



**FREE**

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

Issue 243

February/March 2015



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IF YOU DON'T SEE IT HERE, COME ON IN... THESE ARE JUST A FEW OF OUR SPECIALS!

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**Volume 1 Issue 243**

Publisher and Editor  
**Mark A. Goudy**

Contributing Editors  
West Virginia Division Of  
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**No Subscriptions Offered**

*Printed Every Six Weeks.*

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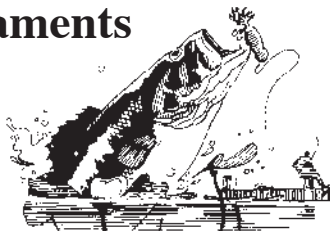
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## Cover Photo

Sam Canada brought in a big archery buck from southern WV.

Next year should give up numerous large racked deer. The abundance of mast will create a healthy deer herd.

Last months cover buck, Chad Cyphers, is a new typical bow record for WV. This McDowell County brute scored 188 7/8. It also broke the typical gun buck taken by Junior Bailes - 185 4/8.

*Photo courtesy of Uncle Tom's Loans in Oceanna.*

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## WV Total Deer Harvest For 2014

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. - Preliminary counts of game checking tags indicate West Virginia hunters harvested 104,223 white-tailed deer during the recently completed bucks-only, antlerless, muzzleloader, archery and youth/Class Q/Class XS deer seasons, according to Division of Natural Resources Director Bob Fala. This year's total harvest was 31 percent less than the 2013 deer harvest of 150,877 and 23 percent below the five-year average of 136,168.

The 2014 harvest is very similar

to the 2010 harvest of 106,499, the last time acorns were exceptionally abundant. Successful buck hunters this year had an excellent chance to harvest an older-age buck as the preliminary analysis of deer age data indicates that 25 percent of the antlered bucks brought to the game checking stations during the first three days of traditional buck firearm season were 3.5 years of age or older. A breakdown of the combined 2014 deer seasons reveals hunters harvested 37,766 bucks during the traditional buck firearm season, 39,514 antlerless deer during all antlerless firearm hunting opportunities, 21,653 deer during archery season, and 5,290 deer during muzzleloader season.

### Antlerless Deer Season

The 2014 antlerless deer season harvest, which includes the youth/Class Q/Class XS deer season, was 30 percent less than in 2013 and 14

continue to the next page



Chuck Spears, from Cairo, took a nice Ritchie County 8 point buck.



Anne & Troy Bartlett used a bow for this 8 point buck.

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percent below the five-year average of 46,204.

“It is important to note that the antlerless harvest is the key component to any deer management strategy, as it controls the future deer population,” said Director Fala.

In 2014, all or portions of 50 of the 55 counties were open to antlerless firearms season for hunters to harvest one to three antlerless deer, depending on the county. Next year’s antlerless deer hunting opportunity will depend on the need to increase, decrease or stabilize deer populations in each of the 51 counties where firearms deer hunting is permitted.

The top 10 counties are: Preston (1,859), Mason (1,446), Lewis (1,421), Upshur (1,365), Jackson (1,296), Ritchie (1,291), Randolph (1,285), Braxton (1,254), Harrison (1,253) and Monroe (1,214).

#### Muzzleloader Deer Season

The 2014 muzzleloader harvest of 5,290 was 32 percent less than the 2013 harvest of 7,739, and 28 percent below the five-year average of 7,341. However, this year’s harvest was within 95 deer of the 2012 recorded harvest of 5,385.



A late season New River musky was landed. Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.

The top 10 counties are: Randolph (295), Preston (265), Nicholas (251), Braxton (195), Lewis (193), Harrison (182), Fayette (164), Barbour (156), Mason (149) and Jackson (143).

#### Archery Deer Season

The bowhunter take of 21,653 deer was 28 percent less than the 2013 harvest of 29,979, 19 percent below the five-year average harvest of 26,721 and is very similar to the 2010 harvest of 21,962. Archery harvests are correlated to hard mast crops, and the above average acorn crop in 2014, like that of 2010, was a significant factor for the lower harvest in 2014.

The top 10 counties are: Preston (968), Randolph (759), Kanawha (757), Mason (710), Wyoming (683), Nicholas (673) Fayette (647), Raleigh (635), Wood (602) and Logan (601).

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## Ice Fishing Techniques

When learning to ice fish, it's important to remember that fish do not exert as much energy or move as fast as they do in the warm months. Ice fishing techniques should all be conducted slowly as the fish will not move much to bite. In addition to little movement, fish do not bite as aggressively as in the summer, so a big part of technique is reading the bite.

### Jigging

If you are using an ice fishing rod and hook-and-line while ice fishing, then a good technique to try is



Ryan Litton bagged a Wirt County buck. *Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.*



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jigging. You can use lures or live bait while jigging. Drop your line and let your jig hook sink to the bottom. Then slowly (very slowly) raise your bait up about a foot off the bottom. You can jig up and down, side to side or up and down and sideways. If you are moving your bait too much or too fast, the fish may think it is not worth the effort to go after it. Jigging works best for smaller fish like panfish.

### Tightlining

Another technique to try is called tightlining. Tightlining is a technique where you do not move the line and lure once you drop it in the water, instead you watch the line for movement. When the line becomes "tight" you know you have something on it. When tightlining, remember to use a lure heavy enough to allow your line to drop straight down to your desired depth, but not heavy enough that the line will not move when a strike occurs. Many anglers use trial and error to find the correct lure.

Some folks also add a spring bobber to their line to help with strike

indication. A spring bobber is a piece of metal or wire that extends off the rod tip. Any movement in the line will cause the spring bobber to move alerting the angler of a bite.

