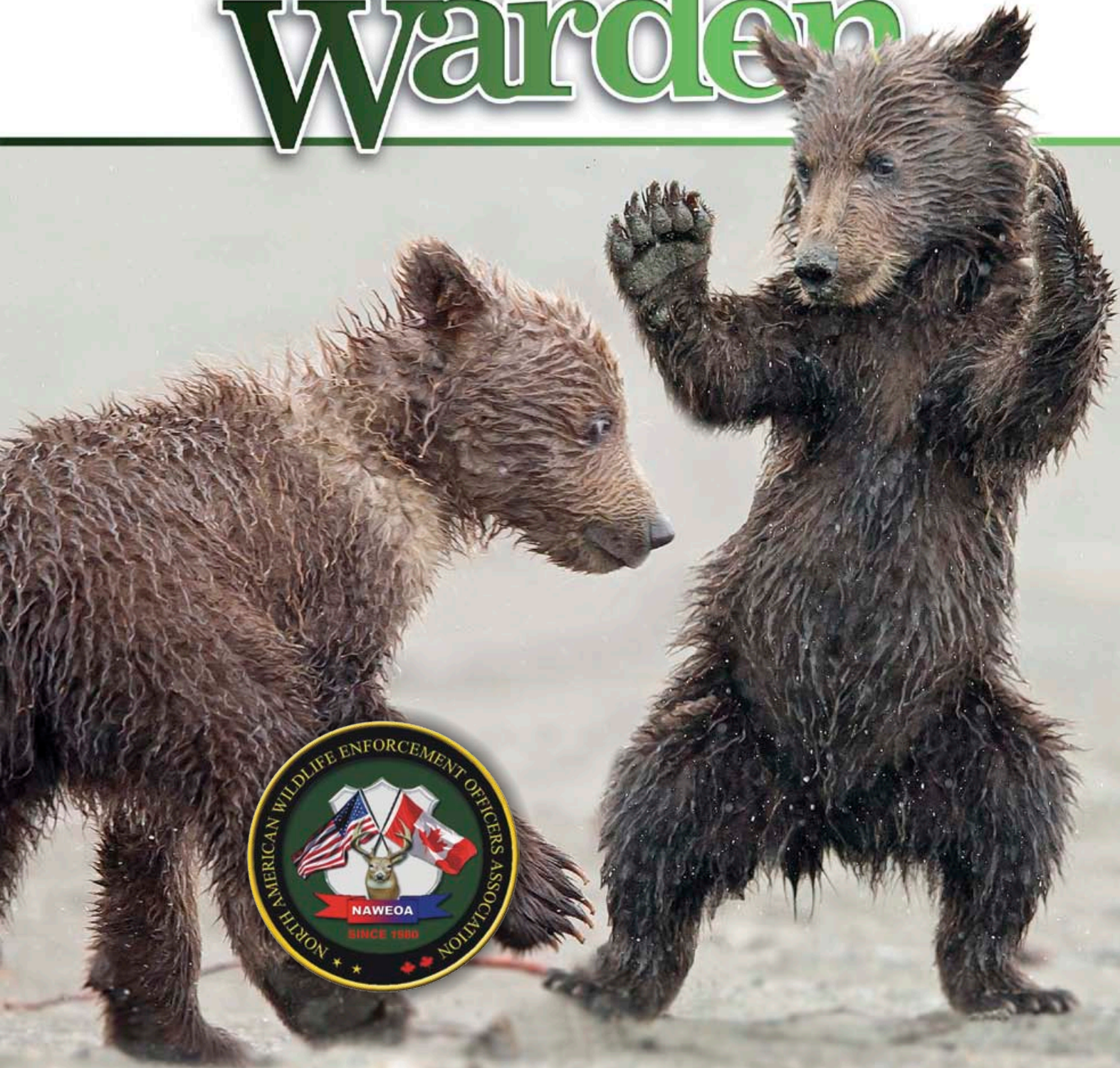


INTERNATIONAL

SUMMER  
2020

# Game Warden



THE WORLD'S LEADING MAGAZINE FOR CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT



# POSTPONED



## TENNESSEE 2020

Dear NAWEOA members,

We are facing an unprecedented health crisis in the US and Canada right now with the COVID-19 pandemic. For many of us, our lifestyle has changed drastically and we are experiencing constant changes to our daily lives and these changes are having far-reaching implications.

**In the interest of our members' health and welfare, the NAWEOA Executive Board and the Tennessee Wildlife Officers Association has made the painful decision to cancel the 2020 Conference in Nashville.** There is a bright side to this, as TWA has agreed to host the conference in Nashville July 11-17th, 2021 and they were able to negotiate this with the same host hotel with no penalties. We are still in the early stages of figuring out the logistics of refunding registration fees, so bear with us and we will post more information about your options. Please contact the hotel directly for cancelling your room reservations. Thank you for your continued support and stay tuned for more details.

**If you have questions or concerns about our decision, please contact NAWEOA President Rick Langley at [president@naweo.org](mailto:president@naweo.org).**



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**IGW Editorial Schedule**

Issue	Content deadline
Spring	January 7
Summer	April 1
Fall	July 16
Winter	October 15



**Cover courtesy of Ken Conger**  
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# OPERATION RING BEAR

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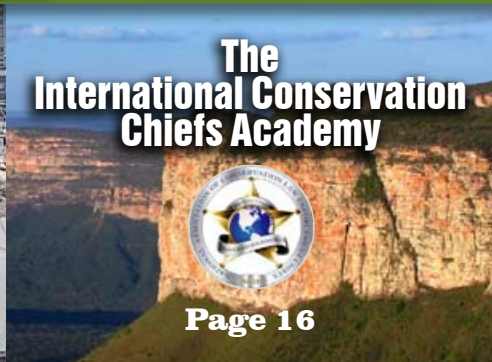
## ARTICLES



### International Game Warden Motto

*Know all that makes up our natural resource and the land on which it thrives. Know the people who share it and keep them as happy as you can. Keep the outlaws guessing, give honest people the benefit of the doubt and hold no mercy for crooks. But above all, be fair!*

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# Retiring, Again

**MY CAREER** as a game warden began in February of 1979 when, as a habitat technician, I went for a ride-along with Washington Department of Game's Wildlife Agent Ken Woltering. On that first trip out, Ken took me to a popular fishing area where, before contacting anyone, we sat back and watched the fishermen from afar. As we sat in hiding, covertly observing the group and looking for violations, two questions came to mind. First, how do I get a game warden job? Second, how many times has someone watched me without my knowledge?

From that point on, I wanted nothing more than to become a game warden. Commissioned in 1983, my dream was realized. From there, I was hired as a full-time wildlife agent the next year. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) equally divided the state into six regions, three to the east of and three west of the Cascade Mountains. During my 34-years with WDFW, I was stationed in half of the regions, but have worked in all six. I have worked on land as well as in our marine division. I've worked in uniform as well as seven years in undercover assignments.

My career and agency have provided me with almost unlimited training opportunities and has allowed all our officers a great deal of flexibility in exploring areas of interest to those individuals.

Just the various pieces of equipment game wardens are exposed to are unique and challenging (often fun too); every vessel imaginable, ATVs, helicopters, fixed-wing aircraft, snowmobiles, FLIR, horses, remote cameras, and the list goes on and on.

My career has taken me to New Zealand and Oklahoma (on an officer exchanges), Canada (training and undercover work), and to more than a dozen U.S. states. My wife and I have hosted game wardens from Canada, New Zealand, and Germany in our home. These experiences solidified bonds and formed friendships that remain strongly intact today.

When I first began my career as a game warden, it seemed I was getting advice from every old warden. Naturally, I ignored most of the unsolicited advice. I felt sorry for old-timers who thought it was a good idea to wear hearing protection at shoots, to pick deer up with one's legs instead of one's back, to not pursue dirt bikes on gravel roads, and to pick one's battles with administration instead of fighting every issue. Now, more than thirty years later, the arthritis in my back kills me as I kneel to find the hearing aid batteries I dropped on the floor.

When I was cutting my teeth as a new game warden, one of my mentors imparted several sound admonitions. First, never write a citation to anyone unless you feel you would deserve a citation for doing the same thing yourself. Second, you will never lose sleep over an arrest you didn't make, but you will lose sleep over an arrest you shouldn't have made. Lastly, you only have one life, don't waste it.

Often, we as game wardens lose sight of what a great job we have. How many people are paid to take backpacking trips into the backcountry or to navigate an airboat through the swamplands? Without doubt, battles with bosses, budgets, and increasing demands with decreasing support will wear one down, negative attitudes creeping behind even

the best warden's badge. Let's not forget, this really is the best job on earth.

Most game wardens would agree this is more than a job, it is a large part of our identities. For many of us, our closest friends are game wardens or retired game wardens. Whether you recognize it or not, we as game wardens share a common bond.

For me, retirement from the state began in 2013, followed by my taking the job as editor of this magazine in 2014. Since that time, I have had the pleasure and honor of gathering articles from wardens around the world and presenting them to you every quarter. Now it is time for me to retire for the second time and pass on the IGW editor torch to the new editor - Marshall Nych from Pennsylvania. I am very grateful to those of you who have supported the magazine through your subscriptions and by way of the articles many have submitted. I also want to thank the staff I have worked with in producing this fine periodical, including; our regular contributing writers, the magazine's manager Marion Hoffman, graphic designer Bruce Weild, advertising sales manager Carlos Gomez, assistant editor Marshall Nych, and the NAWEOA board. I have received nothing but support all the way around. I know my replacement will find the same.

So, for my last time, "Take care, stay safe, and remember to have some fun while you are at it!"



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**NAWEOA** is an 8000 member organization of Wildlife and Fisheries enforcement officers from across North America. The association began at a meeting of 16 Wildlife Officers from the U.S. and Canada in Great Falls, Montana in 1980. Other associations for wildlife officers existed, but this was the first to actively solicit membership from all officers in North America.

**What can NAWEOA do for you?** NAWEOA as a group of dedicated wildlife law enforcement professionals is committed to wildlife protection and to the public we serve. NAWEOA supports the activities of many major conservation organizations through membership and active participation. If you are a Fish and Wildlife Officer, you can be part of the NAWEOA team today by becoming a member. Let us share the benefits of membership with you! If you are a Natural Resource Program Administrator, you can improve your program by sending your officers to NAWEOA conferences and training programs, or let us help you in hosting one yourself.





Lieutenant Colonel Leroy Brewer

## Top South African rhino poaching detective shot dead on way to work

**THE NATIONAL** Commissioner of the South African Police Service, General Khehla John Sitole has, in the strongest possible terms, condemned the senseless killing of 49-year-old Lieutenant Colonel Leroy Brewer.

Colonel Brewer, who was attached to the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (the Hawks), was driving to work at 6:30 a.m. on March 17th when he was shot at on Lydenburg Road in Nelspruit. An unknown gunman, armed with what appeared to be heavy caliber weapons, attacked Colonel Brewer. Brewer died on the scene.

Colonel Brewer was a seasoned investigator within the DPCI environment and always excelled in cracking complex cases, particularly related to rhino poaching.

The National Commissioner has called on a multidisciplinary team to mobilise the 72-hour Activation Plan and urged the team not to rest until Colonel Brewer's killers are brought to book.

"The SAPS family and the community have suffered a huge loss," said General Sitole.

"I have extended my deepest condolences to Colonel Brewer's family and promised a thorough investigation into the Colonel's senseless killing," added General Sitole.

Brewer's work investigating powerful poaching syndicates in the Kruger earned him many accolades, including being named the best detective in elite anti-organized crime unit - The Hawks.

Brewer was particularly known for his determination to investigate any individuals involved in rhino poaching, including fellow policemen. Brewer's commitment often put him at odds with less scrupulous colleagues. In 2016, for example, he himself was detained by police while attempting to arrest two officers for ties to a poaching ring.

## Michigan Conservation officer helps peacefully resolve vehicle pursuit, standoff with an armed suspect

**A 39-YEAR-OLD** Osceola County man was arrested over the weekend after leading a Michigan Department of Natural Resources conservation officer on a vehicle pursuit that ended at the man's residence. James Gross, of Leroy, was arraigned in the Lake County Trial Court.

Conservation Officer Josiah Killingbeck was checking streams in Lake County for steelhead activity Friday night when aware of several reports of residential break-ins in the area, he initiated a traffic stop on a vehicle with a loud exhaust and missing license plate light.

After running the driver's information, Killingbeck confirmed that Gross was wanted on multiple warrants in Newaygo and Osceola counties. When the officer returned to the suspect's vehicle, Gross admitted he was aware of the warrants. Killingbeck asked Gross if there was anything in the vehicle that the officer should be aware of; at that point, Gross admitted to and began to reach for a sawed-off shotgun. Killingbeck ordered Gross not to touch the shotgun and opened the

driver's door in an attempt to secure Gross and the firearm. Resisting, Gross said, "Sorry, I can't," and quickly drove away.

Unharmed, Killingbeck began pursuing Gross in his marked DNR patrol vehicle, receiving assistance from the Lake County Sheriff's Office. After a 25-mile chase, Gross returned to his house in Leroy and barricaded himself inside. Officers with the Osceola County Sheriff's Office and the Reed City Police Department assisted Killingbeck by establishing a perimeter around the house.

After negotiating for an hour, Killingbeck convinced Gross to peacefully surrender. Once Gross had been arrested, Killingbeck found a pistol in the vehicle, but the shotgun was missing. He was able to retrace his pursuit route and locate the shotgun, which Gross had tossed out a window.

Gross was charged with resisting and obstructing an officer, possession of a concealed weapon, felon in possession of a firearm, possession of a short-barreled shotgun and fleeing and eluding.





## Off-duty Conservation Officer arrests Florida woman for making and attempting to detonate bomb in Walmart

**A TAMPA WOMAN** is facing charges after getting arrested, by an off-duty Florida Conservation Officer, for attempting to build an explosive device in a Walmart store.

Just before 6:00 p.m. on January 11, deputies responded to the Walmart located at 2701 Fletcher Avenue in Tampa for a report of a customer trying to create and ignite a firebomb inside the store. A security guard with Walmart noticed the woman, 37-year-old Emily Stallard, roaming the aisles of the store and opening unpaid items. The items included flammable materials, projectiles, and matches. The security guard immediately called the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office and also notified an off-duty Florida Fish and Wildlife Con-

servation (FWC) officer who was inside the store at the time. The off-duty officer and the security guard approached the woman and detained her until deputies arrived. The suspect had filled a mason jar with fuel, denatured alcohol and nails. The suspect was apprehended as she was attempting to light the bomb, with a shoelace as a wick, before the off-duty conservation officer and a security guard stopped her. Investigators said a child had been helping Stallard make the device.

"The defendant encouraged the child to engage in an act that could have caused great bodily harm and induced the child to become delinquent," the arrest report says.

"This woman had all the supplies she needed to cause mass destruction at her disposal. Had it not been for an alert off-duty law enforcement officer and a

watchful security staff at Walmart, she may have followed through with her plans to cause an explosion inside the store," said Sheriff Chad Chronister. "I am proud of the quick response by the officer and security personnel who stepped in and the thorough job performed by my deputies to investigate this matter and make an arrest. I can't stress enough: if you see something, say something. You don't have to tackle a bad guy to be a hero. One phone call to

law enforcement when you spot something or someone suspicious can ultimately save lives."

A child was with Stallard at the time of the incident. Stallard was arrested on charges of Attempted Arson of a Structure, Fire Bombing, Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor, Child Abuse and Battery on a Law Enforcement Officer.



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## Thrill Killers

**ON OCTOBER 22, 2018**, Connecticut State Environmental Conservation Police, with the assistance of Woodbury Police, arrested three individuals in connection with illegal white-tailed deer hunting in Roxbury, CT.

