

January 2024

WOODS & WATERS



Don't Miss The
Richmond Fishing Expo
January 19-21
@ Meadow Event Park

2024 Outdoor Show Preview *Show Dates & Highlights*



What's New In...
Bass Boats // Outboards
Electronics // Tackle

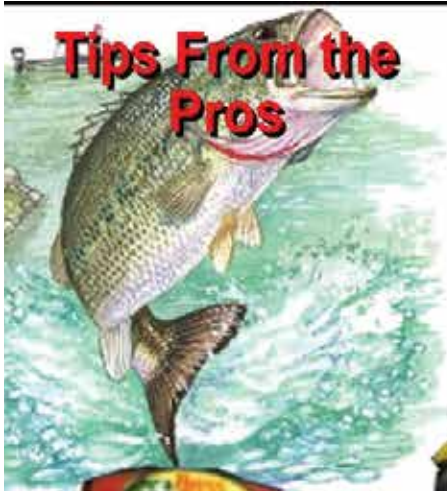
Bass Fishing

2024 Tournament Schedules

Plus:
New Ways To Shoot Old Birds
Ish Monroe's Off Season



Snap here to visit the new woodsandwatersmagazine.com



Tips From the Pros

RICHMOND FISHING EXPO

JAN. 19 - 21, 2024

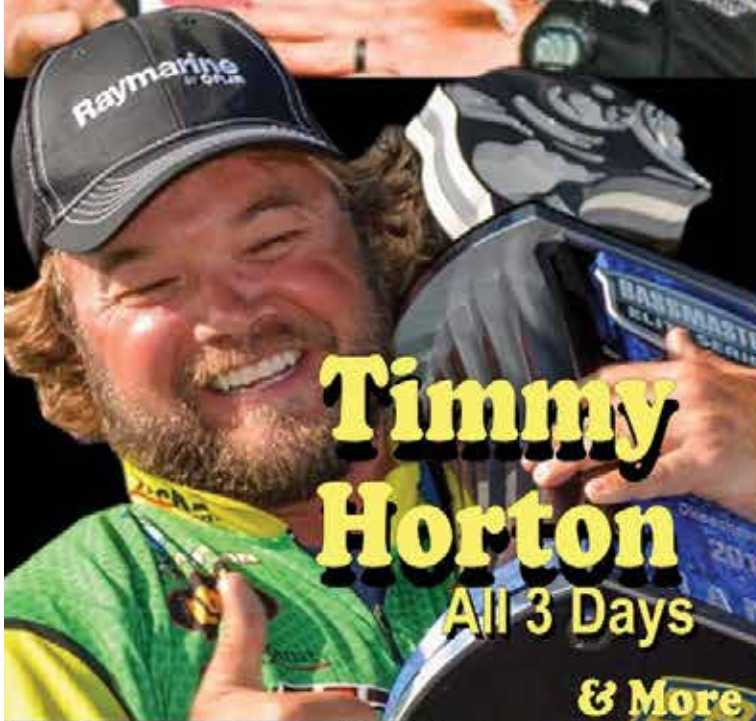
Meadow Event Park - Doswell, Va

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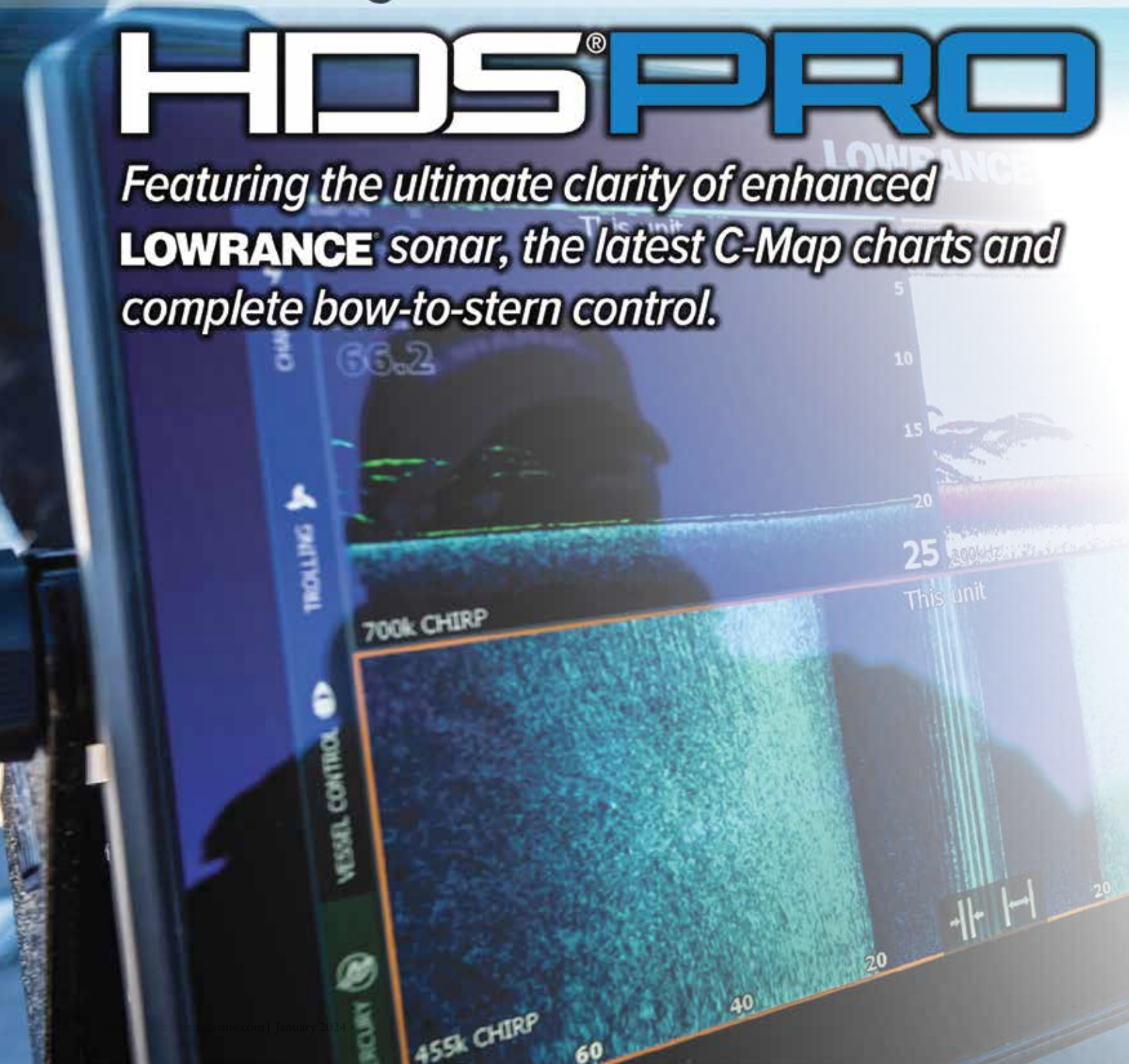
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TOURNAMENT RESULTS



The 2024 tournament schedule has been set: March 23 SML, April 6th Lake Anna, April 20 Chowan River, May 4 James River, July 13 Potomac and October 18-19 Buggs Island Jackson Hudson Memorial. For more information visit www.vaelite70.com.



2023 VA Elite 70 Team of the Year, Greg Cooper and Don Wheeler.



The 2024 Elite 70 Alpha Series is a brand new individual tournament trail that will visit three popular fisheries during prime times.

The season kicks off Saturday, March 3 at Buggs Island out of Oconeechee State Park. Next up is a visit to the tidal James River on Saturday, May 18 out of Hopewell Marina. The final event of the season will be held Saturday, July 27 on the tidal Potomac River out of Smallwood State Park.

Entry fee is \$500 per event. Projected payout based on 70 boats follows: 1st - \$10,000, 2nd - \$5,000, 3rd - \$3,000, 4th - \$2,300, 5th - \$2,000, 6th - \$1,800, 7th - \$1,500, 8th - \$1,200, 9th - \$1,000, 10th - \$900, 11th - \$800, 12th - \$700, 13th - \$600.

For more information visit www.vaelite70.com.

Sturgeon Creek Marina's



Sixteen teams battled it out December 19 in Week 5 of the Sturgeon Creek Marina Winter Series on Lake Anna. They faced foggy conditions and a few light showers late, however some fine bags of bass were brought to the scales.

Being no strangers to being on top, the team of Eric Johnson and Nate Sullivan won the event with a 17.48 lbs. They also made moves on the YTD standings.



Johnson and Sullivan

They now claim second place to the team of Rob Grike and Bobby Fincham, who also had a stellar day finishing second with 16.97 lbs. Rob and Bobby have a nearly 18-pound YTD lead. The team of Neville Green and Stephen Lanier brought in a heavy bucketmouth weighing in at 7.24 lbs. Their total weight was 14.95 also good enough for third.

For more info visit www.facebook.com/sturgeoncreekmarina.



Griker and Fincham

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TOURNAMENT RESULTS



VA/NC Crappie Trail

The third event of the 2023-24 Bobcats Bait & Tackle VA/NC Crappie Trail was held December 2. The team of Tyler and Ricky Trent took first with 10.98 lbs and won \$1,336.

The remaining events will be held Jan. 27, Feb. 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.



Team Trent



2024 Events

Saturday, MARCH 9

LAKE ANNA BIG BASS BATTLE
out of Anna Point Marina

Sunday, APRIL 21 - Potomac River

Sunday, MAY 5 - Potomac River

Sunday, JUNE 23 - Potomac River

Sunday, July 14 - Potomac River

Sunday, AUGUST 4 CHAMPIONSHIP

Potomac River

SATURDAY OCT 26TH BATTLE OF

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Potomac River Launch Site Is
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COST PER EVENT:

BIG BASS BATTLE ENTRY FEE \$200

REGULAR SEASON EVENT \$120

CHAMPIONSHIP \$240

BATTLE OF THE BORDER MDVSVVA \$250

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP \$25/ PERSON

For info visit <https://www.facebook.com/groups/506011516456358/>



February 24-25
Western Branch Reservoir

March 16-17
Northwest River

April 27 & 28
Chowan River Classic*

June 1-2
Roanoke Rapids Reservoir

July 6-7
Chickahominy River

July 8-9
Northwest River

August 17-18
Lake Cahoon/Meade

September 14-15
Roanoke River

Off limits period will be Monday prior to tournament til tournament day.

**Must have qualified from 2023 season.*

20 horsepower maximum • Single man trail
• Each event will be 2-days • \$100 entry fee:
-\$10 (\$5 each day of tournament) for big fish
-\$10 will go towards Classic award

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April 27 May 11 June 22
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A Team must have fished 5 tournaments to fish Oct. 19-20

ENTRY FEE: \$120/Team includes \$10 Lunker fee

\$20 Will be held back for year end and team cost.

*The Oct. 19-20 Entry Fee: \$200 with a 100% payback

5 FISH LIMIT PER TEAM

HOURS: 6:00am or SAFE LIGHT, NLT 6:30am til 3:00pm

Check Web site for start times
Registration ends 10 minutes prior to blast off.

Teams must sign registration/release form.

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- John Doe, Virginia tournament angler

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16 2024 OUTDOOR SHOW PREVIEW

Find which outdoor shows are coming to your area this winter. C.C. MCCOTTER

FEATURES

18 NEW BASS BOATS
From Bass Cat to Xpress here's what's coming to area showrooms. C.C. MCCOTTER

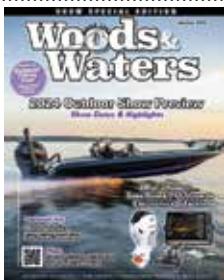
24 NEW TACKLE
ABU Garcia to ZOOM and many baits in between! C.C. MCCOTTER

28 NEW OUTBOARDS
Electric outboards are coming to a boat near you soon! C.C. MCCOTTER

30 NEW ELECTRONICS
The trolling motor category gains players and Lowrance is all new again. C.C. MCCOTTER



COVER PHOTO BY
SKEETER BOATS



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DEADLINE for February edition
is Friday, January 12

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Full Steam Ahead To 2024 And Show Season

Happy new year and welcome to our annual What's New?/Show Special edition. This is an issue you read in front of the fire or woodstove and learn about much of what you'll see in showrooms and stores this coming season.

Between our covers this month you'll find everything new in boats from Bass Cat to Xpress, everything new in outboards, in tackle from ABU Garcia to ZOOM, as well as all the new electronics you'll want to consider for your boat this year.

I'm here to tell you this edition is the perfect buying tool (as it has been for the past 37 years) since we put together articles on everything new for bass fishing. While only our marketing partner dealers are highlighted in each boat section, we do cover nearly all boat lines available in the region and have a big welcome sign out to dealers wanting in on this great collaboration.

There's all that, plus a great listing of tournament schedules, our monthly columnists (Ahnstrom, Gorsuch and Chaconas), 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!

Information is what we provide. It's a passion and you should be able to tell this as you read.

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.

Don't forget the website is all new. You can read the entire maga-

zine online or just browse the articles and Regional Focus Reports.

Before I go I wanted to also welcome the Gray family to Virginia and note that I think I speak for all of us when I say we look forward to the Richmond Fishing Expo at the Meadow Event Park in Dossell January 19-21 (See the ad on page 2). We will have a nice display set up offering our W2 caps, tees and lightweight hoodies, and Fitt Premium Lures, so I invite you to stop by. If you are a subscriber, I'll give you a W2 sticker.

At this show you'll be able to visit with many of our marketing partners and yours truly will be doing the New Product Showcase seminars on the bass tank.

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



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Follow 75 of the best teams in the region as they fish the 2024



The quest for TOTY begins March 23rd...



2023 Team of the Year Greg Cooper and Don Wheeler



- Sat. March 23 - Smith Mountain Lake - SML State Park
- Sat. April 6 - Lake Anna - Anna Point Marina
- Sat. April 20 - Chowan River - Edenton
- Sat. May 4 - James River - Hopewell Marina
- Sat., July 13 - Potomac River - Smallwood State Park
- Oct. 18-19 Fall Classic - Buggs Island/Jackson Hudson Memorial

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NEW FOR 2024....



A new journey begins March 3th...

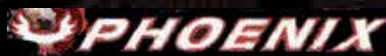
- Sat. March 3 - Buggs Island - Occoneechee State Park
- Sat. May 18 - James River - Hopewell Marina
- Sat. July 27 - Potomac River - Smallwood State Park

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- 2nd - \$5,000
- 3rd - \$3,000
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- 5th - \$2,000
- 6th - \$1,800
- 7th - \$1,500
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Augusta Expo - Fishersville, VA

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dear w2 

Dear W2,

On a recent float trip to the Shenandoah River Ashley Roan and I caught over 20 largemouth and smallmouth bass and lucked into two musky on light tackle; 15-8 braid to a fluorocarbon leader.

Brad Carter
Woodstock, Virginia



Congratulations on the Shenandoah Hat Trick, Brad. Good to see the river is doing well! - ED



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Dear Woods & Waters,

Would you please put me in the magazine for the doe i got on Thanksgiving hunting with a shotgun in Hanover County.

Larry Boykin
Richmond, Virginia



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Lake Anna**

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Richard Stubler



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2024 Outdoor Sho

BY C.C. MCCOTTER

The days are short, the weather can be rough for fishing, the NFL and hunting seasons are ending. What to do? It's time to get off the couch, grab your crew and head to an outdoor show. With so many to choose from you can surely fit at least one in your schedule this year. And if you're looking to sell some of the gear you just never use then you're in luck, too, with lots of flea markets that want you as a seller. Just remember this; if you don't go, you don't know. You don't know about a new bait your buddy secretly found, a new technique demonstrated on a tank, a new place to fish or a new activity to enjoy with a young person.

