

December 2017 / January 2018

The where to and how to magazine for the outdoor enthusiast."

Issue 266

Varturnan



Outdoor Photos





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Send in your large game pics from 2017. Notice the forms on pages 38 and page 22.

Hope you have had a great season. *Photo courtesy of Anderson Outdoors in Buckhannon.*

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Winter Rabbit Hunting

When the deer seasons dry up, the winter sets in (oh, it's already done that?) and when the snow seems to blanket the land more thickly with every passing day, hunters have different strategies for how to keep their skills in check until the springtime.

Sure, some of us opt to simply go into hibernation and wait until the weather gets better to return to hunting. But for every fair weather hunter, there is another winter warrior among us who isn't ready to let a little bit of snow separate him from his hobby.working to keep the predators from hunting priority deer properties or to eradicate the spread of the animals to suburban areas. Others are raccoon hunters. looking for a bit of revenge on the garbage-scavenging beasts that have been breaking into garages and tearing up trash and recycling bags for years.

However, while coyotes and raccoons are perfectly adequate game animals for a hunter looking to stay active through the cold hard winter months, they don't necessarily make for the tastiest meals. In fact, if your goal with winter hunting is to find the animals that can spark your appetite, then the best option is to start going after rabbits.

While not terribly common on the average restaurant or home-cooked



menu these days, prepared rabbit can actually be a delicious treat, especially in wintertime stews and roasts.

For all of these reasons and more, rabbit hunting used to be the main pursuit for hunters during the winter. And hunters didn't stop targeting rabbits in the winter because they didn't like the taste of the meat on their dinner tables, but because finding rabbits became difficult.

Nowadays, some hunters believe that going after rabbits in the winter is more trouble than it's worth. Certainly, the population of the cottontail and showshoe hoppers has thinned over time, thanks to factors ranging from habitat destruction to a preponderance of predators continue to the next page



Chris Erskine harvested a wide racked 9 point in Raleigh Co.





Denny & Cole Jones brought in a Tyler Co. buck with a wide spread.





Offers vary by model. Rebate and finance offers valid on select 2014-2018 new and unregistered models purchased between 11/01/2017 - 12/31/2017. See your authorized dealer for complete details. Rates as low as 2.99% APR for 36 months. Examples of monthly payments required over a 36-month term at a 2.99% APR rate: \$29.08 per \$1,000 financed; and at an 6.99% APR rate: \$30.87 per \$1,000 financed. An example of a monthly payment with \$0 down, no rebate, an APR of 2.99% APR for 36 months at a MSRP of \$9,999.00 is \$290.74; total cost of borrowing of \$467.60 with a total obligation of \$10,466.60. Down payment may be required. Other financing offers may be available. See your local dealer for details. Minimum Amount Financed \$1,500; Maximum Amount Financed \$50,000. Other qualifications and restrictions may apply. Financing promotions void where prohibited. Tax, title, license, and

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(covotes among them). However, rabbits are resilient animals with quick reproductive cycles, meaning that their populations can keep pace with even the most destructive forces.



Lee Ketterman brought in a 47 pound coyote. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.

If you go out this winter in pursuit of a rabbit, you will find one - so long as you know what to look for and where to look.

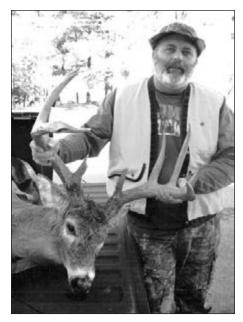
The most important thing to remember when searching for rabbits is which habitat conditions you are looking for. In the winters especially, rabbits like to nestle themselves into thick piles of brush or bramble for cover. Areas where trees have recently been cut down or felled by the elements are perfect, as rabbits will often find spots beneath branches to hide.

Places thick with bushes or pine branches could also be viable spots for a cottontail hideout.

If you have no luck finding brush piles or bramble thickets, head out on a sunny day and search for south facing slopes on your property. Like virtually any other animal, rabbits will go here when it's

Dec/Jan 2017/18~ Page 5

bright out to soak up the sun and warm up. By looking for tracks and following your dog's nose, you can continue to the next page



A. Newhouse harvested this great buck. Photo courtesy of Trappers Den in Cowen.

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find the choice slopes and plan a stealthy attack.

