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**Issue 325**

**July/August 2025**



***INSIDE THIS ISSUE***

**Summer  
Crappie**

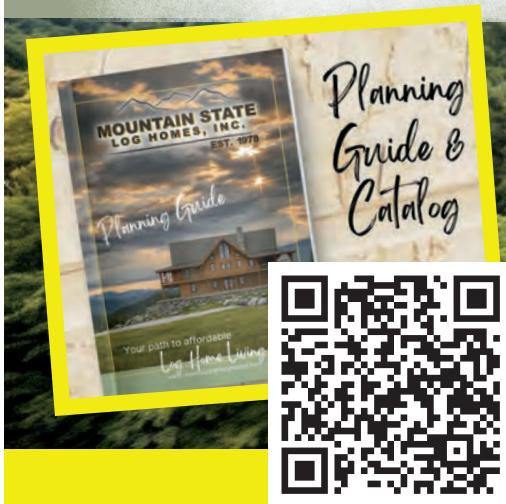
**B.A.S.S.  
News**

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**Magazine**

**Volume 34 Issue 325**

Publisher and Editor

**Mark A. Goudy**

Contributing Editors

West Virginia Division Of  
Natural Resources

**No Subscriptions Offered**

*Printed Every Six Weeks*

**W.Va. Sportsman**

P.O. Box 5521

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## Cover Photo

On May 9, Justin Connor from Milton, W.Va., caught a 51.49-inch, 66.30-pound blue catfish on the Kanawha River in Putnam County using a mooneye on 80-pound test line. The previous 50.82-inch length record, set by Kimberly Feltner of Madison, Ind. in 2024. The blue catfish weight record remains with Michael John Drake, who caught a 69.45-pound, in 2023.

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# Spring Turkey Harvest

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — According to preliminary data re-

leased by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) today, hunters harvested 10,694 bearded turkeys during the spring gobbler season.

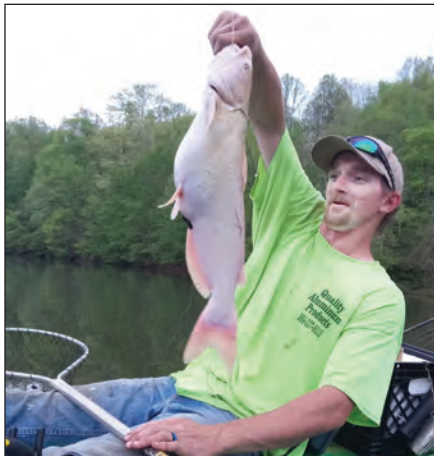
“Spring turkey season continues to be a valued tradition in West Virginia, where hunters have a strong commitment to wildlife conservation and responsible hunting practices,” said WVDNR Director Brett McMillion. “We’re encouraged by the strong participation this spring, especially from all of the youth hunters who bagged their bird during the two-day youth season.”

Youth hunters harvested 682 turkeys (502 on Saturday and 180 on Sunday), which is a slight increase over the 601 birds that were taken in 2024. This year, the youth harvest made up 6.4% of the total harvest. Those numbers are included in the table with county totals.

Despite a strong showing from youth hunters, this year’s total harvest was 8.2% below last year’s harvest (11,650), 1.1% below the five-year average (10,812) and 8.7% below the 10-year average (11,709).

All six districts harvested fewer birds than last year. District 1 harvested the most birds (2,459) followed by District 6 (1,945), District 5 (1,889), District 4 (1,641), District 3 (1,547) and District

2 (1,213). The top five counties with the highest turkey harvest were Mason (476), Jackson (366), Preston (362), Harrison (345) and Kanawha (306) counties.



Timothy Loy caught an albino catfish at Conoway Run Lake.



Jeremy Watkins bagged a Roane Co. 22 pound wild turkey.

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## Very Unusual Fishing Information

Muskies Are Seriously Aggressive

The most dangerous fish found in freshwater in the United States (not counting Bull Sharks that swim up rivers from the ocean) is the Muskellunge.

Muskies, a big toothy fish that looks like a freshwater barracuda, have been known to eat fish half their size or bigger, mammals, birds, and even small dogs!

They have also been known to attack people and can do real damage with their rows of razor-sharp teeth!

The World's Biggest Fish Eats The Smallest Food

The world's biggest fish is

the whale shark which reaches lengths of over 50 feet and can weigh several tons.

Instead of eating equally massive food, the whale sharks subsist on tiny krill, fish, and plankton that they strain in vast quantities from the ocean water

Fish breathe by passing water

over their gills, which extract oxygen from the water.

If a fish chewed its food, this would stop the flow of water past the gills and they could suffocate.

Fish use their teeth only to grab, slice or crush, then swallow the food down.

Brown Trout Are One Of The Most Diverse Vertebrates

Brown Trout, while all one species, have an incredibly diverse genome.

Instead of having a set number of chromosomes, like most species, they can have anywhere between 38 and 42 pairs.

Humans have only 23!

Largest Collection Of Fishing Lures

The largest certified collection of fishing lures belongs to Will (Spike) Yoacum from Cartersville, continue to the next page



Wyatt Legnasky hunted in Marion County for his 1st wild turkey.



Only 7, Reese Dawson used a gun for an 8 pt. from Ritchie Co.

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The most expensive fishing lure in the world is Mac Daddy's Million Dollar Lure, which cost, unsurprisingly, a million dollars.

Why is it so expensive? Because it has over 3 pounds of 14-carat gold and platinum and is encrusted with diamonds and rubies.

