ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
OFFICE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

BOATING ACCIDENT REPORT

January 1, 1993 - December 31, 1993

Illinois Department of Conservation
life and land together

The 1993 boating season was disrupted, for many boaters, by the heavy flooding along the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. For most of the warm weather months, all of the Mississippi and much of the Illinois were closed to both commercial and recreational traffic. Because of this, it is difficult to draw any conclusions about the reduction in the number of reported boating accidents for the year.

Even though the total number of accidents reported was down 13 from the 1992 total of 147, the number of fatalities was up by four for a total of 32 lives lost in recreational boating accidents. As is usually the case, the greatest tragedy is that virtually all of them were preventable.

The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) has begun a campaign to encourage states to require boaters, especially children, to wear PFD's when in a boat. To that end there is federal legislation currently being considered that would require the wearing of PFD's by children under the age of 12.

The facts surrounding Illinois accidents in 1993 support this. Of the 32 people that died, a review of the facts surrounding the accidents indicate that there is a strong possibility that fully 29 of them would have survived had they been wearing PFD's. While it is unknown in several of the accidents whether or not PFD's were available, at least 6 of the fatalities involved cases wherein they were available on the boat but not worn.

Alcohol abuse continues to be a significant factor in many fatal boat accidents. One out of every four fatalities show indications of being attributable to excessive consumption of alcohol. Again, however, the wearing of PFD's could quite possibly have saved these individuals.

Many of the readers of this report will be boating safety education instructors. Of all the things that you will teach your students about safe boating, the most important point that you can stress is that PFD's save lives, but only if they are worn. Many of the people who died in accidents simply fell overboard or were in boats that capsized. We seldom hear about the cases wherein the passengers were all wearing PFD's because they all survive and the incident is nothing more than a mishap.

Many things cause boating accidents. Standing up in small or overloaded boats, failing to follow rules of the road, canoes out in unsafe conditions, excessive consumption of alcohol are a few common examples. In all of these cases, however, the probability of survival increases many times if persons involved are wearing a PFD.

Wear your PFD and encourage your fellow boaters to do the same.

Tom Wakolbinger, Deputy Chief
Office of Law Enforcement

STATE OF ILLINOIS

BOATING ACCIDENT REPORT

From January 1, 1993 to December 31, 1993

Total Accidents	- 134	PROPERTY DAMAGE (total of all vessels involved)	
Injuries	- 94		
Alcohol Confirmed	- 23	Total $ Amount	$212,616.00
# of Drownings	- 29	Average $ Amount	$1,915.46
# of Deaths From Injuries	- 3		
TOTAL FATALITIES	- 32		

Number of Registered Boats - Approximately: 373,740

TIME & PLACE

MONTH

January - 02	April - 04	July - 39	October - 05
February - 01	May - 15	August - 28	November - 02
March - 02	June - 24	September - 10	December - 02
			TOTAL 134

DAY

Monday - 17	Wednesday - 14	Friday - 07	Sunday - 43
Tuesday - 08	Thursday - 08	Saturday - 37	TOTAL 134

COUNTY

Adams - 04	Jefferson - 01	Ogle - 02
Brown - 01	JoDaviess - 02	Pope - 01
Cass - 01	Johnson - 01	Putnam - 01
Christian - 01	Kane - 04	Randolph - 01
Clark - 01	Kankakee - 01	Richland - 01
Clinton - 03	Knox - 01	Rock Island - 02
Cook - 19	Lake - 15	Sangamon - 05
Dewitt - 06	LaSalle - 06	Shelby - 04
DuPage - 01	Livingston - 02	St. Clair - 02
Effingham - 01	Macon - 05	Tazewell - 03
Franklin - 03	Macoupin - 02	Vermilion - 01
Fulton - 01	Marion - 01	Whiteside - 01
Grundy - 02	Marshall - 01	Will - 04
Henderson - 01	Mason - 04	Williamson - 03
Henry - 01	McHenry - 04	Winnebago - 03
Jackson - 02	Monroe - 01	Woodford - 01
		TOTAL 134

