

2023 WEST VIRGINIA BIG BUCK CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

The West Virginia Big Buck Certification Program was established in 1964 to recognize hunters who harvested extraordinarily large-antlered bucks. Although the official “contest” was discontinued in 2013, the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR) continues to officially score deer as part of this program.

The Boone and Crockett Club and Pope and Young Club scoring systems are used to officially score each deer, depending upon method of harvest. Guidelines for the program are as follows:

1. Effective 2015, deer must have a DNR-issued game check confirmation number (13-digit).
2. To be eligible, the deer must be officially scored after a 60-day drying period by an Official Scorer who is approved by Boone and Crockett and/or Pope and Young.
3. Any bow or crossbow-killed deer must score at least 125 Typical or 155 NonTypical. Any gun or muzzleloader-killed deer must score at least 140 Typical or 165 Non-Typical.
4. For state record entries, field photos of the freshly killed deer (antlers attached) must be submitted at the time of scoring.

In 2023-2024, 98 hunters had their deer officially measured by an Official Scorer at a WVDNR District Office, WVDNR field office, or by an Official Scorer at a different location. There are 15 WVDNR Wildlife Biologists and Wildlife Specialists throughout the state who are certified as Official Scorers by Boone and Crockett Club and/or Pope and Young Club. During the 2023 hunting season, **43** bucks (*See attached table) were harvested with a gun, muzzleloader, bow, or crossbow and met the respective minimum score requirement and other requirements listed above.

It is noteworthy that a few deer met the respective minimum score requirement, however proper game check information or other important data was not provided. A good practice is to record the DNR-issued game check confirmation number and keep it with the mount/skull plate so that it is not misplaced. A hunter may only have their deer scored by one Official Scorer. It is the hunter’s responsibility to work with their Official Scorer to ensure all documentation is accurately completed and submitted to the coordinator of the WV Big Buck Certification Program by the annual deadline.

Thank you to all participants in the WV Big Buck Certification Program this year.

2023 Big Buck Score Rankings

Antler Configuration: Typical

Weapon: Bow

Name	County	Harvest Date	Rank	Score
Christopher Davenport	Braxton	9/30/2023	1	175.3
Jason Spurlock	Logan	11/7/2023	2	173.5
Shaun Minnix	McDowell	11/7/2023	3	164.0
Joshua Gross	McDowell	11/5/2023	4	163.1
Dawson Morrison	Mingo	10/13/2023	5	161.4
Marvin Joe Bradford	Mingo	11/18/2023	6	157.6
Michael Perry	Lincoln	11/12/2023	7	155.3
Lt Eskew	Kanawha	12/20/2023	8	150.4
Micah Marcum	Wayne	11/6/2023	9	143.5
Ryan Huffman	McDowell	11/24/2023	10	141.5
Riley Doss	Logan	12/28/2023	11	140.2
Derick Alexander	Monroe	11/11/2023	12	139.1
Braden Higgins	Mercer	11/26/2023	13	138.5
Bryan Wooten	Wayne	11/6/2023	14	137.6
Brandon Vinson	Wyoming	10/24/2023	15	137.5
Tasha Vinson	Wyoming	10/14/2023	16	136.6
Matthew Deal	Kanawha	12/30/2023	17	135.6
Michael Gilliam	Logan	11/15/2023	18	131.4
Brandon Cline	Mingo	11/24/2022	19	130.5
Bradley Pauley	Boone	12/7/2023	20	129.0
Waylon Kincaid	Clay	10/7/2023	21	128.6
Kenneth Crowder	Doddridge	12/10/2020	22	127.3
Brian Smith	Jackson	10/21/2023	23	126.1
Patrick Epperly	Mingo	11/12/2023	24	125.5
Brett Walker	Putnam	10/30/2023	25	125.3

Antler Configuration: Non-Typical**Weapon: Bow**

Name	County	Harvest Date	Rank	Score
Larry Kade	McDowell	11/14/2023	1	186.3
Mikey Brown	Logan	11/14/2023	2	171.2

Antler Configuration: Typical**Weapon: Rifle**

Name	County	Harvest Date	Rank	Score
Kathy Thomas	Kanawha	11/27/2023	1	150.4
Matthew McPeake	Raleigh	11/22/2023	2	150.2
Paul Williams	Doddridge	11/20/2023	3	144.4

Antler Configuration: Non-Typical**Weapon: Rifle**

Name	County	Harvest Date	Rank	Score
Daniel Dorsey	Greenbrier	11/20/2023	1	171.2

Antler Configuration: Typical**Weapon: Crossbow**

Name	County	Harvest Date	Rank	Score
Robert Winters III	Cabell	10/18/2023	1	154
Derek Moorison	Mingo	11/20/2023	2	149.3
Jonathan Miller	Lincoln	10/8/2023	3	144.6
Matthew Tolley	Mingo	12/28/2023	4	141.4
Lemuel Griffith	Putnam	10/1/2023	5	141.1

George Stacy	Mingo	11/6/2023	6	139.1
Nicholas Wolfe	Jackson	11/4/2023	7	136.6
Troy New	Mingo	12/1/2023	8	135.4
Chris Nice	Kanawha	10/6/2023	9	135.1
Gary Keith Vannatter	Mingo	12/23/2020	10	126.3

Antler Configuration: Non-Typical Weapon: Crossbow

Name	County	Harvest Date	Rank	Score
Billy White	Braxton	11/11/2023	1	186.2

Antler Configuration: Typical Weapon: Muzzleloader

Name	County	Harvest Date	Rank	Score
Kaylee Bower	Raleigh	12/15/2023	1	141.4

Antler Configuration: Non-Typical Weapon: Muzzleloader

No scores in this category