

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

MONTHLY REPORT *July 2016*



Central Enforcement District

Wildlife Officers L. Sheeley and B. Newell received a CalTIP report of a poached deer in the Big Meadows area. While in route, they came across a single vehicle traffic accident. The driver, an elderly female, had driven off the roadway near a steep embankment. Luckily, the vehicle collided with a stump, preventing it from rolling down the hill. Warden Sheeley contacted a young couple who contacted the driver approximately 40 minutes prior to Sheeley and Newell's arrival. They informed the two wildlife officers that the woman appeared to be disoriented and unaware of her whereabouts. Sheeley and Newell determined that the woman was from Pleasanton, and had driven through the night to her current location. Newell was able to contact the woman's son via cell phone. The son advised Newell his mother had dementia and should not have been away from the house. EMS and CHP were contacted and CHP transported the woman to Fresno where her son picked her up.

Wildlife Officers A. Golden, S. McNulty and B. Alisio assisted USFS with interdiction related to a large marijuana cultivation investigation. Wildlife Officers Golden and Alisio assisted USFS with a search warrant in Merced County related to the same investigation. Several thousand marijuana seeds were located at the residence.

Warden S. McNulty was making observations on several people around a pond when she noticed one subject smoking narcotics inside his vehicle. McNulty contacted the man and inquired as to the narcotics he was using. While talking to the man, McNulty noticed a US Government license plate partially hidden in the front window. When she questioned the man as to its origin, he could not come up with a straight answer. McNulty seized the license plate (which later turned out to be stolen off a government vehicle) then checked the registration on the vehicle and found it to be expired with stolen 2016 registration tags. McNulty dug deeper into the situation and located another stolen license plate in the back seat of the truck belonging to a trailer that had been stolen a few days earlier. She also located a large chunk of crystal methamphetamine under the seat where she'd seen him smoking. At this point she placed the man under arrest and towed his car. Warden Golden responded to assist with the arrest and vehicle search.

Meanwhile, the man's girlfriend showed up so she was checked for warrants and it was discovered she had three no-bail warrants out of Kern County. Both subjects were transported to the jail and booked. At the jail, McNulty discovered more stolen property in the man's wallet and conducted another interview with the suspect. From her interview, she determined she had a total of five victims ranging from identity theft to stolen property to stolen vehicles. Officer McNulty followed up on her leads and the information she obtained during her interview and recovered the stolen trailer in Visalia. The Tulare County Auto Theft Task Force got involved after they were contacted by Lt. D. Barnhart and they are pursuing additional violations on the suspect. McNulty's investigation recovered a lost driver's license, two stolen credit cards, one stolen US passport, one stolen trailer, one stolen US government license plate, one stolen 2016 registration tag, 3.5 grams of methamphetamine and one violation for fishing without a license!

During the month a mountain lion had been sighted numerous times in the Indian Reservation in Bishop. One night the lion was caught on the hospital's security camera adjacent to the reservation. The lion appeared to be young and possibly recently left its

mother. Wildlife Officers B. Dailey, S. Dishion and C. Elliott all responded to the reservation to investigate different sightings. Lt. Dailey submitted a press release attempting to curtail the rumor mill. During one of the responses, a reporting party stated they were telling their friends and co-workers lion stories trying to scare each other. The squad continues to monitor calls from the public on the lion and the tribe has sent an official request for our assistance should the lion become a problem.

Warden S. Dishion investigated a bear shooting in a USFS campground outside of Bridgeport. A bear entered a camp where a single occupant had been sleeping in his tent. The camper woke in the early morning hours to a bear eating his food. After chasing the bear off two times and firing warning shots at the bear, the bear approached the camper who was in his tent. Ten feet away and in fear of his life, the camper shot the bear with a .22 caliber firearm in the head. The bear ran around the camp and swiped the tent, leaving claw marks and blood. The bear eventually wandered off a short distance and was dispatched in the morning.

Lt. B. Dailey was contacted by a person who had been camping in the Rock Creek Drainage. The victim had left his camper to go to the restroom in the early morning hours. The man left his camper door open and fresh pastries inside and as a result a bear entered the camper. Upon the man's return he entered the camper and found himself face to face with a cinnamon colored black bear weighing between 150-200 lbs. The victim now blocked the bear's only exit and panicked as the bear swiped his paw at the camper tearing his shirt and leaving four scratches on his abdomen and ribs. The victim contacted USFS dispatch center seeking medical advice and refused to provide the location of the occurrence stating he did not want the bear killed believing the bear was not aggressive and was acting only in self-defense.

