

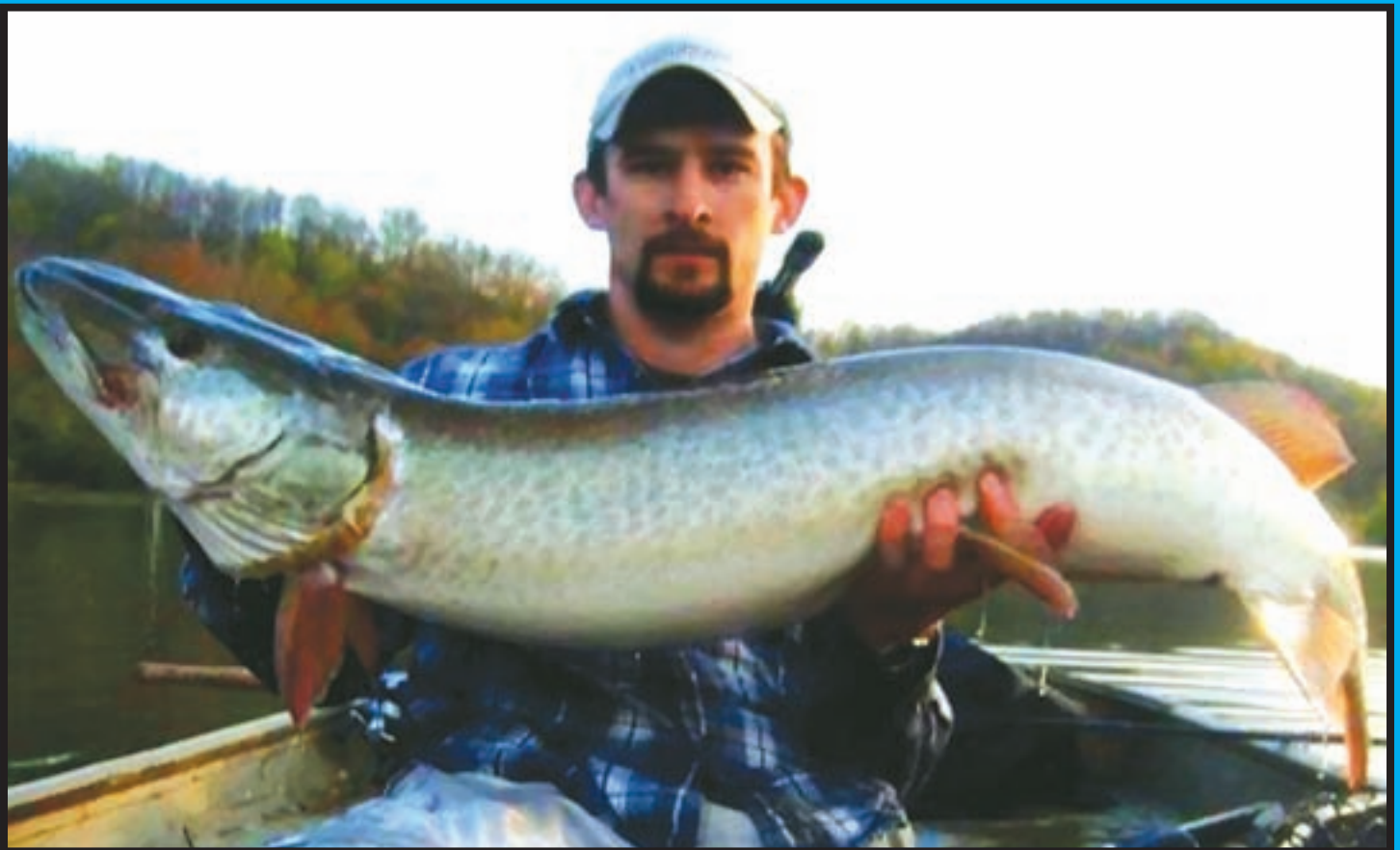


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Issue 218

May 2012



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Cover Photo

The big musky have been biting at Stonewall Jackson Lake near Weston. Troy Radcliff caught and then released this monster musky. It measured 52 inches which was very close to a state length record. This lake has been very active the last few years.

Guided musky trips are available. Contact the ad on page 6 for information on a fully supplied trip.

Photo courtesy of Husky Musky Guide in Jane Lew.

