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Cover Photo

Danny Frazier is one of the most noted big smallmouth fishermen in the state. He has appeared with numerous big fish in this magazine over the years. This 5 pound, four ounce smallmouth was caught in the Greenbrier River. After weighing the fish, it was later released into the New River to be caught another day.

Now on the internet www. wvasportsman.net Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton.



Love Of Old Lures

Spring is once again upon us. After a long winter, it's time for yard sales, flea markets, and auction sales. Everything will be opening up. Let's not forget antique shops. You have to turn over every stone when you look for old fishing lures. What about e-bay? Lots of people live and die over what is on e-bay.

Let's talk about the internet first. There are thousands of lures on ebay to look at every day. There are also thousands of people bidding on lures every day. Some of the good things about it are that you can find about any lure you want, any color you want, and any condition you want. Those are the good things, but the following are bad things: with people all over the world bidding against you, how good of a deal can you get on a lure? You have to be really careful or you will overpay on the internet. Next, is the lure



By Grumpy Ash

you bought original (the paint, eyes, hardware, etc.)? People are making a living repainting and reconditioning old lures. They do it so well it's hard for anyone to know the difference. Before you pay top dollar for a lure, you should know what you're buying! On the other hand, lures that can be picked up locally are more apt to be original.

Recently, I was asked where most of my lures come from. I was shocked when I actually sat down and started adding it up. At least 75% of my lures came from a lure show somewhere. Why? That's



Jeff Miller shot a 21 pound turkey with a 10" beard. *Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth*. May 2007 ~ Page 4



the next question. Because you can buy lures at a show for half of book value or less. That's right — half or less. I'm not sure why; I just know you can. There are many reasons, I believe, such as old collectors selling off their huge collections, or perhaps more lures available than people to buy them (at shows).

I don't know how many times I have found lures for sale that I wanted for my collection and everybody wants top dollar. They will continue to the next page

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say, "I saw this lure sell on e-bay for whatever," maybe *twice* the book value. If I can buy the same lure at a show, why would I pay e-bay price? You can't unless you want it very badly. I have paid top dollar for lures many times in the past, because of color or condition or rarity of the lure. There's a thing I call fair market value. That's the price you can sell the lure for, not the price that was paid for one like it on e-bay three years ago. E-bay has no guaranteed selling price; you simply get what somebody wants to pay for it: \$100 three years ago, \$50 last year, \$25 yesterday, whatever, maybe \$10 today. It's just a chance you take.

If I have seen the lure sell for between \$25 - \$75 in the past year, a fair "market" value would be \$50 to me, whether I'm buying or selling it. There is really no such thing as a "book" price. I have a twenty lure book-price guide library. Every book has a different author and guess what, a different price. A common bait can range from \$15 - \$100. That's sad, but true. So what's the bait really worth? Let's



A huge 22 3/4 pound gobbler with a 10 1/2" beard was shot by Gary Dotson.. *Photo courtesy of Waterfront Sporting Goods in Alderson*.



talk about fair "market" value. The final thought is "you can only get what somebody will pay for it."

I have had a good winter lure hunting, displaying my lures at a few outdoor shows. I always buy lots of lures, but it's getting harder and harder to buy ones I need. I purchased a Shakespeare baby continue to the next page

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revolution, a metal lure made in 1902, at a show this past winter. I already owned the revolution, but a baby was a nice addition to my collection.

Now I'll be looking for the Musky size to fill the set. There's never an end to it. All kinds of lures are still out there.

If you have any questions about lures, you can reach me at 304-782-2324. I'm always trading lures for something I don't have in my collection. Until next time, happy lure hunting.

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Only three, Kaitlyn Holbert caught a 16 3/4" rainbow trout at the 27th Parkersburg Fishing Derby. She won Grand Champion honors

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Addington's Hosting Instructor

The next instructor training for the West Virginia Archery in the Schools Program will be hosted by the Wildlife Resources Section of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources at Addington's Bow Shop, located near Winfield (Putnam County), on July 16 th and 17 th, according to Program Coordinator Scott Warner.

"The Addingtons have spent their lives promoting and educating others on archery," Warner said. "Allowing the DNR's Wildlife Resources Section to host one of our trainings at their archery store demonstrates not only their commitment to our archery program, but to the schools in their area."

