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THE Bucket

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SEPTEMBER 2025

S.O.N.S. PHONE NUMBER 814-453-2270 (ALSO FAX NUMBER)
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FISHING REPORT:

As this season is winding down, the Lake is cooling, and the fish are starting to migrate. Good catches are still being reported however even though high winds and waves are occurring.



Charter Captain Steve Skrypzak poses with SONS volunteer Mildred Kightlinger who caught this walleye beauty on August 31 while fishing aboard the Waterbok

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mon. Sept 29, 6 PM First Responder appreciation service at St. Francis Xavier Church, 8880 Main St. McKean, PA

Sat. Oct. 3, 10-12 Waterworks Pond PISP Autistic and Learning folks fishing. Volunteers needed

Sun. Oct. 4 CLEER Opening at the Main Public library. Kids fishing in East slip behind the Library Vol. Needed

Wed. Oct. 8 9:00 AM West Boat Launch PISP fish habitat building Vol. Needed

Sat. Oct. 12th 1-5 Rainbow Gardens Millcreek Police Gun Raffle

NAVIGATING PERIL

Lake Erie's Shipwrecks & Beacons

THERE'S A SHIPWRECK EXHIBIT AT TREC

A new exhibit opened on August 31 at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center called Navigating Peril: Lake Erie's Shipwrecks and Beacons. The exhibit is co-sponsored by the SONS of Lake Erie and PNC Bank. It explores the treacherous geology of Lake Erie, the history of maritime navigation, and features renderings of shipwrecks off the shores of Erie County.

The exhibit is a collaboration of the Regional Science Consortium (RSC), Lake Erie Lights and the TREC Foundation. A new film called "The Balance" which is a documentary from RSC, produced locally by WQLN - an incredible look beneath the waters of Lake Erie through the lenses of their dive team. Brought to you on the largest movie screen in our region, you'll feel immersed in the depths of Lake Erie for an up-close look at these relics beneath the water. The documentary about our region's dynamic relationship with Lake Erie, will be showing daily at 10:00, 12:00 and 2:00 on the Big Green Screen. It will be on display until November 30

"We are grateful to the exhibit presenting sponsors, S.O.N.S. of Lake Erie and PNC Bank, for making this project possible," Jennifer Farrar, the CEO of Tom Ridge Environmental Center Foundation, said. "It's a wonderful opportunity to highlight our region's maritime history, the cultural preservation of these shipwrecks, the fish ecosystems they support, and the present-day scientific data collection that helps ensure safer navigation of our waters for today's mariners."

EAGLE CLAW HOOK COMPANY CELEBRATES 100TH ANNIVERSARY

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SONS 2026 MEMBERSHIP BUTTON

is a smallmouth bass this year. This is in keeping with featuring a native species fish on the button. You can pick up the 2026 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!

MAIL TO: S.O.N.S., PO BOX 3605, ERIE, PA 16508



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2025

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☐ Renew ☐ New ☐ \$5.00 ADULT ☐ \$4.00 SENIOR CITIZEN (over 65) ☐ \$4.00 JUNIOR (under 16)

In keeping with our Lake Erie native fish theme, we have chosen the Smallmouth Bass to be on our 2026 pin (see above). We are also gearing up for the upcoming sport shows and gun raffles where we sell memberships and raffle tickets.

LADIES DAY ON THE LAKE

SONS Director and Veterans coordinator Chuck Miller planned and organized a Lady Veterans only free fishing trip on the head boat, the Edward John, on August 15, 2025. Twenty four lady veterans from all branches of services participated. These great veterans had a great time and were fun to be with. A few SONS members went along for the ride and helped the ladies fish. Eleven nice walleye and a few perch were caught. It was a beautiful and calm summer day.



The Edward John docking after a morning of fishing on Lake Erie with 24 Lady veterans.



The 24 veterans stop to pose for a picture after their trip on August 15th.

