



February 2010

—VOL. 5 NO. 2—



New state record certified for bull elk with non-typical antlers

Kentucky has a new state record for a bull elk with non-typical antlers.

Harrodsburg resident Terrell Royalty's 7x7 elk scored 372 6/8 in the Boone and Crockett Club scoring system, besting the old record of 367 7/8 taken in Harlan County in 2008. Royalty took his record elk from a wildlife management area in Knott County on Oct. 4, 2009.

"I've hunted all of my life, I've had buck fever and all, but this bull was by far the biggest adrenaline rush of my life," said Royalty, 52. "Once it hit the ground, I felt like I was being stabbed with a million needles and it lasted two or three hours. I was almost in shock."

Royalty said he scouted the area with help from his friend Paul Moore, who participated in the 2008 cow elk hunt. "We started scouting well before the hunt and found this bull," Royalty said. "Paul and I grew up together, and he helped me a bunch."

The first week of the 2009 bull elk season started Saturday, Oct. 3. Royalty's hunt proved fruitless for a day and half. Then, about 2 p.m. Sunday, Royalty, who was hunting with his best friend, Brad Smith, and guide Bob Hunter, heard a bugle.

"After we heard that bugle, we moved to get out front and downwind," he said. "We tracked and tracked to stay out in front of this bull. About 5 p.m. or so, a cow calf came out and we cow called back and forth. Then, the one cow calf turned into



about nine. The cows came out in twos and got older and bigger as they came out."

The trophy bull then appeared in the clearing around 6 p.m. and bugled at another bull in the distance. "He turned broadside and everything was perfect," Royalty said. "It took 15 minutes to get the right angle on him."

Royalty, who estimated that he was 340 yards away from the bull, aimed his .300 Winchester Short Magnum rifle and shot only once.

Big game coordinator Tina Brunjes was

not surprised to learn the record had been broken. "Kentucky continues to produce new state records with regularity," she said. "Each year drawn hunters can reasonably expect a chance to beat the state record."

Applications for this year's hunt are now on sale online at fw.ky.gov, the official Web site of Kentucky Fish and Wildlife. It costs \$10 to apply, and a hunter may apply only once. The drawing for the elk quota hunt is open to residents and non-residents. The deadline to apply for this year's hunt is April 30.

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WE GET MAIL

Letters to the Commissioner's Office

Robert Osborne from Corbin wrote to compliment Sgt. **Ray Lawson**. Mr. Osborne was participating in the 2009 elk hunt with his son-in-law when they came across three large bull elk that had been shot.

While he did not witness the person or persons doing the shooting, he was near enough to see the elk roll down the hillside after being shot. Sgt. Lawson answered their call.

Mr. Osborne said Sgt. Lawson was very professional in his investigation and is an asset to the Department. He said, "Your Department needs more officers of this caliber."

Thanks, Ray, for representing KDFWR in a very positive way!

Sfc John M. Askin, 301st / 299th CM Co., wrote to thank **Seth Stewart** and KDFWR for the generosity shown to the 299th and 301st Chemical Companies deployed in Iraq.

They received *Kentucky Afield* magazines and DVDs. Sfc Askin said, "Your generosity will not be soon forgotten

and I would like to present the KDFWR with a Certificate of Appreciation for all your support and patriotism toward your country's Service Members."

The following letter came to Deputy Commissioner **Hank Patton**. Mr. R. D. Davis wrote to thank Hank and other staff members that worked the Greenwing Hunt at Camp Currie last weekend (Feb. 5-7).

Mr. Davis attended with his granddaughter, Summer Frost. He said they enjoyed the excitement and enthusiasm of everyone connected to this event. Mr. Davis said, "I moved to Kentucky in 2004 and I have never seen the commitment from an agency such as yours. I read *Kentucky Afield* magazine and see all the hunts you offer to youth and also the handicapped. We live in a world where sometimes all we hear about is the negative.

