

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

**Public Meeting:**     **Monday, February 3rd, 2025, 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 – Chairman Barwick
2. Roll Call – Tammy St. Yves
3. Invocation – Bill Dinkines
4. Pledge of Allegiance – Bill Dinkines
5. Introduction of Guests
6. Presentation of Awards

Lt. Dru Polk, Game Warden Supervisor – 25 Years

7. Presentation of the Colonel’s Life Saving Awards – Colonel Nathan Erdman, Chief of Law Enforcement

Zane Arnold	Spencer Grace
Larry Green	Cody Jones
Josey Branch	

8. Consideration and vote to approve, amend, reject, or take other action on minutes from the January 6th, 2025, regular Commission meeting.
9. Presentation of \$1,000 donation from the Grand National Quail Club Foundation in support of the construction of sidewalk access to the trap thrower pad at the shotgun range at Packsaddle Wildlife Management Area Shooting Range - Nels Rodefled, Chief of Communication and Education, Amanda Thomas, Shooting Range Coordinator and Shaun Cummings, Chairman of the Grand National Quail Club Foundation.

10. Director's Report
  - a. Calendar Items – discussion of upcoming department calendar items.
  - b. Agency Update – an update on current activity within each division.
  - c. Oklahoma Legislative Update
11. Presentation of the December 31st Financial Reports and consideration and vote to approve, amend, or reject miscellaneous donations – Andrea Crews.
12. New Business – Discussion of any matter not known about, or which could not have been reasonably foreseen 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.
13. Announce the March 3rd, 2025, Commission meeting will be in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
14. Adjourn

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# February 2025 DIRECTOR'S REPORT



OKLAHOMA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
**WILDLIFE  
CONSERVATION**

## CALENDAR ITEMS:

February 3	Legislative Reception at ODWC Headquarters
Feb 11 & 12	Oklahoma Archery in the Schools State Shoots, OKC
Feb 19 & 20	Oklahoma Archery in the Schools State Shoots, Tulsa
March 5	Rack Madness, ODWC Headquarters, OKC

## AGENCY UPDATE

### **ADMINISTRATION**

December Activities

### **Accounting**

Accounts Payable:

- # of Claims Audited and Paid: 484
- Total Dollar Amount of Claims Paid: \$4,432,863

### **Purchase Card Program:**

- Total # Agency Cardholders: 200
- Total # Agency Approvers (no cards): 11
- Total Agency Monthly Standard Spending Limits: \$462,000
- Total Agency Spending Limits w/ Approved Increase Requests: \$575,000
- # of PCard Spending Limit Increase Requests Approved: 31
- # of P/Card Transactions Processed: 617
- # of ODWC In-depth Audited Transactions: 246
- OMES documentation requests for PCard transactions: 8
- Total Dollar Amount of P/Card Purchases: \$165,040
- PCard Program Refresher Training: 13
- New Approver Training at OMES: 0
- New Cardholder Training at OMES: 5

### **Risk Management:**

- OMES Surveys or Premiums Completed: 0
- New Cases Reported: 5

### **Purchasing:**

- # of Purchase Orders/CO issued: 175
- IT Acquisitions Processed: 8

## **Overview:**

Construction Site Visits: Pre-Bid Conference Optima Shooting Range Pre-Construction Meeting 12/16/2024. The entire team worked together to get PO's issued, county acreages reviewed by Kristen Gillman, and payments issued for amounts in lieu of Ad Valorem Taxes. The entire team also made a push to get 80+ OLAP PO's issued and invoices paid prior to December 31st. Training two new CPO's.

## **Federal Aid:**

- Federal Reimbursement Request: \$1,976,701.20
- Program Income: \$81,449
- In-Kind Contributions: \$61,277
- New Grants of Amendments Submitted: 3
- Grant Reports Submitted (performance and financial): 45
- Reviewed 535 Pcard charges with grant-related transactions, for a total of \$121,299 charged to grants.
- Subaward Invoices Processed: 3
- Interviewed for and filled the Federal Aid Coordinator position effective 12/16.
- Working on indirect cost proposal

## **Human Resources**

### Recruitment:

- Open Positions 37
- Positions Announced 3
- Applications Screened 226
- Positions Interviewed 4
- Candidates Interviewed 17
- New Hires 3
- Promotions 2
- Transfers 6
- Resignations 0
- Retirements 0
- Temporary Employees Processed 5

### Payroll:

- Full Time Employees on Payroll 331
- Temporary Employees on Payroll 31
- DB Plan Members 140
- DC Plan Members 191

### Benefits:

- Retirement Meetings and/or Calculations 1

### Training:

- # in orientation 4

### Miscellaneous:

- FMLA Requests 0

- Worker Comp Injuries 0

Activities:

- Submitted HR Corner article for the January WOG
- New Employee Orientation for 4 new hires
- LDP workshop – Leading at the Speed of Trust
- Launched 2024 Annual Performance Review for full-time employees.
- Finalized completions of Mandatory Supervisor Training

**License**

- Processed 420 orders, including 346 licenses/permits and 321 hard cards (mail and walk-in orders) - \$74,474 in revenue.
- Shipped 741 in-house merchandise items (patches, books, etc.), totaling over \$10,000 in revenue.
- Processed over \$21,000 in miscellaneous revenue, such lease payments, fines restitution, etc.
- Reviewed 1031 online and paper applications for various licenses and permits.

