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Issue 285

June/July 2020



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BASS**

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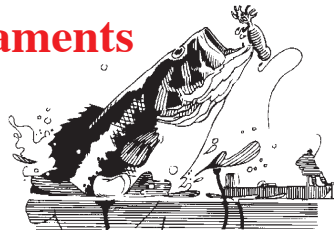
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Cover Photo

The 1st Annual TOP GUN bass tournament - one man fishing alone - was won by noted angler Tony Crumbliss from Bridgeport. There was a 3 fish limit and Tony brought in 12 pounds, 6 oz. of Stonewall Jackson fish. He had the big bass of 5 pounds 6 oz.

Even though the Covid virus is making us all nervous, fishing and being outdoors is very popular in WV. I think the Gov has done a decent job in handling our state.

Spring Turkey Results

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — According to preliminary data, West Virginia hunters harvested 11,314 birds during the spring turkey season, a slight increase over the 2019 harvest of 11,215. The 2020 spring turkey harvest is close to the five-year average of 11,344 and 9 percent above the 10-year average.

“We had a good harvest this year thanks to a great youth turkey season,” said Mike Peters, wild turkey biologist for the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources. “The youth turkey season expanded to two days this year and it appears our young hunters took advantage



Makayla Horrocks brought in a nice spring turkey.

of the additional opportunity.”

Youth hunters harvested 643 gobblers during the two days — 368 on Saturday and 275 on Sunday — representing a 37 percent increase over last year’s youth harvest. Those numbers are included in the table below with county totals.

Districts 4 and 5 reported slight harvest increases over last year’s totals. The remaining districts harvested slightly fewer birds than last

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year. District 1 harvested the most birds (2,749), followed by District 6 (2,284), District 5 (2,131), District 4 (1,617), District 3 (1,521) and District 2 (1,012).

The top five counties with the highest turkey harvest were Mason (457), Preston (434), Jackson (402), Wood (344) and Harrison (339) counties.

Bass Tournaments

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Mark Goudy - Bass Sportsman



David Bunnell did a great job on his turkey pose..

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Wear Your Lifejacket For Safety

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.VA. — As the summer boating season approaches, the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources is reminding members of the public to wear life jackets while boating or swimming in lakes, rivers and streams.

Most water-related deaths, injuries and incidents in West Virginia happen because someone was not wearing a life jacket or personal flotation device. Throughout the Memorial Day weekend and summer months, the DNR will post reminders about safe boating and swimming on social media as part of a campaign called Operation Life Jacket.

"West Virginia has a variety of

creeks, rivers and lakes and we want folks to be able to enjoy going for a swim or taking their boat out for a day on the water," said Lt. Warren Goodson, state training coordinator for the DNR's Law Enforcement Section. "But you need to be safe and wear your life jacket."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there are an average of 3,536 non-boating related drowning deaths each year in the United States. An additional 332 people die each year from drowning in boating-related incidents. About one in five people who die from drowning are children 14 and younger.

Half of all boating deaths might

be prevented with the use of life jackets, according to the CDC. They also greatly reduce the risk of injury.

"Life jackets reduce the risk of injury and can save your life," Goodson said. "You may never get in a

continue to page 8



Josh Murray, from Wood Co. caught a 7 1/2 lb. largemouth bass.



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car wreck, but wearing a seatbelt is there to protect you in the event that something unfortunate happens. A life jacket does the same thing."

Swimming Safety

The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources offers these swimming safety tips for families: Teach kids water safety, first aid and CPR before swimming in a natural body of water. You can contact your local Red Cross for guidance. Never swim alone. Always have a partner. Never allow kids to swim unsupervised or be near water while unattended.

Make sure your life jacket is properly fitted.

Never dive or jump into an unknown area in a natural body of water. Swim in designated areas.

Avoid swift current, flood waters and low head dam areas.

Never consume alcohol or drugs and get into the water.

Take breaks from swimming to avoid fatigue.

Wear sunblock to avoid sunburn.

Remember "Reach, Throw and Row" if someone needs help in the water. Have reaching or throwing equipment available and know how to use them.

Call 911 for emergencies.

DNR Law Enforcement officers are available for assistance and to answer questions about water safety.

