

# CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

## LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

### *MONTHLY REPORT* *May 2016*



# Northern Enforcement District

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**Warden Sutterfield** received a photograph of a large deer reported to have been taken in the Adin area, and then posted on a social media webpage. The buck in the photograph was reported by an anonymous party to have been shot on a ranch owned by the suspect in Big Valley (Lassen County) where he grows hay, at a location with several ponds and a river running through it. The photograph was taken at night from the inside of a shed with a vehicle in the background and an untagged 6x6 buck being held by the subject. The vehicle in the photograph was registered to a subject at a ranch in the Big Valley area. During the investigation, it was found that the subject did not have a 2015 deer tag. Prior to contacting the subject, Warden Sutterfield contacted numerous taxidermists and members of the public attempting to gather any further information, however nothing further was discovered. Warden Sutterfield and **Warden Freitas** attempted contact with the subject and found him spraying weeds on one of his fields. When presented with the photograph, he was honest, admitting he had shot the buck illegally without a tag, had performed the taxidermy on the deer himself and had it displayed in his living room. The large buck measured over 27 inches wide and had a subtotal Boone and Crockett Club score of 182. The buck was seized and the subject was cited.



While finishing up on the buck case, Warden Sutterfield was contacted by a local ranch in the Alturas area regarding a possible antelope poaching. The reporting party claimed that he had located what he believed were the drag marks of an antelope off of one of the ranch's cultivated fields in the Madeline area, an extremely remote area between Alturas and Susanville. Warden Sutterfield responded with a local Lassen County Deputy to investigate the circumstances. Warden Sutterfield confirmed the drag marks were made by an antelope being dragged off the cultivated field and loaded into an unknown vehicle from a dirt access road that surrounded the cultivated field. Warden Sutterfield was able to locate antelope hair, but no blood, indicating the antelope was shot with a small caliber firearm. Warden Sutterfield found antelope hair in the drag marks and a tennis shoe style shoe print on top of the drag marks, left by the suspect. Warden Sutterfield was able to follow the shoe prints to a small residence in the area. At the residence, the same shoe prints were located as were left behind at the original location. Warden Sutterfield located antelope hair and blood in two locations outside the residence. Warden Sutterfield obtained a search warrant for the property and returned with several other officers to continue the investigation. During the service of the search warrant, the shoes that were worn during the poaching were located at the residence and belonged to the property owner. In the bedroom was a 17 caliber rifle, the owner admitted that he had shot the antelope after he saw it in the neighboring field with two other antelope. He claimed he and friends had eaten the antelope for two days and taken whatever was left over to Fresno. He was cited for the unlawful take of antelope.

**Warden Diehl** was on patrol in the remote hills of Yuba County, when he observed a hitchhiker on the side of the road who flagged him down. The man stated that he was abandoned in the hills by his brother and begged for a ride into Marysville. Upon running a local check through Yuba County, it was determined that he had an outstanding warrant for his arrest. Warden Diehl told the man he had some good news and some bad news. He said, "The good news is I will give you a ride to Marysville. The bad news is I am taking you to jail." To which the man replied "Ah man."

Warden Diehl worked as part of a joint-agency probation sweep, targeting those on active probation for theft-related crimes. This was a response to an increase in auto-thefts in the Yuba and Sutter counties. During this detail Warden Diehl recovered his first “10851” stolen vehicle.

**Warden Pirtle** had a two day Federal Jury Trial over a dove baiting case with **Warden Gamble**. The jury returned with a guilty verdict on both charges of placing bait to hunt mourning dove and hunting mourning dove over a baited area in less than one hour. The suspect has a long history with CDFW officers and will be sentenced on June 6. Warden Pirtle had another case with a motion to suppress hearing over two subjects that shot at a deer within 150 yards of three residences, dropped a subject off to recover deer, and stashed the rifle 10 miles away to avoid arrest. The judge ruled Warden Pirtle’s pretext stop for no mud guards was justified, along with his search of the vehicle pursuant to FGC 1006 and FGC 2012. After denying the motion to suppress for the defense the Judge did not like the fact Warden Pirtle did not locate the dead or wounded deer, despite his best efforts, so there was a “body of the crime” issue. The two men got a one year “no hunting” term but pled to possession of concentrated cannabis with a Harvey Waiver of the Fish and Game violations

The **2220 Squad** dealt with several invasive species issues and coordinated with the Department’s invasive species specialists and Agriculture Inspection Station staff to help better streamline enforcement contacts and protocols. Two mussel laden vessels were detected and flagged at the Ag stations in May while en-route to Oregon and Washington. Both Oregon and Washington took the matters extremely seriously, and both agencies made enforcement contact directly with the suspect boat owners within their states.



