

direction. In cases where the violators might escape, it is easily possible for the airplane to follow the car as far as he might go, even to a point where he might wish to unload the meat, and keep him under constant surveillance.

COMBATING NIGHT HUNTING FOR DEER IN SOUTH CAROLINA

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Night hunting for deer has been a serious problem in the southeast for many years. In the coastal regions of South Carolina, it has become even more serious in recent years than ever before. This is primarily due to the tremendous increase in the number of deer in certain areas which always increases the temptation to take them illegally. Increasing numbers of access roads have also added incentive to night hunting. This problem has become so serious in and adjacent to the Refuge on the Francis Marion National Forest that the South Carolina Wildlife Resources Department felt that something had to be done in order to combat this type violation. As a result, a more strenuous night hunting law was introduced and passed in the Legislature. This law reads as follows:

"(A) There shall be no night hunting in this state except for raccoons, opossums, foxes, mink, and skunk and these may not be hunted with lights commonly known as head lights, attached to the head or otherwise attached to the body and the penalty for any violation of this section shall be a fine not exceeding two hundred dollars (\$200.00) or imprisonment not exceeding sixty days.

"(B) Every vehicle, boat, animal, and firearm used in the hunting of deer at night is hereby declared forfeited to the State of South Carolina, and shall be confiscated by any peace officer, who shall forthwith deliver the same to the Director or his duly authorized agent; and the Director or his authorized agent shall sell the same at public auction for cash to the highest bidder, in front of the county court house in the county where same is confiscated, after having given ten days public notice of such sale by posting advertisement thereof on the door or bulletin board of the county courthouse or by publishing such advertisement at least once in a newspaper of general circulation in the said county; and upon such sale the Director shall pay over the net proceeds thereof, after payment of the proper costs and expenses, if any, of the seizure, advertisement and sale, including any proper expense incurred for the storage of such vehicle or boat or for the housing and feeding of such animal pending the sale, to the State Treasurer for deposit in the Game Protection Fund; *provided*, that where said vehicle or boat or animal is of greater value than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) the owner thereof may at any time before sale redeem the same by paying to the Director for deposit as aforesaid, the sum of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) therefor.

"(C) The term "hunting" as used in subsections (B) and (C) hereof in reference to a vehicle or boat shall include the transportation of a hunter to or from the place of hunting, and the transportation of the carcass, or any part thereof, of a deer which has been unlawfully killed at night."

Although this law helped considerably, it is still not adequate and is now being revised and rewritten for introduction in the next session of the Legislature. The main additional features of the proposed law will be to increase the fine for violation and to provide for prima facie evidence to aid in conviction of night hunters, and to eliminate some of the loop holes in the current law.

After the conviction of a few night hunters under the above law, it was discovered that the hunters became considerably smarter and were much more

difficult to apprehend. They were hunting in high powered automobiles, and in order to catch them, it was necessary to drive at speeds around 100 miles an hour with the major portion of the hunters still escaping.

In 1954, the Department installed its first two-way car radios in order to combat night hunting in the Francis Marion area. With the use of a number of state-owned automobiles equipped with two-way radios, the night hunting in this area has been materially reduced.

The Francis Marion National Forest is situated in Berkeley and Charleston Counties. It is bounded on the north by the wilderness of the Santee River; east by the Atlantic Ocean; south by the Cooper River and west by Highway 52. It contains approximately 245,000 acres. Sixty thousand acres of this is in a wildlife management area which has been closed to hunting since 1948. Last year the first managed hunts were held. This area is located in South Carolina's coastal plain and the timber types consist of hardwood swamps and ridges of dense growth of pine. A great portion of timber lands located on the coastal plains and within this boundary are owned by large companies such as the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company, International Paper Company, Williams Furniture Company, Cair Woodlands, other lumber companies and many plantations managed primarily for hunting purposes. The large property owners, including the National Forest, have within the past few years built a great number of roads throughout their forest lands for the purpose of removing timber, to act as fire breaks and to make remote areas accessible to fire fighting equipment. Deer are abundant in these areas. The building of roads increased the violator's interest in hunting deer at night with the use of a light, and usually these are used from a slow-moving automobile (10-12 miles per hour) in such a manner as to reflect light from the eyes of deer.

