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Record crowds
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Elk habitat and viewing improvement on Fishtrap WMA

The 2015-2030 Kentucky Elk Management Plan sets goals of improving elk habitat, establishing recreational elk viewing sites, and sustaining and growing the herd in selected areas. Fishtrap WMA has been designated as a focus area for these enhancements.

Prescribed fire is effective for maintaining grasslands to provide attractive forage for elk, while simultaneously enhancing viewing opportunities. Kentucky Fish and Wildlife (KDFWR) staff recently burned a portion of Fishtrap WMA.

Fishtrap WMA is in the elk zone of eastern Kentucky in Pike County. The United States Army Corps of Engineers has plans to build an elk viewing platform in the near future. To complement these plans staff burned 80 acres of strip mine, this area has high use by all wildlife. Since the burn, several elk have been noticed in the area along with



Prescribed burning sets back trees and shrubs that reduce visual access and elk forage.

plenty of turkey sign.

Fishtrap WMA has held a small elk herd since KDFWR began restoring elk in the late 1990s. Over time, this herd has been augmented by relocation of a few elk

from nuisance situations elsewhere in the elk zone. The population continues to grow naturally. The burn and management to follow will also assist with viewing and hunting opportunities for other game species.

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WE GET MAIL

Letters to the Commissioner's Office

Thanks for helping coordinate the stocking with our team practice yesterday. The students from the Graves County Fishing team really enjoyed seeing that process and hearing from the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife employees about the stocking program. The two gentlemen (Adam Cecil and John Mitchell) did a great job speaking to the students and letting them be hands on during the trout stocking. Thanks again.

Scott Ellison
Bass Fishing team coach
Graves County High School

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife employees Adam Cecil and Andrew Reden came to Simons Middle School and presented to our students on the FINS programs and what happens at the hatchery before we went to the Flemingsburg Old City Reservoir and where we checked oxygen levels and released fish.

I just wanted to let you know that Adam and Andrew did a great job presenting to our students and we very much enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity to participate in this today. Thank you for helping us set this up and I hope we can do something similar in the future.

Brad Hay
Flemingsburg Middle School teacher



MEMBERSHIP MILESTONE

The Kentucky Wild program surpassed 1,000 members this month! Since the program's launch last June, Kentucky Wild has welcomed three corporate sponsors, and members from 28 states and the U.S. Virgin Islands.



Above: Adam Cecil from the Pfeiffer Fish Hatchery speaks with the Graves County Fishing team while the stocking crew was out at Kress Creek Park. John Mitchell, also with the hatchery can be seen at right. Right: Some Graves County Fishing team members received some hands-on experience while Fish and Wildlife crews stocked Kress Creek Park.

Officers make elk poaching case in Perry County

An elk poaching case investigated by Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife ended in fine and court costs for two Perry County men.

The investigation began in November when Fish and Wildlife officers received a call about a bull elk being shot in the Big Creek community of Perry County. KDFWR Lt. Greg Watts found the bull elk with multiple gunshot wounds. Watts and elk biologist Jonathan Fusaro searched the area and found a rifle shell casing. The necropsy of the elk revealed multiple shots of what appeared to be different calibers, with a close range head shot to the elk.

With no immediate suspect and only a vague description of a vehicle seen in the area, Watts began interviewing hunters and people in the community. These conversations led to Teddy Cornett and Donald Ray Bailey, both of Buffalo Run in the Big Creek community, being identified as suspects in the poaching case.

After being interviewed, both men admitted their involvement. According to Cornett, he and Baily were deer hunting when they saw the elk not far from their hunting spot. He said he and Bailey shot the elk. When it went down, the men walked up a hill to see if it was still alive. Bailey than shot the elk in the head and the two men went back to the



truck and left the elk laying. They intended to go back to get the elk the next morning, but Fish and Wildlife officials found the elk before they could.

In January, Cornett pleaded guilty to illegally taking the elk and was fined \$2,500 plus court costs. Bailey pleaded guilty

in February to the same charge. In addition, Baily pleaded guilty to not having a hunting license, deer permit or a hunter education card, after admitting his was deer hunting on the day of the incident. He also paid \$1,881 in court costs and forfeited two firearms he used to kill the elk.



LARRY SEVERS RETIRES

After 14 years and five months with the agency, Wildlife Technician III Larry Severs retired March 31. Larry has been instrumental with implementing many habitat management practice and quota hunts on Yellowbank Wildlife Management Area. He will be missed by staff for his sincere kindness, outgoing personality and strong work ethic. One of Larry's best experiences with the agency was helping the Big Game Program out east with elk. Larry Severs, left, is presented a retirement gift by Scott Harp, Wildlife Regional Coordinator.



MULLINS GRADUATES CJED PROGRAM

Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Sergeant Dustin Mullins graduated the Criminal Justice Executive Development program March 22. This program is an advanced leadership course for criminal justice professionals offered by the Kentucky Department of Criminal Justice Training. The purpose of the course is to provide students from small and medium size agencies with the academic background, leadership skills and management techniques required for the future. Each session enhances leadership abilities as well as encourages the development of visionary thinkers. Mullins, left, is pictured with Captain Richard Adkins.

Salato hosts huge crowds during Spring Break

The Salato Wildlife Center greeted large crowds of visitors during the first week of April, thanks in large part to beautiful weather and Spring Break for local school systems. Over the course of the week, the center saw more than 4,600 visitors – an average of more than 900 visitors per day. Even for spring break, staff members found the numbers impressive.

“We’ve not seen attendance numbers like this in the six years that I’ve been here,” Conservation Educator Geoff Roberts said. “I’d go out on a limb and say that this has probably been the best-attended Spring Break in Salato’s history.”

