



FREE

"The where to and how to magazine for the outdoor enthusiast."

Issue 242

Dec/Jan 2014/2015



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Magazine

Volume 1 Issue 242

Publisher and Editor
Mark A. Goudy

Contributing Editors
West Virginia Division Of
Natural Resources

No Subscriptions Offered

Printed Every Six Weeks.

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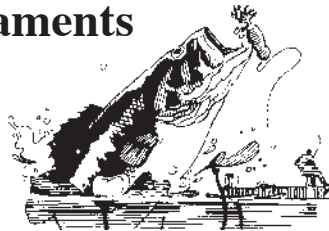
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Cover Photo

A possible new typical archery state record buck was taken by Chad Cyphers, from Princeton, on Nov. 18th. The 12 point (10 main frame points) was harvested on public land in McDowell County. This buck green scored 196 5/8 and will probably result in a score around 186 after deductions are taken.

The 1998 typical buck taken by Mark Lester in Logan County scored 175 6/8. His record has stood for the past 16 years.

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2014 Deer Facts

The West Virginia buck firearms season was open Nov. 24 – Dec. 6, 2014. It is open in all counties except Logan, Mingo, McDowell and Wyoming.

Approximately 330,000 deer hunters will be in West Virginia's woods during this season.

Hunters should review the 2014 - 2015 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary for detailed in-

structions concerning bag limits and season dates. The regulations are available at license agents, DNR district offices or online at www.wvdnr.gov.

A list of official game checking stations in West Virginia can be found online at http://wvdnr.gov/hunting/check_stations.asp

The buck deer bag limit during the two-week buck firearms season is two (one on the base license and one on an RG [resident] or RRG [nonresident] stamp). A hunter may take no more than three antlered deer per calendar year in all archery and firearms seasons combined.

The last day to purchase an additional buck deer gun tag (Class RG/RRG Stamp) was Nov. 23, 2014. Class RG and Class RRG additional buck stamps can only be used to take an additional antlered deer in buck firearms season.

continue to the next page



Rob Miller brought in an 8 point buck. *Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth.*

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A buck was checked in. *Photo courtesy of Bow-Listic Archery in Chelyan.*

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Unused Class RG and Class RRG stamps may not be used in antlerless or muzzleloader seasons.

Antlerless deer hunting was legal on private land in 51 counties or portions thereof and selected public lands Nov. 24 – Dec. 6, 2014, concurrent with the buck firearms season, with valid stamps.

All private land in counties having a firearms antlerless deer season (Class N or NN) was open Nov. 24 – Dec. 6 concurrent with the buck firearms season. All public lands having an antlerless deer season will be open Nov. 24 – Dec. 6. Bag limits vary among counties but will be either one or three antlerless deer. A hunter may harvest two deer per day, but only one antlered deer may be harvested per day. The first deer does not have to be legally checked in prior to harvesting the second deer on the same day. However, all deer must be checked in before hunting during a subsequent day.

Concurrent with the buck gun season was a bear gun season in 28 counties, 17 of which require a permit that must be issued prior to the season. Consult the 2014–2015 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary for specific counties.

Deer hunters spend an estimated \$230 million in West Virginia, much of it in the rural areas of the state that depend upon the deer sea-

sons for a large portion of their annual income.

In 2013, hunters in West Virginia harvested 56,523 bucks during the two-week buck firearms season, an increase of less than 1 percent from the 2012 harvest. This is 3 percent less than the five-year average bucks-only firearm season harvest of 58,070 and ranks 27th among all



Jeff Bragg got a buck. Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.

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past years.

WVDNR forecasted that the buck firearms season harvest should be similar to the harvest of 2013. The very bad weather during the first week of gun season in 2013 coupled with good reproduction three years ago should mean that there will be many older-aged bucks available in 2014. Data indicates that the age structure of harvested bucks has shifted over time to in-

continue to the next page



Ashley Shrewsbury landed a real black colored catfish. Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton.

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clude a lower percentage of yearling animals and a higher number of mature bucks. This trend has been across the state and points to the fact that hunters are passing up younger animals for the chance at more mature animals.

As of Nov. 16, 2014, Sunday hunting was legal in the following 21 counties on private land only: Boone, Braxton, Brooke, Calhoun, Clay, Hancock, Jefferson, Lincoln, Logan, Mason, McDowell, Marshall, Mingo, Nicholas, Ohio, Roane, Wayne, Webster, Wetzel, Wirt and Wyoming. The only Sunday that is open in these counties during the buck season is Nov. 30. Hunters are required to wear at least 400 square inches of blaze or-



Dennis Hatfield bagged a gun buck in Wirt Co. Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.