December License Review:

Recreational Licenses were down 4% for the month compared to December 2023.

Notables include:

<b>License Type</b>	<b>Pct Change MTD (# Sold)</b>
Resident Combo	+34% (1,712)
Resident Fishing	-2% (3,756)
Resident Hunting	+16% (3,893)
Resident Youth Super Hunting	1,206 sold
Resident Deer Gun	+48% (3,204)
Nonresident Fishing	+1% (2,083)
Nonresident Hunting	+293% (6,236)
Nonresident 5-Day Youth Super Hunting	413 sold
Nonresident Annual Youth Super Hunting	146 sold
Nonresident Deer Gun	+16% (610)

Nonresident Hunting license spikes are due to the annual hunting license requirement for waterfowl season as well as deer seasons. This is expected to continue into the new year. Lifetime License sales were down 34% for the month compared to December 2023, with revenue down 38% for the category and 748 sold.

Notables include:

<b>License Type</b>	<b>Pct Change MTD (# Sold)</b>
Lifetime Combo	-54% (238)
Lifetime Fishing	-46% (70)
Senior Citizen Combo	-15% (215)
Senior Citizen Fishing	+25% (120)

Walk-in traffic has slowed but calls for waterfowl season have increased from nonresidents. We expect to follow license sales into the next quarter of the fiscal year on

our comprehensive comparison sheet in the weeks to come. Early 2025 numbers show we're picking up extra revenue on annual hunting licenses from nonresidents for waterfowl season, but we'll have a better number on that with next month's update.

**Information Technology**

- IT took in 67 tickets over the last 30 days.
- Our yearly audit interview process is over, and we are waiting for the fully written response.
- Follow-up penetration tests have been scheduled for 2/27/25.
- The person responsible for doing our upgrades with Cory's AV retired so I have scheduled a getting-to-know-you meeting with their replacement.
- Fixed hotlinks in the employee directory for making calls from the mobile page.
- Continued working with Law Enforcement and OMES on upgrading their laptops at the end of this year.
- IT worked with C&E to start planning for rack madness.
- Property
- January 2025 Auction currently live with 20 vehicles listed and 60 surplus items listed. Staff are currently fielding inquiries about items. Auction scheduled to close on January 28th, with items to be picked up by buyers within a couple weeks of auction close.
- Provided setup and teardown for the Oklahoma room for 4 days of internal and external groups.
- Prepared and deployed annual inventories for entire agency.
- Receive three new FY25 vehicles to begin deployment process.
- Conducted normal mailroom and building/grounds maintenance activities. 823 pieces of mail were received.

**FISHERIES**

Director Highlights  
January 2025

<b>Statewide Fish Stocking, December 2024</b>			
<b>Species</b>	<b># Fish</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b># Locations</b>
Rainbow Trout, Commercial	28,162	Mature	6
<b>Total:</b>	<b>28,162</b>		

Meetings

- The team participated in an OCRAP coding meeting with Dan Shoup and the lab team.
- Met with the contractor and inspector for the Watonga dam project was attended. The contractor has drained the lake and the entire site has been cleared and grubbed.
- Staff meets w/ TPWD staff for the annual Texoma Reservoir Fisheries Management meeting to discuss sampling data and future planning for Texoma Reservoir.
- Staff attended the SEAFWA Conference, which includes committee meetings and presented two papers.

