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Issue 306

February/March 2023

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Cover Photo

Weston resident Mike Determan hunted in Lewis county for this wide racked buck. His 9 point was taken with a gun on opening day.

WV bucks seem to big bigger than past years. Game management and less hunter pressure may be helping in quality racks.

Looking for your big buck pics . There is a form on page 38.

Fishing time is coming soon.

Choosing A Rifle Scope

This guide will show you everything you need to know about rifle scopes.

Including:

- Magnification
- Different types of scope reticles
- Parallax

If you want to go from rifle scope rookie to rifle scope pro, you'll love this guide.

Let's dive in.

Magnification

Magnification is how much

closer the target appears than what is seen with the naked eye.

For example:

If a scope's magnification is 8X that means you can see EIGHT TIMES closer than the naked eye. But how much magnification do you need?

A LOT of rookies would say, "buy as much magnification as you can".

That's not always the case.

In fact, if you buy too much magnification, not only have you wasted your hard-earned money but you may not even use it. That's why I recommend the amount of magnification based on your use.

continue to the next page



Macey Eultschy - 9 point buck in Wetzell Co. Photo courtesy of Tyler Outdoor Supply in Middlebourne.



Jacob Cox bagged a nice buck with a split brow tine..

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Sarah Armentrout harvested a Pendelton County 9 point buck.

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This should help you out:

Do you use your rifle primarily for target shooting (up to 100 yards), stalk small game, or homestead defense? Get a magnification between 1-4x.

Target shooting (up to 200 yards), stalk large game, or hunt in closed landscapes (forests, mountains, etc.)? Get a magnification between 5-8x.

How about target shooting (beyond 200 yards) or hunting in open landscapes (deserts, fields, etc.)? Get a magnification between 9-12x.

For example, if I'm going to hunt varmints and small game with a Savage A17 that's equipped with a 17 HMR scope, then I'll probably need some magnification (like 3 - 9x).

Got it? Good.

To find how much magnification a scope has, look at the first number (or range of numbers) before the x.

For example, if a scope says 2x30, that means the magnification is 2x. What if a scope says 3-9x40? That means the magnification is 3-9x.

You might be wondering: what's

the difference between 2x and 3-9x?

Besides the amount of magnification, the main difference between them is the type of magnification. And actually, there are two types of magnification...

Fixed vs. Variable Power

Fixed power means that your scope uses only ONE magnification. (Like 2x30).

On the other hand, variable power means that your scope uses MORE than one magnification. (Like 3-9x40.)

continue to page 7



Jamie Greene used his muzzle-loader for a Nicholas Co. buck.



Tony Catino went to Hardy County for a quality buck.



Justin Berger hunted in Kanawha Co. for a great 10 point buck.



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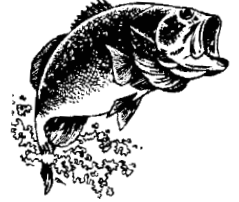
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But the question is, which one should you use?

From my experience, I'd go with variable powered scopes because it allows you to shoot in a variety of environments and situations.

But it also depends. If you plan on shooting from only one distance, then opt-in for fixed powered scope. Otherwise, go with a variable powered scope. Once you've selected the type of magnification, it's time to understand...

Objective Lens

The objective lens is the lens located at the end of the scope and is responsible for light transmission.

Generally, the bigger the objective lens, the brighter and clearer your image will be. That being

said, should you get a scope that has A LOT of objective lens? Not really.

The reason?

Buying a scope that has too much objective lens could be harmful by adding excess weight, requires
continue to the next page



Roy Mason hunted in Gilmore County for his 8 point buck.



Tyler Scott brought in a Wood County whitetail buck.

taller scope rings, and makes your scope more prone to sunlight reflection. (Which gives off your shooting position).

If your firearm has low recoil, you're using it for close range hunting, and have a low power scope, then get 28mm & under. However, if your firearm has quite a bit of recoil, you're using it for

low light hunting, and have a high power scope, then get 30 - 44mm. Lastly, if you're a long-range shooter or using high magnification in low light, then opt-in for 50mm & up.

