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Issue 316

May/June 2024

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**Early
Bass**

**B.A.S.S.
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Attention Bass Fishermen!

**Mail-List For Bass Tournaments
In 2024**

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Cover Photo

Andy Godwin and John Christopher had a second place finish at the 1st Bass Sportsman event at Burnsville Lake. John (JC) Christopher - on the right - caught the big bass with a 5 pound, 6 oz. largemouth bass.

The next Bass Sportsman event is at Stonewall Jackson on May 26th. Look for the tournament schedule in this months issue.

Spool up and hook up.

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DNR Sport Show Returns To Stonewall Jackson Park

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.VA. — The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) announced today that West Virginia's celebration of National Hunting and Fishing Day will return to Stonewall Resort State Park in Roanoke on Saturday, September 21.

"We are thrilled to announce that our National Hunting and Fishing Day celebration is returning to Stonewall Resort State Park this year," said Brett McMillion, WVDNR Director. "This annual event is great for hunters and anglers and is designed to build the next generation of wildlife and

conservation enthusiasts through the Outdoor Youth Challenge."

This annual celebration, which honors West Virginia's hunting and fishing traditions and promotes conservation efforts throughout the state, will return as a special one-day event catered to hunting and fishing enthusiasts and outdoor adventurers of all ages.

Returning this year is the popular Outdoor Youth Challenge, which is designed to engage kids in a

continue to the next page



Brian Workman, from East Bank, landed a huge New River bass.



Jim Summers, from Wirt Co., hooked an early season bass.

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PJ Renzilla has a huge rainbow trout. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.





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series of hands-on activities, such as fishing, wildlife identification, shooting sports and safety demonstrations. Participating youth will be entered into a drawing for several prizes, including scholarships to Conservation Camp and a lifetime hunting and fishing license.

During National Hunting and Fishing Day, guests will be able to attend seminars and presentations and see vendors showcasing the latest in outdoor equipment and services. Visitors will also get to sample a variety of wild game, Appalachian favorites and signature dishes from West Virginia state parks with the return of last year's popular new attraction, "A Taste of State Parks."

Vendor space is still available

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for businesses and organizations looking to showcase their products or services. Those interested in becoming a vendor should contact Jeremy Rowan at the WVD-NR Elkins Operations Center by calling 304-637-0245.



Mark Lusk hunted in Raleigh County for a nice spring gobbler.

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Remove Bear Attractants On Your Property

BECKLEY, W.VA. — To prevent human-bear conflicts around the state, the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources is reminding residents to take extra precautions by removing bear attractants from their property.

“Deliberately feeding a black bear is illegal in West Virginia, but many people don’t realize that they are unintentionally feeding bears, which can cause serious problems for people, their property and our state animal,” said WVDNR Director Brett McMil-

lion.

Common bear attractants include bird feeders, pet food and food scraps and unsecured trash. Bear activity increases and peaks in May and June, but the WVDNR starts receiving reports of human-bear conflicts in April when high-energy food sources such as serviceberries, raspberries, black-

berries and blueberries are scarce.

“Once a bear becomes food-conditioned and habituated to humans, they often have to be humanely killed for safety reasons,” said Colin Carpenter, black bear project leader for the WVDNR. “That is why we remind people every year to take responsibility

continue to page 8



Andy Sigman had success with a 21 1/2 lb. gobbler. *Photo courtesy of WV Wild Outdoors in Birch River.*

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for their property by removing or securing food attractants before a bear finds them.”

Residents can help prevent nuisance bear activity by following what Carpenter calls the bearwise basics, which are:

- Never feed or approach bears
- Secure food, garbage and recycling
- Remove bird feeders when bears are active
- Never leave pet food outdoors
- Clean and store grills
- Alert neighbors to bear activity

To learn more about black bears and how to prevent human-bear conflicts, visit WVDnr.gov/bear-wise-tips.

Youth Outdoor Adventure Winners

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.VA. — Gov. Jim Justice and the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) announced today the winners of a youth outdoor adventure contest with Whitetail Frenzy.

Winners of the contest, which was open to youth hunters who attended one of the WVDNR’s sectional meetings in March, will join Whitetail Frenzy May 3–5 for a guided turkey hunt, trout fly fishing experience and other exciting activities at the Little Coal River Wildlife Management Area. The outdoor adventure will also

be featured on an upcoming episode of Whitetail Frenzy.

