



2019 ANNUAL STATE / PROVINCIAL REPORT

2019 IWC CONFERENCE SOUTH LAKE TAHOE NEVADA JULY 13-17, 2019



The 2019 IWC Conference is being held in South Lake Tahoe at the Montbleu Resort Casino and Spa. Conference registration will be \$100.00. Rooms cost for the conference are: For a single king bed \$99.00 plus tax and \$22.00 facility fee. Double is \$119.00 plus tax and \$22.00 facility fee. You can upgrade to a room with a view of the lake for an additional charge. We can start making reservations for the conference at Montblue now. (1-800-648-3353) or go to their website www.montbleuresort.com and use or mention, if calling, OFFER/GROUP code: STIWC19 Group name IWC Conference. IWC Sporting Clay Shoot and networking opportunity: July 13, 2019

The sporting clay shoot will be held at the Capitol City Gun Club in Carson City NV. People that are able to attend this event can make reservations at the Carson Valley Inn in Minden NV. If anyone needs a ride from the airport they can contact me at 775-848-5836.

Phone Reservations for Carson Valley Inn: Rooms held in the block do not guarantee a reservation. Reservations are to be made on an individual basis by calling our

Reservations Department at **775-783-6629** and mentioning your group number **1681** or group name **Int'l Wildlife Crime Stoppers Assoc.**

All guests will be responsible for their own reservations, guarantees, and payment for rooms and any incidental charges. **Reservation need to be made before June 24, 2019 to get room rate.**

To make reservations on line by clicking "Book A Room" from any page on our website (www.carsonvalleyinn.com), then click on "Make a Group Reservation." RV site reservations must be made by phone.

Room Type	Rooms	Rate
Hotel Two Queen Beds	3	\$119.00
Hotel One King Bed	3	\$119.00
Motor Lodge Two Queen Beds	4	\$99.00

The Reno Tahoe International Airport is where you will be flying into. For transportation needs go to: <http://www.renoairport.com/tofrom-airport>

You can find rental car information and shuttle information. The shuttle to the Hotel cost \$30/per person for one way or \$53/per person round trip. If you use a shuttle you will have need to make a reservation.

If anyone needs to ship packages or items for the conference they can ship them to the address below.

Nevada Department of Wildlife
Capt. Brian Eller
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Reno NV 89511

WESTERN REGION REPORTS

ARIZONA

Arizona OGT program has continued with outstanding performance in the 2018 year. We received approximately 800-1000 credible reports of wildlife violation that were assigned to game wardens throughout the state. The results of those reports has led to approximately 140 criminal misdemeanor citations issued. For the tips received in 2018, the Arizona OGT program paid out \$12,150 in reward monies. The Arizona OGT program has always been and will continue to be a programmatic function of the Arizona Game and Fish Department with a dedicated funding source for promotion of the program and payments of rewards called the Wildlife Theft Prevention Fund, which is authorized by state statute. By law, this fund receives monies through donation, restitution, and civil assessments by the Game and Fish Commission. In 2018, the Commission civilly assessed or revoked 48 wildlife violators \$41,650.00 as reimbursement to the state for loss of wildlife through criminal actions.

Arizona has had some exciting new developments this past year with promotions. The agency has transitioned to a new 'Portal' platform for web accessibility and this new website has the ability to allow online reports of violation. Social media continues to be an increasing mode for violations reports however this comes with some challenges. Information conveyed to the Department via any of our social media channels is unprotected and can be accessed, as it is unsecured. OGT continues to stress that the public should call in for reports of violation however 'quick communication' seems to outweigh the public's need for confidentiality. The Department's use of social media as an outlet for OGT has slowed somewhat however this is not a reflection of disregarding a viable tool of promotion. We have had very few unsolved cases this year in which we needed help from the general recreating public and without the need for witnesses, we have not needed to solicit information via our channels. In the absence of the need for witnesses, we did use this tool as a promotional tool this year as well as to a tool to spread the message of hunting ethics. It is no surprise to anyone in the wildlife profession that hunting is under attack and we here at the Arizona Game and Fish have attempted to use every outlet at our disposal to promote the sport and paint it in the good light it deserves.

Our agency has seen an average high amount of turnover in the past few years and 2018 was what seems like the beginning of a new wave of retirements. We currently have seven officer trainees in the beginning stages of hiring, slated to attend the police academy, and we are eagerly awaiting their return so they can ease the patrol burden of having 10 vacant patrol districts. Associated is the need for recruitment. Arizona, like many states, is seeing a drop off in applications for public safety employment. Game Wardens are not excluded from this trend and with 20 pending retirements from our officer ranks in the next five years Arizona is trying its hardest to attract new applicants that are qualified and motivated to serve the public and wildlife.

Technology continues to be a linchpin of our investigative efforts, as it seems every poacher in the woods is more than happy to document their deeds with a phone in one way or another. With agency resources stressed, we have continually looked to alternative investigative sources to more efficiently detect wildlife crime. We have been utilizing extraction software frequently and even the field officers are coming onboard with the need to not overlook this tactic during investigations. This technique has been very useful and has helped us make cases involving other states leading to federal Lacey Act violations and lifetime revocations (California/Iowa/Kansas).

The time has come. Retirements are looming and no one is getting younger. Arizona needs motivated young men and women to take up the call of the wild, answer up for the needs of conservation, and take the lead moving forward. To Protect and Conserve!

Lt. Scott Fischer
AZGFD OGT Program Manager

CALIFORNIA

CalTIP (*Californians Turn In Poachers and Polluters*) is a confidential secret witness program that encourages the public to provide Fish and Wildlife with factual information leading to the arrest of poachers and polluters. CalTIP was introduced in California in 1981 in order to give Californians an opportunity to help protect the state's fish and wildlife resources. The creation of CalTIP has been an invaluable tool to help combat the illegal take and use of the state natural resources. California has a population of over 38,000,000 people, and with just over 300 officers in the field that is one wildlife officer for every 138,000 people. Wardens are responsible for patrolling over 163,000 square miles of some of the most diverse habitat in North America. The landscape ranges from Mt. Whitney at 14,505 feet to Bad Water Basin in Death Valley at 282 feet below sea level. Wildlife officers patrol and work in over 1,100 miles of coast line, 30,000 miles of river and 4800 lakes and reservoirs protecting more than 1,000 native fish and wildlife species and with 360 of those listed as threatened or endangered. Thankfully, the success of the CalTIP program has increased our presence in the field by increasing the number of watchful eyes in California. Calls for 2018 increased approximately 2 percent for a total of 5,170, compared with 5,069 received in 2017. Around 800 of these tips received this year were sent in via the Department's Tip411 text-a-tip system: This resulted in approximately 1,500 hours of citizen directed enforcement patrols, 100 citations, 16 physical arrests and 36 warnings. CalTIP's were received from all 58 counties in California and represented a wide variety of natural resource violations as well as requests for service for more traditional law enforcement.

Highlights of 2018

CalTIP was well represented in 2018. CalTIP was promoted at multiple fairs, sportsmen's expos, sportsmen's organizations and classrooms. CalTIP was also featured in multiple news and other media stories throughout the year.

Our Non-profit, the CalTIP Rewards Committee, rewarded several individuals a total of \$1,300 for information leading to an arrest or citation. The CalTIP Rewards Committee has seen a further reduction in citizen asking for rewards after providing information to the Department. Currently 1% of reporting parties ask for any type of reward.

