

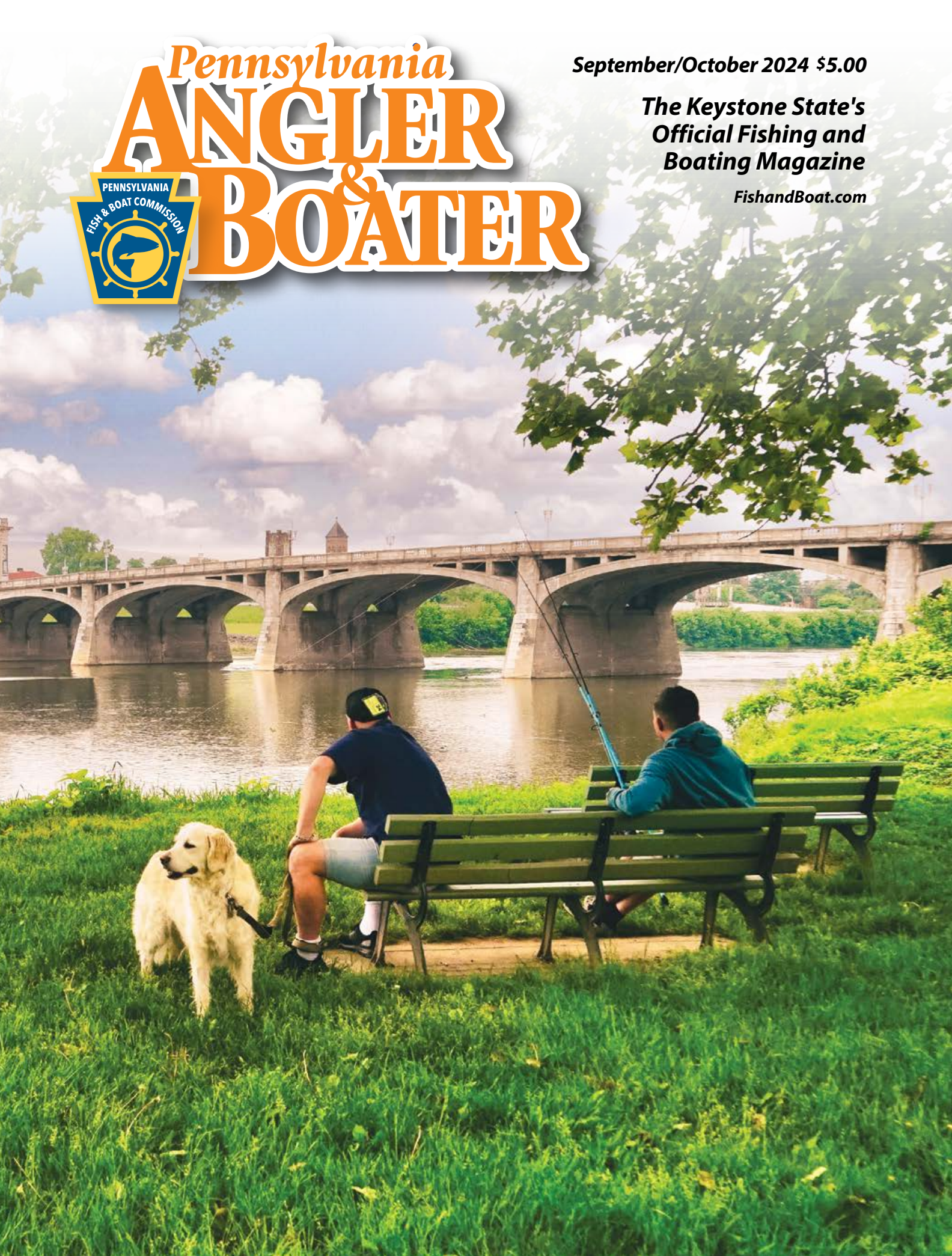
Pennsylvania **ANGLER & BOATER**

The logo for the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission is a blue shield-shaped emblem. It features a white fish silhouette swimming to the right, with a white boat wake behind it. The text "PENNSYLVANIA" is at the top, and "FISH & BOAT COMMISSION" is at the bottom of the shield.

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

FishandBoat.com





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National Hunting and Fishing Day

Programs and Events

Event	Date	Time	Location
National Hunting and Fishing Day Celebration	September 22	11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Registration not required)	Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area, Lebanon and Lancaster counties
McConnells Mill Heritage Festival	September 28 September 29	10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Registration not required)	McConnells Mill State Park, Lawrence County
National Hunting and Fishing Day Program	September 29	12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Registration required)	Bald Eagle State Park, Centre County



Register for programs and events:



register-ed.com/programs/landing/schedule/agency:38

FishandBoat.com

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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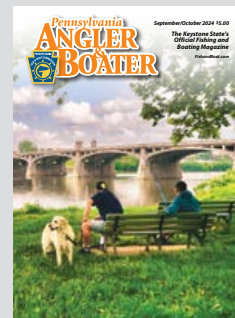
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On the cover



Two anglers enjoy fishing the Susquehanna River near the boat launch at Nesbitt Park, Kingston, Luzerne County. You can see River Street National Historic

District, Wilkes-Barre, in the background. The Market Street Bridge, which has 12 arches, is one of the longest concrete bridges in PA. It's listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Photo by Linda Stager





SAFE BOATING



photo-Tyler Frantz

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

A number of the authors who contribute articles to *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* are members of the Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association (POWA). POWA was formed in 1950 at a time when fishing and hunting stories graced the sports pages of newspapers across Pennsylvania. As a kid, I still remember flipping to Scott Weidensaul's column in *The Patriot-News* as soon as I was done reading the box scores from the latest Phillies game.

Touted as the largest state organization for outdoor writers in the country, POWA's mission is "to enhance the skills of its members, provide a strong and resounding conservation message to the public, hold its membership to the highest ethical standards and provide a legacy for future generations of outdoor communicators."

Commissioner John Mahn is a former outdoor writer and maintains his membership in POWA. Those of you who know John are aware that he is also among the most vocal advocates for boating safety, dating to his time on the Boating Advisory Board. That's why it came as no surprise when John suggested that the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission work more deliberately with POWA to feature safe boating messages in members' articles and annually recognize the best such article of the year with a new Excellence in Craft Award.

We kicked off that safe boating theme with a special session during POWA's spring conference at Frances Slocum State Park, Luzerne County. Sergeant Bryan Bendock, Waterways Conservation Officer Jeremy Yohe and Bureau of Boating Director Paul Littman gave an engaging and

informative presentation that included an explanation of the different types of life jackets and the legal requirements to make sure they are operable and fit the person wearing them.

They also talked about the dangers of Boating Under the Influence (BUI) and emphasized that the penalties for BUI mirror those for Driving Under the Influence. It's tough to ask someone to walk a straight line in a boat bobbing on the water, so the officers walked the writers through a field sobriety test designed to be administered to someone in a seated position on a boat. In what seemed to be a surprise to many, they noted that an increasing number of problems with impaired boaters stem from controlled substances like prescription drugs rather than alcohol.

At the end of the session, the attendees were given an up-close look at one of our agency's new patrol boats. As you will read in "The Right Tool for the Job," on page 44, the boats are more effective, durable and safer for our officers and the people with whom they interact. These boats really are the right tool for the job and are being deployed across Pennsylvania with different models suited to local water conditions.

Thank you Scott Weidensaul for nurturing an interest that turned into a career. Thank you John Mahn for engaging with POWA on safe boating. Thank you staff for educating the writers at their spring conference and boaters across Pennsylvania all year long. And, thank you POWA members for informing and inspiring readers to appreciate all that the Pennsylvania outdoors have to offer, including boating safely. ☐





NOTES *from the Streams*

Big ol' cat

One evening, as I was patrolling the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Goldsboro Access, I came across some anglers. I asked how the fishing was going and if they had fishing licenses. The gentlemen I checked said they caught a few fish but nothing special. I stayed for a bit and was talking with the gentlemen when two kids arrived. The kids asked me how the fishing was going. I told them it was going well, and anglers were catching fish. The boys were all decked out with head lamps and other fishing gear—one would have thought they were being sponsored. We watched them set up and cast their lines. Within a few minutes, one boy had a bite. He picked up his line, set the hook and started reeling it in. He was animated as he said, “Oh man! This is going to be a big ol' cat!” It only took a minute or two for him to reel in his line, but it felt like a lifetime to him.

Breaking the surface was a nice sized Channel Catfish. The boy was so excited, repeating that he caught a big ol' cat. The fish only weighed about 5 pounds, but in his heart, the fish was, in fact, a big ol' cat.—*WCO Lacie N. Mosteller, Cumberland County.*

Small world

Growing up, I always heard the phrase, “It’s a small world”. That came true while stocking trout in the North Branch Little Aughwick Creek, Fulton County, when a woman came up to me and called me by my first name. I was taken aback, because I rarely tell people my first name. She asked if I recognized her. I said, “No, I’m sorry, but I don’t”. Then, she began to tell me how she used to work with my mother, and when I was a little boy, she used to babysit me. It really is a small world after all.—*WCO Wyatt D. Peiper, Elk County.*

Smiles along the Skippack Creek

In mid-August, while patrolling my district, I pulled into a parking lot along the stream to check anglers. As I parked, I noticed a van arriving. Four boys and a mother of the one child stepped out of the vehicle with their faces beaming with excitement at the sight of me. The mother politely asked if I could teach them to fish. Spending time with each one, I got their rods ready and baited them. Soon enough, each boy reeled in their first catch, and the joy on their faces was priceless. The mother, appreciative, asked if we could capture the moment in a photo together. It’s a day etched in my memory, witnessing the genuine smiles as the boys experienced the thrill of fishing.—*WCO Abigail G. Luteri, Southwestern Montgomery and Western Philadelphia counties.*



photo-courtesy of WCO Abigail G. Luteri

Wrong turn

While on boat patrol and making a stop for a regulatory violation, we interacted with a boater who did not have a valid boating safety education certificate. In this case, it’s no different than when you are driving a car without a license. The operator must have the certificate in order to drive. With no other passengers able to drive the boat, I took the helm and safely returned the boat and its passengers to their dock. When beginning to steer the boat, I realized that something was wrong. When I steered left, the boat went right. When I steered right, the boat went left. I was confused especially when the owner told me that the steering was correct, and he thought nothing was wrong with it. He told me that the backyard

mechanic that “fixed the boat” may have been a little bit shady. I assured him that the boat’s steering was supposed to operate the same way as a car. It was an interesting ride back, particularly when it came to docking the boat. Possibly worse than the citation he received was that he had to break the news to his girlfriend who was correct about the faulty steering on the boat.—*WCO Daniel J. Wilson, Southern Westmoreland and Northern Fayette counties.*



Fishing for Northern Pike



by Bob Frye

photos by the author

Calling this a take, a bite or even a hit—words describing the moment action gets underway in other fishing—wouldn't do it justice.

I sent my gaudy firetiger crankbait toward the edge of some weeds in a shallow bay, close to a beaver's bank lodge. After letting the lure settle for a second, I retrieved it in a herky-jerky, stop-and-go way, hoping to imitate something tasty yet wounded.

The result was, well, violent.