"Well, your staff brought out the positive in 18 children and adults. While the



kids were out on the hunt your staff made sure the parents and grandparents were occupied with fun activities. The teaching of firearms and hunting safety was a priority and a life skill every child can use in their life. I hope the state of Kentucky never stops the programs they are offering through your Department." He quoted our staff as saying, "If we lose these kids to the national pastime of hunting and fishing we lose everything." He said he could not agree more.



GOOD THINGS TO COME

A blanket of deep snow tends to dampen thoughts of spring turkey season, but this group of gobblers picking their way down an Anderson County hillside recently during a break between snows means there will be gobbling in the area when the weather finally turns.



McQuillen, Pigman honored at KHEA awards banquet

Hunter Training Officer **Mary McQuillen** was inducted into the Kentucky Hunter Education Association Instructor Hall of Fame, and Conservation

Officer **Homer Pigman** was named 2009 Officer of the Year at the annual Hunter Education Instructor Appreciation Banquet on January 23.

The banquet took place at Dale Hollow Lake State Resort Park. With 112 participants, a good time was had by most.

New Hires / Promotions

Michael Cletus **Buelow** joined KDFWR on February 1 as a Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist in Madisonville at the Area 1 USDA-NRCS Service Center.

Mike received his B.S. from Lake Superior State University and his M.S. from Texas A&M-Kingsville where he studied bobwhite habitat use. Before coming to Kentucky, Mike held several summer positions with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Division and worked for two years with the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute in Kingsville, Texas.

Mike enjoys spending time training his two Labs and hunting.

Robert Hoffman joined KDFWR as a Farm Bill Biologist in Mayfield and is working out of the Graves County USDA-NRCS service center. He received his B.S. in Natural Resource Management from

the University of Tennessee at Martin and his M.S. from the University of Florida in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation.

His graduate research consisted of studying northern bobwhite habitat use on south Florida ranchlands. Robert has worked as a technician for South Carolina Waterfowl Association, University of Tennessee and Tall Timbers Research Station.

He is an avid hunter and enjoys wildlife Photography and training his German wirehaired pointer.

Tom Edwards has begun in a new grant-funded, time-limited biologist position based on the Blue Grass Army Depot at Richmond. Tom is no stranger to KDFWR, having retired in 2008 as a career biologist in various capacities in east-central Kentucky.

In this new role, Tom will be working on BGAD to maintain and further

KDFWR's working relationship with the Army facility. BGAD is a 15,000-acre area mandated by federal law to coordinate fish and wildlife management activities with KDFWR. It is also a focal area for northern bobwhite restoration in the Bluegrass Region. We have cooperated with BGAD for decades, but their recent investment to cost-share a biologist position marks a heightened commitment to wildlife conservation by the facility and by its Commander, Col. Joseph Tirone.

BGAD currently affords public and military hunting opportunities for deer, wild turkey and doves. Tom will be devoting his attention to continuing and possibly expanding public hunting opportunities, as well as large-scale wildlife habitat restoration and enhanced public relations on wildlife activities on BGAD.

See "Hires," page 4

Fishing Forecast for 2010 season

Even though the weather might not look like it, spring fishing is just around the corner. Department fisheries biologists use the winter doldrums each year to assemble the Fishing Forecast which provides anglers information on where fishing might be best across the state.

The 2010 Fishing Forecast is hot off the presses and is available to anglers in hardcopy form as well as electronically on the Department's website.

There are several new expanded fisheries this year including hybrid striped bass at Lake Linville, rainbow trout at Fagan Branch Lake, muskie, sauger, white bass and hybrid striped bass in the Kentucky River, and blue catfish at West Fork Drakes Creek Reservoir, Mill Creek Lake, Spa Lake and Metcalfe County Lake.