It was trolled behind a boat once, with a massive insurance policy in place, but has never caught a fish. **Venomous Bait**

While out fishing in his kayak, fishing guide Shane Davies caught a 10-pound bass.

His bait? A rattlesnake!

When the snake swam dangerously close to his kayak he stunned it with his paddle, put it on a hook,

and cast it out in the river.

Apparently, it looked just fine to the bass!

**Longest Migration**

What are your chances of catching a fish that came from really far away? If you like to fish for eels, they are very good.

The American eel lives in freshwater rivers for most of its life. However, at spawning time it can swim thousands of miles from its home to its spawning ground.

Eels spawn in the Sargasso Sea in the North Atlantic!

continue to the next page



Young Conner Richards joined the Husky Musky Club.

July/Aug 2025 ~ Page 7

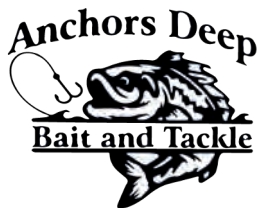


Zachery Staley, from Porters Falls, got a gun buck last fall.



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## Fish Camouflage

Fish can have all different kinds of camouflage, but there is one type that they all have.

They are all lighter on the bottom and darker on the top.

The dark top allows them to blend with the bottom. The bright bottom lets them blend with the sun's light coming from above!

## Dads Do The Work

When it comes to guarding the

nest, bass have single-parent families.

The mother bass will be at the nest before she spawns, but once the spawning is done, she leaves and the father stays to guard the nest.

It is not uncommon for female bass to have several nests, while the males only have one each!

## Biggest Fly Rod And Reel

The biggest fly rod and reel ever made were created by Tiny Mitchell of Port Isabel, in Texas.

It's over 71 feet long, with a reel that is over 4 feet in diameter! There is no word whether it has caught anything yet!

## Circle Hooks Are Nothing New

Everyone is familiar with circle hooks. People think they are easy to set and it is proven that they are less likely to be swallowed.

But, they are not new. In a recent

find in a 12,000-year-old grave of a woman in East Asia, there were several perfectly preserved circular fish hooks.

Circle hooks go back to the Stone Age!

## Fish Don't Sleep

Part of the definition of sleep is  
continue to page 11



Jeff Johnson used a spinner bait for a quality largemouth bass.



Young Allen Plum reeled in a fat golden trout. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.



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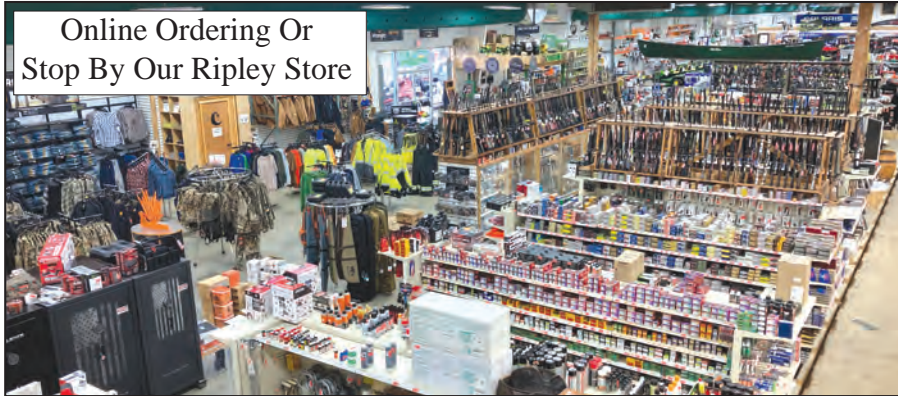
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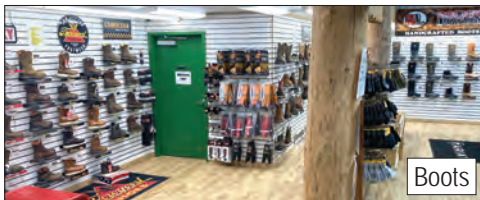
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to close your eyes and fish (except for sharks) don't have eyelids.

So, technically a fish can never sleep. Most fish do have periods of rest where they find some shelter and don't move much.

Sharks can close their eyes, but because of their biology, they can't really stop moving.

They lack swim bladders so they would sink, and they need to keep moving to keep water flowing through their gills!

A Fishing Book By A Medieval Nun

The earliest fishing books that still survive today were written and published in 1496 by Dame Juliana Berners, an English prioress.

This was only a few years after the invention of the printing press and was called A Treatyse of Fysshynge Wyth an Angle. The Strangest Manmade Object Ever Taken From A Fish's Stom-

ach

In the late 1890s, Mr. Douglass Smith caught a 140-pound catfish.

In the fish's stomach was a small,

sealed bottle. When Mr. Smith opened the bottle he found a note inside!

continue to the next page



Bryan and Jason Suter won the Rivers To Trails Bass Festival with 27 pounds, 5 oz. over the 2 days in early June.



Danny Harper landed a 5 lb., 9 oz. largemouth bass for big bass honors at the Bass Sportsman event at Stonewall Jackson. Look for the entry form on page 36 for the next event there.



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The note read, “Whoever will find this will please send it back to me. H.E. Pipes.”

Mr. Pipes had thrown it in nearly 75 miles away, in the Kaw river, three years before Mr. Douglass caught the fish!

Most Consecutive Casts

Brent Olgers of Macon Georgia

is the current record holder for the most consecutive casts.

In July 1999, using a Zebco reel, he made 6,501 casts of over 45 feet. That comes to an average of 270 casts per hour!

The record is silent as to whether he caught any fish with those

casts!

