

FIELD TEST: REMINGTON'S NEW PREMIER LONG RANGE AMMO, P. 78

GAME & FISH

EAST

The Regional Outdoor Guide

GAFMAG.COM
JUNE/JULY 2023

SUMMER TROUT PLAYBOOK

HOW TO LOCATE FISH AND
GET THEM TO BITE AS
WATERS BEGIN TO WARM

HIT THE SURF
FOR VORACIOUS
BLUEFISH

THE EAST'S
TOP 5
FISHIEST
TOWNS

3 SENKO RIGS THAT
CATCH BASS NOW

ESSENTIAL TOOLS
FOR OFF-SEASON
WHITETAIL
HABITAT WORK

REGION ROUNDUP

- CONNECTICUT RIVER CARP
- ST. LAWRENCE MUSKIES
- MAINE BLUEBACK TROUT
- CHAMPLAIN FISHING DERBY
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- FREE FISHING DAYS





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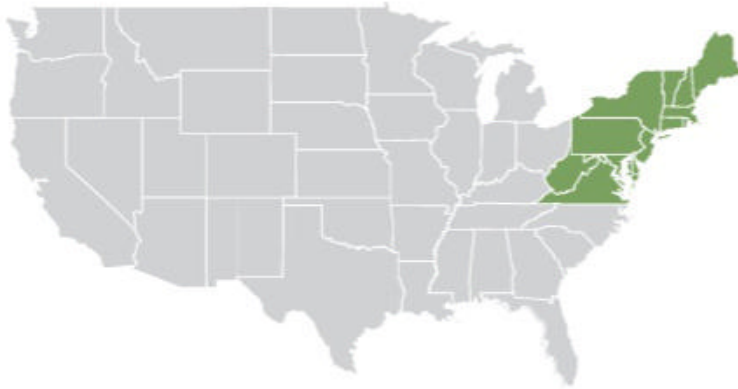


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GAME & FISH EAST

The Regional Outdoor Guide



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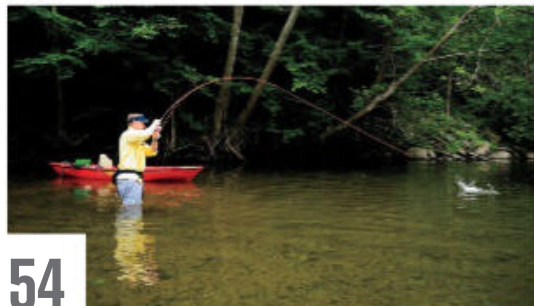
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FREEDOM TO HUNT

With this being the June/July issue, it only seems appropriate to reflect on the freedoms we will celebrate on Independence Day. Thanks to the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, we Americans can include hunting among them. And while we enjoy the freedom to hunt within regulations we as hunters have agreed to in order to conserve game species, it is a freedom—like many others—under attack.

Take, for example, hunting black bears with hounds. Anti-hunters have already managed to get the method banned in many states, even though it's a traditional and highly effective way of managing the species. I was fortunate to go a hound hunt with Table Mountain Outfitters in Idaho last June, and my story on the adventure begins on page 20. It is a story that would not be complete, however, without pointing out the many ways that animal-rights extremists go after hound hunters. Brian Lynn, vice president of communications and marketing for the Sportsmen's Alliance, discussed these attacks with me during the hunt. And they're just the tip of the iceberg.

"The people trying to end hound hunting don't just want to end the use of hounds for bears or mountain lions. They want to end all hunting. Period. Full stop," says Lynn. "The same logic they're using to end bear or lion hunting with hounds can be applied to squirrel and rabbit hunting with hounds, and even upland bird hunting. They're out to stop hunting and they're doing it piecemeal, starting with hounds and other activities with fewer participants, such as trapping. When they finish with one species or method they'll come for the next logical one in your state while also going after neighboring states."

As hunters, we need to support one another. If you don't hunt bears or rabbits with hounds, or pheasants with spaniels, recognize the enjoyment experienced by those who do. If you don't understand a hunting method, learn about it before judging those who employ it. If we stand together, we'll continue to enjoy our freedom to hunt.

Adam Heggenstaller
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The Regional Outdoor Guide

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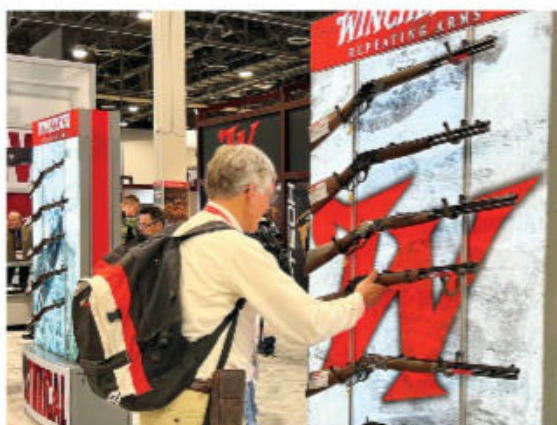
BETTER BAITCASTING

The cursed backlash! Who hasn't picked loops out of a baitcaster, just when the bite was on? Watch “How to Properly Tune a Baitcaster” to avoid this mess.



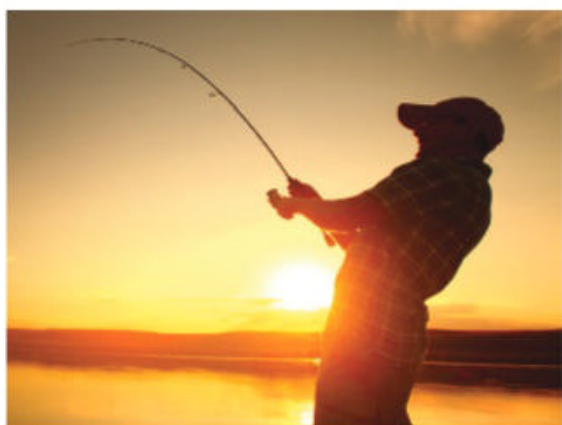
CLEAR FOCUS

Get field-tested advice on glass from Craig Boddington in “Choosing the Right Binocular for Hunting,” an exclusive look at what to keep your eyes on.



SHOT SHOW REPLAY

If you're considering a new hunting firearm for this fall, dive back into our reports from SHOT Show 2023, where we detail the year's top guns.



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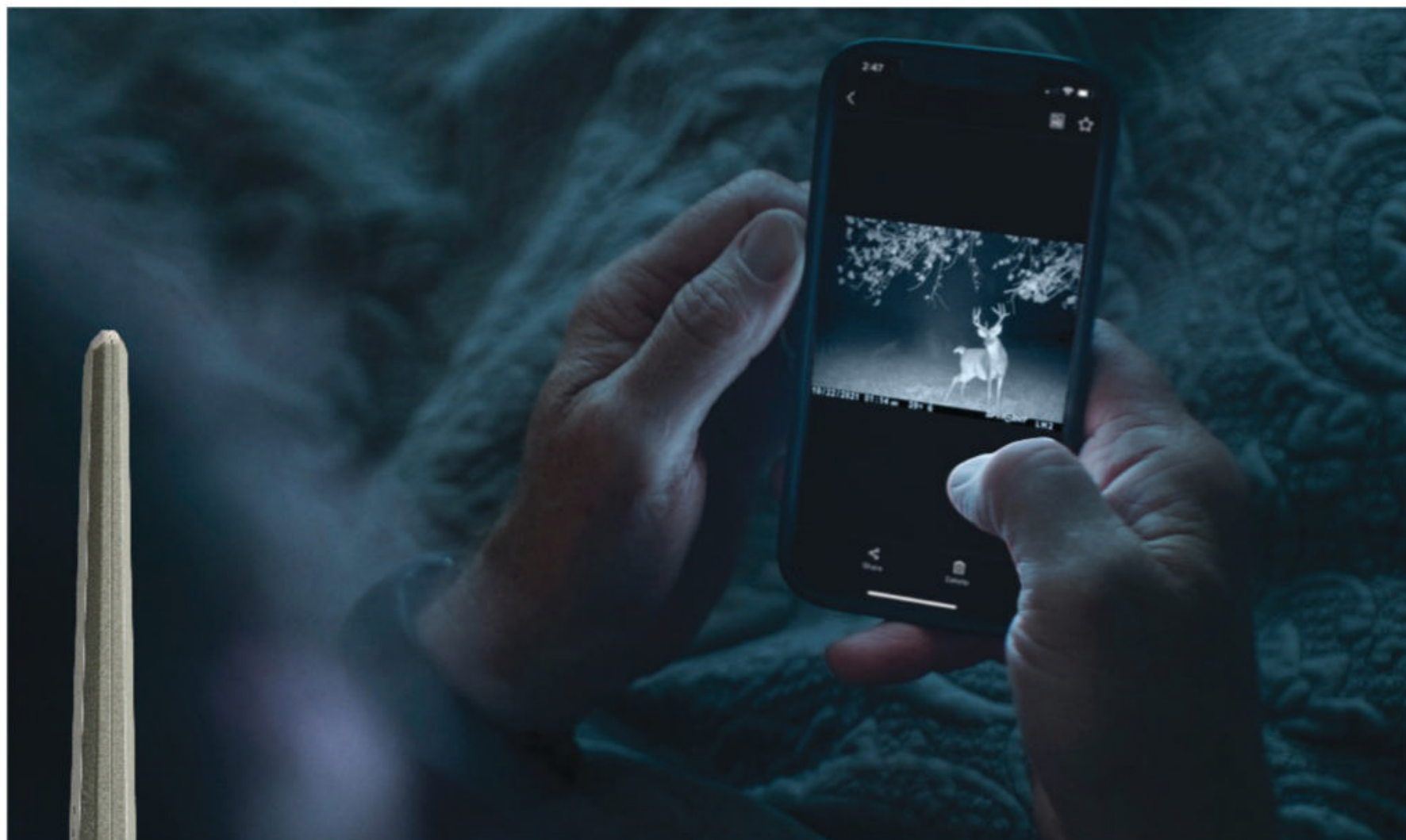
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JULY 2023

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30 am 10:54 to 12:54 pm 11:18 to 1:18		31 am 11:18 to 1:18 pm 11:42 to 1:42		The moon's phases are listed as New, First Quarter (First Q), Full and Last Quarter (Last Q). Times listed represent the peak activity times for game and fish each day. For your own 2023 Doug Hannon's Moon Clock, go to moontimes.com or send \$11.95 each, plus \$3.75 shipping/handling per order, to: Moon Clock, P.O. Box 38460, Atlanta, GA 30358 BEST DAYS GOOD DAYS FAIR DAYS									

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Ready AND Steady

PRACTICE ASSUMING THE FOUR MOST COMMON SHOOTING POSITIONS SO YOU CAN BE COMFORTABLE USING AND ADAPTING THEM IN THE FIELD.

By Richard Mann

When shooting from prone with a bipod, it's more stable to lie with your body in line with the rifle instead of at an angle, but sometimes you must adapt to the terrain while hunting.

There are two rules of thumb when it comes to field shooting positions. The first is that the easier the position is to assume, the less steady it will be. The other is that the closer you can get your rifle to the ground, the steadier you will be. Competence from field shooting positions can help you find success while hunting, but competence only comes with practice. Here's a crash course in the four field shooting positions with some tips to help you assume them faster and shoot better from them.

STANDING

The standing off-hand position is the fastest to assume and the least steady, but sometimes it's required when you're surprised and need to take a fast shot. Most think that to assume it, you just

snap the rifle to your shoulder. Ideally, however, when you bring that rifle up, you should be in sort of a fighting stance, with your support-side leg slightly forward. You should also be slightly crouched, with your knees over your toes and your shoulders over your knees. This provides a good, balanced foundation and helps you control recoil.

Using shooting sticks from the standing position is similar, but for the best results, square up perpendicular to the rifle, with your feet spread a bit wider than normal. You'll use your legs and body to limit the side-to-side movement of the rifle, and you'll use the sticks to control the up and down.

KNEELING

This position is only slightly steadier than standing. It's best used when

you need to shoot under and/or over intermediate obstructions. To assume the position, take a half-step forward with your support side leg and then drop to your shooting-side knee. Rest your support-side elbow on your support-side knee, and if you have a shooting sling, use it for added stability. If you can sit on your heel, or better yet, on your folded-over foot, you'll be even steadier. Remember, the closer you get your rifle to the ground, the steadier you will be.

If you're using sticks or maybe shooting over a log or rock, you can kneel on both knees, spread about shoulder width apart. However, the reverse kneeling position is even better. Kneel on your support-side knee, as opposed to your shooting-side knee, and then rest your shooting arm or elbow on your shooting-side knee.



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For best results when shooting from the kneeling position without a rest, place your support arm directly under the rifle.

SITTING

The seated position is useful for many hunting situations and is very steady. The simplest and fastest way I've found to get into it is to just step one foot across the other and then squat. You can extend your shooting hand to ease the impact with the ground while you're holding your rifle in your support hand. Once down, you have options. You can place your feet flat on the ground and rest your elbows on your knees, or you can cross your legs, lean forward, and place your elbows on, or in front of, your knees and shins.

When shooting from sticks while seated, square up perpendicular to the rifle, spread your legs wide, place the soles of your feet on the ground and your elbows just forward of your knees. Also, lean forward so that your head is in front of your pelvis. You can also place your support hand on the comb or toe of the buttstock, or use it to hold onto the rifle fore-end or shooting sticks. If you have a shooting sling, use it. It can make the sitting position rock steady.

PRONE

The prone position demonstrates the validity of both rules of thumb described earlier. Because it's the most time consuming to assume and because it gets your rifle the closest to the ground, it's the steadiest. However, because of intermediate obstructions, it's not as applicable in as many hunting situations. The best

way I've found to go prone is to just drop to both knees, lean forward, and catch yourself with your shooting hand while holding the rifle in your support hand. Once on your tummy, spread your legs with your feet wider than shoulder width, then prop up your shoulders on your elbows. Without a bipod or rest, you'll want your body positioned at about a 20- to 30-degree angle to the rifle.

If you're using a bipod, deploy it before going prone—you can adjust it once you're on the ground. If you have a bipod or a rest, place your support hand under the buttstock and use it to fine tune your hold. If I'm low enough for

my support hand to touch the ground, I'll often make a fist and rest the toe of the stock between my thumb and index finger. Alternatively, I'll grip the strap tightly and rotate my fist under the buttstock to fine-tune my hold. When shooting with a bipod or other forward support, you want your body positioned in line with the rifle's barrel, as opposed to at an angle, if the ground allows it.

ODDBALL POSITIONS

Sometimes, in the real world, these positions must be modified. I once took an Idaho black bear by shooting uphill at an extreme angle while lying on my back under a large log in a deadfall and resting the rifle across the top of the log. On another hunt, I had to shoot a Nebraska whitetail buck that snuck up behind me on my shooting side. I shot him off-hand but with the rifle from my left as opposed to my right shoulder. And while hunting waterbuck along the Limpopo River in South Africa, I had to kneel and rest my rifle across my guide's shoulder.

You really cannot plan for the sometimes-weird positions you might have to shoot from while hunting. The best preparation is to become as confident as possible with common field shooting positions so that you'll feel comfortable modifying them in the heat of the moment. Also, sometimes mother nature provides us a shooting support steadier than any tripod. Just as you can learn to use the terrain to aid in your stalk, learn to use it to help you shoot, too. 



When shooting from the seated position, rest your elbows on or in front of your knees or shins, and use a sling for added stability.

RICHARD MANN (2)



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BRING *the* HEAT

ADAPTING TO THE CONDITIONS
IS THE NAME OF THE GAME NOW.

By Dr. Jason A. Halfen

A hollow-bodied frog is capable of drawing strikes from fish in the nastiest of cover when bass push deep into the slop.

Summer is rolling into town, bringing heat and humidity, water-skiers and wakeboarders, family road trips and weekends at the lake. The boom-or-bust cycle of spring fishing is now in the rearview mirror as our favorite lakes, rivers, and reservoirs settle into a months-long period of warm water, abundant forage and relatively active fish. No matter where you decide to cast a line, or which finned adversary you plan to target, this collection of species-specific tips will help you meet with success this summer.

FLOAT A FROG FOR BASS

Very few moments in fishing top the thrill of a bass smashing a surface lure. Indeed, watching a frog or other topwater bait during the retrieve floods an angler with the anticipation of a jarring hookset. While many anglers associate topwater lures with low-light conditions during summer's heat, bass will attack surface lures even under the bright midday sun. If you're new to summer topwater fishing, start your journey with a frog.

Hollow-bodied frogs excel where few other lures dare to swim: right in the middle of the thickest surface vegetation, wood and slop. With exceptional flotation and giant double hooks that ride above the lure, hollow-bodied frogs can extract bass from the heaviest cover. The best frogs expertly balance sufficient weight for long casts with optimum buoyancy to float with a lifelike profile at rest: head high and tail low, just like a living frog.

LiveTarget hollow-bodied baits—frogs, sunfish and even mice—are exceptional topwater lures and proven bass catchers. Featuring biomimetic colors, profiles and appearance details, LiveTarget frogs are excellent replicas of their living counterparts. They cast a mile, float perfectly at rest, and attract a bass's attention when worked through cover.

Like when fishing any other topwater lure, pausing a moment after the strike—so the line comes tight and the bass can dive away from the boat—will help make your hooksets more effective. If you're still missing strikes, give the rubber skirt a trim. Sometimes those long skirts can get wedged between the hook and the frog's body, impeding a positive hookset.

TROLL UP WALLEYES

For decades, summer walleye fishing was relegated to the ultra-finesse realm: live bait—especially wiggly leeches and supple nightcrawlers—fished slow, on long, limp leaders, adjacent to deep structure. In recent years, however, summer walleye fishing has enjoyed something of a rebirth, as contemporary power-fishing techniques have entered our collective walleye angling consciousness.

Speed trolling with crankbaits is an excellent way to cover water and capture summer walleyes. A rapidly moving baitfish-profile lure that disperses both flash and vibration throughout the water column appeals directly to walleyes' predatory nature and is effective across the range of waters where they swim.

In many natural lakes and reservoirs, summer walleyes slide into depths of 18 to 24 feet, where they spend much of the warm season as long as some sort of forage remains available. They can easily be reached by long-lining deep-diving crankbaits using braided lines. In this presentation, dedicated trolling tackle—8-foot, medium-power, moderate-action trolling rods, line-counter reels, and 10- to 15-pound-test braided line—is a real advantage. The braid's thin diameter minimizes water resistance and allows lures to dive deeper with less line in the water.

Let sufficient line out to deliver the lures into the walleye strike zone—generally within 2 to 3 feet off the bottom. When in doubt, get the lure deep enough to deflect off the bottom occasionally, then reel up a few cranks. Now, the trap is set.

Summer walleye trolling is a game of speed. Fish will often respond favorably to lures pulled between 2.5 and 3.5 mph as measured by your GPS chartplotter. At speeds such as these, it's important to have well-tuned crankbaits, as a lure that does not run true will invariably snarl itself and frequently other nearby lines or lures in the trolling spread.

Do yourself a favor and check each bait's behavior boatside at or above your target speed, making any necessary adjustments or replacements before ever sending lures down to the walleye zone. An assortment of Rapala Tail Dancers and Scatter Minnows, as well as Northland Rumble Sticks and classic Acme Reef Runners, will transfer summer walleyes from the depths to your landing net.

I 'Bearly' Made It Out Alive

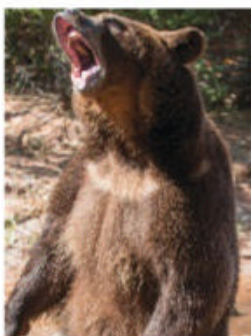
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"The feel of this knife is unbelievable... this is an incredibly fine instrument." — H., Arvada, CO



It was a perfect late autumn day in the northern Rockies. Not a cloud in the sky, and just enough cool in the air to stir up nostalgic memories of my trip into the backwoods. This year, though, was different. I was going it solo. My two buddies, pleading work responsibilities, backed out at the last minute. So, armed with my trusty knife, I set out for adventure.

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Well, what I found was a whole lot of trouble. As in 8 feet and 800-pounds of trouble in the form of a grizzly bear. Seems this grumpy fella was out looking for some adventure too. Mr. Grizzly saw me, stood up to his entire 8 feet of ferocity and let out a roar that made my blood turn to ice and my hair stand up. Unsnapping my leather sheath, I felt for my hefty, trusty knife and felt emboldened. I then showed the massive grizzly over 6 inches of 420 surgical grade stainless steel, raised my hands and yelled, "Whoa bear! Whoa bear!" I must have made my point, as he turned tail and headed back into the woods.

Our Grizzly Hunting Knife features stick-tang construction, you can feel confident in the strength and durability of this knife. And the hand carved, natural bone handle ensures you won't lose your grip even in the most dire of circumstances. I also made



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Monster muskies are prowling the thick cabbage and coontail now searching for easy meals. Big spinners, whether single or tandem, are the ticket for avid anglers on the hunt for these giants.

