

#### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2024 PAGE 2B

#### GASCONADE Republican



**THE 2024** Owensville Area Youth Turkey Competition, held Saturday and Sunday, had 105 hunters sign up for this years event, with 38 turkeys checked in. Held during Missouri's Youth Turkey Season at the Owensville Gun Club, the competition is run by Josh Geisler of Geisler's Firearms and Archery. First place this year went to **Cameron Ryerson** of Owensville, second place went to **Macklin Neigh** of Sullivan and **Kwinton Green** of Belle took third. The winners photographs with their turkeys can be found on page 15B. Other youth turkey photos can be found on pages 8B, 9B, 12B, 13B and 16B. Pictured on the cover weighing his turkey for the competition is **Easton Geisler**. He is the son of Katia Geisler of Owensville. Easton's turkey weighed 23.5 lbs with a 9.25 inch beard. More youth turkey photos will appear in next week's Republican. The next event will be Youth Deer Season on November 2 and 3. For more information visit Facebook @ Owensville area youth deer and turkey hunting competition.



GASCONADE Republican

## **Gasconade County tops** harvest with 92 turkeys taken during youth weekend

#### **BY JOE JEREK**

Mo. Dept. of Conservation

JEFFERSON CITY - Preliminary data from the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) shows that young turkey hunters in Missouri harvested 3,721 birds over the past youth weekend, April 6 and 7. Top harvest counties were Gasconade with 92 birds harvested, Osage with 90, and Franklin with 89.

Young hunters checked 2,550 birds during the 2023 spring youth weekend. "Favorable morning weather appears to have more than made up for some windy afternoons this year," said MDC Turkey Biologist Nick Oakley. "Youth harvest increased by more than a thousand birds compared to the 2023 youth season and was the highest harvest total since 2017. Successively better hatches over the last several years have helped the turkey population stabilize and hunters are starting to see the results of that in the field.

Get more harvest information by county at extra.mdc.mo.gov/widgets/ harvest table/.

The regular spring turkey season runs April 15 through May 5. For more information on spring turkey hunting in Missouri, visit mdc.mo.gov/huntingtrapping/species/turkey.tion on turkey hunting in Missouri, visit mdc.mo.gov/ hunting-trapping/species/turkey.



#### **BY JOE JEREK**

Mo. Dept. of Conservation

JEFFERSON CITY - The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) announces changes

to turkey hunting regulations for the fall seasons. The Missouri Conservation Commission gave final approval to the changes at its April 5 open meeting in Rolla.

The approved changes to fall turkey hunting will reduce the harvest limit from four to two birds of either sex and will now require both fall firearms turkey hunters and fall archery turkey hunters to purchase a fall turkeyhunting permit. Turkeys will

no longer be included in the archery-deer permit. According to MDC, the changes to fall turkey hunting regulations aim to reduce the fall harvest while maintaining as much opportunity for hunters as possible.

The Commission gave initial approval to the regulation changes at its December open meeting. The changes were then open for public comment from Feb. 2 through March 2. MDC received about 40 comments with most pertain-

ing to the removal of turkeys from archery hunting permits.

The Commission previously approved MDC changes to shooting hours for the regular spring turkey season. Shooting hours are extended for private land only from a halfhour before sunrise to sunset. Shooting hours on public land will remain a half-hour before sunrise to 1 p.m. These changes are effective for the Spring 2024 turkey season. The annual youth spring turkey hunting portion will continue to have

extended shooting hours from a half-hour before sunrise to sunset for both public and private land. Learn more about turkey hunting in Missouri

atmdc.mo.gov/hunting-trapping/species/turkey.