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**Warden Ulrich** has one criminal quagga mussel importation case pending in Plumas



County, on a suspect who knowingly and unlawfully entered the state with an infected vessel after being denied access and rejected by the Long Valley Hwy 395 Ag Station. After locating a secondary access route into the state, the suspect knowingly launched the vessel into Lake Almanor. Luckily, subsequent inspections by CDFW scientific staff confirmed all mussels on the boat were dead and not viable, after the vessel was ultimately pulled from the water and quarantined by the CDFW. The Plumas DA’s office is taking the case extremely seriously, and is seeking large fines and jail time for the suspect. According to DFW scientific staff, it will be the first time a FGC 2301 criminal case has been successfully prosecuted within the State. The out of state suspect has now failed to appear for court, and has an active arrest warrant.

**Warden Moskat** finished up several poaching case reports and filed them with the appropriate district attorney’s office. He met with an El Dorado County Deputy District attorney and went over a pregnant doe deer poaching case from April 2016. Moskat worked with a witness and determined a felon out of Sonoma County shot the doe. The felon has a lengthy criminal record that included sexual assault, felony weapons charges, and multiple deer poaching arrests. Moskat contacted Sonoma SO detectives who were also investigating the subject. The felon also happened to be a registered sex offender who was due to register soon. Moskat listened to jail house phone calls made by the felon when incarcerated in the Sonoma County jail. He talked to his girlfriend and told her to get rid of the “things” in the house and explained in detail where the items were and who to give them to. Moskat caught a lucky break while working with Warden Elliott one day; the officers were going to re-scout a property where Moskat observed a possible marijuana grow, when Elliott spotted the suspect’s

vehicle driving not far from where the shooting occurred. Moskat knew the suspect had a suspended driver's license and after the officers observed multiple vehicle code violations, the officers made a stop on the vehicle. The driver was confirmed to be the felon and Moskat determined one of the occupants was connected to a nearby marijuana grow. Moskat wrote search warrants for the residences in Sonoma County and El Dorado County. On April 20, both search warrants were served simultaneously with the help of CDFW officers in the Sonoma and El Dorado County regions, DBEEP officers, and the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department. They found multiple large packages of deer meat (quarters), a marijuana grow, firearm, ammunition, and most importantly-- a DVR video home security system hard drive. One of the residents was arrested on an unrelated outstanding warrant. Moskat later wrote an additional search warrant to allow for the search of the home video security device. The video from the day the doe was shot shows the felon shot multiple firearms and was in possession of a dead doe. The subjects appeared to have killed multiple deer out of season and butchered them in front of the video camera. Moskat and Sonoma SO seized at least one of the firearms seen in the video. Moskat is thankful for all the help he received from other officers during the investigation.

# Southern Enforcement District

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**Warden Coombs** immobilized a very large female bear that made her way into downtown Fillmore. The bear was running through a very heavily populated part of the city, close to a school, during the student morning drop off hours. Warden Coombs worked with Fillmore Police Department and Ventura County Sheriff's Office bringing the potentially dangerous situation to a successful close.

**Warden Pell** was patrolling the California Aqueduct near Littlerock in northern Los Angeles County when he observed a pickup truck parked in the Littlerock Wash. Two men were walking around the wash with what appeared to be a rifle. Warden Pell contacted the two surprised individuals, and found them in possession of a loaded air rifle and two dead quail. Citations were issued for hunting out of season and without licenses.

**Wardens A. Smith and Pell** responded to a female bear that made its way south into a Pasadena neighborhood near a busy shopping area. After a lengthy chase, the bear was treed and immobilized before being safely released inside the Angeles National Forest.

**Wardens Van Epps and Cohen** boarded a trawl vessel at sea to conduct an inspection. Multiple violations were discovered including a hidden switch that allowed the captain to quickly turn off his VMS (vessel monitoring system). They also found a variety of unidentifiable fish in several different freezers, failure to complete logs, and retain landing receipts for the catch period. In addition to these violations, one crew member had a misdemeanor warrant. The captain and crew were cited accordingly. Warden Van Epps' investigation of this commercial fishing vessel is ongoing.