Pyramids And Fishing Poles

The ancient Egyptians also loved to fish! There is a more than 4,000-year-old painting from Egypt that shows people fishing.

Some are using nets, but others can be clearly seen to be using poles and lines!

The Most Popular Fish In The United States

The most popular game fish in the United States is unquestionably the Largemouth Bass.

There are professional and amateur bass fishing circuits, bass fishing matches are highly attended and televised, and there are Bass Pro Shops!



Doug Anderson landed a musky in his kayak. Sounds exciting.



Melinda Michaels hooked a 29 lb. Ohio River blue catfish.

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## How To Succeed On Pressured Lakes

This is the time of year when lakes are getting pounded and bites can become a little more difficult.

It's important to understand the nature of bass. They are cold blooded, so during early spring, their metabolism is slower and the fish are less active. We want to make it easier for them to eat.

As the water warms up, they get more aggressive and will bite more active lure presentations. But, when the dog days of summer come along, bass' aggressiveness wanes. While fishing pressure can be a big factor, the bottom line is the fish aren't in the mood to eat as often when water temperatures soar.

I'm not saying they won't bite fast movers when in a summer funk. Oftentimes you have to trigger the reaction bite by working your bait faster or more erratic, such as with a crankbait like the Rapala DT Series or a big Mop Jig. Try changing speeds to trigger that reaction bite.

Aside from the reaction bite, you need to make the meal easier for them to eat. That means making precise casts and slowing down to match the fish's mood and the conditions.

Another solution is beat the crowd to the best areas on the lake. When I'm going fun fishing, I want to be on the water by at least 30 minutes before sunrise. I'll have the aggressive fish caught before the crowd gets there.

It also can pay to think outside the box. You can do that by using smaller – or larger – baits than the bass have been seeing.

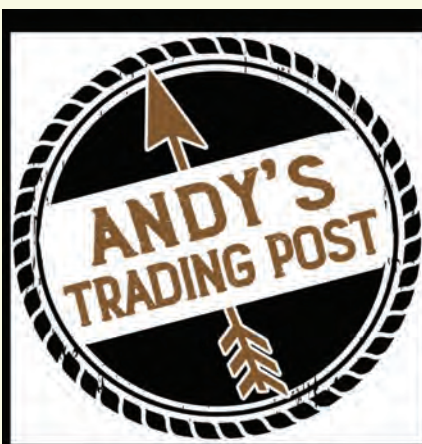
A change in location from the traditional pattern on a lake can make a huge difference too.

Denny Brauer taught us that lesson in the Bassmaster Classic he won in North Carolina. Everyone

By Davy Hite  
had been told the lake was a deep, offshore type fishery, but Denny  
continue to the next page



Steve Starkey got a big large-mouth bass at Stonecoal Lake.



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went to the bank and flipped a tube jig. He caught fish that had been ignored and not pressured.

A change-up also works on blue-back herring lakes. During the summertime those fish are dialed in on the herring, so obvious baits are topwaters, swimbaits or jerk-baits that emulate the baitfish. Anglers know the best places,

and when the lake is being fished heavily, you have to wait in line to pull up on one of those spots.

When I won a Bassmaster Elite Series tournament at Clarks Hill Reservoir, I fished some of those spots but with an entirely different presentation. I fished a Buckeye Mop Jig, and I'm convinced they

bit it because they hadn't seen it. While the herring were a popular target, the bass also were eating crawfish that the jig resembled.

So, when things get tough during summertime and lakes are heavily pressured, consider offering them a different look or fish less obvious places that get less pressure.

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## Summer In WV Fishing Spots

Whether you're looking for an easy-access lake for a family outing or a stream off-the-beaten-path for a weekend adventure, West Virginia has something for every angler. And with warm weather, consistent river flows and active fish populations, summer is the perfect time to cast a line in West Virginia's lakes and streams. Whether you're new to fishing, returning after a break or seeking to enhance your skills, the right techniques, knowledge of the target species and a sense of adventure can help you plan a successful and memorable fishing trip.

### SUMMER FISHING TIPS AND BEST PRACTICES

Part of planning a successful summer fishing trip is understanding how seasonal and environmental factors affect fish behavior and adjusting your techniques accordingly.

As temperatures rise during summer, oxygen levels in water



Zach Elswick, from Fayetteville, has an unusual racked deer.



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drop, which causes fish in rivers to gather below riffles where water is more oxygenated or near the mouths of tributaries, which are cooler. In lakes, fish move to deeper, cooler areas with adequate oxygen. Targeting these areas can increase your chances of success.

Other general tips for successful summer fishing include:

Fish early in the morning or late in the evening and concentrate around riffles and tributary inflows.

Fish deeper waters in lakes or areas with vegetation and submerged structure.

Match your bait and technique to the species—worms under a bob-

ber are always a winner for kids, while soft plastics and topwater lures are great for bass.

continue to the next page



Remington Thomas has a golden trout. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.

## TOMLINSON RUN LAKE (HANCOCK COUNTY – WVDNR DISTRICT 1)

Located in the northern panhandle at Tomlinson Run State Park, this 23-acre lake is ideal for a summer fishing getaway. With ADA-accessible piers, shoreline access and boat rentals, it's a family-friendly destination that offers amenities and scenic beauty. Anglers of all ages can enjoy excellent fishing for bass, bluegill and crappie. The WVDNR also stocks catchable size channel catfish every June.

**Fish Species Available:** Large-mouth Bass, Bluegill, Black Crappie, White Crappie, Channel Catfish

**Best Techniques:** Fish points, weedbed edges and brush. Use soft plastics, crankbaits and top-water lures for bass, especially in early morning and late evening hours.

