

LAKE: Study by Alabama hatchery reveals early results of efforts to increase fish population in Kentucky Lake waters

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Gathering a diverse sample of the fish population, the Alabama hatchery measured and weighed every fish being sampled. Those samples were sent to Auburn University, where Dr. Eric Peatman, a professor who is a leader in the field of bass genetics, analyzed them.

Those results included:

- Of the 50 samples collected, 27 were found to be pure Northern Bass, which are native fish to the area.
- Genetic testing revealed that 15 of the samples showed recent hybridization between Florida Bass and Northern Bass.
- Additionally, six of the samples were determined to be the result of historical crosses between Florida Bass and Northern Bass before the stocking.
- Two of the samples were identified as pure Florida Bass, indicating that they were likely introduced to the lake through recent stocking efforts.
- The four largest fish collected, with an average weight of 3.7 pounds, were identified as F1s. That category of fish have an approximate 50% genetic contribution from both Florida Bass and Northern Bass lineages.
- Overall, the percentage of Northern

Bass in the 2023 sample was found to be 85.7%, slightly lower than the 86.4% reported in 2022. This indicates an ongoing incorporation of Florida Bass genetics into the lake, driven by both the survival of Florida Bass and their hybridization with native Northern Bass.

"It seems like the genetics are going the way it's supposed to go," Starks said.

The effort here was initially patterned somewhat after a similar program at Chickamauga Lake in the Chattanooga area.

"We're right at the edge of the weather line as to whether something like this would work or not here," Starks said. "But it seems to be working. Fishermen now are catching some good weights out there."

One other factor in helping the program has been the slight reduction in Asian carp at the lake. Henry County Mayor John Penn Ridgeway said Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency officials have told him there has been a reduction in the number of those invasive Asian carp recently.

The Asian carp are now being caught and used by North American Caviar on Barnhill Lane in Paris. Many are also sent to the Northeast, where it is used for crab bait and lobster bait.



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This spring, Kentucky Lake will be stocked with small Florida bass for the fifth year in a row in a program that has begun to show results. In this photo from 2020, the first year of the stocking program, Shawn McNulty (center, in blue shirt), owner of American Sportfish Hatchery, oversees

P-I FILE PHOTO

the transfer of thousands of small Florida bass into a release boat at Paris Landing State Park marina. Henry County High School fishing team member Tyler Forrest (right) is handed a net full of fish, while his Patriot teammate Logan Thompson (background) helps.

Christmas lights, hot chocolate turn into cash for charities



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From left, Bart Croasmun of ABLE Farms, David Miles of The Levi Miles Foundation, Roxanne Flood and Brittney Green of Easton's Angels laugh Jan. 17 in the lobby of Carroll Bank & Trust Co. Flood had just presented each of the three

local charity representatives with a check for more than \$1,700 — the proceeds from a charity hot chocolate sale she and her family hosted on weekends during the Christmas season.

BY GLENN TANNER
POST-INTELLIGENCER

A welcome spot to warm up with some hot cocoa while touring the Christmas lights of Paris surpassed its fundraising goal for three local charities.

Roxanne Flood of Paris spent several weekends with her family passing out hot chocolate and treats to the carloads who came to enjoy gazing at her family's festively lit home on Greenwood Drive. At the start, she was hoping donations would reach \$3,000, which would allow her to give \$1,000 apiece to the three children's charities.

Instead, the effort brought in almost twice that.

On Jan. 17, Flood passed out three checks — each totaling \$1,757.37 — to David Miles of the Levi Miles Foundation, Brittney Green of Easton's Angels and Bart Croasmun of ABLE Farms.

Each organization focuses on supporting local children and their families, especially those with special challenges.

The Levi Miles Foundation

was founded for the purpose of providing support and resources to children with disabilities and rare diseases, as well as to promote acceptance and inclusion of all individuals within our communities, while the mission of Easton's Angels is to lend aid to the families of children in Henry County who have fallen victim to a life-altering illness.

While both nonprofits have been operating in the Henry County area for several years, ABLE Farms started on its mission for those with special needs to have sustainable jobs late in 2022.

"As the new kids on the block, we're grateful to be included with these two groups that already have done this type of work and done it well, and we're grateful just to be able to be included in everything that you guys are doing," Croasmun said.

The three said they hoped to be able to work together in the future.

Flood said she and her family hope to hold the event again in 2024.

Paris Landing/Kentucky Lake KOA Holiday recognized as Rising Star

The Paris Landing/Kentucky Lake KOA Holiday, owned and operated by Marc and Starr Peterson, has been named the Kampgrounds of America Inc. Rising Star for 2024.

Announced during KOA's annual International Convention in Las Vegas, the Rising Star award is awarded to an exemplary campground whose owner has been a part of the KOA campground system for five years or less.

