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Issue 273

November/December 2018



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TIPS**

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Magazine

Volume 1 Issue 273

Publisher and Editor
Mark A. Goudy

Contributing Editors
West Virginia Division Of
Natural Resources

No Subscriptions Offered

Printed Every Six Weeks.

W.Va. Sportsman

P.O. Box 5521
Vienna, WV 26105

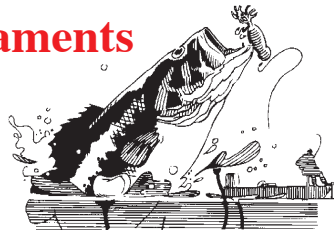
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Cover Photo

A very white piebald deer was taken by 8 year old Nolan Fox from Raleigh Co. He and his dad had seen the 7 point many times. They were using a ground blind.

Crossbow hunting is getting bigger than ever in WV. It was a shame that they were not being sold a long time ago. Children, women and older male hunters can now enjoy archery season.

TEXT, mail or email your large fish or game pictures. Info is on page 38.

Deer Feeding Habits

Food is extremely important in deer hunting. Food is at the center of everything — even the rut. It's that important. So when we're trying to stick a big deer, we have to take into account their feeding habits.

1. They Are "Concentrate Selectors"

This not only applies to big deer but all deer. What this means is deer consume the most nutrient-rich, highly palatable foods they can find. This often means they bite off the top of a plant, tip of a new shoot of grass, or bud on a tree or plant. They generally do not eat the entire plant, just the best part of it. Then, when they've bedded down, they'll regurgitate what they've eaten, chew their cud and digest it further before swallowing it again.

2. Food Drives Everything

Food is king. It's always king no

matter the time of the season or year. Everything revolves around it — even bedding areas. Granted, mature deer choose bedding areas based on the security they provide. Bucks will travel great distances to reach a food source. But in areas where deer don't receive as much pressure — golden nuggets of land in the deer world — they give up some of that security to bed closer to food sources. In areas that are pressured, bucks will travel further and you won't ever see them on those major food sources. That means you have to hunt further away from food sources and closer to bedding areas.

3. They Feed in Staging Areas First

I generally don't hunt over major food sources when I'm trying to kill a mature deer that's on my radar. It is possible to catch a careless buck working a big field in daylight. But it's rare. However, it is much more common to see a big deer on its feet in daylight feeding in a staging area. These can be small food plots, pockets of dropped acorns, etc. Find these locations between bedding areas and major food sources. That's the best way to kill a mature buck while it's eating.

4. They Take Meandering Routes

continue to the next page



Roger Russell, from Jane Lew, caught a nice Stonewall bass,

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to the Dinner Table

Does and young bucks typically take a direct route to the food. They don't take as many precautions as mature bucks. The old ones, they take meandering routes to food sources. They play the wind. They play the thermals. They take travel routes that are strategic for them. In order to understand how this applies to where you hunt, you have to study that place and think like a wary deer.

5. Most Don't Make It to Major Food Sources Until After Dark

As previously mentioned, most mature bucks don't make it to major food sources until after the sun sets. It's a survival tactic. Move less in daylight and run into less hunters. How do we overcome that? Hunt further away from these food sources.

6. They Like Their Salad with

Dressing

I've personally noticed that deer — and mature bucks — seem to move more right after a good rain. I don't have any data or science to support why that is. I just know they do. Who knows, maybe they like their salad with dressing.

7. Food Source Preferences Vary

Every buck has a different personality. Therefore, food source preferences will vary from buck to buck. Some bucks prefer beans to corn. Some prefer corn to beans. Some don't prefer either and stick to browse. Every deer is different. Determine what the individual deer you're after prefers by scouting.

8. Deer Take Cuisine Vacations

Recent studies have proven that deer go on excursions. They'll leave their home range and go elsewhere for a period of time. This can range from hours to days. But they

take these "vacations" periodically. Now, I don't know what causes them to do this. No one does. And I'm not suggesting food is the reason. But one thing is for sure, they ain't eatin' at home when they do. They're using food sources they typically don't use. So if the deer you're hunting suddenly disappear

continue to page 7



Alan Murphy caught a nice New River smallmouth.



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appears, or if you see a new deer for a short period of time, this is likely what happened.

9. Feeding Habits Aren't Really Habits

Deer are very fickle creatures. And food sources are always changing. Because of that, their behavior, bedding areas, and travel routes are always changing, too. You have to stay ahead of them and know what food sources deer will be hitting before they hit them.

10. Deer Eat During the Day

Don't think deer don't move during the day. They do. And bucks don't lay down from dawn to dusk. They get up to feed. They get up to drink. They get up to relieve themselves. However, when mature deer do feed during the day, it's generally within 100 to 150 yards of their bedding area. So if you can find a good food source close to a thick bedding area, you'll be in the money for some action.

River Otter Carcasses Needed

ELKINS, W.Va. — The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources is asking trappers to donate river otter carcasses to assist in collecting much-needed data on otter populations in the state. Reproductive and age data collected from carcasses will be used to model the state's population and better determine how the otter population would respond to any changes in bag limits and season lengths.

DNR is looking to collect 50-75 carcasses a year over the course of the next five trapping seasons. A \$20 gift card is being offered for each useable carcass, which include those with skulls and all organs intact.