Boating Safety

State law requires anyone born after Dec. 31, 1986 to complete a National Association of State Boating Law Administrators approved boater education class before they can legally operate a motor boat or personal watercraft on any water in West Virginia.

The class covers topics such as U.S. Coast Guard navigational rules, safe motorboat operation and legal boating requirements in West Virginia. In-person classes are not available at this time, but the course can be completed online through a NASBLA and state-approved ven-




Kyle McKinniss went to Guntersville for a nice largemouth.



Brooklyn Godfrey, from Copen, reeled in a farm pond bass.

dor for a fee.

To learn more about boating safety go to the DNR website www.wvdnr.gov/lenforce/boating.



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Alex Murray got a rare bearded hen with an 8" beard.



Jason Zirkle landed a 5 lb., 11 oz. largemouth at Stonewall Jackson for big bass at an event there.

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Braeden Godfrey caught a big farm pond largemouth bass.



Betty Hagerman hooked a 22" rainbow in Ritchie County.



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Jason Brewer hooked a 42 pound blue catfish on the Kanawha River.



Jake Brookover landed a big rainbow trout at Conaway Lake.



Paige Bland reeled in a 5 pound rainbow trout in Ritchie County.

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Discounts At WV State Parks

CHARLESTON, W.VA. — To show his appreciation for the resiliency and support of West Virginians during the COVID-19 pandemic, Gov. Jim Justice announced today that West Virginia State Parks will soon offer a historic discount on lodging for all West Virginia residents.

The offer is called the WVSTRONG Discount. For stays between June 1 through August 31, all West Virginians will be eligible for a 30 percent discount on lodg-

ing at all state parks.

"At the end of the day, all West Virginians have been heroes throughout these unusual times" Gov. Justice said. "Because of the resiliency and strength you have shown, following the advice of our experts, our state has seen some of the lowest rates of COVID-19 cases in the country. You're saving lives and we can never thank you enough."

This discount is the first of its kind
continue to the next page




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in the history of West Virginia State Parks. The offer applies to lodge rooms, cabins, and campsite reservations for West Virginia residents staying between June 1 through August 31, 2020.

To claim the 30 percent discount on a new reservation, simply book online at wvstateparks.com and enter promo code WVSTRONG at checkout.

"We want to encourage all West Virginians to enjoy our beautiful state that we have," Gov. Justice said. "Go, West Virginia, and enjoy the parks that are near to your hearts. Or, if there's an area where you want to visit but you haven't been able to get to yet, go and experience a new adventure."

All West Virginians with existing reservations during this time will be proactively issued the discount as a credit on their reservation

within two weeks. Credits will be automatically applied, so guests with existing reservations do not need to call.

"With this promotion, we're hoping to introduce more West Virginia residents to the beauty and outdoor recreation you'll find here at our state parks," said Steve McDaniel, director of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources.



Jay & Ashlee Buckbee doubled on gobblers in Jackson County.

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Pete Headlee, from Waverly, caught a 75 lb. tarpon on a fly rod.

Covid 19

is a real problem in WV as it is around the country. The W. Va. Sportsman magazine wishes all of the readers to be safe and follow all guidelines.

Numerous tourist locations are around OUR state to be enjoyed during this crisis.

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Evan Lantz caught a big rainbow trout. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.

B.A.S.S. Legend

A short while ago, our sport lost one of its best. Longtime Bassmaster, Charlie Campbell passed away at age 87.

Widely known for his topwater skills, Charlie accomplished many things in his life. He was a star athlete in high school, and later coached a varsity basketball team to a Missouri state championship.

He won the B.A.S.S. Federation National Championship in 1974, and three years later began a long, productive career as a consultant/representative to Bass Pro Shops, where he helped design the first Tracker bass boats.

He was inducted into the Bass Fishing Hall of Fame in 2008.

Fishing with Charlie

Fortunately, I got to know Charlie early in my career — while he

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was still competing on the B.A.S.S. Tour.

In those days, things were different. Pros were paired together in the same boat and required to work out a game plan that, in theory, was mutually beneficial. Unfortunately, that format often created conflicts ... and tempers flared as a result.

That was never the case with Charlie, however. He was a true

continue to the next page



Mae Strickland landed a nice blue catfish at the Kanawah River.