The archery program was implemented in the fall of 2004 in 19 schools as part of a pilot program to introduce physical education students to an activity that teaches a life skill. In a little over two continue to the next page



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years there has been a phenomenal amount of interest, allowing the DNR's Wildlife Resources Section to implement this program into 125 schools through the certification of 205 physical education instructors. Though trainings have been held around the state, this will be the first training offered in Putnam County. Because of this, DNR encourages schools, especially the ones located in Putnam and surrounding counties, to take advantage of this opportunity and get their students involved in a program that has reached nearly 20,000 kids.

"Due to the type of training and amount of time needed for handson-instruction, classroom size is limited," Warner said. "Teachers interested in attending are encouraged to contact the DNR early since most of our classes are typically filled weeks prior to the free training. It may seem like it's a little early to announce this training, but schools will be out in a few weeks and the DNR wants to make sure that teachers have every opportunity to sign up before summer vacation. I can assure you that this class will be full. In fact, several teachers have already signed up."

For additional information on the West Virginia Archery in the Schools Program, or to attend this training, visit the DNR Web site at www.wvdnr.gov or call (304) 558-2771.







Hiking WV Program

Discover miles of hiking trails at West Virginia state parks, forests and wildlife management areas in the Hiking West Virginia Program. As a member, you may discover the beauty of nature, experience interpretive hikes and make new friends at special event hikes. Hiking also has many benefits, such as heart disease prevention, weight loss, decreasing cholesterol levels and improving arthritis, osteoporosis and overall mental health.

This program is a great opportunity to participate and accumulate mileage while enjoying nature and all the benefits of hiking. Submit your form with a one-time registration fee of \$10 per person to become a member. Upon reaching each mileage plateau and sending your mileage log to Parks and Recreation for review, you will be eligible to receive a reward and continue on to the next plateau. All mileage must be accumulated on hiking trails in West Virginia's state parks and forests. Enjoy and explore nature at its best.

For more information call 1-800-CALL WVA or visit our web site at www.wvstateparks.com

Support The DNR





Danny Frazier hooked a nice striper. Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edghe in Hinton.



Benny Moore, from Wayne, shot a 9 point.



Ricky King caught a 8 1/2 pound catfish. Photo courtesy of Backwater Bait in Newport, Ohio.

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Young Troy Carr, nine years old, got his 1st turkey. It was 18 pounds. *Photo courtesy of Cardinal Pawnbrokers in Beckley.*

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Mike Smith, from Williamstown, took a Pope & Young Ohio buck.



A 20 pound gobbler (10" beard) with a transmitter was shot by Clint McFee in Wirt County. It had moved 3 1/2 miles from where it was earlier released.



On a trip on the New River, Chase Hyde, from Harrisville, landed a 4 pound, 5 oz.smallmouth.



Dutton Hardaway, from Sutton, landed a 4 pound, 9 oz. rainbow.



Ben Walker, from Sutton, caught a 9 pound rainbow trout..

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Rodney Starcher caught his 1st Northern pike at the Belleville Dam. Photo courtesy of Stacher's SPort Shop in Lubeck.





John Carter. from Charleston. reeled in a 4 pound largemouth.



Rob Ciarupicci, from Leon, caught a 4 pound. 4 oz. largemouth



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Cermony On The Elk

By Jim Wilson

Around noon on Saturday, April 21st an historical event took place on the beautiful Elk River just below Mine #4, in Webster County. The Kanawha Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited stocked its 1,000,000 fingerling brown trout into the waters of the Elk.

Earlier the same day, TU volunteers stocked 5,000 fingerlings into the Catch-and-Release section of the Elk, from Elk Springs Resort down to the concrete bridge in Randolph County.

At the same time another group of TU volunteers were stocking 19,000 fingerlings into the catchand-take section of the Elk from Whittaker Falls in Webster County, down towards Bergoo.



An 18" sauger was hooked byJustn Bennett. *Photo courtesy of Backwater Bait in Newport, Ohio.*



The 24,001 brown fingerlings were corralled up at the Edray State Hatchery, near Marlinton, in Pocahontas County, by Asst. Supt. Jeff Williams. Williams and TU officials agree that brown fingerlings are better suited to survive and mature than other species in central and southern West Virginia.

