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Issue 227

March 2013



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Cover Photo

This giant buck was taken
with a bow in McDowell County.
The bowhunters name was not
available.

Speaking of big bucks, don't
miss the W.Va. Sportsman Show
in Summersville on March
23&24. The W.O.W World's
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22 bucks will be there.

*Photo courtesy of Uncle Tom's in
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2013 Bassmaster Classic

TULSA, Okla. — Cliff Pace of Petal, Miss., now owns what only 33 others can claim: a Bassmaster Classic title.

On Sunday, Pace won the 43rd world championship of bass fishing, the 2013 Bassmaster Classic presented by Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tulsa. His prize for a three-day catch of 54 pounds, 12 ounces, was \$500,000 and the most coveted trophy of the sport.

His victory on Grand Lake O' the Cherokees was wire-to-wire, although he shared the first-day lead with 2003 Classic champ Michael

Iaconelli of Pittsgrove, N.J. On the second day, Pace stepped over the entire 53-angler field, surpassing his nearest challenger — Brandon Palaniuk of Rathdrum, Idaho — by 7 pounds.

Sunday Pace took the win with a margin of 3 pounds, 4 ounces over Palaniuk, who had to settle for second when his hard charge proved to be unsuccessful.

“This is a gift that I will always cherish,” said Pace, 32, claiming his first Classic trophy in his fifth Classic appearance. “This is the
continue to the next page

MARCH 23 & 24 SUMMERSVILLE ARENA



One of the nations best deer displays will be featured at the upcoming W. Va. Sportsman show March 23 & 24 at the Summersville Arena. Seven bucks score over 400. Sixteen bucks will be on display. The WV Whitetails will also be bringing six great WV bucks too. Lots of hunting & fishing products will be available from the numerous vendors. Outfitters and special hunting items will be offered. Special pricing will be offered on bass, pontoon, UTV's & RV's. Show hours are 10am to 8pm Sat. and 10am to 6pm Sun. Admission is \$5 Adults 16 and under \$1 Under 5 is free. Hourly door prizes - It's "Fun for the Family"

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ultimate high of a career, a life-changing moment.”

Each day of the competition brought a new complication, from snow, rain, below-freezing temperatures and then warming air and water under high, bluebird skies — all challenges for anglers. Pace overcame the changing fishing conditions, weighing consistent bags of bass the first two days: Friday he had 21-8, and Saturday he did even better with 21-12. His two-day total distanced him from all challengers by 7 pounds or more.

But Sunday he experienced a reverse that gave him some uneasy hours out on Grand Lake. The day, he said, “was probably the hardest day I’ve ever spent on my boat. I caught two in the first hour, and didn’t get another bite until about 1:30.”

He said the wind direction Sunday was not to his advantage.

“The places I was on were like flat glass today. I knew when I saw that, I was probably not going to catch any, but they had been so good to me for two days, I fished them. But I never got a bite on that stuff today,” he said.

He went 5 1/2 hours without a bite.



Clint & Kevin Lunceford had great buck success.

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“I never lost focus on what I was trying to do. I told myself all day that if I was going to catch them, then I’d better slow down and fish like I’d been fishing,” he said. “Then I pulled up to a place and caught two on back-to-back casts. That gave me four.”

In the end, his Sunday weight of 11-8 was enough to slide home.

Pace said his winning lures were Jackall jerkbaits — a Squad Min-continue to the next page



Clint Pace of Petal, Mississippi, won \$500,000 at the Classic.



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30 TARGET 3-D ARCHERY RANGE

ow and a Soul Shad — plus a Jack-all DD Cherry crankbait in a crawdad color. He also used a 1/2-ounce B&M Football Jig with a V&M Twin Tail trailer in green pumpkin. He dipped the plastic trailer's tails in orange dye for greater visibility in Grand Lake's stained water.

He had two main patterns. Early in the morning, when the bass were deeper, he worked the football head jig deep on channel banks and on the inside of main-lake points. When the sun came out, he tied on a jerkbait for fish that had moved up shallower on shelves.

"That's how I caught a lot of my big ones — except today. I never got a bite on a jerkbait today," Pace said. "Sometimes during the day, fishing a place where there wasn't any wind on it, and the fish wouldn't come up to take a jerkbait, I'd throw the DD Cherry."

With his \$500,000 Classic prize, Pace became the 39th member of the B.A.S.S. Millionaires Club — anglers who have surpassed the \$1 million mark in earnings from Bassmaster events.

