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Issue 313

January/February 2024



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Magazine

Volume 33 Issue 313

Publisher and Editor

Mark A. Goudy

Contributing Editors

West Virginia Division Of
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No Subscriptions Offered

Printed Every Six Weeks

W.Va. Sportsman

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Cover Photo

Angler Michael John Drake caught a 69.45-pound blue catfish on December 8, breaking the state's weight record for this species. He released the fish.

The largest blue catfish ever caught weighed an astonishing 143 pounds! It was reeled in by Richard Nicholas Anderson in 2011 at Kerr Lake. Look for more state records to be broken in West Virginia for blue catfish.

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2023 Gun Season Buck Harvest

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Preliminary data collected from the electronic game checking system indicated that deer hunters in West Virginia harvested 45,155 antlered deer during the two-week firearm season from Nov. 20 through Dec. 3, the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) announced today.

The 2023 harvest was 7.5 percent below the 2022 harvest, which totaled 48,810 bucks.

“The harvest during the 2023 traditional buck firearm season was expected to be lower than that of 2022,” said Paul Johansen, chief of the Wildlife Resources Sec-

tion. “Average hard mast indices paired with bad weather during the opening few days of the buck firearms season probably hindered the success of many hunters this season. All areas of the state registered an average decrease of 11 percent; with the exception of the southeastern areas that had an increase of 19 percent from the 2022 harvest.”

The top 10 counties for the 2023 buck harvest were Greenbrier (1,892), Randolph (1,604), Preston (1,413), Pendleton (1,413), Monroe (1,396), Braxton (1,394),

continue to the next page

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Michael Jamison brought in a huge Braxton County buck.



Roger Maynard, from Lenore, used a bow to get this Mingo black bear. It wasn't weighed officially but it had to be well over 400 pounds.

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, Hardy (1,329), Kanawha (1,242), Pocahontas (1,236) and Fayette (1,226).

WVDNR reminds hunters that several days of deer hunting opportunity remain for 2023, including the remainder of the archery and crossbow season, which runs through Dec. 31. Muzzleloader

deer season is open from Dec. 11-17.

The Youth, Class Q/QQ and Class XS deer season for antlerless deer will be open Dec. 26-27 in any county with a firearms deer season. This will be followed by the reopening of Class N/NN antlerless deer season Dec. 28-31 in

specified counties or portions of counties. See the 2023-24 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary or visit WVdnr.gov for county and area listings.

Hunting, trapping and fishing licenses and stamps for the 2024 seasons are now on sale. Learn more at WVdnr.gov.



Jason Spurlock arrowed a huge Logan County whitetail buck.



Young Luke Bee, from Smithville, harvested a wide rack buck.

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WV DNR And The Girl Scouts Partnership

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Gov. Jim Justice today announced a partnership between The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources and the Black Diamond Council of the Girl Scouts of America to allow scouts to utilize state parks for activities while contributing to conservation service projects.

Gov. Justice signed the MOU at his regularly scheduled Administration Update Briefing today.

Under the terms of the memorandum of understanding, scouts from the Black Diamond Council will be able to camp for free at various parks as long as the

requested facility is available for use on the requested date and its use will not interfere with other groups or scheduled activities at the park. Recreational activities may also be provided at a reduced or negotiated rate, depending on volume, availability, operational hours and the time of year.

“I’m thrilled to continue to create

partnerships with incredible organizations like the Girl Scouts of America and encourage the youth of our state to enjoy and conserve West Virginia’s natural resources,” Gov. Justice said. “This agreement will not only provide scouts with access to our beautiful state parks, but help foster a sense

continue to page 8



Ben Lusk hunted with a bow in Wyoming Co. for a nice 10 point.



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of responsibility towards our natural environment while offering enriching experiences.”

Before starting a service project, scouting units will be required to complete volunteer agreements and obtain project approval from the WVDNR’s West Virginia State Parks section. State Parks personnel may also provide educational programming, such as merit badge classes and counseling, to visiting scouts subject to the availability of parks personnel, scheduled events, operations and availability of facilities or activities.

