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Issue 265

November/December 2017



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TIPS**

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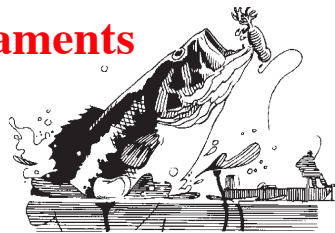
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Cover Photo

Archery season has been rather warm and hunter hours in the woods seems to be down.

Lindell Perry had bow success with this wide racked ten point buck.

We are looking for quality buck pictures again this season. Look on pages 22 and 38 for forms to mail - text or email your pics. Large bear and other game animal pictures are also welcome. Good luck this season! *Photo courtesy of Anderson Outdoors in Buckhannon.*

62 Deer Hunting Tips For Success

Get Good at Shed Hunting

1. Being good at shed hunting can give you insight to what bucks you have on your property and where they hang out. It can also be an easy way to give you a nice rack to hang on the wall.
2. Look in the thick stuff for sheds. Bucks love cover and the thick brush can knock off a loose antler leaving it for you to find.
3. Many sheds are found anywhere a buck has to jump. A creek or fence crossing can offer a shed antler that has been jolted loose.



Sam Mills caught a 25" largemouth at North Bend Lake - 10 pounds..

4. Be sure to check the south facing ridges for sheds. Deer frequent these areas in early spring to soak up the sun.

Use Game Trail Cameras

5. Digital deer scouting is cutting edge and trail cameras are the number one tool. There are even trail cameras that send SMS photos to your phone when motion is detected. One of the best selling trail cameras of all time is the Bushnell Trophy Cam. It takes 12MP photos and 720p HD video.

6. Use a mineral lick or salt block during the off season to bring deer into trail camera range. You can buy these fairly cheap at your local hardware or outdoor store.

7. Remember to bring an extra memory card and batteries every time you check your game cameras.

8. Locate your cameras where they are easily accessible so you don't over-pressure the deer.

9. Position your camera to the north for the best quality pictures.

Big Buck Tactics

10. A part of seeing bigger bucks is letting the smaller ones walk. If you have everybody in 100 square miles practicing this, then you will

continue to the next page

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Todd Dillon, from Hurricane, caught a 30" striped bass.

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- continue to grow larger bucks.
11. Designate a few acres of your property as a deer sanctuary where it is safe for them to go. Give them a food plot, an apple tree, something they will really enjoy.
 12. Post keep out signs around your sanctuaries and safe zones so other hunters don't wonder in.
 13. Be cautious of bucks circling downwind anytime you rattle or call.
 14. Use scents and lures conservatively. Many mature bucks have made a connection between man and scent overuse during the fall.
 15. During the rut, find the bucks by locating the does. The buck's hormones are going to be raging. They are looking for a mate.
 16. Rattling techniques are most effective during the pre-rut phase before bucks lock down with a doe.
 17. Most mature trophy bucks are

- killed between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m during peak breeding season.
 18. Hunt the edges of thickets and the nastiest overgrown areas you can find. Bucks love heavy cover.
 19. The snort wheeze is a great call to use on an aggressive buck.
 20. Don't be afraid to make a move on a buck. Most successful hunters tweak their stand locations once they gain more insight on buck movement.
 21. If moving a tree stand is too risky, consider making a natural blind to ambush a buck.
 22. Don't call or grunt to a buck that is already heading your way. Just be still and quiet and let the deer move right in.
- Shooting & Recovery Tips**
23. From a tree stand, come to full draw while standing upright like normal, then bend at the waist bringing the pin down to the tar-

- get.
 24. It's always best to be patient and wait for the right shot to open up.
 25. Anticipate a nervous buck taking off as soon as he hears the bow-string (ducking the arrow). Aiming
- continue to the next page



Kurt Long used a bow in Ohio for this great buck. *Photo courtesy of Tyler Outdoor Supply in Middlebourne.*

a little lower can result in a better shot.

26. Don't shoot further than what you are comfortable shooting. Stay within your comfortable range.

27. Have enough respect for a mature buck to let him walk if he doesn't offer a good shot.

28. Pay close attention to a deer's reaction after taking a shot to determine where it is hit.

29. Do your part and harvest does to keep the herd in check.

30. Listen once a deer runs off. Many times you will hear them crash after they are out of sight.

31. If you are unsure of the shot placement wait it out. Remember, when in doubt – wait it out!

32. Note the direction a deer runs after being shot. Use landmarks as a guide.

33. Examine your arrow for an indication of the shot placement. Hair and blood color can be a sign where your arrow hit.

General Hunting Tactics

34. Hunt bottlenecks, funnels, pinch points, and trail hubs.

35. Play the wind in addition to scent control clothing or scent killing spray.



Emma Carr used a bow for a 10 point in Randolph County.



