



FREE

Issue 291

March/April 2021

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**Depth
FINDER**

**B.A.S.S.
News**

**DNR
Updates**



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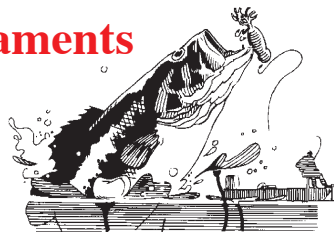
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Cover Photo

Fishing at Stonewall Jackson lake, Gary Ross, from Weston, landed a 6 pound, 14 ounce largemouth bass. He caught and released this large bass in mid-March.

Bass fishing tournaments are starting soon. Look for Bass Sportsman tournament info in this issue.

The HUGE Covid 19 problems are getting better. Everyone should get a vaccine.

Fishing Trivia

1. What is the healthiest fish?
Alaskan salmon
2. What is the largest fish in the world?
Whale sharks
3. What is the fastest fish in the world?
Sailfish
4. A lumpsucker is what type of creature?
A fish
5. What is the dirtiest fish to eat?
Tilapia
6. Some masks for spearfishing have a dark, mirror tint on the glass. Why is this?
It doesn't allow fish to see your eyes
7. Dolphins travel in family groups called what?
Pods
8. What species of fish produces

- the most eggs
Mola
9. A soft-hackle nymph fly that has just been successfully employed to hook a member of one of the types of fish for which flies are most commonly used. What kind of fish is this?
Trout
10. What fish has the least calories?
Cod, flounder, and sole
11. How many tentacles does an octopus have?
Eight
12. What is a group of fish called?
School

continue to the next page



Andrea Cross had success with a nice buck. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.*



Criss Garrison hunted in Kanawha County for a great drop tine buck.

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13. What lure is commonly used for ice fishing?

Lure commonly used for ice fishing.

14. Do fish give birth out their mouth?

Cichlids hold fertilized eggs in their mouth.

15. What fish is the healthiest for weight loss?

Salmon, tuna, Pacific cod, trout, sardines, mackerel, and even the desi hilsa

16. What is the smallest fish in the world?

Paedocypris

17. What animal was the largest to

ever live on the planet earth?

The Blue Whale.

18. What type of bait/lure should you not use to catch Carp?

Spinner

19. What are the driest flies designed to resemble?

Adult insects

20. Does the thickness of the ice af-

continue to the next page



A lucky hunter brought in a quality bow whitetail buck.



Doninick Irizarry, from Parkersburg, caught and released a 44" Little Kanawha River musky.

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ect your ability to catch fish?

Yes

21. How do you tell if a fish is a boy or a girl?

Males are often slimmer but larger-bodied than females and are more vibrantly colored. The dorsal and anal fins of the male are more pointed, larger, and more flowing than in the female.

22. Carp are weak fighters. T/F?

False

23. Which type of fishing reel is most frequently used for beginners?

Spincast

24. What is the most dangerous fish in the world?

Candiru, also known as cañero, toothpick fish, or vampire fish

25. What fish has the most fat?

Mackerel, herring and King salmon



Cody Evans had deer success this past hunting season.



Christmas tree habitat improvement was done by this group at Tygart Lake. Helping were the WVU Fishing Club, District One Fish Management, Boy Scout Troop 135, from Gassoway, and members of WV Federation Nation.

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26. What kind of creature sleeps with one eye open?

Dolphin.

27. How does wet Grizzly King wet fly differ from dry flies?

They sink rather than floating

28. A sea horse is what kind of creature?

A fish

29. Which fish is known for hiding under logs and snatching fish from out of the shadows?

Pike

30. "Angler" is another term for

"fisherman." True or false?

True

continue to page 8

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31. A one shot instant kill is referred to as a what?

Stone Shot

32. When persuading an octopus from its hole, a diver will use the tip of the spear gun or end of a pole sling (three prongs) to gently prod the hole while lightly poking, tap-

ping and pressing against the octopus. What is this called?