Anytime a big fish eats a smaller fish—or insect, crustacean or whatever—it's predatory. But, there's something different about the way Northern Pike attack. They send a jolt of electricity through your line, down your rod and into your arm, every time.

For me, anyway. That's why I like pike fishing so much.

If you haven't experienced it yourself, give it a try now through spring. Pike feed heavily in the

fall. According to the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's (PFBC's) catch data, anglers get more pike per hour in October on rivers and large lakes than at any other time of year. Northern Pike regularly hit through the ice, too—the 35-pound, 49½-inch state record came from Allegheny Reservoir, McKean County, on New Year's Day 2003—and are aggressive near shore right after ice out, when they spawn.

And, there are plenty of places to find them.

The PFBC singles out just three places as being the state's "best fishing waters" for pike: Conneaut Lake, Crawford County; East Branch Clarion River Lake, Elk County; and Yellow Creek Lake, Indiana County. But, native to the Ohio River and Lake Erie drainages, pike are common across western Pennsylvania.

They're even present—if sometimes in smaller numbers—in waters further east. Lily Lake, Luzerne County, gets stocked, and Lake Wallenpaupack, Pike and Wayne counties, has pike, too.

My favorite way to catch them is on shallow-running crankbaits and jerkbaits—those that



Spinnerbaits are good pike lures, especially in summer when weeds are thick.



Northern Pike can grow extremely large, as witnessed by the state record—a fish that weighed 35 pounds and measured nearly 50 inches long. But, any pike of the legal size of 24 inches may be a handful.

suspend and can be fished in slow motion are especially killer in early spring—and topwater baits, like old-school black Jitterbugs. But, spinnerbaits and jigs tipped with soft plastics, fluttering spoons and live bait take pike too. If you're going to use the latter, minnow-tipped jigs are hard to beat. Just go big—

use baits 6 inches and larger—and fish them with a wire leader to account for a pike's sharp teeth.

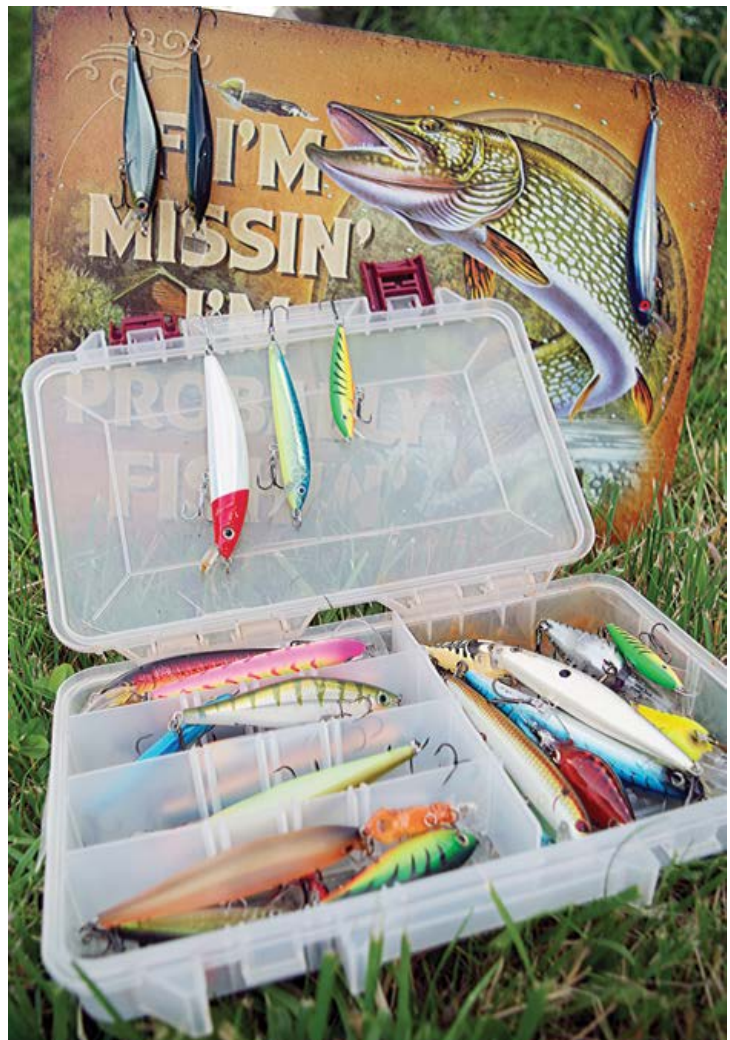
As for where to fish, shallow, weedy bays are always good. They're the first places to warm up in spring and give pike cover from which to ambush prey in the fall. Watch for obvious structure like downed trees, beaver dams and areas of flooded timber.

In the summer, look for fish on points and drop-offs. Pike often stage in these locations, moving into and out of shallower water in pursuit of baitfish. When on rivers, pike don't like fighting current, so focus on slackwater pools and backwaters.

Everywhere, the best fishing is often early and later in the day or when skies are overcast.

The daily limit on pike is two fish per day, of at least 24 inches, year-round. So, opportunities are available. Just be prepared for excitement. Pike hit hard and fight the same way.

There's a reason they're known in Latin as "the waterwolf," after all. Go see for yourself. You'll be glad you did, once you catch your breath. □



Jerkbaits are great when targeting Northern Pike. Black-and-silver and blue-and-silver versions are good, but don't overlook gaudy colors either. Pike hit lures in firetiger, pink, purple and more.

Hiking, Mushroom Hunting and Chasing Brook Trout

by Donald Kelly

Mountain streams and forest trails call my name as the leaves start to change and fall settles into the Pennsylvania woods. The slight chill in the air awakens a desire to wander the woods in search of small stream Brook Trout and wild mushrooms. A lifelong angler, my foray into wild mushrooms started only a decade ago and has proven to be a constant learning experience, much like fishing. The fungi kingdom encompasses many different mushrooms and learning their preferred habitats, the seasons to find them and the relationships they form with their surroundings continues to be an interesting educational journey.

I'm by no means a professional mycologist but an angler intrigued by the world around me. Of all the things I've learned so far, the most important is to do research. Some mushrooms are edible, some have medicinal properties, and some are toxic and potentially lethal if ingested. All are interesting and come in a variety of shapes, colors and even smells. None of these characteristics, by themselves, indicates an edible or harmful mushroom. Often, it's best to find them and take notes and pictures. Then, study them more at home for your next outing. Just as important as learning to identify the edible ones, it's crucial to identify the dangerous ones.

With dual objectives of catching fish and finding mushrooms, I like to pack light and bring minimal necessities. Many times, I only take a tenkara rod, a few flies, a spool of tippet and a mesh bag for any mushrooms I want to bring home. The mesh bag keeps condensation off the mushrooms and helps spread the spores. Other times, I'll grab a 6- or 7-foot, 2- or 3-weight fly rod and a dry dropper setup. It's fun watching an aggressive Brook Trout smack a small caddis pattern off the surface.

Once streamside, I watch the water for visible hatches or rising fish. In low water conditions, I opt for the dry dropper combo. If no specific bugs are present, a size 14 tan caddis pattern trailing a pheasant tail almost always



photo-Terry Malloy

results in Brook Trout. In higher flows, I'll stick to a beadhead nymph or a tandem set of weighted nymphs.

Working my way upstream, I examine the surrounding trees and stumps for mushrooms while casting and drifting the runs and riffles. At the base of an old oak tree, there are hen of the woods mushrooms. On a similar hardwood tree, I see a bright orange shelf looking mushroom called chicken of the woods. Mature trees and dying trees and stumps tend to yield the most mushrooms.

Higher up, in an open wound on a tree, is a *Herichium* species mushroom. Commonly known as bear's head



Brook Trout

tooth or lion's mane, these are some of our favorite mushrooms to find and can be tough to harvest, always seeming to grow just out of reach. Fortunately, with a fly rod in hand, I loop my line behind the mushroom and gently pull downward, cutting the mushroom off the tree.

A hike combining these two passions always ends up being a longer trek than intended. Like that 'one more cast' we all try to get in before calling it quits, I can't help but look ahead on a trail and think 'let's just check around one more bend before going home'. Whether we find mushrooms and catch fish, or not, the hiking experience is good for both the body and the soul. ☐

photo-Donald Kelly



Bear's head tooth

photo-Donald Kelly



Chicken of the woods

photo-Donald Kelly



Hen of the woods



Cold Front Muskellunge



by Braden Eisenhower

photos by the author

The cabin's old propane heater kicked on during the night, just as the owner promised it would. When my dad set the thermostat the night before, it wasn't without a skeptical remark that he'd be frozen to his bunk by morning. But, when we awoke, the room was toasty, unlike the subfreezing temperatures waiting outside.

Two days prior, while readying the boat and trailer for the trip, I ranted about the unseasonable stretch of 80-plus-degree F air temperatures. When I pleaded for fall-like weather, I never anticipated such a wild temperature swing.

Muskellunge anglers often yearn for fall cold fronts. Blasts of frigid temperatures from the northwest are believed to send Muskellunge into a panicked feeding mode

to prepare for winter. It makes for a nice story, but I haven't experienced it.

For me, cold fronts, no matter the time of year, mean tough fishing. During the warmer months, a cold front usually brings clear, sunny skies and negligible wind. In the fall, cold fronts tend to linger, and an angler often feels the sting of strong, incessant winds and overcast skies for several days.

A seasoned Muskellunge angler would have postponed this trip or at least rearranged his or her schedule to fish prior to the front. Then again, I had canceled a fishing outing a few weeks prior when a hurricane pushing up the East Coast promised a forecast with sustained 25-mile-per-hour winds on inland waters. The winds never came, and who knows what may have transpired.

Still, calling off the first trip was the right choice at the time. The angler who goes about the day with a defeatist's attitude is better off at home. With cottages soon closing



Plastic pullbaits and gliding or dive-and-rise jerkbaits are the only lures needed during a cold front.

for the season, there was no time to delay plans any longer.

Success during a cold front—anytime Muskellunge fishing, really—amounts to being in the best position at opportune times and working hard to reap the spoils. Generally, this means following a simple approach without trailing off and making too many mistakes.

While I didn't know the lake well, it wasn't my first trip. I had an idea of the Muskellunge population and knew of a few productive spots. You don't want to make guesses on unfamiliar waters when the weather is poor.

Before launching the boat, I prepared a rod to fish plastic pullbaits and another one that would handle gliding or dive-and-rise jerkbaits. I laid three lures on the boat deck, confident they would be all I needed for the day, possibly the trip.

Tackle junkies, like me, must resist the urge to cycle through the tackle box in search of the "hot" bait. You won't encounter enough follows or bites during a cold front to form reasonable conclusions, and you'll end up second guessing your lure selection.

During cold fronts, baits that lend themselves to the unhurried style of fishing favored by lethargic Muskellunge are preferred. Plus, they cover both shallow and mid-depth zones in areas where structure and cover suit the wind direction. These spots were limited, but that was fine. I'd rather return to the same spots throughout the day than waste time bouncing about the lake.



Boat control is critical when working a weed edge with precise casts. Dial back the trolling motor to slowly advance the break. A drift sock can help slow the boat speed in strong winds.

I persisted, as any hardcore Muskellunge angler would, and continued fishing. A brief weather change pushed a stiff wind from the southwest, and the bite window opened a crack. As my gliding jerkbait cleared the weed edge and hovered over the slight drop, a small Muskellunge obliged.

