

2006
ARIZONA BOATING
SAFETY REPORT

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT



Special thanks to the following agencies for their cooperation in providing accident and enforcement data for this report:

Arizona Game and Fish Department
Bullhead City Police Department
Coconino County Sheriff's Office
Gila County Sheriff's Office
Lake Havasu City Police Department
La Paz County Sheriff's Office
Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

Mohave County Sheriff's Office
Mohave County Parks Department
National Park Service
Nevada Department of Wildlife
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U. S. Bureau of Land Management
Yuma County Sheriff's Office

The 2006 Arizona Boating Safety Report is a technical report provided by the Arizona Game and Fish Department. The data and statistics were researched, compiled and written by Cindy Wall and Kevin Bergersen.

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT - AZGFD.GOV

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

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ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

Boating Enforcement and Education

ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY

The Arizona Game and Fish Department and Commission have been involved in boating safety and law enforcement since passage of the Federal Boat Safety Act of 1971. The Commission and Department derive their authority from state law contained within Arizona Revised Statutes Title 5.

ARS 5-311 outlines the powers and duties of the Arizona Game and Fish Commission to make the rules and regulations required to carry out, in the most effective manner, all the provisions of boating safety for the state of Arizona. By statute, the Arizona Game and Fish Commission's boating safety and registration mandates are extremely broad. The Department is responsible for providing a safe watercraft recreation

environment so that Arizona's lakes will be used, enjoyed and appreciated by present and future generations.

WATERCRAFT LAW ENFORCEMENT

Although the Arizona Game and Fish Department administers and provides boating law enforcement efforts on a state level, primary law enforcement authority resides with local agencies, which might be a state, county, municipal, park, reservation or land management agency depending on the location.

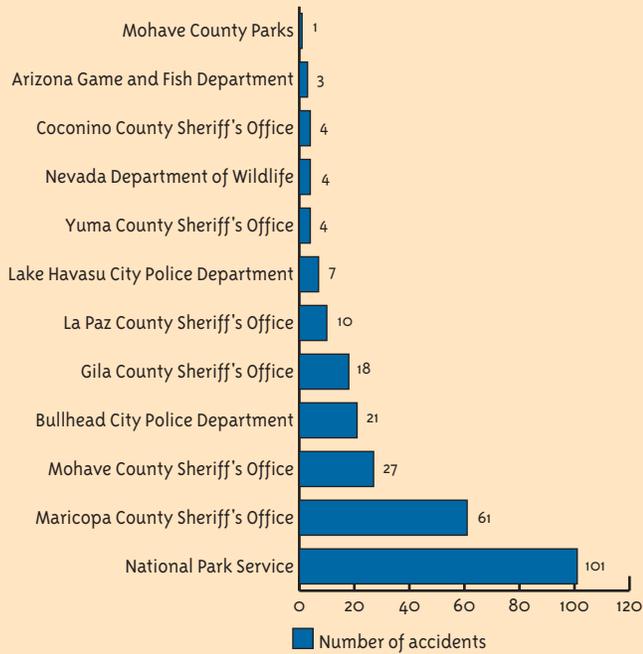
The Arizona Game and Fish Department is the administrative agency responsible for watercraft accident reporting in the state of Arizona. Initial reports and investigations are



Coconino County Sheriff's Office deputies patrol the frigid waters of the Colorado River below Glen Canyon Dam.

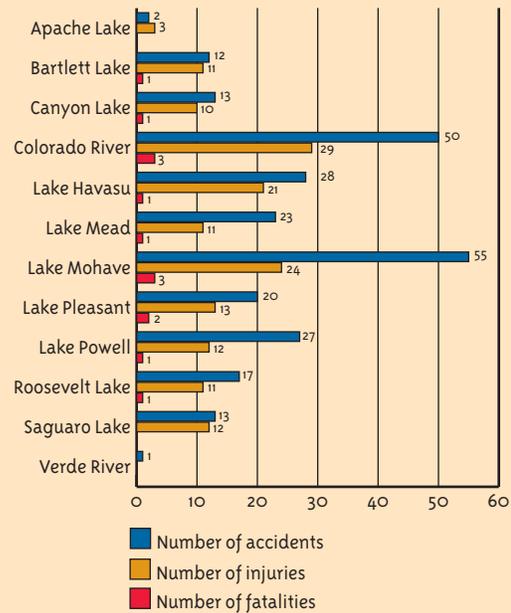
Agencies Reporting Accidents (12)

261 Total Accidents



Water Bodies

261 Total Accidents



Two Arizona Game and Fish Department officers patrol for reckless and impaired boat operators on Roosevelt Lake.

completed by either the boat operator or the jurisdictional agency, and submitted to the Department. These reports are then compiled, tabulated and forwarded to the U.S. Coast Guard for use in national statistics.

