

THE BLADE

Fishing Report



The best angling information from area experts

■ **Maumee River:** Waterway sage Joe Roecklein reports that the walleye anglers are working hard and picking up some fish, but that the cold snap we experienced really gummed up the works. He expects the current warming trend to improve the comfort level of the fishermen, and the catch. Mike Wilkerson, fish management supervisor for the Division of Wildlife in this region, had crews in the river this week shocking up fish, and found a lot of females still holding eggs. He echoed the sentiments of others, that the cold more or less froze the spawning run for a few days. Wilkerson expects water levels to drop, the water temperature to rise, and the fishing action to quickly intensify. The experts over at Netcraft agree, saying the beautiful weather this weekend could signal a walleye fishing bonanza down on the river. They remind anglers that using floating jig heads dressed with three-inch grubs will lead to the most success during the run.

■ **Sandusky River:** The fishing pressure has been low during the recent cold spell, with walleye anglers struggling to land legal fish in a high and muddy flow. John Hageman, a creel survey technician with the Ohio Division of Wildlife who works the river on a regular basis, reports that in a recent electro-shocking session wildlife biologists found a number of spent females. That could indicate that the run has peaked on this stream, but some females holding eggs are present, as well.

■ **Lake Erie:** Walleye pro Ross Robertson from Big Water Guide Service reports that following the harsh wintry weather a week ago that the fishing was pretty tough, but he was getting into big fish again by Tuesday. Robertson said the search for the right approach is essential. "Right now, the pattern is that there is no pattern," Robertson said after spending considerable time on the hunt before landing and releasing 15 Fish Ohio size trophies. Robertson said that with all of the recent runoff, the lake has areas that are very muddy, and others that are crystal clear — the key is finding the "chalky" transitions between these two waters. He's been trolling crankbaits very slowly, and covering a lot of water finding the fish, but expects this weekend "to be off the hook." The folks at Netcraft expect the jig fishing opportunities for walleyes to continue over the next couple of weeks in the Western Basin.

■ **Ohio Steelhead Rivers:** This hotbed for spring fishermen got slammed recently with anywhere from 4 to 12 inches of snow and then rain, so there was significant runoff staining the water and spiking the levels this week. Steelhead watcher Jeff Frischkorn reports that the smaller tributaries tend to heal quickly, so they should be fishable this weekend. Frischkorn expects Conneaut Creek and the Ashtabula River to return to a fishable state soon.

■ **Detroit River:** Guide and Sylvania native Spencer Berman said last weekend's return of winter sent the water temperature plunging to 35 degrees, and that combined with stained water to make for one tough outing. He is optimistic about the weekend, since the warming trend should spark activity, especially in the southern and mid-river sections. Berman said the use of minnows is essential in the colder water temperatures.

■ **Irish Hills:** The Michigan DNR reports that the fishing for crappies and other panfish is slowly picking up following the frigid spell the region just experienced. Sunshine and a slight warm-up should get the action going again on the lakes in this area. The hard core bass anglers have taken a few fish by casting blade baits and small crankbaits in the deeper waters.

■ **Ohio strip mine lakes:** The cold slammed the brakes on things momentarily, but the bass bite is starting to pick up on the lakes and ponds in the expansive AEP ReCreation Land, and guide Corneilus Harris and his Guru Outfitters have found that slow rolling spinnerbaits have produced some fish, as have Texas-rigged plastics. Harris expects the fishing to improve quickly as the sun warms the shallows and the large-mouth bass get more active.

■ **Fishing tournament:** The fifth annual Maumee vs. Perrysburg Fishing Tournament will take place April 30. Check-in begins at 9:30 a.m. at Rotary Pavilion in Side Cut Park, fishing goes from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m., with awards at 1:30 p.m. The event is open to students, staff, alumni and friends of Perrysburg or Maumee schools. Registration is available in the school offices, and all teams must be registered by the end of the school day on April 28. Visit tinyurl.com/MaumeePerrysburgFishing2016 for information and the registration form.