

**AGENDA**  
**Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission**  
**Regular Meeting**

**Public Meeting:**     **Monday, May 6th, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.**  
Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation  
1801 N. Lincoln Blvd.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

In compliance with the Open Meeting Act, this meeting is scheduled to be streamed live and recorded at [www.youtube.com/user/outdooroklahoma](http://www.youtube.com/user/outdooroklahoma)

The Commission may vote to approve, disapprove, or take other action on any of the following items. The Commission may vote to authorize public comment on any agenda item requesting a rule change.

1. Call to Order – Chairwoman Gaddis
2. Roll Call – Tammy St. Yves
3. Invocation – Nathan Erdman
4. Pledge of Allegiance – Nathan Erdman
5. Introduction of Guests
6. Presentation of Awards

Scott Cox, Wildlife Biologist – 30 years  
Ken Cunningham, Chief of Fisheries – 20 years

7. Recognition of Terry McQueeney and family for a donation of \$80,000 to the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Foundation in support of improvements at the shooting range at Lexington Wildlife Management Area. – Nels Rodefeld, Chief of Communication and Education, Rick Grundman, Director of the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Foundation and Terry McQueeney.
8. Presentation of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Patriot Award to ODWC Law Enforcement from the National Guard / American Legion for being an outstanding employer of reserve and national guard members. – Nathan Erdman, Chief of Law Enforcement; Christopher Newkirk, Game Warden Delaware County; Paul Ray, American Legion.
9. Consideration and vote to approve, amend, reject, or take other action on \$3,500 donation from the Oklahoma State Game Warden Association to ODWC for Wildlife Youth Camp. – Nathan Erdman, Chief of Law Enforcement; Marshall Reigh, Oklahoma Game Warden Association President.

10. Presentation / update on the role and activities of the Oklahoma Prescribed Burn Association. – Bill Dinkines, Chief of Wildlife Division and John Weir, OSU Extension Specialist for Fire Ecology and President of Oklahoma Prescribed Burn Association.
11. Consideration and vote to approve, amend, reject, or take other action on a donation from North Fork Quail Forever Chapter of a fire quick remote-ignition incendiary flare kit (valued at \$1,405) to aid in conducting prescribed fire operations on western Oklahoma WMA's. – Bill Dinkines, and Jimmy Clark, North Fork Chapter.
12. Presentation, consideration and vote to approve, amend, reject, or take other action on a donation of four Pneu-Dart G2 X-Caliber Dart Guns and supplies from the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Foundation (OWCF) – Rick Grundman, Executive Director, OWCF and Bill Dinkines.
13. Director's Report
  - a. Federal and Congressional Update
    - Oklahoma Legislative Update
  - b. Calendar Items – discussion of upcoming department calendar items.
  - c. Agency Update – an update on current activity within each division of the agency.
14. Consideration and vote to approve, amend, reject, or take other action on minutes from the April 1st, 2024, regular Commission meeting.
15. Update and consideration to vote, approve, amend, reject, or take other action on a Resolution to establish hunting dates, bag, possession limits, and special means of take for the 2024-25 Migratory Bird hunting season. – Bill Dinkines, and Paxton Smith, Migratory Bird/Wetlands Biologist.
16. Update and consideration to vote, approve, amend, reject, or take other action on a Resolution establishing antlerless deer seasons and bag limits for the 2024 hunting season. – Bill Dinkines and Dallas Barber, Big Game Biologist.
17. Presentation of March 31, 2024, Financial Statement and consideration and vote to approve, amend, or reject miscellaneous donations – Lindsey Presley, Accounting Supervisor, Comptroller.
18. Consideration and vote to approve, amend, reject, or take other action on a FY24 budget revision – Lindsey Presley

19. Discussion and action, if necessary, concerning the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Foundation, including a status update, approval of appointment/reappointment of members for the Foundations' Board of Directors, Board Committees, fundraising and other related matters involving the Foundation – Commissioner Barwick.
  
