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Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife introduces Kentucky Wild

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources invites everyone to join its Kentucky Wild team.

Acting Commissioner Frank Jemley announced a department initiative June 1 to energize those who are passionate about Kentucky outdoors and wildlife, but do not necessarily hunt or fish.

Department staff used the KDFWR Center for Mollusk Conservation as the backdrop for the announcement.

Kentucky Wild seeks a broad public base of support to achieve its goal of assisting vulnerable wildlife facing threats in the state.

“The department’s successes in wildlife restoration and management through the years are significant and well-known,” Jemley said.

Hunters and anglers in Kentucky underwrote those successes through their purchases of hunting and fishing licenses over many years. Their reward is today’s bountiful fish and wildlife populations that everyone can enjoy.

Those restoration efforts extend far beyond game species, however. The department operates a world-class mussel hatchery as part of an ongoing commitment to bring back some of the rarest animals in the world. The growing number of bald eagles, ospreys and peregrine falcons soaring through Kentucky’s skies have benefit-



ted from decades of research and work by department employees.

Kentucky Wild is the way people who do not hunt or fish can support wildlife management and wildlife management areas.

Kentucky Wild will allow the estimated 1.3 million wildlife watchers in the state to support work on the nearly 900 species monitored by Kentucky Fish and Wildlife. Many of these species, such as songbirds, bats, lizards, salamanders, raptors and freshwater mussels, go largely unnoticed. All revenues generated by Kentucky Wild will go to support these species.

Many species in need of conservation

face a growing number of threats, including invasive species, city growth, demands on limited water supplies and competition for places to live. Kentucky Wild will raise awareness by engaging and facilitating more interaction with people who are conscious and committed to preserving Kentucky’s natural heritage, wildlife and wild places.

Economists estimate that wildlife watchers in the state spend some \$1.3 billion on their pursuits each year, supporting more than 19,000 jobs. The economic muscle of this group can generate new

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INSIDE:



2 New director



4 Case closed



6 Hydrilla cleanup

WE GET MAIL

Letters to the Commissioner's Office

This note received by the Information Center:

"Just wanted to say thank you for having free fishing this past weekend. It was the perfect opportunity for my husband and I to take our daughter out to see if she would enjoy it. She loved fishing and we had a blast! We already purchased our fishing licenses so we can all go again. We also got another family member wanting to join in on the fun. Without the free weekend, we wouldn't have tried it. So thank you so much for getting us out fishing as a family!"

Mary Wallace Morgan of Hopkins County writes:

"Thanks to the Fish and Wildlife officer from Hopkins County [Conservation Officer Brant Green] for visiting our Cub Scout Camp today in Dawson Springs! The boys loved it!"



Note: KDFWR Conservation Officers and other staff visit, make presentations at, and otherwise contribute to programs for thousands of events, camps, meetings and other organizations' functions every year to promote fish and wildlife conservation and outdoor recreation across the Commonwealth.



COL. GIBSON TAKES OATH

Franklin Circuit Judge Thomas D. Wingate administered the oath of office to Law Enforcement Division Director Eric D. Gibson earlier this month as majors Shane Carrier and Larry Estes looked on with members of the division's Honor Guard and firearms training team also on hand for the moment.

COMMISSION HONORS CHARLES BUSH



Retired Deputy Commissioner Charles Bush returned to Headquarters this month long enough for the Fish and Wildlife Commission to recognize him for his nearly 32 years of service to Kentucky government, including 18 of those as KDFWR Director of Engineering and Deputy Commissioner. Agency staff presented him with a framed Rick Hill print, and the Commission presented him a framed Resolution and Proclamation that heralded his service to sportsmen and sportswomen.

Wisconsin DNR presents Commission with \$288,000

Wisconsin DNR Director Eric Lobner presented the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission with a check for \$288,000 toward grouse restoration in East Kentucky.