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gentleman, on and off the water. If you drew Charlie, you knew you were in for a positive experience. And being new to a highly competitive game, drawing guys like him was a relief.

Whenever I drew out with a pro known for a specific skillset, I always made a point of quizzing them on their specialty. In Charlie's case, it was his abilities with topwater walking baits like the Zara Spook and Luhr-Jensen Woodwalker — two lures that featured his signature endorsement.

He was the best at it back then, and I learned a great deal from him. The long way around

Charlie took the technique of "walking the dog" to a whole new level. He could nearly circle the lure around emergent objects — like boulders, stumps and dock pilings. According to Charlie, the trick was to make a lengthy cast just to the side and past the target, then begin a "sidestepping" retrieve.

By keeping his rod tip down, he began with short, rhythmic pulls using only his wrist. The cadence consisted of one long pull with a slightly delayed second half pull, repeating this throughout the retrieve — one long pull, one short,



Travis Holt brought in a huge buck. Photo courtesy of Tyler Outdoor Supply in Middlebourne.



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Although it may sound a bit complicated, turning the reel handle comes quite naturally as you twitch the rod. The key is not to think too much about it. Charlie felt you

could almost do it better blindfolded. He claimed watching the lure could cause the cadence to become erratic. Instead, he suggested concentrating on the movements of the rod tip. As the gliding lure forms slack in the line, you'll feel it, and

continue to the next



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that's when you twitch again.

By continuing the sidestepping retrieve, the line will wrap around the backside of the object the lure is intended to circle. Once it reaches that object, you maintain the proper cadence so that the nose of the lure continues to make intermittent contact as it circles it. This minimizes the chances of snagging the object.



AJ Meeks hoked a nice trout *Photo courtesy of Tyler Outdoor Supply in Middlebourne.*

Added benefits

Charlie firmly believed this repeated “bumping-the-stump” contact greatly increases the odds of provoking a bass to strike.

Also, by focusing on the cadence, he believed it improved his odds of connecting with short-striking fish. He was convinced, by concentrating more on the rod rather than the lure, you have more time to determine if a striking fish has fully committed itself.

If a fish missed the lure, Charlie would simply pause for a moment, then resume the walking action. If that failed to coax another strike, he would try a second or third cast to the same location — oftentimes making those fish commit.

Now that you know his approach, give Charlie’s technique a try. It’s fun, and it can absolutely produce the bass of a lifetime.

When and if it does, think of Charlie Campbell — one of the greatest topwater anglers of all time, and a true gentleman of the sport.

**BASS IN WV
UPDATE**
**Tournaments in the
state will have the
boat limit cancelled.
Social distancing
will stay.**



Ed Means caught a smallmouth at Kanawha Falls..

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Box Turtle Project

ELKINS, W.Va. — The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources has launched a citizen science project to track the distribution of eastern box turtles across the state and is asking the public to report sightings of this important but declining reptile.

Reporting box turtle sightings can be done by using geographic coordinates on DNR's map at tinyurl.com/wvboxturtle. Submitting a photo of the turtle is encouraged. People can also use the Survey 123 mobile app to provide the same information and upload photos.

"Box turtles are declining range-wide and understanding their current distribution is critical to taking effective conservation action," said Kevin Oxenrider, amphibian and

reptile program leader for DNR. "So, we're interested in all observations, whether the turtle is dead or alive. This includes turtles encountered around your home, on the road and along hiking trails."

The decline in box turtle populations is linked to habitat fragmentation, emerging disease, road mortality and illegal collection. Popularity as pets and attractive

shell patterning make box turtles a target of poachers. Road mortality is a problem in the spring and fall when they're on the move.

"We ask that if you see a box turtle or any turtle on the road, make sure you are in a safe location and are not blocking traffic before you do anything to help," said Oxenrider. "If you do stop and help a turtle,

continue to the next page

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Patsy Mascara caught a 51" musky from the West Fork River.



Dana Dean, from Beckley, went to Logan Co. for a bow buck.



Maria Renzelli, from Phillippi, used a crossbow for an 8 point.



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gently lift the turtle on either side of the shell and move it to the side of the road in the direction the turtle was facing.”