Owning a picturesque campground near a lake in Tennessee was not part of the Petersons' plans. Living in the suburbs of Chicago, Marc Peterson was busy working in corporate America while his wife, Starr, was beginning a new teaching job. It was when Marc Peterson was laid off that the plan changed.

"When I got laid off, I decided I needed to do something different," he said. "I thought, 'I'm getting old or too worn out, and I said, 'What do I love to do?' I love to go

camping, and we go to many KOAs, and I love the brand. I saw a link that said, 'Own a KOA' and clicked on it."

Eventually, that one click led the Petersons to a quiet Tennessee campground built in 1974 near Kentucky Lake. When the couple bought the campground in 2018, they immediately began adding more sites and creating a five-year plan. Three years later, they not only met, but also exceeded their goal.

"We quadrupled our revenue within the first few years. Now, COVID helped, but a lot of that held sweat equity," Peterson said. "It is all blood, sweat and tears in this place. I mean all three."

The Petersons have made significant changes and improvements to the campground, including the recent addition of two deluxe cabins and five new RV sites with KOA patios, in addition to upgrading 23 existing sites with KOA patios. Wi-

Fi upgrades keep campers connected on all their devices.

Campers themselves, the Petersons still take a lot of inspiration from their fellow KOA owners.

"In the off-season, we camp and stop in and meet people," Peterson said. "We love meeting new people and other owners. We have got to be getting close to 90 or maybe even 100 different KOAs that we have visited or stayed at, and I'm proud of that."

The family's upgrades and focus on customer service have not gone unnoticed. The campground ranks fourth in the KOA campground system with a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 92. Paris Landing/Kentucky Lake KOA Holiday has also won the prestigious KOA Founder's Award all five years of its operation.

"Marc and Starr have taken on the challenge of campground ownership and truly flourished," said Toby O'Rourke, KOA president

and CEO. "To achieve such a high level of success in such a short timeframe is a true testament to the Petersons'

entrepreneurial spirit and dedication to every camper they serve."

For more information

about the Paris Landing/Kentucky Lake KOA Holiday, visit <https://koa.com/campgrounds/paris-landing>.



The Paris Landing/Kentucky Lake KOA Holiday, owned and operated by Marc and Starr

Peterson, includes these two new deluxe cabins with patios.

West Tennessee Boy Scouts get new director

The West Tennessee Area Council, Boy Scouts of America, has hired Morio Snelling Sr. as its new executive director.

He'll bring a wealth of experience and an established history in fulfilling the organization's mission when he starts Feb. 1.

Snelling will focus on learning the region, staff development and growing membership.

He previously served as the director of field service for the Chickasaw Council Boy Scouts of America and chief operating officer for the council.

Before that, he served as the metro field director for that council, where he provided leadership to a team of profes-

sional staff members and oversaw district operations.

His experience and dedication have earned him numerous awards, including the Whitney M. Young Jr. Service Award, presented by the Quapaw Area Council, BSA.

He holds a master's degree in human resource development from Webster University and a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff.

"With more than 25 years of experience in the field of nonprofit work, Snelling's expertise and leadership will be invaluable to the West Tennessee Area Council,"

Board President James E. Ross said. "We look forward to the impact his organization and leadership will make for Scouts and families in West Tennessee."

Council leadership expressed excitement about Snelling becoming executive director.

"I'm thrilled to have Morio and his family joining our team in this time of rebuilding. I am enthusiastically looking forward to working with him to replicate the kind of growth and success he has seen in his previous council," said Kati Rohdy, board vice president of membership.

Misty Croom, who serves

as the central district executive, said Snelling's Scouting background as a volunteer and professional, paired with his positive energy, will help the local organization grow.

"After getting to know Morio during the interview process, I am very excited to have him as our new Scout Executive," Council Commissioner Charles Byrd said. "His experience and vision will serve West Tennessee well in delivering the mission of Scouting to even more of our youth."

Snelling has been married to his wife, Maquitta, for more than 20 years, and they have six children.

Rescue squad elects officers, honors members

The Paris-Henry County Rescue Squad had its annual election of officers recently.

Danny Tucker was re-elected as captain, Diann McGuire retained her position as sergeant/treasurer, as did sergeant/secretary Angie Case.

Dwayne Duncan was re-elected as sergeant/maintenance and continuing as sergeant/public information officer is Stacey Duncan. Grant Roach was elected as 1st lieutenant and Kelly Corbitt was re-elected as 2nd lieutenant.

Michael Guffy was elected

unit director, and Martin Baucum was elected as chaplain for the squad.

Following the election, awards were given for outstanding service in the past year.

Michael Guffy received the Squad Member of the Year award, with Nikki Guffy awarded for having the most volunteer hours. Aaron Little received the award for trainee member of the year.

A special award was given to Monte Starks for his 40 years of service with the squad.