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A.J. Jolly Lake fish habitat improvement

Just how much fish habitat can you construct and deploy in one day? It depends largely in part on the type of help you have.

In the case of A.J. Jolly Lake, the workers were both plentiful and eager to assist.

So just how many structures were built during temperatures below freezing? The answer is a lot... 230 brush piles and 28 pallet structures to be exact. That equates to quite a bit of coverage on the 175-acre A.J. Jolly Lake.

A total of 536 concrete blocks, 84 pallets, over a half-mile of rope, nearly 200 Christmas trees and a multitude of red cedars were cut on site to use as fish habitat. Luckily the ice had broken up a day or two prior to the planned habitat project and allowed boats to strategically place habitat throughout the lake.

The project was a collaborative effort between Jolly Park Community Development Council and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources.

Eighteen department employees from fisheries, wildlife and law enforcement were on hand, alongside 10 volunteers to assist with efforts. Don Sorrell, chair of the natural resource committee of the Jolly Park Community Development Council provided lunch to volunteers and workers, as well as assisted in locating materials for the project.

Prior to the improvement project the



Top: Fisheries Division staff David Baker (left), Danny Duvall (front, right), and Katie Spears (back, right) carry a pallet structure with recycled Christmas trees attached down to boats where they will be deployed throughout A.J. Jolly Lake to create fish habitat. Right: A large group of Department employees and numerous volunteers assisted with the fish habitat improvement project. *Dane Balsman photos*



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WE GET MAIL

Letters to the Commissioner's Office

The following comments were received from the recent A.J. Jolly Lake Fish Habitat enhancement project coordinated by the **Fisheries Division**.

"To Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife and Campbell County Volunteers, THANKS TO EACH OF YOU! Today we were blessed with a beautiful day and with a great group of F&W and CC volunteers. With **Dane Balsman's** leadership and direction and everyone's hard work we accomplished a major project that will improve the fishing and recreational opportunity of A. J. Jolly Park. This is one of the most enjoyable days I have had in UK Extension for some time and all of my days are enjoyable.

Thanks again for your continued work and support to Campbell County and the Jolly Community Development Council's effort to improve A. J. Jolly Park." – Don Sorrell, Campbell County Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources.

"Don, Dane and yesterday's fish habitat workers,

As I sit here watching it snow and looking at the thermometer, I am sure glad we tackled this project yesterday. As Vice Chair of the Jolly Park Community Development Council, I would like to add a huge thank you to Don Sorrell and Dane Balsman for an extremely well organized event yesterday. All the little details were covered, right down to the home-made soup for lunch. It was quite impressive to see the flotilla of boats and people that you folks from Fish & Wildlife brought to the lake. I was amazed at how much got accomplished, how everyone just pitched in and got things done and how well everyone got along.

It was the most fun that I have had doing physical labor in a long time. Of course, anytime you can get out on the wa-

ter in the beautiful sunshine is a great day in my book. I can't wait till it's fishin' season and I can get out and test the results of our work.

Thanks again to all who participated, especially those who drove a long way and worked so hard to help improve A.J. Jolly Lake and Park. We are deeply appreciative. Best wishes to all of you for a great 2014!" – Walt Dunlevy

This email came from Kevin Gallo-way. "I just wanted to express that our party of three hunters, one photographer, and two dogs had a great morning afield on December 17, 2013. We found two different coveys of quail on the Marietta-Booth Tract and were able to harvest three birds (two males and a female). Multiple single flushes containing one to three birds were also raised from these coveys.

I want to compliment you and your staff on the habitat work that is present on this tract. The habitat for upland birds and small mammals looks outstanding. Food sources and escape cover abound. Several

rabbits and numerous songbirds were seen during the hunt as well. Deer sign was also prevalent throughout the areas that we covered.

Keep up the excellent habitat work and thanks for helping us make an enjoyable memory that included good friends, happy hunting dogs, and a pleasant population of birds."

This to State Waterfowl Coordinator and Biologist Rocky Pritchert from Bob Roberts of Louisville:

I was lucky to be drawn for duck hunting at Ballard County in December and wanted to share with you the great experience I had with my two sons.

