



2021 Bulletin

Law Enforcement Section

ALABAMA

Michael M. Weathers, Colonel

AGENCY OVERVIEW

The Law Enforcement Section of the Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division provides assistance in the protection and management of Alabama's wildlife resources and the safety of the public through a fair and balanced enforcement program.

TRAINING

COVID-19 has impacted all aspects of the Law Enforcement Section and training is no exception. With the inability to gather, even in small groups, a new approach to training and meetings had to be explored. Several virtual applications were evaluated, to include the ZOOM app and Microsoft Teams.

Reduced restrictions on video training allowed by the Alabama Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, allowed the Section to utilize secure videos. Officers were required to sign-in to the channel and affirm, by email, that they had viewed and participated in the training. With the email affirmation held as a sign-in document, all requirements were met for the training to be counted as continuing educational units for law enforcement.

The Law Enforcement Section purchased weapon-mounted lights for all department-issued patrol rifles. All Conservation Enforcement Officers received training in the appropriate use of the weapon mounted lights in routine as well deadly force situations. This year the Section completely transitioned away from the issuance of any 10/33 program government owned patrol carbines.

With the state's waterfowl stamp sales being at an all-time high, the need for waterfowl training became apparent. With 35% of the Law Enforcement Section's personnel having less than 5 years of service, the timing of this training was ideal. An advanced waterfowl training course was developed, and all Conservation Enforcement Officers received this training throughout the summer. This course included live scenario-based training that replicates the situations our officers would likely encounter while working waterfowl hunting.

FUNDING AND STAFFING

Limited access to records due to COVID-19 closures of court houses and other public offices continues to hinder background investigations of potential employees. However, the Law Enforcement Section was able to hire 13 new employees in the past year. This year our Section hired the first Muslim Game Warden in the agency's 114-year history. This historic milestone continues our successful efforts at diversifying the Section's employee base to reflect the cultural composition of the state of Alabama more accurately.



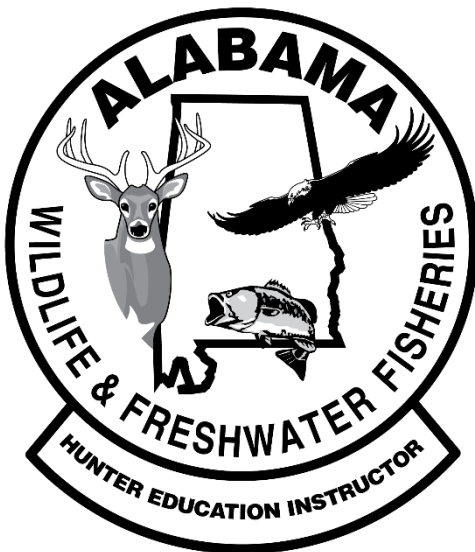
Advancements and COVID-19 social distancing adjustments to the Field Training Officer program allowed it to continue and be successful, regardless of the circumstances.

In an ongoing effort aimed at expanding hunting activities within the state of Alabama that allow for previously prohibited methods of hunting, a special

nighttime feral swine and coyote hunting season was created. This new season allows for the nighttime take of feral swine and coyote on private or leased lands over approximately 8 months of the year. The Nighttime Feral Swine and Coyote License set forth by the legislature went into effect on July 1, 2021. Residents pay \$15.00 for the license and nonresidents pay \$51.00 for the privilege. This new license represents an innovative approach to creating new funding avenues and encouraging new hunter recruitment.

LAW ENFORCEMENT TRENDS

In October of 2020 the Division's Hunter Education Unit transitioned from the supervision of the Wildlife Section where it has resided since its inception in 1973 to the Law Enforcement



Section. This transition paves the way for a much more aggressive range purchase and development program. The Law Enforcement Section currently has in excess of 40 FBI certified firearms instructors on staff and has a long history of teaching firearms courses within the agency. Approximately 75% of all Pittman Robertson Act funds are generated by target shooters and have no intersection with the practice of hunting. The time to act and provide better facilities for those that provide so much of our funding is now. The manpower available within the Law Enforcement Section will enable the success of public range operations

and outreach, resulting in increased licensed sales and operation fees for the sustainment of future budgets.

OTHER SPECIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

The ALDCNR Honor Guard is in its 12th year and consists of 24 members statewide. The team is called consistently for services from the Divisions within the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources as well as outside agencies. The team is always ready to go, no matter the circumstances or time constraint. The team participated in the Alabama Bicentennial parade held at the State Capitol, numerous funeral details and has posted colors at minor league baseball games throughout our state. This year they had the distinct honor and privilege to post colors at the high school graduation of the son of one of our fallen officers in a show support for the family. The Honor Guard continues to show the level of dedication and remembrance that our agency has for its employees regardless of the number of years since that employee's retirement. The Honor Guard provides the final impression of our agency on the families of our current and former employees. Participation in the ALDCNR Honor Guard is the most difficult assignment to achieve and only the elite of our agency are selected for addition to the team.

The K-9 Unit of the Law Enforcement Section continues to grow and perfect its mission. The unit consists of 5 handlers and 7 canines. Our Department hosted a large-scale in-service training this year for multiple state and local agencies. The K-9 Unit provided Garmin Drive Track training to state and local law enforcement utilizing our staff, aviation assets were provided by the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency. The K-9 Unit continues to be a very valuable asset assisting with the apprehension of poachers, search and rescue, manhunts, and public outreach events throughout the state. The Unit participated in several high visibility rescues this year and brought a wealth of positive attention to the Section.

EQUIPMENT

The section was able to purchase optics and weapon mounted lights for all issued patrol rifles. Twenty-five Ram 1500 trucks with cargo management systems, brush guards, and emergency equipment have been purchased and will be issued to field officers for patrol vehicles. In addition, several new laptops were purchased to replace outdated models.

ARKANSAS

Brad Young, Colonel



AGENCY OVERVIEW

The Arkansas Game & Fish Commission has seen a dramatic change in upper-level positions over the past year. Director Pat Fitts retired on June 30 and was replaced by Austin Booth. Austin comes to the AGFC from the Arkansas Department of Veterans Affairs where he held the positions of CFO and Chief of Staff. Colonel Greg Rae, Chief of Enforcement, retired on May 31 of this year. He was replaced by Brad Young who was the Major over the Special Operations' Units within the Enforcement Division. The Enforcement Division also saw the promotion of two Majors. One being Brian Aston, who filled the Special Operations' Major position vacated by Colonel Young, and the other was Nakia Crims, who filled the recently vacated West Region Major's spot. These are welcomed changes that will lead to fresh eyes and new perspectives within the Enforcement Division.

TRAINING

On March 21, Class E-1-21 started 836 hours of the most diverse law enforcement training in the State of Arkansas at the AGFC Enforcement Division's Training Academy. The school started with 10 Wildlife Officer Cadets. Throughout the 18-week school, the grueling curriculum and tough physical standards took their toll on some, leaving the class with only five officers on graduation day. The graduation took place on July 23rd at the AGFC Headquarters in Little Rock. The five graduating Wildlife Officers will now report to their assigned districts to complete an eight-week field training program before being permanently assigned to a duty station.

We have continued to advance our officer's training throughout the year by providing in-service courses such as ALERRT's E.R.A.S.E, SFST refreshers, OCT refreshers, Handcuffing refreshers, TASER recertification, Racial Profiling, Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, Anti-Bias for Law Enforcement, Firearms, and other online courses offered through the Arkansas Criminal Justice Institute. We continually encourage our officers to further their professional education by seeking out and attending new training opportunities.

Colonel Young's number one priority after taking over is officer safety. He has placed a large emphasis on continued training for our officers. Colonel Young has directed the training center staff to formulate and implement a comprehensive in-service training

program for our officers to complete yearly. He has also asked for out of the box thinking on advancing specialized training opportunities throughout the state, such as training with other elite agencies in the state that we routinely work closely with.

OTHER SPECIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

We saw a large increase in turkey violations during Arkansas' 2021 spring turkey season. Officers made 19 out of season cases and 72 hunting turkeys over bait cases throughout the state. This is a drastic increase from the years prior and agency staff are looking



into possible reasons for this increase. Area lakes continue to see large numbers of recreational boaters which we feel is attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. The increase in boating activity has led to more officer contacts on the water. Boating while intoxicated cases are continuing to be made weekly, and we continue to see serious boating accidents being reported throughout the state on numerous waterways.

Our Special Operation Units continue to see increasing requests from external agencies. From January 1, 2021 to date, our K9s have been activated 141 times and assisted other agencies 46 times. Our Dive Team has seen seven activations and five agency assists. Our Unmanned Aircraft Unit has logged 104 flights and 31 agency requests for assistance. The Boating Task Force has been requested three times and has logged 525 hours. The Enforcement Division's Chaplains have made 11 death notifications, assisted 15 citizens and 12 officers. Our Honor Guard has been activated eight times and been requested to perform at events such as the Arkansas Law Enforcement Memorial service at the State Capitol. The Honor Guard has a five-man drum and pipe band that has received statewide recognition and is requested to perform at numerous events, including line of duty deaths that occur throughout the State of Arkansas.



AGFC Enforcement Division's Honor Guard Pipe & Drum Squad



AGFC Enforcement Division's K9s

FUNDING AND STAFFING ISSUES

Although license sales and federal funding continue to be on the up, our division's maintenance and operating budget continues to remain cut. This has created some challenges with the new administration as several necessary needs have been identified. Colonel Young and his staff are continuing to negotiate with the agency's Directorate in hopes of leveraging a budget increase to help fund crucial infrastructure needs within the Enforcement Division. Colonel Young and his staff are also exploring grant options and are communicating with the legislative body in hopes to tap into the American Rescue Plan.

The continuation in shortages of many necessary items is having a heavy impact on operating needs within our division. We are facing challenges in finding replacement parts for boat motors and vehicles alike. We have also been made aware of vehicle shortages that will impact fleet sales. With the Enforcement Division in constant need of new vehicles year in and year out, it has become an increasing concern that we will not be able to purchase any vehicles this year because of the supply shortage. This will not only have a substantial impact on the mileage that we have on our existing fleet, but also have a substantial impact on our maintenance budget as repair costs are sure to rise.

We are continuing to see a decline in quality applicants for our open Wildlife Officer positions. We currently have 12 openings throughout the state, most of which are in east Arkansas. We have also noticed a change in the completion rate of our academy by those we hire. We had an attrition rate of 50% during this last school, which is uncharacteristically high. The number one reason for leaving during exit interviews was being "homesick". We are also experiencing a higher-than-normal level of officers leaving the agency to pursue

other job opportunities. Most of these officers have less than 10 years of employment with the AGFC.

Another priority of Colonel Young's is the recruitment and retention of quality officers. To obtain this objective, he has implemented some changes within the division designed to benefit officers and their families, and to also boost morale. One of these changes was to implement a rotation on the days that officers observed as off days. Previously, all AGFC Enforcement Officers observed their days off on either Monday & Tuesday, or Wednesday & Thursday. This regular day off schedule was permanent. A new rotation was designed and rolled out in mid-June that rotates officer's days off every third month so that they may observe an entire month of weekends off with their families. This change has garnered very positive feedback from field officers and is something that Colonel Young is hopeful to implement permanently. Another morale booster Colonel Young has implemented is a facial hair policy. Currently, AGFC Wildlife Officers are prohibited from having facial hair. This new policy will allow officers to wear certain styles of facial hair within set guidelines. This new change is also receiving positive feedback from field staff.

Another issue that has been identified and is being worked on includes how we recruit for our open enforcement positions. We currently do not have a full-time recruiter and have been relying on field officers to coordinate and recruit through career fairs and outreach events in their assigned areas. Some issues identified in this process are that these efforts are oftentimes not coordinated through proper agency channels, and lead to misinformation and/or no follow up with the interested party. We have also identified that the areas in the state with the greatest need are oftentimes the least recruited. To work towards correcting some of these issues, Colonel Young has asked Major Aston to work through our recruiting process. Major Aston has formulated and is implementing a plan to recruit new officers effectively and efficiently to our agency.

A few of Major Aston's ideas are to create a "recruiter" type position. All Enforcement Division recruiting materials will refer potential applicants to this position for follow up and additional information. This will hopefully cut down on misinformation and provide a consistent message. He is working on creating a recruiting poster that is eye catching and directs potential applicants to a recruiting brochure located on the AGFC website. Major Aston is also working to update the recruiting brochure with new pictures, correct and valuable information, benefits offered, and "recruiter" information. He is working with our Communications Division to update the agency website to make the Enforcement Division's recruiting page more visible and easier to navigate for potential applicants. He created a "newsletter" that highlights enforcement work, job related functions and individual Wildlife

Officers. This “newsletter” also contains the “recruiter’s” contact information and is emailed to all current license holders. He is working to update recruiting materials and giveaways for in-person career fairs.

Major Aston is working with Veteran Affairs to tap into an intern program that is currently offered by all branches of the military. This program will allow newly discharged members of the military to intern with the agency, but the cost of the intern’s salary is paid by the military. Major Aston has also worked with Human Resources and the Training Center staff to revamp our hiring process by advertising for individual open counties instead of a statewide advertisement. We feel that if applicants know which county they are applying for on the front end, this will help cut down on dropouts during the final offer of employment. The hiring process will also take place in part, in the districts that have open Wildlife Officer Positions.

Some other major challenges facing the administration in the Enforcement Division includes needed upgrades in equipment and digital systems, and the cost associated with those upgrades. Equipment such as body armor and Tasers have reached their manufacturers recommended lifespan and tools such as body cameras are moving towards possible state mandate. Our digital platforms, or lack thereof, such as reporting, evidence recording, and HIN number requests is in desperate need of upgrade. With the overwhelming number of companies offering many of the mentioned products, and the continually rising cost of those products, the challenges of staying relevant is of great concern to our division.

FLORIDA

Roger Young, Colonel



AGENCY OVERVIEW

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Division of Law Enforcement consists of 848 sworn personnel who operate in six regions throughout the state. FWC officers are responsible for uniformed patrol and investigative law enforcement services on more than 8,400 miles of coastline, 13,200 square miles of offshore waters, and more than 34 million acres of land. They are highly trained, versatile law enforcement officers with full police powers and statewide jurisdiction. Additionally, FWC's cooperative agreements with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service cross-deputize officers allowing them to enforce federal marine fisheries and wildlife laws, ensuring state and federal consistency in resource protection. The past year has provided unique challenges and opportunities for the FWC, but we are proud to report that operations suffered no degradation as a result of measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19, or the national unrest which occurred during the summer months of 2020.

NEW DIRECTION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

On June 14, 2021, the FWC announced Roger Young as the new director for the agency's Division of Law Enforcement. Colonel Young will oversee more than 1,000 employees in the FWC's Division of Law Enforcement who protect Florida's natural resources and provide public safety on state lands and waters.

Col. Young holds a degree in social sciences with a concentration in environmental studies from Florida State University. He began his conservation law enforcement career 25 years ago with the Florida Marine Patrol officer and transitioned to the FWC after its creation in 1999. He promoted through the ranks and has served as the regional commander of the Southwest Region since 2015.

Col. Young has graduated from the FBI National Leadership Academy, the National Association of Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs Leadership Program and FDLE's Senior Leadership Course. He is a founding member of the agency's Special Operations Group, which specializes in high-risk man tracking, dignitary protection and tactical marine operations.

“Every day our officers and staff exhibit immense professionalism and dedication in protecting the people of Florida and conserving our natural resources,” said Col. Roger Young, director of the FWC Division of Law Enforcement. “It is my honor to represent them in this capacity and it is our shared responsibility to ensure our natural resources are there for future generations to enjoy.”

REACCREDITATION

The FWC’s Division of Law Enforcement received recognition in February 2021 for completing the review process to maintain its accreditation status. The FWC was initially accredited in 2009. This was its fifth completion of the accreditation process. Florida law enforcement accreditation is certified by an independent reviewing authority, the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation (CFA). There are approximately 240 prescribed standards reflecting best management practices that a law enforcement agency must meet or exceed consistently over a three-year period in order to achieve this status.

TRAINING

FWC Training Center

The FWC Law Enforcement Academy graduated two classes in 2020 for a total of 66 new officers. The training of back-to-back academies, sometimes with a several months overlap, is an extremely demanding pace for training staff. COVID-19 created additional challenges requiring building and implementing distant learning platforms during a ten-week facility shutdown. Both recruit classes were able to graduate on schedule and are currently working in their assigned areas.

In-Service Training

In spite of COVID-19 limitations, in-service training continued throughout the state to ensure FWC officers were prepared to protect themselves and others as well as the state’s natural resources. Distance learning was incorporated, when appropriate, to provide consistent training while still allowing attendees the ability to ask questions. In-service training focused



on firearm qualifications and proficiency drills, non-lethal weapons, legal aspects regarding the use of force, training scenarios, and CPR/first aid. Additional in-service training highlighted the appropriate use of non-lethal weapons and use of force scenarios including opportunities for de-escalation.

Recruiting

Division recruiters continued to focus on the mission of finding the most qualified applicants to fill vacancies, enhance diversity and increase retention. With COVID-19 minimizing the amount of job fairs, recruiters had to put forth an extra effort to make contacts while assisting with patrols.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Boating and Waterways

The Boating Safety Unit (BSU) coordinates and administers Florida's Recreational Boating Safety Grant, manages Florida's boating accident report process, and creates Florida's annual Boating Accident Statistical Report. Radio, television, and print media promoting boating safety and education was developed and distributed. In 2020, the FWC reached millions of boaters with vital safety messaging using radio and digital media. The unit participated in the Miami International Boat Show, the International Convention of Allied Sports Trades and helped coordinate Operation DryWater, Spring Aboard and National Safe Boating Week activities.

The FWC's Boating Under the Influence (BUI) enforcement efforts in 2020 were tremendous. Statewide, FWC officers made 578 BUI cases, removing impaired operators from the waters of the state. In a record-breaking year, 74,000 boating safety identification cards were issued to individuals.

Case Spotlight

On May 17, 2020, an incident occurred on the Alafia River involving a personal watercraft operated by Andrew Joseph Miltner and a boat towing a tube. Twelve-year-old Jasina Campbell and another young person were riding on the tube when Miltner's PWC collided with the tube, fatally striking Campbell. After a thorough, months-long investigation, it was determined that Miltner's consumption of alcohol, reckless operation of the PWC — including an accelerated speed in a posted idle speed zone and failure to avoid collision with the inner tube — caused the death of Campbell.

Charges were filed against Miltner, age 40, for BUI manslaughter and vessel homicide stemming from this fatal boating collision that resulted in the death of Jasina Campbell.

Boating Access

The Boating Access Unit (BAU) is responsible for the coordination and administration of Florida's Boat Access Program to identify, develop, maintain, and expand boating access sites in Florida. In 2020-21, approximately 25 grant applicants were awarded more than \$5 million

in state or federal funds for boating access projects. In addition to administering grants, the FWC staffs a full-time crew to handle construction and repair of nearly 300 ramps statewide



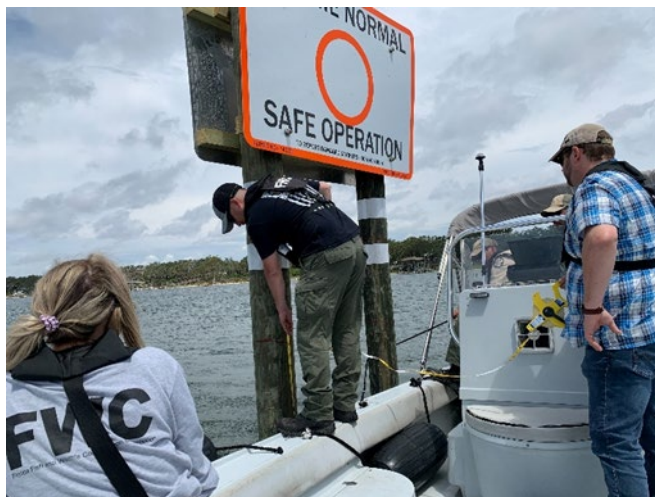
owned and operated by FWC or maintained by the FWC with cooperator agreements. This unit also aids with waterway marker inventory which includes inventories and assessments, installations, inspections of contractor installations, and flipping waterway marker signs during manatee seasons. One of the most valuable tools for Florida's boating public is the Florida Public Boat Ramp Finder, which provides

descriptive information, maps, and photographs for more than 1,500 public trailer boat launches and 700 public hand launch access points across Florida.

Waterway Management

The Waterway Management Unit (WMU) oversees and coordinates statewide regulatory waterway markers and manages the promulgation of "Boating Safety Restricted Areas" on Florida's waterways. Statewide, the WMU is responsible for more than 10,000 regulatory markers and buoys. This can be a challenging task - especially in the aftermath of natural disasters, such as hurricanes. The WMU maintains an On-Call Response Program system for identifying and correcting discrepant waterway markers throughout Florida that may pose a threat to public safety. During 2020, the WMU responded to a total of 163 incidents, an increase of 33 percent over average.

The Derelict Vessel Removal Program is also managed by the WMU. Derelict and abandoned vessels littering the state pose an environmental hazard, as well as a hazard to navigation. Nearly \$2 million in funding has been allocated for derelict vessel removal. To date, 22 contracts representing 55 vessels have been executed for removal funding assistance to cities and counties throughout Florida. Thanks to the Florida Legislature, this continuing program has been able to help state, county and local governments with the costs related to the removal of derelict vessels, stimulating removal activity throughout the state.



Multiple projects stemming from the \$4.5 million grant from the 2018-2022 NOAA-Marine Debris Program continue to move forward. As a result of multiple large-scale hurricanes making landfall in Florida over the past several years, FWC has received federal funds to address marine debris removal and hot spot mapping. Marine debris is a complex, ubiquitous, and growing global threat and we are working to increase intra-agency coordination of FWC marine debris efforts, furthering FWC's capacity to lead, serve as a resource, and partner in statewide and regional marine debris management.

CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT

Offshore Patrol

The FWC's Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) fleet consists of fourteen specialized boats strategically stationed across Florida's extensive coastline. Heavy Endurance- & Endurance-class vessels regularly conduct one to four-day patrols offshore in the Gulf of Mexico covering hundreds of miles. The crews perform resource and boating safety inspections on commercial and recreational fishing vessels in both



state and federal waters. The OPV crews' primary enforcement efforts consist of Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA) patrols of Federal Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) waters and safely conducting commercial shrimp boat inspections to ensure compliance with Turtle Excluder Device (TED) regulations.

Through the 2020-21 JEA contract year, OPV teams completed more than 2,600 hours of dedicated federal JEA offshore patrol. These efforts resulted in 330 federal fisheries violations being documented and referred to NOAA OLE. An additional 290 marine fisheries violations were documented through state citations and warnings.

In April 2021, FWC decommissioned offshore patrol vessel C.T. Randall. The C.T. Randall officially entered service with the FWC on Nov. 12, 2003; named in honor of fallen FWC Officer Charles T. Randall who gave his life in the line of duty. The C.T. Randall served for 18 years directly supporting conservation efforts in state and federal waters operating out of Port Canaveral, Naval Air Station Jacksonville, and Marco Island. Its presence off the coast of Florida and the tireless efforts of past captains and crew have created a distinguished

history. Countless hours were logged conducting long range enforcement efforts, dangerous search-and-rescue operations, and high-profile security details, all while maintaining a vigorous maintenance regimen.

STATEWIDE INVESTIGATIONS / INTELLIGENCE

Statewide Investigations

The FWC Statewide Investigations Section conducts, coordinates, and supports operations, working collaboratively to uncover criminal conspiracies and criminal networks. The section provides specialized training and administrative and technical support for regional investigations and uniformed patrol in each of the six regions around the state.



Working closely with stakeholders, local, state, and federal partners, Investigations focuses on the illegal commercialization of Florida's natural and historical resources. The section also supervises long-term covert operations which focus on large scale resource violators who illegally commercialize natural resources over multiple jurisdictions for personal financial gain and habitual wildlife offenders that have not been brought to justice via more overt means.

Case Spotlight

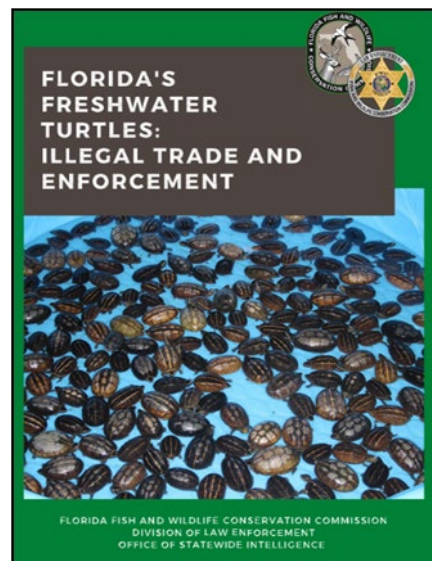
In January 2019, the FWC received a complaint from a concerned citizen about individuals illegally trapping flying squirrels in a rural area of Marion County. Flying squirrels, a protected species in Florida, are sold internationally in the pet trade. Over the next 19 months, FWC Investigators pieced together an elaborate scheme in which flying squirrels were being illegally captured by poachers in multiple counties throughout central Florida. The flying squirrels were then sold to a wildlife dealer in Bushnell and were laundered through the licensed business of this dealer, who claimed they were captive bred.

The poachers deployed as many as 10,000 squirrel traps throughout central Florida and as many as 3,600 flying squirrels were captured in less than three years. The wildlife dealer received as much as \$213,800 in gross illegal proceeds. The FWC estimates the international retail value of the poached wildlife will exceed \$1 million.

Seven suspects have been arrested and 25 felony charges have been made with additional arrests forthcoming. This group of suspects have been charged with Racketeering, Money Laundering, Scheming to Defraud and other violations involving an elaborate organized enterprise to smuggle Florida's wildlife to interstate and international buyers.

Intelligence

Intelligence analysts provide multiple services to officers and investigators in the field, as well as to other state and federal agencies. Analysts serve as interagency liaisons within the Florida Fusion Center located at the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. FWC analysts responded to 1,357 requests for information and processed 456 Field Intelligence Reports submitted by officers in the regions. FWC analysts completed over 38 photo lineups and 12 photo/video enhancements. They prepared and disseminated 88 FWC bulletins, assisted with 536 tips received from the public through social media and the tip line and conducted 36 background investigations. The Intel Team also completed an in-depth research paper on Florida's Freshwater Turtles: Illegal Trade and Enforcement that was distributed to FWC, as well as other state and federal partners.



Technical Operations

FWC's Technical Operations Unit is a statewide investigative support team working to empower FWC officers with the best technology, training, and techniques to produce sound evidence in their mission to protect Florida's natural resources. TechOps supports law enforcement operations throughout the state with forensic evidence recovery, data analysis, electronic surveillance, internet crimes investigations, and financial crime assistance. The unit specializes in remote access covert camera deployments, electronic tracking devices, cellphone record analysis, and forensic extractions of cell phones, computers, and GPS devices. Often in resource investigations the full extent of illegal operations is not discovered because digital evidence is not collected, requested, or analyzed. TechOps aims to bridge this gap and deliver on their moto "Bringing the big picture into focus."

Internet Crimes Unit

FWC's Internet Crimes Unit (ICU) is staffed by 24 regional investigators and coordinated by one Statewide Investigations Lieutenant. Investigators are trained to collect evidence generated from internet-based social media and advertising sites such as Facebook, Craigslist, Instagram, and eBay. Investigators document criminal evidence and conduct undercover operations of illegal wildlife sales over the internet. Additionally, FWC coordinates the Wildlife Cybercrimes Enforcement Group, a national collaboration of wildlife conservation internet crime investigators. The unit has been instrumental in closing a number of cases, including one subject who was charged with ten bag limit violations for the

spring of 2020 and thirty-three bag limit violations for the spring season 2021 after evidence of the crimes were found as a result of social media subpoenas executed by the unit.

Fish and Wildlife Forensics

This spring, the FWC Forensics Laboratory celebrated its one-year anniversary of its partnership with the University of Florida Mapes Center for Forensic Medicine. This partnership offers a unique range of services to our officers with access to analytical capabilities in the areas of entomology, botany, pathology, osteology, toxicology, and specialization in DNA and molecular



biology. DNA capabilities include species identification of most encountered terrestrial species and many marine species, gender identification in mammals and most species of birds, and DNA fingerprinting for a variety of species such as white-tailed deer, black bears, turkeys, canids, and felids. A year into this collaborative partnership, the UF/FWC forensic lab has already processed 20 cases. Most cases have involved the genetic profiling and gender determination of poached deer, genetic profiling of turkey, and species identification and morphological analyses of fish remains.

Wildlife Alert

The Investigations Section coordinates the Wildlife Alert Reward Association Program. During the fiscal year, the program received 349 calls, 1,939 emails or web tips, and 1,518 texts totaling 3,825 tips statewide. Rewards totaling \$20,400 were dispersed to concerned citizens that provided information leading to an arrest. Donations and fines totaling \$83,121 were received by the Association for the year. The Wildlife Alert program purchased and outfitted a mobile trailer as an outreach tool, which is now available for use by FWC personnel around the state to increase awareness of the Wildlife Alert program and encourage the public to partner in resource conservation by providing confidential information.



Case Spotlight

In January 2021, after nearly a yearlong investigation, the FWC charged four individuals with multiple hunting related charges including night hunting, over-the-season bag limit of white-tailed deer, petit theft and entering fraudulent information into the FWC Harvest Reporting System. In February 2020, FWC officers received information of illegal deer harvest that was

taking place at night on private property without landowner permission. A suspect, Dustin Bryant of Freeport, was identified and officers began gathering information. Phone records for Bryant were subpoenaed and, through further investigation, several other suspects were identified. Arrest warrants were issued for the suspects, and they were subsequently booked into the Walton County Jail on Jan. 8. The phone records revealed that violations had also occurred in Alabama. Two of the suspects, Bryant, and James Mcleod, were charged with additional violations by Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Port Investigations

Florida's ports are the front lines of an ongoing battle between law enforcement and those who unlawfully import or export illegal fish and wildlife. The illegal importation and exportation of wildlife through Florida's ports is a significant and growing issue. The FWC has expanded the Port Investigations K-9 Unit to support its existing Division of Law Enforcement Port Investigators to enhance the agency's capabilities to detect and stop illegal shipments. The K-9 unit consists of five dogs and their law enforcement handlers. These teams are geographically dispersed throughout the state, located near the ports of Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Tampa, Orlando, and Jacksonville providing consistent inspections and enforcement at Florida's major ports. Their mission is to detect the unlawful commercial trade and trafficking of fish, wildlife, and related contraband.

Captive Wildlife

The FWC promotes responsible ownership of captive wildlife, and it is our goal to develop the best regulations possible to provide for public safety, animal welfare, and the legitimate use of wildlife for educational, exhibition, or personal purposes. Florida's captive wildlife regulations are among the most stringent in the nation. Investigators perform inspections to ensure humane treatment and sanitary conditions are in place for the animals; verify compliance with caging and security requirements to maintain public safety; and to confirm proper records of sale and licensure are maintained. Investigators also conduct overt and covert investigations into the illicit trade of captive wildlife.



