

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

MONTHLY REPORT *November 2015*



Office of Spill Prevention & Response

Warden Michael Kirchner responded to a 48-foot sunken vessel at the Vallejo Yacht Club that was leaking diesel fuel into the Mare Island Strait (CalOES #15-6900). The vessel was contained, floated, and removed from the water. Warden Kirchner also attended the North Bay Incident Management Team (NBIMT) quarterly training in Santa Rosa and participated as an exercise evaluator for the Conoco – Phillips Refinery oil spill functional exercise at the Cal-Maritime Academy in Vallejo.



Warden Mike Conely along with fellow DFW Honor Guard members, participated in a funeral service detail honoring Lt. John Suchil in Ventura County. During November Warden Conely responded to three oils spills in Kern County and responded to 10 spills telephonically

Warden Jacob Juarez along with Warden Byron Jones continued their effort to keep polluters / poachers off of closed areas along the Pajaro River in Santa Cruz/Monterey County. The patrols resulted in three citations, two arrests and reclamation of four polluted sites along the bank of river. Warden Juarez also responded to a small diesel spill in the Monterey Harbor. The source was from an older vessel that the RP is currently working to restore. Upon arrival to the scene Warden Juarez did not observe any active sheen or any impacted wildlife.



Warden Santos Cabral testified before the Grand Jury in Santa Barbara regarding the Refugio Incident. Cabral took part in a pro-active pollution patrol with Lt. Kord and the crew of the P/B Thresher. They checked a swordfish drift gill net vessel working offshore Santa



Barbara Island, and numerous lobster hoop netters and fishermen along the coast and at Catalina Island. Cabral wrote two citations for undersize lobster and one for 7145 during the patrol. This past week, Warden Cabral patrolled with the crew of the USCG Sea Otter for a Thanksgiving patrol in the southern AOR. They boarded numerous commercial and sport boats during their time underway. Cabral made five commercial cases, of which three were for short lobsters aboard commercial lobster trap vessels. Cabral found a total of eighteen (18) undersized lobsters on three boats and took

appropriate enforcement action. He seized and sold the legal portion of the loads to licensed receivers and received checks totaling \$2,184 made payable to the Fish and Game Preservation Fund.

Northern Enforcement District

Wardens Buckler and Smith worked a wildlife checkpoint detail at the Hwy 80 AG station. During an inspection, they discovered a full body African Lion mount, two additional African Lion skulls, illegal assault weapons, high capacity magazines and parts from at least six individual deer from Idaho. The suspect stated he only had two or three deer, but a quick count of the backstraps and front legs proved otherwise. The investigation is ongoing.



Wardens Buckler and Smith conducted a knock and talk of a suspect in southern Lassen County. They obtained enough probable cause and evidence to detain the suspect and write a residential search warrant. During service of the search warrant, the officers seized several firearms from the convicted-felon suspect, as well as three trophy mule deer. Warden Trainee Smith is working on a felony arrest warrant for a known-identified co-conspirator who was not home during the search warrant service.

Warden Hernandez made a case on a waterfowl hunter at Lake Almanor who unlawfully shot and killed a protected tundra swan. The suspect retrieved the swan, and attempted to leave the field with it.



A deer poacher **Warden Pirtle** apprehended was given a choice of two years no hunting or one year no hunting and forfeiture of bow. The chap elected one year no hunting, forfeiture of bow, and paid a \$1200 fine. In another case, a multiple time convicted subject, caught with a firearm in his hand while on felony probation, was sentenced to four years in State prison. Two other subjects driving down the county roadway shooting from a vehicle traveling 25 mph pled guilty, were fined, placed on probation, and the firearm was ordered destroyed.

While pumping gas, **Warden Laugesen** ran the plate of a suspicious vehicle parked next to him. The plate returned stolen from a vehicle in Davis, CA. An attempt to stop the vehicle led Laugesen on a 20 mile chase on northbound Interstate 5 and into the forest where CHP H-14 (photos courtesy of H-14) assisted in the apprehension of one of two suspects. The female driver was later identified as she attempted to seek medical attention following the violent off highway rally. Both subjects were AB109'ers early release and wanted parolees from Sacramento and Long Beach. Their 49 page criminal history included burglary, robbery, car theft and drug trafficking. The Surreno gang member told Laugesen that he would be out in ten days, once shipped to Long Beach for processing.



Wardens Kraft, Kavanagh, Stevenson, Kemp and Strable conducted a deer decoy in the French Meadows Game Refuge. Shortly after placing the decoy, a truck approached the decoy. The passenger stepped out of the vehicle and shot the deer decoy three times. One of the shots hit the decoy between the eyes. Kraft, Kavanagh, Manes, Kemp and **Warden**

Pinnow conducted another decoy in the dark near Foresthill. A vehicle stopped and used a bright flashlight to illuminate the decoy. Kemp stopped the vehicle and found two rifles within arm's distance with ammunition all over the cab and readily available. The male driver and his wife were both cited. The male suspect was already the suspect in an earlier case involving the shooting of a sow and cub.