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Archery In The School Training

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Section (DNR) will hold its next instructor training for the Archery in the Schools (AIS) Program July 24 and 25 at Pipestem Resort State Park, according to Krista Snodgrass, program coordinator.

“We are very excited to be holding our next training at Pipestem Resort State Park,” said Snodgrass. “When possible, we like to provide trainings at our state parks and Pipestem is a perfect venue for PE

teachers, coaches, and others wanting to get their schools involved in the AIS Program.”

The AIS Program has become DNR’s largest growing educational program. Since its inception in 2004, nearly 70,000 students have been introduced to archery as part of their physical education (PE) classes in 268 West Virginia schools. The program teaches Olympic-style, target archery in both public and private schools Grades 4 through 12.

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AIS Program, they must first have a certified instructor – preferably
continue to the next page



Paul Clark went to Florida to shoot this 10' 4" alligator. He's been watching too much "Swamp People". Want's to do a "Willie" next time and snag one with a hook/line. Photo courtesy of Clark's Taxidermy in Parkersburg.



Duke Paersley used a bow for this 155 P&Y buck.

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a PE instructor or coach who will introduce as many kids as possible to the joys of target archery,” said Snodgrass. “DNR only has about four trainings a year and, because class size is limited to 25, training slots are highly sought after. As an added incentive, teachers taking this training may be eligible to receive Continuing Education Hours (CEH’s) – provided they submit their paperwork to their principal before the end of the school year.”

To ensure a training slot, anyone interested in getting a school involved in the program is encouraged to apply as soon as possible, before the July 1 deadline. The training costs \$25 for all school employees and \$50 for non-school employees. This fee will be paid to



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WVDNR – Archery in the Schools Program (via check, money order, or exact currency only) during the first morning of the training.

To register for the AIS training at Pipestem Resort State Park, please call Krista Snodgrass at

304- 558-2771; email Krista.R.Snodgrass@wv.gov for information on the AIS Program, or visit the DNR’s AIS website at www.wvdnr.gov/archery. For more information on Pipestem Resort State Park, go to www.pipestemresort.com.



James Good hooked this big bass at O'Brien Lake in Jackson County.

BASS SPORTSMAN 2012 - TEAM TOURNAMENTS

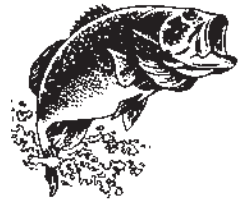
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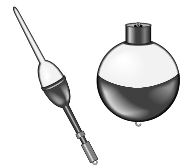
Scott Light went to the New River for this 20 1/2 inch smallmouth.



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Cacapon State Park Diamond Jubilee

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April 1 – May 24, 2012

continue to the next page



Clayton Kenya, from Fairmont, shot a nice 8 point buck.

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McKenzie Belknap landed her 1st bass at Burnsville Lake.



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One of the best places to fish for postspawn bass is under docks that are near where they spawned. These fish will stick around for a while unless the bottom falls out of the lake. Of course, bass aren't under every dock. This time of year they favor the ones that are shallow, low to the water, and have dark shade under them. And bass also like the docks that have a lot of bream, because they feed on bluegills until they move out. I don't fool with the docks that are in deeper water, and whether they have brush under them is no big deal. I just fish the shallow ones and skip jigs or soft plastics under them as far as I can.

There's really no easy way to learn how to skip a bait under a dock except by going out there and making yourself do it until you get it right. I use a Damiki 6-foot, 9-inch rod with medium-heavy action and it works for me. You've got to train yourself to skip a bait as far back under the dock as you can, and not just a foot or so. Some days I'll just

start on a line of docks and keep going. Pretty soon, you'll find out which kinds of docks have the most fish around them. Then you can just start targeting the ones with similar features and passing up the others that probably aren't going to produce much anyway. There's quite a bit of trial and error to it, but you can catch some good postspawn fish out from under shady docks.



Scott Weber, from Wheeling, landed a nice smallmouth bass.

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Cam Thomas trapped a nice bobcat. Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.

