

# No firearms fatalities reported during 2006-07 season

## ■ Hunter Education program credited for drop in hunting related incidents

For the first time since records began in 1973, the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries (WFF) Division reports this past deer season, which ended on January 31, 2007, there were no firearms or tree stand related fatal incidents. Alabama's hunting incident rate has decreased significantly since the mandatory hunter education program was implemented in 1993. However, WFF cautions hunters to continue using safe hunting practices during other game seasons that continue in Alabama through April.

Nine non-fatal firearms incidents have been reported since the opening of dove season in September and only four of the nine occurred as a result of deer hunting activities. Eight non-fatal tree stand incidents have been reported since the opening of the archery deer season on October 15, 2006.

In Alabama, hunting provides about 5 million man-days of recreation for approximately 423,000 hunters and generates a direct economic impact of approximately \$800 million annually. As in all recreational activities, accidents occasionally occur that involve participants. Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Director Corky Pugh attributes the decline in the hunting incident rate to increased hunter awareness and the mandatory hunter education program. "The hunter education program has positively influenced the actions of Alabama's hunters and the future of our rich hunting heritage," said Pugh.

Statistics from the National Safety Council indicate hunting is one of the safest outdoor recreational activities. In fact, nationwide there are fewer than 10 firearms related incidents requiring emergency room

### ALABAMA HUNTING INCIDENT SUMMARY 2005-06 (last season)

- 17 TOTAL INCIDENTS
- 14 NON-FATAL INCIDENTS
- 2 TWO-PARTY FATAL FIREARMS INCIDENTS
- 1 SELF-INFLICTED FATAL FIREARMS INCIDENT
- 3 TWO PARTY NON-FATAL FIREARMS INCIDENTS
- 2 SELF-INFLICTED NON-FATAL FIREARMS INCIDENTS
- 9 NON-FATAL TREESTAND INCIDENTS

(statistics compiled by the Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries for the 2005-2006 Hunter Education and Hunting Incidents Statistics report)

treatment per 100,000 participants. Although hunting is a very safe activity, Pugh reminds all hunters to continue to use good judgment and exercise all safety precautions during the remainder of this hunting season.

Pugh also strongly urges all hunters to properly identify their target and what is beyond prior to squeezing the trigger. In addition, he recommends that all hunters take additional steps to protect themselves.

Abiding by these safety tips offers hunters additional protection from the actions of other hunters.

Wear at least 144 square inches of blaze orange above the waist, visible from any angle or a solid blaze orange cap. This is required by regulation during gun deer season.

Turn on a small flashlight while traveling to and from your stand during low light conditions.

The small beam of light identifies you as a human while you are walking around in low light conditions

which sometimes make it difficult for another hunter to properly identify his target.

Hunting season for small game species including quail, squirrels, rabbits, raccoons, and opossums runs through Feb. 28, 2007. Turkey season runs from March 15 through April 30, 2007 in most counties. Check the ADCNR Web site at [www.outdooralabama.com](http://www.outdooralabama.com) for specific hunting season dates. Very few incidents have occurred during previous small game hunting seasons. Turkey hunting incidents have decreased in recent years as a result of increased emphasis on turkey hunting safety in hunter education programs and other efforts by conservation groups.

Hunter education provides participants with basic information regarding wildlife laws, management, firearms safety, tree stand safety, hunter ethics, and other subjects related to becoming a safe, responsible hunter. Hunter education courses are offered in two formats, a traditional style classroom setting and there is now an online course that is completed by attending a field day for three to five hours. This formal education process is enhanced when coupled with learning experiences provided by adult mentors such as parents, grandparents, or other hunting partners.

Mandatory hunter education in Alabama has proven to reduce hunting accidents and made Alabama's next generation of hunters more knowledgeable regarding our vast wildlife resources and hunting heritage. Successfully completing the hunter education course is mandatory prior to purchasing a hunting license at the age of 16 for anyone born on or after August 1, 1977. Adults are encouraged to enroll their children in a hunter education course between the ages of 12-14 as these younger students are eager to learn and implement the newly acquired safe hunting tips.

For more information on hunter education and hunting accidents in Alabama, call the Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Hunter Education Coordinator at (334) 242-3620 or 1-800-245-2740.



### What a Buck!

Brian Mosley killed this fine eight-point on Dec. 28 while hunting in Louisiana.



### Caleigh's first Buck!

Seven-year old Caleigh Smith shot this six-point buck on Dec. 27th - her first! - while hunting in Louisiana with her dad and brother.



### Sikes Coyote

Archie Sikes killed this rather large and scary black coyote in December. The Sikes crew also took some nice deer this season, check next issue for those photos!

## 'STG' Bass Trail begins Saturday

GILBERTOWN — The 2007 edition of the Share the Gospel Tournament Trail will begin with the Miller's Ferry Open on Saturday, Feb. 24th, fished out of Ellis Landing in Camden.

Ray Covington, the 2006 Tour Champion, will lead this year's five-event trail, culminating with the CLASSIC presented by Blazer Boats, to be fished on Sept. 22nd out of Demopolis.

The trail's second stop will be the Coffeeville Open fished on March 31st out of Service Park followed by the Demopolis Open on April 21st at the City Landing and the Clai-

borne Open on May 26th fished out Issac Creek Park.

The final qualifying tournament will be the Selma Open fished on June 30th out of Selma's City Landing.

Entry fee is \$80 per boat which includes luncheon and parking fees and pay back is 80% of entry fees.

There is an annual \$20 per person membership fee. Registration will begin at 4 a.m. the morning of the tournament. Pre-registration information may be obtained by calling Rev. Howard Gaston at (251) 847-3502 or you may log on to [www.stgospel.com](http://www.stgospel.com).

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In Loving Memory  
 Of  
 Mary Ethel Skinner  
 December 27, 1926 - February 24, 2006  
 In the Arms of an Angel  
 We wish we could have known  
 That her journey was so near  
 She did not go alone  
 In our heart it's very clear  
 The Angel stood beside her waiting  
 'Til she heard God's final word  
 She began singing with God's blessing  
 The most beautiful sound mama heard  
 In the Arms of an Angel  
 She headed for her final journey  
 Looking back with her beautiful smile  
 Knowing God would set her free  
 In the Arms of an Angel  
 A beautiful vision in our heart  
 Her love for us so special  
 We'll never really be apart  
 We love you and miss you,  
 Your children, grandchildren,  
 and great-grandchildren