The way to win during a cold front is by not allowing the thought of it to defeat you. ☐



FALL BACK INTO TROUT FISHING

by Jeff Woleslagle

photos by the author

Many anglers I know eagerly await the trout season opener every year and view it as a sure sign of spring fishing adventures. However, those who put their trout fishing gear away for the season as soon as the stocking trucks stop making regular visits to their favorite stream are missing out on one of the most beautiful and productive times to be on the water. The changing leaves and cooler waters of autumn bring excellent trout fishing opportunities, and it's a great time to 'fall' back into the pursuit. Not all stocked trout streams support year-round trout but many do. Some locations even have fall stocking dates. Weather conditions vary greatly in the fall, so anglers need to be ready. It doesn't take many cool crisp days and nights to get the fish fired up.

When waters start to cool in the fall, trout move from the deeper water haunts that contained them in the summer to colder and more oxygenated

water. Then, they start to actively roam and set up in small pockets and pools, much like they do in the spring. The water in the fall is typically low and clear, making potential holding spots easier to locate. Under these conditions, an angler who is stealthy along the water while keeping a low profile will find more success. Investigate woody structure such as downed trees in the water, undercut banks and places where large rocks provide breaks in the current. Keep in mind that trout are always looking for locations where the current carries forage to them.

Great fall baits include waxworms, red worms, butterworms and minnows. A 6- to 7-foot light to ultra-light action spinning rod paired with the appropriate size spinning reel and spooled with 4-pound-test monofilament or fluorocarbon line are ideal. I prefer hooks in size 8 or smaller with just enough splitshot weights to make casting easier and still allow for the bait to have a natural drift. When using live bait, set the hook as soon as you feel the strike to avoid deeply hooking the fish. As for lures, inline spinners, small soft plastics, hair jigs, tiny jerkbaits and spoons are good choices in the fall.



Pennsylvania's autumn leaves provide a stunning backdrop for stream trout fishing. The water is often low and clear in the fall, so being stealthy is important for success.

When it comes to fall fly fishing, remember insects such as beetles, grasshoppers and ants will still be active until a freeze happens. Flies that imitate these terrestrial insects work wonders. Fall is also a great time to fish streamers that imitate minnows, sculpins and small crayfish.

If the stream you're fishing holds trout throughout the year, it's good to remember that both Brook Trout and Brown Trout spawn in the fall. So, avoid targeting them if you encounter them on redds (spawning beds). Brook Trout typically spawn from mid-September to early November in Pennsylvania, and Brown Trout usually spawn from October to November. Redds are normally found in relatively shallow water, where the bottom is comprised of small pebbles or gravel. There are good numbers of non-spawning trout to chase without disturbing redds. Both trout species may get aggressive close to the spawn.

The clocks get turned back on November 3 this year, and we all get to enjoy an extra hour of sleep. Skip that extra hour of slumber, and fall back into autumn trout fishing. ☐



A beautiful fall Brown Trout



A feisty fall Brook Trout

FALL FISHING GETAWAYS

by Freddie McKnight

photo by the author





artwork-George LaVasish

Brown Trout

In the late summer and early fall when the leaves are turning, you can usually find pleasant weather, and many anglers stopped fishing for the year, leaving more open space to maneuver Pennsylvania's waters. Check out these fantastic fall fishing locations.

Medix Run

Medix Run, Elk County, is a small mountain stream with big possibilities. It offers clear water and easy angler access. The stream boasts stocked Brown Trout and Rainbow Trout, plus a population of native Brook Trout. The stream is rocky with riffles and pools. Usually low at this time of the year, the trout are found in pools and can be skittish. A careful approach and precise casting are required.

Access the stream by Medix Run Road off State Route 2004, just south of the town of Medix Run. The stream and its feeder streams are largely roadside access with numerous state forest campsites nearby.

Raystown Spillway

Raystown Spillway, Huntingdon County, is a great area for fall fishing action. You may catch

Lake Trout or Striped Bass, but you are more likely to tangle with Smallmouth Bass, Walleyes, the occasional musky and panfish. So, go prepared for a variety of possibilities.

Live bait fishing is most popular, as the bottom composition of rocks makes it an easy place to lose lures. Fishing with just enough weight to keep the minnow near the bottom will produce at this time of the year. Current will dictate where you find fish, so you may have to move around a bit.

The Raystown Spillway is a short drive off Route 22. There are restricted areas around the spillway and dam.

Ponds

Typically, ponds are shallow at the water inlet and deepest where the water exits. In the fall, when cold temperatures hit, fish often migrate to deeper water. A sunny afternoon brings fish into the shallows as the water warms several degrees. The fish are active and looking to put on weight before winter sets in.

In ponds, anglers catch Bluegills, bass and catfish. Fishing with lures or live bait produces bites, as fish are typically not as picky as in other waters. Ponds are usually less crowded, too. ☐



Reeling in Rewards

by Michael Kensinger

There was a strong sense of anticipation as I headed to one of my favorite trout streams in Blair County. On this day, I was aiming to fish in the stream where I caught my first trout as a boy. I really wanted to try to relive those memories, this time, with a fly rod. Although my grandfather passed away several years ago, every turn in this stream seems to hold a fond memory to reflect upon.

On my arrival, I found much of this stream is now posted, with only a few small areas having open access for anglers. I drove to one of those

areas, saddened by the number of posted signs I passed along the way. Had so many forgotten the trout season traditions passed on here?

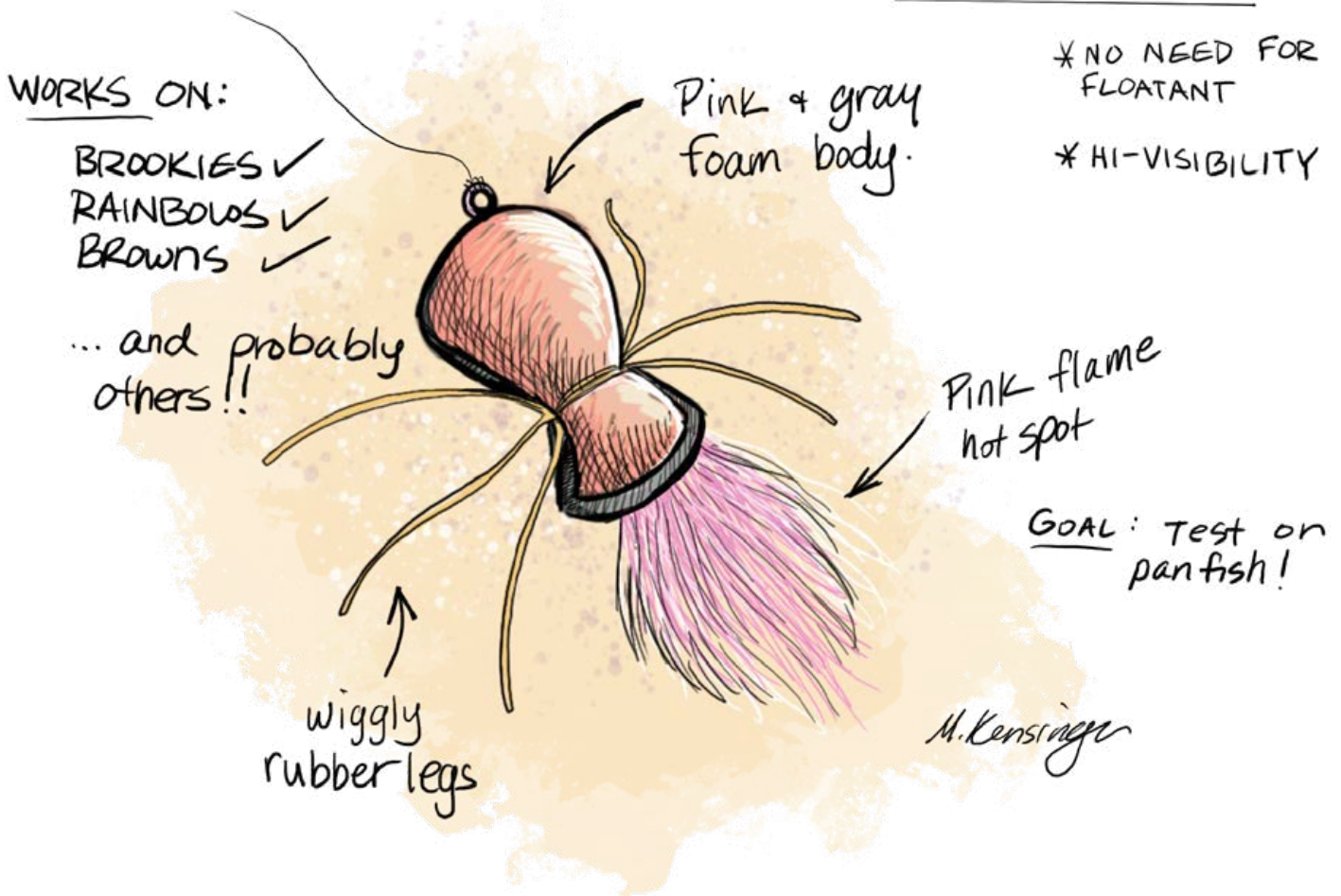
As I approached one of the few fishable sections, the moss-covered stones, rambling brook and sound of birdsong refueled my spirits. I stared up into a canopy of pine trees towering high above me. I still remember the first wild Brook Trout I caught as a child, in a section we called “Port’s Hole”, just upstream from where I was standing. I couldn’t help but wonder if “Port’s Hole” still existed.

The fly I tied on probably wouldn’t have been most anglers’ first choice, but I was curious as it sat in the fly box next to

more traditional looking options. To me, it looked like something you would’ve made in your grandma’s craft room, called a Chernobyl Ant. With a pink foam body, jiggly legs, boasting flame-like fur out the abdomen, it looked like a piece of candy. Luckily, the trout thought so, too.

I’m pretty sure I choreographed some of the most inelegant casting in the history of fly fishing that afternoon. I used the pinch and pull archery method I’ve seen experts do, and believe it or not, I got it right and landed what would be the best Brook Trout of the day in a hard-to-cast spot. I was enamored by its beauty, as I slipped it back safely into the water.

CHERNOBYL ANT



As I continued upstream, I searched for “Port’s Hole”, where we had gathered as kids. The decades have seen some changes in the landscape, and not everything was as I remembered. As I stepped into the next section of stream, I inadvertently took part in what was once an annual tradition of my grandfather—“taking the plunge”.

My grandfather, Ed Kensinger, was known for his love of trout fishing. Using live minnows as his bait, he would carry a peanut butter jar filled with “minnies” to see him through the day. I always knew it was almost trout season when I heard the soft hum of the bait tank in old Pap’s garage. He was

also known for falling in every year, sometimes more than once.

One year, Pap fell in while trying to land a 19-inch Rainbow Trout. He joked with us about how he was diving in to make sure it didn’t get away. There was another time, Pap famously lost footing in a shallow area of the stream and tilted forward into a full sprint. Unable to gain composure, he plunged right into what was probably the deepest hole in the whole creek. My uncle recalls Pap flailing around, rod and creel swirling in the current with water up to his neck.

