



Fishing
adventure
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Alabama hunter pleads guilty to wildlife violations in Western Kentucky

An Alabama man wanted in connection to several wildlife violations in Kentucky, turned himself in this February after nearly a year on the run.

Daniel Hassett, 33, of Vincent, Ala., pleaded guilty to multiple charges in Livingston and Crittenden District Court in Western Kentucky. He was assessed more than \$8,176 in fines, received 240 days in jail, which was probated for two years, must remain outside Crittenden County and lost his hunting rights for five years. In addition, his name was entered in the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact and cannot hunt in the 45 member states until Nov. 30, 2022.

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife officers began their lengthy investigation into Hassett during the 2016 fall deer season when conservation officers were dispatched to a fight at a gas station in Salem, Kentucky. Witnesses said Hassett



Above: Daniel Hassett, Alabama, recently pleaded guilty to multiple wildlife violations in Western Kentucky. Left: A lengthy investigation by Kentucky Fish and Wildlife officers resulted in the seizure of multiple equipment and cash and the arrest of an Alabama man who pleaded guilty to multiple wildlife violation charges in Kentucky.

used the threat of physical violence and intimidation to take a large buck from the pickup of an 18-year-old hunter. Hassett claimed the teen poached the deer on land he leased for hunting. The buck was seized and held as evidence by conservation officers who later determined the young hunter took the deer legally.

During the investigation, officers learned Hassett was operating an unlicensed outfitting business in the area called Axel Creek Outfitters.

With the help of the KDFWR

Special Investigations Unit, the First District Conservation Officers conducted surveillance on Hassett during the 2017 spring turkey and 2017 fall deer seasons. Surveillance included social media search warrants, GPS tracking devices, long hours afield, and the help of Alabama DCNR Law Enforcement Officers. According to court records, Hassett has a history of wildlife violations in other states.

During the investigation, officers

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WE GET MAIL

Letters to the Commissioner's Office

This letter came from Neil Ward, Bell County Attorney:

"The 12th annual Fish Fest was held on April 6. Thanks to the help of your department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 300 rainbow trout were released into the canal flowing through Middles-

boro City Park. On Saturday, several hundred area youth went fishing, some for the first time.

I want to commend your personnel who brought the trout from the Wolf Creek hatchery on Friday. Before the fish arrived, two nets were installed to tempo-

rarily confine the trout. On Saturday, retired fisheries biologist John Williams, and new Conservation Officer Blaine Green were on hand to help the children.

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

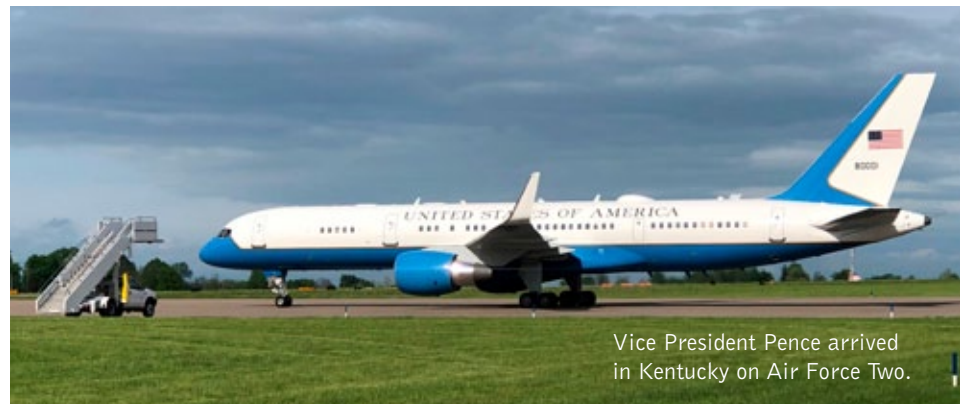


NEW MANAGER NAMED FOR SALATO

Franklin County native Jules Foster started with Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources in April 2019 as the Administrative Branch Manager for the Salato Wildlife Education Center.

She has worked in the museum field for nearly 25 years and holds a master's degree from the University of Nebraska in Museum Administration. Previously, she was the executive director of Liberty Hall Historic Site, a 5-acre non-profit in downtown Frankfort.

In her spare time, Jules enjoys traveling to The National Parks with her 8-year-old son and Junior Ranger, Camden. She is a member of The First Families of Kentucky, a society dedicated to encouraging interest in the history, culture and traditions of the Commonwealth.