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36. Deer can see movement from a long ways, use slow motion if you have to move while on stand.

37. Don't make any human sounds that aren't natural to a deer's environment. Coughing, banging equipment against a metal stand, or your cell phone ringing will ruin a hunt.

38. If you are going to carry one call make it a grunt call. Whenever deer are in rut and they hear that grunt call that sounds like another buck.....oh boy.....things are about to get good.

39. Check the wind direction several times an hour and get down if it switches to your disadvantage.

40. Don't overuse deer calls. Deer don't call as often as deer call mak-

ers would like you to think.

41. Scanning thick cover with a good pair of binoculars is a great way to spot a bedded buck.

42. Leave your rangefinders in a handy spot in case you need them quick. The Nikon 8396 ACULON makes a perfect rangefinder for scouting and will last season after season.

43. Use rangefinders to mark yardages around your tree stand prior to a deer coming in.

44. Always let a loved one know where you'll be sitting in case something unforeseen happens.

45. Hunt the travel corridors between bedding and feeding areas during the early season.


continue to the next page

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46. Leave your bow or gun where you can easily grab it with little movement.

47. Stalking deer can be more successful on windy or rainy days. A deer's hearing and sight are lessened during these conditions.

48. Be sure to wear a facemask or face paint to hide the familiar contours of your face.

49. Cover shiny equipment that might reflect light and look unnatural with paint or camouflage tape.



Jeanie Booher got a nice archery buck. Photo courtesy of Tyler Outdoor Supply in Middlebourne.

50. Deer move in all types of weather. Take advantage of foul weather when other hunters are sleeping in and you could score big.

51. In no way should you ever hunt with broadheads that may be dull. Keep your practice broadheads separate from your hunting broadheads.

52. Keep deer from patterning you

by using different routes to and from your stand sites.

53. A pee bottle is a must. Bring an empty plastic bottle with a lid in case you've got to go.

Scent Control Tips

54. Activate your scent control clothing several time throughout the hunting season. Scentblocker

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makes some of the most advanced technology in blocking odors and human scent.

55. Be sure to shower with scent free soap and shampoo before every hunt.

56. Use field spray on all your clothing, boots, and equipment.

57. Don't ride in a car or truck with your hunting clothes on. It's better

to dress in the field or outside your vehicle once you arrive.

58. Storing your hunting clothes in a scent free bag or container is essential.

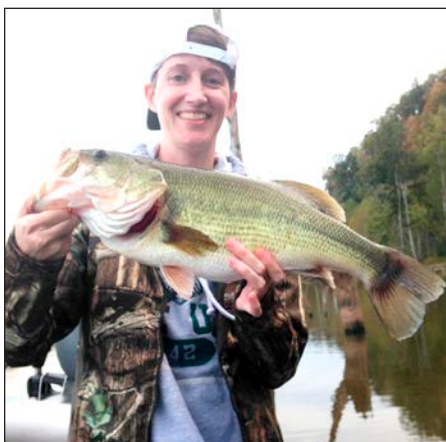
59. Use scent eliminating breath spray.

60. Wear rubber hunting boots as opposed to scent absorbing canvas or leather.

61. Wear layers of clothing to stay warm. Plus you can take off a layer or two if you get hot.

62. Use cover scents that are natural to your area or you might spook game.

Following these deer hunting tips can certainly help you to have a more successful hunting season.



Kristie Seckman caught a 5 pound, 7 oz largemouth at North Bend.

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Colt Corder went to Montana to catch trout. *Photo courtesy of Old & New Sports in Ravenswood.*



Andrea Johnston bow hunted in Doddridge Co. for a nice 8 point.



Rob Ciarapica caught & released a 50" paddlefish on the Ohio River.

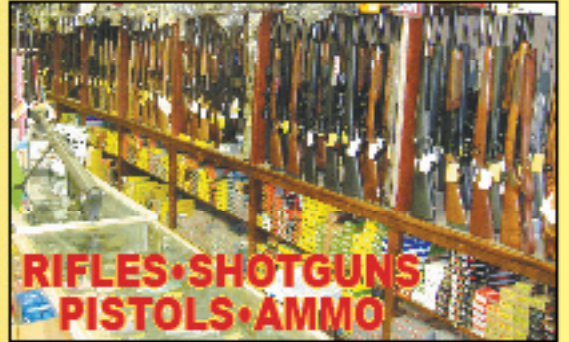
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Small Game Seasons

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — West Virginia's various small game hunting and trapping seasons will soon be underway, and wildlife biologists from the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources are predicting good opportunities for success.