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A great rainbow trout was landed by this lady. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.*

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Makayla hooked a big rainbow at this pay lake. *Photo courtesy of Sure Catch Fish Farm in Elkins.*



Young Dylan Washington shot a spike. *Photo courtesy of Broken Wheel Campground in Weston.*

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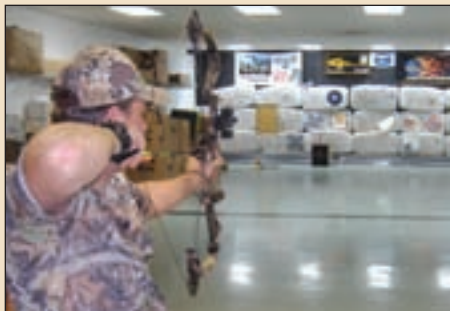
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Swim Worms Work

You'd expect 2006 Forrest Wood Cup champion and National Guard pro Brent Ehrler to unleash a bag of Western swimbait tricks on unsuspecting Southeastern bass occasionally, considering his California pedigree. But when it comes to heavy soft-plastic swimbaits, those rigged with internal lead weights, he'd be the first to admit that he learned a lot of what he knows about them after he came East.


In the last few seasons, "pre-rigged" swimbaits have become part of the rotation of go-to tools for fishing offshore in the shad-rich waters of reservoirs in the Southeast and Midwest. They sink quickly, hold up against repeated attacks by schooling bass and display enough action to draw bites even in murky water.

Fortunately for Ehrler, he's a fast learner, and the lure has become a regular part of his arsenal. He rarely employs the swimbait as his sole tournament lure in the East, but says that it allows him to "put something different in the rotation" when he has a school of bass pinned on offshore structure.

While California still remains the swimbait epicenter, there's a



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reverse flow of information occurring now that goes from east to west. New offshore tactics, particu-

larly with the smaller 5- to 6-inch swimbaits, are being refined on continue to the next page

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on Tennessee Valley Authority lakes and other Eastern impoundments with tremendous results. We asked several top tour pros to weigh in on the subject in preparation for the 2012 season. Here's what they had to say.

Pre-Rigged Swimbaits

It seems swimbaits come in every size, color and shape imaginable these days. Typically, pre-rigged swimbaits have soft-plastic bodies, internal lead weights and a single large hook protruding out of the back. These aren't hollow, unrigged swimbaits such as the Strike King Shadalicious, nor are they jumbo slow-sinkers as are used out West. Instead, they're more like a combination of a soft-plastic swimming body and a lead-head jig. They can vary in size from about 3 inches up to about 9 inches, with 5- to 6-inchers being in the primary range.

The Berkley Saltwater PowerBait Mullet, Storm WildEye Swim Shad and Osprey Tournament Talon Top Hook are prime examples.

Common denominators include paddle tails that "swim" even on a slow retrieve, the propensity to sink quickly and stay near bottom, and availability in a variety of colors that mimic forage. With regard to the latter feature, our experts generally agree that color is not a huge deal, as long as you're using something that replicates a shad. In

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trout-stocked lakes, a rainbow trout replica can also be a killer. Make it Step 2

While pre-rigged swimbaits are great tools for catching bass from offshore structure, they typically work best when used as a follow-up lure when a school of bass is active and you need a big bite.

"I'll throw a crankbait and get 'em fired up," Ehrler says. "But then when they start to slow down, I'll throw the swimbait and often catch the biggest fish of the bunch."

Kevin Snider of Elizabethtown, Ky., agrees. He uses a pre-rigged

continue to the next page



A nice rainbow trout was brought in. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.



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swimbait once he's pulled a fish or two from a spot. He notes that the technique has to be employed carefully, calling it a "double-edged sword." It might get you a big bite or two, but it also sometimes "gets the school screwed up and scatters them." Once scattered, they might not bite again for a while.

Current Analysis

McCalla, Ala., pro and Coosa River expert Kyle Mabrey notes that internally weighted swimbaits are deadly on the spotted bass lakes near his home and on largemouth reservoirs around the country. In both cases, the determining factor in their use involves the current.

"For spotted bass, I usually slow-roll it along the bottom, but you have to let what you see on your graph dictate how you retrieve it," he says. "At Pickwick last year I was seeing the bass suspended up off the bottom. That happens when there's an absence of current. It causes them to suspend. Yet when the current is ripping hard you need to keep the swimbait in contact with the bottom, so it's best to barely urn the handle."



Brad Jenne is pleased with this big flathead catfish.

Ehrler has found the same to be true on reservoirs with current, as opposed to the natural fisheries near his home.

