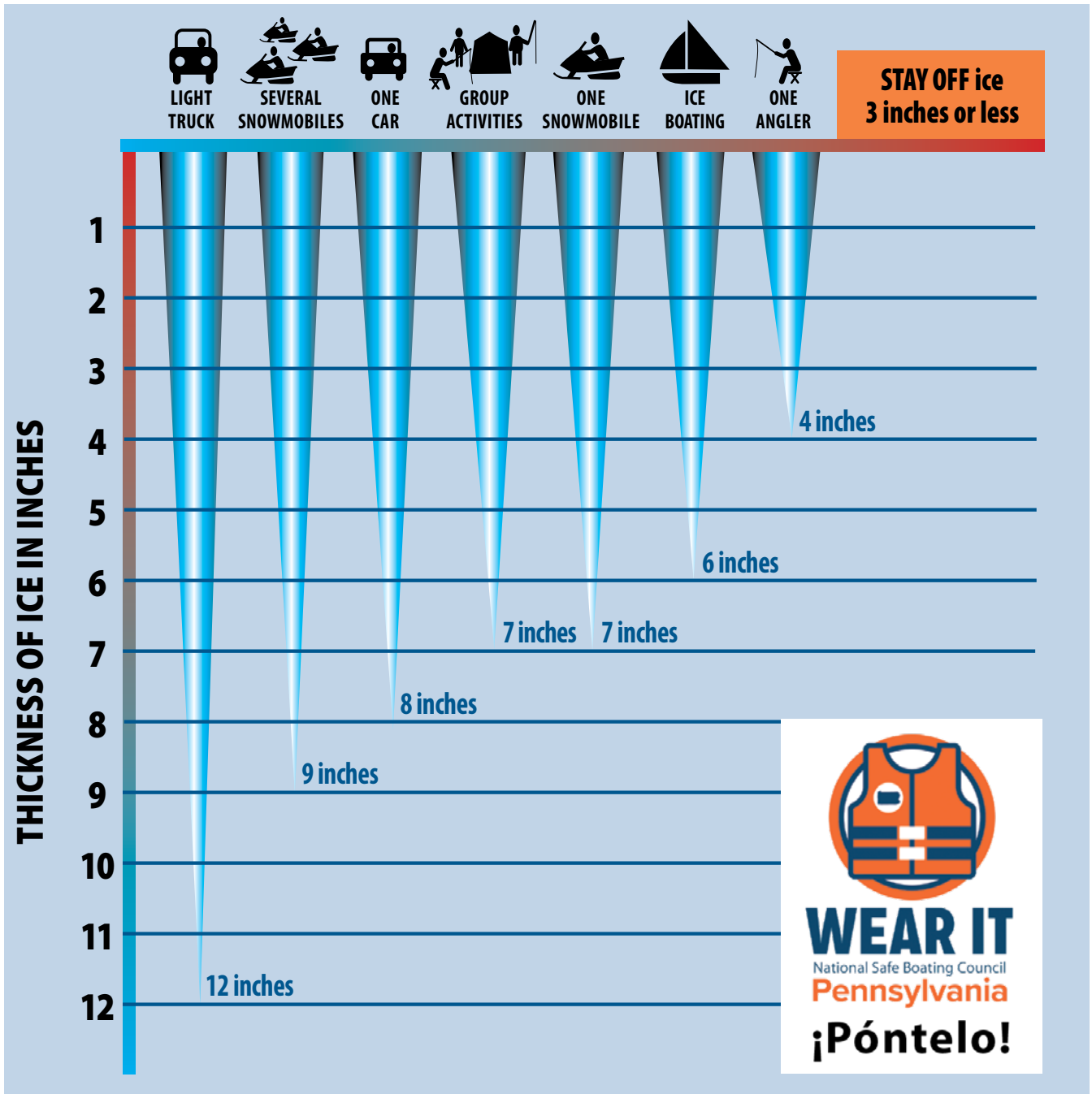
The fun of looking back over the previous year is remembering unexpected catches like this Juniata River Muskellunge.

LAKE ICE SAFETY GUIDE

Stay off moving water.

Ice is never 100% safe.

Minimum ice thickness guidelines for new, clear ice.

