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## KDFWR, legislators join forces to control wild pigs

**W**hen Gov. Steve Beshear signed State Representative Steve Rudy's House Bill 344 into law last month authorizing severe penalties for persons convicted of possessing or releasing feral pigs into the wild, it marked a tremendous leap forward for farmers and wildlife alike.

Rudy, from Paducah, introduced the needed legislation in response to constituent outcries about ecological and agricultural damage due to established wild pig populations that have been tracked to intentional releases. The new law makes those convicted of possessing or releasing wild swine guilty of a Class A Misdemeanor. Additionally, it allows for forfeiture of their privileges to hunt, fish, trap, or be a commercial guide for 10 years.

Since 2008, the KDFWR Wildlife Division has made significant strides with respect to management efforts for wild pigs in Kentucky. Implementation of an annual survey to document and map the occurrence of wild pigs has yielded very important information concerning their distribution. All of Kentucky's established wild pig populations are the result of intentional releases, most for the establishment of recreational hunting opportunities.

See "Pigs," page 11



Field damaged by wild pigs. Chad Soard photo

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## WE GET MAIL

### *Letters to the Commissioner's Office*

Occasionally, Commissioner Gassett receives requests from groups who would like to offer a hunt or fishing event for wounded warriors. We recently received a request from Ron Raboud with the Wounded Warrior Outdoors group to host a Spring Turkey hunt for some Wounded Warriors.

Mr. Raboud wrote the following: "We had a tremendously successful hunt with all of our wounded warriors taking two birds each with the exception of one young man. When you consider that all of our guests were amputees with several being multiple amputees the results are amazing.

More important than the birds harvested is the confidence the guys gained in being out of the hospital and back in the outdoors, that is what our program is all about. In fact, one of our guests just received his legs 7 days prior to our trip, so for him everything was a first. He ended up taking the largest bird at 27 lbs 8 oz with an 11 ¼" beard and 1 ¼" spurs!

The support of the State of Kentucky and the warmth and acceptance of the people of Fredonia will last these young men a lifetime. Thank you for being part of that memory.

I have attached a picture from our trip for you all to see, if you want to use these pictures in any publications just let me know. It will not be a problem.

All of the guys except Kevin Honaker harvested 2 birds, Kevin took 1. All birds were taken on private land in Caldwell County, all were mature gobblers with visible beards over 10".

On behalf of our most deserving group of Wounded Warriors, thank you for helping to make this adventure possible for them. We look forward to returning again next year with another deserving group.



Please pass on my sincere thanks to **Commissioner Gassett** and **Deputy Commissioner Patton**."

We received the following letter from Colonel Brian L. Rogers with the Bluegrass Army Depot. He wrote, "Thank you very much for supporting Kentucky's Wounded Warriors and our Blue Grass Army Depot by issuing three waivers for our recent Wounded Warrior deer, waterfowl, and turkey hunts. Your invaluable assistance with the waivers and the work accomplished by your outstanding staff allowed us to create a truly meaningful event for dozens of Wounded Warriors.

In addition, your contributions helped increase the local community's awareness of the many excellent wildlife and recreational opportunities available on Blue Grass Army Depot.

I am proud and grateful for the depot's partnership with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. Your staff members **Tom Edwards** and **Marcia Schroder** have been an incredible help to us during these hunts and throughout the year. Thank you for helping us grow and maintain the environmental health of our beautiful depot.

As always, it is a pleasure working

with you and your staff. Thanks again for your assistance."

The following email came to us from Lou Komis, Crestwood, Kentucky. "To **Charlie Logsdon** and **Jonathan Gassett**. Just wanted to thank you gentlemen and your teams for making the winter "delayed harvest" experience possible at Otter Creek. Winter can get long and dreary after hunting season but not this year. Weekly, several of my friends and I gathered our fly rods and drove down from Crestwood and elsewhere to spend the day. Often we arrived at daybreak, fished, grilled hamburgers for lunch, then fished some more till about 3 pm. Otter Creek is a crown jewel and we are so delighted that it is now part of the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife."

The following letter came from Neil Ward, Bell County Attorney. He wrote, "The fifth annual Fish Fest was held on April 21. Thanks to your department, 400 rainbow trout were released into the canal flowing through Middlesboro City Park. On Saturday, several hundred area youth went fishing, some for the first time.