First in the line up this season is the Fredericksburg Boat & Watersports Expo which is held at the Fredericksburg Expo & Conference Center January 12-14. Whether it sails, paddles, skis or boats you will find it all from the area's best boat dealers all together under one roof. Admission is \$10 and \$9 for seniors, military and first responders. Save time and money by purchasing your tickets online at <https://www.fredericksburgexpo.com/boat-water-sports-expo>

The Virginia Fly Fishing & Wine Festival is January 13-14 at the Meadow Event Park in Doswell, Virginia and is a not-to-miss show for both the well-seasoned fly fisherman, the novice fly fisherman, and everyone in between. Want to learn to tie flies or maybe you're experienced but want to glean a few tips from the pros you can do that here. Perfect your casting technique? Yes, you can do that here as well and the best part is all casting classes are held inside. Visit www.VAFlyFishingFestival.com and explore their very informative website that lists all of the lectures and classes, the schedule of events, exhibitor lists and participating wineries and more. You are encouraged to sign up for classes in advance online where you can also purchase your tickets which are \$30 for a weekend pass or \$20 for either Saturday or Sunday. Ticket holders that are 21 and over can enjoy a free wine tasting. Children 16 and under are free with a paying adult and this applies no matter how many children you have.

The Richmond Fishing Expo returns January 19-21 to the Meadow Event Park in Doswell and will have the largest array of tackle combined with some of the finest professional talent around offering "a weekend of fishing overload".

If it's made to catch fish, you'll probably find

it here including boats, tackle, apparel, accessories and excellent seminars on the Bass Tub including the Woods & Waters New Product Showcase.

Pros scheduled to attend include two-time BASS Masters Elite Series pro Tim Horton, and MLF Tour pro Bryan Thrift.

You'll love this show not only for the gear and the boats but also for the knowledge you'll gain by listening to the best of the best in salt and freshwater fishing.

This is a family friendly event with a Kid's Trout Pond and Kid's Casting Contest. Show hours are Friday and Saturday 9am-7pm and Sunday 10am-5pm. Admission is \$9 for adults, \$8 for senior & military, \$5 for kids ages 6-12 and kids five and under are free. Admission is good for all three days as long as you pick up a return pass. www.RichmondFishingExpo.com

The 30th annual Monaghan Fishing Show will be held January 27-28 at the Monaghan Twp. Volunteer Fire Department in Dillsburg, Pennsylvania. This is a huge flea market type of event with a Kid's Casting Contest, free appraisals on old fishing tackle, seminar speakers and more. Hours are 8am to 4pm Saturday and 9am to 2pm Sunday. Admission is \$4 with all proceeds benefitting the Monaghan Fire Dept.

"It's time to get off the couch, grab your crew and head to an outdoor show."



ow Preview

Visit www.monaghanfishingshow.com for more information.

January 27 is the date for the local favorite, the Fraternal Order of the Eagles #4123 Fishing Flea Market located on Cool Spring Road in Fredericksburg from 8am-1pm. Here you'll find tackle dealers, guide services and tables full of gear and lures that need to find a new home. Admission is just \$3 and kids under 12 are free with all proceeds benefiting Eagle 4506 Outer Banks.

The region's largest and most diverse outdoor show is the nine-day "Harrisburg Show". Officially called the Great American Outdoor Show and hosted by the National Rifle Association this event runs February 3-11.

The Great American Outdoor Show is the largest sports and outdoor show in the country, celebrating the hunting, fishing, and outdoor traditions treasured by millions of Americans and their families.

The 650,000 square foot Pennsylvania Farm Complex Show will feature nine halls of nearly 1,100 exhibitors including 400 outfitters, shooting manufacturers, outfitters, boats, RVs, hunting and fishing retailers and much more. Music, over 200 seminars, archery competitions, demonstrations, raffles and prizes make it fun for the entire family.

Tickets to the show are available at the door, but you can skip the ticket lines by purchasing them online. Adult admission is \$15, \$13 for seniors,

kids ages 6-12 are \$9, a group pass (10 or more) is \$13/ticket and a two day pass is \$26.

www.GreatAmericanOutdoorShow.org

February 3 from 8am to 1pm is the date and time for the annual Bass Fishing Flea Market now called the Dale City Bass Tackle Show and run by Horizon Bass Anglers Club at the Hillendale Fire Dept. in Dale City, Virginia. Rent a table for just \$35 or come and see what's available for just \$5 admission (kids 12 & under are free). Anglers and their families love this show and return year after year to see what's available. Visit www.NH-BAYouthFoundation.weebly.com.

The annual Augusta County Fishing Expo will be held February 10-11 at the Augusta Expoland in Fishersville, Virginia. You'll find a large collection of both new and used fishing tackle dealers, guides and various regional anglers offering insight into fishing techniques and fishing destinations with presentations on the Woods & Waters Seminar Stage. Show hours are 9-5 both days. If you'd like to be an exhibitor contact Doug Fitzgerald at acbassjons@yahoo.com.

February 10 is also the 34th annual Rapidan Trout Unlimited Fishing Show held in Warrenton, Virginia at the Highland School. Inside you'll find everything fly fishing from vendors, seminars, fly tying to casting demonstrations. Admission is just \$5. www.rapidantu.org

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What's New?

BASS BOATS



Skeeter ZRX20

Tracker Pro Team 175 TWX



Ranger Z518 RC



BY C.C. MCCOTTER

Have we seen the peak in bass boat prices? For several years it seemed like the prices would never stop rising. 2024 could be the year where they stop as manufacturers caught up with demand last year and inventories are much better. Inflation is ebbing slowly as well. Will manufacturers lower prices? There are some interest rate deals (mostly on Bass Pro Shops brand boats) and special offers that do lower your overall cost to purchase out there, but bass boats have become expensive just like everything else that burns gas and moves.

It appears the 21' bass boat craze is slowing a bit with many manufacturers focusing their 2024 efforts on 20' models with 250 hp outboards that permit a slightly lower price point. Keep that in mind as you shop around.

Another bass boat trend we are seeing across the top brands include the incorporation of a shelf in the driver's console where two large screen electronics can be mounted.

Here's what you can expect to see at the winter boat shows and at area dealers' showrooms this spring

Bass Cat

With 10 models to choose from all manufactured in Mountain Home, Arkansas, Bass Cat has always set itself apart from other boat builders. New for 2024 is the Caracal STS a boat that positions itself in the high end 20' bass boat segment at 20'2" long, 96" wide, weighing 1,890 pounds, with a 52-gallon fuel capacity (twin tanks) and 300 max hp rating. The boat comes with plenty of standard features including Humminbird electronics and a Minn Kota Ulterra trolling motor, 28-ounce carpet, 4 gauge trolling motor wiring, Hydro Turf on the cockpit floor, triangular livewell openings, underseat storage, coinbox step up to back deck and step up to front deck cooler, a unique front deck center storage compartment, adjustable trolling motor foot pedal placement and room for two fishfinders on the bow, plus six stainless steel cupholders throughout the boat.

Caymas

Earl Bentz is back in the boat building business with Caymas. The company was founded in 2018 and the boats are built in their own Ashland City, Tennessee plant. Bentz was a pioneer boat racer/boat builder that created bass boat companies like Hy-

draSports, Stratos, Javelin and Triton and he's taken all he's learned over his many years in the industry and produced the Caymas fresh and saltwater hulls.

THE CX 20 is the fastest model in Caymas' line of premium tournament bass boats. The CX 20 hull is 20' 4" in length and sports a 96" beam. Most anglers are powering the CX 20 with a 250hp outboard and enjoying speeds over 75 mph. Order the Caymas CX 20 Pro and the boat will arrive at the dealer with a Lowrance® HDS 9 LIVE at the bow, a Lowrance® HDS 9 LIVE at the console, Lowrance® 2-IN-1 Active Imaging, Lowrance Point-1 antenna, the NEMA harness, Ethernet cable, Oxygen Innovations livewell system, Keel protector, a custom boat cover and a dual disc brake upgrade on trailer. All Caymas CX 20 models are equipped with industry-first Hi-Speed pickup aerator pumps. This pump continues to add freshwater into your livewells while you are running down the lake.

Caymas also offers 18, 19 and 21-foot CX bass boat models.

Falcon

Down in Newberry, South Carolina there is a relatively new bass boat builder that regional anglers have taken a shine to. Falcon offers

“It appears the 21' bass boat trend is slowing a bit with many manufacturers focusing their 2024 efforts on 20' models with 250 hp outboards...”

Icon LX21



hulls of 21, 20, 19 and 18', the most popular of which is the F20 Predator. At 20'2" long, 99" wide with a hull weight of 1,890 pounds, 50-gallon fuel tank and 250 maximum hp rating this boat hauls bass. This boat has rocker-style switches throughout, a sliding tackle tray in the fiberglass center bow storage compartment, a step cooler to the front deck, a dry box that holds two, Plano 3600 boxes in front of the passenger seat, 6 mm foam decking in the cockpit, storage compartment, step up to back deck between driver and passenger seats and chrome trailer fenders. A number of additional standard features including, LED courtesy lights, LED compartment lights, LED livewell light, LED lights on front deck, custom cover, Minn Kota Ultrex 112 iPilot Link with MDI and Humminbird Solix 10 and 12 units make the F20 Predator a great tournament boat.

Take a look at the 2023 Falcons at Propeller Dynamics in Prince William, Virginia. 804.706-1847.

Icon

This is a new player in the high-end bass boat market (debuted in 2023) designed with pro angler Jacob Wheeler and Brent Butler. The hull design is said to be rooted in the old Hydrasports heritage, if you can remember that far back!

Currently there are LX20 and LX21 models and a VLX model said to be coming this spring. The closest dealer in in South Carolina.

The LX20 is 20'10" long, 98" wide, has a 50-gallon fuel tank and will accommodate up to 250 hp. The boat does have some interesting aspects including a hull that flairs out at the cockpit from the stern—they call it the Hydrodynamic Stabilizer System. Icon did this to incorporate saltwater boat strategies for stability, comfort and speed. Twin rear deck L2 Latonia livewells are gelcoated in light blue

with insulated cooler-like lids. This innovative, first-in-class, automated livewell system controls auto-fill, auto-maintain-fill, auto-circulate, auto-oxygenation, auto-inject fish additive, and even auto-temp. The lid and cavity shape designs, united with the integration controls mechanisms and a left-fit chiller plate, produce a healthy environment with anti-sloshing for fish to survive with only care at the click of helm controls. You can also fill your livewall bag with something called a quick connect fill system. The boat also features a cavernous front deck center tackle storage compartment (said to hold up to 50 tackle boxes) and twin rod lockers (said to be able to handle 36 rods), step up to front deck Yeti-like insulated cooler, coinbox step up to back deck storage, suspended buck seats, twin rear storage compartments (all storage compartments are considered "ultra-dry" with tall gutter system) and gull wing doors to access the battery compartment. The console has a touch screen for many functions including the livewell system.

The Icon LX20 is just over \$100K. The LX21 is over \$120K.

Lund

This Minnesota-based boat manufacturer has perhaps more models than any other boat builder in the world. There are boat options for bass, crappie, muskie, walleye, bay, great lakes, utility and hunting. The most intriguing options for area anglers are the Pro-V Bass XS, the Renegade and Predator lines.

The Pro-V Bass XS is available in 18 and 20 models. The 1875 XS was made popular by Jon B of the Googan Squad, who used it during the filming of many of his popular YouTube shows. The 1875 XS is 18'9" long, 96" wide, holds 39 gallons of fuel and will handle up to 200 hp. The 2075 XS 20'10" long, 96" wide, holds 49

gallons of fuel and up to 250 hp.

The Renegade Lund line is positioned to compete against Tracker with 17, 18 and 19' models. The 1975 is 19'9" long, 95" wide, holds 32 gallons of fuel, weighs 1,520 pounds and takes up to 150 hp on a modified v hull. The back deck has unique, dual pop-up seats set just outside the passenger and driver seats that also serve as lids to rear storage compartments. The cockpit floor is covered in vinyl and there is a center rod storage box in the bow.

The Predator line has models 16, 17, 18 and 20' with the 2070 center console at the top measuring 20' long, 96" wide with a 20-gallon fuel cell and able to hold up to 150 hp and available in an olive drab or marsh grass exterior.

Virginia's Lund dealer is Mid Atlantic Marine at Lake Anna. www.midatlanticwatersports.com.

Nitro

Johnny Morris's Bass Pro boat is making a serious attempt to earn your tournament boat money in 2024 with aggressive pricing on its Z20 Pro model. This boat is 20'2" long, 94" wide, weighs 2,000 pounds with a 50-gallon fuel capacity and capable of handling up to 250 hp. A properly rigged Z20 Pro runs around 68 mph. Standard features include a Mercury Four Stroke Pro XS 250 with Torque Master lower unit, a Lowrance Ghost 36V trolling motor, a Lowrance HDS LIVE 9 flush-mounted fishfinder with StructureScan in the dash, a Lowrance HDS LIVE 9 gimbal-mounted fish finder with ActiveTarget and Structure Scan on the bow (all three are NMEA networked), a five-inch in-dash digital touchscreen, dash light dimmer, Veethree multi-function instrumentation, a livewell culling system, factory applied keep protector, Hot Foot throttle, a four-bank battery charger, one extra trolling battery, twin 19-gallon Guardian livewells, twin rear storage compart-

Nitro Z20 Pro



ments, padded front deck, Z-CORE seating system, a center bow tackle management system compartment, port and starboard side rod locker, two molded aft storage boxes that hold seven 3700 tackle boxes, a lift out tray for tool/rope storage in battery compartment, insulated aluminum storage lids with welded corners, passenger rod ramp with rod handle organizer and hold down strap, a NOCO GB40 jump starter pack, LED lighted bow storage, below console RAM X-Grip phone holder and 12V outlet, Step to bow deck w/62-qt. (\$8.67 L) insulated cooler, removable trash receptacle & snap-in sandwich tray, hull integrated port and starboard running lights and a twin axle trailer.

The 2024 Nitro Z20 Pro sells for around \$65,500 and can be found at Dee Kidd's Anna's Marine Center at Lake Anna. www.annasmarine-center.com.

Phoenix

Gary Glouse has spent a lifetime fishing professionally and building boats. His Phoenix bass boat line has become popular among area anglers. The flagship is the PHX 21. This boat is 21'6", 96" wide, weighs 1,950 pounds, holds 50 gallons of fuel and accommodates up to 250 hp.

Ranger

The flagship of Johnny Morris' boat brands has two traditional bass boat model lines to choose from: the Z Comanche Series and The Z Series hulls. The only fully new rig for 2024 is the ZS18, Ranger Cup Equipped edition. The ZS18 is a nice option for those wanting a Ranger but not the premium price associated with the brand. Add all the Ranger Cup option and you have an 18'10" long, 97" wide, 1,650-pound boat that sells for around \$56,000 (with a 150 hp) but will hold up to 200 hp and 39 gallons of fuel. Ranger Cup niceities

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include a Lowrance HDS-9 Live with Active Target on the bow, Lowrance HDS-9 Live at the console with Active Imaging, an onboard Dual Pro auto detect lithium capable battery charger, Lowrance Ghost 24V trolling motor, Hot Foot Throttle, a center rod box in the bow deck with rod management system, tool holders at the bow and front deck step, USB charging port and 12V receptacle, plus special 55th anniversary badging.

Ranger's top 20' hull would be the Z520R at 20'11", 96" wide and able to accommodate up to 250 hp. That boat will set you back around \$80K. The Ranger Z519 is 19'9" long, 97" wide and holds up to 225 hp and sells for around \$64,000.

Skeeter

Is the Skeeter ZXR20 the best value in tourna-

ment bass boats? Some would say it is. This boat is 20'4" long, 97" wide, weighs 2,275 pounds with a 48-gallon fuel capacity and holds up to 250 hp. Properly set up, the boat should run over 70 mph.

Numerous standard fishing features put the ZXR20 in a standard-setting class including a cavernous center tackle storage compartment on the front deck flanked by a port side rod locker and a rodlocker/storage compartment on the starboard side as well as a go to storage compartment. There are two bucket seats with a middle seat area that has storage underneath. The passenger has a slotted rod storage area with a trash receptacle. To access the front deck there's a two step area with tool storage on either side. Twin aerated livewells are tucked just inside twin storage compartments in the rear deck. A split compartment accesses the

battery and bilge area.

