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Issue 261

May/June 2017



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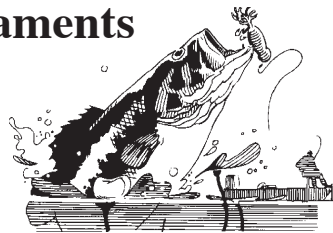
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Cover Photo

Stonewall Jackson "Legend"
Tony Crumbliss caught an 8
pound, 14 oz. largemouth at the
lake. The Stonewall Classic was
won by he and his partner, Mr.
Mullins, the first year with a two
day total of 44 pounds, 10 oz. An
ad is on page 6 of this issue for
this years Stonewall Classic.

Mark Skiles wrote the article
last month titled "Game Tracking
Signs". I gave another name as
the author. See it online in last
months issue - great piece!

Late Season Gobblers

By Chris Larsen

When it comes to applying for turkey permits, my last few seasons have been a comedy of errors. I've either forgotten to apply for a tag or drawn a time period that I could not hunt for one reason or another. This has forced me to hunt late in the year because the only time periods available for over-the-counter purchase were late season tags. Guess what? I'll be hunting late this season as well. My wife has a bun in the oven and the baby is expected to arrive in early April. That means I won't be released to hunt until early May. Hunting late has become a science for me. Hopefully, these tips will work if you find yourself turkey hunting late in the year.

Roost Birds

This is obviously a good idea for any turkey hunt. But it's even more important early in the year. Use the evening to locate and watch birds roost. If you are hunting a familiar area, you probably already know the likely spots. All that is necessary is confirmation. You need to get in close, really close. I'm talking about 50 to 75 yards away. When locating birds, look for a place to set up as well. In most cases, birds are going to come out of the trees in the same place they flew up from. Find a spot that allows you to get close to their fly down area. Try to walk like a deer when walking to your spot. When you know your close, walk a few steps before pausing. Avoid walking ridgelines to prevent being silhouetted.

Swimming In Green

There are leaves on the trees later in the year so getting in close is much easier. Just be sure to move quietly. Oftentimes, I won't even set up a decoy. You want to limit the amount of commotion on the ground. With thick foliage, turkeys have a hard time finding the decoy anyway. When they do, they will often hang up because they won't feel comfortable moving through a bunch of cover to get to the decoy. Open areas work best for decoy sets. If you are hunting in deep timber, it helps to have a caller 20

continue to the next page



Corey Wilson shot a good 13 point in Pleasants County.

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McKenzie Morgan bagged a nice goobler during the youth hunt in Wyoming County.

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yards behind the shooter. Toms won't gobble as much as they do late in the year and often walk right up without making so much as a peep.

Find The Food

After late season turkeys get of

the roost, gobblers will strut as hens head for their nest. Once the hens abandon them, gobblers start looking to fill their bellies. If you strikeout on the roost hunt, get to a known feeding area. Again, keeping a log book of lessons learned during seasons past will help a lot. Scouting and getting to know your hunting area is invaluable. Turkey

sign is pretty easy to find in May. Concentrations of droppings, feathers, and turkey trails are a good indication of where turkeys are eating. Turkeys will use deer trails but if the trail runs under brush and logs, you know it's a turkey trail.

Ten O'Clock Toms

I have written before about late
continue to the next psge



Donald Lane Jr. shot a gobbler near Ravenswood during the youth day.



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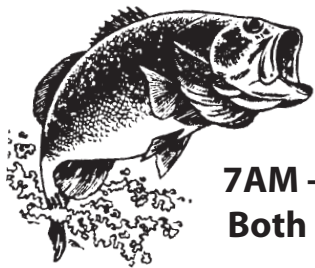
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morning gobblers. I think this is truly the golden hour of turkey hunting. By ten o'clock toms are well fed and looking for action. Most hens are still on the nest and lying low. Yelps and cuts can really be persuasive as loneliness sets in. Set up on strutting areas this time of day. If you can get between a strutting area and a feeding area, even better. Decoys work well in this situation.

Crazy Calls

By the end of the season, most gobblers have heard tons of calling. Educated birds know the difference between a call and a real hen. I like to use oddball calls this time of year. The Squeeling Hen is a new call that isn't used by a lot

of hunters. I'll also use a push button call late in the year. Most hunters are too macho to use one so the sound is fresh and in my opinion they sound pretty good, especially if you keep them chalked. My secret weapons for late season birds are my wingbone calls. There are not a lot of hunters using them and it's easy to get a good sound out of them.