Pace can feel an extra shot of satisfaction, and perhaps some redemp-



Shimanda Leichliter got a nice buck in Wetzel County.

tion, in his Classic achievement. At age 27, he was the runner-up in the 2008 Classic. He has two wins at the lower Open Series level, but missed three Bassmaster Elite Series titles by one spot: he placed second once in 2010 then was runner-up twice last season.

Finishing behind Palaniuk, who had 51-8 over three days, was Classic rookie Hank Cherry of Maiden, N.C. Cherry sacked 17-4 on Sunday, pulling him up to third place with a total of 49-0. Ending in the fourth-place spot was Iaconelli, who had 48-5. Mike McClelland of Bella Vista, Ark., jumped from 14th place on Saturday to finish fifth with a 45-5 total.

The Carhartt Big Bass of the 2013 Classic was the 7-4 largemouth brought to the scales by Mark Pierce of Fort Knox, Tenn., on Friday. He could collect a bonus from Carhartt of up to \$2,500.

Fishing fans packed Tulsa's new BOK Center for the Friday-Sunday weigh-ins. There was a capacity

continue to the next page

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crowd the final two days. At the Wolf Creek launch site in Grove, Okla., as many as 3,000 braved the cold to watch the anglers launch their boats and hundreds watched the anglers take out.

At the Bassmaster Classic Outdoors Show presented by Dick's Sporting Goods at the Tulsa Convention Center, a steady flow of fishing fans turned out to see the latest in fishing boats, motors, tow vehicles, gear and tackle.

Complete Classic coverage is available at Bassmaster.com. Access to the site is free.

Ten hours of Classic coverage will air on ESPN2. The Bassmasters will present its Day One show at 9-10 a.m. ET, March 2. Coverage of the final two days of Classic competition will air March 3 from 7-9 a.m. ET and 10 a.m.-noon ET. Fans can see Classic shows again on March 10 on ESPN2 from 5-



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Details on Page 3



Trent McDonald shot a big 10 point in Wood County.

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Brandon Lloyd went to Ritchie Co. for this big buck. *Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.*

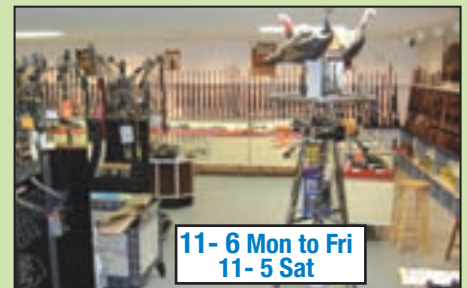
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Joey Workman brought in a nice 12 point buck. Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.

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 Details On Page 3



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Wintertime Blues

I hear it everywhere I go these days ! That is that outdoorsmen and women are already tired of winter, and cannot wait until spring so they can, in their words “get back outdoors”! I have a simple solution for those folks who think that January through March when there is nothing to do but lay around and become a couch potato. That solution is to develop activities to stay busy and to think outside of the box! I know of dozens of activities that need, or can be done this time of the year that will keep you in the

By Mark A. Garner

game, and also probably help you with both you physical, and mental health as well!

One activity that I always do this time of year is to organize, and maintain my fishing tackle. I will go and tear down my reels, and perform a simple cleaning and lubrication that will ensure that when spring is here, I have equipment that is as ready to fish as I am. I also go through my tackle, and organize my weights, hooks and oth-

continue to the next page



Kim Jones used a bow for this buck.

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er miscellaneous tackle so that it is where I want it, verses all mixed together. Old hooks, and rusty hooks are either sharpened, or discarded so that I have what I need, verses what I bought three years ago. One other task I like to do is to build lake boxes for specific lakes and river I know I am going to fish the upcoming year. For an example, every year, on the buddy trails we fish Burnsville lake in May. For the past twelve years, I usually use three or four baits during the event. With that in mind, I can put together a box specifically for Burnsville, and have everything I usually need to fish the tournament! Come tournament day, I do not have to spend time looking through dozens of boxes for a particular bait!, It s already in a pre-arranged box making my time on the water more productive!

Another issue I take care of during the off season is having my



Travis Lanham, from Hico, landed a New River musky.

