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Issue 244

March/April 2015



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**Turkey
TIPS**

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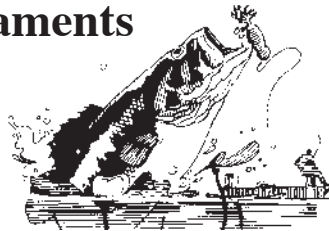
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Cover Photo

Large muskies are often caught in the winter months for those that don't mind the cold weather.

Robert Thaxton was fishing on the Kanawha River on December 14th. He caught and released this 51 inch musky that weighed 41 1/2 pounds.

The overall fishing in 2014 was not as good as prior years. Hopefully, 2015 will show some improvement.

Make sure that you send in your quality fishing pictures.

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Casey Ashley Wins Classic

GREENVILLE, S.C. - On Sunday evening at Bon Secours Wellness Arena, Casey Ashley completed a journey that began more than three decades ago and seemed to drag on forever these past few weeks.

The 31-year-old South Carolina native, who has lived just a few miles from Lake Hartwell all his life, caught five bass that weighed 20 pounds, 3 ounces to cap a moving victory in the GEICO Bassmaster Classic presented by GoPro on his home waters with a three-day total of 50-1.

The weight was enough to help Ashley past Florida pro Bobby Lane, Jr., who finished second with 46-15, and Texas angler Takahiro Omori who placed third with 44-3.

The end of the weigh-in meant Ashley could finally take a deep breath after seven weeks when the lake was mostly off-limits due to B.A.S.S. rules and when virtually everyone he saw wanted to talk about him being the favorite to win.

"I worked a show in Greenville at the TD Convention Center (in mid-January), and I bet I thought about the Classic 50,000 times while I was standing there," said Ashley, who won the event on his sixth try. "My first Classic was here (in 2008), and ever since then I've been saying I'd like to have that one back.

"I wanted to win so bad here at home, and I had a long time to think about it. It was pretty rough."

Once it began, Ashley made the most of his opportunity. An accomplished singer, songwriter and musician in addition to his career as a pro angler, Ashley opened the event with a stirring rendition of the National Anthem before Friday's frigid opening-round takeoff at Green Pond Landing in Anderson, S.C.

Then he went out and steadily

continue to the next page

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caught fish every day on a home-made fish-head spinner rigged with a Zoom Super Fluke Jr. in pearl white. His father, Danny, made him about 20 of the baits before the tournament began.

Ashley prefers to fish a jig – and he won an FLW Tour event last year on Hartwell doing just that. But the more he tried it this week, the more he realized it might sink him if he didn't abandon the tactic and stick with the baits his dad made for him.

“I was going out and getting a good limit with that bait and then going and fishing brush piles and structure looking for big fish with a jig,” Ashley said. “I burned a lot of time doing that the first two days.

“Then Saturday night, I was lying in bed and the (country music) song ‘Why Lady Why?’ kept going through my mind. So I asked myself ‘Why do I keep doing that?’”

With the conditions rainy and overcast on Sunday – just perfect for what he'd been doing with the homemade bait – Ashley stuck with the tactic that helped him catch 10 fish that weighed 29-14 on Friday and Saturday. It paid off as he steadily culled fish throughout the day Sunday.

He rose from fifth to first with his



Bob Pepper brought in a nice buck. Photo courtesy of Bogg's Gas in Elizabeth.

catch of 20-3.

“I knew I had to catch a big bag today, and the weather was textbook for me,” Ashley said. “It all came together, and I could just see it getting closer and closer and closer.”

Omori, the Day 2 leader, was the final angler to weigh in – and when his weight fell far short of what he needed to win, Ashley was overcome with emotion. He was named champion and handed the 45-pound Classic trophy with his own song, “Fisherman” blaring over the speakers and a capacity crowd on their feet inside the arena.

Ashley, who held the trophy above his head with the song still playing and confetti spraying around him, said he considered his Classic victory a “win for everyone.”

He was also proud to be one of few anglers who have managed to win a Classic on his home waters

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despite all of the distractions and potential pitfalls that come with the scenario.

“I know everybody wanted to win this tournament, but they couldn't have wanted to win more than I did,” Ashley said. “I broke that record of nobody can win on their home lake.

Behind Ashley, Lane and Omori, were Arizona pro Dean Rojas (43-13), Virginia pro Jacob Powroznik (43-1)

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Spring Bluegills

Spring is the ideal time of year for anglers all across the United States to target bluegill. These hard-fighting panfish present a fisher with some excellent fishing action during this time of year, especially as the calendar approaches late spring. An angler who can find bluegill and who knows the best methods to fish for them is likely to bring home a bucketful of these very tasty fish.

