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Issue 281

November/December 2019



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Cover Photo

Brandon Henkes, from Princeton, bagged a nice 12 point buck. He got it with a bow in Mercer County.

Go online to see this magazine on the web every 6 weeks. It is www.wvasportsman.net

We are looking for large deer, bear and other game animal pics for future issues. Send your pics from this season.

TEXT, mail or email your large fish or game pictures - page 38.

Wild Game Is Nutritious

FRENCH CREEK, W.Va. — West Virginia's abundance of wildlife and hunting seasons provide opportunities for many families to fill their freezers with highly nutritious wild game.

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.

“Hunting is a great reason to get into the woods, stretch your legs,

and may result in a freezer full of healthy protein,” said Kaylee Poland, wildlife biologist for the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources. “With the diversity of game available for legal harvest, there is something for everyone’s taste.”

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 in 1992, approximately 1,003,208 pounds of venison have been donated. In 2018 alone, 685 deer (23,659 pounds of nutritious venison) were donated to the HHH Program.

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



James Fletcher is in the running for the trophy contest with his nice 10 point buck. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.

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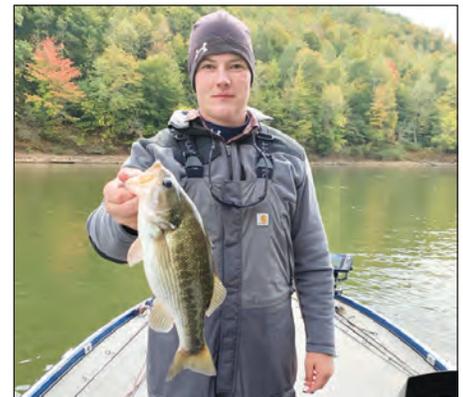
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Brandon Hunter caught a large spotted bass at Sutton Lake. Spotted bass grow large in this lake.

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Special Four - Day Split Antlerless Season

FRENCH CREEK, W.Va. - The four-day special split antlerless deer season for youth hunters, persons with a Class Q/QQ permit, and senior citizens with a Class XS license soon will be underway.

The first segment of the season was Oct. 19-20. The second segment is Dec. 26-27. Hunting is permitted on private and public lands in counties that have a firearms deer hunting season.

Youth hunters ages 8-17 may participate in this special antlerless deer season. Hunters ages 8-14 must be accompanied by a licensed adult who may not hunt or possess implements for the taking of wildlife. Hunters ages 15-17 must comply with all licensing requirements. Senior hunters who have a resident Class XS lifetime hunting/trapping/fishing license may also participate in this special antlerless deer season.

"This is an excellent opportunity to pass on the tradition and safe practices of hunting to youth hunters," said Tyler Evans, wildlife biologist with the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR). "This season also provides a tremendous opportunity for seniors and hunters with a Class Q/QQ permit to enjoy this unique hunting experience at

a time when there is not as much hunting pressure."

All hunters participating in this season, as well as accompanying adults, must wear at least 400 square inches of blaze orange.

Nonresident youth hunters must be properly licensed (Class XXJ Li-

Continue to the next page



Brayden McCormill caught a 49" flathead at Beec Fork Lake.

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cense + CS/LE Stamp, Class AAHJ License + CS/LE Stamp, or a Class DT License), and all accompanying nonresident adults must also be properly licensed (Class E License + CS/LE Stamp).

The daily bag limit for this special antlerless deer season is one antlerless deer per day, for a total of four antlerless deer that may be harvested during this season.

NOTE: The chart on Page 2 of the 2019–2020 Hunting and Trapping Regulations incorrectly states

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that the possession and season bag limits are three instead of four. The correct season bag limit of four reflects one antlerless deer per day as stated above.

Deer harvested during the special split antlerless season will not count toward a hunter's annual deer season bag limit. Class N/NN stamps are not required for this special season.

Each deer must be field tagged and electronically registered within 24 hours of the close of each segment of the split season, and before pursuit of any additional deer. Deer can

be checked online at wvhunt.com, by calling 1-844-WVCHECK, or by visiting a license agent.

Please refer to the 2019–2020 West Virginia Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary for additional details about this special antlerless season. Hunters may also direct their questions to any of the six DNR district offices.



Chad See used a crossbow in Randolph County for a great buck.

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2019 DNR Mast Survey

ELKINS, W.Va. — Hunters can get help preparing for the fall hunting seasons by consulting the 2019 Mast Survey and Hunting Outlook publication, available on the Division of Natural Resources website [HERE](#). Information analyzing mast conditions and wildlife harvests

also is available on the website.

Since 1971, the Wildlife Resources Section of DNR, 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.

and consider the type and amount of food available in the areas they hunt. 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.”