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boat maintained and serviced. I have heard a saying that a “boat is a hole on the water that you throw money into”, but the simple truth is a boat and motor must be maintained in order to save you those unexpected, expensive repairs! Every year, I see guys broken down on the water, or talking in the lot about boat issues. In today’s world of E10 and 15, damage can occur to your motor quickly if you neglect it, and to use another cliché, “a ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”! Part of my fall, and spring program is to take my

continue to the next page



Corey Riffle shot a nice buck. *Photo courtesy of Andersons Outdoors in Buckhannon.*

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If winter is still around by the time I finish with my fishing gear, and both my hunting and fishing gear is either in storage, or tuned, I take to the woods to scout my hunting areas for late season activity. I will travel to Taylor county, and take to the woods to scout the area for new sign, or to enhance my knowledge of a particular hunting area. You'd be surprised at what you can learn, or see in the woods during this time of the year. If a snow covering is on, you can see trails that you missed during the regular hunting season, or find a shed antler from that buck you hunted last fall! You



Easton Wyer is having trouble holding this big trapped bobcat. Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bairt in Elizabeth.

might find a bucks bedding area, or see a funnel that you did not know existed! I often see things that give me a better perspective of my hunting area, and give me a little edge in knowing my area better, which will pay dividends next fall! Also, walking two or three miles up hills or through thickets burns a lot of calories, so it's a great way to stay

in shape during the off season!

As I said, there are lots of hunting and fishing related activities to do, or can be done during the cold, blustery months of late winter. So, instead of watching television, or hanging around the house all winter, get busy, and I'm sure you will find that you always have something to do! See you afield-MAG

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Springtime Trout Fishing

Fishing in the spring is something that anglers look forward to all winter long. The problem with spring trout fishing is that anglers have to deal with many obstacles that they don't have to deal with when trout fishing during other seasons. Cold water temperatures, high and muddy water, and less than ideal weather conditions are just a few of the things spring trout fishing has in store for the average angler.

In this article I will provide 3 tips for trout fishing during the spring of the year. I have been using these tips to help me catch trout during the spring for more than two decades, and if they work for me I know they will work for you. Keep these 3 spring fishing tips in mind as this trout season gets underway and you will experience more fishing success.

These 3 tips are being listed in no particular order and are all of equal value in my view.

Bait Is A Great Idea - With water temperatures hovering around 40 degrees, live bait is a great choice when trout fishing in the spring of the year. This is especially true when fishing for trout in small rivers and streams. When using bait it is extremely important that the proper gear be employed. This means using ultra light rods and reels spooled with 4-6 pound test. While trout aren't quite as wary in the stained and heavy flows, light line should still be employed. You want the focus of your offering to be the bait and not your line, which is where light line comes into play.

continue to the next page

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Jeri Landers's 1st buck was a Fayette Co. 7 point.



Rodney Tomlin, from Leroy, used a bow for this nice 10 point.

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Spoons Work Well In The Spring - Spoons, wobble or flutter, are a great artificial lure choice for spring trout fishing. Spoons often work better in faster currents where fishing bait can be difficult or impossible. Spoons are also very effective in tail waters below a dam. When it comes to artificial trout lures, spoons are hard to beat during the spring of the year.

Keep Your Hands Comfortable - When trout fishing in the spring the weather can be cool to downright cold in many areas so keeping your hands warm is of the utmost importance. The problem is that when fishing for trout you need to have your fingers free for tying knots, baiting up, and re-baiting, so traditional gloves can be an issue. This is where a quality pair of fingerless gloves/glove liners

comes into play. When it comes to spring fishing tips wearing fingerless gloves/glove liners makes any spring fishing trip much more comfortable. Keep your hand comfortable and the rest of your body will feel much more comfortable. Keeping your hands comfortable is very important when trout fishing in the springtime.

Add these tips to your fishing repertoire and you will have a much better time fishing for trout in the spring of the year. There is nothing like going fishing after the long winter to "knock the rust off" and catch some trout.

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Jordan Bare, only 8, shot a buck. Photo courtesy of Old & New Sports in Ravenswood.

March 2013 ~ Page 17

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Info On Page 3

Twelve DNR Public Meetings

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR) will hold 12 public meetings across the state in March to provide hunters, trappers, anglers, landowners and other interested parties an opportunity to review and comment on proposed 2013 hunting regulations for white-tailed deer, wild turkey, black bear and boar, proposed 2014-2015 general hunting and trapping regulations, proposed amphibian and reptile regulations, and proposed 2014 fishing regulations. These meetings will be held from 6 - 8 p.m. on March 18 and March 19, and the public is encouraged to attend.