VOLUNTEER CHARTER WINNERS HAD A SUCCESSFUL TRIP

As previously reported in our August issue of the *Bucket* a special drawing was held for volunteers at our annual volunteer appreciation picnic. After several postponements good weather finally permitted the trip to occur on the Charter Boat *Waterbok* captained by Tom Mascharka and Steve Skrypzak. Posing for the picture L to R are Chuck Zukowski, Sons Director Jack Klaphor who organized the drawing, Mildred Kightlinger and John Kovach. Capt. Steve stands behind. Absent from the picture was Wayne Cunningham. Picture was provided by Capt. Tom Mascharka



The Fly Shop at Follys End Campground presents:

•**The Third Annual**•

Steelhead Kickoff Party

Sunday, October 19, 2025 from 11am until 3pm

**under the pavilion at Follys End Campground
8600 Rt 98 • Girard, PA 16417**

This is a FREE event open to the public!

**Please join us for a fun filled day with DJ music,
Food Truck, Micro-Brew Truck, Fishing Experts
willing to share their knowledge, and of course, fishing!**

Galen Westman

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- Virginia Trout Stream Sensitivity Study member
- Earth Sciences Teacher, John Handley High School, Winchester VA

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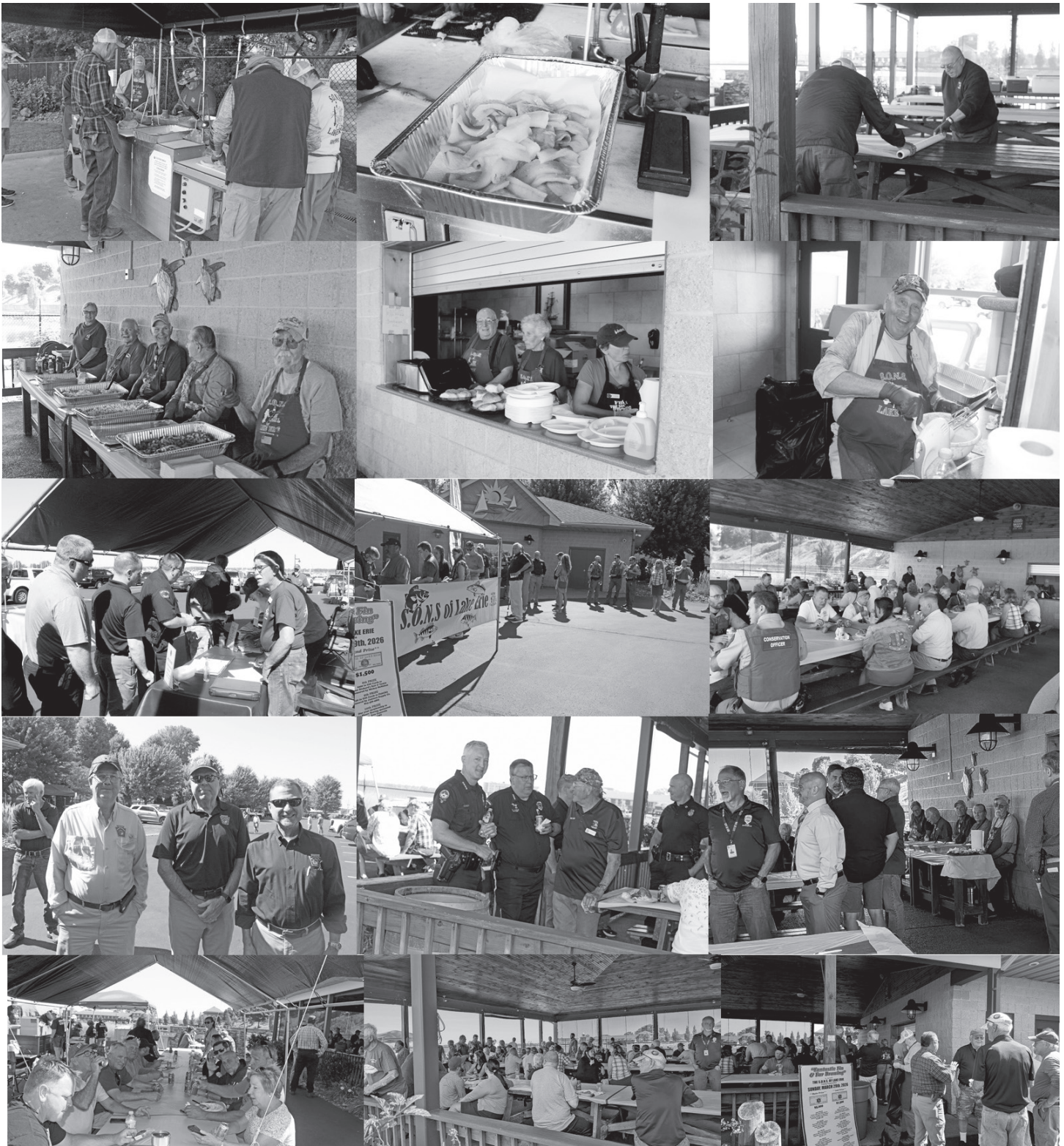
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PUBLIC APPRECIATION FISH FRY