During 2020, FWC's Captive Wildlife Section conducted 4,375 inspections of facilities possessing wildlife. These inspections generated 420 citations and warnings. Additionally, inspectors responded to 145 wildlife alert complaints, 78 escaped exotic wildlife complaints and seized 343 specimens of wildlife. In 2020, there were 8,464 active captive wildlife

licenses, most of which must be renewed annually. Currently the Captive Wildlife Section is working towards automation of the licensing system which will allow online purchase and processing of licenses, greater reporting capabilities for both the licensees and the agency, and increased ease of communication between the agency and licensees.

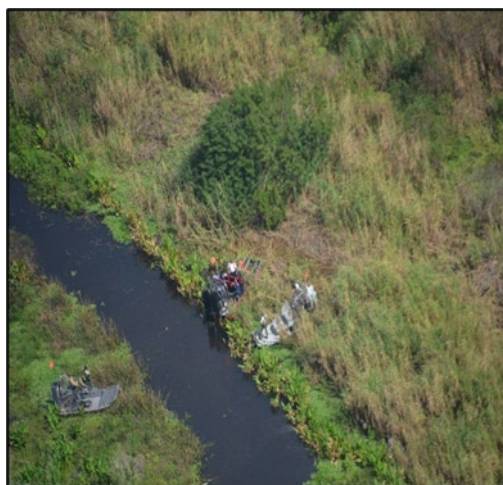
INNOVATIVE ENFORCEMENT PROGRAMS

Aviation

Aviation plays a vital role in the agency's efforts to enforce conservation and boating laws. It is also a unique tool that is essential for the protection of endangered and threatened species, environmental resources, and safeguarding the public. The Aviation Unit is instrumental in many of the search and rescues the FWC Division of Law Enforcement performs each year. Pilots also provide boating safety support for holiday boating weekend activities and specialized events such as spiny lobster mini season.

Case Spotlight

Aviation responded to a search and rescue request on Lake Okeechobee to locate three airboat occupants who had been missing since the evening before. The FWC pilot searched the area and located the three victims, guiding officers to them so they could all safely be brought back to the boat ramp.



K-9 Program

The dedicated members of the FWC K-9 Program make up the country's largest K-9 organization committed to natural resource conservation law enforcement and consists of 19 teams strategically placed throughout the state. Fourteen traditional teams provide services such as search and rescue, fugitive apprehension, evidence recovery and illegal fish and wildlife detection. Five teams are part of the Port Investigations Section and provide services enforcing import/export laws pertaining to exotic and protected species. Initial training for the traditional teams consists of a 400-hour K-9 academy instructed by the FWC K-9 training officers. The Port Investigations teams receives specific detection training at the USDA Detector Dog Training Facility in Newnan, Georgia.



Technical and Communication Services

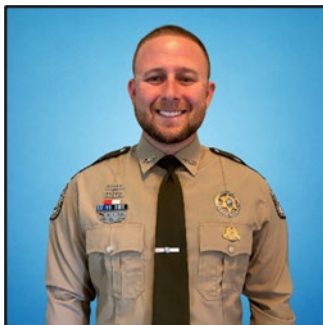
FWC's consolidation of its regional communications centers has helped reduce staff shortages, increase succession, and provides more opportunity for members to advance themselves within the section. This year we have been able to create efficiencies through a single chain of command. By adjusting the resources through consolidation of six RCCs into four, it has allowed the FWC to add staff who can safely address our state-wide needs.



Fleet Services

This section strives hard to live up to the motto of "Keeping our officers in the woods and on the water." During the last year, Fleet Services continued to rig out new equipment, repair vehicles and vessels and perform routine maintenance.

OTHER SPECIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ISSUES



Officer of the Year: Kevin Kleis, South Region Bravo

South Region Bravo Officer Specialist Kevin Kleis grew up in Miami where his father would take him on hunting and fishing trips, ultimately helping him develop a love for the outdoors. After college, Kevin attended FWC Academy Class 26, graduating in April of 2015. He was assigned to Collier County where he continues to work today. Kevin worked several major cases in 2020; one of those involved an incident where he cited a sailboat operator for having fictitious registration numbers on their vessel. Later, the sailboat was reported stolen with the operator as the suspect. Kevin assisted in locating and recovering the stolen vessel and returned it to its owner. After sharing the suspect's information to partnering agencies, the suspect was located, and Kevin arrested him for grand theft.

In 2020, Kevin was presented with a Life Saving Award and the First Responder Award by the Collier County Sheriff. He is one of the agency's Drug Recognition Experts, conducting DRE evaluations for several agencies in the area. He is also breath test operator, a general instructor, field training officer, an academy vessel operations instructor, and defensive tactics instructor. Kevin has been a member of the region's Special Operations Group for two years.

Investigator of the Year: Scott Kirsch, Southwest Region - One major investigation Scott was involved in was Operation Turtle Bandits, a Class 1 operation that started in February of 2018 originating from an anonymous source. The investigation revealed more than 4,000 turtles were illegally taken and sold over a six-month period, including Florida box turtles, Eastern box turtles, striped mud turtles, Florida mud turtles, spotted turtles, diamondback terrapins and many others; ultimately, over 600 turtles were returned to the wild. Two subjects were charged with numerous misdemeanor and felony charges.

Boating Officer of the Year: Britton Corbin, Northwest Region - When it comes to keeping the waterways clean and free from derelict vessels, Officer Corbin has made it his mission. Over the past year, Britton has worked a total of 16 derelict vessel investigations. He has an outstanding attitude and work ethic recognized by his leadership. Britton also enjoys community outreach and looks forward to being able to get back out in the public which COVID-19 has hindered this past year.

Reserve Officer of the Year: Tim Miller, Northeast Region - Tim played instrumental roles in several cases made by area officers. One notable case involved a search and arrest warrant on a suspect who had been illegally targeting deer for a decade. Tim provided historical information on the suspect and his efforts helped officers secure the needed evidence for the warrants. Tim enjoys public outreach and represents the FWC and law enforcement officers in a professional and positive manner.

Team of the Year: Sanford Regional Communications Center Team - Consolidation came to dispatch operations in 2020 with the new regional communications centers performing at a high level while taking on new challenges. The Sanford Regional Communications Center is noted as one that accomplished this with great success. During the year, the SRCC professionally processed thousands of calls that included 2,737 vessel stops, 993 traffic stops, 256 boating crashes (including hit and runs), 14 boating fatalities, 190 search and rescues, 74 BUI arrests, 15 DUI arrests, 51 confirmed warrants and 20 pursuits. The SRCC team is well known for their customer service, flexibility, and ability to always get the job done regardless of the task. This is accomplished through positive can-do attitudes, superior training, and reliance upon the fundamental division values of integrity, professionalism, adaptability, and dedication.

Duty Officer of the Year: Darbie Gibson, Orlando RCC - Darbie has the unique distinction of having been an FWC duty officer in three different centers and experience dispatching for all six regions of 67 counties. In 2020, Darbie answered 2,604 phone calls, entered 1,280 calls for service and dispatched 1,050 calls to FWC officers, including: 14 boating crashes, 11

search and rescues, 13 BUI arrests, 7 DUI arrests, five confirmed warrants, 165 vessel stops and 71 traffic stops. Darbie always displays the fundamental values on which the Division prides itself - integrity, professionalism, adaptability, and dedication.

Employee of the Year: Kathy Grossman, North Central Region - Kathy has given over 27 years of hard work, loyalty and a can-do attitude to the State of Florida. She has taken on the role of mentoring the administrative staff in the region, creating an individual bond and friendship with each member of the team. After recognizing a need in the region, she took the initiative to streamline the purchasing process.

Prosecutor of the Year: Kelly McKnight and Paul Dontenville, Tampa - Special Counsels with the Office of Statewide Prosecution in Tampa within the Office of the Attorney General often work together on multi-jurisdictional cases including several resource crimes. They have been instrumental in preparation, guidance, and prosecution for the most complex organized crime cases of fish and wildlife violations in the state of Florida. They were invaluable partners in Operation Triple Play, a two-year transnational wildlife smuggling investigation involving over 3,600 native flying squirrels that were unlawfully poached from central Florida and laundered through captive wildlife licenses.

Biologist of the Year: Chris Boyce, South Region Bravo - Chris is the FWC south area bear biologist and brings a combination of education, Americorps service and wildlife technician work to Florida, his eleventh state to call home. Chris understands the importance of working across division lines and often works alongside the Division of Law Enforcement assisting with field necropsies of bears suspected to have been killed illegally. Chris created and presented materials for staff members to better understand the types of physical evidence and wound characteristics present during necropsies and created a "cheat sheet" guide for identifying ballistics in a deceased animal. His proactive approach to addressing these issues reduces the number of calls that DLE must respond to.

Fallen Officer Julian Keen, Jr. On June 18, 2021, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers renamed Moore Haven Lock and Dam to honor fallen FWC Officer Julian Keen, Jr.

"Law enforcement officers are dedicated public servants who are never really off duty. Officer Keen showed immense courage and bravery the night he was tragically killed and will

forever be remembered by his FWC family and the citizens of LaBelle. Thank you to Congressmen Diaz-Balart and Steube for honoring Julian and the legacy he left behind,” said Rodney Barreto, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Chairman.



As part of the Water Resources and Development Act of 2020, Congressmen Greg Steube and Mario Diaz-Balart worked with the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure to include the renaming of the lock and dam in the final version of the bill.

Officer Keen was shot and killed in LaBelle on June 14, 2020, after attempting to stop a hit-and-run suspect while off duty. He served more than six years with the FWC and was highly respected in his community. The Moore Haven Lock and Dam will now be called the “Julian Keen, Jr. Lock and Dam” in his memory.

“We are grateful to Congressmen Diaz-Balart and Steube for their dedication in the renaming of the Moore Haven Lock and Dam in honor of Officer Keen,” said Col. Roger Young, director of the FWC’s Division of Law Enforcement. “Julian’s memory as a loving friend and family member who continually strived to make a difference in his community will live on for decades to come.”



GEORGIA

Thomas Barnard, Colonel

AGENCY OVERVIEW

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Law Enforcement Division, currently has 196 POST-certified Game Wardens with statewide authority and full arrest powers and 28 non-sworn staff members. The primary duties of these Game Wardens are enforcement of all laws and regulations pertaining to hunting, fishing, commercial fishing, environmental violations, and recreational boating, as well as to provide public safety on all our DNR-controlled properties.

The Law Enforcement Division operates with a straight-line chain of command. It consists of the Colonel, Lt. Colonel, two Majors, eight Captains (6 Region Supervisors, 1 Training Director, 1 Pilot), seven Lieutenants (database management, special permits/captive wildlife and wild animals, boating law administrator and administrative support, professional standards, investigations, 2 pilots), and 177 field Game Wardens (Sergeants, Corporals, Game Wardens First Class, and Game Wardens).

TRAINING

Game Warden Academy

The 35th Game Warden Academy began on Sunday, January 10th at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center in Forsyth. Eleven cadets from across the state began training with three of the eleven cadets voluntarily withdrawing during the 23-week course. All of the remaining cadets, with the exception of one who declined due to severe allergies, voluntarily took the COVID 19 vaccine and the 35th was able to train for 23 consecutive weeks with no COVID related incidents or delays. COVID 19 protocols and other COVID-19 safety precautions for



academy training were put in place to ensure the safety of our cadets and instructors until the Georgia Public Safety Training Center resumed normal operations on April 12, 2021. The cadets of the 35th Game Warden Academy graduated on June 18th and are currently out on Field Training in the Regions of assignment.

Special Operations Group Training

Twenty members of the Division's Special Operations Group (SOG) attended 6 days and nights of Woodland Operations Training with soldiers from the Georgia National Guard Counter Drug Task Force. SOG Game Wardens received military training in land navigation, tactical team movement, patrol and reconnaissance operations, team development, and the use of cover and concealment. The courses main emphasis was on mission planning and operational leadership. The course concluded with live scenario training missions which were executed during both daylight and night hours. Twenty-one members of the Division's Special Operations Group (SOG) also attended the 32-hour Semi-auto Pistol Level II course at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center. The SOG Game Wardens received advanced pistol training which focused on advance gun handling skills, shooting from cover and multiple threat engagement.

In-Service Training

This years in service training schedule was again dominated by the challenges posed by COVID-19. However, we have been able to complete annual firearm's re-qualifications X2 Taser re-certification training and our annual Standardized Field Sobriety and BUI Refresher training. The Division was able to purchase 40 additional X2 Tasers this year. Taser training was conducted in May and we currently have 116 X2 Tasers in the field. Game Warden's also completed the mandated Governor's Initiative Community Oriented Policing training. This year's training consisted of Cultural Awareness Training. The Division will be completing our annual fall firearm's in-service during the months of September, October, and November at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center. These two full days of training will include the recently updated Use of Force and De-escalation training programs, Use of Force Simulator Training, Shotgun Skills and Advanced Handgun Skills.

CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY

Investigative Unit

The Investigative Unit (IU) is comprised of two full-time investigators, one detached investigator and one Intelligence Analyst. The IU is responsible for undercover investigations, administration of the Critical Incident Reconstruction Team (CIRT), the Marine Theft Unit (MTU) as well as investigation assistance to the Special Permit Unit (SPU). The primary function of the Investigative Unit is to provide field Game Wardens with investigative support. The Investigative Unit is able to fulfill this mission with the support of 13 Game Wardens that perform a collateral duty called "Regional Investigator". Regional Investigators assist the IU with overt and covert investigations. The IU also serves the field as a central point of contact for information sharing on a statewide level. The Unit regularly utilizes ZetX. This technology is requested and used daily not only by Georgia Game Wardens but also by state

prosecutors, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and countless police and sheriff's departments. Through this assistance, the Investigative Unit and the Department have strengthened working relationships with other law enforcement agencies throughout the state - benefiting Georgia law enforcement and more importantly, the citizens we serve.

Undercover Investigations

The Investigative Unit is responsible for undercover investigations which are used when traditional enforcement methods would be problematic or unsuccessful. The Regional Investigators are full-time Game Wardens who have received training in undercover operations and equipment and are used throughout the state as needed. Last year, the Investigative Unit conducted and managed 385 investigations and calls for assistance from the field and from other agencies (both in and out-of-state). These investigations were comprised of intelligence gathering, buy/bust and both short and long-term investigations. The focus of many of these investigations included the sale or possession of wildlife and wild animals. These violations are difficult to address without the aid of undercover officers.

Critical Incident Reconstruction Team (CIRT)

Georgia has 16 CIRT investigators assigned throughout the state. CIRT investigates fatality and serious injury boating, hunting and state park incidents. Each investigator receives specialized training on investigating and presenting these cases. Last year, CIRT was activated to investigate 4 boating incidents and 3 hunting incidents. These incidents resulted in 4 fatalities.

Marine Theft Unit (MTU)

The primary function of the MTU is to assist law enforcement officers in the field. The MTU conducts computer database and offline searches, hidden hull identification number location assistance and assists with locating and recovering stolen vessels. The MTU also serves as the point of contact for customers as well as court systems related to the abandoned vessel process. Last year, the MTU received 58 abandoned vessel/stolen boat requests from the public and field. MTU also fielded numerous phone calls related to the abandoned vessel process.

Aviation

The LED Aviation Support Unit supports all DNR Divisions and other state agencies utilizing three Bell 407 helicopters and a fixed wing Quest Kodiak 100 airplane. The Aviation Unit flew 575 hours in support of the Division's Game Wardens as they conducted their core mission of protecting the states waterways and woodland areas. This consisted of flying support throughout the hunting season from early fall through early spring. Game Wardens were

flown on county surveys looking for baited food plots, duck ponds and illegal shrimping along the Georgia coast. Flight support was also provided for Operation Dry Water, night deer poaching/spotlighting patrols, and searches for missing person and drowning victims across the state. The Wildlife Resource Division (WRD) was provided aviation support during surveys of Bald Eagles, Kestrel, Sandhill Cranes, and waterfowl. Lt Jaye Bridwell flew these same flights along the Georgia coast in addition to surveys for sea turtles, dolphins, and the tagging of manatee. In addition to the WRD surveys, the Aviation Unit flew multiple missions assisting



Game Management Section and the Wildlife Conservation Section with prescribed burns on the State WMA's during the late winter months of January through March 2021. Additionally, the Aviation Unit was actively involved with the Law Enforcement Division's response to

COVID-19. The unit was tasked with multiple, high priority Georgia Emergency Management Agency and Homeland Security (GEMA/HS) flight requests to transport Personal Protective Equipment, ventilators and life-saving medications to multiple medical centers and hospitals. Furthermore, the Aviation Unit conducted missions supporting GEMA/HS in establishing multiple mass vaccination sites across the state. The TASE 500 camera system equipped Kodiak Quest fixed-wing aircraft, with trained camera operators has greatly enhanced the Aviation Unit's capability to support Game Wardens in conducting their primary mission of protecting the states waterways and woodland areas. The Aviation Unit also assisted other State and Federal law enforcement agencies utilizing the Kodiak fixed-wing airplane.

Special Permits

The Georgia DNR Law Enforcement Division Special Permits Unit is responsible for permitting captive wildlife and wild animals in addition to some specialty-take permits such as Scientific Collection Permits. The Unit also coordinates inspections on all permitted wild animal facilities throughout the state. This past year, the Special Permits unit issued 2,686 permits, collecting over \$66,000 in generated fees.

UNIQUE LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS

Ranger Hotline

The Ranger Hotline program, which provides a way for citizens to report anonymously potentially illegal wildlife and other conservation law violations, continues to be successful. If the information leads to an arrest, the tipster receives a cash reward funded by the Georgia Natural Resource Foundation, whose mission is to protect wildlife by increasing public support for wildlife law enforcement. Last year, 363 tips were received for various violations.

OTHER SPECIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

Crime Suppression

This past fiscal year has seen a huge increase in illegal street racing and crime in the City of Atlanta. Governor Brian Kemp initiated a collaborative effort between the Department of Natural Resources, Georgia State Patrol, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Atlanta Police Department, Fulton County Sheriff's Office, and the City of South Fulton, to assist in the city on weekends with the objective of cracking down on criminal activity and illegal street racing in and around Atlanta. From April 9th through June 13th, the operation resulted in 4,246 vehicle stops, 142 pursuits, 127 DUIs, 62 wanted persons, 95 reckless driving, 15 stolen guns, 2,915 citations/arrests, 250 impounded vehicles, 3,054 warnings, and five drug arrests. Game Wardens from across the state continue to be deployed on Saturdays and Sundays into FY 2022.



JE PATROLS

The Joint Enforcement Agreement #19 between Georgia DNR and NOAA office of Law Enforcement called for GADNR enforcement personnel to provide a total of 1,604 hours of marine law enforcement or related work under the agreement. Georgia has 5 Execution Priorities. Execution Priority 1 was Endangered Species Act. There were 360-man hours and 130 hours of at-sea vessel patrol hours dedicated to this priority. These patrols were checking Shrimp Trawlers for TED and net compliance. Execution Priority 2 was dedicated to Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. There were 360-man hours and 130 hours of at-sea vessel patrols dedicated to priority 2. These patrols were to check Red Snapper compliance and any other violation dealing with Snapper/Grouper and HMS species. Execution Priority 3 was National Marine Sanctuaries Act. There were 285-man hours and 95 hours of at-sea vessel patrols dedicated to Priority 3. Execution Priority 4 was

Marine Mammal Right Whale. There were 138-man hours and 46 hour of at-sea vessel patrols. These patrols were during the months of November to March and were specifically targeting Right Whale enforcement. Execution Priority 5 was Lacey Act/International (IUU). There were 60 personnel hours dedicated to IUU enforcement. These patrols were assisting NOAA Enforcement Officers with inspection of containers at the Georgia Ports. Vessel patrol hours targeted the following areas: 1) shrimp trawlers checking for TED compliance, 2) intercepts of recreational and commercial fishing vessels returning to Georgia seaports from fishing trips in federal waters, 3) offshore patrols to Special Management Zones and Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary, 4) concentrations of fishing vessels wherever they occur in the Exclusive Economic Zone adjacent to the State of Georgia, and 5) intercepts of recreational fishing vessels for Red Snapper compliance.

VEHICLES & EQUIPMENT

Throughout the year, the Law Enforcement Division acquired some new vehicles and equipment, utilizing funding from various sources. Forty-three new 4x4 patrol vehicles were purchased for field personnel. New equipment included the ballistic bump helmets for the Special Operations Group, gas masks and new body armor for select personnel, three UTVs and nine patrol boats.

KENTUCKY

Eric Gibson, Colonel

PERSONNEL

During the past year, 12 new recruits completed all required training and began their career as KY Conservation Officers. On June 1, 2021, 12 additional recruits were hired and began the first 6 weeks of the fish and wildlife law enforcement academy. Attrition rate in the academy has remained consistent with years past. Currently, we have 6 recruits remaining, 2 of those are already state certified and will continue on with the remaining 6 weeks of the fish and wildlife academy. The other 4 are currently attending the Department of Criminal Justice State law enforcement academy which is 20 weeks in duration. They will then return and complete their remaining 6 weeks of the fish and wildlife academy. Current plans are to advertise for another hiring process beginning in September 2021. The goal is to hire an additional 10-15 recruits. Current staffing levels are 126 sworn officers.

EQUIPMENT

Three new specialized units have been established within our division this past year to increase our capabilities to assist during emergency situations.

A swift water rescue team is currently being developed. The team of officers has been identified and the equipment has been purchased. Once the proper training has been completed, this team will be available to respond during emergency situations both within and outside the state.

One officer in each region has completed their part 107 certification to operate an unmanned aircraft system (UAS). This drone program will provide new patrol techniques to identify illegal activity and also aid in response to emergency situations that arise across the state.

During the past year, the division also purchased a towfish and ROV to aid with drowning/fatal boat accident investigations. This equipment has already been utilized to locate one drowning victim. There is a dedicated team of officers that have been trained to operate this specialized equipment. This team will be mobilized to victim recovery scenes throughout the state as they occur.

A robotic target from MotoShot was purchased to add more realistic scenarios to our tactical firearms training sessions. Officers attend range training three times per year. Two are

qualification (both day and night with all issued weapons) and one summer tactical range. The robotic target will be utilized during the annual tactical range.

Fifteen additional Dodge 1500 Ram trucks have been equipped with emergency equipment and will be issued to field officers for general patrol vehicles.

Six Chevy Tahoe's have been purchases for command staff.

3 new boats were purchased this past July for lake patrol.

LEGISLATION

Unfortunately, the number of boating accident fatalities and open water drownings have remained consistent during 2021. This increase has garnered the attention of both the KDFWR Commission and state legislators and sparked action to help decrease these numbers. The agency continues to produce and disseminate numerous PSAs focused on the importance of PFD wear, alcohol on the water and open water drowning safety.

In addition to the PSAs, Conservation Officers continue placing a higher emphasis on the current regulation that requires PFDs to be of the appropriate size and readily accessible. Officers have always stressed the importance of appropriately sized but have not always emphasized the importance of the PFDs being readily accessible.

A new initiative launched this past year will provide access to PFDs at public access points. These PFD loaners stations will encourage PFD wear by providing appropriately sized PFD availability to anyone who arrives at the launch site without one. The agency has solicited the assistance of local civic groups to assist with constructing and maintaining several of these loaner stations across the state.

LOUISIANA

Chad Herbert, Colonel

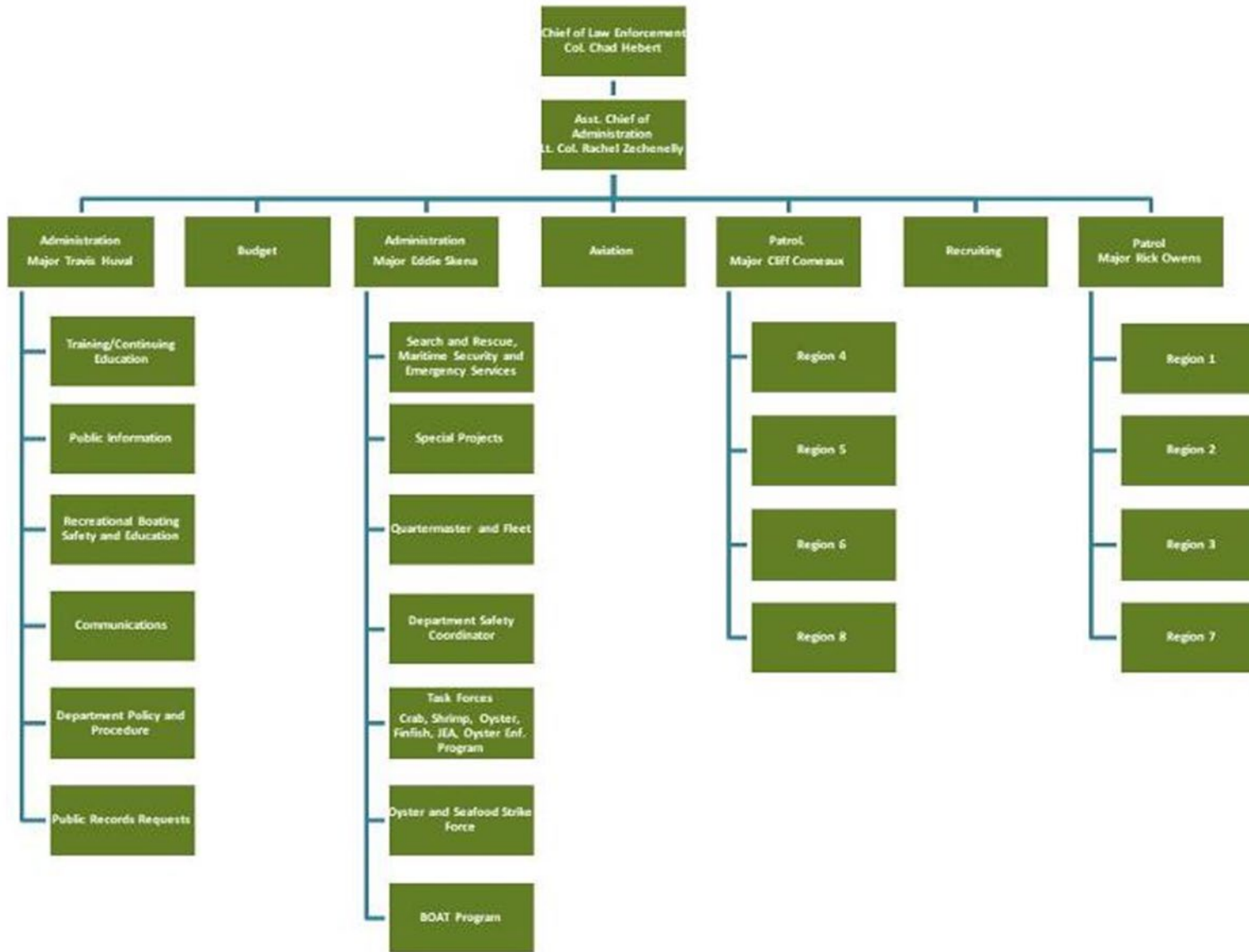


The LDWF Law Enforcement Division's (LDWF-LED) operating budget for fiscal year 2020-2021 was approximately \$37.4 million. Enforcement Division funding is derived from the Conservation Fund (LDWF self-generated revenue), Federal Boating Safety Funds, United States Coast Guard Grant funding, Homeland Security Grant funding, and the LDWF Enforcement Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA) with NOAA for Federal Fisheries and various local grants.

LDWF-LED conducted 314,056 patrol hours in FY 2020-2021: 257,525 on land and 56,531 on water. Agents made 539,715 contacts with the public, the majority of whom were following with state and federal wildlife and fisheries regulations. LDWF-LED agents issued 8,298 criminal citations and 2,940 warnings during this period.



ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE & PERSONNEL



LDWF-LED is organized in a paramilitary structure to assure the efficient use of resources, consistent statewide enforcement policy, and an effective, coordinated response to urgent needs. LDWF-LED is commanded by one colonel, the Chief of Enforcement, who reports directly to LDWF's Secretary and oversees administration of the division. Reporting to the colonel is a Lieutenant Colonel. The Lieutenant Colonel serves as assistant chief of administration and patrol. The administration side includes recreational boating safety and education, emergency services, training, support, public information, and budget. The patrol

side includes all state regional field operations, statewide communications, aviation and recruiting.

The LDWF Enforcement Division is currently headed by Col. Chad Hebert, a 28-year veteran at LDWF. Hebert was promoted to the rank of Colonel in July of 2020 and replaces Col. Sammy Martin, who announced his retirement in June of 2020 after 38 years.

Hebert, from Schriever, has earned numerous awards during his LDWF career. He has twice been honored with the LDWF Meritorious Service Award (2006, 2017), named Statewide LDWF Agent of the Year (2001), Region 9 Agent of the Year (2001) and Outstanding Officer (2001). Named Lt. Colonel in 2018, Hebert helped direct statewide operations and patrols as well as the administrative functions of the Enforcement Division. He also worked with other federal and state enforcement agencies, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Drug Enforcement Agency, Homeland Security, the Louisiana State Police and state attorney generals and judges.



LDWF Enforcement Division Col. Chad Hebert

Col. Hebert served as major from February of 2017 until his promotion and represented the LDWF Enforcement Division on the Crab Task Force, Oyster Task Force, Shrimp Task Force and Finfish Task force. He also served as an enforcement captain from 2013-2017, an enforcement lieutenant from 2009-2013, an enforcement sergeant from 2005-2009 and an enforcement senior agent from 1994-2005. As a senior agent, in addition to his other honors, he received the Certificate of Valor from the North American Wildlife Officer's Association in 2002. He completed the LDWF Cadet Academy in 1993, earning the high overall achievement award, the high marksmanship award and physical fitness award during the training academy.