**Lt. Boyle, Warden Lengning, Warden Van Epps, and Warden Cohen** decided to track down a radar blip offshore San Miguel island, aboard their Patrol Vessel "Swordfish". They found a small commercial fishing vessel and observed three people fishing on board. **Warden Lengning** boarded the vessel and asked if everyone aboard was fishing. The captain said one of the subjects onboard was an observer and was not fishing. The captain also produced a printed log documenting the third man as an observer. Warden Lengning was shocked at this blatant lie and supporting fraudulent document. Warden Lengning again asked, "Are you telling me he was not fishing?" The captain then admitted the "observer" had been fishing. Warden Lengning checked an assortment of rockfish aboard the vessel and then asked to see the vessel's VMS (vessel monitoring system) which is required by federal regulations. He found the vessel had VMS installed but it was totally non-functional. Warden Lengning asked for the required landing receipts from the catch period, but the captain was unable to supply them. Warden Lengning cited the suspects for fishing without a commercial license, non-functional VMS, and failure to maintain fish landing records for the catch period.

While patrolling Catalina Island aboard the P/V Coho, **Wardens Dilts and Garber** observed a commercial passenger fishing vessel (CPFV) fishing inside the Farnsworth Offshore State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA). Warden Dilts boarded the vessel, observed several rockfish in the passengers' burlap game sacks, and witnessed two anglers reel in rockfish on double dropper loop rigs. Take of rockfish is prohibited within the Farnsworth Offshore SMCA. Further investigation revealed the CPFV was operating without a CDFW commercial boat registration, CPFV permit, or commercial ocean enhancement stamp and was cited appropriately.

**Warden Budish** received a phone call from a local, advising three subjects had been poaching lobsters under the small sport fishing pier in Redondo Beach over the course of the last three weeks. The RP (reporting party) stated the subjects usually operate on Friday and Saturday nights, hiding



under the pier pilings, using hoop nets. They reportedly had a “spotter” who was on the “look-out” for “DFG”. Warden Budish patrolled the coast early in the evening and arrived at the small sport fishing pier at approximately 2200 hours. Warden Budish conducted some surveillance in the area and notice there were subjects fishing from underneath the pier. Officers Budish and Collins were the only officers patrolling on the LA coast that evening. Warden Budish contacted **Warden Collins** on the radio and advised him of the activity.

what appeared to be lobster, in their hoop nets. One of the subjects made six trips to a vehicle in the parking lot, carrying a blue backpack to and from the vehicle. The subject carrying the blue backpack was very cautious in his movements, looking around the area before making his trips to the vehicle. At approximately 0100 hours the next morning, the three subjects got in the vehicle and attempted to leave. Officers Budish and Collins stopped the vehicle from leaving (on foot). All three subjects admitted to taking lobster and fish. They produced eight lobster and seven undersized kelp bass and identified which fish and lobster belonged to each of them. After three formal demands to display any additional fish or lobster, and a F&GC 2012 advisement, Officers Budish and Collins uncovered an additional 12 lobsters in a hidden compartment, under the back seat of the vehicle. All three subjects were cited for taking and possessing lobster during closed season, taking and possessing undersized lobster, taking and possessing undersized kelp bass, and failure to display upon demand. A total of 20 lobsters were seized and returned to the water, 14 of which were undersized, and two of which were gravid females.



The Natural Resource Volunteers handled 151 calls from the public, and presented Wildlife Watch/Keep Me Wild presentations to the cities San Pedro, Culver City, Laguna Beach, Rossmoor. They represented the Department at the Mule Days Event in Bishop, Irvine Scout-O-Rama, Santa Rosa Tribal Council Earth Day Celebration, Tour of Mojave Hatchery, Orange County Zoo, and Boy Scouts of America Expo in Sylmar, and continued their participation in the Prado Wetlands Wood Duck nesting box monitoring program; Burrowing Owl site survey program; monitoring of Craigslist for illegal sales of restricted species; Avian Predator Relocation Project (14 raptors); RV Garibaldi transport; and outreach on two piers and Tecolote Canyon, Lakeside.

**Warden Jorge Paz / K9 Mauser** responded to a call from California OES along with three other Department K9 teams and two US Coast Guard K9 teams. The call was in regards to intelligence gathered of person(s) who may have smuggled a handgun into the San Luis Obispo Men's Colony (CDCR prison). Paz and Mauser searched for approximately eight hours for two consecutive days.



**Warden McLennan** worked with members from the Department's aquaculture program to seize 120 illegal white shrimp. These shrimp were carrying IHHN an OIE listed disease.

**Warden Bellis** responded to multiple bear calls in May. The call that garnered the most attention was for a bear in a neighborhood in Rancho Cucamonga.