20. Discussion and possible action to convene in Executive Session pursuant to Title 25 O.S. § 307(B)(4) for the purpose of confidential communications between the Commission and counsel from the Oklahoma Office of the Attorney General concerning *Barrick v. Hannah, et al.*, 6:23-cv-00129-JFH-GLJ (Eastern Dist. Okla.), where counsel has determined that disclosure of information related to the claim(s) or action(s) will seriously impair the ability of the Board to process or conduct litigation in this matter, provided that any action taken shall be in open session.
  - a. Vote to Enter Executive Session
  - b. Executive Session pursuant to 25 O.S. § 307(B)(4).
  - c. Vote to Exit Executive Session
  - d. Possible discussion and action on matters discussed in Executive Session.
  
21. New Business – Discussion of any matter not known about, or which could not have been reasonably foreseen 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.
  
22. Announce the June 3rd, 2024, Commission meeting will be in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
  
23. Adjourn

This agency receives federal financial assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and thus prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, disability, age, and sex (gender) pursuant to Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. To request accommodation or informational material in an alternative format, please contact the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, (405) 521-3851. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any facility, program, or activity, or if you need more information, please write to **Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Civil Rights, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C St. NW, Washington, DC**

# May 2024 DIRECTOR'S REPORT



OKLAHOMA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
**WILDLIFE  
CONSERVATION**

## CALENDAR ITEMS:

May 22<sup>nd</sup> C&E Road Show, Clinton, Oklahoma  
June 3-7 WAFWA Summer Meeting, Stevenson, Washington

## AGENCY UPDATE

### ADMINISTRATION

#### Accounting – March Activity

##### Accounts Payable:

# of Claims Audited and Paid 319  
Total Dollar Amount of Claims Paid \$1,785,213.97

##### Purchase Card Program:

Total # Agency Cardholders 194  
Total # Agency Approvers (no cards) 13  
Total Agency Monthly Standard Spending Limits \$445,500.00  
Total Agency Spending Limits w/ Approved Increase Requests \$478,500.00  
# of PCard Spending Limit Increase Requests Approved 37  
# of P/Card Transactions Processed 825  
# of ODWC In-depth Audited Transactions 179  
OMES documentation requests for PCard transactions 26  
Total Dollar Amount of P/Card Purchases \$235,377.50  
PCard Program Refresher Training 22  
New Approver Training at OMES 0  
New Cardholder Training at OMES 0

##### Risk Management:

OMES Surveys or Premiums Completed 0  
New Cases Reported 2

##### Purchasing:

# of Purchase Orders/CO issued 62  
IT Acquisitions Processed 12

### Federal Aid

Federal Reimbursement Request: \$1,862,563.42  
Program Income: \$389,253.20  
In-Kind Contributions: \$6,554.00  
New Grants or Amendments Submitted: 3  
Grant Reports Submitted: 19

Fisheries and Wildlife division Pcard charges sorted into 330 unique combinations of Fund / Division / Grant number / Project number / Product Code / Area / Object Code for claim jacket preparation.

Subaward Invoices Processed: 18

Key Meetings / Milestones: Federal Aid staff spent most of the month focused on preparation for the PeopleSoft migration: participated in multiple meetings and completed tasks every day, milestones included input on final configuration, completion of user acceptance testing, dry run for go-live, and final set up of 121 projects for the April 1 go-live.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced the final Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration apportionments.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced a change to the name of the staff who coordinate ODWC's main federal funding programs: the Office of Conservation Investment.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sent ODWC a report with the results of our Civil Rights Review.

## **Human Resources**

### **April 2024**

# Open Full-time Positions - 36

Positions Interviewed - 4

Candidates interviewed - 12

Positions Announced - 7

Candidates Screened - 161

Filled Positions - 7 (3 promotion, 4 hires)

See included personnel report that shows personnel actions for the month.

