



U.S. COAST GUARD TEAMS UP WITH HUNTING EXPERT WADE BOURNE TO TAKE AIM AT BOATING SAFETY ON THE WATER

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Hunters all over the country are gearing up for colder weather and their sport of choice: waterfowl hunting. This year, the U.S. Coast Guard is asking these sportsmen to scope out more than just ducks on the water. We're asking them to keep their sights on another target – boating safety.

According to statistics, approximately one-third of all boating accident fatalities are hunters or anglers. In order to effectively reach this vulnerable audience, the U.S. Coast Guard is teaming up with veteran hunter and TV personality Wade Bourne on a public awareness campaign designed to promote the U.S. Coast Guard's national boating safety initiative, "You're in Command. Boat Responsibly!"

Our research has shown that among the best ways to effect change in boater behavior is to speak to them through their favorite experts and sport personalities. We're fortunate to partner with someone like Wade, who carries a great deal of authority and respect among hunting enthusiasts.

Co-host of television's premiere waterfowl show on Ducks Unlimited TV (featured on the Outdoor Life Network) and an author of five books offering expert advice on hunting and fishing, Wade says he is lending his name to the effort because he feels too many outdoorsmen take boating safety for granted. To quote Wade, "Accidents can happen anytime and anywhere, and most often when you least expect them. You don't know when you might step off in that hole or when the boat will hit a stump and flip over."

In order to maximize our outreach efforts to hunting enthusiasts, the Coast Guard's public awareness campaign includes a comprehensive menu of promotional tools such as thirty-second television and radio public service announcements, a print public service announcement, a waterfowl hunting "tips" brochure, and a video news release, all featuring Wade Bourne. Many of the elements of these pieces were shot in Wade's home state of Tennessee (as a University of Tennessee grad, I liked him immediately!) Bourne will also participate in a Radio Tour which will allow him to communicate important "You're in Command" safety messages to hunters through various outdoors and sports shows on national, regional and local radio shows. The campaign will kick off during the month of October, with several pieces set to air and print throughout the fall and winter months.

A LOADED BARREL – OF BOATING SAFETY TIPS!

As in past campaigns that targeted anglers and paddlers, this newest effort focuses on the key elements of the "You're in Command, Boat Responsibly" initiative. The campaign emphasizes the importance of wearing a life jacket at all times while on the water. Coast Guard statistics indicate that 90% of boating fatality victims who drowned in 2004 were

not wearing life jackets. Although the total number of fatalities resulting from a boating accident has dropped in recent years, these statistics serve to remind us that we still have more a lot more educating to do.

Having spent years on the water, Wade, too, is convinced of the value of continued boating safety promotion and education. During a recent conversation with him he stated, "I know people who have life jackets in the boat, but they're in a hurry to get out to the blind, or get out to that spot where they see ducks working, and they just don't take time to put them on."


In addition to life jacket wear, Wade also emphasizes a few safety precautions that, from his years of hunting experience, are often overlooked on the water. For example, he advises against overloading your boat, a common mistake made by hunters used to boating with bags of decoys, a partner and - of course - their dog on board (Wade's own dog, "Andy Jackson" is a constant companion). On this point, the Coast Guard recommends that hunters (and all boaters) check their boats' capacity plates. This plate clearly indicates the suggested maximum weight (in pounds) that the boat can accommodate. Additionally, the Coast Guard advises boaters to distribute the weight evenly throughout the boat from front to back and side to side.

Another safety tip that Wade stresses in our campaign is the value of a survival kit. "I'm a big believer in a survival kit and I take it with me on every hunt." Wade's list of "most wanted" survival kit items include: matches and other devices to start a fire, flares, a VHF radio, space blanket and cell phone.

CELEBRITIES "SHOOT" FOR INCREASED BOATING SAFETY AWARENESS

Wade Bourne joins a cadre of other celebrity partners in promoting the "You're in Command. Boat Responsibly" initiative, including NASCAR's Labonte Family; whitewater kayaker and 2004 Olympic Silver Medalist Rebecca Giddens; Emmy-nominated actor and boating enthusiast John Amos; and legendary angler Bill Dance. All are boating enthusiasts with an eye towards keeping recreational boating the fun, enjoyable and safe exhilarating pastime that it is for millions of American families.

Through continued media and outreach initiatives, the U.S. Coast Guard is committed to promoting these safety messages to the approximately 78 million recreational boaters throughout the country. You can do your part by passing this article along to any hunters or anglers you may know to remind them of the importance of prioritizing safety on the water. Together, we can reduce the number of boating-related fatalities and make sure that boating remains what it is intended to be – a safe, enjoyable and most treasured American pastime.

To find out how you can help, and for more information about boating safety, visit www.uscgboating.org, or call the U.S. Coast Guard Infoline, 1-800-368-5647. 



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