## Activities

- Staff started office renovation project. Paint, new flooring, cabinets, and tile restoration.
- Staff continued rainbow trout production in fish house. Fish were feed, tanks cleaned, and fish sampled when needed and conducted routine trout fry sampling to track growth progress.
- Harvested final forage pond for FLMB.
- Performed predator control on ponds, tilled and reshaped ponds, burned river cane out of 2 ponds at DSFH, cleaned up trees, limbs, and other debris from grounds, created the overflow box for trout raceways.
- Collected Soil Samples from J. A. Manning and Byron Hatcheries.
- Brush piles at Lake Elmer were refurbished with approximately 60 cedar trees.
- Three creel surveys were conducted at Foss. Fishing pressure has increased for hybrid striped bass. Several nice fish have been caught in the winter months.
- Staff assisted with a habitat project at Jap Beaver installing natural and artificial structures.
- Ran Gillnets at Altus Lugert and Lake Lawtonka. Entered and analyzed all data.
- Installed various types of artificial habitat at Jap Beaver Lake-spider blocks, cedar trees, rock piles, gravel beds, and stump beds.
- Began installing fire guards at Jap Beaver Lake.
- Continued trout stocking in Medicine Creek.
- Approved Scientific collectors permits and Letters of Authority.
- In December the paddlefish and native non-game crew (with the help of volunteers) deployed almost 15 miles of gillnet and captured over 1500 paddlefish for stock assessments in Webber's Fall and Grand Lake.
- The creel survey on Sooner Lake continued. From 9/1 to 12/31, 24 creel days yielded 109 angler surveys, 39 of which were obtained by leaving post cards with QR codes on vehicle windshields at boat ramps.
- Began processing otoliths and entering data from fall SSP sampling.
- Prepared career and agency overview presentation to a class at Kiamichi Tech
- Staff worked on Blue River PFHA information sign and pamphlet development with GIS and C&E staff and installed new signs around the BRPFHA.
- Staff analyzed trap netting and gill netting data and updated management plans
- Staff continued working on the Grand Lake Creel Survey. December wrapped up the tenth month of the survey and was the first month of the winter season.
- Staff assisted the non-game crews with paddlefish sampling on Grand Lake. During these sampling events all Flathead catfish are also weighed and measured for supplemental data. Of the flathead encountered 19 were kept to fill gaps in age length data set, and another 19 were tagged and released after data collection.
- Staff deployed 116 spider blocks along the rip rap of the new Winganon Bridge at Oologah Lake. The Winganon bridge is a very popular bank fishing site on the upper end of Oologah Lake.
- Staff conducted SSP gill netting on Oologah Lake, to investigate several constituent calls regarding poor looking blue catfish. They found most of the blue catfish were in good health and only a few were thin with low relative weights. Summer electrofishing will be utilized this coming summer to further look into the blue catfish population.

- Staff started work preparing annual lake reports for Grand, Eucha, Oologah, Keystone, Stroud, and Copan Lakes.
- Assisted with paddlefish sampling of Webbers Falls Reservoir and Grand to determine population abundance and health.
- Read otoliths from a sub-sample of white and black crappie from Fort Gibson and Greenleaf Lakes to determine age and growth rates for the population. The sampling data was entered, validated, and uploaded to SharePoint.
- Began creel survey project on Greenleaf Lake and conducted multiple interviews over multiple creel days.
- Reviewed environmental review requests and drafted and submitted responses related to projects that could impact fisheries across the state.
- Continued drafting SSP Survey Reports for lakes sampled during 2024-2025 federal grant period.
- Participated in Mississippi Watershed webinar to learn about impacts of projects occurring within the watershed.
- Received Grand Lake bighead carp genetics report from lab. Reviewed report and setup meeting with lab to discuss.
- Prepared and submitted Bighead carp presentation abstract for upcoming Southern Division meeting in North Carolina
- Staff met with City of Elk City and City of Enid to discuss The Oklahoma Habitat Enhancement Partnership Program details.
- Staff conducted a gill net survey at Konawa Lake. Otoliths on White Bass, Channel Catfish, and Hybrid Striped Bass were collected for age and growth.
- Staff aged otoliths and began annual survey reports.
- Arcadia fish kill investigation (didn't result in anything/no fish were found)
- Ran large mesh gill nets and Thunderbird to supplement Blue Catfish sample, processed fish and aged them.
- Built road/access and parking area at Verlin Lake on Lexington WMA
- General equipment maintenance
- Staff conducted reviews for North American Journal of Fisheries Management (2 papers) and Journal of Fish Biology (1 paper)
- Staff Worked on Management Reports.
- Bowfishing paper edits and Inland Fisheries Management Volume 4 chapter was worked on.
- Continued compiling and receiving tag returns from tagged trout study on LMFR.
- Entered and aged otoliths from fall sampling.
- Conducted extensive correspondence with local residents, lake association, state park, and DEQ regarding sewage runoff issues at Lake Raymond Gary.
- Began work on community stream reports from Muddy Boggy and Blue River drainage.
- Completed catfish reports from sampling on the Cimmaron River. Blue catfish were abundant, but channel and flathead catfish catch rates were average.
- Completed black bass reports from 14 mi and Lee Creek. Abundance was moderate to high for all size groups, though fish over 14 inches are rare in Ozark Streams.
- Repaired seines, hoop, and gill nets.
- Tested valves and began lake drawdown at Raymond Gary. Corresponded with lake association about docks and ODWC opinion on dock repairs of existing Structures.