“Youth hunters and anglers represent to page 10



Dorothy Bland & Bryson Masuck caught Sutton Lake goldens.



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resent the future of outdoor recreation in West Virginia and initiatives like this are crucial for nurturing passion for stewarding our state's incredible natural resources," said Gov. Justice. "As a lifelong hunter and angler, I'm thrilled that these lucky winners will have the chance to explore the Little Coal River Wildlife Management Area and experience firsthand the thrill of turkey hunting and trout fly fishing."

The winners of the contest, all of whom are West Virginia residents, are:

- Nicholas Arthur
- Benjamin Deaton
- Ryleigh Farrish
- Jack Gore
- Kobie Lawrence
- Zoey Teets

"Thanks to Whitetail Frenzy and their partnership in making this event possible, these lucky youth hunters and anglers will be able to enjoy several of our state's great outdoor experiences while spending time on one of our newest wildlife management areas," said WVDNR Director Brett McMillion. "We wish everyone luck as they embark on this exciting outdoor adventure and hope this positive experience sparks a life-long love of the outdoors for each of these youth."

The youth outdoor experience will begin with dinner and campfire activities at a private campsite on Friday, May 3. On Saturday, May 4, participants will embark on a guided turkey hunt led by WVDNR Natural Resources Police Officers at Little Coal River WMA, followed by a trout fly fishing experience guided by WVDNR staff in the afternoon. The evening will include dinner

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and another campfire at the private campsite.

The winning youth participant must bring one parent or guardian at no additional cost. The contest winner must ensure they obtain all necessary licenses prior to the event. Additionally, participants are responsible for arranging their transportation to and from

the event. All meals and required equipment will be provided.

Send In Your
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Pictures From 2024
Form Is On Page 38



Young Gabe Hedrick reeled in 2 nice golden trout.

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Fun Fishing Facts

Humans have been fishing for thousands of years, and even today the sport of fishing is growing all over the world.

With countless fishing methods, remote locations, and new scientific discoveries being made every day, it's no wonder so many people love this timeless hobby. The Largest Fishing Lure In The World Is As Long As A School Bus

The largest fishing lure in the world is a red and yellow spoon with a treble hook that is more than 40 feet long, with the spoon being 27.5 feet long and 9.5 feet wide. The treble hook is 14 feet long and 8 feet wide.

36 Fun Fishing Facts That Will Blow Your Mind!

The record is credited to siblings Brad Pallister and Jessica Dew and sits outside the Thompson-Pallister Bait Company in Alberta, Canada.

I would hate to see the fish that hits on that!

The Anglerfish Fishes With A Rod And Bait

Female Anglerfish have a long appendage on the top of their heads that has a fleshy lure at the end of it.

They use their "pole" to waive the lure around to entice other fish, then gulp them down!

Fishing Made Us Human

Scientists have found evidence from 1.9 million years ago that our early, pre-human hominid ancestors caught, processed, and ate fish.

They believe that their diets, rich in fish protein, were a vital component that contributed to the rapid expansion of hominid brain size. This eventually led to the

evolution of Homoerectus, later followed by Homosapiens!

The Fish Indians Taught The Pilgrims To Plant Is Still Used Today

Menhaden were the fish that the Indians told the first Pilgrims in Massachusetts to use as fertilizer.

They are still considered "the continue to the next page

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Jack & Mickey Comp, from Kingwood, doubled up on nice gobblers.




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most important fish in the sea” and have several important uses including in pet foods, cosmetics, and food supplements, among other uses.

And yes, we still use them for fertilizer!

The Heaviest Blue Catfish

The heaviest catfish was caught in Kerr Lake, Bugg Island, Virginia.

It was caught on June 18th, 2011 by Richard Nicholas Anderson. The blue catfish he caught weighed in at 143 pounds!

Largemouth And Smallmouth Bass Aren't Actually Bass

Both of the most common species of bass aren't bass!

They are members of the sunfish family, which means that they are more closely related to bluegills and pumpkinseed fish than to real bass.

Stone Age Fishing Tackle Would

Look Familiar To Modern Fisherman

At a site in Israel, archaeologists found stone-age fish hooks and sinkers from 12,000 years ago.

The hooks were made of bone and correspond with modern fishhooks, both in a range of sizes and styles. There are unbarbed hooks and also barbed hooks of several

different types.