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ange (about the size of a vest) as an outer garment for visibility and safety. Blaze orange camouflage patterns are legal as long as 400 square inches of blaze orange are displayed on the garment. A blaze orange hat is not required, but the hunter must have blaze orange visible from both the front and the back.

Hunting licenses may be purchased online at any time and printed out on a home computer printer. Go to

the goWILD! website at www.wv-hunt.com, fill out the application, and purchase it over a secure server with a credit card.

Hunters who wish to donate deer meat or dollars to the Hunters Helping the Hungry program, which distributes deer meat through the Mountaineer Food Bank and the Huntington Food Bank, should call 304-558-2771 or visit the DNR website at www.wvdnr.gov to find a participating meat processor.



Chad Lancaster used a bow for this big Ohio Buck. Photo courtesy of Crooked Creek Archery in Williamstown.



Justin Starkey had a wide racked buck. Photo courtesy of Anderson Outdoors in Buckhannon.

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Out Of Pocket Bass Baits

Another one of our Facebook readers, Dustin Keys, wants to know what out-of-pocket baits I use, and why. By out-of-pocket I assume he means those lures that I buy myself, those that do not come from sponsors.

In truth I don't use a lot of them.



Chuck Spears, from Cairo, tagged a 10 point buck.

By Chris Lane

I have top-shelf sponsors. Their baits seem to work in most situations I'm faced with in B.A.S.S. tournaments. There are exceptions, however.

The first is a Zara Spook. It's the right size, the colors are good and it walks easily. In some situations a walking stick snaking across the top of the water is what it takes. There's nothing that will replace it.

I also use a wide variety of soft plastic stickbaits. I don't have any one brand that I use exclusively. My selections are based on water temperature, water depth, water clarity and the mood of the fish. It's mostly a gut decision that comes from my years on the water fish-

continue to the next page

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Jerry Griffith, from Peytona, used a bow for a black bear.

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ing for bass. If I had a formula for picking the right one, I'd give it to you. I don't.

My third selection is really a group of products — Roboworms. Like a Zara Spook, they come in fish catching sizes and colors. They also have great action. For the most part I follow the standard rules when it comes to picking the best size and color.

The reason I use these baits is because they catch fish. It's that simple.

I do make small, but important, modifications to some of my lures, however. Sometimes I'll use KVD Mustad hooks on my crankbaits, and I like Owner Stinger hooks on my topwater baits. But, once again, I don't follow hard and fast rules for doing this and I don't always use the same brand of hook. The best way to pick a replacement hook is by what works for you.

I also change the rings on the eye of many of my lures. A smaller ring will give you more action. A bigger ring will reduce the action. And, I put a bigger ring on all of my Zara Spooks. I think it gives them better action.

Modifying bills and lips, or repainting lures, isn't my thing. I don't have any issue with those anglers who do — some of the best in the business are really into that sort of thing — but that's not for me. I seem to do OK with what the manufacturers provide.

With all that said I want to respectfully remind everyone that most factory baits are really good right out of the box. Manufacturers put a lot of engineering into their products. At the same time keep in mind that most baits nowadays are designed with the help of top professional anglers. Generally speaking, they catch fish. You don't need

to do much with them.

The best way I know to catch more bass is to find more bass. The way to do that is to spend time on the water, learn to use your electronics and fish with anglers who are better than you. There aren't any shortcuts out there, or at least I haven't found any.



Young Caleb Delansky, from Normantown, brought in a 9 point.

2015 WV Lakes Bass Tournaments From Bass Sportsman



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David Boyce had success with this wide raked Wirt Co. buck. The deer harvest was poor this season. Windy and wet weather was a factor. *Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark*

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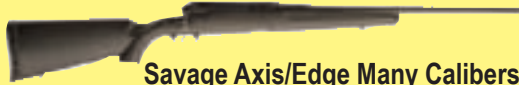
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Daniel Martin had gun success with his 10 point. *Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.*

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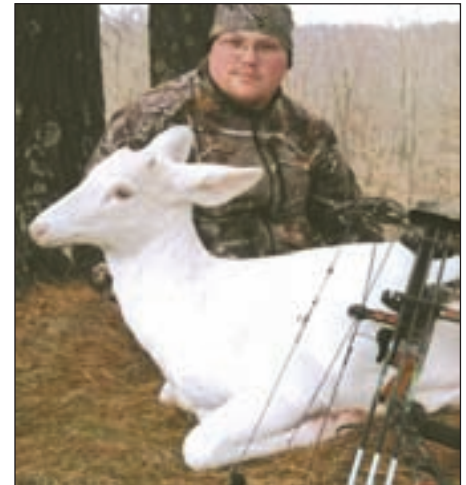
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James Sands went to Wirt Co. for this great 10 point buck.