Use jigs, spinners and live bait for crappie and bluegill. Topwater lures that imitate insects also are effective with bluegill. Use chicken liver, cut bait or nightcrawlers on the bottom for catfish. Target-



Jarod McCloy landed a nice spring walleye.







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ing catfish at night is particularly effective.

**Regulations:** The channel catfish daily limit is four. Only electric motors or non-motorized vessels are permitted.

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(HARDY COUNTY – DISTRICT 2)

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continue to the next page



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access and boat ramp. With the opportunity to catch trophy-size bluegill and abundant largemouth bass, it's great for beginners and experienced anglers alike.

Fish Species Available: Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, Channel Catfish, Black Crappie

Best Techniques: Use flukes, senkos, swimbaits and most other soft plastic bait for largemouth bass. In vegetation, use topwater frogs. Use slip bobbers to catch crappie and bluegill near standing timber. Use chicken liver, cut bait or nightcrawlers on the bottom for catfish. Targeting catfish at night is particularly effective.

Regulations: The channel catfish daily limit is four. Only electric motors or non-motorized vessels are permitted. All black bass (smallmouth, largemouth and spotted) from 12 to 16 inches long must be returned to the water at once. Additionally, the daily creel limit for black bass is six.

**BIG DITCH LAKE (WEBSTER COUNTY – DISTRICT 3)**

Big Ditch Lake is a 65-acre mountain gem with shoreline access, a fishing pier and a peaceful setting. The lake holds a variety of species, such as largemouth bass



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and panfish species. The WVD-NR also stocks channel catfish every June, and has stocked tiger musky, which can reach lengths of 40 inches, offering something exciting for every angler.

Fish Species Available: Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, Black and White Crappie, Channel Catfish, Tiger Musky

Best Techniques: Target weedbeds and brush for largemouth bass, bluegill and crappie using soft plastics, topwaters, jigs and worms. Use small jigs and spinners for crappie and bluegill. Use chicken liver, cut bait or night-

crawlers on the bottom for catfish. Targeting catfish at night is particularly effective. Use large hardbody fishing lures and swimbaits for tiger musky.

Regulations: Electric motors only. **PLUM ORCHARD LAKE (FAYETTE COUNTY – DISTRICT 4)**

Only 20 minutes from Beckley, Plum Orchard Lake is a 175-acre waterbody that's perfect for introducing kids to fishing. With three boat ramps, abundant shoreline access and kayak-friendly zones, it's a convenient and productive summer spot.

continue to the next page



Justin Stanton brought in a great Wetzell County bow buck last fall.





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Fish Species Available: Large-mouth Bass, Bluegill, Channel Catfish, Redear Sunfish

Best Techniques: Use night-crawlers under a bobber and fish 3-4 feet deep for a tried-and-true method. Use circle hooks for catfish on the bottom.

Regulations: No wake zones are

marked and Doris Cove is electric motors only.

BARBOURSVILLE LAKE (CABELL COUNTY – DISTRICT 5)

A favorite local fishing destination, Barboursville Lake features great amenities including handicapped-accessible docks, restrooms and easy bank access. It's an excellent option for family outings and relaxed summer fishing.

cellent option for family outings and relaxed summer fishing.

Fish Species Available: Bass, Bluegill, Channel Catfish

Best Techniques: Use bobbers and bait at dawn and dusk for catfish. Use soft plastics or topwaters for bass and worms or small jigs for bluegill.

Regulations: The channel catfish daily limit is four.

ELK FORK LAKE (TYLER COUNTY – DISTRICT 6)

This lake is known for its abundant bank access and fish-holding structure. With healthy bass populations and panfish aplenty, Elk

continue to page 20

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Ben Lockhart has a 4 lb., 12 oz. bass at the Ohio River Challenge.

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Regulations: Anglers may only harvest six bass per day and only one may exceed 16 inches (New in 2025)

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Charlie Miller landed a 10 pound rainbow trout.



Sammy Uhl, from Williamstown, got his first deer - an 8 point.



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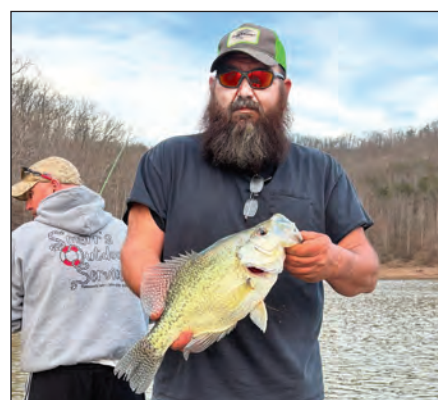
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Keith Smith hooked a 26" New River walleye.



Doody Cook landed an R.D. Bailey spring largemouth bass.



Ritchie Heavner reeled in a huge Burnsville Lake crappie.