The Enforcement Division is divided into eight enforcement regions. Each numbered enforcement region is composed of two or three multi-parish districts. Each region is managed by a captain who supervises two or three district supervisors of the lieutenant rank. Regions have between 16-25 agents, depending on regional size, resident population, and participant population. Current funding provides a field enforcement staff of two to four

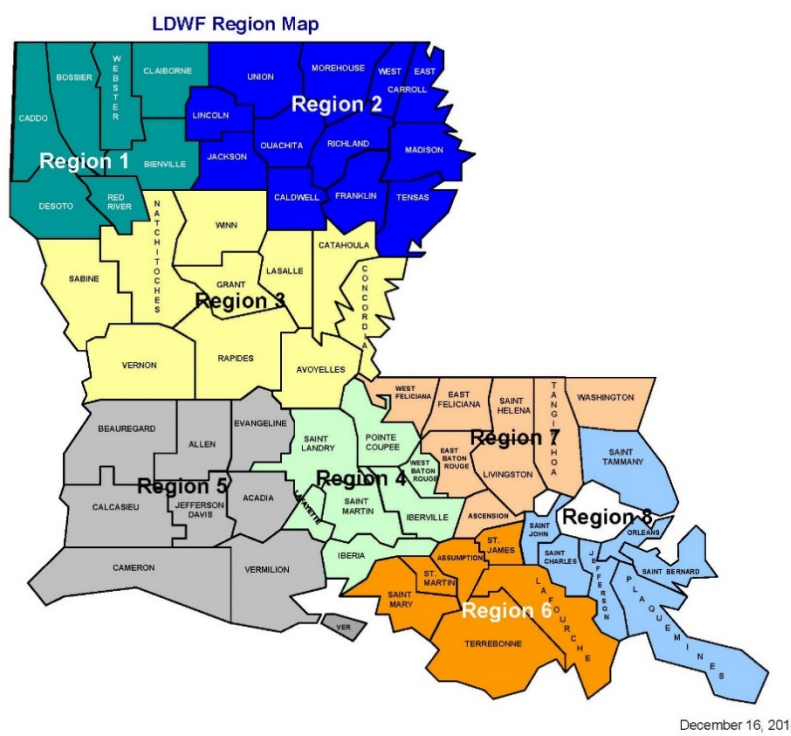
agents per parish, according to the nature of wildlife-based activities in the area, the number of people participating, the frequency of their participation and other factors.

Total division head count is 257 positions including 234 enforcement agents, 14 administrative staff, seven communications officers and two pilots. The actual number of filled positions (as of July of 2021) is 232.

REGIONAL ENFORCEMENT PROGRAMS

Most of the law enforcement activity performed by LDWF-LED is conducted by regional agents. Regional agents work a schedule assigned by their supervisors to address seasonal needs, reported violations, weather conditions and predominant activities. Agents are on-call 24 hours per day and must be willing to change their work hours and locations as circumstances require. Schedules are often changed due to weather and reported violations, and agents are often called out to respond to violations in progress, boating and hunting accidents, and calls for search and rescue.

Agents use a variety of vehicles during land patrols, primarily four-wheel drive trucks and all-terrain vehicles. The primary patrol vessels used during water patrols are outboard bay boats and 19-to-40-foot marine patrol vessels. LDWF-LED also deploys go-devils, airboats, surface drive, mud boats, bass boats and flatboats



SPECIALIZED UNITS

LDWF-LED contains three specialized units with selected missions or purposes: The Maritime Special Response Team, Oyster and Seafood Strikeforce and the Aviation Section. Agents in specialized units have developed specific skills, expertise, and knowledge appropriate for their particular operational fields. Agents in specialized units operate in relatively broad geographic areas and may work alongside regional enforcement agents when appropriate.

Maritime Special Response Team

The Maritime Special Response Team cooperative endeavor by LDWF-LED and the Louisiana State Police SWAT team addresses maritime security threats within the state of Louisiana. The team provides a maritime tactical response capability at the state level in order to effectively provide public safety, officer safety, Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High-yield Explosives (CBRNE) prevention, and response and tactical support for LDWF's federal, state and local partners.



Aviation Section

The Aviation Section contains two pilots and three total planes which include one Kodiak and two Cessna 206 amphibians. The Aviation Section's aircraft provide a valuable platform for detecting illegal hunting and fishing activities and frequently play a vital life-saving role in search and rescue operations. The Aviation Section also contributes its services to other divisions for biological missions, such as waterfowl counts and the monitoring of commercial fisheries



Oyster / Seafood / Strike Force (OSSF)

OSSF is assigned to work problem areas on the coast. They devote attention to commercial fisheries with a focus mainly on oysters, license fraud and white-collar crimes. Violations include smuggling, interstate commerce violations and false reporting, and under-reporting of commercial fish harvests. Violations pertaining to oysters include harvesting polluted oysters, theft of oysters, illegal tagging, oyster size regulations, and sanitary code violations. The agents are licensed FAA Drone pilots. The unit has three drones assigned, which are capable of night or day surveillance. OSSF agents also work with regional agents on coastal patrols.



LDWF ENFORCEMENT NEWS

LDWF Participates in All-New Animal Planet Series “Louisiana Law”

All-new series LOUISIANA LAW follows the men and women of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) as they patrol one of the most geographically diverse states in the U.S., with a jurisdiction that ranges from 200 miles out into the Gulf of Mexico up to the border of Arkansas. With the authority to enforce all fish and wildlife laws in addition to state and federal criminal laws, the wildlife agents of Louisiana are tasked with protecting the natural resources of the state and are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, often patrolling alone and miles from backup.

Audiences will travel deep into the woods and bayous with these wildlife agents as they encounter perilous situations that affect wildlife and citizens alike, all in the name of conservation. LOUISIANA LAW premiered exclusively on Animal Planet Sunday (May 9) at 8 p.m. and was a six-show season.

Season two of Louisiana Law is still in discussions at the time of this report.

LDWF Agents Providing Transportation for Essential Workers



The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) Enforcement Division has been providing transportation for essential workers who are trapped by unsafe driving conditions caused by freezing weather blanketing the state.

Agents began transporting essential workers to and from work on Monday evening.

LDWF agents are transporting essential workers to the Northwest Louisiana Veterans Home in Bossier Parish, the Northeast Louisiana Veterans Home in Ouachita Parish, and the Louisiana Veterans Home in East Feliciana Parish.

Agents are also providing transportation for workers at Bienville Parish medical facilities, St. Francis Medical Center in Monroe, Glenwood Regional Medical Center in West Monroe, the LSU Oschner Medical in Shreveport, and West Carroll Parish nursing homes.

Two Louisiana Men Cited for Contest Fraud after Bass Tournament in Caddo Parish

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries enforcement agents cited two Louisiana men for alleged contest fraud in Caddo Parish on May 29.

Agents cited Hunter Moss, 24, of Mooringsport, and Phillip Purcell, 30, of Oil City, for contest fraud in a bass tournament held on Caddo Lake.

Agents received a complaint that Moss, and Purcell had committed contest fraud. During the investigation, agents learned that Moss and Purcell caught three bass previously during the week and kept them alive in a basket near a dock on the lake.

During questioning, Moss and Purcell admitted to retrieving the three bass from the dock when the tournament started. The three bass were then included in the five bass they weighed in for the tournament.

Contest fraud brings up to a \$3,000 fine and one year in jail.

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award Presented to LDWF Sergeant Scott Dupre



The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council presented the 2019 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year award to Sergeant Scott Dupre of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Law Enforcement Division.

The Council's Officer of the Year award acknowledges service above and beyond duty requirements and recognizes distinguished service, professionalism, and dedication to enforcing federal fishing regulations in the Gulf of Mexico. Nominees may be submitted from each of the five Gulf State Law Enforcement agencies, the U.S. Coast Guard, and NOAA

Fisheries' Office for Law Enforcement.

Sergeant Dupre has led and assisted with numerous federal fisheries cases throughout his career. He has vast knowledge of state and federal fishing Regulations and he has made cases for shrimping violations, improper license and permits, and for possession of undersized or out of season fish. In 2019, Officer Dupre made a case in federal waters that cited a captain for shrimping without a federal permit, not abiding by federal shrimp trawl tow-time regulations, and for violating the Endangered Species Act by being in possession of a sea turtle and two bottle nose dolphin skulls.

LDWF Enforcement Agent Recognized at June Commission Meeting

A Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) Enforcement Division agent was honored at the June 3 Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission meeting held in Baton Rouge.

Shikar-Safari Club International presented their 2020 Conservation Officer of the Year award for Louisiana to LDWF Corporal James Bruce. The Shikar-Safari award recognizes an agent from each state for outstanding efforts in conservation law enforcement.

Corporal Bruce has been an LDWF agent for over five years and mainly patrols Grant Parish. Corporal Bruce leads his region in case production and is among the top statewide, he is on the LDWF alpha search and rescue team for his region, and an LDWF field training officer.

LDWF Agent Helps Save the Life of Chalmette Man with CPR

A Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries enforcement agent successfully saved the life of a Chalmette man on May 9 in New Orleans East.

Corporal Joshua Laviolette was on patrol around 7:30 p.m. in New Orleans East performing a license compliance check on a fisherman on the bank. During the check, an adolescent girl ran up to him asking for help for her grandpa, who was in a truck on the driver's side about 100 yards away.

Corporal Laviolette immediately went to the truck where he found an unresponsive 60-year-old man, who's complexion in his face was already blue. Corporal Laviolette checked for vital signs and found no pulse.

Corporal Laviolette then got the man out of his truck and onto the ground to start Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). With the aid of a good Samaritan, Corporal Laviolette performed CPR for two to three minutes when he observed the man breathing and felt a pulse.

Corporal Laviolette then monitored the man until Emergency Medical Services (EMS) arrived to take the man to University Medical Center in New Orleans. Corporal Laviolette checked on the man a few days later and learned that he was discharged from the hospital.

The granddaughter told Corporal Laviolette that her grandpa lost consciousness as they were traveling on the interstate from Slidell to New Orleans and she was able to get the truck off the first exit and stop it at the bottom of the ramp when she saw his truck.

Boating Safety Program

With 15,000 miles of tidal coastline, 5,000 miles of navigable waterways, three of the busiest ports in the country, a thriving shipping industry, a large commercial fishing fleet, and over 317,000 registered boats, Louisiana contains many geographic, demographic, and economic features that pose special challenges for boating safety enforcement.

LDWF-LED agents made 164,484 public contacts during the course of 54,556 patrol hours dedicated to boating enforcement, education, and accident investigation in FY 2020-2021. Of those hours, 36,637 patrol hours were performed in vessels on the water.

The adoption of "Rules of the Road" regulations for boaters has enhanced the enforcement of boating safety regulations and boating under the influence laws. These regulations provide the boating public with clear rules for the manner in which boats are operated and

are an important tool in determining fault in boating accidents. The “Rules of the Road” also enhance the ability of agents to address reckless and careless operation of motorboats. In FY 2020-2021, LDWF-LED agents issued 67 citations for careless and reckless operation of a vessel and 84 citations for operating a vessel while intoxicated. The statewide LDWF-LED boater education course teaches safe, legal, and responsible boat operation and is approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators. This program provides a vital outreach to the community and has greatly improved the awareness of and compliance with boating safety practices and regulations in Louisiana.



Agents hold monthly classes in each region for anyone who wishes or is required by Louisiana law to take them. In FY 2020-2021, 8,731 citizens were certified in classroom and online classes. LDWF-LED continues to recruit and train additional volunteer instructors to complement and enhance the efforts of its own agents. Since the inception of the boating safety education course in 2003, LDWF has certified 140,099 students.

LDWF-LED remained committed in marketing and promotion of boating education courses by creating special events and activities for students attending courses.

LDWF participated in the National Association of Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) Operation Dry Water Weekend from July 3-5 in 2020. During the Operation Dry Water



weekend, LDWF agents were out in force patrolling state waterways for impaired boat operators. During the weekend, LDWF agents cited six people for DUI while operating a vessel.

LDWF participated in several national campaigns including “Wear your PFD to workday” on May 21 and the “Safe Boating Week” in Louisiana from May

22-28. LDWF Enforcement Division agents were out in full force as always during the safe

boating week to perform boating safety checks and driving or operating a vessel while intoxicated (DWI) patrols.

The LDWF Enforcement Division held their annual "Boating Education Lagniappe Day" on April 24, 2020. This was the 10th annual Lagniappe Day. LDWF certified 123 boaters at



boating safety classes in eight different locations across the state and provided food and drinks, giveaways, and door prizes.

Media interviews, news release articles, public relation events and social media comments occurred throughout the state during all listed campaigns.

Search & Rescue Operations



LDWF-LED is responsible for providing and coordinating search and rescue response and maritime security activities for the state. This activity supports the state's goal of hurricane recovery and emergency preparedness by planning, training, and coordinating local, state and federal response for search and rescue associated with natural or manmade disasters. Preparedness and efficient execution of search and rescue response events is essential to saving lives and swift recovery efforts. Providing maritime security on our state's waterways is essential to protection of critical infrastructure located in maritime environments throughout Louisiana.

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries enforcement agents rescued 110 people Monday night, including seven with physical limitations, from flooded residences in southeast Lake Charles. The children and adults, along with 15 dogs and cats, were brought to high ground where family members were waiting or they were shuttled to a nearby shelter, according to the LDWF. The rescues, involving 11 agents with vessels, were conducted from 2 p.m. to 11 p.m. on May 17 as long periods of heavy rains resulted in flooding in Lake Charles.

A Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) enforcement agent and Cameron Parish Sheriff's Office (CPSO) Deputy participated in a successful search and rescue mission in the Gulf of Mexico in Cameron Parish on March 26. LDWF Senior Agent Matthew Perkins received a call around 3 p.m. about a shrimp boat that was taking on water off the coast of the Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge. Perkins responded immediately in a 32-foot vessel with a CPSO deputy. Around 4 p.m., Perkins and the CPSO deputy found the shrimp boat and were able to rescue the three people on board. They transported them back safely to shore with no injuries around 5 p.m. The seas were rough today and the boat took on water flooding the engine compartment. One of the people on board was able to call 911 for help. Perkins and the CPSO deputy found the people on board on top of the sinking vessel.



The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) Enforcement Division successfully coordinated a search and rescue mission for two missing boaters on Nov. 18 in St. Helena Parish. LDWF agents were notified about two overdue boaters in a bateau on the Tickfaw River around 10:30 p.m. on Nov. 17. Agents immediately responded to the area to conduct a search for the missing 79-year-old man and 54-year-old man. LDWF agents in a vessel were able to retrieve the men from their bateau around 3:30 a.m. and bring them back to the launch where they were treated for mild hypothermia and released. The men said they got lost in the river and then it got dark.

LDWF TRAINING

Academy

The LDWF Enforcement Division conducted the hiring process to fill 24 enforcement agent positions in the winter of 2019 and spring of 2020. The LDWF Training Academy Class 33 began their six months of training on March 9, 2020. LDWF had to suspend the academy due to Covid-19 concerns at the end of March. Training resumed on June 1, 2020.



On Dec. 1, 2020 LDWF graduated its 33rd class of cadets into the ranks of LDWF Enforcement Division agents at a ceremony in Baton Rouge. After eight months of training at the academy including two separate breaks due to the coronavirus, 12 newly commissioned agents are ready to begin enforcing hunting, fishing and boating regulations that govern the use of the state's natural resources.

Completed construction on the new Natatorium at the Waddill Training Complex in Baton Rouge. The Natatorium includes a swimming pool, full gym, locker rooms and classrooms to be used for training and other activities.



10 certified lifeguards. Lifeguarding with CPR with AED for professional rescuers. First Aid and administering emergency oxygen. American Red Cross Certification.

Completed and enhanced the vehicle operator course. LDWF has nine instructors that are certified in enhanced driving instructor course by the LSP.

DT instructors have a total of 11 Agents take the Monadnock DT course.

Recruiting

LDWF created a recruiter position within the enforcement division. The recruiter position focuses on reaching more qualified candidates who have the motivation and interest in becoming an LDWF agent while also diversifying the workforce.

In-Service

At the end of 2020, agents completed their annual and fall/spring firearms in-service training requirements, which consisted of the following:

Spring/Fall: In-Service

-Firearms – Rifles, Shotguns and Pistols

Annual: In-Service

- First Aid/Blood Borne Pathogens/CPR for the Professional Rescuer
- Defensive Tactics/DT Scenarios
- MEB (Monadnock Expandable Baton) Retrainer
- HIATT Tactical Handcuffing
- DWI Intox. 9000
- Standardized Field Sobriety Testing

DWI

Two agents were certified as Drug Recognition Experts (DRE), bringing the LDWF-LED total to 23 DREs.

Marine Law Enforcement Training Program

At the end of 2020, all agents had completed their annual recertification as Boat Operators for Search and Rescue (BOSAR) in the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA), Boat Operations and Training Program (BOAT). Additionally, we certified 4 agents in the NASBLA TOC (Tactical Operators Course), and 6 agents in the NASBLA Pursuit and Stop Course.

Crisis Intervention or Critical Incident Training

LDWF trained seven agents in Crisis Intervention and Critical Incident as part of the Agents Crisis Team (ACT). LDWF now has a total of 10 agents trained in Crisis Intervention. The ACT team consists of agents who are specially trained as skilled listeners. The objective of ACT is to provide support for law enforcement personnel, and their immediate family, who have experienced a critical incident or traumatic event. A Critical Incident is defined as any incident, action, or event, which has the potential for producing significant emotional trauma that may adversely affect the psychological well-being of law enforcement personnel.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Maritime Special Response Team:

The LDWF/LED Maritime Special Response Team (MSRT) partners with the Louisiana State Police (LSP) SWAT team to address maritime security threats within the state of Louisiana. The team provides a maritime tactical response capability at the state level in order to effectively provide public safety, officer safety, and tactical support for LDWF/LEDs federal, state, and local partners.

During this period the LDWF/LED MSRT team completed their annual training which consisted of:

- Close Quarter Battle Techniques (CQB)
- Firearms Training
- Security Zone Enforcement Procedures
- Underway Training
- Hostage scenarios
- Large Vessel Training
- Rural Operations and Tactical Tracking
- Water Survival

At the end of 2020, MSRT members had completed their annual recertification as Tactical Operators Course (TOC) in the NASBLA BOAT Program.

Preventative Radiological and Nuclear Detection (PRND):

LDWF continues to work with key local, state, and federal partners to implement a PRND program in the state of Louisiana. Through our partnership with the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO), the state has developed a statewide concept of operations plan (CONOPS), as well as standard operating procedures (SOPs) for individual agency partners. LDWF and PRND partners successfully completed a three-day training exercise as well as a full-scale exercise.

ACQUISITIONS FOR 2019-2020

Equipment:

- 51 replacement Concealed Bullet Proof Vests
- 18 replacement Maritime Special Response Team Tactical Entry Vests
- 5 Gatortail Boat/Motor/Trailer packages
- 6 replacement outboard motors
- 5 surveillance cameras
- 2 Night Track Pro cameras

- 13 replacement computers
- 1 replacement boat trailer
- 39 (4x4) patrol trucks
- 2 Administration SUV's
- 1 custom robotic deer decoy
- 2 Drones

OPERATION GAME THIEF



Louisiana Operation Game Thief (OGT), Inc. is a program which provides cash rewards to those providing information leading to the apprehension of wildlife violators. Violations can be reported anonymously by calling a 24-hour toll-free telephone number (1-800-442-2511) or by using LDWF's tip411 program. To use the tip411 program, citizens can text LADWF and their tip to 847411 or download the "LADWF Tips" iPhone or Android apps from the Apple App Store and Google Play free of charge. The hotline and the tip411 program are monitored 24 hours a day by the LDWF Communications Center. Reports are immediately referred to agents for action.

During the 2019 year, OGT paid out \$14,550 in rewards. In 2019 the LOGT board reviewed 38 cases that led to 78 subjects getting cited or arrested and a total of 707 citations issued. From 1984 till the end of 2019 the LOGT board has paid out a total of \$432,750 in reward money to informants.

JOINT ENFORCEMENT AGREEMENT

LDWF-LED again entered into a Joint Enforcement Agreement with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Office for Enforcement. LDWF-LED received approximately \$820,602 in FY 2020-2021 to patrol for compliance with federal commercial and recreational fisheries regulations, primarily in the Gulf of Mexico.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

The LDWF-LED Public Information section does various media and public information related tasks. The public information section handles public emails, Facebook questions, media requests including setting up interviews, and gathering enforcement related information. The public information section also provides footage and photos to media outlets both in-state and nationally.



LDWF-LED issued 115 enforcement related press releases during FY 2020-2021. These press releases were issued to a media contact list via email both state and nationwide. They were also posted on the LDWF website. The press releases ranged from rewards for information on current cases, conviction results, announcements of event and upcoming cadet academies, highlighting important and unusual cases, enforcement division and agent achievements and awards won, and boating safety Information.



LDWF-LED public information also produces videos for both external and internal use. The videos range from public service announcements, cadet recruitment, hunting and boating safety and cadet training.

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Jerry Carter, Colonel

AGENCY OVERVIEW/MATION

Are officers 100% Wildlife Law Enforcement or Mixed?

- Officers are mixed between (2) Wildlife, (4) Fisheries & (157) Law Enforcement Bureau

Straight Line Reporting Structure: Yes

- Number of Officers: 163. Officers are full time Law Enforcement
- Retirement of Colonel Steve Adcock and appointment of LTC. Jerry Carter to Colonel.

TRAINING

FY 21 training was different because of the COVID 19 pandemic and online virtual training classes were utilized for career ladder and continuing education.

FY 21 In-Service training focused on Conductive Electrical Weapons (CEW) certification, ambush situations, briefing our officers on trends that have developed within the past year, and utilized high stress situational firearms instruction. We believe it is necessary to adapt and evolve our training to meet the everchanging world in which we live and work.

FUNDING AND STAFFING ISSUES

The total appropriated budget for the Law Enforcement Bureau is \$15,181,000.00.

Maintaining adequate numbers in the workforce continues to be a challenge due to officers seeking employment opportunities outside of law enforcement and an increasing number of retirements. However, continued funding is allowing MDWFP to hire and retain more Conservation Officers. MDWFP graduated a Fall of 2020/Spring 2021 Cadet class with 15 cadets without any COVID outbreaks at our training academy by having a "once there never leave" training academy. We are still seeing a decline in the number of applicants for our Law Enforcement positions.

MDWFP is currently in the selection process for another cadet class to start training in the fall of 2021.

MAJOR CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT TRENDS

COVID-19 has changed the way we work. Officers are social distancing, masking, and practicing recommended safety guidelines to protect themselves and others. Virtual classes and zoom meetings are increasing along with this pandemic. Hunter Education is now

provided online to youth 12 and older and saw a slight increase in the number of students certified. On a positive note, officers are seeing more people take part in outdoor recreational opportunities due to COVID-19. License sales have increased about 10% and expected to hold as people find the outdoors as a way to escape the COVID pandemic. Boat, UTV and ATV sales continue to increase along with recreational boating activity. Officers have noticed an increase in alcohol and drug usage on the water with the introduction of new and less experienced boat owners and operators, with FY21 being one of the highest years for BUI citations issued in Mississippi. Officers should expect more encounters with the general public and safety will be of utmost importance.

STATE, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL ISSUES, LEGISLATION, LEGAL CHALLENGES AND COURT DECISIONS IMPACTING NATURAL RESOURCES LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Mississippi Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks adopted the following regulatory change during the FY21 session:

- HB 382 Chronic Wasting Disease; require testing of white-tailed deer harvested within White-tail deer enclosures

INNOVATIONS IN CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT

The implementation of social media investigations is one of our major ways of curtailing wildlife crimes and prosecution thereof. Conservation Officers aggressively search and investigate those people responsible for the exploitation of our natural resources. One of the cases prosecuted this year was Operation Long Beard, which involved 4 hunters from Mississippi illegally killing more than 25 wild turkeys in 2017 and 2018 in Kansas and Nebraska and traveling home to MS without purchasing the required license and shooting over the legal limit on wild turkeys.

The four individuals plead guilty to Lacey Act violations and will pay a total of \$48,000 in fines and will be on supervised federal probation from 2 to 4 years each, as well as being banned from hunting while under supervised probation. In addition to the Lacey Act violations, all four individuals have been convicted of a total of 234 turkey hunting violations in the state of Mississippi for the 2018-2019 seasons.

MISSOURI

Randy Doman, Chief

TRAINING ISSUES

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) has an Agent Training Academy starting on April 1st. The six-month (1000+ hour) academy will consist of 16 Agent Trainees (13 males and 3 females), with a graduation date set for early October. With 23 current vacancies within our Protection Branch, we will be seeking to hold back-to-back Training Academies with one in 2021 and the other in 2022. The Academy is Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) certified and consists of training in legal studies (constitutional law, conservation law, etc.), criminal investigations, defensive tactics, emergency vehicle operations, boating operations, firearms training, first aid/responder, CPR, land management practices, trapping, hunting incident investigations, fish kills, communications, conducting educational programs, and fish, forest, and wildlife management.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, much of our 2020 group training and qualifications (i.e., firearms, defensive tactics, CPR/First Aid, etc.), meetings, conferences, physical fitness assessments, etc., were postponed until COVID-19 precautions and safeguards were put in place. Alternative options were utilized (i.e., virtual conferences, etc.) whenever possible.

FUNDING AND STAFFING ISSUES

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 operating budget for MDC represents less than one percent of the total state budget and receives no state general revenue. The primary sources of revenue are the one-eighth of one percent Conservation Sales Tax at about \$123 million, permit sales at about \$35 million, and federal reimbursements at about \$34 million. Total receipts for FY 2020 were \$202.7 million.

Many Missourians flocked to the outdoors to hike, bike, walk, hunt, fish, camp, or simply enjoy being outdoors. Hunters and anglers came out in droves to our forests, fields, lakes, and streams. For example, the number of Missouri spring turkey hunters increased 8 percent. During the youth season, hunters harvested 41,461 turkeys, a 7 percent increase from the 2019 total.

MDC implemented a new organizational structure, as of July 1, 2020, which integrated the fisheries, forestry, and wildlife disciplines at both the Central Office (Commission Headquarters) and the field level to reflect our tradition of innovation and leadership in natural resource management. A new Regional Administrator role was designed to enhance

local decision-making and community partnerships in our eight regions. Other new focus areas included positions dedicated to conservation relevancy, recreational use, planning, citizen engagement, hunter and angler recruitment, wetland/aquatic systems, inclusion and diversity, and customer experience.

MDC has a priority-based budgeting program specifically tied to the Department's Strategic Plan: *Design for the Future*. This plan identifies three goals to direct the efforts associated with specific FY21-22 Department priorities.

- *MDC Takes Care of Nature*
- *MDC Connects People with Nature*
- *MDC Maintains Public Trust*

In Missouri, conservation pays by enriching our economy and quality of life. In Missouri each year, more than 1 million individuals' fish, 576,000 hunt, and 1.7 million view wildlife. Hunting, fishing, and wildlife recreation generate \$5.2 billion in economic impacts, and an additional \$10 billion in economic impacts from the forest products industry for a total of \$15.2 billion in economic impacts. This economic activity supports 111,000 jobs. Conservation makes Missouri a great place to live, work, fish, hunt, view wildlife, and be outdoors.

In June of 2021, MDC Commissioner Don Bedell is scheduled to rotate off the Missouri Conservation Commission where he has faithfully served for the past 12 years. The Missouri Conservation Commission consists of four members appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Their responsibilities include appointing the MDC Director, serving as MDC policy makers, approving regulations of the *Wildlife Code of Missouri*, strategic planning, budget development, and major expenditure decisions.

Due to the unknown budgetary implications of COVID-19, the Conservation Commission postponed implementation of the multi-year market-based pay plan which uses a 'Pay for Performance' approach directly tied to available funding. The system is based on three annual criteria:

- 1). Market-based salary comparisons/adjustments,
- 2). Tenure/longevity with the MDC, and
- 3). Performance pay based on set performance measures (i.e., agreed upon goals and objectives).

The Protection Branch currently has 172 full-time employees, which is currently down 23 positions due to retirements, resignations, and terminations. This is the highest number of vacancies that we have experienced within our ranks in quite some time.

At the present time, more than one quarter of our commissioned law enforcement staff are eligible for retirement within the next five years.

MAJOR CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT TRENDS

During the 2020 deer season, 4,787 hunters donated 238,920 pounds of venison to Missouri's Share the Harvest program. This was a decrease from our 2019 numbers (5,739 hunters donating 282,935 pounds). This is primarily a result of COVID-19 with fewer meat processors participating in the program due to a backlog of commitments to deliver beef and pork orders. Something new to the program this year was the addition of venison snack sticks as an alternative option to the traditionally required method of ground venison. Conservation staff, in addition to our program partner, the Conservation Federation of Missouri (CFM), are continually working on raising awareness and securing funding for this extremely valuable program.

Operation Game Thief (OGT) is a hotline sponsored by MDC and the Conservation Federation of Missouri. In 2020, Missouri's OGT program received 1035 violation reports (first time over the 1,000 mark), which resulted in 120 arrests and \$4,100 in rewards paid in 23 of the cases. Our OGT exhibit trailer was not used for events or programs in 2020 due to COVID-19. The Protection Branch actively promotes the OGT program through a variety of media outlets, including our Department's social media page. These efforts resulted in many quality cases being made in 2020.

One such example involved a contact with a landowner who reported hearing a gunshot in the area of their property, and promptly investigating the source of the shot. The reporting party indicated they encountered two unidentified individuals attempting to drag a buck off the neighbor's property towards an awaiting pickup truck parked nearby. The reporting party confronted the male subjects and told them that they would not be taking the deer, and to wait right there while he called the police and agent to respond to their location. Both individuals immediately climbed into their truck and drove away. The reporting party utilized his cell phone to quickly take a picture of the fleeing truck, and he identified it as being an early 2000 model, white Chevrolet Silverado 1500, single cab, with two large deer stickers in the rear-window, a black toolbox, and an aftermarket bumper.

MDC posted the photo, taken by the reporting party of the suspect vehicle, on our MDC Facebook page, and explained that the truck in question had been involved in a deer poaching incident, and solicited for information from the public to help solve this case.

The day after the photo was posted on MDC Facebook, the local conservation agent received an anonymous OGT call from an individual who provided critical information on the owner of the truck in question. The caller provided credible information on both of the truck's occupants who were involved in the reported poaching incident. Agents used this information to contact both subjects, and they both confessed to driving around in their truck on the date in question looking for deer to shoot. They indicated seeing a large buck bedded down with some does on the hillside, so the shooter jumped out of the truck and shot the buck while trespassing on private property. The investigation resulted in the discovery of 17 separate violations which included: Pursue wildlife from a motor vehicle, knowingly entered private property for the purpose of hunting or retrieving wildlife, possess wildlife taken illegally while in violation of trespass statutes, Hunter orange violation, Wanton and waste of wildlife, Loan deer permit, Failure to check deer as prescribed, illegally possess or transport deer, Take deer without valid permit, and Trespass.

Timber theft continued to be an issue in 2020 across the state with numerous investigations resulting in successful prosecution. Conservation Agent - Corporal Shawn Pennington spent most of February working on a walnut timber theft case involving stealing, property damage and other miscellaneous violations that occurred at our Osage Prairie Conservation Area, as well as surrounding private property in Vernon County. Many hours were spent on surveillance, tracking down logs, tracking down suspects, applying for and conducting search



warrants on cell phones, homes, and property, and recovering stolen property used in the timber theft. Some of the stolen property included three tractors, a Ford truck, trailers, chainsaws, other farm machinery and more. Two subjects are in custody, but the main

suspect had been "on the run" for several days after warrants were issued for his arrest. He was later arrested without incident.