Robert Colvis and the crew at Ballard WMA had the blinds in great condition, the fields looked great, the pumps were running, the moist soil units were flooded and the roads were good. The new signs marking the drop off areas and pits are so much better than before. It is amaz-

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From left are Scott Freidhof, Kevin Galloway and Floyd Willis. They are joined by setter, Boone, and the shorthair is Scooby.

“Mail,” continued

ing what Robert has done with such a small crew of men to work such a large area. It was just a great day in a great setting. It is a true blessing to have such a great wildlife management area in Kentucky.

For me and my sons, our trips to Ballard are filled with anticipation. This year was no exception. We have had days we shot our limits and days of a single bird. This year we had a wonderful show from the birds and had a few that wanted to work that day. Our shooting was not up to par, but a highlight was that my youngest son harvested a beautiful mature drake wood duck. As always, it is not about the killing, but the fellowship and time spent in the blind and Ballard offered that setting.

I keep thinking about all the noise that the department has received from the media the past month or so and it is concerning that the media is quick to judge, but has not supported the rank and file of the KDFWR. I'm not sure how many “thank yous” the men receive, but if you would, please pass this one on to Rob-

ert and the crew at Ballard. They do a great job of getting the refuge ready, then deal with the number of hunters that pass through each day. The men are always pleasant and helpful. What a great crew of men to have working for you.

Thanks again for your service to the Commonwealth of Kentucky.”

This letter came to Laura Burford from Victoria Taylor Rogers. “When I got the call that I'd been selected for the Greenwing Adventure I had no idea what to expect. I had loved Camp Earl Wallace so I thought it would be fun. The trip was awesome! What a blessing God allowed me to be a part.

A BIG thank you to KDFWR along with **Scott** (Law Enforcement) and **Jeff** (Camp Currie) who took me on the hunt, and to Mr. Conley and Ducks Unlimited with much appreciation for the positive attitude, super gifts... what a surprise and all the support. Dr. Shields was so generous in sharing the blind I got to hunt from, along with everyone else such as “Catfish” and Jamie who played such big roles. Also,

John Poindexter and crew for teaching us how to fix such great food.

What an honor to get selected, I'm so glad I reached the status of Outdoorswoman. I cannot close without mentioning Ms. **Betty Lewis**... because without her encouragement to attend Camp Earl Wallace I would never have gotten this opportunity.

To think I could down a Pintail duck is unbelievable and having it mounted for me is more than words can say. I am so fortunate and I can't say thank you enough for the opportunity that I will cherish for a lifetime.”

We received the following letter from Franklin County Sheriff Pat Melton. He wrote, “I would like to extend my gratitude to your agency in the search and recovery of Mr. Buford J. Barron, III. Although Mr. Barron lost his life, we were able to provide his family with some level of comfort and closure due to your cooperation and efforts in this tragic incident. If I or any member of the Sheriff's Office can be of assistance to you or your agency, please do not hesitate to contact me personally.”

“Jolly,” continued

lake had limited structure available for fish habitat. The brush piles and pallet structures provide nursery habitat near shore for young fish and act as fish attractors for both larger fish and anglers.

This fish habitat is marked with GPS coordinates and can be found on Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resource's webpage <http://fw.ky.gov/Education/Pages/Department-Lakes-with-Fish-Attractors.aspx>. The habitat information will also be placed on an aerial map in the informational kiosk at the lake.

The kiosk was recently constructed due to a partnership between the Jolly Park Community Development Council and the Highland Heights Lowe's Heroes program. A large kiosk poster was designed by the fisheries division to display past sampling, regulations, fish identification, and an overview of the fishery at A.J. Jolly Lake.



Fisheries staff David Baker (right) and Danny Duvall (center) drop structures throughout the lake. District Fisheries Biologist Jeff Crosby (left) marks these locations with a GPS so that anglers can know their exact location. *Dane Balsman photo*

Capt. Minton accepts position with Shepherdsville Police

Captain Myra Minton recently resigned her position with the KDFWR Law Enforcement Division on February 1, 2014 to accept a position with the Shepherdsville Police Department.

