



IWC

INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE CRIMESTOPPERS, INC.

2024 International Wildlife Crimestoppers Annual Report

Inside the 2024 IWC Annual Report

Mission Statement	3
IWC Leadership	3
Strategic Partners	4
President's Report	5
Executive Director's Report	6
Canadian Region Reports	
Alberta	8
Midwest Region Reports	
Illinois	9
Indiana	11
Michigan	11
Minnesota	13
South Dakota	14
Wisconsin	16
Northeast Region Reports	
Connecticut	17
Maine	18
Massachusetts	19
New Hampshire	21
Rhode Island	21
Vermont	22
Southeast Region Reports	
Florida	23
Georgia	24
Louisiana	25
West Region Reports	
California	25
Colorado	26
Idaho	27
Montana	28
Nevada	29
New Mexico	31
Utah	32
Wyoming	34
IWC Profit & Loss Statement 2025	35
Membership	37

Mission Statement

As a nonprofit organization created by wildlife resources officers, we are dedicated to stop the poaching of North America's fish and wildlife resources through a comprehensive conservation law enforcement approach and the exchange of information with anti-poaching organizations. We promote public education on the differences between sustainable use and poaching with a special emphasis on youth education, therefore creating a force multiplier for law enforcement charged with protecting these valuable resources.

IWC Leadership

Executive Board

Title	Name	Agency
President	Rick Olson	Utah Department of Natural Resources
Vice President	Patrick Walsh	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Treasurer	Tom McKenney	Maine Warden Service
Active Sworn At-Large	Chris Simmons	Maine Warden Service
Active Sworn At-Large	Jake Creamer	Nevada Department of Wildlife
Active Sworn At-Large	Kevin Winters	Texas Parks and Wildlife
Active Sworn At-Large	Dwayne Duffield	West Virginia Department of Natural Resources
Executive Director	Wayne Saunders	
Executive Assistant	Dawn Nichols	

Regional Directors

Region	Name	Agency
Canada	Vacant	
Midwest	Jennifer Wolf	Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Northeast	Josh Beuth	Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
Southeast	Marni Loftis	Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation
West	Casey Mickelsen	Utah Department of Natural Resources

Strategic Partners



J.B. and Kelly
Kolodzey

President's Report



I want to start out by thanking all the member agencies and departments for supporting International Wildlife Crimestoppers. I also want to thank the IWC's donors, continuing supporters and partners. Without their support we would not be able serve our member states.

Last year, IWC'S Executive Director, Wayne Saunders, was instrumental in aiding the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division in securing funds for their Anti-Poaching trailer. This past year Wayne was successful in securing \$30,000.00 from NWTF for the purchase of another Anti-Poaching trailer for the state of Virginia.

This year IWC has partnered with WiseEye Technologies to offer a camera grant to member states. Member states can receive up to 10 free cameras and purchase additional upgraded cameras at a discounted price.

The 2024 IWC Annual conference was held June 10-14, 2024, at the Hyatt Regency Clearwater Beach Resort and Spa in Clearwater beach Florida. The conference was a resounding success with representatives from over 27 states in attendance. Check out the IWC spring newsletter for more detailed information regarding the conference. One of the highlights of the conference, each year, is the presentation of the IWC Game Warden of the Year at the conference banquet. The recipient of the 2024 Game Warden of the Year, sponsored by Guidefitter, was Emily Long from the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. Emily was in attendance as well as Oklahoma Captain Marni Loftis. Emily was presented with a beautiful handmade custom knife with an antler display created by retired Arkansas Game Warden Jason Parker, as well as \$1,000 to be spent with Guidefitter.

IWC has one new IWC executive board member who was elected at the conference, West Virginia Captain Dwyane Duffield. Dwayne has been a great addition to the board, and we are excited to have his expertise.

If you have never attended the IWC Annual conference I strongly encourage you to do so. The collaboration that occurs among states is amazing and you will leave with a greater knowledge of what other states are doing and glean ideas to consider that may move the needle in your states program.

This year's annual IWC Conference will be held at the Winter Park Resort in Colorado. June 17-20 We are partnering with IWVC for the second year and will have time dedicated specifically to IWVC topics the afternoon of the 19th and half a day on the 20th. Please visit the IWC website for details.

Take Care and Be Safe!

Captain Rick Olson, IWC Board President
WildlifeCrimeStoppers@gmail.com

WildlifeCrimeStoppers.org

Executive Director's Report



A Year of Growth and Collaboration

2024 was a very active year for International Wildlife Crimestoppers (IWC). We were proud to collaborate with the International Wildlife Violators Compact (IWVC) at our conference in Clearwater, Florida, marking the first time that IWVC administrators had convened. This conference came at a critical time in the compact's history, as there was a need to change vendors for the data retained by the compact.

Turn In a Poacher Program

Through the development of strategic partnerships, HuntRegs and IWC created a Digital Turn In a Poacher program. This program was implemented for the first time in Georgia in the fall of 2024. Despite initial minor challenges, HuntRegs and IWC successfully launched an affordable digital Turn In a Poacher program.

Indiana Turn In a Poacher Trailer

We also assisted the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in obtaining a Turn In a Poacher trailer. In cooperation with our strategic partner, the National Wild Turkey Federation of Indiana, we raised \$15,000 toward this initiative. Indiana DNR's law enforcement division used these funds to build a trailer that now travels the state, raising awareness about wildlife crime and educating the public on how to report violations in Indiana.

Certified Wildlife Ethics Pledge

In 2024, IWC developed a Certified Wildlife Ethics Pledge for guides, outfitters, outdoor businesses, and individuals wishing to support IWC and make a commitment to wildlife conservation. The Certified Ethics Pledge is designed for guides, outfitters, businesses, and individuals who associate with sportsmen and women in the outdoors and want to pledge their commitment to helping stop wildlife crime. IWC will maintain a public list of certified pledges on its website, allowing individuals and organizations to connect with like-minded outdoor businesses, conservation groups, and individuals who are dedicated to stopping wildlife crime. Entities and individuals that take the Wildlife Crimestoppers Certified Pledge will receive:

- ✓ A gold decal to display at events, shows, or other locations to identify themselves as Certified Wildlife Crimestoppers Pledges.
- ✓ Electronic images for use on websites and publications. *(These images are for the pledge's use only and may not be shared.)*
- ✓ The option to remain anonymous on the website if requested.

Pledge Commitment & Guidelines

The Certified Pledge requires a \$100 donation to Wildlife Crimestoppers, which renews annually.

⚠ Any violation of wildlife laws or rules will result in the pledge being rescinded.

- If rescinded, the entity or individual may be reinstated with a letter from the wildlife enforcement agency that acted against the pledgee.

Wildlife Crimestoppers Pledge

- ✓ I pledge to follow wildlife laws and rules as established.
- ✓ I pledge to report violations of wildlife rules or laws.
- ✓ I pledge to help stop wildlife crime.

Thank you,

Wayne Saunders

Executive Director, International Wildlife Crimestoppers (IWC)



CANADIAN REGION

ALBERTA - Alberta Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Services



The Alberta Report-A-Poacher (RAP) phone hotline has been in place since the 1980's. It is answered 24/7/365 by the Sheriff Branch Operational Control Centre. On-line reporting is now in year eight. It is submission form based and friendly to mobile devices. It can still respect confidentiality and privacy concerns. The on-line reporting is growing each year and well received by the public. Callers to the hotline hear a message in order to filter calls down to violations and wildlife threatening public safety. However, problem wildlife (public safety 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 and fishing license sales.

2023/24 (April 1 - March 31)

- 16,333 phone calls and on line reports from the public to the RAP toll-free hotline and webpage.
- 2539 of those calls being suspected illegal activity reporting fish and wildlife resource crimes.
- \$43,200 in rewards paid to 105 individuals whose information led to charges.



Promotion of the RAP program is the responsibility of the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA), a non-profit, non-government, Delegated Administrative Organization. A RAP education trailer is now operated by the Alberta Hunter Education Instructor's Association at public events. The ACA takes the lead with various promotional items, signage and advertising.

The Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Service is responsible for the reward payments for 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>

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

MIDWEST REGION

ILLINOIS

The Illinois Conservation Police is the primary law enforcement agency for the state's Department of Natural Resources. In 2024, the department continued its mission to protect and preserve the state's natural resources by enforcing conservation laws and regulations. The department's dedicated sworn officers and the valuable information received through the Turn in Illinois Poachers (TIP) program enabled successful investigative processes that led to positive outcomes in conservation law enforcement.



As of 2024, the Illinois Conservation Police boasted 168 sworn officers. These dedicated professionals worked tirelessly to ensure public safety along with the safety and sustainability of Illinois' natural environment.

The TIP (Target Illinois Poachers) program, implemented by the Illinois Conservation Police, encourages citizens to report any suspicious activities related to poaching or other violations of conservation laws. In 2024, the department received a total number of 428 informative contacts through the TIP program. These tips are further separated into Hunting, Fishing, Trespassing, Wildlife Issues, Environmental Crimes, and others. Engaging the public through the TIP program, the Conservation Police form a strong community conservation law enforcement initiative. This collaborative approach builds trust and encourages active participation from the community, resulting in a more effective enforcement of conservation laws.

Case Spotlight: On 5/10/2024, the Illinois Conservation Police received information about a subject hiding fish on a stringer on the Calumet River. The complainant believed the suspect kept the fish for a tournament the following day. According to the Cal-Sag Bass Anglers tournament rules, the area could not be fished on the 10th. The following morning, Illinois Conservation Police surreptitiously watched the location. The Illinois Conservation Police observed the suspect retrieve four smallmouth bass from the stringer and place them in the live well of his boat. After putting the fish in the live well, he threw the stringer on the shore and drove away. It was then confirmed with the Cal-Sag Bass Anglers weigh master that he was registered in their tournament.



