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Issue 274

December 2018 / January 2019

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**32nd  
Annual**



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## Magazine

**Volume 1 Issue 274**

Publisher and Editor  
**Mark A. Goudy**

Contributing Editors  
West Virginia Division Of  
Natural Resources

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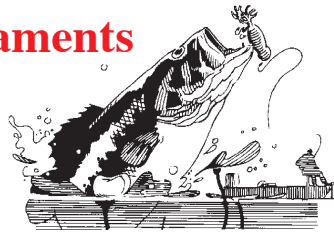
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## Cover Photo

Last month, there was a pie-bald buck on the cover. Lowell Parsons, from Belmont bagged a very rare albino buck in Preston County. Estimates range from 1 in 30,000 to 1 in 100,000 for an albino deer.

Go online to see this magazine online every 6 weeks. Back issues are there from 2006. It is [www.wvasportsman.net](http://www.wvasportsman.net)

TEXT, mail or email your large fish or game pictures. Info is on page 38.



# WV Deer Hunting Information

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The 2018 West Virginia buck firearms season began Monday, Nov. 19 and run through Dec. 1. Here are a few facts about the season:

Buck firearm season is open in all counties except Logan, Mingo, McDowell and Wyoming.

Sunday hunting will be legal on public lands throughout West Virginia, and on private land with written permission of the landowner. The only Sunday that falls within the two-week buck firearms season is Nov. 25.

All deer harvested by hunters in Berkeley and Mineral counties on Nov. 19 and 20 are required to be brought to a designated Biological Game Examination Station. For station locations, consult page

12 of the 2018-2019 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary.

Approximately 250,000 deer hunters will be in West Virginia's woods this season.

Hunters should review the 2018-2019 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary for detailed instructions concerning bag limits and season dates. The regulations are available at license agents, DNR district offices and online at [www.wvdnr.gov](http://www.wvdnr.gov).

All hunters must use their permanent DNR ID number to check game. The ID number can be found on annual hunting licenses. Hunters who have registered with the electronic licensing system in the past must use the number they were previously provided. They also can be obtained by calling 304-558-2758 or logging on to [wvhunt.com](http://wvhunt.com) and providing the requested information. Game may be checked by telephone at 1-844-WVCHECK, online at [wvhunt.com](http://wvhunt.com) or at any hunting license agent. All field tagging, transporting and possession requirements still apply.

Hunters may substitute a bow or a crossbow during the buck firearms season.

The bag limit during the two-

continue to the next page



Greg Strickland brought in a Nicholas Co. 10 point buck, *Photo courtesy of WV Wild Outdoors in Birch River.*

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(one on the base license and one on an RG [resident] or RRG [nonresident] stamp). A hunter may take no more than three antlered deer per calendar year in all archery, cross-bow and firearms seasons combined.

A hunter may harvest two deer per day, but only one antlered deer may be harvested per day. The first deer does not have to be electronically registered before harvesting the second deer in the same day. However, all deer legally harvested must be electronically registered and legally tagged before hunting during a subsequent day.

The last day to purchase an additional buck deer gun tag (Class RG/RRG Stamp) is Sunday, Nov. 18. Class RG and Class RRG additional buck stamps can only be used to take an additional antlered deer during buck firearms season.

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

Fifty-one counties are open to concurrent antlerless deer season hunting during the traditional buck firearms season. Class N (resident) or Class NN (non-resident) stamps to hunt during the antlerless deer season can be purchased at any time. Antlerless deer firearms season opens Nov. 19 on private land and specified public lands. Hunters should consult the 2018-2019 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary for specific antlerless deer season regulations in each county and wildlife management area.

A bear firearms season without dogs will run concurrent with the buck firearms season in 51 of 55 counties, excluding Logan, Mingo, McDowell and Wyoming. Con-

sult the 2018-2019 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary for specific information.

According to Southwick Associates, hunting contributes \$500 million each year to the state's economy. Deer hunters spend an estimated \$230 million in West continue to the next page



Jerry Salisbury harvested a nice buck. Photo courtesy of Trappers Den in Cowen.