Ruffed grouse season begins Oct. 14 and ends Feb. 28. Hunters should look for grouse in five- to 20-year-old timber cuts with abundant soft mast producers like hawthorn, dogwood, greenbrier and grapes. The daily bag limit is four.

Raccoon hunting season opens Oct. 14 and ends Feb. 28. Hunters with hounds should experience success similar to last year, provided they pay attention to river bottom areas near favored food sources. The daily bag limit is four per hunter or groups of hunters.



Konner Stalnaker reeled in a huge carp in Jackson County.



Hunter Sperry fished in the Guyan-dotte for this big drum.

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LIVE BAIT

Cottontail rabbit numbers appear stable in quality habitat, such as old field and brier thickets. Numerous opportunities should be available this season, which runs Nov. 4 through Feb. 28. The daily bag limit is five.

Hunting seasons for snowshoe hare, bobwhite quail, bobcat and red and gray foxes open Nov. 4. Hunters should check the hunting regulations summary for specific closing dates for each species. Red and gray fox night hunting will begin Jan. 1 and run through

Feb. 28.

Trapping seasons for red and gray foxes, raccoon, mink, muskrat, coyote, skunk, opossum and weasel open Nov. 4 and close Feb. 28. Populations look good on all species, and trappers should see more animals available due to a low harvest last year and a relatively mild winter.

Bobcat, fisher, beaver and otter seasons open Nov. 4. Trappers should check the 2017-18 regulations summary for the closing dates for each species.

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DNR 2017 Mast Survey

ELKINS, W.Va. — Hunters getting ready for the fall hunting seasons can now consult the 2017 Mast Survey and Hunting Outlook publication, available on the Division of Natural Resources' website at www.wvdnr.gov. 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.

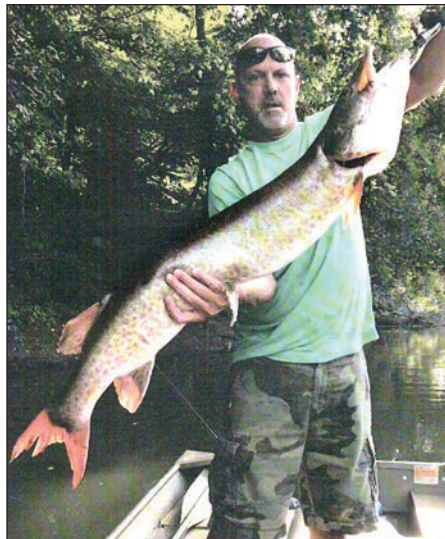
"The availability of fall foods has significant impacts on wildlife populations and harvests," said Chris Ryan, supervisor of the Game Management Services of DNR's Wildlife Resources Section. "Our biologists have used the mast survey data to demonstrate a strong correlation between mast conditions and 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 will affect population sizes in following years."

Production of acorns, walnuts, apples and hickory nuts is significantly higher than in 2016 and will have noticeable effects on the 2017–2018 hunting seasons. Most species produced mast well above the 46-year average.

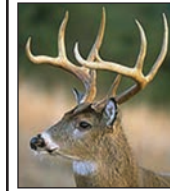
"It is very important for hunters to scout and consider the type and amount of food available in the areas they hunt," Ryan said. "Hunters can find a wealth of facts in the Mast Survey and Hunting Outlook, and it should provide them valuable information before heading into the field."

The 2017 Mast Survey and Hunting Outlook may be found on the DNR website at www.wvdnr.gov under the Hunting section. Information analyzing mast conditions and wildlife harvests also is available on the website.

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Chris Gear, from Pinch, landed a 47" musky on the Elk River.



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Clyde Pruitt, from Delbarton, hooked a 20 1/4" smallmouth.

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Season Dates For Archery

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — West Virginia's 2017 archery and crossbow seasons for white-tailed deer, black bear and wild boar will open Saturday, Sept. 30. The archery and crossbow deer and boar seasons run through Dec. 31. The bear archery and crossbow season is a split season (Sept. 30 – Nov. 18 and Dec. 4 – Dec. 31) with the exception of Logan, McDow-

ell, Mingo and Wyoming counties, in which the season will be open Sept. 30 – Dec. 31.

Black bear

Bear hunters must buy a Bear Damage Stamp (Class DS) in addition to a base license (nonresidents need a Class EE Bear Hunting License). Two bear may be taken per year, provided at least one bear is taken in Boone, Fayette, Kanawha, Logan, McDowell, Mingo, Nicholas, Raleigh or Wyoming counties.