Mickey Comp, from Reedsville, used his bow for this true albino.

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Form On Page 38**

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Postive Results For Asian Carp In WV Waters

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. - The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR) Wildlife Resources Section has confirmed that environmental DNA (eDNA) from the invasive Asian carp was found in water samples taken from the Ohio River and Kanawha River.

As part of a cooperative project, the fisheries biologists from the Wildlife Resources Section and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) collected water samples in July 2014 from the Ohio River within the New Cumberland Navigational Pool (Hancock County) and Pike Island Navigational Pool

(Ohio and Brooke counties), as well as the Little Kanawha River (Wood and Wirt counties) and the Kanawha River (Putnam and Kanawha counties). These water samples were tested for the presence of eDNA for bighead and silver carp by the USFWS.

Positive results were found for

bighead and silver carp DNA from the New Cumberland Navigational Pool, as well as for bighead carp DNA from the Winfield Pool of the Kanawha River. All samples were found to be negative for both bighead and silver carp DNA collected from the Pike Island Navigational Pool, as well as the Little Kanawha River.

Researchers use eDNA analysis as a tool for the early detection of Asian carp. The presence of eDNA does not provide physical proof of the presence of live or dead Asian carp, but indicates the presence of genetic material in the water body. This genetic material may be the result of live carp, or transport of only the genetic material via boats, birds or other vectors.

continue to the next page



Amanda Jarrell brought in a nice buck. *Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.*



Blake Shupp had gun success this hunting season.

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Asian carp are a significant threat to aquatic ecosystems, as well as to angling and boating recreational activities. Because of the harmful nature of these Asian carp species, the DNR urges anglers and boaters to help in slowing the spread of these invasive species.

Anglers and boaters should thoroughly clean gear and boats before entering new waters. Anglers should never release live fish into a public water body and always properly discard baitfish after a fishing trip.

Boaters and anglers are asked to contact the DNR if they suspect that they have observed Asian carp in any West Virginia water body. To learn how to identify Asian carp or more about these invasive species, please consult the DNR website (http://wvdnr.gov/Fishing/Asian_Carp.shtm). All USFWS eDNA results, including the ones from the Ohio and Kanawha rivers, can be found at <http://www.fws.gov/mid-west/fisheries/eDNA.html>.



Young James Williams, from Midway, bagged a nice 8 point buck.

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Buck Harvest Way Down

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. - Preliminary data collected from game checking stations across the state indicate deer hunters in West Virginia harvested 37,277 bucks during the two-week buck firearms season, which ran from Nov. 24 through Dec. 6, 2014, according to Frank Jezioro, director of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR). The 2014 buck harvest is down 34 percent from the 2013 harvest of 56,523. The top 10 counties for buck harvest were as follows: Preston (1,531), Greenbrier (1,384), Randolph (1,254), Lewis (1,159), Ritchie (1,157), Hampshire (1,069), Wood (1,019), Upshur (1,015), Monroe (1,001), and Mason (998).

This year's overall buck harvest is lower than last year's with

decreases occurring in all DNR continue to the next page



Mary Ratliff used a bow. Photo courtesy of Uncle Tom's Loans In Oceanna.



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districts. The largest percentage decreases occurred in the western counties of the state, while the buck harvest in the mountain and southeastern counties had smaller decreases. Warm and very windy weather across the state on opening day; heavy snowfall Wednesday, the third day of the season, in the eastern panhandle of the state; and a rainy second week impacted hunter participation and contributed to the decreased harvest across the state.

The excellent acorn crop this fall also contributed to lower hunter

success, just as a similar abundant acorn crop in 2010 led to a 31 percent decline in buck harvest followed by a 38 percent rebound in 2011. This year's preliminary buck harvest remains 33 percent below the previous five-year average of 55,902.

Wildlife biologists and wildlife managers collected age-specific biological information at checking stations in 19 counties this year. They will analyze data from the combined 2014 deer seasons (buck, antlerless, archery and muzzle-

continue to the next page



Roger Perry had buck success. Photo courtesy of Anderson Outdoors in Buckhannon.

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loader) before making appropriate recommendations for next year's deer seasons.

These recommendations will be available for public review at 12 regulations meetings scheduled for March 16 and 17, 2015 (see current 2014 - 2015 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary page 6 or visit the DNR Web site at www.wvdnr.gov for meeting locations and dates).

