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Issue 294

August/September 2021



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BLUEGILL**

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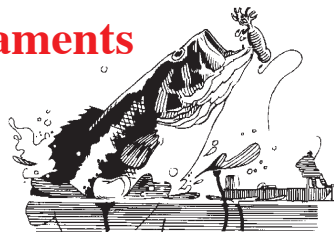
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Cover Photo

Cory Boothe, from Nicholas County, went to Stonewall Jackson for this big musky. It measured 52" and was released. This lake is known as one of the best musky lakes in the state for numbers caught.

Looks like hunting season is just around the corner. Due to the Covid, ammunition is sometimes hard to find. Don't wait until the last minute to find the ammunition you need for hunting.

37 Camping Facts

Over 42 million Americans, 14% of the U.S. population, go camping each year

The 1927 Girl Scouts manual featured the first official recipe for S'mores. Millennials go camping more than any other age group. They cite a love of outdoor activities, an appreciation of nature, a love of music festivals, and a love of sharing photos on social media as motivations for camping.

The Clayoquot Wilderness Resort in Vancouver Island, Canada, is the most expensive camping spot in the world. A single night costs \$3,900. There is not a universally held definition of camping. Instead, camp-

ing embodies the spirit of escaping everyday life and embracing the outdoors. Camping Demographics

In the United States, the average camper is a white male

In the United States, the majority of campers are Caucasian males with an average age of 35.

The Mountain Region of the United States (from Montana down to Arizona and New Mexico) is slightly more popular as a camping destination than other parts of the country.

In the United States, on average, campers went on 3.8 trips per year that each lasted an average of 2.7 nights. They drove 146 miles to their destinations and set up camp

continue to the next page



Austin Lyans used a kayak to catch this largemouth bass.



Storm Keeler hooked a 42" Elk River musky.



Wyatt Goodnight, from Elizabeth, caught a nice Ohio River hybrid.

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about 1/4 mile from their cars. Approximately 42% of campers in the United States choose to camp at state park campgrounds.

In 2015, two brothers were zipped in a camping tent when it somehow fell into the family pool. The two boys drowned before anyone could save them.

The world's smallest camper is called a "cramper." It is pedal powered and has 4 feet of living space. Campers spend an average \$128.26 on their first camping trip.

Around 68% of adult campers in the United States are married or living with a partner, which sug-

gests that camping is a family activity.

The most popular type of shelter among campers is a tent.

It always rains on tents. Rain-

storms will travel thousands of miles, against prevailing winds for the opportunity to rain on a tent.-

On average, RV users camp 3.7

continue to the next page



Eugene Daily landed a 24" wall-eye at the Willow Island Dam.



Daniel Pearl and Tony Crumbliss got a 5 fish limit recently at a river bass tournament and released them afterwards.

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nights, while tent users camp for 2.5 nights.

Traditional Bedouin tents are made out of black goat hair. The Bedouin term for tent is buryut hajar, which literally means "house of hair."

One of the most effective ways to reset a person's natural clock is to go camping.

Before tents were used for recreation, they were a basic survival necessity. The first evidence of tent construction can be traced as far back as 40,000 BC.

The most popular camping gear purchase is a flashlight. Because you can't tell a ghost story without a flashlight

One of the first recorded mentions of a tent is in the Bible. For example, in Genesis 4:20, Jabal is described as "the first to live in tents."

The U.S. Department of Defense is one of the world's largest users of tents.

Though the word "camping" in Thailand often refers to Burmese refugee camps, Thais in Northern Thailand usually camp for recreation.

Tents are not just a type of camp-

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ing shelter. They are also used as a form of protest and symbolize a reclamation of space and ideology. Dyatlov Pass Incident

Rescuers discovered that the tent had been cut open from the inside, and the campers had fled in socks, without shoes. The Dyatlov Pass Incident became one of the strangest camping mysteries in history

when nine student campers in Russia were inexplicably slaughtered. Some bodies were found fully clothed, some naked, some with
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Matt Montgomery caught an 8 pound trout below Burnsville Dam.

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terrible internal injuries, some with traces of radiation, and one camper with a missing tongue and eyes.

The top five most dangerous camp spots in the United States are the following: 1) Lake Mead National Recreation Area, 2) Death

Valley, 3) Glacier National Park, 4) Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, and 5) Great Smoky National Park.