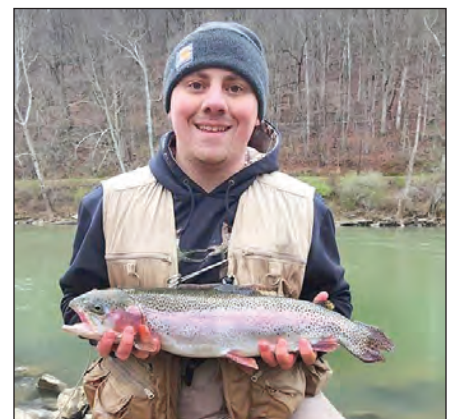
With the hooks, they also found stone age sinkers! These were round pebbles with a groove carved around them to hold the fishing line.

More Than 30 Million Americans Go Fishing Each Year

The number of Americans who continue to the next page



Young Allen Plum hooked a great trout. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.



Logan Landue reeled in a rainbow trout. Photo courtesy of Hardcore Hunters in Grafton.

go fishing in any given year is over 30 million, and that number is growing.

This means that well over ten percent of the population over 16 goes fishing in any given year! It's no wonder they say fishing is good for your health!

The Oldest Freshwater Gamefish Ever Caught Was Over 100 Years Old

A female Bigmouth Buffalo caught near Pelican Rapids, Minnesota was found to be 112 years old.

Of the 386 bigmouth Buffalo they tested, 90 percent of the population was over 80 years old and five were over 100!

Maria Delores Montesinos Fernandez Is The Most Accurate Fly Caster Ever

On December 11th, 2011, Ms.

Fernandez cast a weighted fly into a fishbowl that had a 6.8-inch opening from 23 feet away without touching the sides!

She did this on the set of El Show de Los Records, in Madrid, Spain. Fisherman Spend Over 45 Billion A Year On Fishing

This includes money spent on gear, licensing clothing, and accommodations. Fishing is a serious boost to the economy and a major source of funding for the maintenance and conservation of our waterways and species.

The Hagfish Is The Weirdest Fish Hagfish are an incredible slimy jawless eel that lives in the ocean.

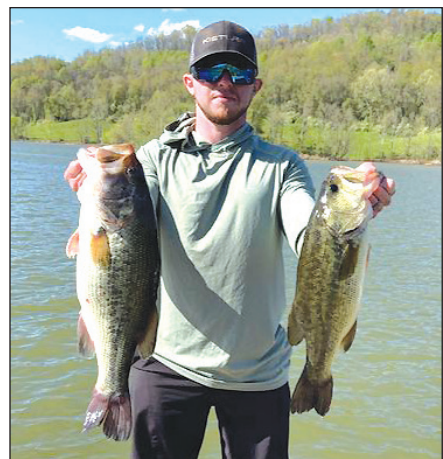
If disturbed they can produce enough slime to fill a two-gallon bucket in a matter of minutes.

They are also the only fish that sneezes. Weird!

Lampreys Are A Remnant Of The Ancient Past

Lampreys (along with hagfish) are the last holdovers of a time before fish evolved jaws. At one time, all fish were jawless.

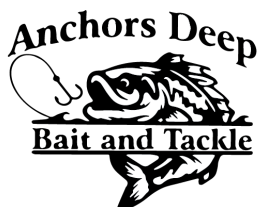
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continue to the next page



Alex Goff has a 6 lb. on the left which helped win a bass event.

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The Ancient Past

For unknown reasons, these two species stopped evolving and are now the last representatives of what all fish once were like!

You Can Tell A Fish's Age The Same Way You Can Tell A Tree's

By counting growth rings! Just like a ring in the tree's wood tell its age, so do the rings in fish.

These can be either in their scales or ear bones, which are called oto-

liths. These methods have been tested by carbon dating and found to be totally accurate!

The Most Common Fishing Method Is Also The Oldest

The most common fishing method in the world is called bait fishing or still fishing.

It is also the simplest. You put a worm or bread ball, or any other bait on your hook, cast it out into the water, and wait.

There's a reason it's the most common method. Not only is it simple and inexpensive, but it's also one of the most effective ways to catch fish!

Muskies Are Seriously Aggressive
continue to page 16

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Hunter & Chris White won a Sutton bass event this spring



Sheila Perry, from Buckhannon, had turkey success this year.

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sive

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

If A Fish Chewed Its Food, It Would Drown

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.

Brown Trout Are One Of The Most Diverse Vertebrates

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



Hunter Presely got his 1st turkey.