Tickling

33. Which place will you catch the largest bass?

Middle of the lake

34. A species of fish that can change its gender is called

A hermaphrodite

35. Bass has been caught on lures such as spinner, hot dogs, crank-bait, and artificial worms. T/F?

True

36. How many varieties of snook are found in Florida waters?

Four

37. What is the most poisonous fish in the world?

Reef stonefish

38. Which fish family is the pilchard of a member?

Herring


39. Carp are bottom feeders and top water feeders as well. T/F?

True

40. What would you call a lobster with no claws?

Pistol

continue to page 10



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Joshua Hedrick has a 6 1/4 pound brown trout. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.*



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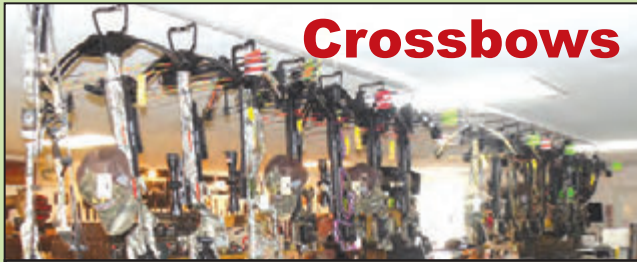


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Eric Burton, from Parkersburg, caught a 43" winter musky at Kanawha Falls and released it.

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Bill Whitehair caught a 23" rainbow trout. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.*

41. When blue water hunting, divers will often 'chum' the water. This is done to do what?
Bring in game fish and distract them
42. What is the scariest fish in the world?
Glass Catfish
43. Which type of reel is the most accurate?
Baitcasting
44. Many wet flies are designed to resemble insect larvae that, in the right season, may accidentally land in the water and struggle to escape. This fly is called after what alliterative name for brown and black caterpillars of a number of species?
Woolly worm
46. Which fish has many bright colors along its sides?
Rainbow Trout
47. What type of fish are members of the class Asteroidea?
Starfish

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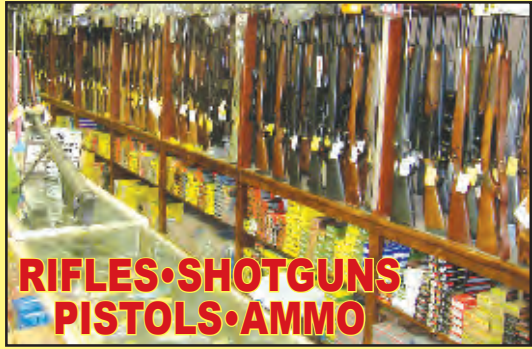
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48. Where would one find a fish's caudal fin?
Tail
49. Sailfish, dolphin, wahoo, tripletail, kingfish, and marlin all fall under the 'pelagic' category. T/F?
True
50. What item is commonly used

to get slush out of your ice fishing hole?
Skimmer



Mike Harper went to Kanawha Co. for a fine bow buck. *Photo courtesy of Tyler Outdoor Supply in Middlebourne.*



Krystal Rider, from Milton, caught her biggest rainbow trout.

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Electronic Fish Finders

Fishing is an activity that involves lots of fun and enjoyment but for others, it's a form of livelihood. But this activity can be quite hectic and frustrating if at the end of the day you're unable to locate and catch fish. The good news is technological advancements have made fishing a lot easier than ever before for even amateur anglers. We are talking about depth finders and fish finders. These devices are among the most useful fishing tools available in the market today.

These two essential accessories for fishing have evolved over the years into sophisticated units that give more accurate, precise, and detailed imaging so users can have an effective yet stress-free fishing experience.

Depth finders and fish finders are often used interchangeably, especially in marketing ads, when the truth is they are two different devices, of course with some similarities. In this article, we are going to explain the basic functionality of each device and some major facts



Ethan Bonnette harvested a Tyler Co. buck. *Photo courtesy of Tyler Outdoor Supply in Middlebourne.*

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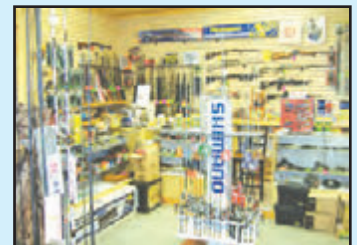
you need to know about them so you can make an informed choice when you go shopping. Without further ado, let's get right into it: What Is A Depth Finder?

