

Boating safety emphasized with higher lake levels

With help from a wet winter, law enforcement agencies in Northern Nevada are preparing for a busy boating season at lakes Tahoe, Topaz, Lahontan and others, following several years of drought and tough boating conditions.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife, Douglas County Sheriff's Office and Washoe County Sheriff's Office are all launching boats before the Memorial Day weekend to provide for public safety and enforce boating laws.

"We've seen challenging conditions over the past few years, but with a healthy winter behind us, we expect a lot more people out on the water," Chief Game Warden Tyler Turnipseed of the NDOW, the agency responsible for boating across the state, said in a statement. "With more boaters, we don't want to see more accidents, so we're being proactive with our boating safety and enforcement efforts."

NDOW has officers stationed at all of Nevada's major waterways, and Memorial Day weekend is the traditional kickoff to boating season.

In addition to NDOW, many other law enforcement agencies will be putting boats on the water before this busy boating season gets underway.

Douglas County is launching a new patrol boat to work enforcement on Lake Tahoe, a lake that saw three fatal accidents last year, all on the California side.

Boaters who were born on or after Jan. 1, 1983, are required to complete a boating course to operate a motorboat of more

than 15 horsepower on Lakes Tahoe or Topaz. As every year, officials also stress life jacket wear as the single greatest step boaters can take to stay safe.