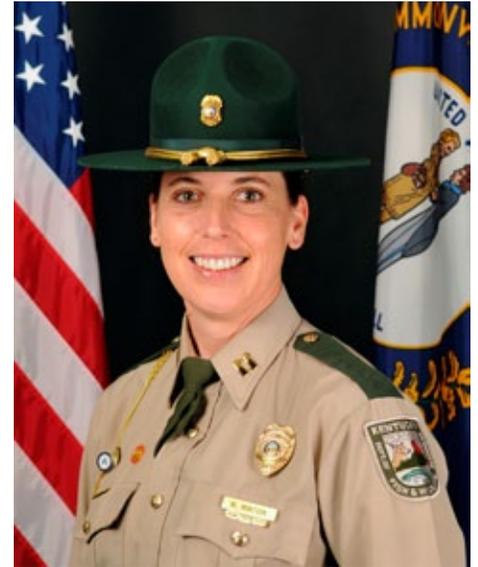
She began her career with the law enforcement division on October 1, 1997 and dedicated more than 16 years protecting the people and resources of this state.

Capt. Minton spent the majority of her career within the 3rd Law Enforcement District. She is a graduate of the Southern Police Institute Administrative

Officer's Course as well as the National Conservation Leadership Institute.

Her hard work, dedication and desire to be a leader resulted in multiple promotions ultimately leading to her position as the District Commander. During her career both as an officer and supervisor, she served a vital role carrying out the agency mission within her area of responsibility.

The agency would like to thank her for the exemplary service and wish her much success in all her future endeavors.



Mullins named NWTF Kentucky Officer of the Year

The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) selected Henderson County conservation officer **Dustin Mullins** as Kentucky's NWTF "Officer of the Year 2012."

Second District officers are applauding the NWTF's selection, and offer Mullins their own thanks for his hard work at protecting Kentucky's resources.



NEW CONSERVATION OFFICER RECRUITS SWORN

Franklin District Judge Robert Olds administered the oath of office to six new Kentucky conservation officer recruits. From left are Michael Hudson, James Mulholland, Jacob Speck, Evan Ethington, Cristian Casper and Robert Lile, who have completed 18 weeks of basic training at Department of Criminal Justice Training Academy and another 12 weeks of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Academy. They now enter 16 weeks of field training.

New forms of fish habitat

Jon Tubbs, Fish and Wildlife Technician in the Western Fisheries District, is experimenting with additional types/styles of fish habitat enhancement at Kentucky Lake.

He developed this idea while fishing a few years ago, having noted that redear sunfish seem to congregate around old submerged duck blinds covered in river cane.

Taking this thought in production, Jon began developing river cane habitat by placing cut sections of river cane into concrete blocks that will be deployed in select areas of Kentucky Lake this coming spring.

Paul Rister, Fisheries Program Coordinator for the Western Fisheries District has coined this new type of habitat as “Block-O-Cane.”



New hires / retirees

We would like to wish **Chris Sutherland** good luck on his new job with the Kentucky Department of Transportation. He started with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources in July of 2006 as a Mechanical Maintenance and Operations Tech III and was promoted to a Maintenance Superintendent I in 2013. His electrical experience and knowledge was a great asset that will be missed.

Derrick Lindsay has been hired as a Fish and Wildlife Technician I in the Southeast Region. Originally from Dandridge, Tennessee, Derrick holds a Bachelors degree in Biology from Lincoln Memorial University. While there he was a standout on the cross country team. His previous employment includes two stints as an interim wildlife technician for

KDFWR, and an internship as a biological technician at Cumberland Gap National Park. Derrick has excellent carpentry skills, is a great welder and knows more about slime molds than anyone you are likely to meet. He is easygoing, hard working and an excellent addition to our team.

After many years of dedicated service, **Sharon Duvall** has retired from the department to enter another phase of her life. Sharon has been an integral part of the Administrative Services division for many years as the manager of the Purchasing and Property branch. Sharon's purchasing knowledge, pleasant attitude and willingness to help will be sorely missed by the department. Sharon's retirement date was February 1 and we wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

Kentucky Afield TV welcomes **Nathan Brooks** to the team as Associate Video Producer. Brooks is a native of Owensboro and a graduate of UK's Broadcast Journalism School. His 11 years behind the camera has taken him across the country producing segments for TV news, NFL and college football teams. He grew up watching Kentucky Afield and saw it as a dream job.