### Tip Ups

A tip-up is a technique as well as a piece of ice fishing equipment, more information can be found in the ice fishing gear section. A tip-up is a device set on the ice above your hole that dangles bait beneath it with a flag as a strike indicator. When a fish takes the bait, the reel turns and releases the line and flag at the same time. The flag "tips up" alerting the angler something is on the line. Tip-ups work best with heavier braided line and a larger lure, and typically attract larger game fish.

Once your tip-up is set up on the surface above your hole, drop your line in the water until it hits the bottom (usually stirring up the water), then raise it slightly above the floor. The line can either remain still or the wind can provide a natural jigging movement.

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# New Evinrude ETEC G2

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, June 14, 2014 – BRP today revealed a new outboard engine that produces up to 75% fewer total regulated emissions, with 15% better fuel efficiency and 20% more torque than leading four-stroke engines\*: G2 engines, the next generation of Evinrude E-TEC outboard engines.



Mike Scites, from Creston, bagged a Wirt County black bear.

“BRP’s Evinrude brand is an integral part of one of the most innovative powersports companies in the world,” said Alain Villemure, vice-president and general manager of BRP’s Marine Propulsion Systems division. “Our reputation for inventing and reinventing the playgrounds we’re in dictates that a new era in outboard engine technology and design would originate from BRP.”

The Evinrude E-TEC G2 outboard engine delivers unrivaled performance with best-in-class torque and fuel efficiency and lowest total emissions. Available this fall at BRP dealers in ranges starting at 200 H.O. to 300R.A.V.E., the new E-TEC G2 engine offers the first and only customizable look, the only clean rigging and fully in-

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offering 5-5-5: 5-year engine warranty\*\*, 5-year corrosion warranty, and 500 hours with no dealer-scheduled maintenance, allowing for the most time on the water.

The company launched its first-generation Evinrude E-TEC technology in 2003 and added to the line a broad spectrum of horsepower options for any boating need. The innovative technology has delivered on more power and torque while achieving and surpassing the EPA's clean air standards for more than 10 years. BRP's technological breakthroughs with the Evinrude E-TEC technology have also allowed for fewer dealer visits and less engine maintenance over time, giving boaters more time on the water. G2 engines join other Evinrude E-TEC product innovations like the new Pontoon Series engines, the only ones specifically built for pontoons, providing vibra-

tion-reducing motor mounts and all the same Evinrude best-in-class performance.

BRP dealers and boat builders from around the world and members of the media were given the opportunity to find out more about this new revolution in the outboard industry as well as test-ride the new line-up during a dealer conference held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (US) this past weekend. BRP organizers received a Silver status certification for a sustainable event.

BRP's Evinrude engine line-up from 3.5 to 300 horsepower offers customers superior value across a

full range of applications. Engines are available at authorized Evinrude dealerships worldwide.



E-TEC G2 Evinrude Outboard

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Bass Tournaments  
Details On Page 3**

## **2015 WV Lakes Bass Tournaments From Bass Sportsman**



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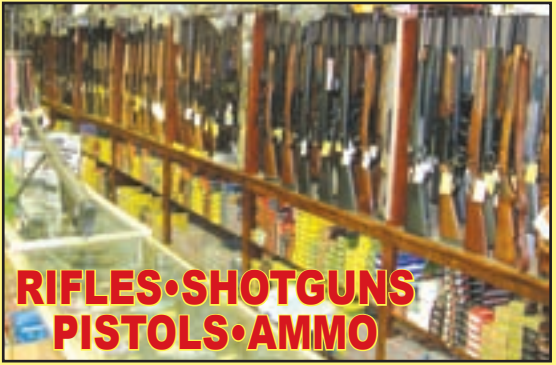
Colt Corder had a good day trapping and brought in a big bobcat. Photo courtesy of Old & New Sports in Ravenswood.

# OLD & NEW SPORTS

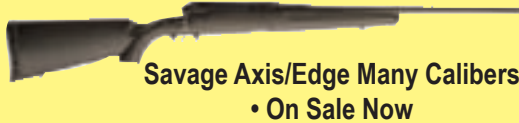
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Larry McCumbers had gun success with his 10 point. Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.

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Brendon Buck had success this season with a 10 point buck.



Colton Young, from Ripley, bagged a 9 point in Mason County.

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## Kayaking And Tournament Fishing

Kayak Tournament Fishing from a  
Beginners Perspective

About this time last year, my fishing season was winding down and I was preparing for the long days of winter and life without bass fishing for several months. During this time, I think I read more “How To” articles about fishing than anyone else on the planet. The articles don’t really seem to help my fishing abilities, but they do a great job of convincing me of things I “need” for the upcoming year to catch more and bigger fish. While browsing the internet for local fishing clubs, I stumbled across a website for the Mountain State Kayak Anglers (MSKA). After reading the forums and looking at pictures of

their events, I became more interested in the sport of kayak fishing. I grew up fishing for Smallmouth on the Greenbrier River, so I was familiar with fishing from a canoe. However, after scrolling through the MSKA photo gallery and looking at all of the rigs, it became clear pretty quickly that these weren’t your normal canoes or rafts. These were non-motorized fishing machines equipped with depth finders, rod holders, silent traction and more. This was right up my alley because I’m the type of person that likes to buy something bare and customize it to my liking, like MacGyver equipped with PVC and super glue. I own a small 14ft flat bottom Jon Boat that isn’t much in many people’s eyes, but to me it is my pride and joy. I bought the boat in 2012 and it was a plain ol jon boat equipped with 2 wooden paddles and a trolling motor that

looked like it was made back in the 50’s.

