

# Texas Parks and Wildlife - Game Warden Reports

## Facebook Timeline Unravels Hunter's Account

When crafting a hunting story on social media, always pay attention to the timeline. A Trinity County man posted information about a white-tailed buck he claimed to have taken on Nov. 4 that caught the eye of game wardens. A quick check revealed the individual actually purchased his hunting license the day after he claimed the kill. After monitoring the subject's Facebook page for a couple of days, and noting he had already gotten the finished taxidermy mount of the deer antlers, wardens paid him a visit. Wardens arrived at the residence and asked to see the hunter's license. The hunting license was missing a mule deer tag, and the harvest log revealed the hunter killed a doe on the same day it was purchased. Wardens already knew a buck was killed and asked to see the head. The hunter led the wardens to the living room of the residence where the skull was European mounted and displayed on the wall. According to the hunter, he had killed the buck on Nov. 4, and received the mount back the next day. After a short interview, it was determined the buck was taken on Oct. 23 with a rifle during the archery-only hunting season. Multiple cases were filed as well as civil restitution.

## Low Hanging Rotten Fruit

Some folks have a reputation for bad habits, particularly when it comes to breaking game laws. Game wardens have habits, too, like revisiting hunting camps with a known history of violations. One camp in particular in southeast Texas, for example, gets a routine checkup and during a recent visit wardens discovered five improperly tagged deer. One hunter tagged a doe with a buck tag to avoid exceeding the bag limit on antlerless deer and another used his son's tag rather than his own. Cases are pending.

## Grass Not Always Greener

In early November, a hunter witnessed another hunter on an adjacent property shoot a buck on his side of the fence. The offending hunter then jumped the fence, retrieved his arrow and began to search for the deer when he was

confronted by the landowner, who called game wardens. After interviewing the landowner and the suspect, the wardens began searching for the deer. After following the blood trail, and searching for several hours with no results, the wardens contacted the game warden K9 team for assistance. Game warden wildlife K9 Blitz and his handler arrived early the next morning, and quickly located the deer. Appropriate charges and restitution were filed and are pending.

## Slippin' Sliders

Tiny turtles are cute, but come with risks in tiny hands; salmonella cases have been traced back to common turtles like red-eared sliders and small children have a tendency to put things in their mouths and not wash their hands. That's why it is illegal to sell turtles less than four inches in size. On Nov. 3, Cass County game wardens received a call concerning individuals selling undersize turtles at the Cullen Baker Fair in Bloomburg, TX. The caller stated two stands were selling small one-inch red-eared sliders and did not possess the required a non-game wildlife dealer permit. Wardens investigated both stands. The first vendor they checked had removed

his turtles and was very deceptive during questioning. Further investigation revealed the vendor heard game wardens were on the scene and attempted to hide his turtles in his truck. The second vendor was honest about his activities. Appropriate charges were filed.

## Costly Target Practice

During the late-night hours in early October, an Upshur County game warden received a call from a distraught couple claiming they had discovered a deceased 10-point buck on their property. The couple explained they noticed the dead deer in the field just beyond their target after sighting in hunting rifles. The callers requested the warden's response due to concern that the deer was possibly sick or diseased. An impromptu necropsy by the wardens confirmed their suspicions that the buck had died from a fatal gunshot wound. After further questioning, ballistics exams, and recreating the couple's shooting scenario, the emotional female finally confessed to intentionally shooting the buck in the field. Claiming never to have had the opportunity growing up to hunt or harvest a wild animal, she decided to take a shot at the live target. Civil restitution and charges were filed. Cases are pending.

## Snapchatted

On Nov. 3, Henderson County game wardens followed up on a tip regarding a Snapchat posting of a white-tailed doe. It was believed the doe was illegally harvested the night before opening day of the general firearm season. Upon interviewing one of the suspects, it was confirmed the deer pictured on Snapchat was taken illegally at night and with the aid of artificial light. All three suspected violators later provided written statements admitting involvement in hunting the deer at night and failing to keep the deer in edible condition. Citations were issued to all violators.

## Remote Rescue

On Nov. 20, a Val Verde County game warden responded to a kayaker in distress call. The paddler was part of a group that put in on the Pecos River at Pandale Crossing for a six-day, 55-mile kayak trip to the Rio Grande River. On the second day, a kayaker in the group took a hard fall on a white water rapid and injured his ribs causing breathing difficulty and was unable to continue. With over 40 miles of river left to navigate, they made an emergency call using a satellite phone and were able to give a rough location. The warden

used his extensive knowledge of the river and his relationship with area landowners to drive through some very rough country to their exact location and extract the injured man.

## Buyer Remorse

While inspecting a local game processor and taxidermist, a Waller County game warden came across three suspiciously tagged deer, including one with an entire hunting license tied to the antlers. Upon further inspection, the license was a non-resident 5-day special hunt permit, which is not valid for hunting deer or other big game animals in Texas. There were two out-of-state hunters involved, and both had purchased the same permit. Curiously, records revealed both hunters had purchased the correct non-resident hunting license in the past. When contacted, one hunter claimed Walmart had told them to buy the 5-day permit if they were only planning on hunting a few days. The hunter making this statement must have forgotten he had bought his permit online and had only purchased his previous years' licenses online. The other hunter did purchase his at Walmart, but it was a few days after the other hunter bought his license and harvested two of the bucks. All three deer, each of which scored in excess of 170 under Boone & Crockett, were seized. The cases and restitution are pending.

## Hide and Seek

On Nov. 10, a Harris County game warden was patrolling at night for hunting violations when he observed a vehicle exiting a distant wood line on a known hunting lease. A truck pulling a trailered Polaris UTV covered in heavy mud eventually emerged, and a field check was initiated. The two hunters in the truck admitted they had been bowhunting on the lease but hadn't seen or killed any deer. The bed of the truck and trailer appeared empty of any game, but upon opening the cab of the loaded UTV, an untagged and undersized 5-point buck was found stuffed into the floorboard. The occupants confessed to killing the deer and lying about what had transpired. Citations were issued, and civil restitution is pending.

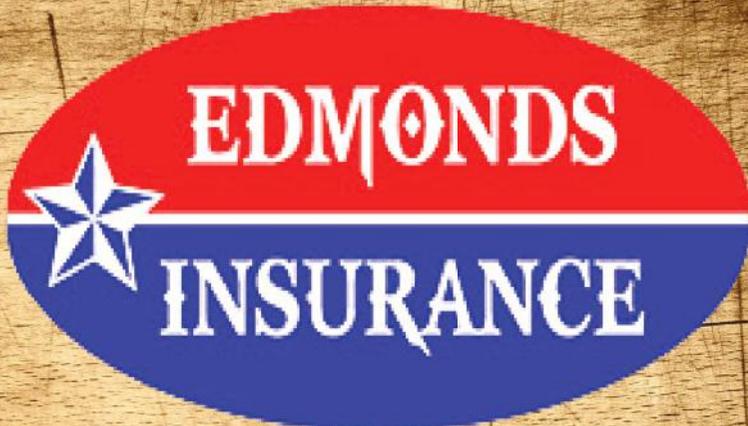
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