In 2006, 12 different law enforcement agencies, along with boat operators, reported 261 watercraft-related accidents to the Department. This number does not include 44 boat accident reports that did not meet minimum state or U.S. Coast Guard reporting guidelines. Information from these accident reports assist Arizona law enforcement agencies in identifying safety needs, developing new regulations, designing new enforcement techniques, identifying manufacturer problems,

and directing boating safety programs and law enforcement resources to particular areas of concern.

Law enforcement agencies investigating boating accidents and operators involved in accidents are required by law to report such accidents to the Arizona Game and Fish Department. If the accident involves an injury or fatality, a written report

2006 STATEWIDE OUI ARREST TOTALS BY AGENCY

Agency	Arrests
Lake Havasu City Police Department	148
Mohave County Sheriff's Office	122
Maricopa County Sheriff's Office	100
Arizona Game and Fish Department	77
La Paz County Sheriff's Office	44
Bureau of Land Management – Lake Havasu	10
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Lake Havasu	8
Gila County Sheriff's Office	8
Bullhead City Police Department	7
National Park Service	5
Yuma County Sheriff's Office	3
Coconino County Sheriff's Office	3
535 Total	



Central Arizona boaters are flocking in ever-increasing numbers to Lake Pleasant's Humbug Cove.

Primary Accident Types

261 Total Accidents



Primary Accident Cause

261 Total Accidents





This fishing boat slammed into a rock wall at Canyon Lake after it hit a wave, throwing the operator overboard without his engine cut-off device attached.

must be submitted within 48 hours. All other accidents must be reported within five days.

According to 2006 statistics, a significant number of boating accidents continue to occur along the Arizona border formed by the Colorado River. This stretch of the river includes Lake Powell, Lake Mead, Lake Mohave, Lake Havasu and several other open stretches of the Colorado River. A number of these accidents were related to the use of drugs and alcohol. In 2006, fourteen (14) people died on Arizona waterways and four (4) of the deaths (28 percent) were alcohol-related.

In an effort to reduce those numbers, federal, state, county and local law enforcement agencies have developed partnerships to conduct cooperative operating under the influence (OUI) patrol efforts. These special projects include on-the-water OUI



A U.S. Coast Guard boat crew conducts a watercraft law enforcement patrol on Lake Havasu along the Colorado River; the Colorado River is the only navigable waterway in Arizona where the Coast Guard has jurisdiction.

checkpoints and high-density law enforcement saturation (wolf pack) patrols involving law enforcement agencies from Arizona, Nevada and California, as well as federal officers from the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Statewide, watercraft law enforcement officers were very successful in detecting and arresting impaired boat operators. In 2006, Arizona watercraft law enforcement agencies arrested

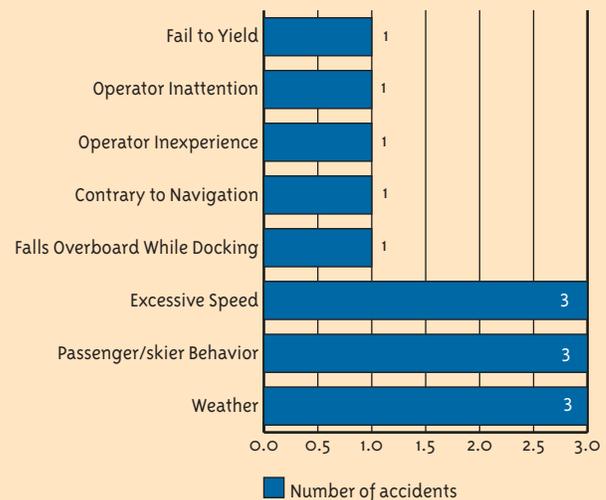
Primary Cause of Injury Accidents

261 Total Accidents



Primary Cause of Fatal Accidents

261 Total Accidents





This catamaran was traveling too fast for prevailing conditions, which caused the operator to end up on this rocky shore near Parker.

535 individuals for operating under the influence. Fifty (50) of those arrests occurred during the year's 16 OUI special projects. These cooperative projects contacted 1,216 watercraft (with 4,508 persons on board), and law enforcement officers issued 432 citations. The boating public has continued to support OUI patrol efforts. Approximately 16 interagency OUI patrol activities have been planned for the 2007 watercraft season.

Many boat operators appear to be heeding the message of sober boating on the state's waterways. Watercraft law enforcement officers statewide have reported a marked increase in the percentage of designated sober operators encountered during routine contacts. Drinking while boating continues to be a critical problem and high-priority target enforcement objective for officers, but the fact that many boat operators practice safe and sober boating is highly encouraging.