Production of black/red oak acorns, apple and black cherry is significantly higher than the past year and will have effects on the 2019–2020 hunting seasons, according to the report. White and chestnut oak are down significantly from last year and well below their long-term average.

“The availability of fall foods has significant impacts on wildlife populations and harvests,” said Chris Ryan, supervisor of the Game Management Services of DNR’s Wildlife Resources Section. “It is very important for hunters to scout



Young Bristol Florence caught a 3 1/2 pound pond largemouth.



Gary Ross caught & released a musky while fishing for bass.

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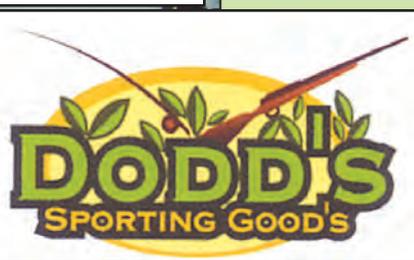
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10 Hunting Facts

1. Avid hunter Theodore Roosevelt created our national forests and grasslands and forever protected 230 million acres for wildlife and the public to use and enjoy.

Roosevelt, an avid hunter, created some of the most well-known parks for everyone to enjoy forever.

2. An 11 percent tax on guns, ammo, bows and arrows generates \$371 million a year for conservation.

\$371 million is a lot of money. It puts many people to work and enables many wildlife conservation programs, hunting season after hunting season.

3. Hunting supports 680,000 jobs; from game wardens to waitresses, biologists to motel clerks.

Speaking of jobs, how about that anti-hunters? Well over a half a million jobs in the United States and Canada are created from hunting, according to Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

4. Through state licenses and fees, hunters pay \$796 million a year for conservation programs.

Filson

continue to the next page



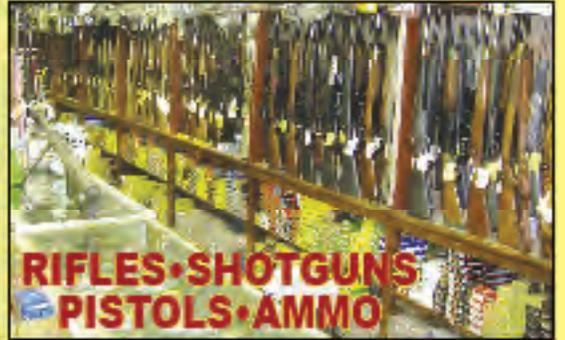
Reed Elder landed some nice late season Summersville Lake small-mouth. *Photo courtesy of Catch Em Lures in St. Albans.*

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5. When tallying up the various fees, licensing, and taxes, hunters raise \$1.6 billion!

Anti-hunting sentiments just can't seem to grasp that. Hunters help protect access to North American public lands and our natural resources from almost-certain struggles.

6. The best form of eating organic is hunting.

In a world that loves to go all natural and eat organic, hunting is the purest form of organic eating. Not to mention most wild game and fish is high in protein and provides great nutritional value.

7. In the past century, elk, white-tails, turkeys, and ducks have gone from thousands to millions thanks to the help of hunters and programs funded by hunters.

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Darren Elder landed a smallmouth at Summersville Lake. *Photo courtesy of Catch Em Lures in St. Albans*

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That's right. Without the efforts of hunters, many of the animals that are abundant today would have dwindling populations. The next time an anti-hunter says we are killing too many wild animals, share some of this information.

8. Hunters keep nuisance species in check and keep herd numbers healthy for various other animals.

Wildlife management has never been this important, with development encroaching into habitat on an exponential scale. Natural predators are one thing, but when the introduction of invasive spe-

cies or prevalence of nuisances, it becomes a matter of life or death for a lot of game animals.

9. Sport hunting in Zambia provides 143 tons of meat to rural villages with an estimated value of \$600,000.

A study done by two individuals found that African sport hunting offers great benefits to the inhabitants of the land. Most times the rural natives are happy when a dangerous animal is harvested, because the village becomes safer.

10. At the end of the day, "I'll never apologize for being a hunter."




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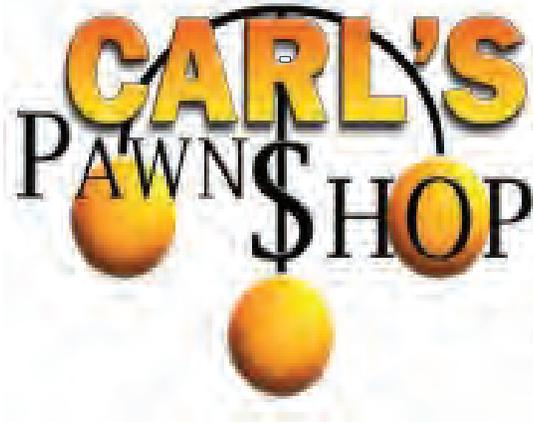


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Deer Scents Unmasked

Making sense out of deer scents can make or break your season before it even gets started.