As the name suggests, it's a device that simply displays the depth of water under a water vessel in a digital read-out. It uses sonar to send out signals underwater and measures the time it takes for a sonic pulse to return from the depths of the water. A depth finder is commonly used when detecting the depth of shallow waters and a

continue to the next page



Russell Dickens bagged a fine bow buck this year..



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There's a wide variety of depth finders that are available for different fishing needs. A basic model can measure the depth and temperature of the water. If that is all you need to make your fishing experience fruitful, then, by all means, get a basic depth finder as it's much cheaper and simple to use.

However, for novice anglers who may need more data than that, consider a more sophisticated depth finder. These top-notch models have multiple features and a variety of settings that provide all sorts of data. You can also choose from different fishing modes, whether shallow water, slow trolling, fast trolling, or ice fishing.

While you can achieve any of these fishing modes by simply adjusting where you point your depth finder, different settings on the

high-end models can allow you to adjust your device to focus on the types of data retrieval you want. What Is A Fish Finder?

The main purpose of a fish finder is to reduce the number of time anglers spend looking for fish and increase the catch rate. This device utilizes the same sonar technology but actually gives a graphic image/video of what's happening under the water, including what the bottom looks like and any objects present like fish, wrecks, etc. Modern fish finders include features like radar and electronic compasses, GPS capabilities, and more, all aimed at making them more effective at showcasing the exact location of fish.

Understanding Fish Finders

There's so much to know about fish finders and in the following texts, we are going to cover as

much as possible so you can know how to choose the best fish finders. Let's start with how does fish finder works. This device consists of two major parts: a head unit with a screen and a transducer. The latter generates a sound wave underwater.

continue to the page14



Holly Lewis, from French Creek, got a 10 point in Randolph County.



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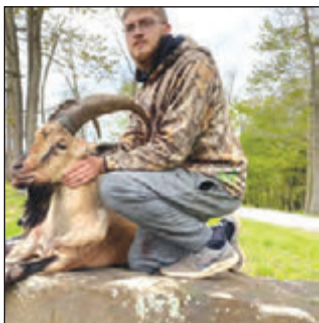
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When this sound wave encounters something solid like fish, rock, or even the bottom of the water column, it reflects back to the transducer. The return time and strength of the signal speak to the distance and hardness of the object, respectively.

The waves reflected from fish are often displayed differently from those coming from corals, rocks, and other obstructions, so are the symbols displayed on the screen. This allows users to know exactly what underneath the water for a successful fishing experience.

How Accurate Are Fish Finders

Most anglers will agree that this is an extremely effective tool that allows users to see what's underneath the water, among other data, thus improving your chances of catching fish. With that being said, it all comes down to your particular device and how you install and configure it. This is what will determine how accurate a fish finder is. The first step to getting the most out of your device is buying the right one in the first place.

There are several things to consider when buying the best fish finders, and they include:

Type of fish finder in the market

These devices can be categorized into several different types based on how they function and some continue to the next page

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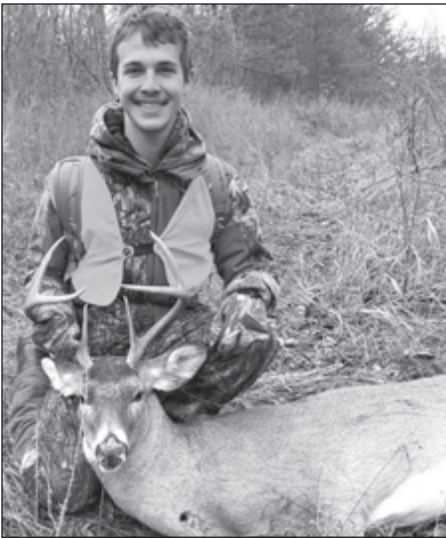


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Brandon Wolfe harveted a nice 8 point buck this season.

extra and important features they possess. Here are the common categories for fish finders:

Standalone fish finders: These units collect the basic data about the world underwater, including structural features, water depth, and water temperature and display it on the screen to help users. They offer the most performance and biggest display for the least fish finder price. Therefore, if you have a small boat that you use to fish mostly on inland lakes and are on a limited budget, standalone fish finders is your go-to.

