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News

Arkansas Outdoors for January 7, 2009

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Snow goose conservation season opens Feb. 2

LITTLE ROCK - Waterfowl hunting is traditionally a winter sport, but goose hunters in Arkansas will have an extra three months to hunt "light geese" (snow geese, blue geese and Ross's geese). A special snow goose conservation season will open on Feb. 2 and extend through April 25.

It isn't a special hunting season but a Conservation Order according to Luke Naylor, waterfowl biologist for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. "Whatever you want to call it, the regulations are relaxed because it's important that hunters be allowed to harvest as many snow geese as they can," he said. There's no daily bag or possession limit on light geese during the Conservation Order, guns do not have to be plugged, electronic calls can be used and shooting hours have been extended to ½ hour before and after sunset.

The requirements for hunting are a valid hunting license and a special snow goose registration number. The hunting licenses can be either resident or non-resident. Hunters may get registration numbers, which are free, by calling the AGFC at (800) 364-4263 between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.



Naylor said the special snow goose conservation season was initiated several years ago and continues this year in an effort to reduce the snow goose population from present levels. "Snow geese numbers have increased to the point that they're damaging their nesting habitat in the sub-Arctic and Arctic tundra, posing a serious threat to the long-term health of the Arctic ecosystem and its associated wildlife communities. The Conservation Order with its relaxed harvest regulations is an attempt to reduce the population to a more healthy level by allowing hunters the opportunity to harvest more geese," he added.

"This is a unique situation for modern-day waterfowl hunters," says Naylor. "Most waterfowl regulations are implemented to protect species from overharvest. With snow geese, the objective is to maximize the harvest, and for

exactly the same reason - to protect the species and other species associated with Arctic tundra habitat," he said.

Winter fishing reports available online from AGFC

LITTLE ROCK – With ice on the trees and the temperature hovering around the freezing mark, fishing may be the last thing on Arkansas angler's minds. But, many clever anglers know that winter produces some of the best fishing - and lunker-size catches of several species - in Arkansas. Lakes and streams aren't crowded, either.

Arkansas fishermen can find out about current conditions on lakes and rivers across the state on the Internet, and the information is free.

The fishing report of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission provides capsule reports from knowledgeable sources in all corners of Arkansas and is updated each Wednesday. The report also features a fishing tip of the week to help anglers land that trophy fish. Fishermen also can contact each of the report's fishing informants directly by accessing their websites or by phone. Just go to www.agfc.com and click on 'Fishing.'



To sign up for an electronic copy sent each week to your email address, just send an email to arkansasoutdoors@agfc.com and place "Fishing Report" in the subject line.

Bird box project can be a family's January tradition

LITTLE ROCK – For a number of Arkansans, January means it's time to build a bird house. Many call them bluebird boxes, and that's fine. Other birds make use of the wood structures also.

Along with helping birds find suitable places to nest, a bird box project can be ideal parent-child or grandparent-child endeavors. A youngster helping by sawing a board, driving a nail or putting in a screw quickly benefits from an accomplishment.

A little planning helps with this bird box project.

If your participating youngster is not somewhat experienced with tools and carpentry, use the KIS approach – keep it simple. Plans are available on the Internet, but look them over. Skip the ones that call for angled saw cuts and other complex woodworking techniques. Plans are also available from the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's offices around the state. A simple box suitable for bluebirds and many other common Arkansas species can be made from one board that is an inch thick nominally (three-quarters of an inch actual size), six inches wide (5 ½ inches actual size) and six feet long will be enough for a basic bird house. Several smaller scrap pieces of wood will work also.



Use a hand saw for the cutting if the young helper is a first-timer instead of a power saw. Teach the helper the builder's axiom of measure twice then cut once. Let the youngster do the measuring, the marking then the cutting.



This alone is a worthwhile confidence builder. Consider teaching the technique of small pilot holes for the nails – or use wood screws to put the box together.

With some confidence from the saw work, show the child

how to bore the quarter-inch drainage holes in the bottom.

The boring of the entrance hole may be more difficult for a beginner, but let him or her watch you do it with a spade bit of a circle-cutting saw bit. Then on a second box project, the helper may be ready for this step.

Getting the wood for the box can be fun too.

Absolutely, under no circumstances, use treated lumber. The chemicals are toxic to birds. For the same reason, don't paint or stain the bird house. Some authorities believe that latex paint on the outside won't hurt, but most advise leaving the wood unpainted for a more natural appearance as well as safety for birds' health.

If you have some wood around the house, use it. Yellow pine and fir are common for general building projects, but these aren't the best for a bird box. They will work but not last as long in weather as cedar, commonly found in fence pickets.