The Illinois Conservation Police waited for the suspect to return to the weigh-in. The tournament limit was five bass with a minimum length of 12 inches. All the fish except the undersized largemouth bass had culling tags attached, commonly used in tournaments. Two of the smallmouth bass were discolored and floating upside down, so they could not be returned unharmed to the water where they were taken.

The total weight of the fish was 19.5 pounds. He would have won the tournament by more than 4 pounds, and the first-place prize was \$1,300. After further investigation by the Illinois Conservation Police, it was revealed that he caught the four-smallmouth bass on May 10, 2024, in Lake Michigan near Hammond, Indiana. He then imported the fish into Illinois without a Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) permit. The suspect was charged with two Class A Misdemeanors, four Class B Misdemeanors, and one petty offense, and was also assessed a civil penalty.

Training Update: The Illinois Conservation Police has taken significant steps and successfully became accredited with NASBLA. This accreditation will ensure the readiness of the state of Illinois in the enforcement and emergency response boat crews throughout the country, our ability to conduct missions on our waterways safely and effectively with this standard, and a system to assess our agency's compliance with the standard in place.

Keeping with the trends of officer readiness, we have developed our own control and arrest tactics program, implementing Gracie Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and a train-the-trainer course to advance our trainer platform.

Staffing Update: Illinois Conservation Police have completed the hiring process for another class of Conservation Police Officer Trainees. This will be the third year in a row that a class has been hired, significantly increasing our ability to keep up with agency retirements and a nationwide shortage of applicants.

USCG/CGIS/IDNR Task Force: The Illinois Conservation Police continue working closely with the United States Coast Guard (USCG). While working with members from the Marine Safety Unit Chicago, Coast Guard Station Chicago, and the Coast Guard Investigative Service (CGIS), Conservation Police Officers assisted in creating a task force focused on investigating and enforcing illegal charter operations in the southern tip of Lake Michigan. This unique partnership led to the creation of an informational campaign, a user-friendly investigative tool, a straightforward tip reporting tool. So far, this task force has made multiple arrests and assessed penalties, including a man sentenced to year in prison and another which resulted in the Coast Guard seeking a record \$80,000.00 in restitution.



and
a

Environmental Crimes Working Group-Chicago: The Illinois Conservation Police have just entered the founding phase of an environmental crimes working group. Member agencies of this group consist of the US EPA, FBI, DOJ, DHS-HSI, USFWS, USDA, DHS-CBP, Illinois EPA, IN Environmental Management, HUD, Cook County Dept. of Environment and Sustainability, and the Chicago Dept. of Public Health.

This group will help develop liaison relationships between local, state, and federal law enforcement partners focusing on investigating and prosecuting environmental crimes in the greater Chicago Area. This collaborative approach will assist in exchanging ideas and best practices, develop a clear understanding of the environmental issues in the greater Chicago area, and help facilitate a clear path to investigation and prosecution.

Contact Information:
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Office of Law Enforcement
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702

Director of the Office of Law Enforcement Jed Whitchurch
jed.whitchurch@illinois.gov - (312) 550-7548

Deputy Chief of the Office of Law Enforcement John Miller
john.miller@illinois.gov - (217) 900-0214



INDIANA

In 2024, the Indiana Turn in a Poacher or Polluter (TIP) program expanded its advisory board from 11 to 18 members. The addition of these new members provides us with optimism that the "Turn In a Poacher" initiative will be disseminated across a diverse array of consumptive and non-consumptive user groups.

3,130 calls were made to the TIP hotline, marking a 20% rise from the previous year. Online submissions through the website remained stable, with a total of 299 reports. Overall, the TIP program received nearly 3,500 submissions and distributed rewards amounting to \$10,000. The board has been actively involved in developing a strategic marketing plan to promote the TIP message. One of the initiatives includes the continuation of the wildlife challenge coin series, which showcased the green wing teal in 2024. While these challenge coins have gained popularity, they are just one of the many strategies used to communicate the TIP message.



With support from International Wildlife Crimestoppers and the Indiana National Wild Turkey Federation, the IDNR Law Enforcement Division (LED) successfully acquired and developed an anti-poaching trailer over the past year. Collaborating closely with Bravo Trailers in Bristol, Indiana, we designed a custom trailer intended to display poached wildlife from Indiana. This TIP trailer will be employed by the TIP advisory board members, as well as Indiana Conservation Officers to promote awareness regarding the importance of reporting wildlife crimes.

As of November 2024, twenty-three men and women worked tremendously hard and were successful in graduating from the Indiana Conservation Officer Academy. The new officers will enhance their training over the next year by attending the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy in early 2025, in addition to completing essential LED training, which includes swift water rescue, waterfowl & raptor identification, off-road vehicle and boat accident investigation, and boat crewman course, among others. The additional officers represent a significant advancement in fulfilling the manpower needs of the division.

An additional development for the division was the statewide rollout of body-worn cameras (BWC) for the officers. The goal of the cameras is to help mitigate officer-involved complaints for civil litigation and misconduct, collect video/audio evidence for prosecution of those who violate the law, and transparency for the public when requested.

Lt. Colonel Terry Hyndman
4850 SR 446 Bloomington, IN47401
812-837-9536 (24-hour Dispatch Center)
thyndman@dnr.in.gov



MICHIGAN

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Law Enforcement Division (LED) ended 2024 with 253 enlisted conservation officers (COs), 22 civilian support staff, and 12 civilian emergency dispatchers, bringing total employment to 287.

In 2024, the Report All Poaching (RAP) hotline received 43,250 calls and initiated 10,059 complaints. Rewards totaling \$3,450 were paid to 12 complainants who were nominated by the COs who successfully obtained prosecutions resulting from tips leading to the case.



The LED will be conducting Training Academy 13 (TA13) beginning in January 2025, so recruitment was of utmost importance. A combination of traditional and new digital tactics was used as part of the recruitment process, based on current trends for the target audience. Content focused on the unique aspects of the job that distinguish natural resources law enforcement from general law enforcement, and utilized YouTube video ads, carousel ads, and officer-created video reels for Facebook and Instagram. A live webinar, in which officers gave a short presentation about the job and hiring process and spent much of the time answering questions, was also used. Ultimately, 20 applicants were hired for TA13.

The LED once again conducted joint training initiatives with the Quebec Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs (MFFP), this time including the Michigan State Police (MSP) as well. Representatives from both MFFP and MSP attended advanced marine enforcement and operations training hosted by LED. The LED also developed and administered ORV enforcement training for local jurisdictions, which will increase the footprint for enforcement of ORV regulations on the trails.

In 2024, the Recreational Safety, Education, and Enforcement Section (RSEES) rolled out a new required training for new instructors in all the recreational safety programs (Marine, Snowmobile, ORV and Hunter Education, including Bow Hunter and Trapper). The training is delivered virtually followed up with a two-day in-person training. Training topics include classroom management, policy and procedures, how to navigate the web-based event registration and management system, how to setup and teach a safety class, presentation skills, program specific breakout sessions, and other topics. The in-person training is offered once per quarter statewide, and 56 instructors completed this training in 2024.



CO Ryan Weakman received a disposition on a felony case involving illegal timber harvest, stemming from a March 2023 investigation in Clare County's Freeman Township. The suspect, a habitual offender, pled guilty in 2024 and was sentenced to 72 months to 15 years in prison on one count of damage to trees totaling more than \$25,000 and was ordered to pay \$25,956.12 in restitution to the State of Michigan.

Over the past two camping seasons, state park personnel discovered that several of the remote Luce County state forest campgrounds were coming up several thousands of dollars short on campsite fees. District 2 Cos along with Special Investigations Unit (SIU) detectives began working surveillance. Ultimately, the surveillance along with the assistance of MSP and the Mackinac Bridge Authority identified a suspect. Surveillance continued into the fall. On October 19th & 20th the suspect breached several of the campground pay pipes and was then apprehended by with a large amount of stolen cash, a burglary tool and other evidence of the crimes. The suspect confessed to the crimes and was lodged on unrelated outstanding warrants. The case was submitted to the MI Attorney General's office and is currently in process. The success of this case was the result of great teamwork by everyone involved. Many hours went into the surveillance with officers from across the entire district and several SIU detectives working together to close the case.



Captain Jen Wolf
Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Law Enforcement Division
Wolfj1@michigan.gov
Report All Poaching | 1-800-292-7800 | CALL OR TEXT
Website: [Michigan.gov/rap](https://michigan.gov/rap)

MINNESOTA



The Minnesota DNR Enforcement Division and non-profit organization Turn in Poachers (TIP) have partnered since 1981 to curb poaching activity and provide people an opportunity to take an active role in protecting Minnesota's natural resources. While collecting tips about possible poaching is a hallmark of the partnership, outreach is equally as important in stopping such behavior before it occurs.

In-person events are key to these outreach efforts and help show people the consequences of poaching and how the activity steals resources from law-abiding individuals. This past year, DNR conservation officers (COs) and members of the TIP board attended dozens of events with TIP trailers, which include taxidermy mounts of fish and wildlife that were poached in Minnesota. The largest event was the Minnesota State Fair, which attracted more than 1.9 million people.

Anglers, hunters, and others who care about Minnesota's natural resources have several ways to report possible violations: by phone, via a mobile app, or through an online form, which is meant for violations that are not time sensitive. The mobile app is the newest way for people to report violations, and the app's popularity has continued to grow since it was unveiled in 2022.

During 2024, there were 2,236 TIP reports, of which about 99% were referred to COs for further investigation. About 40% of the reports came in via the new mobile app, which is free and allows people the ability to make reports anonymously. Last year, TIP reports resulted in 308 arrests and the program paid out \$4,325 in rewards.

