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**FREE**

Issue 268

March / April 2018

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TURKEY**

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Updates**



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# WV Classic Giveaway & Outdoor Expo

TAYLOR COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS, GRAFTON WV

## A TWO DAY CHARITY RAFFLE & TRADE SHOW.

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## WV CLASSIC GIVEAWAY RAFFLE

SATURDAY, AUGUST 25<sup>TH</sup> AT 12:00 PM

12:00 2018 TOYOTA TACOMA TRD OFF-ROAD	1:10 HARLEY DAVIDSON IRON 833	2:20 BASS & QUAIL HUNT, KY	3:30 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	4:40 2018 CAN-AM WAVERICKER SIDE X SIDE	6:00 2018 JEEP WRANGLER
12:02 SAUSAGE 10 BA STEALTH RIFLE	1:12 RUGER AMERICAN BOLT ACTION RIFLE	2:22 SPRINGFIELD 10M5 PISTOL	3:32 GLOCK 42 PISTOL	4:42 BROWNING BPS 16GA	6:02 HENRY 45-70 RIFLE
12:0 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	1:14 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	2:24 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	3:34 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	4:44 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	6:04 \$500 COLD HARD CASH
12:06 YETI TUNDRA 105/HOPPER TWO 20 PKG	1:16 OLD TOWN PREDATOR MK FISH KAYAK	2:26 SIG SAUER OSCAR 3 SPOTTING SCOPE	3:36 RECONVX HYPERFIRE HC 600 TRAIL CAM	4:46 OLD TOWN TWIN HERON ANGLER KAYAK	6:06 YETI TUNDRA 105/HOPPER TWO 20 PKG
12:08 SNAPPER 48" ZERO TURN MOWER	1:18 SUNBRITE OUTDOOR 55" TV	2:28 DEWALT 6-TOOL 20 VOLT COMBO	3:38 \$2000 COLD HARD CASH	4:48 GENERAC 102000 PORTABLE GENERATOR	6:08 WINCHESTER TREASURY 48 GUN SAFE
12:10 2018 POLARIS SPORTSMAN TOUR	1:20 WHITEHALE HUNT CAST & BLAST OH	2:30 \$5000 COLD HARD CASH	3:40 TRACKER PRO 170 BASS BOAT	4:50 YAMAHA VX DELUXE W/WEED EATER	6:10 2018 YAMAHA WOLVERINE SIDE X SIDE
12:12 RUGER M77 HAWKEYE RIFLE	1:22 S&W BODUGARD PISTOL W/LASER	2:32 MOSSBERG 500 410 GA	3:42 MOSSBERG 500 12GA	4:52 GLOCK 23 PISTOL	6:12 REMINGTON 700 LR 7MM
12:14 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	1:24 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	2:34 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	3:44 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	4:54 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	6:14 \$500 COLD HARD CASH
12:16 ULTRASKIFF 360 FISHING KAYAK	1:26 BRADLEY 6-RACK DIGITAL SMOKER	2:36 BARNETT WHITETAIL HUNT CROSSBOW	3:46 OLD TOWN VAPOR 12 ANGLER KAYAK	4:56 GOPRO HERO5 4K ACTION CAMERA	6:16 ULTRASKIFF 360 FISHING KAYAK
12:18 GENERAC 102000 PORTABLE GENERATOR	1:28 SUN DOLPHIN PRO 120 FISHING BOAT	2:38 \$2000 COLD HARD CASH	3:48 KOBALT 18 DRAWER STAINLESS TOOL CABIN	4:58 FAMILY VACATION- WYRTLE BEACH, SC	6:18 7X12 ENCLOSED BOX TRAILER
12:20 RAM HUNT W/BUCK & BOAR, SC	1:30 \$5000 COLD HARD CASH	2:40 SEA DOO SPARK	3:50 SNAPPER 61" ZERO TURN	5:00 KUBOTA COMPACT UTILITY TRACTOR	6:20 ELK HUNT W/BEAVER CK OUTFITTERS, CO
12:22 REMINGTON WINGMASTER 20 GA	1:32 THOMPSON CENTER MUZZLELOADER	2:42 REMINGTON R1-191 PISTOL	3:52 WINCHESTER M70 FEATHERLIGHT	5:02 RUGER GP100 357MAG PISTOL	6:22 BERETTA TIKKA 25-06
12:24 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	1:34 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	2:44 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	3:54 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	5:04 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	6:24 \$500 COLD HARD CASH
12:26 SPYPOINT SOLAR CELL TRAIL CAM	1:36 TENPOINT TURBO GT CROSSBOW	2:46 OLD TOWN PENOBSCOT 164 CANOE	3:56 SUMMIT TREESTAND/ TRAIL CAMERA PKG	5:06 YETI TUNDRA 105/HOPPER TWO 20 PKG	6:26 LIBERTY 18 GUN PROVAULT SAFE
12:28 SKI D OPEN TRAILER	1:38 \$2000 COLD HARD CASH	2:48 ECHO PRO SAW/BLOWER/TRIMMER PKG	3:58 ELK SPRINGS FISHING PACKAGE FOR 2	5:08 WEBER GENESIS II STAINLESS GRILL	6:28 ECHO PRO SAW/BLOWER/TRIMMER PKG
12:30 \$5000 COLD HARD CASH	1:40 CALDERA 5 PERSON HOT TUB	2:50 SUZUKI KINGQUAD 400 4X4	4:00 HARLEY DAVIDSON SOFTTAIL FATBOY	5:10 2018 HONDA FOURTRAX BANCHER 4X4	6:30 \$5000 COLD HARD CASH