Location

Bluegills spawn after species that largemouth bass and crappies do. Bluegill prefer the water temperature to be warmer than many types of fish before they begin to become active, meaning late May and into June the bluegill bite will be at its



Mike Scites bagged a 10 point Wirt County buck. *Photo courtesy of Bogg's Gas in Elizabeth.*



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best. Look for bluegill in ponds and lakes near the shore, where they dig out shallow beds in the gravel to use as "nests" in the shallows, usually in much less than 6 to 8 feet of water. The bluegills will overpopulate such areas, especially if there is any cover provided by such things as weed beds or downed trees. The water near a submerged tree or old log will usually yield bluegills, as will the region close to stumps and brush piles that are in the water. Since bluegills spawn in large groups, it makes little sense to continue fishing where you are not getting any bites. Move around along the shore or in your boat until you find a bunch of bluegills rather than waste time hoping that some come to you. In rivers, bluegill can be found in the spring in the calmer waters of coves and inlets or in places along the shore, where they can get a break from fighting the power of the current.

Bait and Tackle

In the springtime, a bluegill is not particularly fussy about what it will attack and consume. Among

the best baits for bluegill are night crawlers and earthworms, as well as leeches and red worms. Wax worms will also entice a bluegill to bite, as will crickets, corn and even bits of bacon. Artificial lures should have small hooks due to the smallish size of a bluegill's mouth. Smaller spinning baits, artificial flies, tiny crank baits, poppers and jigs will all work when the bluegills are spawning. For the ultimate bluegill experience, use the lightest possible tackle, such as an ultralight spinning rod rigged with 2 to 4 lb. monofilament line. Keep hooks small to accommodate the bluegill's mouth.

Bluegill Tactics

To catch bluegill one right after the other, hook your live bait, such as wax worms or night crawlers, on the hook underneath a small-sized bobber. Cast out and wait for the bobber to indicate a bite before setting the hook. A bluegill gives as good a fight as any freshwater fish, and it is imperative that you steer it clear of any structure in the

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water, such as branches or stumps, or you risk the line becoming tangled. Artificial lures such as jigs can be tipped with a small chunk of a worm or with wax worms to get the bluegills to bite. If you are catching many small bluegills, it is unlikely that you will tie into any big ones, since overpopulation by this species tends to affect the availability of food and thus the size of the bluegill. Look for bigger bluegills in farm ponds that are not overstocked with fish and where extremely fertile soil eventually drains into the stream or pond.

**MAIL or EMAIL YOUR
BIG FISH
PICTURES
Form On Page 38**

Senior Lifetime License

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. - Division of Natural Resources Director Bob Fala and Division of Motor Vehicles Commissioner Pat Reed announce the opportunity for seniors who have purchased the Class XS Senior Lifetime Hunting and Fishing License to obtain a Class XS designation on their West Virginia driver's license or identification card.

According to Commissioner Reed, "DMV is pleased to offer a new, convenient driver's license and ID card designation for our customers, in addition to other designation opportunities already available, including veteran, hearing impaired and organ donor."

Working together with other orga-
continue to the next page

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***Offer valid only on Model Year 2015 Sportsman ETX and Sportsman 570. Does not apply to prior purchases, racing, fleet, rental or modified vehicles. Five year promotional coverage consists of 6 months factory warranty, plus 54 months Polaris Protection Limited Warranty for a total term of 60 months. In all states, including Florida, this is given as a free of charge Limited Warranty. Subject to \$50 deductible, no mileage limitation. ~~Warning: The Polaris RANGER® and RZR® are not intended for on-road use. Driver must be at least 16 years old with a valid driver's license to operate. Passengers must be at least 12 years old and tall enough to grasp the hand holds and plant feet firmly on the floor. All SxS drivers should take a safety training course. Contact ROHVA at www.rohva.org or (949) 255-2560 for additional information. Drivers and passengers should always wear helmets, eye protection, protective clothing, and seat belts. Always use cab nets or doors (as equipped). Be particularly careful on difficult terrain. Never drive on public roads or paved surfaces. Never engage in stunt driving, and avoid excessive speeds and sharp turns. Riding and alcohol/drugs don't mix. Check local laws before riding on trails. ATVs can be hazardous to operate. Polaris adult models are for riders 16 and older. For your safety, always wear a helmet, eye protection and protective clothing, and be sure to take a safety training course. For safety and training information in the U.S., call the SVIA at (800) 887-2887. You may also contact your Polaris dealer or call Polaris at (800) 342-3764. ©2014 Polaris Industries Inc~~

izations to further enhance good customer service is important to both agencies. "We are pleased to partner with the DMV to make it easier for our Senior Lifetime License holders to show proof of a license while in the field," said Director Fala. "The Class XS License endorsement printed on the West Virginia driver's license means they only would be required to carry that one proof of identification with them."

The Senior Lifetime Hunting, Fishing and Trapping license can only be purchased through the DNR South Charleston Office at 324 4th Avenue. To obtain the Senior Lifetime Hunting, Fishing and Trapping designation, customers may visit their nearest DMV regional office and apply for the designation to be added to their driver's license or ID card. Customers will need to present the bill of sale for the li-

cence, or their permanent Class XS license card as proof of licensure, as well as all applicable documentation for a driver's license or ID card.

