



Wildlife biologists seeking information on feral pig sightings

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources is seeking information from the public about feral pig sightings.

Some Kentucky farmers, hunters and native wildlife are paying a huge tab today because pigs released in areas few years ago have multiplied and become a destructive force today.

“These feral pigs are responsible for serious agricultural damage, and some farmers have lost the majority of their crops,” said Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Feral Pig Biologist Terri Brunjes. “Home-owners have awakened to find their yards destroyed, tilled up during a single night.”

Pigs outcompete native wildlife for food and displace deer and turkey. They root up newly planted food plots and harbor various diseases transmissible to livestock, pets, and even humans. They pose a serious threat to Kentucky’s high quality deer and turkey populations.

“I know landowners who are turkey hunters and just a few years ago thought hunting pigs on their farms was a cool thing,” said wildlife biologist John Hast. “But they haven’t killed a turkey since the



pigs showed up and now they want their farms back.”

While hunting is the primary tool wildlife professionals use to manage most wildlife populations, it fails as a management tool for feral pigs due to their high reproductive rate and intelligence. Hunting pressure causes them to become nocturnal or to move into another area.

“We discourage pig hunting,” said Brunjes. “They just leave the area and show up months later miles away, each female with a new litter. Trapping is far more successful.”

Pigs live in groups called “sounders,” which are groups of related females. They can reproduce at six months of age and have two litters per year. Left alone, numbers increase very quickly. Males generally are solitary.

Eradication of this invasive species

requires removing entire sounders through trapping. Population reduction requires at least 70 percent removal annually. Intensive hunting removes only about 30 percent.

“Other states have serious pig problems today because hunters tried to turn them into game species,” said Brunjes. “Hunting them just pushed them into other areas where they became established and multiplied. Native wildlife like deer, turkey, rabbits, and quail – everything really – paid the price.”

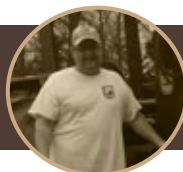
“I understand the lure to hunt them,” said Hast. “Every person that goes out and hunts a pig becomes a person who wants pigs around – at least until they realize they no longer have turkeys on their farm.”

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WE GET MAIL

Letters to the Commissioner's Office

The following email came in to our Wildlife Division. Professor Philip Lavretsky wrote, "I am a professor at the University of Texas at El Paso and emailing you in regards to my recent trip to Kentucky where I worked closely with **Robert Colvis and his team** at Ballard WMA.

Everyone was very accommodating, easy to get along, and very knowledgeable. The group did a fantastic job in preparing field sites and helping to capture ducks, from which I was able to sample blood that will be used for genetic analyses.

The group did everything they could to get us the numbers that we needed and, in general, were great to work with (we are already set up for next year's collaborative effort)."

This note came to us from R. Perkins of Radcliff. She wrote, "My trip to the Green Wing Event was very helpful. It helped inexperienced hunters such as myself learn different hunting techniques and guided us just enough to where we still learned ourselves but didn't have something done for us.

I learned how to load and shoot a 12 gauge shotgun, and how to use a duck call. I liked how they gave each child a choice between a 12 gauge and a 20 gauge shotgun. It not only supported someone who wasn't comfortable with a gun's recoil, but it also gave the shooter an option as to

what they shot best with.

My trip was also enjoyable. The staff assigned us blinds that were far apart to give us better chances of shooting ducks and geese. I really liked the counselor that drove us and stayed with us in the blind. They helped us shoot, lure in birds, and were great company. They even went out into the water to get the duck I shot.

The cabins were well managed and the food tasted amazing. We even received duck meat to take home.

The Green Wing Event was both beneficial and fun! I'd go again if I wasn't too old. I recommend Camp Currie and any other camp.

This letter came to us from Ted Rogers, MD of Clarkson, KY. He wrote, "I wanted to thank all involved for their time, effort and level of commitment for the Greenwing Adventure Waterfowl Hunt at Camp John Currie this past January. **Bill Fannin, his co-workers**, private volunteers, and businesses involved are to be commended for their dedication which they displayed and their love of sportsmanship with regards to our state hunting and fishing programs.

Their involvement can only be a positive influence on the youth of our state and the preservation of our hunting resources and its continued interest and growth. I believe programs such as these are vital

and will help today's youths seek out new opportunities in these areas.

My son and I had a new and great experience together. I myself attended Camp Currie in 1978 and remember that week with great fondness and have recommended it to many other families over the years. Three of the four of my children who have participated in this opportunity have come back with similar memories. Resources allocated for these type of state activities provides a wonderful return on the investment."

From Tom Wilkerson of Owensboro – "I wanted to write a special thank you to the fisheries department and staff who were responsible for stocking the FINS lakes in Owensboro. The trout this year are all quality size fish that anyone would want to throw on the grill! Compared to years past, it's a great improvement! Keep it up!"