Give a call or stop by a fence company to see if untreated wood is available. Ask about scraps or discards. There's nothing wrong with being a scrounger when it comes to bird houses. If you find rough-sawn or unplanned lumber, take it. Just allow for the extra thickness if you are following a plan, and the birds may even like it better than smooth-faced wood.

"Woodworking for Wildlife" is a handy and informative large-format book for the home shop worker and is available at Game and Fish Commission offices. It costs \$6.50 plus shipping. Phone 1-800-364-GAME to order.

Size, wing shape help in recognizing eagles at a distance

LITTLE ROCK – There's a really big bird soaring in the distance. Is it an eagle? Winter is bald eagle watching time in Arkansas, and beginners often have questions about identifying the national symbols in the field.

How do you tell an eagle from a hawk or a turkey vulture (often called a "buzzard" by Arkansans)? First of all, size is a major identifier, according to Arkansas Game and Fish Commission staff members. Eagles are much bigger than hawks and owls and are also larger than vultures.

While its hard to tell the actual length of wingspan while a bird is soaring, for comparison purposes, a large female red-tailed hawk will have a wing span of 4 feet while a bald eagle's wingspan is between 7 and 8 feet – almost twice as wide as the hawk's wingspan.

Another clue is the flight pattern. Bald eagles soar with their wings extended flat; vultures hold their wings in a V shape. Many hawks also soar with wings flat and not in the V shape.

A mature bald eagle is easy to identify if you can get close enough for a good look. It is all dark brown with a white head and tail, and its legs are bare and yellow.

The golden eagle, not nearly so common in Arkansas, has a brown head and tail and legs covered with feathers down to the feet, according to the AGFC's nongame migratory Bird Program Leader Karen Rowe. "If you grab a bird book and look up goldens and balds, you'll see that the immature golden will have central white spots on the underwing and that's visible if you are under a soaring bird. Immature bald eagles will have mottled white all over the underwing," Rowe said.



Boating education class schedule

Click here for boating education information: <http://www.agfc.com/education-class/boating-education.aspx>

Hunter education class schedule

Click here for hunter education information: <http://www.agfc.com/education-class/hunter-education.aspx>

What's open for hunting

Current and approaching seasons in Arkansas:

Deer:

Archery – All zones: Oct. 1, 2008 to Feb. 28, 2009.

Duck:

Dec. 6-Dec. 24 and Dec. 26-Jan. 25.

The youth waterfowl hunt will be Jan. 31-Feb. 1.

Statewide Canada goose season:

Dec. 26, 2008 - Jan. 30, 2009 (bag limit two).

White-fronted goose season:

Dec. 6-Dec. 24 and Dec. 26-Jan. 30 with a bag limit of two.

Snow, blue and Ross' goose season:

Nov. 8-Dec. 24 and Dec. 26-Jan. 30 with a bag limit of 20.

Snow goose Conservation Order:

Feb. 2-April 25 with no bag limit.

Dove:

Dec. 13, 2008-Jan. 2, 2009

Spotted Skunk, Weasel Hunting:

Closed

Fall Turkey:

Archery: All Zones: Oct. 1, 2008-Feb. 28, 2009.

Bear:

Modern Gun: Zone 5: Dec 6-14

Zone 5A: Nov 29-Dec 14

Zones 3, 4, 6 and 7: closed

Furbearers:

Trapping (other than coyote, beaver, muskrat, nutria): sunrise, Nov. 15-sunset, Feb. 22.

Coyote trapping: sunrise, Aug. 1-sunset, March 31.

Beaver, muskrat, nutria trapping: sunrise, Nov. 15-sunset, March 31.

Gray fox, mink, opossum, red fox, striped skunk hunting: sunrise, Sept. 1-sunset, Feb 28.

Raccoon day or night hunting: sunrise, Sept 1-sunset, March 31.

Raccoon night hunting: sunset, July 1-sunrise, Aug. 31.

Bobcat hunting: sunrise, Oct. 1-sunset, Feb. 28 and from the first day of spring turkey season through June 8.

Coyote hunting: sunrise, July 1-sunset, Feb. 28 and from the first day of spring turkey season through June 14.

River otter hunting: sunrise, Nov. 15-sunset, Feb. 28.

Muskrat, nutria, beaver hunting: sunrise, Sept. 1-sunset, March 31.

Badger, spotted skunk and weasel hunting: Closed.

Elk:

Zones 1, 2, 3, 4, A and B: Dec. 8-12.

Zone 4 private lands: Jan. 12-16. The quota is five antlerless elk; two either-sex permits also will be issued.

Quail:

Statewide: Nov. 1-Feb. 8.