Keep an eye out for the recognizable tracks, and follow them (duh). Early mornings are best, especially after a fresh layer of new snow.

As far as guns go, a .22 is likely all the firepower you'll need for these furry critters. At times a 20gauge could work well, but there's no need to overdo it.

Stalking a rabbit can be great, just be sure to match your camo to

the amount of snow (hunters don't always think about this; green or even brown camouflage can stand out to a rabbit's excellent vision).

So if a fresh blanket of snow and some cold temperatures don't scare you that much, think about joining



Cory Bailey landed a nice bass at Elk Fork Lake.

the rabbit hunting crowd and you'll hopefully end up with something unique and delicious for a meal that perfectly matches the weather.



Gabe Sigman shot a 9 point in Nicholas Co. *Photo courtesy of WV Wild Outdoors in Birch River*.



Roy Wood used a bow for a nice 7 point buck. *Photo courtesy of Trappers Den in Cowen*.

Get Landowners Permission

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — As the days of summer wind down, the Wildlife Resources Section of the Division of Natural Resources asks hunters to refresh themselves on hunting ethics before the season approaches.

"Hunting ethically and legally preserves our image as sportsmen and women and promotes good stewardship of resources," said Gary Foster, DNR's assistant chief in charge of game management.

Finding somewhere to hunt is critical in planning your hunting season. While private land ownership makes up 90 percent of West Virginia, there is still more than 1.5 million acres of public land open to hunting. Hunters have a variety of locations to hunt in West Virginia, including wildlife management areas, state forests and national forests.

"If you plan to hunt new territory, spend some time studying maps and satellite imagery to ensure familiarity with the property boundaries of the area," said Holly Morris, DNR wildlife biologist. "Being unaware of property boundaries is



Jerry Broce brought in a great red fox. *Photo courtesy of Tyler Outdoor Supply in Middlebourne*.



no excuse for trespassing."

The DNR reminds hunters to always obtain written landowner permission before entering private property. Taking the time to get written permission also gives hunters a chance to build relationships with landowners.

"You can discuss hunting experiences from last year, how you could help out with land management or simply express your thanks for the opportunity to hunt on their property," Morris said. "Keep in mind that landowners may use purple paint, in addition to signs and fences, to post their lands."

Whether hunting on public or private land, hunting ethics should be kept in mind. Take the time to review hunting regulations now, focus on the counties or areas you'll be hunting and make sure you uncontinue to the next page



Blake Hunt used a bow for a fine 10 point buck. *Photo courtesy of Uncle Tom's Loans in Oceanna*.



Dec/Jan 2017/18 ~ Page 7



derstand them. Be respectful of other hunters while in the field. Don't hunt areas where someone else is already hunting and try to have a backup plan so you don't crowd fellow hunters. Dumping carcasses and hides on public land is illegal.

"Treat all land, whether public



Frank Cayton went to Ritchie Co. for a nice buck.

or private, as if it were your own," Morris said. "How we act in the



Elizabeth Bright, from Newville, shot a Braxton Co. buck.



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field and treat others reflects on all of us as hunters."

Hunters who need help finding a place to hunt can contact any DNR district office, the Elkins Operation Center or go to the DNR's website, www.wvdnr.gov, for information about wildlife management areas, state forests and national forests open for public hunting. The 2017-2018 Hunting and Trapping Regulations brochure can be found on the DNR's website, all DNR District offices and at hunting license dealers.

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David Boone used a bow for this unique in velvet buck. *Photo courtesy of Uncle Tom's in Oceanna*.



Anthony Tingler bagged an 8 point. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.



Harry Nestor went to Wyoming Co. for a nice bow buck.



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WV Archery In The Schools

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — West Virginia students will have the opportunity to compete in a virtual archery tournament in early January 2018. The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Section has announced that the Archery in the Schools State Qualifying Virtual Tournament will open Jan. 2, 2018.