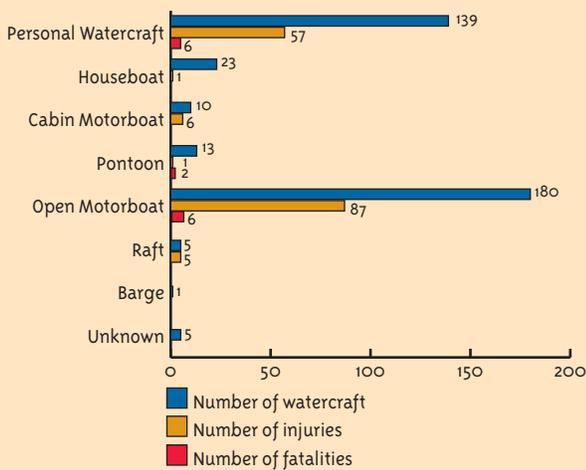
WATERCRAFT ACCIDENTS

In 2006, Arizona saw 261 boating accidents involving 374 boats, with 157 individuals reportedly injured. Boat accidents reported to the Department last year listed \$622,221 in property and vessel damage. An analysis of these accidents reveals there were 16 fewer vessels involved in accidents than in the prior year and that the total number of accidents decreased by five and the number of injuries decreased by four. However, there was a significant increase in the number of fatal boat accidents. In 2006, the total number of fatalities climbed to 14, as compared to five in 2005. The 14 fatalities consisted of five weather-related and nine operational fatalities. Breaking it down further, fatal accident data also indicates there were five trauma-related, one lightning strike, five drowning and three "falls overboard" fatalities. Eight of the 14 fatalities might have been prevented if the victims were wearing life jackets.

CATEGORY	2005	2006	INCREASE/DECREASE
Total Number of Accidents	266	261	Decrease of 5 Accidents
Total Number of Vessels	390	374	Decrease of 16 Vessels
Total Number of Injuries	161	157	Decrease of 4 Injuries
Total Number of Fatalities	5	14	Increase of 9 Fatalities
Total Property Damage	\$891,940	\$622,221	Decrease of \$269,719

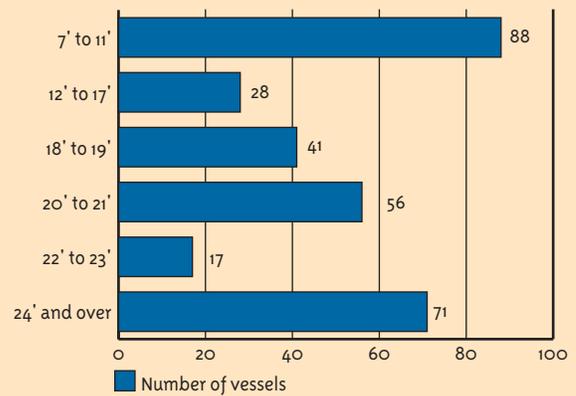
Types of Watercraft in Accidents

157 Total Injuries and 14 Fatalities



Length of Watercraft

All Incidents



Boating continues to be an increasingly popular form of recreation in Arizona. The number of registered watercraft in Arizona has grown from 105,000 in 1986 to 145,023 in 2006. According to the 2006 Watercraft Gas Tax Survey, 4,793,677 total boat use days were reported for Arizona. This indicates a 48 percent increase from the 3,229,153 boater use days calculated from the 2003 survey data. Arizona boaters comprised 48 percent of those days, while California boaters made up 42 percent. Nevada boaters represented most of the remaining percentage. Promoting the safety and education of all recreational boaters in Arizona, regardless of where they reside, is the main focus of the Arizona Game and Fish Department's watercraft safety program.

In analyzing watercraft accident information, there are five main areas of interest: type and cause of the accident,



A Coconino County Sheriff's deputy performs a safety equipment check on this Lake Powell watercraft for the appropriate number and size of life jackets.

operator information, boats and equipment involved, environmental conditions at the time of the accident, and time and location of the accident. The leading cause of accidents for the 13th consecutive year in Arizona was operator inexperience. Passenger/skier behavior and weather were the second and third leading causes. Thirty-nine percent of operators involved in Arizona boating accidents were residents of the state and 43 percent were from California. The types of watercraft most often involved in accidents were open motorboats 24 feet or more in length (48 percent) and personal watercraft smaller than 12 feet in length (37 percent).



Telephone Cove is one of the few places on Lake Mohave with extensive shoreline access, making it very popular with personal watercraft operators and paddle sport enthusiasts.

The average accident occurred during the day when weather conditions were usually clear, with good visibility and the

waters calm or choppy. However, waterway conditions were not always calm, and environmental conditions were a significant factor in 2006. Specifically, a total of 33 weather-related boat accidents occurred in 2006, including four wind-related fatal accidents and one lightning strike fatal accident. The most dangerous month for recreational boating in 2006 was July. June was second, May third and August fourth. May, June, July, August and September traditionally have high numbers of



Lake Havasu is extremely popular destination and saw more than 1.3 million boat use days last year, making it arguably the busiest body of water of the Colorado River Basin.