Southwest Sector Environmental Conservation Police Officers, as well as Woodbury Police Department, had received numerous complaints of illegal deer hunting after sunset in proximity to the Roxbury Airport. A Woodbury Police Officer was conducting a patrol check of the area after midnight on October 22, 2018, when a vehicle was observed traveling along Route 317 with the occupants actively shining the open grass fields, a prime habitat often frequented by deer. The officer suspected the occupants of illegal deer jacklighting and conducted a motor vehicle stop in Roxbury.

The occupants were identified as Eftihios Marnelakis (age 23 of Southbury), Mihali Marnelakis, (age 20 of Southbury) and Jacob Parcell (age 20 of Southbury). The trio was found to be in possession of numerous flashlights/spotlights, ammunition, and multiple firearms, of which one was a loaded .308 caliber rifle. There was also strong evidence indicating a recent deer kill/processing in the bed of the pickup.

Eftihios, Mihali, and Jacob provided responding Environmental Conservation Police Officers with sworn statements indicating they were driving around after midnight merely looking at wildlife and had no intent on hunting deer. The three suspects stated the

blood in the bed of the pickup was from a deer killed by a friend three days prior. When questioned about the still moist blood present on the clothing and boots belonging to Mihali he stated it was from hunting squirrels several days prior. Environmental Conservation Police Officers noted the temperature on the night of arrest was approximately 32 degrees Fahrenheit and that the thick clots of blood in the bed of the pickup truck were still in a liquid state and not consistent with the statements provided by three suspects.

While Environmental Conservation Police Officers were processing Eftihios, Mihali, and Jacob on criminal charges at the Connecticut State Police Troop (A) barracks in Southbury, they noticed a relevant picture of previous illegal deer hunting on the cell phone lock screen belonging to



Jacob. A check of several social media sites revealed an Instagram account registered to Mihali. Located on Mihali's public account was an uploaded "selfie-style" photograph dated November 10, 2017, showing Mihali standing with Jacob and Eftihios posing at night with two deceased white-tailed deer holding their antlers. Jacob and Eftihios were seen in the picture wearing the same clothing as on Jacob's cell phone lock screen. A check with State deer harvest records revealed no antlered deer were reported by any of the three suspects on or about the date of November 10, 2017. Based upon police training and work experience "Thrill Killers" typically document their activity through pictures and videos and share them via text message and chats. Eftihios, Mihali, Jacob were charged with the following initial violations; hunting from a public roadway, possession of a loaded weapon in a motor vehicle, jacklighting, and negligent hunting. They were each released on a \$5,000 surety bond with a court date of November 18, 2018. The three cell phones were seized and search warrants were subsequently granted for the stored data.

The data on the cell phones revealed extensive evidence of illegal deer hunting dating back to the fall of 2016 involving Eftihios, Mihali, and Jacob. Most importantly, between the dates of 9/14/18 and 10/21/18, Environmental Conservation Police Officers located picture evidence of at least ten different antlered white-tailed deer taken after legal hunting hours. Using fo-





rensic software, the metadata of each photograph was found to contain the same GPS address belonging to the Marnelakis' residence. Furthermore, text messaging data revealed the three collaborated with Jacob's cousin, Ryan Smith age 30 of Southbury, to sell excess deer to local banquet halls for approximately \$100 a deer.

Environmental Conservation Police Officers were subsequently granted a search warrant for the residence belonging to Mihali's and Eftihios' parents. On November 28, 2018, Environmental Conservation Police Officers, with the assistance of US Fish and Wildlife, executed a search warrant on the Marnelakis' residence and seized multiple firearms linked to fish and game violations, illegal antlered deer mounts, and a handwritten manifesto titled "Deer Journal". During the search warrant, the gutted and quartered remains of an antlerless deer were located in the bed of a pickup truck belonging to Eftihios. Eftihios informed officers the deer was roadkill and he was never provided a proper deer kill incident report (DKIR) by the local police department before removing it. The local police department confirmed the deer was roadkill. However, they stated Eftihios was not involved and never spoke with the police. The antlerless deer remains and pickup were seized as evidence.

The seized manifesto authored by Eftihios chronicled the events of "Jake" [Jacob], Mihali, and "Eftihi" [Eftihios] in what they referred to themselves as the "Killing Krew Klan (KKK)". The manifesto, dedicated to Eftihios' and Mihali's grandfather, chronicled events to which they consisted of, "Long nights and high-risk situations but with high rewards." Eftihios bragged about using .22 caliber "Stingers" to effectively shoot deer without being heard in populated areas. Eftihios joked about an event titled "Wrestle Mania" where Mihali and Jacob returned to retrieve a buck they had shot in the head. Upon returning to the deer, they found it was still alive and attempted to stab it to death after being tossed around like "Rag Dolls". He continued that the deer was still alive kicking in the bed of the pickup truck as they drove around the local police department stating, "Thankfully we made



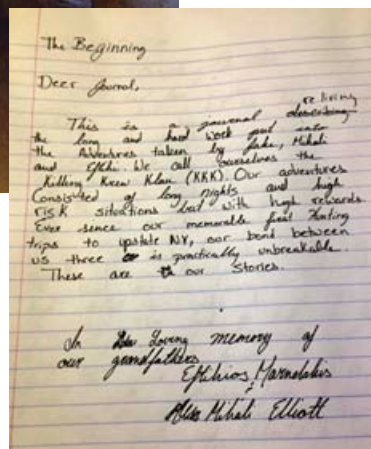
it without anyone seeing the back of the truck full of blood."

The dates of deer kills mentioned in the manifesto were linked to picture evidence found on the cell phones belonging to the three. Specifically, one of the events was detailed enough to guide officers to the location where they attempted to kill what they referred to as the "World's Biggest 5 Pointer Zombie Deer." Using the details provided by Eftihios in the manifesto, Environmental Conservation Police Officers with the assistance of a Connecticut State Police Bloodhound K9 were able to recover a spent shell consistent with the make and caliber found in the Marnelakis' house during the search warrant, as well as located inside the Chevy Silverado on the night of their initial arrest.

Environmental Conservation Police Officers applied for and were granted arrest warrants for Eftihios, Mihali, Jacob, and Ryan after corroborating evidence of illegal deer jacklighting activity was found within the stored data on the cell phones and at the Marnelakis' residence. On January 6, 2019, Eftihios, Mihali, and Jacob turned themselves into Connecticut State Police Troop (A) barracks in Southbury. They were each

charged with the following violations; making a false statement, interfering with an officer, jacklighting deer, failure to report deer kill, conspiracy to commit negligent hunting in the second degree, conspiracy to commit negligent hunting in the third degree, conspiracy to commit negligent hunting fourth degree and conspiracy to commit illegal sale of game. Ryan was charged for the following violations; interfering with an officer, negligent hunting, and illegal sale of game/animal. They were each released on \$10,000 surety bonds with a court date on January 17, 2019.

On April 5, 2019, Torrington Superior Court Judge Michael Wu rejected a motion for accelerated rehabilitation by Eftihios, Mihali, and Jacob. In Connecticut, accelerated rehabilitation is a form of special probation that would have allowed their records as first-time offenders to be erased. Environmental Conservation Police testified before the court that the



accused's actions were reckless and dangerous to the public. Furthermore, if accelerated rehabilitation was granted, it would have been a slap in the face to sportsmen who lawfully purchase licenses and follow the laws.

On November 20, 2019, Torrington Superior Court Judge Paul Matasavage accepted guilty pleas from Eftihios, Mihali, and Jacob. All three were found guilty of Conspiracy to Commit Negligent Hunting 2nd Degree (Two Counts), Loaded Weapon in a Motor Vehicle, and Illegal Jacklighting. The three were each sentenced to 3 years of probation, unable to hunt or possess hunting implements while on probation, pay a \$1,500 fine, remain employed, complete 200 hours of community service and forfeit all property seized to include lights, knives, guns, and deer mounts. Only their cell phones and pickup truck were returned.

In a separate case, Ryan Smith was found guilty of Interfering With an Officer and Conspiracy to Commit Illegal Sale of Animals. Ryan was sentenced to two additional years of probation.



Currently awaiting administrative penalties through both the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and Department of Motor Vehicles regarding the suspension of their hunting, fishing, trapping, and driver's licenses.

## Federal Wildlife Canine Officer Rawlinson Wins Prestigious Ira Gabrielson Award

**ON FEBRUARY 28TH**, US Fish and Wildlife Service Deputy Assistant Regional Director for External Affairs Roya Mogadam presented the coveted Ira Gabrielson award, named for the first Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to Adam Rawlinson.

Rawlinson is the Service's National Canine Program Coordinator, stationed at the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge in Illinois. Rawlinson maintains his federal wildlife canine officer handling skills and law enforcement qualifications by providing law enforcement support to local national wildlife refuges.

Since 2011, when Rawlinson took on his canine partner Nate, a Belgian Malinois, they have achieved many milestones in support of wildlife conservation, including helping shut down a poaching operation on Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge. Last fall, Federal Wildlife Officer Dustin Schelling of Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge noticed evidence of baiting and what looked to be a poaching operation for harvesting whitetail deer in an area of the refuge closed to hunting.

Hunting over bait, using screw-in steps for a tree stand, and leaving a tree stand in overnight are all violations of federal hunting regulations and Schelling set out to put a stop to this illegal activity on refuge lands. In addition to the tree stand and equipment found on site, there was extensive damage done to create these illegal hunting holes, including cutting and removal of vegetation.

While he had a great amount of evidence, Schelling was having difficulty finding one of the poaching locations.



Adam Rawlinson, and his canine partner Nate, with Steve Chase, Richard Johnston, and Roya Mogadam

To better build his case and, ultimately bring the poacher to justice, Schelling called upon Federal Wildlife Canine Officer Adam Rawlinson and his canine partner Nate to work the case.

Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge Manager Kathleen Burchett was pleased with the strong team effort on this case, reporting, "Officer Schelling's patience, tenacity, and effective utilization of all available resources of our exemplary refuge law enforcement team, including Canine Officer Nate, has brought another poacher to justice."

Federal wildlife canines are trained to use their keen sense of smell for all sorts of wildlife-related needs. In this case, Nate is trained to track human scent and was able to track the poacher's path from his vehicle to a baited tree stand nearly a half-mile into the woods. This was a central element in closing the case.

Patience, observation, and teamwork made this successful case possible and with the support of Refuge Zone Officer Geoff Donaldson and the Assistant U.S. Attorney George Norwood, the poacher was sentenced to two-years probation to each of the charges, with all terms to run concurrently.

"This is significant in that it sends an important message to those that might consider abusing the privilege of hunting public lands and helps protect legal hunting opportunities for ethical hunters," noted Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge Deputy Manager Kevin Sloan.



A further condition of the sentencing is that during the term of probation, the poacher is losing the privilege of hunting on any public lands and has been fined \$1,450 for his illegal activity.

About a year later, Rawlinson assisted in rescuing four hunters whose boat had tipped into the refuge's freezing waters. For the heroic rescue, he was awarded the Department of the Interior Valor Award.

Rawlinson has many accomplishments beyond the refuge's borders, including helping to seize almost \$500,000 in drugs smuggled onto a refuge in Arizona.

"Adam is a hard-working, determined officer who has dedicated his career to conserving our nation's wildlife and wild places," said Refuge Law Enforcement Chief Richard Johnston.

"He is willing to stay out that extra hour to catch poachers, travel across the country to show the benefits of a canine program to leadership, meet with local school kids to inspire their conservation ethic and offer assistance to support law enforcement efforts nationwide. Adam exemplifies our motto: 'Protection, Conservation, and Service, since 1903' in all that he does," continued Johnston.





## Just Another Day

**NO MATTER WHAT** the occupation, all in the workforce endure those days that seem to never end. Those days can be just a little bit different for the game warden. The following is one of those days I had as a new officer in Burley, Idaho.

As is normal in late September, the elk were very active. The rut was on, and sportsmen wielding bows were flooding the hills trying to call in those big bulls. In southern Idaho, the elk like to retreat to private property to escape the hunters while finding themselves a tasty meal at the same time. I had received calls about depredation issues on a farm south of Malta, a small town near the border of Utah. I woke up at 4:00 AM to make it down to the fields before sunrise. I packed my shotgun, cracker shells and rubber buckshot as I was going to try and spook the elk out of the field. Using these tools can help alleviate some of the pressure the farmers get from the wildlife. Unusual for this time, it was actually snowing that morning. The sun had not yet made its way over the horizon as I stepped out of my truck into the alfalfa. I hiked the first hill, whistling my way into the elk herd, imitating the sound of a cow elk. Every time I let out a whistle, three big bulls would answer with a ground-shaking bugle. I snuck

within 100 yards and fired off consecutive cracker shell rounds over the heads of the large animals. After I watched their shadows take off into the hills, I made my way back to the warm truck. I figured I would work my way back to town the long way, looking for anyone else out and about that Friday morning.

On my way back I noticed a large group of crows and magpies fluttering some distance off in the sagebrush. Usually, this means one thing ... something died out there. I went to check it out and found four quarters of a bull elk, with all of the meat still on them. It floors me every time I see something like this! Now it's my job to try and catch the imposter sportsman who left these here. I noticed a three-bladed arrow wound in the right shoulder. After documenting the location, taking pictures, DNA samples and bagging up all the parts, I continued towards town. Hopefully, I could close this case later.

When I was heading home, I received a call about a notorious family who were actively stalking and driving a local herd of elk. After quickly looking up the parties involved, only one had a valid tag. Not only was this potentially a large party hunt, the tag was for a muzzle-loader only season and the tag holder did not purchase his muzzleloader per-

mit. I quickly made my way to the area, found the herd of elk, but did not find the individuals hunting the animals. I then made plans with fellow officers to patrol this area during the following days. If we couldn't catch them in the act, maybe we could at least let them know we were watching.

After watching the herd of elk for a few hours, I received another call. This time the call came from an elderly woman in Kimberly. She was on her back porch when she noticed something moving on her lawn. After a closer look, she discovered it was a fish! It had flopped out of the pipe she used to flood irrigate the lawn. She had no idea what kind of fish it was and she wanted me to identify it. After I made my way to Kimberly I met the lady at her front door. She greeted me and showed me inside her house where she pulled the fish out of her fridge. The thing looked like it had gone through a few quick pulses of a blender, but it was mostly intact.

I wanted to figure out what I was looking at, so I called the office and talked to our lead fish biologist, who helped me confirm it was indeed a young carp. The immature fish have a large sharp spine on their dorsal fin and have whiskers similar to a catfish, much different than the adults. While I was on the phone, the elderly woman was still trying to talk





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to me. All the while her false teeth kept falling out, making it difficult to understand what she was saying. I did manage to decipher a few comments about what I nice young man I was and that she liked the color of my eyes. Every few minutes throughout our conversation, I could also hear her relieving herself of some stomach pressure she must have been experiencing. What a test of concentration this had been. They didn't prepare officers for this in the academy! After telling the nice lady she had not discovered a new species, she laughed and said she was going to write to the papers about her exciting day.

Leaving the elderly woman's house, I made my way to the regional office to drop off the wasted elk I found earlier that day. After processing the evidence, I received another call. This summon came from Officer Jim Stirling. He had his new trainee with him and they were both very busy as well. They had a report of a dead elk in a dumpster behind a warehouse in the nearby town of Kimberly. I thought since it was on my way home, why not top off the long day with a dumpster dive?