Lt. Dailey is investigating another bear incident that occurred at Lake Mary, Mammoth Lakes Basin. An angler and his wife were fishing at the end of a six foot long dock using salmon eggs as bait; they had not caught any fish and had no food with them. The two anglers saw the blond bear walking north on the shoreline towards the dock. The bear was approximately 300 lbs. almost "albino" in color; blond on top with light brown on his underside. The bear walked to the end of the dock and snorted. The bear then walked to a bush on the north side of the dock turned around and went to the restroom in the bush. The bear picked his head up and snorted again. It walked to the tackle box, which was open, sniffed but did not touch the tackle box. The bear turned and faced the anglers who were standing on the end of the dock and the bear began to walk out onto the dock snorting and bouncing his head back and forth. Believing the bear was not going to stop, the two anglers jumped into the lake when the bear was 2 -3 feet away. The anglers reported the bear walked to the edge of the dock and appeared angry, snorting and swatting his paw against the dock. The bear did not immediately leave. As the bear left he appeared frustrated.

Wildlife Officers R. Watkins and K. Blagg were on an early morning fishing contact at the Mendota Wildlife Area when he was given consent to search a subject's vehicle. Watkins located a "baggie" of a white powdery substance. When the owner of the vehicle was asked what was in the bag, he said it was cocaine. After running the subject he was found to be on probation. Watkins made the felony arrest on the violation of probation, possession of narcotics, and two wildlife area violations involving the illicit drugs and fishing.

Warden Lenz spent a large portion of time assisting allied law enforcement agencies within his district. Lenz assisted USFS law enforcement officers in a three day marijuana eradication and suspect apprehension operation. The operation consisted of multiagency marijuana grow raids within the Sierra National Forest, interdiction efforts, and execution of residential search warrants in Merced County. In all, four subjects were apprehended.

Warden Lenz assisted the Madera County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) during two local fires. Along with MCSO, Officer Lenz evacuated threatened neighborhoods and aided in providing security patrols within the evacuated areas.

Warden Lenz came across a large pile of trash located in an overflow campground. After digging through the trash, Lenz uncovered a Harbor Freight receipt which contained possible suspect identifying information. At the entrance to the campground Lenz located and documented several cardboard signs with writing on them that read "KMC." Lenz determined KMC to be the initials of one of the responsible subjects. Further investigation revealed that the subject owned a local garage in Fresno called "KMC Garage." Lenz followed up with Harbor Freight in Fresno to obtain contact information for the subject and to obtain surveillance footage of the subject purchasing items prior to being issued the receipt. Lenz contacted the subject at his garage in Fresno and informed him that he was investigating a deer poaching that occurred in another county on the weekend it was believed he camped and left the trash. The subject stated he had nothing to do with poaching the deer as he was camped where Lenz had found the trash. The subject willingly completed and signed a witness statement form indicating where and when he was camping. With the written statement in hand, Warden Lenz confronted the subject with photographs of the trash piles and the "KMC" signs at the entrance to the campground. The subject claimed responsibility for the trash and said to "send him the bill." Warden Lenz advised the subject that he would be filing a formal complaint for violation of Fish and Game Code 5652, for leaving trash within 150 feet of a creek.



Warden S. Moss responded to a report of mountain lion on the rear deck of a residence. The property owner, investigating the noise, then met the lion face to face below his residence. The lion slowly walked off the property after the property owner fired two rounds from a .40 caliber handgun into the ground in an attempt to scare the lion away. Moss also responded to a report of a subject taking over limits of trout at Baker Campground near Kennedy Meadows. Moss was able to locate the subject at the reported campsite and found 20 rainbow trout in an ice chest that belonged to the camper. When asked if he knew the bag limit on rainbow trout, the subject responded, five a day.

North Coast Enforcement District

Wildlife Officers Kinnard and Laird patrolled the Mendocino coastline aboard the Patrol Boat Chinook. The Coast Guard needed assistance with a disabled vessel whose mast and fly deck collapsed in on itself, leaving the mast and cables dangling in the water. The Chinook was used to help extract the captain from the vessel and later assisted Coast Guard officers with the recovery of the disabled vessel.

Warden D. Willson and K-9 Jasmine contacted a subject angling on a private lake. The subject said he had a fishing license but it wasn't on him. Upon further investigation, he was found to be in possession of an over limit of bass with one fish being too short. After checking the Automated License Data System, the subject did not purchase a 2016 fishing license and did not have permission to access the property he was fishing on. A couple weeks later, Wildlife Officer M. White contacted the same subject in Napa County, where the subject was found to be in possession of a fishing license this time, but it wasn't his own and it was expired!