12:32 WEATHERBY VANGUARD 257 RIFLE	1:42 RUGER AMERICAN 204 RIFLE	2:52 SIG SAUER P938 PISTOL	4:02 RUGER HAWKEYE 7MM RIFLE	5:12 RUGER SR-40	6:32 SAUSAGE 25V17 HORNET
12:34 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	1:44 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	2:54 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	4:04 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	5:14 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	6:34 \$500 COLD HARD CASH
12:36 EXCALIBUR 305 CROSSBOW	1:46 OLD TOWN NEXT CANOE	2:56 MATHEWS HALON COMPOUND BOW	4:06 YETI TUNDRA 105/HOPPER TWO 20 PKG	5:16 OLD TOWN VAPOR 10 ANGLER KAYAK	6:36 TENPOINT RENEGADE CROSSBOW
12:38 \$2000 COLD HARD CASH	1:48 WEBER GENESIS II STAINLESS GRILL	2:58 FAMILY VACATION- PIGEON FORGE, TN	4:08 STIHL PRO SAW/BLOWER/TRIMMER PKG	5:18 WINCHESTER TREASURY 48 GUN SAFE	6:38 \$2000 COLD HARD CASH
12:40 GENERAC WHOLE HOUSE GENERATOR	1:50 CUSTOM HART RIFLE	3:00 2018 FORD EXPLORER	4:10 2018 POP UP CAMPER	5:20 \$5000 COLD HARD CASH	6:40 SEA DOO SPARK
12:42 RUGER LC9 PISTOL	1:52 ROCK ISLAND M1911 PISTOL	3:02 FXR-40 PISTOL	4:12 RUGER AMERICAN 6.5 CREEDMOORE	5:22 S&W SHIELD 9MM PISTOL	6:42 BROWNING X-BOLT 28 NOSLER
12:44 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	1:54 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	3:04 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	4:14 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	5:24 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	6:44 \$500 COLD HARD CASH
12:46 OLD TOWN VAPOR 10 ANGLER KAYAK	1:56 GOPRO HERO5 4K ACTION CAMERA	3:06 YETI TUNDRA 105/HOPPER TWO 20 PKG	4:16 OLD TOWN DIRIGO 106 KAYAK	5:26 BARNETT GHOST 375 CROSSBOW	6:46 OLD TOWN PREDATOR POL FISHING KAYAK
12:48 STIHL PRO SAW/BLOWER/TRIMMER PKG	1:58 CAST & BLAST TURKEY HUNT	3:08 WINCHESTER TREASURY 48 GUN SAFE	4:18 LAS VEGAS GETAWAY FOR 2	5:28 \$2000 COLD HARD CASH	6:48 HUSQ PRO SAW/BLOWER/TRIMMER PKG
12:50 15' TRACKER JON BOAT W/MOTOR	2:00 2018 SUN TRACKER PONTOON	3:10 2018 HONDA FOURTRAX FOREMAN	4:20 D&B SPORT FISHING WALLEYE TRIP	5:30 2018 POLARIS BANGER SIDE X SIDE	6:50 2018 SLINGSHOT ROADSTER
12:52 SAUSAGE 555 0/U SHOTGUN	2:02 S&W M&P 10	3:12 RUGER MINI-14 RIFLE	4:22 MOSSBERG PATRIOT RIFLE	5:32 SAUSAGE 17MM RIFLE	6:52 REMINGTON 700 CCL 270
12:54 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	2:04 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	3:14 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	4:24 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	5:34 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	6:54 \$500 COLD HARD CASH
12:56 INDULTRE TRAIL CAMERA, FEEDER PKG	2:06 YETI TUNDRA 105/HOPPER TWO 20 PKG	3:16 OLD TOWN PREDATOR XL FISHING KAYAK	4:26 PRIMOS BLIND / TRAIL CAMERA PKG	5:36 OLD TOWN DISCOVERY 133 CANOE	6:56 MATHEWS HALON COMPOUND BOW
12:58 FAMILY VACATION- WHITE WATER TRIP WV	2:08 BOSS BUCK BLIND W/10' TOWER	3:18 SUNBRITE OUTDOOR 55" TV	4:28 MILWAUKEE 15 TOOL 18 VOLT KIT	5:38 HUSQ PRO SAW/BLOWER/TRIMMER PKG	6:58 REDNECK 616 BUCK BLIND W/ TOWER
1:00 YAMAHA VX DELUXE W/WEED EATER	2:10 2018 YAMAHA KODIAK 700	3:20 WHITEHALE HUNT PIKE CO. ILLINOIS	4:30 \$5000 COLD HARD CASH	5:40 HANLEY DAVIDSON DYNA STREET BOB	
1:02 REMINGTON 380 PISTOL	2:12 RUGER SR1911 PISTOL	3:22 TAURUS 809 PISTOL	4:32 RUGER BLACKHAWK 41 MAG	5:42 S&W SHIELD 45 PISTOL	
1:04 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	2:14 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	3:24 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	4:34 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	5:44 \$500 COLD HARD CASH	
1:06 YETI TUNDRA 105/HOPPER TWO 20 PKG	2:16 OLD TOWN LOON 106 ANGLER KAYAK	3:26 EXCALIBUR MATRIX 330 CROSSBOW	4:36 TENPOINT TITAN XTREME ROSSBOW	5:46 LEUPOLD BX-3 MOJAVE 12X50 BINOCULARS	
1:08 MEC 2006 SPORTER CLAY TARGET INC.	2:18 GENERAC 102000 PORTABLE GENERATOR	3:28 MUDDY BULL BOX BLIND W/TOWER	4:38 \$2000 COLD HARD CASH	5:48 3 DAY LAKE ERIE FISHING TRIP	

