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Vol. 1 Issue 193

Hunting 2009



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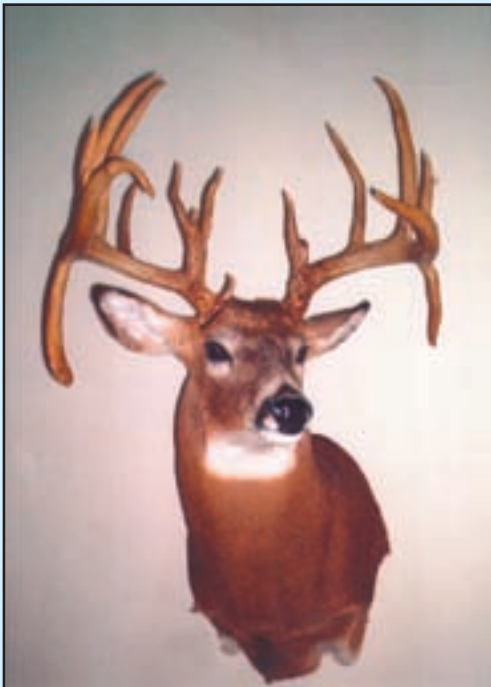
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Cover Photo

Early season archery season has yielded a lot of nice bucks in West Virginia. Victoria Hensley, from Ravenswood, has used a bow for many seasons and harvested this quality 10 point. She reported a low mast count and hunted near leafy vegetation for this deer.

Send in your deer and other big game photos to this magazine. A form is on page 38. Either email or send in by mail. Good luck this season. *Photo courtesy of Old & New Sports in Ravenswood.*

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Brothers Of The String

By Ralph Russell

As the alarm went off, I eagerly arose from my camper bed. The night had seemed to stretch on for hours. I could barely sleep at all. I ran to the camper door with the same level of anticipation a child has on Christmas morning, running to see what presents lie beneath the Christmas tree. I slowly stuck my head out the door to see what the weather was like. The cold northern air hit my lungs like a sledgehammer. A thick white frost covered everything in sight. One by one I saw lights turn on in the other campers. My face lit up like the 4th of July. This is what we had all been waiting for. It was the first week of November and the first day of our annual bow hunting trip on Cheat Mountain.

As the coffee was perking, I did a quick check to make sure nothing would be forgotten ... range finder, release, safety harness, hand warm-

ers, pull up rope ... yup, it's all there. Breakfast was a bowl of oatmeal and a cup of coffee. Not a five-star breakfast by any means, but it would do. After eating breakfast I loaded my gear into the truck, wished the others good luck, and started off to one of my favorite stand sites.

As I drove out the long ridge high atop Cheat, I could see the mighty spruce tops silhouetted against a bright red morning sky. A storm was moving in. The latest weather synopsis forecasted a rain/sleet mix for the area later that evening. I eased down the slow moving creek bed, weaving in and out of the pines and laurel, until I reached the spruce that held my stand. As I first made eye contact with the stand, it was

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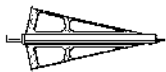
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like seeing an old friend that I had not seen or spoken to for a long time. I climbed up and into the stand, secured my safety harness, and pulled my bow up.

I looked at my watch ... 7:05 a.m. Perfect! It was a calm morning. The sounds of the slow moving creek trickling down the hollow, along with a few song birds, filled

continue to the next page

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**Game
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Dave Brown, from Charleston, used a bow for this big buck. *Photo courtesy of Clark's Taxidermy in Parkersburg.*

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my ears. I could not help but laugh as a couple of red squirrels, or as I like to call them, mountain boomers, began chasing one another up and down the trees.

No more than 30 minutes had passed when I caught movement to my right. Slowly turning my head, I could see a nice mature doe easing down the ridge. The rays of light glistened from the frost on her back as she made her way through the thick pines, stopping directly under my stand. She kept looking back up the hill, as if she anticipated other deer were close by. Sure enough, two yearlings came prancing out of the laurel and made their way down the same trail. The doe began licking the little ones on their faces as they stood contentedly by her side.

I glanced down at my watch again ... 7:35 a.m. Suddenly a loud crash off in the distance made my heart skip a beat. It's that kind of feeling you get when someone shoots a high-powered rifle just a short distance away and you're not expecting it. I almost jumped out of the tree. It sounded like a rotten log or a tree had smashed into the forest floor. The deer, which now stood about 20 yards from me, were in full alert mode: heads up, ears out, locked in one position as they peered off into the distance. After several agonizing minutes the big doe slammed her front hoof down, snorted, and ran off to my left. The two yearlings

ran directly away from the front of the stand.

I knew that something was coming, but what could it be? Was it a buck? Was it another hunter? I grabbed my bow and clipped my release to the bow string. Whatever it was it was heading in my direction. My heart started beating extremely fast, and I could feel my legs start to shake. The small group of pines which stood about 25 yards from the stand began moving back and forth.

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OHIO HUNTING PROPERTY



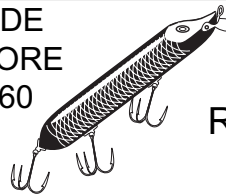
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Keiling Fife, shown with daughter Avery, took a nice archery buck. *Photo courtesy of Clark's Taxidermy in Parkersburg.*

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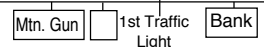
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I heard what sounded like something exhaling very loud. All of a sudden a large black bear sprang out of the thicket, into the creek below the stand. I can't believe this ... I can't believe this ... is all that was going through my mind. The mighty bruin stood up on his hind legs as if to get a better look at where his prey might have vanished. The bear dropped to all fours, head to the ground, nostrils working overtime to pick up the scent, then scurried off in the direction the two yearlings had gone.