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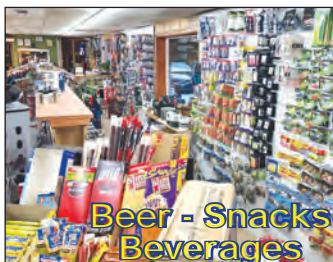


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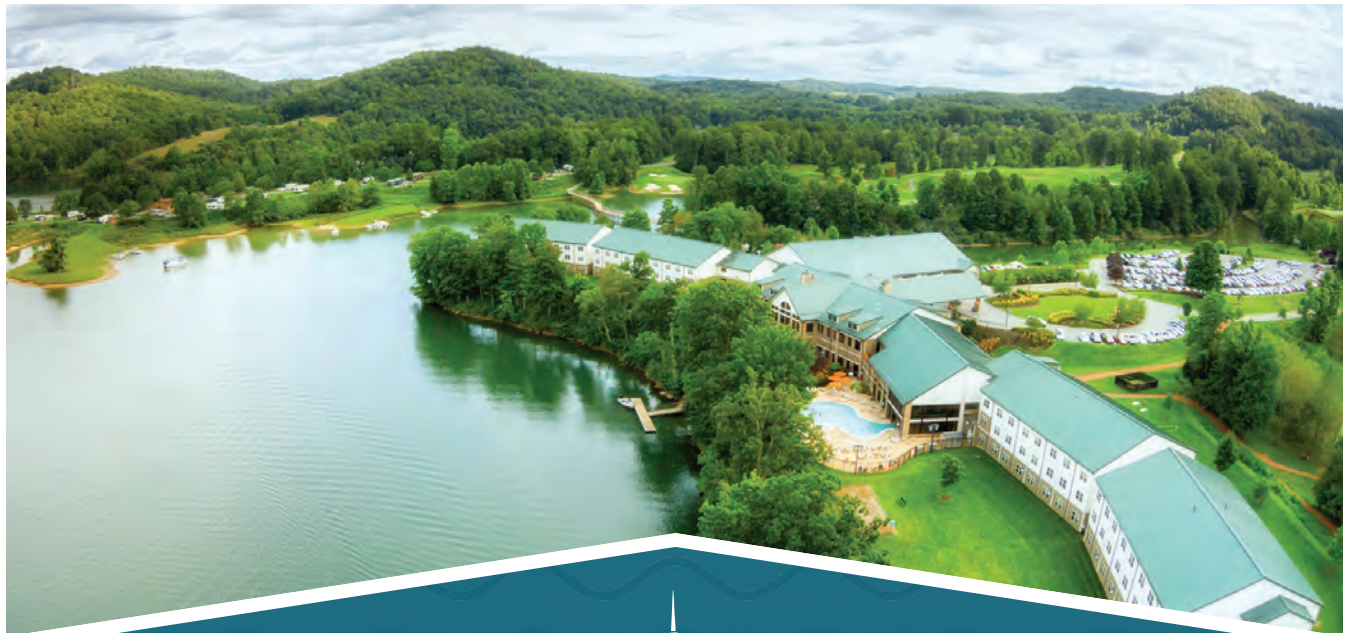


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# Flyfishing For Musky

By Nathan Rees

They say musky may be the fish of 10,000 cast but what you also don't hear is hey can be the fish of 10,000 dollars! Only kidding of course.

Just like with all fish species and hobbies you can dive as deep down the rabbit hole as you'd like. Musky fishing can be affordable and done on a budget or you can make it as complex and expensive as you'd like.

Having chased these fish for 20 years I'd like to lay out a few things I've learned over the many seasons on the water searching for them.

We will start off with the gear.

1. Rod and Reel: When diving into the sport look for a solid rod with a nice tip that can allow for a sturdy figure 8 (a technique I will explain in a little while). A 10-12WT rod is recommended, and helps to turn over the large flies. Pair the rod with a reel that falls within your budget. In the many years fishing for these fish I have never once used my reel to land one. For the most part all they do is act as a line holder.

2. Line: look for a good intermediate sink or sink tip line in the 300-500 grain weight depending on the depth and current speed of the water you will be fishing. Shallower water go on the lighter end and deeper go a little heavier. 350-400 grain seems to be the sweet spot for most. I prefer a lighter line as they tend to give my flies the action I prefer.

3. Flies: fly selection can be situational/seasonal. That being said flies in my box range anywhere



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from 6" to 20+". When starting out I always recommend a good single Buford style fly and a fly with some articulation.

That happy medium for most of my flies falls in the 10-12" range. There are so many good fly tiers and patterns out there that it really is tough to go wrong. Just look for something with some buck tail,

continue to the next page

July/Aug 2025 ~ Page 26



Joel Miller hooked & released a nice Jackson County musky.



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something with some buck tail, feathers, and flash and you should be golden.

4. Miscellaneous: I recommend a good solid net (look into Catch Cam Nets), a nice set of long needle nose pliers, jaw spreaders, and Knipex bolt cutters for those times when the fish get hooked deep and that's the only option for a safe release.

Now that we got the basics of gear out of the way we can take a look at habitat/structure to target when you're out on the water. Below are a few of the areas I tend to focus on in the rivers and lakes of Appalachia:

- In lakes I will target standing timber, lay downs, rocky banks with chunk rock or boulders along them, weed beds, main lake points, deeper channels with access to shallow water, and depending on time of the year and forage base sometimes it pays off to follow the bait wether that's shallow or deep (it varies seasonally)
- In our rivers and streams I tend to focus on all forms of timber and lay downs wether it's shallow or deep. We also like to target mid river humps and sand bars. However with that being said most riv-

er/stream fish seem to come from the outside bending bank where the most current and flow channelizes the water making it deeper and a great place for a musky to lay awaiting the opportunity to ambush.

Finally I'd like to wrap up with a few tips and tricks I've learned over the years that have helped put some fish in the net.

- Always figure 8 (rod tip slightly in the water and make a 8 or infinity sign with the fly) after every cast or at the very minimum throw in a big half circle to see if you have something trialing the fly.
- If you get a fish to "follow" changing depth from shallow too deep with your figure 8 can often help trigger a strike.
- Roll casting your fly when it

gets hung up and using the weight of your sink tip to get it unstuck is an invaluable tip. It has saved me blowing out structure and spots many of times and it has also resulted in some wild reaction strikes from fish.