Late season turkey hunting is full of new challenges early season hunters don't have to deal with. Those challenges make bagging a late season bird that much more rewarding.

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Shawn Stidham went to Putnam Co. for a 23 pound, 5 oz. turkey.



Ronnie, Dylan, and Teddy Bennett enjoyed a turkey hunt.

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Timber Rattlesnake Survey

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR) is asking the public to become involved in a scientific research project aimed at determining the current distribution of timber rattlesnakes in the state.

Although many people fear rattlesnakes and may want to kill them, rattlesnakes are a critical part of healthy forest ecosystems, and reduce human risk of contracting Lyme disease and other diseases spread by mice and chipmunks, the snake's main prey.

"Rattlesnakes are essential to controlling populations of these small mammals that can transmit human diseases," said Kevin Oxenrider, a DNR wildlife biologist.

The project asks the public to re-

port their rattlesnake observations to the DNR through an online form that can be found at www.wvdnr.gov/rattlesnakereport. Those who participate can provide the location of their rattlesnake observation through geographic coordinates obtained from a handheld GPS unit or by using a map provided on the website. The site also asks users to submit a photo of the snake.

"The map feature helps people report their rattlesnake observations by zooming in to the exact location of their rattlesnake observation," Oxenrider said.

The DNR is interested in all observations, whether the snake is alive or dead. Information gained from this project will allow the DNR to

continue to the next page

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Dawn Lanham, from Milton, shot a great buck.

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better manage timber rattlesnake populations and focus conservation and outreach efforts.

The timber rattlesnake has been disappearing throughout much of its range, mainly from habitat loss



Eric Dillon used a crossbow in Wood County for this buck.

and direct persecution, Oxenrider said.

“In West Virginia, we are fortunate that our state possesses the intact forests needed by timber rattlesnakes, so our snakes have a real opportunity to thrive,” Oxenrider said. “But to do that, people need to remember that although rattlesnakes are venomous, they are not out to get us or our pets, and that if left alone or observed from a distance, they pose no threat.”

“Although we are collecting rattlesnake observations from the public, we will not be sharing user contact information or the locations

of rattlesnakes with anyone,” said Oxenrider. “This protects people’s privacy as well as the location of the rattlesnakes.”

For more information about how to participate in this initiative, visit www.wvdnr.gov/rattlesnakereport or visit www.wvdnr.gov for more information about rattlesnakes.

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Chase Freeman landed a large trout at a preserve. *Photo courtesy of Bel Meadows in Stonewood.*



Diane Rice got her 1st buck in Tyler County.



Dennis Sole used a bow for a huge 12 point in Pleasants County.

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A new length state record musky was caught by Braxton County resident Joe Wilfong. His 34.58 pound giant measured 53.5 inches. He kept the fish alive waiting for an official DNR confirmation. The record fish was then released back into the Little Kanawha River.

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Jeremy & Conner McCloy both had turkey success.



Rob Ellis reeled in a huge catfish at the Nitro Ramp.



Amelia Smith - 10 - landed a 22" rainbow trout in Logan County.

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Dave Ashley knows how to pose this gobbler taken in Marion Co.

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Guide For Carolina Rig Fishing

Fishing a Carolina Rig is sometimes referred to as dragging “The Old Ball and Chain”; thanks to the extreme love hate relationship many bass anglers have developed for the technique. They hate it because dragging around a heavy weight all day isn’t nearly as exciting as flipping a jig or working a topwater frog. They love it though, because it flat out catches fish when other techniques won’t or can’t.

The versatility of carolina rig fishing is hard to beat. It works in all types of lakes, north to south; clear to stained, and throughout all the seasons of the year. Yet many new bass anglers are hesitant to learn the Carolina Rig setup, perhaps because of the more involved rigging required. This guide will take you step by step through each component of the C-Rig and you will be

ready to throw it the next time you hit the lake.

The basic Carolina Rig setup consists of a few simple components that when combined, create a subtle presentation that bass relating to the bottom have a hard time resisting. Let’s break down the Carolina Rig into 3 easily digestible sections to understand how and why it works. Rod, Reel, and Main Line

Rod & Reel – The best rod for Carolina rig fishing is a Medium Heavy, Fast Action casting rod, and a good baitcasting reel with a 6.3:1 or 7.1:1 gear ratio. The longer rod allows you to make a long sweeping hook set that can quickly take up any slack line and the fast action helps penetrate the hook into the fish’s mouth. The higher gear ratios help you to reel line up quickly when making the sweep hook set.