The father of the modern outdoor movement is widely considered to be author, preacher, and sportsman William H. H. Murray. He published the watershed book on camping called *Adventures in the Wilderness*; or, *Camp Life in the Adirondacks*, which made camping accessible to the masses for the first time.

Germans love to camp. When they camp, they usually bring family, extended family, and a pack of UNO cards. Their favorite places to camp are in France or Italy.


The Dutch love to camp and are famous for their infamous caravan traffic jams on weekends and holidays. Like the Germans, they tend to overpack, and they consider licorice, cheese, and peanut butter essentials.

Married people are more likely to have sex while camping than at home.

Crazy Camping Facts

Make sure you take a tent that's big enough

While Mongolians camp out of necessity rather than recreation, they are proud of their nomad-



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ic lifestyle and set up their ger, or tent. Their tents have an altar, which features family photos and images of Buddha

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Ralph Wattes, from Harts, hooked a New River musky.



Tavia Loretis landed a huge smallmouth bass.



Rick Townsend caught a 5 lb. 3 oz. rainbow trout. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.*

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The top five most popular places to camp in the world are 1) Mount Cook National Park, New Zealand, 2) Devon, England, 3) Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, Scotland, 4) The Alps, France, and 5) Hossa National Park, Finland.

Between 120–140 people die at U.S. national parks annually. This is actually a small number when you consider that over 280 million people visit the parks each year; so, the odds of dying are roughly one in two million.

The most common causes of death while camping at national parks are 1) drowning, 2) car accident, 3) falling, 4) suicide, and 5) other. Sibley Tent Fact

Sibley is referred to often in the 1966 film *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*.

Confederate States Army Officer Henry Hopkins Sibley invented the first modern tent in 1855. He modeled his "bell tent" after Native American tents, using canvas instead of buffalo hides.

Getting killed by wildlife is one of rarest ways to die while camping at a national park. However, in 2010, one unfortunate person was killed by an angry mountain goat.

Men are more likely to die while camping than women. Men ac-

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count for nearly 75% of camping deaths at U.S. national parks.

In the United States, one of the most common causes of car acci-

dents in popular national parks and camping areas are foreign drivers who are not used to driving on the right side of the road.



Dominick Irizarry, from Parkersburg, caught and released another huge musky in late June.

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Summer Bluegill

Summer brings long days and ample opportunity to fish 7 days a week, and one of the most popular species in the upper Midwest is bluegill. They are not tough to find and catch in numbers, but the big ones seem to disappear. Where do they go, and how does one catch them?

Bluegills in Lakes

There are plenty of smaller bluegills in the shallows all season long, and the vast majority of pan fish anglers fish them there. The problem is quality and size is generally poor. The big fish have moved out, and here is how to find them. After the spawn in early June, the bull bluegills (fish over 8.5”) head to the first available break line looking for food and cover. Weed edges are the place to look from 6’ to 12’ on clear lakes and 3 to 6’ on the dark water lakes. The really stained tannic waters will not support weeds deeper than a few feet. Where the weeds stop is where the larger fish will be for about a month. A small fishing bobber and



Jim Hawkins, from New Martinsville, caught a 14 lb. 2 oz. hybrid striped bass in the Ohio River.

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1/32-ounce jig tipped with Berkley GULP Maggots will do the trick. The larger fish won't like to come up for the jig, so place the jig about 3.5' or more under the float. Use 4# to 6# Berkley Trilene fishing line or Fireline, a medium light rod, and a size 10 spinning reel.

Finding the bluegills is easy with a Humminbird Side Imaging sPros4-1Source's Keith Worrall with a big bluegill caught on Berkley Gulponar, just cruise the edges marking waypoints where you see groups of fish on the edges. Fre-

continue to the next page



Kameron McClain caught a nice Tyler County musky.



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quently the crappies will hang out with the larger bluegills, which usually is not something one would complain about. Once you have several schools marked, go back and methodically fish each school by spot-locking on them with Minn Kota or deploying a Talon shallow water anchor and begin looking for the nice ones.

A fly rod and small popper can really be fun if fly fishing is your preferred presentation. I would wait for late evening to fish them with a fly or popper, as with the low light the bluegills will rise to a presentation more readily.