If you happen to walk through a sports store right before deer season opens up in your state, you will see more sprays, scents, cans, and wafers than most hunters can shake a stick at.

Some of these products are gimmicks designed to bag the hunter long before they will ever help a hunter bag a deer, but some can be highly useful tools that bring a buck running.

If you plan to use deer scents on your hunt, it vital that you understand what deer scents work best during specific times of the season. Opening Day

During the early part of the season, bucks are still not actively

chasing does. Instead, they are sparing and marking their territories by making rubs and



Lyle Adkins hooked and released a large musky while fishing in the WV Bass Nation tournament.

scrapes. This is the time to break out a bottle of buck urine.

The goal of the buck urine is to catch the nose of a buck that is already in the area and make him continue to page 14



John Graham Jr. used a bow for a nice buck. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.

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curious enough of the new smell to want to investigate and size up competition. This is a time when setting up on scrapes and rubs can be effective, and often deadly, when coupled with this uniquely powerful scent. gamecamera2

Mixing in a combination of doe urine is also very effective because it tells the buck that is investigating that everything is fine in the area and safe to proceed. Notice the velvet on this early season buck to the right.

Pre-Rut

Bucks are now getting much more aggressive and looking to challenge other bucks to set up a pecking order when does come into heat. Using buck urine on a drag line is the way to go.

If you happen to hunt an open field or have a wide area around your tree stand or blind, walking away from your set up and walking back with a drag strip covered in buck urine can stop a cruising buck in it's tracks and bring him right to you.

Rut

Rut is often the time when bucks throw caution to the wind and chase anything that smells like a doe in heat. Just like the two scent combos in the early season, a mix of dominant buck urine and doe estrous can drive any nearby buck to the point of tears.

Hanging several estrous drip lines

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around your stand to add extra scent to the air can bring a buck several hundred yards away to try to find a ready doe. Sprinkling more dominant buck urine in the area can send a buck into a stomping rage. On the picture to the left, this buck is licking the air trying find a doe in heat.

Post Rut

With all the dominant bucks in
continue to the next page



Dylan Nichols, from Middlebourne, caught a 43" musky.

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Four Miles North Of Clarksburg On Rt. 19 & 20 (Across RR Tracks) **HEPZIBAH, WV**



Eddie Austin got a 298 pound bear. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.

the area tired out from a few weeks of flurry, their main concentration begins to switch back to food. Doe urine is back on the game plan as bucks are seeking bedding areas and a place to grab a bite to eat. Just like before, as they pass an area with doe urine, they tend to lower their guard, possibly opening up a shot.

In order for any of these scents to work, the human odor factor has to be minimized the best it can. In these cases, cover sprays and scent eliminators are designed to reduce human scent so the deer scents can be allowed to work their magic.

I have found that scent eliminators, such as Bucked Scent Eliminator, works better than cover scents in most situations. Trying to fool a deer's nose by importing a smell into their living room that is powerful enough to overpower human odor can sometimes have the opposite effect the hunter wants. Eliminating odor in the first place is just the best option.

Be wary of other cover sprays with added smells such as earth, apple, acorn, etc. If those smells



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are not naturally in your area, you very well may not even see a deer because they will take that strange

odor as a warning and be two counties away before you even reach your stand.

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Hunting Funnels & Pinch Points

Funnels and pinch points play a vital role in your whitetail success as a productive food plot program.

Sure, food lures deer in like free food samples at a giant box store, but without routes that manipulate deer into ambush opportunities your food efforts may fall as flat as a kale sample at a health food store. The percentage of failure rises if local deer feel pressure and linger in timber for a nocturnal entrance to feed.

Funnels are generally defined as terrain or manmade features that channel whitetail travel activity.

Increase shooting odds by locating funnels and pinch points on your property. Deer use them as travel shortcuts and you can use them as shortcuts to success.

Funnels are generally defined as terrain or manmade features that channel whitetail travel activity.

This may include land features such as riparian zones, coulees, hillside benches and ridgetop saddles. In the manmade category it might include fences, hedgerows, planted windbreaks and seldom-used back roads.

Pinch points oftentimes exist in a funnel, but further neck down a meeting location to an x-marks-the-spot site. They include narrow creek crossings, bottlenecks of timber, cliff-side trails and an open gate along a tightly-strung fence.