Rabbit

Statewide: Sept. 1-Feb. 28.

Squirrel

Statewide: Sept. 6, 2008-Feb. 28, 2009 and May 16-June 14, 2009.

Crow

Statewide: Sept. 6-Feb. 23.

Projected opening dates for the 2009-2010 deer hunting season.**Archery:**

Oct. 1, 2009

Muzzleloader:

Oct. 17, 2009

Modern Gun:

Nov. 14, 2009

Coming up in the outdoors

Jan. 9-11 – Marine Expo at the Statehouse Convention Center in Little Rock. Admission is \$5 for adults with children under 12 years admitted free. For more information contact Ken or Kelly Griffey at (501) 765-1423 or (501) 225-6177.

Jan. 10 - Stuttgart Chapter of Ducks Unlimited Membership Dinner, 6 p.m. at the Occasions Banquet Hall in Stuttgart. For more information call: Lester Seiber at (870) 946-5713.

Jan. 10 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "Bald Eagle."

Jan. 10 – Booneville Chapter of Ducks Unlimited membership banquet, First Baptist Church in Booneville. For more information contact Josh Boersma at (479) 518-4250 or boersma66@yahoo.com.

Jan. 17 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "Watchable Wildlife and Outdoor Photography."

Jan. 17 – L'Anguille River Chapter of Ducks Unlimited Membership Dinner, at the Harrisburg National Guard Armory. For more information call: Jason Stewart at (870) 219-0782.

Jan. 17 – Grand Prairie Chapter of Ducks Unlimited- Membership Dinner at 6 p.m. at St. Cyrus Catholic Church in Slovak. For more information call Bob Butler at (501) 847-3888.

Jan. 17 – Chicot County Chapter of Ducks Unlimited Membership Dinner, at the Lake Village Country Club. For more information call: Daniel Clark at (501) 912-0397.

Jan. 17 – Black River Chapter of Ducks Unlimited membership banquet, Rolling Hills Country Club in Pocahontas. For more information contact Joey Pfeffer at (870) 378-1926 or joey.pfeffer@afbic.com.

Jan. 22 – AGFC Commission monthly meeting at the AGFC Little Rock central office, 2 Natural Resources Dr., beginning at 9 a.m.

Jan. 23 – White River Chapter of Ducks Unlimited Membership Dinner at the American Legion Hall in Clarendon. For more information call: Fusty Lansford at (870) 468-6097.

Jan. 24 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "Ladies Only Duck Hunt."

Jan. 24 – Lawrence County Chapter of Ducks Unlimited Membership Dinner at the Walnut Ridge Country Club. For more information call: Bill Davis at (870) 886-3820.

Jan. 24 – Bottomland Chapter of Ducks Unlimited Membership Dinner at the Tri-County Farmers Building in Holly Grove. For more information call: Stanley Powell at (870) 270-7331.

Jan. 24 – Three Rivers South Chapter of Ducks Unlimited Membership Dinner at the Arkansas County Fairground Building in DeWitt. For more information call: Gary Boyd at (870) 946-9430.

Jan. 30 – Arkansas State University Chapter of Ducks Unlimited Membership Dinner at the Moose Lodge in Jonesboro. For more information call: Jonathan Higgins at (870) 821-1306.

Jan. 31 – Outdoor Sportsmen Banquet, Greenwood High School basketball arena, 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Jan. 31 - Talkin' Turkey and Whistlin' Quail Workshop, 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., Eagle View in Searcy. Topics are habitat and management of turkey and quail. For more information and registration, contact White County Cooperative Extension Service, (501) 268-5394.

Jan. 31 – University of Arkansas Razorback Chapter of Ducks Unlimited Membership Dinner at the Fayetteville Town Center. For more information call: Dane Harris at (501) 977-4762.

Jan. 31 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "Late Season Duck Hunt."

Jan. 31 – Calhoun County Chapter of Ducks Unlimited Membership Dinner at the Calhoun County Fairground Building in Hampton. For more information call: Cody Strickland at (870) 818-5032.

Feb. 6-8 – Arkansas Sportshow presented by the Rotary Club of Jonesboro. The Sportshow will be held at the Convocation Center on the campus of Arkansas State University. For more information, go to <http://www.arsportshow.com/home.php>.

Feb. 7 - Wildlife Habitat Improvement Workshop, 3 p.m. - 7:30 p.m., Janet Huckabee Arkansas River Valley Nature Center, Barling. Topics include deer, duck, quail and turkey habitat. For more information and registration, contact Crawford County Cooperative Extension Service, (479) 474-5286.

Feb. 7 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "The Art of Knife Making."