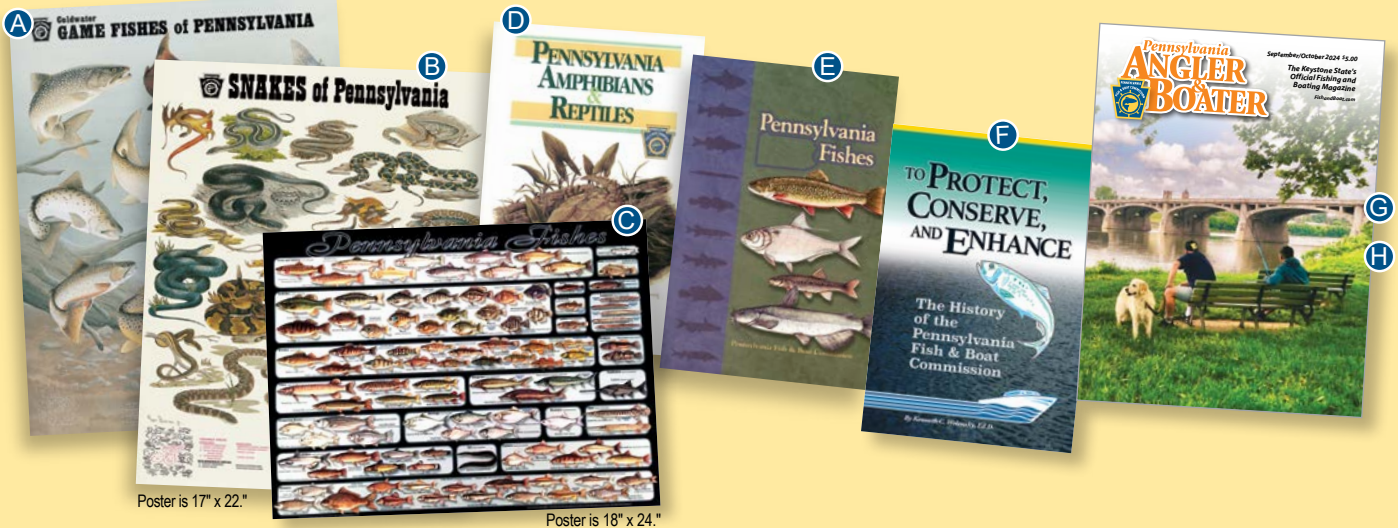


There are many factors that influence ice strength including water chemistry, wind and sunlight. Please note: these are general ice thickness guidelines. Carefully check ice conditions before venturing onto the ice.

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Poster is 17" x 22."

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photo-PFBC archives

by Mike Parker
Communications Director
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

Forming healthy habits when we're young is typical stuff, from washing our hands before we eat to wearing a seat belt when riding in a car. At the time, we may not have liked the constant nagging of a parent or teacher who pushed us to incorporate certain rituals into our daily lives, but, looking back, we recognize that it was for our own good to help keep us healthy and safe.

As habits go, there comes a time when we stop thinking about why we're doing something, and it just becomes part of the routine. To use some common slang that never seems to age, when something that was originally new or difficult for us becomes easy, common or automatic, we may even refer to it as "old hat."

In the boating community, the challenge for agencies like the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) is to make the life-saving habit

of wearing a life jacket "old hat" as quickly as possible. Increased interest in recreational boating, especially paddling, across the Commonwealth is undeniable, and the anecdotal evidence of seeing so many brightly colored kayaks on cartops and pickup truck beds everywhere you go is backed up by data. Over the past 15 years, the total number of unpowered launch permits sold by the PFBC has grown by nearly 600%, with approximately 150,000 permits now being sold annually statewide.

While many people who purchase launch permits are experienced paddlers with many seasons under their belts, many others will be boating for the first time, and some are children.

As an adult paddling for the first time, forming a good life jacket habit can happen in a variety of ways. In many cases, an informed new paddler will recognize the life-saving value of a life jacket and will be eager to always wear one to protect themselves in case of an emergency and gain a feeling of safety and comfort. In other cases, a paddler may not wish to wear a life jacket but will reluctantly wear one, when required, simply to comply with regulations and avoid fines. Under both scenarios, boaters will be safer



Shop around for a life jacket style that fits you.

for their decisions, but it would be better if we could remove reluctance from the equation.