Combination fish finders: Combo units are ideal for mid-sized boats and if you want some navigating component. They feature a good GPS receiver for navigation to the fishing grounds with some even creating a map of the unmapped water areas, all of which can make your next fishing trip less of a hassle. You can either view the sonar and the GPS on the screen simultaneously or independently.

Networked system: These are fish finders with all the bells and whistles as they support a huge range of data sources, including GPS,



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For those who are wondering, "Do I need 2 fish finders?" Well, this may be necessary if you are a se-

rious fisherman who wants to take advantage of all the help they can get.

The problem is it is not easy to manage both devices at a time, which is where the networking
 continue to the next page



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mechanism comes in. These networked systems can be linked directly within themselves or using a hub, which allows users to share screens and even the functionality of your fish finders.

Features available for fish finders.

A transducer is said to be the heart of a fish finder as it's the part that generates and receives the sonar waves. There are different types of transducers with varying cone angles and beams, frequencies (single, dual, multiple, or CHIRP technology), power, and so on. Other things to consider when choosing the right transducer are the imaging technique (down-scan or side-scan imaging), water-resistance, and compatibility with your boat/kayak in terms of mounting technique.

When it comes to the head part of the fish finder, it's important to consider the screen size, color, and resolution.

While these are the main things to look for in a fish finder, modern

models come with several additions to help make your fishing trip easier and unforgettable. Common additional features of a fish finder include GPS capabilities for navigation, as well as Wi-Fi and Bluetooth functions for more synchronized operations.

Portable vs. fixed fish finder

Do you want your fish finder to be
continue to page 18



Young Gavin Blake got a nice buck. Photo courtesy of Tyler Outdoor Supply in Middlebourne.



Steve Hamilton used a bow for a tall racked buck. Photo courtesy of Hardcore Hunters in Grafton.

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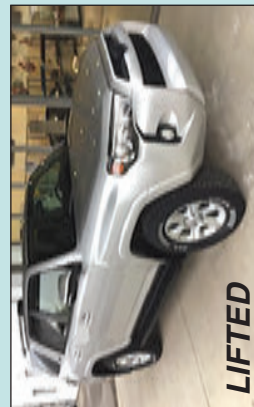
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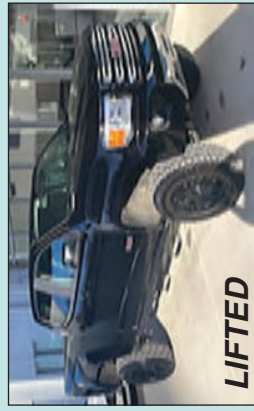
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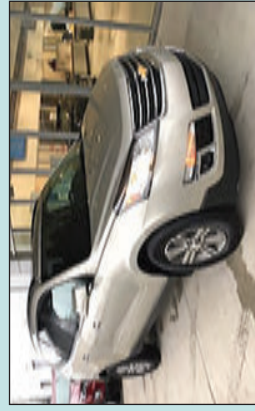
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mounted permanently to the water vessel or the portable ones? There are pros and cons to both options. For instance, portable fish finders are ideal for rented boats while the permanent ones are always ready for use at any time and don't require much time to setup.

Ease of use of fish finders

What is the easiest to use fish finder? Well, most fish finders are built

with low learning curves so users can get to fishing as soon as possible, but there are a few that might take more time to get a hang of. Consider one with an intuitive design, easy to install and configure, and features a quick-start and off option.

Cost of fish finders

Fish finders are available at different price ranges to suit every bud-

get. There are units as low as \$50 or below and as high as \$300 and above. The higher the price, the more features a fish finder will be and the better it is for your fishing experience. So, do cheap fish finders work? Yes, they do although they offer only the basic information that is still pretty helpful to anglers.

The price of a fish finder will also depend on the brand. There are several different brands of fish finders with the most popular ones including Hummingbird, Raymarine, Garmin, Furuno and Lowrance. Each of these brands is unique and offers a wide range of fish finders at different price points to suit every consumer's needs.