Of course in a similar fashion to the rest of the day, the dumpster couldn't be mostly empty. It was filled to the brim with yard waste, beer cans, paperwork, car parts, old carpet and, of course, bloody elk parts. After nearly emptying the dumpster, I was able to find four legs and a hide from an elk. Embedded in the hide of the elk were several BB's from a shotgun blast. I remember the pellets were unique in that they were copper and not lead. Along with the hide and shot there were several papers, stained in elk blood, all bearing the name of one individual. Perhaps this could be our suspect? I called Officer Stirling with my findings. He asked me to leave the parts and pieces in the dumpster so he and his trainee could look them over in the morning. I was tired, smelled like crud. Deliriously happy to be heading home, I laughed most of the way there. A total of 18 hours had passed since I first got into my truck that morning. Who would have thought a day could bring such a wide array of things to do. I love my job.

➤ *Idaho Game Warden*  
*Steve Ross*

## Klamath Chaos

**IN EARLY SEPTEMBER** of 1981, I was a young game warden and was assigned a roving land-based marine patrol district running from the Oregon border to south of Fort Bragg, California (approximately 200 miles long). A complaint came into the Eureka Fish and Game Office that large quantities of salmon were being caught in an area closed-to-fishing in the Pacific Ocean waters just outside the mouth of the Klamath River. I grabbed a warden who was the boarding officer on the Department patrol boat, the Bluefin, and we raced the sixty miles north in my patrol truck.

Before I became a warden, I had worked the Klamath River and its many tributaries when I had a Fisheries Technician job with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (covered in my memoir, *An American Possibility*). I knew this remote and isolated area quite well. Since it was salmon fishing season for the river, I knew there should be several people trying their luck. Under state and federal law, the tight salmon fishing regulations only allowed for taking salmon in the river. All water outside the mouth in the Pacific Ocean were closed and off-limits. This law was a protective measure to prevent over-harvesting when the fish were schooled-up waiting to make their mad-dash upstream to their native spawning grounds.

When we arrived at Dad's Camp, which was a privately owned campground on the south side of the Klamath River, we were able to look north to the end of a sand spit peninsula spanning a mile in length and about 200 yards wide. From our elevated position, we could see both the closed ocean and open river sides. The first thing I noticed was fifteen sport fishing boats beached on the riverside of the spit, obviously having been driven down from the numerous resorts located farther upstream. Using binoculars, we spied dozens of fishermen fishing in the closed ocean waters just south of the mouth of the river. While I let some air out of my tires for better traction on the very soft sand, my partner kept watching the fishermen. He blurted out, "They're catching salmon like crazy in the ocean."

We raced out the spit, but before we

had gone even halfway it was obvious we had been spotted. As we got closer, fishermen, apparently aware of the violation, started a frenzied mass exodus over the spit toward the legal side! I had never seen anything like it before or since. Little old ladies were running for all they were worth, men followed after grabbing fishing poles and salmon; it was like the Charge of The Light Brigade. I ground to a stop in the middle of a pack of fishermen and we started yelling for them to stop. Some complied, others kept running, while a few had a look of, what's the problem?

In the chaos, I had to evaluate the scenario. The faster of the fishermen had already reached their parked jetboats, the loud thunder-like clap of powerful engines being hastily started filled the air. The scream of powerful outboard engines being over-revved as guilty people fled, all determined to make their escape, added to the surreal scene. If there ever was an every-man-for-himself scenario, I was witnessing it. We managed to corral eight people, all of whom were getting tickets for fishing in a closed area. We found abandoned fishing gear, four abandoned salmon and one full twelve-pack of Budweiser beer – ole Bud should have been a little wiser. Because of the remoteness and the scarcity of game wardens in general, help was non-existent.

What I saw next helped explain the situation. In the ocean, 200 yards south of the mouth of the Klamath was a massive purple-black ball of anchovies, a baitfish that predatory fish like salmon can't resist. This biomass ran north and south, was 400 yards long, 150 yards wide and only 20 yards offshore. I watched as scores of large salmon broke the surface scooping up the trapped fish. A variety of birds also joined in the fine dining experience, diving and gorging themselves. When I was a tuna/porpoise observer with the federal National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) I learned commercial fishermen called what I was seeing a "breeze." Experiencing one so close to shore is rarely seen. I could hardly blame the locals for going a bit crazy over a very unique windfall. But the law is the law and in this case, unlimited, open taking of vulnerable salmon could potentially severely dam-



age the whole Klamath river run. I could imagine hundreds of people lined up shoulder to shoulder working this “meat line”. I had seen that kind of fishing before and it turns a sporting, happy wilderness opportunity into a greedy free-for-all! I sent what we experienced up the chain of command. It was determined the only thing that could be done was have rotating shifts of game wardens babysit the salmon.

One mitigating factor that made things a little more palatable was with the incoming tide part of the ball of anchovies moved into the river, so everybody had a brief legal shot at them. After having signs made and posted, I was like a fish in a barrel, stuck answering the same questions over and over, which usually started with, “Why can’t I...?” or “What happens if...?” I tried to convince the folks to just enjoy the uniqueness of the phenomenon. After a couple of those twelve-hour shifts, I was hoping somebody would shoot me and put me out of my misery. Game wardens, at least this game warden wasn’t used to being so cooped up. One surprise benefit to our initial patrol was the homeless at the Eureka Rescue Mission ate the donated salmon like they were royalty.

After three days of babysitting, I decided to take a different tact. I began my shift early, just after sunrise on a Sunday. Instead of driving out on the sand spit and parking, I drove to the mouth of the Klamath from the north side. There is a scenic/observation parking lot that is 600 feet high and less than a mile from the remaining bait ball and feeding salmon. I knew from my location it would take twenty-five minutes to drive out to Highway 101, then south crossing the river, then west to the spit. Over the last several days everybody had been well trained and generally compliant.

I watched a lone pickup truck drive out the spit and park near the bait ball area. Two men got out and one of them started fishing south of the anchovies. He was fishing for Redtail perch (which was legal) and quickly began catching them. I kept a running count. I was using

my spotting scope and switched over to watching the second fisherman. Right off, I watched him stand in the back of the pickup and using binoculars he intently looked south checking the only access road. I had a minor chuckle over that nefarious action. I could only think about the saying, “They never look up.” Ole fisherman number two immediately cast into the bait pile of anchovies. Within seconds he hooked and landed a twenty-pound salmon, then thumped it on the head. Well, there’s a solid violation. I continued to watch the perch fisherman



man and he had already landed seven perch out of the legal limit of ten. Now things get rather strange. The Salmon fisherman again checks south toward Dad’s Camp.

Next, he grabs his salmon and fishing pole and walks over the spit to the river. He hooks the dead salmon on a hook and throws it into the Klamath! From there, he starts gyrating and pumping his rod like he has the fight of a lifetime! I’m laughing so hard from my perch I couldn’t keep my eye next to the ocular on my spotting scope. He walked back to the truck, stashed the salmon in an ice chest and joined the other fisherman. When the first perch fisherman went over the legal limit by keeping twelve fish I decided to end the madness.

When I arrived at their location, I started a conversation by making sure they knew the rules. They said they did. They showed me their “sixteen” perch and the salmon guy showed me his beautiful king salmon. I asked again, “You know you can only catch salmon in the river?”

He replied, “Yes.” When I told them I had been staked out on a point, indicating my perch, pointing to it; their first nervous shuffling began. When I asked the salmon fisherman what was he looking for with the binoculars, he knew he was toast.

I also asked him, “Why would you risk losing this beautiful fish by throwing it back in the river?”

He sheepishly replied, “In case the warden came along.” The perch fisherman fessed up to taking the over-limit and signed in the box on the citation I issued.

I had one more eye-opening, unique

incident during this trapped-salmon extravaganza. On my seventh Klamath patrol day, when I approached the end of the sand spit, I saw two elderly men fishing in the closed ocean waters. They each had already landed and kept a salmon. When I informed them of the violation, one of the men said Fish and Game didn’t have the authority by law to regulate fishing per the U.S. Constitution. I was a bit confused because he was very adamant about his belief. I asked to see his fishing license and he showed me a Constitutional Fishing License, signed by The Founding Fathers, something I also had never encountered. When I said, “I need to see a valid California fishing license.”

He responded, “I don’t need to do anything until you fill out Form 242!”

I replied, “I don’t know what you’re talking about, but because you’re fishing in a closed area, I’m going to issue a citation.”

Now he starts screaming at me, “I’m the master and you’re the servant!” Then he pulled a copy of the U.S. Constitution out of his waders and starts waving it around! This was getting very strange. Not only couldn’t I get valid identification from him, he said when I left, he was going to go back to fishing. Not a good thing to say to a warden. I could seize his gear and slow him down, but I still needed to identify him. I told him if he didn’t help me with identifying himself, I would have to arrest him. He was so amped up, when I said I would have to take him to jail, he didn’t care. So I did. His friend eventually showed up at the jail and gave him his wallet, which had a valid fishing license and driver’s license!

As if to prove his total support to his belief, when he appeared before the judge he pleaded guilty. However, he’d only pay the fine in U.S. currency when the judge showed up at his home. The judge wasn’t amused and said, “Pay the fine now or you’re going back into the jail.” He paid. I felt bad I had to deal with an elderly man this way. He was the first Constitutionalist I ever had to deal with. Boy was I happy when the bait ball dispersed and my professional life returned to the semi-chaotic nature of normal game warden duties.

➤ *Mike Maschmeier - Author of An American Possibility*



# A deputy's perspective on working closely with your local game warden

**AS A SHERIFF'S DEPUTY** for medium-size department, I have come to learn the local game warden is a priceless asset to everyday patrol. As a 24-hour agency, we often get the call for service when our local wardens are out on marine patrol or in remote areas of the patrol district. We work on building relationships to share our expertise on calls for service when they have a wild-life enforcement need. It's nice to share in the training and learn from each other's expertise while building a case in or outside of natural resource protection.

I was dispatched to a state park in my area shortly after a heavy rain subsided. The dispatcher had explained a vehicle was crossing a ford when a flash flood had occurred and swept the vehicle off of the roadway and into the creek bed. The elderly husband and wife, along with their puppy, were trapped inside of the vehicle. Water slowly filled the disabled car. One of our local CPO's (Conservation Police Officer) was contacted for any help he could provide. The warden, who was off duty at the time of the call, arrived at the location to assist. With the warden's knowledge of swift water rescue and the aid of a technical rescue team from our local fire department, we were able to help secure the vehicle and provide life jackets to the occupants until the swift water rescue team reached the vehicle. Both occupants of the vehicle and their dog were safely escorted to the shore with no injuries.

On another incident, I was dispatched to the front row bout between car vs deer. The confrontation occurred at approximately 2300 hours. I arrived



at the same time as another one of our local wardens. While I was talking to the driver of the vehicle, I observed a strong odor of cannabis coming from the vehicle. During the investigation, we searched the vehicle, which led to roughly 40 grams of cannabis and 50 grams of cannabis wax. While I was completing the search of the vehicle, the warden located a scale tossed from the passenger side of the vehicle now laying on top of the grass. In addition to charging the female driver with felony possession of cannabis, the recovered scale allowed felony manufacturing and delivery as an added bonus. We were now able to seize the vehicle.

During the 4th of July weekend, the weather was perfect with a fair amount of boats on the water. Late in the afternoon, a pontoon boat was traveling down the river with four or five people aboard when they were struck by a fishing boat heading upriver. After the collision, it was learned a female had fallen overboard and was missing.

The unresponsive female was quickly located and transported by boat to the shoreline, where she was treated by paramedics and transported to a local trauma center. I located the other boat and its occupants just a few hundred yards in front of the impact area. EMS was contacted and began treating the passenger for minor injuries. As I spoke to the driver of the boat, I observed him to be intoxicated. At the beginning of the incident, the local warden was contacted and was en route. I secured the boat and the driver until the warden arrived, at which time I assisted the warden with the investigation. The female was later pronounced deceased at the hospital and the driver of the second boat was charged with Aggravated OUI, Reckless Operation, amongst other charges.



Working together on these incidents made our job at the sheriff's office easier. The time invested in our relationship without local game warden improves the level of service given to our community.

Through these interactions with our local game wardens, we have been able to help each other on several occasions, whether it be backing up one another on a DUI, pulling a suicidal lady from a burning car or helping search for drowning victims in the river, I have learned a good working relationship with your local game warden is invaluable. 🙏

📍 Deputy Thiel Ogle County Sheriff's Office





**COVID-19** has shown to be a worldwide challenge for everyone. Daily information has departments changing protocol and response efforts. As the pandemic evolved so did our dedicated game wardens, to meet the challenges and protect the public's resources despite having an increased risk of exposure. The virus was finding its way into major cities and occupied spaces. It took time to crawl across the country into some faraway places, but eventually and statistically it finds its way. Many agencies were responsive as the information developed based upon their needs and liabilities. Other departments discovered the threat was already present and were reactive to the environment. There is no doubt efforts have been made to reduce and prevent the pandemic as it materialized.

One thing learned from this situation was that agencies had different approaches based upon their needs and threats. Resources in one part of the world are different than other parts. This can also be seen on the state level. States like New York, Illinois, and California have concentrated areas and rural areas. Same with the major cities in Canada. Some areas have instituted reassignments for officers to be reactive and dedicated to the virus threat. Other agencies have suggested an isolation model asking their officers to stay home and self-quarantine. Many of the agencies have declared a state of emergency, closed some or all of the government areas, and have even restricted spring



hunting and fishing opportunities.

Some areas have public use locations, such as state parks, forests, and lakes, which are a welcomed source of exercise and leisure for the public. When these areas become concentrated with the public, transmission issues become problematic and those areas have to be closed. Monitoring these closed areas often fall on the responsibilities of the game warden.

Courts systems have been closed, fall hunting violation trials postponed, with new arrests having summons dates set far in the future. Despite the pandemic conditions the resource has to be protected. Several officers continue to postpone complex investigations, but still must document and enforce critical and safety violations.

The public impact will be felt for years to come. Less money has been spent on fall hunting opportunities. Big game tag requests have been reported as being down as much as 60 percent. Hunters are not wanting to spend the money today on a chance for an animal that may be restricted in the future. Many hunters have expressed frustration about the spring hunts. Bear hunts in Canada have been canceled. Spring turkey hunts have been reduced and canceled and the problems continued as the pandemic continues. It seems all of North America has been impacted by the pandemic.

New York has been an area of focus since the pandemic started. On any given day, there are approximately 42 members working on the COVID-19



response for New York. The primary job is providing security for the numerous testing sites around the lower portion of the state. These sites are designed to have the public “drive-through” a protected area to get tested for the virus. ECOs make sure the public is expedited to the testing area and monitor for general site safety. As the event unfolds, details arise almost daily that require ECO assistance. Recently the Division was tasked with escorting the USNS COMFORT into New York harbor for its arrival to assist with medical treatment of non-COVID-19 patients.

New York also has officers who are certified to “fit test” first responders and medical personnel for the protective masks that are Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) in “hot zones.” This fit testing ensures the PPE is being properly utilized/worn. The officers are deployed to areas that will have COVID-19 testing centers and use a “fit test” machine and software to test the individual’s “fit” with the mask on, to certify proper protection of the mask on the individual.

Another important function that ECOs are involved in is the incident command structure and the tracking/deploying of assets. The Department of Environmental Conservation as an agency has an Emergency Response Command Center (ERCC) in the City of Albany where all DEC resources are being tracked/deployed. The ERCC has 2 Division of Law Enforcement (DLE) members, a uniformed lieutenant and a uniformed officer, working side-by-side with civilian staff, for a 12-hour shift to coordinate DLE’s response to the event. The lieutenant is tasked as the agency representative for DLE and makes assignments, fills requests and keeps the DLE Command informed. The uniformed ECO is assigned to a 12-hour shift to meet all logistical concerns at the ERCC, including

tracking deployed assets, making sure the datasheet is accurate and updated, and, possibly the most important task, keeping the members at the ERCC fed and caffeinated.

