

Arkansas Game & Fish Commission

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Arkansas Outdoors Weekly Newsletter

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

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Governor Beebe appoints Mahony to commission

LITTLE ROCK – Governor Mike Beebe has named Emon Mahony of El Dorado as the newest commissioner of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. Mahony was named to the Commission in a short ceremony held today at the AGFC's Witt Stephens Jr. Central Arkansas Nature Center in Little Rock.

"Emon is a true conservationist, the result of being a lifetime outdoor sportsman," Beebe said. "He understands both the environmental protection and economic opportunities that good stewardship can foster."

Mahony, 68, has been a trustee for the Arkansas Nature Conservancy since 2007. Governor Pryor previously appointed him to the Arkansas Soil and Water Commission in 1978, where he served for seven years, including one as chairman.

Mahony was one of the advocates who helped establish the 1/8-Cent Conservation Sales Tax for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and still works to create conservation easements to protect local ecosystems.

Since 1996, Mahony has been president of an oil-and-gas business in Union County. He spent the 20 years prior to that with the Arkansas Oklahoma Gas Corporation, serving most of that time as the company's president. He also worked for U.S. Senator John McClellan and as a private attorney.

Mahony fills the 4th Congressional District position on the Commission, replacing Freddie Black of Lake Village. Mahony's term will expire July 1, 2016.



New law affects teen boaters operating personal watercraft

LITTLE ROCK - A portion of Act 693, known as "Rachel's Law," will take effect July 10, raising the minimum age to 16 years for individuals to legally operate a personal watercraft alone. Previously, the minimum age had been 14 years to operate a personal watercraft, which includes Jet Skis, Sea-Doos and WaveRunners.

While the law primarily affects teen boaters, other age groups are under its influence, too.

"This is the first time the boating education law applies to someone besides the operator," said Bob Cushing, AGFC boating education coordinator. Indeed, boat operators between 12 and 15 years of age may operate a personal watercraft only when accompanied by an individual at least 18 years old who was born before 1986 or has a valid boating education certificate. Additionally, the accompanying person must be in position to take immediate control of the vessel.

Boat operators under age 12 may operate a personal watercraft only if accompanied by an individual at least 21 years old who was born before 1986 or has a valid boating education certificate. Again, this accompanying individual must lawfully be in position to take immediate control of the personal watercraft.

By law, all Arkansas boat operators born after Jan. 1, 1986 must complete an approved AGFC boating education course. A course may be completed in any of the following ways: in an instructor-led course free of charge, online for \$15, or, for a limited time, 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," or call (877) 493-6424.

Though a boating education course is mandatory for many young boaters, the information is valuable for everyone.

"We encourage the parents to also take the course with their children," said Capt. Stephanie Weatherington, AGFC boating law administrator. "It has information for all people, not just the young people."

Additionally, the boating education course will undergo changes starting Jan. 1, 2010: boat operators will no longer be able to take non-proctored (unsupervised) final tests when taking the online course, among other changes that are being developed.

As the Fourth of July holiday nears, Weatherington said boaters should exercise extreme caution when operating vessels, especially during firework displays.

"Reduced visibility, increased boat traffic, and alcohol can create a deadly combination," said Weatherington.

In addition to being careful, boaters are urged to wear life jackets—at all times—when boating. "We've had 12 fatalities [this year], and 11 of the 12 drowned because they were not wearing a life jacket or their life jacket was not properly fitted," said Cushing. "We strongly encourage all boaters to wear properly fitted, U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets, regardless of age and regardless of swimming abilities."



Proposed early migratory bird seasons presented to commission

LAKE VILLAGE – The unofficial opening of Arkansas's fall hunting season was one of the main topics at last week's meeting of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. As an added bonus this year, dove hunters may get extra days to enjoy their passion. The opening of dove season is the date many Arkansans point to for the fall hunting seasons in the state.