As the bear went out of sight, I said to myself, "I can't believe I didn't get a shot." I mean it all happened so fast that by the time I started to pull my bow back, he was walking directly away from me.

Suddenly I snapped back to reality, as the bear came scurrying back. At about 25 yards he stood up again, peering off into the pines directly behind me. This time it would be different though. As he dropped down onto all fours, he turned slightly quarterly away. By this time I was at full draw. "Stay calm, stay calm, and pick a spot." The sight settled in directly behind



Matt Cronin used a bow for this 8 point. Photo courtesy of Reese's Country Store in Deerwalk.

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the shoulder. The green fiber optic pin seemed to glow against the jet black coat of fur. I gently squeezed the release, sending the Easton arrow and Thunderhead on the perfect course. The white-crested arrow sank up to the fletching exactly where I was aiming. The mighty-black bear spun around in a circle,

continue to the next page

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rolled over onto his back, and staggered off into the pines.

My heart was beating a million beats per minute. I closed my eyes and thanked God for letting my aim be true. It seemed like the bear had just made it into the pines when I heard the death moan. After a few seconds the woods became silent. I knew all the practice had paid off and that I had executed the shot to perfection.

I slid down the tree and ran up the hill to the truck in Olympic speed. I took off for camp to get some help tracking my bear. As I approached the camper, I began laying on the horn. I ran over to Mike's camper, beating on the door. "Mike, Mike, I just shot a huge bear. Get up!" Mike, who had driven up from Alabama, came staggering to the door. "What! What! Slow down, slow down," he said. Mike practically had to tie me down; I was so excited. After about an hour and countless times of going over and over the story, we headed off to recover my bear.

Mike kept saying, "I can't believe I haven't been up here even a day, and I'm already tracking a bear." Both of us were ecstatic. We found the crested part of the arrow directly where the bear had stood. We had a perfect blood trail. It was like you had taken a five-gallon bucket of blood and poured it out down into the pines.

We hadn't gone more than 35 to 40 yards when we both spotted my bear. It was a large male bear with huge paws and an enormous head. A true West Virginia trophy. Mike gave me a big hug and told me how proud he was of me. We took several photographs to seal the hunt in permanent memory.

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John Bryant hunted with a bow in Ohio for this quality 8 point buck. It weighed 205 field dressed. *Photo courtesy of Boone's Bow Shop in Parkersburg.*

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Young Logan Hickman, from Spencer, took advantage of the youth hunt for his 1st deer.



Casey Pierce had bow success this year. Photo courtesy of Cardinal Pawnbrokers in Beckley.



Marshall Wood hooked a nice largemouth. Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.

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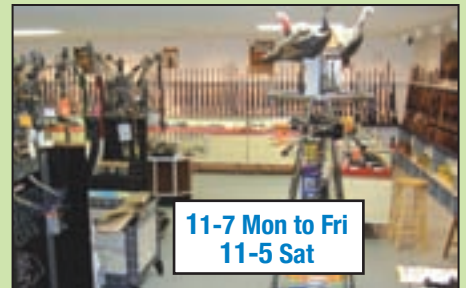
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Dan Hart, from Walker, used a bow for this quality buck. The picture below shows the deer on his trail camera taken earlier. Photo courtesy of Clark's Taxidermy in Parkersburg.



Terry Stutler used a bow for this high-racked buck. Photo courtesy of Clark's Taxidermy in Parkersburg.

Archer's Paradise

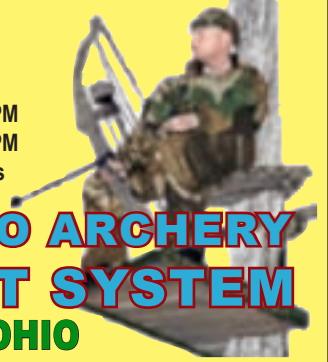
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Steve Blouin hunted with a bow in Wood County. Photo courtesy of Croosroads General Store near Newark.

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Brad Allen used a bow to bring in this wide-racked 8 point buck. Photo courtesy of JBC Archery in Shady Spring.

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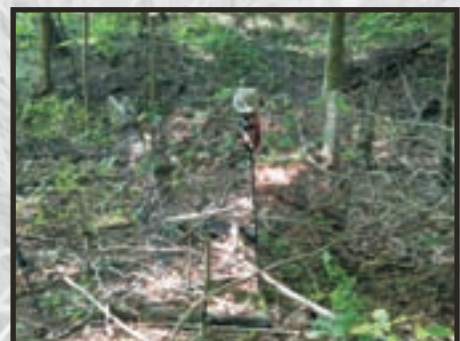
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KAWASAKI TERYX

2009 Deer Season Fact Sheet

The West Virginia firearm buck gun season is Nov. 23 – Dec. 5. It is open in all counties except Logan, Mingo, McDowell and Wyoming. Approximately 280,000 licensed hunters will be in West Virginia's woods during this season. Hunters should review the 2009-2010 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary for detailed instructions concerning bag limits and season dates. The regulations are online at www.wvdnr.gov

A list of deer checking stations in West Virginia can be found online

at www.wvdnr.gov/hunting/check_stations.asp

The firearm antlered deer bag limit during the two week buck season is two (one on the base license and one on an RG [resident] or RRG [nonresident] stamp). A hunter may take no more than three antlered deer per calendar year in all archery and firearms seasons com-

bined.