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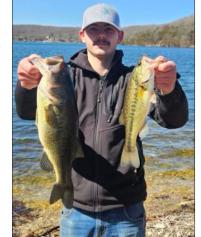




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#### Mid-Mo Fishing tournament

The Mid-Mo Fishing team held a tournament on March 9 at Peaceful Valley Lake. Luke Karg (photo top left) took first place with 9.47 pounds and a big bass of 4.06 lbs. In second place with 7.08 lbs was AJ Massa (not pictured). Tyler Litton (photo, second from left) with 7.05 lbs was the third place finisher. Also pictured with their catches from the tournament are (pictured clockwise from top center) Cody Lenauer, Jacob Alexander, Kaleb Neal, Blake Alexander, Quinton Goben and Branden Lenauer. The groups next tournament is scheduled for April 6. For more inforamtion, or how to join the team contact Kyle Meyer at 573-437-2522







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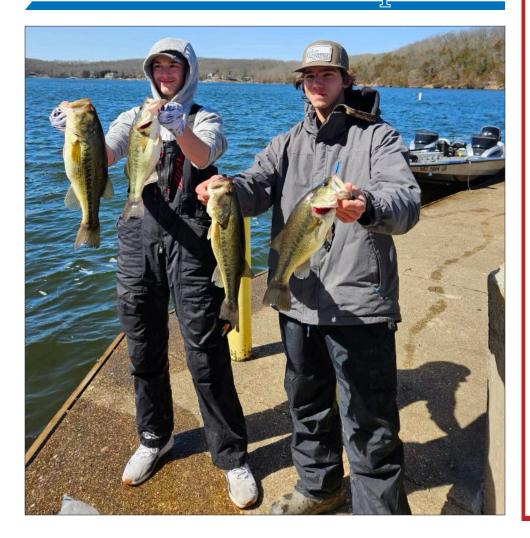
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It was two o'clock in the afternoon before we got to the lake, and it was up a little but not much. The water was just a little murky, but there was still a few feet or so of vis-

ibility in it. That's about perfect for a big spinner-bait. If you fish small spinners and light line, clear water is fine. but if you are after a brawling, broadsided bass, and the spinner blade is about the size of a spoon you use to serve mashed potatoes with, a little bit of murkiness in the water is fine.

I pulled a yel-

low and white skirt with two large gold willow-leaf spinners out of my tackle box, and I put a trailer hook on the main hook. I added a strip of white pork rind on the main hook below the trailer. so the trailer hook wouldn't come off, and it made the whole thing look even more delectable. When you get through with that you have about three-quarters of an ounce of lure to cast. With that I was using an Ambassadeur 4500 casting reel and 14-pound line, on a medium-heavy graphite rod. Of course, such a rig isn't meant for enjoying the resistance of small fish. You are hoping to attract a largemouth of lunker proportions, and you are looking for him in brushy water, back up in a cove which is full of timber, or maybe in that cove halfway out to the main lake.

And of course, I caught five bass in the first hour from 12- to 15- inches long. That is better than nothing, but I am one of those lunker-busters. I want a hog... a slab-sided frog eater! Smaller bass would have been great fun on a spinning outfit with eight-pound line but in the brush we were fishing, that kind of gear is too light. They were out away from the bank in six or eight feet of water, and to get to them, I was hanging up on occasion, then working to get that lure loose.

It happens that way when you fish a spinner-bait the size of a bird's nest in that kind of water. You don't just cast it and retrieve it. You vibrate that blade, you lift it and you drop it and you let it fall and flutter into water where there are logs and limbs. You try to tantalize a bass, get him to rise up from the brushpile hideout where he lurks and come after that spinner bait. You use your rod tip, you feel your lure through

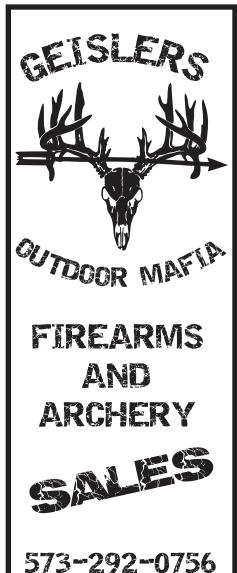


places where you can't actually see what is there. I don't know what a bass thinks that spinner-bait is, but you make him like the idea of eating it, by causing the blade to

> throb and the skirt to undulate. You make it look alive, like something with a fishy taste to it.

