



**FREE**

**Issue 298**

**February/March 2022**

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TIPS**

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**Mark A. Goudy**

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## Cover Photo

A 170 class archery buck was taken by Roger Maynard from Lenore. This Wyoming County buck still had some bark on its rack from some recent rubbing.

This magazine will look a bit different this month. My usual printer company decided to ditch around 5 commercial jobs and closed down the newspaper that printed my job. Ogden Printing is now handling this magazine.

# French Creek Freddie Predicts

FRENCH CREEK, W.Va. — West Virginia will be getting six more weeks of winter, French Creek Freddie predicted on Wednesday during a Groundhog Day celebration at the state's Wildlife Center in Upshur County.

Freddie, the state's most popular weather-predicting groundhog, came out of hibernation on Wednesday to provide his annual forecast to fans and followers in attendance.

"Freddie was happy he could cel-

eborate his special day with friends this year and is ready to nestle back in his burrow for a few more weeks of winter," said Trevor Moore, wildlife biologist for the West Virginia State Wildlife Center. "When spring arrives, Freddie hopes everyone will come back and visit him and enjoy a day at the Wildlife Center."

According to tradition, six more weeks of winter can be expected if skies are clear and a groundhog returns to its burrow after getting spooked by seeing its shadow. If skies are cloudy and a groundhog doesn't see its shadow, an early spring can be expected.

In the past 40 years, Freddie's forecasts have been accurate 50

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A 9 point Wirt County buck was taken by Peyton Richards.



Kelli Dean hunted in Upshur County for a nice 9 point buck.

percent of the time. Freddie predicted an early spring in each of the last three years.

The West Virginia Wildlife Center continue to the next page



Roy Neal used a bow this season for a Fayette County buck.

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er in Upshur County is home to French Creek Freddie and nearly 30 different species of West Virginia mammals, birds and reptiles. The center is open 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., seven days a week through the end of March. Admission is free during this period. To learn more about the Wildlife Center and for directions, visit [wvdnr.gov/west-virginia-wildlife-center](http://wvdnr.gov/west-virginia-wildlife-center).

[www.wvasportsman.net](http://www.wvasportsman.net)



Trapper Samples brought in a 480 pound black bear. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods.*

## DNR Master Angler

**SOUTH CHARLESTON, WV**  
— The 2022 West Virginia Fishing Regulations Summary is now available online at [WVdnr.gov](http://WVdnr.gov). Printed copies will be available at license agents and WVDNR district offices in early January.

Anglers are encouraged to review the new regulations to familiarize themselves with changes to the regulations. If you need clarification, please contact your local DNR office. *continue to the next page*



Austin Carr landed a nice tiger trout at Watoga Lake. A tiger is a cross between a male brook trout and a female brown trout.

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## 2022 Bass Sportsman Tournaments



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ification or have other questions, contact your local DNR district office. The numbers are located on the inside cover of the regulations and online here.

A new program and changes to a previous angling program will also take effect this year. The Master Angler Program is an exciting new opportunity for anglers to complete “slams” for specific fish species and also earn a lifetime award as a West Virginia Master Angler by completing all six slams. The rules and application can be found at [WVdnr.gov/fishing/fishing-regulations](http://WVdnr.gov/fishing/fishing-regulations) under “Fishing Forms.”

The long-standing Trophy Citation Program is undergoing some changes beginning in 2022. The printed citations were completely re-designed and will feature new fish artwork from renowned artist, Joseph Tomelleri.

Additionally, instead of receiving a citation for each trophy fish reported, anglers will now get one citation for each species at the end of the calendar year, reporting the total number of trophies caught for that species. For example, if you submit 15 citation applications for rainbow trout and five

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citation applications for smallmouth bass, you will receive one trophy citation for rainbow trout, stating you caught 15 trophy-size rainbow trout and one trophy citation for smallmouth bass, stating you caught five trophy-size smallmouth bass. Each citation will also list the length of the largest trophy caught for that species.

The rules and application for the Trophy Citation Program can also be found at [WVdnr.gov/fishing/fishing-regulations](http://WVdnr.gov/fishing/fishing-regulations) under “Fishing Forms.”



Dennis Bokey, from Bridgeport, caught a 25” brown trout.