The last day to purchase an additional deer gun tag (Class RG/RRG Stamp) is November 22. Class RG and Class RRG additional buck stamps can only be used to take an additional antlered deer in firearm buck season. Unused Class RG and Class RRG stamps may not be

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Lee Conner used a bow for this buck. Photo courtesy of J&R Sporting Goods in Shinnston.



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All private land in counties having a firearms antlerless deer gun season (Class N for residents and Class NN for nonresidents) will be open Nov. 23 – Dec. 12 and Dec. 29 - 31. All public lands having an antlerless deer season will be open Nov. 25 – Dec. 12 and Dec. 29 – 31. Bag limits vary among counties and will be one, two or four antlerless deer. Hunters may take only one deer per day; therefore, a buck and an antlerless deer may not be taken on the same day. Class N and Class NN antlerless stamps are no longer county specific. See the 2009-2010 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary for county and public lands specific regulations. All deer must be field tagged and checked in within 72 hours of the time of kill or within 24 hours of the close of the season, whichever



Stephanie Richards, from Elizabeth, used a bow for this nice 8 point buck.

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comes first. Additional deer may not be taken until all previously taken deer have been checked. Only one deer may be taken per day during the buck season. Deer hunting in West Virginia generates a total annual economic impact of \$233 million, much of it in the rural areas of the state that depend upon the deer seasons for a large portion of their annual income.

In 2008, deer hunters in West Vir-
continue to the next page



Cameron Roberts hooked a 7 1/4 pound New River walleye. Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton.



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nia generates a total annual economic impact of \$233 million, much of it in the rural areas of the state that depend upon the deer seasons for a large portion of their annual income.

In 2008, deer hunters in West Virginia harvested 67,365 bucks during the two-week buck season, an increase of less than one percent from the 2007 harvest. The 2008 antlerless season deer harvest increased by 29 percent from 2007 with a total of 56,221.

Based upon scouting reports and mast production, DNR is looking for the buck kill to be slightly higher than last year. Poor weather conditions last year during the first week of buck season resulted in a large number of antlered deer carrying over to this hunting period, meaning more and bigger bucks will be harvested. Poor mast production this year means deer will be more accessible in field areas where food is more likely to be found, Hunters who have done their pre-season scouting and have located food sources for deer will have the best chance of success.

Sunday hunting is legal in the following 14 counties on private land only: Boone, Brooke, Clay, Hancock, Jefferson, Lincoln, Logan, McDowell, Marshall, Mingo, Ohio, Wayne, Wetzel and Wyoming. The only Sunday that is open in these counties during the buck season is

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November 29. Hunters are reminded that deer gun seasons are closed in Logan, Mingo, McDowell and Wyoming counties.

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

Hunting licenses may be purchased online at any time and printed out

on a home computer printer. Go to the goWILD! Web site at www.wv-hunt.com, fill out the application, and purchase it over a secure server with a credit card.

Hunters who wish to donate deer meat or dollars to the Hunters Helping the Hungry program, which distributes deer meat through the Mountaineer Food Bank and the Huntington Food Bank, should call (304) 558-2771 or visit the DNR Web site at www.wvdnr.gov to find a participating meat processor.

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Commemorative Coins

Certain visitors to Tu-Endie-Wei State Park in Mason County this past summer will be getting a special reward during Veterans Day week in appreciation for their interest in the historic site. A limited edition commemorative coin has been stamped and will be sent to those who participated in special "ranger walk and talks" conducted by Park Superintendent Doug Wiant with hundreds of interested visitors.

This year was the centennial of the dedication of the Battle of Point Pleasant Monument at what is now Tu-Endie-Wei State Park at Point Pleasant, built in recognition of 1774 Revolutionary War bat-



Lyle Moore used a bow in Ritchie County for this big black bear.. Photo courtesy of Crooked Creek Archery in Williamstown.

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tle fought there. The interpretive walks were conducted to help preserve the history of this important battle.

The commemorative coin memorializes the battle monument, its centennial year and the state park. One hundred fifty people will re-

ceive the coin with a letter from W.Va. State Parks Chief Ken Capliger thanking them for support of the park system's interpretive programming and recognizing history at the site on the anniversary of a 100 year milestone.

"We called the interpretive walks 'Battle Remembered,' but our goal was to invite people to learn about the history of the 1774 Battle at Point Pleasant and the 100th year of the battlefield monument's recognition of that battle," Supt. Wiant said. The monument was installed Oct. 10, 1909, in remembrance of a battle fought on Oct. 10, 1774.

Wiant met family members who traveled to the park to see where their forefathers were engaged in this battlefield site. "It was impressive that the arrangement of some

continue to the next page

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very basic interpretative walks and discussion about a point in history caused descendents of people involved on this battlefield site to come to West Virginia. Each walk was special, but meeting people connected to the battle personalized the day.”

Visitors attending the scheduled walks received a certificate featuring the battle monument from Wiant the day of the walk. Participants were invited to leave a mailing address and, during Veteran’s week in November, a commemorative coin would be mailed as a thank you for remembering history and a battle fought.

