

Buck darters
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Above: Goose Creek (Casey County) pre-restoration condition. Note high banks and lack of instream habitat diversity. Right: Post-restoration condition. Note lower banks, less erosion and increased instream habitat diversity. Trees will be planted in spring 2020 to increase shade and floodplain roughness.

Rare fish found in Casey County creek after stream restoration project

The Stargazing minnow (*Phenacobius uranops*) is listed in Kentucky’s Wildlife Action Plan as a species of greatest conservation need and is limited to high quality riffle habitats in the upper Green River drainage.

In September, this rare species that averages just 4.7 inches long at maturity was detected for the first time in Goose Creek, a direct tributary to the Green

River above Green River Lake. The discovery came soon after the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources’ Stream and Wetland Mitigation Program (Stream Team), which restores stream resources across the state, completed a stream restoration project on Casey Creek. The restoration project addressed multiple issues in the watershed, such as livestock in streams, lack of streamside vegetation,

severe bank erosion and low instream habitat diversity.

In addition to habitat and stability assessments, Stream Team staff conduct fish and macroinvertebrate community surveys before and after restoration.

Staff sampled Goose Creek before construction in 2014, 2016 and 2017.

[See ‘Record,’ page 2](#)

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Burton hired as department's new safety administrator

Rebecca Burton started in September as Kentucky Fish and Wildlife's new safety administrator.

A Russell County resident, Burton previously worked in safety for private industry and spent more than 10 years with the Kentucky Labor Cabinet as an Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) compliance officer and consultant, where she conducted numerous general industry and construction inspections. These included referrals,

general scheduled inspections, accidents and fatality investigations. Burton also was tasked with recommending the issuance of citations and penalties for violations of general industry and construction safety standards.

She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Justice Administration from the University of Louisville and in 2014 earned a Master of Science in Safety, Security and Emergency Management from Eastern Kentucky University. She also

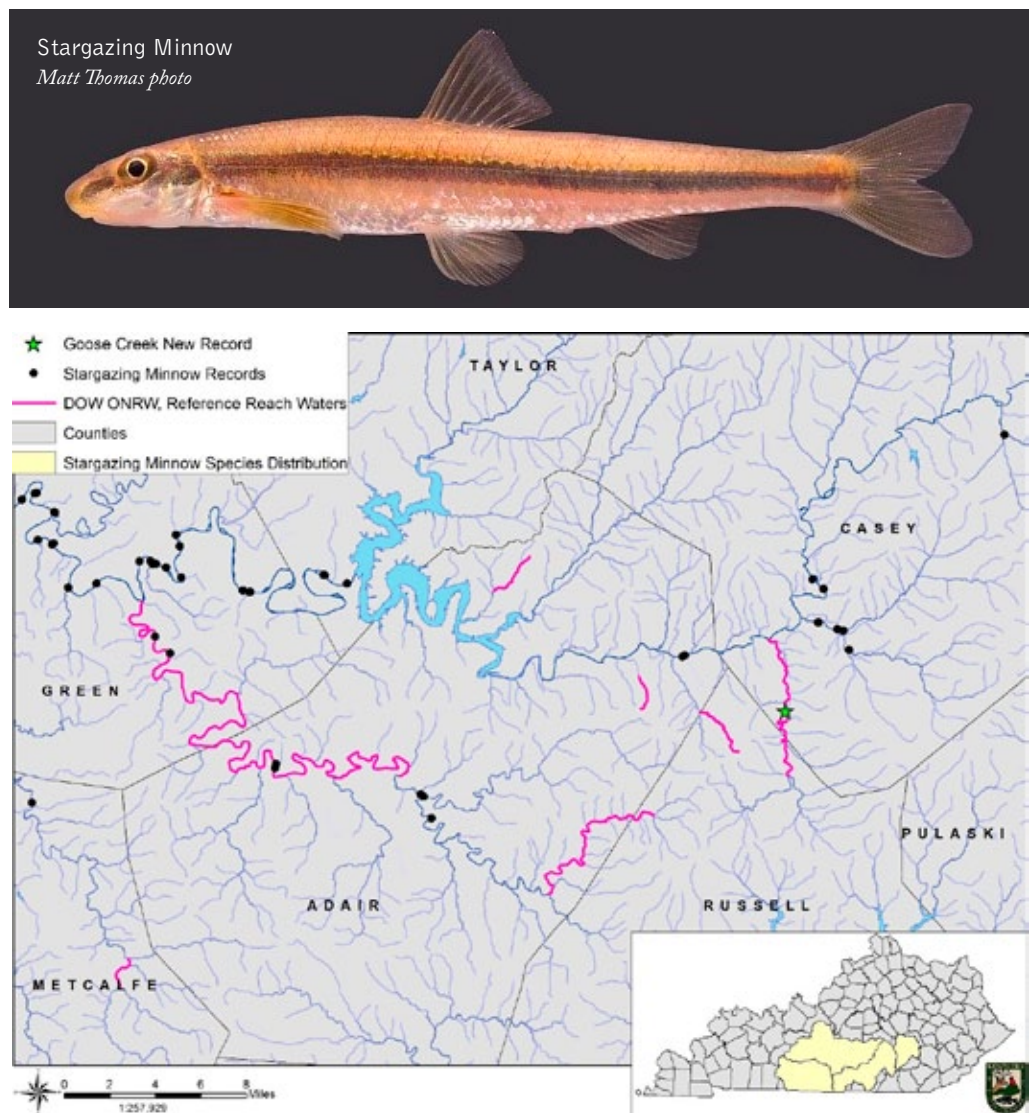
holds a Construction Health and Safety Technician (CSHT) Certification from the Board of Certified Safety Professions.