In addition, the FINS program, which provides fishing opportunities closer to home, has expanded from six lakes to 30 lakes in 2010. This program will provide catchable trout and catfish stockings

2010 FISHING FORECAST AND TIPS



Welcome to the 2010 Fishing Forecast for Kentucky's major fisheries. The forecast is based on 2009 fish population surveys, creel surveys, fish stockings, and historical knowledge of the fisheries. This handout is designed to assist anglers in planning their fishing trips and improving their fishing success. Additional fishing information is available from the Department's website at fw.ky.gov or by obtaining copies of the 2010 Sport Fishing and Boating Guide available at most sporting goods stores. The Kentucky Trout Waters brochure is contained in the 2010 Fishing and Boating Guide.

To locate fishing access sites in Kentucky, visit our website and click on "Fishing & Boating", then "Where to Fish", and finally "Find a Place to Fish". You will be able to search for your favorite water bodies and get directions to all major boat launches and access sites.

Opening day of the 2010 fishing season starts March 1 with the new year's license, so take a trip to your local sporting good store, get online at fw.ky.gov, or call 1-877-998-2401 to purchase your 2010 fishing license.

The Fishing Forecast was partially financed through funds provided by your purchase of fishing equipment and motor boat fuels under the Federal Sport Fish Restoration Program.



throughout the year and hopes to recruit new and lapsed anglers.

Along with a brief summary of each major lake across the state, the Fishing Forecast also provides a list of lakes which

are showing noticeable improvements for particular sport fish species. Some examples include crappie fishing at Cave Run Lake, bluegill and crappie fishing at Dewey Lake, spotted bass fishing at Green River Lake, and channel catfish fishing at Washburn Lake.

The Fishing Forecast is a great way for anglers to improve their chances of catching a trophy fish as well as experiencing a memorable fishing trip. Anglers can concentrate on lakes where the fishing is best this year and will also pick up a fishing tip here and there.

If they don't feel like reading through the entire forecast, anglers can skip to the end where they will find the Fishing Forecast Cheat Sheet. The cheat sheet lists only those species and lakes where fishing is forecast to be good or excellent.

Make sure you check out the Fishing Forecast before you head out on the water this spring. Now's a good time to do it, unless you like ice fishing.

"Hires," continued

Erin Harper has been hired as a migratory bird biologist with the Migratory Bird Program. Erin's work will primarily focus on sandhill cranes, a variety of shore birds and other wetland oriented migratory birds as KDFWR assesses migration chronology and habitat needs for these species groups.

In addition, she will assist with ongoing research activities with some high priority game species such as mourning dove, wood cock and black duck which are listed

in Kentucky's wildlife action plan as well as collect data for national avian influenza investigations.

Erin is a Kentucky native and graduated from Breckinridge High school. She received a Bachelor of Science degree from Eastern Kentucky University with a major in Wildlife Management and a minor in geology in 2004. Erin graduated with a Master of Science in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology from Arkansas Tech University in 2006 where she studied cerulean warblers in the Ozark and Ouachita National Forests in Arkansas. Before Erin

joined the wildlife biologist ranks she gained valuable experience working as a fish and wildlife technician for the Migratory Bird Program.

Erin is a long distance runner, taking part in several races each year and this spring she will run in the prestigious Boston Marathon in April. She is an avid outdoor enthusiast and photographer. Erin and her husband Chris reside in Frankfort. The Migratory Bird Program and Wildlife Division welcome Erin aboard.

Research aimed at evaluating a new 36-inch statewide size limit for musky in reservoirs

Musky anglers fishing Kentucky's reservoirs will be following a new 36-inch minimum size limit and one fish daily creel limit effective March 1, 2010. This new, statewide size limit will be enforced on Kentucky's three premiere reservoir musky fisheries of Cave Run Lake, Green River Lake, and Buckhorn Lake.

For quite some time, the musky fisheries of Kentucky have been considered by many anglers as some of the best fisheries in the Southeast. This honor has been further cemented by the catch of a new state record (47 lbs) musky from Cave Run Lake by Sarah Terry in 2008.

During previous years, musky populations have been managed under a 30-inch minimum size limit. Acting upon support from local musky anglers and guides, the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources recently completed an evaluation of a 40-inch minimum size limit at Buckhorn Lake.