Documentation required includes one proof of physical residency for a Not For Federal driver's license or ID card and two proofs of physical residency for a For Federal card. No fees will be collected by the DMV for the designation if the applicant is already renewing their license or ID card. A \$5 duplicate

fee will be charged for the Not For Federal driver's license or ID card if the customer is wanting to just add the designation. A \$15 fee will be collected for the For Federal driver's license or ID card.

Commissioner Reed encourages all applicants to call the DMV Call Center at 1-800-642-9066 or visit the DMV website at www.dmv.wv.gov with any questions before going to a regional office. "Our focus is customer service, and we want our customers to have a pleasant and efficient visit to the DMV. Our fully-staffed Call Center and website are both great information resources to ensure that all of the necessary documents are in place before going to the DMV."

For additional information about the senior lifetime hunting, trapping and fishing license, please call 304-558-2771 and ask for the licensing office.

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Bass Tournaments
• Look For Events
In Upcoming Issues
Details On Page 3**

2015 WV Lakes Bass Tournaments From Bass Sportsman



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In Upcoming Months
In The W. Va. Sportsman
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Colt Corder had a good day trapping and brought in a big coyote. Photo courtesy of Old & New Sports in Ravenswood.

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Brien Murray brought in a nice bow buck. Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.

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Mark Heefner caught a rare yellow perch at Dents Run Lake.



Jesse Harness used a bow and ended up with a coyote..

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Selecting An Effective Turkey Gun

Turkey hunting's popularity today has given rise to a vast assortment of new and improved shotguns designed specifically for turkey hunting. The modern turkey shotgun now comes with a camo finish, composite stock, super-full turkey choke, 3 1/2" chamber and shorter barrel. They are a far cry from the classic side-by-side doubles many of the earliest turkey hunters used.

Do you need one of these modern firearms to hunt turkeys? Honestly, no, since hunters have been killing turkeys for an awful long time without them. But most firearm purchases by hunters are not based on what you need but what you want so if you can afford one, go ahead. They can give you that extra edge in bagging a turkey this spring

Selecting a Shotgun

What should you look for in your turkey hunting shotgun? In my opinion, the most important thing is to find a shotgun you can shoot comfortably and accurately. It does not really matter if that is a pump, automatic, double or a single shot. A good fitting shotgun that you are comfortable with and have confidence in is a great place to start.

Gauge

The vast majority of turkey hunters hunt with a 12 gauge. It comes in a ton of different models and makes. Some hunters opt for a little more firepower and move up to a 10 gauge. The 10 ga. does increase your effective range a little and gives a little more knockdown power than a 12 ga. If you are up for lugging the thing around, go for it. Speaking of weight issues, one of the more popular choices nowadays is the 20 gauge. I would

especially recommend this to the women and kids who are just beginning hunting. It is lighter and has less recoil than its big brother the 12 gauge but it also comes with a reduced range. That really is not a problem as long as you carefully judge the range of your shot and limit them to 35 yards or under. Another choice for those hunters wishing for less of a “kick” from their turkey shotgun is to use the new HeviShot loads that have a lot less velocity than other magnum turkey loads. The HeviShot loads I've tried didn't kick much more than a regular pheasant load and much less than the magnum 3" turkey loads I normally use. And of course, automatic shotguns have

continue to the next page



Aubrey Marshall hooked 4 pound, 3 oz. rainbow. *Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton.*

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less of a kick than pumps or doubles since they utilize some of the back pressure to cycle the gun.

Barrel length

Barrel length is another important decision. If you are using your shotgun for turkey hunting only, the new short barrels might be your choice. Shorter barrels make for a lighter more maneuverable gun which can be important when you are turkey hunting and doing a lot of walking around in the woods. If you plan on using your new shotgun for upland or waterfowl hunting also, a standard 28" barrel would be a better pick for all-around use.

Test Patterning

After you have selected your turkey gun, now comes the most important part of getting your gun ready to hunt - test patterning. Many people never do this assuming a new gun always shoots straight - and for the most part they do. However, if your shotgun consistently shoots off your point of aim, you need to do something about it. A gunsmith can adjust your shotgun by bending the barrel or by changing the



Heaven Blosser, from Pursglove, caught a 41" flathead catfish.

**Advertise In The
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Details On Page 3**

fit of your stock. A less expensive fix is to fit your gun with adjustable sights or a scope and then adjusting them until your shotgun hits where you point it.

Along with a straight shooting shotgun, you must also get your shotgun shooting good patterns. Turkeys are very tough birds and the preferred method of shooting them is aiming for the head & neck

region where pellets to the spine or brain will instantly bring down a turkey. To do this, you need tight consistent patterns at the range you are shooting. Which brings up another question. How far away can you shoot a turkey?