Another example, Johnson County Conservation Agent Sam Whisler received a call from an Iowa Conservation Officer about a subject that had purchased property in Johnson County, Missouri. This subject was reported to be revoked from hunting, and caution was suggested when contacting this particular individual. In September 2020, a caller contacted Agent Whisler reporting a large buck taken illegally on neighboring property by the subject that the Iowa Conservation Officer had called about in January. The next evening, Agent Whisler responded to the area after the reporting party called and reported that the subject was back in the woods hunting. Agent Whisler immediately responded and watched the subject walk out of the woods just before dark with a black crossbow.

Upon contact, the subject admitted being revoked in Iowa, but claimed that he did not know he was also revoked in Missouri. When asked if he had harvested any deer, the subject said he had not but his friend from Arizona had killed a nice buck a few days before. The subject was quick to show Agent Whisler pictures of this deer on his cell phone. Several of the pictures showed the subject posing with the buck, but none of the friend that he had mentioned with the deer. Agent Whisler seized the crossbow and the subject's cell phone. The subject signed a cell phone consent waiver giving permission for Missouri Department of Conservation to search his phone. Through the cell phone search several violations were noted. The data on the phone showed pictures, videos, text messages, times, and locations using GPS. Text messages from the subject to the friend from Arizona on the evening the large buck was supposed to have been killed by the friend read "HUGE BUCK DOWN!!!!!!" sent at 6:43 pm and a video of the subject standing over the deer while it was still kicking and the subject stating "What a monster".

Other images on the phone included pictures of a coyote caught in a foothold trap after



season was already closed. In Missouri, the subject received citations for Take or Attempt to Take Deer without Permit x 2, Hunt while Revoked, and Take Furbearers by Trapping Methods in Closed Season. The friend from Arizona received one citation for Attached Permit to Deer Taken by Another. Information from the cell phone forensics search was also sent to Iowa Conservation Officers

where 22 additional cases were noted primarily for hunting and trapping while revoked and various trapping violations.

UNIQUE CROSS BOUNDARY OR COOPERATIVE, ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS

For the second time in recent history, Protection Branch staff were requested by the Missouri State Highway Patrol to assist with protective service operations involving organized public protests and civil unrest. These operations were primarily focused on the Missouri State Capitol building and complex. This was in response to the national threat of attacks against the capitol buildings in each state.

Protection Branch staff were also requested by the Missouri State Highway Patrol to assist with protective service operations associated with providing security at the 2021 Inauguration ceremony and related activities for Missouri Governor Mike Parson. This is the second time in the history of MDC that we have been asked to provide such assistance with this high-profile event.

MDC is part of a very productive network of federal, state, and private agencies (i.e., Missouri Department of Agriculture, US Department of Agriculture, Missouri Farm Bureau, United States Army (Fort Leonard Wood), Missouri Corn Growers Association, National Wild Turkey Federation, Missouri Agribusiness Association, and countless others) called the Missouri Feral Hog Elimination Partnership. All members of the partnership are dedicated to total elimination of feral hogs from the state and have worked together to successfully remove 12,635 hogs from Missouri's landscape in 2020.

In December of 2019, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) announced its decision to prohibit feral hog hunting on public land in the Mark Twain National Forest (MTNF). While prohibiting hog hunting, the USFS decision allows for the 'opportunistic take' of feral hogs in the MTNF during all deer and turkey hunting seasons. With this USFS announcement, the Missouri Feral Hog Elimination Partnership developed an operational plan to provide additional staff and resources on private and public land around the MTNF. The Conservation Commission is providing \$1.8 million annually to the U.S. Department of Agriculture for trapping services, and MDC staff contribute more than 25,000 hours annually towards feral hog enforcement and feral hog elimination efforts on both private and public land.

With the official closing of hog hunting on U.S. Forest Service land in Missouri, the Protection Branch was tasked with providing increased law enforcement patrols and maintaining a physical presence to deter potential public unrest, and to provide protection for staff on the ground conducting scouting and trapping operations. Conservation Agents also remained

actively involved in the trapping efforts while continuing to enforce the state statutes prohibiting the transportation and release of feral hogs, as well as enforcing regulations prohibiting feral hog hunting on MDC lands.

Missouri's Special Investigations Unit (SIU) continues to remain active as a contributing member of the multi-state Aquatic Resources Task Force comprised of their counterpart investigators from Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Tennessee.

NEW INNOVATIONS IN CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Protection Branch continues to embrace technology to better protect Missouri's fish, forest, and wildlife resources. The Protection Branch allocated funding to outfit all Protection vehicles as mobile workstations. We are currently outfitting each truck with laptop mounts, *CradlePoint* router 9-in-1 antennas with *Forward Thinking* applications to provide agents with Department of Revenue vehicle/driver information, wants/warrants, GPS tracking capabilities, and vehicle diagnostics.

The Protection Branch continues to make great cases utilizing game cameras and remote surveillance cameras that send photos to agent's smartphones when activity is detected. Numerous cases were discovered and effectively documented using this technology, as well as detecting the presence of feral hogs in staged corral traps. Our staff continue to successfully use Cellebrite in conducting cell phone data extraction and transfer analysis, and ZetX to map and analyze huge sets of phone record data quickly and efficiently while meeting scientific standards (TRAX mapping - tower dumps, exigent pings, etc.), as well as Google location warrants which proved to be extremely helpful in our first successful prosecution of an individual who illegally shot and killed a cow elk. This successful investigation utilized cell phone tower information and a Google location data warrant that provided critical GPS mapping data and ultimately solved a previously unresolved illegally killed cow elk case in Carter County. The defendant pled guilty on October 27, 2020, to the two charges of: 04-110-011 Import, transport, sell, purchase, take or possess black bear or elk, or parts thereof, inconsistent with rules of the Code, and 04-110-009 No person who takes or possesses any wildlife shall wantonly leave or abandon any portion of such wildlife commonly used as human food; and was fined \$1,000 per charge.

STATE, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ISSUES, LEGISLATION, LEGAL CHALLENGES AND COURT DECISIONS IMPACTING NATURAL RESOURCES LAW ENFORCEMENT

Legislative Session - MDC has been engaging in discussions with legislators on the typical topics (budget allocations, feral hog elimination efforts, landowner acreage for no cost permits, landowner registry, number of commissioners, etc.), but some of the more concerning legislation involves Senate Bill 449 (SB449) and House Bill 1166 (HB1166), both of which could ultimately restrict conservation agents, sheriffs, or their deputies from entering private property, or placing cameras on such private property, without first obtaining probable cause, permission, or a search warrant. This kind of restrictive and impactful legislation is also being filed in other states across the country. We are also seeing Police Reform legislation being discussed, and we are in the process of reviewing our Defensive Tactics training program through PPCT/HFRG. We are also researching various types of body cameras currently on the market to possibly deploy to our field staff in 2022.

Missouri courts discovered several years ago that the previously utilized mail-in ticket Fine Collection Center (FCC) process was unconstitutional since prosecuting attorneys were not physically signing off on tickets issued by law enforcement with the option to plead guilty and pay the fine via the mail. Thus, Missouri has gone to a Prosecutor Portal in which all tickets are sent directly to local prosecutors who then must decide if they want to require a personal appearance in court or to allow for the fine to be paid through the mail. With the assistance of the Missouri Office of State Courts and Timmons Group, the Protection Branch successfully created and implemented an e-filing ticket process.

COST SAVINGS INITIATIVES

The Protection Branch continues to utilize a very active and successful Protection Volunteer Program consisting of approximately 97 volunteers spread across the state. In 2020, they contributed 2,779 hours of volunteer work to MDC. These volunteers assist Conservation Agents and other MDC staff with projects including enforcement patrols, outreach and education programs, training scenarios and wildlife surveys. This volunteer program has also proven to be a valuable recruitment tool.

Protection Branch initiated our Department K-9 Program which consists of five (5) Agent Handler/canine teams. The canines are single-purpose sporting dogs consisting of either Labrador Retriever or German Shorthaired Pointer breeds. The Handler/canine teams are currently attending the 2021 Indiana Resource Protection School with a set graduation date of May 14th. California Department of Fish and Wildlife found that one well trained dog can save approximately 800 personnel hours per year. Based on this information our figures show that if each of our future canines save us 800 hours of labor each year, at an annual

cost of approximately \$1,050 dollars per canine, that's \$1.31 per hour in labor, or a total savings of \$15,760 annually per dog. Total annual cost for our K-9 Program is estimated to be \$5,250 with a projected total labor savings gained annually of \$78,800.

Renewing Missouri hunting, fishing, and trapping permits was made easier and more convenient through MDC's online Permit Autorenewal service. Autorenewal allows online permit buyers to automatically renew their permits prior to the start of the next season or permit year so they always have a valid permit when they need it. More than 24,200 permits, valued at nearly \$670,000, were renewed in FY20 using Permit Autorenewal.

In FY20, MDC's Mo Hunting app proved to be the most popular method for checking in harvested deer and turkey. Hunters used the app to check in 138,854 deer and 28,808 turkeys. The app accounted for 51 percent of checked harvests, while the phone checks accounted for 37 percent, and the remaining 12 percent were completed online. Hunters also used their mobile devices to buy 994,274 permits in FY20, an increase of 242,196 from FY19, for a total of \$13.3 million sold via mobile devices.

OTHER SPECIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

COVID-19 had many Missourians and others looking for safe ways to get outside in nature. As a result, more people visited MDC conservation areas and natural areas during 2020, and more people bought hunting and fishing permits than in previous years. To help folks discover nature for free, MDC waived the requirements for fishing permits and trout tags from March 27 through April 15. Unfortunately, this temporary waving of the required fishing permits did cause some issues for Protection staff with uninformed individuals who thought a fishing permit was no longer required for the year.

The Missouri Conservation Commission approved regulation changes to the *Wildlife Code of Missouri* regarding night hunting and feral hog control. In response to citizen requests, MDC approved rule changes to allow the use of night vision, infrared or thermal imagery equipment, or artificial light to hunt coyotes from February 1 – March 31. In addition, the changes allow for landowners or their representatives to use night vision and infrared or thermal imagery equipment, without approval from a Conservation Agent, to address damage-causing feral hogs. Illegal spotlighting and night vision/thermal imagery equipment use continues to generate complaints from the public which tends to keep our Protection staff busy.

As part of its ongoing efforts to slow the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), MDC added regulations to the *Wildlife Code of Missouri* regarding the transport of deer carcasses and carcass parts into and within Missouri, and proper disposal of carcass parts as pertaining to licensed meat processors and taxidermists. These regulations brought with them a level

of complexity with moving deer carcasses in and out of designated CWD management zones for testing, and challenges associated with finding sanitary landfills or transfer stations permitted by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources to accept the deer carcasses from meat processors and taxidermists.

prohibiting the transportation and release of feral hogs, as well as enforcing regulations prohibiting feral hog hunting on MDC lands.

The restoration of elk in Missouri is supported and appreciated by many people and organizations, and elk tourism has proven to be a benefit to local communities. The elk herd continues to grow and in 2020 the Department will hold its first elk hunting season using a lottery system with only five Elk Hunting Permits to be issued this year.

Unfortunately, we continue to investigate poaching activities that have resulted in the illegal killing of six elk over the last couple of years. Working with our partners at the Conservation Federation of Missouri (CFM), Missouri's OGT program offered a \$20,000 reward in late 2019 for information leading to the conviction of those responsible for killing these Missouri elk over the past several years. However, this large reward amount has not proven to be successful in garnering the information needed to make any arrests, so our investigations continue without having received much credible information or assistance from the public.

After numerous years of documented abuse, the Department has established regulations to address a significant level of fraud with our landowner permitting system. A statewide review in 2018 by conservation agents found over 30 percent misuse of no-cost landowner permit privileges (i.e., landowner fraud). Based on this information, the Conservation Commission instituted a landowner registry system to ensure no-cost permits are only being issued to qualifying landowners, and the Commission increased the qualifying land acreage from five to 20 acres.

Lastly, our conservation agents also conducted a very successful statewide covert operation involving pet stores possessing and selling illegal wildlife (e.g., focusing primarily on illegal invasive crayfish). Appropriate charges are pending and soon to be filed in the local courts

OTHER AGENCY UPDATES

In April of 2020, the Missouri Conservation Commission approved Missouri's first elk hunting season. MDC received 19,182 Resident Antlered Elk Applications and 33 Resident Landowner Antlered Elk Applications. From those applicants, MDC issued five permits for the inaugural season through a draw system. Missouri's first elk-hunting season ended on Dec. 20 with all five of the selected hunters harvesting bull elk during the firearms portion (Dec. 12-20).

The Missouri Conservation Commission gave final approval in December to MDC for the state's first black bear hunting season framework. The approved framework limits bear hunting to areas of southern Missouri and restricts bear hunting to Missouri residents only. The next step to Missouri's first bear hunting season will be MDC presenting recommendations to the Commission this spring for a potential initial permit quota and harvest quota. If quotas are set, Missouri residents will be able to apply during May for an October fall hunt.

ANOTHER HIGH-PROFILE POACHING INCIDENT IN THE SHOW-ME STATE

Brandon Butler cohosts a Driftwood Outdoors Podcast and was formerly the Executive Director of the Conservation Federation of Missouri. Unfortunately, his poaching story and subsequent cabin burning gained national attention.

After witnessing a poaching attempt the night of November 15, Butler filed a complaint with the Missouri Department of Conservation. Butler and his friends saw a truck enter a field less than 300 yards from his cabin and heard at least two shots after the truck's occupants illuminated the field with a light bar. Butler gave chase, got the truck's license-plate number, and reported it to MDC investigators. Not long thereafter his cabin suspiciously burned to the ground.

Investigators learned that three women were involved in the poaching attempt, which included the truck's owner, and one of them confessed to the shootings – implicating the others in the process. Investigators found no dead or wounded deer in the field or adjacent woods.

Butler has long kept trail cameras trained on his cabin for security, including one in plain view of visitors. When he checked the "dummy" camera, he found someone had removed its SD card. The two cameras he concealed nearby in the woods were untouched. Their SD cards held photos of a man carrying a rifle and container toward the cabin. Photos minutes later showed the man returning only with the rifle as flames erupted from the cabin. A time-lapse sequence documented the cabin's fiery destruction.

After studying the photographs and crime scene, investigators arrested Corey J. Landrigan, 32, on January 16, for allegedly torching Butler's cabin in retaliation for the poaching complaint. Landrigan, who knew the three women involved in the poaching incident, possesses a 17-year criminal history: including burglary, poaching, assault, and traffic violations. The convicted felon also served prison time for possessing a firearm and controlled drugs.

Butler said the cleanup felt like a two-day funeral, but he kept reminding himself that his loss isn't unique. "I heard from a lot of people around the country who suffered similar crimes, and the arsonist in many cases was never caught," he said. "I can't imagine what it would feel like if the person was still out there and could do it again to someone else."



Brandon Butler's torched cabin



The crew that helped Brandon Butler clean up after the fire

NORTH CAROLINA

Jon Evans, Colonel

AGENCY OVERVIEW

The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) Law Enforcement Division's mission is to conserve wildlife resources; promote safe, responsible boating; and provide public safety, through proactive law enforcement and the instruction of quality education. The division consists of 220 sworn law enforcement officers. Central office staff includes the Colonel, Major of Field Operations, Administrative Major, Captain of Support Services, Telecommunications Lieutenant/ Training Director, Professional Standards Lieutenant, Business Operations Manager, Telecommunications Supervisor, seven telecommunicators and three administrative assistants.

57th Basic School

- The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission 57th Basic School started on December 29th, 2020.
- The Basic School was held for the first time at the Samarcand Training Academy in Jackson Springs, NC located in Moore County.
- Eighteen officers graduated from the Basic School on July 20, 2021.
- The graduating officers are:
 - Tyler Barber of Granite Falls, N.C.
 - Kristofer Blankenship of Albemarle, N.C.
 - Jacob Bosley of Friendsville, Md.
 - Sarah Campbell of Thomasville, N.C.
 - Aaron Carter of Lumberton, N.C.
 - Joshua Doshen of Currituck, N.C.
 - Jacob Dyer of Purlear, N.C.
 - Zachary Hayes of Carthage, N.C.
 - Andre' Jones of Jackson, Miss.
 - Kirby Lambert of Robbins, N.C.
 - Michael Lott of Woodbridge, Va.
 - Justice McCormick of Lilesville, N.C.
 - Jason Munson of Massena, N.Y.
 - Devon Schaffer of Pueblo, Colo.
 - Walker Shelton of LaGrange, N.C.
 - Damon Smith of Stanfield, N.C.
 - William Weaver of Shelby, N.C.
 - Erin Worlax of Red Springs, N.C.



NASBLA Boating Accident Investigation Training

10 Wildlife Law Enforcement Officers from across the state attended the NASBLA National Boating Accident Investigation, Reconstruction, and Analysis Course, Level II-Advanced at the Pat Thomas Law Enforcement Academy from November 2nd-6th 2020 in Havana, Florida. Currently the Level II course is the highest level of Boat Accident investigation training that NASBLA offers.

The week began with a brief overview of the Level I course, and a closer analysis of navigation rules and applicability during incident investigations. Technology in incident investigations including cell phone data and GPS forensics was discussed in detail, providing Officers necessary skills to extract and document critical information for preservation in these investigations.

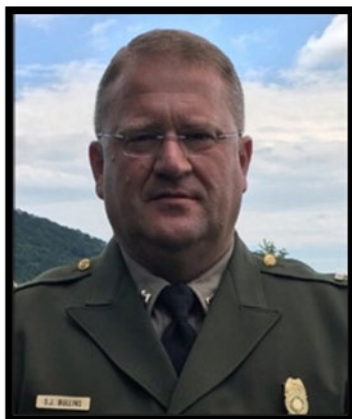
Later in the week, Officers were provided the opportunity for hands on learning by examining multiple boats post collision and utilizing investigative techniques to assess these collisions. Unlike dealing with boat incidents solely post collision, these boats were involved in staged collisions which allowed for a better understanding of boat incident dynamics.

The week concluded with learning how electrical control unit information can be utilized in boat incident investigations and with group boat incident reconstruction presentations.

The following officers attended the training: Wildlife Officer Jacob Long, Senior Officer Joseph Spears, Master Officer JD White, Master Officer Clayton Ludwick, Master Officer Matt Criscoe, Senior Officer Jake Thompson, Senior Officer Chris Wilkins, Wildlife Officer Nathaniel Rowland, Senior Officer Ashely O'Hare, Master Officer Josh Hudson, Master Officer Eric Gleason, and Senior Officer Zach Allman.



Awards



Captain Steve Bullins received the 2020 Governor's Awards for Excellence for Safety and Heroism, during a virtual ceremony held on Oct. 27. Capt. Bullins serves the people of Surry County and the State of North Carolina with integrity and selflessness. What seemed like a normal evening at home on January 8, 2020 quickly turned in to a life-or-death situation. Capt. Bullins was off duty and came on duty to responded to what appeared to be unlawful deer poaching activity. He soon observed that a vehicle collision had occurred and observed flashing lights coming from a ravine in a cow pasture. He assisted the motorist

in the collision to find that the vehicle was leaking gasoline. He immediately began to pull the driver from the wreckage. Although suffering head trauma, a broken arm and severe blood loss, the driver was stabilized and survived thanks to Capt. Bullins' heroic efforts. In the face of tremendous danger, Capt. Bullins displayed tremendous courage to save someone's life while risking his own.

Senior Officer Nathaniel Cox was selected as the State National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) Chapter Officer of the year. Officer Cox's nomination has been forwarded to the NWTF Headquarters in Edgefield, SC for consideration for National Officer of the Year Award. Officer Cox is a 6-year veteran of the NCWRC Law Enforcement Division. He is currently



assigned to Alleghany County. Officer Cox's drive to apprehend poachers, serve the constituents of North Carolina, and to proudly pass on the tradition of hunting are unparalleled. During his tenure as a wildlife officer, he has played an instrumental role investigating a variety of fish and game violations. His dedication to the public, for which he serves, is unsurpassed. He selflessly makes himself available to the public even while off duty, to ensure the people of Alleghany County can report game and fish violations as they occur. Officer Cox regularly meets with members of his community to address their concerns, answer questions, and educate them about the law. He is extremely active in the community and that has translated into establishing great relationships with citizens, wildlife clubs, sportsmen, landowners, and other law

enforcement agencies. The relationships he has established not only ensures that people know how to contact him, but they are more likely to do so because of the rapport he has built and the trust he has established.

NC Wildlife Officer of the Year

Sergeant Darby Enoch was selected as the 2020 NC Wildlife Law Enforcement of the year and represented our Agency at the 2020 SEAFWA Conference. He received his plaque from SAFARI INTERNATIONAL in January.



MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) Award Nom

While on his way home from work, after patrolling Lake Gaston for 10 hours, Jacob Long was rear ended

by an impaired driver who tried to flee the scene of the incident. Officer Long, who was towing a 21-foot McKee Craft patrol boat, was able to get his vehicle turned around and apprehend the individual who attempted to flee. These actions coupled with the 14 boating While Impaired arrests Officer Long logged on public waterways were beyond deserving of a nomination for making

publics waterways a safer place for constituents to recreate.

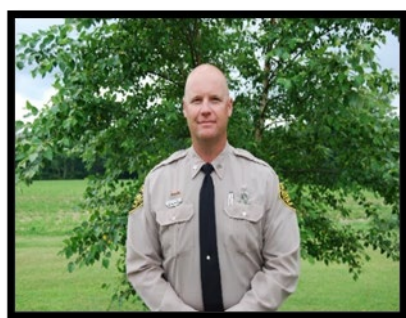
PROMOTIONS



Lieutenant of Professional Standards Sam Craft was promoted to Captain in District 3 effective September 7TH, 2020. Captain Craft is a graduate of Wilson Community College with an Associate Degree in Criminal Justice Technology, a veteran of United States Army, and a 20-year veteran of our Law Enforcement Division.



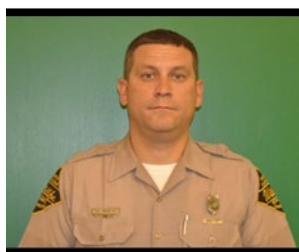
District 6, Area 5 Sergeant Branden Jones was promoted to Captain of Support Services effective November 15, 2020. He has been employed for 11 years and has served as the Sergeant in District 6, Area 5 for the past three years. In his role as Captain, he will be stationed out of NCWRC Headquarters and will be responsible for planning, organizing, directing, and managing the programs and operations of the Law Enforcement Division Professional Standards/ Training Section including Recruitment and Hiring, Investigations, Training, Telecommunications, Emergency Operations, Aircraft, Public Information and Personnel Record Keeping.



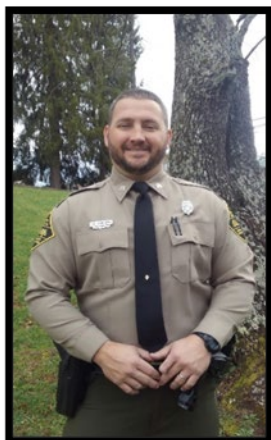
District 1, Area 3 Sergeant Brad Stoop was promoted to Lieutenant in District 1 effective August 17, 2020. Lieutenant Stoop is a 20-year veteran of our Law Enforcement Division with more than 13 years of wildlife law enforcement supervisory experience. Lieutenant Stoop holds a bachelor's degree in Outdoor Recreation and Leisure Studies from the University of Mount Olive. This past year Lieutenant Stoop was awarded the NASBLA Educator of the Year for the Southeastern Region. Lieutenant Stoop has worked his entire career in District One.



District 2, Area 3 Sergeant Parks Moss was granted a lateral transfer as the District 1, Area 5 Sergeant effective November 9, 2020. Sergeant Moss will be the Area Sergeant over Bertie, Martin, and Hertford counties.



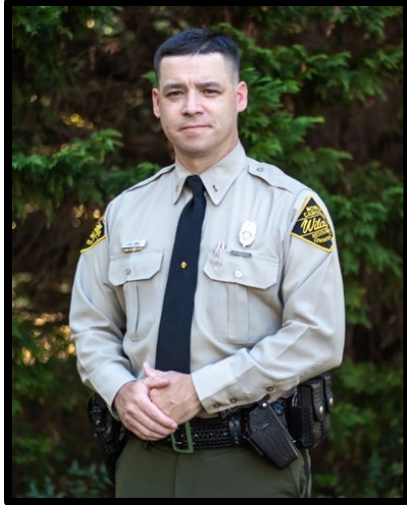
District 1, Area 5 Sergeant George Owens was granted a lateral transfer as the District 1, Area 3 Sergeant effective October 1, 2020. Sergeant Owens will be the Area Sergeant over Chowan, Gates, Pasquotank, and Perquimans counties.



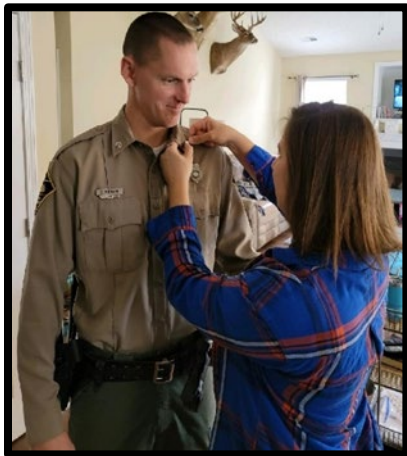
Master Officer Mickey Carpenter was promoted to Sergeant in District 9, Area 5 effective September 1st, 2020. Sergeant Carpenter will be the Area Sergeant over Macon, Cherokee, and Clay counties. Sergeant Carpenter is a graduate of Western Carolina University with a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and is a 13-year veteran of our Law Enforcement Division.



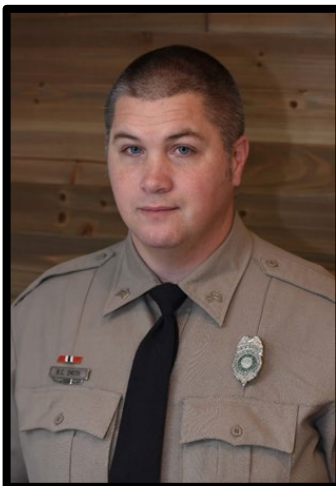
Master Officer Eric Blalock was promoted to Area Sergeant in District 3, Area 5 effective November 16, 2020. Sergeant Blalock will be the Area Sergeant over Wake and Johnston counties. Sergeant Blalock is a veteran of the United States Marine Corps, a graduate of Methodist University with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and is a 7-year veteran of our Law Enforcement Division.



Sergeant Forrest Orr was promoted to Professional Standards Lieutenant/Assistant Training Director based out of NCWRC Headquarters. This promotion became effective December 29th, 2020. Lieutenant Orr is a graduate of Asheville Buncombe Technical Community College with an Associate Degree in Civil Engineering and is a 16-year veteran of our Law Enforcement Division. Lieutenant Orr has over two years of supervisory experience with the Law Enforcement Division. We look forward to Lieutenant Orr assuming his role as Professional Standards Lieutenant/Assistant Training Director.



Master Officer David Midyette was promoted to Sergeant in District 2, area 3. This promotion was effective December 14th, 2020. Sergeant Midyette is a graduate of East Carolina University with a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and is a 12-year veteran of our Law Enforcement Division. We look forward to Midyette assuming his role as Sergeant in District 2.



Master Officer Claude Smith was promoted to Sergeant in District 5, Area 2. This promotion was effective February 1st, 2021. Sergeant Smith is a veteran of United States Marine Corps, has an associate degree in Criminal Justice from Randolph Community College, and is a 13-year veteran of our Law Enforcement Division. We look forward to Smith assuming his role as Sergeant in District 5.



Master Officer Darby Enoch was promoted to Sergeant in District 6, Area 5. This promotion was effective December 14th, 2020. Sergeant Enoch is a veteran of the United State Army, a graduate of Appalachian State University with a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and is a 7-year veteran of our Law Enforcement Division. We look forward to Enoch assuming his role as Sergeant in District 6.



Master Officer Chris Harris was promoted to Sergeant in District 7, Area 2. This promotion was effective February 1st, 2021. Sergeant Harris is a graduate of East Carolina University with a master's degree in Criminal Justice and is a 13-year veteran of our Law Enforcement Division. We look forward to Harris assuming his role as Sergeant in District 7.



Lieutenant Allen Carlisle was promoted to District 8 Captain. This was effective July 5th, 2021. Captain Carlisle has an associate degree in Fish and Wildlife Management Technologies from Haywood Community, and is a 25-year veteran of our Law Enforcement Division. We look forward to Captain Carlisle assuming his new role.

Sergeant Mike Nunnery was promoted to the Eastern Special Operations Unit (SOU) lead investigator position. This was effective May 31st, 2021. Sergeant Nunnery has a Bachelor of Science in Fisheries, Wildlife and Conservation from NCSU, and is a 9-year veteran of our Law Enforcement Division. We look forward to Nunnery assuming his role with the SOU.

Enforcement

Ginseng

- Captain Andrew Helton in District 9 completed a report for the NCWRC Law Enforcement Division containing District 8 and District 9's Ginseng information for 2020 as required by the MOU and our joint efforts with the NCDA in the protection of Ginseng and other plants listed on the PPCA.
- Most of this information consists of about six weeks' worth of reports and investigations. The totals did not include drug charges which was involved in approx. 70% of their Ginseng investigations. Below are the totals for District 8 and District 9:
- *District 8* Contacts/Reports- 20, Ginseng Charges- 43, Roots Seized- 1043
- *District 9* Contact/Reports- 49, Ginseng Charges- 74, Roots Seized- 2283
- *COMBINED TOTALS:* Contact/Reports- 69, Ginseng Charges- 117, Roots Seized- 3326



Derelict Vessels

- Officers in District 2 have been working on placing notices on Abandoned or Derelict Vessels which had been earlier identified following several named storm events. Some vessels are just generally derelict, but most were the result of the severe storms which have struck our coast over the last few years.
- The NC Wildlife Resources Commission was granted funds to use for the removal of these vessels. Over the last several months officers have been posting notices on these vessels as required by law to begin the process of their removal. Once posted, the

Commission has been sending letters of notice through the mail to last known owners as well.

- This process to remove derelict vessels is an important step in protecting our state's coastal ecosystems and navigable waterways.

EQUIPMENT

Body Cameras

- Nine officers recently completed field testing the AXON Body Camera. They have field tested the cameras over the past six weeks.
- Officers are currently in the process of summarizing their experience with the camera/software and including the pros/cons in helping the Enforcement Division decide in the future on body cameras.

Drones

- Currently the Law Enforcement Division has three Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS). All three are Mavic Dual Enterprise with FLIR thermal capabilities. We are in the process of acquiring three more of the same drones with the same capabilities
- We currently have five FAA and state certified pilots. One in the west, three in the Piedmont and one on the coast. We are working to certify 15 more certified pilots.
- We have used the UAS for several missing persons and several attempted suicide calls. We recovered one suicide victim with the UAS this past year, but she was already deceased on the game lands, but we were able to locate her with thermal at 10:30pm.
- We have used the UAS for boat incident investigations, viewing restricted areas on game lands, identifying hazardous channels on lakes and rivers and to access flood damage as well as to document tracts of timber that was blown down by a microburst.
- We have assisted local sheriff's department and rescue squads with man hunts, stolen property, and various other calls for assistance. They have also been used during the COVID 19-Pandemic to document crowds at access areas and on game lands such as big Bradley falls on Green River game lands.