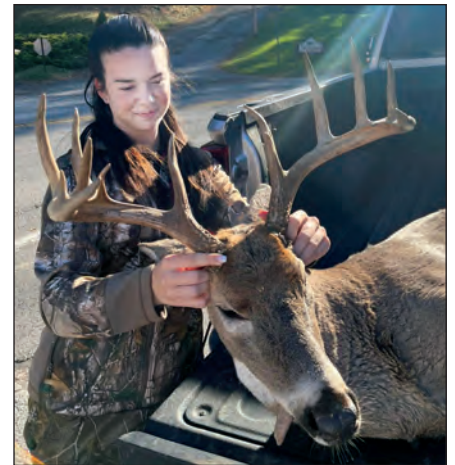
“We are excited to partner with the Black Diamond Council and

leadership potential of these truly incredible kids,” WVDNR Director Brett McMillion said. “We



Gage Ketterman got an 11 point buck. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.*

hope the time they spend in our incredible state parks will trans-continue to page 10



Coner Vohwinkle got her 13 point in Monongalia County. *Photo courtesy of Hardcore Hunters in Grafton.*



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late into a lifelong love for West Virginia and an ongoing positive impact on the scouts, our state parks and the community as a whole.”

The Girl Scouts of America’s Black Diamond Council is headquartered in Charleston and serves more than 5,000 girls, helping them develop their academic skills, self-confidence, ethics, leadership skills and citizenship skills through outdoor activities.

This new agreement is one of several public-private partnerships forged during the Justice Administration to promote environmental stewardship, outdoor education and community engagement. In July, the WVDNR signed a similar agreement with the Buckskin Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Other partnerships include hunting trips, trout stocking and stream improvement projects with the Mountaineer Challenge Academy.

To learn more about the Black Diamond Council and scouting opportunities in West Virginia, visit bdgsc.org. For more information about West Virginia’s State Parks, visit WVstateparks.com.



Hayden Jenks harvested his great 10 point in Wood County.

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Jesse Masters went to Tyler Co. for a 10 pt. *Photo courtesy of Tyler Outdoor Supply in Middlebourne.*



Kara Snyder bagged a 417 pound black bear. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.*

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Smallmouth Tactics

Smallmouth bass are one of the most sought-after fish species in the United States. According to the Smithsonian Institute, smallmouth bass are present in 43 states in the United States (Smithsonian Environmental Research Center 2023). They are known for their magnificent color patterns and tenacious fight they put up when caught. The current world record smallmouth bass was caught by David Hayes at Dale Hollow Lake and weighed 11lbs 15 oz. The length record in West Virginia is 25.5 inches. It was caught in the New River by Franklin Elliot. The weight record in West Virginia was caught by David Lindsay in the South Branch of the Potomac

By James Hively

River which weighed a whopping 9.75lbs (WVDNR 2023). In small rivers and creeks, the population of trophy smallmouth can be limited but still provide excellent opportunities for anglers that do not have a boat or a kayak. However, investment in a kayak can increase the places you can fish for “bronze backs.” To get your hands on a 20-inch smallmouth bass in West Virginia, you will need to acquire the skills to increase your chances of landing one.

Equipment

To catch smallmouth in small streams or creeks I recommend that you use a 6 foot 6 or 7-foot medium action rod with a fast tip. You could even go smaller using a 6-foot or 6-foot 4 rod.



Eli Ward landed some big spotted bass at Sutton Lake in the fall.



S. Miller landed a huge hybrid striped bass from the Ohio River.

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Some of my favorite rods for this type of fishing include St Croix, Lew’s, G-Loomis, etc. However, you do not have to spend a ton of money when going out and catching creek “smallies.” Reels in my arsenal include a Daiwa BG, Shimano Stradic Ci4, and a Pflueger President. When start-

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ing to smallmouth fish anglers should do fine with an inexpensive combo, especially because it is inevitable it will be dinged on rocks and enveloped with sand, because of this I usually leave my Shimano Stradic at the house and use a Lew's Rod with a Pflueger

President spinning reel. When targeting creek "smallies" I use 8 to 10 pound P line fluorocarbon to throw lighter lures that smallmouth tend to gobble up. I usually use spinning gear exclusively when wading or kayaking for the "brown fish." The lighter line and

spinning gear will enable you to throw effective lures that will ultimately be crushed if tossed to the right places.

