

December 2022

WOODS & WATERS



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Corrottoman River

DWR's Bear & Turkey Forecasts

Goose Hunting

Smallmouth King
Go Small For Big Winter Bass



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- + - W2 Profile - Charlie Taylor
- Winged Wisdom - Kate Ahnstrom
- Hook, Line & Thinker - Steve Chaconas

Buck Tails

CALENDAR OF EVENTS /// TIDE CHARTS /// TOURNAMENT RESULTS /// REAL ESTATE



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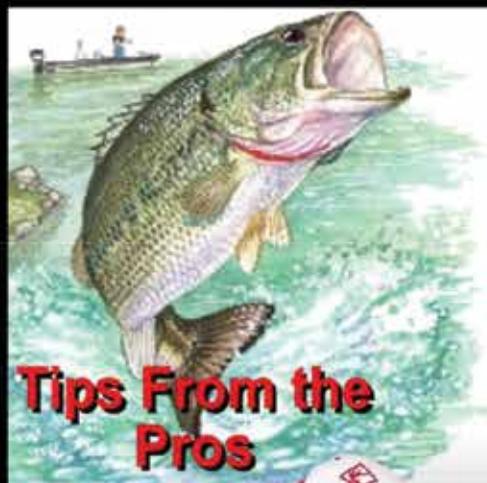
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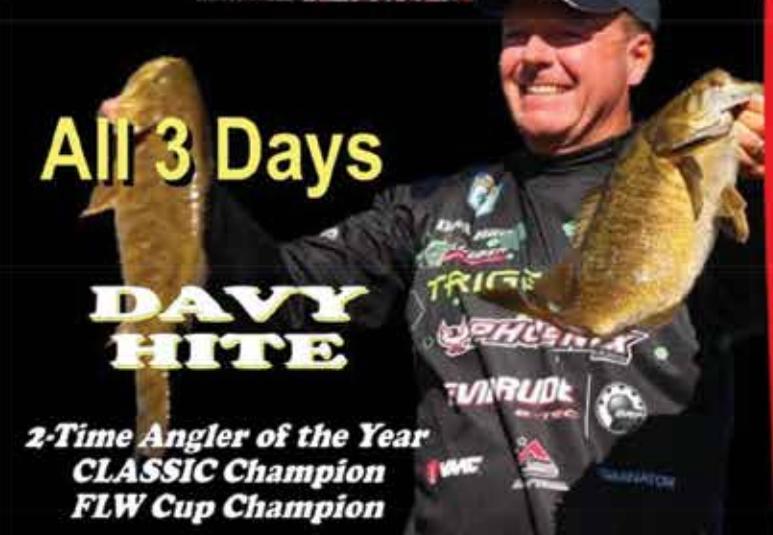
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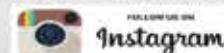
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TOURNAMENT RESULTS

★★★★

Veteran's Day Bass Fishing Tournament

Saturday, November 12 was a great day for the 2022 Veterans Day Fishing Tournament. While they could not fish on Veterans Day due to heavy rain, Saturday turned out with excellent weather. The VDFT had a record turnout of 116 teams/boats.

Tournament Director Larry Martin noted: "Thank you veterans past and present, and all of you future Military service men and women and to the great supporters that show their appreciation."

Here are a few stats: 224 anglers fished, 74 veterans and 150 supporters. The field consisted

of 26 Army vets, 16 Navy vets, 19 Marines, 3 Coast

Guardsmen and one National Guardsman. A total of 305 largemouth bass were caught and all but two were released alive and well. There were 42 five-fish limits. 62 sponsors donated \$14,630 worth of prizes that were given out. 35 prize packages were given to veterans worth \$9,700. 24 prize packages went to supporters worth \$4,930. \$5,990 was paid out to 24 places. Matt Martin and Josh Hall went with 17 lbs. and won \$1,050. Paul Spence had big fish at 7.55 lbs. and earned \$640.



Angler Appreciation Tournament

Anna Point Marina's annual Angler Appreciation Tournament was held October 22, drew 64 teams and paid nine places.

When all fish were weighed something happened that had never occurred before: last year's champs had successfully defended their title.

Stephen and Bobby Campbell won with a five-bass limit weighing 19.93 pounds, earning them \$2,600 and the chance to put their names once again on the Angler Appreciation trophy.

Mike Fletcher and Sue Stramel were second with 18.40 pounds and took home \$1,000. Dave Matthews and Jerry

Boutchyard were third with 16.53 pounds and won \$700. The event big fish went to Wayne Snow at 5.99 pounds, earning him and teammate George Herring eighth place and \$805.

Tournament Director Dave Fauntleroy wanted to thank all who participated and invite anglers to visit the new Anna Point Marina in 2023. For more information visit www.annapoint.com



Josh Hall, Matt Martin and Lee Martin



Matt Martin and Josh Hall

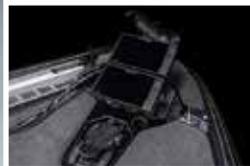


Stephen and Bobby Campbell



Wayne Snow

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TOURNAMENT RESULTS



The final Bob's Wednesday Night Tournament of the year was held November 2. Nine boats launched and one limit was weighed. Joe Glazebrook and Joey Derezinski won with five for just 8.87 lbs. Keith Lynch took second with 5.52 lbs. Daniel and Beverly Vance were third with 5.15 lbs. For more information and results visit www.facebook.com/bobsfishinghole.



Derezinski and Glazebrook

STURGEON CREEK MARINA



Congratulations to Matt Martin and Josh Hall who won the opening Sturgeon Creek Marina Winter Series event November 20 with 23.56 pounds and the big fish at 6.68 pounds. The team of Wilson/Jones second with 17.86 pounds. Taylor/Norton were third with 17.68 pounds. These events will be held every weekend through January. For more info visit www.facebook.com/sturgeoncreekmarina.com.



Matt Martin and Josh Hall



VA/NC Crappie Trail

The second Bobcat's Bait & Tackle VA/NC Crappie Trail event was held November 5 and won by Scott and Kenneth Ball with an 8.46-pound, seven-fish limit - good for \$1,558. Freddie and Blake Sinclair were second with 8.24 pounds.

The next event will be held December 3. For more info visit www.facebook.com/bobscatsbaitandtackle.



Scott and Kenneth Ball



The Bass Bandits of Virginia November 6 tournament was held on the tidal Appomattox River and drew 12 boats for a tough day of fishing. There were only five limits brought to the scales. Logan Branch and Landon Howlett were first with five fish for 11.60 lbs. and big fish of the day at 4.5 lbs.

For more info and 2023 event dates visit www.facebook.com/groups/458306391457498.



Logan Branch and Landon Howlett

"Bobby, what the heck just blew by us?"
- John Doe, Virginia tournament angler

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BUCK TALES

Stories of success from our readers around the state.

C.C. MCCOTTER

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GOOSE HUNTING

Join the author for a guided adventure before you hit the blind. *TRAVIS STAUCH*



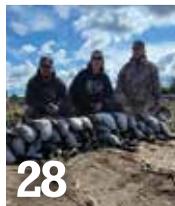
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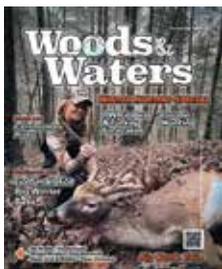


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COVER PHOTO BY ANNA NICHOLS



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Reflecting Gratefully Before The New Year

In this, the final month of 2022, we pause to reflect on some milestones the year has brought us.

New state records for fall fish and saugeye, a pretty good Trout Slam and Bass Slam Challenge from our friends at the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, the return of the Green Top Outdoor Expo, the return (coming up next month!) of the Richmond Fishing Expo and a new Governor in Richmond.

We had a bunch of great Bucketlist adventures starting with a spring visit to Santee Cooper, a summer adventure at the Inner Banks, fall on the the Susquehanna River, the Niagara River, even a safari.

We added excellent new writers like Chris Gorsuch of Reel Fishing Adventures and Travis Stauch of Ram Rod Waterfowling and try each month to feature interesting personalities with our W2 Profiles. Staff writers like Kate Ahnstrom, Steve Chaconas and Sam Scott continue to produce interesting and informative monthly articles.

We even had time to relaunch our website and post a bunch of W2 Pro Tip videos on our Facebook page.

I wanted to thank you for being a part of this 12-month, 672-page adventure and invite you come along in 2023, where I'm sure we'll visit many new places, try new tactics and gear and bring you the stories.

Looking at this month's issue we offer you Matt Knox's annual DWR Bear and Turkey Season Forecasts to help you harvest more game. The Smallmouth King (a.k.a. - Chris Gorsuch) gives another look into his fascinating guide mind with his article *Small Jigs For Big Winter Bass*. W2 Pro Team member and waterfowl guide Travis

Stauch tells us all about his goose hunting adventures. We also caught up with W2 Adventure Editor Aaron Ball for a Destination File piece on the little-known Corrotoman River. Elsewhere we have our annual Buck Tales; a compilation of stories from our readers about their deer hunting successes.

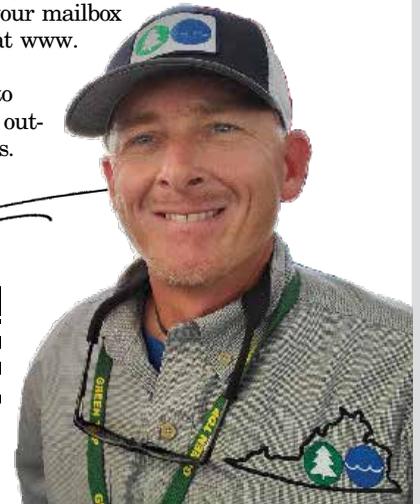
There's all that, plus our monthly columnists (Ahnstrom, Scott and Chaconas), a W2 Profile on Charlie Taylor, our famous Regional Focus Reports, Tide/Moon Charts, Calendar of Events and an expanded Destinations section with a bunch of new outstanding real estate listings geared toward outdoor enthusiasts like you!

If you like what you have seen, make it a habit to pick up a copy at any one of the over 75 shops around the state that carry W2 OR you can have it sent to your mailbox by signing up for a subscription at www.woodsandwatersmagazine.com.

Until next time, remember to cherish, protect and conserve the outdoors while sharing it with others.



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Freshwater Books

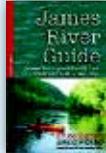
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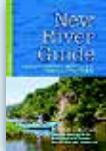
The James River

by Bruce Ingram \$13⁹⁵
 Paddlers to anglers will find this guide book a great tool when planning trips. 136 pgs., 15 river maps.



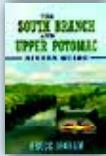
The New River

by Bruce Ingram \$14⁹⁵
 Covers fishing the river from the highlands of NC to the valleys of VA to the gorges of WV. 174 pgs., 8 river maps.



South Branch & Upper Potomac

by Bruce Ingram \$14⁹⁵
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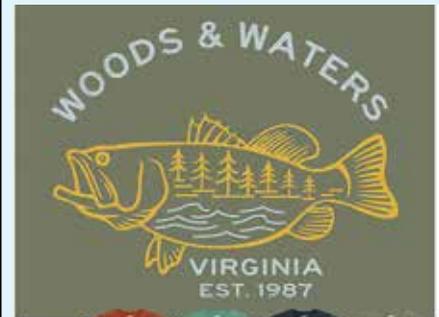
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Hello Woods & Waters,

Attached you will find a picture of my son Braden (13) with his first ever deer (4-point buck). He shot it on private property from approximately 30 yards with his crossbow from his ground blind (I didn't assist until tracking/processing) on 7 November 2022. We know it ain't in running for biggest buck of year/season, but he (and I) are mighty proud of it.

Thank you for your product and possible feature in from readers section.

Paul and Braden Fahlor
Spotsylvania, Virginia



Good job Paul and Braden. Your W2 sticker is OTW! - ED

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Snap here and catch our Canaan Valley Adventure video on woodcock hunting and a special canoe fishing challenge with W2 Publisher C.C. McCotter and Mitchell McCotter.



Outdoor Moments

Richard Stubler



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Matt Martin & Josh Hall
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hunting



Snap here to read about Zack Robb's bow season 10 pointer.



BUCK TALES

BY C.C. MCCOTTER

Every season we hear about them and see the pics; the mountain monster, the cornfield ghost, the river bottom buck, the first buck, the stories are as diverse as the hunters, and they are all special. These are the tales of triumph from readers hunting whitetail deer around the state.

Deer hunting is a special tradition in the Old Dominion and the buck tales that accompany the seasons are worth sharing here in hopes of inspiring and entertaining you. Enjoy, and good luck for the rest of the season.

Just a reminder: the annual Woods & Waters Big Buck Contest runs through January 31 – to enter just submit your photo to us either via our Facebook page or emailing it to us at woodsandwatersmagazine@gmail.com. First prize is a \$50 gift card from our friends at Green Top Sporting Goods, plus a W2 cap and sticker.

Baker's First Muzzleloader Buck

On a warm November morning 18-year-old Austin Baker was in his tree stand hoping to drop his first buck with muzzleloader. The Louisa County resident had practiced with his Thompson Center Impact rifle and knew if he had a clear shot, he could hit the target. He, his mother, and his father had discussed which stand each would take that morning, and when he couldn't decide, Mom decided for him.

"As we all climbed up in our stands November 9, within the first hour Austin's Dad saw a small buck headed Austin's way. He sent him a text message to let him know. Austin replied and said that he saw the deer but wanted to wait for something bigger. Twenty minutes after the text message we heard the gunshot!"

A nine-pointer had walked within 30 yards of the stand Mom choose for Austin and the young man had dropped it. Mom told W2 he should thank her!

"His smile was priceless!! We were just as

happy for him as if we had shot the deer ourselves!" noted Tina Baker.

Hamilton's Second Act

November 9 was a good day to be in the woods as our next Buck Tale also takes place on that fateful day.

Hunter Hamilton won last year's Woods & Waters/Green Top Big Buck Contest with a 15-pointer he dropped in Rappahannock County.

He was back for the start of muzzleloader season this year looking for another wall hanger.

Hamilton told W2 his father, Russ, was in a ground blind all morning and he decided to join his dad that afternoon when the magic happened.

"I decided to come sit the evening with him I got set at about 1:40 pm and wasn't sitting down for maybe five minutes and [the buck] came cruising through."

Hunter said he took a 78-yard shot with a CVA Optima blackpowder rifle with a Simmons 4x12 scope. He was using 150 grains of powder and a 200 grain Thompson Center Shockwave round. The deer ran about 50 yards and piled up.

"These are the tales of triumph from readers hunting whitetail deer around the state."



Austin Baker



Hunter Hamilton

"I'd like to thank my dad and everyone else who introduced me to the outdoors," Hamilton told W2.

LJ Knight's Ghost Buck

LJ Knight's Buck Tale started out in 2015 when he saw the first pic of the Rappahannock County buck he was to focus on for the next four years.

"The only thing special about this buck was that he had a split brow tine but I went the whole hunting season without seeing him," Knight told W2.

In 2016 Knight noted the buck was even bigger from pre-season trail cam pictures and that he had triple brow tines on both.

The next season, 2017, Knight early awaited the trail camera pics to show this buck.

"The first time I checked, there he was, a stud with drop tines split brows again and stickers everywhere."

But once again Knight went all season never seeing the buck in the daylight.

"I put in countless hours and shot many

trophy deer but was hunting for this buck of a lifetime."

So, onto the 2018 season and it started off the same way. Knight noted that year there was plenty of trophy bucks on the property and the big buck was out for fight to show he still ran the area. The deer showed himself during the pre-rut three different times. Once was when Knight was with his wife in tree stand with bow in hand. They let three bigger bucks than she had ever taken walk within 25 yards to maybe have a chance of getting the Ghost within range, but the field cleared and after some grunts and rattling that he never acknowledged, he cleared also.

The rest of the 2018 season he was a ghost, so onto next season they went.

Trail cameras went out in July 2019 and Knight was ready to see if the deer he had been tracking for four years was still that big.

"On the way to check the camera on the ATV I rode right up to the buck bedded behind my camera on the edge of the field. No more than 15 yards separated us. After

all these years there he was, but there was no reaction! My thoughts are is he asleep? Is he sick? Five minutes passed and not a move but then finally he turns his head and I see his eye was glossed over, but then with a wrinkle of the nose, he turned his head the other way to then see me and then ran out of sight. This weird encounter left me thinking could this deer be deaf?"