Temporary Employees Processed (Interns & Aids), - 5

Full time employees on March payroll - 334

DB Plan Members - 148

DC Plan Members - 186

Hourly employees on supplemental payroll - 32

Retirement meetings and / or calculations - 2

Work Comp Injuries - 0

### **Other misc:**

New employee orientation for 6 new hires

Finalized planning and facilitated Leadership Development Program Level Two Workshop

Workday webinar for Workday Learning Administrators

Webinar for Statewide Learning Coalition

IT onboarding for 2 new hires

Work on Budget Payroll process for FY25

## **Personnel Actions**

### **New Hires**

Corrie McClees – Fisheries Hatchery Technician, Holdenville, 4/1/24  
Garrett Scott – Wildlife Technician, Red & Grassy Slough, 4/1/24  
Dalayne Richard – Wildlife Administrative Assistant, 4/8/24  
Mona Meiser – Wildlife Technician, OLAP, 4/15/24

### **Promotions**

Tammy St. Yves – Wildlife Administrative Assistant to Executive Assistant, 4/1/24  
Stacey Priest – Assistant Hatchery Manager @ JA Manning to Hatchery Manager at Durant SFH, 4/1/24  
Jon West – Fisheries Streams Biologist to NE Regional Supervisor, 4/1/24

### **Transfers**

#### Resignations/Terminations

Adam Dreyer – Wildlife Technician @ Packsaddle, 4/13/24  
Colby Rowe – Fisheries Heavy Equipment Operator NW Region, 4/15/24  
Angela Veley – Fisheries Administrative Assistant, NW Region, 4/15/24

## **IT**

Prepped new laptops for deployment and sent out scheduling requests.  
Assisting wildlife in vetting and hiring a new GIS Admin for a second time.  
Updating the historical information for Federal Aid.  
Working on the VPN connection between ODWC and Brandt.  
Building a program to automatically update the vehicles in the Vehicle Log  
Acquired quotes for updating our security system, AV system, and aging server hardware.

## **License**

### March 2024

- Processed over 970 orders, including 907 licenses/permits and 672 hard cards (mail and walk-in orders) - \$75,473 in revenue.
- Shipped 788 in-house merchandise items (patches, books, etc), totaling over \$5,200 in revenue.
- Processed over \$244,000 in miscellaneous revenue, such lease payments, fines restitution, etc.
- Reviewed 2,128 online and paper applications for various licenses and permits.

### March License Review

Recreational Licenses were up 9% for the month compared to March 2023.

### Notables include:

License Type	Pct Change MTD (# Sold)
Resident Hunting	+15% (423)
Resident Fishing	+12% (24,742)
Resident Combo	+11% (1,998)
Resident Youth Hunting	-3% (32)

Resident Youth Fishing	+46% (1,552)
Paddlefish	-6% (17,789)

Lifetime License sales up 11% or the month compared to March 2023.

Notables include:

License Type	Pct Change MTD (# Sold)
Lifetime Combo	+52% (276)
Senior Citizen Combo	+8% (728)
Senior Citizen Fishing	+5% (356)

Mid-April License Review (Sales through April 21)

Recreational Licenses are down 17% for the first 21 days of the month compared to April 2023.

Notables include:

License Type	Pct Change MTD (# Sold)
Resident Fishing	-25% (17,672)
Resident Combo	-8% (1,462)
Resident Youth Fishing	-16% (822)
Spring Turkey	+10% (6,570)
Nonresident Hunting	+18% (1,983)
Nonresident 1-Day Fishing	-5% (3,767)
Nonresident Fishing	-18% (5,089)
Nonresident Deer Archery	+339% (123)
Nonresident Deer Gun	+318% (46)

Lifetime Licenses were up 30% for the first 21 days of the month compared to April 2023 (over 400 more lifetimes sold).

Notables include:

License Type	Pct Change MTD (# Sold)
Lifetime Combo	+198% (387)
Lifetime Fishing	+107% (249)
Senior Citizen Combo	+8% (728)

## Property

Monitored and fielded calls for auction items listed for April.

Received ten law trucks, four wildlife trucks and three fish trucks. Began preparation process on each truck to deploy out to the field.