Taking a box turtle with you to release in a different location, such as a farm or other property, is not only illegal but can be dangerous to other box turtles. Oxenrider said moving animals often spreads wildlife disease.

Information gained from this project will allow DNR to better manage box turtle populations and focus conservation and outreach efforts. Contact information of survey participants and locations of box turtles will not be shared publicly in order to protect people’s privacy and box turtles around the state.

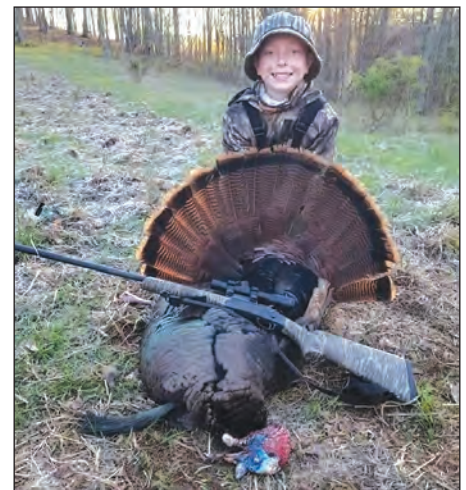
For more information about box

turtles and other wildlife, visit wvdnr.gov.



Andy Godwin, from Burnsville caught a 5 pound bass at Stonewall Jackson Lake in a tournament.

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Aiden Crocket, from Braxton Co, bagged a nice spring gobbler.

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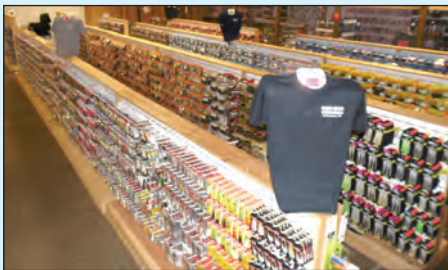
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Interesting Fish Facts

The word "halibut" means "holy flatfish" (hali=holy + butte=flatfish) because it was only eaten on holy days. Most fish reproduce by laying eggs, though some fish, such as great white sharks, give birth to live babies called pups.

Lungfish can live out of water for several years. It secretes a mucus cocoon and burrows itself under the unbaked earth. It takes in air with its lung through a built-in breathing tube that leads to the surface. A lungfish has both gills and a lung. Some fish, such as the great white shark, can raise their body temperature. This helps them hunt for prey in cold water. The oldest known age for a fish was an Australian lungfish. In 2003, it was still alive and well at 65 years old.

Fish use a variety of low-pitched sounds to convey messages to each other. They moan, grunt, croak, boom, hiss, whistle, creak, shriek, and wail. They rattle their bones and gnash their teeth. However, fish do not have vocal chords. They use other parts of their bodies to make noises, such as vibrating muscles against their swim bladder.

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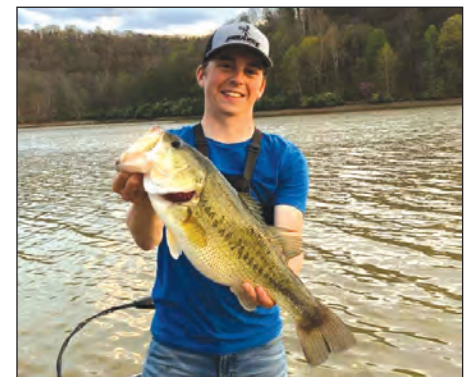


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millions of fish. They use their eyes and something called a lateral line to hold their places in the school. The lateral line is a row of pores running along the fish's sides from head to tail. Special hairs in the pores sense changes in water pressure from the movements of other fish or predators.

Interesting Starfish Fact

Starfish don't have a brain or blood
continue to the next page



Chase Sansom a 5 lb. 2 oz. largemouth bass this spring.



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Since a fish's jaw is not attached to its skull, many fishes can shoot their mouths forward like a spring to catch startled prey.

Electric eels and electric rays have enough electricity to kill a horse.

Sharks are the only fish that have eyelids.

Fish have sleep-like periods



Chris King landed a nice bass in muddy water this spring.

where they have lowered response to stimuli, slowed physical activity, and reduced metabolism but they do not share the same changes in brain waves as humans do when they sleep. Some fish, such as the herbivorous fish (grazers), often lack jaw teeth but have tooth-like grinding mills in their throats called pharyngeal teeth.