Wildlife Officers M. White, Jones and Esquivel conducted several boat patrols at Lake Berryessa. During one of the boat patrols, the wildlife officers contacted a repeat violator that Warden White had cited several months earlier for possession of undersize black bass and using them for catfish bait. On this occasion, the suspect once again stated that he did not have any fish but after White inspected his kayak, the subject was found to be in possession of three undersize black bass, one of which was being used as bait.

Warden W. O'Brien completed a case against a tropical fish importer for illegally importing 50 Blue Tilapia, 5 Spotted Gars, 6 Blue Spotted Sea Hares, and 461 Sea Hare Slugs. The defendant was ordered to pay over \$13,000 in civil penalties and \$1,400 to the Department. The defendant also received a permanent injunction against illegal importation of live restricted species.

Over two years ago Warden N. Kozicki was working with Chevron Refinery in Richmond over issues with nesting osprey in their facility and the illegal take of a nest. She required that an alternative nesting post be created. After many meetings with biologists, a site was selected near the Richmond Bridge, and an osprey nesting post was constructed. This month, a pair of osprey was found inhabiting a nest on the post. All of her persistence and dedication paid off, SUCCESS at last!!!

Warden C. Garrett responded to a call of a woman and two dogs that were attacked by a wild pig. The woman suffered a significant avulsion to her calf and was air lifted to the hospital. Officer Garrett and East Bay Regional Park Police found the pig in the same area and dispatched the animal. Officer Roberts went to the hospital and interviewed the victim and gave her a ride home after being stitched up. The wild pig was tested and found to be negative for the rabies virus.

Warden M. Schad attended the Basic Boat Operator training at the Maritime Law Enforcement Training Center in Long Beach. During training, Warden Schad and his allied agency partner heard a "Mayday Man Overboard Call" on their marine radio. Schad

responded toward the distressed vessel and observed the subject overboard floating in the water. Additional training class participants also responded to the scene and rescued the subject who had gone overboard, while Schad and his partners assured the safety of the small sailboat which was now under the command of a child, unfamiliar with its operation. The father was reunited with the child and safely transferred back to the sailboat.

The crew of the Patrol Vessel Steelhead concentrated on commercial Dungeness crab violations after the closure in June. Many traps were pulled in Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Mateo counties, producing several citations for taking fish out of season, abandonment, no destruct devices and a few other gear related violations. The crew also inspected several squid boats. The squid boat contacts produced citations and warnings for various log and light violations, in addition to the illegal take of Dungeness crab. Another significant case was also made when a commercial vessel was found to be unlawfully trawling in State waters. The Steelhead crew issued multiple sport citations varying from undersize lingcod and salmon, possession of canary rockfish, over limits of rockfish and fishing in the Marine Protection Areas.

Warden J. Cisneros concluded his investigation into the juvenile Great White Shark caught and landed off of the Pismo Beach Pier. The angler turned himself in after his photograph was posted on local news outlets. Wildlife Officers Cisneros and S. Huntsman received information of a suspected shark poacher previously known to them was in the area of the Cayucos Pier; catching, mutilating, and finning sharks. Cisneros and Huntsman responded to the area and watched the man for several hours. The wildlife officers observed a seven gill shark head, tail, and jaws, and a leopard shark hanging off the pier near the man. After surveillance of over ten hours and learning the man was offering to sell sharks, Officer Huntsman dressed into plain clothes and contacted the subject who offered to sell the leopard shark to her for \$50. The two wildlife officers cited the subject for selling sport caught fish.

Warden Teri Hickey and K-9 Keara were called out to assist the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office Gang Task Force for a firearms search of a parolee. During the search, K9 Keara alerted to a couch in the garage where a loaded .38 revolver was recovered.

Office of Spill Prevention & Response

While on traveling eastbound on Interstate 80 in Solano County between Vallejo and Fairfield, Lieutenant. J. Nicholas encountered stopping traffic on the freeway. Lt. Nicholas was alarmed to see a uniformed California Highway Patrol officer injured and bleeding lying on the ground near the center median edge. Upon reaching the officer, Lt. Nicholas learned that the officer was involved in a solo motor vehicle accident and was ejected from his patrol motorcycle. He assisted local response agencies until the officer was airlifted to a local hospital.