You can find how much objective lens a scope has by looking at the number after the x.


For example, if a scope says 2x30, that means the scope has a 30mm objective lens. Simple enough, right? So now that you've selected the right amount of objective lens, it's time to discuss...

Lens Coatings

A lens coat is an invisible coat that reduces glare and enhances the sight.

There are 4 basic lens coating types: .

I wouldn't really worry about lens coating since most scopes today are fully multi-coated. And even if a scope is just coated, sometimes that one layer is better than several layers. With that said, I wouldn't stress scope coats. Instead, invest in a proper reticle.



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Hunter Sprouse got his firsts deer, an 8 point with his dad.



Mick Fry brought in a quality Jackson county buck.

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Outdoor Show In Morgantown Doubles In Size

Thousands of outdoor enthusiasts from the tri-state area will be heading to Morgantown's Mylan Park on March 4th-5th for the 21st annual WV Fishing, Hunting & Outdoor Sports Show. Recognized as the largest outdoors show in the region, the NEW 100,000 sq. ft building is packed with EVERYTHING OUTDOORS! Over 200 Vendor booths from all over the US and Canada will be selling thousands of products and services.

"We are so excited for this year's show," says Labeth Hall Director of the Event. "We have the largest show ever with everything you need to go fishing, hunting, camping or to just enjoy the great outdoors. In addition to ATV's, campers, boats, trucks, trailers, tractors you can find jerky, outfitters, charter boats, and much more. We have added a lot of new vendors this year as our show has continue to the next page



Outdoor Show in Morgantown offers lots of items for outdoors. Read the article above for info.

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Colett Merrill brought in a quality whitetail buck.



Danny Harper had success with an 8 point buck this season.



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For those who are serious fisherman, they will find a variety of fishing trips in the US and Canada, bait, tackle, reels, area fishing guides, as well as numerous charter boat captains from the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay. Professional anglers and fishing enthusiasts will find everything they need to catch the Big One.

The avid hunter can browse through lots of guns, archery equipment, knives, ammo, hunting associations, DNR, taxidermists, camo gear and lots of new gadgets. There will be turkey

calls, tree stands, scents and a variety of new hunting products also. Hunting outfitters will be there to book bear, whitetail, wild boar, moose, turkey and game birds trips to a variety of destinations.

Fishing and hunting seminars will be held daily. Special guests at this year's show include the Davisson Brothers performing Saturday at 4:30pm, followed by World Champion Turkey Caller Chris Walls. Attendees can check the website for the updated schedule of other seminars.

Families are also welcome at the show. You will find something for everyone. Women can shop for camo purses, marinades and spices, unique jewelry and decorative

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items with an outdoors theme. Children can enjoy meeting birds of prey, Smokey Bear, Outer Rim Praxeum Lightsaber School, face painting, a movie theatre and more.

continue to the next page



Shiela Perry, from Buckhannon got a nice 10 point buck



Billy Sierra Lemley bagged a heavy racked 9 point buck.



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Guests can register at the Prize Table to win lots of great prizes given away hourly, as well as two Grand Prizes including a week-

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The "WV Fishing, Hunting &

Outdoor Sports Show" is owned and organized by WVRC Media.

For more information visit the website at wvoutdoorsportsshow.com.



Hunting in Lincoln County, Easton Toney has an 8 point buck.



Scott Light used a compound bow for a great 10 point buck.



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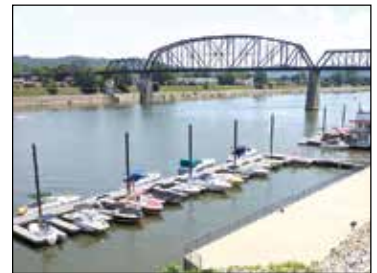


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For those who don't know, FFS

is a relatively new sonar system that allows you to pan ahead of the boat, see fish and watch how they react to the lures you cast toward them.