BURN MUSKIE BUCKTAILS

Summer is the perfect time to churn the water with bucktails. Water temperatures are approaching their annual peaks, and muskies are on the chew, ready to chase down fast-moving presentations. Look no further than thick beds of cabbage and coontail to garner consistent summer musky action.

Both weed varieties cast shade within the water column, reducing nearby water temperature and providing respite from the bright midday sun. Dense stands of cabbage and coontail provide ample cover for baitfish and small panfish, guaranteeing that resident muskies have an abundant food supply.

Contemporary bucktails fall into one of two broad categories: lures with a single

spinner blade and those with tandem blades. Both styles can be fished slow or fast, but be prepared for the tandem-blade spinners to pull back hard as you crank them in. Spinner blade size and shape will determine the retrieve speed at which the lure performs best, as well as the amount of thump and vibration the rotating blade creates as it spins along the lure's axis.

Long, slender willow-leaf blades function best at high speeds and displace the least amount of water, producing more flash but less thump. At the same time, Colorado blades are typically associated with slightly slower presentations: crank these too fast, and the spinner may "blow-out," no longer rotating smoothly around the lure's wire backbone. Big

Colorado blades move a lot of water as they spin and distribute the most vibration into the water column. The amount of thump from a spinner blade increases as its size increases, as does the effort needed on the retrieve.

Which bucktails should you choose? Frequently, sparse cover, shallow water and extreme retrieve speeds call for lures with willow-leaf blades. Dense cover, a slower retrieve speed or fishing after dark calls for big Colorado single- or tandem-blade spinners. Keep your color selections simple: black tails with silver or gold blades are great for clear water. Brighter, more colorful combinations—like yellows, oranges or flashy mylar skirts—perform well in stained or turbid water during summer. 

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FARM TEAM

THE NEXT FEDERAL FARM BILL WILL ESTABLISH THE TERMS—AND THE SCALE—OF CONSERVATION AND SPORTSMAN ACCESS ON AMERICA'S PRIVATE LAND.

By Andrew McKean

The amount of funding for the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program, which many states use to support walk-in hunting areas on farms and other private lands, will be decided in passage of the 2023 Farm Bill.

The federal Farm Bill, reauthorized by Congress every five years, is the most important piece of legislation that most of us ignore. That's because the \$1.4 trillion bill, which influences everything from public-school lunches to disaster payments for drought-crippled corn farmers, is dense, complicated and so full of acronyms that it's hard to know whether you should support ACEP, VPA-HIP or EQIP.

Happily, folks far more familiar with the process and details are watching the development of the 2023 Farm Bill with an eye for what it can deliver to America's hunters, anglers and outdoor recreationists. Folks like Jim Ingles, director of governmental affairs for Pheasants Forever.

"Depending on what part of the country you live in, or whether you are a farmer or a hunter, you're going to hear about, and be affected by, this legislation," says Ingles,

whose job is to ensure that conservation provisions of the sprawling legislation are preserved or even increased in order to affect things like clean water, healthy wildlife habitat and expanded access. Those conservation titles, which amount to just 7 percent of the federal funds distributed by the bill, include items such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) that pays farmers to keep marginal cropland in bird-boosting cover and the clumsily named Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP) that creates hunting access on farmlands.

The 2018 bill expires on Sept. 30, which means Congress will be pushing to get the next Farm Bill completed and signed by Oct. 1. Ingles says that most sportsmen and -women can look beyond the biggest-ticket items that fund the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the billions of dollars in price supports and crop insurance.

"Habitat and access, that's what we boil it down to," he says. "There's a lot at stake in those two categories. Programs like CRP and EQIP [Environmental Quality Incentive Program] affect tens of millions of acres of wildlife habitat across America. And if we don't get VPA-HIP funded, hunters could lose popular walk-in hunting programs across the country."

The longest-running conservation program in the Farm Bill is CRP, which could be called America's grass bank, intended to keep soil from washing and blowing away. All the cover planted in place of crops is a boon to ground-nesting birds, including waterfowl and upland species, and since CRP was authorized in the 1985 Farm Bill, it's also raised a lot of whitetails and non-game species. But we're a long way below the high-water mark of 37 million acres of CRP contracted in 2007, an era defined by low commodity prices. Grain prices are

currently spiking because of the war in Ukraine and global weather events, which means it will be a fight to get CRP acres back to those historic highs.

“We’d like to see CRP restored to high levels, but we can’t go to Congress right now and ask for 40 million acres,” says Ingles. “That would be expensive and a non-starter in a Congress that’s losing its appetite for big public expenditures. So we’re going to ask for as many acres as possible, but with management flexibility that makes it appealing to landowners looking for alternatives to row crops that can make their operations more resilient during these wide swings in weather events that they’ve been experiencing. We think it makes sense to talk about CRP as both an ecological and economic safety net for producers.”

The VPA-HIP was created in the 2008 Farm Bill to provide grants to state fish-and-wildlife agencies to allow public hunting, fishing and wildlife-related recreation on private land. Many administer the program as walk-in hunting initiatives, which have created millions of hunter days on hundreds of thousands of acres.

“If you hunt walk-in areas in your state, you are benefitting from VPA-HIP,” Ingles says. “If funding goes away or gets reduced, it’s going to remove a lot of hunting access.”

The 2018 Farm Bill approved \$50 million in access grants to states and tribes, and this time around advocates are asking for \$150 million to provide even more private-land access for hunters. Ingles notes that acres enrolled in VPA-HIP projects are good for landowners, who get an incentive payment for voluntarily allowing access and for improving wildlife habitat. It’s also good for recreationists, who can access high-quality habitat for not only hunting, but also fishing and other outdoor activities like bird watching.

The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, which is leading a coalition of conservation groups on a unified approach to Farm Bill priorities, notes that economic analysis of private-land access “shows a huge return on investment while expanding hunting opportunities.” That’s an appealing pitch to not only Congress, but also landowners, rural communities, state agencies and even the sporting goods industry—all groups that have skin in this year’s Farm Bill game. 

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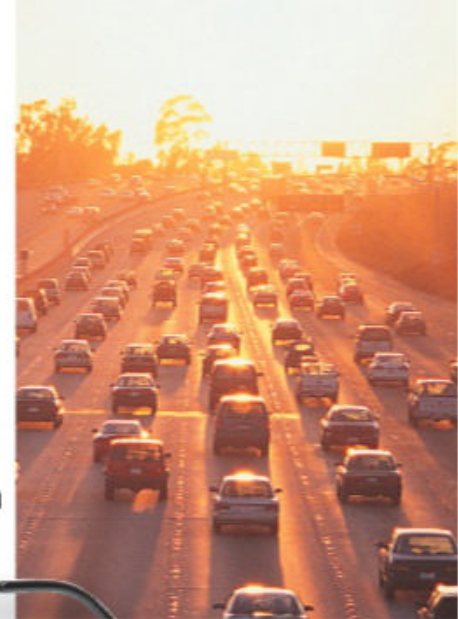
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RACE ON THE MOUNTAIN

THE FIRST RULE OF
HUNTING BEARS WITH HOUNDS
IN SOUTHWESTERN IDAHO IS
TO KEEP UP WITH THE PACK.

By Adam Heggenstaller

Black bears inhabit rough, rocky country in Idaho, and hounds are all too willing to meet the bruins on their own turf.

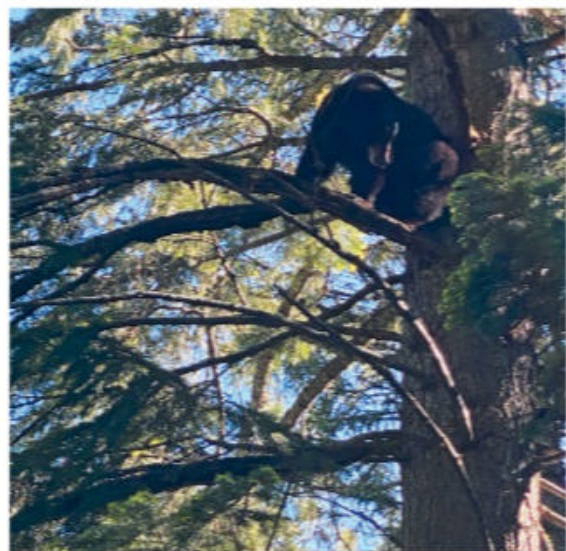


SCOTT HAUGEN (MAIN); ADAM HEGGENSTALLER (RIGHT)

When the mud-spattered Toyota stopped at the end of the gravel road, I slid out and strode to the edge of a clearing that had most likely been a log landing in the recent past. The ground dropped off quickly beyond the crushed stone and scattered bark fragments, and below me stretched a vast forest of pine towering above thick, green undergrowth. A soft wind swayed the branches of the trees at the edge of the landing, and I caught my breath when the breeze delivered the faint yet unmistakable sound my ears had been straining to hear.

A bark, a bawl ... somewhere down in there—way down in there—the hounds were still on the trail.

I turned around to get the attention of the guys in the truck and, excited to hear proof that the race was on, pointed in the direction of the sound. It was a needless gesture. Casey Hileman, the owner of the hounds and a guide with Table Mountain Outfitters, had been watching his pack's progress on a Garmin GPS handheld unit since the dogs had picked up the bear's scent more than an hour before. He knew exactly where each of his dogs were, if not where the bear was going to take them.



Good thing, too, because even though my friend Brian Lynn, vice president of the Sportsmen's Alliance and an avid bear hunter, hopped from the truck and joined me to listen, neither of us caught the sounds of the hounds again. Brian just shrugged.

"And that's why we have GPS," he quipped. "Could you imagine trying to keep track of dogs out here without it?"

I couldn't. In the 80 minutes or so that the hounds had been trailing the bear,

they'd covered more than 6 miles. The terrain was seemingly straight up and down in some spots, and innumerable snarls of deadfall and brush covered the forest floor. The hounds, hunters themselves in top form, were a lot better

at traversing this country than us. They would give their all to their job—run the bear up a tree or hold it at bay on the ground—no matter how far they would have to chase it first. Being softer and slower of foot (I say that with no

disrespect to my hunting partners) we had to resort to technology to stay in the race.

With each hound wearing a collar having a GPS receiver, we monitored the track of every dog in real time on the handheld. Having spent years training his dogs and hunting bears with them in the wilderness of southwestern Idaho, Hileman could study the icons on the handheld screen and visualize what was happening on the front lines based on the speeds and directions of the hounds transmitted to the screen. He knew when dogs were within sight of the bear, “looking at it,” and when dogs had lost the trail. After another 20 minutes, it seemed as though this first race of the morning was leaning toward the latter.

“I don’t think they have it anymore,” Hileman said. “They’re spread out and heading in different directions. Let’s go see if we can pick them up. There’s a road that will get us pretty close.”

In the truck we made a winding descent, took a turn and soon the handheld

Table Mountain Outfitters guide Casey Hileman judges a bear treed by his hounds in a drainage.



ADAM HEGENSTALLER

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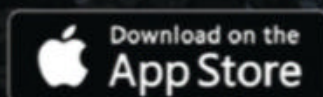
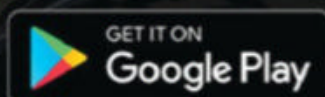
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When hounds strike the scent of a bear, the entire forest knows it. Driving forest roads with dogs in the back of the truck is an efficient way to find bruins.



showed us we were within a couple hundred yards of the hounds, which were moving in our general direction. It looked like they were still seeking the scent of the bear, but Hileman knew it was over.

“Rooster! Rooster! Rooster!” he shouted out the window to one of the hounds. “Clancy, here! Here dogs, come on dogs!”

The pack heeded his call, though judging by the hounds’ expressions when they emerged from the timber, it was clear they didn’t want to call it quits. Hileman loaded each one into the large dog box spanning the bed of his truck, and we were off to try to strike another bear. In this rough and immense forest, treeing or baying one—let alone getting a shot—would be far from guaranteed.

IN DEFENSE OF DOGS

Idaho is one of only a handful of states that permits hunting black bears in spring with hounds. The season, and dates during the season when hound hunting is allowed, vary by unit. Generally speaking, Idaho’s spring bear season opens in

early April and ends in late June, with hounds permitted for most of that time in the majority of units.

Baiting is also permitted in most Idaho units during the spring. Table Mountain Outfitters (tablemountainoutfitters.com) employs a combination of both techniques to put hunters onto bears.

“Bait sites really serve two purposes for us,” Scott Denny, who owns and operates Table Mountain Outfitters (TMO) with his wife, Angie, explained to me during my hunt with TMO last June. “We run bait sites to pattern bears for hunters who want to sit for them, and the sites that are being hit by bears give us a place to start the dogs. Normally we’ll run dogs in the morning and hunters will sit on bait in the evening.”

Both are effective methods of hunting bears and managing their populations in the expansive Idaho forestland where TMO operates its spring camp. With millions of steep acres covered in timber, it would be difficult to consistently locate bears—even with hounds—if there were nothing to encourage bears to establish a pattern.

Baiting and hound hunting, however, are criticized by those who do not understand the methods. Much of the misguided negativity toward the techniques stems from anti-hunters looking to drive a wedge between specific groups of sportsmen. Unfortunately, some hunters only help the antis’ cause by condemning methods of take that they subjectively view as unfair.

“Hunters are sometimes their own worst enemies,” noted Lynn as we discussed the criticism often directed at hound hunting and baiting for black bears. “The antis recognize this and are always quick to use it against us. When they can get hunters to disagree on something, it only gives them more reason to influence public opinion and seek a ban. Wayne Pacelle [former president and CEO of the Humane Society of the U.S.] said it point blank: ‘We are going to use the ballot box and the democratic process to stop all hunting in the United States. We will take it species by species until all hunting is stopped in California. Then we will take it state by state.’”

SCOTT HAUGEN (TOP)

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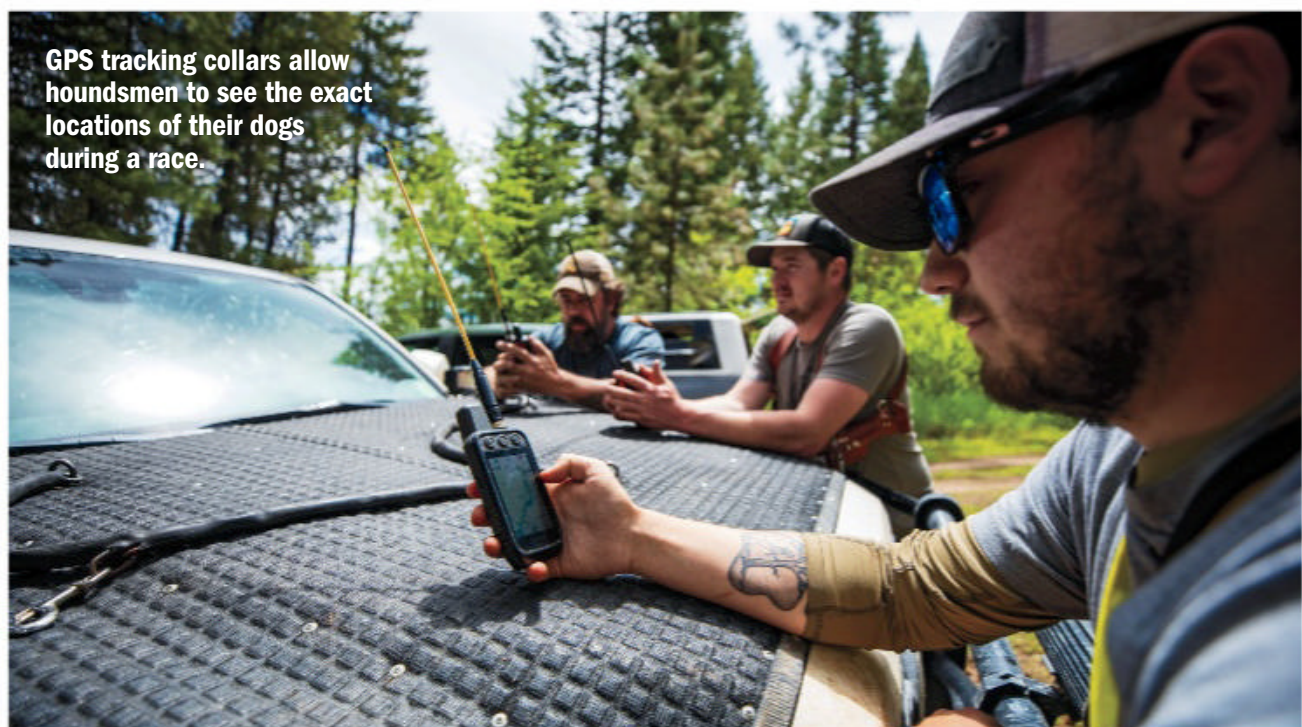
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As the head of communications and marketing efforts for the Sportsmen's Alliance (sportsmensalliance.org), Lynn said that he is all too familiar with the tactics employed by extremists at the federal, state and agency levels to end hunting. In his home state of Washington, animal-rights activists banned bear hunting with bait and hounds by a ballot initiative in 1996. They did the same in Oregon two years before.

Anti-hunters also tried the ballot initiative approach to end hounds and bait in Idaho in 1996, Lynn pointed out. The Sportsmen's Alliance was a major financial contributor in the battle leading up to the vote, helped to educate Idaho citizens on the facts of bear hunting and provided fundraising consulting to garner the means needed to spread the truth among the public. Voters resoundingly rejected the measure, and bear hunting as Idahoans know it was preserved.

But the fight isn't over, noted Lynn. Hound hunting remains under attack in every state where it is legal, and anti-hunters are becoming increasingly



GPS tracking collars allow houndsmen to see the exact locations of their dogs during a race.

furtive in their tactics. For example, distorting animal-cruelty laws to apply to hound hunters, trainers and breeders is a current favorite strategy.

"They disguise overly restrictive laws pertaining to breeding, kenneling, tethering, selling and transferring dogs as 'animal-cruelty' laws," Lynn explained.

"These hit hunters, especially houndsmen and bird dog hunters, really hard. They make it difficult for hunters to train and interact with working dogs in a constructive way."

As I'd see in the coming days, hound hunters like Hileman and the Dennys have nothing but respect, admiration

SCOTT HAUGEN



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and downright love for their dogs. They pour years of effort into training and take great pride in the partnership that forms between hunter and hound. And along with that, I'd soon realize hunting with hounds is one of the most physically



demanding and ethical ways to pursue black bears.

TREED IN NO TIME

After another couple turns on the gravel roads snaking their way through the pines, I was lost. Hileman, of course, knew exactly where he was going and pulled the pickup into a wide spot at the end of an old skid trail. He opened the dog box, and four hounds bounded out the door, quickly disappearing into the wet woods. Seconds later, they struck the scent of a bear, their bawls crashing like waves against the huge trees.

"Clancy's got it," said Hileman a couple minutes later. "He's really going now. He might be looking at that bear."

The guide started to head in the direction of his hounds, and I grabbed my rifle and followed. Unlike the morning's first race, this time the hounds' voices remained clear in my ears. The GPS showed they were less than 400 yards away, heading along the side of a hill and into a shallow drainage. I fought my way through briars and over rotting logs, trying to keep up with Hileman,

slipping in the mud of the trail made slick by a light rain.

We hadn't hiked 10 minutes when the dogs' long, deep bawls shifted to shorter, more excited chops. They were getting louder because they were no longer moving away from us. We were gaining on them. The hounds had stopped at a tree, and in that tree was a bear.

Moving down the hill, drawing closer to the ruckus, I was astounded by the size of the gigantic pine looming before me toward the bottom of the drainage. It made the hounds scrambling around its trunk look like brown and white ants. A couple smaller trees had fallen next to it, uprooted by wind, forming humps of tangled roots and branches. The dogs climbed all over the deadfalls, seeking to gain every inch that would put them closer to the bear.

"Good Clancy. Good dogs," said Hileman with the sincerity of a parent looking over a straight-A report card. "Good dogs."

The bear peered down from its perch 30 feet above the hounds, unimpressed by their performance. Even as the dogs

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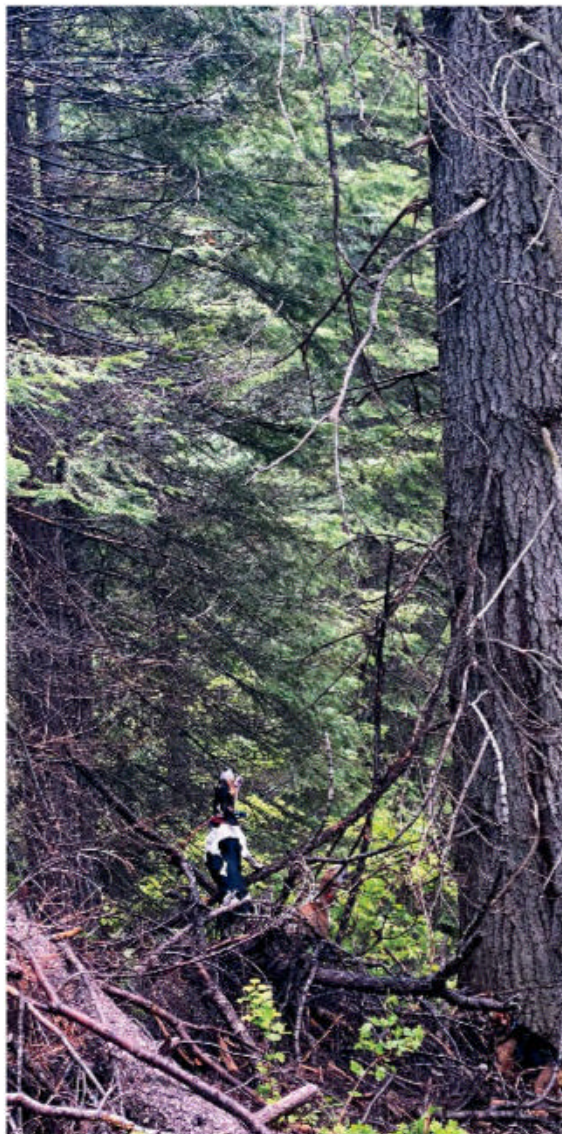
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clawed and jumped at the trunk and tried to climb it, the bear seemed smug in its knowledge that it was unreachable.