Over the past couple of years, I put a lot of time and effort into customizing it around my fishing needs. I added a 25hp motor, a carpeted standing platform and swivel boat seats. I mounted a nice 55lb thrust Minn Kota foot controlled trolling motor and a Lowrance fish finder. I also worked with my dad to build a livewell that we made from a 4wheeler toolbox that got several compliments at the bass boat tournaments. I know it’s not a sixty thousand dollar candy red, glitter flaked Ranger, but to me it did the job and allowed me to do everything I needed to do to fish

By Chris Shafer

continue to the next page



Jacob VanDyke brought in a buck this season. *Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.*

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from a boat and compete in tournaments. That isn't a knock to anyone that does own a nice bass boat, because trust me, I wouldn't mind owning one myself. I bring this up because affordability is a major drawback to many fisherman who just want to get off the bank and out on the water, either for fun or to compete in tournaments. Kayak fishing provides another avenue for people who might want to try something different or may not be able to afford an expensive bass boat. One thing I want to make clear is that many of the members of MSKA aren't in kayak fishing because of affordability, these guys just straight up love to fish from a kayak. To some, tournament fishing isn't strictly about money. I'll get into it more later, but from the people I've met in this group, it's about the competition and camaraderie.

Now that I have my first year of kayak tournament fishing under my belt, I wanted to share my experiences with others that might be interested in getting involved in the sport. After all, I've learned a lot in my first year, mainly because the "veterans" of the club have been so helpful in sharing tips and ideas with me. I put veterans in quotations because even though they have been around since the club was established, the club and many others around the nation are still in their infancy. That's the beauty of this sport, even the veterans are still learning and developing new ideas on how to improve and advance the industry. When you join

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a club, at least in my experience, you don't feel so behind the 8-ball that you can't catch up. I quickly learned that most of the things that I was trying to figure out were also things that others in the club were still trying to perfect as well. The sport of kayak fishing is literally evolving in front of our eyes.

If I tried to sum up my experience from my first year of kayak fishing in one word, I'd be torn between two, challenging and rewarding. The challenging aspects that I mention below might be pretty obvious, but it's the rewarding aspects that now have me addicted to this sport.

We as anglers all have the inner confidence that we're the best damn fisherman ever put on god's green earth, which may or may not

be true, but before you jump into kayak tournament fishing with the mindset that you're going to dominate week in and week out, you  
continue to the next page



Brandi Greene used a bow for this buck. Photo courtesy of Uncle Tom's Loans in Oceanna.



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better make sure you're a well-rounded angler first. This sport is challenging in a number of ways. I won't touch on them all, but I'll go over my top 3.

#### Challenges to Beginners

First, the tournament trail is a 50/50 split between rivers and lakes. That means you better know how to fish flat water for Largemouth and know the different areas of the lakes, from points to deep structure, to knowing how to fish swift water and which rocks and eddies are holding the big Smallmouth in the rivers. Also, keep in

mind that you're fishing from a kayak, so your secret honey holes better be within paddling distance of the ramps. This isn't bass boat fishing where you can hammer down your 250hp motor and explore each end of the lake before lunch. You should have a good game plan going into tournament day on when and where you plan to fish, because you have to make the most of your time on the water.

Secondly, battling the conditions while trying to fish from a kayak can be very challenging. Most of your sit-on-top fishing kayaks

are in the 60-90lb range and have a tendency to get blown around while on the water. Depending on your fishing style or where the fish are staging on a given day, holding position while on the water is critically important. Trying to do this from a kayak while fishing in 10-15mph winds can be challenging, but it's doable. Instead of battling the wind and trying to hold position all day, some kayak fisherman try to find protection by seeking out coves and covered banks, while others choose to fish with the wind.

*continue to the next page*

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It's definitely one of the most challenging things I had to learn how to adjust to in my first year. Normally winds under 10-12mph didn't affect me much when fishing from my jon boat. I had my foot controlled trolling motor and could pretty much navigate wherever I wanted to and hold close to a spot in windy conditions. In kayak fishing, that isn't the case. Your paddle is your trolling motor and if you want to stay on a spot or in a particular area, you better be picking up your paddle every other cast and repositioning yourself. This can certainly lead to a long day on the water, but as with any type of fishing, it's the person that can adjust to it the best that will have the most success.

Third, managing your gear while on the water is crucial and can be challenging for newbies to kayak fishing. I'm speaking from experience. You'll be amazed when you see how many rods and tackle boxes some people can fit on a 12ft kayak. For some, this approach works just fine and allows them to fish many different techniques throughout the day without wasting any time changing lures

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or presentations. Personally, I've learned the hard way that the "less is more" approach works better for me. The challenging part, from my perspective, is being able to work effectively while on the water with all of this gear surrounding you. If you plan on joining the kayak fishing world, you'll quickly learn that managing your space and having a well-organized kayak is essential, especially when tournament fishing. It took me a couple of tournaments and a few lost fish before I understood how important it was to have all of my gear easily accessible.

continue to the next page



Jeff Casto, from Ripley, hooked a fall 45" musky.

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sible at the drop of a dime.

In kayak tournaments, landing the fish is only half the battle. Once you get the fish in your boat and it's flapping around between your legs like a mad man, treble hooks shaking around like a pair of maraca's, you still have to get the fish documented for weigh-in. In order to document the fish, you have to lay the fish down on the official measuring board (hawg trough), place the tournament identifier somewhere it is visible in the photo, and get your phone out to take a picture. As you can imagine, the fish typically isn't the most cooperative thing in the world while you're fumbling around for your phone, which many times your hands are wet or slimy and trying to unlock your phone with the finger swipe becomes a challenge of its own. During the first couple of tournaments, I lost several fish that flopped off of my measuring board and through my hands as it turned around and winked at me before diving back into the water and swimming off. All of that

work....for nothing. Fortunately, a fellow MSKA member shared with me a tip of how he rigged his Hawg Trough with paracord and a stringer clip to secure the fish to the board while he took a picture. This was a huge help and I haven't lost a fish since making the change.