“Conducting the special walks was a lot of fun and something different for me in addition to my work routine. I like interaction with the public, but keeping the grounds and



Karen Belcher got her 1st deer with a bow. *Photo courtesy of Bow-Listic Archery in Chelyan.*

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park in good shape takes up most of my time.” Two walks were scheduled in June, July, August, and September and a final walk on Oct.10. The walk on the 100th anniversary of the monument installation had 56 people in attendance.

Wiant gives praise to local residents who helped with the summer events. “Eddie Lowe assisted with coin design image, museum hosts, the town of Point Pleasant, Mason County CVB, and local newspapers, all helped make visits memorable. And that’s exactly what we try to do daily, to remember those frontiersman and women.” Lowe, Wiant, and others spent countless hours rejuvenating the bronze plaques found on the park and on the monument, cleaning concrete and continuing maintenance of park grounds in preparation for Point Pleasant Battle Days held in October, daily visitors, and the interpretative walks.

For more information about

events and special activities scheduled at West Virginia’s state parks and forests, visit online at Events Calendar, www.wvstateparks.com. A printed event calendar will be available at state parks and forests, welcome centers, and 324th 4th Avenue, South Charleston in late December.

About Tu-Endie-Wei State Park
At the junction of the Ohio and
continue to the next page

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and Kanawha Rivers are a monument and a state park which commemorate the frontiersmen who fought and died at the Battle of Point Pleasant. This battle was fought with Chief Cornstalk on October 10, 1774, and is recognized as a decisive engagement in a proactive series of Indian wars.

The name "Tu-Endie-Wei" is a Wyandotte word meaning "point between two waters." The park is a four-acre day-use facility featuring an 84-foot granite obelisk honoring the 1774 battle. Memorial tablets dot the lawns. The 1796 Mansion House is considered the oldest hewn log house in the Kanawha Valley and is preserved as a museum and hosted by the Colonel Charles Lewis Chapter, N.S. Daughters of the American Revolution.

The park grounds are open year-round. The museum hours are: May through October, Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Tu-Endie-Wei State Park is located on First Street in Point Pleasant. The Web address is www.tu-endie-weistatepark.com. To contact the park by telephone, call 304-675-

0869 or e-mail tuendiewei@wv.dnr.gov.

Trout Stocked At Lake Tailwaters

The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, in cooperation with the West Virginia Professional Outfitters Association (WVPRO), stocked 1,200 pounds of rainbow trout in the Summersville Dam tailwater of the Gauley River Oct. 28. The goal of the stocking is to enhance trout fishing opportunities in the Gauley River, especially in the remote canyon section of the Gauley River, according to Frank Jezioro, DNR Director.

"The trout stockings were conducted by helicopter and should provide good fishing in the fall with holdover fish available to anglers into next year," said Jezioro. The program is supported by whitewater rafting fees to compensate for additional days of whitewater rafting flows on the Gauley River and resulting reduced fishing opportunities during these high flows released from Summersville Dam.

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Matt Dooley Trapped a bobcat. Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth.



Bill Sampson hooked a 41" musky recently. Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth.

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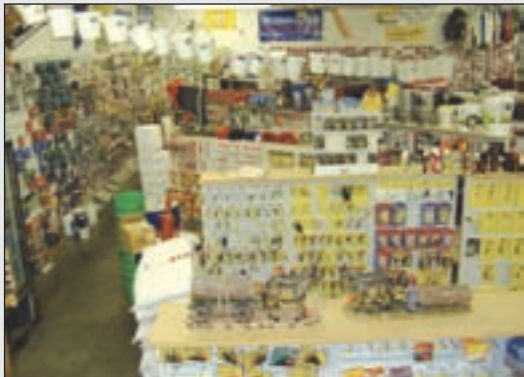
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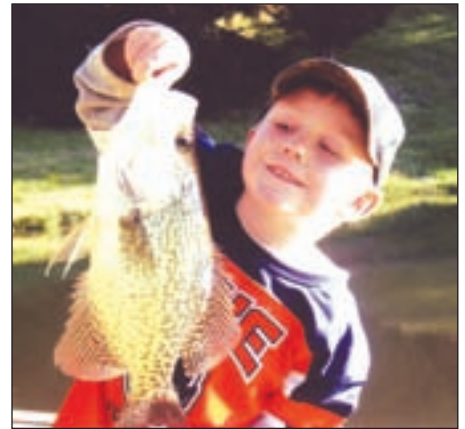
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Young Hayden Mattison hooked a big crappie. *Photo courtesy of Justin's Hunting & Fishing in Huntington.*



A 318 pound wild boar was taken with a bow by Don Ramsey. *Photo courtesy of Bowlistic Archery in Chelyan.*



A nice 10 point bow kill was made by Mark Heldreth. *Photo courtesy of J & R Sport Shop in Shinston*

**Mail In Your BIG FISH Pictures
From The 2009 Season.
Form Is On Page 38**

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A top quality Mason County deer - 9 point - was taken with a bow by Jay Cox. Photo courtesy of Outdoor Specialties in Winfield.



