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Issue 330

February/March 2026



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Cover Photo

Fishing in the Smoke Hole area, Nathan Bentley reeled in a 10 pound, 7 ounce rainbow trout. Nathan is from Keyser.

This winter has definitely been brutal for cold and snow. Lots of people took up ice fishing this year that had not tried that in the past.

It won't be real long before turkey season starts. Good luck to all hunting & fishing in 2026.

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Winter Fishing In WV

Winter in West Virginia offers some of the most peaceful and rewarding fishing of the year. The summer crowds are gone, the scenery is crisp and beautiful and with the right approach, the fish are definitely biting. So, if you think the fishing season ends when cold weather arrives or that trout are the only fish worth catching in the winter, this guide is for you.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Fish are cold-blooded, which means their activity is dictated by the water temperature around them. As water cools, their metabolism slows down. However, fish-

ing can be fantastic on warmer, sunny winter days. Even a slight increase in water temperature can spur fish to move into shallower areas and feed more actively.

As any seasoned angler will tell you, a great day of fishing begins long before you get to the water. A little preparation is the key to a safe, comfortable and successful winter trip. Following these simple rules will ensure your adventure is a safe one.

Dress for the Weather: Dress in layers to stay warm and dry, as falling into cold water can create a dangerous situation very quickly.

Share Your Plan: Always let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return before you head out.

Watch Your Step: Winter conditions make shorelines treacherous
continue to page 6

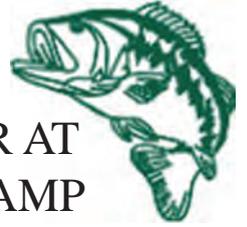


Anderson Roberts, from Danese, brought in some winter rabbits.



Hunter Rohr landed a large brown trout. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.

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ous. Always test your footing on rocks and steep banks before putting your full weight down.

Don't Walk on Ice: While the surface of lakes, ponds and impoundments can freeze during the winter, when the temperature is below freezing for an extended period of time, it is NEVER safe to walk onto ice.

Wear Your PFD: Most water-related deaths, injuries and incidents happen because someone wasn't wearing a personal flotation device. If you are on the water in a vessel, West Virginia law requires that you have a life jacket that is in good condition, properly sized and readily available for each person on board. Any child under the age of 13, including infants, must wear a PFD while the vessel is underway. Vessels 16 feet and over must have a throwable Type IV PFD ring or cushion on board that can be thrown to a person in the water in addition to the previously noted PF device.

DISTRICT 1 WINTER FISHING GUIDE

If you want to cast your line in a reservoir, check out Cheat Lake or Tygart Lake. But be advised that water levels fluctuate signifi-

cantly during the winter months. You'll find plenty of walleye and yellow perch in Cheat Lake, but you also can target channel catfish in deep waters off the park piers and fish the tailwater for sauger. Tygart Lake also supports a healthy walleye fishery as well as a self-reproducing muskellunge population. As winter progresses, both fish migrate towards the head of the reservoir for spawning.

For river fishing, cast your line in the tailwaters of the Ohio and Monongahela rivers, such as Hannibal, Pike Island and Morgantown. These areas support walleye, sauger and musky.

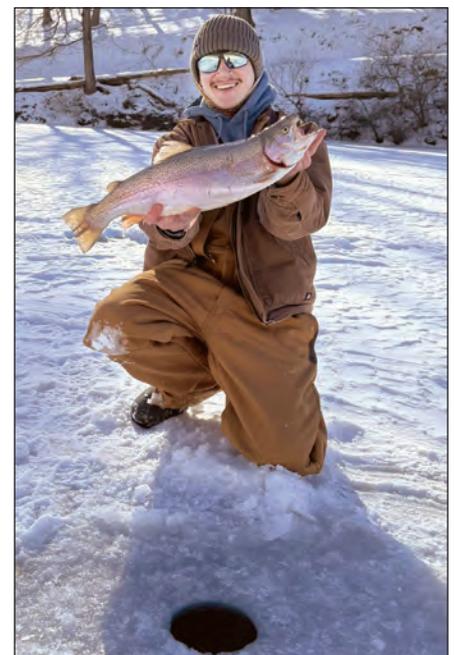


Luke Stewart hooked & released a 51 1/4" early season musky.

Warmwater discharges associated with industrial facilities will hold white and hybrid striped bass throughout the winter. You can also find musky in the Tygart River and West Fork River.

Beginning in January, trout are stocked at popular spots like Blackwater River and Wheeling Creek. Small impoundments like Teter Creek Lake are also stocked, while ponds such as Fairfax Ponds

continue to the next page



Cameron Irizarry, from Parkersburg, pulled a nice rainbow trout out of the ice.