Standard with the ZXR20 is a Yamaha V MAX SHO 250 four stroke outboard, Hot Foot throttle, a Minn Kota Ultrax iPilot 112 trolling motor, two 8' Minn Kota Raptors (an option on other packaged rigs), a Humminbird Helix 12 CHIRP MEGA SI GPS G4N with temperature in the dash, a Helix 9 CHIRP MEGA DI GPS G4N with temperature on the bow (both are gimbal mounted) a twin axle trailer, two bike seats, Hamby Keel Protector, Minn Kota 10 amp 5-bank charter, dry dock ventilation system, LED storage compartment lighting and eight color choices. The cockpit and boat switches are rocker style for assured performance.

This boat sells for around \$76,000 NAP so if you are in the market for such a feat of engineering, you'll want to check around for a boat with similar features.

The Skeeter lineup of bass boats consists of the ZXR hulls (ZXR21, ZXR20 and ZXR19), the FXR hulls (FXR 21 APEX, FXR 20 APEX, FXR 21 L and FXR 20 L) and the ZX 200 and ZX 150.

You'll want to check with Dee Kidd at Anna's Marine Center at Lake Anna for a 2024 Skeeter. www.annasmarinecenter.com

Tracker

The Tracker Pro Team 175 TXW remains one of the most popular fishing boats in the nation. At 17'7" long, 89" wide, a package weight of just 2,235 pounds, 21.5-gallon fuel capacity and able to hold up to 75 hp, the Pro Team 175 TXW sells for around \$24,000 (with a 60 hp) and \$25,715 with the 75 hp outboard. Tracker is now powdercoat painting and clearcoating this boat with what they dub the Diamond Coat 3.0 process, so they have better curb appeal and durability. The 2024 Tracker boats can be found at Dee Kidd's Anna's Marine Center at Lake Anna. www.annasmarinecenter.com.

Triton

The 2024 Triton 20XP Patriot is 20'5" long, 95" wide, weighs @2,220 pounds, with a 50-gallon fuel capacity and handles up to 250 hp. The total package weight comes in at under 3,000 pounds.

According to Triton it will run past 70 mph. A rededication to performance drove the engineering for this new boat. To accomplish this, designers moved the center of gravity back nine inches to get the boat up and moving in a hurry. Inside, the cockpit features a full roster of innovations including the TriTouch™ touchscreen control unit that offers insight into critical engine functions and performance and proven rocker switches for accessories. An integrated console shelf lets you mount two big screen graphs at the helm and all-new seating adds plush comfort and support. The cockpit floor is covered in hydro turf instead of carpet and features a Pro Pedal foot throttle.

Standard features include Lowrance® HDS fish-finders (Lowrance HDS 12 PRO with Active Imaging HD 3 in 1 transducer in the dash and a Lowrance

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Triton 20XP Patriot

HDS9PRO with ActiveTarget 2 Live Sonar transducer at the bow) reside at the bow and dash, a powerful 37V Lowrance® Ghost trolling motor is standard on the bow, keel guard, pull up cleats, NOCO on board battery charger, center bow tackle storage compartment, twin bow rod lockers, auto on LED compartment lights, the adjustable driver and passenger suspension bucket seats, built-in fish measuring board with tool holder, a built-in ice chest on the step up to the front deck, center coinbox step to rear deck with fiberglass lid, twin rear livewells with divider, timer and Oxygenator system, twin rear tackle storage compartments that accommodate 143700 tackle boxes, passenger side rod ramp and foot

rest drawer, a tandem axle trailer with custom wheels, are just a few of these standard features found on the 20XP Patriot.

The 20XP Patriot runs \$68,995. There are 10 standard color schemes to choose from. Triton also has a new 20XP that features the same hull without quite as many standard features for \$66,995.

War Eagle

This Arkansas-based aluminum boat manufacturer fields six model lines for 2024; the Sportsman, the Blackhawk, the Predator, the VS Stick Steers, the Tomahawk and Renegade.

War Eagle Boats has built a reputation of having the toughest alumi-

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5. Cabelas Prestige Fly Outfit-8' 6", 4wt, 4pc(FredK)

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num boats on the water. All models are built using all welded aluminum and the wings transom design that creates superior handling, even in choppy waters.

Since 1992, War Eagle Boats have been a force in the duck hunting industry, providing customers with the best camo paint jobs in the business. Each boat is individually painted using a tested process that produces HD camo results that blend perfectly with your environment. The Sportsman Gladiator model is a regional favorite with duck hunters that install mud motor type outboards on them.

The Predator and VS models are popular with crappie guides and pro anglers throughout the south.

If you are looking for a boat that can fish as hard as it hunts, then check out the Blackhawk series. These models come fully loaded and are built on an 18°V hull that not only provides a smoother ride but will keep you dry. The best feature of the Blackhawk is that the layout can be customized with either a side or center console, each with an impressive list of standard equipment.

The 2170 Blackhawk is a center console fishing and hunting rig that measures 21'6" long, 98" wide and holds up to 150 hp. The 961 Blackhawk is 19'5" long and 89" wide and is rated for 115-150 hp depending on the console choice.

Stop by Tomahund Marine on Rt. 5 near the mouth of the Chickahominy River for a look at the 2023 War Eagle boats.

804/829-9888

Vexus

This is the company made up of ex-Ranger engineers and executives after the acquisition a number of years

back by Bass Pro Shops. The Vexus AVX is their aluminum line and the VX is the fiberglass line.

The flagship VX21 is 21'11" long, 97" wide, holds 58 gallons of fuel and up to 300 hp. The boat sports a number of exclusive design features, perhaps the most noteworthy is the Infused Composite Construction process that eliminates spraying layers of gelcoat and offers a much more exact molding process drive by vacuum.

The new for 2024 AVX2 line is topped by the AVX 2080. This aluminum/fiberlass hull is 20'2" long, 95" wide, holds 35 gallons of fuel and up to 200 hp. All the Vexus aluminum rigs look like fiberglass boats with the curving lines their exclusive manufacturing process permits. Neither the VX21 or AVX 2080 has a published hull weight.



Xpress

This original all-welded aluminum boat builder offers models in eight categories: bass, bay, skiff, catfish, crappie, hunting, utility and jon.

Area bass anglers have taken to the X21 Pro model that, when properly matched with a 250 hp outboard can push 80+ mph. Just ask BASS Pro Jason Christie how he likes his. There's also an X19 Pro and an X18 Pro model.

The X21 Pro is 21' long with a 95" beam that handles up to 250 hp and holds 40 gallons of fuel. Many anglers are opting for the Xpress Appearance Package with custom fitted SeaDek in a striking, color-coordinated pattern.

The Xpress Hyperlift series includes a H18 and H17 model.

Take a look at the 2024 Xpress boats at Propeller Dynamics in Prince William, Virginia. 804.706-1847.  



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Snag Proof Zoo Pop



Crush City Freeloader



Shimano Curado 200M



Shimano Swaggy



Rapala Tiny 7



Crush City Bronco Bug



Culprit Shakin' Neko Craw



Z-Man Chatterbait Elite EVO



ZOOM Uni-Toad



Shimano 190 FB



BY C.C. MCCOTTER

This is the time of year when many anglers are adding to their tackle arsenal. Most restock with proven producers and then review the new stuff they've heard the pros are using and make some choices. Some trends we are seeing is a host of new reel manufacturers – too numerous to mention, but don't be surprised to see some reels with names like Seviin and Denali you've not seen before in shops this year. From ABU Garcia to ZOOM, here's a preview of some of what you'll see in shops, online and on the pro's boats this season.

ABU Garcia

The ABU Garcia Zenon X spinning reel looks to be a popular choice among area anglers this season that excels in finesse fishing techniques while offering the versatility to also handle heavier baits. The reel features an asymmetric, one-piece, lightweight aluminum gear box, Air fin spool design helps reduce weight, a V-Rotor design that

reduces start up inertia, a carbon fiber handle and co-molded handle knob, a AMG2 fully machined aluminum main gear that gives unparalleled smoothness and durability, 9+ HPCR bearing system, 6.2:1 gear ratio for around 6 ounces in all versions.

Berkley

Offering anglers the durability and performance of a plastic bait, the new Berkley Dime crankbait is said to feature balsa-like action thanks to Berkley's patented Flash Disc technology. It not only casts further due to the weight transfer system in the smaller sizes, but it tracks perfectly and features sticky sharp Fusion 19 treble hooks. The bait comes in a number of intricate and modern color options to match the hatch that balsa baits cannot achieve. The bait is available in four sizes.

The Berkley Nessie is a new swimbait that resembles the Megabass Magdraft baits. The Nessie is available in three different sizes starting from five-inch up to nine-inches, the PowerBait Nessie presents a big profile with the ability to be retrieved at various speeds

and cadences due to the unique stabilizing fins that keep the bait running consistent at all times (it doesn't roll). This bait has a mesh reinforced joint and hook retention clip so it's very durable. Anglers will enjoy skipping it under docks on clear area lakes.

Bill Lewis

The Hammer-Trap is the newest offering from Bill Lewis in the lipless category, which they put on the map over 50 years ago. The Hammer-Trap's name is derived from the incredible hammering action. This action, which will literally rock your rod tip, also activates the Tri-Tone sound chambers. In turn, this emits 3 distinct tonal frequencies as well as the next-level vibration. When stopped on the retrieve, the Hammer-Trap will fall with a fluttering action. The Hammer-Trap, which comes in 3/8 and 5/8-ounce is available in 16 pro-selected colors and comes equipped with Mustad Triple Grip hooks.

Culprit

The Culprit Shakin' Neko Craw looks to be a hot bait for this spring, the first of its kind

“From ABU Garcia to ZOOM, here's a preview of some of what you'll see in shops, online and on the pro's boats this season.”

for use in finesse applications of Neko rigging, shaky head, wacky rigs, and even trimmed down for Ned rigs. When rigged Neko style, each twitch of the rod produces an action much like the tail of a crawfish as it scoots in short bursts on the bottom. There is even a built-in groove to securely hold an O-ring, popular with Neko and wacky rigging.

Costa Del Mar

Costa's new King Tide sunglasses are built for those who seek performance from their eyewear both on and off the water. For the first time in Costa's history, this frame is available in two styles – King Tide 6, a six-base frame with a straighter wrap and King Tide 8, a full wrap-around eight base version, giving elite watermen and anglers a choice in style and fit at the highest level of functionality.

Technical specs on both frames include removable side shields for optimal use on and off the water, shark inspired venting to achieve a near impossible zero-fog effect, top of the line sweat management, and the introduction of non-skid hooding to keep your frames exactly where you set them, no matter the conditions.

Daiwa

Daiwa has a redesigned and incredibly affordable Tatula 100 that's ultra-ergonomic (fits in your hand nicely). The first upgrade is a new, thinner and lighter 7075 aircraft-grade aluminum spool for greater casting distance and more control. Ultimately, Daiwa created a farther-casting reel with better braking system. Daiwa

also went to what they call Hyperdrive gearing found in their higher end models like Steez and Zillion. MSRP is \$179.

MEGABass

Achieving overwhelming long-distance castability that exceeds the average flight distance of similar 70mm jerkbaits, the Megabass X-Nanahan jerkbait features a unique shape that provides excellent swimming response and intuitive handling. The X-Nanahan's body is carved from a high-volume block to create a visually tight silhouette with high precision. The X-Nanahan concept fuses the ideals of Shinjin Sato, one of Japan's foremost jerkbait anglers, and the engineering of Yuki Ito, creator and lure designer of dominant jerkbaits like the Vision 110. Bursting to life with dynamic jerking and darting action that sets it apart from the school, the X-Nanahan produces high-pitched rolling action on a straight retrieve and sharp dynamic darting action when twitching.

The MEGABass SHADING-X R62 is fueled by a patented balancer system that, despite its small 2.4in, 3/16oz size, enables dizzyingly high-pitch action and improved cast performance, elevating the finesse shad category to new heights. Reengineered to perform in the toughest conditions, the SHADING-XR62 is built to deliver bites when bass are keyed on precise, high-pitch action and smaller offerings. Available August 2023 in limited quantities. See at Megabass.co.jp.

The MEGABass KANATA+1 expands the depth

| continued on page 26



Virginia East TEAM SERIES SCHEDULE*

- March 2 | Chickahominy River | Rockahock
- March 23 | Lake Anna | Sturgeon Creek Marina
- April 20 | Buggs Island | Rudds Creek
- May 18 | Lake Gaston | Holly Grove Marina
- June 1 | Lake Chesdin | Seven Springs Marina
- June 22 | James River | Hopewell Marina

2024 Eligible Contingencies

- Toyota Bonus Bucks (30+ boats) -TH Marine Atlas Rewards (50+ boats)
- Power-Pole Captains Cash (20+ boats) - BassCast Quest (30+ Boats)



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Andy Lavin "Team" Series Director

*Teams earn 50 bonus points for attending the Friday night pre-tournament meetings. This includes a FREE MEAL, door prizes, fellowship music and an inspirational message. Family and friends are welcome at no additional cost. TRUTH VERIFICATION AT EVERY EVENT.

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Richmond Crappie Club
2024 Tournament Schedule

2024 Tournament Dates and Locations

2/10 – Chickahominy River 3/16 – Lake Anna
4/28 – Chickahominy Lake 5/19 – James River
6/9 – Lake Chesdin
Saturday & Sunday October TBD – Classic
(Location to be voted on by the qualified teams from the regular season)

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For rules and information or if you're interested in becoming a sponsor visit the Richmond Crappie Club on Facebook or contact Josh Morris (804)968-8963.

range of the original big body KANATA jerkbait. Now reaching depths of 10+ft, the KANATA+1 exhibits a high-pitch natural rolling action and a big, showstopping flash-and-dart action not found in other oversized jerkbaits. Coming in at 6.3in, 1-1/8oz, KANATA+1 features a tungsten Triple Oscillating System (PAT.) to propel the bait to the farthest reaches to hunt new targets.

MES Lures

The creative mind of Mike Seal produces many creations. The MES Lures Root Frog continues to be a local favorite among bass and snakehead anglers. Seal's fertile lure designing mind has created a floating frog with two sets of legs imitated by silicone strands both fore and aft of a hollow body. The colors are insane, especially the one featuring day glow orange. There are 3/4 oz. hollow bodied versions as well as 1/4-oz. versions you'll want to try this season.

Rapala

This hard bait manufacturer has

introduced a line of soft baits called Crush City. There's the Bronco Bug, The Freeloader, the Ned BLT, The Cleanup Craw and The Mayor.

The new Bronco Bug differs from similar baits with a perfect level of body thickness, which allows an angler to Texas rig to keep it snagless, while allowing for easy penetration of the hook. It features a dolphin-like swimming action and a "Bronco Buck" kick when jigged. The body of the bait has raised ribs on each side to hide the hook point, meaning that when one side of the bait starts to show wear, the hook can be flipped without compromising any action, thereby increasing durability and efficiency. The appendages face forward, which means they'll create a disturbance larger than that of the overall package and remain quivering with the slightest bit of current or angler manipulation.

Collaborating with Jacob Wheeler, the product engineers at Rapala sought to create the ultimate chatterbait/spinnerbait trailer bait. The new Crush City Freeloader can be used as

a vibrating jig trailer, alone as a swim-bait, or for countless other traditional and novel soft plastic presentations. The body features miniature ribs for added action, water movement and a realistic texture, but the unsung hero of this product is the tail, which tapers to a point, albeit one with a ball at the end. That creates a kicking action which is subtly realistic. It's the reason why it has quickly become Wheeler's spinnerbait trailer of choice, too, adding a bit of bulk, color contrast, and a touch of ultra-realism. 4 1/4 inches long. 6-pack for \$5.99. 17 custom colors

The Rapala Crush City™ Ned BLT is a 3-inch tapered worm. It combines durability and high floating, while also retaining maximum action. It's built with TPE, so it's super-flexible and has some really good colors to it, but the key is that three inches is the perfect size whether you're dealing with largemouth bass, spotted bass or smallmouths. Available in 16 custom colors.

The Rapala OG Deep Tint 7 is a small, flat-sided crankbait made with premium balsa wood and circuit board lip. The flat-sided body design, combined with its balsa wood construction gives it a tight and finesse wobble. Getting the deep diving swim was a labor of love but pro angler and Rapala consultant Ott Defoe has perfected it in this new staple of cold water fishing. The new OG Deep Tiny 7 comes in 19 natural colors with a body length of 2-1/4 inches and weighs 5/16-ounce.

