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**Issue 232**

**September/October 2013**



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## Cover Photo

A huge 8 pund, 5 ounce large-mouth bass was landed in a farm pond. Kevin Johnson, from Buckhannon, reeled in this bass, weighed it, and then released it back into the pond.

Hunting season is starting soon. Bow season opens earlier than usual on September 28. An unusual buck or bear season starts this year in 20 counties. Look for lots of bear pics this year.

*Photo courtesy of Anderson OUtdoors in Buckhannon.*

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## Bear And Deer Archery Season

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. - West Virginia's 2013 archery seasons for white-tailed deer and black bear open on Saturday, September 28. The bear archery season is a split season (September 28-November 23 and December 9 - December 31). The deer archery season runs through December 31.

This is the second year the black bear archery season will have both a September start and an extended December segment. "The black bear population continues to expand," said Curtis I. Taylor, Chief of the Division of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Section. "We believe the expanding population can sustain an extended archery season and provide a great deal of recreational opportunity."

In addition to a base license, bear hunters must purchase a Bear Damage Stamp (Class DS) to hunt bear in West Virginia. Two bear may be taken during the archery or the gun season (or one each in the archery and gun seasons) provided at least

one bear is taken in Boone, Fayette, Kanawha, Logan, McDowell, Mingo, Raleigh or Wyoming counties. Other than the Class DS stamp, no additional stamps are needed to harvest the second bear during the archery season except for non-residents hunting on the National Forest (Class I).

Hunters are also reminded that they need stamps if they wish to harvest additional deer during the archery season. One or two additional archery deer, depending on the county, may be taken with Class RB (Resident) or Class RRB (Nonresident) stamps (one per continue to the next page



Lonnie Cogar went to Canada for this northern pike. Photo courtesy of Trappers Den in Cowen.

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Josh Perry reeled in a huge Summersville walleye.

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stamp). Hunters should also note in the regulations that in 23 counties or portions thereof, they must take an antlerless archery deer prior to harvesting a second antlered deer during the archery season. Additional archery stamps must be purchased prior to the start of the deer archery season.

The daily bag limit for deer has increased this year, allowing an individual to take up to two deer in one day. However, only one antlered deer may be taken in the same day.

The first deer does not have to be legally checked at an official game check station prior to harvesting the second deer in the same day.

Special regulations exist for the four archery-only counties: Logan, McDowell, Mingo, and Wyoming. In these counties, only two archery deer may be taken, one of which must be antlerless.

In all counties, legal resident landowners hunting on their own

property and holders of Class DT (Life-threatening Conditions) licenses may use Class RB/RRB stamp privileges without stamp purchase.

For complete information, hunters should consult the 2013-2014 West Virginia Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary available at any WVDNR office, license agents, or by visiting the WVDNR website at www.wvdnr.gov.

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Roberta Hatcher, from French Creek, landed a nice largemouth.

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## Fall Crankbait Fishing For Bass

As the days become shorter and the water temperatures begin to cool in most parts of the country, many bass anglers reach for a crankbait to catch some late season action. Elite Series pro Brian Snowden has some tips when it comes to late summer and early fall crankbait tactics that are applicable from coast to coast.

“Successful crankbait fishing depends largely on water temperature and clarity and in understanding the dynamics associated with

each,” says Snowden. During the peak of the summer heat, Snowden vacates deep ledges and river channels and begins to target isolated flats where bass are chasing large schools of baitfish. Often located at the mouth of a river, Snowden will follow the flat until it begins to bottleneck. “The hotter it gets, the further back into a river I like to go — but only until the river really narrows down,” he explains. “This time of the year, a shallow running crankbait in these areas will out-produce a spinnerbait.”

Snowden says that in mid to late summer, the bass are aggressive and willing to chase down a meal in the shallows. Targeting flats in 1 to 5 feet of water, Snowden will begin fancasting a shallow diving crankbait like a Cotton Cordell Big “O,” searching for schools of baitfish. The Big “O” not only moves a great amount of water but also provides a large profile for the bass to key on.

“I know anglers who have won a lot of money fishing crankbaits in

*continue to the next page*



Richard Burke, from Elkview, hooked a New River smallmouth.

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less than 5 feet of water this time of year,” he says. “I really believe in the technique.”