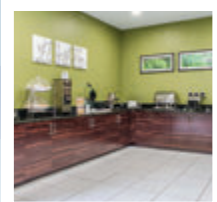
Trappers are asked to freeze carcasses as soon as they are skinned. Fresh or frozen carcasses may be delivered to any DNR district wildlife office where a data sheet must

be filled out by DNR staff. Trappers may also make arrangements to have their carcasses picked up by calling one of the district offices listed below.

For more information about the study or carcass collections, contact the district office near you or furbearer program coordinator Rich Rogers at rich.e.rogers@wv.gov or (304) 822-3551.



Mikayla Jones hooked a Bluestone River smallmouth.



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Avoid Deer Collisions With Your Vehicle

FRENCH CREEK, W.Va. — The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources urges motorists to exercise caution while driving during the fall months because vehicle collisions with deer typically increase during this time of year.

"Because West Virginia has an abundant white-tailed deer population, there are more opportunities for collisions, especially during the peak breeding season in October and November when deer are more active," said Tyler Evans, DNR Wildlife Resources Section wild-

life biologist. "On average, about 40 percent of deer-vehicle collisions in West Virginia take place between October and December."

The state's rugged terrain also contributes to collisions, as high-quality deer habitat often is in valleys where conditions allow for agricultural production and more natural food sources. Winding, hilly roads bordered by forests also reduce the distance drivers can see animals ahead, increasing the chances of collisions.

DNR urges motorists to observe the following driving tips:

Be aware of your surroundings

and make use of your peripheral vision. If you see a deer in the roadway, immediately reduce your speed and honk your horn using short blasts.

Drive with your headlights on and use high beams whenever it is safe to do so.

Drive at a reduced speed, especially during early morning and late evening hours when deer are more active.

Do not swerve or leave your lane to avoid a deer. If you encounter a deer, press your brake pedal firmly and attempt to stop.

Always drive defensively.



Todd Snider got a huge archery deer in Ritchie County.



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Tyler Davis and Tai Letan won a bass event on Sept. 30 at Stonewall Jackson. They had a 6 fish weight of 18 pounds, 15 oz. They had a 5 pound, 13 oz and a 5 pound, 15 oz in their bag.



Monte Kreps and Steve Casto won the Stonewall Classic with a 2 day weight of 27 pounds, 5 oz. This was their second win at this event.



Dan & Ron Harper had the big bass at the Stonewall Classic - a 6 pound, 7 oz. largemouth.

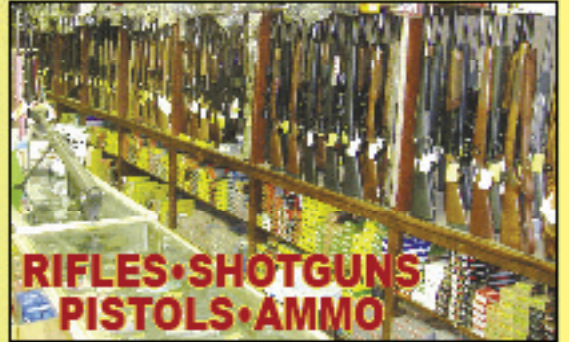
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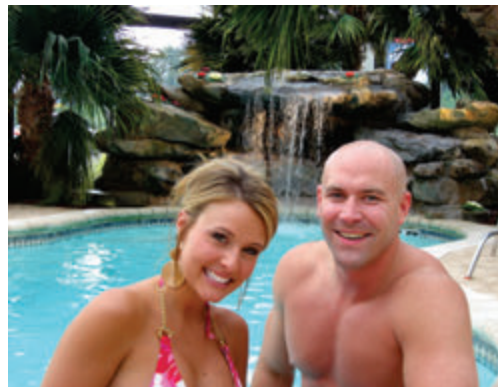
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DNR Mast Survey

ELKINS, W.Va. — Hunters getting ready for the fall hunting seasons can now consult the 2018 Mast Survey and Hunting Outlook publication, available on the Hunting section of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources website at www.wvdnr.gov.

Since 1971, the DNR Wildlife Resources Section, in cooperation with volunteers from numerous other agencies, has conducted a fall mast survey to determine the abundance of mast produced by 18 species of trees and shrubs.

“The availability of fall foods has significant impacts on wild-



Mark Grey caught a 5 pound, 15 oz big bass at the Stonewall Classic.



Mike Batten landed a 5 pound, 2 oz. bass at the Stonewall Classic.

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life populations and harvests,” said Chris Ryan, supervisor of the Game Management Services for the DNR Wildlife Resources Section. “Our biologists have used the mast survey data to demonstrate a strong correlation between mast conditions and deer, bear and turkey harvests. In addition to the impacts on harvests, the amount of food available each year can affect the reproductive success of numerous species, which affects population in following years.”

Production of white oak acorns, walnuts and hickory nuts is signifi-

cantly higher than the long-term average and will have effects on the 2018–2019 hunting seasons. Black/red oak, scarlet oak and black cherry are down significantly from last year and well below their long-term average.

“It is very important for hunters to scout and consider the type and amount of food available in the areas they hunt,” Ryan said. “Hunters can find a wealth of facts in the Mast Survey and Hunting Outlook, and it should provide them valuable information before heading into the field.”