The Virtual Tournament will be available at all West Virginia schools that currently participate in the Archery in the Schools Program and have a certified basic archery instructor. A virtual tournament can be held at any participating school, or in conjunction with other schools, between Jan. 2 and Feb. 28, 2018. For a complete list of Virtual Tournament rules, please visit www.wvdnr.gov/archery.

Student archers may enter as individuals or as part of a school team. There is no limit on the number of participants in the Qualifying Virtual Tournament. The top 12 shooters, of which at least four must be

> continue to the next page Dec/Jan 2017/18 ~ Page 12



Matt Deisenger had success with a quality Lewis Co. buck.



of the opposite sex, will be used to determine winners of the Virtual Tournament and qualify for the State Tournament. Those qualifying for the State Tournament will be the top six teams in each division, and the top 15 male/female individual students in each division who are not already on a qualifying team.

"The Archery in the Schools Program has grown tremendously in the past 14 years and exceeded all expectations," said program coordi-

Advertise In The *W. Va. Sportsman* Details On Page 3 • LOW RATES nator Kayla Donathan of the DNR Wildlife Resource Section. "The State Qualifying Virtual Tournament provides more students with an opportunity to compete at a state level." Scores will be finalized and posted by March 2, 2018. The State Tournament will be held Saturday, March 24, 2018, at the Summersville Arena and Conference Center in Summersville.



Logan Jarrett harvested a great 10 point buck in Jackson County.



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Improving Wildlife Habitat

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, in partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, West Virginia Division of Forestry, National Wild Turkey Federation and others, is seeking private landowners interested in improving wildlife habitat on their land.

The partnership seeks to address shrinking populations of priority wildlife species by implementing conservation practices that improve natural resources on private land. Target species include cerulean warbler, golden-winged warbler, and multiple insect pollinators that have been identified as priority species in West Virginia's State Wildlife Action Plan (available online at www.wvdnr.gov/Wildlife/ Action_Plan.shtm). These species inhabit a variety of habitats, from meadows to shrubby thickets and groves of young saplings to mature forests, which are also preferred by species like ruffed grouse, whippoor-will, white-tailed deer and wild turkey.

"More than 80 percent of land in West Virginia is privately owned and many wildlife species occur



Kenny Taylor used his bow for an 8 point in Braxton County.



primarily on private land. So, public-private partnerships are critical for the long-term persistence of

these populations," said Paul Johansen, chief of the DNR Wildlife continue to the next page





Resources Section. "Private landowners benefit from the technical and financial assistance to improve their land, which ultimately benefits many of the state's priority species. It's a 'win-win' for everyone."

Professional biologists, foresters, and conservation planners are available to develop individualized conservation plans based on each landowner's objectives and the identified needs of the land. Every conservation plan is unique but may include removing problematic plants, establishing desirable plants, thinning trees from overstocked forests, adjusting the type and timing of current management practices and creating natural structures such as brush piles where wildlife can nest, forage and take shelter.

Mature Forest

Cerulean warblers prefer mature deciduous forests with an abundance of large tall trees and small openings in the canopy that are

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filled with vigorous new plant growth. Most forests in West Virginia have large tall trees, but they often form a uniform and closed canopy. Thinning some undesirable trees will increase growing space for trees that wildlife prefers and also encourage development of multiple canopy layers able to support a greater abundance and diversity of wildlife.

Landowners interested in managing mature forest habitat may also notice more hooded warblers, ruffed grouse and wild turkey. For more information about mature forests or for help getting started, contact Steven Wilson, WVDNR/NRCS Partner Avian Biologist, at 304-618-6124 or steven.wilson2@wv. usda.gov, or Kyle Aldinger, NWTF Forest Enhancement Partnership Coordinator, at 304-284-7595 or kaldinger@nwtf.net.

Young Forest

Golden-winged warblers prefer continue to the next page

Sat. Feb 3, 2018 Many Exhibitors Musky Tackle

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Cole Owens, from Waverly, used a crossbow for a good 8 point buck.