"I fish them differently on places like Kentucky Lake ledges than I do at home," Ehrler says. "At home, I fish them more like a spinnerbait, while here [in the East] I cast them out and let them sink to the bottom.

I usually do best when I'm almost hitting the bottom the whole way."

In some instances, a dragging presentation, done either by lifting the rod tip or slowly sweeping it sideways, is required to keep contact with the bottom the entire time. Other times you can slowly retrieve it and occasionally pause to allow

continue to the next page

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the swimbait to fall to bottom.

Gary Dobyms of Yuba City, Calif., is another swimbait aficionado. He likes to fish a swimbait like a crankbait, with the exception being that he can hit any depth with it. When bass suspend, the trick is to count down the lure to the depth where they are suspending.

“There will be times when you can’t catch them on a jig,” Dobyms explains. “They just won’t bite it, but they’ll jump right on a swimbait if you drag it by them. I think of it as a giant crankbait, but there’s no crankbait you can get to run 25 to 35 feet.”

Some swimbait manufacturers identify the sink rate of their swimbaits on the package. For others, you’ll have to learn it through experimentation. Keep in mind that



Glen Tracewell, from Parkersburg, caught a huge Florida bass.

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the type of line (monofilament versus fluorocarbon, for example) and diameter will affect the sink rate, which you might use to alter your presentation slightly.

Seasonal Considerations

Pre-rigged swimbaits work just about any time of year for offshore bass schooled up on offshore humps, points and drop-offs. In seasons when bass forage in shall-

continue to the next page



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ower water, lighter swimbaits or hollow, unrigged swimbaits are better options.

“It’s a postspawn bite for me,” Snider says. “It slacks off a bit later in the summer, but I keep it out because you might still use it to catch a couple of big ones.”

Dobyns agrees that the postspawn bite can be good, but in the Golden State there’s a tremendous bite that starts around the first of November, when stocked trout become more active.

“As the weather gets nastier, it [the swimbait bite] just gets better,” he says. “And it goes all the way through the end of April.”

Mabrey employs swimbaits practically year-round. During tournament season he’ll slow-roll a swimbait on ledges on reservoirs, but he’ll also use it in the heart of winter on his favorite Alabama spotted bass lakes.


That’s one of the keys to this style of swimbait for offshore fishing: As long as bass are present and they’re feeding on baitfish, the pre-rigged swimbait, with its sinking presentation and bait-imitating profile, is hard to beat.

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a misty morning, I don't have to worry so much about the hooks or other metal parts of a lure getting a little wet and then start rusting. It's a good idea to replace the liner about once a year.

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Rick Hyre landed a nice rainbow trout on a fly rod.