I've had some amazing experiences with it on Lake Hartwell

By Gary Clouse
where the fish typically set up well for the technology. Hartwell has abundant offshore structure where spotted bass will school
continue to the next page



Jamie McGee harvested a bear in Wirt County.



Young Rylee Martin used her crossbow for her fine buck.

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over brush in 15 to 25 feet of water. You can see the cover on the screen, cast a drop shot around it and watch two or three bass swim out of the brush and one of them eat it.

And, of course, it's deadly on northern lakes filled with smallmouth. Those brown fish are so aggressive that if you get a lure around them, they usually bite it. If you see a fish on the screen and it doesn't bite it, it's probably not a smallmouth.

It's not as effective in shallow areas, although I've used it in Florida to locate grass clumps ahead of me. The fish may not be visible because they're hunkered in the grass, but when I throw there I get a bite.

Other lakes don't set up as well, especially lakes with a lot of different species. I find myself spending too much time on a fish that may or may not be a bass that I can't catch. It becomes a time waster, kind of like sitting on a stubborn bedding fish while trying to make it bite.

And that's one of my inner battles with this technology. It can be



15 year old Grant Owens got his 1st bear in Webster County.



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addicting and cause me to waste valuable fishing minutes.

I've caught myself staring at the screen while following a fish, only

to see another one and start following that one. The next thing I

know, I'm 50 yards off of the spot

continue to the next page



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Jansen McCloy used a bow for a great 11 point Wood County buck.

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• Info On Page 3

I intended to fish and have nothing to show for the 15 to 30 minutes I spent wandering around.

I have made it a point to reevaluate when and where I should spend time staring at the screen.

I'm not sure FFS was around much when the late Aaron Martens was fishing at full strength. Would FFS have made him even better? Or would he be like me and become so distracted that it

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took away from his natural ability and instincts?

I'm concerned about the younger generation of anglers that are coming into the sport. I've watched them; they don't cast until they see a fish on the screen. Are they learning basic fish-finding skills and using natural instincts that are so critical to becoming a great

angler?

My point isn't to ridicule FFS. It's an incredible tool that can make you better in some situations.

But, when over-utilized, it can be a time waster and detract you from employing your brain or using instincts that are the keys to consistent bass fishing success.

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Mudpuppy And Hellbender Science Survey

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — In an effort to learn more about the distribution of hellbenders and mudpuppies, the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources has launched a citizen science project to track sightings

of these important but declining salamanders around the state.

The project, which will take two years to complete, gives anglers, science enthusiasts and members of the public a chance to help WVDNR biologists map the dis-

tribution of hellbenders and mudpuppies and protect these unique amphibians and their habitats.

“While hellbenders and mudpuppies might look fearsome and strange, these salamanders are harmless to humans and sport-fish populations and play a big part in keeping our waterways healthy,” said Kevin Oxenrider, project leader. “As we track sightings over the next two years, we want to encourage everyone to keep their eyes open, report their sightings and help us protect these important salamanders and their

continue to page 20

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Donnie Simmons caught a 9 lb., 6 oz. rainbow. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.

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sightings and help us protect these important salamanders and their habitats for future generations.”

Anglers and members of the public who see a hellbender or mudpuppy in their local waterway or inadvertently catch one

while fishing can report their sighting to the WVDNR by completing a short questionnaire, which includes questions about the date and location of the observation. Submitting a photo is

continue to page 23



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encouraged. To learn more about the survey visit WVdnr.gov/hellbender-mudpuppy-survey.

Hellbenders and mudpuppies are the only two fully aquatic salamanders native to West Virginia. Neither species is poisonous or venomous, and they eat mainly crayfish, worms and insects, but occasionally eat small minnows or other smaller amphibians. Hellbenders and mudpuppies have not been shown to negatively impact sportfish populations.

Anglers who inadvertently hook a hellbender or mudpuppy should immediately release the animal

into the water by cutting the line as close to the hook or extracting the hook (taking care to remove the barb with pliers before extracting). State law prohibits the possession or taking of a hellbender or mudpuppy.