The SONS of Lake Erie held its 43rd Annual Public Appreciation Fish Fry on September 3rd at the Bayshore East Marina. There were 157 guests that were served a delicious walleye lunch. The fish fry was a great success thanks to the hard work of 25 volunteers who cleaned and prepared over 110 lbs of walleye filets, covered tables, put up three tents, manned the food line, mixed batter, manned the fish fryers, emptied the trash and cleaned up. We would especially like to mention SONS director Chuck Miller, aka / Fry Daddy, and his Frying Crew, who worked in the hot sun operating our two fryers, then waited around for hours while the cooking oil cooled and then transported the fry equipment when it was all over. Our guest register team signed up 97 new SONS members and we sold many Fin & Fur Raffle tickets as well as SONS merchandise.

The guests at the fish fry included members of various agencies, businesses, governmental entities and individuals that have interacted and provided services to us throughout the year. The event has become our way for the community to get to know who we are and what we do.

Finally we would like to thank all those anglers who donated their fish to us and thank you to Mr. Tim Schmidt, Manager of the Bayharbor Marinas for letting us use this fine facility.

HOW OLD IS A FISH?

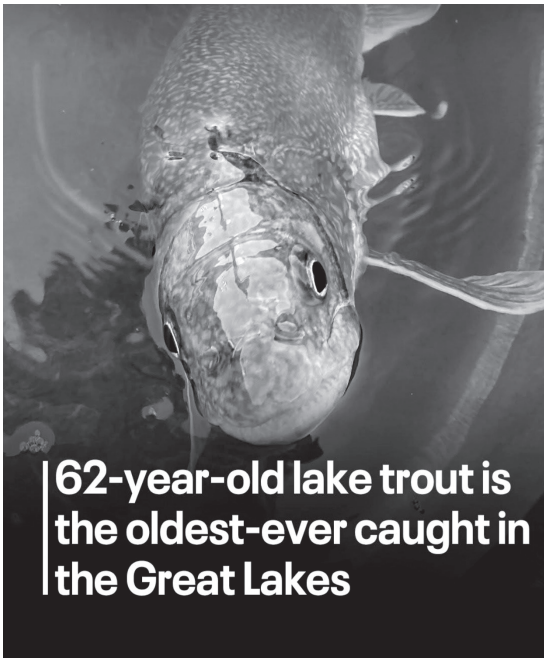
The best way to find out the age of a fish is to count the rings on a chunk of calcium called an otolith in its inner ear.

The best way to measure how old a fish is by counting the number of rings formed on a chunk of calcium living in its inner ear.

