

Arkansas Game & Fish Commission

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Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

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Commission approves early migratory season

LITTLE ROCK – The unofficial opening of Arkansas's hunting season was set during last week's commission meeting in Little Rock. It's time to pull the shotgun out of the gun case and give it a good cleaning. Commissioners from the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission approved the early migratory bird seasons for 2009-2010.

Mourning Dove and Eurasian Collared Dove

Sept. 5 to Oct. 18

Dec. 5 to Dec. 30

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

Special Early Teal Season

Sept. 12 – Sept. 27

Season length and bag limit: 16 days, 4-bird daily bag

Biologists also presented the proposed late migratory bird seasons for 2009-2010, including several proposals for duck season. One proposal is to raise the hen mallard bag limit on Bayou rently, the regulation limits the daily bag limit on the WMA to a single hen mallard. Another proposal is to prevent the use of boats on the Government Cypress greentree reservoir within Bayou Meto.



One topic of discussion was a proposal to restrict motor horsepower on several WMAs to 25 horsepower or less.

AGFC Wildlife Chief Doyle Shook said habitat conditions for breeding waterfowl improved in much of the U.S. and Canada in 2009. "The Canadian prairie ponds were up 17 percent from 2008 and 5 percent above the long-term average," Shook explained. "Total duck abundance is estimated at 42 million – a 13 percent increase from 2008 and 25 percent above the long-term average," he added.

Based on this year's survey results of 8.5 million mid-continent mallards and 3.6 million ponds in Prairie Canada, Shook said the prescribed regulatory option for the Mississippi Flyway most likely will be the liberal package. "This will result in a 60-day season with a 6-bird daily bag limit," he said.

Season options:

Option 1:

Nov. 26 (Thursday) – Dec. 6 (Sunday)
 Dec. 12 (Saturday) – Dec. 23 (Wednesday)
 Dec. 26 (Saturday) – Jan. 31 (Sunday)

Option 2:

Nov. 21 (Saturday) – Nov. 29 (Sunday)
 Dec. 10 (Thursday) – Dec. 23 (Wednesday)
 Dec. 26 (Saturday) – Jan. 31 (Sunday)

Youth Waterfowl Hunt:

Dec. 5-6 or Feb 6-7

The late migratory bird seasons will be decided at the August commission meeting.

In other business, the Commission:

*Approved a budget increase of \$225,500 to be used for the development of a habitat conservation plan in the Big Woods of Arkansas. The plan would cover all six of the federally listed species in the area: the ivory-billed woodpecker, fat pocketbook mussel, pink mucket mussel, scaleshell mussel, red-cockaded woodpecker and interior least tern.

*Approved a budget increase of \$30,000 to build a trail system on Choctaw Island WMA. The new trail will allow sportsmen and recreationists the opportunity to observe white-tailed deer, turkeys, waterfowl and other birds along the Mississippi River.

*Approved a \$40,000 budget increase for a habitat improvement on Dry Run Creek in Baxter County.

*Heard a proposal for fishing regulation changes for 2010.



2009 spring turkey hunt close to previous year's totals

LITTLE ROCK – Turkey hunting in Arkansas last spring, a season shortened to a "conservative" mode, ended with hunters taking nearly as many birds as the previous year, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission was told at its July meeting.

The spring turkey season resulted in 11,122 turkeys being taken by hunters, said Mike Widner, turkey program coordinator. This was down by 339 from the 2008 spring hunt, a 3 percent decrease. Slight declines were in the Ozarks, Ouachitas and the Gulf Coastal Plain, and the Delta had an increase in turkey successes.

Widner said, "The stable harvest during the 2009 season was primarily the result of the conservative spring turkey season now in place, as brood production continues to be below average. The current season structure is compatible with recent trends in turkey reproduction and turkey numbers."

The spring season was three weeks long for much of the state, Widner said, down from the 37-day hunts a few years back. The production of young turkeys, called poults, dropped because of weather problems and other unfavorable conditions, so the AGFC reduced spring hunting, first to a 28-day maximum then to 21 days.

Sharp County in northern Arkansas was again the top turkey hunting county with 421 birds checked in. Next in the Top Ten of turkey counties for the spring 2009 hunt were Fulton 409; Baxter 337; Cleburne 335; Independence 329; Izard 304; Randolph 303; Montgomery 284; Marion 278; and Union 277.

Two counties in northeast Arkansas, Cross and Mississippi, had their most productive spring turkey hunts ever.

The public area that had the most turkeys checked by hunters was White River National Wildlife Refuge in southeast Arkansas, where 89 turkeys came in.

AGFC's regulations restrict the number of jakes, young male turkeys, that are taken by hunters. Widner said that in the 2009 spring hunt, the percentage of jakes in the totals dropped to 18.3 percent, down from 19.3 percent in 2008 and from 25 percent in 2007. A hunter can take



only one jake during the season.

