

DATE: December 5, 2007 FILE REF: 2006 Deer Season Report

TO: DNR Secretary Matt Frank

FROM: Chief Warden Randy Stark

SUBJECT: 2007 Nine Day Deer Gun Season Report

Attached is the 2007 Bureau of Law Enforcement Report for the 2007 Nine-Day Deer Gun Season.

First off, I'd like to thank everyone who helped make the deer season a success - all of our wardens, call center and hotline staff, safety section staff, and others whose dedicated efforts led to the **second safest season on record**. Additionally, this achievement would not have been impossible without the selfless efforts of our core of Volunteer Hunter Education Instructors.

The warden service also greatly appreciates the collaborative efforts of our partners in police departments, Sheriffs Departments, the State Patrol, Wildlife Management, and Customer Service and Licensing across the state in making this a successful season.

And of course, I like to thank the vast majority of our deer hunters who support our efforts through the licenses they buy, the cooperation they provide, and who do things right to enhance Wisconsin's cherished deer hunting tradition.

## **HUNTING TRENDS AND ISSUES**

### **Hunting Techniques**

The methods used by hunters continue to change in Wisconsin. Many wardens attribute these changing methods to the changing age structure of the hunting community. While there was good participation in the hunt on opening day, it is becoming more and more evident that the amount of sustained effort put forth throughout the season by hunters appears to be decreasing annually.

More hunters are using comfortable tower blinds, with an increasing number with four walls, roof, windows, radio, TV, & heater that offer expansive views and frequently overlook baited areas.

Fewer deer drives are noted by wardens each passing year as the size and organizational efforts of hunting groups diminishes and rural residential development increases. The majority of hunters now seem to be hunting from fixed positions, often for a few hours in the morning, leaving at mid day, and then perhaps returning in the late afternoon. In part, this has reduced the number of road hunting complaints/violations encountered, particularly early in the season.

There is a significant increase in the use of inexpensive camouflage tent blinds. The increased incidence of use is becoming a safety concern because when hunters enter these blinds, the effect of blaze orange is lost and hunters cannot be seen unless they place blaze orange on the outside of their blind. Some hunters are doing this. **NOTE:** Placing blaze orange on the outside of these blind will be a required in 2008 while hunting on state lands.

The use of bait for deer continues to be a wide spread practice in areas where it is currently legal, particularly in northern half of Wisconsin. Corn and apples continue to be the most prevalent bait used.

### **All Terrain Vehicle Use**

Wardens in the northern parts of the state report ATV use continues to be a growing problem. The number of ATVs is increasing. People are using them to bring in bait, haul in stands and drag deer out - increasingly on properties that are not authorized for ATV use. This is causing more damage to the landscape, hunter conflict, and eroding the experience of non-ATV users. These issues are likely to increase as the large “baby boomer” segment of the overall hunting community ages along with the rest of society. In the coming seasons, efforts will be made to increase enforcement, use the media to emphasize the ATV regulations prior to deer season, and perhaps include certain ATV laws in the deer hunting regulation pamphlet.

### **The Changing Landscape and the Implications for Hunters**

Increasing rural residential development, changing land use and ownership patterns, and increasing parcelization of the rural landscape continues to adversely impact hunters in most all areas of the state.

With paper companies and some utility companies rapidly divesting themselves of large tracts of land previously open to hunting, the landscape is changing rapidly under the feet of the Wisconsin hunter.

These trends are at play statewide. Reports of wardens from across the state reflect the following common themes with respect to changing landscape trends:

1. Decreasing access to lands previously open to hunting as these lands change hands. Many new owners, after investing heavily to buy the land for hunting themselves, are not interested in allowing others to hunt on the property. Wardens also reported hunters commenting that they, their families and children have lost their long held places to hunt due to the landowner selling out their lands for hunting leases.
2. An increasing number of landowners do not hunt and do not allow hunting. In some extreme cases, wardens report people buying land for the sole purpose of ensuring the land is not hunted. Wardens also are receiving complaints of landowners engaging in “legitimate” activities on their own land designed to frustrate hunting efforts on adjacent lands.
3. An increasing parcelization of land, resulting in an increasing number of land owners, coupled with an increased amount of baiting and feeding, is impacting the distribution of deer on the landscape.
4. Significant shifts in hunting pressure from private lands to public property as lands previously open to hunting are no longer open to the public.
5. Wardens are beginning to see an increase in issues associated with permanent tree stands being built on state land and portable stands being left out on state land overnight. Wardens believe this is the result of hunters in these areas having fewer places to go, resulting in increased competition for hunting spots.
6. As larger tracts are being broken down into smaller parcels, hunters who own these smaller parcels are hunting on these smaller acreage tracts of land. Many are baiting in an effort to draw deer on to the smaller tracts that normally may not hold deer. When privately owned large tracts of land adjacent to these small tracts of land are lightly hunted or not hunted at all, a refuge effect is created and this is impacting the movement of deer. This may account for widely divergent experiences reported to wardens regarding the number of deer they see. Some hunters are seeing no or relatively few deer and as a result seriously doubt DNR population estimates, yet other hunters report seeing many deer. Some hunters stated that they saw a lot of deer in the fall but struggled to find deer during

the gun deer season. These different reports would sometimes be just miles apart. Bottom line, there seems to be an unequal distribution of the deer herd, and changing land ownership patterns and food sources greatly affect where the deer are.

7. Wardens report that some people hunting public property seem less tolerant of other hunters resulting in conflict. Throughout the state wardens reported conflicts revolving around baiting and stand placement on public lands. The upshot is that hunters believe that placement of bait or setting out stands or erecting blinds on public lands reserves their spot.
8. Wardens are reporting increased “neighborly tension” as there are more landowners on the landscape and more efforts are directed to patrolling their property lines during deer season. In one instance, wardens and a Shawano County Sheriff’s Deputy mitigated a conflict that resulted from hunters who were leasing land mistakenly ordered a landowner off his own land by telling the landowner he’d cut the tree down while the landowner was sitting in it if he did not leave. The individual leasing the land thought the landowner was on the land they were leasing. Fortunately, the landowner kept his composure, left and called authorities. Investigation revealed an apparent miscommunication or misunderstanding regarding the boundaries of the areas leased by the hunters.
9. Increasing numbers of hunters of ordinary means are expressing concern of being priced out of a place to hunt. The impact of leasing Managed Forest Law (MFL) lands was evident in the Tigerton/Ort Lumber Company Lands in Waupaca and Shawano County where significantly fewer numbers of hunters were found in areas that traditionally hosted large numbers of hunters. Over 10,000 acres of land previously open to hunting were closed, divided and leased to a few hunters, displacing many other hunters.

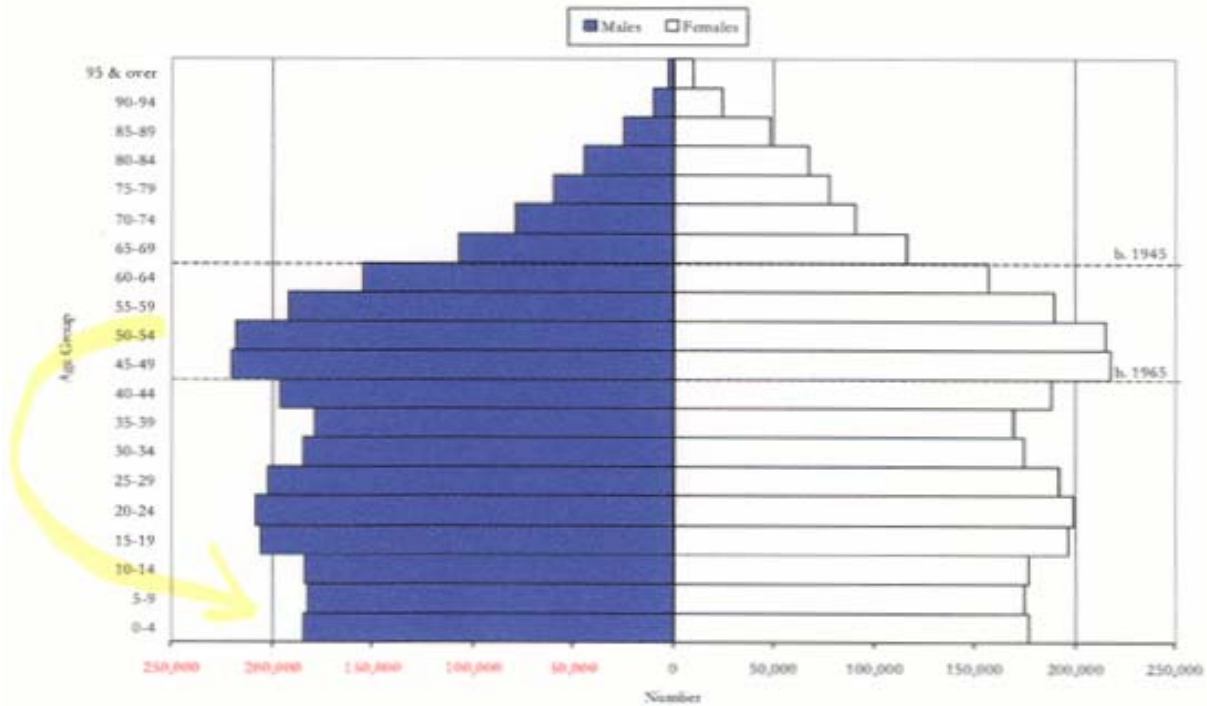
These trends serve to underscore several important issues for the future of hunting in Wisconsin:

1. The significance of the recent reauthorization of the Stewardship Program to the future of hunting. We are fortunate this program has been reauthorized in view of the current and anticipated changes occurring on Wisconsin’s landscape.
2. Since nearly 80% of hunters hunt on private land, the significance of landowner relationships and creating incentives for landowners to open their land for hunting that can compete with the financial attractiveness of leasing will be a significant issue for the future of hunting. This is particularly true with the aging of the land-owning baby boomer generation. In the next 25 years, we’ll see the largest intergenerational transfer of forested and agricultural land in history. What happens over time to lands will have a significant impact on the future of hunting and the management of the deer herd.
3. The confluence of trends relating to baiting and feeding for deer, and trends related with landscape changes are combining to create a synergistic effect that increases the impacts of these individual trends.

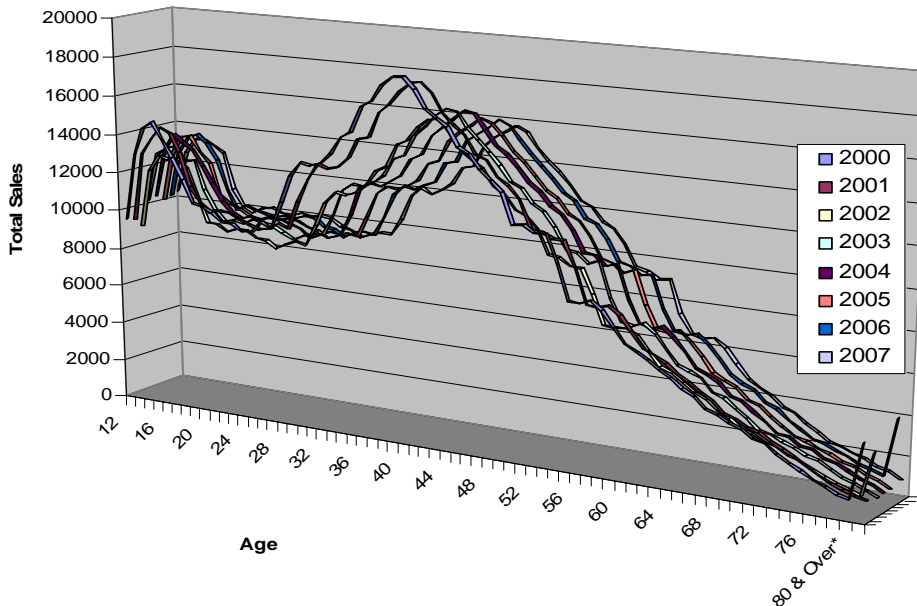
### **Demographics and Age Structure of the Wisconsin Deer Gun Hunting Community**

The aging of the baby boomer generation will result in a significant change in the age structure of society. Below is the forecasted age structure distribution by sex and age for 2010. Note the high number in the age-cohort born between 1945 and 1965. Note the number people 1-14 years of age as compared to the number of people 45-55 years of age.