Transitioned inventory over from old BTG system to new PeopleSoft Asset Management.

## FISHERIES

### March Highlights

<b>Statewide Fish Stocking, March 2024</b>			
<b>Species</b>	<b># Fish</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b># Locations</b>
Rainbow Trout, Commercial	7,553	9"+	3
Rainbow Trout, Commercial	499	14"-25"	3
Rainbow Trout, USFWS	13,289	10"	1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>21,341</b>		

#### Meetings:

Staff participated in the B.A.S.S. Conservation Summit, provided updates, and presented a perspective from Oklahoma's tournament exemption process.

SCR staff hosted the Blue River Appreciation Lunch for local partners (County, Sheriff), agencies (USFWS, etc), elected officials, and co-workers (ODWC various divisions) that help provide continued success of the area. Approximately 60 individuals enjoyed a good meal and toured the area as interested.

Personnel participated in meetings with COE, USFWS, Arkansas Game and Fish, ODEQ, and other agencies to discuss the upcoming McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System 12-Foot Deepening project in Oklahoma and Arkansas.

Personnel participated in a joint meeting in Ft. Smith between ODWC and Arkansas Game and Fish to discuss common fisheries issues and presented information on border water fisheries management.

Personnel attended the Oklahoma Kill Response Management Team Workshop, hosted by ODWC and ODEQ at the Arcadia Wildlife Education Center, to learn about fish kill reporting procedures, lab sampling, source tracking, case studies, and sensitive wildlife kills. Several state, federal, and tribal entities attended and presented on what should be known about a fish kill response and the inner workings of their response team methods.

#### Activities

- Received 2.3 million walleye and Saugeye eggs from Colorado. Eggs were then incubated and hatched.
- Rainbow trout were fin clip-marked prior to stocking.
- Manager orders brine, HCG, and other fish production supplies.
- Ponds were tilled and prepped for fingerling production, and checked-in feed and fertilizer for ponds were delivered.
- Began filling ponds for bass production and prepared structure clean out, laid sod, and mow.



- Personnel also took part in fish care and bass handling after the weigh-in. With the help of hatchery staff, all the bass were taken back to the lakes where they had been caught. High School and College anglers fished at Keystone Lake, and the Classic anglers were fishing at Grand Lake. A total of 668 fish were weighed in at the Classic with an average weight of 2.9 pounds, with the big bass weighing 6 pounds 12 ounces. NER personnel also attended the Bassmaster Classic Media Day and interviewed several media members regarding the Grand Lake bass fishery. Staff at Blue River initiated a pole barn expansion project. All support framing was completed, but a few days remain until the sheet metal roof is finalized. BRPFHA staff completed a 12-month angler survey to gauge seasonal use patterns and demographics of visitors.
- The Blue River Fly Fishers hosted the Annual One Fly tournament at BRPFHA. Area staff were on the scene to provide updates and answer questions to this key constituency group. This group is anticipated to donate \$13K+ this year to the area.
- Area staff continued to collect data and tag fish for the bass sampling bias project. They also assisted AGFC with the black bass telemetry project to gain experience and information about associated surgeries.
- Multiple broodstock collections, including paddlefish for Tishomingo National Fish Hatchery and white bass males for hybrid striped bass production at Byron State Fish Hatchery.
- Staff picked up angler-shot fish from the Grand Lake bow fishing tournament and processed carcasses for many data, including age, length, weight, and DNA. Conducted surveys for Largemouth Bass, Walleye, and/or White Bass on Broken Bow, Pine Creek, Vian, and Eufaula tailwater. Striped bass were present in good numbers in the tailwater, and things look promising for broodstock collection later in the month.
- Assisted with trout marking and stocking for the LMFR rainbow trout project utilizing fingerlings hatched from eggs. Staff have continued working on a project investigating movement and redd construction.
- Met w/ LMFR Foundation and TU and discussed trout projects and future plans. Assisted DSFH with pond and fence repairs.
- Continued habitat-related work, including cubes for Tenkiller and Eufaula and cedar removal at Nanih Waiya
- ANS/Carp personnel finished up all planned eDNA springtime sampling on the Lower Arkansas River, a total of 99 samples taken from 33 sites. Samples were processed, packaged and sent off for analysis.
- Personnel constructed, selected suitable sites and deployed habitat into Tenkiller lake in preparation for the upcoming Use of Habitat Additions by Oklahoma Game Fishes study. This included two sites of each type of habitat: Cedar brush piles, King jacks, Mossback Safe Haven XL and Shelbyville Cubes.
- Aging of channel catfish otoliths from American Horse is ongoing. Preliminary data suggests moderate growth. Length at age is comparable to previous studies.
- A habitat project was completed at Canton Lake. Twenty Shelbyville cubes and twenty spider blocks were placed in the lake. GPS coordinates were recorded and will be uploaded to the ODWC GIS site.
- Staff assisted with the repair and renovations at Jap Beaver Lake. Jetties were built from material in the lakebed.