Most fish have taste buds all over their body. An estimated one third of male fish in British waters are changing sex due to pollution in human sewage.

Saltwater fish need to drink more water than freshwater fish. Since seawater is saltier than the liquids in a fish's body, water inside the fish is constantly flowing out. If they didn't drink to replace the lost water, saltwater fish would dry up like prunes. The oldest fishhook ever found dates back to about 42,000 years ago.

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Most fish have little salt in them. Sharks, however, have meat as salty as the ocean they live in.

continue to the next page



Young Eli Ward brought in a nice gobbler this spring.



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Most brands of lipstick contain fish scales.

Most fish can see in color and use colors to camouflage themselves or defend themselves and their territory. Most fish have the best possible eyesight for their habitat and can most certainly see you peering at them in a fish tank. Some fish can see polarized and ultraviolet light.

A fish does not add new scales as it grows, but the scales it has increase in size. In this way, growth rings are formed and the rings reveal the age of a fish.

Fish that have thin fins with a split tail indicate that they move very quickly or may need them to cover



Gary Luff, from Wheeling, caught a 6 lb., 2 oz. bass this spring.

great distances. On the other had, fish that live among rocks and reefs near the ocean floor have broad lateral fin and large tails.

A ship has a heavy keel in the lower part to keep it from capsizing. Fish, on the other hand, have the keel on top. If the paired fins stop functioning to keep the fish balanced, the fish turns over because its heaviest part tends to sink, which happens when it dies.

On average, flying fish can glide 160 feet (50m), but have been known to glide as far as 660 feet (200 m). And they can reach heights up to 19 feet (6m).

An inflated porcupine fish can reach a diameter of up to 35 inches (90 cm). It puffs up by swallowing water and then storing it in its stomach. The stomach increases in

size with more water. If the fish is taken out of water, it can inflate in a similar way by swallowing air.

A fish can drown in water. Like humans, fish need oxygen, so if there isn't enough oxygen in the
continue to page 25



Grant Harris, from Tyler Co., bagged an albino turkey.

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water, they will suffocate.

Although the fangtooth fish is only a few inches long, it has teeth about the size of a human's. Their teeth are so big that they can't close their mouths completely

The fish in the middle of a school control the school. The fish on the outside are guided by those in the middle. Only bony fish can swim in highly coordinated groups.

Most fish cannot swim backwards. Those that can are mainly members of one of the eel families. Fish would suffocate if they tried to chew because chewing would interfere with water passing over their gills.

The biggest fish in the world is the giant whale shark, which can grow to nearly 60 feet, or the length of two school buses. It weighs over 25 tons and eats mainly plankton. It has over 4,000 teeth, though they are only 3 mm long.

The most poisonous fish in the world is the stone fish. Its sting can cause shock, paralysis, and even death if not treated within a few hours.

The word "piranha" is from the Tupi (Brazil) pira nya and means "scissors." Found in freshwater rivers in South America, piranhas have razor-sharp teeth. They typically eat fish, insects, seeds, fruit, and even larger animals such as horses. While there are no proven

continue to the next page

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Nick Panhoundis tied for 2nd big bass with a 5 lb., 2 oz. bass.



Frankie Haight & JR Hoops caught a bunch of bass this spring.

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reports of piranhas killing a person, they do eat human carcasses.

The fastest fish is the sailfish. It can swim as fast as a car travels on the highway.

Seahorses are poor swimmers and can die of exhaustion in stormy waters. Seahorses are the only fish that swim upright. The slowest fish is a seahorse. It swims so slowly that a person can barely tell it is moving. The slowest is the Dwarf Seahorse, which takes about one hour to travel five feet. It even looks like it is simply standing up, not swimming.

Some fish do not have scales. Sharks, for example, have rough sandpaper skin instead of scales.

Fish have multiple Christian and pre-Christian overtones. For example, the Greek word for fish is Ichthys, which is an acronym for "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior"



Isaiah Crockett, from Braxton Co, shot a nice turkey this spring.

and was used to mark early Christian tombs and meeting places. Because of their association with fertility, fish have also been linked to Isis and Aphrodite.

