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Vol. 1 Issue 162

September 2006



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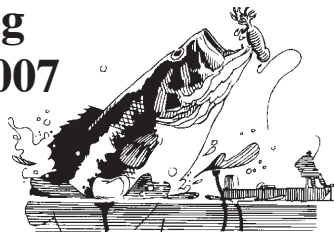
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Cover Photo

The New River is renowned for lots of feisty smallmouth. Occasionally large musky are reeled in as well.

A 49 inch musky was landed by Rusty Smith from Sophia. His large fish weighed 25 pounds. He was on a float trip at the time.

Fishing all over the state has been excellent this season. Good spawning conditions in the past years springs has helped.

The magazine is now on the internet. www.wvasportsman.net

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Brown - It's Down

Once the state of West Virginia opened the first two weeks of buck season into a season of harvesting either a buck or doe, the season became known as "Brown It's Down" season by many hunters. Unfortunately, with the first two weeks of hunting season now being the "Brown It's Down" season, too many deer are being harvested and too many of those deer are young bucks being checked in as antlerless deer, which undoubtedly is a large reason why the buck harvest is down during the season.

The preliminary data that the Department of Natural Resources has collected shows that the 2005 harvest was down twelve percent from the 2004 harvest. The 2004 buck season produced 63,873 deer as opposed to the 56,347 deer that were harvested during 2005. Hunters with the proper stamps and licenses could also participate in the concurrent antlerless deer hunting opportunities during the two-week buck hunting season in 41 counties,

By Todd Zickafoose
or portions thereof. In this early portion of the 2005 antlerless deer hunting season, 27,790 deer were harvested as opposed to the 2004 season harvest of 44,297 deer. This represented a 37 percent decline during the early antlerless deer hunting season.

This decline in the number of bucks harvested during the two-week buck season has been credited to a number of things, such as poor mast in the woods and a large number of winter kill, whereas the decline in the number of antlerless deer harvested was reported to be a direct result of more conservative deer hunting regulations, along with there being fewer counties that were open to antlerless deer hunting.

The Department of Natural Resources also credits the fact that there was a reduced bag limit in many areas. The DNR claims that the decline in this year's buck kill is a result of their efforts to reduce

continue to the next page

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of deer in regions of the state that are considered to be over-populated, according to their White-Tailed Deer Operational Plan.

In this hunter's opinion, it is plain to see that the real reason the number of deer harvested statewide is decreasing is that we do not have the deer. The reason we do not have the deer is that people are killing too many, along with some of the reasons that the DNR states. Even with this year's "reduced" bag limit, a hunter could kill approximately eight deer. With this early season antlerless hunt coinciding with the buck season, a lot of young bucks and button bucks are getting shot because they are being mistaken for antlerless deer. Therefore, at the current rate, the state's deer population could very well be down to nothing in just a number of years.

It is apparent to this hunter that we need to go back to separating antlerless and antlered hunting season, as well as reduce the amount of antlerless deer a hunter may harvest. Antlerless season might even be suspended for a year or two, in order to give the population a chance to rebuild in some areas; however, it has been apparent to me that the

chances for separating antlerless and antlered season during the first two-weeks of hunting season are not very good, according to a DNR officer. One of the main reasons is the revenue the state collects from out-of-state hunters who come to West Virginia to hunt. The main reason the state runs these seasons together is that if an out-of-state hunter does not kill a buck at first, he can at least kill a doe before having to leave. As long as the out-of-state hunter is able to obtain meat for his freezer, that hunter will continue to return to West Virginia to hunt, which means more money for the state.

Another reason, according to the DNR preliminary data for the 2005 season, is that deer populations exceeded management objectives in seven counties.

According to Frank Jezioro, the director of the Division of Natural Resources, the state's deer management program is designed to be responsive to the changing population conditions and can be adjusted annually to regulate the number of deer harvested. Henceforth, the "Brown It's Down" season will remain in effect until the DNR feels that the state has the proper number

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of deer.

Editors Note: High gasoline prices may also have had an adverse effect on hunting hours last season.



This 6 point was shot by Mike Mueller. Photo courtesy of Ridge Runner Productions in Wood County.

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Keeping Game Birds Healthy

By Ralph Russell

We hear through the news media about Avian Influenza (AI), or "bird flu", and how it is spreading throughout the world. AI spreads quickly from bird-to-bird contact, and migratory birds can spread the contagious disease over hundreds of miles as they travel. There is not much a bird farmer can do about migratory birds, but you can try to keep your birds away from other birds, such as other bird farmer's flocks. Be sure to have any new birds tested for Avian influenza before adding them to your flock.

It is a law in the State of West Virginia that all birds imported into the state must have an official health certificate, signed by a licensed veterinarian in the state from which they came. Also, a wildlife impor-

tation permit, from the Division of Natural Resources, is required before birds or eggs are to be shipped. If importing eggs or game birds, a National Poultry Improvement Plan certificate and an Avian influenza (AI) health certificate must also accompany this form.

Whom do you contact if you have sick birds in your flock, and they start dying? The main person you need to talk to is the state vet, Dr. Bill Casto, who can be reached through the Department of Agriculture, in Charleston, W. Va, or at the WVDA Poultry Health laboratory in Moorefield, W. Va. After you have contacted him, he will usually come to your location and take samples of your birds for testing. The samples will be tested for Avian influenza and Exotic Newcastle disease at the WVDA Animal Health Diagnostic laboratory in Charleston, or at the laboratory in Moorefield.

In most cases, it takes from a few days to a week or more to get the results back. After you have obtained the test results and the state vet has

determined your birds do not have anything contagious, that will be about all the help you get.

You will then need to find a game bird vet or a laboratory that specializes in game birds. It has been my experience that finding a game bird vet in West Virginia is difficult, although most vets will look at your birds and take your case. Finding the cause of your birds being sick can result in a lot of time and money; therefore, the faster you can get your birds well, the better off you

continue to the next page



An unusual big head carp was caught at the Hannibal Dam. *Photo courtesy of J & R Sporting Goods in Shinnston.*

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will be. The best place to find help is at a laboratory that specializes in game birds. The State of West Virginia has a poultry laboratory that can diagnosis your game birds, but they don't specialize in them.

