



**FREE**

Issue 307

April/May 2023

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Turkey**

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**Volume 32 Issue 307**

Publisher and Editor

**Mark A. Goudy**

Contributing Editors

West Virginia Division Of  
Natural Resources

**No Subscriptions Offered**

*Printed Every Six Weeks*

**W.Va. Sportsman**

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## Cover Photo

Grafton resident, Steve Mumaw, went to Dog Run Lake with his kayak in mid-March. He landed a quality 27" rainbow trout estimated to be around 9 pounds.

It looks like this terribly long winter may be behind us now. Fishing and the upcoming turkey season is on the warmer horizon.

Be safe in turkey season.

*Photo courtesy of Hardcore Hunters in Grafton.*



# WV Big Buck Photo Winners

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Gov. Jim Justice today announced the winners of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources' second annual Big Buck Photo Contest. The 20 youth and five adult winners were announced at a press conference at the State Capitol on Wednesday.

"I want to thank the DNR and everyone who submitted a picture," Gov. Justice said. "Each and every one of them was truly amazing. It's important that we encourage everyone, including our children, to go outside, learn

about nature, and enjoy the outdoors, just like we did when I was young. It's an honor for me to contribute by promoting these great kids and adults who're taking advantage our beautiful outdoors. That's some really good stuff right there."

The Big Buck Photo Contest, sponsored by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources and Department of Tourism, was open to residents and nonresidents and included a youth division for hunters 17 and younger and an adult division for hunters 18 and older.

To enter the contest, hunters had to submit a photo with a buck they harvested during a 2022 hunting season along with a short account  
continue to the next page



Gunner Ketterman brought in a nice 9 point. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.*



Jake Hartman reeled in a long rainbow trout.

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Chantz Williams landed a March walleye at Summersville Lake.

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of their hunt. Each entrant was required to show proof of a valid 2022 West Virginia Hunting License and had to include the 13-digit DNR-issued game check number for the buck.

Finalists were chosen by random drawing from all eligible entries and winners were selected by a judging committee made up of Gov. Justice, WVDNR Director Brett McMillion and Tourism Secretary Chelsea Ruby or their designated representatives. Winning photos were selected based on photo composition, size of the

buck's antlers, number of antler points and how well the hunt was described. Finalist photos can be viewed here.

The 20 youth participants will all receive one lifetime hunting and fishing license. The five adult winners can choose one lifetime hunting license or a two-night state forest cabin stay. Only West Virginia residents are eligible for a lifetime license.

- Hadley Allen — Charleston, W.Va.
- Olivia Barker — Thornton, W.Va.
- Kyla Bibey — Dennison, Ohio
- Courtney Burgess — Walton, W.Va.
- Blake Burner — Mineral Wells, W.Va.
- Eli Currence — Elkins, W.Va.

- Donovan Dameron — Cyclone, W.Va.
- Landon Hartshorn — Shock, W.Va.
- Dillon Jones — Charleston, W.Va.
- Bella Kesterson — Franklin, W.Va.
- Paige King — Lancaster, Md.
- Jonah Marcum — Chapmanville, W.Va.
- Rylee Martin — Sutton, W.Va.
- Carter McCloud — Ravenswood, W.Va.
- Cole Owens — Waverly, W.Va.
- Brayden Reese — Scott Depot, W.Va.
- Brayden Seago — Sisterville, W.Va.
- Samuel Shomo — Junior, W.Va.
- Carter Stover — Summersville, W.Va.
- Slade Terral — Bob White, W.Va.



Gary Paynter has a largemouth & smallmouth from Bluestone Lake.



Curtis Ash caught and released a March musky.



Eddy Humphreys, from Charleston, has a 7 1/4 pound March bass.





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## Spring Turkey Hunting

Pursuing wild turkeys is not only a fun hunt, it can also be one of the most challenging ones you'll ever try. There are many trusted tactics and techniques to help you bring in a tom. We could write for hours on things like turkey sounds and their meaning, camo selection, ground blind construction, and turkey decoy selection. However, today we're keeping things simple and to the point. These quick and easy-to-remember tips will put the odds in your favor for spring turkey season.

### 1. Scout

If you take any tip away from this list, it should be this one. It may seem obvious, but you'd be surprised how many hunters don't even bother with proper scouting.

