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Issue 312

November/December 2023



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Rut**

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Cover Photo

Casey Raines Nettles brought in an excellent archery buck with 18 scoreable points. This giant buck was taken in Roane County.

Gun buck season begins on Nov. 20th. This magazine is looking for large game animal pictures from 2023. Look for a form on page 38 with instructions on sending in your 2023 pictures.

Hunt safely in 2023. Good luck and have great success.

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Four Phases Of The Deer Rut

The deer rut is a period of time when the whitetail deer are mating. Deer rut typically occurs in November and can extend into early December.

During deer rut, male whitetail deer are in their most aggressive state. They will fight to compete for mates or try to find new territory to roam. They also drool and grunt a lot, which is probably the origin of the term "rut."

There are several phases of the deer rut including:

Pre Rut Phase – Early season before does enter estrus.

Seeking Phase – Beginning of the rut when does start entering estrus.

Chasing Phase – Peak rut when does are in estrus and bucks are actively seeking them for breed-

ing. Post Rut Phase – After does leave estrus and bucks return to their typical cautious behavior.

During each phase, whitetail bucks will behave differently. We will explore each of these phases and discuss what you can expect to see as a hunter in the field.

Pre Rut Phase

The pre-rut, or "early rut" is the time period before the start of heavy interactions with does. The term pre-rut distinguishes it from an actual gestation period or mating.

The pre-rut phase will occasionally bring bucks out of hiding, but not completely. They are still in a transition period between when it pre-rut ends and when chasing begins (which typically happens

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during October). During this time, you might see continue to the next page



Steven Starkey hunted in Harrison County for his fine buck.



Josh Nolin has a huge McDowell County archery deer.



Britney Foster used her crossbow for a nice 8 point buck.

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bucks out of their normal hiding spots, but not really exhibiting what you would typically expect during the deer rut.

The pre-rut phase is the time in which bucks start forming scrapes, rubs, and fraying on trees or branches. Rut signs are a good indication of a buck settling in nearby.

The pre-rut phase is followed by the rut or mating season. The whitetail deer will start to seek out does for breeding at this time of year.

Seeking Phase

During the seeking phase of whitetail deer rut, it is believed

that does will start to come into estrus.

This is what hunters are typically waiting for in order to begin seeing bigger bucks out roaming the woods. These bucks are looking to find a doe that they can breed with and that desire oftentimes will exceed the buck's need for safety.

During this phase of the deer rut, don't be surprised if you see an increase in buck movement and activity around your hunting area. You might also see more bucks fighting with each other.

Chasing Phase

The most exciting period of the rut and what every hunter wants

to see is when the bucks start chasing the does.

The chasing phase typically occurs in November and can last into early December. This time of the rut is typically referred to as peak rut as the bucks only have one thing on their minds during this period – breeding does.

During the chasing phase, it is common to see bucks acting very aggressively while chasing does. This can include bucks fighting with each other to establish dominance for the rights to breed with a doe in heat in the area.

Post Rut Phase

Once a buck has successfully bred one or more does, it will go back into what is called the post-rut phase of the whitetail deer rut.

This typically occurs around late
continue to the next page



Becky Bogard got her 1st bow buck in Marshall Co. *Photo courtesy of Tyler Outdoor Supply in Middlebourne.*



Andy Hawes brought in an awesome compound bow buck recently. *Photo courtesy of Hardcore Hunters in Grafton*

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December to early January when most breeding stops.

During this time, a buck will typically be less active and go back into its hiding spots. It has what it wants from the doe so now it is regressing back to normal behavior.

Post rut is a difficult time to hunt because the deer are very cautious due to the high number of hunters in the field during the rut.

The Second Rut

Most does enter estrus during the first rutting period. However, a few does will go into estrus

during the so-called second rut.

The second rut occurs about 28 days after the first rut and can last a few weeks.

It is common for female fawns to come into estrus during this time. However, fawns are not mating as often as older deer.

It is worth noting that as does come back into heat, the bucks can get aggressive again. This is

continue to page 8



Alice Warden caught a 42" Stone-wall Jackson Lake musky.




Johnny Richards put the hammer on a "biggen" 9 point with a bow.

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a good time to be in the field because you might see more activity than what is typical of post rut.

Hunting During the Deer Rut

What should you expect while hunting during the rut?