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

Deer

Hunters must purchase stamps



Matt Helmick hooked a 4 3/4 pound smallmouth bass on his first trip to the Ohio River.

if they wish to harvest additional deer during the archery season. One or two additional archery deer, depending on the county, may be taken with Class RB (resident) or Class RRB (nonresident) stamps

continue to the next page



Randy Osburn caught a 44 1/2" Stonewall Jackson musky.

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Underage residents are required to purchase a Class RB stamp to take additional archery 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.

Hunters should take note that in 23 counties or portions thereof, they must take an antlerless archery deer before harvesting a second antlered



Logan White, from Given, reels in a nice largemouth bass.

deer. Additional archery stamps must be purchased before the start of the deer archery season.

Individuals may take up to two deer in one day during the archery or crossbow season. 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.

Wild boar

The wild boar archery and crossbow 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 2017-2018 West Virginia Hunting and Trapping Regulations

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Limit Maker Bait

He named it the Limit Maker, but Michael Neal doesn't limit his new Big Bite Baits creation to the Ned rig application for which it's most commonly associated. Rather, he's keen to use this 3 3/4-inch soft plastic as his team's utility player.

"For the weekend angler, this keeps them from having to spend lots of money on multiple baits when you have one bait that you can use for multiple scenarios," Neal says. "For me, it's a confidence deal where I know I can tie it on, and whatever situation arises, I know that I can reach for it."

About the worm

Released at ICAST, Neal's Limit Maker features more detail than the small (or cut-down) stick baits most commonly used on mushroom-style jigheads for the typical Ned rig. Neal designed his bait with subtle eyes, a pair of low-profile wings for a gliding descent and a sharply narrowed tail that wiggles with the slightest movement.

Neal also designed a Limit Maker Jighead that comes in black or green pumpkin in sizes 1/16, 1/8 and 3/16 ounce. Built on a 3/0 Gamakatsu hook, the jighead features a 60-degree flat eye (perpendicular to the hook, rather than parallel) that Neal deems essential to the



JT Hart, from Wellsburg, got an early Preston Co. black bear.





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sus an in-line,” he says. “Also, I wanted that head to double as a shaky head, and I refuse to throw a shaky head that does not have a flat eye.”

Here are the ways Neal will rig the Limit Maker throughout the season.

1. Ned rig

Targeting steeper banks with either chunk rock or bluffs, Neal will use the lightest head he can get away with – usually 1/16 ounce in calm wind and light current, and up from there.

“Going light gives the bait a lot more chance to glide freely, instead of just being a straight fall to the bottom,” Neal says. “A lot of your Ned rig bites come on the fall, so the slower you can make the fall, the more bites you’re going to get.”

2. Shaky head

Neal might also use a shaky head on those same chunk rock or bluff banks, but he particularly likes it for dragging long, flat points where brushy, snaggy bottom might require a weedless presentation.

3. Texas rig



Jack Conrad, from Roanoke, brought in a huge spring gobbler.

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Spawning season is when Neal expects to put this presentation to work, pitching the small-profile bait to bedding areas. Whether that’s grass or laydowns, he’s confident that he can rig appropriately. “That bait has a thick enough body where you can put a 2/0 Gamakatsu Finesse Heavy Cover hook in it,” he says. “You don’t have to worry about getting hung up.

“The benefit of using this bait during the spawn is that bedding fish like to grab baits by the tail, so when you use a downsized presentation like that, there’s a lot less chance of them short-striking it, or picking it up and carrying it off and dropping it.”

Neal will also throw a Texas-

rigged Limit Maker in many of the same places in which he’d use the continue to the next page



David Yeater, from Paden City, shot a nice Tyler Co. turkey

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shaky head, only he prefers the rig when dirtier water allows him to use heavier 12- to 16-pound-test Sunline Shooter fluorocarbon.

“Your bluffing banks will have cracks in them, and the fish will actually get in those cracks and on the ledges of the bluffs,” Neal says. “A Texas-rigged Limit Maker is great for those scenarios, as well.”

4. Carolina Rig

A Carolina-rigged Limit Maker is

a good impersonator of a disoriented baitfish, and Neal uses it when targeting current breaks such as the depression between two sandbars or the downstream side of a wing dam. A 2-foot leader affords the right balance of presentation and castability.

“This is also a good presentation for dragging along long, flat points and feeling around for isolated rocks and wood,” Neal says. “In

the fall, it’s especially good when fish are schooling on bait. A lot of times, your bigger fish are under the schoolers, and the Carolina-rigged Limit Maker looks like a shad that’s falling to the bottom.”

5. Drop-shot

In classic “video gaming” form, Neal likes to drop his Limit Maker over rock piles, grass lines and breaks and fish it vertically on a drop-shot.