As Summer progresses to middle July onward, a rarely fished pattern emerges that can offer some of the best fishing of the season. Search out mid-lake humps that come up to within a few feet of the surface, and stay off the top, that will sup-

port lots of smaller fish. Fish the deep edges around the hump vertical jigging with a 1/16 th ounce jig and the above-mentioned GULP. When you contact a school of tanker bluegills, hit the spot-lock and hold on them moving along slowly the direction the school seems to be moving. They will move along slowly, if the action slows a bit, move along the direction of the last couple captures. Weed humps are not better than rocks, the fishing depends on what the bluegills are eating, and both can provide the

insects they prefer. Walleyes, small mouth, rock bass, and other fish will be mixed in with your catch. The bluegills will be there all the way until Autumn.



Mike Starcher caught a 6 1/2 lb. rainbow trout at Shavers Fork.

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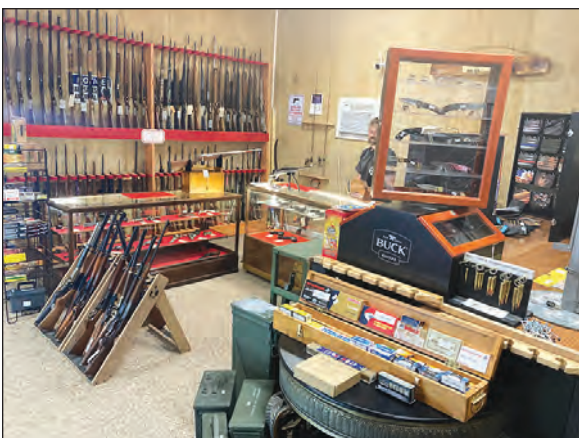
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New Laws For Reptiles And Amphibian Possession

New regulations making it unlawful to take or possess most native reptiles and amphibians for any reason are now in effect in West Virginia.

“Reptiles and amphibians are a valuable wildlife resource and unfortunately we’ve had several large poaching cases involving these animals,” said Kevin Oxenrider, amphibian and reptile program leader for the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources. “When it comes to the illegal wildlife trade, people don’t think about turtles, snakes and salamanders. But these animals call West Virginia home, so we want to make sure we’re doing everything we can to protect them so they can continue to serve their ecological function in the environment.”

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Salamanders

Streamside salamander

Jefferson salamander

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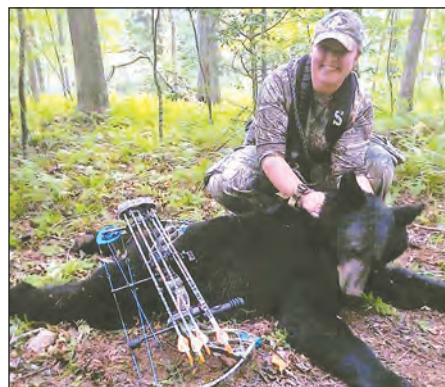
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Tyler Shaffer brought in a tailless rainbow trout.





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Midland painted turtle
Spotted turtle
Wood turtle
Northern map turtle
Ouachita map turtle

Eastern river cooter
Northern red-bellied cooter
Eastern musk turtle
Woodland (eastern) box turtle
Red-eared slider
EXCEPTIONS TO NEW REPTILE AND AMPHIBIAN REGULATION

While the new regulations make it unlawful to take or possess native reptiles and amphibians, there are exceptions for individuals who have written permission from the WVDNR Wildlife Resources Chief. Individuals may also legally take and possess bullfrogs, green frogs, snapping turtles and eastern spiny softshell turtles.

"We know that these turtles and frogs are commonly collected for consumption, so we wanted to make sure there was an exception that allowed folks to still take them and eat them," Oxenrider said.

Additionally, property owners, lessees or their representative may kill or relocate any snake within a

continue to page 18

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place of residence, dwelling, structure used for domestic or commercial purposes, and outbuildings, including sheds and structures, gardens and fields used for agricultural crops and livestock.

AUTHORIZATION TO POSSESS LAWFULLY OBTAINED REPTILES OR AMPHIBIANS

The new regulations also allow for individuals who came into possession

of a prohibited native reptile or amphibian before March 23, 2021 to obtain an authorization letter from the WVDNR to lawfully maintain possession of the animal for the rest of its life.

