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**Issue 327**

**October/November 2025**



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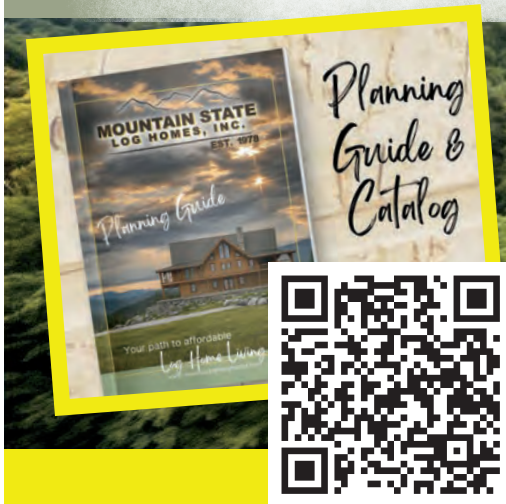
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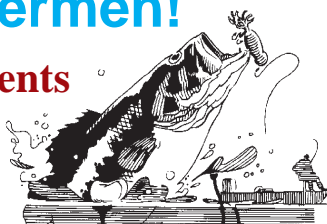
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## Cover Photo

Jeremy Goddard had success with a quality 11 point buck on opening day. He hunted in Wetzel County for his trophy buck.

Several counties, mainly near the Ohio River, have suffered from an EHD epidemic. It will impact the deer harvest from those counties.

Good luck to everyone!

We are looking for big game pictures. Form is on page 38.

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# Whitetail Facts

It's finally October, and you know: season is now in full swing. For some of us, the season has been in full swing for months. For the rest of us, we have a short, jam-packed several weeks to land that monster buck on our trail cam.

Therefore, rather than twiddling our thumbs and waiting for that deer to make its way to our stand, let's make use of our time. Let's learn more about our game.

Knowing the game you hunt helps you plan and hunt more successfully. So, here are ten interesting facts that every hunter and huntress should understand about



DeWayne Cantrell hunted in Wayne Co. for his whitetail.

whitetail deer. Use these insights to stalk your prey this season.

1. Whitetail Deer Are Very Agile  
When tracking a deer through the woods or waiting in your tree stand, it might seem like a buck is there one minute – then gone the next.

That's because whitetail deer are exceptionally agile. They can run 35-40 miles per hour and leap over obstacles 7-10 feet high.

A whitetail's powerful legs and acute balance enable swift, nimble movements through dense forests and rugged terrain, allowing them to evade predators and navigate complex environments with remarkable ease.

2. They Feed Often

On average, a whitetail deer will feed about four times in a 24-hour window. These deer need to eat around eight pounds of vegetation per one hundred pounds of body weight per day.

For example, a whitetail that weighs 150 pounds can be seen feasting on 12 pounds of vegetation throughout the day!

3. They Can Live a Long Time

Do you feel like you keep seeing the same buck year after year on your trail cams? It's possible!

Whitetails can live up to 20 years in the wild. Although only a few deer live to the age of ten, many live only two to three years.

4. Several Factors Contribute to

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Large Antlers

How does that buck's antlers get so large? A 10-point buck doesn't  
continue to the page 6

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A whitetail's large antlers result from three primary factors: nutritious food, increasing buck age, and good genes.

5. They Use Scent Glands for Identification

How does one deer recognize another deer? It's all about the smell.

Whitetail deer have scent glands between the two parts of the hoof on all four feet, outside of each hind leg, and on the inside of each hind leg. This makes communication and identification a piece of cake for these animals.

6. Antlers Grow Fast

Adult buck antlers will start to

grow around the last day of March and the first day of April. They usually grow at the rate of about a quarter-inch per day.

7. Does Can Have Multiple Fawns

Female deer, or does, can give birth to one to three young at a time. This usually happens in May or June.

8. They Rest During the Day

More often than not, whitetails are at rest or inactive during daylight hours, making them crepuscular animals.

The ideal times to see whitetail deer feeding are from before dawn until several hours later and again from late afternoon until dusk.

9. They Swim

Have you ever seen a deer swim? They can!

Whitetail deer can swim at a speed of up to 15 miles per hour.

10. A Whitetail's Vision is Very Distinct

They can only see shades of yellow and blue, and they can view landscapes, forests, fields, etc., at a 310-degree radius. In other words, wear orange and don't move.

Use these Whitetail Deer Facts and hunt wisely to Tag Out This Season

Now that you know a little bit more about your favorite game, let's make this season one to remember.

Hunt safely this year and obey DNR rules and regulations. Maybe you can get your trophy buck.



A 15 lb. Koi got loose one time and Caleb Joyce caught it.



Tim Wade hooked a big large-mouth bass in the morning.

Oct/Nov 2025 ~ Page 6

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## Deer Archery and Crossbow Season Open

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) announced today that archery and crossbow seasons for white-tailed deer, black bear and wild boar will opened on Sept. 27. Hunters are encouraged to prepare now by purchasing their licenses and stamps at WVhunt.com before the seasons begin.

“The start of West Virginia’s archery and crossbow seasons is one of the most anticipated times of the year and provides an incredible opportunity to introduce new hunters to the sport, reconnect with family traditions and enjoy the outdoors,” said WVDNR Director Brett McMillion.

To help hunters prepare, the

WVDNR is reminding the public of several important matters pertaining to these seasons:

**Electronic Checking:** All big game must be field tagged and electron-

ically checked at WVhunt.com. Completing the check promptly after harvest ensures accurate reporting and helps the WVDNR continue to the next page



Michelle Messer hunted in Wayne County for a first day buck.

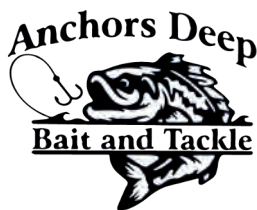


Dakota Taylor got a nice black bear. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.



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**Deer Stamps:** Hunters who want a chance to take up to two additional deer during the archery season must purchase their Class RB or RRB stamps before the season begins.

**Deer Carcass and Baiting Restrictions:** Carcass transportation restrictions are now in effect in Grant County, while baiting and feeding restrictions apply in

Pendleton County.

**Wounded Game Recovery:** An unmanned aerial vehicle can be used to track and locate mortally wounded deer, bear and wild boar. Only one leashed dog can be used for this purpose.

