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# TOURNAMENT RESULTS



The teams of the Fishers of Men East division converged on the tidal Chickahominy River July 15, and launched from Rockahock for the final event of the season. Congratulations to Ray Hogge and Donnie Daniel on the win with 18.01lbs. Jay Griffin and Doug Wharton were second, and they are also the 2023 Virginia East Points Champions!

For more info and standings visit [www.fomntt.com](http://www.fomntt.com).



Ray Hogge and Donnie Daniel



Brad Webb and Matt Holt won the VA Elite 70's fifth tourney stop on the tidal James River held June 17 with 23.45 lbs.

After the five regular season events, the team of Don Wheeler and Greg Cooper are first with 949 points folled by Nathan Reeves and Robbie Templeton with 932.

Next up is the fall classic on Lake Gaston Oct. 20-21. For more information visit [www.vaelite70.com](http://www.vaelite70.com).



Brad Webb and Matt Holt



The July 8 James River Tackle Co. Weekend Series tournament drew 42 boats and was won by Wayne Vaughan and Ryan Proz with 17.02 lbs., good for \$1,300. Steven Miller and Matt Wood wer second with 16.91 lbs. Christopher Wingfield and Marshall Johnson had the 6.77 lb. big fish. The teams fish next August 19.

For info contact Donnie Bell at [donnie7196@gmail.com](mailto:donnie7196@gmail.com).



Marshall Johnson and Chris Wingfield

## Jon Boat Elite TOURNAMENT TRAIL



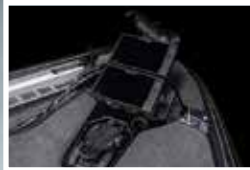
The July 8-9 Jon Boat Elite tournament held on the Northwest River out of Bob's Fishing Hole was won by Dustin Webb with a two-day total of 33.36 lbs. with 21.75 lbs. on Day 1 and 11.61 lbs. on Day 2. Noah Peters was second with 32.17 lbs. Jesse Wade was third with 28.17.

The teams will next fish August 12-13 on Chickahominy Lake. For more information visit [www.facebook.com/jonboatelitetrail](http://www.facebook.com/jonboatelitetrail)



Noah Peters

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# TOURNAMENT RESULTS

## Richmond Crappie Club

The Richmond Crappie Club fished the tidal James River June 25 for event #5. Rick Weaver and David Fay won with 10.60 lbs. Donnie and Hayden Bell were second with 10.56 lbs and the 1.83-lb. big fish.

The Richmond Crappie Club Classic will be held Sunday, October 2 on Lake Gaston. Visit [www.facebook.com/richmond-crappieclub](http://www.facebook.com/richmond-crappieclub) for more dates and results.



David Fay and Rick Weaver

## STURGEON CREEK MARINA



The June 23 SCM Youth Series event was won by Matt and Wake Martin with an impressive three fish limit of 13.37 lbs that included the tournament's big fish at 5.94lbs. Ashlyn Beasley and Tyler Haines both had a solid day on the water putting them 2nd and 3rd in the event. The SCM Elite Series teams will kick off the second half of the season August 12 and Sept. 16.

For more info visit [www.facebook.com/sturgeoncreekmarina.com](http://www.facebook.com/sturgeoncreekmarina.com).



Matt and Wake Martin



## VA/NC Crappie Trail

The 2023-24 dates for the Bobcats Bait & Tackle VA/NC Crappie Trail have been announced. The dates are October 7, November 4, December 2, January 27, February 24 and March 9. The Classic will be held April 19-20. The circuit draws some of the best crappie anglers in the mid-Atlantic region.

For more info visit [www.facebook.com/bobscatsbaitandtackle](http://www.facebook.com/bobscatsbaitandtackle).



Team Whitlow



The Bass Bandits of Virginia fished the Nottoway River July 8 out of the General Vaughn Bridge Boat Ramp. It was a hot one with 18 boats and 12 brought in limits. Adam Derby and Jared Bass were first with 16.45 lbs. and big fish of 6.71 lbs.

The next tournament is Aug. 5 on the Appomattox River, then Aug. 13 on the Pamunkey River, then Aug. 27 on Roanoke Rapids Lake.

For more info visit [www.facebook.com/groups/458306391457498](http://www.facebook.com/groups/458306391457498).



Dave Carney and John Dunn

# "Bobby, what the heck just blew by us?"

- John Doe, Virginia tournament angler

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## 14 30th Annual VA Sportsman Show

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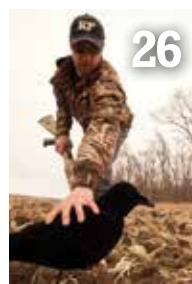
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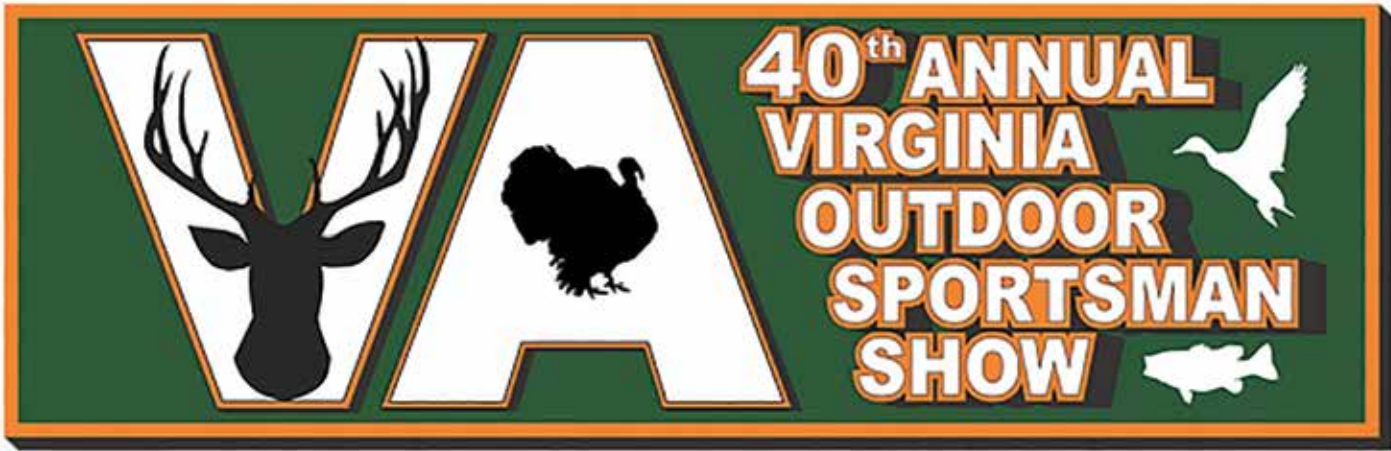
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# At The Threshold Of Hunting Seasons!

August to me means it's time to start making plans for hunting seasons. Deer hunters begin to consider stand placement and tree trimming as well as tuning bows. Some bird hunters will work on their wingshooting with crows to be ready for dove and early goose. Of course the fishing on the Chesapeake is great and it's pretty darn good on area lakes and rivers, too!

There's a lot going on in August and this edition reflects the diversity of our writers' talents and interests.

The 40th annual Virginia Sportsman Show will be held August 4-6 at the Meadow Event Park in Doswell in conjunction with the 84th annual VPSA Big Game Show. This will be a great weekend if you are a hunter and I hope to see you there!

Our Destination File takes us back to an almost forgotten fishery - the tidal Rappahannock River. We fished with river guru Bruce Lee and had a great morning.

The Small Waters Series highlights Hunting Run Reservoir outside of Fredericksburg. DWR Biologist John Odenkirk has studied and managed this lake extensively and it offers a good option for your visit this month.

W2 Regional Editor Jared Mounts traveled to the annual ICAST show last month and brought back his keen insight into the new tackle and gear we'll be seeing at area shops.

Speaking of crow, dove and goose; how about a W2 Challenge to harvest all in one day? Check out page 26 for the deets.

Smallmouth King Chris Gorsuch's monthly piece focuses on what fishing line is best; monofilament, braid or fluorocarbon.

There's all that, plus our monthly columnists (Kate Ahnstrom and Steve Chaconas), news from VDWR on summer trout stockings, a new outdoor show coming to Appomattox, our famous Regional Focus Reports, tournament schedules, 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](http://www.woodsandwatersmagazine.com).

Our YouTube Channel is up and running - Woods & Waters Adventures. You can read the entire magazine online or just browse the articles and Regional Focus Reports.

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



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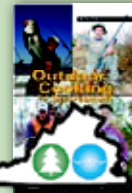
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**Monroeville Convention Center - Monroeville, PA**  
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dear 

Dear Woods & Waters Magazine,

I wanted to share a photo with you of my stepson, Jacob Lauffer, and a nice bass he caught recently fishing a wacky worm on Lake Biggins. He just seven years old but he loves fishing.

Ryan Haynes  
 Newport News, Virginia



*Love that smile! - ED*

Dear W2,

Check out this 20", 4.74-lb. Shenandoah River smallmouth I caught using a Keitech Easy Shiner! I enjoy reading your magazine and hope you can use this pic.

Ray Michael Anderson  
 Gore, Virginia



*Nice fish, Ray. Good to see the Shenandoah fishing well this year. - ED*

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Richard Stubler



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# Virginia Sportsman Show; Part Of Hunting Tradition

*40th Annual Event Will Draw Hunters From All Over The Commonwealth*

BY C.C. MCCOTTER

**H**unters from all over the state will convene August 4-6 at the Meadow Event Park complex in Doswell for the 40th annual Virginia Outdoor Sportsman Show where they will find a massive display of hunting gear, guides, mounted trophies and more.

Event owner Annette Elliot is no stranger to shows as she also owns and operates Showmasters Gun Shows that holds events around the mid-Atlantic region. She's owned the show for four years and after surviv-

ing the Covid years, notes the show thrived in 2022 and will be bigger than ever this year.

"Once we cleared that Covid nonsense and moved the show to Doswell we've had more exhibitor participation and much higher attendance," Elliot told W2 recently.

This year's event will mark the 40<sup>th</sup> annual show. Hugh Crittendon began the traditional hunting show, sold it to David Posner, who then sold it to Elliot.

Besides a modern venue just off I-95, the show features exhibitors displaying everything from ATVs to tree stands, guns to apparel, hunting trips and more.

The show features the 84th annual Virginia Peninsula Sportmans Association's Virginia Big Game Contest. The contest will feature most of the largest deer, bear, and turkey harvested throughout the state during last hunting season. Each will be scored and display and the top entrants will be recognized Sunday afternoon.

To put this in perspective, last year VPSA put on display 335 of the largest deer, bear, and turkey harvested in Virginia! This section of the show is always impressive to view.

When asked what to expect this year, Buddy Faison (VPSA

Director and outdoor social media influencer) stated he expected a record year. Faison said that "the deer, bear, and turkey posted on social media this year will prove to be record breakers once the VPSA measures them in August."

Anyone that thinks they can call turkey is encouraged to enter the National Wild Turkey Federation sanctioned state turkey calling contest running in conjunction with the event.

Attendees can also meet and chat with television personalities like Kip Campbell from Red Arrow, Tim Andrus from Rush Outdoors, Carson Koury from



**Tim Andrus**



**Kip Campbell**



**Byron Ferguson**



The VPSA Big Game Show category winners will be announced Sunday, August 6 starting at 2 pm, including youth winners.

Final Draw and trick archery shooter Byron Ferguson. There will also be free game butchering and cooking demonstrations by Chef Albert and Captain Anthony Cabbage. Of course, you'll want to sample the food at the Pig, Deer & Beer Cafe.

Outdoor shows offer hunting and fishing enthusiasts a place to gather, learn new tactics, book trips, meet friends and learn in person vs. an online video. If you've ever wanted to learn how to call waterfowl but were unsure, you'll find a number of call makers selling at this event AND they will personally show you how to use their call.

Listening to champion waterfowl caller and W2 Pro Team member Travis Stauch is a real treat and he'll be at the show with his Ramrod Guiding business.

There's also those amazing Dock Dog shows, decoy painting with the Virginia Waterfowlers Association and the Re/Max Encore and Green Top Sporting Goods Kid's Trout Pond.

For a list of the exhibitors, seminar schedule and details about the show, visit [www.sportsmanshow.com](http://www.sportsmanshow.com) for more information. To find out how to enter your deer, bear or turkey mount in the VPSA Big Game Show, visit [www.vpsa.org](http://www.vpsa.org).



"The deer, bear and turkey posted on social media this year will prove to be record breakers once the VPSA measures them in August."



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# Hunting Run Reservoir

BY VDWR & W2 STAFF

**H**unting Run Reservoir is a 420-acre water supply reservoir owned and operated by Spotsylvania County. The lake was stocked by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources and opened to fishing by Spotsylvania County in fall 2007. There is one access point near the upper end of the lake off Ely's Ford Road. The lake has an excellent largemouth bass population that is currently "bass heavy" or "predator heavy".

Anglers need an access pass to fish on the reservoir. Season passes for Hunting Run Reservoir are only \$8 for anglers from Spotsylvania, \$10 for Fredericksburg and Stafford. Daily passes are also available and cost \$3 for Spotsylvania, \$5 for Fredericksburg and Stafford and \$7 for all others, respectively. Senior citizens over age 62 have free access, and children under 16 have free access. Boat rentals are \$6 an hour with a minimum of three hours and can be rented for up to eight hours.

If using your own boat, it must have an electric motor, gas motors are allowed on boats but have to be raised out of the water or the fuel line disconnected. Gas motors are prohibited from opera-

tion unless engaged in official duties.

Hunting Run is usually sampled annually by electrofishing (EF) by VDWR biologist John Odenkirk to get an accurate picture of the fisheries status. Electrofishing is an active sampling method used to determine abundance, density, and species composition of fish populations. Typically, community sampling is done in daylight. Historically, the reservoir has consistently been in the top 10 NOVA district waters for catch rate of largemouth bass.

VDWR fisheries biologists have sampled the reservoir annually since an illegal introduction of northern snakehead in 2013 to monitor potential effects on the fish community. Most recently, an EF sample was conducted in April 2020. Biologists use shoreline EF to obtain estimates of population size structure and relative abundance. Abundance is usually described as a catch rate in number of fish per hour (CPUE, or Catch per Unit Effort).

Biologists employ numerical descriptors of length-frequency data such as Proportional Size Distribution (PSD) and Proportional Size Distribution - Preferred (PSD-P) when evaluating fish populations. PSD is calculated by dividing the number of fish (minimum

quality length by the number of fish) minimum stock length x 100. Quality length is defined as the minimum size of fish most anglers like to catch (12" for largemouth bass). Stock length is the minimum length at which a fish provides recreational value and/or is recruited to the fishery (8" for largemouth bass). PSD-P is the percentage of preferred length group found within a population. It is calculated by dividing the number of fish (preferred length by the number of fish) minimum stock length x 100.

Preferred bass are those 15" or larger, while memorable bass are those 20" or larger. State standard regulations apply to the harvest of most game and nongame fish (e.g., catfish), but largemouth bass harvest has been regulated by a 14-22" protected slot limit. Anglers are required to immediately release any bass between 14 and 22" (inclusive), and can creel only one bass per day over 22" and up to four bass per day under 14". Harvest of bass below the slot is beneficial to minimize stockpiling of small fish, increase growth and maintain a desirable size structure.

