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OCTOBER 2023

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FISHING REPORT

Fishing is taking on its seasonal change as the walleye are heading back to the Lake Erie Western Basin, perch are coming into Presque Isle Bay and steelhead are heading into tributary streams. The fishing pressure is declining as many boater fishermen are pulling their boats as the marinas are closing for the season. Here's some recent photos that were submitted that will tell the story better—



The above photo was captured from our webcam that is located at the mouth of Trout Run in Fairview Township on October 1st. In September there were 120,000 visitors to the camera web site which is sponsored by the PA Steelhead Assoc., Fairview Township, Fish USA and The SONS of Lake Erie. It can be viewed on line at <https://www.fishusa.com/avonia-webcam>. Watch for our November Issue of the "Bucket" for the introduction of another web camera at the Walnut Creek Access Area.

In Memoriam

Sadly we must report the passing of Ray Yurcak on September 28, 2023 at 97 years old. Ray was one of our oldest members. He was active as a volunteer and a great friend who will sadly be missed.



Ray Yurcak (Right) poses with his son Buddy Yurcak (Left) at one of our prior volunteer picnics. Buddy passed away several months ago, too.

THE PROGRAM AT OUR SEPTEMBER MEETING

was presented by Fish USA Pro Staff member Josh Feltenberger at the meeting. Josh provided us with tips and tactics for chasing Steelhead through the different stages of the run. From Lake fishing to low clear water early on and then midwinter green water. Flies, beads, live bait, lures & jigs we're all covered. There were about sixty SONS members in attendance. A nice array of door prizes were awarded that night.



Josh Feltenberger

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Let us know if you can help out by emailing sonslakeri@aol.com or text 814-882-7296.

Saturday October 21
10-5 Folly's End Campground
Steelhead Kickoff Party

Thursday October 26
9:00 AM Niagara Boat Launch
PISP fish habitat assembly
and deployment volunteers
needed

SONS 2024 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE BEGINS

You will or may have already received or will have received the SONS 2024 membership packet in the mail. Our membership level reached 2600 in 2023. We are asking your continued support by rejoining and possibly signing up a friend or relative. We are a respected and well recognized organization thanks to members like you. We have served our fishing community and our Lake Erie fishery for nearly 43 years and will continue to do so with your support. Included in the packet are six benefit tickets for ten \$100 prizes which will be awarded at a drawing that will be held at our January 22 meeting. Your donation for the tickets help defray the cost of printing and mailing the packet.



SONS 2024 MEMBERSHIP BUTTON

is a depiction of a bluegill this year. This is in keeping with featuring a native species fish on the button. You can pick up the 2024 pin at anyone of our events or meetings or you can get one by sending \$3.00 to SONS of Lake Erie, PO Box 3605, Erie, PA 16508

JOIN A FRIEND TODAY!

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2023

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Fish Pictures!



PINK SALMON CAUGHT

The picture above shows Murdock Bannister with his pink salmon caught at 4:30 p.m. on 9/20/23 in sixteen mile creek which runs through his backyard. The salmon weighed 3lbs 11oz. The picture was submitted by Melissa Larsen-Haynes, his grandmother. 11-year-old Murdock is the son of Molly and Jeremy Bannister. His dad, Jeremy is an accomplished skin diver who as a member of the Pennsylvania Archeological Shipwreck Survey Team (PASST) has studied, documented and photographed nearly all of the known shipwrecks in the PA waters of Lake Erie. His grandmother is the daughter of Mr. Al Larsen who worked as a regional biologist in Pennsylvania in the 1950s, then took a position as a fisheries biologist based in Ann Arbor, Michigan from 1960 until his retirement in 1984. At first, he was a research biologist on all five Great Lakes. Then he was a director of the U.S. Wildlife Research Fleet on the Great Lakes. He was instrumental in developing the steelhead in Lake Erie. Molly is the granddaughter of Al Larsen.