Burton looks forward to fostering the safety culture at Kentucky Fish and Wildlife by developing policies and procedures, setting goals, encouraging employee involvement and taking proactive measures to identify and correct any issues that could impact the safety and health of all employees.

"Record," continued

Prior to construction, Goose Creek boasted 24 species present. When staff sampled in September shortly after the completion of construction, a new record of the Stargazing minnow was detected. Although found in the Green River watershed, it was the first time the species had been detected in the Goose Creek watershed and the first time above Green River Lake since 2002.

After restoration, Goose Creek now has the riffle habitat, which will hopefully allow additional individuals to colonize. Biologists will continue to monitor the fish community at Goose Creek to determine if a resident population establishes.



Kentucky Conservation Officers honor fallen officers in 200-mile relay event

A team of Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Conservation Officers recently traded their uniforms and boots for running gear to honor the seven Kentucky conservation officers who have died in the line of duty.

The Runnin' Down Poachers team that competed in The Bourbon Chase on Oct. 18-19 included conservation officers Capt. Jeremy McQueary, Lt. David Marques, Cody Berry, Tim Brett, Zach Carney, Bryan Hill, Jason Ice, Josh Robinson, Robbie Spears and Brad Stafford. Rowan County prosecutor Jason Greer



and Zach Pickett with The Nature Conservancy also competed with the team.

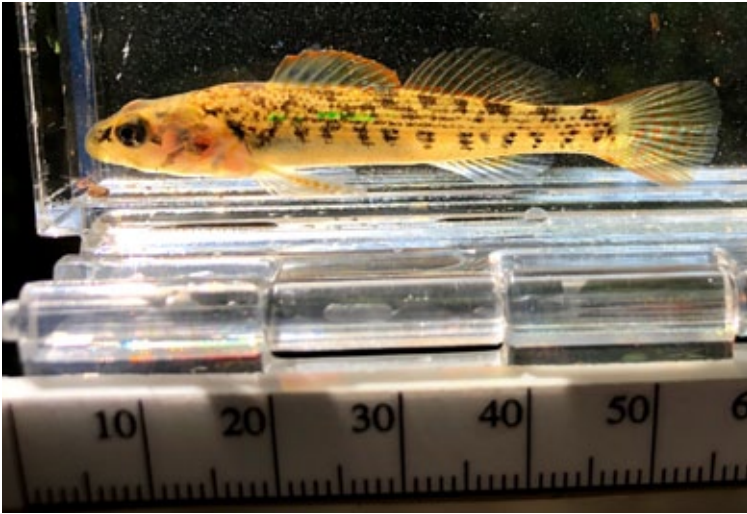
The Bourbon Chase is a 200-mile running relay that follows the Kentucky Bourbon Trail. It starts in Clermont and finishes in downtown Lexington.