**Hemorrhagic Disease in Deer:** Hunters should also be aware of ongoing reports of hemorrhagic disease (HD) in some deer populations across the state. HD is a naturally occurring virus that can affect white-tailed deer, and the WVDNR is monitoring the situation closely. For more information, including guidance on reporting suspected cases, visit [WVDnr.gov/hemorrhagic-disease](http://WVDnr.gov/hemorrhagic-disease). **Deer Bowhunter Survey:** Hunters who participated in last year's deer archery season are invited to participate in the WVDNR's annual bowhunter survey, which

provides valuable data that supports wildlife management and helps improve future hunting opportunities. Invitations will be emailed beginning the week of Sept. 22.

continue to page 11



Chad Harrison had a time reeling in this 41" blue catfish.



Aiden Crockett caught a 5 lb. 8 oz.unker bass on day 2 of the Stonewall Classic. His team finished 3rd overall.



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Hunting Outlook and Mast Survey: Due to an increase in hard mast production, harvests during the archery and crossbow seasons are expected to be lower in 2025. To learn more, download the report at [WVdnr.gov/mast-survey](http://WVdnr.gov/mast-survey).

To learn more about season dates, bag limits and county-specific regulations, check the West Virginia Hunting Regulations Summary, available to download at [WVdnr.gov/hunting-regula-](http://WVdnr.gov/hunting-regula-)



James & Kyle Warner (with baby Maisie) won the 15th Annual Stonewall Classic. They were in 8th place on day one and put together a big bag on day 2 to win with a 2 day weight of 25 pounds, 7 ounces.



Gary Ross hooked a 3 lb. & a 3 lb. 7 oz. bass on a crankbait for a rare double at Stonewall Jackson. Both bass hit at the same time.

# DNR Mast Survey For 2025

ELKINS, W.Va. — The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) announced today that hunters preparing for fall seasons may now consult the 2025 Hunting Outlook and Mast Survey, which details the abundance of wild fruits and nuts produced by 18 species of trees and shrubs and forecasts game harvests for the coming year.

According to the survey, the mast index is 2 percent above the statewide long-term average and 16 percent above 2024.

“Hard mast production, especially acorns from white oak and chestnut oak, is up this year and expected to be abundant and widespread across the state,” said Avery Korns,

mast survey project leader for the WVDNR’s Wildlife Resources Section. “However, soft mast production was variable and many species showed decreases across most or all of the surveyed ecoregions.”

When mast is abundant, big game tend to move less and remain more dispersed, making them harder for hunters to locate. Reduced soft mast can cause wildlife to move more in search of food, creating localized opportunities in later months for hunters who do advance scouting.

Because mast production influences wildlife behavior, harvests for white-tailed deer and raccoon are predicted to be lower in 2025. According to the survey, the over-

continue to the next page



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all black bear harvest is predicted to be higher. Hunters should see similar harvests for wild turkey, wild boar, gray and fox squirrel and ruffed grouse in 2025 compared to 2024.

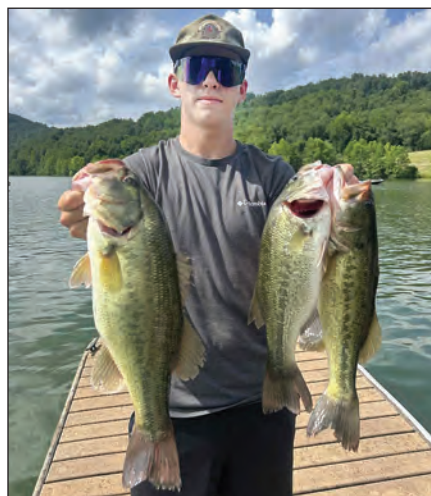
“Every hunting season in West

Virginia comes with unique opportunities and challenges, so I encourage folks to use this report to their advantage, plan accordingly and enjoy a great hunting season this fall,” said WVDNR Director Brett McMillion.

The survey, which is conducted by active and retired staff from the WVDNR’s Wildlife Resources Section and West Virginia Division of Forestry, may be downloaded at [WVdnr.gov/mast-survey](http://WVdnr.gov/mast-survey).



Chad Hager reeled in a quality 22” rainbow trout near Elkins.



Braeden Godfrey landed some nice bass at the Stonewall Classic.



Robbie Smith fished at night for a huge flathead catfish.





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## Favorite Time Of The Year For Bass Fishing

We're not too far from one of my favorite times of the year, but we're not there yet. I'm talking about fall in Oklahoma, and my gut tells me it won't be much longer.

I fished a tournament on Lake Eufaula the second week of September, and the water temperature was in the 80s. At that temperature level, the fish are not concerned with chasing bait. They're still in that late summer pattern, and they still haven't made any transition to the backs of creeks.

During that tournament, I caught them early on topwater and then moved out to deep brush, timber and anywhere I had caught them

in August. I didn't even look for those shallow patterns.

At this point, we're probably two weeks away from the beginning of fall. We had a late summer, so it'll probably happen in early October. We just need a week of cool weather and it will get going.

In my experience, you know fall has arrived when you start seeing the deer moving around early in the morning and not just in the evenings. There's more life in nature.

On the water, you see shad flipping, and it's not just stagnant like it had been during late summer.

By Luke Palmer

when I fished that recent tournament with my dad, he and I said,  
continue to the next page



Austin Spear hooked a smallmouth at Sandstone Falls.



Bridgett Fausey caught a blue catfish from the Kanawha River.



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“It just feels dead.” There were no carp moving around, no gar snapping.

But once that water gets around 70, stuff starts popping. There’s life everywhere.

The bass are moving shallower and getting on the bait school. It seems like you’ll see more grouping. They’ll start showing themselves and feeding more aggressively.

Lake turnover is a big part of the fall transition and that normally happens for us about now. After a recent cool spell, the water started looking and I think it was trying to turn over, but the weather got stable and hot again and the ther-

mocline was solid at 15 feet.

We have some cooler weather coming, so that should start getting the lakes turned over.

When things get right and true fall conditions arrive, it’s strictly about covering water. If the water temperature is 70 or under, I’ll rarely be deeper than 3 feet.

You don’t really know where they’re going to be from the main lake to the backs of creeks, so you have to focus on moving fast and hitting a lot of spots.

One of my favorite fall baits for covering water is a Heddon Zara Spook. I also like the BOOYAH continue to the next page



Chris Hugart landed an impressive 7 lb. 11 oz. largemouth bass at Stonewall Jackson Lake.