Vice President Pence arrived in Kentucky on Air Force Two.



OFFICERS HELP WITH VP VISIT

When Vice President Mike Pence stopped by Frankfort in May to visit with Gov. Matt Bevin, about 20 Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Conservation Officers pulled detail to work traffic. Pictured are, from left, Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Rich Storm, Gov. Matt Bevin, Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Col. Eric Gibson and U.S. Rep. Andy Barr.



More than 40 people attended the R3 summit in April. At right, Becky Wallen presents.



Strategic Plan focus of R3 Summit

A strategic plan for Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation (R3) efforts in Kentucky was completed in March. The plan guides efforts to increase participation in hunting, fishing, trapping, boating, recreational shooting and other wildlife related activities. The creation of the plan would not been possible without the alliance of many partners and agency staff working together for the same goal.

The plan was the focus of the second annual R3 Summit, April 9 in Frankfort at the Kentucky State University Research Farm. More than 40 people participated, which included partners and agency staff. Partners in attendance were Ducks Unlimited, National Rifle Association, National Wild Turkey Federation, Pheasant and Quail Forever, Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Safari Club International, Fellowship of Christian Athletes Outdoors, United States Forest Service, Trout Unlimited, Fishing League World-

wide, University of Kentucky Extension, NASP, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers and Mississippi Flyway. Every partner brings a unique perspective and expertise to the R3 initiative in Kentucky.

The morning portion of the Summit was a Reflection on R3 Efforts nationally and on a state level that was presented by Olivia Dangler (R3 Coordinator) and Andrew Wooldridge (Aquatic Education Conservation Educator). The presentation segment that followed reviewed R3 Accomplishments and Achievements from speakers on state and nationally levels. John LaRowe (NRA) presented on R3 and grant opportunity. Roy Grimes (NASP) reviewed NASP Working for Students, Conservation and the Shooting Sports. Becky Wallen (KDFWR) educated the audience on how the agency has modified various regulations during her Providing Opportunities for Recruitment presentation. Katherine Estes (KDFWR) wrapped up the portion of the summit by



Click [here](#) to view the R3 Plan!

reviewing Online Event Registrations-Creating Analytics for Recruitment and Retention.

Attendees were encouraged to look through the Strategic Plan to see what strategy or action items were most closely related to current priorities of their organization/agency/branch/department. Partners and agency staff were encourage to attend or become a member of one of the four committees during the afternoon portion of the summit. These committees consist of marketing, mentors, coaches and instructors, access, and program design and evaluation. During the meetings, the committees developed timeframes and expected outcomes needed to start to implement the action items within their designated strategy. Committees are made up of agency staff and partners that are all working together and using each other's strengths to help to increase participation within Kentucky.

The third summit will be in Frankfort in the spring of 2020. For more information of how partners and agency staff can be involved in the R3 effort, email Olivia.Dangler@ky.gov or call 502-892-4493.

Fallen conservation officer Ratliff honored in memorials

Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources Commissioner Rich Storm in May observed National Police Week in Washington, D.C., with Law Enforcement Division Director Col. Eric Gibson and Maj. Larry Estes and law enforcement honor guard members. They attended the National Peace Officers' Memorial Service at the U.S. Capitol on May 15.

Storm, Gibson and Estes also accompanied Karen Ratliff to the candlelight vigil held May 13 at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial. The names of 371 officers killed in the line of duty were added to the memorial this year. One of those was Ratliff's late husband.

Bernard Dean Ratliff served as a wildlife and water patrol officer with Kentucky Fish and Wildlife (KDFWR) for more than a decade until his death in June 1999. He suffered a heart attack while participating in agency-approved physical training. Ratliff was formally recognized at two recent capital city ceremonies – first at Kentucky's capital and then in Washington, D.C.

On May 9, Ratliff's relatives and friends joined representatives from KDFWR, other state officials, and members of the Kentucky Conservation Officers' Association for a special service to remember Ratliff and fellow fallen officers in Frankfort. Ratliff is the seventh Kentucky Conservation Officer to have a monument erected in his honor at the Fallen Officers Memorial on KDFWR's headquarters campus near the entrance to the Salato Wildlife Education Center.

Others honored included Elijah Roberts, James R. Claxton, John C. Martin, Denver Tabor, Robert C. Banker and Douglas W. Bryant.