TIME

Midnight - 6:00 a.m.	- 11
6:01 a.m. - 12 Noon	- 16
12:01 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	- 66
6:01 p.m. - 11:59 p.m.	- 39
Unknown	- 2
TOTAL	134

FORMAL INSTRUCTION

None	- 78
U. S. Coast Guard Aux	- 13
U. S. Power Squadron	- 10
American Red Cross	- 01
State	- 12
Other	- 16
Unknown	- 33
TOTAL	163

WATER CONDITION

Calm	- 62
Choppy	- 39
Rough	- 10
Very Rough	- 07
Strong Current	- 15
Unknown	- 01
TOTAL	134

WEATHER CONDITION

Clear	- 100
Cloudy	- 28
Fog	- 00
Rain	- 02
Hazy	- 03
Snow	- 00
Other	- 01
TOTAL	134

BOAT INFORMATION

Open Motorboat	- 85
Cabin Motorboat	- 20
Auxiliary Sail	- 06
Sail (only)	- 03
Rowboat	- 04
Canoe	- 08
Jet ski	- 18
Other	- 11
Unknown	- 08
TOTAL	163

FIRE EXTINGUISHER USED

Yes	- 21
No	- 110
Unknown	- 08
TOTAL	139

WIND

None	- 21
Light	- 69
Moderate	- 27
Strong	- 11
Stormy	- 02
Unknown	- 04
TOTAL	134

VISIBILITY

Good	- 113
Fair	- 13
Poor	- 05
Unknown	- 03
TOTAL	134

WEATHER ENCOUNTERED

Was as forecasted	-107
Not as forecasted	- 01
No forecast obtained	- 18
Unknown	- 08
TOTAL	134

OPERATION AT TIME OF ACCIDENT

Cruising	- 89
Approaching Dock	- 06
Water Skiing	- 07
Towing	- 06
Drifting	- 17
At Anchor	- 05
Tied to Dock	- 06
Fishing	- 08
Diving/Swimming	- 00
Hunting	- 01
Racing	- 00
Being Towed	- 02
Fueling	- 01
Other	- 15
Unknown	- 00
TOTAL	163

OPERATOR'S OPINION/CAUSE OF ACCIDENT

Alcohol - Use	- 25
Weather Conditions	- 14
Excessive Speed	- 27
No Proper Lookout	- 27
Overloading	- 04
Improper Loading	- 11
Hazardous Waters	- 34
Fault of Other Person	- 35
Drug Use	- 01
Fault of Hull	- 05
Fault of Machinery	- 09
Fault of Equipment	- 07
Other	- 62
Unknown	- 04
TOTAL	265

TYPE OF ACCIDENT

Grounding	- 05	Collision with Float Obj.	- 10
Capsizing	- 23	Falls Overboard	- 13
Flooding	- 02	Falls in Boat	- 01
Sinking	- 08	Burns	- 02
Fire or Explosion (fuel)	- 03	Hit by Boat/Propeller	- 06
Fire or Expl. (other)	- 01	Other	- 09
Collision with Vessel	- 32	Unknown	- 00
Collision with Fixed Obj.	- 19	TOTAL	134