Results from this study indicated that the 40-inch minimum size limit did increase the densities of 30- to 36-inch musky, as well as the number of musky greater than 40 inches.

Based upon the findings of this study, the Commission approved a new 36-inch minimum size limit to be enacted statewide at Kentucky's musky reservoirs. The goal of this new size limit is to help improve musky fisheries, yet continue to allow adequate levels of harvest for anglers

Sarah Terry with her 47-pound Kentucky state record musky caught from Cave Run Lake.



catching a large musky.

Beginning in 2010, fisheries research biologists will begin an in depth evaluation of this new statewide size limit. "Kentucky already has the reputation for world-class musky fisheries, but we truly want to see if we can make these fisheries even better," says Gerry Buynak, program manager for the Fisheries Division.

Under this evaluation, fisheries biologists will be conducting spring electrofishing over the next five to eight years to examine the effects of this new regulation on the abundance of several size classes of musky at Cave Run Lake, Green River Lake, and Buckhorn Lake.

"We will be looking at densities of musky in several size classes including fish larger than 30 inches, 30 to 36 inches, and bigger than 36 inches. We will also be looking at stomach contents of musky,

growth rates, and angler catch rates of musky in each of these three reservoirs," says Dave Dreves, fisheries research biologist. In Cave Run Lake, musky typically reach 30 inches by age three and 36 inches by age five.

Ultimately, the Fisheries Division anticipates that the enactment of the new 36-inch minimum size limit will help to increase angler catch rates of 30- to 36-inch musky, as well as musky larger than 36 inches.

This new regulation is also anticipated to help improve angler satisfaction across each reservoir as a result of higher catch rates and larger size of musky. For more information about this evaluation project, please feel free to contact Dave Dreves at (502) 564-3400 ext. 4469.

Salato Center's 2010 reopening comes with exciting new additions

Visitors to the Salato Wildlife Education Center will encounter some new and exciting additions with the center's re-opening February 16.

As visitors first walk through the doors they will see two trees surrounding the front desk reception area. The tree which appears to be growing out of the front desk is a replica of a bur oak. This tree is dedicated to the memory of Kyle Houchin.

Kyle's family hosts a golf tournament in his memory and the funds were donated to the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Foundation to allow for this new exhibit element. The other tree located along side the Dr. Salato exhibit is a white oak. Both trees were created by Murphy Catton, a local exhibit design company. As visitors proceed into the main exhibit hall they will get a chance to view two southern flying squirrels. The flying squirrels were confiscated by Law Enforcement and held until the court case was over. Their exhibit was built by John Akers and his crew.

The Salato Center has also added a striped skunk. This animal will not be on exhibit but will be used in educational programs. The skunk will only be handled by staff members but just getting an up close look will afford visitors an opportunity they will not soon forget.

Please come by and take a look at the new and exciting changes going on at the Salato Center and be sure to tell your family and friends.



Kristy Stroud and Jamie Cook attend to the front desk in the renovated entrance area.



Brent McCarty with the striped skunk, in front of the newly-built flying squirrel exhibit.

Trophy largemouth bass update at Cedar Creek Lake

The construction of Cedar Creek Lake, a joint partnership with the Kentucky Department of Transportation and Lincoln County government, helped create the Commonwealth's first public lake managed solely for the production of

trophy largemouth bass.

Impounded in 2002, the lake is now in its seventh year of management.

You may be wondering, what is the status of the fishery and trophy largemouth bass management at Cedar Creek

Lake? Put it this way – anglers seeking the opportunity to catch a trophy largemouth bass should definitely put Cedar Creek Lake on their list of lakes to hit during the 2010 fishing season.

Annual sampling of largemouth bass during 2009 documented that the largemouth bass population continues to show signs of improvement. Catch rates of largemouth bass during 2009 were the highest on record.