Warden R. Hanson responded to a sunken vessel in Rollins Lake. The 22' ski boat sunk at the dock due to no drain plug. While on late night patrol, Hanson saw a suspicious unoccupied vehicle in a remote forest area. The plate came back stolen. When Hanson returned to the vehicle a short time later, it was occupied by a male and female. Long story short- the subjects bought the car at an "Estate Sale" the day before it was reported stolen. CHP responded and assisted Hanson. The subjects were released and the vehicle was towed by CHP.

Warden R. Thiem responded to a call out from American Canyon PD during a health and safety code enforcement contact. Officers located a fawn on the property that was being held captive. It was pretty clear the property owner had full intentions of making the wildlife a pet. Thiem ended his month on-call working some minor spills that posed some degree of imminent threat to state waters. The most significant call was an 8,500 gallon tanker truck that nearly rolled over a few yards from Clear Lake. Warden K. Smith was quick to note the overall potential for a larger problem and got the ball rolling. Smith assisted the local agencies and ran-point until Thiem's arrival.



Lieutenant J. Mello worked as the State on Scene Coordinator for the Grove Incident oil spill in Ventura. Mello attended the Plan Holder's meeting and drill exercise in Bakersfield. Lt. Mello also attended the Central Coast Subcommittee meeting with the United States Coast Guard regarding Panga pollution response along the Central Coast. Mello and Wildlife Officer J. Juarez responded to an abandoned tank farm in the Greenfield area. One dead oil bird was seized.



Warden M. Conely responded to a 300 barrel oil and produced water spill that entered Buena Vista Creek in Kern County. A unified command was stood up and Conely assumed State on Scene Coordinator (SOSC) responsibilities. The spill affected approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of Buena Vista Creek. The clean-up is ongoing.

Wildlife Officers D. Nelson and N. Molsberry patrolled the coastline of south Orange County during the busy 4th of July weekend. While on foot patrol along the Dana Point east jetty, a yellow two person kayak was observed just off of the jetty. The wildlife officers returned to their patrol truck and retrieved binoculars. It was then clear that the yellow kayak had two subjects aboard but it was still unclear as to the activities of the subjects due to the extreme darkness. One of the subjects aboard the kayak grabbed a blue bag and began to walk into the darkness of Doheny State Beach and that's when the two officers made contact. The two subjects aboard the kayak admitted that they were hoop netting for lobsters. Orange County's Harbor Patrol recovered four hoop nets off of the east jetty and returned 16 more lobsters that were in the nets when the nets were pulled. All of the lobsters were returned to the resources which included three females that were full of eggs.



Lieutenant B. Gollhofer continued work coordinating the Refugio Oil Spill Investigation in Santa Barbara and the Grove Incident Investigation in Ventura County. Gollhofer along with OSPR Legal gave a presentation to the Ventura County District Attorney regarding OSPR and CDFW authorities regarding spill response, investigation as well as our responsibilities as wildlife trustee for the State. Along with Officer Norris, Gollhofer also attended the recent hearing regarding motions in the Refugio Plains All American case in Santa Barbara.

Headquarters

Delta Bay Enhanced Enforcement Project (DBEEP)

Wildlife Officers Bolla and M. Manes assisted Sacramento County Parks by patrolling the American River on jet skis for the annual Rafting Gone Wild event where several citations were issued for park ordinance violations. While near a large set of rapids on the river, Bolla and Manes observed two canoes attempting to pass through the rapids. Both were unsuccessful and flipped in the water. No one on board, including two children, were wearing life jackets. Both officers were able to reach the struggling canoers, pulling one person onto each Jet Ski and transporting them to shore.

Wildlife Officers B. Trunnell and M. Manes patrolled the American River on its salmon opener by kayak. Early in the patrol an angler was alerted to the officer's presence by a recreational kayaker. The angler quickly reeled in and began to walk away. Manes got the man's attention and told him to come back. He had tossed his fishing rod in the bushes. Manes and Trunnell both got to shore and talked to the man. A large knife was removed from his belt. He handed over his identification. It was obvious he did not have a fishing



license. He was also using barbed hooks in violation. Trunnell was explaining the violations to the man and preparing to write him a citation when Manes found a meth pipe in the man's tackle box. Upon Manes discovery of the paraphernalia the man pushed past Manes and dove into the river. The suspect had multiple opportunities to come to shore but thought he would be arrested for the paraphernalia even though the officers assured him it was only a citable misdemeanor. He went down river to evade the wildlife officers. Manes and Trunnell followed him on the kayaks. He eventually became exhausted and came to shore. Trunnell, in an attempt to get to the bank quickly hopped off the kayak into deep water and became submerged. He learned firsthand how quickly and effectively the Mustang Survival auto inflating PFDs work. The

man was arrested and transported to jail.