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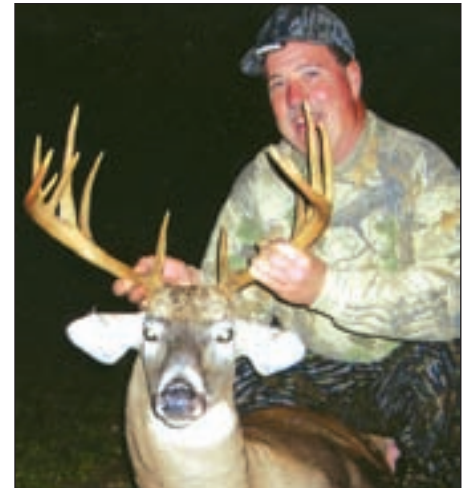
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Randy Sheppard arrowed a huge buck. Photo courtesy of Clark's Taxidermy in Parkersburg



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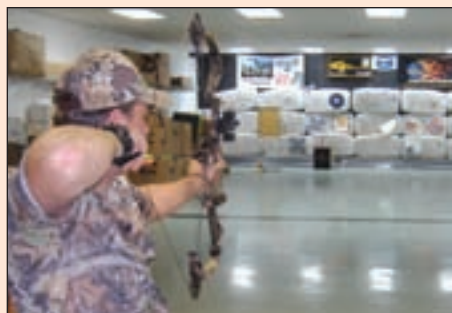
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Jim Pierce used a bow for this nice buck. *Photo courtesy of Cardian Pawn-brokers in Beckley.*



An extreme piebald deer was taken by Johnny Knight. *Photo courtesy of Bow-Listic Archery in Chelyan,*



Steve Miller used a bow on this massive Mason County buck

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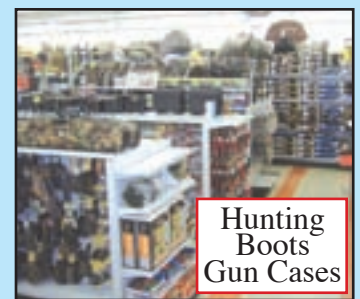


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Fall Hunting Time Again

This week, I have finally turned the corner, and have began to think of the upcoming fall seasons. When I think of fall, I think of all the fun filled days that I will have either bass fishing on Stonewall Jackson Lake, or bow hunting in Taylor county. I also just love the entire fall season, and the great scenery that happens when the leaves begin to turn into the fall spectacular that we have to look forward to. As I began looking at my bow, I felt that first pang of excitement that I get every fall.

Just spending the day in the great West Virginia outdoors is reward enough, but if I get the opportunity to drawl back on a trophy buck, well, that just icing on the cake! Anyway, I need to back up a little, and explain why I have been on hiatuses the past several months. This summer had been a season packed full of bass fishing events, and my partner, Jerod Harman, and myself has been getting into every tournament that was held since March. It has been a rewarding season in terms of satisfaction derived from the sheer excitement I get from competitive bass fishing. We had some good tournaments, and some

By Mark A. Garner

mediocre finishes, but all in all, we spent most every weekend on the water searching for that big bass. Just last weekend, we fished the annual fall Boy Scout event on the Mon River where we found a 5.66 pound largemouth that secured a high finish for us, and also took the lunker prize for the tournament. I do not have to tell anyone who fished here in West Virginia that a 5 pound plus fish on any river is a trophy worth bragging about!

Enough bragging, but that is why I have been absent from the newspaper since late spring. I have been extremely busy doing what I love....bass fishing. However, I hope to become more regular in the upcoming 10 weeks to keep up to date with all that will be happening during the fall hunting and fishing seasons. Speaking of events, this weekend the annual National Hunting and Fishing show is being held at Stonewall Jackson lake. This event has someone for everyone in your family from the

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continue to the next page



Vick Walten hunted this fall turkey.
Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.

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inside of a Blackhawk helicopter. I have been to this event every year, and I always enjoy myself. I especially like the game cooking where they prepare fish, and wild game samples for the public. It is a worthwhile event that is sure to get you into the hunting and fishing mindset!

Also, some of you have already taken to the woods for the early seasons that the DNR has scheduled for the 2009 season. In an effort to control the ever expanding deer herd, two special seasons has been established to help curb the antlerless deer in the designated areas. To review the specifics concern these, and all of the changes to the regulations, please review the regulations online at [HYPERLINK "http://www.wvdnr.gov"](http://www.wvdnr.gov) www.wvdnr.gov.

Lastly, this year shows lots of promise with a good crop of wild cheery being reported in most of the counties where fall turkey season is open. In addition, in most areas, acorn mast is reported to be good to heavy, and hickory nuts are abundant in the southern and central counties with some areas in the upper elevations reporting that the mast is low this year due to late frosts. For the deer and bear hunters, the apple crop is good to heavy

in most areas. Naturally, to get the most accurate picture of the conditions in your area, take a day and walk your hunting grounds. In doing this, you will know what foods the game is targeting, and you can prepare for that opening day in the woods. Good luck to all of you, and be careful when you take to the woods. Remember to keep the safety on while you hunting until you are ready to shoot! It only takes a few seconds to confirm your target, and ensure your target in the clear, and offers a good clear shot. See you afield-MAG

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Dale Tayler hooked a 22" bass. Photo courtesy of Broken Wheel Campground in Weston.

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Small Game Seasons Now Open

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The small game hunting seasons in West Virginia began Oct. 10 with the opening of squirrel season. “Squirrel season is very popular with many West Virginia sportsmen,” said Curtis Taylor, Chief of the Wildlife Resources Section of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR). “It is a time when hunters can participate in one of their favorite sports and also enjoy the fall beauty of the mountain state.”