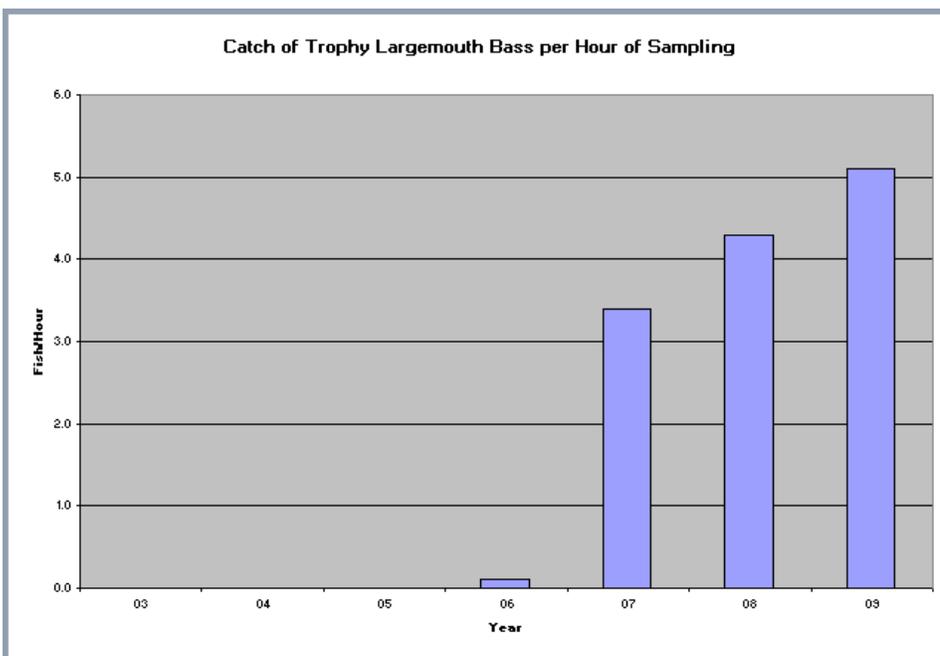
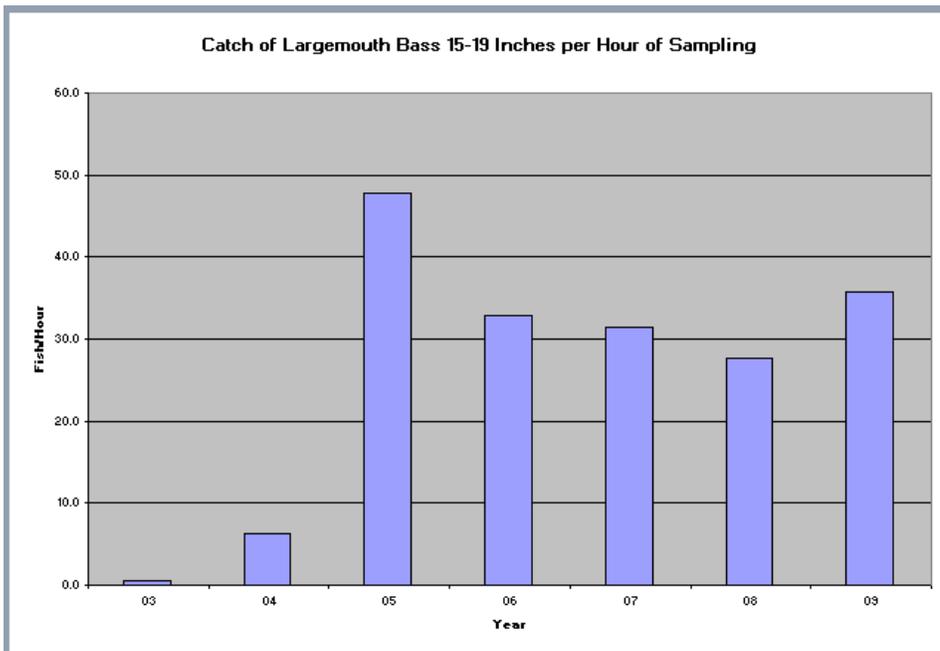
Approximately 225 largemouth bass were collected per hour of sampling (this number includes all sizes of largemouth bass). Catch of trophy largemouth bass (fish that are 20 inches or greater) increased for the fourth straight year.