In order to sustain Hunting Run as a trophy bass fishery, anglers are

**"Historically, the reservoir has consistently been in the top 10 NOVA district waters for catch rate of largemouth bass."**

encouraged to keep bass under 14 inches, (especially those from 10-12"), and release bass over 22". Anglers are also encouraged to keep black crappie (25 per day, no length limit) and northern snakeheads (no length or harvest limit).

Based on electroshocking data the population size structure of largemouth bass (LMB) in 2020 was slightly better than the previous sample in 2019. PSD increased to 75 from 73. A PSD of 40-70 is indicative of a balanced fish population. Proportional Size Distribution of preferred fish (PSD-P; ratio of adults greater than 15") was better in 2020 (41) and indicative of a desirable size structure with a population trending towards larger individuals. Total catch per unit effort (CPUE) of LMB in 2019 (87 fish/hr) decreased slightly in 2020 to 80 fish/hr which is still good. CPUE of preferred size bass increased slightly from 26/hr (2019) to 28/hr in 2020.

Since 2013, LMB catch rates have shown a gradual increasing trend. Length distribution of collected bass ranged from 3 to 21", with a large proportion of bass in the 11 to 17" range which suggests improvement in overall bass size structure. This population is regarded as abundant with bass averaging 2-3 pounds and 6+ pound fish available.

Largemouth bass catch rate and size structure has fluctuated since the fishery's



Above - The boat launch and boat dock at Hunting Run is excellent. Above right - LG Knight with a five-pound Hunting Run summer bass. Aaron Ball photo

creation, and the community became predator heavy in the mid-2000s. Forage was quickly reduced and as a result, largemouth bass became skinnier, as bluegill was the most utilized prey. Multiple attempts to introduce gizzardshad finally succeeded in recent years, and likely is one of the drivers of enhanced bass size structure.

Good summer bass baits on Hunting Run include crankbaits and swimbaits. Bass school in the early fall into winter and a soft plastic jerkbait be good as well.

Hunting Run provides an adequate black crappie fishery. Length distribution ranged from 4 to 13" with the majority being 9 to 12". Crappie populations are known to fluctuate due to high annual variation in spawning success, and while not a positive sign for crappie anglers; reduced abundance of this species in this predator heavy community can be viewed beneficially. Anglers are encouraged to harvest any crappie caught up to the 25-fish/day creel limit.

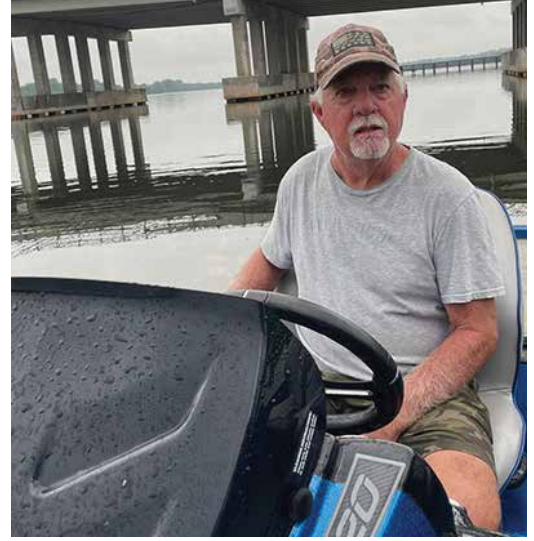


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# Tidal Rappahannock River

BY C.C. MCCOTTER

**O**n a hot and humid July morning I found myself fishing with an old friend on the tidal Rappahannock. It had been a minute since I last fished the Rapp, and I had the feeling of anticipation one might have right before opening the door of a high school reunion - that the experience could be disappointing or amazing, but that the next few hours were going to be interesting. The weather and conditions were pretty much perfect for a summer tidal river visit. We fished from a Nitro Z20.

My host was long-time Rappahannock River angler and bass fishing advocate Bruce Lee. Those of you with some age and a good memory will recall Lee was one of the driving forces behind the formation of the Concerned Bass Anglers of Virginia (CBAV). He, along with several others actively organized anglers into an effective lobbying force and fundraising group and actually stocked the tidal Chickahominy River with largemouth bass despite the then VDGIF disapproval.

Eventually the CBAV and VDGIF began to see eye-to-eye and VDGIF took over

the stocking in year three. Five years after the stockings the Chickahominy River bass fishing was incredible, and a national precedent was set that stocking tidal rivers was a potential tool for fisheries managers.

Lee went on to try the same thing for the tidal Rappahannock (just one year), where he resides riverside and has been fishing for over 50 years. The results weren't as amazing but encouraging, and while bass fishing on the tidal Rapp isn't as good as it is on other tidal rivers around the state, it's pretty good, if you know what you are doing.

I like Bruce. He's a go-getter. I worked with him to set up CBAV. I always like fishing with him. I also wanted my son, Mitchell to meet him. Fishing with Lee is an honor. His knowledge of the Rappahannock is legendary.

We put in that morning at Port Royal Landing and headed down river, running a falling tide in search of feisty Rappahannock bass and perhaps a northern snakehead.

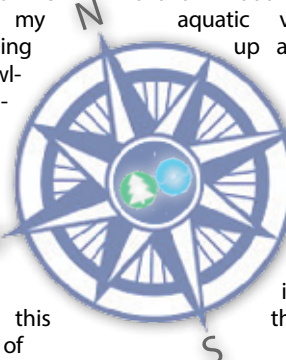
"I've fished the river five times this year, four tournaments and won three of

'em," Bruce told Mitchell and I, pointing out the plaques in his workshop prior to our launch. Lee is pretty-much THE expert on Rapp River fishing on the angling side. His knowledge and advocacy for the river is the stuff of legend.

DWR Biologist John Odenkirk has been studying the tidal Rappahannock for years, but from a more scientific viewpoint. While he and Lee don't always agree on the intricacies of fishery management, they have strong respect for one another.

"The tidal Rappahannock is an interesting river because it really doesn't have great largemouth bass habitat. Yes, there's shallow wood and rocks, but the submerged aquatic vegetation that really revs up a tidal bass fishery has been lacking in many areas of the river. It does have good largemouth fishing, but I don't think it will ever be another Chickahominy or tidal Potomac," Odenkirk told W2. "Stockings in 2013 did show promise but not like those done in the Chickahominy."

Angling for freshwater spe-



"My host was long-time Rappahannock River angler and bass fishing advocate Bruce Lee."



# er Bassin'

cies on the tidal Rappahannock is best from the head-of-tide at Fredericksburg downstream to Leedstown. This section of river is characterized by forested shorelines with large river bends cutting through high banks and cliffs, and below Route 301 the river opens up with broad expanses of tidal marsh. Anglers on the tidal Rappahannock can quite easily forget this river is just miles from densely populated sections of northern Virginia and Washington D.C.

The tidal Rappahannock offers an array of species, including blue catfish, largemouth bass, crappie, white perch and migratory anadromous species such as American shad, hickory shad, river herring (alewife and blueback herring), and striped bass.

With slower growth and lower catch rates, this largemouth population has never had the national reputation the tidal Chickahominy and James largemouth fisheries have experienced. However recent angler reports of good catches of bass in the tidal Rappahannock match findings of VDWR biologists, which include improved electrofishing catch rates in recent years.

Above Route 301, highest bass catch rates in electrofishing surveys were recorded from Hick's Landing downstream to near

Port Royal. Largemouth bass in the lower Rappahannock River, below Portobago Bay, have limited areas where suitable habitat and forage are available; shorelines adjacent to side-channel drop-offs, marsh back channels, and in tidal tributaries. However, recent electrofishing surveys indicate good numbers of largemouth can be found in these pockets of habitat.

As noted above, the tidal Rappahannock River was stocked with roughly 62,000 F-1 LMB on May 20, 2013. CBAV members were able to disperse these bass into 18 selected sites by way of aerated hatchery bags that held a desired weight of bass fingerlings. A DGIF fisheries biologist was present at the Wilmont Landing boat ramp to observe the stocking. Assistance was given in the weighing of the bass before each bag was sent out to the desired stocking location. The stocking sites ranged from Snowden Creek on the western edge to Otterburn Marsh on the eastern range. A large percentage of the bass were stocked within the Marsh Point to Horsehead Point section of the river.

DGIF requested that all F-1 LMB fingerlings be marked by hatchery staff with OTC

| continued on page 20

## River Info

The tidal Rappahannock River begins at the fall line near Fredericksburg all the way down to where the river joins the Chesapeake Bay near Whitestone. There are over 70 miles of main river to fish and dozens of miles of creeks to explore. Tides refresh the river twice a day bringing baitfish and more.

In the summer, you can expect water temperatures from 85-90 and water clarity will vary depending on where you are in the river. In creeks and pockets with hydrilla or in the upper river, you will find fairly clear water. On the main river, the water will be slightly muddy many days. This is not a tannin-stained river, but it does get sediment run off from many sources and the mud flats are extensive.

There are few lily pads except down river near Leedstown and these are mostly American pond lilies – the kind that stick out above the water that can be difficult to fish in the summer. The river does have countless shoreline logs, trees and stumps. Cypress trees are few and far between, though. Hydrilla and other submerged aquatic weeds are at historically high levels. Most of these weeds grown in the lower river, below Port Royal. Most creeks don't harbor much grass but certain ones do like Lyons, Pee Dee, Cat Point and Occupica.

Access to the upper river is decent. You can start at the City Dock Park in Fredericksburg should you want to fish the upper, tidal river (where the smallmouth are). The next ramp is the Little Falls ramp on the north side of the river. As you head down river, the access points are less frequent. The Hopyard boat ramp follows, also on the north side of the river. A couple miles downstream is Hicks' Landing on the south side of the river off Rt. 17. Port Royal Landing is right next to where Rt. 301 crosses the river. Hoskins Creek Boat Ramp is just below Tappahannock and offers access to Piscataway, Occupacia and Catpoint Creeks in the lower, tidal Rappahannock.

Most tidal Rappahannock summer anglers target largemouth bass using a shallow running crankbait, buzzbait, a Texas-rigged running worm, soft plastic stick bait and a creature bait. There is a Chatterbait and spinnerbait bite at times. Braided line is recommended as most of the fish are behind logs or other underwater structure that tends to have a barnacle or two on it that might saw through monofilament.

On an average day, a decent angler should expect to catch from six to twelve largemouth bass from the tidal Rappahannock. If you lock into a good tide and pattern the fish 20-40 bass is certainly possible. Most of the fish will be between 12-15 inches. A few might be over three pounds. A big tidal Rappahannock River largemouth may reach seven to eight pounds.

Locals know there smallmouth bass in the upper reaches of the tidal Rappahannock. They fish for them in the fall and winter within a couple miles of Fredericksburg.

Photos, clockwise from left to right - Bruce Lee and author's son with a triple of bass. Bruce Lee at the Port Royal bridge. The General in a bass' mouth. Bruce Lee fishing water lillies. Author's son and Lee at the Port Royal Landing ramp. Author's son with one of the two snakeheads caught during the visit. The Brian Green Special spinnerbait used.

(Oxytetracycline) for use in determining the percentage of contribution to the 2013 year class as well as tracking the growth rate potential of the supplemental stocking. DGIF staff was able to grow out a subsample of the LMB fingerlings to determine if the fish were properly marked with the OTC dye. DGIF staff at the DGIF Age and Growth Lab detected the presence of the OTC mark on the extracted otoliths of the grow-out bass fingerlings. The majority of the stocked bass were around 1.75 to 2 inches in total length at the time of stocking.

The 2013 electrofishing survey of the tidal Rappahannock River covered the section of the river from just below Port Royal to Catpoint Creek. The 18 standardized sites provided 18,000 seconds (five hours) of electrofishing effort. The fall 2012 survey consisted of the sampling of 20 sites for a total effort of 19,200 seconds (5.33 hours) of pedal time.

The survey consisted of the sampling of 29 sites for the expanded effort of 30,800 seconds (8.56 hours), and it consisted of an expanded effort to cover additional sites that have not been historically sampled in the past. Eleven additional survey runs were conducted for an effort of 12,800 seconds (3.56 hrs).

The goal of this increased effort was to determine if the general areas stocked with supplemental largemouth bass fingerlings on May 20, 2013, would actually still hold fish four months later. Certain areas showed some promise while other areas revealed less than ideal results.

The 11 non-standardized sites provided the collection of 136 largemouth bass for CPUE of 38.25 bass/hr. Of the total of 136 bass, 118 of them fell into the YOY (Young of Year) category based upon using the total length of 250 mm as the cut-off size determination. The YOY CPUE was 33.2 bass/hr. A total of 18 adult-sized bass were collected from these sites. The adult bass CPUE was 5.06 bass/hr.

The 18 standardized sites yielded a total of 96 largemouth bass for a CPUE of 19.2 bass/hr. These sites showed the presence of 61 YOY largemouth bass for a YOY CPUE of 12.2/hr. The 35 adult-sized bass yielded a CPUE of 7

bass/hr. Six of the survey sites conducted in Cat Point Creek (2), Occupacia Creek (2) and Pee Dee Creek (2) were withheld from the analysis due to the fact that these areas were well outside of the stocked section of the river. These six sites yielded no YOY largemouth bass. Only one adult bass from the upper site on Cat Point Creek was collected over the course of these six surveys runs. The removal of this effort (6,000 seconds) from the total effort for standardized sites allows for the CPUE of YOY LMB to climb from 12.2/hr to 18.3/hr.

The surveys within the non-standardized sites provided insight into which stocked areas supplemental bass were able to survive in substantial abundance. The two sample sites of Troy Creek and the marsh edge and side creek across from Wilmont Landing were surveyed on September 11th. These areas had a substantial amount of hydrilla present during the time of sampling. The collection of 72 bass from these sites provided an impressive CPUE of 108 bass/hr and a high proportion (31%) of the total 232 largemouth bass collected during the entire survey.

These two sites yielded a total of 62 YOY (young of year) bass which was 34.6% of the total 179 YOY collected. The 2013 overall CPUE (catch per unit of effort) for largemouth bass was 27.1 bass/hr. The CPUE from the 2012 survey was 14.6 bass/hr. The 2013 CPUE for YOY bass was 20.9 bass/hr. The 2012 CPUE for YOY bass was 5.4 bass/hr. The increased sampling effort in areas where bass were stocked allowed for this favorable increase in CPUE.

A total of 176 YOY bass were used for otolith analysis. Of these 176 fish, the DGIF Age and Growth Lab successfully read 172 of the otoliths for OTC mark verification. A total of 144 bass came back as positive for having OTC marked otoliths. This provided an 83.72% contribution of stocked bass to the 2013 year class. The remaining 28 bass did not have an OTC mark and have been classified as natural stock from the successful spawning behavior of the limited brood stock that is present in the river. The natural stock component of the



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Above left - the Berkley 5.25" The General stickbait in watermelon/red glitter was a productive bait during the visit. Above right - author with a chunky tidal Rappahannock River largemouth bass that inhaled The General.

year class based on the sample set collected was 16.28% contribution.