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Boss Pop when I need to briefly slow down around docks and other shallow cover. I can keep that bait in the strike zone and call those fish out of cover.

The other bait I'll have tied on is the War Eagle Screaming Eagle spinnerbait. It has smaller blades, and you can really burn it without it rolling over. It's a compact bait that matches the smaller fall baitfish.

Whatever you throw, don't get frustrated. One day can be tough and the next can be magical.

And stay positive. It's easy to get negative, but stay after it because you could run into them just about anywhere and when you do, they're going to be ready to bite.



Only 12, Parker Kendrick got a buck on opening day of archery.

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## DNR Antlerless Deer Seasons

Whether you're a seasoned hunter or planning your first trip into the woods, understanding West Virginia's antlerless deer season is crucial for a successful hunt. With specific regulations and season dates in place, this guide will help you stay informed and ready for the upcoming season. From identifying which deer you can legally harvest to knowing where and when to hunt, we've got you covered. Get ready to make the most of West Virginia's antlerless deer season and enjoy the many benefits it offers.

**WHAT DEER CAN I LEGALLY HARVEST DURING THE ANT-**

**LERLESS SEASON?**

An antlerless deer is any deer without antlers. That part might be obvious, but additionally any deer with antlers that are not longer than three inches above the hairline are also considered antlerless deer. When in doubt, don't shoot anything with visible antlers.

When hunting antlerless deer, focus on areas with high deer activity, such as the edge of fields and trails as well as areas of high acorn abundance. Pay attention to wind direction to avoid being detected by a deer's keen sense

continue to the next page

of smell, and set up in a location that gives you a clear, ethical shot. Early mornings and late afternoons are prime times to hunt, as deer are most active during these hours. Remember to stay patient and wait for the right opportunity to ensure a successful and responsible harvest.

## WHEN ARE WEST VIRGINIA'S ANTLERLESS DEER SEASONS?

West Virginia's antlerless deer season is a split season, which means the hunting dates are divided into separate time periods throughout the fall and winter. This structure allows hunters multiple opportunities to hunt antlerless deer during different phases of the season, accommodating various schedules and hunting conditions. The split seasons also help manage deer populations by spreading out the harvest over several weeks, reducing pressure on the herd and allowing for more sustainable hunting practices.

Antlerless deer season dates to remember:

October 23-36

November 24 – December 7

December 11-14

December 28-31

For more information about antlerless season dates, bag limits



Charleigh Morgan landed a big grass carp.



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and special regulations for each county where the season is open, consult pages 15-20 in the Hunting Regulations Summary.

**WHERE CAN I HUNT DURING WEST VIRGINIA'S ANTLERLESS DEER SEASON?**

The antlerless deer firearms season will be open on public and private land in all or portions of the state's 51 counties that are open to deer firearms hunting. This gives hunters a wide range of environ-

continue to the next page



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ments to choose from, including state forests, wildlife management areas and private lands with written landowner permission. No matter what property type you plan to hunt, be sure to scout your area in advance to understand the terrain and locate deer activity.

The antlerless deer firearms season is closed in West Virginia's four bow-only counties (Logan, McDowell, Mingo and Wyoming). Portions of Fayette, Raleigh and Wayne counties are also closed to antlerless deer firearms hunting due to local management strategies. Hunters in these regions should be aware of these restrictions and plan their hunts in counties where the season is open. Always check for any special regulations or additional restrictions in the specific area where you plan to hunt, as they can vary by county and land type. **WEST VIRGINIA ANTLERLESS DEER SEASON REGULATIONS TO REMEMBER**

Staying up-to-date on hunting regulations is more than just a legal requirement—it's a commitment to safety and wildlife conservation. During West Virginia's antlerless deer season, specific rules ensure that hunters can safe-

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ly enjoy the outdoors while helping to maintain a healthy deer population. Here's what you need to know to hunt responsibly and stay within the law:

#### Blaze Orange

Since West Virginia's antlerless season is a firearms season, all hunters must wear a blaze orange outer garment of at least 400 square inches.

#### Field Tagging and Checking Game

Before you can transport a deer you harvest, you must attach to it a completed field tag with your name, address, hunting license

number (if required) and the date, time and county of your harvest. This tag must remain on the deer until it is tagged with a WVD-NR-issued 13-digit game check confirmation number.

Game check confirmation numbers can be acquired online at WVhunt.com, by calling 1-844-WVCHECK or by visiting an authorized license agent. Each deer must be electronically checked and tagged with your 13-digit game check number, name and address within 72 hours of harvest or within 24 hours of

continue to the next page



Chase Richards fished through the rain for a nice largemouth bass.



Attention on deck! Calling all vets looking for some "reel therapy" on the water catfishing.

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www.operationvetswithnets.org

Charlie Brookover

West Virginia volunteer captain



the season's close, whichever comes first. This tag must remain on the deer until it is dressed for consumption.

#### License and Stamp Requirements

All antlerless deer must be taken on a Class N or NN stamp or with a Class DT license. Resident landowners hunting on their own property (or their resident chil-

dren, resident parents or resident tenants) do not have to purchase a Class N or NN stamp. Only one antlerless deer may be taken on each stamp.

#### BENEFITS OF HUNTING ANT- LERLESS DEER IN WEST VIR- GINIA

An early antlerless deer firearms season provides several advantag-

es for hunters, such as favorable weather conditions for tree-stand hunting and the ability to meet the harvest requirement some counties have for taking a second antlered buck in November. Counties that require hunters to harvest an antlerless deer before taking a second antlered buck include Berkeley, Greenbrier (south portion), Hampshire, Hardy, Jefferson, Mineral (east portion), Monroe, Morgan and Wood.

West Virginia's early antlerless season is designed to control the state's deer population and promote healthier, heavier and more productive deer herds.



Weston Lester arrowed a nice Wyoming County whitetail buck.

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## Calling In A Buck

Calling in a deer is one of the most exciting things you can do as a hunter; it means you are perfectly positioned and communicating directly with whitetail.

The weeks leading up to and shortly after early November are a hunter's favorite time of year, when does are coming into heat and bucks are up and moving, searching for their mate. With increased buck movement comes more opportunities for you to bag your next trophy.

So, how do you draw bucks into shooting range during the rut and this period of increased movement? Whether you are hunting the pre-rut, the middle of the rut, or the tail-end of the rut, here are the best tactics to call in shooter bucks.