## C&E DIVISION

- Damon Springer, Colby Cook and Kelly Boyer worked on concepts for the Arcadia Archery Park project. They are currently working on the idea of redesigning the existing Arcadia Conservation Education Center to see if it can fit the needs of a world class indoor archery range and provide the same services that building has provided in the past.
- Amanda Thomas monitored the final phases of the construction of the Atoka WMA Shooting range and the dedication was held on Jan. 16. The shooting range redesign and renovation project is soon to be under contract with a vendor for the construction at the Optima Wildlife Management Area.
- Smokey Solis won a recent competition held by the Association of Conservation Information (ACI). His redesign of their logo was selected the winning design and will be the foundation of a rebrand of the association. The ODWC will host the ACI conference in the summer of 2026.
- The annual Rack Madness event will be held on March 5 of ODWC Headquarters from 1:00-6:00 p.m. and we expect to measure 200 racks that the event.
- Jacob Tison did test run of new R3 streaming studio to be used for interactive, virtual training videos. This studio will be used for the existing Learn to Hunt virtual training and the new aquatic education counterpart. The first episode can be found on the Outdoor Oklahoma YouTube channel.
- Jena Donnell worked on a campaign to promote tax refund donations to the Wildlife Diversity Fund.
- Kelly Boyer received all qualifying scores for first period of OKNASP and Varsity Archery teams. Schools hold shoots with other schools in their area and provide them to ODWC where we schedule flight times and invite them to the state shoots that will be held in Oklahoma City on Feb. 11-12 and in Tulsa on Feb. 19-20.
- Heather Del Moral is ODWC's booth at the Backwoods Show to be held Feb. 28 at the Oklahoma City Fairgrounds.
- Pre-bid meeting held for Arcadia parking lot project. Seven companies were represented. Unfortunately, questions arose from this meeting that that pushed back the bid opening date to January 14. Work will start as soon as possible on renovating one to three of the existing parking lots and correcting a drainage issue that affects the Arcadia Conservation Education Center.
- The annual Readers Photo Showcase competition is open and will run through April. The top photos will be featured in the July/August issue of Outdoor Oklahoma magazine.

## **WILDLIFE DIVISION**

### **WMA Highlights**

- 31.5 Miles of area roads maintained.
- 107 Tons of gravel spread.
- 1 Miles of firebreaks maintained.
- 5 tin horns replaced.
- 36 Parking areas, heavy use sites and campgrounds maintained.
- 54 Signs installed or maintained.
- WDU maintenance and pumping activities
- 10 acres of invasive species controlled by herbicide application and mechanical control.
- 17 acres burned
- 64 acres of food plots planted/worked.
- Shooting range maintenance activities
- Ag and Grazing leases monitored with several expired leases being advertised for bid.
- Hunter use surveys across the state for various season openers
- Multiple controlled hunts conducted.
- Waterfowl reports completed.
- Point count surveys for bobwhite were conducted.
- Attended pre-bid meeting for shooting range at Optima WMA
- Attended shooting range opening at Atoka WMA
- Conducted WMA tours.
- Deer harvests similar to last year.
- Coordination with tribes for deer harvest data.
- "Age My Deer" online link has been popular and provided helpful information. Unique effort that assists in gathering age data and provides a service to hunters.
- Private land youth hunts were conducted with fair success.
- Pheasant season had fair success.
- Quail season has been very good.
- Staff attended and presented at Ranch Conversation meetings.
- Assisted with deer & turkey research projects.
- Staff coordinated with DMAP cooperators and jaws are being aged.
- Provided technical assistance and assisted landowners.
- The Wildlife Research Committee meeting soon to discuss research proposals. 14 research proposals have been submitted since August 2024.
- CWD sample drop off freezers were monitored and good numbers of sample submissions. Test samples submitted, no additional positives to date.
- Standardized elk survey through January. Coordinated efforts with Law Enforcement Division & USDA Wildlife Services.
- Winter flock turkey survey ongoing through the end of the month.
- Youth waterfowl hunts were conducted.
- Avian Influenza (HPAI, Bird Flu) has been detected in commercial poultry operation in Adair County.
- Preparations to attend the Southeast Deer Study Group meeting are ongoing.
- Northern bobwhite wing collection boxes on select WMAs were monitored and wing ages compiled.