There are all kinds of spinnerbaits today, and blades of a variety of colors and shapes. Apparently my gold willow leaf variety was what they wanted that day last week. I had just retrieved the lure from an

underwater limb, and made another cast ahead of me, when between two upright trees, I felt it hit another limb. I lifted it



quickly and felt it stop and give just a little. Then in a split second I saw it move, away and down. I set the hook hard and the bass, only eight or ten feet from the boat, didn't give an inch. A hog! Finally I had attracted a bass worthy of the gear I was using. He just stripped a foot or so of line against my drag, then came back below me, arcing the rod like a catfish on a cane pole. It was fun... at times like that I remember why I like to fish for bass.

No, it isn't quite along the lines of dueling a four-pound smallmouth in a current below a river shoal, but a big largemouth bass with a mouth that will easily hold a softball, and a belly wide and heavy with eggs, will make you forget there is any work left undone at home. I fought him, and I won. Many times I have hooked bass of that size and they have won the struggle, but last week it was my turn. I hefted him, actually a 'her' and my partner took a couple of pictures. The bass was a little better than 21 inches long, and

you can guess it's weight by going to my website (www.larrydablemontoutdoors. blogspot.com) and looking at the photo.

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The lake was a place of solitude that day in midweek. There wasn't a boat to be seen, not an unnatural sound to be heard. I don't fish lakes which are heavy on development, and I don't fish on weekends because there are too many boats on the water, often because of the tournament crowds. I like being out there alone when I can be, where you can't see anything but water and woods around you. And with those conditions, every now and then...

Read more of my outdoor news and columns on larrydablemontoutdoors. Email me at lightninridge47@gmail.com. Our river trip on the Big Piney will be April 20 and the Truman Lake pontoon trip will be April 27. Call and talk too my secretary, Ms. Wiggins, if you want to go along, or get more information. The office phone is 417-777-5227.



#### Stay Safe this Spring on the Farm!

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# Mushroom hunting tips

Available April 11 in person or on line

#### **BY FRANCIS SKALICKY**

Missouri Department of Conservation

ASH GROVE, Mo. - Morels and some other types of mushrooms that are found in the outdoors can be a tasty addition to the dinner table. However, there are also mushrooms that should be avoided.

People can get information on how to tell edible mushrooms from mushrooms you should steer clear of at the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) program "Learning to Hunt: Mushrooms." This program will be 6-7:30 p.m. on April 11 at MDC's Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center and will have virtual and in-person options for attendance. MDC's Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center is located at 4897 Greene County Farm Road 61.

People can register for the virtual attendance option at:

https://mdc-event-web.s3licensing. com/Event/EventDetails/197170

People can register for the in-person attendance option at:

https://mdc-event-web.s3licensing. com/Event/EventDetails/197168

At the April 11 program, MDC Outdoor Education Center Specialist Ali Cannefax will provide tips on how to find and identify edible mushrooms. Morel mushrooms are a popular spring mushroom and will be included among the mushrooms Cannefax will discuss.

Though this program is free, registration is required to participate. Use the link above. Registrants must provide an e-mail, so a program link can be sent to them. This program will include a chat-based questionand-answer period where participants can interact with the presenters.

People can stay informed about upcoming programs at MDC's Andy Dalton Range and Outdoor Education Center and other nearby MDC facilities by signing up for text alerts and e-mail bulletins. People who have questions about upcoming events or how to sign up for text alerts from the Dalton Range can call 417-742-4361.

Staff at MDC facilities across the state are holding in-person and virtual programs. A listing of these programs can be found at mdc.mo.gov/events.



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**SHOPHIA DWYER,** 11, holds turkey she harvested during the Spring Youth Turkey Season. This was her first turkey. The turkey weighed 25 lbs. and sported a 10.5" beard. She is the daughter of Alex and MyLe Dwyer of Gerald.