### 1. Can Calls

When fawns are distressed or simply want comfort from their mother, they make a high-pitched bleating noise. This call causes a doe's maternal instincts to kick in and causes them to investigate

the noise, even if they don't have fawns of their own.

Can calls are used to imitate a fawn or does' bleating noise depending on how high or low pitched you make the sound and

how many holes you cover.

This call is best used just before and at the beginning of the rut. Bucks begin looking for does during the pre-rut, so a doe that

continue to page 22

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comes to your call may have a buck close behind her. Bucks may also hear your call and come in to investigate themselves.

Once the rut is in full swing, fawns are stable, and does disregard their maternal instincts. If you are hunting during the early season or the rut, letting out a few can calls even when you don't spot a deer isn't a bad idea.

Deer have exceptional hearing. You may have a big doe just beyond your visibility. However, make sure not to overcall either, as this behavior is not natural or believable.

### 2. Grunt Tubes

Whitetail bucks actively grunt

throughout the rut to assert their dominance over younger bucks and attract nearby does. That's why you need a grunt tube if you are hunting the rut.

This call imitates the grunt bucks make, causing mature bucks to head your way to investigate or challenge what they think is a smaller buck encroaching on their territory. Typically, the bigger the buck, the lower the grunt, so when using a grunt tube, your call's pitch should imitate a younger buck.

Grunting too deeply makes it sound like you're a massive male and will intimidate and push away smaller bucks who feel they can't

compete.

"Once most does are receptive,  
continue to page 24



Elliot Miller hunted in Roane County for a Sept. buck.



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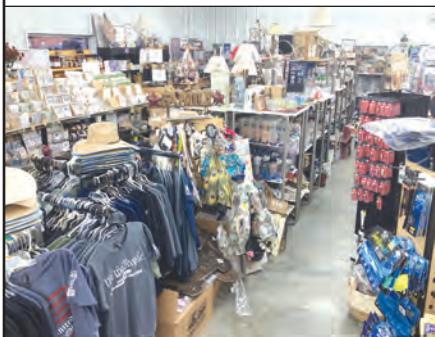
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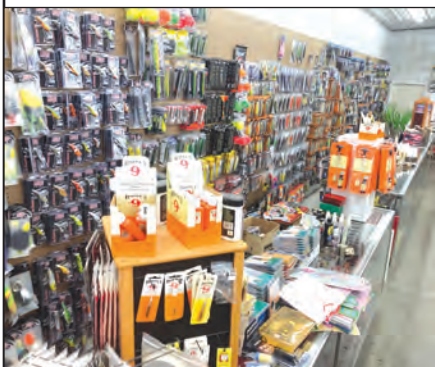
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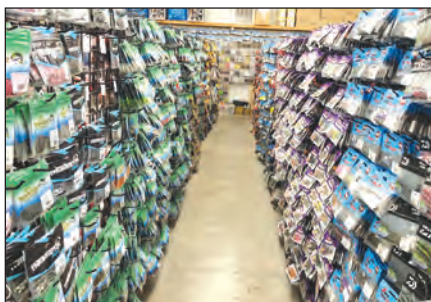


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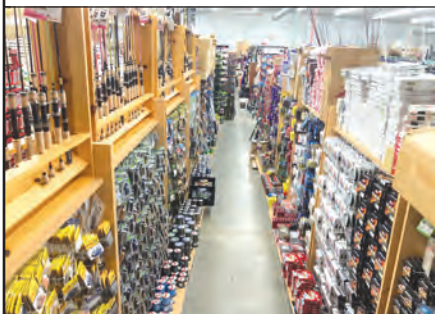
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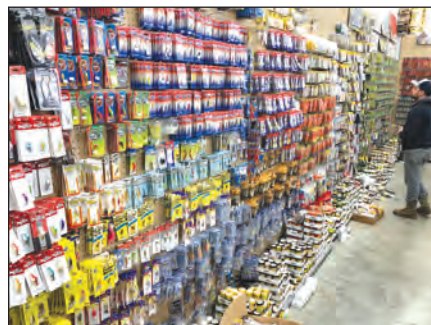


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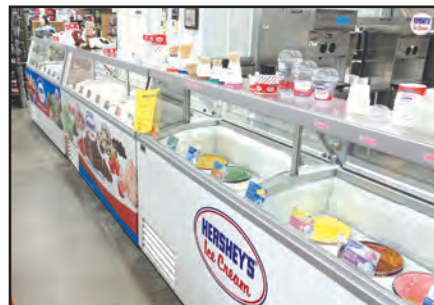
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and the rut (breeding) is in full swing, I will grunt at any buck I see cruising UNLESS they appear to be coming within range. I've seen bucks respond from long distances. I blind call about every 15 to 30 minutes to pull in those bucks that might be in the vicinity of the sound but outside my range of vision." – Grant Woods, Growing Deer.tv.

A hunter carrying whitetail antlers in the woods, how to call bucks during the rut concept.

### 3. Rattling Antlers

Rattling mimics the sound of two bucks fighting and is a useful tactic to use throughout the rut.

This attracts other bucks because they want to see what the fuss is all about and what other males are in their territory. If you've never heard two bucks fighting, check out YouTube to get an idea of how aggressive you should be with your rattling.

If you have some old antlers laying around, that is as real as it gets. Use antlers that are reflective of the deer in your area; you don't want to scare away a good buck

by making it sound like two monster bucks are fighting nearby.

Sometimes, carrying full-size antlers around can be bulky and inconvenient, so another option is to purchase a rattle bag. This bag mimics the noise of antlers.

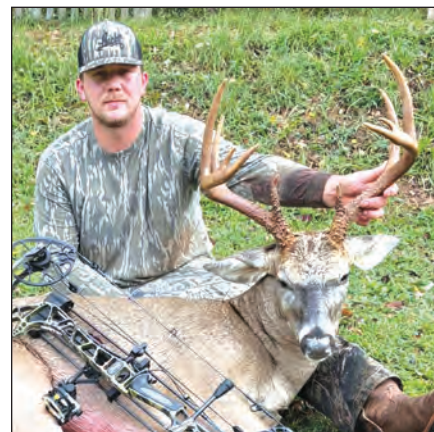
### Play the Wind

While calling is an effective way to lure mature bucks towards you, it will all be for nothing if you get busted by the wind as the buck approaches your location.

