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Issue 241

Nov/Dec 2014



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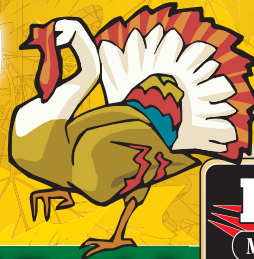
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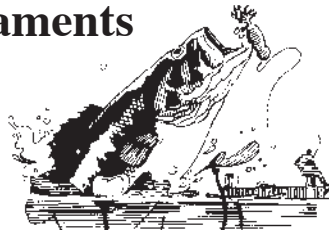
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Cover Photo

Bear reports all over the state are very frequent these days. The DNR went on a big campaign several years ago to move them around the state. Their population seems to get larger each year. Did you order the bear for your area.....lol?

Brian Butcher, from Charleston, used his bow for this quality black bear in Wirt County. This area is reporting a large increase in bear. *Photo courtesy of Holbert's Store in Big Bend.*

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DNR Acquires New Land

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Two new wildlife management areas (WMAs), both in Preston County, have been acquired by The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR), according to

Curtis I. Taylor, chief of the DNR Wildlife Resources Section.

“These new public lands will provide outdoor enthusiasts with additional opportunities for hunting, trapping, fishing and other wildlife-related activities,” Taylor said. “In addition, these WMAs contain important habitat types and unique wildlife species which, under the management of the Wildlife Resources Section, can be responsibly conserved into the future.”

Cheat Canyon Wildlife Management Area

The Cheat Canyon WMA (3,836 acres) was the collaborative effort of several acquisition partners, including federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations and corporate and private donors. Located in the Cheat River Canyon from approximately Albright, West Virginia, north to the Jenkinsburg Bridge, the WMA is very important for the conservation and manage-



Matt DiBaccos used a bow for a 325 black bear in Gilmer County.

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ment of the federally endangered Indiana bat and the federally threatened flat-spined three-toothed land snail, which is known to only occur in the Cheat Canyon in Monongalia and Preston counties.

In addition, a section of the Allegheny Trail through the Cheat Canyon previously closed to public use is re-opened on the WMA for hiking and wildlife viewing. The Cheat Canyon WMA is composed of very steep and rocky ter-

continue to the next page

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rain primarily from rim-to-rim in the Cheat Canyon.

Access into the WMA from the south is via Beech Run Road (County Route 26/23) and from the north by County Route 14/4 from Mount Nebo or Bull Run. Hunting opportunities exist for deer, black bear, wild turkey, coyote and squirrel. Limited trapping is available with raccoon, coyote, bobcat and fisher being common species available. Smallmouth bass fishing opportunities exist in the Cheat River.

Fairfax Pond - Rehe Wildlife Management Area

The Fairfax Pond – Rehe WMA (638 acres) is located near Reedsville, West Virginia. It is composed of moderate-to-gently rolling slopes with mixed hardwood forests, open fields and a diverse wetland complex in the valley. Scattered old field habitat is found throughout the area along reclaimed strip mine benches. The wetland complex, a very important and limited habitat type in West Virginia, will be managed for a wide array of wildlife species.

Access to the Fairfax Pond



Charlie Surbaugh hooked a quality smallmouth bass. *Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton.*

– Rehe WMA can be gained from State Route 92 on Arthur Road (County Route 92/1) and Dogtown Road (County Route 56/2). Primary species for hunting include deer, wild turkey, waterfowl and grouse.



Garrett Paynter brought in a gobbler. *Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton.*

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Trapping for beaver, muskrat, raccoon and bobcat is available on the area. Fishing opportunities for largemouth bass, bluegill and other sunfish exist in two impoundments located on the WMA.

Additional information on both of these WMAs is available by contacting the Farmington District 1 DNR office at 304-825-6787.

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SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – It's the time of year for holiday and Christmas gift ideas and West Virginia's state parks "Something Extra" program returns. Gift card purchases made online or by telephone order between Nov. 1 and Dec. 15, 2014, receive additional promotional discounts for the card recipient, or for the person who purchases the card.

For every \$100 card purchased, the "Something Extra" cards are mailed with the West Virginia State Park gift card. Together, the plastic gift card with the purchased monetary value added and the paper "Something Extra" cards have a value totaling approximately \$125,



A large striped bass was hooked out of the New River. *Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton.*



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depending on use dates and if re-deemed. Unlike the gift card itself, which can be used any time for all purchases and services at all state parks, "Something Extra" cards have expiration dates.

The "Something Extra" promotion is only offered on gift card purchases made online from Nov. 1 through Dec. 15, 2014, or by telephone order to 304-558-2764, (ask for Carol). There is no shipping or handling fee. Cards are mailed via standard US Postal Service.