Catch of largemouth bass in the 15- to 19-inch range was the second highest on record. This group of largemouth bass is anticipated to grow into the 20-inch range over the next several years and further help increase abundance of trophy bass.

Lastly, sampling during 2009 indicated that the spawning of the 2008 year-class of largemouth bass was the second largest on record at Cedar Creek Lake.

Angler creel and attitude surveys had previously been completed in 2005 and more recently during 2009. During the 2005 creel, anglers fished an estimated 39,735 hours (50.7 hours/acre) at Cedar Creek Lake.

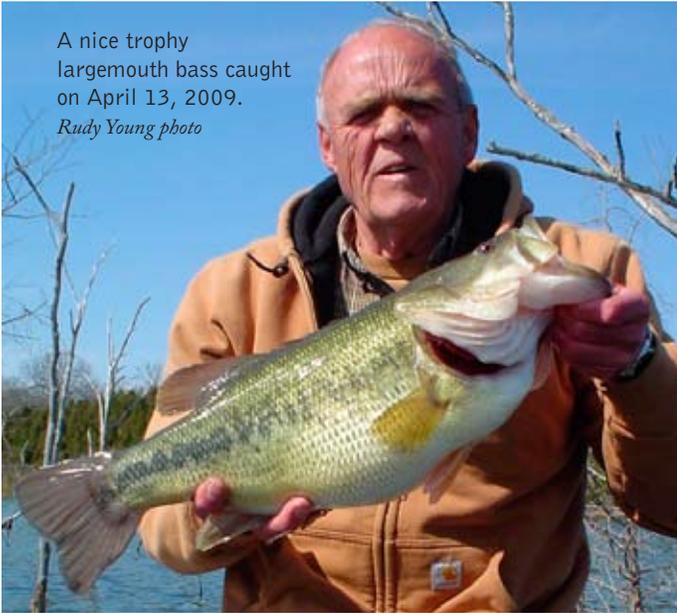
In 2009, effort increased roughly five-fold to 192,691 hours (245.8 hours/acre). A total of 38,561 fishing trips (49.2 trips/acre) were taken to Cedar Creek Lake during 2009, compared to 10,110 fishing trips (12.9 trips/acre) in 2005. A total of 296,539 fish were caught from Cedar Creek Lake during 2009 (378 fish/acre), compared to 76,439 fish caught during the 2005 creel survey. The number of fish caught during 2009 represented a four-fold increase from that



See "Bass," page 8

A nice trophy largemouth bass caught on April 13, 2009.

Rudy Young photo



“Bass,” continued

observed in 2005.

Anglers targeting largemouth bass fished an estimated 92,299 hours during the 2009 fishing season. A total of 18,470 trips were taken to Cedar Creek Lake solely for the purpose of fishing for largemouth bass. Anglers solely targeting largemouth bass accounted for 47.9% of all fishing trips to Cedar Creek Lake dur-

ing the 2009 fishing season.

Using the most recent data from the 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, trip-related expenditures to Cedar Creek Lake by anglers generated an estimated \$924,586 during 2009, compared to \$260,029 during the 2005 creel.

In light of the dramatic increase in angling pressure, the

largemouth bass fishery continues to show signs of improvement during its seventh year of management. The Fisheries Division is pleased at the development and progress of the largemouth bass fishery as it appears to be meeting the expectations of a trophy fishery.

Ongoing efforts will continue to monitor this fishery to ensure that it continues to provide a trophy aspect to the anglers of Kentucky. From the amount of

angling pressure directed at Cedar Creek Lake, it appears that the trophy management strategy of this fishery is well received by the public.