Probably one of the best game bird laboratories in the country is at Penn State University. If you want to get quick results, this is the laboratory you need to use. The person you need to contact is Dr. Eva Wallner-Pendleton, and she can be reached at Penn State by calling (814) 863-0837 and asking for the Animal Diagnostic Lab.

I have sent samples to this laboratory and received the results the next day. They also advised me of what medicines I should use to treat the birds. This lab will give you quick results at a low cost, with the highest cost being in shipping the samples by overnight express. I hope this information will help you keep healthy game birds and get your sick birds better.

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Kevin Taber (left) harvested this Pope and Young archery bear in Quebec with Team Buckhorn. Photo courtesy of Team Buckhorn in Princeton.



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Alyssa George, from Walker, caught this trout at Seneca Rocks.



Taylor Foley caught a 29" carp. Photo courtesy of Richmond's Store in Sandstone.





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Largemouth Bass Stocked In Woodrum Lake

The Division of Natural Resources stocked more than 5,000 largemouth bass fingerlings into Woodrum Lake during the last week of July, according to Bret Preston, Assistant Chief of the Wildlife Resources Section. The bass that Woodrum Lake received ranged in size from two to six inches.

The Jackson County lake was drained completely in 2005 as the result of damage done to a lower gate during a routine inspection. During the following winter the U.S. Department of Agriculture repaired the gate and the lake began to fill in late March. It currently needs about four additional feet of water to be completely full.

“So far this year Woodrum has received bluegill, fat head minnows and largemouth bass,” Preston said. “Other species that will be introduced include muskie and channel catfish, which may be stocked this fall.”

While the lake was dry the DNR,

with assistance from Muskies Inc. and B.A.S.S. members, took several steps to jump-start the developing fishery. “Last fall, approximately 6,000 pounds of winter wheat seed, purchased by the NRCS, was planted along several sites within the dry lakebed,” Preston said. “During March, aquatic vegetation was also planted.”

Hundreds of soft stem bulrush, sago pondweed, and arrowhead plants were introduced in two areas.

To minimize loss of the developing plants, fences were constructed around the planted areas. “These sites are located in two upper areas of Woodrum Lake and it is hoped that these plants will supply seed sources for other areas within the lake. Anglers should note that because of the low water, only small boats can be launched at the boat ramp. Woodrum Lake is located in southern Jackson County approximately five miles east of Kenna.

Send In Your Big Fish Photos For 2006.

Details & Form Are On Page 18 Of This Issue

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State Record Gar

A West Virginia state record long-nose gar was caught by Mr. Shelby Searls of Henderson, according to the Division of Natural Resources. Searls caught the 52.25-inch, 16.42-pound fish from the Kanawha River in Mason County on August 20, 2006, using a creek chub for bait. Searls' catch establishes a new West Virginia record for length. The previous length record for longnose gar was a 50.63-inch fish caught by Brian Klug from Fish Creek in 2003. The current weight record for longnose gar still stands at 19.08-pounds (50.5-inch), caught by Michael Shan Casey. Casey's fish was caught in 1993, also from



Bud and Alex Kocher, from Belpre, Ohio, had recent success with two nice black bear taken in Ontario.

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the Kanawha River.

"Most large waterbodies in the state contain longnose gar populations. The Kanawha, the Ohio and the backwater areas associated with these large rivers are great places to start when attempting to catch a large gar," according to Zack Brown, District Fisheries Biologist.

Anglers who believe that they



New state record gar caught by Shelby Searls of Henderson.

have caught a state record fish should check the record listing in the 2006 Fishing Regulations brochure. The brochure also outlines the procedure to follow for reporting their catch. This information is also available online at www.wvdnr.gov.

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A huge 43.6 pound flathead was caught in the Kanawha River by Steve Boswell. Photo courtesy of Amish Country Store in Marmet.



Tom Berga landed a nice walleye and a steelhead at Lake Erie. Photo courtesy of Backwater Bait in Newport, Ohio.



Steve and Aaron Dickens have a 12 3/4 pound catfish.. Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton.

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A 20 pound flathead was reeled in by Josh Murray. Photo courtesy of Starcher's Sports Shop in Lubeck.



Two speckled sea trout were caught by Tom Berga. Photo courtesy of Backwater Bait in Newport, Ohio



Clarence Richardson took this spring bear in Quebec. Photo courtesy of Team Buckhorn in Princeton.

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A wild boar was bagged at the Big Hawks Lodge in Know City, Texas by C.J. Lester. *Photo courtesy of Mountain State Machine and Gun in Lavalette.*



Mike Murray trapped a 38 pound beaver. *Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.*



A 10 pound hybrid striped bass was landed by Justin Beeler. *Photo courtesy of Shaffer's Sports Shop in Lubeck.*

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Fishing With Clarence

By J. R. Sarrett

I'd always considered myself a fair to middling fisherman. I'd usually either hold my own or catch the most. Then, I went fishing with Clarence!

Clarence had been a tournament fisherman a few years back and he had done pretty well. He had a beautiful Ranger bass boat, as good as they come. It was stocked with what I called Wal-Mart's fishing section. A worm, a grub, a tube of every length, color and brand. I was astounded at the variety of baits that could be housed in this futuristic aquatic transportation. 225 horses propelled this grand machine with a console that rivaled

the Enterprise. I was used to my modest little Bass Tracker that had been a trusty but humble friend over the years so this ride at what felt like Mach 1 on the Kanawha River was eye opening!

I thought to myself, "All this gear must be compensating for something. Maybe it's the inability

to catch fish!" It had been a while since I'd fished the Kanawha but from my memory, which tends to embellish when it turns to fishing, I had done pretty well. Smallies, my favorite, spots, largemouth and occasionally a striper had visited my

continue to the next page



Two nice hybrid striped bass were caught by Bob Caudill from Princeton.