## 5-Year Age Group Pyramid by Sex, Wisconsin, 2010 Projection



Below is the age distribution of licensed firearm deer hunters for the eight seasons (2000-2007). With the exception of the age 15-29 cohort, the age structure of the Wisconsin firearm deer hunting community somewhat mirrors the overall age structure in Wisconsin. Wardens are reporting the age structure of the hunting community becoming more apparent now in the field. The largest cohort age group currently represented is now in the mid-to-late forties.



An examination of these charts shows that within a decade it's a demographic inevitability that we'll have fewer hunters in the future than we have today. As the community ages, there will likely be an annual incremental small drop in participation each year over the next decade. Additionally, the population of hunters will be smaller in proportion to the overall population. The implications of this trend for fish and wildlife conservation are many – the future vitality of hunting related conservation organizations, changes in the fish and wildlife program funding streams, reduced ability to control wildlife populations through hunting, and reduced economic impact of hunters, to name a few.

If the hunting community in Wisconsin comes together on this issue now, there are opportunities to stabilize and sustain Wisconsin's cherished hunting tradition. The mid-40's cohort of licensed deer gun hunters is 93% male. However, license sales reflect an increase in the number of female hunters. In the 12-16 cohort age range, females comprise nearly 21% of the licensed deer gun hunters. This is a reflection of the hunting community becoming more inclusive as hunting parents are introducing their daughters to deer hunting, and the success of programs like Becoming an Outdoors Woman. This is a very encouraging trend, as creating an inclusive community is also critical to encouraging Hmong, Hispanic, and other cultures into the hunting community.

The additional good news is that, for the next decade anyway, we have an army of potential mentors who can introduce young people to hunting in the coming years before they hang up the rifle. Surveys and experience indicate that it takes a hunter to make a hunter. In the future, it will be critical to increase opportunity for youth to be exposed to hunting in contexts that emphasize connecting to the natural world and the social aspects of hunting - spending time afield with family and friends, sharing stories, and creating memories. Answering this challenge will require the hunting community to unify around this issue and work with policy makers, landowners, diverse cultures, and others to develop safe and innovative ways to increase hunting opportunities for young people.

### **HARMONY IN THE WOODS - Cultural Outreach with the Hmong Community**

There were no incidents reported to law enforcement involving Hmong and non-Hmong hunters during the 2007 deer gun season. While there were Hmong hunters afield, wardens reported noticeably fewer Hmong hunters in areas of the state that have traditionally been frequented by Hmong hunters.

There has been tension in the woods over the last couple of years due to a couple of tragic incidents involving Hmong and non-Hmong hunters in recent years. Pre-season outreach efforts in the Hmong community and contacts with Hmong hunters suggest that tension over past incidents was the leading reason for reduced participation. The attention drawn to the Nichols trial in Marinette County, and the timing of the trial in October, drew significant public attention to the tensions just prior to the deer season.

In an effort to reduce tensions and sensitize hunters, Hmong and Caucasian alike, to respect and learn to be comfortable when they are in the woods and fields together, a cooperative effort between DNR, the Hmong community, and conservation organizations called "Harmony in the Woods" was initiated in July 2007.

The long term initiative has several goals. The goals include creating a safe and enjoyable outdoor recreational environment for everyone, creating shared cultural understanding, building long term relationships that honor differences, and creating a more inclusive conservation community into the future.

To accomplish these goals several actions were taken that included:

- Building upon previous efforts, in July 2007, a retreat was held at the MacKenzie Center with Hmong community leaders, conservation group leaders from the Conservation Congress, the National Wild Turkey Federation, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, Wisconsin Bowhunters Association, Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, and the Woodland Land Owners Association and staff from several DNR programs. The purpose was to share cultural and historical information, compare perspectives on natural resources and identify common ground and opportunities to work together in the future.
- In July 2007, wardens and existing Hmong Hunter Education instructors conducted instructor training with members of Lao Veterans Association from across Wisconsin. The training resulted in 47 Hunter Education graduates, 12 of those new Hunter Education instructors certified to teach Hunter Education, with the balance becoming an instructor after an apprentice period. These new instructors can now fan out and hold Hunter Education courses in the Hmong language across Wisconsin in the future.
- In July, the Bureau of Law Enforcement hired Eileen Hocker to assist in law enforcement outreach efforts across the state with the Hmong community.
- Wardens regularly participated in call-in shows on Hmong radio in Northeast Wisconsin.
- Customer Service and Licensing hired May Vang, a bilingual Customer Service Representative to staff the new DNR Call Center.
- In an effort to provide DNR services to the Hmong community and enhance relationships, Secretary Frank, wardens and customer service representatives attended Hmong Holiday celebrations in Green Bay.
- Wardens are working with the Hmong community to introduce them to local conservation organizations, including the Conservation Congress, and establish a Hmong conservation organization.
- The 2007 Deer Hunting Regulation Pamphlet included highlight pages in the Hmong language.
- Deputy Secretary Pat Henderson, DNR staff, and Wisconsin Wildlife Federation Executive Director George Meyer attended the Hmong Mutual Assistance Association meeting in November.
- Extensive media outreach greatly aided in communicating the goals of the initiative and reducing tensions, particularly in the Green Bay area.

One of the desired states of our “Harmony in the Woods” initiative was that when a Hmong hunter and a non-Hmong hunter met in the woods, each would just see another hunter who shared the same appreciation for the outdoors and love of hunting. The following stories represent what can be.

***Young People Leading By Example*** - Warden Ted Dremel (Waupaca) encountered two Hmong hunters hunting in a public hunting area in Waushara County. The Hmong hunters had harvested a deer which was a substantial distance from the road. One of the Hmong hunters was an elderly man and was not able to drag the deer for a long period of time. The other hunter was tired from doing most of the work himself. The two Hmong hunters encountered two young Caucasian hunters who saw they were having difficulty dragging the deer. The two younger hunters helped them drag the deer several hundred yards to their vehicle. When they all reached the vehicle, the hunters who helped with the deer gave the tired hunters water and snacks. The Hmong hunters told Dremel they appreciated the hunters’ help and before help arrived thought they may have to return to Appleton to get assistance. Thankfully, the parents of these young people taught them the virtues of respect, understanding, leadership, and helping others - and they in turn modeled for others in society to learn and draw inspiration from. It’s refreshing to know that the future is in the hands of young people like this.

*What “Harmony in the Woods” Feels Like* - Warden Jeff Dauterman, Antigo, met a Hmong/Asian fellow named Paul who moved to Antigo this summer from San Francisco. In October, Paul stopped by the DNR office several times for assistance. Jeff invested time with Paul showing him maps of public hunting areas, teaching him how to determine if a particular property was open to public hunting, and providing advice about the laws. Jeff was impressed with Paul’s diligent efforts to do things right. However, Paul informed Jeff he had serious concerns for his safety if he went hunting - he was worried about being harassed like other Hmong hunters. Paul was aware of these issues from media accounts of the two tragedies as well as from Asian friends and associates. Paul was told not to go hunting and that they themselves would not go hunting because of that fear. Jeff told Paul that hunter harassment does occur, and informed him of the hunter harassment law. Jeff told Paul he should not view all non-Hmong hunters as having a bias toward the Hmong. Jeff told Paul that some deer hunters tend to get somewhat protective of "their" area to hunt on public lands. Jeff advised Paul to scout out the public lands prior to the season and pick 4-5 areas that looked good. Then on opening day, Jeff suggested Paul not to go into the area until after the opening hours. That way Paul would be able to see if the area was being hunted by others. If others were there, Paul could adjust from that area or go to another area he had scouted. Jeff told Paul that he would have the same plan if he was hunting a new area on public hunting grounds. It was just common courtesy. Jeff also told Paul that after lunch on Sunday of opening weekend, pretty much everyone pulls out and he would have 1000's of acres all to himself.

Jeff was impressed with Paul and decided he would check up on him after the season. Jeff stopped by the business Paul owns and manages and asked how Paul's season went. This was his story.

Paul said he really loves to hunt, so despite the fears, he checked out areas and followed Jeff’s advice. Paul was so confident in his approach to this season that he convinced a Hmong friend from Sheboygan to hunt who would not go for years due to the fear. Paul did mention it was hard to convince the friend's wife, but in the end, she said okay. Paul and his friend went out hunting on a heavily used public hunting area in Langlade County. They found a spot and hunted. Paul shot at and wounded a buck that ran toward another group of hunters. Paul trailed the deer and found that another hunter had killed the deer. They had a pleasant discussion on who should take the deer, and Paul immediately gave the deer to the other hunter, because that hunter had delivered the fatal shot.

On Sunday, Paul continued to hunt the area. He left his spot for awhile, and when he came back found another hunter sitting in Paul's chair at Paul's stand. Paul had another pleasant and long conversation with this hunter who was from Wausau. Paul invited the hunter to sit in Paul's stand anytime that Paul was not using it. Paul and his friend hunted other public areas in Langlade County, and had a positive contact with Warden Tim Otto. Later in the season Paul's friend harvested a nice doe. Paul and his friend hunted pretty much the entire season.

Paul was really excited about his successful season. Paul said that it really doesn't matter to him whether he gets game or not, he just really loves to get outdoors and the chance to connect with the natural world, and experience a regeneration of his spirit. Paul's success and confidence has grown to the point that Paul and friends are already planning on muzzleloader hunting, as well as bow hunting next fall.

In a way, Paul's story is everyone’s story. It’s a story everyone can learn from. It’s a story that helps everyone understand how important creating Harmony in the Woods is to the future of hunting. It’s a story that is a source of inspiration for Paul’s courage, Jeff’s service orientation and faith in others, and how the actions of the unknown people in the story have a profound impact on people they never met.

I'd like to thank the Hmong community for their collaboration on the "Harmony in the Woods" initiative. Many in the Hmong community are very passionate about the outdoors and are an important part of the Wisconsin hunting heritage. Given the changing cultural demographics, it is vitally important to future conservation efforts that we continue to work together to build a diverse conservation community. This will be a critical element in our future success in protecting the natural resources on behalf of future generations. We look forward to building on the relationships created over the past year.

**HUNTING RELATED SHOOTING INCIDENTS**

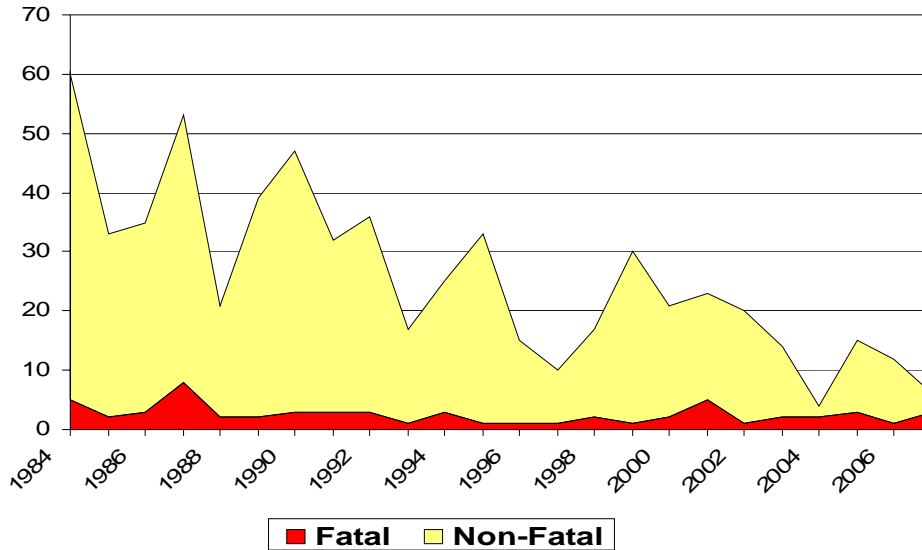
On the statewide historical scale, **the 2007 Nine-Day Gun Deer Season was the second safest on record.** Our hearts go out to the families who suffered tragic loss of a family member or suffered injury during the season. On the individual level, any accidental loss of life is a tragic event. Our goal is to eliminate all injury and loss of life while hunting, and through thorough investigation to learn what happened in these incidents, so we can work to prevent such incidents in the future.