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COLORADO

OGT Program Statistics - In 2018, Operation Game Thief (OGT) generated 557 reports. This is down from last year's reports of 650. Of those total reports 370 were for big game violations; 61 reports for fishing violations; 6 report for licensing violations; 18 reports for small game violations; 24 reports for waterfowl violations; 7 reports for nongame violations; 0 report of threatened/endangered species violations, 2 reports for antler shed collection and, 69 reports classified as other. These 557 reports ended, to date, with 17 citations issued to individuals. In 2018, OGT paid 10 rewards totaling \$5,000.00.

TIPS Program Statistics - The TIPS reward program is set up through Wildlife Commission regulations to award licenses and preference points to eligible persons that report illegal take/possession or willful destruction of big game or turkey. In 2018, there was one TIPS reward for a limited license for elk and one TIPS reward for a preference point for deer.

The Turn in Poachers (TIP) program began September 1, 2004. This program allows people who turn in poachers to receive preference points or even licenses in some cases. The TIPS program created is in addition to the existing Operation Game Thief (OGT) program. The TIP program applies only to reports of illegal take/possession or willful destruction of Big Game or Turkey. In order to be eligible for the license or point rewards the reporting party must be willing to testify which is in contrast to OGT, which will pay rewards upon citation or arrest and even to anonymous parties.

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IDAHO



Idaho's Citizen's Against Poaching

2018 marked 37 years of service for Citizen's Against Poaching (CAP). During 2018 there were 800 calls reporting violations and CAP paid \$27,100.00 in rewards.

The CAP Board changed their marketing focus for the fall of 2018 by hiring a dedicated advertising agency. The advertising agency recommended a rebranding by creating and marketing a new logo, as seen above. The advertising agency created a Facebook, radio and television blitz that started in August of 2018 and ended around the first of November. At this point we haven't fully analyzed the results but a quick review of call numbers indicates a potential increase in call volume of nearly 60% over the same months in 2017. It is important to note the Shockey's continue to support Citizen's Against Poaching as Eva created a short video of support we used in the television ad campaign.

Citizen's Against Poaching also saw their income increase by nearly \$40,000 over last year. The CAP Board is not sure what they will do with the additional income but they are thinking of possible big projects. They have discussed the potential for adding one or two more trailers to the three "wall of shame" trailers they currently have. They will discuss options and make some decisions during their mid-winter conference call on February 4, 2019.

The CAP Board replaced and completely constructed a new "wall of shame" trailer which replaces one of the original trailers of nearly 15 years.

I look forward to seeing everybody this summer at Lake Tahoe.

Sincerely,
Chris Wright
Assistant Chief of Enforcement – Special Operations
Idaho Fish and Game
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MONTANA

Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) TIP-MONT program experienced several changes in 2018, one of the most significant changes was enhancements on how calls are entered and tracked with MFWP database. Our agents enter a report and once submitted the report will

automatically be sent directly to the responding warden through e-mail. The reporting system now allows for better tracking and faster dissemination of reports created by MFWP agents during regular business hours. After hour TIP-MONT calls are still received through Montana Highway Patrol (MHP) dispatch, MHP creates a call record through MHP CAD system and incident report is sent directly to the wardens in the field.

Another change that became a logistical challenge was relocation of the TIP-MONT phone center. The new location needed to be completely equipped with new phones, wiring, computers and supplies, this process took months to complete. After working with several different departments and agencies, the center was up and running by Montana's general hunting season, without the support of all involved it would not have been the success it was.

REPORTS

In 2018, the TIP-MONT program generated over 2700 reports, slightly more than the previous year's numbers. The increase of reports can be attributed to Montana's vigilance in stopping the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS). MFWP has launched a major educational campaign along with set up AIS check stations strategically across Montana. Due to these efforts, TIP-MONT has received over 300 calls regarding AIS related instances resulting in numerous citations.

MFWP monitors for all AIS including species not known to occur in Montana, in 2018 MFWP and our partners surveyed 1,450 sites on 250 unique waterbodies and analyzed over 2000 water samples for invasive mussel larvae. No invasive mussel adults or larvae were detected in Montana in 2018.

BISON POACHING CASE

Below is a portion of a news release illustrating the effectiveness of a MFWP trial canine program:

Three dead bison were discovered March 2 by agency personnel in Beattie Gulch, an area of U.S. Forest Service land near the border of Yellowstone National Park. All three bison had their heads removed and all usable meat was left to waste. The bison skulls had been skinned and hidden nearby.

MFWP enforcement division is currently engaged in a research and trial period using trained canines in very limited applications. MFWP currently only has two canine teams as part of this statewide trial program. Enforcement Chief Dave Loewen said using canines to detect critical evidence at wildlife crime scenes is an incredible tool that can greatly reduce staff time and increase the chances of locating evidence. "It is doubtful the evidence in this case would have been detected and located without the canine."

The judge in this case ordered each of the three men to pay \$2,605 in fines and restitution with an 18-month suspended jail sentence. The men also lost their fishing, hunting and trapping privileges for 54 months with the added restriction of not being able to apply for permits for an additional five years after their privileges are reinstated. Remedial hunter education was also ordered.

REWARDS

Reward total amounts continue to remain consistent with previous years and the trend remains the same regarding reporting parties not requesting rewards for information provided. Generally, the public does not want compensated for protecting their heritage and natural resources.

Brian Shinn
TIP-MONT Program Manager
Enforcement Division
Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks
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NEW MEXICO

New Mexico's program began  a re-branding effort a couple of years ago starting with a new primary logo displaying a mule deer skull and antlers. These logos continue to be well embraced by the public. T-shirts and caps continue to sell at a good rate. The Gila monster sticker continues to do well. Our Permit's manager travelled to a couple of "reptile rendezvouses" with the stickers and made them available to reptile collectors and enthusiasts. These promotional strategies continue to be a huge benefit in getting the message out about OGT.



NM Officers made numerous high profile cases based on OGT tips. One that stands out involved the investigation of two individuals who killed two oryx (Gemsbok) without hunting licenses. The investigation spanned several states and NM received assistance from the Missouri Dept. of Conservation and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Division. Officers were able to get confessions and seized the oryx. Charges in this case were Unlawful Killing of Oryx Out of Season, Hunting Without a License, and Unlawful Possession of Oryx out of Season. The two men received fines and court costs totaling approximately \$6,000.00 and were revoked for 5 years.



This past year, OGT received 203 tips from the public, down slightly from the previous year (206). 145 of these reports have been closed out with no violations found or no charges filed, 30 resulted in charges being filed and 27 reports are still open investigations. Of the 30 reports which resulted in charges, 45 individuals have been charged with 115 crimes. Officers have been able to get 65 convictions with \$11,471 in fines and court costs (5 cases are still pending trial). The single largest fine of \$6,000 was the case with two defendants killing oryx without a license. OGT paid \$9,500 in rewards and received \$19,035 in donations (Compare to FY 17 @ \$8,100 paid and \$20,704 collected).

A common OGT report is that of a headless animal. NM now has a 4th degree felony wildlife law to combat waste of game cases where trophy heads are cut off the animal and the carcass is left to rot. We currently have 3 cases going through the court system. In one of these cases, 34 total heads (25 deer and 9 elk) were found during the execution of a search warrant. This warrant was served, after information was received, during a jailhouse confession after the suspect was arrested for spotlighting deer this past winter. This new tool for New Mexico officers will no doubt help prosecute the worst of the worst in the poaching world.