When Warden Bellis arrived on scene he was greeted by a show of force from the sheriff department, neighborhood crowds, and local media. The bear was found in a yard approximately 50 feet up in a tree. The property was adjacent to Vineyard Middle School and less than one-quarter mile from the 210 freeway (a major traffic artery connecting San Bernardino and Los Angeles). Bellis devised a plan that involved waiting for the bear to climb down to a lower spot on the tree. The plan required a subdued excitement level so Warden Bellis requested all



but two deputies leave the yard. The rest of the deputies on scene were asked to move people away from yards with barking dogs. The only request that was not granted was to get the four media helicopters to go to a higher elevation. After approximately two hours, the helicopters left to refuel. A few moments after they flew off, the bear descended from the tree and was successfully darted by Warden Bellis and Lt. Chang. The bear was retrieved from a nearby yard, transported and successfully released into the closest suitable habitat in the Angeles National Forest.



# North Coast Enforcement District

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**Warden K. Smith** investigated a CALTIP of three men who killed a deer across from an elementary school in Lucerne. A great reporting party caught the trio on video with her cell phone. Within 30 minutes the group was caught within a quarter mile of where the deer was killed. The group was known by the sheriff's department, and between two of the suspects, had 64 pages of criminal history. **Lt. Steve White and Warden Donald White** worked a case regarding the sale of a fawn that was posted on Craigslist. The advertised price for the fawn was \$300. Warden D. White saw the posting and made arrangements to meet the suspects. CDFW officers contacted the female suspect and her boyfriend and observed the fawn in the front seat of the suspect's vehicle where it appeared to be in good health. The suspects stated they picked it up earlier in the morning standing in the roadway near Hopland and that they did not know it was illegal to sell a wild animal. The fawn was taken to a licensed rehab facility in Lakeport, and the female suspect was booked in Mendocino County jail for a no cite warrant. The male suspect was released.



**Lt. Hendricks** organized an abalone saturation detail for the Mendocino Coast low tide series. A total of 14 CDFW officers from NCD and NED flooded the coast making over a thousand contacts issuing 53 citations and 60 warnings for various abalone and fishing violations. Violations included: unlawful take of over-limits of abalone, unlawful possession of abalone, unlawfully altering abalone report card and tags, exceeding the yearly limit of abalone, unlawful use of barbed hooks to take salmon, waste of fish, unlawful take of undersize Cabezon, and unlawful take of undersize lingcod. Lt. Hendricks worked with the Mendocino Police Activities League organizing the annual PAL Fishing Clinic in Fort Bragg. Fourteen hundred rainbow trout from the Mad River Hatchery were stocked into the Moura Pond where children from the ages of 1-12 were instructed how to fish by officers from the 3100 squad. The event was a complete success and the turnout was the largest ever for this event.



**P/V Chinook** worked commercial and recreational salmon, rockfish, and Dungeness crab. The Chinook was also used as the primary and only vessel for assisting the Mendocino Sheriff office Search and Rescue with a body recovery in Moat creek.

**Warden Freeling** watched a group of abalone divers south of the Point Arena Harbor in Mendocino County. One of the divers, after taking a limit of three abalone, took a fourth and passed it to a friend. After two more hours of spearing fish, the subject returned to shore. Freeling re-situated himself on a precipice directly above the hidden cove where the subject exited the water. He then watched the subject pull a mesh bag containing an additional nine abalone. The subject handed the bag to his partner who proceeded to remove three of the largest abalone. The subject took the remaining six abalone from the mesh bag and dumped them in the rocks to die. Freeling met the duo in the parking lot confirming the subject took a total of 13 abalone. Freeling arrested the subject for taking abalone for commercial purposes, waste of fish and altering a report card. The subject was greeted at the Mendocino County Jail by throngs of jumpsuit clad convicts shouting, "You better not be stealing our abs!" The subject was booked under the felony section and was released two days later. The partner had recently completed his probation for a 2012 abalone violation where he served five days in jail and paid \$1800 in fines. He was cited for unlawfully receiving three abalone.

**Warden Meyer** and **Warden Thomas** doubled up for a low tide patrol along the southern Big Sur and northern San Luis Obispo coasts. The officers followed up on information given to them about possible abalone poaching in a remote portion of the San Luis Obispo Coast. Meyer noticed evidence of recent activity in the area but saw no one on the beach and no vehicles were seen parked anywhere along the highway. Meyer noticed movement about 100 yards to the north in the tidal area and saw a man jump out of a crevice in the reef with a bag and screwdriver in his hands. The officers waited for the suspected poacher and watched as he changed his clothes and unknowingly walked right to them. Meyer stepped out and cut off his escape, and Thomas came from behind the suspect. The man saw Meyer and said, "Oh no. Am I going to jail for this?" Meyer responded, "For what?" The man replied, "You know what... taking abalone." The subject had taken 35 black abalone and one large red abalone. Meyer and Thomas interviewed the man and were able to get the description of the driver and drop off vehicle. **Wardens Chance** and **Cisneros** found the vehicle and the sleeping driver approximately 10 miles to the south. The driver was also found to be in possession of heroin, methamphetamine, marijuana, Xanax, Oxy acetaminophen, and related paraphernalia. Both men were booked into the San Luis Obispo County Jail on a variety of Fish and Game and Health and Safety violations.