“That’s not the one we want,” said Hileman, looking up at a bear I judged to be about 100 pounds. “I had a feeling it was a small bear since it treed so quick, but sometimes I’m surprised. This one’s got to grow up.”

It was an example of how hound hunting allows for selectivity in the taking of a bear. When a bear is treed, hunters typically have all the time they want to judge the animal for maturity, size, condition of its coat and color. It also ensures female bears with young are not taken, which is prohibited in Idaho. If a shot will be fired, it can be taken deliberately, with plenty of time to use a solid rest, shoot from a stable position and wait for the ideal angle that guarantees a quick, ethical kill.

Hileman gathered the hounds and put them on leads to walk them back to the truck. They weren’t going to leave the tree any other way, but for now, their hunt was over. Even though Clancy was young “and can go all day, and day after day,” Hileman didn’t want to overwork



BEAR ESSENTIALS

Tough, lightweight gear is key for hound hunting.

Hunting bears with hounds often demands hiking over rough, nasty terrain, because that’s where the bruins like to live. Shots will typically be short, less than 50 yards, and so this isn’t a hunt where a precision rifle with a heavy barrel and robust stock is needed. Accuracy, of course, is never a bad thing, and the **Browning X-Bolt Speed Suppressor Ready** (\$1,429.99-\$1,529.99; browning.com) provides it in a compact, lightweight package.

The rifle’s fluted, sporter-contour, 20-inch barrel is threaded for a suppressor and comes with a muzzle brake. The composite stock keeps weight at less than 6 1/2 pounds and is available with Browning’s Oviz camo finish. The Smoked Bronze Cerakote on the external metal surfaces resists corrosion and scratches from brush and rocks. The rifle I used on my Idaho hunt was chambered in 6.8 Western, and the 175-grain Long Range Pro Hunter load cleanly took a bear with one round.

The scope, too, requires some thought when hunting bears with hounds. Since shots will often be at close range, lower magnification is the ticket. Hunters need a bright scope with a reticle that stands out against black hide in shade and shadows. The **Leupold VX-3HD 2.5-8x36 mm scope** (\$499.99; leupold.com) I mounted to the X-Bolt gave me a clear view of my target in the tree, and built on a 1-inch maintube, the optic was compact and balanced nicely with the rifle.

The scope’s Elite Optical System provides bright images in low light while reducing glare. The CDS dial gives hunters a quick way to adjust for longer shots if needed, such as while spot-and-stalk hunting. Above all, the VX-3HD is tough, which provides piece of mind should a hunter happen to fall while traversing tricky terrain (I know this from experience).



him and the other hounds. They would get much-deserved rest during the afternoon and night.

HONOR AMONG HOUNDS

It didn’t take long for the hounds to demonstrate their amazing noses the next morning. We were slowly driving down another gravel road, still sipping hot coffee left over from breakfast, when a chorus of bawls erupted from the boxes in the back of the truck. Their noses constantly working, Clancy and the gang had struck a bear from the road—not uncommon with good dogs. In fact, driving mountain roads with the air wafting through the dog box and across the hounds’ noses is a preferred way to cover ground without needlessly

tiring dogs and hunters. The tiring part would come soon enough.

Hileman pulled the truck off the road and released the hounds. The race was on immediately, with the dogs’ voices quickly fading as they rushed downhill and over a low ridge. The area was covered in saplings, brush and other tangled vegetation that was over my head, but it didn’t slow the hounds one bit. They were off and running.

“We have a bait down there,” said Hileman. “The bear was probably on it when the dogs first struck. They’re looking at him right now.”

The houndsman could sense the excitement in his dogs, and pressed into the damp surface of the road was further proof that the trail was hot. Fresh bear



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tracks told us the animal had just been here, and judging by the size of them, it was a nice one.

After the initial fade when the dogs plunged down the hill, the volume of their bawls remained consistent. Rather than taking a course that continued to lead away from the bait site, the bear had turned and was running a line roughly parallel to the road, maybe half a mile from our location. This went on for perhaps 20 minutes, and then the sound began to grow louder. The bear had made another turn and was heading toward us.

“Looks like the bear crossed back on its track,” explained Hileman, watching the dogs’ route on the handheld. “It’s coming this way. Be ready to shoot.”

Lynn and I walked the edge of the road, looking for an opening in the brush that would give us a better view downhill. The best we could find were small patches of vegetation about 75 yards away that were just a bit thinner than the surrounding growth. The dogs sounded like they were just out of sight, and as I scanned the brush on the slope below me, I caught a quick flash of black. It was the bear, and it was gone just as quickly as it had appeared. Seconds later a couple glimpses of the hounds showed me they were right behind.

The race then took another turn, heading downhill and away from the road again. The bear had most likely either seen or smelled us and was putting distance between itself and us once more. Judging by the sound of the dogs, the bear soon turned yet again, looping back toward the starting point of the race before making another change in direction that took it farther downhill. It ran another long, rough loop at that elevation before going straight downhill and leading the hounds almost out of hearing range.

It had been more than an hour since the hounds had first struck the trail, and Hileman decided to make a move. We jumped in the truck, watching the race on the handheld, and found a road that would take us downhill and put us closer to the action. After a couple mile drive, Hileman stopped and studied the GPS.

“We got a tree,” he reported. “Let’s see what we have.”

According to the handheld, it was only about 300 yards from the truck to the tree with the bear. That was a

straight-line measurement, however, and a ridge between us and the tree would triple that distance. The bottom portions of the ridge were covered in alders and briars, slowing our progress as we clawed our way to the top, over the spine and then down into a steep drainage where the bear had treed. The hounds’ choppy barks urged us on, and after a half-hour of sweaty struggle we arrived at a huge pine holding a black mass in its branches 60 feet from the ground.

The pine grew straight out of the drainage bottom. Climbing the slope on the far side of the tree put us about 30 yards from the bear but less than 20 feet below it. We could clearly see this was a bear worthy of taking, and being all

black, something of a rarity in an area known for its color-phase specimens.

After a race that had spanned more than two hours and led the hounds over nearly 10 miles of rough terrain, my shot was almost anticlimactic but certainly welcomed. As the report echoed down the drainage and over the ridge, the dogs rushed in to get their final licks at the bear. They would leave their hard-earned prize only when we snapped leads to their collars and pulled them away from the jet-black carcass.

Tied to nearby trees as we skinned and quartered the bear, the dogs continued to bark, adding to the atmosphere of satisfaction with a job well done. It was almost like they were congratulating me for being able to keep up with them. 



Hounds and author alike celebrate the culmination of a two-hour race resulting in a 30-yard shot at a bear.

ADAM HEGENSTALLER

Strike King
G



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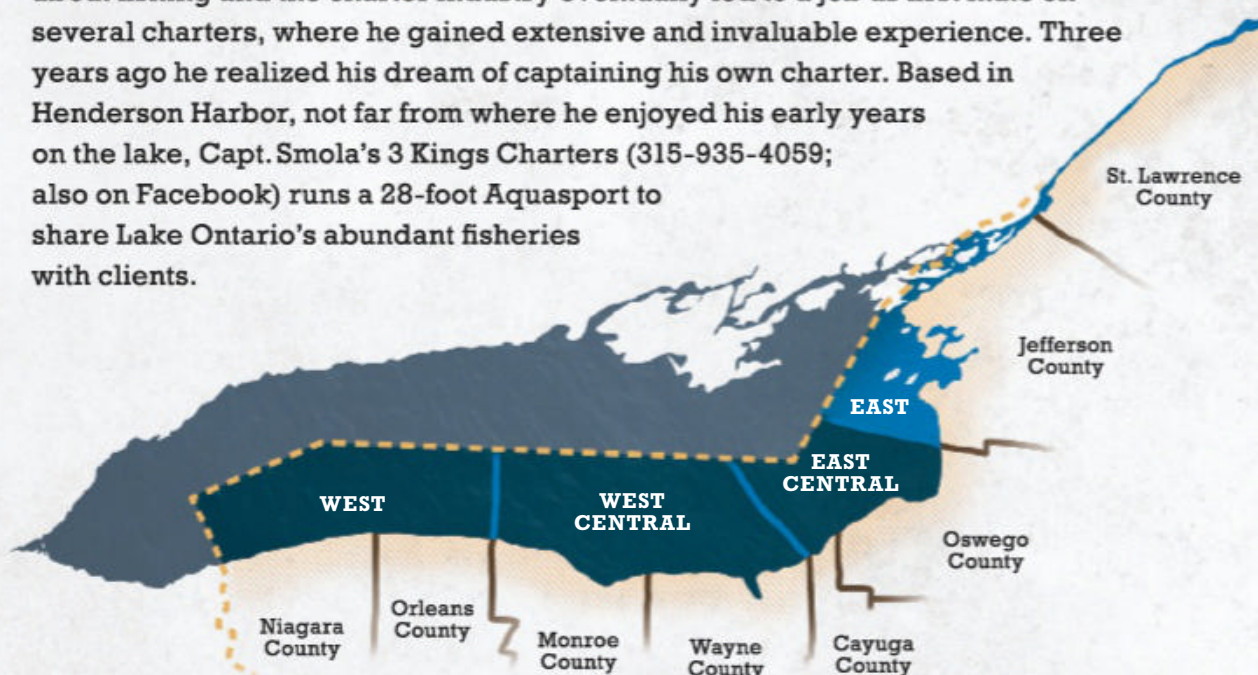
New for 2023—Strike King has developed two new additions to the proven RAGE® lineup of soft plastics. Both the Scounbug & Rattlin Rage Craw come in a wide range of colors—and are highly versatile baits offering numerous rigging options. Tie One On!

SCAN TO LEARN MORE





Spending his childhood days at his grandparents' camp on Lake Ontario's Sawyer Bay near Henderson, N.Y., Capt. Jason Smola developed a deep love for being on the water at an early age. His eagerness to learn more about fishing and the charter industry eventually led to a job as first mate on several charters, where he gained extensive and invaluable experience. Three years ago he realized his dream of captaining his own charter. Based in Henderson Harbor, not far from where he enjoyed his early years on the lake, Capt. Smola's 3 Kings Charters (315-935-4059; also on Facebook) runs a 28-foot Aquasport to share Lake Ontario's abundant fisheries with clients.



ON THE WATER

with **Capt. Jason Smola** of 3 Kings Charters

What's your favorite bite to key on during June and July?

The Eastern Basin of Lake Ontario stands out due to its diverse range of fish, particularly toward the end of June and July. The area has abundant structure, which attracts a variety of fish. We can catch salmon, brown trout, steelhead and lake trout using the same set of lures, such as spoons, flasher flies and flashers with meat rigs.

What lure do you reach for, day in and day out?

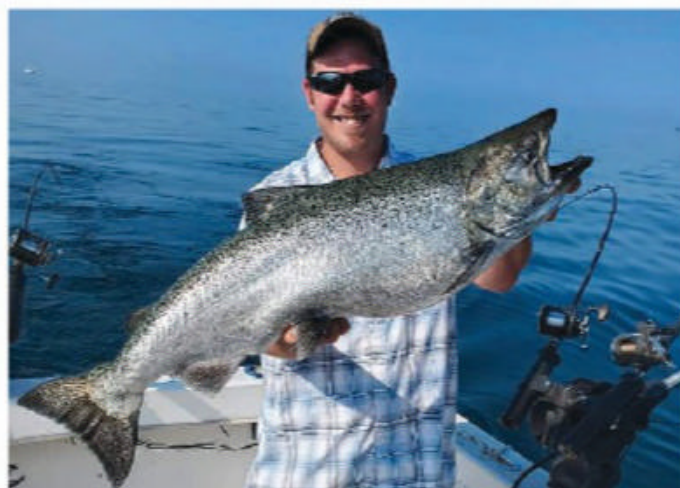
During this time of year, our preferred lure is undoubtedly the black and silver NK28 [spoon from Northern King]. It's hard to find a better option that works just as well in both cloudy and sunny conditions.

Why is a charter on Lake Ontario ideal for families?

A family-friendly charter is not just about the fishing, but also the overall experience. The Eastern Basin offers stunning scenery that can add to the enjoyment of the trip. We can enjoy picturesque Henderson Harbor, pass charming islands and admire the high, impressive rocks along the trench leading to Stony Point Lighthouse.

Tell us about a memorable day on the lake with kids.

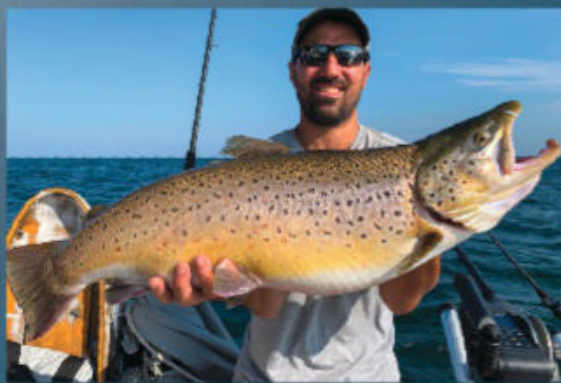
During an afternoon trip, we had my 13-year-old cousin Truman and my 9-year-old son Mason with us, and the experience was amazing! They both caught their limit of king salmon, along with two bonus lake trout. Even at a young age, they were able to skillfully fight the fish using copper [line] rods, dipseys and riggers, and successfully bring them to the net. The action was non-stop for the couple of hours we were out, and the kids had so much fun they didn't want the trip to end.



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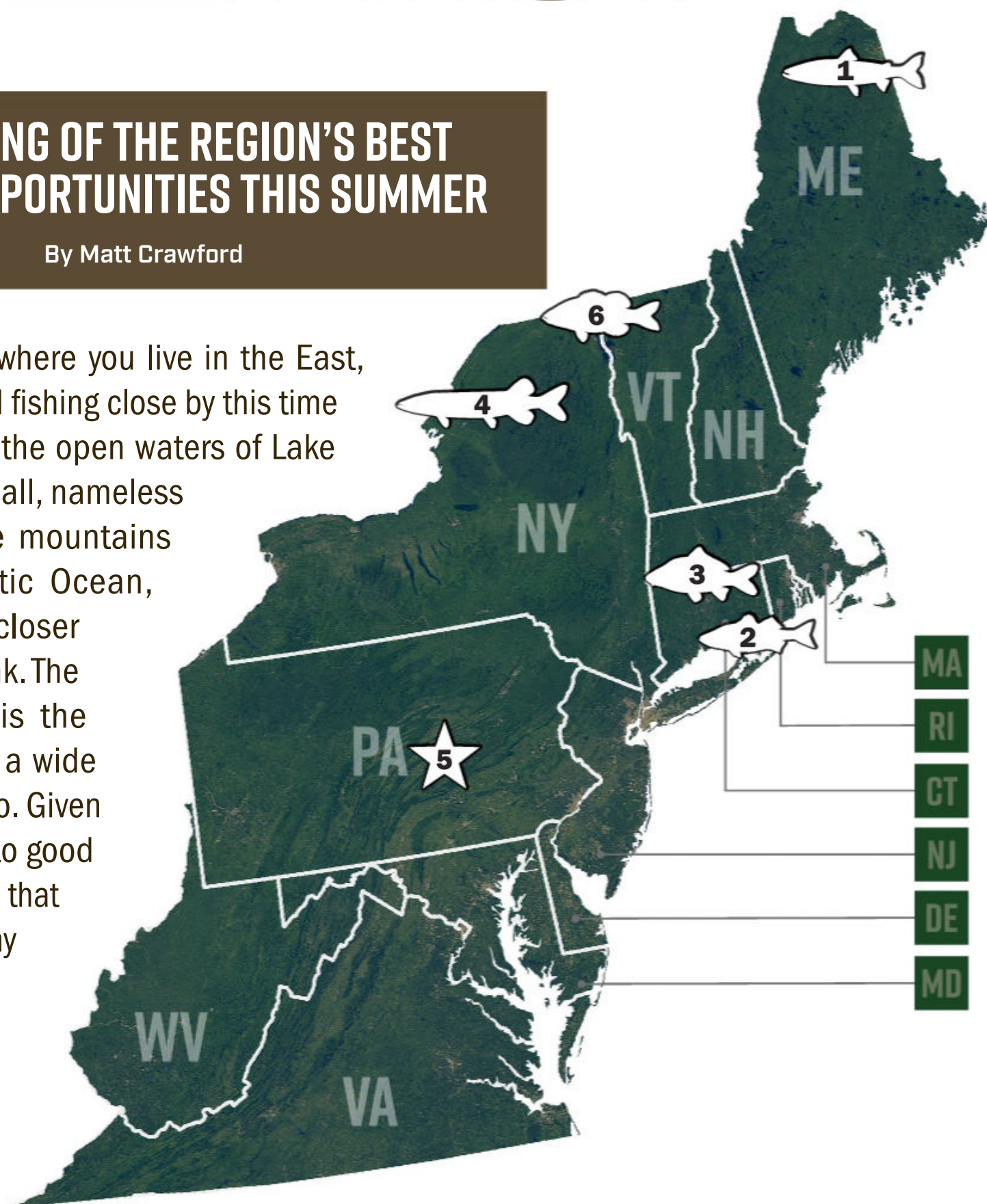


AROUND THE EAST

A SAMPLING OF THE REGION'S BEST FISHING OPPORTUNITIES THIS SUMMER

By Matt Crawford

Regardless of where you live in the East, you have good fishing close by this time of year. From the open waters of Lake Ontario to small, nameless ponds high in the mountains to the vast Atlantic Ocean, fishable water is closer than you might think. The start of summer is the best time to catch a wide array of species, too. Given how close you are to good fishing, the question that remains is this: Why aren't you fishing right now? Here's some motivation if you need it.





THE MOST ELUSIVE TROUT

Want to cross a bucket-list fish off your life list? Consider a trip to the northern wilds of Maine, where the only remaining populations of blueback trout in the Lower 48 can be found. Native to the headwaters of the St. John and Penobscot Rivers, bluebacks can still be found in about a dozen deep-water Maine ponds, with Deboullie Township home to four of them—Gardner, Deboullie, Pushineer and Black. You can find guided help at Red River Camps (redrivercamps.com), while Bradford Camps (bradfordcamps.com) in Ashland has access to at least one of the ponds where bluebacks still swim. Once native to the three northern New England states, bluebacks (a landlocked subspecies of Arctic char) are the rarest member of the salmon family found east of the Rocky Mountains.



EARN YOUR STRIPES

Along the northeastern seaboard, June and July are prime months for striped fishing. But you don't need to get out on the ocean to get to the fish. Hundreds of tidal rivers give those with smaller boats and shore-bound anglers access to bass as they migrate through. Some favorites include the Providence River in Rhode Island (good shore fishing with plenty of public access), the Thames River near Groton and New London, Conn., and the Piscataqua River near Portsmouth, N.H., (best fished by boat).



BIG C IN THE BIG C

The Connecticut, New England's longest river, is full of fish. There's outstanding trout fishing in the uppermost reaches; pike, walleye and shad in the middle; and world-class striped fishing where it empties into Long Island Sound. In addition to the mainstem, the many setbacks, oxbows and ponds that drain off the Connecticut produce some outstanding carp fishing. The state of Connecticut manages the river and its coves—like Batterson Park Pond in New Britain, Squantz Pond in New Fairfield and West Thompson Lake in Thompson—as trophy carp water. Upriver in Massachusetts, Oxbow Lake (between Easthampton and Northampton) and nearby Danks Pond are also home to some monster carp.



BORDER-WATER MUSKIES

One does not simply fish for muskies; one must hunt them. And among the most fertile hunting grounds for muskies in all the world is the mighty St. Lawrence River. The Thousand Islands Region, near the village of Clayton, N.Y., is perhaps the epicenter of St. Lawrence musky fishing, with fish routinely hitting the 40-inch mark, and others even bigger than that. When the musky season opens in late June, anglers have the opportunity to explore lots of water where fish can hide in the stretch of the river on both the U.S. and Canada sides. To optimize your time on the water, consider hiring one of the many guides out of Clayton or Alexandria Bay.



