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Alum Creek, WV 25003

D5 Reservoirs – East Lynn (1005 acres Wayne County) and Beech Fork (720 acres Wayne County) fish well through the fall for a variety of species. Anglers are reminded to be aware of the drawdown on these reservoirs which occurs usually November 1 annually. After the drawdown only the main marinas will remain open and usable. As temperature levels start to drop through early fall bass will become more active throughout the day. Try spinnerbaits, soft plastics, and crankbaits fished along edges, any visible structure, weedbeds, or drop-offs. The topwater bite will continue into late fall. Buzz baits, frog imitations, Zara Spooks and other walk the dog action lures excel. Savage has a new Snake lure out in two sizes many have had success with recently, give it a try. As fall progresses into early winter slow down your retrieve and switch to slower moving baits. Jerkbait (Husky jerks, Pointers, Rozante) are always good as are jig and pig (trailer) combinations. Jigs matching crawfish patterns work best with blue/black or purple/black ranking a close second.

The featured species at Beech Fork are Hybrid Striped Bass, stocked annually to maintain their numbers. Troll for these hard-fighting fish or cast to schools as they break surface early and late in the day. If no schools are visible again trolling or casting to schools of shad is a good bet also – many times gamefish will be close-by their preferred forage. The dam and deeper water are usually hotspots for Hybrid Striped Bass. East Lynn featured species is the Muskellunge which are maintained also by annual stockings. Trolling is a good way to target these fish as is casting to likely spots. Junctions of arms of the reservoirs, drop-offs and felled shoreline trees are excellent choices to target to increase your chances of hooking the fish of 10,000 casts. Early fall try bladed baits such as Cowgirls, Mepps, and Blue Fox in larger sizes. Larger jerkbaits are also a good choice as are glide baits such as the Shum Shum, Crane or Amma bama jerkbaits. As water temperature cool into November slow down your retrieve, Glide baits excel even more later in the fall. Large tubes and other soft plastics also excel during cooler conditions. Bondy baits are a good choice for vertical jigging in deeper water near the dam for East Lynn Muskies.

D5 Nav Rivers - As is the case on all WV waters, fall is a great time to be on nav rivers as an angler. A variety of catfish species can be caught from below locks and strategic locations along these rivers. Flatheads especially can be found below locks, near sunken barges or other sunken debris/trees. Flatheads prefer live bait and can grow to enormous sizes. The WV state record is the longest standing WV record, held since 1959 (70 lbs Little Kanawha River). Channel Catfish can be caught by anglers using just about anything, fish guts, worms, cut bait, stinkbait, and soap, yes, even soap! Channel Catfish like all catfish are excellent ‘tasters’ of the water. They use their whiskers to home in on food items, anything strong smelling or to their liking they find quickly. A basic river rig or bait fished under a float are two good ways to target Channel Catfish. Blue Catfish are the ‘swimmers’ of the three species. Blue Catfish will be found more up in the water column and feed on a variety of fish and prey. Skipjack are one of their preferred food items and coveted by anglers to target large Blue Catfish. Blue Catfish will relate to barges that have been tied up, frequent drop-offs, tributary mouths and can be found below locks. Blue Catfish are also big movers covering many miles in their daily/annual travels. DNR officials recently verified a state record for length from the Ohio River and have checked a few others very close to record size.

Hybrid Striped Bass are another species to target on navigable rivers. Hybrids tend to congregate below locks and around tributary mouths. Hybrids or ‘Mules’ often travel in schools, if you catch one be prepared to catch another...Any silver/white lure is a good choice. A Little George or other blade baits are good

choices when fishing close to the lock, they get down quick. Large jigs and spinners are also good choices in colors mimicking shad, their preferred baitfish. Largemouth, Spotted and Smallmouth Bass all can also be encountered while out on nav rivers. Target any embayments, and backwater areas for Largemouth. For Spotted and Smallmouth Bass target edge water with some current close-by. Often these two species will be encountered directly below the lock holding behind boulders and other obstructions. Flukes, large spinners and jerkbaits are good choices for fall bass. Shad imitating lures are a good choice for all nav river black bass. Soft plastics and slow-rolled spinnerbaits are preferred for cooler temps and later in the fall.