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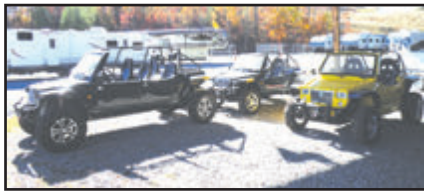
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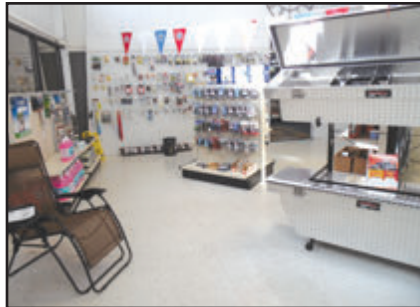
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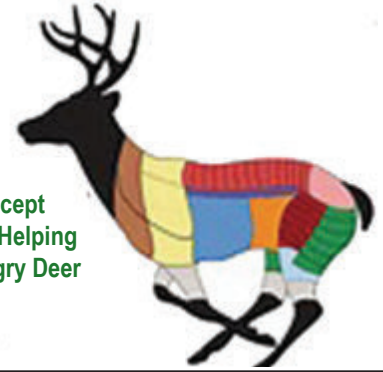
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Catching Fall Crappie

Fall days looking for crappie can feel more like a scavenger hunt than a day out on the water, but these tips are sure to help you find them

To catch big fall crappie like this, anglers may have to dig deep into their bag of autumn fishing tricks. To catch big fall crappie like this, anglers may have to dig deep into their bag of autumn fishing tricks. (Photo courtesy of Keith Sutton)

Autumn fishing frustrates many crappie anglers. During fall, America's favorite panfish often are scattered and hard to find. Crappie may be deep one day, shallow the next and suspended at mid-depths the next. Fish may feed ravenously in the morning and get a bad case of

lockjaw in the afternoon.

On the lakes and reservoirs usually targeted by crappie anglers, hot-weather crappie tend to stay in or near the thermocline. Shallow-water action might be good during cool, low-light periods, but crappie rarely venture to the "dead zone" below the thermocline. For this reason, pinpointing schools of summer fish is relatively simple; find the cool, oxygen-rich water that forms the thermocline and you'll find crappie.

This changes when fall begins. Cool weather begins lowering the surface water temperature. As the upper layer cools, it becomes heavier and sinks. This action forces warmer, lighter water below, back to the surface. This water subsequently is cooled, just as the previous surface layer was, and descends as it cools. This mixing or "turnover" continues several weeks until the thermocline dis-

appears and all water in the lake is roughly the same temperature. This mixing effect also replenishes oxygen in deep water.

The end result is that fish, formerly restricted to narrow bands of ac-
continue to the next page



Fonda Withrow, from Indore, caught a 40 pound carp.



Rodger Snyder used a bow for a great 10 point. Photo courtesy of Trappers Den in Cowen.

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ceptable oxygen and temperature, are no longer limited in their movements. Crappie once barred from the coolest depths because of low oxygen levels now may roam freely to much deeper water. Likewise, where once fish could not spend extended periods in extreme shallows due to high temperatures and low oxygen levels, after turnover,

even these areas are acceptable. Crappie may now be found deep, shallow or anywhere in between.

Some waters don't experience turnover because they don't stratify in summer. Rivers are a case in point. So are many large, shallow, wind-swept lakes and some reservoirs with lock-and-dam facilities or hydroelectric generators.

In waters where fall turnover does occur, however, the angler will need to dig deep into his or her bag of tricks to zero in on schools of crappie. And it never hurts to have a few new tricks in your bag. Here are some that could help.

Find the Crappies' Comfort Zones

The secret to crappie-fishing success, regardless of the season, is realizing that crappie always concentrate in areas providing the most comfortable living conditions and learning to identify those areas. In fall, conditions are theoretically

such that crappie can live anywhere within a lake. In actuality, factors such as oxygen content, light penetration and food availability still greatly influence a crappie's choice of living quarters.

Consider, for example, that all the debris and poorly oxygenated water being pushed upward from
continue to the next page



Tony Parsons caught a 6 pound, 7 oz. North Bend largemouth.



Sky Warren, from Weston, hooked a 42" musky at Stonecoal Lake.

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the lake bed when turnover begins temporarily “trashes” the whole system. Crappie respond by seeking areas with good quality water. To find them, savvy anglers do likewise. An easy way is working tributaries bringing fresh water into the lake. Another way is looking for areas where turnover has not begun. On some large reservoirs, different arms turn over at different times; anglers can concentrate their efforts in areas that aren’t visibly affected.

When turnover causes excessive amounts of decaying debris to circulate in the water column, sudden significant drops in oxygen can result. When this happens, crappie must find oxygenated water immediately. They frequently solve the problem by going directly to the nearest source, which is surface aeration from wind and waves. Consequently, windswept shorelines with shallow cover may be productive crappie fishing spots.

Your first order of business when fishing during the turnover period should be finding comfort zones such as those just described and working them systematically to continue to the next page



Scotty Smith got a huge 8 point with a bow. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.

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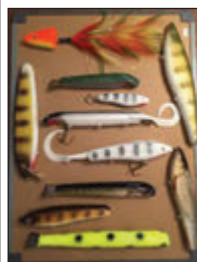
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pinpoint crappie.
 Try Standing Timber

When turnover ends and the water starts to clear, crappie often concentrate around standing timber. Here the fish can move shallow or deep as water and weather conditions dictate. On cloudy or windy days when light doesn't penetrate very far into the water, crappie may be within a few feet of the surface. Bright, sunny, post-frontal days may find them hugging the bottom. Adjust your tactics accordingly.