Go-To Lures

Inevitably, if you ask 100 different anglers what lures to use on smallies you might get 100 different answers. Before we proceed to what lures I recommend when targeting these fish, it is important to know I have zero sponsorship, I use what works. We will go over four different lure choices that I have found to be productive day in and day out. The first lure I start with is a 4-inch stick bait in green pumpkin. My favorite is a YUM Dinger. Why a YUM Dinger and not something like a Yamamoto Senko? Price. YUM Dingers sell around \$3.50 com-



Austin Weis brought in a Raleigh County archery buck.



Adam Maltempis got a quality Raleigh County bow buck.

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pared to Yamamoto Senko that can be up to around \$8.00. When using this lure, you simply cast it, let it sink to the bottom, raise your rod to hop it off the bottom and let it sink again. The fish will usually bite on the fall. It is important to watch your line for any signs a fish has hit it because anglers will not always feel the strike. Usually, your line will just "take off" in the water, that is when you crank

down and set the hook. I usually Texas rig the YUM Dinger with a 3/0 offset worm hook round bend made by Gamakatsu with a 1/16 oz Eagle Claw Pro Series worm weight.

Secondly, another effective lure to catch a bronze back is the Nikko Hellgrammite. This lure is a little on the pricey side, however, with the elasticity of the plastic I found it to be good for catching 20-30

fish before it tears up. I work the Nikko Hellgrammite like the YUM Dinger. Similarly, you need to be a line watcher for this lure to detect bites. In my experience, the natural color Texas rigged with a 1/0 Gamakatsu worm hook round bend and a 1/16 oz Eagle Claw Pro Series worm weight is my go-to. I tend to Texas rig soft baits that are worked slowly to avoid snags.

When throwing moving baits, I gravitate towards a 3-inch Keitech Easy Shiner swimbait. These lures can be effective when the bass are out chasing baitfish. Keitech has a plethora of colors to choose from but in my tackle box I carry the following: Smallmouth Magic, Green Pumpkin Char-
continue to the next page

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Phillip Hedrick has a dandy 10 point. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.*

reuse, Green Pumpkin, Alewife, and French Pearl. These baits are rigged on a 1/8 oz Revenge Dart-er jig head (discontinued) but can easily be paired with a Keitech jig head that are available on their website. When fishing this lure, I usually use a straight retrieve. It is an effective strategy to let it sink to the bottom before you start the retrieve.

Lastly, a lure that is often overlooked is the tube style bait. My brother and father have been fishing tubes their whole life. We still have numerous packs of Cabin Creek Baits who have recently been bought out by Georgia Lure Company. Although Georgia Lure Company does not offer tube baits on their website at the time of this writing there are several companies such as Strike King, Berkely, Get Bit Baits, etc. that offer these lures. One company I do not have experience with but will try when my family runs out of Cabin Creek tubes, is the Secret Lures Company Stupid Tube. This company offers lures and jig heads that make the tube completely weedless to avoid snags. I usually go for green pumpkin



Bo Talbert went to Wyoming Co. for a nice bow buck. Photo courtesy of Harcore Hunters in Grafton.



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or smoke-colored tubes paired with the infamous Oldham's jig heads that come from Texas. Fishing a tube is like fishing a stick bait. There have been times I've thrown a variety of lures in my arsenal and then resort back to the

tube bait and get bit. Tube baits mimic crawfish that can be found in most creeks and streams.

Where to Find Creek/Small River Bronze Backs

In early spring targeting the first
continue to the next page



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placed over deep holes, it's more likely than not there is a fish in there. As with most bass fishing, it is important to target structure. Submerged boulders, trees, rock piles, and weed lines are all high percentage areas that should not be overlooked. Wading for me has always been a favorite past time. In the high-tech world of social media, smart phones, and instant information, it's important to re-connect with nature and experience the outdoors. Who knows? You might just hook into that 20-inch smallmouth!



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deep hole up a creek that is tributary to a river can be an effective strategy for catching smallies. Fish will come up these creeks in early spring to spawn enabling anglers to pick off big fish. Also, when scouting out a new stream to wade for smallmouth, I always look for rocky bottoms in that body of water. Rocky bottomed creeks and riverbeds will usually hold smallmouth, not to mention they play a big factor determining

if that body of water is wadable or not. The best approach is to walk the stream passing through the shallows to get from hole to hole. I have caught many smallmouth bass in two feet of water so it's important to cast to every part of the stream to catch the fish that are spread throughout. Generally speaking, the deeper the hole the more concentrated the fish are. Fore example. If you see a rope swing, which are usually



Rick Farley arrowed a rare double tine buck in Logan County.