FREE FOR ALL

Chances are good that, since you're reading *Game & Fish*, you probably buy a fishing license every year. But chances are also good that you have friends and family members who want to try fishing but aren't inclined to invest in a license just yet. Good news for them: Every state in the region offers some sort of "Free Fishing Day" this summer that allows anglers to try fishing without having to buy a license. Free Fishing Days vary state by state. Some are as early as June 3 and 4 (Maine), while others take place in July (Pennsylvania). Check with fish and wildlife agencies for exact dates.



CHAMPLAIN DERBY DAYS

Since 1991, anglers from around the region have descended on Lake Champlain to take part in the Lake Champlain International Fishing Derby, held Father's Day weekend and open to all who enter. The waters open to derby anglers comprise pretty much the entire length of Champlain, from Missisquoi Bay on the Vermont side to the narrow southern end near Ticonderoga, N.Y. Virtually all game species are in play during the three-day derby. Salmon and lake trout anglers compete against those targeting bass, walleyes, catfish and pike. There's a junior division, too. Proceeds help fund water-quality improvement efforts on the lake. For more details, check out mychamplain.net.





TOOLS OF THE TRADE

ONE MAN'S EQUIPMENT LIST FOR OFF-SEASON WHITETAIL HABITAT MANAGEMENT WORK

Story and Photos by Zack Vucurevich

Successful habitat management starts with reliable tools you feel comfortable using.

Being unprepared will send you home faster than any other circumstance. The good news is being unprepared is completely avoidable. As a wildlife biologist and habitat consultant, I travel far and wide to help landowners transform their properties from a hunk of dirt into the wildlife and hunting paradise of their dreams.

Due to the nature of my work—outdoors in the elements—I always carry a backpack to keep track of my gear. On any given summer day, whether completing habitat improvements on my family farm or working with clients around the country, the contents of my pack rarely change. To keep things brief here, I have omitted no-brainers like multi-tools, toilet paper, insect repellent, snacks and PPE such as chaps, a helmet and earplugs.

I put together the following list to give you a template for a pack that'll keep you safe, productive and, most importantly, in the field to make the most of your habitat improvement work this summer.

THE PACK

My daypacks are usually retired hiking packs, which range in size from 24 to 30 liters and can accommodate a water bladder. While a 2-liter bladder is great, a 2 1/2- or 3-liter bladder is preferred. A waist strap is also a great feature—even better if you can find one with hip-pocket storage. I always choose a pack that is brightly colored (my current one is mustard yellow) so it's easy to relocate if I ever take it off quickly. I recommend against using an old camo hunting pack unless you have no other option. A rainfly is nice but optional.

MAPPING SOFTWARE

As the list of mapping software and applications grows, pick one you understand well and stick with it. I am partial to onX, as I have used this program for years. As long as you can mark waypoints, draw polygons, take notes (pictures are excellent) and see topography lines, you will be able to stay organized with your habitat plans and progress.

If you are more old-school and prefer to take notes on paper, I suggest getting a Rite in the Rain all-weather universal journal. I was introduced to these journals as an undergrad in the wildlife and fisheries management program at West Virginia University and have used them ever since.

The paper can withstand steady rain and works with any pencil (the company also sells waterproof pens). While I've not

tried using the paper as a fire starter, its wax content makes me believe it would serve well as a crumpled tinder bundle.

FLAGGING RIBBON

Flagging ribbon is an indispensable visual marker for the land manager. While I tend to hang most of my flagging ribbon during the dormant season, I always keep a couple rolls of different colors in my pack throughout the year.

The list of colors and color combinations is endless, so be smart with your choices and designations. I typically add a note (and photo) to my onX indicating the color and what it means. For example, if I hang a red ribbon on a tree, it always means the tree is to be cut. A blue ribbon means “save this tree.” When marking areas for future projects, such as a bedding thicket cut, invasive species treatment or crop tree release, walk the perimeter and add ribbon as you see fit. Once the leaves are down in a few months, your “flags” will be much more apparent.

I cannot emphasize this point enough, so I will say it one more time: Keep track of what you are marking on your mapping software! If you can stay organized, you can mark food plots, new trails, fresh sign or anything you want. If you change your mind about the project, remove the old ribbon. There are few things worse than stumbling across an area you previously flagged only to realize you can’t remember what you were marking.

COLLAPSIBLE HANDSAW

Most of the forest stand improvement (FSI) projects I work on during the summer involve invasive species. Summer is a great time to focus on bush honeysuckle, multiflora rose, buckthorn and autumn olive, all of which are small-to moderate-sized shrubs and trees. A good-quality handsaw will quickly work through the trunk, exposing the fresh stump for herbicide treatment. Make sure to apply your herbicide within half an hour of cutting; it won’t take if the plant is allowed too much time to heal. Use the saw to cut a ring around the trunk of larger trees to create a makeshift girdle. After you ring the tree, apply the herbicide immediately to the entire wound. This will kill the tree and leave it standing.

HATCHET

The hatchet you choose doesn’t need to be anything fancy. Whatever you can find lying around the barn should work, though given the option, I prefer one with a bit of heft. I use an old hatchet my grandfather gifted the family before he passed away. It feels great to use a tool whose lacquer was worn thin through use on countless weekend projects. I use this tool for hack-and-squirt projects to kill (and leave standing) trees too big to cut down with the handsaw.

SQUIRT BOTTLE AND NITRILE GLOVES

Any spray bottle designed for cleaning products will work for our intended purposes. I buy cheap bottles from the hardware store, expecting to replace them regularly. The herbicides and adjuvants added to the bottles will inevitably clog the spray nozzles and filters, so don’t expect a lengthy lifespan for your bottle. If your backpack doesn’t have a water bottle holder, consider purchasing a pouch or other means to hold your herbicide bottle. (Back at home, always store your bottles in a liquid-proof container—I use a 5-gallon bucket.)

Any time I am working with herbicides, I wear nitrile gloves. Whether measuring chemicals at the barn or using the spray bottle in the field, they are always on my hands. I know it’s hot. I

know your hands will prune from the sweat. But I also know that nitrile does a much better job than latex at protecting you from chemicals.

FIRST-AID KIT

Since I often work alone, keeping a capable first-aid kit on my person can be the difference between getting home safely and spending an uncomfortable night in the woods. Notice I said “capable” instead of “robust.” Items I deem essential include a basic wound-care kit (antibiotic ointment, several bandages, sterile pads), Imodium (take at the first sign of an upset stomach), Benadryl (angry hornets, bees, pollen) and a tourniquet (for any “oh, s#!t!” scenarios).

VERSATILE CONTENTS

The moral of the story here: Bring enough to be prepared to cover a couple of different activities. Whether it’s a scouting-and-marking project or you’re cutting and treating invasive species, be ready to make the most of your day.

In the event the weather shifts, put down the herbicide and work on some hinge cuts. Or flag off the perimeter of a future edge-feathering project (don’t forget to mark it on your map app!). Stay busy. If you get a booboo, clean it, patch it up and move on. Every bit of effort now gets you one step closer to punching a tag this fall. Have fun out there and be safe. 



A collapsible handsaw is easy to pack and comes in handy for removing non-native vegetation and even felling small trees.

BLUES FEST



BLUEFISH TEND TO TAKE A BACKSEAT TO OTHER NEAR-SHORE SPECIES, BUT FEW OFFER SUCH RELIABLE, TENACIOUS ACTION DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS.

By Al Raychard

The first bluefish I ever caught was by mistake, and it was one of best and most fortunate angling mistakes to ever come my way. I was surf-fishing a favorite beach for striped bass with little luck. The tide was starting to ebb and with it my hopes of success, and I was thinking about calling it a day.

One more cast, I thought as I launched the Kastmaster, dropping it just off a string of exposed ledges. My hunch was that bass might have bait corralled

against the rocks. As I started the retrieve, I felt a solid tug on the line. My first thought was *big striper!* but this fish fought with more anger and aggression than a bass. It also made longer, faster and more tenacious runs. When it cleared the water in a series of acrobatic leaps that continued almost to the beach, something stripers rarely seem to do once hooked, I knew what it was.

The unfortunate part of my bluefish initiation is I never got a chance to put my hands on it. Just as the blue seemed

to give up the ghost and I started to pull it ashore, my monofilament leader let go. As the fish shimmied and rolled with a sudden flash of the tail, it disappeared into the surf.

Since that day I have targeted bluefish whenever and wherever I hear through the grapevine they “are in.” I still enjoy fishing for striped bass, but I’ve gone nuts over blues. I’ll even stick my neck out and say, pound for pound, there’s nothing quite like them that swims inshore waters.

KEITH SUTTON

In most of the Northeast, bluefish offer a six-month fishery, with the best action occurring when water temps are above 60 degrees.



TIMING THE RUNS

Bluefish are migratory. The timing in specific areas along the East Coast is always dependent on water temperature and the availability of baitfish, so it can vary from year to year depending on local conditions.

Bluefish travel north in spring and early summer as inshore water temperatures warm; they retreat southward in the fall as temperatures cool. The best angling activity generally occurs when the water temperature is above the

60-degree mark. In the mid-Atlantic and waters of Chesapeake Bay, this generally means late April or early May through November and even into December some years. The coastal waters of New Jersey, New York and New England south of Cape Cod can see their first runs sometime in May, with good angling prospects through much of November. Eastward, along the New Hampshire and Maine

coasts, bluefish don't usually arrive until sometime in June (later in some years) and are headed south by mid-September.

Again, the timing varies, and at times locating fish can be frustrating. Even along a stretch of beach or within a certain bay or estuary, bluefish might be available in a specific area but not another, and they can appear and disappear quickly, so it pays to be mobile.

GRILLED BLUEFISH

A simple, tasty way to enjoy your catch

Despite their poor reputation as table fare, bluefish can be quite delicious if handled properly. Bluefish flesh is rather soft, and those over 10 pounds tend to be quite oily. In general, bluefish should be kept on ice when caught and prepared fresh; they do not freeze well. Bluefish can be cooked as fillets or on the bone, breaded and pan-fried, grilled, baked or broiled. Here's a grilling recipe that I really enjoy.

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 bluefish fillets
- Salt and pepper
- Olive oil
- 1 tsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley, cilantro, mint, minced garlic, thyme, oregano, parsley or whatever herbs you prefer

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat grill to high.
2. Season fillets with salt, pepper and a mixture of olive oil and herbs.
3. Add lemon juice to a plate for cooked fillets.
4. Brush grill with olive oil.
5. Place fillets skin-down on the grill and cover. Cook for 3 minutes.
6. Reduce heat to medium. Flip fillets onto the flesh side, cover and cook for 3 additional minutes per 1 inch of thickness.
7. To test for doneness, gently lift a fillet with a spatula or fork. If the flakes start to separate, the fillets are done.
8. Remove the fillets, keeping the skin side up, and place on dish with lemon juice to serve.



Although water temperature is important, bluefish will rarely be found where there is nothing to eat. This makes the availability of menhaden, silversides and other baitfish equally important, if not more so. As these foods move, so do the blues. Once bluefish arrive, it doesn't take long for word to get around. Living miles from the coast as I do, I made a point long ago to establish a network of contacts—bait and tackle shops, local fishermen I've met who live closer to the coast, a few local guides—for up-to-date bluefish activity.

ANY TIDE WILL DO

Every inshore angler has a favorite tide for the areas they fish—some prefer the high tide, some the low and some anywhere in between the two. The preference often depends on experience, how and when baitfish move within a given area and other criteria. With bluefish it makes little difference. Bluefish can be caught at various tide levels with equal success, provided water temperatures are within the comfort zone and food is available.

An exception is areas that are dirtied by silt or mud, typically on the outflow and especially after astronomical high tides or severe periods of rain. As a



A typical surf-fishing rig includes a medium-power rod at least 8 feet in length, 15- to 20-pound mono main line and a 50- to 80-pound fluoro leader.

rule, bluefish are almost always found in clear water, presumably due to the better visibility and because most baitfish species shy away from areas where their visibility is restricted.

TIME OF DAY AND WEATHER

Bluefish are opportunistic feeders that ravage schools of bait whenever hunger dictates. This can happen at any time

of day, but it pays to keep in mind that bluefish are sensitive to bright light. While it is quite possible to witness bluefish blitzing the surface whenever opportunity knocks, even under the noontime sun, bluefish generally hunt in deeper, darker waters under clear, sun-filled days. Given the right tides, just before daybreak until mid-morning, and then again from late afternoon to after dusk, are considered prime fishing times. Cloudy days can also be especially productive.

The same is true before and after a cold front or a drastic change in weather conditions. Upticks and downturns in barometric pressure often put bluefish on the feed. At nighttime, schools of baitfish are quite active under the cover of darkness, especially during moonlit skies—a fact bluefish are acutely aware of and exploit.

LOCATING BLUES

One of the biggest challenges in targeting blues is locating them. Schools of bluefish are perpetually on the move. They can appear at a moment's notice and disappear just as quickly. For that reason, angling success, whether inshore or offshore, depends on being mobile.

Offshore boaters should look for activity near rock piles, reefs and other structure. The riled, breaking edges of rocky islands are also potential hotspots. A reliable sign of bluefish activity is gulls circling overhead and diving in a frenzy. Inshore hot spots seem limitless

Instead of casting directly into a school of blues, cast in front or to one side of the pod and strip quickly to trigger a chase.



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FISH MORE
YOU
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but typically include large and small bays, estuaries, river mouths, along rock jetties, strong rips and channel ridges—wherever bluefish can corral menhaden, mackerel and other prey species. There are times when blues force bait right into the surf along the beaches within easy casting range.

BLUEFISH GEAR

Bluefish can be caught by trolling lures and on bait such as cut mackerel. When they're chomping on or near the surface, spinning or fly-fishing gear is most enjoyable. Bluefish travel in schools, typically with fish of the same general size. In the waters of Chesapeake Bay,

2- to 5-pounders are common, with larger specimens exceeding 10 pounds possible in New England waters, though it is never a certainty what size bluefish will be encountered in a given spot. In general, it is better to go with at least medium-power gear rather than light.

Popular spinning rigs include 8- and 9-foot rods (even longer when fishing the surf) with matching reels loaded with 15- to 20-pound-test monofilament main line and 50- to 80-pound-test fluorocarbon leaders. Even these heavy leaders should be checked occasionally for fraying. Connect the two pieces of line with black or dark-colored snap swivels or a strong knot. When on the feed, blues will hit practically anything on or below the surface that they can see. The Cotton Cordell Pencil Popper, Talkin' Popper by Tsunami, Gag's Grabber Schoolie Popper, Acme's Kastmaster, Luhr Jensen's Krocodile Spoon or any of the diamond jigs are but a few good options.

Few inshore fish are as exciting on fly gear. Smaller blues in quiet estuaries and back bays can be handled on 6- and 7-weight rods, but 8- and 9-weight rods are better on the flats, river outflows, rips, the surf and other heavy water. Overloading fly rods with slightly heavier floating or intermediate lines makes presenting large, heavy and bulky flies and poppers easier and calls for fewer false casts, especially in windy conditions. Heavy leaders and fluorocarbon tippets similar to those used with spinning gear can be employed when casting flies.

When it comes to fly patterns, bluefish are not fussy. Large Clousers and Deceivers dressed in white, green and blue with some flashy tinsel are good choices. Single-hook poppers such as the CB In-Shore Popper #3 and Bob's Banger are productive on the surface. Practically any streamer or popper pattern remotely resembling or acting like a panicked baitfish will often get the job done, but it pays to check with tackle shops for local favorites.

In most cases presentation and retrieving speed are more important than what you throw at bluefish. Rather than casting directly into a school of feeding fish, cast in front of it or to the side, start stripping quickly and hold on tight. 

BLUES BY YOU

Top bluefish spots in every Eastern coastal state

VIRGINIA: Chesapeake Beach; Tilghman Island area; Kent Island area; Point Lookout; Sandy Hook; Virginia Beach area, including back bays and inlets



MARYLAND/DELAWARE: Ocean City beaches and inlets; Mallows Bay Park (Lower Potomac River); Cornfield Harbor area; Delaware Bay and islands, beaches, canals and creeks; Cape Henlopen Fishing Pier; Henlopen Point; Indian River Inlet; Broadkill Beach; Tower Beach

NEW JERSEY: Cape May beaches; Point Pleasant area; Sandy Hook Bay and beaches; Barnegat Lighthouse State Park jetty, beaches and bay; Island Beach State Park area; Ocean City piers and beaches; Corson's Inlet State Park area



NEW YORK: Montauk Point area, including Shadmoor Beach; Turtle Cove and Lighthouse Point areas; Cold Spring Harbor; Little Neck Bay; Glen Head and other bays and beaches along the north shore of Long Island; Jamaica Bay; Great Bay and other bays and beaches along the south shore of Long Island

CONNECTICUT: Lower saltwater portion of Connecticut River from Baldwin Bridge downstream; South Cove Causeway area in Old Saybrook; DEP Marine Headquarters boardwalk south to mouth of Lieutenant River in Old Lyme; Poquonock Cove area of Bluff Point State Park; Fort Trumbull State Park; Sherwood Island State Park



RHODE ISLAND: East and West Passages of Narragansett Bay; outflows at Weekapaug; Quonnie area; Charlestown; Galilee Channel; Narrow River area

MASSACHUSETTS: Plum Island and Merrimack River mouth area; Salisbury Beach; Peggotty Beach; Revere Beach; Lynn Harbor; Saugus River mouth; Boston Harbor



NEW HAMPSHIRE: Isle of Shoals; mouth of Piscataquis River and Portsmouth Harbor; Great Bay and Little Bay areas; Hampton Harbor; Rye Harbor

MAINE: Mouth of Kennebec River including Popham Beach and Popham Beach State Park; Casco Bay area; mouth of Saco River and Saco Bay



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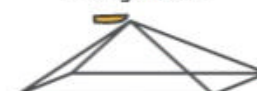


A gar and crappie
suspended in a fallen tree.

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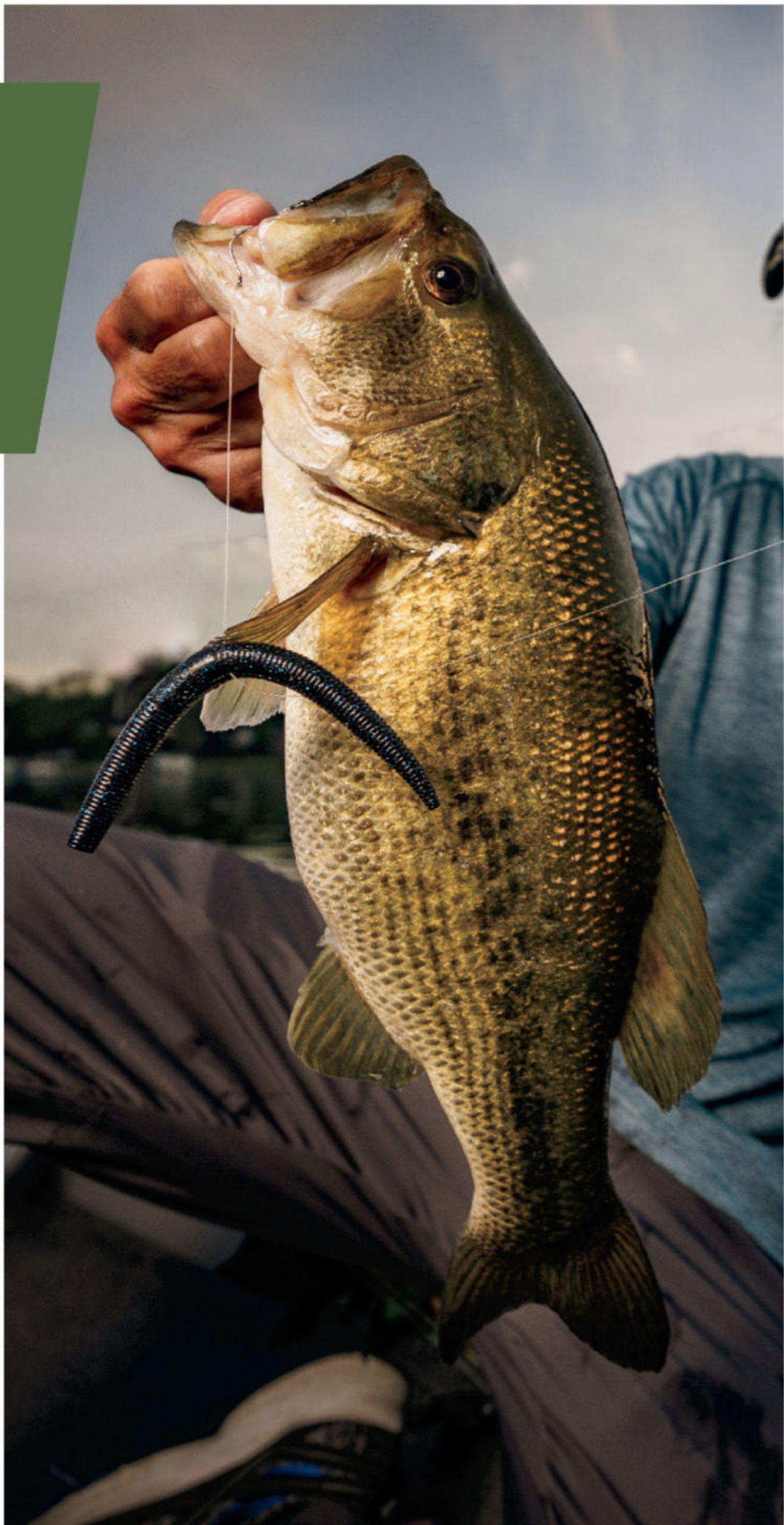
STICK SHIFT

THE SENKO IS ONE OF THE MOST VERSATILE SOFT-PLASTIC BAITS IN ANY BASS ANGLER'S ARSENAL. HERE'S HOW TO ADAPT IT FOR THREE COMMON SUMMERTIME PATTERNS.

