



ORPHANED BEAR CUB RESCUED IN ST. MARY PARISH

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) personnel rescued an orphaned male black bear cub in St. Mary Parish on Nov. 14 and transported the cub on Nov. 21 to the Appalachian Bear Rescue (ABR) Center in Tennessee for rehabilitation prior to return to the wild.

Arlen Carter, of Franklin, observed the cub in his hunting area while in a deer stand overlooking a food plot at 8:15 a.m.

“I watched the cub and waited for his mother to arrive,” Carter said. “After 30 minutes, I came to the conclusion that the cub was alone and called LDWF authorities.”

Carter said that he has hunted this same area for the last four years and has seen quite a few bears, some coming within yards of his deer stand.

“Situations like this are extremely rare and hunters should not assume bear cubs seen without a female nearby are orphans,” said LDWF Wildlife Biologist Maria Davidson. “This cub was very small, undernourished and near starvation, which prompted the decision to capture him. Had he been in good health, he would have been left in the area.”

Wildlife Management Area (WMA) Technician Tim Marcentel from LDWF's New Iberia office, along with student worker Brent Castille and WMA Technician Guy Patout, retrieved the cub. According to Davidson, the cub had been trying to subsist on sugar cane stubble left in a harvested field. The cub weighed 15 pounds when caught, well outside the 30-to-50-pound range a 10-to-11-month-old bear should reach. All cubs are born in January or February each year.

Following the capture, the young bear was then transported to Baton Rouge, given emergency care and nourishment and then transferred to the ABR Center.

LDWF File Photo



This 10-to-11 month old orphaned cub was found in St. Mary's Parish on Nov. 14. The cub was severely malnourished and was given emergency care by LDWF staff before the cub was transferred to the Appalachian Bear Rescue in Tennessee.

According to ABR's Web site at www.appalacianbearrescue.org, the cub will be placed on commercial formula along with natural wild foods gathered by local volunteers. It will be housed with other cubs for comfort and companionship with minimum human contact. Prior to release into the wild, the cub will live in a one-acre bear enclosure with hardwood trees, natural dens and man-made streams and water sources.

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LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES OFFERS THREE WAYS TO TAKE MANDATORY HUNTER ED COURSE

Hunter education certification cards can be obtained three different ways from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) Hunter Education Program. The free hunter education course is mandatory for anyone born on or after Sept. 1, 1969, who plans on purchasing a hunting license.

The traditional standard hunter education course is taught in a classroom setting by an LDWF hunter education instructor. The standard course usually takes place over a two or three-day window and includes an actual hands-on skeet shoot. In 2003, 18,651 students participated in the standard course with 17,577 in 2004 and 13,611 last year.

"There are still people who would rather take the standard course by a qualified hunter education instructor," said LDWF's Hunter Education Program Manager John Sturgis. "The reduction in students last year could probably be attributed to the hurricanes, since they occurred during our busiest time of the year right before hunting season."

Developed in 2003 by the Southeast Hunter Education Coordinators, the home study hunter education program has certified over 1,500 hunters. The home study program can be taken over the Internet at LDWF's Web site or by requesting a CD-Rom from LDWF. Both home study programs use the exact same content.

At the end of the home study program, the course will administer a test and prompt the student to print a report. A passing score for the test is 75 percent. The student must then sign the report and bring it to a scheduled field day.

The field day consists of one day with hands on activities such as a skeet shoot and written test.

"The home study course was created to offer an alternative method to access hunter education," said Sturgis. "It has become difficult with current work schedules to attend traditional standard courses. Plus, some people like to be self taught and would prefer to take the course in the convenience of their own home."

The curriculum for all course types includes sections on ethics and responsibility, wildlife management, firearms and ammunition, safety in the field, wildlife identification and wildlife conservation. The major objectives of the hunter education programs are to reduce the number of hunting accidents, improve the image of hunting through ethical and responsible conduct and promote the shooting sports.

Standard course listings and field day schedules can be obtained by visiting LDWF's Web site at www.wlf.louisiana.gov/hunting/education/ or by calling 225-765-2920. Registration may be required for some course listings and field days.

For more information, contact John Sturgis at 225-763-5448 or jsturgis@wlf.louisiana.gov.

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In the enclosure, the cub will not see humans or receive human contact unless medical attention is required. Cubs will forage for randomly placed food within the enclosure.

Each cub must grow to at least 60 pounds in weight and exhibit normal foraging behavior, while interacting and vocalizing with other cubs and demonstrating climbing skills, before being released into the wild. Normal wild bear behavior can also be verified if a cub spends its days above ground in a tree and on the ground at night looking for food.

ABR has released 78 bears back into the wild without any being reported as a nuisance by the public. Their goal is to make sure bears are wary of humans.

Davidson hopes this cub will be ready to return to Louisiana by the spring of 2007 for release in north Louisiana where bear densities are lower.

For more information, contact Maria Davidson at 225-765-2385 or mdavidson@wlf.louisiana.gov.



SULPHUR MAN CITED FOR HUNTING TURKEYS DURING A CLOSED SEASON ON THANKSGIVING DAY

On Nov. 29, 2006, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Enforcement Division agents cited Adam K. Foster, 26, of Sulphur, for allegedly killing two wild turkeys on Thanksgiving Day in Beauregard Parish.

Agents received a tip that Foster had been deer hunting on the morning of Nov. 23 and shot two turkeys from his deer stand. Agents conducted an investigation and questioned Foster at his residence in Sulphur on Wednesday, Nov. 29.