Showing no response the previous year to any call or rattling and now riding the ATV within 15 yards of him made Knight come to this conclusion. And he thought maybe it

| continued on page 16



LJ and John Knight



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Turkey Harvest Could Be Lower

By Katy Martin Bear, Deer & Turkey
And Mark Dye Forest Game Bird Project Leader

While you were at the beach or mountains enjoying some time off during the months of July and August, the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) staff and cooperators completed an annual turkey brood survey. They were out in fields and forests trying to figure out how many young turkeys had been hatched and how many were going to make it to Jake status. The DWR survey provides an index to productivity of wild turkey reproduction and can assist in management decisions. The survey counts the number of turkeys observed by staff and cooperators as they go about their normal day to day business and is expressed as the number of turkeys observed per 1,000 miles driven and the number of poults (juvenile turkey) observed per hen.

DWR carried out the survey with the dedicated assistance of many volunteers from the Virginia National Wild Turkey Federation chapters, DWR Complementary Work Force and Hunter Education Instructors, and the Virginia Master Naturalists.

The 2022 annual survey suggests reproduction for wild turkey declined to a statewide average of 1.9 poults/hen, falling below the long term survey average of 2.5 poults/hen. According to past data the overall number of turkeys staff have observed in the summer has declined since 2015. In 2022, the total number of turkeys observed fell below the long-term average (18.4/1,000 miles) to 10.1 birds per 1,000 miles.

Wild turkey success in hatching and raising broods plays an important role in wild turkey populations and is especially important in fall harvests. Further, the ratio of young birds (poults) to the number of females (hens) is a critical index to reproduction (P/H).

In 2022, the Department received 217 reports by observers driving nearly 272,000 miles during July and August. Seventy-four percent of observers reported seeing at least one turkey.

On a statewide basis, the number of turkeys seen per 1,000 miles driven in 2022 was 10.1 turkeys per 1,000 miles. This ratio peaked in 2014 (29.4) and 2015 (30) and has been declining since. Low reproduction is believed to be the primary cause of the decline.

The Tidewater Region had the highest ratio (22/1,000 mi.) and likely has the highest turkey population of any region in the state. The Southwest region had the next highest ratio with 9.8 birds per 1,000 miles, but is significantly lower than the 2021 ratio of 21 birds/1,000 miles for this region. The South Piedmont (7.8), North Piedmont (6.2) and North Mountains (4.8) were all significantly below the long-term survey average (18.4 turkeys per 1,000 miles).

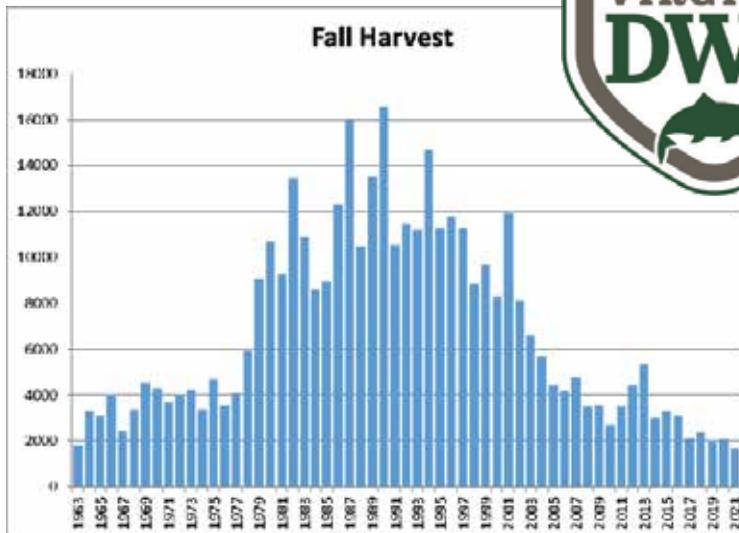
The Poults/Hen ratio is DWR's best measure of reproduction as it considers the number of poults produced by all hens. Complete brood loss is not uncommon and those situations need to be incorporated when evaluating reproduction.

Statewide, the 2022 P/H ratio (1.9) was below the long-term survey average (2.5). This is a nearly 30% decline from the 2021 ratio (2.7) and matches a low reported in 2020 (1.9).

Unfortunately, poor reproduction continues in areas of the state (North Mountains) with lower turkey densities. Several years of above average reproduction would likely be needed to reverse any continued productivity declines.

Below average recruitment (P/H ratio) was reported across all regions in 2022 with the Tidewater having the "highest" (1.4) and the Northern Mountains the lowest (0.6). Falling in the middle were the Southwest (1.2), Southern Piedmont (1.1), and Northern Piedmont (1.1).

According to the authors of this report, "This information is intended to monitor turkey population trends and densities but does not infer high hunter success or satisfaction while hunting." 



Annual fall turkey harvest in Virginia by DWR



Howard Smith, Fall turkey, 2021

was the year to make it happen. "I deployed cell phone cameras and finally caught him jumping the fence into a pasture field after dark, and every day it was like clockwork besides a few minutes earlier every day, 'till finally he entered one evening at last light."

So here was the debate going on in Knight's mind: "I was busy at work knowing this deer was gonna jump that fence in daylight, but I wasn't gonna be there, so who should be there? Well, I made a phone call to my father telling him what was going happen, and I wanted him in my stand to hopefully be lucky enough to shoot that deer."

"This man was always thrilled to see me shoot big mature bucks over the years, showing me all the steps along the way, so it was time for me to repay the favor."

Needless to say, on December 16 the Ghost Buck jumped the fence and entered the field where LJ's father, John Knight was setting armed with his model 700 Remington 6.5 Creedmore.

He had now laid eyes on his biggest buck to date and had to take the time to steady his aim and the shot was fired. Was it a hit? The deer never flinched! The elder Knight quickly bolted another shell with the buck walking at 175 yards and squeezed off another round. Then the phone call was made to his son saying he had shot the buck, but he didn't drop.

"I told him I was on my way as I had just clocked out. Upon arrival to the where he last seen the deer there was little blood, so I immediately called Nose-to-ground Blood Trailers of VA and they sent out a handler with dog. The dog battled high winds with a drifting trail in a tall sage grass field and lead us to the same corner in the field two times, but we saw nothing. The handler was set to return the next morning to continue the track but after a sleepless night my father couldn't wait and was there waiting at daylight and walked to the corner of the field to see the deer belly up 25 yards away. "

Knight noted the deer was recovered with one shot through the lungs and the other through the shoulder. This deer had a will to live and scars to prove it, but patience and the hard work

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hunting Fewer Bears In VA?

Hunters reported harvesting 2,988 bears during the 2021–2022 bear hunting seasons in Virginia. and that was approximately 14% lower than the harvest the previous year and 16% lower than the statewide harvest reported during the 2019-20 record season; however, it was only 1% lower than the previous five-year average during 2016–2020.

A lower proportion of the 2021-22 season harvest consisted of female bears (44%) than the previous year (47%).

Significant harvest decreases during the three-day early firearms season (35%) and archery season (35%) were the main contributors to the overall decline in the 2021-22 statewide bear harvest.

The youth/apprentice weekend harvest decreased by 13% and the firearms season decreased by less than 1% from the 2020-21 season. The muzzleloader season actually increased by 2% from the previous season.

The decrease in bear harvest during the 2021–2022 season could have resulted from several factors, including the unusually warm and relatively dry weather throughout the season (especially during the early and archery seasons) and spotty acorn crops that may have contributed to decreased bear movements early in the seasons and reduced vulnerability to hunters.

In addition, recent firearms season expansions (2017 and 2019) as well as the three-day early firearms season (established during 2017) were designed to reduce bear populations in much of western and northern Virginia.

As bear populations decline, harvests are expected to decline within subsequent years.

Lastly, notable drops in harvest in certain northwestern counties could be related to sarcoptic mange, a parasitic skin disease in bears. There is currently no evidence, in Virginia or elsewhere, that the disease limits bear populations over the long term; however, other states have observed cyclic outbreaks of mange that can impact local bear populations for several years. Harvest may also be decreased if hunters avoid hunting or taking bears in areas where mange is more prevalent.

The 2021–2022 season was the first during which hunters could only check bears through the DWR electronic checking systems using phone, internet, or mobile applications.

The majority (62%) of hunters reported their bear harvest using the mobile application, 31% called in their harvest by phone, and 7% reported their harvest using the internet.

The quality of harvest data received during the last three seasons indicate that the electronic reporting system is an effective method of data collection, including submission of teeth for aging bears.

Across all seasons when hounds could be used, an estimated 61% of bears were taken by hunters using hounds during 2021–2022. Season estimates for the proportion of bears harvested by hunters using hounds were as follows: three-day early firearms season (46%), firearms season (63%), and youth/apprentice weekend (82%).

The top counties for bear harvest last season were: Highland (128), Bath (127), Rockbridge (124), Augusta (116) and Nelson/Botetourt (113 tie).

Season	Harvest (#)	% Total Harvest	% Females
3-Day Early Firearms	306	10.2%	49%
Youth/Apprentice	88	2.9%	58%
Archery	553	18.5%	47%
Muzzleloader	394	13.2%	39%
Firearms	1637	54.8%	42%
Unknown (not assigned)	10	0.3%	30%
Total	2988	100%	44%

Bear 2021-22 bear harvest in Virginia by season. Source: DWR

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Stan Brooks of Fitt Premium Lures with a hefty winter smallmouth.



Small Profile Jigs For Winter Smallmouth

BY CHRIS GORSUCH

Nothing kindles my fire like cold water smallmouth fishing. Over the decades however, I have learned that one man's cold water can mean something completely different depending on your geography. Cold water smallmouth as I define it is when the morning water temp is well into the middle 30's and may or may not reach the upper 30-degree mark by the end of the day. When I explain that to some anglers, I get the deer in the headlights look. Their cold-water mark is a good 10 degrees or so warmer than my definition.

During the last 20 years, I have fished for smallmouth during that cold water window on a dozen different rivers in six states.

I am by no means an expert; along the way I have picked up some solid insight and I can spot locations on new water fairly quickly. I have also been able to put some of my favorite techniques and lures to the test on these new areas.

Generally speaking, cold water arrives sometime in December and holds true through early to mid-March. Depending on the year, the month of December can look and feel completely different at the start than it is by mid-month. The key is when that first real cold blast of winter hits. That first big drop in water temperature can make catching tricky. But this drop in water temperature from this point on will keep the water at or below 39 degrees for the next 6 to 10 weeks. Believe me when I say, smallmouth will

adjust and remain active during this time period.

During the winter months, discussions on fishing boards, at the counter of your favorite tackle shop or on any social media platform generally cover the tools, tricks and best lures for targeting smallmouth during this time. Everything from lure types and profiles along with specific areas to target bass based on current flow, depth and bottom composition will be covered. Anglers will share, debate and even argue their ideas and experiences. That old saying, "the proof is in the pudding" has never been more true. Here, an hour of applying these techniques on the water is worth days of discussions behind the keyboard.

One cold December morning a few years

"Cold water smallmouth as I define it is when the morning water temperature is well into the middle 30's and may or may not reach the upper 30-degree mark by the end of the

back, I hosted Stan Brooks (owner of Fitt Premium Lures) and his favorite fishing partner Ken Sutch. I have known this duo for over a decade and while we never fished together this late into the year, I knew that cold weather fishing was right up their alley. The overnight snow, while unexpected, added to the feel of this cloudy, cold late December day.

We had our own favorite lures but decided to try outside our comfort zone to see what other profiles would work as well. Our rule for the day was no tubes and no hair jigs, so Stan brought an ample supply of Chillee Willees, Undulators, Baby Predator Craws and the G&W Crinkle Worm. While we all had our favorites, I can say that each produced bass on a very frigid day. Perhaps the most surprising profile and lure choice to me was the Predator Craw. While I fish this profile a great deal, I never considered it a top 5 profile for the time of year. Early and often, Ken put my worries to bed on this late December outing. It was a great light-bulb moment for me. Frankly, I did not think it would produce in the low temperatures as it did.

Chillee Willee

This lure is very similar to an Erie Darter, a lure many of you are probably



Brooks with the Fitt Premium Lures Chillee Williee and another winter smallmouth.

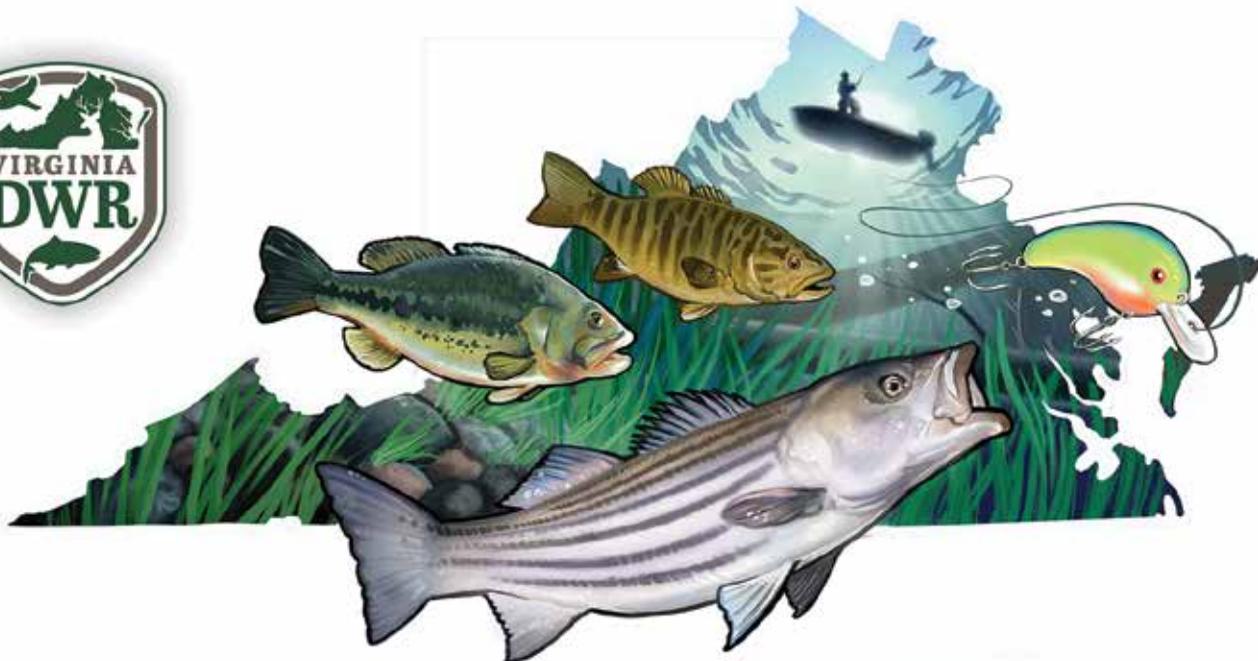
familiar with. The Chillee Willee is much smaller in length, but the body is thicker. The added thickness helps hold the bait to the jig hook without bunching up the lure. Another big difference is that the paddle tail is shorter, tapered rather than flat. It is also held to the body of the bait with less material than the Erie Darter. This allows the tail to move more freely and with less effort than the larger profiled darter. Fitt Lures makes a Stand-Up Football jig specifically for this application, but the Ned Head works as well on this lure. Bottom line here on this lure, fish it like a tube. Lake or river, the Chillee Willee gets their attention and it is my go to jig in the winter.