- Staff assisted with marking 26,000 rainbow trout raised at the Byron State Fish Hatchery. These fish were released in the Lower Mountain Fork River and will be monitored to determine recruitment.
- Sank 100 plus cedar trees at Duncan Lake. Both deep water piles and shallow piles.
- Repaired new dock at Ft Cobb. Poured concrete anchors for cables, pulled 4 pencils, installed cables and cable floats, positioned dock in correct location, dropped pencils and anchored dock with cables.
- Assist wildlife division with burns at Waurika WMA and Hackberry Flat WMA.
- Bixhoma, Phase I complete, Budget and engineering documents have been finalized, Nationwide Pre-Construction Notification has been submitted to the USACE, and Updated project details in TRACS
- R.C. Longmire - Northside Boat Ramp addressed USACE's requests for additional information on the Nationwide Pre-Construction Notification
- Reviewed briefing from SW Regional Supervisor on courtesy dock repairs at Fort Cobb - Fly Inn 2
- Reviewed annual Boating Access inspections from the NW Region.
- CTHP feeders are operational now, and creel surveys have started.
- Catfish spawning boxes are being built and placed in regional lakes to understand the effectiveness of increasing Channel Catfish spawning and recruitment.

## **C&E DIVISION**

- Damon Springer, Jason Smith, Colin Berg, Lance Meek, Jennifer Benge, Heather Gaylord, Amanda Thomas, Kelly Boyer and Shawn Gee set up and conducted the OKSSSP north and south region shoots at El Reno with staff from other divisions. Over 1,200 shooters participated in the regional shoots. Additionally, staff will run the OKSSSP state shoot at El Reno along with other agency staff for the top 16 high school teams, top 8 junior high teams and individual qualifiers. Some amazing scores were shot at the shoot by teams and individuals.
- Staff is planning the annual C&E Division Road Show on May 22 at the Frisco Conference Center in Clinton. The workshop is designed to foster communication and collaboration between the C&E Division and other agency personnel.
- Lance Meek handled requests and assisted organizations and staff with several meetings that took place at the Arcadia Conservation Education center. Staff also met with the engineers regarding the Arcadia parking lots.
- Kelly Boyer and Shawn Gee began work on equipment purchases for the next rounds of schools that will be trained this summer to ensure that equipment kits are available for new schools. They also began compiling a list of teacher training dates for May-September.
- Amanda Thomas and Colin Berg met with contractors for the Atoka shooting range and documented progress as it was happening at the range. Amanda also went to several meetings with engineers and agency staff looking at other future range projects. All kinds of activity are taking place across the state with projects that are to be built in the future as well.
- Staff worked on updating the ODWC website to reflect changes related to the Oklahoma License Modernization Act.

