



Rare sighting
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November 2018

—VOL. 13 NO. 10—



Fish and Wildlife hosts its 2018 Kentucky Fur School



The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) hosted its fourth Fur School in Frankfort during mid-October. This is the official Fur School for the southeastern U.S. through the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Twenty-two students including wildlife staff, law enforcement officers and conservation educators attended the four-day school. Representatives from the Wisconsin Trappers Association, North American Fur Auctions, Kentucky Fur Takers, United Trappers of Kentucky and KDFWR educated students on the ins and outs of trapping furbearers and pelt preparation.

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WE GET MAIL

Letters to the Commissioner's Office

Several law enforcement members provided security in conjunction with state and local law enforcement agencies during President Donald Trump's visit to Richmond in October. Below is the message the division received from the U.S. Secret Service:

"I cannot thank you enough for a very successful trip of the president to Richmond, Kentucky.

This trip was extremely man-power intensive on your end and included everything from helicopters, motorcycles to boats in the water.

Please extend a 'Thank You' to all of your Officers, Troopers, Tactical, Fire and Medical assets.

Again, we could not have done this without your support.

We very much appreciate your time and efforts."



2018 KECC PUMPKIN CONTEST

The 2018 Pumpkin contest benefitting KECC brought out some tough competition. Terra Coffey was the winner of the Pumpkin Decorating portion of the contest with her tribute to E.T. Kristen Hundley won the Pumpkin Carving division with her Calavera Skull. The contest raised \$113 for KECC. All decorated and carved pumpkins were donated to the Salato Center for its Walk with the Animals Halloween bash.



TARGET SHOOT CHALLENGE

This year's KECC event featured a new event, the Target Shoot Challenge. Fisheries Biologist Travis Bailey (left) was crowned champion and received a Fish and Wildlife cup. Several others participated in the event with \$100 raised for KECC.

New conservation educator named for Otter Creek

Rachel Young has been named the new conservation educator at Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area in Brandenburg.

A 2017 graduate of the University of Kentucky with a Bachelor of Science in Animal Science, she immediately started at Salato Wildlife Center where she has served as a seasonal educator for two years. In the off season, Rachel worked at a local pet store in Lexington as a nutrition consultant and aquarium specialist. She is currently working at the Cincinnati Zoo as an Overnight Adventures Educator part time.

In her free time, Rachel and her boyfriend enjoy bird watching, looking for herps, and playing with their two cats and

dog. She always loves sharing her passion for wildlife and conservation. Her parents took her hunting for the first time when she was around 6 years old, and she has been enjoying hunting and fishing ever since.

As a kid, Rachel loved sitting in the woods watching the wildlife and spotting deer for her mom and dad who always fell asleep as soon as they sat down in the blind. Hunting deer spurred her enthusiasm for the natural world. Rachel is excited to start her position with the R3 Branch at Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area. She is looking forward to meeting new people and working with all of the amazing department staff.



Salato closes out a banner October, readies for renovations

October was a busy month at Salato Wildlife Center. Investors Heritage and Aquarian Holdings selected the Center's Butterfly Amphitheater as the site of its employee thank you picnic. They partnered with the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Foundation and paid for public attendance for an entire day. As a result, Salato collected several hundred dollars' worth of operational items in donations in lieu of charging regular admission.

Salato also hosted a two-headed copperhead snake in October. At the end of the season, the snake, which had been out on exhibit daily, was in good health.

In addition, Salato hosted the second most attended Halloween Walk with the Animals with 2,647 people in attendance. Salato closed Nov. 21 and is now working on several offseason renovation projects. The center will reopen March 1, 2019.



GRANTS BRANCH STAFF ATTEND TRAINING

In October, Mary Nickles and Tricia Orme from the Grants Branch traveled to Sacramento, California, to attend a Management Concepts training course. The two-day training, "Subawarding for Pass-Through Entities," covered the process of managing grants through a subrecipient. The Sacramento Bridge, pictured, was one of the many sites they saw while attending their training.

Angler catches new state record blue catfish – then releases it

Carlisle County resident Glynn Grogan bested a nearly 20-year-old state record when he caught a 106.9-pound blue catfish from the lower Ohio River on Oct. 20, 2018.

After having the fish weighed on certified scales and acknowledged by Adam Martin, Western Fisheries District biologist for the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Grogan released his monster back into the Ohio.

Bruce Midkiff of Owensboro caught the former record, a 104-pound fish, from the Ohio River in 1999.

Grogan caught his record fish below Olmstead Lock and Dam while fishing in the Walter Hayes Memorial Catfish Tournament, Martin said.



“Walter Hayes was a fishing partner and good friend of Mr. Grogan,” Martin said. “Mr. Hayes passed away last year. They had a memorial tournament in honor of Mr. Hayes, and Mr. Grogan caught the state record.”