Last season, Arkansas dove hunters had a 60-day season, but under the new proposal the season would be extended to 70 days. Final approval for the seasons will take place during the Commission's meeting in July.

Two season proposals were presented to the commission:

Mourning Dove and Eurasian Collared Dove

Saturday opening:

Sept. 5 – Oct. 18

Dec. 5 – 30

Season length and bag limit: 70 days, 15 bird daily bag

Special Early Teal Season

Option 1: (16-day Framework): Sept. 12 – Sept. 27

Option 2: (9-day Framework): Sept. 19 – Sept. 27

Daily bag limit: 4 birds

Season length will depend on approved federal frameworks.



The Commission also was presented with a proposal for the statewide special early Canada goose season. If approved, the dates would be Sept. 1 to Sept. 15 with a 5 bird daily bag.

In other business, the Commission:

*Heard a proposal on the state's upcoming alligator season. This will be Arkansas's third alligator hunting season. There are no significant proposed changes to last season's regulations. A total of 28 alligator hunting permits will be available.

*Approved a recommendation to rename a road on the Sulphur River WMA after Drew Palmer. Palmer was an avid hunter and fisherman who lost his life in traffic accident.

*Approved the use of cast nets below dams. The nets are used to catch bait fish used in striper fishing.

*Elected Brett Morgan of Little Rock the new chairman of the Commission to replace Freddie Black of Lake Village. Black's term on the commission ends on June 30. Craig Campbell of Little Rock was elected vice-chairman.



25 hunters win elk permits for upcoming 2009 season

JASPER – For 25 lucky people, the highlight of the 12th annual Buffalo River Elk Festival is the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission drawing for elk hunting permits. Over 7,000 people applied for this season's hunt. The two-segment season will be held Sept. 21 to 25 and Dec. 7 to 11.

As in past seasons, this year's elk hunting will be on public lands of the Buffalo National River and the AGFC's Gene Rush Wildlife Management Area, as well as adjacent private lands within Elk Zones 1 through 4. Since 1998, 254 elk have been taken in Arkansas's modern hunt.

Just four of the hunters will be in the field in September. The other permits are for the December hunt, when weather will be cooler. Two of the 25 permits for hunting in Elk Zones 1 through 4, mostly public land, were earmarked as youth elk permits for hunters under 16 years old.

The youth hunter permits are unique in another way, too. It specifies either-sex elk, meaning the youth hunter can harvest either a bull elk or a cow elk. Since Arkansas elk hunting began in 1998, permits other than youth elk permits for elk hunting zones 1 through 4 have specified which kind of elk could be taken. The youth permits will be for the December segment of the elk hunt.

To be eligible to win the elk permits, youths must have successfully completed a hunter education course.

The September hunt will be by four winners of bull permits, two drawn Saturday and two others who were high bidders at fund-raising events sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, which donates most of the proceeds to the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission for elk program work.

Elk permit winners:

Zone 1

September, Bull, Matthew Eden, Springdale
 December, Bull, Alton Tounsand, Jonesboro
 December, Antlerless, Richard Maley, Mountain Home
 December, Antlerless, Patrick Parrott, Searcy
 December, Antlerless, Jacob Chandler, Augusta

Zone 2

September, Bull, Daniel Dickerson, Bryant
 December, Bull, Allen Mallett, Bull Shoals
 December, Antlerless, Claude Woodward, Lamar
 December, Antlerless, Ralph Tinnin, Berryville
 December, Antlerless, Michael Bredernitz, Van Buren

Zone 3

December, Youth-either sex, Alden Deloach, Magnolia
 December, Youth-either sex, Darwin Baker, Nashville
 December, Antlerless, Donnie Ellington, Bentonville
 December, Antlerless, Corbet Clark, Walnut Ridge
 December, Antlerless, Douglas Brents, Cleveland
 December, Antlerless, Lyle Mast, Mountain View
 December, Antlerless, Nathan Swaffar, Vilonia
 December, Antlerless, Allen Bourland, Bixby, OK