Here are a couple of good and affordable Carolina Rig combos, that can also be used for many other applications.

7’1” MH St. Croix Mojo Jigs/Baits
continue to the next page



This lady caught a bunch of trout.
Photo courtesy of Sure Catch Fish Farm in Elkins.

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Main Line – Your line can be just about anything, or whatever you typically use for other baits. The best fishing line for a Carolina Rig is typically going to be 15-20lb fluorocarbon or 20-30lb braided line for the main line. Since you'll be making long casts, the low stretch nature of these lines will help when setting the hook. Also keep in mind that a larger diameter line will tend to get caught in current more and can put a bow in your line that makes hook sets challenging.

15-20lb Seaguar InvizX Fluorocarbon

20-30lb Sufix 832 Advanced Braid Weights, Bead, & Swivel

Brass – The most common Carolina Rig weight is a 1/2 to 3/4 oz brass bullet weight. Brass produces more noise than lead. There are many variations you can try however, such as a Mojo style weight that is cylindrical and can navigate through grass a little easier.



Robert Howard landed a 7 pound, 10 oz. trout at Dunkard Lake.

Bullet Weights Brass Carolina Weights

Tungsten – Tungsten weights have several advantages in fishing a Carolina rig. First off Tungsten is much harder than lead, so it makes a louder noise when they hit the bead, and you can more easily feel the bottom composition. Tungsten

continue to the next page

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weights are much smaller than lead and will come through cover without snagging as much.

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Bead – When using a brass weight, a red or black glass bead will do the trick. The bead protects your knot as well as makes a clicking noise against the weight that can attract inquisitive fish to your bait. A tungsten weight can shatter a regular glass bead, so use a bead like the Eco Pro or Vike Force Beads that won't break.

Eco Pro Tungsten Pro Beads

Swivel – The swivel is simple. Just choose a size 6 or 8 barrel swivel, or a size 2 ball bearing swivel. These sizes are plenty big enough to handle big bass and not get snagged in grass or cover. I like Owner hooks, so I also stick with Owner for swivels.

Owner Micro Hyper Barrel Swivel

Owner Hyper Ball Bearing Swivel

Leader & Hook

Leader – Stick to monofilament



Hannah Boley used a crossbow in Ohio to get her buck.

for most of your Carolina Rigs. You might be tempted to use fluorocarbon because it is nearly invisible, but remember that it sinks and defeats the whole purpose of the C-Rig: floating and gliding your bait off the bottom.

10-15lb Trilene XT Monofilament

10-14lb Sufix Elite Monofilament

Hook – The best hook for Carolina Rig fishing is an offset shank wide gap hook. Choose the appropriate size for the bait you are fishing. Some people prefer a EWG hook for their plastics, and that will work fine as well, just use what you have confidence in.

Owner Extra Offset Worm Hook

Owner EWG

Best Carolina Rig Baits

I'm sure you've heard the phrase "match the hatch" before. It applies to Carolina Rig fishing as much as anything else. The lizard, creature, beaver, and finesse worms are great all around baits to start with, but if you see a lot of shad in the area, a tube or super fluke would be a better choice. If you think the fish are on a crayfish diet, then switch to a

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green pumpkin brush hog or beaver style bait. I keep things simple buy sticking with a few colors: Green Pumpkin and Black/Blue for stained to dirty water, and a Shad color for clear water or when bass are chasing bait.

Lizard

Creature

Trick Worm/Finesse Worm

continue to the next page



Aaron Johnson got a nice gobbler in Lincoln County.



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- Big Worm
- Tube
- Fluke
- Beaver
- Why it Works

By now you are starting to see the logic behind fishing the Carolina Rig. But why exactly, is this rig so effective at catching fish? I can think of a few really good reasons off the top of my head:

Easy to Use – All you do is cast it out and drag it back in, as slow or as fast as you want. That's as simple a technique as you'll ever find.

It's great for anglers of all experience levels, including kids.

Covers Water at Any Depth – The Carolina Rig is effective at nearly any depth. You can cast to shallow weed edges, or drag across deep main lake points.