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DISTRICT 2 WINTER FISHING GUIDE

Winter is a great time to go fishing at Mt. Storm Lake, where you can find trophy-sized walleye and striped bass. Due to warmer water temperatures, fish grow quickly here, so try trolling shad-pattern crankbaits in deep water to find them. Jennings-Randolph Lake is another option, but be advised that winter drawdowns may render the West Virginia side of the Howell boat ramp unusable.

During warmer winter days, when temperatures have been higher than 40 degrees, anglers have been known to catch small-mouth bass on the South Branch, Shenandoah or Cacapon rivers. Anglers also have found success at smaller impoundments during

the winter. Wherever you cast your line, target deep, slow-moving pools near moderate to large boulders where fish tend to congregate this time of year. If fishing on the North Branch River, strictly monitor whitewater discharge rates and adhere to Mary-



Andy Godwin, JC Christopher & Rick Harkness landed crappie.

land regulations.
DISTRICT 3 WINTER FISHING GUIDE

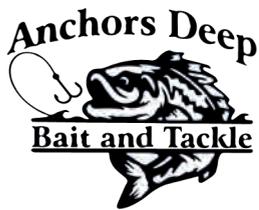
If you want to cast a line in a lake, there are plenty of options in District 3. The upper end of Ston-
continue to the next page



Bridger Williams was a winner in the WV DNR photo contest.

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coal Reservoir is a great place to catch crappie, perch and bluegill and Stonewall Jackson and Burnsville lakes are good places

to target musky.

Walleye anglers should visit Summersville Lake and fish for them in 25-50 feet. The Little Kanawha River, which is famous for producing state-record musky, is also a good location. Be advised that USACE lakes like Summersville and Sutton undergo massive winter drawdowns, so checking water levels is essential before launching boats.

For new anglers, small impoundments such as Big Ditch and Wall-back lakes hold quality fish that bite readily on small jigs. Trout are also stocked at several lakes and streams from January to May. **DISTRICT 4 WINTER FISHING GUIDE**

The New River is a top choice for walleye. Because these fish see well in low light, success improves significantly by fish-

ing at dusk or dawn near tributary mouths and deep holes. The New, Greenbrier and Meadow rivers also hold smallmouth bass and muskellunge. For bass, try deep-water techniques with blade

continue to page 11



Trenton March hunted with a coyote style gun in Lewis County.



Bruce Wayne used a compound bow in Braxton County.

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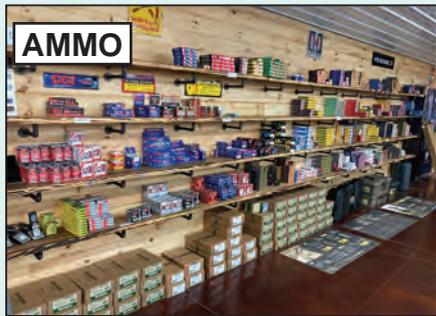


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baits, while musky anglers should target Kanawha Falls with large glide baits. Below the Kanawha River locks (Marmet and London), anglers can find hybrid striped bass, walleye and flathead catfish.

Bluestone Reservoir is a primary destination for striped and hybrid striped bass, which are coolwater fish likely to bite under winter conditions. RD Bailey Reservoir also holds state-quality spotted bass.

For trout, Glade Creek offers a catch-and-release section, and Second Creek provides fly-fishing opportunities for those using nymphs or streamers. Smaller impoundments like Stephens Lake (walleye and bass) and Plum Orchard (bass and bluegill) also provide productive outings.

DISTRICT 5 WINTER FISHING GUIDE

Following a series of warm days which increase water temperatures slightly, East Lynn and Beech Fork lakes are a great place to target wintering largemouth bass. East Lynn is also a destina-

tion for musky, while Beech Fork anglers can find hybrid striped bass near the dam.

Small impoundments such as Chief Logan and Laurel lakes offer excellent access for anglers of all skill levels. Look for fish attractors made of recycled Christmas trees. Waters such as Hurricane and Coonskin are often stocked with trout.

For river fishing, the Ohio and Kanawha rivers are prime spots for walleye and sauger. Focus your efforts on the tailwaters of locks and dams and tributary mouths. During low flows, anglers have been known to catch smallmouth bass in deep pools in the Big Coal, Little Coal, Guyandotte, Twelvepole Creek, Mud, Big Sandy and Tug Fork rivers.

DISTRICT 6 WINTER FISHING GUIDE

During the winter, anglers can target rainbow, brown and brook trout in stocked waters, such as Rollins Lake, Cedar Creek State Park Pond and Conaway Run Lake. Anglers in District 6 can target largemouth bass on warm, sunny days at North Bend Lake, Rollins, and Woodrum lakes. Charles Fork Lake offers a unique opportunity for walleye, though this is a catch and release water. Musky anglers should target woody cover in Mountwood and North Bend lakes.