Aaron Hecht, KDFWR's Wildlife Veterinarian, resigned at the end of the year. He decided to pursue a new career path, and we wish him the best in his new endeavors. We appreciate his years of service and all he did to build the Wildlife Health Program for KDFWR.

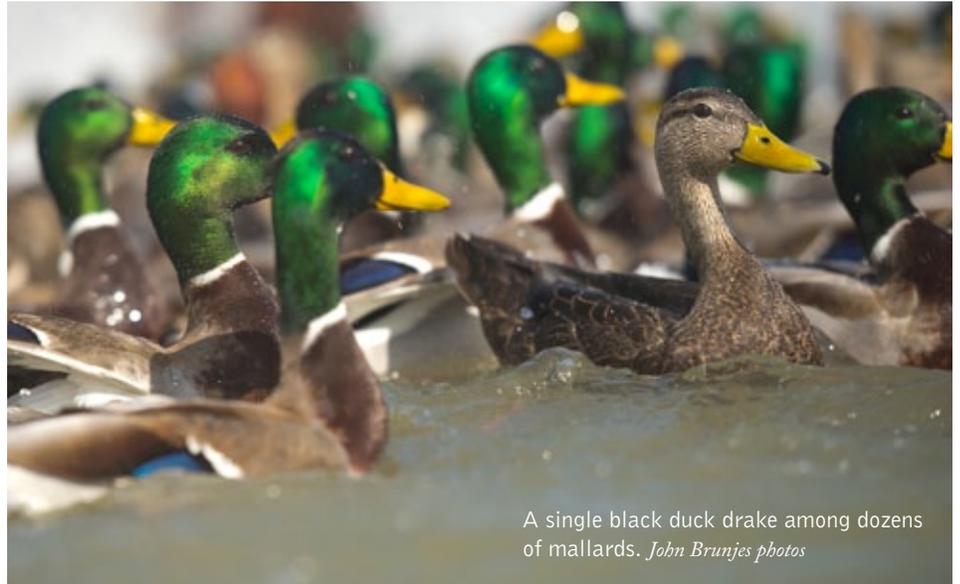
Elizabeth Danks, a biologist within this program, will be our point of contact for all wildlife health/disease issues.

Cold conditions have made 2014 an excellent year for banding

By John Brunjes

Each year with the close of waterfowl seasons, the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources undertakes an effort to band waterfowl at many of our management areas.

The Department is asked by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Black Duck Joint Venture to band a quota of American black ducks. Most waterfowl species are banded on their breeding grounds, but black ducks nest in remote widely scattered locations in Eastern Canada. Banding them on their breeding grounds is virtually impossible so states in the wintering range have been asked to participate in a post hunting season banding program.



A single black duck drake among dozens of mallards. *John Brunjes photos*

Banding will provide critical information on survival rates of this troubled species. The survival rates will be used in population models created for the species. The banding program also allows us to get a handle on just how much hybridization there is with challenge.

Black duck numbers are low in all but far eastern portions of the Commonwealth. In central Kentucky where the

Yellowbank WMA is located, Wildlife Division staff may have to catch 1,000 mallards for every 50 black ducks. In far western Kentucky, we may catch 5 black ducks for every 1,000 mallards.

While this winter has been a serious drag, the cold conditions have made trapping exceptional. We will easily catch our quota of black ducks and could break all Kentucky winter banding records.