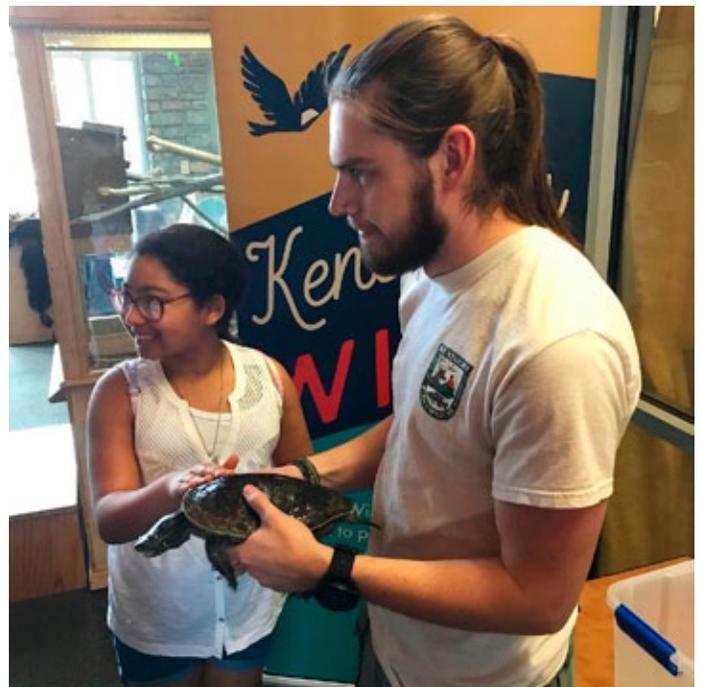
The surge in attendance will serve as the center’s warmup for “field trip season,” which is just around the corner.



Salato’s resident black bear is always popular with the crowds.



Above: A visitor points to Salato’s resident eagle during Spring Break. Right: Conservation Educator David Jalbert helps acquaint visitors with one of Salato’s resident turtles.





Participant Samuel Knopf shows off the white bass he caught. At right, Hannah Jaggers also had some success.



KDFWR's Aquatic Education team leads white bass class



Kentucky Fish and Wildlife's Aquatic Education team, which includes Easton Copley and Morgan Bishop, led a class of five participants on a quest to catch white bass on April 10.

Due to the nature of the white bass run, the timing for this class was last minute and the Aquatic Ed team was excited to have so many interested participants who had never experienced white bass or riverine fishing. The Salt River provided the perfect experience and within a few hours of fishing, everyone was hooked. All five participants were able to catch enough for dinner. Two of the participants felt comfortable enough that they went back the next day and brought two first-time anglers with them.

Overall, this class provided the opportunity for participants to gain knowledge as well as comfortability in fishing in a lotic habitat, picking and changing baits, and handling of fish. Feedback from participants assured the Information and Education Department's R3 Branch, which Aquatic Education is a part of, that experiences like the white bass run are needed and worthwhile.



Where There's Smoke...

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife staff in the Northeast Region successfully completed an 800-acre forest burn on Grayson Lake WMA. A lot of coordination and planning was required to complete this unit, but in the end the burn went great and the objectives were met.

Grayson Lake WMA has a high proportion of upland oak forest with a mid-story comprised of maple and beech. While red maple and American beech are a native and common species, mismanagement of timber, and lack of fire on the landscape has allowed these species to encroach into upland oak sites. The objective of this burn was to incorporate fire into the forest to increase the abundance of fire tolerant species. This objective will require long term commitment to varying fire regimes on the landscape.

Through long term reintroduction of fire, as well as hands on forest stand improvement practices, this section of forest will become healthier, and more diverse. This burn is setting the stage for future forest management and that will benefit oak in areas with poor recruitment or mediocre composition.



BURN AT HEADQUARTERS



Kentucky Fish and Wildlife staff burned an area near the Frankfort headquarters March 27. Prescribed burns are used by Department staff to kill unwanted plant species in a particular area to encourage native grasses and wildflowers to thrive.



Above: The 18-row planter donated to Ballard Wildlife Management Area will make planting crops faster, easier. Right: A Ballard WMA staff member loads seed into the planter.

Ballard WMA's 18-row planter makes crop growing easier

This winter, the Ballard Wildlife Management Area was the beneficiary of a wonderful private donation. The area received a “new to us” 18-row planter to help the area achieve its management objectives.

On April 9, the staff planted the first

corn for waterfowl to go in this season. This is in upland areas as much of the area is still inundated by river flooding. By having its own planter, the WMA staff can now plant as soon as areas are dry enough to be planted.

The following day, the staff started planting the first sunflower dove fields. The time savings by going from a four-row planter to 18-row planter will allow the staff more time to accomplish other important missions.



James Charas (right), his son Sam, Rachael Crume, executive director of the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and Wes Little, migratory bird biologist for Kentucky Fish and Wildlife stand in front of six goose nesting boxes built by Sam Charas and Troop 41 in Lexington and donated to Kentucky Fish and Wildlife for Sam Charas' Eagle Scout Project.

Eagle Scout creates nesting structures for Department

An Eagle Scout project by Sam Charas of Lexington-based Boy Scout Troop 41 recently donated 20 donation boxes for the Salato Wildlife Education Center and six floating goose nesting structures for the Wildlife Division of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources.

“These projects represents 245 hours of planning and 115 hours in execution,” said James Charas, Scoutmaster of Troop 41 and Sam’s father. “Twenty five Boy Scouts in Troop 41 constructed all of these in one day.”

Bob Dickson, owner of Furniture Medic in Lexington, donated the space for the Boy Scouts to construct the donation boxes and goose nesting structures.

“Mr. Dickson really helped by letting our troop use the facilities for his business to build these,” Charas said.

Troop 41 is in the Bluegrass Council of the Boy Scouts of America and has 80 members.