**Warden Hampton** investigated a pollution case in which the maintenance workers at an RV campground attempted to unlawfully dispose of partially full cans of paint near the banks of Llagas Creek. The workers dug a hole near the creek, placed some sticks vertically in the hole, and then upended the paint cans onto the sticks to drain the paint into the hole. There was a pile of sand staged near the hole to cover the paint up afterwards. The paint cans were a combination of latex based and oil based. Hampton issued several other citations for gear restriction violations in local creeks and littering.



**Warden Gil** was patrolling the Williams Hill area in Lockwood when he noticed several people standing near their vehicle, trespassing onto the adjacent property. Upon contact, two of the four men ran into the nearby brush attempting to hide. Gil uncovered a freshly killed quail and was able to locate the additional subjects with air rifles. The men received citations for multiple hunting violations.

**Wardens Chance** and **Hodel** rescued a pair of fawns from the dam spillway of San Antonio Lake. Hodel and Chance responded to the report of a bear being shot in Shandon. The report indicated the bear was in the act of killing the owner's fighting roosters. The owner reportedly kicked the Rottweiler sized bear thinking it was a dog. The man ran to his house to get his rifle and shot at the bear which ran off into a moderately wooded riverbed. Hodel and Chance were unable to find the bear, or any prints or blood. The officers noticed the owner had substantially altered the riverbed and polluted it with copious amounts of domestic animal waste. Chance investigated the unlawful streambed alteration and pollution. A complaint will be filed with the District Attorney's Office

**Warden Hickey** and **K-9 Keara** assisted the North Coast squad with a low tide saturation detail with abalone enforcement. **Warden Boele** and Hickey issued five citations for over limits, failure to re-attach, failure to complete abalone report cards, and failure to tag abalone. Hickey and K9 Keara assisted the San Luis Obispo Sheriff's Office with a search warrant for firearms associated with a

homicide investigation at a residence occupied by three felons. Keara recovered four firearms, and ammunition associated with the firearms

# Office of Spill Prevention & Response

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**Warden Michael Kirchner** responded with the San Joaquin County Sheriff and U.S. Coast Guard to a report of a sunken vessel in Potato Slough near the town of Terminous in the Sacramento/San Joaquin River Delta. Additionally, Warden Kirchner worked with the crew of the PB Steelhead patrolling the Monterey Bay and the associated Marine Protected Areas. Multiple violations were discovered and multiple citations were issued.



**Warden Amanda Johnson** had an extremely busy on-call schedule that included a response to a sunken pleasure craft at Moss Landing, an oil spill near Kinder Morgan in Richmond and a broken pipeline at Shell Refinery in Tracy.

**Lt. Josh Nicholas** responded and assisted Warden Ryan Hanson with a Heating Oil spill in the area of Serene Lakes near Soda Springs in Placer Co. An underground fuel tank containing heating oil had leaked and made its way into an area lake via the shallow ground waters and surface waters from snow melt present on site. Conditions at the site were challenging due to the spill impacting a frozen lake, along with the cold and wet weather conditions.



Lt. Nicholas and Warden Ryan Hanson came upon a semi-truck accident along interstate I-80 in Placer County. The vehicle was traveling unsafely at a high rate of speed in unsafe conditions. A case report has been filed with the Placer Co. District Attorney's Office for the unlawful pollution of state waters due to the negligence of the driver.

**Warden John Amis** responded to a pollution incident with Warden M. Beals. The pollutant was an algaecide that depleted the oxygen in Cal Park Lake resulting in approximately 500 fish being killed.



**Lt. Joe Mello** worked on numerous spill responses throughout May, including coordinating the response to a 42K gallon spill of produced water and oil into secondary containment due to a pump failure.



**Warden Mike Conely** physically responded to six spills in Kern County. The most significant being a spill that involved a natural seep that broke containment during a torrential downpour.

**Warden Santos Cabral** boarded and inspected a commercial vessel with a NOAA/NMFS limited entry permit whose operator failed to procure a CDFW vessel registration. The boat has made 11 landings since April 1, 2016 and brought in over 8,000 lbs of federal ground fish valued at \$33,896. A case has been written up and will be filed with the Santa Barbara DA's office for review and prosecution.