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2024 Fall Wild Turkey Results

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) announced today that hunters harvested 981 wild turkeys during the 2023 Fall Wild Turkey Season.

Due to the lower brood production this year, the 2023 harvest saw a slight decrease of three percent over the 2022 harvest of

1,012 birds. However, this season was one percent above the five-year average and 12 percent below the 10-year average.

Fall turkey harvest numbers are influenced by hunter participation but also depend on the current year's brood production and mast conditions. Brood production in 2023 was lower than last year. However, more counties were

open for a two-week fall season due to a higher spring gobbler harvest than last year.

Districts one and four increased their harvest over 2022, with the others showing a slight decline. District four had the highest harvest (229 birds), followed by District three (215), District one (165), District two (142), District six (119) and District five (111).

Counties with the most harvests were Nicholas County (57 birds), Greenbrier (46), Monroe (43), Randolph (42) and Fayette (32). These counties, except Fayette, had a four-week season.

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Austin Davis has a 12 point Nicholas County buck. Photo courtesy of WV Wild Outdoors in Birch River.

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Winter Rabbit Hunting Advantages

In winter hunting, rabbit is one of the small game animals that are most hunter's favorite. Winter rabbit has its advantages and disadvantages. Hunters always have queries in regard to how they can know more about winter rabbit hunting, improve their hunting skills, and hunt more rabbits in a day. Why rabbit season is in the winter?

There are several reasons when winter is considered as rabbit season. Rabbit like cottontails is easily visible in the white snow and thus winter gives your rabbit hunting experience easy, fun and exciting. Rabbit like Snowshoe hares can be difficult to spot on in the white snow because they have

white pelt but eventually they can be spotted though because they are comparatively large in size. Snowshoe produce more meat and so preferable by the hunters.

Some prefer winter rabbit hunting because the cold killed off rabbit infestation with fleas, sickness, diseases, or parasites. But this problem can also be solved if you, after killing (hunting) the rabbits, let their body cool down for several hours. Since fleas need a warm body, so cooling down the rabbits dead bodies will cause it free from fleas

What happens to rabbits in the winter?

In winter the rabbits are weary from being hunted by humans and other animal predators like house cats and bobcats on the ground and by hawks, owls and other feathered predators from the sky.

The rabbits make creative hid-
continue to page 22



Haidon Thompson used a bow in Mason Co. for his 10 point buck.



Cindy Little enjoyed bagging a nice whitetail buck.



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ing place to hide in winter because there is a lot of lacking of vegetative covering during winter. Some rabbits change color to blend in white and gray winter landscape. In winter, Rabbits also stay put and do only necessary movement in cold weather to conserve energy.

What do rabbits eat in the winter time?

In winter, rabbit's diet routine changes. Natural vegetation food supply run out as consumed by other rabbit or wild animals. Plants like clover, tender young plants, berries and vegetables will no more or difficult to find because of snow. In such rough weather, wild rabbits generally

eat woody plant parts including the birch, willow, oak trees, twigs, bark and buds of trees and bushes.

In some States, in winter season, rabbits lives in brushy areas near agricultural fields. From that agricultural field, they eat waste grains, soybeans, corn, wheat, and sorghum.

Rabbits sometimes also eat snails, moths or other insects. They are cecotropes in nature so they eat their own feces.

In winter, when you think about your pet rabbits you must keep the same diet what they use to have all year round but the con-

continue to page 24



Henry Bonetti bagged a nice 9 point buck in Raleigh County.

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Lick Run Hunt Club is located in **Webster County**, West Virginia and encompasses over **8000** acres near the community of Hacker Valley. The Club is home to deer, turkey, bear and squirrel. Our members are invited to stay and camp and enjoy the many activities within the Club as well as the surrounding areas. Lick Run Hunt Club emphasizes the outdoor experience in a private setting with beautiful mountain scenery.

