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Aubrey Burns Age 5

FISHING REPORT: PRESQUE ISLE BAY NAMED IN TOP 10

According to a story by Nicole Lee on WJET TV Channel 24 aired on January 23, 2024, Presque Isle Bay is getting national attention as a prime ice fishing destination.

After two years of mild winters, local fishermen couldn't be happier to be back on the ice and those we spoke with recognize the gem they have in the bay.

Presque Isle Bay has been named among the top ten best ice fishing destinations in the country for 2025. That designation was made by Fishing Booker, the world's largest platform for booking fishing trips. Fishing Booker did its rankings based on the diversity of fish species available, the beauty of its winter landscape and the unique camaraderie of its fishermen.

Presque Isle Bay was ranked number 6, in the top ten.

The word soon got out and hundreds of ice anglers began showing up. According to posts on the Presque Isle Bay Angler Facebook page, the top 10 designation was highly accurate. There have been reports of scores of perch, crappies, blue gills and occasional walleye and steelhead. The PFBC reported stocking the steelhead that were used to collect eggs for hatching at Trout Run into the Bay after collecting the eggs and spawn. We were able to secure permission to use some of these pictures in this newsletter. Notice the mix bag of fish.



Wyatt Cook Age 3



by Dirty 30 Charters



Brett Griffin Age 7



REMINDER

Yellow Perch caught in Presque Isle Bay or the inland waters of Presque Isle must be at least 7 inches long. The regulation is in effect from December 1 to April 30.



SONS 2025 MEMBERSHIP BUTTON

is a depiction of a crappie this year. This is in keeping with featuring a native species fish on the button. You can pick up the 2025 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

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Fish come in three sizes: small, medium, and the one that got away!



ICE FISHING RETURNS TO PI WINTER DISCOVERY DAY

On Saturday February 1, 2025 the Annual Presque Isle Winter Discovery day was held in the area of the Rotary Pavilion at the park. This event is co-sponsored by the Presque Isle Partnership and DCNR. We have participated in this event every year since its inception. We usually help out with ice fishing. This year was the first time in about 4 years that the ice

was safe enough for fishing. In the years with no ice we were forced to fish off the floating platform on the East Waterworks pond. Nineteen SONS volunteers helped over 100 participants including parents and kids try their hands at ice fishing. Only 2 trout were caught but it was fun watching the kids playing on the ice. The weather was cold but sunny and very

comfortable. There were other activities including sled dog demonstrations, horse drawn carriage rides, snowshoe tryouts, birding craft activity, wild life ID and more. Inside the Rotary Pavilion we set up our ice fishing game to the delight of little kids who were given a bag of goldfish crackers when they caught a "fish".

THE FLAG SHIP ICE OPEN FISHING TOURNAMENT

was held on Saturday February 1, 2025 in Misery Bay on Presque Isle State Park. The event hosted by the Western Pennsylvania Hardwater Series and FishUSA attracted 101 participants. The weather cooperated and a lot of fish were caught. Cash prizes and merchandise were awarded to winners in each category. Entries were limited to eight fish in each category and could include any species of fish.

Flag Ship Ice Open winners Nick Glosser and Chad Beale won first place. They entered 8 fish totaling 10.1 lbs and won \$2600. The largest perch was 2.7 lbs entered by Alyssa Lichtenfels.



ATLANTIC SALMON CAUGHT OFF WALNUT CREEK

The team at Poor Richard's Bait and tackle posted a picture on Facebook of Frank Johnson who caught an Atlantic salmon that he caught off of the pier at the mouth of Walnut Creek recently.



Frank Johnson with Atlantic salmon

A black and white advertisement for a boat and fishing show. It features a graphic of a boat and fishing gear. The text reads: "BOAT & FISHING SHOW Erie Convention Center". To the right, it says: "CABIN FEVER? Come and see us at our table at the Boat and Fishing Expo February 28 - March 2".

THE SPEAKER AT OUR JANUARY GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

was Expert Angler John Scherrer who presented a great slide show telling us how he was able to make several fishing trips to Wyoming costing less than \$1,000. John explained in the presentation that he accomplished it by staying at camp grounds near his favorite fishing spots along places like the Platte River, sleeping in tents and on a cot in the bed of his pickup truck. He cooked his meals using food that he brought along with him on a camp stove. It even included MRE's. He fished mostly with a fly rod. His meals sometimes included freshly caught trout. His expenses for the trips were relatively modest with gasoline being the most expensive. He showed us beautiful slides of the scenery in the areas he fished.



TEN LUCKY WINNERS

of our annual Membership Campaign benefit drawing which was held at our January 2025 meeting. They were as follows each being awarded a \$100:

Lewis Stickler of Erie, Bill Miklos of Erie, Tom Covatto of Erie, Walter Harriett of Slippery Rock, PA, Mike Lapko of West Mifflin, PA, Jennifer Stipe of Fairview, PA, Ron Wojcik of Ford City, PA, William Raun of Edinboro, PA, William Bentze North East, PA and Damian Shimek of Fairview, PA.