In Japan, the fugu, or puffer fish, is a succulent but lethal delicacy. It contains tetrodotoxin, a deadly poison. However, it is so delicious that Japanese gourmets risk their lives to prepare it. To make this high-risk dish, chefs must have a certificate from a special school that teaches preparation of this toxic fish.

Hammerhead sharks can live in



Joey Stalnaker has a nice pose with his spring gobbler.

schools of more than 500 sharks. The strongest female swims in the middle. When she is ready to mate, she shakes her head from side to side to signal the other female sharks to move away so she is the center of attention. Some desert pupfish can live in hot springs that

continue to page 29

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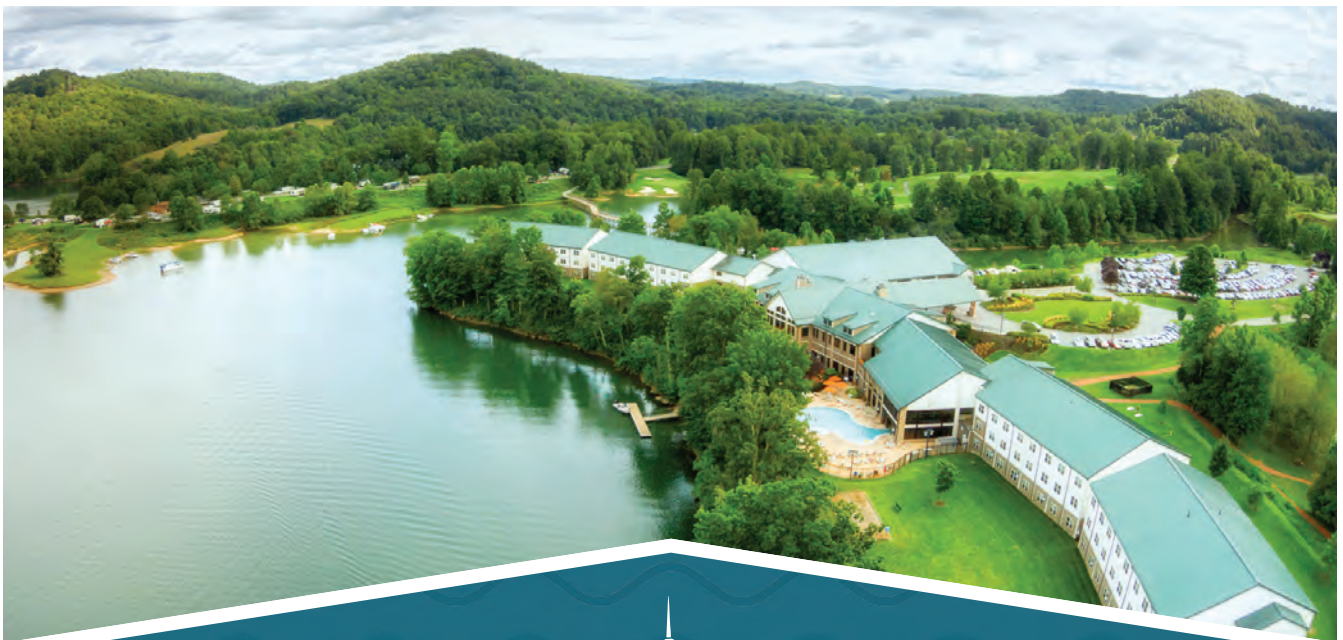
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reach temperatures greater than 113° F.

A male emperor angelfish lives together with up to five female mates. If the emperor angelfish dies, one of the females turns into a male fish and becomes the leader of the group.

Mudskippers are also able to jump 2 feet in the air. The mudskipper is a fish that spends most of its time out of water and can “walk” on its fins. It carries a portable water supply in its gill chambers when it



Jim Summers, from Wirt Co., landed a nice spring largemouth bass.

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Josh Pertz reeled in a 6 1/4 lb. rainbow trout. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.

leaves the water. It can also breathe through the pores of its wet skin.

There are approximately 32,000 different kinds of fish in the world today, which is more than all the other kinds of vertebrates combined. Scientists are discovering new species all the time. The batfish plays dead when danger is near. It floats motionless on its side when scared, making it look like a dead leaf floating on the surface of the water.

Anableps, four-eyed fish, can see above and below water at the same time.