These are just a few of the challenges that a beginner kayak angler will face. There are ways to deal with each of them and fortunately we are all still learning together. The good thing is, there's plenty of people in this community willing to share tips and ideas.

**What Kayak Tournament Fishing Is All About**

The other word I mentioned that I would use to sum up my first year of kayak fishing would be rewarding. It's hard to explain on paper what I mean by this, but I'll give it a try. First of all, the kayak fishing community is like none I've ever encountered. The friendships I've formed this year with mem-

bers of the MSKA group and clubs from other states have been amazing. There's a lot of camaraderie in our group and in the kayak fishing community as a whole. The night before each tournament, several people from MSKA would always meet at the local campground of whatever lake or river we were fishing the next day and camp out. Nearly every tournament brought new members to the club, many of which took part in the camp outs the night before. You simply don't find this in many other fishing clubs.

The kayak fishing community itself feels small in the sense that the major players all seem very approachable, but the sport itself is one of the fastest growing outdoor activities. In the B.A.S.S tournament world, fishing in a tournament with Randy Howell, Kevin VanDam, Skeet Reese or any of the other insanely popular fisherman in today's fishing world would be

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Chris Shafer landed a 5.5 pound smallmouth in late November.

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very unlikely. However, in kayak fishing, it's very possible that you could find yourself lining up to fish in a tournament next to one of the top names in the sport. At the Mountain State Kayak Anglers New River Super Event tournament this year, the designer of one of the most popular fishing kayaks to date travelled to West Virginia to hang out with the clubs from West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. It was a cool experience for everyone involved, but especially for the people who owned one of his boats and got a chance to meet him in person.

From my point of view, the kayak fishing industry almost feels like a grassroots sort of movement in the fishing world. All over the country there are local clubs sprouting up that support the emergence of kayak tournament fishing. A majority of the baits, rods, and gear used by most kayak fisherman are produced by small locally owned businesses. Many of these businesses are owned and operated by a single person, but are distributing products to many fisherman all over the world. Whether it be the YakAttack products you have mounted all over your kayak, the 412 BaitCo by Donald Corbett plastics or spinnerbaits your tossing around the rivers or lakes, the SmallieStix rods your battling the fish with, or any of the other countless small businesses contributing to the kayak fishing world, the kayak fishing community is a very self-sufficient group. In this world, you can keep your mass produced baits, rods, and gear, we'll take the

stuff that is being made in someone's basement or garage....and out fish you with it.

Last but not least, there's something extremely rewarding about being out on a river or lake as the sun is coming up in your kayak. I know that sounds corny, but if you've been there, you know what I'm talking about. You don't have the stress of worrying about your

motor not starting, forgetting your trolling motor battery at the house, or your tournament partner driving you insane. It's just you and the water.

If you're interested in kayak fishing, you can find more information at [www.mountainstatekayakanglers.com](http://www.mountainstatekayakanglers.com) or on Facebook by searching Mountain State Kayak Anglers.

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This hunter bagged a quality buck.  
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John Snider shot an 8 point buck.  
Photo courtesy of Hobert's Store in Big Bend.

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Cory Boothe, from Summersville, brought in a large bobcat.



Jack Herron went to Upshur County for his 7 point buck.

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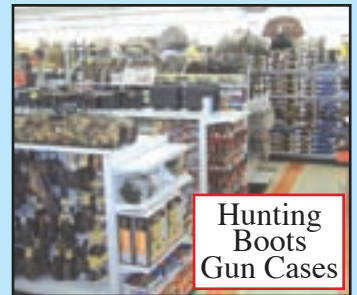
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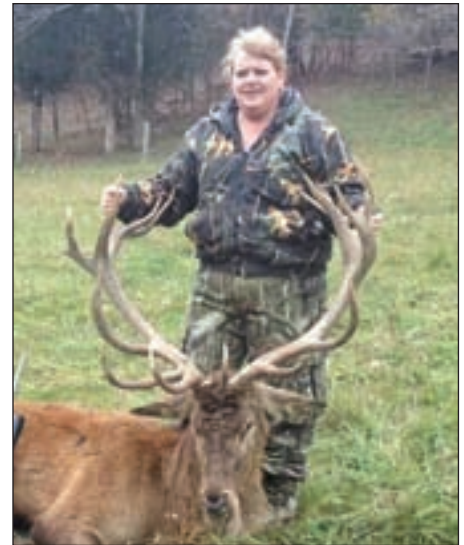
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Mitch Liggett trapped a big river otter. Photo courtesy of Anderson Outdoors in Buckhannon.



A quality bow buck was taken by Keith Dameron. Photo courtesy of Uncle Tom's Loans in Oceanna.



Kim Poing went to Texas for an exotic animal. Photo courtesy of Re-Creations Taxidermy Studio in Elkins.



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# Trout Information

Trout is a term used for several types of fish that are a part of one of three genera: oncorhynchus, salmo or salvelinus. They live in freshwater, but some trout do spend time out in the ocean and return to freshwater to spawn, just like salmon, which trout are closely related to. Several common types of trout are brown trout, lake trout, rainbow trout and steelhead. A trout's diet usually consist of other fish and aquatic invertebrates. When a trout reaches over 12 inches they'll usually only feed on smaller fish. Trout are a very popular game fish and many state wildlife agencies stock lakes, ponds and streams with trout for anglers to catch.