BODY OF WATER

Apple Canyon Lake	- 02	Lake Mildred	- 01
Calumet Sag Channel	- 05	Lake of Egypt	- 02
Canton Lake	- 01	Lake Pistakee	- 01
Carlyle Lake	- 03	Lake Sara	- 01
Chain O'Lakes	- 02	Lake Shelbyville	- 04
Chautaqua Lake	- 01	Lake Springfield	- 05
Clinton Lake	- 06	Lake Summerset	- 01
Crab Orchard Lake	- 02	Lake Thunderbird	- 01
East Fork Lake	- 01	Lake Zurich	- 01
Farm Pond	- 03	Mill Creek Lake	- 01
Fox Lake	- 03	Mississippi River	- 07
Fox River	- 10	New West Frankfort Lake	- 01
Gillespie Lake	- 01	Otter Lake	- 01
Grass Lake	- 02	Patterson Bay	- 01
Illinois River	- 14	Petite Lake	- 01
Kankakee River	- 03	Reese Creek	- 01
Kaskaskia River	- 03	Rend Lake	- 02
Lake Arlan	- 01	Rock Quarry	- 01
Lake Centralia	- 01	Rock River	- 06
Lake Decatur	- 03	Sangamon River	- 02
Lake Holiday	- 01	Sanchris Lake	- 01
Lake Kincaid	- 02	Silver Lake	- 01
Lake Michigan	- 17	Small Pond	- 01
		Vermilion River	- 03
		TOTAL	134

AGE	Less than 20 hours	20 to 100 hours	100 to 500 hours	Over 500 hours	Unknown	Total
13 - 17	02	04	01	00	00	07
18 - 19	01	01	01	00	00	03
20 - 29	11	07	11	03	01	33
30 - 39	04	09	14	16	05	48
40 - 49	04	06	15	12	04	41
50 - 59	02	02	06	05	00	15
60 - 69	02	00	01	01	02	06
70 - Over	00	01	00	01	02	04
Unknown	00	00	02	00	04	06
TOTAL	26	30	51	38	18	163

17 or Younger 7 With Instructions 5 Without Instructions 2

NARRATIVES FOR 1993 FATAL BOATING ACCIDENTS

There were 134 boating accidents in 1993. Of those, 28 involved fatalities, killing 32 boaters. Four of these 28 accidents involved double fatalities. A critical examination of these fatal boating accidents helps us to determine the focus of our future enforcement emphasis. Additionally, it provides our safety education professionals with insights on how to better prepare the boating public to be safe on Illinois waterways. Provided below is a brief description of the 28 accidents where 32 boaters lost their lives.

1) The deceased was a passenger in the boat. As the boat approached the dock, the victim started to stand up which caused the boat to capsize. Two occupants swam to shore. The victim's seven year old son was still in the water and one of the occupants re-entered to water and saved the child. She swam back to the victim but he could not be located. There were no life jackets in the boat or none worn by the occupants. The victim's BAC was .16 and major metabolites of marijuana were also found in his blood. Gillespie Lake, Macoupin Co.

   Contributing factors: - No PFDs worn or available in the boat
   - Impairment due to alcohol and drugs (over the .10 legal limit)

2) Two canoeists went out late at night on the Fox River. Their plan was to tie up to a safety cable near a dam and have a picnic. They realized too late that the cable was not in place and they were perilously close to the dam. One of the occupants jumped overboard and swam to safety. The victim stayed with the canoe which went over the dam and he drowned. It was later determined that his blood alcohol content was .087 (almost the legal limit of .10). There were no personal floatation devices in the canoe or worn by the occupants.

   Fox River, Kane Co

   Contributing factors: - No PFDs worn or available in the boat
   - Possible impairment due to alcohol (near legal limit of .10)
   - Lack of familiarity with area (especially at night)

3) After an evening of heavy alcohol consumption, two boaters went out in a small jon boat equipped only with oars, beer, cigarettes and a personal floatation device rated for a 90 lb. person. The operator went up to the front of the boat to urinate off the bow. In doing so, he caused the boat to capsize and the other occupant drowned. The victim, a 200 lb. woman, was found face up in the water wearing the PFD. The operator was arrested for Operating a Watercraft Under the Influence of Alcohol (OUI) and his alcohol content eight hours after the accident was .13. An autopsy of the victim revealed that her blood alcohol content at the time of her death was .18. The operator was convicted of felony OUI and was sentenced to four years in prison.