Grogan caught his record while drifting a mooneye as bait on 80-pound line. He used a Shimano rod matched with an Abu Garcia 7000 C3 reel.

Martin examined the fish at the Wickliffe Boat Ramp and measured its length at 58 inches, with a girth of 24 inches. The fish was still in good shape when Grogan released it back into the Ohio River at the boat ramp.

Grogan is the owner of Grogan’s Taxidermy and Fish Market in Arlington, Kentucky.



LAKE CUMBERLAND TROUT SAMPLING

On Oct. 28 several of the department’s fisheries crews completed their annual nocturnal trout sample in the Lake Cumberland tailwaters. Marcy Anderson (above) shows off a 10 pound plus walleye. Daniel Prater (left) is holding one of several 20 inch plus brown trout caught that evening. The fish pictured is 24 inches and 6.21 pounds.

KDFWR hosts IWRC Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation course

The International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (IWRC) recently instructed a course on Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation in Frankfort in early November. This two-day, hands-on course is required of all wildlife rehabilitators in Kentucky. Forty-two participants received training on a variety of topics including zoonotic diseases, administration of medication, wound treatment, nutrition, wildlife behavior, euthanasia, housing standards and release requirements.

IWRC offers science-based education and resources for wildlife rehabilitators around the world. They offer several courses developed by veterinarians, wildlife biologists and experienced wildlife rehabilitators. Personnel hosted the course in an effort to instill a better understanding and abundance of regulations and to provide training for upcoming rehabbers. During the course, Salato staff treated students to a raptor flight demonstration and promoted the new Kentucky Wild program. Several knowledgeable wildlife rehabilitators volunteered to teach students proper laboratory techniques. This training was made possible by support from many staff members, including Laura Palmer, Willie Cook, Sarah Tomke, Heather Teachey and Rachel Young.

KDFWR depends on wildlife rehabbers to care for injured wildlife that would otherwise end up in the hands of the public or dropped off at KDFWR offices. Studies show that without wildlife rehabilitators, the public often cares for injured or ill wildlife, which puts them at a greater risk of exposure to zoonotic diseases.



Above: A student practices a medical procedure known as "gavage" on a great horned owl carcass. Gavage is the administration of food or drugs through a tube leading to the stomach. Below left: A student practices giving fluids via a subcutaneous injection. Below right: Conservation Educator Rachel Young poses with a non-releasable kestrel. *Willie Cook photos*





On Oct. 29, 12 of the whistling duck hatchlings were captured, banded and released. Banding data is used by state and federal biologists to set seasons and bag limits each year. We hope to learn where these birds go when they leave Kentucky.

Black-bellied Whistling Duck

Pat Hahs, public lands biologist in the Purchase Region, documented Kentucky's first successful nesting observation of a Black-bellied Whistling Duck when he photographed an adult with 13 ducklings on Oct. 1, 2018. Though seeing a Black-bellied Whistling Duck in Kentucky is not unusual, nesting had not yet been documented. The range of Black-bellied Whistling Ducks historically was South and Central America, North to southern Texas. In the last 25 years, their range has been expanding. Florida now has a "resident" population. Louisiana estimates a population of around 30,000 Black-bellied Whistling Ducks, and several states along the Mississippi river and the Atlantic Coast have noted them as a rare breeder. Kentucky is now a part of that list.

Calvert City Elementary starts its NASP program

Nancy Kiernan, a conservation educator in western Kentucky, recently teamed up with Calvert City Elementary in Marshall County to raise funds for the school's new NASP school program. Calvert City teacher, Adrienne O'Neill, started the school year wanting to bring the NASP program to her students. O'Neill talked with her administration and PE teacher about incorporating the program into the PE curriculum and the possibility of starting an archery team at the school. "There are so many positives to the archery program and I really felt it could be something our students would enjoy and could benefit from," O'Neill said. "From being able to participate in a team sport to the possible college scholarships down the road, this has the potential of being a big win for our students from elementary school until after they graduate high school."

O'Neill first teamed up with Micah Seavers, a well-known hunter/trapper in West Kentucky and a big supporter of youth outdoor and hunting opportunities. Seavers also owns a local barbecue restaurant and put together a Boston Butt BBQ sale with proceeds going toward the purchase of the needed archery equipment.

"The fundraiser with Micah was a huge success. It helped us raise a significant portion of the needed funds. He is a big supporter of activities that have the potential of getting kids outdoors," O'Neill said. "The NASP archery program has that potential with the 3D target tournaments and extensions into archery hunting."

With funds still needed, O'Neill and Kiernan borrowed an inflatable archery set up from the KDFWR NASP program for the upcoming school fall festival.