Seven stone tablets etched with likenesses of each conservation officer who has died in the line of duty since 1918 rest on stone pedestals lining the brick pathway



Officer Ratliff's widow, Karen Ratliff, at the Fallen Officer's Memorial in Frankfort.

leading to a bronze statue of a saluting conservation officer.

"This is an honor that Officer Ratliff and his family deserve, and it was overdue," said KDFWR Commissioner Rich Storm. "We are forever grateful for his service to the Commonwealth and the service of all of our fallen officers. Our thoughts remain with their families."

Ratliff was born in Pike County and graduated from Eastern Kentucky University. Before joining KDFWR, he worked for the Richmond Police Department. Ratliff served the Commonwealth in those roles but also served the country during the Vietnam War and Gulf War in Operation Desert Storm. He amassed 21 years of service with the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force.

Kentucky's conservation officers are sworn law enforcement officers with statewide jurisdiction but a primary mission focus on hunting, fishing and boating enforce-

ment. In their everyday role, conservation officers ensure compliance with hunting and fishing laws and ensure that the state's waterways are a safe place for all to enjoy by utilizing a two-pronged approach consisting of education and enforcement.

The May 9 ceremony featured remarks by Storm, Kentucky Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet Secretary Don Parkinson and Conservation Officer Rodney Milburn, president of the Kentucky Conservation Officers' Association.

The second ceremony in which Ratliff was honored was the National Peace Officers' Memorial Service, held on May 15 in Washington, D.C.

Karen Ratliff was escorted at the ceremony by KDFWR Commissioner Rich Storm, Law Enforcement director Col. Eric Gibson, and Maj. Larry Estes. They also attended the candlelight vigil on May 13 at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial. The names of 371 officers killed in the line of duty were added to the memorial this year, including Ratliff.



Commissioner Rich Storm, center, observed National Police Week in Washington, D.C., with Law Enforcement Division Director Col. Eric Gibson, left, and Maj. Larry Estes, right, and Law Enforcement honor guard members.

Fishing Adventure hosted at Camp Wallace



Above: Fifteen campers attended the Fishing Adventure at Camp Earl Wallace in May. Several Kentucky Fish and Wildlife employees made the camp a success. At right: Connor Vanhook attended the Fishing Adventure at Camp Wallace and caught a 13-inch largemouth bass.

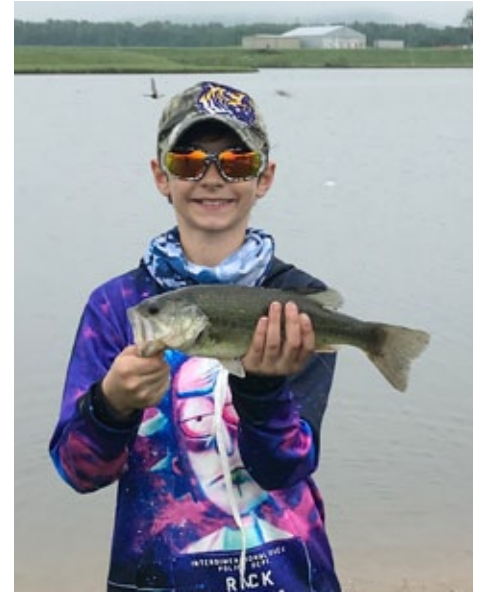
A two-day fishing camp for 15 campers who earned their outdoorsman badge at Camp Earl Wallace last year was hosted at the camp in early May.

Only about 16 percent of summer

campers earn their outdoorsman badge each year. Of those 16 percent, a small amount are randomly drawn to attend the two-day fishing camp. This year 15 campers and their guardians attended.



Camper Chase Collier caught this 27-inch flathead catfish on his first cast Friday night of the event. Helping Collier with his whopper of a fish are, from left, Kentucky Fish and Wildlife employees Aaron Redmond, John Gutzeit, Jamie Alton and Eric Schulte.



The event, which was May 10-11, began on Friday night with a fish fry prepared by the camp kitchen staff. Campers fished off the point at Camp Wallace with one camper, Chase Collier, catching a 27-inch flathead catfish on his first cast and another camper catching a 14-inch black crappie.

After fishing, the campers made cane poles to use, in addition to the traditional rod and reel, during Saturday's fishing event at a pond owned by Nick Cooley.

On Saturday, the 15 campers caught 608 fish at Cooley's Pond. The camper who won the most fish award, Olivia Smith, caught 108 all by herself. Parents were allowed to assist with tackle and baiting, but the campers had to cast, set the hook and land their fish for themselves.