If you're among the paddlers who aren't exactly enthusiastic about wearing a life jacket, it may be time to channel your inner kid. Recall a time when you were forming a different healthy habit and had every excuse in the book to resist it. But thankfully, someone who cared about you kept pushing you. Here are some common reasons people choose not to wear life jackets and some help to move past the excuses.

“It’s not comfortable”

Shop around for a style that fits you and you can tolerate. While some people prefer a traditional life jacket that zips up or snaps in the front and offers instant buoyancy if you fall into the water, some wearers find them bulky, hot and restrictive when paddling or fishing, especially during the summer. Look for a life jacket that features added ventilation or choose an inflatable style that fits over your shoulders but doesn't restrict arm movement. Remember, inflatable life jackets must be United States Coast Guard approved, be worn to comply with regulations

and like other inflatables are not recommended for cold weather use. Inflatable life jackets require CO₂ cartridges that must be replaced after each use or upon expiration, which can add extra costs.

“This is cramping my style”

While safety should always outshine fashion on the water, it's understandable that you still want to look good while paddling. Selfie, anyone? Once you find the style of life jacket that's comfortable for you, choose a color or pattern that fits your personality that you'll want to wear again and again. Some paddlers may choose a brightly colored life jacket that enhances visibility and matches their kayak or paddle, while others may prefer natural tones or camouflage to blend in with their surroundings. If you're particularly loyal to a certain outdoor brand, there's a good chance your favorite company makes or sells a life jacket that matches some of your other favorite gear.

“My kids complain about having to wear one.”

While regulations are stricter for younger paddlers, it doesn't mean kids don't have any choices when it comes to life jackets. Instead of dusting off an old youth life jacket from a bin in the basement, take the child shopping for a new one and, at minimum, allow them to choose the color. While options may be limited for youth-fitted life jackets compared to adult sizes, there are still plenty of alternatives in stores and online. Explain to the child that while they are required to wear a life jacket, there's no law that says a life jacket can't be flashy or fun. When choosing a life jacket for a child, let them see the price and explain that quality and safety go together. You may end up spending a few extra dollars to meet your child's needs, but getting a young paddler excited about wearing a life jacket is priceless.

Stick with it.

Healthy habits aren't developed overnight, but a life jacket works best when you're wearing it. Unfortunately, people lose their lives every year while boating in Pennsylvania, and statistically, about 80% of victims were not wearing a life jacket. So, keep pushing yourself, your kids and your friends to put safety first on the water, so you can focus on having fun. ☐



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Pennsylvania

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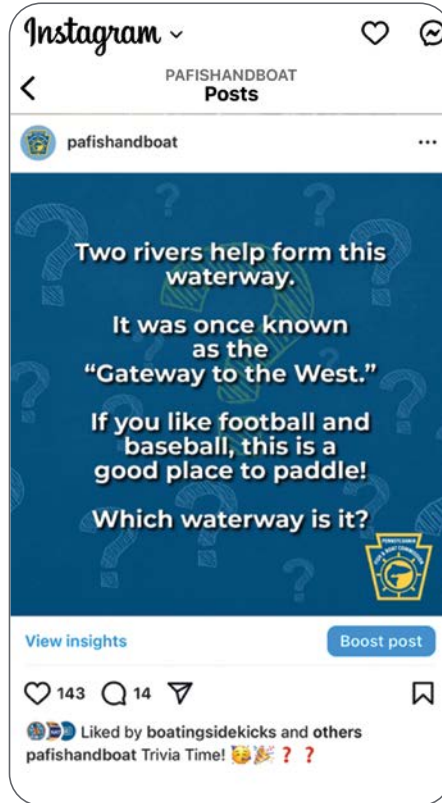
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CAST & CAUGHT



Brooke Winters caught a 23-inch Brown Trout while fishing in Franklin County with her daughters Huntley and Timberlyn.



Parker Alexander, Nanty Glo, caught this 27-inch Muskellunge while fishing Yellow Creek Lake, Indiana County.



Jon Plowman caught and released this 5-pound, 2-ounce Smallmouth Bass while fishing the upper Juniata River.



Levi Sobek, age 10, caught his first Walleye while fishing Pymatuning Reservoir, Crawford County, on his Pap's fishing boat.



Paige Johnson, Enon Valley, caught this large golden Rainbow Trout while fishing North Fork Little Beaver Creek, Lawrence 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:
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