DLE members are also deployed mostly to the downstate region to fill incident command roles. They are staffed at various Command Posts and are responsible for all aspects of the incident command system, from operations to logistics. The deployment period lasts for 7 straight days.

The state of New York has an emergency response coordination system called New York Responds. This system is instrumental in sharing/deploying/tracking all state and local resources. There are 14 Emergency Support Functions

(ESF) with corresponding agencies to coordinate and/or assist in case the ESFs are “stood up.” The DEC is involved in a total of 7 of them, by far the most of any state agency. Certain members of DLE have been trained on the system and 24/7 monitoring of ESF #1 (transportation) has been enacted during this event. The members track all requests for this ESF and other requests for the incident. When there is a request that DLE may be able to assist with, the member goes through the chain of command to attempt to get that request filled. It is an extremely important role during a wide-spread response such as COVID-19 as tracking of requests can be cumbersome due to the high volume of requests.

With so much happening in many patrol regions, it helps to understand what other officers are doing. Sharing the response information amongst each other to best suit our specialized enforcement capabilities can help other officers down the road as the disease spreads. After speaking with many officers in North America it has been seen despite quarantine and infection game wardens continue to serve the public and protect the natural resources. 🐾

👉 *By Steve Beltran*





# The International Conservation Strengthening Global Law

## The International Conservation Chiefs Academy

(ICCA) brings together cohorts of conservation leaders from around the world focusing on “Strengthening Global Law Enforcement Relationships to Combat Illegal Wildlife Trafficking.” The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), along with partners in the State Department, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) and with the assistance of the National Association of Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs (NACLEC), instituted this international leadership academy in 2016 in support of the National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking. Since that time, 6 cohorts of approximately 40 participants per academy have been invited to the 2-3 week training held at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) in Shepherdstown, West Virginia.

To date, the Academy has had 224 participants from 37 countries, with materials and presentations and group work translated to 9 languages. In an effort to build relationships and break down barriers, concepts of adaptive leadership are a primary focus with the practices of systems thinking, sharing, and working on personal and country adaptive challenges. Adaptive challenges, in this context, are those that cannot easily be solved, such as halting illegal wildlife trafficking.



If the challenge had been easy, someone would already have solved the problem.

These are big issues not necessarily solved by talking about facts and figures, but rather the changing of cultures and shifting the hearts and minds of everyone involved. Identifying and listening to factions while understanding where and why they are starting enables the participants to engage others and give the work back to those involved. This often requires “getting on the balcony” to make sure the facilitator/leader is seeing everything that is transpiring, not just what is right in front of you.

One of the tenants in the Academy’s teachings is leadership can come from anyone, anywhere in the continuum, at any time. We often expect leadership from people who have positions of

authority. It is important to understand this pair of traits can be two very different things. Many of these principles should be familiar to those who have graduated from the NACLEC Leadership Academy. The primary instructor for both NACLEC and the ICCA is Randy Stark, a retired Chief Game Warden from Wisconsin. Randy has been a student of Adaptive Leadership and studied at both the Kansas Leadership Institute and the Harvard School of Government.

The goal of the ICCA and the NACLEC Leadership Academy is slightly different, but both address leadership, relationship building and illegal trafficking. When the opportunity presents itself, these two academies overlap for one week. During this collaboration, it is amazing to see the problems of a conservation officer in Minnesota often mirror a problem a ranger is having in Malawi, India, Central America, or anywhere in the world.

One evening of the academy is set aside as an international cultural night.



# Chiefs Academy

## Enforcement Relationships to Combat Illegal Wildlife Trafficking.

During this unique event, participants share something from their country: a dance, song, traditional clothing, food or story. When the NACLEC participants overlap with the ICCA, this may be the most memorable night for both groups. What generally starts out having people sitting in country groups, because of familiarity and comfort, ends up with a unified group, finding they are all more similar than different. It is reassuring to see how easy it is to break down the barriers among the participants from different countries, including the USA, with someone taking a leadership role and initiating a conversation with someone from a different culture.

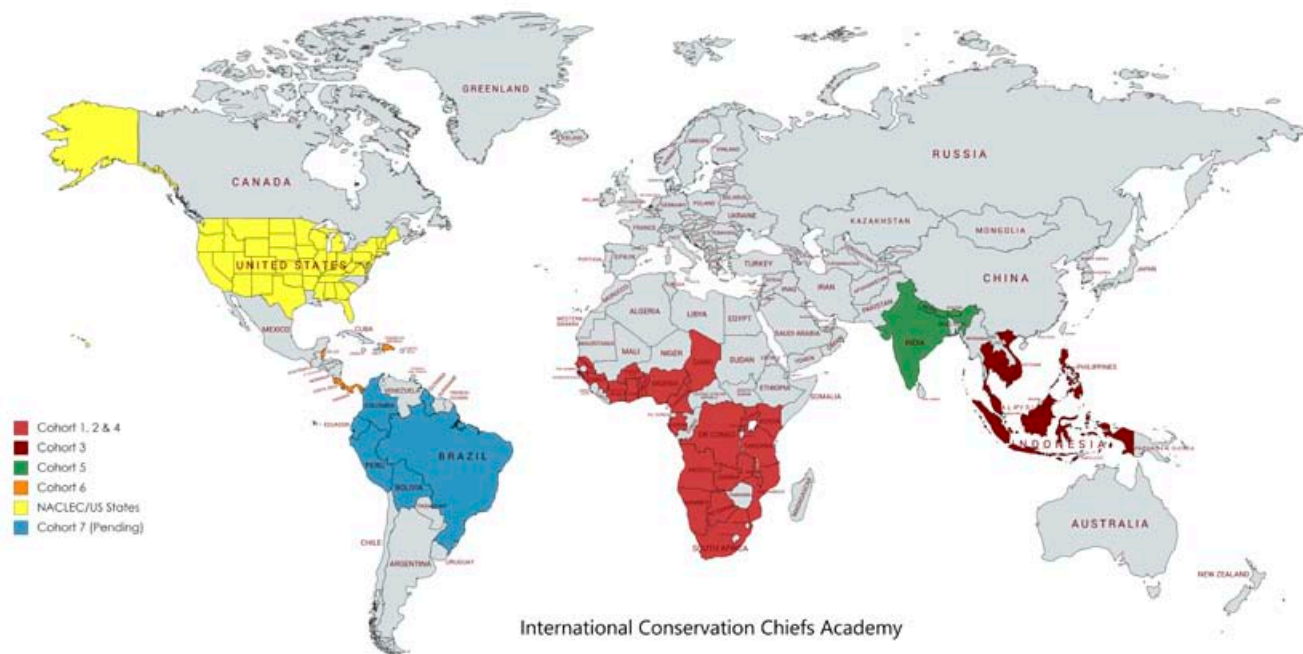
Social media sites keep the cohorts connected after they graduate from the ICCA. Stories are shared from



around the world on wildlife issues, poaching, and cases being brought to conclusion. There is also information on

investigations needing assistance from one country's investigator to another. There have been several success stories

**... it is amazing to see the problems of a conservation officer in Minnesota often mirror a problem a ranger is having in Malawi, India, Central America, or anywhere in the world.**





derived from these communications.

A shipment of 434 elephant tusks hidden in a shipping container in a port in Africa was headed to a Southeast Asian country. When the ICCA graduate from Africa investigated the shipment paperwork of the container, he noticed it was destined for a SE Asian Country. Within minutes of connecting the two ICCA alumni, one from the shipping country and one from the receiving country, secondary inspections were ordered for all shipments coming into the SE Asian country from the originating African port. This could have taken weeks or months to achieve had it not been for the personal connection.

The same global connections have assisted in other investigations as well. Shipping labels from the US have been shared in SE Asian cohorts on shipments of turtles and heavily poached plants species. Other highlights shared by alumni include wildlife and joint border inspections, sharing of information on suspects, methods of take and identified routes of travel for suspected traffickers.

Many alumni have received promotions and are now directors of programs for wildlife in countries across the world, have received prestigious awards or have made new progress on challenges they had presented while at the academy.

The ICCA keeps the graduates together through the social media sites and provides other leadership opportunities. A Wildlife Officer Exchange program had its initial run in 2019 with ICCA alumni from Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, and Namibia spending two weeks with NACLEC Leadership Academy graduates from California, Colorado, Maine, Maryland, and Missouri. The officers have work plans and experience everything from traditional patrols to evidence storage, court systems, internal conservation structures, reporting, constituent interaction and geographic challenges with long-distance supervision. Visiting officers experience what it is like to live in the US with all its amenities. The reciprocal trip for the US officers to go to Africa has been de-



layed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but will take place in the near future. The same experiences of patrols, court systems, and day-to-day life will be laid out for the US participants in Africa. Plans for the 2020 Wildlife Officer Exchange are already underway.

ICCA Alumni events are also planned and being held around the world in areas where the cohorts originated. This keeps the graduates engaged in the network and provides updates and a forum for sharing of ideas, successes and on-going challenges. Our first event was held in Cape Town, South Africa in 2019 and was a great success.

Another opportunity for ICCA graduates is attending the Wildlife Trafficking Executive Symposium (WTES), which is held at the International Law Enforcement Academy in Roswell, New Mexico.

This is a three-week course addressing trafficking from an executive position and speaks to a wide range of topics, including graft and corruption. This course is provided by the USFWS, the State Department, and the INL.

The ICCA has provided additional opportunities to graduates. Case in point, Nigeria's Silvaline Oharie. Ms. Oharie replied to an ICCA post asking for interest in the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Environmental

## The same global connections have assisted in other investigations as well.

Crimes Committee. She has since participated at the IACP convention in Chicago and is now a standing member of the Environmental Crimes Committee, allowing the committee to see a broader picture and truly be international by inclusion.

These are all tremendous opportunities for the individuals and the conservation community as a whole. In the end, we all know it will take a global effort to beat the network of illegal traffickers. This is how the USFWS, the State Department, INL and NACLEC, along with participating countries, are building the network.

Over the next several issues, and possibly as a standing column, we will introduce the readers to ICCA alumni as they tell their stories of day-to-day life, challenges they face, and successes they achieve. Our hope, through these articles, is for all to see our similarities and find ways to assist each other with investigations, support or conservation questions as they arise. Together we can make progress with the goal of the ICCA: "Strengthening Global Law Enforcement Relationships to Combat Illegal Wildlife Trafficking." 🌐

👉 *By California Chief  
Nancy Foley - retired*





**OFTEN, NEW PRODUCTS** come out to aid or assist in rescue situations. One such remedy for remote cold weather situations would be portable heat. Enter a product called Hotshotz. Ultimately, your rescue situation may include the desire to start a fire and or make shelter. An immediate heat solution comes in the form of reusable heat. Reusable heat is a product that has unlimited activations and provides a strong and consistent heat platform to reduce the threats of sub-thermal conditions. Such heat products are also valued as a comfort tool when used in a remote environment or hunting situation.

Hotshotz has developed a portable heat product able to aid in a variety of situations where portable concentrated heat is needed. Its main use has been



# HOTSHOTZ

on the therapeutic market, but crossing over to the outdoor spectrum makes sense when the temperatures start to drop. Allow me to state this product is not touted as a rescue device. It's simply a portable, reliable, effective, and reusable heat source. The product works so simple, it's a wonder why we all don't have them for our professional and personal lives.

According to the website, here is how the Hotshotz heats:

**Scientific Information-**

The process the heat pack goes through is known as an exothermic reaction. The sodium acetate inside the heat

pack freezes at 130° Fahrenheit but will stay in a liquid state at room temperature.

This is known as being super-cooled. With a click of the activator button, one causes a few of the molecules to become solid. Thus, triggering a chain reaction. In the process of going from a liquid to a solid, the by-product is heat. These heat packs are fun to watch.

Bending the metal disk starts the crystallization process. Instantly the crystallization proceeding through liquid can be seen.

What is happening here may appear to be magic, but the science of process can be understood if one thinks about water freezing. Water freezes at 32° F (0° C). If you were to stick a thermometer into a cup of water and place the cup in the freezer, the temperature of the water falls to 32° F and then hangs there until all of the water is completely frozen. Only then does the temperature of the solid water fall to the temperature of the freezer.

What if, somehow, water could experience a super-cooling?

That is, say water's temperature reached 10 degrees below the freezing point without crystallizing into a solid — such a scenario can be realized using clean glassware and distilled water, providing no points for the water to begin crystallizing. In this condition, if the glass is tapped the temperature of the water will jump up to 32° F (0° C). Hence, solidifying the water quickly.

HotShotz Heat Packs contain sodium acetate and water. Sodium acetate is highly efficient at super-cooling. It freezes (solidifies) at 130° F (54° C), but will remain a liquid at a much lower temperature and is quite stable. Clicking the disk, however, forces a few molecules to flip to the

solid-state. Following suit, the rest of the liquid rushes to solidify as well.

The temperature of the solidifying liquid jumps up to a warming 130° F during this unique process. Once it cools, the solid requires boiling to meltdown, returning to the liquid state. During the melting process, it is crucial every crystal melts. Otherwise, the liquid will quickly re-solidify. Theoretically, the cycle can repeat forever, so long as the container remains airtight and intact.

Many wardens rely on portable charcoal activated hand warmers. While these are nice, charcoal produces a small amount of disposable heat. Another drawback to the classic charcoal is, once the product is activated and the reaction is complete, the product is discarded.

Using this dynamic product come fall will give an edge up on the bitter winds.

Hotshotz provides heat time and time again once it has been reset. It is the only product on the market with this technology. More information can be found at ReusableHeat.com. If desired, them out and use the promo code "heatmeup" on the site to get a discount. I also have created a YouTube video demonstrating the technology. Visit [youtube.com/c/stevebeltran](https://youtube.com/c/stevebeltran).

Any questions please email me at [steve@stevenbeltran.com](mailto:steve@stevenbeltran.com)





# OPERATION RING BEAR

**The unlawful sale of bear parts is still very much illegal in all provinces in Canada. Severe penalties and public education have possibly resulted in investigations and occurrences where the unlawful sale is reported or found.**

**T**HE RECENT convictions in Saskatchewan and Ontario in the unlawful sale of bear parts, which you will be reading about shortly, goes to show that although the illegal activity may have slowed, it is not wiped out. Provinces like British Columbia and Ontario may continue to see an increase in the possession and unlawful export of these parts due to their position as transportation hubs that serve as gateways to foreign markets. Seizures at airports and investigations over the past five years have led officers to believe that perhaps this type of illegal activity has gone underground and those involved are much more efficient in exporting these parts to markets where they have much more value.

In Saskatchewan alone, the small instances where investigations into the unlawful trade of bear parts

may make some think that it is not an issue anymore. Dean Grisdale, Manager of Investigations with the Ministry of Environment, agrees partly with this assessment. "I think that was the perception. Certainly it doesn't seem to be at the level we were accustomed to in the 1990s and early 2000s, however, I believe that there is, and always has been, a market," says Grisdale. In his time as manager of this unit, he feels that galls have reappeared on our radar over the last three years. One new thing that officers have discovered is that a portion of those individuals who consume these galls have now also become the people actually killing the bears, both legally and illegally. The individuals involved in the

investigation in Saskatchewan were brazen, with no fears of consequences. "There hasn't been a lot of enforcement action, at least

in Saskatchewan, on gall trafficking prosecutions which may contribute to the illegal activity," says Grisdale.

Lindsey Couillard, Staff Superintendent and Manager of Intelligence and Investigation Services with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, feels that there is still an active market for bear parts. "The illegal wildlife trade is based on demand for the product. The illegal black market for bear gall bladders exists and fuels the demand," she says.





