



News

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Arkansas Outdoors for November 19, 2008

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AGFC wildlife officer dies in helicopter crash

QUITMAN – An Arkansas Game and Fish Commission wildlife officer was killed early Sunday morning when the helicopter he was in crashed in Cleburne County. The officer was participating in an operation aimed at catching night hunters.

The crash took place at approximately 1 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 16 about five miles northeast of Quitman on Highway 25. Killed in the crash was wildlife officer Sgt. Monty Carmikle, 45, of Heber Springs.

The wildlife officer was a passenger in a Bell OH-58 helicopter when it went down in a field on private property. The contract helicopter pilot, Jerry Fryar of Ozark, was taken to a Conway hospital where he was treated and released.

This is the first time that an AGFC wildlife officer has died in the line of duty since two officers were killed in a plane crash in the early 70s.

The Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board are investigating the crash. At this time, there is no indication of what might have caused the crash.

AGFC Chief of Enforcement Mike Knoedl, said that the entire agency is deeply saddened by Carmikle's death. "Being a wildlife officer is a very dangerous job. We're trained for just about everything, but in this instance it was out of the officer's control," he said.



Habitat conditions are dry for Arkansas duck opener

LITTLE ROCK – Conditions for the opening weekend of Arkansas's waterfowl season look very dry. The first segment of the state's duck hunting season begins Saturday, Nov. 22. Arkansas Game and Fish Commission personnel conducted aerial waterfowl surveys Nov. 3-7.

Conditions generally were very dry across the state leading to low habitat availability during the survey period, AGFC waterfowl biologist Luke Naylor said. "Heavy summer rains substantially delayed crop harvest in much of the state. As a result, many fields typically pumped full at this time remained dry as farmers worked to get crops out and fields prepared. A notable exception is the Grand Prairie portion of the eastcentral survey region where a good amount of habitat had been made available by private landowners with pumping capability," Naylor explained. "The dry conditions are similar to the November 2007 survey period with the exception of the northeast survey region where conditions were wet last year," he added.



AGFC personnel indicated that the statewide total duck count of 418,293 is an 8 percent increase from last year's count of 388,311 ducks. The count is the highest since 2004, but is still below the 1985-2008 November survey average of 564,564 ducks.

November's mallard count of 141,599 is a 4 percent drop from last year's count of 146,735 and below the long-term average of 268,766 mallards. Mallard numbers were much greater than last year in the eastcentral survey region with nearly 60 percent of all mallards counted in that region, Naylor said. "This is not surprising given the relative abundance of flooded habitat present in the Grand Prairie compared to the rest of the state," he said.



Snow goose numbers (163,550 this year, 170,770 last year) were similar to last year's count. Counts of white-fronted geese markedly increased again this year, nearly doubling from 58,660 in November 2007 to 150,530 in November 2008. Observers noted about equal numbers of snow and white-fronted geese in the three Delta survey regions with slightly greater numbers in northeast Arkansas.

October is historically one of the driest months in Arkansas so dry conditions, including conditions on many Wildlife Management Areas, should not come as a complete surprise, Naylor explained. "Dry fall weather like we are currently experiencing highlight the importance of private landowners flooding agricultural lands to provide early waterfowl habitat. The majority of AGFC

wildlife management areas, popular for duck hunting, are completely dependent on rainfall and runoff to fill impoundments," he stated. "We've prepared the state's WMA impoundments for flooding. Now we need some help from Mother Nature to fill those impoundments, Naylor said.

Naylor cautioned that duck numbers are down from 2007 due to continued habitat loss and dry conditions of the breeding grounds in the northern U.S. and Canada. "Hunters should remain cautiously optimistic that habitat conditions and duck migration events occur at a level that will meet high expectations set after last year's excellent season," he said.

New look waterfowl reports available online from AGFC

LITTLE ROCK – Just before sunrise this Saturday, duck season officially arrives in Arkansas. Hunters have already turned their attention to the state's countryside looking for the flash of mallard's wings. One weapon in the waterfowl hunter's arsenal is the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission waterfowl report.

The popular report begins Wednesday and long-time users will notice a new look for Saturday's opener. Information has changed somewhat and several links have been added for local weather conditions and water level gauge readings, AGFC waterfowl biologist Luke Naylor explains. "I think hunters will find the information more timely and better suited to their hunting needs," he said.

The waterfowl report provides capsule information from agency personnel in all corners of Arkansas and is updated each Wednesday throughout waterfowl season. Just go to <http://www.agfc.com/data-facts-maps/publications/agfc-newsletters/weekly-waterfowl-report.aspx> or to receive the report each week on your computer, send an email to arkansasoutdoors@agfc.com and type "Waterfowl Report" in the subject line.