Warden Trunnell responded to a Mt. Lion sighting late one Tuesday night. The witness saw the lion curled up on his front porch suburban home. The lion ran away when he opened his front door. He and his wife both got a good look at the lion. The man's adult son and his fiancé also saw the lion the previous night down the street. When Officer Trunnell arrived the man said it ran across the street and he believed it was still in the neighbor's yard. Trunnell inspected the neighbor's yard but didn't find any evidence of a Mt. Lion. The fiancé was afraid to go to her car until Trunnell arrived. When Trunnell arrived she went to her car and said she would call him if she saw the lion. Trunnell was talking with the reporting party making plans to search the neighborhood more thoroughly when the fiancé called. She said it was right in front of her car. She had stopped just 50 yards down the



street. Trunnell ran toward her and heard her yelling, "Its right there!" She was pointed out the driver side window. Trunnell ran to the driver side of the car and clearly saw a tan colored greyhound dog running away. He asked the fiancé if that was the Mt. Lion and she said yes. When he told her it was a dog she was shocked. Trunnell walked back to the residence and informed the other of their misidentification. It appeared the dog ran from its yard during 4th of July fireworks. Trunnell attempted to catch the dog but it's a greyhound. So it was fast.

Marijuana Enforcement Team (MET)

MET wildlife officers conducted scout, eradication, arrest, and reclamation missions in San Diego, Shasta, Tehama, San Mateo, San Benito, Mariposa, Fresno, Sonoma, Mariposa, Fresno, Merced, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Monterey, Glenn and Butte counties this week. In addition, investigations were started in Sutter and Sacramento counties. Throughout the month, the MET eradicated 108,000 marijuana plants, arrested 19 Drug Trafficking Organization (DTO) suspects (10 of these apprehensions were made by K9 Phebe), removed approximately 44,000 pounds of grow waste and trash during reclamation operations, and rectified 46 streambed alteration, water diversion and water pollution violations within trespass grow sites.

The highlight case of the many MET operations throughout July was Wildlife Officer Baquirin's coordination with Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on the execution of an allied agency search warrant on a large scale marijuana cultivation operation in Riverside County. This was the first team-wide MET operation in the Southern Enforcement District, and allied agency bridges were built with multiple local, State, and Federal allied enforcement agencies. The cultivation site was located on private and BLM public lands, including BLM's Beauty Mountain Wilderness area with some federally protected endangered species habitat surrounding the grow site. The area is critical habitat for the endangered Quino Checkerspot butterfly and the Stephen's Kangaroo rat. The suspects bulldozed roads in the wilderness area, cut down trees and shrubs resulting in habitat loss and are also involved in trafficking drugs and a murder investigation in the Midwest. Officers from several agencies served a warrant on the 850 acre complex. Officers eradicated approximately 8,000 marijuana plants, arrested five suspects, and seized one rifle, two handguns and approximately \$10,000 in cash. One suspect who had barricaded himself and refused to comply with commands was apprehended by a BLM K9.

Watershed Enforcement Team (WET)

WET Wildlife Officers and Environmental Scientists (ES's) travelled to Mendocino County and assisted in Operation Green Thunder. In addition to WET team members, members from



Mendocino County Sheriff's Office, National Guard, Cal Fire and various Northern California Task Forces were present. The detail focused on environmental crimes and felony cultivation. 21 parcel inspections were conducted by WET. There was 41 total environmental violations, 40,397 marijuana plants removed, 14 arrests made, seven firearms seized and one vehicle seized under asset forfeiture.

-Example of dewatered stream found during the detail. Note impact one-poly pipe has on aquatic habitat downstream

WET Wildlife Officers wrote warrants for properties that were the subject of an inspection last year. The property owner has failed to comply with the terms of two Notice of Violation (NOV) letters that were sent several months ago. During an overflight of the area, 26 greenhouses and three outdoor marijuana cultivation sites were observed on the parcels, all actively growing marijuana.

- Some of the greenhouses associated with a property that will be the subject of an upcoming warrant.



WET Wildlife Officers conducted an early morning detail on a private parcel west of Anderson, Shasta County. During a prior overflight of the area, the wildlife officers observed patches of marijuana cultivation within the riparian vegetation along Lack Creek, an anadromous waterway. Before daylight, the wildlife officers entered the grow in hopes of observing the responsible parties tending to it. Wildlife Officers observed two subjects walk into the area and begin watering plants. Both suspects were apprehended. One subject attempted to evade wildlife officers. CDFW K-9 Rango was used to apprehend the suspect. Two thousand eight hundred marijuana plants were eradicated. Two illegal water diversions were documented and dismantled. Numerous litter and pollution violations were also documented.