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Virginia, much of it in the rural areas of the state that depend upon the deer seasons for a large portion of their annual income. Hunting is estimated to be responsible for 5,400 jobs and \$35 million in sales taxes on goods and services spent in West Virginia.

In 2017, the traditional bucks-only firearm season harvest of antlered bucks was 44,127, a decrease of 4 percent from the 2016 harvest. This is 14 percent less than the 5-year average bucks-only firearm season harvest of 51,448 and ranks 35th among all past years.

WVDNR predicts the buck harvest will be higher than it was in 2017. White oak mast will have the deer spread across the landscape, but the lack of other oak species will make it easier for hunters this year than last season. Field reports are showing a very healthy deer population and many good bucks available.

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



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Hunters who wish to donate deer meat or money to the Hunters Helping the Hungry program, which distributes deer meat through the Mountaineer Food Bank and the Facing Hunger Food Bank, should call 304-924-6211 or visit the DNR website at [www.wvdnr.gov](http://www.wvdnr.gov) to find a participating meat processor.

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## Bobcat Trappers Needed For Study

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources is asking bobcat trappers to assist with a new study in Berkeley, Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Jefferson, Mineral, Morgan, Pendleton, Pocahontas, Randolph and Tucker counties.

“We’re asking trappers in those counties who catch bobcats to call wildlife biologists so a research crew can place a radio collar on their animal and release it,” said Gary Foster, assistant chief for Wildlife Management. “A \$100 gift card, useable at several locations, will be awarded to all trap-

pers contributing an animal for the study.”

Animals caught and released will not count toward the trapper’s seasonal bag limit, and trappers may contribute multiple animals to the study. The study will help DNR refine the population model used to manage bobcats in the state and guide harvest recommendations in the future. Radio-collared bobcats will yield important data regarding home range size, habitat use and mortality factors. The study will take two trapping seasons to complete and biologists are hoping to collar 30 bobcats each season.

Upon trapping a bobcat in the targeted counties, trappers should leave the animal on site and call one of the numbers listed below during normal business hours, Monday through Friday. A research crew will be dispatched to process and release the animal. Trappers should not keep animals through the weekend or holidays, as research crews will not be available to respond.

Kirsten Belcher (West Virginia University) 304-293-0050 or 304-216-8482

Rich Rogers (WVDNR) 304-822-3551



Young Grant Roush bagged his first buck. It was a dandy.



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Vicki Hensley used a crossbow for a big 8 point buck. *Photo courtesy of Old and New Sports in Ravenswood.*



Sophia Board bagged a huge 10 point in Wirt County.



TR Hathaway had success with a 7 point from Calhoun Co. *Photo courtesy of Superior Toyoto in Parkersburg.*

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# Fall Turkey Harvest

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – West Virginia turkey hunters harvested 1,215 birds during the fall season, according to the Division of Natural Resources. That’s an increase of 28 percent above the 2017 season, and only 4 percent below the five-year average.

“Even with the incredibly wet summer we had this year, poult production was up from last year,” said Mike Peters, DNR game bird biologist. “That was a good indication fall harvest would also be up, as was predicted in the 2018 West Virginia Mast Survey and Hunter Outlook.”

Two main factors contributed to the improved harvest numbers, according to Peters. Brood production was up from last year and mast conditions were slightly below the long-term average. Poor mast conditions will concentrate birds and make it easier for hunters to bag a bird. The uptick in harvest from last year could also be attributed to the increase in hunting opportunity.

“It’s the third year all 55 counties

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Todd Smith used a crossbow in Ritchie Co. for a 9 point. Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.

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had at least a one-week season, but it’s the first year that Sunday hunting was permitted in all 55 counties on both private and public land,” Peters said.

Leading the state was Randolph County, with hunters harvesting 76 birds, followed by Nicholas (68), Greenbrier (65), Upshur (58), and Preston County (54). The top three counties had a four-week season with Upshur and Preston County having a two-week season. District 3 hunters harvested 319 birds, followed by District 1 (232), District 4 (230), District 2 (168), District 6



Cameron Irizarry bagged a quality Wood Co. 11 point buck.