Undulator

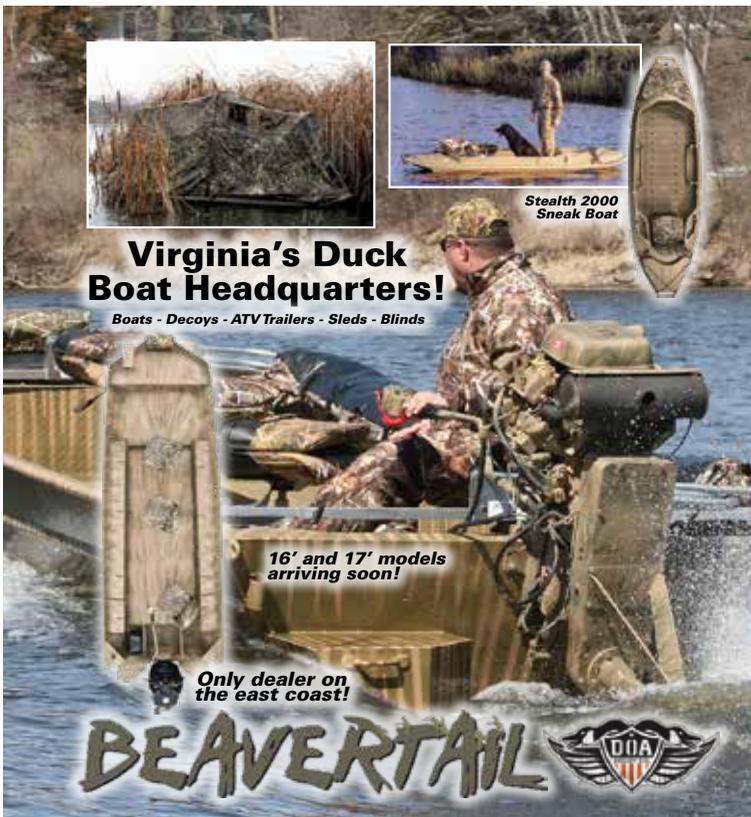
With a very similar body as the Chillee Willee, the Undulator has a long leech-like tail. It is thin and ribbed and nearly identical as it closely resembles the tail of the leech. Overall, the Undulator is 1/2 to 3/4 of an inch longer than the Chillee Willee. In the water during early tank tests, the tail undulated slowly. This motion gave the lure its name. The tail on this lure moves with little to no effort making it Stan's first choice

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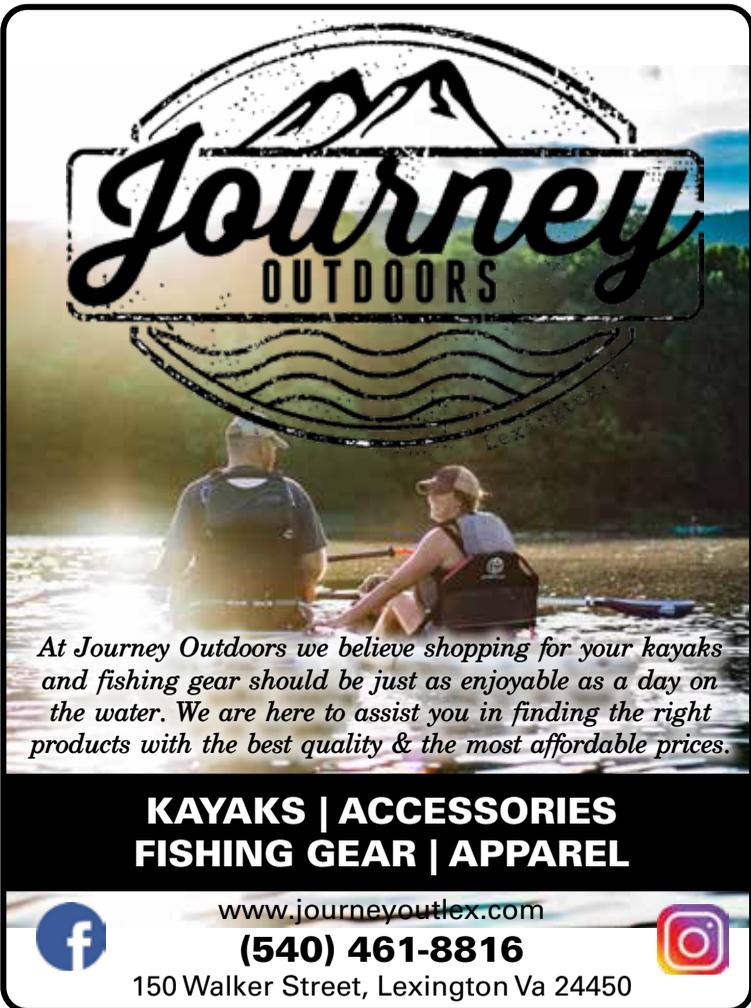
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when cold water jigging. While I prefer to fish this lure almost dead stick, Stan likes to twitch the rod tip every few seconds, slowly hopping the Undulator along the bottom. His method and this profile works! Stan landed quite a few big smallmouth on it.

Baby Predator Craw

This lure comes in three different sizes with the "Baby" being in the middle. While about equal in length to the Undulator, the Baby Predator Craw was the largest profile in our group of lures on this day. The claws are thin, which makes them perfect for slow, cold water presentations. In the water on the Stand-Up Football jig, the claws move slowly up and down as the body remains motionless, perhaps this is what triggered so many strikes for Ken. During the warm water season, I prefer to rig the Baby Predator on a Fitt Weedless Flutter Head jig. With the Flutter Head, I can move the bait quickly along the bottom, stopping here and there before moving it through the rocks.

G&W Crinkle Worm

The origin of this simple worm goes back two decades when I was fishing one of the coldest open water years I can recall. Bass were triggering on ultra-small profiles that were fished at a snail's pace. After such outing, I spent the evening making clay worms that were about 3" long, with a crinkle body just thick enough to hold a jig, then

taper to a smaller diameter tail with a small flat paddle at the end. Crinkle cuts were fashioned into the rod tip every few seconds, slowly hopping the Undulator along the bottom. This crude flat pour worm was incredibly productive. When Fitt (formerly known as Winco Lures) approached me about making a CNC injection mold I was flattered, and the G&W Crinkle Worm was created. Rigged on either the Stand-Up Football or Ned jig, this is a killer bait when that bite shuts down on those tough days.

Oh, and as for the outing. A great deal of knowledge and bass were gathered that day. Profiles like the Predator Craw, proved to be an effective option during the winter months when worked slow. The Undulator held its own against my two favorites, the Chillee Willee and G&W Crinkle Worm.

Open water fishing during the winter is not for everyone, but should you find yourself on the water this December or January, give small profile jigs a try. Remember to slow everything down to a fraction of the movement used during the warm water season and be careful. Catching bass in the winter is addictive. Find success and you may never hang the fishing gear up for the season. 🟢🟢



Author Chris Gorsuch is a licensed charter guide in the state of Pennsylvania. He started the Reel River Adventures guide service in '07 and spends 225-250 days on the water annually. His home base is on the Susquehanna River where he operates 20' jetboats. Chasing smallmouth is his specialty, however he enjoys catching walleye and other freshwater gamefish on the upper North Branch. He has written 100's of articles. You can follow his daily fishing reports on Facebook 'Reel River Adventures-RRR' & Instagram @Chris_Gorsuch



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Corrotoman River

Exploring One Of Virginia's Best Small Tidal Rivers

BY AARON BALL

Back in October I got invited to go on an adventure that I have wanted to make for years.

My buddy Mark Faulhaber asked if I wanted to go chase speckled trout and redfish on the Corrotoman River. Mark spends a good amount of the fall on the tidal rivers on the eastern side of Virginia and is a wealth of knowledge when it comes to these fisheries, so how could I say no to this?

I had to meet Mark at 7am at Yankee Point Marina so that meant an early wake up, and a long drive down I-64 in my Silverado, but you have to do what you have to do for an adventure!

The Corrotoman River is an unheralded, smallish and wide inlet that meets the Rap-

pahannock River upstream from the State Rt. 3 Robert E. Norris Bridge on what is called the Northern Neck of Virginia. The Corrotoman splits in two prongs approximately 3.5 miles from the mouth of the river, with the Eastern Branch headwaters being near the village of Lively and the Western Branch headwaters being near the Town of Kilmarnock.

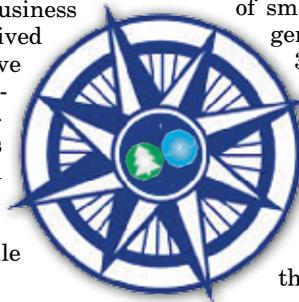
Oysters were once big business in this area until disease arrived and killed most. Extensive experimentation of disease-resistant strains and management has restored this tasty bay resident. You will probably note waterman harvesting or see other signs of oyster beds while fishing the Corrotoman.

Anticipation for the day was high as I pulled in the marina and we launched my aluminum Triton into the calm water. Mark gave me a break down on what we would be focusing on, and I had come prepared with some baits he had suggested.

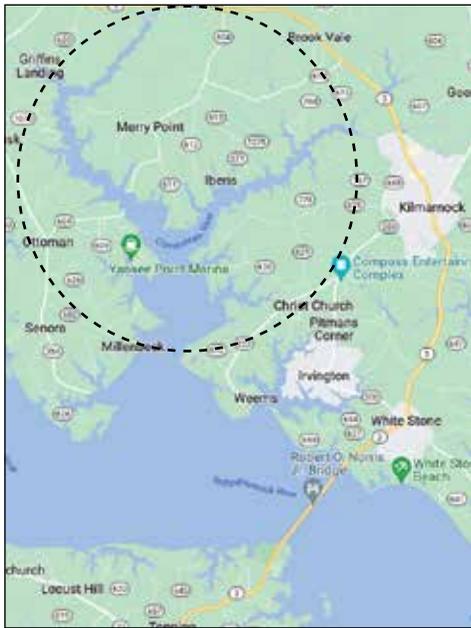
He advised what we would be focusing on is contour breaks in the river and for baits he keeps it really simple. Some type of smaller swimbait on a jig head. I generally prefer to throw a 2.8 or 3.3 Keteich, and I believe Mark

was using some type of small Z-Man swimbait in the same general sizes.

We pulled up on the first area Mark wanted to try and it didn't take long until I was hooked up on my first redfish of the day. After a respectable battle



“Anticipation for the day was high as I pulled into the marina and we launched my aluminum Triton into the calm water.”



Corrottoman River and author with Corrottoman speckled trout and redfish.

I had the fish boatside and I couldn't help but admire the sun reflecting off it's beautiful red scales. It had multiple black dots that are the trademark of the redfish.

Mark really put on a clinic, putting in multiple redfish, speckled trout and stripers in the boat. It is such a pleasure sharing a boat with somebody who has spent the time dedicated to his craft as Mark has and his

willingness to share ideas is much appreciated.

We worked several other areas and they all produced fish, and I continued to pick up redfish, stripers and even my first lizard fish - a very odd-looking fish for sure.

We moved to another area that Mark had said produced well earlier in the week and this is where we put a cherry on the day.

Mark had expected the fish to be on the

break closer to the shore, but I was able to see the fish were actually relating more to the open water off the bank with my Garmin Livescope.

I could see several bigger fish in front of me, and was able to present my swimbait to them with ease using the forward-facing, realtime Livescope.

I popped the swimbait over the biggest mark and he instantly inhaled the bait. I knew this was a better-size fish and after a quick net job by Mark. I had my first gator trout in the boat!

We were able to work the area and picked up several other nice trout, and I was able to show Mark some new tricks, which made the day that much more enjoyable.

We finished the outing off fishing some dock pilings closer to the ramp, and we picked up several more nice stripers.

On the long drive back to Charlottesville I was able to reflect on the days adventure. It is always so much fun stepping out of your comfort zone, trying new things, and meeting new people. It's one of my favorite things about this activity we all love so much.

If you have any suggestions on a new adventures I would love to hear your suggestions or see pictures at my Instagram @PsuAaron.



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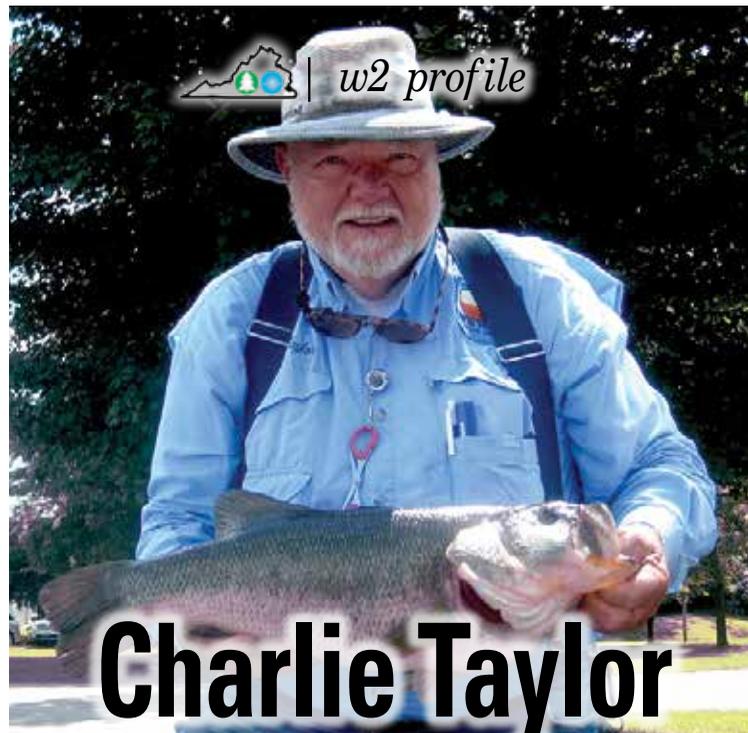
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w2 profile

Charlie Taylor

New Horizon Angler

BY C.C. MCCOTTER

This month's W2 Profile features our most senior subject yet. Charles (Charlie) Taylor at 84, remains very actively involved in a fishing club he and friends pioneered many years ago intended to serve beginning anglers. Taylor is a lifelong angler that has seen many innovations in his time. We caught up with him recently to bring you his W2 Profile.

Fishing came to Taylor later than most but when he started at age 40 he never looked back.

"I was a supervisor over all 7-11 stores in Herndon, Reston and Sterling, requiring me to visit each store daily to determine the operation and adherence to policy. While visiting the Sterling Park store one morning, the manager, Rufus Via, told me that I was way too stressed out, needed a hobby and should take up fishing. I was 40 years old and had never had a fishing rod in my hand. I told him that I did not have time for a hobby as I had to work every day. He in-

formed me that anytime I was available, he would take me fishing. I somehow found myself scheduled off on Memorial Day weekend and asked him if the offer still held. He said yes, and I fished with him on one of the many, many trips over the years. He started me off crappie fishing on Broad Run, graduated to tidal creeks off the Potomac River and saltwater fishing on the Chesapeake Bay.

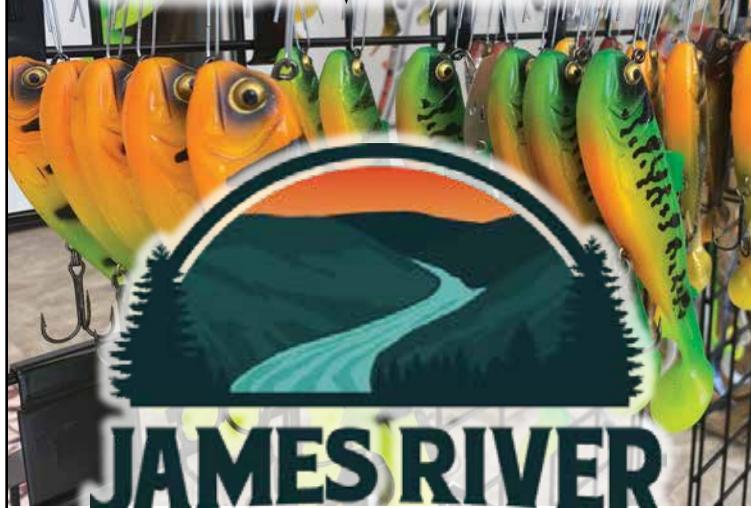
Taylor then began fishing with the Northern Virginia Bassmasters and Occoquan Bassmasters. Next, he bought boats and started guiding on both the upper and tidal Potomac River. Due to his love of brown bass he joined with Dr. Ken Ward and formed the Potomac River Smallmouth Club and subsequently, Lots-A-Luck Bassmasters in Herndon. He eventually left that club and fished a couple of years with Red-Eye Bassmasters in Vienna. Along the way he did lots of saltwater fishing on Chesapeake Bay during the heyday of the Baltimore bluefish, striped bass and grey trout peaks.

At some point, Taylor knew

"When we started the club, we also decided that we had to give back to the community and get youth involved with fishing."

- Charlie Taylor, New Horizon Bass Anglers

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Charlie Taylor

some of the more satisfying moments of his involvement with fishing over the years.

"I loved my involvement with guiding. While guiding the outdoor writer for a midwestern newspaper, he informed me that my storytelling would make me a good outdoor writer and

there had to be more for him than tournament fishing.

"Lots-A-Luck Bassmasters was an attempt to form a club that featured sharing of information, fun and camaraderie. This was quickly put to rest via the ballot box. The first item on their agenda was to change the format of the club back to competition and pricing new anglers out of fishing, leading to my leaving the club."

After being assured that Red-Eye B/M was different, Taylor joined and fished with them for a year before realizing that they were exactly the same.

"I decided to quit all clubs and just guide and pleasure fish."

Three friends then approached Taylor and asked him to assist them in forming a new club.

"I agreed to assist them but assured them that I would not be a part of the club."

After much back and forth, the friends came up with the idea of a club governed by a Board of Directors who had ultimate authority over all decisions regarding direction of such club. The club was formed with By-Laws and Tournament Rules that promoted fun, education and camaraderie. The membership fee was set at \$35 per year and tournaments fees were set at \$10 per tournament. Only 50% of the tournament fees were returned as prize money, eliminating the desire for cheating and making members more likely to help educate their partners.

One of the requirements of membership was that all members had to share information with the group at weigh-in as to what lures, techniques and patterns led to their tournament catch.

We asked Taylor to note

talked with me over a number of months about starting out as an outdoor writer. I subsequently started writing about fishing and boating for the 17 Times community newspapers.