**See "Mail," page 10**

Stephanie Brant and  
Dr. Matt ThomasSpring Creek in  
Simpson County

## It's the small fish in life that keep us going!

*Reprinted from the Tennessee Institute  
Conservation Initiative blog, Feb. 13, 2012*

**W**hile many people view small fish simply as bait, to aquatic biologists they can be important indicators of water quality in our streams. In August 2011, two Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) biologists made an unexpected find of some beautiful “bait” near Franklin, KY... a group of bright red Flame Chubs!

This small minnow, found in clear springs and streams in Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee, had not been seen in Kentucky waters since the 1880s.

This exciting discovery for **Dr. Matt Thomas** and **Stephanie Brandt** came at the end of a day of creek surveys in western Kentucky.

“We were not expecting to find anything very interesting in this creek, much less Flame Chubs, so we were pretty excited when we collected a group of 9 that day!” says Thomas,

an Ichthyologist for KDFWR.

Because we biologists get as excited about these 3-inch fish as fishermen would a trophy bass, news of the rediscovery of Flame Chubs in Kentucky was quickly passed on to scientists at the Tennessee Aquarium Conservation Institute (TNACI).

We have been studying the population status and genetics of the species since 2009. Because Flame Chubs are only found in high-quality water, their presence in a stream indicates a generally good

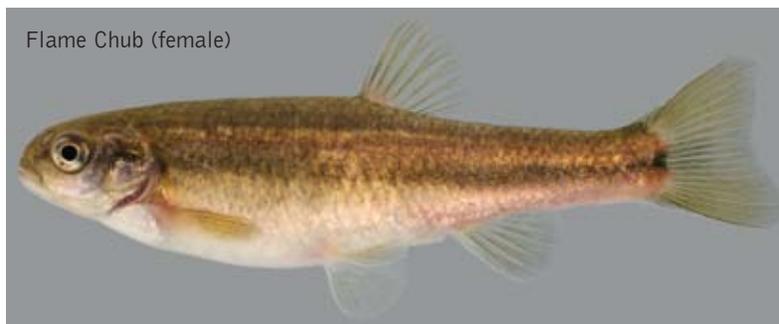
environmental health. Examining their DNA helps us fine-tune this prediction. The amount of genetic variation in the individuals tells us which populations are the healthiest, and which could use a little additional help to grow bigger.

In January, I was able to meet Matt and Stephanie for another survey of the creek. We captured eleven fish that were transported back to TNACI for genetic analysis. Because this population is currently very isolated from others in this species, it's especially important that we determine how much genetic variation they have.

It's always encouraging to find rare species in new locations, and we hope to learn more about what Flame Chubs need to thrive. In addition to the genetic analysis I have also begun studying how much Flame Chubs move from smaller springs and streams into larger creeks during different times of the year. Besides being beautifully colored, this species is interesting from a behavioral perspective as well.



Flame Chub (male)



Flame Chub (female)

## Engineering completes new Sledd Creek boat ramp at Kentucky Lake

Engineering Division staff are pleased to announce that they have completed yet another boat ramp, this one located in the northwestern embayment of Sledd Creek in Marshall County of Kentucky Lake. The new facility is located four miles south of Kentucky Dam Marina.

Anglers and boaters can access the area by traveling south on US-641 past Kentucky Dam Marina. Turn left onto KY-1519 (Sledd Creek Road). Turn right on Ridge Rd. Turn left approximately 0.8 miles onto a gravel access road that will lead you to the boat ramp.

This new boat ramp offers a single lane, paved boat ramp with a courtesy dock. Two small paved parking lots will accommodate parking for approximately 20 vehicles and trailers. Overflow parking can be found along the access road leading to the general area.

This project was the result of a partnership between the Tennessee Valley Au-



The new completed Sledd Creek boat ramp project. Completion of this project would not have been possible without the financial support of the Tennessee Valley Authority. *Ryan Oster photos*



thority (TVA) and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR). TVA provided significant

funding (\$100,000) towards the project with the remaining balance being funded by the KDFWR.

## New Hires

We are pleased to have **Jon Anderson** on the Farm Bill Staff as the Tobacco/Farm Bill Specialist in Somerset. This FF/TL position was created as the result of a grant through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) that will focus conservation practices and outreach to tobacco farmers in KY. In addition to his statewide duties with tobacco

conservation, Jon will be assisting with farm bill duties focusing on CCRP, EQIP Wildlife, and HFRP in the Somerset work unit area.