**Warden Gerald Borjeson** responded to a large diesel spill of approximately 3,700 gallons from a tanker truck accident that occurred on a bridge that crosses the San Diego River. The fuel flowed from the tipped over tanker into the rain gutter for several hundred feet, spilling through the drain holes on the bridge and down into the river and the riparian areas on both sides of the river. Clean up took approximately two weeks with more than 100 tons of contaminated soil removed.



**Lt. Bryan Gollhofer** assisted Warden Anastasia Norris with the final preparation of the Refugio investigation case package for presentation to the Santa Barbara County DA and the California AG Kamala Harris. The case was presented and the Santa Barbara Grand Jury concluded, resulting in a 46 count indictment including four felonies and 42 misdemeanors.

# Headquarters

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## **WATERSHED ENFORCEMENT TEAM (WET)**

The WET served a search warrant at parcel in southern Humboldt. 3,170 marijuana plants were eradicated, approximately 13 lbs of dried marijuana was seized. \$10,000 was seized under asset forfeiture and the person in control of the property was arrested for felony cultivation, possession for sales and being a felon in possession of ammunition. In addition, approximately 22 violations of Fish and Game Code were documented on the property including FGC 1602, 5650 and 5937. Sediment from the illegal grading activity probably entered Elk Creek, coho habitat, during the 2015-16 winter. And, surely would enter the waterway during the following winter if sediment and erosion control measures are not successfully employed.



Above: Southern Humboldt County grow with major land modifications impacting the environment.



Above: Wetland excavated and filled in to construct green houses

Below: Illegally constructed pond in wetland with failed dam face where operator attempted to repair with no sediment and erosion control measures.



WET Law Enforcement (LE) assisted the North Coast Water Quality Control Board (NCRWQCB) with a consent inspection in Southern Humboldt County. Ten violations of the Fish and Game Code were documented on the parcel with 20+ violations documented on the private road leading to the site. The tenant was dishonest and evasive throughout the inspection. After two additional phone interviews following the inspection, the subject finally fully disclosed the entire convoluted story relating to parcel ownership, tenants and responsible parties for the violations.



Watershed Enforcement Team (WET) Law Enforcement (LE) executed a search warrant for three private parcels belonging to the same subject on Horse Mane Ridge in Trinity County. WET Environmental Scientist (ES) and Water Board Scientist (WBS) were present to document environmental damage. WET ES staff documented 12 environmental violations which included illegal stream crossings and pollution.

During WET LE's search of the residence, an old school bus painted green, they discovered five pounds of Butane Honey Oil (BHO) with a low street value of approximately 100K, one-quarter pound of Psilocybin mushrooms and \$136,920 in US currency. None of the suspects wanted to claim the money. In three green houses, WET LED documented and eradicated 701 mostly budding marijuana plants. The property happened to be closing escrow on the day of the search warrant. The new owners were present during the search warrant and paperwork (cashier's checks) located during the search warrant indicated that roughly 221k was sitting at the Trinity Title Co as payment for the property. WET served a warrant on the Title Company and the money was turned over to the Department pending litigation. The suspects claimed the funds for the property were from their parents who had allegedly liquidated some of their assets to purchase the property. This grow was small in comparison to many in Trinity County but the 358K seized is just small indication of the unaccounted for cash involved in many cultivation sites.



WET assisted Trinity County Sheriff's Office with the service of a search warrant on a Hayfork residence. Three suspects were arrested for felony cultivation, and 1644 marijuana plants were eradicated; far above the eight plants authorized by county ordinance. One violations of FGC 1602 was documented where the suspects were diverting water of off US Forest Service land to water their grows. It is believed that the main suspect evaded apprehension during the warrant. Later in the day, WET LE assisted Trinity County Code Enforcement with an inspection of a grow several miles away. This grow had all the signatures of the first grow, and based on interviews of the property owner, it is believed that the suspect, a possible Drug Trafficking Organization (DTO) affiliate, was growing there

on their recommendations. A pump that was irrigating the grow was located in Hayfork Creek, critical habitat for coho salmon and steelhead. It was decided to conduct a surveillance of the second grow in an attempt to append to the DTO suspect. The case is pending further investigation

WET LE executed a search warrant in the Elder Creek drainage of Tehama County. One suspect was arrested for felony cultivation, and 350 marijuana plants were eradicated. In addition three FGC 1602 violations, four FGC 5650 and 2 FGC 5652 violations were documented.