During each of these phases, what you should expect changes drastically depending on the phase of the deer rut you are hunting.

During the pre-rut and seeking phase, bucks will typically be hiding out during the day and feeding at night. They are still somewhat aggressive (especially if another buck is around their territory), but they do not want to attract attention from what might be a competitor for breeding rights with

does that could potentially roam into their area.

During the chasing phase, bucks might be out and about during the

day because it is what they are most focused on – finding a doe that is in heat. This is the best time to use deer calls and rattles

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Carl Blei - 10 - landed a large-mouth in Doddridge County.



Carter Burdette caught a huge bass in Jackson County.



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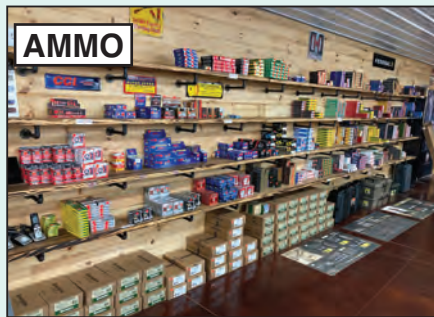
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as the bucks are eagerly looking for a doe to breed. Stay in your stand or blind as much as possible during this phase because you can see a deer any time of the day.

During the post rut, bucks will be much more cautious. It is best not to use rattling antlers or deer calls at this time of year because it is more likely to scare the deer away than pull them to your stand. This is a good time to return to early season hunting techniques around bedding areas and food areas.

With what we have covered, you should now know what to expect as a hunter during each phase of the whitetail deer rut and how it changes the deer's behavior.

You can harvest a deer anytime during the season, but you are more likely to take a trophy buck during the rut.

Best Deer Attractant During the Rut

The deer rut is a great time to use deer attractants. The most effective deer attractant to use during the rut is doe estrus. You can purchase estrus attractants that are artificial and mimic what a doe in heat smells like or actual estrus



Timmy Miller used a bow in Wyoming Co. for a 13 point buck.

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taken from a real doe in heat.

It is important to not use too much estrus attractant while you hunt. Using too much attractant can actually turn off the buck and prevent you from taking one at all.

Use just enough so that when the wind picks up, the buck will smell it. You want the buck to be curious enough so that it comes closer to location.

Deer are most active during what is called the "peak" of the rut. This occurs when there is a lot of does that come into heat at once

and bucks are very active and are looking to breed.



Young Ashley Rowan got her first archery 9 point buck with her dad.



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DNR Huge Fall Trout Stocking

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Gov. Jim Justice announced today that the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources will begin fall trout stockings during the weeks of Oct. 16 and Oct. 23. The state's second annual Monster Trout Contest will also return during the same time.

During these two weeks, the WVDNR stocked more than 40,000 pounds of trophy-size and monster trout at 43 lakes and streams around the state. Of that total, 35,000 pounds of trout weighing 1-2 pounds and 6,500 pounds of monster trout weighing 3-6 pounds will be stocked. Out of the monster trout, five fish will

have a tag that can be redeemed for a grand prize.

“This is one of the best announcements of the year as we stock our lakes and streams, and we have created an exciting element by adding the monster trout contest,” Gov. Justice said. “This also provides an excellent opportunity for all of our anglers to catch fish and potentially win some great, great prizes. So, gear up and get out there during this amazing time of year.”

Anglers who catch one of the five tagged fish and submit a photo with the tag number will be eligible to win a weekend cabin stay at a West Virginia State Park or a Cabela's prize package. Entries must be submitted by Friday, November 17. To learn more about

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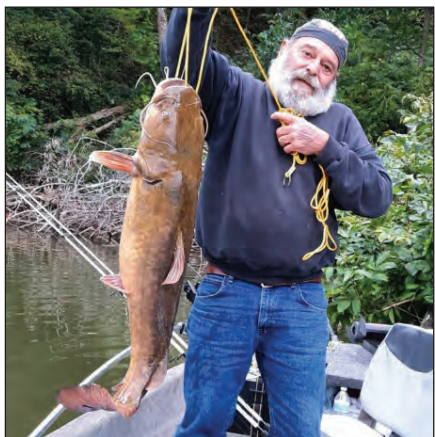
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the Monster Trout Contest, visit WVdnr.gov/fall-monster-trout-stockings.