NICE NORTHERN PIKE

Above: Brett Johnson (Left) caught the 38" Northern and his friend Chris Hoffman (Right) caught the 29" Northern trolling in Lake Erie on Sept. 22, 2023. Photo: Rick Makowski

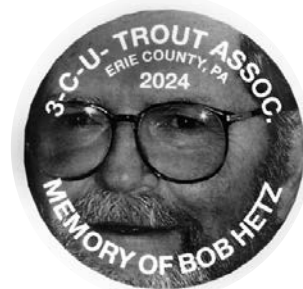


AND ALSO THERE'S BASS

John Camp caught this nice bass while fishing from the Holland St. dock on October 6, 2023. Photo: Rick Makowski

REMINDER--- A STEELHEAD KICKOFF PARTY

will be held Saturday October 21 from 11 AM until 5 PM under the pavilion at Folly's End Campground 8600 Rt. 98, Girard, PA 16417. Admission is free and open to the public. It promises to be a fun filled day with DJ Music, Food Truck, Micro-Brew truck and experts on hand to share their fishing knowledge and fishing opportunities there. The experts on hand will be Gary Kell certified fly casting instructor and guide, Karl Weixlmann writer, author and owner operator of Fly Fish Erie, Tony Dranzo owner operator of Addicted Angler School, Ari Capotis guide and owner operator of Keystone Fly Girl, Mark Signorino fly casting instructor and guide and Julie Szur fly fishing guide. There also will be manufacturer reps on hand.



3-CU HONORS BOB HETZ ON MEMBER PIN

The 3-CU like the SONS also uses a pin as a badge of membership. This year's pin has a likeness of Bob Hetz, the former president and driving force of the organization printed on it. The dues to join 3-CU is \$5.00. You will find memberships available at most local bait shops.

**"Fishing is a passion that
can never be fully explained."**

NEWS BRIEFS

FORMER ERIE COKE CO PROPERTY TO BE CLEANED UP

On Friday October 6th the Erie Western PA Port Authority and the Erie Redevelopment held a joint meeting at which the two entities joined in a partnership to proceed with the acquisition and environmental remediation of the former Erie Coke Plant. This marks the first steps to repurpose nearly 200 acres of lakefront property.

LAKE ERIE PASSES GAS

*from an article by David Bruce
Erie Times-News*

Lake Erie recently released a foul-smelling “burp”, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

Officially called an upwelling event, the release of trapped gasses from the bottom of the lake is what DEP officials believe caused an acrid smell Sept. 25-26 that was noticed across the Erie area.

Lake Erie releases the gas as a cold front passes and winds break up summer stratification according to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

Central Lake Erie often stratifies during the summer, with a warmer upper layer of water and a cooler lower layer. The two layers do not mix, and the lower level loses most of its oxygen by the end of summer. The area of the Lake is located between Cleveland and the Ohio line. The area was identified as a “Dead Zone” many years ago and is being monitored by scientists. It is caused by a growing flow of nutrients such as fertilizers into the Lake. This coupled with warmer temperatures causes the formation of algae that dies and sinks to the bottom of the lake forming a decaying layer that produces the effect. The gasses from the bottom, including hydrogen sulfide, known for smelling like rotten eggs then escape into the atmosphere.

This release does produce an odor but is not harmful to people’s health.