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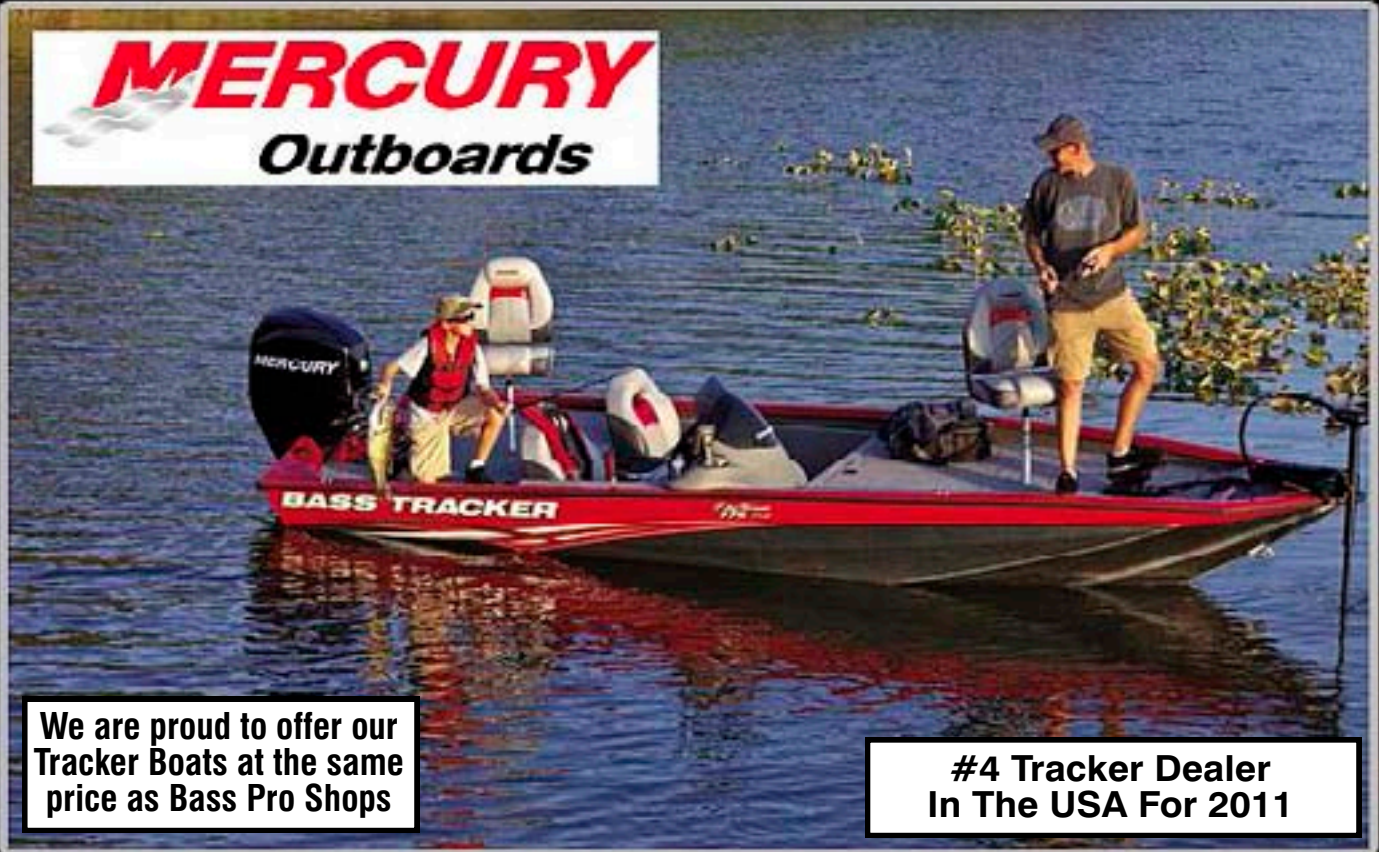
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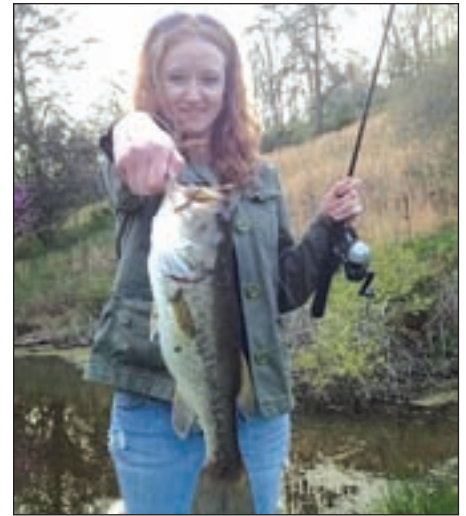
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Alicia Harris, from Sissonville, went to a farm pond to land this 8 pound, 13 ounce largemouth bass.



Jackie Siers, from Cairo, landed a nice largemouth bass.



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Terry Bowman went to Beech Fork Lake for this largemouth bass.



Jack Herron, from Buckhannon, landed a 34 pound carp at Stone-wall Jackson Lake.



Brian Ball brought in a nice gobbler this year. Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.

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With the help of his dad, Jordan Bender reeled in trout. *Photo courtesy of Sure Catch Fish Farm in Elkins.*

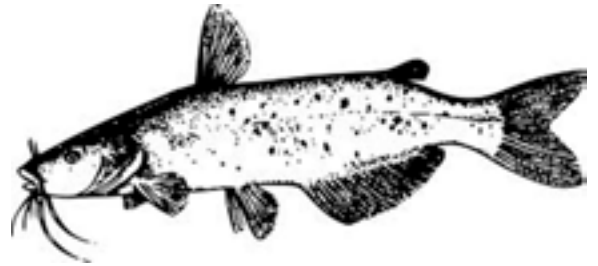


Kevin Ross, musky guide, landed and released a big Stonewall Jackson musky. *Photo courtesy of Husky Musky Guide Service in Jane Lew.*



Joe Mullins hooked a 42" musky.