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my little Bass Tracker to be returned no worse for the wear. I thought, "Maybe I can teach this "TV fisherman" a thing or two about this game!"

We started the day early right in the middle of Charleston which in my way of thinking is some of the best fishing on the river. I tied on my favorite grub for smallies and Clarence started with a tube so big that it resembled a shredded inner tube. I thought, "Well, it looks like I may have been right. No self-respecting smallmouth bass would ever consider eating that wad of plastic!"

One of the worst tasting substances on the face of the Earth is Crow! And I ate a lot of it that day. The man was a magician with a rod and reel. He caught bass, all three species on baits that I would have never used for carp. When we experienced a short lull in the action, he slid a chunk of plastic on his hook that looked like a wad of bad bubble gum that had been stuck under the table for a year. I thought, "This is it! He's finally cracked!" This unholy conglomeration was cast next to a willow that I had been pounding with my grubs and "Wham" here he comes with a good keeper largemouth!

The only dish that goes with crow

is humble pie and on that day I overate! Still, it was one of the best days I had ever had on the water. You see, Clarence is probably the biggest-hearted guy I've ever fished with. He is a big man, one that you wouldn't want to make angry, but

his personality spells "Teddy Bear". There isn't a selfish bone in his body and would probably give you his shirt if you asked him.

I have several good tales of my other adventures with Clarence not to mention his Boone county jokes, where I hail from and kind of proud

continue to the next page



Young Patrick Gordon caught his 1st catfish. Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth.



Danny Frazier hooked a 5 pound, 2 oz. smallmouth bass. Photo courtesy of Three River's Edge in Hinton.

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of it. Clarence is an ex-coal miner from McDowell County so the barbs fly from one end of the boat to the other. Good-natured kidding is a prerequisite for fishing with Clarence so one must be ready for a lot of laughing as well as a good time with the fishing.

Clarence once told me after I refused to unpack one of his nice rain ponchos during a downpour that he had known chickens smarter than me. I laughed so hard that the rain didn't even matter. Anyway, those darn ponchos are harder than road maps to get folded back right. Maybe he does know some smart chickens!



Amos Hicks hooked a nice smallmouth. *Photo courtesy of Richmond's Store in Sandstone.*

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Goose Season Open

West Virginia's 2006-07 waterfowl seasons will begin September 1 with the opening of the early Canada goose season, according to Curtis I. Taylor, Chief of the Division of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Section.

The 2006 September Canada goose season will be open statewide September 1 through September 16. The daily bag limit is five Canada geese and the possession limit is 10. Shooting hours are 1/2 hour before sunrise until sunset. All other general waterfowl hunting regulations apply to the September season. Hunters must possess a federal waterfowl stamp and a free Harvest Information Program (HIP) registration card in addition to their regular hunting license.

"Canada goose populations remain high and production was good this year so plenty of birds continue to the next page

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Audrey Neff, from Mt. Nebo, caught a 19" catfish.

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should be available,” Taylor advised. “However, even with large numbers of geese, hunting can be difficult. Canada geese are very wary and will quickly change their habits and feeding areas in response to hunting pressure or crop harvesting. Successful hunters scout regularly, maintain good relations with numerous landowners and adjust their tactics.”

Finally, waterfowl hunters are reminded of two important toll free numbers. Federal waterfowl stamps may be purchased with a credit card by calling 1-800-Stamp24 (782-6724). Hunters who harvest a banded bird may call 1-800-327-Band (2263) to report the bird and find out when and where it was banded. Banded birds may also be reported online at www.pwrc.usgs.gov (select bird banding lab)

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Details on page 3**



An Ohio River 30 pound flathead was landed by John Murray. *Photo courtesy of Starcher's Sport Shop in Lu-beck.*

Youth Waterfowl & Squirrel Hunts

Young hunters will have two opportunities to get an early start on the fall hunting seasons in West Virginia this September. West Virginia's youth waterfowl hunt has been set for Saturday, September 23, 2006, and the youth squirrel hunt is scheduled for Saturday, September 30, 2006, according to Curtis I. Taylor, Chief of the Division of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Section.

“These special youth hunts provide an excellent opportunity to introduce youngsters to the hunting heritage of West Virginians,” said Taylor. “The mild days of early fall are a great time to be afield with young hunters and to pass on to

them the traditions of safe hunting and wildlife conservation.”

Youth squirrel hunters must be less than 15 years of age on the day of the hunt. Youth hunters do not

continue to the next page



A 25 3/4" trout was caught by Jeff Kelly. *Photo courtesy of Christy's Trading Post in Mt. Nebo.*

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need hunting licenses; however, they must be accompanied by a licensed adult 21 years of age or older. The supervising adult may not hunt or carry a firearm or bow and must remain near enough to the youth to render advice and assistance. The daily bag limit for the squirrel hunt is the same as during the regular season (six).

Youth who are less than 16 years of age on September 23, 2006 may participate in the youth waterfowl hunt. Youth hunters, age 14 and under, are not required to have a hunting license. Those who have reached their 15th birthday must possess a valid state hunting license (A, XJ, XXJ or A-L) and HIP registration card, or be a qualified resident landowner. The youth must be accompanied by a licensed adult at least 21 years of age. Landowners over 15 years of age are required to carry a valid federal duck stamp.

For additional information, hunters should check the 2006-2007 West Virginia Hunting and Trapping Regulations and the 2006-2007 Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations. These publications are available at all license agents, DNR offices and the DNR's Web site at www.wvdnr.gov.

These youth hunts have been very successful over the past years.

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Ron Midkiff bagged a coyote. Photo courtesy of Justin's Hunting & Fishing in Huntington.



Danny VanMeter caught a 7 pound, 6 oz. rainbow. Photo courtesy of Kile's Grocery in Upper Tract.