“We’re excited to bring back our Monster Trout Contest for a second year and continue to provide anglers and their families some of the best fishing experiences in the country,” said Brett McMillion, continue to the next page



Harry Scarberry, from Letart, arrowed a nice 9 point buck.



Frank Stewart landed a 34” flat-head at Stonewall Jackson Lake.

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director of the WVDNR. “These stockings will go by quickly, but anglers should expect ideal trout fishing conditions to continue for several weeks, especially in larger streams and lakes where trout have more room to disperse.”

Fall Trout Stocking Waters

Lakes and streams scheduled to receive a fall trout stocking during the weeks of Oct. 16 and Oct. 23 are listed below. Each water will be stocked once each week for a total of two stockings.

Anthony Creek
Big Clear Creek

Blackwater River
Brandywine Lake
Buckhannon River
Buffalo Fork Lake
Cacapon State Park Lakes
Coopers Rock Lake
Cranberry River
Elk River
Evitts Run
Glade Creek of Man
Glade Creek of New
Jennings Randolph Tailwaters
Knapps Creek
Lost River
New Creek Dam No. 14
North Fork South Branch
Opequon Creek
Pendleton Lake
Pinnacle Creek
Pipestem
Pond Fork
R.D. Bailey Tailwaters



Lincoln Canfield is pleased with his Gilmer County archery buck.



John Cottrell bow hunted in Clay County for a dandy buck.

continue to page 14



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Sutton Tailwaters
Teter Creek Lake

Tygart River Headwaters
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Upper Guyandotte River
Watoga Lake
West Fork Greenbrier
Wheeling Creek
Williams River
Wheeling Creek in Marshall and Ohio County and Glade Creek of Mann (Babcock State Park) has been added to the fall stocking list. Upper Shavers Fork will not

be stocked on FS Service Road 209 due to road construction by the U.S. Forest Service. The remainder of the Upper Shavers Fork stocking locations will receive fish.

For a complete list of waters receiving a fall trout stocking, anglers should check pages 14-15 in the 2023 Fishing Regulations Summary. The WVDNR also posts trout stocking updates online at WVdnr.gov/fish-stocking. Special Elk River Fall Trout Stockings

In November and December, the WVDNR will also stock trout on the Elk River in Webster County as part of a pilot program to evaluate the economic impact of continue to the next page

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Paul Phillips caught one of the 5 tagged fish from the state contest. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.



Craig Coplin brought in an impressive Wirt County bow buck.

trout stocking in the area. Stockings, which will occur at the usual stocking locations, will include 750 rainbow trout each month for a total of 1,500 additional trout stocked in the Elk River.

“Thanks to Gov. Justice’s vision, West Virginia’s trout stocking program has become not only a source of pride for our state, but also a cornerstone of our economy and a magnet for tourism,” said James Bailey, secretary of the West Virginia Department of Commerce, which oversees the WVDNR. “This pilot program is just one of the ways we’re increasing tourism and economic activity in Webster County. Thanks to the dedication and sound manage-



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ment practices of the WVDNR, we’re able to stock trophy trout in even more waters and continue to showcase West Virginia as a world-class destination for outdoor adventure.”

Criteria used to determine what

waters receive a fall stocking is based on stream flow and if the water temperature is below 68 degrees. Because of these factors, waters included on the fall stocking list are primarily located at

continue to the next page

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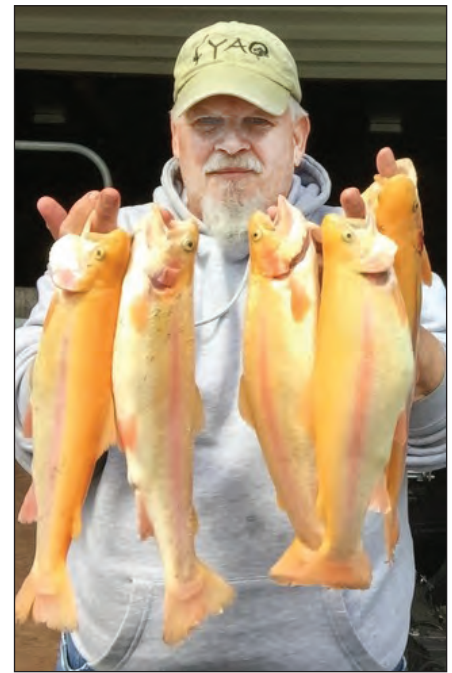
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Terry Turley has his hands full of some great golden trout.