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shrubby thickets and young forests near large patches of mature deciduous forest at higher elevations. The right combination of these characteristics is quite rare in West Virginia. Fortunately, some pieces of the preferred habitat often are already in place. So, it's a matter of using management practices such as harvesting timber or controlling problematic plants.

Landowners interesting in managing young forest habitat may also notice more American woodcock, Eastern cottontail and whippoor-will. For more information about young forests or for help getting started, contact Katie Loucks, WVDNR/NRCS Partner Avian Biologist, at 304-364-5103 extension 104 or catherine.loucks@wv.usda. gov.

Pollinators

Monarch butterflies and other

pollinators are an integral part of our environment and are vital for our agricultural systems statewide. These insects can benefit from management just like other wildlife species. Pollinators and their habitats are incredibly diverse, so a variety of existing management practices can be tailored for their benefit.

For landowners interested specifically in pollinators, a conservation plan may include management practices such as removing problematic plants, enhancing nectar resources for bees and butterflies by planting species such as common milkweed, and providing nesting structures for bees. For more information about pollinators and for help getting started, contact Sarah Owen, WVDNR/NRCS Partner Pollinator Specialist, at 304-368-6909 or sarah.owen@wv.usda.gov.



Nov/Dec 2017 ~ Page 17

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Tygart Lake Improvements

GRAFTON, W.Va. — A major upgrade to the boating facilities at Tygart Lake State Park will begin this fall. Construction is tentatively scheduled to begin Monday, Oct. 9, and is expected to be completed by early summer 2018. Visitors should be aware that the entire marina and boat ramp will be closed to traffic during this time.

The project will enlarge and combine two smaller parking lots, to create 110 new parking spaces for vehicles with boat trailers. Plans also include widening both existing boat ramps, from single lanes to two lanes. Both ramps will be extended, with one reaching more than 100 additional feet to near the seasonal low water mark. Courtesy docks and ADA ramps also will be constructed.

"When completed, these improve-

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www.wvasportsman.net



Dallas Hines had success with a nice 9 point buck. *Photo courtesy of Trappers Den in Cowen*.

Dec/Jan 2017/18 ~ Page 18



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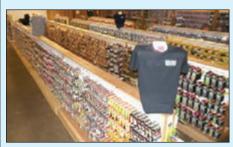
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A great bow buck was brought in. Photo courtesy of Hardcore Hunters in Grafton.



Josh Walls, from Gilbert, used a bow for a nice buck.



Sawyer Redman caught a nice Jackson Co. largemouth bass.



Jason Lester used an arrow for a big rack Wyoming Co. buck.



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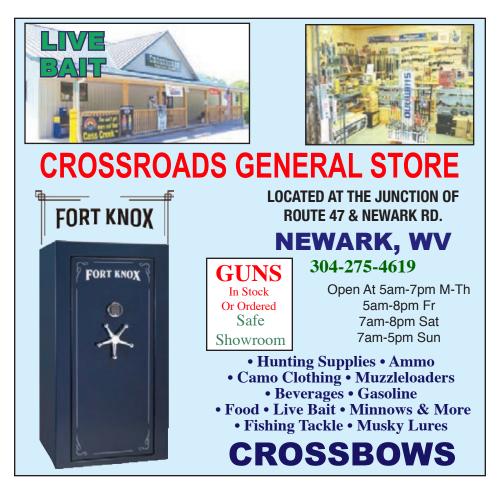


Sergeant G.A. Sinclair got his "buck of a lifetime" a 17 pointer.

Buck Of A Lifetime

I had hardly seen any deer the first 4 days of the buck firearms season in West Virginia. I was having a very discouraging week of hunting, so I decided to change things up and go to a different location - thank God I did!!

The day started off like any other day of hunting for me, I got in the stand before daylight and it was a cold 25 degrees. I sat there waiting for daylight and the action to begin. I had heard about a mon-



ster buck that was in the area, but I thought to myself that I would probably never ever get to see it for myself. Well, shortly after 7:00 am, the action started. A group of three does came out of a little patch of woods into an opening I was watching. The does grazed around for a about 10 minutes and I decided that I would take one of them to put some meat in the freezer. I did just that - I took down one of the does and then climbed down out of the stand to go field dress it.