- Strip set don't set with your rod.
- continue to the next page



Jay Carper caught & released a 49" musky.



Zaden Dodd landed a quality largemouth. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.



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- And last but not least keep some ibuprofen in the boat because double hauling big flies all day ain't easy or for the faint of heart! Now if I haven't scared you off. The rewards of landing a musky on the fly are well worth the effort. The stories, the pictures, the memories, and the time spent on the water with good people more than make up for the long days of only moving a fish or two.

From everyone here at Natives Fly Shop/Ascent Fly Fishing we hope to see you all out there on the water chasing the fish of 10,000 casts and if you have any questions please don't hesitate to ask us! We'd be more than willing to help out.

View the Natives ad on page 25. A huge selection of fly tackle is offered at our Fairmont location.

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## DNR Rule Changes

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) today announced that changes to coyote, waterfowl and youth hunting regulations went into effect on May 19.

These changes, which were approved by the West Virginia Legislature during the 2025 regular session, include removing maximum caliber restrictions for night

coyote hunting, increasing youth waterfowl hunter maximum age limits and providing clarification on adult supervision during special youth hunting seasons.

"These updates make our hunting regulations more accessible and ensure young hunters can enjoy the outdoors safely and responsibly," said WVDNR Director Brett  
continue to the next page



Earl LaFever used an umbrella rig lure for this chunk smallmouth.



Jenifer Keffer is the first woman to garner the big bass honors at a Bass Sportsman tournament. She caught a 4 lb., 15 oz. lunker at Stonewall Jackson in May.

McMillion. "By expanding opportunities for youth hunters and supporting responsible practices, we're building the next generation of West Virginia sportsmen and women."

Small game hunters who hunt coyotes at night will no longer have a maximum caliber restriction. The WVDNR reminds hunters to always hunt safely and be aware of their target's location and what lies beyond. A safe backstop is important to avoid unintended injury to people and property.

The youth waterfowl season is now open to hunters 17 years of age or younger, expanding the previous age limit of 15 and under. The legislature also approved a change to make it clear an adult assisting a youth hunter during any special youth season may handle the hunter's firearm to provide safe handling advice and help. When assisting a youth hunter during a special youth season, the accompanying adult is still prohibited from carrying a firearm for the purpose of taking wildlife.

Youth hunters under the age of 15 who are not hunting on their own land or are participating in a special youth season must still be

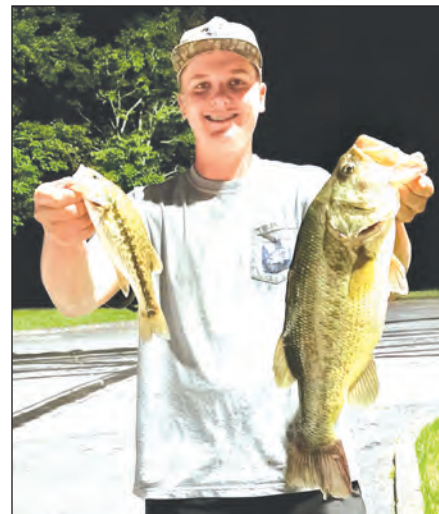
accompanied by a licensed adult who is 18 years of age or older. The accompanying adult must remain close enough to the youth to provide guidance and assistance. Youth hunters ages 15-17 must comply with all applicable state

and federal licensing requirements.

The 2025-2026 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary will be released on July 1 and will remain in effect through June 2026.



Luke King caught & released a huge river paddle fish.



Ben Gabehart landed a huge and little bass. Photo courtesy of Burnsville Docks in Burnsville.



James Melton caught a quality smallmouth at Kanawha Falls.

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## Leave Young Wildlife Alone

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) today reminded members of the public to leave young wildlife alone, noting that handling wild animals often harms the animal, spreads disease and, when done without a permit, breaks the law.

“Watching wildlife is one of the many joys of being outdoors in West Virginia,” said WVDNR Director Brett McMillion. “But for the safety of everyone and the preservation of our natural resources, it’s always best to leave young wildlife alone.”

Touching, picking up or even approaching young animals can leave behind human scent, which may attract predators and put the animal at risk. Contact with wildlife also increases the chance of spreading diseases and parasites such as rabies, ticks, Lyme disease and roundworms.

“We get a lot of calls this time of year about fawns, birds and baby rabbits that people think are abandoned or injured,” said Vinnie Johnson, WVDNR wildlife biologist. “Most of the time, those animals are doing exactly what nature intended.”

For example, does often leave fawns hidden for eight hours or longer while they search for food. These fawns rely on their camouflaged coats and lack of scent to stay safe. Approaching or handling a bedded fawn can put them in danger. Similarly, people often mistake fully-feathered fledgling birds for injured ones. If the bird is featherless and the nest is within reach, it can be carefully returned

continue to the next page

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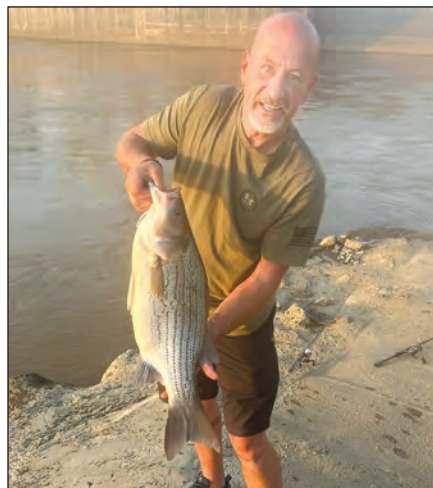


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Doug Tingler landed an Ohio River hybrid bass.