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## Albino And Leucistic (Piebald) Deer

It turns out people have been captivated by white deer for centuries, and perhaps millennia. The ghost-like appearance of these animals has attracted myth, superstition and rampant scientific misinformation for an equally long period of time.

That misinformation continues to this day. And it stands to reason that, with whitetails becoming more abundant near population centers, more people will be sharing their own tales of these unusu-

alcreatures.

White deer are real, but they may not be what you think. Albino, Leucistic or Piebald?

Most people, like my grandfather, refer to white deer as "albinos." While deer can be albinos, it's exceedingly rare.

Albinism is a congenital condition defined by the absence of pigment, resulting in an all-white appearance and pink eyes. Many

continue to the next page



Caleb Smith used a bow in Logan County for a quality buck



## Bass Sportsman 2019 Events

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plant and animal species exhibit albinism (including humans). It's difficult to accurately determine how frequently this condition exists in wild animals, because albino animals tend not to survive long. They have poor eyesight and are conspicuous, making them easy prey. Research suggests that albi-



Chuck Watson, from Pleasants Co., bagged a fine 10 point buck.

no alligators, for instance, survive on average less than 24 hours after hatching.

The same undoubtedly holds true for deer, and in fact true albino deer are rarely reported. Instead, most white deer exhibit a condition commonly known as leucism, a recessive genetic trait found in about one percent of all white-tails. As with albinism, leucism can be found in nearly all mammals.

Leucistic animals lack pigment over all or part of their bodies. Leucistic deer can be varying lev-

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els of white – some contain white splotches, some are half brown and half white, some appear nearly all white. Mixed brown and white animals are often known as piebald deer. (Confusingly, many deer biologists and hunters use “piebald” to describe all leucistic deer).

The nose is black, as in a “normal” deer, and eyesight is not usually affected.

Many other animals exhibit leucism.   
continue to the next page



Jim Summers, from Wirt Co., brought in a nice 9 point buck.

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cism. Birders often report seeing unusual white birds (rendering field guides nearly incomprehensible). White squirrels have become famous tourist attractions in several U.S. towns.

Leucistic deer generally can survive longer than albino deer. Still, they are not very well camouflaged in the forest, making them stand out to predators. In a habitat with its large predators still present, a leucistic deer's chances of survival are slim.

As wildlife photographer and deer expert Leonard Lee Rue III notes in his recent book *Whitetail Savvy* (a must-read for deer nerds), "Many piebald deer also exhibit hunched backs, bowed legs, and short, rounded noses."

Today, human hunters are the most common large predator over much of the white-tailed deer's range. Humans bring their own selection pressures to hunting, and they're quite different from those of wolves or mountain lions.

I'd guess that, because of that, you're more likely to see a white deer today than at any point in the whitetail's history.



Andy Short shot a 320 pound black bear. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.

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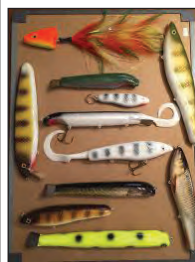
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## 2018 Buck Harvest

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. - Preliminary data collected from the electronic game checking system indicates that deer hunters in West Virginia harvested 44,572 antlered deer during the two-week buck firearms season which ran from Nov. 19 through Dec. 1, 2018, according to Gary Foster, assistant chief of Game Management with the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Section.

continue to the next page



Cody Collins, from Lesage, brought in a nice 10 point buck.



Jamie McGee bagged a nice 10 point buck in Wood County.



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The 2018 harvest was 1 percent higher than the 2017 harvest. The top 10 counties for buck harvest in 2018 were: Randolph (1,685), Preston (1,607), Greenbrier (1,479), Hampshire (1,471), Jackson (1,379), Pendleton (1,274), Grant (1,217), Hardy (1,212), Kanawha (1,212) and Mason (1,206).