On the staffing front, the DNR Enforcement Division held a Conservation Officer Academy in 2024 to keep pace with retirements and minimize the number of vacant stations. Eighteen individuals completed the academy and field training and are now working in the field. Twelve had previous law enforcement experience, while six were hired through our CO Prep program, which provides individuals with the necessary law enforcement education prior to beginning the 16-week CO academy.

Case highlights:

On Oct. 25, 2024, a tip was received via the TIP411 mobile app about an individual who caught a 22-inch walleye and a 25-inch walleye and kept both. In Minnesota, anglers are allowed to harvest only one walleye longer than 20 inches. The tipster provided the individual's license plate and phone number, and upon being interviewed the suspect admitted he knew the regulations and violated them. He was cited for the overlimit, the fish were seized and donated to the Raptor Center, and he was charged restitution.

On November 9, the opening day of Minnesota's 2024 firearms deer season, an individual called the TIP hotline and reported an individual hunting from a permanent deer stand that had bait (apples and pumpkins) scattered in front of it. The complainant sent photos of the bait, as well as a property map showing the location of the stand. A CO went out the next day and saw an individual hunting from the stand. The hunter admitted to shooting a deer over bait (the gut pile was still there) and admitted to shooting a federally protected gray wolf. Further investigation resulted in the discovery of bait around additional stands of members of the hunting party. Two individuals received multiple citations. In addition, the CO seized two rifles, an ATV, the illegally harvested deer and wolf, and samples of the bait they'd been using.

On May 3, a CO received an anonymous TIP call regarding a juvenile suspected of shooting over his limit of wild turkeys. The caller advised the suspect uploaded many photos to social media. The CO looked through the posts and associated comments, many of which seemed

to point to the suspect acknowledging poaching turkeys. The CO looked up the individual's harvest history since 2014, which showed he hadn't registered any birds. The CO spoke to the juvenile's parents, who provided more information and allowed the CO to speak with the juvenile. The juvenile initially lied about when and who had killed the turkeys, but ultimately admitted to shooting too many turkeys, shooting turkeys out of season, wanton waste, failure to register, and more. The conversation with the CO also resulted in him admitting to additional violations outside the turkey case. The CO recommended to prosecutors the juvenile be ordered to pay \$1,000 in restitution and lose all angling and hunting licenses for three years.

CPT Aaron Kahre
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Enforcement Division
TIP Hotline: 800-652-9093

SOUTH DAKOTA

Since its establishment in 1984, the TIPs program has paid out over \$210,000 in rewards to those who have observed and reported violations. The funding for this program comes from various sources, including contributions from sportsmen themselves, making it a popular initiative among the community.

During the 2023 TIPs year, which spanned from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024, the program played a significant role in 324 investigations and 188 arrests. As a result of these investigations, violators faced fines amounting to \$17,569 and were required to pay \$38,000 in civil damages. Furthermore, judges sentenced offenders to a total of 1120 days in jail, with 1119 days being suspended. As a token of appreciation for their involvement, TIPs rewarded individuals with a total payout of \$3,500.



Case highlight:

BOOZE-CRUIISING DEER POACHER

On September 3rd, 2020, Wildlife Conservation Officer (WCO) Kendyll DeRouchey responded to reports of two dead deer found west of HWY 1804, in Potter County, South Dakota. The remains of the carcasses were sparse, but it was observed that clean cuts were made along the spine to remove the back straps of the deer. There was no evidence of a vehicular collision along the roadway within the immediate area.

On September 4th, 2020, WCO DeRouchey received another call from a landowner regarding two more deer found dead in Potter County about a mile from the first two deer investigated. The landowner stated that the deer had been shot and backstraps cut off both deer. The landowner provided pictures of the dead deer, and both appeared to have had their backstraps removed based on the clean cuts made along the spines of the carcasses. There was no other damage to the carcasses.

WCO DeRouchey investigated the report and found the two dead deer. One was a doe, which was located within 60 yards of the west side of the highway, and the other was a fawn which was located 20 yards on the east side of the highway. The tool marks along the spine of the fawn were obvious where the backstraps had been removed. Officer DeRouchey also found three spent red 12-gauge Winchester Super X and three spent green 12-gauge Herter shotgun shells along the side of the road pavement within 30 yards of the carcass, possibly indicating multiple suspects. All four deer appeared to have been killed around the same time within the previous week.

On October 8th, 2020, WCO DeRouchey received information from a confidential informant regarding illegal hunting activity that had taken place in Potter County. Officer DeRouchey was informed that two individuals were involved in shooting 18 deer in Potter County during nighttime hours. The informant also mentioned that backstraps were cut off the deer.



On November 14th, 2020, WCO John Murphy informed WCO DeRouchey that one of her suspects had been arrested on November 13th and was sitting in the Hughes County jail. Around 10:00AM the same day, WCO Tyler Krekelberg contacted WCO DeRouchey regarding one of his cases to request help retrieving evidence from his suspect's residence in Gettysburg, SD. This suspect was also a suspect in WCO DeRouchey's case. After WCO Krekelberg finished with his case investigation that day, WCO DeRouchey got consent from one of the suspects to interview them about her case.

WCO DeRouchey and other officers interviewed multiple suspects about the poached deer in Potter County. The reoccurring theme from these interviews was that this group of young adult males would "Drive around drinking at all hours of the night and shoot whatever they could find in their headlights." Over the course of the investigation, officers were able to obtain a search warrant for one of the suspect's homes. It was proven that at least 12 deer were killed in Potter County without proper licensing and with no regard for laws, deer were killed throughout all times of the year. Fifty-five dead heads in various stages of decomposition were removed from the defendant's home in Gettysburg, SD. Dead heads are illegal to possess for any reason unless authorized by GFP officials. During interviews of the other suspects, videos of the defendant were also found where he was seen roping two live whitetail bucks and tying them to the hitch of his pickup truck, while he attempted to ear tag them. There were numerous other videos and photos including the defendant posing with a dead trophy whitetail buck at nighttime and out of season.

After pending for three years in the court system, a ruling was finally made regarding the case. The defendant was initially facing 15 Class 1 misdemeanor charges for Big Game-Closed Season, Big Game-No License, Hunting at Night and Unlawful Possession of Big Game Animals. Plea agreements were arranged, and the individual pled guilty to 12 Class 1 misdemeanors for Hunting or Taking Big Game During Nighttime, Closed Season, or Without License in violation of SDCL 41-8-2, 41-8-18, and 22-3-3, all class 1 misdemeanors carrying a maximum penalty of one year in jail and a \$2,000 fine.



On December 19th, 2023, the defendant was sentenced to the following:

- \$24,000 civil fines (\$2,000 per count)
- \$6,000 criminal fines (\$500 per count)
- \$1,158 court costs (\$96.50 per count)
- Four years jail, all suspended but 30 days
- Hunting privileges revoked for 8 years
- Forfeiture of all firearms involved in the crimes.

Joe Keeton
 Conservation Officer Specialist
 Law Enforcement Section
 South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks
 605-430-4705
Joseph.keeton@state.sd.us
 TIP Hotline: 888-683-7224



Investigative wardens play a unique role in the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Public Safety and Resource Protection Division (PSRP) by providing investigative resources to the conservation wardens in their administrative areas. The bureau's focus in 2024 was to provide efficient investigative resources to the field when needed. They investigated cases such as thrill killing, night shooting, elk poaching, internet-related complaints, pollution cases, and illegal ginseng sales. They continue to maintain relationships with the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene and the State Crime Lab

through the investigative warden liaison who regularly processes and sends evidence to the lab for forensic analysis. Several burglaries and cash thefts from self-pay stations from state lands were investigated which led to citations or arrests. They helped protect forested lands and public safety by assisting wardens and DCI agents across the state in several wildland arson investigations.

Their aim is to ensure that the egregious poachers and wildlife law violators across the country are held accountable by coordinating with other states on individuals who are revoked from hunting and fishing. The program administrator processed 414 court-ordered revocations and administrative suspensions and entered them in the Wildlife Violator Compact database. This year, 30 Wisconsin residents are revoked in a compact state. This cooperative interstate effort enhances Wisconsin's ability to protect and manage wildlife resources for the benefit of all residents and visitors.

The program administrator and administrative warden also oversee the special permit program for certain industries, ensuring that rules were followed by reviewing and auditing records. They issued 333 Captive Wild Animal Farm licenses, 112 Wild Fur Farm licenses, 99 Wholesale Fish Dealer licenses, 323 Bird Hunting Preserve permits, 22 Wild Ginseng Dealer licenses, and processed and reviewed over 500 wild ginseng purchase transactions.

Notable cases with convictions:

A Richland County man was investigated for shooting over 150 deer that he left lay. He later attempted to argue in court he was protecting private property from damage and had rights. A lengthy investigation by wardens and investigators using surveillance and other means secured enough evidence to obtain a conviction. The subject plead guilty to 14 crimes (tail to obtain deer hunting approval x 7, hunt deer during closed season x 6, and illegal shining of deer x 1). Fines of \$1000 each plus court costs were assessed for counts 1-12 and counts 13 and 14 drew three years' probation. The subject was also court-ordered a total of 42 years license revocation and 120 days in jail for each of the counts as well as confiscation of all firearms and evidence.

A man was convicted of arson in Fond du Lac County after entering guilty pleas during a court. The subject pled guilty to two counts each of Intentionally Setting Fire to Another's Land and Arson. Three other charges were read into the record and dismissed. The first suspicious fire was investigated in March of 2020. Wardens and investigators used surveillance and other techniques to capture evidence of the arsons which mostly included grassland and wooded areas on state forests. He later told investigators he lit fires to relieve stress, which included the birth of his child three years ago. The 40-year-old also admitted to starting a fire after arguing with his fiancée. Fires were set in grassy/brush/marsh type of areas.