This is a controversial topic since most serious turkey hunters believe in calling them close (less than 30

continue to the next page

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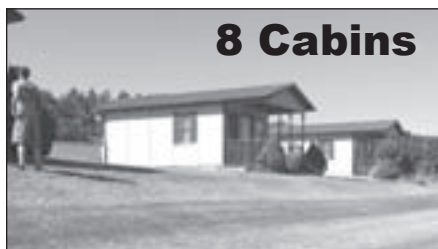
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yards). But modern magnum loads and turkey chokes now make it possible to consistently kill birds at 50 yards and over providing you can aim straight. That is where the biggest problem comes in with most shooters and why I would recommend keeping your shots at 40 yards or under. Also, many people misjudge shooting distances anyway. If you try to keep your maximum distance for a shot at 35 or 40 yards, when you do make a mistake in judging distance and the bird is further away it should still be in effective range. I would rather error

on the side of caution and wait for the bird to get close.

Getting back to patterning, after you have a straight shooting shotgun, you still must try out various choke and shell combinations to find your best pattern. Nowadays, many turkey shotguns are coming from the factory with Extra-full chokes that are as good as the after-market tubes. The only way you will know for sure is to try it out.

I like to pattern at 40 yards to start. I usually try a variety of shells from different manufacturer-continue to the next page



Mike Fleak bagged a bobcat this season. *Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.*

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ers with different shot sizes (4, 5, or 6) and different lengths (2 3/4", 3" and if your gun can shoot them 3 1/2"). A good way to save costs while doing this is to go in with a few friends to spread the shell cost out some. Once I find the best shell / shot size combination at 40 yards, I will shoot some shots closer in to see what the pattern does there. Sometimes a gun will be throwing a great pattern at 40 yards but a terrible one at 20 - 25 yards. Again, a little time practicing before the season will tell you what to expect. Also, try some shots in real close at 5 yards & 10 yards. Most of the turkey chokes throw very tight, baseball-sized patterns at these ranges and if you turkey hunt long, eventually you will have a shot at 10 feet or less. There's not much margin for error when they are in that close.

Just remember when patterning that no two barrels are alike. Even if they are the same model and year as someone else's, they will probably still pattern a little differently.

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Buck Limit

By Cory Boothe

Times are changing in West Virginia. Deer hunting has a different feel than it did twenty years ago. For those of us that hunted twenty years ago, we can remember seeing tons of deer, however few bucks. These few bucks often carried small racks due to the carrying capacity of the land being exceeded in much of West Virginia. If you got to see a six point, you shot it.

Today, we have less deer, and we should. No longer are we capable of seeing 35 deer on an evening bow-hunt. The deer population is more in line with the carrying capacity of the land. We have expanded doe hunting opportunities and people have been filling doe tags. We now have an opportunity to see a better buck. However, people are still shooting the first buck they see then “holding out” for a nice buck.

We still have hunters in concurrent buck and doe counties watching a field with ten does and one spike that shoot the spike then wonder why we don't have larger

deer. The comment will be made that one can't eat the horns but no consideration will be given about shooting the doe.

Many feel this is because of our liberal bag limits. Hunters are not being selective because they don't have to be. Too many people feel that if they don't shoot a buck the hunter on the next farm over will do so. Too many hunters feel the need to get their buck regardless of size.

Many out of state hunters use WV as a way to fill their freezers while returning home to be selective and hunt for a large buck in their state. Of our neighboring states, Virginia, shares our three buck limit and that is only east of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Maryland has a three buck limit at one per season of archery, rifle and muzzleloader. However, they have an antler point restriction included with the limit. Kentucky and Ohio both have a one buck limit. Pennsylvania has a one buck limit with antler restrictions that prohibit the

continue to the next page

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Tony Chidester hooked a 43 3/4 inch flathead catfish.

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taking of deer with less than 3 or 4 points per side.

How do we change our deer herd for the better? Many feel that lowering the buck limit is the correct answer. It could be one buck, one buck with an antler restriction, two bucks, or two bucks with an antler restriction on the second buck.

If you are one of the many hunters in West Virginia that want to see

a better herd with a more balanced buck to doe ratio, a more intense rut and a population of multi-age class bucks please sign the better buck management petition at <http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/wv-hunters-for-better-buck-management.html>. Also, please join us on facebook at WV Hunters for Better Buck Management.

Thanks for considering.

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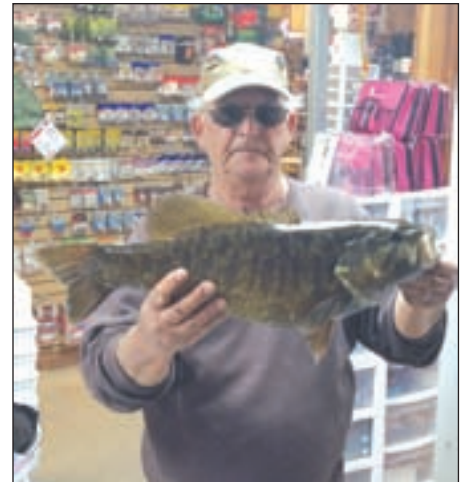
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Lewis Primm went to Ohio for a January bow buck.