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# Outdoor Show Coming

Thousands of outdoorsmen from the tri-state area will be heading to Morgantown's Mylan Park on

March 5th-6th for the 20th annual WV Fishing, Hunting & Outdoor Sports Show. Recognized as the largest outdoors show in northern WV, the event sells out annually with over 150 booths representing outdoor vendors from all over the US and Canada.


"We are so excited for this year's show," says Labeth Hall organizer of the event. "We have the largest show ever with over 53,000 square feet of everything you need to go fishing, hunting, camping or to just enjoy the great outdoors. In addition to ATV's, campers, boats, trucks, trailers, tractors you can find jerky, outfitters, charter boats, and much more. There are thousands of products and services related to the outdoors and we have added a lot of new vendors also. It is an outdoorsman's paradise!"

For those who are serious fisherman, they will find a variety of fishing trips in the US and Canada, bait, tackle, reels, area fishing guides, as well as numerous charter boat captains from the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay.

There will be turkey calls, tree stands, scents and a variety of new hunting products also. Hunting outfitters will be there to book bear, whitetail, wild boar, moose, turkey and game birds rips to a variety of destinations.

A variety of fishing and hunting seminars as well as special attractions will be held daily. Attendees can check the website for the updated schedule.

Families are also welcome at the



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show. You will find something for everyone. Women can shop for camo purses, marinades and spices, unique jewelry and decorative items with an outdoors theme.

The Outdoor Sports Show hours are Saturday from 10am-7pm and Sunday 10am-4pm. Tickets can be purchased at the door and admission is \$10 for adults, children 7-12 are \$2, and there is no charge for kids under 6 years. The first 50 people each day will receive a FREE gift! For more information visit the website at [wvoutdoorsportsshow.com](http://wvoutdoorsportsshow.com).



Come join the fun at the WV Outdoor Sports Show March 5 & 6.



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# 12 Top Rated Fishing Destinatons In WV

West Virginia is an angler's paradise, not just because of the vast number of lakes, streams, and rivers flowing through the state, but for the variety of trout fishing opportunities available. The brook trout is the only native trout species in the state, but due to a robust stocking program through the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR), anglers can also catch rainbow, brown, and the unusual golden rainbow trout that originated in the Mountain State.

There are sections of waterways specifically designated for catch and release that appeal to recreational and fly rod anglers. Some sections of waterways are fly-fishing only, and some are designated as "general," which means anglers can fish year-round and harvest their catch.

More than 200 waterways are stocked throughout West Virginia, many of them in the mountainous eastern part of the state. The

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WVDNR stocking program is multi-faceted: to stock some waters with trout that are sizable to harvest, to supplement the natural stock with fingerlings to help with trout reproduction, and to stock areas that have depleted populations by reintroducing trout.

While West Virginia has a robust stocking program in place, especially for rainbow, golden rainbow, and brook trout, a number of  
continue to the next page



Nick Battista, from Weirton, hooked a huge walleye.



Donnie Summon caught a big golden trout. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.

streams, including the Cranberry, Williams, and Greenbrier River, are not stocked with brown trout since they are predatory toward other fish species. Brown trout are predatory toward the endangered candy darter for which these streams provide critical habitat.

The stocking schedule is different for every waterway and every year, so anglers should consult current schedules in each area.

"The stocking program provides a lot of fishing opportunities. We distribute it around the state, so folks have a location not too far from where they live to have access to trout fishing. Our goal is to not only provide fishing opportunities but a variety of fishing opportunities," says Jim Hedrick, Hatchery Program Manager for the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources.

The most unique trout in West Virginia waters is the golden rainbow trout. It is unique to West Virginia and originated in the state when one trout with golden bands was discovered in the 1950s. Over a period of reproductive years, a stock of 300 completely gold trout emerged and have been reproducing ever since.

You can find golden rainbow trout throughout the year, but anglers can also get in on "The Goldrush Program," which takes place each spring. It is designed to encourage kids to fish and celebrate the state's unusual, completely gold-colored, trout. One week each spring, certain streams are heavily stocked with golden rainbow trout. An angler

continue to the next page

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who catches a tagged trout gets a T-shirt and bragging rights.

Anglers will get a lot of use out of the state's interactive map of rivers, streams, and lakes for targeting trout. You can identify stocked sections, access points, and regulations about bait and catch-and-release or fly-only sections. Do not forget to get a state fishing license and review current fishing information at [wvdnr.gov](http://wvdnr.gov).