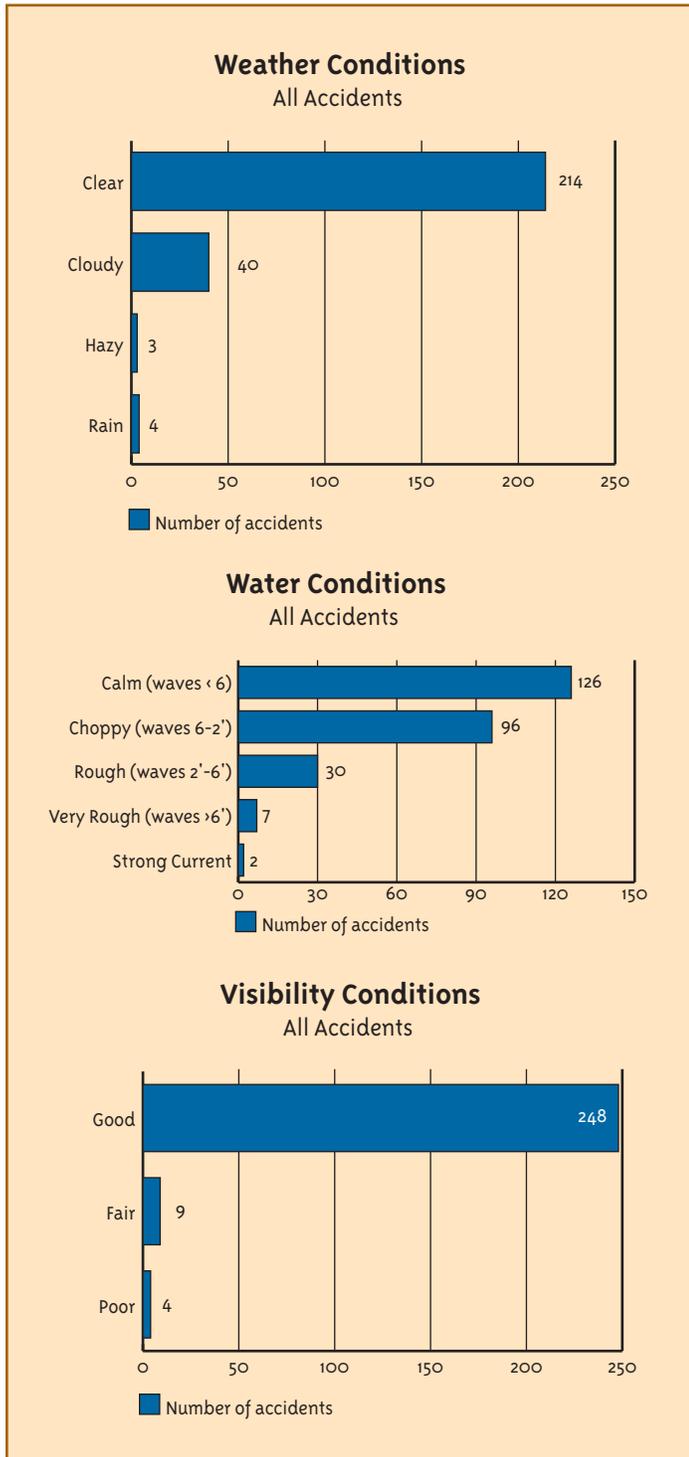
boating accidents because these months reflect peak boater day use along with the summer's busiest boating holidays: Memorial Day, Independence Day and Labor Day. In 2006, 45 percent of all accidents occurred between noon and 4 p.m., and Saturday had the most accidents and injuries

WATERCRAFT EDUCATION

Education is considered one of the most effective ways to reduce the number of boating accidents. The Arizona Game and Fish



OUI checkpoints are very effective in removing dangerous boaters from the water before they can cause fatal boat accidents.





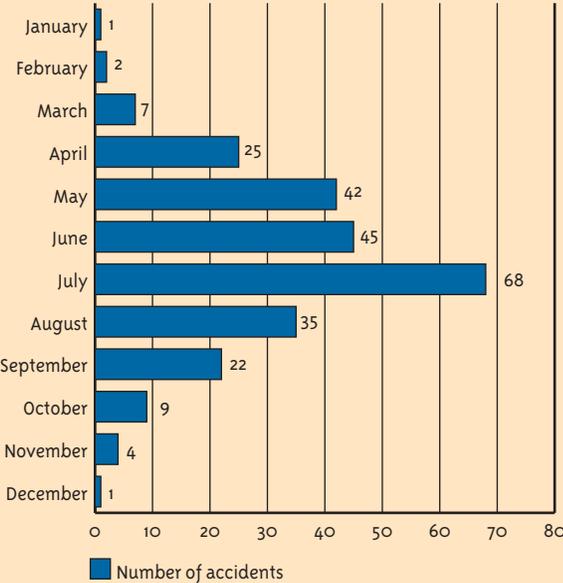
Keeping a good day good may be as simple as wearing your life jacket.