"As space got tight and readers wanted fishing reports, my column changed to a Virginia Fishing Report, covering all major public bodies of water throughout Virginia and saltwater reports covering the Chesapeake Bay and nearby Atlantic Ocean. This report continued for over 40 years before my having to discontinue the report due to lack of available honest, responsible and reliable information."

Taylor told W2 the other highlight of his fishing life was the formation of New Horizon Bass Anglers Youth Foundation.

"When we started the club, we also decided that we had to give back to the community and get youth involved with fishing. To this end, we formed a Youth Foundation and proceeded to hold a Kid's Fishing Derby each year, open to all kids under age 16, at no charge."

"We held our first derby on the Virginia Free Fishing Day in June with 38 kids attending. We quickly learned that school sports were still going on at that time, keeping a lot of kids from attending. The following year, 1992, we decided to add an additional derby in July to capture the kids who were unable to attend the June derby. With the exception of 2020, we have held two derbies at Lake Fairfax Park in Reston each year since. We now plan for 150-325 kids at each event, still free for all.

| continued on page 41

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 **Buck Tales** from page 16

and countless hours of hunting this deer had paid off.

"I couldn't be happier that my father killed his buck of a lifetime that had 14 points, tipping the scale at 225 pounds and measuring 165 3/8 Boone & Crocket.

Kelly Charbono's Old Grey Face

John Hoffmeyer had been watching a nice buck his crew nicknamed Old Grey Face all summer on his family farm along Tommahund Creek on the Chickahominy. Trail camera pics revealed a solid eight pointer with a wide spread. By October 5 though, Hoffmeyer's cameras lost the swamp buck. The accomplished hunter was in the woods for 35 days of bow and the first week of muzzleloader season but couldn't catch a glimpse of the buck during the day.

"My brother-in-law, Kelly, got him November 12. He was driving along the farm driveway and the buck was chasing does around a nearby pond. Kelly went home, grabbed his muzzleloader and snuck up to the pond. The does jumped up out of some weeds and the buck stood up about 70 yards away. Kelly shot him freehanded from the ground."

Hoffmeyer told W2 they had pics of the buck for three years as an eight-pointer and this season he had added a lot of mass to the rack and weighed in at 200 pounds.

Klimtzak Buck

Tom Klimtzak enjoys spending time in the woods and on the water with this 16-year-old son, Aiden. While they live in Spotsylvania, then hunt a property in Culpeper County and were doing so November 6 around 7 am when Aiden dropped his first nice buck – a fine eight pointer.

They were hunting out of an elevated box blind and Aiden was using a Thompson Center Triumph 50 cal. blackpowder rifle with 100 grains of 777 powder and a 240 grain Traditions Smackdown sabot.



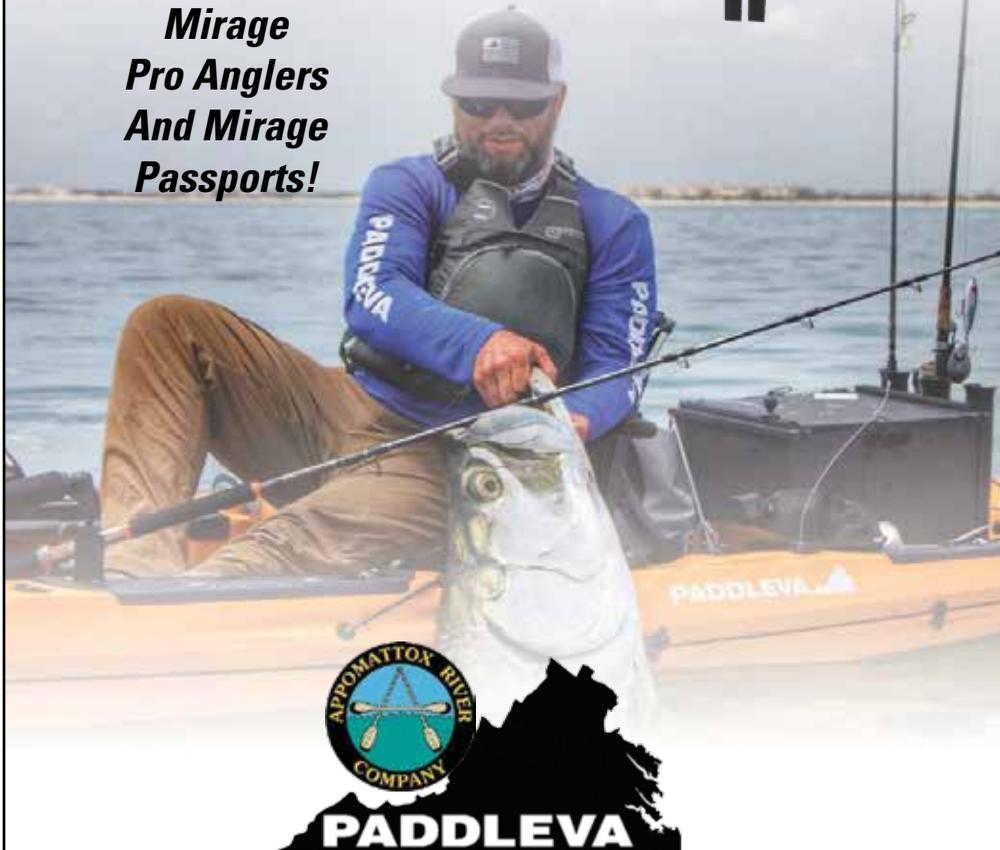
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Nathan Sullivan

This was the first Sunday of muzzleloader season and a rainy morning. They were hunting an oak flat with some cedar thickets intertwined.

“Around 6:45 Aiden spotted a deer coming through the thicket to our left. It ended up being a doe. He then caught a glimpse of a deer about 50 yards behind her. That was Aiden’s buck. It took roughly 10 minutes for the buck to follow where the doe walked. Once he gave Aiden a clear shot he took it. I watched the whole event unfold. The shot was roughly 45 yards. The buck traveled 125 and was piled up. There wasn’t any blood trail. We saw him standing about 100 yards away after the shot. After looking at the shot site and found no sign, we walked over to the last place we saw him. He was laying 25 yards from there. Aiden is becoming a great hunter and outdoorsman. I couldn’t be a prouder Dad.”

Sullivan’s Spotsy Special

Noted tournament angler Nathan Sullivan also enjoys the thrill of the hunt and was set up on a Caroline County ridge top with plenty of dead falls and a briar thicket when his deer honey hole paid off again. He employed the use of a Traditions LT Pursuit 50 cal. blackpowder rifle and a Primos doe in estrus call to attract the attention of his big buck.

“This buck came sneaking off the ridge behind me, checking the scent and the sound he heard. As I looked carefully, I noticed he had something in his rack. I was committed to the shot when he stopped around 75 yards then came straight at me. He turned at 27 yards and I took the shot.”

Sullivan told W2 the 120-pound, eight-point buck bolted straight back up the ridge and fell behind a large cherry tree. Close inspection revealed a branch stuck in the rack. Sullivan wanted to thank the late Tunney Sullivan for showing him the spot where he has hunted for years and has harvested a number of bucks. 🍀🍀

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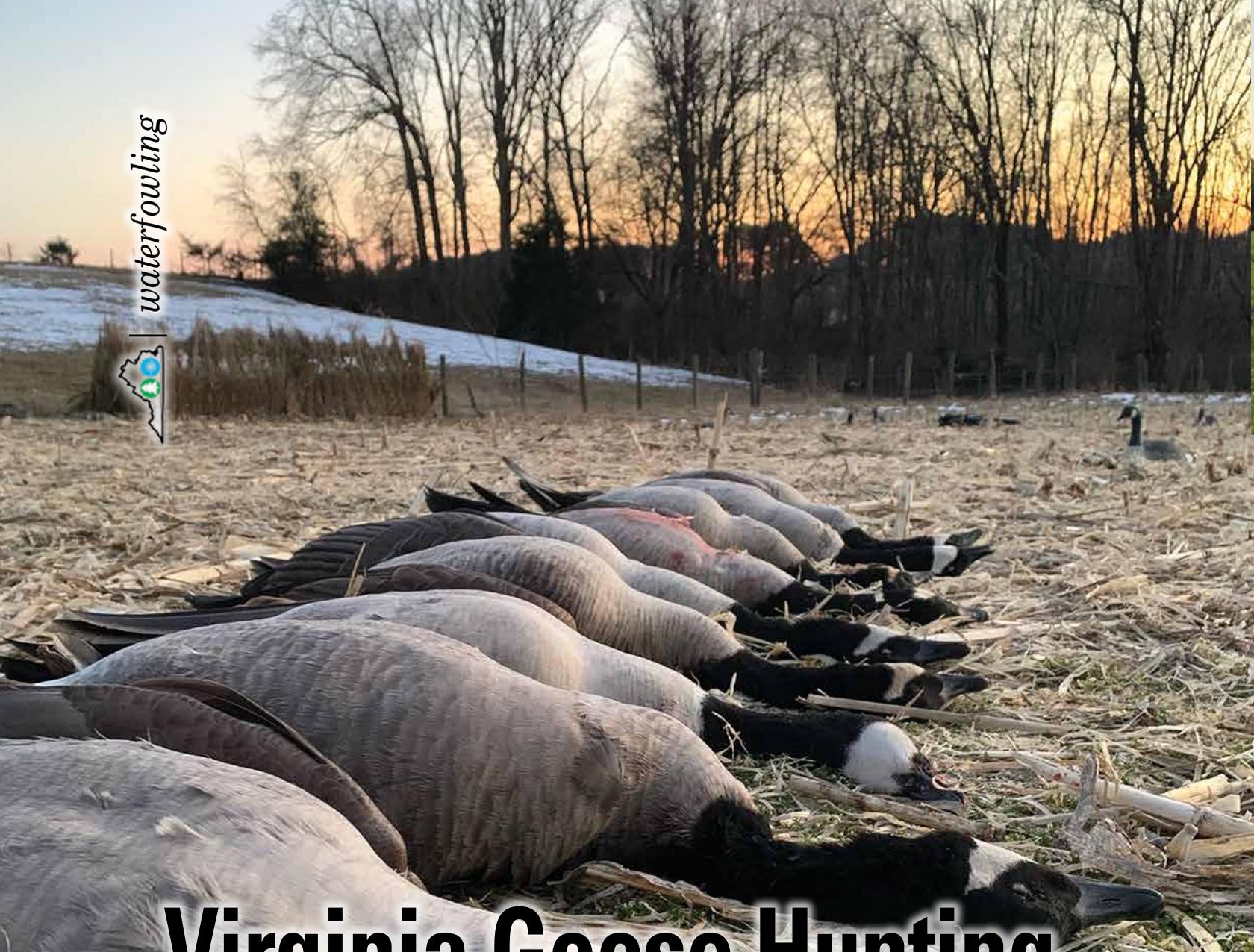
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Virginia Goose Hunting

Trafficking And On The X

BY TRAVIS STAUCH

Ask any waterfowl hunter what their dream bird would be, and you'll get answers ranging from pintails to harleys to hybrids. Most hunters don't think twice about a common goose as their trophy bird. Here in Virginia, the Canada goose is always a prize bird.

The Old Dominion is fortunate to house not only migrating geese, but an abundance of resident geese. Thanks to our neighboring state of Maryland, the Chesapeake Bay watershed attracts thousands of migraters every year.

Although the goose population has been on a slight decline in the past decade, numbers have not decreased low enough to close the September season like in 1995. Virginians are lucky enough to have the agriculture of the Piedmont and tidewater regions to feed these visiting birds, keeping hunting season open.

Recent studies have shown a below average amount of geese in Virginia, causing regulations to alter. What was once a 50-day season has now become a 30-day season where the daily bag limit ranges from a single goose a man in the Atlantic Flyway to three geese a

man in the Southern James Bay region.

These declining numbers are mainly due to the unfavorable weather conditions in their nesting grounds of Canada. This causes less breeding pairs and a delayed migration. Because we can't control Mother Nature, Virginia makes up for it in having an abundance of grain fields for easy meals for both resident and migrating geese.

But finding them is only half the battle. The other half is tricking them into getting within 25 yards of your shotgun. We do this with using the right type and number of decoys, as well as knowing how to blow a goose call.

"The Old Dominion is fortunate to house not only migrating geese, but an abundance of resident geese."



Left - author with a 20-inch Maury River dinkie. Middle - Maury River rock bass

There are two types of hunting when targeting geese: 1) trafficking and 2) being “on the X.”

Trafficking birds means using hundreds of decoys, including socks, silhouettes and full

bodies. A trafficked spread is used to attract huge groups of migrating birds, whereas an “on the X” spread is usually much smaller with a few dozen full bodied and shell decoys to target compact groups of geese.

“At just 15 years old, Alden has held the junior goose calling championship twice and won countless other competitions.”



Alden Pugh with the results of goose hunt he guided..

Along with the type of decoy set-up you’re using, a goose caller must also adapt to the type of calling in order to attract the birds.

I spoke to native Virginian and Junior Champion duck and goose caller, Alden Pugh about how he handles his hunts. At just 15 years old, Alden has held the junior goose calling championship twice and won countless other competitions. He’s had his fair share of limiting out on geese thanks to his rig and calling talents.

When hunting “on the X,” Alden’s typical call is cutting down the pressure and grabbing their attention with a few loud notes.

As the birds show interest, he speeds up his cadence and turns the birds back on a tight line.

If the geese are circling above the decoys, he calls at them slowly and less frequently.

Calling at geese “on the X,” is almost like having a conversation with them, going back and forth, until they finally decide to land in the hole.

This is the complete opposite when trafficking geese. From the moment you first see a goose to the shot call,

| continued on page 30

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you should be ripping on a goose call.

Alden told me he mimics 80% of his stage routine on these hunts. These birds need loud, fast, and constant “talking to” to get them to even look at your decoys. As they get closer, you can back off the calling a little bit, mainly to catch your breath, but don’t be afraid to start right back up, just as aggressive as the first note.

Don’t fret if you don’t know



Alden Pugh.

how to use a goose call. The waterfowl community, specifically the calling industry, is very welcoming to beginners. As a champion caller myself, I love teaching and helping novice hunters.

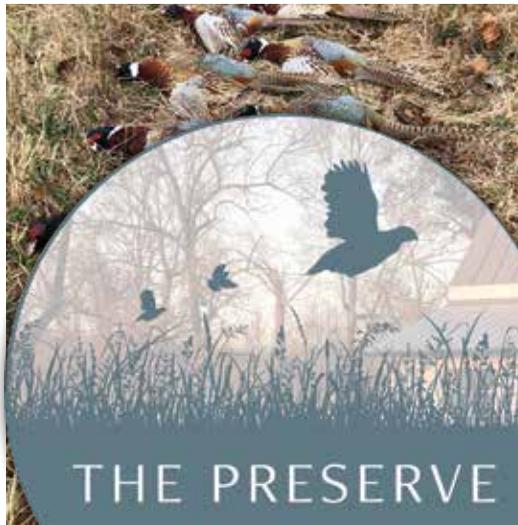
You can also attend hunting shows like the Green Top Outdoor Expo or Virginia Sportsman Show and learn calling techniques from experts during

Duck Numbers

In the traditional survey area, the total duck population estimate (excluding scoters, eiders, long-tailed ducks, mergansers and wood ducks) was 34.2 ± 0.6 million birds. This estimate was 12% below the 2019 estimate of 38.9 ± 0.7 million, which was the last year a survey was conducted and 4% below the long-term average (1955–2019). Estimated mallard abundance was 7.2 ± 0.2 million, which was 23% below the 2019 estimate of 9.4 ± 0.3 million and 9% below the long-term average of 7.9 ± 0.04 million. In the traditional survey area the 2022 estimate for blue-winged teal was 19% above the 2019 estimate and 27% above the long-term average of 5.1 ± 0.04 million. Estimated abundance of gadwall was 18% below the 2019 estimate and 30% above the long-term average of 2.0 ± 0.2 million. The 2022 northern shoveler estimate of 3.0 ± 0.2 million was 17% below the 2019 estimate of 3.6 ± 0.2 million and 15% above the long-term average of 2.6 ± 0.02 million. The estimated abundance of green-winged teal was 2.2 ± 0.2 million, which was 32% below the 2019 estimate of 3.2 ± 0.2 million and similar to the long-term average, while the canvasback estimate of 0.6 ± 0.05 million was similar to the 2019 estimate and the long-term average. Estimated abundance of redheads was 35% higher than the 2019 estimate and 36% higher than the long-term average of 0.7 ± 0.01 million.



Author Travis Stauch is USCG licensed waterfowl and bowfishing guide that spends many days on the tidal Potomac River. He is a member of the Woods & Waters Pro Team. You can reach him via email at ramrodbowfishing@mail.com.