"The PTO was onboard right away and agreed to write a check for the



Students use the inflatable archery set up at Calvert City Elementary's fall festival. The booth was a fund-raising activity for the school's NASP program.

remaining amount needed," O'Neill said. "All we had to do was provide and staff the activity at the fall festival."

The archery activity was a big success and one of the most popular of the night. With a constant line of students from kindergarten age to teenagers (and a few parents) waiting their turns, Kiernan and O'Neill stayed busy nocking arrows and handing out prizes to the beginning archers.

"Not only was the activity a lot of fun, it was also an awesome way to introduce and promote the archery program to the kids and parents," Kiernan said. "The kids seemed to get really excited about the possibility of there being an archery team at their school."

The archery inflatable also provided

the opportunity to answer questions and talk with a lot of people who had Fish and Wildlife related questions.

"I looked up hunter safety course schedules, showed hunters where to find the new deer regs online, pointed out the Western Kentucky Fisheries Facebook page as a great reference and answered questions about Camp Currie all night," Kiernan said.

With the success of the fundraisers, the archery equipment has been ordered and Calvert City Elementary will become the first elementary school in Marshall County to have an archery team.

"We are new at this and have lots to learn, but we are super excited to be able to offer this for our students and community," O'Neill said.

Hero's Haven organize mentored rifle hunt

Hero's Haven, a group comprised mostly of disabled veterans looking to give back to other men and women who have put their lives on the line to serve their country, organized a special mentored rifle hunt for the last weekend of October. Participants included eight novice hunters consisting of youth, active military, and veterans ranging in age from 14 to 75. Jason Martin, conservation educator, represented

the department at the special hunt.

The night before the hunt a Hero's Haven member educated the hunters on guns, gun safety, shot placement and allowed them to practice with the rifles they would be using. Next, they talked about deer movement, hunting tactics, and the placement of blinds and stands. They ended the night over a hot meal and enjoying the comradery of deer camp.

After hunting all day on Saturday and Sunday morning the hunters had racked up more than 65 deer sightings and were able to harvest six nice bucks and two does. They were able to watch a deer-processing demo and each were given the opportunity to clean their own deer. After seeing the joy on the hunters faces and receiving an influx of letters of gratitude, to say that this hunt was a success would be an understatement.

Right: Edward Dunn (left) and Bill Baker (right). After shooting his first deer, a nice 9 point buck, Baker said, "I can't wait to call my dad!"

Below: John Zdral (left) and son Hunter Zdral (right). John used the first morning out to teach his son about rub lines and deer trails. Afterwards they were able to come up with a game plan together which allowed them to harvest Hunter's first buck and a doe. It was evident how proud John was of his son as he bragged on his ability to stay composed and make the shot on this wide 8 pointer. Below right: This event was the first time ever that Cory Davis had the opportunity to shoot a rifle. Although Cory was not able to harvest a deer on this hunt, he said that he was just excited to see deer. He even had one in the crosshairs once.



HABITAT PROGRAM TEACHES STUDENTS ABOUT ECOSYSTEM

Andrew Wooldridge, conservation educator, worked with a group of gifted and talented students in the first through fourth grade to learn about the health of the ecosystem. The program took place at Camp KYSOC in Carrollton. The day started with a hike on the Camp KYSOC grounds discussing the four attributes of good wildlife habitat: food, water, shelter and space. While on the hike, students collected leaves for a craft project. After the hike, Wooldridge talked to the students about things that hurt habitats such as poor logging practices, pollution, invasive species and coal mining waste. He also pointed out Kentucky Fish and Wildlife success stories he has had with wildlife such as the American Bald Eagle, American Black Bear, Elk, White-tailed Deer, Wild Turkey, Walleye and Peregrine Falcon. The students then took the leaves they collected and made wildlife art with them, creating their own habitats.





“Fur,” continued

Students were introduced to several types of traps and learned how present day trap modifications improve animal welfare and reduce injury. Students then spent two days in the field setting traps for raccoon, muskrat, mink, coyote, fox and bobcat. Each student set and checked traps under

the guidance of seasoned trappers. Special attention was given to practicing ethics, safety and avoidance of non-target species on the trap-line. Students then learned fur handling practices including how to properly skin a furbearer, remove excess fat and grease from the hide, and then stretch and dry the hide in preparation for tanning or sale on the fur market.

Students left the workshop with a new understanding of fur trapping and how to utilize trapping as a management tool to control furbearers. Students learned how to effectively communicate with the public about the benefits of trapping and how fur is used on the market. Their newly acquired expertise will aid them in providing technical guidance to landowners experiencing property or crop damage by furbearers, enforcement and allow them to better communicate with trappers about trapping.

HALLOWEEN COSTUME LEVEL: PRO

Asher Wells dressed as a pro fisherman for Halloween. Asher is the son of Conservation Officer Jason Wells. Asher will be 3 in February.