Narrow down your fishing options in West Virginia, with our list of the top rivers and lakes for trout in West Virginia.

### 1. Cranberry River

The centrally located Cranberry River is surrounded by forest

service land and is a remote wilderness area. The large river is a prime location for trout anglers who want a more rustic experience, especially for fly rod anglers in search of wild brook trout.

The catch-and-release, fly-fishing-only section is located upstream of the stocked waters in areas like Dogway Fork. This area is only accessible by foot or on bike. The stocked section of Cranberry River is a nearly 15-mile stretch that runs parallel to Cranberry River Road, so there are many access points in the area.

This section is stocked with rainbow, golden rainbow, and brook trout that can be harvested. Since

these sections of river are wilder-  
continue to page 14



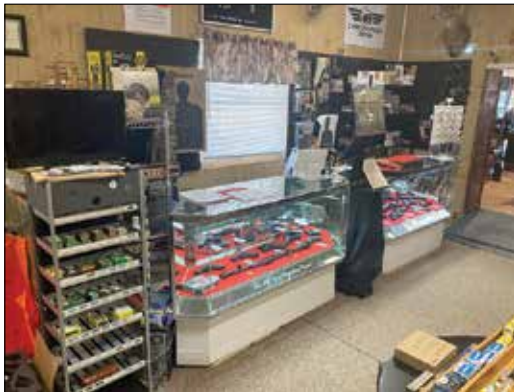
Young Hunter Smith tagged a huge 9 point in Roane County.



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Johnny Richards knows how to catch largemouth at Stonewall.

ness areas, some anglers pack a tent and make a week-long vacation out of it.

## 2. Williams River

Another top trout waterway in West Virginia, the Williams River, is also in a wilderness area. The larger river system and backwoods experience appeals to trout anglers who are looking as much for the primitive outdoor challenge as they are the stellar day of fishing on the water.

The nearly 20-mile stretch of stocked waterway runs parallel to Williams River Road between North Cove Run and Swago Road. Rainbow, golden rainbow, and brook trout are stocked regu-

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larly in the fall, winter, and early spring.

While many sections are general and available for harvest catches, there are some catch-and-release-only sections of this waterway, so refer to the state regulations before planning your outing.

## 3. South Branch River — Smoke Hole Area

The Smoke Hole section of the South Branch River features natural forest land but it is not as remote as the trout sections of the Cranberry and Williams River continue to the next page

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Jen Riffle bagged a fine buck in Braxton County.

River systems. It is a bit more accessible for anglers looking for a rugged experience but it is not remote wilderness.

A 9.3-mile section of the South Branch River running parallel to Smoke Hole Road is stocked with rainbow, golden rainbow, brook and brown trout marked as general regulations except for one-mile section in the middle near Pretty Ridge Road that is catch-and-release only. The Smoke Hole section of river is located near the Virginia state line, and you are surrounded by the stunning view of the mountains.

#### 4. Shavers Fork River

The waters at Shavers Fork River are preferred for trout fishing because there are multiple stream sections that feed into the main river that are also stocked with rainbow, golden rainbow, brook and brown trout. Most of the stocked river sections flow through Randolph County near Elkins. The main section starts on Spruce Knob, which is the highest point of the state, with nearly 50 miles of stocked water.

There are both general designa-



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tion sections for harvesting trout, as well as catch-and-release only sections. Many of the general designation sections are easily acces-

sible by the road. During certain times of the year, trout are transported by train and stocked near  
continue to the next page



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Spruce Knob, which is a beautiful area for anglers who want to enjoy one of the most scenic spots in the state during their fishing trip.

5. Elk River

Whitaker Falls on the Elk River  
Whitaker Falls on the Elk River  
The Elk River offers a wide range of trout fishing opportunities for golden rainbow, rainbow, brook and brown trout. There is a catch-and-release only section and a long stretch of general designation waters downstream. The river is pleasant and scenic and easily accessible.

There are multiple public access points at the Back Fork of Elk River, the Elk River Rail Road Bridge, Webster Springs Park, Baltimore Run, Jim Compton WMA, and access at the scenic

Whitaker Falls. One of the conveniences of the Elk River is the lodge and fly shop in Elk Springs. Anglers have easy access to fly rod lessons, equipment, and lodging right near the water.