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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!
Look for more interesting facts later



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Matt Given caught a 5 lb., 2 oz. 2nd big bass at Burnsville Lake.

Pipestem Resort Tram Repair

PIPESTEM, W.Va. — West Virginia State Parks officials announced today that progress on replacing the aerial tramway at Pipestem Resort will reach a significant milestone this month with the installation of new support towers along the canyon rim of the Bluestone River Gorge.

Replacing the tram system at Pipestem Resort is part of the Justice administration's ongoing investment in infrastructure upgrades across the West Virginia State Parks system. Over the

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last seven years, more than \$150 million has been spent upgrading park facilities with more than \$24 million going to improvements at Pipestem Resort.

“Pipestem Resort has always been one of the most popular state parks in West Virginia and this new tramway is going to help us accommodate visitors and continue to offer a world-class experience,” said West Virginia Division of Natural Resources

Director Brett McMillion. “As a former superintendent at Pipestem, I want to thank Gov. Justice for his continued support of our state parks over these last seven years and guaranteeing that they will be enjoyed by West Virginians and visitors alike for years to come.”

Work on replacing the tram system, which was more than 60 years old, started in December

continue to the next page

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ber 2023 and is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2024. In the coming weeks, the old support towers will be flown out of the gorge by helicopter and new towers will be flown in and set on new concrete platforms. Work is being done by Doppelmayer USA, which has a base of operations located in Tucker County.

The new tram system, which provides the only means of transportation to overnight lodge guests, anglers and adventure seekers to the base of the gorge, will feature significant improvements over the previous system, such as larger six-passenger gondolas that will be fully accessible. There also will be a freight car that can

transport bicycles and kayaks to and from the 30-room Mountain Creek Lodge.

“Exciting things are happening at Pipestem Resort State Park and we’re excited to see how this new tramway is going to make one of this beloved state parks even better,” said West Virginia State Parks Chief Brad Reed.

Located on the east rim of the Bluestone River Gorge on the border of Summers and Mercer counties, Pipestem Resort State
continue to page 20

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Shawn Stidham got a 23 lb. spring gobbler in Putnam County.

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West Virginia State Parks is

managed by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, a division of the West Virginia Department of Commerce.



Kaylee Bower used a muzzle-loader for a dandy 11 point buck.



Chris Pratt hooked an 8 lb. rainbow. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.*



Jeff Funk reeled in a nice New River smallmouth bass.



Kevin Taylor caught a nice spring largemouth bass.



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New CWD County

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.VA. — The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) announced today that chronic wasting disease (CWD) has been confirmed in four white-tailed deer in Jefferson County.

“Jefferson County has been part of the CWD containment area for several years because it lies adjacent to CWD-positive counties in West Virginia, Virginia and Maryland,” said Paul Johansen, chief of the Wildlife Resources Section. “While there is no evidence that CWD is harmful to humans, it is important that hunters abide by the carcass transport regulations to ensure the proper wildlife management and reduce risk factors that may affect our deer population.”

Jefferson County is the first new

West Virginia county to detect CWD-positive deer since 2018. Previously, positive cases were identified in Berkeley, Mineral, Morgan and Hampshire counties.

The WVDNR has implemented restrictions on baiting and feeding deer and on transporting high-risk carcass parts out of the CWD containment area to reduce the risk the disease will be further spread by human actions. Baiting and feeding deer have been unlawful

in Jefferson County since 2015, and the presence of CWD in the county further adds to the importance of not feeding deer. The WVDNR has also implemented deer carcass transport restrictions in Jefferson County because of the detection of CWD.

A full list of deer carcass transport regulations can be found on page 13 of the 2023-2024 Hunting Regulations Summary. These restrictions will remain in effect for the 2024 deer hunting seasons.

Questions should be directed to the WVDNR District 2 office at (304) 822-3551.