Some sample sites yielded a limited number of bass that were all from the supplemental stocking. A prime example would be the three YOY bass that were tested from Otterburn Marsh that came back as positive for having an OTC mark. The additional survey run that was conducted within the western branch of Lyons Creek provided 100% OTC mark verification of the 13 bass collected. The survival rate of stocked bass was clearly evident in areas such as Lyons Creek. The 21 YOY LMB from Lyons Creek provided a total of 20 OTC+ LMB for a 95.2% contribution to the 2013 year class. The marsh edge and side creek across from Wilmont Landing provided another high percentage contribution (91.49%) of stocked bass from the largest sample set of 47 YOY bass.

The 2013 electrofishing surveys of the Rappahannock River yielded an increased CPUE of largemouth bass (27.1 LMB/hr) when compared to the 2012 survey (CPUE: 14.6 bass/hr). This increase was a direct reflection of the stocked bass that were still present within the areas that were targeted during the May 20th stocking. The catch rate of YOY LMB showed a favorable increase from 5.4/hr in 2012 to 20.9/hr in 2013.

It appears that the higher concentrations of largemouth bass were found within defined tributaries that had lower concentrations of blue catfish and white perch present. The presence of a substantial amount of SAV (submerged aquatic vegetation), primarily in the form of hydrilla, provided great nursery habitat for young bass in

tributaries such as Troy Creek, Piss Creek and the no name, side creek across from Wilmont Landing. The open, shallow water flats of Otterburn Marsh and Drakes Marsh provided limited numbers of stocked bass.

The slow growth of SAV due to the cold snap in April might be one of the determining factors that these areas did not support a higher survival rate of stocked bass. The fact that abundant white perch, yellow perch and blue catfish are present in these areas most likely added to the demise of a large percentage of stocked bass.

The collection of seven largemouth bass within Baylors Creek was rather disappointing. The abundance of blue catfish stacked along the pad line most likely took care of their share of stocked bass. The survey run within Baylors Creek collected a total of 253 blue catfish (CPUE: 910.8 fish/hr) along with 92 white perch (CPUE: 331.2 fish/hr). The survey yielded the collection of 8,615 total fish.

According to Odenkirk, "the overall contribution percentage of 83.72% of stocked bass to the 2013 year class should provide a substantial boost to the largemouth bass fishery for years to come. The abundance of forage fish (eastern silvery minnows, spottail shiners, threadfin shad) in most areas sampled will provide a great forage base for the bass."

Four of the 18 stocked areas were not sampled during the electrofishing survey. These areas were Portobago Creek, Snowden Creek and the two small creeks on the southern edge of Green Bay. Portobago Creek and Snowden Creek were inaccessible during the low tide

*| continued on page 41*

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# ICAST 2023

## Seeking Out Next Season's Hottest Tackle & Gear

BY JARED MOUNTS

**T**he world's largest sportfishing trade show, ICAST, kicked off their 66<sup>th</sup> year at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando Florida from July 11-14th. The American Sportfishing Association (ASA) headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia is responsible for bringing manufacturers, distributors, media, and retailers from all over the world together under one roof in Florida for four days.

This event has become an annual ritual for the Jake's Bait & Tackle family to attend to find out what's new and upcoming to bring back to our great customers to help them catch more fish or bigger fish. As a Regional Editor for Woods & Water Magazine, I want to bring this news to W2 readers as well.

Networking and building relationships with industry anglers are also a big part of the ICAST experience. Front Royal native and angler Cilla Johnson also attended the ICAST on the Water for the first time this year. She has quite the resume in the fishing industry. Cilla reps for Berkley Fishing, Abu Garcia, Jackson Kayak, Power-Pole, Cashion Rods, ZMan, Torqeedo, and YakAttack and many more. She represented the United States and Team Philippines in the 2023

Kayak Fishing World Championship held in Tennessee. Whether she is chasing snakehead on the Potomac or competing in the NVKA tournaments, Cilla is an ambassador for woman anglers.

At the State of the Industry breakfast we learned 54.5 million people, six years old and older went fishing in 2022. Kids fishing from 6-17 years old is up 2.5 million from last year. Woman are up 42% for first time fishing. An amazing 1,100 new products were introduced in 2023.

Our first stop was the ICAST On The Water event held on one of the ponds next to the convention center. Approximately 20 vendors were set up along the walkway promoting their product. The unique thing about this outdoor venue is participants can try out the product on the water.

Kayaks, watercraft, and the Torqeedo electric motor can be seen buzzing around the pond. Rods and reels were also used casting lures into the pond.

Bill Siemantel of FishLab BBZ was on hand to introduce us to their new line of spinnerbaits and buzzbaits. The 4.5" Bio-Blade Buzzbait is one of a kind with a two-piece independent blade design that can be bent on the water to provide a different clack pitch. We were able to see on the water how quickly this buzzbait got up on plane and we could

hear firsthand the loud distinct pitch on a slow and fast retrieve. The buzzbait was built for adding a plastic frog as it is skirtless.

Another noteworthy new soft plastic bait is The Bomba by Missile Baits. This is a 3.5-inch finesse, thick, craw body worm that casts and skips like a rocket! Fish it Texas-rigged and weightless to erratically fall to the bottom while gliding, rocking, and even going away from you at times.

Jacob Wheeler and Rapala worked extensively to create the CrushCity soft plastic line. Wheeler noted he created "the soft baits I need to win tournaments". The Bronco Bug has the most lifelike action with snapback "bronco kick" when it lands, imitating a defensive craw.

The new forward facing sonar technology has opened a new market for lures. The new Yamamoto Scope Shad is a three-inch perfect profile rigged for a vertical presentation. Throw this on a Buckeye Scope Head that is weighted to give it a horizontal natural presentation for suspended fish.

The last soft bait that caught our attention was the Geecrack Bellows Gill Swimmer. Most are familiar with the popular Bellows Gill profile. They've

| continued on page 24

"Another noteworthy new soft plastic is The Bomba by Missile Baits."

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added a paddle tail for more water movement. At 3.2 inches, it is recommended to use a 4/0 EWG swimbait hook to rig it horizontally.

Manufacturers can enter new products into 37 different categories as part of the New Product Showcase. Participants vote on their favorite in each category. Here are a few of the category winners that you may be most interested in. Release dates for each of these products vary as some are available now and others may not be available for several months.

**Best Freshwater Soft Lure**

The Berkley PowerBait Nessie

This soft bodied jointed glide bait is slow sinking, great for skipping, and has the Powerbait scent. It features a mesh reinforced joint for durability while allowing for free range of motion and stabilizing fins for consistent action. It comes in 10 custom-painted, forage-matching finishes in three sizes and retails for \$12.99. A quick disclaimer on this lure: at the time of writing this article I came across a post by Mike Bucca in reference to a dispute between Grow Design Works and Berkley Fishing. You can check out Bucca's post on his Facebook for more details and discussion.

**Best Terminal Tackle**

VMC Swingin' Ned Rig Jig

The new articulated jig head design maintains a solid stand up with added flow and natural swing movement to your Ned rig presentation. Adjustable fluorocarbon keeper, offset point, long shank, and wide gap will work on many of your plastics. The heavy head and design allows for longer casts, better bottom contact, and great crawling action. Retailing at \$5.49 for a 3 pack in 3/16, 3/8, or 1/4 ounce weight.

**Best Freshwater Hard Lure**

Z-Man Chatterbait Elite EVO

Z-Man's patented direct head-to-blade connection allows for quick start vibration and increased hunting action. It features a hybrid molded split-grip wire trailer keeper to secure your favorite soft plastic trailers. What anglers will notice differently about this line will be the new head paint schemes, skirt color patterns, and blades finished with a glitter coat. Retailing at \$9.99

**Best Fishing Line**

Shimano's Mastiff Fluorocarbon

The 100% fluorocarbon, produced in Japan, will offer strength, durability, and smoothness. Anglers will note the line is smooth to the touch however engineers have added NANOARMOR technology to it. Nano-size ridges across the outer surface of the line will enhance knot strength and toughness, preventing slippage and reducing the risk of line breakage. Retail price of \$24.99 for 200 yards.

**Best Freshwater Reel**

Shimano's Stradic FM

Smooth as a hot knife through butter, the



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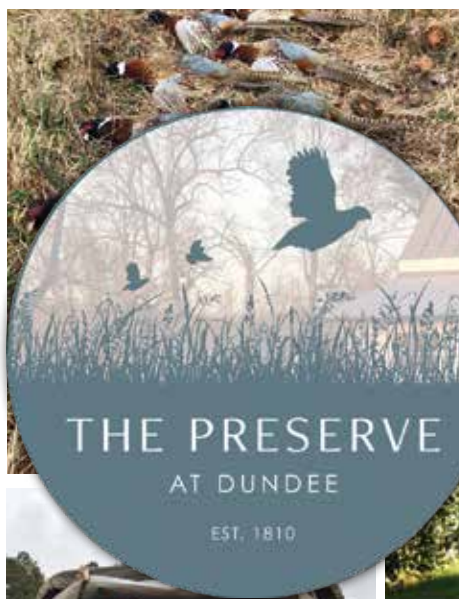
Just north of Richmond, our 200-acre hunting preserve has been cultivated and strategically prepared for upland hunting. There are several distinct and different hunting environments including traditional pine forests, open field, and sloping hills.

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Ted Barrett, Owner & Director  
The Preserve at Dundee



Stradic FM adds infinity Xross technology for unequalled gear durability and synergy. This parlays Shimano's legacy of cold-forged HAGANE gearing for added strength with the refinement of MicroModule II. InfinityDrive delivers increased cranking power under load while the new Duracross Drag provides the smooth performance of felt with up to 10 times the durability. Retail Price of \$219.99

**Best Freshwater Rod**

St. Croix Mojo Bass TRIGON

This rod features St. Croix's proprietary, new, ergonomic TRIGON handle and Dynamix Reel Seat design based on anthropometric data. The rod series is built on premium SCII carbon or 100% Linear S-Glass blanks (reaction-bait models only), with length, powers, and actions to support bass fishing techniques from BFS to eight-ounce swimbaits. MSR of \$175

**Best Rod & Reel Combo**

Abu Garcia ZATA Baitcast Combo

The ZATA low profile reels feature a 10+1 bearing system for smooth operation. The lightweight graphite frame and Infini brake system offers limitless adjustability to handle all of your fishing situations. The reel is paired on a 24-Ton graphite blank with stainless steel guides offering great sensitivity to strikes. Suggested Retail of \$229.95

**Best Motorized Boating Accessories**

Power-Pole Move ZR Trolling Motor

The Power-Pole MOVE ZR scissor lift style is perfect for traditional bow-mount bass boats. Made to handle both saltwater and freshwater with multi-layered corrosion resistance, it's built with compound fail safes and held strong with an unbreakable aerospace-grade titanium shaft. MSRP is \$4999.99

Each year we attend this fishing industry conference, I walk away with a new appreciation for the collaboration of all of the great people bringing angler products that continue to get the job done on the water. Innovation and improvement to products is always on the minds of the folks in the industry.

The owners of American Baitworks is rolling out a new line of Bait Fuel for the saltwater anglers. They want to make sure it's not a gimmick but scientifically proven to work through extensive studies.

You hear Bill Siemantel with FishLab Tackle talk about the "Science of the Strike". The water is their lab and they love research. Similarly, Jacob Wheeler built a testing pool to create the new Crush City line of plastics for Rapala. He talks about the perfect hardness as well as softness to get a consistent action that produces often. A desire to be the best and win tournaments drives them to excellence.

Whether you are a recreational, weekend warrior or competitive tournament angler you can be assured the leaders in the fishing industry put their time in on the water and in the lab to bring you something that will produce.



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# Crow, Dove And Goose C

BY C.C. MCCOTTER

Let's talk about realistic hunting challenges for Virginia hunters. How about dropping a dove, goose and crow all in one day? You'll be pursuing 50-mile-per hour softballs, armored drones and the smartest bird that flies. Is that even possible? It can be if you know where to look, have the right equipment and move quickly from venue to venue. Here's some advice on how to drop this early season feathered hat trick.

## Goose

Early goose season begins at legal shooting hours and that means sunrise. You can choose to hunt early or late for resident geese, just be sure you've scouted them before showing up and have some idea as to where you're going because you often have one or two shots before they wise up.

Public lakes and private ponds are abundant in our region. Many farmers do not like the resident geese as they cause damage to crops and yards. Take some time and ask to hunt their small ponds so that you can help them reduce the problem.

Kayaks are great for hunting geese.

Access to public lakes can also be accomplished in the rural areas by asking permission of homeowners to set up off their docks or put your jon boat in from their property and set up in front of their pier. Many lake property owners are frustrated with the damage to the manicured lawns that they try to maintain all year. Just keep in mind minimum distances you can hunt from an occupied dwelling. This often varies from county to county, so be aware of this BEFORE you set up your decoy spread.

If you can, try and buy a half dozen decoys or ask someone to borrow a little flock. Most experienced waterfowl hunters are eager to encourage and help beginners and may be willing to lend you or give you a few of their old decoys.

During early goose season, the geese are typically still in their family bunches and do not always feed together in large flocks. A tip is to use small decoy spreads: 10-18 decoys total. Use small bunches of decoys spread out to resemble family flocks. This gives the realistic early season appearance as well as gives the geese plenty of room to land.

Decoys are not an absolute necessity because resident geese will often come repeatedly into an area where they feel safe – where they were yesterday is where they often go today. The decoys will help but you can be successful without them. Calling to resident geese is also not critical.

As far as specialized camo, don't get too involved. Your lightweight hunting clothing will provide the necessary camouflage cover.

Beginners usually think that they need a special gun for waterfowl hunting, but this is not the case. Granted many new guns today are designed with waterfowl hunting in mind, with camouflage coverings, weather resistant coatings and specialized choke systems.

You can actually use your existing deer hunting shotgun to experience the fun of goose hunting. Waterfowl hunting does require the use of steel or non-lead shot, which if shot enough can wear down your favorite deer barrel.

Shooting geese usually requires larger shot such as BB. When you look at the expense of blended metal shot such as Hevi-Shot, it appears to be expensive, but if you compare shooting a bird one or two times

“Many farmers do not like the resident geese as they cause damage to crops and yards.”



# Gear Check

When it comes to getting outfitted for a hunting season, look no further than the shop that has outfitted more Virginia hunters than anyone else over the past 50 years.

We consulted with Travis Barrett at Green Top Sporting Goods to come up with some gear suggestions for crow, dove and goose hunting seasons. The gear covered here ranges from the guns and ammo, to the decoys and calls, even the other, specialty gear you may want to invest in before opening day.

Speaking of opening day, here are the seasons for crow, dove and early goose:

**Crow** - August 19 through March 15: on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. September 1 through March 9: on National Forest Lands and Department lands on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays only.

**Dove** - First Segment September 2-October 22, Hours, September 2: 12:00 noon until sunset. September 3-October 22: One-half hour before sunrise until sunset.

**Early Goose** - September 1-25, Statewide, Hours: East of I-95, September 1-16: One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.

September 17-25: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset. Hours: West of I-95, September 1-20: One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. September 21-25: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset. Bag Limit 10 per day, 30 in possession.