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Taylor Lopez harvested a very wide racked buck. *Photo courtesy of Hardcore Hunters in Grafton.*



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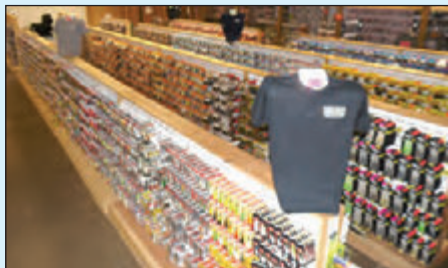
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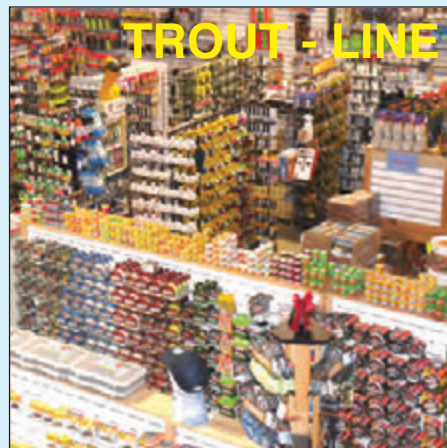
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As we all know, there are some who would like to come here, that do not wish America well, do not wish to join us, & do not want to work. These few want to make our country become more like the places they just left. They will stop at

continue to page 22

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Tanar Puskas caught a 5 3/4 pound rainbow trout. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.

have 2 walls and the American people can't have one? Really?!!

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Wheeler's Ad On Page 35 -

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Is It Prespawn or Spawning Time?

It's time to hit the water. We all know the bass are either in their prespawn, spawn or postspawn mode. But, how do you tell the difference?

The first thing to understand is that each mode is different. The prespawn happens when the base water temperature rises to about 58 degrees. Base temperature means the water temperature when you take your boat to the main part of the lake first thing in the morning. Once the base rises above 60, the spawn is going to happen.

The only way to tell if the postspawn is happening is by examining the spawning areas. If you see lots of bass fry around the shallow cover, you're probably looking at the postspawn.

Here's a side note you might find interesting: Garmin measures about 2 degrees below Lowrance. Humminbird measures about 1 degree below Lowrance. I've fished Lowrance so long that I use it as

my benchmark for predicting what the female bass are — and will be — doing.

Now that we have the temperature business out of the way let's take a

continue to page 26



Bryson Troyer's Wood County-buck has a unique face.



Mark Moran caught a couple of nice smallmouth bass.

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closer look at each of the phases.

Prespawn is best described as the time when bass start moving to the spawning areas and looking for a place to build a bed. They really get territorial the closer it gets to the spawn.

Vibrating baits like crankbaits, spinnerbaits and bladed jigs are great during this time because the bass are defensive, and the vibrations trigger them to bite. One bonus bait I like is a jig such as a Missile Jigs Mini Flip. It has some bulk to it and can be a great lure during the prespawn.

Rock and grass are key pieces of cover during the prespawn, but docks, wood, laydowns and anything else that's a little different from the surrounding area can also hold bass during this time.

The spawn changes things. The bass don't tend to chase lures, and they don't show much interest in anything with a hard vibration. Soft plastics are usually the way to go here. They're my choice 80% of the time.

My preference is for creature baits — small and large. I love the Missile Baits Baby D Stroyer as a search bait, but the full-size D Stroyer can really trigger bites when they are actually on the bed. Target protected pockets and isolated cover. It's all about finding where they are spawning.

Once the spawn is over, your tactics need to change. Finesse baits and topwater offerings are the name of the game. The exception to what I just said is during the shad spawn. Then, a spinnerbait or a swim jig rule the day. Or, you might try a topwater bait. My favorites are poppers and frogs.

Another great postspawn presentation is a power drop-shot rig. That's nothing more than a drop-

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Don't let early season bass fishing

get the better of you. Take some time and figure out what the bass are doing. It'll be time well spent.

Good luck this seson!



Alex Goff and Zach Horrocks caught some nice early season smallmouth.