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DNR Employeess Recognized

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR) employee Arthur L. Shomo and recently retired employee William K. Igo received prominent awards at the 68th Northeast Fish and Wildlife Conference held April 15–17, 2012 in Charleston, according to Curtis Taylor, Chief of the Wildlife Resources Section. “The DNR and the sportsmen and women of the state should be proud to have these well deserving employees honored



Ruger Law went to Ritchie County for his 1st deer, a 7 point buck.

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with such distinguished awards. This recognition demonstrates professional respect from their peers and the high level of competence of West Virginia Wildlife Resources Section staff,” said Taylor.

Art Shomo received the Communicator of the Year award from the Northeast Conservation Information and Education Association. The award is given for contributions in Communications and Education, including outreach innovations, program development, publications and for dedicated service to the fields of communications or education.

Shomo received his undergraduate degree in wildlife biology from Utah State University and graduate degree in wildlife from Colorado State University. He was the leader in developing the DNR’s

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Project Wild program in the early 1980s. He has conducted hundreds of Project Wild workshops in schools across the state, has been instrumental in developing

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Bill Stone hooked a big blue catfish at this pay lake. *Photo courtesy of Catfish Paradise near Marietta, Ohio.*

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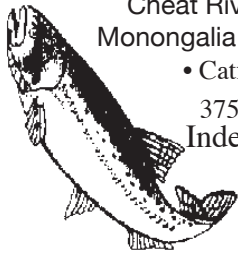
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the state's Envirothon competition, and makes presentations to numerous local and statewide organizations about West Virginia's wildlife and the importance of resource management in the state. He also participates as an instructor at the state junior conservation camp and each year introduces conservation science to about 200 middle school students. He coordinates the review and publication of the DNR's annual hunting and fishing regulations, news releases, other brochures and legislative rules and statutes. He is



Carolyn Tracewell, from Parkersburg, went to Florida for big bass.

also the editor of the West Virginia Wildlife magazine.

“Art's efforts through the years have had a positive impact on thousands of the state's young people, giving them an appreciation of our wildlife and natural resources they might not have gotten otherwise,” Taylor said.

William “Bill” Igo was honored with the William T. Hesselton award from the Northeast Wildlife Administrators. The award is given annually to a wildlife biologist in the northeast United States who has demonstrated initiative and made significant contributions that further the ideals of the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program. The purpose of the Wildlife Restoration Program is to provide funding for the selection, restoration, rehabilitation and improvement of wildlife habitat, research into factors affecting wildlife management, hunter training programs and the development, operation and maintenance

of public target ranges.

Igo received both his Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in wildlife management from West Virginia University and was a wildlife biologist for the DNR for
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Richard Hypes used a bow for this Summers County black bear. Photo courtesy of Waterfront Sporting Goods.

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more than 35 years. His contributions varied widely from management, research, land acquisition to coordination on the Monongahela National Forest. Bill was a key researcher and biologist involved in the highly successful Appalachian Cooperative Grouse Research Project. This innovative research involved collaboration between numerous agencies and universities

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and culminated with winning the prestigious Wildlife Monograph of the year from The Wildlife Society. In addition to his important ruffed grouse work, Bill served as the wild turkey and upland game bird biologist and was a contributor on numerous wildlife survey projects.

“The majority of the projects in which Bill has participated directly reflect the ideals of the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program and we will certainly miss his expertise as a valued employee,” said Taylor.

“There are many Wildlife Re-

sources Section projects and programs that would not have been completed, or even started, if it had not been for Bill’s and Art’s tremendous efforts,” said Taylor.



Curt Gregory caught a musky at Burnsville Lake.

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Leave Young Wildlife Alone

FRENCH CREEK, W.Va. – The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR) advises people to leave all young wildlife alone. “The spring season is the time of year when the woods and fields of West Virginia are full of new life,” said Gene Thorn, wildlife biologist at the West Virginia State Wildlife Center in French Creek. “People have a great opportunity to view and enjoy young wildlife during this season, but it is especially important for the public to understand the need to avoid touching or disturbing these wild animals.”