Authorization letters can be requested online or by mail.

Those who wish to request an authorization letter by mail need to complete and send the download-

able form by email to DNR-repor-taherp@wv.gov or mail to: Reptile and Amphibian Rule West Virginia Division of Natural Resources

Elkins Operations Center
738 Ward Road, P.O. Box 67
Elkins, WV 26241

All authorization requests must be submitted no later than March 31, 2022.

Those with questions about the new regulations should contact their local WVDNR district office or call 304-558-6200. To download an updated copy of West Virginia's reptile and amphibian regulations, visit WVdnr.gov.

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Young Cooper Allen harvested a buck in gun season.



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Identify WV Wildlife

Whether you're a wildlife enthusiast or an angler or hunter, knowing how to spot animals in the wild is a valuable skill and enjoyable activity. With more than 80 species of amphibians and reptiles, 70 species of mammals, 178 species of fish and nearly 300 species of birds, West Virginia is a great place to hone your wildlife identification skills. Here's a few tips to help you get started.

USE YOUR SENSES

To properly identify wildlife, you need to know what to look and listen for, so keep your eyes and ears open. Animals provide plenty of clues and signs to help you identify them. As you look and listen in your backyard, in the woods or at a state park or forest, pay attention to an animal's:

Shape

Size

Color

Distinguishing features

Tracks

Scat

Calls, songs and other noises

Take notes of what you see to help

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you remember everything, and pay special attention to any behavior patterns you notice.

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR SURROUNDINGS

Edge zones, where one habitat transitions into another, are great places to see wildlife. Fields, meadows, riverbanks and shorelines are also good places to see wildlife in action. As you visit these locations,

continue to page 23



Nicholas Wolfe caught a big large-mouth in Jackson County.



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pay attention to water availability, food sources, shelter and shade and other topographic features. Many animals are only found within certain habitats and ranges, so paying attention to the location of an animal can help you identify its species.

CONSULT A FIELD GUIDE OR ASK AN EXPERT

Thanks to field guides and smartphone apps, identifying animals in the wild has never been easier. Many apps can help you identify an animal by photo, but we recommend starting out with a tried-and-true field guide. Not only do field guides help you hone your wildlife identifying skills, they don't need cellphone service to work. You can purchase wildlife field guides for North America and West Virginia online. Many state park gift

shops also carry state-specific field guides.

And when in doubt, ask an expert. Not only can WVDNR wildlife biologists and state park naturalists help you identify an animal, they can teach you all about that animal and its habitat.



Aiden Crockett landed a nice large-mouth on the Mississippi River.



Youth WV Bass Federation members Aiden -9- & Isaiah -13- Crockett came in 3rd at the TBF Junior World championship on the Mississippi River in Iowa.

Their father, Johnny, was the captain of the boat during the tournament. They caught 8 pounds, 7 ounces of bass on the final day to gain their 3rd place finish.

The Crockett family live in Braxton County.



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WVDNR Deer Study

Big bucks, young bucks, does and fawns. Thanks to a new West Virginia Division of Natural Resources study, hunters, conservationists and wildlife enthusiasts will soon know more about the state's white-tailed deer population, their survival raises, behavior and movement patterns.

"We captured 98 deer this past winter and placed GPS collars around their necks so we can collect location data that will help us learn a lot about survival and hopefully give us a better picture of what causes deer mortalities," said Brett Shelly, assistant deer project leader for the WVDNR. "We are also looking at where bucks go during the rut and where does are fawning around the state."

The project is in the first of three years and includes three study areas: Hampshire, Barbour/Upshur and Jackson/Mason counties.

"This is only the second time we've put collars on deer since the early 2000s, so we hope to get a lot of information about deer survival, habitat selection and movement rates," Skelly said.

Some of the things Skelly hopes to learn include:

What causes deer deaths around the state?

What are bucks doing during hunting seasons?

What kind of impact does chronic wasting disease have on the deer in Hampshire County?

Do more female deer survive to adulthood?

"Everything we learn in this study is going to help us make more informed management recommendations, which will have benefits for our state's deer population and the

continue to the next page

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Tagged deer may be seen this year in parts of WV in the deer study.