There were a total of six incidents, of which three were fatal (Burnett, Price, and Waushara Counties). Deer drives once again contributed to 50% (3) of all of the incidents during the season. In every case the shooter was shooting at a running deer. In one case a stander had chosen to move from his assigned spot without notifying the other members of the drive and was fatally shot by another stander in the group as a deer ran by him. Self inflicted injuries dropped to 16% (1) this season. This was refreshing news in that statistics show that about 30% of all gun deer incidents are self-inflicted injuries; hunters shooting themselves.



This was the second time in history that we've had a gun deer season with incidents totally less than 10. The first season was in 2004 with only 5 incidents reported. Below is a graph depicting the incidents for the gun deer season since 1984, which clearly shows hunting is safe and getting safer.

## History of Gun Deer Incidents



Another positive down turn in trends was the number of juvenile hunters (under age 18) that were involved in causing hunting incidents. Only one was reported and the shooter was age 17.

The incident rate for this season was 1.06 incidents per 100,000 hunters, well below the national average or three incidents per 100,000.

### Synopsis of Individual Incidents by Region

#### Northeast Region

- **FATAL** - On the first Sunday of the season a grandfather was “still hunting” through some pines, while his 18 year old grandson moved from his stand towards the grandfather. Neither knew the other was there and the grandson draped a white and brown blanket over his shoulders because he was cold. He was also wearing black pants and no blaze orange cap. The grandfather saw what he believed was a deer through the trees and brush and fired one shot hitting the grandson. A non-fatal hunting related shooting incident occurred in Green Lake County on the White River Public Hunting Grounds. A hunter apparently in a tree dropped his 30-30 rifle to the ground. The firearm discharged and the bullet struck his foot, groin and lodged in his abdomen. This individual survived, however, is still in critical condition and has not been able to be interviewed.

#### Southeast Region

- There were no hunting accidents reported in the Southeast Region.
- A very lucky person - There was however one very close-call. On Monday, November 19<sup>th</sup> Warden Mitchell investigated a near hit. A shotgun slug went through the knit hat worn by a 14 year old hunter. The shooter has not been positively identified.

#### West Central Region

- In Buffalo County, a hunting accident occurred on Tuesday, November 20<sup>th</sup>, during a deer drive. One of the drivers shot at a deer as it headed around his location and toward a stander approximately 150 yards away. Neither the victim nor the shooter could see each other at the time although the shooter

admitted he knew the victim was posted in that area. The victim was hit in the right calf muscle by one of the rounds.

- In Dunn County, a group of 10 hunters were making a deer drive when 3 deer ran between two drivers and one person was grazed by a 12 gauge shotgun slug in the left hip.

**Northern Region**

- **FATAL** - Wardens investigated one fatal hunting incident on private land which occurred on Monday, November 19<sup>th</sup>. Upon investigation it was discovered three men were tracking a deer when one of the men had an unwanted discharge. His hunting partner was shot through the shoulder/chest area with a 30-06 round. When the shooter’s rifle was inspected, the safety was in the off position.
- **FATAL** - Wardens investigated a fatal hunting incident in southwest Price County. The incident involved a deer drive with about 15 members of the hunting party. The victim had moved from his predetermined standing location when a deer ran between the victim and shooter. The victim was out of view of the shooter during the incident.

**South Central Region**

- Another very lucky person - This is not a non-reportable hunting incident because there was no injury requiring medical treatment, but it demonstrates the role luck plays in separating a bruise from potentially serious injury. Wardens Heather Gottschalk of Dodge County and Recreational Safety Warden Catherina Nooyen of Madison investigated a hunting incident in which a hunter was hit in his left hip by a 12 gauge slug. The investigation determined that the victim was walking a stand of corn with two others. From the standers’ position none of the drivers in the corn were visible, despite the blaze orange. When a deer came out the end and ran at an angle past the standers, each stander shot at the deer. During this time the victim was hit with a slug in his left hip area. The slug spun him around and knocked him to his knees. The victim had a box of slugs in his left jacket pocket. The slug hit this box, damaged it and may have deflected the slug enough to keep it from penetrating any clothing. The victim received only a bruise.

**Homes & Vehicles Struck by Bullets/Slugs**

**Reported Incidents of Houses Shot**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>

The changing landscape in the form of increasing rural residential development brings with it safety concerns. There were a total of (19) houses and (2) cars struck by bullets during the 2007 deer gun season. Following are a synopsis of the individual incidents:

**Northeast Region**

- The Winnebago Sheriff investigated a house near Neenah/Menasha which was struck by a slug.
- In Outagamie County there was an incident in which an occupied parked car was struck by a slug resulting in broken front and rear windows. The car was in a state wildlife area parking lot and the bullet traveled from the other side of the road. A 14 year old male occupant in the car had a wound to his forearm from the glass; however he did not require medical attention.
- Two residences were reported struck with bullets/slugs in Shawano County.
- The Waupaca County Sheriff’s Department responded to a home that was struck by gun fire near Manawa.
- On Sunday, November 18, 2007, Wardens Chris Kratcha (Sturgeon Bay) and Darren Kuhn (Kewaunee) assisted the Door County Sheriff’s Dept. with the investigation of a house shot by a road hunter. The shooter and deer were in Kewaunee Co and the house was a half-mile north, just into Door Co. The hunter exited his truck and shot four times at two deer running across a field. The

hunter was using a 30.06 caliber rifle. The hunter shot despite the tops of several buildings being visible beyond the crest of the hill in the field. The bullet entered the house above an unused front door entryway. The bullet continued through a second wall and stopped after hitting the bathroom wall. People were home at the time, but no one was injured. The hunter was cited for shooting from the roadway and criminal charges are pending for the reckless use of a firearm.

- On Saturday, November 24, 2007, Wardens Kratcha and Protogere assisted the Door County Sheriff's Dept. with the investigation of a house suspected to have been shot by a hunter participating in a nearby deer drive. The hunter was believed to have been shooting at a running deer despite numerous buildings and a farm visible in the background. The bullet hit a large viewing window in the front of the house. Fortunately, the bullet did not penetrate the second pane of glass and dropped into the sill. The homeowners were seated at a table near the window when they heard the glass break. No one was injured. The case is to be referred to the Door Co District Attorney's Office.

### **South Central Region**

- Wardens Dave Wood and Nathan Kroeplin assisted a Dane County Sheriff Deputy with a complaint where a house south of Mt. Horeb was hit with a rifle bullet. The homeowner was inside of the home when the bullet hit and missed him by about 4 feet. The wardens and deputy were unable to locate the shooter.

### **Southeast Region**

- Warden Bill Mitchell reported that on Saturday, Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> a slug penetrated a house. The hunter fired three times at a running deer from across a road with the house in plain view. After penetrating the outside wall, the sabot slug struck a piano, ricocheted and then came to rest on the floor next to the home owner. The shooter was 143 yards from the house. The shooter was charged with shooting across the road after agreeing to pay the homeowner for the piano and repairs to the house.
- Wardens Drake and Zeihen responded to two incidents where residences were hit with slugs. In one case, the slug came from an unknown location and only cracked the vinyl siding of the home. The other case was more serious. The slug went through the glass of a patio door, across the kitchen, through another wall, across a hall and into the wall of the bathroom. Luckily no one was home at the time. The slug traveled 163 yards across an open field. The house was plainly visible from the shooter's location. Drake interviewed three hunters on the property from which the slug originated and those hunters said they were the only ones hunting and had not shot or even heard a shot. Later investigation found that there was another hunter in the group and he had shot. The other hunters knew this. The case has been turned over to the District Attorney's office for review of potential charges against the shooter and charges against the other hunters for obstructing the investigation. The shooter was shooting at a running deer and was unaware he had hit the house.
- Warden Doug Zeihen investigated a house shot in Waukesha County. A member of a relative's hunting party shot a relative's house.

### **West Central Region**

- Two of the houses hit by bullets were in Marathon County, and both were investigated by Warden Robin Barnhardt, Deputy Warden Chris Hamerla, and the Marathon County Sheriff's Department. In one case, a bullet had exited the woods, crossed a county highway, went through a house window and across the living room before becoming lodged in a bible on a shelf. The residents were inside the house when the shooting occurred. The investigation identified the responsible hunter and enforcement action was taken. The second case was reported through the Hotline. A bullet crashed through a kitchen patio door shattering the glass onto the female resident who was seated at the dining table 2-3 feet away. The female suffered two small lacerations on her leg from flying glass. The bullet lodged into the patio door frame. Investigation of the incident continues.
- In St. Croix County, Warden Rick Rosen and Regional Warden Mark Burmesch assisted the St. Croix County Sheriff's Department with an investigation of a home being shot in the township of Stanton.

The round (30 cal. rifle) came from the direction of public and private lands, went through an exterior wall, and lodged in a laundry room door. There was no specific time identified by the homeowner when the round came through the wall. No one was injured. Investigation of the incident continues.

- The Chippewa County Sheriff's Department investigated one complaint of a bullet striking a house near Jim Falls.
- The Portage County Sheriff's Department also investigated a complaint of a house being struck by a bullet.
- In Wood County, Warden Stewart Smith assisted the Wood County Sheriff's Department with an investigation into an incident where two vehicles were damaged by a bullet on state land near the Sandhill Wildlife Area. The windows of the car were shot out and the bullet then struck a truck parked nearby.

### **Northern Region**

- Warden Pat Novesky had one incident of a house being shot with only enough damage to crack the siding. With the minimal damage, the shot likely came from some distance away and it was not possible to locate the source of the shot.
- Warden Dorn had one report of a bullet that passed into a window and didn't penetrate the inside window pane. The bullet seemed to have expanded suggesting that it passed through something on the way to the house. No suspects were encountered as the distance from the shooter is unknown.

## **HUNTERS LEADING BY EXAMPLE – Passing on the Tradition**

These stories reveal the magic behind the hunt, why people are drawn to the experience, and what they take away from it. This portion of the report is designed to communicate the human interest and social value of the deer hunting experience from the eyes of the warden in the field. While as wardens we often deal with the negative side of things because it's our job to seek out and apprehend violators, we believe these stories highlight the rewarding experiences of the deer hunt that come from being with family and friends, passing the tradition on to the next generation. These stories demonstrate the vast majority of hunters are very good and honest people.