The buck harvest increased in the eastern panhandle (DNR District 2) and in southwestern West Virginia (DNR District 5) and was similar to or slightly down in the remainder of the state.

Deer hunters have several days of opportunity left this year, including the remainder of the archery and crossbow seasons, which run through Dec. 31. Muzzleloader deer season will open Dec. 10 and remain open through Dec. 16. The Youth, Class Q/QQ and Class XS



Haley Jones, from Big Bend, landed a nice bass.

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deer season for antlerless deer will be open Dec. 26-27 in any county with a firearms deer season. This will be followed by the reopening of Class N/NN antlerless deer season on Dec. 28-31 in specified counties or portions of counties.

In addition, the new primitive weapons “Mountaineer Heritage Season” will be open during the



Wayne Duffield and Cory Canell got two 8 point bucks in Calhoun County

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period from Jan. 10-13, 2019.

Refer to the 2018–2019 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary or visit the DNR website at [www.wvdnr.gov](http://www.wvdnr.gov) for additional details as well as county and area listings.

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## State Park Christmas Gift Cards

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — The perfect gift is one that keeps on giving, and West Virginia State Parks is including “Something Extra” this holiday season on gift card purchases of \$100 or more. This bonus includes eight coupons that can be used at select state parks and forests in 2019.

West Virginia State Parks gift cards can be used to pay for lodge rooms and cabins, and on dining, gift shops or other activities that charge a fee where debit/credit card equipment is used. Each gift card purchase of \$100 made online or by telephone between Nov. 1 and Dec. 14 will also receive up to eight “extras” such as “two-for-one” offers and other discounts at state parks and forests.

“Giving a state park gift card is

a personal invitation to family and friends to visit a favorite park or forest,” said Miranda Cope, who works in the State Parks central office. “Some people even buy a card for themselves just to get the extras.”

Gift cards may be purchased on-

line at [wvstateparks.com](http://wvstateparks.com) or by calling 304-558-2764. There is no shipping or handling fee, and gift cards and “Something Extra” coupons are mailed together. While gift cards can be used any time for all purchases and services at all state parks.



JD Cantarelli harvested a nice buck in Harrison County.



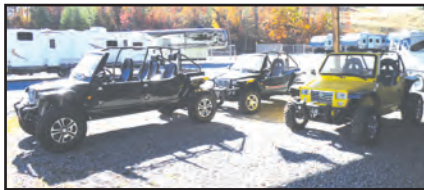
Sean Parsons, from Minerlwwells, used a bow for a nice buck.

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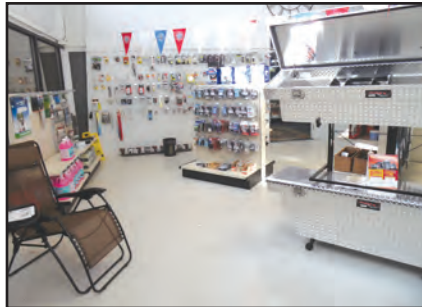
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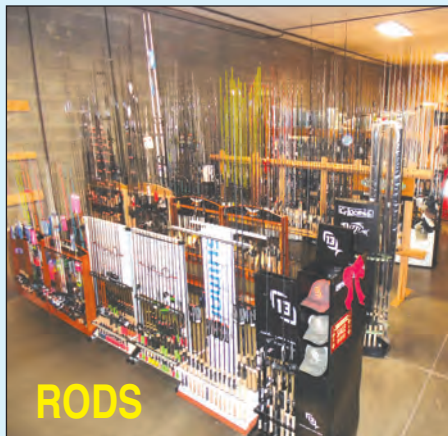


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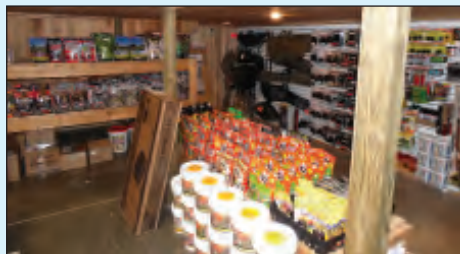
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## Winter Rabbits

When the deer seasons dry up, the winter sets in (oh, it's already done that?) and when the snow seems to blanket the land more thickly with every passing day, hunters have different strategies for how to keep their skills in check until the springtime.