Hunter Huffman, from Franklin, reeled in a big trout..

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hunting public,” Skelly said.
CAPTURING DEER FOR THE STUDY

Capturing deer and placing collars on their necks required a delicate touch. Deer were trapped and given an anesthetic. Skelly and his team also covered each deer’s head with a blindfold to protect the eyes of the animal. After taking vitals, measurements and DNA samples, each deer was given ear tags and a collar and were then put in a safe place and given a reversal so they could get up and go on their way.

The GPS collars, which expand to accommodate swelling in a buck’s necks during the rut, will send location data to Skelly every 12 hours. If a deer stops moving, he’ll know where to go to determine if and how a deer died. Each collar has a three-year battery life and a release mechanism that automatically drops off after three years.

“After the study, we can retrieve the collars, refurbish them and use them again,” Skelly said.

The WVDNR plans to collar more deer during the next two winters, following the Mountaineer Heritage season. Skelly said he expects the study to show that female deer survive at a higher rate than males, that younger deer have a higher mortality rate and that the leading

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cause of death will be hunting-related.

Collared deer are legal game during deer hunting seasons. Information about the study and what a hunter should do if they harvest a collared deer will be released in the next edition of West Virginia’s Hunting and Trapping Regulations.



Ronnie Moyers reeled in two huge crappie. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.*

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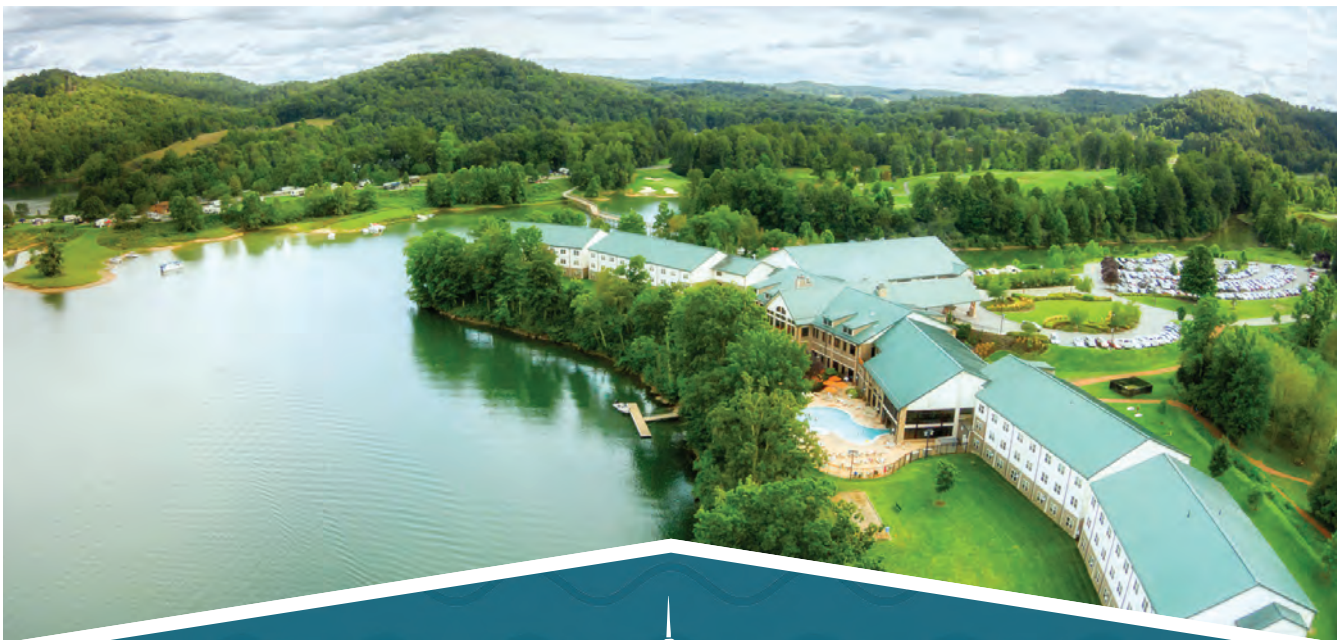


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Boating Public Access Guide

For anglers, waterfowl hunters and those who enjoy boating, access to West Virginia's streams, rivers and lakes is vital to their enjoyment of the outdoors. The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources maintains many public access sites, from large concrete ramps with courtesy docks to gravel bars for launching a kayak. And the WVDNR is adding and improving sites every year! Here's what you need to know about access sites.