In either category think the path of least resistance. Whitetails vary their travel, but generally lean toward an easy path that provides refuge.

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Begin that search at home or on a smart device. Satellite images from popular hunting programs, like ScoutLook Weather or OnXMaps, give you the view from above and allow topographical overlays to view terrain underneath the canopy.

Satellite images from popular continue to the next page



Kaden Shafferman, from French Creek, got a crossbow buck.



Frank Cayton used a bow in Ritchie County for a good buck.

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hunting programs, like ScoutLook Weather, give you the view from above and allow topographical overlays to view terrain underneath the canopy.

These lines of elevation reveal subtle terrain features deer use to sneak between food and refuge. As you research scout for strips of narrow cover connecting large blocks of timber. Also be on the hunt for ribbons of habitat that lead to food sources or sanctuary. If you find funnels that connect, like spokes in hub, you've hit a homerun.

Narrowed Search

Next, narrow your search for pinch points in between. Obvious selections, such as constricted tree lines, stand out on satellite images and you may be able to decipher others with mapping help. Still, a walk in the woods may offer the most credible insight.

Aaron Volkmar, a 14-year veteran whitetail outfitter, believes onsite exploration is the best way to confirm funnels and pinch points. His various hunting properties in Iowa, Missouri and Kansas keep him in scouting mode much of the off-season. He suggests firsthand scouting any time of year, except hunting season. Nevertheless, he advises winter and spring scouting as his top preference if at all possible.

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"The best way to scout and for the best view of funnels, and pinch points is to go out in the middle of winter. Your intrusion ate and rank travel corridors based on how many deer use them, and find the pinch points," notes Volkmar. "I also do a lot of scouting for funnels and pinch points during turkey season. Vegetation is not in full bloom

and much of the sign from the previous fall is still evident."

To bolster his findings he employs
continue to the next page



Young Garrett Richards used a crossbow in Ritchie Co. for a buck.



Anna Painter, from Green Creek, got a turkey with her crossbow.



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lots of long-range glassing, especially during the summer when bachelor groups begin to form and bucks consistently feed in daylight. Volkmar is looking for bucks appearing on trails with distinct pinch-point opportunities he discovered while walking properties. Scout and Confirm

Since Volkmar specializes in hunting mature bucks he deploys trail cameras to help inventory bucks on his properties. Despite the extra eyes in the woods, he limits his forays into the woods to check trail cameras. This is especially important if the camera is near a pinch point with a high probability for a mature buck meeting.

"If I glass an older buck or catch

one on a trail camera, the last thing I'm going to do is walk in repeatedly to check a camera. You likely only get one opportunity on a mature buck. You won't get that opportunity if you keep busting or jumping a seasoned buck."

One of Volkmar's Iowa properties is characterized by a 9-acre stand of timber that funnels through two fields into another 4-acre bowl of trees. That small habitat zone eventually dwindles to nothing in a nearby crop field. Last season Volkmar counted no less than 38 active scrapes along the corridor and he placed stands in the narrowest pinch points.

Be on the lookout for your own whitetail thoroughfare this season.

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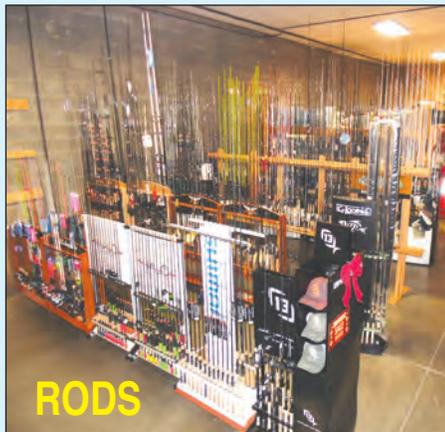


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Avoid Deer Collisions

FRENCH CREEK, W.Va. - The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR) urges motorists to take extra caution while driving in the fall. On average, approximately 40% of deer-vehicle collisions in West Virginia will occur between October and December.

"West Virginia is fortunate to have an abundance of white-tailed deer," said Tyler Evans, wildlife biologist with the DNR Wildlife Resources Section. "However, populations are dense in many areas and this can increase the number of deer-vehicle collisions during the fall breeding season.

"October and November coincide with the 'rut' peak of the deer breeding season. The increase in activity and movement of deer can increase the chances a deer will collide with a vehicle. Additionally, the presence of hunters may contribute to deer movement and increase the probability of a deer-vehicle collision," Evans said. West Virginia's rugged terrain also likely contributes to these collisions as the highest quality deer habitat is often associated with

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valleys and bottomland areas, according to Evans.