Runnin' Down Poachers stopped at 36 locations and completed the 200-mile course in 32 hours, 5:02 minutes, finishing 10th in the Military/Public Service Division and 206th out of 428 teams that entered The Bourbon Chase.



CONSERVATION OFFICER RECRUITS HELP WITH TRUNK OR TREAT EVENT IN MADISON COUNTY

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Conservation Officer recruits were in the Halloween spirit as they helped at an Oct. 15 trunk or treat event hosted by the Department of Criminal Justice Training's law enforcement Basic Training Academy and Public Safety Dispatch Academy. The event was open to all Madison County children ages 12 and younger. Pictured from left to right are Michael Pritchard, James Neyhouse, Gabriel Suthoff, Glen Shortt, Mason Stamm, Robin Martinez, James Brace, Tory Parrish, Nathan Wildharber and Miranda Perry. *Photo provided by Col. Eric Gibson*



Above: Recaptured 2018 year-class Buck darter, marked with green visible implant elastomer tag. Right: Seining for Buck darters.

Buck darter recovery progress update

In 2010, Department ichthyologists Matt Thomas and Stephanie Brandt discovered a new species of fish found only in the Buck Creek drainage in Pulaski County.

The aptly named Buck darter (*Etheostoma nebra*) grows to 3 inches in length and the males develop brilliant breeding colors during the spring spawning period. Unfortunately, this beautiful little fish has declined significantly within its range and is now restricted to two small streams in the Flat Lick Creek system a few miles east of Somerset.

A conservation partnership between Kentucky Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Kentucky Field Office (KFO), Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) and Conservation Fisheries, Inc. (CFI) was formed to develop and implement conservation actions for the species.

Since 2016, EKU has completed research on the Buck darter's population size and ecology, while CFI initiated a multi-year captive propagation study and is maintaining an ark population.

Captive-spawned Buck darters were tagged and released in 2018 for the first

time in a small tributary of Flat Lick Creek. In 2019, more than 500 progeny were tagged and released on Aug. 20 and Oct. 1. An Aug. 20 survey recaptured one tagged adult, indicating survival of fish released in 2018.

Monitoring will continue into 2019 to assess survival and natural reproduction of stocked fish.

Reintroduction of the species into its former native habitat has been made possible through Partners for Fish and Wildlife, a voluntary partnership program administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

to provide financial and technical assistance to private landowners who wish to protect or restore wetlands, uplands, and riparian and instream habitats.



Carleisha Hanns (CFI) and Stephanie Brandt (KDFWR) acclimating captive-spawned Buck darters before stocking.



Grants awarded for Lake Barkley, Barren River Lake habitat improvement projects



Above: Joseph Zimmerman, Aquatic Habitat Coordinator for Kentucky Fish and Wildlife, accepted the Friends of Reservoirs Small Project Grant. Right: Artificial concrete and gravel spawning bed constructed at Lake Barkley.

A pair of recently awarded grants totaling more than \$31,000 will be used to enhance fish habitat on Lake Barkley and Barren River Lake.

Applications for habitat improvement projects submitted by various states from across the country were evaluated for potential funding at the Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership's annual meeting in October in Kansas City, Kansas.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Lake Barkley in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service, Kentucky Fish and Wildlife, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, Kentucky B.A.S.S. Nation, Wired2Fish, Murray State University

Bass Anglers, Kentucky BASS High School Trail West, McCracken County High School Bass team, Kentucky Bassmasters, Akridge Farm Supply were awarded a \$30,000 grant for habitat improvement efforts on Lake Barkley.

The project will include the installation of cypress tree plantings, simulated laydown cover, fish attractors, and long lasting artificial spawning beds throughout Lake Barkley.

Friends of Barren River Lake was awarded a Friends of Reservoirs Small Project Grant for \$1,000 to go towards habitat improvement efforts in the Barren River Lake Fish Habitat Project. This



funding will be used to purchase rock for several black bass rock/log combo structures. These structures will be built on main lake points near the Narrows on Barren River Lake.