You need to get out in the woods and listen. You need to get the lay of the land, and consider what land characteristics will affect or influence turkey movement. Don't

continue to the next page



Alex Goff had success with a nice buck.



Eli Ward tagged a snow goose in Braxton County.





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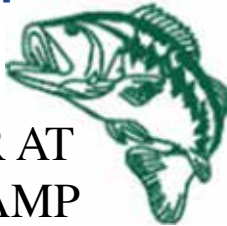


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just show up and call, but get up early and find where they roost.

2. Roost a bird

Once you consistently find early-morning spring gobblers, start putting them to bed. As your season gets closer, it's even more important to have idea of patterns the turkeys around you are following. When you can roost a bird, you know where to hunt the next morning.

3. Find the hens

Find the hens and you'll find the toms. If you can find where hens are feeding during hunting season, you're right where the toms are going to be strutting.

4. Shock and awe

Use shock gobblers to help you find that sneaky old longbeard. There are a few good ways to shock a tom into gobbling, but my favorite is to slam my truck door. If that doesn't work, see my next tip.

5. Use an Owl Hooter

If you hunt pressured birds or the truck-door trick doesn't work, an owl hooter locator call just might. Buy one and learn how to use it.

6. Less is more

It's really easy for turkey hunters to get caught up in the calling. This is never more true than when

continue to page 10



Aaron Parsons harvested a nice 10 point buck.



Eric Pifer took a quality buck with a wide rack.



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you have a responsive tom that gobbles with your every cluck. I've even found myself getting caught up and over-calling. Don't make the same mistake. It's easier said than done, but nothing will drive a tom mad like a hen playing hard to get. Let him think his gobbles fell on deaf ears. This is especially effective if he's already seen your hen decoy.

7. The purr and cluck

Just don't when trying to bring in a tom. This particular sound and call is made only when a hen is mad. If you want to confuse a tom and have them hang up, use this call. Now that I have that out of the way, there is really only one scenario to use this call. If you have a hen you'd like to keep around, this call will make her mad and likely keep her around a little longer.

8. Hens make the best decoys

Similar to the last few tips, you want to know where the hens are located, and you want to keep them around. Pure and simple, toms are looking for hens, so find the hens and a tom will eventually show up.

9. Use a mouth call

It's no secret that turkeys rely on their impeccable sight. Nothing will blow a hunt faster than reaching for a call, or using a call that requires movement. Learn how to properly operate a diaphragm call and keep it in your mouth until that tom is taking a permanent dirt nap.

10. Use more than one call

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Young Conner Jarvis brought in a quality whitetail buck.



Frank Baily used a compound bow for a great buck.



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pockets for a reason. You wouldn't hit the lake with only one lure, so why would you limit yourself to one turkey call? You never know what a tom will respond to.

11. Use the weather

Weather patterns change bird behavior, so pay attention to the forecasts. Snow will slow down breeding behavior, but they still need to eat. Rain will work against a bird's sight, and in my experience, they then seek open fields. Wind will do the opposite, sending them to low, wooded areas. Calm, sunny days will make for the best hunting.



Paiyn Pritchard went to Boone County for her quality buck



Theresa Murphy had success in Braxton County with her buck.

12. Check your pattern

It may seem obvious, but some may need a reminder. Shoot your gun to make sure it's on target. In fact, shoot it several times with different loads. Not all loads will pattern the same with your gun, so test them all. If you are bow-hunting, do not forget to practice before you head out!

13. Decoy or Decoys

Based on your hunting location, make sure you're using the right decoy setup. Where turkeys can see a good distance, use more decoys. Don't be afraid to throw out a tom, or even a jake decoy around your hens in strut zones. In thicker cover, stick to the less-is-more mentality.

14. Get aggressive


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Don't be too afraid to run and gun. Too many hunters get stuck on sticking to the field edges and never changing positions. If you're within earshot range of a tom, move, get closer and use cover to your advantage.





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## WV DNR Releases 2022 Big Game Bulletin

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — West Virginia’s annual white-tailed deer, wild turkey, black bear and wild boar harvest numbers for 2022 are now available to the public, the state Division of Natural Resources announced on Wednesday.

Harvest numbers, as well as harvests by season and county area, are made available each year in the West Virginia Big Game Bulletin. Physical copies are available for free at WVDNR district offices and at the agency’s Elkins Operations Center. Digital copies are available online at [WVdnr.gov/big-game](http://WVdnr.gov/big-game).