### **MARIJUANA ENFORCEMENT TEAM (MET)**

MET operators conducted scout, eradication, arrest, and reclamation missions in Shasta, Tehama, Fresno, Stanislaus, Glenn, Butte, Monterey, San Benito, Santa Clara, and San Diego counties this month. The team completed a press outreach story with Fox News highlighting DTO widespread use of banned and toxic poisons throughout their statewide cultivation operations on their largest mission to date in Stanislaus County this month.

MET officers participated in a very large 20,000 plant marijuana grow, with the entire CDFW-MET, SDEA, and the Stanislaus County Sheriff Office participating in this allied agency operation. The team apprehended six suspects in two separate live in camps and found three firearms inside the network of marijuana plots. The complex contained multiple water diversions from the anadromous San Joaquin River and operators located several bottles of banned pesticides. Two dead cottontail rabbits and one dead Mourning Dove were located amongst the marijuana plants and likely perished from ingesting the toxic chemicals. The CDFW officers and officers from the allied agencies performed a complete eradication and reclamation of the marijuana grow site.

MET Officers scouted the China Island Wildlife Area and located a 421 marijuana plant grow. The officers eradicated the marijuana and removed all trash and infrastructure from the site. The growers were removing water from hand dug wells that were fed from the anadromous Merced River. The chemicals and pollutants used in this site seeped directly into the aquifer which was only two feet deep in the grow site. The affected portion of China Island Wildlife Area was made safe for public use. MET will continue to monitor the area for future marijuana activity.

MET Officers assisted the Fresno County Sheriff's Narcotics Unit with four open lands marijuana grows and an additional nine marijuana cultivation search warrants where over 2500 marijuana plants were eradicated, five suspects were taken into custody and multiple firearms including one AK47 were seized.

Warden Imsdahl travelled to New York to testify during a Grand Jury hearing for an organized crime marijuana cultivation and interstate sales case. His testimony was pivotal in the success of the New York based felony case moving forward.

### **DELTA BAY ENHANCED ENFORCEMENT PROJECT**

DBEEP officers organized Delta Blitz in Contra Costa County this month. DBEEP officers along with officers from Lt. Garrett's squad issued 20 citations for fish and game and boating safety violations. Lt. Johnson was on patrol at the deep water channel in West Sacramento where he contacted two subjects that had no bail warrants for outstanding parole and probation violations. Lt. Johnson arrested the subjects and one of the subjects was also in possession of methamphetamine and drug paraphernalia.

The Sacramento County District Attorney's office requested arrest warrants for six individuals in a DBEEP commercial sturgeon case. DBEEP officers arrested four of them during a warrant sweep. Two of the suspects turned themselves in.

# Central Enforcement District

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Over Memorial Day Weekend **Warden Conely and Warden Golden** teamed up and conducted a back country patrol into the Golden Trout Wilderness of the Sequoia National Forest in Tulare County. They spent four days and three nights in the back country patrolling the Kern River and a short section of the Little Kern River. A 41 mile stretch of the Kern River from “Forks of the Kern” to Tyndall Creek in Sequoia National Park is designated as “Heritage/Wild Trout Waters” and has special regulations to protect and enhance native trout populations. The officers hiked over 20 miles concentrating on a five mile stretch of the Kern and Little Kern Rivers from “Forks of the Kern” to “Kern Flat.” Compliance with the “Special Trout Regulations” was poor in this area. One citation was issued for using illegal gear and several warnings/education were given to groups that had just finished fishing or were about to start fishing. They only checked two fisherman that were not in violation or going to be in violation. We will be coordinating with the local CDFW Inland Fisheries folks to improve signage and public awareness regarding the special regulations.



**Lt. Barnhart and Warden Sheeley** worked a job fair at the Lemoore Naval Air Station. A lot of qualified military personnel stopped by the booth to ask questions and obtain hiring information.



**Lt. Barnhart** assisted Tulare County Sheriff’s Office with a detail on the St. John’s River near Visalia. Numerous homeless encampments line the river, and there has been an uptick in litter, theft, assaults, and property crimes in the area. In one hour, Lt. Barnhart and two deputies arrested six subjects for outstanding warrants. Warden Alisio also spent time in the same area, after a suspicious fire destroyed several of the encampments.

**Warden McNulty** started a 1600 investigation where a large swath of the Tule River was decimated due to heavy equipment being operated in the river bed while excavating for a broken pipe. A cease and desist order was issued until an emergency streambed alteration permit was filed. Rehabilitation to the river will be addressed in a separate permit.