“The public meetings have been designed to use an ‘Open House’ format,” said DNR Director Frank Jezioro. “This informal meeting style allows people to attend at their convenience during the scheduled meeting times, learn of proposed regulation changes, discuss these proposals with Wildlife Resources biologists and Natural Resource Police Officers and comment on the proposed regulations and other wildlife-related issues.”

As in the past, written comments from the public on these proposed hunting, trapping and fishing regu-

lations will also be encouraged. Deadline for written comments is April 5, 2013. Anyone interested in attending the meetings scheduled in their areas should note the list of dates and locations:

- Monday, March 18, 2013:
 Fairmont – East Fairmont High School (Commons Area)
 Martinsburg – James Rumsey Technical Institute (Cafeteria)
 Summersville – Nicholas County High School
 Lewisburg – Quality Inn (Conference Room)
 Milton – West Virginia Pumpkin Park (Office Building)
 Harrisville – 4-H Camp
 Tuesday, March 19, 2013:
 Glen Dale – John Marshall High School (Cafeteria)
 Moorefield – Moorefield Middle School (Cafeteria)
 Elkins – DNR Operations Center



Adam Mullinex, from Milton, went to Ritchie Co. for this 11 point.

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- Beckley – Beckley-Raleigh County Convention Center
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 Parkersburg – City Building (Lobby)



Denver Mullenix, from Harrisville, shot a 10 point in Ritchie Co.

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Jeremy Bruffy shot a big 12 point.

Waterfowl Survey

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Wildlife biologists counted 5,252 ducks and 6,262 Canada geese during the annual mid-winter waterfowl survey in early January according to Steve Wilson, Waterfowl Biologist for the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Section.

“The number of ducks and geese counted this year increased 73 percent and 44 percent respectively compared to last year, and both are well above the 10-year average,” Wilson said. The increase was not unexpected due to weather fronts moving through from the northwest in December.

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Canada geese, mallards and black ducks, as usual, were the most commonly observed species in the 2013 survey. Other waterfowl observed include: canvasback, scaup, ring-necked duck, redhead, bufflehead, wood duck, gadwall, mergansers and tundra swans. Nine adult and

five juvenile bald eagles were also observed.

The survey was conducted on January 7, 8, and 10, 2013, and included portions of the Kanawha, Ohio, Shenandoah and New Rivers as well as Tygart and Bluestone Lakes.

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March, 2013 ~ Page 19

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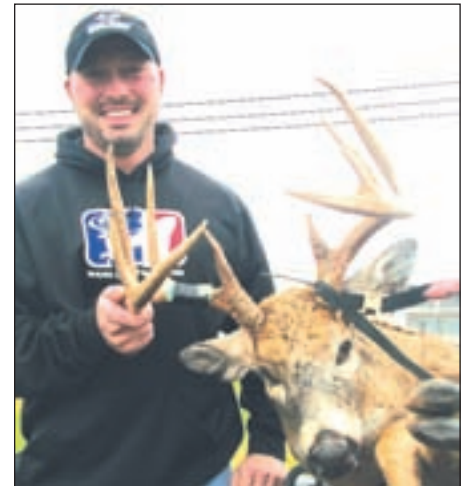
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Chad Lusk, from Man, went to Florida for this 9-7 largemouth.



Boone Koher shot a nice 10 point in Tyler Co.



Josh Wilt shot a big buck. Photo courtesy of Anderson Outdoors in Buckhannon.



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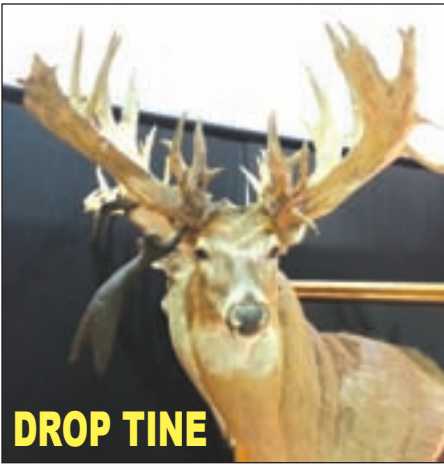
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A palmated buck with a big drop tine will be one of 22 monster bucks at the W. Va. Sportsman Show in Summersville. An ad is on page 8.



Steve Robinson, from Cross Lanes, used a bow for this 9 point buck.



Justin Bunner went to Ohio for this 170 score 10 point buck. Photo courtesy of Holbert's Store in Big Bend.