Sure, some of us opt to simply go into hibernation and wait until the weather gets better to return to hunting. But for every fair weather hunter, there is another winter warrior among us who isn't ready to let a little bit of snow separate him from his hobby.

Some of them are coyote hunters, working to keep the predators from hunting priority deer properties or to eradicate the spread of the animals to suburban areas. Others are raccoon hunters, looking for a bit of revenge on the garbage-scavenging beasts that have been breaking into garages and tearing up trash and recycling bags for years.

RELATED: 4 Coyote Calls You Need to Know

However, while coyotes and raccoons are perfectly adequate game animals for a hunter looking to stay active through the cold hard win-

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ter months, they don't necessarily make for the tastiest meals. In fact, if your goal with winter hunting is to find the animals that can spark your appetite, then the best option is to start going after rabbits.

While not terribly common on the average restaurant or home-cooked menu these days, prepared rabbit can actually be a delicious treat, especially in wintertime

continue to the next page



Bill Basil had success this season with a great 9 point buck.



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stews and roasts.

For all of these reasons and more, rabbit hunting used to be the main pursuit for hunters during the winter. And hunters didn't stop targeting rabbits in the winter because they didn't like the taste of the meat on their dinner tables, but because finding rabbits became difficult.

Nowadays, some hunters believe that going after rabbits in the winter is more trouble than it's worth. Certainly, the population of the cottontail and showshoe hoppers has thinned over time, thanks to factors ranging from habitat destruction to a preponderance of predators (coyotes among them). However, rabbits are resilient animals with quick reproductive cycles, mean-

ing that their populations can keep pace with even the most destructive forces.

If you go out this winter in pursuit

of a rabbit, you will find one - so long as you know what to look for and where to look.

Good luck this winter.



Steve Jones harvested a 520 pound black bear from Summers County. The DNR had a bear relocation project over 20 years ago. Many thought that it was to create bear hunting around the state. I googled an article by Dr. Gary Alt on bears. It stated that bears 1, coyotes 2 and bobcats 3 eat around 50% of fawns in wooded areas - based on his study. It would appear that the relocation of the bears may have also been deer management.

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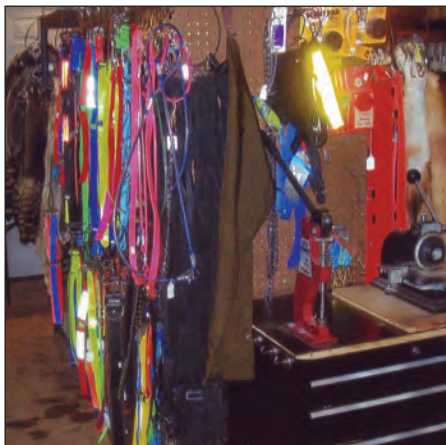
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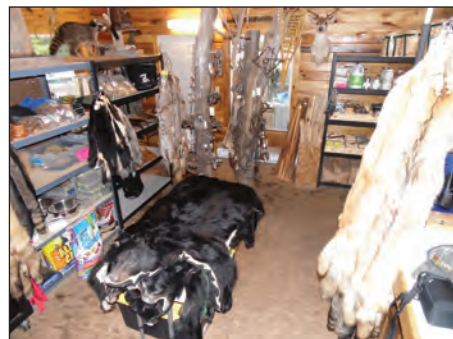
Bucky Sargent used a bow for a super Logan County buck.



Brock Kinsell got a nice buck in Marion Co. Photo courtesy of Tyler Outdoor Supply in Middlebourne.



Brent Warner harvested a nice 10 point buck. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.



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Charlie Marstiller caught several nice trout. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.



Cody Bassett used a bow for a 7 point buck. Photo courtesy of Tyler Outdoor Supply in Middlebourne.