Squirrel - The above-average hickory and walnut crop in 2008 resulted in good over-winter squirrel survival and good reproduction in 2009. A recent mast survey conducted by DNR indicates that statewide, oak, hickory, and walnut production this summer was significantly lower than last year. Squirrels will be concentrated in areas that have mast available. The daily bag limit for squirrels is six.

Ruffed Grouse - The ruffed grouse season opened Oct. 17 and closes Feb. 28, 2010. Brood counts for ruffed grouse were higher in the mountains and southern regions of the state when compared to 2008 brood numbers. Unfortunately, they were lower in the Eastern Panhandle, central and northern regions. Grouse hunters should look for areas that provide ample cover



Jim McClelland used a bow for this 8 point. *Photo courtesy of J&R Sporting Goods in Shinnston.*

and soft mast species such as grape, hawthorn, dogwood and greenbrier. Mast survey results indicate that these species did not produce as well this summer as in 2008. The daily bag limit for grouse is four.

Raccoon - Hunting season for raccoons opened Oct. 17 and will continue through Feb. 28, 2010. Favorable mast conditions in recent years have allowed raccoon populations to increase. Food sources are not as plentiful this year as in recent seasons. However, hunters and their hounds should still have a very successful season. Raccoon hunters are reminded that the daily bag limit is four.

Cottontail rabbit and other small game species - Opening day of cottontail rabbit season is Nov. 7. Rabbit populations are expected to be higher than last year. Old fields and brushy pastures are the best habitat types in which to pursue
continue to the next page

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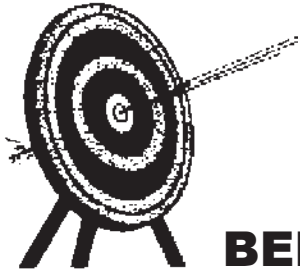


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cottontails. Snowshoe hare, bobwhite quail, bobcat, red fox and gray fox hunting seasons also open Nov. 7. Hunters should be aware of daily bag limits and season possession limits for each species.

Trapping seasons – Nov. 7 also marks the opening of trapping season for fur bearing animals in West Virginia. Populations of beaver, bobcat, fox, mink and raccoon are good, and trappers should be very successful. Trappers are reminded that season closing dates vary for the different species.

For more complete information on season dates and bag limits, consult the 2009-2010 Hunting and Trapping Regulations brochure available at all hunting and fishing license agents, DNR District Offices and the DNR Web site, www.wvdnr.gov. Have a safe and productive hunting season.

Must Tag Furbearers

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. - Trappers harvesting beaver and fisher in West Virginia are reminded they must present the whole animal or pelt to a game checking station or Division of Natural Resources 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.

The law requires bobcat hunters and trappers to field tag each bobcat before moving the animal from the location where it was killed. The field tag must remain on the carcass until it is retagged with an official game checking tag at an official game checking station. Hunters and trappers are to present the unskinned bobcat when checking the animal.

Information provided by hunters or trappers on the checking tag is used to monitor harvests and assist in future management of these species in West Virginia. Decisions re-

garding season length, opening and closing dates, and bag limits are reliant upon accurate data obtained from these tags.

**MAIL IN YOUR
GAME PHOTOS
~ FORM IS ON PAGE 38**



Adam Brogdon used a bow for this black bear. This was the first archery bear ever reported in Wirt County. *Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth.*

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Ohio Bear Poachers Caught

A lengthy bear poaching investigation was brought to a conclusion Oct. 22 and Oct. 25, when West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) conservation officers and Wildlife Resources personnel apprehended a group of eight hunters in Nicholas County for using bait to lure black bear into sites where they could be shot from elevated and camouflaged stands. It is illegal to bait black bear in West Virginia.

“This group of hunters, all of whom were residents of Ohio, had been participating in this type of illegal activity for a period of several years,” said Capt. Michael Waugh of the WVDNR District 3 Office in Elkins. “They had purchased their bait, which consisted of donuts and corn, from multiple out-of-state vendors. The bait was then hauled into the area by truck and distributed to the bait sites using all-terrain vehicles. This out-of-state purchase and interstate transport of the bait is believed to have been an effort on the part of the poachers to conceal the quantities of bait, the purposes for which it was being purchased, and to avert suspicion in the areas they were baiting.”

Seven baited shooting sites were located by Conservation Officers D. Duffield, T.L. White and Wildlife Manager Tom Pratt when they

entered the woods in Nicholas County near Summersville. On Oct. 22, five of the hunters were apprehended at a cabin used as a base camp from which to stage these illegal activities. As the individual hunters were located and removed from the elevated shooting platforms, Sgt. C.R. Johnson conducted interviews which led to additional information and the discovery of multiple baited black bear kills from previous years.

Two large adult black bears were seized at the base camp location as well as large quantities of bait stored for future use. The first was a large male bear that was estimated to weigh in excess of 240 pounds. The second was a large three-to-four-year-old female estimated to weigh more than 130 pounds. Two additional black bears were killed at the bait sites earlier and had already been removed from the base camp to locations outside the borders of West Virginia. Requests for assistance in recovering these black bears have been made to the US Fish and Wildlife Service under the provisions of the Lacey Act.