When a warden has suspicious evidence of night hunting in a given area, he makes a reconnaissance during mid-day and notes places where radio cars can be hidden near the road but completely out of sight. Although the cars must be completely concealed, they must be near the road that is being used by the violator in order to get back onto the road on a moment's notice. The warden then returns and requests from his supervisor as many cars and wardens as felt necessary to carry out the mission. These cars are placed between cross-roads or junctions, and vary three to eight miles apart. Where intersection are more numerous, additional cars are used to block all approaches.

Before hunting, the violator will usually drive the area in search of tire tracks leaving the proposed hunting road or any other evidence that may lead him to believe that a warden is present. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary, by use of a sapling top, to erase by sweeping away, all fire marks and foot prints made. This can also be done by use of another automobile turning around, showing signs of merely turning around, thus covering or marring the tracks of the car that has taken cover. Placing of the cars should occur at dusk so as to eliminate the use of light during the process of concealment.

After all cars are placed and well-concealed, the warden in charge places one or more men with walkie-talkie radios between radio cars for the purpose of securing evidence and reporting to radio cars. The walkie-talkie operators are carefully placed in position, being sure he is away from any road junction or curve for these are the most unlikely places to be hunted. To take his position, he steps from a car onto the grassy road shoulder making no unnecessary tracks. The walkie-talkie operators having been placed, the warden in charge contacts all cars to be sure that all radios are in working condition and that all cars have knowledge of the others' location. When the walkie-talkie or radio car spots a violator, he immediately radios the car that is ahead of the violator giving the description of the car occupied by the violator with orders to stop same. While this is being carried out, the radio car located behind the violator will follow at a normal rate of speed, without lights if possible. This is done for the purpose of blocking all routes of escape, and to provide extra help if needed. All cars have no less than two wardens. Usually, these patrols consist of four wardens per car.

Before the use of radios, it is estimated that fifty per cent of violators such as this escaped and were never brought to court. There were occasions where wardens drove at a "break-neck" rate of speed only to see the violator escape into the dusty roads. This was a hazard which was eliminated by use of radio.

With the advent of radio equipped cars, there has been only one case on record where the violator escaped.

Another method used extensively in apprehending less experienced night hunters is by marking dead end roads leading off the main road by driving in an inebriated fashion across the entrance to these roads, and checking later to see if any cars have entered. After finding that a car has entered such road without returning, men with walkie-talkies are sent down to observe any violations by such cars and the road blocked. However, it has been found that experienced night hunters do not enter such traps and are much more difficult to apprehend.

Night hunting is definitely on the downward trend in the Francis Marion National Forest. This is attributed directly to the use of two-way radio units and the every day appearance of wardens on routine patrol. It has also been reduced in other areas of the State. We now have 38 radio controlled cars and one station, and are now equipping others as fast as funds will permit. We expect to have at least 100 car units by the end of the current fiscal year.

To apprehend the night hunter, there are five points that are most important in accomplishing the objective:

1. A detailed observation of the area and locating the most desirable position for radio cars and walkie-talkie men prior to calling out patrol.
2. All members of the patrol must have knowledge of the road system and especially the most likely area where the violation may occur. This is one by a roughly drawn map.
3. The patrol must have prior knowledge of all other radio cars working the area.
4. Prior to moving a patrol into an area and by the use of a roughly drawn map, assign cars to spots of concealment so that these cars can move into the area with as little confusion as possible.
5. Have patrol cars move into area from all direction possible and at intervals of thirty to forty-five minutes.

Attached is a map of warden night hunting patrol set-up.