River anglers on the Ohio River can find walleye and sauger congregating below tailwaters. Be aware of the trophy walleye regulation on the Ohio (a limit of two fish per day over 18 inches). Industrial warmwater discharges are excellent spots for white and hybrid striped bass.



Dustin Jeffrey got a 9 point in Ritchie County. Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store in Walker.

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Catching Winter Bass

Not long after he won the 2014 Bassmaster Classic on Lake Gunterville, Progressive Bassmaster Elite Series pro Randy Howell and his wife, Robin, moved their family to the shores of the famous north Alabama impoundment permanently. The lake, consistently ranked among the best bass fisheries in America, offered Howell the opportunity to continually hone his skills and expand his knowledge of bass behavior on an almost daily basis.

The “almost daily” part occurred each year during the winter months when the bass fishing predictably became far more difficult. It took him a full decade — until a cold, brutal day on the water during the winter of 2024-2025 — to realize what he and many other anglers

had been completely overlooking. “For years, we all thought bass wintered on deep, vertical-type cover like bluffs, flooded timber and deep brushpiles,” Howell says. “They became extremely lethargic and usually didn’t bite well, so we just fished slow and

deep. Everybody had the same bag of tricks, too.”

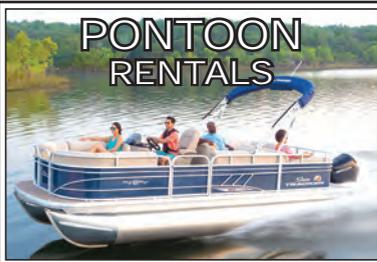
“For instance, if we ever found shallow, green vegetation, even moss beds, we could sometimes catch one or two on a topwater, continue to the next page



Tony Crumbliss landed a large-mouth at Maple Lake in the fall.



Bentley Kalp hooked a Winfield Dam blue catfish.



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but grass doesn't really come into play in the winter. If you got really lucky, you might even catch a big fish by crawling a spinnerbait along the bottom, but it was never a sure thing, even on a big-fish lake like Guntersville.

"Overall, however, we caught just enough bass in those types of places to continue fishing that way. During the winter months, you basically prepared yourself mentally for a long, slow day."

In those not-so-long-ago days, Howell used water clarity and, to a lesser extent, water temperature to determine where he was going to fish. If the water temperature had dropped below 50 degrees, he concentrated on rock bluffs, transition banks and certainly deeper boat docks — if they were present. The clearer the water, the deeper he would fish.

That much is still true today. Water clarity nearly always determines how deep you should fish. To some, it's probably more important than water temperature.

"Then, the scenario began to change, slowly and very quietly," recalls Howell. "Winter fishermen on Guntersville began bringing in five-bass limits weighing 30 pounds or more. Not only that, but multiple fishermen would do it during local winter tournaments continue to the next page



In 1968, the first Ranger boat hit the water. Back then, the pedestal seats featured an arm rest. This Z 521R sits on a Z Comanche lineup. Several fish finders are featured along with a 31 gallon livewell. With a 300HP Mercury motor, this boat will move on the water. This classic Ranger is at the Great Outdoors in Lavalette, WV. They now sell Ranger and Triton boats. Stop by to view this "one of one" boat.

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on the lake. Everybody knew Guntersville was good, but many of us had never seen anything like it in all the years we'd fished the 69,000-acre impoundment.

"At first, my son, Laker, who's 24 now and a guide on Guntersville [and the winner of both a Bassmaster Open and a Nitro Bassmaster Elite Qualifier presented by Bass Pro Shops this past season], wasn't sure what was happening, either," continues Howell. "We'd go out together and see all the other boats, but no one was fishing around vegetation

or even specific breaklines like we used to.

"They'd be offshore fishing channel swings in the deeper water. So, of course, we went out, too, just to look around, and we were absolutely amazed at how many bass were out there. It seemed like they were easier to catch, too. They were out there just cruising around, following the baitfish."

The absolute key, Howell realized, was the presence of the baitfish. They are almost always part of the key anywhere, but

continue to page 16



Amanda Ellyson hunted in Gilmer County for a great gun buck.

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during the winter, shad form huge schools and drift in seemingly open water, attracting active bass.

What Howell saw were balls of shad suspended high in the water column. One of his first experiences with them was in water 50-plus feet deep, but the shad were only 5 to 15 feet deep, and the bass were 10 feet down. Every-

thing was clearly visible on ordinary sonar, too.

“It’s a completely different world out there than we ever imagined,” Howell says, “and I know now that it continues for months. A lot of fishermen have fished around schools of baitfish over the years, most often on shallow creek flats during the autumn. If it was in

deeper water, we dropped spoons down through the schools to catch a few bass.