6. North Fork River

The North Fork River presents lots of trout opportunities for all of the stocked species, including rainbow, golden rainbow, and brown and brook trout. There are 40 miles of stocked areas with general designation available for harvest.

One of the most popular public access areas with easy water accessibility is near Smoke Hole Caverns. This spot is also nice if you want to do a little excursion at the caverns after your day of

continue to page 18

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Dillon Jones, from Sissonville, shot a nice squirrel.

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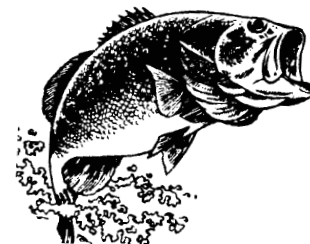
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fishing. There is one small half-mile section of catch-and-release only located at Seneca Rocks that is best for anglers who are looking to fish for wild rainbow and brook trout. Seneca Creek empties into this area, bringing with it additional trout opportunities.

7. Blackwater River

The Blackwater River is an ideal waterway for anglers and families that want to get kids into fishing and who are looking for an easy experience. There are large sections upstream of Blackwater Falls that are stocked with rainbow, golden rainbow, and brook and brown trout with a general

designation, so fish are available to harvest.

There is also a stocked lake at Blackwater Falls in Blackwater Falls State Park. There are many nearby amenities, attractions, and lodging if you want to turn it into a vacation and do some sightseeing.

8. Pipestem State Park

The lake in Pipestem State Park is a public fishing lake that is stocked with trout, as well as other game species. Trout anglers can target rainbow and golden

continue to page 20

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Mark Dickey bagged a massive buck. Photo courtesy of Hardcore Hunters in Grafton.

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Ranse Cline used a bow in Mingo County for a quality buck.

rainbow trout earlier in the stocking season, and brown and brook trout later. The lake has a general designation, so trout can be harvested.

This lake is accessible from the banks, and there is a public access area with restrooms and parking located at Long Branch Lake. Since this lake is located within the state park, there are many amenities like restrooms. Also nearby are hiking trails and a tram

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that goes across Blue Stone Canyon.

**9. Reservoir Tailwater Area**

There are a number of reservoir tailwater areas in the state that have prime trout fishing for rainbow, golden rainbow, and brook

and brown trout. The top tailwater areas are Sutton Lake, Summersville Lake, Stonewall Jackson Lake, Burnsville and Tygart Lake and state park. All of these areas have dams where you can target

continue to page 22



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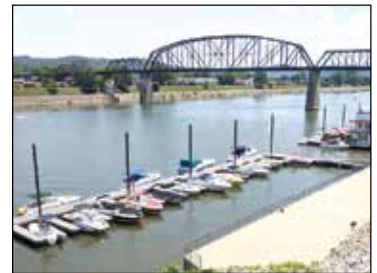
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trout just below them, as well as fishing piers and nearby amenities.

The one advantage that these tailwater areas have, especially for novice trout anglers, is easy access to big water. While all are located in different areas, they are all in close proximity to interstates. This makes it easy to plan a day of trout fishing that does not involve a long trek to the water or a big time commitment. Jackson Lake has a resort nearby if you want to plan a longer trip.

## 10. Greenbrier River

One of the new and exciting trout fishing areas in West Virginia is on the Greenbrier River. A section of the river will be stocked with rainbow, golden rainbow and brook trout beginning in 2019. The section starts at the Cass Scenic Railroad at the park with stocked areas following the rail

trail for several miles.

This is an exciting area to fish because there are several access points with parking areas that are right next to the stream. There are also a few sections that require walk-in or bike-in accessibility



Kevin Glasscock bagged a huge buck with a broken tine.

for anglers looking for that additional outdoor challenge. The stocked areas are general designation, so fish are available for harvest.

## 11. Cacapon State Park Lakes continue to the next page



Justin Stanton went to the woods for a nice buck.

The Cacapon State Park lakes sit in the shadow of Cacapon Mountain in the eastern panhandle of West Virginia. Two lakes within the park are stocked each spring with rainbow, golden rainbow, brook, and brown trout. These are recreational fishing lakes, so you will also see anglers fishing for bass, catfish, and bluegill.