Strike King

The new Gravel Dawg crankbait delivers a wide wobble action in a bite-sized, 1.5 profile. It grinds through rock, wood, and grass better than any medium-diving crankbait in its class. The Gravel Dawg comes in two different versions – the Gravel Dawg 8 and Gravel Dawg 10. Both sizes keep the same body profile and size, but the bill changes between the two to achieve different diving depths. These baits will have you covered in the 5-10 ft. range throughout all parts of the country.

Shimano

Shimano designed the ARMAJOINT 190SS Flash Boost (FB) to solve the challenges of casting a big jointed swimbait and the proprietary

ARMABOOST technology significantly increases casting distance and accuracy by reducing unnecessary air resistance and the chances of the lure spinning during flight. As the angler casts the lure, ARMABOOST technology facilitates the lure to disconnect from an internal magnet and forces the body to fold into its compact shape. Once the lure hits the water, the lure's body reengages with the magnet to create a smooth and natural swimming action. Swim in an S-pattern, but the bait will not flare out when stopped due to the fold in its body. ARMAJOINT also features Shimano's proprietary FLASH BOOST technology that constantly emits a fish-attracting flash during the retrieve — even on the pause.

Shimano's Swagy spinnerbait incorporates an innovative tapered-wire design to add durability without sacrificing the lure's vibration. The lower arm's thicker (0.95mm) wire improves hookup ratios and adds durability. Swagy's upper arm tapers to a thinner (0.6mm) wire, boosting the lure's specially-designed blades to transmit more vibration through the lure body and causing the skirt to have more action as the lure moves through the water. Swagy's head design incorporates both tin and tungsten while precisely placing the high specific-gravity tungsten on the bottom portion of the head to stabilize the swimming action during fast reel retrieves. The shape of the blade's front cup creates a faster rise for extreme vibration.

The new Curado 200 M inherits the latest Shimano reel technologies to provide ultimate castability with heavier lines and lures in any power fishing situation. Expanded line capacity comes without compromise as the Curado 200 M now leverages Shimano's Magnum Lite (MGL) Spool III to reduce start-up inertia for unparalleled casting performance, especially when targeting trophies with large paddle-tail swimbaits, big jigs, deep-diving cranks, oversized frogs, Carolina rigs or umbrella rigs. The addition of Silent Tune technology improves spool quietness during casts. SVS Infinity technology provides precision casting performance with easy-to-manage and consistent spool control and brake force adjustments when faced with demanding condi-



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tions or switching between baits. The aluminum HAGANE Body provides added rigidity to increase cranking power and overall reeling efficiency, while MicroModule Gear, Cross Carbon Drag and X-Ship deliver the tournament-tested smoothness, durability, and versatility for which the Curado family is known.

The newest addition to Shimano's CoreSolid lineup of spinning reels is the Stradic FM and it showcases reel technologies passed down from Shimano's flagship spinning reels. The addition of Infinity Drive delivers light rotation and increased cranking power under load, while the new Duracross Drag system provides the smooth performance of felt with up to 10 times the durability. Shimano's X-Protect water-repellent coating and specially designed, water-channeling labyrinth construction ensure a lifetime of dependable performance by stopping water penetration in key areas without adding a heavy rotational feel. The new Anti-Twist Fin — an elastic polymer on the underside of the roller — enhances line management for anglers fishing monofilament or fluorocarbon line.

Snagproof

Check out the unique Zoo Pop — a little bait that will rock (or pop!) your fishing world! With its incredible popping action that floats-at-rest, the Zoo Pop (TM) is a brings finesse fishing to power frog fishing and is an incredible bait that creates its own action. The super soft hollow body creates incredible popping action in a finesse profile that will get fish to go when larger profile frogs won't. The Zoo Pop stays "snagproof" even in heavy grass, pads and vegetation thanks to the fully integrated hook design.

Tiger Crankbaits

These sought after custom painted plugs are created locally by Greg and Heidi Stinnett and long-time tournament angler Harvey Reece. Last year's Hot Cherry Craw is a custom-painted medium diving crankbait similar to a Bandit 100 that anglers snapped up like free beers at a football game. The new Electric Bluegill color pattern continues to drive demand from anglers wanting a Bagley-type crankbait in this outstanding color.

Yamamoto

The Yamatanuki 2.5 repeatedly requested by pros and consumers

who wanted a smaller, more compact version of their new favorite soft plastic. The smaller size allows for greater application in clear water, smallmouth, spotted bass, and other finesse scenarios. The 2.5" perfectly fits the bill as it can be fished on light line, rigged weightless, or on most any style of jig head. It can be cast, pitched, skipped, dropped, or presented however the situation calls for.

Although designed to be the perfect tool for forward facing sonar, the new Scope Shad offers the perfect profile to fool even the most pressured bass. You can confidently rig it for a vertical presentation on technique-specific jig heads such as the all-new Buckeye Scope-Head. It is also an incredible offering on a drop shot as it is constructed from Yamamoto's Mega Floater Formula. Pair it this winter with an underspin. Available in 13 clearwater-specific colors, 3-inch size.

Z-Man

The Chatterbait Elite EVO is the culmination of thousands of hours of professional testing, tweaking and bass-in-the-boat, this next-level bladed jig features all new hybrid molded split-grip and wire trailer keepers to pin all soft plastics tightly in place, while expediting perfect rigging, every time — built around a 5/0 custom heavy-duty needlepoint black nickel hook. The hook was custom designed by Z-Man pro Stephen Browning, including exclusive barb placement for optimal performance, hookset to lip-lock. Wire-tied 100% silicone skirting maxes out durability. Stainless steel blades sport extra durable plated, painted and glitter finishes. Available in 3/8- and 1/2-ounce sizes in 12 elite color patterns.

Zoom

Building upon the success of the widely popular Zoom Horny Toad, the Zoom Uni-Toad Swimbait is molded with the same body but with a single paddle tail instead of two Ultra-Vibe legs. On the bottom it features a belly slit to increase hook penetration and make it easy to rig weedless on EWG or screw-lock style hooks for fishing over grass and pads. It can also be fished as a trailer on the back of your favorite buzzbait to create better casting performance and a bigger target than a silicone skirt for hungry bass. Offered in Zoom's best-selling colors. 🟢🟡

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| What's New?

OUTBOARDS



BY C.C. MCCOTTER

Outboard manufacturers are now looking ahead to the year 2050, which some have announced as their goal to be carbon neutral. Yamaha in particular has said this is a goal and they are not only working on electric outboards but hydrogen power motors as well.

There are some electric outboards available, but nothing yet for the likes of today's high performance bass boats. Mercury is in the marketplace as are a host of smaller companies. Like most technological innovations in the marine industry the exciting stuff happens at the top and takes a while to trickle down to the mass market. There might be a scattering of electric powered vessels in anchorages these days, but no doubt as technology progresses and prices decline, we will see more and more boats sporting electric outboards, big and small.

For 2024 don't expect any groundbreaking introductions. The OEMs are sticking with their proven four stroke V6 and V8 designs for now and that means most boats you'll see at the show will be power by Mercury or Yamaha outboards with smattering of Hondas and Suzukis.

Here's what's going on with the top outboard manufacturers for 2024.

Honda

While they are still somewhat of a rarity on bass boats around the area, Honda outboards are an option and they are present on pontoon boats and some coastal boats. The BF 200, BF 225 and BF 250 are Honda's V6, four-stroke outboards suitable for bass boats. They are built on a 60-degree, 24 valve V6 that displaces 3.5L and weighs 609 pounds. This outboards has a 90 amp (1119 amp) alternator with 60 watts of charging power. The cowling features air intake vents and is available in white and silver options. A unique cooling system passes through each aluminum exhaust manifold, the cylinder heads, and once again through the exhaust manifolds. This results in increased cooling efficiency and long-term durability. Honda's exclusive Intelligent Shift and Throttle (iST) command and control system delivers superb control plus plug-and-play installation of Honda Marine products and third-party controls and devices. Boosted Low Speed Torque, or BLAST, uses Honda's patented spark advance system to propel the boat to plane in just seconds. When you move the throttle quickly, BLAST is activated:

the throttle body opens up, the air-fuel ratio goes to a richer setting, the ignition timing advances aggressively and this allows the engine to make more torque, or power.

Mercury

The Pro XS line of Mercury outboards continue to be a popular option for the region's anglers. A large dealer network and being the exclusive outboard for certain boat manufacturers tends to help Mercury be the top choice on most boats you see on area waters.

The Mercury Pro XS 250 is what is found on the back of all new 21' Nitro's and Tritons. This V8 outboard displaces 4.6L and weighs just 511 pounds. It runs fine on 87 octane fuel with 10% ethanol maximum. The power plant's alternator cranks out an impressive 85 amps or (1,071 watts) wide open and 20 amps at idle to charge your battery. A DTS HotFoot throttle is standard with all 200-300 Pro XS outboards. These motors are Smart-Craft capable and that means you can hook up any number of add-on accessories like Active Trim, VesselView Link and VesselView Mobile to increase performance and monitor the engine. Mercury claims the Pro XS 250 has better 0-20 mph acceleration on a heavily loaded 21' bass boat than a competitor's 250 hp (probably Yamaha), 12-15% more torque

“Outboard manufacturers are now looking ahead to the year 2050, which some have announced as their goal to be carbon neutral.”

and a higher top speed rigged on a 21' bass boat with a light load.

Mercury is putting a lot of research and development into its Avator electric outboard as regulations around the globe are incentivizing non-fossil fuel motors.

The Avator 7.5e debuted last year, offering 3.5 hp for small boats. New for 2024 is the Mercury Avator 20e and 35e. The 20e is said to be able to accelerate a 12' Lund WC-12 boat at a similar rate as a 5 hp four stroke outboard, while the 35e model's acceleration is similar to a 9.9 four stroke.



The Avators have displays on the front of the outboards that show battery life and settings. You can also connect wirelessly to your phone using the SmartCraft Connect and Mercury Marine app. You can charge the lithium ion batteries individually using the charging port on each battery or charge up to four connected batteries at once using the Mercury Power Center charge port. The 230W charger takes 10 hours to fully charge a depleted 2300Wh battery. The 520W charger cuts that time in half.

Suzuki

Only limited by its lack of dealers in the region, Suzuki has a good product for area anglers to consider when repowering and when they are able to choose an outboard for a new boat. The revised Suzuki SS 250 engine offers a sleek cowling design featuring new intake louvers, upper cover grips (to assist with removing the cowling) and the new "SS" graphics include the raised black Suzuki lettering that is only featured on this model. It looks like a stealth or black ops engine.

The SS 250 is a V6 four stroke that displaces 245.6 cu. in. (4.0L) and weighs 578 pounds. It has a 54 amp alternator, Multi-Point Sequential Fuel Injection, Variable Valve Timing and Multi Stage Induction. Suzuki also offers fly-by-wire digital technology SPC 2.0 controls and Auto-Trim, a keyless start system and a digital pedal throttle. There's a new lower unit for less drag and the skeg has something called "left-right asymmetry" with a curve in it to assist in maneuvering.

Tohatsu

Better known for powering smaller boats and rental fleets, Tohatsu motors does field an option for the region's anglers needing an engine to push their bass boat. The Tohatsu BFT250D is a 3.6L V6 four stroke outboard with a narrow, 60-degree V6 design that weighs in at 619 pounds and has a 90 amp alternator with 60 charging amps. The BFT250 has another industry-first; separate dual air circuits. The first is used to cool the engine where air is drawn into the front of engine and

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What's New?

ELECTRONICS



BY C.C. MCCOTTER

There really aren't any jaw-dropping headlines in marine electronics coming in 2024.

Garmin does have a new trolling motor as does Minn Kota (finally joined other manufacturers with brushless technology), and Lowrance will introduce a newer version of live sonar. Here's what you can expect to see at the shows and in shops this season.

Garmin

The new Garmin Force® Kraken trolling motor will be available this spring. Dubbed the most powerful trolling motor the recreational fishing market has ever seen. Coupled with Garmin's industry standard precise anchor lock technology, Kraken is designed with longer shaft lengths and a pivot-style mount for easy installation on boats where bow space is limited; like skiffs, bay boats, center consoles and multispecies fishing boats.

Garmin's newest trolling motor utilizes multi-band GPS signal reception and integrated AHRS (attitude and heading reference system) for heading hold to deliver Garmin's most precise boat positioning technology yet. "We are excited to build on the success of our Force trolling motor and bring new mounting options and features to even more anglers in

both the saltwater and inland markets. From power and durability to integration and innovation, Kraken has everything anglers want and need from their trolling motor and more," said Dan Bartel, Garmin Vice President of Global Consumer Sales.

And with the Kraken, for the first time in the industry, anglers can install forward-facing sonar, like LiveScope™, on a pivot-style trolling motor by conveniently routing the transducer cable **inside** the trolling motor shaft thanks to Kraken's new LiveScope cable management system.

With the Kraken LiveScope Mounting Bracket (additional purchase required), any LiveScope transducer can be installed and operated in all three modes—forward, down and perspective. This will keep the LiveScope cable safe from possible damage during stow or deploy and keeps the trolling motor and deck space cleaner.

Kraken's brushless motor uses a high-efficiency propeller to produce 100 pounds of thrust on a 36-volt system, or 80 pounds on a 24-volt system. Even with all that power, Kraken is extremely efficient so anglers can count on it to fish all day. It's also whisper quiet above and below the water and less likely to spook the fish.

In calm conditions, the Kraken will decelerate the motor when it's within approximately

one meter of the user-selected location. And in rough conditions, Kraken can apply more aggressive motor speed for improved performance on larger boats.

Wireless integration with Garmin chartplotters allows anglers to create routes, patterns and tracks for the trolling motor to follow while they fish, and a new illuminated arrow on the trolling motor head can allow anglers to confirm the boat's heading at a glance (a simple, but very important feature).

Anglers can also use the included wireless remote to help navigate from anywhere in the boat. The remote can give anglers control of the Kraken trolling motor with precise virtual anchor lock, autopilot functionality, heading hold and point-and-go gesture steering—plus it floats. A compatible Garmin smartwatch, like the award-winning quatix® 7 series, can also be connected to Kraken to control steering, anchor lock and more, right from the wrist.

Select Kraken models include a built-in GT56UHD all-in-one transducer with Ultra High-Definition ClearVü and SideVü scanning sonar along with CHIRP traditional sonar for brilliant image clarity of structure and fish below and to the sides of the boat. Additional Garmin transducers can be added and no matter the sonar setup. The brushless motor technology allows for clear returns with extremely low levels of unwanted noise from electrical and mechanical interference.

The Kraken propeller is designed with a thinner leading edge to reduce resistance and maximize thrust, while the trailing edge is engineered to decrease aeration of the water that can cause cavitation and interfere with thrust. Rugged and durable, the sturdy composite shaft and all components have advanced corrosion and saltwater protection. Krakens are backed by a three-year limited warranty and a lifetime limited warranty on the shaft, along with support through an ever-increasing servicing dealer network.

Kraken will be offered in white in 63-, 75- and 90-inch shaft lengths, or black in 63- and 75-inch lengths. Both black Kraken models are sold with a GT56UHD transducer. Suggested retail prices range from \$3699.99 to \$4299.99.

Humminbird

MEGA Live Imaging TargetLock combined with MEGA Live Imaging – a way to keep live imaging sonar always pointed at the target automatically was introduced mid model year 2023. Area anglers have sung its praises.

Combined with Minn Kota Ultrex™, the need to choose between Spot-Lock® and MEGA Live Imaging is no longer. The new Humminbird MEGA Live Hand Control™ Universal Mount allows anglers to utilize the technology on any vessel.

For 2024 Humminbird will continue to rely on Apex, Helix and Solix G4 fishfinder lines.

Lowrance

The new Lowrance HDS PRO system provides full networking and bow-to-stern boat control spanning trolling motors, autopilots, engines, radar, communications and PowerPole® shallow water anchors. It includes C-MAP® DISCOVER OnBoard charts, featuring high-res bathymetric 1-foot contours for over 19,000 lakes across the U.S. and 9,400 in Canada. A new chart option also allows users to overlay ActiveTarget 2 Scout or Ghost 360 trolling motor views, directly on the chart.