New Patrol Vehicles

- We have added 40 new patrol vehicles to our fleet in the field.
- Some of the patrol vehicles are Ford F-150's and some are Chevrolet Silverado 1500's.



- All new patrol vehicles are 4-door, 4x4, equipped with all emergency equipment, and marked with black/gray decals.

NC SPECIAL OLYMPICS TORCH RUN

- Colonel Evans, Lieutenant Orr, and members of the Division of Law Enforcement Honor Guard attended the North Carolina Law Enforcement Torch Run Conference at Atlantic Beach, North Carolina. The North Carolina Law Enforcement Torch Run raises funds through donation and fundraisers to support the Special Olympics in North Carolina. Colonel Evans will be leading the charge for NCWRC to do our part in supporting this amazing organization.
- During the month of May, Wildlife Officers across the state participated in multiple legs of the Special Olympics of North Carolina Torch Run. These events raise money for Special Olympics of North Carolina. Over \$10,000 has been raised to date to benefit the charity.



ON THE ROAD/ ON THE WATER AND OPERATION DRY WATER

- On the Road/ On the Water is an annual campaign held on Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends. The purpose is to raise awareness of and prevent impaired driving both in vehicles and on vessels.
- Operation Dry Water (ODW) is a year-round boating under the influence awareness and enforcement campaign. Operation Dry Water's heightened awareness and enforcement three-day weekend takes place annually around July fourth, a holiday unfortunately known for drinking and boating, and deadly incidents.
- NC Wildlife Officers participate in both of these campaigns as part of their mission to promote safe, responsible boating and to provide proactive law enforcement. They work alongside many other agencies including NC State Highway Patrol, local Sheriff's Offices, NC Alcohol Law Enforcement, NC Forensic Tests for Alcohol, and Mothers Against Drunk Driving. To date in 2021, NC wildlife officers have done the following:
 - Hours Patrolling boating- 15,031
 - Boats Checked- 4270
 - Boating Citations issued-1762
 - Boating Warnings Issued- 2187
 - Boating Under the Influence Arrests- 143
 - Boating Safety Education classes taught- 101

Memorial Day 2021

Officers Participating	165
Vessels Contacted	1057
Boating Citations Issued	363
Boating Under the Influence Arrests	24
Boating Warnings	491
Boating Incidents Investigated	5

July 4th Weekend/ Operation Dry Water

Officers Participating	161
Vessels Contacted	1032
Boating Citations Issued	440
Boating Under the Influence Arrests	55
Boating Warnings	693
Boating Incidents Investigated	13



AGENCY OVERVIEW

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation is comprised of 6 divisions which include: A Law Enforcement Division, Wildlife Division, Fisheries Division, Information and Education Division, Administration Division, and a Federal Aid Division.

The Law Enforcement Division consists of a Colonel/Chief of Enforcement, Lt. Colonel/Asst. Chief of Enforcement, Captain/Operations Manager, and a Secretary located at our headquarters in Oklahoma City. There are approximately 117 field employees which include: Game Wardens who are divided into 8 districts, with each district containing two Lieutenants and a Captain. A game warden's primary responsibility in Oklahoma is to enforce the state's wildlife laws. However, game wardens also have the jurisdiction to enforce all other state laws when necessary. Beyond law enforcement, game wardens are responsible for conducting public outreach programs as well as assisting other divisions with research and other projects. Game wardens are often involved in assisting with spotlight counts, controlled burns, fisheries research assistance, and other Department programs and projects.

In addition, the agency has a reserve force consisting of 13 reserve officers. These reserves are agency employees assigned to various divisions whose primary duties are other than law enforcement. This program has been dwindling as employees retire and we are not actively enlisting new reserves at this time.

The division operates with a straight-line chain of command.

The division operates with a straight-line chain of command.

TRAINING ISSUES

Covid-19 led to many different training issues. Our Operations Manager created and organized new training opportunities in order to adapt to the situation. She developed an online class roster which could be edited and verified only by instructors. Further, each warden could only sign in for themselves because the form logged the associated email address. Online training classes were then given online via Google meets. This platform was chosen because audit logs were available. Audit logs show how long each warden attended the class and therefore verify which wardens could receive credit. This method worked so well our wardens were able to maintain their yearly mandatory CLEET training hours and officers from other agencies were able to attend and receive credit as well.

FUNDING AND STAFFING ISSUES

Funding was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Much of our budget was lost near the beginning due to stock market fallout. However, it has since bounced back some. That, in addition to the fact that our license sales have drastically increased during Covid, has restored most of our budget.

We still have the same four warden vacancies from last year. The open positions are a result of retirements and one resignation from the newly instituted Game Warden Training Academy. Now that the budget has been restored, we are beginning the hiring process and hope to start the 2nd Annual Game Warden Training Academy on April 12, 2021.

We were able to purchase 12 Dodge four-wheel drive extended cab pickups all with the Dodge cargo management system. The equipment installed on this year's trucks include LED light bars, locking double gun racks, front end leveling kits, tinted windows, and grill guards. We purchased two eighteen-foot center console boats and numerous other equipment purchases of which none have been delivered due to the covid 19 issues. We are still hopeful that the boats and other equipment will be delivered soon but haven't received any updates from manufacturers in a few months now. We have ordered 19 new Level IIIA vests for our yearly replacement of vests to keep our officers outfitted with current body armor.

The body cameras we were purchasing last year were put on hold due to Covid and the initial loss of budget. With the reinstatement of the budget, we now proceed with obtaining the Visual Labs cell phone style body camera.

MAJOR CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT TRENDS

Commercial and noncommercial breeders are increasing in Oklahoma and not all of them have legal intentions. We have people obtaining commercial breeder licenses so that they can work as brokers for other commercial breeders. This is not completely legal and breaks the intent of many laws while not breaking the law itself in most cases. It is a loophole that is being used. Many other new commercial breeders do not have intent on legal activities at all. A new trend is to obtain the license and breed a pair of skunks occasionally, while collecting skunk kits from the wild to pad their sales. This was discovered after a kit was sold with papers from a vet showing the animal had been properly dewormed, yet it died of a worm infestation only a couple of weeks later.

Exotic species are also on the rise as pets. There is little to no legislation against exotic species in Oklahoma and animals such as monitor lizards are being released into the wild. In northeast Oklahoma, at least two different individual monitor lizards have been photographed but only one has been successfully caught and removed from the wild.

Also because of the lack of exotic species laws, many people are buying tracks of land to turn into small zoo's such as the "Tiger King". Yet others are buying land in Oklahoma so that they can raise exotic species for training and the film industry. It is becoming apparent that Oklahoma should consider more legislation in these areas to prevent commercial abuse of wildlife. Furthermore, legislation should also be considered to monitor exotic species more closely as a preventative measure so that native wildlife is not damaged from the release or escape of non-native species.

UNIQUE CROSS BOUNDARY OR COOPERATIVE ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS

Last year the McGirt case was decided by the Supreme Court, which gave Native American tribes more legal jurisdictions within their boundaries. Because of this decision several agencies are now being cross commissioned. Oklahoma Game Wardens are currently being cross commissioned with 5 tribes: Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, Chickasaw and Seminole. We have completed agreements with 4 of the tribes and are in the process of getting commission cards done for each tribe. We are also in the process of getting cross commissioned with the BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs).

NEW INNOVATIONS IN CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT

We will soon be switching from Google products back to Office 365. New computers are in the works because the current Chromebooks are not capable of utilizing all of the features found on Office 365.

We are also in the process of moving to a fully paperless system for reports. New electronic timesheets are being developed at this time.

The new license database system is proving to be a great law enforcement tool. When licenses are revoked the customer is flagged for wardens to see and the customer is locked from purchasing new licenses. Currently, we are working with the Oklahoma State Courts Network in order to potentially have their database and our database share information, which will result in court ordered revocations, failure to appear license suspensions, and license reinstatements automatically updating in our system. This will greatly reduce data entry. Furthermore, we are working on developing specific reports within the license database for wardens that will enable them to obtain a list of all revocations for their county and/or run a report that shows all revocations which attempted to purchase a license or check in an animal. The best part about the license database has been the adaptability to change or create items based on law enforcement needs.

STATE, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL ISSUES, LEGISLATION, LEGAL CHALLENGES AND COURT DECISIONS IMPACTING NATURAL RESOURCES LAW ENFORCEMENT

New legislation and administrative rules:

- 1) Area boundaries, method of take, daily/size limit and equipment restrictions have changed on the Lower Mountain Fork River for trout.
- 2) The daily limit for channel/blue catfish is now same as statewide on Lake Texoma.
- 3) The attempt to take or harvest Alligator Gar is prohibited statewide from May 1-31.
- 4) Deer gun season limits increased from three deer to four deer, only one of which may be antlered.
- 5) Deer muzzleloader season limits increased from three deer to four deer, only one of which may be antlered.
- 6) The holiday antlerless season bag limit was increased from one to two.
- 7) Waterfowl zones 1 and 2 now have the same season dates.
- 8) New legislation on the importation of cervid carcasses or carcass parts was passed: No person shall import, transport, or possess any cervid carcass or part of a cervid carcass from outside the boundaries of Oklahoma. The following items are the only exceptions:
 - Antlers or antlers attached to clean skull plate or cleaned skulls (all tissue removed).
 - Animal quarters containing no spinal materials or meat with all parts of the spinal column removed.
 - Cleaned teeth.
 - Finished taxidermy products.
 - Hides or tanned products.
- 9) Antelope must be checked-in within 24 hours using the online E-Check system. There are no longer physical check stations.

COST SAVING INITIATIVES

We are again purchasing the Dodge trucks. We have not had any major issues yet and they are significantly cheaper.

OTHER SPECIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

The McGirt case has led to numerous law enforcement issues. The decision gave Native American tribes legal jurisdiction within their “treaty” boundaries, which is much larger than previously acknowledged. The legal jurisdiction gives the tribes’ jurisdiction over crimes committed by Native Americans anywhere within the “treaty” boundary. It encompasses much of the northeastern quarter of Oklahoma including Tulsa as well as other areas in the state. This has led to enforcement issues for every branch of law enforcement from city, county, state, and even tribal issues as it is too much for the tribes to handle alone. This has led to the cross commissioning of several agencies. Even with cross commissioning there is a significant amount of gray area. The decision is still being interpreted and debated. There are uncertainties on the jurisdictions of minor vs major crime. This has led to uncertainty as

to whether wildlife crimes that occur within treaty boundaries by Native Americans will be filed in federal court or district court. The federal courts would not be able to handle the magnitude of cases if minor crimes are indeed to be filed there. Therefore, this could develop into a wildlife crime nightmare, as many Oklahomans are card carrying Native Americans and wildlife crime will be at the bottom priority for federal courts.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Chisolm Frampton, Colonel

DIVISIONAL Accomplishments

LE training is dedicated to ensuring our supervisory staff are provided the skills expected in a professional managerial environment. 13 Supervisors from 1st Sergeant to Captain completed the three levels of the FBI-LEEDA Leadership Institute to obtain their nationally recognized FBI-LEEDA Trilogy Award. The Division has implemented a leadership training curriculum to ensure all supervisors obtain the best training available.

Officer Safety

This is our first priority as our game wardens are our most important resource to protect. We were able to complete the procurement of Glock Model 45 9MM pistols with aimpoint optics for our game wardens. These pistols replaced our current issue Glock Model 22 40 caliber pistols. Most of our vehicles were provided a locking under seat gun box for firearms storage as well. We are continuing with our ballistic vest replacement program annually and looking to procure the most innovative vests available to encourage daily wear by our officers.



We have continued with radio communications upgrades from the standard Vhf radios to tri-band portable and mobile radios. By moving to the tri-band models we are allowed greater inter-operability with other state, local, and federal partners. The tri-band radios allow for conventional VHF, Uhf, and 800 MHz channels all contained within the same radio. We are moving to docking

stations in all patrol boats to allow the use of portable radios in place of mounted radios which resulted in savings of operational dollars due to radio service monthly fees.

Due to the civil unrest that has increased around the country our Game Wardens have been called in to assist with these events around the state. To better protect our game wardens,



we purchased ballistic helmets with face shields for use during these events. We also purchased and trained a detachment in the use of shields, extended batons, and less lethal launchers for use when crowd control becomes a primary mission.

The Division procured a new 39' Contender off-shore patrol vessel

which will allow officers to conduct long range patrols of the EEZ.

Technology Advances

The Division has procured the SmartCop field reporting and mobile app for field implementation. We are currently finalizing all of the software installation and administrative steps to begin training and issuing equipment to our field game wardens. This will give our game wardens 2 ways to use the product through either their issued smartphone or a rugged tablet windows-based device. This vendor is used by numerous conservation agencies and will hopefully allow for future data and intelligence sharing.

Recruitment and Retention

The Division hired 16 new game wardens during the calendar year.

Captain Henry Stackhouse has been selected for our recruitment coordinator, unfortunately, due to Covid-19 this has hampered his recruitment efforts other than on-line.

Public Service and Outreach



Our Hunter and Boater Education Instructors taught 11,967 students in Hunter Education and 5,042 students in Boater Education.

Our Shooting Sports Program held 5 events with 2,013 shooters in attendance and awarded \$72,000 in college scholarships.

SC National Archery in the Schools Program held 9 events with 3,550 archers participating and awarded \$41,000 in college scholarships.

The Take One Make One Program coordinated 42 hunts with 185 participants.

The first women's deer clinics were held in 3 locations with 28 ladies participating and 10 deer being harvested.

We maintained 3 life jacket loaner boards at Murrells Inlet, Limehouse Landing, and Lake Murray in partnership with the US Coast Guard Auxiliary and Power Squadron.

Our Take one Make One trailers visited 8 events with 100,500 visitors.

Our public shooting range program continues to grow with over 52,815 visiting our four staffed ranges in 2020.

South Carolina is currently 7th in the nation in registered vessels. Due to our weather, boating is a year-round activity in South Carolina from the coast to the mountains. Whether fishing, hunting, or simply for pleasure cruises most yards in this state have a boat parked in them.



The Division continues to use our mobile Breath Alcohol Testing unit. The unit has been vinyl wrapped in support of the divisions boating safety and BUI enforcement campaign. The platform can be set up at area landings and large marine events to support the field officers conducting high visibility boating under the influence patrols.

The Division currently has 2 Didson dual frequency acoustic imaging units and 1 remote operated camera vessel with accessories. The Didson units are state of the art technology used for the location of evidence and recovery of victims of drowning and boating related deaths. These units required minimum training to allow operators to become efficient and effective with its use in recoveries. This equipment has been invaluable because it maximizes diver safety and minimizes the wait for families to begin the closure process in the loss of a family member.

Partnerships

Our successful partnership with US Coast Guard Auxiliary for teaching boater education and has led to the distribution over 12,000 SC Boater Handbooks annually to local landings and marinas across the state.



Our partnership with the Wendy's Food Chain for the "I Got Caught Wearing My Lifejacket" tickets allowed youth caught wearing their PFD by officers while underway to receive a free Frosty.

Policy Development

Currently we are reviewing all Directives, Policies, and Regulations to ensure they are current, enforceable, defensible, and relevant in preparation for our accreditation application. Review and revision cycles are not only mandated it is an integral best practices approach for any law enforcement agency.

We are also trying to ensure that we do not lose our history as game wardens and our historical duties that are expected of us. With the proposed revisions it will allow us to set forth with relevant directions to our game wardens as we face the new challenges and enforcement expectations placed on us in this ever-changing career in law enforcement.

LE Division Statistics – Jan 2019 – Dec 2019

The Division issued **8,077** summons and **24,870** written warnings.

The Division spent **44,103** hours on boating patrols inspecting **63,657** boats.

The Division spent **4,240** hours conducting SAR mission, **5,708** hours of Homeland Security patrols, and **13,273** hours assisting other agencies.

The Division conducted **30,872**-night patrol hours, **8,342** hours on litter patrols, and conducted **1,713** public presentations.

The Division checked **51,819** hunters, **69,771** fishermen and issued **1,737** depredation permits.

The Communication Center received 22,373 calls for service in 2020. These included the following:

- Top Three Calls for Service:
- General Information – 3,023
- Injured Animal – 2,473
- Trespass to Hunt/Fish – 1,465

K-9 Unit

Our K-9 Team was recognized by the American Police Canine Association as being the first agency in the US to be certified in Wildlife Detection.

K-9 Teams were deployed 228 times resulting in 202 DNR related cases, 94 agency assists, and 17 public presentations.

All K9 Team members received national certification through the American Police Canine Association becoming the first team to certify on wildlife detection through the APCA.



All K9 Team members were outfitted with a new duty belt and rifle plate carrier body armor systems.

Special Investigations Unit

Assisted in 3 boating fatalities with extracting data from phones and GPS.

Coyote case in Orangeburg County for illegal transfer of 7 coyotes.

Exotic deer and racoon sales in Spartanburg County.

Assisted with collecting phone data in hunting fatality in Colleton County

Transportation of hogs from Georgetown County to Horry County.

Search Warrants for cameras and phones in Region 1 resulting in 12 hunting turkeys over bait.

Operation Fox Pen resulting in catching 30 Coyotes coming into state from GA.

Charleston Goose Case where goose was X-Ray and collected video evidence from a doorbell in case.

Used a tracking device for night hunting and Lacey Act violation thru phone records.

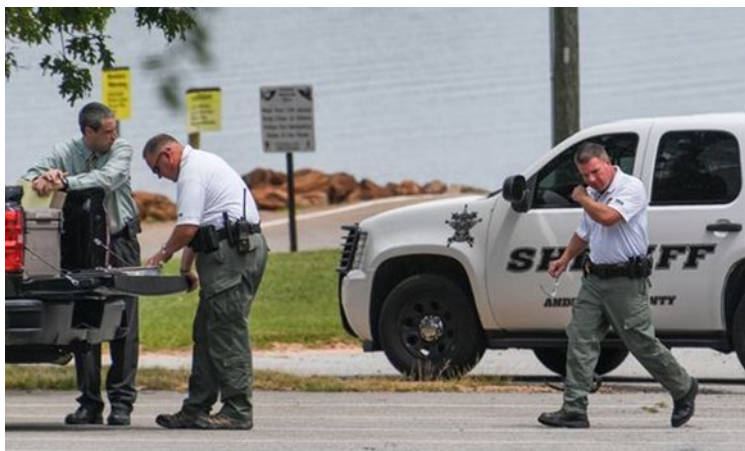
Kansas CWD case that turned into a Lacey Act violation thru phones, ZETX, etc.

Located GA night hunting deer ring who fled into SC through phone records.

Marine Theft and Fatality Investigations

The Investigation section issued 20 summons and 163 warnings.

Investigated 29 boating related deaths.



Investigated 3 hunting fatalities.

Completed 161 reportable boating accident reports into the USCG Bard System.

Reviewed 78 non-reportable boating accidents.

Investigations removed 19 abandon boats from Georgetown County, 15

from Charleston County, and 9 from Beaufort County.

Marine Theft Investigations resulted in 20 summons and 163 warnings.

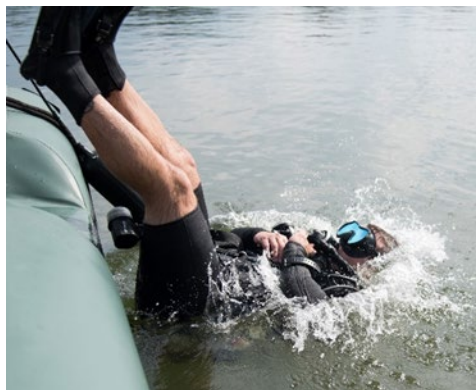
Investigations recovered 1 boat, 1 motor, 1 trailer stolen for a value of \$1,964.00.

17 No Wake Zone requests were investigated resulting in 4 wake/exclusion zones being approved and 91 responsibility signs provided.

811 marine theft investigations were opened and 421 of those cases have been closed.

Aquatic Investigations and Recovery Team

Aquatic Investigations and Recovery Team conducted 45 Dive Assignments consisting of 34 body recoveries and 11 evidence dives. Body recoveries were made on 22 of the 34 dive assignments and evidence was recovered on 7 of the 11 evidence recovery dives.



Aids to Navigation Team (ATON) replaced 377 missing or damaged buoys/signs.

ATON maintained temporary no wake zones during flood waters.

There were 393 permitted marine events across the state.

Operation Game Thief



Through a grant from International Wildlife Crimestoppers our OGT Program was able to procure a “Wall of Shame” trailer for use at public events. The focus of this trailer is to show the public just what poachers are taking from their natural resources and how it affects even the non-consumptive users of those resources.



SCDNR Tips line received 465 tips this year which resulted in 60 cases and 37 warnings being issued. Due to Covid-19 which slowed our rewards down tremendously we only issued \$3,743.00 in monetary rewards after conviction.

Significant Events & Cases

Region 2 – CO Vissage & Oliver assisted Montana game wardens with executing search warrants and investigating wildlife crimes committed in Montana. Through their investigation, officers also found subjects violated the law by bringing back whole mule deer heads into the state of SC from a CWD state. Charges are pending.

Region 2 - Officers Kinsey and Gallien, in conjunction with the Chesterfield County Sheriff's Department, executed search warrants on a subject who was impersonating an officer. The investigation revealed that a nuisance wildlife control operator was posing as a DNR officer. During the search, law enforcement gear, alligator parts, stolen property and drugs were recovered from his residence.

The subject was arrested and charged with 3 counts of impersonating law enforcement and 33 other alligator related violations. He also has several charges with Chesterfield County Sheriff's Department, with more cases pending.

Region 3 - Unit 3D officers initiated an investigation of several Asian subjects out of Georgia who were crossing the Savannah River to trespass and fish illegally. They were apprehended with several undersized and over the limit Striped Bass on separate occasions. They admitted



that they were planning on taking the fish back to GA and sell to their Asian community. The subjects were charged and posted bond. All their information was shared with GA DNR.

Region 3 - LCPL Laney and DLEO Lowder located an abandoned Hoop Net on the Wateree River with 24 dead blue catfish. After an investigation, they were able to locate the owner and charged him for Improperly Marked Non-Game Devices. Subject posted bond on the spot. LCPL Laney made another case for an Unmarked Hoop Net against the same subject exactly 30 days from the last date that he charged the subject for the same

violation. Cash bond was posted on the spot again. This same subject was also arrested the day before in Marlboro County by DNR officers for the same Non-Game Device violations.

Region 4 - Captain Thomas, FSGT Garner, LCPL Whaley, and PFC Luper responded to a call after receiving a complaint in reference to an illegal maricultural operation in Privateer Creek on the N. Edisto River. The illegal site contained 25 large pens and 18 smaller pens of suspected illegal diploid and triploid seed, along with larger oysters and marketable product. Sixty-eight growing pens and over 100,000 oysters were removed. Samples were taken from several different sleeves and were sent for lab testing in Charleston at MUSC as well as the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. An estimated value of over \$17,000 worth of product was seized, documented, and sold to another properly licensed maricultural permit holder.

Region 4 - Unit 4F received information on a large deer hunt that was to occur on Thanksgiving morning. LCPL Jones met with landowners in the area and completed a map of what area the dog hunters had permission to hunt. On Thanksgiving morning Unit F met and staged down the road, while LCPL Jones and DLEO Chappell used a covert truck to ride around the area. Within twenty minutes of the hunt beginning the dogs had left the property that was legal to hunt and were running across private landowners. Unit F officers deployed to check the hunters for licensing issues and renegade hunting. Charges were made for hunting licenses, deer tags, trespassing, and renegade hunting. The incident resulted in 24 cases and 5 warnings.



Region 4 – Pfc. Angotti-Smith, CO Ellis, and CO Taylor conducted several operations to stop the illegal taking of striped bass using cast nets in the fish sanctuary on the Santee River. These operations resulted in cases of taking striped bass out of season, fishing in a sanctuary, and taking game fish with non-game fish devices. This is an example of one operation resulting in 28 cases for taking striped bass out of season, 2 counts for fishing in a sanctuary, and 2 counts of taking game fish with a non-game fish device. 36 warning were also issued on this day's operation for the above violations.

TRAINING

Eight new officers were hired along with one commissioned wildlife manager and they were trained in firearms, ATV operation, defensive tactics, EVOC (truck and boat operation), boating accident investigation, BUI investigations that included a wet lab, hunting accident investigation, black bear enforcement, commercial fishing enforcement, trapping enforcement, nuisance animal training, water survival, waterfowl enforcement and wildlife immobilization. In addition, these newly hired officers were certified as hunter safety and instructors.

Annual in-service training was conducted for the Agency's 270 commissioned personnel – Annual in-service training now consists of blended learning, officers must complete learning modules from Virtual Academy, this year's modules consisted of: Child Sex Abuse; De-escalation for Law Enforcement; Mental Illness; Police Health and Mental Wellness; Emotional Intelligence and Duty to Intervene; Public Assembly and Community Interaction and TN Legal Update 2020-2021 and Intro to Community Immersion. In addition to this learning, defensive tactics and fire-arm re-qualifications were conducted.

All Agency commissioned personnel transitioned from the Glock Model 31 Gen 4 .357 Sig to the Glock Model 17 Gen 5 9mm pistols. In addition, all Agency commissioned personnel were issued ceramic body plates.

FUNDING AND STAFFING ISSUES

Agency employees in a wildlife class position in which wildlife officers are included were given a 2.0 % pay raise, in addition if that employee was not topped out in their salary grade, they were awarded an additional 4.5% for a cost-of-living adjustment.

LAW ENFORCEMENT TRENDS

In July 2021, TWRA partnered with state and local law enforcement agencies across the state in Operation Dry Water (ODW) from July 2 – July 4. These joint operations identified and removed impaired operators from Tennessee waters. ODW resulted in 264 officers participating; 3,701 total officer hours; 5,306 total vessels checked; 265 citations written, 288 warnings written, 21 BUI arrests and 141 boaters were assisted.

UNIQUE CROSS BOUNDARY OR COOPERATIVE ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS

Officers with TWRA's Special Investigations Unit have been working jointly with the USFWS on investigations dealing with illegal hunting, commercialization of wildlife and Lacey Act violations.

INNOVATIONS IN CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Agency was able to conduct the third class of the Tennessee Wildlife Officers Training Academy. TWOTA is a twenty-two-week law enforcement training program for all newly hired law enforcement commissioned personnel. This newly established academy's focus will be on conservation law enforcement.

STATE ISSUES/LEGISLATION AFFECTING LAW ENFORCEMENT

T.C.A. Code 69-9-219 was amended to mirror the Driving Under the Influence penalties for a conviction of Boating Under the Influence.

Public Chapter 241- Creates lifetime sportsman license for adopted children residing in the state, allows guardian to apply for license on child's behalf within 26 months of adoption. Child must be less than 13 years old at time of application.

Public Chapter 385 - Creates a permanent sport combination license for \$10 to residents permanently restricted to a wheelchair or who have suffered an amputation of 75% or more to a lower limb.

Public Chapter 489 - Prohibits use of choke holds, requires de-escalation tactics, creates a duty to intervene if officer directly observes excessive use of force, requires creation of policy to limit circumstances in which an officer may fire a weapon from a moving vehicle, motorcycle, or bicycle, requires agencies to establish a use of force reporting system by Jan 1, 2022 and report monthly to the Tennessee Bureau of Investigations.

SPECIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

The TFWC has now passed a permanent rule that established a CWD Unit with specific regulations for eight CWD positive counties and four CWD high risk counties. An Earn-A-Buck program will allow the hunter to harvest one additional antlered deer in this unit if that hunter harvests two CWD Unit antlerless deer, in addition a Replacement Buck program is available for hunter's that harvest a CWD positive antlered deer in the CWD Unit.

A Tag-Before-You-Drag requirement was initiated, a hunter that harvest a big game animal (deer, turkey or bear) must use a temporary transportation tag provided by the Agency until the hunter can report their harvest by gaining cellular phone service to utilize the TWRA On the Go App or report their harvest directly through the website at www.GoOutdoorsTennessee.com or take their harvest to a TWRA physical check-in station

TEXAS

Chad Jones, Colonel



TRAINING

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Law Enforcement Division (TPWD-LE) continues to develop and adopt training to ensure game wardens are prepared to meet the demands of their job.

- 64th Cadet Class dismissed and quarantined December 10 – January 6 due to Covid-19
- TPWD-LE provided Use of Force train the trainer updates, to assist in the field and with cadet training.
- Increased our Cadet Physical Readiness Entry Standards to handgun stability, 2000-meter row at 70% VO2 max, and Swim - 1 min tread water and 100-meter swim in 4 min.
- Implemented De-escalation Training statewide
- Taser Testing Program and assessment taking place – pending funding.
- Implemented an Online Learning Management System - Target Solutions. Target Solutions provides the division a platform for the distribution of training material and division updates while

FUNDING AND STAFFING

Lt. Program Coordinator to the GWTC Staff:

- Opened an Instagram account for Recruiting to reach a more diverse audience.
- Using QR codes at recruiting events to help gather information

- Paid and Unpaid Internships

We successfully graduated the 64th Cadet Class in June 2021; our new Game Wardens are all operational working through their Field Training Program.

MAJOR CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT TRENDS

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department initiated a transition of the department's Boating Education Program from the Communications Division to the Law Enforcement Division. This transition will help consolidate and streamline Recreational Boating Safety Grant key functions.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Law Enforcement division has personnel assigned to County Emergency Operations Centers, Disaster District Centers, and the State Operations Center to assist with the dissemination of COVID-19 information to the public, employees, and first responders. In addition to dissemination of information, TPWD LE personnel assigned to these centers facilitate the use of TPWD resources throughout the state as needed and/or requested by TDEM following the ICS model. Some of those requested resources include the request for TPWD LE first responders to assist with security and law enforcement activities at COVID-19 test sites, the transportation of COVID-19 test samples collected at Texas rural county drive-thru sites, and the pre-positioning or movement of PPE supplies and equipment to support TPWD first responders. TPWD LE division also has non-LE personnel assisting with the identification and ordering of available PPE to ensure first responders have the necessary PPE and supplies to continue supporting TDEM led COVID-19 operations, TPWD patrols, and TPWD public services.

TPWD Game Wardens were a part of an operation that supported the mission of making COVID-19 testing available to all Texans; this operation is known as, "Operation Pony Express". Texas Game Wardens were responsible for the transportation of COVID-19 samples collected at mobile test sites across the entire state of Texas to a regional staging area managed by AgriLife. The samples from multiple sites would then be gathered and transported by an AgriLife agent to a DPS or TPWD plane bound for one of a few labs with the capacity and resources to analyze hundreds of samples.