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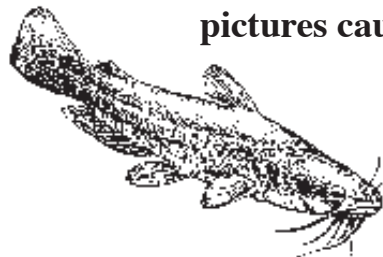
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Late Summer Cabin Discounts

As fall colors begin peeking through the lush green of summer, West Virginia State Parks offers late summer travel discounts in cabins and cottages, according to Group Sales Coordinator Sis Summers.

Seventeen state parks and forests offer discounts ranging from 10 percent to 40 percent off standard nightly rentals depending upon the area for mid-week rentals from September 5-30, 2006. The discount amounts vary by park.

This special is only available at Beech Fork, Blackwater Falls, Bluestone, Cacapon Resort, Canaan Valley Resort, Cass Scenic Rail Road, Holly River, Lost River,



A backwater Ohio River 4 pound, 5 oz. largemouth was reeled in by Keith Davis, from Parkersburg.

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A minimum two-day rental is required and reservations are recommended. Discounts at specific

parks or forests are posted online at www.wvstateparks.com, click on Packages/Cabin Discounts for details or call 1-800-CALL WVA and ask for the participating area and discount details. For other state park and forest discounts and packages go online at www.wvstateparks.com.



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Wade Huffman caught a 5 pound smallmouth at Sandstone Falls. Photo courtesy of Richmond's Store in Sandstone.



Tim Terry and Mike McGuire caught a 5 1/2 pound smallmouth and a 15 pound catfish. Photo courtesy of Granpa's General Store in Hinton.

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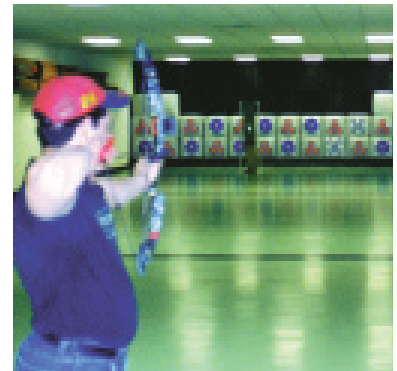
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A 2.61 pound white bass was reeled in by Nick Arthur. Photo courtesy of Amish COuntry Store in MArmet..



Alyssa Flach caught a 6 pound rainbow trout. Photo courtesy of Christy's Trading Post in Mt. Nebo.



A 15 pound carp was landed at by Tyler Lucas. Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton.



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Mourning Dove Season Open

The September 1 st opening of mourning dove season marks the beginning of traditional fall hunting for many West Virginia hunters, according to Curtis Taylor, Chief of the Division of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Section. The 2006 season will open at 12:00 noon on September 1 and the first of three segments will continue through October 7. The two remaining segments are October 23 through November 4 and December 18 through January 6, 2007. Shooting hours, after the first day, are from one-half hour before sunrise until sunset. The daily bag limit is 12 with a possession limit of 24.

“Mourning dove seasons are set to maximize hunting opportunity in relation to other hunting seasons,” Taylor said. “The bulk of the season is in September when



A 37 pound flathead was reeled in at Bluestone Lake. *Photo courtesy of Bluestone Marina on the lake.*



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few other hunting seasons are open and the second and third segments target late crop harvests and the Christmas/New Year holiday period respectively.”

“A recently-harvested grain field with a dead snag for perching and a water source nearby is an ideal setting for a good hunt,” according to Taylor. Scouting and obtaining permission from landowners before opening day increases the odds of a successful hunt.

continue to the next page



Bubby and Matt Stoddard are shown with a 6 pound, 4 oz. smallie. *Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton.*

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Federal regulations require all licensed dove hunters (including lifetime and senior citizens) to register with the National Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program (HIP) and carry proof of registration while hunting. HIP registration is free and available from DNR offices and all hunting license outlets. Hunters may not hunt migratory birds with a shotgun capable of holding more than three shells unless the shotgun is "plugged" with a one-piece filler which cannot be removed without disassembling the gun.

Several hundred doves are banded with leg bands each year for monitoring and research. If you harvest a banded bird you can report it by calling 1-800-327-band (2263) or online at www.pwrc.usgs.gov (select bird banding lab). Hunters may keep the band and will receive a certificate of appreciation that includes the banding information for the bird.

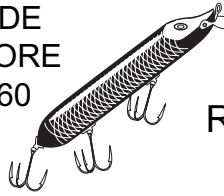
More complete information will be available in the 2006-2007 West Virginia Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations. The regulations will be available from DNR offices, license agents and the DNR website www.wvdnr.gov in late August.



The tailwaters at Summersville Dam were recently stocked with brood trout. Ben Treadway caught a 7 pounder. *Photo courtesy of Christy's Trading Post in Mt. Nebo.*

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Fall Fishing

Autumn is approaching. Soon, the leaves will be turning and the bucks will be preparing themselves for the rut and most West Virginians will be putting away their fishing rods for the winter.

They don't know what they're missing.

It's been a grueling summer and there is no reason to stop fishing now because the best is yet to come.

Autumn offers the same ideal wa-

ter temperatures that makes spring fishing so rewarding, but with voraciously-eating fish that are fattening themselves for winter, not with fat stores drained by winter and spent by the rigors of the spawn.

Something as simple as a stream thermometer can give an angler a good idea of what to expect and what species to target as the water cools. Smaller streams, such

continue to the next page



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as Middle Island Creek, will cool faster than medium-volume rivers such as the Elk River, which itself cools more quickly than big waters like the Ohio and Potomac rivers.

The rate at which water cools is much less drastic and more uniform than the ever-cooling fluctuations in the air. Water temperature is affected less by how cold the air is than how long it is cool.

As summer fades and autumn waxes, fish become more active and as the water nears a species optimum temperature, the same temperature at which they spawned in the spring, the fish begin an eating binge that gets them ready for winter holding.