Weekly Waterfowl Report
Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

NORTHEAST ARKANSAS					
Area	Impoundment	Habitat	Water Levels	Weather	Comments
Dave Donaldson Black River WMA	Upper Island GTR	Fair to good, with moderate abundance of mast crop within the GTRs.	269.4 msl - 30% flooded & holding	View current weather conditions and forecast for DeLaplaine, Arkansas.	Area Info and Map Please remember to keep all boats off the levees, so AGFC personnel can access the area. Boats will be moved that are blocking access. Unattended trailers are not to be left overnight.
	Lower Island GTR	Fair to good, with moderate abundance of mast crop within the GTRs.	267.75 msl - 40% flooded & rising		

Mosquitoes and other insects affect wildlife as well as hunters

LITTLE ROCK - The above-average rainfall during the summer and from the recent Gulf hurricanes has been good for insect populations. Hunters will be quick to tell you that mosquitoes and other insects have been very abundant this fall. It's a "sore" subject with most of them.

Right now is the peak of hunting activity in Arkansas and some hunters are reporting that wildlife may be affected by insects as well.

Mosquitoes, biting flies and other insects annoy wildlife just like they do hunters, and many wildlife diseases are directly transmitted by insects. Reports of Hemorrhagic Disease (HD) in deer—spread by biting insects—were recently reported in Arkansas Outdoors. Some localized mortality has occurred, but die-offs do not appear to be widespread.

Wild turkeys also appear to be affected by the hordes of insects in many areas. Mike Widner, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Turkey Program Leader, has received several calls from along the Mississippi River and the Gulf Coastal Plain about sick turkeys in recent weeks - more calls than normal. These birds typically have sores or scabs on their heads, often to the point that vision is obscured.



"These symptoms are classic for a viral disease in birds known as avian pox," Widner says. "The disease is similar to chicken pox in humans and can be spread by biting insects or by dander and scabs from infected birds. Generally, avian pox follows a trend similar to HD in that it may kill individuals, but large die-offs are normally not seen," Widner explained.



There's not much that can be done about the current crop of biting insects except look forward to the reduction in bug numbers as a result of colder weather, but hunters and landowners can take some precautions to reduce the possibility of avian pox being spread by contact. Any activity that concentrates wildlife increases the threat of disease transmission, with game feeders one of the most obvious ways to concentrate wildlife.

Widner doesn't recommend supplemental feeding of wild turkeys and feels that the negatives associated with the practice - one negative being disease transmission - outweighs the positives. "However, I realize the practice is well established and not going away anytime soon. For that reason, I

recommend that feeders be frequently moved so that disease organisms, including dander or infected scabs from birds with avian pox, don't build up at a permanent feeding location," he said. Widner also advises to pay close attention to the wildlife coming to feeders, through direct observation or trail cameras, to quickly identify sick or diseased wildlife.

The presence of lethargic, immobile or diseased wildlife should be reported to the AGFC as soon as possible. In some cases, samples will be collected for shipment to labs for diagnosis. In other cases, diseased animals may be removed to cut down on the possibility of infecting other animals. Hunters or landowners should call local Wildlife Officers or Regional Offices to report sick animals. Sick turkeys can be reported directly to Widner at (877) 470-3650.

While the possibility of epidemics is remote with most wildlife, precautions still need to be taken, Widner said. "No one wants to see disease wipe out a flock of turkeys if it can be prevented. Meanwhile, all of us are looking for a break from the mosquitoes. Of course, it remains to be seen how bad the buffalo gnats will be later this winter," he said.

Arkansas in second year of project to test convenience of electronic duck stamp

LITTLE ROCK – The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission is beginning the second year of a three year program to test electronic waterfowl stamps. The AGFC, in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is testing the pilot program to make it simpler for hunters, birdwatchers and stamp collectors to buy Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps, commonly known as duck stamps.

The pilot program allows the AGFC to sell stamps electronically through their individual automated licensing systems providing proof of purchase. This proof of purchase – a unique code given to the purchaser instantly, will be accepted as evidence of the federal duck stamp purchase for 45 days. This will give the purchaser – time enough for the physical stamp to arrive in the mail. Duck stamp purchasers will now be able to buy an electronic duck stamp from Arkansas retail licensing locations or by telephone or by their website.



Every waterfowl hunter over the age of 16 is required to buy a federal duck stamp in order to hunt waterfowl. In addition, federal duck stamps provide free entry into any national wildlife refuge in the country that charges an entrance fee. The electronic duck

stamps are \$2 higher in cost than the over-the-counter version.

The electronic proof of purchase will fulfill the requirement for waterfowl hunters to possess the stamp nationwide and allow visitors to National Wildlife Refuges gain free access. After the 45 days, the proof of purchase will expire and the purchasers must possess the paper stamp to receive its full benefit.

The federal duck stamp is currently available at many major sporting good stores selling hunting and fishing licenses, select post offices and online through the U.S. Postal Service and AMPLEX, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's duck stamp fulfillment center.

The Electronic Duck Stamp Act of 2005 directed the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with state management agencies, to conduct a three-year pilot program under which up to 15 states could issue electronic migratory bird hunting and conservation stamps. The pilot program will allow the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to evaluate the program and make adjustments or assess other distribution options to better serve stamp buyers.

Click this link for more information about the [Federal Duck Stamp Program](#).

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.

Modern Gun - Zones 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10 and 11: Nov. 8-30.

Zone 5: Nov. 15-16.