By Shane Beilue

A resounding “Yes!” was my answer when my college-aged daughter asked if I’d take her fishing during the first week of summer break. Now, understand, she might fish one time per year. Therefore, I needed a lure that would give her (and me) the best chance of catching bass with the simplest means possible. The clear choice was the curiously versatile 5-inch soft stick bait.

When Gary Yamamoto introduced the Senko more than two decades ago, he initiated a genre of soft plastics that has likely become the most effective bass-catching worm of all time. The simplicity of its design (based on a ballpoint pen of all things) lends itself to multiple rigging methods that can produce bites when bass simply won’t eat other lures. The method that produced multiple spotted bass for my daughter and me that day was the weightless wacky rig, one of three highly effective techniques with a soft stick worm.





Though wacky- and Neko-rigged stick baits hardly resemble anything a bass normally eats, they often excel when other lures won't get a sniff.

BRAD RICHARDSON/GET N BIT PRODUCTIONS



WACKY RIG

WACKY RIG

How to Rig It

The wacky rig may be the most unorthodox means of rigging a plastic worm, yet it is amazingly effective and very simple to use.

Rigging a Senko “wacky” style is simply a matter of sticking the point of a #2 finesse hook into the mid-section of the soft plastic, allowing the midpoint of the worm to rest perpendicularly within the bend of the hook. As the rig falls slowly through the water column, the ends of the Senko will give a slight quiver as the midsection is pulled down by the weight of the hook, causing the worm to fall in a “U” shape.

Though the wacky rig can be fished effectively with baitcasting gear, spinning tackle is ideal for handling the light line necessary in clear water. A main line of 10- to 15-pound braid tied to a 6- to 10-pound-test fluorocarbon leader, has become standard for most spinning techniques. Braided line doesn't twist, and fluorocarbon is virtually invisible underwater, making it a better leader material than monofilament. Rod choices vary by angler, though 7-foot medium-action rods are well suited for casting the weightless worm and battling bass with lighter lines.

Why It Works

In truth, the wacky-rigged stick worm resembles nothing in nature, yet the odd-looking little rig is absolutely deadly for catching bass when other lures fail.

The success of the wacky rig is likely derived from its inconspicuous appearance and minimal action, making it ideal in ultra-clear water, on days with heavy fishing pressure or on days when bass are just uncooperative. Because the lure settles slowly, depths of 10 feet or less are optimal, though it is possible to fish the bait deeper in calm conditions. Bites are typically very subtle, as bass simply inhale the falling worm, noted by either a slight “tick” as the worm settles or a spongy heaviness as you lift the rod tip.

When to Use It

Smallmouth, largemouth and spotted bass are all susceptible to the tantalizing fall of a wacky-rigged stick bait, particularly during the spawn or the days immediately thereafter, when bass refuse to chase fast-moving lures. With the bass spawn kicking off progressively later in the Northeastern states, June and early July are well within the window of time when a wacky-rigged soft stick bait will dominate.

Simply cast the wacky rig across shallow spawning flats and allow it to fall next to shallow dock pilings, small stickups or near patches of shallow vegetation. Late spawners and post-spawn bass will hold next to shallow cover. On the memorable outing with my daughter, she caught multiple spotted bass by allowing the bait to settle along steep, rocky bluffs, as the post-spawn bass were hanging over shallow rocky outcroppings along the bluff walls.



NEKO RIG

NEKO RIG How to Rig It

The Neko rig is an adaptation of the wacky rig that allows the worm to nose downward on the fall thanks to a small nail weight or screw-lock weight inserted into the head of the worm. The weight can be as small as 1/32 or 1/64 of an ounce; however, weights of 1/8 to 3/16 ounce can be utilized effectively in 30 feet of water or more.

Like the wacky rig, a #2 finesse hook is placed within the midsection of the worm; however, the hook point is rotated 90 degrees to lie in line with the worm rather than perpendicular to it, preventing line twist after repeated casts. This rigging alteration is aided with the addition of a small O-ring band around the midsection of the worm, which supports the hook and prevents the soft-plastic bait from tearing. Rigging the hook with the point facing up toward the tail of the worm,



Wacky-rigged stick baits perform well on spotted, largemouth and smallmouth bass alike, especially during or immediately following the spawn.

opposite the weighted head, allows for more consistent hooksets and assists with reducing snags around brush. Applying firm pressure to the rod tip is all that's required for hooking the bass, as the exposed point of the thin-diameter hook quickly punches through the bass' mouth.

The Neko rig can be utilized with the same rod, reel and line setup as the wacky rig, though some anglers employ rods of 7 feet 3 inches to 7 feet 6 inches and medium-heavy actions for better hooksets in deeper water.

Why It Works

Like the wacky rig, it's hard to understand exactly what the Neko rig imitates in nature. However, the upright appearance of the thin-profile worm falling through the water is unique among other soft-plastic techniques. And when bass are reluctant to eat bulkier lure offerings, the thinner profile "finesse"

tactics often prove effective. As the bait is lifted, the hook being in the center of the worm imparts a subtle flex in the plastic body. When hopped along the bottom nose-first, the worm appears alive.

When to Use It

The Neko rig can be used shallow or deep. The added weight in the nose makes it an especially good choice as a finesse presentation in depths of 10 feet or greater, where the weightless wacky rig becomes inefficient. Many offshore anglers utilize a heavy Neko rig as a "clean up" technique following a rotation of fast-moving, bottom-bouncing lures. Reluctant bass will often inhale the straight-tail Neko rig when they refuse crankbaits and heavy jigs. Because bass almost always eat the lure on the fall, a high lift of the rod tip will create more opportunity for the bass to catch the lure on the descent.



TEXAS RIG

TEXAS RIG

How to Rig It

The Texas rig is one of the oldest and most reliable methods for catching bass. It excels in shallow or deep water, especially when bass are holding tight to cover.

The Texas-rigged stick worm has a bullet-shaped lead or tungsten slip

sinker threaded onto the line above the hook. With the weight free to move up and down the line, it will separate from the lighter soft plastic as it falls through the water column, creating an enticing darting action on the descent. The slip sinker can vary from lighter weights of 1/16 to 1/4 ounce in shallow water (10 feet or less), to weights of 3/8 and even 1/2 ounce for greater depths or when wind dictates a heavier weight to maintain contact with the lure.

The soft-plastic worm needs to be matched appropriately to the size of the

hook. A 5-inch worm is best paired with a 3/0 offset hook. However, some soft stick worms, like the Senko, are also available in 6-inch and even monster 7-inch sizes, which require 4/0 to 6/0 hooks.

Because the Texas rig is typically fished near or within cover, fluorocarbon in 14- to 20-pound test is needed to absorb the stronger hooksets, as well as pull stubborn bass out of cover. Baitcasting gear is preferable for handling the heavier line, with 7-foot to 7-foot 6-inch rods in medium-heavy actions ideal for driving home the larger hooks.

Why It Works

The success of any Texas-rigged soft plastic lies in the ability of the weedless design to extract bass from heavy cover, be it wood, rock or vegetation. Quite frankly, the movement of a Texas-rigged stick bait in the water is not that impressive. With no fluttering appendages or curly tail, the only action is derived from the soft flex of the worm when hopped along bottom, yet the stick worm catches bass despite its simplistic shape.

When matched with a 5/16- to 3/8-ounce slip sinker, it shoots to the bottom very quickly, often causing bass to grab the passing lure out of instinct. Conversely, light 1/16 to 1/8-ounce sinkers cause the stick worm to descend on a softer glide, perfect for fishing light cover or extremely shallow water.

When to Use It

In early summer when many bass are still roaming the shallows, pitching a stick worm with a 1/4-ounce weight into shallow brush in 3 to 5 feet of water can be highly effective. As bass move progressively deeper with the advance of summer and warmer water temperatures, a Texas-rigged stick worm with a 3/8-ounce weight is perfect for dragging across offshore brush piles or dropping into holes of thick vegetation.

STICK TO IT

Regardless of rigging method, one can use the soft stick worm for catching bass every day of the year. With myriad designs, shapes and actions available for fishing soft-plastic worms, the simplistic profile of an ink pen has proven the most versatile and, quite often, the most effective of them all. 

An O-ring or collar placed at the midpoint of a stick worm enables quick rigging and prolongs the life of the bait.



SNAP *TO IT*

THE GLIDE JIG IS BEST KNOWN AS A WALLEYE LURE, BUT ITS ERRATIC ACTION MAKES IT **A MULTI-SPECIES MARVEL IN SUMMER.**

By Jeff Knapp

JEFF KNAPP



Originally intended for vertical presentations, glide baits like the Rapala Jigging Rap are effective during horizontal retrieves, too.

The two isolated humps rose to within 12 feet of the surface, a couple hard-bottomed structures associated with a much larger mid-lake complex of reefs.

While performing a quick scan of the two humps with side-imaging sonar, I marked what I suspected was a loose school of walleyes sitting near the crest of the eastern hump.

After dropping an icon to show the location of the fish, I positioned the boat within casting distance, roughly 50 feet away, and fired a glide jig—in this case an Acme Hyper Rattle—in their direction. It took only a few seconds for the dense bait to rocket to the bottom. I then imparted two quick, robust snaps of the rod to shoot the lure off the bottom, allowing it to sink back down on a slack line. As I attempted the next series of snaps, I encountered solid resistance. A nice walleye had pinned the lure to the bottom.

During the next 30 minutes, five more walleyes succumbed to the glide jig, along with a chunky channel cat. By day's end, glide jig tactics had accounted for several more 'eyes, along with a couple dozen white bass, smallmouth bass and an assortment of panfish.

GLIDE JIGS 101

Categorically, glide jigs are dense, minnow-shaped jigs of the classic Rapala Jigging Rap vein. Most have a single hook molded into the nose of the bait, as well as the tail, with a treble hook hanging from the belly. A plastic fin molded into the tail gives the lure its gliding action. The line tie is located along the back of the lure where the dorsal fin would be.

To the best of my knowledge, the emergence of glide jigs began when anglers from the Upper Midwest's "wall-eye belt" applied the Rapala Jigging Rap, an ice-fishing lure, to the open water. It was discovered that when worked erratically along the bottom, the lure oftentimes provoked strikes from both active and inactive walleyes. This success has fueled the development of many such lures, such as the Acme Hyper Rattle, Moonshine Shiver Minnow, Northland Puppet Minnow and Johnson Johnny Darter among others, with new versions continually trickling into the market.

Glide jigs seem almost purpose-built for use with sonar. Due to their weight and profile, they get down quickly to suspended and bottom-oriented fish.



While the baits are similar, individual models have different fall rates and gliding actions. Experimentation will determine which ones work best in your situation. When targeting walleyes and bass in summer, I prefer baits in the 3/8- to nearly 1-ounce range.

WORKING A GLIDE JIG

Bass hit a suspending jerkbait because it combines flash and movement with a vulnerability that is often irresistible. In a sense, a glide jig does the same thing but on or near bottom in depths ranging from the shallows out to 30-plus feet.

Since a glide jig is relatively heavy and compact, it sinks rapidly. Therefore, you can quickly put it in front of fish you spot on sonar. It's efficient, as fish either hit it on the first couple casts or

they ignore it; repeatedly working a lure in front of fish is rarely productive.

The essentials of working a glide jig include allowing it to fall on a slack line to the bottom, which doesn't take long. Once there, engage the reel and take in the slack. Then, give the lure a sharp, upward snap that rockets it anywhere from a couple to several feet off bottom, depending on intensity and length of the snap. A quick sequence of two or three snaps will shoot it up even higher. The lure then falls on a slack line to the bottom.

As the jig sinks, it glides from side to side in an erratic manner. Suppress the urge to maintain a tight (or even semi-tight line) during the drop. Veteran jig fisherman might find this difficult to do, but the slack line is necessary to allow the jig to glide.

Different species seem to hit glide jigs in various ways. Walleyes commonly follow the lure to the bottom and pin it there. You likely won't feel the strike, rather the fish will just "be there" when you attempt your next snap (or series of snaps).

Smallmouth and largemouth bass often hit the lure on the fall. As you work a glide bait, even on a slack line, you'll develop a sense of timing as to when the lure crashes back on bottom. When something interrupts this cadence, it's often because a bass has inhaled the lure.

White bass often hit the lure on the initial fall, especially when there's an active school tearing into baitfish. Again, you notice the bite simply because the lure fails to hit bottom in the few seconds it normally does.

WALLEYE TACTICS

What I've learned about the glide jig over the past few years comes from targeting walleyes. The key isn't so much in how you work the bait, but where. This often relates to the habitat as well as the dynamics of fish populations in the lake being fished.

The glide jig is not exactly a fisherman-friendly bait to work; it can be physically taxing. For that reason, it's wise to use them in high-percentage areas, like where you've spotted fish on sonar. (While I have no doubt forward-facing sonar would increase the efficiency of targeting fish, I only use side, down and traditional 2D sonar.)

In water 15 feet or less, I lean toward side imaging set out to 70 to 80 feet. Walleyes roaming flats and humps will display on side scan, particularly

TACKLE TALK

Choose the correct rod-reel-line combination for glide jigs.

Fishing glide jigs is a somewhat specialized tactic, and choosing the right rod, reel and line is important not just for properly working the lure, but also for sustained angler comfort.

A spinning rod in the 6 1/2- to 7-foot range with backbone, but also with some give in the tip section (i.e., a fast action rather than extra fast) is ideal. My personal choice is a St. Croix Avid Series Walleye rod that's 6 feet 8 inches in length with medium power and a fast action. To this I match a 2000- to 2500-size, high-quality spinning reel.

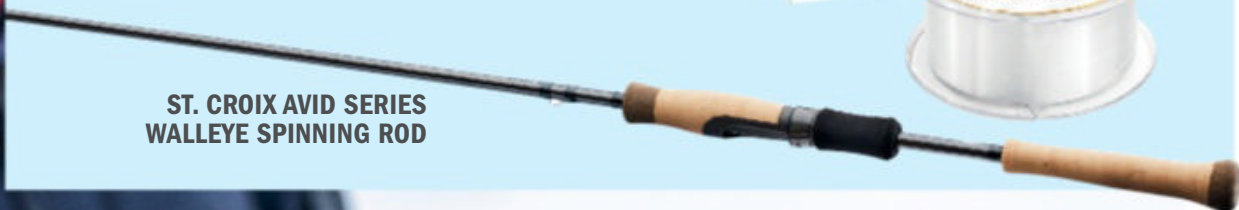
The tip section "give" is important for a couple reasons. First, when snapping the jig, it loads up to help propel the bait off bottom. Second, the somewhat softer action helps keep fish pinned.

Regarding line choice, both braid and nylon mono have their devotees. While I use braid in nearly all other spinning rod applications, I much prefer mono here, specifically Sufix Advance Monofilament in 10-pound test.

It's been my experience that in the warm water of summer, fish respond best to violently worked glide jigs. The stretchiness of mono, like the tip section of the rod, stores energy that helps propel the bait off bottom. It's less fatiguing than attempting the same with braid. Mono also helps keep fish hooked.



ST. CROIX AVID SERIES
WALLEYE SPINNING ROD



A walleye will let you know if it's interested in a glide bait quickly. If you don't get a strike after a couple casts, it's time to move on.

high-frequency units like my Garmin Ultra with UHD56GT transducer. Sometimes you'll only see the shadows.

When I mark fish, I'll drop a waypoint on the spot (I use a blue pin) with the intention of circling back around, spot-locking the boat, then targeting those fish. Since it's impossible to know how long fish will stay in an area, I don't wait long to glide-jig them once I've found them. Don't camp out on a spot, though. If you make contact with fish, keep at it until the action dies. If they don't bite, keep looking.

In deeper water (roughly 15 to 35 feet), down-imaging and traditional sonar come into play. Deep humps, points and creek channel ledges are all places to search. I often scan deeper structures at around 2 mph with my outboard. When I spot

fish, I slam the boat into reverse and toss a heavy glide jig back behind the boat.

BLACK BASS TACTICS

On clear-water lakes and reservoirs, which I often fish during the summer period, it's common to find both black bass and walleyes out on deeper structure. The fish display similarly on sonar, so it's often hard to know which is there until you catch one.

That said, there's one situation that is black bass-specific: Larger fish holding off deep wood. When targeting deep-wood crappies—brush piles and submerged trees in 15 to 25 feet of water—I often notice bigger marks 10 to 20 feet off the cover. These are usually bass, and a glide bait dropped down into them will often trigger one or more fish to bite. Just

don't fish too close to the cover. Glide jigs and wood don't go well together.

WHITE BASS AND PANFISH TACTICS

White bass are a gregarious species and like to feed in packs, often on suspended baitfish. When my 2D sonar shows baitfish being broken up by predators, which often displays like a paint ball splattered on the screen, it's usually white bass at work. Glide jigs dropped down through the school will nearly always provoke a strike from these fish. When you hit things right, you can catch one after another—great fun when the whites are 12 to 15 inches long.

Bluegills, pumpkinseeds and crappies are bonus fish that commonly show up on a glide jig when targeting other species. It's a versatile summertime bait. 

Don't be surprised if you catch a few crappies and other panfish when targeting walleyes or bass with a glide jig. The lure is irresistible to a number of game-fish species.



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HEATWAVE

TROUT



JUST BECAUSE TEMPERATURES ARE RISING, THAT DOESN'T MEAN TROUT HAVE STOPPED EATING. IT MEANS YOU NEED TO ADJUST YOUR APPROACH AND TACTICS.

By Al Raychard

I became a trout junky as a kid. As soon as spring arrived, time not spent in school or doing chores was usually spent dunking worms in several brooks within walking distance of home. The trout fishing was generally excellent until school got out in early June and for a few weeks after, but the action tapered off considerably during the summer break. I still caught fish, just not as many or as easily.

In the beginning I didn't know anything about seasonal environmental changes or the role they play in trout survival. I was perhaps 13 years old when I started putting two-and-two

together. It would be years before I fully understood how water temperature, dissolved oxygen levels and other factors dictate trout behavior and activity and where they go during the dog days of summer.

BASIC NEEDS

While it's true some trout species will tolerate warmer water temperatures than others, all trout prefer habitats where oxygen levels are consistently high, water temperatures are consistently cool or, better yet, where there is a happy combination of the two. In general, trout prefer water temperatures

between 52 and 56 degrees. Along with that, the ability of water to carry and supply oxygen is dependent on water temperature. The warmer the water, the less oxygen it can supply. In late spring and summer, as water temperatures rise beyond tolerable limits and stream flows and oxygen levels drop, trout seek cooler living conditions. Trout become stressed as water temps approach 70 degrees. Avoid fishing in these warm areas.

FISH FINDING

Where do trout go once things heat up? The locations and water depths they inhabit typically vary between high



The deepest pools in a river will often concentrate trout during hot weather, especially areas with either visible or submerged rocks and boulders.

mountain streams and sections at lower elevations, even at different times of day or during certain weather conditions. But the need for suitable living conditions seldomly changes.

The head and tail ends of the deepest pools are good places to start. This is especially true around visible boulders and submerged rock structure. Trout concentrate in these areas for protection and because the rocks deflect the flow and provide accommodating holding stations.

Pocket water behind boulders, downed trees and other natural barriers in rapids and riffles are other potential hotspots. They are often deep, cool,

shaded, well-oxygenated and the first recipients of food flushed downstream.

Don't overlook deep cuts and channels along shaded and overhanging banks for the same reasons. This is also true of any visible vegetation along the banks or areas midstream where the bottom drops to deeper water. Through the process of photosynthesis, green grasses and other water plants produce needed oxygen during the daylight hours. Additionally, they often harbor various food sources while offering cover and protection.

I like to concentrate on the mouths of smaller feeder streams and spring seepages. These are a source of cool,

if not cold, oxygenated water and offer a supply of food as it's flushed downstream, making them magnets for trout.

It pays to keep in mind during late spring and summer, when trout seek these cooler bastions, that low water levels tend to make trout rather skittish. Whether casting flies, lures or bait, "read" a stretch of water before diving in. Polarized glasses will help cut through the glare and highlight those darker hotspots.

Approach each with a thoughtful plan, keeping your human profile and shadows low or away from the target areas. On the approach, especially when

wading, take care not to disturb the stream bed by dirtying the water with bottom debris.