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The Preserve at Dundee





what's new?

State Record Saugeye Certified

The first Virginia state record saugeye has been recorded. On September 23, Michael Miller from Nathalie, Virginia, landed a six-pound saugeye from the Saunton River. Miller caught the trophy-sized fish with spinning tackle using a crank-bait. The fish measured 26



Michael Miller's record saugeye.

¼ inches with a girth of 14 inches and was officially weighed at Bobcat's Bait and Tackle in Clarkesville, Virginia.

After biologist verification and review by the State Record Committee, Miller's catch was certified and is recognized as the current Virginia state record saugeye.

This is the first entry and certified record for saugeye since the hybrid species was added to the State Record and Trophy Fish Programs in 2020.

In other record-setting news, two more state records have been certified.

Josh Bailey, from Waldorf, Maryland, arrowed an almost 69-pound blue catfish from the Rappahan-

nock River. The fish measured 3'11" and had a girth of 35 ¼in.

After a DWR biologist and the State Record Committee verified and reviewed the fish, Mr. Bailey's catch was certified and was recognized as the current Virginia archery state record blue catfish. The previous record was held by Jason Emmel with a 66.5-pound blue catfish captured earlier this year from the Pamunkey River.

Richard Hayden, Jr., from Bracey, Virginia, arrowed a 48-pound flathead catfish from Belmont Bay. The fish measured 3'11" and had a girth of 28.5in.

After a DWR biologist and the State Record Committee verified and reviewed the fish, Mr. Hayden's catch was certified and was recognized as the current Virginia archery state record flathead catfish. The previous record was held by David Raines with a 44.8-pound flathead catfish captured in 2020; also from Belmont Bay. PP

Conservation Offers Nab Duck Poachers

During the course of the 2021 early duck season, Virginia Conservation Police Sergeant Rich Goszka and Master Officer Mark Sanitra attempted to locate an excessive amount of shots in Cedar Run Creek between Fauquier and Prince William Counties but did not find the source.



On October 7, 2022, the officers again heard an excessive amount of shooting and, after investigation, located the hunting area. Upon inspection of the hunting area, the officers located a water impoundment adjacent to the creek with a blind and a cell trail camera focused on corn placed in front of it. Another blind was located on a sandbar in the creek and another cell trail camera focused on corn in the creek. The officers located numerous empty shell casings, but the group had left the area.

During the early morning hours of October 8, 2022, Sgt. Goszka, Master Officer Mark Sanitra, and Officer First Class Roger Palmisano navigated to the remote area and began their illegal hunt. At 7:30 a.m., and after 21 shots were fired, the officers contacted the group. The group was found to have killed seven wood ducks and two that could not be recovered. Each member of the group knew the area was baited. Further investigation revealed that on Oct. 7, 2022, the same group hunted the baited area, killing 14 wood ducks.

All four subjects were charged with two counts of hunting a baited area and one subject was charged with exceeding their limit. MK

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winged wisdom



Get More Birds In Your Bag

BY KATE AHNSTROM

The cold breezes chill your face as you walk familiar paths. The moody, gray winter skies set up perfect conditions for shooting, taking away everyone's favorite excuse for missing, "the sun was right in my eyes at the trigger pull!" The dogs are working on yet another point but, this time they would love for you to actually give them the chance to get feathers in their mouths. Often, I tell students that it is perfectly fine to get excited and sometimes whiff a shot. Hell, if you don't get excited in this sport, then why are you doing it?! It is far more exciting to get that retrieve and with a few easy to implement strategies into your shooting routine, that is absolutely possible. This month, we look closer at gun mount on the flush and how you should be swinging on the bird.

One thing that must be set straight, that I dread hearing from a lifelong hunter, is that when hunting, you never know where the bird is going, and that clay shooting isn't realistic for real hunters. Hmmm. Well, every clay out there can easily mimic some sort of bird flight. And, for those that claim they never know where the bird is going, well you need to read your dogs. Every time Kai or Lacy Blues or Kimber or any of the dogs that we use in hunts hits a point, we have a very

sound idea of where that bird is located. The angle of the dog's head will tell you. The direction and speed of the wind will also let you know if you should expect the bird to turn on the rise to get the wind at its back or if it will flush straight ahead.

How To Set Up For The Flush

As you approach the dog, you should have your gun just off your side and the buttstock nestled into the crook of your elbow. This will allow you to quickly and smoothly get your gun up without interference from your vest or other clothing. If you are flushing the bird, you will appreciate being able to see under the gun and your arms with this slightly off-set position. The muzzle must be in your line of sight so that when the bird does flush, you will be able to track it smoothly with minimal muzzle movement, allowing you to insert directly onto the bird. If your muzzle is too high, you will spend too much time dipping and digging trying to get the gun into position. Putting the muzzle low puts the dogs in jeopardy and again causes poor muzzle management.

Thrill Of The Flush

As you move in front of the dogs, your muzzle in your line of sight and stock just off your side, use your off-side foot to push around in the cover. A

right-side shooter will use their left foot for this work and vice versa. The birds know how to jump up when you are in mid-step or have the wrong foot forward. Everything we do should have a forward motion. As the bird flushes, you want the off-side foot planted just ahead so that you may lean forward into the shot allowing your cheek to mount the stock first and then settle into your shoulder. Your visual acuity of your target will be far clearer, and the sight picture of the necessary bird/barrel relationship will be almost instantaneous.

Covey Calculations

Implementing the above fundamentals will allow you to knock down more than a single bird. You will find that you have an abundance of time by starting your swing onto the bird at the first recognition of flush. Should you have the fortune of a covey, pick a single bird and stick with it until it drops. This is not only good sportsmanship but, you're already locked into that sight picture and if a second shot is needed, it is far easier to make a tiny correction than to swing onto a whole different bird. The eyes are the fastest muscle in the body, and you should be working them in the field. When you drop the first bird, allow the gun to come off your face just a bit and use your eyes to softly scan for a second bird. Again, allow the gun to move smoothly into the bird and acquire the correct sight picture. If you need to take a moment to reload, keep your eyes up! This should be practiced so you don't fumble with your gun and you're able to either mark a downed bird or track escapees, so you know where to head for the next point.

This holiday season, take a friend or family member into the hunt field and share the excitement of the hunt. From all of us here at Virginia Shooting Sports, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Kristen Murray Photography

Kate Ahnstrom, owner of Virginia Shooting Sports is a certified, professional instructor of the Paragon School of Sporting, pro staff Syren/Caesar Guerini, resident pro Orapax Hunting Preserve, Artemis ambassador for Virginia and field staff member of the Sisterhood of the Outdoors. Her tireless dedication to her students' success is obvious in each and every lesson.

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The Evolution Of Professional Bass Fishing

Professional bass fishing is extremely difficult to follow, frustrating existing fans and turning off prospective followers. Broadcasts are average when compared to other major sports, leaving lifelong fans yearning for Bob Cobb on Saturday mornings making the Bassmasters come alive.

FLW had a good run. This was a family-oriented league with grass roots pros and a few of the legends and FLW's famous million-dollar pay out. B.A.S.S. and FLW were at odds, but both generated large turnouts. But it was FLW that backed down when a conflict with the Bassmaster Classic schedule occurred.

When sports leader ESPN purchased B.A.S.S., they started with a bang, wall-to-wall Bass Center. The Classic was moved from late summer, which was a huge fan success, to winter to avoid conflicts with major sports. Professional bass fishing had arrived.

A couple of decades later and the Classic remains in February after a big gap in top level tournament activity over the winter, prohibiting the crown jewel of bass fishing from taking place above the Mason Dixon line. What used to be billed as an opportunity for a pro to earn a million dollars, although the top Classic prize was \$300,000,

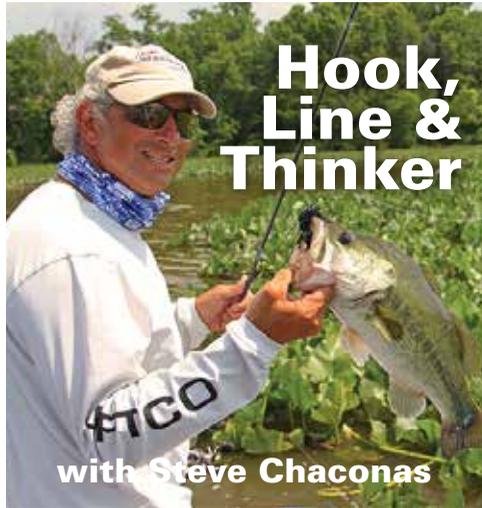
has been all but discarded as the winner picks up their check and then heads into the new season. Classic Champ Woo Daves was one of the last winners who capitalized on his win with a one-year victory lap.

Pro fishing trails became more expensive, and payouts didn't keep pace. A group of well-backed anglers created Major League Fishing. MLF was supposed to be the anglers trail, with pros

having a say in rules and regulations, even fishing destinations. They came on with the promise of television exposure to grow the sport, good news for advertisers. While there are more opportunities for sponsors, the pool is diluted, and companies must align with the right mix of anglers to achieve coverage. The pie is still spent, but angler slices are smaller.

Just when you thought it wouldn't get any worse, B.A.S.S. now requires Opens anglers to fish the entire nine-event series to qualify for the Elites. Committing to fishing all events, anglers must come up with sponsors or have mommy-daddy money to compete. Not to mention taking time off to hit the road along with those expenses.

Now MLF is muddying the water even more. The most difficult trail to follow is



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now joining the status quo by fishing five fish tournaments with immediate release.

While this appears to be a return to normalcy, it was their CWR example that set fisheries managers into motion to restrict catch and keep events, guiding tournament directors to switch to a catch weigh and release format. Oh, and MLF will still have catch as-many-as-you-can events.

Even TV Guide couldn't follow the sport now. Fans will pick a favorite angler and follow them. While tournaments will continue, touring pros need sponsors and this support isn't growing at the same pace as entry fees, travel, and fuel expenses. 🟢🟢



Author Capt. Steve Chaconas is Potomac bass fishing guide & freelance writer. Potomac River reports: nationalbass.com. Book trips/purchase gift certificates: info@NationalBass.com.

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Land For Sale

#6608-#66748-1.78±Acres-\$179,900.00 Enjoy your country club get away! This elegant manufactured home sits back off the road and is surrounded by wide open views and a plentiful yard for family recreation. This home has residential drywall throughout and over 2,100 square feet under a brand new roof! The see through fireplace makes for a great family gathering spot in either the living room or den! The large primary bedroom is served by a massive walk-in closet as well as a full bathroom with a shower and soaker tub. At the other end of the house are two bedrooms, an office, a full bath and a laundry room with a utility sink. A large rear deck overlooks the private pool and the shop that has electricity run to it. Located in Mecklenburg County, VA centrally located between Richmond, VA and Raleigh, NC. Buggs Island Lake, aka John H Kerr Reservoir. *Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011*

#6607-#66750-0.75±Acres-\$425,000. Beautiful 1620 sq. ft. manufactured home 3 bedrooms and 2 full baths on Buggs Island lake. Large aluminum dock in place with roof and aluminum walkway, Beautiful view of the lake from a large screened in deck. Would make a great full time residence or a wonderful lake getaway. All appliances and furniture transfer. This lake is living at its best on Grassy Creek. *Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011*

#6606-#66747-3.26±Acres-\$39,000.00 Welcome to country living amongst the towering oaks and peaceful sounds of nature. The property is backed by acres of vacant land, and is an ideal building site where wildlife abound. In just minutes you will be at Kerr Lake and the nearest fishing hole. Within 10 mins you can be at the lakeside town of Clarksville where you will find delicious dining options, a variety of shopping, doctors offices, boat ramps, recreation, and entertainment. Boydton is within 20 mins. South Boston & South Hill are within 30 mins. This property was percertested in 2007 for a 3BR conventional septic system. This is a beautiful piece of property! *Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011*

#6605-#2004174-0.24±Acres-\$485,000.00 Duplex and separate small office building on .24-ac in prime downtown Culpeper, VA is being offer for sale. The 2,444 square foot residential building contains two units, each units has two bedrooms, one bath, kitchen and living room with gas fireplace. The 496-square foot office building has rooms for offices and a full bath with off street parking. 90 min to Washington D.C., 60 min to Dulles Airport, 30 min to Fredericksburg and 30 min to Charlottesville. *Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011*

#6604-66737-5.78±Acres-\$126,900.00 Welcome to the rhythm you have been seeking - 5.78 acres of country paradise located centrally between Clarksville, Chase City, and Boydton to give you a short drive in any direction for the daily essentials with the quiet you have been seeking. Located on Rocky Mount Road, you have a 3 bedroom, 2 bath home with a loop driveway sitting at the front of the property with a path running almost to the back corner. The home is 1,012 sq ft with a nice open floor plan offering good flow from the living room to the kitchen/dining area while connecting all bedrooms directly to the living room. With a front porch providing the main entrance to the home, you also have a second entrance directly into the laundry room to keep those dirty shoes at bay. With a mostly wooded tract, you have the added opportunity to hunt your own land. The rear of the property shows plenty of deer sign and mast production along the edges with oaks steadily dropping acorns and fresh rubs. Bring your dreams and find reality! *Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011*

#6602-#66735-3.41±Acres-\$34,500. Excellent building site on 3.41 acres and only 10 mins to the nearest boat launch on Kerr Lake. This beautiful piece of property has already had a perc test proving it to be an ideal homesite. The property has a mix of younger trees and a gentle roll making building a breeze. Are you longing for a slower pace? Can you hear the sounds of nature? The country is calling! But, will you be the first to answer? Only minutes to the lakeside town of Clarksville where you will find dining,

shopping and entertainment. Chase City is also a few minutes away with great food, shopping options and MacCallum More Museum & Gardens, the world's largest Microsoft data center in Boydton, VA is only 15 mins away, and the larger towns of South Boston and South Hill are approx. 30 minutes away where you will find big box stores, hospitals, larger selection of employment opportunities, dining and entertainment. Mecklenburg Co. is located between Richmond, VA & Raleigh, NC and boasts of its agriculture, industry and recreation opportunities. *Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011*

#6601-#66734-4.05±Acres-\$154,900. Welcome to this perfectly priced country rancher with 4 beautiful ac. on which to live and call home. Whether you're looking for a place to build a homestead, family retreat, first time home or a place to retire, this property is an excellent location. Maybe you're looking for a home where you can build a shop for a small business? You've found a great location to give that a try. The property is conveniently located between Clarksville and Chase City with Boydton just to the East, and larger towns within 30 mins. This 3 BR home is roomy with tons of potential to be brought up to the design styles of 2022, whether you love the farmhouse look or the mid-century modern. Located just mins to Kerr Lake and the lakeside town of Clarksville with dining and shops, 15 mins to Microsoft, 30 mins to South Boston or South Hill. *Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011*

#6526-#65393-84.5±Acres-\$249,500.00 For the recreational enthusiast, this property checks a plethora of boxes off of the wish list. 84.5 acres of secluded privacy convenient to amenities with space to breathe the fresh country air. The property offers a tremendous amount of timber value with planted pines throughout the majority of the property and trails to make access very easy after your successful harvest. Most of the perimeter is fenced as this was a fox pen a number of years ago. A small pond towards the rear of the property provides a sanctuary for your game and an excellent location for a food plot as every hunter needs a honey hole stand on their land. Deer and turkey signs are prevalent as you traverse the tract. If you are looking to build a home off the grid or tucked away, add another check to the list. *Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011*

#6485-#65225-2.97±Acres-\$22,995.00 Three acres of wooded land zoned AG for you to call home. Come enjoy country living in whatever type home you wish to own whether it be site built, modular, doublewide or singlewide. Have you been searching for a place that would allow you the freedom to have a micro farm? This little spot gives you the country feel but is only a few minutes to shopping, dining, and doctors. Within 30 minutes you are at hospitals and big box stores. If watersports and fishing are your fancy then Kerr Lake is just 20 mins away in lakeside Clarksville, VA. Come check out all Mecklenburg County has to offer near this ideal residential lot. *Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011*

#6525-#65389-320±Acres-\$1,649,000.00 Annie Oaks Farm is the dream property you have been searching for! When stepping foot on the farm you feel like you went back in time to a simpler life as the giant oaks shade the charming farmhouse with an enormous wrap around screened in porch overlooking the rolling pastures with the bison grazing in the distance. The home consists of a living room, a den, kitchen with dining area, utility room, 3 bathrooms, and 3 bedrooms. The view from the bedroom is breathtaking! A short walk from the house is the first of 2 ponds. The first pond has a dock with a screened in pavilion overlooking the pond. The second pond has a dock on it as well. Exceptional fishing available at both ponds. The farm is composed of over 320+/- acres, featuring approximately 75 acres of pasture, not just fenced, but fenced and cross fenced with upgrades for the bison, plus "bison built" pens and handling facilities! These pastures are rolling, well watered and have established grasslands for year round grassing. The views from these pastures are dramatic! *Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011*

#6600-#66728-4.05±Acres-\$190,000. Attention developers, investors, and businesses looking to relocate - Take a look at this 4.05 acre tract located just outside of town on Noblin Farm Road with excellent frontage on both Noblin Farm Road and Sawmill Road. The land lays well for building and is currently zoned Agricultural with the potential to change if needed. With several businesses located adjacent to this tract, you are investing in a growing segment of Clarksville while being out of downtown. The level lot offers plenty of space for a warehouse, shop, storage facility, or retail location while having additional room for parking. Take the initiative and invest in yourself or create a stream of passive income from rental opportunities. *Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011*

#6595-#66719-6.52±Acres-\$795,000. Have you ever wondered what if? Well, here is the answer to that question as it pertains to your Kerr Lake adventure. Whether you are looking to build your dream home overlooking the lake, setting up a family camping complex or thinking of developing commercially, Oconeechee Ridge hits the spot with over 2,000 feet of lake frontage and multiple dock permits. You have the ability to launch your boat, get gas, and ski on clean water all within a couple hundred yards of your dock locations. The 6.52 acres is broken into two parcels should you wish to build multiple homes along the cove looking across the Ferry Hill section of the lake. Well and septic in place. Two entrances off of Highway 58 provide good access to the property. Could make a tremendous site for condos overlooking the lake with public water and sewer a possibility also. *Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011*

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CHICKAHOMINY

Lake & River

For a map of the Chickahominy River or Lake visit woodsandwatersmagazine.com

Don't think for a minute the fishing is over for the winter in the Chickahominy region. All those 8-10 pound largemouth bass don't vaporize. No, what happens is that they head for overwintering areas where they can find schooled baitfish and continue to feed, albeit less frequently, all winter long.