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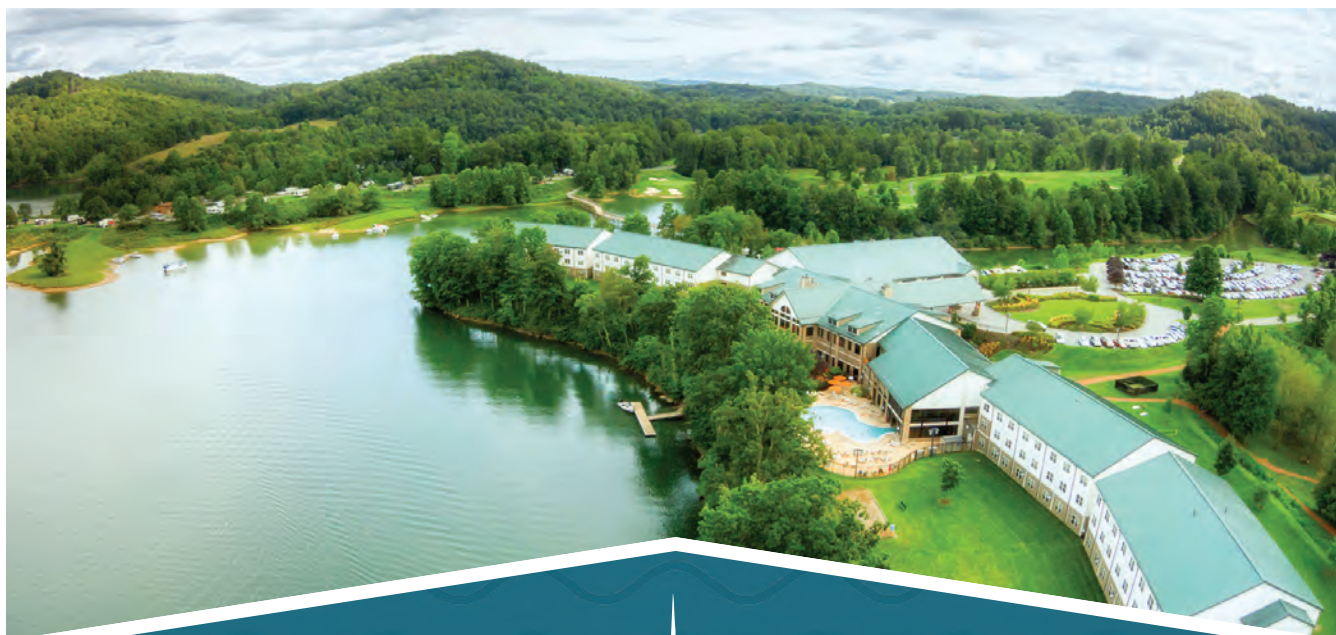
Carly Thompson got a gobbler with help from Chuck Richards.

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Early Season Catfish Methods

You can extend your springtime flathead fishing fun if you focus on small bodies of water first. The smaller lakes and streams will warm up a lot faster than larger bodies of water. Keep track of water temps on your area waters and when the surface temps reach the 50's the catfish begins to feed-up for the upcoming spawn. This is the best time to fish for spring flatheads. These small waters is

your best bet early and they can warm up weeks before larger waters. Extend your season with this tip and remember as the small water flatheads begin to spawn and refuse to bite those big waters are just getting warm enough for more fishing action.

Springtime Flatheads Love Ambush Points

Springtime flatheads are known to be buried in thick cover but

during early spring they love to sit in ambush points to gorge on bait-fish and worms and any other food that washes by. Look for flathead catfish to position themselves in current breaks behind boulders or around channel swings in the creek, river or stream. A real good spot to find early spring flatheads is at the mouth of incoming creeks. Flathead catfish will hang in the slack water next to this moving water waiting to engulf any type of food that washes by. Small Baits For Big Springtime Flatheads

During the early spring flathead catfish have much slower metabolism. Flathead catfish, like other fish, know from instincts how much energy it will use to first catch the prey and then to also digest that prey. You can increase your bites during the early spring by downsizing your bait. Cut-bait will also work on early spring flathead catfish. It seems that the best way to present cut-bait to flathead catfish is throwing into

continue to page 26



Taylor Boggs hooked a 31 lb. flathead at the Winfield Locks.

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moving water allowing the bait to wash into slack water where the flathead lies in wait to ambush its prey. Flathead catfish, that are in these ambush spots, will engulf the cut-bait without knowing it is dead so take advantage of this during your early spring trips.

Look Up The Creeks For Spring-time Flatheads

Flathead catfish, more than any of the other catfish species, seek calm water. If you hunt flathead catfish on big rivers they will migrate up smaller tributaries to get out of the turbulent flow from the snow melt and early spring rains. These tributaries may be flowing strong but they will have less turbulent water and more ambush points to hide behind. There have been many big flathead catfish caught in very small tributaries during early spring. They are there you just have to be patient and believe they are there. It is a lot of fun pulling a 30 pounder out of a small creek.