Warden Lenz and **Warden Kraft** worked the American River. They were ten feet away when a subject landed a fish, removed the hook from its side and unlawfully retained it. The suspect was also using illegal snagging gear. They also found two suspects angling 45 minutes early and taking several fish. The subjects had three fish in possession and an ice chest containing fresh salmon eggs. The subjects were cited. The subject that had his limit was told he could not take any more fish. Two hours later, the officers located the same suspect and watched him catch a fish, take its eggs and throw the fish on the bank. The suspect was also littering. Lenz and Kraft were also working the Spenceville WA when they found an unoccupied vehicle parked on the wildlife area. They decided to hide nearby. Fifteen minutes after legal shoot time, they heard three rifle shots approximately one mile away. They contacted the suspect two hours after dark and discovered that he had killed a wild pig. The subject hadn't purchased pig tags.



Warden Kavanagh put together three chronic wasting & quagga check points at the Interstate 80 Agricultural inspection station in Truckee. Kavanagh had help from multiple officers on each day, including trainees. All three checkpoints combined for: 154 vehicles inspected, 311 contacts, 23 citations: 17 for violation of CCR T14 712 (import prohibited deer or elk parts into California), 1 for Health and Safety Code possession of Marijuana, 2 for Health and Safety Code 12677 possession of fireworks and Fish and Game Code 2353 failure to declare game, two for Fish and Game Code 2353 failure to declare game.

Kavanagh responded to an incident in Tahoe City regarding a bear attack on a person in his home. At the residence Tahoe Fire medics were administering first aid to an elderly homeowner's left leg. In the front room was a dead 150 pound bear. The bear had entered his home through the front door, even though he and his wife were inside both yelling at the bear to leave. The bear was shot by the homeowner who feared for the safety of his wife.

Warden Elliott and **K9 Rusty** assisted a Placer SO Detective with a burglary case involving the suspect reportedly hiding stolen high dollar firearms in the woods. Rusty searched rugged terrain but no evidence was recovered. Elliott and **Warden Moskat** conducted numerous



deer investigations which resulted in a case where a large buck was shot in a driveway. The suspects falsified the information on the deer tag to indicate the deer was killed on public land in a different area. Elliott is following up on several other deer investigations including one in which a suspect admitted to killing two deer unlawfully in Alpine County.

Warden Renner along with **Wardens Chase** and **Castillo** responded to a floral farm in Willow Creek after Warden

Renner received a tip from an anonymous party. The tip, which was received in Spanish, was translated and stated that an employee's supervisor was trapping foxes and killing deer on the property and also mentioned a bear hide that was drying in a warehouse. Once on scene, the officers spoke with an employee but soon found that the employee and the supervisor were the same person. The suspect was questioned about issues they were having with deer, bear, and fox on the property and he soon admitted that he had a trap on another part of the farm. The officers were shown the trap, a homemade deadfall, and after some more questions the suspect admitted to killing foxes. Knowing that there was more to the story, Warden Renner put to use the interview training he had recently gone through and soon had the suspect admitting to killing a bear illegally and poaching a buck deer the week before. Back at the warehouse, the suspect took the officers to where the deer head was and showed them the .22 rifle in his office that he said he used. A hide from a bear he said killed a "few years ago", was found on top of a large walk-in cooler. Two fox hides were also found that the suspect had caught in the trap.



Southern Enforcement District

The Ventura County District Attorney's Office recently argued a Ventura County bear trapping case before a jury in the Ventura Superior Court. The defendant was on trial for unlawfully attempting to take bear(s) with metal-jawed traps, unlawfully attempting to take bears over bait, and unlawfully attempting to take bears during darkness hours. **Warden Coombs** was the case lead officer assisted by **Warden Collins**. Warden Coombs and Warden Collins were called to testify during the trial. The jury returned with a guilty verdict on all three charges. Sentencing in the case will be on December 29, 2015.

Earlier, another suspect involved in the same bear trap case pled guilty. The second subject received the following sentence: seven days in jail (to be served doing community service), pay a \$1,500.00 fine, the associated firearm and trap ordered forfeited to the state; three year probation term, revocation of hunting privileges for three years, stay away orders from all hunting activity and person(s) engaged in such activity, and at the conclusion of the probation term subject must retake hunter education.

Warden Van Epps coordinated an offshore patrol during the weekend closure for commercial squid. During that time, the United States Coast Guard located a vessel with its squid lights on and actively metering for squid. The vessel operator made numerous excuses including stating that he was just testing his lights for a short time. In reality he was visibly seen with his lights on for approximately 25 minutes before law enforcement contact was made. A formal complaint will be issued to the District Attorney's office for the violation.

Warden Loudon worked with **Warden Nguyen** in Los Angeles Harbor and discovered a vessel with three lobster fishermen on board. The fishermen had a short lobster and some short fish on board. However, the officers discovered a mesh bag in the water and were able to connect the bag with the fishermen. The bag had three additional short lobsters inside. The subjects were cited for the violations and failure to exhibit the lobsters upon demand.