TIMING CAN BE KEY

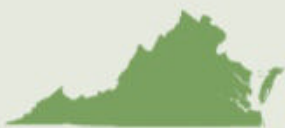
There's an old saying that goes, "anytime is the best time to go fishing." Generally, I would agree, but certain times are better than others during the summer. Trout subsist on a variety of terrestrial and waterborne foods, but in waters with wild populations of fish and those specifically managed for trout, aquatic insects like mayflies, caddisflies and



Cooler temps and consistently high oxygen levels are the hallmarks of promising stretches of water for summertime trout.

SUMMERTIME HAUNTS

Promising waters for warm-weather trout



VIRGINIA: Shenandoah National Park trout streams such as the Rapidan, Rose and Hughes, to name but a few; Smith River Tailwater in Franklin and Henry Counties

WEST VIRGINIA: Williams River within Monongahela National Forest; Shavers Fork River starting at Spruce Knob; North Fork Cherry River



PENNSYLVANIA: Oil Creek within Oil Creek State Park; Cedar Run and Slate Run, both tributaries of Pine Creek near the town of the same name; Fishing Creek near Bloomsburg; Spring Creek near State College

NEW YORK: Neversink River below and above Neversink Reservoir; West Branch Ausable above Au Sable Forks; Schroon River below Starbuckville Dam near Lake George; Nine Mile Creek from Marcellus to Camillus



MASSACHUSETTS: Deerfield River near Monroe; West Branch Westfield River near Westfield; Swift River below Quabbin Reservoir near Belchertown; Housatonic River near Lee



MAINE: Androscoggin River from Gilead to Bethel; Kennebec River below Wyman Dam in Bingham

NEW HAMPSHIRE: Upper Connecticut River north of Pittsburg



stoneflies are at top of the menu. Most of these insects become active and emerge when water temperatures are roughly between 50 and 60 degrees. Various baitfish and land-based insects are also most active at that time.

Coincidentally, or perhaps due to Mother Nature's grand plan, trout go heavy on the feed within the same temperature range, give or take a few degrees. When water temps get into the high 60s, insect and other forage activity, trout feeding activity and productive fishing generally taper off.

In early spring, when water temperatures are cold or cool, peak feeding occurs during the latter hours of the day once waters have had a chance to warm. From June through July, however, water temperatures are generally best for peak feeding activity from early morning to mid-morning before waters warm, and again from late afternoon to dusk as they cool.

This does not mean to suggest that trout can't be caught at other times when water temperatures are cooler or warmer. They can and are. But during these hot days, planning fishing trips during hours of peak activity can be key to success.

Additionally, trout can be highly active in reduced light conditions such as overcast days or when it's drizzling



When the summer sun is high and bright, trout can often be found lurking in shaded areas.



Aquatic insects like mayflies, caddisflies and stoneflies typically emerge when water temps are between 50 and 60 degrees.

in clear waters. Spinners can be cast up or across stream or fished deep in ponds. Vary the retrieve by stopping and going or twitching the rod tip on occasion.

Trout are receptive to a wide array of artificial flies that represent insects at various stages of life, small baitfish, crustaceans and land-based insects. A key to success is knowing which naturals are active and “matching the hatch,” so to speak. The challenge is the emergence and activity times vary from state to state within the region. Mayflies, caddisflies and terrestrial insects are active in Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland much earlier than they are in New England. Local fly and tackle shops can provide helpful advice on hatches and insect activity.

Unless trout are feeding on something specific or are well-educated due to fishing pressure, offering a close facsimile to the active forage will get the job done. Most fly-fisherman carry a large selection of dry, wet and nymph flies in various size and color combinations. Many also have a selection of bait-imitating and attractor-type streamers.

Whether using bait, lures or flies, fishing for summer trout can be productive. We have to look for them in different places, but if you consider what trout require to survive at this time of year, catching them isn’t that difficult. **G&F**

or raining, even during midday. Water temperatures remain relatively cool during these conditions, or at least closer to optimum temperatures.

SPIN, FLY AND BAIT

Just as they are at any time of year, trout are willing takers of a variety of baits, lures and artificial flies during the summer months. Where legal, garden worms and night crawlers are always a good way to go. If necessary, attach a split-shot to keep the bait down where the trout are. Allow it to drift with the current, then move the rod tip up and down on occasion when retrieving upstream. Trout also respond well to garden baits when they’re mated with a flashy silver spinner.

In-line spinners—Panther Martin, Mepps, Blue Fox, etc.—in various sizes are great, too. Bright colors and gold work best on overcast days and in cloudy or stained waters; muted colors are best



Early and late in the day are usually the best times to catch trout in summer, though midday forays on overcast days can also be productive.

Welcome to **LUNKERTOWN**

THERE ARE PLENTY OF PLACES AROUND
THE REGION WHERE YOU CAN CATCH A FISH,
**BUT THESE BURGERS TAKE THE EXPERIENCE
TO A WHOLE OTHER LEVEL.**

By Matt Crawford

Florida likes to bill itself as the “Fishing Capital of the World,” and with thousands of miles of coastline, gazillions of freshwater lakes and a wide diversity of species, the Sunshine State seems on pretty solid footing with its claim.

Taking a cue from Florida, we wondered what the Fishing Capital of the East might be. But we’re not going to hang it all on one state. Rather, we’ve decided to spotlight five of the best fishing towns in the region.

To be on this list of piscatorial paradises, a location must have a wide range of species close by—something that appeals to worm dunkers and fly anglers alike. It should be accessible to shore anglers, those with kayaks and canoes, as well as bass boats and larger craft. And it has to have a unique charm, offering something a little bit different than the average town.

To make it a bit harder on us, we limited this list to just two purely coastal towns.

So here’s our unscientific spotlight on five of the best fishing towns in the East. And just because places like Lewiston, N.Y., Colebrook, N.H., or Boston didn’t make the cut, that doesn’t mean they should be overlooked. Quite the contrary. Go fish them all. Create your own list. And please feel free to let us know what we’ve gotten right—or wrong.

CHATHAM, MA

Cape Cod just had to be on this list, and no town better represents all the fishing the Cape has to offer than Chatham.

Located at the elbow of the Cape, Chatham is uniquely situated near the intersection of the north-flowing Gulf Stream and the south-flowing Labrador Stream that pumps the area full of nutrient-rich water and ideal habitat for

a whole slew of fish species. All told, the area offers world-class fishing for stripers, bluefish, tuna, flounder, sea bass and pollock.

What makes Chatham exceedingly fishy (besides its long history as a commercial fishing town) is a healthy mix of charter boats and DIY options. You can show up to Chatham with nothing but a credit card and a bottle of sunscreen, or you can bring your own boat, a quiver full of rods and a live well full of bait. Either way, you’ll be catching fish in no time.

As summer arrives on the Cape, the stripers show up in force. You’ll find anglers on every public beach, tossing live bait, plugs and flies. The Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge is one of the best fishing spots on the entire Cape, regardless of how you fish. Late May to early July is prime time—it’s also the start of tourist season.

The cherry on top of all of this is the decent freshwater fishing that's also found nearby. The small ponds and lakes throughout the Cape offer up good fishing for pickerel and largemouth bass.

PLATTSBURGH, NY

Thanks to its location on the northwestern edge of Lake Champlain, and local tourism officials who understand the value of fishing, Plattsburgh has become a yearly stop for a slate of professional and amateur bass tournaments.

With an RV park on Champlain's shores, a number of hotels close to I-87 and multiple launches, Plattsburgh offers some of the best access to the big lake that pro bass anglers adore.

"Everybody on the tour absolutely loves Lake Champlain," says Bassmaster Elite angler Brandon Lester. "I get asked a lot what my favorite place to fish is and I always [used to] say the Tennessee River



Home to both smallmouths and large-mouths, among many other species, Lake Champlain is a favorite stop on the professional bass fishing tours.



The waters of Chatham, Mass., attract big numbers of stripers—and striper fishermen—during the summer months.

because that's where I grew up fishing. But after fishing on Lake Champlain, it really has become my hands-down favorite place. There are not many places you can go out and catch 60 to 100 bass in a day like you can there."

Champlain is far from just a bass fishery. The big lake offers a dizzying mix of warmwater species (including pike, walleyes, carp and bowfin) and coldwater species (like lake trout and landlocked Atlantic salmon) that can be caught all 12 months of the year.

Plattsburgh, a college town with plenty of inexpensive restaurants, is close to the eastern edge of the Adirondack Park and less than an hour from spectacular trout fishing on New York's Ausable River that flows down from the town of Lake Placid.

GREENVILLE, ME

Situated on the southern end of Moosehead, Maine's largest lake, Greenville is about a three-hour drive north of Portland. The smallest and most remote town on our list, Greenville doesn't offer an exhaustive list of restaurants, but with several campgrounds in town, it makes an ideal place for campers. That said, you can't go wrong renting a cabin at Wilsons on Moosehead Lake. It's positioned at the East Outlet of the Kennebec, a 3 1/2-mile stretch of river that can be floated

or waded and is a premier fly-fishing spot for brook trout and landlocked Atlantic salmon.

At 75,000 acres, Moosehead is famous for its salmon and lake trout fishing, with boat rentals and charter fishing available if you don't feel like hauling your own boat to the fringes of the North Woods. The big lake is far from the only attraction here. Hundreds of small streams in the region have healthy populations of wild brookies, and nearby Indian Lake has lots of feisty smallmouths.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

This might come as a bit of a surprise addition to this list, but there's a whole lot for anglers to like about the fishing in and around our nation's capital. Chief among them is the opportunity to casually stroll past historic, iconic monuments to the Potomac River, where you can catch monster blue catfish and stripers.

"I was getting interested in blue cats, and I came across these YouTube guys who were catching big, big blue cats right in D.C. proper," says Joe Cermele, host of the Cut & Retie fishing podcast. "I mean, they were fishing the railing behind the Kennedy Center and this island right near the Pentagon."

Cermele gave it a try, and he's been a big fan of D.C. fishing ever since. There is more than blue cats in the Potomac, too. Much more.



Stunning wild brook trout are plentiful in the East Outlet of the Kennebec River, which connects Moosehead Lake and Indian Pond in central Maine.

"That river gets an incredible run of breeding stripers that you can catch right in the heart of the city," Cermele says. "And just south of there, in some of the creek arms and setbacks, it's ground-zero for northern snakehead fishing."

Like most attractions in D.C., there's easy public access. Fletcher's Boathouse, which boasts "the best selection of shad darts and spoons in the Mid-Atlantic region," offers boat rentals. It's a good place for launching or renting a craft.

Not only can you fish within city limits, but other fabulous fishing destinations are close by. If you want to experience spectacular smallmouth and walleye fishing, Harper's Ferry, W.V., is just an hour's drive from the heart of the city.

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA

Pick any day of the year, and chances are high that you'll find good fishing near Virginia Beach. And from late spring to mid-autumn, the fishing here can be as good as it gets anywhere in the region.

The Potomac may be best known for its blue catfish and stripers, but it's also an excellent bass fishery.





The main draw is the diversity of big-water species that can be accessed from Virginia Beach, including bluefin and yellowfin tuna, marlin, mahi-mahi, wahoo, cobia and king mackerel.

Feel like something less salty? The nearby James River, a tidal river, supports an excellent largemouth bass fishery that annually attracts a number of pro tournaments. The James is chock-full of prime ambush spots that largemouths prefer, like trees, stumps, lily pads, river grass, and docks. 

Virginia Beach is one of the premier big-game saltwater fishing destinations on the Atlantic Coast.



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FINDING BIG BUCKS AND LEARNING THEIR HABITS.

Story and Photos by Scott Haugen



Bucks are most active in the open during the first few hours of morning and in the late afternoon, though they will often move to seek shade and change beds during midday.

By 3:30 a.m., Dad and I were where we wanted to be. It was Oct. 1, opening day of general rifle season. I had been scouting the area since early August and had seen some good bucks. We assumed the place would be overrun with hunters, but we didn't see a single truck until 10 minutes before legal shooting light. Over the next few minutes, we watched more trucks making their way down various logging roads in Oregon's Cascade Range.

Daylight came and the sun eventually crested the mountains behind us. Dad and I had yet to see a deer, but we dared not move. The logged unit we glassed was tall

with weeds, willows and briars, making it hard to see deer unless they moved. Finally, more than three hours into the morning, a buck materialized from the brown fireweed. Then another ... and then a third. These were the same bucks I'd been seeing all summer when they were in velvet. All the sudden traffic in the woods had put them on edge.

We already had the rifle set up in the shooting sticks. At 305 yards, Dad made a perfect shot. It took us a couple hours to get the buck out, but there was no hurry. This morning belonged to my dad, who was soon to turn 82 years old and had just taken a mature Columbia

blacktail deer, his favorite big-game animal to hunt.

Driving home, we stopped and talked to a fellow hunter parked alongside a logging road. "Man, sure aren't the deer there used to be," he muttered. "I haven't seen a deer all day!" When I asked if he'd been scouting, he said he hadn't been able to find time.

I start serious scouting for bucks around the Fourth of July. By this time, I can tell how big their racks will be and get a good sense of populations. On my first day of scouting the place where Dad shot his deer, I saw 23 bucks, mostly mature ones.

VISIBLE IN VELVET

Whether you hold an early-season archery tag or you'll be hunting the general rifle season later, now is the time to get out and scout. When bucks are in velvet, they're visible. Bucks don't want to damage their valued headgear, which is used not only as protection against predators, but also for fighting with other bucks during the rut and as a status symbol.

Velvet racks are engorged with blood, sensitive and easily damaged from May through mid-August. This is why bucks hang out in the open during the summer more than any other time of the year. I like glassing the first few hours in the morning, when bucks are most active. I also look for velvet bucks in the late afternoon, as soon as draws and hillsides become shaded. It doesn't take a big drop in temperature for bucks to start moving and feeding during the hot summer months.

Scouting during the hottest part of the day can also be productive, because as the sun hits a bedded buck, it will get up to re-bed in the shade. Bucks bedding in open habitat will often change beds multiple times a day, be they blacktails, whitetails or mule deer. To do so, they must move in broad daylight.

Once you've located a buck, study the land. It's critical that you intimately know the land so when hunting season comes you can anticipate where a buck might be. The deer Dad took last season lived in big country, and I knew the only thing that would push that buck out was a cougar. There'd been an early archery season in the area, but it was nearly impossible habitat to bowhunt in the extremely dry conditions, so I ruled out hunting pressure as potentially moving that buck.

I quickly learned where Dad's buck was bedding in the summer; that was easy because it was in the open. But I also knew that as soon as that buck—and the others with it—stripped their velvet, the bedding area would shift into a nearby stand of thick Douglas firs.

In the last week of August, Dad's buck stripped its velvet. I kept scouting, set trail cameras, and found that the buck had multiple trails connecting its bedding and feeding areas. On opening morning, Dad and I set up where multiple feeding trails converged and headed into the thick bedding area. The plan worked.

While hunting bears in early September in Idaho one year, I saw a giant whitetail that had just stripped its

velvet. Every evening, four nights in a row, I saw that buck in the same spot. I drew a November deer tag for the unit and hoped to find the buck during the rut. After three days, I finally found it. The buck was giant, unmistakable. But at more than 800 yards away, I couldn't get a shot. I tried getting closer but ran out of daylight. For two days I looked for the buck, with no luck, but I did shoot another dandy I'd also seen in late summer. Because I knew the area, and where those bucks lived, I filled a tag.

The next summer I scouted for the giant whitetail buck and found it in the same drainage. I drew the tag again, but I was too late. Someone killed it early in the rifle season. The buck carried more than 180 inches of antler. However, that season I killed one of its offspring, another big buck, less than a mile from where the monarch had lived.

Had it not been for summer sightings, I would have never gotten those two bucks. A great deal of learning takes place when scouting in the summer. The more you know the land, the better you'll be able to predict where bucks will be, and most importantly, understand why.

A photograph showing three deer bucks with velvet-covered antlers standing in a field of tall grass and yellow wildflowers. The bucks are looking towards the camera. The text is overlaid in the top right corner of the image.

Finding bucks is only a starting point. Next, figure out what it is about the area that has attracted them and whether those features will be relevant in hunting season.

WHERE TO START

When hunting new land for the first time, try to scout it in the summer, when bucks are most visible. So many times, in so many states, I found more bucks in a single day of summer scouting than I saw during the entire time I hunted them. On July 10 one summer, I saw 17 bucks. I hunted that area for 28 days and saw just one legal buck the entire season. Hunting pressure was what I blamed for keeping bucks in deep cover, moving only during darkness. Had I not seen them in the summer, I wouldn't have thought there was a deer within miles, as sign was sparse in the thick habitat.

Summer scouting reveals how many bucks are in an area and how big they are. It provides a confident starting point come hunting season.

One July I was scouting out of state. I found some nice bucks, one whopper, and felt confident they'd be there come the Sept. 1 archery opener. I went back into the area three days before the season and spent hours poring over trail-camera footage and scouting. The target buck I was hoping for showed up nearly every day on one camera or another. Then, the day before the season, the buck stripped its velvet. I hunted from a ground blind on opening morning, but the buck failed to walk the trail it had been using every day for the past two weeks.

Figuring the buck would soon be nocturnal, I made a bold move and re-located my pop-up blind very near to where I thought the buck's core bedding area was. Sure enough, in the closing minutes of legal shooting light, the big buck came down the trail and I arrowed it. Had I stayed hunting where I was, it



High Definition video captured by the Browning Dark Ops Pro DCL is a key component to the author's summer scouting strategy.

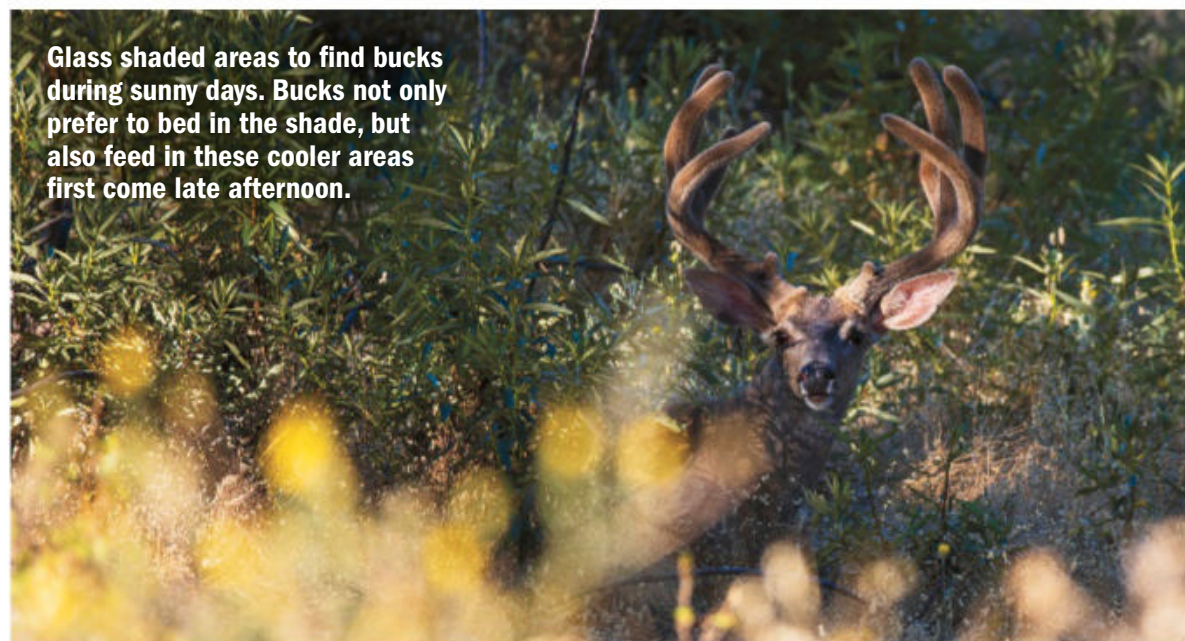
BROWNING, CAMERA, ACTION

Capture valuable video with the Dark Ops Pro DCL.

In some of my deer hunting areas I run more than two-dozen trail cameras year-round. In distant places I'll be hunting, I try to make a road trip, scout and set out trail cameras in early to mid-July. When I return for the hunt, I gather cameras and study footage on my laptop.

Eight months ago I started using Browning Dark Ops Pro DCL cameras (\$179.99; browningtrailcameras.com). I run all my cameras on video mode to get the full story. High Definition (1080p) video captures movements, behaviors and sounds that still images can't. With the ability to increase the length of the video clips captured by the Dark Ops, these cameras have revealed a lot about deer—and predators. Think a 10-second video shows a lot? Let it run for 2 minutes and learn exactly what deer are eating.

I'm impressed by the stunning HD clarity of the Pro DCL and the camera's ability to capture discrete movements in the night. I love the strap system, tilt bracket and how easy it is to confirm the framing of shots. I've had multiple Browning trail cameras set out and have not had to change the batteries. They've been covered in snow, experienced weeks of torrential downpours and weathered many days of freezing temperatures. Through all this, the functionality of the cameras held up perfectly and the batteries kept working, capturing thousands of high-quality video clips.