Steep Banks

During your hunt for early spring flatheads look for steep banks. Flatheads will move up to feed-up in preparation for the

spawn and they will do this near spawning areas. Flathead catfish spawn in holes that they can protect. Steep banks that have large boulders, root wads and mud is where flatheads like to spawn. Flatheads will spawn in brush in shallow water. However, the steep banks with a lot of cover will attract a larger number of flathead catfish. Fish these banks or nearby flats where dead shad, from the winter kill, wash in during early spring. This is another reason cut-bait will work on flatheads in the spring. Catfish focus on dead shad this time of year.

Are Bullheads Good Bait for Flatheads

Yellowbellies or Bullheads as we call them are great for spawning flatheads or anytime for that matter. The bullheads stay alive much

longer and will seek the same areas to hide as their flathead cousins which is right where you want them to go. Be careful though or they could lodge themselves in those hiding spots so keep them
continue to the next page



Brandon Hurst landed a 4 1/2 pound New River smallmouth.



Dave Shaffer shot a 23 lb. trukey. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.



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May/June 2024 ~ Page 26



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moving. I would say use them all season long for some great flat-head action.

What Water Temperature Do Flat-heads Spawn

I know that flatheads will spawn from 65 to 80 degrees while 70 degrees seems to be the target temp I would start your search when the water is approaching 65 degrees. It's sort of like the rut when deer

hunting. They say the rut will be the first week in November and usually it is but there is some rutting activities before and after this time frame and you can bet I am in the woods for it.

Another good reason to find early spawners is because you can mark that spot. Flatheads like to spawn in certain size and types of holes. They look for areas where

they can protect their eggs. If that hole is the right size and place there will usually be flathead in it.

What Tackle Is Best For Flathead Catfishing

Due to the flathead catfish aggressive nature, raw power, and potential size having a proper rod and reel can determine whether you land a monster. A heavy rod, 6-7 feet in length, a heavy duty spinning or baitcasting reel, is a great place to start. Spool the reel with 50 lb mono or 65-100 lb braided line.



Aiden & Josh Compton doubled on Ritchie County spring gobblers.



David Little fished from the bank for a quality largemouth bass.

Serch Baits For Early Bass

As we entered spring, more and more bass are beginning to move shallow. When that happens, they tend to spread out — some to the backs of pockets, others to protected flats or along south-facing banks. In any of these, visible cover becomes key.

Bass — especially bigger bass — usually relate to objects, like stumps, dock pilings, cypress trees, lily pads, shallow patchy

By Bernie Schutz

grass or some combinations of these. Getting enough bites often requires covering lots of water. To help facilitate that, most savvy anglers utilize what are known as “search baits” — lures that can cover water quickly and efficiently.

Among them are buzzbaits, spinnerbaits, swim jigs, bladed jigs, crankbaits, jerkbaits, swimbaits and speed-style worms. All are obviously moving baits, but which to apply first will depend on certain factors — like depth, type of cover, water temperature, mood of the fish, prevailing weather ... even confidence gained through personal experience.

No stones unturned

Regardless of the waterbody I’m confronted with, this time of year I’m looking in protected areas first. Spring may bring warmer weather, but strong coldfronts are still likely. So I try to find areas where radical weather changes will have less of an impact.

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I’ll check creeks, coves and pockets with minimal runoff, as well as southerly facing banks. On rivers, I’ll check the backwaters or any flats with little or no current — especially those with vegetation, stumps, brush or cypress trees. Canals can also be good.

If vegetated flats are the target, I’ll look for irregularities — like open holes or patchy sections, or seams where different grasses mix. I’ll also check the shallowest edges, especially if there’s a void between those and the bank. Narrow, protected voids are like magnets for spawners.

The same goes for flooded brush and cypress trees. Instead of starting on the outside, I’ll try going

continue to the next page

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Jackie Buckland reeled in an early R.D. Bailey Lake bass.



Joe Johnson bagged a turkey in Wood Co. with a double beard.

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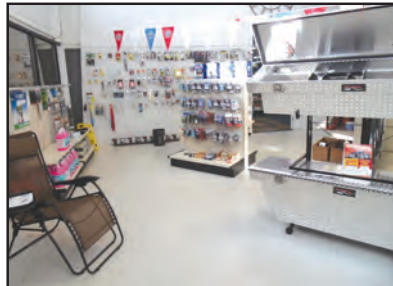
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inside toward the bank, while looking for irregularities such as thin and thicker sections, or isolated targets. In any of these scenarios, I'm focusing on protected water.