Jack Comp, from Reedsville, has a huge snapping turtle..





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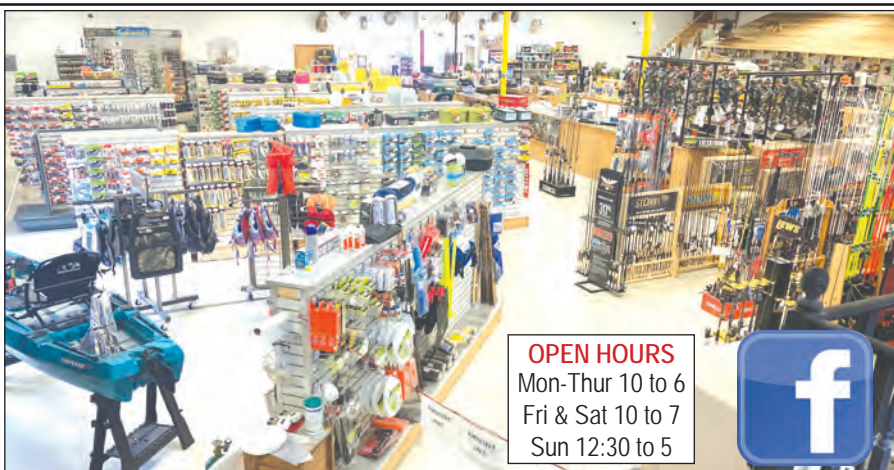
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to the nest. But most of the time, young birds on the ground are fully-feathered fledglings learning to fly.

“Wanting to help is a natural in-

stinct, but when it comes to young wildlife, the best way to show that you care is to leave them there,” said Johnson.

The WVDNR is also reminding the public that it is illegal to possess wild animals without a per-

mit. Fines for unlawful possession of a fawn, bird, squirrel, bear cub or other wildlife range from \$20 to \$300, and may include jail time up to 100 days.

To learn more about wildlife in West Virginia, visit [WVDnr.gov](http://WVDnr.gov).

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Isaac Price set the hook on a large carp.



Eason Miller & Logan McVey reeled in a couple of nice crappie.



Levi Watkins hooked a 5 1/2 lb. largemouth bass in Parkersburg.





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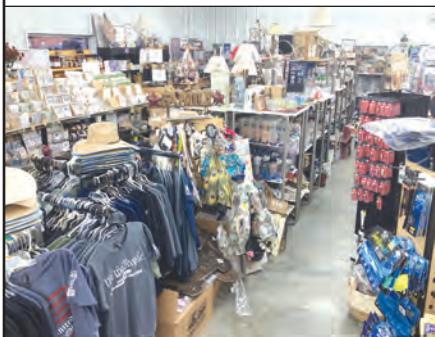
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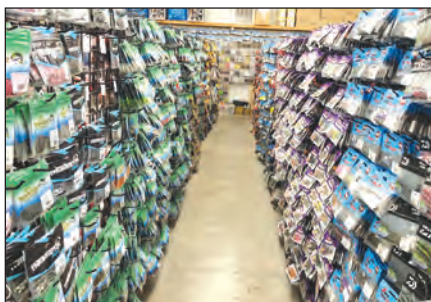


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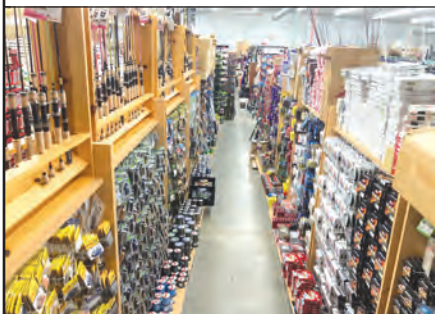
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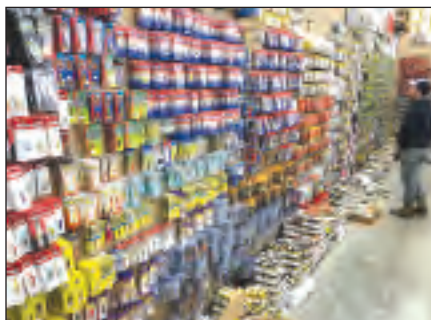


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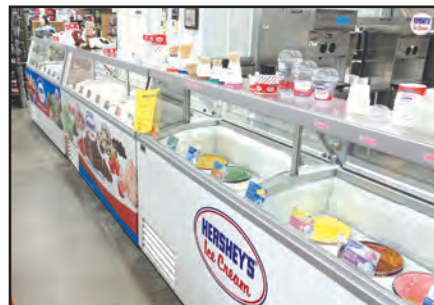
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# Summer Crappie Fishing

## Identifying Crappie Habitat in Summer

When it comes to summer crappie fishing, understanding their habitat is crucial for success. Crappies are highly adaptable fish, but they tend to congregate in areas that provide them with protection, food, and suitable water conditions. So, where do you start looking?

### Structures with Submerged Vegetation

Submerged vegetation is a crappie magnet during the summer months. Aquatic plants like weed beds, milfoil, and hydrilla provide ambush points for crappies to attack unsuspecting baitfish and insects. These structures also offer a comfortable hiding spot from predators and a place to regulate

their body temperature. Look for areas with submerged vegetation in 5-15 feet of water, especially near drop-offs or points.

### Deep Water Drop-Offs and Points

Deep water drop-offs and points are another favorite haunt of summer crappies. These areas often have a more consistent water temperature, which is essential for crappies during the hot summer months. The drop-offs and points also provide a natural funnel for baitfish, making it easier for crappies to feed. When exploring these areas, focus on the 15-30 foot depth range, and look for subtle changes in the bottom topology.