Although the weather called for rain, the rain held off and an overcast day in the 60s created some great fishing weather.

With help from Nick Cooley and the use of his pond, Leo Dyehouse who provided the award plaques and medals, Conservation Officer Jerrod Alley for watching over the event and Conservation Educator Jamie Alton for his organization of the event, it was a success.



Left: A field to fork turkey hunt allowed 16 new turkey hunters from the University of Kentucky an opportunity to get in the woods.

Right: Eastern Kentucky University hosted its annual peer mentored spring turkey hunt on Grayson Lake WMA during the spring turkey season.

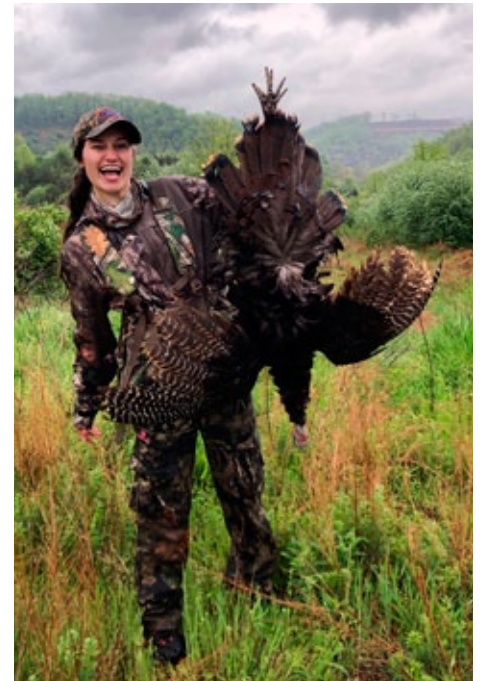
Field to Fork hosts mentored spring turkey hunts

This spring turkey season 16 new adult turkey hunters took to the Kentucky woods with their mentors to put their newly learned skills from Field to Fork to the test. During the third weekend of the season students from the University of Kentucky set out on the Paul Van Booven Wildlife Management Area. After some evening scouting and a few good harvest opportunities, there was a successful morning hunt where one bird was harvested. This is the first season Field to Fork that has been hosted for UK students.

The establishment of the program at UK was made possible through partnership between Kentucky Fish and Wildlife and the University of Kentucky and their joint participation in the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), Multi-state Conservation Grant Program.

On the same weekend, students from Eastern Kentucky University hosted their annual peer-mentored spring turkey hunt on Grayson Lake Wildlife Management Area. This is the third year in a row where students from the EKU student chapter of The Wildlife Society have paired up with their classmates who are new to the hunting community and mentored a spring turkey hunt. For these EKU students, the availability of Camp Webb in the off-season helps create that “hunt camp” atmosphere that strengthens the social support around the hunting community, which is critical to a new hunter’s progression in participation.

During the last weekend of the season, six new turkey hunters had the opportunity to hunt land in Crittenden County, owned and managed by the National Wild Turkey



One University of Kentucky student harvested a turkey during the weekend.



Turkey were seen and heard all weekend providing the new hunters a quality first time hunting experience in Crittenden County.

Federation. Turkeys were seen and heard all weekend providing the new hunters a quality first time hunting experience that was made possible through access to this property. A special thank you to members of NWTf KY chapters who helped plan hunting locations and assist with access to the property, mentored, and cooked a nice grilled lunch at “turkey camp.”

Annual KDFWR 2019 Spring Songbird Training

The familiar call of bobwhite filled the air on a beautiful spring morning at Peabody Wildlife Management Area, as biologists from around the state gathered for the annual songbird ID refresher. The training is intended for biologists conducting point counts (auditory surveys) on Quail Focus Areas across the state. KDFWR biologists, partners from NGOs and other state entities conduct the surveys. Counts take place in June each year. Participants record the number of individuals and estimate the location for up to 22 bird species. This refresher helps participants brush up on songbird vocalizations and distance estimations.

Beginning in 2008, the songbird point counts on the Quail Focus Areas have been a key indicator of how certain bird species are faring from the management taking place on each area. The 10-year dataset shows increases for bobwhite and other grassland birds during periods following targeted management. The survey



Birds like this adult male dickcissel were heard during the event.



also includes 12 priority species such as loggerhead shrikes and short-eared owls, which are rare in Kentucky.