As I was getting over to the where continue to the next page

Hillbilly Haven Log Cabin Rentals



the doe went down, I heard something over the hill behind me so I looked down and could see "movement" of something coming through the brush. A good sized buck broke through the brush and I though WOW! Maybe I can get a shot at it - but just one problem... I left my rifle over by the tree stand - approximately 25 yards away.

So I hurried back to get my rifle and get back to where the buck came through the brush. When I got back to the location, the buck had taken off and then I heard a gunshot on the opposite hill from me - I thought, well at least someone got him!

I went back to field dressing the doe I had downed. Just as I was getting my knife out to start, I heard something below me again in the brush. I looked down the hill again and about 50 yards down, another buck came through the brush into a small opening. This was my 17 pointer!

Although at the time I did not

know it was the MONSTER BUCK. It stopped in the path, I took aim with my Browning 270 and shot. The monster buck took off running then stopped approximately 25 yards from where I first shot at it.

"Wow, I knew I hit the buck, but why did he not go down?" The buck stood there for a few seconds, then looked up at me as if to say "What was that?" I took aim again and this time, the Monster Buck went down.

Well, I gathered my composure and walked down over the very steep bank to where the monster buck went down. As I got closer to it, all I could see was HORNS!

When I finally got to it, I realized that this must be the monster buck everyone talked about. Now I was floating on Cloud 9!! I never ever dreamed I would see the monster buck, let alone be the one that killed it!

The only thing I can think of is my dad, who passed away 16

years ago, was up in heaven smiling down on me that day - Friday, November 24, 2017 at 8:00 a.m. I am still floating on Cloud 9 just as I believe my dad is now too!

Story by Sergeant G.A. Sinclair

www.wvasportsman.net



Troy Carter used a bow to get this huge 10 point buck. *Photo courtesy of Unccle Tom's Loans in Oceanna.*

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Deer Firearm Fact Sheet

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The West Virginia buck firearms season began Monday, Nov 20 and rnn through Dec. 2. Here are a few facts about the season:

Buck firearm season is open in all counties except Logan, Mingo, McDowell and Wyoming.

Sunday hunting will be legal in all 55 counties on private land only for those with written permission. The only Sunday that falls within the two-week buck gun season is Nov. 26.

Purple paint may be used to post private land.

All deer harvested by hunters in Hampshire, Mason and Upshur counties on Nov. 20 and 21 are required to be brought to a designated Biological Game Examina-



tion Station. For station locations, consult page 12 of the 2017-2018 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary.

Approximately 330,000 deer hunters will be in West Virginia's woods this season.

Hunters should review the 2017-2018 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary for detailed in-



Garrett Weese got a 9 point buck. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.

Dec/Jan 2017/18 ~ Page 24

structions concerning bag limits and season dates. The regulations are available at license agents, continue to the next page



Kevin Friend shot a nice 9 point in Braxton County.

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All hunters must have an official DNR ID number to check game. The ID number can be found on annual hunting licenses. They also can be obtained by calling 304-558-2758 or logging on to wvhunt.com and providing the requested information. Game may be checked by telephone at 1-844-WVCHECK, online at wvhunt.com or at any hunting license agent. All field tagging, transporting and possession requirements still apply.

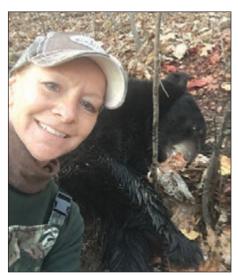


Mike Walker, from Jude, got a 10 point in Gilmer County.



Hunters may substitute a bow or a crossbow during the buck firearms season.

The bag limit during the twoweek buck firearms season is two (one on the base license and one on an RG [resident] or RRG [nonresident] stamp). A hunter may take no more than three antlered deer per



Nina Brumfield, from Logan, got a 375 pound plus black bear.

calendar year in all archery, crossbow and firearms seasons combined.

A hunter may harvest two deer per day, but only one antlered deer may be harvested per day. The first deer does not have to be electronically registered before harvesting the second deer in the same day. However, all deer legally harvested must be electronically registered and legally tagged before hunting during a subsequent day.

