

## **This Month With A Susquehanna River Guide**

**You know, April showers bring May flowers but to me April showers flooded the river, I had to reschedule charters the first week, and worst of all had to go work for my wife! Ouch! Yes Dear, I mean I got to work for my wife, I'm so lucky.**

**The month started off with the typical high dirty water conditions which meant finding some slack water and fishing very slow with jigs. We caught anywhere from 30 to 50 fish a day then that magical 52 degree water temperature and they turned on with 60 to a high of 117 fish in one day, all with artificial lures! In the last 30 days we have documented over 960 fish caught and released.**

**High water conditions also can mean some dangerous boating conditions. If you are even the least bit unsure you should hold off getting on the river with a boat. People often under estimate the raw force the river current has, and in early spring the water is also cold from 36 to 40 degrees. We humans can't survive long in those conditions if we fall in. I find boats nearly every spring wrapped around trees or bridge pilings due to the power of the river current. Right now I know of one boat or canoe, I can't tell which, that is caught under a tree that's laying across the river with only the bow tip showing, the force of the river current has it standing on end!**

**One of the worst things you can do is to throw out an anchor in high fast water to slow you down. When that anchor catches your boat will be pulled under the water leaving you in a very dangerous situation. You are required to have good PFDs,(personal floatation device) on board for every person so wear them in at least those conditions.**

**April is also a time of big fish. We have boated many trophy fish and several catch and release Angler Award fish. We've caught several 19" to 20" smallmouth bass, a 30" channel cat, and I boated my personal best walleye at 31" long, all of which were released to catch again another day when they will be even bigger. These fish can be seen on the photo gallery at my web site.**

**Lures that are working this month that we use are lead jigs tipped with tubes, stick worms, baby beaver craws, and sassy shads. These are all plastics made by many companies however I use the ones made by Alluring Baits out of Texas. U.S.A. Also with the water in a light stain to clear conditions, suspending jerk baits are working very well.**

**Lets talk a little about the lure you probably haven't heard about much but we've had good success with and that is the 3 1/2" Baby Beaver Craw. It's meant to imitate a crawfish which is one of the main food items for the smallmouth bass in the river. The front of this plastic lure is flat oval shape like a beavers tail and it has two flat claw shaped appendages coming out the back. The shape of the lure lets it glide through the water the way a real crayfish would act if it was trying to get away. I put it on a lead head jig with a full hook exposed in 1/8 oz to 1/4oz weight. To fish it you cast slightly up river because fish mostly face the current when waiting for a meal. Bring it back in to you by twitching your hand and reeling up the slack line keeping it touching the top of the rocks and much as possible all the way to the boat. Expect to get caught on the river bottom now and then. If you don't get caught you are fishing too fast. Boat control is also**

**important. Slow down your boat using the electric trolling motor. The fish are not into high speed chasing yet.**

**In the stretch of river that I fish, from the New York border South about 70 miles, we fish around many bridges because they have a lot of rocks and structure around them and are generally some deep holes there. You can catch many fish around a bridge. Twice this month I've had clients while casting give a mighty cast and hit the top of the bridge from the boat. One fellow put one right over the bridge rail and on the road! I asked him to take it a little easy around the bridges because Fords were not in season and they are a little tough to net.**

**The river area has also started to come alive with active wildlife. With the air getting warm, the turtles, mainly of the painted, and snapping variety are sunning themselves by the hundreds now. There is a place on the river where a tree is bent way over and the turtles climb up it to sun themselves, sometimes as high as 4ft off the water. When the boat comes near they do a turtle high dive to get back in to the water. It's something you don't see every day. There are some turtles that really don't want to leave the comfort of the tree and will stay right there as if to say "It took me a long time to climb this tree and I'm staying". The eagles are nesting now and have been for some time. Each year they come back to the same nest and add to it with twigs and such. One nest I know of is not only about 4ft wide now, but it's also about 4ft deep! We keep a good distance away from it so as to not disturb it's owners, but it is easy to see the eagle in the nest. The ducks and geese are all over the river just starting to nest. We had one little dipper duck come by us while we were fishing a cove, he was catching walleye fry. He'd go under water and come up with a couple in his bill. We didn't see him around for awhile and the lady fishing with us had a hard strike and the little duck pops up. He was after her lure which was a stick worm. We immediately left the cove because we weren't there to catch ducks and that bold little guy wasn't about to leave us alone.**

**We were watching an osprey the other day fishing, these are big birds with at least a four foot wing span. He would hover in one spot and then plunge into the river feet first to get a fish. The splash is quite loud and you wonder how they ever fly out, sometimes with a fish in their claws. The mink are very active now, we are seeing several every day going in and out of the rocks along the river bank searching for food. They stop to keep an eye on us as we go by.**

**I want to remind everyone here to please take a kid fishing. I love it when dad, granddad, or just a good person brings a kid fishing on my boat. I get the opportunity to teach them not only about fishing, but also the world and wildlife around fishing along with resource conservation and that you don't have to harvest every fish to enjoy the sport of fishing. It's fun to take a picture to show the folks back home, then let the fish go so they can have the fun of catching it another day. There is a certain method to teach a kid to fish on the river from a boat. The very worst thing you can do is to force them to fish. Too often the parent will say, "I brought you to fish, now fish, don't play in the water". Sorry but this is wrong! This takes the joy out of the trip and almost makes it a work environment for the youngster. Kids need to be kids, let them play. You got to keep**

**it entertaining and interesting. When they get tired, let them put down the rod and rest or play in the water. You may look at the river water as just water but a kid will look at the water and see all the different bugs and weeds on the surface and will want to play with them. When you catch a fish let them reel it in, soon they will pick up their own rod and want to continue. Often when they catch a fish, I'll take off the plastic worm or lure and give it to them. Then their interest is peaked and they want to see how many worms they can collect from me. Keep your child safe, 12yr olds and younger are required by law to wear a PFD that fits while on a boat. Make them feel safe and secure in the boat, kids love to ride and go fast in my jet boat and I explain to them that even if we take a saw and cut the boat in half, it will not sink because it's filled with foam and we will still float. Ya know, now that I think about it, sometimes the adults like to hear that as well. So folks, that's my report for this month. For further information about my charter service, fish photos, and daily report, visit me on my web site at [www.ldguideservice.com](http://www.ldguideservice.com) . Boat safely, and I'll see you on the river.**

**Good Fishing**

**Lance**