Some traditional areas to look for winter bass on the tidal Chickahominy River include the backs of lower river creeks like Morris, Tomahund, Gordon's, Shipwreck and Yarmouth. Largemouth bass will school by the dozens in deeper creek bends with wood. You can target them with a three-inch swimbait on a 1/4-oz. jighead or a similar bait on a drop shot rig.

In the upper Chickahominy, you'll want to target the region from the first big bend up from Riverside Camp right up to Walker's Dam. In this region, savvy anglers know hundreds of fish school in the deep channel bends. Don't be afraid to fish 18' of water with blade baits like a Riverside Ripper or Crazy Blade. Many species are harbored in this deep water including largemouth bass, crappie, yellow perch and catfish.

Crappie will school around Walker's Dam this month, too. Be careful to observe safe fishing practices around this structure. Crappie love the concrete and wood structure in the water here where the river is separated from the lake.

Up on the lake, guide Art Conway knows December can be a very good month to catch bass and crappie. For the panfish, he'll target deep wood with minnows and ultra-light jigs with his clients in the lower section of this lake that has produced another bumper crop of big bass this year.

When you are on the middle river, use Riverside Camp & Marina's facilities, which include a fine boat ramp and piers, tackle



Another Chickahominy Lake lunger. This one weighed 7.1 pounds on the scales at **Ed Allen's Boats & Bait**.

shop and campground with rental cabins. On the upper river, Rockahock Campground (and cottages) is fishing headquarters.

Up on the lake, Ed Allen's Boats & Bait is fishing headquarters on the lower end of the lake. Here you'll find a boat ramp, jon boat rentals, minnows, tackle shop, restaurant, fishing pier and the home of the ongoing Ed Allen's Winter Series.

Another Chickahominy Lake launching option is Eagle's Landing. Located a couple miles

above Walker's Dam, Eagles Landing offers a concrete ramp, rental boats, tackle shop and live bait.

In nearby Toano, a bit down Rt. 60, there's a great gun shop and an awesome tackle shop.

Toano General Gun Store is area headquarters for hunters and firearms enthusiasts. Inside you'll find everything from long guns to handguns, accessories to ammunition. You can also pick up a gun you've ordered online from the shop.

Visit Fishing Pro Tech this month and you won't be disappointed. Lin Bell has a huge supply of special run colored ZOOM baits, Megabass Magdrafts and suspending baits, the new CAST Prodigy swimbaits and more. He's also preparing for another incredible show both at the Richmond Fishing Expo held January 20-22.

Tomahund Marine is the area headquarters for marine resupply, repairs and winterization. They also sell War Eagle and Beavertail boats, so if you are looking for a duck and fishing boat, perfect for hunting and fishing the marshes of the Chickahominy and James River, they have a limited number in stock and they sell very fast!

Conveniently located on the way to West Point you'll find the Surf & Turf Outdoors shop. It's full of great saltwater gear used for fishing the Pamunkey and Mattaponi Rivers that meet in West Point to form the York. Striper is what everyone is after now, so stop in and see what they are biting on! *C.C. McCotter*



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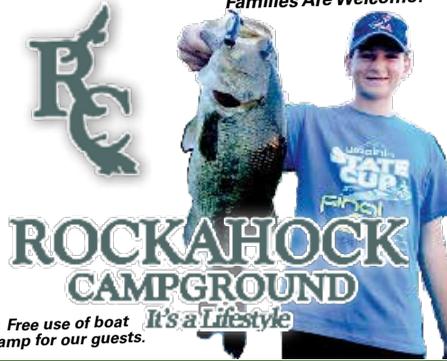
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CHICK/JAMES TIDE/MOON CHART

	HIGH	LOW		HIGH	LOW		HIGH	LOW		HIGH	LOW
1	3:41am	9:55am	10	10:45am	4:19am	19	5:37am	----	28	1:12am	7:23am
	4:11pm	10:23pm		11:03pm	5:13pm		5:54pm	12:03pm		1:42pm	7:59pm
2	4:45am	11:02am	11	11:23am	4:59am	20	6:31am	12:01am	29	2:13am	8:27am
	5:11pm	11:17pm		11:43pm	5:53pm		6:50pm	12:59pm		2:40pm	8:53pm
3	5:43am	----	12	----	5:40am	21	7:25am	12:53am	30	3:15am	9:34am
	6:07pm	12:03pm		12:02pm	6:33pm		7:44pm	1:53pm		3:40pm	9:48pm
4	6:36am	12:07am	13	12:25am	6:23am	22	8:18am	1:46am	31	4:17am	10:39am
	6:58pm	12:58pm		12:42pm	7:14pm		8:37pm	2:46pm		4:40pm	10:42pm
	7:23am	12:53am	14	1:10am	7:10am	NE 23	9:11am	2:39am	Jan. Tides		
	7:44pm	1:47pm		1:25pm	7:56pm			9:30pm	3:38pm	1	5:13am
6	8:07am	1:38am	15	1:58am	8:03am	24	10:03am	3:32am		5:34pm	11:30pm
	8:27pm	2:32pm		2:12pm	8:41pm		10:23pm	4:29pm	2	6:08am	----
7	8:49am	2:20am	16	2:51am	9:01am	25	10:57am	4:27am		6:27pm	12:35pm
	9:07pm	3:14pm		3:04pm	9:29pm		11:17pm	5:21pm			
8	9:29am	3:00am	17	3:46am	10:02am	26	11:50am	5:23am			
	9:46pm	3:55pm		4:00pm	10:18pm		----	6:13pm			
9	10:07am	3:40am	18	4:41am	11:04am	27	12:14am	6:21am			
	10:25pm	4:34pm		4:57pm	11:09pm		12:45pm	7:05pm			

James River All corrections taken from Newport News Chickahominy
 -0:12 Jordan Point +1:22 Richmond Deepwater Terminal +3:45 Ferry Point +4:55 Mt. Airy
 +1:23 Petersburg +1:57 Richmond City Locks +4:25 Wright Island +5:20 Lanexa

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REGIONAL FOCUS

Richmond

Tidal James River Region

For a map of the James River visit woodsandwatersmagazine.com

This January will mark the return of the Richmond Fishing Expo at the State Fairgrounds in Doswell, January 20-22. The Gray family is putting the finishing touches on the show and announced that BASSMaster legend Davey Hite and two-time BASSMaster Classic champion Hank Cherry will headline the special appearance list.

This indoor expo will feature more bass and saltwater fishing tackle, fishing kayaks, apparel and new boats/outboards than anywhere else, plus a Bass Tub demonstration tank and a Kids Trout Pond. There's even the annual Woods & Waters Magazine New Product Showcase on the Bass Tub demonstrating many of the new lures and gear available at the show. For more information on any of these shows visit www.ncboatshows.com.

In fishing news, Donnie Bell from James RiverTackle Co. reported last month that his son, Hayden caught a hybrid striped bass while fishing the tidal James River. This is an unusual catch because hybrid stripers (a cross between a striped bass and a white

bass) were never stocked in the James River. They were not stocked in Lake Chesdin either. The concern is that wipers could crossbreed with pure strain Chesapeake Bay striper, so we'll be monitoring if other hybrids are caught this winter from the James.

Bell says the crappie fishing will continue to be strong this month on wood and bridge pilings in and around the mouth of Appomattox River. Bass anglers will want to explore the Appomattox River this winter as many bass overwinter in it, off the James River.

One of his favorite tactics is pitching a Mud Puppy Brush Monkey to wood on deep banks on a warm afternoon. Google Earth the Appomattox all the way up to Colonial Heights and note some good fishing areas to try this month. Check with Bell on launch ramps and

Hayden Bell with a hybrid striped he caught last month fishing the tidal James River. Photo courtesy of **James River Tackle Co.**



current river conditions.

Bell says tidal James catfish anglers know December is a month for big blues. Cut live shad fished on bottom rigs or live eels are gobbled readily by blue catfish up to 80 pounds now.

Over on Lake Chesdin, anglers are enjoying a good fall with crappie up to two pounds. Most are coming from brushpiles on small minnows.

Chesdin bass anglers are targeting some heavy bass using suspending jerkbaits this month. Chesdin striper are at the mouths of creeks on bait and can be caught on suspending jerkbaits and swimbaits. The lake does have a good supply of walleye. Most are caught accidentally by bass anglers on crankbaits this

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month.

Area bowhunters, if you busted something on your bow or crossbow last month, you need to stop by Shooter's Archery north of Richmond, about halfway to Fredericksburg. This shop offers bow hunting and archery enthusiasts a very unique venue that includes an indoor and outdoor range, pro shop and a fishing tackle section as well as live bait.

Hunters west of Mechanicsville will want to stop by Jo Jo's Fishin' & Huntin' Express in Manquin. This shop is well-stocked with everything you'd need for a successful day deer hunting or waterfowling.

G'Daddy's Bait & Tackle in Carrollton, Virginia (just across the James River Bridge in Hampton) is stocked with ZOOM soft plastic baits, a limited special collection of Poe's classic all-wood crankbaits, Duckett rods and Reel Blessed custom rods. Profound Outdoors baits can also be found in the shop. Gift certificates are available at the shop as well as fishing licenses and the City of Norfolk lake fishing permits.

Robby Patterson of Propeller Dynamics invites you to stop by his showroom this month to see his selection of new Xpress boats, Raptor boat and used boats. He's also the area authorized warranty service center for Minn Kota, MotorGuide, Lowrance, Power Pole and Garmin so if you have a marine electronic, he can fix it or sell you a new one! He also offers propeller repairs and sales if you found a rock over the summer with your rig.

Don't forget RVA Santa will be at Green Top Sporting Goods December 14-16, 3-7 pm, December 17-18, 10-4 and December 19-22, 3-7. RVA Santa is hugely popular so online reservations are required!
C.C. McCotter & Donnie Bell



Charlie Taylor Profile

continued from page 25

New Horizon has also entered the arena of area fishing events.

"When we learned of the demise of the longest running fishing show in northern Virginia, we contacted the operator and learned why he was discontinuing the show. The venue had raised the rent to the point where he could not make a profit. After much deliberation, we decided to undertake the show if it were possible as a fundraiser for our Youth Foundation. We came to an agreement with the venue on a much lower rental fee due to our non-profit status and we undertook the operation of the Dale City Flea Market which is now in it's 26th year. While we don't make a lot of money from the show, it allows northern Virginia anglers to get together once per year and renew friendships and look over what is new as well as what is old in the way of fishing tackle. It also allows everyone to advertise events, organizations and products."

We asked Taylor if he had any advice for younger folks reading this trying to balance fishing passion and job duties?

"Family and providing for them always

comes first. Hopefully, you can find a job which allows you to spend plenty of time with them and perhaps some of this can be fishing. If so, keep the fishing time as pleasure fishing and not competitive. I always advise fathers and mothers not to take along their fishing gear when taking kids fishing. The outing should be all about the kids. They will remember it forever."

Taylor also encourages anglers to mentor.

"If it is possible, be a mentor to young people. My partner and I, both being disabled, have been mentoring 17-year-olds for the past four years. Each of these young men have a passion for fishing and we have even involved their families in some of our fishing excursions. Every time we can get a

young person on the water and hooked on fishing, we promote responsible behavior that is passed on throughout their peer group. We never know how many other people we touch by mentoring others. Our current young fishing companion has been fishing our Kid's Fishing Derbies since he was four years old."



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REGIONAL FOCUS

Lake Anna

For a map of Lake Anna visit woodsandwatersmagazine.com

Even though Lake Anna has cooled to more seasonal temperatures, anglers can still expect to encounter roaming schools of voracious fish throughout the lake during certain key feeding periods. Water temperatures in much of the lake dropped quickly into the upper 60s and 50s late last month and will fall further into the 40s this month except for at Dike 3.

According to guide C.C. McCotter, all these lower water temperatures mean striped, wiper, bass, white perch, crappie, even catfish are schooled up and can be found feeding heavily at times, while other times you cannot buy a bite! The key to finding these schools of active fish is three-fold: 1) locating the hot zone of baitfish and gamefish, 2) watching birds and 3) fishing during feeding periods.

Here's what you can expect for a December visit and some news from around the lake's marinas.

McCotter says some bass are schooled and others are not this month. Decide what you want to target and seek them out. Up lake bass are leaving willow grass lines and beginning to follow schools of threadfin

and gizzard shad on their annual down lake migration.

Most of the better action is still coming off main lake points early in the morning where bass ambush shad and will take a spinnerbait. Later in the day, the fish move deeper to rocks and brush and can be pursued with crankbaits, suspending jerkbaits, even blade baits and fluttered spoons. The fish sometimes return shallow again in the late afternoon for a brief feed on the points, again where they find baitfish.

Hot bass zones in the up lake region include between the two bridges in both the North Anna and Pamunkey Branch and just above and below them.

Mid lake bass tend to school in creeks due to clearer water. Hot zones here can include



High Point Marina was where this nice rack of Lake Anna striper was photographed.

the mouth of Marshall Creek, the mouth of Pigeon Creek, Mitchell Creek, the mid section of Contrary Creek and the mouth of Sturgeon Creek. Using swimbaits, hard and soft plastic swimbaits can be effective when fish and bait are in the area otherwise go deep with spoons and blade baits.

Keep in mind the schools of bass are moving throughout the day, so if your depth finder

shows fish in 28-32 of water at the mouth of a creek where you caught them shallow in the morning, don't doubt it.

If you cannot find any fish, try pitching a Neko worm or shaky head worm to docks in the first third of creeks.

Down lake bass fishing is bait dependent. Creeks like Sturgeon, Beaver Pond, Dukes and Rockland often have bass feeding on bait that

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can be targeted with everything from small crankbaits to swimbaits, jerkbaits to spoons. Docks will hold fish once the water drops to 50-55. The Dike 3 region has yet to turn on consistently as the herring are not there but should change in December.

Good fishing is available now for Lake Anna's striped fish, mostly in the up lake region. Fish began feeding in the upper portion of the North Anna River late last month. Some striper and wiper finally migrated up lake toward baitfish and you might also find schools right around the 208 marinas. It's been a mid lake year again. Evening fishing at Dike 3 can also be productive in December.

Look for the best concentrations to possibly take up residence from Big Ben Flats up to around the Harris Bridge in the North Anna side and from Jetts Island of Plentiful Creek up to the mouth of Terry's Run in the Pamunkey Branch. Some fish might remain in The Splits region, too. Don't overlook the mouths of Contrary and Pigeon Creeks either in December.

Yes, there are again a lot of non-keeper striper and wiper (under 20") in the lake, but there are still some bruisers out there, so don't give up! A 13-lb. + wiper is coming this winter!

You can also often catch white perch in the same areas when the striper won't bite. The 1/4-oz. Capt. Mack's Super Spoon is deadly on all three and a Crazy Blade is a lot of fun to fish for perch.