"When fishing standing timber, fish each tree for only a couple of seconds," says Missouri crappie pro Kevin Rogers whose specialty is jigging vertical timber. "If you don't get a bite, move to the next tree. Too many people make the mistake of sitting or tying up to a tree. You'll catch more fish by using your trolling motor and moving from tree to tree."

Rogers used such tactics to qualify for the Crappie USA Classic six consecutive years. The way you present your lure, he says, important.

"When vertical jigging around standing timber, after your lure reaches the bottom, grab the line with your free hand and gently raise the lure up the tree," he says. "Crappie will not go down to hit your bait so raising the lure puts the bait in their face. They can't



Benny Buckley, from Gay, hooked a huge carp.







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stand it."
 Dealing With Cold Fronts
 Passing cold fronts are a common fall phenomenon. And when

a front moves in, the fishing can quickly turn sour. Crappie still can be caught, however, if the angler
 continue to the next page



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knows how to deal with this situation.

“Anglers can’t control the weather,” says Kentucky crappie guide Steve McCadams (www.stevemccadams.com). “But they can adjust their presentation and be more effective in catching crappie when weather patterns turn nasty. I’ve seen crappie have a drastic mood swing literally overnight when cold fronts descend, lowering surface temperatures with bone-chilling winds. After the front passes, high skies with a high-pressure system alter the crappies’ feeding habits, too.”

Crappie relate close to structure in this scenario, says McCadams.

“To catch them, you must slow



Lily Garcia, from VA, caught a large trout.

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down your presentation to a vertical style, keeping the bait in front of the fish longer and in their specific depth range,” he notes. “Don’t expect the fish to be aggressive and chase down a moving bait because they’re holding tight on structure. Light or small lure sizes will help too, as will using a bobber for slow, sinking presentations that assist you in keeping the bait in the strike zone longer.”

Pontoon Flipping

Ohio crappie guide and tournament pro Russ Bailey often concentrates his fall fishing efforts around pontoons, or party barges.

"Pontoons provide excellent crappie fishing in early fall when the days are still hot and the nights are starting to cool off," says Bailey. "Pontoons provide one key thing for the crappie this time of year: shade. You don't have to have brush or other cover under them to catch fish. As the nights begin to cool, the fish start moving to shall-

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lower water. During the day, when the sun is hot and bright, the pontoons provide the cover they need."

Bailey uses a long pole to flip jigs into the shady reaches beneath the

continue to the next page



Kendall Waybright bagged a 414 pound (field dressed) black bear. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.



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pontoons where crappie are likely to be holding.

“If you work at it, you can learn to use a 10-foot or 11-foot rod to flip under the pontoons,” he says. “But ‘shooting’ with a 6- or 7-foot rod can be very effective as well. Using colored line such as Berkley Iron Silk or Stren Hi Vis Gold will help catch more fish because many times you will not feel the strike at all, but you can very easily see the colored line jump. Concentrate on getting your jig back as far as possible under the rear of the pontoon. This can make the difference between catching just one fish and catching 20 fish.”

Additional Tips

Spider trolling and drifting are excellent ways to pinpoint scattered schools of autumn crappie. Rig several poles with different lures/baits set at different depths, then

move around in likely looking areas. When you catch a fish, change rigging so all your poles conform to the depth and bait preferences exhibited by that fish.

Fall crappie often follow secondary bottom channels when moving between deep water and shallow. A sonar unit is invaluable for pinpointing this type of structure and the fish themselves.

Jigs and minnows are the best crappie baits year-round, but if one or the other doesn't produce, try a jig/minnow combo. A marriage of live bait and artificial lure sometimes does the trick for finicky fall crappie.

Be patient and persistent. Fall conditions force fish to roam, thus fishermen must also be willing to move frequently, forsaking likely looking spots or those that produced yesterday. If the tactics cov-

ered here don't produce crappie, improvise another strategy and keep trying.



Cathy Moore used a bow for a large buck in Tyler Co. *Photo courtesy of Tyler Outdoor Supply in Middlebourne.*



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To avoid danger and stay alive, a whitetail uses its ability to detect faint odors more than any other sense. Without argument, its nose is its greatest aid in survival; however, it can also prove to be its undoing when it comes up against a hunter who develops the right strategy of combining attractant and cover scents. To do this, a hunter needs to know what to use, when to use it and then execute a plan that will put a buck at total ease and even pull him in for an easy shot. Here's how to build your own easy-to-follow scent plan for big buck success.

Time Your Scents

First, you have to use the right scent for the right phase of the rut you're hunting. I still see a lot of guys who use that generic bottle of doe pee pulled from a discount store shelf throughout the season and expect it to bring bucks running as the rut hits fever pitch. I've also seen hunters who dropped top dollar on doe in estrous scent and started dumping the stuff out as early as mid-October in the honest belief they were going to trick bucks into thinking they were the

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first doe ready to mate. Again, with the foolish notion that bucks would come running. Both types of hunter are missing the point and not getting the real benefits from attractant scents that can be had.

