

District 4 Spring Fishing Report

District 4 – (Vacant, Bob Knight) – 304-256-6947

2006 Robert C Byrd Drive

Beckley, WV 25801

D4 Reservoirs – (Summer pool starts on April 1)

Bluestone (2040 acres, Summers County) and R. D. Bailey (630 acres, Wyoming County) are the two reservoirs in District 4 in the Southeast portion of West Virginia. Spring is a great time to pursue largemouth bass which will be transitioning from deep water to shallower water as the water temperatures increase. Look for areas where shallow water with cover is next to deeper water. Points, coves, mouths of creeks to the end of creeks will hold bass. As water temperature increases or decreases, largemouth bass will move between deep water and shallow water so key in on the location of bait fish to find the bass as the baitfish schools will move based on water temperature also. During the pre-spawn, anglers should look for shallow areas with mixed sand and gravel or small gravel and rocks near woody structures. Popular lures are square-billed crankbaits, lipless crankbaits, jerk baits, and spinner baits. Good soft baits will include flukes, swimbaits, jig and pigs, and worms. White, shad, chartreuse, and crawfish are good color choices. Hybrid and Striped Bass will be transitioning from deep water to shallow water as water temperature changes. Find deep water cover off points, humps on the contour of the lakebed, and old river channels. Good shallow areas are backs of coves, big flats, long points, and feeder creeks. Hybrid and Striped bass will migrate toward tributaries and creeks as water temperatures increase. Hybrid and Striped Bass are schooling fish, so use electronics to find a group of fish on your screen. Popular lures are jigging spoons, lipless crankbaits, and deep diving crankbaits for deep water. For shallow water use swimbaits, stickbaits, suspended baits and even try topwater lures. Try a wide range of lures from larger baits up to eight inches. Trolling can be very effective at slow speeds. Spotted Bass are present in very good numbers in R. D. Bailey Lake and anglers can find them around deep rocky breaks, points, humps on the lake bottom, suspended around deep timber and bluff walls. Find areas with some current near structures while avoiding weeds and slower moving current. Spotted Bass may spawn in deeper water than Largemouth Bass. During the pre-spawn, find flats with small gravel substrate near brush, logs, or other cover. Popular lures include crankbaits, spinnerbaits, jerkbaits, Jigs, swimbaits, and tubes. Crappie will be showing up on brush piles, flooded timber or downed trees where they will spawn. Best baits for crappie will be small live minnows or small jigs fished close to the woody cover.

D4 Rivers and streams-

The New river has a good population of smallmouth bass, walleye, flathead and channel catfish, and musky. Smallmouth bass can be found in deep pools near shoals and flats, eddies along the bank, fallen timber from the shore, behind boulders or other current breaks. As the water warms, smallmouth bass will move from the deep pools to the head of the pools closer to the current. Popular lures are jigs, tubes, jerkbaits, crankbaits, spinnerbaits, swimbaits, and crawfish imitations. This is a good time of year to fish for walleye which will be moving upstream to find spawning areas. Look for deep pools near shallow areas like mouths of tributaries, gravel flats, and shoals. Walleye fishing is best in the evening or overcast skies when they move up into the shallower areas as sunlight fades. Jig heads with minnow-imitations, swimjigs, and long skinny crankbaits fished near the bottom as well as live bait work well this time of year. As the water warms, the catfish will begin biting better. Flathead catfish can be caught on live bait while channel cats will hit cut fish bait and other commercial stinky bait types. Muskies will be on the move and

anglers can find them closer to the shallower areas of rivers and streams. Use glide baits, in-line spinnerbaits, large swimjigs, jerkbaits and even some top water lures. Channel catfishing is good in the New river during the month of April and will be moving up stream to Sandstone Falls. R. D Bailey tailwaters will be stocked twice a month from February through April and then once in May.

D4 Impoundments -

Good population of bluegills are present with some larger than average-sized fish in many of the small impoundments located in District 4. Anglers should target structures like stumps and submerged timber. Look for pre-spawn sunfish near shallow areas early in the season and then find them in shallower water as the water temperatures rise above 55 degrees. Use small jigs, minnow imitations, night crawlers, and wax worms to catch bluegills. Largemouth will be transitioning from deep water to shallower water as the water temperatures increase. Find areas where shallow water with cover is next to deeper water. Points, coves, mouths of creeks to the end of creeks will hold bass. Find stumps, submerged brush, downed trees along the edges to locate bass. As water temperature increases or decreases largemouth bass will move between deep water and shallow water. Crappies will be moving into brush piles and downed trees along the edges of the lakes where they will spawn as water temperatures rise above 55 degrees. People can catch crappie on small jigs, worms, wax worms, stump jumper jigs and small minnows suspended under a bobber at a depth just above the brush piles. Several small impoundments will be stocked with trout. Check the current Fishing Regulation Brochure or our website www.wvdnr.gov for all the stocking information.