You can locate trout in lakes and streams with cool water. The ideal temperature range is 50 to 60 degrees. Juvenile trout can also be known as fry, troutlet and troutling. They tend to mature around 2 to 3 years of age. The lifespan on trout depends on the species. For example, a rainbow trout can live up to 7 years while lake trout can

live for several decades. The color variation of trout varies greatly and is dependent on the type of trout you're looking to catch. Trout are not only popular with anglers, they are also popular on the dinner table. Trout, along with its close relatively salmon are a common staple in many American's diets.

Know the Current - If you understand how a river or stream is shaped by moving water you'll be able to find trout very easily. Deep pools created by the current can hold a big trout, but smaller trout can also be found in them. The large trout will most likely be in these pools during dawn and dusk. Power Bait ONLY Works on Stocked Trout - If you're fishing for trout with power bait you better make sure the trout in that body



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of water were stocked (farm raised) and not native. Native trout will not bite on power bait, the only reason stocked trout will is because they are fed pellets in the hatchery and will eat anything that resembles or smells like the pellets.

The Best Live Bait - Hands down night crawlers are an effective live bait for catching trout, along with minnows and crayfish. A neat trick  
 continue to the next page

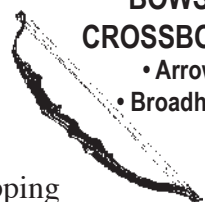


Wayne Franklin bagged a black bear in Raleigh County.




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is to take a look at what lives on the shore of where you're fishing for trout and see what might be native to their lunch or dinner menu. Mayflies, when native to the area, can be deadly during the fall season.

Choose Your Lures Wisely - It's important to pick the right lures. Using the wrong type could make you miss out on opportunities. Fortunately, there are a few brands on the market that do a tremendous job. Read our article on the top trout lures to learn more. The Silver Spoon - Trout, especially lake trout love to bite on a small silver spoon. There are several different rigs that might work best for you, try them out to see what works best.

**Trout Fishing Records**

Listed below are the world record trout caught by fishermen just like you. This data comes directly from the IGFA (International Game Fish Association). These type of fishing records don't change often and we do try to keep this section updated. To see if one of the below trout records were broken you should visit the IGFA website, below we've provided a link to it in the bottom

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section called Additional Resources for Trout Fishing. Hopefully one day we'll see your name listed below for a record trout!

Llyod Bull caught a lake trout

(salvelinus namaycush) in Great Bear Lake located in Canada on August 19th, 1995 that weighed 32.65 kg (72 lbs. 0 oz.)

continue to the next page



Gerald Cottrell, from Arnoldsburg, caught a 51 inch musky recently.

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Sean Konrad caught a rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) in Lake Diefenbaker located in Canada on September 5th, 2009 that weighed 21.77 kg (48 lbs. 0 oz.)

Chas Reed caught a golden trout (*Oncorhynchus aguabonita*) in Cooks Lake located in Wyoming, USA on August 5th, 1948 that weighed 4.98 kg (11 lbs. 0 oz.)

N. Higgins caught a bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) in Lake Pend Oreille located in Idaho, USA on October 27th, 1949 that weighed 14.51 kg (32 lbs. 0 oz.)

Dr. W. Cook caught a brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) in the Nipigon River located in Canada on July 1st, 1916 that weighed 6.57 kg (14 lbs. 8 oz.)

John Skimmerhorn caught a cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki*) in Pyramid Lake located in Nevada, USA on December 1st, 1925 that weighed 18.59 kg (41 lbs. 0 oz.)



Dylan Leslie harvested a nice buck. Photo courtesy of Anderson Outdoors in Buckhannon.

**Don't Forget To Send In Your BIG GAME Pics!**

**Look For Forms In This Issue.**

**Mail Or Email Details On Pages 15 & 38**

## Bass Fishing In Cold Water

By Jason Christie

There's no question, if your local waters are not frozen over, you're fishing in cold water. Largemouth bass know how to survive wherever they live, and with the exception of the shallow southern fisheries, deep water is the key to that plan.

This time of year, deep and slow is a good general strategy. The fish don't feel like chasing down their meals, so you have to make it easy for them.

My specific baits will vary based on where I'm fishing, but in most

cases, I have a lot of confidence in a jig, a swimbait and a deep diving crankbait. Here's how I use them:  
Jig

This is my first choice for deep winter fishing. I'll use it when I think the fish are relating to the bottom. I like calm conditions because it's harder to feel the bait and the bites when there's a lot of wind and waves.

I'll go with a 3/4-ounce Booyah  
continue to the next page



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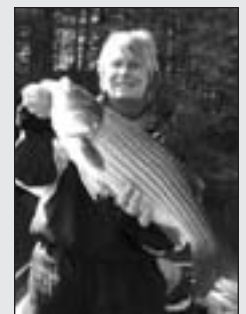
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football jig with a green pumpkin skirt. I also like green pumpkin on the trailer, but I go with something that doesn't have a lot of action like the YUM Craw Papi.

In the wintertime, it's more about profile than action. The fish don't see a lot of action this time of year, so I want my trailer to have a natural appearance.

That green pumpkin color is what I use when there's a lot of sunlight, but on cloudy days, I'll go with a black and blue trailer for contrast. It's crazy how adding a dark trailer changes the whole look of your jig.

For a different look, you can also go with a black and blue jig and a green pumpkin trailer.

I fish my jigs on 12- to 16-pound Sunline Sniper fluorocarbon. I go with 12-pound when the water is really clear, but in lower visibility,

I prefer the 16-pound line because it just slows down the bait.

## Swimbait

A 5-inch YUM Money Minnow is what I use, and the river shad color works really well in the wintertime. Depending on the depth and the wind, I'll fish this on a 1/2- to 1-ounce swimbait head. If I find there's a lot of trees and brush on the bottom, I'll replace the swimbait head with a 5/0 or 6/0 Trokar belly-weighted swimbait hook.