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Black Bear Harvest

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) today announced that hunters harvested 2,469 black bears during the combined 2025 archery and firearms seasons.

The preliminary harvest for the combined 2025 seasons mirrors that of the 2024 seasons, coming in 10 bears short of last year's total of 2,479 harvests. As predicted in the 2025 Mast Survey and Hunting Outlook, hunters harvest fewer bears during the archery and crossbow season and more bears during the firearms season.

During the first segment of the 2025 archery and crossbow seasons (Sept. 27 to Nov. 23), hunters harvested 543 bears. Of these harvests, 252 were taken with vertical bows, and 291 were taken with crossbows. The top five counties for archery/crossbow harvests were Fayette (47), Raleigh (35), Greenbrier (29), Logan (28) and Boone (27).

During the firearms season, hunters harvested 1,925 bears, a 22 percent increase over last year's



Jase Thomas - 8 - hunted in Monroe County for a gun buck.



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harvest of 1,580 bears. This included 506 bears taken during the September and October seasons, 152 bears during the September youth, Class Q, XS season, five bears during the October youth, Class Q, XS season, 33 bears

during the concurrent antlerless deer/bear season and 316 during the three early firearms seasons.

Additionally, hunters harvested 290 bears during the concurrent buck-gun bear season and 1,129

continue to page 20



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bears during the traditional December season. One bear was harvested with a muzzleloader during the Mountaineer Heritage Season. The top five counties for firearms harvests were Boone (169), Kanawha (136), Randolph (124), Webster (122), and Pocahontas (102).

For more information about hunting opportunities in West Virginia, hunters should consult the West Virginia Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary, available to download at WVdnr.gov/hunting-regulations. Hunting licenses may be purchased online at WVhunt.com.



Lindell Marker fished at Woodrum Lake for this black crappie.

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Fun Fishing Facts

From the sparkling streams of mountain valleys to the vast expanse of the ocean, fishing has long captured human interest. Whether you're a professional angler or an amateur fisherman, the thrill of the catch never fades. In this article, we'll delve into 18 facts about fishing that will undoubtedly hook your interest. So, grab your fishing gear, and let's jump right in!

Fishing is one of the oldest human practices dating back nearly 40,000 years. Archaeological evidence like fish hooks made of bone and cave paintings depict early humans fishing, underlining the fact that this pastime has been central to our survival and cultural evolution.

Fishing's Economic Impact

Fishing isn't just a hobby—it's a significant economic force. Globally, it's estimated that the fishing industry, including commercial, recreational, and subsistence fishing, contributes over \$240 billion to the world economy each year, providing livelihoods for hun-

continue to page 22



Dylan Young caught a big rainbow trout at Shavers Fork.



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A World of Fish Species

There are approximately 34,000 species of fish in the world, more than all birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians combined! From the smallest Paedocypris to the largest whale shark, the diversity in the piscine world is truly astonishing.

Fish Feel Pain

Contrary to common belief, scientific research shows that fish can feel pain. Their nervous systems are complex, similar to birds and mammals, and they respond to harmful stimuli. This understanding has led to the development of more humane fishing practices.

Recreational Fishing Popularity
Recreational fishing, also known as sport fishing, is a popular hobby worldwide. In the U.S. alone, more than 49 million people engage in recreational fishing annually.

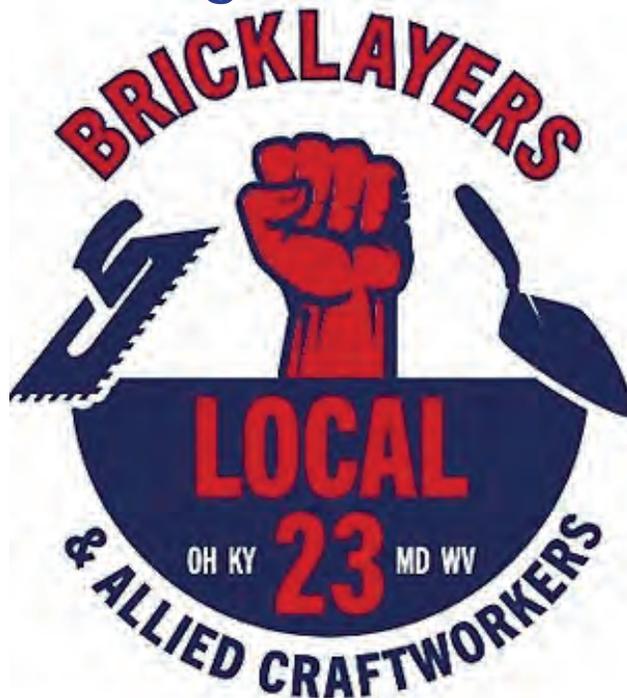
Fishing Techniques: Rod and Line to Nets

Fishing techniques have evolved over time. From traditional rod and line methods to using nets and fish traps, the manner of fishing varies across cultures and regions based on local aquatic ecosystems and
continue to page 24



Travis Beasley hunted in Roane County for a quality buck.