“The Big Game Bulletin gives a broad overview of big game

harvest numbers and helps our hunters see harvest trends,” said WVDNR Wildlife Resources Section Chief Paul Johansen. “These harvest numbers also help our biologists monitor big game populations and recommend any needed changes in bag limits or season lengths so we can continue to sustain healthy populations of these important species.”

Publishing the Big Game Bulletin is funded by money collected through the sale of hunting and fishing licenses and by funds from Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration.

Josh Witt is one of thousands of hunters who brought in bucks.



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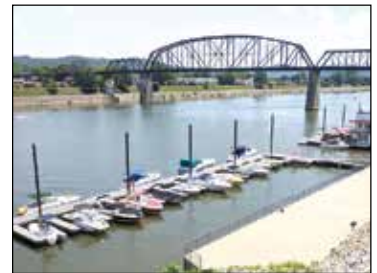
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## Catch Spring Crappie This Year

Water temperatures are the primary driver of spawning (and catching) locations, as fish favor those areas that warm first and hold that temperature well, but to find crappies consistently, a little knowledge from the winter sea-

sons can go a long way. I start with mid-winter community holes that anglers frequent to find schooled up groups of crappies over depth. These areas can be in 50FOW or more, but in most instances, you can draw a nearly straight line

from these holes, to pre-spawn staging areas, and the eventual spawning shallows.

Think of this line as a continuum of depth from which to search along. Start deeper, and move to shallower staging areas like a weedline or edge of a flat in 10-12FOW, then move all the way up to the shallows beyond, shallower than 6-8FOW.

The best areas have a well-defined basin, that gives way to an inside turn or "chute" that fish follow back and forth as water temperatures and weather changes. Animals of all kinds are well known for using topographic fun-  
continue to the next page

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Amanda Richards had success with a nice buck this season.



nels and land contours for movement, and fish are no exception. Underwater topography concentrates movement, making inside turns and the inward directions that point towards the shallows great locations to start.

### Spring Crappies

On cooler, overcast or rainy days within the spring period, consider following this line outward to the depths. On the warmer days, focus your efforts shallower for spring crappies, knowing again that activity will be better from the middle to late part of the day, especially in the earlier part of the spring season. Proceed slowly with the bow-mount down, using your electronics as a key part of this fish-finding session. If you have side-imaging, make sure to use it as this technology is tailor-made for locating big schools of early season panfish.

As far as the spawning locations themselves, you're looking for back bays, coves, and boat canals with warmer than main-lake water temperatures. That said, there will be zones within these warmer locations that fish congregate in



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more heavily.

That can be docks, brush piles, bulrushes, pencil-reeds, and lily pad root stems where only

soft-bottom is available. Cover however is secondary to water temperature, so keep that in mind.

continue to the next page



Nathan Shaffer, from Flatwoods, harvested a great 10 point.



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Lastly, know that spawning location depth is relative for the lake you're fishing and its clarity. Fish in clear water can spawn well outside of the reedbeds in 60 degree or more, while murky-water fish can be right up against the bank.

### Speed Decisions

Now that you've found them, effort can go into catching them, but it's good to pause a bit before you start slinging any old jig. Decipher an approach based on speed first and foremost, taking careful account of the time of year and water temperature, along with time of day, and what you see on your electronics. If earlier, and fish are tightly schooled on pre-spawn transition flats and edges, you'll want to fish slower than if it were later in the day, season, or otherwise warmer and fish are more spread out.

It's hard to beat a bobber for crappies in that regard, as stationary targets presented in the right locations are hard for these fish to ignore, sometimes regardless of what bait or lure is tied on the

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Kenna Weese bagged an 8 point.



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# Lots Of Fun Fishing Facts

The Largest Fishing Lure In The World Is As Long As A School Bus

The largest fishing lure in the world is a red and yellow spoon with a treble hook that is more than 40 feet long, with the

spoon being 27.5 feet long and 9.5 feet wide. The treble hook is 14 feet long and 8 feet wide.

The record is credited to siblings Brad Pallister and Jessica Dew and sits outside the Thompson-Pallister Bait Company in Al-

berta, Canada.

The Anglerfish Fishes With A Rod And Bait

Female Anglerfish have a long appendage on the top of their heads that has a fleshy lure at the end of it.