- ***It Takes a Hunter to Make a Hunter*** - Warden Mike Nice (Richland Co.) checked a father/son combination. The son was only eight years old and wanted his dad to take him deer hunting because he thought it would be exciting. The father stated he wouldn't have gone or even bought a license if it wasn't for his son. The father found land in which he obtained permission to hunt on the opening weekend. The father found blaze orange for he and his son and proceeded to the field opening day. Upon contact with Warden Nice the son was happy to report he spotted a four point buck coming towards him and his dad. One shot killed the buck and the memories shared will last a life time. The son told Warden Nice he can't wait until he turns 12 so he can go gun deer hunting. The father stated, "I guess we started something!"
- ***A Youngster's Trophy Experience*** - Warden Tyler Strelow contacted one hunter on public property that was dragging a doe out of the field with the help of his 11 year old son. He told Warden Strelow that after he shot a big buck a few years ago, all he has concentrated on is taking his son in the field to pass down the tradition. The hunter stated that he had a fantastic hunt that morning. He and his son were sitting in a ground blind when a doe started working her way towards them. The hunter went on and told the story like the deer was a huge trophy animal. The hunter's son said that he got to watch the deer come in and then his Dad harvested the animal. The son said that he cannot wait until next year when he gets to hunt, too. Dad stated that it was the best hunt he had ever had, and felt fortunate to have the opportunity to be out in the woods with his son.
- ***Knowing What's Important*** - On 11-23-07, Haydn Wolff, shot his first deer (a doe). He and his father, Michael Wolff, were sitting on private land in southeastern Dane County when Mike heard

deer approaching, and told Haydn to get ready. A doe and two yearlings walked into range of the hunters. Haydn fired at the doe and hit her, and then they began tracking the blood trail. At the end of the blood trail on adjacent private land where they had an agreement they could retrieve a deer, there was the deer and a hunter dressing it out. The hunter asked if they had shot the deer which he also shot and tagged. Mike replied, "Yes, it's my son's first deer." The hunter, Dennis Carothers, asked Haydn if he would like the deer. Of course, Haydn said yes. The hunter removed his tag, shook Haydn's hand and offered him congratulations on his first deer. He also shot the deer, but told Haydn since he shot it first, it's only right that he get the deer. Mr. Carothers gave up the deer and the opportunity to earn a buck authorization, but made this young boy's day!

- ***Ethical Behavior When No One is Looking*** - Warden Jeff King received a call reporting that a caller was in possession of an EAB sticker that a hunter surrendered to him to give to the warden. Warden King learned that Greg McGinnis of Monroe registered his buck at a gas station recently and the attendant at the station gave Greg an EAB Sticker. McGinnis read the rules and discovered that he should not have been given the EAB sticker and decided it was wrong for him to use it. Warden King sent a thank you letter to Greg for his ethical behavior.
- ***Providing Opportunity*** - A landowner and long time hunter education instructor took two disabled adults gun deer hunting opening weekend on his farm in Grant County. He and another hunter provided a gun deer hunting opportunity for two wheel chair restricted individuals. They both had opportunities to shoot at deer, though they were not successful in harvesting one. The landowner commented on how both individuals had enjoyed their day of deer hunting.
- ***Concerned Hunters Lend a Hand*** - USFWS Officer John Below (Horicon) and Warden Ben Nadolski (Waupun) responded to the Horicon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge reference an elderly hunter who was not answering his radio. The hunter's wife was concerned that something had happened to him. Several hunters in the area immediately volunteered to assist with the search for the elderly hunter. Before the search began, the missing elderly hunter responded to his wife on the radio that he was fine.
- ***Sharing the Experience*** - Warden Jason Higgins checked a father and son on Tuesday of the deer season sighting in a shotgun for the 12 year old. The father and son were going hunting but the father wanted his son to hunt the right way and was going to sit with the son throughout the deer season and not hunt himself.
- ***Helping to Ensure No Child is Left Inside*** - Warden Mark Schraufnagel (Shawano East) noted that one man who owns a large parcel of land was contacted by a hunter who had numerous unrelated young hunters out with him on the hunt. This individual was definitely doing his part to pass on the hunting tradition by allowing these young hunters to hunt on his land. Many of these young hunters did not have a place to hunt and this landowner opened his property to them – he's a hero in those kids' eyes (and he is in our eyes too).
- ***Citizen Assistance*** - Warden Mike Stahl (Oconto Falls) noted that a landowner and his son (15) agreed to watch a deer that was shot illegally in Oconto County. The deer was shot at around 1:00pm and not picked up until after 3:00pm on the last Sunday of the season. Warden Stahl received a call back from the cooperator who was able to provide a license number to local State Troopers and the registration station near the incident. A short time later the registration station reported that the suspect vehicle was at their station. Response and investigation resulted in three DNR related citations to be issued and two trespass cases are pending through the Oconto County Sheriff's Department.
- ***It's All About the Kids*** - Warden Bill Mitchell reports "Scott C. Sager (West Bend) has taught 3,483 students as a hunter safety instructor. Scott has always gone out of his way to take kids hunting. This year Scott was in a stand with his 12 year old daughter, Claire. Sixteen year old Kailee was in a nearby stand. Kailee let 6 deer including a 9 point buck go by her stand toward her younger sister

Claire so that she could get her first deer. Claire shot the 9 point buck that her sister let go by. Scott has told Mitchell several times: "It's all about the kids."

- ***It's a Family Affair*** - Walworth County Warden Jon Hagen reports that while standing at a registration station investigating a complaint, Warden Hagen observed a family of seven come into register a couple of deer. Warden Hagen had observed the same family out tracking a doe the day before that ended up getting away after a couple hours of tracking. The family consisted of an older gentleman and his wife, two males in their 30's, one female in her 30's, and two young girls around the ages of 4 and 7. The entire family, consisting of three generations, had participated in the deer drives in which they had harvested two does. The young girls were able to pick out a candy treat for all their work.
- ***Grandma Steps In*** - Warden Fetting spoke with a young hunter in southern Wood County who told Fetting that 2007 was his second season. The young hunter's eyes lit up and he smiled from ear to ear as he told Fetting a story from last season when he harvested his first deer. During the course of the conversation Fetting spoke with the young hunter's grandmother and uncle who were also hunting. The young hunter's grandmother told Fetting that she and her son have been taking her grandson hunting for the past two years because, "his dad can't take him and he loves to go."
- ***Future Warden Material Here*** - A 15 year old young man did a lot to help Warden Cross to apprehend an illegal road hunter. Besides reporting what he knew about the incident, the young man also tracked down other witnesses in the area to determine what they had seen, enabling Cross to cite the offender based on eye-witness accounts.
- ***Well Documented Cooperation*** - Warden Grudzinski received a call from a landowner that observed a shoot from the road violation. When Grudzinski met with the landowner to obtain a statement, the landowner had already completed a very detailed statement using his own form. The landowner had worked in loss prevention at Fleet Farm and had used a company statement form. The suspect was apprehended thanks to the excellent information provided by the landowner.
- ***What a Gift*** - Warden Tim Ebert stated a landowner who locks the gate to his private land observed a father and his 12 year old daughter getting ready to go hunting. After speaking with the father, the landowner provided him with a key for the gate. The father and daughter were then able to access more land and avoid some of the hunting pressure. The landowner later learned that the daughter shot her first deer ever. A spike buck!
- ***Take Me to Deer Camp Grandpa*** - Warden Bayer and Warden Peters checked several hunters who were taking youths hunting. One hunter approached Wardens Peters and Bayer on the side of the road. The hunter had his grandson with him and said that although they could see more deer down south in farm country his grandson wanted to come up to deer camp and hunt in the north woods.
- ***Making a Difference in a Life*** - Warden Peery reports that while checking on an ATV trespass issue on paper company land, he contacted a recent graduate of the Safe Hunters of Tomorrow program. This young lady participated in the youth turkey hunt and harvested a nice bird. Then, at our field day, she shot a pheasant and won a youth bow. She was sitting with her dad, and through her chattering teeth, heard all about her hunt. Even though she had not shot a deer, she was excited and having a great time. "That made me proud of the work that we do with the SHOT program and it proves that we are making a difference in some of those young hunters' lives".
- ***Just in Time*** - Warden Michels contacted a local hunter who spent the last five years serving in the armed services in Iraq. He arrived home last year during the gun deer season and this season was his first deer season in six years. The veteran harvested a trophy 18 point buck exactly one day after his plane landed on his return from Iraq.
- ***Helping Disabled Hunters*** - A landowner and long time hunter education instructor took two disabled adults gun deer hunting opening weekend on his farm in Grant County. He and another hunter provided a gun deer hunting opportunity for two wheel chair restricted individuals. They both

had opportunities to shoot at deer, though they were not successful in harvesting a deer. The landowner commented on how both individuals had enjoyed their day of deer hunting.

## **ARRESTS AND CALLS FOR SERVICE**

### **General Observations of Violations during the 2007 Deer Gun Season:**

- The number 1 violation is illegal use of bait, 331 cases. This represents a 30% increase over 2006 record of 254 violations. It is the highest number of violations recorded during the deer gun season.
- Total violations however increased by 9% to 1518 violations from 1394 violations in 2006, the highest number recorded since the year 2000.
- Overall, illegal baiting and feeding violations accounted for 27% of the total number of violations (413 of 1518)
- Feeding wild animal cases jumped to the number three spot in violations with 82 violations, up 82% over 2006.
- Juvenile violations declined by 88% from 35 in 2006 to 4 in 2007.
- Loaded and uncased guns in vehicles are similar to past years.
- Shooting from vehicles and shooting from within 50 feet of a road type violations declined by 25% from 90 violations in 2006 to 68 in 2007.
- There was a doubling in the number of group deer hunting violations to 30 cases in 2007.
- Hunting with an improper license and fraud in obtaining a license increased by 75% for the two categories of violations to 50 cases in 2007, while hunting without a license declined by 16%.

### **Top Ten Violations Encountered by Wardens during the 2007 Deer Gun Season**

2006 Rank	Violation	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	% Change
1	Illegal use of bait	331	254	221	150	76	30%
2	Trans. loaded gun in vehicle	120	106	102	113	112	13%
7	Feeding wild animals violations	82	45	20	27	16	82%
3	Trans. uncased gun in vehicle	80	88	75	84	117	-9%
5	Failure to validate tag	65	48	67	57	52	35%
8	Hunt w/in 50' of paved road center	62	44	51	75	68	41%
4	Shoot w/in 50' of a road or across roadway	46	68	39	65	82	-32%
14	Hunt with improper license	32	22	31	61	29	45%
11	Operate ATV on roadway	32	30	45	22	33	7%
14	Hunt deer without backtag exposed	31	23	20	20	29	35%

### **Summary of Total Violations by Year 2001-2007**

Summary by Year	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
<b>Total Number of Violations</b>	1518	1394	1280	1156	1259	1240	1340
Juvenile	4	35	45	37	32	28	38
Adult	1514	1359	1235	1119	1227	1212	1302
<b>Total Number of Seizures</b>							
Illegal Deer	183	149	200	205	164	172	150
Illegal Bear	5	4	6	4	5	3	5
Other	144	89	99	72	76	98	99
Carkill Deer	9	13	21	17	20	16	20

## Call Center Reports

Call Center Reports November 17 – November 25	Number
Found dead deer or other carcass	60
Baiting and feeding	39
Heard shots; believes poaching	26
Hunt within 50 feet of roadways center	27
Shoot from a vehicle	10
Hunt before or after hours	18
Possession of untagged deer	12
Possession of illegal deer	15
Miscellaneous	204
Total hotlines	399
Calls to the hotline that were not DNR violations or other calls for service/info	150
Total calls	549
Total calls (including extra baiting)	561

### Hotline Complaints

The call center was a great success from all perspectives. Wardens, hunters and the Customer Service staff were all pleased with the call center's first deer season performance. The Customer Service staff did a great job; they answered over 23,000 customer calls in the month of November!

The warden service is in the process of distributing cellular air cards to the wardens for use in their laptop computers in their trucks. Customer service staff and wardens found this tool greatly enhanced the speed of transmission and accuracy of hotline information. Essentially a warden could receive a hotline via email while in the truck responding to a call. The warden service appreciates the support of the hunting community in providing tools that aid in efficiently and effectively doing their job.