The last day to purchase an additional buck deer gun tag (Class RG/RRG Stamp) is Sunday, Nov. continue to the next page



Ty Carter used his bow for a great 13 point Jackson County buck.



19. Class RG and Class RRG additional buck stamps can only be used to take an additional antlered deer during buck firearms season. Unused Class RG and Class RRG stamps may not be used in antlerless or muzzleloader seasons.

Fifty-one counties are open to concurrent antlerless deer season hunting during the traditional buck firearms season. Class N (resident) or Class NN (non-resident) stamps to hunt during the antlerless deer season can be purchased at any time. Antlerless deer firearms season opens Nov. 20 on private land and specified public lands. Hunters should consult the 2017-2018 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary for specific antlerless deer season regulations in each county and wildlife management area.

A bear firearms season without



Danny Frazier caught a late 5 pound, 2 oz. smallmouth bass. *Photo courtesy of PC Bait in Hinton*.





dogs will run concurrent with the buck firearms season in 35 counties, eight of which are by permit only. Consult the 2017-2018 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary for specific counties.

According to Southwick Associates, hunting contributes \$500 million each year to the state's economy. Deer hunters spend an estimated \$230 million in West Virginia, much of it in the rural areas of the state that depend upon the deer seasons for a large portion continue to the next page



Austin Nichlson went to Doddridge Co, for a nice 9 point buck.



of their annual income. Hunting is estimated to be responsible for 5,400 jobs and \$35 million in sales taxes on goods and services spent in West Virginia.

In 2016, the traditional bucks-only firearm season harvest of antlered bucks was 46,071, a decrease of 24 percent from the 2015 harvest. This is 15 percent less than the five-year average.

WVDNR predicts the buck harvest will be close to than it was in 2016. Increased oak mast, especially white oak, will have deer spread out over the landscape and less visible in fields and less susceptible to bait. Several counties were positive for Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD), which may have a localized impact on the population.

Hunters are required to wear at least 400 square inches of blaze orange (about the size of a vest) as an outer garment for visibility and safety. Blaze orange camouflage patterns are legal as long as 400 square inches of blaze orange are displayed on the garment. A blaze orange hat is not required, but the hunter must have blaze orange visible from both the front and the back.

Hunting licenses may be pur-



Richard Eddy used a crossbow to get a nice 8 point in Upshur Co.



chased online at any time and printed out on a home computer printer. Go online to www.wvhunt.com, fill



Curtis Ray Bays, from Gauley River, got a couple of big rainbows.

out the application and purchase it over a secure server with a credit card.



Ron Baker brought in a nice bobcat.



EXPERIENCE LEWIS COUNTY



Come visit the haunted Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum. Featured on many paranormal shows over the years, the facility is currently offering civil war, historical, paranormal, and farm tours. Many other activities and events include ghost hunts and a haunted house in October.

Weston, West Virginia was once the hand blown glass capital of the world. Now it has two charming studios where you can watch the art of blowing glass. Appalachian Glass and WV American Art Glass masterfully blend traditional glass-making methods with the best of modern techniques. Then learn more about the deep history of West Virginia glass by stopping by. The West Virginia Museum of American Glass has a collection of more than 17,000 pieces.

At the Mountaineer Military Museum, you will experience some of the United States Military's unique moments while seeing the military of our country and the nation comes alive through a soldier's eyes.

Kick back and relax at Lambert's Winery, situated on a beautiful hillside in its own hand cut stone building where you can take a tour of the facility and enjoy a tasting while visiting the gift shop.

You may also visit the childhood home of Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson at WVU's Jackson Mills Farmstead. Here you will see an 1840's farmstead with a working gristmill, blacksmith's shop, buildings, cabins and more.

Outdoor enthusiasts can visit Stonewall Jackson Lake State Park or Stonecoal Lake for boating, fishing, hiking, hunting and more. Enjoy a round of golf while spending a relaxing weekend at the four diamond awarded Stonewall Resort on the shore of Stonewall Jackson Lake.