Fisheries Division staff from Kentucky Fish and Wildlife attended the meeting, which included an aquatic dredge demonstration and a workshop on reservoir habitat restoration best management practices.

WE GET MAIL

Letters to the Commissioner's Office

Dear Kentucky Fish and Wildlife,

I wanted to extend my sincere thanks to officers Dolen and Neal. I called Saturday morning on (Oct. 26) about a deer that seemed to be injured on Green River WMA. The officers showed up amazingly fast and were able to deal with the

situation. Both officers were very professional, knowledgeable and humane in their treatment of the animal. I'm glad folks like them are out and about protecting our fish and wildlife resources.

Sincerely,
Eric Hardin



Kentucky Fish and Wildlife assists development of “Cook Wild Kentucky” initiative



A kickoff event for the Cook Wild Kentucky initiative was held Oct. 8 at the UK Cooperative Extension Service office in Scott County. Kentucky Fish and Wildlife’s Commissioner Rich Storm, Deputy Commissioner Karen Waldrop, Chief of Staff Brian Clark, Information and Education Division Assistant Director Nathan Brooks, R3 Branch Manager Brent McCarty, and conservation educators Becky Wallen, Olivia Dangler and Andrew Wooldridge were among the department representatives in attendance. *Kevin Kelly photos*

The University of Kentucky’s Nutrition Education Program recently unveiled 17 recipe cards that it hopes will lead more people to make wild game a part of their diets.

Santa Fe rabbit soup. Roast venison. Venison meat loaf, Sloppy Joes and steak. Rabbit Jambalaya. Kentucky baked dove breast. Duck and potatoes. The Cook Wild Kentucky recipe cards feature those mouthwatering recipes and more. Each recipe card provides a list of ingredients, detailed preparation instructions and nutritional information.

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife staff shared their knowledge about wild game processing and preparation with UK Nutrition Education Program staff as the initiative took shape over the course of a year. The Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Kentucky Hunters for the Hungry and Feeding Kentucky also are partners in Cook Wild Kentucky.

“The Cook Wild Kentucky initiative is a great complement to the Field to Fork program, a learn-to-hunt program for adults that we’ve successfully developed in Kentucky with the help of partners like

the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service,” Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Rich Storm said.

“Teaching essential field skills is a vital part of the hunter development

process, and this culinary initiative will help us complete the process. It takes the guesswork out of turning locally harvested game meats into nutritious and delicious table fare. We hope this partnership leads more people to explore and enjoy the abundant and healthful natural food resources available to hunters and anglers in the Commonwealth.”

Cook Wild Kentucky recipe cards are available at UK Cooperative Extension Service offices and food pantries, as well as online at the Nutrition Education Pro-



gram’s website (planeatmove.com).

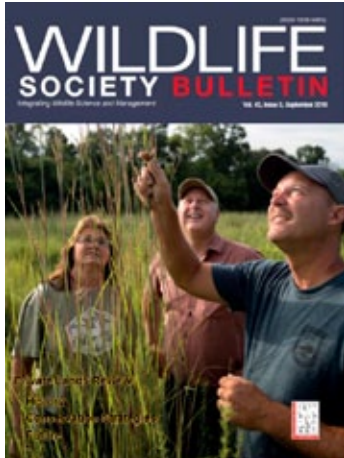
A link to the website is available at Kentucky Fish and Wildlife’s online home, fw.ky.gov. Click on the “Education” tab on the department’s homepage and choose “Learn to Hunt, Fish and Shoot” from the dropdown menu.

Biologists coordinate national private lands conservation discussion

Kentucky is 93 percent privately owned and the majority of people recreate on private land in the state. This land-ownership pattern also means the vast majority of wildlife habitat is on these private lands. Kentucky Fish and Wildlife has a dedicated private lands staff with private lands and Farm Bill biologists across the state.

These facts led Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Small Game Program Coordinator John Morgan to form a state and national team aimed at getting the conversation started on the importance of private land, not only in Kentucky, but nationally, as well.