## **ILLEGAL BAITING AND FEEDING**

Over the past few years, warden reports have expressed concerns regarding baiting and feeding for deer. These concerns include the potential for disease transmission, altering natural movement patterns and influencing distribution of deer, cabin shooting, and conflict. These concerns remain. This segment of the report will attempt to succinctly and objectively convey information regarding warden experience in the field during the 2007 deer gun season. It is a combination of information including arrest and complaints, observations, and common themes in conversations hunters are having with wardens in the field related to baiting and feeding.

### Arrests

Illegal baiting and feeding was by far the most prevalent violation encountered by wardens this year during the deer gun season. The number of illegal baiting violations increased to 331, up 30% from the 2006 record of 254. The number of illegal feeding violations increased 82%, from 45 to 82.

### Observations

- Wardens reported baiting and feeding violations were up considerably in the Northern, Northeast and West Central Regions, but have decreased a in the South Central and Southeast Regions where baiting and feeding has been illegal now for several years.

### Baiting and Feeding Cases by Region

Region	Baiting Cases	Feeding Cases
Northern	147	25
West Central	76	31
Northeast	76	13
South Central	17	11
Southeast	15	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>82</b>

- Some wardens are seeing increased efforts to conceal illegal baiting activity.
- Cabin shooting continues to be a problem in the Northern region. In one instance, a warden received a complaint from a hunter who stated that on the opening weekend he heard eleven rifle shots between 6:30 PM and 9:00 PM in the vicinity of his cabin.
- With the smaller land parcels being bought by hunters and non-hunters, an increasing number of hunters are relying on bait to draw and hold deer on parcels that normally would not hold deer. There are also small parcel owners who feed the deer to see them. It seems that both entities have taken an ownership in the deer on these small wood lots – but for different reasons. Consequently, wardens are seeing competing motives and conflict between those non-hunting landowners who “feed” deer to hold the deer on their property to protect the deer, and those hunting landowners who “bait” deer to hold deer on their property to harvest them.
- Some hunters arrested for baiting violations knew the penalty was \$530, but chose to violate the law anyway; they thought they would not be apprehended so it was worth the risk.
- Some progress has been made regarding the size of the illegal bait piles. While these smaller piles are still often times 100’s of pounds in size, wardens report fewer “truck load” type illegal baits.
- Wardens are reporting an increasing pattern of people baiting illegally for several weeks before season and then reducing the size of the bait to legal amounts as the season nears.
- 203 of the 331 cases were made on the opening day, with the vast majority of those made opening morning. This is when wardens have the highest probability of finding someone on an illegally baited stand. The odds of finding someone hunting an illegally baited stand go down quickly after opening morning.
- With the increased use of trail cameras, wardens are seeing the use of trail cameras over baited areas contributing to some conflicts. This comes from hunters becoming very possessive of a baited area once they have photographic evidence that a large buck is coming to their baited stand. Some of these hunters then increase the amount of bait in an effort to hold the deer in the area, and become very territorial of the public land they are hunting on.
- Some wardens in the north reported conversations with hunters who expressed concern relating to the difference in laws between recreational feeding and baiting for hunting purposes. Concerns were expressed that the current rules allowing for feeding deer year round, and baiting only immediately before the archery season. The hunters explained they believe it creates a situation that serves to concentrate deer in subdivisions and private lands in the area, making the deer in areas not accessible to hunters.
- Particularly in the northern portion of the state, wardens continue to see illegal ATV operation in conjunction with transporting and placing bait.

## Conversations with Hunters in the Field

The following bullet points attempt to convey general themes of what wardens report hunters are telling them in conversations with wardens in the field.

- Wardens report they continue to hear hunters express frustration about baiting and feeding for deer.
- Wardens continue to hear the general perception that baiting and feeding is altering deer movement patterns during the season.
- Wardens continue to hear some hunters, both those on private property and those who hunt on public lands, that while they'd not otherwise bait, they feel they must place bait to compete and have an equal opportunity at harvesting deer.
- Wardens report concern from hunters that the baiting and feeding of deer is turning hunters against hunters.
- Wardens report that baiting and feeding has changed the nature of deer hunting in Wisconsin. Some wardens heard hunters express concern about some hunters redirecting their efforts away from learning knowledge of the woods to acquiring skills needed for competitive baiting.
- Wardens report they see conflicts between hunters over baiting and baited areas.

## Highlighted Cases

- ***Armed while intoxicated*** - Warden Ed McCann (Fond du Lac) and Recreational Safety Warden April Dombrowski (Oshkosh) investigated a hotline complaint at about 8:00am, and contacted two hunters on state property. Warden McCann could instantly smell the odor of intoxicants and discovered that one of the hunters quit drinking at about 1:00am, slept a few hours and woke up to go hunting. Subsequent field sobriety tests showed that this hunter was intoxicated and registered a 0.218 on the preliminary breath test device, nearly three times the legal limit. This individual was arrested and transported to a hospital where a blood sample was taken.
- ***Earn a buck from a car killed deer?*** - While transporting an intoxicated hunter to the hospital, Warden McCann and Recreational Safety Warden April Dombrowski observed a hunter gutting a deer on the side of the roadway. A Fond du Lac County Sheriff's Deputy advised McCann that this deer was a car killed deer from that morning. Investigation showed that the hunter dragged the dead deer off the road, shot it with a slug, gutted it and planned on tagging and registering it to receive an Earn-A-Buck sticker. The Wardens cited the hunter for a car killed deer violation, and the Deputy arrested this hunter for driving without a driver's license and placed him in the squad along side the intoxicated hunter.
- ***You guys should be arresting real poachers*** - Regional Warden Goetsch (Green Bay) and Warden Tom Truman (Winneconne) contacted a hunter while approaching a state wildlife area parking lot. The individual had been drinking and possessed a loaded firearm. This individual did poorly on the field sobriety tests and a PBT result of .127% breath alcohol content. The individual was arrested for possessing a firearm while under the influence of an intoxicant and made the above comment among others to wardens.
- ***Great lengths to get an Earn a Buck Sticker*** – Warden Jason Higgins (Oshkosh) received a complaint from DNR staff at a registration station about an antlerless deer that was shot in Adams County was now being registered in Winnebago County. Investigation showed the subject harvested the doe in Adams County (Unit 53) which is a regular deer management unit and drove the deer over to Winnebago County to register it to get an Earn- A- Buck sticker.
- ***Hotline complaints in real time*** - Warden Ben Nadolski (Waupun) observed a vehicle in a parking area of a state public hunting area at sunset on Friday before the season opened. Nadolski parked in a different area and waited for the suspect to leave, believing they were placing illegal tree stands. While waiting, Nadolski received a hotline complaint that the suspect and two others had carried in

tree stands and had just left without them. Nadolski located and documented the tree stands that were left placed in trees on the state land. Nadolski returned the next morning and cited all three hunters.

- ***Better get rid of that illegal bear hide*** - Wardens Dave Oginski Jr. (Milwaukee), Joe Paul (Lakewood) and Matt Meade (Crivitz) investigated a deer camp in southern Marinette County. The hunters stated that they only shot one deer, but the Wardens later discovered two gut piles. One deer was shot by a hunter who did not possess an antlerless tag for that area. Another deer was tagged, but not registered. The meat from the deer was taken back to the hunter's residence. Warden Stahl from Oconto County was going to meet the hunter later in the day to recover the meat from the deer. Wardens Oginski, Meade and Paul left the deer camp at around 9:00 am. Then, Warden Stahl received a hotline at 10:15 am from someone stating that they just observed a littering violation. Warden Stahl investigated and found a tag from an antlerless deer in 2006 that belonged to the previously mentioned hunter along with an untagged bear hide. The hunter had called a buddy and told him to get rid of the bear hide, because the Wardens would be stopping by. Wardens Oginski and Stahl investigated and discovered that the hunter had shot the bear illegally during the 2006 gun deer season.
- ***Need to follow instructions*** - Warden Dave Oginski Jr. (Milwaukee) and Deputy Warden Amy Martin contacted a Marinette County hunter on opening weekend that had out over 500 pounds of corn. The hunter also had apples and salt blocks on the property. The hunter had used large green garbage cans and filled them up to the top and cut a whole in the bottom to turn them into gravity feeders. Two other large containers were filled to the top and were placed on the property. The hunter had a total of seven cameras set up at the different bait piles. When contacted by the Warden Oginski and Deputy Warden Martin the hunter stated that everyone else is baiting. Warden Oginski explained the baiting laws and told the hunter that all of the bait needed to be removed. The hunter asked if he could just spread it around the property because it was too hard to pick up. Warden Oginski again told the hunter that all of the bait needed to be removed. Warden Oginski then returned later in the week to find that the hunter just spread the bait out all over the property. A second citation was issued and the hunter came back up the next day and removed all of the bait.
- ***Need to unload 'em and case 'em up!*** - Warden Mark Schraufnagel (Shawano East) encountered a group of hunters concluding a deer drive. Two of the hunters were riding in the back of the truck and both had uncased firearms. One of the firearms was loaded. A neighbor drove down into the field to talk to the hunters and also had a loaded firearm in the vehicle. Citations were issued.
- ***How did you spread that corn?*** - On opening morning Warden Mike Stahl (Oconto Falls) made contact with a hunter in which we had a complaint that he had broadcasted corn in a cut corn field. Based on investigation the complaint facts seemed to be verified. The suspect was contacted opening morning of the deer season and acknowledged placing two 5 gallon buckets of corn. He said the rest bounced out of his gravity feed box. When asked why it was spread in circles he did not answer. One citation for hunting over illegal bait was issued.
- ***Which one was shot first?*** - On the second day of the season Wardens Mike Stahl (Oconto Falls) and Mike Kitt (Marinette) made contact with several hunters at a deer camp with two dead deer; one was a buck and one was a doe. The camp was located in unit 63B which is an Earn a Buck (EAB) Unit. The doe looked very fresh but the buck not so. After determining time of death for each deer, it was determined the shooter of the buck had killed this deer before legal hours and then radioed his father that he had just shot a buck and had no EAB sticker. The dad then shot a doe later to try and cover for the buck. Two citations issued and deer seized along with several warnings.
- ***Persistence pays off*** - On Wednesday Wardens Mike Stahl (Oconto Falls) and Joe Paul (Lakewood) responded to a late hunting complaint where a suspect was to have shot twice after the 5:00pm News had started. Wardens met with the complainants and an illegal bait pile was found behind the trailer, but no deer or blood was found, the subject had left before wardens' arrival. A couple of days later,

Warden Stahl and Recreational Safety Warden Jeremy Cords (Green Bay) watched the suspects' trailer. They shined the baited areas twice after the legal shooting hours. He then left and was stopped in his vehicle. The investigation revealed the suspect shot at deer Wednesday after hours and hunted over illegally placed bait. It was also found that the subject was not a licensed deer hunter and that he could not get a license as he had never taken hunter education. Criminal charges are pending.