Snowden’s fall crankbait pattern begins once the water reaches the mid to low 70s. Early in the fall, he will still target the same shallow, isolated flats he did in late summer, but, in addition, he will follow them “all the way back to where the creek or river makes its first major swing.”

During the early fall bite, bottom composition becomes increasingly important for Snowden. “As the water cools, bass start looking for subtle changes in bottom contour,” he explains. “It seems that shad this time of the year are moving away from the shallower clay flats onto gravel bottom flats farther up the creek and the bass are following them out.”

When targeting these bass,



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Snowden fishes a 1/2-ounce Cordell Spot or a Bomber 6A crankbait. The Missouri pro also focuses on making casts around schools or balls of baitfish.

Later in the fall, as the water temperatures continue to drop, Snowden targets the 4- to 8-foot range but pays close attention to the location of the baitfish. “You’re going to be looking for balls of shad. The key thing to remember

continue to the next page



Tess Bailey landed a large freshwater drum.



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s to fish where the bait is. If some forage isn't present, you need to go in search of it," he stresses.

When bass are holding in that 4- to 8-foot range, Snowden prefers a gold or silver Cordell Spot depending on water clarity — gold when

it's sunny or the water is clear, and silver in stained water or under cloudy conditions.

By following Snowden's late summer and fall patterns, you can cash in on some late season bass with a shallow crankbait.



Greta Miller ,from Dailey, caught a large walleye recently

## Shooting Exhibitions At Outdoor Show

ROANOKE, W.Va. - Archery and shotgun shooting exhibitions will be showcased at the 2013 West Virginia's Celebration of National Hunting and Fishing Day at Stonewall Resort State Park Sept. 28 and 29.

Gould Brothers Exhibition Shooting (GBX) from Minnesota will be doing one show a day Saturday 5 – 6 p.m. and Sunday 4 – 5 p.m. The Gould Brothers perform highly entertaining live exhibition shooting shows. GBX promotes shooting and hunting sports, conservation, gun safety and living with a purpose. From Aaron's one-handed pushup shot to Steve's limbo shot,

continue to the page 13





Bert Collins & Mike Spurlock won the 4th Annual Kings of the Lakes 2 day bass tournament. They collected \$2,250 dollars with a weight of 18-3. They edged out the Johnson-Poling team that had 18-1. This tournament had the 1st day at Burnsville Lake and day 2 at Sutton Lake. Their team won the extra Ranger Cup money sponsored by Mid-State Marina in Sutton, WV. Look for another event next year.

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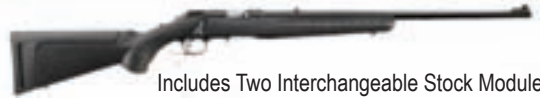


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Sarah Booth, from Cyclone, shot a 19 pound, 3oz. gobbler.



Rick Dunlap Jr. hooked a 48" musky. Photo courtesy of Rick's Taxidermy in Buckhannon.

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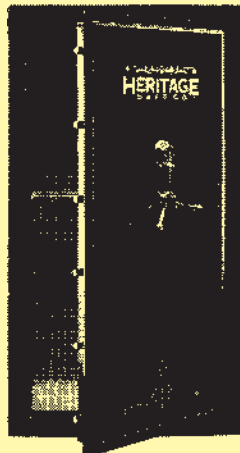
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Byron Ferguson took an interest in the longbow at the age of 12, first shooting out candles in the pitch-dark night to develop his skill. He is able to shoot coins out of the air, split playing cards, and even shoot an arrow through a wedding ring in midair. Ferguson has performed in eight foreign countries and on dozens of television programs. He visited Austria to shoot for the German version of “MythBusters,” History Channel’s “Extreme Marksmen,” and he performed all of the trick

shots in the last “Robin Hood” movie. Ferguson will present his hour-long show at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Saturday and at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Sunday. [www.byronferguson.com](http://www.byronferguson.com)

In addition to the Gould Brothers and Byron Ferguson, Curtis Fleming from Fly Rod Chronicles, featured on the Sportsman’s Channel, will be conducting a meet and greet Sunday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Fleming, a West Virginia native, travels the world doing what he loves, promoting fly fishing. In addition, there will be dozens of demonstrations and hands-on activities, as well as close to 100 ven-

dors available.