Work started in February 2019 for a



special issue of the Wildlife Society Bulletin, an internationally peer-reviewed publication, along with special events at regional and national meetings of state, federal and non-governmental organization (NGO) natural resource professionals.

The papers in the special issue were released in September.

The first special event was held in September

at the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) annual meeting in Minnesota. Several hundred natural resource professionals, including many directors and chiefs of state fish and wildlife agencies, attend these meetings. Morgan and Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Deputy Commissioner Karen Waldrop coordinated and hosted a reception. Attended by

more than 200 of these professionals from across the country, the event was a success.

The conversation on the importance of private land conservation is under way and the team is looking forward to hosting more events at upcoming AFWA meetings.

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife has a good start on the necessary number of staff required to adequately assist in the management of Kentucky's private lands. According to research published by Kentucky biologists in the special issue, there is still a long way to go. The department's private lands staff is doing good work with the private landowners of Kentucky, the research featured in the special issue and the purpose of the planned events are to outline the importance of their work and get them the tools they need to continue the relationships and habitat improvements made on private lands. We will not be able to recover the many common species in decline without private lands!



BOATING SAFETY DAYS

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Conservation Officers Thomas Blackwell (above left), Lt. David Kuhn (right) and Boating Education Coordinator Marcus Bowling recently spent two days teaching boating safety to more than 400 fourth grade students in Hardin County.

Photos provided by Marcus Bowling



Karri Hazlett

Camp Currie mentor hunt helps seven hunters harvest their first deer



Joshua Westerfield

Seven hunters harvested their first deer during a special mentor hunt held Saturday, Oct. 12 on the grounds of Camp John Currie in Marshall County.

Camp staff and staff from the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources' R3 branch invited seven hunters who had never harvested a deer and seven mentors to accompany them.

The experience started the night before. Participants practiced shooting crossbows and had an opportunity to ask Kentucky Conservation Officer Daniel Richardson questions during a question-and-answer session.

A cold front moved through the area overnight and it made for a chilly but productive morning. Seven deer were harvested before noon and processed by the participants and mentors.

"This is really what interested the participants," said Easton Copley, conservation educator with Kentucky Fish and Wildlife. "(Conservation educators) D.J. Garland and Courtney Goodman took the lead on helping participants process their harvest, showing them each cut of meat and guiding them through the process. Each participant left the experience with a cooler of venison and the memory of their first harvest."



Carly Bell was a counselor at Camp Currie this past summer



Nick Pendergraft

Tune to “Kentucky Afield” TV for a special show Nov. 2

Hunters and conservationists will not want to miss a special Nov. 2 episode of “Kentucky Afield” TV featuring host Chad Miles and an expert panel discussing chronic wasting disease (CWD) and how it could affect Kentucky’s deer and elk herds.

The show airs at 8:30 p.m. (Eastern) on Kentucky Educational Television (KET).

While CWD has not been detected in Kentucky, the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources is increasing its statewide monitoring for the disease

and working to raise public awareness about it.

CWD is fatal to deer, elk, moose and caribou and it has spread to more than half of the states in the U.S. since its discovery in the late 1960s. Six of the seven states bordering Kentucky have detected the disease.

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife panelists for this special installment of “Kentucky Afield” include veterinarian Dr. Christine Casey, Deer and Elk Program Coordina-

tor Gabe Jenkins and Deer Biologist Kyle Sams.

Together, they will cover a variety of topics, including how the disease affects deer and elk herds, human health concerns associated with CWD, the role of carcass movement in the spread of the disease, the department’s readiness and more.

A replay of the show will be posted on the “Kentucky Afield” YouTube channel ([KYAfield](#)) after it airs Nov. 2 on KET.

Salato Center hosts Monarch Day



Photos provided by Michaela Rogers

The Salato Wildlife Education Center played host to Monarch Day on Sept. 7 to mark the start of the annual migration of Monarch butterflies through Kentucky and to raise awareness about their journey to Mexico and habitat needs.

The event attracted 542 people to the Salato Center, where they enjoyed a monarch tagging demonstration, a monarch themed story time, a variety of butterfly crafts, native plant information, face painting and much more.