WVDNR biologists will use data collected during the survey to better understand hellbender and mudpuppy distribution and status in West Virginia, and to inform future conservation efforts.

“Every observation counts,” said Oxenrider. “You don’t have to be an angler to participate.”

For more information about
Feb/March 2023 ~ Page 23

hellbenders, mudpuppies and other citizen science projects, visit WVdnr.gov/surveys.



Christian Thompson went to Anderson Lake for a rainbow trout.

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French Creek Freddie Predicts

FRENCH CREEK, W.Va. — Get ready for an early spring. French Creek Freddie, West Virginia's most popular weather-predicting mammal, called for warmer temperatures during his annual Groundhog Day celebration at the state's Wildlife Center in Upshur County on Thursday.

"When it comes to predicting the weather, Freddie's a pro," said Trevor Moore, wildlife biologist for the West Virginia State Wildlife Center. "Freddie couldn't wait to come out of his burrow to spend his special day with fans and hopes everyone will come back and visit him this spring and summer to help him celebrate the Wildlife Center's 100th anniversary."

According to tradition, if skies

are cloudy and a groundhog doesn't see its shadow, an early spring can be expected. Six more weeks of winter can be expected if skies are clear and a groundhog returns to its burrow after getting spooked by seeing its shadow. In the past 40 years, Freddie's forecasts have been accurate about 50 percent of the time. Freddie predicted an extended winter in 2022.

The West Virginia Wildlife Center in Upshur County is home to French Creek Freddie and nearly 30 different species of West Virginia mammals, birds and reptiles. The center is open 9 a.m. to

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3 p.m., seven days a week through the end of March. Admission is free during this period. Regular hours and admission go into effect in April. To learn more about the Wildlife Center and for directions, visit WVdnr.gov/west-virginia-wildlife-center.

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Travis Vanscoy hooked a 6 1/2 lb. golden trout. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.*

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| 6:50 PM | \$4,000 |
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ROUND A RFR #2 Christensen Ranger 22LR
ROUND A RFR #3 Taurus Judge 45/410 SS
ROUND A RFR #4 Kel-Tec CMR-30 22WSM Titanium
ROUND A RFR #5 Christensen Arms Mesa FT 28 Nosler
ROUND A RFR #6 Weatherby VG Badlands 300 wby
ROUND A RFR #7 Glock 29SF 10mm
ROUND A RFR #8 C2 Readhead Premier 20ga o/u
ROUND A RFR #9 H&K VP-9 9mm
ROUND A RFR #10 Bergara Hunter 300Win

ROUND A RFR #11 Rock Island VWF-14 12ga
ROUND A RFR #12 Springfield 1911 9mm
ROUND A RFR #13 Ruger PC Charger 9mm
ROUND A RFR #14 Fair Carrera One 12ga
ROUND A RFR #15 Thompson 181A1 45ACP
ROUND A RFR #16 S&W Model 642 38 Special
ROUND A RFR #17 Kimber Micro Raptor Pistol
ROUND A RFR #18 Weatherby Sporter 243
ROUND A RFR #19 Kel-Tec P50 5.7x28mm
ROUND A RFR #20 Sabatti Sapphire Thumbhole 30-06

Drawing #21 ONLY - TEN WINNERS

ROUND A RFR #21 Glock 19 Gen 5 9mm (Match last 3 numbers on ticket to WIN)

5:31 PM - 6:00 PM Rapid Fire Round B

Drawings #1 THRU #20 - ONE WINNER

ROUND B RFR #1 Beretta PX4 Storm 9mm Pistol
ROUND B RFR #2 IMI Tavor 1912 12ga Tactical
ROUND B RFR #3 Weatherby VG First Light 257Wby Cipher
ROUND B RFR #4 FN 509M 9mm
ROUND B RFR #5 Beretta A300 Ultima Kom 12ga Combo
ROUND B RFR #6 Remington 700SPS Tactical 308
ROUND B RFR #7 Tri-Star Bristol 410 SXS
ROUND B RFR #8 Kel-Tec Sub-2000 GX17 9mm
ROUND B RFR #9 Pietta 1873 357 Mag 4.75"
ROUND B RFR #10 Weatherby Vanguard S2 Sporter 243Win