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Bill Crothers has a new state record for muzzleloaders with this 13 point buck. It scored 173 typical. *Photo courtesy of Bogg's in Elizabeh.*



Jerome Gum, 16 years old, used a bow for this 465 pound field dressed black bear. Full weight should be around 535 pounds. Jerome lives in Mill Creek. Great black bear!

Sunday Hunting In WV

By Corey Booth

Sunday hunting can be a reality for the hardworking outdoorsman and women of West Virginia. Sunday hunting is enjoyed without any restrictions in 39 of our 50 states. These 39 states have thriving wild-life populations while allowing hunters adequate time afield. The seven states having restrictions on Sunday hunting are from antiquated "blue laws" created in the 1700s to discourage any activities on Sunday besides church.

As hunters in West Virginia, we can change this. Many of us work 6 or 7 days a week and we simply do not have enough time in our schedule to hunt. A working man deserves to be able to hunt on private land on Sundays.

In order to do this, counties without Sunday hunting will have to get a petition of 5% of the county's registered, resident voters to sign a petition for Sunday hunting to be on the spring 2014 ballot. You can

only sign a petition in the county you are registered to vote in.

Once the petition is given to the county commissioner, the true battle begins. The West Virginia Farm Bureau is adamant about you not having the right to hunt on Sunday. Remember, it is still the landowners option to not allow hunting on his or her land. Others believe that Sunday hunting will lower church
continue to the next page



A 5 1/2 pound smallmouth was reeled in recently. Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton.

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attendance. It is fair to assume that church attendance is not lower in the 39 states allowing Sunday hunting.

The time is now for Sunday hunting. Currently we have enough signatures in a few counties in central West Virginia. Altogether we already have 3,000-5,000 signatures. We are active in Braxton, Webster, Calhoun, Fayette, Gilmer, Nicholas, Ritchie, Webster, and Wirt Counties.

We need volunteers in every county that does not have Sunday hunting to circulate a petition for it. Basically, a person takes clipboards to select locations such as gas stations, diners, sports shops, bars, and large employers. Leave it for 2-3 weeks and then pick it up.

It will take hard work for a great reward. If you are interested in making a change for the future of hunting in West Virginia, please send your name, county you live in, address, and phone number to sundayhuntingnwv@hotmail.com or download petitions from facebook at Sunday Hunting in West Virginia.



Josh Hodgson went to Boone Co. for this big buck *Photo courtesy of Uncle Tom's in Oceanna.*

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Outdoors Woman Workshop

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources announces that the spring Becoming an Outdoors-Woman Workshop at North Bend State Park will be April 19-21, 2013.

Have you ever wanted to learn a new skill but have never had the opportunity to try? Or, have you wanted to take up an outdoor sport but were afraid to purchase all the equipment and then find out later that you hated it? Then the West Virginia Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (WV BOW) Program is definitely for you! Women who are at least 18 years old can learn a new outdoor skill.

This spring, the BOW workshop will offer outdoor classes that include archery, biking, shooting,

camping, fly tying, fishing, self-defense and outdoor cooking, to list a few.

Registration is now open with a fee of \$150 which covers lodging, some meals, and some class materials during the workshop. For more information or to register for the workshop, please contact WV BOW at 304-558-2771 or billie.j.shearer@wv.gov. The registration form can be downloaded at www.wvdnr.gov/hunting/bow.shtm.

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"There's probably not a better bait as far as appealing to big fish," Brauer says. "I don't know whether it's the bulkiness of the bait or what the reasons are, but the fact is it's one of the finest — if not the finest — big bass baits."



Danny Frazier landed 2 early season smallmouth bass. *Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton.*

As far as outfits for good jigging, Denny suggests a medium heavy rod with some backbone. For someone who doesn't have a sledgehammer tough hook set, he recommends a heavy power rod.

A good rod length is between 7 feet for casting jigs and 7 1/2 feet for flipping and pitching.

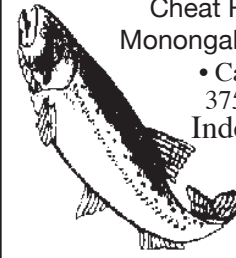
Brauer's reel preference is one with a high gear ratio. "It's more versatile," he explains, "Especially if you're making use of the clock like in tournament angling. The high speed reel's going to get you more presentations during a day's time."

And, as far as line is concerned, Denny is clear: "Jigging is very seldom a light line game. For football heads with light wire hooks, you can get by with 10- to 12-pound fluorocarbon line. In heavy cover, you really need to use 17 to 25 pound. Actually, for heavy cover or dirty water, you can step up to braid."