Glass shaded areas to find bucks during sunny days. Bucks not only prefer to bed in the shade, but also feed in these cooler areas first come late afternoon.

would have been dark by the time the buck reached me. Locating the buck in summer when it was in velvet, along with reading sign during the time of the hunt and understanding habitat and buck behavior, helped me fill a tag.

Another year I held a general-season archery tag in northern California. The buck a buddy and I caught on trail camera traveled virtually the same trail at the same time in the morning for three weeks prior to the hunt. But on the August morning I hunted from a ground blind, it didn't show up. By 11 o'clock it was more than 100 degrees outside the blind.

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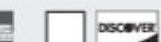
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A wildfire can greatly impact deer movement for years after the event. In areas prone to them, tracking fires is an important part of summer scouting.

I was soaked in sweat. The next day was supposed to be even hotter, so we moved the blind a couple hundred yards up the oak-studded hillside.

The move paid off; around 9 o'clock the big buck walked by, and I filled my tag. Our thinking was simple. Hotter days meant deer would be seeking cooler conditions, sooner. Here, where water was lacking, that meant heading to the crests of hills where they could bed in the shade and catch uplifting thermals to cool them.

If hunting migratory deer late in the season, summer scouting might not apply because the deer won't be where you'll be hunting. Unless you can break away to walk the land in the summer, you'll be learning the land while simultaneously hunting. In this situation, try setting trail cameras and checking them in the middle of the day. Spend mornings and evenings hunting, and the middle of the day checking cameras and looking for sign. Never head back to camp for a nap when hunting unfamiliar land. There's always something to be learned, and the best time to do this is in the middle of the day when deer are hunkered down.

I've had good success over the years scouting wintering grounds in the summer then returning to hunt in October and November. This is where summer scouting is all about learning what you can about the land, not necessarily looking for deer. Look for old rubs that reveal buck movement in the area during the

rut, worn trails and does. I've filled a lot of deer tags over the decades thanks to does I found while scouting in the summer. A lot of homebody does are visited by migratory bucks, so don't overlook the value of finding does.

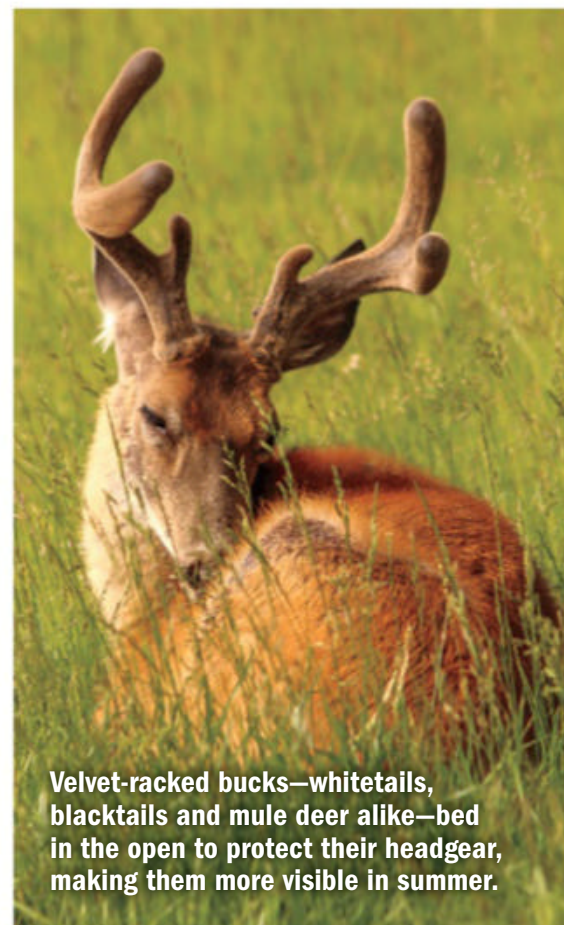
A CHANGING LAND

Scouting unfamiliar land helps you learn it, but sometimes you show up to hunt familiar places and are caught by surprise. Recently, I encountered a drastic change in vegetation due to extreme summer heat and drought. Rather than massive stands of blackberries thriving—the soft vines of which deer love feeding on in late summer and early fall—the ground was overrun with tall grass and noxious weeds. Though the new vegetation was good for bedding cover, it choked out the food. With so little food and no water in the small creek at the bottom of the draw, the deer left. Although I killed a buck that season, it was 3 miles from where I normally hunted.

Clear-cut logging has also surprised me more than once when I've rolled into familiar hunting grounds and found the stands of timber gone. A change in such landscapes not only forces deer to relocate bedding areas, but it can also impact where they feed, thus what trails they use to travel from the new bedding areas to feeding zones. It can take some time, even years, to learn where deer go during such a disruption. Mind you, it's not a bad thing. I'm all for logging

because it creates the best deer and elk habitat where I hunt, but learning new land and finding deer amid such changes can be difficult.

A couple winters ago one of my hunting areas was obliterated by an ice storm. So many trees and big branches fell that it impeded deer travel routes. In fact, it shut down deer travel to the point they had to relocate to another drainage. Sometimes natural disasters like snow and ice storms, even high winds or tornados, can influence where deer live and how they



Velvet-racked bucks—whitetails, blacktails and mule deer alike—bed in the open to protect their headgear, making them more visible in summer.



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move. It's no secret many old whitetail and blacktail bucks live in a very small area, and if that habitat is devastated by sudden environmental changes, the deer will move, sometimes miles.

Throughout the West where I do most of my deer hunting, wildfires have greatly changed the face of the land in recent years. We've never dealt with wildfires to this degree. Today, large-scale wildfires are commonplace, and I'm learning a lot about deer movement based on burns, the intensity of burns and where deer are moving in response to them. But most importantly, I'm understanding why deer are choosing to live where they do in their respective habitats, and it's helping me find more bucks.

In your summer scouting efforts, be sure to track wildfires if looking to head on a hunt out West. Big fires are easily tracked online, as well as by making calls to regional forestry and wildlife offices. If you're planning on hunting an area that's near a wildfire, or in a region where wildfires have occurred in recent past, be prepared with a backup plan. Every fall, areas are closed right before, and even during, a hunting season due to fire. Having another place to hunt is wise.

With so much land shut down by wildfires, more hunters are forced to hunt in closer proximity to one another. Hunting pressure, be it forced by fires or not, is something that will impact buck movement. Most bucks will go nocturnal with the onset of human intrusion, often in a matter of hours, and killing such bucks becomes nearly impossible.

ELEMENTS OF ATTRACTION

The number of bucks I've found during summer scouting and then killed is surprisingly low, but I've filled a lot of tags

in the same areas where I'd seen big bucks in the summer. I mostly hunt blacktails in thick cover, Western whitetails in big country and mule deer that move. Though I may not find a target buck when I'm hunting, I'm confident the areas I have chosen to hunt hold big bucks. This is because I'm hunting where big bucks want to be, and summer scouting provides me with that critical information.

I've learned two key points over the years when targeting big bucks. One, a mature buck is never anywhere by mistake, except during the rut when some deer seem to lose all common sense. And two, when a big buck is taken out of an area, another mature buck will move in. When you see this scenario

unfold, take time to closely study the area to see what is attracting mature bucks. It's likely a combination of prime feed, cover, multiple escape routes from bedding areas, multiple trails connecting bedding and feeding areas, and does.

If you kill a big buck you've never before seen, figure out what brought it there. It could be feed, cover, predators, hunting pressure, even a severe storm could have pushed it. At the very least, plan on hunting that same spot at the same time the next season, for if all factors remain constant, another big buck will be there. Maybe you'll even find it when scouting in the summer.

One July a buddy from Wyoming called, excited about a double-drop-tine



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The author tagged two nice whitetails in consecutive years at the same spot due to spotting a giant buck in summer and focusing his efforts on the area.

mule deer that had just run in front of his truck in the middle of the night. I'd drawn a tag for the area and planned to hunt with him. He set out trail cameras and caught the buck many times, always at night. Then in September it disappeared for more than a month. We eventually found the buck and I shot it on opening day, less than a mile from where it hung out all summer. That buck liked the area, and we were hunting there because of the summer intel we had gathered.

Summer scouting takes effort and sweat, but if you want to elevate your deer hunting to the next level, this is the place to start. Big deer are smart, and they're most visible in summer. Now is the time to find them. **G+**

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Door County DREAMS

WISCONSIN'S DOOR COUNTY ON LAKE MICHIGAN OFFERS BASS ANGLERS
**EXCEPTIONAL SMALLMOUTH FISHING WITH CHANCES
AT BEHEMOTH BRONZEBACKS.**

By Drew Warden



In spring and early summer, the Door Peninsula's shallow bays attract loads of smallmouths as they prepare for their annual spawn.

I was halfway through a slow, steady retrieve when my line suddenly pulled tight, a noticeable bend forming in my rod. Something in the shallow, clear waters surrounding the Sister Islands had inhaled my black marabou jig. I set the hook and felt a weighty fish dart off in another direction. A short but dogged fight later, I had a chunky smallmouth bass in hand—my first of the day. After a few quick photos, I slid the feisty fish back into the cool water, and my boatmates congratulated me on my first Door County smallmouth.

It was mid-June, and our group of anglers was on Lake Michigan's Green Bay for two reasons: to catch lots of smallmouth bass and to test Humminbird's new MEGA Live Imaging TargetLock system before its official launch. The new accessory lets anglers lock their MEGA Live Imaging on structure while being free to use their trolling motor for navigation. We'd see it in action over two days of excellent fishing.

I spent most of the morning with fellow anglers Ryan Chuckel and Bryan Brasher, catching several nice smallmouths on swimbaits and hair jigs. After lunch, I hopped onto Capt. Adam Rasmussen's boat. A Door County charter captain for the past eight years and owner of Rasmussen Outdoors Guide Service and Salmon Depot Charters, the guy has the fishery around Sister Bay dialed in. We caught more bass around the islands before fishing the docks along Sister Bay's shoreline. We eventually stumbled onto a big school of smallmouths, ranging from dinks to decent fish around 3 pounds. I

don't know how many we caught that afternoon, but the almost-every-cast action was a fun way to close out my first day fishing on Green Bay.

Most serious bass anglers know of Door County. The area has received lots of attention for its abundant, spirited smallmouths, especially those exceeding 6 pounds. In 2014, Bassmaster crowned Door County's Sturgeon Bay the nation's best bass fishing "lake." The ranking was justified. From 2012 to 2014, winning total weights for the two-day, 10-fish bag in the annual spring Sturgeon Bay Open Bass tournament were each more than 60 pounds. The average per-fish weight for winning teams across those three years was nearly 6 1/2 pounds, and the largest smallmouth caught weighed 8.45 pounds.

The fishery has declined a bit from those peak levels, but fishing remains very good. A 50-plus-pound total bag still typically wins the pre-spawn tournaments in May. And behemoth bass, like the 8.78-pound monster caught in 2018, still show up on occasion. This level of fishing begs the question: What is it about Door County waters that make them so good for smallmouths?

"We just have all the pieces of the puzzle here, I would say," notes Scott Hansen, a Wisconsin DNR fisheries biologist in Door County for more than 15 years. "All of the components for the different life-history stages. Good spawning habitat. Some protected areas where they're allowed to spawn and where the young—the nursery areas, so to speak—can occur."

Medium and medium-light spinning rods of at least 7 feet are needed for the long casts and finesse baits used to catch spring smallmouths.



DREW WARDEN (2)

Green Bay's forage base is also astounding. Its fertile waters offer ample zooplankton for young fish. Adults, meanwhile, gorge themselves on a buffet that Hansen says includes crayfish, smelt, perch, minnows, invasive alewives and the ubiquitous—and similarly invasive—round gobies, which smallmouths love.

Since gobies were first discovered in the Great Lakes, Door County's smallmouth bass have grown considerably longer on average. Fish that once took seven years to reach the 14-inch legal size limit are now doing so in as little as five years, sometimes less. While Hansen hesitates to credit gobies exclusively for this growth, he says it's hard to ignore their potential influence. With its big fish and scenic views, it's clear why Door County is a bucket-list spot for many bass anglers.

THE BITE WINDOW

Although Sturgeon Bay gets much of the press, it barely scratches the surface of what's available. Door County boasts 300 miles of shoreline along the Door Peninsula. Prime fishing extends from Little Sturgeon Bay on the Green Bay side north to Washington Island and then back south along the Lake Michigan side to roughly Jacksonport.

Despite its northern latitude, the open-water season is relatively lengthy. Weather, naturally, is the determining factor early and late.

"Depending on the year, you can start catching them middle to end of April, but for the most part, it starts the beginning of May—like the traditional Wisconsin opener—and then all the way until it gets too cold that they quit biting, or it freezes," Rasmussen says. "I've caught them as late as December."

Spring and fall are traditional big-fish time periods, with Rasmussen favoring spring. His biggest-ever smallmouth weighed 7 pounds, 10 ounces and came in the second week of May. He also caught a 7-pound, 4-ounce giant one fall. Summer months, meanwhile, offer numbers and quality. I caught my personal-best bronzeback, a 5-pound, 13-ounce fish, in the middle of June. Rasmussen says 3- to 4 1/2-pounders are common, and there are good numbers of 5- to 6-pound bass.

"Sixes have just turned into good ones," he says. "Like you don't get too excited until they're in that high 6- or

7-pound range. Legit 7-pounders ... I fish here 80 to 100 days a year, and if I see like two of those a season, that's probably about right."

Action begins in early May on southern Door County's Green Bay side, where waters warm sooner. Pre-spawn—and eventually spawning—smallmouths invade rocky and sandy shorelines and flats in the shallow bays lining the peninsula.

Little Sturgeon Bay, Rileys Bay and Sand Bay are among the first to warm, as are Sturgeon Bay and Sawyer Harbor. From the middle to the end of May, Rasmussen reports, northern areas like Fish Creek, Egg Harbor, Ephraim and Sister Bay heat up. Lake Michigan bays, such as Rowleys, North and Moonlight, typically have a later spawn than those in Green Bay, as do those around Washington Island.



Door County offers stunning views of its many lighthouses on Lake Michigan. Visitors can hike, bike or paddle to take in the sights.

DOOR COUNTY TRIP PLANNER

Multi-species fishing and more on the peninsula

Capt. Adam Rasmussen runs his charter business out of Sturgeon Bay. A testament to Door County's multi-species diversity, Rasmussen offers smallmouth and walleye trips through his Rasmussen Outdoors Guide Service (rasmussenoutdoors.com) and trout and salmon trips through his Salmon Depot Charter Fishing (salmondepot.com). Book him for a no-hassles adventure and to shorten your learning curve on the water.

DIY anglers should visit Howie's Tackle (howiestackle.com) for local info and to stock up on necessary supplies. There are ample boat ramps on both the Green Bay and Lake Michigan sides of the Door Peninsula, along with a few fishing piers and shore access points for shore-bound anglers. The Wisconsin DNR (dnr.wisconsin.gov) has an interactive map showing launches, shore fishing access and more. Also, bone up on regulations, which can vary.

If taking a break from fishing, there's plenty in Door County to keep you busy. State parks offer hiking and biking trails, and there are several golf courses, with some offering incredible views. You'll find kayak and paddleboard rentals for sightseeing, or there are museums and historical landmarks if that's more your speed.

For fine dining, I heartily recommend Boathouse on the Bay, which offers excellent food and a killer view of scenic Sister Bay. Area supper clubs, a distinctly Wisconsin experience, are another option. Or consider taking in a traditional fish boil, a Scandinavian tradition that's been part of Door County culture for decades. There are breweries and wineries to explore, and area lodging options are almost endless, ranging from quaint bed-and-breakfast accommodations to expansive resorts. Get information on all the above at Destination Door County (doorcounty.com).



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June is a big spawning month, but by mid-July, Rasmussen says most fish head to summertime haunts in deeper water, where they look for structure—reefs, boulders, drop-offs and more. He says fall bass move deeper still, schooling near steep transitions. They'll be on 20-, 30- or 40-foot breaklines, sometimes even deeper.

While most of Door County is open to year-round catch-and-release small-mouth fishing before the Lake Michigan harvest opener in early May, Washington Island and the Mink River are not. The Mink River is a fish refuge downstream to the mouth in Rowleys Bay from the first Sunday in March until June 15, with no fishing for any species allowed. Meanwhile, angling for bass specifically is prohibited within a quarter mile of all islands in the Town of Washington Island from early March to July 1.

What's nice about the Door County fishery, though, is that the area's small-ies don't all spawn simultaneously. The

spawn's timing varies from bay to bay along the Door Peninsula and even from one part of an individual bay to another. In fact, Wisconsin DNR research suggests Green Bay smallmouth populations are isolated from one another and genetically different. Anglers can usually target pre-spawn fish somewhere, even if other bass are on beds. Most bays have boat ramps in individual townships, so lengthy runs across open water to target pre-spawners are rarely required. Just hitch up your trailer and launch where you want to fish.

A FINESSE GAME

In Green Bay and the main lake's clear waters, spinning rods and finesse tactics reign supreme. Light tackle, light line and long rods shine all season but especially early when long casts and low-impact presentations are required. Marabou jigs, Ned rigs and 2- to 3-inch tubes and swimbaits weighing 1/16, 1/8 or 3/16 ounce are good springtime bait options, as are jerkbaits.

Rasmussen likes a 7-foot-3-inch medium-light rod for hair jigs, swimbaits and Ned rigs, and a 7-foot medium-action rod for tubes. He prefers the 13 Fishing Aerios, but any 2000- or 3000-size reel with a quality drag works. He spools up with 8-pound Sufix NanoBraid or 10-pound Sufix 131 braid with a 6- to 10-pound Sufix Advance fluorocarbon leader, depending on water clarity.

Retrieve swimbaits and hair jigs slowly but steadily; Rasmussen says proper retrieve speed is highly specific and varies daily. When he guides, he usually fishes along with clients, in part so they can see how he's reeling. He says fish are often that specific in their preferences. Meanwhile, work Ned rigs and tubes just off the bottom, occasionally making contact.

These setups work in mid- to late summer, too. All that changes are the places smallmouths are found and the weight of the baits needed to reach them. Excluding a small window after spawning, where bass stick around the shallows and can be caught on 1/2-ounce spinnerbaits, Rasmussen says most fish push out to structure in 12 to 25 feet of water. For these depths, he bumps up to 1/4-, 3/8- and 1/2-ounce jig heads on swimbaits.

In July, drop-shot rigs become key for Rasmussen as marabou jigs fade away. For plastics, he suggests 2- to 3-inch floating baits mimicking gobies, like Berkley's PowerBait MaxScent Flat Worm or Z-Man's Trick ShotZ. He likes a VMC Redline Finesse Neko hook, which allows for nose-hooking or threading baits on the hook. On calm days, he rigs a 1/4-ounce drop-shot weight; in heavy wind, he prefers a 3/8-ounce weight.

Rasmussen turns to a temperature gauge, his FishWeather app and LakeMaster maps to find the warmest water and highlight desired depths in the spring. But he mostly uses his eyes (and quality polarized sunglasses) to find fish and ideal habitat. In summer and fall, electronics play a larger role. When fish move deeper, he uses Side Imaging to find the big boulders smallmouths love and utilizes MEGA Live Imaging to see if fish are present. If not, he moves until he finds them. When he does, he uses TargetLock to watch fish while using Spot-Lock to anchor in place and fight the wind.



Small swimbaits on light jigs and Ned rigs are good baits for smallmouths in shallow bays. When fish move deeper, try drop-shotting.

Scientific Discovery Stuns Doctors

Biblical Bush Relieves Joint Discomfort in as Little as 5 Days

Legendary “special herb” gives new life to old joints without clobbering you. So safe you can take it every day without worry.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 54 million Americans are suffering from joint discomfort.

This epidemic rise in aching joints has led to a search for alternative treatments—as many sufferers want relief without the harmful side effects of conventional “solutions.”

Leading the way from nature’s pharmacy is the new “King of Oils” that pioneering Florida MD and anti-aging specialist Dr. Al Sears calls “the most significant breakthrough I’ve ever found for easing joint discomfort.”

Biblical scholars treasured this “holy oil.” Ancient healers valued it more than gold for its medicinal properties. Marco Polo prized it as he blazed the Silk Road. And Ayurvedic practitioners, to this day, rely on it for healing and detoxification.

Yet what really caught Dr. Sears’ attention is how modern medical findings now prove this “King of Oils” can powerfully...

Deactivate 400 Agony-Causing Genes

If you want genuine, long-lasting relief for joint discomfort, you must address inflammation. Too much inflammation will wreak havoc on joints, break down cartilage and cause unending discomfort. This is why so many natural joint relief solutions try to stop one of the main inflammatory genes called COX-2.

But the truth is, there are hundreds of agony-causing genes like COX-2, 5-LOX, iNOS, TNK, Interleukin 1,6,8 and many more—and stopping just one of them won’t give you all the relief you need.

Doctors and scientists now confirm the “King of Oils”—Indian Frankincense—deactivates not one but 400 agony-causing genes. It does so by shutting down the inflammation command center called Nuclear Factor Kappa Beta.