ROUND B RFR #11 Bergara BMR Micro 22LR
ROUND B RFR #12 Mossberg 590 Shockwave JIC 12ga
ROUND B RFR #13 Browning Xaor Max Long Range 300 Win
ROUND B RFR #14 S&W Performance Center 642 38 Special
ROUND B RFR #15 Glock G41 10mm
ROUND B RFR #16 Christensen Arms Mesa 28 Nosler
ROUND B RFR #17 Henry 22 LR Pump
ROUND B RFR #18 Glock 43 9mm
ROUND B RFR #19 Tikka T3x Lite Combo 6.5 Creedmoor
ROUND B RFR #20 Bergara HMR 300 FRC

Drawing #21 ONLY - TEN WINNERS

ROUND B RFR #21 Ruger LCP II 380 W/Green Laser (Match last 3 numbers on ticket to WIN)

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- 1:16 PM Old Town Sportsman Autopilot Angler Kayak
- 1:20 PM \$500 Amazon Gift Card
- 1:24 PM Indian Chief Bobber
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- 1:32 PM \$500 CASH
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- 2:48 PM Oyster Bamboo Fly Rod Master Series 8' 5wt
- 2:52 PM \$4,000 CASH
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5:31 PM - 6:00 PM Rapid Fire Round B

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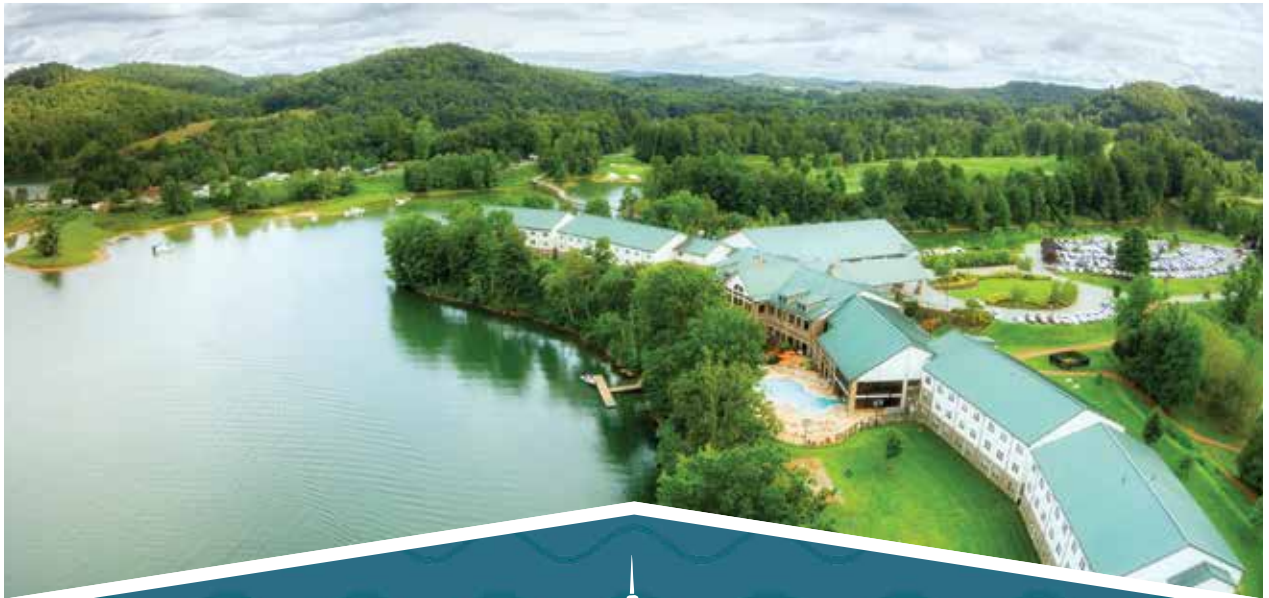


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Winter To Early Spring Bass Fishing

It is an exciting time when the ice comes off the water and you know that spring is coming soon. Dreams of big bass fill our minds, but there is a certain approach that I use to narrow down where those bass are at, and most importantly, how to catch them.