Director Jezioro reminds hunters that several days of deer hunting opportunity still remain for 2014. The traditional antlerless deer season in selected counties on both public and private land opens Thursday, Dec. 18 and runs through Saturday, Dec. 20. The Youth, Class Q/QQ and Class XS deer season for antlerless deer will be open Friday and Saturday, Dec. 26 and 27. in any county with a firearms deer season.

This will be followed by the re-opening of Class N/NN antlerless deer season Dec. 29-31 in 50 counties or portions of counties (see 2014 - 2015 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary or visit the DNR Web site at www.wvdnr.gov for county and area listings).

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Josh Legg got his 1st black bear in Boone County.



Logan Wilson tagged an 8 point in Calhoun County.

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Black Bear License Plate

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (November 07, 2014) - Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin today unveiled the third and final license plate in a three-part series, celebrating West Virginia's native wildlife. Through a collaborative effort between the Division of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV), West Virginia is now offering the new license plate as an alternative standard issuance plate option to West Virginia passenger vehicle owners. The license plate features the image of a black bear and her cub looking over Dolly Sods in Tucker County.

"Today's celebration marks yet another exciting opportunity to recognize some of the beautiful sights West Virginia is known for," Gov. Tomblin said. "Our state is home to much more than beautiful scenery, it's also home to abundant wildlife whose natural habitats are found within our forests, rivers and streams. I appreciate this partnership between DMV and DNR and

their continued effort to showcase all of the beauty West Virginia has to offer. I look forward to seeing these plates on our roads."

The black bear license plate is the third in a three-part series featuring wildlife native to West Virginia. Each year, this series of license plates provides more than \$300,000 to DNR, and supports a variety of wildlife education outreach programs. Over the past 20 years, funds have been used to develop educational wildlife trunks for schools, publish numerous books and brochures, identify rare plants and plant communities, develop wildlife viewing areas, fund grants to schools for projects benefiting wildlife, and inventory and monitor nongame wildlife species.

A \$15 annual fee added to the cost of a license plate will be issued by the DNR Wildlife Diversity and Natural Heritage programs, re-



Chris Shafer landed a 5.5 pound smallmouth in late November.

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Lake Russell Event

Anglers from the Ohio Valley headed to Lake Russell for the 19th Annual Wright's Riverside Marine open bass tournament. 18 teams traveled to Elberton, Georgia and stayed in cabins near the lake. Big stories and fishing tales were abundant once again.

Teams compete in a four day tournament with three days of pre-fishing before the main event. Veteran Ohio River tournament fishermen were glad to be somewhere for a good bite. These anglers suffered through a bad season on the Ohio River.

A new team emerged as champions this time. Henry Chisolm and Paul Isner had an impressive four day weight of 45.74 pounds. They use a five fish limit each day in the tournament.

Second place belonged to Dan Holdren and Bill Schneider (Cecil's brother). They weighed in 36.90 pounds. Finishing in third were Murphy - Frazier with 34.42. Two bass over 5 pounds were weighed during the main tournament.

A splendid time was had by all once again.



Paul Isner & Henry Chisolm won the Lake Russell bass tournament.



Wright's Riverside Marine - Lake Russell Tournament

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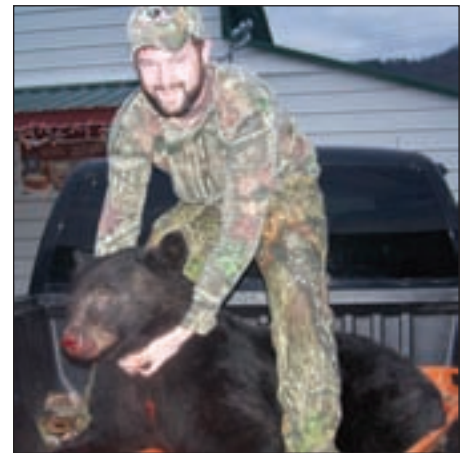
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Clayton Lee, 9 yr. old, bagged a 460 pound black bear. *Photo courtesy of Trappers Den in Cowen.*



Chris Bloom took a nice black bear. *Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.*



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Sam Canada used his bow for an impressive 14 point. *Photo courtesy of Uncle Tom's Loans in Oceanna.*



Cory and Amy Boothe are shown with a nice bow black bear.