Foster admitted he had killed two turkeys on Thanksgiving Day and that one of the turkeys had already been consumed. The remaining turkey was seized as evidence along with the shot-



gun that was used to commit the violation. Agents cited Foster for two counts of hunting turkeys during a closed season. He was also issued a civil restitution penalty for the replacement costs of the two illegally taken turkeys.

Louisiana does not have a fall turkey season. During the spring season in portions of the months of March and April, hunters may harvest gobblers only. The limit is one per day and two per season.

The penalty for taking turkeys during a closed season is a fine up to \$950, up to 120 days in jail, or both plus court costs, and forfeiture of anything seized for each count. The civil restitution value is \$802.50 for each turkey.

Agents involved in the investigation were Sgts. David Liles and Keith Aucoin.

For more information, contact Lt. Col. Keith LaCaze at 225-765-2988 or kla-caze@wlf.louisiana.gov.

ST. AMANT MAN CITED ON MAUREPAS W.M.A.

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Enforcement Division Agents cited a St. Amant man on November 26 for allegedly killing four deer on the Maurepas Swamp Wildlife Management Area (WMA).

James M. Duhe, 47, of St. Amant was cited after Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Enforcement Division agents set up surveillance and apprehended Duhe near Highway 641, in St. James Parish. Duhe and three other men were observed dragging two button bucks, a doe and a 10-point buck through the swamp to the edge of the highway.

After further investigation and interviews by the agents with the four men, Duhe ultimately confessed to killing all four deer. The legal daily limit for deer on a Wildlife Management Area is one antlered and one antlerless deer (when legal) per day.

Duhe was placed under arrest and booked into the St. James Parish jail. Agents seized the rifle used by Duhe as evidence. The four deer were also seized and later donated to charity.

If convicted, Duhe faces fines up to \$750 or jail time between 15 and 30 days for possession of illegally taken deer. For taking over the daily limit of deer, he faces fines up to \$500, or jail time up to 90 days, or both plus court costs. Failure to comply with rules and regulation on a WMA carries fines up to \$350, or jail not more than 60 days, or both plus court costs. Duhe also faces civil restitution penalties of \$524.54 per deer.

Agents participating in the case were Sgt. Aron Hastings and Agent Robert Turner.

For more information contact Lt. Col. Keith LaCaze at 225-765-2988 or klacaze@wlf.louisiana.gov.



L.D.W.F. HAS ROLE IN AVIAN FLU MONITORING NETWORK

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is actively involved in an Avian Influenza Early Detection Surveillance System to check for this virus in wild waterfowl and shorebirds as part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) avian influenza monitoring network.

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' Avian Flu Early Detection Surveillance System consists of collecting 1,000 waterfowl and shorebird cloacal swabs prior to and during the waterfowl hunting season as part of the broader Mississippi Flyway Avian Flu Surveillance Plan. LDWF has targeted species most likely to mingle with birds from Asia on breeding grounds or migration routes and transport the virus down the Mississippi Flyway to Louisiana.

LDWF has already collected shorebirds and will sample ducks and geese harvested on public hunting areas this fall to collect the swabs. Those swabs are then sent to the Louisiana State University Veterinarian School for testing.

"This early detection system is a proactive approach to an unlikely problem," said Robert Helm, LDWF's waterfowl study leader. "The possibility of the disease arriving in Louisiana or North America via migrating birds is unknown, but the risk to bird hunters is expected to be very low. This monitoring system should give the public the confidence of knowing that the bird hunting opportunities in this state are safe."

Avian flu has two different types based on pathogenicity, which is the ability of the virus to produce a disease. The Low Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (LPAI) strain causes few clinical signs in infected birds and generally does not pose a threat to humans. The High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI) strain is frequently fatal to the bird and is easily transmissible between susceptible bird species. The HPAI strain can pass from bird to bird and rarely from bird to human, but it is not considered a pandemic virus because it cannot pass from human to human.

The strain that is currently of concern in Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Africa is the HPAI H5N1 virus. HPAI H5N1 strain has caused 156 human deaths from 2003 to Oct. 31, 2006. Those people were from third world countries and presumably contracted the virus via unsanitary handling of infected domestic poultry.

The spread of the virus across Asia and Europe has raised fears it might spread into new areas including North America and pose potential danger to those who handle wild birds, including hunters. LDWF wants to reassure bird hunters that at this point the HPAI strain has not been found in the state of Louisiana or North America. Indeed, nearly 600 cloacal swabs taken by LDWF and USDA from primarily long-billed dowitchers, Baird's sandpipers, least sandpipers, wood ducks, and blue-winged teal have been tested and have shown no evidence of the virus. The sampling effort nation-wide is 50 percent complete at this time, and not a single sample has tested positive for HPAI H5N1.

So be prepared, not scared. LDWF would like to again remind the public when handling birds to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Do not handle birds that are obviously sick or birds found dead.
- Wear rubber or disposable latex gloves while handling and cleaning game, wash hands with soap and water or with alcohol-based hand products, and thoroughly clean knives, equipment and surfaces that come in contact with game.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke while handling or cleaning birds.
- Cook all game meat to at least an internal temperature of 155 degrees to kill disease organisms and parasites.

For more information on avian influenza, visit the LDWF's Web site at www.wlf.louisiana.gov.

For more information, contact Robert Helm at 225-765-2358 or rhelm@wlf.louisiana.gov.