They use their “pole” to waive the lure around to entice other fish, then gulp them down!

Fishing Made Us Human

Scientists have found evidence from 1.9 million years ago that our early, pre-human hominid ancestors caught, processed, and ate fish.

continue to page 20

## 2023 Boats In Stock

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Nathan Sendling hooked an 8 lb., 2 oz. rainbow. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.

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Chuck Britton used a compound bow for a Pleasants County buck.



Mark Gray caught a huge largemouth bass in a private lake.



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They believe that their diets, rich in fish protein, were a vital component that contributed to the rapid expansion of hominid brain size. This eventually led to the evolution of Homoerectus, later followed by Homosapiens!

The Fish Indians Taught The Pilgrims To Plant Is Still Used Today

Menhaden were the fish that the Indians told the first Pilgrims in Massachusetts to use as fertilizer.

They are still considered “the  
continue to the next page



# LAKE VIEW CABINS

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most important fish in the sea” and have several important uses including in pet foods, cosmetics, and food supplements, among other uses.

And yes, we still use them for fertilizer!

The Heaviest Blue Catfish

The heaviest catfish was caught in Kerr Lake, Bugg Island, Virginia.

It was caught on June 18th, 2011 by Richard Nicholas Anderson. The blue catfish he caught weighed in at 143 pounds! Largemouth And Smallmouth Bass Aren't Actually Bass

They are members of the sunfish family, which means that they are more closely related to bluegills and pumpkinseed fish than to real bass!

Stone Age Fishing Tackle Would Look Familiar To Modern Fisherman

At a site in Israel, archaeologists found stone-age fish hooks and sinkers from 12,000 years ago.

The hooks were made of bone and correspond with modern fish-  
continue to page 23



William Zirkle, 9, got the shot on this 468 lb. field dressed black bear. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.*

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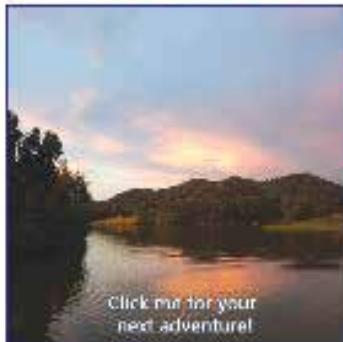


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Click Below to Open this month's Free Internet Issue of the W.Va. Sportsman Magazine

W.Va. Sportsman  
The sports and news magazine for the outdoor enthusiast  
January 2023   February/March 2023  
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**FREE**  
**Early Bass**  
**B.A.S.S. News**  
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**Outdoor Photos**

You must have Adobe Acrobat Reader Version 7.0 or later to view the Sportsman Magazine. If you don't have it, click the image below to



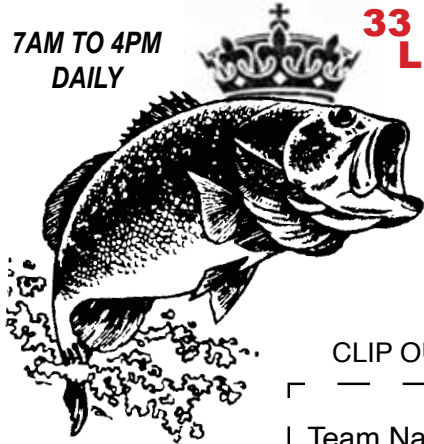
Check out the February/March 2023 Issue

14th Annual Bass Sportsman

# Kings Of The Lakes

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- 2011 Cottrell - Cottrell
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- 2015 Ray - Heater
- 2016 Godwin - Godwin
- 2017 Long - Johnson
- 2018 Godwin - Godwin
- 2019 Fleshman - Fleshman
- 2020 Marks - Marks
- 2021 Estep - Collins
- 2022 L.Long - Harper

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Big Bass Tournament Each Day

\$10 Each Day Fee On Big Bass

Total Cost = \$145

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fish hooks and sinkers from 12,000 years ago.

The hooks were made of bone and correspond with modern fish-hooks, both in a range of sizes and styles. There are unbarbed hooks and also barbed hooks of several different types.

With the hooks, they also found stone age sinkers! These were round pebbles with a groove carved around them to hold the fishing line.

More Than 30 Million Americans Go Fishing Each Year

The number of Americans who go fishing in any given year is

over 30 million, and that number is growing.