In the two-day special youth hunt that preceded the regular turkey season, 981 turkeys were taken by hunters 15 and younger. This bettered the previous high of 951 in 2007's youth hunt.

Widner said, "The spring harvest was in line with our expectations. We expected harvest in the Delta to go up due to good hatches in 2005 and 2006 and good carryover of adult gobblers due to closed seasons in spring 2008. We expected harvest in the rest of the state to be similar to last year because of continued below-average brood production in most areas.

Public meetings will be held around the state on Tuesday, Aug. 25, for hunters to provide input for the spring 2010 season.

Conservation is a lifestyle for Bert, Cheryl Haralson

AUGUSTA – A close connection to the land has been with Bert and Cheryl Haralson all their lives. When their interests focused on wildlife, the next step came naturally.

They went to work for habitat, the foundation and the backbone for Arkansas's bountiful wildlife. They have made significant contributions in Arkansas wetlands for waterfowl and in Arkansas upland country for elk.

Both Bert and Cheryl are natives of Augusta. Bert is a product of a farm family and has been in farming all his adult life. Cheryl worked as a legal secretary in her younger years and has been an enthusiastic partner with Bert in habitat work and outdoor activities for many years now.

It is natural for many east Arkansas farmers to blend their agricultural pursuits with duck hunting. Bert Haralson did this for many years, and it led to a major undertaking for them five years ago. They put 750 acres of wetlands into a conservation easement, assuring it will remain wildlife habitat forever. The land is on the Cache River and adjoins Rex Hancock Black Swamp Wildlife Management Area of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission as well as the Cache River National Wildlife Refuge.

The Haralsons were already involved in wildlife work as one of the first farm families to join the Conservation Reserve Program in 1987. Tree planting drew their attention on land better suited for growing wildlife than for producing crops.

A trip to the West for mule deer hunting evolved into elk hunts for Bert in the 1980s. He quickly became an elk enthusiast, with Cheryl in step with him. They became life members of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and when talk of an Arkansas elk hunt on a limited basis began in the late 1990s, the Haralsons were quick to step up as volunteers. They were already involved as Elk Foundation representatives in partnership habitat improvement projects, and Cheryl served on the Elk Foundation's national board of directors for a number of years.

From the beginning, a feature of the Arkansas elk hunts was the auctioning of two permits at Elk Foundation banquets, with most of the money going to elk work in Arkansas. The Haralsons helped talk up and sell the Arkansas hunts at the Elk Foundation national banquet then went a major step further.

They hosted the out-of-state permit winner each year, and they were stylish hosts to the extent the experience has brought repeat high bidders. "Elk camp" with the Haralsons is a tradition much talked when Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation members gather.

The Haralsons bought land and a house in the elk country of Newton County, and they made a conservation easement on 314 acres that is bordered by the AGFC's Gene Rush WMA, insuring it will be a home for elk, deer, turkey, bear and other wildlife forever.

For more information and tickets to the Outdoor Hall of Fame banquet, phone Steve Smith or Wendy Glover at (501) 223-6396.



Corps to issue permits for special deer hunt at Greers Ferry

LITTLE ROCK - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is taking applications through Aug. 15 for a special deer hunt for the physically impaired to be held Nov. 3-5 at Greers Ferry Lake.

The Corps said up to five permits will be issued to hunters whose mobility is permanently or severely impaired by paralysis or amputation.

Hunting blinds and safe access routes to the sites will be provided. Hunters will be limited to the use of muzzleloaders only. Hunters will need an assistant and an all terrain vehicle to access the blinds.

Applicants must submit a completed application form and a doctor's letter by close of business Aug. 15. A drawing will be held during the



Arkansas Disabled Sportsmen Association's annual meeting to select up to five hunters.

Applications may be obtained from the Corps' Greers Ferry Project Office in Heber Springs. P.O. Box 1088, Highway 25 North, Heber Springs, AR 72543, or by calling (501) 362-2416. Office hours are 7:30 a.m. until 4 p.m. weekdays.

The special hunt is a joint effort of the Corps of Engineers, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and the Arkansas Disabled Sportsman's Association.

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.