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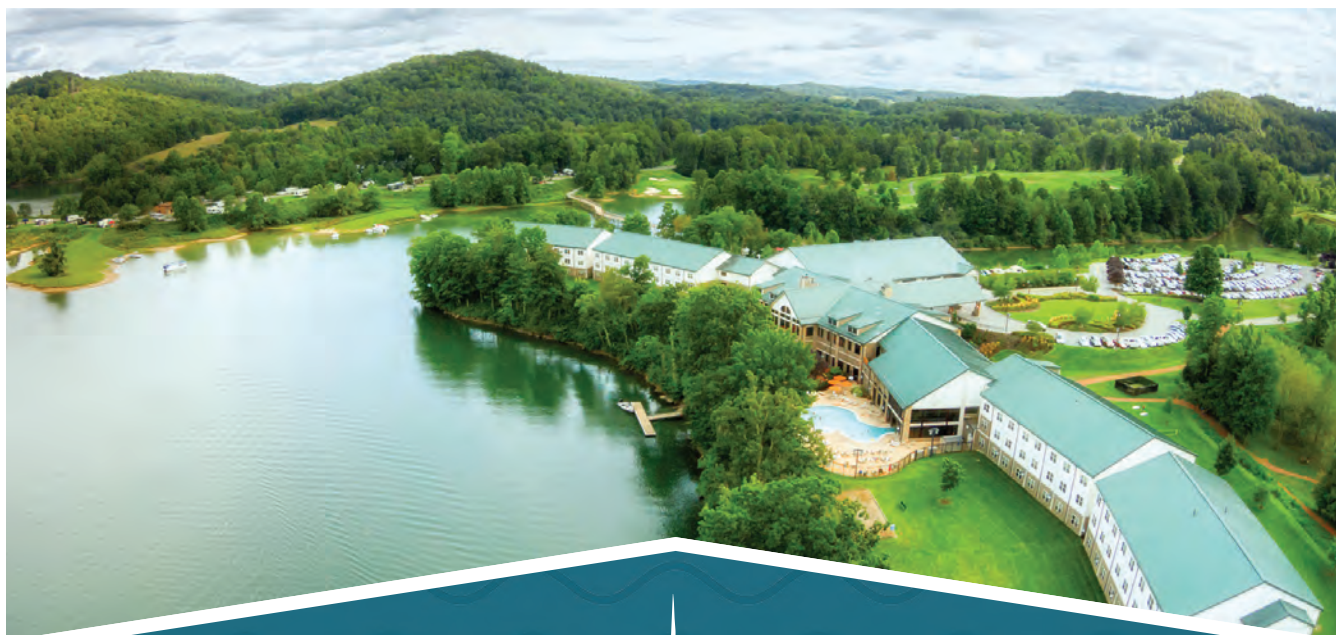
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sumption quantity will differ. In cold weather, rabbits will normally consume more Pet food to gain more fat which eventually keep them warm. You must feed your rabbits the same amount of quality pellets, vegetables and fruits as they use to have all year round. You make sure your rabbit's water has not been frozen or become too cold for it to drink.

What time of year are rabbits most active?

Rabbits are active all year round. That is why the hunters hunt and eat rabbits all year round. Besides,



Joe Posey, from Burnsville, shot an 8 point whitetail buck.



Roy Neal hunted in Fayette Co. for his quality 10 point buck.

in most States Rabbits are not considered as game, thus there is no hunting season for Rabbit.

Since rabbits are simple prey for owls, hawks, eagles, falcons, and wild dogs, they apparently less active during full moon because in full moon light predators can easily spot them.

Rabbits are crepuscular in nature. It means they are mostly active at dusk and dawn.

What time do rabbits come out at night?

Rabbits sleeps in day, around 6 to 8 hours per day. As a crepuscular animal Rabbits mainly come out during sunset and sunrise. Since rabbits are nocturnal in nature, their favorite playtime is night and they generally come out at night around 8 p.m. They do that because they sleep hours

continue to page 26

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in day and awake at night. So, do rabbits sleep at night? The answer is no.

Are rabbits more active at night?

Yes, they are more active at night. As mentioned earlier, Rabbits as nocturnal game animal sleeps in day for hours and play at night in their den or in pet home. Wild rabbits come out in sun down and first light just to be safe from predators.

