



WWW.AGFC.COM

News

Arkansas Outdoors

February 4, 2009 - Keith Stephens (501) 223-6342, e-mail: kastephens@agfc.state.ar.us

Today's Topics

[AGFC begins overhaul of elk management plan](#)
[Ross reflects on Sportsmen's Caucus post](#)
[UAM students, AGFC personnel bolster deer research](#)
[Great American Cleanup in Arkansas launches March 1](#)
[Birding basics topic for Mount Nebo State Park program](#)
[Boating education class schedule](#)
[Hunter education class schedule](#)
[What's open for hunting](#)
[Coming up in the outdoors](#)

AGFC begins overhaul of elk management plan

LITTLE ROCK – Elk populations once numbered in the millions and occupied habitats across most of North America. Shrinking habitat and overhunting reduced these large populations to a few persistent herds in the mountainous West. Had elk not been remarkably adaptable, they may have become extinct.

In 1981, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, in cooperation with private citizens, initiated another elk restoration project in the Ozark Mountains of northwest Arkansas. Between 1981 and 1985, 112 elk from Colorado and Nebraska were released in Newton County.

The AGFC monitors the elk herd with the cooperation of the National Park Service. Through field observations, records on public comments and non-hunting mortalities and harvest data, the herd is estimated at about 450 animals. Arkansas' elk range covers approximately 315,000 acres with 85,000 acres in public ownership.

Interest in Arkansas elk increases each year. Not only in hunting these animals, but viewing them as well. More Arkansans visit the Buffalo River area each year to observe and photograph these magnificent animals, especially in late September and early October when elk are breeding. The herd will never be large compared those in western states, but these elk provide an exceptional wildlife-viewing and hunting opportunity. The future continues to look bright for elk in the natural state.



Elk management in the state is a broad topic that generates a lot of passion – especially to those Arkansans most affected by their presence in north Arkansas. To address the issues, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission will be

holding public scoping workshops in several cities. The goal is to get ideas and suggestions from hunters and the public, to be incorporated with wildlife biology essentials into a new Arkansas elk management plan.

The AGFC will use an outside facilitator to help with administering the public scoping workshops. The new elk management plan will provide goals and direction pertaining to hunting seasons, regulations and overall management of the resource. The final decision on seasons and regulations will remain with AGFC commissioners.

The first round of public workshops will be held at various points around Arkansas and are open to everyone. All meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m. The dates and locations of the meetings are as follows:

Feb. 9, Ponca Volunteer Fire Department.

Feb. 10, Carroll Electric in Jasper.

Feb. 12, Petit Jean Electric in Marshall.

Feb. 13, Arkansas Farm Bureau in Little Rock.

The second round of public workshops will be held:

May 4, Ponca Volunteer Fire Department.

May 5, Carroll Electric in Jasper.

May 7, Petit Jean Electric in Marshall.

An elk summit will be held during the Jasper Elk Festival on June 27.

Ross reflects on Sportsmen's Caucus post

PRESCOTT - Mike Ross of Prescott is in his fifth term in the U.S. House of Representatives. However, the latest session of Congress is a little different.

"I am pleased to share with you that I have been elected by my fellow sportsmen in the House of Representatives to serve as a vice chairman for the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus – a leadership role I take very seriously," Ross wrote in a press release. "As one of the most active caucuses in the Congress, members of the Sportsmen's Caucus have a 20-year history of passing legislation that effectively protects hunters, anglers and habitat, and I am confident that tradition will continue in the years ahead."

Ross, also a member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, writes that the tradition of waking early to hunt and fish has deep roots in his family.

"It is a routine I have often shared with my children as my parents did with me and their parents with them. It is a treasured tradition and way of life for many Arkansans that dates back for generations, and something I believe should continue to be passed down to future generations.

"As an avid hunter and outdoorsmen, I believe this important tradition must be preserved and promoted, especially in our nation's capital. Joining both Democrats and Republicans from across the country, I am an active member of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, which works to build legislative support on numerous issues important to America's outdoor and sporting heritage."



Ross, who sits on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, makes clear where he stands on an often divisive topic.



“There are many issues Congress will consider in the months and years ahead that will directly affect outdoorsmen, but no issue more important than gun-owner rights. I am a firm believer in the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution, which guarantees ‘the right of the people to keep and bear Arms.’ As a life member of the National Rifle Association, I had an A+ rating during my tenure in the Arkansas Senate, and as a member of Congress I have maintained my A+ rating due to my strong commitment to protecting the Second Amendment. As a pro-gun Democrat, I will continue working to protect our Second Amendment rights in Congress and I will continue to oppose and fight any efforts in Washington that restrict our right to own and bear arms.”