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SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The furbearer trapping seasons in West Virginia open Nov. 4. Trappers harvesting beaver, bobcat, fisher and otter must electronically register their catches within 30 days after the close of the respective season.

A game check confirmation number issued by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR) must be recorded in writing with the trapper's name and address, or written on a field tag, and must be attached and remain attached to each pelt or whole animal until it is sold, tanned or processed into commercial fur or is mounted.

Information provided by hunters or trappers when checking game is used to monitor the harvest and as-

sist in future management of these different species in West Virginia. Decisions regarding season length, opening and closing dates, and bag limits rely on accurate data obtained from electronic registration of the harvest.

Trappers are asked to deliver skinned river otter carcasses to DNR district offices. Biological samples collected will assist biologists in making decisions regarding future trapping seasons.

DNR personnel advise trappers to obtain a Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES) seal for each bobcat and otter pelt from animals harvested in West Virginia. The plastic seal is necessary only if the pelts will be shipped out of the state. Federal law requires the seal on all bobcat and otter pelts if they will eventually be shipped to international markets including Canada. The seals must be obtained from the state where the animals were harvested.

Bobcats and river otters are not endangered species but may be confused with similar-looking species that may be found on the international market. These seals may be obtained from the Elkins Operations Center and any DNR district office. Calling ahead is advised to ensure that personnel authorized to seal pelts will be available.



McKenzie Thomas bagged a Tyler Co. gobbler on youth day.



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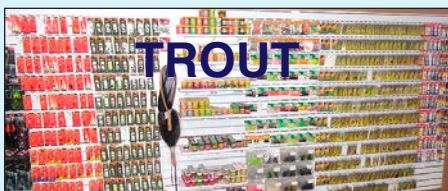
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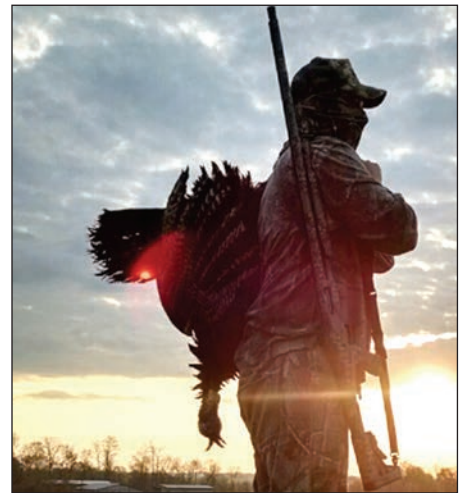
Jacob Johnson got a nice spring gobbler.



Tracy Pauley caught this 46 pound flathead in the Kanawha River.



Jacob Kincaid - 7 - used a cross-bow for an 8 point buck.



Cole Taylor brought in a gobbler in the youth season.



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Karl RIne got a nice archery buck. Photo courtesy of Tyler Outdoor Supply in Middlebourne.



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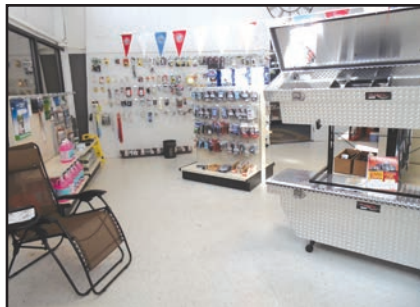
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Late Season Bass Fishing

October and November are synonymous across much of North America with bright foliage and falling leaves, pumpkins and the harvest moon, fog and frosts, football games and soccer games, and – what have I left out? Fishing?

Yes, fall does mean fishing for some people, especially bass fishing, though you wouldn't know it since many bodies of water seem deserted in fall.

If the weather and the water are still warm where you fish for bass in these months, think late-summer patterns and deep fishing, especially on reservoirs.

You can find some small bass in shallow areas where there's cover, and around vegetation, but bigger

fish are likely to be in deep ambush spots – creek channels, humps, and dropoffs – where you need to use a jigging spoon, Carolina-rigged worm, jig and pork, or possibly a deep-diving crankbait.

THE HERDING PHENOMENON

In big reservoirs, shad will soon start to move and this will likely get bass to act more like schooling fish than they do at other times, following massive pods of bait. When bass, which are normally object- and cover-oriented, start to react to the shad, which are not object- and cover-oriented, several things are likely to happen.

One is that you may find bass chasing schools of baitfish in open water, that is, away from the banks. This may occur near or along the edges of cover, especially vegetation. Surface lures, lipless crankbaits, and some lead- or metal-bodied lures, are good for schooling

continue to the next page

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Tom Utt, from Sutton, landed a 49" musky.



