



Yuma County Sheriff's Office

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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 20, 2015 – 10:30 AM

Search and Rescue

Location of Incident: Upper Colorado River (White Rock) - Yuma, AZ

On Monday, January 19, 2015 at approximately 9:50 a.m., the Yuma County Sheriff's Office received a call from Mr. Mike Bann, 65, stating that he and his wife, Michelle Bann, 62, were stranded on their air boat in a channel near White Rock, located in the upper river area of Martinez Lake.

Mr. Bann reported that he and his wife had arrived in the area on Sunday, January 18th, at approximately 4:00 p.m., and were scouting for duck when the air boat motor overheated and stalled, which caused the air boat to become stuck in debris. Mr. Bann stated that he was unable to get the motor running again and so they spent the night on the boat.

Deputies responded to the area on watercrafts and determined that the area where the Bann's were stranded was inaccessible by watercraft due to shallow water. The area was also inaccessible by vehicle and therefore the YCSO contacted the Yuma Marine Corps Air Station Search and Rescue Unit requesting air support. The Yuma MCAS SAR responded, located Mr. and Mrs. Bann, and assisted Deputies in air lifting them from the channel to their camp site at Squaw Lake. Neither one was injured.

The Yuma County Sheriff's Office would like to take this opportunity to thank the Yuma MCAS SAR Unit for their continued support with assisting in emergency situations and search and rescue missions. Their willingness to respond at a moment's notice has undoubtedly saved many lives.

It was recently reported that the Yuma MCAS SAR Unit will be disbanded in October due to budget cuts. Sheriff Wilmot stated, "It is very sad news to hear that the administration in Washington D.C. would cut funding for something that, by its sheer name (search and rescue), provides such a critical service. These men and women are not only vital to our military and pilots, but they are also a significant part of the EMS community wherever they are stationed. The YCSO and local community has been the recipient of emergency and search and rescue services provided by the Yuma MCAS SAR on numerous occasions and would encourage the administration to rethink cutting the funding to such a vital service."

Information Released by: Alfonso Zavala, Public Information Officer