"It's important that a hunter use a scent that is believable to the deer," says Mike Mattly, public relations manager of Code Blue scents and an avid Iowa deer hunter. Here's continue to the next page



Coy Bailey ahs an archery buck with a wide rack.



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what you need to use and when to use it.

Doe Urine—Basic urine from a doe is good throughout the season, but mostly during the earliest weeks, before the rut when bucks are still in bachelor groups and not yet su-



Chad Wallbrown landed a 40 pound Kanawha River blue cat.

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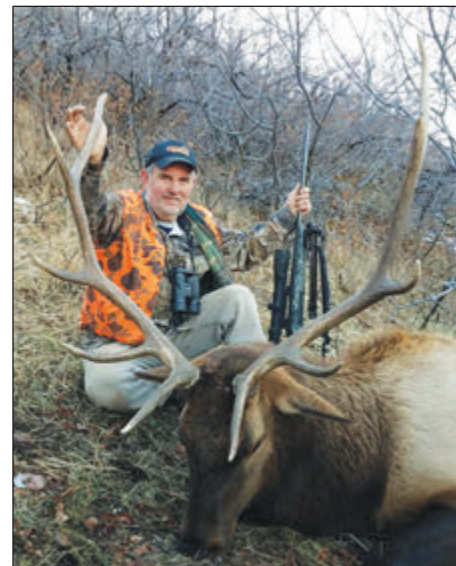
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per competitive. More than anything, doe urine will reassure deer as they pass through an area that everything is all right. A relaxed deer is much easier to hunt than one on edge. This serves the same purpose throughout the season and can bring curious deer in on a trail dragged with the scent. As the rut recedes and deer begin to fall back into feeding patterns, doe urine is a solid go-to scent.

Buck Urine—A quality buck urine used in conjunction with scrapes (real or mock) or in other high-traffic areas is a good transition attractant leading up to the rut. Aggression in bucks is building and they are becoming more competitive. The smell of an intruder in their space, mixed with the sound of deep grunts and rattles, can draw them near in an effort to locate the interloper. Now is the time to challenge a buck.

Doe Estrous—Not until you are within two weeks of the peak of the rut do you want to use the higher-dollar doe estrous scents. As soon as you notice bucks beginning to chase tail-wagging does and continue to the next page



Walter Stalnaker, from Weston, went to Utah for a nice elk.

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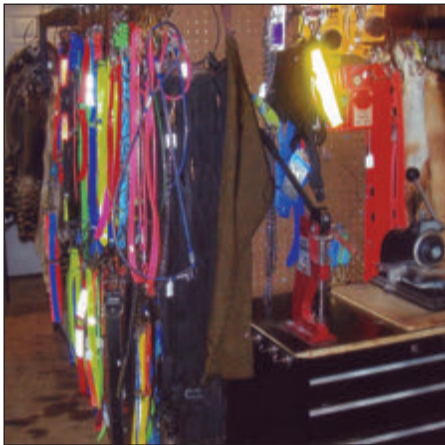
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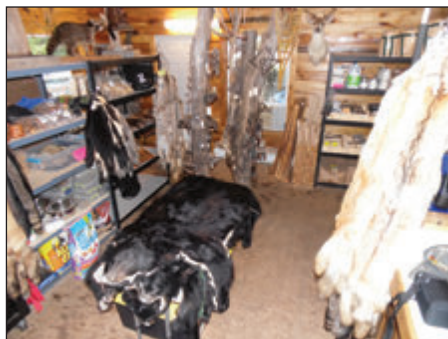


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your trail cams pick up increased activity, you want to drape the area around your best stand with estrous scent. Use it both on a drag into your stand and around your setup to act as a cover to scent and as an attractant. Use this throughout the key phase of the rut until you detect the rutting urge beginning to wane and then push it a few days more. Not all does will come in or go out of estrus at the same time, so by being one of the last ones, you may pull that one buck still seeking.

Tarsal Gland—Fuel both a big boy's rage and sexual drive by busting out a little tarsal scent from a buck, along with that doe in estrous. Drip them both in mock scrapes along an existing scrape line or mud-worn deer trail and stay at the ready. Both work well on a drag. Use throughout the rut peak. Code Blue's Gravedigger line of scent-impregnated soils are ideal for scrape use.

Scent Setup The Right Way

Don't spend money on scents only to fail in using them in a way
continue to the next page



This lady used her bow for a quality buck.



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that will maximize possible results. There's a trick to placing the scent around your stand.

Be Realistic—A lot of hunters expect to hang scents out and then watch as deer come running in to check them out. To anyone who has hunted with scents, however, that just isn't the case. Scent locations serve more to get a deer just walking past to stop and check it out, giving a hunter a better chance at getting a stationary, broadside shot.

Be a Drag—Using a scent drag soaked in the proper scent serves two purposes: One, it helps cover your own scent you may leave behind when walking in and two, it can serve to catch a buck's attention as he is cruising by and draw him in a little closer. Again, I don't



Randall Light used a bow for a nice Logan County buck.

want to oversell the latter. A heavily placed scent trail doesn't mean a buck is going to come running right into your stand along that path. More often than not, it will peak his attention so he will work around the area trying to catch more scent to confirm what he hopes is an actual doe.