Junior Rooker caught a March 5 pound, 10 oz. smallmouth. Photo PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton..

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John King caught this big rainbow trout. Photo courtesy of the Bait Shack outside of Ellenboro.



Young Timber Starkey bagged a nice 10 point buck.



Danny Frazier caught an earl sea-son smallmouth. Photo courtesy of 3 Rivers Edge in Hinton.

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On Pages 15 or 38**



Don Salisbury brought in an 8 point. Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.



Owen Adkins had an early large-mouth bass. Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.



Kyle Upton landed a nice rainbow trout. Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton.



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Trout is the name that's shared by several fish species. Trout are members of the salmon family. There are several species of trout, including brown, brook, rainbow, cutthroat and steelhead. There are also some species of sea trout. These species feed on insects, insect larvae, crustaceans and smaller fish. Trout are native to Asia, Europe and North America. During the 19th century, they were introduced to Australia and New Zealand by enthusiastic anglers.

Trout can be found in easily recognizable narrow areas in cool lakes, rivers and streams where fast, rapidly moving water meets slow, and where deep water meets shallow. They can also be found where rocks and rock shelves offer tranquil relief from the current. Rainbow trout feed in faster water that runs approximately six feet per second. Other species of trout feed in slower waters where water runs approximately one foot per second.

If you are fishing a stream where brook, brown cutthroat and rainbow are all found, you will find rainbow at the head of the pool and the other species in the middle and at the tail of the pool. They also like to hang around large objects that slow the current, such as rocks

or rock shelves.

Trout like to rest where fast water meets slow and adjacent to the main current. Find the main current by watching bubbles and debris that moves through the pool or run. Look to the head of the pool and find where the faster water spills into it. Trace its path through the pool to find the places where trout lurk, waiting for prey. When a tree falls into the water at a right angle to the current and the trunk is still rooted in the bank, anglers call it a sweeper. The best places to fish are just outside of the branches, in front of the crotch where the sweeper meets the bank.

continue to the next page

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If you are still-fishing for trout, you will need a graphite or fiberglass rod that is between 6 and 7 feet in length and a basic reel. Use 8 to 10 pound-test line, a swivel, a leader and live or artificial bait as mentioned above. If you are fly fishing for trout, you will need a 9 foot graphite or fiberglass fly rod to allow you to cover the widest range. Add 75 feet of line to your reel if you plan to catch trout that is over 4 pounds. You will also need thigh or chest waders, a fisherman's vest with lots of pockets for flies, a knife and a fishing basket for your catch. Both wet and dry flies can be used to fish for trout.

If you need advice on trout fishing or help to choose your trout fishing equipment, ask a family member, a friend or a staff member of the local bait and tackle store. Experienced anglers can give you tips that will make your trout fishing experience a positive one.

Good luck and land a nice fish.



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Fishing Rod Overview

Imagine standing on the bank of a swiftly moving stream in the shade of a gnarled willow, your fishing rod bent beneath the weight of an unusually large catch. The type of rod you choose is important for a moment like this. It can determine whether or not you land that fish.

A fishing rod is a rod of graphite, fiberglass, steel, wood or bamboo that is used for the purpose of catching fish. Fishing filament, also called fishing line, is threaded through the ferrules (eyes) along the flexible rod. One end winds around a reel, which is located at the base of the pole. The other end of the line has a barbed hook attached to it. This hook is where you place the bait. Your reel has a handle which you turn to reel in the line once a

fish has taken the bait.

Fishing rods vary in size between 4 feet (for children) and 16 feet. The average rod is 6 feet in length. The longer the rod, the more force is put on the angler's arms. However, your fishing rod is the backbone of your fishing tackle and you need to choose a rod that is right for you. The length of the rod you choose depends on two things. The first is the species of fish that you wish to catch. The other thing you have to consider is the landscape of the fishing location and the type of water.

If the landscape around your fishing hole has a lot of trees and overhead branches, a short, flexible rod is best. Short strong rods are best

continue to the next page

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landing game fish. Flexible, thin rods that are 10 to 12 feet in length are best if wind conditions are moderate. Stronger and thicker rods should be used for large, aggressive fish such as northern pike, muskellunge, walleye and Arctic char. These fish would quickly snap a light and more flexible pole. Flexibility, which is the amount that the rod can be bent before breaking, can be determined by the diameter of the pole. Light rods are thin and flexible, while stronger rods are thicker and more rigid.

When you look at a fishing rod, you will see several metal rings that are spaced from the handle to



Jerry Griffith, from Peytona, bagged a bear in Roane County.