ANNUAL FIN & FUR BENEFITS ARE IN THE MAIL

We are again holding our annual fund raiser “The Fantastic Fin & Fur” benefit which helps support all of our activities like introducing children to the fun and skills of fishing, taking veterans fishing, operating our fish hatchery, building fish habitat, promoting public access and much more. All of these activities are supported by donors and supporters like you. You should have received 6 of the benefit tickets for the drawing. The suggested donation for the tickets is \$5.00 each or three for \$10.00. Each ticket will give you a chance to win one of 13 great prizes. No donation is necessary to participate in the drawing but all donations are greatly appreciated. You need not to be present to win. If you would like more tickets or if you have any questions call 814-453-2270 or email us at sonslakeri@aol.com.

The drawing will be held on March 30th , 2025 at our “Ice Out Party” The list of prizes is below:

1st Prize \$5,000 Cash, 2nd Prize \$1500 Cash, 3rd Prize: 8 hour Lake Erie Fish Charter on “Heartbeat”, courtesy of Capt. Bob Ferraro, 4th Prize: half-day walleye charter on the “Waterbok” with Captain Steve Skrypzak, 5th Prize: \$300 Gift Certificate sponsored by FishUSA.com and FishErie.com, 6th Prize: \$250 Gift Certificate to Edinboro Sports Sponsored by Winschel Bros. Landscaping, 7th Prize: \$250 Gift Certificate to Poor Richards Bait and Tackle sponsored by Poor Richards, 8th Prize: \$250 Gift Certificate to “Poor Richard’s Bait & Tackle”, sponsored by Mickey McMahon, 9th Prize \$200 Gift Certificate to Underdog Barbecue, 10th Prize \$200 Gift Certificate to Poor Richards Bait & Tackle sponsored by Alex Motor Sports, 11th Prize: \$200 in admission tickets on the “Perch Pirate”, 12th Prize: \$150 gift certificate to FishUSA sponsored by Janitors Supply Co., 13th Prize: One year membership to Lake Shore Towing sponsored by Captain Eric Guerrein.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

February 13 9:30AM-? Erie Convention Center Setup for RV & Outdoor Adventure Show

February 14-16, Erie Convention Center RV & Outdoor Adventures Show

February 22, 9am-1pm Presque Isle State Park, E. WW Pond Scouting in the Woods

February 28-March 2 Erie Convention Center Second Annual Boat and Fishing Show

March 30 to February 2 1-5pm Erie Shrine Club Ice Out Party

April 5 8:00 to 11:00 Waterworks Pond PISP 1st day of trout season

April 26 8:30 -12 Rotary Pavilion on PISP Presque Isle clean up. We will be serving lunch to the volunteers.

We will have signup sheets for volunteers to help at these events at our February 24th General Membership meeting.

PFBC EXEC VISITS SONS HATCHERY

On Saturday, January 25, 2025, PFBC Executive Director Tim Schaeffer visited the SONS hatchery at the foot of Chestnut St. in Erie. Hatchery Manager Jack Bock and Joe Springer and Don Tombaugh were on hand to provide info on hatchery ops. He was able to see the over 1200 brown trout which we were raising at the hatchery at that time. These brown trout will be stocked into Presque Isle Bay in late March. Mr. Schaeffer also toured the 3-CU trout club facilities.



A FLOAT PLANE TOUR SERVICE

was proposed by Great Lakes Air Tours, to the EWPPA at their January 22, 2025 meeting. A business plan and financial forecast was introduced at the meeting by Donald Williams, Manager, who talked about the permits they have obtained and locations of infrastructure. The base received FAA, Coast Guard, DEP, and DCNR green lights to proceed with the project. Seaplane infrastructure development includes:

- expanded use of existing marine piers, docks, and ramps outside of the Presque Isle State Park marina,
- establish dedicated seaplane basic facilities, where feasible, within and outside of the marina,
- and establishment of a full-service, public-use seaplane base, either on the Presque Isle State Park (marina) or on the City of Erie bayfront in the Waterfront Commercial (WC) zone.

The company is now seeking approval from the EWPPA to further the project. There were over 30 take offs and landings last season with the planes refueling at the gas dock in the Presque Isle Marina.

TROUT UNLIMITED TO HOST 2025 FLY FISHING FILM FEST

Join the local NWPAs Trout Unlimited chapter at their Spring Film Fest Fundraiser on March 15th at the Tom Ridge Center! Doors Open at 5:15 PM Film Starts at 6 PM. Admission is \$20

CAUTION!

Four large lake carrier vessels are undergoing winter maintenance at Don Jon Shipbuilding Co. They are being moved in and out of the company's dry dock in order to make repairs. They are using ice breaking tug boats to accomplish the moves so stay away of areas off the Public Dock to the channel. It's hard to predict ice conditions beyond that point because the ship movements will be going on all season. Below are some outstanding photos that were posted on Facebook by Lance Aerial Media that really tell the story.