Lowrance's new ActiveTarget 2 Live Sonar is said to provide the highest-resolution live views of fish movement and structure available, enabling anglers to quickly recognize if lures and techniques are working in real-time, allowing them to adjust and get fish to strike. Exclusive to HDS PRO, users can combine two live sonar systems at the same time giving even more views simultaneously with 180 View, Scout Wide and Forward + Scout split screen view. The increased range will allow you to see your baits on a full typical cast distance of 150-plus feet.

Minn Kota

Starting from scratch, The Ultrex QUEST 24V and 36V models are completely redesigned trolling motors, while retaining all the

beloved features of the original Ultrex. First off, anglers will notice the larger brushless lower unit, offering 30% greater efficiency than the previous model and an impressive 50% more torque at 24 volts. Torque is the power that allows you to cut through weeds and maneuver your boat swiftly. To support this added power, Minn Kota has reinforced and reimagined the mount, bracket, shaft, and pivot points with enhanced durability and rigidity.

Every Ultrex QUEST trolling motor includes two props: the power prop and the weedless wedge. The power prop is ideal for open water, delivering maximum speed and torque. On the other hand, the weedless wedge prop features flare tips to efficiently shed weeds while maintaining performance across all RPM ranges.

Another goal with the Ultrex QUEST was to make it easier than ever to stow and deploy. The new trolling motor features an improved the lift assist and even offers aftermarket lift assist cylinders for accessories. Once deployed, the motor automatically aligns itself straight ahead, allowing you to start fishing right away. When it's time to stow the trolling motor out of the water, it turns perpendicular to the mount, eliminating the need to step on the pedal. This feature ensures your forward-facing sonar transducer or other



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equipment remains undisturbed and facing upward.

The Ultrex QUEST foot pedal maintains its familiar wire-to-water feel, but with an added programmable One-BoatNetwork key. This key allows you to engage autopilot, mark waypoints on a Humminbird fish finder, or deploy your shallow water anchors, such as Raptors or Talons.

In the importance of maximizing your time on the water to gain a competitive edge, Minn Kota has introduced real-time battery monitoring through your Humminbird fish finder. You can also extend your day by activating eco mode when you reach 20% battery life, conserving power for essential functions.

GPS functionality has always been a standout feature of the Ultrex, and Minn Kota has taken it further with the Ultrex QUEST trolling motor. In addition to the renowned Spot-Lock, the new Drift Mode feature allows anglers to maintain a target speed and heading while slowing down to match wind or current.

All Ultrex QUEST models come with built-in dual spectrum CHIRP or MEGA Side Imaging and include the necessary cabling for connecting to Humminbird fish finders.

QUEST technology is now available Minn Kota Ultrex, Ulterra, Instinct, Terrova and Riptide Terrova trolling motors.

MotorGuide

The MotorGuide Tour Pro 82 claims to have the most Accurate GPS anchor and it's definitely the only true cable steer trolling motor with GPS anchor. Pinpoint® GPS anchoring is reputedly three times as precise as competitors', meaning you can stay on structure and fish, even in currents and wind. Features like Anchor, Jog, Heading Lock and Cruise Control put Tour Pro tech in a class of its own.

Tour-Tested Durability: with a 360° breakaway mount, the Tour Pro is built for tough conditions and surprise rocks and stumps. A rugged two-piece shaft features an oversized stainless steel outer column and an unbreakable inner composite shaft with lifetime warranty.

This unit has a no-flex metal foot pedal: solid steering system with metal upper foot pad and premium grip tape allows for no-flex, no-slip operation. Large push-control GPS Anchor, Heading

Lock and Constant On buttons allow you to set your course and focus on fishing.

A Zero-G lift assist system requires nearly half the effort needed versus competitors' assist mounts. The patented Bulldog latches bite down to lock in place but release on command for effortless stowing and deploying. Tour Pro's powerful nitrogen gas spring makes light work of long days on the water.

MotoGuide's HD+ universal sonar compatibility lets you choose whatever fishfinder you want. You can pair the Tour Pro with the sonar of your choosing without routing external cables. See the world beneath your boat with traditional 83/200 kHz 2D sonar views or high-definition 455/800 kHz views available with major sonar brands.

Power Pole

For 2024 Power-Pole will introduce a new movement in boat control with the Power-Pole MOVE Brushless trolling motor, the strongest and most advanced trolling motor ever created.

Power Pole founder, John Oliverio and the Power-Pole team began by looking at the technology and materials available and decided that to bear the name Power-Pole, they needed to begin from scratch. To have the power and stealth desired, Oliverio determined he needed to produce his own brushless motor and steering components. Research and development produced technology that have never been used in marine application.

The technology used in the Next-Gen Brushless Motor and Stealth Steering Drive are key to the power production, and the operational reliability of the motor.

The Power-Pole MOVE Brushless Trolling Motor comes standard with features like advanced Anchor Mode that allows the angler to stealthily maintain position while focusing on fishing. The Vector Heading feature follows a straight course down a bank or offshore drift, while our Follow a Route feature guided by ProNav allows the angler to use the Power-Pole app or compatible device to set a route for the motor to follow. Finally, a Compass Heading feature causes the motor to bear towards specific compass headings identified by the user.

The Power-Pole MOVE is available in two versions, The MOVE ZR is a

model with a hinged scissor bracket commonly used on bass boats and the MOVE PV, a pivoting version most commonly used on saltwater and big water boats. Both versions are built to withstand use in saltwater environments, will operate in 24- or 36-volt systems, are integrated with a C-Monster 2.0 wireless connection system and produce Max True Thrust of 100 pounds in a 36-volt system or 78 pounds in a 24-volt setup.

The Power-Pole MOVE carries a three-year warranty on everything but the titanium shaft, which is protected by a lifetime warranty, similar to the Lifetime Everflex Spike Warranty found in Shallow Water Anchors.

The MOVE ZR is available in shaft lengths of 45, 52 and 60-inch versions. It comes standard with our Wireless RealFeel™ Foot Pedal, separate wireless Foot Buttons that control Anchor Mode and GPS functions along with a Wireless Trolling Display to help the angler keep up with the system. MOVE ZR also comes with a Wireless Hybrid Remote complete with Charging Cradle that is compatible with Power-Pole Shallow Water Anchors through the C-Monster 2.0 system. The Power-Pole MOVE PV is also available in of 45, 52 and 60-inch shaft lengths, and a 72-inch model. It comes standard with two Wireless Hybrid Remotes with a wireless Charging Cradle and a quickrelease bracket mount. MOVE PV is also compatible with the Wireless RealFeel™ Foot Pedal, Wireless Foot Buttons and Wireless Trolling Display.

Rhodan

Rhodan HD GPS Anchor+ trolling motors are manufactured in Florida and are available in 36 (120-lb.), 24 (80-lb.) and 12-volt (55-lb.) models in a wide variety of shaft lengths (even a 96" shaft for saltwater anglers that prefer not to use a wreck anchor).

In Anchor Mode, the Rhodan HD GPS Anchor+™ Trolling Motor will keep the boat's bow parked where you want it, in any depth of water, automatically compensating for wind, waves and cross-current. Anchor sites can be jogged in precise five-foot increments in four directions relative to the boat's heading using the wireless fob.

In the Track Mode, the Rhodan HD GPS Anchor+™ Trolling Motor will automatically pull the boat along a chosen course, continually compensating for wind and current disturbances. The track speed is adjustable (32 thrust settings) and the track heading can be changed in precise five-degree increments, all using the wireless fob.

In the Manual Mode, the system behaves just like a normal trolling motor, allowing the operator to wirelessly steer the system and control the thrust. Rhodan has refined the system further by incorporating Thrust Dependent Electronic Steering Control, complete forward and reverse thrust capabilities, and anti-wrap-up technology which prevents the power cord from winding itself around the shaft.

The Rhodan HD GPS Anchor+™ Trolling Motor has 12 memory locations. Four of these are dedicated to memorizing anchor sites. The remaining eight can be used to record intricate paths or routes over 1000 miles long! The twelve memories will remain in the system memory even after power down. Paths can be

| continued on page 35

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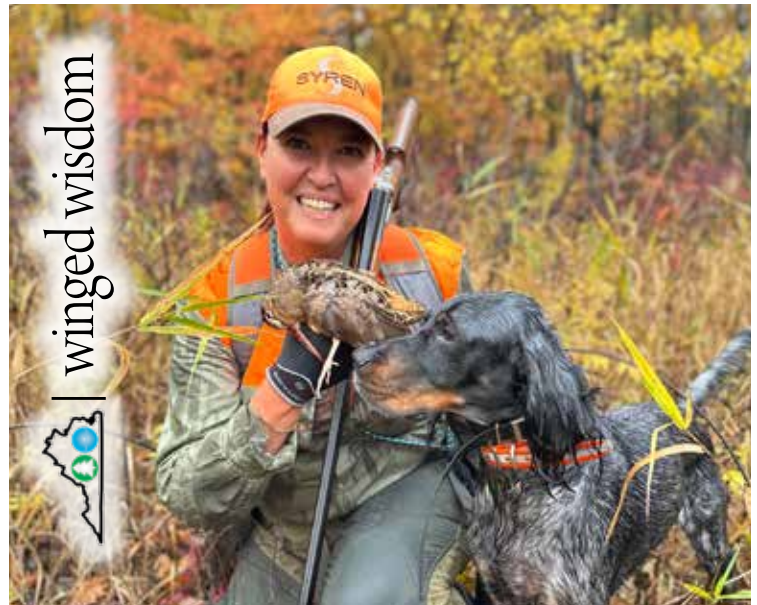


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winged wisdom

New Ways To Shoot Old Birds

BY KATE AHNSTROM

With the new year, we all eagerly welcome the chance to hit the “reset” button. This rebirth is a way to shake off the old and start anew. But, what if some of your old habits are the only thing you know? How do you break that cycle of consistent inconsistency in your shooting? Are you sure you are employing every tool in your toolbox to create success?

Shooters, like all humans, thrive on structure and discipline. Even those that claim they prefer a more loose and fast approach (shoot whatever you see however you can) deep down inside long for the coveted ability to know. Know why they can hit certain birds but not others. Know what they did wrong to cause a miss and most importantly know how to fix it!

This new year, make a commitment (one that will actually last unlike all the diet challenges) and learn new ways to crush those old, irritating presentations. Too many shooters get mired down in just one or two methods of shooting. They either aren’t willing to learn a new method, or they may not realize that there are other methods to kill a bird, clay or feathered.

There are five distinct methodologies a shooter will pull from based on the presentation. Please remember

that if you don’t understand how to set excellent hold points, the method you select won’t matter.

First, and most commonly used is Pull Away. This method is rooted deeply in the West London Shooting School for a very good reason. It works! At the hold point, the shooter will insert on the bird, go with it for just a moment and then pull ahead and pull the trigger. Let’s break this method out a little further, since it is the backbone for so many shooters.

The hold point needs to be in or slightly under the flight path of the bird. As the bird comes to the barrel, the gun begins to move out with the bird maintaining the flight path. At the determined break point, the shooter pulls ahead of the bird the required distance based on angle and speed. As they pull the trigger, the bird shatters. The majority of your birds can be killed with Pull Away.

Second, Swing Through. This is one of my favorite methods for quickly eliminating a bird in a pair. It’s also fantastic for dropping multiple feathered birds in a covey. Again, the barrel has to be in the bird’s flight path. The hold point for this method is set closer to the launch area so that the bird can easily pass the barrel. As the bird passes the barrel, the shooter pushes the gun through the back of the bird,

“Shooters, like all humans, thrive on structure and discipline!”

moving to the front and as the shooter comes through the front of the bird, pulls the trigger. Measuring is not needed as the pure motion of the gun adds in the required lead. This method will allow a shooter to drop a bird far faster.

Third, Churchill. Yes, as in Robert Churchill. He realized that if one could quickly point at an object with their shotgun, the same way they do their finger, they should be able to drop game. This is all dependent on the shooter having a well-fitted gun, a clean sight picture and smooth mount to the cheek and shoulder. This method is deadly on flushing game up to 25 yards. It falls apart after that as the presentation at distance will require lead or adjustment for angle.

Fourth, Maintained/Sustained Lead. Skeet shooters know this method well. The shooter needs to, you guessed it, be in the bird's flight path but this time, the shooter pulls ahead of the bird and stays ahead of the bird while pulling the trigger. It's a great method to use when the shooter is either very experienced in reading the target for speed and angle or the shooter is very well versed in repetitive shots, such as on a skeet field.

Finally, Straight Line Intercept. This is sometimes also referred to as Diminishing Lead. The shooter sets up in the bird's path makes a momentary connection with the bird then instead of continuing the flight line with the bird, the shooter runs the barrel a significant distance under the flight line and intercepts the bird at the breakpoint. It works wonderfully on chandelles! No matter your preferred method, branch out and have fun learning new ones. There is more than one way to crush a clay or drop a feathered bird. Fill your toolbox and give yourself the advantage. Be sure to take a friend or family member along so they can learn along with you! Happy New Year everyone and see you on the course or in the hunt field. 🌲🐾



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.

What's New In Electronics? from page 32

recorded while running at trolling speed and even at cruising speed with the trolling motor stowed! The system will automatically anchor the boat when it completes a memorized route.

A wireless, floating, waterproof remote control fob lets you control the trolling motor while fishing from anywhere on the boat. The HD GPS Anchor+® Trolling Motor can steer the boat while the main engine is at low power settings. An audible battery meter allows the battery state of charge to be checked from anywhere on the boat using the wireless fob.

The stowed position sensor automatically prevents the trolling motor and propeller from operating in the stowed position. A lockable quick-release mount permits the unit to be moved for safe-keeping or use on another boat. Durable corrosion-free composite shafts flex upon impact. There are both black and White models are designed for saltwater use and are equipped with sacrificial zinc anodes and the trolling motor/lower unit and shafts all include Line-X® finish. You'll find Rhondan trolling motors at Green Top Sporting Goods. 🌲🐾

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Ish Monroe's Off Season Is Full Of Preparations

Bass professional Ish Monroe has been through over 20 off-seasons. Time to recharge, renegotiate, and restock. The off-season began with Ish and his wife taking a tuna fishing trip. No phones, no internet. Ish says it's necessary down time to avoid burn out and a chance to stock their freezer with tuna.

Returning, Ish calls his most important sponsors, those paying the most. He stays in touch with sponsors all season. "They know what I'm capable of doing." Lowrance electronics added Relion lithium batteries, Ish broadened his sponsor base.

Frequently courted by potential sponsors, Ish builds a mutually beneficial relationship. Ish is fair to existing sponsors, committed to putting forth 100% effort. Adding new ones would compromise the time commitment made to core sponsors.

Younger anglers tout social media numbers. Ish says social media alone doesn't sell product. Companies want sales. Easily measured results set him apart. He's supported by top line sponsors: Skeeter Boats, Yamaha Outboards, Lowrance Electronics, Simms Fishing, Diawa, Sportsman's Warehouse, and others.

Prior to his tuna trip, Ish ordered rods, reels, and line from Diawa, as he works across spon-

sor product lines. Sorting through every lure box, Ish replaces, replenishes, and reorders everything he's going to use. Lures have a 3 year lifespan. If not used in three years, they're set aside. Hooks are replaced. Anything else, he picks up at Fisherman's Warehouse. Previous season's gear is donated to high schools and bass clubs.

"I would love to have those kids use that gear and get excited about going fishing."

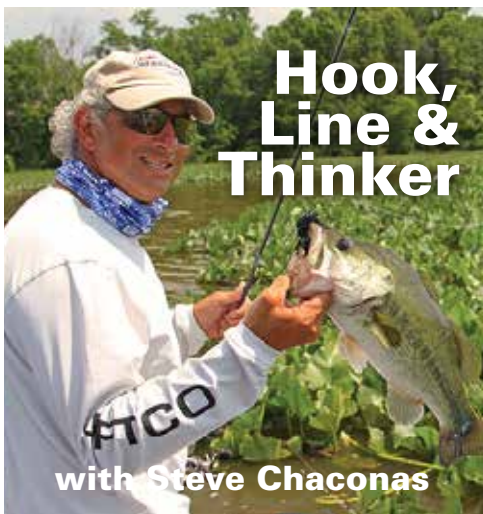
Ish received his new Skeeter in November, giving him two weeks to rig. Replacing the factory jackplate, with a BOB's jackplate, Ish installs the Lowrance Ghost trolling motor, Lowrance electronics, and Power Poles. Installing accessories minimizes troubleshooting.