Admission to the two-day event is \$6 for anyone 16 and older. Children 15 and younger are admitted free. For a complete listing and schedule, visit the Division of Natural Resources website at [www.wvdnr.gov/nhfd/](http://www.wvdnr.gov/nhfd/).

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## New Public Shooting Range Opens

FAIRMONT, W.Va. – The newest West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR) public shooting range will be dedicated at noon Friday, Sept. 13, 2013, according to DNR Director Frank Jezioro. The public is invited to attend the dedication event.

The range will be open for public use the following day – Saturday, Sept. 14. The rules of the range will be posted and enforced. The range features four standard benches and one bench for the physically challenged.

The new Dents Run Shooting Range is located on the Dents Run Wildlife Management Area (WMA) near Mannington in western Marion County and was built entirely by DNR employees to help control costs, according to Jezioro.

“The construction of this new facility was made possible through the cooperation of the DNR, CONSOL Energy and the National Rifle Association, and with the support of our state and federal leaders,”



Young Miss Landis was in on landing this catfish. *Photo courtesy of Wabash Trading Post in West Union.*

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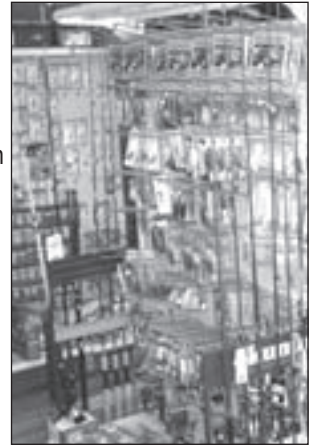
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Jezioro said. “We expect that this new facility will receive a lot of use during the next few weeks as the fall hunting seasons begin and hunters start sighting in their firearms.”

Representatives of the various organizations, as well as Senator Joe Manchin, are planning to be on hand for the opening of the range and to make comments on the importance of the range for hunters

coninue to the next page



Clarence Kendrick, from St. Albans, hooked a 16” white bass.

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Directions to the dedication event for the Dents Run Shooting Range are as follows: At the junction of US Rt. 250 and County Route 1 (Buffalo Creek Road) in Mannington, take Buffalo Creek Road (CR 1) approximately 1.5 miles to its junction with Dents Run Road (CR 5). Turn right onto CR5 and proceed approximately 1 mile – entrance to shooting range will be located on the right.

Dents Run WMA, which encompasses 1,226 acres, is primarily forested and provides hunting opportunities for deer, wild turkey, squirrel, waterfowl and other game species. In addition, a 30-acre impoundment provides the public with warmwater fishing opportunities. For additional information pertaining to Dents Run Wildlife Management Area and the shooting range dedication event please contact the Farmington District I DNR Office at 304-825-6787.

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## WV Big Buck Contest Begins

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. - The September 28 opening of the bow hunting season for deer marks the beginning of the annual West Virginia Big Buck Contest. Antlered deer, taken between September 28 and December 31, 2013, are eligible to be scored and entered.

“Any hunter who bags a deer in West Virginia with antlers having eight or more points, a 26-inch beam length and points that are more than eight inches long may have a winning buck,” according to Division of Natural Resources Wildlife Biologist Gene Thorn. “Antlers will be measured according to the official scoring system for North American big game animals established by the Boone and Crockett Club.”

Plaques will be awarded to eight first-place winners for typical and non-typical bucks in gun, bow, muzzleloader and crossbow (physically challenged) categories at next year’s National Hunting and Fishing Day Celebration, which will be held at Stonewall Resort State Park on the fourth weekend in September.

Gun and muzzleloader hunters whose bucks score more than 140 points typical or 165 non-typical will receive certificates commemo-

continue to the next page

Sept./Oct.. 2013 ~ Page 15

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Wesley Kopas, from PA, hooked a 24" rainbow trout.

rating the entry of their bucks into the West Virginia Big Buck Contest and Records Keeping Program. Bowhunters or physically challenged crossbow hunters whose bucks score more than 125 points typical or 155 non-typical will also receive certificates.

There were 189 new entries into the West Virginia Big Buck Records last year that were taken during the 2012 season. The season total showed 22 bucks taken by gun, one by muzzleloader, 65 by bow and none by crossbows (physically challenged) that qualified for the West Virginia Big Buck Contest. Bucks taken in previous years may still be scored for a certificate and entry into the records if they meet the minimum score.