Check the wind direction and think about your scent drift before you start calling. Always be mindful of where you're set up and what direction a buck will likely approach you, as it could be the difference between filling

your freezer or going home empty-handed.

While there are many techniques, tactics, and opinions on how to call in big bucks, these are our tried and true favorites.



Nathaniel Rose bow hunted in September for a fine buck.




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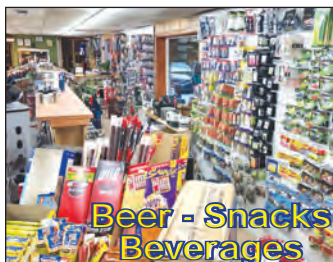
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## From Field To Fork - Wild Game

Wild game is one of the healthiest, most sustainable sources of protein you can put on your table and with proper processing, storage and preparation, you can enjoy delicious, nutritious meals all year long. And for hunters who find themselves with more meat than they can use, donating extra deer through the WVDNR's Hunters Helping the Hungry program is a powerful way to share nature's bounty with those in need.

In this guide, we'll explore why wild game is such a healthy protein source, walk through the basics of processing and storing it for the best quality, share tips for preparing delicious meals and explain how you can make a difference in your community this hunting season.

### WILD GAME IS NATURE'S HEALTHIEST PROTEIN

Wild game isn't just tasty. It's lean, nutrient-dense and often healthier than many meats you'll find at the grocery store. Take

venison, for example: a three-ounce serving contains about 102 calories, nearly 20 grams of protein and just over 2 grams of fat. Compare that to a similar serving of lean ground beef, which has 114 calories, 15 grams of protein, and more than 5 grams of fat. That means your wild game meals are filling and packed with high-quality protein while being lower in fat.

The benefits go beyond calories and fat content. Wild game is free from hormones, antibiotics and artificial additives commonly found in store-bought meats.

Many species are naturally active, meaning their meat is firm, flavorful and full of nutrients.

Whether you're new to hunting or have years of experience in the field, supplying your family with wholesome food is a great motivator to get in the field. But it's also a compelling reason to participate in the Hunters Helping the Hungry program and share this incredible resource with your community.

### PROCESSING YOUR HARVEST THE RIGHT WAY

Once your hunt is successful, continue to the next page



DJ Thomas arrowed a 12 point fine buck. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.

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proper processing is key to preserving both the quality and nutrition of your wild game. Handling meat safely not only protects you from contamination but also ensures that every cut reaches your table in the best possible condition. Before you begin processing a harvest, make sure you've legally checked in your game at WVhunt.com. Need a refresher on how to do that? Check out this guide.

Start in the field by wearing disposable gloves and keeping your tools clean and your knife sharp. A dull knife can tear muscle fibers, waste meat and increase your risk of injury.

When processing a deer, remove the hide carefully, then trim away all hair and excess fat. Cut along the natural contours of the muscles to maximize your yield. Hindquarters and tenderloins are ideal for steaks and roasts, while neck and shoulder meat can be ground for burgers or sausage. Taking a little extra time during processing ensures you get the best cuts for

freezing, cooking and sharing.

For beginners, taking your deer harvest to a local processor is a great option, but learning these basics yourself is an important part of the process and the first step toward delicious, lean meals that keep you coming back for more fall hunts.

### STORING WILD GAME FOR FRESHNESS

Proper storage is essential to keeping your wild game flavorful, nutritious and safe to eat long

after it leaves the field. Because wild game is leaner than most commercial meats, it can dry out more quickly if not stored correctly.

Vacuum sealing is the best option for long-term storage. It protects meat from freezer burn, locks in flavor and preserves tenderness. If vacuum sealing isn't available, tightly wrap cuts in plastic wrap and then add an airtight layer of freezer paper or heavy-duty aluminum foil. Label each package with the type of meat and the date it was harvested so you can rotate your freezer stock and enjoy it at its peak.

Smaller cuts, like steaks or tenderloins, freeze more evenly and thaw faster than large roasts or whole cuts. Ground meat should be portioned into usable amounts to avoid repeatedly thawing and

continue to the next page



Scott Landis got a September bow buck with a tall rack.

**Advertise In The  
W. Va, Sportsman**  
• Details On Page 3

refreezing. By taking a few extra steps during storage, you can ensure a year-round supply of high-quality, nutritious wild game for meals that nourish your family.

## PREPARING AND ENJOYING WILD GAME

When cooking wild game, remember that wild game is leaner than store-bought meats and can dry out if overcooked. To help you prevent this, research and follow recommended internal cooking temperatures for the game you are preparing. This will also ensure that the meat is properly cooked and safe to consume.

Simple preparations often let the natural taste shine. Venison steaks can be seared with a touch of garlic and herbs, ground venison makes excellent burgers or chili and waterfowl can be roasted or smoked for a rich, flavorful meal. Experimenting with recipes allows you to enjoy the full range of flavors West Virginia game has to offer.

Sharing a meal of wild game nourishes the body and the soul by connecting hunters to their families, friends and communities. For those with extra meat, programs like Hunters Helping the Hungry ensure that your harvest can bring that same joy and sustenance to families across the state.

The WVDNR's Hunters Helping the Hungry program allows hunters to donate extra deer to feed families in need across the state. Since its start in 1992, hunters have processed and distributed more than 1 million pounds of nutritious deer meat to charitable food pantries, shelters, senior centers and soup kitchens around the state.

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Xyler Erskine, from Rainelle, reeled in a nice smallmouth.



Chris Erskine, from Rainelle, landed a smallmouth bass.





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Suckers - Leeches

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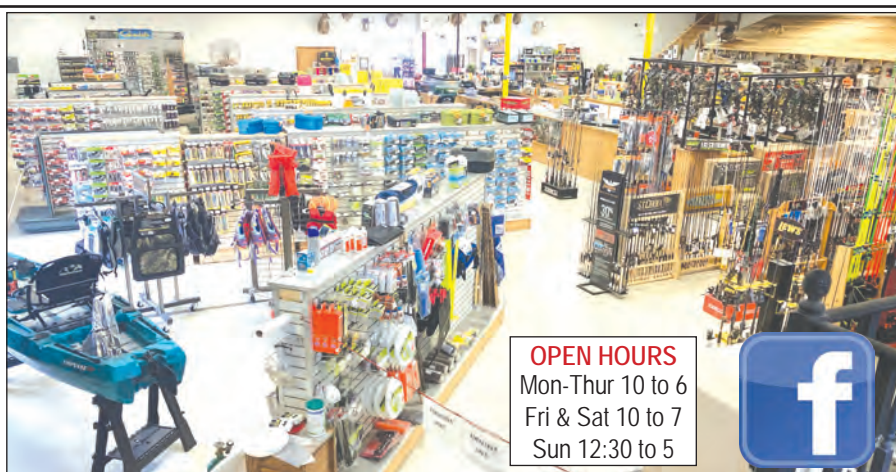
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## Elk Management Tours

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) today announced dates for its 2026 elk management tours, which give visitors the chance to explore scenic areas of Logan County and learn about the state's elk restoration program. The first tour will take place Saturday, Sept. 6, with tours continuing on weekends through Oct. 25.