Maintains Bottom Contact – We are using fairly heavy weights on the rig, making it very easy to maintain contact with the bottom. This provides you valuable information about the composition and hardness of the area. This also

continue to the next page



Rodney Bumgardner hooked a 15 1/2" crappie..

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makes it a great rig for fishing in strong winds.

Subtle Action – The slow gliding and floating action of the Carolina Rig is probably the most important factor in its success. The motion of your bait is tantalizing to bass, and the clicking of the weight and bead helps draw other fish to your bait. When and Where to Use the Carolina Rig

The Carolina Rig is truly a year round presentation. Use it to locate hungry pre-spawn bass as well as recovering post spawners. It's deadly all throughout the heat of summer, and can clean up on bass when they school up in the fall. Even in the dead of winter, the Carolina Rig can coax bites from the most lethargic fish.

NOT Rocks or Rip Rap – The bullet style weight is going to get snagged in the rock crevasses, so avoid using it on rip shorelines. But parallel casting with the edge of the rock can be awesome.

Grass Beds – The type of grass beds I'm talking about are just a few feet tall, not matted up vegetation. Using it in the short grass beds can be very fun. Just set you leader length long enough for the



Shawn Ashley got a 9 point in Marion County.

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bait to dance at the grass tops and work the weight with a slow lifting motion instead of the standard drag.

Works Well in the Wind – If the wind is howling and you find yourself scrambling for a Plan B, look to the Carolina Rig as an option that could save your day. The heavy weight makes it easy to cast into the wind, as well as still feel the bottom.

Points & Humps – Bass love points and humps, so dragging a Carolina Rig over the top of them is a fast way to see if any fish are present. When you catch some, it's easy to slow down and try some other baits and put a hurting on them.

Ledges – Fishing a C-Rig down a

ledge is a classic bass fishing staple. Cast to the top of the ledge and slowly bring it down. You can catch the active fish on top, and pick off inactive ones along the sides and
continue to the next page



Timothy Kimes hooked a 7 1/2 pound rainbow at Rollins Lake.



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bottom of the ledge.

Ditches & Drains – These depressions among the big flats on lakes are bass magnets during the pre and post spawn phases. Throw the C-Rig up, down, and across the ditch to see if it's holding any good fish.

Transition Banks – When you find a stretch of bank that looks like a “no nothing bank”, but then has some changing features like grass, wood, or rock, there just may be a bottom composition change. The

Carolina Rig allows you to feel when the bottom changes from muck to clay, or clay to gravel. This is what a bottom transition is called, and bass love these places.

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- Details On Page 3**



Stephen Shinn bagged an 8 point buck in Gilmer County.



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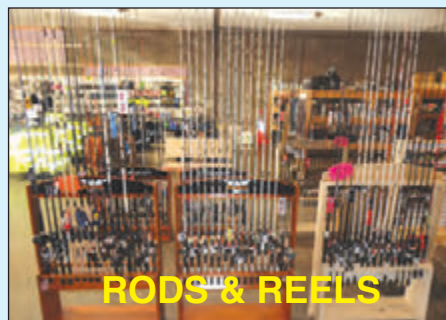
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Steve Woods caught a 10 pound, 2 oz. largemouth at Stonewall Jackson in March. It was 26 1/2" long which would have been a state record. He has a state eel record.



Gary Price landed a 3 pound spotted bass in the Greenbrier river.



Dakota Withrow hooked a rainbow trout at Anderson Lake.



Ed Means, from Red House, got a 9 point with a crossbow



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Josh Murray caught and released a musky landed on a fly rod.



Jimmy Luke, from Powhatan Point, landed a 5 -12 bass on the Ohio.

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Nick McMahon landed a large Ohio River smallmouth bass.



Malia Cooper, from Elkins, used a crossbow for a 9 point buck.

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William Harless, from Cross Lanes, caught a 26" rainbow trout.



Bill Feldman bagged a 9 point in Kanawha County.



Chase Pritchard hooked a large trout at Barbourville Lake.



Josh Perry has 2 largemouth over 4 pounds from Sutton Lake.

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You do, too, huh? What's that - you have a problem?? Oh, that 'seasonal' problem thing has got your goat. You wonder where all the crappie go to in the summer? Hey, maybe we can help!