"You don't know who's working on your boat. Rather blame me than try to figure out what someone else did."

In 2024 he'll be fishing B.A.S.S. Opens, BAM Series, and tournaments to fill in gaps. Packing tackle for each trip, Ish takes a disciplined approach.

"I have a style I think I can win events. So, I can go to any fishery and fish my style, making a fishery small to fit my style."

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receive the greatest visibility.

Media calls are returned within 24 hours, no exceptions. At tournaments and shows, Ish seeks familiar media faces. He emails story ideas.

Ish is said to be the hardest working guy in the fishing business.

"I hope I'm not." Lamenting that younger guys don't share his work ethic Ish says, "That's what makes the industry better." According to Ish, the future of the sport requires anglers working with companies to maximize the working relationship.

Pro bass fishing athletes perform on the water but conducting business off the water is how they make a living. Ish proves trust with sponsors, media, and fans is the key to success. There's no off season, it's all a part of the season. 🟢🟡



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

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#6780-#68599-20.26±Acres-\$79,900.00
The Haven of Hayes Mill! Discover the perfect canvas for your dreams on this 20.26 acre parcel in Boydton, VA. Made up of mostly majestic, mixed hardwoods, this property offers multiple potential building sites and AG zoning with NO restrictions or HOA!! (Hayes Mill Road Boydton, VA 23917) **Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011**

#6787-#68602-6±Acres-\$349,000.00
Annie Oaks farm is the dream property you have been searching for! When stepping foot on the farm you feel like you went back in time to a simpler life as the giant oaks shade the charming farmhouse with an enormous wrap around screened in porch overlooking the rolling pastures with the bison grazing in the distance. The home consists of a living room, a den, kitchen with dining area, utility room, 3 bathrooms, and 3 bedrooms. The master bedroom and bath were expanded and renovated a few years ago. The view from the bedroom is breathtaking! The large tractor shed is perfect for storing all your toys! **Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011**

#6786-#68612-0.076±Acres-\$320,000.00
Nestled in the picturesque Hinton Mill Sub-division in Boydton, Virginia, this stunning new construction home is a dream come true for those seeking the perfect blend of modern comfort and scenic tranquility. Boasting three bedrooms and two bathrooms, this home is the epitome of tasteful design and contemporary living. Whether you're a fishing enthusiast, a boating aficionado, or simply someone who enjoys a leisurely stroll along the waterfront, this location will not disappoint. **Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011**

#6785-#68605-110±Acres-\$369,000.00
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#6780-#68599-20.26±Acres-\$79,900.00
Discover the perfect canvas for your dreams on this 20.26 acre parcel in Boydton, VA. Made up of mostly majestic, mixed hardwoods, this property offers multiple potential building sites and AG zoning with NO restrictions or HOA!! Empower fiber-optic lines have already been installed along the road, giving you access to high speed internet. The property is also centrally located between the state capitals of Richmond, VA and Raleigh, NC! **Virginia United Country Realty @434-374-2011**

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

Local anglers know that the fishing on the Chickahominy system can be very good for big fish this time of year. While you might not catch dozens of bass now, you do have an excellent shot at a eight+ pounder in the upper river and lake.

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

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

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

When you are on the river this year, use Riverside Camp & Marina's facilities which include a fine boat ramp and piers, tackle shop and campground with rental cabins. Rockahock Campground welcomes anglers with ramps on both the lake and river, plus rental cabins and yurts.

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



Chickahominy Lake also holds some fairly large blue catfish from the looks of this one brought in to **Ed Allen's Boats & Bait**.

and fishing pier.

Another Chickahominy Lake launching option is Eagles Landing. Located a couple miles above Walker's Dam, Eagles Landing offers a concrete ramp, rental boats, tackle shop and live bait.

Several area shops cater to bass anglers; Adam's Sports Mart in Providence Forge, and Fishing ProTech, both in Toano.

Tomahund Marine is the area headquarters for marine resupply and repair. They also sell

War Eagle and Muddy boats/motors so if you are looking for a duck and fishing boat, perfect for hunting and fishing the marshes of the Chickahominy and James River they have some in inventory and more on the way.

Adams' Sports Mart and Absolute Outdoors are the area's headquarters for hunting and fishing. Adam's backroom is filled with fishing gear for bass, crappie and catfish, and Adam's place is where you'll find most hunters fueling up their trucks and their bellies. There's a devoted group of waterfowlers and rabbit hunters in the area.

In nearby Toano, a bit down Rt. 60 there's a great gun shop and an awesome tackle shop. The wife might want to accompany you. Drop her off at the nearby Williamsburg outlets. Reconvene for lunch or dinner at the waterfront Lakeside Restaurant at Ed Allen's.

Toano General Gun Store is area headquarters for hunters and firearms enthusiasts. Don Bishard can help you with everything from long guns to handguns, accessories to ammunition and in-house gunsmithing.

Lin Bell's Fishing ProTech is also a Must-Do when in town. Bell specializes in hard-to-find and new bass tackle. Bell will take his shop on the road to the Richmond Fishing Expo, January 19-21 at the Meadow Event Park in Doswell. He's coming in hot with a load of special run color ZOOM baits, Megabass Visions and MagDrafts, Shimano Flash Boost baits, Crush City baits, Hover rig gear, the Elite EVO Chatterbait and more. *C.C. McCotter*



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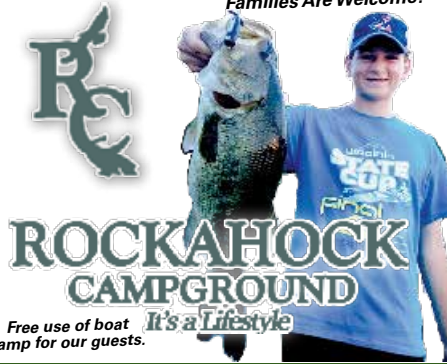
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1	12:41am	6:45am	12:56pm	7:19pm	10	8:27am	1:53am	8:43pm	2:54pm	19	4:01am	10:31am	4:25pm	10:26pm	28	11:12am	4:56am	11:29pm	5:28pm
2	1:25am	7:33am	1:37pm	7:59pm	11	9:16am	2:45am	9:33pm	3:41pm	20	5:06am	11:37am	5:28pm	11:26pm	29	11:45am	5:35am	-----	6:00pm
3	2:12am	8:25am	2:22pm	8:42pm	12	10:05am	3:37am	10:24pm	4:28pm	21	6:09am	-----	6:28pm	12:38pm	30	12:05am	6:14am	12:18pm	6:33pm
4	3:02am	9:21am	3:13pm	9:29pm	13	10:54am	4:29am	11:14pm	5:14pm	22	7:06am	12:24am	7:06am	12:24am	31	12:43am	6:56am	12:54pm	7:08pm
5	3:56am	10:21am	4:08pm	10:19pm	14	11:43am	5:23am	-----	6:01pm	23	7:58am	1:18am	8:12pm	2:21pm	Feb. Tides				
6	4:52am	11:21am	5:06pm	11:13pm	15	12:07am	6:18am	12:33pm	6:49pm	24	8:44am	2:08am	8:56pm	3:04pm	1	1:23am	7:41am	1:34pm	7:48pm
7	5:48am	-----	6:04pm	12:19pm	16	1:01am	7:16am	1:26pm	7:38pm	25	9:25am	2:53am	9:37pm	3:43pm	2	2:09am	8:33am	2:20pm	8:33pm
8	6:43am	12:07am	6:59pm	1:13pm	17	1:58am	8:18am	2:22pm	8:31pm	26	10:03am	3:36am	10:16pm	4:20pm					
9	7:36am	1:00am	7:52pm	2:05pm	18	2:58am	9:23am	3:22pm	9:27pm	27	10:38am	4:16am	10:53pm	4:54pm					

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

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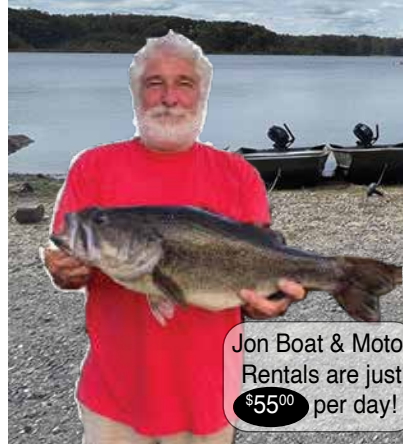
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REGIONAL FOCUS

Richmond

Tidal James River Region

For a map of the James River visit woodsandwatersmagazine.com

This month will mark the return of the Richmond Fishing Expo at the State Fairgrounds in Doswell, January 19-22. The Gray family has a great show planned and announced that BASSMaster Elite tour pro Tim Horton and MLF pro Bryan Thrift will headline the special appearance list.

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

In fishing news, Donnie Bell from James River Tackle Co. invites you to visit his show booth where he'll have a bunch of new vintage baits like Bagleys, Bil Normans and much more of those baits we wish were still made!

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

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

rent river conditions.

The schedule for Bell's James River Tackle Co. Weekend Series Bass Trail is as follows: March 23, April 6, April 20, June, July 13 and August 10. The Two-Day Classic will be held September 28-29. All of these events are held on the tidal James River out of Hopewell Marina.

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

Over on Lake Chesdin, anglers are discovering that the saugeye DWR has been stocking the past few years are doing well. Visitors are catching them exceeding the minimum size limit of 18 inches using swimbaits reeled slowly along the bottom at the mouths of creeks with rockypoints and bait.

Chesdin bass anglers should target some of the biggest bass of the year using suspending jerkbaits and spoons this month.

Chesdin striper are feeding heavily now. You can find them under birds on main lake flats in the mornings and in main lake pockets in the afternoons.

Area bowhunters, if you busted something on your bow or crossbow last month, you



Jacob Poh with a nice buck he harvested this season after getting set up by **Pat's Sporting Goods**.

need to stop by Pat's Sporting Goods south of Richmond on Rt. 1. This shop offers bow hunting and archery enthusiasts a skilled bow technician who has years of experience setting up and repairing archery equipment.

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

Robby Patterson of Propeller Dynamics invites you to stop by his display at the Richmond Fishing Expo. He'll essentially move his showroom to the show with Xpress boats and Falcon boats. Patterson is the area authorized warranty service center for Minn Kota, MotorGuide, Lowrance, Power Pole and Garmin so if you have a marine electronic, he can fix it or sell you a new one! He also offers propeller repairs and sales if you found a rock over the summer with your rig

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circulated around critical engine components. A top mounted cooling fan draws cooling air over the alternator. The second intake circuit directs cooling air from the upper intake vents, separates out moisture, and then inducts it into the throttle body. This system provides for cooler, denser air for better combustion as compared to conventional under-cowl induction systems. Tohatsu offers a five-year warranty on this outboard.

Tohatsu's lower horsepower offerings will gain new options with a BFT150D, 30 hp MFS30D and 25 hp MFS25D. Ed Allen's Boats & Baits on Chickahominy Lake is your area Tohatsu outboard dealer.

Vision

Vision Marine Technologies has something called the 180E E-motion outboard that is said to produce 180 hp. It also is said to be able to be charged from any shore outlet. It combines an advanced battery pack, an inverter, and a high efficiency motor with proprietary union assembly between the transmission and the electric motor design utilizing extensive control software.

Vision Marine says it "strives to be a guiding force for change and an ongoing driving factor in fighting the problems associated with waterway pollution by disrupting the traditional boating industry with electric power. In turn, this directly contributes



to zero pollution, zero emission, and a noiseless environment. Vision Marine believe that our electric outboard powertrain systems are significantly more efficient and powerful than those currently being offered in the market today."

In particular, Vision Marine have recorded powertrain efficiencies of more than 94%, well above the 54% efficiency that Vision Marine recorded for their principal competitor's product.

In August 2022 a V32 HellKat widebody 32' catamaran equipped with two fully electric E-Motion™ 180E (180 hp) outboard motors and powertrain systems debuted at the annual Lake of the Ozarks Shootout, in which the driver reached a stunning 109 mph, shattering and setting the world electric boat speed record (which has now increased to 116 mph using the same outboards

The twin 180Es were fitted with two high density, lightweight batteries custom designed in partnership with Octillion Power Systems. Additionally, boat racing industry legends Weismann Marine custom engineered the lower units for the V32, which was important in accommodating the high torque generated by the E-Motion™ outboard technology.

How much for an E-Motion 180E? \$26,995 for the outboard and \$78,990 for the 881-pound battery pack.

Yamaha

The Yamaha 250, 225 and 200 V MAX SHO outboards are found on all Skeeter bass boats and the brand is a popular option among coastal anglers.

The V MAX SHO 250 is a 60-degree V6 with 4.2L of displacement that weighs 567 pounds and offers 70 gross amps with an optional isolator that can charge a house or trolling batteries. The engine design features individual intake and exhaust camshafts, larger valves than previous models and four valves per cylinder for better valve timing, responsive power and increase fuel economy. This outboard requires minimum 89 octane fuel.

Yamaha's exclusive In-Bank Exhaust System exits downward through the center of the V block rather than on the exterior. This increases efficiency, power and torque while resulting in a more compact shape.

Yamaha says the V MAX SHO 250 is faster to 50' than a competitor's 250 (think Mercury) by .15 sec., .19 sec faster to 100' and .28 seconds faster to 200'.

Yamaha is reputedly set to display a proto-type hydrogen-powered outboard in February 2024 at the Miami International Boat Show.

"Marine products run through water and are thus subjected to water resistance, requiring significantly more energy for propulsion than land vehicles. Additionally, the performance and engineering requirements for marine products can vary widely depending on the usage environment-such as the ocean, rivers, or lakes-as well as the usage itself, from commercial fishing to recreation. In order to achieve carbon neutrality with marine products while facing such challenges, the Company is promoting a multi-directional development approach, looking to other new energy sources and technologies in addition to its electrification efforts," noted a Yamaha spokesperson.

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REGIONAL FOCUS

Lake Anna

For a map of Lake Anna visit woodsandwatersmagazine.com

As predicted, much-needed rainfall brought Lake Anna water levels and water temperatures back to normal last month. This also brought to a close a very good up lake striper/wiper feed. Annual baitfish migrations from up lake into the mid lake region are now underway and the lake's bass, striper and wiper are tracking them. Here's what you can expect for a January visit.

According to guide C.C. McCotter, lower water temperatures and muddy water up lake mean striper, wiper, bass, white perch, crappie, even catfish have moved into the lower up lake and mid lake regions. The game fish simply followed the schools of threadfin shad. Where the shad hold up is based on a combination of water temperature, plankton and depth.

The key to finding these schools of winterfish is being vigilant, McCotter notes.

"Watch for any little sign of gamefish pressuring bait like swirls, bait jumping out of the water, sudden movements of seagulls and herons," he told W2. "Of course, I'm always watching my Humminbirds as well."

When you do catch a clue of where to fish,

it's go time. McCotter suggests you try ZOOM Super Fluke Jr on a jig head, three-inch swimbaits on an A-rig, a bucktail, a suspending jerkbait and a spoon. These are the baits he uses each year to catch striper, wiper, bass and white perch.

If you want to focus exclusively on catching the big wintertime bass Anna is known for producing, focus your efforts mid lake, says McCotter and use suspending jerkbaits, swimbaits, underspins and spoons.

Bass are schooled now. You should be able catch them jigging spoons in 27-35' of water at the mouth of Pigeon, Mitchell and Sturgeon Creeks. Some of the more adventurous/aggressive bass can be caught using a suspending



Seth Henderson joined guide C.C. McCotter out of **High Point Marina - Lighthouse Inn** for a winter fishing trip and they found the bass hungry for their Fitt Premium Lures River Darters. All fish released.

jerkbait around main lake points in the same region.

Hot zones here can include the mouth of Marshall Creek, the mouth of Pigeon Creek, Mitchell Creek, the mid section of Contrary Creek and the mouth of Sturgeon Creek.

Unless the water clears up and warms up considerably, you can pretty much write off up lake bass until March.