"The elk tours have become one of our most popular wildlife experiences, and for good reason," said WVDNR Director Brett McMillion. "They give people a front-row seat to see the results of our conservation work and to witness firsthand the beauty and resilience of West Virginia's grow-

ing elk herd."

These four-hour guided tours start and end at Chief Logan Lodge. Tours are offered in the morning, starting at 5:30 a.m. and in the evening starting at 4:30 p.m. Tickets are \$30 each, and a boxed breakfast or lunch can be added for \$15.

Participants should arrive at least 15 minutes before departure. Each tour is led by knowledgeable park staff, includes a short hike to a viewing area in the Tomblin Wildlife Management and offers opportunities to learn about the history, behavior and conservation of elk in West Virginia. While sightings are not guaranteed, visitors are often able to observe these animals in their

natural habitat.

Overnight accommodations are available at Chief Logan Lodge and a special Elk Tour Package is available for guests who purchase a tour ticket, boxed meal and room. The package can be reserved online at WVstateparks.com using code ELK25 at check-

continue to the next page



Zach Chidester caught and released a nice musky.



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Ridenour Lake  
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## Legal Hunting In WV

SIMPLE PREPARATION CAN HELP YOU ENJOY LEGAL, SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL HUNTS

One of the simplest ways to become a better hunter is to know the regulations and rules before you go into the field. This knowledge not only helps you avoid costly mistakes, but it also ensures you're hunting ethically and safely. In this blog, you'll learn why following hunting regulations matters, see the 10 most common mistakes our Natural Resources Police Officers encounter in the field and get practical tips for avoiding them. Whether you're new to hunting or returning after a break, these simple steps will help you get ready for your hunting adventures and keep your season on the right track.

### WHY FOLLOWING REGULATIONS MATTERS

When it comes to hunting, rules and regulations are a good thing. They preserve the land, conserve our wildlife, benefit hunters and protect the beauty and goodness of West Virginia's world-class natural resources.

Regulations help preserve the  
continue to page 32

out.

For tour availability, booking details and more information, visit [WVdnr.gov/elk](http://WVdnr.gov/elk).

Elk Visitor Center Construction Continues

The WVDNR also announced that construction continues on a new visitor center and viewing tower at the Tomblin Wildlife Management Area and that the facility is expected to open later this fall.

The new facility will feature an observation tower with elevated and accessible viewing areas and exhibits that highlight the history of the WVDNR's elk restoration project. It also has conference space, offices and amenities for visitors, researchers and staff.

About the Elk Restoration Project

The WVDNR launched its Elk Restoration Project in 2016 with the release of 24 elk acquired from the Land Between the Lakes. Since 2018, the WVDNR has introduced 95 elk (53 from Kentucky and 42 from Arizona) to the Tomblin WMA in Logan County. To learn more about the WVDNR's elk restoration program, visit [WVdnr.gov/elk](http://WVdnr.gov/elk).



The crappie were biting for these 2 fellows.



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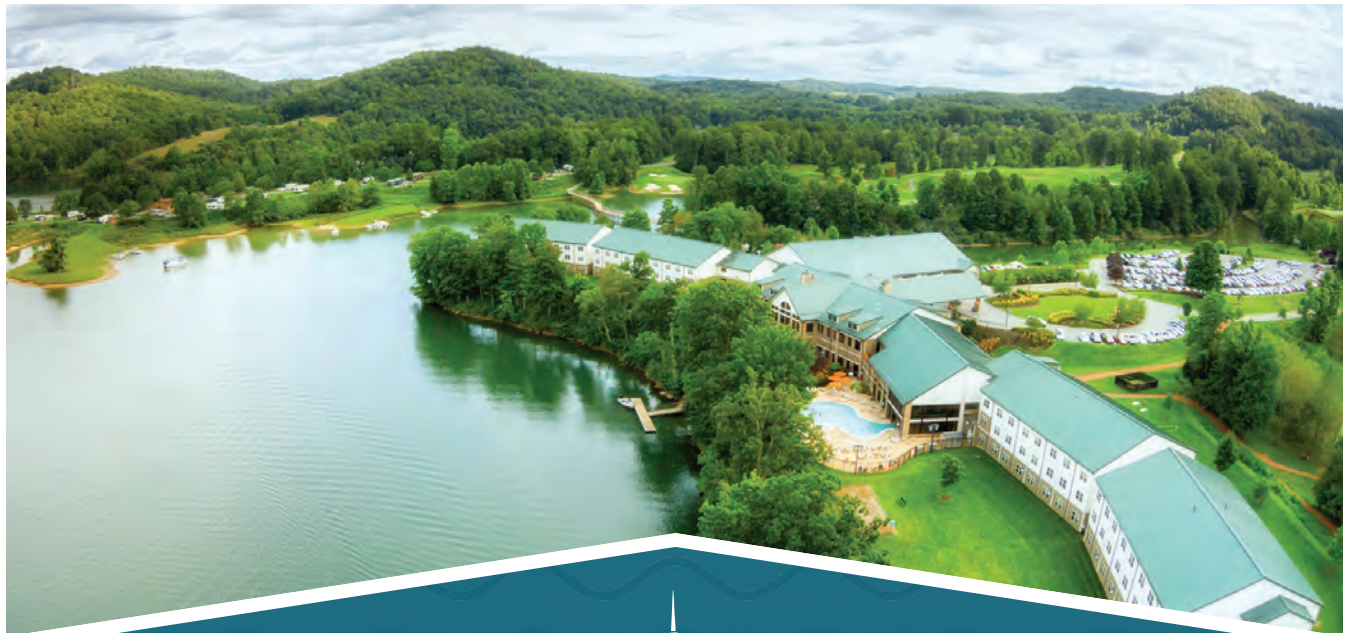


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land by preventing overuse and damage to habitats. Staying within legal hunting areas, respecting private property and following seasonal restrictions allows the landscape to recover and remain healthy and habitable for all wildlife — game and nongame species alike.