Shane Hunt bagged a big Wyoming Co. buck with a bow.



Randy Light used a bow in Wyoming County.

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Travis Neal got a six point buck in  
 Mason County.

## Must Tag Furbearers

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va.  
 — The West Virginia Division of  
 Natural Resources would like to  
 remind beaver, bobcat, fisher and  
 otter trappers that they are required  
 to electronically register their  
 catches within 30 days after the  
 close of the respective season. The  
 furbearer trapping seasons in West  
 Virginia opened Nov. 3.

A game check confirmation num-  
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 per's name and address, or written  
 on a field tag, and must be attached  
 and remain attached to each pelt or  
 whole animal until it is sold, tanned  
 or processed into commercial fur,  
 or is mounted.

Information provided by hunters  
 or trappers when checking game is

used to monitor the harvest and as-  
 sist in future management of these  
 species in West Virginia. Decisions  
 regarding season length, opening  
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 rely on accurate data obtained from  
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 vest.

continue to the next page

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Trappers are asked to deliver skinned river otter carcasses to DNR district offices. Call a district office to arrange a pick up if



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you are unable to deliver the carcass. Biological samples collected will assist biologists in making decisions regarding future trapping seasons. A \$20 gift certificate will be issued for each useable otter carcass turned in.

DNR personnel advise trappers to obtain a Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES) seal for each bobcat and otter pelt from animals harvested in West Virginia. The plastic seal is necessary only if the pelts will be shipped out of the state. Federal law requires the seal on all bobcat

and otter pelts if they will eventually be shipped to international markets including Canada. The seals must be obtained from the state where the animals were harvested.

Bobcats and river otters are not endangered species but may be confused with similar-looking species that may be found on the international market. These CITES seals may be obtained from the DNR Elkins office and any DNR district office. Calling ahead is advised to ensure that personnel authorized to seal pelts will be available.

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## Winter Squirrel Hunting

When the leaves are off the trees and the weather is cold, squirrel season becomes the art of the sniper.

Here are our tips to aid in your success while late season squirrel hunting.

In early season when the leaves are on the trees, squirrels are less wary of intrusion into their domain and less likely to be spooked by the quiet hunter. In late season, after facing other hunters, they have become educated. Also, the leaves

that once hid the hunter are now gone.

This becomes the hunting game of the rifleman.

Hunters are wise to utilize full camouflage, including the use of face masks and gloves to mask their human presence. Moving ever so slowly, the hunter scans the tree tops with binoculars looking for that small part of the squirrel that might give them away. This may be a silhouette, a flickering tail, a tail blowing gently in the breeze, or its ever-present intensely black eyes.

Once located, the stalk begins to find a suitable spot to take a shot.

This is the hunt of the rifleman, as ranges are frequently more difficult than that of a shotgun's capability. The Ruger model 10/22 is a reliable .22 long rifle chambered weapon that is very effective on quick, accurate shots at squirrels at quite a distance.

The .22 long rifle cartridge is accurate and damages the meat little, especially if you take head shots.

continue to the next page



John Bates went to Wetzel Co. for an 8 point buck.

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Breanna Wade got a nice 6 point buck in Wetzel County.



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Good luck and be sure all of your shots you take have a solid backing, such as a tree, to stop the bullet after it exits your squirrel.



Hunter Lemasters used a bow for a high rack buck. Photo courtesy of Tyler Outdoor Supply in Middlebourne.

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Austin Brown bagged a huge buck. He was with Zach Horrocks.

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Dec/Jan 2018/19 ~ Page 27



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At the Mountaineer Military Museum, you will experience some of the United States Military's unique moments while seeing the military of our country and the nation comes alive through a soldier's eyes.

Kick back and relax at Lambert's Winery, situated on a beautiful hillside in its own hand cut stone building where you can take a tour of the facility and enjoy a tasting while visiting the gift shop.

You may also visit the childhood home of Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson at WVU's Jackson Mills Farmstead. Here you will see an 1840's farmstead with a working gristmill, blacksmith's shop, buildings, cabins and more.