Clayton Barnhart used a recurve bow for this buck.

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bass that chase shad.

Be observant and watch for this activity; sometimes schooling action occurs suddenly, so keep a rod ready and rigged with an appropriate lure that you can fire quickly to the edges of the breaking fish.

If you just want to chase shad schools on the theory that bass will be around them, then you must rely on sonar to find and stay with the schools.

But this is only marginally effective. Shad are here and there so quickly that you lose the schools often, spend too much time searching, and are likely to spook them or nearby bass with persistent electric or outboard motor noise.

Another scenario is that as the



Frank Elmore landed a couple of nice Jackson County largemouth.

water starts to cool, baitfish schools move from open areas back into creeks and coves, and may get herded into these areas by bass, so your focus should shift to the mouths of such places and then to the interior or upper portions. This is also the time to pay attention to main lake points, which are a natural edge passage point and which often find bass and baitfish gathered.

Again, use fast-moving lures in these locations. This is also a time when lures with some sparkle and glitter -- in effect having flash that might suggest a moving baitfish -- are likely to be especially productive.

STRUCTURE AND SHALLOW WATER

When you don't find a lot of baitfish in creeks and coves it doesn't necessarily mean that the bass aren't there or that the baitfish won't come around eventually.

continue to the next page

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Richard Franklin, from Greenville, hooked a 22 1/2" largemouth bass.

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ally. Thus, shoreline structure, like brush, logs, fallen trees, etc., are places to work, perhaps with surface lures if the light is low, and otherwise with a spinnerbait, jig, or Texas-rigged soft worm.

Bass stay in these places waiting for shad to come by since ambushing is more in their nature and there is a lot of shad movement. Retrieve worms and jigs slowly, perhaps flipping them into thick cover if the water is dingy; fish spinnerbaits slower as the water cools, even slow-rolling them in places.

In many natural lakes and ponds, especially in northern latitudes, there is no shad population and thus no pattern of bass following huge schools of these baitfish. There may be sporadic activity in which bass bust schools of shiners (or, less occasionally, alewives), but this is more a situation in which bass react in a sudden moment to

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a mobile school of shiners rather than aggressively follow them.

Bass do move into shallower areas of natural lakes and ponds, however, as the water cools, and they can also be receptive to lures with a flashy, suggestive appeal.

Sand and rock points likewise become feeding locations, and the edges of weeds deserve special attention.

Not Too Fast

In smaller bodies of water, I don't find a fast retrieve much of a benefit. And with surface lures

it's just the opposite. Fall is a great time to enjoy surface fishing, but if you work poppers, chuggers, and stickbaits too hurriedly in waters where the fish aren't accustomed to the frenzy of plundering schools of baitfish, you'll mostly be ignored.

One of my most preferred lures for these places is a minnow plug with a single tailspinner, which is often fished without any movement other than an occasional twitch that darts the plug forward a smidgeon and causes the spinner to briefly

continue to the next page



Terry Wadsworth, from Pine Grove, caught a 22" trout. *Photo courtesy of Cooper's Campground in Harman..*

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whirl and splash the surface; I can't tell you how many fish just slurp this kind of lure instead of slam it, and, as a result in clear water, I especially like to light-line such a lure with a spinning outfit.

When the water is cooling, I also like minnow plugs without spinners, fished very slowly on the surface or, especially over thick and now-dying weeds, a suspending minnow plug that is twitched just under the surface. September bass in natural lakes and ponds may be getting paunchier, but that doesn't



John Bentz, from Racine, Ohio, reeled in a very large 45 pound blue catfish.

mean they're swimming around like food vacuums.

Here Comes the Wind

One thing that eventually occurs on all but the smallest bass waters in early to late fall is wind. Changing weather patterns bring wind, which can whip up the surface. This can help super-oxygenate wind-blown areas, which is especially helpful in larger lakes that experience fall turnover. Otherwise, it helps stack up plankton, which draws numbers of baitfish and also bass. So, even though it's more comfortable to get out of the wind and more difficult to maneuver for casting when rocked by the wind, pay attention to windward shores. This is especially true in places where baitfish are likely to get stacked up because of natural funneling (like between islands). Minnow plugs are good here, and also shallow-running crankbaits or

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I've mentioned a number of different lures for early fall bass fishing, albeit for different situations, as well as a variety of places to seek early fall bass. Which brings up a closing thought: use your head and be adaptable during this season. Nothing is guaranteed, except nice foliage.