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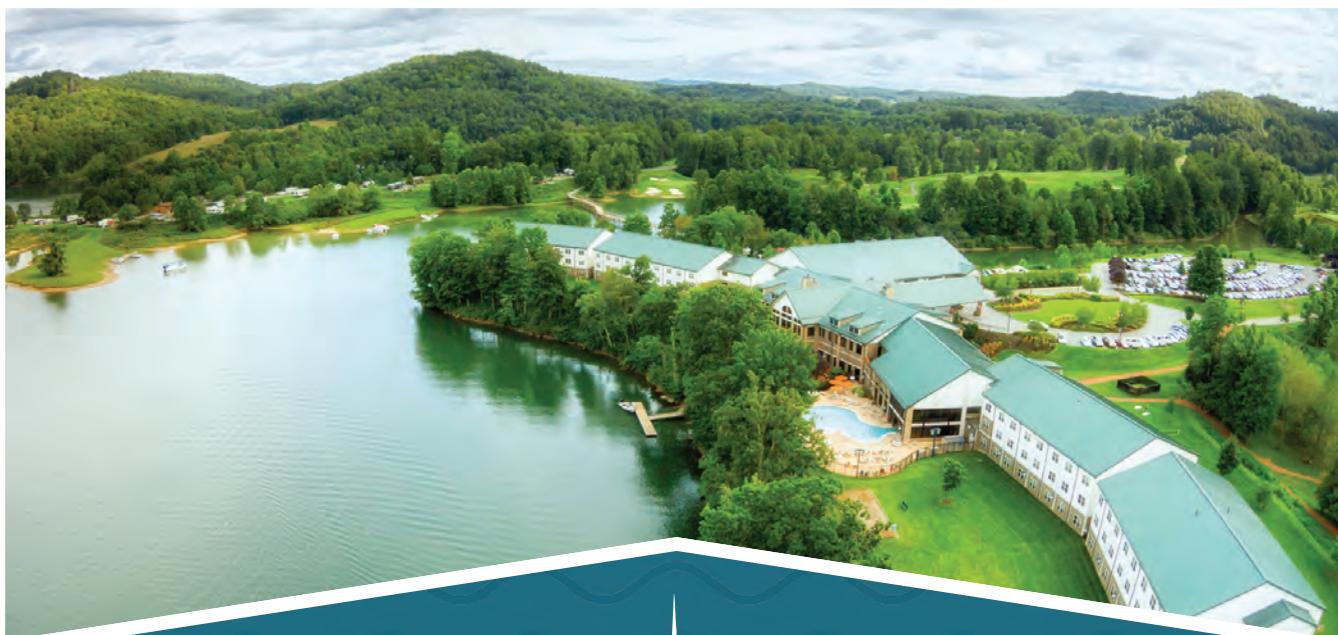
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and cultural practices.

Fly Fishing Artistry

Fly fishing, a popular form of angling, uses an artificial “fly” as bait and involves casting a nearly weightless lure, which can be a beautiful and artistic practice. The earliest known references to fly fishing date back to the 2nd century, highlighting its long-standing history.

The Benefits of Fishing

Fishing isn’t just fun—it offers numerous health benefits. It promotes physical health through outdoor activity, improves mental well-being by reducing stress, and encourages social bonding when fishing with others.

Sport Fishing Tournaments

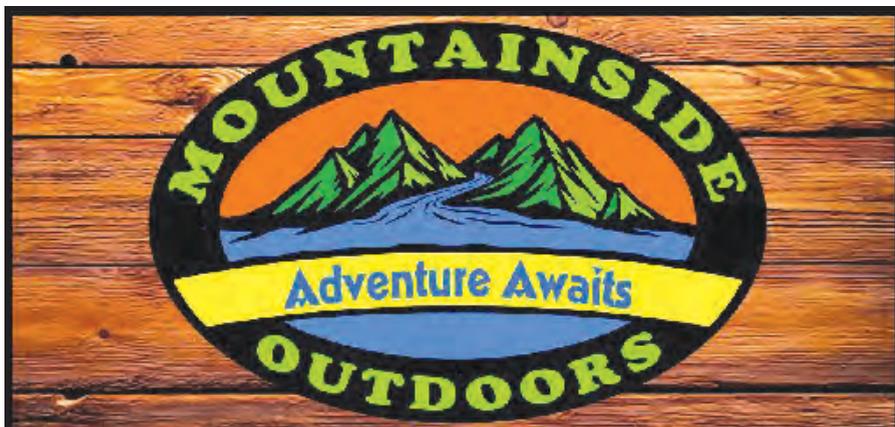
Fishing isn’t just a relaxing pastime—it can also be a competitive sport. Sport fishing tournaments attract anglers worldwide, who compete for prizes and bragging rights. Some of these events, like the White Marlin Open, offer millions in prize money.