A gun you might want to consider purchasing for all three species in this challenge is the Benelli Super Black Eagle 3. This shotgun focuses on three critical areas of importance improved ergonomics, flawless functionality, and updated design for a look and feel that delivers cutting edge style. The SBE 3 also features BE.S.T., or the Benelli Surface Treatment - a proprietary coating that protects the steel with a tough, impenetrable armor to stop rust and corrosion. According to Barrett at Green Top Sporting Goods, the 28" 12 ga. Benelli Super Black Eagle is at home in the dove field, goose blind and at your side as you call crows within range. You can use various screw-in chokes to adjust to the various hunting scenarios.

When it comes to hunting crows, you will definitely need some type of caller. You can use a mouth call or a digital call that plays recorded crow sounds to attract the birds to your decoys. The Cass Creek Ergo Electronic Crow Call/Hawk/Owl Sounds is a great option at just \$22.95. Green Top stocks mouth crow calls from Primos and Hunter Specialties for under \$11 each.

You will need at least a half dozen crow decoys. Full body decoys are recommended. If available try the Greenhead Gear FFD Elite Crow Look Out Decoy. These are fully flocked with the RealMotion stake included that fits in body slot in the tail.

Are decoys necessary when hunting doves? That depends. If you have scouted and located a roosting tree, power lines or water spot, maybe not. The spinning wing Mojo Voodoo dove decoy might help get the birds' attention, though, and therefore within range of your shooting blind. Get the Mojo Outdoors Dove Tree and combine the Voodoo with a few clip on decoys and really fool 'em!

# Challenge

to shooting three or four times, the blended metals products are cheaper and you feel more comfortable in your abilities. We also have an ethical obligation to make a quick, clean harvest. Consider this when buying your ammo and patterning your new barrel.

If you buy a good beginner goose call it will have instructions on basic calling, which is all you need to call the more relaxed resident geese.

Be sure to check all the laws as there are three hunting zones in Virginia for goose season, each having different rules. You will also need a Virginia hunting license, state and federal waterfowl stamps and H.I.P. permit.

Use your existing camouflage clothing and any deer blind material you have to cover up you and your gear. Hunt the mornings and evenings trying your calls, watch the reaction of the geese and try to learn new things. In no time you will be off to the next challenge at noon...

## Dove

Dove hunting is a favorite early season activity among area shooters. As long as you understand that not every cornfield has doves and that some overgrown fields can be loaded, you'll at least understand just how random a good dove shoot can be.

Keep in mind, the first segment of dove season begins each day at noon. With that

being said, location is critical in dove hunting, both in having a location with birds and in surveying the location for bird patterns.

The most successful dove hunts take place on managed dove fields, either public state run operations, pay to shoot hunts, or private venues. During season, check out message boards at sporting goods stores, Woods & Waters Magazine and word of mouth for good hunts. Public hunting lands take a lot of pressure from the public. Make no mistake about it, it will get crowded early as people come in several hours before shooting time to pick out the good spots and make claim. Pay hunts are usually fairly reliable and you can expect to pay anywhere from \$50 to \$150 a gun. Ask around to see if anyone has experience with a certain outfitter. If you live "out in the country" and know landowners and farmers who will let you hunt, that is likely the best route to go.

Given the choice to hunt a cornfield, sunflowers, or some combination of these with or without various millets, I would choose sunflowers. And each particular field will show a preferred feeding route for the birds. From the nesting areas the birds travel a predictable route to and from the field. Scout this if you have time and set up accordingly. Do not be afraid to move if you aren't getting birds and it is ok with the host - trust me on this one - if there are

| continued on page 28

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**Dove, Goose & Crow Challenge** from 27

only a few birds and they are showing a particular flight path you want to be able to reach them as they travel that pattern.

With regards to clothing and concealment, I can tell you that like most game, dove have great eyesight and will flare if they see movement or color contrasts they don't like. Sure, ol' granddad will claim he hunts 'em in a white tee shirt and flip-flops, but I recommend colors that blend into the surroundings. Camouflage is not required, but the clothes should be earth toned at the least. My favorite early season outfit is a pair of beat up green jeans and a brown shirt. I like a wide brimmed hat for sun protection.

There's way too much yakity-yak about guns and loads and such. You got a gun bigger than a 28 gauge? Bring it. By some quality #8 shot loads, one ounce for 12 gauge, and 7/8 ounce for 20 gauges. Modified choke for single barrels, IC and Modified for double barrels. Bring some cold drinks. A sports bucket will come in handy for keeping drinks, extra shells, and bagged birds, and giving your feet a rest.

Using dove decoys is a good idea. The rotary winged versions are effective, but tend to cause lots of low birds so be careful. Decoys for power lines and fence posts are DEADLY. And you only need three or five decoys: Place one decoy. Then 10 feet away put the other ones space about a foot apart. Watch the birds come from 100 yards to get in that open spot.

FYI, the ticks and chiggers (red bugs) will eat you alive squatting or standing in a dove field. Spray down liberally before the hunt, especially around the top of your boots and pant legs.

**Crow**

Not everyone is Duck Commander with duck boat, dozens of decoys, \$100 calls, fancy guns and purebred retrieving dogs.

Nope, there are those that hit the field in worn Carhartts, long-sleeved camouflaged shirts bought at Wal-Mart and a slightly rusty 12 ga. pump found at a garage sale for \$35. The most expensive part of the gear kit is probably the electronic game caller at \$49.95.

These are the pursuers of the Black Bandit, the Brotherhood of the Crowe or just crow hunters.

Hunting crows can be a rewarding experience considering they are the smartest of the North American birds, destructive to farm crops and wreak havoc on their fellow bird populations.

You can pursue this highly intelligent quarry while assisting farmers and doing a favor for other birds if you choose to hunt crows. Here are some of the basics of crow hunting that will help you get started this season, in between duck hunts, of course!

**Locating Crows**

Locating crows is not unlike locating other game birds. Drive around and look for them on farmlands, feed lots, orchards and vineyards. You might also listen and then blow a few "Come Here" calls and see what response you get. Sometimes you can call in crows during a slow time on a dove hunt.

If you are lucky enough to locate a roost or flyway, you can often find hundreds of crows. Dense pine or cedar trees often serve as crow roosts. Check them in the evenings or right after sunrise.

Crows are most successfully hunting in the morning as they fly down from roosts and hungrily look for food. They respond to calling and decoys best early in the day. By the late afternoon they are full and trying to just get back to their roost.

Crow season in Virginia began last month and runs through the early spring. You are permitted to hunt Wednesday, Friday Saturday and Sunday only, no matter where you hunt. Crows are a federally regulated migratory species; however, no HIP permit is required and hunters may use unplugged shotguns to hunt them. Electronic calls may be used on private and public lands and are very effective at drawn crows within range.

Well, there you have it - an early season hat trick game challenge worth attempting. Good luck!



## what's new?

### Fredericksburg Ducks Unlimited Banquet

Area waterfowlers and conservationists will gather September 8, 3 pm at the Fredericksburg Fairgrounds for their annual Beef & Crab Feast.

The event will bring together hunters from all over the region to enjoy the fellowship of a fine meal as well as raise funds for the many conservation projects the chapter champions.

Come out and meet 2023 Wetland Protector of the Year, Chris Hallberg as well as many of the region's top waterfowl hunters.

The afternoon's schedule begins with the first serving of crabs at 3 pm as well as the opening of the VIP hospitality area. Dinner will be served at 6 pm and a gun raffle drawing will commence at 7:30 pm. At 8 pm there will be a live auction. Tickets are available at [www.fredericksburgdu.org](http://www.fredericksburgdu.org).

### New Outdoor Expo At End Of August

The Appomattox Community & Disaster Relief Organization will be hosting a two-day event, "The Appomattox Outdoor Expo" on Saturday, August 26, 2023, from 10am - 6pm and Sunday, August 27, 2023, from 11am - 5pm at the Spring Grove Events Center Appomattox, VA 24538.

The event will feature manufacturers and dealers of outdoor and recreational equipment related to hunting, fishing, archery, camping, guns, knives, etc. Food vendors will be on site, full glass purchases & bottles of wine, distilled spirits cocktails and craft beers will be available for purchase. Crafters will be at this event offering their wares. This is a family-friendly event, but please, no dogs or other pets.

The ACDR is holding this fundraising event to provide the training, equipment, and manpower to provide the citizens of Appomattox County with Emergency/Disaster Preparedness training, as well as First Aid, Search & Rescue, and others. Portions of the proceeds are earmarked for equipment donations to local law enforcement.

Information and ticket sales will be posted on the website, [www.AppomattoxEvents.com](http://www.AppomattoxEvents.com), with an info hotline message available (434) 998-1203. Tickets will be \$10 for each day, with under 12 years FREE, and can be purchased online. Get your tickets soon, this should be a popular event!

Visit and "LIKE" the event Facebook page, Appomattox Outdoor Expo, (@APXExpo) to be kept informed of event happenings as well as the website, [www.AppomattoxEvents.com](http://www.AppomattoxEvents.com)



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winged wisdom

## The Challenges Of Chokes

BY KATE AHNSTROM

**T**o choke or not to choke? That is one of the most inflammatory and greatly contested questions. This is my take....

### How Chokes Work

Shotguns, initially known as "scatter guns" utilize a series of graduated chokes. The chokes offer a variety of constrictions to allow the shooter to produce an open or restricted pattern dependent upon the distance of the target and being able to deliver a clean kill shot, clay or feathered. Chokes do not assist in the speed (velocity) of the actual shot but will affect the pattern.

One thing I ALWAYS recommend to students is to shoot a pattern test with different chokes. This will verify if the selection is viable based on the intended target. Not all guns will shoot all ammo with the desired pattern.

A two-barrel set up allows the shooter to quickly select between the 2 different chokes based on the presentation. Once I've seen a presentation, I'll determine which barrel will fire first. Both of my Syrens are set up with Light Modified (LM) in

the top and Improved Cylinder (IC) in the bottom. This deadly duo gets me through just about any clays or upland feathers with great success.

Recently, a student wanted to know if his over/under was set up correctly and why those chokes went into those specific barrels. My response, you want a more precise alignment on a bird (clay/feathered) at distance. The top barrel is immediately under your eye and offers a better vantage point down the rib for the shooter's sight picture, so this is always the tighter choke. (Pro tip- you shoot a 60yd bird the same way you shoot a 20yd bird - more on this in an article to come later).

NEVER shoot a shell through a gun without a choke if the barrels are threaded to receive one. It will damage the threads and possibly blow out the end of the barrel. There are guns (new and old) manufactured with "fixed" chokes. This just means that the gun can only offer a particular pattern and cannot be changed.

Chokes for Upland & Waterfowl  
 Different birds offer different flight patterns and feather

"Chokes do not assist in the speed (velocity) of the actual shot but will affect the pattern."

densities. A quail, delicate feathers and weighing in at a few ounces, known for quick, short and often lower flight patterns doesn't require more than #8 shot load and an IC choke. For chukar, that same #8 shot and IC choke will work just fine, for pen-raised birds. As you move into pheasants, you will want a little larger shot size (#6/#7.5) and a little more choke M/IC.

For wild birds, in early season, smaller shot with more open chokes, or later season birds, bigger shot with tighter chokes. My best recommendation, set up the bottom barrel with IC and Mod/LM in the top barrel. Tighten up to the next level for mid and late season. The cover is better early and holds the birds. As cover depletes and birds are educated, the flushes will occur farther out.

Waterfowl require heavier shot and steel. This means you will want to typically use an IC choke as it will mimic a tighter choke due to the pattern of the steel and the amount of shot traveling the barrel. Keep in mind, this is subject to early/late season and the average shot distance.

#### Choking for Sporting Clays

Once you see a show pair, use a more open choke for closer birds and tighter choke for farther birds. Keep your shot size in mind. Again, LM/IC is a great all-around combo. If you have #9 shot on hand, smaller shot will mimic a more open choke and offer a bigger spread. For those with autoloaders, a great trick is to use 2 different shot sizes or loads to mimic a more open or tighter choke. This is a great way to crush a report pair or true pair when you are using a single barrel shotgun.

Regardless of the chokes you choose, pattern them. Be sure to take a friend or family member with you and share the education and opportunity! 🍷🍷



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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# Watch Out For E15 Fuel At Pump Near You...

Aside from regular, mid-range, and premium a new ethanol blend, E15 is finding its way into gas pumps and boaters are being warned with bright orange labels.

Mechanics advise avoiding standard E10 or using additives if only ethanol is available and not letting ethanol sit in tanks for more than two weeks. Ethanol, E10, contains alcohol which is "hygroscopic," meaning it attracts water molecules. Boat fuel systems are vented, and moisture collects in fuel and bonds with alcohol, sinking to the tank bottom where fuel pick-ups are located. At this point nothing good happens from performance issues to catastrophic engine damage as the powerful alcohol astringent loosens fuel tank debris.

E15, with even more alcohol, is showing up unannounced at pumps across the country and is not approved in outboard motors by every manufacturer. Boat Owners Association of The United States (BoatUS) reminds boaters to ensure the right fuel goes into the tank since fuel sellers don't make the clarification between mixtures. Federal law prohibits using E15 fuel in boats. Ethanol voids engine warranties and has been proven to cause damage to marine engines. Any pump dispensing E15 fuel must have an approved orange

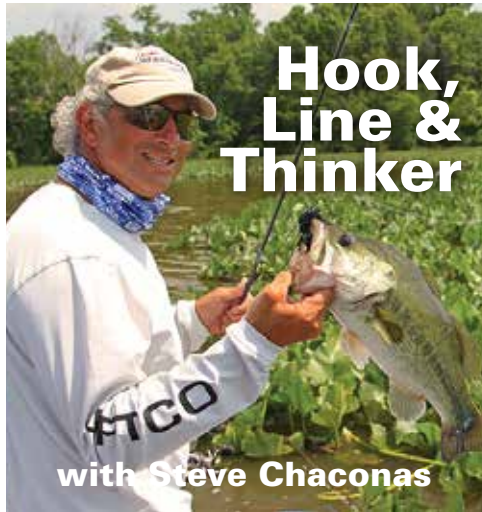
warning label.

Major engine manufactures include E15 fuel tank warning labels. Warranty coverage on a wide range of repairs and services are voided on Mercury engines operated using fuel with an ethanol content of more than 10%. It's been Mercury's long standing policy for years that ethanol can damage outboards, but the availability of E15 at pumps this summer adds more risk of its use.

This could be due to an unaware boater or one who wants to save money and isn't aware of the damage ethanol can cause. But it's endangering boaters who know, but might not notice the pump's ethanol-content labels when fueling up.

More E15 is available as a Clean Air Act waiver expanded the sale to June 1 to September 15, prime boating season, where it had previously been excluded. BoatUS has fought efforts to weaken pump labeling rules, maintaining pressure to keep bright orange labels and to educate boaters about E15 hazards to boats.

Another major outboard manufacturer, Yamaha, recommends a ten-micron water-separating fuel filter. Yamaha also recommends a marine-specific fuel stabilizer and conditioner every fill up to prevent oxidation and phase separation to protect metals



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Author Capt. Steve Chaconas is Potomac bass fishing guide & freelance writer. Potomac River reports: [www.nationalbass.com](http://www.nationalbass.com). YouTube video channel National-BassGuide.