All unlawful bear commercialization information continues to be investigated by both agencies. In the end, a very successful investigation came to a close with convictions in both provinces and the substantial penalties imposed by the courts will hopefully provide a deterrent in the future for this type of activity, or at least slow it down. Both Grisdale and Couillard are happy with the penalties imposed by the courts. “The penalties are significant. As in all criminal activity, the penalties may deter some individuals from becoming or staying involved in the illegal activity,” says Couillard. Grisdale agrees, saying, “We were able to move the investigation into another jurisdiction and expose guilty parties there and convict them as well. There was a good deal of intelligence that came from this file. This may prove to be useful in the next gall trafficking file.” In the future, bringing organized groups of wildlife traffickers to justice will require a continued cooperative approach between all law enforcement agencies locally, provincially, and internationally.

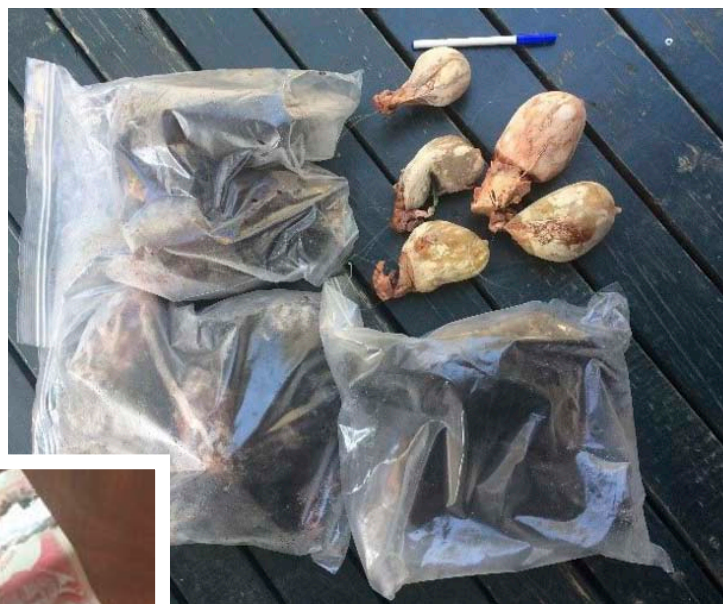
This investigation highlights the cooperation between two natural resource law enforcement agencies. “The sharing of information, trends, and enforcement techniques has been established between Saskatchewan and Ontario for many years and this is the result of this excellent working relationship that involves sharing information and working cooperatively to target illegal activity,” says Couillard. “The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry would like to thank Saskatchewan for initiating this investigation and coordinating a combined effort that resulted in the successful joint initiative.”

In conclusion, Grisdale feels that, in a perfect world, we would have been able to identify and prosecute more associates who have an interest in illegally purchasing galls. “We know they exist but simply had to end the file at some point. Sadly, with these types of investigations, the web is ever expanding but time and resources demand that once the objectives have been met it needs to end.”



**THREE-YEAR** investigation into the unlawful sale of bear gall bladders and paws recently came to an end with convictions and fines against a three residents of Sandy Bay, Saskatchewan, one resident of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and one resident of Toronto, Ontario. The investigation was a result of numerous intelligence reports generated by Saskatchewan officers from Creighton and Pelican Narrows over the past number of years. The investigation started with officers getting information that Sandy Bay residents were shooting black bears at the landfill.

those who use it. During the investigation, officers learned a lot about methods of use, consumption, and shipping of these products right from the targets themselves. It was clear that this type of activity had been happening for a number of years. The suspects, who



**Clockwise from top: This large sale was for five bear galls and eight paws for \$1,700.**

**Vodka changes colour after bear bile is added to it.**

**Sept 2016. Three bear galls were purchased for \$900.**

Black bear gall bladders are used in traditional Asian medicine. Their value on the black market can range from \$2,000 to \$10,000 per gall bladder. Bear paws are used for soup or broth which is then consumed. Both are believed to promote strength and good health to

were unlawfully shipping and exporting the bears unlawfully inside and outside of Canada, revealed to the officers how they were successfully shipping to international markets. As the investigation went on, investigating officers realized that there was still a demand for bear



galls and parts since the sale and export ban was implemented in 1995.

This investigation resulted in the conclusion that the trade in bear parts is still a relevant issue in Canada and that perhaps it has been driven more underground with its illegal nature. This investigation took officers from northern Saskatchewan to Saskatoon, and then to Toronto, Ontario, as the investigation intensified over time.

Sandy Bay residents started to notice an increase in the number of black bears killed and left with the entrails open and paws missing. Information came in that the bears that were being shot were having the gallbladders and feet removed, then sold to Chung's Restaurant in Sandy Bay. Officers attended and investigated and found one bear at the landfill butchered in a manner that suggested that the gall bladder had been removed. With the assistance of the RCMP, a couple of names were provided as being possible suspects in the unlawful killing of the black bears. Officers then contacted the local RCMP to see if they knew anything about the bears, or if any reports had come in. The RCMP confirmed that they knew of the killings but did not know about the value of the bear gall bladders. Informants and investigation all pointed to one individual, Marcel Sewap, who may have been responsible for killing the bears and removing the parts.

In May 2016, the Sandy Bay RCMP received information that someone in

a blue van was at the dump killing bears. The RCMP responded and located the blue van in question in the parking lot of Chung's Restaurant. Eventually, the van was stopped once it left the restaurant and the driver was identified as Marcel Sewap. With years of intelligence and information, the Ministry of Environment's Special Investigations Division initiated an undercover operation beginning in August 2016 to address the unlawful sale of bear parts in the Sandy Bay area. The undercover operation lasted 2.5 years and moved from Sandy Bay to Saskatoon, and then as the investigation evolved, it expanded to Toronto. At Sandy Bay, covert operators were used to make contact with possible targets associated with the investigation. The investigation at this point focused on Li Gen Han (G.H. Li) who was the manager of Chung's Restaurant, his wife, Luanshun Li (L. Li), and Marcel Sewap (M. Sewap).

Officers posed as individuals who were starting a hunting-related busi-



ness in the area. Officers made contact with G.H. Li and L. Li to obtain used cooking oil for their baits. During this first visit to the restaurant, G.H. Li and L. Li asked the undercover officers if they had any bear gallbladders that they would like to sell. Normally, the officers have to find a way of inquiring about the unlawful activity, but the subjects expressed interest to the officers first.

This really got the investigation rolling, as officers knew from the beginning that they had the right targets. G.H. Li purchased two bear gall bladders from the officers for \$600. The officers confirmed with G.H. Li that it was illegal to conduct these types of wildlife transactions and G.H. Li clearly understood the legalities and the implications if caught.

Officers asked G.H. Li what they did with the bear gall bladders. G.H. Li told the officers that they put the bear bile in vodka and drank it. G.H. Li showed officers the vodka bottles and explained how the bile changed the colour once added to the vodka. Fresh bear bile will change the colour of the vodka to a golden colour and after it ages, it will turn the vodka a lime green colour. G.H. Li then told the officers that he would like to purchase a gall for his aunt in Saskatoon. At this point, G.H. Li told the officers that he would like to purchase three more gallbladders.

In late September 2016, the officers returned to Chung's restaurant in Sandy Bay. G.H. Li purchased the three gall bladders for \$900. Officers asked G.H. Li if he knew anyone in Saskatoon that they could get used cooking oil from. G.H. Li provided the name of his aunt, who also owned a restaurant in Saskatoon.



Investigation started in Sandy Bay, then moved to Saskatoon and as the investigation continued, moved to Toronto.



G.H. Li placed another order for three more galls to be delivered in October, and in late October 2016, undercover officers returned to Chung's Restaurant and G.H. Li purchased the three galls from the officer for another \$900, even though he complained that the galls he received during the last sale were too small. G.H. Li then handed the officer a yellow sticky note with the phone number of his aunt, Launhua Chi (L. Chi), who ran the Jeju Korean BBQ Restaurant in Saskatoon.

During this time, officers managed to make contact with M. Sewap. Although skeptical of the officers at first, he became friends with them and even went fishing with them. Officers tried to buy galls directly from M. Sewap, but he only sold them to G.H. Li for some quick cash. As time went on, M. Sewap trusted the officers more, telling them that he had sold bear galls to G.H. Li on many occasions.

In November 2016, G.H. Li met with the officers in Saskatoon at the Jeju Restaurant. He introduced the officers to his aunt, L. Chi, so that they could obtain some used cooking oil. Arrangements were made for the officers to return to the Jeju Restaurant every two weeks for oil. As the officers walked away, L. Chi asked the officers if they could bring her some bear "breasts," as she moved her hands down on her abdomen. Unsure what she was asking for, the officer asked if she meant a gallbladder, to which L. Chi responded, "Yes ... bladder." The officer asked L. Chi how many she wanted and she responded with the number three.

In late November 2016, officers went to the Jeju Restaurant and explained to L. Chi that the selling of bear galls is very illegal and both of them could get into lots of trouble. L. Chi responded that she knew it was illegal to buy the galls but still wanted to buy the three galls that were agreed upon during the



**Above: The largest sale was for six paws and eight bear galls for \$1,900.**

**Right: Size comparison of a bear gall compared to a fork.**



previous visit. All agreed to a price of \$300 per gall. L. Chi explained to the officers that she put the bile into vodka. L. Chi also dunked the galls into boiling water for five seconds, three times each. This prevented the bile from leaking out of the gall. After that, she put the galls in a net and hung them to dry. From there, she shipped them to Toronto where they were made into pills.

Undercover officers asked if L. Chi was re-selling the galls to other people. L. Chi responded that she gave the galls to other people and they in turn give her \$300. With that being said, L. Chi stated that she had three friends who wanted two galls each. Then, as if this order was not enough, she told the officers that the cook, working in the kitchen of the Jeju Restaurant, was also interested in purchasing some bear galls. The cook turned out to be L. Chi's sister from Toronto, who bought bear galls and then exported them to China. After this, arrangements were made to include

the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry undercover officers to work on the investigation in Ontario. Arrangements were made to sell one gall bladder to the cook's daughter, Shun Ji Xue (J.X. Xue). Everything went through J.X. Xue in Ontario, as she was the only one who spoke English. Undercover officers in Toronto sold two bear galls to J.X. Xue. Shortly after this transaction, things in Toronto seemed to quiet down. It is believed this was due to other legal issues related to a second person involved in the undercover sale in Toronto.

To date, the transactions only included bear gall bladders, until L. Li asked if they had any right front paws from bears. They used paws for bear oil which helped to heal burns from the deep fryer in the kitchen.

Officers returned to the Jeju Restaurant in December

2016. They met with L. Chi, who asked if they had the bear galls and paws. Officers had the galls, but did not bring the paws. They wanted to make sure that L. Chi was still interested in the paws before they brought them to sell. The officers and L. Chi agreed on a price of \$20 per bear paw, but now, L. Chi wanted the whole bear leg as she had friends who would pay \$100 for four legs and would buy as many as they could get to use the legs and paws for soup. With the number of people now involved, the officer once again reminded L. Chi that it was very illegal to sell these items and that they could get into lots of trouble. L. Chi acknowledged that this act was illegal and told the officers that she would not say anything. Officers sold L. Chi



one gall for \$300 and the other two galls to her sister for \$600. L. Chi's sister told the officers, through L. Chi, that she wanted as many galls as she could get and also wanted the price lowered to \$200 per gall. She dried them and took them back to Toronto. Officers stuck with their price, as \$300 was a fair and average price for bear galls.

Just before Christmas 2016, officers made another visit to the Jeju Restaurant. L. Chi told the officers that many Asian people were coming to Saskatchewan because there are lots of fish to eat, and now she can provide bear parts. During the conversation, she told the officers that she used to have someone in Sandy Bay supply her with bear parts, but now she is dealing with the undercover officers. When reminded again about the legalities of selling bear galls, L. Chi advised

that she had instructed everyone to simply say that the bear parts were gifts and not to say anything. Chi asked the officers if they had any galls with them as her sister was going back to Toronto at the end of the month and she wanted to send three galls back with her. Rather than taking them on the plane, she

planned to simply mail the dried galls to Toronto in a box of clothing. Prior to the officers leaving, L. Chi purchased one bear paw from them for \$20.

In January 2017, officers again visited the Jeju Restaurant. L. Chi purchased three paws from them for \$60. During a conversation with the officers, L. Chi advised that she wanted two galls for her brother and a friend who both live in China. She did not want to send them in the mail, as the mail was examined closely for this type of activity. She said she transported them personally by drying them, freezing them, and wrapping them in tin foil in her clothes. She

disclosed to the officers, "I haven't been caught yet." L. Chi told the officers that her sister would want two or three galls when she returned from China. Officers again reminded her of the illegal activ-



**L. Chi's sister purchased two galls from officers for \$600.**

**Left: Galls were prepared in a manner that they could be shipped to Toronto without being detected.**



ity and that they could get into lots of trouble. Officers, while playing their role, stated that they did not trust L. Chi's sister as she did not speak English

really well and might not know this activity was illegal. L. Chi countered the officer's statement by saying that it is illegal in China too. Prior to the officers leaving, L. Chi reminded them that she has a friend who would take as many bear paws as they could provide and that her sister also wanted pelicans, rabbits, or ptarmigans for food.

Further into January 2017, officers returned to the restaurant with two galls, but L. Chi did not want to buy them, as her sister would take them. They purchased the galls for \$600 and ordered a leg and paw as well. A few months passed, as the ability to harvest

bears was low because of their dormancy over the winter. In March 2017, L. Chi ordered two galls for her sister who was leaving for Toronto in early April. Officers attended the restaurant

on April 7 and learned that L. Chi's sister had left the country early, as she had not been feeling well. The officer told L. Chi that he had a friend in Toronto who could sell her sister some galls too in hopes of increasing the players in this illegal venture. L. Chi then purchased one bear gall bladder for \$300.

In mid-May, L. Chi put in a large order of gall bladders: four for herself and four for her sister. Officers attended the restaurant and learned that L. Chi's sister was still in China, but the new kitchen cook wanted to buy eight to ten galls. While at the restaurant, L. Chi bought a bear leg for \$50. Moving

forward to July 5, 2017, an officer went to the Jeju Restaurant and L. Chi put in an order for five gallbladders and eight legs/paws. L. Chi then provided the officer with contact information for G.H. Li's mother in Toronto, as well as contact information for her sister, now living in Toronto.

In July 2017, the two undercover officers returned to Chung's Restaurant in Sandy Bay. G.H. Li was not around, but L. Li met with them. She looked at a bear leg and told the officers that she wanted the paws only, with no fur on them. Officers replied that the cost would now be \$25 per paw. The officers left and returned with only the paws. L. Li then placed an order with the officers for five bear galls and eight bear paws. She agreed to a price of \$75 for four paws and \$300 each for the bear galls.

In late summer 2017, officers went back to the Jeju Restaurant, where a large sale was finalized. L. Chi purchased six galls and eight legs for \$1,900. Over the next couple of months, there were several conversations between the undercover officers and L. Chi, and a new



order was placed, but no transactions were completed. By this time, officers were confident that L. Chi was not going to be able to provide any more buyers or markets for bear parts. She was the distributor and would not provide any more names or contacts to other potential markets. All buys in Ontario were completed and no additional interest was observed from other potential buyers.

The take-down by uniformed officers in Sandy Bay happened on March 13, 2019. Seizures included a bottle of vodka containing bile and a bag of galls that officers sold to the suspects. Charges were levied against all three individuals in the Sandy Bay investigation. All three individuals pled out in provincial court and received the following penalties:

- Li Gen Han – Seven counts of trafficking in wildlife - \$23,800
- Luanshun Li – Three counts of trafficking in wildlife - \$8,400
- Marcel Sewap – One count of wildlife trafficking in wildlife - \$2,800

Justice of the Peace Paula Liu heard the case against Shun Ji Xue of Toronto in Toronto Old City Hall Court, convicted her of unlawfully possessing bear gall bladders, and issued a fine of \$3,250.