This means that well over ten

percent of the population over 16 goes fishing in any given year!

continue to the next page



Eric Burton, from Parkersburg, went to Ohio for a 47 1/2" musky.



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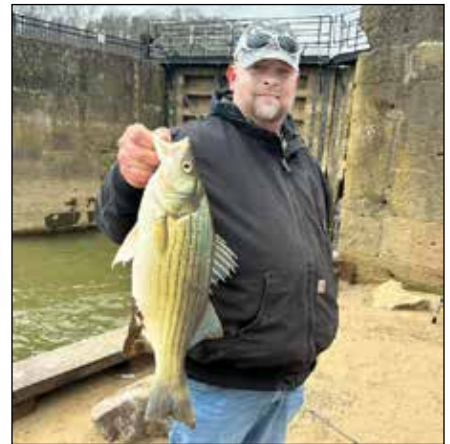
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Tony Crumbliss, from Bridgeport, landed a huge bass in a local lake.



Josh Campbell reeled in a nice hybrid bass.

The Oldest Freshwater Gamefish Ever Caught Was Over 100 Years Old

A female Bigmouth Buffalo caught near Pelican Rapids, Minnesota was found to be 112 years old.

Of the 386 bigmouth Buffalo they tested, 90 percent of the population was over 80 years old and five were over 100!

Maria Delores Montesinos Fernandez Is The Most Accurate Fly Caster Ever

On December 11th, 2011, Ms. Fernandez cast a weighted fly into a fishbowl that had a 6.8-inch opening from 23 feet away without touching the sides!

She did this on the set of El Show de Los Records, in Madrid, Spain.

Fisherman Spend Over 45 Billion A Year On Fishing

This includes money spent on gear, licensing clothing, and accommodations. Fishing is a serious boost to the economy and a major source of funding for the maintenance and conservation of our waterways and species.

The Hagfish Is The Weirdest Fish

Hagfish are an incredible slimy jawless eel that lives in the ocean.

If disturbed they can produce enough slime to fill a two-gallon bucket in a matter of minutes.

They are also the only fish that sneezes. Weird!

Lampreys Are A Remnant Of The Ancient Past

continue to page 26

## Broken Wheel Campground

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WAS \$36,342 **NOW \$28,968**



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BO 19.8  
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Lampreys (along with hagfish) are the last holdovers of a time before fish evolved jaws. At one time, all fish were jawless.

For unknown reasons, these two species stopped evolving and are now the last representatives of what all fish once were like!

You Can Tell A Fish's Age The Same Way You Can Tell A Tree's

By counting growth rings! Just like a ring in the tree's wood tell its age, so do the rings in fish.

These can be either in their scales or ear bones, which are called otoliths. These methods have been tested by carbon dating and found to be totally accurate!

The Most Common Fishing Meth-

od Is Also The Oldest

The most common fishing method in the world is called bait fishing or still fishing.

It is also the simplest. You put a worm or bread ball, or any other bait on your hook, cast it out into the water, and wait.

There's a reason it's the most common method. Not only is it simple and inexpensive, but it's also one of the most effective ways to catch fish!

Muskies Are Seriously Aggressive

The most dangerous fish found in freshwater in the United States (not counting Bull Sharks that swim up rivers from the ocean) is the Muskellunge.

**CENTENNIAL  
MOTEL**  
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Muskies, a big toothy fish that looks like a freshwater barracuda, have been known to eat fish half their size or bigger, mammals, birds, and even small dogs!

They have also been known to attack people and can do damage with their rows of razor-sharp teeth!



Ron Riddle caught an 8 lb. 4 oz. rainbow. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.



Brock Schoonover has a 9 lb. 4 oz. rainbow. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.

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Doody Cook caught a big small-mouth & largemouth bass at Stephens Lake near Beckley.

## Bassmaster Classic Winner

By Jeff Gustafson

Being the first Canadian to win the Academy Sports + Outdoors Bassmaster Classic presented by Toyota is pretty special. We have a lot of people in Canada who love bass fishing and a lot of good anglers who aren't going to have the same chance that I did.