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the tip. These are ferrules. They guide your fishing line and help it to cast and retrieve smoothly. The tip ferrule directs your cast. Your rod probably also has a reel seat that helps secure the reel to your rod. The reel seat is placed near the handle grip.

Your rod is the most important tool that you will use while fishing and they come in a wide range of types, styles and lengths. Types of fishing rods include bamboo, fiberglass and graphite.

Bamboo Rods

Bamboo rods can be as basic as

an inexpensive pole with a line attached, to very expensive handcrafted rods that are used for fly fishing. Simple bamboo poles are great for kids. Expensive bamboo poles make great fly fishing rods. Bamboo rods run from \$5 to hundreds of dollars for handcrafted fly fishing rods. If you are not planning on taking up fly fishing, fiberglass and graphite rods are best.

Fiberglass Rods

Fiberglass rods are great for beginners and kids. They come in a variety of lengths and flexibility.

continue to the next page



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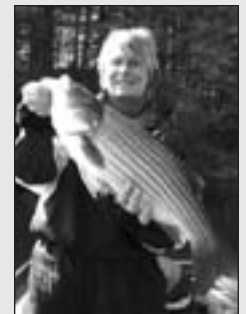
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They're reasonably priced and it's easy to find a fiberglass rod that will fit your needs. They stand up well and require very little or no maintenance. Experienced anglers prefer graphite rods because they are very lightweight and extremely strong. Graphite is the best of the basic rod types.

If you are just beginning your life as a fisherman, you might consider buying a prepackaged rod and reel, but these are not something you will use once you have a little experience under your belt. If you're not sure you will enjoy fishing, borrow a rod from a family member or friend, instead of investing money in tackle that you may not use for long. More experienced anglers should choose a rod and reel

unit over the prepackaged ones.

If you wish to become a successful and skilled angler, you need to choose a fishing rod that compliments your style. Your rod is an extension of your arm and the backbone of your fishing tackle. Choosing a rod doesn't have to be complicated. Take into consideration where and how often you fish. If you're a beginner, buy a reasonably priced rod and reel and then purchase a more expensive one when you've honed your skills.

Do you plan to freshwater or saltwater fish? Freshwater fishing is done in lakes, ponds, rivers and streams that are found in the interior of the country. Saltwater fishing is done in oceans and on the

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coast. Be sure to choose a rod that is compatible with its job. Though some rods can be used outside of their intended application, it's best to choose a rod that is the right one for the job. This ensures a successful fishing experience.

If you have trouble finding a rod that fits your arms and is as comfortable as a pair of old sneakers, ask a family member or friend who has angling experience to go along to help. Or seek the assistance of the staff at your local fishing store. They'll be glad to give you a few pointers that will help you choose the fishing rod that is right for you.



This young fellow got a nice Ohio buck. *Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.*

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The Spin On Fishing Reels

There's nothing like standing on the bank of a stream or river, the sun sparkling on the water and feeling the thrill of a big catch. You play the fish until it tires, carefully bringing it in using your reel. Your choice of reel is important when you're an active fisherman.

A fishing reel is a piece of fishing equipment that is devised for sports and hobby fishermen to cast and retrieve fishing line. It is a spool and axle that mounts on a fishing rod. There are also reels that have been specifically designed to mount on boats. There are three basic types of fishing reels: bait casting, fly casting and spin casting.

Bait Casting Reels

Bait casting reels are extremely complicated. The line is pulled off the rod by the weight of the lures being used. It is thrust forward by

the motion of casting. These reels usually provide a device that lays the line evenly across the rotating cylinder that acts as the core of the reel. If the cast is not smooth, it will cause problems when the line is reeled in. The line can become tangled, which is frustrating to the user. Great lengths of time can be spent untangling the line when using bait casting reels. These reels are not for beginners or children.

Fly Fishing Reels

There are two specific things you need to be aware of when choosing a fly fishing reel. One is to ensure that it has a drag that is extremely responsive. The second thing is to buy a fly fishing reel that can stand the tension and strain put on it should you have a significantly large catch. Fly casting reels are more expensive than other types of fishing reels. When purchasing a fly fishing reel, look it over with an eagle eye and ascertain that there

are no plastic parts. It isn't unusual for plastic to fail when you have a large fish on your line. All metal reels are much more reliable and are worth the extra price that you will pay.

Spinning Reels

There are two types of spinning reels - closed faced and open faced.

The closed faced reel is inexpensive and easy to use. It is the best type of reel for those who are learning to fish. Closed faced reels are almost trouble free, yet are capable of bringing in your catch, whatever it may be. Closed faced spinning reels have a push button release when casting and have an opening in the top for the line to come out when cast. This type of reel is mounted on your fishing rod. Spinning reels are used by fishermen who are hobbyist, casual sportsmen, beginners and children.