"That's where conditions allow for agricultural production and may also promote an abundant supply of acorns and other natural food sources," Evans said. "Not surprisingly, these areas also support the majority of the state's public roads."

DNR offers the following driving
continue to the next page



Mitchell Boyce, from Phillipi, caught a huge WV brown trout.



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Interesting Hunting Facts

tips:

Be aware of your surroundings and what may be in 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 possible.

Drive at a reduced speed, especially during early morning and late evening hours when deer movements are likely to increase.

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

Drive defensively.

Blowing your horn going around curves can be of help.

1. African Hunting Dogs vote to decide whether to go on a hunt or not. The most important animals in the pack need only garner around 3 votes; the lesser dogs need about 10.

2. Grizzly bears were so feared and respected by Native Americans that hunting them required a company of 4 to 10 warriors and was done with the same preparation and ceremonial as intertribal warfare. –

3. In 2014, Namibia raised over \$350k by auctioning off the right to hunt one endangered black rhino. The rhino was past breeding age and detrimental to the rest of the herd. The money was used to protect endangered animals.

4. In 1859, English settler Thomas Austin released only 24 rabbits onto his property in Australia, stating “The introduction of a few rab-

bits could do little harm and might provide a touch of home, in addition to a spot of hunting.” By the
continue to the next page



Charles Horst arrowed a huge Jefferson County buck.

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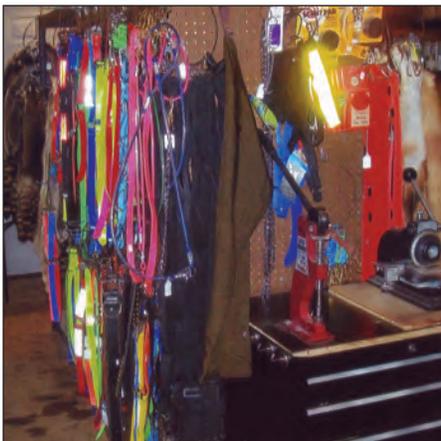
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1920's the population reached 10 billion.

5. If you don't pay child support in Texas you won't be able to renew your hunting license. 6. The near-extinction bison hunting in the 1800s was not to gain food, but to restrict the American Indians' dominant food supply; herds were shot from trains and left to rot where they died 7. Serial killer/Cannibal Nathaniel Bar-Jonah after one of his victim's disappearance started to hold cookouts in which he served burgers, chili and etc to guests. His response was that he had gone deer hunting. He did not own a rifle, a hunting license, nor had he been deer hunting at any time.

8. A couple of PETA members, after attending an anti-hunting campaign, wrecked into a deer. They followed up by suing the New Jersey Game Department claiming that their deer management program was to blame.

9. When the Champawat Tigress, a Bengal tiger responsible for the deaths of over 436 people was

continue to the next page



Julie Price caught a 3 1/4 pounds snallmouth for big bass at the Ohio River 1st 33 Bass Tournament.

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Developed by Italian gun maker Pedersoli to commemorate Lyman's 140th Anniversary, this 1878 Sharps carbine is an elegant streamlined version of the Sharps rifle that made Lyman famous. The gorgeous walnut stock and engraved receiver with silver finish, make this a superbly functional work of art. It features the side hammer falling block design that the Sharps is known for with the traditional #2 Tang sight that got Lyman their start 140 year ago. The unique front sight pivots between a blade style and globe style bead to suit your preferences. Only 140 of these rifles are made and it's sure to become a collector's item. Trim and lightweight, with refined styling, this rifle is still a shooter! Extraordinarily accurate and chambered in .30-30 Winchester, this rifle was built to perform on the range and in the field. You know that the Lyman 1878 Sharps Carbine 140th Anniversary Model is going to turn some heads everywhere it goes!



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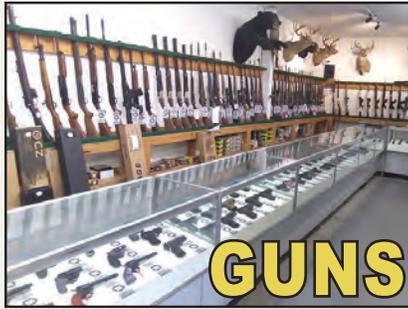
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killed, it was discovered that its canine teeth were broken. This had prevented it from hunting its natural prey.

10. The reason cats and snakes have vertical pupils is because it increases their depth perception while hunting at night while prey animals such as sheep have horizontal pupils so that they may have a panoramic view of their surroundings to watch for predators.

11. There are a group of Native Americans in Mexico who run 200 miles in one session and hunt by running their prey to death.