WET Wildlife Officers assisted Trinity the County Sheriff's Office with a marijuana eradication and reclamation mission in the Big French Creek area of Trinity County. Approximately 16,000 plants were eradicated from the area, and a significant amount of garbage and supplies was cleaned up from the camping areas.

WET Wildlife Officers served two search warrants in the Indian Creek Watershed of Trinity County. Indian Creek is a tributary to the Trinity River and critical habitat for Coho and Steelhead. Both warrants were in response to recent observations as well as information gathered during last year. In both situations, during the 2015 inspections, Water Board administrative warrants were served and no plants were eradicated during the operation.

During both inspections, both grows far exceeded the county's eight plant per parcel ordinance and evidence of felony marijuana cultivation was present. The information was relayed to the Trinity County Sheriff's Department, but due to officer shortages and the overwhelming growth in marijuana cultivation, no further action was taken. While executing the 2016 search warrants, officers found that both grows had been expanded since the 2015 inspections. During the operations, 678 marijuana plants were eradicated from both grow sites. Additionally, new grading and stream crossing violations were documented. Two additional grows were visited under the open fields doctrine and marijuana plants were eradicated. A total of 1217 marijuana plants were eradicated during the operations with a total street value of 4.8 million. In addition, \$8000.00 was seized during one of the search warrants. For the day's efforts, charges will be filed on a total of five subjects for felony cultivation.

WET Wildlife Officers helped Integral Ecology Research Center (IERC) biologists and Humboldt County Sheriff's Office conduct trespass marijuana grow site assessments for environmental damage at four sites in Humboldt County. A total of 25,930 marijuana plants were eradicated. Several violations of Fish and Game Code were documented in each site, as well as hundreds of pounds of fertilizers, plant nutrients, and several containers of pesticides and rodenticides. One supplemental report was written for the environmental damage at one site with possibly two more to come.



-Snare set on a trail leading into one grow site

CDFW's WET and MET teams joined forces to eradicate a Drug Trafficking Organization (DTO) grow on the Tehama Wildlife Area. The marijuana grow had been under surveillance most of the summer and had been tied to other DTO activity throughout Shasta and Tehama County on Forest Service and National Park land. A recent overflight revealed that the marijuana plants are being harvested at the site, and it was hoped to apprehend numerous subjects processing marijuana. Nearly 3000 marijuana plants were eradicated and two suspects were arrested for felony cultivation. A partial reclamation of the grow's camp was done to discourage growers from coming back. A full reclamation will be conducted this fall when temperatures are less than 100 degrees.



-Antlers displayed prominently in trespass grow camp

Southern Enforcement District

Lieutenants W. Boyle and R. Buckler and Wildlife Officers S. Cohen, A. Bagdasaryan, J. Nguyen, M. Loudon, L. Garber, D. Lengning, and T. Van Epps assisted in a successful operation of an unlicensed charter fishing vessel. A citation was issued to the captain of the vessel for operating a commercial vessel without commercial vessel registration, operating a commercial passenger fishing vessel without an ocean enhancement validation, and take of undersize sheephead and undersize barracuda. Also three passengers were issued citations for fishing without a fishing license in possession while aboard the fishing vessel.

Warden M. Dilts responded to a call for help from a citizen that witnessed an occupied vehicle enter the San Gabriel River. Due to the driver's actions and verbal statements to responders, it was determined that she was attempting suicide Dilts secured his gun belt in his patrol vehicle and jumped in the water. Assisted by another civilian rescuer, Dilts pulled the woman from the sinking vehicle and to the safety of the shoreline. She was subsequently booked by the Long Beach Police Department for an imposed safety hold for acting as a danger to herself.

Warden M. Budish investigated a complaint regarding a pest control company who was trapping animals using unmarked traps and failing to check the traps as required. Budish went out to the site where the trapping was taking place and found all traps un-marked. The trapper, who did not have a trapping license, was contacted and admitted to relocating animals and failing to check the traps for weeks. Budish cited the subject for using unmarked traps and failure to procure a trapping license as required by law. Communications with the company is underway, as they will be investigated as well.

While patrolling the riparian areas of Orange County, Warden B. Matias observed two men sitting along the bank of the San Diego Creek. Matias concealed himself upstream and watched the subjects for about an hour before he saw them pull a large gill net that was stretched across the water. About another hour later, Matias contacted the subjects on a trail downstream. Matias found a backpack containing the large gill net and another backpack that contained 58 striped mullet that one of the men attempted to hide in the bushes. The two subjects were charged with trespassing, possession of illegal gear, over limits, and fishing without licenses.



