

Arkansas Game & Fish Commission

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Arkansas Outdoors Weekly Newsletter

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

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Today's Topics

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Escalating boating accidents spur concern, caution among boaters

LITTLE ROCK - Warm weather plus a glittering expanse of water spark boating excursions, but tragedy can invade even the most polished of plans. To date, 12 fatalities have resulted from boating accidents in 2009, a spike considering last year's 14 total fatalities.

Drowning is most often the cause of death: of the 11 found bodies (one is missing), 10 had drowned, stressing the importance of wearing life jackets.

"They [the victims] either weren't wearing one properly or at all," said Capt. Stephanie Weatherington, AGFC boating law administrator. "In most of these accidents, they actually had the life jackets on board."

In addition to 2009's already high number of fatalities, 42 boating accidents have been reported; in contrast, 29 accidents had been reported by this time last year.

Weatherington cited several reasons for this year's rise in accidents and fatalities. Early warm spells—even in February—have attracted boaters to the water, allowing for a longer boating season and more chances for accidents. High floodwaters have covered areas in lakes otherwise not navigable, sometimes littered with stumps and debris just below the surface that can harm boats at high speeds. But by far, most accidents in any year are collisions from "operator inattention," when navigators fail to pay attention to their surroundings.

To prevent accidents and fatalities, Bob Cushing, AGFC boating education coordinator, recommended that boaters make wearing U.S.-Coast-Guard-approved life jackets a priority.

"There's no excuse for not wearing a life jacket," Cushing said. "Make sure it fits you; make sure it's snug. It's like any other piece of clothing."

Cushing suggested that boaters test their life jackets by wearing one and wading into shallow water in a pool or lake to see if it will float your



body.

Additionally, defensive boaters operating a vessel should refrain from drinking or using drugs; take care to not overload their boats; be attentive and keep a proper lookout; and take a boating education course. Individuals born after 1985 are lawfully required to complete a boater's education course before operating a powerboat, sailboat or personal watercraft in Arkansas, but Cushing encourages every boater to take the course regardless of age. A boating education course can be completed in the following ways: in an instructor-led course free of charge, online for \$15, or via a home study course which includes a DVD or video available for purchase online. For more information about boating courses, visit www.agfc.com/boating and click on "Boating Education."



Cushing said boating accidents peak around the 4th of July, so holiday boaters are especially encouraged to practice caution.

"The majority of accidents happen when weather conditions are good," Cushing said.

Foundation president to graduate from Leadership Arkansas

LITTLE ROCK – Steve Smith of Little Rock will soon graduate as a member of Leadership Arkansas Class III, which is sponsored by the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce and Associated Industries of Arkansas. Smith is the president of the Arkansas Game and Fish Foundation. Leadership Class III graduation will be held on June 26.

A total of 77 individuals from throughout the state were recently selected for this prestigious honor. More than 130 applications were received for the coveted spots in the class.

Leadership Arkansas is a program designed to take a statewide view of the economic and political challenges that face Arkansas. The Program offers leadership opportunities that expand the impact of community leaders across the state. Created by the State Chamber/AIA, Leadership Arkansas builds a sense of statewide community by identifying and training individuals with the passion and commitment to become personally engaged in issues, programs and activities aimed at building a better Arkansas.

Participants are required to attend at least 80 percent of seven program sessions including the mandatory opening Class III Retreat, which was held on September 14 at Mountain Harbor Resort along Lake Ouachita. Other sessions included:

- Session I Arkansas State Chamber/AIA Annual Meeting – October 15 in Little Rock;
- Session II Tourism - December 4-5 in Eureka Springs;
- Session III South Arkansas Economy - January 29-30 in Magnolia;
- Session IV Governmental Affairs – February 23 in Little Rock;
- Session V Economic Development - March 26-27 in Ft. Smith;
- Session VI Northeast Arkansas Economy - May 21-22 in Jonesboro and Paragould;
- Session VII Northwest Arkansas Economy - June 25-26 in Fayetteville

All sessions are in conjunction with State Chamber/AIA regional board and membership meetings.

The Chairman for this year's Leadership Arkansas class is program founder Paul H. Harvel. Curriculum chairman is Michele Bond of CJRW – Northwest.

Leadership Arkansas Class III is sponsored by Southern Bancorp of Arkadelphia.

The Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce and Associated Industries of Arkansas is a non-profit trade association representing businesses and entities throughout the state. The mission of the business organization is to continually enhance the economic climate in Arkansas.