- Kasie Harriet conducted several turkey hunting virtual courses. Kasie and Lance Meek began working with volunteers from the OHA on the 2024 deer conference which will be back at the Reed Center in Midwest City on August 17th.
- Staff led the Planning and preparation for the annual Legislative Fish Fry scheduled for April 23 at the State Capitol. Thanks to any Commissioners who were able to attend and participate.
- Colin Berg and Kelly Boyer met with staff from Autry technology center as well as Marshal Reigh to engage other technology centers across the state. Pioneer Tech in Ponca City and Western Tech in Elk City are going to follow the lead that Brian Moorehead (Autry Tech Center Business Instructor) has taken with using ODWC outdoor Education programs with kids and adults in an after school repeated process. Autry is using ODWC education programs as a means of getting kids and adults from their service area into their technology centers to showcase and hopefully recruit kids as well as adults into taking courses offered at the Technology center.

## WILDLIFE DIVISION

- The WAFWA Western States Wild Turkey Technical Working Group meeting will be held in western Oklahoma May 6-9.
- Roadside Pheasant Surveys began April 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Nuisance goose calls starting to pick up.
- 36 NWCO's are enrolled this year as Special Canada Goose Sub-permittees.
- Wetlands staff helped Ft Gibson WMA staff check for duck blind removal compliance on Webbers Falls and Ft. Gibson reservoirs. 88 blinds were inspected and only 8 were not in compliance.
- Discussions are ongoing about potential future DU donations for wetland infrastructure in the northeast.
- Coordination with the Tar Creek Trustee Council is ongoing on our Neosho Bottoms project area.
- Upland bird program continues to monitor weather as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAH) has begun to forecast a transition from our current El Niño conditions back towards a La Niña. We are currently expected to make this transition April-June and currently have a 55% chance of La Niña developing in the June-August timeframe. La Niña brings with it less favorable conditions for our upland species due to projected warmer and drier conditions.
- Continue to work closely with University funded researchers.
- 5 new Wildlife Division staff were onboarded during April: Garrett Scott (Red Slough/Grassy Slough WMA Technician), Wyatt Slade (McCurtain County Wilderness Area Technician), Michael McLaughlin (Keystone / Heyburn / Skiatook / Candy WMA's Biologist), Dalayne Richard (Central Office Administrative Assistant), and Mona Meiser (OLAP Technician).

### WMA Activities:

- Work is underway on the Atoka WMA shooting range.
- Staff have been busy with maintenance / clean-up activities in preparation for opening and ongoing turkey season.

- WDU drawdowns, pump removal, etc have been completed for the year. Maintenance work has been scheduled and/or is ongoing, and discing for habitat management is underway. Evaluating FY-25 budget needs for repairs.
- Grazing season on many WMA has commenced along with associated maintenance of watering facilities, fencing and other grazing infrastructure.
- Gobble counts and opening day hunter use monitoring was completed on a number of WMAs, and staff continue routine interactions / assistance with turkey hunters. Weekday opener helped reduce pressure on some areas but not all. Lots of wind and weather conditions have not been ideal but some success reported.
- Maintained 21 miles of area roads, 18 parking areas, and 32 miles of firebreaks.
- Mulched 81 acres in northeast, NRDA mulching on Atoka WMA is ongoing and expected to be completed by early May, and the Canton Cedar mulching project continues.
- Applied Spike herbicide to 150 acres.
- Repaired 3 WMA ponds.
- Assisted OHP Bomb Squad in destroying Unexploded Ordinances on Cherokee WMA.
- Preparation work for growing season burning and spring planting is well underway.
- Finished up dormant season burns including 1,100 acres on Hackberry Flat WMA. This is a milestone event due to burn bans/poor conditions.
- GIS is working on updating the pdf (printed version) of wildlife management area maps.
- Wildlife and Law Enforcement Division staff attended a meeting with Bureau of Reclamation and all Stakeholders for Dam safety and Security at Altus Lugert and Mountain Park
- All the behind-the-scenes work associated with the controlled hunts program was coordinated and completed, and the 2024-25 controlled hunts application process is open through May 20<sup>th</sup>.
- The Furbearer roadside survey was conducted during March, with numerous interdivisional staff assisting, and results will be available as soon as data analysis is complete.
- The annual budget preparation and approval process for FY 25 is underway.
- The Research and Diversity teams are coordinating with university researchers to set up new grants resulting from the 2023 Request-For-Proposals. New Wildlife Restoration projects will focus on Northern Bobwhite Digestive Ecology, Turkey Harvest Estimates, and Resident Canada Geese Populations. New State Wildlife Grant projects will focus on Blue River Mussel Community Assessment, Spavinaw Watershed Salamander Evaluation, Stream Barrier Assessment, and Arogos Skipper Distributions.
- Wildlife Diversity staff sponsored and attended the University of Central Oklahoma Tri-Center Symposium event and interacted with science and forensic science students, showcasing careers with ODWC.
- Development of new research needs is ongoing to prepare the FY-25 Request for Proposals to solicit proposals from academia in late summer 2024.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION**