   Chautauqua Lake, Mason Co

   Contributing factors: - Insufficient number of PFDs available in the boat and of an inappropriate size for the occupants
   - Impairment due to alcohol. Both operator and victim well over legal limit of .10)

4) The occupant of a boat stood up on the stern of the boat to urinate while the boat was adrift. The other passengers in the boat urged him to get down and back into the boat but he ignored them. The victim lost his balance and fell in. He yelled for help but the other occupants thought he was just kidding. When they realized that he was in serious trouble it was too late and he had already gone under the water. It was almost 9:00 at night which also inhibited the search. The body was recovered the next day by a dive team. Although PFDs were available in the boat, the victim was not wearing one. An autopsy report revealed that the victim's blood alcohol content was .04 (well below the legal limit of .10). East Fork Lake, Richland Co.

Contributing factors: - Failure to wear PFD

5) A father/son canoe team capsized their canoe while negotiating the Wildcat rapids area of the Vermillion River. Both canoeists were wearing PFDs. The victim went under the water, but was immediately rescued by a second canoe party travelling with them. CPR was initiated as soon as they were able to drag the victim to shore but their attempts to revive him were in vain. The victim was asthmatic and his son stated that he thought his dad suffered an asthma attack after entering the water. Vermilion River, La Salle Co.

Contributing factors: - Hazardous waters
- Pre-Existing medical condition that impaired the victim's ability to swim or otherwise save himself in the water

6) A motorboat occupied by six people stalled in the middle of the Mississippi River channel. The operator was able to start the engine but each time he put it in gear, it stalled. A barge was approaching and a collision was imminent. Another recreational boat attempted to throw a line to the disabled craft but was unsuccessful. The victim put a PFD on his wife and she and four of the other occupants jumped into the water to avoid the crash. The victim stayed with the boat trying to start it. Everyone in the water went under the barge but incredibly they all survived and were picked up by other boaters. The boat was struck by the barge and the victim drowned. He was not wearing a PFD.
Mississippi River, Henderson Co.
Contributing factors: - Mechanical failure of watercraft
- Failure to wear PFD

7) The victim's borrowed boat was found circling with the motor running and no one in the boat. The operator's seat was detached from the base and tipped over. There were several empty beer cans, but no indication that there had been any recent consumption. The victim's body was found the following afternoon. After interviewing the owner, it was determined that the seat had been broken previous to the accident. Since there were no witnesses, it is speculated that the operator fell out of the boat when the broken seat tipped over. An autopsy report revealed a blood alcohol content of .034 (well under the legal limit of .10). Although PFDs were available in the boat, they were not used.
Crab Orchard Lake, Williamson Co.
Contributing factors: - Failure to wear PFD
- Other factors unknown. Since there were no witnesses, it can only be speculated that the victim may have tried to use the broken seat and fell overboard when it tipped over

8) The victim's boat was found circling with the motor running and no one in the boat. Earlier in the day the victim's sons had seen him out fishing. There were no witnesses to the incident. The victim's body was recovered thirteen days later. The boat was equipped with PFDs, but they were inaccessible and not worn. Illinois River, Brown Co.

Contributing factors: - Failure to wear PFD
- Other factors unknown

9) A 14-foot Sea Sprite with a 65 hp motor, was loaded with six adults and four dogs. Although none of the survivors' statements conformed, what is known is that water came over the bow of the boat, capsizing it and throwing all of the occupants into the water. A 59-year old man drowned in the mishap. Only four PFDs were available in the boat and none was used by the victim. At a coroner's inquest, it was determined that there was negligence on the part of the operator and the deceased. The operator was charged with operating a watercraft with an insufficient number of PFDs and issued a written warning for overloading and overpowering a motorboat. Rock quarry, Livingston Co.

Contributing factors: - Insufficient number of PFDs available in the boat and none worn by the victim
- Overloading boat with too many occupants and cargo (dogs)
- Overpowering boat with excessive horsepower motor.