The DNR, Izaak Walton League of West Virginia, West Virginia Bowhunters Association, West Virginia Muzzle Loaders Association, West Virginia Physically Challenged Advisory Board and Toyota are again sponsoring the contest. Many hunters have their deer scored by a team of official measurers during the West Virginia Hunting and Fishing Show. A list of Official Measurers is maintained on the DNR's website: [www.wvdnr.gov/hunting/BigBuckContest.shtm](http://www.wvdnr.gov/hunting/BigBuckContest.shtm), or successful hunters can contact any DNR district office for additional information.

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Caitlin Hanna, from Fairmont, reeled in a 42' musky recently.

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When buying used, the best thing to do is look for quality name brand; Evinrude, Yamaha, Mercury, and Honda, for example. It is actually better to purchase a more popular brand because they are usually the best quality and come with the best warranties. Check out Consumer Reports for outboard motors. Read consumer's reviews on Yahoo Shopping. Look around and ask people what they have and why. When you have the whole picture, you are ready to choose your next used outboard motor.

Look at the different accessories you may choose. Some have

hydraulic tilt, cable steering, and electric start, all of which simplify using the motor, while others have a pull rope start and a tiller handle for steering and throttle control. Because of these factors, no one piece of advice or article can cover all the possibilities. If you already have the boat, however, you need the compatible motor to your set-up. In other words, if you have a steering wheel, or stick type steering system, you will want to buy a motor with a steering cable attachment, and if you have a battery and wiring to an ignition system you will want electric start. On the other hand, if you do not have these fea-

continue to the next page

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Caleb Stanley, from Prichard, caught a 20" smallmouth bass.

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tures in your boat, it is not practical to buy a motor that uses them.

Next, consider age. Age and use are not always synonymous. A used motor can be older, and still have had relatively little use. It is hours run that matters with a boat, and not miles on an odometer as in a car. Anything over 500 hours run will generally mean more maintenance. As a rule of thumb, look for a motor with the fewer hours run. This is the safest economical practice.

Buying a boat, complete with motor, often ends up costing more. If you find a boat, new or used, then choose wisely on a used motor, you are saving money, since in many

cases, it is the new motor you are paying the most for on a boat bought complete. Remember that age does not equal quality. There are some fantastic used motors out there that have had little use. Depreciation on a motor occurs most rapidly in the first year, but that doesn't mean the quality of the motor is any less.

The same principle applies to hav-

ing a boat that has need of a "new" motor. Choosing a used quality motor is going to be much cheaper than buying new, and in most cases, just as practical. By doing just a little homework you can decide which used outboard motors are best for you. Having an economical used outboard motor does not have to compromise quality.

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Greg Proctor, from Charleston, caught a 33" channel catfish.

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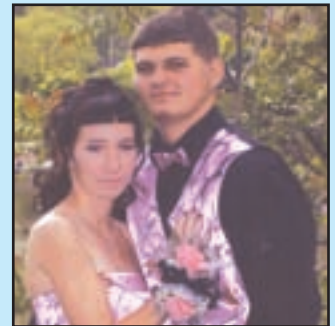
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Chris Davenport hooked and released a very nice 49" musky recently.



Chris Price, shown with Austin, bagged a spring gobbler.



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Jake Jett brought in a 28 pound flat-head. Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth.

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Nathn Bostic helped his wife, Tammy, in holding her 42" catfish she hooked.

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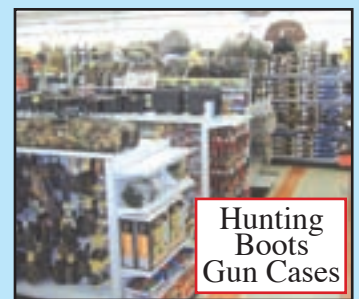


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Elbert Wright, from Kistler, caught a 30 1/2" channel catfish..

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**Details on Page 3**



Randall Hyde hooked and released a nighttime musky. Great catch.

# Squirrel Hunting Fun

Now you see them, now you don't. Fleeting glimpses are often the most positive results of early-season squirrel hunts. Spotting a tree squirrel is difficult enough in early fall while leaves are still on the trees. Seeing them long enough to make a shot can be downright frustrating.