I respect all of the guys I fish against so much as well as all the names that are on that trophy. It will be nice to have this one over Chris and Cory Johnston for a while as well. I only kid ... and the reality is those guys are super

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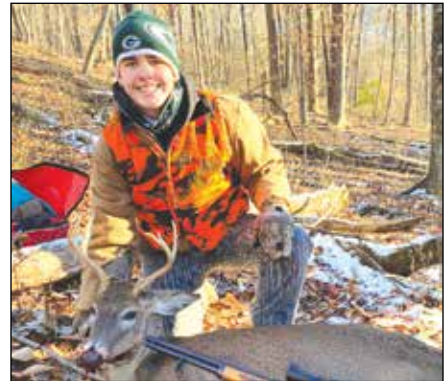


good and their results speak for themselves.

I was totally wowed by the crowd inside Thompson-Boling Arena, all of the lights, the music, the whole spectacle. It was the highlight of my fishing career and really my life.

It all happens so fast. You are so excited, and a lot of emotions run through you. When all the confet-

continue to page 29



Larry Nichols bagged his first buck in Marion County.



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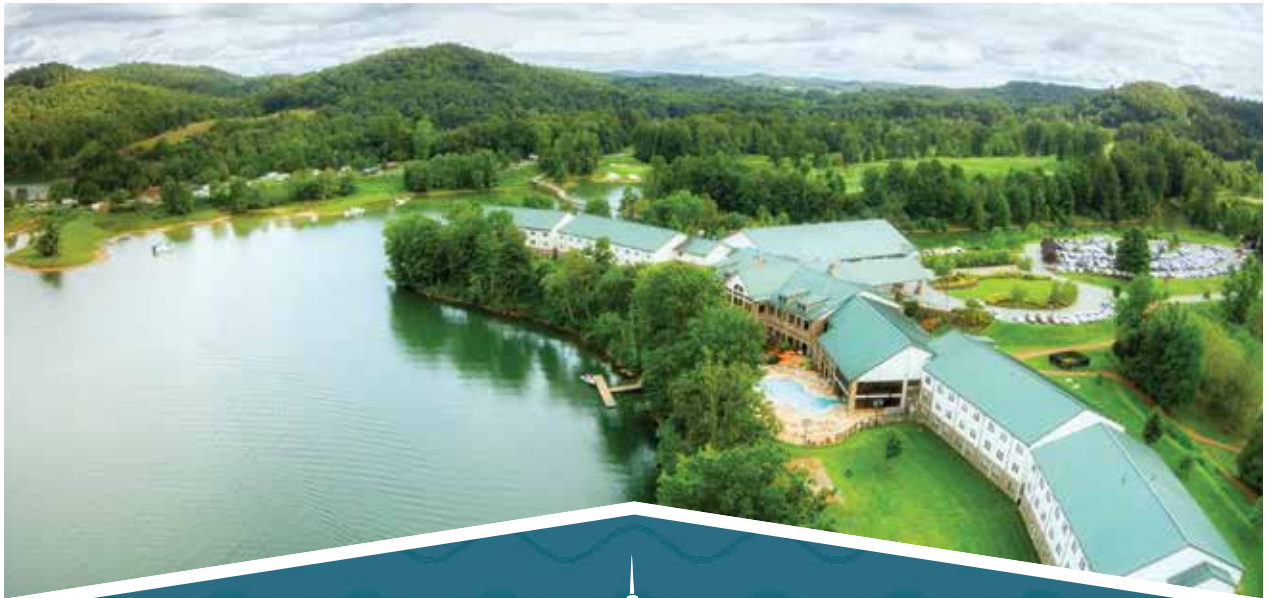


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etti went off around me, I thought I lost my hearing. There was so much of that stuff it blocked everything out.

I really can't believe how it all worked out. With the moping technique, I am glad we had the Live video going so people could see what I was looking at. It probably isn't exciting to watch, but I love doing it. The fans being able to see my bait, see what the fish were doing and how they were moving around was awesome.



Joe Defazio hooked a 4 1/2 lb. golden. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.



Brent Ware got an 8 point in Randolph County.

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It is something I love doing and am confident with.

I have been using a new Aqua-Vu system this year where I can plug it into my Humminbird Apex unit and look at it on that screen. It is a much bigger screen and brighter. It is beautiful and awesome for using the Aqua-Vu.

So when I got to Knoxville and started practicing on the Tennessee River, I went to that canal where I

caught them last time right away. There were more fish, probably more bass than there were the last time. But half the field spent time fishing there. Then on Saturday there was a local tournament right at the ramp there and a lot of those guys were fishing there.