Black bass are among the first to prepare, as their optimum temperature is around 70 degrees. During late summer, they feed mostly at night or in the evenings, but as water temperature cools, they fill

themselves with forage fish earlier in the day.

Musky tend to like water around 60 degrees and walleye fishing really picks up when the water approaches 50 degrees.

Typically, the water will remain relatively warm for several weeks after the first wintry weather and my experience has been that fishing doesn't begin to deteriorate until December. Last November, in fact, I caught my largest white bass ever, a 2.35-pound fish caught during the first severe cold snap of the year. Air temperature was a blistering 16 degrees.

While Jack Frost was nipping at my nose, the fish was quite comfortable in the warm water and likely felt rejuvenated. The water was around 40 degrees warmer than the air and that offered another advantage to us both, oxygen-rich water. Cold air cools the surface of the water and as that water cools, it sinks and warm water rises to take its place.

The down current of cool water delivers oxygen-charged water to the fish, which makes them more active and is one of God's ways of helping them fatten up for a hard winter.

Many anglers switch to smaller baits as the water cools and fish will follow forage fish and mouths of creeks and backwater areas can be

excellent locations. Fishing below dams or other obstructions can also be hot spots as predator fish often school there as they "pin" forage fish against the obstructions.

While the fish are comfortable in the cooler temperatures so are we. Catching fish on a 70-degree day with a crisp wind blowing at your back is always better than vainly pounding the water with a lure in sweltering heat.

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An Embarrassed Hunter

For one very young, inexperienced, and embarrassed deer hunter, it was the night before deer season. I was up almost all night, anticipating the deer hunt to come. It seemed like the night took forever to pass, as I nervously awaited the clock to alarm; however, When the clock alarmed, I didn't hear it, because I was exhausted from the night before. My dad shook me and said, "Son, it's time to get ready." I hurriedly got ready, and it was about 4:30 a.m. when we got all the gear

loaded and left. I was only sixteen, so my dad told me all the safety lessons again on the way to the hunt.

My dad walked me to a big oak, which we had already picked out; then I watched him walk around

By James T. Oakley
the hill till his light went out. Every little noise in the dark made me think of bears, wildcats, and wild dogs, as my imagination ran wild.

continue to the next page

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Fishing in New York, Jack Van Slyke caught an unusual carp. Photo courtesy of J & R Sporting Goods in Shinnston.

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I was very afraid. When it started getting daylight, I could see movement, but I sat very still. I could see a deer but couldn't tell what kind. I cocked my gun and waited to see what kind it was. After seeing that it was a doe, I sat with my gun butt between my legs, with the barrel pointing skyward. I watched the doe feed out of sight and waited, but nothing followed.

The sun came out, hitting me all over, and it felt so good that I soon drifted off to sleep. I was awakened by the loud thunder of a gunshot. I sat very still, looking and listening, but there was nothing. After sitting for a while, I got tired and decided to leave. I broke my single shotgun down and got scared, because I was



Only 5, Kenneth Satterfield caught a bass. Photo courtesy of Backwater Bait in Newport, Ohio.

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the one who had fired the shot. I didn't know what to do. What was I going to tell my dad? Was I going to make up a story and tell him that I had shot at a deer? Then I thought about the little doe. Would Dad have known that the little doe was all I had seen, and I shot at it? It was illegal to kill does. I was in a pickle! I decided to tell the truth, even if it meant getting a whipping or having hunting privileges taken from me.

I went toward the truck and met my dad standing there. With tears in my eyes - and afraid - I told my dad what had happened. He looked at me, smiling, and said, "I guess you will have to hunt with me a little while longer."

Photography Workshop At Twin Falls

Capture the beauty of nature at Twin Falls Resort State Park, located southwest of Beckley, during the Fall Photography Workshop September 22 - 24, 2006.

"Those who enjoy digital or film cameras will find this weekend event to be exactly what they are looking for," says Randy Murphy, activities coordinator at Twin Falls Resort State Park. "The workshop agenda will cover an array of topics from equipment and composition to photography, natural light, people, action photography, digital

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"Those who enjoy digital or film cameras will find this weekend event to be exactly what they are looking for," says Randy Murphy, activities coordinator at Twin Falls Resort State Park. "The workshop agenda will cover an array of topics from equipment and composition to photography, natural light, people, action photography, digital imaging and computer software use."

David Fattaleh, photography manager for the Department of Commerce Communications Division, will lecture and conduct field trips. Andy Ferguson, information systems coordinator for the West Virginia Division of Tourism, will share his extensive knowledge of visual production for this fun and educational workshop. All participants are encouraged to bring their own cameras and equipment.

The Fall Photography Workshop package includes a variety of accommodation choices. The package price of \$158 for one person includes two nights of lodging, workshop fee, full lunch on Saturday and Sunday and break refreshments. The workshop only price of \$70 includes workshop fee, full

lunch on Saturday and Sunday and break refreshments. Cabin rates and other package prices are available. Advanced reservations are required.

"The Fall Photography Workshop is the perfect time to learn new skills and hone old ones," Murphy says. "With 4,000 acres, Twin Falls provides the perfect background for these skills."

For more information or reservations, please call Twin Falls Resort State Park at (304) 294-4000 or 1-800-CALL WVA and ask for Twin Falls.

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Coyote Seminar To Be Held At Celebration

Nationally-recognized predator hunter Tom Bechdel of Cambridge Springs, Pennsylvania, will return for the ninth year to present his popular coyote hunting seminars during the 2006 West Virginia Celebration of National Hunting and Fishing Days, to be held at Stonewall Jackson Lake State Park in Lewis County (Interstate 79 exit 91) September 23 and 24.

"There is a lot of interest in coyote hunting in West Virginia," Bechdel said. "I'll typically have more than 500 people in attendance at my seminars to learn what it takes to become successful. However, my seminars are a little different; I try to educate hunters on the life of a coyote, how to find them, how and when to call them, how to use electric and mouth calls, and how to use decoys. I cover all 12 months of the coyote's life, what he does, how he does it, and why. I will explain the different color phases of

the Eastern coyote as compared to a Western coyote. This will be time well spent to learn of your new neighbor."