Representatives of more than 10 partner groups and agencies that play a role in the Kentucky Monarch Conservation Plan staffed booths and help make the event a success.

A recently completed Monarch



waystation at the Salato Center was also dedicated in memory of Mary Carol Cooper, who served as native plant program coordinator and was an employee from April 1997 - December 2010.

This event was made possible through a partnership between the Salato Wildlife Education Center, Wild Ones and the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Foundation.



Louisville resident becomes Field to Fork success story

Edwin Liem moved to Kentucky about 15 years ago and accompanied a friend deer hunting on a few occasions.

“That’s when I got my first taste of it,” he said. “The thrill of the hunt, the peace and quiet of being out in the woods, the camaraderie, the challenge of archery, the bounty of nature when you harvest an animal, it was all new and exciting for me. This brief experience made a big impression on me. But, alas, my friend moved away and I got busy raising my kids, so I did not hunt anymore for many years.”

Liem ultimately discovered the [Field to Fork](#) program through the Fern Creek Sportsman’s Club and attended classes led by Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources Conservation Educators Rachel Young and Becky Wallen.

Field to Fork is a learn-to-hunt program for adults who are new to hunting in general, or who have little to no experience hunting the featured game for the workshop. Workshops are advertised on the department’s website at fw.ky.gov.

Liem was one of 11 novice hunters who participated in a mentor deer hunt Oct. 19-20 at Taylorsville Lake Wildlife



Edwin Liem (right) harvested his first deer, a doe, with archery equipment during a mentor hunt on Taylorsville Lake Wildlife Management Area. Scott Crume (left) served as Liem’s mentor for the hunt. *Photo provided by Rachel Young*

Management Area in Spencer County. The hunters hunted the first day and the morning of the second with their mentors. Late in the morning on Oct. 20, Liem harvested the only deer taken during the mentor hunt, a doe that he harvested with a bow.

“We are so excited for Edwin to have harvested his first deer while being mentored by Scott Crume,” Young said. “Special thanks to all mentors who came out and to the Taylorsville WMA staff for their help.”

West Virginia donates blue catfish to Kentucky

Agenerous donation of 15,000 blue catfish from the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources boosted fish populations in the Kentucky River.

“We’re grateful to West Virginia for helping us fortify blue catfish populations in areas where numbers are low and catfishing is popular,” said Paul Wilkes, acting director of fisheries for the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources.

Earlier this year, Arkansas donated 38,000 surplus cutthroat trout to Kentucky, enabling the state to stock this species for the first time ever in the Cumber-

land River below Lake Cumberland.

“These are just further examples of where state and federal governments work together to provide more opportunities for anglers everywhere,” Wilkes said.

Kentucky stocked 15,000 of West Virginia’s catfish into Pools 2-6 of the Kentucky River on Oct. 10, although Pool 3 was skipped due to low numbers of forage fish. Over time, annual flooding should carry more fish downstream and help restore populations in that section of the river.

The stocked fish from West Virginia averaged 11 inches long.

Kentucky operates two hatcheries of its own. Together, the Minor Clark Fish Hatchery near Morehead and Peter W. Pfeiffer Fish Hatchery near Frankfort produce cool and warm water fishes, such as largemouth bass, muskellunge, walleye, striped bass, hybrid striped bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, blue catfish and channel catfish.

The state annually stocks 4.5 million fish measuring at least 1½ inches raised at these hatcheries. Kentucky has also stocked an average of 7.4 million hatchlings a year for the past six years.



Toyota teams up with Salato Center for National Public Lands Day

Toyota employees and their families volunteered Oct. 6 at Salato Wildlife Education Center in honor of the 26th annual National Public Lands Day.

National Public Lands Day events are held over several weeks and bring together volunteers to improve and restore lands used for recreation, education, exercise and enjoyment.

More than 150,000 volunteers partici-

pated in activities at more than 2,000 sites across the country.

Inclement weather hampered the efforts at the Salato Center but volunteers persevered and completed multiple projects. New river pebbles were placed in the amphitheater and around the elk statue. Salato Center visitors also will notice improvements to the groundhog and box turtle enclosures where the children of

Toyota employees helped remove weeds.