12. In 1889, a dam owned by an exclusive hunting and the fishing club gave way, causing a flood that



Brian Mowdy, from Huntington, hooked a 6 pound largemouth.

killed 2,209 people in southern Pennsylvania. The club's members included many of the richest men in America and efforts to hold it legally responsible went nowhere.

13. The term "Sniper" originally referred to hunters skilled enough to shoot a Snipe, a species of bird.

14. The extinct Passenger Pigeon bird went from being the most abundant bird in North America

and possibly the world during the 19th century, to extinct in the 20th century due to massive hunting and habitat destruction. Martha, the world's last passenger pigeon, died alone in 1914 at the Cincinnati Zoo, USA.

15. Some inmates in Greenland hold the keys of their own cells, may leave the premises during the day to go to work/school and are even allowed to go hunting with rifles to shoot birds and seals. 16-20
16. Wyoming issues Jackalope hunting licenses for its official hunting season. It is on June 31st from midnight to 2 AM, and only for hunters with an IQ no greater than 72.

17. The Nazi's were staunch animal rights activists with major efforts to limit hunting and general animal cruelty. Göring, in particular, was a professed animal lover

continue to the next page



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who proclaimed bans on both vivisection(Nazi Germany was the first country in the world to do so) and the shoeing of horses. 18. Edward James Jim Corbett tracked and killed 33 well-documented man-eaters, 19 tigers, and 14 leopards, that combined to kill over 1,200 people. Despite the dangerous nature of the beasts he was hunting, Corbett traveled alone and by foot while hunting the cats. 19. The Burkitshi are nomadic hunters of Mongolia. They capture a golden eagle at the age of four and train it to become a hunting partner. The Burkitshi live and sleep with the eagle for ten years, and then it is released back into the wilderness before death. 20. The U.S. Post Office sells a \$25 stamp that's required for duck hunting. The proceeds go to conservation efforts. 21. Ancient Egyptians used tamed and trained cheetahs for hunting; this tradition



Dustin Dennis used a bow in Ritchie County for a nice buck.

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was passed on and kept alive until the 20th century by e.g. Indian royalty.

22. Scotland is so barren because most of it belongs to a few dozen wealthy people who use it as hunting grounds. Huge numbers of deer bred by them destroy all new seedlings.

23. A fox shot his hunter in Belorussia(now Belarus). The man tried to finish off the fox with the butt of his rifle, but the fox pulled the trigger with its paws, wounding the man in the process.



Gary Vogan brought in a huge black bear.

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phone service and water must be either carried in or pumped from a hand-dug well.

By the time you reach that last creek crossing, the farmhouse is, indeed, a welcome sight. A "white rose" centered in a long, narrow valley of green clover fields. The house is surrounded by a dilapidated barn, an old out-building slowly rotting into the

continue to page 29

By Robert L. Fischer

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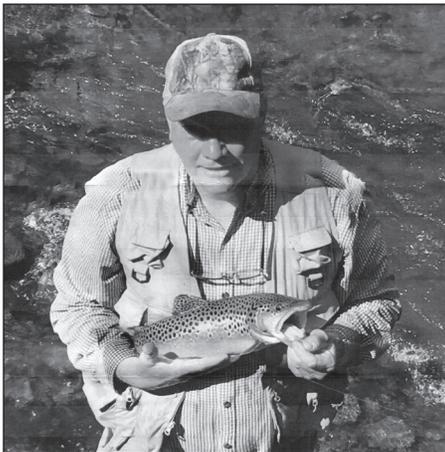
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Terry Cottrill hooked a huge rainbow trout.



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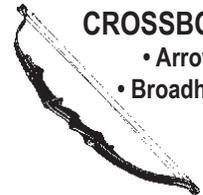
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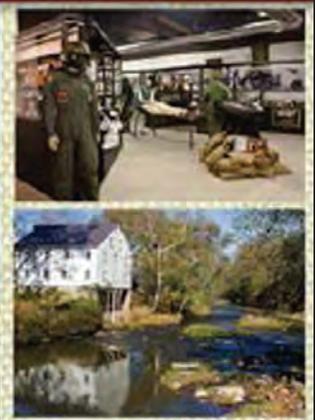
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ground and a small creek. The only structure of twentieth century construction is a big picnic shelter with a stone fireplace.

Accommodations inside the farm house are just what you might expect from clues in the surroundings. Conditions are "primitive" to say the least. Ceilings are low, bare plywood floors are "soft" in places and far from level. There's usually a wasp or two in the air and every fall, bucket-loads of ladybugs need to be swept from the floors. The only heat for subzero winter nights is provided by an old wood stove that nearly burned the house down last year. And, during the "dog days" of summer, it's sometimes better to sleep out under the picnic shelter than swelter on one of the second-floor bunk beds. The old house has few of the "creature comforts" most of us take for granted these days.