While the **PV Thresher squad** was on a three day patrol offshore Catalina Island, they discovered a boat fishing inside the Lion Head to Arrow Point State Marine Conservation Area, late one night. The two fishermen were setting hoop nets for lobsters inside the closed fishing area. During the contact, officers also discovered the subjects in possession of an overlimit of 16 lobsters and were cited accordingly.

Lt. Mc Nair and his squad wrapped up patrols in the Portola Springs area, where there were six people bit by coyotes in a five month period. Over 840 wildlife officer hours and 200 NRVP hours were spent responding to the incidents, which continued until a coyote was taken that was positively linked to three of the incidents.

The **Department of Fish & Wildlife's Honor Guard** was called into service for three losses this past month. Lieutenant Buckler and Lieutenant Johnson, with Wardens Arkinstall, Wardlow, Banks, Conley, and Kraft attended retired Fish & Wildlife **Lt. Suchil's** memorial services. The Honor Guard team conducted casket watch, escorted Lt. Suchil's remains to the burial site and presented Mrs. Suchil with the California flag.

Wardens Arkinstall and Wardlow represented the Department's Honor Guard team at the memorial service for **San Bernardino Police Officer Hanes**, who was killed by a drunk driver while on patrol.

And once again at the memorial service for **Downey Police Officer Ricky Galvez**, who was killed by three subjects during a botched robbery attempt in the public parking lot of the police department. The memorial was held at Our Lady of the Angels in downtown Los Angeles, and was attended by thousands. Law Enforcement agencies attended from all over the country, including NYPD, Chicago PD, Alaska, Las Vegas PD, Phoenix PD, along with many officers from varied departments throughout the state.

Warden Nemlowill and K-9 Buddy received a phone call from the Wister Wildlife area advising there were four subjects hunting on a non-hunt day. Nemlowill responded to find the four subjects had shot 36 non-game birds and 14 game birds. The birds included; 1 American avocet, 1 greater yellow leg, 21 long bill dowitchers, 1 white-faced Ibis, 2 redwing black birds, 2 killdeer, 1 white pelican, 6 double-crested cormorants, and 14 coots. The subjects were also in violation for not having Federal or State duck stamp validations, and shooting lead shot on the nonlead Wister Wildlife Area. Nemlowill filed the case with Imperial County Superior Court.



Central Enforcement District

Early in November, **Warden Chad Elliott and trainee Jason Smith** received information about possible deer poaching in Mono County. The suspect's Facebook posts were getting a bit far-fetched for some of his hunting acquaintances to believe. In his most recent post, the suspect, a Crowley Lake resident, included pictures of a large 4x4 mule deer buck he claimed to kill October 31 on an afternoon hunt in D6 with his bow on an archery only tag. He was also "blessed" enough to kill it near a road and so managed to get the entire deer home wholly intact. A quick review of the suspect's previous social media activity cast suspicion on the circumstances surrounding many deer he had killed in previous years. The suspect had an M.O. of consistently getting large bucks under self-described spectacular and heroic circumstances. The suspect claimed he was an extreme backcountry bow hunter and he waxed eloquent about his exploits and impeccable timing to kill large bucks deep in the backcountry while hunting mountain passes during severe storms.

With no hard evidence, Elliott and Smith decided on a knock-and-talk interview with the suspect at his home. The officers used a cover story as to why they were at his home, which seemed to put the subject at ease and got him talking and telling hunting stories. After some friendly bantering, the interview turned less casual when the suspect was told that the officers knew he had poached the large buck just a few days ago. The suspect initially denied all wrong-doing, but with some persuasive bluffing from the officers, he ultimately rolled and admitted to killing the deer out of season near June Lake. The suspect and his wife were both in tears and the suspect agreed to meet the officers the following day to show the kill site and give a play-by-play at the crime scene. Little did the suspect know, the officers suspected other poached deer and planned to confront him about those the following day.



The next day, the cooperative suspect showed the officers the recent kill site, including remaining gut pile and other detailed corroborating evidence. The suspect apparently thought that the officers were concluding the investigation, but he was then confronted about previously poached deer. Another two hour interview commenced, with the same initial denials, but ultimate confessions about both of his poached bucks from the previous year. The suspect broke down in tears again and at one point he put his hands behind his back and asked to be arrested. Elliott told the subject that he would rather have him give detailed descriptions of the other poached deer instead, which the subject agreed to do. Two other kill sites from the previous year's deer were documented. The officers were able to replicate photos with distinct landmarks, using the suspect's own Facebook photos. In one Facebook post, the suspect staged a photo of his loaded backpack with deer head/antlers when he supposedly arrived back at the trailhead near midnight after the grueling six mile hike out of the backcountry. The suspect admitted that the buck was killed in a residential area, and that he had to stall and waste time for hours in order to stage the photo at night and make the story believable to his wife. One of the trophy bucks was killed while the suspect was standing in the backyard of a residence (without permission), and the

deer were feeding on the lawn in the backyard of another residence. This was in a "no-shoot" residential area in June Lake.

Several other bucks were suspected to be poached and trainee Smith asked the subject to fill out a form detailing all previous poaching activity. Amazingly, the broken but still cooperative subject initially agreed to do that, but he was not heard from in subsequent days. His silence was explained when Elliott got a phone call from his Defense Attorney who asked us not to talk to his client anymore, as his client was advised not to talk to us anymore (perhaps too little too late).