10) The passenger of a motorboat was killed after the boat he was in passed under a bridge and his head struck the bridge structure. The accident occurred during high water and the boat had made several passes under the bridge at a relatively slow rate of speed. On the fatal pass, the operator increased the speed of the boat which placed it higher in the water and thus decreasing the clearance available. The operator was arrested for OUI and had a blood alcohol content of .11 six hours after the accident. At a Grand Jury hearing, the operator was charged with felony OUI, involuntary manslaughter and reckless homicide. The case is still pending. New West Frankfort Lake, Franklin Co.

Contributing factors: - Impairment due to blood alcohol content greater than legal limit of .10
- Reckless operation

11) A tuber was killed instantly when he was run over by a boat attempting to cut in too close behind the towing vessel. The two boats were travelling side by side when the second vessel unexpectedly cut behind the towing vessel. The operator of the second vessel stated that he did not realize that someone was being towed. Although the victim was wearing a personal floatation device, he died from massive chest injuries. Lake Zurich, Lake Co.

Contributing factors: - Careless inattention by operator of second vessel
- No proper lookout

12) A couple went out on the Rock River during flood conditions to go fishing. They were last seen motoring southbound on the river. The witness remembered that neither occupant was wearing a personal floatation device. When they didn't return home later that evening, a search ensued. Their boat was found the next morning, upside down, stern facing upriver. The stern anchor was out and caught on an unknown object. The bow anchor was out but not attached to anything. This caused the boat to be held under the water by the strong current. It required a crane to recover the boat. Since there were no witnesses, it was speculated that the when the stern anchor was thrown out of the boat with the stern facing upstream, this caused the stern to be forced down allowing water to come in over the back. The strong current held the boat down, eventually sinking it. An autopsy report of both victims revealed blood alcohol contents of .04 for the passenger and .12 for the operator. Rock River, Whiteside Co

Contributing factors:
- Either carelessness or inexperience with proper anchoring
- Hazardous waters
- Impairment due to alcohol consumption (operator well over legal limit of .10)
- Failure to wear PFDs

13) A teenager was killed when he deliberately took a small inflatable raft over a low head dam and was caught in the boil. The victim had no paddles or PFDs in the raft. Two friends were on an inflatable air mattress and went over the dam also. They were kicked free from the boil and were rescued. Fox River, Lake Co.

Contributing factors:
- Carelessness
- No PFDs worn or available in the watercraft

14) A woman who was a passenger in a boat was killed when a second boat ran up over the back of the boat she was riding in. The accident occurred after dark, and the operator of the boat that was struck stated that he had been turning his running lights off so as to not attract mosquitoes. When he would see a boat approaching, he would turn his lights on briefly to alert the other boat of their presence. The boat that struck them came up from behind at a high rate of speed and didn't see the unlighted boat until it was too late to avoid the collision. Otter Lake, Macoupin Co.

Contributing factors:
- Unlawfully operating a watercraft at night without running lights
- Excessive speed for night time conditions (second boat)

15) After being in the water only four minutes, a canoe carrying two adults and a child capsized. A bystander observed the mishap and swam out and rescued the child, who was wearing a life jacket. One of the adults also made it to shore. The father of the child was not so fortunate and drowned. When his body was recovered, it was discovered that he had 4.9 grams of cannabis in his possession. Witnesses stated that he had a few beers and had smoked marijuana prior to the incident, but the autopsy report was negative for drugs and alcohol. Silver Lake, Dupage Co.

Contributing factors:
- No PFDs available or worn by victim
- Operator/Victim's lack of canoe experience

16) A canoe capsized and one of the occupants drowned. The mishap occurred when the river was at flood stage. Although witnesses stated that both of the occupants had been drinking prior to the accident, the investigation did not address these allegations. The report did not indicate whether or not PFDs were available, but it is known that the victim was not wearing one. When his body was recovered, it was too decomposed for the coroner to determine a blood alcohol content. Fox River, Kane Co.