NK-Kappa B is like a switch that can turn 400 inflammatory genes “on” or “off.” A study in *Journal of Food Lipids* reports that Indian Frankincense powerfully deactivates NF-Kappa B. This journal adds that Indian Frankincense is “so powerful it shuts down the pathway triggering aching joints.”

Relief That’s 10 Times Faster... and in Just 5 Days

Many joint sufferers prefer natural solutions but say they work too slowly. Take the best-seller glucosamine. Good as it is, the National Institutes of Health reports that glucosamine



The active ingredient in Mobilify soothes aching joints in as little as 5 days

takes as long as eight weeks to work.

Yet in a study published in the *International Journal of Medical Sciences*, 60 patients with stiff knees took 100 mg of Indian Frankincense or a placebo daily for 30 days. Remarkably, Indian Frankincense “significantly improved joint function and relieved discomfort in as early as five days.” That’s relief that is 10 times faster than glucosamine.

78% Better Relief Than the Most Popular Joint Solution

In another study, people suffering from discomfort took a formula containing Indian Frankincense and another natural substance or a popular man-made joint solution every day for 12 weeks.

The results? Stunning! At the end of the study, 64% of those taking the Indian Frankincense formula saw their joint discomfort go from moderate or severe to mild or no discomfort. Only 28% of those taking the placebo got the relief they wanted. So Indian Frankincense delivered relief at a 78% better clip than the popular man-made formula.

In addition, in a randomized, double blind, placebo controlled study, patients suffering from knee discomfort took Indian Frankincense or a placebo daily for eight weeks. Then the groups switched and got the opposite intervention. Every one of the patients taking Indian Frankincense got relief. That’s a 100% success rate—numbers unseen by typical solutions.

In addition, BMJ (formerly the *British Medical Journal*) reports that Indian Frankincense is safe for joint relief — so safe and natural you can take it every day.

Because of clinically proven results like this, Dr. Sears has made Indian Frankincense the centerpiece of a new natural joint relief formula called **Mobilify**.

Great Results for Knees, Hips, Shoulders and Joints

Joni D. says, “**Mobilify** really helps with soreness, stiffness and mild temporary pain. The day after taking it, I was completely back to normal—so fast.” Shirley M. adds, “Two weeks after taking **Mobilify**, I had no knee discomfort and could go up and down the staircase.” Larry M. says, “After a week and a half of taking **Mobilify**, the discomfort, stiffness and minor aches went away... it’s almost like being reborn.” And avid golfer Dennis H. says, “I can attest to **Mobilify** easing discomfort to enable me to pursue my golfing days. Definitely one pill that works for me out of the many I have tried.”

How to Get Mobilify

To secure the hot, new **Mobilify** formula, buyers should contact the Sears Health Hotline at **1-800-333-6172** TODAY. “It’s not available in retail stores yet,” says Dr. Sears. “The Hotline allows us to ship directly to the customer.” Dr. Sears feels so strongly about **Mobilify**, all orders are backed by a 100% money-back guarantee. “Just send me back the bottle and any unused product within 90 days from purchase date, and I’ll send you all your money back.”

Use Promo Code **MBGF523** when you call to secure your supply of **Mobilify**. Lines are frequently busy and due to heightened demand, supplies are limited. To secure your supply today, call **1-800-333-6172**.

In fall, larger 4-inch swimbaits and Alabama rigs shine. For A-rigs, Rasmussen relies on a 13 Fishing Envy 7-foot-11-inch crankbait rod and a 20-pound fluorocarbon leader. Smallmouths are typically even deeper, so he'll drive around in 30 to 40 feet of water with 2D sonar or Side Imaging until he finds them. He advises anglers doing similarly not to place deep-caught fall fish in livewells or keep them out of the water too long, though, as it can kill them.

During the spawn, Rasmussen avoids targeting smallmouths on beds. First, he doesn't wish to hinder their reproductive success. Second, it's still possible—and often more productive—to catch pre-spawn bass in June.

Nest fishing is a complex, controversial topic. Most studies suggest that pulling a male smallmouth off a nest he's guarding reduces the probability of that individual nest's success. Brood predators, like other sunfish or gobies, consume some or all the eggs or larvae, with more typically consumed the longer the bass is off the bed. If all eggs or larvae are eaten, that nest fails, and if enough are lost in the male's absence, he may abandon the nest.

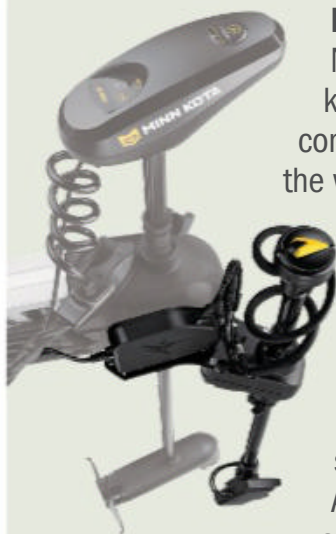
Still, research offers conflicting opinions on population-level effects of nest fishing, and no regulations (yet) prohibit it. If you decide to target smallmouths on beds, minimize potential negative impacts. Use artificial instead of live baits to avoid deeply hooking fish. Immediately release bass where caught. Move to a new



SMALLMOUTH SECRET WEAPONS

Gear to make bronzeback fishing more productive

Quality spinning rods, reels, lines and finesse baits are a good place to start for a Door County smallmouth adventure. But a few key items can make your trip even better.



HUMMINBIRD MEGA LIVE IMAGING TARGETLOCK

New MEGA Live Imaging TargetLock (\$1,500 for adapter kit/\$3,000 with transducer; humminbird.johnsonoutdoors.com) lets you lock live-imaging sonar on a particular structure in the water. You can freely drift or use your trolling motor to move or anchor in place via Spot-Lock, and TargetLock automatically keeps your transducer pointed at the target. On windy days while targeting offshore boulders, Capt. Adam Rasmussen uses this feature so he can focus on smallmouth fishing without worrying about boat control or manually adjusting Live Imaging. We also used it in shallower water in June to stay on a school of fish hanging near a dock wall in Sister Bay. Additionally, TargetLock's MEGA Live Sweep function provides a constantly updating 120-degree view ahead of you, while MinnKota Steer lets you control trolling motor and MEGA Live Imaging direction simultaneously. It's a potent tool on Green Bay or anywhere you choose to fish.

FIN-NOR CLEAT SUNGLASSES

Polarized sunglasses are essential tools for Door County smallmouths. I wish I'd had Fin-Nor's new Cleat sunglasses (\$189; fin-nor.com) last year. They've become my go-to due to their exceptional comfort and ability to help me see into the water. The Cleat glasses have an innovative venting system, an adjustable nose pad and integrated spring hinges for a snug fit on different face shapes and sizes. I love the built-in peripheral shields, which block extra light from the sides, making the view beneath the surface even clearer. They're available in several frame and lens colors.



BERKLEY POWERBAIT MAXSCENT

Berkley states that its MaxScent products catch 45 percent more fish than its original PowerBait. It's especially effective on finicky fish and when using finesse presentations, like a drop-shot or Ned rig. MaxScent features a unique water-absorbent PVC construction that releases a super-charged scent field in the water to convert bass looks into bites. And, unlike other scent products, it doesn't dry out. The PowerBait MaxScent Flat Worm (\$9/10-pack; berkley-fishing.com) is a great drop-shot plastic, while the MaxScent Lil' General (\$9/8-pack) is perfect for Ned rigs. The MaxScent Tube (\$9/8-pack) is another good option for Door County smallies.



area after catching a couple; that leaves at least some nearby nests undisturbed.

Many anglers still feel that Wisconsin's current 9-pound, 1-ounce smallmouth record, taken from Oneida County's Indian Lake in 1950, could fall in Door County waters. Green Bay certainly has the forage base to support such growth. Five years ago, one fish came within ounces

of it, and bass approaching 8 pounds are still occasionally caught in spring tournaments. If anglers keep practicing ethical catch-and-release fishing, and key habitat is maintained, the possibility is there. Until then, anglers can wear themselves out on quality bass with a chance at a true giant, all in a setting that offers picture-perfect views. 

Fish Oil Failure Shines Grim Light on America's Memory Crisis

America's Top Memory M.D. Reveals Why Fish Oil Doesn't Protect You from Senior Moments – and the #1 Alternative

More than 16 million Americans suffer from age-associated cognitive impairment, and according to nationwide research, these numbers are only rising.

Thankfully, anti-aging specialist and best-selling author Dr. Al Sears says there's an easy way to banish senior moments and brain fog for good.

It's a safe, natural compound called DHA – one of the building blocks of your brain. It helps children grow their brains significantly bigger during development. And in adults, it protects brain cells from dying as they get older.

For years, most people thought fish oil was the best available source of DHA...

But industrial fish farming practices have depleted the nutritional content of nearly every fish oil you can buy.

Today, roughly 20 million Americans are wasting their money on fish oils that hardly do anything at all.

And since they think they are addressing the problem, fish oil's failure has led to America's memory crisis continuing to grow practically unchecked.

Fortunately, Dr. Sears says, "there's still hope for seniors. Getting more DHA can make a life-changing difference for your mental clarity, focus, and memory."

Dr. Sears, a highly-acclaimed, board-certified doctor—who has published more than 500 studies and written four bestselling books—says we should be able to get enough DHA in our diets... but we don't anymore.

"For thousands of years, fish were a great natural source of DHA. But due to industrial fish farming practices, the fish we eat and the fish oils you see at the store are no longer as nutrient-dense as they once were," he explains.

DHA is backed by hundreds of studies for supporting razor-sharp focus, extraordinary mental clarity, and a lightning quick memory... especially in seniors.

So, if you're struggling with focus, mental clarity, or memory as you get older...

Dr. Sears recommends a different approach.

THE SECRET TO A LASTING MEMORY

Research has shown our paleo ancestors were able to grow bigger and smarter brains by eating foods rich in one ingredient — DHA.

"Our hippocampus thrives off DHA, and grows because of it," explains Dr. Sears. "Without DHA, our brains would shrink, and our memories would quickly fade."

A groundbreaking study from the University of Alberta confirmed this. Animals given a diet rich in DHA saw a 29% boost in their hippocampus — the part of the brain responsible for learning and memory. As a result, these animals became smarter.

Another study on more than 1,500 seniors found that those whose brains were deficient in DHA had significantly smaller brains — a characteristic of accelerated aging and a weakened memory.

PEOPLE'S BRAINS ARE SHRINKING AND THEY DON'T EVEN KNOW IT

Dr. Sears uncovered that sometime during the 1990s, fish farmers stopped giving their animals a natural, DHA-rich diet and began feeding them a diet that was 70% vegetarian.

"It became expensive for farmers to feed fish what they'd eat in the wild," explains Dr. Sears. "But in order to produce DHA, fish need to eat a natural, marine diet, like the one they'd eat in the wild."

"Since fish farmers are depriving these animals of their natural diet, DHA is almost nonexistent in the oils they produce."

"And since more than 80% of fish oil comes from farms, it's no wonder the country is experiencing a memory crisis. Most people's brains are shrinking and they don't even know it."

So, what can people do to improve their memory and brain function most effectively.

Dr. Sears says, "Find a quality DHA supplement that doesn't



Why the 'brain fuel' ingredient in fish oil is slowly drying up.

come from a farmed source. That will protect your brain cells and the functions they serve well into old age."

Dr. Sears and his team worked tirelessly for over two years developing a unique brain-boosting formula called **Omega Rejuvenol**.

It's made from the most powerful source of DHA in the ocean, squid and krill — two species that cannot be farmed.

According to Dr. Sears, these are the purest and most potent sources of DHA in the world, because they haven't been tampered with. "Omega Rejuvenol is sourced from the most sustainable fishery in Antarctica. You won't find this oil in any stores."

MORE IMPRESSIVE RESULTS

Already, the formula has sold more than 850,000 bottles. And for a good reason, too. Satisfied customers can't stop raving about the memory-boosting benefits of quality-sourced DHA oil.

"The first time I took it, I was amazed. The brain fog I struggled with for years was gone within 24 hours. The next day, I woke up with the energy and mental clarity of a new man," says Owen R.

"I remember what it was like before I started taking **Omega Rejuvenol**... the lack of focus... the dull moods... the slippery memory... but now my mind is as clear as it's ever been," says Estelle H.

"My mood and focus are at an all-time high. I've always had trou-

ble concentrating, and now I think I know why," raves Bernice J. "The difference that **Omega Rejuvenol** makes couldn't be more noticeable."

And 70-year-old Mark K. says, "My focus and memory are back to age-30 levels."

These are just a handful of the thousands of reviews Dr. Sears receives regularly thanks to his breakthrough memory formula, **Omega Rejuvenol**.

WHERE TO FIND OMEGA REJUVENOL

To secure bottles of this brain-booster, buyers should contact the Sears Health Hotline at **1-800-966-5680**. "It takes time to manufacture these bottles," says Dr. Sears. "The Hotline allows us to ship the product directly to customers who need it most."

Dr. Sears feels so strongly about this product he is offering a 100% money-back guarantee on every order. "Send back any used or unused bottles within 90 days and I'll rush you a refund," says Dr. Sears.

The Hotline is taking orders for the next 48 hours. After that, the phone number may be shut down to allow for inventory restocking.

Call **1-800-966-5680** to secure your limited supply of **Omega Rejuvenol**. Readers of this publication immediately qualify for a steep discount, but supplies are limited. To take advantage of this great offer use Promo Code **OMGF523** when you call.

REMINGTON PREMIER LONG RANGE

DESIGNED FOR EXTENDED SHOTS ON GAME,
THIS LOAD PERFORMS ACROSS ALL DISTANCES.

By Adam Heggenstaller

It had taken us all day to find the blacktail buck bedded on the side of a hill rising from Alaska's Kodiak Island. I was lying prone on an adjacent hill, a light wind quartering from right to left. The range was 284 yards, and my rifle was steady when I squeezed off the shot. The buck took one bound from its bed and rolled down the hill until it stopped on the edge of an alder patch. It never moved again. Thus was my introduction to Remington's Premier Long Range load, a performance that didn't really surprise me given the top-end components the company has put in its new line of big-game ammo.

Bullets built for long-range hunting have to possess three primary features. First, of course, they must be accurate. Second, they should have a high ballistic coefficient to minimize bullet drop and wind drift. Third, they have to expand at the lower impact velocities that come with long shots.

The latter two requirements work against one another. Heavy-for-caliber

bullets typically have better ballistic coefficients than their lighter counterparts, contributing to a longer, more streamlined form. However, heavier bullets have lower muzzle velocities and therefore lower impact velocities at long ranges. Remington balances these two factors by loading the Speer Impact bullet in the Premier Long Range line.

The Speer Impact bullet has a patented, polymer Slipstream Tip, designed by engineers at sister company Federal, that helps initiate expansion at lower velocities. The tip is hollow yet has a solid meplat, or front end. While the solid meplat improves aerodynamics and decreases drag during flight, it breaks off at impact to expose the hollow channel in the tip. This allows media to enter the tip, initiating expansion. Federal says the tip design extends the range at which the bullet reliably expands by a few hundred yards.

The Slipstream Tip also increases ballistic coefficient, and it is made of a material that resists the high

temperatures that act on a bullet due to drag while in flight. These temperatures can cause some polymer tips to deform in flight, decreasing ballistic coefficient and leading to erratic bullet flight. The Slipstream material doesn't start to soften until it reaches a temperature of 434 degrees Fahrenheit, ensuring consistent performance downrange. Other features that improve aerodynamics include a boat-tail base and rear-adjusted center of gravity that assists in bullet flight.

While the Speer Impact bullets Remington loads in Premier Long Range are heavy for caliber—175 grains in the 7 mm Rem. Mag., 172 grains in the .308 Win. and 190 grains in the .300 Win. Mag., for example—the Slipstream Tip promotes expansion at the lower velocities that come with such heavyweights. In fact, Remington engineers have tested the loads to 1,000 yards and recorded reliable expansion.

Another noteworthy feature of the Speer Impact bullet is its bonded core.

The Speer Impact bullet is designed for reliable expansion at extended ranges. These upsets were recovered from gel shot at, from left to right, 300, 500, 744 and 1,000 yards.



The bullet's jacket is chemically fused to the lead core to prevent separation on impact and ensure high retained weight. This allows engineers to "program" the bullet to expand at low impact velocities but not break apart at high ones. It's another balancing act that makes Premier Long Range an excellent big-game load at all ranges. For example, should a hunter stalk to within 75 yards of a buck, he can rest assured the Speer Impact bullet will retain enough weight to ensure adequate penetration even on quartering shots at hard angles. If he must take a shot at an extended range, say 500 yards, he can be confident that the Slipstream Tip in the bullet will cause adequate expansion to create a devastating wound channel.

I used the Remington Premier Long Range .308 Win. load to take two blacktail bucks and a caribou on Kodiak Island. None required more than one shot, and none went more than 100 yards from the spot of impact. While the farthest shot was the one on the bedded buck I described earlier, I



would not hesitate to use this load at my maximum effective range. In the Savage 110 Ultralite rifle I took on the hunt, the Premier Long Range ammo was a solid sub-MOA performer out to 300 yards, the farthest distance at which I tested the load.

Remington offers Premier Long Range in 10 loads, from 140-grain 6.5 Creedmoor (MSRP: \$70.99 for 20 rounds) to 215-grain .300 PRC (MSRP: \$82.99). While "long range" is in its name, Remington Premier Long Range works at all ranges. It's a versatile load that will serve deer hunters in the East just as well as elk hunters in the West. **G+**



The Speer Impact's jacket is chemically fused to the lead core to prevent separation on impact, while the Slipstream tip promotes expansion.

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FOOL'S TOOLS

NOTHING CATCHES THE MOST FISH EVERYWHERE ALL THE TIME.

When school let out for summer, Shane's cousin Kurt invited him to his family's dairy farm in New York, with the promise of lots of good fishing after the daily chores were done. Shane quickly talked his parents into letting him go, and a couple weeks later he was in Kurt's room, organizing his gear in preparation for an afternoon on the water.

"I brought Rat-L-Traps, buzzbaits, deep-diving cranks and a whole slew of plastic worms," said Shane.

"I'd probably leave the buzzbaits and those anaconda-sized worms at home," Kurt suggested, chuckling a little as he looked over Shane's tackle. "Do you have any eighth-ounce white jigs or Rooster Tails?"

"I don't have anything that small," said Shane. "I just can't imagine a bass—even a Northern bass—not devouring a 10-inch purple PowerWorm when I stitch it across his noggin."

"You might be watching too many Florida fishing shows, cuz," joked Kurt. "Up here the water is colder, the bass are more finicky, and we catch them using finesse. But don't worry, I have plenty of jigs for you."

"Doubt I'll need 'em," uttered Shane, "but thanks for offering."

About that time Kurt noticed the rest of Shane's gear propped in the corner.

"Those look like reels you'd use for sharks off the coast of New Jersey," said Kurt. "What's that, thirty-pound test?"

"Twenty-five," replied Shane.

"You're going to have a hard time just *throwing* a Rooster Tail," said Kurt. "Did you bring any spinning gear or just those baitcasters?"

"Baitcasters," answered Shane. "I thought you said we would mainly be fishing for largemouths."

"Yeah, I did," said Kurt, "but I don't think it's that much fun to just ski a bass in without a fight. You Southern boys don't give 'em much of a chance, do you?"

"Whatever," said Shane, laughing.



"I'll fish my way, you fish yours, and we'll see who catches more tomorrow."

After the next morning's farm chores followed by an afternoon of fishing, the boys were exhausted. They had boated 10 fish; Kurt caught seven, Shane three. Kurt also caught the biggest, a 3-pounder, but Shane had one on that almost certainly would have been the fish of the day had he landed it. Mainly, the boys had a blast fishing together, and their informal contest continued for another week.

When Shane got back home after his trip, his father asked him how the fishing had been at Kurt's. So Shane told him the full story.

"Sure, Kurt had more bites—and I'll even admit he caught more fish," said Shane. "But honestly, Dad, I use big tackle because I like to catch big fish. I don't really care about catching lots of little dinks."

Shane's father laughed. "Seems the acorns didn't fall too far from the trees, son. About 20 years ago I invited Kurt's father, your uncle Gary, here to fish, and

we went 'round and 'round about tackle and techniques. I told him he needed big baits and heavy line, but he stuck to his ultralight stuff, saying it served him fine up there just as it would down here. I out-fished him two-to-one while he was here."

"So who's right, Dad?"

"Simple, son. You're both wrong. The world's best fishermen are proficient with all tools that catch fish where the *fish* live. To be close-minded about a technique just because it's not what you're used to at home is, well, foolish."

"So do you have a spinning reel?"

"I sure do. Uncle Gary gave me one when he left."

"I've never seen it," said Shane.

"It's in the rafters above the garage, because I never use it."

"Why not?"

"Because I'm a fool for pitching a 1-ounce jig 'n' pig into heavy cover and ripping a bucketmouth clear out of the water, stump and all," said Shane's father. "Now that's what I call bass fishing!"

Shhhhh. No wake zone.



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