LEARN MORE ABOUT PUBLIC ACCESS SITES WITH WVDNR'S ONLINE MAP

Discover some of the best access sites in America by using our online map at mapwv.gov/huntfish. This interactive map is the best way for you to learn more about access sites in West Virginia and fishing in public lakes and streams. Search for a specific access site or get directions to one near you. Learn more about parking and on-site amenities and what kind of fishing you can enjoy. Check it out today and start planning a trip!

PUBLIC ACCESS SITE REQUIREMENTS AND PROHIBITIONS

Now that you know how to find access sites all over West Virginia, take some time to learn about regulations for using them. The following are regulations and prohibitions that apply to access sites in West Virginia.

Public boating and fishing access facilities shall be used solely for the purpose of launching and retrieving watercraft or fishing from the shore. No other use of access sites is allowed. After launching, vehicles shall be parked in available parking spaces.

Any law enforcement officer act-

ing under proper authority may prohibit an individual from launching a watercraft from any public boating and fishing access sites.

The following are prohibited at fishing and boating access sites:

Consumption of alcoholic beverages or possession of an open container of alcoholic beverages.

Swimming or bathing.

Camping.

Open fires.

Trash disposal except where trash receptacles are provided.

Discharge of firearms, fireworks and explosives.

Leaving unattended watercraft.

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Parking of any vehicle or the mooring of any watercraft in such a

continue to page 31

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Danny Fisher hooked a 5 3/4 pound rainbow trout. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.*



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manner as to obstruct any avenue of ingress or egress, except for the purpose of launching.

Any person violating any of these rules and regulations shall be punished in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 20 of the Code of West Virginia and such other laws as may be applicable.

ENJOY INCREDIBLE FISHING AND HUNTING IN WEST VIRGINIA

Before you cast your line or head out for a hunting trip, make sure you purchase a West Virginia hunting and fishing license and any stamps you may need. You can buy them online at wvhunt.com or wvfish.com, at a license retailer or your local WVDNR district office.

Your fishing license dollars help us maintain and improve public access sites across the state. And without your support, we wouldn't be able to continue building new ones. Get your license today!

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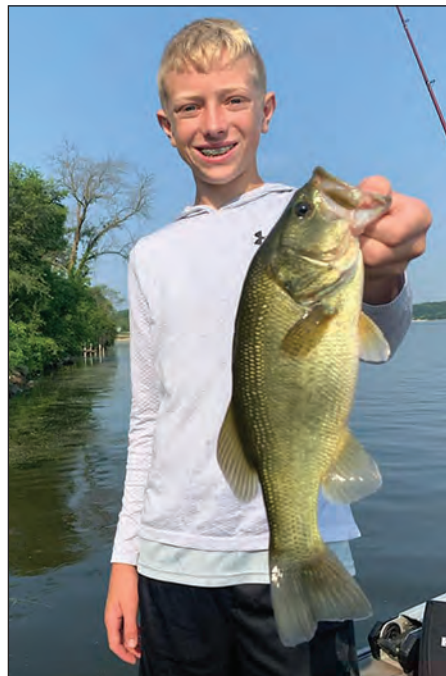
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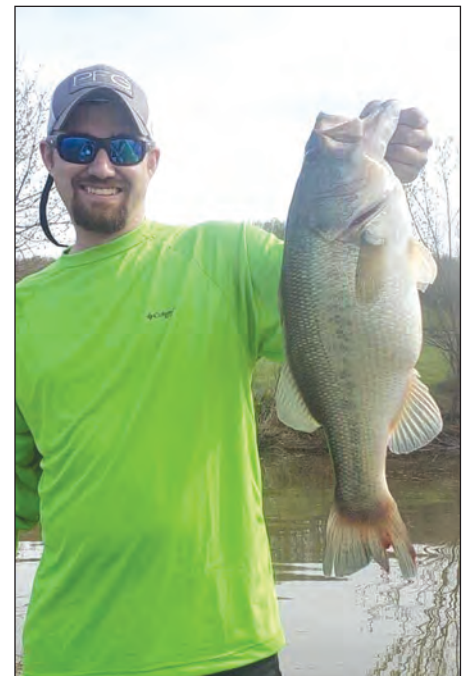
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Isaiah Crockett hooked a large-mouth on the Mississippi River.