Patrol Boat Thresher wildlife officers were getting ready to start their last day of a three day patrol when Engineer Burman pointed out a buck near the water's edge. The officers glassed the buck and noticed 20 feet of line wrapped in the buck's antlers and wrapped around a rock. The buck was stuck there and the tide was rising. Lieutenant E. Kord, Wildlife Officers L. Arkinstall, J. Holemo and Engineer Burman entered the water with mask, snorkels,

fins and their dive knives to try and free the buck. Kord and Arkinstall reached the water's edge first after a short brisk swim. Kord and Arkinstall were able to cut away most of the line and free the buck from the rocks and send it on its way. The buck took to the water and swam to the next cove, where it lay down to rest and gain the energy needed to climb up the cliff behind the cove.



Warden D. Holyoak responded to a request for assistance from the Riverside County Sheriff's Department regarding a traffic collision involving over 100 goats. Once on scene, Holyoak and Lt. K. Chang assisted in removing the dead and injured goats from the roadway and subsequently euthanized seven goats on scene. Several other goats were removed from the roadway and put back into their pasture. 15 to 20 goats were struck by one vehicle.

Warden J. Paz was on patrol driving through a semi-suburban area of San Diego County when he observed a subject riding a racing type ATV on a public asphalt road with no helmet. Paz followed the subject who was traveling approximately 45 MPH down the county road. The subject sped through a busy church parking lot jumping the speed bumps while Paz safely followed behind him. Paz initiated his code three lights and siren to make a traffic stop on the subject. Paz followed the subject for a few hundred yards, when the subject turned his head and looked behind him only to see Paz's code three lights. The subject stopped his ATV and told Paz he lived around the corner. The subject also told Paz he could not turn off the ATV as he would have trouble turning it back on. Paz later found the ignition was missing. Paz ran the subject and the ATV through dispatch. Paz noticed the "SUR 13" tattoo on the subject's left forearm and asked him if he was on probation or parole. The subject said he had been off parole for two years. Dispatch advised Paz the subject was clear but the ATV came back stolen. Sizing up the subject at 6'-02" approximately 280 pounds Paz deployed K9 Mauser from his patrol vehicle and informed the subject he was riding around on a stolen ATV. The subject had earlier mentioned he was working on the ATV who belonged to a friend named Tim (couldn't give Paz a last name). The subject became angry and began using colorful language as if disappointed with himself. Paz placed handcuffs on the subject without incident. The 33 year old subject's mother walked over from their residence and Paz gave her permission to talk to her son. The subject's mother did not seem surprised her son was under arrest. She talked to her son for a few minutes and then left. Paz booked the subject into the county jail for receiving stolen property. Paz found the subject had been arrested multiple times for vehicle theft, evading officers, burglary, forgery, DUI, ID theft, battery, and receiving stolen property as well as other offenses.

The Southern District Natural Resource Volunteers volunteered over 1,020 hours during the month of July. They handled 145 calls from the public regarding wildlife, and participated in Wildlife Watch events in Palos Verdes, Monrovia, Long Beach, and Irvine. They participated in a Veterans Outreach event in Central Park, Rancho Cucamonga and represented the Department at National Night Out. They also assisted in many other Department programs, including the Avian Predator Relocation Project (6+ raptors).

Northern Enforcement District

Wildlife Officers M. Cervelli and C. Edwards followed up on a report of illegal mining activity on the Klamath River. The two plain clothes officers located and videotaped two suction dredges in operation on the Klamath River near Happy Camp. An enforcement detail was planned for the following day, when the officers returned in full uniform with additional help from other wildlife officers. Both suction dredges were still in the river and seized as evidence. The miners operating the suction dredges were eventually located and charges will be filed with the Siskiyou County District Attorney's Office. Reports of unlawful mining activity in Siskiyou County have been increasing.

Warden M. Cervelli received information of an illegal water diversion located in Willow Creek, a tributary of the Klamath River and salmon/steelhead habitat. Officer Cervelli located the pump, as well as a marijuana cultivation site, water tanks, and a large motorhome all on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) property. Cervelli conducted surveillance and discovered that the owners of an adjacent private parcel were responsible for the grow and had blocked the entrance to the BLM property with a locked gate. The occupants were also filling a large water tank in the back of a pickup truck with water from the creek to water their other marijuana grow across the street. Warden Cervelli contacted BLM and the North State Marijuana Investigation Team (NSMIT) and conducted a joint investigation which led to a search warrant. Two subjects were arrested at the private parcel and booked into Siskiyou County Jail. The charges include illegal cultivation of marijuana, possession of marijuana and methamphetamine for sale, felon in possession of a firearm/ammunition, and conspiracy. Cervelli will also be following up with multiple Fish and Game Code violations related to the illegal diversion of water, for the purpose of cultivating marijuana on public land.