The extras have become a requested add-on to our holiday program says Sissie Summers of West Virginia State Park. "Each season we look as some new opportunities and also retaining popular extras, such as a round of golf at Pipestem or Twin Falls. This year includes sternwheeler ride to Blennerhassett Island and a substantial room rate savings at Hawks Nest, Chief Logan and Cacapon Resort state parks." Gift cards convey to the recipient that a person knows you or your family interests and encour-

ages seeing West Virginia via state parks."

West Virginia State Park gift cards can be used on lodging, dining, gift shops or other activities that charge a fee. In addition, each gift card purchase of \$100 made online or by telephone order before Dec. 15 will

continue to the next page



Rob Call had a nice archery buck. *Photo courtesy of Anderson OUtdoors in Buckhannon.*

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receive up to eight “extras” such as “two for one” offers and other discounts at West Virginia State Parks and Forests. To place an order, visit www.wvstateparks.com and click “Gift Card Purchase” or call 304-558-2764, ext. 51828 (Carol).

About the eight “Something Extras!”

This list of the eight “extras” is a general description. The cards, when received, provide full details with disclaimers.

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Paddle Boat at Watoga State Park Two individuals enjoy one-half hour paddle boat ride, Tuesday-Thursday in 2015, as available.

Double Wheeeee! Aerial Tram Ride at Pipestem Resort.

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the tram at Pipestem Resort State Park or play a round of disc golf. Blennerhassett Island – Island Belle Sternwheeler

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Larry Adkins Jr. hooked a nice smallmouth. *Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.*

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Brad Smith caught and released this 42" musky. *Photo courtesy of Trapper's Den in Cowan.*



Timothy Fullerton used a bow for this 8 point. *Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.*

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Hannah Loudin, aged 10, shot a 525 pound black bear. Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting in Elkins.

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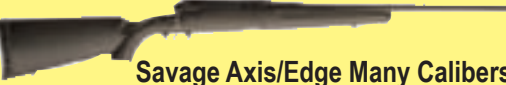
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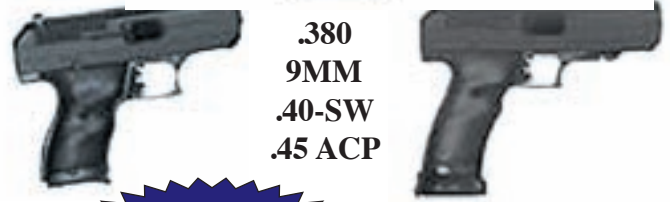
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Doanld Cook used a bow for a nice buck. Photo courtesy of PC Bait and Tackle in Hinton.

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Jansen McCloy landed a nice large-mouth bass at a farm pond.



Danny Kerns hooked a 43" tiger musky at Tygart Lake.

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Deer During The Pre Rut

The pre-rut is the time before deer mate with one another. During this time, deer exhibit a dramatic change in behavior. Early on, does and bucks can be seen grazing

together; this is the only time of year they are seen side by side. As the pre-rut progresses, deer also become aggressive towards each other. For example, mother does will drive their young away and seek isolation, while bucks will challenge any other buck they encounter. This aggressiveness causes

the deer to become careless of their surroundings, which makes this an ideal time for hunting.

The breeding season begins in early autumn, and lasts until the beginning of December depending on region. The shortened fall days raise the hormone levels in deer, which drastically alters their demeanor. There's a buck's testosterone, and a doe's estrogen.



This hunter took a tall raked archery deer.



Eugene Armstrong used a bow for this good buck. *Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.*

During the pre-rut, estrogen prepares the doe's internal organs for birthing. It also causes emotional changes in her such as aggressiveness, intolerance, and isolation. This need for isolation causes the doe to disperse her fawns. She no longer allows the fawns to drink from her; often pushing them away and seeking seclusion.

The doe will not tolerate her male fawns; driving them out of the deer herd. This prevents any inbreed-

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ing between the mother and son. Female fawns will also wander, although they never stray from their home range. This makes it easier for a buck to find a doe. However, not much else changes in the doe's life during the pre-rut.

On the other hand, bucks undergo much greater changes. These changes begin with the shedding of the velvet. Testosterone is the hormone responsible for antler growth. As the level of testosterone increases, the antlers mature and stop growing. This rise in testosterone also causes the antlers to harden. After the antlers mature, the velvet which covers them dies and becomes dry. The dried velvet irritates the buck, who will try to rub the velvet off on trees and other protruding objects; this process is called rub-off.

Rub-off also helps bucks estimate the size of their antlers, since they can't see them. Often times, a buck

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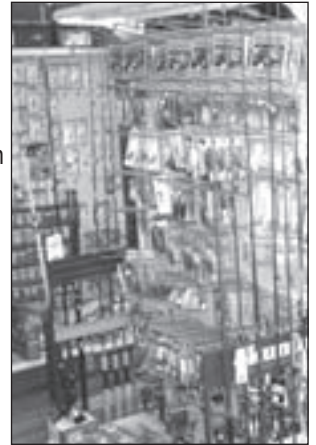


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Tim Parker, from Wood County, went to Indiana for a great buck. Photo courtesy of Crooked Creek Archery in Williamstown.