Down lake bass are creatures of the deep that occasionally enjoy a mass foray into shallow pockets and up on shallow points. Most of the best places to target these bass are the points at the mouths of down lake creeks (Beaver Pond,

Boggs, Dukes, Rockland, Blount's, Levy and Valentine's) as well as the coves near Dike III. Swimbaits, reeled slowly along the bottom are effective down lake as are suspending jerkbaits.

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

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

Many anglers are now employing forward facing live sonar to "snipe" bass they see on their screens. The pattern here is to find underwater rocks and brush, cast a bait like the new Berkley Power Switch and let it sink to the level of the fish. The screen will tell you if the fish is interested!

Keep in mind the schools of bass can move from very deep to shallow throughout the day. So if your depth finder shows fish in 28-32 of water at the mouth of a creek where you caught them shallow in the morning, don't doubt it.

Good to excellent fishing is available now for Lake Anna's striped fish. Anglers will find most in the mid lake region after they fed actively in the upper the North Anna River and Pamunkey Branch for much of last month. Striper and wiper will relocate mid lake around baitfish and you might also find schools right around the 208 marinas. Evening fishing at Dike 3 can also be productive in January.

Look for some remaining schools to linger from the Holladay Mill Bridge down to Big Been Flats in the North Anna side and from Stubbs Bridge down to The Splits in the Pamunkey Branch. Some fish might remain in The Splits region to 208 marinas region, too. Don't overlook the mouths of Contrary and Pigeon Creeks either in January.

McCotter is happy to report a lot of the non-keeper striper and wiper (under 20") in the lake have now grow to 21-22" and there are some bruisers out there with January often when anglers catch the year's largest fish. Could a 15-lb. + wiper be coming this winter? We'll have to fish and see!

You can also often catch white perch in the same areas when the striper won't bite. The 1/4-oz. Capt. Mack's Super Spoon is deadly on all three and a blade bait is a lot of fun to fish for perch. The mouth of Pigeon Creek is usually a good place to target these tasty fish. If they aren't there, check the mouth of Sturgeon Creek.

Some of the lake's crappie remained schooled around bridge pilings near the main river channel. Deep brush piles are good, too, if you can find one that hasn't been fished too often. Two-inch jigs on 1/16-oz. jig heads and small minnows on slip bobbers are best.

This is the year anglers are again catching legal sized saugeye (18"). DWR Biologist Mike Isel told W2 gill net surveying revealed



Red and Adam fished for striper and wiper with **McCotter's Lake Anna Guide Service** last month and enjoyed a productive morning casting.

good numbers of these tasty fish from a stocking four years ago. You can target saugeye on deep rocks with grubs, swimbaits and nightcrawlers on a worm harness. They will often hit the same lures you using for striper/wiper.

Tournament Director Dave Fauntleroy wanted to invite anglers to review his lineup of bass fishing tournaments in 2024. Check the Anna Point Marina website for event dates and stop by Fish Tales to chat with Fauntleroy.

High Point Marina and The Lighthouse Inn welcome winter anglers looking for a warm room and great access to the lake. The tackle shop is well-stocked with guide-selected items, including a restock of spoons, Megabass suspending jerkbaits and MagDrafts,

| continued on page 44

FISH TALES

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Over at Sturgeon Creek Marina the annual Winter Series bass tournaments have produced a number of 19+ pound limits. This series is for serious Anna winter diehards and some outstanding limits well over 20 pounds are expected this month.

Anna's Marine Center wanted to invite anglers in the market for a new boat to visit them at the Richmond Fishing Expo January 19-21. Dee and Will will bring a selection of 2024 Skeeters representing the FXR, ZXR models. Stop by for a look as well as to see the new Nitro Z21XL boat and TRACKER rigs.



Adam Green and Haynes won the December 2 Sturgeon Creek Marina Winter Series event with this limit weighing nearly 18.51 pounds.

Elk Creek Country Store is where to find fuel and Uncle Mike's Tackle Shop on the way to fishing the warm side of the lake this month. Mike notes bass and perch were schooled in Elk and Millpond Creeks for much of December with water temperatures in the mid 50s to lower 60s. These fish will be moving toward warmer water every day and eventually end up in front of the Elk Creek and Millpond Bridges and Pond 1. Swimbaits, dropshots and spoon are all good now. Fish shallow when you see fish chasing bait, otherwise target 25-38' depths.

Lake Anna Outfitters still has several new fishing kayaks in stock. They have a Feel Free Moken 10 V2 and Moken 10 Lite paddle-powered boats. *Chrissie McCotter*

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REGIONAL FOCUS

Smith Mountain Lake

New River Valley

For maps of Smith Mountain Lake visit woodsandwatersmagazine.com

Smith Mountain Lake level was 793.73' and rising slightly by the middle of December. This is higher than the level at the end of November. Keep in mind normal pond is 795' so the lake is remains a little low.

Water temperature was 46-49 degrees on the surface from mid to down lake by the mid-December W2 deadline. Expect the lake level to hold steady in January and watch the water temperature begin to drop into the lower 40s by the end of the month.

January can be a good month to fish the lake for largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, striper and crappie.

Most January largemouth bass will be caught around points, on rock piles, in brush piles and under docks. Best depths will be from the surface to 25 feet deep. Some largemouth bass will be schooled deep and on baitfish. You can pursue the differently, using spoons, spy baits, multi-arm rigs and plastic minnow imitators on Moon Eye heads.

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

Wilson targets striper in the upper section of the lake this month, especially in larger creeks.

His best lures are swimbaits, jiggging spoons and ZOOM flukes fished on 1/4 to 1/2 oz. jig-heads. The best depths will be from near the surface to 50 feet deep. Vertical jigging with a



Michael Eric, Joycelyn & Billy Gathof, and Randy Stallard fished in late Nov. with Capt. Cathy of Spike's Prime Time Fishin' on Smith Mountain.



Clients of Capt. Clint Gray striper caught fishing Smith Mountain Lake this fall.

spoon remains a good method to catch stripers this month, too. Wilson says to try to find areas with the largest concentrations of baitfish.

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

They are off until April now but are taking booking requests and thank all their 2023 customers for a great year!

They note the lake's striper population continues to grow and that January and February are two of the best months to land a citation (20+ pound) SML striper.

Many anglers will now fish alewives or shad on planer boards or freelines with 5/8 split shot 10 feet deeper than you see the fish. You can also fish down rods with 2 oz. sinkers exactly where you see the fish. Remember, you can now keep two fish per day under 30 inches or over 40 inches.

Give them a call if you want to try fishing the lake this coming season. Not only do the Francescinis offer guided fishing trips but they also rent lodging they own at the lake. Kathy's Place, 3 br/2b, sleeps eight with game room. The other rental is a 2 br/1 bath, sleeps four with kitchen in the great room. Both have flat screen tvs and wifi and fully equipped kitchens. Guests enjoy use of the docks and also water, electric, cleaning stand and room to park boats. You also get use of a golf car with each rental to use to and from the docks. The listing #s are 218590 and 282712 on VRBO.

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REGIONAL FOCUS

Buggs/Gaston

Kerr Lake/Lake Gaston

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

Lake Gaston

By mid-December the water level on Gaston was around 199.60' (200' is full pool) and Dominion was holding the level steady. Water temperatures ranged from 45-52 degrees with the up lake section just below Kerr Dam the coolest. Anglers can expect 38-45-degree water temperatures for January in most parts of the main lake.

For January on Gaston, long time BASS-Master Elite angler and guide Rick Morris will target deep bass schooled on bait using a jigging spoon. The lake's plentiful spotted bass will be mostly on hard cover like rocks and a little deeper. They will also take the spoon as well as a small soft plastic jerkbait fished on a jighead.

Lake Gaston can also offer good crappie and striper fishing this month. Target freckles on bridge pilings and deep brush piles. The lake's striper will school on bait and you'll have to keep an eye on seagulls to know where to go.

Holly Grove Marina is a family-friendly tackle shop, boat ramp, restaurant/gathering place on the lake and we're glad to have them with us. Holly Grove is located about 10 minutes off I-95 at the Bracey exit on Rt. 903.

Morris now has a fishing pontoon in addition to his 21' bass boat for guiding larger parties.

Kerr Reservoir (Bugg Island)

The water level on Kerr Lake by the W2 late December deadline was 298.94' and rising. 300' is full pool. Daytime water temperatures



David Fay brought this citation 2.95-pound crappie to **Bobcat's Bait & Tackle** last month.

varied from 45-50 degrees depending on the region of the lake late last month.

This month anglers should expect continued drop in water temperatures - back down to around 38-44 degrees eventually.

Shad and herring are now on the main lake and still lingering at the mouth of some major creeks. Many anglers here use spoons on points now. Some like to use swimbaits. If you visit, you are mostly going to be targeting schooling bass, striper or crappie on or near baitfish. The suspending jerkbait bite could develop later this month, too.

If you cannot get a reaction bite, you can also try fishing shaky head worms and drop shotted

worms around 15-20' humps and points with underwater cover like rocks and brushpiles.

Fishing points in the larger creeks like Nutbush, Bluestone, Rudd's, Butcher's and Eastland as well as main lake points at the mouths of these creeks should be the pattern now.

Striper anglers are still fishing the Clarksville area where they are finding feeding fish under birds and busting bait.

Casters will want to use three-inch spoons like the KT Slab/Toothache spoon around the mouth of creeks and on main lake channel bends. Swimbaits or soft plastic jerkbaits on jigheads are also good where you find birds. Some striper anglers will troll umbrella rigs this month tipped with swimbaits.

Before you head out onto the lake, be sure to stop by Bobcat's Bait and Tackle to get a current fishing report and all the gear you could possibly need.

The third event of the 2023-24 Bobcats Bait & TackleVA/NC CrappieTrail was held December 2. The team of Tyler and Ricky Trent took first with 10.98 lbs and won \$1,336.

The remaining events will be held Jan. 27, Feb. 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.

Stinger Supply in nearby Boydton is the area headquarters for Garmin gear. You'll find excellent in stock supplies of Garmin Livescope sonar units, Force trolling motors and Alpha dog tracking collars. *Rick Morris*

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REGIONAL FOCUS

Potomac & Rapp River

Cold weather and shorter days are putting fish into winter patterns and that means it's a great time to fish the tidal Potomac River. Here's what you can expect if you get out this month.

Start by looking for steep drops. Take it slow, small, and light with grubs, tubes, thin small worms and hair jigs! Spinning gear handles lighter six-pound test on 10 pound test braid on fast spinning combos. Use thin wire hooks for hooks sets on cold fish from a longer distance on light line!

Crappie and bass are being caught in deeper spots on the tidal Potomac out of the current, like The Spoils, Smoot Bay and around the I-95 Bridge. DC Bridges are also spots to try, as is Washington Channel. The hot spots are Possum Point, Four Mile Run and Blue Plains, but they can be very crowded! In these dischargers there are many shad and other species; it's hard to get baits through them. You need to "feel" fish before setting the hook!

Drop shots, split shots are good, but Carolina rigs with 1-ounce weights keep baits in one spot a long time, letting current push

it. Generally, a five-inch finesse worm in green pumpkin or watermelon/red works. Use the same baits on split shot and drop shot.

During heat of the day, near warmed rock and wood surfaces or close to Blue Plains, work suspending jerkbaits in clearer water 45 degrees or warmer...warmer the better...50 is very warm this time of the year. Use 10-pound fluorocarbon line. Jerk and pause... twitch...pause, twitch, and sit. Before you jerk, crank baits down first.

If water in other areas warms to 45, try crankbaits and spinnerbaits. For crankbaits, a tight wiggle bait is needed. Spool 10-pound test fluorocarbon and make long casts. Fish are not hitting very



Apex Predators Potomac Creek Guide Service is now guiding for big river blue catfish like this one.

hard, so crankbait hooks become critical.

Spinnerbaits, 3/8 ounce or heavier with willow/Colorado gold blades, retrieved near flats out of current close to deeper drops, pausing when you don't feel the bottom, will work. Slow down with a slower reel or slow it down by slightly underpooling. White or white/chartreuse skirts, best with chop on the water.

River bass are grouped on drops. Make bait transitions as fronts pass. Your temperature gauge is the most important boat instrument and your PFD the most important piece of gear. Dress in

layers, take a buddy and let others know where you are going to be. A fall into the river this time of year can be fatal!

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The king of all winter river baits is the Silver Buddy! The company is making them again. Cast to three-foot depths and burp down drops to deeper water. Vertically jig over 8-15 foot holes. Don't overwork! Control drops on semi slack line back to bottom. Feel a "tick" or feel fish when you lift again.

For tackle, use a 7-foot medium action graphite rod and 10-pound test GAMMA Copoly. Replace dull hooks, cutting the eye near the shank, open, attach and close. Split rings allow hooks to catch each other. Blade baits locate groups of fish. Take note of depth and stay on them.

For bottom baits, try three: Mizmo Tubes, and 1/4-ounce Punisher Hair Jigs with plastic Punisher chunks. Thinner diameter line offers less resistance, encouraging fish to hold on longer. Thin diameter makes it easier to feel light bites and set hooks on longer casts, and gets to the bottom, holding in wind and current.

For three-inch avocado grubs (perfect replacement for stingray grubs), use 1/4-ounce round jig heads. Rig tails flat. Cast to bottom lifting the rod, slowly drop, creating a very slow gliding motion into cover. Green pumpkin Mizmo tubes rigged with a 1/4-ounce weedless insert tube head made with Mustad Hooks make this bait glide. Punisher Hair jigs.

Drop shooting becomes very effective the colder it gets, near 40 or below. Fish group on drops on South Point, Smoots, Spoils, barges above the Wilson Bridge, and Foxes Ferry. A good drop shot rod has enough backbone to hook set on long casts, but flexible enough when working under the boat. *Capt. Steve Chaconas*

Book your spring guided trip with Apex Predators Potomac Creek Guide Service now before the rate increase. Waterfowl guide Travis Stauch of Ram Rod Waterfowl welcomes your call if you are ready to go duck hunting with him in January.

Rappahannock River

Fishing was phenomenal last month on the tidal Rappahannock in the mid to upper section of the river. Smallmouth bass dominated the catches in recent weeks, with an occasional largemouth catch here and there. However, I anticipate a decline in the smallmouth bite and an increase in difficulty due to heightened fishing activity and old man winter.

As we enter 2024, it is crucial to consider water clarity, particularly when it changes due to weather conditions. Towards the end December the river received a lot of rain that caused high water levels and reduced water clarity. The water temperature has consistently been in the mid to low 40's with live bait and crankbaits being the bait of choice. Concentrate your efforts on river bends, submerged structures, and rocks. Utilize a slow presentation, like slow rolling a crankbait, soft plastics or live minnows to be effective throughout the month. *Mike Hepburn*

POTOMAC RIVER TIDE/MOON CHART

	HIGH	LOW		HIGH	LOW		HIGH	LOW		HIGH	LOW		
1	11:11am	5:42am		10	6:17am	12:38am		19	1:03am	8:02am	28	9:20am	3:51am
	11:21pm	5:28pm			6:25pm	12:19pm			1:41pm	8:29pm		9:32pm	3:43pm
2	11:58am	6:24am	NEW	11	7:02am	1:30am		20	2:07am	8:55am	29	10:03am	4:33am
	---	6:12pm			7:06pm	1:08pm			2:43pm	9:33pm		10:16pm	4:25pm
3	12:10am	7:06am		12	7:46am	2:19am		21	3:12am	9:48am	30	10:45am	5:13am
	12:47pm	6:59pm			7:48pm	1:58pm			3:43pm	10:36pm		10:58pm	5:05pm
4	1:02am	7:47am		13	8:29am	3:08am		22	4:13am	10:42am	31	11:26am	5:49am
	1:39pm	7:50pm			8:33pm	2:48pm			4:40pm	11:37pm		11:40pm	5:44pm
5	1:56am	8:29am		14	9:13am	3:56am		23	5:12am	11:36am			
	2:32pm	8:46pm			9:20pm	3:40pm			5:34pm	---			
6	2:52am	9:12am		15	10:00am	4:43am		24	6:07am	12:34am			
	3:25pm	9:46pm			10:10pm	4:33pm			6:25pm	12:30pm			
7	3:47am	9:56am		16	10:49am	5:32am	FULL	25	6:59am	1:28am			
	4:15pm	10:46pm			11:04pm	5:28pm			7:14pm	1:21pm			
8	4:39am	10:42am		17	11:42am	6:21am		26	7:48am	2:19am			
	5:01pm	11:43pm			---	6:26pm			8:02pm	2:11pm			
9	5:29am	11:30am		18	12:01am	7:11am		27	8:35am	3:06am			
	5:44pm	---			12:40pm	7:26pm			8:48pm	2:58pm			

Jan. Tides

1	---	6:23am
		12:08pm
2	12:24am	6:54am
		12:51pm

Tides for Aquia Creek.
See corrections below

Corrections:

Washington Channel:
Low: +2:32
High: +1:28

Alexandria:
Low: +2:21
High: +1:45

Occoquan Bay:
Low: +1:04
High: + :26

Port Tobacco:
Low: -2:35
High: -2:40

Dahlgren:
Low: -3:01
High: -3:14

Lewisetta: Low: -4:52 High: -2:40
Cornfield: Low: +7:50 High: +7:27

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REGIONAL FOCUS

BACK BAY

Northwest River, North River,
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Bob's Fishing Hole continues to hold tournaments all winter long. Teams weigh a three-fish limit and blast off at 8 am. In addition to the Winter Series, Bob's is also holding crappie tournaments. You can find out all the dates by visiting their Facebook page.