Sometimes tornadoes pick up fish while traveling over water and carry them over land, where the fish rain down. These “fish showers” have been happening for thousands of years. Roman writer Pliny the Younger describes this phenomenon in the 1st century A.D.

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Shane Raynes, from St. Albans, hooked a 7 lb. bass in Jackson Co.

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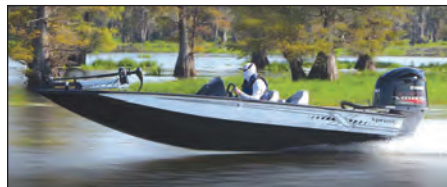
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Summer Bass Tips

Post-spawn bass fishing is widely considered a feast-or-famine season for many anglers. Gone are the days of expecting a bite on every obvious piece of cover; as the bass leave their more predictable shallow water haunts in search of deep structure, efficiency and continuous experimentation are indispensable.

Elite Series pro Terry Scroggins doesn't let the nomadic nature of early summer post-spawn bass throw him for a loop. Throughout his career, he has developed 6 easy tips that will help you stay on top of the bass when other anglers tend to struggle.

Avoid fishing in the past

Most of us are creatures of habit—we tend to go to bed at the same time each night, wake up at the same time each morning and in a bass angler's case, we're often tempted to fish the same areas that have previously yielded big bass and fond fishing memories. If you can put your fishing "history" on the backburner, however, Scroggins believes you'll be ahead of the game this season.

"This is an excellent time to catch big bass. They've been stressed

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out for the past several weeks and they want to fatten up. As they get schooled up and start feeding ag-

gressively, you can have some ridiculous days on the water."

continue to the next page



Jarod Harman caught a 5 pound bass at the Top Gun event.



JC Christopher came in 2nd at the Top Gun with 11 lbs., 10 oz.

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“Post-spawn bass fishing is definitely a tricky time of year,” Scroggins said. “Once the bass wrap up the spawning process, they want to move to deeper structure as quickly as possible. This leaves anglers in a tough situation—we have to figure out a way to intercept them throughout their migration route. The fish move daily, which makes it extremely important to adapt each and every day you’re on the water.”

In other words—don’t be stubborn to a specific spot or pattern. Even if you caught a lot of nice bass in an area yesterday, those fish can move hundreds of yards over-



Steve Panas, from Wheeling, caught a 5 1/2 lb. smallmouth bass.



Tony McCumbers hooked a real nice spring largemouth bass.

night and be gone today.

“A lot of folks want to fish the spots that worked last week or even the previous day, but fishing history doesn’t work this time of year,” Scroggins said. “If your best areas don’t produce, always look for the next hard structure closer to deep water such as shell beds, rock piles or stumps and start your search there.”

Don’t overlook steep banks

Many types of bass fishing struc-

ture and cover are most productive on a seasonal basis, but Scroggins has found steep banks to offer outstanding fishing opportunities throughout the entire year. In the early summer months as the majority of bass make their annual trek to deeper water, they use these banks for several different reasons.

Travel routes—“A steep bank, such as a bluff wall, is almost always indicative of a deep channel

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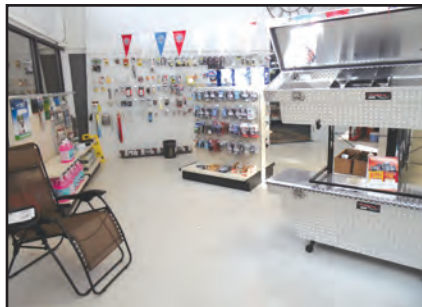
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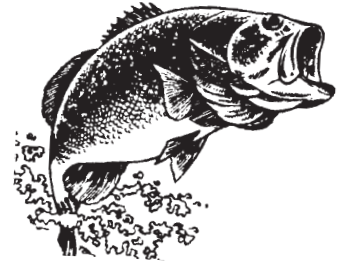
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swing,” Scroggins said. “Bass are going to use the path of least resistance when coming in and out of spawning pockets and these channels allow them to move quickly and efficiently. So if you can find a tall, vertical bank, you have a great chance of intercepting some hefty post-spawners.”