**ELLIE BRINKER** proudly displays the turkey she harvested during Spring Youth Turkey Season. She is 6 years-old and the daugther of Kinsey and Adam Brinker of Bland. The bird weighed 24 lbs.



**GEORGE VANDEGRIFFE,** 15, of Owensville killed this bird April 7 in the Spring Youth Turkey Season. The turkey was 26 lbs. with 1.5 inch spurs and an 11 inch beard. He is the son of Jason and Jessica Vandegriffe.



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**ASPEN VANDEGRIFFE** poses with her first 25 pound turkey taken in during Spring Youth Turkey Season. Aspen is 8 years-old. She is pictured with Trent Kinsey, her uncle. She is the daughter of Jeremy and Tiffany Vandegriffe from Belle.



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**A DOE** and her fawn (photo left) stop to checkout the photographer. A buck (above) meanders through an open field.

PHOTOS BY DAVE MARNER



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## Missouri angler catches world record-sized bighead carp

#### JILL PRITCHARD

Mo. Dept. of Conservation

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) confirms George Chance of Festus is the latest state record holder after catching a massive 97-pound bighead carp from the Mississippi River. Chance was bank fishing for catfish with a bottom-bouncing crankbait when he hooked into the fish March 19. The previous pole-and-line state record was an 80-pound fish caught from the Lake of the Ozarks in 2004.

"You kind of know what a fish is once



you hook into it based on how it fights," Chance said. "It was moving pretty slow and I originally thought it could be a flathead."

Chance was fighting with the fish for around 20 minutes before he finally got it onto the shore.

"The more it fought, I saw it's tail and knew it was some type of carp," he recalled. "I was able to hook him with a hay hook in order to get him out of the water. It looked to be 50 or 60 pounds at least."

Chance took the monster fish to a nearby recycling center to use their scale, which prompted him to call his local conservation agent.

"They told me it was a state record, and I said, 'You've got to be kidding me!", he laughed. "Then later they said 'It's not just a state record, it's a world record!' and I said 'You've got to be kidding me!' I had no idea this would happen would I woke up that morning."

Chance's catch is the third state record fish recorded for 2024. The fish also beats the current bighead carp pole-and-line world record of 90-pounds.

"I chopped up the fish and put it in my garden," Chance said. "I'm going to eat it in the form of tomatoes and cucumbers."

Chance also noted the carp was full of eggs and likely would have spawned

**GEORGE CHANCE** of Festus was bank fishing from the Mississippi River March 19 when he reeled in a monster 97-pound bighead carp. The fish not only beats the previous state record of 80 pounds, but beats the current pole-and-line world record weight of 90-pounds.

#### PHOTO COURTESY OF GEORGE CHANCE

"Three-fourths of the Earth's surface is water, and one-fourth is land. It is quite clear that the good Lord intended us to spend triple the amount of time fishing as taking care of the lawn." — Chuck Clark

"There are only two occasions when Americans respect privacy. Those are prayer and fishing."