James notes Bob's Fishing Hole's winter bass anglers use jigs, jerkbaits and some drop shot to target fish over-wintering in the Northwest River from Back Bay.

For a January visit James says to stop in an he'll give you some tips on where to try fishing. Deep shoreline wood on the main river using creature baits and the drop shot has been productive. You can fish from spot to spot using the suspending jerkbait like a Megabass Vision 110 Minnow. River bends with a channel near a creek mouth are always good places to probe.

As you begin to plan your expeditions for the coming year, the Northwest River and Back Bay should be on your list

North Landing Beach Resort Campground is fishing basecamp for the North River. Archie and the staff invite you to fish and stay with them this month in their one and two-bedroom cottages with kitchens, sinks and flatscreens. North Landing Beach Resort is



Here's another happy client of Capt. David Ward of **Backwater Adventures** with an Outer Banks bass.

close to free boat ramps on Back Bay, the North Landing River (on site) and within a 20-minute drive to Bob's Fishing Hole.

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

Here you'll find the best ramp for all of North

Bay, especially if the NE wind blows and there's low water. From here you can access all the weedy "ponds" that are full of bass around North Bay and enjoy excellent crappie fishing in nearby Muddy and Hell's Creek.

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! Best of all, the campground is 10 minutes from Sandbridge restaurants.

Backwater Adventures Guide David Ward guides on the North River, Kitty Hawk Bay and other northeastern North Carolina rivers.

Ward says January fishing will be all about the weather. He notes the water temps should be in the 40's and some days starting in the upper 30's.

Ward notes the bites will be fewer and slower, but this month will be a good time to catch a big one. Jigs and crankbaits will be the best choice. He suggests fishing very tight to wood and any other cover that could hold a little heat. Flatsides, Shad Raps and the Rapala DT-6 will cover you in the crankbait department this month.

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REGIONAL FOCUS

Chesapeake Bay

For maps of the Chesapeake Bay visit woodsandwatersmagazine.com

Middle Bay

Fishing for striped bass is now strictly catch and release and if you give it a whirl on a calm and sunny day, the fish are holding in the deepest parts of the shipping channel and to a lesser degree the False Channel. They are also tucked in like cordwood at the bottom at the Bay Bridge rock piles but unlikely to bite – best to just leave them alone. The warm water discharge at the Calvert Cliffs Power Plant will always get the attention of anglers during the cold winter months. Anglers may even find a speckled trout nosed into the warm water there if they're lucky.

White perch can be found deep in several areas in the middle Bay, usually around the 40-foot mark. Large white perch can be found at the rock piles at the Bay Bridge, holding deep in the swift current. It will take a heavy jig or dropper rig to get to them. The 40-foot channel edge out in front of Matapeake is another traditional area for white perch to be holding, before that edge drops off into 100 feet of water. You can find them on your depth finder be aware you may also detect schools of gizzard shad hunkered down in the same areas.

Lower Bay

If striped bass are your target this month, keep in mind all Maryland and Virginia waters of the Chesapeake are closed and only allow catch-and-release fishing for striped bass.

If you do focus on striped bass, the best action is occurring from the mouth of the Wicomico River south to the mouth of the Potomac along the channel edges. Bird activity can be sparse so keep a watchful eye



Chuck Many and the crew was aboard ShoNuf Sportfishing Charters with Captain Clint Lessard when the team deployed two additional satellite tags for their Northeast Striped Bass Study.

on a depth finder along the deeper channel edges. The section of the Potomac from the St. Marys River to Point Lookout is the best place to find diving gulls and breaking striped bass..

Jigging has been a very popular way to fish along the channel edges and anglers are using 1- to 1.5-ounce soft plastic jigs from 6-8 inches with good success. White and chartreuse colors are popular, braided line and a fast taper fishing rod are very helpful tools of the trade. Trolling is another option, and a warm cabin can offer an inviting way to fish. It will take stout trolling rods to handle the heavy inline weights needed to get bucktails, sassy shads, or umbrella rigs down to where the fish are holding.

Coastal

Tautog are providing fishing opportunities at the inlet jetties, the Route 50 Bridge piers, and nearby bulkheads. Sand fleas are the preferred bait. A fair percentage of the tautog being caught fail to meet the 16-inch minimum but the fishing is fun. The daily creel limit for tautog is four per day.

Now that the black sea bass season is closed, tautog are also the focus at the nearshore and offshore wreck and reef sites. Most anglers are doing well and some double-digit size tautog are being caught. Pieces of green crab and white-legger crabs along with sand fleas are the baits of choice.

Eastern Shore

Call Capt. Pete Wallace if you want to experience the legendary waterfowl hunting of Virginia's eastern shore. Wallace has dozens of blinds ready for your party and you can target puddle ducks, diving ducks and geese. After the hunt, it's time to enjoy the equally famous Chincoteague oysters!

If you'd like to try Chesapeake Bay fishing this year contact W2 Charter Captains like Kevin Salmon of Chesapeake Unlimited Sportfishing or Clint Gray (see Smith Mountain Lake section) who switches over to Bay rockfishing in the winter.

Wilcox Bait & Tackle in Newport News wanted to thank all their customers for another great year and invite them to stop in this month for any fishing or hunting needs/re-stocking efforts.

Wilcox is a stocking dealer for Gheenoe boat, a perfect answer to the high price of fishing boats. Gheenoe boats are more stable than a canoe or kayak with a much higher capacity for gear and an outboard.

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It's that time of year when it's cold outside and the hunting season is winding down. The hunters will be putting their hunting gear away and thinking about fishing and the fair weather anglers will be waiting for a nice warm sunny day to go fishing. The die-hard anglers will still be fishing.

January is the month you can catch your biggest bass of the new year. If you are planning to go fishing, start by checking the weather report before you go and dress accordingly.

Even though our water levels reached historical lows this fall, there are still nice fish to be caught and water levels have risen after December rainfall.

River water temperatures are in the low forties to high thirties and the fish are lethargic. Remember that fish are cold blooded creatures, so the water temperature is the same as their body temperature. Their metabolism slows dramatically, and their energy levels are greatly reduced, which means they eat less often and suspend most of the time, however they are opportunistic feeders.

This time of year, the water temperatures have acclimated as well as the fronts. Go to the deepest pools that you can find. If you can find water deeper than 8 to 10 feet, it is more likely there will be fish close to or laying with their belly slightly touching the bottom. They will move around occasionally but will gravitate to steep banks where they can move up and down in the water column.

This helps them expend less energy, but make no mistake when the opportunity presents itself and if the offering looks appealing, they will eat.

When you plan your outing look for warming trends up to a weeklong and take advantage of them. Winter always throws a curveball, but just like hunting, some of the nastiest weather makes hunting good. The same applies to fishing; some of the biggest fish have been caught in the worse weather.

If you have some wind, take advantage of it and fish the windy banks if possible. In fishing they always say that the, "The wind is your friend," but there is also a time where there is just too much wind and then you must look for the sheltered banks.

When you find a deeper pool start out with faster moving baits like flat sided crankbaits, bladed baits, jerkbaits hard and soft as well as lipless crankbaits. On these types of baits your color selections can be browns, greens, for crayfish patterns as well as baitfish colors such as reflective iridescent colors of blues purple and silvers.

If you are not getting any takes with faster moving baits, then you need to slow your presentation down. This is the time of year that hair jigs will shine. There are several companies that make hair jigs and there are many different versions.



W2 Regional Editor Lonnie Conner with a healthy Shenandoah River smallmouth he caught while fishing last month..

Punisher hair jigs work extremely well, and Jenkins jigs are also a great option. Whatever your preference is stick with natural colors.

Make sure you use trailers that have little to no movement or action. Anglers must remember the water is extremely cold and all baitfish and other creatures' movement are slow. Another overlooked option that does not get much attention in the rivers are the black marabou jigs.

These jigs in 1/16 to 1/8 ounce are killers in cold water when slowly moved along the bottom of the river with the current. I believe that these jigs imitate the mad-toms of the Shenandoah, and these tiny morsels are like candy for smallmouth and largemouth bass. If you can find them with a weed guard it is even better.

There are many options other than hair jigs such as Ned heads which are preferred by a lot of anglers because they work well. With Ned rigs you have lots of options for trailers such as Zman TRD's , Berkley Maxscent Lil' Super Trooper craws and the Yamamoto Ned Senko, which floats like the Zman products. Choose a bait that you are confident in will be fished more precisely than one you have no confidence in.

There are lots of techniques out there that will work drop shotting, hover rigs, Damiki rigs, swimbaits and wacky rigs. Whatever you choose, go out and have fun and make some memories. I look forward to seeing you on the water. *Lonnie Conner*



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REGIONAL FOCUS

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

Happy New Year! We here at Woods & Waters HQ wish all of you a happy, healthy & prosperous 2024 filled with plenty of time spent outside in the woods and on area waters. Virginia has a rich tradition of fishing and hunting – make this the year you pass on these age old ways to a youngster. An hour or two in a tree stand, a few casts in a local stream or even just sitting together tying knots for fishing are all meaningful, purposeful ways we can promote the outdoors to the next generation. Christmas break is a great time to complete the Virginia Hunters' Safety Course – partner up with them and go to the in person class with them or sit with them while learning online. We did this with both our children and it was a fun experience all around.

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Management is busy stocking area streams with trout. To find out if your favorite stream is/was or will be stocked visit the VDWR website and you'll be in the know.

Brian "Razor" Bodine of Razorback Guide Service is enjoying the late season waterfowl hunting and has just a few remaining hunts available so don't delay, call now! Waterfowl hunters are waiting for the cold weather to set in and drive the ducks down but there are plenty of resident geese around so you can definitely get some shooting in. Razor reports that the James River is in good shape right now with the mild temperatures and the smallies have been biting. Jigs and perch colored crankbaits are the ticket this time of year. One outing with Bodine and you'll understand why he is the area's most popular and versatile guide.

Jim Starkey, the mastermind of the popular

James River Jets has been busy taking orders from folks who want their new custom Rhino boat ready by the Spring thaw. It's not too late to get on the list, call him today to discuss your new custom rig!

Along with the New Year comes show season! This year the Richmond Fishing Expo kicks off the lineup on January 19-21 at the Meadow Event Park in Doswell, Va. Here you'll find great deals on fishing tackle, clothing and boats. You'll see the newest boats of 2024 along with the motors and electronics that just keep getting better every year. Seminars are scheduled all three days so be sure and check the VABoatShows.com website for the details. Tickets are good for all three days so secure yours online today.

Saturday, January 27th is the annual Fishing Flea Market at the Fraternal Order of Eagles in Fredericksburg, VA. Show hours are 8am-1pm and you can purchase a 10x12 space with two tables by calling Dave at 540/287-0731.

Saturday, February 3 is the 27th Annual Dale City Fishing Tackle Show from 8am-1pm at the Hillendale Fire Department. Sign up now to be a vendor where you get a 10x10 space and two six-foot tables for just \$35. All proceeds benefit the New Horizon Bass Anglers Youth Foundation kids fishing derbies. See our calendar of events in the back



Brian Heslin had a good weekend hunting with **Razorback Guide Service**. He harvested double does and this nice eight pointer chasing a doe.

of the magazine for more information on this and other shows.

The NRA Great American Outdoor Show will be held February 3-11 at the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg, PA. This nine day event features over 1,000 exhibitors and offers over 200 free seminars and demos. Scan the QR code on their ad in this month's issue and get your tickets at a discount!

February 9-11 brings us the Augusta County Fishing Expo at the Expoland in Fishersville, VA. This show has long been a local fan favorite and just a great venue to meet up with your buddies and

check out all the vendors. *Chrissie McCotter*

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Outdoor Calendar

Event listings are free for advertisers and non-profit organizations or clubs. Deadline is 14th of the month before the month to appear.

Please send or email information you want to appear to: Woods & Waters Notebook, 114 Old Quarry Lane, Bumpass, VA 23024.

Send emails to: woodsandwatersmagazine@gmail.com

Fishing Tournaments

January 7 – Lake Anna Winter Bass Series – Sturgeon Creek Marina, 7am-3pm. Call 540/895-5095.

January 14 – Lake Anna Winter Bass Series – Sturgeon Creek Marina, 7am-3pm. Call 540/895-5095.

January 21 – Lake Anna Winter Bass Series – Sturgeon Creek Marina, 7am-3pm. Call 540/895-5095.

January 27 – Bobcat's Virginia/Carolina Crappie Trail & VA/NC Crappie Masters State Trail - \$175 Entry due by 5pm on 1/24/24. Call 434/374-8381 or email bobcatsfishing@gmail.com.

January 28 – Lake Anna Winter Bass Series – Sturgeon Creek Marina, 7am-3pm. Call 540/895-5095.

February 24 – Bobcat's Virginia/Carolina Crappie Trail & VA/NC Crappie Masters State Trail - \$175 Entry due by 5pm on 2/21/24. Call 434/374-8381 or email bobcatsfishing@gmail.com.

Shows/Community/Other Events

January 13-14 – Virginia Fly Fishing & Wine Festival – Meadow Event Park, Doswell, VA. \$30 weekend pass, \$20/day pass. Children 16 & under are free with paying adult. Visit VAFlyFishingFestival.com.

January 19-21 – Richmond Fishing Expo – Meadow Event Park, Doswell, VA. Fri. & Sat. 9am-7pm, Sunday 10am-5pm. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors/military and \$5 for kids 6-12 years old. Visit VABoatShows.com

January 27 – Fraternal order of Eagles Fishing Flea Market – 21 Cool Spring Rd., Fredericksburg, VA. 8am-1pm. Set up as a vendor or come shop for deals! Admission is \$3, Kids under 12 are free. Contact David Limerick DWL629@gmail.com 540/287-0731.

January 27-28 – Monaghan Fishing Show – Monaghan Twp. Volunteer Fire Dept., Dillsburg, PA. \$4 Admission. Monaghanfishingshow.com.

February 3 – 27th Annual Dale City Fishing Tackle Show – Hillendale Fire Department, Dale City, VA. 8am-1pm. Set up as a vendor or come shop for deals! Admission is \$5, kids 16 & under are free with paying adult. Contact Mark Porter NHBAYF.Treasurer@gmail.com 703/499-3614.

February 3-11 – The NRA Great American Outdoor Show – Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg, PA. Many ticket options available, see details on GreatAmericanOutdoorShow.com or scan QR code on ad.

February 10 – Rapidan Trout Unlimited Fishing Show – Highland School, Warrenton, VA. \$5 Admission. Visit RapidanTU.com for more information.

February 10&11 – 10th Annual Augusta County Fishing Expo – Augusta County Expoland, Fishersville, VA. Saturday 9am-5pm, Sunday 9am-3pm. For vendor/admission & other information visit AugustaCoBass.com, email ACBassJons@yahoo.com or call 540/910-0078.
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