The Nevada Department of Wildlife is one of 20 cooperating agencies sharing jurisdiction along the Colorado River.

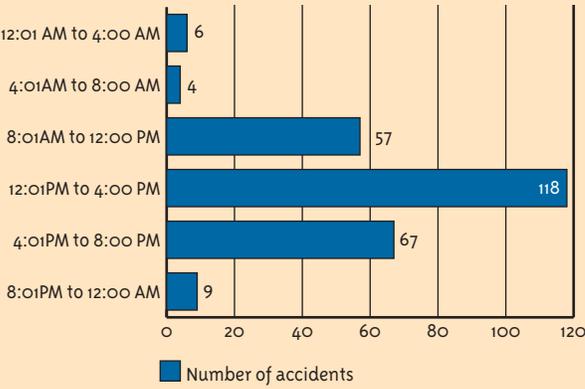
Accidents by Month

261 Total Accidents



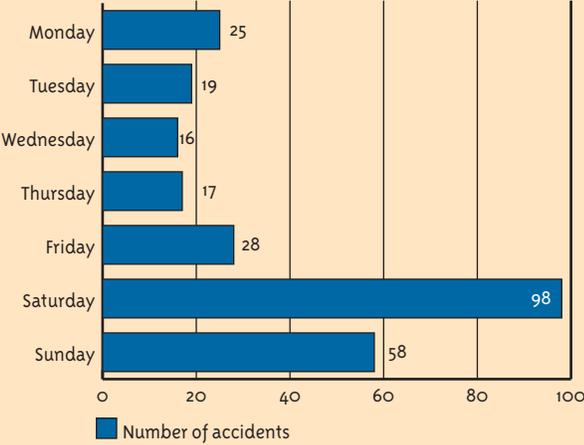
Accidents by Time of Day

261 Total Accidents



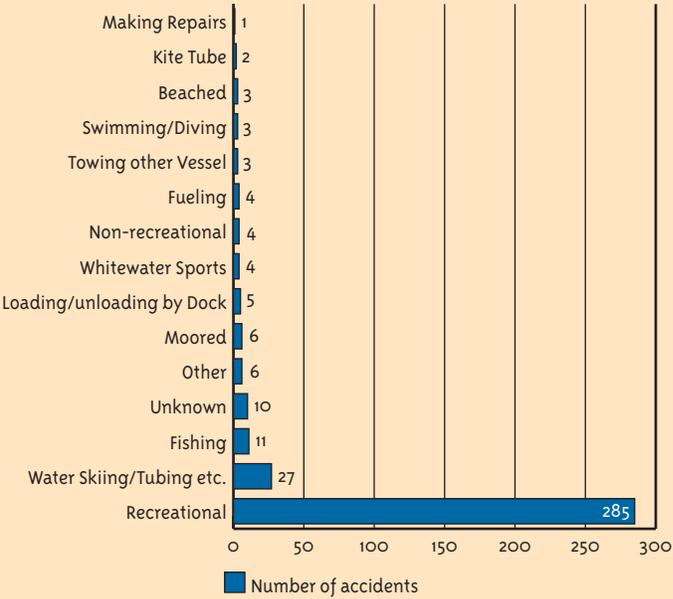
Accidents by Day of Week

261 Total Accidents



Activity at Time of Accident

261 Total Accidents





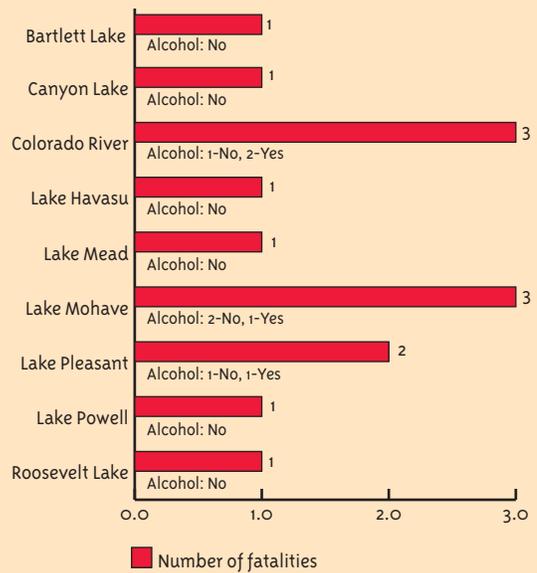
Personal watercraft are invaluable patrol assets because their small stature and maneuverability allow watercraft officers to approach very close to other vessels.