D5 Rivers/Streams - Fall is second only to spring for opportunities to float and fish WV rivers/streams. Fall temperature levels are more appropriate for stream fish and the scenery can be even more spectacular with changing leaves. Smallmouth are the targeted species usually with catches of Largemouth and Spotted Bass, and panfish also possible. The Guyandotte, Coal and Tug Fork Rivers are the main locations to try in D5. For floating, many utilize kayaks or small johnboats and keep two to three rods rigged up. If three are available, the bottom, middle, and surface are the preferred ways to rig-up, allowing an angler to cover the entire water column. Good choices for surface lures include Jitterbugs, Pop Rs, Torpedoes and various buzz baits in different sizes. With low water use smaller sized lures and lighter more natural colors, and during higher off-color water try larger sized lures and brighter colors to allow the bass to pinpoint your offering. Lures with extra sound are good when the water is up and off-color. Mid-level baits include spinners, small crank and wakebaits, jerkbaits, and chatterbaits. Try various sizes, colors, and retrieves until the fish let you know what they like. Chartreuse is a good color to try for most gamefish, especially Smallmouth. Bottom bumping baits include jig and trailer combinations, creature baits, Senkos, and various collared jigheads which can be outfitted with trailers depending on the fish and angler preference.

Fall trout stocking is also right around the corner (weeks of October 19 and 26), Pond Fork in Boone county receives a fall stocking as do the tailwaters of RD Bailey close-by. Try spinners and various preferred flies, or your preferred bait and past style baits. Water can sometimes be very low causing trout be very skittish and shy, be sure to wear drab colors, stay low on your approach to water you intend to fish, and be ready for the bite. Finally, a fall Channel Catfish outing can sometimes be a very good way to spend a fall afternoon or evening. With low water, fish will be restricted to deeper pools. Target these pools for Channel Catfish using a float rig. A meal of freshly caught Channel Catfish is a great way to spend the evening with family and/or friends.

D5 Impoundments – Fall bass and panfish fishing can be excellent on WV small impoundments. Most hunt, and fish to past the time between hunting seasons. Therefore, fall and winter are a great time to get out due to the lack of pressure, which will increase your success. Try soft plastics, spinnerbaits, swimbaits, and/or whatever your preferred bass baits are. As temperature levels drop into the fall, fish (bass) will continue to bite throughout the day, especially on a cloudy or overcast day. Preferred surface lures include frog imitations, Pop Rs, various buzz baits, and the Devil's Horse. Small crankbaits are a great choice in the fall as are jerkbaits for bass. Rebel cranks and Rapala jerkbaits are good choices. A warm day in late fall is an excellent time to utilize a jig and pig and hit 'beaver huts' on WV small impoundments. Target Channel Catfish using live either a bottom river rig, or under a float. Nightcrawlers, liver, hot dogs soaked in anise or Jell-O or all good choices. Catfish bite best during low light, concentrate your efforts early and late for improved success.

****TIP OF THE FALL SEASON:**

If you are unaware of good fishing locations contact your district fish biologist or become active in fishing clubs, online forums, etc. Many find locations, preferred lures and other information interacting with other anglers. A day spent floating a West Virginia river in search of smallmouth (or other fish) with family or friends can create a lifelong memory. Use the WVDNR fishing hunting mapping tool link to pick out a float trip. Due to more preferred temperature levels an angler can often pick their favorite bass lure or technique and find success during the fall. However, don't be afraid to switch up and try different techniques or colors if you are not getting bites, maybe experiment with a new lure or technique. Our waters are fished over a lot, try something different, keep up with new techniques. The pursuit of Muskellunge across West Virginia into the cooler fall months is another preferred WV fishing activity. Many West Virginia Muskie bait makers exist in the state, try some of their unique colors and models for increased success. Often the fall angler will find themselves fishing alone with many choosing to pursue game at this time of the year, good luck and be safe on the water!