Rules also conserve wildlife by ensuring game populations are managed sustainably. Bag limits and season dates are based on research and surveys and protect game from over-harvesting, ensuring populations remain strong and sustainable year after year.

Regulations benefit hunters by creating fair, safe opportunities for everyone. Safety requirements, such as wearing blaze orange, protect lives. License and stamp requirements ensure hunters have equal access to game while con-

tributing to conservation funding.

Finally, rules and regulations protect West Virginia's natural resources by keeping our outdoor heritage and traditions intact. Ethical hunting practices maintain the balance between people and nature, ensuring that the state's forests, mountains and wildlife remain a source of pride and enjoyment for future generations.

By following hunting regulations and rules, you play a direct role in conserving our state's natural resources and protecting hunters' rights to enjoy a world-class hunting experience in West Virginia.

## THE 10 MOST COMMON HUNTING VIOLATIONS

While following the rules is simple once you know them, our Natural Resources Police Officers encounter the same violations season after season. Most of these issues can be avoided with a little preparation and attention to detail. Knowing what they are is the first step to keeping your hunt legal and enjoyable.

Hunting without landowner permission (trespassing)

Hunting or taking game out of

Convenience Store • Movie Rentals  
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**304-472-4279 LIVE BAIT**

season

Failing to electronically check harvested game

Possessing wildlife illegally

Taking more deer than the legal bag limit

Hunting without the required additional stamps

Not wearing at least 400 square inches of blaze orange during firearms deer season

Hunting from a motor vehicle

Hunting with a firearm in a closed county

Hunting without a valid license  
**HUNTING WITHOUT LANDOWNER PERMISSION (TRESPASSING)**

Private land access is a privilege, not a right, which is why you must always get permission from the landowner before hunting. Avoid making this mistake by contacting landowners well before the season and keep a copy of their written permission with

continue to the next page

## WV WILD OUTDOORS

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**Camo Clothing • Tree Stands**

**Ammunition**

**Archery Equipment**

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Mon-Sat 10am to 6pm Sun 1pm to 6pm

Off The Birch River Exit - Rt. 19

Turn Left At Stop Sign Near Go Mart

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Tyler McQuain caught a 23 lb. Kanawha River flathead.

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**WEST HAMLIN, WV**  
ACROSS FROM THE POST OFFICE

**FULL TIME TAXIDERM Y SERVICE**



you in the field.

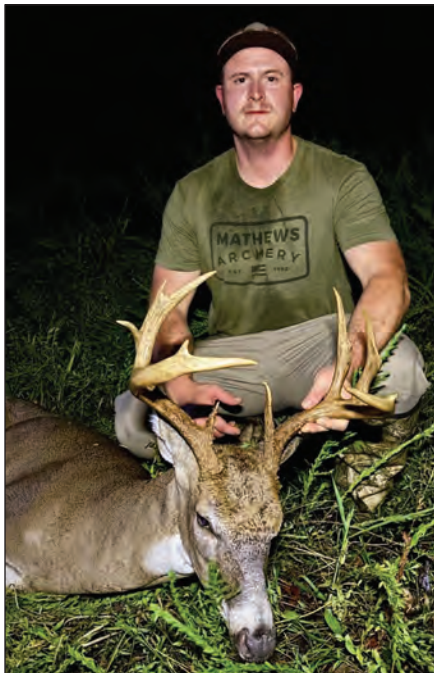
## HUNTING OR TAKING GAME OUT OF SEASON

Season dates are set to protect wildlife. Hunting outside these dates not only harms wildlife, it's illegal. Avoid making this mistake by reviewing the season dates for your target species and marking them on your calendar before heading out.

## FAILING TO ELECTRONICALLY CHECK HARVESTED GAME

Checking big game is a requirement and helps biologists track harvest numbers and manage wildlife populations. Avoid making this mistake by checking your harvest within the required time-frame using the WVDNR's electronic game checking system. To learn more about this process, check out our Game Check Guide. **POSSESSING WILDLIFE ILLEGALLY**

Wildlife taken outside legal proper licenses, is considered illegal  
continue to the next page



Caleb Torman got a September buck in Clay County.

# GUN SHOWS



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## R & R SHOWS

View On Facebook  
R&R WV Gunshows



**OCT. 11-12, 2025 - HURRICANE, WV**

- PUTNAM CO. PARKS & RECS  
CONVENTION CENTER

**OCT. 18-19, 2025 - ELKINS, WV**

- PHIL GAINER COMMUNITY  
CENTER

**OCT. 25-26, 2025 - CLARKSBURG,**

NAT'L GUARD ARMORY

**NOV. 8-9, 2025 - LEWISBURG, WV**

- STATE FAIR GROUNDS-WV  
BUILDING

**DEC. 13-14, 2025 - FLAT-**

WOODS, WV - DAYS INN  
CONFERENCE CENTER

**DEC. 20-21, 2025 - PARKERS-**

BURG, WV - NAT'L GUARD  
ARMORY

**JAN. 3-4, 2026 - CLARKSBURG, WV**

- NAT'L GUARD ARMORY

**JAN. 10-11, 2026 - HURRICANE, WV**

- PUTNAM CO. PARKS & RECS  
CONFERENCE CENTER

**JAN. 31-FEB. 1, 2026 - LEWIS-**  
BURG, WV - STATE FAIRGROUNDS

- WV BUILDING

**FEB. 7-8, 2026 - FLATWOODS, WV -**  
DAYS INN CONFERENCE CENTER

**FEB. 14-15, 2026 - PARKERS-**  
BURG, WV - NAT'L GUARD  
ARMORY

**MAR. 28-29, 2026 - HURRI-**  
CANE, WV - PUTNAM CO. PARKS  
& RECS CONFERENCE CENTER

**APR. 11-12, 2026 - CLARKS-**  
BURG, WV - NAT'L GUARD  
ARMORY

MORE DATES/LOCATIONS TO COME



## R&R SHOW GUIDELINES

- \* YOU MAY BRING IN FIREARMS TO TRADE OR SELL BUT THEY MUST BE UNLOADED AND WILL BE CHECKED AT THE FRONT GATE
- \* NO TRADING IN THE FRONT LOBBY AREA OR OUTSIDE OF THE BUILDING.
- \* CONCEALED CARRY MUST BE UNLOADED AND IT MUST REMAIN HOLSTERED.
  - \* DO NOT BRING IN MORE THAN YOU CAN CARRY AT ONE TIME.
- \* CHILDREN ARE WELCOME BUT THEY MUST BE WITH AN ADULT AT ALL TIMES.
  - \* NO ONE UNDER THE AGE OF 18 IS PERMITTED TO HANDLE FIREARMS.