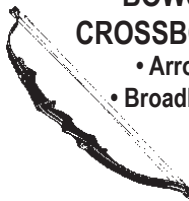
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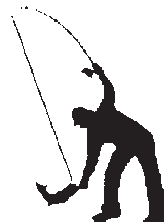


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Antlerless Seasons

FRENCH CREEK, W.Va. — The three-day special antlerless deer season for youth hunters, persons who possess a Class Q/QQ permit and senior citizens with a Class XS license will soon be underway. The first segment of the season is one day, Oct. 21, and the second segment is two days, Dec. 26-27. This season is open 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



Jim Thrasher has a yellow phase rattlesnake. He's too wild.

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.

“The special split antlerless season provides an excellent opportunity for parents and other mentoring adults to pass on the skills, safe habits and traditions of hunting to youth hunters,” said Tyler Evans, continue to the next page

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FRENCH CREEK, W.Va. — The three-day special antlerless deer season for youth hunters, persons who possess a Class Q/QQ permit and senior citizens with a Class XS license will soon be underway. The first segment of the season is one day, Oct. 21, and the second segment is two days, Dec. 26-27. This season is open 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.

“The special split antlerless season provides an excellent opportunity for parents and other mentoring adults to pass on the skills, safe habits and traditions of hunting to youth hunters,” said Tyler Evans, wildlife biologist with the DNR. “This season also provides excellent opportunities for our seniors and other eligible hunters to take to the woods at a time when hunting pressure is at a reduced level.”

All hunters participating in this season, as well as accompany-

continue to the next page



Long time Ohio River angler, Ron Schultz caught a 4 1/4 pound river smallmouth bass..

TEXT

Your Big Game
Pictures
Details On Page 22



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ing adults, must wear at least 400 square inches of blaze orange.

The daily bag limit for this special antlerless deer season is one antlerless deer per day. A total of three antlerless deer may be harvested during this season. These deer will not count toward the hunter's annual deer season bag limit, and Class N/NN stamps are not required for this special season.

Each harvested 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 may be checked in on the Electronic Licensing System at www.wvhunt.com, by calling 1-844-WVCHECK or by visiting a license agent.

Please, refer to the 2017-2018 West Virginia Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary for additional details on this special split antlerless deer season. Hunters may also direct their questions to any of the six DNR district offices.

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Ed Carney went to Stonewall Jackson Lake and caught a 43" musky.



Rich Wynn used a bow in Ohio for a great buck. Photo courtesy of Crooked Creek Archery in Williamstown.

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Hunting Ethics

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — As the days of summer wind down, the Wildlife Resources Section of the Division of Natural Resources asks hunters to refresh themselves on hunting ethics before the season approaches.

"Hunting ethically and legally preserves our image as sportsmen and women and promotes good stewardship of resources," said Gary Foster, DNR's assistant chief in charge of game management.

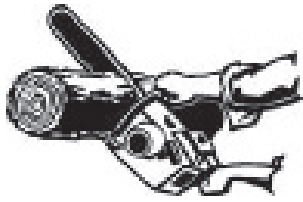
Finding somewhere to hunt is critical in planning your hunting season. While private land ownership makes up 90 percent of West Virginia, there is still more than 1.5 million acres of public land open to hunting. Hunters have a variety of locations to hunt in West Virginia, including wildlife management areas, state forests and national forests.

"If you plan to hunt new territory, spend some time studying maps and satellite imagery to ensure familiarity with the property boundaries of the area," said Holly Morris, DNR wildlife biologist. "Being unaware of property boundaries is no excuse for trespassing."



Jared Bishop, from Bluefield, caught a giant 19 1/2" crappie.

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The DNR reminds hunters to always obtain written landowner permission before entering private property. Taking the time to get written permission also gives hunters a chance to build relationships with landowners.

“You can discuss hunting experiences from last year, how you could help out with land management or simply express your thanks for the opportunity to hunt on their property,” Morris said. “Keep in mind that landowners may use purple paint, in addition to signs and fences, to post their lands.”

Whether hunting on public or private land, hunting ethics should be kept in mind. Take the time to review hunting regulations now, focus on the counties or areas you’ll be hunting and make sure you understand them. Be respectful of other hunters while in the field. Don’t hunt areas where someone else is already hunting and try to have a backup plan so you don’t crowd fellow hunters. If you are a successful hunter, be mindful of how you dispose of your harvest. Dumping carcasses and hides on public land is illegal.

“Treat all land, whether public or private, as if it were your own,” Morris said. “How we act in the field and treat others reflects on all of us as hunters.”