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Details On Page 3

will be seen rubbing his velvet as well as his forehead. This is often done in order to leave behind a scent from a deer gland on the forehead. Researchers are unsure of the purpose of this scent. However, they are sure that rub-off serves a reason other than removing the velvet, since if left alone, the velvet will eventually come off by itself.

As testosterone levels increase, tensions begin to rise among buck herds. The male deer begin to separate themselves from the social herds they formed over the spring and summer. The bigger and older bucks may wander outside their home range in order to find a mate. They have reached their peak weight, and the increase in testosterone has caused other changes, such as an enlarged neck and enlarged sex organs. This is the time

when the massive and majestic continue to the next page



Donnie Rose went to Wisconsin for an archery deer. Photo courtesy of Re-Creations Taxidermy Studio in Elkins.



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buck of hunting lore can be most easily found.

Eager to test their new antlers, bucks will engage in sparring. Sparring is a sport which helps establish and confirm the dominance hierarchy of the bucks in the area. It also helps bucks gauge how large their antlers are. Sparring begins with one buck approaching another with his head lowered. If the other buck accepts the challenge, he too will lower his head and the two bucks will lock antlers. They will then push each other until one buck overpowers the other. The losing

buck may lick the winner's forehead and face in order to remember the winner's scent. The loser now remembers this buck to be dominant over him.

Sparring is most often done between bucks of different herds, since the hierarchy of herds is usually formed during the summer. It should be noted that sparring is not fighting; sparring is a gentle sport between two, sometimes three, bucks. Often times, older, larger bucks will offer one antler to younger bucks for them to spar

continue to the next page



Roger Perry had archery success. Photo courtesy of Anderson Outdoors in Buckhannon.

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spar with. Sparring matches performed early in the pre-rut are thought to strengthen social bonds among bucks. However, as autumn continues, sparring becomes more frequent and aggressive.

Sparring is most often done between bucks of different herds, since the hierarchy of herds is usually formed during the summer.

The hierarchy formed among bucks helps establish the breeding rights. It is the dominant bucks that get to mate the most. Most of the time, the dominant bucks are the larger, older bucks, and the ones with the strongest genes; they are typically the most aggressive also. This is nature's way of insuring that the new generation of deer acquires the best genes for survival.

The interesting thing about dominance is that it does not follow a linear structure. Imagine you spot three bucks. It is possible to have a situation where buck #1 is dominant over buck #2, buck #2 is dominant over buck #3, but buck #3 is dominant over buck #1. However, it is usually the case that there is one buck who is dominant over all the other bucks in an area.

During the pre-rut, bucks will also engage in an activity called signposting. Signposting is used to signal other does that the buck is in heat, and to warn rival bucks to stay away. Bucks use their glands

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to deposit scents which carry this information. There are two types of signposting: deer scrapes and buck rubs. These two are almost always found near each other, and are usually found on trails which deer often travel. Older bucks will scrape and rub earlier and more often than younger bucks.

Scrapes are most often found under tree branches. Bucks lick these tree branches and

continue to the next page



Brandon Hall arrowed a huge WV buck..

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rub them with their forehead in order to deposit scents from the deer's forehead gland, their pre-orbital gland, and their saliva. The buck will then scrape the ground beneath the branch, leaving a pawed area about 3 to 4 feet wide. While making the scrape, scent will be deposited from the interdigital glands. The buck then rub-urinates in the scrape. The scent from rub-urinating is very strong, often strong enough for a human to smell.

Deer scrapes are often found on higher ground; this helps disperse the scent across a wider area. One buck will leave many scrapes in one area, but he will not deposit them across a large range. The scrapes of a buck are usually done within a quarter-mile radius of each other.

If a doe wishes to respond to this calling card, she will urinate near the scrape. This tells the buck that there is a doe in the area that is ready to mate.

Buck rubs are marks left on trees as the buck uses his antlers to strip away the bark. He also rubs his forehead against these trees to leave a deer scent. The white, bark-less portion of the tree also serves as a visual sign to other deer. A buck prefers to rub on aromatic trees, such as pine, cedar, and cherry; the natural odor of these trees helps disperse the scent of the buck. Older bucks have thorns, or little bumps, at the base of their antlers, which help to strip the bark away.

Deer enter puberty depending on their weight; once a fawn reaches

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75 pounds, it will usually enter puberty. Some yearlings and fawns take part in the breeding season. If the fawn has been leading a healthy lifestyle during the spring and summer, it will have a good chance of entering puberty during the pre-rut. However, male fawns are seldom given a fair chance to breed because the older bucks will scare them away from does, or, older does may be reluctant to breed with them. In contrast, if a female fawn does breed, they will usually bear only one child.

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Brandon Carpenter got an archery buck. Photo courtesy of Trappers Den in Cowan.

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SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. - With a variety of hunting seasons underway or approaching, the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources reminds big game hunters that successful hunters must field tag and transport their deer, bear, turkey or boar to a Natural Resources Police Officer or official game checking station for checking.