Now, I was following tradition, flailing around in the cold water, almost as if Pap himself had pushed me for a laugh. I wouldn’t put it past him!

Gathering myself, I looked up just in time to see two trout shoot upstream to get away from the madman who had just plunged into their living room. I shook my head and laughed to myself in disbelief as I moved upstream. At last, I found “Port’s Hole”. All these years later, still here though a bit shallower. And so, I cast the pink Chernobyl Ant, and I landed three native Brook Trout in the place where I had first begun my journey as a trout angler. On the way home, soaking wet, I smiled ear-to-ear. I knew if Pap were around, he’d be sharing the joy with me. The rewards are hard fought in smaller trout streams. It’s a lot more difficult than it seemed, but I am bound to keep learning. ☐



CROSS CREEK LAKE CRAPPIES

by Jeff Knapp

photos by the author

The fertile water of Cross Creek Lake, Washington County, provides an aquatic haven for a variety of fish species, especially crappies. The cooling temperatures of fall usher in some of the best crappie fishing of the year.

Just under 250 acres, Cross Creek Lake seems much bigger. It's possibly due to the network of bays and coves that form the lake. Though somewhat small in stature, like a low-to-the-ground gridiron running back, it packs a lot of punch, with an abundance of structure and cover. It supports a level of submerged weed growth of about 8 feet.

Cross Creek Lake has a history of producing large and abundant crappie populations. When Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) biologists surveyed the lake last spring, they confirmed that the population is still strong.

“Cross Creek Lake has produced good numbers of fish and has shown pretty good catch rates. There’s a reason there’s always boats out there targeting crappies,” said Mike Depew, PFBC fisheries biologist.

The lake has been under Panfish Enhancement Special Regulations for at least 20 years, calling for a 9-inch minimum crappie size. Crappies have flourished with this added level of protection.

When Fisheries Management Area 8 staff surveyed the lake in April, trap nets collected approximately 700 crappies, the majority were Black Crappies. The fish ranged in size from 3 inches to more than 15 inches. Of all the Black Crappies, 82% were longer than the 9-inch minimum. It was the second highest number of legal length crappies from any of the lake surveys.

Though White Crappies made up a small percentage of the total population, the fish were of good size, mostly 11- to 13-inches long. Depew was also impressed with the weight of the fish, noting that they appeared well fed.



In deeper reservoirs such as Cross Creek Lake, fall crappies tend to concentrate near deeper cover—approximately 15- to 25-foot depths—especially in proximity of creek channels. Cross Creek Lake has an abundance of such options including submerged bridge abutments and bridge decks, cribs, shoreline laydowns that drop into the channel, offshore trees embedded in the bottom, and logs and stumps along creek channels.

During the early fall, when water temperatures are still relatively warm, it's likely crappies will be active. Lures that exhibit motion and flash are good choices. This includes tiny spinnerbaits, lead head underspin jigs (which incorporate a small spinner attached to the underside of the jig head) and action tail bodies. All are good options for horizontal presentations, ones where the lure is cast and retrieved in and around cover.

As the water cools, it often makes sense to tone down the action of the lure, calling for profiles with subtle straight tails or broom-like tails. These lures are better when hovered vertically over cover. Naturally, there can be a lot of crossover days—where subtle tails excel when cast, and action tails trigger strikes when fished vertically. Crappies can be finicky. Be willing to experiment with profiles and colors.

Crappies also like to move. A sunken tree that was loaded with fish last week may be empty this outing. Since crappies tend to suspend around cover, they show up well on sonar. Taking the time to examine cover

and structure options for the presence of fish is often a smart approach.

While the fall often provides excellent action for crappies, it may be a challenge to stay connected with them. Cross Creek Lake is a great place to accept that challenge. ☐



A good variety of lead head jigs and smaller blade baits should be included in a tackle kit for fall crappies.

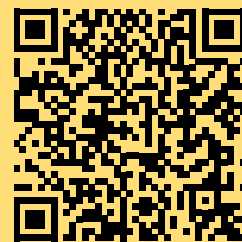


During the early fall, crappies will often respond to small spinnerbaits, action tail grubs and subtle tail grubs.



The main access at Cross Creek County Park, Washington County.

Fish Habitat Improvement Maps:



fishandboat.com/Conservation/Habitat/Pages/Lake-Improvement-Maps.aspx



HOW TO SUCCEED AT LATE FALL BASS FISHING

by *Darl Black*

photos by the author

Dedicated bass anglers know the arrival of cooler water temperatures in the fall significantly increases the opportunity of setting the hook into larger-than-usual bass feeding before winter. The big bass bite continues until water temperatures drop below 40 degrees F. This isn't the time to be satisfied catching 2-pound bass—the goal now is a lunker bass.

As the water cools, big bass focus on the most abundant high-protein forage fish available, so understanding fall prey preference and location is important.

The fall bite should be viewed as a two-stage affair. First, when water temperature is dropping from the upper-60s to the mid-50s, the near shore area is still filled with small panfish and Golden Shiners. Once cooling starts, open water baitfish schools (i.e. Alewives, Emerald Shiners and Gizzard Shad) push into shallower water, providing a true fall feast for Largemouth Bass, which are dispersed around hard and soft cover in less than 10 feet of water.

Second, when water temperature nears 50 degrees F, it triggers baitfish and bass movement from the shallowest water to somewhat deeper water. Bass schools will eventually settle in 10- to 20-foot water.

Although Largemouth Bass are still spread out in shallower water, it's important for anglers to



Fall Largemouth Bass lures for shallow water—(left column): swimbait, chatterbait, lipless crankbait and spinnerbait. For deep water in the fall—(right column): deep diving crankbait, 5-inch swimbait on jig head, skirted casting jig with trailer and blade bait.

explore an area quickly with casts placed around visible cover. Targets include any objects you see, or barely see. Cast over and beside submerged weed beds, weed clumps, wood cover, isolated rocks, rock outcroppings and dock posts.

Lures resembling the primary baitfish species—often Gizzard Shad—are a top choice. Favorite lures in shallow water are swim jigs, chatterbaits, lipless crankbaits and spinnerbaits. A swim jig is my first go-to lure, because it can be fished “clean” (minimal snagging) with varying retrieves through all types of cover.

As the water temperature goes below 50 degrees F, bass exit the shallows for the most part and concentrate at key sites around deep weedlines, creek channel edges, deep wood or breaklines. Now, anglers must use electronics to discover where bass

are holding and feeding. On sonar, look for baitfish schools in the lower part of the water column. Depending on the sophistication of the electronics and interpretation of the signals, you may or may not be able to identify nearby bass. If you see a concentration of baitfish near deep cover or a structure break, it's a good place to start fishing.

With water temperature falling through the 40s into the upper 30s, lure retrieves should be slow and close to the bottom. Productive presentations include bottom crawling a deep diving crankbait with added suspend strips, so it rises slowly when paused; “polishing the rocks” with a 5-inch fat swimbait; using a pop-drop-drag retrieve with a casting jig (especially around deep wood); and using a vertical lift-and-drop retrieve with a blade bait. Hook a big one—then, catch, photo and release. ☐

Discover NORTHEAST PA!

En español:



[fishandboat.com/About-Us/
PFBC-by-Region/Northeast-PA/
Pages/default.aspx](http://fishandboat.com/About-Us/PFBC-by-Region/Northeast-PA/Pages/default.aspx)

by *Linda Stager*

Nestled amid the picturesque landscapes of the Pocono Mountains, the 11 counties comprising the northeast region of Pennsylvania offer stunning scenery throughout every season and an unrivaled palette of autumn colors.

The tranquil lakes and pristine waterways provide an idyllic retreat for fishing enthusiasts, boating fans and everyone in the family. Breathe crisp mountain air as you hike through hills ablaze with fall foliage. Glide quietly along northeastern waterways in your kayak or canoe while experiencing quiet wooded settings.

Try some legendary pizza from Grotto Pizza. Visit the region's charming small towns, and catch a glimpse of its rich history. And, by all means, get on the water. Fishing and boating in the region is plentiful and fun.

Northeastern PA is a nature lover's playground. There's an adventure waiting for all activity levels—for little legs, experienced hikers and everything in between.

Treasured trail

Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor: The 165-mile Delaware and Lehigh Trail is the backbone of this historic National Heritage Area, which conserves green space for public use.

The trail follows the route that anthracite coal took from mine to market. Its northern sections wind along the banks of the Lehigh and Delaware rivers, past the remnants of old canals and historic towns.

At its upper reaches, the Lackawaxen River, a tributary of the Upper Delaware River, is a popular destination for canoeing and fly fishing. It is reportedly where Zane Grey, an American author, first learned to fly fish. Take a tour of his home at Lackawaxen and learn to fly fish in the river, too.

To the south, the 26-mile rail trail section from White Haven to Jim Thorpe is known as the Lehigh Gorge Trail. The trail uses an abandoned railway. The overall change in elevation is minimal, which makes for gentle climbs and descents. The scenery is varied and engaging. Look for waterfalls cascading down trailside cliffs as you ride or walk, with the river carving a pathway along one side of the trail while dramatic towering rock walls and deep forests follow the trail's other side.

For whitewater fans, the Lehigh River in this section calls visitors from all over the country.

Traditional shuttle services are available for trail visitors, but a unique opportunity for bicyclists is the limited-schedule "Bike Train" offered by the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway. Board the train with your bicycle in Jim Thorpe, and ride to a trailhead alongside the Lehigh Gorge Trail. After your drop-off, ride your bike back to



Mount Pisgah State Park, Bradford County

photos-Linda Stager

Jim Thorpe using the trail. It's a special delight for bikers and hikers who are also train buffs. For more on this trail, visit delawareandlehigh.org.

Popular waterways

Lake Wallenpaupack:

This lake has over 5,700 acres of water for recreation. It's a haven for boaters of all kinds. Since there are no horsepower restrictions on this massive manmade



reservoir, pontoon cruises, jet skiing, waterskiing, wakeboarding, kayaking and canoeing are all popular. Bring your life jacket and fishing license and cast for Bluegills, Brown Trout, Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass and Walleyes.

Several day-use areas are located on Lake Wallenpaupack. Other parks and campgrounds, including Promised Land State Park, Pike County, are nearby.

The lake and surrounding areas host several summer celebrations including Wally Lake Fest, Hawley Independence Day Celebration and Pocono Dragon Boat Race.



Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway in Jim Thorpe, Carbon County



Nesting osprey at Lake Wallenpaupack, Pike and Wayne counties



Endless Mountains, Bradford County

photos-Linda Stager

Fishing Creek: This Columbia County tributary of the Susquehanna River is considered one of the best freestone trout streams in the state. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) and a local fishing club stock it with trout. This 30-mile stretch of fun fishing is easily accessed from Route 487, which parallels much of the stream.

The stream can be fished all year long, though spring is a prime time because of the insect hatches on the water. Bring a 9-foot fly rod and an assortment of flies to enjoy a day of relaxing fishing.

North Branch Susquehanna River: This river is Pennsylvania's 2023 River of the Year. It flows 146 miles through several northern Pennsylvania counties.

The Susquehanna River Water Trail - North Branch has several outstanding sections. The Great Bend section in Susquehanna County and the Endless Mountains portion in Bradford and Wyoming counties are known for their pristine forestlands, serenely isolated areas and extensive wildlife sightings. The Susquehanna River Birding and Wildlife Trail is centered here. Vosburg Neck State Park, Wyoming County, one of PA's newest state parks, is along this trail.