Shaun Deeney
Conservation Warden Major
Wisconsin DNR
Cell Phone: 715-491-3892
shaun.deeney@wisconsin.gov

NORTHEAST REGION

CONNECTICUT



In 2024 Connecticut Environmental Conservation Police (EnCon) recorded 22,711 calls for service related to wildlife, fisheries, boating, and state parks which resulted in 141 arrests, 1672 infractions issued and over 2000 warnings issued.

Outreach:

Our division has public information officers (PIO) that lead our outreach efforts with over 270 outreach events across the state. Our division is in the process of replacing our display trailer with a new trailer and has begun distributing division branded items at different events to include wristbands, pens, lanyards and fishing lures.

Funding and Staffing-Our division has recently completed hiring of all our new authorized positions and has a total of 62 sworn officers. Our dispatch center is

still struggling to recruit and retain dispatchers and currently has 2 vacancies we are working to fill.

Cooperative Efforts:

EnCon has created an investigative unit that is staffed with one sergeant and three officers (1 from each district). This unit has been active since beginning in June of 2024 and is able to work collaboratively with other law enforcement agencies in our region to move investigations forward. The unit assists district officers with complex or lengthy investigations allowing field officer to return to the field and active patrol.

New Innovations:

In June of 2023, the Environmental Conservation Police Division introduced a new program into its Communications Center to improve the delivery of essential services to the citizens of Connecticut. This program is Prepared Live. Prepared Live is a software program that allows the Communications Center to identify caller location, provide real time language services through texting, and has the capability to forward a link to a caller's mobile phone to allow dispatchers to observe the incident through the caller's camera on their Smart devices. The software works by sending a text message to the caller, and once that caller accepts the request, it allows personnel to obtain real time information and relay information to first responders. Since the inception of this program, the Communications Center has enhanced its operational capabilities greatly by innovating and leveraging this system to better serve the citizens of Connecticut.

State Issues:

EnCon officers are responsible for delivery of all law enforcement services in our state parks and forests. With increasing visitation numbers to our parks our officers are challenged to find time to focus on traditional duties in the summer such as boating and fishing patrols. To aid our officers to focus on our traditional duties we continue to use a seasonal patrol officer (EnCon Ranger) program that allows the division to have non-POST certified rangers to patrol our state parks and issue infractions for violations of our park and forest regulations. The program has been successful in its mission and in equipping the next generation of law enforcement officers with relevant training and hands on experience in providing public safety patrols and enforcement.

Connecticut requires all law enforcement agencies to meet state accreditation requirements and EnCon Police have meet all requirements and been award tier 3 accreditation and has completed our tier 1 audit for 2024 while preparing for our tier 2 audit in 2025. To meet the requirements of accreditation the division hired a civilian accreditation manager. This position is responsible for policy review, maintaining a collaborative relationships with our state accreditation team and other agency accreditation managers, performs audits required by accreditations standards and ensures officers know and understand the high liability policies.

Cost Savings:

The division continues to leverage technology to increase officer effectiveness. The division has increased our use of cellular trail cameras in the past year to allow officers to remotely monitor several areas at once. This allows officers to have time to spend on proactive patrol while monitoring areas of concern for violations.

Other issues:

With an increase in new officers the division has created and fish and game academy for new officers to complete after they have completed their FTO training. The fish and game academy currently runs one week and subjects including but not limited to: migratory birds, furbearers, fisheries, deer/moose, raptors, small game/ turkey, nuisance wildlife, and aquaculture. Officers even get hands on experience with firearms/bow hunting safety, animal/ blood tracking, tree stand safety, handling raptors, and long gun familiarization.

MAINE



Maine Operation Game Thief

Operation Game Thief is a private 501c3, non-profit organization that works in cooperation with the Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, Maine Warden Service, Department of Marine Resources, Maine Marine Patrol, and Wildlife Crime Stoppers which pays rewards, if requested, to citizens who turn in poachers or to individuals unlawfully introducing non-native fish species to lakes, ponds and streams of Maine. Reward amounts vary based on the severity of the case but normally range from \$100.00 to \$1,000 for the most flagrant poaching cases. Rewards of up to \$2,000 are paid for information that leads to the arrest or a summons being issued to individuals unlawfully introducing non-native fish species into Maine's waters. All of the monies that support this program come from donations from concerned

sportsmen, sportswomen and citizens.

2024 has been another exciting year for Maine OGT. Approximately 350 public reports to Maine OGT have been made this year and many high-profile fish and game cases were successfully solved as a result of calls to Operation Game Thief. Maine Game Wardens and Marine Patrol officers respond to many other calls for service each year, but these OGT complaints often help lead our officers to successfully document poaching violations across the state.

During 2024 Maine Operation Game Thief has planned and executed many events in which funds have been raised to assist in purchasing equipment to assist Wardens in the field catch poachers. OGT has hosted golf tournaments, banquets, sportsmen's shows and many other events this year which have all been a huge success. Maine Game Wardens and New Hampshire Conservation officers participated in the Northwoods throwdown charity softball game again this year which was a huge success with New Hampshire winning the game.

Maine OGT continues to partner with Waldo County Sheriff's Office, 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. Game Wardens in the field were able to make several high-quality cases through the detailed information that was received through our network of reporting platforms. Maine OGT partners with Hunt Regs to utilize "app"-based reporting of poaching information to supplement our existing reporting platforms. Officers now utilize the Hunt Regs platform to receive all OGT calls that come in across the state. Our dispatchers enter complaints that come in via the phone line and all web and mobile device complaints populate in the system as well.

Plans are being made for this year's charity softball game where Maine will be hosting West Virginia. This game has been extremely successful over the years and a chance for game wardens to get together and have fun and compete for a great cause. It has become a significant fundraiser for OGT and very successful over the years with very few injuries to report!

Look forward to seeing everyone in Colorado!

Lieutenant Tom McKenney
Maine Warden Service
Tom.mckenney@maine.gov



MASSECHUSSETTS



Massachusetts Environmental Police currently have approximately 104 sworn field officers and 8 sworn command-level managers.

Recruitment and Marketing:

- Recruitment opportunity: The MEP attended a Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) college fair held in New Bedford, MA in Feb 2025. There was a great deal of interest in the MEP and the education qualifications and hiring process for MEP new hires. This was but one of the MEP's continuous efforts to reach out to prospective new candidates considering careers in conservation law enforcement. The MEP regularly presents at colleges and universities, targeting students studying in related fields.

- The MEP is contracting with an outside media consultant to implement an education strategy around the passage of new legislation that will require Recreational Safe Boating certification for operators of motorized vessels. Additionally, the MEP will be revamping its Social Media strategy and providing training on the topic to officers in an effort to expand outreach efforts and more effectively use social media platforms.

Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact:

Massachusetts is committed to being an active member of the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact. Currently there is a focus on identifying and appointing a new Compact Administrator from the Massachusetts Fish and Wildlife Agency. Captain Scott Amati of the MEP is to be assigned to the role of law enforcement liaison.

Collaborative work with New Hampshire:

- MEP officers joined NH officers for a joint striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*) marine fisheries enforcement venture in mid-July. NH was interested in recreational angler takes, while MA was interested in the commercial takings and illegal fish caught in NH offered for sale in MA.
- MEP officers traveled to NH for a joint snowmachine training session to further enhance officer competencies and safety in the use of snowmachines for enforcement purposes.

Massachusetts Case Highlights:

- A shark fin case investigation was initiated and investigated by MEP officers assigned to the metro Boston area. In March of 2024, the MEP received a complaint of suspected shark fin for sale at a supermarket in the Boston area. Upon further investigation and surveillance, officers discovered and seized 5.79 lbs of suspected dried/processed sharks fins on display for sale in plain view. The shelf value of the shark fin amounted to \$1,157.94. Documentation was

obtained that led officer to a company out of New York that was believed to be the source of the illegal shark fin. NOAA Law Enforcement was notified for a follow-up investigation with that source in New York. That investigation led authorities to discover the product was imported on a container ship originating from Hong Kong. A sample of the seized shark fins were sent to a NOAA apex predator biologist that confirmed the suspected shark fin were in fact shark fins. As a result, the permit holder/owner of the Massachusetts supermarket was issued a \$1,200.00 non-criminal citation for the Possession/Offering Shark Fin for Sale. The citation was paid on February 13, 2025.

- A case involving illegally possessed bear paws was investigated by Sgt. M. Cote in cooperation with Vermont Conservation Law Enforcement and USFWS Agents. The matter is ongoing and remains under investigation.
- A Massachusetts based fishing vessel and a Massachusetts based Seafood Dealer were identified in a skate wing overage violation. The investigation revealed potentially intentional alteration of associated tally sheet(s). The matter was referred to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).
- A Massachusetts based fishing vessel was investigated by the MEP for possession and sale of undersized haddock. (~30% of the catch was undersized).

New Patrol Vessel:

The MEP has taken delivery of a new 41" Safe Boat, the Interceptor. This platform will be a valuable tool in the protection of the last 372 remaining North American Right Whales left on the earth. These whales arrive in large numbers (approximately 80% of the remaining population) in Massachusetts waters each Spring. The MEP is involved in identifying the locations of the whales to provide deconfliction between the fishing fleet, the commercial fleet and recreational users. The MEP also works proactively with the Division of Marine Fisheries to identify and remove derelict or illegally placed gear. The MEP enforces speed restrictions and exclusionary zones to protect the whales.