Department provides an eight-hour boating education course developed for recreational boaters. Many insurance companies offer discounts to those who successfully complete the course as a way to encourage boater education. Currently, the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Information and Education Division coordinates these courses. Approximately 41 active volunteer boating education instructors from across the state provide classroom instruction. In FY2006, the Department offered 84 boating education classes in Arizona, and 935 recreational boaters completed them. This was a 19 percent student decrease from 2003, which had 1,162 students attending 73 classes.

The Arizona sections of both the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and the U.S. Power Squadron also conduct boating education training. U.S. Coast Guard boating safety classes vary from an eight-hour basic safety course to 80 hours of instruction. The U.S. Power Squadron offers a six-chapter boating course, as well as a shorter, more intense, three-chapter course.

Fatalities per Body of Water (14 total)

4 Out of 14 Were Alcohol Related

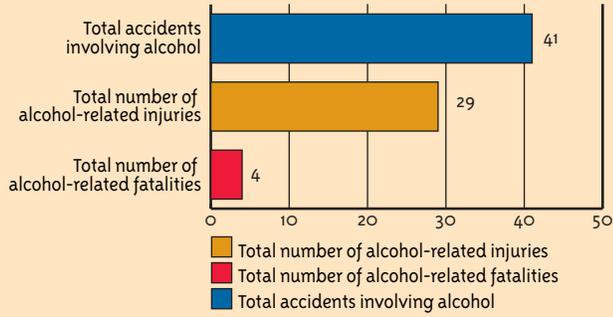


Lake Havasu's London Bridge Beach continues to draw thousands of avid powerboat enthusiasts from across the Southwest.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department continues to work with judges throughout the state to include its boating safety education program as part of sentencing for violators of boating rules and regulations. Judges are encouraged to use the program in lieu of, or in addition to, a fine, to help increase the boat