Feb. 8 - 12 - The Nature of Agritourism Retreat, sponsored by the Business of Birding Institute, Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas, DeWitt, Arkansas. Farmers, landowners, lodge owners, hunting guides, community leaders or anyone with an interest in starting or expanding Nature Tourism needs to attend this retreat. Topics include habitat management, business planning, risk analysis and marketing. Participants stay in lodges, interact with a variety of experts, go on field trips, and leave with a business plan for their land or community. The birding community as a potential market is explored. Information including registration is available at <http://www.aragriculture.org/aai/retreat/default.asp> or contact Kathy Radomski at (870) 946-3506, ext. 1617.

Feb. 12 – Arkansas Tech University Chapter of Ducks Unlimited Membership Dinner at the Lion's Den in Dardanelle. For more information call: Micah Tindall at (870) 421-5167.

Feb. 14 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "Run, Rabbit, Run."

Feb. 19 – AGFC Commission monthly meeting at the AGFC Little Rock central office, 2 Natural Resources Dr., beginning at 9 a.m. Topics include the 2009-2010 general hunting regulation proposals.

Feb. 21 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "Quail for Kids."

Feb. 28 - Bucks and Ducks Habitat Improvement Program, Lawrence County Community Room, Walnut Ridge, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Topics include waterfowl, deer, turkey and quail. For more information and registration, contact Lawrence County Cooperative Extension Service, (870) 886-3741.

Feb. 28 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "Zig-Jigging for Trout."

Feb. 28 - Arkansas Catfishing Association younament at the Arkansas River in North Little Rock at the Alltel Arena access. For ACA members: rod and reel, catch and release, and alive and well. For an ACA application form, constitution and bylaws, local conditions and information along with the rules and regulations, visit our website at http://arkcats.org/Home_Page.php or Lee Fields of Russellville at (479)

331-0399 or (870) 577-7289 or by email at leefields@centurytel.net, or Paul Schweyer of Barling, paulschweyer@sbcglobal.net at (479) 452-1652 or (479) 719-0474.

March 7 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "Raccoon Hunting."

March 7 – Marion Chapter of Ducks Unlimited Membership Dinner at the Barton Ag Center. For more information call: Irwin Burton at (870) 738-3442.

March 7 – Saline County Chapter of Ducks Unlimited Membership Dinner at the Saline County Girls and Boys Club in Benton. For more information call: Keith Johnson at (501) 840-2379.

March 14 – Springdale Chapter of Ducks Unlimited Membership Dinner at the Parson's Rodeo Arena. For more information call: Steve Delancey at (479) 466-4666.

March 14-15 – Arkansas Catfishing Association tournament at Lakes Millwood (Yarborough Landing) and Earling (Hwy. 53 to Lake Earling Park's Public Ramp) in southwest Arkansas between Hope and Texarkana. For ACA members: rod and reel, catch and release, and alive and well. This will our yearly charitable tournament whereas we suspend the normal rules and "go for the double catch" to donate to a local charity to help feed the hungry. For an ACA application form, constitution and bylaws, local conditions and information along with the rules and regulations, visit our website at http://arkcats.org/Home_Page.php or Lee Fields of Russellville at (479) 331-0399 or (870) 577-7289 or by email at leefields@centurytel.net, or Paul Schweyer of Barling, paulschweyer@sbcglobal.net at (479) 452-1652 or (479) 719-0474.

March 19 – AGFC Commission monthly meeting at the AGFC Little Rock central office, 2 Natural Resources Dr., beginning at 9 a.m. Topics include the 2009-2010 general hunting regulations approval.

April 16 – AGFC Commission monthly meeting at the AGFC Little Rock central office, 2 Natural Resources Dr., beginning at 9 a.m.

April 18– Arkansas Catfishing Association tournament at Lake Maumelle launching from the Jolly Roger Marina. For ACA members: rod and reel, catch and release, and alive and well. For an ACA application form, constitution and bylaws, local conditions and information along with the rules and regulations view our website at http://arkcats.org/Home_Page.php or Lee Fields of Russellville at (479) 331-0399 or (870) 577-7289 or by email at leefields@centurytel.net, or Paul Schweyer of Barling, paulschweyer@sbcglobal.net at (479) 452-1652 or (479) 719-0474.

May 21 – AGFC Commission monthly meeting at the AGFC Little Rock central office, 2 Natural Resources Dr., beginning at 9 a.m.

June 18 – AGFC Commission monthly meeting in Lake Village. Topics include the early migratory bird season proposals.

For the latest in Arkansas Game and Fish Commission information go to www.agfc.com or call the Wildlife Information Hotline, (800)440-1477.

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