**Warden Lenz and Lt. Stevenson** were called out to investigate a deer carcass after it was believed the deer had been shot with a firearm. Warden Lenz and Lt. Stevenson confirmed that a young spike buck deer had been shot in the hind quarter with a firearm. The deer carcass was outside the residence of a subject who had made threats that he would shoot any deer that ate his landscaping flowers and shrubs on his property. Additionally, blood and deer hair were found on the subjects’ driveway. Warden Lenz contacted the resident only to find out that he was a retired deputy sheriff from another county. The subject responded astutely to Warden Lenz’ questioning and appeared careful to not portray himself as involved in the incident. Having little to go on in terms of evidence and witnesses, Warden Lenz turned to the local newspaper outlets and social media to bring the incident to the attention of the local community. Within minutes, online comments were being posted by outraged and disappointed members of the community regarding the poaching of a young spike buck. No witnesses or leads came forward as a result of the newspaper media posting, however, the community benefited by becoming aware of the deer poaching issue. Warden Lenz

hopes the public exposure will make the subject think twice before unlawfully poaching additional deer in the neighborhood.

**Warden Gairan and Lt. Bruce** did an animal caging/facility inspection for Jay Owenhouse Promotions in Merced. Mr. Owenhouse, an illusionist from Montana, incorporates his twin female tigers, Shekinah and Sheena, into his show. The twins are five years old, Shekinah is white and Sheena is orange and each weigh approximately 450. Mr. Owenhouse was performing one show in Merced before moving on to a performance in Redding. Mr. Owenhouse' four children perform in the show with him, either onstage or behind the scenes.



**Wardens Moss, Gairan, Milazzo, Lt. Bruce and Captain McKay**

worked with Irwin High School staff on a fishing event Friday May 6<sup>th</sup>. Irwin High School is a continuation school in Hilmar. Students who show positive progress are rewarded with different trips throughout the year. The Merced County Sheriff's Department works with the school and contacted CDFW for assistance. The Fishing in the City Program provided rods and reels for student use. Originally, 24 students were scheduled to attend. The number dropped to 14 the night before the event, as some students weren't showing continued progress. The day of the event, the number dropped to 13, as one student missed the departure time. The day was less than ideal for the students because the temperature at Pinecrest Lake was 37 degrees at 0730 the morning of the event with light rain. The students, driven to the lake by two teachers/chaperones, arrived undeterred at 0800. The students fanned out at various locations on the shoreline with the officers assisting and fished through the weather for about four hours. Many remarked,



regardless of the weather, it beat sitting in class. The students were provided lunch by a local restaurant. Unfortunately, no fish were caught. On the bright side, there were only a few rod casualties. Most of these students had little or no fishing experience, nor had they been to a mountain lake. Overall, it was a successful outing.

**Warden Giertych** participated in a multi-agency violent incident exercise drill. Personnel from Merced County SO, Merced PD, UC Merced PD, Los Banos PD, California State Parks, Merced County Probation, CHP, Gustine PD, Dos Palos PD, Los Banos FD, Cal-Fire, Merced City FD, Riggs Ambulance, Merced County OES and Gustine FD participated. In all, 115 personnel took part in the exercise. The drill took place at the Kagome Inc. Food and Drink Plant near Los Banos with their personnel acting as role players.



**Warden Mello** encountered and arrested a Parolee At Large with a \$100k warrant who was fishing without a license along a Stockton waterway. Mello subsequently booked the parolee into San Joaquin County for the outstanding warrant. The parolee also seemed to be in the process of creating a "Zip Gun", as what appeared to be various firearms parts and springs were found in his possession. The parolee initially stated he had found the parts along the river. However, after he was arrested and observing Mello as he analyzed the parts, the

parolee spontaneously stated, "There's no serial number and no trigger, and now it's got your prints on it." Unfortunately, after further analysis and assistance from the San Joaquin Sheriff's and DA's Office it was determined the gun was most likely a paint gun or parts of one.

**Warden Witzel** assisted the Amador Sheriff's Office with a call of and 18 year old female and 19 year old male that went missing while swimming near More Creek camp ground along the Mokelumne River. Warden Witzel along with **Lieutenant A. Gregory** arrived first on scene and contacted family members that had located the male adult under water and pinned against a willow. The officers quickly relayed the coordinates to the SO. The officers learned that the male had been under water for two hours. Shortly after, Amador Fire and Rescue, Amador SO Deputies and a CHP Helicopter arrived on scene. The CDFW officers and the CHP helicopter began to search for the female who was located by the CHP helicopter about 100 yards downstream of the male. The CDFW officers stood by with the family while the Amador SO dive team recovered the two bodies.