Hunters who need help finding a place to hunt can contact any DNR district office, the Elkins Operation Center or go to the DNR’s website, www.wvdnr.gov, for information about wildlife management areas, state forests and national forests open for public hunting. The 2017-2018 Hunting and Trapping Regu-

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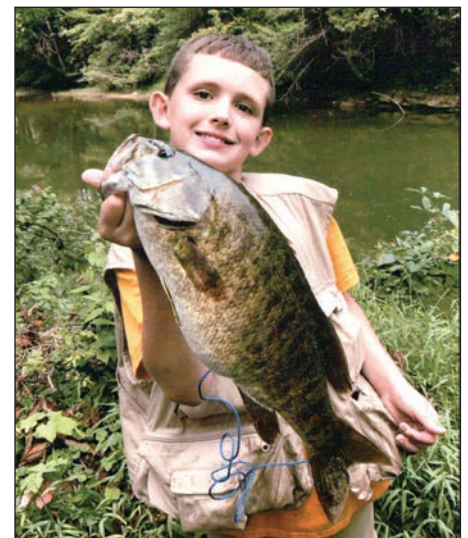
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Wild Game Meat

FRENCH CREEK, W.Va. — West Virginia’s abundance of wildlife provides opportunities for many
continue to the next page



Devon Johnson caught a 21 1/2” smallmouth at Birch River.

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families to fill their freezers with an ample amount of highly nutritious wild game.

Wild game can provide a healthy, high-protein alternative to beef and other commercial meats. For example, white-tailed deer (venison) has fewer calories and contains approximately five times less fat than an 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. Hunters and their families are not the only West Virginians who benefit from the state's abundance of wildlife resources. The DNR-sponsored Hunters Helping the Hungry Program processes deer for needy families and individuals in the Mountain State. Since

the program's inception in 1992, 941,066 pounds of hunter-donated venison has provided more than 1.2 million meals for needy West Virginians. The 2017 hunting season will mark this successful program's 26th year.

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



Isaiah Casto hooked a nice Jackson County largemouth bass.

Tourism Initiatives

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va.
 — Three new initiatives designed to increase fishing and hunting opportunities and to attract outdoor recreation tourism have been announced by West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Director Stephen McDaniel.

The DNR is exploring opportunities to enhance trout fishing in and around state parks beginning in 2018. Hatchery personnel are making plans to stock trout in many state parks lakes on Saturdays. In addition, selected trout streams within a 10-mile drive of these state parks will be stocked on Fridays. The Saturday trout stockings will be announced in advance to give anglers the chance to plan weekend trips, including overnight stays at state parks.

continue to the next page

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“We believe stocking these lakes and streams on Fridays and Saturdays will provide an excellent opportunity for people, especially new anglers, to improve their chances of catching a trout while visiting our beautiful state parks and forests,” McDaniel said. “This should help attract families looking for additional weekend activities and those who work or attend school on weekdays during the regularly scheduled trout stockings.”

The DNR is also exploring the concept of establishing special catch and release regulations for brook trout on streams located within four major watersheds in the Monongahela National Forest. These include portions of streams within the drainages of the Middle Fork of Williams River, Tea Creek, Red Creek and Otter Creek. These watersheds support more than 130 miles of native brook trout habitat



Cheryl Tucker, from Pennsboro, hooked a 17 pound drum..

and, if approved, will bring the total miles of catch-and-release and fly-fishing-only waters for brook trout to approximately 200 miles statewide.

“The purpose of these proposed catch and release regulations for brook trout is to provide added protection to these fisheries and to make these areas more attractive to both resident and out-of-state anglers. We think this will encourage them to say overnight and enjoy our state’s many outdoor recreation opportunities,” McDaniel said.

The concept for establishing these catch and release regulations for brook trout will be finalized and presented to the Natural Resources Commission during its quarterly meeting scheduled for Feb. 25, 2018. These proposed regulations will also be presented for public comment during the 12 sectional meetings scheduled March 12-13, 2018.

The DNR also is planning to expand its successful program of

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controlled deer hunts at select state parks. The Natural Resources Commission is authorized to conduct controlled deer hunts for white-tailed deer on state parks to protect the ecological integrity of these public lands. These hunts will provide recreational opportunities for those seeking a unique
 continue to the next page



Kristen Tanner, from Elkview, caught a 44" Elk RIVER musky.

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"We are still working out the details, but up to 10 state parks and an either sex tag are being considered for inclusion in this deer hunting program," McDaniel said.

The concept for these expanded state park hunts also will be finalized and presented to the Natural Resources Commission in February, and proposed regulations will be presented for public comment during the March sectional meetings.

West Virginia fishing and hunting licenses may be purchased at license agents across the state or at www.wvfish.com or www.wvhunt.com. Reservations for state parks lodges and cabins can be made at www.wvstateparks.com.

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JC Christopher, from CLarksburg, caught a rare 6 1/4 pound smallmouth bass at Stonewall Jackson Lake.



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