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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 160 retail locations across the state or online at WVfish.com.



Matt Brown hooked November smallmouth at Bluestone Lake.



Mike Anderson caught a 7 pound, 9 oz. tiger trout.

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Fall Trout Opportunites In WV

Whether you're a seasoned angler or new to the sport, fall is a great time to go fishing in West Virginia. Select streams and lakes were stocked with large catchable-size trout and trophy monster trout during the weeks of October 16

and October 23. With beautiful fall foliage and several big and small game hunting seasons being open, there's no better time to experience all of the beauty, goodness and adventure that West Virginia has to offer.

Fishing should be relaxing and enjoyable, so don't worry about finding the perfect spot or catching the biggest fish. Just enjoy yourself and let this guide help you plan your fishing adventure! But before you cast your line, make sure you buy your fishing license and stamps at WVfish.com and find your fishing spot at mapwv.gov/huntfish.

During the weeks of October 16 and October 23, we stock more than 40,000 pounds of trout in 43 lakes and streams around the state. These fish are bigger than the trout we stock in the winter and spring. Most of the trout we stock in the fall weigh 1-2 pounds, continue to page 20

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but we also stock about 6,500 pounds of monster trout weighing 3-6 pounds.

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ESSENTIAL FALL TROUT FISHING GEAR

Whether you're a seasoned angler or a beginner, having the proper gear can make all the difference in your fishing experience. First, you'll need a fishing rod and reel that is appropriate for the type of fishing you plan to do. For trout fishing, a fly rod or lightweight spinning rod and reel combo are great choices. Make sure you use light lines such as 4 to 8 pound test and consider using fluorocarbon leaders in the ultra clear waters typically found in fall streams.

In addition to your rod and reel, you'll also need to bring along



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bait or lures, and hooks. When it comes to bait, live bait such as worms or minnows can be very effective for catching a variety of fish including trout but check

your regulations because live bait is not allowed in some special regulation areas. Alternatively, lures such as spinners and jigs can also

continue to page 22



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be effective and they come in a wide range of colors and styles. Make sure you bring a variety of smaller sizes and types to match the conditions. Don't forget to check the weather forecast and pack appropriate clothing and accessories such as rain gear or sunscreen to ensure that your fishing trip is comfortable and enjoyable. **BEST FALL TROUT FISHING SPOTS**

The quickest and easiest way to find a good fishing spot is to ask a friend or family member who's an avid angler to give you a recommendation. If you're asking us, many state parks and forests have popular fishing streams and lakes that are perfect for anglers of any experience. You can also contact

your local WVDNR District Office to speak with the fishery biologist or use our interactive fishing map to find a spot that fits your needs.

CRANBERRY RIVER

This 14.39-mile section of the Cranberry River in the Monongahela National Forest, is arguably West Virginia's top trout stream. Known for its beautiful scenery and excellent trout fishing, the Cranberry is stocked in the spring and fall with rainbow, golden rainbow and brook trout, making it a great spot any time of year for experienced and novice anglers. In addition to fishing, the area offers camping, hiking and stunning scenery and native brook trout can be found in many of the small

tributaries of the Cranberry River BLACKWATER RIVER

This 7.33-mile section of the Blackwater River in Otter Creek WMA is an ideal trout stream thanks to its high elevation and

continue to page 24



Pap & Cohen High have a 22" drum from the Monongahela.



Layla Brooke took an awesome buck in archery season.



Brandon Musuck, from Sutton, arrowed a nice black bear.