The presentation is in keeping with an agreement between the two state agencies that called for Wisconsin receiving Kentucky elk in exchange for grouse restoration guidance and funds.

Lobner answered questions from Commission members during their meeting this month and then joined with Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation's Kim DeLozier in presenting the check to Kentucky Deer and Elk Program Coordinator Gabe Jenkins, Commission Chairman Jimmy Bevins and Wildlife Division Director Steve Beam.



Conservation Officer Estes' persistence, investigation lead to stolen fishing gear recovery

Three professional anglers from Texas, Kansas and Canada, participating in an FLW Bass tournament on Lake Cumberland in April had more than \$20,000 in stolen fishing equipment recovered thanks in no small part to advance contacts and later persistent investigative work by a Kentucky conservation officer.

Officer Jason Estes' early contact with FLW tournament officials led to a theft report just a few days later, triggering an investigation by multiple law enforcement agencies that resulted in the arrest and conviction of Donal Weber, 33, of Antioch. The officers recovered and returned all of the stolen high-end fishing equipment.

Weber pleaded guilty in Pulaski Circuit Court to theft of the equipment, possession of handguns by a convicted felon, fleeing or evading police, and cultivating marijuana (more than five plants). Circuit Judge David Tapp sentenced Weber to three years in prison.

Weber's conviction and resolution of the case were set in motion about a month earlier after a conversation between Estes and FLW tournament pro Scott Martin at Burnside Island State Park. "I gave him my card while we were talking and told him to give me a call if I could ever help him," Estes said.

That contact led Martin to follow up with Estes a just few days later with a request for him to be on the lookout for some top-end fishing equipment stolen from another tournament participant.

Estes quickly reached out to other area law enforcement agencies – Somerset Police Department, Burnside Police Department, Pulaski County Sheriff's Office, and a local constable – with information of the stolen items, and they began pursuing the case.

Other officers involved as the investigation progressed were Timothy Miller,



Ninth District Conservation Officer Jason Estes pauses with FLW tournament anglers Jeff Gustafson of Canada, and Jeff Sprague of Texas and Casey Scanlon of Kansas after recovering their stolen fishing equipment.

Detectives Matthew Gates and Larry Patterson, and Lt. Randal Smith of Somerset Police, Burnside Constable Mike Wallace, and Stephen Alley and Sgt. Mike Hill of Burnside.

Estes searched area pawnshops and left information with them about the stolen gear. He talked with other anglers and business owners around the lake as to if they knew of anyone trying to sell the equipment.

His efforts soon produced a tip leading him and detectives to the Tri County

Flea Market where they discovered some of the stolen equipment. Flea market owners also were able to provide Estes with information about the man selling them that included a first name (Donal), a photo, and description of the vehicle he was driving.

Through their investigative analysis, Estes and the detectives determined the thefts to have occurred at the Burnside Island ramp. The sheriff's office there sought

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“Recovery,” continued

public assistance by posting the photo online, and they soon had more detailed information that pointed toward Weber.

Then, while driving toward Burnside, Estes encountered Weber driving the suspect vehicle and attempted a traffic stop. However, his attempt turned into a six-mile pursuit that required the help of multiple agencies before it concluded at Weber’s residence.

Officers found the remaining fishing gear items in a shed outside of the residence. They returned all of it to the three theft victims.

The officers then arrested Weber and

lodged him in the Pulaski County Detention Center.

Jeff Gustafson of Canada, Jeff Sprague of Texas, and Casey Scanlon of Kansas were the targets of Weber’s thefts and thrilled to have their gear returned.

Gustafson pens a column titled “*The Live Well*” that appears in the *Fort Frances Times*. He wrote about his Lake Cumberland experience. “I was shocked,” he wrote upon discovering his missing tackle. “This was years’ worth of tackle that I had compiled and it was irreplaceable...”