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Helen Farley is looking for bigger fish. *Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.*

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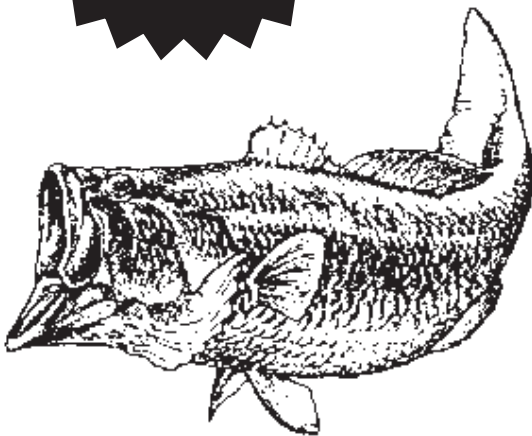
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Chris Summers landed a large March bass. Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.



Jim Dunlap, from Petroleum, hooked a 4 1/2 pound rainbow.

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Jason Cook, from Logan, caught and released this early season largemouth bass.



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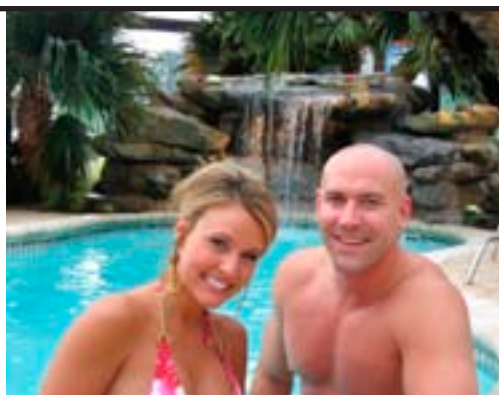
Dennis Cloudy went to Calhoun Co. for an 8 point. *Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.*



Louis Revy had gun success with a 13 point. *Photo courtesy of Bogg's Gas in Elizabeth.*



Bill Wood ice fished for a nice catch. *Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.*



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and children. If you buy a prepackaged rod and reel, this is usually the type of reel that's included.

Open faced spinning reels are more difficult to use and comes in a variety of sizes. Ultra light models are great for catching pan fish. Larger models will be needed for game fishing or ocean fishing. Line capacity on an open faced reel is greater and is serviceable when fishing for salmon and trout. They have a smooth drag, which makes them an excellent choice for the longer run game fish.

A closed faced fishing reel is perfect for beginners and children, as mentioned above. As your fishing skills are honed, you may wish to upgrade to an open faced reel and then move on to more advanced

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reels. Keep in mind that you don't want to choose a reel with plastic parts that can fail if you catch a good sized fish. A good rule of thumb is the lighter the line, the smaller the reel. Be sure the reel you purchase is compatible with the type of fishing line you plan to use. If you're choosing only one reel, a medium speed is best. If you plan on buying at least two reels, choose both a high and low speed. There is a difference in reels for right and left-handed people. Be sure you purchase a reel that is compatible with your dexterity. Left handed reels turn counter clock wise while a right handed reel turns clock wise.

If you have trouble choosing a reel, ask a family member or friend who is an avid angler to lend you a hand, or ask the staff at your local fishing store. Anyone who has experience in fishing will be more than glad to help in any way they can.

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Fishing Tackle

If you've decided to take up fishing as a hobby or sport and get out into the fresh air and sunshine, you've made a good choice. Fishing can be very relaxing. It gets you away from the hustle, bustle and stress of daily life and makes you one with nature. Like all other hobbies, sports and activities, there are a few basic things that you will need.

Fishing tackle is equipment you use to get live or artificial bait into the water, dangling in front of the fish. It's not necessary to have a lot of tackle if you are just taking up the sport of fishing, but you do need basic and proper tackle. If you are a beginner, it's best to keep tackle to a minimum until you hone your

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skills. Then, and only then is the time to try more advanced tackle.

Rod and Reel

A rod and reel can be purchased at your local fishing store. It's best to buy a lightweight rod because they make it easier for you to tell when you have a bite. Spinner reels are best for beginners. Often, you can purchase a rod and reel as one unit. If you don't want to buy a rod and reel until you've tried the sport, borrow one from a family member or friend. An adult fishing rod should be approximately 6 feet long. A rod for a child will be between 4 and 5 feet long.

Fishing Line

Fishing line, also called filament, comes in a wide range of sizes or strengths, which are called pound-test. The larger the pound-test, the stronger the fishing line. For instance, eight pound-test is not as strong as ten pound-test. The trick here is to match your line's pound-test to your rod and reel, the bait you plan to use and the species of fish that you're hoping to catch. Small, lightweight rods that use spincasting or spinning reels will use a line that is up to six pound-test. If you have a large spinning reel, be sure to use a strong pound-test line. Bait casting reels use a heavier line that can run anywhere from six to thirty pound-test. However, eight to sixteen pound-test is the most popular size of fishing line. Keep in mind that if your line is too heavy, you won't get as many bites or strikes because the fish can see the line. If you're a beginner or if you're using line for kids' rods, eight pound-test is recommended.