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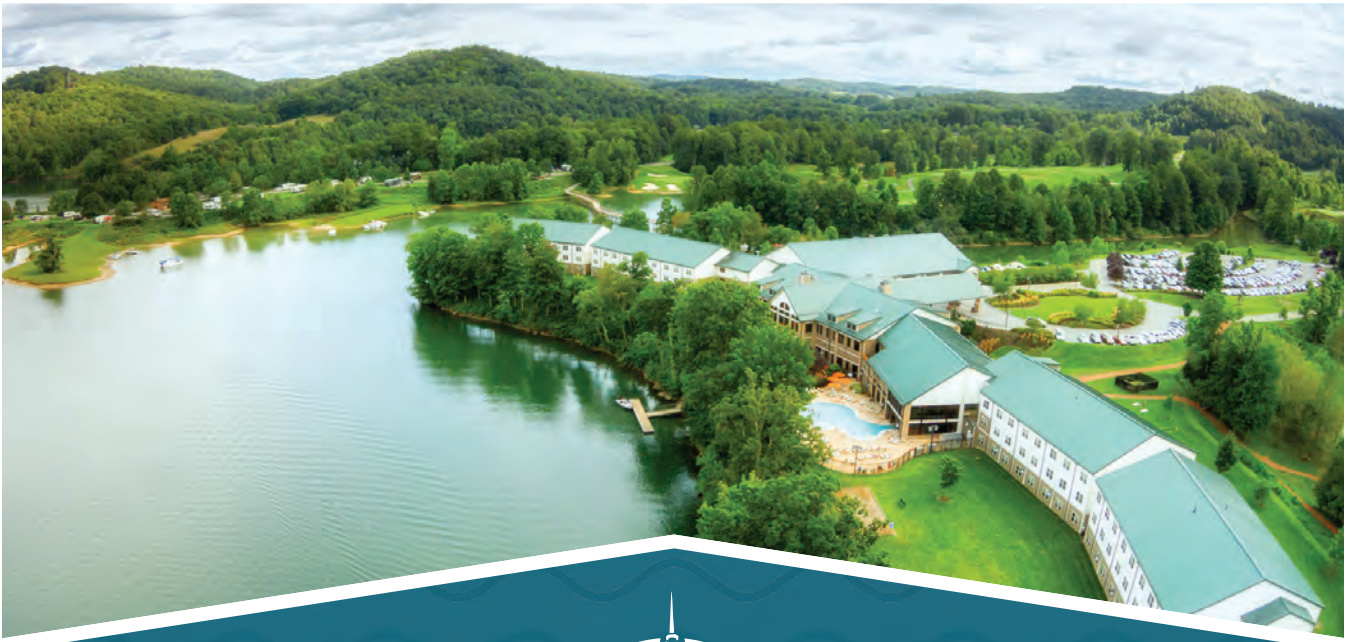
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its proximity to Blackwater Falls and Blackwater Falls State Park. Because of this, the Blackwater River is an ideal fishing spot for people who want to enjoy a fall getaway.

But when it comes to fall trout fishing, don't miss your chance to cast a line in a stocked lake or stream. Here are a few fishing streams and lakes stocked with trout that we think you'll enjoy this Fall.

ELK RIVER

This 21.7-mile section of the Elk River in Webster and Randolph counties is remote, pristine and representative of a West Virginia trout stream with plenty of large pools, small waterfalls, runs and plenty of access points. The section stocked is from Rose Run downstream 18 miles to Webster Springs, and. WV secondary Rts. 26 and 26/1 provide access.

UPPER GUYANDOTTE RIVER

This 14-mile long section of the Guyandotte River is a pris-

tine trout stream located between Mullens and Pineville. Located outside Twin Falls Resort State Park, the upper Guyandotte provides excellent trout fishing all year. This stream is a new trout stocking location, officially added to the schedule in 2021 during a ceremonial stocking of rainbow trout.

NORTH FORK SOUTH BRANCH OF THE POTOMAC RIVER

This 35.02 mile-section of the
continue to page 26



Logan Garner, from Parkersburg, landed a huge rainbow trout.

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Potomac River's South Branch in Grant and Pendleton County runs through Seneca Rocks and is known for its scenic beauty, stunning mountain views and easy access points for casting your line. The stream is stocked downstream, from Judy Gap to 1/2 mile above the junction of South Branch, near Cabins. WV Rt. 28 parallels the stream along this section.

SHAVERS FORK

Shavers Fork is an 88.5-mile long stream that forms the Cheat River at its confluence with Black Fork in Parsons. Located in Tucker, Randolph and Pocahontas County, this stream is one of the highest rivers in the eastern United States in terms of elevation, which makes it an ideal trout water. During fall trout stocking, Shavers Fork is stocked in Bemis (0.78 miles), in the lower section between Bowden and Elkins (7.28 miles) and in the upper section in the Cheat WMA (7.75 miles).