National Hunting and Fishing Days is sponsored by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources and the West Virginia Wildlife Federation and is like no other event, with hands-on learning opportunities for youngsters and families in the area of wildlife and outdoor recreation. Nearly 20,000 wildlife enthusiasts will be

in attendance to try their hand at everything from archery, shooting, fly-fishing, and kids fishing derby, to list only a few. In addition, attendees will also have opportunities to sit in on several other wildlife demonstrations or visit one of the hundred-plus vendors on hand. Admission is \$3 for adults, \$1 for children under age 15, and children 3 and under free. For more information call (304) 558-2771, or visit the DNR's website at www.wvdnr.gov/hunting/nathuntfish.shtm.



Young Austin Rudisill caught a nice catfish. *Photo courtesy of Water-front Sporting Goods in Alderson.*



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Big Buck Contest Begins With Archery Season

The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, the West Virginia Izaak Walton League and the West Virginia Bowhunters Association are again sponsoring the Big Buck Contest for deer taken between October 14 and December 31, 2006. During this time, any hunter who bags a deer in West Virginia with antlers having eight or more points, a 26-inch beam length, and points that are more than eight inches long may have a winning buck. Antlers will be measured according to the official scoring system for North American big game animals, established by the Boone and Crockett Club for gun hunters and the Pope and Young Club for bowhunters.

Plaques will be awarded to four overall first place winners in gun typical and non-typical and bow typical and non-typical classes at the National Hunting and Fishing Day Celebration held at Stonewall Jackson State Park in Lewis County September 23-24, 2007. Gun hunters whose bucks score more than 140 points typical or 165 non-typical will receive certificates commemorating the entry of their buck into the WV Big Buck Contest Record Keeping Program. Bowhunters whose bucks score more than 125 points typical or 155 non-typical will also receive certificates. There were 51 new entries into the Big Buck Records last year that were taken during the 2004 season. The season total showed 10 taken by gun hunters and 41 by bowhunters. Bucks taken in previous years may still be scored for a certificate (if it meets the minimum score) and entry into the records.

Hunters wishing to have their deer scored for this contest should contact the closest Official Mea-

asurer through any DNR Wildlife District Office; phone numbers and addresses are listed in the "2006-2007 West Virginia Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary." Appointments must be made for scoring trophies. Many hunters have their deer scored by Official

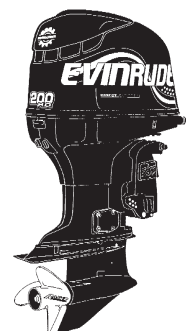
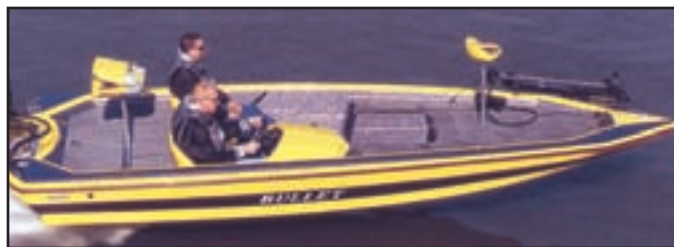
Measurers during the WV Hunting and Fishing Show, held at the Charleston Civic Center in late January. Hunters will be required to read and sign a Fair Chase Affidavit. The hunter must bring the official Game Check Tag with the antlers to be measured.

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Dannie Warden landed a nice hybrid striped bass at Kanawha Falls.



Danny Gill hooked a 5 pound, 2 oz. largemouth. Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton.



David Hobbs reeled in a 5 1/4 pound rainbow trout. Photo courtesy of Kile's Grocery in Upper Tract.

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DNR Director Will Host Bird Dog Demonstration

Frank Jezioro, Director of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, will host a bird dog hunting demonstration at the 2006 West Virginia Celebration of National Hunting and Fishing Days, to be held at Stonewall Jackson Lake State Park in Lewis County (Interstate 79 exit 91) September 23 and 24.

“Anyone who knows me or has read my books knows that there is nothing I enjoy more than hunting, especially bird hunting with my dogs,” Jezioro said. “How serious do I take bird hunting? Let’s just say that I have been very fortunate to have been able to pursue my passion by bird hunting with my dogs from the Southern Appalachians to Canada. There is nothing I enjoy more than watching my dogs work a bird, but they didn’t get there overnight. To become successful in raising a bird dog takes a lot of work and making the right decisions early in the puppy’s life goes a long way toward assuring you a very successful hunting partner. During my seminar I will provide tips and some insight as to what it takes to have a good bird dog. As a hunter, I would encourage everyone who has ever been interested in getting started in bird hunting, or one who just enjoy dogs, to at-

National Hunting and Fishing Days, sponsored by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources and the West Virginia Wildlife Federation, is like no other event held with hands-on learning opportunities for youngsters and families in the areas of wildlife and outdoor recreation. The objective of the event is to educate the non-hunting/fishing public on the benefits of hunting and fishing, as well as to how these activities support the DNR’s efforts in wildlife conservation. Nearly 20,000 wildlife enthusiasts will be in attendance to try their hand at everything from archery, shooting, fly-fishing, and kids fishing derby, to list only a few. In addition, attendees will also have the opportunity to sit-in on several other wildlife demonstra-

tions, or visit one of the hundred-plus vendors on hand.

Admission is \$3 for adults, \$1 for children under the age of 15, and children ages 3 and under are free. For more information call (304) 558-2771, or visit the DNR’s website at www.wvdnr.gov/hunting/nathuntfish.shtm.



A nice musky was hooked by young Austin Lockhart. Photo courtesy of Jarrett’s Bait in Elizabeth.



A 6.29 pound golden trout was caught by Jim Perkins. Photo courtesy of Kile’s Grocery in Upper Tract.