Since the start of "Pony Express" Texas Game Wardens have assisted with the delivery of samples from 627 testing sites from 228 counties.

TPWD Aviation has performed 22 flight missions to assist with the transportation of 97 various sized coolers containing COVID-19 test samples. Along with test samples TPWD

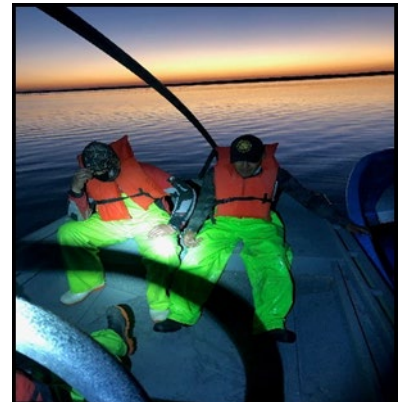
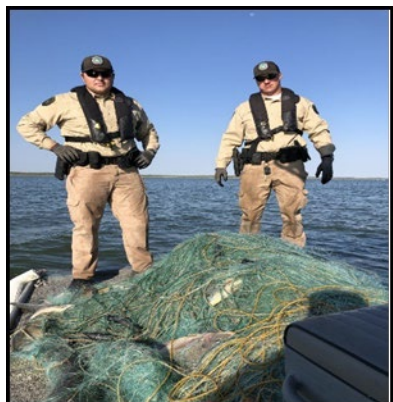
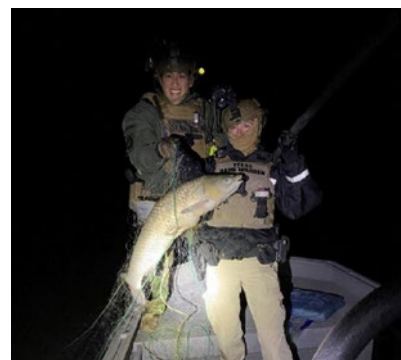
Aviation has been assisting with the delivery of sample kits to be distributed to different test site locations throughout the state.

UNIQUE CROSS BOUNDARY OR COOPERATIVE, ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS

Texas Game Wardens executed Operation Brush Guard III covering the Texas-Mexico border along the Falcon Lake area for the purpose of protecting the State's diverse valuable, and fragile natural resources including fish and wildlife. This operation resulted in the:

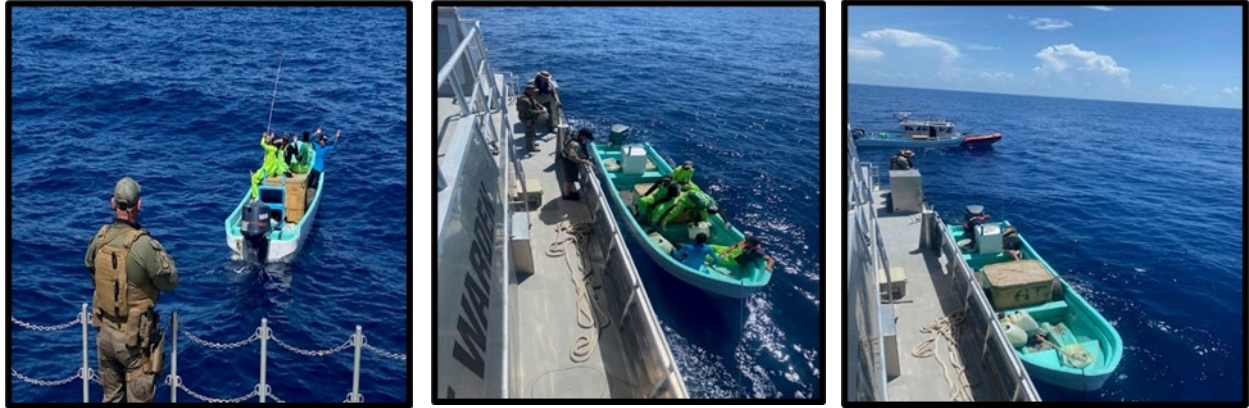
- Arrest of multiple subjects for human trafficking, evading arrest, driving while intoxicated, and possession of a controlled substance.
- Seizure of 9,610' feet of gill net
- Seizure of 2,350 LBS of fish

In total, for FY 21, Texas Game Wardens have arrested 3 commercial fishermen, seized almost 46K' feet of gill net, 2 hoop nets, and 660' feet of trotline from Falcon Lake.



Texas Game Wardens patrolling the Gulf of Mexico via the Law Enforcement 80' Patrol Vessel Capt. Murchison interdicted multiple illegal foreign commercial fishing vessels and seized over a thousand pounds of illegally caught Red Snapper and Shark.

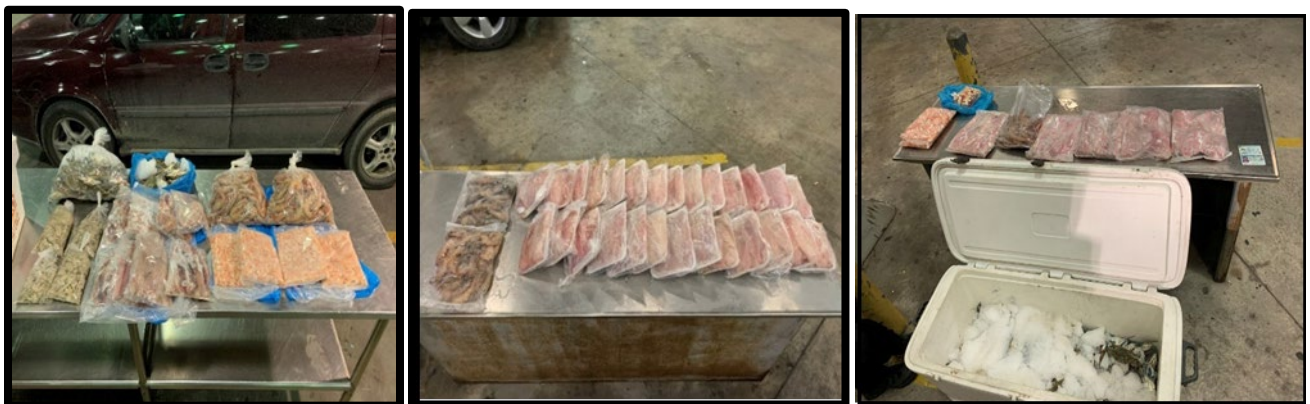
Texas Game Wardens played an instrumental role in support of Operation Lone Star, an operation focused on the security of the Texas-Mexico border for the purpose of disrupting,



denying, and destabilizing Drug Trafficking Organizations and Transnational Criminal Organizations that often exploit the riverine border environment to smuggle narcotics and individuals. Texas Game Wardens worked side by side with Florida Fish and Wildlife Special Operations Group Game Wardens, members of the Texas Marine Unit of the Texas Department of Public Safety, and U.S. Border Patrol patrolling by land and boat.



Texas Game Wardens continue to work with federal partners at the southern Ports of Entry to combat Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and seafood fraud. Seafood fraud and IUU fishing have a potential to overlap each other through the mislabeling and/or smuggling of aquatic species in efforts to hide the origin of such species.



NEW INNOVATIONS IN CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Texas Game Wardens and State Park Police were recently equipped with and trained on, 500 drowning resuscitation kits that were distributed statewide. This equipment was directly funded through a budget line item from the 86th Legislative Session. This equipment will be vital to providing emergency oxygen to victims of a drowning in hopes of arresting the drowning process and providing them with lifesaving oxygen.
- The trucks Texas Game Wardens are being issued are now coming with a mounted in-car computer system with the Dell Latitude 5420 Rugged CTO.

STATE, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ISSUES, LEGISLATION, LEGAL CHALLENGES AND COURT DECISIONS IMPACTING NATURAL RESOURCES LAW ENFORCEMENT

The 87th Legislative Session began in January and ended in May; however, we are currently under a second special session. We continue to monitor several legislative bills that could impact Texas Parks and Wildlife.

A few of the significant bills that already passed are:

- SB 599 – Regarding unattended illegal fishing gear found in public waters and our ability to removal and destroy without a court order.
- HB 2326 – Regarding Burmese Python Reclassification and our ability to continue regulating this species
- SB 24 – Regarding procedures required of the department before hiring a peace officer (additional requirements to the background investigation).
- SB 69 – Regarding the observations and reporting of excessive use of force.
- SB 675 – Regarding a special open season for certain migratory game birds by veterans.
- SB 1359 – Regarding the adoption of mental health leave for peace officers.
- HB 30081 – Regarding the adoption of a digital license and digital tagging for the take of certain animals.



CONSERVE. CONNECT. PROTECT.

MESSAGE FROM THE COLONEL

Without a doubt, 2020 was a year like no other! As usual, VCP Officers and LE Staff met the challenges and exceeded expectations in a very difficult environment. We continue to pursue and plan to implement important initiatives in 2021 to include a VCP Career Progression Program (CPP), Leadership Development Continuum (LDC), 11th Basic Academy and VLEPSC Accreditation.



As I assumed the duties and responsibilities of the Chief of Law Enforcement on November 10, 2020, I certainly knew our greatest asset was our CPOs and LE Staff. Having implemented the Office of Professional Standards, I had constantly seen the commendations that came through our Citizen Feedback System and knew we were very fortunate to have members of the Law Enforcement Division that are extremely talented, dedicated, and passionate with their role as “Protectors of Wildlife”. It is evident within the pages of this Annual Report that their work effort makes an outstanding contribution towards this wildlife law enforcement profession.

My vision for us includes three main elements that we will continue to focus on as we move forward, which are Quality Public Service, Employer of Choice, and Pursuit of Excellence. It will be my honor and privilege to lead our Law Enforcement Division into the future. I am grateful to have our officers and staff input to help us develop a VCP Roadmap in 2021 that will set our direction for the next few years. While we are in a transformational phase with historically low staffing levels, I am confident that we will develop ourselves to be even more successful in our chosen profession and that we will be looked on by others as an example of excellence.

I know we will continue to promote a safe outdoor environment for our constituents. Additionally, I believe we will find new ways to show others the value of wildlife, which will grow our constituent base, like nature, to be more diverse. We have an obligation to guide others to know for themselves our incredible experience with wildlife resources and the great outdoors.

MISSION SUMMARY

Virginia Conservation Police Officers operate within the Law Enforcement Division of the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR). The mission of the Law Enforcement Division is to preserve law and order; to enforce applicable criminal and regulatory laws in a fair and impartial manner; to provide education and outreach in an effort to gain voluntary compliance with and promote public understanding and support of the Commonwealth's wildlife, fish and boat laws and regulations; to work in concert with other Agency divisions in accomplishing the Agency's mission; to provide responsive, coordinated services to the citizens of the Commonwealth in a professional, efficient manner.



Conservation Police Officers focus their patrol efforts on enforcing the wildlife, fishing, and boating laws and regulations of Virginia. They utilize specialized law enforcement techniques and equipment to promote compliance, address criminal activity, and preserve public safety. Because of their knowledge and professionalism, officers are often called upon to assist other state and local agencies with various enforcement endeavors. Whether instructing a Hunter Education class, tracking a violent offender through remote terrain, or providing law enforcement services in the wake of a natural disaster, Conservation Police Officers are dedicated to serving the citizens of the Commonwealth.

The protection of Virginia's vast natural resources is a great undertaking. The Commonwealth is comprised of 95 counties, 38 independent cities, and a total area of 39,490 square miles. In 2020, Virginia was home to an estimated 8,631,393 citizens. From the Coastal shores, to the rolling hills of the Piedmont region, to the peaks of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Virginia's topography is as diverse as its population. There are 371 rivers or creeks and 27 major lakes to explore. DWR also owns or manages 230 boat ramps to provide users with access to public waters. For the trout angler, Virginia contains over 3,500 miles of trout streams which includes over 2,900 miles of wild trout waters. Hunting and outdoors enthusiasts can recreate on the over 1.6 million acres of National Forest land found in Virginia. Additionally,



there are 24 State Forests totaling over 68,626 acres managed by the Virginia Department of Forestry and 46 Wildlife Management Areas totaling over 203,000 acres managed by the DWR.

FEMA PORT SECURITY GRANTS

In 2020, the law enforcement division submitted a FEMA Port Security Grant application for three projects that totaled \$500,000. The first project was for a 27' SAFE boat that would be assigned to the Middle Peninsula and help to support our public safety mission, while also assisting our other local, state and federal first responder partners that work within the maritime domain. The second project was for seven dual payload vessels mounted FLIR cameras that will replace aging FLIR cameras on some of the current agency SAFE boats. The third project was for training funds that could be used to host two NASBLA Tactical Operations Courses, two NASBLA Boat Crewmember Courses and Two NASBLA Pursuit and Stop courses. As an active member of the Port of Virginia Maritime Incident Response Team, we will sponsor these courses, provide most of the expert trainers and will open them up to our partner agencies. We were fortunate to receive funding for all three of these projects and the procurement process is underway. On February 25th, the 2021 FEMA Port Security Grant Notification of Funding was announced, and we are already in the process of preparing the required documentation to seek \$250,000 worth of federal funding for three new projects aimed at equipment sustainability.



OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

A centralized Citizen Feedback System and workflow went operational on May 25, 2018 in conjunction with the official launch of the Office of Professional Standards (O.P.S.) website: dwr.virginia.gov/ops. This system was established within the Law Enforcement Division to collect, track, and respond to all types of citizen feedback in the interest of quality public service. Officers and Staff were provided with both large and small informational printed cards to be given out to the public to obtain their feedback. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) were initiated for handling feedback appropriately, by various positions.

In reference to Officer Commendations, the feedback system has allowed us to significantly increase the collection of positive interactions from the public's perspective with our officers and staff. In fact, from the beginning of this new system to the end of the first year (2018), we had a 286% increase in commendations. These records are now kept and maintained by O.P.S.

In Calendar Year 2020:

- Recorded **142** Total Citizen Feedbacks
- Maintained a **4 to 1 ratio** of Officer Commendations to Officer Complaints

Officer Commendations:

- **112** totals (59 of them through the website – about 1/2)
 - Region I – **27**
 - Region II – **36**
 - Region III – **8**
 - Region IV – **25**
 - Special Ops – **10**
 - HQ – **6**

Officer Complaints:

- **30** totals (10 of them through the website - about 1/3)
- Driving related complaints were the most common (8 total)
- **7** complaints were received after a summons was issued and 6 were for criminal investigation harassment
- Region I - **5**; Region II - **8**; Region III - **3**; Region IV - **11**; and Special Ops / HQ's - **3**

EMPLOYEE SUGGESTION PROGRAM (E.S.P)

The purpose of the Employee Suggestion Program is to utilize that segment of the Professional Standards Creed, which deals specifically with “management best practices”. In particular, going into the “*inclusive, diverse and cohesive team environment*” in order to “*employ proactive and collaborative efforts to enhance effectiveness and reduce risk*”. This is accomplished by focusing attention and building functional workgroups on issues that would often benefit the frontlines. More importantly, it is using field level CPOs and Law Enforcement Staff with their knowledge, creativity, and innovation to make improvements within the entire division.

All employees of the DWR Law Enforcement Division are given the opportunity to submit constructive suggestions to the O.P.S. Advisory Council. This council will facilitate employee feedback in one of two ways. If it is an O.P.S. Project that is currently underway in the council's completion tracker database, the employee should reach out directly to either the designated project leader or one of its team members with feedback and/or suggestions. If the suggestion is already listed as a "Potential" E.S.P. Project or if the employee believes it should be added to that list, the employee may complete an "Employee Suggestion Form" and submit it directly to the O.P.S. Advisory Council at this dedicated mailbox LawESP@dwr.virginia.gov. This council will review employee suggestions on a quarterly basis.

When the interest of senior leadership and the necessary resources both exist to move a proposed project from a potential to active status, those that suggested will be contacted and a team will be created to work on the new project towards an implementation target date set by the O.P.S. Advisory Council.

From inception to 12/31/2020:

- **35** Projects and work teams created, which has led to the completion of **29** projects, using group creativity and innovation to build upon those employee initiatives
- **Total of 5** Completed Project Titles **in 2020** included: Peer Support Team, VCP Recognition and Engagement Handbook, CPO Hot Sheets, VCP Outside Government Agencies Marketing, Leadership Development Program, Hiring Process Review & Recommendations Report

ACCREDITATION SELF-ASSESSMENT PHASE

The Law Enforcement Division of the Department of Wildlife Resources continued its pursuit of excellence in 2020. The Accreditation team and numerous subject matter experts in the division worked to introduce approximately 90 new and revised General Orders. These general orders were designed to put together best law enforcement practices, successfully meet, or exceed VLEPSC accreditation standards, and provide division employees with clear direction. The continuous review of agency directives and practices is the purpose of accreditation. For example, the accreditation team's Use of Force workgroup successfully prepared for compliance with Presidential Executive Order 13929 before it was even signed into law.

Additionally, the accreditation team along with the Regional Evidence Custodians and Technicians began implementing improved evidence handling practices to include barcoding

evidence in the division Records Management System. VLEPSC standards for evidence and property handling were implemented and will continue to be improved into 2021.

Division staff was trained on VLEPSC standards and the importance of detailed report writing during their in-service training session. The venue was used to help Virginia Conservation Police Officers understand the importance of accreditation and their role in the success of accreditation and implementation of best practices.



The division is preparing for their on-site initial assessment in August. The agency is on track to become a VLEPSC accredited agency and stand with the other 99 law enforcement agencies in Virginia to meet this high standard.



RECRUITMENT

The 11th Basic and Modified Training Academies are tentatively scheduled to begin in September of 2021. The Division has been actively recruiting prospective candidates to fill the 24 vacancies. The Training and Recruiting Section had to alter the way it reached out to the community due to COVID-19 and increased the use of social media and other methods. A series of videos have been shared through the DWR social media platforms that highlight the conservation police officer career. A new segment called CPO Spotlight features one of the Division's officers each month and shares a little about themselves and why they chose the career.

These videos and segments have increased the number of calls and information requests we receive each week. The Division's recruiters make themselves available to speak with

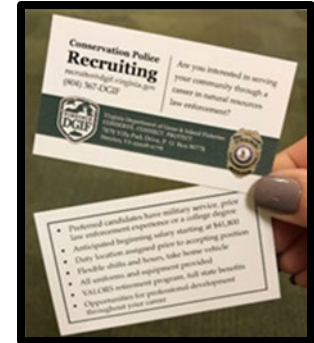




prospective candidates and discuss the career path, hiring process, and the training program new officer's attend. These discussions often last 30 minutes or more.

TRAINING

The Training and Recruiting section program offerings were significantly impacted by COVID-19. Many of the in-person courses were canceled or postponed due to the inability of conducting face to face sessions.



Tactical Operator Course

As Virginia's primary marine law enforcement agency, DWR has an active training program to address the needs of our officers as well as those of our partner agencies. DWR is a National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) Accredited agency. Through this accreditation, our credentialed instructors are able to present training in several areas of boat operation and investigation. In July, The Port of Virginia and DWR presented two sessions of the NASBLA Tactical Operator's Course to our partner law enforcement agencies in the Hampton Roads Area. These courses are 5 days in length and follow the Federal Exclusionary Zone Enforcement Training Curriculum. They are designed to enhance the country's port security capabilities by providing students with the knowledge and skills necessary to appropriately react to threats in the maritime community. DWR and NASBLA instructors taught law enforcement officers the same tactics, techniques, and procedures that the U.S. Coast Guard uses to train its boat operators, ensuring seamless integration into security operations amongst federal, state, county, and local maritime law enforcement officers and agencies. Participating agencies included VA Marine Resources Commission, VA Beach Police, Norfolk Police, Chesapeake Police, and Newport News Police.



Officer Water Survival

DWR partnered with the City of Hampton Police and Fire Department's to put on the NASBLA Officer Water Survival Train the Trainer Course. This 5-day training program was conducted

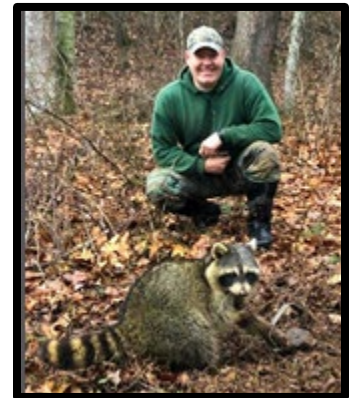


in accordance with the NASBLA's Boat Operations and Training Program standards and provides a course of instruction to give the maritime law enforcement officer the skills to survive in and on the water. This course prepares the officer for the unexpected immersion into the water. A key element of this course is the preparation of participants to become proficient in water survival skills and awareness on how to modify

both duty and survival equipment to increase your chances of survival. In addition, this "Train Trainer" offering prepares the professional agency sponsored trainer the skills and knowledge to deliver the NASBLA curriculum within their agency. Participants in this five day/40-hour course participate in swimming, treading and other drills in uniform, with body armor and a simulated duty belt. This course is physically challenging and uses free style stroke, breaststroke, side stroke and swimming under water.

Advanced Trapping Class for CPOs

In the winter of 2020, an advanced trapping class was held in Southwest Virginia to improve to trapping knowledge and skills among a handful of conservation police officers. This 5-day course involved landowners, volunteers, and several CPOs who have trapping backgrounds. This course built upon knowledge gained in the Academy and provided them with a deeper understanding of trapping practices, methods, and Virginia's furbearer species. This class will be offered regularly in years to come.



DCJS Academy Recertification

DWR operates a Department of Criminal Justices Services Certified Law Enforcement Training Academy. This academy is authorized to present basic and in-service training to law enforcement officers and new hires as well as instructor certification and in-service. In March of 2020, representatives from DCJS performed a review of the curriculum and training records to ensure compliance with established standards. Over the two-day period, reviewers went through documentation related to the approximately 1400 training elements. After this review, DCJS re-certified our training academy through June 2023.

Officer In-Service

In 2020, all of our conservation police officers attended their bi-annual officer in-service training. This training covered areas including de-escalation tactics and control techniques, Diversity Equity and Inclusion, commercialization of amphibians and reptiles, and other topics. Halfway through delivering the training the Division's officers, the COVID-19 epidemic

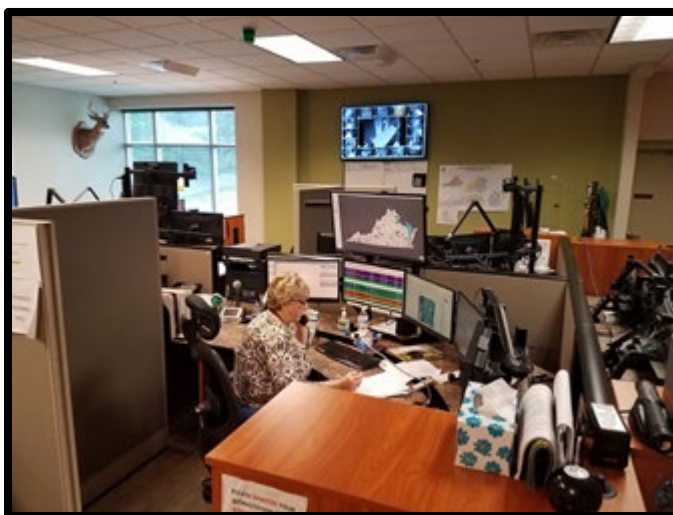
hit Virginia. This caused training to be put on hold for several months and the agenda to be adjusted to limit in-person training.

Implementation of the Boat Operation Training General Order

The Department is one of several state natural resource agencies that are NASBLA Accredited. This accreditation provides a national standard of boat operations and training curriculum. In 2020, our Division implemented General Order 04-05 Boat Operation and Training. This details the training requirements and necessary documents needed to show compliance with the program guidelines. General Order 04-05 provides a systematic approach to vessel crew and operator training in order to develop the Law Enforcement Division ready boat crews and boat operators with search and rescue and special response capabilities that are consistent with national training standards. The Boat Operations and Training (BOAT) Program, created by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA), establishes a U.S. Coast Guard and FEMA recognized national standard for the training, qualification, credentialing and typing of marine law enforcement and emergency first responders. Field officers complete a Boat Task Accomplishment Record every 6 months to document their proficiency in several areas, including general boat operation, towing assistance, search patterns, and maritime security zone enforcement.

LAW SUPPORT SERVICES

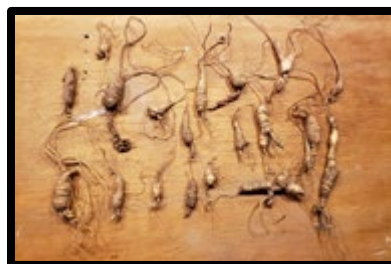
DWR continues to operate a 24 hour, 7 days a week Law Enforcement Communications Center. This Center provides support throughout the entire Commonwealth, not only for Conservation Police Officers and State Park Rangers, but all agency personnel as well. During 2020, the Communications Center completed several notable enhancements that greatly improved the operational effectiveness of its services. The most significant change was the elimination of all 3 part-time Dispatcher positions in exchange for 2 additional full-time Dispatchers. This decision has vastly improved the delivery of Dispatch functions and cannot be overstated. The former part-time Dispatch positions created a “revolving door” of staffing recruitment and hiring. With this change, 2020 observed the longest period of consistent and stable staffing levels in the Communications Center. We now have 10 full-time Dispatcher positions in addition to the 2 Dispatch supervisors for a total of 12 positions.



The year 2020 also brought several technology application upgrades to the center. First, DWR has partnered with Tip411 to bring “Text to 911” services for an additional method of “Crimeline” reporting to the Communication Center. The public can now simply text DWRTIP to 847411, plus their tip, and the Communication Center will route the information to the appropriate Conservation Officer or Park Ranger for follow-up. The application also has the ability of the responding officer to continue the text conversation with the tipster. As with any “Crimeline” application, the tipster may remain anonymous. Full marketing and use of Tip411 will expectantly increase in 2021.

Records Program

The Law Records Program is responsible for the Records Management System (RMS) aspects of managing the case-based data. A fundamental focus of Law Records is to support system development and maintenance while striving to ensure data accuracy and acting as a primary source for data edits. As mandated by the state of Virginia, we submit our records containing offenses to the FBI through the Virginia State Police using a National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Based on these criminal records, the division makes continual contributions to the Naval Criminal Investigative Service’s (NCIS) Law Enforcement Information Exchange (LinX) system.



In 2020, the impact of the Covid-19 virus affected Conservation Police activities in various aspects as it did with the whole nation. With mandatory state and national restrictions placed on social interactions during the majority of the year, officers’ interactions with the public reduced. Summarizing arrest charges within a case gives a view of the hunting, boating and fishing criminal activity that occurs across the Commonwealth.



As a Virginia Law Enforcement Agency, DWR participates in the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) program with the FBI. The state repository for this data is through Virginia State Police’s (VSP) Incident Based Reporting Program (IBR). Each month DWR submits crime data from RMS using the IBR format required by VSP. VSP utilizes this collected data to publish the Crime in Virginia report every year based on Uniform Crime Report (UCR) codes. The table below lists DWR’s data from a UCR perspective similar to the Crime in Virginia Report. Based on the NIBRS system, most of what Conservation Police Officers enforce falls under the UCR code 90Z, “All Other Offenses” (6,844 offenses in 2020).

Due to the ambiguity of the 90Z designation which can include anything from illegal possession of wildlife to not having a fire extinguisher on a vessel, the Law Division created the major and minor categories, reflected previously, to help focus on DWR's mission and goals.

WILDLIFE AND BOAT REVOCATIONS

Law Records is responsible for submitting wildlife revocations to the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact (IWVC), which is also state mandated. On December 1, 2011, the Board of IWVC administrators accepted DWR's application to become a member. DWR has been contributing Virginia wildlife revocations into the IWVC database since 2014. Law Records staff regularly download IWVC data containing revocations associated with wildlife violations submitted by the 48 U.S. member states.

Boating revocations records are also the responsibility of Law Records. This type of revocation is managed via a customized divisional dedicated IT process. As with the wildlife revocations, Zuercher is the starting point to document a revocation. Officers initially update the associated case with relevant revocation information. Auto generated notifications are issued to Law Records personnel to continue processing the revocation data. Ultimately, an "alert" associated with each revocation is created within Zuercher. The alerts display a visual indicator, automatically deactivated on the expiration date of the restriction. This information can be instrumental in a CPO's first contact with an offender/suspect and potentially used to support charge presentations in the judicial system.

Revocations entered into the Revocation Database from 2016 to 2020

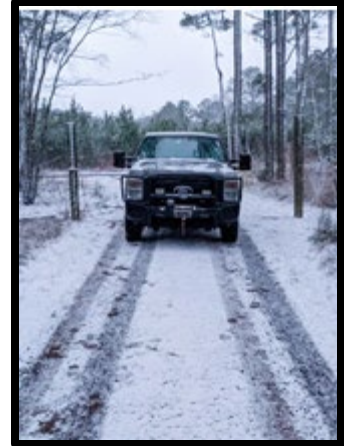
Revocations Entered	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<i>VA Hunt</i>	113	94	93	94	64
<i>VA Fish</i>	1	4	2	5	12
<i>VA Boat</i>	12	22	9	13	7
Total VA Revocations	126	120	104	112	83
Other State Revocations Ratified	5,287	5,150	7,246	5,591	5,470
TOTAL REVOCATIONS	5,413	5,270	7,350	5,703	5,553

FLEET AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

Our fleet and asset team had a very busy 2020. The following list describes some of the highlights that were accomplished while working in a Covid-19 protocol environment:

- VEHICLE HIGHLIGHTS:
 - Active Patrol Vehicles: **140**
 - Average Patrol Vehicle age: **5 years**
 - Average mileage on Patrol Vehicle: **77K**

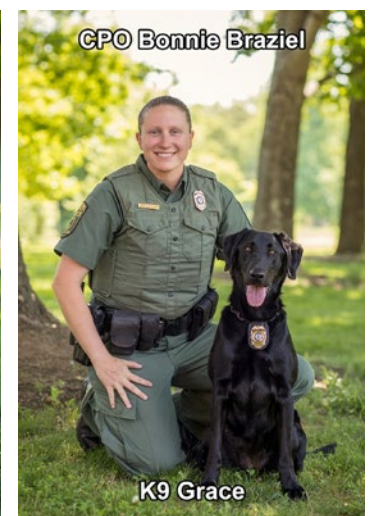
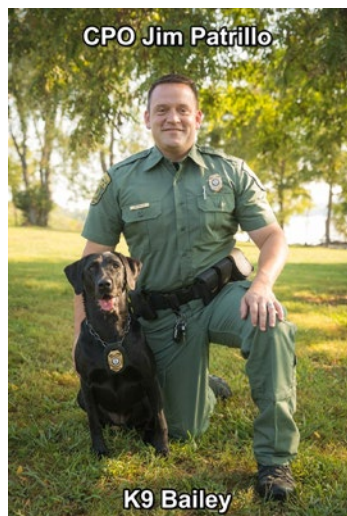
- Total miles on Patrol Vehicles: **9.7M**
 - Total miles driven in 2020: **2.2M**
 - Average miles driven in 2020: **17.5K**
 - Most miles driven in 2020: **33.7K**
- Coordinated with Virginia State Police (VSP) in the decommissioning of surplus vehicles and continued internal decommissioning of selected vehicles and boats.
 - Continued internal maintenance of parts salvage to replace broken parts on law enforcement fleet vehicles with parts from surplus vehicles to provide cost reduction for the department.
 - Initiated selected removal and installation of vehicle and boat decals to increase cost savings.
 - Increased participation in User Agency Requirements Committee (UARC) meetings to strengthen knowledge of VSP functions.
 - Completed verification of DWR law enforcement vehicle assets and reconciliation with VSP Sunflower Asset System. This required purchase and development of equipment, files, and protocol for infield inspection of all LE STARS related assets.
 - Completed verification of VSP Network Operations Center (NOC) alias records with DWR active aliases to correct VSP records.
 - Continued preparation support for accounting asset personnel on vehicles for surplus to facilitate the process.
 - Coordinated the purchase of 22 new vehicles for LE.
 - Composed justification letters for new vehicle purchases and sole source vendor approvals.
 - Researched, purchased, and coordinated the installation of LE equipment in several new boats.
 - Researched, purchased, and coordinated the installation of LE equipment for new vehicles to include the following:
 - Multi-vendor purchases and installation while maintaining Covid safety protocol.
 - Chevrolet trucks: specialty vault, brush guard, back rack, new lights/layout/controls.