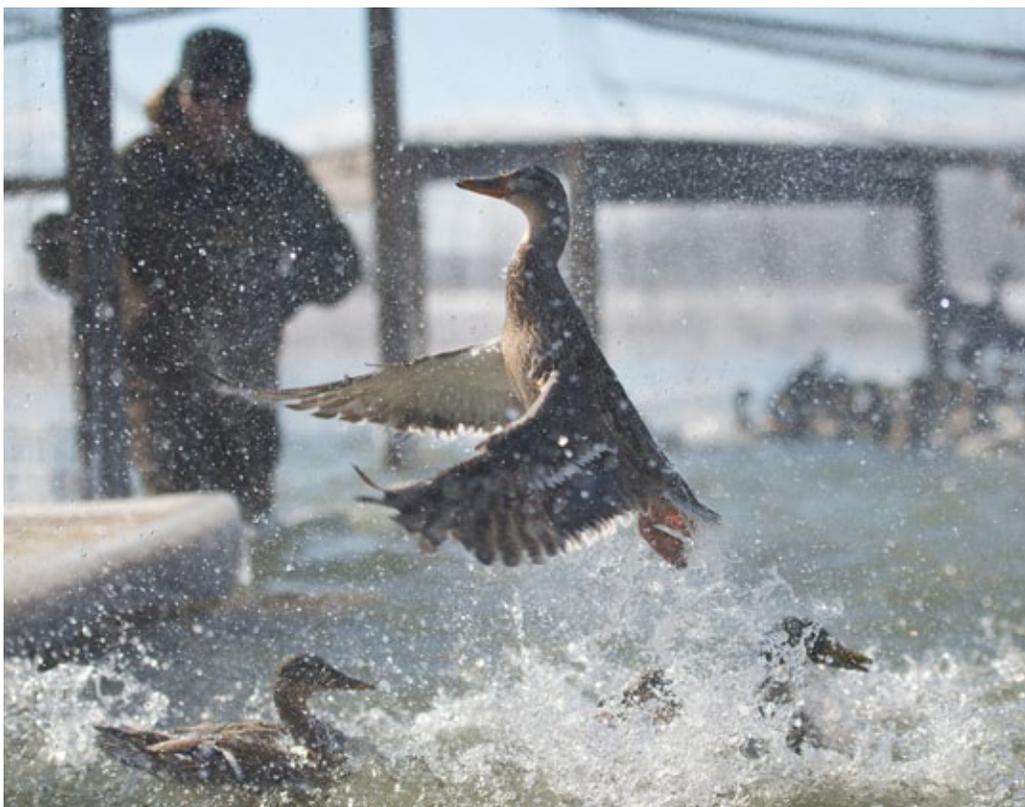
Left: KDFWR Officer Jeff Hall holds a captured black duck while Ryan inspects its wing. In the banding process, it is important to correctly identify the sex and age of each bird. For black ducks, age identification requires a careful inspection of the wing feathers looking for juvenile characteristics. For black ducks, there is the additional complication of identifying hybrids with mallards. Right: Wildlife Technician Larry Severs holds a drake goldeneye before banding. A drake goldeneye is a rare surprise found in the trap.



DUCK TRAPPING AND BANDING AT YELLOWBANK WMA

Below: A female mallard takes flight in front of Ryan Taylor in the trap at the Yellowbank Wildlife Management Area. Birds in the trap are herded to confined areas where they can be removed individually and banded. The air in the trap is alive with birds and spray while they are being herded.

John Brunjes photos



Above: KDFWR Wildlife Biologist Jared Handley shows a mallard-black duck hybrid. Many of the black ducks captured in Kentucky are hybrids with mallards. It is expected that hybridization rates increase in western portions of their range where there are less black ducks and more mallards.



Left: Christmas trees provide prime fish habitat during the spring for all sport fish species, especially when strategically placed along creek channels where they will be easily available for all types of fish species. *Paul Rister photo*. Right: Stockpiled Christmas trees await slightly warmer weather and frozen lakes to thaw before staff can deploy these structures to help improve fish habitat across the state. *Jeremy Shiftet photo*

Fisheries Division appreciates donations to improve fish habitat

This year's significant winter weather – frozen lakes and boat ramps – restricted Fisheries Division's ability to spend much time out on the water.

Despite this, Northwest Fishery District staff, as well as most other district

fishery offices, has spent a large amount of this time collecting and amassing recycled Christmas trees for future fish habitat and fish attractor projects across Kentucky.

Rest assured, once the ice breaks up, trees will be deployed throughout reservoirs, lakes, and ponds in the form of fish habitat.

These efforts would go unrealized without the generosity and assistance of many public and private businesses throughout the state.