Jon is a native of Pulaski County and he graduated from Eastern Kentucky University with a Bachelor degree in Agriculture in 2002. While in college he worked a few months at Madison Co. NRCS as a student employee.

For the past eight years he has worked as a conservation Technician (50-50) with the Pulaski Co. Conservation District and

NRCS, administering farm bill programs.

He and wife Mary have a three-year-old son (Lane) and live on the family farm in Eubank, where they raise registered Limousin beef cattle.

Jon enjoys spending time outdoors and when time allows he likes fishing in Buck Creek and horseback riding. Jon is excited to be working in this position and we look for good things to come!

Jon can be reached at [jon.anderson@ky.usda.gov](mailto:jon.anderson@ky.usda.gov) or at the Somerset NRCS office at (606) 678-4842 ext. 3



Class member Taylor Fischer proudly displays a 20-inch largemouth bass from Cedar Creek Lake. At right, the class watches as black crappie otoliths are removed. *John Williams photos*

## Fisheries Division “shocks” future leaders at Cedar Creek Lake

**S**outheastern Fishery District biologists **John D. Williams** and **Marcy Anderson** recently met with a Lincoln County Chamber of Commerce Leadership class on Cedar Creek Lake. The leadership class is designed to acquaint selected local high school students (future leaders) to business and tourism opportunities in Lincoln County.

Cedar Creek Lake, the only designated trophy bass lake in Kentucky, was chosen as one of the stops on the class tour of the county because it is one of the major tourist and recreational attractions in the county.

The day began with John and Marcy giving a short discussion on the history of the lake, the formation of the Cedar Creek Sportsman’s Club, and the community’s involvement and stewardship of the lake.

Next, they discussed the fish community, and the Department’s stocking and fish management efforts on the lake. After a quick lunch, participants traveled to the lake for an electrofishing demonstration in hopes of finding some trophy largemouth bass.

The electrofishing demonstration was a success, as several species of fish were collected from the lake, including some sizable largemouth bass. Class members enjoyed learning about the fish and getting their picture taken with a 20-inch largemouth bass. The day concluded with Marcy

demonstrating how to remove otoliths from a black crappie to determine its age.

Class participants and their mentors seemed to enjoy the day and left the lake with a better understanding of the lake, its fishes, and the economic and recreational benefits that Cedar Creek Lake has to offer.

### SUCCESSFUL FIRSTS



Information and Education division Assistant Director Norm Minch, also an official Boone & Crockett Club scorer, measured this bull elk last week for Shelbyville resident Hubert Brooks. Brooks, 61, told Minch it was his first elk, taken with his first shot from a 7mm mag, on the first morning after being successful in his first elk draw lottery last year.

## Kentucky's first Archery Academy

Kentucky hosted its first "Archery Academy," featuring all things archery, March 15-16 at E.P. Tom Sawyer State Park in Louisville.

The event provided training in archery equipment, programs, and facilities to representatives from several municipal parks and recreation departments in central Kentucky. Participants received certification as intermediate archery instructors.

The event was sponsored by the Archery Trade Association (ATA), Archery Shooters Association, Easton Sports Development Foundation, KDFWR, and USA Archery, in concert with the Kentucky Recreation and Park Society.

Participants competed in an archery shoot-off for two equipment kits valued at \$5,000 each to take back to their parks departments. The winners were Louisville Metro Parks and Franklin County Parks. Both agencies are in the process of expanding archery opportunities at their facilities.

The other participating parks departments – Boone County Parks, Lexington Parks & Recreation, and Oldham County Parks – are moving in that direction as well.

The Archery Academy was an important step in the implementation of Kentucky's "Community Archery Strategy," developed in recent months cooperatively by KDFWR and ATA.

The strategic plan's overarching objective is increasing archery and

Participants learned to assemble a light-poundage crossbow, suitable for parks and rec programs (left), and also about using Explore Bowhunting curriculum activities for teaching a variety of outdoor skills and archery hunting.



Participants in Kentucky's first Archery Academy discussed principles of outdoor range setup on the E.P. Tom Sawyer State Park archery range in Louisville. *Brian Clark photos*

bowhunting participation in the Commonwealth by 20 percent over the next five years. It also identifies more focused goals and prescribes specific actions to meet those goals.

One of the plan's action items for 2012 was hosting the inaugural Archery Academy to train parks and rec department staff, so they have increased capacity to deliver archery in their communities.

The wildly popular National Archery in the Schools Program has exposed hundreds of thousands of youths to archery in

Kentucky over the past 11 years, creating substantial demand for local archery opportunities statewide.