Tug boats moving a large vessel for Don Jon Shipbuilding on PI Bay while ice fishermen are enjoying the sport about half mile away. Photos thanks to Lance Aerial Media

EFD GETS NEW WATER RESCUE TRUCK

The City of Erie Fire Department just purchased a brand-new unit for their Water Rescue Team. thanks to a generous grant of \$142,234 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority. We have been advocates of this team since its inception in the late 1990's. We began our support by purchasing and donating the team's first vehicle a used aluminum body step van from Stroehman bakeries for their equipment and use. It was still in operation until it was replaced this year. We also supported the team by donating diving gear. In 2019 we donated \$5500 to cover the 2019 training new divers and the cost of 3 rescue suits. In 2021 the SONS continued the support by donating \$2000 to train 7 new divers. These brave first responders need all the help we can give.



New EFD Dive Team Truck



Box truck donated to the EFD dive team in the '90's



**PLEASE
DON'T
LITTER.**

2025 ICE OUT PARTY - and - FIN & FUR DRAWING set for MARCH 30



For over 30 years we have held our annual fund raiser "The Fantastic Fin & Fur" benefit at our annual "Ice Out Party" with the Fin and Fur benefit which will take place on Sunday March 30th, 2025 from 1-5 PM at the Erie Shrine Club.

This family friendly event is open to the public.

There will be free food, beverages door prizes, kid's games raffles and fun. The admission price for the party is \$10.00 for adults, \$5.00 for kids 15 and under. Toddlers are free.

For some fun, join us on March 30, 2025



HARD WATER SAILOR!

It has been several years since the ice on PI Bay has been strong enough so the Ice Boaters are out enjoying it.

TROUT RUN STREAM BED UNDERGOING REPAIR

Recently the west wall of the Trout Run Stream bed collapsed about 100 yards upstream from its mouth. In early February workers from the PFBC were at work replacing it with a rip rap wall. The cleverly constructed a gravel bridge across the stream with a 4ft culvert built in to allow the water to continue flowing to the lake. They used the bridge to transfer the stone which was unloaded on the beach on the east side. An excavator was at work on the west side reinforcing the bank with the stone.



Excavator working at Trout Run



Gravel bridge across stream notice culvert

ANOTHER WALLEYE SEMINAR

is being sponsored by the Tudor Hook n Nook Bait and Tackle Shop 10543 Old Lake Rd. Lake City, PA on Saturday March 15, 2025 from 9-2. The seminar will be about small boat angling on Lake Erie. Guest Speakers will be Capt. Keith Esbaugh of Dutch Fork Fishing Charters, Capt. Chris Wassel of Reel Intense Fishing Charters, and Capt. Jason Hagg of Ripple Effect Guide Service. Registration is \$25/ person. You can register by calling 814-774-8755. Seminar is limited to 65 people. Registration includes free lunch and other gifts.

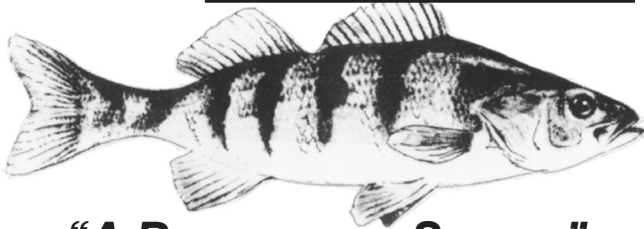


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FEBRUARY 2025



"A REPLENISHING SPECIES"

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

MONDAY, FEB. 24, 2025 7:00 PM

POLISH FALCONS CLUB

431 E. 3rd Street, Erie

PROGRAM: Honey Stempka, Project Manager of the Proposed Lake Erie National Marine Sanctuary for the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, will talk about the proposed establishment of the Lake Erie Quadrangle marine sanctuary. She will be able to answer any questions you may have about it.

STEELHEAD ASSOCIATION AND OTHERS PROPOSE REGULATION CHANGE

By Chris Larsen President- PA Steelhead Assoc.

The members of the PA Steelhead Association sent a letter asking the PA Fish & Boat Commission to consider changing the regulation regarding the hours of fishing on the Lake Erie tributary streams from the beginning of September until the opening day of Trout Season in April. The Officers and Board Members of the PA Steelhead Association, Northwest PA Chapter of Trout Unlimited, and 3-CU expressed their support for this proposal and were included in the letter. The S.O.N.S. of Lake Erie also expressed their support but wrote and submitted their own letter. The proposal requests that fishing on the Lake Erie tributary streams start no earlier than ½ hour before sunrise and stop no later than ½ hour after sunset (Dawn-to-Dusk). The current exceptions allowing 24-hour fishing, north of Route 5 on Elk and north of the Manchester Rd Bridge on Walnut Creek, would not be affected. The proposal would also not affect hours of fishing on the Lake shore, for example, Avonia Beach would not be affected. We are hoping that this proposal will appear on the PFBC Law Enforcement Committee meeting agenda in April.

REMINDER

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.



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 575 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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FISH USA

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Walleye-Palooza event will
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pro shop at 6960 West Ridge
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- Captain Pete Alex III & Captain Bob Ferraro will be speaking on walleye fishing tactics and tips from beginner to expert levels
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