- Worked with Vehicle Team to determine needs and options for LE vehicle equipment and decals.
- Coordinated vendor demonstrations of law enforcement equipment for vehicle team evaluation.
- Coordinated the decaling and specialty equipment vehicle installations for new K9 Officers.
- Responded to daily requests from field officers for equipment issues, spare parts and coordinated repairs with local vendors.
- Solicited and secured vendor support for Old Dominion One Shot Program.

SPECIALTY TEAMS

K-9 TEAM





2020 brought many changes to the DWR K9 Unit. Wes Billings' longtime canine partner K9 Josie officially retired in May 2020. While Josie will enjoy retirement, Billings has a new partner in K9 Molly. Billings and K9 Molly, and new handlers and canine partners CPO Tyler Blanks and K9 Bruno, CPO Bonnie Braziel and K9 Grace, Master CPO Mark DiLuigi and K9 Lily, and CPO Ian Ostlund and K9 Reese attended a Conservation K9 Academy in Virginia. The academy, which consists of 3 – 3-week sessions over a 15-week period, was instructed by Senior CPO Richard Howald

and assisted by Billings.

All new handlers and their canine partners were trained in tracking, evidence/article detection, and wildlife detection. Billings and K9 Molly did not train in wildlife detection, as they and current K9 team CPO Jim Patrillo began training DWR's first canines in Human Remains Detection Training and hope to be certified by mid-2021. This new tool will help bring a quick closure to families of missing victims.



With the onset of COVID in the spring of 2020, the K9 Unit's public appearances were cut by 85%. We are hoping that restrictions will begin to relax in 2021 and they are able to get out and promote the Unit, the Division, and the Agency.



With the resignation of one of the K9 handlers, we advertised and selected Officer David Hennaman to be the new handler of K9 Waylon. This team will attend the Indiana K9 Conservation Academy in the spring of 2021.



As reported last year, CPO Wayne Billhimer's K9 partner Justice was diagnosed with cancer. We are sad to report that Justice lost his battle with cancer in May 2020.

The following table contains summary information for the K9 unit since 2014 and includes a snapshot of what Senior Officer Billings and K9 Josie and Molly, Officer Tyler Blanks

and K9 Bruno, Officer Bonnie Braziel and K9 Grace, Officer Glenn Cramer and K9 Waylon, Master Officer Mark DiLuigi and K9 Lily, Senior Officer Richard Howald and K9 Sky, Officer Ian Ostlund and K9 Reese, Officer Jim Patrillo and K9 Bailey, and Officer Mark VanDyke and K9 Avery did during the calendar year 2020:

*Summary for K-9 Activity from 2016 to 2020 (*separation of uses and patrols starting in 2018)*

DESCRIPTION	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
TOTAL USES	154	76	127	267	286	292
TOTAL PATROLS	*	*	*	182	195	277
PUBLIC APPEARANCE	42	33	60	85	89	14
TRACKS	78	64	52	63	71	74
WILDLIFE DETECTION	29	26	21	28	18	17
AREA SEARCH	87	51	42	51	63	177
NONSPECIFIC USE	21	16	35	40	45	10
HUMAN REMAINS DETECTION	*	*	*	*	*	1

MARINE THEFT AND FRAUD

In 2017, the Law Division recognized an increasing need in the enforcement of thefts and frauds of boats and boat registration applications. Special Agent Jim Croft, as part of the Special Operations Unit, had historically been



tasked with investigating stolen boats. The cases he was becoming involved in and the information he was receiving, indicated that he was going to need assistance to be able to effectively address these issues across the Commonwealth. The decision was made to assign two officers each year to work with Agent Croft. This would not only give him the much-needed assistance but would provide a set of new skills and investigatory knowledge to the assisting officers so they could continue to identify and investigate marine-related thefts and frauds in their respective districts at the completion of their assignments. Through 2020, five officers have participated, been involved in significant cases, and taken the Law Division's response to these types of crimes to a new level.

2020 created an interesting challenge for the unit. Agents Croft and Inge were tasked with working around the restrictions and fallout of COVID-19. Due to those restrictions, the public chose to be more engaged with the outdoors and the boat titling section saw a significant



increase in applications for new and transferred motorboats. This significant increase also brought an increased caseload of fraudulent representations. This increase, with the closure

of many courts, created a new challenge for the investigators. Many jurisdictions were receptive to alternatives to charges to include the payment of owed taxation monies from misrepresentations in lieu of adding to the already significant backlog of pending court dockets or dismissal of charges to free up that backlog and thus lost revenue for the Agency.



The increased public participation in boating also brought out those who chose to prey on unsuspecting new boaters. Investigators identified 19 violations of individuals selling boats without a watercraft dealers license. Several were innocent oversights; however, a few involved the intentional scamming of

purchasers. One case of notation originated from a citizen complaint where an individual was previously selling boats in North Carolina, ran into legal troubles there and moved his business to Virginia. Agents covertly visited the business where the owner and an employee offered to sell the agents numerous vessels. While looking at the boats, agents identified several with missing HINs and suspicious ghost numbering. Agents left, secured a search warrant for the business, and returned. Before producing the warrant, agents focused on a suspicious boat. They had the owner produce paperwork like they were going to purchase the boat and trailer and the owner provided titles that didn't match what was being sold and also a VIN plate was produced that wasn't affixed to the trailer. The local district officers and a DMV agent arrived, and the warrant was executed. The business had 54 boats and as many trailers to comb over with many issues detected. At the conclusion of the investigation 23 charges were filed on the business owner.

The most notable event of 2020 for the unit was the receipt of the 2020 Conservation Law Enforcement Award from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. The unit was selected from numerous nominations from across North America. This award is for an individual, a unit, bureau, division, or combination of the preceding, to enhance the professionalism and significant advancement of conservation law enforcement in the areas of deterrence of violations, forensic techniques,



equipment development, public relations, innovative operations, and conservation law enforcement research. Since 2010, Agent Croft and the Marine Theft & Fraud team members

have exemplified every component of the Conservation Law Enforcement Award. Members of the unit proudly accepted the award virtually in September.

The unit continues to be successful and looks for new and innovative approaches to enforcement and furthering the goals of the Division and Agency. The following is a preview of what has been accomplished by this team in 2020:

Case Types from Boat Fraud Team

DESCRIPTION	2018	2019	2020
CASES DEVELOPED	114	105	74
FELONY CHARGES	11	51	10
MISDEMEANOR CHARGES	55	24	28
WARNINGS	7	31	0
SEARCH WARRANTS	12	60	13
RECOVERED BOATS	11	21	6
RECOVERED TRAILERS	5	12	5
CAMPER RECOVERED	1	1	0
IMPACT ON LOCAL TAXATION	\$90,000	\$90,000	TBD
TOTAL VALUE OF RECOVERED PROPERTY	\$241,000	\$334,000	TBD

TRACKING TEAM

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (VDWR) tracking program has been a popular course among local law enforcement agencies. The VDWR tracking training cadre was able to proceed with two tracking classes in 2020, before canceling the rest due to the corona virus pandemic. The two courses were held for law enforcement officers of the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Currently, the VDWR tracking training cadre has received requests from several agencies and plans to hold a VDWR advanced tracking class in the fall of 2021. Once these VDWR Officers have completed advanced tracking training, they will become eligible to join their respective regional tracking team. Additionally, Officers that complete training to become instructors through the Department of Criminal Justice Services will become eligible to join the tracking training cadre.

The VDWR tracking teams utilized the skills of 29 dedicated Officers who have taken on this extra responsibility in addition to their normal duties. Tracking team members regularly train and work with one of nine VDWR K9 units. Four tracking team members take on yet another responsibility as the regional team leader. Each team leader coordinates regular team training sessions and supervises regional operations as they arise.

2020 Regional tracking team leaders were:

Region 1: CPO Dan Rabago

Region 2: CPO John Daniel

Region 3: CPO Andy Rutledge

Region 4: CPO Chance Dobbs

HONOR GUARD

The DWR Honor Guard continues to provide essential services during the difficult COVID 19 Pandemic:

In March 2020 the Honor Guard collaborated with Wildlife / Outreach Divisions to assist with the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel Project to protect Virginia's largest seabird colony. Honor Guard assisted with the decommissioning of the American flag that flew over Ft. Wool. The flag, which was raised in 2007, flew day and night until DWR partnered with VDOT to create habitat for the seabird colony displaced by bridge tunnel complex construction. The Honor Guard lowered the 20' x 38' flag, removed it from the 90-foot pole, and folded it with honors before it was provided to the Hampton History Museum.



Though serving in an altered capacity for much of the year, Honor Guard members fulfilled their purpose by representing DWR and the Law Division during these unprecedented times. Our members adapted to the many challenges in daily life as well as those in their professional life. Dealing with the restrictions of COVID 19, Honor Guard, continued to serve as a well-

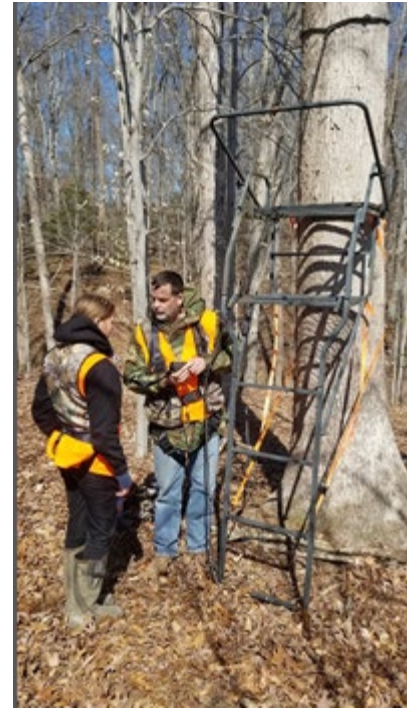
trained unit rendering honors by presenting flags in memoriam and appreciation to families for their loved one's service to the Commonwealth as prior Game Wardens and/or Conservation Police Officers. The ability to provide quality service during these turbid times is testament to the quality of our team members. Each member possesses the unique skill set required to represent the agency at its highest level and their dedication is unwavering. A beacon of professionalism representing the agency and a staple of the law division charged with preserving traditions, promoting esprit-de-corps, and instilling pride.

OFFICER OUTREACH

On March 7, 2020 Officer Nevel hosted her third annual Women and Youth Hunter Education class in Richmond County. The event was hosted at Independence Farm, a private residence belonging to a retired Army Sargent Major Rick Walters, who hosts several youths and

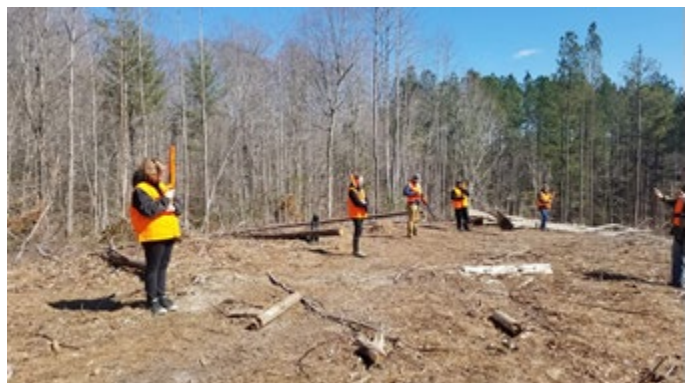
wounded veteran events throughout the year. Stephanie and Rick Walters are both active Hunter Education instructors with the department.

The event consists of a block of instruction in the classroom, followed by a range, and a trail walk. The students are taught a condensed version of the hunter education curriculum in the morning in the classroom covering weapon safety, conservation, hunting safety laws, different weapons for hunting, hunter safety plans, basic survival skills, and much more. In the afternoon, the students expand upon those lessons taught by experiencing the basic shotgun range. Students learn basic shotgun skills including patterning a shotgun, target practice for turkey and deer hunting, and simulated shooting from a tree stand by shooting from the seated position. Students participate in the trail walk like they



were going on a simulated hunt. Students don orange hunting vests and carry a firearm safely in a group. Students practice safely transitioning over a fence individually and with a partner. A hunt master is picked from amongst the group, who must ask the landowner's permission for the simulated hunting group. The students proceed through the trail reviewing shoot don't shoot scenes based on safety and legal requirements (ie: posted property, wildlife too small or out of season, and other hunter's positions). Students cover conservation and preservation of the property with the landowner. Students practice zones of fire by setting up for a dove hunt and are checked by the CPO in the field.

This particular course was met with the onset of COVID 19 just before class. The instructors took safety precautions by cutting down the group size and running two programs simultaneously in different rooms to allow for social distancing. All safety guidelines were followed to allow for the safety of all the



instructors and the students that participated. It was the last class taught in Region 1 before all events were canceled the following week and the state shut down for COVID.

This course also had participants from the Governor's Office of Diversity and This amazing course could not have happened without the amazing DWR volunteer hunter education

instructors from the Northern Neck and surrounding areas including The Hydes, The Walters, Mark, Ronnie, Rick, Nerine, Barbara, Tony, and Brian. Our number of women participants has increased with each class and the feedback from the students states the class has been well received.

RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

Officer of the Year

Officer Cory Harbour has been named the 2020 Conservation Police Officer of the Year.

Each year, DWR regions (I-IV), along with DWR Special Operations, nominate outstanding officers who deserve extraordinary recognition and praise for their accomplishments. This year, the nominees were RI, Senior Officer Brian Bratton, RIII, Officer Benjamin Boyette, RIV, Officer Derrick Kekic, and Special Operations K9 Unit Officer Richard Howald.



Officer Harbour, who works District 23, received 14 commendations through the Office of Professional Standards. Just a few of Officer Harbour's accomplishments are included in the list below:

- Initiated/responded to over 800 calls for service in four districts within his region.
- Made over 200 arrests and recorded over 150 warnings out of almost 400 violations detected.
- Made 14 felony arrests, assisted with 3 additional felony arrests, and made OUI and DUI arrests
- Received the Lifesaving Medal for responding to a DUI crash and pulling the suicidal driver from the edge of the bridge as he was about to jump.
- Assisted with a boating fatality investigation and was lead investigator for two hunting incidents.
- Volunteered to display the breast cancer awareness pink decals and used his media contact to do an interview about the initiative on the local news
- Adhered to COVID protocols to participate in two in person outreach events in the height of the pandemic, while participating virtually on committees in and outside the agency

The time, dedication, and effort that Officer Harbour puts into his chosen profession, along with his consistent interaction with his community and local law enforcement, make him very efficient and effective with his work in all aspects. Cory's ability to foster and build relationships, while showing his passion and enthusiasm for the job, is the reason for his many commendations. The qualities shown make him a model conservation police officer and invaluable asset to the Commonwealth.

Boating Officer of the Year (NA SBLA)

Senior Conservation Police Officer Brandon Harris has received The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) Butch Potts Memorial Award. This award, also known as the 2020 Boating Officer of the Year award, is presented to one Officer in the Northern, Southern, and Western US regions.

Each year, DWR regions (I-IV), along with Senior Leadership, nominate outstanding officers who deserve extraordinary recognition and praise for their accomplishments. This year, the nominees were RI, Officer Cameron Dobyns, RIII, Officer Jason Harris, and RIV, Officer Alan Hatmaker. We congratulate all the Officers on their nominations.



Senior Officer Harris works in Halifax County, VA in DWR Region II. His outstanding nomination highlighted his many efforts and achievements. Just a few of Officer Harris' accomplishments are included in the list below.

- Detection efforts for identifying impaired boating operators.
- Three BUI arrests and convictions.
- A recognition by Mothers against Drunk Driving (MADD) for extraordinary efforts.
- Extensive boat patrol efforts that lead to 73 boating related arrests.
- On scene and/or primary investigator for 6 boating related accidents to include a fatal resulting in a manslaughter charge.

Brandon's accomplishments were not all enforcement related. He also received the very prestigious DWR OPS Professionalism Decree Award. He continuously shares this knowledge with his fellow Officers and is a tremendous asset to their effective patrolling of these waters. Brandon is the lead instructor for our Division's Boat Cadre as well as a team member of our

Boating Incident Reconstruction Team. These voluntarily commitments go beyond his basic core responsibilities. This year he assisted in this capacity by reconstructing a major fatality investigation that occurred on Lake Anna, in Spotsylvania County. Brandon's extensive tenure enables him to have more initiative, not be idle and exhibit an above and beyond work effort. Even with the COVID-19 restrictions mandated by the Governor and Agency management, Brandon searched for ways to be most productive and make our waters safe. He conducted 32 boat patrols this year identifying areas on Lake Gaston and Buggs Island Lake where he encountered alcohol, boating safety, and fishing violations. Since January 2020, Brandon inspected over 200 vessels and he has completed over 100 waterway marker inspections to ensure safety and compliance. DWR congratulates Senior Officer Brandon Harris on this well- deserved recognition of his outstanding commitment and dedication to the citizens of the Commonwealth, the Agency and Virginia's boating public.

Boating Officer of the Year (NA SBLA)

The Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) is honored to announce that Conservation Police Officer Sgt. Daniel (Dan) Hall was selected to receive the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) 2020 Guy Bradley Award.

During the course of his 30 plus year career, Sgt. Hall's commitment to our natural resources, the agency, the sportsmen and sportswomen, and the citizens of the Commonwealth and its constituents has been unwavering.

The Guy Bradley Award is presented annually to one state agency officer and one federal agency officer whose dedication and public service in protecting the nation's natural resources demonstrates outstanding leadership, excellence in implementation, knowledge and actions that have advanced the cause of wildlife conservation.

NFWF considers nominee's years of service, career achievements, professional contributions, impact on their community, innovation, and other criteria in making their selection.



In 1905, Florida game warden Guy Bradley became the first wildlife law enforcement agent killed while performing his duties to protect the nation's wildlife. Law enforcement agents and officers like Bradley are essential to virtually every aspect of wildlife conservation, from recovering endangered species to managing waterfowl and big game resources. In honor of



Guy Bradley, NFWF established this lifetime achievement award to recognize individuals for their commitment and performance in the field of wildlife law enforcement.

"Established in honor of the first wildlife law enforcement agent to be killed while performing his duties, this annual award recognizes extraordinary contributions to national and local efforts to protect wildlife," said Jeff Trandahl, Executive Director and CEO of NFWF. "Conservation Police Sergeant Daniel Hall of the

Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources has truly earned this recognition. Over more than 30 years, his career accomplishments have ranged from helping to reopen deer season in southwest Virginia to holding companies responsible for polluting waterways. His efforts have improved the quality of life for local residents and helped to preserve and protect wildlife for future generations."

Sgt. Hall has demonstrated outstanding leadership in the field of conservation law enforcement throughout the last three decades. Dan was instrumental in the restocking efforts of Whitetail Deer in rural Southwest Virginia. Dan's passion for the resource and ability to make mutually beneficial relationships with numerous landowners helped facilitate this effort which resulted in the re-opening of deer season in that area, which had been closed for 18 years. While working the same geographic area, Sgt. Hall identified an opportunity to encourage angler activity in the Breaks Interstate Park, a park whose boundaries lie between Virginia and Kentucky. Working with local legislators and elected officials, Dan facilitated legislation that allowed residents of either state to fish in the park with their own resident licenses. Not only did this encourage angler involvement but eliminated a significant enforcement issue in this heavily used recreational area.

Not only has Sgt. Hall been a leader in the field of law enforcement, but Dan also understands the need for outreach opportunities and education that encourages positive interaction between constituents of all ages and diverse backgrounds and law enforcement officials. For the last 20 years, Dan has organized and coordinated the Smyth County Kids Fishing Event that to date, has reached thousands of youths, many of whom have went on to purchase licenses and contribute to conservation later in their life. Other outstanding community-based programs that Dan has been directly involved with include a VFW sponsored boating safety program for elementary school students, the "Shop with a Cop" program, and a 21st

Century Learning Grant program that teaches, supports, and encourages fishing and wildlife conservation.

OTHER AWARDS

Colonel's Leadership Award (2020)

The purpose of the Colonel's Leadership Award is to formally recognize those officers and staff members that set the standard in regard to being a leader within the Law Enforcement Division. Furthermore, the Colonel has an opportunity each year to highlight an employee within the division who is demonstrating a best practices management model through their outstanding actions and deeds per the criteria identified below in our Professional Standards CREED.

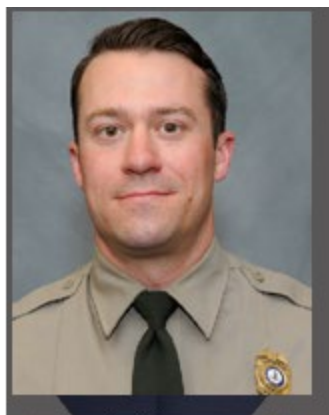


Lifesaving Medal (2020)

The Lifesaving Medal may be awarded to any sworn officer of the Law Enforcement Division who, through demonstrating extraordinary effort, provides direct life sustaining emergency medical care, or rescues or endeavors to rescue any person from life-threatening incidents such as drowning, vehicle accidents, fires, or other perils.



Benjamin Boyette



Daniel Hyman



Sgt. Adam Keene

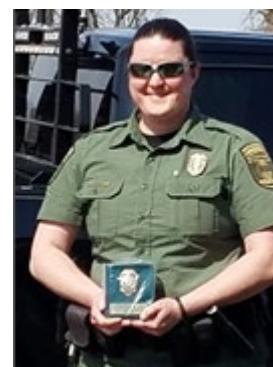


Meritorious Service Medal (2020)

The Meritorious Service Medal may be awarded to any sworn officer of the Law Enforcement Division who, in the line of duty, rescues or endeavors to rescue any person from life-threatening incidents such as drowning, vehicle accidents, fires, or other perils. The Meritorious Service Medal shall only be awarded to an individual who performed a rescue or attempted rescue at significant risk of his or her own life and demonstrates extreme and heroic daring.

O.P.S. Professionalism Decree (Class of 2020)

The purpose of the O.P.S. Professionalism Decree (Innovation Award) is to establish a tradition to formally recognize those Sworn Officers and DWR Law Enforcement Staff who have gone above and beyond to promote the professionalism of Virginia Conservation Police through their commitment and dedication to this public service profession.



AFWA Conservation Law Enforcement Award (2020)

The purpose of the "AFWA" award is to recognize outstanding, national-level achievements in conservation law enforcement by an individual, a unit, bureau, division, or a combination of the preceding, to enhance the professionalism and significant advancement of conservation law enforcement in the areas of 1) Deterrence of Violations; 2) Forensic Techniques; 3) Equipment Development; 4) Public Relations; 5) Innovative Operations; and 6) Conservation Law Enforcement Research.



Communications Officer of the Year (2020)

The Communications Officer of the Year Award is presented to a member of our Communications Center, who during the calendar year has excelled in the areas of

enhancing officer safety, quality public service and working with agency partners in support of our mission Laura O'Hara.

A FEW GOOD WOMEN



On this cold November morning it starts at sunrise. Nevel is on her way to organize a hunt for disabled sportsmen at the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge, and I am along for the ride. We are only on the road a few minutes when she gets a report of an injured bird, followed by a call from a hunter who has harvested a buck showing signs of disease. Over the next eight hours, Nevel will traverse two counties, cover close to two hundred miles, and end her day deep in the woods, dropping cameras where she suspects illegal baiting. This is crunch time, when hunting and rockfish seasons intersect, and no two shifts are the same.

"Normally I start off with a plan, but it doesn't always work out that way," she laughs. "You never know what's going to happen when you go on duty. That's why I like it."

Nevel is one of only 153 conservation police officers (CPOs) tasked with enforcing Virginia's hunting, fishing, and boating laws across the Commonwealth's 42,775 square miles of land and more than 49,000 miles of river. But she is also part of an elite subset because of her gender. The state employs only nine female CPOs (formerly known as game wardens), making up about six percent of the Department of Wildlife Resources force.

Nationwide, women currently earn nearly half of all undergraduate degrees in law enforcement, and more than half of the degrees awarded in biology, agriculture, and natural

resources programs. Any of these majors could easily lead to a career in conservation resource policing, but few women consider it as an option. It just isn't on their radar, according to Nevel, because they haven't grown up seeing women CPOs. She's working to change that by teaching hunter education classes to women and young girls. She says participants are often surprised to see her there.

"They tell me they didn't know ladies could be game wardens," Nevel explains.

Her experience is echoed by her sister officers. Many say they were the first female CPOs their communities had ever seen.

"I remember when I was still in training," say Senior Officer Beth Garrett, now in her 22nd year. "I was in a 7-11 store in the Northern Neck, and this guy just kept following me around, staring at me. I finally turned asked if I could help him. He said, 'I heard tell there was a female game warden down here, but I wouldn't believe it till I laid eyes on you.'"



She laughs. "I twirled around in front of him and said 'Well, you can believe it now.'"

I hear her story—and those of the others—at the Osbourne Boat Landing on the James River, thanks to the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources. The agency has orchestrated a rare gathering of the state's nine female CPOs for an interview and photo shoot that quickly takes on the feel of a family reunion. Faces light up as each new vehicle arrives, and soon the parking lot is filled with the sound of excited voices and laughter. Everyone is eager to pet Grace, a Labrador retriever puppy who is also Officer Bonnie Braziel's new partner. Grace is the only dog paired with a female CPO as part of the canine program. It is just one of many firsts for this group that is changing the face of the VDWR. Though they come from diverse backgrounds—a family history of public service; a stint in the military; two, four, or even six years of college— they share a common bond: They are committed to preserving and protecting nature for future generations, and they hate to sit still.

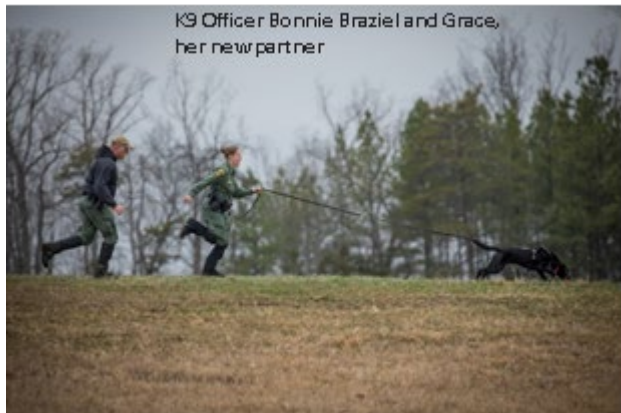
"It's my parents' fault," jokes Garrett, who grew up camping and boating. "I got out of school, took an office job, and I hated it." In addition to a love of the outdoors, these women say it is the fast pace and variety of the work that drew them to conservation policing. "It's always something different," explains Senior Officer Beth McGuire, who considered other law enforcement careers before joining the VDWR. "We're not stuck to the pavement."

"I can be on a boat one minute, and in the woods searching for a lost two-year-old the next," says Sergeant Jessica Whirley agrees. "You never get tired of it."

All that variety can lead to some memorable moments, from calls about bears trespassing in trailers to naked boaters—the latter of which apparently happens more often than you might think. Everyone who has worked the water seems to have a story about nudity. Officer Katiana (Kat) Quarles recalls a couple boating in the buff on a very crowded Lake Anna. When stopped, they insisted they weren't doing anything wrong because they were too far out for the walkers to see from the shore.

"I couldn't believe it," she laughs. "I pointed all around them and said, 'What about all the other boats?'"

There are also more serious calls for boating accidents, missing persons, and recovering the bodies of drowning victims. CPOs often go undercover to track down illegal



smuggling of animal parts and even assist local police in murder investigations. They serve as deputy U.S. Fish and Wildlife officers, crossing state lines to investigate violations of federal law. To prepare, every candidate must complete the 26-week Basic Law Enforcement Academy followed by a 15-week field training. CPOs go to driving school to hone off-road and fast-track pursuit skills, and they take ongoing defensive tactics and weapons training. It is a rigorous program, and one that Officer Krista Adams credits with instilling in CPOs a sense of mutual respect. Because they are all held to the highest standards, she says, "the guys see us as equals."

That is not always the case with the public. The women joke about how often they are called "honey," "sweetheart," or "darlin" while on duty.

"Sometimes you let it go," says McGuire. "You understand, especially with older gentlemen, it's not meant as disrespect, it's just how they grew up."

But there are also times when the terms are intended to be condescending and demeaning, Adams points out. "That's when you have to call them on it."

"I say they need to use 'Officer' or 'Ms.' because those other names are reserved for my husband," McGuire says with a smile. "That usually takes care of it."

Learning to maintain professionalism in the face of rude or insulting behavior is an essential skill, according to the VDWR. That is because conservation policing has a higher inherent level of danger.

"If you think about it, nearly every person I am in contact with is armed," observes Nevel. "They either have a loaded gun or a knife, and I'm usually approaching them in an isolated environment."

It is in these challenging circumstances, she says, that being a woman can be an asset.

Officer Krista Adams agrees.

"Females have a different perspective," she notes. "We understand how to defuse a situation. Even if we're not as physically strong, we bring this other skill to the table."