As mentioned last year, the OGT call line is now handled by one dispatch center with DPS during night and weekends and officers can be dispatched statewide via CAD to calls in near real time. However, some of those calls are being dispatched as a call to service instead of as an OGT report. Therefore, the number of OGT tips/reports from the public may be much higher than stated above.

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NEVADA

The Operation Game Thief (OGT) Program was established during the 1981 legislative session. The program is similar to a Secret Witness program and is designed to allow individuals to call and report wildlife crimes while maintaining the ability to remain anonymous and collect rewards for the information.

Since OGT's inception, there has been tremendous public support for the program. From the onset, it was believed that a majority of the program could be supported through public donations. Equally important was the notion that wildlife criminals should shoulder some of the financial burden of investigating and prosecuting the crimes they commit. This was to be accomplished by the courts assessing civil penalties on convicted poachers to ensure that the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) kept its promise to the courts and the thousands of individuals that donate to OGT. To accomplish this, an obligated account was established to track donated monies and court ordered monies destined for this specific use.

OGT is primarily a self-funded program within NDOW. It continues to provide resources to game wardens in the field to investigate and successfully prosecute wildlife crimes. This is accomplished through a variety of mechanisms such as active promotion of the program in community events, providing training to officers, providing specialized equipment as technology improves, and the interaction and participation in state coordination and planning for law enforcement activities.

The activities and accomplishments of the OGT Program during state fiscal year 2018 are summarized below.



Highlights of Operation Game Thief Projects Funded in FY18

- Enhancing our field officers' ability to respond to OGT calls and meet public expectations.
- The Budget for the OGT program in 2018 was \$26,289.00.
- Updating the OGT page on www.NDOW.org and working on a new form to be filled out to report wildlife violations to augment the avenues for citizens to report wildlife crime violations.
- Maintained the 1-800 OGT tip line.
- Provided continued cell phone coverage and satellite phone service for field officers.
- Specialized patrol activities such as plain clothes patrol and uniformed patrol for big game and special saturation patrols. (Unit watches)
- Promotion & marketing of the OGT Program.
- Participation in conservation and sporting goods conventions, or events such as the Wild Sheep Foundation, and retail events at Cabela's and Sportsman's Warehouse.
- Participated in 24 events with the OGT public education "Wall of Shame" trailers, contacting approximately 14052 people. (Elko and Reno based trailers)
- Had 2 unit watches for a total of nine days with the OGT trailer. (Elko County) The trailer was taken to Wildhorse Reservoir and Spring Creek NV locations at prominent road access points to promote

the program and answer hunter questions. Reserve Game Wardens participated in patrols. OGT volunteers participated in ride along with Game Wardens.

- Purchased license holders and mini calendars to distribute to sportsmen. These items displayed the OGT logo and phone number.
- Purchased NDOW wildlife coloring books for handing out to kids. The coloring books are an educational tool on Nevada wildlife.
- Promotion of OGT/Law Enforcement Program and other agency programs.
- Participation in RMIN, Rocky Mountain Information Network
- Participation in regional law enforcement events, such as National Night Out.
- Participated in career days and outdoor educational trips to schools.
- Received Donations from Barrick Gold Elko and Elko Bighorns Unlimited to fund repairs and a new wrap for the OGT trailer stationed in Elko.
- Maintained membership in IWC (International Wildlife Crimestoppers). Game Warden Captain Eller was elected President of the IWC. The IWC conference will be hosted by NDOW and held in South Lake Tahoe in July of 2019. (<https://wildlifecrimestoppers.org>)
- The OGT program is looking into the possibility of getting either a texting application so individuals can text the 1-800 number to report violations or getting an app that can be down loaded to a phone for reporting wildlife violations.
- The program received a donation of \$25,000 to go towards a truck for the program from the Shikar Safari Club International.
- Our Reserve Game Warden put in 60 days of volunteer work. With participation from the Reserve Game Warden Program and volunteers, was able to save the department approximately \$19,000 in hourly wages.
- Volunteers put in approximately 1,134 hours participating in the OGT program. (4 Volunteers)
- Several poached animals have been mounted for display in the new OGT trailer and work is underway to have it up and running soon.
- Calls on the 1-800 line were down considerable this year. We are looking into the reason for the low amount of calls.

These are some of the items and activities that OGT has funded or actively participated in for 2018. OGT still has at its core, the basic mission of protecting Nevada's wildlife resources and supporting those efforts that will successfully lead to the apprehension and prosecution of violators and promote the program to encourage and obtain greater public participation in the protection of a valuable resource that belongs to all citizens of Nevada.

With continued public support for this mission demonstrated by continued and voluntary financial support from the public, the support of the OGT Citizens Board providing rewards, the public support of district attorneys prosecuting wildlife cases, and the judicial application of our civil penalty statutes, OGT will continue to play a critical role in protecting the resources of the state.

UTAH

Utah Division of Wildlife Resources 2018 IWC Annual Report

UTiP Hotline

In 2018, the Utah Turn in a Poacher (UTiP) Hotline received 1,183 calls. The number of calls made to the hotline had continued to slightly increase until 2018. The reduction in calls in 2018 is most likely due to

better organization of calls by dispatchers that don't generate a UTiP call number. A fraction of those calls are questions or nuisance wildlife problems, but the large majority of them are reports of known or suspected illegal wildlife activity. Calls to the UTiP Hotline are answered by a dispatcher at a private call center, who first gathers basic information and then patches the caller through to the nearest conservation officer.



RRestitution and Rewards

In Utah, the value of all wildlife is set in statute. The statutory value of that wildlife is used to determine the severity of the crime. In 2018, the total aggregate value of the wildlife taken illegally, or believed to have been taken illegally, was \$486,977. That total included sixteen trophy deer and thirteen trophy elk; valued at \$8,000 each. It also included two moose, one Desert Bighorn Sheep and two Rocky Mountain Goats; all once-in-a-lifetime species.

Restitution for wildlife illegally taken is also set by statute. In 2018, restitution paid to the Division of Wildlife Resources Help Stop Poaching account was \$162,687. Help Stop Poaching account money is used to pay rewards, buy equipment, conservation officer training, education and outreach events, and other purposes supporting the prevention and detection of poaching of wildlife. In 2018, \$7,425 was paid in monetary rewards. Utah also offers rewards in the way of permits, for cases involving once-in-a-lifetime species and certain limited entry species. In 2018, a total of nine poaching reported reward permits were given for deer, elk, and turkey.

Poaching Reported Reward Permit Rule

Utah started a poaching reported reward permit program in 1996. Through 2018, Utah has issued two hundred and forty permits through that program. In July 2018, the Utah Wildlife Board approved a new poaching reported reward permit rule. Until the recent rule was passed, rules regarding reward permits for turning in poachers were found in each individual rule (big game, cougar, and turkey). The language in each individual rule was slightly different. In passing this rule, we clarified language and procedures as well as added black bear and general season deer and elk permits as being eligible for reward permits. It also gives us the opportunity to make changes to this rule without having to make changes in multiple rules.