Ross is working with the other caucus vice chairman, Jeff Miller, a Florida Republican. Co-chairmen of the caucus are Dan Boren, a Democrat from Oklahoma, and Paul Ryan, a Republican from Wisconsin.

The Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation works through the Congressional Sportsmen’s Caucus and state sportsmen’s caucuses to tie together resources and allies to protect and promote hunting, fishing and wildlife management.

UAM students, AGFC personnel bolster deer research

ARKANSAS CITY – An efficient team of wildlife biologists with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and graduate students from the University of Arkansas at Monticello is compiling needed data on white-tailed deer and their movements. The research is part of the agency’s recently adopted deer management plan.

Their arena is Choctaw Island Wildlife Management Area, a major addition to Arkansas public lands in 2001. It is the only public area inside the main levees of the Mississippi River. The management area is just east of Arkansas City in Desha County.

The project began early in 2008 with eight deer trapped and fitted with the Global Positioning System (GPS) collars. Last spring when the Mississippi River was in flood stage, one interesting result of the monitoring of the collared deer was that the does stayed on high ground at Choctaw Island but the bucks crossed the big levee to high ground a few miles away.

This year, more deer have been trapped and fitted with the GPS collars. Brad Miller, AGFC’s deer program coordinator, said, “We initiated trapping for this year on Jan. 1 and have so far outfitted 18 deer with GPS collars, due primarily to the work of the UAM researchers. We intend to capture a total of 30 adult deer. Most the deer captured to date have been bucks, and we are hoping to pick up more does to balance out the samples.”



Trapping of the Choctaw Island deer is quite a challenge. Cory Gray, AGFC assistant deer program coordinator, works closely with Blair Smythe, UAM graduate student, works under the guidance of Dr. Don White, wildlife ecology professor at UAM.

Smythe and his crew, with AGFC personnel pitching in, set up nets 60 feet by 60 feet and mounted on poles. The nets are rigged with ropes and raised about five feet off the ground, with a center pole to hold them without excessive sagging. Bait is spread under the nets, then two or more of the crew hides in a nearby blind with a rope attached to

the ropes at the net poles. When a deer comes under the net to eat, the rope at the blind is pulled, and the net collapses around the deer.



The ambushers rush to the deer, with the first one sprawling on top of the deer to hold it in place. A sedative, not a tranquilizer, is injected into the deer. The other worker tattoos a number on one ear of the deer, fits a tag into the other ear, then they carefully work the GPS collar under the net and into place around the deer's neck. The deer is released.

It sounds fairly simple in words. In the field, it is quite a bit more complex, more uncertain. The trapping is mainly at night, and a number of nights find the workers going home empty handed. At first, they used electronic controls on the net ropes instead of pulling a trigger rope. But the deer were sharper. The electronic rig made a soft click before the net fell, and the deer were able to run out from under it.

The pull rope is more reliable, but it has shortcomings too. The rope has to be run through a piece of conduit so animals of all sorts won't become tangled in it. But in cold rainy weather, ice forms inside the conduit, rendering the rope useless.

It is a pricey operation, with each GPS collar costing about \$5,000. The collars are programmed with ending dates. At a preset time, the collars unlock and fall from the deer's neck to the ground, where they can be tracked and retrieved by the researchers.

The goal of the Choctaw Island project is to provide more information, especially on the movements of the deer, so AGFC biologists can make adjustments and additions to the state's management of its deer.

Great American Cleanup in Arkansas launches March 1

LITTLE ROCK - Each year, thousands of Arkansans improve the appearance of their communities by volunteering in the national Keep America Beautiful® Great American Cleanup in Arkansas. This year's spring cleanup campaign, is coordinated and promoted by Keep Arkansas Beautiful, a Keep America Beautiful certified state affiliate, and will begin March 1 and run through May 31.

All communities across the state are encouraged to become involved in this annual community-cleanup effort. To learn more about organizing a Great American Cleanup event in your community or to volunteer in a local event, please visit KeepArkansasBeautiful.com, e-mail info@keeparkansasbeautiful.com or call 888-742-8701 toll-free.

"The Great American Cleanup in Arkansas is an opportunity for volunteers and communities to shine and help keep The Natural State clean and green. Groups large and small shine when they cleanup their communities by planting trees and flowers, picking litter and hosting recycling drives," said Robert Phelps, Keep Arkansas Beautiful director. "We want to preserve our state's natural beauty for residents and visitors to enjoy for years to come."