This is required of all hunters, including landowners. A summary of the checking requirements follows, but hunters should check the 2014-2015 Hunting and Trapping Regulations brochure at www.wvdnr.gov for complete details.

Deer: The unskinned carcass or the fresh skin and head must be checked before it is transported beyond the county adjacent to the county in which it was killed within 72 hours from when it was killed or 24 hours from the close of the respective season, whichever comes first. In Logan, McDowell, Mingo or Wyoming counties; however, the deer must be checked in the four-county area within 24 hours of the time of kill. Deer killed outside these four counties cannot be

checked within these counties.

Bear: The unskinned carcass or fresh skin must be checked within 24 hours after the kill and before any part of the bear is transported more than 75 miles from the point of kill.

Turkey: The unskinned carcass must be checked before it is trans-

ported beyond the county adjacent to the county in which it was killed within 72 hours from when it was killed or 24 hours from the close of the respective season, whichever comes first.

Boar: The unskinned carcass must be checked in the county of kill within 24 hours after kill.



Casey Stollings, from Hedgesville, landed a 20 1/2" smallmouth.

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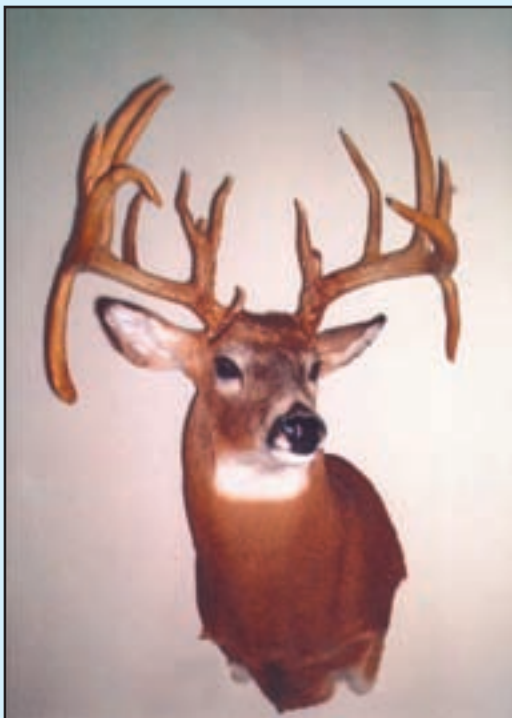
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These were shed antlers found by Sam Lambert. We bought a cape and created this stunning whitetail mount.

A Whitetail taken by Andy Border, owner of the Great Outdoors in Ripley, shows the deer taking a drink of water. Just under the lilly pads is a small green frog. The piece was finished with ripples created from the water dripping from the deer's mouth. We added a crayfish claw for good measure.

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Tony Crubliss caught a 5-15 oz. largemouth bass at the Sept. Stonewall Jackson bass tournament



Mooney & Huddleston brought in a 5-14 oz. largemouth at the Sept. Stonewall Jackson bass event.



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Justin Bunner used a bow for a 9 pointer. Photo courtesy of Holbert's Store in Big Bend.

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Harley Francis bagged his first gobbler. Photo courtesy of Tri Lakes in Walkersville.

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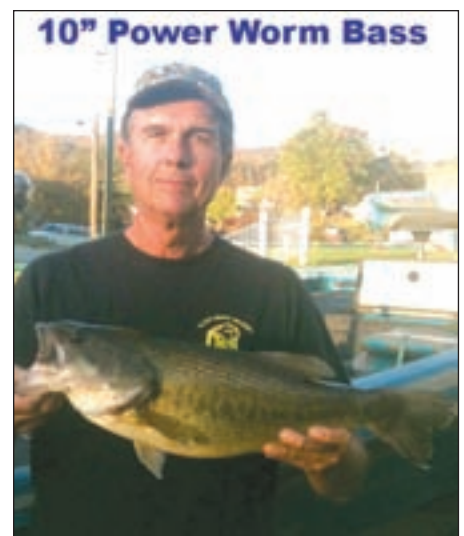
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A beer can somehow got stuck and grew into this does lip. *Photo courtesy of Anderson Outdoors in Buckhannon.*



A wide racked buck was arrowed by this lady in Braxton County.



Mark Goudy hooked this 5-4 bass at Stonewall Jackson. He was fishing trees in 20 feet of water.



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Hunting During The Rut

The actions and aggressions of the pre-rut occur in order to satisfy the deer's desires during the deer rut. The rut is the period when bucks actually breed does. This breeding phase usually lasts about a month; in most parts of the country, the rut occurs in November, although this varies depending on geographic location.

Unlike the rut, deer in the spring are actually calm. In order to protect their velveted, developing antlers, they avoid confrontation. Spring is the most common time to see bucks and does chumming with each other in a field.