And here's a tip: Most anglers know that sealing your swimbait to your leadhead with Super Glue will minimize wear and tear and eliminate the need to constantly readjust your bait. But if you'll take the time to glue your bait to the swim-

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bait head before you go out, it will dry faster than it will on the water.

To me, the swimbait fishing is like the old school grub fishing. You get a target depth and then just slow roll it along the ledge. Once you know the depth they're in, either from looking on your electronics or catching one on a jig, you can slowly bring that swimbait through the strike zone.

## Crankbait

On days when the fish are definitely relating to the bottom and I want to show them something other than a jig, a deep diving crankbait

continue to the next page



Max Crook brought in a buck this season. Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.

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will give them a different look. For this, I do best with crawdad colors or firetiger.

It's a lot like cranking deep ledges in the summertime, except when you're cranking in the wintertime, you're not going to get as many bites. But the trade-off is that when you do get a bite, it could be the biggest fish you catch that day.

Also, in the summertime, we tend to reel pretty fast, make bottom contact and really burn it to get that reaction strike. I also want that reaction strike in the winter, but I use a different strategy. I reel my crankbait pretty fast to make bottom contact, but once I get it down there, I slow it down and just dig.

Another tip: In the wintertime, I throw a crankbait that's a little bigger than the depth I need. For instance, if I'm fishing 10-15 feet, I can usually hit that with a Bomber BD6, but in the wintertime, I'll throw a BD7.

It's a little bigger bait and it lets me stay in contact better while I'm reeling on that slower speed. I'll also use a Lew's reel with a slower gear ratio, like a 5.4:1 with 10- to 12-pound line.

I'll fish all three of these baits in the same types of habitat – drops near deep water, creek channel turns and areas with cover. In the wintertime, fish like that hard cover, whether it's rock, stumps or logs.

Wherever you end up fishing, remember that you can still catch largemouth bass in the wintertime, but you're usually going to have to fish deep and fish slowly.

## Fall Turkey Harvest

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. - Preliminary figures for the 2014 fall turkey hunting season reveal that 1,016 turkeys were checked in, according to Curtis I. Taylor, chief of the Wildlife Resources Section of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources. Statewide, the 2014 harvest was very similar to the 999 reported in 2013.

Three of the six administrative districts reported increases in harvest from 2013 levels ranging from a modest 4 percent increase in District 1 to a 69 percent increase in District 6, despite having two additional counties closed to hunting. Districts 2, 4 and 5 reported declines in harvest. The decline in District 5 was likely due to only one county being open to hunting in 2014, compared to five counties in 2013.

"Fall turkey harvests are highly influenced by hunter participation and interest, annual recruitment and

hard mast conditions," said Taylor. "Turkey brood production was fairly good this year and it mimicked the 5-year average. Brood observations were 30 percent higher than last year and 15 percent better than 2012. These production improvements and better mast conditions led us to anticipate a similar fall harvest, which happened even with six fewer counties open to hunting."



Mr. Humbolt harvested a buck this season. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.*



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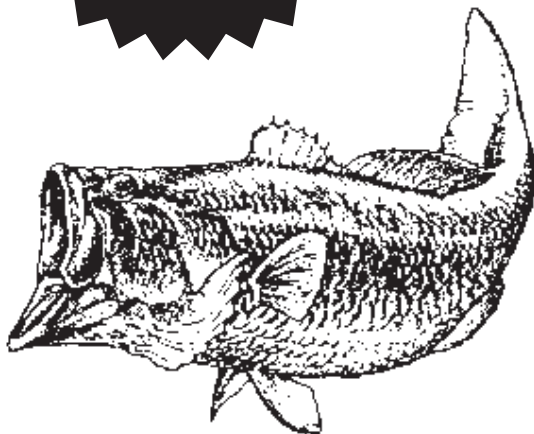
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## 2014 Fall Turkey Harvest Results

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Ronald Boyer, from Tunnelton, went to Preston Co. for a bear.

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2012. These production improvements and better mast conditions led us to anticipate a similar fall harvest, which happened even with six fewer counties open to hunt-

ing.”

Top counties for 2014 were Nicholas (90), Greenbrier (84), Randolph (83), Pocahontas (54) and Preston (53).



Mary Jo Goddard, from New Martinsville, went to the ocean for a 63 pound white marlin.

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Eric Bennett bagged a quality buck.  
 Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.



Scoty Rush, from Arnoldsburg, caught a winter musky.

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Young Issiah Border, from Sandville, shot a nice 8 point buck,



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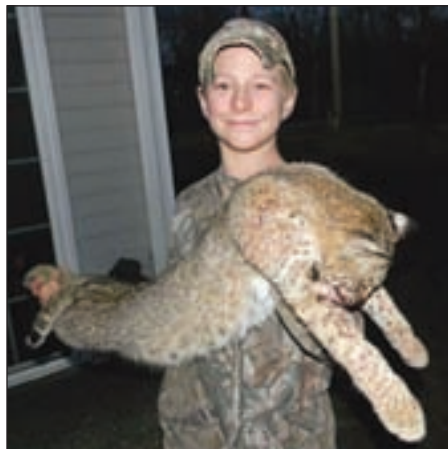
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Kathy Dunlap bagged an 8 point buck. *Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.*



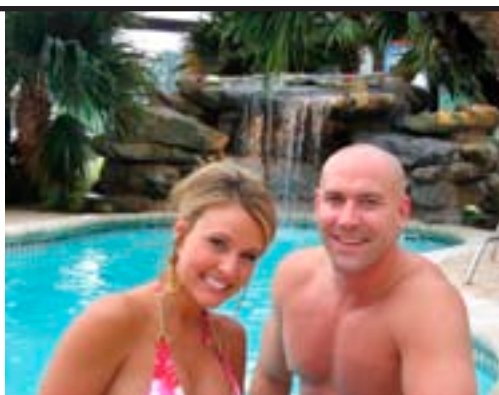
John Alley, from Charleston, got a seven point in Ritchie County.