Charges have been filed against the suspect for a plethora of violations, including taking deer out of season (x2), taking deer in the wrong zone (x2), hunter trespass, falsifying deer tags, shooting too close to homes, shooting in a "no shoot" zone, litter in state waters, and unlawful possession of illegally taken deer. When convicted, the suspect will likely also face enhanced penalties related to the unlawful take of "trophy" deer.

Warden Estrada responded to a plethora of wildlife calls issuing several depredation permits for a mountain lions and several bears. Two mountain lions have been actively hunting llamas and dogs in the mountain community of Crowley Lake. The community lies directly in the deer migration route. Up in arms the community and the Sheriff's Office wanted to declare the lions as public safety animals. It was explained only depredation permits could be issued for the mountain lions. The bears also have been terrorizing neighborhoods in June Lake and Crowley Lake trying to get that last bit of food before the winter hibernation.

The **4240 Squad** had their Holiday Squad / Family party. The kids participated in a gingerbread cookie decorating contest, including the squad kids Garrett Smittle and Todd Estrada. The night was a lot of fun with good food and great company. The young boys won the decorating competition.



The 4210 squad received a CalTip reporting a high school student at Minarets High School posted a picture of a 3x5 buck he had supposedly killed out of season on Instagram. An investigation was conducted and all parties were interviewed associated to the case. During the interview process **Warden Paz** was there listening to **Lt. Stevenson** interview the suspects with a subject who was translating for him. The alleged suspect was actually a migrant farm worker, and the translator was his boss of the vineyard where the deer was taken. Warden Paz picked up that the boss was coaching his employee on what to tell us. Warden Paz let Lt. Stevenson know this and then intervened in the interview. The suspect and the other male that was with him were then split up and interviewed separately by Warden Paz. There were some discrepancies in their account of events and Lt. Stevenson and Paz weren't totally convinced that he actually shot the deer. The high school student was asked why he took the photograph of the dead deer and posted it on Instagram. He said that he wanted to brag to his "Red Neck Friends." Even though there were some

inconsistencies in the farm workers story, the suspect still maintained that he was the one who killed the deer. He was also able to produce the antlers for the officers. No other corroborating evidence was discovered at the kill site. The officers did have enough to charge the worker for unlawful possession.

Warden Golden contacted three subjects fishing on the Aqueduct. While inspecting the subject's fishing licenses, Warden Golden noticed that the subjects had striped bass code sections written on the front of them. All three subjects denied catching any fish. Warden Golden noticed a container near the subject's vehicle which contained bluegill. Warden Golden had the subjects reel in the lines which of course had a bluegill on the end. Warden Golden questioned the subject about the bluegill, but he remained tight lipped. Warden Golden searched a trash can near one of the subjects and located a fresh striped bass. Of course all three subjects denied it was theirs and knew nothing about it. Warden Golden explained FGC 2012 to all three subjects who kept to their story of not catching any fish. After getting consent to search the vehicle, Warden Golden located (11) striped bass stuffed inside a large camping pack with fishing equipment sticking out from the inside, making the fish well hidden. After acquiring all three subjects driver's licenses, Warden Golden immediately recognized one of the subjects from an officer safety bulletin that the department sent out in the Central District. All three subjects had been cited previously (six weeks ago) by Warden Giertych for taking gross over limits of striped bass. Warden Golden cited all three subjects for taking over limits of striped bass, using bluegill as bait and failure to show. After getting back to his HQ, Warden Golden gained more information on the subjects. One of them has been cited at least five different times.



The weekend of November 20-22 was the disabled adult and veteran pheasant hunt sponsored by the Southern Tulare County Sportsmen's Association. The hunters were assisted by the sportsmen who ran their dogs in the field.



While conducting a nighttime patrol of the Tuolumne River in La Grange, **Warden Cahill** observed an empty houndsman vehicle parked along the Tuolumne River at 2am. Cahill could hear multiple hounds barking fairly close along the river and set up to observe the activity and contact the houndsman when he returned back to his vehicle. When the subject returned to his vehicle he was very surprised to see Warden Cahill's truck and immediately tried to hide a firearms case he was holding. The subject claimed he was just out walking his dogs. The man's tune changed when Warden Cahill told him he saw the man drop the firearms case in the grass. The man admitted to hunting raccoons and did not have a license. He was also using GPS Collars with a built in treeing switch. Despite having well-used custom engraved equipment with the subject's name, the man tried to play it off that he had never run dogs before and this was his first time ever. The man was properly cited and some of his equipment was seized for evidence in court.

Warden Schultz focused a lot of his patrol on pheasants this month. During one patrol, Warden Schultz contacted three subjects target practicing in an alfalfa field. The subjects stated they found the gun they were using on a front lawn in Stockton. Warden Schultz ran the gun through dispatch and it came back clear, however, he seized the gun and with additional investigation he discovered the gun was reported stolen in 2012 and the serial number was input into CLETS incorrectly. A formal complaint will be filed. Warden Schultz also set up and conducted a Pheasant Decoy with the help of Lt.