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# Hunting Winter Deer

The next time you find yourself scheduling vacation for deer hunting, consider flipping past Halloween and Thanksgiving and poring over the possibilities around December 10. Why? Well, it's not because of the so-called "second rut." Yes, rut activity sometimes occurs in early December, but it's minor.

The bigger factors are:

Hunger

Food availability

Cold weather

Little or no hunting pressure.

When those factors combine before mid-December — and you throw in random late-breeding activity for added spice — you'll often see deer activity that out-

shines the main rut of late October through mid-November.

True, breeding activity can tick upward in early December as doe fawns enter heat for the first time and an occasional doe recycles after failing to get pregnant four weeks earlier. But the second rut is more a last gasp than a second wind, and breeding in December north of the Mason-Dixon line results more from convenience and coincidence than relentless pursuit.

Although there's no guarantee the early to mid-December time frame will produce great deer activity each year, the ingredients for a deer hunter's "perfect storm" almost always swirl about that time. Those ingredients include:

Large agricultural fields often offer the most abundant and accessi-

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ble foods, and hunger drives deer to make daylight appearances.

Food sources compress and food varieties dwindle.

In Northern regions, most crops have been harvested by then, and many acorns and nutritious leaves have been eaten or buried under early snowfalls. Deer congregate on remaining foods and deplete them further.

The whitetail's metabolism hasn't yet slowed for winter, which means hunger can be relentless.

They must find food to maintain their energy reserves, and when they find it, they'll stay longer to eat.



Garrett Owens got a nice 8 point in Ritchie County.



Danny Fields got an 8 point in Kanawha County.



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## Winter Bass Fishing

Cold weather and bass fishing are two things that, for the majority of bass anglers, don't fit together. We are all used to picture in our mind hot sunny days and giant bass, not miserable cold snowy days, frozen northern winds, ice on the shorelines or similar stuff.

These aspects often represent what keep the bass fishermen away from the water during the coldest months of winter. Well, not all of them. Those like me enjoy fishing for the little green fish 12 months a year, experience, during the dead of winter, some of the best bass fishing action, and catch **QUALITY** bass too!

I'm not afraid to say that the large-mouth bass, specially the northern

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strain, can be caught even through the ice if we are willing to fish for it. I've caught bass, and lot of them in waters partially iced up! The key to be successful in winter is **SLOWING DOWN**, sometimes leaving our lure motionless on the bottom for seconds if not minutes. It's tough fishing, which requires

coninue to the next page



DW Mahan used a bow for a fine Jackson County buck..



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lot of self-conditioning, an excellent mental preparation and full concentration on the job at hand. As for these latter aspects, I compare winter fishing to tournament fishing.

Winter fishing is, for several aspects, a mental game. First of all, we have to convince ourselves that the fish is there and has to eat to survive, even in the

coldest months of the year. Surely it will eat a less amount of food but it has to nourish itself to not die by starvation. So, mr. Bass will probably bite one of our lure... With that in mind, we'll have to consider that during spring, summer and fall we took particular care of two aspects to consistently catch fish: location and presentation. In winter it's exactly the same thing, maybe with some slight exceptions.

continue to the next page

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Natalie Snyder harvested a nice 8 point buck. *Photo courtesy of Trappers Den in Cowen.*



Doug Devart shot a good 8 point buck. *Photo courtesy of Harcore Hunters in Grafton.*

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Another thing that plays to our favor in our mental game, is that winter bites, as I've already mentioned, are quality bites. There are also very good chances to catch those huge fish we have seen spawning last spring and which seemed disappeared for the rest of the year! Wonder why? For two reasons. First, because they're subject to almost no fishing pressure; second,

when the opportunity of an easy big meal arise, the big female bass is the first one to take advantage of this in winter.