Matt Hornbeck brought in a 20 pound bobcat. *Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.*

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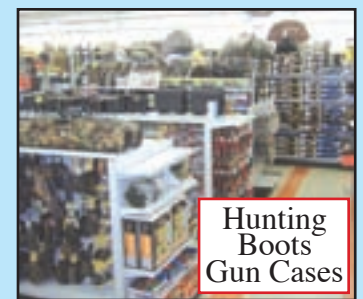
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Brad Liggett had success with a nice gun deer. *Photo courtesy of Anderson Outdoors in Buckhannon.*



A quality bow buck was taken by this hunter. *Photo courtesy of Uncle Tom's Loans in Oceanna.*



Rick Morgan brought in a wide racked buck. *Photo courtesy of Anderson Outdoors in Buckhannon.*



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Rabbit Hunting Tips

Rabbit hunting is a practice spread worldwide due to the range of habitats the rabbit has, allowing hunters from all over the world to enjoy hunting rabbits (hares). Although it might seem like an easy task compared to other types of hunting, rabbit hunting requires more accuracy, skills and tactics than many others. Some may argue that a small, furry animal like the rabbit can't possibly be a challenge for a fairly experienced hunter, but the truth is these creatures do have some aces up their sleeves and do know how to use them.

Furthermore, the rabbit's best and well-known weapon is agility, speed which is crucial in its survival in nature. Its powerful back legs help the rabbit reach impressive speeds - you will often be surprised as to how fast they can sprint when jumping from a bush you've just come close to.

One more problem, when it comes to their agility, is the fact that they

never run in a line, but choose to make a confusing array of movements while running. Sometimes this strategy confuses them too and they end up running in a complete circle, so be patient and you may have an easy shot instead of a tiring chase. They have a pretty good stamina and can keep running for a relatively long time without slowing down the pace.

Another thing that makes it difficult to successfully hunt rabbits is their capacity to camouflage their presence in many terrain types. They've adapted so that their fur matches the color of the inhabited territory. Being rather small in size, they manage to escape unseen even through thin bushes and similar kind of cover (but usually do not wait for anyone to get close to their

hide-out and run vigorously when they sense danger). That is why rabbit hunting should always be done in a quiet and slow manner, in the same time being attentive and prepared. This leads us to the


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Steve Wolverton bagged a 10 point buck. Photo courtesy of Trapper's Den in Cowan.

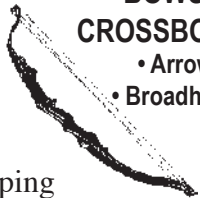


Jeremy Simons is with Justin Sharp and his 14 point buck. Photo Courtesy of Re-Creations Taxidermy Studio in Elkins.




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rabbits' best form of defense, their highly developed senses.

Surviving in such harsh conditions and with so many predators forces a small animal like the rabbit to develop not only great speed and camouflage abilities, but also exceptionally sensitive senses. The rabbit's appearance clearly indicates its keen sense of hearing, being able to hear sound from as long as two miles away, with the other senses being just as remarkable. For instance their sense of smell is so sharp that they can smell food that is below ground. Their eyesight is exceptionally accurate, especially at night, and are able to detect predators from a long distance. Altogether, using these hyper-senses the rabbit can manage to escape predators and hunters and many times even avoid them completely.

As you can see, rabbit hunting is not a walk in the park and requires higher attentiveness and skill for it to be a success. In other words, rabbit hunting distinguishes itself as an independent and unique practice, due to the very few aspects that links it to other forms of hunting.

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Now that's a huge bear or a great camera angle. Photo courtesy of Bowlistic Archery in Chelyan.

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Tree Stand Safety

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – November is a big month for hunters, and the Division of Natural Resources (DNR) reminds hunters that safety is the most important part of a successful season.

One of the most popular pieces of equipment used by deer hunters is a tree stand. Tree stands can be dangerous if they are used incorrectly or carelessly. Nationally, one in three hunting injuries involves a tree stand. Falls from tree stands can be caused by a variety of factors, including a weakness in the stand's structure and incorrect installation. Hunters also may fall asleep while on their stands. Tree stands can also be a factor in other



Rusty Hyre harvested a nice buck. Photo courtesy of Anderson Outdoors in Buckhannon.

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Look For Forms In This Issue.

Mail Or Email Details On Pages 15 & 38

hunting accidents, including injury from accidental firing of a loaded firearm while the hunter is climbing to the stand.

“Because tree stand incidents have become the most common cause of hunter injuries, DNR has been emphasizing tree stand safety in the mandatory hunter education courses we schedule around the state,” said Col. Jerry Jenkins, Chief of the DNR Law Enforcement Section.

To help prevent these accidents, follow these safety precautions:

Never carry equipment with you



Nina Mae Coberly - age 9 - bagged a Webster Co. 8 point buck.