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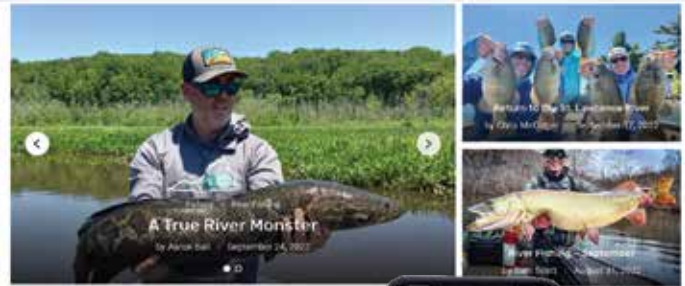
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#6708-#67331-3±Acres-\$449,000.00 This charming 2-story home is nestled in the serene community of Cluster Springs, VA. Surrounded by the lush countryside of Halifax County, this property offers a perfect blend of peaceful rural living and convenient modern amenities. This property features a sprawling 3 acres with a meticulously maintained yard and beautiful landscaping. A large rear deck is perfect for outdoor relaxation and entertainment. In addition to the built-in garage, the expansive concrete driveway leads to a detached 2-car garage providing ample parking and storage. The first floor features a cozy living room with a fireplace, a modern eat-in kitchen with custom built oak cabinets and stainless steel appliances, a formal dining room, a large primary suite with a luxurious bathroom, an office and a second full bath. **Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011**

#6707-2±Acres-\$175,000.00 Nestled in the picturesque town of Spring Grove, VA, in Surry County, our old country store is a beloved local establishment. With its prime location at the corner of two highways, Rt 10 and Rt 40, and situated on a spacious 2-acre lot, the store offers excellent visibility and convenience for both residents and passersby. This advantageous placement ensures a steady flow of potential customers, contributing to the store's success. Additionally, the store provides employment opportunities for residents, contributing to the economic well-being of the community. **Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011**

#6706-#112200-0.69±Acres-\$1,200,000.00 Established in 1983, our service center and auto sales business in Colonial Heights, VA, has been serving the local community for several decades. With a prime location and a range of services, we have built a reputation for quality workmanship and excellent customer service. Situated on 0.69 acres, our service center and auto sales business features an office area, a comfortable waiting area for customers, and three fully-equipped service bays. The combination of our service center and auto sales business provides a diversified revenue stream, further enhancing profitability. **Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011**

#6689-#67230-0.42±Acres-\$169,000.00 Newly updated home within walking distance to local country club. The open concept of the home gives your guests freedom of movement and welcoming feeling in the main living area. The home has all new appliances, new countertops, freshly painted throughout, remodeled bathroom, hardwood floors, and new carpet in the primary bedroom and hallway. The wrap around deck

gives you a large area for entertaining family/friends or for a quaint & cozy breakfast nook. The home is located within a few mins to shopping, dining, dr's offices, and a plethora of community activities and gathering spots. Mecklenburg Co. boasts of both Buggs Island/Kerr Lake & Lake Gaston. Kerr Lake is within 15 mins & Lake Gaston within 25. **Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011**

#6704-#50510-16.27±Acres-\$49,900.00 Welcome to the scenic and secluded hunting property located in Lunenburg County, Keysville, Virginia. Spanning an impressive 16.27 acres, this property offers an exceptional opportunity for hunting enthusiasts and those seeking a peaceful retreat in nature. With its abundant wildlife, half-mile frontage on a state-maintained dirt road, and potential for subdivision, this property presents an enticing investment for both recreational and development purposes. For hunting enthusiasts, this property is a dream come true. Lunenburg County is known for its diverse wildlife population, including deer, turkey, small game, and more. Subdividing the land can also provide an excellent investment opportunity. **Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011**

#6681-#67213-3.5±Acres-\$120,000.00 Farmette fixer upper with 3.5 acres, pond, and workshop. This vintage home is waiting to be brought to life again. The home draws you back to a slower time when front porches were for sipping iced tea and shelling butter beans on hot summer evenings as lightning bugs twinkled from the edges of slowly darkening woods. From the workshop out back, the sounds of saw blades and hammers filled the air with anticipation. Property is situated in a rural area within 10 mins to the nearest town where you will find grocery stores, doctors, dining, and other local merchants and social activities. 30 mins to either South Hill or South Boston. Approx. 15 miles to the lakeside town of Clarksville and the nearest boat ramp for Kerr Lake. **Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011**

#6702-#2315669-0.36±Acres-\$298,000. Welcome to your brand new home in the charming town of McKenney, Virginia! This beautiful new construction property offers the perfect combination of modern comfort and small-town living. With 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, and approximately 1600 square feet of living space, this home is designed to meet all your needs. Situated within the town limits of McKenney, you'll enjoy the convenience of town water and sewer services, ensuring a hassle-free living experience. The kitchen is a true centerpiece, boasting modern appliances, sleek countertops, and ample cabinet space for all your culinary needs. Enjoy the outdoors and entertain guests on the spacious patio or consider transforming it into your own personal oasis. **Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011**

#6694-#67262-2.20±Acres-\$519,000.00 Imagine waking up to the peaceful views Kerr Lake has to offer. This private, spacious 2 Bedroom 2 full bath lake home situated on 2.2 acres will give you just that. This dream home is wonderfully secluded at the end of a private drive off of a gravel cul-de-sac. As you enter through the newly built 28x30 - car garage you will find the laundry/mud/pantry room. Once you open the door to the kitchen you will immediately feel at home. The home has stainless steel appliances and a granite countertop island with ample storage for all cooking needs. Outside are panoramic

views of the Bluestone quadrant of Kerr Lake. **Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011**

#6701-#67303-0.60±Acres-\$415,000.00 Historic Home nestled in the heart of a charming neighborhood. Originally built in 1884, the home was meticulously renovated in 2022, combining timeless charm with modern luxury. Steeped in history, this architectural gem boasts a grand foyer & exquisite original hardwood floors. The formal dining room, adorned with elegant detailing and ample natural light, offers a delightful space for entertaining guests or hosting memorable gatherings. Walking distance to the picturesque Dan River, quaint shops, dining, local library & SOVA Innovation Hub. This home offers a unique opportunity to own a piece of the past while enjoying the comforts of modern living. **Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011**

#6699-#67284-8.53±Acres-\$89,000.00 Introducing a truly exceptional property, encompassing 8.53 acres of natural beauty and limitless potential. As you explore this expansive property, you'll be enchanted by the lush greenery, with mature hardwoods casting a gentle shade over the landscape. One of the standout features of this property is the enchanting Blue Creek that gracefully meanders through the land. Just seconds away, you'll find yourself at the renowned Buggs Island/Kerr Lake, where endless recreational opportunities await. Whether it's boating, fishing, or simply enjoying a day at the beach, this pristine lake will become your personal playground. **Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011**

#6697-#67285-14±Acres-\$879,000. Introducing a truly exceptional property that offers a rare combination of two houses, expansive acreage, and exceptional equestrian amenities. Nestled on 14 acres of picturesque land, this equine property is a sanctuary for nature enthusiasts and horse lovers alike. The houses have been thoughtfully upgraded with new metal roofs, HVAC systems, and new flooring. The whole house generator was installed in 2019. Five well-maintained paddocks allow for rotation and proper grazing management. The centerpiece of this equestrian haven is the impressive 80x80 barn. It features seven spacious stalls, a 13x26 workshop within the barn, and hayloft. **Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011**

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river fishing

# Which Line Is Best? Braid, fluorocarbon or monofilament?

BY CHRIS GORSUCH

**S**uccess is often determined by a fine line.

Just recently, a client looked at the four rods I had set out for them and began to ask me about rod and line choice. Each rod was rigged with a different lure and varied between two and three power rods and of course a variety of line types. I mentioned that I get this question a lot and started to explain the attributes of the line types, why I choose them for specific applications and how changing the type of line can allow anglers to cast further, feel strikes better and help keep fish from unbuttoning during the fight.

The words were put into play as they cast and caught bass that day on a variety of lure combinations. At the end of the trip, the client suggested I devote an article to the topic of fishing line, so here we are.

Walk into any tackle shop today and you will find entire sections dedicated to fishing line. Larger outdoor shops will have aisles of line options or racks specifically set up for each type of fishing line. For many anglers, they can get lost in the sea of choices. Hopefully this short article will help anglers understand the pros and cons.

To start, there are three main types of fishing lines: monofilament, fluorocarbon and super lines (such as braids and fusions). They all have specific attributes and once anglers understand the value they add, all three will have a place in most tackle bags. Each type of line has its own place for me.

## Monofilament Fishing Line

Tried and true, this line has been doing it all for well over 60 years and will continue to. One of its best features is that it stretches, adding a level of shock and forgiveness in a number of situations.

If you throw crankbaits, you know how important a moderate slow action rod can help keep the fish from throwing the lure once hooked. What monofilament offers, is enough stretch to tame a faster action rod without sacrificing longer casts. In a perfect world, we would all have 15-20 rods with the perfect action to match the lures we wish to throw. The stretch factor here, allows anglers to use a rod that may not be the best action for a given application.

Monofilament is inexpensive and can be found anywhere. It also offers great knot strength. Another great feature is

that monofilament is rather buoyant. This makes it a solid choice for topwater, especially smaller, lighter plugs that can get pulled underwater with sinking lines.

Where monofilament falls short is that it holds a lot of memory and over time (and use) it will start to coil. This will impact casting distance and likely cause other line issues. For this reason, at least from my experience, monofilament needs to be changed more often than the other two fishing lines on this list.

My favorite lures for monofilament line are lipped and lipless crankbaits, buzzbaits, spinnerbaits and topwater plugs. I can add shallow running jerkbaits as well, but in some conditions, I prefer fluorocarbon line due to the sink rate.

## Fluorocarbon Fishing Line

Well known as leader material, fluorocarbon line is virtually invisible in water and offers exceptional abrasion resistance. The stuff is down-right incredible in that department. It is also stronger than monofilament in the same diameter.

As a main line, fluorocarbon line lasts longer than monofilament. Having far less memory, it does not tend to coil and comes off the spool better. Especially

**“They all have specific attributes and once anglers understand the value they add, all three will have a place in most tackle bags.”**

when it comes to baitcasting. For spinning reels, it can be problematic as it wants to jump off the spool. One thing I can share, is that not all fluorocarbon lines are equal in that department.

The downside to fluorocarbon line, is the expense. It can be several times the cost of monofilament. Knot strength also comes into play, however wetting the line before cinching the knot tight will take many of these concerns away.

Fluorocarbon sinks, which depending on your lure choice, can be a pro or a con.

My favorite lures on fluorocarbon line are soft jerkbaits (such as Super Flukes, Fitt River Darters), drop shot rigs and wake baits. I also find that deeper running jerkbaits will reach better depths on sinking line. Clear water lake fishing opens up more lures due to line visibility, far less of a concern on the rivers I fish.

#### Super Lines (Braids & Fusions)

While we can debate all day on whether or not fluorocarbon line stretches, one thing is for certain; super lines do NOT stretch. And depending on the situation, this can be good or bad. For me, limited stretch adds incredible feel for jiggling or feeling lures such as tubes, Ned Rigs, and other bottom bouncing lures. Braided line is second to none in this department. That said, braid is my last choice for most crankbaits. I find that the shock factor of braid causes too many drops during the

fight. The smaller the treble hook, the less I like using braided line.

Keep in mind, as with the segment on monofilament, the action of the rod can be enhanced by the line used. When it comes to braided lines, a lighter action rod can be used. Lighter action adds to the sensitivity and yet with braid, the angler can still maintain a solid hook-set. Zero line stretch will make feeling the lure and setting the hook easier, it can be a disadvantage for anglers who have "gorilla or monster" hook sets. While some anglers tie lures and jigs directly to the braid, I prefer to tie a fluorocarbon leader between the jig and the braided main line.

Braided line has incredible longevity. While it may fade, it will often last an entire season or more for me. When it does fade, respool it from one reel to another. This puts the sun faded line deep into the new spool allowing the unfaded line time at the top. Color options make braided line perfect for jiggling and line watching, I am a huge fan of line management while fishing on the bottom. It will make you a better angler.

Another advantage of super lines is line diameter. It is by far the smallest of the three line types. This makes casting light weights a breeze. Again, as with any line there differences between line manufactures. I prefer eight-stranded line over four-stranded options, especially for lighter pound-test lines.

Disadvantages are expense, as braided lines are two to three times the cost of monofila-

ment line. Since it has a small diameter and it floats, braided line is more susceptible to wind. Knot tying can also be a disadvantage for those who prefer to tie specific knots. You'll have to learn a couple new ones.

My favorite lures for braided fishing line are tubes, Neds, swimbaits, swimming jigs or any bottom bouncing lures. Chatter jigs and blade baits, work extremely well for me on heavier braided line with a fluorocarbon leader.

Just a few closing thoughts. Understanding the attributes of each line type is a good first step. Line choice will also come down to personal preference when matching the line to your rods and reels. What feels right to some may not to others. It is worth experimenting until you find the combination that works best for you.



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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## REGIONAL FOCUS

# CHICKAHOMINY

Lake & River

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

Fishing on the tidal Chickahominy River slowed a bit during last month's heat wave, but only because anglers had a tough time staying on the water, though some anglers have wondered if tournaments launching from the James River have relocated Chick River fish.

Visiting anglers this month will want to target bass on main river grass lines, especially when baitfish are present, using small crankbaits, spinnerbaits and bladed jigs.

If you cannot find these types of areas, you can always flip small worms to duck blinds, brushpiles, docks and other submerged structure at the mouth of creeks and back in larger creeks like Shipwreck, Yarmouth, Diascund and Gordon's.

At times this month topwater baits like a Rico or buzzbait will also catch aggressive fish in the first third of creeks.

When planning a trip to the Chickahominy River, consider staying at either Rockahock Campground & Resort or Riverside Marina & Campground. Each has rental cabin options and their own ramps on the river. Rockahock's ramp at Walker's Dam on the upper river is a popular launch. Riverside rents jon boats and pontoon boats for river exploration.

Up on Chickahominy Lake, Ed Allen's Boats & Baits reported the water was clear and full pool with water temperatures in the upper 80's just after the July heat wave that brought 90-degree temperatures to the region.

Fishing continued to be good despite the hot water, mostly early in the day and then again at dusk and after dark. Anglers were having the most success using topwaters, soft plastic stick baits like Senkos and bladed jigs. Fishing structure like weeds and wood in 8-10 feet of water has been productive during the day.



Brad Webb and his fishing partner have been catch some good limits on Chickahominy Lake out of **Ed Allen's Boats & Baits**.

Ed Allen's has a great tackle shop, boat ramp, rental boats (jon and pontoon), a restaurant, 200' long fishing pier and an angler's motel. Semi-retired guide Art Conway (a.k.a. the River Rat) fishes out of Ed Allen's and you'll find him in the restaurant for lunch most days he fishes.

On the upper end of the lake you'll find great access at Eagles Landing. There's a boat ramp, rental jon boats and tackle shop not far from the cooler headwaters for the lake.

Nearby Toano has become a hunting and fish-

ing headquarters of sorts with the Toano General Gun Store and Fishing Protect within a half mile of each other.

Don at Toano General Gun Store notes his handgun inventory has been keeping pace with demand this summer. He has many of the newest and most popular personal protection pieces, plus holders of all kinds. He also notes it's now time to bring in your hunting pieces for any gunsmithing so Sodian Armament technicians can get to work on them.