Innovations:

The MEP continues to be leader in Massachusetts in the deployment and use of underwater remotely operated vehicles (ROVs). The MEP provides this valuable resource to local and state law enforcement agencies engaged in water borne searches and evidence recovery. These efforts are augmented using side scan sonar. The MEP has established itself within Massachusetts as skilled and trusted partner when it comes to use of this technology and is frequently sought out for mutual aid.

Legislative Updates:

- A recent court ruling in Massachusetts has strengthened and expanded the traditional pre-trial discovery rules and obligations for prosecuting agencies. Prosecutors are working with law enforcement agencies, to include the MEP, to ensure that all evidence, records, exculpatory evidence and officer disciplinary histories are provided to the defense throughout the various prosecution phases. This approach varies from county to county and requires that officers ensure they coordinate with the District Attorney's Offices in a close manner to be in compliance.
- The Massachusetts Legislature has recently passed into law the Hanson-Milone Act, which will require, for the first time ever in Massachusetts, all operators of motorized vessels to possess a Recreational Boater Safety Certification. This mandate will require the MEP to expand both online and in person training opportunities and to provide a process and mechanism to obtain and replace the cards. Those efforts are currently underway in order to meet the legislatively imposed deadlines for obtaining certification.

Major Kevin L. Clayton, M.P.A.

Chief of Enforcement

E-mail: Kevin.Clayton@mass.gov

Mobile: 508-630-4315

Massachusetts Environmental Police, MITC Building

200 Arlington St., Chelsea, MA 02150

NEW HAMPSHIRE



Josiah Towne
Conservation Officer
New Hampshire Fish and Game



New Hampshire
**FISH AND GAME
DEPARTMENT**

New Hampshire Fish & Game Law Enforcement Division personnel are diligently working to secure convictions from the 2024 hunting season. The division reports 40 full-time, assigned Conservation Officers and an additional one Conservation Officer Trainee. New Hampshire is proud to have a Operation Game Thief citizen board. This non-profit board supports the Fish & Game Law Enforcement Division with equipment and training needs to help combat the illegal taking of the state's fish and wildlife resources. The New Hampshire Operation Game Thief board continues to work with The Gate City Casino. The casino operates under the State Lottery Commission's charitable gaming regulations that require casinos to donate 35 percent of the proceeds to a local nonprofit. The revenue generated through this program allowed the Law Enforcement Division to host a class by Wildlife Field Forensics. They also purchased turkey wildlife simulator and metal detectors.

RHODE ISLAND



In May 2024, the Rhode Island Environmental Police Officers Association (RI EPOA) hosted its' annual sporting clay fundraiser at Peacedale Shooting Preserve to benefit the association and IWC. Approximately 60 shooters came out to break some clays, enjoy a BBQ lunch and support IWC. The EPOA will be donating \$1,500 from the proceeds to IWC.

The Division continues to work to backfill vacancies because of retirements. EPO Patrick Severson and EPO Lucas Walter graduated from the RI Municipal Police Training Academy in December 2024 and are expected to complete field training in April 2025. The Division looks forward to welcoming three additional recruits to its' ranks that are expected to complete the police academy in May 2025.

Case Highlights:

In May 2024, an Environmental Police Officer (EPO) following up on violations from the prior deer hunting season charged an individual with baiting deer, archery deer hunting without a deer tag and discharge of a firearm within 500 feet of an occupied dwelling. The charges were dismissed in lieu of a \$500 donation and loss of his hunting license. During the fall 2024 hunting season, the EPO found the suspect to again be baiting deer at same location as the prior case. The EPO investigated the poacher and eventually apprehended him while actively hunting over bait. The arrest resulted in 49 charges including baiting deer prohibited, deer hunting without a deer tag, and obstructing an officer in the execution of duty. Prosecution is still pending on this case.

In September, Rhode Island EPOs teamed up with Enforcement Officers and Special Agents from NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement, as well as Connecticut DEEP Encon Police Officers to conduct an operation to check for compliance with Highly Migratory Species (HMS) regulations. In total, 11 boat patrols were conducted over four days with 47 HMS vessels contacted. Eighteen violations were documented, three bluefin tuna were seized/abandoned and 10 civil citations were issued for a penalty value of \$3,750. Additionally, two violations were referred to NOAA's Office of General Counsel for penalty assessment and six violations were addressed as warnings.

In November 2024 EPOs received a report of a dog that had been caught in a set of snares in West Greenwich, RI. The use of snares is prohibited in Rhode Island. EPOs investigated and located several baited snare sites, one of which had caught a white-tail buck that had subsequently died. EPOs identified

a suspect and took him into custody. The suspect admitted to taking at least one additional deer in the weeks prior to his arrest. The suspect received 270 days probation and court imposed fines.

Sergeant Joshua Beuth
Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
Division of Law Enforcement
(401) 639-8658
Joshua.beuth@dem.ri.gov

VERMONT



VT OGT Summary 2024

We completed our first full year with our new partners, the Colchester Police Department, who have taken over answering our 24/7 hotline tip number. In 2024 we received 147 online tips and 47 phone calls to the tip number. Many of which resulted in criminal violations and arrests. Our trailer was viewed by thousands of people as it travelled around the state doing outreach programs. Our trailer was on display at our largest outdoor show, which draws crowds of approximately 15,000 people. This year our OGT program with our non-profit partners, Vermont Federation of Sportsman's Clubs, were the major sponsor of the outdoor show. One plan for this upcoming year is to be involved at our state capital for a day displaying

our trailer for our State Representatives and the Governor to tour and see what we do firsthand. Our program is also involved with our Junior Warden Camp weekend a program we started last year, where campers get to experience what it's like to be a Warden for the weekend.

Jeffrey Whipple
Game Warden Sergeant
Dispatch: (802) 234-9933
Cell: (802) 535-5220
jeffrey.whipple@vermont.gov

SOUTHEAST REGION

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Wildlife Alert Reward Association



The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and the Wildlife Alert Reward Association (WA) hosted the Wildlife Crimestoppers (IWC) Annual Conference in 2024 in Clearwater Beach, also adding the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact Administrators to the agenda.

WA serves primarily as a reward program but also supports FWC with its mission when appropriate. To provide this support, WA receives donations primarily through court orders from cases made by FWC Officers. A recent outreach campaign focused on judicial circuits continues to produce results as WA received over \$141,000 in donations.

FWC received over 10,000 reported violations from concerned members of the public resulting in \$45,000 in rewards being distributed by WA. What is even more impressive is that many stakeholders do not ask for a reward!

Additionally, WA continued its support of FWC by purchasing outreach supplies, thermal imaging, night vision and "robo" deer.



Captain Patrick Walsh

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Wildlife Law Administrator
620 South Meridian Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399
Office: 850.617.9563
Cell: 239.227.7472
Patrick.Walsh@myfwc.com

Georgia Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division



Program Statistics
127 Ranger Hotline Web Reports
284 Hunt Reg App Reports
10 Payment Requests
\$1,100.00 in requests paid

- ❖ **Marketing Strategies-** We recently implemented the Hunt Regs App for users to report game violations. Our Game Wardens will receive real-time reports of poaching. Also, we introduced a new Ranger Hotline Logo that includes a QR code to the Ranger Hotline and the Hunt Regs App. A photo op was planned with Governor Kemp but was cancelled due to Hurricane Helene.
- ❖ **Funding and Staffing Issues-** A Ranger Hotline meeting is tentatively planned for Spring 2025. The objectives of this meeting will be to appoint new board members as well as to identify partners and additional funding sources.
- ❖ **Unique Cross Boundary or Cooperative, Enforcement Efforts-** Numerous Lacey Act investigations worked jointly with USFWS, USFS and other State Conservation Law Enforcement agencies. Several major cases solved utilizing FLOCK SAFETY cameras around the state that Game Wardens now have access to. For instance, a current ongoing investigation in Houston County, Ga. where a collared black bear sow and 2 cubs were illegally killed on state WMA land. With assistance from local authorities using FLOCK SAFETY cameras, the investigating game warden was able to identify a suspect and receive a full confession.
- ❖ **New Innovations in Conservation Law Enforcement-** Along with the Hunt Regs App, Ga. DNR LED obtained Cellebrite software for the Investigative Unit to assist with a variety of investigations. This software purchase was made possible by the NWTF Superfund. Fifty-four Chevrolet 1500 4x4 trucks were purchased for Game Wardens during the 2024 and 2025 period.
- ❖ **State, Regional and National Issues, Legislation, Legal Challenges and Court Decisions Impacting Natural Resources Law Enforcement-** No changes.
- ❖ **Cost Saving Initiatives-**No new initiatives.
- ❖ **Other Special Law Enforcement Issues-**No recent issues noted.



Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries OGT

LOGT Case Report for 2024:

- 25 – Deer Cases
- 3 – Bear Cases
- 8 – Migratory Game Bird Cases
- 1 – Alligator Case
- 1 – Commercial Fish Case
- 5 – Small Game Cases
- 2 – Fresh/saltwater Cases
- 1 – Outlaw Quadruped Case
- 52 – Total Cases
- 91 – Total Suspects Cited
- 213 – Total Offenses



Total Rewards Paid - \$ 19,050

LOGT is currently exploring new and unique ways to promote the program, we are currently working closely with Louisiana CCA and their events (among other conservation organizations) as a way to raise awareness and raise money (gaining auction items, etc.)

Sgt. Terry Hicks
2000 Quail Dr., Baton Rouge, La 70808
225-765-2512
thicks@wlf.la.gov

WEST REGION

CALIFORNIA

The **CALTIP** Program is the California confidential secret witness program. The **CALTIP** Program was introduced in 1981. The **CALTIP** Program provides the public with a toll-free number to report poaching and pollution activity anonymously. The

Department's **CALTIP** Program adopted the use of Citizen Observer's **TIP411** in 2015. This is a texting and online application which allows the public to report unlawful natural resource activity with the use of a computer or smart phone. A free smartphone application is available. **CALTIP** and **TIP411** information can be found on the California Department of Fish and Wildlife website **CALTIP** page:

<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Enforcement/CalTIP>

The **TIP411** Application conveniently allows the reporting parties to include photos and videos immediately.