Attempts to rescue or rehabilitate young wildlife are often counter-productive. Picking up or getting too close to wildlife greatly increases the chance of harm to the animal and/or the persons involved in this unwise practice. By touching young animals or close approach, humans leave scent that may attract a predator. Wildlife viewing is an enjoyable and perfectly acceptable activity; however, DNR



William Whittaker shot a nice gobbler. Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.

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recommends that this pastime be conducted from a safe distance and with the aid of binoculars.

“In addition to being detrimental to the welfare of young animals, handling wildlife can expose humans to various wildlife-associated diseases, parasites and other health-related risks,” said Thorn. “Rabies, roundworms and other parasites such as lice and ticks can be transmitted to humans through the improper handling of wildlife.”

The Wildlife Center and DNR offices statewide receive numerous calls each year concerning young wildlife, especially fawn deer that

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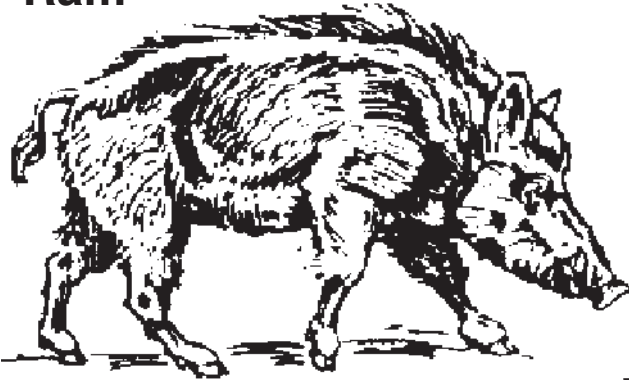
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have been picked up by well-meaning residents. It is important to note that in almost every case these young animals have not been abandoned. In fact, the offspring are often hidden as the adult searches for food, and this separation can last for a few hours or all day.

The spotted pattern and coloration of fawns and their lack of scent make them difficult for predators to detect. If a predator approaches a fawn, the young deer will normally hold very still until the threat passes. The fawn will wait until the very last moment before fleeing to safety if discovered by a predator. Removing the young wildlife from its natural environment almost certainly leads to death of the animal.

As a final caution, state laws prohibit the possession of wildlife without a permit. Under any circumstances, when you pick up

a young animal in the wild you have taken it into your possession. The fines 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 up to a maximum of \$1,000 and/or up to

100 days in jail.

“We want everyone to enjoy wildlife in West Virginia,” said Thorn. “For your own health and safety and to protect the wildlife, remember these wild animals should be left alone and allowed to stay wild.”



Ohio fisherman, Billy Williams hooked a 48' flaehead catfish recently.

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A big brown trout was hooked by this angler. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.



Dusty Watson, from Shinnston, used a bow for this 10 point.

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Young Brian Higgins was in on catching these trout. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.



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Lionel Lilly hooked a 3 pound, 13 oz crappie. *Photo courtesy of Jerry's Sporting Goods in Horner.*



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Jeremy McCloy released this huge largemouth with a 21" girth. It was from a pond in Wood County.

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Austin Lemley caught a 7 pound, 6 oz. trout. *Photo courtesy of Jackson COuntY Pawn in Ravenswood.*

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Robert Lane hooked a 4 1/2 pound smallmouth bass. Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.



Dianna Rider landed several nice trout at this pay lake. Photo courtesy of Sure Catch Fish Farm in Elkins.

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Two New State Fish Caught

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Two state record fish were caught recently from the Ohio River, according to Frank Jezioro, Director of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources.

A state record sauger was caught by David Vance of Portland, Ohio. Vance caught the 22.50-inch, 5.06-pound fish from the Ohio River in Jackson County on March 20, 2012. He caught the record sauger while bass fishing using a Mimic Minnow across from the mouth of Mill Creek.

Vance's catch establishes a new



Young Trenton landed a big trout. Photo courtesy of Sure Catch Fish Farm in Elkins.



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West Virginia record for weight. The previous weight record for sauger was a 4.75-pound fish caught by Steve Powell from the Ohio River in 1985. Vance's fish, however, does not best Powell's fish for length, which retains the length record for sauger at 23 inches.

A state record skipjack was caught by Howard Neal Craig of Poca, W.Va. Craig caught the 19.1-inch, 2.50-pound fish while fishing at the R.C. Byrd Lock and Dam tailwater on the Ohio River in Mason Coun-

continue to the next page



Howard Neil Craig caught the new state record skipjack.