However, does are only able to breed during a certain time, called estrus. The estrus cycle lasts between 2 to 4 days, and it is the time during which a doe's body is able to mate. A hunter can sense the rut approaching because he will see more buck movement; especially during daylight hours.

A buck chooses his mate by first checking his signposts to see if any doe has responded. A doe responds

to a signpost by urinating near it. If the buck smells the urine of the doe, he will attempt to find her. By smelling a doe's urine, a buck is able to tell if she is close to estrus or not. Bucks will usually ignore does who are not close to estrus.

Bucks are often able to find receptive does because they seldom stray from their range. Instead, they stay within this range, as if pacing. Once a buck finds her, he will make short dashes at the doe, accompanied by short grunts and wheezes. Other subdominant bucks may join in the chase, but it is always the dominant buck that is in the lead. Researchers believe this behavior triggers the doe estrus cycle of the doe. A doe is usually calm and receptive to any buck that approaches her, although she may sometimes

get the best mate by running away from the younger bucks.


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Jean Crites had a good archery buck. Photo courtesy of Trapper's Den in Cowan.

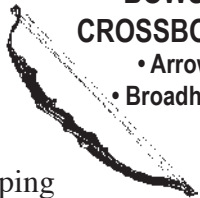


Phil Atkinson, from Vienna, reeled in a 22" largemouth bass.




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Eventually, the doe allows the dominant buck to approach her. The two will seek to isolate themselves from the other deer. She urinates; the buck analyzes the doe urine using his sense of vomolfaction.

If the buck's analysis reveals that the doe is close to estrus, he will once again proceed to follow her, this time in a more subdued manner than before, with his head low and neck outstretched. The buck will follow her like this for an extended amount of time, often for as long as a day, maybe longer. Many bucks become impatient and eventually leave the doe. This is another way to insure that the strongest bucks are the ones to mate, since younger bucks are the most impatient.

A short while before estrus, the doe will allow the buck to approach her; this is called "tending." The buck will watch for other rival bucks while he "tends" the doe; waiting on her to come into estrus. If he spots other bucks in the area, he will chase them off. The buck only chases them for a short distance, since he is cautious not to leave the doe for too long. A buck


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will even drive away the fawns of the doe.

Does never truly leave their home range, so finding one is not hard for a buck.

Sometimes, a buck will be faced



Douglas Barker got an archery black bear. *Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.*

with a buck that does not back down from his threats. In this case, a fight usually ensues. Both bucks will face each other before repeatedly clashing their antlers. This continues until one buck surrenders. The victor is the one that will breed the doe. These fights are usually short lived but can result in severe injury to both bucks involved. Sometimes, death can be the end result of a fight when antlers become locked. Other times, although a buck may win a fight, he may be too tired to continue. In this case, an onlooker may move in and mate with the doe. Still, buck fights are rare, since the dominance hierarchy is already established.

As a doe approaches estrus, she urinates frequently. When she does enter estrus, the buck will mount

continue to the next page

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her and begin the breeding process. With the buck resting his chin on her back, the doe supports most of the buck's weight. The doe and buck mate several times while she is in estrus. When her scent no longer appeals to the buck, he will move on and search for a new mate.

As autumn winds down and snow begins to fall, the hormone levels in deer decrease. Deer then return to their normal routines. Bucks begin reforming their social group (although, these are often times not the same group they had during the spring and summer), and does carry the seeds which will bloom into fawns come spring.

The deer rut usually leaves the dominant bucks tired and depleted of fat reserves. They look small-



Levi Able arrowed a wide racked buck. *Photo courtesy of Anderson Outdoors in Buckhannon.*

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er than they did just a few short months ago. A buck may lose about 30% percent of his body weight during the rut while chasing does as well as the competition. Therefore, bucks must spend the time after the rut replenishing their body for the brutal winter that lies ahead. Sometimes, the dominant buck in an area will die because it can't replenish itself before the harsh winter sets in.

During the post-rut, does are in much better shape than the bucks. However they too will spend this time eating and growing their fat

reserves for the winter. They must also eat more to provide nutrients for the fawn growing inside them.



Will Beckett caught & released a nice musky.. *Photo courtesy Trappers Den in Cowan.*



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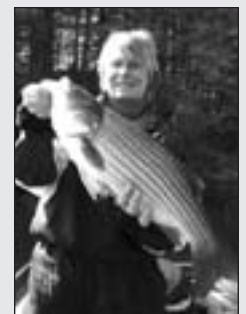
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Improved Bass Fishing

I want to say a little more about how the fishing in Ohio, and generally around our country, has improved since I started fishing back when I was a kid several decades ago.

The weekend before last I made a trip to Lake Erie. The wind was out of the south so I was able to fish a mile or so away from the shore, at least for a while in the morning. I caught a limit of smallmouth bass in short order. Then, I started culling. I don't mean real culling, though. I wasn't in a tournament. Nothing went in my livewell.

Finally the wind and waves drove me off the water. I thought about

By Charlie Hartley

going into the marinas where I could target largemouth. Instead, I decided to head towards home and maybe stop somewhere along the way.