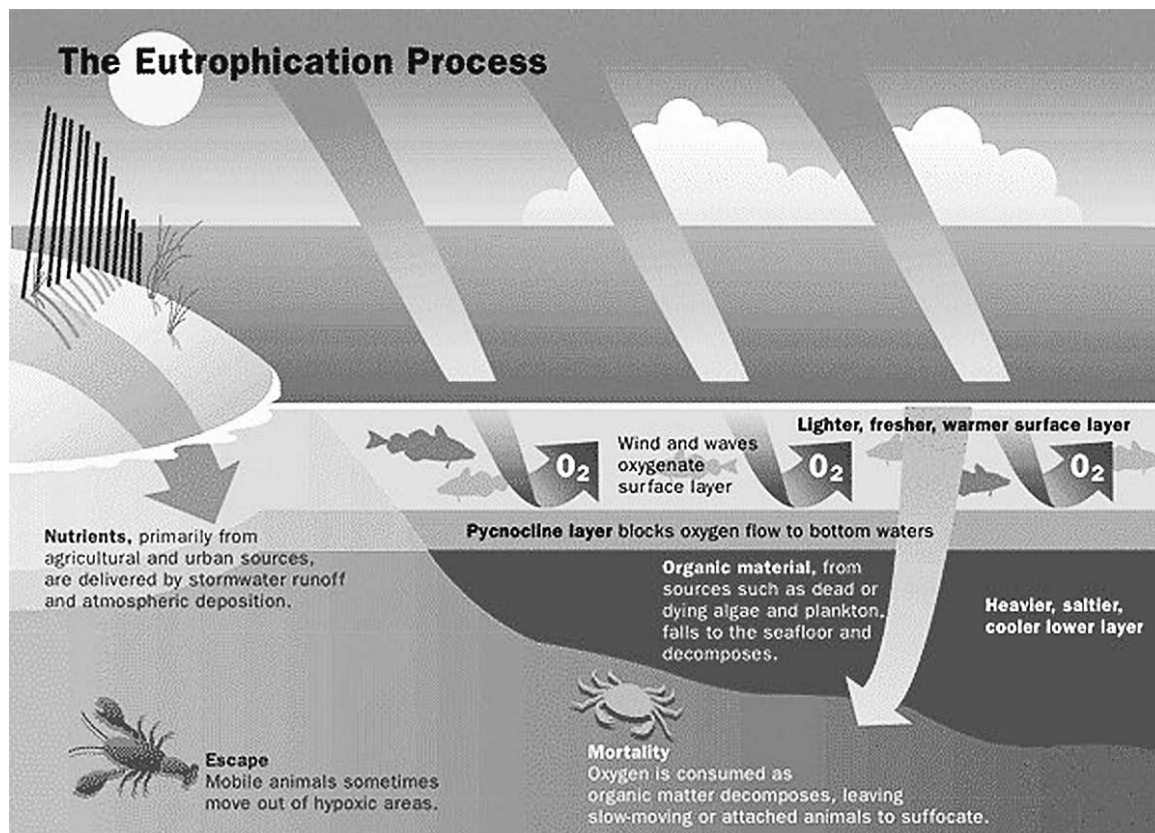
NEW TECHNOLOGY GOOD FOR FISHING OR BAD FOR THE FISHERY?

New electronics called Forward Facing Sonar (FFS) is now being utilized by anglers to locate and catch fish. This new technology is highly effective in locating fish resulting in higher catch rates in species targeted for harvest that could provide stress on the fisheries. It is important that our fisheries managers understand the significance of new techniques and its impact on the fishery and develop plans and regulations to control harvest rates.

The Lake Erie historical fishery is an example of the potential results of the use of technology. The Lake has produced more fish than any other fresh water body in the world. Technology started with the introduction of steam then gas powered fish tugs which total of over 120 in the 1920’s that made Erie their home port. There also was the introduction of gill nets, trawling, mechanical net lifters etc. Each new innovation resulted in larger

unregulated harvests causing the disappearance and depletion of some Lake Erie native fish starting with white fish, sturgeon, and then cisco followed by blue pike now extinct and possibly yellow perch in the future. All this resulted in harvests from the Pennsylvania waters of Lake Erie totaling 113 million pounds between 1918 and 1927.

Thankfully times have changed and our fishery managers of the Lake Erie Committee are keeping an eye on our fish biomass in the Lake. You can use the technology to bring you success but only harvesting what you need not always taking the limit would be prudent.



