

THE METHODS USED IN TENNESSEE IN COMBATING THE HUNTING OF DEER AT NIGHT

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The Game Managers in Tennessee report that our deer herd is increasing. This good news also means that illegal hunting in some areas will likewise increase. This directly concerns law enforcement.

It is difficult to work on an established schedule, by an established method, for ways to violate are as numerous as violators. Therefore, law enforcement officers must be resourceful and able to adjust and alter plans as the situation requires.

Generally, we may say, that to combat deer hunting at night, the officers must have conservation-minded friends to furnish information that cannot be acquired on routine patrol. After pin-pointing the location of probable night hunting as best he can, the next step is to keep roads under surveillance, deploy officers around the area with portable radios so they can report directly to other officers and to one or more radio cars which should be ready to give chase immediately. After this, it then becomes a matter of waiting.

Let us not forget that one of the best weapons which can be used in this battle is a program of constant patrol both by vehicle and on foot. When it is generally known that a deer herd is being protected by diligent patrol, and that a violator may be faced with a heavy fine, plus confiscation of automobile and gun, and possibly a term in jail, the odds are not too attractive.

A most valuable weapon in this combat is cooperation from other law enforcement agencies operating within the State. As an example, the Tennessee Highway Patrol, which is constantly on the roads of the State, has on several occasions, contributed materially to the arrest and prosecution of deer poachers.

Another professional weapon which we are now able to employ in our continuing battle against law-breakers, and which is of tremendous value, both psychologically and physically is the Precipitin Test. By this method we can positively identify bits of deer blood and hair. In criminal prosecution, this *can* be a matter of vital concern to the officer.

There is one other system for eliminating night deer hunting. This one requires the cooperation of the violators. A case in point—On the night of November 11, 1955, in Cumberland County, Tennessee, two parties set out to poach a deer. One man was hunting alone, two men were hunting together. One of the hunters in the party of two had taped his spot light to his rifle barrel. The person who was hunting alone caught a glimpse of the light through the brush and blazed away with .00 buckshot, thinking he was seeing the reflection of a deer's eyes. Both men in the other party were hit. The shooter was fined \$50.00 plus \$9.25 costs the next day. In my opinion this is a very effective way to eliminate night hunting for deer.

Seriously, the best way we know of to combat night hunting of deer is to simply stay on the job, remain alert, and be prepared to wait patiently throughout the night if necessary.