With support from ATA, industry partners, sportsmen's and conservation groups, KDFWR is moving to capitalize on this archery fervor and help equip local organizations to get and keep more Kentuckians on the archery recruitment pathway, helping to support the agency's wildlife conservation and recreation programs through purchases of hunting licenses and archery equipment.





## Staff marks bridge collapse at request of Transportation

Department staff working on Kentucky Lake placed five can buoys marking the submerged wreckage at the Eggner's Ferry Bridge at the request of the Transportation Cabinet.

The buoys show restricted area markings and the text "NO BOATS." They

have 36 inches visible above the waterline. They are not lighted. Their positions are as indicated on the attached diagram. The "N Lighted," "High Spot – Red Mooring Buoy," and "S Lighted" markers were placed previously.

The buoys mark submerged steel

trusses of the Eggner's Ferry Bridge that fell in January after being struck by a cargo ship. They will remain in place until the submerged structure is removed.

The Transportation Cabinet took the action to help ensure the safety of the boating public.



## CLOSE-UPS

It might not be cause for alarm if you come across Kentucky Afield Editor Dave Baker lying on the Headquarters sidewalk in mid-afternoon. He may be simply attempting to get a portrait of a critter – an Indigo Bunting in this case temporarily disoriented after colliding with a window. Fed up with Dave's intrusion, the bird eventually flew away.

## KCOA seeking donations for Fallen Officer Memorial

The Kentucky Conservation Officers Association is nearing the halfway point in its quest to raise \$140,000 in donations for a memorial to honor those officers who have lost their lives while protecting Kentucky's fish and wildlife resources.

**Sgt. Scott Herndon**, KCOA vice president and chair of its Memorial Committee, says the association committed the first \$40,000 to the project and has raised another \$20,000 through donations since January.

Plans call for the Fallen Officer Memorial to be constructed at KDFWR Headquarters near the entrance to the Salato Wildlife Education Center. Herndon says the KCOA is hoping to begin work on the memorial this fall and dedicate it by October in line with the 100th year of the state General Assembly establishing



state game wardens and officially calling for wildlife conservation and enforcement of game laws in Kentucky.

Since 1918, six Kentucky conservation officers have died in the line of duty. The memorial's design pays tribute to those fallen officers and also recognizes those whose donations made the memorial

possible.

The memorial design features a life size statue of a uniformed Kentucky conservation officer facing six black granite-topped pedestals laser-engraved with name, picture and description of the events leading to the officer's death. Donation pedestals will display sponsors' names and brick pavers will display names of others who make monetary contributions to the memorial.

Herndon says persons wishing to sponsor at a Platinum Level (\$5,000-up), Gold Level (\$1,500 - \$3,000), Silver Level (\$500 - \$1,000), Bronze Level (\$25 - \$250), or purchase a paver (\$200) may contact the KCOA at (502) 797-8961 or by mail at KCOA, P.O. Box 1025, Taylorsville, KY 40071. The website is [www.officialkcoa.com](http://www.officialkcoa.com).



## CRUM'S YOUTH FISHING EVENT IS ANOTHER HIT

Aquatic Education's Marc Johnson and Tonya Stevens joined several Louisville Metro Police officers in assisting students from Jefferson County's public all boys school, Frederick Law Olmsted Academy, in west Louisville at an annual youth fishing event hosted by former University of Louisville basketball coach Denny Crum on his farm just outside of Louisville. A memorable time was had by all.



Pictured above: Jim Fields with his Wildlife Resources class along with Officer James Beckett preparing to hang wood duck boxes. Not pictured are Sgts. Pat Brannen and Mickey Craig, who also assisted with the project.

## Wildlife class constructs and hangs wood duck boxes

The local Wildlife Resources class at Bracken County High School, in cooperation with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, constructed 30 wood duck boxes.

They gathered donations from The

Wetlands Foundation and local hardware store Miller Lumber and assembled the boxes during their class.

Then class members helped in the placement and hanging of the boxes in completing the project.

Wood ducks naturally nest in tree cavities near water. The construction and placement of these boxes makes for excellent wood duck nesting habitat.