Spring Channel Catfish Methods

April is a month of activities. The Robins begin to show and the songbirds begin to sing signaling the coming of spring and the end of winter. For the hunter it means strutting gobblers. For the angler it means warming waters and the beginning of a great season of great fun and fresh fillets. Here are a few tips on how to catch early spring channel catfish.

Most anglers I know begin to prepare their crappie poles and sharpen their jig heads for some deep brush jiggling or spider rigging some tuffies along creek channels leading to known spawning grounds or sunken stake beds. This is a great time for some cruising crappies but it can be just as good for channel cats as old man winter loses ground.

This time of year can be deceiving as the air temperature rises the catfish angler can't wait to get on the water. The problem is that the water takes a while to warm even with bright sunny days and warmer weather. The important thing with early spring cat fishing is water temp. Finding the warmer water on any lake will be the focus and just a few degrees can make all the difference.



Jason Conner landed a 46" musky last fall.

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LOCATING EARLY SPRING CHANNEL CATFISH

Look for temp changes in shallow coves. The larger the area of shallow water the quicker it will warm providing great catfish action. Water 1 to 4 feet is a great place to look as the springtime sun is drawn to the dark bottom of the lake causing the water to warm quicker in these areas. I know it is tempting to fish deep when the water temps are so low but catfish do feed in these shallow areas as the water begins to warm. The warmer water definitely stimulates the cold blooded

continue to page 29



Young Kole Biddle bagged a fine 12 point in Wood County.

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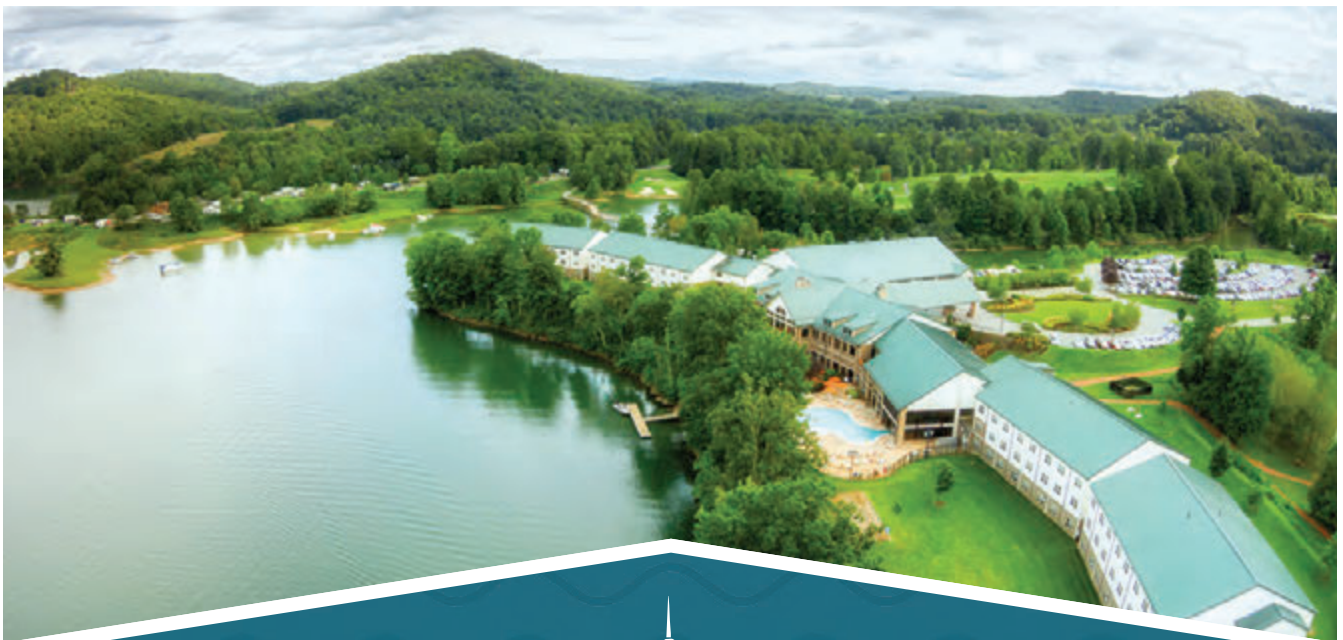


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cats causing them to prowl but an even stronger motivator is the food found in these shallow coves in the spring.