Lin Bell at Fishing Pro Tech continues to push the envelope of high performance bass tackle and this month is no different than his past 31 years in the business. He's brought in the new Sunny B Bagleys crankbait, the Yamamoto Yamatanuki soft plastic bait, the CAST USA 20 gram Herring OG, the SPRO Chad Shad glide bait and the Toad Thumper line of soft plastics.

Bell also attended the recent ICAST show so who knows what's coming next? But if you stop by his shop you'll be ahead of the curve and he can tell you what's OTW!

It's never too early to think about duck hunting, right? Tomahund Marine is the Virginia dealer for BeaverTail Boats and motors as well as War Eagle boats - one of the favorite's of James River duck hunters. There's a model in that line-up for just about any angler or hunter.

Tomahund is the area's boat repair and marine supply shop and now stocks a great selection of bass tackle including Profound crankbaits. Stop by on your way to fish the lower Chickahominy on Rt. 5. *C.C. McCotter*

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# CHICK/JAMES TIDE/MOON CHART

	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW
F U L L	① 9:49am	3:53am	10 5:35am	11:30am	19 ----	6:07am	28 7:36am	1:44am
	10:22pm	3:54pm	6:13pm	----	12:14pm	6:23pm	8:15pm	1:43pm
	2 10:43am	4:43am	11 6:36am	12:45am	20 12:26am	6:39am	29 8:36am	2:38am
	11:14pm	4:51pm	7:12pm	12:29pm	12:49pm	7:03pm	9:11pm	2:44pm
	3 11:36am	5:31am	12 7:32am	1:40am	21 1:00am	7:11am	⑩ 9:32am	3:29am
	----	5:46pm	8:05pm	1:25pm	1:27pm	7:45pm	10:03pm	3:42pm
	4 12:05am	6:19am	13 8:22am	2:29am	22 1:38am	7:48am	31 10:24am	4:17am
	12:29pm	6:42pm	8:52pm	2:16pm	2:09pm	8:33pm	10:53pm	4:37pm
	5 12:55am	7:06am	14 9:08am	3:13am	23 2:21am	8:30am	<b>Sept. Tides</b>	
	1:22pm	7:39pm	9:33pm	3:03pm	2:58pm	9:28pm	1 11:15am	5:03am
	6 1:47am	7:55am	15 9:49am	3:52am	24 3:12am	9:20am	11:41pm	5:31pm
	2:16pm	8:37pm	10:11pm	3:47pm	3:55pm	10:31pm	2 ----	5:49am
	7 2:40am	8:44am	⑬ 10:28am	4:28am	25 4:13am	10:21am	12:05pm	6:24pm
	3:12pm	9:38pm	10:46pm	4:28pm	5:01pm	11:38pm		
	8 3:35am	9:37am	17 11:04am	5:03am	26 5:21am	11:28am		
	4:10pm	10:40pm	11:20pm	5:07pm	6:09pm	----		
	9 4:34am	10:32am	18 11:40am	5:35am	27 6:31am	12:44am		
	5:12pm	11:44pm	11:53pm	5:45pm	7:15pm	12:37pm		

James River All corrections taken from Newport News Chickahominy  
-0:12 Jordan Point +1:22RichmondDeepwaterTerminal +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

James River Tackle Co. shop owner and local angler Donnie Bell says bass on the tidal Appomattox and James Rivers this month should be very interested in topwaters like Rico's, Mudd Puppy buzzbaits and Whopper Ploppers fishing early along shoreline wood.

As the sun climbs, he suggests pitching a Mudd Puppy Flattail Ringworm or a Grey Goat tandem willow-bladed spinnerbait around slightly deeper wood cover.

On the tidal James River, Bell suggests visiting anglers fish blowdown trees that stick out into creek channels with a 1.5 to 2.5' squarebill crankbait. The main river jetties near Dutch Gap will also begin to turn on this month for anglers using crankbaits and worms.

Bell did note he and other anglers have noticed an increase in largemouth bass in the tidal James River and a decrease in the Chickahominy River. He and others are wondering if tournament anglers have unwittingly redistributed Chick River bass to the James River.

Bell says his shop has plenty of bass and gear for catfish anglers. The main rig he's selling is a combination of Team Catfish Sliders, a double action circle hook, a 40-lb. test leader and a Frog Tongue/no roll sinker. He also has a good selection of combos from Lews, Quantum and Zebco great for river catfishing.

James River Tackle Co. is also the area's bait fishing headquarters stocking live baits like minnows, crickets, eels, nightcrawlers, super worms and bloodworms as well as a wide range of frozen baits.

Bass fishing on nearby Lake Chesdin has been good recently according to W2 Regional Editor Red Fisher. Chesdin was formed by a dam on

the Appomattox River. Fisher says the lake has been staying around 80 degrees and the fishing consistent.

He reports the bass are out on the ledges. He'll still fish buzzbaits and Pop-Rs in the morning near willow grass but he does best fishing ledges that hit the river channel with deep diving crankbaits during the day and afternoon. His plug of choice is a Strike King XP5 and 6. He'll also use 10" worms and Brush Hogs on Carolina rigs.

Don't forget there is a free ramp on the lower end of Chesdin maintained by the Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries.

Area sport shops like James River Tackle Co., Castaway Sporting Goods in Chester, Jo Jo's in Manquin and Pat's In Chester are your sources for fishing information. Stop by, poke around and talk to the clerks. They will be happy to let you know what the fish are biting on.

Pat's has an incredible amount of rods and reels, so think twice before going online. Stop by Pat's and actually feel the rig in your hand before you make that purchase.

Area bow shops like Pat's, Shooter's Archery, Hunt N Shak and Green Top Sporting Goods are helping hunters get geared up for archery season starting this month. The bow shops and ranges



Congratulations to **James River Tackle Co.** Pro Team members Donnie and Hayden Bell for their second place finish in the July **Richmond Crappie Club** event on the tidal James River.

will be getting busy so don't wait until the last minute.

The 40th annual Virginia Outdoor Sportsman Show will be held August 4-6 at the Richmond Raceway Complex.

Besides exhibitors showing everything from ATVs to tree stands, guns to apparel, hunting trips and more, the show features the 84th annual Virginia Big Game Contest August 4-6 at the Meadow Event Park in Doswell, Virginia.

The contest will feature many of the largest deer, bear, and turkey harvested throughout the state during the last hunting season. You can expect to view over 300 mounts.

At this show there's also a National Wild Turkey Federation sanctioned state turkey calling contest, television personalities and cooking demonstrations. Visit [www.sportsmanshow.com](http://www.sportsmanshow.com) for more information.

Robbie Patterson and his team at Propeller Dynamics have found that regional anglers really like their Falcon bass boats. The Predator model has been difficult to keep in stock! Patterson also sells Xpress boats, trolling motors of all kinds and is the region's top propeller expert. Need your new live sonar units installed? Call Patterson!

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stages on the days sampled.

The density of hydrilla growth was closely observed during the survey. The protected water within Troy Creek provided the greatest hydrilla growth of any of the 29 sites sampled. The upper reach of Jetts Creek had flats covered with hydrilla growth. The upper flat within Piss Creek had a decent amount of hydrilla growth as well. All three of these sites showed a decent catch rate of juvenile largemouth bass from the 2013 stocking.

The results of the otolith analysis and the high percentage of contribution from the stocked fingerlings showed that the supplemental stocking can provide some improvements to a limited largemouth bass fishery. Whether or not some additional fish will be stocked in the future will be based upon further discussions and future decisions. Any additional bass stockings will be conducted in areas that have revealed successful survival of bass from the 2013 stocking.

A few of these areas would be Troy Creek, Lyons Creek, Piss Creek, the upper reaches of Jetts Creek, as well as the marsh edge and tributary across from Wilmont Landing. The full impact of the 2013 supplemental bass stocking may take some time for anglers to see a noticeable change in the abundance of adult-sized bass they catch. DWR fisheries staff will continue to monitor the largemouth bass fishery within the tidal Rappahannock River with the majority of data collected from fall electrofishing surveys.

There are smallmouth bass in the tidal Rappahannock, too. They are encountered rarely

in biologists' fisheries surveys, however, there have been verified reports of some very large (citation sized) smallmouth from the tidal section of the Rappahannock between City Dock and Little Falls. This species is more abundant the closer one gets to the fall line and occurs throughout the non-tidal upper Rappahannock.

The two most sought-after catfish species in the tidal Rappahannock River, channel cats and blue cats, are not native to the river. Channel catfish were likely first stocked in the Rappahannock sometime between 1890 and the early 1900's, and blue catfish were not introduced to the river until the mid-1970's.

Blue catfish are abundant in the river from Fredericksburg downstream to Carters Wharf. Fresh gizzard shad is the bait of choice. Angling for blue cats is best in river bends having deep channel drop-offs near steep banks and good submerged structure, such as old pier pilings or downed trees.

My morning on the river with Bruce and my son yielded 24 largemouth bass up to four pounds and two eight-pound snakehead. We caught our bass using a weighted wacky rigged worm (Neko Rig), and a spinnerbait (one made by Dave Farrington and one made by Brian Green).

I'm not sure how far we ran down river from Port Royal Landing, but I know we hit a bunch of holes on the way down before



Bruce Lee, left, with author and their best five from the 24-bass morning.

locking into a pattern that involved shallow hydrilla. We also caught a few fish along the edge of water lilies.

Our host was happy with the amount of bass we caught and thought if a nasty thunderstorm hadn't drove us off the water around noon, we'd have probably caught a couple five plus pounders.

I was impressed with the amount of submerged aquatic vegetation in the river and water clarity around these weed beds. I had always thought of the tidal Rapp as a muddy river but, at times, we fished sections that had water as clear as Lake Anna.

I highly recommend you put this often forgotten tidal river on your list this summer and fall so you, too can enjoy the current good largemouth bass fishing.



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**REGIONAL FOCUS**

# Lake Anna

As we slip into the hottest part of the summer, fishing at Lake Anna transitions. Water temperatures now range from 78 in the headwaters to 88 at the Dike 3 discharge. Shallow bass will be more difficult to find now (but they can still be found!) and anglers should will their efforts to deeper structure and the up lake region. Striper and wipers congregate in vast schools, roaming the mid and lower lake feeding voraciously at times, doing absolutely nothing at other times. Small crappie are abundant but 12+ inch fish are too, if you know where to look or spent time creating brush piles in late winter. Here's what you can expect for a summer visit in the coming weeks. Look for schooling largemouth bass down and mid lake with more fish down lake (if you can find them) and most feeding on young-of-the-year threadfin shad and blueback herring. If you see large herring being blown out of the water, you are on a school of bigger fish. This year there has been an abundance of large herring in the mid lake region and the bass, striper and wiper have been eating them! Generally the larger the bait, the larger the fish and the fewer in the school.

FITT Premium Lures Riverdarters, Missile Baits Shockwave 3.5 swimbaits, a bone Pop-R and small multi-arm rigs are best for these schooling bass.

Up lake bass will often engulf a medium diving crankbait like a Berkley Fishing Fritside scraped along the numerous rockpiles on channel bends located in the upper Pamunkey Branch, the North Anna River arm and Terry's Run. You can also worm fish the same spots if the plug doesn't activate the fish.

There could be some headwater action far up the tributaries as well. You fish these areas like you would a river - jigs, spinnerbaits and worms.

The lake received over 70K tiger bass in June as part of the ongoing Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources restocking plan. DWR Biologist John Odenkirk is two years into a three-year



Did you know Lake Anna harbors some big yellow perch? Here's a 12" citation brought in to **High Point Marina** for a photo last month.

project to see if stocking the hybrid largemouth bass (a cross between a Florida and a northern strain fish) will result in more big bass caught in Anna.

Throughout the state, stockings of tiger bass have been mostly successful in improving the size structure of body of water's largemouth fishery. Smith Mountain Lake, Chickahominy Lake and Back Bay have been the recipients of these stockings and those fisheries improved within three years.

While there's nothing wrong with the bass fishery at Anna, this effort is an attempt to address anglers' concerns about the lack of truly trophy

bass in a lake that appears to offer perfect big bass habitat.

McCotter notes this season his clients has been catching some very fat and aggressive



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largemouths up to 16" that he thinks might be from the initial stocking a little over two years ago - an incredible growth rate confirmed by Odenkirk!

Most of the lake's keeper striper and wiper have been schooled from just above The Splits down to Dike 1 - a pretty big area. Hotspots have been Big Ben Flats, the mouth of Pigeon Creek and the entire 208 region just above and below the bridge, Contrary Creek and around Dike 1.

You can cast to breaking fish with topwaters and swimbaits or jig fish on the depth finder. Some like to troll plugs and multi-arm rigs. Others prefer live bait. All tactics have their place, though trolling, jigging and casting will be better as the fish are forced to move around in the water column to find suitable oxygen content and bait. Keep in mind, wiper are more active in hot, summer water.

High Point Marina has an excellent selection of striper/wiper fishing gear including spoons, trolling plugs and multi-arm rigs.

Last year in August there were schools of sub-keeper-sized striper in the down lake region. Anglers enjoyed many mornings catching striper on the surface using small topwaters, swimbaits and spoons. We'll see if that will occur again this summer. It all depends on if the threadfin shad reach an inch. If they do, the fish will eat them.

It's a small crappie bonanza out there if you are bridge piling angler. Brushpiles near channels, though, is where you'll find the slabs this summer. The best depths now are 18-24' mid lake and 10-15' up lake. Small jigs are best as it's darn tricky to keep minnows alive for long when the water is 86 degrees.

The lake also has an excellent population of white perch anglers can target during the summer. Look for them breaking over deep water in the mid lake region and cast small spinners to them. Trolling the spinners also works well.

Anglers have begun to report catching the saugeyes DWR stocked in the lake the past couple of years, too. These fish are approximately 13-17" (keeper size is 18") so the first legal keeper will be notable, hopefully caught this fall. They tend to feed on swim-baits casted for bass or striper and retrieved along a rocky bottom. Interestingly, most of the catches have been reported coming from the Waste Heat Treatment Facility or "hot side" of the lake.

Weekly tournaments held out of Anna Point Marina's Fish Tales, headed by Tournament Director Dave Fauntleroy continue to be popular at the lake. The Sunday Morning Series consistently draws over two dozen teams from just after dawn to around noon.

Fauntleroy welcomes your visit to the lake and invites you to visit Fish Tales. While you



Drew Ludwig and his father, David with a 17-lb. plus limit of largemouth and two striper for dinner caught with **McCotter's Lake Anna Guide Service**.

are there, be sure and bring some bread or crackers to feed the hungry carp that live at the marina.

High Point Marina and The Lighthouse Inn are ready for your summer visit. The Woods family and their team operate a full service marina and the lake's only waterfront motel. The tackle shop is packed with the lures the lake's top guides use, plus there's just about any beverage you'd want, snacks, marine accessories, live baits, oil, 24/7 fuel on-the-water with pay-at-the-pump and boat storage of all kinds.

Sturgeon Creek Marina will continue its weekly tournaments on Tuesdays and Fridays in addition to resuming its Elite Series and Youth Series events this month.

Sturgeon Creek was the first marina on

| continued on page 44

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## Lake Anna Report

the lake. The late Campbell Edenton and his son, the late Wayne Edenton shot the elevation before the lake filled and poured their first boat ramp in the perfect place. Today Sturgeon Creek is still a great place to start a Lake Anna adventure with a great tackle shop, 24/7 fuel on-the-water with pay-at-the-pump, more boat ramps than any other marina, rental pontoons and tournament facilities.