- ***Never know what you'll find*** - On the last weekend of the deer season Warden Mike Stahl (Oconto Falls) and Recreational Safety Warden Jeremy Cords (Green Bay) were in the Kelly Lake Area of Oconto County. While on foot, Warden Cords found illegal bait and noticed a loaded crossbow sticking out of a pit blind and pointing towards the bait site. A person was found in the pit blind dressed in full camouflage and hunting well after the legal hunting hours with no backtag. Charges are pending.
- ***Didn't think I'd ever get caught*** - Warden Jim Horne (Shawano West) received complaints over the years of hunters in tower stands using rifles in a shotgun zone. Most of these tower stands have a commanding view of the land and hunters can see anyone who approaches from a long distance. At the close of hours on the opening Saturday Wardens Horne, Chief Warden Randy Stark (Madison), and Supervisor Bob Goerlinger (Peshtigo) worked the complaint. One of the suspected hunters shot after shooting hours with an illegally used rifle and when he went to look for the deer was contacted by wardens.
- ***It looked like a deer?*** - Wardens Joe Paul (Oconto Falls) and Ben Herzfeldt (Port Washington) set up the deer decoy on public land and a short while later a vehicle with three people drove up. One person got out and shot from roadway, and during the stop, a loaded .357 pistol and an uncased rifle were also found in the vehicle.
- ***In the dark of night, over lighted bait, from the window of a trailer*** - Warden Joe Paul (Lakewood) had some information about a subject who shot a deer from his trailer over a lighted feeder at night with a crossbow. Wardens Paul and Ben Herzfeldt (Port Washington) walked the property and found the illegal feed site with a light over it. Wardens Paul and Herzfeldt drove by the residence again at 3:30AM and noticed the lights on inside the trailer house. Later that week, Warden Paul and Regional Warden Byron Goetsch (Green Bay) returned to the residence and contacted the subject. Investigation revealed that the subject in fact shot a doe with his crossbow at night over the lighted bait. The subject will be charged with hunt/shine deer with light while in possession and hunting with and crossbow and also with hunting after hours and hunting over illegal bait.
- ***When it rains, it pours*** - Warden Matt Meade (Crivitz) received information regarding a man hunting without a license in Porterfield Township. The subject was also allegedly hunting illegally with a firearm due to recently being issued a restraining order with a firearm restriction. Warden Meade was joined by Wardens Joe Paul (Lakewood) and Dave Oginski, Jr. (Milwaukee) to assist with the investigation. Wardens contacted several hunters in the woods and with Warden Supervisor Robert Goerlinger assisting. Investigation revealed that two subjects were hunting without licenses; 1 hunter was hunting in camouflage non-blaze orange clothing, six were hunting over illegal bait piles (over two gallons in size) and 1 subject was hunting without a backtag. Wardens seized two rifles and other equipment from the two hunters hunting without licenses.
- ***The buck express*** – Wardens Jeff Knorr (Fremont) and Ted Dremel (Waupaca) apprehended two hunters who killed two bucks and transported them out of the Earn a Buck (EAB) Unit to a non EAB Unit for registration. Hunters complained of not seeing any antlerless deer, so they had to do what they did.
- ***Bait but no orange*** – Warden Ted Dremel (Waupaca) had located approximately 100 pounds of corn and a 50 pound mineral lick in Waushara County, a non-baiting county prior to the gun season. Dremel found the hunter hunting approximately 25 yards from the bait with no blaze orange and no back tag on. As the hunter climbed down from his tree stand he removed a blaze orange vest from his

pocket and put it on. When asked why he wasn't wearing blaze orange in his tree stand, the hunter said he feels the camouflage he was wearing would give him an advantage while deer hunting, but he would not risk walking through the woods with no blaze orange on. The hunter said there are some really "stupid" people around and feared the possibility of being mistaken for a deer.

- ***Southern style bait*** – Warden Bryan Lockman (New London) contacted a hunter with over 4 gallons of a white "powder-like" substance that was determined to be "grits".
- ***Should Have Stayed Home***- Wardens Mike Nice and Deputy Warden Mike Williams located a suspect driving with two companions along a remote country road in Richland County. Warden Nice attempted to pull over the truck and the driver pulled into the middle of the road. There was a buck in the back of the truck without a buck authorization sticker attached. Wardens determined the buck was shot from the vehicle and one of the occupants had a loaded rifle which he cased up when they observed the wardens. Warden John Buss assisted and it was further determined the driver was a felon and had used a firearm to shoot from the truck and had shot other deer. A stolen silver metal registration tag was put on the buck in the truck to make it look like it was registered. A 10 point buck was determined to be shot off the road on a previous trip. Wardens continue to investigate numerous violations involving road hunting of deer in Richland and Crawford counties.
- ***Can't Get Away With It*** - Wardens Jeff King and Deputy Warden Chuck Earhart responded to a report of shooting from and across the road. It was also reported that these hunters were shooting toward a house. After several hours of neighborhood canvassing, interviews, and scene processing, wardens identified two suspects. A citation was issued to one man for shooting a firearm within 50 feet of the center of the road.
- ***Thought I Had a Day to Tag a Deer*** - Wardens Dave Youngquist and Chuck Horn (Iowa County) checked a property that was about a mile walk from the locked gate to where the farmhouse and outbuildings were. Two hunters were found with five untagged deer, a loaded rifle on the ATV and a rock-shaped mineral block 40 yards from his deer stand. Three of the untagged deer had been shot the day before and retrieved from the woods with the ATV and two of the deer had been shot that morning and brought back to the house untagged. The hunter said that he thought he had 24 hours to tag the deer.
- ***Wrong State*** - Warden Michael Green of Wisconsin Dells and Deputy Warden Steve Rodenkirch investigated an individual who was a resident of North Carolina and was hunting with resident hunting licenses. The wardens issued two citations for fraudulently obtained resident gun deer licenses.
- ***The Old Re-register the Car Kill Trick*** - Warden Heather Gottschalk of Dodge County received information that a State Patrol Trooper had observed a subject pick up a car kill deer prior to the gun deer season. The suspect was stopped by the Trooper and told he had to register it. He did register it, twice. Warden Gottschalk suspected the deer was used to "earn" a buck sticker. Warden Gottschalk checked local registration stations and found the subject had registered an antlerless deer on the same date as an archery kill. Warden Gottschalk spoke with the suspect who had used the deer to register it two times at two different registration stations in two different counties. The registration stubs, metal tags, hide and meat were all recovered.
- ***An Escort Out of the Woods*** - On opening day, Warden David Walz and Warden Supervisor Jeremy Plautz encountered a convicted felon gun deer hunting on the public hunting grounds in Dodge County. Upon arresting the person, he was found to be in possession of marijuana and drug paraphernalia. Criminal charges have been filed.
- ***Makes You Wonder*** - Wardens Mike Dieckhoff and Deputy Warden Kanable along with Intern Pete Idzikowski were on patrol in Rock County when they received some information that a hunter was smoking marijuana while in possession of a loaded shotgun. Wardens made contact with the hunter and detected the odor of marijuana. Warden Dieckhoff searched and located six containers of

marijuana, a marijuana pipe, and one prescription bottle with oxycodone and vicodin. Also located during the contact was the camouflage tent blind the subject was hunting from with a blaze orange camouflage hat on top of it stating, "DNR SUCKS." The subject was arrested and taken to the Rock County Jail.

- **Lawyer on Patrol?** - On the Friday of the season, Warden Preder and DNR Attorney Lutz received a call in regards to an individual hunting without blaze orange. Contact was made with the subject. The individual (non-resident) involved was found to be hunting with a 7.62 caliber rifle in a shotgun only area, no blaze orange, and no back-tag. The reason he didn't have a back-tag was because he also didn't have a license. Criminal charges are pending.
- **A Costly Mistake** - Warden Herzfeldt and RSW Plenke met up to walk a state property after dark looking for illegal stands and baits in Ozaukee County. While walking the property, RSW Plenke informed Herzfeldt that a vehicle was in a field across the road. Plenke then informed Herzfeldt that he heard a shot and that the vehicle was leaving. Plenke and Herzfeldt hurried back to their vehicles and pulled the suspect vehicle over. The suspect immediately stated he was sorry and that he made a mistake. Wardens found the suspect to have a loaded .22 caliber rifle in his truck. In speaking with the suspect, Wardens found the man to have shot at a doe in his headlights using the .22 caliber rifle. The man stated he aimed for the glowing eyes of the doe from his headlights and that he had been chasing the doe that afternoon. The firearm was seized and criminal charges are pending.
- **A Fine Mess I've Got Myself Into** - The day before the start of the nine day gun deer season, Warden Lee responded to a call that two bucks were locked together by their antlers and were resting on the side of a vehicle. Warden Lee found the bucks locked together sliding down a hillside. The bucks then fell into a pond, with one of the bucks' head being pushed underwater. Lee shot at the antlers with a 12 gauge slug. Lee shot one side of the locked antlers off. One buck got out of the pond, and ran away. The other buck remained in the pond. Lee got a rope around the remaining antler and pulled the buck out of the water. Problem solved, problem created. How do you get the rope off the antler of a big buck that is standing there looking at you? With the help of wildlife manager Tom Isaac and his staff, an extension pole was used to release the rope from the antler. As of this report, both bucks survived.
- **Wrong Gun** - Wardens Drake and Reed contacted a hunter in a tower stand in an area that was baited by corn. The hunter climbed out of the stand when he saw the wardens. The hunter was carrying a revolver and admitted to placing the corn. When Warden Reed climbed up into the stand, he observed a loaded .44 caliber rifle and a spotlight. This area is a shotgun only area. The hunter said he needed the rifle in case a deer was way down in the swamp.
- **Kinda Obvious what I Want** - Warden Jennifer Niemeyer had contact with a hunter on private land in Kenosha County who was hunting in full camouflage. Upon contact, the individual asked "what do you want?!" The hunter felt that it was ok to hunt on private land without blaze orange on. Niemeyer explained to him it is even more important on private land as there are many trespassing problems in this area.
- **Caught By Computer -Ain't Technology Great** - On opening day, Warden Jon Scharbarth (Stevens Point) located a vehicle parked on the side of a road with a non-resident license plate. Using his Mobil Data Computer, Scharbarth ran the vehicle and registered owner and learned that the owner did not have a gun deer license. Warden Roy Kubisiak (Central Office) was dropped off at the vehicle near closing hours and contacted two individuals, each dragging out a deer. It was learned that one of the individuals had shot a small spike buck without a license. This deer had been tagged by his companion who did have a license. Enforcement action was taken.
- **Persistence Again** - On the last Saturday of the season, Warden Jon Scharbarth (Stevens Point) and Warden Supervisor Randy Falstad (WI Rapids) received a shining and shooting complaint about a half hour after the close of hours. The wardens responded to the area, but could not locate any

evidence of the violation and did not have a good description of the vehicle or a plate number to go on. On closing day, near the end of hunting hours Scharbarth and Falstad set up in the area to work the complaint. Fifteen minutes after hours, a hunter in the area shot four times, killing two deer. The suspect and a relative field dressed the deer and were contacted as they left the field. In addition to both deer being shot after hours, there were two uncased rifles in the vehicle and neither deer had the carcass tag attached.