Early Saturday morning TU members picked up the fingerlings at Edray. They used specially designed aerated holding tanks placed in their pickup trucks. Around 10:00 am the stocking process began with old fashioned leg work continue to the next page



Shirley Kirby bagged a double bearded turkey. *Photo courtesy of Bogg's in Elizabeth*



and plastic buckets.

Steve Young and his group of volunteers, including his son Steven, stocked the Catch-and-Release area, while Joe Crowder and his group stocked the catch-and-keep section.

The millionth fingerling was saved for the noon ceremonies. TU officials Joe Crowder and Ernie Nestor were co-emcees. Members of the state TV media were represented by Channels 8 and 11. The print media was represented by yours truly.

Crowder introduced several members of his TU chapter for special recognition along with several DNR personnel in attendance, including Mike Singleton who is supt. of cold water fisheries. There were 50 or more people at Mine #4 for this historic ceremony.

TU member and official Ernie Nestor then took over as emcee and thanked everyone in attendance for their help and support with the TU stocking program.

The Kanawha Valley Chapter of TU has been stocking state streams and rivers with fingerlings, in conjunction with our DNR, since 1977. The Kanawha Chapter by far is the



Mike Smith, from Williamstown, used a bow for this P&Y Ohio buck.

biggest in the state with close to 500 members.

Mike Singleton gave praise to the Kanawha Valley Chapter saying that TU had helped the DNR immeasurably in this volunteer work. And that the DNR doesn't have the manpower to do this stocking without TU's help.

Ernie Nestor, the recipient of 4 Trout Unlimited national awards, then picked up the dip net containing the one millionth brown fingerling; held it close to his face and ceremoniously said, "Hey, little brownie, I'm giving you a new home. Stay away from your big brothers and sisters, stay away from anything with a hook through it, beware of high water and seek shelter in low water. Grow to be 18 inches, so one of us in the Kanawha Valley Chapter of TU can catch and then release you unharmed. Bye for now."

He turned the dip net upside down and the crowd roared, as Baby Brownie slipped into the stream, hardly making a riffle.



Eight year old Leoma Leaseburg caught a 19" rainbow trout.





Leave Young Wildlife Alone

The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources reminds people to "leave young wildlife alone." It's that time of year again, when the woods and fields of West Virginia abound with new life. If you are involved in outdoor recreation activities, do your part to ensure the survival of young wildlife by remembering the motto --"look, but do not touch or disturb".

Picking up baby wildlife or getting too close and disturbing the family unit greatly increases the chance that the offspring(s) may become part of Mother Nature's food chain. If you come across young wildlife in your outdoor travels, do not touch or disturb them. If you want to watch, do so from a safe distance with the aid of binoculars.

If you find young wildlife that are alone and think they may have been abandoned, please remember that the mother is probably out gathering food. It takes a lot of energy to raise offspring, so the mother must leave to get enough food for her and the babies. This could take a few hours or all day, but the mother knows where her young are and she will always come back. Humans are poor substitute parents for wild animals. Young wildlife have special diets and they need to learn survival skills from their mothers,





things people cannot duplicate. By observing wildlife at a safe distance with binoculars, you can learn how wild animals care for their young in a natural environment without compromising the animals' safety.

The DNR receives more calls about abandoned fawns than any

other wildlife. Unfortunately, many people often mistake a bedded fawn, with no mother in sight, as abandoned. Remember, not moving is an important defense tactic of fawns. Their spot pattern, coloration and lack of scent make continue to the next page





the fawn difficult for predators to detect. If a predator comes by, the fawn will freeze until the threat has passed, or it will wait until the very last moment to flee to safety if spotted. Fawns should always be left undisturbed. If you are certain that the fawn's mother is unable to care for it or has been killed, call your local DNR office, conservation officer, or wildlife manager.

Another reason for not picking up wildlife is that diseases, parasites, and other health related risks are greatly increased with captive wild animals. Parasite transmission between pets and wild animals could result in the death of one or both animals. Rabies, roundworms and other parasites such as lice and ticks are transmitted to both pets and humans. Roundworms can cause blindness, paralysis, and even death in humans.

As a final incentive, please remember that state laws and regulations prohibit possession of wild animals without a permit. Fines

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for illegal possession of a fawn deer, black bear cub, baby raccoon, squirrel, or any other species taken or possessed during the closed season, range from \$20.00 up to a maximum of \$1,000.00 and/or up to 100 days in jail.