- Fur trapping season is underway. Staff have been distributed bobcat and river otter tags.
- Three public land-trapping workshops have been scheduled: January 25-26 @ Ft. Gibson, February 1-2 @ Pushmataha, February 8- 9 @ Packsaddle.
- GIS working with C&E to update WMA atlas.
- WMA planning app committee is meeting and moving the planning app forward.
- Falconry duties are ongoing. Engaged with USFWS focus group to determine BMPs for falconry enclosures and inspection requirements.
- Collection of white-tailed deer genetic samples across the state with over 300 samples collected and more coming in from the field. Expected to get to goal of 500.
- Christmas bird surveys conducted.
- Deer being scored (Rack Madness coming soon).
- Presented at SOSU-Career path and opportunities at ODWC, and on Oklahoma Black Bears.
- Use of OLAP properties is still fair.
- Wildlife Diversity staff continue to work on revisions to the State Wildlife Action Plan.
- Attended USFS annual coordination meeting.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION**

### **Dist. 1 - Capt. Hank Jenks**

- Lots of training has been started including required CLEET classes and a class in Tulsa on Interviews/Interrogations.
- Wardens Newkirk, Rolling, and Capt. Jenks attended FTO initial training in OKC.
- Warden Rolling has been working on a lead on her stolen rifle.
- We had a big retirement gathering/cookout for Monte Reid and several guys stayed over and enjoyed some camaraderie.
- Warden Willman and wife Kenzie welcomed a new baby boy into their home in late December.
- Duck hunting has picked up this month with cold weather finally showing up.
- Several Wardens attended the Tulsa Boat Expo in Tulsa, with many more programs on the horizon during this busy Show season.
- 1<sup>st</sup> quarter Teams and Safety Meeting is scheduled for this Friday.
- Several wardens have assisted with securing lands for Herd Health Study and are signed up to assist in the actual event.

### **Dist. 2 – Capt. David Robertson**

- Wardens DeMontigny and Rowland, with the assistance of the OHP airboat, investigated a report of duck hunting without permission complaint, which resulted in 7 written contacts.
- Wardens Rowland, Langford, 3rd District Wardens Fields, and Penwright worked a baited area on Eufaula Lake resulting in 10 hunters being cited for multiple violations including placing bait on department lands and hunting waterfowl over bait.
- Wardens Couch and Henry issued multiple groups of duck hunters citations for hunting in closed areas and hunting on closed days inside the Sequoyah National Refuge.

- Wardens Youngblood and Garrett completed an investigation resulting in multiple written contacts for baiting, ATV use, off-road travel on Cherokee WMA.
- Wardens Youngblood and Garrett contacted repeat offender hog hunters on Cherokee WMA.
- Wardens Youngblood and Garrett assisted the Cherokee County Sheriff's office with a person threatening suicide. They were able to take physical control of the person and remove an edged instrument.
- Wardens Couch, deMontigny, Rowland, Cramer, Garrett, and Langford participated in the Game Warden Association Fill the Boat Christmas Toy Drive.
- Warden Couch attended the Honor Guard wreath-laying event at Bucky Garrison Memorial.
- Wardens Bailey, deMontigny, Garrett, Langford, and Rowland attended the FTO training course in OKC.
- Warden Couch attended the FTO committee meeting held before the FTO training course.
- D2 Wardens spent a lot of this month on well-deserved comp leave.

### **Dist. 3 – Capt. Todd Tobey**

- Wardens Rowland and Langford from D2 and Wardens Fields and Penwright from D3 investigated a report of baiting waterfowl and were able to locate baited areas at 4 different locations on both public and private located on Eufaula Lake in both McIntosh and Pittsburg Counties. Wardens issued citations to several hunters for multiple violations including placing bait on department managed lands and hunting waterfowl over bait.
- Lt. Lawson issued citation and written warnings to 3 waterfowl hunters for Hunting without permission.
- Lt. Polk assisted the MCSO and Choctaw Tribal Police with a suspected juvenile arson suspect in the Smithville community. He also made contact with 3 juvenile suspects for shooting from a roadway. No arrests were made; however, parents were notified.
- Capt. Tobey, Lt. Lawson, Warden Gillham and Warden Barnes attended the ribbon cutting ceremony at the newly constructed Atoka WMA Shooting Range.
- The Axon Body Camera trial is running smoothly here in D3, and we are in the process of re-assigning the cameras to Wardens in other Districts across the State.
- January 13, 2025, Warden J. Gillham received an operation game thief call about several hunters hunting waterfowl over a baited area in Choctaw County. Saturday January 18, 2025, Warden Gillham and Choctaw Nation Warden Jay Harvey made contact with several hunters at the location described in the OGT call, they were not able to find any bait but did find several license violations. Two citations were issued for non-residents hunting waterfowl without licenses and two warnings for hunting waterfowl without an Oklahoma waterfowl stamp. The owner of the property was in possession of an Oklahoma Lifetime Hunting license that he had procured in May 2024, further inquiry by Warden Gillham revealed that the property owner was/is not a legal resident of Oklahoma and he agreed to contact the ODWC License Desk and surrender his lifetime license without re-imburement in lieu of criminal charges which he did on January 21, 2025.