World’s Most Expensive Fish

The most expensive fish ever sold was a Pacific bluefin tuna in Japan. This prized catch fetched a
continue to page 26



Jeff Kidwell used a bow in McDowell County for a great buck.



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staggering \$3.1 million in 2019, demonstrating the high value some species hold in certain cultures.

Aquaculture: Farming in Water
As a response to overfishing and to meet the growing demand for fish, aquaculture, or fish farming, has emerged as a significant part of the industry. It involves breeding, rearing, and harvesting fish, shellfish, and aquatic plants in all types of water environments.

Fishing Superstitions

Fishing is rife with superstitions. Some anglers believe in good luck charms, others think it's bad luck to change rods during a successful day of fishing. These beliefs add a touch of mystery and fun to the fishing experience.

Record-Breaking Catches

The world record for the largest fish ever caught on a rod and reel belongs to a 2,664-pound Great White Shark. It was captured off the coast of Australia in 1959 and still holds the record over six decades later.

The Risks of Fishing

Despite its serene appearance, fishing can sometimes be dangerous. Anglers must watch out for hazards like poor weather con-



Jeff Schiefekbien hooked a 25" rainbow. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Spotting Goods in Elkins.

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ditions, water currents, and even certain fish species. Always remember, safety first!

Women in Fishing

While traditionally seen as a male-dominated activity, women have been making waves in the fishing world. The number of female anglers has been steadily rising, shattering stereotypes and contributing to diversity in the sport.

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Details On Page 3**

Overfishing: A Global Problem

Overfishing poses a significant threat to oceanic ecosystems. It depletes fish populations, disrupts food chains, and threatens biodiversity. Efforts are ongoing
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globally to combat overfishing and promote sustainable fishing practices.

The Technology of Fishing

Technology has made significant inroads in fishing. Today, gadgets like fish finders, GPS devices, and even drone technology are being utilized to locate fish, making the sport more accessible and exciting than ever.

The Future of Fishing

Looking ahead, the future of fishing is set to become more sustainable and technology-driven. Advancements in fishing gear, real-time data collection, and regulations for protecting marine biodiversity will continue to shape the sport and industry in the years to come.

Final Word

These 18 fishing facts present a compelling view of a world deeply entwined with human history, culture, and survival. Fishing is far more than just a leisure activity—it's a window into our relationship with the natural world, reflecting our respect and understanding of life beneath the water's surface. Let's remember to celebrate this rich heritage.



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Catching Trout Methods

Are you ready to catch more Trout? Then get ready for some insider Trout fishing tips. I've been guiding and chasing Trout across the globe for decades and have boiled down the complex world of these fish into a handful of simple rules. With a basic understanding of the environment, food, and conditions, anglers can adjust techniques, learn to read water, and find more Trout in their nets throughout the year.

Some of what I'm about to tell you may seem like common sense. But you'd be surprised

how many anglers forget about the basics! There are also some more elusive tips that I'll give, learned from my years of Trout fishing experience. Are you ready to fish like a pro? Read on to discover my top 10 expert Trout fishing tips!

1. Temperature is Everything
If there's one variable that influences Trout more than any other, it's temperature. Under ideal circumstances, the water temperature will range between 55–65 Fahrenheit (12–18°C). In places
continue to the next page



Hunting in Wood County, Tyler Scott got a 10 point bow buck.



Chris McIntyre landed a 5 pound golden trout. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.

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where temperatures are consistently colder, Trout will acclimate to lower ranges. If the temperatures exceed the comfort zone, fishing can become dangerous as mortality rates are higher.

When the water is especially cold, Trout will seek slower-moving water to conserve energy. As it warms into an ideal range, they will move into faster water where oxygen is plentiful and insects are available for food.

2. Look for Oxygen

Speaking of oxygen, Trout are especially sensitive and require high levels of dissolved oxygen in the water. Look to riffles and moving water where oxygen levels increase to find Trout. Springs can also create turbulence that injects oxygen into the ecosystem. Not only that, but oxygen is also

a driver for insects that Trout eat. Stoneflies are prolific in rivers and streams with gradients and plenty of cold, oxygenated waters.

3. Match the Hatch

A close-up shows someone holding a Brook Trout with its mouth wide open, clearly displaying sharp teeth and shimmering scales.