Vielhauer, Warden Mello, and Warden Cahill this month near White Slough Wildlife Area in San Joaquin County. Although the overall activity was low, a few minutes after the decoy was set up (and well before legal shoot time) a passenger in a passing vehicle couldn't resist the opportunity to get out and shoot. Observations were made of the subject as he ran toward the decoy, shot at it once from close range, and returned to the vehicle. He then appeared to grab a second shotgun from the vehicle and shoot at the decoy once again before the vehicle attempted to drive off at a high rate of speed. The subject was stopped and cited for hunter trespass and early shooting for pheasant.

Warden Cahill contacted a subject fishing in the Tuolumne River above La Grange while the river is closed to fishing. Warden Cahill gathered the subject's ID and fishing license and walked him up to Warden Cahill's truck. A warrant check of the subject revealed a couple no-bail warrants for the subject's arrest. Warden Cahill told the subject he was under arrest which caused the subject to flee on foot across the Old La Grange pedestrian bridge. Warden Cahill briefly gave chase but stopped after the subject threw his fishing rod at Warden Cahill. The subject jumped on a motorcycle and took off toward the town of Snelling at a high rate of speed and helmetless. The subject left Warden Cahill with his California Driver's License and 2015 Fishing License. Prior to fleeing the subject gave Warden Cahill the street in Snelling that he had just moved to, which happens to have only two houses on it. Formal charges were filed with the Stanislaus DA's Office. A few weeks later a resident of Snelling called Warden Cahill and stated he knew the subject that ran from him. Apparently the subject had been bragging at the local gas station about running from a wildlife officer. It was also found out that the subject's only two brothers had been killed recently by law enforcement and that running from law enforcement is in the subject's blood.

North Coast Enforcement District

Warden Embry and Warden Trainee Dericco were mid field training cycle when they began a deer related investigation that started when Embry, Dericco, Zulliger and Alfaro captured two subjects spotlighting for deer in Ferndale. Together the team of officers submitted and executed a search warrant on the suspect's residence. They obtained and submitted several deer blood/hair/tissue samples to the Department's Wildlife Forensics Laboratory for analysis. During the course of the search warrant, the officers also seized a computer with spotlighting video footage, several firearms and other illegal deer hunting related evidence.

Warden Mengel and Warden Cisneros finished the second half of Cisneros' second FTO cycle. They worked the inland fishing activity around Humboldt County. They found a few equipment and fishing closed waters violations. They attended a short training session at the Humboldt Coroner's Office on how to tell the difference between human bones and animal bones. The officers conducted fish business inspections and worked waterfowl hunting around Humboldt Bay.

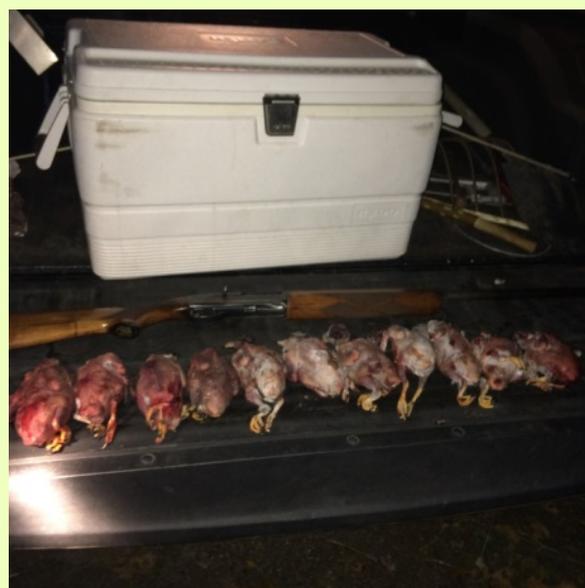
Warden Kinnard, spent many hours working dockside commercial fishermen gaining compliance and answering questions. A few warnings were issued mostly for paperwork violations. He also worked on a waterfowl hunter/trespass issue along Ten Mile River. Warden Kinnard and Warden Laird responded to a call of a sunken boat at Dolphin Isle in Noyo River. They monitored the raising of the fishing vessel and gained compliance with clean-up of the deleterious material and petroleum products.

Warden Powers began the month working the Mendocino Coast issuing six citations for violations involving abalone and rockfish. Powers began working with trainee Meredith Lohan for her third cycle of field training. Lohan issued twenty-three citations for violations involving abalone and other violations involving the California Vehicle Code. Lohan cited one group of three abalone rock-pickers that took 20 abalone. Lohan also assisted the Mendocino Major Crimes Task Force with a search warrant in Comptche, CA involving a honey oil lab. Several individuals were arrested during the service of the search warrant and a large amount of processed marijuana, honey oil, and a lab were seized. Lohan performed an excellent search of a travel trailer at the residence finding a large amount of methamphetamine that had been well hidden. Lohan ran into one of the same suspects the next night just after he had bailed out of jail. The suspect had wrecked his car into the side of a hill near Comptche, and immediately threw a large plastic tub full of marijuana into the tall grass in front of his vehicle when he saw a patrol vehicle approaching him. Lohan found the tub contained six one pound bags of processed marijuana. Lohan once again arrested the suspect and booked him into the Mendocino County Jail for felony possession for sale (marijuana), and committing a felony while out on bail. Lohan also relieved the suspect of approximately \$4,000 dollars in cash that he had on his person. Lohan was the first responder at an abalone diver drowning in Point Arena. The victims friend stated they had been abalone diving and he had not seen his friend for several hours. Lohan contacted local agencies as well as the Coast Guard to respond. A Coast Guard helicopter was dispatched to the scene and was unable to find the diver in the dark due to rough conditions. The diver was found the next morning approximately ½ of a mile north of the location washed up on Manchester Beach.