Total Number of Alcohol-Related Accidents

261 Total Accidents



PWC Accidents-Age of PWC Operator



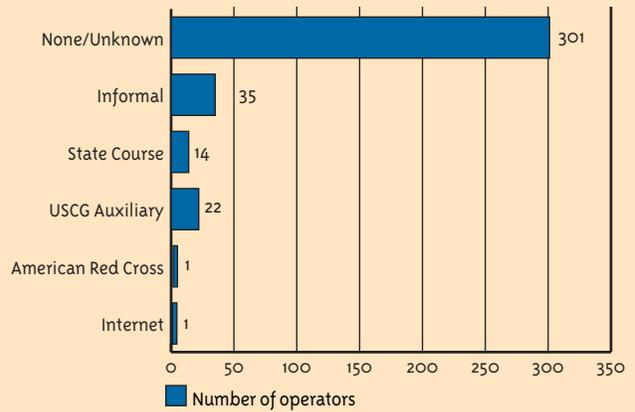
Age of Watercraft Operators

14 Fatalities



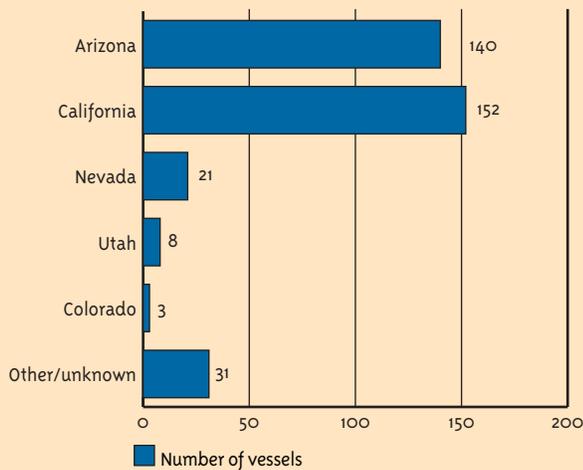
Operator's Boating Education

All Accidents



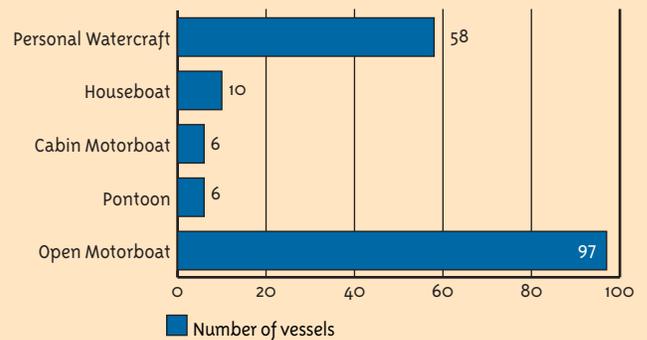
Residence of Operators

All Accidents



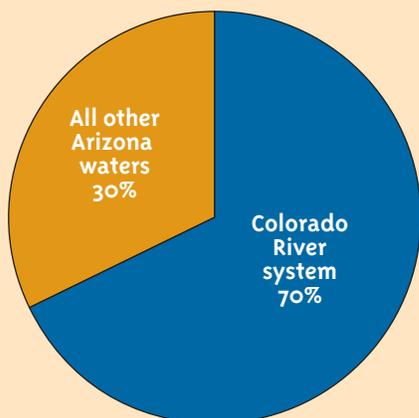
Property Damage Over \$500

Types of Watercraft



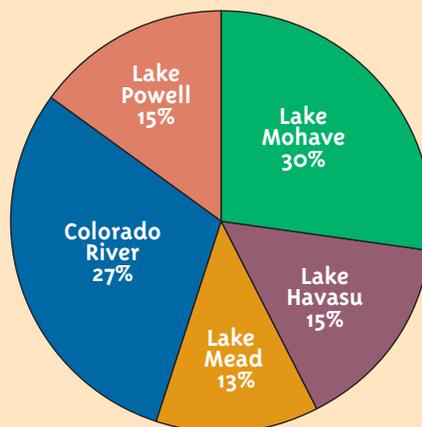
Colorado River System Compared to All Other Arizona Waters

261 Total Accidents



Colorado River System

Accidents Reported in Arizona



operator’s knowledge of boating safety information and regulations. So far, judges and boating violators have indicated the program has proven positive in increasing awareness of boating safety issues.

BOATING ACCIDENT STATISTICS

An area of priority to both recreational boaters and law enforcement agencies is the increasing personal watercraft (PWC) use on Arizona waterways. In 1990, only 8,168 PWCs were registered in Arizona, compared to more than 28,000 in 2006. While PWCs comprise approximately 19 percent of all Arizona watercraft registrations, they account for 37 percent of all accidents and 39 percent of all injuries. Many of these accidents can be attributed to numerous first-time operators that are renting or have just recently purchased a PWC. A PWC is operated differently and averages more time on the water than a traditional watercraft.

The increased use of the Colorado River system from Lake Powell (north) to Yuma (south) is another area of concern to the Arizona Game and Fish Department and other law enforcement agencies.

Combined 2006 Colorado River statistics from California, Arizona and Nevada: 387 accidents, 185 injuries and 13 fatalities.

Seventy percent of all Arizona watercraft accidents occurred along the Colorado River, and since 1993, statistics demonstrate that 65 percent of all Arizona fatal watercraft accidents occur along the river. Of Colorado River fatalities, 80 percent involve

California operators. An increase in law enforcement activity on both sides of the river, particularly OUI enforcement, and a focus on boating education have been shown to help reduce the number of boating accidents along this high-use area.

This information was compiled from boating accident reports submitted to the Arizona Game and Fish Department by watercraft enforcement agencies and persons involved in watercraft accidents throughout Arizona. For more information on boating safety education, call (602) 789-3235.



Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office deputies operate one of the few airboats in the state as they prepare to deploy divers along the Lower Salt River.

ARIZONA'S 2006 BOATING LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER OF THE YEAR

For more than 23 years, Sergeant Wayne Lupinski has been providing citizens of Maricopa County with exceptional boating enforcement, investigation expertise and related medical services. Throughout his career, Sergeant Lupinski has ensured his position at the forefront of boating enforcement and as a medical first responder. He is a state certified/national registered paramedic and administers the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) Basic Emergency Medical Technician and Paramedic Programs. He has completed several boat accident investigation and reconstruction courses, and graduated first in his class at the Small Motorboat Operator's Instructor Course. Sergeant Lupinski has been intricately involved in boating law enforcement efforts and boating accident investigations. In 1997, he was recognized by the National Water Safety Congress with an Award of Merit, "in recognition for outstanding efforts and accomplishments in prevention of water-related accidents and drownings."

Sergeant Lupinski responded to Hurricane Katrina relief efforts in Louisiana and was recently involved in a collaborative effort with the Honorable Judge Lex Anderson of the Peoria Justice

Court. This partnership produced the video "Operating Under The Influence: Navigating Disaster," which is shown in boating education classes across the Southwest to educate the public on the disastrous effects of operating watercraft while under the influence. Wayne is currently involved in a pilot project with Good Samaritan Hospital to identify carbon monoxide exposure levels of enforcement personnel and the boating public.