The same goes for docks. I target their backsides and connecting catwalks — from the bank to the first significant dropoff. And if they are laced with brush, all the better.

One of my favorite search baits

in shallow vegetation is a speed-style worm, like the Yamamoto Speed Senko. With the trolling motor steadily advancing the boat, I fan cast ahead and reel the bait back just under the surface. If

the grass I'm over is submerged, I'll slow the retrieve just enough to maintain intermittent contact. If the grass is touching the surface or emergent, I'll swim the Speed

continue to the next page



Marshall Wood caught a Blue-stone Lake smallie. *Photo courtesy of PC Outdoors in Crab Orchard.*

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Senko right on top or through any alleyways I can find. My normal rate of retrieve is steady to brisk.

Other good choices for vegetation include buzzbaits, spinnerbaits and swimming and bladed jigs. Those, too, should be retrieved at a steady to brisk rate of speed. Remember, we're covering water. So the trolling motor will be in perpetual use as our lures comb the shallows.

When deeper grass, stumps or submerged brush are the targets, that's when jerkbaits, crankbaits, swimbaits and heavier bladed jigs tend to shine. Again, I try to maintain intermittent contact or at least close range with the cover. It's so crucial. When a lure touches an object and either tears free or deflects off that object, that's when bass are most likely to strike.

Among my favorite crankbaits are Shimano's Original Macbeth and Macbeth Flat 57F. The Original is a full-body, wide-wobbling lure that displaces a tremendous amount of water, and it deflects off cover well. The Flat 57F has a circuit board lip and internal weight-transfer system, which make it easier to cast. The lip



Chris Acord, in Clearfork, landed several rainbow trout.

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forces it to swim sure with a tight shimmy. Depending on the situation, one can outperform the other, but both are essential to my needs.

For wire-frame lures, I rely on those I designed for Hildebrandt — including the HeadBanger and SqueakEasy buzzbaits, and The Blade and Tin Roller spinnerbaits. The HeadBanger is a clack-style buzzbait, which is ideal for pulling fish out of cover or from long distances. The SqueakEasy is more subtle, perfect for sparse cover and lethargic fish.

As for the spinnerbaits, The continue to the next page



Jacob Haught, from Charleston, hooked a monster largemouth.

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Skeeter
South Bay



Blade is better in grass and the Tin Roller is better for hard cover. Both feature tandem blades and heads with lifelike characteristics, making them ideal for clear water applications.

I also like the Z-Man JackHammer ChatterBait with Yamamoto Zako Trailer. Color depends on the situation, but I carry black and blue, white, and various sun-fish patterns with matching Zako trailers.

When it comes to swimbaits, there are countless styles that will serve well for the technique. Choose those that give you confidence, but when in search mode, try to match the approximate size and profile of the baitfish the bass are feeding on.

The Hildebrandt HeadBanger is a clacker-style buzzbait, ideal for faster retrieve speeds. The SqueakEasy is a squealer and

works best at slower speeds.

Balancing your arsenal

Regardless of the type of lure or cover you're dealing with, it's important to have the right balance of tackle — a system, so to speak.

For example; when I'm throwing the Speed Senko, it's usually on a 7-foot, 2-inch medium-heavy spinning rod, paired with a 3000-size reel. More specifically, a Shimano Expride EXS72MHB rod with Stradic or Twin Power 3000. I spool up with 10- to 15-pound Power Pro Super8Slick V2 braid and tie directly to an extra-wide-gap 5/0 or 6/0 hook. To add some distance to my casts, I use no more than a 1/4-ounce tungsten bullet weight ... preferably less.

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Archery In The School Event

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.VA.

— The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) today announced the top schools and students for the annual West Virginia Archery in the Schools state tournament, which took place at the Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center on Saturday, March 30.

“We are so proud of the students who participated in the West Virginia Archery in the Schools tournament this year and for everyone involved in making this inclusive program so successful over the last 20 years,” said WVDNR Director Brett McMillion. “As we look to the future of this program, we’re excited to continue partnering with schools around the state to provide incredible opportunities for our youth to learn life

continue to page 34



Young Noah Workman caught a 23” golden trout at Burnsville.



Chris Gay, from Chesapeake, landed a 6 1/2 lb. rainbow trout.

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May/June 2024 ~ Page 33

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skills that will help them later on in life, whether in the field or in their education and careers.”