Basically, I realized pretty quickly that I wasn't going to be able to win in the canal. Those fish were

continue to the next page

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PSE Bear

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Hoo Doo

Kayaks



getting really hard to catch.

But I had my Aqua-Vu, and I have the exact dots where I caught a lot of my fish last time. There are rocks there, and I would put the Aqua-Vu down and see the bass sitting in the cracks of these rocks. What it taught me was, you couldn't idle around and find these fish on Tellico. They were glued to the bottom. That's why I think, for the most part, no one got on these fish.

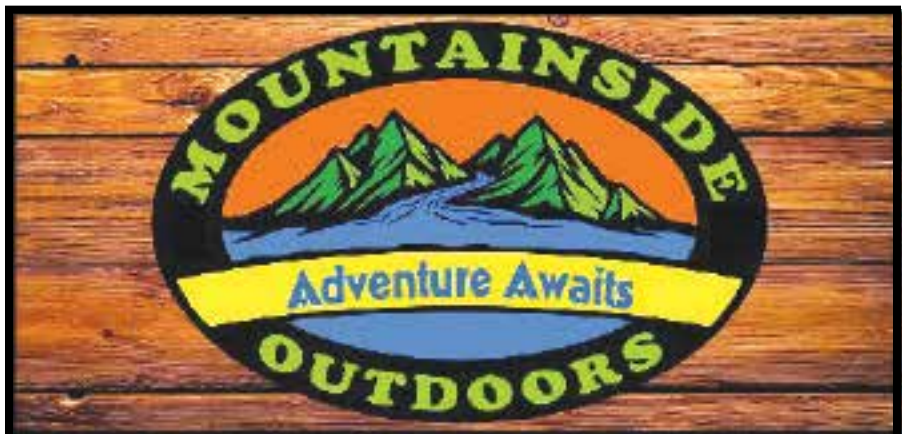
It wasn't super clear to where you could move around with it and see a lot of fish. It was finding the rock and then quickly put it down there. I saw a few smallies with their bellies to the bottom in some of the little cracks. That was all I needed to see.

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Jeff Goddard trapped a big coyote and bobcat. *Photo courtesy of Tyler Outdoor Supply in Middlebourne.*



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## Archery In The Schools Results

CHARLESTON, W.VA. — The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources announced on Thursday results from the 18th WVD-NR Archery in the Schools State Tournament.

The top high school teams were Shady Spring, Winfield and Hurricane. The top middle school teams were Ripley, Peterstown Middle and Elkview. And the top elementary school teams were

Elk, Bridge/Clendenin and Maysville. The top 10 male and top 10 female archers in the high school, middle school and elementary divisions also were recognized during a ceremony.

More than 750 students from nearly 70 schools from around the state participated in the tournament at the Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center. Nearly 3,000 people attended the event.

“We set a goal this year to give the kids and coaches who work so hard all year the largest tournament we have ever put on and continue to the next page



Roger Perry shot a 10 point Pocahontas Co. buck. Photo courtesy of Whitetail Supreme in Buckhannon.



Jaden Winters got her 1st buck with a crossbow..

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I think we did that," said Chris Scraggs, who coordinates the Archery in the Schools program for the WVDNR. "As always, we want to thank everyone who participated in the program this year and extend a big congratulations to all our teams and students that placed in the state tournament."

In the weeks leading up to the tournament, more than 1,400 students from 96 schools in West Virginia participated in qualifier rounds. The top ten elementary,

middle and high school teams and the top 15 male and top 15 female elementary, middle and high school students were invited to participate in the state tournament.

"I want to congratulate the schools and students who participated in the West Virginia State Archery in the Schools tournament," said West Virginia Department of Commerce Secretary James Bailey. "By promoting shooting sports and providing opportunities for youth to participate in activities like Archery in the Schools, we are not only instilling important skills in our young people, such as focus and discipline, but also contributing to the growth of our state's economy. Hunting and fishing are an integral part of our state's heritage and by fostering an interest in these activities through programs like this, we are ensuring a strong

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future for West Virginia."

Tournament competition is open only to schools that have received the National Archery in the Schools training and follow NASP rules. For more information on the West Virginia Archery in the Schools Program or to attend the next training, visit [wvdnr.gov/west-virginia-archery-in-the-schools-program](http://wvdnr.gov/west-virginia-archery-in-the-schools-program).