Not too far from my Lake Erie ramp there's a small lake named Clear Fork Reservoir. It covers about a thousand acres and was impounded as a water source for the city of Mansfield. There's a 10 mph speed limit on the lake but no horsepower limit. You get the picture.

It didn't take me but a couple of hours to boat another limit of bass, this time largemouth. And, like on

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Erie, I caught more after that.

Back when I first started fishing two limits would have been impossible. Forget about smallmouth and largemouth, or legal size for that

continue to the next page



Brian Thomas caught a 32 1/2" New River flathead..



A big archery buck was brought in.
Photo courtesy of Bow-Listic Archery in Chelyan.

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matter. We're talking just catching 10 fish in one day. We call two legal limits "The Ohio hat trick."

I'll freely admit that some of my early struggles were of my own making. I didn't know how to find fish, much less catch them. Still, the change in the number and size of the bass that we are catching in our lakes, rivers and streams is ex-



A lady brought in a nice bear. *Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sporting Goods in Elkins.*



Danny Frazier landed more big smallmouth. *Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.*

traordinary.

Part of that isn't just that my skills have improved. Let's look at equipment first.

Modern electronics are almost incomprehensible when you look at the detail they give anglers. We find the spot in a matter of minutes and mark it accurately. We can return to that same spot years later. At the same time we can see if there's fish on it. We no longer waste our time fishing dead water with half the lures in our tackle box.

At the same time, don't underestimate the impact that improvements in pollution control and fish management have made. Not only are our bass better managed but they live in better neighborhoods.

I also think that the proliferation of grass in our waters has helped. Regardless of the reason — this is not the place to get into an environmental debate — there's no doubt in my mind that grass has been a huge factor. I see it turning green earlier in the year and I see more of it almost every place I fish these

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So here's the bottom line: If you like to fish, take advantage of what we have right now. Don't wait. None of us can say how long this will last. Like you, I hope it lasts forever. But hope is not a plan. Fishing now is a plan.

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Trappers Must Tag Furbearers

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. - West Virginia's trapping seasons will open Nov. 1, 2014. Trappers harvesting beaver, bobcat, fisher and otter must present the whole animal or pelt to a game checking station or West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR) representative within 30 days after the close of the respective season. A tag provided by the checking station shall be attached to the whole animal or pelt until it has been sold, tanned or mounted. After April 1, 2015, beaver trappers may check beaver using DNR's new electronic checking system.

Game checking information provided by hunters and trappers is used to monitor harvests and assist in future management of these species in West Virginia. Decisions regarding season length, opening and closing dates, and bag limits rely

upon accurate data obtained from these tags.

The state's fourth otter trapping season will soon be underway. Trappers are once again being asked to deliver skinned carcasses to a DNR district office or to contact a DNR district office to make arrangements to have the carcasses picked up. Biological samples collected will assist biologists in making decisions regarding future otter trapping seasons.

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

markets such as those in Canada. The seals must be obtained from the state where the animals were harvested.

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



Trudy Noechel landed the lunker at a Cheat Lake bass tournament.



Rod Dellacroce used his bow for a nice 10 point.



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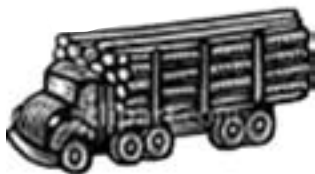
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KJ & Robby Callaway, from Raleigh County, went to Alberta, Canada for these nice bucks. Photo courtesy of Cardinal Pawnbrokers in Beckley.

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A large black bear was checked in.
 Photo courtesy of Middle Mountain Sport-
 ing Goods in Elkins.



Scott Lontz, from Vienna, went to
 Guntersville with Joe Michael.

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Zack Marcum used a bow in Logan
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Brenda Fields hooked a 14 3/4" spotted bass at R.D. Bailey Lake.



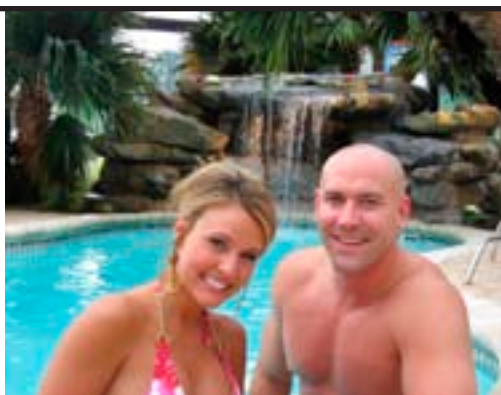
Larry Stevens, from Rock View, caught a 21" brown trout.



Jeremy Simons arrowed a nice whitetail. Photo courtesy of Re-Creations Taxidermy Studio in Elkins.



Mike Fleak brought in a 10 point. Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.