The water trail ends in Northumberland County after flowing through Columbia and Montour counties.

When the water trail flows through Tunkhannock and points south and east, visitors will find an array of river towns and fun things to experience. Pick your area to explore based on what your family likes to do.

Paddle and fish stretches of the river that are suitable for novices. Introduce little ones to fishing at small rivertown

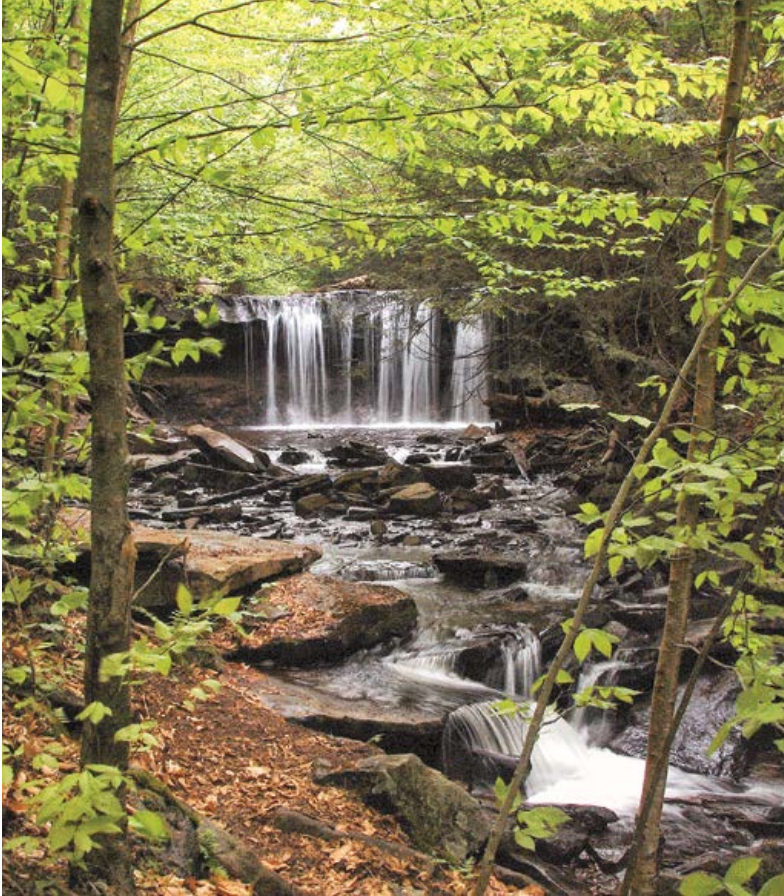
parks. Or, get away from it all in the Endless Mountains. Find out more at susquehannagreenway.org.

Best-loved adventures

- **Wyoming Valley:** This area includes the neighboring cities of Scranton (the setting for the television sitcom "The Office") and Wilkes-Barre. Historically, this area was known for its significant coal mining. Now, its diverse economy boasts cultural attractions and historic sites.
- **Scranton,** Lackawanna County: Visit Steamtown National Historic Site. Also, check out Everhart Museum.
- **Wilkes-Barre,** Luzerne County: Take in a show at Mohegan Sun Arena and enjoy the natural beauty of nearby Seven Tubs Recreation Area.



Bloomsburg, Columbia County



Ricketts Glen State Park, Columbia, Luzerne and Sullivan counties

photos-Linda Stager

Points of interest

- Bushkill Falls, Little Bush Kill and Pond Run Creek, Lehman Township (Pocono Mountains), Pike County
- Columbia County PA Covered Bridges (23 covered bridges)
- Forksville Covered Bridge, Loyalsock Creek, Sullivan County (National Register of Historic Places)
- Harveys Lake, Luzerne County (Pennsylvania's largest natural lake by volume)
- Marie Antoinette Lookout and French Azilum Historic Site, Wyalusing, Bradford County
- Yuengling Brewery, Pottsville, Schuylkill County



- **Ricketts Glen State Park:** This state park extends across Columbia, Luzerne and Sullivan counties and is known for its stunning waterfalls. The park features 24 named waterfalls. Although the path to see the waterfalls is developed, it is strenuous, so caution is advised before hiking.
- **Tunkhannock Viaduct:** This structure is a massive stone concrete railroad bridge near Nicholson, Wyoming County. Completed in 1915, it was considered the largest concrete structure in the world at the time of its construction. The viaduct spans Tunkhannock Creek, known for its trout fishing. Fish from one of the public access spots along the creek.



The northeastern region of Pennsylvania is known for its scenic beauty and outdoor recreational opportunities. Add in small-town charm, events, festivals, historical significance and plenty of watersport opportunities, and it's somewhere the whole family should visit.



Marie Antoinette Lookout, Bradford County



Forksville Covered Bridge, Sullivan County

Check out the year-long educational fishing and boating events presented by PFBC throughout the year at FishandBoat.com.

Create your own adventure and make unforgettable memories in this nature lover's playground. ☐

Countless ways to hit the water

Celebrate Pennsylvania's beautiful lakes, rivers and streams by casting a line, dipping your paddle or dropping an anchor.

Where to fish:



fishandboat.com/Fishing/Where-to-Fish/Pages/default.aspx

Where to boat:



fishandboat.com/Boating/Where-to-Boat/Pages/default.aspx

Prepare for launch

Don't forget to buy a launch permit or register your boat before taking it to the water.

Powered boat:



fishandboat.com/Boating/Register-Title-Boat/Pages/Powered-Boats.aspx

Unpowered boat:



fishandboat.com/Boating/Register-Title-Boat/Pages/Unpowered-Boats.aspx

Gotta have a fishing license and gear

Buy a license:



fishandboat.com/Fishing/Buy-License/Pages/default.aspx

Borrow gear:



pfbcm.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=eea001d1a15b49b9ae8375136b8c97ae

Common hand signals for watersports

<p>SPEED OK</p>	<p>CUT MOTOR</p>	<p>MAKE ANOTHER LOOP</p>
<p>SPEED UP</p>	<p>STOP</p>	<p>RETURN TO LAUNCH</p>
<p>SLOW DOWN</p>	<p>SKIER OK</p>	<p>SKIER IN WATER</p>
<p>GO RIGHT, GO LEFT</p>		



CONSERVATION AT WORK

Check out our latest projects to protect PA's waterways and wildlife:



fishandboat.com/Conservation/Pages/Conservation-At-Work.aspx

Gear Up for Adventure

Don't Forget to Wear Your Life Jacket!



WEAR IT
National Safe Boating Council
Pennsylvania
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Popular waterways

Northeast Region:

- Beltzville Lake
- Delaware River
- Fishing Creek
- Harveys Lake
- Lackawanna Lake
- Lake Wallenpaupack
- Lake Winola
- McMichael Creek
- North Branch Susquehanna River
- South Branch Tunkhannock Creek



Pennsylvania state parks

Northeast Region:

- **Archbald Pothole State Park**, Lackawanna Co.
- **Beltzville State Park**, Carbon Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Big Pocono State Park**, Monroe Co.
- **Frances Slocum State Park**, Luzerne Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Gouldsboro State Park**, Monroe and Wayne counties (fishing and boating)
- **Hickory Run State Park**, Carbon Co. (fishing)
- **Lackawanna State Park**, Lackawanna Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Lehigh Gorge State Park**, Carbon and Luzerne counties (fishing and whitewater)
- **Mount Pisgah State Park**, Bradford Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Nescopeck State Park**, Luzerne Co. (fishing)
- **Promised Land State Park**, Pike Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Prompton State Park**, Wayne Co. (fishing and boating)
- **Ricketts Glen State Park**, Columbia, Luzerne and Sullivan counties (fishing and boating)
- **Salt Springs State Park**, Susquehanna Co. (fishing)
- **Tobyhanna State Park**, Monroe and Wayne counties (fishing and boating)
- **Varden Conservation Area**, Wayne Co. (fishing)
- **Vosburg Neck State Park**, Wyoming Co.
- **Worlds End State Park**, Sullivan Co. (fishing and whitewater)

Key:

fishing=fishing, no boating of any type

fishing and boating=fishing and powered and unpowered boating

paddling=unpowered boating

whitewater=whitewater paddling



Worlds End State Park, Sullivan County

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

artwork-Michael Kensinger

Popular State Game Lands

- **State Game Lands (SGL) 180**, Pike County: Made up of 12,500 acres, except for steep slopes located near Shohola Gorge, topography mainly consists of rounded hills and broad to narrow valleys. Swamps, peat bogs and wetlands are widespread. At approximately 900 acres, Shohola Lake Waterfowl Impoundment is a popular spot for anglers and hunters. Hunting includes deer, ruffed grouse, waterfowl, squirrels and turkeys. Go geocaching, hiking, sightseeing, fishing and boating. The Shohola Creek is a Stocked Trout Water.
- **State Game Lands 127**, Monroe County: At just under 26,190 acres, recreational shooting opportunities abound including a rifle range. Hunt for deer, grouse, bears, hares and turkeys. Snowshoe hares are of growing interest to the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) due to evidence of statewide population decline. Snowshoe hares are different from cottontail rabbits in many ways. One difference, of course, is the snowshoe hare's huge, furry hind feet that help it travel over deep snow.



Snowshoe hare

- **State Game Lands 13 and 57**, Columbia, Luzerne, Sullivan and Wyoming counties: Combined for nearly 100,000 acres and easily accessible, this is the largest expanse of SGL in Pennsylvania. These two SGL together offer big and small game hunting, trapping, fishing, hiking, birdwatching, biking and horseback riding. SGL 57 is also a site of the annual SGL driving tour. During the self-guided tour, participants pass habitat improvement projects completed by PGC and partners. Staff from PGC and conservation organizations are on hand to explain the projects and answer questions.



SE
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LANCASTER
Fly Girls
ONE MORE CAST



Building a Fishing Community

by Kelley Kirsch

photo-courtesy of Kelley Kirsch

Remember those youthful days of belonging to sports teams or clubs, where camaraderie and excitement thrived? It's clear we all crave that sense of being part of something larger than ourselves. My journey into fly fishing began with a desire to learn, a blend of wonder and apprehension. Where does one even begin? Previous experiences tackling new challenges taught me the importance of community, especially with other women who shared similar interests. Initially, finding fellow female anglers in my area proved challenging. However, an online discovery changed everything—the United Women on the Fly (UWOTF). It felt like stumbling upon a hidden gem—a network of women enthusiastic about fly fishing, predominantly in the western United States.

Immersing myself in their social media and educational content fueled my enthusiasm, but I needed to find more local people interested. A plea on my personal Facebook page surprisingly rallied a group of friends interested in learning alongside me. Harnessing this energy, I organized a casting clinic and hired a guide to teach us the basics. The turnout exceeded expectations—15 women, many novices to fly fishing, arrived with curiosity and eagerness.

To sustain this momentum and cultivate lasting fishing companionship, I decided to form my own group. Rather than reinvent the wheel, I sought guidance from Heather Hodson, the founder of UWOTF. Despite never meeting in person, Hodson generously offered advice and connections, laying the groundwork for Lancaster Fly Girls. Though initially modest, our Facebook group now boasts 225 members and continues to grow.