That's why my city-raised wife just can't understand why our teenage grandson, Blake, is always eager to endure the 130-mile drive and spend weekends there. Let me try to share some sense of his attraction for those who have not already begun to feel it.



Larry Spotloe caught some trout. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.

It's a place where kids can ride dirt bikes and 4-wheelers, play in creeks, shoot guns and fish in ponds all day long.

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les. They learn the ancient arts of concealment and silent movement through the forest. They are taught to identify unseen animals by the calls they make and even by the distinctive way each creature rustles leaves. Kids begin stalking groundhogs and squirrels and then work up to deer and turkeys. They take pride in becoming accomplished hunters and excellent marksmen.

The first week of deer season is always the highlight of farm activities. An annual "hunter migration" begins the Friday before Thanksgiving. Family and friends start rolling in from all over the country. There's a big weekend reunion before deer season opens on Monday morning.

Opening day starts around 4 AM. Hunters awaken to a flurry of activity. Everyone is getting dressed, drinking coffee, eating breakfast and loading backpacks. Hours before daylight, they strike out in all directions - armed with rifles, side-arms and hunting knives. Most of them will have at least a half-hour hike along pitch-black trails lit only by the narrow beam of their flashlights. It's not unusual for one of our hunters to be startled by

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by the blood-curdling calls of nearby coyotes. They are a sobering reminder that bears, bobcats and an occasional panther also hunt these woods at night. Hunters need to pay as much attention to the trail behind them as they do to what lies ahead. Guns and knives afford marginal protection against large predators that lurk in dark forests. Its not until they are safely up in their treestands that the hunters become the most feared predators in the woods..

Everyone hopes to see a trophy buck today. Maybe they will. Maybe they will choose to shoot. Maybe not. Maybe they will bring home meat or maybe a rush of adrenaline will cause them to miss



Brad Berga hooked a 4 pound, 2oz. Ohio River smallmouth.



Jonathan Caltrider used a bow for a 146 class Ritchie County buck.

altogether. One thing is certain, however - something always happens to etch the first day of deer season into every hunter's memory. It might be the deer or turkeys or pesky squirrels. Sometimes it's the Sun or rain or wind or snow. Mother Nature always provides a story for the campfire.

All too soon, the hunt is over. The entire week is gone and we're packing for the trip back to civilization. The senior citizens are

worn out. None of us are as young as we used to be. Staying up late, getting up early, climbing hills and dragging deer have even taken a toll on the youngsters. But, there's no doubt every one of us will be back.

Last year, as the front of my pickup dropped into the first creek

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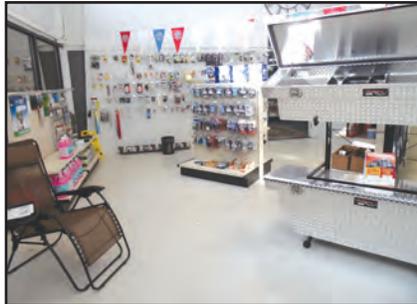
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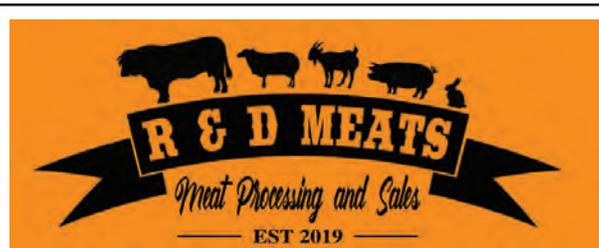


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crossing, I turned around for one last look at the old farmhouse. That's when I first realized the miracle that happens here. The timeless traditions we carried on this week transformed that old house into a mansion.

Webster defines a "mansion" as "the large house of a wealthy person." Well, our old farmhouse was big enough to sleep twenty hunters this week. And, every year, our band of "brothers from different mothers" fills a treasure chest with memories worth more than the price of gold. Our camaraderie is the key that opens the lock allowing every one of us to indulge in priceless riches.

There is no doubt we are leaving here as wealthy men today. But, the most wonderful thing about our treasure is that - despite all that we are taking home with us today - there will be even more of it when



Josh Sommerville hooked & released a 42" tiger musky.

we open that chest again next November.

Blake is, indeed, fortunate to have been born into these West Virginia traditions of hunting the backwoods and living "off the grid."

He cannot remember when "the farm" was not a part of his life. He is growing up reliving the boyhood experiences of his West Virginia

forefathers. Blake has become another legitimate heir to the treasure found only in the hearts of those who have chosen to dwell here. He is inexplicably drawn to that old farm because he realizes it has not only become a part of him - he is now a part of "the treasure." He's a mountaineer.