CANADA REGION REPORTS

PROVINCES and TERRITORIES of CANADA

ALBERTA - Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch (FWEB)



The Alberta Report-A-Poacher (RAP) phone hotline has been in place since the 1980's. It is answered 24/7/365 by the Provincial Radio Control Centre (PRCC) dispatchers. Website reporting is now in year two. It is submission form based and friendly to mobile devices. It can still respect confidentiality and privacy concerns. The on-line reporting has been used and appreciated by the public right from the launch. Callers to the hotline hear a message in an attempt to filter calls down to violations and wildlife threatening public safety. However, problem wildlife (various concerns and injured animals) and miscellaneous topics are still the majority of calls to the line. Funding for rewards comes from a portion of hunting licence sales. [2017/18](#) (April 1 - March31)

- 16,392 total calls from the public to the RAP toll-free hotline (and 169 on line reports, first full year).
- 3108 calls of suspected illegal activity reporting fish and wildlife resource crimes

- 577 charges initiated from all RAP Reward Eligible calls. (Provincial total - 8624 enforcement actions taken by Fish and Wildlife Officers (includes charges and written warnings under various legislation).
- \$60,600 in rewards paid to 154 individuals whose information led to those charges

Promotion of the RAP program is the responsibility of the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA), a non-profit, non-government, Delegated Administrative Organization. One education trailer is utilized at public events, usually with staff from the ACA and the FWEB working together. The ACA takes the lead with various promotional items, signage and advertising.

The Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch is responsible for the reward payments in the program. Coinciding with RAP is the Human Source Handling and Payment for Information program. With many controls and guidelines, payment can be made for information received from confidential informants regardless if it ends up with charges, unlike RAP that requires charges laid.

<https://www.alberta.ca/report-poacher.aspx>

<https://www.facebook.com/AlbertaFishandWildlifeEnforcement>

Detective Sergeant/Intelligence Officer - Major Investigations and Intelligence Unit
Justice and Solicitor General - Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch - Special Investigations Section
Edmonton, Alberta - Office: 780.427.9346. Mobile: 780.554.3760. Email: Brian.Voogd@gov.ab.ca

BRITISH COLUMBIA - Conservation Officer Service



The British Columbia Conservation Officer Service has evolved over the years into a leading natural resource law enforcement agency specializing in public safety as it relates to human/wildlife conflict, our responsibilities include managing complex commercial environmental and industrial investigations and compliance and enforcement services. As an organization we are structured in three units; Provincial Operations (uniformed officers), Provincial Investigations Unit (investigations) and program support, and we are located in 45 communities throughout British Columbia and our Headquarters is located in Victoria.

Conservation Officers are highly trained, dedicated individuals responsible for enforcing 33 federal and provincial statutes, they hold Special Provincial Constable Status under the Police Act and have unrestricted appointment to enforce Acts and Statutes, and protect the public and preserve the peace.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/natural-resource-law-enforcement/conservation-officer-service>

The Report All Poachers and Polluters (RAPP) hotline is a toll free tip line 24/7 service used to report known or suspected violations of fisheries, wildlife, or environmental protection laws and wildlife-human interactions where public safety may be at risk. The RAPP program also includes an online form for reporting violations electronically. An occurrence report is generated by RAPP line call takers and the information is then forwarded to a Conservation Officer in the field by phone and or e-mail depending on the urgency. All field Conservation Officers in BC carry smart phones and have mobile workstations in their vehicles to access reports generated through RAPP.

Calls for Service 2018:

Known or Suspected Violations: 7,293 known or suspected violations were reported to RAPP in 2018

Human Wildlife Conflicts: 25,729 human wildlife conflicts were reported to the RAPP line in 2018. A significant number of these reports are attributed to conflicts with bears.

In 2017 the Conservation Officer Service deployed an outreach trailer to promote the agency and the RAPP line. The outreach trailer travels around the province to various community events and trade shows.



QUEBEC

ANNUAL REPORT – QUEBEC – 2018

Here's a short report of our organisation operations for past year. We have been pretty active with four operations over the last year for us.

-The first one called "Marée-Montante" (High tides) at the end of winter was in the area of the Saguenay. The main objective were selling and buying fish, mostly rainbow smelt. 70 persons we're met, 11 warrants made for a possible total of 175 000\$ in fines. 95 conservation officers we're needed for the operation. We also had a team from MPO in support.

-The second one was "Nord-Sud"(North-South) in the area of Granby, Estrie. The operation was focused on sale network, principally yellow perch. 90 persons we're met, 14 warrant for possible total of 270 000\$ in fines. The Op needed over 100 conservation officers.

-In July, in the area of Saguenay, we've done "Pochettes"(Pockets). The Op focused on Black bear gallbladder selling. 60 persons we're met, 10 warrants for a possible total of 325 000\$ in fines. 150 conservation officers we're needed for this Op. We have to mention a collaboration with New-Brunswick conservation service where one of our principal target was also buying merch", Environment Canada also collaborates on the Op.

-The 12 of December, in the Joliette area, it was "Cerftitude"(Not really translatable). The Op needed 70 conservation officers and was mostly on a small sale network of white tail deer. 27 persons we're met and 5 warrants for a possibility of 45 000\$ in fines.

We want to thank every service who participate to one or other of our Op during the last year.

SOUTHEASTERN REGION REPORTS



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

- ❖ 2018 Statistics: A total of 2,485 reports of violations were received through the Wildlife Alert program in 2018. This is an increase from the 2,300 reports from 2017.
- ❖ These reports resulted in 110 cases being made from the information provided by the public. Case variety included violations of game laws related (but not limited) to: deer, turkey, ducks, marine and freshwater fish, wildlife management area and littering/environmental crimes.
- ❖ Rewards totaling over \$36,000 were provided to members of the public that requested a reward. Fines and donations totaling over \$80,000 were received in 2018 by Wildlife Alert as a result of cases made by FWC Officers.
- ❖ Marketing: The increasing trend of electronically reporting wildlife crimes continued this year, with 90% of those 2,485 reports being by email or text message.
- ❖ Technology: FWC recently rolled out a new, more user and mobile device friendly website. The new site features a fresh new look and additional features, and can still be found at: <https://myfwc.com/>
- ❖ New personnel: Avery Tubbs has recently taken on a new assignment at the FWC Training Center. Travis Franklin is the new Wildlife Law Administrator for FWC and will be the new IWC representative. Hailee Melott has also recently been hired as our Wildlife Alert Coordinator.



Captain Travis Franklin
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Wildlife Law Administrator/ Port Inspections
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GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

2018 Ranger Hotline State

❖ Program Statistics

Ranger Hotline Board paid for: 6 Turkey, 6 Deer, 1 Hawk and 1 Raccoon, 1 Redfish. We had a total of 15 payments issued by the board. We had 214 emails submitted to Ranger Hotline.

❖ Marketing Strategies

– “RANGER HOTLINE” is under the department’s DNR Foundation. Our DNR Commissioner is the Chairman of the Ranger Hotline Board and we have four Natural Resource Foundation members serving on the Ranger Hotline Board. We have local constituents serve as advisors and provide input along with funding. The DNR Foundation is currently a 501c3 non-profit that will help with fundraising. National Wild Turkey Federation State Chapter helped pay for promotional items for RANGER HOTLINE. We also have a relationship with RealTree to use their camo pattern.

❖ Funding and Staffing Issues

– our Board sends out invoices at the end of each year to pay for rewards. We receive funding from Georgia Wildlife Federation, QDMA, NWTf, and SCI. We have a donate button on our website for visitors to make a tax-deductible donation.

❖ Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts

– Georgia has been a member of the Wildlife Violator Compact now for sixteen years. We suspend about 50 poachers a year and enter violators on the WVC database.