“A huge thank you to Jason Estes and the Burnside Police Department for their hard work to find my things and get them back to me. Most of the time these kinds

of stories don’t have a happy ending so I’m very lucky.”



“Wild,” continued

wildlife success stories.

Kentucky Wild consists of six membership levels beginning at \$25. Each level presents escalating opportunities to members to accompany Kentucky wildlife professionals in the field working with wildlife in special circumstances. Sponsorships begin at \$1,500.

For more information about Kentucky Wild – and to join the ranks of wildlife conservation heroes – go online to fw.ky.gov/kywild.



The Kentucky Wild kick-off event brought out the public and the media to announce its new initiative. Monte McGregor, with KD-FWR Center for Mollusk Conservation, gives the public and media a tour of the facility. The Center was used as the backdrop for the kick-off event because several mussel species will be benefiting from the project.

Efforts underway to keep ramps open at Cave Run Lake

Rapid spread of invasive hydrilla creates problems for boaters

A series of chemical treatments designed to keep boat ramps free of hydrilla at Cave Run Lake is now underway.

Hydrilla is an invasive aquatic weed that grows quickly, choking out other vegetation and impacting fish populations. First discovered in Cave Run Lake near Morehead in 2016, the weed quickly spread from Alfrey bank and Zilpo Flats to other areas of the lake.

Biologists believe the fragments of hydrilla hitch-hiked from a boat into the lake. Fragments attached to a boat can remain viable for five days after it is taken out of the water. Fragments as small as one inch have a 50 percent chance of survival in a new lake. Thick mats of hydrilla impede boating and can damage motors.

Treatments to eradicate hydrilla began last month around the Clay Lick, Warix, Alfrey and Zilpo boat ramps. More treatment is scheduled.



The pelletized compound applied from boat-mounted spreaders breaks down quickly after its initial application. It is not harmful to humans, pets, macroinvertebrates, reptiles, amphibians or fish. It will not affect water supplies.

Boaters will notice dead aquatic vegetation in treated areas. Due to the high cost of the chemical, however, only

areas around boat ramps will receive the treatment.

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources urges all boaters using Cave Run Lake to take a few precautions after taking their boat out of the water:

- Inspect the boat, bilge, drywells, trailers, motors and all recreation equipment for plant fragments and remove them before leaving the area.
- Drain livewells and bilge areas at the lake. Leave

them open to dry.

- Wait five days before launching your boat into a lake that does not have hydrilla.
- If possible, steam clean your boat after leaving an infested lake.

For more information about stopping the spread of invasive species in Kentucky's waterways, please go online to stopaquaticinvasives.org.

New Camp Currie record

Kaden Brown of Monroe County smashed a 30-year Camp Currie big fish record with this catch of a 21-pound 7-ounce buffalo this month.

"In 1991, Billy Cooper from Warren County caught a common carp that was 21 pounds," said Camp Director Bill Fannin. "I thought this record would never be broken."

Kaden caught her fish on a crappie wonder pole with a small bluegill hook. It was no easy task getting it in without



the pole breaking. Kaden Brown is now the new champ.

"Sadly we will now have to change all our Billy Cooper lies – I mean stories about how he became a legend and that it all started at Camp Currie," said Fannin. "Now Kaden Brown is famous and makes Monroe County proud."

Kaden show them boys how it's done... Girl power!

BALLARD FISHING EVENTS ATTRACT THE YOUNG AND THE NOT SO YOUNG



In a more recent event at Ballard, the Ballard Bottoms Tourism Council (BBTC) helped host the older anglers in a bass tournament, crappie tournament and for bowfishing.

Josh Hager photos



Approximately 110 fourth-grade students and another 75 fifth graders from the Ballard County school system participated in their annual fishing outing last month at the Ballard Wildlife Management Area Gravel Pit Pond. First District Commission Member Dr. Harry Carlross, along with staff from Wildlife, Fisheries and Law Enforcement Divisions assisted with the event. *Richard Campbell photo*



Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Conservation Educator Teach Teachey helps 6-year-old Bruce Incorporated with the finer points of fishing. KDFWR employees helped fulfill a dream for Bruce and his family, teaching the whole family to fish. The fished in the overflow pond at the Peter F. Pfeiffer Hatchery and toured the facility.