Once a community signs on to host a Great American Cleanup in Arkansas event, KAB will work with that community to organize and publicize the effort. KAB will provide volunteers with trash bags, gloves, safety vests and T-shirts. Volunteers at Great American Cleanup events hosted by certified and pre-certified Keep America Beautiful affiliate

organizations will be registered to win one of two Troy-Bilt Gas Backpack Blower and Straight Shaft String Trimmer sets, and all Great American Cleanup volunteers will be registered to win one of five \$50 Wal-Mart gift certificates. Promotional materials available to communities will include banners, posters, volunteer stickers and brochures.

During last year's Great American Cleanup in Arkansas, more than 20,000 individuals volunteered more than 83,000 hours in communities across the state. Organized by 316 local coordinators, the volunteers picked up 1.2 million pounds of litter from 2,567 miles of roadway, trails and shorelines, and 140 acres of parks and public areas; cleaned 38 playgrounds; closed 41 illegal dumping sites; and removed 56 junk cars.

In addition to picking up litter, volunteers recycled 512,105 pounds of mixed metal, 40,000 pounds of plastic bottles and 242,882 pounds of newspapers, as were 138 car batteries, 12,654 tires and 340,025 pounds of electronics. Also, 1,260 pounds of clothing were collected for reuse.

Additionally, volunteers planted 608 trees and 45,000 flowers and bulbs, painted or renovated 12 homes and buildings, and removed graffiti from 10 sites.

The total economic value of the 2008 Great American Cleanup to communities around the state was more than \$1.5 million.

Birding basics topic for Mount Nebo State Park program

DARDANELLE – Arkansans who want to get into the rapidly growing pastime of birding can gain basic and useful information on topics from binoculars to bird songs at the program, "Migrating Through the River Valley," Feb. 6-8 at Mount Nebo State Park near Dardanelle.

Admission is free. For a detailed program schedule, contact the park at 479-229-3655. For more information on the park visit www.ArkansasStateParks.com.



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.

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

Archery: Oct. 1, 2009

Muzzleloader: Oct. 17, 2009

Modern Gun: Nov. 14, 2009

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

Statewide Canada goose season: Dec. 26-Jan. 30

White-fronted goose season: Dec. 26-Jan. 30 with a bag limit of two.

Snow, blue and Ross' goose season: Dec. 26-Jan. 30 with a bag limit of 20.

Snow goose Conservation Order: Feb. 2-April 25 with no bag limit.

Spotted Skunk, Weasel Hunting: Closed

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

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.

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.

Coming up in the outdoors

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. 6-7 – Arkansas Ducks Unlimited state convention at the DoubleTree Hotel in Little Rock. For more information contact Vince Callahan at (870) 735-5813 or vcallahan@sbcglobal.net.

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. 21 – Fly-tying class, taught by Donnie Hyslip, will be held at the Little Red Fly Shop in Heber Springs. The cost of the class is \$100 and includes everything needed to learn how to tie the flies useful in the White River system. For more information call the Little Red Fly Shop at (888) 442-4022 or (501) 887-9988 or e-mail at shop@littleredflyshop.com.

Feb. 27-March 1 - 22nd Annual Hot Springs Boat, Tackle and RV Show. Hot Springs Convention Center and Summit Arena. Admission is \$5 for adults. Children 12 years and under get in free. For more information call Ken or Kelly Griffey at (501) 765-1423 or (501) 225-6177 or by email at griffeyinc@sbcglobal.net.

Feb. 28 – Totally Trout free seminar. Educational seminars, demonstrations, biology lessons, door prizes and a free lunch. Classroom schedule begins at 9 a.m. at the C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center in Ferndale.

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 tournament 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. Open tournament to the general public so come out and let's do some catfishing, or you can join: 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.

Feb. 28 - Ouachita River Chapter NWTf Hunting Heritage Banquet in Malvern. The banquet will begin at 6 p.m. at the Malvern Community Center.

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. Lake Millwood will be a regular tournament but the "catch" will be donated. This will be 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 Schwyer of Barling, paulschwyer@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.

March 28 – Greenbrier Chapter of The National Wild Turkey Foundation annual fundraising membership drive, dinner and auction at the Boy Scout Camp in Damascus. For more information call: Dave Smith at (501) 335-7240.

March 28 - Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Big Game Banquet, Robinson Center/Doubletree Hotel in Little Rock. Doors open at 5 p.m. For more information call (501) 516-0439 or bettynjackt@gmail.com.

April 4 – Twin Lakes Chapter of Ducks Unlimited Membership Banquet at the Big Creek Country Club in Mountain Home. For more information call: Shane Williams at (870) 421-5746 or shanewilliams@eaton.com.

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 Schwyer of Barling, paulschwyer@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.

© 2009, Arkansas Game & Fish Commission. All Rights Reserved.

2 Natural Resources Drive - Little Rock, AR 72205 - (800) 364-4263 - (501) 223-6300 - www.agfc.com
Aristotle Web Design Services