The adage “If you build it, they will come” rings true not only in movie notoriety but also in the realm of women’s fly fishing. Yet, this journey is not solitary; it’s been championed by support from numerous individuals. Notably, Amidea Daniel, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), introduced to me by Hodson, has been instrumental. The PFBC hosted a Fishing 101 course for our group and



While the thrill of catching fish and the serenity of being on the water are undeniable, it's the camaraderie and shared experiences that leave the most lasting impressions.

continues to offer on-water events including a women’s steelhead program in Erie, Erie County. Collaborations and partnerships with supportive groups and agencies are key to thriving in this endeavor.

Building a group takes time, and success will typically not come from a one-and-done event. Diversifying opportunities is crucial in engaging members at every stage of their fishing journey. From online programs to casting clinics, fly tying nights, mentoring sessions on local streams and organized fishing outings, Lancaster Fly Girls aims to provide a wide range of opportunities. Understanding the importance of ongoing engagement and community building is paramount. Research suggests that individuals often need to participate in up to five or more events before committing to a group. Having a Facebook page serves as a central hub for resources, questions and member connections, fostering a supportive


and interactive community. The connections we forge and the relationships we cultivate within these communities are what keep us coming back for more. Networking with other organizations and individuals also plays a pivotal role; each person we meet has something valuable to teach us.

While the thrill of catching fish and the serenity of being on the water are undeniable, it's the camaraderie and shared experiences that leave the most lasting impressions. As Rachel Finn, a revered figure in fishing circles, eloquently puts it, “It’s all about the hang.” Whether you’re finding your community or, better yet, creating it, it’s a journey worth embarking on for anyone passionate about their pursuits. ☐



Collaborations and partnerships with supportive groups and agencies is key to building a fishing community.

photos-courtesy of Kelley Kirsch



SEEING THE OUTDOOR WORLD'S MANY HUES— COLOR BLIND VIEWFINDERS

photo-Kyle Yates for PA Wilds Center

by *Jessica Aiello*

Imagine a world where the red fall leaves of a maple tree never appear to make that color change, remaining a dull olive green. Or, a bright blue summer sky appears as a grey, overcast day. That is the reality for the 13 million people in the United States living with color blindness, also referred to as color vision deficiency. Now, thanks to technology, the colors of the rainbow are opening up for those who haven't seen them.

According to the National Institutes of Health, people with color blindness generally see colors differently, not no colors at all. People with the two most common forms of color blindness, red-green and blue-yellow color blindness, have trouble differentiating between two colors or seeing items with a specific coloration and sometimes other colors as well. In fact, there are four forms of red-green color blindness and two forms of blue-yellow color blindness, varying in degree of severity. In rare cases, color blindness limits colors to seeing everything as black, white or shades of grey.

Color vision deficiency occurs when specific light-sensitive pigments in the cones of the eyes are missing. The light-sensing

cones sensitive to different wavelengths are what produce color in vision. This lack of cone pigments is usually genetic and is more prevalent in men (especially white men) than women. Age-related eye conditions such as cataracts and macular degeneration, as well as chronic conditions like diabetes and multiple sclerosis, can also cause color blindness, according to All About Vision.

While there is no cure for genetic color blindness, special contact lenses and eyeglasses can help people differentiate between colors. These lenses work by increasing the contrast between colors, so they are easier to tell apart. In a pilot project at multiple state parks across the Pennsylvania Wilds (a 13-county area in Pennsylvania that encompasses more than 2 million acres of public lands), visitors who are color blind will soon have the opportunity to see a fuller spectrum of colors.

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR), Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation (PPFF), and PA Wilds Center are working together to install fixed-mount, binocular-style viewing glasses at strategic, scenic state park locations, typically overlooking a vista or other special natural feature. These viewfinders have special lenses that allow visitors who are color blind to see in full color. The viewfinders were purchased through a partnership program



A colorblind viewfinder at Kinzua Bridge, McKean County

between the PA Wilds Center and PPF—the PA Wilds Round Up for Conservation. This effort asks people to round up to the nearest dollar when they purchase items through Pennsylvania Wilds Visitor Centers or their online marketplace.

“We are all excited to give the opportunity for color blind visitors to experience the beauty of the colors in the natural world,” said Alan Lichtenwalner, PA DCNR Regional Manager (Northcentral Region). “Some will perhaps see the brilliant fall colors for the very first time in their lives.”

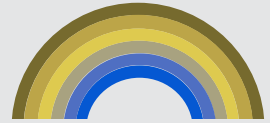
Tennessee state parks have already installed viewfinders. When people with color vision deficiency looked through the lenses for the first time, they were understandably emotional. One gentleman said, after seeing brilliant fall foliage for the first time, “I’m glad I’ve seen it. I just wish I had seen this all my life. It’s kind of what I’d imagine the difference between here and heaven.”

“Sometimes, we take for granted the magic that comes from seeing a scenic autumn vista bursting with the colors of red, yellow and orange leaves,” said Marci Mowery, PPF President. “I can’t wait to hear stories from visitors to PA Wilds state parks who experience full-color leaf peeping for the first time. I can only imagine how magical that experience will be for them, and it makes me so grateful for this partnership effort.” ☐

Color blind people see as few as 10% of colors compared to those with normal color vision



To color blind people, a rainbow only seems to have 2-3 colors



Protan Color Blind Vision Rainbow

*Adapted from **enchroma.com***

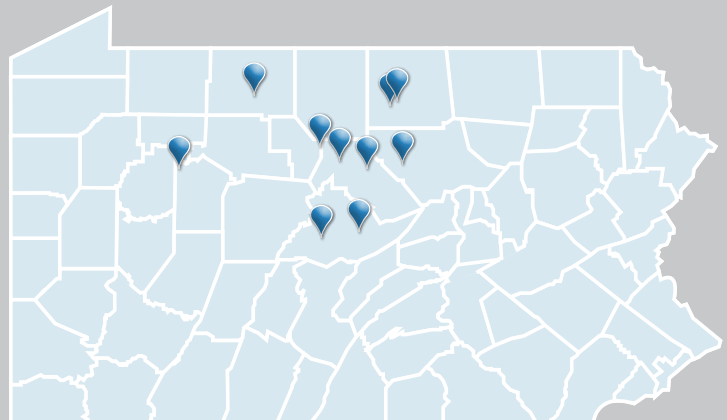
Viewfinders for the color blind:

To get a sense of the impact color blind viewfinders make in Tennessee and Pennsylvania, use the QR code below.



Then, visit these Pennsylvania state parks to experience it for yourself:

- Bald Eagle State Park, Centre County
- Black Moshannon State Park, Centre County
- Colton Point State Park, Tioga County
- Cook Forest State Park, Clarion, Forest and Jefferson counties
- Hyner View State Park, Clinton County
- Kettle Creek State Park, Clinton County
- Kinzua Bridge State Park, McKean County
- Leonard Harrison State Park, Tioga County
- Little Pine State Park, Lycoming County
- Sinnemahoning State Park, Cameron and Potter counties



BIG SPRING CREEK

by John Allen

photos by the author





The stretch known as the “Ditch” is at the headwaters of the stream and is the source of many early 1900s stories.

Big Spring Creek, Cumberland County, was once so popular that a train would travel daily in the early 1900s from Washington, D.C. to Newville, just for people to fish. Many early outdoor writers described the stream as one that could only be found in England.

Big Spring Creek was known for its plentiful Brook Trout that would gorge themselves on the abundant aquatic insects and sculpins. Anglers recounted stories of the water boiling with rising trout and commonly catching Brook Trout exceeding 4 pounds. In 1971, a fish hatchery was built at the headwaters. This had a major impact on the Brook Trout population due to multiple factors. Following the hatchery closure, much work went into stream habitat improvement projects that were specialized for features preferred by Brook Trout. Today, after a series of habitat improvement projects, the fishing gets better each year.

A highlight of the creek is a 1.52 mile stretch of Catch and Release Fly-Fishing Only waters that runs from the top of the “Ditch” to Nealy Road. From Nealy Road downstream to a stone arch bridge, where Big Spring Road crosses the creek, the stream is regulated as a Stocked Trout Water and generally receives one preseason and two inseason stockings.

This reach is usually heavily fished after it's stocked and does not have too many holdover trout.

Big Spring Creek's unique feature is its ability to grow trout quickly due to its abundant food source. For fishing, though, when there is an abundant food source, you will find picky trout. The “Ditch” can be one of the most frustrating stretches of water that you will ever fish. You can walk along the bank spotting actively feeding trout and not even get a look when you present your offering. Between the depth, vegetation and food present, it is extremely difficult to make the right presentation. Downstream of the Ditch are deep, narrow runs with trout lying along many of the edges within the weeds.

The most popular hatches on the stream are the little black stonefly in late winter and early spring, the sulphurs in mid-to late spring, and the tricos from mid-July until the first frost of the fall. Each hatch requires its own special tactics and techniques, but all will bring these picky trout to the surface.

While the fishing is no longer that of the early 1900s, the wild trout population is on the rise, the water quality is as good as it has been for several decades, and it provides an excellent opportunity for any angler looking for a challenging limestone trout stream while traveling through the Cumberland Valley. ☐

Blaze the Trail and Enjoy Fall Trout Fishing



Have you ever picked up a *DeLorme Atlas & Gazetteer: Pennsylvania* and selected a stream at random to try to fish? It's quite exciting. This paperback book offers symbols delineating fishing access, state parks and state game lands. It also lists campgrounds and other road trip necessities. It's the base tool necessary to plan and blaze a trail for fall trout. TroutRoutes or onX Hunt are also helpful tools. TroutRoutes is a fishing-based app that offers stream specific information integrated into the app, and onX is a topographical mapping app. When a thrill seeker simply points and picks off a map or app, they only have an idea of what they will find and experience, and that is the hook. Sometimes, even with the help of guidebooks and apps, waters look and fish different than expected. One must be ready to adapt and improvise in order to catch fish. The sweet reward of success is something entirely self-created and beautiful. At times, a location has different vegetation or banks than expected, but if research is properly done, an angler will know the potential hot spots and how to get to and from the stream. Such information is integral to a safe and successful adventure. Water and snacks are also important.

For fall expeditions, your options are wild and stocked trout. If you're interested in targeting beautiful wild Brook Trout, read the fish handling practices at KeepFishWet.org. It's your responsibility as an angler to understand the science behind proper fish handling, be it for catch and release or proper harvesting techniques. With small Brook Trout, it's important to employ the appropriately sized hooks and to wet one's hands before handling. Blazing the trail for Brook Trout is straightforward. Most streams feeding into major rivers, such as the Allegheny River, Youghiogheny River, Juniata River and Susquehanna River, hold Brook Trout. Pick a thin blue line on the map, double check the water temperatures and enjoy. During November through January, anglers should be careful when walking through riffles to prevent the destruction of redds, or fish nests. A more conservation-minded plan as water temperatures drop is to target trophy-sized trout stocked by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. To find a Keystone Select Stocked Trout Water near you, visit FishandBoat.com.