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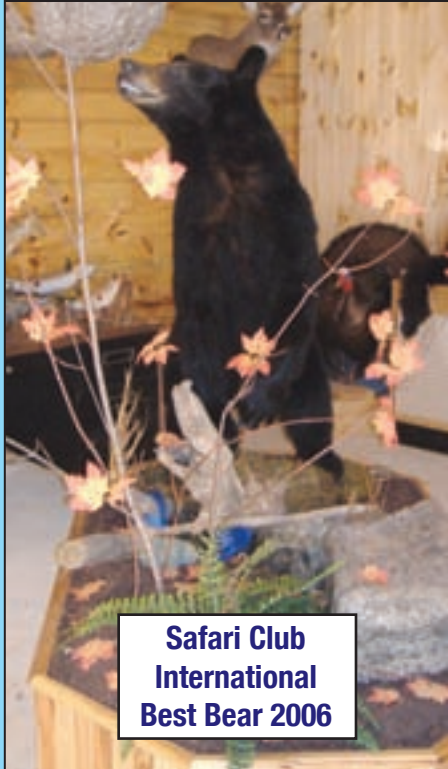
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Elizabeth Robinette, from Ripley, caught a nice largemouth bass.

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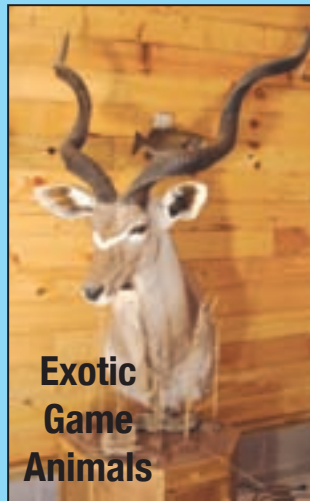
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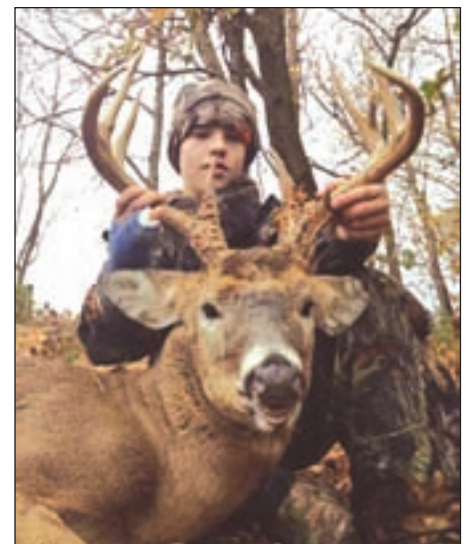


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Jeremiah Howe used a bow for a nice buck. Photo courtesy of J&R Sporting Goods in Shinnston.



Young Ben Sheppard brought in a real nice archery buck.

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Unbreakable B.A.S.S. Record

With Kevin VanDam missing his first Bassmaster Classic since 1990, his assault on Rick Clunn's record of 28 in a row ends at 24 — something to be extremely proud of, but still four short of the all-time mark. Is Clunn's record untouchable? If not, who has a realistic chance to break it? It's certainly one of the most impressive marks in any sport.

Only five anglers have strung together more than 14 consecutive Classic appearances:

Rick Clunn - 28 (1974-2001)
Kevin VanDam - 24 (1991-2014)
Larry Nixon - 18 (1977-94)
Gary Klein - 17 (1984-2000)

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Jay Yelas - 16 (1991-2006)

First let's speculate for a moment and talk about what might have been. Rick Clunn began his pro career in 1974 at the age of 27. He qualified for his first Classic that year and fished it at age 28. That's relatively young for a rookie bass pro, but not nearly as young as

continue to the next page



A bow bear was checked in from Kanawha County. *Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton.*

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A large smallmouth was brought in by Steve Keaton. *Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton.*

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some. If Clunn had debuted a year or two earlier he likely would have made the Classic then, too, and tacked a few years onto his remarkable run.



Richard Fauliner used a bow for a bear. Photo of J&R Sporting Goods in Shinnston.

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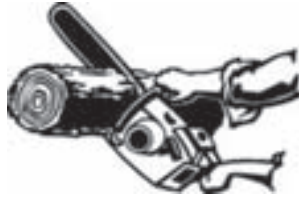
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During his stretch of 28 straight, qualifying for the championship was never a problem for Clunn. His worst finish in the Toyota Bassmaster Angler of the Year standings was 21st (his rookie year). So the guys chasing his mark are lucky the number isn't 29, 30 or even 31.

In some ways, Clunn's closest challenger hasn't been KVD. It was Gary Klein, who started his career early — something you have to do if you want the Classic streak record. Klein was just 21 when he qualified for his first Classic. In the next four years, though, he only fished one championship. That's because he left the B.A.S.S. tour (largely an east coast thing at the time) and returned home to California. It almost certainly cost him a few appearances right before he ripped off 17 straight.

