

# RECAP

## of Year 2000

### Pennsylvania

# Boating Fatalities

by Dan Martin

**1. A 19-year-old man** lost his life when he capsized his 10-foot kayak. The victim was paddling on Cross Creek Lake, Washington County, in the company of his brother. The two paddlers were some distance apart when the mishap occurred. The victim removed his life jacket to take off his shirt. In the process he capsized his kayak. Once in the water he was unable to grab his life jacket or kayak. The victim was a poor swimmer and he was not wearing a PFD at the time of the accident.

**2. A 67-year-old man** lost his life when he fell overboard from a 12-foot rowboat on Kielar's Pond, Luzerne County. The victim and another man were fishing from the small boat when the victim stood. The boat was overloaded, so this action caused the boat to tip sharply, throwing both anglers into the water. Both men held on to the sides of the boat as the victim reached up and started the electric motor, using it to propel the partially swamped boat to shore. The shoreline was very steep where they reached shore, so the two men could not get out of the water at that place. The victim then said he wasn't feeling well and sat down, slumping over. Death was caused by heart failure.

**3. A 14-year-old male paddler** and his 42-year-old father lost their lives when they apparently capsized their 15-foot canoe. Little is known about this accident because there were no witnesses. They launched the canoe in the swollen waters of Perkiomen Creek, Montgomery County, for a 10-mile float trip. After waiting several hours, the person who was to meet them reported them missing. The water temperature was 62 degrees, so hypothermia or sudden immersion may have been a factor. Neither paddler was wearing a life jacket.

**4. A 46-year-old man** lost his life when he capsized his rented 12-foot inflatable kayak at Dimple Rock on the Youghiogheny River, Fayette County. The victim was paddling with another person when he struck the rock sideways. This caused the kayak to capsize, putting both paddlers in the water. The surviving paddler, after losing sight of the victim, made it to shore and called for help. Both paddlers were wearing life jackets and protective helmets.

**5. A 36-year-old woman** lost her life when the operator of the personal watercraft she was towed behind made a turn, causing the tube to collide with the shoreline, on the Allegheny River, Westmoreland County. There were three other women on the tube with her, even though it is illegal for more than one person to be towed behind a personal watercraft. All of the other women towed were injured, one seriously.

**6. A 21-year-old man** lost his life when he was struck by the propeller of a 21-foot motorboat, on East Branch lake, Elk County. The boat operator was maneuvering to pick up the victim, who had been towed on a tube, when the boat operator ran over him. The victim was wearing a life jacket when he was struck by the propeller.

**7. A 45-year-old man** lost his life when he was pushed overboard by a friend from a 16-foot open motorboat, on the Susquehanna River, Lancaster County. Horseplay resulted in the victim ending up in the water. He surfaced, grabbed his boat's anchor line and began to swim toward shore. He yelled for a life jacket and then disappeared beneath the surface. A witness said that the anchor line from the boat had become wrapped around the victim's leg.

**8. A 30-year-old man** lost his life when the 14-foot canoe from which he was fishing capsized, on the Susquehanna River, Lycoming County. Apparently the boat was struck by a wake. The accident occurred at dusk in an area where several powerboats were operating. No lights were on display, and no PFDs were onboard. Alcohol was a factor.

**9. A 63-year-old man** lost his life when he fell overboard from a 12-foot inflatable raft at Dimple Rock on the Youghiogheny River, Fayette County. The victim was wearing a PFD. Though the trip was guided, the guide was not in the boat. After the boat capsized, the victim stayed on the surface but appeared to be scared and confused. He very soon became unconscious and was grabbed by a party in another raft. The victim was not breathing, so the guides who were accompanying the trip began CPR immediately. The victim went into cardiac arrest.

**10. A 16-year-old woman** lost her life when she capsized her rented 12-foot inflatable kayak at Dimple Rock on the Youghiogheny River, Fayette County. The victim was paddling with another person when she struck the rock and capsized, putting both paddlers in the water. The victim was wearing a helmet and PFD. The surviving paddler floated to the right side of the rock, looking downstream. When she looked back, the victim had disappeared.

**11. A 47-year old man** died when he apparently fell overboard from his 17-foot canoe, in the Kiskiminetas River, Indiana County. There were no witnesses. The victim went paddling alone on the cold river on Sunday, planning to stay overnight and then return on Monday. When he did not return as scheduled, family members called the police. Rescue personnel found the victim's body in his partially swamped canoe on Tuesday at 11 a.m. He had died of hypothermia, or exposure. Evidence indicated that the victim had entered the water and had died after struggling back aboard his canoe. ☐