Use Wicks—Sure, cotton balls in plastic canisters work, but they can also alter the smell of scents when combined with whatever material the canisters are made from. Wicks

continue to the next page



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are made expressly for the job, and many today come with their own containers where you can store them free from contamination. The containers also help to avoid fewer sloppy spills.

Minimize Scent Locations—I used to put four or five scent bombs in a big circle around me to cover every direction. Not necessary, says Wildlife Research Center's Ron Bice. "All you need are two wicks," Bice

says. Hang one to your left and one to your right in order to catch anything passing by. If it makes you feel better, hang one directly in front of you as well. Bice also warns to never hang scents behind you or in spots where you won't be able to make a shot.

Keep in Range—You also don't want to hang them farther than you can shoot. Place them adjacent to shooting lanes or likely travel routes within shooting distance of your stand, so when a deer stops to check it out, you can take the shot. Higher is Better—Scent bombs placed on the ground may seem like they would be more realistic, but bottom-line is, they are also less effective. Instead, hang them at least five or six feet from the ground in

order to be better caught by gentle breezes and thermals, thereby expanding the chance to draw a curious (or agitated) deer into your setup. When creating mock scrapes or enhancing a real one, use a scent dripper. This will both deposit scent on the ground where a deer will expect it and catch the higher breezes where the smell can be caught from farther out.

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Donita Cox went out west for an 8x8 elk.. Photo courtesy of Crooked Creek Archery in Williamstown.



Zoey Ryan got her first buck with her crossbow.

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Fall Rabbit Hunting

Rabbit hunting is a fast growing avocation for hunters. It's a welcome respite from "cabin fever," there are a lot of them, and they taste real good. The problem is, that lots of hunters fail to recognize the often simple tricks that will set apart a good hunt from a "skunker." Here are some points that I've learned over the years about rabbit hunting, and I hope you'll find them quite useful. It's sort of the "light bulb going off in your head," say-

ing, "gee, I never thought of that", or "I never knew that."

Rabbit hunting is pretty simple. You grab a shotgun or a .22, for instance, go to your favorite woods, and pick apart these tasty little fur bearers. You can increase the odds of success by doing some pre-season scouting, and recognizing that rabbits are most active early in the morning, and late in the day.

Look through the woods that
continue to the next page

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want to hunt. The best places to look are fence rows, with brush around the bottom, fallen trees, and old brush piles. These are real "hot spots" for rabbits. They seek cover and concealment, and the areas described are where they normally will want to locate.

The most productive days to hunt rabbits are cloudy, cold, damp days. A perfect day is one with a foggy morning or afternoon, where there is heavy mist in the air, and the woods are real, real quiet. You can sneak in the woods very stealthily, making sure you move slowly, and keep a keen eye out. Constantly watch ahead of you for any type of movement. Savvy hunters will find one of the spots that we've described, and when coming up on it, will literally give it a good, swift kick. Trust me: If there's a rabbit in that spot, it'll come scurrying out at warp speed.

Good, you say. Well, not quite. Those rabbits come really flying out, and I don't care how quick or how good a shot you are, you're not going to get a good shot instantly. "It ain't gonna work that way." What you'll want to do when you see the rabbit run out, is stand still, and either whistle or click your tongue. Some type of noise from your mouth. Half the time or more, the rabbit will instantly stop, and offer you a perfect shot.

Another good thing to know is that you should never move. Stay perfectly still and motionless. That rabbit will come right back to you. No kidding. They do. They will stop, turn around and circle right back to where they came from.

Continue to zip through the woods, and you'll get your bag limit quickly, following these simple suggestions -- again, assuming you've pre-scouted the area and know it has a rabbit population.

One thing that you should recognize and to me at least is a negative when it comes to rabbit hunting, is that they're usually infested with fleas. Lots of hunters don't know that. When you get home, leave
continue to the next page

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Jake Ramey used a bow in Logan Co. for an excellent buck.

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the rabbits outside for awhile, until their bodies get cold. When that happens those warm loving fleas will skedaddle. If you do bring the rabbits in the house immediately, you're going to have an infestation of fleas – and for sure if you've got a cat or dog, they'll become infested.

Being a successful rabbit hunter means you'll really have had some fun experiencing nature, and will put some delicious "protein" on your family's dinner table. You also won't have to worry about mortgaging your home to afford one of those fancy dan restaurant dinners, which for rabbit can go up to \$50 (no kidding- -that's what they can run). Br'er Rabbit is waiting for you. Go for it.



A lady bagged an early season black bear. *Photo courtesy of Trappers Den in Cowen.*

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

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

Come visit where heroes were raised, legends born and memories are made! For more information contact:

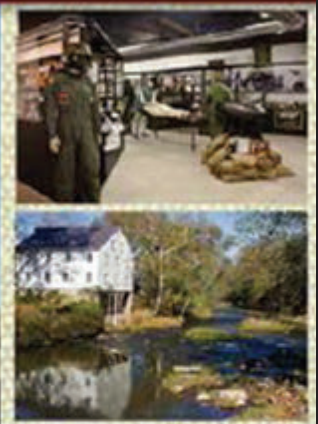
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Fall River Fishing

It's hot now but in no time it'll be fall and that means good river fishing. The water will be low, or maybe normal given all the heavy rainstorms we've had this year and that'll make the fish easier to find, if not easier to catch.