Glenwood lake named after former commissioner

GLENWOOD – A cooperative effort between several state and local agencies have resulted in a new fishing opportunity for western Arkansas residents. The John Benjamin Glenwood Community Fishing Lake is the end result of a project between the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, City of Glenwood, Pike County and Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism.



The lake is named after former commissioner John Benjamin of Glenwood. Benjamin was appointed by former governor Mike Huckabee in 2004 and served until 2006 when he resigned.

The project began in 2004 and was completed earlier this year at a cost of \$250,000. The lake includes nine fishing piers, a boat ramp, asphalt roads and parking areas, as well as a pavilion. It is located in the Glenwood industrial park just south of the city.

The lake was officially opened on Friday, June 26 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and kid's fishing derby. The five-acre lake is part of the AGFC's Community Fishing Program. According to AGFC chief of fisheries Mike Armstrong, the lake was constructed for fishing and educational purposes. "The program is designed to enhance or create destinations in communities close to where people live, so excellent fishing is available within a stone's throw of all Arkansans," he said.

AGFC reopens access routes on management areas

MONTICELLO – The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission has reopened several roads that were closed earlier this year due to flooding in eastern Arkansas. Roads on the Trusten Holder and Choctaw Island wildlife management areas have now been repaired and are again open to the public.

The flooding conditions caused several washouts in the roads and created a very hazardous situation for the public, according to AGFC Regional Supervisor, Roger Milligan. "At this point, the flood waters have receded, most repairs and debris removal have been accomplished, the roads have sufficiently dried and they have been graded. They're ready for the public," he said.

There are still a lot of fishing opportunities this time of the year, Milligan said. "We would like for the public to have as much opportunity as possible to enjoy the resources," he said. "In the case with opening the Trusten Holder Road, this will allow for many deer club members on Big Island to return to their camps to repair roads, camp buildings and infrastructure," Milligan added.



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:

Furbearers

Raccoon night hunting: sunset, July 1-sunrise, Aug. 31.
Badger, spotted skunk and weasel hunting: Closed.

Deer

Archery

Statewide: Oct. 1-Feb. 28

Muzzleloader

Zones 1, 1A, 2, 3, 4A, 5A, 6, 6A, 7, 8, 8A, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 15: Oct. 17-25 and Dec. 19-21
Zones 9, 12, 16, 16A and 17: Oct. 17-25 and Dec. 29-31
Zones 4, 4B, 5 and 5B: Closed

Modern Gun

Zones 1, 1A, 2, 3, 6, 6A, 7, 8, 8A, 10 and 11: Nov. 14-Dec. 6
Zone 4: Nov. 14-15
Zone 5: Nov. 14-15 and Nov. 21-22
Zones 4A, 5A, 13, 14 and 15: Nov. 14-Dec. 13
Zones 4B and 5B: Nov. 14-22
Zones 9 and 12: Nov. 14-Dec. 20
Zones 16, 16A and 17: Nov. 14-Dec. 25

Christmas Holiday Modern Gun Deer Hunt is Dec. 26-28 statewide.

The Special Youth Modern Gun Deer Hunt is Nov. 7-8 and Jan. 2-3 statewide excluding certain WMAs where a modern gun or muzzleloader permit is required to hunt.

Bear

Archery

Zone 1: Oct. 1-Nov. 30

Zone 2: Sept. 15-Nov. 30

Zones 3, 4, 5, 5A, 6 and 7: Closed

Muzzleloader

Zones 1 and 2: Oct. 17-25

Zones 3, 4, 5, 5A, 6 and 7: Closed

Modern Gun

Zones 1 and 2: Nov. 9-30

Zone 5: Dec. 5-13

Zone 5A: Nov. 28-Dec. 13

Zones 3, 4, 6 and 7: Closed

Special Youth Modern Gun Bear Hunt

Zones 1 and 2 (does not include WMAs requiring a deer permit to harvest a bear): Nov. 7-8