More than 80 percent of anglers are currently satisfied with the largemouth bass fishing at Cedar Creek Lake. The current state record largemouth bass weighs in at 13 lbs, 10 oz from Wood Creek Lake in 1984.

Perhaps Cedar Creek Lake is well on its way to producing the next state record largemouth bass.

Morehead man pleads guilty to 48 counts of illegally taking deer

A Morehead man has pleaded guilty to 48 counts of illegally killing deer, trapping without a license and possessing and trafficking in marijuana.

John Kevin Watkins, 36, entered the Class D felony plea January 15 in Rowan Circuit Court in exchange for a five years supervised probation sentence from Rowan Circuit Judge William Lane. He was ordered to undergo drug treatment and receive parole officer visits.

Last February, conservation officers responding to information about illegal deer kills, executed a search warrant and discovered the illegal deer along with marijuana, indoor grow lights, pills in plastic bags, 19 firearms and more than \$1,200 in cash.

Lane fined him \$200 for trapping without a license and also ordered 48 sets of antlers, 16 firearms, \$1,250, and an illegally possessed bobcat seized during the arrest to be forfeited.

Officers participating in the case included **Glenn Kitchen**, Maj. **Paul Teague**, Capt. **Herb Booth**, Sgt. **Buddy Grayson**, **Loren Clark** and **Andrew Black**.

SEEKING BLACK DUCKS

Wildlife biologist Chris Grascch puts the finishing touches on a trap to capture black ducks on Elkhorn Creek in Franklin County. The effort is part of a Black Duck Joint Venture of states in the Mississippi and Atlantic Flyways to band black ducks for a better understanding on post harvest survival rate.





BEAR SEASON FOR BIOLOGISTS

When black bear cubs are just weeks old and mom is still denned for the winter, biologists seize the opportunity to update radio collars, insert micro-chips in the cubs, and collect health and reproduction data. State bear biologist Steve Dobe and University of Kentucky bear researcher Ben Augustine show two Letcher County cubs. Above, they approach a well-hidden den under an uprooted tree. Conservation officer Willie Amburgey helps out holding two cubs. Kentucky Afield TV host Tim Farmer joined the trip while shooting an upcoming segment. Captain Frank Campbell and Amburgey sat next to the sedated mother bear still in the den. *Tim Slone photos*



Greenwing hunters bag three ducks, a weekend of fun

Flooding in western Kentucky didn't stop this year's Greenwing youth waterfowl hunters from having a good time. Several hunting blinds at Ballard WMA and the surrounding area weren't available to the kids because of high water.

But event organizers were able to shift youth hunters into other blinds with help from local landowners, who donated their time, guide services and hunting blinds to make sure the kids were able to hunt.

"We lost six blind spots. I thought we'd have to cancel Greenwing," said Bill Fannin, Information and Education Division administrative branch manager and Greenwing organizer. "But local people came through and offered blind



spots. They said, 'Please don't cancel Greenwing. Send us as many kids as you need to.'"

The 15 youth hunters, who were put into a random drawing for a spot at Greenwing after earning their Outdoorsman or Outdoorswoman patch at conser-

vation camp the previous summer, enjoyed some of the best hunting blinds in Ballard County. Though it was a slow day of hunting and only three ducks were harvested, the kids appreciated the chance to hunt and watch the birds work.

"I think my favorite part was watching the ducks come in and then fly away," said Will Rumfield, a participant from Louisville. "You think they're going to come in and they don't. It makes you appreciate it even more when they do come in."

Deputy Commissioner Hank Patton joined a team of Fish and Wildlife employees from the Law Enforcement, Wildlife, and Information and Education divisions to ensure the participants hunted safely and had an unforgettable experience at this year's Greenwing.

BANDING THE BIRDS



Mike Morton, Sloughs Wildlife Management Area Supervisor, prepares to release a recently-banded Canada goose. In the past two weeks, Sloughs staff have captured and banded 1,141 waterfowl.