**7:00 \$50,000 CASH**

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## Magazine

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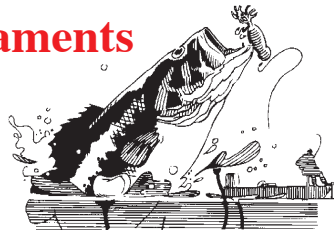
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## Cover Photo

Ted Doolin, from Davis Creek, hooked a large walleye from the Kanawha River. There are many locations with walleye in the state. They don't seem to be as popular to fish for as they are in other states.

Fishing season for trout is underway now. Large bass can be caught in March. Try a black & blue jig & pig bait.

Send in your big deer and fish pictures from 2017-2018. Look for a form on page 38.

# 2017 Final Deer Numbers

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Preliminary counts indicate hunters harvested 108,160 white-tailed deer in West Virginia during the 2017 seasons. The 2017 harvest was 4 percent below the 2016 harvest of 112,384 deer, and 15 percent below the five-year average of 127,803.

A breakdown of the combined 2017 deer seasons reveals 44,127 bucks were harvested during the traditional buck firearm season, 33,584 antlerless deer were killed during all antlerless firearm seasons, 26,206 deer were harvested by bows and crossbows, and 4,243

deer were taken by muzzleloader hunters.

## Antlerless Deer Season

The 2017 antlerless deer harvest, which includes those taken during the youth/Class Q/Class XS deer season, was 3.5 percent less than in 2016 and 22 percent below the five-year average of 43,145.

“It is important to note that the antlerless harvest is the key component to any deer management strategy, as it controls the future deer population,” said Paul Johansen, chief of the Wildlife Resources Section.

The top 10 counties were: Preston (1,703), Upshur (1,300), Ritchie (1,290), Lewis (1,258), Jackson (1,122), Roane (1,101), Wood (1,087), Braxton (1,083), Mason (1,052), and Harrison (1,014).

Hunters are reminded that the DNR will hold 12 public meetings across the state on March 12 and 13 to gather comments on fall 2018 antlerless deer hunting seasons in each of the 51 counties where firearms deer hunting is permitted.

## Muzzleloader Deer Season

The 2017 muzzleloader harvest of 4,243 was 15 percent below the 2016 harvest of 4,997, and 26

continue to the next page



Shawn Ramme had success with a nice 8 point buck.

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Dawn Lanham caught a big golden trout at Barbourville Lake.

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percent below the five-year average of 5,768. The top 10 counties were: Preston (203), Randolph (194), Upshur (163), Nicholas (162), Lewis (146), Jackson (138), Greenbrier (130), Braxton (127), Harrison (126), and Fayette (124). Archery and Crossbow Deer Season

The bow and crossbow harvest of 26,206 deer was 1.2 percent less than the 2016 harvest of 26,524, and 4 percent below the five-year average of 27,420. Archery harvests are affected by hard mast crops. The average acorn crop in 2016, followed by a better-than-average acorn crop in 2017, likely contributed to the slightly lower 2017 harvest.

More deer were harvested with a crossbow than in past years. For the first time, more deer were taken with a crossbow than a bow.

The top 10 counties were: Preston (1,469), Kanawha (894), Randolph (883), Wyoming (824), Raleigh (789), Fayette (765), Wood (738), Greenbrier (722), Upshur (694), and Monongalia (694).



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

March/April 2018 ~ Page 5

## GO ONLINE

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Len Spotio caught a 4 1/2 pound rainbow trout.

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## 2018 WV State Park Camping

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — West Virginia's state parks and forests will begin processing campsite reservations on Feb. 15, in advance of camping season this spring.

Family camping is one of the quintessential summer pastimes enjoyed by families all over West Virginia," said West Virginia State Parks District Administrator Matt Yeager. "We've been getting a lot of inquiries about reservations at our parks and forests, so all indications point to 2018 being a banner year for camping."

By sending in an application, park guests can make sure they have a campsite reserved during higher-traffic months in the summer. Campgrounds are located at 25 state park areas, many of which also feature lodges, cabins, cottages and swimming pools, and offer planned activities and other outdoor recreation options.

Campgrounds start opening between mid-March and April, depending upon the park and weather. Most campgrounds with reservable campsites are open Memorial Day to Labor Day weekend. Until the Friday before Memorial Day, campsites are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

After March 15, campsite reser-

vations are taken by phone and by mail. On April 1, walk-in reservations are processed. Reservations for campsites that are accessible to persons with disabilities may be reserved from Feb. 15 through March 15. Applications and information for reservable campsites are available on each state park or forest webpage at [www.wvstateparks.com](http://www.wvstateparks.com).

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Details On Page Three**



John Maynor used a bow for a large black bear. *Photo courtesy of Uncle Tom's Loans in Oceanna.*

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## Fur Bearer Season Ends

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va.  
 — Trapping seasons for all fur-bearing animals, except beaver, have closed. The beaver trapping season continues until March 31.

All beaver, bobcat, otter and fisher pelts are required to be checked within 30 days of the close of their respective season. Hunters and trappers can check game one of the

following ways:

Internet – [www.wvhunt.com](http://www.wvhunt.com)

Stopping at any license agent (you will not have to bring the animal with you)

Telephone – Call 1-844-WV-CHECK (1-844-982-4325)

It is illegal to set traps during the month of March for beaver unless those traps are in water. Trappers should be aware that it is illegal to set traps or leave traps set after noon on the last day of the season.

Furs shipped out of West Virginia

must have a fur shipping tag, which is available at DNR district offices. Anyone who plans to sell an otter or bobcat pelt outside of the state of West Virginia should obtain a CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) seal for each pelt. All otter and bobcat pelts, usually exported from the United States by licensed fur buyers, must have a CITES seal from the state where the animal was harvested.



Chuck Capp used a crossbow for this Preston County Buck.

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Brett Carey used a crossbow in Cabell County for a nice buck.



Craig Cline used a bow in Logan County for a wide racked buck.



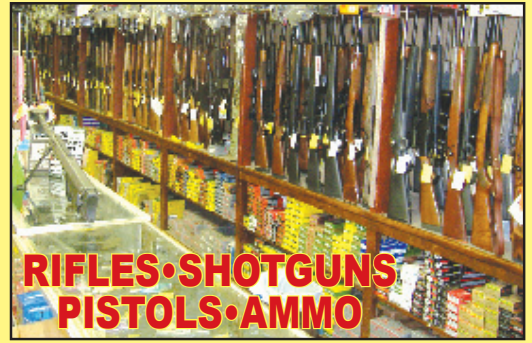
Randy Osbourne landed a 5 pound walleye at Stonewall Jackson.

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Zack Hatfield used a bow for a great buck. Photo courtesy of Uncle Tom's Loans in Oceanna.



This hunter had bow success this season. Photo courtesy of Uncle Tom's Loans in Oceanna.

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The first time a turkey gobbles, don't tear down the woods running to him. Keep cool; slip 25 to 50 yards in the direction of the gobbler; and check up. A tom will usually gobble 2 or 3 more times, and hopefully more than that. Listen to those calls and draw a solid line to the bird's roost tree.