The Division of Natural Resources wants you to enjoy nature's bounty of beautiful and exciting wildlife in West Virginia . However, for your own health and safety and for the animals' welfare please remember that young wild animals should stay wild.



David Montgomery caught a 5 pound, 14 oz. largemouth. *Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton.*

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Malik Friend, from Albright, hooked a big smallmouth





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Fishing at Burnsville Lake, Joshua Compton landed a nice catfish. *Photo courtesy of Burnsville Docks on the lake*.



Dean Lovejoy caught this rainbow on the Cheat River. It weighed 6 pounds, 4 oz.



Josh Murray had success this season with a nice gobbler. *Photo courtesy of Starcher's Sport Shop in Lubeck.*



During the youth hunt, Justin Forney bagged a 20 pounder with a 9" beard. *Photo courtesy of Flintlock's in Kingwood.*



These turkey hunters, Justin Beeler, Rodney Starcher and John Murray had a great day in the field. *Photo courtesy of Starchers Sports Shop in Lubeck*.



Ed Brooks reeled in a 23 1/2 pound catfish. *Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth*





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Young Ethan Hornbeck bagged his 1st gobbler. *Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.*



Amy Cross caught a nice largemouth bass. *Photo courtesy of Starcher's Sports Shop in Lubeck.*



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How To Take Better Fishing Photos

Do you ever wonder how the pros take such incredible fishing photos? You know, the ones that wind up on the covers of your favorite outdoor magazines. While there's often an element of luck involved in catching a trophy-sized fish, veteran outdoor photographers leave little to chance when it comes to capturing such moments with their cameras. You don't have to be a photo professional, however, to take great fishing pictures. The following pointers, courtesy of BoatersWorld. com and its sister site RitzCamera. com, will help you dramatically improve the quality of your on-thewater images. And while there's no guarantee that your pictures will be cover shots, you'll be able to create a fishing photo collection worth bragging about.

1. Avoid the "Dead Fish" Syndrome

A dead, colorless fish that's been laying in your fish hold for hours makes a terrible photo subject. If you want to take a shot of an angler holding his or her catch, do so soon after the fish is landed. This way,



JR Scott took a bird with a 10 1/4" beard. *Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.*



you'll be assured of capturing the vivid colors and patterns characteristic of the species in the photo. Many game fish, especially dorado, wahoo, billfish, salmon and trout, lose their amazing color minutes after being caught. By taking your shot right away, you'll end up with a much more brilliant and appealing image. You'll also be able to capture the genuine expressions of joy and excitement on the face of the proud angler. If you are practicing catch-and-release, you'll need to take your photos quickly anyway in order to get the fish back in the water in short order. But if your plan is to keep your fish for the frying pan or barbeque, don't let your catch sit around in a box or cooler for hours and expect it to sport the



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same rainbow of color displayed when it was first landed.

2. Catch the Action

While a photo of an angler holding a freshly-caught fish often makes for a nice image, there's nothing like an action shot to con-

continue to the next page



vey the true excitement of a catch. If an angler will be releasing a fish after landing it, take advantage of the opportunity to snap some shots of the fisherman leaning over the gunwale of the boat, setting the fish gently back in the water. When taking such a shot, be sure that there are no obstructions, and that you can clearly see the fish as it is being set free. It's usually best to snap the shot just before the angler releases the fish. If you wait until the fish is below the surface, chances are the colors will be lost and the image will be distorted. In addition to catch-and-release scenarios. you can take advantage of other action scenes to produce great fishing photos. While it may be difficult to put down your own rod for a moment during a hot, "wide-open" bite to pick up a camera, the great pictures will make passing up a fish or two worthwhile. Take some candid shots of your fishing buddy with his rod doubled over under the weight of a powerful game fish. Try to capture the look of concentration and determination on the angler's face during the heat of battle.

3. Make Sure the Subject is a Colorful Character

You can inject a blast of color into your shots featuring an angler by



ensuring that the subject is wearing brightly colored clothing. This is especially important if the fish featured in the shot is not a colorful species, or if the day is overcast. Shirts, jackets or slickers in red or yellow or purple are best and will enhance any fishing photo. Avoid wearing blue, green or white, especially on the upper body, as colors like these tend to get lost against the predominantly blue and white backdrop of the water, sky and clouds. Additionally, many game fish species have blue and green or white coloration, which can make a fish hard to distinguish if the angler is wearing similarly colored clothing.