The lakes at Cacapon State Park are not as secluded as other trout fishing areas in West Virginia, but they are easily accessible for anglers who do not want to venture into remote wilderness areas. The park is located near the town of Berkeley Springs, where you can base yourself if you do not plan to book a cabin or lodge within the state park.

### 12. Spruce Knob Lake

The scenery at Spruce Knob Lake is as impressive as its trout fishing. It is a 23-acre impoundment lake, which is stocked regularly with rainbow, golden rainbow, brook, and brown trout. Due to its high elevation, Spruce Knob Lake water stays cool and is an excellent trout fishery from the

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spring and into the summer.

Spruce Knob Lake is more remote than other West Virginia trout waters, but it has gained a reputation as an excellent trout-fishing waterway. It is a pro-

ductive trout fishery, and a number of trophy-sized trout have been recorded from these waters. Anglers are able to launch and fish from small boats or kayaks or fish from the shore.



Conner Boothe used a bow in Monroe County for a buck.



Don Salisbury hunted in Wirt County for this nice buck.



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# Trout Catching Methods

Behind bass and possibly panfish, trout are among the most popular fish for anglers to target in North America. Trout always put up a good fight, are abundant by both stocking and natural reproduction, and are pretty tasty when anglers decide to keep them.

There are 3 main species of trout anglers chase, and they all have somewhat similar characteristics. The Rainbow, Brook, and Brown

Trout are the most common variations. There is also the wildcard steelhead, which is classified as a rainbow trout that spends time in the ocean or Great Lakes before returning to freshwater or smaller tributaries to spawn. In doing so these rainbows gain a silvery tint to them, hence their name. This habit, most commonly seen in salmon, breeds a size and toughness in the normally smaller bows which makes them living legends among trout anglers.

Where To Find The Trout  
header trout winter

Trout are most often found in cold water and often live in moving water as they run up and down

rivers and creeks. They do also live in lakes (hence the term for another species, The Lake Trout), and they are of course among one of the more commonly stocked game species, where they can be dropped in streams, ponds, and anywhere in between.

As trout are one of the more ac-  
continue to page 28



Dustin Marks got a wide racked Jackson County buck.



Sam Howell harvested a fine Preton County buck.

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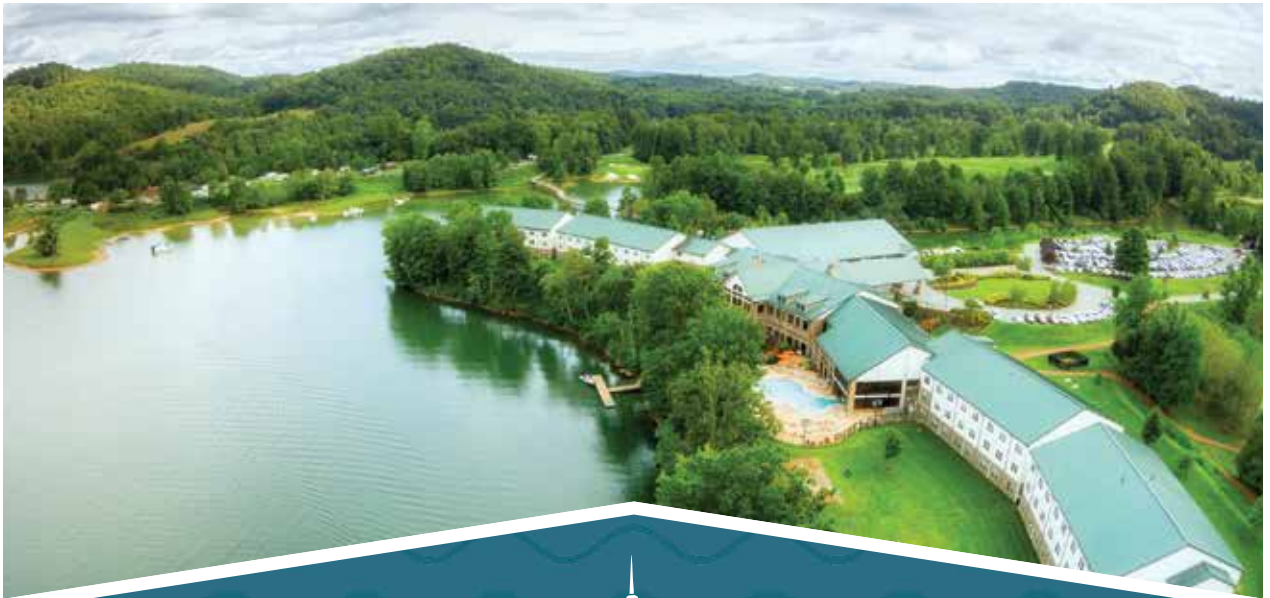
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essible food sources for wild-life, you can likely find them in the woods where you'd also find bears, bobcats, and other fishing wildlife. The more remote the river or lake, the more likely you are to find some trout swimming through their waters. This makes trout fishing some of the more active gamefishing any angler can do, where it almost crosses a line into hunting or tracking.