❖ New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement

– All Game Wardens have the CAD system to issue citations and complete reports. They now have the ability to verify recreational and commercial licenses and boat registrations in the field. All Game Wardens were recently issued smart phones to provide even more accessibility for license and registration checks.

Lieutenant Wanda Roberts
Game Warden
Program Coordinator
Law Enforcement Division
(770) 918-6408 | M: (404) 520-1568
Ranger Hotline (800) 241-4113





- 2018 has been a good year for our OGT program as we added 1st Sgt. Sidney Rainwater to the staff in late 2017 this has allowed greater focus on continuing to grow our program. 1st Sgt. Rainwater has been working hard to build partnerships as seen in Ohio with the cooler and thermal cups provided for raffle and door prizes.
- Rewards totaling \$ 1350.00 were issued for Night Hunting of Deer, Migratory Bird Violations, Black Bear violations, Illegal Use of Non-Game Fishing Devices, Saltwater Fisheries, Violations, WMA violations, Littering, and multiple cases involving deer tag violations.
- Our OGT Program has received \$6,500.00 in donations this year.
- The SCDNR Tips Program with the use of the tip411 software program continues to allow the public greater access to pass on vital information regarding violations. This program will allow citizens to send anonymous tips through website links, social media site links, SMS texting, iPhone and Android downloadable apps, and the traditional 800 tip line. As of January 1, 2019 over 1,100 tips have been submitted through the web-based or smart phone application.
- We worked to rebrand and promote to OGT secondary programs Operation Coast Watch and Property Watch. Operations Coast Watch is a violation reporting initiative focusing on marine fisheries violations. The property Watch Program works with private land owners and lease holders to combat trespassing to hunt, fish, or trap.



- Our 2019 Initiative will focus on bringing our program out to public events more through the creation of an Operation Game Thief display booth and Wall of Shame type trailer. We hope to raise funds for these ventures through grants, raffles, and private donations.
- 1st Sgt. Sidney Rainwater continues to work with Clemson University on our planning of the 2020 conference. As many of you may know the **2018 National Champion Clemson Tigers** have offered a private tour of their newly completed multi-million dollar football training facility with hopefully a meet and greet with Coach Sweeney if available.

Captain Lee E. Ellis
SCDNR OGT Coordinator
Office: 803-734-0022 / Mobile: 843-870-5548
PO Box 167 Columbia, SC 29201
Ellisl@dnr.sc.gov

LOUISIANA



Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries Enforcement Division

Louisiana Operation Game Thief (LOGT) INC. was established in 1984 to protect Louisiana's diverse wildlife resources. There are several ways to provide information about possible wildlife violations. LDWF has a 24 hour phone tip line (1-800-442-2511) and are also members of the Tip 411 program.

LOGT will pay up to a \$1,000 reward on cases very serious in nature. A tipster can remain anonymous and still be paid a reward without a conviction in court.

Lt Will Roberts, of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) Enforcement Division, is the LDWF OGT coordinator. In 2018, 44 cases were presented to the OGT board members for review. A total of \$16,750 was paid out on those cases. Out of those 44 cases for 2018, 95 subjects were apprehended and a total of 617 offenses were cited.



Lt. Will Roberts
2000 Quail Drive
Baton Rouge, LA, 70808
Region 7A District Supervisor / LOGT Coordinator
225-765-2999

NORTHEAST REGION REPORTS

NEW HAMPSHIRE

NEW HAMPSHIRE OPERATION GAME THIEF

Total number of calls into OGT in 2018 = 324

Warnings, summonses, arrests = 45

Case Highlight:

- OGT call ref a possible illegal bait site in Strafford, NH
- Conservation Officers St. Pierre and Arsenault's follow up revealed a faked kill site, multiple baiting violations, illegal turkey and deer taken over bait, OHRV violations
- total of 12 violations, 1 misdemeanor, and 2 felonies occurred resulting in 4 convictions
- deer confiscated (pic attached)

Upcoming Fundraisers:

- 2nd Annual Wild Game and Craft Beer Pairing – April 27 – Cranmore Mountain Resort in North Conway, NH

PENNSYLVANIA

The Pennsylvania Game Commission's Operation Game Thief Program received 1,536 phone and on-line submissions from 1/1/2018 to 12/31/2018. All submissions were forwarded to appropriate regional office dispatch centers from around the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and all submissions were dispatched to appropriate State Game Wardens, generally within 21 minutes of the informant submitting information through Operation Game Thief.\

Eyler, Chad ceyler@pa.gov

MAINE

Maine OGT Website – www.maineogt.org

This year has been an extremely busy year for Maine OGT. Calls to Maine OGT have been increasing every year and several high-profile fish and game cases were successfully solved as a result of calls to Operation Game Thief.

In 2018, Maine OGT has continued to work in cooperation with International Wildlife Crimestoppers and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on a project to incorporate wildlife displays into the Portland International Jetport décor. This is going to be an educational display featuring all of Maine's big game wildlife species as well as fish displays and an international display highlighting common issues that USFWS deals with as well. The ultimate goal of these displays are to educate the public about the wildlife that Maine has to offer as well as the issues of illegal taking of these animals. We are currently working with the jetport to move displays into the facility while their renovation project is on-going.

Maine OGT changed dispatch services during this year as well. Maine OGT is now partnering with Waldo County Sheriff's Office and using the Waldo County Regional Communications Center for dispatch services on calls. Dispatchers from the RCC are fielding phone calls as well as web based complaints that come in through the Maine OGT website. We are also utilizing a cell phone "app" called "I Am Responding" which alerts Game Wardens and Marine Patrol Officers when they have a new OGT complaint assigned to them. This "app" allows officers to acknowledge when they receive the complaint and it alerts them much like a text message on their phone.

Maine OGT held the first annual OGT banquet in Lewiston, Maine this year. This banquet was well attended and included a dinner, live auction, silent auction, as well as several raffles. The banquet was a huge success and the Maine OGT board is in the planning stages for holding the banquet again in the spring of 2019.

Maine OGT continues to work with Unity College to strengthen their positive relationship with students from the environmental college. These students are often volunteers at many of the fundraising events for OGT and now they have student representation come to OGT board meetings in order to stay current with OGT events and planning. Students from Unity help compile an OGT newsletter that is distributed to supporters of Maine OGT as a token of appreciation for their generous support throughout the year.

Maine OGT created a video project that was completed during this year. The video can be viewed on the Maine OGT website and the link directly to the video is here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MLm874Xe_RU&feature=youtu.be

Maine OGT also partnered with IWC and Maine Warden Service to hold a charity softball game last spring. The event was held in Belfast, Maine. Wardens from the Maine Warden Service and their family members participated in the game and played against students from the Belfast Area High School baseball and softball teams. Maine OGT partnered with Maine Make a Wish Foundation to split the proceeds of the event between the two organizations.



The event drew a large crowd of spectators and raised the level of public awareness about poaching in Maine and across the country. All in all, the event was a huge success and we are planning on doing another game this spring. We would be more than willing to help other states and programs get started with a fundraiser of this type. If you have questions, please reach out to us!

RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island is still working towards establishing an OGT program in our state. We hope to have the program off the ground with in the year. We will be hosting the 3rd annual IWC/RIEPOA Sporting Clays Fundraiser on April 27th at Peace Dale Shooting Preserve.