4. Don't Look at the Camera!

When taking fishing photos, whatever you do, make sure the subject is NOT staring straight at the cam-



era. If an angler poses for a shot with a "cheesy" grin, the image will look staged. Make your images look like they were captured on the spur of the moment (even if this isn't actually the case). The best fishing shots appear as if they were taken by a "ghost" photographer during the course of the day -- as if the subjects were not aware they were being photographed. continue to the next page





Make sure the angler is focusing on the fish, instead of your lens. Have the fisherman look his adversary right in the eye, and flash a smile that reflects the happiness of winning a hard-fought contest. It's fine to introduce other anglers into the shot, but make sure all of the subjects are looking at the fish instead of the camera.

5. Consider the Total Shot

Be conscious not only of your intended photo subject or subjects, but also of what may be "lurking" in the background of any fishing shot. An otherwise spectacular fishing photo can be ruined by objects that have no business being in your shot. When people look at your fishing photo, you want them to focus on the angler and the fish, not extra rods and reels, tackle boxes, trash cans or chum buckets in the background. Also be aware of objects that might cast shadows on the subjects and negatively affect the overall image.

6. Let There Be Light

Typically, you won't need to use a flash on bright sunny days. How-



ever, if the skies are overcast or low-light conditions exist, it's best to use a "fill flash" to ensure that your shots are not too dark. There are some unique natural lighting situations, however, create special photo opportunities. For example, you may want to take advantage of a scenic panorama of the sun rising above an offshore island, or the silhouette of fishing boats off your bow at sunset. You'll need to use a flash, however, in these situations. You can also benefit from the use of a built-in or accessory flash – even in bright sunlight. Mid-day shadows, such as those cast by a hat or cap over an angler's face, can often be reduced by using this "fill flash" technique.

7. Take a Different Point of View

When you look through the viewfinder, first decide whether the framed image lends itself better to a horizontal or vertical photo. continue to the next page





Jr. Rooker caught a 4 3/4 pound smallmouth recently. *Photo courtesy of Waterfront Sporting Goods in Alderson.*



Some scenes, like panoramic views are naturals as horizontal photos, whereas others, such as an angler standing up with rod and fish in hand are better taken as vertical shots. Then, think out of the box a little. By snapping your shots from different angles and/or levels, you can make your fishing photos more interesting. Try getting down low and shooting upwards to maximize the length of a fish. Take a few shots from up on the flybridge to mix things up a bit. Varying your position will add variety and creativity to your fishing pictures. One additional note on the subject of perspective. Having a subject hold a fish away from his or her body and toward the camera is a technique some photographers employ to make the fish seem larger. If you choose to create this illusion, be careful not to overdo the effect. Holding the fish too close can make a small flounder look like a 50-pound halibut. Remember, you want to use photo techniques to enhance your picture, not to distort it to unreal proportions.

8. Shooting a Fish Solo

Let's face it, fishing pictures are usually more interesting when they feature both a fish and an angler. Afterall, most people like to look at other people, as well as impressive



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game fish. If you want to snap a few solo shots of your catch, however, focus the shot on a particular feature of section of the fish that characterizes this species or stands out as particularly striking. For instance, you may want to focus on the most colorful section of a "fluo-



Caleb Bohrer, from Proctor, bagged his 1st buck - an 8 point. May 2007 ~ Page 26

rescent" dorado, the distinguishing hooked jaw of a male salmon, or the massive head section of a blue marlin with its formidable bill.

9. Night Moves

If you will be taking fishing or boating photos at night, you'll want to use a high-speed film, such as 400 or 800. The greater sensitivity to light that this film provides will enable you to capture greater detail during low-light conditions. Also continue to the next page



be sure to use either an internal or external flash. If your camera has an internal flash, make sure your battery is fully charged, especially if you will be taking a lot of night photos. If you'll be using an external flash, take along extra batteries. When taking pictures of people at night, you'll want to guard against the "red eye" effect. Many cameras have built-in red-eye reduction features, so make sure this is turned on for your night photography.