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## Total WV Deer Harvest

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Deer hunters in West Virginia have had a good year. According to preliminary numbers released by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources on Thursday, hunters harvested 118,606 deer during the 2022–2023 seasons, which is a 12.7 percent increase over the 2021 harvest and 12.2 percent above the five-year average of 105,718.

“From the start of the archery and crossbow seasons in September to our Mountaineer Heritage season in January and everything in between, West Virginia has some of the most incredible deer hunting opportunities in the eastern United States,” said WVDNR Director Brett McMillion. “We’re excited to announce a good harvest this year and we’re so encouraged to see hunters and their families getting out more and more each year

and enjoying so much success in the field.”

The increased deer harvest can be attributed to favorable weather and poorer mast conditions in 2022 and a slightly lower overall deer harvest during the 2021 seasons, which resulted in more deer being available last year.

A breakdown of the combined 2022 deer seasons reveals that hunters harvested 48,938 bucks during the traditional buck firearm season, 31,669 antlerless deer during all antlerless firearm hunting opportunities, 32,850 deer during urban and regular archery and crossbow seasons, 4,566 deer during the muzzleloader season and 583 deer during the Mountaineer Heritage season.

Buck Firearms Season

During West Virginia’s two-week buck firearms season from

continue to page 36



90 year old Paul Lathey had deer success in Jackson County.

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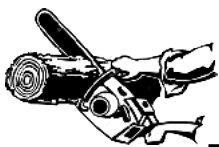
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Nov. 21 – Dec. 4, hunters harvested 48,938 bucks, an increase of 18 percent over the 2021 harvest. The largest increases were reported in West Virginia's central and western areas, where buck harvests increased 39 and 36 percent, respectively. The top 10 buck harvest counties in 2022 were Greenbrier (1,856), Preston (1,760), Randolph (1,667), Ritchie (1,633), Jackson (1,539), Hampshire (1,453), Mason (1,417), Kanawha (1,352), Lewis (1,270) and Pocahontas (1,196).

## Antlerless Deer Season

During the 2022 antlerless deer season, which includes the youth, class Q and class XS deer season, hunters harvested 31,669 deer, an increase of 14.7 percent compared to the 2021 harvest of 27,614 and 3.1 percent above the five-year average of 30,708.

"It is important to note that the antlerless harvest is the key component to any deer management strategy, as it controls the future deer population," said Paul Johansen, chief of the WVDNR's Wildlife Resources Section.

The top ten antlerless deer harvest counties in 2022 were Preston (1,523), Jackson (1,327), Lewis (1,255), Mason (1,250), Ritchie (1,246), Upshur (1,241), Wood (1,070), Hampshire (1,063), Roane (939) and Monroe (870).

## Muzzleloader Deer Season

Hunters harvested 4,566 deer during the 2022 muzzleloader season, which is a 9.8 percent increase over the 2021 harvest of 4,159, but 3.2 percent below the five-year average of 4,718. The muzzleloader deer season harvest does not include the deer taken with side lock and flintlock muzzleloaders during the Mountaineer Heritage season. The top ten muzzleloader deer harvest counties were Preston (204), Randolph (193), Nicholas (188), Greenbrier (166), Upshur (155), Jackson (153), Lewis (139), Wood (139), Braxton (138) and Mason (133).

## Archery and Crossbow Deer Season

Hunters harvested 32,850 deer with bows and crossbows in 2022, a 4.7 percent increase over the 2021 harvest of 31,362 and 13

percent above the five-year average of 29,067. The archery and crossbow harvest does not include the 37 deer taken with recurves and longbows during the Mountaineer Heritage season. The top ten archery deer harvest counties are Preston (1,557), Kanawha (1,166), Randolph (1,090), Wyoming (1,053), Raleigh (1,046), Wood (984) Upshur (962), Jackson (950), Fayette (945) and Mason (828).

For more information about deer hunting in West Virginia or to purchase a hunting license, visit [WVDnr.gov](http://WVDnr.gov).



Mathew Brown landed some early season Bluestone smallmouth.



Young Jacob Lauer caught a 21" rainbow trout at Shavers Fork.



Matt Miller brought in an unusual 15 point .



Timmy Baily, from Gilbert Creek, caught a big early smallmouth.



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Andy Godwin went to Burnsville Lake and caught nice crappie.

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