Mike Schipritt Michael.schipritt@dem.ri.gov

DELAWARE

<https://news.delaware.gov/2018/11/16/dnrec-fish-wildlife-natural-resources-police-arrest-three-kent-county-men-multiple-hunting-violations/> [news.delaware.gov]

<https://news.delaware.gov/2018/11/20/dnrec-fish-wildlife-natural-resources-police-arrest-two-sussex-county-men-multiple-deer-poaching-violations/> [news.delaware.gov]

<https://news.delaware.gov/2018/12/12/dnrec-fish-wildlife-natural-resources-police-arrest-two-sussex-county-men-weapons-poaching-violations/> [news.delaware.g

Sergeant Brooke Mitchell W946

Delaware Fish & Wildlife
Natural Resources Police

Boating Safety & Education Coordinator

Cell: 302-382-7167

Office: 302-739-9086

NEW JERSEY

Captain Linda A. Quirk

New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife

Bureau of Law Enforcement

New Jersey's Operation Game Thief tip line received 164 calls in 2018. Of these calls, fifteen resulted in prosecutions. Seven additional calls resulted in written or verbal warnings.

Highlights of 2018 Operation Game Thief Tip-line Cases

In January, Conservation Police Officer Robert Driscoll received an Operation Game Thief tip concerning illegal waterfowl hunting on the Rockaway River in Morris County. The complainant, after encountering the hunter retrieving a duck on his property, provided the officer with a photograph of the suspect in possession of one wood duck and one common merganser. On this date the Canada Goose season was open, but the duck season was closed. Officer Driscoll located the hunter the next day and issued two summonses for "take waterfowl during closed season," resulting in \$150 in penalties.

In January, CPO Adam Merritt responded to Hopatcong State Park for an OGT complaint of an ice fisherman who appeared to be violating the wanton waste of fish law by leaving multiple panfish on the ice rather than taking them into his possession. When Officer Merritt located the fisherman, he had collected his catch, which numbered seventeen over the daily possession limit of twenty-five panfish. A summons for taking over the limit of panfish was issued.

The Operation Game Thief tip line received several complaints of people keeping undersized blue crabs during the summer of 2018. Working on information from a tip, Lt. Brian Scott apprehended an individual at the township pier in Seaside Heights Borough with four undersized blue crabs. CPO Robert Henderson made two apprehensions in August with the help of OGT callers, one at Stockton Lake, in Manasquan of an individual with 16 undersized crabs, and a second at Windward Beach Park, in Brick Twp. where a person had 28 undersized crabs. Summonses were issued in all three cases.

In August a person who was fishing the Trout Conservation Area of the Pequett River contacted the tip line concerning five men who were fishing with live bait contrary to the TCA's special regulations. CPO Holmes was able to apprehend the five individuals who were all fishing without valid fishing licenses in addition to using live worms. The five fishermen received summonses for the violations, resulting in penalties of \$95 for each.

In October a caller contacted the OGT line after observing a man keeping an over-limit of tautog at the Point Pleasant Canal, in Point Pleasant Borough. CPO Henderson responded and after a short time identified the suspect. Officer Henderson contacted the fisherman at his car. He first denied catching any fish, but was found to have four undersize tautog, which is also three over the daily limit, and one undersize black sea bass in a cooler. Three summonses were issued for the violations, resulting in \$210 in penalties.

During the Six Day Firearm deer season, CPO Riviello and Lt. Toppin handled an OGT complaint about a single shotgun blast heard by a Southampton homeowner the previous night. After a thorough search of the wooded neighborhood, CPO Riviello and Lt. Toppin found a blood trail leading to a shed. An interview of the property owner proved productive as the man ultimately admitted to killing a five-point buck in his backyard the night before. He was charged with hunting deer outside of legal hours, possession of a loaded firearm within 450 feet of several homes and license and deer tagging violations.

VERMONT

VERMONT OGT SUMMARY

2018 was another successful year for our OGT program in Vermont, in fact 2018 was our most successful year to date. Our call volume increased not only through our 24/7 hotline, but our online reporting system as well. Our wardens made several great cases to include arrests for poached deer, bear and turkey. One of our turkey cases was recognized by the NWTf for the outstanding work done by our field force.

Most notably 2018 was our first summer with our completed Wall of Shame trailer. We revealed our trailer at the NEAFWA (Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies) 2018 Chief's Conference, hosted by our Department in Burlington VT. Our trailer has made its way around the state and continues to do so throughout the winter.

We are excited to see everyone in Nevada at the 2019 IWC conference, and if you haven't heard VT will be hosting the conference in 2021!

MASSACHUSETTS

- Former Colonel was terminated due to. . . https://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2018/10/the_head_of_environmental_poli.html [masslive.com]
- Lt. Col. Anthony Abdal-Khabir has the reins for the time being. No replacement for the Colonel has been as yet selected to our knowledge.
- Recruitment: About 12 hired. 2 currently in the field as they had previous municipal police experience. Both are assigned to coastal positions.
- The rest of the recruits await commencement of a municipal police academy. About 23 weeks they will graduate and begin conservation law enforcement training, followed by field training(San Jose model).

- Upon graduation of the new class, our numbers will increase to approx. 82. Full complement= 145 or so. This number is still painfully lower than required to adequately protect the natural resources in the manner required.

*Lieutenant Kevin L. Clayton, M.P.A.
Massachusetts Environmental Police
251 Causeway St., Suite 101
Boston, MA 02114*

MID-WEST REGION REPORTS

ILLINOIS

Illinois again attended the IANRC conference, continuing to acquire valuable information for the “Target Illinois Poacher’s” program. The TIPs program made a significant addition to how reports can be taken. People can continue calling in using the TIP’s hotline, but the public can now submit a TIP online as well.

For traditional calls the hotline is manned by the DNR headquarters office during business hours and then manned by the state IEMA call center during non-business hours (90% of all calls).



TIPs calls had declined from 385 calls in 2014, to 243 calls in 2015, to 193 calls in 2016, before increasing to 247 calls in 2017. In 2018 we received approximately 230 traditional calls, and for the six weeks the online reporting was in service we received over 85 reports, for a total of 315. We expect that number to rise significantly in 2019 with the new online reporting. The average percentage of enforcement remains around 10%.

Our only promotion to the new on-line reporting was through Facebook, but we plan on increasing exposure through various medias in 2019, including partnerships with our outdoor groups and through our field staff, along with a traditional media campaign.



recruits currently enforcement

Illinois is down to just 76 field officers, however, we have 22 in the DNR Academy and 16 recruits in a basic law academy. The TIP’s program continues to be crucial in our efforts to partner with the Illinois public to protect our natural resources and is proud to partner with International Wildlife Crimestoppers to help in this endeavor.

MICHIGAN

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division (LED) graduated 24 officers from its academy on December 21st, 2018 bringing the ranks to 243 enlisted conservation officers (COs), 13 civilian support staff, and civilian dispatchers at the Report All Poaching (RAP) hotline. The division was successful in establishing 7 additional detective positions statewide which provides access to specialized investigative techniques and expertise in all 9 districts. The division was also able to increase the Great Lakes Enforcement specialist positions to provide more adequate regulatory and enforcement capabilities of our commercial fishing industry. In 2018, the RAP hotline received 33,637 calls and handled 6,787 complaints. 472 of these complaints were received by the ‘Text to RAP’ capability which was implemented in May 2017. 135 complaints were initiated by dispatcher social media investigations. Technology continues to assist COs in a myriad of ways, and many of this year’s notable cases were made possible through a wide variety of technical applications.