Some prefers hunting in snow in compare to early season because in winter you can track rabbits foot step in the snow. Moreover, in extreme cold weather rabbits are bound to take shelter from the rough weather, that makes them simple to find and less likely to disappear in the wild.

Where is the best place to hunt rabbits?

You must know that, depending on the kind of rabbits, these rabbits can be found various places. Generally top locations in finding Rabbits is places with highly dense cover. You can find cotton-

tails and swamp rabbits in gnarly tangles of briars, thorns, brush piles, honeysuckle patches, fallen treetops, cane brakes and other forest cover. They look for these places to hide because coyotes, foxes and birds of prey hardly reach them in those places.

Furthermore, deserted estates, old logs and dead trees, mainly those where the trunk is still rooted providing food for skimming rabbits is also great places to look for.

Rabbits stay tight in those hiding places unless almost stepped on to them or evicted by a rabbit dog. If you have good rabbit dogs, you will have high chance of killing more rabbits.

In winter hunting, when the ground is covered with snow, continue to the next page

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Details On Page 3



Levi Britton, from Pt. Pleasant, has a tall racked buck.



Mathew Metz shot a 389 pound black bear. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.



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search for rabbit tracks that lead to good hiding places and reveal no sign of leaving. Then hunt the hiding places around thoroughly. Are rabbits less active in winter?

No, Rabbits are not less active in the winter. They are not uncomfortable in cold weather so they don't need to hibernate. They regularly look for food sources all over the winter to remain warm and alive.

These rabbits are not generally visible in winter because they are solely active on dusk and dawn. They come out this time because the weather is gentle and less light outside which eventually decreases their possibilities of being hunted by a predator.

Do wild rabbits have babies in the winter?

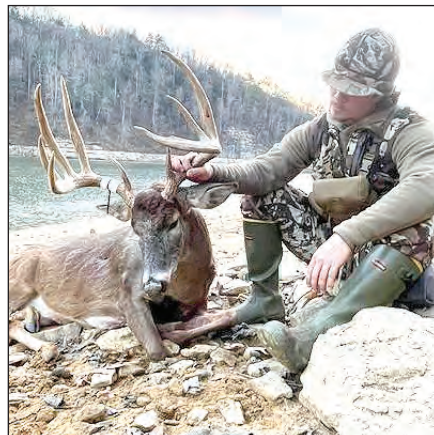
Yes, wild rabbits have babies in the winter. In general, rabbits breeding season is in late fall. When the temperature falls they

start to breed from early October to December. In the off-season they avoid mating with each other and blissfully coexist without brawling.

But some research showed that around 30 percent of Cottontail rabbits survive winter. It may seem less but cottontail rabbits breed February-September and their breeding rate is so high. A female rabbit can make up to 6 litters per year with 1-8 babies per litter.



Raylin Colvin hunted in Marshall Co. for her 10 pt. *Photo courtesy of Tyler Outdooe Supply in Middlebourne.*



Cole Collins archery hunted in Wyoming County. *Photo courtesy of Hardcore Hunters in Grafton.*



Randi Myers caught a nice small-mouth in Cacapon Park.

State Record Blue Catfish

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The state record for the largest blue catfish by weight has been broken for the fourth consecutive year, Governor Jim Justice and the West Virginia Division of National Resources (WVDNR) announced today.

On Dec. 8, Michael John Drake of St. Albans, WV, caught and released a blue catfish weighing 69.45 pounds and measuring

50.51 inches. Drake was fishing using cut shad from his fishing boat on the R.C. Byrd Pool of the Ohio River near Gallipolis. Drake's record fish was measured by WVDNR hatchery manager Ryan Bosserman.

The previous record blue catfish of 67.22 pounds and 50.70 inches was held by Steven Price.

Anglers who believe they have caught a potential record-breaking fish should report their catch to the WVDNR for verification. Fish that do not qualify as a state record may still qualify for a trophy citation. For more information, visit wvdnr.gov/fishing/state-records.

The new state record catfish is featured on the cover this issue.



Two bucks apparently were locked up fighting near my property this season. As you can see, they fell roughly 25 feet and died. One was a ten point and the other was an 8 point. The electric company found them on a work job.