- **Fraudulent License** - Wardens Mike Cross (Prairie du Chien) and Mitch Groenier (Delafield) worked a hotline complaint regarding an unlicensed non-resident deer hunter. After hunting hours, Cross and Groenier hiked into to property and located hunters at a cabin. The suspect was identified and found with a fraudulent license. An untagged doe, killed the previous day was hanging outside
- **Wardens Won't Check Duck Hunters in Deer Season** - Mike Cross (Prairie du Chien) and Recreational Safety Warden Bill Yearman (Eau Claire) checked a group of duck hunters on the Mississippi River during the deer season. One subject did not have a state waterfowl stamp. A subsequent investigation revealed the hunter, who possessed Wisconsin resident licenses, was a resident of Colorado. Enforcement action was taken.
- **Nice Try** - Warden Shawna Stringham (Viroqua) responded to a complaint that a DNR employee had shot from the road. The investigation determined that the suspect, who was not a Department employee, had identified himself to others as a Conservation Warden and had even checked some hunters in the field. The man was arrested for impersonating a Conservation Warden, which is a criminal offense. Charges are pending.
- **Gotta Be in The Field** - Warden Lance Goette (Recruit) discovered a group hunting violation on Thanksgiving morning. A 30 year old man shot a very large buck (8-pointer with a 20-inch spread and about 200 pounds). Instead of tagging the buck with his own carcass tag, the hunter field dressed the deer and dragged it out to a trail untagged. He then drove about two miles back to his cabin where he met his 69 year old grandmother who went out and tagged the deer. The man told Goette that he just wanted his group to fill as many tags as possible. Enforcement action was taken.
- **Moonlighting** - Wardens Eric Grudzinski (Mauston) and Gary Eddy (Central Office) received a call of deer being shot at off the road at approximately 10:30 pm. The wardens discovered a dead adult doe deer in a field and tracked down one of the suspects involved. The subject confirmed that he had shot at two deer after he had observed them in two different fields. The subject had observed the deer while driving by the fields and had enough moonlight to shoot at the deer's silhouette. The subject didn't think anything was wrong because the deer were on property owned by his family. Enforcement action was taken.
- **No Laughing Matter** - On opening day, Warden Henry Bauman (Onalaska) arrested a deer hunter for aiming a 7mm rifle w/scope at Bauman from a deer stand. Using his truck for cover, Bauman retrieved his issued rifle and was able to command the hunter to lower his rifle. Upon arresting and taking the hunter into custody, Bauman found that the rifle was loaded with a bullet in the chamber and the safety was off. The hunter is facing criminal charges for endangering Bauman's safety by use of a firearm.
- **Never Know What You'll Run Into** - Warden Lance Burns (Gordon) responded to a hotline report of a subject hunting with a 2006 back tag that was shooting wildly and appeared to be intoxicated or on drugs. Warden Burns contacted the subject who was sneaking through the woods and stated he had just shot a deer. During the contact the subject was talking about bullets bouncing off the deer he had shot and people in trees directing robotic deer and was hallucinating about seeing deer, bears and other animals. During the investigation it was found the subject had been in a bad car accident two weeks prior and suffered a concussion. It was believed this was causing his problems. The subject and his rifle were turned over to his brother and they went home where the subject obtained medical care. He did have a valid hunting license in his wallet. No citations were issued.

- ***A Long Time Coming*** - During the middle of the week, Warden Supervisor Randy Falstad (WI Rapids) located a large pile of corn on a property. Warden Jon Scharbarth (Stevens Point) checked the area and determined that the corn, about a pick up truck load, was located in a field at the edge of a shooting lane for a tower stand. Wardens Scharbarth and Barry Meister (Stevens Point) contacted a hunter that was in the stand on Thanksgiving morning. This hunter stated that he knew about the corn as his son had seen it from the stand on opening day. A check of the area showed that there were also 4 huge piles of apples in other areas of shooting lanes for the stand for a total of several hundred gallons of bait in a county where baiting is banned. Additionally, it was learned that the hunter was a Minnesota resident that had been purchasing resident licenses for at least the last nine years. Enforcement action was taken.
- ***Definitely Knew Better*** - On opening day, Warden Matt Weber (Necedah) and Warden Supervisor Korey Trowbridge (Black River Falls) contacted three deer hunters on private property all hunting over illegal bait in Juneau County, where baiting is banned. One of the hunters being cited told the wardens he had read the pre-season article on baiting in the Wisconsin Outdoor News, which was currently inside the cabin. He also said that on Friday night the group of hunters had talked about it. Enforcement action was taken.
- ***Expensive Combination*** - Wardens Wade Romberg (Friendship) and Mike Hirschboeck (Sturtevant) contacted one individual that was hunting while under the influence of an intoxicant. The individual was also hunting while possessing another's hunting license. It was also found that there was illegal bait on the property. Enforcement action was taken.
- ***Way to Much Bait*** - On opening morning, Warden Matt Modjeski (Sparta) contacted a hunter in a plywood hunting blind in Sparta Township. The area around the blind had been baited with corn. The landowner, who placed the corn, used a grain gravity box wagon (average-sized wagon holds 800 gallons) to aid in placing hundreds of gallons of corn. Enforcement action was taken.
- ***Poor Gun Handling*** - While Wardens Amie Egstad and Pat Quaintance were working the deer decoy, a subject shot at the decoy while standing next to his truck. The subject threw the gun back into the pickup truck and was later stopped by Egstad. Egstad observed the subject trying to get the gun back in the case as he was being stopped, but the case was still unzipped. The rifle also had a live round backwards in the chamber. Egstad informed the subject of the bullet still in the chamber and the subject stated "well I must have been excited". The subject was issued a citation for shooting from the roadway and having a loaded firearm in the vehicle.
- ***Good Observation*** - Warden Matt MacKenzie reported a landowner noticed a possible trespass and went to check it out. He observed two hunters with one carrying a bow. Upon further investigation a deer head and hide with an arrow wound in it was located in the garage, and it was determined the hunter had been hunting deer during the closed season with a bow at night with a laser light.
- ***Keep Your Eyes on the Road*** - While traveling the Porcupine Wilderness Road, area Wardens Schartner and Niemeyer were run off the roadway by a hunter who was paying more attention to the woods along the road than the vehicles traveling on it. Upon stopping the vehicle the hunter had a loaded, uncased rifle at his side.
- ***Up to No Good*** - Warden Ebert was working early morning deer hunting violations when he encountered a vehicle that displayed actions matching that of a complaint. After a period of observation Ebert attempted to stop the vehicle. A short pursuit ensued coming to an end when the suspect vehicle crashed. The subjects fled on foot through a wooded area and ultimately stole a vehicle to escape. Investigation continues.
- ***Apprehending an Opportunist*** - Warden Novesky was working night hunting enforcement and had heard a high powered rifle shot at about 8:00pm. Novesky walked down the road and observed a person moving around in a wooded area near some cabins. Novesky followed the hunter out of the woods undetected and made contact with the hunter at the road. It was determined that the hunter was

driving down the road and observed a buck standing at an illegal bait pile in front of an unoccupied cabin. The hunter then shined his headlights on the buck and shot it from his vehicle. The subject who shot the deer also did not have a valid gun deer license. The deer and a rifle were seized and several charges are pending.

- ***Lots of Bait*** - Conservation Warden Thomas Heisler and Warden Karl Brooks made eleven illegal baiting arrests on opening day of the 9-day gun deer season. Cases ranged from 5 + gallons of corn to one case which involved 5 piles totaling approximately 1+ pick up truck bed full. Warden Heisler then made five more illegal baiting cases throughout the rest of the season.
- ***A Like-Minded Couple*** - Warden Heisler made contact with a subject on opening morning at a stand that was illegal baited a week earlier. Upon contact, the subject was sitting in camouflage clothing and did not have a back tag or his license with him. Warden Heisler told the subject to meet Warden Heisler back at the camp as Warden Heisler wanted to check his wife's license who was sitting in a different stand. The subject's wife also was in camouflage and did not have her back tag. Citations were issued for excessive bait and blaze orange violation.
- ***Should Have Bought the Right License*** - Conservation Warden Thomson made contact with a subject who had a loaded handgun in his vehicle. When asking for identification, the subject tried to conceal an old Wisconsin Driver's license while producing a current Arizona Driver's license. The subject was not hunting at the time, but was driving out of a field with a hunter. Warden Heisler did some checking after the contact and found the subject moved to Arizona approximately 2 years ago and has purchased WI gun deer licenses this year and last year. A citation was issued.
- ***Lots of problems*** - Warden Swanson contacted two hunters who were just driving away from the location of their morning hunt. When the driver recognized Swanson as a Warden he rapidly squeezed the car past the Warden truck and sped away down a logging road. Swanson was able to catch up to the car and signaled for the driver to stop, which he did. Upon contact with the driver Swanson immediately smelled the odor of burning marijuana. During the ensuing conversation and search Swanson learned that there was a loaded .30-.30 in the back seat of the car. There was a tray with marijuana on it in the front seat. Both men had been smoking a joint before hunting that morning as well as when initial contact was made. The driver of the car stated he could not afford a hunting license this year so he had borrowed a 2006 back tag from the passenger. The tag was folded in half in the holder to hide the fact that it was a 2006 back tag. Both subjects were booked into the Washburn County jail with numerous charges pending.
- ***Lot's of Corn on the Ground*** - During the gun deer season Warden Nerva and Deputy Moermond wrote 22 citations for baiting violations. Most of the baits were in the 50 to 100lb range with one being a truck load of corn.
- ***Thought We'd Got Away With That*** - Warden Nerva assisted Warden Peters with an investigation of a group of hunters that were suspected of cabin shooting deer. The investigation revealed the subjects shined and shot a deer with the bow two weeks before the gun season.
- ***ATV OWI*** - While on patrol on the Friday before deer season, Warden Peters observed two ATVs being operated illegally on a county highway near Tomahawk. Warden Peters stopped the ATVs and found the operator of one ATV to be under the influence of intoxicants. The party was transported to Tomahawk PD where he tested at a 0.19%.
- ***One Complaint Lead to Lots of Issues*** - Warden Peters investigated a report of illegal road hunting on the Tuesday of deer season. Warden Peters spoke with complainants who described the vehicle and people involved, and provided a plate number. Wardens Nerva, Nice and Peters, along with Deputy Wardens went to the vehicle owner's home and seized the deer and firearm used in the offense. Wardens also found an unlicensed taxidermy business with several untagged and undocumented furs, venison, and deer parts.

- **Slow Learner** - On opening day, Warden Blankenheim attempted to contact a subject who had placed several gravity or mechanical deer feeders on his property. Warden Peery had cited the same individual in 2005 for doing the same thing with the same feeders. The subject, who was dressed in camouflage, watched Blankenheim approach from a long distance and ran from his deer stand; the subject did, however, leave his back pack with his back tag attached to it in the deer stand. Blankenheim finally made contact with the subject on Monday, November 19. The subject stated that he was trying to keep the deer on his land instead of the neighbors.
- **Slow Learner II** - Wardens Blankenheim, Cork and Oginski cited a landowner and several hunters for hunting over large amounts of corn on a property and from the same stands as wardens did in 2005. Apparently in these two cases, \$530 was not a large enough deterrent for the landowners to quell their illegal behavior.
- **Snow Tells the Story** - Warden Michels received one call from a frightened hunter who reported driving around the bend of a town road just as a stander (who was posted in the middle of the road) shot down the road toward the truck at two deer that came out on a deer drive. Upon contact the suspect denied shooting from the road until it was pointed out there were no boot tracks in the snow off the road where he claimed to be standing. The shooter and one additional stander were cited for hunting from the roadway.

## WOLF SHOOTINGS

There were three wolves found dead during the deer season, only one of which died by gunshot. No arrests have been made for the gunshot wolf.

## FELONS IN POSSESSION OF FIREARMS

**Felons in Possession of a Firearm Cases**

Year	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Number	16	9	3	10	14

### **Examples of felon in possession cases**

- Two subjects who were carrying handguns and accompanying a deer hunter were taken into custody - one for being a felon in possession of a firearm, the other on a traffic warrant. They had been target shooting at trees on the public lands and used up a box of 50 cartridges. Other hunters in the area were all very upset when they found out what was going on because they didn't know where the rapid gunfire was coming from.
- **Warden Peery** received information that there would be a convicted felon hunting with a firearm. During a routine patrol in an area of many late hunting complaints, Warden Peery ran a license plate on a vehicle, which came back to the convicted felon. Warden Peery dropped Warden Blankenheim off to observe any late hunting activity. Warden Blankenheim made contact with the convicted felon who was in possession of a .30-.30. Warden Blankenheim placed the subject under arrest and seized the rifle and five rounds of ammunition
- **Warden Ron Nerva** worked on a case with the Lincoln County Sheriffs Department. A convicted felon was living in a lean-to in the woods and several firearms were found at that location. There was also evidence that the man had an illegal deer. He did not purchase any license to hunt.
- **Wardens Thole and Dunkel** contacted a vehicle leaving the Rice Beds Creek Wildlife Area. The passenger of the vehicle had a rifle next to his leg that was in a case but the case was not zipped shut. The passenger was wearing a blaze orange jacket, but told the wardens he was not hunting. Thole had knowledge this person was a convicted felon. Thole contacted the subject's probation agent who

found methamphetamine and possible stolen property in the subject's residence. The wardens also learned that the subject deer hunted with a firearm in Minnesota a week prior to the Wisconsin deer season. Thole and Dunkel are referring a charge to the Polk County District Attorney for felon in possession of a firearm.