WATOGLAKE

The 12-acre Watoga Lake is stocked with rainbow, golden, brook and brown trout and provides a great opportunity for all anglers, experienced and novice alike, to enjoy fall trout fishing.



Jeremy Clovis landed a 6 pound, 13 oz. rainbow trout from Shavers Fork. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.*

Fishing is accessible even to those with limited mobility. Watoga also has park facilities available to make your trout fishing trip into a family outing a great experience. GET YOUR WEST VIRGINIA FISHING LICENSE AND PLAN



Roberta Hatcher fished from a kayak for this quality largemouth.

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Seek The Shallows For Fall Smallmouth

It's a natural assumption; we tend to equate northern smallmouth with deeper water but giant smallmouth can also be found roaming the shallows.

It's a natural assumption; we tend to equate northern smallmouth with deeper water. But while there's no lack of opportunity in flogger depths, don't overlook the areas that would leave a basketball rim dry.

The spawn obviously pulls a lot of big ones up shallow enough to sight fish. Tons of fun, no doubt, but bed fish are not always the easiest.

Canadian pro and Elite rookie Cooper Gallant knows that postspawn through the summer months will offer plenty of chances to locate and engage these brown brutes in 10 feet or less.

"In northern fisheries, there's always going to be big smallmouth shallow," Gallant said. "They get shallow in the fall before they start going out (to wintering depths).

"Realistically, there are shallow smallmouth all year long. It's not that they stay shallow; a lot of times, it's a timing deal. They'll come up shallow to feed, but sometimes, smallmouth just like having sun on their backs."

No question, these feisty fish pretty much do what they want

and, as veteran Elite Bernie Schultz said, it's simply a matter of finding fish and realizing that relocation is common.

"There are fish that become territorial — they'll set up on different shoals and sand bars and structural features, but a lot of them come
continue to the next page



Chris Ellis brought in a quality compound bow buck in Raleigh Co.

up periodically and go back,” he said.

Where to look

In most northern lakes and rivers, Gallant expects to find shallow smallies on expansive flats next to deep water. That could be a river or lake scenario; it’s all about the access. Smallies want to easily reach the food, while remaining close to safer depths

Gallant likes a flat with rock transitions and shallow sandy areas. Schultz, who has historically fared well on the St. Lawrence River by fishing flats shielded by current-breaking islands, agrees and notes habitat diversity bolsters the appeal.

“The best ones usually are a mix of rock, sand and grass. I think whenever you have a variety off cover and structural features, it’s a magnet for food — baitfish, craws, etc.

“The most attractive islands are the ones with a diversity of composition and plenty of bait.”

Wherever smallies roam shallow, the common thread defines their primary interest — food. Gobies, alewives, shiners and crowdads rank high on the list, but Gallant points out another entree class —



Bob Williams arrowed a great 13 point. Photo courtesy of WV Wild Outdoors in Birch River.

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one that helps explain why those black marabou “hair” jigs work so well.

“They’ll eat a bunch of insect larvae, little bugs, stoneflies, mayflies,” Gallant said. “I think that’s something that, quite often, gets overlooked.”

Rules of the road

A few points to consider when targeting shallow northern smallmouth.

Distance is your friend: The extreme clarity characteristic of northern waters complicates the cat-and-mouse game. A shallow

continue to the next page



Only 5, Mike Miller bagged a 9 point in Gilmer Co. in archery.




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smallie might not bolt, but you're not fooling them. It's just a matter of tolerance.

"There are times when they can be very hard to catch. A lot of the times, they don't look spooked like a largemouth would, they're more mellow. But if they know you're there, they get stubborn."

Schultz agrees and notes that downwind and/or down sun casts

equal stealth. Moreover, daily conditions can help or hinder, depending on the objective.

"I like a light wind if I'm sight fishing smallmouth, but if I'm just covering water, more breeze breaks up the surface and cushions their awareness of you," Schultz said. "I try to make out the fish as

soon as I can and, if they're not moving, I'll drop the Power-Poles and make long casts."

Gallant manages the intrusion risk by easing onto a flat, fan-casting and watching for visible targets. A sensible strategy, this incremental tactic also leverages that clarity to his advantage.



Dakota McCumbers landed a 48" flathead at Leachtown.