In the winter there is a natural die off of fish that occurs and if your lake has shad, which most successful catfish lakes do, then the amount of food floating below the surface of the lake can be extraordinary. This die off provides catfish with a much needed food source to begin the spawn that is nearing with the warming of water. Instinct will prevail and the catfish know that these wind swept coves have trapped lots of dead fish from the winterkill and they do take advantage of this natural occurrence.

Wind to an angler can be a nuisance or a great ally. In the case of early spring cat fishing wind is your ally. Not only does wind help mix the water and help to warm these shallow coves but it also tends to push these dead fish into these coves. The important thing is to find the combination of large shallow cove and a wind that blows directly into this cove. If the wind is not blowing directly into the cove then try to at least locate a side wind and fish the bank being lapped with the wind blown water.
BEST CATFISH BAIT



Rick McCloy hooked a 5 pound, 10 oz. trout. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.

The choice of bait seems obvious. Cut shad is the way to go for this time of year and does work but I tend to mix it up a little. Most of the fish will focus on dead shad so you definitely want a rig with cut shad but I usually rig a pole or two with something different just in case it stimulates a fish that might be attracted to something a little different. I have to say that sometimes the different bait far outperforms the shad but always have cut shad in the boat, as it will work best most of the time. Some other bait I use is fresh chicken livers and where legal fresh bluegill filets work great.

First scale the bluegill then fillet. The scales trap the smell of the meat and needs to be removed. Some will argue that the smellier the bait the better. Fresh bait has
continue to the page 31

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David Lucas hunted in Mason County for his wide raked buck.

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always worked well for me and seems to attract the larger fish as well. I may be wrong, but I keep the stinky stuff out of my boat and stick to fresh or fresh frozen. I have caught fish on the rotten stuff, but wasted a lot of time with missed strikes and smaller fish.

Since going to strictly fresh bait the number of bites dropped off, but the action on bigger fish increased. I waste little time on small fish. I spend my time fighting nice size channel catfish to the boat. Thirty minutes in one spot is all I'll wait before searching for another cove. Keep moving, but don't forget that first cove later in the day. The catfish may move up while you search other parts of the lake.

BEST CATFISH RIG SETUP

Tackle for Channel Cats is simple, but a couple of tricks can help your success. You want to start with at least a medium to medium heavy rod. I use a heavy rod because when targeting big channel catfish I've landed several over ten pounds. These big channel catfish can put up a fight and are often in the middle of thick brush. If you're like me you'll start with regular gear that you've used for



Tom Berga landed an early season sauger and a walleye.

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years to catch three pound fish. After hooking into and losing a giant channel catfish prowling the shallows you'll decide that heavy gear is important. There are also giant

flathead catfish living in the same areas that big channel catfish live. The last thing you want is to tangle with a forty-pound flathead in a
continue to the next page



Young Luke Samples hooked this 44" musky in his backyard on the Gualley River. He was fishing in late February.

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brushpile with wimpy gear.
SLIP SINKER CATFISH RIG

Another well-known trick is the slip sinker. These fish are very sensitive to pressure and if they feel any at all they will drop the bait. I have yet decided whether a free spool is better than tight lining. All my rigs free spool just in case I miss a bite he can keep running until I can get to the rod. If I see the bite I set the hook immediately. I tend not to tight line because I have seen too many dropped bites when they feel the tension. The hook, I believe, will slip right out when the fish spits the bait covered hook out of its mouth. So experiment and draw your own conclusion.



Riley Markle got a quality buck in Braxton County - 7 years old.

