

Fish and Wildlife confirm identity of victim in Rochester boating accident



(WBKO)
By Whitney Davis
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Two men with a boat rendered useless, stranded in the middle of the Green River.

That was the scene the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife described Tuesday morning after a beautiful day of boating on the water turned fatal after the motor of a Jon boat failed.

"The boat went over the Rochester Dam," said Ethan Vincent with Fish and Wildlife.

Realizing the inevitable, 42-year-old Ryan Chad Hardin of Rochester and his passenger made a last minute attempt to saves their lives.

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"Just before it went over the Rochester Dam, both male subjects abandoned their boat."

Only one of them made it to shore alive.

Shortly after officers arrived on scene, they were able to locate Hardin's body just below the falls of the Dam, a small piece of good fortune given the state of the water.

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"The current's pretty swift right now."

Despite those rough waters and the falls, Fish and Wildlife says boaters are permitted to enter the water in the exact spot Hardin and his passenger did.

"Anybody's open to boat here, it's just it is a dangerous area with the locks and the dams here," Vincent explained.

Tuesday's accident may or may not have been a preventable maintenance failure, but Vincent said there is one thing we can all do to ensure our best chance of survival, even in an emergency.

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"Always have a life jacket readily available, and have enough life jackets on board for everyone that's on your boat."

It isn't yet Memorial Day, and already Tuesday's tragedy was the second boating-related fatality to hit South Central Kentucky in less than a month.

A harsh reminder that water is not a force to underestimate.

Fish and Wildlife have not released the name of Hardin's passenger at this time.

It will be posted here as soon as it becomes available.

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