This year, survey participants were able to hear many species of concern on Peabody WMA, such as Henslow's sparrow, dickcissel, grasshopper sparrow and Bell's vireo (unique to this region). Along with a refresher on songbird vocals, the group also checked barn owl nest boxes and mist netted songbirds. All activities were a huge success and biologists were able to hear and see survey species in hand.

In 1933 Aldo Leopold said, "Continuous census is the yardstick of success

Biologists from around the state gathered at Peabody Wildlife Management Area for the annual songbird ID refresher.

or failure in conservation." On the Quail Focus Areas, we have taken that to heart with 10 years of songbird data. The final Quail Plan Report will be out later this year, outlining those successes and failures. The trainings are important for biologists to continue to track changes in grassland bird populations as the landscape changes. Thanks to all that were able to attend and thanks to the Peabody WMA crew for hosting the training.

'Alabama,' continued

learned that during the 2017 spring turkey season, Hassett was an unlicensed guide and was guiding turkey hunts for cash in Livingston and Crittenden counties. On several of those hunts, the clients were unknowingly hunting over bait and on farms that Hassett did not have permission to hunt. Hassett was also transporting clients while having a suspended Alabama driver's license. In addition to those violations, Hassett or the clients shot female and male turkeys from the vehicle and on farms they did not have permission to hunt.

Conservation officers discovered the

same kinds of violations in the 2017 fall deer season. On Nov. 19, 2017, officers executed a search warrant on Hassett's hunting lodge in Salem. A few clients were in camp and one Alabama hunter was charged with taking a deer from a roadway. Hassett was arrested at the lodge and then the lodge was searched. Officers seized an ATV, trailer, one whitetail deer, two rifles, bow, pistol, computer, cell phone, trail cameras, ledgers, paperwork and more than \$4,000 in cash that were all used to help in the illegal hunting and guiding.

Hassett was arrested and charged in Livingston and Crittenden counties on multiple charges including robbery and theft by unlawful taking for his offense

with the 18-year-old hunter that started the investigation. Other charges ranged from operating an unlicensed commercial guide business and multiple wildlife violations.

Shortly after his arrest, Hassett pleaded guilty to amended charges in Livingston County was assessed fines and the loss of seized items and his hunting privileges. He was to return in April 2018 to face charges in Crittenden County. Hassett missed his court date and a warrant was issued for his arrest.

In February 2019, Hassett turned himself into Kentucky officers and pleaded guilty to amended charges resulting in more than \$8,000 in fines and the loss of his hunting privileges for several years.

Brown family recognized for working together for conservation

Portia and Jerry Brown have worked with the United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS), KDFWR, the Shelby County Conservation District, Kentucky Division of Forestry as well as several other partners and agencies for more than two decades. Over the years, they have participated in several government led programs that offered assistance in many ways, helping them achieve some of the goals they set forth upon their purchase of the property. Objectives were met one by one and conservation projects were completed such as invasive species removal, forestry improvements and wildlife plantings including pollinator habitat went from words and illustrations on paper to habitat improvement on the ground.

Throughout their journey, lessons learned, and the Browns have made sure to share their experiences with other landowners and natural resource professionals from a variety of agencies, departments and divisions. During the summer of 2018 they hosted the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service's Woodland Owners Short Course that encompassed classroom and field presentations, involving several natural resource representatives, discussing a variety of Timber Stand Improvement Practices (TSI) beneficial for wildlife, using logging as a tool for managing the resource but also for productivity as well as possible cost share options that may be available through Farm Bill Programs.

The success that Mr. and Mrs. Brown have seen on their property can be credited to their desire and commitment to improve the landscape. However, it is also a testament to the advantages of everyone working together, landowners and natural resource agencies alike, to accomplish that main goal of conservation.



Fred Rothenburger, chairman of the Shelby County Conservation District presents the Master Conservationist Award to Portia and Jerry Brown in recognition of their dedication and efforts of promoting quality stewardship practices on their property near Waddy, KY. Brandon Jacobs, Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR), is also presenting the Browns with the 2018 Landowner of the Year Award for the establishment, maintenance and enhancement of numerous wildlife practices on their 160-acre farm in the southern portion of the county. Mr. and Mrs. Brown were selected from a host of landowners located within the 31 counties encompassing the Bluegrass Wildlife Region. The awards were presented at the Annual Meeting of the Shelby County Conservation District.



Brandon Jacobs, Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist at the Shelby County Conservation District Annual Meeting