Contributing factors: - No PFD worn by victim

17) A father and his stepson drowned after the 10-foot jon boat they were fishing from capsized on a rural farm pond. There was a third occupant in the boat who survived and was able to describe what happened. He stated that he was sitting in the stern of the boat and hooked a fish. The other adult man in the boat came over to help him land it. This caused the port stern corner of the boat to go below the water, capsizing it. The 9-year old boy did not know how to swim and was panicking. The survivor swam to shore and looked back and saw the stepfather trying to save his son. When he reached the shore he looked back again and neither was visible on the surface of the water. There were no personal floatation devices available in the boat. Farm Pond, Pope Co.

Contributing factors: - No PFDs available in the boat or worn by the occupants
- Improper loading and/or overloading

18) A bass boat carrying six people crashed after trying to avoid another boat that was operating without lights. Survivors of the accident stated that they were cruising along at night when the operator suddenly veered off into the cattails to avoid a boat without lights. The boat travelled approximately 55 feet through the cattails before striking a log. At that time it became airborne and travelled another 40 feet, landing upside down. The operator and another passenger were trapped under the boat. The passenger survived, but the operator died from gasoline inhalation and drowning. An autopsy revealed that his blood alcohol content was .17, over one and a half times higher than the legal limit of .10. The investigation indicated that at least five personal floatation devices were available in the boat, but it is unclear whether or not they were used. Newspaper reports indicate that they were not used.
Grass Lake, Lake Co.

Contributing factors: - Impairment due to alcohol consumption (over 1 1/2 times the legal limit of .10)
- Excessive speed (legal speed limit at night on the body of water was 25 mph
- Failure to wear PFD

19) A man drowned after the boat he was in suddenly accelerated and he was thrown out of the boat. Another occupant was thrown out also but was rescued by another boater. According to her report, the boat had been experiencing motor problems. The operator had been testing it out on the water, starting, accelerating and stopping many times. On the last attempt, he was looking over the transom of the boat at the motor and asked his passenger if she was ready for him to accelerate. At that moment the motor accelerated to near full throttle and the boat turned sharply to the right throwing both occupants into the water. The survivor also stated the operator was a heavy drinker who had been intoxicated the night before and had already had three beers since 6:00 a.m. the morning of the accident. The accident occurred at 8:00 a.m. The coroner's report revealed that the victim had a blood alcohol content of .228, over twice the legal limit of .10. Although personal floatation devices were available in the boat, they were not being worn at the time of the accident.

Lake Springfield, Sangamon Co.

Contributing factors:
- Impairment due to alcohol consumption (over twice legal limit of .10)
- Possible mechanical problems with the motor
- Failure to wear PFD

20) An elderly man drowned after falling out of a small fishing boat on a private pond. The owner of the pond and boat stated that the victim did not have permission to use the boat. A PFD was found in the victim's car but none in the boat. The coroner's report indicated that the victim died from drowning which rules out the scenario that the victim had a heart attack and died before falling out of the boat. Since there were no witnesses to the incident, it can only be speculated that (for whatever reason) the subject fell out of the boat and drowned. Farm Pond, Woodford Co.

Contributing factors:
- Failure to wear a PFD or have one available in the boat
- Other factors unknown

21) Two men drowned after the boat they were fishing from capsized on a rural farm pond. Since there were no witnesses to the accident, there is little known about it. Both men frequently fished the area and were familiar with the boat they were operating. There were no PFDs available in the boat.

Contributing factors:
- No PFDs were available in the boat or worn by the occupants
- Since there were no witnesses, other contributing factors are unknown

Farm Pond, Knox Co.

22) A man drowned after falling overboard from an eight foot plastic bass boat. According to the surviving witness, the two men borrowed the boat to go fishing. There were no seats in the boat so they used two lawn chairs. They had forgotten their personal floatation devices (life jackets) and decided not to go back and get them. There was, however, a boat cushion. They equipped the boat with a small trolling motor and the surviving witness was the operator. The victim hooked a fish and stood up. At that time he lost his balance, fell in the water and did not resurface. The operator grabbed the boat cushion and jumped overboard. He located the victim and dragged him to the surface. The victim was panicking and his rescuer could not keep him above water. He dragged him to the surface several more times, but could not get him to shallower water. He finally had to leave him and swim for help which arrived too late. His companion's body was recovered later that evening. Lake Mildred, Monroe Co.