Anna's Marine Center has become one of the state's leading boat dealers through the visionary management of Dee Kidd. He's been in the marine business for over 40 years now and he knows boats.

The Skeeters, Nitros and Trackers he sells are three of the top brands in the country. Yamaha and Mercury offer the best in modern outboard technologies as well.

If you are ready to upgrade your boat's electronics, Kidd and his team are excellent



Congratulations to Adam Greer and Hunter Hamilton for their June 23 **Sturgeon Creek Marina Friday Night Team** event win with this three-fish limit weighing 11.04 pounds.

at networkign and rigging Humminbird and Lowrance units.

Uncle Mike's Bait & Tackle at Elk Creek Country Store had a recent tackle upgrade. Uncle Mike's has an array of excellent bass, striped and crappie tackle specially chosen for fishing the lake and the 3,900-acre "hot side".

Christopher Run Campground is a great place to use as fishing headquarters for a summer visit. They welcome anglers with cabins, boat ramps and a location that permits small boat anglers access to the upper North Anna River arm of the lake. This is a family-friendly campground you'll love to visit.

Lake Anna Outfitters at High Point Marina still has Feel Free Moken 10 V2 and Moken 10 VA Lite fishing kayaks in several colors and a Feel Free Lure 11.5V2 Overdrive boat. These fishing kayaks offer some exclusive features including a patented wheel in the keel. *Chrissie McCotter*

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## REGIONAL FOCUS

# Smith Mountain Lake

New River Valley

Smith Mountain Lake was around 84 degrees on the surface from mid to down lake by the mid-July W2 deadline after a period of hot weather.

The lake level was 793.85' and falling by the end of July. This was slightly lower than it was in June. Keep in mind normal pond is 795'. Expect the lake level to drop slightly this month and for the water temperature to hold in the upper 80s.

SML's smallmouth bass population will bite fairly well until the water hits 80 and then it slows unless you know how to find them deep where they seek out cooler water. Generally speaking the best smallmouth fishing is within sight of the dam here. Target summer SML brown bass on hard bottoms in 20-30' using drop-shotted minnow baits, Ned rigs and Damiki rigs.

Anglers can target SML largemouth bass this month with shakey head worms, drop shots, swimbaits, Damiki rigs and some top-water. By the end of the month, start fishing Carolina rigs.

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

The Franceschinis mostly fish with live baits when they guide and note the lake's striper population continues to grow. August is one of the best months to a bunch of schooled SML striper, but remember, once you catch your two, it's either time to head in or target a different species.



The Monaghan crew were putting them in the boat fishing with **Capt. Kathy of Spike's Prime Time Fishin'** on Smith Mountain Lake July 6.

They report good fishing for their clients in July once the water in the lake warmed up to 80 degrees and striper schooled up to feed on bait. They say to expect similar conditions early this month, with hungry striper on deep baitfish schooled on the main lake where you can target them with good depth finders.

The striper population is very high in the lake right now and can be found in most areas of SML with the mid to lower ends on both river arms being the most productive.

Visiting anglers will want to target main lake points and flats with rock or red clay in 15-35 ft of water. The bigger fish are starting to show up in lower ends of the lake following schools

of bait around in the shallows.

Spike and Kathy will target these fish with larger baits pulled on planer boards up shallow early in the morning or cloudy days, and move out deeper as the sun rises and temps warm.

Spike and Kathy will cast some topwater lures, jig a spoon a bit and drop a soft plastic jerkbait on a jig head, but mostly they pull live baits on down lines this month.

Guide Clint Gray will use smaller live baits on downlines this month to target deep striper on bait. He also likes to use jigged artificial lures when fish are holding deep in dense schools. One of his favorite rigs is a ZOOM Super Fluke Jr. in albino shad rigged on a 1/4-ounce jig-head and fish on 14-pound braided line with a 12-pound fluorocarbon leader. He lowers this bait to the fish on his depth finder and lifts and drops it to trigger strikes on the fall.

Spike and Kathy maintain two waterfront rentals on Smith Mountain with all the amenities. The listing #s are 218590 and 282712 on VRBO.

Gills Creek Marina & Lodge welcomes your visit to Smith Mountain Lake. They offer waterfront rooms perfect for anglers and their families.

Cripple Creek Trout Farm and The Hidden Gem Trout Fishing are two of the three venues of the W2 Trophy Trout Trail you can visit in this region of the state. Both are private operations that offer visiting anglers a chance to catch large stocked trout.

For maps of Smith Mountain Lake visit [woodsandwatersmagazine.com](http://woodsandwatersmagazine.com)

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**REGIONAL FOCUS**

# Buggs/Gaston

Kerr Lake/Lake Gaston

**Lake Gaston**

By mid-July the water level on Gaston was around 199.60' (200' is full pool) and Dominion was holding the level steady. Water temperatures ranged from 76-87 degrees with the up lake section just below Kerr Dam the coolest. Anglers can expect 84+ degree water temperatures for August.

Guide Rick Morris reports Gaston's largemouth bass are transitioning to deeper water haunts this month. Deep to a largemouth on this lake is 12-18'. While there will always be bass shallow, more will hold deeper in August due to a combination of food, temperature, cover and boat traffic. You can target shallow Gaston largemouth this month around willowgrass lines using Neko rig worms. Gastons' plentiful spotted bass population likes deeper water - as deep as 50 feet. You can target them with different lures like Damiki rig or small swimbait off main lake points with rocks in the lower section of the lake. You can sometimes also pull both largemouth and spots up from offshore structure using a walking topwater bait this month.

Call or email Morris for guided trips on Gaston.

Holly Grove Marina is a family-friendly tackle shop, boat ramp, restaurant/gathering



Above left - Kevin and Mike Mahanay fished with **guide Rick Morris** on Lake Gaston this spring and caught plenty of spotted bass and largemouth like this one. Above right - Jody Thacker with a two-pound, 15.7- inch crappie caught summer slab fishing. Photo courtesy of **Bobcat's Bait & Tackle**.



first, you're passing up the best time for offshore fishing.

The best offshore places will have rock wood or brush dropping off quickly to deep water. Try the side of a long point on the main lake where it drops from 10 to 30 foot; obvious channel swings create this prime scenario. Seek these places out that feature channel swings and fast breaks that offer water, flow, food and habitat.

Morris says it's time to break out 10-inch worms, large and finesse jigs, drop shot, shaky head worms and a Carolina rig. Experiment with different size

place on the lake and we're glad to have them with 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 July deadline was 302.38' - high for July and two feet higher than it was in June. 300' is full pool. Daytime water temperatures varied from 83-87 degrees depending on the region of the lake late last month. This month, anglers should expect similar water temperatures.

Guide Rick Morris says offshore ledge and brushpile fishing is best early in the morning; the same as shallow fish. So, if you go shallow

plastics and different colors, as size and color can make a big difference this time of year. He says you need to fish these baits very, very slowly.

Morris notes if you're chasing fish with your forward-shooting sonar then dropshot is still the best choice, however underspins with swimbaits show up really nice when targeting brush piles.

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.

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## REGIONAL FOCUS

# Potomac & Rappahannock

With the arrival of August comes a great time to bass fish the tidal Potomac River. Submerged grass beds are lush sanctuaries for bass looking for oxygen, cover and cooler water as temperatures will approach 90 degrees. Here's what you can expect on a visit this month.

Tidal Potomac bass generally prefer grass to wood in the same spot, but wood in grass is a primary target. Docks with grass best fished at high tides. At lower tides, bass move to grass. On the sunniest days, get your bait tight to cover. With clouds, fish use cover as a current break. Milfoil edges and boat channels around the front of docks are targets.

Water temperatures range from 85 and up now on the river! Cooler mornings are best for topwaters, but there's a hollow frog bite at low tides anytime! Replace worn feathered popper hooks with hand-tied with colorful feathers and reflective material adding light, flash, and action to topwaters and squarebill cranks. Feathers pull together when moving baits, then open while sitting to get the second chance bite after misses. The slightest movement gets feathers moving. Try red

hooks, especially on the belly!

Topwater tips for the Potomac...smaller/faster in clear water...start small and work up in size with natural colors and then go darker. For clear calm conditions, use a walking lure around grass or wood. Move to spinnerbaits and shallow crankbaits when topwater bite slows. Waker cranks in the larger size are perfect with enough water over grass!

If a fish misses topwaters, cast follow-up baits: watermelon and green pumpkin five-inch stick worms hooked wacky style with a 2/0 Mustad weedless wacky hook. GAMMA EDGE fluorocarbon line allows baits to fall more naturally.

Crank to 4-6 feet around the Fort Washington lighthouse, South Point, Spoils, the Wilson Bridge, and other deeper



Congratulations to **Apex Predators Potomac Creek Guide Service's** youngest pro staffer, Walker Jett on this snakehead!

repeated casts to good-looking spots. Fish will tell you where they are positioned and on what type of cover.

If there's chop on the water, stained water, or cloud cover at higher tides, willow/Colorado combination and a white skirt, burned around and near cover is producing hard strikes. A faster reel spooled with 14 or 16-pound GAMMA EDGE line and 6'6" medium heavy rod is best for targeting close cover, or a 7-footer to cover open areas. Bump cover and rip free. At the lowest tides, use 1/4-ounce spinnerbaits with gold blades in all but the clearest water. For clear water, use a nickel blade and double willow with firetiger skirts. Higher tides 3/8-ounce is easier to work deeper. No spinnerbait bite, go to shallow crankbaits, at lower tides work

areas. Make

short casts around cover and grass clumps.

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Vary your retrieve. Here, you need a 7-foot medium action graphite rod with backbone to rip free from grass.

It's time to fish pad edges and punch through grass mat canopies, especially on sunny days. You'll get reaction strikes with 1 to 1.25-ounce tungsten weights. A bobber stopper will keep weights fixed to three-inch creature baits. A 3/0 hook and GAMMA TORQUE braid 60-pound test braided line with a flipping stick along with a strong reel will get big ones out!

Otherwise, you have to create commotion to get them to come up. Hollow Frogs are perfect for this. I replace the rubber skirt with rabbit fur and drop in two round glass rattles!

Buzzbaits with stinger hooks work well over grass and wood. TORQUE braid helps hook-sets! I also like toads in white, black, green pumpkin, and watermelon, depending on water clarity and chop. The swimbait hooks work very well for toads!

Swimbaiting is great in fairly clear water and can be fished horizontally and vertically. Pitch them into grass clumps or swim over and drop. 16-pound test GAMMA EDGE Fluorocarbon line is best! Med/Heavy rod for good hooksets. I'm also using weighted swimbait hooks. The 7/0 with 1/4 oz. built-in adjustable weight holds very well in a swimbait...white/blue back. The weight is movable to get the correct balance with any bait and allows you to cover more depths and speeds.

In the tidal Rappahannock River anglers will find water temperatures in the mid-80's this month and fish will be on different structure in different areas of the river.

In the up river portion of the tidal Rapp, look for fish to be holding on shoreline wood and mud flat drops. Pitch worms and creature baits to the wood. Cast crankbaits and spinnerbaits to the drops.

In the mid section of the river (10 miles in either direction of Port Royal) fish are on lily pads, wood and hydrilla. A weighted wacky rigged stick worm is good in tight spots while a spinnerbait or buzzbait is good when you can cover water.

In the lower tidal Rappahannock (Leedstown down to Piscataway Creek), anglers will want to target bass in hydrilla, lily pads and in major creeks like Occupacia, Cat Point and Piscataway using the same lures. A chatter jig can also produce now on the Rapp.

Good launch points include Port Conway, Hicks' Landing, Port Royal Landing, Wilmont Landing, Leedstown Campground and Hoskins Creek in Tappahannock.

Call Capt. Mike now if you want to experience one of the best snakehead seasons ever on the tidal Potomac River. He and his parties have been catching many fish each day using the MES Floating Frog.

Costello's in Warrenton is THE place to shop for fishing gear. You'll be pleasantly surprised by what they have stocked, plus you can pick up any hardware or household/garden item you might need. They are also a dealer for Green Egg, Traeger and Weber grills. *Capt. Steve Chaconas & C.C. McCotter*

# POTOMAC RIVER TIDE/MOON CHART

	HIGH	LOW		HIGH	LOW		HIGH	LOW		HIGH	LOW		
FULL ①	8:33am	2:47am	NEW ⑫	10 4:24am	11:24am	FULL ⑩	19 11:08am	5:26am	FULL ⑬	28 6:20am	12:22am		
	9:12pm	3:47pm		5:01pm	11:14pm		11:28pm	5:41pm		7:04pm	1:38pm	7:23am	1:33am
	2 9:27am	3:46am		11 5:22am	---		20 11:40am	6:02am		8:00pm	2:31pm	8:20am	2:36am
3	10:03pm	4:36pm	4	12 6:19am	12:12am	5	21 ---	6:40am	6	31 9:13am	3:33am		
	10:20am	4:43am		12 6:53pm	1:16pm		22 12:16pm	6:37pm		8:52pm	3:21pm	9:42pm	4:08pm
4	11:12am	5:38am	5	13 7:12am	1:07am	6	22 12:34am	7:22am	7	<b>Sept. Tides</b>			
	11:45pm	6:09pm		14 8:00am	1:59am		23 1:16am	8:12am		1 10:04am	4:28am	2 10:54am	5:21am
5	---	6:33am	6	15 8:45am	2:47am	7	24 2:04am	9:11am	8	10:31pm	4:54pm		
	12:05pm	6:56pm		16 9:12pm	3:33pm		25 2:59am	10:22am		11:19pm	5:38pm	Tides for Aquia Creek. See corrections below	
6	12:37am	7:29am	7	17 10:02am	4:12am	8	26 4:03am	11:34am					
	1:00pm	7:42pm		18 10:36am	4:50am		27 5:12am	---					
7	1:31am	8:26am	8	10:27pm	4:44pm	9	4:57pm	11:03pm					
	1:57pm	8:30pm		18 10:59pm	5:14pm		27 6:04pm	12:39pm					
8	2:27am	9:25am											
	2:58pm	9:21pm											
9	3:25am	10:25am											
	4:00pm	10:16pm											

### 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
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## REGIONAL FOCUS

# BACK BAY

Northwest River, North River, Currituck Sound

James Waters at Bob's Fishing Hole reports the water was around 85-90 degrees by the middle of July on the Northwest River. Local anglers were catching plenty of two pounders but the bigger fish were getting tough to find. Waters notes river fish will continue to bite despite the hot water of August. These are shallow water fish and they are used to hot water.

Some anglers are reporting that 50 fish days are not uncommon but many of the bass aren't much more than two pounds. Recent tournament weights have varied from 13 pounds up to 18 pound depending on the day and conditions.

Waters says for August pitching soft plastics to shady shoreline structure is your best bet. Baits like a Senko, the ZOOM UltraVibe Speed Craw and the Reaction Innovation Sweet Beaver are popular.

Early in the morning, Waters suggests throwing a topwater frog to shallow structure along the bank. Keep in mind the topwater bite hasn't been as good as in recent years but it's still decent.