10. If You Plan On "Going Digital"

Taking on-the-water photos with a digital camera offers several advantages over using a film SLR model, and thanks to technological advances, the quality of images taken with digital cameras are now as good or better than those taken with traditional film cameras. With a digital camera, you can view the images you take instantly - you can't do this with a standard SLR or point-and-shoot model. When you get home, you can edit your digital images and file them without any processing costs or delays. You also have the option of storing your fishing or boating pictures online, and sharing these images with friends and family via the Internet. If you opt to "go digital" for your fishing and boating photos, there





are a few things you should keep in mind. The "firing rate" of a digital camera is typically slower than that of a traditional camera, so when you press down the shutter button, there will be a slight delay in when the shot is actually captured. This could be a factor, especially if you are attempting to capture an action photo like a fish jumping. If you plan on taking a lot of shots, be sure to take extra memory cards with you, just as you would bring along extra rolls of film for a traditional camera. Also plan on taking some extra batteries with you, since the LCD features on digital models tend to eat up battery power. You won't want your camera to run out of "juice" when you're 20 miles offshore. If your digital camera offers the option of adding a creative filter to the lens, you should do so to cut down on sun glare. Such a filter will act like sunglasses for your camera and greatly diminish the negative effects of glare. Try to take better photos this year.



Glen Hall, from Lost Creek, shot a big red stag at the Double "DD" Ranch in Ohio.



Archery In The Schools Program

The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Section will be hosting its second annual West Virginia Archery in the Schools Program State Tournament at Braxton County High School on May 19th, 2007, according to Frank Jezioro, Director of the Division of Natural Resources.

"Since our pilot program began in the fall of 2004, there has been a tremendous amount of interest from schools around the state," said Jezioro. "In less than three years, the program has grown over six times in size with 125 schools currently participating. During this time the program has reached more than 20,000 students, making it one of the DNR Wildlife Resources Section's largest and fastest growing educational programs."

Students from 31 schools will be participating in this year's tournament:

"Our goal when we started the program was to inspire young people to spend more time in the outdoors and to take a greater interest in their education," said Scott Warner, who is coordinating the archery program. "If the tournament is a benchmark of how successful this program has become, let's



just say it's nearly doubled in size since last year. Thanks needs to be given to Braxton County High School for allowing us to host the tournament at their school, and to school districts around the state for their continued support in allowing their students to participate in this nationwide program. Also, special thanks needs to be given to tournament volunteers and wildlife organizations for their commitment in assisting us again with this year's tournament, because without them this program would have not become the success it is."





Jim Carpenter and Brandon Miller caught 23 channel catfish. *Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth*



Bob Harkness with a 19 pound bird with a 9 1/2" beard. *Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark*.



Justin Lusk brought in a nice 8 pointr Photo courtesy of Dee's Sporting Goods in Hamlin

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Shon Butler brought in an 18 pounder with a 10 1/4" beard. Photo courtesy of Broken Wheel Campground in Weston.













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Noted smallmouth expert, Danny Frazier landed a 5 pound and a 3 1/2 pound samllmouth on the same day. *Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton.*



Monty Kuntz caught a nice musky in the Mud River. *Photo courtesy of Dee's Sporting Goods in Hamlin.*



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Jeremy Metzler, from Marietta, Ohio, caught a 20 pound snook in Florida.



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Shon Butler (right) and Theron Smallridge are shown with 135 P&Y buck. *Photo courtesy of Broken Wheel Campground in Weston.*



Jason Call bagged a great 14 point. Photo courtesy of Dee's Sporting Goods in Hamlin.



Josh Thomas killed a nice 18 pound gobbler with a 10" beard. *Photo courtesy of Backwater Bait in Newport*, *Ohio*





Junior Rooker caught a 5 pound smallmouth. *Photo courtesy of Waterfront Sporting Goods in Alderson.*



Daniel Roberts brought in an 18 pond catfish. *Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth*



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Common Bass Fishing Mistakes

Sometimes what makes a good fisherman great is knowing not so much what to do, but rather, what NOT to do. All too often out on the water I see very capable anglers make mistakes that otherwise could have made for a good day of fishing. In this article, I want to point out these common mistakes that both experienced and rookie fisherman make and hopefully open your eyes to new and better fishing!

#1. The "Confidence Bait" Flaw

This is probably the biggest mistake I see anglers make on the water. Every fisherman has a confidence bait. That one lure that always seems to catch fish and outdoes the other lures in your tackle box. Ask Denny Brauer what his



Young Austin Dunn brought in his 1st gobbler. *Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton.*

confidence bait is and he'll tell you straight up, "The Jig". He's made millions fishing that lure. Rarely will you ever see him on TV throwing a spinnerbait or slug-go. So what is wrong with having a confidence bait? Nothing, but if you are going to be like Denny Brauer and always throw that confidence bait, you better know how to catch fish with it day in and day out in all conditions.