- January 19, 2025, Warden Gillham received photographs of 5 paddlefish heads posted on Facebook that had been dumped on a road in Choctaw County. January 20, 2025, Wardens Gillham and Barnes began investigating the incident and were notified that a Rattan Police Officer had stopped a truck the night of January 16, 2025, and during the stop noticed a container in the back of the truck containing 5 paddlefish. The officer was able to identify the men in the truck. Wardens Gillham and Barnes were able to locate 2 of the suspects at a residence in Choctaw County. Upon arrival at the residence Gillham and Barnes noticed an active illegal mobile whiskey still in the front yard, they contacted the local ABLE Agent Andrew Potter who handled the moonshine violations. Ultimately the investigation culminated in 4 suspects admitting to illegally snagging paddlefish in the tailwaters below Hugo Lake Dam. Wardens Gillham and Barnes issued 8 citations for Paddlefish violations and assisted ABLE Agent Potter with the dismantling and seizure of the illegal whiskey still.

#### **Dist. 4 – Capt. Tom Cartwright**

- Warden Taylor assisted in public outreach at Tatanka Hunting Ranch in Stroud where he helped guide hunts on a special holiday youth hunt.
- Wardens Taylor, Johnson, and Wagner participated in the Shop with a Cop program in Hughes County.
- Warden Arnold, Hale, and Beam assisted the Oklahoma Highway Patrol in a search for a missing fisherman. A relative reported the man missing when he failed to return home after setting jug lines in the Washita River in the Little City. The fisherman’s body was located three days later by OHP Divers. It is believed the man had fallen out of his boat and he was not wearing a personal floatation device.
- Warden Hale, Arnold, and Lt. Cramer investigated an Eagle Talon brooch offered for sale in an antique shop. The brooch was removed from the showcase and the owner was contacted.

#### **Dist. 5 – Capt. Gary Emmons**

- GW Harriet and France interviewed 2 Louisiana residents who killed 2 antlered deer illegally in 2023 by checking them in on their Oklahoma girlfriend’s resident license since they didn’t have non-resident licenses. This season they purchased their non-resident licenses but harvested an antlered deer during the antlerless only holiday hunt. GW France made a deer case on a trespasser who harvested a deer without landowner’s consent.
- GWs Harriet, France, Campbell, Buley and Mesis showed up at the Agra Predator Calling Tournament weigh in after the tournament director requested some Game Wardens be there to check licenses and tag bobcats. He told everyone who entered the tournament to be legal because Game Wardens would be there. 2 of the predator hunters purchased Temporary Hunting licenses at weigh in...apparently, they missed the memo.
- GWs Harriet, Buley, Taylor (from District 4) and Capt. Emmons assisted with mentoring and guiding new adult hunters during the holiday antlerless gun season through a partnership with Oklahoma Hunters and Anglers at the Tatanka Ranch in Lincoln County after they were gracious enough to allow access to their property. A shortened version of a hunter education class was conducted along with rifle zeroing, plus the process of taking a deer from the field to the table. GW Harriet

demonstrated field dressing, skinning and butchering a deer before the hunt and then after the hunters harvested their deer. 11 adults participated as students and 6 new hunters actually got to hunt, resulting in 3 antlerless deer being harvested.