Using ridges, hollows and foliage for cover, you should have no trouble sneaking within 200 yards of a roosted turkey. Whenever possible, try to cut the distance to 125 or even 100 yards. The less terra firma

between you and a bird, the better the odds that he'll pitch down and drift to your calls at daybreak.

For some strange reason, most toms are reluctant to pitch from

their limbs and strut downhill to calling. Try to position above a roosted bird, or at least on the same gradient plane with him.

continue to the next page 15



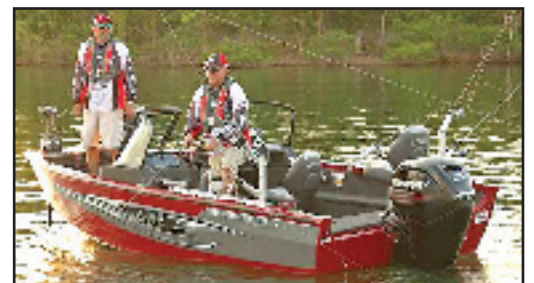
Couple of brothers out hunting. Dalton & Kaiden Warner got a couple of bucks. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.*

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Devin Bokey landed a nice brook trout. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.



Ed & Blake Taylor had success on the youth turkey season.

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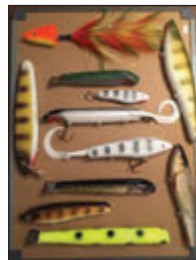
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For some strange reason, most toms are reluctant to pitch from their limbs and strut downhill to calling. Try to position above a roosted bird, or at least on the same gradient plane with him.

As you approach a gobbling tur-



Destiny Hatfield used a bow for a great deer.

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key, scan the woods for a fence, creek, gully or strip of thick brush, and maneuver to take any hazard large or small out of play. Strive to set up where the terrain is gently rolling and fairly open, which makes it easy for a tom to strut toward your calls.

The best strategy of all is to anticipate where a gobbler will go to gather hens, then set up to block his way. Is there a field, food plot, clear-cut, burn or open creek bottom within a half-mile or so of a tom's roost tree? If so, beat feet  
continue to the next page

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over in that direction and settle in. When the turkey flies down and heads for his strut zone, you'll be in good position to cut him off and coax him with calling.

**Early Morning Calling**

Let's say you do it right and slip within 100 yards of a roasted turkey that is gobbling hot and heavy. The more the bird roars, the more you feel an uncontrollable urge to cluck and yelp. But be careful! Too much calling at first light can hang a tom on his limb as he waits for the hot "hen" to sail or walk beneath his roost tree. And the longer he sits up there and fails to see a girl, the more he smells a rat. When the bird finally flies down 30 minutes later, there's a good chance



Larry & Aaron Tenant caught lots of big crappie in Marion County.

he'll run the other way.

So fight the urge to call too early. Wait until pink illuminates the sky. Then give a bird some pillow talk to let him know you're there. A couple of sultry tree clucks and yelps are about right.

If the turkey bellows shut the heck up! He has honored you as a hen, he likes what he heard, and he knows where you are. Let him fly down and come looking for you. But if the tom fails to gobble, cluck and yelp a little louder to focus his attention in your direction.

If he still doesn't talk, it's no big deal. Listen for the bird to fly down, then hit him with a spirited hen cackle. Try flapping a Primos turkey wing against your leg to sound like a hen pitching to the ground. If the tom gobbles and steps your way, you might not need to call again. But if he hangs up after 5 minutes or so, cluck, yelp and purr a little louder. As long as the turkey hangs around and gobbles keep playing the game. Most hunters move too quickly on toms that might eventually strut to their calls 30 minutes or so after fly-down time.

**Midmorning Tactics Back Up**

Turkeys might gobble like crazy on the roost. But for an hour or two after daybreak the woods may fall

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as quiet as a mausoleum. That's because the hens and toms are courting and breeding. Toms strut and drum but gobble little if at all as they have their fun. The so-called "gobbling lull" is the toughest time of day to hunt.

But along about 9 o'clock some continue to the next page



Jacob Valentine brought in a nice deer last season.



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some hens begin to leave some of the gobblers. Some girls simply lose interest in the boys, while others slip off to lay eggs. Lovesick toms are driven to be around hens all the time in the spring, so they immediately begin searching for more company. Some rowdy

2-year-old males may start gobbling hard in hopes of attracting new hens. Older long beards strut and drum intensely, and they are stoked to shock gobble.

"Gobblers strut around all morning, and suddenly they look up and their hens are gone," says my friend Harold Knight of Knight and Hale Game Calls. "They almost fly into a panic. If you slip around the woods and call, those lonesome

turkeys will hear you and gobble. If they gobble a couple of times at your calls, they're generally pretty easy to call in."

There's another big reason the midmorning hours are hot. You've got plenty of elbow room to do your thing. "Most hunters have gone home or to work," notes Knight. "A lot of the gobblers that were called to and maybe spooked first thing

continue to the next page



Brandon Sheets, from Mt. Clare, brought in a nice Grant Co. buck.

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n the morning have settled back down. The woods have calmed down and the turkeys are back on their normal routine. If you've got the day off, hang in there. You'll have the woods to yourself as you call to those lonely gobblers."

Beginning around 9:00 a.m. walk old logging roads, field edges, foot trails on ridges...you get the idea. Pause often and listen for gobblers. Try to strike toms with calls. "

I like to blow a hawk or crow call," says Knight. "Lonely turkeys

have so much pent-up energy that they'll often shock gobble at those sounds. The minute a turkey gobbles, I move in, set up in a good spot and switch over to soft hen calls."

If locator calls fail to produce, turn to turkey calling. "My favorite calls are loud yelps and especially cutts," says Knight. "If a gobbler's hens have left and he's strutting around by himself, he'll nail a sharp cutt most of the time."

Knight offers one exception to

the rule of calling aggressively to strike toms. "When I hunt a public area late in the season, I figure most of the gobblers are call shy," he says. "So I tone down my calling. I still cover lots of ground and call down into hollows and around fields, but I yelp and cutt softer and not as much."