Kimberly McCloy tagged a great buck in Ritchie County.

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Access Roads For Class Q Permits

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — With fall hunting seasons about to open, the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources is reminding hunters with disabilities that select access roads in national forests and state-owned wildlife management areas are open to those with Class Q permits.

“The WVDNR is proud to have created opportunities for hunters with disabilities through the Class Q hunting program as part of our partnership with the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest and the Monongahela National Forest,” said WVDNR Director Brett McMillion. “This program is a testament to our commitment to inclusivity and ensuring that everyone, regardless of their abilities, can enjoy the outdoors and the rich hunting outdoor heritage of Almost Heaven, West Virginia.”

The Class Q hunting program allows improved, extended vehicular access on 13 roads in national forests and 13 roads on state wildlife management areas. These



Brandon Herndon caught a big trout on Shavers Fork.

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roads are gated to limit vehicular access for approved Class Q hunters only, which includes hunters with permanent and irreversible respiratory, cardiovascular and/or lower extremity use limitations. For a list of Class Q access road sites, visit WVDnr.gov/hunting/class-q-hunting.

Class Q hunting permits are issued by the WVDNR to applicants who are permanently disabled in their lower extremities. Approved applicants are issued

a wallet-sized permit card, which must be presented in person at the appropriate national forest or DNR district office to receive a letter of authorization and a gate key to use designated Class Q roads.

To qualify for the program, applicants must meet the requirements that have been established in West Virginia Chapter 20 Natural Resources Laws. Applications must be certified by a licensed

continue to the next page

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physician to be considered for approval. Application forms and more information about Class Q permits is available at all WVDNR offices or online at WVhunt.com and WVdnr.gov/hunting. Rules for Using Class Q Access Roads

When hunting within a designated area, Class Q hunters may hunt from a stationary vehicle with the engine turned off, and the vehicle may not be parked on any public road or highway right-of-way. The permittee may be accompanied — or in the case of national forest lands, must be accompanied — by one assistant at least 16 years of age inside the vehicle, but the assistant is not allowed to



Brittany Miller arrowed a big Harrison County buck.

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hunt from or outside the vehicle while assisting a Class Q permittee.

Class Q permit hunters must obey all other hunting rules and regulations while behind gates. No ATVs or UTVs may be used in national forests or state wildlife management areas and hunting with bait is prohibited on public lands. All proper licenses and stamps along with the Class Q permit must be in the hunter's possession while he or she is hunting. Hunters on national forest lands must follow additional rules. The Class Q program on national forest lands is authorized through a Special Land Use Permit granted

to the WVDNR by the U.S. Forest Service.



Brian Casto tagged a bow buck that had some nice stickers in Jackson County

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Land Protection Projects

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The West Virginia Outdoor Heritage Conservation Fund announced today that it is accepting grant applications for land-protection projects and that interested parties have until Dec. 31 to apply.

Land-protection projects can include important wildlife habitats, working forests and farmlands, as well as hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreational areas. Applications for large and small grants will be accepted. Large grants are those totaling more than \$25,000. A total of \$50,000 in funding will be reserved for small grants.

Applicants are reminded to complete their application and determine if their project qualifies for funding by using the OHCF's eligibility assessment tool and technical assistance manual, all

available at commerce.wv.gov/outdoor-heritage-conservation-fund.

Fiscal Year 2023 Grant Applications will be accepted through December 31, 2023.

About the Outdoor Heritage Conservation Fund

The Outdoor Heritage Conservation Fund, created by the West Virginia Legislature, invests in conserving wildlife habitats, natural areas, forests, farmlands and recreational spaces. It acquires property interests and awards

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grants for conservation projects aligned with plans like the Wildlife Conservation Action Plan. An 11-member Board of Trustees, comprising stakeholders from land trusts, state divisions, recreation groups, and experts, guides the fund's efforts. To learn more about the Outdoor Heritage Conservation Fund, visit commerce.wv.gov/outdoor-heritage-conservation-fund.

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Mark Moran, from Weston, hooked a nice largemouth bass.



Brandon Lilly used his compound bow for a McDowell Co. buck.



Steve Robinson used a bow for a tall tined 10 point buck.