Trout are also abundant deep in some of the great lakes, where

they can grow to massive size and put up fights usually reserved for the ocean. These trout can be found feeding on smaller fish in the depths of the lake, or more commonly during the salmon spawn, raiding their beds. Finding out where trout are stocked is simply and easy, and a week or two after a stock is always a great time to try your hand.

What Fishing Gear To Use When Trout Fishing

Since rainbow trout grow to about 12 inches, you are safe even with ultralight tackle. A standard trout fishing rig would include a spinning reel, 4-8 lb test fluorocarbon line, and a light or ultralight action rod.

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There are two big rules to remember when trout fishing:

1. Powerbait will only work on stocked trout (most likely)
2. Most trout over a foot long cut flies and insects out of their diet. These won't make or break the bite, but they will affect the type

continue to the next page



Nathan Russell harvested a nice buck. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.



Ryan Stewart hooked a large golden trout. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.

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you hook into.

Powerbait (or trout marshmallows, or any dough bait substitute to imitate pellets) is simply not a good choice for natives. Stocked trout grow up in hatcheries and on farms where they are fed pellets. Dough baits like Powerbait are created solely to imitate those pellets in sight, texture, and scent. If you are fishing for natives, they likely have no idea what that glob of dough floating in front of them is. While you may get a bite out of curiosity, it is unlikely that they

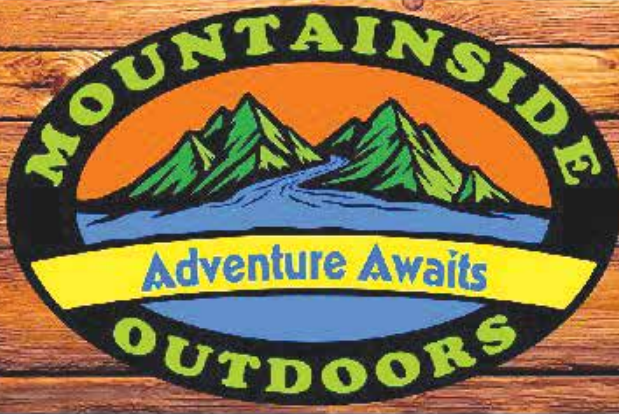
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Scooter Johnson, from Clarksburg, reeled in a big rainbow.




Nick Battista, from Weirton, hooked a monster walleye.



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are conditioned to eat those pellets and will lay off your line.

If you're looking for BIG trout (steelhead or larger adults of the bows, browns, and brooks), avoid fly, mayfly and tiny-haired imitators. While they may snack on zooplankton, flies or other tiny insects occasionally, they almost exclusively eat smaller fish, worms, shrimp, and larger insects when they are over 1 foot in length. To imitate those common trout meals when trout fishing, here's what you should throw.

### The Best Lures & Rigs For Trout Fishing

To imitate the creatures trout eat, there are a few main types of lures. If you're going trout fishing, make sure to pack at least one of each of these. And, if you're looking to purchase a gift for a trout angler, consider these as top of mind:

Crankbaits may not be your first choice when fishing for trout, but big trout will hit a crank as large as 1/3 or eve 1/2 of their size. With sharp teeth like trout have, it doesn't take much to suffice for a snack for them, and they have no

problem eating portions of a fish too big to swallow whole.

- 1) Bobber, Hook, Line & Sinker  
 continue to the next page



Wayne Worth landed a rainbow trout at Smoke Hole.



Robbie Withee, from Pt. Pleasant, bagged a snow buck.