### Near-Surface Structures Like Docks

Near-surface structures like docks, piers, and sunken logs can be a hidden gem for summer crappie fishing. These structures provide shade, ambush points, and a place for crappies to suspend in the water column. Docks, in particular, can be very productive, as they often have a built-in food source in the form of baitfish and insects attracted to the structure. When fishing near-surface structures, focus on the 5-10 foot depth range, and be prepared to make precise casts.

### Choosing the Right Lures for Summer Crappie

When it comes to summer crappie fishing, the right lure can make all the difference. You've got to remember that crappie are finicky creatures, and they can be picky about what they eat. So, what are the best lures to use when targeting summer crappie?

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Jigs with soft plastic trailers are a classic summer crappie lure. The soft plastic trailer adds a tantalizing action to the jig, making it irresistible to crappie. Think about

continue to page 34

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Shyanne Atkinson reeled in a big flathead catfish.

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it like a juicy worm wiggling on a hook – it's hard for crappie to resist! When using jigs with soft plastic trailers, make sure to choose trailers that match the natural forage in the water. For example, if you're fishing in an area with a lot of shad, use a trailer that mimics a shad. You can also experiment with different jig weights and retrieval speeds to see what works best for your specific fishing spot.

## Crankbaits with Bright Colors

Crankbaits are another great option for summer crappie fishing. But here's the thing: you need to make them stand out. That's where bright colors come in. Crappie are attracted to bright, bold colors, especially in the summer when the water is warm and murky. Look for crankbaits with bright oranges, yellows, and greens – these colors are like a beacon calling out to crappie. And don't be afraid to experiment with different retrieval speeds and depths to see what works best for

your fishing spot.

## Small Minnow-Imitating Lures

Small minnow-imitating lures are a great option for summer crappie fishing, especially in areas with a lot of baitfish. These lures are designed to mimic the natural forage in the water, making them irresistible to crappie. When using small minnow-imitating lures, make sure to use a gentle, subtle retrieval. You want to make it look like the lure is just swimming along naturally, not like it's being pulled by a fisherman. This will help you get more bites and land more crappie.

## Effective Presentation Techniques

Whether you're a seasoned angler or a beginner, mastering effective presentation techniques can make all the difference in catching summer crappie. It's not just about throwing a lure into the water and waiting for a bite; it's about understanding the behavior and preferences of your target species and adapting your presentation accordingly.

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## Slowing Down Your Retrieval

When it comes to summer crappie, slow and steady wins the race. These fish are often sluggish in the warmer months, and fast-moving lures can spook them easily. Think of it like trying to get a sleepy cat to wake up and play – you need to ease into it gradually. By slowing down your retrieval, you're giving the crappie a chance to register the presence of your lure and react to it. This is especially important when fishing in areas with heavy vegetation,

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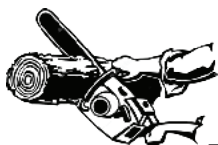


Shawn Stidham brought in a Putnam County spring gobbler..

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where crappie may be hiding and waiting for an unsuspecting meal to wander by.

### Using a Suspend-Type Rig

A suspend-type rig is a game-changer for summer crappie fishing. This type of rig allows your lure to hover tantalizingly close to the bottom of the water, without actually touching it. This can be irresistible to crappie, which are naturally curious and love to investigate unusual objects in their environment. Imagine you're at a party and someone leaves a intriguing-looking present on the table – you can't help but want to open it, right? That's exactly what's happening when you use a suspend-type rig; you're presenting the crappie with a puzzle that's too enticing to resist.

### Fishing at the Right Times

Fishing at the right times is crucial when it comes to catching summer crappie. The timing of your fishing trip can make all the difference between a successful catch and a disappointing one. But what are the best times to go fishing for summer crappie?



Colton Farley arrowed a nice 9 point buck in Logan County.



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### Dawn and Dusk for Active Crappie

The early bird catches the worm, or in this case, the early angler catches the crappie. Dawn and dusk are considered the best times to fish for summer crappie. During these periods, the water is usually calm, and the sun is not too intense, making it ideal for crappie to be active. The changing light conditions at dawn and dusk also trigger the crappie's feeding instinct, making them more likely to bite. Imagine a peaceful lake at dawn, with the mist slowly lifting off the water, and you'll understand why this is a crappie's favorite time to feed.



Gene Brown hooked an 18" tiger trout for his first trout ever.

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Baron Claypool has an unusual pose for his nice gobbler.



Chance Broyhill landed a very healthy largemouth bass.



Andrew Camp reeled in a long flathead catfish.



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Tanner Justice-Humphreys had gob-  
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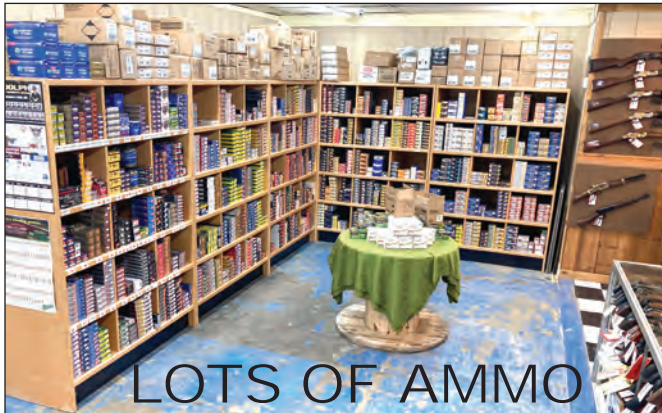




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