Zone 4

December, Bull, Justin Mitchell, Okolona
 December, Bull, Carl Appling, Marion



December, Antlerless, Roy Herndon, Hot Springs National Park
 December, Antlerless, Blanca Santillano, Witter
 December, Antlerless, Jared Ross, Havana
 December, Antlerless, Thomas Rowland, El Dorado
 December, Antlerless, Roy Sharp, Jacksonville
 Permits purchased through auctions by the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation:
 Horace Smith, Daytona Beach, Fla., Zone 3 (September Hunt)
 Mike Balenko, Cabot, Zone 4 (September Hunt)

The applications and permits were free, although a number of applicants sent donations earmarked for elk program work.

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission plans drawdown for Harris Brake Lake

PERRYVILLE - The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission will begin a drawdown of Harris Brake Lake on Aug. 1. To keep adjacent landowners informed, the AGFC will be holding a public meeting to discuss management actions and answer questions concerning the drawdown. The meeting will be held July 9 at 6 p.m. in the Perryville High School cafeteria.

The lake will be drawn down seven feet below normal pool to elevation 273 feet. The drawdown will be in effect until Dec. 14, 2009. At that time the gate will be closed and the lake allowed to refill. Refilling will be totally dependent on rainfall.

This drawdown is intended to allow lakefront landowners an opportunity to make repairs on their piers and boathouses, according to Lake Manager Matt Horton. "Some of the structures on the lake are in advanced states of disrepair. The AGFC will be notifying owners of repairs to be made, structures to be removed and structures encroaching on the easement around the lake owned by the Commission that must also be removed," he explained.



All piers and boathouses must be permitted. Other AGFC projects include repairing the boat ramp at the dam, cleaning out the spillway to promote better flood relief when the lake gets inundated with heavy rains, and marking boat trails with a universal system throughout the lake. All stumps also will be cleared from the boat trails.

This will be an excellent opportunity for landowners to create fish attracting structures, such as brush piles, around their fishing piers and shoreline, Horton says. "We encourage landowners to take this opportunity to make any shoreline improvements such as armoring of eroded banks or planting trees and shrubs, especially water tolerant species. However, no changes in the configuration of the shoreline will be allowed," he says. "Any shoreline stabilization work or pier and boathouse construction requires a permit attained from the AGFC," Horton added.

In addition to cleaning up structures on the lake, a shoreline clean-up will be organized to help improve the appearance of the area.

For answers to specific questions or concerns about the drawdown or advice on shoreline improvements, call the Mayflower Fisheries Office. Interested parties can call Tom Bly (District 10 Fisheries Supervisor), Matt Schroeder (District 10 Fisheries Biologist), or Matt Horton (District 10 Lake Manager) at (501) 470-3309.

Reyno Levee reopens on Dave Donaldson Black River WMA

POCAHONTAS - The Reyno Levee within Dave Donaldson Black River Wildlife Management Area has reopened for public access. The levee will remain open through Oct. 31 - as long as weather related conditions allow vehicular travel without causing damage to the levee top surface.

The levee may be closed periodically during the summer months due to rainfall events over the local area. Caution should be used when travelling along the levee due to elevated levels of the Black River and subsequent overbank flooded conditions of the compartments adjacent to the levee. Water levels in the compartments are expected to fall as the Black River recedes within its banks over the next 2 to 3 weeks.

The Little River Dam Road within Dave Donaldson-Black River WMA will remain closed to vehicular traffic as sustained overbank flooding of the Black River is limiting all access to the Little River Island. The road will open for vehicular travel as soon as Little River levels permit safe public access and may be limited due to ongoing maintenance and repair operations to the road surface. River levels are expected to drop within the next 2 weeks to allow area staff to restore public access to the vicinity.



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

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 Schweyer 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 Schweyer 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 Hattieville. 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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