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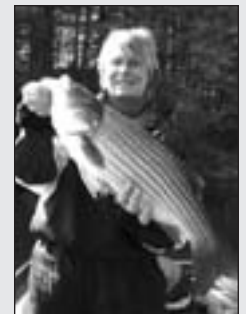
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while climbing. Use a haul line to raise or lower your gear. Make sure guns are unloaded and broad heads are covered prior to raising or lowering firearms or bows with a haul line.

Since most accidents occur when hunters are climbing up or down a tree, always use a climbing belt. Always use a safety belt or harness when hunting from elevated tree stands. Study manufacturer's recommendations before using any equipment. Never use a rope to replace a safety belt.

Check permanent tree stands every year before hunting from them, and replace any worn or weak lumber.

Read, understand and follow the

factory recommended practices and procedures when installing commercial stands. Inspect portable stands for loose nuts and bolts each time they are used.

Choose only healthy, living trees when using climbing devices. Rough-barked trees such as oak are best. Do not use a tree that is rotten or has dead limbs.

Never put all your weight on a single branch. Keep at least one hand and one foot on a secure place when reaching for the next hold.

Climb higher than the stand and step down onto it. Climbing up onto it can dislodge it.

Wear boots with non-skid soles, because steps or platforms can be

continue to the next page

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Nick Martin hooked a nice farm-pond largemouth bass.



Marshall Nichols arrowed a Ritchie Co. buck. Photo courtesy of Crooked Creek Archery in Williamstown.

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Don't fall asleep. This is a common cause of accidents. If you get drowsy, move your arms rapidly



Brien Murray brought in a 13 point buck. Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.



Hunter Leslie harvested a good buck. Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.

until you feel alert.

Never wear a ring in any climbing situation. Rings can catch on tree limbs and equipment.

As a precautionary measure, remove all logs, upturned and cutoff saplings, rocks and other obstructions on the ground below the tree stand.

Use updated equipment. When used properly, newer tree stand equipment is solid, safe and secure. Older models of safety belts offer some protection, but newer safety harnesses offer more protection.

Carry a whistle to call for help and carry a first aid kit, flashlight and cellular telephone in a fanny pack.

All persons born on or after Jan. 1, 1975, must first successfully complete a certified hunter education course before purchasing a hunting license. The course is free and takes about 12 hours to complete. Information about the course and a schedule of classes can be found at <http://wvdnr.gov/lenforce/education.shtm> or by calling 304-558-2784. An online version of the

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2015 OHIO RIVER BONUS BASS TOURNAMENTS

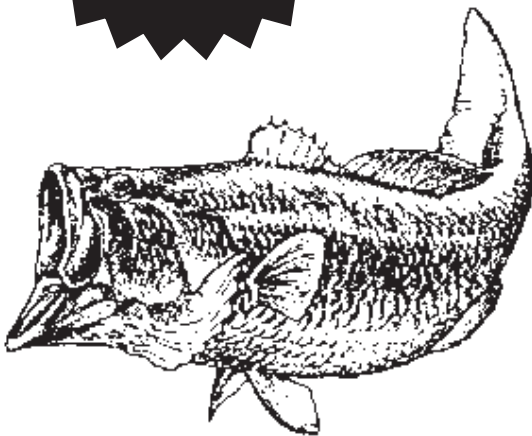
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- Example

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Jim Duckworth arrowed a great Ohio buck. Photo courtesy of Outback Jack's in Coolville, OH.



Logan Utt brought in a good cold weather buck. Photo courtesy of WV Wild Outdoors in Birch River.

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A large buck was checked in. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.



Chris Lucas bagged a quality high racked deer.

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Jansen McCloy harvested a quality buck.



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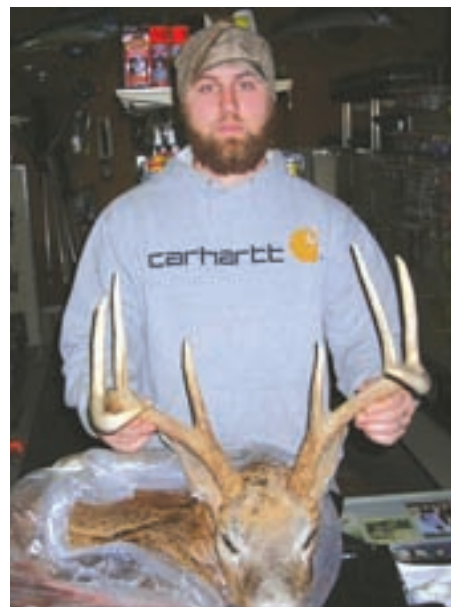
Jeff Cordray had gun success with a wide racked buck.