Bob's Fishing Hole is located on Rt. 168 (Chesapeake Expressway) on the way to the Outer Banks. It offers anglers access not only



Nick Koenig won the July 5 tournament out of **Bob's Fishing Hole** with 16.64 pounds. anchored by a 4.76swamp chunk.

to the great fishing on the Northwest River but also to Back Bay.

North Bay Shore Campground is headquarters for North Bay or the upper portion of Back Bay behind Sandbridge.

North Bay Shore Campground 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.

Back Bay bass will remain in weedy, oxygen-rich bays and "ponds" where anglers can target them using weedless lures like Johnson silver spoons and swimbaits.

Guide and USCG Licensed Captain David Ward of Backwater Adventures told W2 the water temperatures in the Currituck Sound and northeastern North Carolina Rivers he guides on will be in the mid to upper 80's this month and even in the 90's during any hot weather stretches.

He'll be using topwater in the morning, mainly poppers and single spin props. Once the topwater bite slows, its time to bring out the soft plastics. Weightless stick worms rigged weightless wacky or Texas rigged will be key. Shaky heads with 5" straight tail worms will work on those slow hot days this month. Don't forget to go head hunting with a frog in the shade during the mid day sun.

Ward is now booking his fall trips so if you are planning a trip to the OBX, why not fish with him for a morning on Currituck?

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**REGIONAL FOCUS**

# Chesapeake Bay

Bay waters will continue to warm with high temperatures, moderate winds, and a chance of thunderstorms throughout the month. Main Bay surface water temperatures have increased to the low 80s, with the coolest surface waters found between the Patapsco River and Annapolis. Bay salinity is still above average. There is low oxygen in bottom waters from Tolchester down to the Virginia line, and in the Potomac River from Blossom Point down to Point Lookout.

**Middle Bay**

Striped bass fishing in the middle Bay has been fair at best, and fortunately speckled trout, bluefish and Spanish mackerel are filling the gap. There is early morning and late evening striped bass action along the Bay Bridge piers where anglers are live-lining with spot or drifting soft crab baits towards the pier bases near the 35-foot drop-off at the east end. Other anglers are casting skirted soft plastic jigs close to the bridge piers.

At sunrise, anglers are finding striped bass action along the shorelines of the Bay and lower sections of the tidal rivers as well as the rocks at Poplar Island and Thomas Point. Casting poppers and paddletails tends to be the most popular way to fish. The stump fields along the lower Eastern Shore provide another good place to fish and cast Zara Spook topwater lures for striped bass and speckled trout.

Bluefish and Spanish mackerel are showing up in the middle Bay in increasing numbers and can be spotted chasing schools of bay anchovies. Anglers are casting metal jigs and soft plastic jigs into breaking fish



**Capt. Kevin Salmon** put the guys from the Spencer Hatcher band on this 51.5" cobia last month.

and speed reeling to entice Spanish mackerel to strike, or using a slower retrieve for bluefish. Trolling at about 6 to 7 knots with small Drone spoons behind No. 1 planers is the most popular way to catch Spanish mackerel.

**Lower Bay**

The Potomac River below the Wilson Bridge closed to striped bass fishing on July 7 and will remain closed until August 20. Virginia waters remain closed to striped bass fishing with only catch and release allowed until October 4.

Currently the best striped bass fishing occurs during the early morning and late evening hours along the shorelines of the St. Marys and Patuxent rivers on the western side of the Bay, and near Hooper Island and Tangier Sound on the Eastern Shore. Most anglers are having good success with a mix of striped bass and

large speckled trout. Soft plastic jigs and paddletails along with Zara Spooks are the most popular lures being used for casting. Drifting peeler crab baits is an effective way to target speckled trout along the marsh creeks and Tangier and Pocomoke sounds. Slot size red drum can also be part of the mix.

Bluefish and Spanish mackerel can now be found in the lower Bay along channel edges where they are chasing schools of bay anchovies. Gold and silver spoons are a good choice. If you can, get ones with a chartreuse stripe.

Cobia fishing is improving each week and they are being caught near Smith Point, Pocomoke Sound and near the Target Ship. Most anglers are chumming and fishing with live eels in the back of their chum slicks; others are having good luck sight fishing and casting with live eels or fishing large soft plastic jigs.

Capt. Kevin Salmon invites you to contact him about your trip dates as he gets booked up quickly. He specializes in big cobia and bull red drum from Virginia beach up to the Maryland line. Flounder, spadefish, sheepshead, Spanish mackerel and bottom fish trips are also available. He departs from Deltaville on a 27' Maycraft pilot house with full cobia tower.

Anglers wanted to find out what fish are in the lower James River should stop by G'Daddy's Bait & Tackle. This shop supplies that region's anglers and is a good resource to contact when planning a fishing trip to the James River pier.

If you want to try rail hunting around Chincoteague, call Capt. Pete Wallace now and get a September date. This hunting is a must-do if you want to say you've hunted everything.

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## REGIONAL FOCUS

# Mountain & Valley Country

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Even with a few summer rain events the water in the Shenandoah River during July was mostly low and warm and fishing was good.

Lonnie Conner managed some decent smallmouth on the Route 7 to Morgans Ford stretch of the river. He also picked up a really nice 4.62-pound largemouth while fishing Riverton in Front Royal. The largie took a tube in a foot of water!

He noted deeper water was best if you can find it now. The smallmouth were moving in small pockets and pools because the low water was keeping them from traveling. He had success behind water breaks, rapids, and pockets with back flow.

Fishing in the month of August can be a challenge due to lower water levels and crystal clear water conditions. Kayaks, canoes, and wading are the recommended methods of fishing this time of year. Riverton in Front Royal and Egypt Bend near Luray Virginia can still be fished with a jet motor or prop boat. Look for moving water around rapids, shaded pockets, and/or deep holes to hold bass. Also be sure to make longer casts when the water is clear.

Another consideration is to plan your approach to said holes. Cruising bass can be hard to predict their location for obvious reasons. Otherwise, when reading the water you will also want to think about where and how the fish may be laying.

As an example, in the majority of the

cases they will be facing in the upstream direction. If you don't see any visual features, fan cast and retrieve your lures at various angles. When throwing to a submerged log work lures on both sides with several casts to the shaded side. Cast close to the bank where you can see the log as well as work the wood all the way out into the deeper water. Follow a similar approach to boulders or large rocks that offer current breaks. Make at least six casts in and around a rock.

Talk to a fly fishing trout bum about how they dissect a river and read the water. There are times trout fisherman are targeting one fish in one spot. Take this information and apply it to the river and you'll catch more fish!

As far as lure selection, anything and everything should work for anglers in August.

Follow the same patterns we talked about last month of fishing the seam lines created by swift current next to slow water from bank to bank. Eddys, the backward floating water, are also areas you will want to work. Fish not only in the rapid itself, but also work above and below the set of rapids. I like to start with the reliable wacky rig. Pick your poison with brand of stick worm and color.



Lonnie Connor with a hefty largemouth he caught fishing the Riverton area of the Shenandoah River. Photo from **Jake's Bait & Tackle**.

A weighted wacky style hook or fishing it weightless is also up to your personal preference.

As mentioned at the beginning of the article the topwater bite can also be very good this time of year. Buzzbaits are making a big come back as was evident at ICAST 2023 recently. Zara Spook, and an Arbogast Jitterbug are good choices. Also consider the smaller versions of the Tiny Torpedo or the old reliable Rapala Original Floating Minnow. The smaller version of this minnow floats well on top and dives just under the surface when twitched or reeled in.

It is important to note when anglers are struggling to get a bite, downsizing can make all the difference in the world. The 2.75" size point and smaller will produce bites. Berkeley Gulp Minnow, Ned Rig, and small paddle tail minnows rigged on a small jig hook will do the job. Otherwise look in the trout and panfish aisle for small presentations. Inline spinners and Rooster Tails will also work well. Throw it on lighter six-pound test line, and I think you'll increase your catch rates.

Check out my article on ICAST '23 elsewhere in this issue where I cover a lot of new gear and baits. **Jared Mounts**



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**REGIONAL FOCUS**

# Central Virginia

Charlottesville Upper James  
• New River

According to the Old Farmer's Almanac the official Dog Days of Summer are July 3 through August 11. This coincides with the rising at sunrise of the Dog Star, Sirius as well as with hot, sultry weather. Although my days often begin before sunrise, I can't say that I've looked for the Dog Star however hopefully one morning I'll remember to scan the sky.

This hot, humid weather reminds us that dove season is right around the corner. Those of us who enjoy this early season have already started scoping out fields and power lines and are planning the placement of our bucket seat or shooting chair when the clock strikes 12 noon on September 2.

This is the month to ensure that your gun is in good condition and your ammo supply is sufficient for the season that runs through October 22. Legal hunting hours are one half hour before sunrise until sunset. Most of us can't make a full day of it given the sun, the heat and the insects but it sure is a fun few hours with good friends harvesting some tasty little game birds.

The second segment of dove season is November 18-26 and the third runs December 22 through January 20. The bag limit is 15 per day, 45 in possession and can be composed of both mourning doves and white winged doves. Be sure to check the DWR website for WMA rules and exceptions.

Brian "Razor" Bodine of Razorback Guide Service reports that the James River summer bite is on! Plenty of smaller sized fish can be caught casting near the banks using grubs and finesse worms.

Not hooking up? Try varying your speed of retrieval until you figure out the perfect speed and then you'll surely have success.

Area businessmen enjoy Razor's Businessman Special guided trips. Hop in the boat after work and enjoy the prolific evening bite while you watch the sun set. There is just a couple more weeks to take advantage of this fun offering so call today to reserve your evening on the river.

If you're looking to land a lunker then you'll need to work a little harder and a lot smarter as the bigger fish will be holding to wood in deeper water and will prefer structure near a creek mouth. Cast tight, about 2-3 feet, to the structure using flukes and senkos. Be patient and then be ready to reel in your hog.

James River catfish anglers report finding them in deeper holes during the day and cruising the shallows as the sun sets. Love or cut bait is the preferred offering this time of year. Be sure your tackle is set up to handle more weight than you think you'll need because there are some massive cats to be caught!

Razor alerted us that his trophy buck and doe hunt dates are filling up fast. Check your calendar, give him a call and secure your date sooner rather than later. If you



Brandon Schwartz of Charlottesville enjoyed fishing the upper James River with Brian Bodine, **Razorback Guide Service**.

have or know of a youngster that has expressed an interest in deer hunting this season, Razor's doe hunts are a perfect offering to not only instill a love of hunting to our youth, but will also fill your freezer and that's a win/win combination!

Mark your calendars for August 4-6 and don't miss the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Virginia Outdoor Sportsman Show at the Meadow Event Park, just off 95 in Doswell. Parking is free, Adults are \$10 and kids age 12 and under are free. This show also hosts the 84<sup>th</sup> Annual VPSA Virginia Big Game Contest which is a big draw for those of us who

love seeing the bounty of wildlife that are harvested throughout the Commonwealth.

Lake Anna Outfitters is your source for fishing and recreational kayaks. They have sit-on-tops from Feel Free that you paddle and pedal. They have Moken 10 V2 and Moken 10 V2 Lite boats in stock as well as a number of other models at their location on Lake Anna at High Point Marina. *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](mailto:woodsandwatersmagazine@gmail.com)

### Fishing Tournaments

Every Sunday – Sunday Morning Bass Series – Lake Anna, Anna Point Marina/Fish Tales – 6-11am. Call Dave 540/840-6772.

Every Tuesday Night – Lake Anna Summer Series Tuesday Night Open Team Bass Tournament – Sturgeon Creek Marina, 6-9:30pm. Call 540/895-5095 or visit [www.sturgeoncreekmarina.com](http://www.sturgeoncreekmarina.com).

Every Friday Night – Lake Anna Summer Series Friday Night Open Team Bass Tournament – Sturgeon Creek Marina, 6-9:30pm. Call 540/895-5095 or visit [www.sturgeoncreekmarina.com](http://www.sturgeoncreekmarina.com).

August 5 – Bass Bandits of Virginia Tournament – Appomattox River, Hopewell Marina. Email [BassBanditsVirginia@gmail.com](mailto:BassBanditsVirginia@gmail.com).

August 12 – Sturgeon Creek Marina Elite Series Tournament – Lake Anna. 6am-12noon. Call 540/895-5095. Or visit [www.sturgeoncreekmarina.com](http://www.sturgeoncreekmarina.com).

August 12-13 – Jon Boat Elite Trail Tournament – Chickahominy Lake. Email [bassnbucks60@gmail.com](mailto:bassnbucks60@gmail.com) or follow on Facebook.

August 13 – Bass Bandits of Virginia Tournament – Pamunkey River. Email [BassBanditsVirginia@gmail.com](mailto:BassBanditsVirginia@gmail.com).

August 19 – James River Tackle Co. Tournament – Hopewell Marina, SL-3pm. Call Donnie Bell 804/668-5866.

August 20 – Sturgeon Creek Marina Youth Series Tournament – Lake Anna. 6am-12noon. Call 540/895-5095. Or visit [www.sturgeoncreekmarina.com](http://www.sturgeoncreekmarina.com).

August 26 – Potomac Teams Tournament – Leesylvania State Park, SL-3pm. Visit [www.PotomacTeams.com](http://www.PotomacTeams.com).

August 27 – Bass Bandits of Virginia Tournament – Roanoke Rapids Lake (Old Lake). Email [BassBanditsVirginia@gmail.com](mailto:BassBanditsVirginia@gmail.com).

Sept 3 – Bass Bandits of Virginia Tournament – Nottoway River, Rt 258 General Vaughn Bridge Boat Ramp. Email [BassBanditsVirginia@gmail.com](mailto:BassBanditsVirginia@gmail.com).

September 30 – Potomac River Battle Series Battle of the Border – Leesylvania State Park. Visit the Facebook page for more information.

October 2 – Richmond Crappie Club Classic – Lake Gaston. Visit the Facebook page for more information.

October 20-21 – Virginia Elite 70 Fall Classic – Lake Gaston. Visit [www.vaelite70.com](http://www.vaelite70.com).

### Outdoor Shows/Community Events

August 4-6 – 40th Annual Virginia Outdoor Sportsman Show – Meadow Event Park, Doswell, VA. Adults \$10, kids 12 & under are free. Visit [www.SportsmanShow.com](http://www.SportsmanShow.com).

August 4-6 – 84th Annual VPSA Virginia Big Game Contest. Held in conjunction with the Virginia Outdoor Sportsman Show. Meadow Event Park, Doswell, VA. \$20/entry. Visit [www.vpsa.org](http://www.vpsa.org) for more information and to review the Virginia Big Game Contest Rules.

August 26 & 27 – 1st Annual Appomattox Outdoor Expo – Spring Grove Events Center, 4414 Spring Grove Rd., Appomattox, VA 24522. Admission \$10, kids 12 & under are free. Visit [www.AppomattoxEvents.com](http://www.AppomattoxEvents.com).

September 8 – Fredericksburg Ducks Unlimited 52nd Annual Beef & Crab Feast – 3pm. Fredericksburg Fairgrounds, 2400 Airport Avenue. Purchase tickets online [www.ducksunlimited.myeventcenter.com](http://www.ducksunlimited.myeventcenter.com). Email [ChairmanFredDU@gmail.com](mailto:ChairmanFredDU@gmail.com).

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