

Cast Away

The Middle Allegheny River Water Trail's Great Fishing



by Art Michaels

Anglers on the Middle Allegheny River Water Trail will find action for smallmouth bass, walleyes, muskellunge, northern pike, flathead catfish, rock bass and in the section from Kinzua Dam downstream to the Warren area, brown and rainbow trout. The 8.75-mile section from Kinzua Dam to the confluence of Conewango Creek is managed with miscellaneous regulations. It has a 14-inch minimum size limit with a two-per-day creel limit for trout during the period from opening day of the regular trout season through Labor Day. For the remainder of the year until the next opening day of the following year, it is catch and release. There are no tackle restrictions.

Commission Area Fisheries Manager Al Woomer says that this section of the Allegheny River holds trout because of the relatively cold water released from Kinzua Dam. "Anglers catch some really big brown trout in this section," Woomer says. "Trout fishing is in full swing during May

and June. The release at the dam and the flow in the river are key in this section, so it pays to call ahead to Kinzua Dam for the river forecast."

Visit the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Kinzua Dam web site here: www.lrp.usace.army.mil/rec/lakes/kinzuala.htm, or call 814-726-0164 for Kinzua's lake and recreation information.

Fly-fishing is one of the most popular fishing methods through this stretch, but lures, spinners and live bait are also used. Try floating crankbaits and retrieve them at a moderate pace with occasional firm twitches.

"For most of the Allegheny River between Kinzua Dam and Emlenton, smallmouth bass are the most popular fish sought, although the harvest season doesn't start until mid-June," says Woomer. "A wide variety of lures and bait is used, including spinnerbaits, minnow-types lures, jigs and live bait like minnows and crayfish." Woomer also says that anglers seine some of

the best live baits, including various minnows and shiners, from the river and use them to catch smallies.

In addition, rock bass grow to an ample size in the river. They can be caught easily on lures and spinners.

"Walleye fishing is probably more popular in May with the season opening May 5, and it gets harder as summer approaches and the river warms up," says Woomer. "But walleyes are available even then for anglers who can figure out how to catch them. Jigs with minnows are a favorite along with blade baits."

Muskies are commonly caught throughout this stretch of the Allegheny River, and occasionally they reach 50 inches. Big musky lures are the primary gear along with bucktail jigs. Northern pike are also commonly caught and are usually much more likely to hit a variety of baits and lures than are muskies. For more information on musky and pike fishing in the Allegheny River, see page 8 in this issue.

"Flathead catfish are in the river's deep pools and eddies, and night fishing with a chub off the bottom works best," Woomer says. "Late July and August are usually the best times for them, but some might be caught in early summer. Anglers also catch some channel catfish." ☐



photo: Art Michaels

Allegheny River near Tidoute, Warren County

More information

The Middle Allegheny River Water Trail guide is a free publication among other water trail guides available from the Commission. Visit the Commission's water trail pages online on the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us. On the left side of the web site's main page, hold your cursor over "Boat," and in the drop-down menu, click on "Boating Near You." Then click on "Water Trails." View, print or download individual water trail guides.