More than 610 students from all over the state participated in the tournament. To qualify, schools had to participate in the state qualifier. The top eight elementary, middle and high school teams and the top 15 male and female elementary, middle and high school students were invited to participate in the state tournament.

“This year’s tournament was a celebration of the students and schools that work so hard to get to the state tournament and of the 20th anniversary of the Archery in the Schools program in West Virginia,” said Chris Scraggs, WVDNR Archery in the Schools Coordinator. “We want to thank everyone who participated in the program this year and extend a big congratulations to all our teams and students that placed in the state tournament.”

West Virginia Archery in the Schools State Tournament Results

Top High School Teams
UCHAA Upshur County Homeschool

James Monroe High
Herbert Hoover High
Top Middle School Teams
Elkview Middle
Ripley Middle
Peterstown Middle

Top Elementary School Teams
Elk Elementary
Alderson Elementary
Chesapeake Elementary

High School Male Individual Standings

Clayton Mills (Wirt County High)
Clay Tenney (UCHAA Upshur County Homeschool)

Kadin Tinney (Petersburg High)
County High)

High School Female Individual Standings

Kimber Koehler (Wheeling Central Catholic)

Madisyn Gregory (James Monroe High)

Brea Ellison (Hurricane High)

Abilene Supers (UCHAA Upshur County Homeschool)

Middle School Individual Male Standings

Owen Champlin (Ripley Middle)
Hunter Lilly (Independence Mid-

continue to the next page



Alexandria Murray hunted in Wood Co. for a spring gobbler.

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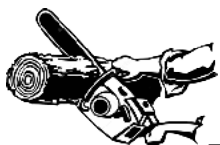
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Controlled South Branch Hunt

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.VA. — Applications for a controlled mourning dove hunt at the South Branch Wildlife Management Area in Hardy County are now available, the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) announced today.

The annual mourning dove controlled hunt is scheduled for Sept. 1–2. Hunters may register in person at the WVDNR District 2 headquarters in Romney or re-continue to the next page



Derek Mauldin reeled in a quality size crappie.

dle)
Caleb Servetas (UCHAA Upshur County Homeschool)
Triton Brown (St. Michael Parish School)
Middle School Female Individual Standings
Elizabeth Chandler (Elkview Middle)
Abbey Oldham (Ripley Middle)
Kinley Honaker (Eastern Greenbrier Middle)

Elementary School Male Individual Standings
Nathan McDonald (UCHAA Upshur County Homeschool)
A.J. Bailey (Peterstown Elementary)
Wyatt Shamblin (Elk Elementary)
Isaac Legg (Conner Street Elementary)

Elementary School Female Individual Standings
Lillian Roberts (Elk Elementary)
Braylyn Parker (Alderson Elementary)
Emily Wegman (Pickens)
Sophie Stricklin (HEAT)
Tournament competition is open only to schools that have received the National Archery in the Schools training and follow NASP rules. For more information on the West Virginia Archery in the Schools program or to attend the next training, visit the WVDNR website at wvdnr.gov/west-virginia-archery-in-the-schools-program.

Congratulations to all of the schools involved in this program that teaches youth archery.



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quest an application by calling the Wildlife Resources Section at 304-822-3551. Hunters who wish to participate must submit an application by midnight on July 1.

The South Branch WMA is located at the upper end of what is known as the “trough section” of the South Branch River in Hardy County. Hunting is by permit only on Sept. 1–2, the first two days of the mourning dove season.

Successful applicants will be notified by mail or email by Aug. 1. Hunters who are successful in the lottery drawing will be assigned a day to hunt and a shooting station free of charge and will be allowed to bring two guests. A map showing the location of shooting

stations will be included with notification of successful drawing.

In addition to the permit, all hunters participating in the controlled mourning dove hunt must have a West Virginia hunting license or be exempt from license requirements. No permits will be necessary to hunt doves after Sept. 2, though hunters must still follow licensing requirements.

The 2024-25 West Virginia Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations with season dates and addition-

al information will be available at WVDNR offices by the end of August and will be posted at WVdnr.gov.



Trudy Noechel landed a quality largemouth at Cheat Lake.

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Tom Criner reeled in a 23 3/4" largemouth bass at a farm pond.



Garrett Richards had a youth gobler with help from dad, Chuck.



Gerald Caltrider caught a 13" yellow perch at North Bend Lake.



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Alicia McDougal hooked a 47" musky at the Willow Island Dam.

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