In Saskatoon, Launhua Chi was charged with seven counts of trafficking in wildlife but she pleaded not guilty. During her trial in late November 2019, L. Chi's lawyer contested that there had been an abuse of power and entrapment. The judge ruled that entrapment was not an issue, as it was L. Chi who introduced the idea of buying bear parts from the officers. "There was no persistence by the police before she agreed to the first purchase ... no pressure by the police. She brought up the possibility of the sale before they mentioned it. The actions of the police were not of a type to induce an average person to commit these offences. They used no trickery, rewards, or threats," said Judge B.J. Bauer.

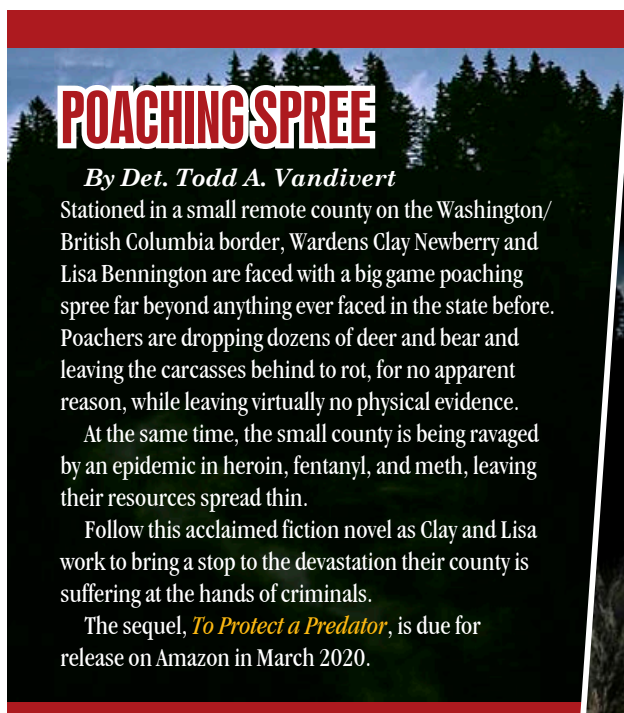
L. Chi contested that she did not speak or understand English which resulted in her committing these offences. Judge Bauer once again disagreed, referring to evidence from officers that they only spoke to L. Chi in English, she had acted as an interpreter between the officers and her cooks, and the fact that, throughout the trial, she made her own notes in English. "I find that her evidence was an attempt to minimize her involvement in the purchasing and resale of bear parts and

I do not accept her evidence where it conflicts with the investigators," Judge Bauer stated during the sentencing. In mid-December 2019, Launhua Chi was found guilty on all counts and given a \$29,120 fine.

Saskatchewan Investigations Manager Dean Grisdale is happy with the outcome of the investigation. "Overall, I am quite satisfied with the outcome and the penalties. We were able to move the investigation into another jurisdiction and expose guilty parties there and convict them as well," states Grisdale. As mentioned, the investigation ended rather abruptly after L. Chi was unable or unwilling to provide officers with more markets. "In a perfect world, we would have been able to identify and prosecute more associates who have an interest in illegally purchasing galls. We know they exist but simply had to end the file at some point," he said. ☞

☞ *Author: Lindsey Leko. Lindsey is a member of the Saskatchewan Association of Conservation Officers.*

*All information gathered in this feature was taken from court transcripts.*



**POACHING SPREE**

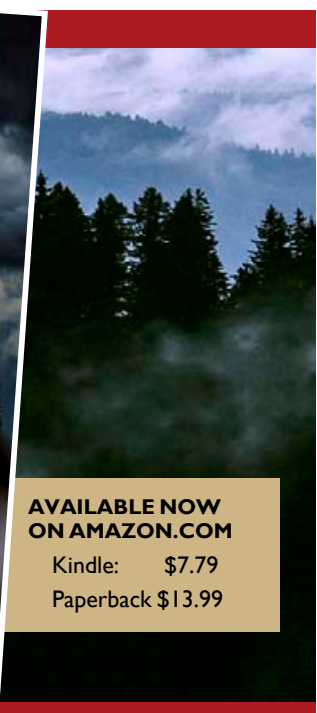
*By Det. Todd A. Vandivert*

Stationed in a small remote county on the Washington/British Columbia border, Wardens Clay Newberry and Lisa Bennington are faced with a big game poaching spree far beyond anything ever faced in the state before. Poachers are dropping dozens of deer and bear and leaving the carcasses behind to rot, for no apparent reason, while leaving virtually no physical evidence.

At the same time, the small county is being ravaged by an epidemic in heroin, fentanyl, and meth, leaving their resources spread thin.

Follow this acclaimed fiction novel as Clay and Lisa work to bring a stop to the devastation their county is suffering at the hands of criminals.

The sequel, *To Protect a Predator*, is due for release on Amazon in March 2020.



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# -TO READ OR- NOT TO READ

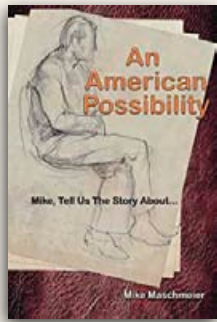
*Sgt. Rich Phillips (ret.)*

**WELL, IT FINALLY HAPPENED**, I got called for jury duty. The call was for District Court which, here in Washington State, means misdemeanors. Being retired, I really couldn't find a reason to get out of it. So I showed up with 24 of my closest friends for Day 1. Once we were checked in and seated, the clerk had us watch a short video about unconscious bias. I found it both interesting and informative. The judge came in and introduced herself, the case (DUI) and the defendant, a fireman. Eventually, she asked if anyone is closely associated with law enforcement. I disclosed that I was a retired Game Warden and that my son is a K-9 Deputy with the arresting agency. Her Honor then asked if that would make it difficult to be impartial? I answered that I will always lean in favor of law enforcement and was quickly excused. So much for civic duty? But it does give me more time to read, which leads us to the first book review...

and his wife were standing near a group of biologists and hatchery workers. An older biologist pointed to a group of game wardens and said, "Those game wardens, they are a different breed."

AN AMERICAN POSSIBILITY is published by Outskirts Press Inc. ISBN-978-1-9772-1839-1 (paperback), ISBN-978-1-9772-2019-6

(hardcover). It is available on Amazon for \$38.94/Hardcover, \$21.99/Paperback, and \$9.14/Kindle. (Canadian). It is \$29.95/Hardcover, \$16.95/Paperback, and \$6.95 Kindle. (US)

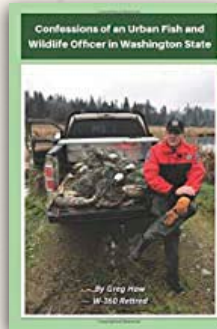


The first book, authored by a retired California Game Warden, describes his "convoluted" journey through life. **AN AMERICAN POSSIBILITY** (Mike, tell us the story about...) by **Mike Maschmeier** is the story of a "Baby Boomer", the forces and choices that shaped his life, and what he has learned about his journey. The author was born into a middle-class family in Ohio in the 1950s. He wonders if life was simpler without today's electronic miracles. Family, friends, and outdoor fun ruled all decisions. This book takes the reader along as the author describes his high school experiences, hitchhiking across the country, meeting the girl who would become his wife, college, jobs, and his efforts to become a game warden. Many game wardens from this generation took a similar path. I was hired in the same month and year as the author (different state) and can personally relate to many of his stories. He describes the highs and lows from his career and tells a few stories. This book is not limited to his fish and game career. He also describes his efforts at stand-up comedy, health concerns, and giving back to society. Throughout the book, the author refers to philosophy to describe how his choices and decisions shaped his personality and life.

Mike recounted a story for me of his first Christmas party as a game warden. He

The next book for this issue is **CONFESSIONS OF AN URBAN FISH AND WILDLIFE OFFICER IN WASHINGTON STATE**. The author is **Greg Haw**. Officer Haw retired 5 years later than I did from the same agency. I know Greg, but we never worked together. Greg began his law enforcement career in 1986 as a Fisheries Patrol Officer for the WA Department of Fisheries. WDF managed all migratory salmon (both in salt and freshwater), shellfish, and all saltwater fish except steelhead and searun cutthroat trout. Fisheries Patrol Officers (fish cops) spend a good percentage of their patrol hours on commercial fisheries enforcement. In the mid-1990s, the WA Legislature merged WDF with the WA Department of Wildlife. Thus, the WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife was born. It was a complicated birth that took many years to mature. Power struggles, jealousies, and incompetence were part of the growing pains. Greg's early years as a Fisheries Patrol Officer helped shape his attitudes and perspectives towards resource law enforcement.

This book is roughly a chronol-



ogy of his career as a new officer in Forks on the Pacific Ocean to a very urban officer in Seattle, to his long stint in Olympia (WA state capitol). Forks was a very rough logger/fisher small town with lots of resources. Seattle is a huge metro area situated between Puget Sound and Lake Washington. It has most of the commercial market for a large portion of the west coast. Olympia is at the very south end of Puget Sound, with a huge commercial shellfish industry. Greg is not shy about

pointing out both successes and failures he experienced in his career. He shares many of each. Like many officers upon retirement, Greg went into a slight depression at the perceived loss of his "identity". Unlike most of us, Greg freely admits it was difficult to adjust to life as a civilian. He is just as brutally honest as he describes events and cases from his career. He tirelessly champi-

oned a less complicated fishing regulation pamphlet, often describing the problems with having non-enforcement folks making rules. This book describes his career from his point of view. You may or may not agree with him (I often do not), but I appreciate his efforts and that he took the time to share his story.

This book would have benefited from more careful editing, but I recognize self-publishing on a limited budget is a big challenge.

*Confessions of an Urban Fish and Wildlife Officer in Washington State* by Greg Haw. ISBN-978-1-6707-93515. Cost is \$12.99 paperback/\$7.25 Kindle (US); \$17.11 paperback/\$9.55 Kindle (Canada). It is available through Amazon.

**POACHING SPREE** is the first work of fiction by an author you may (or may not) be familiar with. His first book (*Operation Cody*) dealt with a major undercover wildlife trafficking case that he led for over a year. Now he has turned his efforts to fiction. **POACHING**

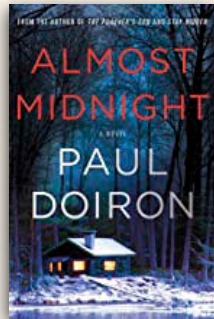


**SPREE** by **Todd A. Vandivert** is a story of bear poaching, the international trade in bear gall, betrayal, intrigue, and hard-working game wardens. It is set in the Okanogan Valley of north-central Washington. Read this book and you will get a glimpse into the real-life world of bear gall trafficking. The author is descriptive in his writing



of drug use, manufacture, and smuggling across international borders. He goes into detail showing the reader the importance of ballistics as it relates to wildlife cases.

BUT - if you want a description of how the wind sounds blowing through the jack pines or the crisp smell of pure mountain air - you will be disappointed. Read any work by the eminently talented Terry Hodges for those descriptions. POACHING SPREE has a good storyline, well-developed characters, and could lead one to believe what they are reading is real. The author shares his expertise in an area of wildlife crime-fighting that many lack knowledge in. It is a fun book to read and is just a bit different from other works of fiction regarding wildlife law enforcement.



*POACHING SPREE* by Todd Vandivert, ISBN-978-1-7048-26875 is available from Amazon in paperback for \$13.99 US or \$18.57 CN. I found a Kindle version for \$10.17 CN.

The most current release by author **Paul Dorian** in the Maine Warden Mike Bowditch series is **ALMOST MIDNIGHT**. It again finds the warden investigator up to his elbows in problems, many of which he creates with his hardheadedness, as well as the uncanny knack of being in the wrong place at the wrong time! Bad guys, drugs, murder, and girl problems. Our warden investigator has them all. And that is just while he is on vacation! A simple request from a friend leads Bowditch down a slippery slope and

a series of switchbacks as he becomes the target for a nasty group of folks who need him eliminated. Like the other books in this series, the author does a good job of showing the reader the human side, both good and bad, of the characters involved. If you enjoyed his other books, you will also like this one. If you haven't tried this series, I think you will enjoy them.

*ALMOST MIDNIGHT* by Paul Dorian is published by Minotaur Books. ISBN-978-1-2501-0241-6 (hardcover), 978-1-2501-0243-0 (e-book). You can find it on Amazon for \$16.99/Hardcover, \$17.99/paperback, and \$14.99/Kindle (US). It is \$23.85/Hardcover, \$24.50/paperback, and \$15.99/Kindle (CN). The paperback editions are not available until June 2020.

Until next issue, bless you all for the important work you do. ☺

**TO READ OR NOT TO READ**

If you would like Rich Phillips to review your book, you can email him at: [warden156@hotmail.com](mailto:warden156@hotmail.com)

# WILD CONCOCTIONS

## BURBOT IN BLACK BEAN SAUCE

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1½ - 2lbs burbot fillets
- 1½ tbsp prepared black bean sauce
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 tsp dry sherry or cooking sherry
- 1 tbsp flour
- 2 tsp soya sauce
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- ½ tsp sugar
- ½ tsp fresh ginger root - chopped
- 1 cup water
- 1 clove garlic - chopped
- 2 tsp cornstarch, blended with 1 tbsp water



Saskatchewan Association of Conservation Officer Cookbook Recipes

### DIRECTIONS:

Combine salt and flour, then coat fish in mixture. Heat oil in large frying pan or wok. Add fish and fry on both sides until golden brown and fish flakes easily. Remove fish from wok and put on serving platter. Pour off excess oil from pan, leaving 1 tablespoon. Reheat oil; add ginger and garlic. Stir-fry for one minute or until golden brown. Stir in black bean sauce, sherry, soya sauce, sugar, and water. When boiling, stir in blended cornstarch and water to thicken sauce. Put cooked fish into wok, stir so fish is coated with sauce, then return to serving platter. Serves 4-6 people.



# - The - RESURRECTION - of - PRINCE

**A**fter a long week at work, I was looking forward to climbing into my treestand to catch the last hour and a half of daylight with the rut in full swing. After putting on all of my gear, I had just snapped the last buckle on my full-body harness, when I felt my cell phone vibrate. The text was from a neighbor who advised me that two of the employees of an adjacent community had just seen a large eight-point buck with an arrow sticking out of its neck.

My initial thought was, "I'll go look for this buck in the morning since it was getting close to dusk." The next text said the workers thought it had just been shot as there was blood seen dripping from the fletchings on the arrow. This could mean that the shooter was still in the area, and since the buck was in a Poconos vacation community where hunting is prohibited, I changed my mind. I obtained the exact location of where the buck was last seen and then headed in that direction.

I arrived within minutes at the location where the buck was last seen. I first wanted to see if there was anyone around who might have shot the buck. I cruised the roads around the location and looked into the woods and around nearby homes, but saw no vehicle anywhere, and did not see anyone suspicious. I went to the location where the workers had seen the buck last and began to wander in circles, looking for any sign. I was able to discern a few drops of blood, but not enough to follow as a trail. Knowing I was where the buck had been, I thought about the topography and habitat, and where a wounded animal might go for seclusion.

A nearby wetland area, choked with highbush blueberry and surrounded by glacial boulder deposits was just over the rise from where I had found blood. I headed toward the swamp and using my binoculars scanned the landscape looking for any sign of the buck. There among the boulders, I saw a contrasting horizontal line that stuck out and I focused in on it. It was the top of the

buck's back as he lay between two of the larger boulders. From my angle, I could not see any evidence of an arrow, so I made a wide circle to get a different view. The buck stood at the sound of my approach and looked in my direction. At that moment I could see the fletchings protruding from below its left ear.