Common Moorhen

Sept. 1-Nov. 9

Mourning Dove and Eurasian Collared Dove

Sept. 5-Oct. 18

Dec. 5-Dec. 30

Teal

Sept. 12-Sept. 27

Virginia and Sora Rail

Sept. 12-Nov. 20

Woodcock

Nov. 7-Dec. 21

Snipe

Nov. 1-Feb. 15

Purple Gallinule

Sept. 1-Nov. 9

Early Canada Goose Statewide Season

Sept. 1-15

Northwest Canada Goose Zone Season

Sept. 26-Oct. 5

Late Canada Goose Statewide Season

Dec. 26-Jan. 30

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. 14-159 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

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 – Wildlife Field Day. The U of A Division of Agriculture in Calhoun County will be hosting the field day at the Woodberry Park Community Center beginning at 10 a.m. This event will bring in professionals from across the state to discuss many different wildlife management aspects. The cost for the program will be \$10 payable to the Calhoun County Extension Office at the door. The fee covers fact sheets and other literature. Due to size limitation, there will be a maximum of 50 people allowed to participate in this program. Interested participants please preregister prior to Aug. 5 at 4 p.m. Lunch will be provided. To preregister, or for any additional information, please contact the Calhoun County Extension Office at (870) 798-2231.

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. 13 - Wildlife Habitat Management for Landowners, 7 p.m.-8 p.m., Witt Stephens Jr. Central Arkansas Nature Center in Little Rock. There are many things landowners can do to make property more attractive to wildlife. Jason Honey and Matt Mourot, wildlife biologists for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, will discuss topics such as fall food plots, native plants, controlled burning to benefit wildlife, forest canopy openings, water resources and more. The seminar is designed for landowners with 40 acres or more to manage. Hunting clubs and leases and individual property owners are invited to attend for ideas on wildlife habitat management. The Central Arkansas Nature Center is located within Riverfront Park in the River Market District of downtown Little Rock. Free parking is available along streets in the River Market District. Seating is limited, so call the nature center office at (501) 907-0636 to register to attend.

Aug 15- Russellville First Flight Chapter of Delta Waterfowl banquet at First Baptist Church Fellowship Hall. The church is located at 200 South Denver. The fellowship hall entrance is one block over on South El Paso. The doors will open at 5:30 p.m.

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.

Aug. 22 – East Arkansas Chapter of Ducks Unlimited membership banquet, Southland Gaming and Racing Park in West Memphis. For more information contact Jason Rodgers at (870) 225-6642 or agoinc4450@aol.com.

Aug. 28 – Ouachita Flyway Chapter of Delta Waterfowl banquet, Caddo Event Center in Caddo Valley near Arkadelphia. Social starts at 5:30 p.m. followed by dinner. Tickets are \$40 for a single, \$60 for a couple, student discounts also are available. The chapter requests that all people planning to attend call or email Tommy Womack at (870) 230-3215, tommy_womack@hotmail.com.

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.

Sept. 12 – Jacksonville Chapter of Ducks Unlimited membership banquet, old Wal-Mart building in Jacksonville. For more information contact Matt Robinson at (501) 412-8055 or jacksonvilledu@aol.com.

Sept. 12 – Greers Ferry Lake and Little Red River cleanup, 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. Free picnic and entertainment at Narrows Park from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Come with or without boats between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. to reporting stations at commercial marinas on the lake for the Greers Ferry

National Fish Hatchery or trout docks on the river. Bring your life jacket. Litter bags will be provided. For additional information, call (888) 490-4357, (501) 362-2416 or (501) 324-5156.

Sept. 17 – North Little Rock Chapter of Ducks Unlimited membership banquet, Sherwood Forest in Sherwood. For more information contact Pat Mahan at (501) 743-6154 or northlittlerock@yahoo.com.

Sept. 25 – Toad Suck Chapter of Ducks Unlimited membership banquet, Knights of Columbus Hall in Conway. For more information contact Jeremy Abbott at (501) 428-3161 or jerabb@yahoo.com.

Sept. 26 – South Logan County Chapter of Ducks Unlimited membership banquet, 1st Baptist Church in Booneville. For more information contact Josh Boersma at (479) 518-4250 or boersma66@yahoo.com.

Oct. 5 – Benton County Chapter of Ducks Unlimited membership banquet, The Quail Barn in Bentonville. For more information contact Todd Etzel at (501) 613-1874 or toddetzel@sbcglobal.net or Blayne Estes at (479) 721-3394 or baestes@cox.net.

Nov. 3 – Marion Chapter of Ducks Unlimited membership banquet, The Greens at Marion Clubhouse in Marion. For more information contact Irwin Burton at (870) 739-3442 or redneck_squirrel@yahoo.com.

Nov. 19 – Phillips County Chapter of Ducks Unlimited membership banquet, Phillips County Community College in Helena-West Helena. For more information contact Jason Smith at (870) 995-6103 or jason6868@att.net.

Nov. 19 – Paragould Chapter of Ducks Unlimited membership banquet, Paragould National Guard Armory. For more information contact Jerrod Brown at (870) 215-3212 or william.brown@smail.astate.edu.

Dec. 5 – Clear Creek Chapter of Ducks Unlimited membership banquet, Alma Boys and Girls Club. For more information contact Jeremy Teff at (479) 409-4646 or duckranger@gmail.com.

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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