## STRATEGY TIME

Catching squirrels unaware is the trick to early-season hunting. Seeing one climb up a tree is not enough. You might wait there a long time and not see it again. Once it gets up among the treetop leaves, it might go anywhere. You might not be able to find it even if it stays in that same tree, and you might not be able to follow it if it runs through the limbs to another

tree.  
Do you move, or do you wait?

The problem with moving is that  
continue to the next page



Tobby Payne, from Clendenin, caught a 47" musky recently.



Scott Snyder landed a smallmouth on a Canadian fishing trip.

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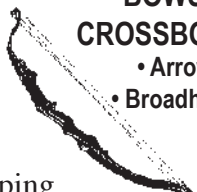
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it is very difficult to see squirrels before they see you. The problem with waiting is that you must be in just the right place or you will wait in vain.

### THE WAITING GAME

Your best chance to catch squirrels unaware is by sitting quietly in a place where you are confident that you will see squirrels. Scouting, of course, is the way to find such places. Of course, if you find squirrel food you will probably find squirrels, but there is more to it than that.

Squirrels eat various mast crops, particularly nuts. They prefer some nuts over others and at different times of the year. This varies from area to area. One of the biggest problems with early-season hunting is that the nuts might not yet have fallen on their own. As early as September, squirrels may be high in the trees cutting nuts loose, sometimes too high to reach with a shotgun. Waiting for the squirrels to come to the ground to retrieve the nuts they cut (which they may not do the same day) calls for a lot of patience and uses up a lot of hunting time.

Squirrels are also very fond of agricultural crops, with corn being the most common food in many areas. Hunting around corn fields offers the clear advantage of seeing more squirrels on the ground.

When food is plentiful, it is unlikely that you will find a concentration of squirrels in one place. There is no reason for them to congregate. Waiting for squirrels is best when food is scarce, especially the season after a year of abundant food and squirrels are plentiful. A remote corn field or a tree that has nuts will attract squirrels from a wide area.

If it is allowed where you hunt, use a .17- or .22-caliber rimfire rifle

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in a feeding or denning area. The relatively mild crack of these rifles does not scare squirrels nearly as much as the blast of a shotgun.

If you must use a shotgun, use the relatively quiet .410 if you have this option. A .410 might be the  
continue to the next page



Shawn Cogar and Mike Paulie won 3rd place in the Cabelas catfish tournament. *Photo courtesy of Anderson Outdoors in Buckhannon.*

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optimum firearm for hunting squirrels. Anyone who is serious about this sport should consider owning one. Choked either full or modified, a .410 will reach out as far as a 12 gauge. The only difference is the amount of shot, which is not critical. Squirrels are not difficult targets for a shotgunner unless they are running in trees. Just a couple of No. 4 or No. 6 shot from a high-velocity load will dispatch a squirrel. However, do not use 3-inch magnum loads for squirrels. These contain more shot than standard loads, but the velocity is lower. Squirrels are tough, with tough skin. One shot pellet that completely penetrates does more good than a dozen that barely penetrate the skin.

You can expect to wait as much as 30 minutes after shooting a 12-gauge shotgun before squirrels will come out of hiding. A little simple math will demonstrate clearly that you will not have time to bag many squirrels during a late-afternoon hunt, even if things go right. Shooting more than three squirrels is very unlikely during a two-hour hunt.

**TRY A CALL**

Squirrels can sometimes be coaxed out of hiding by using a squirrel call. However, calling squirrels is more difficult than calling turkeys. Squirrel "language" is not common knowledge. Plus, squirrels are probably a lot "smarter" than tur-

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keys.

To get more action, stay out of feeding or denning areas. One of the best situations for calling is a travel corridor between a wood lot and a corn field. This will typically be a windrow or brushy drainage ditch, which squirrels will use for travel routes. Their home might be hundreds of yards from the feeding area, as opposed to mast crops, where their dens are usually in the same vicinity. These squirrels might not be alarmed by the noise of shooting if they are far enough away.

The early season is a pleasant time to lean back against a tree and

wait for squirrels. Carry a cushion, a cold drink and enjoy the wait.

**STILL-HUNTING**

Waiting for squirrels is not the style of choice for some hunters. Some  
 continue to the next page



Trenda Stanley, from Smithville, caught her 1st catfish.



Clayton Barnhart took a male coyote in Calhoun County.

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wait for squirrels. Carry a cushion, a cold drink and enjoy the wait.