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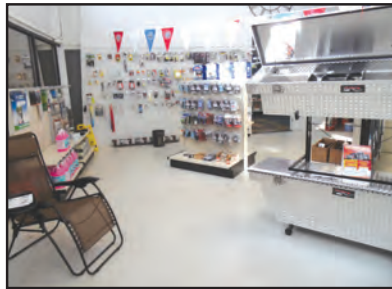
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Meat Processors Needed

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources today announced a need for additional meat processors to participate in the Hunters Helping the Hungry program, a collaborative effort with food banks to help provide nutritious protein to hungry people around the state.

“Over the past 32 years and with the help of hunters and meat processors around the state, we’ve been able to provide more than 1 million pounds of highly nutritious meat for people in need throughout West Virginia,” said WVDNR Director Brett McMillion. “Meat is in high demand at food banks around the state, so we’re asking for more processors to step up and help out. We also want to encourage hunters to get in the woods this fall, fill the limit on their license and stamps and then donate any extra meat to processors.”

Wild game is often healthier than

many commercially available proteins. According to the Cornell University Cooperative Extension Service, a three-ounce serving of venison has 102 calories, 19.5 grams of protein and just 2.06 grams of fat, while a 3-ounce serving of lean ground beef has 114 calories, 15.41 grams of protein and 5.36 grams of fat.

Meat is first donated by hunters, who take their deer to a participating meat processor where it is ground, packaged and frozen. The Mountaineer Food Bank in Gas-saway and Facing Hunger Food-bank in Huntington then pick up donated meat from processors and distributes it to individuals and families in need through a state-wide network of 600 charitable food pantries, soup kitchens, senior centers, shelters, community centers, orphanages, missions and churches.

To participate in the program, processors need to be certified with either the U.S. Department

of Agriculture or the West Virginia Department of Agriculture. Once certified, processors should express their interest in participating by sending a copy of cer-continue to page 36



Dawson Morrison has a huge Mingo County bow buck.

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ification to the WVDNR's Hunters Helping the Hungry program coordinator, Trevor Moore, by calling 304-924-6211 or sending an email to trevor.m.moore@wv.gov. Once approved, processors can begin receiving and storing meat for pick up. Processors are reimbursed at a rate of \$3 per pound.

Since the program was started in 1992, more than 1 million pounds of venison from 28,826 deer have been donated and processed. During the 2022 seasons, hunters donated 681 deer, which provided 24,580 pounds of venison for individuals and families in need. To learn more, visit WVdnr.gov/hunters-helping-the-hungry.

For season dates, bag limits and other regulations, hunters should consult the West Virginia Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary, available online at WVdnr.gov.



Gabe Dixon, from Layland, arrowed a huge black bear.

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DNR Mast Survey Results For 2023

ELKINS, W.Va. — Hunters getting ready for the fall hunting seasons may now consult the 2023 Hunting Outlook and Mast Survey, the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources announced today.

The annual Hunting Outlook and Mast Survey provides details about the abundance of mast, such as wild fruits and nuts, produced by 18 species of trees and shrubs and the forecasted impacts to West Virginia's wildlife.

“Beech, walnut and hickory production was up compared to 2022 production and above average across all ecological regions,” said Holly Morris, furbearer and small game project leader for the WVDNR's Wildlife Resources Section. “In addition, red and black oak and scarlet oak production was up compared to last year and above the long-term average.”

Soft mast production was mixed this year and hunters should pay close attention to the ecological regions they'll be hunting. Hunters should do plenty of scouting to determine how mast conditions will affect their plans. Locating



John Hanshaw used his bow for a tremendous whitetail buck.

good, natural foods can increase a hunter's odds of success.

Hunters can find a wealth of facts in the Hunting Outlook and Mast Survey, which is a helpful resource to consult before heading

into the field. The report, compiled by the WVDNR's Wildlife Resources Section with the help of volunteers and other agencies, may be downloaded at WVdnr.gov/mast-survey.





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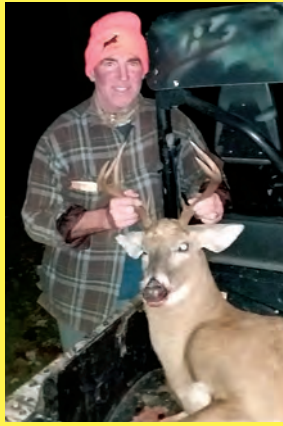
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