The lake's crappie are schooled around docks and bridge pilings near the main river channel. Brush piles are good, too, if you can find one that hasn't been fished too often. Up lake rock piles can hold fish until the water drops below 50. Two-inch jigs on 1/16-oz. jig heads and small minnows on slip bobbers are best.

Congratulations to Stephen and Bobby Campbell on successfully defending their 2021 title by winning the Fish Tales/Anna Point Marina Angler Appreciation Tournament on October 22. Anna Point Marina's annual tournament drew 64 teams and paid nine places.

When all fish were weighed something happened that had never occurred before: last year's champs had successfully defended their title.

The Campbells won with a five-bass limit weighing 19.93 pounds, earning them \$2,600 and the chance to put their names once again on the Angler Appreciation trophy.

Mike Fletcher and Sue Stramel were second with 18.40 pounds and took home \$1,000. Dave Matthews and Jerry Boutchyard were third with 16.53 pounds and won \$700. The event big fish went to Wayne Snow at 5.99



Greg and Len fished with *McCotter's Lake Anna Guide Service* last month and caught a number of bass using Capt. Mack's Super Spoons.

pounds, earning him and teammate George Herring eight place and \$805.

Tournament Director Dave Fauntleroy wanted to thank all who participated and invite anglers to visit the new Anna Point Marina in 2023.

High Point Marina and The Lighthouse Inn welcome winter anglers looking for a warm room and great access to the lake. The tackle shop is well-stocked with guide-selected items (including a restock of spoons and blade baits) and all the waterfront motel rooms offer an outstanding view and dockage for your boat. This marina also sells non-ethanol fuel both on and off the water.

Over at Sturgeon Creek Marina the annual Winter Series bass tournaments have begun. Gone are the days of gentle summer breezes

| continued on page 44

FISH TALES

Store and Stories

at Anna Point Marina

Lake Anna's Fishing Headquarters

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Lake Anna Report

and warm evenings on the lake. This series is for serious diehards and some outstanding limits over 20 pounds are expected. The Winter Series will run through January.

Anna's Marine Center wanted to thank all their customers for patience this year - as getting in boats took longer than usual but delivery times have improved over last year. Dee Kidd and Wil Vickery also wanted to point out two of their new SKEETER owners have continued to win some series SKEETER Reel Money as a result of winning tournaments out of their SKEETERS. Clay Gatewood and Matt Martin each tourney's this year and earned \$5K of SKEETER Reel Money for each win.

All of their new SKEETER boats have Humminbird standard and the Helix MEGA Chirp+ units offer incredible resolution. The new Humminbird MEGA Live real time sonar and



The team of Wilson and Jones had this healthy 17.81-pound limit to take second in the **Sturgeon Creek Marina** Winter Series tournament on November 20.

MEGA Live Target Lock have been popular options on the new SKEETERS. Solix units are also available if you want to step up the product line. Stop by for a look as well as to see the new Nitro Z Series and TRACKER rigs.

Elk Creek Country Store is where to find fuel and Uncle Mike's Tackle Shop on the way to fishing the warm side of the lake this month. Mike notes bass and perch are schooled in Elk and Millpond Creeks and moving toward warmer water every day. Swimbaits, dropshot and spoon are all good now.

Lake Anna Outfitters at High Point Marina still has several fishing kayaks in stock. They have a 3 Waters Big Fish 103 and a Big Fish 105 with pedal drives. They also have a Feel Free Lure 11.5 V2 with pedal drive and two Feel Free Moken 10V2 paddle-powered boats. *Chrissie McCotter*

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REGIONAL FOCUS

Smith Mountain Lake

New River Valley

For maps of Smith Mountain Lake visit woodsandwatersmagazine.com

Smith Mountain Lake level was 794.59' and rising slightly by the middle of November. This is slightly higher than at the end of October. Keep in mind normal pond is 795' so the lake was in very good shape at the start of winter.

Water temperature was 50-55 degrees on the surface from mid to down lake by the mid-November W2 deadline. Expect the lake level to rise slightly in December and watch the water temperature begin to drop into the upper 40s by the end of the month.

December on Smith Mountain is normally a month where this deep, clear lake offers excellent fishing for striper while fishing for smallmouth, largemouth and crappie slows down a bit but it's still good at times of peak activity.

The best lures for green bass will be drop shot rigs, crankbaits, shaky heads, spoons, spinnerbaits, Carolina rigs and plastic worms.

Most December largemouth bass will be caught on points, rock piles, brush piles and docks. Best depths will be from the surface to 25 feet deep. Points, rocks, stumps and brush are a key factor to finding bass this month.

The lake's smallmouth bass will hold on rocks, ledges, humps and main channel points. Best lures will be Ned rigs, hair jigs, drop shot rigs, crankbaits and Carolina rigs. Focus efforts on the mid to the lower sections of the lake.

Visiting anglers can target striper in the upper section of the lake this month, especially in larger creeks.

The top striper lures for December on Smith-



Boehringer-Ingelheim group with Capts. Spike and Kathy of *Spike's Prime Time Fishin'* boated 19 stripers on November 18.



Jeff Bonn with a nine pounder caught with Kathy of *Spike's Prime Time Fishin'*.

Mountain are swimbaits, jigging spoons and ZOOM Flukes fished on 1/4 to 1/2 oz. jigheads. The best depths will be from near the surface to 60 feet deep. Wilson says to fish areas with

the largest concentrations of baitfish.

Fishing for crappie will be good on SML this month. They will be found 10 to 25 feet deep. Best areas will be in the main creeks around docks, fallen trees, stumps and brush piles in the mid to upper parts of the lake. Small live minnows and 1 1/2 to 2 inch tubes or shad shaped plastic lures fished on 1/32 to 1/16 oz. lead heads will work best.

Spike and Kathy Francescini operate Spike's Prime Time Fishin', one of the longest continuously operated guide services in Virginia.

They note striper have moved up the rivers and into the creeks and were breaking on the surface and feeding down to 30 feet deep. The fall fishing season has been very good with double digit stripers and largemouth up to nine pounds.

This month you can fish planers with no weight for those fish on top. You can also fish planers with 5/8 split shot 10 feet deeper than you see the fish. You can also fish down rods with 2 oz. sinkers exactly where you see the fish. Fish are biting both small and large bait. Remember, you can now keep two fish per day under 30 inches or over 40 inches.

Give them a call if you want to try fishing the lake this coming season. Spike and Kathy are heading out west until April and thank all their 2022 customers for a great year!

Hidden Gem Trout fishing in nearby Blue Ridge has plenty of trout in their private stretch of stream if you prefer fly fishing. Call to make your appointment now.

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REGIONAL FOCUS

Buggs/Gaston

Kerr Lake/Lake Gaston

For maps of Buggs Island or Lake Gaston visit woodsandwatersmagazine.com

Lake Gaston

By mid-November the water level on Gaston was around 199.50' (200' is full pool) and Dominion was holding the level steady. Water temperatures ranged from 49-54 degrees with the up lake section just below Kerr Dam the coolest. Anglers can expect 45-55-degree water temperatures for December in most parts of the main lake.

Guide Rick Morris has been enjoying his full fall season since retiring from the BASS Masters Elite Series trail. He now spends his days putting clients on largemouth and spunky spotted bass, even crappie and white perch using a variety of tactics while sharing stories of fishing the Elite events.

For December on Gaston, Morris says you will want to target largemouth bass schooled deep on and feeding on baitfish using spoons, A-rigs, swimbaits and Ned rigs. Look for them at the mouths of major creeks in 20-30'.

Morris targets the lake's ample spotted bass population now using Damiki rigs and drop shot rigs in 25-35' of water around rocks and main lake points. Birds will indicate schools of baitfish now and bass (both largemouth and spots) can be under them. Gaston also harbors striper and December can be a good month to start targeting them with lures.

Call or email Morris for guided trips on Gaston.

Holly Grove Marina is a family-friendly tackle shop, boat ramp, restaurant/gathering place on the lake and we're glad to have them with



Vincent Barbella and his father, Mark with some spots and greenbacks caught fishing with guide, **Rick Morris** on Lake Gaston this fall.

us. Holly Grove is located about 10 minutes off I-95 at the Bracey exit on Rt. 903.

Kerr Reservoir (Bugg Island)

The water level on Kerr Lake by the W2 late November deadline was 298.52' and steady (about six inches lower than last month). 300' is full pool so this was a good level for late summer. Daytime water temperatures varied from 48-53 degrees depending on the region of the lake late last month.

This month, anglers should expect a significant decrease in water temperatures - to around 40-45 degrees.

For December, Morris says you'll still find large schools of baitfish in most creeks - but they will be at the mouth of the creeks and deep.

Many bass anglers use crankbaits on the lake in November and switch to spoons, swimbaits and A-rigs in December. You can also try fishing shakey head worms and crankbaits around humps and points with underwater cover like rocks and brushpiles.

Fishing around bait at the mouths of larger creeks like Nutbush, Bluestone, Rudd's, Butcher's and Eastland should be the pattern now as long as we don't get any major rainfall.

Striper anglers are targeting their favorite fish in the Clarksville area where they can find them under birds and busting bait using a variety of methods.

Casters will want to use three-inch spoons like the KT Slab/Toothache spoon around the mouth of creeks and on main lake channel bends. Many striper anglers will troll umbrella rigs this month tipped with swimbaits.

Before you head out onto the lake, be sure to stop by Bobcat's Bait and Tackle to get a current fishing report and all the gear you could possibly need. See page 7 for a recap of the most recent Bobcat's Crappie tournament.

The lake's big blue catfish are also feeding heavily now. This is where the state and world record came from, so if you like catching big catfish, Buggs is a fine place to start.

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REGIONAL FOCUS

Potomac River

December on the tidal Potomac means it's time to open the tacklebox and go fishing! Here's what you can expect on a visit this month along with some news from around the region.

Anglers should be able to use spinnerbaits, crankbaits, jerkbaits and even possibly some topwater (primarily during the warmest part and lower tide of the day!).

Bridges in DC are good for smallmouth, largemouth and stripers using pilings as current breaks and in the dead zone waiting for prey this month. Depth and how bass are using cover are more important now as water drops to 45 degrees and below. Slow down and keep baits into these zones.

The Spoils, Smoot Bay (National Harbor), Fox Ferry, Hogg Island, Belle Haven, Oxen Cove, Blue Plains are the typical hangouts in the northern end of the Potomac River. Also check out the warm water discharge at Possum Point.

In colder water, fish slower and generally deeper. Some fish are shallow and easier to catch just about every day especially in stable weather. Several techniques produce

under most conditions. Most are slow presentations.

Start with main river points and work your way north, ambushing bass at creek points of shallow creeks like Piscataway and Broad.

Into the deeper creeks, follow winter bass in the ditches and channels.

In the Wilson Bridge area, follow the excavation ditches rimming the Spoils and Smoots (National Harbor).

Fish closer to drops near water 10 feet deep when temperatures get down to 45, and near 4-6 foot drops when water is 50 or above. Look for deep water close by and sharp drops in those areas to find wintering bass.

In Blue Plains, expect more active fish. When water gets below 45, cast and work 1/2-ounce Silver Buddy's down drops on the bottom with short "burps" on 10-pound test Gamma Edge



Happy clients of **Apex Predators Guide Service** with several Potomac River rockfish caught last month.

Fluorocarbon on a medium action casting rod. I prefer casting gear.

For plastics fishing, downsize to 8 or even 6-pound test Edge to feel more bites when water gets colder, and fish aren't aggressive. They'll feel the drag of "bigger lines" and let go, before you feel them. Also, you're fishing deeper and further from the boat than in summer. Thinner lines get to the bottom and stay in wind and current. You'll feel bites better and have less drag in the water for hooksets.

Downsized baits like Mud Puppy 3-inch avocado SR grub on 1/4 ounce round jig heads made with Mustad hooks worked slowly down drops will produce.

A good soaking in spray attractant keeps fish holding on longer with all soft plastics!

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Dragfour-inch tubes with tube heads, gliding down drops. Green pumpkin tubes are the best place to start. Other colors: Blue Craw, Green Pumpkin Copper. Try 4 inch grubs with the tail rigged UP on a 1/4-ounce round jig head.

Anglers can use a drop shot once fish are found. A 3/16-ounce Water Gremlin Bullshot weight is perfect in current on 8-pound test GAMMA EDGE leader tied to 10 pound test GammaTorque braided line. A 2/0 Mustad wide gap Mega Bite worm hook works with Mud Puppy Custom Lures DS (drop shot) worms.

If you feel pressure, set the hook. Remember, you're using lighter line; you don't need a giant hookset. This is a great way to catch them at Blue Plains.

Probe flats near drops and points in Spoils and Smoots with split shot rigs with 3/16 ounce Water Gremlin Bullshot weights and Carolina rigs. Use a 2/0 Mustad Ultra Point Mega Bite hook with Mud Puppy Custom Lures DS (drop shot) worms.

This month use hair jigs in black/blue, green/orange and green-pumpkin/orange with plastic matching chunks. Insert a rattle. Pitch to cover, drops and flats near drops and let it sit, occasionally shaking. These baits are really good at Blue Plains if you just let the current move the bait. Most bites are light pickups, watch line!

When water is a bit warmer to around 50, target shallower fish with a tight wiggle crankbait diving about four feet deep with 10-pound test line. Rattles are better in slightly stained water. You can also go deeper with 8-10 foot divers on 12-pound test.

Also suspending jerkbaits are very effective in clear water around 50. Fish around hard cover that is warmer with the sun on it. Baby Bass, Mat Pumpkin, Black Gold are my favorites. Use 10-pound Gamma fluorocarbon and a jerk, jerk, jerk, pause retrieve. Let it sit a while; vary cadence and length of pause. Works at Blue Plains, Four Mile Run, around Spoils and Fox Ferry. Not a lot of guys throw jerkbaits, so you'll have an edge.

When water warms above 45 degrees don't put away spinnerbaits especially on windy days. Go to the bank the wind is blowing on and toss a 3/8-ounce with a white skirt, and a gold willow/Colorado tandem. Slowly retrieve, bumping bottom. You'll catch the biggest fish of the season this way.

Many of these baits can be found at Taylor's Bait & Tackle near Aquia Creek. This is a full service tackle shop that also sells live minnows. When the state restocks nearby Locust Shade Park, it's time to stop in for jarred Berkley Baits, spinners or trout spoons also stocked at Taylor's.

Costello's in Warrenton is a great place to shop for bass tackle thanks to the efforts of Mike to stock the brands anglers want. You'll be very happy if you make the drive. Steve Chaconas & C.C. McCotter

POTOMAC TIDE/MOON CHART

	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW
1	2:18am	9:12am	10 9:56am	4:25am	19 4:25am	10:34am	28 ----	6:57am
	2:57pm	9:38pm	10:00pm	4:06pm	4:45pm	11:48pm	12:31pm	7:16pm
2	3:24am	10:07am	11 10:35am	5:02am	20 5:22am	11:30am	29 12:56am	7:48am
	3:58pm	10:40pm	10:38pm	4:42pm	5:36pm	----	1:31pm	8:16pm
3	4:25am	11:00am	12 11:13am	5:38am	21 6:16am	12:49am	30 1:58am	8:40am
	4:54pm	11:39pm	11:17pm	5:19pm	6:28pm	12:28pm	2:31pm	9:17pm
4	5:21am	11:50am	13 11:52am	6:12am	22 7:09am	1:46am	31 3:00am	9:32am
	5:46pm	----	11:58pm	6:00pm	7:19pm	1:27p	3:30pm	10:17pm
5	6:14am	12:35am	14 ----	6:47am	NEW 23 8:00am	2:40am	Jan. Tides	
	6:34pm	12:39pm	12:33pm	6:45pm	8:11pm	2:26pm	1 3:56am	10:19am
6	7:02am	1:27am	15 12:43am	7:25am	24 8:51am	3:33am	4:21pm	11:12pm
	7:19pm	1:25pm	1:18pm	7:36pm	9:05pm	3:24pm	2 4:52am	11:11am
7	7:49am	2:16am	16 1:33am	8:07am	25 9:43am	4:24am	5:14pm	----
	8:02pm	2:08pm	2:08pm	8:33pm	9:59pm	4:21pm		
8	8:33am	3:01am	17 2:28am	8:52am	26 10:37am	5:15am		
	8:42pm	2:50pm	3:00pm	9:36pm	10:56pm	5:19pm		
9	9:15am	3:44am	18 3:27am	9:42am	27 11:33am	6:06am		
	9:22pm	3:29pm	3:52pm	10:43pm	11:55pm	6:17pm		

Corrections:

Washington Channel:	Alexandria:	Occoquan Bay:	Port Tobacco:	Dahlgren:
Low: +2:32	Low: +2:21	Low: +1:04	Low: -2:35	Low: -3:01
High: +1:28	High: +1:45	High: + :26	High: -2:40	High: -3:14
	Lewisetta: Low: -4:52	High: -2:40	Cornfield: Low: +7:50	High: +7:27

Tides for Aquia Creek. See corrections below

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REGIONAL FOCUS

BACK BAY

Northwest River, North River, Currituck Sound

James Waters at Bob's Fishing Hole reports that the BFH weekend tournaments will be held Saturdays with hours from safe light to 3pm. Entry fee remains \$25/person with a five fish limit. The 2023 trail events will be held on Sundays. The Winter Series began last month, Sundays, 8am to 3pm with a 3 fish limit, entry fee \$25/person.