Anyone who fishes for crappie knows they are suicide-prone in the spring. When the spawning urge gets them into the shallow grass and stumps, crappies are probably the easiest fish of all to catch.



Cotton Ring, from Curtisville, hooked a 6 pound, 4 oz. rainbow..

All the angler has to do is locate a spawning area and they will be there by the hundreds. And, to top that off, they will be ferociously (well, as ferocious as a crappie can be) guarding their nesting area. Anything that comes into the area will be struck at.

Following that great fishing of spring, there comes the heat of summer. And, for many, the crappie seem to pull off a successful Houdini and just plain disappear. Well, they did not really disappear; they just changed locations.

Most of us think the crappie stays in the brush and grass. In shallow, grassy lakes, such as in Florida, that is often true. But, in deep reservoirs and rivers, it is NOT! That misconception exists because that grass and wood cover is where 99% of us always fish for them. So, since the only crappie we catch comes from cover, we think that is where they always must be.

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continue to the next page



Young Kensi Plumley caught her 1st rainbow trout..

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dedicated schooling fish. He lives in a pack of his like relatives and he generally stays in open water.

The crappie school, like any school fish, follows the baitfish schools for food. Occasionally, the baitfish will go into an area of cover for protections and/or to feed on the aquatic



These fellows caught a lot of trout at this pay lake. *Photo courtesy of Sure Catch Fish Farm in Elkins.*

life that clings to the cover. The crappie may follow them and disperse within the cover. When that happens, and we come along and find them, we may catch crappie for a short period just as handily as during the spawn.

But, the open water is the real key to summer crappies.

Finding open water crappies in the summer months can be difficult. A depth finder may show something below the surface, but it might be any type fish, a baitfish mass, turtles, or loose wads of grass. A sonar signal can even be returned by a pocket of dense, cold water. So, we need to let the experience of others give us a timesaving head start in our search.

The depth summer crappies are found is usually a function of water clarity. In murky, stained waters, they seem to prefer depths of 8-15 feet. In waters with a normal algae content and visibility down to 4-

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6 feet, crappies appear to like the 12-20 foot range. In those gin clear waters where the Smallmouth bass also roams, I have taken them as deep as 50 feet. In my own mind, I think the crappie's positioning is based on the positioning and movement patterns of their local food supply.

The location of the crappie school in open water seems to vary by type water. In water that has some defined current flow (reservoir impoundments and rivers), crappie appear to like the main channel areas, or at least where there is a slight water movement. Possibly, this has to do with the fact that moving water has little or no temperature stratification because the water is always mixing.

In areas away from current flow, or a confined lake, they seem to continue to the next page

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like to school in open water adjacent to some cover or structure feature. I have seen this happen where a weedline bordered on a drop-off into deep water, such as where a submerged creek channel ran in close to a grass flat. I have also seen crappie key to the wall of a steep bluff bank, or off to the side of deep submerged timber.

Having a general idea as to depth and possible location, I recommend drifting live minnows as the quickest and most confident manner of finding open water summer crappie. No fish can resist live bait, whether hungry or not. And, it is easy to 'saturate' an area and eventually find the fish. Jigs can, of course, be used, but are not nor-



Young Jackson Gray, from Glen Fork, caught a big Bluestone Lake largemouth bass.

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mally as effective as live bait during the warmer months.

I use three or four rods and put a small #2 wire hook on the line. I, then, go above the hook 10 inches and add split shot weights. Normally, I will use enough weight to make the baited hook stay generally directly beneath the rod. I do not use a bobber, but rely on watching the tip of the rod for signs of a strike. If there is a wind and the boat is rocking, you may need to rig a bobber with a bobber stop at the desired depth.

Once I have the rods set up, I bait them by hooking the minnows through the rear part of the

body, near the tip of the tail. They will be very active and live longer when hooked that way, plus are not as likely to get pulled off as when hooked through the lips. I drop the bait down to the chosen depth and start to very slowly move about the area, trying to make contact with the fish. If I am using a number of rods, I will occasionally vary the depth of some of them to spread my depth search.

An interesting quirk about crappie is that they tend to school in a horizontal plane; that is, all at generally the same depth. Once we confirm a depth, that is where most of that

continue to the next page

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particular school will be found.

When you catch a crappie in this manner, it is important to immediately note where he was in relation to any surrounding cover, structure or depth. The school could be associating with a drop-off, a deep brush top or the outer edge of the weedline. If you are able to add that final factor to allow you to pinpoint them directly, the livewell is as good as full.