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2017 Buck Season

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Preliminary data collected from the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources' electronic game checking system indicate deer hunters in West Virginia harvested 44,455 bucks during the two-week buck firearms season, which ran from Nov. 20 through Dec. 2.

This year's harvest is close to the 46,071 bucks collected in 2016.



Nikki Currence bagged a huge black bear. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.*



The buck harvest increased in the Eastern Panhandle (DNR District 2) and in southeastern West Virginia (DNR District 4). It decreased slightly in the other four districts. The top 10 counties for buck harvest were: Preston (1,959), Randolph (1,647), Greenbrier (1,631), Hampshire (1,394), Ritchie (1,347), Monroe (1,302), Braxton (1,243), Lewis (1,216), Hardy (1,201) and Grant (1,198).

"Good weather across much of the state for the entire season allowed hunters to enjoy a productive seacontinue to the next page



Dec/Jan 2017/18 ~ Page 30

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on," said Wildlife Resources Section Chief Paul Johansen. "I am pleased that a lot of hunters were able to get out and enjoy West Virginia's incredible natural resources."

There are still several days of deer hunting left in 2017, including the remainder of the muzzleloader season, which runs through Saturday, Dec. 9. The traditional antlerless deer season in selected counties on both public and private land opens Thursday, Dec. 14, and runs through Saturday, Dec. 16.

The Youth, Class Q/QQ and Class XS deer season for antlerless deer will be open Dec. 26 and 27 in any

county with a firearms deer season. This will be followed by the reopening of Class N/NN antlerless deer season Dec. 28-31 in specified counties or portions of counties. For county and area listings, see the 2017–2018 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary or visit the DNR website at www.wvdnr. gov.

Your Big Game

Pictures

Details On Page 22



Jay Session shot a big 10 point. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.

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Rocky Romanello harvested a fine buck. Photo courtesy of PC Bait in Hinton.



Diane & Jake Rice brought in a Tyler County 8 point buck



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Chri

Π





Mike Arison landed a huge bass in Jackson Co. and released it ..



Noah Miller harvested a great buck. Photo courtesy of Tyler Outdiir Supply in Middlebourne.

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— The perfect gift is one that keeps on giving, and West Virginia State Parks is including something extra this holiday season on gift card purchases of \$100 or more.

WV State Park

Through Dec. 18, the state parks system is offering "Something Extra" coupons for every \$100 gift card purchased. This bonus includes eight coupons that can be used at select state parks and forests in 2018. Gift cards may be purchased online at www.wvstateparks.com or by calling 304-558-2764. There is no shipping or handling fee. Gift cards and "Something Extra" coupons are mailed together through the U.S. Postal Service.

"Our 'Somethings Extra' coupons are great value and encourage visitors to get out and discover the fun and affordable activities our state parks and forests offer," said Carol Stewart, who administers the gift card program. "State parks are popular vacation spots, so a gift card with something extra makes continue to the next page



Vicki Glasscock harvested a nice buck. *Photo courtesy of Tyler Outdoor Supply in Middlebourne*.



a great holiday present for friends and family."

While West Virginia State Park gift cards may be used on lodging and cabin rentals, dining, gift shops and other activities at any time at all parks and forests, "Something Extra" coupons have expiration dates.

About "Somethings Extra"

The "Something Extra" coupons include a variety of goods and services offered at state parks and forests.

Free admission to the Blennerhassett Museum of Regional History.



Redeemable anytime in 2018.

One two-hour sledding session at the Blackwater Falls State Park Sled Run, the longest east of the Mississippi. Redeemable January through March 2018, weather permitting, when sled run is open.

Best Tee in West Virginia. Waiver of the 18-hole green fee at Cacapon, Pipestem, Twin Falls and Canaan Valley state park golf courses with rental of motorized cart. Redeemable at Cacapon, Pipestem and Twin Falls Sundays through Thursdays



Hailey Parsons, from Mineralwells, bagged her 1st black bear.

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continue to the next page



Tanner Starkey used a crossbow for a Tyler Co. 8 point buck

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Tram Ride. Free tram ride at Hawks Nest or Pipestem Resort state parks during open hours in 2018.