Contributing factors: - Improper loading (lawn chairs inappropriate seating for watercraft
- No wearable PFDs available in the boat or worn by the occupants

23) A man drowned after falling overboard while working on the motor of his boat. His companion was at the front of the boat and said that the victim was laughing after falling in. Then he started calling for help, but she thought he was just "clowning around". Finally he yelled "no this is serious," but by then it was too late. The boat was inoperable and it took almost four hours for the boat to drift to shore where the companion could go for help. According to her statement, she had picked the victim up from the V.A. Hospital where he had been released on a one day pass from a "Detox" program. She stated that the victim had been drinking vodka "pretty heavy" most of the day. When the victim's body was found, the blood alcohol content was determined to be .198. The investigation did not specify whether or not the victim was wearing a PFD, however, it seems reasonable to assume that he was not wearing one or his body would have been found much sooner. Lake Shelbyville, Shelby Co.

Contributing factors: - Probable failure to wear PFD
- Impairment due to alcohol consumption (almost twice legal limit of .10)

24) A man drowned after falling overboard from his small craft. There were no witnesses to the accident but his wife stated that he had gone out with the intent to put goose nesting boxes on a small island. It is unknown why he fell overboard, but his wife revealed that he had a heart condition and was a poor swimmer. An autopsy revealed that the subject died from drowning and his blood alcohol content was .11. It is unknown whether or not the subject had any PFDs available in the boat at the time of the mishap. However, none were found floating at the scene, in his vehicle or on the body.

Small Pond. Well Co

Contributing factors: - Impairment due to alcohol consumption (over legal limit of .10)
- Other factors unknown, although it is speculated that no PFDs were available in the boat or worn by the victim

25) Two young men drowned after their catamaran capsized in rough seas on Lake Michigan. There were no witnesses to the accident. The catamaran was inspected when it was recovered and no mechanical problems or other conditions were noted. The bodies were not recovered for more than two months. Neither was found wearing a PFD. Since both men were extremely experienced sailors, it is speculated that they somehow fell overboard before the craft capsized. The catamaran then sailed away from them and they were unable to reach it.

Lake Michigan, Lake Co.

Contributing factors: - Failure to wear PFDs
- No witnesses, therefore other factors unknown

26) A nine-year old boy drowned after the canoe he was a passenger in capsized in flood waters. The victim's father, brother and two other boys survived. According to the survivors, the canoe hit an overhanging tree and capsized. The father was holding the victim, but the strong current pulled them both under the log jam and only the father resurfaced. Although five wearable and two throwable PFDs were available in the canoe, they were not being worn. The victim's body was found a week later.

Sangamon River, Mason Co.

Contributing factors: - Failure to wear PFDs available in the boat
- Extremely hazardous waters

27) A duck hunter drowned after falling overboard from his boat. The victim was last seen motoring on the river by a barge operator. A few moments later, the barge operator saw the boat unoccupied and the hunter's dog swimming in the water. An intensive search was conducted, but the victim's body was not found until mid-February, 1994. Although PFDs were available in the boat, they were not used by the victim. Illinois River, Mason Co.

Contributing factors: - Failure to wear PFD available in the boat
- Other factors unknown

28) The operator of a small runabout headed his craft in the direction of an approaching tow. The operator and his craft disappeared from sight beneath the head of the tow. When the operator was spotted again, he was located approximately 70 feet away from the tow. He sank below the surface of the water before he could be rescued. The operator was boating with friends who were in a second boat and who attempted to locate the subject. There is no known or speculated reason why the victim operated his boat in the direction of the tow. Although PFDs were available in the boat, they were not used.

Calumet Sag Channel, Cook Co.

Contributing factors: - Failure to wear PFD available in the boat
- Other factors unknown