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egal possession. Avoid making this mistake by only taking possession of legal wildlife you have legally harvested and keep licenses and tags current.

## TAKING MORE DEER THAN THE LEGAL BAG LIMIT

Bag limits prevent overharvesting and ensure deer populations and buck to doe ratios remain at healthy levels. Avoid making this mistake by knowing the bag limit for the county where you are hunting and keep track of your harvest throughout the season.

## HUNTING WITHOUT THE REQUIRED ADDITIONAL STAMPS

Certain deer seasons require you to purchase an additional stamp(s) to take extra deer. For example, you need to buy an RB/RRB stamp to take extra deer during the archery season, an RG/RRG stamp for the buck firearm season and an RM/RRM stamp for the muzzleloader season. Avoid making this mistake by buying your hunting license and any required stamps at the start of the year so

you're prepared for any season.

## NOT WEARING AT LEAST 400 SQUARE INCHES OF BLAZE ORANGE DURING FIREARMS DEER SEASON

Blaze orange makes you visible to other hunters and reduces the risk of accidents. Avoid making this mistake by wearing the required amount of blaze orange on your head, chest and back during firearms deer season, even if you're not hunting deer.



Ellie Groves got an early season bow buck in Nicholas County.

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## Bow Repair & Set-up

## HUNTING FROM A MOTOR VEHICLE

Shooting from a moving or stationary vehicle is unsafe and unfair to wildlife. Avoid making this mistake by exiting your vehicle and making sure you are fully off the roadway before loading or firing your firearm.

## HUNTING WITH A FIREARM IN A CLOSED COUNTY

Some counties restrict certain firearms for specific seasons to protect wildlife and public safety. Avoid making this mistake by checking the county-specific regulations in the current hunting digest before your trip.

## HUNTING WITHOUT A VALID LICENSE

You'd be surprised how often our NRPOs encounter someone hunting without a valid license. Avoid making this mistake by purchasing your license before the season. Better yet, purchase a three-year license (Class X3 or XP3) and upgrade it to a license card so you can carry your license with you whenever you hunt.

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Drones are illegal in Pennsylvania  
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## Multi Black Bear Season Dates

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) today announced that the next segment of the state's black bear firearms season will be open in select counties Sept. 20-26.

Additional black bear firearms season segments are scheduled for Oct. 4-10, Oct. 23-26, Nov. 24-Dec. 7, and Dec. 8-31. Archery and crossbow seasons for black bear starts Sept. 27. A special youth, Class XS and Class Q season will also be held Oct. 18-19.

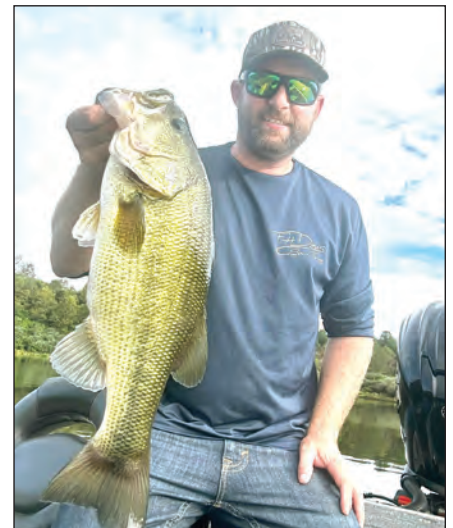
"I want to encourage bear hunters to take advantage of the September seasons, which often coincide with the peak of acorn drop when bears are active and feeding heavily in oak stands," said WVDNR

Director Brett McMillion. "These seasons not only give hunters several chances to experience bear hunting in West Virginia but also play a vital role in managing a healthy population."

Resident hunters must purchase a bear damage stamp in addition to their hunting license. Nonresidents must purchase both a bear hunting license and a bear damage stamp. Licenses and stamps are available at WVhunt.com.

Hunters who harvest a bear are required to submit a premolar tooth from each bear. Those who harvest a female black bear are also encouraged to save the reproductive tract or all the entrails and submit them to the WVDNR for a

chance to receive a \$20 gift card. Data collected from these submissions help biologists monitor the state's black bear population.



Dustin Dennis went to North Bend Lake for the fall bass.





Shawn Stidham hunted in Putnam County for his 10 point buck.



Matt Whitt caught a big walleye at Summersville Lake.



Steve Woods got a Braxton Co. bow buck with a tall rack.



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Intersection of  
Rt. 4 & 20  
Rock Cave, WV  
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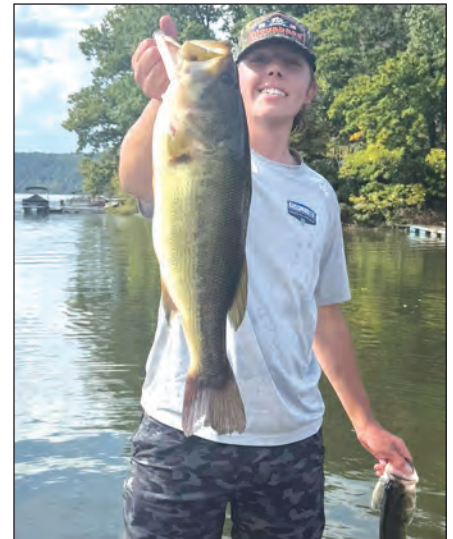
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Garrett Tucker caught the lunker bass (5 1/4 lb.) and won the event.

## LARGE FISH & GAME PICS WANTED

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State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Fish \_\_\_\_\_ Pound \_\_\_\_\_ Oz \_\_\_\_\_  
Deer \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_ #Points \_\_\_\_\_

We are looking for **LARGE** fish & game pictures from 2025.



**NO  
DOES**

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**Vienna, WV**  
**26105**

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