The champ's choice of trailers depends on water clarity and presentation. "In clear water," he begins, "I go with natural colors like a crawfish pattern. If it's stained but not muddy, I like the black and blue. If it's muddy, I use black with chartreuse." Brauer is very confident in the style of jig and trailer he

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prefers, and he should be. He designed them for Strike King.

"I designed a trailer called the Denny Brauer chunk. It's made of 3X material and it's very tough, but soft. It's also very buoyant so the pincers float. There are several colors available and it's my go-to trailer almost exclusively.

"I thread the trailer on one of two ways," he says. "I'll thread it all the way through the head and up to the jig head if I'm skipping it under docks or want a compact profile. My Strike King jig allows you to slip the trailer in between the rattle and hook. If I want a real big profile, I'll hook it the traditional pork frog way which is similar to nose-hooking a bait for drop shotting."

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Details On Page 3

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Archery In The Schools Instructors

FLATWOODS, W.Va. – The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Section (DNR) will hold its next instructor training for the Archery in the Schools (AIS) Program April 9 and 10 at Mid-State Archery in Flatwoods, according to Krista Snodgrass, program coordinator.

Since its inception in 2004, AIS has become the DNR's largest educational program introducing archery to more than 84,000 students as part of their physical education (PE) classes in nearly 300 West Virginia schools. The program teaches Olympic-style, target archery in both public and private schools Grades 4 through 12.

"Mid-State Archery is looking forward to hosting this training and becoming a part of a program that has attracted a great deal of attention in our state, especially among the schools located here in central West Virginia," said Danny Mayse with Mid-State Archery. "We are very excited about providing our facility to a program that is getting more youth involved in an activity that teaches a skill that can be taken with them beyond the classroom."

"In order for schools to have the AIS Program, they must first have a certified instructor – preferably a physical education instructor or

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coach who will introduce as many kids as possible to the joys of target archery," said Snodgrass. "DNR only has about four trainings a year and, because class size is limited to 25, training slots are highly sought after. As an added incentive, teachers taking this training may be eligible to receive Continuing Education Hours (CEH's) – provided they submit their paperwork to their principal before the end of the school year."

To ensure a training slot, anyone interested in getting a school involved in the program is encouraged to apply as soon as possible, before the March 29 deadline. The training costs \$25 for all school employees and \$50 for non-school employees. This fee will be paid to WVDNR – Archery in the Schools Program (via check, money order, or exact currency only) during the first morning of the training.

To register for the AIS training at Mid-State Archery, please call Krista Snodgrass at 304-558-2771;

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Tommy Colvin Jr., from Waverly, got a 10 point with a bow.

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Behind Closed Doors

PARKERSBURG, W.Va. – The Blennerhassett Island Museum of Regional History has installed a new exhibit: Behind Closed Doors – American Bathrooms Through the Ages. The exhibit collection features artifacts dating back to the 18th century. This unique exhibit opened February 1 and the items will be on display until December 31, 2013.

As part of the exhibit's history, Dr. Ray Swick, West Virginia State Park historian, will present two lectures titled the "History of Bathrooms...From Ancient Times to the 21st Century" while this collection of historic potties and privies is on display. Dates for the lectures are: Saturday, April 20, 2013, at 1 p.m. and Saturday, July 20, 2013, at 1 p.m. in the museum conference room. There is no charge to attend the lectures.



Clifford Brown hooked a New River musky.



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GAME CHECKING

General admission to the museum is \$4 for adults and \$2 for children (ages 3-12) which includes a tour of the bathroom exhibit.

The Blennerhassett Museum is a year-round facility that features three floors of exhibits and covers pre-history to twentieth century

relics. Tours are self-guided. The museum is open Tuesday – Saturday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Sundays from 1 to 5 p.m. For more information about Blennerhassett Island, mansion, museum, events or lectures, phone 304-420-4800 or visit www.blennerhassettisland-statepark.com



Butch Trimble went to the New River for this nice smallmouth.



Roger Snyder brought in a good buck. *Photo courtesy of Trapper's Den in Cowen.*

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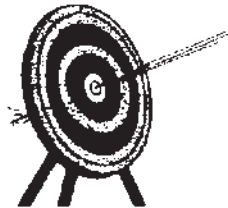


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Larry McCumbers went to Wirt Co. for this 10 point. Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.



Jeremy Woods, from Cool Ridge, used a bow for this 156 Wyoming Co.



Zach Pethel, from Pt. Pleasant, shot a wide 9 point buck.