Trout are selective eaters when a hatch is present. Have you ever encountered a situation where Trout are visibly eating on the surface but will not respond to your lure or fly? I certainly have and it's very frustrating. Take a closer look at the insects hatching and do your best to imitate them for success. On the flip side, you can try some different baits between hatches. My top tip for Trout fishing at these times is to

use crayfish, sculpins, and other forage.

4. Move and Search

When the fishing is slow, go on the hunt to find more Trout. Working a single run or shoreline is productive at times, but Trout can concentrate in specific areas without notice. If you don't see

continue to the next page



Hunting in Cabell County, Justin Caldwell bagged an archery buck.



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them and aren't catching them, start covering more water until you narrow down the search.

Once you do find a Trout, whether through a missed strike or via a landed fish, pay close attention to the depth, presentation, and general place the Trout was holding. Use that as a template to find more Trout in look-alike waters.

5. Stay Put

Two people, wearing hats and waders, are enjoying a sunny day of California Trout fly fishing in a river surrounded by trees and mountains.

Searching for fish is my favorite approach but there are times when it makes sense to stay in one place. If you're fully confident that a run or lakeshore is holding Trout, it makes sense to stay put and solve the puzzle. How deep are they?

What are they eating?

Adjust your tactics and continue working that place until a fish eats your presentation. This is especially true in very cold conditions, as the Trout move more slowly
continue to page 32



Trace Butcher used a compound bow for a whitetail buck.

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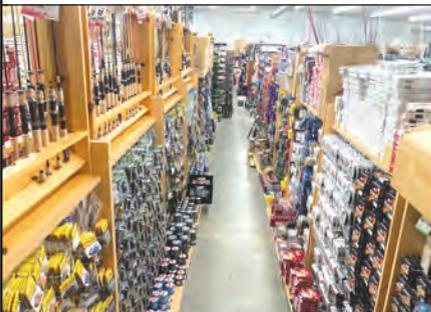


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and often have a narrow feeding window. Working in one place is a good idea in this situation.

6. Adjust Your Retrieve

Speed is an important factor for Trout fishing, and my next tip is all about timing. When eating nymphs below the surface, using a dead-drift fly presentation is ideal. A suspended jig is also great for static feeding behavior. At times, however, the fish are willing to chase and make aggressive strikes. Speed up your streamer retrieves or accelerate lure speeds to test reactions. Sometimes, faster is better. Other times, slower is the ticket. I really love adding pauses, as well. Pausing throughout a retrieve imitates wounded behavior and triggers more strikes.

7. Fish at First and Last Light

It's no secret in most fishing and

hunting circles that most action occurs at first and last light. When it comes to Trout fishing, the same rules apply. Low light conditions are optimal, and some of the largest fish caught come from anglers focusing on these time periods. Any chance you have to fish until dark or to catch a sunrise, take advantage of the opportunity.

It's worth noting that Trout are caught at all times of day so don't avoid fishing the mid-day hours. In cold weather, early afternoon is productive as water temperatures reach the highest point for the day. This triggers activity and can offer the best fishing in colder months. I still tackle those low-light conditions whenever possible, however.

8. Pre- and Post-Spawn Activity Offer More Opportunities

I am adamant about avoiding spawning fish entirely. When Trout are spawning, they're creating the next generation of fish to catch. Leave them alone and do everything humanly possible to avoid damaging spawning beds as well. For me, that means no anchor drops in riffles and careful wading.

But before and after the spawn is a different story. Big fish that

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are secretive and difficult to catch are more vulnerable as they pack on calories and move from safety. Fishing streamers and moving constantly to intercept these rare specimens has been a proven strategy for me.

continue to the next page



John Conrad brought in a white-tail buck with a fine rack

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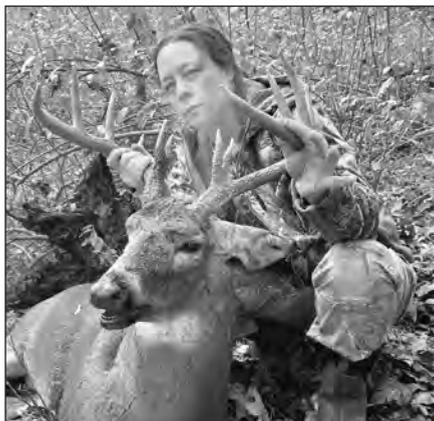
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Randi Carmichael hunted in Mason County for her 13 point buck.

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Spawning occurs during spring or fall with different Trout species. The exact timing varies by region and environment but you can generally bank on peak activity in April and May, or September and October in most places. I fish hard for a few weeks preceding the spawn and move off those waters at the first sign of staging or spawning fish. After the spawn ends, I resume and really focus on larger streamers that present a calorie-heavy meal.