I see it all the time. Fisherman will catch a ton of bass one day on say a worm, and the next day they are trying to do the same thing. I know I would be trying to do the same thing as the day before, but if it isn't working, it isn't working. I've seen fisherman go the whole day fishing one bait, changing colors thinking a little blue fleck may be all the change that's needed to get those bass striking again. You have to be cognizant and realize when it's time to make a change.

When you find yourself fishing a lure and not getting any bites, two

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things should come into your mind. One, do I need to change location? Or two, maybe this bait has lost its appeal to the fish. I used to be the kind of fisherman to fish a bait for hours even without a bite, convincing myself that if there were a fish to be found, he would hit my lure I was fishing. Now, I have realized it is much better to constantly change. I think a lot of anglers watch shows like BassMaster and FLW Tour and see these pros spending the whole day throwing the same bait, even though they may not be catching fish. But you have to remember, these pros have spent hundreds of hours pre-fishing their waters, so what is on their line they probably have good reason for it.

So next time your out on the water and your not getting any strikes, change up! Adapt to the situation, and seek out an answer. Don't assume the fish will start biting and what you have tied on is your best

continue to the next page

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bet, cause if you aren't catching fish, changing up should be the only thing on your mind!

#2. Don't Be A Camper

This is another common mistake I see anglers making. Whether the particular cover they are fishing has given up good fish in the past, or just looks like a winning hotspot, fisherman often make the mistake of camping out on a certain piece of cover. Have you ever been fishing down a relatively bare bank and come across a massive tree that has fallen into the water. This tree has hundreds of branches and every nook and cranny would



Wayne Carr used a bow in Wyoming County for this big buck. *Photo courtesy of Cardinal Pawnbrokers in Beckely.*

have to hold a ten pound bass. Sure, sounds like a great laydown to me....I'd fish it! But if I hit the main spots of the laydown with my jig, and maybe toss a spinnerbait or crankbait to it a few times and get nothing, I'm out of there! Your fishing time is a precious commodity. Especially in a tournament, if your not getting bites on a piece of cover, disregard it and move on.

I've seen fisherman spend hours fishing one single tree. They will tie on every lure and color combination imaginable. They have it in their mind that this tree, rock pile, or pier looks too good not to have active fish on it. If you spend hours on a piece of cover, there is a chance that you will find a nice fish hidden somewhere where your first hundred casts didn't reach. But you need to take the 'chance' out of fishing! So don't put all your faith on a single piece of cover, or your asking for disappointment.

#3. Losing Concentration

Fishing is a tough sport. Though the whole "fishing takes patience" saying is true, the word 'patience' is less fitting than the word 'focus'. Patience is sitting back, waiting

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for the fish to find your bait. I like to think of 'focus' more along the lines as actively making your bait seek out the fish. As much as I think fishing is a relaxing sport, if your goal is to catch the most fish possible, it really isn't. Your mind has to be sharp, everything you do must be for a reason, and letting up your focus, will cost you in the long run.

I remember when I was young going fishing with my dad, the two best casts I made were the first and last. The first cast I had all my energy and focus. I was ready to catch fish. As soon as that lure hit the water, I was making a note of everything. Every little bump continue to the next page





and tap I possibly could. My eyes glued to my line as my worm hopped across the bottom, rod ready to strike into action.

Sorry to tell a story, but hopefully I made my point. Make every cast like your first and last!

Take care and good fishin'

Group Camping Available

Cabwaylingo State Forest, Panther State Forest, and Tomlinson Run State Park are taking reservations for large group camping. These group camps offer excellent facilities for church retreats, 4-H outings, civic meetings and other social gatherings. The camps provide lodging, fully equipped kitchens, dining halls and recreation facilities. Please call 1-800-CALL WVA and ask for the individual park to verify availability and to make reservations.