A few examples of Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters are Oil Creek, Venango County; South Branch Tunkhannock Creek, Lackawanna and Wyoming counties; Middle Branch White Clay Creek, Chester County; and Meadow Run, Fayette County. Trophy-sized trout are stocked each fall in all of the creeks listed on the Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters list. Although specific sections are stocked, in reality, there are miles of waters and trails to fish and explore. Regardless of what part of the state anglers are gallivanting through, there are caddisflies and mayflies present in the streams. With many stocked trout, a drag free drifting fly is more important than the fly itself. You have many options when it comes to fall fishing in Pennsylvania. The question is, where do you want to go? ☐



Brook Trout

Keystone Select Stocked Trout Waters:



pfb.com/maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=eb5e3ed6e2c14be09e187cc325590ff9

Fall Day on the Water



photos-Darl Black

by Marilyn Black

It's the second Monday of October and school's out, and banks and government offices are closed. This traditional 3-day weekend during pleasant autumn weather fits the schedules of many outdoor enthusiasts.

Paddlers can explore any of the 29 designated Pennsylvania Water Trails, including French Creek Water Trail, which are best enjoyed while paddling a kayak or canoe. Water levels can be checked in advance online for the latest water gauge readings for optimal floating conditions.

Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish and Smallmouth Bass are active during the fall in rivers. The Youghiogheny River, Allegheny River and Shenango River maintain fishable water levels throughout the autumn suited for small fishing boats, kayaks and canoes.

Larger recreational lakes are much quieter and less crowded. During October, anglers typically target Largemouth Bass, Muskellunge and Northern Pike in lakes such as Pymatuning Reservoir (20 horsepower limit) and Allegheny Reservoir, Conneaut Lake and Tionesta Lake (unlimited horsepower).

Fishing trout streams during the extended trout season has better results than during the summer. Recommended for autumn trout fishing are Oil Creek, Crawford and Venango counties; Conewango Creek, Warren County; Connoquenessing Creek, Butler County; and Neshannock Creek, Mercer and Lawrence counties.

In October, anglers seeking steelhead enjoy Lake Erie and its tributaries.

Take some time to fish, paddle or camp along a Pennsylvania waterway this year, and enjoy the beautiful fall foliage. ☐



This couple is paddling the Pymatuning Creek section of Shenango River Lake in Pennsylvania, downstream of Orangeville, Ohio.



The Youghiogheny River produced this feisty Smallmouth Bass caught and released by Pete Cartwright.

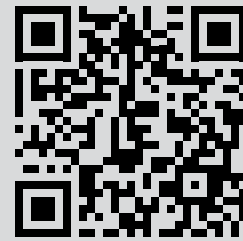


This steelhead was caught in October from the beach at the mouth of Trout Run, Erie County, as it enters Lake Erie.

What's in a name?

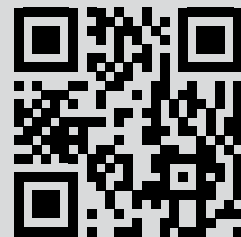
- Allegheny River (good, fine, beautiful stream)
- Conewango Creek (a long strip)
- Conneaut Lake (place of late snow)
- Connoquenessing Creek (a long way straight)
- Lake Erie (wild-cat)
- Neshannock Creek (two adjoining streams)
- Pymatuning Reservoir (crooked mouthed man's dwelling place)
- Shenango River (the beautiful one)
- Tionesta Lake (there it has fine banks)
- Youghiogheny River (wandering stream)

Pennsylvania Water Trails:



pecpa.org/water/pa-water-trails/

Erie Maritime Museum:



eriemaritimemuseum.org



Fishing Stocked Trout Ponds with Kids



by Ross Robertson

photos by the author

Fishing ponds that either the Commonwealth or private parties stock can be a great way to introduce children to fishing. While the fishing can be amazing, it isn't always like "shooting fish in a barrel" like people think. Stocked fish raised in hatcheries, where their diets consist almost entirely of pellets, can be extremely picky at times. Aside from the fish's temperament, there are several things to consider before planning your first outing with a young angler fishing at a stocked pond.

Clothing

Dressing both yourself and the kids properly will help ensure you have a better experience. While seasoned anglers know to watch the weather to see if a

jacket or rain gear is needed, it is often overlooked by less experienced anglers. Hats, sunglasses and other items that keep the sun and elements off children will help extend the fishing trip.

On a recent outing, some family didn't listen to my advice on footwear, and it created some issues. The areas around ponds typically have mud or wet grass, both of which can cause a mess. Waterproof shoes or lightweight rubber boots can make the day more enjoyable and less messy. A change of clothes, including shoes, can often make the ride home less messy as well.

The goal

The goal will likely be different for each child on each trip. On the first trip, it may be fishing an hour or learning to use the equipment. For parents, it's important to be patient and remember to assist the child with fishing. In reality, parents not being able to fish themselves or only being there for a short time is a win. Each trip can mean more interest and can work towards



Waterproof shoes or lightweight rubber boots can make the day more enjoyable and less messy.



Getting them there and wanting to go back is the win, not how many fish are caught.

having a fishing buddy for life. Don't do things that will turn them off permanently.

Essentials

Stocked fishing ponds can be somewhat remote. You most likely won't have time to drive around to find items you need or want, so plan accordingly. Insects may be a problem. A simple bug spray that is easy to apply is helpful to keep bugs away.

A cooler is often an overlooked item and necessary to keep your catch from spoiling. It is wise to have a bag of ice in it or some ice packs prior to fishing. Coolers with wheels are a good option since many fishing spots require walking to get to them.

Food

All parents know that snacks or even a lunch can turn a cranky child into a content one quickly. A snack and a drink can be one of the best ways to take a break from fishing and avoid a meltdown.

Fishing gear

In my experience, it's better to be prepared with your own fishing gear. Visit local fishing forums or clubs for advice on the gear you need. Often, it is not what you think. Trout dough balls or pieces of nightcrawlers on a slip sinker rig are effective. On my most recent trip, we used small plastic crayfish on a jig head, so we didn't have to use live bait. Take along extra rods and lures, as it is only a matter of time before a reel or lure is rendered unusable.

I also recommend a landing net. Not losing a fish as it slides up the bank or keeping a child from getting muddy is a big win.

Parents need to be prepared, but just rolling with the punches can make or break the day. My 3-year-old nephew didn't want help from his dad casting or reeling in fish. He just wanted to cast his own rod with a plug on it. Remember, getting them there and wanting to go back is the win, not how many fish are caught. ☐

A SPECTATOR SPORT



artwork-George LaVanish

by Marshall Nych

While it's true I gained more knowledge during my 4 years at a state university than any time before or since in my life, one memorable lesson stands out from my college days—fishing is sometimes its finest when it's a spectator's sport.

I scheduled classes around outdoor pursuits, filling a full-time student's load into a couple days, so I could fish the other days of the week. When I wasn't in class, I was in the woods or on the water. One entire week of break, I focused my fishing efforts on catching a musky. I devoted every waking moment

of that 7-day stint to casting the wakes of a local lake. Batteries were drained, and muscles were strained. Every bucktail in the box was waterlogged. Just prior to sunset on the last day, I allowed myself to go insane. A 47-inch monster exploded on my buzzbait. Landing that fish, a personal best to this day, felt like many life lessons wrapped into one moment.

My tunnel vision failed to notice a fellow angler working the same stumps. Easily within earshot, I proudly asked, "Did you see that?"

The middle-aged man only offered an apathetic nod. Never had the absence of a single word communicated so much. With it, the angler expressed he had done far better and some element to my approach was mediocre.



A humbling gut check, one of life's fishiest lessons surfaced—those who most genuinely celebrate a fish are often those far removed from fishing. Ask yourself, how often has an angler sneered across a run when you hooked a fish? Has one of your priceless photos been scoffed or go-to stories dismissed?

Personally, I find the sincerest, purest reactions frequently come from the general public who never really see such fish. The following are my favorite fishy run-ins with spectators of the sport.

Lured by the shine of chrome, I often travel to Lake Erie's tributaries. Rainbow Trout in my small town are measured with a ruler. The steelhead within these tributaries require a yardstick. Papa had asked me to keep one of the steelheads, so he could try smoking it. Landing the most perfect specimen of my season, a stainless steel beam well over 30 inches, I was not about

to disobey the request of my family's patriarch.

Upon returning home, arms wonderfully sore, I stopped at the local diner. The fish stayed in the truck on ice as I trudged through the glass door. Possibly, it was the waders, but my outfit solicited questioning from the staff. When I relayed my adventure and their inquiries to the size of the steelhead, the waitress wanted to see it for herself. I scarfed down a Reuben and complied. As if sneaking out, the waitress scurried towards my truck from the back of the diner. While she marveled at the Lake Erie masterpiece, the entire kitchen staff surrounded me in the parking lot. I assumed the hostess flipped the sign to closed. A young dishwasher gave me a high five. Amidst phones snapping pictures and shrills of delight, I noticed the

chef's eyes glued to my prize. "Sorry friend, this one is going to Grandpa. Maybe, next time." I left a local celebrity and smelling of fish.

On a separate occasion, my brother and a friend planned an overnight float down the Allegheny River. On the second day, working a pool as remote as it was deep, I hooked what would shatter my largest Walleye ever. Once alongside the boat, the golden beauty could only be described as dinosaur-like. Both my brother and friend talked me into mounting the 10-pound fish. Ironically, my favorite memory from the trip occurred hours after the fish was in the net as we drifted into the dock. A family playfully swam as our vessel reached dry land. Curiosity as to what creature finned next to our boat was getting the best of the mother and father as their three children splashed in the refreshing current. They strolled over to have a look. The moment the doting parents observed the toothy behemoth, the mother emitted a guttural scream of pure terror. As if a scene from "Jaws", the lady cried, "Kids! Get out of the water. Now!"

Most of the time, no one is present to see a special fish caught firsthand. Those who an excited angler encounters must simply take the angler's word and have faith in the honor system. Such was not the case with what is known as "the bachelor party bass." Jeff, my best friend since grade school, was getting married in the fall. Wanting a low key celebration with a circle of close friends around a campfire, I offered my property and pond.

As conversation flowed as lively and free as the creek running into the 3-acre pond, I had an uncontrollable itch to throw a jitterbug into the twilight. My first cast at last light, the jointed body landed perfectly atop the quiet current of the feeder stream. I let it idly float down to the pond. Once there, I started a slow retrieve. When my initial crank was complete, topwater frothed wildly into whitewater as the jitterbug was engulfed. There was no need for a summoning holler. The entire party heard the attack themselves. In front of an audience, nearly all familiar since childhood, I fought the toughest bass I ever hooked. A net is not needed in situations with more than 12 helpful hands and a band of brothers willing to wade, or jump in for that matter, if need be.