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Catching River Walleyes

Tournament schedules force some of the best anglers in the world to fish throughout the season, regardless of conditions. With the actual dates for the tournaments set months in advance, anglers must deal with extremes in temperature, water clarity and fish activity. For many anglers, river systems are a favorite destination to begin each new season. Wherever walleyes may roam, river systems offer a predictable pattern as fish travel and concentrate to spawn. What aren't predictable, however, are weather and river conditions.

Nothing will shut down a hot river bite like high runoff and no visibility. Four inches of snow or rain can muddy the water and literally shut down the bite for weeks. For many river rats, the best way to catch walleyes under such conditions is to pack up and fish some-

where else. For the professional anglers that follow the tournament trail, however, packing up and traveling to a better bite isn't an option. These anglers are forced to make adjustments and alter their approach. Catching walleyes when visibility is reduced to an inch is difficult, but certainly not impossible.

Richard LaCourse of Port Clinton, Ohio, has years of experience fishing rivers, including muddy ones. Regarding muddy-water techniques, LaCourse treats them just like any other tough fishing situation when the walleyes turn finicky, such as a cold front. He begins by downsizing his presentation, and then slows everything down.

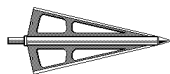
In a muddy river combined with swift current, such as the Detroit River at times, LaCourse advocates handlining and polelining. "Pulling my handline into the current allows me to stall a bait while the current keeps it working right in front of a fish" LaCourse said. "A walleye's sight is very limited in dirty water, so they're not going to chase a bait 5 feet. But they'll feel the vibration of it and bite it out of reaction if it's right in front of them"

The more current there is to work the lure, then, the more effective handlining can be. "Not rocket science, LaCourse said" It's just an

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A rock bass was caught by Nathan Spencer. Photo courtesy of Rick's Taxidermy in Buckhannon.

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effective way of presenting a bait in muddy water and heavy current.”

When it comes to choosing just the right offering to twitch and pulse at the end of a handline, experimenting with various crankbaits once you’ve settled on handling as your technique is the key. Most of the time, in muddy water, the brighter colors, such as orange, chartreuse and firetiger, will produce the best.

The tight wobble of a classic Rapala Floating Minnow is often the lure of choice for a handlining presentation, but diving plugs, particularly shallow-running Shad Raps, are also useful for this technique. LaCourse progressively downsizes his offerings as conditions worsen and walleye lips seal a little tighter. Fish that were hitting a No. 9 Shad Rap might open up more willingly for a No. 5 Shad Rap as the water gets colder, faster and muddier.

Tommy Skarlis of Dorchester, Iowa, has spent a considerable amount of time slipping the current on walleye runs across the continent. A seasoned professional angler who is one of the most consistent anglers on the Wal-Mart FLW Walleye Tour, Skarlis has an uncanny ability to scratch out wall-eyes regardless of conditions.

Skarlis approaches any river system very observantly. His quest for finding clean water in a flow

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of chocolate milk even takes place on the Internet, in some instances right up until he leaves for the destination.

“On some river systems, like the Detroit River for example,” Skarlis explained, “I can go on the Internet and look at recent aerial photos to try and distinguish if there are pools or pockets of cleaner water. Some-

times, one side of the channel might be better.” What Skarlis tries to establish immediately is where the dirty water is coming from. “If the main channel is high from runoff, for example, and visibility is poor, I look for feeder creeks or some other source that might be dumping cleaner water into the channel. This

continue to the next page

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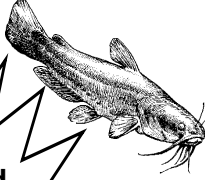

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pocket of clean water might afford me a small area with better visibility. If the stained water is coming into the main channel from a tributary or from immediate runoff, I often try and get above the source, upstream where the water is often clearer” Skarlis spends much of his prefishing time narrowing down small pockets of water that offer the best visibility when conditions get bad.

Water visibility can often be determined by how soon your jig disappears in the water. In some cases, bad visibility might make a 1/2-ounce jig vanish when lowered a couple of inches. Skarlis is actually planning on marking the shaft and lower unit of his Minn Kota 101 with a chartreuse ruler for monitoring water clarity more precisely for the 2006 season.

While popular in bass circles, dipping plastics in fish attractant formulas isn't as common amongst the walleye crowd. Skarlis, however, insists added scent can make a difference under tough river condi-



A nice catfish was reeled in by Shawn Ramme. Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth.

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tions. Skarlis often dips his jig into Berkley Walleye Attractant every couple of minutes.

“Bait, however, isn't as crucial” Skarlis added, “when you are using scented plastics” The beauty of plastics is that they don't tear off after a bite as easy and come in the shapes and colors needed to catch walleyes in dirty water.

When bulking up with longer profiles, Skarlis also attaches a stinger hook to the rear of his bait. Dirty water means fishing slow, and to slow down in the current, anglers are forced to go heavier. But heavier jigs with bulked-up bodies can mean short hits so a stinger hook can be important.

“One extreme or the other is how Skarlis described his preferred color options. Fluorescent, glow and chartreuse are popular choices, but many river anglers, Skarlis included, experiment with dark color

options, like purple or black.

Under such conditions, anglers seldom have to worry about wall-eyes spooking from under the boat, and the presentation is kept vertical even when targeting shallow fish. Some anglers choose to anchor and pound the jig in one spot, picking off fish as they move through. Other anglers slip slightly slower than the current. Whether you anchor or slip, pounding the bottom is extremely important. “You don't want the jig to move horizontally very much, but you need to pound the jig on the bottom vertically so that fish can find you,” Skarlis explained.

Another accomplished river angler, Nick Johnson of Elmwood, Wis., echoes many of Skarlis' opinions regarding river walleyes during high-water/reduced-visibility conditions. Johnson, who won the

continue to the next page



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coveted FLW Walleye Tour Angler of the Year Title during the 2005 season, is very proficient on moving water.