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ty April 13, 2012. Craig was using a jig while fishing from the shore.

Craig's skipjack establishes a new West Virginia record for length, just exceeding the 19.01-inch skipjack that J.R. Coleman caught last year on the Ohio River. The state skipjack weight record remains a 2.61-pound fish caught by Steve Skeens from the Kanawha River in 2002.

Anglers who believe that they have caught a state record fish should check the record listing in the 2012 Fish Regulations brochure. The brochure also outlines the procedure to follow for reporting their catch. This information is also available online at www.wvdnr.gov.



Dustin Arnold, from Craigsville, shot an 8 point in Nicholas Co.

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Don't Feed the Bears

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR) reminds all West Virginia residents that feeding black bears is a violation of state law, as well as a misguided disservice to the state animal, according to Colin Carpenter, black bear project leader for the DNR Wildlife Resources Section.

“Some people will illegally set out food so they can get a closer look at this often secretive animal,” Carpenter said. “However, these actions often lead to the destruction of the bear. Bear movements are tied to food sources. Bears that

roam in and around residential areas in search of food are less likely to stay if they do not find anything to eat.”

Capturing and moving bears that have become accustomed to humans is a costly and often ineffective way of addressing the problem, especially if it just moves the problem from one place to another.

Bear populations have increased in both number and distribution in the past 20 years. Bears are now found in areas where they have been absent for decades and have been reported in all 55 counties.

continue to the next page

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Multiple reports of sows with cubs have been received from the northern and western portions of the state. "There is simply nowhere to move bears that have become a problem," Carpenter said.

Human / bear interactions increase during the spring and summer for several reasons. Natural food sources are at their lowest point when bears leave their dens in the spring. Bears often spend



Lora Rinehart, from Scarbro, shot a Fayette County black bear.

several weeks feeding on green vegetation while continuing to lose weight. High-energy foods such as serviceberries, blackberries, raspberries, and blueberries do not become available until later in the summer.

In addition, the bear breeding season, which peaks from late June through July, puts many bears on the move. During the breeding season, males will cover large areas while searching for females. This is also the time of year when adult female bears will chase off their yearlings so that they may breed again. Human-related food sources are higher in calories and easier to obtain than natural foods. All bears, especially yearlings that are on their own for the first time, will take advantage of easy food sources. Bears will continue on their way if they do not find easy food sources.

Bears quickly become habituated to handouts in the form of trash,

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Dalton Cutright, owner

bird seed, pet food and feed placed out for other animals, and lose their fear of humans. They then resort to raiding garbage, outdoor freezers, storage sheds, vehicles and other structures associated with people. Unfortunately, when these activities continue to the next page

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ies are repeated, DNR personnel are forced to humanely destroy the offending animal for safety reasons.

“The unintentional feeding of black bears is something that can be prevented,” Carpenter says. “Garbage should be secured in a bear-proof facility and placed out for collection on the morning of pick-up, not the night before. Food scraps that produce large amounts of odor should be sealed in a plastic bag before being placed in the trash. Food scraps should not be placed in a compost pile during the summer



Daniel Rice shot one deer with a gun and the other with a bow.

months. Residents should remove all outside pet food at night, and bird feeders should be taken down, cleaned, and stored until late fall to further discourage bears from feeding around human habitation. If you do not remove food attractants until after a bear has become a nuisance, you may have caused the death of that animal”

Feeding of any wildlife should be avoided for numerous reasons, including, but not limited to, disease transmission, increased predation, habitat destruction around the feeding site, ethical concerns, and the



Jim Asbury shot an 8 point buck.
Photo courtesy of Crosroads General Store near Newark.

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animal's overall health. Following these practical and common sense recommendations will reduce human-bear conflicts and assure that more of the state's animals remain wild.

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Katie Buckbee got a 20 pound bird during the youth hunt.



Donnie Powell landed and released a 48" musky caught in the West Fork River.



Young Cory Marple, from Buckhannon, shot a nice 9 point buck.

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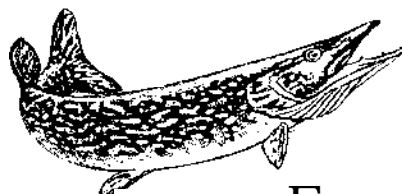
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