The enhancements were completed just ahead of the Salato Center's annual Halloween Walk with the Animals on Oct. 26.

The Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Foundation supported the day's projects. Foundation staff worked alongside Toyota and Salato Center staff to ensure the day was a success.

Wild pig eradication efforts in Henry County producing results

A multi-year partnership between the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources and U.S. Department of Agriculture – Wildlife Services in September led to the capture of the last known sounder of wild pigs in Henry County.

Two sows, two boars and eight piglets entered a trap at 9:45 p.m. on Sept. 15, and USDA Wildlife Specialist Dax Lane acted quickly to shut the door remotely.

"As far as we know, this capture

removed the last remaining females from the population," said Terri Brunjes, wild pig biologist with Kentucky Fish and Wildlife. "Only a few remaining boars are known to be left. It is possible that more pigs are present on the landscape.

"With the great relationship our agencies have with the Henry County community, we expect reports from hunters if pigs are seen on trail cameras. Deer



season is an excellent time to find any remaining pigs in the population because there are so many trail cameras in use."

See "Pigs," page 12



2019 Sharp Shooters Gold Star Youth Deer Hunt

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources and Riverbend Whitetails teamed up to host a youth-mentor deer hunt Oct. 12-13 near Sturgis, Kentucky for three boys from Gold Star families.

Gold Star families include immediate relatives of members of the U.S. Armed Forces who died in service to the nation. The three youth hunt participants ranged from 6 to 9 years old. Two were brothers.

Each participant received instruction on firearm safety and proved themselves to be sharp shooters at the range using paper and balloon targets, as well as 3D deer targets. Shot placement and deer position were finalized using the 3D targets.

All three harvested their first deer. Each took a buck and one harvested a doe in addition to his buck.

"The brothers hunted with me and



were both in the blind at the same time when the other one killed their first buck," said Curt Divine, fish and wildlife management foreman at Higginson-Henry Wildlife Management Area. "This was very special for them."

The youth hunters learned about deer processing and helped process their harvest. They even helped meal plan, learned about cooking techniques and helped



Left Daniel Cornell with Alex Guerra-Rojas, 6, and Aydan Guerra-Rojas, 9. Right: Curt Divine helps Alex slice venison as his brother, Aydan (far right), looks on.

prepare backstrap and tenderloin.

The experience wasn't limited to hunting or learning about nature and the outdoors. The boys also had an opportunity to ride horses and took a UTV ride.

"Grilled venison and chili made for the conclusion of a great hunt," Divine said. "Little faces had big smiles as they talked about the hunt and that they were indeed, sharp shooters."

"Pigs," continued

When wild pigs first appeared in parts of Kentucky, sportsmen and sportswomen were excited about the increased hunting opportunities, but it soon became apparent that wild pigs were more than anyone bargained for. Wild pigs displace game species, destroy crops and food plots, and consume the acorns many other wildlife species heavily rely on as a food source.

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife recently launched an educational campaign called, "Report. Don't Shoot." The campaign encourages sportsmen and sportswomen to report wild pig sightings and refrain from

hunting or shooting them.

"Shooting into a sounder may remove one or two pigs," Brunjes said. "However, it educates the rest of the sounder. Disturbances associated with human activity, especially hunting pressure, cause wild pigs to leave the area and become nocturnal. Once they learn to avoid humans, it becomes extremely difficult to find them again. By the time we do find them, their numbers have doubled or even tripled."

Eradication efforts have been underway for several years.

Since 2016, almost 600 wild pigs have been removed from this population. Eradication efforts are successful due to the

excellent partnership between Kentucky Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Department of Agriculture – Wildlife Services, as well as strong support from the community.

"This success story in Henry County shows that our agencies can fully eradicate all wild pigs in Kentucky with strong partnerships and community support," Brunjes said.

Sightings of wild pigs can be reported to Brunjes by phone at (502) 892-4548 or by email at terri.brunjes@ky.gov. Free trapping services are available to anyone with a pig presence on their property. Total eradication of wild pigs is possible with continued assistance from the public.