## CUMBERLAND'S BLACK BEAR FESTIVAL

KDFWR's Tristan Curry told siblings Ryleigh and Hunter Lawson about the comeback of the Black Bear and about wildlife hides on display at The Kentucky Black Bear Festival May 11 in downtown Cumberland. The Festival celebrates the natural return of the Black Bear to the mountains of Harlan County. The annual event provides wildlife safety information as well as community fun in a festival atmosphere. *Reprinted from Harlan Daily Enterprise; Jennifer McDaniel's photo*

## Fifth District youth turkey hunt successful

The Fifth District youth turkey hunt sponsored by the Kentucky Conservation Officers Association and the National Wild Turkey Federation was a big success.

Nineteen youth from Pendleton, Campbell and Bracken counties enjoyed a Friday evening meeting and instructions session the day before youth season opened. They were paired with local volunteer guides to take them in pursuit of a turkey.

Seven successfully took gobblers as youth season dawned, and the rest returned with stories of close calls and enjoyment in the spring turkey woods.



This is an annual event that several Officers in the Fifth district participate in, both in and out of the woods. **Sgt. Mickey Craig** gave an always educational and all inclusive turkey talk on Friday evening.

Above: Officers Beckett, Ping, Fossitt and Sgt. Craig with the group of hunters and guides during the youth hunt.

### “Mail,” continued

I want to commend your personnel who brought the trout from the Wolf Creek Hatchery on Friday. When the fish arrived, they waded into the water and installed two nets to temporarily confine the trout. Fisheries biologist **John Williams** even returned on Saturday and spent the day helping the children with their fishing efforts.

Once again, thank you and your employees for a successful fishing day enjoyed by the children and their families.”

Fisheries Division received the following note from Ray Wiehoff. Mr. Wiehoff wrote, “I fished in Stein Lake (Campbell County) over 50 years ago. Then it was just an old reservoir. So I just want to thank you for giving us a great place to fish.”

The Stein Lake is one of our Fishing in Neighborhoods (FINS) program lakes and is administered by **Dane Balsman** and **Jeremiah Smith**.

## Big, but not quite a new state record



When I saw it, I thought it was going to be the new record,” said **Captain Frank Campbell** of the largemouth bass Tim Lucas, of Whitesburg, landed while bank fishing at Fishpond Lake in Letcher

County Saturday, April 28.

Campbell weighed the big bass on meat scales.

But while Lucas’ 12-pound 6-ounce fish attracted lots of attention, it fell short of Kentucky’s state record 13-pound, 10-ounce catch by Dale Wilson of London that has stood since 1984.

Lucas caught the 25¼-inch long, 22-inch girth trophy fish

using a black and blue Flex Chigger Craw bait on 20-pound test line.

“I’ve seen a lot of big bass in there,” said Campbell of the lake. “They’re just tough to catch.”

## “Pigs,” continued

These surveys confirm the presence of wild pigs in approximately 30 counties across Kentucky. Consider that pigs were confirmed in only 19 counties in 2008. This expansion paints an ugly picture. In addition to causing extensive agricultural damage, these wild swine pose serious threats to native wildlife and their habitats, and introduce disease-related concerns that affect wildlife, livestock, pets, and humans.

Concentrated removal efforts have significantly decreased pig numbers in areas where ecological and agricultural damage have been significant.

The new law takes a huge step towards protecting our native wildlife and their habitats, and minimizing agricultural losses to Kentucky farmers. It dovetails nicely with ongoing removal efforts by the KDFWR to prevent the continued spread of wild swine in the state.

Since December 2010, the KDFWR and USDA Wildlife Services have implemented cooperative removal efforts in the Obion Creek area of Hickman County where statewide pig numbers were greatest. Intensive trapping and aerial gunning removed more than 400 pigs from this area in the last 14 months. Due to these successes, the department’s Wild Pig Program now classifies this area as a controlled population.

The Department, in conjunction with the USDA Wildlife Services, has also implemented a statewide cost-share program that allows a 75 percent reimbursement for traps to landowners with wild pigs on their property. This fledgling program has increased trapping and disease-surveillance efforts on private lands at a minimal cost to landowners.



In addition to such traditional staples of decoys, ammunition and a shotgun, Lt. Brett Zalla says additional required equipment necessary to bring along when taking his four-year-old daughter, Lucy, turkey hunting includes a really good blind, Cinderella coloring books, “Dora the Explorer” books, peanut butter and jelly sammiches and PATIENCE!

## ALL IN THE FAMILY



Tony Wheatley (left) took a few minutes away from pursuing additional department land purchase and lease opportunities to take his first gobbler, a double with Public Affairs Division Director Brian Blank.