The number of **CALTIP** and **TIP411** reports grew almost 10% from 2023 (6,533 reports) to 2024 (7,158 reports).





The privately funded **CALTIP** Rewards Committee awarded \$6800 to 22 recipients in 2024. These cases involved unlawful commercial fishing practices for salmon, halibut, tuna, lobster and more. Cases also included elk, deer, abalone, sheephead, black bass, striped bass, and rockfish. Pollution violations were also reported, and responsible parties were convicted in court.



Figure 1: 2023 CALTIP Lobster case made with canine office



Figure 1: A CALTIP call led to these poached deer.



Figure 3: CALTIP marine fish measurement sticker.

Lieutenant Specialist Matthew Shanley
 CALTIP Program Manager
 California Department of Fish and Wildlife
matthew.shanley@wildlife.ca.gov

COLORADO



Operation Game Thief (OGT) is a Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) program which pays rewards to citizens who turn in poachers. You can call toll-free at 1-877-COLO-OGT (1-877-265-6648); Verizon cell phone users can dial #OGT; or contact by email at game.thief@state.co.us. Callers do not have to reveal their names or testify in court. A reward of \$500.00 is offered for information on cases involving big game or endangered species, while \$250.00 is offered for information on turkey and \$100 for fishing or small game cases. A citizens committee administers the reward fund, which is maintained by private contributions. The Board may approve rewards for higher dollar amounts for flagrant cases. Rewards are paid for information which leads to an arrest, or a citation being issued.

In 2024 OGT received a total of 1,213 calls which in turn resulted in 363 reports being generated. Of those total reports 209 were for big game violations; 53 reports for fishing violations; 7 reports for licensing violations; 20 reports for small game violations; 21

reports for waterfowl violations; 14 reports for nongame violations; 2 reports for threatened/endangered species; 4 antler shed reports; and 31 reports classified as other.

In 2024, OGT paid a total of \$3,650.00 in reward distribution and received \$81,600 in court mandated donations. The OGT board approved the purchase of 1 elk decoy; 1 deer decoy; 1 pronghorn decoy; game cameras with accessories, and 200 traffic safety vest during a roadside check station for Colorado Parks and Wildlife Officers.

The TIPS reward program is set up through Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission regulations to award licenses and preference points to eligible persons that report illegal take or possession or willful destruction of big game or turkey. In 2024, there were three TIPS rewards given with one for an over-the-counter deer license and two elk preference points.

Jim Hawkins
Assistant Chief of Law Enforcement
Operation Game Thief Coordinator
6060 Broadway, Denver, CO 80216



IDAHO



Idaho Fish and Game works in cooperation with Citizens Against Poaching (CAP), a nonprofit organization with interested hunters and anglers from around the state serving as regional directors and officers. IDFG has 78 conservation officers in the whole state. With over 83,000 sq. miles to cover, officers cannot be everywhere at once, and CAP strongly supports their efforts. Calls can be made 24/7 to the CAP hotline: 1-800-632- 5999. These calls are dispatched by Idaho State Police, who inform a conservation officer assigned to the area that an incident has occurred.

CAP offers rewards as an incentive for people to report wildlife crimes; eligible reporting parties can choose to remain anonymous. There is also an online report form available on the [IDFG website](#).

In October of 2024, the CAP hotline received a report from Washington County, Idaho of two suspects shooting a mule deer doe, walking up to it, touching/shaking it and then leaving the area. After Senior Conservation Officer Dakotah Smith contacted the reporting person, he received additional information that allowed him to identify and locate a suspect. The suspect admitted to shooting and leaving the doe. Subsequently, the suspect was cited with two charges for “take-closed season” and “fail to retrieve”. This resulted in a one-year license revocation, and the reporting person received a reward for their efforts.

The CAP hotline received 1,518 calls, and the online “Report a Wildlife Crime” form received 339 reports in 2024. Citizens reporting poaching were awarded \$33,250 for the year. These numbers are above average for the past five years, as CAP continues to increase their reach, allowing more citizens to take part in preserving Idaho’s hunting and fishing heritage.





CAP has provided funding for 5 trailers used to display animals taken during wildlife crimes. The two newest CAP trailers are in the process of being completed and should hit the road in 2025.

Trailers contain animal mounts, stories, and a TV equipped to play informational videos are accompanied by IDFG staff or volunteers to events throughout the state. These trailers are available by request through the [CAP website](#).

MONTANA

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks currently has 114 sworn game wardens and 4 vacancies. In 2024, the TIPMONT rewards board received 21 requests from wardens for rewards reported by the public. All 21 requests received a monetary value approved by the board in July 2024 totaling \$12,950. Several convictions were made based off these reports including, Unlawful hunt from road, Fail to obtain landowner permission, Hunting during closed season, Killing an overlimit, Unlawful possession, Hunting without a license, Commission rule and regulations, Hunting with artificial light, Obstructing a peace officer, Fishing without a license, Waste of game, Unlawful purchase of a resident license, Felony criminal mischief, Unlawful use of equipment, Criminal Trespass for antler hunting.

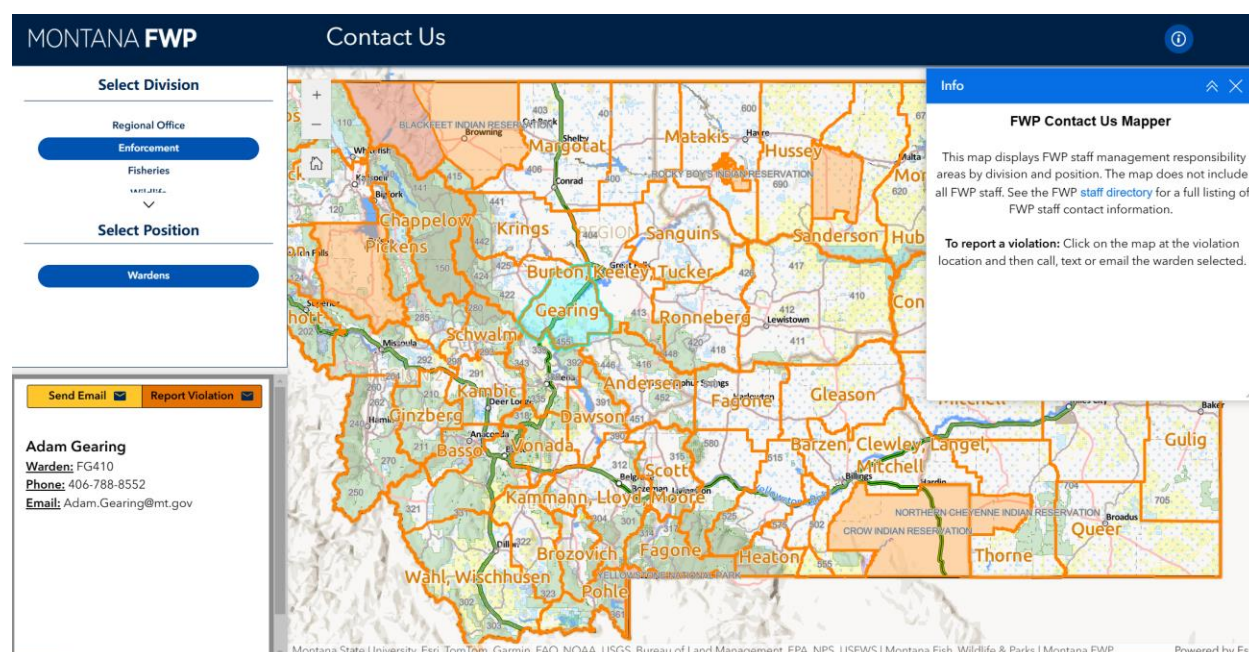
Montana Highway Patrol dispatches for Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks wardens and are also tasked with answering calls to the TIPMONT line. In the past, the TIPMONT call line has overloaded the dispatch lines during the hunting season. Due to this, we staffed seasonal workers to answer the calls for the 12 weeks of hunting season. The last few years we have had trouble staffing and budgeting for these seasonal workers.

The 2024 season came with some major changes to the TIPMONT reporting system. We rebranded our logo to not include the 1-800 number and to include our online reporting system. We will start advertising these new changes on agency signs, regulations, and maps starting in the 2025 season. Below is an example of our new reporting logo.





If someone wants to report a violation they visit tipmont.mt.gov where they are brought to the map shown below. Once they determine where the violation took place, the caller can click on the location and select if they want to call, text, or email the warden directly. While we have only tested this during the 2024 season, the feedback has been positive, and it seems to have cut down greatly on the call loads and increase response time. This change was cost effective due to our agency GIS staff doing the leg work of building the mapper system. Our goal with this system is to still maintain the 1-800 tip line but have the call volume low enough that Highway Patrol can manage the call load.



NEVADA

The Nevada Operation Game Thief (OGT) Program was established during the 1981 legislative session. Since OGT's inception, there has been tremendous public support for the program. The OGT program continues to provide resources to game wardens in the field to investigate and successfully prosecute wildlife crimes. Within the OGT program is a core of volunteers, including retired law enforcement officers. The 'Reserve' Game Warden Program is tied directly with the responsibilities and mission of the parent OGT program. Reserve game wardens are

sworn law enforcement officers who remain current on all NV POST requirements through NDOW and perform the duties of OGT outreach in addition to assisting the Law Enforcement Division in tasks and duties which allow for full time uniformed wardens to commit more time to their field patrols and wildlife resources.

Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) employs 41 total game wardens which includes: 1 Chief, 3 Captains, 3 Regional Lieutenants, 31 field Game Wardens, 1 Investigations Lieutenant and 2 Special Investigators. In addition, we utilize one Seasonal Game Warden and Volunteer Reserves. We currently have 6 vacancies in field level game warden positions and 1 regional Lieutenant position equaling 17% vacancy rate, the lowest level in at least 10 years.

NDOW Dispatch received thousands of phone calls in 2024 which resulted in 272 investigations. In addition, the NDOW TIP app received 100 wildlife crime reports.

Highlights of the OGT and Law Enforcement Division included:

- Participation in 17 sportsmen's shows, youth events, fairs and outdoor programs with over 4,400 people contacted through the OGT program.
- OGT Program funding was cut for 2024. Limited spending authority will be restored in 2025.
- Continued to promote the use of NDOW TIP app. As the State's main wildlife crime reporting tool.
- Collaborative efforts between NDOW wardens and the OGT Citizen's Board yielded pay outs to anonymous reporting parties for reports of wildlife violations.
- Annual NDOW TIP app use saw another rise in legitimate wildlife crime reporting use.
- Notable accomplishments within NDOW law enforcement include:
 - Wardens have conducted numerous cases which includes cross jurisdiction authority and collaboration, including residency fraud, several big game hunts utilizing drones and thermal cameras, trail camera law violations, numerous guiding violations, hunter trespass cases, unlawful killing of big game, unlawful methods of take, trapping violation and many more misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor, and felony level crimes.
 - Wardens have many felony level cases submitted to District Attorney offices throughout the State awaiting trials.

Jake Kreamer
Wildlife Law Enforcement Captain
Nevada Department of Wildlife
Law Enforcement Division



6980 Sierra Center
Parkway, Suite 120
Reno, Nevada 89511
Phone: (775) 688-1547
Fax: (775) 688-1551
jkreamer@ndow.org



NEW MEXICO

Operation Game Thief is a New Mexico Department of Game and Fish program, which pays rewards to citizens who turn in poachers. *OGT can also be used to report Criminal Trespass (30-14-1).* Begun in 1977 here in New Mexico, Operation Game Thief or a similar program has now been adopted by nearly every other state. In short, Operation Game Thief is crime-stoppers for wildlife. In fact, the program was



modeled after the original crime-stoppers program started by the Albuquerque, NM Police Department. **Rewards are:**

\$750 for cases involving elk and bighorn sheep;

\$500 for deer and oryx;

\$350 for antelope;

\$250 for turkey, bear, cougar, javelina, ibex, barbary sheep, endangered species, small game, fish, raptors and furbearers.

During the 2024 year, the OGT program received 121 tips, took in just under \$32,000 of donations and payments while paying \$3,500 in rewards.

New Mexico Game and Fish IT department helped to streamline information sharing by assisting in changing the web form which generates OGT's online. They are now generated automatically by area office, GMU or county and pushed via email immediately to supervisors in the area.

We also made changes to the OGT form, which helps us identify violations which were viewed online or in social media and routed to investigators with specific knowledge and capabilities to view, preserve and draft affidavits for the platforms they are posted on.

Luna County, NM –



Officer Van Liew received an Operation Game Thief Report on January 2024, that a reporting party saw lights in a farm field and heard gunshots at night, then saw a photograph posted on Facebook the next day, also taken during the night. The photographs were of a hunter in a farm field with a mule deer, and the deer had an arrow sticking in it. This was during an open archery mule deer season.

Officer Van Liew recognized the young man in the images posing with this mule deer buck in one of the attached photographs. Officer Van Liew had previously met the

suspect at a local business in Deming, New Mexico.

Sgt. Adan Jacquez and Officer Van Liew interviewed the suspect and his father at their home where they



admitted to several violations during the questioning. The buck had been wounded with archery equipment shortly before shooting hours ended, but they continued to pursue the buck after legal shooting hours using spotlights. After wounding the buck with a few more arrows, the suspect put the deer down with a 9mm handgun, using full metal jacket ammunition. The suspect's father held the spotlight and was an accessory to the crimes committed. Violations included unlawful killing of a mule deer, unlawful possession of deer in season, spotlighting, shooting hours violation, unlawful weapon type, and unlawful bullet type.

The buck was seized and scored 146 3/8" SCI. Just missing a trophy civil penalty. Due to the suspects' cooperation, a plea deal was struck in which the defendant's paid out \$600 in fines through the court and owed a \$250-dollar

civil assessment to New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.



Creation of the Division of Law Enforcement

The Utah legislative session in early 2024 came with significant change to the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources Law Enforcement section. HB469 created in statute the new Utah Department of Natural Resources – Division of Law Enforcement. Essentially this bill removed the law enforcement arms of the Utah Divisions of Outdoor Recreation, State Parks, State Land – Forestry & Fire, and Wildlife Resources and unified them all under the new Division of Law Enforcement. As you might imagine, this is a significant change for our law enforcement section, and we are still working through the unification process.

On January 1st, 2025, Utah Governor Spencer Cox officially swore into office over 130 Natural Resource Officers for the State of Utah during a special ceremony at the Utah State Capital. Within the Division of Law Enforcement there are three sections: outdoor recreation enforcement (Rangers), wildlife enforcement and investigations (Conservation Officers), and shared services (administrative processes, special projects, and Aquatic Invasive Species, AIS). We are excited about this new challenge and look forward to providing even better wildlife and natural resource law employment services to our wildlife constituency and all the citizens of the great State of Utah.



01/01/2025 – DNRLE Swearing in ceremony, Utah State Capital

UTiP Hotline, TIP 411, Email Reporting

The Utah Division of Law Enforcement receives poaching tips from the public through several mechanisms; Utah Turn in a Poacher Hotline, TIP411 mobile App and email reporting. Starting in 2024, tips from all three reporting options are collected and warehoused through one service. This service does not break out total tips from each separate reporting mechanisms any longer,

just a total number. In 2024, we received and investigated a total of 1,648 tips from the public. This reflects a slight decrease from the 1,715 total tips received in 2023.

A small portion of these calls relate directly to wildlife questions or nuisance wildlife problems, but most of them are reports of known or suspected illegal wildlife activity.

Conservations Officers receive these tips directly through the TIP411 app or from direct phone calls from the UTIP dispatcher at the time of the original phone call tip. The officers are then connected directly to the reporting party. Many of our officers' "biggest and best" cases each year result directly from tips from the public using these reporting services.

Restitution and Rewards

In Utah, the value of all wildlife species is set in state statute. The statutory value of that wildlife is used to determine the severity of the crime. Illegal taking of wildlife in Utah can result in anything from an infraction citation to a third-degree felony charge.

In 2024, a total of 1,007 animals were confirmed to be illegally taken through patrol work and investigation of our Conservation Officers. Of this number, 216 mule deer (12 trophy class bucks) and 140 elk (20 trophy class bulls). In addition, 7 moose, 4 bison, 5 bears, 12 cougars, 3 bald eagles and 371 fish were also illegally taken by wildlife violators. Many of these cases resulted in successful prosecutions for our officers.

Restitution values for wildlife illegally taken are also set by state statute. Restitution paid to the Division of Wildlife Resources Help Stop Poaching account totaled \$155,741.71 for 2024.

These monies are used to run Utah's UTIP programs.

Help Stop Poaching account money is used to pay rewards to individuals who provide information that results in a successful prosecution, buy equipment, conservation officer training, education and outreach events, and other purposes supporting the prevention and detection of poaching of wildlife. A total of \$9,375 was paid in reward money to reporting parties in 2024. In addition to our monetary reward program, Utah offers wildlife permits for poaching cases successfully prosecuted. In 2024, 11 reward permits were issued to reporting parties whose information led directly to successful illegal wildlife prosecutions. Of these 11 permits, 7 were for limited-entry trophy bull elk units, 3 were for limited-entry trophy buck deer units, and 1 was for a limited entry bear permit.

10/13/2024 - Bull elk illegally harvested and wasted by spike bull elk permittee



WYOMING



In 1980, the Stop Poaching Hotline was created to give the public an easier avenue to report suspected wildlife crimes in Wyoming. The hotline is answered 24/7 by dispatchers in a statewide law enforcement communications center in Cheyenne. In addition to the toll-free phone hotline, the public can report suspected violations via the Department website and a text tip line. The Stop Poaching Program is an excellent and necessary tool to aid game wardens in identifying and apprehending violators. People providing information regarding possible violations can remain anonymous.

In 2024, 235 tips were received from members of the public and game wardens followed up on all of them. In many cases, no violations could be determined. However, tips from the public were instrumental in identifying several specific violations and possible suspects. These tips led to 28 citations and 16 warnings being issued to violators. Defendants charged due to Stop Poaching tips were ordered to pay \$23,590 in fines and restitution this year, with 20 cases still under investigation or pending court disposition. Without the public's help and support, game wardens would have a much more difficult job.



To encourage reporting of wildlife violations, by the public, the Department has partnered with the Wyoming Wildlife Protectors Association (WWPA). The WWPA was started in 1983 as a registered non-profit organization. The sole purpose of the WWPA is to manage a reward account and provide monetary rewards to citizens who provide information leading to the apprehension and conviction of wildlife violators. The WWPA is funded by the restitution payments as ordered by the courts at the sentencing of wildlife violators and from private donations. Many of the successful investigations and prosecutions of wildlife violators in Wyoming would not have been possible without information provided by concerned citizens. Many informants show genuine concern for Wyoming's wildlife by turning in friends or family members. Department enforcement officers may submit a reward recommendation to the WWPA when a violator has been successfully prosecuted. In 2024, \$3,700 in rewards was paid to six individuals who provided the information leading to the convictions of wildlife violators.