11
The
Unit

The LED can now partner with the Forest Resources Division (FRD) to assist with missing hunters or other missing persons recreating in Michigan's outdoors. FRD pilots normally fly aircraft for fire detection routes over large tracts of state forest land. However, they can now launch drones with infrared detection capability to aid in search efforts. This may be beneficial for situations when an aircraft is unavailable or not effective for the topography. The process is still being tested but the future looks promising.

OnX Hunt maps have also been a very welcomed addition. Conservation officers can now get a quick (and fairly accurate) look at property lines and ownership with the use of their smart phones in the field. The division is piloting the Axon electronic evidence collection product, allowing for quick, easy use of smart phones to capture evidence and organize it in the "cloud."

Data from Michigan's licensing system is being analyzed and revealing a number of violations, including a number of hunters and anglers using expired operator's licenses to purchase resident licenses when they no longer qualify. The data has also revealed fraudulent purchases for free licenses by individuals who do not qualify. Prosecution for cases of taking big game without licenses or taking an over limit have also increased by utilizing this data and comparing it to social media or wildlife registration records.



CO Jared Ferguson received a complaint regarding two dead eagles in a gravel pit in Dickinson County. One of the eagles was fitted with a GPS tracking device and CO Ferguson located the eagles in the gravel pit underneath a spruce tree. While documenting the scene and searching for evidence, CO Ferguson located an area which appeared to have previously had foothold traps. CO Ferguson located the property owner and conducted an interview at his place of business. CO Ferguson developed several suspects who had access to the pit. After several interviews CO Ferguson received a confession from one of the suspects who stated he placed a dead deer on the ground and surrounded it with foothold traps to catch coyotes. One day he went to check the traps and saw both eagles caught in his traps. The suspect said he panicked and did not want to call the DNR because his traps were not tagged and he did not know if his set was legal or not. The suspect said he walked up to the eagles and shot them both twice with a .22 caliber rifle and hid them under a nearby tree. The suspect was charged with taking two protected species and untagged traps. Total fines and costs were \$8500 in addition to 6 days in jail, 60 hours of community service, and loss of hunting and fishing privileges for 5 years.

Special Investigations Unit (SIU) detectives are utilizing a software program called Trax provided by ZetX. Trax has functions such as carrier lookup, document generators for preservation requests, legal demand with specific verbiage (for multiple carriers) and other pertinent tools related to cellular phone records requests. A legal demand is sought, obtained, and served on a carrier/provider to provide records as requested. When the provider returns records to the officer the information can be uploaded into Trax for analysis. The software produces an interactive, chronologically accurate, Google Earth map that has geolocation and call information available. The software also provides an analytic feature that compiles, filters and displays call frequency, duration, common calls, contacts, etc.

SIU detectives worked two notable cases in which two collared Eastern Grey Wolves were illegally taken in separate instances. In the first case, COs found a dead wolf with a GPS collar still intact and on the animal in a remote portion of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Using the GPS data from the collar, COs found the animal had recently been frequenting a privately-held property landlocked inside a large tract of public lands. After developing probable cause, they obtained a search warrant for the phone records of the owner of the private property. The records were analyzed with the Trax software and found the suspect was in very close proximity of the last known, live, location of the collared wolf. The suspect was presented the data and when coupled with other corroborating information, confessed to shooting the wolf.

In the second case, COs investigated a 'mortality signal' emitted from a collared wolf. COs found the collar fully intact but removed from the wolf. They were able to identify locations where the wolf had been alive recent to the mortality signal. They identified deer hunters in the area and conducted interviews, developing suspects and probable cause for a search warrant for cell records of two suspects. Using the software, detectives were able to input the collar GPS data overlaid with cell record geolocation data and found that one of the suspects was at the site of the last known alive location AND at the location of the collar when it entered mortality mode.

In a separate situation, detectives were contacted to analyze a data set of obtained cellular phone records of a deer hunter who had been named, by public complaints, of shooting a trophy deer with a firearm during the archery-only hunt. COs interviewed the suspect who claimed to have shot the deer in a high fence, privately-owned game ranch, yet could not produce the identifying tags of the deer. Cellular geolocation data, along with corroborating message data, showed he had in fact shot the deer in the private game ranch in the time frame noted. The suspect later claimed he did not want his wife to know how much he had spent at the ranch, so he used social media sites to promote that he had taken the deer “fair chase”.



[DNR Report All Poaching \(RAP\) - State of Michigan](#)

CALL OR TEXT: 800-292-7800
24 Hours a Day, 7 Days a Week



NEBRASKA

With approximately 55 Conservation Officers covering 93 counties within approximately 77,000 square land miles and thousands of miles of river it is evident that they can't be everywhere all the time, and we look for the assistance from the concerned sportsman “to make the call”. WCS provides an easy way to report violations and support our Law Enforcement Division efforts.

Currently the Nebraska Wildlife Crime Stoppers Program (WCS) tip line is monitored 24/7 by administrative staff. Citizens can report a violation by calling 1-800-742-7627 or calling their area conservation officers whose work cell phones are published. The majority of calls continue to be taken by the field officers which has reduced the number of calls to the hotline throughout the year. We are continuing to look for a more efficient way to record number of calls and reports generated through the crime stoppers program.



WILDLIFE CRIMESTOPPERS

The Wildlife Protectors Association (WPA) who partners with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission in the implementation of our Wildlife Crime Stoppers program is currently adding four new board members in 2019, in addition to adding an additional two members on their 20 person board in 2018. We are excited to have these new members in moving forward with a continued partnership with the WPA. For over 35 years, Wildlife Crimestoppers has proven a very effective tool in protecting Nebraska's natural resources. We need to continue to have the assistance of the general public in assisting us with the information in wildlife violations. When we can work together with those concerned enough to become involved many more wildlife violations can be prosecuted. The program has paid out over \$81,000.00 of rewards with fines totaling over \$170,000.00 since the program's inception.

Nebraska re-approved a limited mountain lion season in 2018 set to begin in January of 2019, after closing the inaugural season down several years ago. Additional research and findings have generated enough information to support a limited harvest once again.



Nebraska Officers will be transitioning to E-Citations this next year, when the entire state switches over. With the new technology and process we realize with this new system we all will have a learning curve to adjust too with additional training needed to comply with the new mandate.

2018 was our first full year within the violators compact. The information sharing has proven to be invaluable to officers and investigations.

Nebraska looks forward to a continued partnership with International Wildlife Crimestoppers to protect our natural resources.

Duane Arp,
 Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
 2200 N. N33rd, Lincoln, NE 68503
duane.arp@nebraska.gov

OHIO

2018 was a busy year for the ODNR, Division of Wildlife between hosting the IWC Annual Conference and sporting clays fundraiser, significant court outcomes to enforcement cases and the exciting addition of five K-9s to our Law Enforcement Program. The K-9s and their handlers completed academy training that



included obedience, area searches, building searches, tracking, criminal apprehension, and handler

protection, culminating in the certification of the handlers and their K-9 partners by the Ohio Peace Officer

Training Academy. Additional training in selected wild game detection, gunpowder detection, and ginseng

detection was certified in-house with the assistance of Natural Resource Officer Jason Lagore of the ODNR,

Division of Parks and Watercraft. The five K-9 handlers are Josh Elster and K-9 Mila, Matt Leibengood and K-9 May, Jeremy Carter and K-9 Finn, Chris Gilkey and K-9 Mattis and Jason Keller and K-9 Scout.