Bob's Fishing Hole is located on Rt. 168 (Chesapeake Expressway) on the way to the Outer Banks. It offers anglers access not only to the great fishing on the Northwest River but also to Back Bay.

Back Bay bass have pretty much left the main bay and even smaller weedy bays and headed to over-wintering areas like Muddy and Hell's Point Creeks as well as the Northwest River. Any creek or canal that dumps into Back Bay could harbor a lot of fish.

Top lures now include a jig-n-craw, three-inch swimbait, a shallow diving crankbait and a single Colorado-bladed spinnerbait.

If you want to plan a visit next season North Landing Beach RV Resort & Cottages is a great place to use as a family basecamp for Back Bay fishing. The resort is first class, has its own ramp and is nearby two others and about 20 minutes from Bob's Fishing Hole.



Daniel and Beverly Vance with the big fish from the November 2 **Bob's Fishing Hole** tourney that helped them place third..

Book a two bedroom cottage and settle in for a few days of great fishing this coming spring and summer.

North Bay Shore Campground also welcomes anglers and has cabins and a bath house for overnight stays. A canal runs right behind the cabins, so you can keep your boat in the water

and you are minutes from Sandbridge.

BackwaterAdventures Guide DavidWard notes December will still offer visiting anglers some bass fishing opportunity in waters he fishes like the North River, Kitty Hawk Bay and other northeastern North Carolina rivers.

He says water temperatures should be in the mid to low 50's and could drop in the 40's. Crankbaits, jigs and the shaky head will be big players. Crankbaits, such as the Rapala DT-6, square bills, and any shallorunning flat sided should start to produce. On the shaky head side, small worms such as the ZOOM FinesseWorm or a 4" ringworm will work on slow, bluebird days. This is the time of year to catch a nice one, so bundle up and hit the water!

If you are looking for accommodations and a new place to fish in 2023, consider the AJ Outfitters cabin on the Chowan River near Harrellsville, North Carolina. This is a riverside cabin with pier and nearby boat ramp that offers angler the opportunity to fish perhaps the best bass river in NC.

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REGIONAL FOCUS

Chesapeake Bay

Middle Bay

The Bay Bridge continues to attract anglers to fish for the striped bass that are holding near the bases of the deep-water piers. Jigging is the most common way to fish for striped bass, but some anglers are drifting with live eels, pulling them back to the pier bases with good results. The rock piles are holding striped bass, but schools of large white perch also tend to hold there this time of the year. Anglers are also having success trolling tandem or single rigged bucktails along the sewer pipe on the north-east side of the bridge.

Some of the best fishing for striped bass in the middle Bay is occurring in the area from Thomas Point to Chesapeake Beach on the western side of the Bay, and the area from Eastern Bay out past Buoy 83 and south to the False Channel at the mouth of the Choptank River. The striped bass are feeding on juvenile menhaden for the most part, although young of the year hickory shad are moving out of the Choptank and will have to pass through the gauntlet of hungry striped bass stationed at the mouth of the river.

There is still occasional bird action to direct anglers to striped bass feeding on schools of bait, but much of the action is now occurring deep, making depth finders a valuable tool this time of the year. Jigging with soft plastic or metal jigs is a productive and fun light-tackle way to catch striped bass.

Trolling is a good bet along channel edges, using tandem or single rigged bucktails in white with twistertails or sassy shads pulled behind inline weights. Umbrella rigs in white and pulled behind heavy inline weights are also working well when



December will bring more big rockfish to the lower Chesapeake Bay.

allowed to get down to where striped bass are suspended close to the bottom of channel edges.

Colder water temperatures are beginning to force striped bass that have been prowling the shallower waters of the Bay shores and lower sections of the tidal rivers to head for deeper water.

White perch have moved out to the deeper waters near the mouths of the major tidal rivers, the rock piles at the Bay Bridge and the deeper channel areas off Matapeake. Bottom rigs with hooks baited with pieces of bloodworm or dropper rigs rigged with small flies are the best way to reach them in the deeper waters.

Lower Bay

The lower Potomac River continues to be a major draw for anglers, spurred by a two-fish minimum at 20 inches or more, and excellent

fishing. The striped bass are spread from the Route 301 Bridge south to Point Lookout. The steep channel edges offer excellent opportunities for jigging and trolling.

The lower Patuxent River is also offering good striped bass fishing out to Cedar Point. Channel edges in the 30-foot range off Cove Point, and on the eastern side of the Bay, the area from the HS Buoy south is also holding striped bass. The channels in Tangier Sound are also holding striped bass. As water temperatures decline, striped bass will be found in even deeper waters in the channels.

Jigging is always a fun light-tackle way to fish for striped bass in the fall and once fish are located, the action can be exciting. Soft plastics in the six-inch and larger size range tend to be the most popular, in shades of pearl and white. Braided line, fluorocarbon leaders, and fast action rods help make jigging more productive in the deeper waters.

Trolling is a good option to get down where the striped bass are suspended close to the bottom in the deeper channel areas. Heavy inline weights are often needed to get umbrella rigs to the depths where the striped bass are holding. White teasers and trailers are popular in the clearer waters this week. Tandem rigged bucktails dressed with sassy shads are also a good option but will also need inline weights to get them down. Using braided lines can reduce drag or water resistance when trolling.

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REGIONAL FOCUS

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The first couple weeks of November saw some warmer temperatures and anglers taking to the Shenandoah River on boats and kayaks.

Daniel Litwin and a friend did a kayak float trip on the South Fork of the Shenandoah landing 10 fish with one measuring 20.5 inches, but the young angler's best on the day went 22.5 inches and weighed in at 6-5! The beautiful bronzeback took a ZMan Shroomz Jig with a ZMan TRD Bugz trailer. The jig was a candy craw color and the trailer was green pumpkin.

Lonnie Conner also saw some success out of the Riverton section of the Shenandoah River. He found fish on large rock and the ledges. He noted water temps at 60 but dropping with a cold front rolling in. They were equally eating tubes and crankbaits. He was catching them in 13 foot of water on a DT14 bluegill pattern crank and the 2 3/4 inch tube. He noted smallmouth tend to like the smaller crawfish so downsize your presentation and drag slow with a pause. Lonnie's largest smallmouth went 3.75 pounds.

If you've been reading these articles on a regular basis you've heard me talk about before but it's worth saying again, the biggest smallmouth landed all year are typically caught in the next three months. It's recommended you get on the water to take advantage of this opportunity.

Most realize the smallmouth bass prefers

colder water temperatures. Expect water temperatures to fall through the 50's into the forty-degree mark in December.

Another important point Lonnie made on a recent fishing report involved finding stability in the river conditions. Stability with water temperature, levels, and clarity. Several days of consistent conditions equals favorable fishing conditions in the winter months. Fish have had a chance to adjust and will be more apt to eat.

Focus your fishing efforts on the deepest pockets in the area you are fishing. Fish will stack up in these wintering holes this time of year. This is not to say you can't catch them shallow especially if it is cold and the midday sun has warmed up the rocks in the shallower water. Spend considerable time in both areas of the river. Make longer casts when fishing shallow since the water will be crystal clear.

Stories of one fish days but that one fish weighing six pounds coming on a crankbait is possible.



Daniel Litwin with a beautiful 22.5", 6-9 Shenandoah River smallmouth bass. Photo from *Jake's Bait & Tackle*.

I continue to get positive feedback on the Megabass Okashira Screw Head. Put a small paddle tail on the 1/16 oz 3/0 hook and throw it on six-pound test line. Let it free fall through the water column, jig it, or slow roll it to catch those winter brutes.

Jerkbaits of various sizes and depths will also come into play as the water temp drops. Vary retrieval speed to see how the fish want it. It's not always going to be the painful 45-second to a minute pause to get bit. Small tubes and hair

jigs with a trailer drug slowly along the bottom are also very popular presentations for winter river bass.

Shout out to Adam Packham with Hero's on the River for another successful combat veteran event out of Front Royal Golf Club on the Shenandoah River.

Check out Jake's new online Store and plan to attend our River Guide Panel on December 17. W2 Pro Staff Chris Gorsuch (Susquehanna) will be joined with Travis Edens (Shenandoah River), and Jeff Greene (Upper Potomac) at Jake's from 2-4. Ask in person live audience questions or catch it on the Fishing the DMV livestream Podcast. *Jared Mounts*



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REGIONAL FOCUS

Central Virginia

Charlottesville Upper
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For a map of the upper James River visit woodsandwatersmagazine.com

December in central Virginia can run the gamut in terms of weather so area outdoorsmen have learned to dress in layers, adding or removing as needed and they've also learned to not put their fishing equipment away for the winter! The early November warm temperatures had bass cruising the shallows looking like they were preparing to spawn and anglers were donning shorts and t-shirts while out on the water. Then came a week of below-freezing temperatures at night which drove the fish back in to deeper waters. One thing is for sure, winter time fishing can bring some hawgs into your boat so finish your holiday shopping and get out on the water!

Brian "Razor" Bodine of Razorback Guide Service is spending most of his time this month in the woods guiding trophy deer and doe management hunts. Razor guides year 'round and is celebrating 25 years in the business. His love of everything outdoors is evident from the moment you meet him and start your quest together. His popular Cast & Blast trips are ideal for those of us that enjoy waterfowl hunting but also can't stand to be on the river without wetting a line if the bird action should slow. Spring gobbler guided trips fill up fast so if you've considered doing this in 2023 then be sure to contact Razor today. And of course, Razor's guided smallmouth trips are his most popular offering and provide hours of action on the mighty James River.

River smallmouth move a bit slower in the colder months so you need to as well.

Jerkbaits, spinnerbaits and crankbaits will be productive. You won't go wrong tying on anything that looks like bait as the fish are hungry and should bite when presented properly.

Many of us are in the woods this month working to fill our freezers for the year. Should you find that you have enough for your household but still have some tags left, please consider donating to Hunters for the Hungry. It's really quite easy, just go to www.h4hungry.org and you'll find a list of participating processors in your area. All you will need to do is drop it off and the processor will handle the rest. If you live in Louisa County you can donate your venison to the Resource Council who will in turn get it to very appreciative families in need.

James River Jets' owner Jim Starkey is already looking towards the spring season. Order your custom-built jet boat from him this month and you'll be rigged and ready for the warm weather fishing frenzy! Starkey's attention to detail in rigging these Rhino boats is top notch and the customer service is far superior to any big box store out there. Give Jim a call today and talk to him about



Logan Buttolph and his partner Slade Hart with a nice Lake Anna limit that earned them second in a tourney last month. Photo courtesy of **Central Virginia Outdoors**.

your dream boat and he'll do his darndest to build it out exactly how you envisioned.

Lake Anna Outfitters, located at High Point Marina, has several fishing kayaks in stock. They have a 3 Waters Big Fish 103 and a Big Fish 105 with pedal drives. They also have a Feel Free Lure 11.5V2 with pedal drive and two Feel Free Moken 10V2 paddle-powered boats. With weekend hours throughout the holiday season you still have time to make

sure there's a kayak under the Christmas tree this year!

Be sure to mark your calendars for the Richmond Fishing Expo in Doswell January 20-23 in Doswell. Here you'll find the largest array of tackle, combined with some of the finest professional talent around, offering a weekend of fishing overload.

Many kids have an extended break from school during this time so please consider giving them one of the best gifts ever – the gift of your time. Take them out fishing, hunting or even hiking and show them your love for the outdoors.

We wish you and your family a very merry Christmas and happy holidays.
Chrissie McCotter



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Outdoor Calendar

Event listings are free for advertisers and non-profit organizations or clubs. Deadline is 14th of the month before the month to appear. Please send or email information you want to appear to: Woods & Waters Notebook, 114 Old Quarry Lane, Bumpass, VA 23024. Send emails to: woodsandwatersmagazine@gmail.com

Fishing Tournaments

- December 3 – Bobcat's Virginia/Carolina Crappie Trail – Visit BobcatsLakeCountry.com
- December 4 – Lake Anna Winter Bass Series – Sturgeon Creek Marina, 7am-3pm. Visit SturgeonCreekMarina.com or call 540/895-5095.
- December 11 – Lake Anna Winter Bass Series – Sturgeon Creek Marina, 7am-3pm. Visit SturgeonCreekMarina.com or call 540/895-5095.
- December 18 – Lake Anna Winter Bass Series – Sturgeon Creek Marina, 7am-3pm. Visit SturgeonCreekMarina.com or call 540/895-5095.

Shows/Community/Other Events

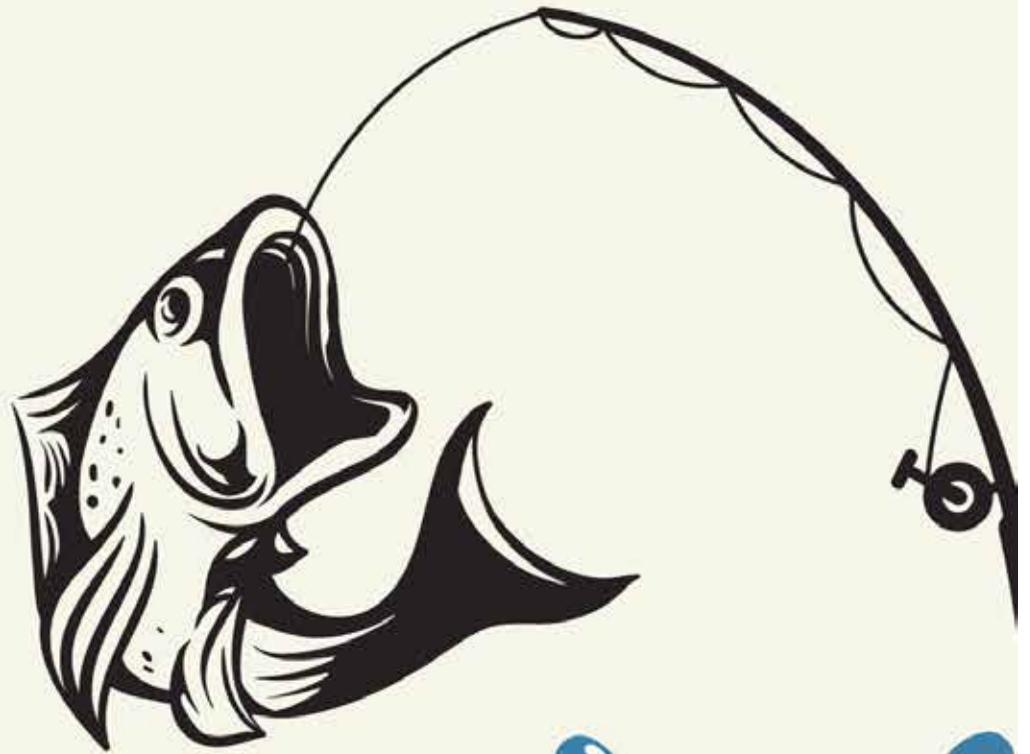
- January 14 – Pines Pheasant Ring Shoot – The Preserve at Dundee, Hanover, VA – Visit ThePreserveatDundee.com.
- January 20-22, 2023 – Richmond Fishing Expo – State Fairgrounds of Virginia – Doswell, Va. Visit www.RichmondFishingExpo.com
- January 28 – Fredericksburg Eagles Fishing Flea Market, Fraternal Order Of Eagles, 21 Cool Spring Road, Fredericksburg, VA. 8a-1p. For more information contact David at dwl629@gmail.com
- February 4 - 27th Annual Dale City Bass Tackle Show – Hillendale Fire Dept., 13511 Hillendale Dr. Dale City, VA. 8a-4p. For info or table contact David at 540/848-2199.
- February 4-12 – NRA Great American Outdoor Show – Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex – Harrisburg, PA. Visit GreatAmericanOutdoorShow.org.
- February 11, 2023 – Field Pheasant Ring Shoot – The Preserve at Dundee, Hanover, VA – Visit ThePreserveatDundee.com.

Hunting Seasons

- Dove - December 23 - January 21
- Duck - December 17 - January 29
- Grouse - October 29 - February 11
- Rabbit - November 5 - February 28
- Woodcock - November 11 - December 3. December 27 - January 17.

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