

News Release

Nevada Department of Wildlife

For Immediate Release

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NDOW, NPS Team Up to Rescue Kayaker on Lake Mead

Las Vegas, NV - A tragedy was avoided on Lake Mead Wednesday when a kayaker who had become separated from his kayak was rescued by game wardens from the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) and National Park Service (NPS) Law Enforcement Rangers after spending over an hour in the 40-degree water.

Game Warden Zachary Blackwood was meeting with Rangers from the National Park Service (NPS) at the Las Vegas Boat Harbor launch ramp when a 911 call came in reporting a person in the water. After spotting the victim struggling in the water roughly 500 yards from the shore near the fishing pier, Blackwood launched his NDOW boat with an NPS Ranger and an NPS medic on board. An NPS unit also helped direct them to the kayaker from the shore.

When they arrived, the victim was unable to grasp the rope with his hands due to the extended exposure to the cold water. NPS Rangers pulled him into the boat as Blackwood returned to the boat harbor where the man was treated for extreme hypothermia. The victim reported that he had become separated from his kayak and the winds had made retrieving it impossible.

"This was definitely a case of right-place, right-time," said Blackwood. "I was actually on land patrol that day, but because I was meeting with NPS on the boat launch, we were able to locate the victim and launch my boat pretty quickly. Having a ranger and a medic on the boat was also crucial in retrieving him and administering first aid quickly. It's just one more example of how effective our partnership with the Park Service is here on Lake Mead."

Blackwood was able to retrieve the man's kayak and equipment from the lake and after a few hours warming up on the boat harbor, the kayaker felt well enough and he refused any further treatment.

"The only reason this story didn't end tragically is because this kayaker was wearing his life jacket," said Blackwood. "I don't care if you're on a boat, kayak or a stand-up paddle board, you always, always wear a life jacket. You just never know what might happen."

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Western Region - 1100 Valley Road, Reno, NV 89512, Phone (775) 688-1506
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NEWS from the Nevada Department of Wildlife

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