Ten Wildlife Officer Cadets Hired:

Ten wildlife officer cadets started their training in late 2018. The cadets will graduate from the 29th Wildlife Officer Training Academy on March 15, 2019 and begin the field training portion of their careers.



Turn In a Poacher Inc. ATV raffle:

Ohio Turn In a Poacher Inc. held an ATV raffle in association with the 2018 International Wildlife Crimestoppers Conference. Pictured below is the winner, Morgan Arnold, being presented the key by Ohio TIP Board members Mike Gregg and Art Yoder.

Text to TIP:

In September, the Turn in a Poacher hotline began accepting text messages with the help of AT&T Landline Texting. This program allows users to text the (800) POACHER hotline to report natural resource crimes directly to the ODNR Communications (Dispatch) Center that is monitored 24/7, 365 days a year. The ability to report violations via text to (800) POACHER adds one more avenue to report crimes via this popular mode of communication. Reporters can send photographs, screenshots and videos of valuable evidence that can then be forwarded to a wildlife officer or wildlife investigator in a timely manner.

Wall of Shame trailer:

The ODNR, Division of Wildlife, with a generous grant from the International Wildlife Crimestoppers, was able to obtain and outfit a twenty-two feet long "Wall of Shame" trailer for use at events to highlight wildlife crimes reported via the Turn In a Poacher program.

Operation North Coast concludes;

The ODNR, Division of Wildlife has closed the adjudication phase of what has become the largest case in its 146 year history. The case, dubbed Operation North Coast, culminated in 2016 with the execution of search warrants, arrest warrants and dozens of simultaneous interviews. The case primarily concerned the illegal taking and sales of Lake Erie sportfish and white-tailed deer meat products in counties along the Lake Erie shoreline. Since the takedown, wildlife investigators have spent two and one-half years attending court hearings

Following the initial search warrants and interviews, wildlife investigators reviewed thousands of documents, conducted approximately two hundred interviews, executed additional search warrants, examined hundreds of digital and physical evidence items that were seized, and attended approximately one hundred court hearings.

Nine defendants were subsequently charged with engaging in a pattern of corrupt activity and associated crimes for operating as a criminal enterprise. The Division of Wildlife asserted that members of the group would take deer illegally, often not tagging or reporting the harvest as required by law. The group would also create false harvest records by checking deer in the names of others to cover illegally taken deer meat and/or antlers. The agency further asserted that the deer meat was laundered into venison "smokies" that were sold or bartered for taxidermy and other services.

In all, the cases resulted in forty-six defendants being charged with a total of 91 felonies and 73 misdemeanors. These 46 individuals were assessed a combined \$131,763.00 in fines and restitution, sentenced to 8.6 years of jail with the majority suspended, received 79 years of hunting and fishing revocation, and paid in excess of \$18,000.00 in court cost. Of the items forfeited were three vehicles, 96 deer and turkey mounts, 35 sets of antlers, over 200 pounds of filleted sportfish, and 400 pounds of de-boned venison and processed deer meat.



Respectfully submitted:
Ronald Ollis, Special Operations Supervisor
ODNR, Division of Wildlife
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SOUTH DAKOTA



The Turn-In-Poachers (TIPs) program is a partnership between South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks and the non-profit organization, Wildlife Protection, Inc. This joint venture was born out of a desire for South Dakota's Sportsmen to "police" their own. With approximately 81 Conservation Officers called upon to cover about 75,000 square miles of land and 1,200 square miles of water in South Dakota it is evident that they can't be everywhere all the time. Most times the best witnesses are the landowners and resource users themselves. So, in an effort to provide easy and convenient ways to report violations, TIPs has become a core component of Game, Fish, and Park's Law

Enforcement efforts.

Through TIPs, a 24 hour, seven day a week toll free number, 1-888-OVERBAG (683-7224), has been set up to field reports from the public regarding hunting, fishing, and trapping violations. Information may also be provided through a link to the GF&P's website. Just like those calling in on the telephone, the information entered in this form

may be reported by those who wish to remain anonymous. A wildlife violation may be reported through the website by accessing:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/7dbdb3f84da340bc8f46ded76822a3a8>

This partnership between government and the private sector allows those who provide information to be compensated for their information. Since the inception of the program in 1984, over \$176,000 in rewards has been paid out to people who observe and report violations. The funding for this program comes from a variety of areas; however, one of the most popular is by sportsmen themselves. During this fiscal year, almost \$43,000 was donated at the time of license purchases.

In the 2017 TIPs year (which began in July 1, 2017 and ended on June 30, 2018) 261 investigations and 146 arrests could be directly attributed to information provided through the program. From this information, violators were fined \$31,153 and required to pay \$57,463 in civil damages. Judges sentenced violators to 4,576 days in jail for their crimes (4,239 days were suspended). TIPs paid out \$6,850 in rewards.

Social media has proved to be a very efficient way to quickly broadcast violations to a large group of people. Some of our Facebook TIPs have received over 800,000 views, which certainly increase the odds of that information reaching an informant. Most of our Facebook violations are posted as a last-resort due to a lack of evidence. The goal of publicizing these violations is to make the public aware of the wildlife crimes that happen in their backyard, and hopefully prompting them to be vigilant and make the call to TIPs.

The largest TIPs case this year started as a simple mountain lion baiting case and grew into the conviction of two individuals for the illegal taking of nine deer and three mountain lions. This case resulted in \$15,508 in fines, \$26,000 in civil damages, 12 year loss of hunting privileges and 8 months in prison for federal weapons violations.

For over 30 years, the South Dakota Turn In Poachers program has been a shining example of what can be done to protect a public trust resource when government, private industry, sportsmen and the general public come together to address a common problem.

TIPs SUMMARY

TIPs Program Totals for TIPs Year 2017	TIPs Program Totals 1984 to June 30, 2018
261 INVESTIGATIONS	11,919 INVESTIGATIONS
146 ARRESTS	4,327 ARRESTS
\$31,153 FINES	\$814,187 FINES
\$57,463 LIQUIDATED CIVIL DAMAGES	\$655,350 LIQUIDATED CIVIL DAMAGES
4,576 DAYS OF JAIL (4,239 days suspended)	41,069 DAYS OF JAIL (37,578 days suspended)
\$6,850 REWARDS PAID	\$176,055 REWARDS PAID

South Dakota TURN IN POACHERS

PROTECT YOUR RESOURCES!

MAKE THE CALL TO TIPs.

1-888-OVERBAG
(1-888-683-7224)

TIPS.SD.GOV

This number is for reporting wildlife law violations only. Operators are not required to handle information requests or to forward calls.

NINE DEER AND THREE MOUNTAIN LIONS
ILLEGALLY TAKEN BY TWO INDIVIDUALS IN THE BLACK HILLS.

STATE AND FEDERAL CHARGES:
UNLAWFUL POSSESSION, BAITING, SHOOTING BIG GAME AT NIGHT
DURING CLOSED SEASON, NO LICENSE AND FEDERAL WEAPONS VIOLATION

\$15,508 FINES | \$26,000 CIVIL DAMAGES
12 YEAR LOSS OF HUNTING PRIVILEGES | 8 MONTHS PRISON

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