Campfire. Receive a free bundle of firewood in 2018 when you pay for a campsite rental of two nights. Redeemable Sunday through Thursday at campgrounds at various parks.

Surprise Souvenir. Receive a mystery gift when a Somethings Extra card is completed and mailed in.

Purchase state park gift cards at www.wvstateparks.com by clicking Gift Cards at the SOUTH



Fall Turkey Harvest

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Fall turkey hunters harvested 948 birds during the 2017 season, according to figures released by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources. The fall harvest is down 54 percent compared to the 2016 season, but only 23 percent below the five-year average.



Tim Ingram trapped a 71 pound beaver.



"As predicted in the 2017 Mast Survey and Hunter Outlook, we expected this fall's harvest to be down from a year ago," said Mike Peters, DNR Game Bird Project Leader. "In 2016, the turkey popucontinue to the next page



Hunter Lanham, from Milton, harvested an 8 point buck.





ulation was bolstered by the emergence of the 17-year cicada, which young turkeys eat. Last season also was the first year all 55 counties had at least a one-week season. Both factors resulted in an aboveaverage fall harvest in 2016."

The 2017 season is more on par with a typical season, Peters said. Brood production was down from last year, and mast conditions are good, meaning birds are more dispersed.

Leading the state in harvested birds is Greenbrier County with 64 birds, followed by Preston (55), Monroe (51), Randolph (38), and Nicholas County (36). The top five counties had a four-week season, except Preston County, which had a two-week season.

District 4 harvested 212 birds, followed by District 1 at 200, District 3 at 173, District 6 at 147, District 2 at 134 and District 5 at 82.

The 14 counties in West Virgin-



Rylee Boggess, from Parkersbug, brought in a nice 8 point buck.



ia's central mountains that have a four-week season accounted for 39 percent of the state's fall turkey harvest.



Issiah Border, from Sandyville, bagged a nice 10 pint buck.





Carter Clegg bagged his first buck.



Erin Kelly went to Wood Co. for a nice buck.



Cole Owens, from Waverly, used a crossbow for a nice 8 point buck.



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A massive 14 point buck was taken with a bow in Mingo County.

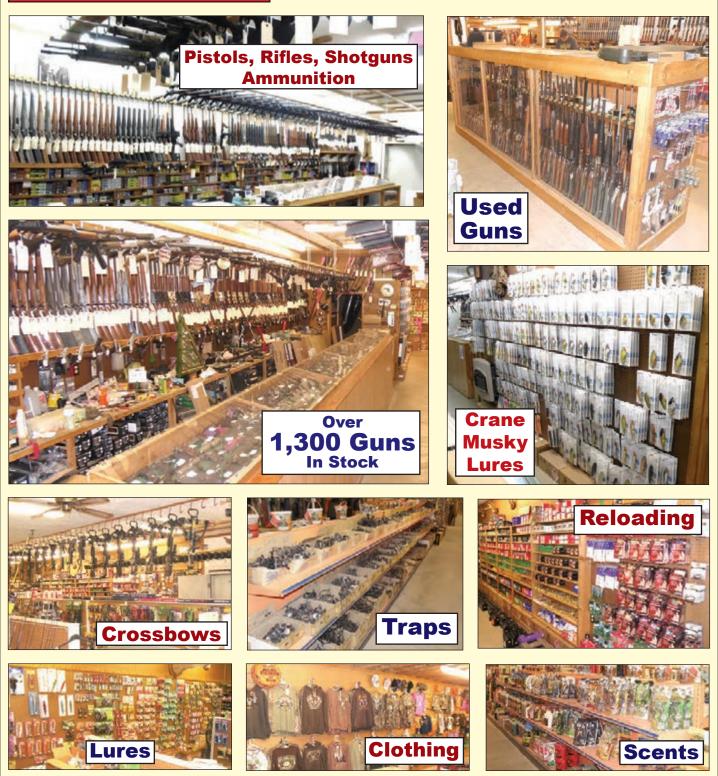


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