Tim Wolfe of Beattyville wrote: "I own a farm and hunt on my own land. I let my license lapse this year because I didn't need it. One of the most valuable things that I learned at [the Georgetown] "Field to Fork: Turkey Hunting" program was the importance of getting a hunting license.

I learned so much [at the workshop]. It's given me the confidence to hunt on my own. I'll definitely buy an annual license from now on to support the educational programs you do so well."

"Pigs," continued

Trapping them works, but is a honed skill.

"We need to catch them all and their intelligence can make that difficult," said Brunjes. "We wait to drop the trap door until they all are inside. If you trip it too soon and leave some outside the trap, those escapees immediately are trap smart

and won't step inside another trap."

"We used a multi-pronged approach and eradicated more than 1,100 from the Pond River area in Hopkins and Muhlenberg counties," said Hast. "Those pigs are now gone, so we know we have the ability and capacity to address the problem. We've proven that we can be successful."

KDFWR asks that people refrain from shooting pigs and instead, report

sightings. Anyone with information can call wildlife biologist Terri Brunjes at 800-858-1549 ext. 4548.

"We hope people will report pig sightings, not shoot at them," said Brunjes. "We need to get them all."

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife partners with USDA Wildlife Services to eradicate feral pigs and offer free trapping services to those impacted by feral pigs.



From left are officers Cory Ellis, Jeremy Meade, Loren Clark, Eighth District Commission Member Rich Storm, Commission Chairman Jimmy Bevins and Commissioner Gregory Johnson.

Fish and Wildlife commission recognizes Eighth District conservation officers

Three Eighth District Conservation Officers were recognized at the March meeting of the Fish and Wildlife Commission for their efforts in locating and apprehending two Fleming County

brothers for illegally pursuing and taking deer.

The Commission recognized Officers **Cory Ellis, Jeremy Meade and Loren Clark** for their efforts in charging the two

violators each with 114 counts of illegal take / pursuing of deer. One had an additional charge of terroristic threatening after reportedly making threats to one of the officers.

New hires

Melinda Kemper has joined Fish and Wildlife as Commissioner Gregory Johnson's new executive assistant. She assumes the position vacated by Nancy McIver, who retired.

Kemper came onboard on March 1 after working at the Fayette County Conservation District in Lexington.

Originally from Carroll County, she now resides in Lexington. She has one daughter, Chelsie Kemper, a critical care nurse at the University of Kentucky Medical Center.

Graham Howell is the new Fish Biologist II at Peter W. Pfeiffer Fish Hatchery after working as an interim technician for the past two seasons.

Before working at the hatchery he spent a season working for the Idaho Fish and Game performing backpack electrofishing surveys and snorkeling surveys.

He grew up in Nicholasville and graduated from Asbury College with a Bachelor's in Biology. He is working toward his Master's in Aquaculture at Kentucky State University.

He enjoys fishing, tennis, and wood-working. Recently, Graham has taken up hunting with great success. He took his first deer with a bow in his first season bow hunting this past season.

Graham currently resides in Lexington with his wife Chelsea, but will eventu-

ally live on site at the hatchery.

Ryan Taylor was recently promoted to public lands Wildlife Biologist within the Green River Region, overseeing operations of Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area and Yellowbank Wildlife Management Area.

Ryan began his career with KDFWR in 2008 as an interim Wildlife Technician at Peabody WMA. He came on permanently later that year as the Wildlife Management Foreman managing Yellowbank WMA, where he has remained.

Ryan has a B.S. degree in Wildlife Biology from Murray State University, and is a past recipient of the Ducks Unlimited Jim Moynahan Award.

Retirements

Nancy McIver, executive assistant to three Commissioners and to the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission, retired March 1 after 20 years of service at the department.

McIver joined Fish and Wildlife in 1997 as the first supervisor of the newly formed Information Center. She moved to the Commissioner's Office in October 2004 to become Executive Assistant to then Commissioner Tom Bennett.

She went on to serve 13 years in the Commissioner's Office, including throughout the administration of Commissioner Jon Gasset, and the past three years with Commissioner Gregory K. Johnson.

She had previously worked for Investor's Heritage Life Insurance Company in Frankfort before taking leave from that to become a stay at home mom raising children. When she returned to work in 1997 is when she began her career at Fish and Wildlife.

"I always loved the people at Fish and Wildlife," said McIver. "Their passions for doing what they do always made coming to work a pleasure."

During a gathering celebrating her contributions to Fish and Wildlife, Commissioner Johnson presented her with a framed print of a squirrel on a limb by Department wildlife artist Rick Hill.

Today she's looking forward to spending time with her grandchildren and working around her home.

"I have a whole list of things to do here at home," she said. "And I don't believe it's going to get any shorter."

Thanks Nancy. We wish you well.