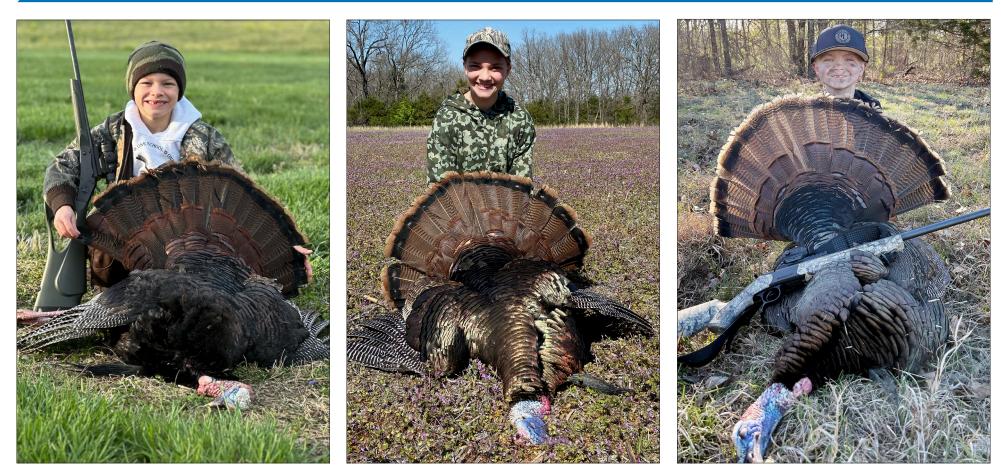
-Herbert Hoover

"I only make movies to finance my fishing." —Lee Marvin, American actor this spring. Bighead carp are an invasive fish from Asia. MDC encourages people to harvest carp to help remove them from Missouri waters.

Missouri state record fish are recognized in two categories: pole-and-line and alternative methods. Alternative methods include trotline, throwline, limb line, bank line, jug line, gig, bow, crossbow, underwater spearfishing, snagging, snaring, grabbing, or atlatl. For more information on state record fish, visit http://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZCp.



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**WITH PATIENCE** Keever Schaning (left), 7, and his sister Lydia, 10, from Owensville, both harvested turkeys opening day of youth season on their grandparents farm in Owensville. Keever's bird measured with a 10 inch beard, 1 inch spurs and 19.2 lbs. Lydia's bird measured with a 9 inch beard, 1.75 inch spurs and 25 lbs. They are the children of Josh and Katie Schaning of Owensville.

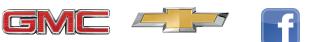
**KLINT MEYER,** 6, took this first gobbler on Sunday. Klint is the son of Kyle and Jodi Meyer of Bland.





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**BLAKE KOCH,** 10, harvested his first turkey over the weekend. It weighed 23 lbs. with a 10 inch beard. Blake is the son of Brian and Heidi Koch of Owensville.



**FAYE GEISLER,** (left, photo above) poses with her brother Harley and her first gobbler that weighed 26 lbs and had a 9 inch beard. Harley (photo right) proudly shows off his turkey taken over the weekend. His turkey weighed 26 lbs and had a 10 inch beard. He won 3rd place in the Belle youth contest. They are the children of Josh Geisler.



#### DRIFTWOOD OUTDOORS Catch spring slabs when crappie come shallow

Crappie fishing is a signal spring is upon. When "slabs", as big crappie are called, are found close to shore, you should also expect turkeys to be gobbling and morel mushrooms to be popping. I've often said, if I were in

charge, we'd have 10 Octobers and two Aprils. In my book, were entering the second best outdoors month of the year.

Crappie are a common panfish. They're fun to catch and great to eat. Using minnows under slip-bobbers is a common tactic for catching crappies, but jigs often work just as well. This time of year, you'll catch crappie

shallow. I'm talking in less than 10-feet of water. You'll want to find solid bottoms around brush or near drop-offs on ledges. The crappie bite might be strong, but you still must know where they're at. If you don't have a boat, there are many options for fishing from shore.

As water temperatures continue to rise, crappie are drawn to the warmer shallow wa-

ter along the shore and in the back of bays. Standing timber in shallow watershould be one of your key targets. Fallen trees, brush piles and manmade structures, like docks or water intakes, are also prime locations to find shallow water crappie.

I've been fishing the same lake for a few weeks waiting

on the crappie to move shallow. Just the other night, they finally showed up where I've been waiting for them. When I pitched my bait to the end of a fallen tree, a beautiful 11-inch crappie slammed my minnow. I couldn't believe how aggressive the bite was. I dropped the fish in my basket and put on another minnow. A minute later, I was dropping in another keeper.

Personally, I'm a bobber man. Grandpa used to get all fancy with his slip bobbers. He'd use these long, tall pencil bobbers. I believe he thought of himself as some sort of panfish master, making his own jigs and all, but I don't think one needs to make it so complicated. Just stick with a nice, simple slip bobber.