#### STILL-HUNTING

Waiting for squirrels is not the style of choice for some hunters. Some prefer to hunt on the move. Expert squirrel hunters have two distinctly different approaches to hunting squirrels on the move. One is considered still-hunting; the other is essentially a steady walk. Both can be effective.

Still-hunting requires all of the essential hunting skills. The hunter must be stealthy, alert and able to make difficult shots. It is a very intense hunting method as opposed to sitting and waiting.

A still-hunter should remember that animals could detect the difference between threatening and non-threatening humans. So, the hunter must move quietly and slowly, using natural cover and scanning the woods all around.

One thing the still-hunter should do is spend more time standing still, watching the leafy canopy overhead.

The "steady walk" technique usually results in opportunities to



Chad Metz, from Jane Lew, caught a 7 pound largemouth at night.

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shoot at squirrels that are moving. Nonetheless, it can be effective because squirrels sometimes are not as alarmed by steady walking as they are by stealthy still-hunting or stalking. Maintain a steady, brisk pace, but don't go so fast that visual details are missed. The idea is to see squirrels, not to cover ground. Look for the silhouette of a squirrel's head, body or tail against the sky or the shape of a squirrel flattened against a branch high in the crown of a tree.

Walking works best when the ground is damp, which allows a hunter to move quietly through the woods. A steady, light drizzle is perfect. Walking on dry leaves makes too much noise. Squirrels can hear a hunter approaching from a long distance and will often sit tight for hours.

However, it is possible to creep within shooting range of squirrels on noisy ground. Everything else moving on the ground makes

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noise, including squirrels. After all, if noise alone sent squirrels immediately into hiding, they might surely starve.

If you must hunt on noisy ground, try not to sound like a human. Take shorter, quicker steps. Pause briefly after moving 10 to 20 yards. Squirrels will eventually know where you are, but they might not take flight until it is too late. Stay alert and shoot quickly for best results.

**TAKE TO THE WATER**

Float hunting can be very effective because canoe or kayak hunt-

continue to the next page

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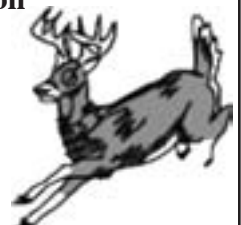
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ers do not move nearly as much as they do while walking, nor does float hunting make as much noise. Another big advantage is that creek bottoms often contain excellent squirrel habitat. Stream bottoms in farm country might contain the only squirrel den trees in a broad area. Some creek bottoms are so wet, or the cover is so dense, that they are lightly hunted. This makes squirrels less wary. Also, squirrels often display more curiosity than fear about hunters in boats. Sometimes they scamper onto limbs that overhang the creek and scold incoming hunters, providing easy shots at close range. (Try to avoid shooting squirrels that might drop into the water – they will sink!)

Carry a shotgun while moving on foot or in a boat. Shooting opportunities will usually be brief and most shots will be at moving squirrels. Shot pellets do not carry as far as rifle bullets, so there's no

need to be as choosy about shooting opportunities as long as you are sure the shot will not carry to buildings, roads or anywhere else people might be.

**SHOOT AND MOVE**

A shotgun blast will send squirrels into hiding over a radius of about 150 yards or so. Avoid a long wait

continue to page 33



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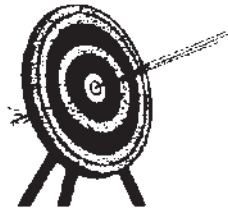


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Aaron Hanna, from Enterprise, hooked a 51" musky.




Isaac Cooley, form Lost Creek, caught a 30 1/2" catfish.

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Eddy Galloway, from Walker, caught a 45" musky at Stonecoal Lake.

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Rick Dunlap, from Buckhannon, hooked and released a nice 45" musky.  
 Photo courtesy of Rick's Taxidermy in Buckhannon.

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Austin Starcher brought in a 26 pound catfish.. Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth.



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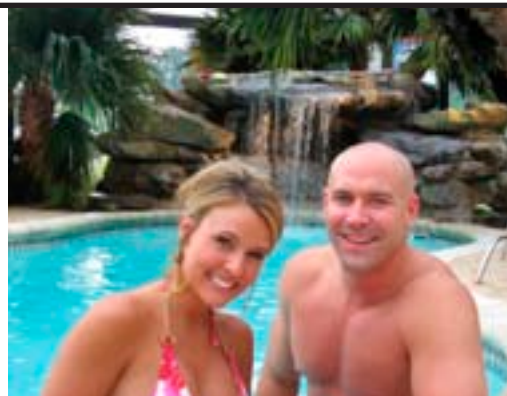
Frank Lane, from Parkersburg, hooked a 48" Ohio River flathead catfish.