Focus on channels or coves that come off the main lake and lead to traditional spawning areas. If



Larry Hendershot bagged a quality 9 point Ohio buck. *Photo courtesy of HP Archery in Belpre, Ohio.*



Larry Hendershot Jr. took a long tined Ohio buck. *Photo courtesy of HP Archery in Belpre, Ohio.*

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the water is below 50° use a suspending jerkbait, if the water is just above 50° switch to a big glide bait. Often, the bass will be hanging on secondary points in those coves, channels, and creek arms.

In this article, we will break down how I approach late winter and early spring bass fishing.

A Lake Within a Lake

The first thing that I do, is to nar-

row down my search area. I am not interested in covering a large amount of water. On a traditional reservoir or lake system, I will focus my efforts on one particular cove, creek channel, or bay.

I start at the main point leading into this area and cover each secondary point thoroughly as I head all the way to the back of the cove.

A secondary point is any point af-

continue to the next page

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LIVE BAIT

ter the primary point. If there are five points between the entrance of the bay and the back pocket, all of these are considered secondary points.

The bass will be somewhere along this stretch. The awesome part is, if you find them on the third point back, this is most likely a repeatable pattern that can be applied to other coves across the lake.

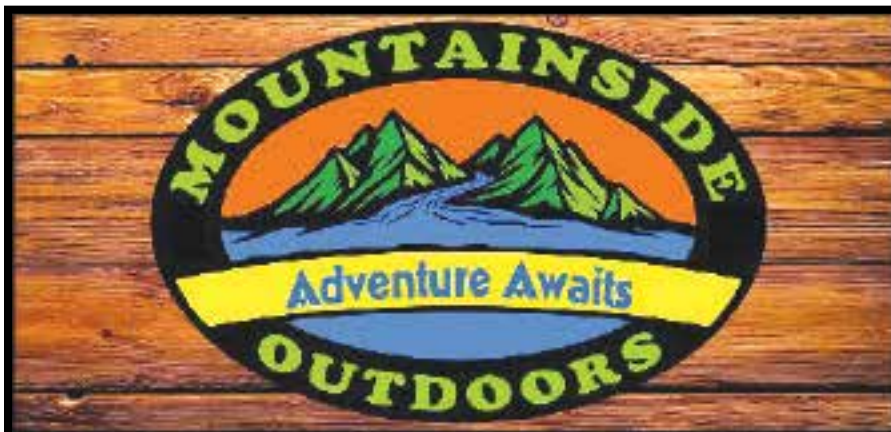
Lure Choice for Late Winter Fishing

For my lure selection, I keep it very simple. If the water is below that 50° mark I will stick with a suspending jerkbait. If the water breaks that 50° mark I will switch over to large glide baits. I will also use a tight wobbling crankbait, but I will discuss that later.

Suspending Jerkbait, like this KVD200, are always tied on when I hit the lake during the late winter or early spring.

Suspending Jerkbait

continue to the next page



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Cliff Reed used a crossbow for an 8 point Kanawha County buck.

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Equipment

I will stick with low gear ratio reels, a rod with a medium power rating, and 10lb fluoro or braid with a fluoro leader.

Lure Selection

In cold water, I prefer to stick with a smaller jerkbait. One with two sets of trebles is my go-to, but if I use a three treble version, I want the hooks to be small.

Natural colors are always my starting place. Match the forage in your lake. If you have predominantly shad use silvers and whites, if you have lots of bluegill, switch

to something with more greens and yellows in it.

The Retrieve

Even though it is not the dead of winter, I still prefer a slower cadence when fishing a jerkbait this time of year. The air temperature may be getting comfortable, but those water temps are still cold. Make long casts towards the bank.