Forage—“When bass are done spawning, their energy levels are depleted,” Scroggins said. “They’ve had a one-track mind for the past several weeks and haven’t been feeding very much. As a result, post-spawners gorge themselves on shad and crawfish which are often found on steep banks. The shad also use the channels as migratory routes and the crawfish love the clay banks and small rocks often found in these areas.”

Lowlight conditions—“If you’ve ever been swimming in a lake this time of year, you’ve probably no-

ticed how the water temperature varies depending upon depth,” Scroggins said. “It may be a 90-degree surface temperature but your feet will be in 70-degree water. This makes lowlight conditions critical in these areas—the bass will move up in the water column and feed in the cool water, making them very easy to catch. As the day drags on and it gets warmer, they’ll slide off into deeper water to take advantage of the cooler temperatures.”

Keep your spinning gear nearby

Although finesse fishing has
continue to the next page



Rob Ciarapica hooked a 7 lb., 9 Oz. largemouth at Elk Fork

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an unfair reputation for catching smaller fish, always make sure you load your spinning gear before you fish for post-spawn bass. Big females often require a period of recovery following the rigors of the spawn, making small, subtle presentations very effective.

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Fluoro or braid? Scroggins prefers using 10-pound HI-SEAS Grant Slam Braid for his mainline and a 10-foot, 6-pound HI-SEAS 100% Fluorocarbon leader when finesse fishing. It allows for better casting distance and increased sensitivity.

"Before post-spawners start focusing on food, they can be fairly inactive for a short period," Scroggins said. "The loud thump of a big crankbait and the large profile of a jig may not always be what they're looking for, so don't be afraid of spinning gear because it catches some really big fish in the early summer. I caught a 9-pound,

12-ounce bass on Toledo Bend a few years ago using 10-pound braid and with a 6-pound leader."

Now, you probably won't catch a 9-pounder each time you break out your spinning gear, but these finesse presentations will generate bites when other tactics fail. In a season when bass are constantly on the move, a few extra bites are



Levi Lilly got his 1st buck in Mercer County.

all that's needed to start putting together the daily post-spawn puzzle. A solid dissection system

Time management is no more critical to your bass fishing success than it is right now. Getting out of rhythm and deviating from your game plan for just a few minutes can totally derail and otherwise perfect game plan.

First things first—"A lot of peo- continue to the next page



Matt Blouir shot a fine buck in Ritchie County.

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ple overlook the shad spawn this time of year,” Scroggins said. “You can absolutely load the boat in the first hour of daylight if you time it just right. Throw a white spinner-bait and keep a close eye on it as it comes back to the boat—if you see a bunch of shad following it and ticking the blades, you can rest assured there are bass in an area. It only lasts for the first few hours each day, so target rocks, grass and marina docks early in the morning and you’ll have a great chance of making something happen.”

Mid to late morning—“You’re also going to notice a lot of bream

beds in the early summer months,” Scroggins said. “These are outstanding places to catch your kicker fish. If you can’t smell them, look in the shallow bays for glowing white spots that look almost like sunken tires. Once you find ‘em, big bass in these areas are suckers for topwater frogs, swim jigs and

bream-colored squarebills.”
 Lunchtime—“After I’ve taken advantage of the shad spawn and nearby bream beds, I’ll start to concentrate my efforts from the secondary points out to the mouths of creeks,” Scroggins said. “This is largely a run-and-gun type of deal. I’m going to hit every secondary I can find and if I don’t have any luck, I’ll start spending more time at the mouths of creeks”

Afternoon—“When the sun gets
 continue to the next page



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high and the water really starts warming up, I'm going to hit the main channel and spend the rest of the day there," Scroggins said. "This is where you'll often find those mega-schools of bass. Focus on any irregularities on the channel ledges—these can be points, turns, doglegs, rocks or even logs. Anything that breaks up the monotony of a ledge will hold bass."

Many of us are drawn to the bank whenever we go bass fishing. The laydowns, visual bank transitions and docks are tough to bypass, but Scroggins makes a concerted effort to steer clear of the distraction. His reasoning makes a lot of sense.



Jay & Jacob Phillips, from Bancroft, doubled on spring gobblers.



Travis Hitchens reeled in a huge largemouth bass.



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Dustin Dennis hooked and released a North Bend Lake largemouth.

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