Young Kayden Young trapped a nice bobcat.



Mike Arbogast brought in a buck. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.*



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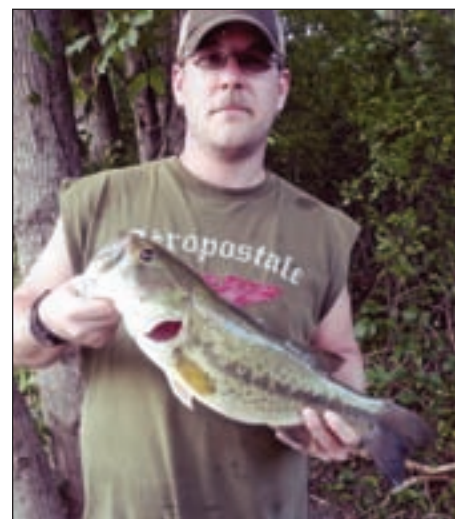
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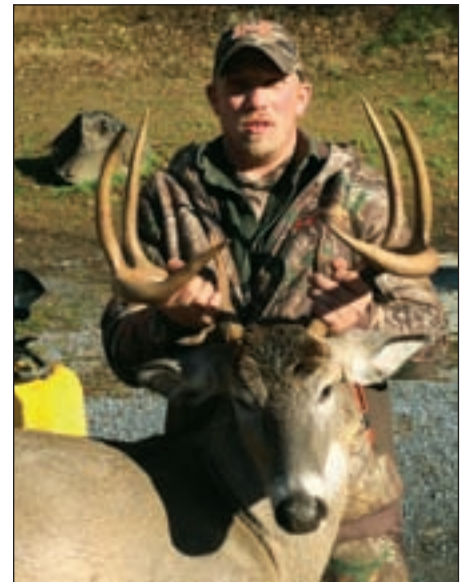
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Jason Estep went to Raleigh County for his good buck.

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## Black Bears

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va.— West Virginia hunters harvested 2,385 black bears during the combined 2014 archery and firearms seasons, according to Colin Carpenter, Black Bear Project Leader for the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources. The preliminary harvest data for the combined 2014 seasons were 11 percent lower than the 2013 harvest of 2,692 bears. The black bear harvest of 2014 marks the fifth time in five years that the harvest has topped 2,000 and is tied for the third highest harvest on record.

“Mast conditions in 2014 helped some hunters and hurt others,” said Carpenter. “The 2014 Mast Survey and Hunting Outlook docu-

mented vastly improved oak mast conditions over 2013. Historically, abundant oak mast has led to a decreased archery harvest and an increased December firearms harvest, and that scenario held true in 2014. Abundant oak mast statewide prevented archers from patterning bears effectively and led to a decreased archery harvest. However, abundant mast kept bruins out of their winter dens and available to be harvested in the December firearms season.”

Carpenter attributed the decrease in harvest during the September/October firearms seasons to a decrease in hunting days from six in 2013 to three in 2014 in the 16 counties that were open. There was a slight increase in harvest during the concurrent buck-gun/bear season over 2013. Overall, the decrease in archery and September/October firearms harvest was not offset by the increases in the buck-gun and December firearms harvest.

Hunters took 516 bears during the 2014 archery season. The top five continue to the next page

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counties were Webster (53), Preston (45), Fayette (42), Nicholas (39), and Randolph (39).

Firearms hunters harvested 1,869 bears during 2014. Hunters took 457 bears in September and October, 397 during the concurrent buck-gun/bear season, and 1,015 during the traditional December season. The top five counties were Pocahontas (182), Randolph (172), Greenbrier (167), Pendleton (167) and Webster (160).

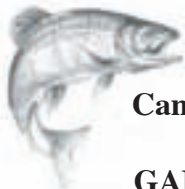
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## All About Line

By Brent Chapman

Over the last few weeks I have asked my fans on social media for questions. While I have received questions on just about everything involving fishing, and some not, the one question I get most is about line.

It's good to know that people have their mind in the right place – line is extremely important. I am not sure I can answer all the line questions in a single article. I think by giving you my line preferences I can start to answer many of the questions.

Before I get into my line choices I want to point out a couple of things. First, while line is something I am pay close attention to, I am pretty simple in my thinking about it. Here's a quick general list of some things to keep in mind.

I use a Palomar knot for just about everything.

I use uni-to-uni knots for line splicing (adding leader).

I use Gamma Torque braid on all my spinning rods (with a leader). I use snaps for topwater walking baits to help them walk more freely.

Smaller diameter line helps baits run deeper.

Here are some of my line choices for different techniques I use a lot. Jerkbait

continue to the next page



Robert Lee Cornell went to Mason County for a nice 8 point buck.

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For a jerkbaits, I use 8- to 16-pound Gamma Edge fluorocarbon line. The deeper I want the bait to run, the lighter the line I choose. If I am fishing a body of water with big fish like Gunter'sville, Falcon or Clear Lake, I will select a heavier line.

**Crankbait**

With a crankbait I use 8- to 20-pound fluorocarbon. Like the jerkbait, the deeper I want the bait to run the lighter the line I choose. However, if I am cranking near structure I will upsize my line.

**Jig**

A jig is one of my favorite baits, and for them I will use the heaviest line I can get away with that will not alter the action of the bait. I generally use between 10- and 30-pound fluorocarbon. For really big fish and fishing in heavy structure, I will sometimes make the switch to braided line.

**Topwater**

For topwater I will use 30- to 50-pound Gamma Torque braid. I do have one exception, and that is prop baits. For prop baits I will use a copolymer line. With braid there is little or no stretch, which makes working the bait easy and improves my hookset.