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A small hook rigged with live bait, realistic soft plastics, or artificial fish putty-like will catch you trout all day long, especially if you're targeting stocked or unpressured fish. To do this, rig a bobber near the depth you think fish are feeding, and present your bait that way. By suspending your presentation, you'll be able to catch fish roaming in the middle of the water. In shallow water,

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pinch on bobbers will do the job, but you'll need slip bobbers to effectively fish trout in deep water.

Some anglers fish small split-shot or drop-shot rigs near the  
continue to page 34



Trevor Smith reeled in a large rainbow trout.



Sandy Skeens, from Gandeeville, harvested a good buck.

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bottom with light-powered spinning rods at stocked ponds. I met an angler in Arizona fishing this exact method one time, he thought that stocked fish eat pellets, and while most pellets get eaten right away, a few might sink to the bottom and just lay there until a trout gobbles them up. He cast out small putty-balls made from trout dough deep into the middle of the pond and caught most of his keeper fish that way.

Split shotting 1-2 small weights about a foot above a small Aberdeen hook rigged with live bait is a great way to fish trout in current. Cast your rig out and slowly bring it back with the current while hopping your bait along the bottom. Keep the rod tip high, and don't let the bait rest on the bottom for too long to prevent snags.


2) Fly Fishing Gear  
Trout are the most targeted fish that fly anglers chase after and their love for catching rainbows, browns, and brook trout has created its own unique culture, industry, and overall look. Fly anglers often fish wadeable creeks, rivers, and streams in the pursuit of fish, and in these places, their ability to subtly present lures oftentimes will outproduce the tools that a conventional angler might carry. Post Fly is a fishing company

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that provides a monthly fly fishing box to help anglers get better equipped for chasing fish in their area. It makes fly fishing for trout approachable and fun!

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4) Soft Plastics Bugs & Crickets

Grasshoppers, beetles, crickets, and other larger bugs end up falling into the rivers and streams of trout all the time. They're used to seeing them as easy snacks. Try drowning live grasshoppers or using imitators to float in the current.

Tubes or grubs imitate zooplankton and other easy snacks all fish snack on. Truth be told they don't look much like anything swim-

ming in the water. But truth be told they get bit a LOT. So, keep them in the tackle box.

Trout love to feast on smaller baitfish, especially bigger trout. The best way to trigger strikes  
continue to page 36



Clay Dallison killed a buck with an extra wide spread.

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when they are up feeding on bait-fish is a paddletail swimbait that can disrupt the column.

Obviously, live worms get bit by just about every fish and this is one of the most simple trout catching techniques. Some downsized soft plastic worms are great choices for trout. Bright colors that can be detected in moving water are a plus when fishing rivers.

5) Crankbaits

When we talk about crankbaits for trout, it is not the same traditional form of crankbaits you would throw at a bass. While bass fishing with crankbaits, you are imitating common forage of baitfish such as shad, bluegill, or perch. Lipped baits you would throw while trout fishing can imitate anything from minnows and baitfish to creatures such as crickets, grasshoppers, or beetles. These are the types of bugs that fall from branches and bushes into cold water creeks and streams, where trout are lingering for an easy meal.

6) Spoons

Flashy spoons, especially those tipped with feathers and sometimes even wax worms, are effective for trout all year long. They thrive, however, in colder weather when the bite slows down. Their flashiness can annoy and entice into a bit bite.

7) Powerbait & Salmon Eggs

Essentially any dough bait will be called "power bait" by a trout angler, just like every tissue is called a kleenex and every disc is called a frisbee. If there are stocked trout anywhere in the vicinity, it's worth having a few col-



Dylan Adams shot a nice Marion County buck.



Shane Miller brought in a big bodied Wood County buck.

ors of power bait to ball up onto a hook and give it a go.

Trout are notorious scavengers, raiding spawning beds of other fish constantly to feed on their eggs. Cut one belly open and you'll see tons of roe. Thread a few onto a size 6 hook and they will treat it like a buffet.

Good luck this season.

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Cole Collins used a bow for a great buck. Photo courtesy of Hardcore Hunters in Grafton.



Christian Harless bagged a good buck in Fayette County.



A Wyoming County bow buck was taken by Jeremy Cassie.



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Ronnie Armolt went to Cacapon State Park to catch this huge rainbow trout. That fish will make many tasty fillets.

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