**Afternoon Strategies**

Combined, more than 25 Southeastern, Midwestern and Western states permit all-day turkey hunting in the spring. If you live in or travel to one of these states you can experience some great action

continue to page 20

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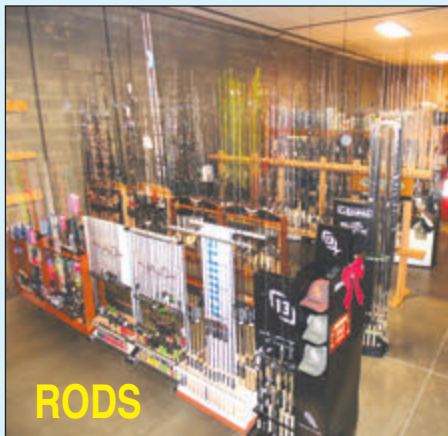


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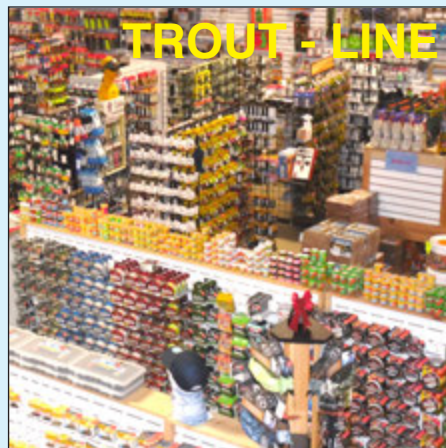
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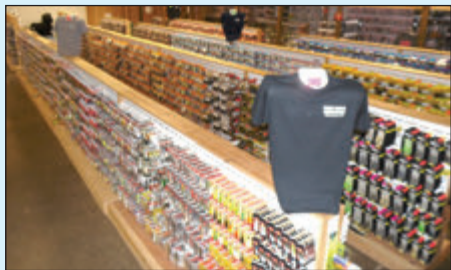
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beginning after lunch and continuing until roosting time. Most of the early-morning hunters are out of the woods. But the gobblers are still there, most of 'em deserted by hens and stoked to gobble at your locator calls or hen cuts.

But keep this in mind. You can't expect a turkey to gobble 50 or more times in the afternoon like he might first thing in the morning. Most birds won't even gobble as much as they might around 9 or 10 a.m. You need to crow call or hen cutt and listen closely for a faint gobble or two. Then move in and listen for softer sounds, like a turkey strutting or walking in the leaves. A lot of turkeys, especially old Easterns, will gobble only once or twice in the afternoon, but they'll come to your calls fast and silently.

Afternoon hunting generally peaks from around 2 to 4:30 p.m., but you might as well hunt right up until dark some days. Gobblers love to roost within 50 to 200 yards of hens. If a turkey hears you yelping and cutting late in the day, he might come in to roost in the area. Better yet, he might run over to check out the hen before he flies up.

Good luck & hunt safely!

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Dave Post, from Mineralwells, caught a steelhead up north.



Kellijo Kessler reeled in a nice channel catfish.



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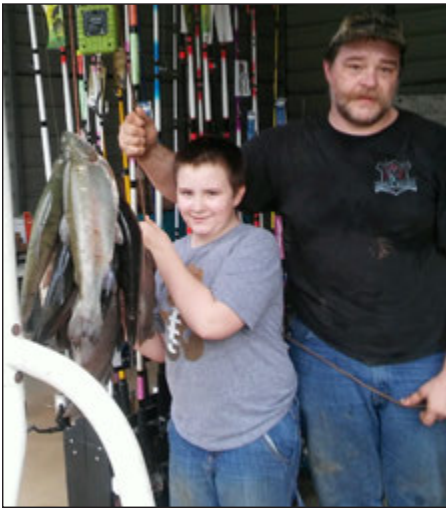
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This fellow caught a bunch of trout. Photo courtesy of Bell Meadows Fishing Preserve in Stonewood.

## Spring Bluegill

Spring is the best time of the year to get out on the water. The weather is phenomenal, flowers are blooming, and critters of all persuasion are following cupid's arrow to create the next generation of deer, birds, and fish.

From a fishing perspective, spring fish are usually hungry, aggressive, and shallow – which makes catching them easier and more fun than other times of the year. Because of that, it's easy for anglers to focus their springtime energies on catching popular species like bass or

crappie.


That's an understandable focus. Springtime bassin is one of the more enjoyable ways to spend a relaxing day on the water, and collecting a stringer of nice crappie is downright sublime.

Unfortunately, anglers that focus their springtime energies solely on bass and crappie are missing out on one of the most rewarding spring bites there is, the bluegill.

Often overlooked by their more famous cousins, bluegill are aggressive, frisky fighters on ultra-light tackle, and one of the finest eating fishes that swims fresh water. And there's no better time to catch bluegill than spring.

Bluegills spawn much later than bass and crappie, so their aggressive prespawn period is one of the longest on the lake. Because of that, anglers looking to target springtime bluegill should be able

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The best places to target spring bluegill are on the outside edges of grass beds, in flooded timber, and around any cover adjacent to the

continue to the next page

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What are the 1st 33 bass tournaments? These 4 events held out of the Belpre, Ohio ramp give teams a chance to win a fair payout.

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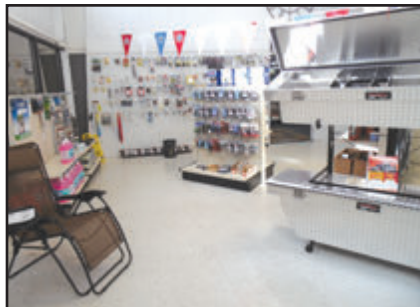
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large, sandy flats that they spawn on later in the summer.

To catch bluegill, there isn't much more effective than a chunk of nightcrawler or a waxworm threaded on a gold hook or 1/64 ounce jig, although artificials like tiny curly tailed grubs, flies, and even small crankbaits can also be effective (particularly when targeting bigger bluegill).

They are great to eat too.