Andy Mlynek, Army veteran, got a Calhoun County spring gobbler.



Robert Thaxton hooked a musky.



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Terry Lane, from Parkersburg, caught a 29" Ohio River flathead.





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between shots by moving to a new feeding area after killing a squirrel. But, do not move immediately after shooting. Even though squirrels will be alert for a distance much greater than 150 yards, they might just hide for a few minutes to see what the commotion was all about. Give the animals time to settle down and resume feeding.

There are plenty of options in early-season squirrel hunting. Evaluate the conditions and consider your options. Consider the choices and early-season hunting will not be nearly as frustrating as it used to be.



John Barnette, from Cowen, hooked a 27" channel catfish.

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### GAME CHECKING

## Fall Bass Fishing Know How

While spring often offers some of the year's heaviest stringers, most diehard bass anglers would contend that there's no better time of the year for numbers than the fall.

Legendary Elite Series pro Denny Brauer would be among the foremost fans of fall fishing; however, he cautions that like any other time of the year, anglers must pay attention to the seasonal cues. "One of the things that happens a lot of times is that when an angler first gets to a new lake, he is confused about where to start," he explains.

"The very first thing you should always consider is the season you're in. That will shorten the learning curve dramatically." During fall, the veteran pro points out, bass are intently focused on their primary food source. The bait migration toward warmer water will

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dictate where bass will be positioned. "Bass are moving to the shorelines, to the creeks, and to the backs of pockets because as the water cools down, that's where the bait is headed," he notes.

"Bass are simply going to follow the food source." Brauer recom-

continue to the next page

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mends that anglers focus their attention on ambush points along these shallower-water routes. "Bass will position this time of year anywhere there's an ambush point," he reveals. "Places like isolated timber, or a dock, or even a stick-up along a mud flat will be your high-percentage spots to target."

With so many types of cover readily available in most fisheries, how does an angler decide which type to focus on? "Really, the type of the target is not very important," Brauer says, explaining that almost any object can be a bass hideout. "Something as simple as an isolated lily pad on the outside of a clump of grass, or the end of a laydown along a creek channel, can hold a fish this time of the year."

As for his "go to" baits in the fall, Brauer keeps it simple. "I lean toward baits that mimic shad," he reveals. "Things like shallow-running crankbaits and spinnerbaits are excellent choices right now, but you can even pick up some fish on a buzzbait."

Although he's proficient in any style of bait, Brauer is widely known for his devotion to jig fishing. While the jig may be more effective at other times of the year

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when fished vertically, he says it also can be deadly in the fall — when presented properly.

"You have to adjust your retrieve to mimic the bait during the fall," he explains. "I'm going to be moving it horizontally, as opposed to vertically, in the fall. I do this because the fish are nearer to the surface and will be keying on horizontal movement more than something moving vertically."

Brauer contends that about the only way you can have a terrible outing in the fall is by staying at

home, provided you're paying attention to the clues nature is providing. "Really, about the biggest tip I give to anybody is to pay attention to the season," he says.

"Just use a little common sense and ask yourself where the fish should be. It will make your day a lot more productive and enjoyable."

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## Goose Hunting Advice

Many hunters new to the sport are unaccustomed to firing at such a big bird. More familiar with shooting ducks, they often fire with too light a load at geese too far away. To improve hunters' effectiveness and reduce the crippling of geese caused by ill-placed shots, the DNR has begun teaching hunters how to shoot more effectively. Through a brochure, "Get Your Goose," and seminars held each fall at Thief Lake and Lac Qui Parle wildlife management areas, hunters are learning how to improve their odds of bagging a honker.

Although it's a big bird, a goose has a relatively small vital zone. The total area in which pellets will kill a goose is just one-tenth the bird's total size. To ensure they hit the vital zone with enough oomph, waterfowl hunters need to pattern their guns and find the correct loads.