The above diagram exhibits the process that takes place causing the dead zone gas

LOCAL FISHING AND BOATING FACILITIES UNDER IMPROVEMENT



WORK ON THE LAMPE FISH CLEANING STATION

(shown in collage above) is finally underway. The southwest corner of the Lampe Marina parking lot has been fenced off in preparation for the construction of the long awaited fish cleaning station. Preliminary work has commenced with the underground horizontal boring for the installation of water and electric lines

from the marina building to the station. A trench for a sewer line has also been cut through the parking lot. The \$450,000 project is being funded by Lake Erie Access grant from the PFBC to the Erie Western PA Port Authority. It's all paid for by the money raised from the sale of the Lake Erie fishing stamp.

NEW DOCKS ARE BEING INSTALLED AT THE PRESQUE ISLE MARINA



Presque Isle Marina tenants were asked to remove their boats from their boat stalls by September 27th in preparation for the removal of the old docks and installation of new ones. The work was started by the Lake Shore Towing and Construction Co. by installing a silt curtain barrier around the whole marine dockage. All of the old docks are being removed except "C" dock and will be replaced by new floating docks with finger piers forming the stalls making it easier to board and dock the boat. Pier 7 will not be replaced. The project must be completed by May 2024. No fishing will be allowed inside the waters that are enclosed by the yellow silt curtain. See the lower right corner photo for a view of part of the curtain.

LOCAL FISHING AND BOATING FACILITIES UNDER IMPROVEMENT



POND AT HARBORCREEK MUNICIPAL PARK DRAINED AND DREDGED

Mac Quarie's pond at Harborcreek Township Community Park was recently drained, dredged and regraded after all of the fish were removed and relocated. These improvements will offer better fish habitat and water quality. The SONS have partnered with the Township every spring by providing a free public fishing event at that pond. As a public service we also donated funds to construct a picnic pavilion adjacent to the pond for the convenience of those using the pond for fishing.

Above is a photo of the pond at the Harborcreek Township Municipal Park prior to work.

Below are photos of drained pond and dredging equipment provided by Jack Bock.



**PLEASE
DON'T LITTER.**

REMINDER- MANDATORY LIFE JACKETS REQUIRED

November 1 through April 30

Beginning in 2012, the following regulation was established:

a person shall wear a Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (PFD or life jacket) during the cold weather months from November 1st through April 30th while underway or at anchor on boats less than 16 feet in length or any canoe or kayak.

LOCAL FISHING AND BOATING FACILITIES UNDER IMPROVEMENT

LIBERTY PIER GETTING IMPROVEMENTS, TOO

The EWPPA has also begun improvements to the Liberty Pier by installing additional sheet piling on the west side of the pier as well as the NW corner of the pier. These improvements will provide more and safer public access.

DOES ANY BODY READ THIS?

If so let us know what you think. Email us at sonslakeri@aol.com



FISH USA HOSTED A STEELHEAD SEMINAR

on Saturday October 7th from noon til 4PM at their massive warehouse located at 6960 West Ridge Rd. Fairview, PA. The well attended event featured speakers included Roger Hinchcliff Fish USA pro staff member, Female Steelhead Guide Ari Capotis and Jack Bar Erie tributary guide. The speakers offered a wealth of information including many items we never heard before. If you missed the presentations they will be aired on Youtube. We don't have the links yet. There also were some nice sale items available and prizes. Free hot dogs, snacks and beverages were served and prepared by SONS of Lake Erie Volunteers.



NOMINATIONS FOR OUR CLUB'S OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

will be taken at our November 20th, 2023 General Membership meeting. Club Officers President Jerry Skrypzak, Vice President Ed Kissell, Secretary Don Tombaugh and Treasurer John Krupinski have completed their term and will be up for reelection. Four director's terms will be expiring also. The directors whose terms are coming to an end are Jack Klaphor, Rich Brine, Ron Morrow, and Dave Mikeska. Nominations will be taken to fill these officers and directors positions at this meeting as required by our by-laws. All nominees must be present at this meeting or they must indicate their willingness to serve by submitting a letter or email prior to the meeting. Director Tom Nichols is the chairman of the nominating and election committee.