- **Warden Barry Fetting (Marshfield)** received a complaint on the opening day of the deer season of an individual driving a pick-up truck through a field with two other individuals shooting buffalo from the back of the vehicle. The complainant said that everyone was drinking alcohol and that he was concerned that someone was going to shoot a house. After help with the investigation by Wardens Bill Schwengel (Eau Claire) and Tim Lawhern (Central Office) and two Clark County Sheriff Deputies, violations were confirmed including a felon being in possession of a firearm. Enforcement action was taken.
- **Warden Shawna Stringham (Viroqua)** and Warden Supervisor Steve Dewald (La Crosse) arrested a convicted felon with a firearm and cited two other members of the same party for riding on an ATV with uncased rifles in Vernon County.
- **Warden John Collison (Trempealeau) and Recreational Safety Warden Bill Yearman (Eau Claire)** arrested a subject for felon in possession of a firearm. While the wardens were waiting for a Sheriff Deputy to transport the subject to jail, a truck stopped on a road about a hundred yards away. A hunter dressed in blaze orange got out the vehicle and fired one shot from the roadway with his deer rifle. The subject shooting from the road was then contacted by Yearman while Collison waited with the in-custody felon. The subject that shot from the road was found to have been attempting (unsuccessfully) to shoot a pheasant with a rifle. Enforcement action was taken.
- On Thanksgiving Day, **Warden Bob Jumbeck (Alma)** arrested a convicted felon with a firearm in Buffalo County, who had been participating in a deer drive.
- While investigating a trespassing complaint, Chippewa County Sheriff's Deputy Chris Kowalczyk arrested a hunter for being a felon in possession of a firearm and for hunting deer without a license. **Warden Scott Bowe (Cornell)** caught the same individual a few weeks earlier for shining and shooting deer and being a felon in possession of a firearm.
- On opening day, **Wardens Eric Grudzinski (Mauston) and Gary Eddy (Central Office)** contacted a man and his adult son hunting near Mauston. The son was hunting over a bait pile consisting of corn, pumpkins and buck scent. Grudzinski contacted the elder subject deer hunting at another baited stand and recognized him as being a convicted felon. Grudzinski checked the subject's back tag and found he was wearing a 2007 Archery back tag and had not purchased a Gun Deer license. Enforcement action was taken.
- **Warden Bill Miller (Adams)** contacted twin brothers hunting and they appeared intoxicated. One tested .07 and the other .13 on a Portable Breath Tester. One was arrested and was also found to be a convicted felon. Criminal charges are pending.
- **Warden Tim Otto** reports, during the early morning hours of the Friday before deer season, Warden Otto observed a vehicle approach a field after 10:00PM and begin shining the field. The vehicle turned its headlights out and periodically shined the field. The vehicle did this for about 25 minutes. Otto eventually stopped the vehicle and located a loaded .30-06 rifle, and five handheld lights. The operator was a convicted felon, under a protection order prohibiting possession of a firearm, and has been apprehended for illegal deer hunting violations earlier in the fall. This subject was arrested for being a felon in possession of a firearm landowner's property from a neighboring Paper Company property. During the incident the landowner threatened to blow the youth's head off and to shoot any other trespassers.

## **SEARCH AND/OR RESCUE EFFORTS**

Being ready to respond to emergencies to enhance public safety is a major goal of the warden service. Wardens responded to ten requests for search and/or rescue assistance in Calumet, Florence, Oconto, Marinette, Racine, Juneau, Burnett, Dane, Shawano, and Langlade Counties during the nine day deer gun season.

- On Sunday of the opening weekend, Warden Mike Disher (Chilton) assisted the Calumet Sheriff's Department in locating a lost hunter in his 70's in the Brillion State Wildlife Area.
- On Sunday of the opening weekend, Warden Kelly Crotty (Florence) and Recreational Safety Warden Jeremy Cords located two lost hunters north of HWY 2 in Florence County in a remote area near the Michigan Border.
- Wardens Joe Paul (Lakewood) and Ben Herzfeldt (Port Washington) assisted in a search for a missing Hmong hunter. The hunter spent the night in the Nicolet National Forest and was found early the next morning.
- Warden Mike Kitt (Marinette) and Supervisor Bob Goerlinger (Peshtigo) responded to a report of a lost hunter in the Peshtigo Harbor Wildlife Area. Warden Kitt located a distant light in the woods which was the hunter responding to his vehicle lights.
- Warden Supervisor Joe Jerich responded to a call of a boat accident on the Fox River near Tichigan Lake. Three waterfowl hunters ended up in the water after their 12 foot flat bottom boat overturned in windy conditions and sub-freezing temperatures. All three hunters successfully got out of the frigid water.
- Warden Supervisor Joe Jerich, while working deer shiners was first on the scene of a serious head on collision in Racine County. Warden Jerich secured the scene and held one of the drivers who appeared to be intoxicated in custody. The subject was later arrested by Deputies for Causing Injury by Intoxicated Use of a Vehicle.
- Warden Matt Weber (Necedah) on Thanksgiving Day, located a lost hunter's vehicle and used his patrol vehicle's siren to help the hunter find the road.
- On Sunday November 18<sup>th</sup> 2007, Spaight responded to assist in the search and rescue of a hunter who had fallen out of a tree stand on state property. When Spaight arrived at the scene, Spaight found that there were approximately 20 hunters who had come to help as well. When they learned of the injured person they abandoned there deer drive and offered to assist with the removal of the injured hunter. It was quite a site to see approximately ten people carrying an injured hunter out of the woods, while ten other people cleared a path through the woods to make the removal of the injured hunter easier.
- Warden Dave Wood responded to a call from a woman who reported her husband lost on a DNR public hunting ground in southern Dane County. The woman reported that her husband had a cell phone with him, but the battery was dying. The lost hunter also had a GPS unit with him and relayed his coordinates to the sheriff's department. The hunter was able to locate the squad sirens after about an hour and found his way out of the woods.
- Warden Dryja reports one subject got lost in the National Forest in Langlade County and had been missing since 1:30pm. The subject was located around 4:00am.

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE AND TAGGING SYSTEM**

### **Customer Service Call Center a Success!**

Customer service staff at the service centers did a great job prior to and during the season assisting customers with license sales and questions. In addition, the new call center was very successful in handling its first deer gun season. Wardens across the state reported people speaking very favorably of the Call Center. Wardens also reported a decrease in the number of general question messages at home and office.

## **Tagging System Improvements**

Wardens reported the improvements in the tags have aided in helping hunters know what tags to use when. While it appears that hunters seem to be more familiar with the current tags, there were some suggestions to further improve the tagging system that were forwarded to Customer Service and Licensing. The most frequent suggestion was print a gun or a bow and a buck or doe on the tags to visually distinguish them from each other. Many hunters were confused about the Archery Antlerless tag or Antlerless Herd Control tags issued with their archery license could be used during gun deer season.

- **Some Sticker Issues:** There is an issue with buck stickers staying attached to the CWD Tyvac tags especially in the colder weather. Warden Mike Green stapled several buck stickers onto CWD tags that had fallen off. All of the wardens in the Poynette Team took reports of buck stickers that had fallen off during transportation or while deer were being dragged out of the woods.
- **Duplicate tags:** One problem with an ALIS vendor issuing a duplicate license to a hunter who had lost their tags. They had failed to ask the hunter if they had already used their tags. They had issued several duplicates prior to the season, but not during. The hunter returned later and questioned whether he should have the tags. The tags were returned and given to Warden DeWitte.
- **Weekend Contact:** Three of the wardens on the Poynette Team were contacted late in the season by registration stations because they ran out of “buck stickers.” Suggestion - perhaps Wildlife Management should have “on call” staff to troubleshoot concerns of the registration station attendants.
- **Registration station issues:** The wardens received reports from hunters that some registration stations were not physically tagging the deer at the registration station. The registration clerk would hand the tag to the hunter so they could tag it. In one case, in Columbia County when the wardens went to investigate a complaint of this occurring when they arrived they observed a hunter walking out the door of the registration station with a registration tag in hand. It was discovered that this was the standard operating procedure for the registration station. With the cooperation of wildlife management the station was closed down and will no longer be registering deer.

## **EARN A BUCK (EAB)**

Wardens report some problems with EAB. In general, the problems dealt with:

- Registration attendants being confused about the administration of the EAB buck stickers and issuing buck stickers to individual who did not qualify.
- Complaints and cases pertaining to violations with motivations attributable to earning a buck sticker or circumventing the system including transporting bucks shot in an EAB unit to a non-EAB unit for registration, multiple registrations of deer (including car kills), shining and shooting antlerless deer for a buck sticker, and illegally shooting bucks.
- Another trend that seems to be becoming more prevalent in the EAB zones in the South Central Regions is that hunters are utilizing public hunting areas to shoot antlerless deer for EAB stickers that will be used on private properties.
- Hunters had positive comments about being able to prequalify for EAB stickers for the next year.
- In some cases registration stations in the EAB areas did not cut one ear off of the antlerless deer. The possibility of the same deer being registered multiple times is high and the wardens are investigating reports of this occurring.

## **PROBLEMS & POSITIVES ENCOUNTERED WITH THE CWD SEASONS**

- Wardens in the Southeast region encountered tremendous confusion in regard to the CWD seasons and zones. Wardens in the SCR and SER recommend combining the HRZ and the DEZ into one CWD Unit and making a concerted effort to significantly reduce the number of Deer Management Units. Wardens have noticed that there again appears to have been a high number of bucks registered in 77M this year. The suspicion is many of those bucks were harvested in 77B; the hunter did not have a buck tag, and chose to register at a 77M registration station. These two observations have an impact on the Department's ability to count harvested deer numbers accurately east and west of the interstate. Wardens suspect this is showing the deer numbers east of the Interstate much higher than they truly are.
- **Registration Concerns:** Most wardens reported significant issues associated with the registration process in the CWD zone. In addition, some circumstances arose in which a hunter lived close to a registration station, but because of the zone requirements, could not take advantage of that station. The Department's requirement that deer be registered by 5:00pm the following day exacerbates the lack of stations issue. Warden Supervisor Jerich noted that, in many instances, in the spirit of customer service, wardens were helping register deer after hours for hunters unable to find a station. While important in terms of the Department's goal of customer service, it reduces investigation and patrol time. Perhaps a remedy can be found to make registering deer more accessible.
- **Food Pantry Program:** People are very happy that the food pantry program is back in the DEZ and hunters commented to Warden Dave Youngquist that they have no problem with the \$20 per deer if it means the deer can be used by someone who needs it.
- **Early CWD hunt and pheasant hunt overlap:** The wardens received several comments from hunters in regards to the early CWD hunt. Hunters felt it was not a good idea to have the early CWD hunt the same weekend as the pheasant opener for safety reasons. Many pheasant hunters were unaware of the blaze orange requirements on that weekend and the wardens gave several warnings out for hunters not meeting the blaze orange requirement. Warden Dave Walz spoke to numerous pheasant hunters who were upset or concerned for their or their dog's safety about the CWD gun hunt being held the opener of the pheasant season.

## **ESCAPED FARM-RAISED DEER & FREE RANGING WILD HOGS**

Wardens continue to handle escapes from deer farms and the removal of wild hog from the landscape as a high priority due to disease transmission risks. Wardens responded to eleven situations involving escaped deer and elk, hunters shooting deer with an ear tag attached, hunters shooting fallow deer, wild hog shootings and sighting, and reports of deer with collars on them.