The buck then laid back in the spot and stayed put. I conferred with Game Warden Bob Johnson via cell phone along the way and we discussed the buck's situation. I continued to observe the animal's reactions over the next thirty minutes, and the decision was made to dispatch the buck.



Officer Johnson arrived and together we took up positions to stake out the carcass with the hope that the shooter might come looking to retrieve their trophy. After several hours without any results, we gave up our efforts and retrieved the buck. At this point, we were able to better examine the evidence and remove the arrow, which proved to be a crossbow bolt. The weird angle of the fletchings was because the entire bolt was embedded down the buck's neck. It appeared that the buck was shot from an elevated position or was lying down when shot, with the attempt being made for a headshot. The buck probably would have laid there for several days in agony before succumbing to the wound from infection or starvation.

Once the investigation was underway for any leads in the case, I learned from a nearby property owner that they had been feeding several bucks and does for years at their home. And they were understandably upset to learn this special eight-pointer had been wounded in such a horrible manner. They identified the deer as being one that had been there since he was young, and how they had watched his antlers increase in size each year, and they had named him "Prince".

I made the decision then and there that this buck, Prince, would not die in vain and go to waste. I contacted my son and asked him to get gloves, knives, and flashlights and be ready for when I got home. We field dressed the buck, and together we iced the buck liberally to cool the carcass.

The next day I got five more bags of ice on the buck and headed to Prime Time Meats in Milford, Pike County. This shop has been one of the certified processors for the Hunters Sharing

the Harvest program for many years. Steve Lyon agreed to process the buck for Hunters Sharing the Harvest, as all donated deer are deboned and ground into packages for distribution.

I then spent the next several days contacting local food pantries about this new source of protein

coming available, all of who welcomed the offer of receiving venison to provide to their recipients. Within a few days, Steve Lyon reported back that the product was ready. Fifty-two pounds of ground venison was then distributed among two food pantries in Pike County, providing high protein meat to dozens of needy families.

This deer is just one of many that aren't wasted, thanks to the efforts of statewide Game Commission Officers throughout the year wherever practical. With the Agency partnering as a major supporter of Hunter's Sharing the Harvest, officers now make every effort to ensure these deer are field dressed and handled to end up on the tables of families fighting hunger.

In 2016 I was appointed as the Pike



County coordinator for HSH by executive director John Plowman after long-time volunteer John Crerand retired. That first year we had no deer donated to HSH, then Prince served as my initiation into the role of getting deer to processors and then following through to the food pantries for distribution.

Until this past season when donation opportunities significantly escalated, I had no idea about what goes on behind the scenes of food pantries. There is an army of folks out there donating deer and many more volunteers coordinating to make sure that once or twice a month, families in need get some groceries and other items to help tide them over.

With a little homework, I have now established a county-wide network of food pantries that welcome donations of venison through the efforts of HSH

and supporters such as the Game Commission. I would be remiss to not give kudos to our certified processors such as Prime Time Meats in Milford, and Heberling's Butcher Shop in Greentown. These processors do a superb job at getting those animals processed and packaged and frozen for distribution in a variety of weights. Each portion is rated at ¼ pound so the average 40 pounds of meat from a deer yields roughly 160 meals!

This may not seem impressive until you have visited a food pantry and seen the faces of families receiving high protein venison with such pleasure. There are more people out there, in our own neighborhoods than most of us realize that no one ever sees in need. The HSH program has existed for utilizing a wildlife resource to help people since 1991 and has distrib-

uted over 1.2 million pounds of donated venison over that time.

The long list of individual donors, public and private sponsors and other supporters of Hunter's Sharing the Harvest providing the monetary support to allow deer to be donated at no cost to the hunters are key to the program's success. Their credits and all other information about the program can be found on the [www.sharedeer.org](http://www.sharedeer.org) website.

The network of processors, volunteer coordinators and others such as Game Warden's and Deputies who lend a hand getting this effort put together and ending with the army of people distributing the venison to families in need, is rewarding and incredible. This concept can be easily replicated in every district, as there will always be other "Prince" situations out there. ☺



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# International DIGEST





## CALIFORNIA



On April 28, 2019, wildlife officers investigated a tip to the CDFW's 24-hour poaching and pollution hotline called CalTIP. Specifically, the tip was directed towards a fisherman suspected over-limit of trout near Antelope Lake in remote eastern Plumas County. A man, later identified as Yaroslav Pugach, age 48, from Sacramento County had been fishing the trout opening weekend near Antelope Lake. The reporting party described seeing Pugach catch and retain more than the legal limit of five trout. He provided a detailed vehicle description and a partial license plate number. Wildlife Officers Zeke Awbrey and Jon Doerring responded to the lake. Pugach caught sight of them from a distance and fled at a high rate of speed. It took 1.5 miles of code 3 driving to catch him.

wildlife officers who made the case, came up with an idea of the best way possible to destroy 54 evidence trout. He contacted the Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care (LTWC) permitted animal rehab facility and asked them if they had any hungry bears. The facility often partners with CDFW in accepting and rehabilitating injured or orphaned wildlife. It is one of the few facilities permitted to rehab bears, ultimately preparing them for release back into the wild in the spring. LTWC confirmed they did have hungry bruins. Because bears are always hungry, especially right before hibernation, they would make great use of the 54 trout. So, on December 10, 2019, Lt. Kroll drove the forfeited evidence trout to Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care.

Rehabbing bears for release back into the wild is tricky business. Human

## CONVICTED POACHER FINED \$17,500 FOR UNLAWFUL TAKE OF DEER OVER BAIT

A Granite Bay man has been convicted of poaching a trophy class deer with the use of bait and will pay an enhanced penalty. A tenacious investigation by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) coupled with prosecution by the El Dorado County District Attorney's office made the conviction possible.

Wildlife officers conducting surveillance over the course of the 2018 deer hunting season observed archery hunter Myron Barry Woltering, 66, repeatedly adding food to a bait pile on a property he owns in Pilot Hill, El Dorado County. Woltering was unlawfully using alfalfa, corn, other grains and salt licks for the purpose of attracting deer. Using a combination of surveillance, a review of



He finally pulled over. Wildlife officers located a total of 54 trout – many times over the daily bag limit of five trout per day and cited him accordingly. Plumas County District Attorney David Hollister took a personal interest in the case. In October, his office prosecuted, which ultimately ended in a conviction. Pugach was ordered to pay nearly \$5,000 in fines and was ordered to serve two years of probation. Part of his probation terms included no fishing for two years. The seized evidence in the form of 54 trout were ordered destroyed by the court.

Lt. Kyle Kroll, who supervises the

contact, particularly visual, must be minimal to none. LTWC staff coaxed the bears out of an enclosure while reporters set up cameras to remotely record the bears feeding. They vacated the enclosure with the cameras rolling. The bears ate then were coaxed out of the enclosure to a different enclosure, and the cameras were removed.

There were more than 100 lbs. of seized fish, so the three bears, a bald eagle, and six raccoons devoured the trout, but not before tearing them to pieces and swallowing fish heads, guts, and the rest, in front of reporters' cameras.

mandatory hunting report records and search warrants served at Woltering's home, business and the property where the baiting took place, wildlife officers were able to prove Woltering had poached a large trophy class 6×4 buck over the bait.

On February 21, 2020, Woltering pled no contest in El Dorado Superior Court to one misdemeanor count of taking deer over bait. Because the buck qualified as a "trophy" size, the penalties for the crime were enhanced. Woltering will serve 3 years of probation, during which time he will be prohibited from hunting. He stipulated to the forfeiture of all



**HAWAII** 

**TWO O‘AHU MEN ARRESTED FOR ILLEGAL HARVEST OF HUNDREDS OF ‘OPIHI**

(Honolulu) – Two men from O‘ahu’s North Shore were cited yesterday by officers from the DLNR Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE) after they were allegedly caught picking ‘opihi in the Pūpūkea Marine Life Conservation District (MLCD). It is illegal to remove any marine life from an MLCD.

53-year-old Raymond Agsalda of Waialua and 53-year-old Ronsin Rosa of Hale‘iwa had 784 ‘opihi in their possession when contacted by DOCARE officers. Hawai‘i Administrative Rules prohibit any fishing, catching, killing, removal, or possession of any sea life, including live coral or rock from the MLCD. The only exception is in-season fishing at Waimea Bay, which has species restrictions and bag limits.



seized items and paid a fine of \$17,500.

The Pope and Young Club, one of North America’s leading bowhunting and wildlife conservation organizations, defines “fair chase” as the ethical, sportsmanlike and lawful pursuit of free-ranging wild game animals in a manner which does not give the hunter an improper or unfair advantage over the animal.

“California hunters have long considered baiting for deer a violation of fair chase principles,” said David Bess, CDFW Deputy Director and Chief of the Law Enforcement Division. “The Legislature and Fish and Game Commission enacted laws and regulations to prohibit the act, then took it a step further to enhance the penalties associated with conviction of baiting trophy class deer.”



“As more and more would-be poachers see poaching convictions with these enhanced penalties, we hope they will be deterred from poaching the largest deer out of these local herds,” Bess continued.

mately 280 wildlife violations being issued to 14 different subjects.

The following individuals have been arrested:

- Kenneth Ray Britt, (39 of Wesson, MS); charged with 142 wildlife violations.
- Tony Grant Smith, (25 of Wesson, MS); charged with 68 wildlife violations.
- Allen Shelton Morgan, (48 of Brookhaven, MS); charged with 28 violations.
- Breanna Jeanine McKay, (26 of Wesson, MS); charged with 5 violations.

This group is believed to be responsible for poaching roughly 100 turkeys and trespassing on 15 properties in Claiborne, Copiah, Franklin, Jefferson, and Lincoln counties. It was discovered during the investigation that the illegal activities were not limited to Mississippi. The US Fish and Wildlife Service is also investigating the illegal out-of-state hunts.

“This is the most blatant disregard for Mississippi’s conservation laws I have seen in my thirty-three years of service with this Agency,” says Colonel Steve Adcock. “The primary mission of the MDWFP Law Enforcement Bureau is to detect and hold accountable those persons who jeopardize our rich hunting heritage by committing lawless acts such as these.”

**MISSISSIPPI** 

A group of South Mississippians believed to have killed nearly 100 turkeys during the 2019 season have been charged and arrested. These arrests follow an 11-month investigation by the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP) Conservation Officers resulting in approxi-





## MONTANA



## “THE BULL ELK I ACCIDENTALLY POACHED WAS MUCH SMALLER!”

On the evening of November 15th, 2018, Broadus Montana Game Warden Kyle Queer received a TIP-Mont call from a witness who had watched a hunter kill a large bull elk and simply walk away. The witness was able to get a good description of a likely suspect pickup parked a few miles away on the Custer National Forest in SE Montana.

Before daylight the following morning, while traveling to meet warden Queer at the kill site, the witness saw the suspect vehicle, obtaining a license plate number. The data came back to a local from nearby Colstrip, MT.

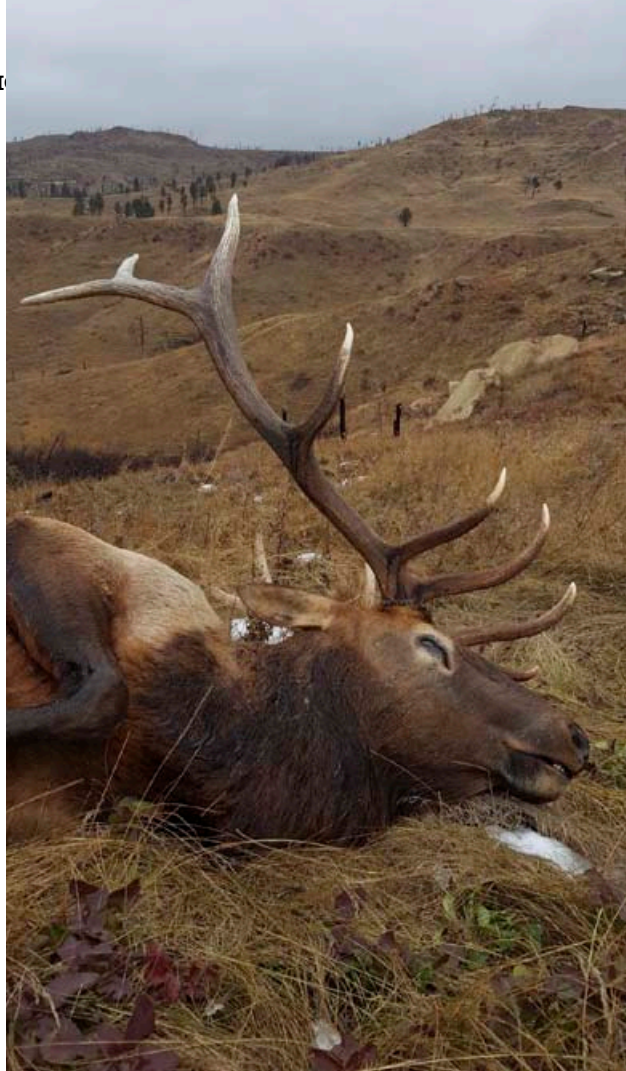
Despite a quality search with K9 Warden Paul Luepke and his Dutch Shepard Oola, physical evidence was sparse. Only the killed elk and a quality .30 caliber slug were recovered.

After researching the suspect vehicle owner's background, Warden Queer and Wildlife Investigator Steve Marx conducted a lengthy interview. Eventually, their efforts led to an admission the suspect's brother from Washington State had shot the bull.

The suspect from Washington came up with several interesting alibis during both his interview with Warden Queer and later for the judge. To Warden Queer he stated that he shot toward the bull “to make it move” and later that he shot the bull “out of mercy because it looked injured”. He was sorry the meat was wasted, but not for killing the elk.

The suspect was charged with hunting without a license, abandoning a game animal in the field and hunting on private property without permission.

To the judge, the suspect claimed that he was just watching the bull through his scope when the gun accidentally discharged. He also claimed the bull he shot was much smaller than the one warden Queer had found, too small in



his opinion to meet the guidelines for trophy restitution. Justice of the Peace Cathy Landa and prosecutor Jeff Noble weren't buying the story. The Washington poacher paid \$8,720 in fines and restitution and lost his hunting, fishing, and trapping privileges for 2 years.

*By Warden Captain Jack Austin*

## PIPELINERS AGAIN ... AND AGAIN!

Wardens in southeastern Montana have a long history of catching oil and gas pipeline workers poaching. The vast spaces and abundant wildlife are just too tempting for some.

During the summer and fall of 2018, Baker Montana Game Warden Zach Phillips was busy investigating numerous cases where someone was killing mule deer bucks and removing only their heads.

The construction of a large natural gas pipeline in the area brought a large influx of “pipeliners” from out of state. This rash of poaching was happening in remote areas near the pipeline route.

While hidden off road and prepar-

ing to set up an evening decoy operation, Warden Phillips and Warden Sgt. Chris Kerin saw a vehicle approaching. The pair agreed they heard a shot from a small caliber rifle. The vehicle quickly fled. The wardens found a dying mule deer buck thrashing in the sagebrush near the road.

Several days later, Warden Phillips examined a similar looking pickup at a grocery store in town, observing firearms and ammunition inside the vehicle. A quick check found the vehicle's owner, Matthew Hayes, had an extraditable felony warrant out of Texas for being a felon in possession of a firearm. Before making the arrest, Warden Phillips took the opportunity to conduct an interview and got a confession that Hayes and his supervisor had indeed piped the buck the wardens had witnessed a few nights prior.