## Walleye Fishing Informaton

The scientific name for walleye is sander viterus. If you're from Canada you may have heard people refer to this fish as pickerel. Regardless of what you call the fish, they are very distinguishable. Walleye

have big shiny eyes making them easy to identify. They have a beautiful golden color and with distinct sharp spines. Walleye have fairly large teeth, and will feed on smaller fish, bugs, and insects. They have a big appetite and can grow to be quite large. Walleye can grow

continue to the next page



Daniel Cotrill caught this 6 pound bass last year at O'Brian Lake.

March/April 2018 ~ Page 24

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as big as 25 lbs, and both the big and small ones can put up a great fight. They will typically spawn in the early spring over rocky streams usually at around 50 degrees Fahrenheit or less. Usually once summer weather moves in these fish will migrate to larger bodies of water, but you can always catch a few in these streams. Walleye typically go on eating frenzies early in the morning or as soon as the run goes down. This is usually the best time to catch them, however; if you know the right spots you can fish for them all day long. So without further delay below is probably the reason you stumbled upon this page. The tips provided below will be changed and updated frequently to ensure your fishing success so

check back often and feel free to submit your own tips as well.

Walleye Fishing Tips and How To Fish Walleye

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Just before the sun comes up and right after the sun goes down is the absolute best time to catch walleye. These fish will move into the shallows to attack prey at this time making them easy targets. Trolling with crank baits such as Rapalas, or using minnows/worms/leeches tends to work great. Some people will use plastics however I have always found live bait to work better. A secret walleye lure I often use at night is the Rapala husky jerk – clown fish.

During the day walleye tend to

move into deep water. Dredged areas and drop offs are usually hot spots for this fish. They tend to get pretty lazy during the day and will usually sit in these holes right along the bottom. My personal favorite method is to troll using a bottom bouncer and a worm harness + worm. If you are familiar with some good holes you can anchor and jig these areas.

Use a worm harness if you're going to use a live worm. Walleye are smart fish and will often bit the tail area of the worm. They like it when the worm is attached to the hook at the very tip and left fully extended. A worm harness will prevent the worm from ripping, and will also land you the fish if it decides to bite just the end.

Troll slow! Walleye are lazy fish and will typically not chase down its prey if it's moving too fast. If

continue to the next page

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Hannah Stump brought in a nice 6 point from Gilmer County

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your fishing off shore reel in very very slow. If you are trolling a lake troll at the slowest pace your motor will allow.

When you find one there are usually more in that area! If you manage to land a walleye be sure to hit up the same area again and again. Walleye are schooling fish so where there is one there are usually many.

The most important thing is to get your lure to where the walleye are situated. Sounds easy but in reality this can be a difficult task. You want to get your lure to sit a few inches off the bottom of the lake or river you are fishing.

Sometimes simple is better. Some of my best walleye fishing has been done using sinkers, hooks, and worms. Just find the fish and get the worm in front of them.

Use the right line/rod. Walleye fight hard and have sharp teeth. I usually recommend a 10lb braided line and a rod with a sensitive tip. The sensitive tip is key so that you can feel when your lure hits bottom and when you have a nibble.

**Walleye Lures and Bait**

This section will outline the rigs and setups you need to land you a trophy walleye.

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**Hook + Worm + Bottom bouncer**– This is by far the most effective combination when fishing during the day in deep waters. The rig is cheap and it will ensure that your lure is right on bottom where the big units reside.

**Jigs**– These are probably the most common walleye set up. A jog is cheap and allows you to get your lure to the bottom effectively. Mimic minnows and white twister tails tend to be a popular choice to add to the jig. I personally prefer using live bait such as worms min-

now or leeches.

**Spinners**– spinners work great for walleye as well. Just be sure to use ample sinkers or a bottom bouncer to ensure that you are getting low enough.

**Crank Baits**– These are my go to lures when fishing early in the am or late at night in the shallows. Crank baits help you cover a lot of ground and are great during times when walleye are on their feeding frenzies in the shallows. The Rapala husky jerk is a personal favorite of mine.

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## NWTF Awards DNR Officers

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Two West Virginia Division of Natural Resources staff members have been recognized by the state chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) for their efforts in game management, conservation and promoting hunter safety.

During the NWTF's annual awards banquet in January, District 4 wildlife manager Mark Richardson received the 2017 Wildlife Manager of the Year Award, which recognizes DNR wildlife managers who demonstrate outstanding efforts in the management and conservation of wild turkey and other wildlife resources. Richardson has been a wildlife manager with DNR for 10 years. At the same event, Natural Resources Police officer Chris Fitzwater was given the Sharp Spur Award, in recognition of his work investigating illegal turkey hunting and promoting hunting safety. Fitzwater is stationed in Braxton County in DNR District 3.

"DNR is proud of everything Mark (Richardson) and Officer Fitzwater have done to make sure our wild turkey population is healthy and that hunters are being safe," said DNR Director Stephen McDaniel. "I want to thank the National Wild Turkey Federation for recognizing their hard work and giving them these much-deserved awards."

Richardson manages four wildlife

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management areas in DNR District 4, including Beury Mountain, Camp Creek State Forest, Meadow River and Tate Lohr. He also frequently assists staff in other wildlife management areas and on special projects, where his expertise in wildlife habitat management, research and heavy equipment operation is needed. Richardson has developed wildlife clearings, water holes and road improvements, and has improved habitat on multiple wildlife management areas by creating successful food plots. Richardson played a key role in a wild turkey restoration project coordinated by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. He has devoted numerous hours over the past three

winters baiting, monitoring, moving nets and sitting long hours in blinds to trap turkeys for the project.

Officer Fitzwater located and monitored 15 illegal bait sites in his assigned area last spring. During his patrols, he logged more than 30 miles of travel on foot. His investigations led to the arrests of several suspects on charges of non-resident hunting without a license, exceeding bag limits, hunting over bait, using electronic calls, hunting from a motor vehicle, illegal possession of wildlife and taking wildlife during a closed season. Officer Fitzwater also spends time educating hunters about the importance of basic safety while turkey hunting.