Another lesson I have learned is not to cover your hook. I used to cover the hook with bait for fear the fish might feel the hook and spook. I now leave the hook point uncovered as best I can so that when the fish inhales the bait the point is exposed and even if the fish decides to spit it out there is a better chance the point will find its mouth on the way out.
SINKER SLIDES FOR CATFISHING

Terminal tackle for catfishing should consist of a solid hook and a heavy monofilament leader with swivel at the top. Above the leader should be a single bead and then a slider for your weight. These sliders are inexpensive and are slicker than just a slip sinker on your main line which tends to abrade your line causing premature breaks and risk of losing a giant catfish.
PICKING YOUR CATFISH LINE
 continue to page 34



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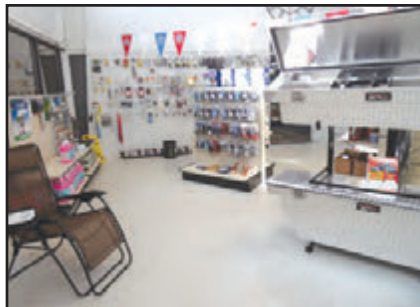
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Your main line should be heavy mono or braided line. I choose mono for my leader to give some stretch at the hook and also withstand the abrasion effects of heavy brush a little better than braided line. This is another trick learned

the hard way. Braided line is strong for its diameter and allows me to get much more on my reels while still using thirty to fifty pound test line. The braided lines will not hold their strength however with the slightest abrasion so check it often.



Whitney Rader used a crossbow in Gilmer County for a great buck.



Bernard Drennen harvested a 9 point in Gilmer County



Young Ty Longwell bagged his first buck. *Photo courtesy of Tyler Outdoor Supply in Middlebourne.*

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WV Gold Rush Returns

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.VA. — On March 16, Gov. Jim Justice announced that the West Virginia Gold Rush is returning for its fourth year. For the first time, Gold Rush will include 12 days of trout stockings at some of the state's most popular fishing lakes and streams.

"Every year through our incredible Gold Rush program, more and more people are discovering the thrill of fishing in West Virginia's pristine waters, surrounded by the awe-inspiring nature we are blessed to enjoy in one of the most beautiful places on Earth. Many are creating memories and family bonds that will last a lifetime," Gov. Justice said.

From March 23 to April 3, the WVDNR will stock 50,000 golden rainbow trout at 62 lakes and streams, including waters in or near 15 state parks and forests. Stockings are scheduled to run through April 3. Stocking locations can be found at GoldRushWV.com.

"The golden rainbow trout is a really unique fish and a little more difficult to catch than a regular rainbow trout, which makes them a trophy for many anglers," said WVDNR Hatchery Program Manager Jim Hedrick. "Once you see their unmistakable, bright-yellow color in the water, you can't help but get excited and we hope folks are able to get out this year and enjoy this exciting event."

WV State Parks Discount
A discount associated with Gold Rush is also available at several state parks and forests. Those interested in booking a stay can checkout using the discount code "GOLD" online at WVstateparks.com for 15% off their entire lodge or cabin reservation. Exclusions apply and details can be found at WVstateparks.com/deals.

"Gold Rush is an exciting event that encourages anglers and their families to visit our lakes, streams
continue to the next page

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and wonderful parks and forests all throughout the state,” said West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Director Stephen McDaniel. "Not only is this event great for tourism, it provides exciting opportunities for kids and new anglers to enjoy trout fishing."

Gold Rush Giveaways

In addition to extending Gold Rush to 12 days, the WVDNR is increasing the number of prizes anglers can win for catching a tagged trout. This year, 100 trout will receive a special numbered tag, which can be entered to win one of four prizes. The grand prize is a three-night cabin stay at Blackwater Falls State Park. Other prizes include one-night cabin stays at a state park or forest, West Virginia State Parks gift cards and exclusive Gold Rush merchandise.

For those who don't reel in one of the 100 golden rainbow trout with a tag, there are still chances to win prizes by signing up to receive travel tips and information from the WVDNR at GoldRush-WV.com.



Gerald Martin caught a nice golden trout. This is the kind of fish you are trying to catch in the WV Gold Rush. If you happen to catch a nice golden trout, send in your pic to the form on Page 38.



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Chris Berger, from Dunbar, brought home 2 large rainbow trout.

LARGE FISH & GAME PICS WANTED

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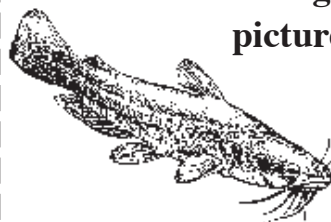
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