High fives and handshakes, all of which could fit effortlessly within the circumference of the fish's mouth, solidified yet another memory between allies. At once, every friend in attendance raced to their fishing rods with hopes they would catch a fish in the next 30 seconds that took me 30 years to catch. I returned to the campfire in solitude, knowing the magic of the moment could not be recreated. As I smiled at the smoke swirling into the August night air, I realized there are times fishing is a fine spectator sport. ☐

PENNSYLVANIA OUTDOOR CORPS DEAF CREW— GONE FISHING



by Miranda Smith
Southwest Region Education Specialist
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

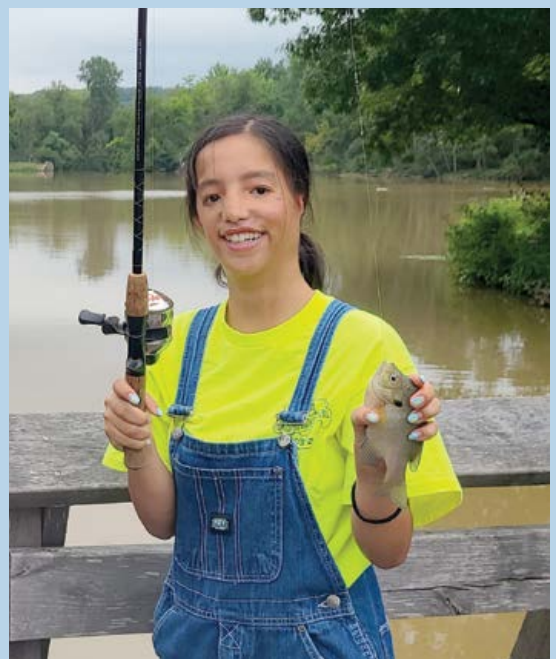
On Wednesday, August 7, 2024, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission education staff provided the first Introduction to Fishing program for the Deaf community at North Park, Allegheny County. The program was held for the Deaf crew of the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps, based at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf. Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps is a partnership between CorpsTHAT, located in Baltimore, MD, and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Program participants learned the principles of being a S.M.A.R.T. angler (Safety, Manners, Appreciate, Release, Teach); casting and knot tying skills; fishing regulations; and basic tackle and rigging for bait fishing. Following the education portion of the program, participants had the opportunity to fish at Marshall Lake. 📺

Videos:



[fishandboat.com/Pages/
ASL.aspx](https://fishandboat.com/Pages/ASL.aspx)



Despite the muddy water from recent rains, nearly all anglers caught fish.

photos-PFBC archives

CAST & CAUGHT

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**



Sadie Husted, age 10, caught this 17-inch Rainbow Trout while fishing at the children's fishing area at Wykoff Run, Cameron County.



Samuel Lewis, age 6, caught this 25-inch Rainbow Trout while fishing with his dad, Adam, at Kingston Dam, Loyalhanna Creek, Westmoreland County.



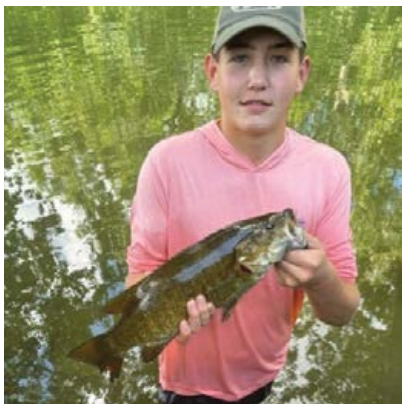
Trace Irion, age 7, caught and released this 24-inch Brown Trout while fishing the West Branch Susquehanna River, Lycoming County.



Adam Isgate, Frackville, caught this Brown Trout while fishing First Fork Sinnemahoning Creek, Potter County.



Huntley Winters, age 3, caught this 19½-inch golden Rainbow Trout while fishing in Franklin County.



Derek Adams, age 14, caught and released this 23-inch Smallmouth Bass while fishing Conodoguinet Creek, Cumberland County.



Joe Baker, Canonsburg, caught and released this 46-pound Striped Bass while fishing the Delaware River.



Emily Wlazlo, West Babylon, NY, caught this carp while fishing the Delaware River in Pennsylvania with her husband, Rafal.



THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB

by Mike Parker
Communications Director
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

If you've ever struggled with a home improvement project, big or small, it's likely that you've experienced that frustrating moment when you realize you don't have all the tools needed to finish the job. Sure, you can try to "make do" with what you already have in the toolbox, and you might save a few bucks. But chances are, after adding hours to your project and gritting your teeth, sooner or later, you'll still end up driving to the hardware store to buy the gadget that will finally get your project across the finish line.

If you've done this a few times, like me, you'll eventually realize how vital it is to have the right tool for the job from the start.

Recently, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) made the decision to put the right tools in the hands of Waterways Conservation Officers (WCOs) in the form of 25 new patrol boats. As part of a 3-year boat replacement plan, these boats are now in service

on waterways across the Commonwealth, replacing older vessels that outlived their usefulness for the purposes of effective law enforcement.

A credit to their resourcefulness, many WCOs over the years have found ways to "make do" and perform their duties with boats that were either outdated or not properly designed for their line of work. In one case, a boat that was used to patrol the middle section of the Susquehanna River in the northcentral region had been in service since 1990. The 34-year-old boat, which had been repurposed for law enforcement use after decades of service to PFBC fisheries biologists, was seaworthy; however, it was limited to patrolling only deep pools of the river and incapable of reaching shallow areas frequented by many anglers.

When replacing that particular boat and others statewide, consideration wasn't only given to the age of the vessels but also how well they were equipped for law enforcement use in their unique regions of Pennsylvania. Like our diverse waterways, not all patrol boats are created equal. The same boats that may be perfect for handling heavy wave action on Lake Erie or strong currents on the lower Delaware River would be clunky to maneuver and overpowered for use on a small or mid-sized lake. In addition to being recognizable as



photos-PFBC archives

Sergeant Bryan C. Bendock patrols the water in a new Boston Whaler 210 Guardian.

professional law enforcement tools, the boats were assigned to regions where they were appropriately matched to the type of boating that occurs.

Where possible, especially for use on larger lakes and deeper rivers, new boats added to the PFBC fleet were ordered from manufacturers that offered a specific law enforcement package already equipped with lights, sirens and standard police gear. In other instances, where a smaller boat was preferred on a smaller lake or shallower river, boats were selected for their versatility and durability. The boats were later fitted with law enforcement equipment that is now standard across the agency.

While the addition of modern patrol boats is an obvious benefit for WCOs who now have a more professional platform on which to perform their jobs, anglers and boaters will also be better served. Through the purchase of boat registrations, fishing licenses and permits, anglers and boaters continue to be the primary source of funding for PFBC law enforcement efforts needed to protect and conserve our aquatic resources and enhance public safety. Funding for two new patrol boats was secured through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Port Security Grant Program. ☐



The G3 Bay 20 GX is the type of boat being used on waterways including the Susquehanna River and Pymatuning Reservoir.



Patrolling the water near PFBC's Mangan Cove Access at Lake Wallenpaupack, Pike and Wayne counties, in a new Boston Whaler 210 Guardian.

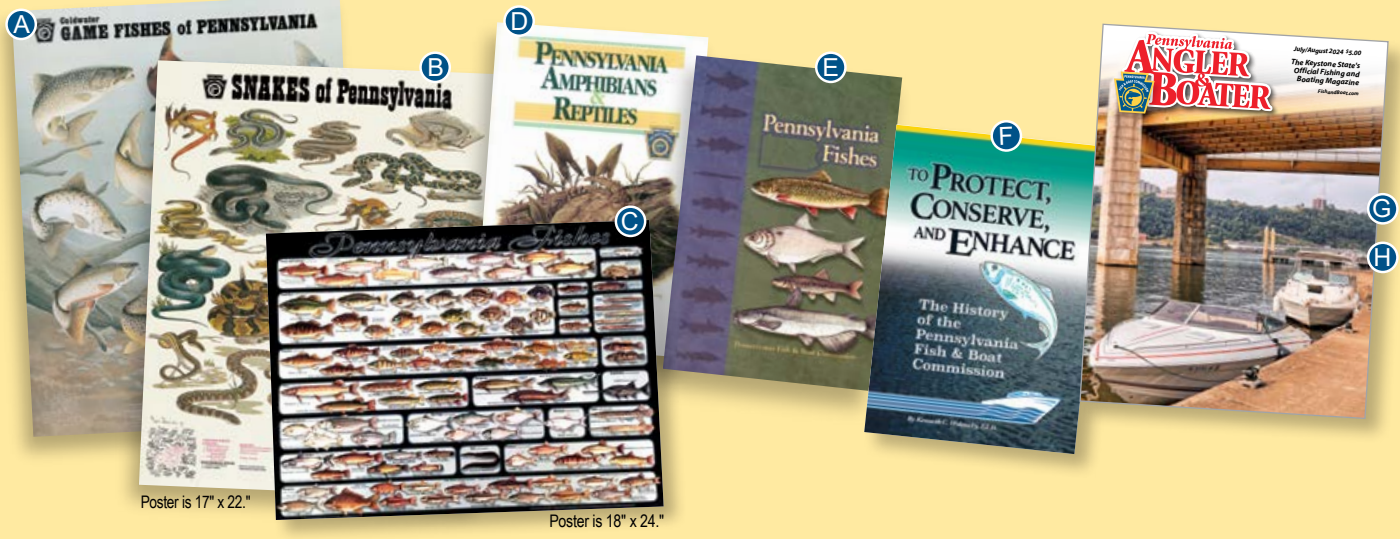


Silver Ships AM600 is assigned to Delaware County.

Poster is 17" x 22."

Books are 6" x 9."

Magazines are 8.25" x 10.88."



	Price	Quantity	Subtotal
A Set of: Coldwater Fishes, Coolwater/Warmwater Fishes, Migratory Fishes, Miscellaneous Fishes, Panfishes, Forage Fishes (6 posters)	\$13.99	_____	_____
B Set of: Frogs, Salamanders, Snakes, Turtles (4 posters)	\$12.11	_____	_____
C Set of: Pennsylvania Fishes Wall Charts (2 posters)	\$ 9.16	_____	_____
D Pennsylvania Amphibians & Reptiles Book (172 pages)	\$14.34	_____	_____
E Pennsylvania Fishes Book (172 pages)	\$14.34	_____	_____
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Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
May 28 · 🌐

Anglers and boaters, can you answer this question?
What are the six major watersheds in Pennsylvania?
A. Erie, Ohio, Chemung, Potomac, Susquehanna, Delaware
B. Erie, Ohio, Genesee, Potomac, Susquehanna, Delaware
C. Erie, Ohio, Tioga, Potomac, Susquehanna, Delaware
D. Erie, Allegheny, Genesee, Potomac, Susquehanna, Delaware

Challenging questions like this one were part of the Aquatic Ecology station test at the 2024 [Pennsylvania Envirothon](#) event.

County-winning teams and over 300 high school students traveled from across the state to participate in this event, one of the largest state-level environmental competitions in the country.

Team Greenflash from North East High School, Erie County, scored highest in the Aquatic Ecology station and was also the overall winner. Congratulations to all the teams and talented students that participated in this year's event!

Pennsylvania Watersheds

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pafishandboat Jake Paulovich, 15, caught this Rainbow Trout with a live minnow in Allegheny County at Bull Creek... more

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May 10

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Colin caught this Largemouth Bass with Wacky Worm bait! What a beautiful catch and release!

Have a fish story to share? Send it to ra-fsocial1@pa.gov 📧

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YouTube

017 Airpump & Airstone Prep & Installation

166,255 views · Jun 3, 2020 Trout in the Classroom- Aquarium Set-up

D17 - Title: Preparing and Installing your Air Stone with the Air Pump
Description: How to properly prepare and install your Air Stone with the Air Pump. The proper installation of these components will ensure that you have adequate dissolved oxygen present in your system.

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