Finally, keep this in mind: forget all of those old fables about fish not biting in hot weather. Fish are cold-blooded creatures of Nature. Their bodily metabolism rate is highest when the water is the warmest. That means they use and, therefore, need more food during the summer than at any other time.



Zander Stalnaker caught a large drum in Jackson County.

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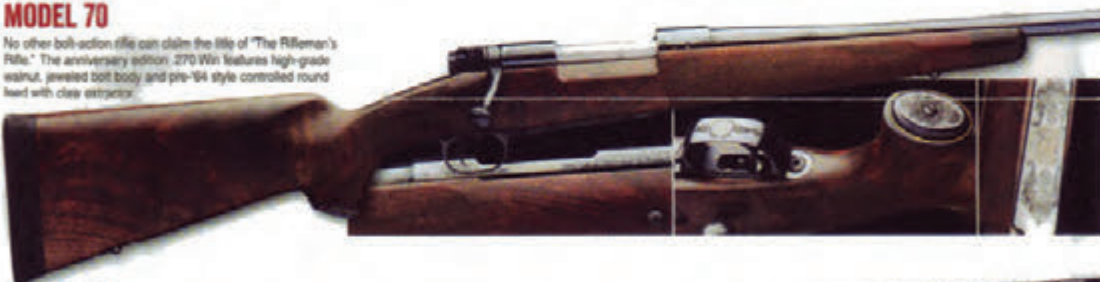
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Danny Frazier hooked a 4 pound, 9 oz. smallmouth. Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.

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Connie Townsend, from Sand Fork, hooked her largest Burnsville bass.



Josh Ankrom landed a 5 pound, 9 oz Ohio River tournament bass..

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Dawn Lanham hooked a brown trout at Anderson Lake..



Brian Burns caught a 5 1/4 pound rainbow at Mountwood Lake.

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Living Rubber

By Jordan Lee

In the 2017 GEICO Bassmaster Classic presented by DICK's Sporting Goods I used a little trick that made a big difference in my catch. It won't work everywhere, but in big bass venues when the jig bite is on it can be a killer. I'd like to share it with you.

I'm talking about swapping out your silicone jig skirts with living rubber skirts. The rubber has a tendency to flair out when it hits the bottom and create a much bigger profile. It's a gentle flair that makes the jig come alive and look like something to eat. The difference isn't all that obvious when you're holding one in your hand, but when it hits the bottom the difference is obvious.

In addition to the living rubber skirt I used two Strike King trailers at the Classic to give my bait an even bigger profile. I switched back and forth between a Rage Tail Space Monkey and a Rage Tail Space Craw. They have different actions but accomplish the same purpose.

The Space Monkey has a fairly
continue to the next page



Lily Rice, from Upshur County, hooked a nice smallmouth bass.

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big body with two arms on it and two big claws on the back. They're wide, and they have serrated edges so they make a big showing and move lots of water. It does pretty much what you'd expect a bait to do that's called a Space Monkey.

The Rage Craw is a more traditional looking crawfish type of plastic — no arms with tentacles coming out of its nose. But, like the Space Monkey, it looks big and it moves a lot of water.

I first developed this technique on Lake Guntersville. I noticed that when I made my jig look bigger and

a little gaudy I caught bigger bass, and at the same time it seemed to almost cull out the smaller ones. That's why I said before that this is something you only want to think about when you're fishing around truly big bass. It's not for 3-pounders.

Jig style and weight matters with this technique. On Lake Conroe I went with a living rubber jig but I also like a football head when the bottom's hard.

As far as water depth is concerned, I'll use a 1/2-ounce head when the water's 13 feet deep or less. If I'm fishing water that's deeper than that but less than 20 feet deep, I'll move up to a 3/4-ounce head. And, when

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the water's deeper than 20 feet I'll go with a full ounce. The combination I'm talking about works best when it's on the bottom.

There really isn't a right way or a wrong way to fish a big profile jig like I'm talking about. Like most other lures you have to try different
continue to the next page

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Ruby New caught a 36" flathead in Boone County.



Jayden Martin caught a carp in Jackson County.

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things — hop, drag, pull — until you find what makes them bite.