Zone 4A, 5A, 13, 14 and 15: Nov. 8-Dec. 7.

Zones 4B and 5B: Nov. 8-16.

Zones 9 and 12: Nov. 8-Dec. 14.

Zone 16, 16A and 17: Nov. 8-Dec. 25.

Muzzleloader- Zones 1, 2, 3, 4A, 5A, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 15: Dec. 13-15.

Zones 9, 12, 16, 16A and 17: Dec. 29-31.

Zones 4, 4B, 5 and 5B: Closed.

The statewide Christmas holiday modern gun deer hunt will be Dec. 26-28.

Duck:

Nov. 22-Dec. 1,

Dec. 6-Dec. 24

Dec. 26-Jan. 25.

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

Statewide Canada goose season:

Jan. 10-Feb. 1 (bag limit two).

White-fronted goose season:

Nov. 15-Dec. 1, 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

Virginia and Sora Rail:
Sept. 13-Nov. 21

Spotted Skunk, Weasel Hunting:
Closed

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

Bear:
Archery: Zone 1: Oct. 1-Nov. 30
Zone 2: Sept. 15-Nov. 30
Zones 3, 4, 5, 5A, 6 and 7: Closed
Modern Gun: Zones 1 and 2: Nov 3-30
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.

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

Nov. 20 – AGFC Commission monthly meeting at the AGFC Little Rock central office, 2 Natural Resources Dr., beginning at 9 a.m. Topics include: special fishing regulations approval.

Nov. 20 – Paragould Chapter of Ducks Unlimited membership banquet, National Guard Armory. For more information contact Jarrod Kersey at (870) 476-2549 or dexum@grnco.net.

Nov. 20 – Pine Bluff Razorback Chapter of Ducks Unlimited membership banquet, Harbor Oaks Country Club. For more information contact Bryan Hornsby at (870) 267-3885.

Nov. 22 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "Wings Over the Prairie Festival."

Nov. 29 – Brookings Chapter of Ducks Unlimited membership banquet, Brookings Landing. For more information contact Eric or Carolann Wilmes at (870) 236-4225 or ufoundcarolann@hotmail.com.

Nov. 29 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "How 'Bout Them Hogs?"

Dec. 6 – Poinsett County Chapter of Ducks Unlimited membership banquet, Trumann Recreational Complex. For more information contact Chris Gairhan at (870) 530-2899 or cgairhan@yahoo.com.

Dec. 6 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "Christmas Gift Ideas." The Grand Prize will also be awarded to some lucky viewer.

Dec. 6 – Cypress Bayou Chapter of Ducks Unlimited membership banquet, Beebe National Guard Armory. For more information contact Barry Wolfe at (501) 681-4286 or wolfe.barry@gmail.com.

Dec. 12 – Hughes Chapter of Ducks Unlimited membership banquet, Hughes Fire Station. For more information contact Bobby Cupples at (901) 489-7263.

Dec. 13 - 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 Carving."

Dec. 13 – East Arkansas Chapter of Ducks Unlimited membership banquet, Southland Greyhound Park. For more information contact Jason Rodgers at (870) 225-6642 or agoinc4450@aol.com.

Dec. 18 – AGFC Commission monthly meeting at the AGFC Little Rock central office, 2 Natural Resources Dr., beginning at 9 a.m.

Dec. 20 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "The Trout Magnet."

Dec. 27 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "Holiday Squirrel Hunt."

Dec. 31 – Razorduck Chapter of Ducks Unlimited membership banquet, Foothills Indoor Arena in Clarksville. For more information contact Cheryl Feikema at (479) 754-3924 or cherdene@suddenlink.net.

Jan. 6, 2009 – AGFC hunting regulations meetings, 7 p.m.

Jan. 9-11, 2009 – Marine Expo at the Statehouse Convention Center in Little Rock.

Jan. 10, 2009 - 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, 2009 – 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, 2009 - 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, 2009 – Black River Chapter of Ducks Unlimited membership banquet, Rolling Hills Country Club in Pochontas. For more information contact Joey Pfeffer at (870) 378-1926 or joey.pfeffer@afbic.com.

Jan. 22, 2009 – AGFC Commission monthly meeting at the AGFC Little Rock central office, 2 Natural Resources Dr., beginning at 9 a.m.

Jan. 24, 2009 - 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. 31, 2009 – Outdoor Sportsmen Banquet, Greenwood High School basketball arena, 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Jan. 31, 2009 - 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."

Feb. 7, 2009 - 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. 14, 2009 - 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, 2009 – 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, 2009 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve "Wildman" Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be "Bringing Back the Bobwhite Quail."

Feb. 28, 2009 - 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."

March 7, 2009 - 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 19, 2009 – 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, 2009 – AGFC Commission monthly meeting at the AGFC Little Rock central office, 2 Natural Resources Dr., beginning at 9 a.m.

May 21, 2009 – AGFC Commission monthly meeting at the AGFC Little Rock central office, 2 Natural Resources Dr., beginning at 9 a.m.

June 18, 2009 – AGFC Commission monthly meeting in Lake Village. Topics include the early migratory bird season proposals.

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