But there's more to the Klein story. He's the only angler who has put together two Classic appearance streaks of 10 or more. He did 17 straight between 1984 and 2000 and he posted another 10 in a row from 2002 to 2011. Had he been able to bridge those streaks, he would have tied Clunn at 28. And

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had he not left the tournament trail for a few years early in his career, he might have pushed the mark as

continue to the next page

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as high as 33.

If you want a shot at 28, you have to establish a track record of excellence. The guys who go to the Classic year after year generally don't squeak in or win a single event to get there. They do it on AOY points, and they make it without sweating things out on the final day of the season. The guys who consistently rank in the 20s or 30s have little chance of putting together a long streak because they give themselves little margin for error. One bad day at the wrong time and they're out.

The other critical factor is an early start. A 35 or 42 year old might be the best angler in the world (it's about the age of most AOYs), but

if that's the age at which he starts his consecutive Classic run, he'll be too old to cross the finish line. Of all the anglers to string together 14 or more Classics, Clunn started out the oldest — 28 — and he's one of just three anglers in history to qualify every year through his 40s. (Tommy Martin and Kevin Wirth are the others.)

Who Could Do It?

All of this makes a strong case for Clunn's record being nearly unbreakable. Still, there are a few current pros who could make a run at it. I'll count them down to the most likely angler to rewrite the record book.

But first, I'm going to dismiss a couple of names — not because

they can't do it, but because they lack a meaningful track record.
continue to the next page



Alexandria Hamler went to a game preserve for a white elk. Photo courtesy of Re-Creations Taxidermy studio in Elkins.



Trace Butcher brought in a whopper bow buck from Logan County.

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they can't do it, but because they lack a meaningful track record. Brandon Lester and Justin Lucas qualified for their first Classics this year. Lester is 26; Lucas is 28. To tie Clunn's record, they'll still need to be qualifying at 53 and 55, respectively. While that gives them a chance, Lester and Lucas are too far from the mark and too new to the circuit to be considered. They need to make their second consecutive championship before we start thinking about 28.



A good archery deer was checked in. Photo courtesy of Bow-Listic Archery in Chelyan.

The Bow Shop Hosts School Shoot

CLARKSBURG, W.Va. - The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Section (DNR) will hold its next instructor training for the Archery in the Schools (AIS) Program Dec. 4 at the Bow Shop in Clarksburg, according to Krista Snodgrass, program coordinator.

Since its inception in 2004, AIS has become the DNR's largest educational program introducing archery to more than 90,000 students as part of their physical education (PE) classes in more than 300 West Virginia schools. The program teaches Olympic-style, target archery in both public and private schools Grades 4 through 12.

"The Bow Shop is looking forward to hosting this training in the Clarksburg area for more teachers to get certified to teach archery in the schools," said Harold Cogar, owner. "We are very excited about providing our facility to a program that is getting more youth involved in an activity that teaches a skill

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that can be taken with them beyond the classroom."

"In order for schools to have the AIS Program, they must first have a certified instructor – preferably a physical education instructor or coach who will introduce as many children as possible to the joys of target archery," said Snodgrass.

DNR only has about four trainings a year and, because class size is limited to 25, training slots are highly desired. As an added incentive continue to the next page



Derrick Garten arrowed a buck.

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ive, teachers taking this training may be eligible to receive Continuing Education Hours (CEHs) – provided they submit their paperwork to their principal before the end of the school year.

To ensure a training slot, anyone interested in getting a school involved in the program is encouraged to apply by Nov. 21. The registration fee is \$25 for school employees and \$50 for non-school employees. Payment is due the morning of registration by check, money order or cash.

To register for the AIS training at The Bow Shop, please call Krista Snodgrass at 304-558-2771, email Krista.R.Snodgrass@wv.gov, or visit the DNR’s AIS website at www.wvdnr.gov/archery/Archery_training.shtm.



Ronnie Dzik harvested a great archery buck,

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O	E	I	I	I	G	S	R	T	A	B	G	N	I	H	N	T	E	L	I
L	R	A	W	T	P	A	R	R	O	W	T	C	I	J	E	A	R	M	N
C	E	M	O	I	N	O	U	E	T	S	E	S	U	L	L	O	A	A	C
R	W	N	N	N	U	E	H	G	Y	H	T	R	F	E	L	H	C	T	H
B	E	N	D	E	B	N	E	C	E	T	F	I	A	A	I	H	E	T	E
E	S	D	X	S	C	R	E	G	G	I	R	T	A	R	G	F	A	E	S
W	S	E	F	A	S	P	O	E	G	S	O	P	R	B	R	U	S	H	T
H	O	G	M	O	A	L	R	A	N	M	E	R	T	P	R	E	O	S	E
W	N	E	U	C	O	A	F	A	A	I	T	G	F	U	B	O	M	H	R
O	R	A	S	L	S	N	W	O	H	T	W	U	S	C	T	K	I	G	G
A	A	E	M	I	S	U	U	H	O	H	O	L	N	E	R	O	C	N	E
T	B	R	O	W	N	I	N	G	P	H	O	S	U	P	P	L	I	E	S

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