Matching the hatch is important, and it's a great way to catch bass. But it's also important to match your lures to the size bass you expect to catch. That theory worked out for me on Lake Conroe. I hope it works out for you on your lake.

Interesting Fish Facts

Fish have been on the earth for more than 450 million years. Fish were well established long before dinosaurs roamed the earth. There are over 25,000 identified species of fish on the earth. It is estimated that there may still be over 15,000 fish species that have not yet been identified.



Lynn Proctor reeled in a 38" musky.

There are more species of fish than all the species of amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals combined.

40% of all fish species inhabit fresh water, yet less than .01% of the earth's water is fresh water.

The spotted climbing perch is able to absorb oxygen from the air and will crawl overland using its strong pectoral fins.

Some fish like sharks don't possess an air bladder to help keep them afloat and must either swim continually or rest on the bottom.

Some fish make sounds by grating their teeth and others like some catfish make sounds from their air filled swim bladder.

Some species of fish can fly (glide) others can skip along the surface and others can even climb rock.

Fish have a specialized sense organ called the lateral line which works much like radar and helps them navigate in dark or murky water.

The largest fish is the great whale shark which can reach fifty feet in length.

The smallest fish is the Philippine goby that is less than 1/3 of an inch when fully grown.

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Some species of fish have skeletons made only of cartilage.

Fish have excellent senses of sight, touch, taste and many possess a good sense of smell and 'hearing'. Fish feel pain and suffer stress just like mammals and birds.

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Spring Gobbler

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – West Virginia’s statewide spring gobbler season opened Monday, April 17, and runs through Saturday, May 13. Hunters may kill only one bearded turkey per day and two during the season.

Youth hunters under the age of 18 who would like to experience spring gobbler hunting are encouraged to participate in the special one-day youth season, which will be held Saturday, April 15. Check the 2016-17 hunting regulations for specific details on this season.

Because the typical gobbler harvested is usually a 2-year-old bird, the Division of Natural Resources routinely projects the harvest by using brood reports from two years earlier. On a statewide scale, the brood reports from 2015 exceeded the five-year average by 14 percent, thanks in large part to the contribution of the southern region, which saw brood observations increase by 67 percent.

Observations from the mountain counties declined by 44 percent with the remaining two regions at or exceeding the prior year’s recruitment, meaning that over most of the state, relative abundance should be greater this year.

The 17-year periodical cicadas emerged last year in much of the state. This abundant food supply,

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which greatly helped survival, caused the brood reports in the northern and northwestern counties to increase by 323 percent over the five-year average. While the male pecking order usually suppresses the young males (jakes) from coming readily to a hunter’s call, the sheer numbers of them in this general area could result in more jakes



Logan Coleman brought in a large Putnam County buck

in the harvest.

As spring progresses, many hunters quit hunting for a variety of reasons, including a perception that the birds have finished gobbling. Obviously, those highly vocal turkeys that are more prone to calling are taken during the first week of the season, which generates 58 percent of the total harvest.

However, good-to-excellent hunting can still be had through the end of the season. According to a number of hunters, some of the best hunts take place in the last week and last days of the season as gobblers that are interested in breeding easily come to calls.

DNR officials want to remind sportsmen and women that hunting turkeys over bait and killing hens is illegal and unethical, and disrespects the great sport of spring gobbler hunting. Turkey hunters are encouraged to report any such activity to their local Natural Resources Police Officer or call 911 to report the violation.

Turkey populations are on the rise. Good luck this season.



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Riley McCloy - 10 - bagged a 23 pound turkey on the youth hunt.



Gary Luff reeled in a large Ohio River smallmouth bass.



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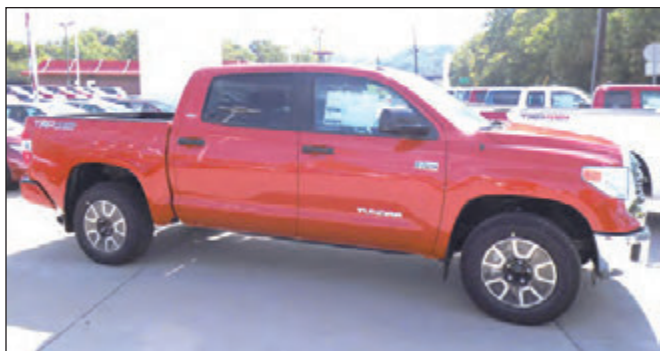


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