9. Learn to Read Water

The biggest hangup for new Trout anglers involves the difficulty of reading water. It's tricky to determine where Trout hold in rivers and lakes. Larger bodies of water are especially difficult due to the large surface area of possibilities.

One of the best ways to read water is by fishing small streams and ponds. Trout will hold in pockets, seams, riffles, and tail-outs, but they are far easier to identify in a small body of water. After learning the nuances of Trout behavior in these places, you can narrow down the most likely holding places in bigger waters.

continue to the next page



Eugene Spurlock used a compound bow in Logan Co.

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Reading water takes time to learn and I encourage anglers to experiment and fish different types of water. Don't just focus on the deep and obvious-looking runs. Hit the fast water, work small pockets, look for riffles and spend your time working to better understand the fish, their food sources, and the types of waters they prefer.

10. Trout are Lazy

My final Trout fishing tip may seem counterintuitive. But it will help you to better understand Trout. Although you may see them darting across currents quickly or swimming along a lake shore, Trout are generally lazy. This means they want to conserve energy while also consuming as many calories as possible.

When you do see Trout on the move, it equates to food availability. They'll work harder when the reward comes in the form of net caloric gain. In many situations, Trout will work to conserve energy while also gaining calories. An eddy in a river is the perfect ex-

ample. They can sit on slow currents that require little effort while eating insects that are trapped and circle in the water. It's a literal buffet on a conveyor belt when insects are plentiful!

If you can identify places where a fish can both conserve energy and gain calories, you just might hit the jackpot of Trout waters. Places like this will produce fish for many years after you learn to find them, read the situation, and make a quality presentation.



Levi Tinsley used a bow in Kanwaha County for a buck.

DNR Photo Contest

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) announced today the winners of the state's fifth annual Big Buck Photo Contest during the opening ceremony of the West Virginia Hunting and Fishing Show at the Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center.

"This year's Big Buck Photo Contest showcased impressive deer and the stories and traditions that make hunting in West Virginia special," said WVDNR Director Brett McMillion. "By participating in hunting seasons and continue to page 36



Kylo Benton, from Summersville, was a youth DNR contest winner.

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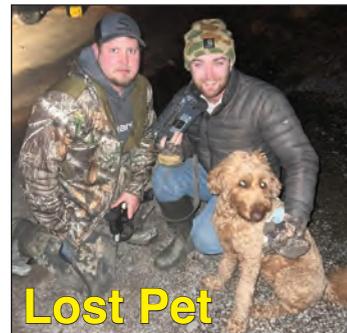
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and contests like this, hunters play a vital role in stewarding our state's natural resources and showcasing the incredible opportunities West Virginia has to offer. I want to congratulate all of our winners and thank everyone who took time to share their photos and stories."

The Big Buck Photo Contest was open to resident and nonresident youth and adult hunters. To enter, hunters were required to submit a photo with a buck they harvested during a 2025 hunting season along with a short account of their hunt. Each entrant was required to show proof of a valid 2025 West Virginia Hunting License and had to include their personal 13-digit DNR-issued game check number. Finalists were chosen by random

drawing from all eligible entries and winners were selected by a judging committee. Winning photos were selected based on photo composition, size of the buck's antlers, number of antler points and how well the hunt was described.

The seven winners included one resident adult, five resident youths and one non-resident adult who were selected from a list of more than 170 finalists. No submissions were received from non-resident youth hunters.

The resident adult grand prize package includes a lifetime hunting license and a West Virginia State Park cabin stay. The non-resident adult winner will receive a State Park cabin stay or a Bass Pro Shops prize package

and all youth winners will receive a Bass Pro Shops prize package. Winners will be contacted by the WVDNR to claim their prize. **RESIDENT ADULT DIVISION WINNER**

Emma Malcomb, Tallmansville,



Emma Malcomb, from Tallmansville, won the photo contest.

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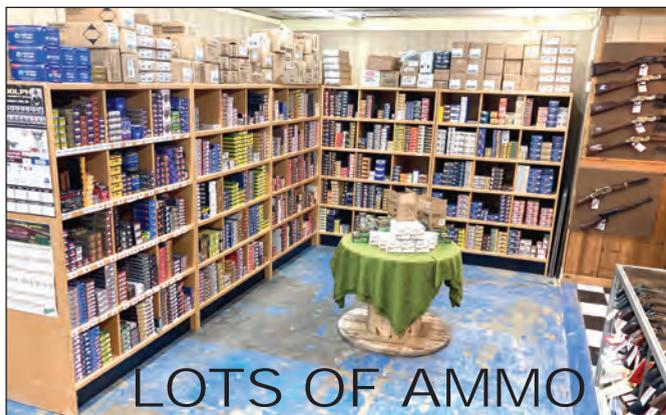
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