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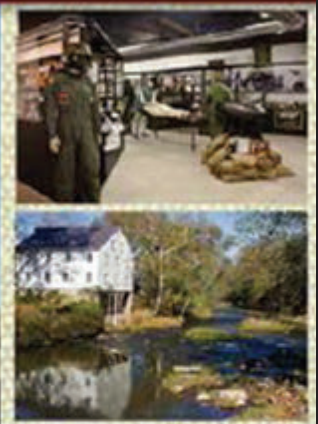
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# Bass Fishing Pre-Spawn

It's about time for the prespawn to begin. For all that's written and said about this phase of a bass' life, it isn't all that complicated if you keep a few things in mind.

The prespawn begins with Mother Nature's seasonal changes. The first thing that's usually mentioned is water temperature, but it's about a lot more than that. You often hear about a "perfect" temperature that starts the bass moving. There's no such thing.

Assuming a water temperature of at least 50 degrees, things like the length of the day and the angle of the sun affect the prespawn movement just as much or more than any increase in water temperature. Without them temperature is a secondary factor.

Some will disagree with me, and I have to admit that there may be a few small bass that'll go based

solely on temperature. But it'll only be a few. The big ones, as well as most of the small ones, look for other cues. They sense that it isn't time until the length of the day and the angle of the sun are in line no matter what the water's doing.

When I'm looking for prespawn bass early in the year I pay more attention to water color than I do to water temperature. Most of the early fish will hold somewhere between 2 and 8 feet. If the water's dirty or heavily stained, I start looking on the shallow end of that depth range. If it's clear or clearing I go deeper until I'm comfortable with where the light penetration drops off, and the bass have a safety factor when they stop.

I'd rather catch bass shallow so I'm a little prejudiced in favor of

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stained, shallow water.

Something else that I think is often misunderstood about the early prespawn is the idea that the females stage on breaks, things like channel swings and underwater crevices — quick changes in depth. They do stage on those areas but only because they're there.

continue to page 31



James Lattea, from Lewis County, caught a 35 pound musky at Terer Creek Lake.

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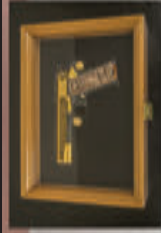
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They're just as likely to stage on a stump, a rock, old fencing, a tire or anything else that happens to be around. A staging spot is about something different. It's not about natural structure.

Another thing about holding areas is that they aren't always between deep water and the places where the bass will make their beds. Sometimes they stage shallower than they spawn. This is especially common during an unusually warm spell that lasts for several days. A weather pattern like that drives the baitfish shallow and, of course, the bass follow. When it's time to actually spawn they turn around and move back out a ways.

My preference for lures at this time of the year is pretty much ordinary. I like lipless crankbaits and bladed jigs. They seem to be exactly what the bass like when they're

resting up and feeding heavily.

Traditional hard crankbaits will work, too. A Rapala Shad Rap is hard to beat during the early pre-spawn. It's been catching bass forever and shows no signs of slowing

down. The Rapala DT4 and DT6 are also good choices.

Don't let the early prespawn get the better of you, and don't make it difficult by fixating on water temperature and structural breaks. Keep the big picture in mind.



Mike Arbogast shot an 8 point in Barbour County.



Adam Maltempie bagged a nice buck in Summers County.



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# The Birth Of Pitching For Bass

Editor's note: 2018 marks the 50th anniversary of B.A.S.S. As part of our celebration we're publishing stories, videos and photos about the history of the sport, including the one below.

Any bass angler who strives to compete at the highest level has no choice but to learn the pitching presentation. Today, the term flipping generally lumps pitching and flipping together. Pitching, an offshoot of flipping, allows for pinpoint accuracy and a soft lure entry that rivals the flip-cast but at greater distances.

Oklahoma angler Tommy Biffle deserves credit for refining and popularizing pitching. Soon after he got wind of the newfangled flipping method in the mid 1970s, he mail-ordered one of the original 7-foot, 6-inch, brown fiberglass Fenwick Flippin' Sticks.

"It weighed a ton and was as stiff as a pool cue," Biffle said.

He taught himself the flip-cast and was soon catching loads of tourna-



Bob O'Dell got a 10 point buck in Jackson County..

By Mark Hicks

ment bass with the method. One day Biffle lifted his jig out of the water to make a flip and "just kind of swung it out there." It was a eureka moment.

"It worked so much better than what I had been doing because I could stay farther back from the fish and the cover," he said.

continue to the next page

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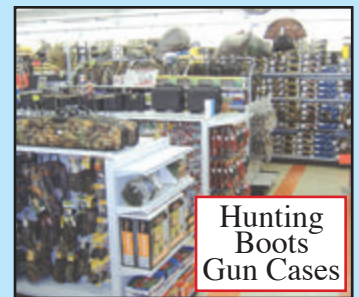
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Though persistent trial-and-error, he tweaked his pitching to the point where he could gently drop a 5/8-ounce jig into a teacup size opening. And, he could easily reach targets more than 40 feet away. It gave him a considerable edge over anglers who were flipping.

Before he began fishing Bassmaster tournaments, Biffle competed in draw events that attracted some of the biggest names in bass fishing. In early 1985 Biffle was paired with Rick Clunn at a tournament on Lake of the Ozarks. Clunn had already won three of his four Bassmaster Classics.

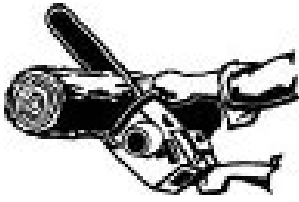
"I was excited to no end," he said. "I didn't even flip a coin for the boat. I just went with him."

Clunn spent most of the day flipping to buck bushes, a strategy that normally prevented backseaters from catching anything. Whenever Biffle was presented with a target that Clunn couldn't reach flipping, he would pitch his jig in there. It often paid off with a bite and a good bass.



This young fellow is looking over the trout. *Photo courtesy of Bell Meadows Fishing Preserve in Stonewood..*

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“After I caught several fish, Clunnaid. “I thought I’d made him mad. He told me to just keep doing what I was doing. We both had a good day.”

Later that year Clunnaid won a Bassmaster Invitational on Lake Okeechobee by pitching his baits into grass. While giving fishing seminars the following winter, Clunnaid credited Biffle for teaching him how to pitch.