Warden T. Little responded to a "Shots Fired" call in a gated community. After further investigation Little found a 3x2 buck freshly killed. Little went house to house looking for the shooter. Eventually Little found a group of young adults that couldn't get their stories straight. Warden Little hiked around their back yard and found an empty shell casing. With new evidence the shooter finally confessed. The case has been filed with the Lake County DA's Office.



Wardens Henderson and Walker would come to remember this month as the "Band-tail Bonanza". After a few fall storms the officers began to notice the Band-tail pigeons arrive in great numbers. Apparently the squirrel hunters noticed as well and it didn't take long for the word to get out. Walker checked a group hunters return to their vehicle just after dark and used very little light while packing up even though it was well after sunset. When Walker approached, he saw multiple subjects scrambling and plastic shopping bags go flying down a nearby hill. Walker quickly took control of the situation. Walker found 21 band-tailed pigeons shot by five subjects all using .22 caliber rifles. The guns and out of season birds were seized and appropriate citations were issued. A few days later, Henderson and Walker were patrolling the same area when they noticed a vehicle parked in the same exact spot as Walker's Band-tail pigeon poachers. Again the officers waited the subjects out while monitoring radio traffic on hand-held two-way radios. Henderson and Walker watched them pack up their equipment using their night vision optics. They approached the group on foot and lit them up while announcing their presence. The shocked hunters sat dumbfounded and hardly moved. When asked what species they were hunting, the hunters claimed to have hunted squirrel without any success. The officers located a large bag. Walker lifted the bag and asked about its contents. One of the subjects put his head down replied, "Oh, pigeons." Thirty six Band-tail pigeons were found in the bag. Three of the subjects again used rifles to shoot them from the trees while one used a shotgun. All guns and birds were seized and citations issued. The following week, Warden Walker and Warden Henderson made a plan to split the day and give coverage to the area from sun up to sun down. Walker and Lt. Moore worked the morning and located a camp of hunters. The hunters were in the field and many shots were heard in the area. Walker and Moore decided to wait the hunters out. After making contact with the hunters and inspections of two vehicles, 24 band-tail pigeons were found in the possession of more alleged squirrel hunters. Guns and birds were seized and citations were issued. By this time, Henderson and Walker were in the area every day. The activity seemed to die down, but sure enough, the following Sunday Henderson noticed another vehicle in the area. It appeared to belong to "squirrel" hunters, evidenced by the .22 caliber rifle scabbards visible in the back seat. Henderson contacted Walker and again the two officers waited the hunters out. The officers waited in a different location, further down the hill, and smiled and waved as the Toyota Tacoma approached. The hunters voluntarily stopped and complied with



the officer's request to inspect the vehicle. After a claim by the hunters to have been squirrel hunting without success, a 2012 admonishment was given. The hunters stuck to their story. It did not take long for Henderson to locate two band-tailed pigeons in the front passenger door compartment. The front passenger admitted to taking them with a .22 caliber rifle, apologized for lying and claimed he did not know of any other birds the group may possess. About that time, Walker noticed a large bulge in the front mid-section of the rear passenger. When asked about it, he pulled out a bag, awkwardly smelled it as if surprised to find it, then admitted the bag contained two band-tailed pigeons. His pigeons were also taken with a .22 caliber rifle. After interviewing the driver a second time, something seemed wrong. He seemed nervous and awkwardly leaned against the hood of his vehicle. Walker turned to Henderson and said, "I think he's holding." The officers noticed a large strangely shaped bulge in the crotch area of his pants. They approached the driver and asked him directly what he was hiding in his pants. The driver gulped and sheepishly admitted to be hiding pigeons. He removed a bag containing two band-tailed pigeons. More guns and birds were seized and appropriate citations issued.

At the conclusion of the month, Henderson and Walker had seized 14 guns, 87 band-tailed pigeons and issued 15 citations for violations including: out of season band-tailed pigeons, over limit of band-tailed pigeons, band-tailed pigeons without a fully feather head or wing, unlawful method of take, failure to show, and loaded long gun in a vehicle. Hopefully word has reached the central valley, as almost all of the violators came from that area, and some birds will be spared. Nonetheless, efforts will continue to catch those who decide to break the law.