- GW Branch assisted District 8 with a waterfowl baiting case and GW Mesis assisted District 6 with a trespass case.
- Lt. Strang received a request from a Wyoming Game Warden to interview 2 Norman residents who illegally killed turkeys in Wyoming.
- Lt. Young is currently working an investigation on a deer poaching group driving all over central Oklahoma poaching deer. Their "Modus Operandi" is driving thru various public parks, lakes, WMAs, etc. to shoot the semi-tame deer with a crossbow from their Ford Fusion. If the deer didn't drop dead in its tracks and die, it probably wasn't recovered by the group because they didn't spend more than 10 minutes looking for ones they shot at to lessen their chances of being caught from someone. Several deer were recovered by Lt. Young that had ran off and died after the allotted 10 minute time frame. Wes Watkins Lake, Draper Lake, Thunderbird State Park, Lexington WMA and Arbuckle National Park are some of the crime scenes so far. The investigation is ongoing from Lt. Young but the citation count is nearing 50 currently.
- Lt. Young had one Hunter Harassment charge for a neighbor interfering with a lawful duck hunt.
- Lt. Young also assisted a critically ill youth hunter on a donated hog hunt after the Non-profit organization who granted his Wish of a new dirt bike said they don't condone hunting. Lt. Young stepped up and found a commercial hunt area that was willing to donate a hunt with lodging for the youth's family. Lt. Young said the youth had a great time and hopefully learned a little about shot placement, cleaning and preparing his harvested game as well as the "Excitement" created by muzzling your guide.
- Lt. Young also plans on scheduling an appointment to the eye doctor after he had 2 waterfowl hunters hide from him while checking waterfowl hunters on Arbuckle Lake in the 10 inches of fresh white snow. 1 group of hunters advised Lt. Young that they witnessed 2 guys (1 of which was apparently quite large they said, maybe 300 pounds) run off and hide as Lt. Young was approaching their blind area walking past them. Lt. Young was able to make it back to his truck to intercept them before they left the public hunting area however. Violations involved unplugged gun, no licenses and lead shot.
- GW Murray has been very busy conducting 252 sportsman compliance checks, most of which were waterfowl hunters. He had been babysitting several baited duck holes for the last month. His hard work finally paid off after catching two separate groups hunting the baited ponds. One of the ponds was in Lincoln County and GW Buley assisted him there issuing citations for violations of Title 29: 5-406 & 7-502 to 7 hunters. Two other ponds were near Jones in Oklahoma County, about 2 miles apart. GW Murray found a location situated halfway between the ponds where he could sit in the mornings listening for shots. After a week of no activity on the ponds, he finally heard shots from one of them. He checked 3 subjects just as they were finishing their hunt on a pond situated about 400 yards north of the baited pond. They informed GW Murray that most of the ducks had landed at the pond down in the bottom (the baited one). After he conducted the compliance checks, he started the ½ mile walk back to his truck. The hunters hopped in their truck and promptly

drove south to the baited pond. As GW Murray watched through his binoculars, the group exited their truck and snuck up and jumped the baited pond killing 4 mallards which resulted in them getting issued citations for 5-406 & 7-502. On New Year's Day GW Murray contacted an individual hunting a pond west of Piedmont with his two juvenile sons and was just finishing his hunt when GW Murray arrived. There had been a hard freeze that morning for the first time in a while and the pond was frozen. There was so much scattered corn that GW Murray could see it from roughly 60 yards away, much of which was on TOP of the ice. The hunter was adamant he didn't place the bait there even though the water didn't freeze until sometime early that morning since the temperature was well above freezing the day before. The hunter was also adamant he didn't have any bait in his possession as well. After looking in the bed of his truck, GW Murray asked the hunter about the half empty bag of corn and deer pellets. Citations for no federal stamp, hunting over bait and possession of illegally taken birds were issued.

- GW Murray made another good case on a suspect in Cleveland County with the assistance of Lt. Strang and GW King involving an illegal antlered deer and giving false information to a check station. The suspect had posted a picture on a Facebook hunting page where someone recognized the deer and location and called the suspect out on the deer. The suspect went to the trouble of hauling the deer to Seminole County and field dressing it there and checking it in as well. Unfortunately for the Reporting Party, the suspect decided to get retribution by putting bleach in the gas tank of his \$80,000.00 truck. Unfortunately for the poacher, all of that was caught on surveillance video. During an interview the next day, GW Murray and Lt. Strang noticed bleach stains on the suspect's jeans and hoodie (the same clothes as in the surveillance video). OCPD is currently working on the charges for the sabotage.
- Several ADFs, Temporary licenses and various other arrests were also made during this time.

#### **Dist. 6 – Capt. Mark Walker**

- Lt. Howser
  - Participated in a career day for Binger Public Schools
- Warden Pearson
  - Spoke with Hennessey 4-H about what game wardens do.
  - Had a meeting with State Representative Dobrinski regarding non-resident licenses and hunting guides.
- Warden Stover
  - Provided pictures of working in the snow to local news tv channels and social media
  - Spoke to a group at a local gun shop in Duncan.
- Warden Cornett
  - Conducted a hunter education course.
  - Had 4 non-residents hunting without federal waterfowl stamps, one without state waterfowl stamp and one without a non-resident hunting license.
  - Investigated a report of hunter harassment that resulted in citation being issued for interfering with a lawful hunt.
  - Wrote 4 individuals for hunting without valid deer license.