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Tom Wolford shot a massive buck.

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Mike Jantorno brought in a 9 point buck. Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.

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Josh Compton, from Harrisville, shot an Alaskan caribou.



Jerry Haller, from Barbour Co., went to PA for a 9-8 steelhead.



Dan Holdren & Cec Schneider went to Lake Hartwell in GA for these nice stripers. Photo courtesy of Wright's Riverside Marine in St. Marys.

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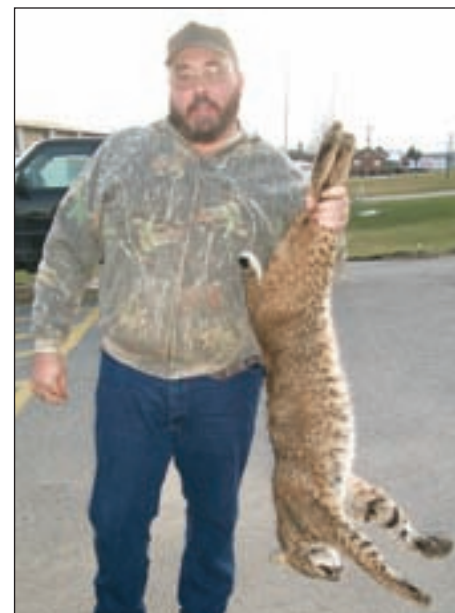
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Terry Hissan brought in a big bobcat. Photo courtesy of Andersons Outdoors in Buckhannon.



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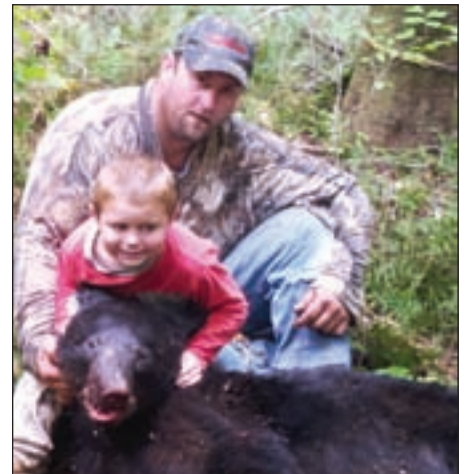
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Gary Young hooked a 31" carp from the Elk River.



Only 6, Dustyn Williams shot his 1st Randolph Co. black bear.

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Early Season Bass

There's a lot of variance in February around the country when it comes to bass fishing. Some of the fish will be up on the beds and others will be just starting to move towards the beds. One thing is for certain, however, they'll all be thinking about the spawn. That means they're vulnerable to a flipping or pitching approach.

Look for them around suitable spawning areas. Generally that'll be in the thickest cover they can find near a hard bottom area. I usually start near pockets or other backwater spots, but you always have to keep in mind where you're fishing. If backwater spots are few and far between on your water, you might want to look around to see what else is available. I've seen many a largemouth bed on a big tree limb in standing timber over 40 feet of



Jimbo Paynter used a bow for this buck. Photo courtesy of *Uncel Toms in Oceanna*.

water. In Florida they often spawn on pad roots.

Another thing to keep in mind is the weather. Prespawn bass are very sensitive to cold fronts — more than during any other season of the year. One day they might be up making beds, but then the weather turns cold and they'll run back into the thickest cover around. It doesn't take much. A drop in water temperature of one or two degrees will do it.

This situation presents one of the best flipping opportunities you'll ever have. In fact, it may be the only opportunity you'll have to

continue to the next page

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Rob Law arrowed a large carp.

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get a bait to them.

My lure preference for this type of fishing is a jig. I want something that'll get through the cover but, at the same time, I don't want much movement. The Strike King Denny Brauer Premiere Pro-Model Jig is perfect. If the water is clear, I fish a brown and green pumpkin color (No. 46). If the water's dirty, I switch to a black and blue or a Texas Craw.

I like to put a Denny Brauer Chunk on the back of my jig. This gives me more bulk but doesn't have an unnatural amount of action in cold water. I always match the color to my bait. In my experience that's more natural looking and will catch more fish. Weight is a matter of water depth. The deeper the water, the heavier my jig will be. At this time of year the fish are bottom-oriented.

If you live in the north, the water will still be really cold. The bass may not be as far along as what I've been talking about. Look for them on breaks, channels and other natural travel routes from their winter spots to the bedding areas. I'd still go with the same jig and plastic combination, however.