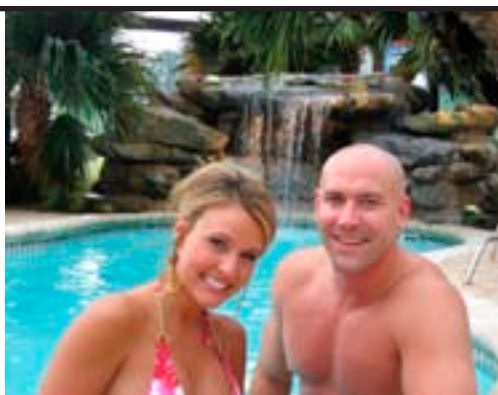
Ralph McCloy landed a big farm pond largemouth bass..



Jarrold Price bagged a good deer. Photo courtesy of Re-Creations Taxidermy Studio in Elkins.



Tyler Lane is leading this stores buck contest. Photo courtesy of J&R Sporting Goods in Shinnston.



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Mike Malcomb, from Craigsville, bagged a Webster Co. buck.

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Dana Arbogast went to Barbour Co. for this buck. Photo courtesy of Re-Creations Taxidermy Studio in Elkins

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Electronic Licensing

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR) announces that Dec. 23 will be the last day in 2014 for processing lifetime licenses or permits. The last week of December will be used to prepare for conversion of records into the new electronic licensing system which becomes effective Jan. 1, 2015.

After Dec. 23, applications for lifetime licenses and permits may still be dropped off or mailed to the DNR Headquarters, 324 Fourth Avenue, South Charleston, WV 25303, but they will be held until January for processing in the new system. Lifetime permits include the Class Y crossbow permit and Class Q permits.

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Hunters, trappers and anglers who buy their licenses online at www.wvhunt.com or at an electronic point-of-sale license agent should not notice any difference when purchasing a license in 2015. The old-style paper license on which stamps for additional privileges were placed will no longer be available.



Justin Young shot a piebald buck with one antler. *Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.*

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Never Too Cold For Bass To Bite

By Keven VanDam

A common mistake all anglers make is we adopt preconceived notions about when the fish bite and how active they will or won't be.

Cold water is a good example. Conditions we're seeing here in Michigan refute beliefs that bass go "dormant."

Most of the fishing public believes bass activity shuts down when the water temperature gets into the mid-40s, but that's not true.



Abigail Strait enjoyed her deer hunting. Photo of J&R Sporting Goods in Shinnston.

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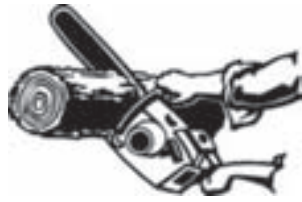
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The A-rig, for example, has dispelled that belief here and across the south. The multi-lure rig has been catching quality bass in cold water for the past couple of years. Here in southern Michigan, our smaller lakes are developing sheet ice while the bigger bodied waters are more open. Lakes in some far northern areas are completely frozen over.

Although our surface temperature is in the low 30s, diehards are catching fish. Yes, in some cases they have to drive their boats over thin ice to get to open water. But when they do, good things can happen.

You'd be amazed at how aggressive the bite can be in these cold temperatures. While the surface temp may be 33 degrees, the water is warmer where the bass winter in deeper water.

Most of our lakes don't have current flowing through them like reservoirs, so there is a temperature gradient throughout the water column. What you see on the surface isn't indicative of what the temp is 20 feet down.

Also, our primary forage consists

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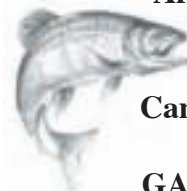
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of crawfish, bluegills and perch, not shad. That keeps the bass relat-

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Dalton Cutright, owner

lating to the bottom around deep weed edges and scattered weed patches lying off the drop offs.

They're tightly schooled in small areas. For that reason, it's critical to use electronics to look for balls of bait and bass hanging close to these deep weed patches. Typically, you will find the fish on corners of turns instead of the tips of them. And those same areas will be productive year after year.

However, baits like jerkbaits, spinnerbaits and crankbaits aren't players; the fish are hunkered down so you have to get a bait that stays in their face longer, like jigging spoons, blade baits, grubs and even tubes.

Blade baits (thin, fish-shaped metal bodies with two treble hooks) are popular baits with diehard winter anglers. They cast them, then rip them a few inches off the bottom and allow them to flutter back.