When rivers get high, like after a heavy storm, the water swells and the fish spread out all over the place. We've all heard stories of guys catching them around picnic tables in flooded recreation areas. Those stories are probably true and they bring a smile to our faces, but those conditions make the fish really hard to target. There's too much water to cover.

Another good thing that happens in the fall is that the water clears up some and the float goes away. You can concentrate on fishing instead of playing dodgeball with floating trees that you may or may not be able to see.

I start my fall search by looking for whatever current I can find. There won't be much so it might take me a while, but it'll usually be time well spent because the bass will be looking for it, too. And

when they find it they'll they stay put and feed.

During most of the year you'll usually find bass on the downstream side of current. They position themselves inside ambush points and wait for something to wash past them. But this is not most of the year. This is the fall. You'll find more of them — especially the better ones — on the upstream side.

Laydowns in current are especially good in the fall. They collect algae and other scraps of vegetation which then attract baitfish. That's one of the two things bass are looking for — food and protection from predators.

As far as a recommendation for a good fall river lure goes, that won't be easy. At some time darn

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Details On Page 3

near anything in your tackle box will catch them. That said: I always have a squarebill handy.

A spinnerbait is a good choice, too. The water's fairly clear and there's always one you have on hand, or can customize real quick, that'll match the hatch. And, at times topwater baits will be effective, especially if the water's calm and you don't feel comfortable fishing with a spinnerbait.

Point your rig towards a local river this fall. Take advantage of what it has to offer before the really cold



Ed Burnside caught a huge trout. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.



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Cody Davis, from Volga, hooked an 8 pound bass at Watoga Park.

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Archery Season Open Now

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — West Virginia's 2018 archery and crossbow seasons for white-tailed deer, black bear and wild boar will opened Saturday, Sept. 29. The archery and crossbow deer and bear seasons run through Dec. 31.

The wild boar archery and cross-

bow season is a split season, with the first segment also from Sept. 29 to Dec. 31 and an additional late season from Feb. 1 to Feb. 3, 2019. To hunt the February wild boar season, hunters will need a 2019 hunting license.

Bear hunters must buy a Bear continue to the next page



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Other than the Class DS stamp, no additional stamps are needed to harvest bears during the archery and crossbow season, except for nonresidents hunting on the Na-

tional Forest (Class I stamp). The daily bag limit for bear remains one bear per day.

Hunters must buy stamps if they wish to harvest additional deer during the archery and/or crossbow seasons. One or two additional archery deer, depending on the county, may be taken with Class RB (resident) or Class RRB (nonresident) stamps (one deer per stamp). Additional archery stamps must be
continue to the next page

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bought before Sept. 29.

Resident underage and senior hunters must buy a Class RB stamp to take additional archery or cross-bow deer, but resident landowners hunting on their own property and Class DT (Life-threatening Conditions) license holders are not required to purchase any additional archery stamps.

In 12 counties or portions there-

of, hunters must take an antlerless archery deer before harvesting a second antlered deer in that county.

Individuals may take up to two deer in one day during the archery or crossbow seasons. The first deer does not have to be electronically checked before harvesting the second deer in the same day. However, only one antlered deer may be taken in the same day during any

season.

Special regulations exist for the four archery-only counties -- Logan, McDowell, Mingo and Wyoming. In these counties, only two archery deer may be taken, one of which must be antlerless. In these counties, crossbows can only be used by holders of Class Y/YY permits.

The wild boar archery and cross-bow seasons are open in Boone, Logan, Raleigh and Wyoming counties. The season bag limit is one boar.

For more information on hunting regulations, hunters should consult the 2018-2019 West Virginia Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary available at DNR offices, license agents, or on the WVDNR website www.wvdnr.gov.

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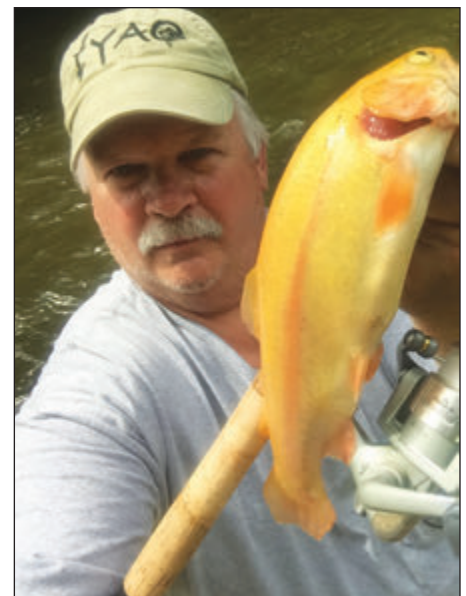
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Details On Page 38



Terry Turkey caught a nice golden trout on the Williams River.

Hunting The Rut

Everyones knows about the rut, when bucks let their guard down and hunters capitalize on the breeding-centric distractions.

Make sure you follow these tips when the rut arrives for you best chance at bagging a big buck. These are the eight most common mistakes hunters make.

1. Not staying put

The number one reason for deer hunting failure during the rut is leaving the stand too early. This is a time when bucks are off their usual patterns. They are searching wildly and widely for does. With one thing on their mind, bucks will be seen wandering throughout the day.

2. Not being flexible

Why do hunters refuse to move to another location even after days of seeing no game? Unless you have credible, fresh information that a buck is using the area near



Corey Boyles, from Peeltree, caught a 43" carp.