Reel the suspending jerkbait down to depth and then let it sit. Be sure to twitch it on a slack line, not a tight line. Twitching on a slack line will ensure that the lure has the most action and side-to-



Steve Rinehart harvested his buck in Wood County.



Sydney Hatcher - 13 - bagged her first deer in Wood County.

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sashay.

Between twitches, leave is sit suspended. Most strikes are going to occur just after the twitch and you will then notice you have a fish the next time you go to move the lure.

Reel down and use a side sweep to set the hook.

.Glide Bait

If the water is over 50° I will then switch over to a big glide bait.

The Lure

It's important to know what a

glide bait is. Unlike large soft plastic swim baits, a glide bait is made from hard plastic. The back tail does not wobble like on a soft plastic lure. Many of them on the market are quite large and they can get pricey. (Some nearing \$100)

Don't panic though, there are plenty in that \$15-\$40 range that work quite well.

The bass get a real good look at a glide bait when you are fishing it. Ultra realistic details on the lure will help to convince that big bass that what you are offering to them is in fact a real meal.

The Equipment

I like to use a low gear ratio reel to make sure my retrieve is slow enough and I pair it with fluoro-

carbon line in that 15-20lb test range.

As far as the rod, it is critical to have one with some flex to it. Imagine an extra large cranking rod. Glide baits traditionally have large trebles and, as anglers, we do not want to pull those trebles

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Dylan Carpenter brought in an 8 point nice buck.



Kim McCloy bagged a nice Ritchie County 9 point buck.

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from the fish.

A medium action rod with good parabolic action will ensure that those fish stay hooked and you can land them. Rods that are anywhere from 7'6" to 8' are excellent glide bait rods.

The Retrieve

Keep it simple. Let that bait work from side-to-side. The only action you need to impart comes from the reel. Give the handle a quick crank, pause, and then repeat. This allows the glide bait to make long sweeps to the left and right.

When you get a strike, just reel down and maintain pressure on the fish.

The Third Bait I Will Use – Tight Wobbling Crankbaits

The other bait that I like to use when fishing late winter and early spring conditions, is a tight wobbling crankbait.

Why a crankbait with a tight wob-

ble?

If you pay attention to threadfin shad this time of year, their side-to-side movement is tight. Most fish in the cooler water will have small movements. This is why I like a crankbait with a tighter wobble.

Yes, there are exceptions. For example, it seems like Table Rock Lake in Missouri is all about the Wiggle Wart this time of the year. And yes, it has a very wide wobble.

Where to fish the Crankbait

The smaller male bass are the first ones up. The larger females will hang back until the nests are fanned out and the temperatures warm up a little more.

I like to throw the crankbait two cast lengths from the shore. Of-

continue to the next page

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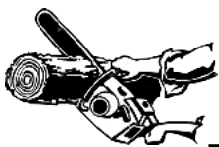
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ten, the boat is sitting over the big females and we are casting away from them.

Be sure to experiment with the distance from the shoreline, especially if you are not getting bites with the jerkbait or glide bait.

Just like with the other two lures, I stick with natural colors unless the water has a heavy stain to it, then I will go with more solid colors or patterns.

Pay Attention to the Details

As you are fishing from the front of the channel to the back, make sure that you pay attention to all the little details.

Are you getting strikes on the main point? Are you getting bit on the third secondary point back? Are you getting your fish in the pockets between the points? Is there a runoff ditch coming off the shoreline and into the water? Look at the cover available. The nice thing about fishing this time of year when the bass are wanting to move up, is that usually the pattern you find is repeatable.



Daniel Lattea brought in a quality 10 point buck.



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Christina Wilson had success this year with her buck.



Dan Nichols hunted in Roane County for a nice buck.

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Steve Miller went to Wirt County for his 8 point buck.



Tyrler France got a Lincoln County buck with a big drop tine..



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Barry Hamilton & John Sigler, from St. Marys, bagged a moose in Maine with 22 points.



Gary Ross harvested a nice 9 point buck in Lewis County.



Josh Compton had success with a nice Ritchie County buck.



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