**Drop shot**

I almost always drop shot with a spinning reel. Over the past few years I have found the benefits of braided line on spinning reels. Less coil and better casting are the two biggest benefits, but added strength

and better hooksets are also a benefit. For my leader I use about 18 inches of 8- to 12-pound fluorocarbon. Recently, I switched from using the uni-to-uni knot for this, instead I use a Eagle Claw Lazer sharp barrel swivel (size 12-16.) This keeps my line twist to a minimum, and I don't have to worry about the knot strength on such light line.

**Shaky head**

For a shaky head I use 8- to 12-pound fluorocarbon depending on the area I am fishing. When I am fishing around rock or docks, I will elect to use the 12-pound. For more open water areas I will select the 8- or 10-pound size.

**Flipping**

For flipping I use 16- to 30-pound fluorocarbon. I use Gamma Torque braid for punching or fishing super heavy vegetation or wood. However, for soft wood, like the kind at Falcon Lake, I will switch back to fluorocarbon, up to 40-pounds, because braid will cut into a tree and make landing a fish impossible.

**Soft plastics/Texas rig**

Another one of my favorite techniques is a TightLines UV Beaver on a Texas rig. For this and other soft plastics I use 14- to 25-pound fluorocarbon. By using lighter line I can speed the rate of fall, or heavier line will slow it down.

For the majority of my fishing, these are the lines I use with each technique. Of course, there are always exceptions. Choose the right

line, understand the properties of each and hook and land more fish. Remember to change your line often, and always check your line for abrasions throughout the day.



Patrick Toler used a bow for a good 8 point buck. Photo courtesy of Uncle Tom's Loans in Oceanna.

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## Jerkbaits In Cold Water

We all hear about jerkbaits when the water's cold in the winter and then again later as it warms up going into the spawn. I like to fish them too under those conditions, but I put something different into my presentations.

I first noticed something during the 2013 Classic on Grand Lake. It seemed like whenever I let my bait sit perfectly still in the water and suspend with no vertical movement, I struggled. But, when I modified my jerkbait just a little so it would slowly sink nose down, I was able to catch them.

That wasn't the first time I'd done that, but it was the first time that I made up my mind to experiment with it. After almost three winters I've come to the conclusion that cold water jerkbaits fall into three categories.

The first is the slow fall, nose down. This is good in water from the low 40s all the way down to freezing. And, when I say slow fall I mean really, really slow with the

By Mike Iaconelli

nose just barely pointing down. Think about it this way — you don't see real minnows drop through the water like a rock with their nose pointed down like a missile.

I call the next group true suspending jerkbaits. These are the ones that'll sit perfectly still in the water without any vertical movement whatsoever. These baits are good when the water's between 45 and 50 degrees.

The third group will rise ever so slightly with their nose barely pointed up towards the surface. This is a more aggressive presentation that's usually at its best in water 50 degrees or warmer.

Any decent jerkbait — and I do mean almost any jerkbait made by almost any company — can be customized to fit into any of my three categories. It's simply a matter of taking the time to make it happen. I prefer Rapala jerkbaits.

The first, and maybe the best, way to customize your lure is to swap out the hooks. Size, style and make

are all important here. I test mine at home in a tub of water so I don't have to waste fishing time when I'm in the boat. Actually, I do this no matter how I modify them.

The next best way to change the performance characteristics of your jerkbaits is with SuspenDots or SuspenStrips. They're made by Storm and are available at any quality tackle shop or online. Golf

continue to the next page



This WV buck had an enormous rack with long tines.

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Tape will do a surprisingly good job too, although I much prefer the Storm stickers.

Another way to create subtle changes in a jerkbait's performance is with line choice. Mono tends to float. Fluorocarbon tends to sink. Thicker line doesn't sink as fast as thin line. This is a pretty good way to do it. I put it last, however, because I realize that a lot of recreational anglers don't have six or eight types of line spooled up when they go fishing.

Next time we'll talk about how to fish each of these baits and I'll give you a couple of tricks that I use with jerkbaits to coax bites from lethargic bass. Mike Iaconelli's column appears weekly on Bassmaster.com. You can also find him on Facebook and Twitter or visit his website, [mikeiaconelli.com](http://mikeiaconelli.com).

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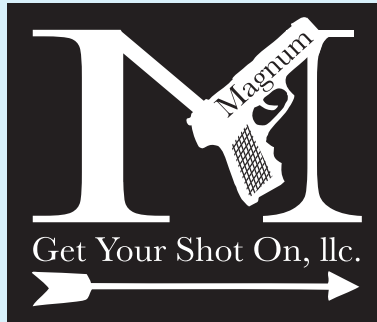
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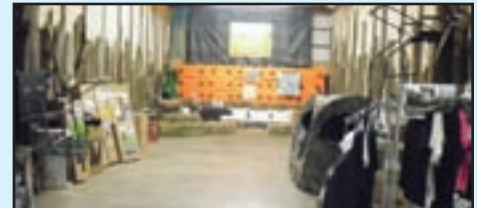
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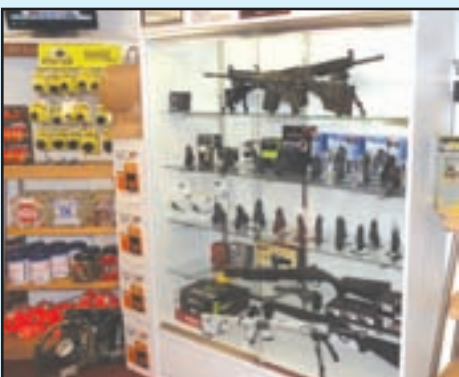
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