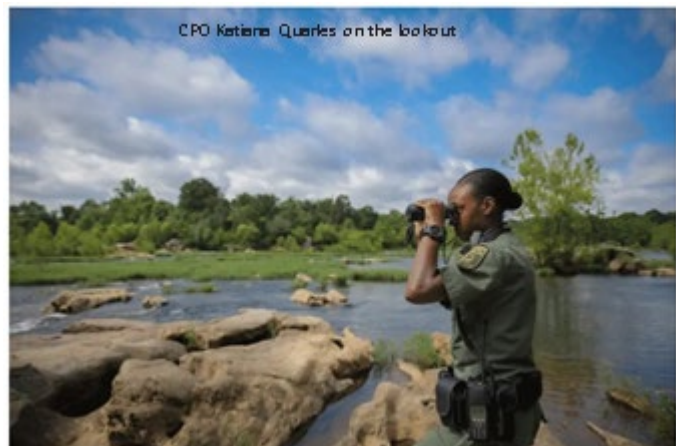


These aren't just opinions. They are borne out by forty years of research showing women have a less authoritarian style of policing, are better communicators, and are less reliant on physical force than their male counterparts. More importantly, female officers are less likely to escalate volatile confrontations. It is a scenario I watch play out during my ride along with Officer Nevel.

We are out at Windmill Point, in the driveway of a hunter who violated regulations by transporting his deer home to process before tagging it. From the front passenger seat of the officer's SUV, I can hear his voice rising. Nevel continues to talk in a soothing voice, even when he shouts about how much he hates game wardens. When he finally winds down enough to take a breath, she responds sweetly, "Now sir, that's not nice. I don't feel that way about you."

His anger evaporates. He even gives Nevel a tip on a poacher after receiving his ticket.

The same level of professionalism and heart to serve are apparent in all nine of the female officers. They take enforcing the law seriously, but they strive to



execute their duty with both humor and compassion. It is a credo summed up best by Officer Krista Adams.

“The goal at the end, regardless of the interaction—even if I’m writing someone a summons—is to leave them with a smile.”



CONSERVE. CONNECT. PROTECT.

WEST VIRGINIA

Bobby L. Cales, Colonel

OFFICER TRAINING

West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Section certified 10 new Pistol/Firearms Instructors, certified 10 Swift Water Rescue Level One Technicians, and six newly hired officers attended mandatory ATV rider-safety. Enhanced firearms training was conducted with the Glock 21 duty pistol and the Remington 870 shotgun. Seven newly sworn Natural Resources Police Officers attended the mandatory eight (8) hour Seated Battery Transition Course, all other NRPOs completed the annual Seated-Battery refresher course for Boating Under the Influence (BUI) and Driving Under the Influence (DUI) enforcement. During FY21 West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Section partnered with the Charleston Police Department and NASBLA (National Association of State Boating Law Administrators) to complete a Boat Crew Members Course, this course is 40 hours in length. In FY21, Natural Resources Police Officers were CPR/First Aid recertified and received Stop the Bleed instructor certification. Based on a partner grant with Spirit of Blue Foundation and the West Virginia Trauma Surgeons Association, 135 Gen7 C-A-T Tourniquets and Rigid TQ Holders were issued to all West Virginia Natural Resources Police Officers after the Stop the Bleed training.

The Law Enforcement Section Honor Guard/Color Guard continues to attend opening ceremonies, special events and funerals.

FUNDING AND STAFFING

The WV DNR Law Enforcement Section normally has a staffing level of 126 Natural Resources Police Officers (NRPO) and 11 support personnel. During FY2021, eight officers separated from service, and nine new officers were hired. One support personnel separated from service and one support personnel was hired.

LAW ENFORCEMENT TRENDS

The Law Enforcement Section continues are focus on water safety and increased lifejacket usage by the public through the *Wear It Campaign, Operation Life Jacket, and Spring Aboard*.

The Law Enforcement Section offers in-seat Boating Safety classes in all counties in West Virginia. Students may view class information and register online at www.register-ed.com. The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and The U.S. Power Squadron also teach Boater Education within the State of West Virginia. NASBLA and State of West Virginia approved On-line Boater Education courses can be found on www.wvdnr.gov. Anyone born after December 31, 1986, is required to successfully complete a NASBLA-approved boating safety course before

operating a motorboat. While using news releases and interviews during ***Spring Aboard***, the mandatory Boater Education message reaches many new boaters.

The public and media continue to follow the work of our officers on the WV Natural Resources Police Officer Facebook page, www.Facebook.com/DNRpolice. The Facebook page continues to see increases in media contacts for additional information within the state and nationally. The reporting of wildlife violations on the DNR website, www.wvdnr.gov/enforce/poachers.shtm and Facebook are increasingly useful.

UNIQUE CROSS BOUNDARY OR COOPERATIVE ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS

One Sergeant and four officers are working the Hatfield-McCoy Regional Recreation Authority. The Authority reimburses the Section for salaries, benefits, and associated equipment expenses. This trail system is growing, and we are working together to make sure we have coverage for the safety of the public. It is our hope that more officers will be added as the system grows.

A grant from the Governor's Commission on Drunk Driving Prevention provided the Law Enforcement Section additional funding for enhanced BUI patrols on West Virginia waters from July 1, 2020, to September 30, 2020. These patrols resulted in 9 BUI arrests, and 786 other citations/warnings.

Natural Resources Police Officers participated in the nationwide program *Operation Dry Water* from July 3, 2020, to July 5, 2020, to reduce alcohol-related boating incidents. This operation resulted in 265 citations/warnings, and 4 BUIs. The Section has renewed its efforts toward water safety and increased lifejacket usage by the public through our *Wear It Campaign* on Facebook and general boat patrols.

COST SAVING INITIATIVES

The Section continues to conduct a vehicle/boat accident review board semi-annually to identify incident types and causes. Since newer vehicles have the backup cameras and sensors, we have seen a reduction in backing incidents. We are always looking for ways to reduce insurance premiums.

The Section continually utilizes technology to reduce travel costs. Cell phones, computers, radios, and the internet are used to transmit reports, complaints, and information. Conference calls are used to conduct meetings, boards, or planning sessions to cut down in-state travel.

The Section keeps vehicles, if the vehicle is operating efficiently, 5 years or 125,000 miles to reduce vehicle expenditures. High maintenance cost vehicles are traded earlier to avoid excessive repairs. We were able to purchase 3 new Dodge Ram 1500 Classic Pickup Trucks, 5 new Jeep Grand Cherokee Latitude SUV vehicles.

The Section was able to purchase 130 new WatchGuard Body Cameras and 6 new Autel Robotics EVO II Pro 6K Rugged Bundle Drones.

The Section continues to work with federal and state agencies to procure grants to assist with equipment purchases. The hunter education and boating grants are being monitored to maximize returns from expenditures of time and resources.



LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

- SB216 Commerce Rules 58-56 Added edible enticement and non-edible facsimile of an enticement to definition of baiting in the waterfowl rules.
- SB419 Redefined the term firearm to match the Federal definition.
- SB 514 Provided new criteria and term limits for Natural Resource Commission members

COVID 19

WV DNR Law Enforcement Officers were out in full force during this pandemic. They continued on with patrols, hunter education classes, and assisting the public when and where they were requested. Our District offices and Headquarter office stayed open for the citizens of West Virginia.





United States Department of the Interior
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Office of Law Enforcement



Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 focus is to investigate wildlife crimes; regulate wildlife trade; help people understand and comply with federal conservation laws; work in partnership with federal, state, tribal, and international counterparts to conserve wildlife and plant resources; and protect our nation's border and natural resources by interdicting illegal wildlife products and injurious species before entering or leaving the country.

We achieved such by implementation of Strategic Goals to include:

- Actively Combating Global Wildlife Trafficking
- Protecting the Nation's Fish, Wildlife, and Plants from Unlawful Exploitation, Industrial Hazards, and Habitat Loss
- Facilitate and Expedite Legal Trade
Enhance Management Accountability

FY 2021 during the COVID -19 pandemic, the Office of Law Enforcement, Atlanta, GA SAC Office, adapted and made necessary changes to ensure the safety of personnel and customers while continuing to fulfill the mission of the Service and facilitate legal wildlife trade. During this time, enforcement staff made the proper arrangements to continue to assist the public, facilitate legal trade while also performing physical inspections of imports and exports to detect and interdict illegal shipments. WIs in the Southeast U.S. have consistently made seizures throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Special Agents continued to perform their duties and roles in complex investigations, apprehending traffickers, and collaborating with partner enforcement agencies.

A query of the Law Enforcement Management Information System (LEMIS) reflected the following casework handled by Interior Region 2-4 during this period:

- New cases opened in FY 2021: 1216
- Total # of cases currently active: 1735

Inspection Areas:

- Total Shipments: 36,682
- Declared Value: \$792,132,563
- Total # of inspections: 3,165
- Total seizures: 337

FY 2021 Adjudication Statistics – Interior Region 2-4

Criminal Fines/Penalties

Fines Imposed	Fines Suspended	Restitution	Forfeiture of Collateral	Criminal Forfeiture	Property Forfeited	Other Directed Sanctions
\$148,138	\$0.00	\$49,243	\$54,435	\$18,630	\$46,291	\$0.00

Civil Fines/Penalties

Property Forfeited	Negotiated Other Payments	Negotiated Agreement	Civil Penalty Assessments	Other Negotiated Payments
\$16,293	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$256,093	\$343

Sentencing Summary

Jail (months)	Suspended (months)	Probation (months)	Home Confinement (months)	Halfway House (months)	Community Service (hours)	Suspension/Revocation of Privileges (months)
20	0	819	18	0	2,060	744

FY 2021 Violation by Act - Interior Region 2-4

Total Cases by Act

Act Description	Act	New Cases	Ongoing Cases	Total Violation Investigations	Act Description	Act	New Cases	Ongoing Cases	Total Violation Investigations
African Elephant Conservation Act	AEC	3	0	3	Marine Mammal Act	MMA	5	5	10
Airborne Hunting Act	ABH	0	1	1	Migratory Bird / Stamp Act	MHS	5	2	7
Archeological Resources	ARA	2	7	95	Migratory Bird Treaty Act	MBT	36	71	107
Assimilated Crimes Act	ACR	0	0	0	National Wildlife Refuge	WRF	0	2	2
Conspiracy	CON	4	21	25	Obstruction Of Justice	OBJ	0	3	3
Eagle Protection Act	EPA	3	10	13	Other Federal Laws	FED	9	25	34
Endangered Species Act	ESA	1,052	296	1348	Permit / License	PLI	0	0	0
False Statements	FSE	1	13	14	Rhino Tiger Act	RTA	0	0	0
Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA)	FIF	0	0	0	Smuggling	SMG	35	32	67
Foreign Laws	FOR	2	1	3	State Law	STL	1	35	36
Lacey Act	LAC	204	114	318	Undefined	XXX	1	2	3
Lacey Act - Wildlife	LAW	19	28	47	Wild Bird Conservation Act	WBA	8	5	13
Major Crime	MJC	0	0	0	Total Acts for All Cases		1,390	673	2,063

FY 2021 Violation by Act - Interior Region 2-4

Port	Port	Total Shipments	Total Species	Avg. Number of Species per Shipment	Total Value Declared	Number of Inspections (by shipment)	Percentage of Shipments Inspected	Total Number of Seizures (by shipment *)
WP-West Palm Beach	WP	48	99	2	\$ 117,255	0	0%	0
AT-Atlanta	AT	2,549	8,762	3	\$ 93,970,188	129	20.0%	20
CR-Charleston	CR	228	343	2	\$ 6,136,677	0	0.0%	0
ER-Erlanger	ER	526	1,011	2	\$ 2,452,551	55	10%	18
Fernandina Beach	FE	8	19	2	\$ 4,996	0	0.0%	0
FL-Fort Lauderdale	FL	186	196	1	\$ 410,044	175	1.0%	174
JX-Jacksonville	JX	83	181	2	\$ 5,256,053	0	0%	0
LO-Louisville	LO	13,833	23,710	2	\$ 40,360,265	974	14.0%	59
MB-Mobile	MB	10	36	4	\$ 26,979	0	0.0%	0
ME-Memphis	ME	7,857	12,190	2	\$ 205,290,492	1,294	6%	8
MI-Miami, FL	MI	9,108	27,215	3	\$ 281,535,388	263	35.0%	48
NO-New Orleans	NO	396	973	3	\$ 103,562,680	250	2%	0
OR-Orlando	OR	15	85	6	\$ 49,614	3	5%	3
PE-Port Everglades	PE	201	489	2	\$ 2,872,124	0	0%	0
SA-Savannah	SA	570	846	2	\$ 20,617,153	12	48.0%	2
SJ-San Juan	SJ	237	306	1	\$ 23,013,165	84	30%	5
TP-Tampa	TP	743	2,666	4	\$ 6,313,780	2	372%	0
WI-Wilmington	WI	34	40	1	\$ 143,159	0	0.0%	0
Total		36,682			\$ 792,132,563	3,165		337

**Seizure count is for all shipments which were fully or partially seized*

Education & Outreach

In an effort to remain safe during the COVID pandemic, connected and engaged in the Wildlife Law Enforcement profession, Wildlife Inspectors from the region initiated a series of Webinars using Microsoft Teams as a platform to discuss new trends, enhance identification techniques and promote discussion among peers. The first topic of discussion was shark fins; the three-part series went over trafficking trends, targeting shipments and providing useful techniques on how to identify fins from species listed under the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES). The series featured collaboration from the National Fish and Wildlife Forensic Laboratory where Forensic Scientists discussed preliminary findings and results on a shark fin seizure at the Port of Miami. What started as a small initiative grew to include Wildlife Inspectors, Special Agents, Law Enforcement Support Assistants and Evidence Custodians throughout the service. The continued success of the series attracted personnel from the Branch of Training and Inspection (BTI), the National Eagle Repository, the Forensic Laboratory, and Senior Wildlife Inspectors from Headquarters. Over the course of the year a total of 31 webinars were held covering a variety of topics to include but not limited to shark fins, traditional Asian medicinal, sea cucumber

trade, illegal bird trade and importance of the MBTA, in-transit international shipments, southern border port updates, subscription boxes and illegal wildlife, Operation Mitten Catcher, evidence submission guidelines for the National Forensics Wildlife Lab, HQ updates, Operation Thunder, LEMIS/eDec Enhancements, The National Eagle and Wildlife Repository, Alaska Native Arts, new species of iguanas trade and implications, and protected timber I.D.

International Collaboration

Brazilian Delegation Savannah, GA Port Visit

FY 2021, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) in Savannah, GA hosted a delegation from Brazil, which was comprised of officials from the Federal Police, Brazilian customs (Receita Federal), and the Federal Prosecutor's Office of the Public Ministry of Justice. The visit was in connection with multiple containers of wood flooring and decking material that were seized at Savannah and other U.S. ports for violations of the Lacey Act in the preceding months. The group was hosted by Savannah National Wildlife Refuge and activities included presentations and meetings between the Brazilian delegation and U.S. government stakeholders, as well as inspection and sampling of 80,000 m3 of Brazilian timber previously seized at the port.



International repatriation of Poison Arrow Dart Frogs with rare color morph

In FY 2021, the Miami OLE returned 21 (19 blue and 2 orange) rare, endemic, CITES-



protected poison dart frogs' home to Brazil. This was accomplished in cooperation with Miami, FL Wildlife Inspectors, OLE International Operations Unit, Disney Animal Kingdom, Mission Brazil, São Paulo Zoo, and Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA). The frogs included 19 of a rare 'blue morph' of the species, which was discovered in 2012 in a secluded location of Brazil and IBAMA confirmed they were never allowed or permitted to be in the commercial trade. The repatriation event aligned with the Brazilian U.S.

Ambassador Chapman's announcement of a new Brazil-U.S. Environmental Dialogue during the same week. The USFWS Special Agent Attaché received the frogs in São Paulo, assisted with their clearance and transport to São Paulo Zoo, and coordinated a media event. This event was widely distributed by Brazilian media and Disney. Media emphasized the strong Brazilian and U.S. collaboration.

31st Interpol Meeting of the Wildlife Crime Working Group

Wildlife Inspectors from the Interior Region 2-4 actively participated in this meeting, which featured a robust agenda focused on subject areas such as *Wildlife Forensics, International Collaboration to Combat Wildlife Trafficking, Illicit Finance, Live Wildlife & Prevention of Introduction of Zoonotic Disease, and Civil Society Engagement*. Due to the COVID Pandemic, the meeting was held virtually. The platform online accommodated up to 420 participants from 86 countries, to include global leaders in conservation law enforcement, government, and civil society from around the globe. FWS Wildlife Inspectors presented training during this meeting regarding the *Inspection of Live Wildlife and Proper Use of Personal protective equipment (PPE)*. The presentation was translated in English, Spanish, French and Arabic, and several sessions, due to conflicts in various time zones, were recorded and available for participants to watch at later date.

25th Annual Meeting of the Canada/Mexico/U.S. Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management

Wildlife Inspectors from Interior Region 2-4 actively participated in this meeting discussing live wildlife seizures, confiscations and subsequent complexities involved in caring and holding of live animals that are victims of illegal trade at ports of entry. Wildlife Inspectors presented training during this meeting regarding the *Disposition of Live Wildlife and Building Partnerships*. During the meeting, a Law Enforcement Worktable session with representatives from Canada (Environment and Climate Change Canada) and Mexico (PROFEPA) were held and led by U.S. Fish & Wildlife representatives in an effort to integrate human dimensions, technology innovation for conservation, connectivity, and adaptation to ecosystem change.

NATIONWIDE UNILATERAL EFFORTS

Injurious Zebra Mussel Distribution & Interdiction

In March 2021, FWS Special Agents in the Southeast United States and across the nation learned that moss balls potentially containing injurious and highly invasive zebra mussels were being sold by nationwide retailers PETCO and PETSMART. Interior Region 2-4 OLE Special agents quickly identified importing companies and major distributors obtaining voluntary abandonment of thousands of moss balls imported from a Ukrainian source. This

effort was conducted jointly and collaboratively with many State Conservation and Wildlife Agencies with a shared common goal of rapidly interdicting and stopping the potential spread of these invasive and injurious species throughout our great nation.



SIGNIFICANT WILDLIFE INSPECTION PROGRAM SEIZURES

Port of Miami, FL Seizure of 454 Venomous Snakes

In FY2021, Calusa Animal Company imported a shipment of live reptiles and arachnids from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) into MIA. During the physical inspection of the shipment, WI's found all venomous snakes (bush vipers (*Atheris squamiger*) and rhinoceros vipers (*Bitis nasicornis*), were not labeled, or packed according to International Air Transport Association (IATA) regulations. The shipment also had an overage of 196 additional bush vipers from the declaration. All wildlife in violation were re-exported back to the country of origin.

In another incident in 2021, the same importer presented a shipment of live venomous reptiles from the DRC into MIA. The shipment was declared to contain 500 bush vipers (*A. Squamiger*) and 10 rhinoceros vipers (*B. nasicornis*). Upon physical inspection, WI's found that 443 bush vipers and 3 rhinoceros vipers were not labeled or double bagged as per IATA regulations. In addition, WI's found 4 gaboon vipers (*Bitis gabonica*), two (2) Jackson's tree snakes (*Thrasops jacksonii*), one (1) ringed water cobra (*Naja annulata*) and one (1) mole viper (*Atractapsis* sp.), all of which are venomous, undeclared, and not listed on the export



permit. All wildlife in violation was seized.

Smuggling of Mexican box turtles

Undeclared shipment containing twenty (20) live Mexican box turtles (*Terrapene Carolina Mexicana*) wrapped in socks, duct tape and stuffed in large baby formula cans was discovered by Wildlife Inspectors at the Port of Memphis. Mexican box turtles are listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The shipment was seized, and the animals were donated to the Memphis Zoo. A second shipment of sixteen (16) live Mexican box turtles were intercepted, packaged similarly to the shipment received prior. The turtles were placed inside four separate coffee cans with holes poked around the circumference.



Tarantulas and Other Invertebrates Smuggled in Toys

FY 2021, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife Inspectors and Special Agents seized over half a dozen packages containing smuggled tarantulas illegally imported into the United States. Wildlife Inspectors at the Erlanger/Cincinnati Port and the Louisville Field Office successfully intercepted numerous shipments containing smuggled live tarantulas and other invertebrates. Special Agents in New Mexico successfully retrieved additional packages. Many of these animals are protected including the highly desirable *Typhochlaena seladonia* or Brazilian Jewel's tarantula that has never been allowed to collect and export from the home country of Brazil. FWS worked closely with our law enforcement counterparts in that



country to ensure the protection of these animals. Many of these tarantulas were wrapped in plastic and concealed in children's toys.

Queen Conch Opercula Seizure

Fiscal Year 2021, a shipment consisting of twenty-two (22) boxes said to contain 470 kgs of Murex Opercula arrived at MIA via Amerijet Cargo from Haiti heading to Saudi Arabia. Upon physical inspection, WI's found that the shipment consisted of a massive amount of Queen conch opercula (*Strombus gigas*) and not from Murex opercula as stated on the invoice. Queen conch is listed in Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and requires that a valid CITES export permit or re-export certificate be issued by the exporting country in order to be legally traded. The shipment documents did not contain either of these CITES documents, only a copy of a Haiti non-CITES export permit for Murex opercula. In addition, CITES issued a suspension on trade in Queen Conch from Haiti in 2003, therefore shipment was in violation of CITES and was seized. This is the second shipment from Haiti incorrectly declared as Murex opercula.



243 LBS. Methamphetamine Found by Wildlife Inspector at Expedited Parcel Facility

USFWS Wildlife Inspectors at Memphis, Tennessee, and Louisville and Erlanger Kentucky,



have been targeting the shark fin trade at the expedited parcel facilities. In FY 2021, a Wildlife Inspector at the Port of Louisville discovered one of these shipments, invoiced as "Silica Gel", contained sealed silver packages inside. Upon further inspection, a clear crystalized compound was discovered. Testing confirmed the substance was positive for methamphetamine. This single shipment contained 243 pounds (110 Kilograms) of crystal meth with an estimated value of over \$2.16 million dollars.

SIGNIFICANT SPECIAL AGENT INVESTIGATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS

The Monkey Whisperer

In FY 2021, a subject known as “the Monkey Whisperer”, was arrested for conspiracy, trafficking, and submitting a false record in violation of the Lacey Act, Endangered Species Act, and an additional charge for witness tampering. The subject owned and operated The Monkey Whisperer, LLC - a business engaged in the breeding and selling of wildlife. In previous years, the subject conspired to sell a capuchin monkey to a buyer in California, who could not lawfully possess the animal. The subject facilitated the transportation of the capuchin monkey from Florida to California through individuals who were not permitted to possess that species of monkey in either state. Law enforcement later seized that monkey from the residence of the California buyer, hip-hop singer. Conviction and sentencing are pending.

Operation Green Gold

Operation Green Gold was initiated to combat international trafficking of native wild American ginseng. In FY 2021, the primary target of this investigation was arrested on multiple probation violations within the Eastern District of Kentucky stemming from the target’s initial felony Lacey Act guilty plea, which included 90 days of incarceration. Most recently between December 2020 and February 2021, four additional subjects pled guilty to a variety of felony and misdemeanor violations of the Lacey Act related to the unlawful sale of ginseng which led to a combined 6 years of probation, \$34,000 in fines, 6 months house arrest and forfeiture of 78 pounds of ginseng valued at approximately \$58,000.

Operation TNT

In FY 2021, four individuals charged by a federal grand jury were sentenced for conspiring and egregiously killed over 25 wild turkeys without the required hunting licenses. The subjects harvested over the State of Kansas limits and transported the wild turkeys with trophy spurs and beards across state lines to the State of Mississippi. In addition, another subject was sentenced for aiding and abetting similar federal violations. The defendants’ unlawful activities took place in Kansas and Nebraska. This investigation showcased the great investigative efficiency arising from collaboration of Special Agents (OLE Lacombe, LA RAC Office) and Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, working together to obtain evidence against the violators. During court proceedings, the District Judge of the Southern District of Mississippi clearly recognized the significant impact these men had on Kansas wild Turkey populations. He asked the men directly, “Are you contrite for what you have done?” In an unusual twist, the Judge suggested the suspects write letters of regret to stakeholders and the public covering several concerns identified by the Court. In the 2021



sentencing, the defendants received probation (2-5 years), worldwide hunting prohibitions (2-5 years) and collective fines of \$48,000.

Operation Muddy Waters

In FY 2021, two subjects were indicted on twelve (12) felony violations of the Lacey Act and are awaiting sentencing. Additional indictments of a caviar buyer and additional roe harvesters are pending currently. Operation Muddy Waters is an operation that

was initiated to apprehend commercial roe harvesters engaged in illegally harvesting paddlefish and shovelnose sturgeon, a CITES II protected species located in the rivers and lakes of western Kentucky. The vast majority of the roe was destined for Russian markets via transnational smuggling activity. Areas of western Kentucky have been identified as one of the largest caviar fisheries in the world. Several commercial roe harvesters were identified during the investigation that were harvesting significant numbers of paddlefish and sturgeon from waters closed to commercial fishing while using illegal gear to harvest these fish. A large-scale surveillance operation spanning several years was conducted and resulted in successfully apprehending separate commercial fishing operations actively engaged in illegal fishing for roe. The investigation was a combined team effort with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources.



Operation Rock Bottom

Operation Rock Bottom has been an ongoing in-depth investigation into the black-market marine life trade. A large volume of the illegally harvested and trafficked marine life has originated from FWS Refuges, National Parks, National Marine Sanctuaries and other protected areas in the Florida Keys and Puerto Rico. Investigative targets have come from all levels of the industry including commercial harvesters, wholesalers, retailers, import/exporters, public aquariums as well as straight up smugglers moving illegal product. During the past year, prosecution on this case entered the final phase with the remaining few subjects making their way through the system. This investigation to date has led to the

execution of 12 search warrants; 30 subjects and businesses criminally charged and convicted; 14.5 years of incarceration; 53.5 years of probation; \$156,000 of criminal fines, \$40,000 restitution, 820 hours of community service; and the forfeiture of three boats, two vehicles. In addition, a significant amount of aquarium related equipment and commercial fishing licenses valued at several hundred thousand dollars.

Operation Fauna Salvaje

This investigation targeted the trafficking of wild caught migratory birds via Facebook, resulting in a nine-count indictment of three individuals in Puerto Rico. Charges included



MBTA, Lacey Act and conspiracy. The three subjects of investigation were arrested simultaneously along with execution of two anticipatory residential search warrants in FY 2021. Conviction and sentencing are pending.



Repeat Offender Sea Turtle Egg Poachers Sentenced

In 2021 two South Florida subjects, were convicted and sentenced for poaching sea turtle eggs, following a joint criminal investigation conducted by Miami, FL OLE Special Agents and Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission Investigators. One subject received a 7-month term of imprisonment followed by 1 year of supervised release for his role in violating the Endangered Species Act. The co-conspirator was sentenced to a 9-month term of imprisonment followed by one year of supervised released for his role in violating the Endangered Species Act. Both subjects have been previously charged with illegally possessing with intent to sell sea turtle eggs in violation of the Endangered Species Act.



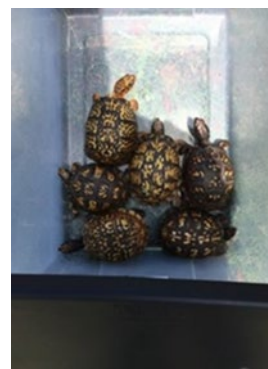
TASK FORCE INITIATIVES

Southern Surge Task Force

The Southern Surge Task Force (SSTF) team was formed to combat international trafficking of turtle species and associated Federal crimes, focusing on those species native to the United States. The focus of this team is to disrupt transnational organized criminal syndicates pillaging species from the wild, subsequently smuggling them, overseas primarily to Asian Pacific Rim countries. The SSTF works closely with investigative counterparts in state conservation agencies across the southeastern United States, federal border, and interstate commerce partners and other USFWS special agents across the



country against the prolific international trafficking of native U.S. turtles and other wildlife. In cooperation with other Federal and State partners, this team so far dismantled and exposed 15 criminal enterprises resulting in 18 felony convictions with imprisonment sentencing total of 7.3 years, probation 25 years and fines totaling \$3,000.



Florida Federal Wildlife Trafficking Task Force

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service joined forces with U.S. Customs & Border Protection forming a Florida Federal Wildlife Trafficking Task Force (FFWTTF) to cooperatively neutralize and dismantle domestic and international wildlife trafficking organizations. Task Force members primarily focus on Florida related issues but also work cooperatively with USFWS Special Agents and Wildlife Inspectors throughout the region and abroad on long term and short-term investigations, operations, interdiction, and special projects related to wildlife trafficking crimes. A CBP officer is full time embedded with Miami Florida Office of Law Enforcement office with access to a large variety of available databases to aid in joint investigative activities, perform comprehensive analysis of data, assist with targeting, interdiction, and record-keeping. The task force also develops and initiates BLITZ operations at various ports of entry and conducts training exercises with respective agency members assigned to this Task Force.

Uniformed Conservation Law Enforcement Officer Operations

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Law Enforcement, has two full time Conservation Law Enforcement Officers (CLEOs) operating in Interior Region 2-4 dedicated to a primary mission of enforcing the Endangered Species Act (ESA) by conducting manatee zone



enforcement patrols throughout the state of Florida. Annually, these two (2) officers spend over 1260 hours patrolling the coastal waters of Florida, apprehending on average 400 vessels. During FY 2021, Conservation Law Enforcement Officers (CLEOs) in Florida due to the COVID-19 Pandemic conducted three out of five scheduled statewide manatee details and, multiple “wolfpacks” focused on enforcement of manatee protection zones throughout the state of Florida. To date, CLEOs issued

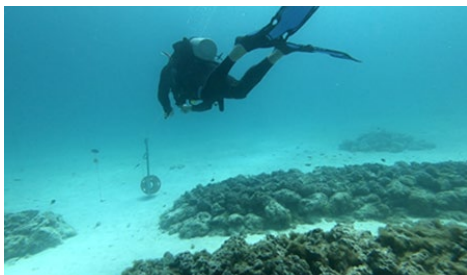
(231) Violation Notices for manatee protection slow speed/25MPH zones and (56) Written warnings issued for manatee protection slow speed/25MPH zones. One particular enforcement detail in Miami, FL produced a record issuance of (144) violation notices issued. Additionally, CLEO’s opened two (2) investigations regarding to manatees, one (1) for “take” by killing/striking a manatee with a vessel and one (1) for “harassing” by feeding a manatee. In addition, CLEOs handle ESA “take” investigations, support field enforcement operations, serve as trainers and support operational activities including search/arrests warrants and surveillance activities.



SPECIAL ACTIVITIES & TRAINING

Interior Region 2-4 Scuba Dive Team and Dive Operations

In 2021 special agents as part of the Interior Region 2-4 scuba dive team participated in FWS scuba diving reauthorization training consisting of CPR, Emergency Oxygen Administration, and dive related skills to include line tending, emergency ascent, diver down assistance and master diver



swim assessment. This year, 52 scuba dives were conducted to document and collect evidence supported by FWS Special Agent vessel specially equipped with a hydrophone and side scan sonar used to locate and create images of areas to be surveyed by divers for items of evidence.