Most experts say the best loads for geese are sizes 1, BB, BBB, or T steel shot. For most hunting situations, BB or BBB shot is the most effective shot size. Both have plenty of pellets, but still enough energy to bring down a goose. Guns are usually 10- or 12-gauge. Because steel shoots tighter patterns than lead does, the best chokes for geese are modified and improved modified. However, each shotgun choke is unique, which is why hunters should pattern their

particular guns.

To test loads, place a 40- by 40-inch-square sheet of paper at the same distance as flying geese that will be shot at. (For most hunters and situations, that's about 30 to 50 yards). Fire at an aiming point you mark on the paper. Do this on five sheets. Then, on each sheet, draw a 30-inch diameter circle around the densest pattern area on each sheet and count the pellets that hit inside the circle. This is the "pattern density." Try different loads and chokes until one is found that puts enough pellets (from 35 for heavier loads up to 55 for lighter loads) into the circle, which ensures that enough will hit the goose's vital zone for a clean kill. Another common mistake of beginning hunters is to shoot at geese flying out of range ("skybusting"). This can

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cripple birds, flare off approaching geese, and may cause approaching flocks to fly even higher. Some exceptional shooters have the skill to occasionally drop a bird "from the stratosphere," but for most hunters, continue to the next page



Chuck Young was fishing at Sandstone Falls for this nice smallmouth bass.

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a kill at over 50 yards is just dumb luck and poor sportsmanship. A good rule of thumb recommended by goose guides is this: If the end of your gun barrel covers more than half the bird, it is beyond 45 yards and is too far away for a clean kill. It takes practice to find the correct lead for geese. The big birds have slow wing beats that make them appear to be lumbering along. But actually, geese move as fast as a mallard. Lead accordingly.



Bryce Blake, from Paden City, hoked a 37" flathead catfish.

## Hunters Ethics On Public Land

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The fall hunting seasons are about to get underway in West Virginia, and it's time for hunters to begin scouting both for game and for places to enjoy their sport, either on private or public land.

"We often talk about getting land-owner permission before hunting on private land and the ethical standards that should be followed, but we need to also emphasize hunter ethics on public land," according to Mike Peters, wildlife biologist with the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR).

"West Virginia is very fortunate to have 78 wildlife management areas, eight state forests and three national forests totaling more than 1.5 million acres open to the public for hunting, trapping and fishing. This is more than 10 acres of public land for every resident, licensed hunter.

"It sounds like there is plenty of room for everyone, but chances are,

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if you hunt or trap on public land, you will encounter other outdoor enthusiasts while afield," Peters said. "How we conduct ourselves during these encounters may not only determine the success and enjoyment of our hunt but also other outdoor enthusiasts using the same public lands."

Here are some suggestions that may help you on your next public land hunt to be a more ethical public land user.

Make sure you know and understand the regulations for the public land on which you are hunting or trapping. Although many of the regulations among public lands are similar, some may have regulations specific to that area, such as older-aged deer management areas. Be respectful of other hunters and try not to hunt the same area as someone else.

Have a back-up plan, and try to scout several areas to hunt. This way, if someone else is already us-  
continue to the next page

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ing the area you were planning to hunt, you have other alternatives and your day is not ruined.

Some types of hunting, such as dove and waterfowl hunting, can be very social. If another hunter shows up late, invite them to join your group if you have room. Chances are, this will improve both of your hunting experiences because you will not be competing for the same game.

If you come across other hunters, ask them where they plan to hunt and tell them where you plan to hunt. Working together, you can increase your chances of not interfering with each other's hunting and keep everybody safe. In some situations, more hunters can be a positive factor.

If you are going to hunt an area where someone else may already be hunting, proceed with caution and courtesy. Just remember -- you would not want someone to interrupt your hunt.

Blinds and tree stands should be placed and removed at appropriate times. Placing a tree stand on public land three weeks prior to the season to reserve "your spot" is not only unfair to other hunters but is also illegal. This also applies to leaving a tree stand up all season. Dispose of hides and carcasses from harvested game in a lawful manner. It is illegal to dump deer carcasses on public land.

Leave the area in better condition than you found it. Do not leave trash, and if you see trash, pick it up and dispose of it properly.

"The old adage, 'first come, first served,' applies in many situations while using public land," Peters said. "Just remember – public land is for everyone. Treat other fairly and hopefully, so will they. Good luck on your hunts this season.



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