“I didn’t teach him anything,” he said. “He learned just by watching me.”

Since then Biffle has won more than \$2 million fishing Bassmaster tournaments, including seven wins and 19 Bassmaster Classic appearances. He has accomplished “dang near all of it pitching.”

Biffle’s flipping/pitching rod measures 7 feet, 6 inches, and bears his name. He designed it for Quantum when Quantum was one of his sponsors. Quantum no longer

sponsors Biffle, nor do they make his signature flipping rod.

“I’ve got three left,” he said. “They’re the stiffest flipping rods out there. Other flipping rods have too much tip action. I can’t pitch near as well with a rod like that.”

Biffle matches the rod with a light, high-speed baitcasting reel filled with 25- to 30-pound Sunline Shooter Fluorocarbon. A number of experiences have convinced Biffle that the zipping noise braided line makes when it rubs against grass and wood cover puts off the bass.

“We used to think you had to have a low gear reel to pull them out,” he said. “You pull them out with the rod, not the reel. You need a quick reel you can get the bait back faster and make more pitches.”



Jeff Copen, from Munday, got an 8 point in Wirt County.



Larry Helm caught a 50” musky that weighed 37 pounds. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.*

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A lefty, he pitches with his left hand. However, he matches the rod with a right hand reel so he doesn’t have to switch hands after making a pitch.

Biffle’s pitch-cast is the fastest, most efficient and most effortless you will ever see. With a continuous motion, he reels in the bait, lifts it out of the water, swings it back and shoots it forward with a quick, compact arm movement. His elbow stays close to his side throughout the pitch.

Biffle does not touch the bait or extend his arm when he pitches. The exception is when he pitches to an especially distant target. He believes this is why he has never had the elbow or shoulder problems that plague many other pros.

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## BRUSHY FORK MART

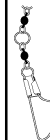
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Dalton Cutright, owner

"Everybody else extends their arm when they pitch," he said. "I tell people to hold a newspaper under their arm when they practice pitching."

The signature Junkyard Jig that he designed for River2Sea is now his go-to pitching jig. Among other things, the jig features a pointed nose that slithers through grass and other cover, a flat bottom that makes the jig stand up on the bottom and a double-barreled rattle. He often dresses the hook with a Larew craw.

He also pitches a Texas rigged Larew Biffle Bug. He matches it with whatever size tungsten sinker is needed to penetrate the cover he is fishing.

Pitching has not totally replaced flipping for Biffle. When dingy water allows him to work close to

an abundance of cover, he opts for flipping. In this instance flipping allows for faster presentations to multiple targets, the softest and most accurate bait placement, plus the highest odds for landing the bass you hook.

"To this day, I do either one," he said. "I pitch 97 percent of the time, but if I come across something that needs to be flipped, I flip it."



Pat Dye brought in a nice buck.

**Spring Crappie**

THE TYPICAL SPRING CRAPPIE APPROACH is a no-brainer. You head for the backs of reservoir tributary arms, anchor, and drown minnows in sunken brushpiles, waiting for finicky spawning crappies to bite--all the while rubbing bows with scores of other anglers doing the same thing. Kentucky Lake guide Garry Mason (731-593-5429) takes a more proactive tack. He hits the water several weeks ahead of the crowds, casting lures along sunken highways that fat pre-spawn crappies travel to reach their shallow spawning grounds. It's virtually the same strategy as that of professional bass anglers gunning for big largemouths in early spring. Soaking minnows is a meat-fishing game. Mason's method, on the

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Richard Wilson, from Shinnston, bagged a nice 12 point buck.

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the other hand, is geared toward those who'd rather tie into the crappie of a lifetime.

Migration Routes

CRAPPIES TAKE A PREDICTABLE PATH TO SPAWN. HERE'S HOW TO AMBUSH THEM

RESERVOIR CRAPPIES TYPICALLY winter on deep main-lake structures like river-channel dropoffs, submerged roadbeds, and offshore humps. They're often 25 to 50 feet deep. As the lake gradu-





Franks Jarvis harvested a nice black bear. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.


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ually warms in early spring, crappies gravitate toward shallower water, following predictable migration routes that lead to their eventual spawning areas.

"Think of these as underwater interstates," Garry Mason says. "Crappies move along points at tributary mouths, creek channels, ledges, and ditches, occasionally stopping to hold and feed at 'rest areas' such as channel bends and isolated wood cover. It's the same way largemouth bass go shallower in spring."

This crappie migration takes place in waves rather than all at once. The initial activity occurs when a lake reaches 55 to 58 degrees. "The first wave often contains the big-

gest fish, so it pays to monitor the water temperature closely during this period and be on those crappie highways when the slabs roll in," Mason says. "You'll find most of them in the 12-foot zone, holding tight to submerged brushpiles and stumps."

By the time the lake hits 65 degrees, expect to experience some truly awesome crappie fishing if you target this pattern. "They'll move progressively shallower as the water warms, eventually ending up in the backs of tributary arms and coves, where they spawn in stake beds and sunken brushpiles once the water reaches the low to mid 70s. But you'll have already

continue to the next page



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caught the biggest, baddest fish by then. You can leave the little ones to the batter-and-fry crowd."

**BATTLE PLAN** As crappies follow creek channels to spawning water, they stop at staging or rest areas. Isolated wood cover, underwater stumps along bends, and points are all good spots. The warmer the water temperature, the closer they'll be to spawning areas.



Adam Maltempie, from Beaver, arrowed a Summers Co. 10 point.



Steve Ellis got a great bow buck in Mingo County. It was 14 points and scored 185 2/8.



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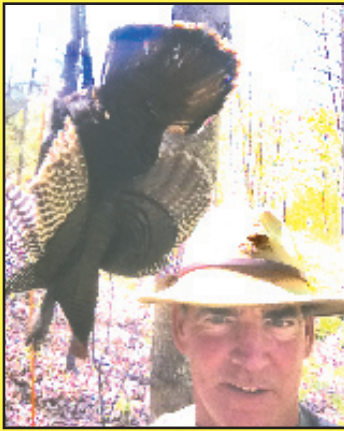


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