### **Dist. 1**

Warden Newkirk made a great turkey case from only a trail cam pic and a concerned landowner. The culprits were caught on camera carrying a turkey out of the woods two or more weeks prior to season and Warden Newkirk tracked them down through some good old fashioned police work and was able to get multiple charges in Cherokee Tribal Court

- Warden Jackson has started up a Prairie Chicken Count through cooperation with Wildlife Division in Craig and Nowata Co and has heard and seen multiple birds.
- D1 had a large contingent at the Giggling Tournament on Lake Eucha. Approx 10 Wardens came and answered questions and met with anglers and sightseers.
- During the Tournament Wardens Newkirk, Adair and Morris apprehended two giggers with multiple large bass and a firearm, all of which they tried to throw out of the boat when contacted.

### **Dist. 2**

D2 Wardens were busy on area lakes and rivers with fishing activity picking up. Several wardens worked on a special emphasis project at Webbers Falls dam targeting striper over-limit violations.

- D2 wardens were also busy with mandatory training events including our annual defensive tactic refresher course. We also spent several days assisting at the game warden academy. Completed a case in McIntosh County where 2 turkeys were illegally harvested.
- Wardens gathered for Brek Henry's retirement party and send off after 30 years of service with the Department.

### **Dist. 3**

D3 wardens worked in areas in southeastern Oklahoma expecting huge crowds due to the eclipse. Overall activity and crowds did not live up to the hype surrounding the event. Lt. Lawson and reserve warden Phillips did see approximately 250 people in and around the Red Slough and another area known as the farm in southern McCurtain County.

- During the last 28-day period, D3 wardens participated in 7 public outreach events and conducted 13 programs. They spent 216 hours assisting other divisions within the dept., other agencies, and the public. They spent 202 hours in training, 93 hours conducting investigations, and 1014 hours patrolling areas in southeastern Oklahoma. They issued 6 citations, 13 written warnings, sold 4 field licenses, and 6 administrative fines. Overall, they completed 1014 compliance checks and drove a total of 20,852 miles.

### **Dist. 4**

- The Game Wardens completed their annual refresher Defensive Tactics training and successfully qualified with their firearms. Warden Dale Stites contributed to the LEDT training of new wardens at the Game Warden Training

Academy at Camp Gruber. Warden Lydia Gearhart is currently undergoing training at the Game Warden Academy and is expected to graduate in May, assuming her role as a Game Warden in Coal Co.

- Game Warden Trey Hale provided instruction to the ODWC Wildlife Investigator Team on snake identification and conducted field exercises on snake handling. Wardens Trea Taylor and Zane Arnold investigated reports of premature turkey hunting in their assigned area, leading to confessions and citations. Wardens Garrett Beam and Trey Hale investigated a report of an adult actively turkey hunting during the current youth turkey season. They located the subject and issued citations.
- Game Warden Zane Arnold responded to a gunshot victim at the Blue River Public Hunting and Fishing Area, where he promptly administered first aid by applying a chest seal to reduce bleeding. With the assistance of Johnston Co. First Responders, the victim was stabilized for helicopter transport to a nearby trauma center. Warden Arnold, Trey Hale, and Lt. Bud Cramer conducted a thorough investigation, confirming the incident as an accidental discharge. Warden Arnold's quick response and intervention played a crucial role in saving the victim's life.
- Warden's Lt Cramer, Stites, Harley, Taylor, Johnson, Attended and conducted STEP shoot at Lt Governor's Turkey Hunt.