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your stand, you need to be willing to move.

Game cameras, tracks and sightings from neighbors or landowners will provide additional information. You must act quickly. Bucks won't necessarily stay in one spot for long during the rut. Move to a high-traffic area where you can see a lot of real estate.

Aside from trail cameras, you can also look for bedding areas and food sources.

3. Not using the right calls

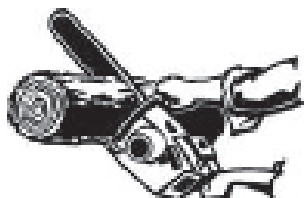
Quit using your doe bleat call you

were using during pre-rut. After the
continue to the next page



Jake Crislip used dogs for a good bear. *Courtesy of Trappers Den in Cowen.*

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Dalton Cutwright, owner

early season, bucks are only interested in does they can breed. Use a "doe in estrus" call. Keep your call on the deer's level. If you are in an elevated stand, rig your can or square call.

Tie a line around the bottom of the call with two tails coming off of it. Anchor one to the ground and tie off the other to your ladder. Tie a second line to the top of the call and take it up into your stand.

Make sure you tape over the hole in the bottom of the call. From the stand you pull the line that turns your call upright. When you let it go, the can turns over and you get a nice "bwaaah."

However, make sure you don't do too much calling. You might give yourself away.

4. Ditching the decoy

A lot of deer hunters quit using a decoy after archery season or early gun season. You need to lure a good buck away from real does. If

one will stand still, he may abandon those he's been chasing all day to check her out.

Screw a real deer tail onto your decoy in a horizontal position, imitating a doe ready to breed. Now the "Ms. November" decoy has a realistic breeding posture.

5. Forgetting the buck grunt

Wandering bucks that are not on a hot doe's trail have little tolerance for competition from other bucks. A much bigger buck may be intimidating and a yearling buck may not be a threat.

Use two grunt calls--one of a young buck and one of a more mature buck. Hit the young buck four times as often as the mature buck call. This will really piss off a rutting buck.

6. Letting weather stop you

Don't stay home to avoid early-morning rain or snow. When the bucks have to hold up overnight they are itching to get after does as soon as the sun comes up. Get your

continue to the next page



Tyler Harper used a bow in Kanawha County for a nice buck.



Brandon Vinson used a bow for a huge buck.

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waterproof gear on and wait them out.

7. Misusing scent

Don't bother dribbling some doe-in-heat scent around your blind. Put it in a clean spray bottle. Spray vegetation and surrounding foliage about waist-high--where the doe would emit scent.

If you can, use two different brands and spray some of each all the way to your stand. A buck will think he has a couple of hotties figured out and he'll follow that scent.

8. Showing up late

You can no longer get to your stand half an hour before daylight. Rut-crazy bucks can't wait to get back in the chase. They'll start wandering well before dark. Does will head out to avoid them.

If you bump the deer out of your area, you may be done. Get settled in the stand at least two hours before daylight and wait it out.

Hunting for whitetail deer during the peak of the rut requires a change in tactics. If you continue to hunt using conventional methods, you're doing it wrong. You may get lucky but your chances improve greatly if you're lucky and hunting smart.








Casey Lester went to McDowell County for a drop tine buck.

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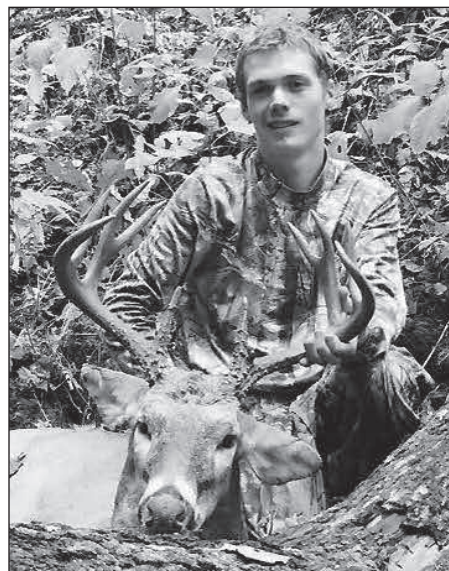
Wild game provides a low-fat, high-protein alternative to beef or other commercial meats. For example, white-tailed deer (venison) contains fewer calories and approximately five times less fat than the equivalent serving of beef.

"Wild game that is legally harvested during one of West Virginia's hunting seasons provides a healthy source of protein for many West Virginians," said Tyler Evans, wildlife biologist with the West

Virginia Division of Natural Resources. "Many West Virginians incorporate venison, wild turkey and other wild game into their diets on a regular basis."

Hunters and their families are not the only West Virginians who benefit from the state's abundant supply of wild game. The DNR-sponsored Hunters Helping the Hungry (HHH) Program processes deer for needy families and individuals in the Mountain State.

Since the program's inception
continue to the next page



Hayden Adams brought in a nice Logan County archery buck.

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inception in 1992, approximately 979,549 pounds of venison have been donated. In 2017 alone, 554 deer (19,702 pounds of nutritious venison) were donated to the HHH Program and contributed to approximately 26,269 family-style meals.

For more information about the Hunters Helping the Hungry Program, please visit the DNR website at www.wvdnr.gov or call the DNR district office in French Creek (304-924-6211).

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Trey Miller went to Pocahontas County for an archery buck.

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