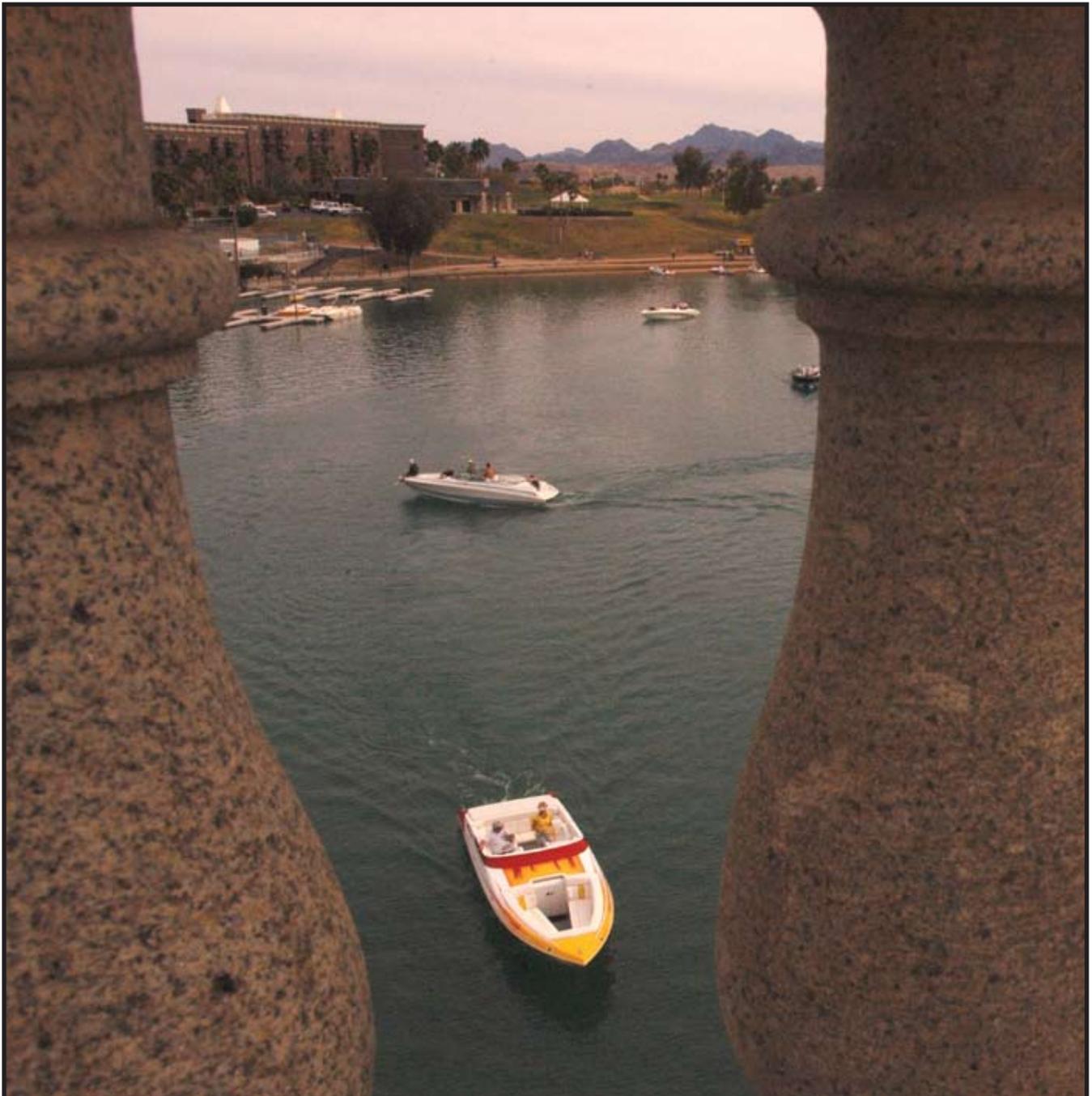
Maricopa County Sergeant Wayne Lupinski

Sergeant Lupinski routinely provides countless hours of medical training to law enforcement personnel and is an instructor for the Arizona Game and Fish Department's nationally recognized boating school. Sergeant Lupinski is a current member of the Advisory Committee for the Arizona Chapter of the International Trauma Life Support Program and is a subject matter expert for Arizona Peace

Officers and Standards Training Board in the area of first aid. In addition, he is currently assigned as the supervisor at the largest lake in Maricopa County. He concurrently oversees the MCSO medical, paramedic, and automated external defibrillator (AED) programs and serves as the dive medic on the Lake Patrol Division dive team.

Previous Arizona Boating Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Recipients:

- 2006 Jared Kayer, Mohave County Sheriff's Office
- 2005 Tim Baumgarten, Arizona Game and Fish Department
- 2004 Jerry Burns, La Paz County Sheriff's Office
- 2003 Deanna Pfleger, Arizona Game and Fish Department
- 2002 No Arizona officer named
- 2001 Gerald Duvall, Bullhead City Police Department
- 2000 Steve Andrews, Arizona Game and Fish Department



Boat Safe, Boat Smart, Boat Sober.



- Wear your life jacket
- Boat sober
- Take a boating class
- Get a vessel safety check



For information on boating education classes, visit azgfd.gov or call the Arizona Game and Fish Department at (602) 789-3235.