Warden Hampton began the investigation of a fuel spill that resulted from the abandonment of a vessel at Alviso Marina. The subject simply backed the boat down the ramp and let it loose. The boat's plug was fashioned out of a wood dowel so it began taking on water immediately. The push of the tide eventually ran the boat aground. As the tide receded, the boat settled on the mud at a high angle. The boat's fluids and all the water that was taken on mixed and began leaking through the boat plug into the slough. Unfortunately for the suspect, his comings and goings from the marina were recorded on security camera, and hopefully he will be identified soon.

Warden Chance started working an FTO Cycle with **Warden Huntsman** with a few citations issued for fishing violations, littering and vehicle code offenses. Huntsman conducted a restricted species facility inspection in Cambria, finding the facility in full compliance. Also, Huntsman issued a few depredation permits with one permit being successful in the lawful take of a Mountain Lion that had killed two sheep.

Warden Gil has been working an FTO Cycle with **Warden Sommer**. The pair has made a number of cases involving hunting violations at Fort Hunter Liggett and several fishing related cases along the coast. Gil reports that a deer case from September involving the take of three deer including two does and a spike resulted in a large settlement penalty of \$50,000 paid directly to the Monterey County Fines Commission by the two suspects in the case. In addition, all hunting equipment seized in the case was ordered destroyed.

Warden Thomas was contacted by San Luis Obispo Sheriff's Deputies as they were conducting a search warrant on a residence in rural Paso Robles. They located a large buck deer head obscurely placed in a Rubbermaid tote without a tag that was covered with a

white powder determined to be concrete additive. Thomas arrived and investigated the deer. The subject in possession of the deer was compliant and gave Thomas information and photos of who shot it. Thomas contacted Lt. Tognazzini for assistance with translation from Spanish to English. Thomas and Tognazzini followed up and were able to get a confession out of the subject that he shot the deer. The investigation led to the discovery of an expensive stolen rifle that was used to kill the deer. The agency with jurisdiction from where the firearm was stolen was contacted and numerous search warrants throughout the southern state have been executed based on the discovery of a large burglary that occurred in January, 2015. In addition to the firearm, Thomas seized the suspect's phone and obtained a search warrant for records. The information on the phone revealed numerous photos which indicate many more deer and pigs that had been unlawfully taken. The suspect will be charged with numerous Fish and Game violations and the subject who possessed the deer will also be charged. The investigation is still ongoing to identify additional suspects for the deer and pigs discovered on the phone.

Warden Hare reports a recent disposition for a case involving a fish business in Monterey County. The case dealt with a business failing to submit landing receipts, failure to accurately complete landing receipts, failure to pay landing taxes. The business settled and agreed to pay \$30,000 in restitution and penalties; \$10,000 of which will go directly to the Department.

Warden Hickey and K-9 Keara received information from the SLO Sheriff's Office, that three male subjects were observed by the property owner, attempting to load a forked horned buck into their sedan. The property owner obtained license information and photographs of the drag marks which lead to where the deer had been shot from earlier that morning. Hickey followed up with interviews of all three subjects where she was able to get a full confession from the shooter and the two that assisted. Three formal complaints will be filed for the unlawful take of deer out of season and hunter trespass.

Captain Kelly had the pleasure of presenting a recognition award to **Warden Ryan Hanson** through the San Luis Obispo Chapter of Footprinters International. Former F&W Captain, and now the current Undersheriff of San Luis Obispo County Tim Olivas, is the current president of the Footprinter's chapter. Ryan was recognized for his outstanding work on keeping the Patrol Boat Bluefin a viable asset on the water in the absence of a Lieutenant for over a year. Ryan's mom was also in attendance and was equally proud!

Kelly was also able to put together a last-minute flight over the coast for the sport crab "Non Opener". The compliance with the closure was significant and but the plane was able to assist the P/V Marlin crew with a report from the Farallon Islands researchers of a vessel trolling a dummy in a wetsuit to attract white sharks. Contact was made with the violators by the Marlin as the plane circled above.

Headquarters

WATERSHED ENFORCEMENT TEAM

With the onset of winter, WET Environmental Scientists are busy working on reports from last summer and WET LED continues pursuing follow up investigations. As the prospect of El Nino storms approach, WET members will be gearing up to inspect more private land parcels where sediment discharge can be documented impacting critical salmonid habitat. WET LED participated in two significant reclamation efforts last month. **Warden Lynch** assisted IERC Executive Director, Dr. Mourad Gabriel, with reclamation efforts on BLM land where environmental damage at a trespass marijuana grow site in southern Humboldt had occurred. Lynch, along with other WET members, **Warden Pilot Veal** and USFS LEO's finished reclamation two sites associate with a week-long reclamation effort that took place the previous month.

WET LED conducted general patrol in rural parts of Shasta, Tehama and Trinity counties.

While doing so, WET encountered a significant amount of drug trafficking along Hwy 36W and Hwy 299. In total, **885 pounds** of processed marijuana were seized during interdiction type stops and **1600 pounds** during a marijuana raid. In total, 11 felony cases were filed:



In a Hwy 36 W stop near Trinity Pines, **Warden Cardoza** and a Trinity County Deputy contacted an individual driving back to Eureka from the Hayfork area. Upon

contact, the individual was discovered to possess 20 garbage bags (476 pounds) of marijuana in the Ford Econo-line van that he purchased earlier that same day.