I'll summarize all this by saying

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that in February you have to figure out what stage the bass are in as well as where they're holding and then target them with a jig and plastic chunk.

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Ad On Page 8



A 9 1/2 pound rainbow trout was hooked. *Photo courtesy of Elza's Cycle & ATV in Elkins.*

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Trout Techniques

Trout streams contain a variety of cover habitats, both natural and man-made. Natural cover includes dead water pools, boulders, bank-cover, aquatic vegetation, and log jams. In high gradient streams with swift current, an excellent place for a lurking trout is on the downstream side of boulders. Just behind most of these rocks an eddy is formed where a feeding trout can face upstream, protected from the main current in the still water of the eddy. Sometimes in slower current Rainbow trout position in front of a boulder where the current is split. Browns and Brook trout prefer the slower, more protected eddies.

Bank cover is preferred by trout when it has at least 6 inches of overhead shading and a foot or more in depth. The bank slows the current and provides habitat that is similar to boulders. Obstacles such as brush, logs, and tree roots that extend outward from the bank add even greater attraction for cover. It is very difficult to predict the precise location of trout in a brush or log pile, so take your time and fish this habitat with utmost care.

Aquatic vegetation is probably the most difficult yet one of the most productive habitat covers to fish for trout. In most instances the main stream current scours a tunnel through the vegetation bed. Thin strands of the plants extend out from the main body that become a

nuisance by fouling baits and lures. Trout often lay at the inside edge of the vegetation where it slows the flow and provides a comfortable feeding station.

Deep pools interspersed with riffles provide a variety of places for trout fishing. They are logical places for the fish to hide and ambush their prey. The riffle provides feeding sites for small trout, while the lunkers often inhabit the pool. The upstream end of a pool is the best location to fish for trout, where the inflowing current is strongest. Trout will congregate near the bottom and forage on drifting food organisms. The fish will sometimes move to the lower end of the pool during late evening when there is a heavy insect hatch.

Locating trout near man-made
continue to the next page



A large bow buck was checked in..
Photo courtesy of Jason's Country Corner in Saulsville.



Shirley Foutty, from Belpre, Ohio, arrowed a nice bow buck.

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habitat improvement structures follows the same procedures as natural cover. Bank hides that have been constructed on the outside bends of streams are probably the most difficult to fish, but they are also very productive for trout. These structures provide excellent concealment for even the largest trout. Trout often orient themselves at the upstream end of these structures and capture food items that drift along the outside edge. The best method is to drift the bait or lure into this vicinity. Many unsuspecting trout fishermen have stood directly on a bank hide and fished the water at their feet without success. These structures blend very well with the surrounding landscape, so concentrate on the bank terrain as well as the stream.

Orientation of trout along a rip-rap armored bank is similar to that in pool habitat except the fish tend to locate closer to the rock structure. Half-logs are not common structure in Iowa streams, but where they are found the fish usually conceal themselves directly under the

structure where they can ambush forage.

Be alert at all times while trout fishing. Actively feeding trout will often times reveal their presence to the perceptive angler. Learn to look for specific habitats and approach these locations with care and patience. Make mental notes of drifting aquatic organisms, both on the water surface and substrate. Ask yourself questions about water quality and take notice of what terrestrial activities along the stream bank that might influence trout. Try to become a part of the stream system -- try to read the stream.



London Lott, age 8, shot his first buck - a six point.

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Landing Your Catch

After you have a fish on, there are many techniques necessary for playing and landing a trout, and several are very important. Keep your rod tip high, so the impact of a sudden run is on the rod and not the line. Do not allow or encourage a large fish to swim downstream; it will only prolong the battle from the current. If this happens, the best advice is to follow the trout along

continue to the next page



Gary Heflin brought in a buck this season.

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the bank. Trout tire easily, especially if they have to work in the current in an upstream direction or the fish is allowed to make several runs. If you intend on releasing the fish -- don't overplay it -- stress may kill the fish. Fish intended for release should be landed quickly and netted. Release the fish while it is underwater and in the pool where it was caught.



Mike Allen took a great 11 point buck in Wirt County.

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David Hughes used a bow for a great buck. Photo courtesy of D&D Pawn & Bait in Sutton.



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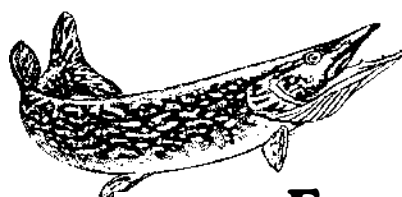
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