Profit and Loss
International Wildlife Crimestoppers, Inc.
January-December, 2024

DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT	TOTAL
Income	
43400 Direct Public Support	0
43410 Corporate Contributions	\$6,500.00
43450 Individ, Business Contributions	\$6,785.00
43460 Outdoor Professional Partner	\$200.00
Total for 43400 Direct Public Support	\$13,485.00
45000 Investments	0
45030 Interest-Savings, Short-term CD	\$0.90
Total for 45000 Investments	\$0.90
47200 Program Income	\$1,000.00
47220 Conference Income	0
47221 Conference Registration fee	\$6,400.00
47222 Conference Raffle Tickets Income	\$1,015.00
47223 Conference Silent Auction Income	\$975.00
47224 Conference Sponsorship Income	\$20,000.00
Total for 47220 Conference Income	\$28,390.00
47230 Membership Dues	\$15,020.00
47250 North Woods Throwdown Income	-\$5,855.86
47251 North Woods Throwdown Sponsorship Income	\$16,850.00
47252 North Woods Throwdown Donations Income	\$291.80
47253 North Woods Throwdown Merchandise Income	\$2,584.31
47254 North Woods Throwdown Donations Auction/Raffle Income	\$3,577.02
Total for 47250 North Woods Throwdown Income	\$17,447.27
Total for 47200 Program Income	\$61,857.27
Total for Income	\$75,343.17
Cost of Goods Sold	
Gross Profit	\$75,343.17
Expenses	
60900 Business Expenses	0
60910 Bank Charges	\$39.00
60920 Business Registration Fees	\$38.00
Total for 60900 Business Expenses	\$77.00
62100 Contract Services	0
62110 Accounting Fees	\$1,909.98
62130 Square fees	\$39.98
62140 Legal Fees	\$9.95
62170 Contractor Services	\$9,000.00
Total for 62100 Contract Services	\$10,959.91

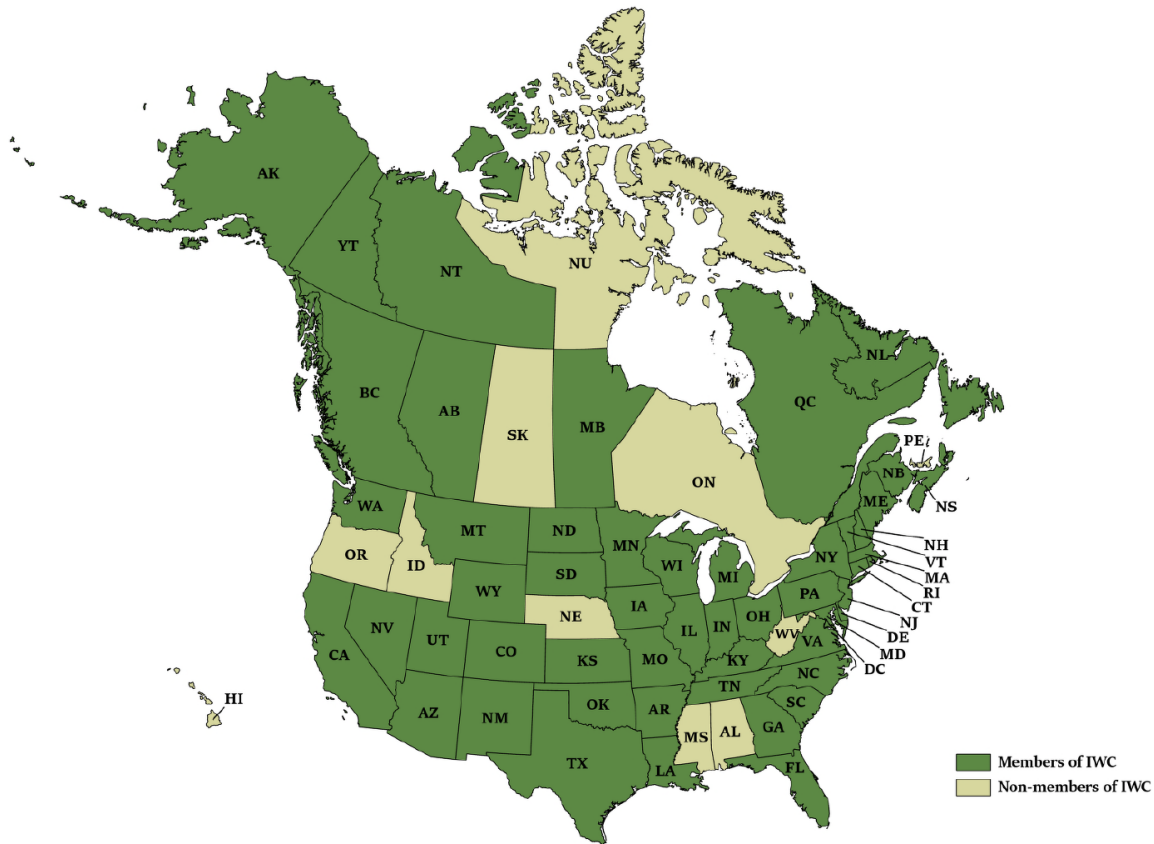
Profit and Loss

International Wildlife Crimestoppers, Inc.

January-December, 2024

DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT	TOTAL
62200 Conference	0
62201 Conference supplies	\$1,682.31
62202 Conference Hotel	\$25,684.15
62203 Conference Host Attendee Gifts	\$3,290.30
62204 Conference & Expo Raffle Items Expense	\$320.29
68300 Travel and Meetings	\$491.56
68310 Conference, Convention, Meeting	\$2,363.47
68330 Lodging Conference	\$2,680.06
68340 Airfare Conference	\$965.64
68350 Car Rental Conference	\$254.71
68360 Meal Reimbursement Conference	\$329.63
Total for 68300 Travel and Meetings	\$7,085.07
Total for 62200 Conference	\$38,062.12
62300 North Woods Throwdown Expenses	\$750.00
62301 North Woods Throwdown Supplies Expense	\$1,090.51
62302 North Woods Throwdown Merchandise Expense	\$4,342.68
62303 North Woods Throwdown Rental Expense	\$2,072.00
62304 North Woods Throwdown Permits Expense	\$15.00
Total for 62300 North Woods Throwdown Expenses	\$8,270.19
62400 Outside Conference & Expo Expenses	0
62401 Outside Conference & Expo Raffle Expenses	\$500.00
62402 Outside Conference & Expo Supplies Expenses	\$271.98
62403 Outside Conference & Expo Travel Expenses	\$1,238.24
62404 Outside Conference & Expo Booth Rental Expenses	\$304.68
Total for 62400 Outside Conference & Expo Expenses	\$2,314.90
65000 Operations	\$75.00
65010 Books, Subscriptions, Reference	\$325.20
65020 Postage, Mailing Service	\$146.51
65040 Supplies	\$1,319.71
65075 Marketing items	\$208.55
Total for 65000 Operations	\$2,074.97
65100 Other Types of Expenses	0
65130 Outside Organization Membership	\$250.00
65140 Sponsorship- Other organization	\$600.00
Total for 65100 Other Types of Expenses	\$850.00
PayPal Fees	\$420.48
Unapplied Cash Bill Payment Expense	\$164.89
Uncategorized Expense	\$1,380.00
Total for Expenses	\$64,574.46
Net Operating Income	\$10,768.71
Other Income	
Net Other Income	0
Net Income	\$10,768.71

International Wildlife Crimestoppers Members



Canadian Region

- Alberta Justice and Solicitor General Fish and Wildlife, Enforcement Branch
- British Columbia Conservation Officer Service
- Department of Fisheries and Land Resources, Newfoundland and Labrador
- Manitoba Dept of Conservation
- Ministère des Res nat. et de la faune
- New Brunswick Department of Justice and Public Safety
- Northwest Territories Department of Environment and Natural Resources
- Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change Inspection, Compliance, and Enforcement
- Yukon Conservation Officer Service

Midwest Region

- Illinois Department of Natural Resources
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks – Law Enforcement Division
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Law Enforcement Division
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Enforcement
- Missouri Department of Conservation
- North Dakota Report All Poaching
- Ohio Division of Wildlife
- South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource

Northeast Region

- Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
- Delaware Fish and Wildlife Natural Resources Police
- Maine Warden Service
- Maryland Natural Resources Police
- Massachusetts Environmental Police
- New Hampshire Fish and Game Department

Southeast Region

- Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Law Enforcement Division
- Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources
- Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

West Region

- Alaska Fish & Wildlife Troopers
- Arizona Game and Fish Department
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife
- Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Honorary Members

- Ron Bailey
- Rob Buonamici
- David Croonquist
- Rob Young
- Candice (Candy) Henderson

Super Sport Members

- James Lettiere
- Skowhegan Sportsman Club

Educational Institution Members

- White Mountains Community College

Silver Members

- Fredrick Follette

- New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Law Enforcement
- New York Dept of Environmental Conservation
- Pennsylvania Game Commission
- Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Law Enforcement
- Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, Law Enforcement Division

- North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
- Oklahoma Department of Wildlife
- South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
- Tennessee Wildlife Resources
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- Virginia Department of Wildlife Resource

- Nevada Department of Wildlife
- New Mexico Law Enforcement Division
- Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Enforcement
- Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Lifetime Members

- Norman Ackermann
- Mark Cavanaugh
- Edward Etter
- Safari Club International – Houston Chapter
- Jimmy Hasslocher
- John Hoerster
- Stanley Kolodzey
- Larry Weishuhn

Bronze Members

- David Mawn
- Joshua Wolfe
- Corey Robertson