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Elk River Trout Stocking Announced

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Gov. Jim Justice today announced that additional trout stockings were made to the Elk River in Webster County this November and December as part of a recently announced pilot program to evaluate the economic impact of trout stockings to the area.

The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources stocked trout on the Elk River and Back Fork of Elk River catch and release section once in November and once

in December.

“These additional trout stockings are a testament to our world-class hatchery program, which has made West Virginia one of the premier trout fishing destinations in the globe,” Gov. Justice said. “As a lifelong angler myself, I can confidently say that there’s never been a better time to cast a line in Almost Heaven. Not only will you experience the thrill of reeling in a trout in our crystal-clear streams, but you’ll

also be supporting the local economy in Webster County, too. So, grab your gear and plan a fishing trip with friends and loved ones, especially with the added fishing options during the fall and winter months.”

The WVDNR currently manages and operates seven cold-water hatcheries where rainbow trout, golden rainbow trout, brook trout, brown trout, and tiger trout are raised. To provide anglers with

continue to the next page



Bobby Spears reeled in a huge white bass.



Rodger Myers hooked a big large-mouth at Stonewall Jackson Lake.

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an opportunity to catch more than one species of trout, the WVDNR will stock multiple species of trout in the catch and release sections of the Elk River in Webster County.

Located near Webster Springs, the Elk River, and Back Fork of Elk River catch and release section are within a short drive of lodging, restaurants, shops, and other outdoor adventure destinations, such as Holly River State Park, Big Ditch Lake Wildlife Management Area, and the Monongahela National Forest. For more information about area attractions, visit wvtourism.com.



Stacy Hart, from New Milton, set the hook on a big largemouth.

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For more information about trout stocking on the Elk River in Webster County, anglers are encouraged to check the 2023 West Virginia Fishing Regulations Summary. The WVDNR also posts trout stocking updates online at WVdnr.gov/fish-stocking.

All anglers 15 years and older are required to have a West Virginia fishing license, trout stamp and a valid form of identification while fishing for trout. Licenses and stamps can be purchased at 175 retail locations across the state or online at WVfish.com.



Jamal Casto hooked a largemouth bass at a farm pond.

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Fun Hunting Facts

1. The practice of hunting has been ingrained in human civilization for approximately 3 million years, starting with archaic humans, and has endured ever since.
2. Upon the discovery of early evidence showcasing our human ancestors' hunting endeavors, it became evident that the inclusion of meat in their diet brought about significant changes, including the increase in skeletal size.
3. African Hunting Dogs take democracy to a whole new level. They hold a vote to decide whether to embark on a hunting expedition or chillax, where the dominant animals in the pack only require around 3 votes, while the subordinate dogs need approximately 10.
4. Native Americans held such deep reverence and fear for griz-

zly bears that hunting them necessitated a group of 4 to 10 warriors, who meticulously prepared for the hunt with ceremonial rituals akin to intertribal warfare.

5. In 1859, Thomas Austin, an English settler in Australia, introduced a mere 24 rabbits onto his property, believing that their presence would have negligible impact and might provide a sense of familiarity and an opportunity for hunting. However, by the 1920s, the rabbit population had skyrocketed to 10 billion.

6. In 2014, Namibia generated over \$350k through an auction that granted the right to hunt a single endangered black rhino. This specific rhino was beyond its breeding age and posed a threat to the rest of the herd. The funds raised were subsequently allocated to protect other endangered animals.

7. Attention, Texas parents! Failure to fulfill child support obligations in Texas can lead to the denial of hunting license renewal.

8. In an unusual incident in Belarus, a fox managed to shoot its

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hunter. As the hunter attempted to dispatch the fox using the butt of his rifle, the fox unintentionally pulled the trigger with its paws, resulting in the hunter being wounded in the process.

9. The U.S. Post Office offers a mandatory \$25 stamp for duck hunting, with the proceeds contributing to conservation initia-

continue to page 34

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Paxton Lantz used a compound bow for a wide rack 10 point buck.



Zac Alderman's Cabell County buck has extra long tines.

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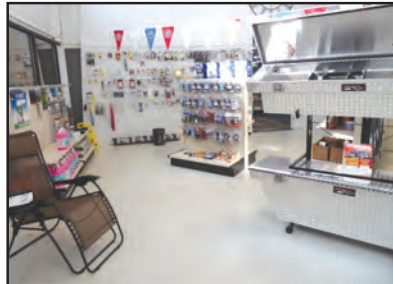
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tives.