Upon searching the vehicle, Warden Phillips recovered two small caliber rifles, ammunition, rotten packaged deer meat, vari-

ous blood, a spotlight, and a saw with blood and deer hair attached. Hayes ‘assured’ warden Phillips that he was a good guy, a meateater and hadn't committed any other wildlife crimes in Montana, but he had taken meat and antlers from road killed deer. Warden Phillips wasn't ‘assured’ in the least and has since served several search warrants, the results of which will have to wait for another article after prosecutions for numerous fish and wildlife violations are complete.

As for the single deer case above, Hayes was convicted at trial and fined just under \$2000 with a loss of hunting, fishing, and trapping privileges for 10 years. Hayes is currently in jail awaiting federal sentencing for being a felon in possession of firearms ... yet again.

On a pair of related side notes, during this same timeframe, Warden Phillips cited a different pipeline worker for unlawfully taking two mule deer bucks and a doe and another “pipelines” for taking a bobcat kitten from the wild.

*by Warden Captain Jack Austin*



**ONTARIO**



**ILLEGAL HUNTS RESULT IN LIFETIME HUNTING-LICENCE SUSPENSIONS AND ALMOST \$60,000 IN FINES**

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry wants to remind the public that non-resident hunters must use the services of a licenced outfitter while hunting bears in Ontario.

In May 2018, conservation officers of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, with assistance from the Canada Border Services Agency and Special Agents with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, investigated a hunting guide service.

The investigation discovered that three men guided paying clients on illegal black bear hunts while operating a guide service around Spanish, Ontario.

As a result, the three men and seven other people who were involved in the hunts were convicted of several charges under the Fish and Wildlife Conserva-

tion Act related to illegally shooting black bears, covering up what they had done by falsifying records, and illegally transporting hides to the United States for taxidermy.

Two trials took place, each heard by a different Justice of the Peace, in Elliot Lake.

The charges were as follows:

- hunting black bear without a licence
- unlawfully transferring a black bear licence
- transporting illegally killed wildlife
- providing bear hunting services without a licence
- hunting black bear within 400 metres of a dump
- abandoning the flesh of a black bear suitable for food
- making a false statement in a document
- exporting wildlife without a permit
- being party to providing black bear hunting services without a licence
- being party to unlawfully attaching a seal to a bear killed by another person
- being party to exporting wildlife without a permit.

Ontario residents Russell Christensen and Keevin Beckerton were convicted. In addition, the following people from Michigan received convictions: Onie Miller III, Onie Miller IV, Adam Collins, BrieAnna Miller, Andrew Geiger, Kevin Henning, Falisha Colby, William Dewitt.

In addition to \$60,000 in total fines, two utility terrain vehicles (UTVs) were seized and permanently forfeited to the Crown and some people received lifetime hunting-licence suspensions.



**PENNSYLVANIA**



**“SEEK AND YE SHALL FIND”**

A game warden never knows what violations a proactive approach to law enforcement might reveal. This “routine” check on a bear kill site in Sullivan County evolved into a case that would prove much more interesting than the routine word suggests.

A late afternoon during the 2016 bear rifle season found me on a remote and desolate road in the heart of rural Sullivan County. I had already worked several long days alongside 3 deputies and decided to check a bear kill site on a remote dead-end dirt road lined with a spattering of widely spaced cabins. Game Wardens are asked to conduct inspections of these sites as their schedule permits, checking for evidence of baiting or other illegal activities. The information provided on the Game Commission’s bear harvest report form only gave general information, so I phoned the hunter to get a more specific location and was on my way.

While driving along the road leading to the property, I encountered a hunter donned in full camo slinging a rifle as he trudged across a small field, making his way back to his cabin located on the far side of the road. Understandably, he was shaken when he looked up and saw the game warden as he was already in violation of not wearing the required amount of fluorescent orange material. I exited my state truck and approached him. A license check revealed that the hunter did not have a hunting license. “It’s back at my cabin over there,” he said, pointing across the road. I asked

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him if he knew of a bear being killed in the area. He offered that his buddy shot a bear earlier in the day and he knew the kill location. His friend had already taken the bear home to Reading. The two of us made our way back across the field and down an ATV trail to the alleged bear kill site. As we stood under a tree stand, in a wooded area, I realized

there was unlawful activity going on here – although I never imagined how much!

Interviewing potential game violators or witnesses is both an art and a science that becomes increasingly more effective with experience. Following several long days of hard work and nights with little sleep, my patience was wearing

thin. I pressed the hunter for legitimate information in an attempt to tease out any incriminating evidence of wrongdoing. My demeanor and questions must have relayed the impression that I was investigating an illegal bear kill, was in no mood for being lied to, and knew more than I did. He agreed to show me the actual bear kill site and began sharing

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his own litany of unlawful hunting exploits. We made our way to the cabin.

Persistent questioning revealed the hunter shot at and wounded a 9-point buck behind his cabin, through the use of bait (minerals), on the last day of the archery deer season. He further said that he found the buck still alive the next day, after the archery season had closed, and killed it with a rifle. The buck, minus the head, was then dragged to a location near a tree stand across the road from the cabin to entice bears. This seemed to be a common practice for the unscrupulous hunter. He admitted to previously placing a doe, one he claimed was a road-kill, in the same area. Both deer were readily fed upon by bears.

The Pennsylvania bear season saw our hunter behind his cabin and in the same tree stand where he killed his 9-point buck. The 8-point buck that now wandered into his shooting range never stood a chance. It fell in its tracks as the violator had now chalked up two antlered deer killed unlawfully. In an egregious example of wanton waste, the deer was unceremoniously stuffed amongst a nearby brush pile in the hopes of drawing in a bear.

The bear killed earlier that day by the hunter's friend was

determined to have been drawn into his shooting range through the use of multiple deer carcasses strewn about the location and actively being visited by bears.

You are the company you keep, it is often said. This investigation revealed evidence that this hunter, his father, and his friend were hunting over deer carcasses used as bear bait for four days before I arrived at the scene to conduct a "routine" check on a bear kill site. The hunter's friend may have shot a bear on this day, but two others would also be charged with a slew of game law violations.

Thousands of dollars in fines were assessed and the three men face several years of losing their Pennsylvania hunting license privileges. The aforementioned bruin was only 1 of the 10 bears seized for being killed unlawfully in Sullivan County in 2016.

Being proactive can be one of a game warden's most valuable assets in uncovering crimes against wildlife that would otherwise go undetected. Conducting hunting license checks, patrolling state game lands, and investigating bear kill sites may all be termed "routine" by many. In some unforgettable cases, they end up being anything but routine. 🐾

**Rick Finnegan,**  
**Sullivan County Game Warden**

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# STRENGTH

**MOST MEMBERS** of the general population believe strength and weakness are polar opposites. The majority defines the pair as antonyms dangling from far ends of the spectrum. Game wardens disagree. Officers who feel they are strong in every facet of the job expose a glaring weakness (likely one of many) - over confidence. In contrast, I would contest awareness of one's weaknesses is, in itself, a strength.

True we should tap our forte in the field each and every time we can. An acute pulse on our power leads to officer safety and success. Equally as important is knowing when to avoid an area of limitations. The infamous illustrations of the chain links and armor chinks lend themselves nicely. To be perceptive to the precise location and nature of the weakest point can be an advantage. The consummate professional constantly strives to train and learn to improve flaws.

A game warden's unique duties require constant balancing. Each incident necessitates a variety of skills and tools. Though such scenarios are endless, I have included four situations where a warden may measure and reflect strengths and weaknesses.

## Case #1:

**STRENGTH = HUSTLE AND DOGGEDNESS**  
**WEAKNESS = WATERFOWL IDENTIFICATION**

One fall, Deputy Game Warden Jones and I assisted with a waterfowl detail in a northern district. While I am no John James Audubon, I am familiar with more of my feathered friends than most. Still, I confess there are flocks of migratory birds and waterfowl species that allude my backyard, localized skillset. Bottom line, I would not want to put myself in a position where this precise identification was a cornerstone for prosecution. Not knowing a female mallard from a black duck hybrid could be humbling. Cognizant of this, I made several successful arrests based on perseverance. I woke early to wade through swampy hideouts. Hard work put me in the right place at the right time to catch violations related to licenses and shooting times. However, I deferred to Jones on proper identification. A waterfowl hunter himself, my partner officer was far more rehearsed in the process. Our strengths paired together on the case better than a dry wine and roasted duck.

## Case #2:

**WEAKNESS = INEXPERIENCE ADMINISTERING HUI**  
**STRENGTH = AMPLE FRIENDS WHO DRINK**

Field sobriety tests are a source of frustration for some game wardens. Does the opportunity to administer the test have yet to present itself in the field? Can training, though effective and confident at the time, be forgotten as hunting season rolls around?

A possible solution would be to combine professional life with personal, work with play. I can think of no group more readily accessible or testable than my friends who imbibe adult beverages. Volunteers emerge (or stumble) from weekly poker nights, buddies watching the big game, or relatives at

a holiday party (refrain from in-laws). The test for nystagmus will be a preferred party trick. Much like hunters, friends will

try to outwit the warden and beat the variety of coordination exams. Sharpen skills and testing comfort with this crowd. If you can detect alcohol's presence in Uncle Ray, catching law breaking sportsmen will become second nature.

## Case #3:

**STRENGTH = EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**  
**WEAKNESS = GIVING UP THE LEAD**

In my decade as a game warden, I gravitated towards I & E opportunities (Information and Education). I jumped at the chance to build bluebird boxes with boy scouts or to teach an entire grade level of school children about black bears. These outreach programs are among the best public relations. Society is perceptive. They witness a game warden happy to be there and sincerely enjoying the job and affiliated agency. A game warden effective at education needs to realize it is not only the community who benefits from these lessons. Hopefully, the instructor sees opportunity much closer to home – brothers and sisters of the badge. At first, an officer whose weakness was educational outreach should shadow, not lead, peers who flourish as instructors. Eventually, the student should become the teacher, the follower the leader. The saying surfaces, "Give a man a fish he eats for a day. Teach him to fish and he eats a lifetime." Similarly, teach a warden to teach, they can better serve people and wildlife across an entire career.

## Case #4:

**WEAKNESS = FIREARM PROFICIENCY**  
**STRENGTH = PERSEVERANCE**

The best shots I know happen to be the game wardens I know. Still, shooting may be a hiccup for some in law enforcement. For those who find qualification unfavorable, I recommend setting one's sights to a higher goal. Accuracy is synonymous with survival in a life-threatening situation. Stating the obvious, shoot regularly. Burning through a box is not only therapeutic, it's practice. Take additional courses. I

am in awe of testimony from students of advanced shooting classes and how quickly another set of eyes saw and remedied an existing problem. Take training seriously. The caliber of your firearm should only be rivaled by the caliber of your character.

Many other strengths and weaknesses exist in the life of a game warden. The aforementioned samples merely scratch the surface. Regardless, find creative ways to cultivate talent or fix the flaws.

With dedication and hard work, along with leaving the safety of comfort zones, our limitations can slowly shift to our gifts. Limits are better recognized and respected than tested or pushed. Underlying our weakness is strength. ☺

☞ Deputy Game Warden Marshall B. Nych,  
Pennsylvania Game Commission





# INSURANCE

*By Terry Hodges*

**I RECEIVED A CALL** one day I once had a duck hunter intentionally fire a 12-gauge shotgun just over my head in an attempt to scare me. It worked. It happened in California's vast Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta, a waterfowl hunters' heaven. I was in a 16 ft. skiff at the time and the hunter was in a brush blind along a shoreline, a spread of decoys in the water in front of him. I would learn that as I was idling toward him, he failed to recognize me as a warden and mistook me for a decoy thief. Anyway, at a distance of about 20 yards, his Magnum load of #5 shot passed no more than three feet over my head. While the shot missed me, the muzzle blast struck me like a punch. I was furious, and the shooter was absolutely horrified to learn that I was a game warden.

My intent, of course, was to haul the man off to jail, but there was a problem. His wife was with him, and they had arrived by boat from a marina several confusing miles away. I couldn't leave the woman out there alone, and other options, for many reasons, would have been difficult. Ultimately, because the shooter, about age 60, was terribly shaken and genuinely remorseful, I felt he had learned his lesson. I therefore reluctantly chose to let him off, but only after a severe tongue-lashing.

The above incident occurred early in my career and served as a lesson to me as to the many hazards we face when approaching armed violators, particularly when we're alone in remote places. And I was almost always alone. These hazards, we know, are multiplied greatly after dark, and I worked a lot of hunters shooting in near darkness during closed hours. I came to regard approaching late shooters as one of the most risky things I did. Not only was my initial contact with the shooters dangerous, but parting company with them after issuing citations was hazardous as well.



**Lt. Bill McFarland, CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, with a burst shotgun barrel found during the service of a search warrant. The cause of the mishap is unknown.**

Walking away from them after handing their shotguns back, even though I had unloaded the guns, always gave me the creeps. I was acutely aware of how easily one of them could slam a shell into a gun and cut me down, and more than once I had the distinct impression that violators were considering that very option.

At some point, however, I invented a trick that provided me with a little insurance. During the process of unloading shotguns and checking them for magazine plugs in poor light, I would somehow, "accidentally," stick the shotgun barrels into mud, enough to leave at least a two-inch plug of mud in each barrel. I would then hand the guns back to them, advise them of my "mistake" and warn them against firing the guns until after they were cleaned.

I'm sure many of you will feel that such a measure is beyond reason, if not policy, but I put myself in harm's way more than most, and to me, this simple

precaution gave me comfort and was worth the inconvenience it caused the violators. The photo accompanying this piece illustrates what the probable results would have been had a violator chose to ignore my warning. For what it's worth, I never received any complaints about my do-it-yourself "life insurance" practice.

## FOOTNOTE:

It was my personal policy, when working waterfowl hunters for late shooters, to allow a 10 minute grace period. Those who shot fewer than 10 minutes after legal shooting time received warnings, but those who shot later received citations. One evening, on a Delta island, I saw a lone hunter fire at passing ducks exactly 10 minutes late. He then gathered up his stuff and started out of the field. I was watching from the top of a nearby levee. As I was considering whether or not to cite the guy, he started across a wooden plank spanning a narrow, but deep, drainage canal. He was halfway across when the plank suddenly broke, plunging him into 40-degree water. The first part of him to reappear on the surface was one arm bearing his shotgun. Thrashing wildly, he was able to thrust the shotgun onto dry land, then he managed with great difficulty to drag himself out. At that moment, as he lay gasping for breath, I made my decision. He had suffered enough for one night. I turned and hiked down the levee to my skiff and went on my way, pondering the fact that justice, at times, comes more swiftly than usual. The near-hypothermic hunter never knew I had been there watching and was unaware that his unexpected dunking had probably saved him from a fine of several hundred dollars. ☹



# INTERNATIONAL Game Warden

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## Look Who's Reading International Game Warden

Environment and Climate Change Canada / Government of Canada Wildlife Officer Kristopher (Kip) Dirks and his co-worker with the crew of the HMCS Kingston (Canadian Navy Warship) in the St. John's harbor after a 3-week Arctic patrol called Operation Nanook. They patrolled the high arctic and inspected many National Wildlife Areas and Migratory Bird Sanctuaries that they just couldn't get to without the cooperation of their Navy partners. It has Signal Hill and the entrance (called the Narrows) to St. John's, NL harbor in the background.



### Look Who's Reading Winner!

Due to the cancellation of the 2020 NAWEOA conference in Tennessee, no Look Who's Reading Contest winner will be drawn for 2020.

All 2019/20 entries which would have been eligible for the 2020 contest will be pooled with the 2020 entries for the 2021 NAWEOA conference drawing.

### YOU could be a winner too!

Reader feedback shows that officers like getting to know their colleagues across North America and beyond. Just send in a snapshot of an officer - or your whole officer organization - so we can see who's reading IGW in your part of the world. Please include the following information with your photo ...

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