Department employees make fishing dream a reality for 6-year-old

Some Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife employees went above and beyond recently to make a little boy's dreams come true.

Six-year-old Bruce Incorporated, of Lexington, woke up one morning determined to learn to fish. His parents, mom, Robin Dodd, and dad, Patrick Danielson, aren't anglers and they weren't quite sure where to start but they needed to try. Bruce was diagnosed with DIPG, an inoperable brain tumor in January. His parents are trying to fulfill Bruce's every wish while they still have time with him.

To accomplish his latest desire, they purchased Bruce a basic fishing kit with a pole and tried their luck, but they didn't catch a thing.

Through a friend of the family, Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Conservation Educator Heather "Teach" Teachey, who is



in the Aquatic Education Division, heard about Bruce's desire to fish and decided the department could help. The goal of the department's aquatic education department is to teach those unfamiliar with fishing how to be successful anglers. This

was a perfect opportunity to teach the entire family and make a little boy's dream come true.

With the help of the Aquatic Education staff, which included Teachey, Andrew Wooldridge and Jason Martin, and employees at the Peter F. Pfeiffer Hatchery, Bruce was able to fulfill his dream. Bruce, his parents, Bruce's brother, Jack, and a few friends fished at the hatchery's overflow pond. On June 4, Bruce caught his first fish – a catfish – and then watched and cheered his family and friends from the shade of a nearby tree.

Hatchery employees Josh Pennington, hatchery manager, and Noah Nelson, fisheries biologist, treated the family to a tour of the facility, letting them watch a catfish feed when the day was over. Salato pitched in a one-day pass to enjoy a day of

behind-the-scenes interactions and marketing provided a few logoed items for the family to take home.

The experience was such a success, the family has decided to make fishing a regular part of their activities.

Illegally kept deer fawn leads to drug charges

Marion County man arrested following investigation by conservation officers

The report of a deer fawn being kept illegally led to drug charges for a Marion County man and his mother.

On June 11, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources Conservation Officers charged 26-year-old Matt White, of Lebanon, Ky., with holding protected wildlife and one count of cultivation of five or more marijuana plants.

Officers also charged White's mother, 59-year-old Lebanon resident Mary Colvin, with driving under the influence, possession of marijuana and having an open container of alcohol in her vehicle. Colvin arrived at the scene while officers were obtaining a search warrant for White's residence on McElroy Pike.

Conservation officers were called to the residence after receiving a report of a captive deer. In Kentucky, it is illegal for the public to keep a deer fawn.

Deer typically give birth in May and June. Mothers leave their offspring for hours while they go off to feed. This behavior makes it more difficult for predators to find the fawns by looking for the mother. Young fawns also attempt to avoid

predators by lying motionless to avoid detection. This also makes them susceptible to people carrying them off while the mother deer is away.

Conservation Officers Brandon Boone and Lee Keith went to White's house to investigate the captive deer report and discovered a fawn locked in a large dog cage outside of the garage. Upon further investigation, officers found

multiple marijuana plants outside of the house and marijuana growing inside the garage. Investigators said more charges may be forthcoming against White based on additional evidence found inside the house.

White was arrested and lodged in the Marion County Detention Center. The fawn seized in the case went to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.



Conservation Officers seized a captive fawn, drug paraphernalia and marijuana plants when complaints of an illegally held deer resulted in the arrest of a Marion County man and his mother. Officers found the items inside and outside of a garage. Pictured are, back row left to right, Officer Brandon Boone and Officer Jared Ervin. Front row: Recruit James "Cody" Berry and Officer Lee Keith.