

Game Warden Field Notes

The following items are compiled from recent Texas Parks and Wildlife Department law enforcement reports.

- **Willie the Decoy**

Two Henderson County game wardens and two Cherokee County game wardens were patrolling for night hunters because calls were received from landowners about road and night hunting on a farm-to-market road in their area. Willie, the decoy deer, was put into action and the wardens barely had time to set up the decoy before the first shots rang out. One of the subjects said he was just shooting to get the deer to run back into the woods. Cases pending.

- **Just 'Looking at Animals'**

A Leon County game warden received a call from the Limestone County Sheriff's Office about a driver of a green vehicle who shot a deer from the road. The warden met with the person who called the sheriff, who said he was sitting in his deer stand when someone drove by, stopped, shot, drove down the road, turned around, and shot again. Then, the suspects got out and drug the deer from the property, loaded it up and drove off. Although the man was unable to get a license plate number, the warden contacted the local police department thinking that the truck would be heading in their direction. The Mart Police Department found the truck with fresh blood in the bed and two loaded shotguns in the cab. The warden arrived at the suspect's residence in Mart, where evidence was collected and the shotguns and deer were seized. The man, his two sons, and his young daughter were on a Sunday drive "looking at animals" when the violations occurred, the father said. Cases pending.

- **Getting Schooled**

A McLennan County game warden received a call from a hunter to help locate a deer he shot while bowhunting. After further investigation, the warden found that the deer was shot on China Spring Independent School District property and the hunter had been hunting on this property for some time without permission from the ISD. The large white-tailed buck had been seen on a few trail cams in the area and was being hunted by many in the area. The deer was found on an adjoining landowner's property a week later. Citation issued. Charges pending.

- **Ruffled Feathers**

An Austin County game warden made contact with two hunters at a campsite after hearing a gunshot. The hunters claimed they did not see or shoot anything, but after the warden mentioned hearing a shot, the suspects changed their story and said they shot at a coyote with a shotgun. The warden looked around the area and found fresh dove feathers on a four-wheeler. The hunters were persistent that they only shot at the coyote. After further conversation, the hunter claimed he thought it was still dove season and admitted to shooting a dove. Citations were issued and the dove was seized.

- **A White-Tailed Lie**

An Austin County game warden responded to a call at a local residence where a shot was heard. As he approached the house, he saw three men standing outside the garage looking at

him. Two other men soon came out of the garage and shut the door. The men claimed they did not shoot anything and that they were not hunting. After talking with the men and hearing conflicting stories, the shooter was identified and the warden found a white-tailed doe hidden in the garage. Citations were issued, and the deer was seized.

- **Smoking Through a Storm**

While on patrol during a winter storm in Callahan County, a game warden and deputy stopped to assist a man whose pickup truck had slid off the icy roadway, ending up on its side in a ditch. When the door was opened, a strong odor of marijuana escaped the vehicle. After a lengthy interview with the driver in 10-degree weather, the man pulled a bag of marijuana out of his pants. The man was transported to jail and was charged with possession of marijuana and driving with a suspended license.

- **Tag, You're It**

A Polk County game warden filed a citation on a local man for killing a white-tailed buck in Polk County and tagging the deer with his wife's license. The man explained to the warden that he had already killed a buck in an adjacent county and thought that if he used his tag on the deer in Polk County, he would be "tagged out." The warden pointed out that he misunderstood the antler restriction bag limit and found that he was not "tagged out" after all. Citations and warnings were issued to the man and his wife for hunting/allowing to hunt under the license of another, failure to tag white-tailed deer, and failure to complete harvest log.

- **Too Much Fun Can Lead To a Lot of Problems**

A Val Verde County game warden received a call after midnight from a concerned landowner who feared that a rowdy group of hunters, who had just left his hunting ranch without paying for a big game hunt, had also committed hunting violations. The warden was able to track the group to a local hotel through tips he received, but when he attempted to make contact with them he found that they had been kicked out of the hotel due to disorderly conduct. He was finally able to make contact with the group in the county jail, when they were being booked for discharging a weapon within the city limits and public intoxication. After several interviews, another trip to the ranch for evidence collection, and 12 hours and investigation, the game warden found that the group had been too inebriated to shoot straight and had not been able to harvest any deer. Multiple citations for no hunting license and lack of hunter education certification were issued. Cases pending.

- **Dodging Traffic and Trouble**

Two Palo Pinto County game wardens were patrolling for night hunters when a call came over the radio about a suspect who had just run from Department of Public Safety troopers nearby. The wardens arrived on scene just as the subject ran his vehicle into the side of a DPS patrol car. The suspect played Frogger across four lanes of Interstate 20 and across the service road before he was captured. The wardens assisted with the search of the area to see if the subject had thrown anything out of his vehicle and found two pounds of crack cocaine and more than \$3,000 in cash.

- **Game Warden in the Spotlight**

A Palo Pinto County game warden had just gotten into position to watch an oat field when a vehicle stopped in front of him. The truck's lights were turned off and a passenger got out, reached for a rifle from the bed of the truck and began shining the field with a green light. The man then returned to the truck and continued down the road. The warden saw them shine their light on several fields before turning into a gate. After stopping the vehicle at the gate, the warden found a loaded rifle in the front passenger's lap. Another Palo Pinto County game

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warden arrived on the scene to assist and found that the back seat passenger was underage and drinking beer. The wardens also found a small amount of marijuana in the center console. Multiple charges are pending.

- **Blood Trail Leads to Trespassers**

A Titus County game warden responded to a trespass call in Red River County when a landowner's wife discovered a blood trail on her property with ATV tracks running beside it. The warden visited the adjacent hunting camp and discovered a fresh-killed and tagged white-tailed doe. Two individuals were identified and admitted shooting the deer on their neighbor's ranch without consent. Citations were issued for possessing a white-tailed antlerless deer without a permit and criminal trespass. Cases pending.

- **Is the Grass Greener on the Other Side?**

A Red River County game warden was patrolling for night hunting activity when a truck began spotlighting the barn the warden was sitting in. When the warden stopped the vehicle, the driver frantically tried to hide the ammunition from the .22 rifle he had stuffed beside his seat. The subject ended up sitting on the gun's magazine, which was found when the warden had him exit the vehicle. The rifle still had a round in its chamber. The suspects came from Oklahoma and said they crossed the river to see what they could find. Cases were filed for hunting from a public road and for no hunting license. Cases pending.

- **Slip of the Tongue**

A Real County game warden was talking to a hunter in a store parking lot about a nice buck in the bed of the hunter's pickup truck when the hunter admitted that his buddy shot it, but he put his tag on it. The hunter, realizing what he just told the game warden said, "I guess I'm in trouble now." Cases pending.

- **A Deer Has More Meat Than Its Backstrap**

A Zavala County game warden received information about two white-tailed deer that were dumped on the side of the road without backstraps. The warden searched nearby residences and found fresh blood that seemed to be washed out of the bed of a pickup truck. In a hidden ice chest, four backstraps were found under ice. After a lengthy wait, two Arkansas women, who are currently working in the oil field, admitted to taking the two deer at night and dumping the carcasses on the road.

- **Sea Turtle Given a Second Chance**

Three Aransas County game wardens were in an airboat checking duck hunters, when they saw a green sea turtle struggling in the water. The turtle was rescued from the cold and shallow waters and relocated to deep water in Aransas Bay.