Josh Compton used a bow for his first black bear from Ritchie Co.

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Fall Walleye Fishing

The fall months have reputations for being some of the best months of the entire year for fishing as most fish species, walleyes included, are actively feeding during this time. While big, deep lakes are often thought of as "classic" walleye waters, small, shallow lakes often harbor good walleye populations that often go on the bite now too.

Typically, I like to target fall walleyes in shallow, weedy lakes by searching along the lake's first drop-off, that area where the flat that typically extends out from shore starts to drop to deeper depths. On many of the small, shallow lakes I fish this drop-off occurs in depths from 5- to 10-feet deep.

Searching along subtle points and turns or finding bottom content changes along these drop-offs is often a good starting point. These areas are often good spots during

the spring bite on these lakes and produce again during fall. As fall progresses, I start looking for still living, green weeds which often occur grow up on the flat and then extend down the drop off as well. In fact, an area of green weeds will often be the "spot on the spot"
continue to the next page

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Ronald Lamp arrowed a Richie 10 point. Photo courtesy of Cross-roads General Store near Newark.



Shawn Stidham removed a 29 pound Putnam County coyote.

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where numbers of walleyes of all sizes gather.

Incidentally, the areas where “good weeds” are present one fall, is often an area that will harbor weeds and fish in future falls as well. These areas are also often top winter ice fishing spots too, particularly during early ice.

The classic jig and minnow combination slowly trolled or drifted along a lake’s first drop-off is one way to find the subtle differences and/or living weeds that may host fall walleyes in good numbers. Simply drifting with the wind and swimming a light jig and minnow combination on a long line behind the boat is, in fact, my favorite fishing method on these waters because it helps me eliminate unproductive water and find walleye schools.

Once a school of marble-eyed fish is found along the drop-off, the catch can often be maximized by anchoring, either with an anchor or with a trolling motor’s “spot-lock” feature and pitching jigs and minnows repeatedly to the fish. Shallow water pitching is a great way to

work over a spot and catch a bunch of fish from a small area.

Jigs in the 1/16- and 1/8-ounce size range get the nod when drifting or pitching to shallow walleyes. The classic Fire-Ball® Jig is available in these sizes and comes in a bunch of “fishy” colors as well. Various minnows will produce fall walleyes, but a scoop of fatheads is often all that is needed. On flat calm days or in very shallow water, the 1/16-ounce size Fire-Ball® gets the nod, though I’ll go to the 1/8-ounce size if the wind kicks up. Incidentally, the Fire-Ball® will soon be available in several UV color patterns that will make these jigs even more appealing to fish in the off-colored waters often found in many small, shallow lakes.

Light jigs and minnows fish well on light line and spinning rods and reels. .

If you are looking for some perfect fall fishing fun this year, consider heading to a small, shallow lake right now. Tie on a jig and minnow and look for the spots just described.

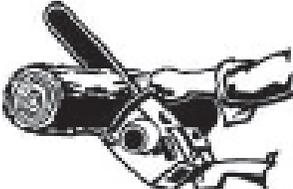


Joe Parcell landed a large Kanawha River walleye.



Doug Kirk arrowed a massive Mingo County buck

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Travis Heater landed a 6 3/4 pound largemouth at the Stonewall Fall event. His team finished third.



Logan Martin got a bow buck. Photo courtesy of Park Center Sporting Goods in Rainelle.



Jamie McGee used a bow for a 10 point Wirt County buck.



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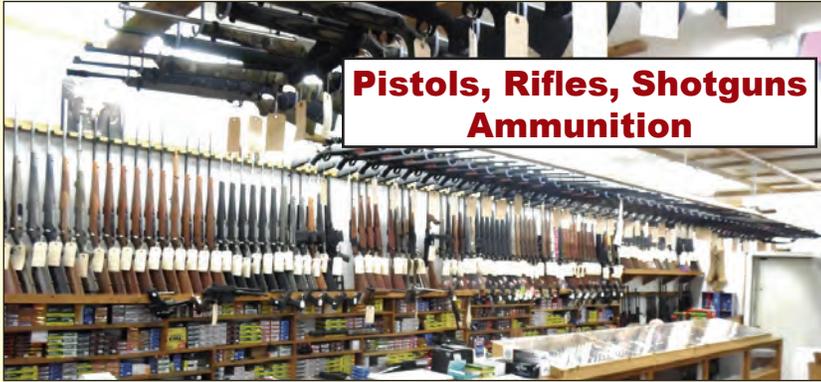
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