The Northern Enforcement District received dispositions in two recent cases involving the take of bald eagles. One suspect who is a 3rd striker was sentenced to 13 years in prison (suspended) and six months in county jail for shooting a bald eagle from his vehicle, felon in possession of a firearm, and dissuading a witness. The Siskiyou County District Attorney's Office complemented Warden M. Cervelli's work, commenting that his outstanding investigation is what led to a disposition of that magnitude. In the second case, Warden C. Edwards investigated a suspect who killed a bald eagle and took a bear at night with hounds. The investigation included serving simultaneous search warrants on three locations and obtaining a follow-up search warrant for evidence contained on cell phones. The cell phone evidence included videos of the crime that were recovered after the suspect had deleted them. The suspect was sentenced to three years' probation, one year no hunting, and \$2200 in fines and penalties.

Warden J. Brennan began an investigation, which later led to felony charges, into a subject who was dumping large amounts of household garbage and waste along a tributary of Butte Creek. Brennan located items within the garbage which led him back to a residence in Magalia. The residence did not have electricity, but contained copious amounts of similar garbage, and vehicles in various stages of dis-repair. Upon a vehicle registration check of a car in the driveway of the home, it was found to have current stolen registration tabs. The owner of the vehicle / home was also found to be a multiple convicted felon on searchable felony probation. Brennan later returned to the residence with several deputies. A search of the premises yielded ammunition, a police style expandable baton, and metal knuckles.

Wildlife Officers Z. Awbrey, N. Buckler, B. Rose and Lieutenant K. Kroll worked extremely hard throughout the month assisting members of the CDFW Marijuana Enforcement Team, local Sheriffs offices, US Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management with numerous marijuana grows. Unfortunately, the growers have discovered the remote National Forest lands within the North Sierras, and are reaping the benefits of the abundant water and sunshine. The officers have assisted with the eradication of 118,585 total marijuana plants within the high country of Plumas and Sierra counties in the past month. A total of six growers have been apprehended in the raids.



Along with the marijuana plants eradicated, the officers have removed countless streambed obstructions, diversions, and water impoundments. Bears in these remote locations which



would typically have very little contact with humans, are becoming habituated to raiding the growers camps and trash dumps. Evidence of very high bear activity was seen on nearly every grow. Evidence of bears directly eating concentrated fertilizers was also seen. Dangerous chemicals such as carbofuran were located within several of the Sierra County sites, and some of the locations were unable to be eradicated by the teams.

Wildlife Officers S. LaFave and M. Michilizzi conducted a high risk felony stop after Michilizzi observed a wanted felon drive past them. The subject had been on the run for over two months and was wanted in connection with a couple drive-by shootings and weapons violations.

Lt. LaFave conducted a vehicle stop on a subject he paced at over 100 miles per hour and was weaving in and out of traffic. Lt. LaFave approached the passenger side vehicle and could see a large male adult, in the driver seat, holding his cell phone. The subject was advised to roll down the dark tinted window and Lt. LaFave could see that the man was recording the stop. Lt. LaFave advised him why he pulled the man over then asked him if he had a gun in the car. The man stated there was an unloaded handgun in the glove box. The scenario was almost exactly like the officer involved shooting that had just occurred in Minnesota. The man was advised to place his hands on the steering wheel and Lt. LaFave removed and cleared the weapon, which was unloaded. The subject and firearm were clear. Lt. LaFave thought he recognized the man's name and asked if he played in the NFL. The man stated six years with the Buffalo Bills. Lt. LaFave cited and released the subject for the traffic violation.

Warden D. Moskat made a felony arrest on an argumentative 17 year old who was in possession of marijuana for sale. Moskat seized several bags of marijuana, baggies, scale, cash, and a cell phone. Moskat booked the juvenile into Juvenile Hall on charges of possession of marijuana for sale and minor in possession of alcohol. The 17 year old seemed unscathed by the arrest/booking process until Moskat made a phone call to his mother.

The Natural Resource Volunteer Program Rancho Cordova Chapter provided 13,467 hours of support to the Department in fiscal year 2015-16. The chapter completed 2,614 assignments, made 30,653 field contacts during outreach events and LED details and handled 9,975 phone calls.