**LOCATION**

Despite the most of anglers I've spoken with about winter fishing are convinced that sunny days are usually better, I'm not of the same opinion. I'm aware on how a prolonged period of sun affect bass

behavior but in the dead of winter, sunny days oftencorrespond to lower air temperatures while cloud cover means warmer weather that turns the fish a little more active and move them shallower. These are good ingredients for a productive winter trip. Over my years of extensive winter fishing, I've discovered that one of the best time to be on the water is when it's snowing. Snow seems to put some frenzy on the bass.

continue to the page 35

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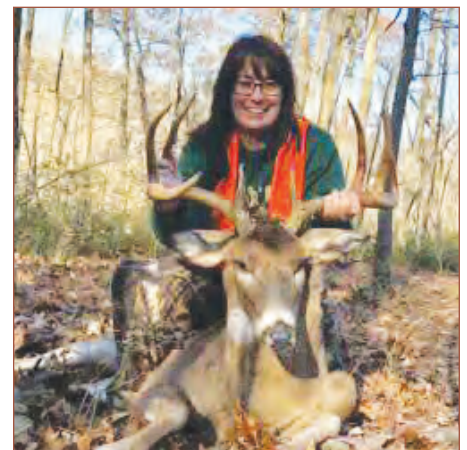
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Young Johnny Crockett is a good bass fisherman & a pretty good deer hunter.



Jennifer Barker went to Braxton County for a good buck.



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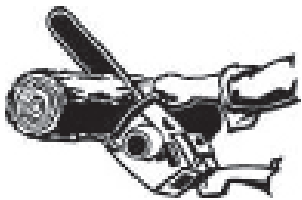
Since the days are shorter during winter, I've experienced some extra-time fishing in the dark, just because the bass were biting more aggressively than during the middle of the day! Just a thought, but sometimes winter fishing has big similarities with the hot summer fishing.

**PRESENTATION**

Fish normally moves slow and so it will accordingly feed on slow-moving baits. Presentation is one of the most mental aspect of winter bassin'. You need to retrieve your lures so slow that sometimes this results painfully, in the true sense of the word. It's even more hard in the beginning, after a wonderful fall season spent casting and retrieving spinnerbaits, topwaters and crankbaits.

When you think you're fishing slow, slow down again and again

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and again! Sounds strange but the most of the times it's that way you'll catch fish in winter. You have to condition yourself to believe that

a big fish is always following your

continue to the next page

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Larry Nixon got a good buck. Photo courtesy of Tyler Outdoor Supply in Middlebourne

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lure, watching it and wondering if it is the case to bite it or not. Often, this is true: there's a fish watching and following your lure. Your task is to keep its interest high and convince it to bite.

Sometimes it will attack with vengeance and you'll see the line jumping and starting to run sideways like a rocket, but the most of the times you'll feel absolutely nothing.

With the experience, I developed a "sixth" sense, and well, I often set the hook on what this sixth sense tell me. When something is not right and you aren't able to feel your lure or this one is where it hasn't to be, reel in the slack line quickly and set the hook!

Concentration plays a big role in winter presentation: you've to try to become one with your lure and be always aware on where it is and what it's doing.

Coming back to the bass watching

and following our lure, I've found that shaking this one, brings a lot of interest from the fish. A good portion of the bites I get in winter comes while I'm shaking the lure. I feel or see the distinctive "thump" of the bass that all of sudden interrupts my shake. I usually add a shot of Kick'N Bass fish attractant to my lures. I believe this give me an advantage over the bass because this



Marina Lynn Purvis, age 9, got a nice 8 point buck.

way I stimulate all its senses and in this season, every minimal aspect of our fishing is critical.



Marc Hescht, from Belpre, Ohio, bagged a huge Fayette Co. bear.

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Nathan Shaffer used a muzzloader for a great buck. Photo courtesy of Hardcore Hunters in Grafton.



Jim Duckworth, from Waverly, shot a great 10 point buck.



Hunter Thompson, from Elkview, brought in a huge 13 point buck.



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Colton Ratcliff got a monster bow buck in southern WV.

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**Lures**



**Clothing**



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**\$3,000** Customer Cash  
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The name says it all! SALES, SERVICE, PARTS

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