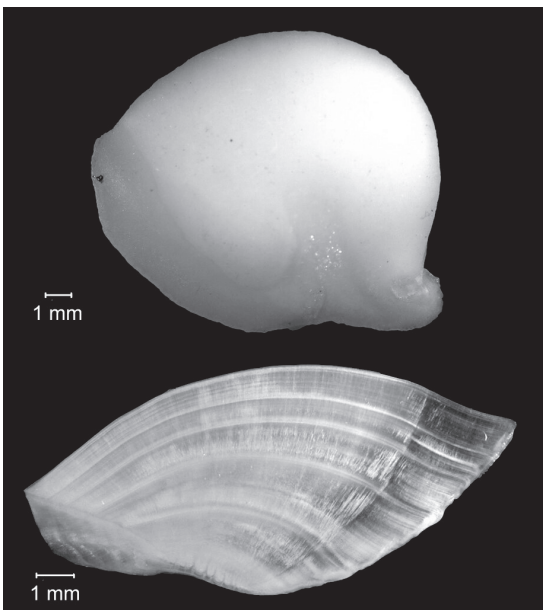
This lake trout, named Mary Catherine, had 62 rings.

It's the oldest lake trout ever found in the Great Lakes.

Read more: bit.ly/3Uv9C7M

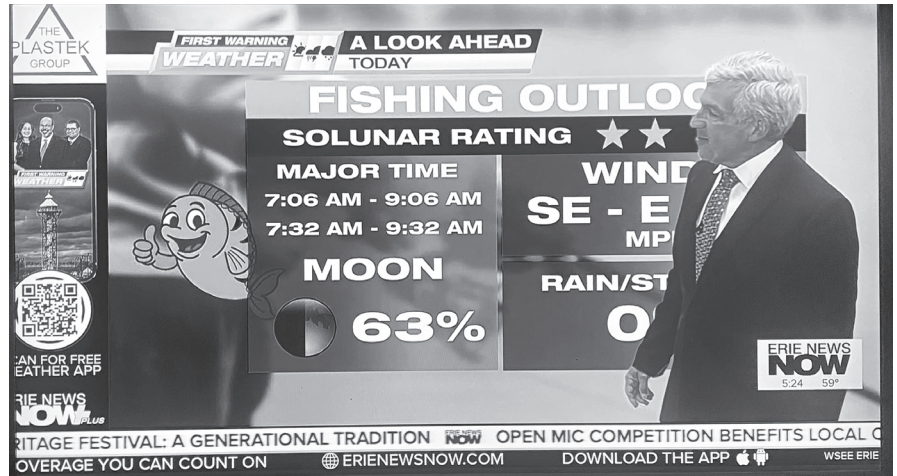


Otolith shown below



HATS OFF TO TOM DEVECCHIO

WICU/WSEE TV weather forecaster has been part of the early morning show broadcasts. He has been incorporating fishing forecasts as well as lake conditions in his broadcasts. He shows solunar tables that predict the best fishing times for that day as well as wind and wave data from the Regional Science Consortium's weather buoys located in Lake Erie. This is a great service to fishermen and boaters. Tom is an award winning forecaster who also teaches meteorology courses at Mercyhurst and Penn State Behrend Universities. THANKS TOM!!



Screen grab of Tom DeVecchio's segment on WICU/WSEE TV news.

Saturday,
September 27th
from 2 - 6 pm


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Family Friendly - BYOB

Tickets: Adults \$20 / Children 12 and under only \$5

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www.pasteelhead.com, or
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PFBC Lake Erie Unit team Leader, Mark Haffley cuts the ceremonial ribbon at the September 3rd dedication of the new research building on the grounds of the Fairview Fish Cultural station while PFBC Exec director, Commission members and other officials hold the ribbon. Photo by PFBC

PFBC DEDICATES LAKE ERIE RESEARCH BLDG

FAIRVIEW, Pa. (September 3) – Today, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) Executive Director Tim Schaeffer, staff, and local partners celebrated the opening of a new facility which will house the Lake Erie Research Unit based in Fairview, Erie County.

The 2,800 square-foot building, located on the grounds of the Fairview State Fish Hatchery contains a research laboratory, library, conference room, and modern office space for three full-time biologists, seasonal biologist aides, and a Waterways Conservation Officer

“This state-of-the-art facility is an incredible asset to the Lake Erie Research Unit, and we feel fortunate to have this space to work in and help us achieve our mission at an even higher level,” said Mark Haffley, Biologist and Port Captain for the PFBC’s Lake Erie Research Unit. “Thank you to the anglers who continue to support us and provide us with the tools we need to do our jobs on their behalf. As

we settle into our new space, we’ll continue to work with our local partners and stakeholders to ensure that there will be quality fishing on Lake Erie for years to come.”