Zones 3, 4, 5, 5A, 6 and 7: Closed

Fall Turkey Season

Archery

Statewide: Oct. 1-Feb. 28

Firearms

Zones 3, 5B, 6 and 17: Oct. 26-Nov. 1

Zones 1, 1A, 2, 4, 4A, 4B, 5, 5A, 7, 7A, 8, 9, 9A and 10: Closed

Elk

Zones 1, 2, 3, 4 and A: Sept. 21-25

Zones 1, 2, 3, 4, A and B: Dec. 7-11

Zone A: Sept. 21-25 and Dec. 7-11

Zone B: Dec. 7-11

Quail

Statewide: Nov. 1-Feb. 7

Rabbit

Statewide: Sept. 1-Feb. 28

Fall Squirrel Season

Statewide: Sept. 5-Feb. 28

Spring 2010 Squirrel Season

May 15-June 13

Crow

Statewide: Sept. 5-Feb. 20

Furbearers (2009-2010)

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

Opossum Hunting: sunrise, Sept. 1- sunset Feb. 28

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

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. 4-sunset, Feb. 28

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

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

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

Badger, spotted skunk and weasel hunting: Closed

Furbearer trapping (other than beaver, coyote, muskrat, nutria): sunrise, Nov. 14-sunset, Feb. 21

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

Beaver, muskrat, nutria trapping: sunrise, Nov. 14-sunset, March 31

The 2010 deer season opening dates:**Deer (archery):** Friday, Oct. 1, 2010**Deer (muzzleloader):** Saturday, Oct. 16, 2010**Deer (modern gun):** Saturday, Nov. 13, 2010**2010 Spring Turkey Public Meetings:**

Tuesday, Aug. 25, 7 p.m.-9 p.m.

2010-2011 General Public Meetings:

Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2010, 7 p.m.-9 p.m.

For further hunting changes regarding bag limits, deer zone boundaries, game checking and other information go to www.agfc.com.

Coming up in the outdoors

June 25 – Want to know more about Arkansas bats? Check out “Bats: Fact and Fiction” at the Witt Stephens Central Arkansas Nature Center in Little Rock, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Learn about rabies, species of bats in Arkansas, which are on the endangered species list and many other topics. Blake Sasse, non-game mammal coordinator for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, will be on hand to give information on bats, their importance to the ecosystem and how to install bat houses. Call the nature center office at (501) 907-0636 weekdays between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to register.

June 25 – AGFC Commission monthly meeting in Lake Village. Topics include the early migratory bird season proposals.

June 27 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve “Wildman” Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be “Ridin’ and Reelin’.”

July 4 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve “Wildman” Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be “Chairman Freddie Black Looks Back on 7 Years.”

July 11 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve “Wildman” Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be “Float Tube Fishin’.”

July 18 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve “Wildman” Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be “Trout Fishin’ on the White River.”

July 18 - Arkansas Catfishing Association tournament at Lake Norfolk (Gamaliel). Open tournament to the general public. For more information contact Paul Schwyer of Barling at paulschweyer@sbcglobal.net or (479) 452-1652 or (479) 719-0474, or Lee Fields of Pope County at leefields@centurytel.net or (479) 331-0399 or cell at (870) 577-7289 or go to http://arkcats.org/Home_Page.php.

July 25 - Talkin' Outdoors at the Corner Café with Steve “Wildman” Wilson, 9 a.m. on KARK Channel 4. Topic of the show will be “Smallmouth Fishin’ with Duane Hada.”

Aug. 8 – Scimitar Shrine Director’s Staff Bass Tournament, Arkansas River behind Alltel Arena, 6 a.m. to 1 p.m. Entry fee is \$150 per boat with 75% payback. For more information call Chris at (501) 749-3025 or Tom at (501) 834-6005.

Aug. 8 – Reekie Gardner Jr. White River Bass Classic Tournament, team bass fishing (two people per team). Entry fee is \$65 per boat. Registration will be held at B & R Marine, 840 Batesville Blvd. in Batesville, Aug. 6-7, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. For more information, call (870) 793-8275.

Aug 15-16 - Arkansas Catfishing Association tournament at lakes Millwood and Earling in southwest Arkansas. Open tournament to the general public. Double catch donated to Hope in Action charity. For more information contact Paul Schwyer of Barling at paulschweyer@sbcglobal.net or (479) 452-1652 or (479) 719-0474, or Lee Fields of Pope County at leefields@centurytel.net or (479) 331-0399 or cell (870) 577-7289.

Sept. 12 – University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton Skeet Shoot, 2 p.m. at the Point Remove Lodge in Hattiesville. This year Andy Miller is scheduled to do a shooting exhibition. Again this year, the Ducks Unlimited Green Wing shoot for kids ages 8-14 will be featured. For more information call Kristi Strain at (501) 977-2085 or by email at strain@uaccm.edu.

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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