In conjunction with the Nicholas County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office, charges were lodged against the participants in this illegal baiting scheme on Friday, Oct. 23. The suspects chose to enter pleas to these charges at the arraignment. The charges lodged included:

“This investigation serves as a classic reminder that the Division of Natural Resources and its employees are ever mindful of their charge to protect the natural resources, including the wildlife, of the State of West Virginia for the benefit and enjoyment of our citizens and their children.

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An unusual big head carp was caught out of the Ohio River by Bill Phillips. *Photo courtesy of Starcher's Sport Shop in Lubeck.*



Kyra-Beth Romine, from St. Albans shot a squirrel.



John Little arrowed a 9 point. *Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth.*

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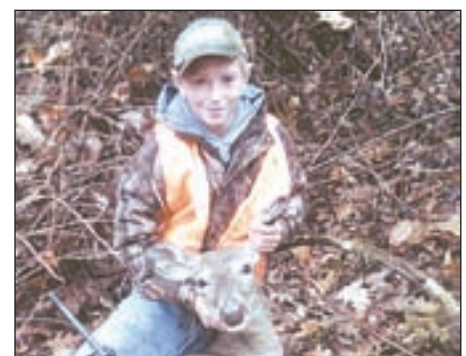
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Doc Yeater got a big elk out West. Photo courtesy of Croked Creek Archery in Williamstown.



Richard Henderson used a bow for this buck. Photo courtesy of Willie's Sport SHop in Glenville.



Young Kyler Sutton took his 1st deer. Photo courtesy of MAD Sporting Goods in Boaz.

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Randy Newbank hooked a 44 pound carp. Photo courtesy of Crooked Creek Arhery in Williamstown.

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 Page 38**

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Eric Shock got a Pope & Young buck. Photo courtesy of Outdoor Specialties in Winfield.



Billy Booth trapped his 1st coyote. Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store in Newark



An Illinois archery deer was shot by Chris Payne. Photo courtesy of Cardinal Pawnbrokers in Beckley.

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Reel Chat With Jimmy Houston

Q: How old were you when you got your first bass boat, and is it true that topwaters are the best lure to use when it rains?

-- Alex F (North Providence, RI)

A: I actually got my first boat when I was in high school (1958 or '59), and it really wasn't what we consider a bass boat now. I had a 20-hp motor and put a trolling motor on the front of my boat when that was unheard of. Trolling motors were made for only the back of the boat back then. Everybody thought I was crazy. But now it's unheard of not to see trolling motors on the front of the boat. Bass fishermen are innovative, and that's why we have such great equipment. As for the second question, I'd disagree a little bit with that. I'd go with a spinnerbait on top of the water or a buzzbait. My third choice would be a topwater bait.

Q: Do you think your success on the media side of fishing has hurt you on the competitive side as far as high finishes and payouts? Was this your desire and vision from day one, or did this just kind of happen?

-- Dave (Raeford, NC)

A: You know, the media came along because of the tournaments.

Particularly the early TV guys, we started in the tournaments and TV came along because of our success in those tournaments. Because of my success, I wound up being guests on other shows, and people started saying, "You should get you own show." However, I will say that I do 52 television shows a year, and it definitely hurts your success. If you just think about the days involved, it becomes very difficult to prepare for fishing tournaments. It's almost impossible for me to devote any time to practice. In FLW Tours, there's unlimited practice, and guys can spend sometimes 30 days practicing. In BASS, you only get three days of practice, but I rarely even get to use those three days. Tournament competitors nowadays are just so, so good. I do love tournaments, the competition and the camaraderie, but I'm really not a tournament fisherman - never claimed to be. In the early days, the skill level in tournaments was only at the top of the tournament field, but now everyone is a great angler. So, it's a lot tougher to compete with little or no practice. This next year I'm planning on dedicating at least three days to practice fishing for every tournament. Whether that works out or not, it's hard to say.

Q: Since you've been a competitive angler for quite some time, do you think that this sport will continue to be able to support the two

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major circuits, or do you think this will evolve into something where the two circuits will combine for the better of the sport and its competitors?

continue to the next page



Charles Pack caught a mess of smallmouth. Photo courtesy of Three Rivers Edge in Hinton.

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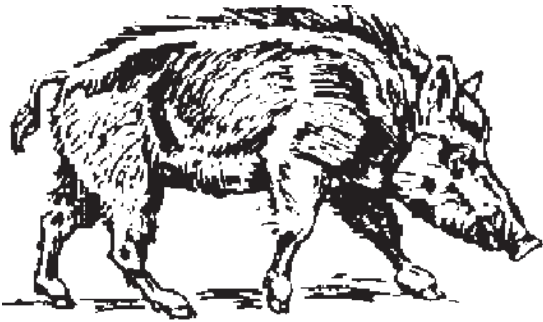
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- Dave (Raeford, NC)

A: You know, the media came along because of the tournaments. Particularly the early TV guys, we started in the tournaments and TV came along because of our success in those tournaments. Because of my success, I wound up being guests on other shows, and people started saying, "You should get your own show." However, I will say that I do 52 television shows a year, and it definitely hurts your success. If you just think about the days involved, it becomes very difficult to prepare for fishing tournaments. It's almost impossible for me to devote any time to practice. In FLW Tours, there's unlimited practice, and guys can spend sometimes 30 days practicing. In BASS, you only get three days of practice, but I rarely even get to use those three days. Tournament competitors

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Q: Since you've been a competitive angler for quite some time, do you think that this sport will continue to be able to support the two major circuits, or do you think this will evolve into something where the two circuits will combine for the better of the sport and its competitors?