The \$2.4 million-dollar facility funded through the PFBC’s Fish Fund, replaces temporary leased office space that has been used by staff since 2020 when the Unit was relocated from the Thornton House, an 1870’s-era historical residential home located on the hatchery grounds. While a ceremonial ribbon-cutting and dedication was held today on the new building, minor finishing work will continue to be completed by contractors over the next few weeks.

Staff who comprise the Lake Erie Research Unit play a key role in fisheries management for Pennsylvania’s portion of Lake Erie, and collaborate with neighboring Michigan, New York, Ohio, and Ontario (Canada) to monitor fish health and determine annual harvest quotas for popular species within the lake, including Walleye and Yellow Perch.

TEAM MISFIT WINS WALLEYE BASH TOURNAMENT

Members of Team Misfit proudly hold up a facsimile check for \$3840 the first place prize in the Erie Walleye Bash Tournament which was held on August 15-16. They won with a total of 38.30 lbs. The major sponsors of the tournament were Sportsman’s Warehouse, Poor Richard’s Bait and Tackle and East End Angler Bait and Tackle. There were 48 teams entered in the Walleye Bash.



TOP GUN DON TOMBAUGH

was absent at our volunteer picnic so he did not get his award for being one of three volunteers who were given the Top Gun awards at the picnic so he was presented with his special gift at our fish fry.



L to R Jack Klapthor, Dave Mikeska and Will Richardson stand by as Don Tombaugh holds up his Top Gun sweatshirt



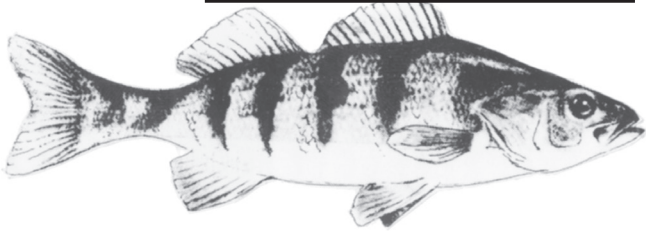
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**"The Bucket" published monthly
by the S.O.N.S. of Lake Erie**

**VOLUME 22 • ISSUE 9
SEPTEMBER 2025**



"A REPLENISHING SPECIES"

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

MONDAY, SEPT. 22 , 2025 7:00 PM

POLISH FALCONS CLUB

431 E. 3rd Street, Erie

PROGRAM: FishUSA Pro Staff member
Josh Feltenberger will talk about
Steelhead techniques

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 760 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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IN MEMORIUM



We would like to note the passing of longtime SONS member and volunteer Sam Brady who passed away on August 21, 2025. He was a frequent volunteer and a good friend. We would like to offer our deepest sympathy to his family. He will be sadly missed. Rest in Peace, Sam.

ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS REPAIRING THE NORTH PIER

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District awarded a \$2 million contract to Chicago-based Architectural Consulting Group, Inc. on May 27 to repair approximately 500 feet of the Erie North Pier this summer.

The repair ensures safe navigation for commercial and recreational vessels in Erie Harbor, the flow of commerce across the Great Lakes, and access for shipments of sand to nourish the beaches of Presque Isle State Park. The repair includes construction of a new concrete cap at the east end of the pier, near the Channel Lighthouse. Work started recently and should be completed by November 2025.

This marks the second phase of construction on the project, following work on the pier in summer 2024. The project is 100% federally funded.

Portions of the north pier will be closed to the public during construction to ensure public safety, and some nearby areas of Presque Isle State Park may be used to stage construction equipment. Work will be conducted on shore, and visitors to the park and

vessels navigating the federal channel between Erie Harbor and Lake Erie are advised to observe all safety signage and avoid construction activities and equipment.

Equipment and materials ready on North Pier for repair project.