Like Skarlis, Johnson has fallen in favor of jig and soft-bait combinations for most of his river fishing. Both anglers prefer the Berkley Gulp! and Powerbait bodies for added color, scent and profile when the visibility is reduced. Both anglers also choose color extremes as well. Johnson often favors black or purple but also experiments with brighter colors in glow, chartreuse or white, especially when fishing shallow.

Johnson stresses that he focuses his attention on the edges more during strong flows that often coincide with dirty water. "Usually, really strong current will blow the wall-eyes out of the main channels, but you can still usually find saugers holding right in the main flow," Johnson explained.

When targeting walleyes, especially bigger fish, Johnson focuses on the edges away from the main channel and fishes shallow. Often times, Johnson will find wall-eyes holding to backwater areas that were nothing more than duck marshes before the high water. Other structural elements Johnson looks for are flooded willow stands or riprap areas that lead to backwater. He notes these shallow areas away from the main channel often





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When targeting river fish in less than 6 feet of water, Johnson spends a lot of time casting and working the

jig back to the boat. "Many times, fish aren't chasing the bait so you have to work the bait slowly or you won't get bit," Johnson said.

Johnson prefers to cast because he believes he can come into con-

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tact with more fish by working cross-current and often finds walleyes in extremely shallow water. "There are times," Johnson explained, "when we are literally casting the jig up onto shore and bringing it back."

When Johnson is forced to work with the main channel where flows are often at their strongest, he often chooses to slowly motor upstream or cross-current with three-way rigs and stickbaits. "Usually, saugers are going to hold in their wintering holes no matter how bad the current gets and these deep holes will often hold male walleyes as well," Johnson said. "It takes an awful lot of current to blow saugers out of these spots." In strong current, weights that range between 3 and 5 ounces, sometimes more, are used to sink a three-way rig with about a 4-foot snell.

Johnson stresses that you want a long, easy-to-find profile that doesn't dive too deep when choosing the proper stickbait. Crankbait options might include a No. 11 Original Floating Rapala, Smithwick Rattlin' Rogue, Berkley Frenzy Firestick Minnow or Salmo 8F Perch. By hovering upstream and cross-stream with a three-way rig, Johnson can actually move much slower than slipping downstream with a jig, giving the fish more time to find the lure. Like casting cross-stream, Johnson stresses that he can often get his lures in front of more fish by slowly cutting across

the current breaks, moving cross-stream. This tactic enables him to crawl through productive areas at a snail's pace, putting a vibrating, attractive profile in front of the fish for longer periods of time.



Michael Nutter caught a Little Kanawah River flathead catfish recently. Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth.

Record Number Of Eagles

"As the West Virginia Wildlife Resources Section's Wildlife Diversity Program prepares to celebrate its 25th anniversary, we are very proud of the increase in the number of bald eagles nesting in the state over the past 25 years," notes DNR wildlife biologist Craig Stihler. The first documented bald eagle nest in the state was discovered in Hampshire County in 1981, the year legislation was passed to create the Nongame Wildlife Program, the predecessor of today's Wildlife Diversity Program. Twenty-five years later, 17 successful nests produced a total of 32 eaglets.

Both the number of successful nests and the number of young fledged are the highest on record. In addition, 2006 witnessed the first successful nest outside the Potomac

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River drainage. This summer, a nest in the Ohio River drainage fledged two young eagles.

In 2001, a pair of eagles nested on Blennerhassett Island in the Ohio River, but the pair was unsuccessful and did not return to nest the following spring. The 2006 eagles' nests were located in Grant, Hampshire, Hancock, Hardy, Jefferson, Mineral, Morgan, and Pendleton counties. Two additional nests monitored in 2006 were abandoned during the nesting season, but biologists anticipate these birds will return to try again in 2007.

Each spring, Wildlife Resources Section biologists monitor known nests and search for new nests in areas where pairs of adult birds are seen during the nesting season. Many of the nests they monitor were reported by the public. Please report eagle nests or pairs of eagles observed in late winter and spring to: Eagle Report, P.O. Box 67, Elkins, WV 26241 or call (304) 637-0245. You can also check out our fact sheet on the bald eagle on the

WVDNR Web site, www.wvdnr.gov.

In historic times, eagles may have nested in the area that would later become West Virginia, but no old records of nesting eagles exist. The first documented nesting was in 1981. A second nest, this one in Pendleton County, was not discovered until 1987. Over the years, additional eagle pairs have taken up residence in the state's Eastern Panhandle, but it wasn't until 25 years later that a nest produced young in the Ohio River drainage.

Weather can play an important role in determining the outcome of nesting attempts. "This year's weather was more favorable than in 2005, when three nests were destroyed during an ice storm in early April, and only 16 young eagles were fledged," Stihler explained.

Bald eagles are large birds of prey with wingspans of up to seven feet. Young eagles are brown or brown mottled with white. The birds do not attain their characteristic white head and tail until they are at least

four years old. Bald eagles mate for life, and both birds (the female is a little larger than the male) take part in incubating the eggs and feeding the young. The eggs hatch after 35 days and the young remain in the nest until they are 10 to 13 weeks old. Bald eagle feed largely on fish, but will eat other items, even carrion, if available.

The bald eagle was adopted as our national symbol in 1782. Over the years, eagle numbers declined as a result of habitat loss, degradation of water quality, persecution, and, beginning in the 1940s, the widespread use of the pesticide DDT. In 1969 the bald eagle was declared an endangered species in the lower 48 states.

Laws passed to protect eagles, a ban on the use of DDT in the early 1970s, and improving water quality have allowed eagle populations to increase and expand their range. In 1995 the status of the bald eagle in the lower states was upgraded from endangered to threatened. Today, both state and federal laws protect eagles in West Virginia.

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This 22 pound snapping turtle was brought in by Dayton Knapp from Leon.



Young Cody Zimmerman caught a nice bass. Photo courtesy of Broken Wheel Campground in Weston.



A 20" largemouth was reeled in by young Cody Gooden from Mannington.

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