Daniel (Danny) R. Allen retired effective March 1 after 22 years with Fish and Wildlife.

Danny earned his Bachelor of Sci-



Commissioner Johnson and Nancy McIver

ence (BS) degree from Eastern Kentucky University in Security and Loss Prevention. He spent his state career with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Services interacting with all Divisions and staff throughout Kentucky, because he was responsible for fixed asset and real property inventory.

Danny started as an Administrative Specialist SR on 02/21/1995 in the Fiscal Control Division. His title changed over the years, and he retired as a Program Manager in the Purchasing Branch responsible for maintaining Property Accountability. He made sure our buildings and vehicles were properly insured.

Danny was responsible for many of the behind the scenes requirements that make all our jobs easier. If your vehicle gas card wasn't working, Danny got you a new one. If you put your surplus property



Danny Allen

in the hall of the Arnold Mitchell Building (AMB), it miraculously disappeared because Danny took the initiative to store it for the next auction.

Need a license plate for the new vehicle purchased? Danny went and picked up a license tag, then went to the courthouse to register the vehicle.

Danny was also responsible for organizing the two KDFWR auctions held each year and never missed an auction during his 22 years of service.

Danny and his wife Angie have decided to relocate back to Montgomery County where Danny is from.



Lee Kemper

Longtime Fish and Wildlife employee **Lee Kemper** decided to hang up his department hat and retire into the sunset.

Lee spent his career in the Engineering Division starting in the woodshop. Lee spent the majority of his career working on the survey crew and worked the last several years as a project manager for agency statewide projects.

Lee will enjoy some fishing time and his family as he decides the next step in his life.

Best of luck to Lee. You will be missed.

Conservation Camps ramping up for 2017 summer action

Our Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Conservation Camps program began almost three-quarters of a century ago and will open again for Kentucky fourth, fifth and sixth grade students Monday, June 5.

Counselors and staff for Camp Robert Webb near Grayson, Camp Earl Wallace near Monticello, and Camp John Currie near Benton will arrive on campuses two weeks earlier.

Camp superintendents have been working through the winter months readying things for the more than 5,000 campers that will begin arriving to start the 9-week long camp season in just over two months.

Information and Education division Director **Tim Slone** visited Camp Webb and its superintendent **Kevin Osborn** this month and saw some of the progress made



during the off-season.

Campers will enjoy a new swim dock funded by the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Osborn and staff **Rick Crider** and **Lee Roush** have been busy this winter. They repaired water line leaks, and made major renovations to buildings and other

facilities.

Osborn seemed particularly proud at being reunited with an old friend, a tractor he first used as a young department employee in the early 90s. He said all it took was a bit of tender loving care during the winter months and now it's running like a new one.





Coast Guard Auxiliary, Law Enforcement Division prepare for summer boating

Law Enforcement Division Director **Col. Rodney Coffey** was joined by captains **Buddy Grayson** and **Richard Skaggs**, and Boating Safety Education Coordinator **Zac Campbell** for the monthly flotilla meeting of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary in Lexington.

"We discussed potential partnerships and our department mission," said Campbell. "They will be able to help us quite a bit on some of the bigger events like the Raft-up and Poker Run on Lake Cumberland, and with towing boats sometimes when needed."

Flotilla Commander Nick McManus called the meeting an excellent opportunity to meet with members of Fish & Wildlife and learn more about its mission and efforts at making boating safer.



He said the flotilla is looking forward to possibly working together on national safety events, large boating activities like

the Poker Run, and certain Marina events. He said also they a seeking to train more instructors for boater education.

Department R3 committee takes shape



The department has created a formal Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3) Committee. This committee works to create strategies that enhance the department's R3 efforts and programs.

Jamie Cook serves as the department's R3 coordinator and recently conducted the R3 Committee's first

meeting at the Salato Wildlife Education Center.

The focus of the meeting centered on evaluating the department's current programs aimed at recruiting new anglers and hunters.

The group discussed current license trends, becoming familiar with the Na-

tional Plan for R3, and learning about the Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model.

The committee identified and prioritized specific threats to R3 efforts. The committee is comprised of representatives from Wildlife, Law Enforcement, Public Affairs, Admin services, and I&E.

The department will host a statewide R3 Summit for other state and federal agencies, along with over 20 conservation and industry organizations on April 18. The summit will provide our partners the opportunity to assist

KDFWR with creating a statewide R3 strategic plan for hunting and angling.

Meeting in the Salato Wildlife Education Center, the group was able to assist with a training exercise for the center's Kestrel. Deputy Commissioner **Karen Waldrop** attended the meeting and also took part in training the Kestrel.



Elk arrive in Wisconsin in third year of partnership with Kentucky

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources announced last week that 28 Kentucky elk arrived at their new home in the Flambeau River State Forest in Sawyer County. Once released into the wild, the “class of 2017” will join the current Clam Lake herd.