Cabwaylingo State Forest, Wayne County

Cabwaylingo State Forest offers a 100-person, fully-equipped group camp, which is great facility for gatherings. This rustic-style camp was formerly the old Civilian Conservation Corps barracks. It features two barracks, which sleep 50 each, and a third building that houses a dining hall with a completely furnished kitchen. A complete shower house was added in 1999. The group camp features a council circle that is perfect for



Tylor Coplen took this turkey during the youth hunt. *Photo courtesy of Bogg's in Elizabeth.*

an evening campfire. Guests will be able to take advantage of a game court, hiking trails and the pool, which opens Memorial Day through Labor Day Weekend. The camp is available from early May through late October.

Panther State Forest, McDowell County

Panther State Forest's group camp is perfect for campers who prefer an isolated setting while enjoying modern camping and recreational facilities. The camp sleeps up to 60 people in bunk beds, and has a



fully equipped kitchen and dining area, swimming pool privileges, a fire circle nearby, picnic shelters and hiking trails. The group camp is rented by the week from Memorial Day to Labor Day. A minimum of two nights is required in spring and fall rental. Reservations are required.

Tomlinson Run State Park, Hancock County

Tomlinson Run State Park's group camp provides10 cabins that sleep up to 10 people each and a counselor's quarters that sleeps 12. The dining hall has a fully-equipped kitchen and nearby recreation building has a stage for skits and movies, and tables for indoor projects or games. Park recreational facilities include lake and ponds for fishing; rowboat and paddle boat rentals; a swimming pool/bathhouse complex with a snack bar; basketball courts; horseshoe pits.



Hooked On Bass Fishing

By Gabriel Bennett

Five words I never thought I'd ever say came out of my mouth just the other day. It was Sunday, April 23, 2007, my new best friend, Zach, and I went bass fishing. I would much rather fish for trout with my fly rod, but when you can't get to the mountains any fishing will do. We started out fishing for Musky on the Hughes River, and with not much luck started looking for some farm ponds to fulfill the need to catch a fish. We caught a few in the first pond. Nothing though that makes your heart race. I did have a nice one on but lost it 3 feet from the shore.

We decided to call it a day, went home, cooked out with the wives and kids, and pretty much had decided that the fishing was over for the day. But, a good friend to me, and brother-in-law to Zach, made a suggestion to try another pond towards the evening. You didn't have to ask us twice. We both were up for it and before long were in the vehicle driving to try our hand at catching a big one.

What I didn't tell you is Zach had been to this pond just the weekend before. He hooked onto a nice one and lost it the same way mine had gone earlier that morning. Jok-



On The Internet At: www.huntn.biz/4044

ingly, he said that it would be his luck and I would end up catching the one that got away from him. We both laughed never thinking it would ever come true.

We started fishing and Zach right away started catching fish. We kind of had a little competition going and he now was beating me pretty good.

I came close to catching up to him but he stayed a fish or two ahead of me. Until.....

Zach started fishing the spot where he hooked the big one the weekend before and got a couple of smaller ones, but couldn't seem to get the big one to bite. As he moved around the pond, so did I. I took one cast, with a straight black and silver Rapala. I was fishing the The Most Elite And Exciting Hunting & Fishing Club In The World!! Call Alan Shreves at (304) 669-1234

shore about 2 feet out and WHAM! I've never had a fish hit so hard. As soon as Zach heard the drag going out he yelled, that's him, that's him! It didn't take me very long to get the brute to the shore but I was so afraid of him coming off continue to page 38



Gabriel Bennett's big bass being held by Zach.





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that I yelled for Zach to help me. He dropped his pole, came running towards me, ended up slipping in the mud, and while he was lying on the ground grabbed the beast by the bottom lip and dragged him on shore. He measured 18 1/2" long, and our best guess weighed about 4.5 to 5 lbs. This was the biggest fish I'd ever caught.

I told him, only a true friend would risk getting wet to help me drag HIS fish on the shore. We both gave out that redneck hoot and holler with big smiles on our faces while trying to catch our breaths from laughing so hard. I told him, I'll never forget these moments for as long as I live. Zach said, "This is what it's all about."

We shook hands, chuckled a little, and took a couple pictures to remember it by. We both are catch and release enthusiasts and after inspection noticed the HE was carrying eggs. So we put her back in the water to be caught another day. Hopefully she will bring enjoyment to a couple of other friends like she did for me and Zach.

Now On The Internet www.wvasportsman.net



Ron Cunningham hooked a 6 pound, 6 oz. brook trout. *Photo courtesy of Cheat Trout Trips*



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