My preferred bait for targeting crappie is minnows. I usually fish them between two and four feet deep. Many crappie anglers swear by jigs. For me, there's just something about watching a bobber dance. So, whether you like casting or you like pitching minnows under bobbers, both methods work extremely well when the bite is on.

To find big crappies, even in the spring, you're going to have to do some exploring. A tip I tend to follow when targeting a big body of water is to break the lake down into smaller lakes. There are crappie all over on big reservoirs, so what you want to do is pick a cove or a finger and dissect it. Learn it. Know it. You'll be way better off having a thorough knowledge of a particular area than a general knowledge of the whole lake.

While you're fishing this time of year, keep in mind you may also luck into a find of morel mushrooms. Good areas to look for morels include south-facing slopes, around fallen logs and around the bases of elm trees, especially dead ones. South-facing slopes are prime spots early in the season because they warm up first.

The spring trifecta is to kill a turkey, catch a crappie, and find a morel mushroom in the same day. If you can pull this off and put all three of these gifts from nature on a dinner table at the same time, then my friend, you will be experiencing a meal money can't buy. Forget eating like a king or queen. Royalty wouldn't know what to do with a Midwestern meal this good.

See you down the trail....

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**by BRANDON BUTLER** 

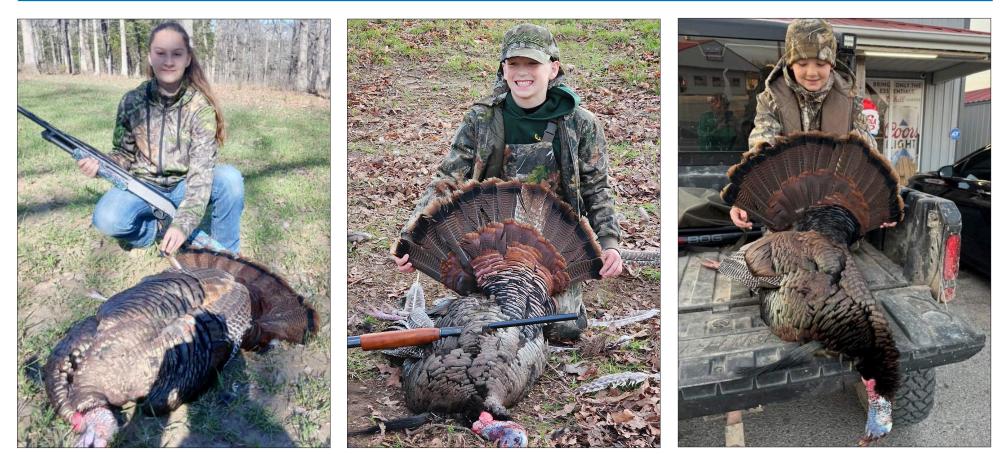
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#### GASCONADE Republican



**CAMERON RYERSON,** (photo left) of Owensville took first place with a 27.8 lb. turkey with two beards (9.75 inches and 7.5 inches). Second place wend to **MACKLIN NEIGH** (center) of Sullivan with a 26.5 lb. turkey with a 9 inch and 6 inch beard. **KWINTON GREEN,** (right) of Belle took 3rd place in the Owensville area youth turkey hunt with his first double beard gobbler. More youth turkey photos will appear in next week's Republican.





TESS MEYER daughter of Collin and Leann Meyer of Hermann poses with her first turkey. She harvested the jake in Gasconade County on Saturday, the first day of Youth Turkey Season.



PEYTON SELLS, 12 harvested this double bearded gobbler Sunday morning with his grandpa Eddie Lake. Peyton is the son of Toni and Galen Wells of Owensville. His bird weighed in at 19 lbs.

"My biggest worry is that when I'm dead and gone, my wife will sell my fishing gear for what I said I paid for it." —Koos Brandt

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