

Recap of 2008 Pennsylvania Boating Accident **FATALITIES** *by Dan Martin* *Director, Bureau of Boating and Access*

In 2008, 8 fatal recreational boating accidents resulted in 8 fatalities. The number is 3 fewer fatalities than the number reported in 2007 and 4.1 fewer than the last 10-year average of 12.1. Only one of the 8 victims was wearing a life jacket at the time of the mishap.

1. 1 Fatality

Raystown Lake, Huntingdon County, 4/19/08, 3:30 p.m., Saturday.

A 53-year-old man lost his life when he was overcome by carbon monoxide from his motorboat. The victim started the engine and told his friend that water was coming into the engine compartment through the plug hole. He told his friend to grab the bow rope and pull the boat over to the dock. The victim waded into the water to screw the plug into the lower part of the exterior stern. The survivor walked down the dock to the back of the boat to look for the victim. Seeing no one, he called for help. Using a boat hook, a spectator brought the victim to the surface. Then, with assistance, onto the dock. The victim didn't wear a life jacket although life jacket use was not a factor in this accident. Alcohol was a factor. The boat operator was an experienced boater, but had no formal instruction in boating safety.

2. 1 Fatality

Susquehanna River, Lancaster County, 5/21/08, 10:30 a.m., Wednesday.

A 24-year-old angler lost his life when he apparently fell overboard from his motorboat. Life jackets were onboard, but not worn. The boat operator was an experienced boater, but had no formal instruction in boating safety. The water temperature was 62 degrees, so sudden immersion into cold water or hypothermia may have been a factor.

3. 1 Fatality

Schuylkill River, Philadelphia County, 6/28/08, about 1:15 p.m., Saturday.

A 57-year-old woman lost her life when she was found in her capsized

kayak with the spray skirt still in place. The victim was wearing a life jacket and a helmet. She was an experienced paddler, but was boating alone. The pull strap for the spray skirt was on the inside of the boat rather than on the outside where it could be grasped by the paddler. It is unknown if she had any formal instruction in boating safety.

4. 1 Fatality

Susquehanna River, Bradford County, 7/8/08, 7:00 p.m., Tuesday.

A 62-year old angler lost his life when he apparently fell overboard from his open motorboat. The victim's son-in-law found the boat floating empty about 300 yards downstream of the last seen location. The boat was partially filled with water. A type III life jacket was in the boat. The motor was in gear, forward, mid-throttle position. Two type IV life jackets were located on the river approximately one mile downstream. He was an experienced boater, but had no formal instruction in boating safety.

5. 1 Fatality

Susquehanna River, Northumberland County, 8/3/08, 6:00 p.m., Sunday.

A 19-year old man lost his life when the canoe he and three others were paddling swamped and capsized in the hydraulic current below the Sunbury Generation LLC power company dam in Shamokin Dam. The paddlers made a decision to cross the dam upstream, even though it was clearly marked run-of-the river low-head dam exclusionary zone. The boat was properly equipped with life jackets. However, the victim was either not wearing one or was wearing one that was improperly fastened. It is unknown if the victim had any boating experience or formal instruction in boating safety.

6. 1 Fatality

Raystown Lake, Huntingdon County, 9/7/08, 2:25 p.m., Sunday.

A 34-year-old angler lost his life when the canoe he was paddling with his brother-in-law capsized. Life jackets were onboard, but not worn. A waterways conservation officer spotted the victim and recovered his body after about 30 minutes. The victim was an inexperienced boater. It is unknown if the victim had any formal instruction in boating safety.

7. 1 Fatality

Promised Land Lake, Pike County, 9/27/08, 8:15 a.m., Saturday.

A 56-year-old angler lost his life when the canoe in which he was fishing apparently capsized. The victim's body was found floating near a dock in a couple feet of water. The victim was not wearing a life jacket. The victim was an inexperienced boater. It is unknown if the victim had any formal instruction in boating safety.

8. 1 Fatality

Susquehanna River, Wyoming County, 10/18/08, 6 p.m., Saturday.

A 44-year-old paddler lost his life during a float trip in a canoe. It is unknown how he ended up in the water. There were two people on board at the beginning of the trip. They were attempting to make it to the access. According to the survivor, the river was lower than expected, and they had a difficult time getting through several areas. An argument ensued and the survivor got a property owner to give him a ride to the access. Rescue crews were called out to search for the victim and found his body floating face down in the river. The water temperature was 60 degrees, so sudden immersion into cold water or hypothermia may have been a factor. Life jackets were onboard, but not worn. Alcohol was a factor. The victim had some boating experience. It is unknown if he had any formal instruction in boating safety. ☐