-- Dave (Raeford, NC)

A: That's really difficult to answer. It is a possibility that the two circuits could combine. I like both organizations. I've fished BASS for a long time, and I've supported the FLW Tour from the beginning - Irwin Jacobs is my good friend. But,

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yes, the sport can support both organizations. We've got to the point where we're bringing in many, many outside companies. And when that happens, there is enough support out there for both organizations to continue. Somebody was just telling me the other day, the three hottest sports right now are NASCAR, poker and bass fishing. Those are the things that have re-



Mike VanFossen used a bow for this big buck. Photo courtesy Of Boone's Bow Shop in Parkersburg.

ally captured the imagination of the American public. There are plenty of people who don't bass fish but are still captivated by the sport. Why? Because it's fun and entertaining.

Q: Jimmy, what is your opinion about where bass go when they are released from tournament weigh-in sites? Do they hang around the weigh-in area for several days?

-- Tim Kennedy (Hixson, TN)

A: The fish actually do both. Depends on the time of the year. If it's in the spring, the fish are going to go directly to the nearest spawning areas. Outside of the spawn, they will generally go back to the areas where they were caught. We've tagged a lot of fish over the years, and we've definitely learned from that. In theory, the bass are a little bit like homing pigeons.

Q: Jimmy, what is a good way to start the process of becoming a pro angler?

-- Brant Davidson (Cache, OK)

A: One of the key things is to fish as many different lakes as you possibly can. One of the easiest ways

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to do that is to join a local bass club. Fishing with different individuals is very important because you get a lot of knowledge that way. If a person really wants to become knowledgeable, you can look at the Internet, read books and watch DVDs. We had to learn by trial and error back in the old days, but that's a very inefficient way to go about things. I'm personally very impressed by the knowledge all of the young guys have today. When I first met Kevin VanDam, for example, he won a tournament and came up to me and said he was able to beat me as a result of watching something on my TV show. We're both fishing the same area, but he was making many more casts than I was. Finally, it's just getting out on the water and fishing as many tournaments as you can. Too many people worry about sponsors right away. But if you're good enough, sponsors will find you. Sponsors definitely are watching for the next
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Q: Hi Jimmy. What is your favorite lake to fish in Tennessee?

-- Doug Fraser (Ashland City, TN)

A: I would probably say Kentucky Lake, which isn't in Tennessee. Chickamauga is a good one as well. Tennessee is a state that has a reputation as a difficult state to fish. Percy Priest is another good one. Nickajack is also good. The lakes on the upper end of the Tennessee River are tremendous pieces of water. On a side note, my wife actually won every Bass N' Gal tournament



Young Dusty Turner Jr. shot this big buck last year. Photo courtesy of Tri-Lakes In Walkersville.

that was ever fished in Tennessee.

Q: Jimmy ... When you and your production crew sit down to discuss what lakes you will fish for your show, what criteria do you use? Also, do you view your show more as entertainment over teaching bass fishing?

-- GL (Jackson, MI)

A: What we try to do, because I live in Oklahoma, we do more TV shows with geographical considerations than anything else, just because lakes in Texas, Oklahoma, etc., are closer. But I've fished all over the world. We try to put ourselves in the best situation. We'll go to a certain lake when it's the best time to catch certain fish. I generally go South in the winter and North in the summer. We try to also hit the right weather conditions. I've been doing this for 29 years, and

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we've never staged on fish. Some shows do that, but we don't. If I go out fishing and we don't catch anything, we won't do a show. With our show, we try to blend entertainment with education. To me, fishing is fun. That's what we try to do with every TV program. And that's what it's all about. Unfortunately, some tournament fishermen forget to have fun - they don't even have fun when they're winning.

Q: What is the most important thing you do when trying to pattern fish?

-- Rod Blankenship (Fort Payne ,

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A: The obvious thing is that you need to catch more than one to start developing a pattern. You think about four things: time of the year, type of water - you wouldn't pattern a fish the same on a river as a lake - you've got to think about what the water is doing, and what the weather is doing. If you're just going to go fishing for the fun of it, then you try to use those criteria. If you can't develop it, go to the next likely pattern. But tournaments are different. With so many boats, you might start with your fifth-best pattern because guys are so good that all of the easy patterns are going to be figured out. If you do what other people aren't doing, your pattern will likely hold up better. However, the one time of the season that doesn't always work is during the spawn. And if it was up to me, I wouldn't have any tournaments during the spawn.

Q : Maybe can you explain the evolution of catch-and-release.

A: I fished my first BASS tournament in 1968, third one they ever



David DeBord caught a nice Summersville Lake catfish.

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had. I caught 11 bass that weighed 52 pounds, 11 ounces. It was a 15-bass limit back then. Now, it's a five-bass limit, of course. That 52 pounds I caught, we carried them in an icebox to the weigh-in. Three of those fish were filleted and given to charity. But those fish - three of

those over 8 pounds - never swam in that lake again. But now we've changed to where we have 98-percent release ratios. There are new technologies that allow you to actually weigh the fish right in the water. They're currently testing it in Canada right now.



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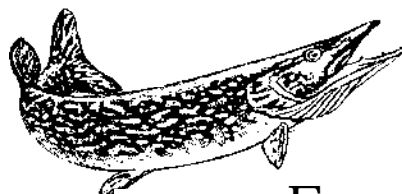
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