In another of **Warden Cardoza's** cases, he contacted a female subject who works as a registered nurse at the local hospital. Cardoza had contacted her several weeks earlier as she was returning from her second job trimming marijuana (her own statements). The female subject and each of her passengers worked in the local hospital and ER and stated they trim marijuana for extra money. Cardoza ultimately issued each of them a warning for individual marijuana possession violations. This time the female subject was driving a different vehicle,



traveling solo and on her way to San Diego. Cardoza did not recognize her at first and almost didn't ask if she was transporting marijuana. Upon recognizing the female, Cardoza asked if she was transporting marijuana to San Diego. The female calmly stated "No" and Cardoza asked if she would mind opening the trunk to verify what she was telling him was truth. The female pressed the key fob on her rental car and the trunk popped open. Due to her calm demeanor, Cardoza admitted he was surprised to find a fairly large amount of

processed and vacuum sealed marijuana.

Warden Galwey conducted four inspections in active marijuana grows. One of the sites had been previously inspected in 2013 for a 1600 violation. No environmental crimes were observed, but all four grows were found to be cultivating marijuana illegally. Warden Galwey filed felony cultivation charges on two of the suspects. 500 plants were eradicated and 1600 pounds of processed marijuana seized and later destroyed.

Wardens Galwey and Cardoza conducted a criminal interdiction stop that resulted in seizing 240 lbs. of processed marijuana on its way to New Jersey, the arrest of two male subjects and the initiation of asset seizure and forfeiture. Both individuals had a prior history of transportation and upon searching the vehicle Cardoza located paperwork indicating an 80,000 dollar deposit on a Leer Jet in the Sacramento area had been made. It is believed the large amount marijuana valued at 1.2 million dollars (New Jersey price) was going to be flown back to the east coast.



Wardens Crowl and Galwey observed two vehicles running in tandem West of Redding on Highway 299. The lead vehicle (pickup) maneuvered himself behind the follow vehicle (rental vehicle) when they spotted Crowl. The pickup immediately began to swerve, crossing the double yellow line several times. Warden Galwey responded to the location. Warden Crowl initiated a vehicle stop for the violations he observed while Galwey found probable cause for a stop on the rental vehicle. Crowl gained probable cause to search the pickup; he found evidence that tied the two vehicles together, but no contraband. All of the occupants were family and possessed marijuana recommendations. Crowl documented the evidence, cleared and responded to Warden Galwey's location. The two officers were able to smell marijuana in the rental vehicle. Approximately 31 lbs. of marijuana were found in two bags in the trunk.

Warden Cardoza and Lt. Little assisted local ES Staff with the inspection of several parcels in the Trinity Pines area of Trinity County regarding 1600 related issues and applications. While inspecting the parcels Cardoza and Little made several contacts while people were leaving the area. Most of the contacts were people who had been in the area working in marijuana cultivation operations and paid to trim marijuana bud. Several of the contacts led to searches and most individuals leaving the area appeared to be in possession of anywhere from 7-8 thousand dollars (cash) for 7-10 days of trimming. One of Lt. Little's contacts / cases resulted in the discovery of 27 pounds of processed marijuana being transported back to Davis by a U.C Davis college student.





During the Trinity Pines site visit, **Lt. Little** documented over 20 recently drilled wells along a three mile stretch of creek. Each well, with associated bentonite, was located within fifty feet of the state's high watermark, and appeared to service a nearby marijuana grow. Lt. Little will be working with the State Water Board and Trinity County Planning Department to investigate impacts on the watershed.

MARIJUANA ENFORCEMENT TEAM

Around taking some much needed breaks and reducing time balances throughout November, MET operators conducted scout, reclamation, eradication, arrest and outreach missions in Santa Clara, San Diego, Shasta, Butte, Fresno, and Tehama counties. On the outreach front, the MET K9 team participated in the Tehama County Community College career day, providing information and demonstrations of the LED K9 program to over 500 kids.

During a Santa Clara private lands search warrant operation 1000 marijuana plants were eradicated, 1000 pounds of processed marijuana seized, and six suspects arrested for multiple cultivation and environmental crime violations. In a similar search warrant operation in Shasta County later in the month, the MET K9 team was instrumental in locating and seizing



three hundred pounds of processed marijuana during the mission. Immediately following that operation, the MET K9 team interdicted more processed marijuana and a butane honey oil (BHO) lab during a case related vehicle stop.



Photos – Honey Oil Lab, Water Diversion Shasta County, Poisoned Song Bird & Furadan Shasta County

DELTA BAY ENHANCED ENFORCEMENT PROJECT

DBEEP officers spent the month conducting an investigation into the illegal commercialization of sport caught fish by several suspects in Sacramento County. These particular suspects were arrested in 2006 by DBEEP and SOU for selling sport caught striped bass. This time they have been seen selling striped bass, salmon, and sturgeon. The case is ongoing and their arrest is in the near future. **Warden Marrone** also turned cell phone evidence over to the Sacramento Police Department which stemmed from operation Green Valley. The cell phone in question had evidence of child abuse and other crimes which implicated one of the suspects arrested.