However, my favorites are small tubes and grubs. Because our water is so clear now, it's really important to use smaller profile lures. Instead of a 3 1/2-inch tube, we use 2-inchers. We stick to natural colors, like green pumpkin in soft plastics or gold spoons and blade baits.

Light line is a must. I use 6-pound fluorocarbon because it helps me control lighter weight lures in deeper water and provide a more natural presentation.

Obviously, you have to dress properly but today's cold weather clothing does an outstanding job

for keeping the body warm. I also suggest a facemask and a good pair of thin, performance gloves such as those liners used by downhill skiers. They give you free finger movement, retain your feel and keep your hands warmer than you think.



Homer Farley shot a buck. *Photo courtesy of J&R Sporting Goods in Shinnston.*

It's not unusual to catch 20 to 25 bass a day once you locate them and 50 a day isn't out of the question. One day, three of us sat in the boat and threw at the same spot. In a two-hour period, we caught 64 bass, including some nice ones!



Paul Rundle took a very nice buck. *Photo courtesy of Re-Creations Taxidermy Studio in Elkins.*



Mary Brown got her 1st bow buck.

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GAME CHECKING



WV Wildlife Calendars

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – “The 2015 West Virginia Wildlife Calendar is now available for everyone to enjoy,” according to Curtis I. Taylor, Chief of the Wildlife Resources Section of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources. “The calendar is full of interesting daily facts, best fishing days and monthly tips to help you fully enjoy the outdoors. Its \$10 price tag makes it a terrific bargain and a great holiday gift.”

The cover of this award-winning wall calendar features a beautiful painting of two large bucks in the snow. Paintings by West Virginia artists include a yellow perch by Janet Ripper Chambers, a woodcock with newly hatched young and a pair of red-bellied woodpeckers by Chuck Ripper, a woodchuck by Carli Dawn Ratliff, a coyote in snow by Shelby Oreolt, and two snowshoe hares in their white pelage by Ron Refsland. Additional wildlife species featured include a red fox, red-tailed hawk, female cardinal, barred owl and a Luna

moth.

Accompanying each painting is a brief description of the featured animal and the artist’s contact information. Feature articles include a history of two key federal laws and the impact they have had on fish and wildlife management, and tips on taking a youngster fishing. Informational resources available

on the DNR website are also highlighted.

Proceeds from the calendar sales help fund projects of the DNR Wildlife Diversity Program such as monitoring bird populations, developing educational wildlife trunks for use in schools, and print-

continue to the next page



Hunting buddies Zach Shreves & Jordan Foster had success. Photo courtesy of Broken Wheel Campground in Weston.

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ing of publications about wildlife for which people do not hunt, trap or fish.

The 2015 West Virginia Wildlife Calendar is available at DNR district offices, card stores, convenience and drug stores throughout the state, or by mail through the West Virginia DNR Wildlife Resources Section, P.O. Box 67, Elkins, WV 26241; phone: 304-637-0245. A list of vendors selling the calendars is available online at www.wvdnr.gov/Wildlife/WildlifeCalendar.shtm.



Alec Yochym hammered a bunch of squirrels. *Photo courtesy of Broken Wheel Campground in Weston.*



Stephen Walker used a bow in McDowell Co. for a 156 class buck.



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X	O	R	S	U	Z	U	K	I	B	I	A	B	D	C	N	K	I	J	E
A	M	E	M	I	N	U	E	M	J	S	H	E	R	U	S	A	E	L	P
J	S	A	R	T	X	J	A	S	O	T	A	R	T	S	A	X	L	Z	R

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DOES**

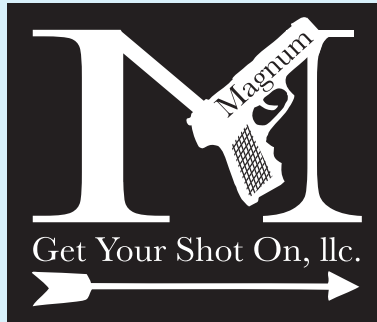
Send Photo To:

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P.O. Box 5521
Vienna, WV
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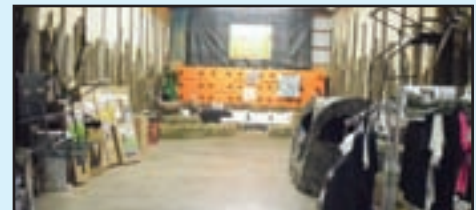
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T.R. Hathaway Says: Deer season runs to the end of the year. Rabbit and grouse seasons end Feb. 28th. Good luck!



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