FishUSA

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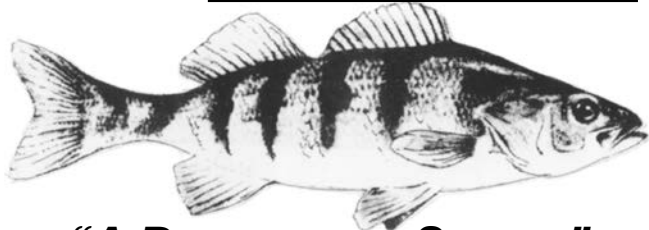


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**"The Bucket" published monthly
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**VOLUME 20 • ISSUE 10
OCTOBER 2023**



"A REPLENISHING SPECIES"

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

MONDAY, OCT. 30 7:00 PM

POLISH FALCONS CLUB

431 E. 3rd Street, Erie

**NOTE: THIS IS A WEEK LATER DUE TO ANOTHER EVENT
SCHEDULED AT THE CLUB ON OUR USUAL 4TH MONDAY**

PROGRAM:

TBA (We have not lined up a speaker for our October 30 meeting as of our deadline but be sure that we always endeavor to produce programs that you will enjoy.)

WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET YOUR SONS NEWS LETTER BY EMAIL?

If so, send us an email to sonslakeri@aol.com list your name, address and note that you would like to change to the electronic version. So far we have about 220 members who have requested the change so far. You can always read the current and past issues of the Bucket at our web site, sonsoflakeerie.org at any time.

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ANOTHER PINK SALMON CAUGHT

According to a recent story by Pennsylvania Outdoor Writer Brian Whipkey another pink salmon was caught on a night crawler at the mouth of Crooked Creek on October 2nd by Andy Davis a guide for Spooled Guide Services who asked a fellow angler to take a photo then released the fish. When Davis left the stream he stopped by FishUSA and talked to one of the Pro Staff members who commented that the state record for a pink salmon was 4.8 lbs landed in Elk Creek in 1995 by David Rabitan. It was then that he realized that the fish he released was larger judging by past experience. Sadly we'll never know.

During the October 4th Fisheries and Hatcheries Committee meetings PFBC'S Lake Erie Research leader Mark Haffley stated that we are seeing quite a few pink salmon this year."

He went on further to say "We discontinued stocking of the chinook salmon in 1997, we discontinued stocking coho in 2003. We opted to go with the steelhead program because of it being a repeat spawner. Toward the end of the salmon program, we just weren't able to get the survival of these eggs. I think at the end I think we were getting a 16% survival from egg to fish." "Now the salmon that we see are transients coming out of Lake Huron. They come down through the Huron-Erie corridor. We are seeing pinks, chinook, coho and we're even seeing Atlantics," he said about the Pennsylvania portion of Lake Erie.

"Michigan stocks the very southern end of Lake Huron almost to the mouth of the Huron River with all these salmon. It's basically just a right-hand turn and they are down to through the Lake Huron-Lake Erie corridor and the first cold-water habitat that they find that is suitable are the trenches off the west side of Erie. And that's the first place that they stall out at, and we see them in that deep-water area. Which is why we see them at the mouth of Walnut Creek and the mouth of Elk Creek, because that's the first cold water they come to," he said.

"The nicest thing about Lake Erie is that your creel limit could have anything in it," Haffley said. "The odds are just endless for what you can catch. You can come fishing for steelhead and end up with an Atlantic salmon, end up with a coho, end up with a pink, end up with a brown trout. It's just unbelievable the opportunities that are here both in the streams and in the lake."

This article originally appeared on *The Daily American: Surprise! Steelhead anglers in Erie County are hooking salmon, including one likely record.*