10. The Burkitshi, a nomadic hunting community in Mongolia, capture golden eagles at the age of four and train them as hunting companions. They form a deep bond, living and sleeping alongside the eagle for ten years, before eventually releasing it back into the wilderness prior to its natural demise.

11. Back in the 1800s, bison hunting wasn't just about filling up the fridge—it was a sneaky tactic to mess with the American Indians' dominant food supply

12. Those cunning hunters hopped on trains, took aim at herds of majestic bison, and then left them to rot where they fell.

13. Following their participation in an anti-hunting campaign, a

couple of PETA members found themselves involved in a collision with a deer. Subsequently, they took legal action against the New Jersey Game Department, asserting that their deer management program was responsible for the incident.

14. Surprisingly, the Nazis were fervent advocates for animal rights, actively working to curtail hunting activities and combat animal cruelty. Notably, Göring, a self-professed animal lover, implemented bans on vivisection (making Nazi Germany the first country in the world to do so) as well as the practice of shoeing horses.

15. The Australian boomerang, continue to page 36



Jon David MacKnight harvested a nice Mason County 8 point buck.



Jason Wayne took a nice Braxton County bow buck.

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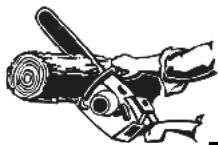
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now widely recognized as a popular toy and souvenir, originated as a tool specifically designed for hunting purposes.

16. Ever wondered why skilled marksmen are called “snipers”? Well, buckle up for this feathered fun fact! The term actually originated from hunters who were masters at shooting a particular bird called a Snipe.

17. Hunting continues to play a crucial role for individuals residing in regions where agriculture is impractical or highly challenging, such as the rainforests of South America or the jungles of South-eastern Asia.

18. When it came to ensuring a prosperous hunting season, the Aztecs took things to a whole new level. They worshipped Mixcoatl, the god of hunting, and believed that human sacrifices were the key to his favor. Yep, you heard that right.

19. During the Middle Ages, hunting was like a VIP club exclusive to the rich and powerful. Forget

about your average Joe grabbing a bow and arrow and venturing into the woods. No, no! Hunting as a sport was a privilege reserved for the aristocrats who owned private

lands. 20. In Africa, the most sought-after trophy animals among hunters are lions, followed by elephants and leopards.



MaKaylah Bishop hunted in Mercer County with a crossbow and bagged a great 13 point buck. Send in your 2023 buck pics. A form is on page 38.

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WV Monster Trout Contest Winners

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Gov. Jim Justice today announced the winners of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources' second annual Monster Trout Contest.

"I want to congratulate our Monster Trout Contest winners for reeling in the catch of a lifetime and extend a special thank you to all of the anglers who went fishing this fall," Gov. Justice said.

continue to the next page



The Oliverio's had great success catching a couple of golden trout.



Kaylee Bower, from Fairdale, used a muzzleloader for a tall tined 11 point with a strange tine.



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“As a lifelong angler, I am so excited to see West Virginians, especially kids, get excited about the outdoors and enjoy our state’s incredible streams and exciting fishing opportunities.”

The seven lucky anglers each caught a tagged monster trout, which were stocked during the WVDNR’s two weeks of fall stockings in October. Those stockings included more than 35,000 pounds of trophy-size trout weighing 1–2 pounds and 6,500 pounds of monster trout weighing 3–6 pounds.

Anglers who caught a tagged monster trout had until Novem-

ber 17 to submit a photo of their catch with the tag number to win a weekend cabin stay at a West Virginia state Park or Cabela’s prize package.

2023 West Virginia Monster Trout Contest Winners

Jamie Holbrook — Hyndman, Pa.

(Grand Prize Winner)

James Moran — White Sulphur Springs, WV

Louie Nickelson — Romney, WV

Paul Phillips — Fairmont, WV

Victoria Appold — Petersburg, WV

Jeffrey Myers — Aurora, WV



Jamie Holbrook, from Hyndman PA, won the Monster Trout event.



Josh Gant used a bow in Wirt Co. for a monster drop tine 13 point.



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