Cory Clevenger reeled in a quality largemouth bass.

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Spinning Reels For Success

By Patrick Walters

My third Bassmaster Elite Series season has drawn to a close, and I'm still fishing with most of the same spinning reels that started off in my boat during my rookie season. It may seem miraculous or unlikely — after all, much of the public assumes that we get as much tackle as we want, and just dispose of the previous gear — but it really shouldn't be surprising at all. Anglers who've bought quality spinning gear and taken care of it know that it can last a long, long time.

Those of us who are lucky enough to fish for smallmouth up north know that quality spinning tackle is a necessity, not a luxury, on those big water beasts. Sure, if you just fish ponds for smaller fish you might be able to get by with a lower-range product, but when you're testing your drags, fluoro-carbon and braid-to-fluoro knots against hard-charging smallmouth, you better have the good stuff.

I can't tell you how many times I've heard other competitors complaining about six-month-old reels that suddenly locked up, usually mid-fight with a fish that would



Jonathan Carpenter landed a 21 1/2" brown trout. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sportin Goods in Elkins.

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have put money in their pocket. I've never had that problem because I buy the right gear.

At this point you may be suspecting that I only fish the absolute top-

of-the-line reels that Daiwa makes, and I'm proud to admit that I have a handful of super-luxury Exist and Certate reels in my lineup. Those

continue to page 34

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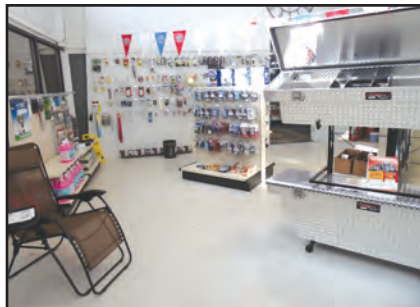
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drags are so buttery smooth, it's no wonder that saltwater anglers who



Doug Tackett landed a 6 lb. 5 oz. largemouth bass in Jackson County

chase bonefish and tarpon rely on them.

That said, the majority of the spinning reels I carry with me are Daiwa Tatula LTs, which retail for \$199.99 apiece. That's well within the budget of most anglers, and it's actually a bargain when you consider their longevity. If you buy a \$50 reel or even a \$100 reel and it doesn't last you a full season, or gives out at the worst possible time, what kind of value is that?

Just because you don't live up north, or don't fish for smallmouth, don't assume that you shouldn't

have quality spinning gear in your arsenal. At home on Santee Cooper I've caught more largemouth over 7 pounds on spinning tackle than on anything else. I also use my spinning reels for saltwater applications along the South Carolina coast.

Be sure to rinse off all of your continue to page 36

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tackle after every saltwater outing, but to be totally honest beyond that I haven't done much maintenance to my Daiwa spinning reels. I might clean them up a little bit at the end of the season, knock the dirt off of them, but that's about it.

The "problem" is that my season never really seems to end, so there's never been a good gap of time to accomplish a more thorough cleaning regimen. I vow that later this year I'll break them down, clean them up and lubricate them as needed.

If you're not using spinning tackle a lot, then you are leaving quality catchable fish behind, and if you're not using the right quality spinning tackle then you'll never maximize your success. When we go up north, it's not necessarily a matter of who is going to get big bites — we all get them — but rather who is going to land the majority of those big bites.

I have not yet gotten to the point where I put them all in the boat, but when I hook into a big, mean smallmouth on 8- or 10-pound

braid with a 6- or 8-pound test fluorocarbon leader, I know that the margin for error is small. The fight may take a minute, or it may take seven minutes. I've heard that Taku sometimes fights them for eight to 10 or even more minutes.

In order to remain patient and confident during that battle you have to know that your gear is bordering on infallible. You have to know that it's not going to lock up on you or even "catch" enough to cause the line to part. That's the kind of confidence I have in my spinning reels, even after three-plus years of heavy use and occasional abuse.



Shawn Ramme brought in this buck last season.

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