## **Dist. 5**

- 8 D5 Wardens have been teaching at the Game Warden Academy.
  - Tactical Combat Casualty Care – Lt. Young
  - Firearms – Capt. Emmons
  - Defensive Tactics – Capt. Emmons, Lt. Young, Warden Branch
  - LEDT – Lt. Strang, Warden Runyan
  - WET Class – Lt. Strang, Lt. Young, Warden Murray
  - Simmunitions Scenarios – Capt. Emmons
  - Search Warrants, Wildlife Search & Seizure, Evidence Collection – Wardens Paulk & Gillham
- Wardens Buley and Harriet made a good turkey case last Thursday (April 18) for hunting without consent & failure to check. A neighboring landowner called Jacob & said he had heard a shot Wednesday morning on his neighbor. Jacob asked the landowner if anyone was supposed to be hunting that place & was told no. Dalton & Jacob went out there and found where the bird was shot, wad, shell & where they were sitting & their tracks crossing the creek, so they interviewed the landowner. The landowner said he didn't know who it was, so they called his grandson who then ratted out his 2 buddies. They had hunted the correct place that morning but there were no birds, so they hopped the fence and shot one. They never checked it in.
- Warden Meskimen showed up on a house fire in Cleveland County. He had to enter the house several times through the smoke to check on the owner that was fighting the fire in the bedroom with a garden hose. The wife started the fire when she was trying to kill a tick on the bed with a blow torch.
- On April 16, Warden Runyan arrived at a house fire fully engulfed in Wynewood with a PD officer. They were first on scene and knowing a woman and her 2 small children lived there, they made entry but fortunately no one was home.

## **Dist. 6**

- Warden Clem investigated a case that originated from a source in Texas. Warden Clem interviewed a subject from Texas who ultimately admitted to killing a deer and then buying the license after the fact. The subject also admitted to killing a bobcat out of season with a thermal scoped rifle. The pictures of the deer that the subject had posted on Facebook showed the subject posing with the deer and the thermal scoped rifle, but the subject would not admit to using the thermal to kill the deer. The deer, bobcat and thermal scoped rifle were seized as evidence and charges are pending.
- Warden Cornett investigated a case of a non-resident turkey hunter from Georgia taking a turkey and purchasing the required licenses after the fact. Warden Clem had the same thing happen with a Texas hunter. Charges are pending in both cases. Seems to be a common theme with non-residents.

## **Dist. 7**

- Assisted with OKSSSP shoots in El Reno
- NR Turkey trespass issues, citations issued.
- Outfitter broadcasting milo baiting turkeys, NR killed 3 turkeys overbait, 10-15 citations possible.
- D7 Shotgun/rifle qualifications
- Received a call about vehicle passenger aiming a rifle from the vehicle window at birds, ended up at a marijuana grow with a deputies and a trooper with suspects, one of them had pending felony charges for illegal drug trafficking
- Assisted deputies with investigation of a hunt camp being robbed and other hunters had caught the thieves in the act, thieves were arrested and jailed, located the hunters that belonged with the camp.
- Assisted with turkey research group getting access to private property to check on GPS nesting birds in the research.

## **Dist. 8**

- Lt. Paul took the airboat over to work the gigging tournament, made 61 contacts, sold 1 temporary license and explored a lot of the river system otherwise not accessible without an airboat.
- Warden Badley and Capt. Bickerstaff worked a group of turkey hunters that shot another hunter in their party. Tried to move the feeder 100 yards away when they found out the wardens were working the investigation. At the conclusion of investigation, the admitted to shooting two jakes right under the feeder with bait on the ground. The hunter that was shot, was treated and released. He was 49 yards from the shooter when he was shot.