The elk released in Wisconsin are part of a reintroduction program that is key to Kentucky's grouse restoration. Wisconsin is funding major east Kentucky habitat initiatives for grouse.

The Clam Lake herd resides primarily in Ashland, Price, and Sawyer counties, and has grown steadily since reintroduction to the area in 1995 from Michigan. Adding additional elk from Kentucky to the herd will boost herd growth and introduce new genetics.

“We are very excited to be adding more elk to the northern elk herd – working alongside Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources staff has been such a positive experience,” DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp said. “This is yet another milestone we would not have reached without help from Kentucky and our other partners – whether through volunteer hours or donations, their support has led to a true team effort.”

Wisconsin DNR staff has worked closely over the past three years with Kentucky Fish and Wildlife staff to help make sure trapping efforts in Kentucky are



as successful and efficient as possible.

Funding for Wisconsin elk translocation efforts over the past three years is a result of support from the Ho-Chunk Nation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Jackson County Wildlife Fund, Chippewa tribes and others. The department made a commitment to use only funds received from partner groups for this project.

Now that the elk have arrived in northern Wisconsin, DNR staff will take special precautions to help make sure these elk become accustomed to their new home in the Flambeau River State Forest.

The elk will be enclosed in a seven-acre quarantine pen to satisfy health testing requirements and allow the elk to become familiar with their new surroundings. The area surrounding the acclimation pen is closed to the public during this

period. Individuals are asked to avoid the general vicinity of the closed area until the elk are released – likely sometime during summer 2017. Minimizing human disturbance near the release site will allow the elk to adjust and will maximize the success of reintroduction efforts.

During 2015 and 2016, a new elk herd was established in Jackson County where a total of 73 elk were released.

“The task of actually bringing elk to Jackson County is complete, and we are now shifting our efforts to the northern herd,” said Kevin Wallenfang, DNR deer and elk ecologist. “Our hope is to deliver at least 75 elk to the Clam Lake area over two years, but we have an option to return for a fifth year if necessary.”

For more information regarding elk in Wisconsin, visit dnr.wi.gov and search keyword “elk.”

My Summer Camp

Conservation Educator Amy Zimmerman forwarded the letter below written by one of her fifth grade students as a speech class requirement. He waited to present it to his class until she was there so that she could enjoy it too.

By Norman Arnold Blackburn

Have you ever heard of Camp Earl Wallace? After the first time I did I knew I had to go. A counselor from the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources came to our school. She talked about a camp with a huge lake where I could have fun with my friends and learn about boating safety, hunting, fishing, swimming and shooting. The best part was I could earn my orange card. Hi, my name is Junie Blackburn, and I want to tell you about my experience last summer.

Camp Earl Wallace is a conservation education camp located at Lake Cumberland outside of Monticello, KY. It first opened in 1951 and is run by the KY Fish and Wildlife Resource. Registration can be done online with a credit card and is open only to KY students in fourth through sixth grade. You cannot be older than 13 years old. I still remember the night my Mom signed me up.

The day finally came that I was leaving for camp. We left on a Monday morning and returned on a Friday afternoon. I was a little scared. While I was there, I slept on a bunk bed in an

air conditioned cabin. The food was really good there too. Once we got to camp I didn't even think about being scared because we were so busy having fun and making new friends. While I was there, I got to shoot a rifle and arrows. But first they taught us all about gun safety.

It was very interesting to learn about how to track animals by their footprints. Driving the boat was exciting. I went in the lake and had to go down and get a block and bring it back up to earn my swimming patch. These patches are called Achievement patches. I earned one in Archery, Boating, Naturalist, Swimmer, Gun Safety and Outdoor Survival. Everyone who goes to camp also gets his or her Jr. Sportsman's License for the year.

Because I earned all my patches, I also

earned the respected Outdoorsman patch and my Orange card! That made me feel happy and proud. The Orange card is the KY Hunter's Education Certificate that is required to hunt after you turn thirteen. Once you earn it you have it for life and I already have mine. It is honored all across Kentucky.

I will always remember the summer I earned my Orange card at Camp Earl Wallace. I made new friends, had a great time and learned a lot about being outdoors. Even though I already earned my Orange card, I am going back again this summer to learn more and make new friends. If you want to sign up to go to the KDFWR website and click on Education. By April first. Hope to see you there. Thank you for your time.



PIKEVILLE WALMART DEER

Conservation officers Glenn Griffie and Robert Spears rushed to the Walmart store in Pikeville earlier this month after a deer found its way inside among the patrons and employees.

They worked with the store manager and devised a plan that called for using a pillowcase to cover the deer's eyes and then wrapped it in a bed sheet to immobilize it.

They then carried it from the premises and released it unharmed into nearby woodlands.