The Northwestern Fishery District office would like to specifically thank the following entities for providing Christmas trees and other forms of materials that aid

the Division in creating this fish habitat.

Special thanks are due to:

- Owensboro Sanitation Department
- Elizabethtown Public Works Department
- Leitchfield Public Works Department
- Home Depot of Owensboro
- Lowes of Evansville
- Lowes of Owensboro
- Menards of Owensboro
- Wal-Mart of Leitchfield
- Wal-Mart of Madisonville
- Wal-Mart of Owensboro

Once deployed, all fish attractor sites are available to the public at <http://fw.ky.gov/Education/Pages/Department-Lakes-with-Fish-Attractors.aspx>.

Follow Kentucky eagles online!

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife recently introduced a new blog where the public can follow the movements of bald eagles from Kentucky!

Kentucky's bald eagle tracking project began in 2010, and has followed five birds since then.

Each eagle wears a solar-powered GPS satellite transmitter. The transmitter weighs less than two



Kathy Dennis photo

percent of the eagle's body weight and is attached externally, like a backpack.

The transmitters do not interfere with flying, hunting, mating or nesting and allow biologists to safely and easily study the movements of these birds.

You can follow the birds too via the new eagle tracking blog at <http://kyeagletracking.wordpress.com/>. Sign up to follow the blog and receive updates on the eagle's travels.



FARM POND ICE FISHING



The recent extended sub-freezing temperatures left many Kentucky farm ponds with ice thick enough to support ice fishing. Kentucky Afield Television producers took advantage of some seven-inch-thick ice on a Grant County farm pond last week to shoot an upcoming ice fishing segment. They had a great outing catching crappie, bluegill and bass.

PLANNED OVERTIME

Administrative Services Division is reminding staff that planned overtime opportunities for KDFWR employees are those specific overtime requirements, as part of the agency's general presence, to support trade shows and public/partner events such as State Fair, NASP tournaments, Boat and RV shows, and other outdoor-related exhibitor functions.

Employees wanting to work such events must access the sign-up form by visiting Personnel/KHRIS on KDFWR's [intranet](#) to read the instructions and complete the form.

2014 Wounded Warriors Duck Hunt produces smiles, laughter and ducks

Three Fort Campbell Military Base soldiers arrived at Gumz Hunt Club just outside of Geneva, KY on January 12 to participate in the 2014 Wounded Warriors Duck Hunt.

Gumz Hunt Club and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife partnered to sponsor this hunt.

Gumz Hunt Club owner/operator Kevin Gumz, Department staff and two retired military men who would serve as their hunting guides welcomed the soldiers. Ducks Unlimited presented them with several gifts, and other sponsors provided them hunting licenses and Federal Duck Stamps.

After a large breakfast the hunting began on Monday morning. With excellent blinds and outstanding habitat management the hunter's hopes ran high. However, weather conditions limited duck movement.

After lunch the soldiers were given a behind the scenes look at the Sloughs WMA by Department staff. The driving tour included numerous stops to view large numbers of waterfowl both resting and feeding and address questions.

Even though the WMA is managed with an emphasis on migratory birds, the soldiers saw that deer, turkey and small game benefit from these management practices as well. The tour of the refuge area was the highlight of the tour for the soldiers as they were able to see hundreds of ducks erupt from a small moist soil unit and feel the resulting wind on their faces.

The next morning found the hunters in the blind again and ready for action.



They enjoyed an early flurry of action, but it was after lunch before a front moved in and caused the ducks to really move again. The "fowl" weather produced more shooting action, and by the day's end, each



soldier had taken a duck and allowed a few more to get away.

Upon returning to the lodge the soldiers displayed their ducks and recounted the tales of the hunt.

Later, during dinner conversation, the soldiers remarked about the magnificence of the mounts in the lodge. At that point one of the members of the hunt club offered to have the ducks the soldiers had killed mounted for them.

At this point their smiles got even wider and their laughs got even louder.



INTRICATE SHAPES AND COLORS

Dave Harris of Louisville spoke with Kentucky Afield Television host Tim Farmer earlier this month while shooting a show segment that featured his hand crafted and painted duck decoys. *Scott Moore photo*