Fishing Net

A fishing net isn't an absolute necessity but they do come in handy when you're landing a fish. They're

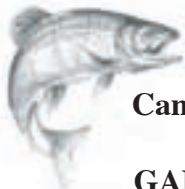
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Ryan Hickman caught a 43" musky.
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also useful for keeping kids busy when they tire of fishing. They can catch frogs, minnows and tadpoles and discover a whole new world.

Bait

There are several different kinds of bait, both live and artificial. Night crawlers, also known as earthworms, are great for beginners. Instead of buying a dozen, take a flashlight out into the yard after dark when there's dew on the grass and pick your own, or dig them out of your compost heap. Place them in a plastic container that contains a bit of soil and store them in the refrigerator over night. Be sure to punch holes in the lid of the container and make sure the top is secure. Other types of baits include mealworms, kernel corn, grubs and bread balls.

Bobbers

Bobbers are floats that you attach to your fishing line to dangle the bait in front of the fish. They also give extra weight when casting. The bobber sits on the water surface and when it dips into the water, you know you have a bite. Small is better. Use a bobber that has just enough weight to keep your bait from dragging it under the water. The most sensitive bobbers are the pencil style. Round bobbers are less sensitive and therefore it's easier for you to tell if you have a bite using a

pencil bobber. However, round bobbers are the easiest to cast. Slip bobbers can be adjusted quickly and easily to allow you to fish at different depths and they're easy to cast. They come in both pencil and round styles and are perfect for beginners and children.

Hooks

Fish hooks come in a wide variety of sizes and styles. If you are planning to use live bait, it's best to buy a variety pack that includes hooks in sizes that range from No. 6 to No. 10. If you are fishing for bullhead or catfish, you will need larger hooks. If you intent to catch and release, fish hook barbs can be flattened. This gives you more of a challenge and inflicts less pain and injury on the fish. Flattening barbs reduces the amount of fish that die because of wounds or because they swallowed the hook. A good rule of thumb to keep this from happening is to use hooks that are compatible with the size of the fish's mouth that you are hoping to catch. If the hook is too small, it is easily swallowed and if it's too large the fish won't take the bait.

Sinkers

Sinkers, or weights as they're sometimes called, come in a variety of sizes and are used to keep your line from floating on the water surface. Split shot sinkers range in size from minute to about the size of the end of a lead pencil, and are the smallest type of weights. Sinkers range from split shot to weights

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of a pound or more. The most popular and frequently used sinkers are split shot and they are the best weights for beginners and children. When you purchase sinkers be sure they are lead free in order to pro-
continue to the next page



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

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Leaders

Fishing leaders are fine pieces of metal with an eye on one end and a small easy to use pin catch on the other. You open this pin to slip a hook or lure onto it. The fishing line is threaded through the eye and knotted. Leaders aren't necessary for beginners or children but are recommended for ease of changing hooks and lures. Leaders are also used when fishing for game fish such as northern pike, muskellunge and walleye. The metal leaders stop these toothy fish from biting through your line.

Swivels

Instead of attaching leaders, hooks and lures to the fishing line, many anglers use a small device called a snap swivel. There is an eye on one end and a pin clip on the other. The fishing line is threaded through the eye and fastened securely with a fishing knot. The pin clip opens much the same as a safety pin and the hook, lure or leader is slipped onto it and the clip

pin is closed. Snap swivels protect your line from tangling as your bait moves and spins through the water. Snap swivels allow you to change bait or to change leaders quickly without cutting and re-tying your fishing line.

Fishing Knife

A fishing knife comes in handy if you have to cut snagged or tangled line. They are also used for scaling and cleaning fish. If kids are fishing, give them nail clippers to cut their line.

Needle Nose Pliers

These assist in removing the hook when the fish swallows it.

First Aid Kit

Pack some bandages, perox-



Jeff Barlow, from Mallington, hooked a 23 1/4" largemouth.

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ide and anti-bacterial ointment in your tackle box to treat cuts and scrapes.

Tackle Box

A tackle box is used for organizing and storing bobbers, hooks, line, lures, leaders and other small items you will need to have a successful fishing experience. Boxes that open from the top and have two trays are continue to the next page



A nice buck was checked in. Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton..

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great for beginners, children and casual anglers. Tackle boxes often come with a small amount of tackle such as hooks, bobbers, sinkers and artificial worms.

Now that you have your rod, reel and tackle, you are ready to head out to the old fishing hole. Find a nice shady spot on the bank of a creek, pond or stream or on the side of a lake and relax while you wait for that nibble or strike.



A wide racked buck was checked in. *Photo courtesy of Bogg's Gas in Elizabethtown.*



Jamie McFee used a bow for a quality 8 point buck..



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