- Wrote individual for illegal possession of deer.
- Warden Stover
  - Wrote an individual for illegal possession of deer.
  - Wrote an individual for hunting with the aid
- Warden Clem
  - Investigated a case of a group of individuals that were driving around shooting whatever they came across including road signs. The individuals admitted to their actions and charges are pending.
  - Wrote an individual for hunting without landowner consent.
  - Wrote non-resident for hunting deer without valid license.
- Warden Taylor
  - Had a case of people harassing waterfowl with a drone.
  - Wrote an individual for illegal disposal of elk carcass.
  - Wrote a non-resident for hunting without a license
  - Numerous other citations for licenses, plugs, echeck issues.
- Lt. Carroll
  - Wrote an individual on a controlled elk hunt for exceeding bag limit of elk. The hunter shot into a group of elk and the group ran around causing the hunter to lose track of the elk that he shot at, and he ended up shooting another one.
  - Wrote an individual for illegal possession of deer.
  - Presented safety programs to controlled elk hunt participants.
- Lt. Howser
  - Lt. Howser has conducted numerous investigations regarding disputes between groups of waterfowl hunters hunting in close proximity to each other, baiting and hazing waterfowl. Most of these are guided groups of duck and goose hunters. This takes up a lot of Lt. Howser's (and Cornett's) time this time of year since he lives so close to Ft. Cobb Lake.
  - Assisted town of Hinton by assisting them with setting live traps to control nuisance wildlife.
- Warden King
  - Assisted D5 warden with illegal deer investigation in Cleveland County that resulted in citations for possession of illegally taken deer as well as providing false information to a check station.
- Warden Pearson
  - Investigated a case where a landowner had a cell camera on the property and got a picture of an individual on the property that did not have permission to hunt there. Warden Pearson's quick response allowed him to get to the property and catch the individual still there hunting. The person was written for hunting without landowner consent.
  - Wrote 7 tickets/ADFs for waterfowl related violations
- Warden Zimmerman
  - Caught a non-resident waterfowl guide hunting without a hunting license and state waterfowl stamp.
  - Wrote an individual for exceeding the bag limit on elk.
  - Assisted Grady County deputies with a pursuit.



## **Dist. 7 – Capt. Jeff Headrick**

- Warden Jones worked a quail hunting without consent case, landowner wanted to file.
- Wardens Clem and Lt. Edwards worked a deer hunter trespassing to retrieve a deer, landowner did not want to file
- Wardens Carpenter and Vaughan worked a cow elk that got inside an old high fence commercial hunt area but were able to get the elk out safely.
- Wardens Carpenter and Vaughan made contact with some deer hunters near the high fence/elk location that didn't have a deer license and no field tagging
- Lt. Edwards worked a doe deer shot and left lying in a field case
- Warden Blackburn is still working on a Geofence Warrant for a horse shot during gun season case
- Several calls for bobcat needing tagged.
- Several calls still about licenses during the Holiday Season
- Wardens Vaughan and Carpenter teamed up following up on some information to catch a fishing guide operating without a guide license at Foss Lake
- Warden Vaughan worked trappers selling furs to a traveling fur buyer.
- Warden Vaughan also contacted some people in a UTV with a red LED light bar displayed on the front of the UTV and a thermal camera mounted on the UTV with a tablet inside to view. Warden Vaughan had received several complaints in the past weeks/months on the UTV making rounds
- Warden Carpenter and Lt. Edwards teamed up to check 24 waterfowl hunters in Washita Co., 4 out of 15 nonresident hunters in one group were hunting without a waterfowl license and without a valid nonresident hunting license, some of the hunters were actually trying to purchase their licenses when Warden Carpenter and Lt. Edwards got to them to check them
- Warden Carpenter worked a complaint on waterfowl hunters peppering houses on the North side of Clinton, the hunters didn't realize they were hitting the houses
- GWs are working on Mandatory CLEET Hours and OLETS recertification.
- Lt. Edwards received a complaint of possible trespassing/hunting without consent that ended up being a 68-year-old man sighting in a .177 caliber air rifle, he was shooting water bottles that he had set up on a landowner's hay bales
- Lt. Smith and Warden Raasch worked a case on a bull elk that was shot and left in a wheatfield
- Lt. Smith, Wardens Raasch, and Brothers assisted two juveniles on a doe hunt on the Ross Ranch
- Lt. Smith, Wardens Brothers, Lt. Edwards, and Warden Carpenter worked waterfowl hunters in Kiowa County
- Warden Brothers has been working waterfowl hunters at Hackberry Flat WRP
- Lt. Smith and Warden Raasch worked a spotlighting complaint in Kiowa County
- Warden Lehrman is working waterfowl hunters in Greer County
- Lt. Smith and Warden Lehrman worked a Hunter Harassment
- Lt. Smith and Warden Lehrman worked night hunters, made 3 arrests on an individual that was using a borrowed rifle with a thermal and a suppressor on the rifle, from a public roadway

## **Dist. 8 – Capt. Ben Bickerstaff**

- Warden B. Cottrill made a late season surge in Illegal deer cases: He made 2 of the 4 Illegal deer cases against a nonresident that did not buy any licenses at all. He was able to make these cases due to a scorned Ex wife’s information. He made 2 (Warden Reigh assisted with) more separate illegal deer cases that were during the Holiday Antlerless Deer Season where hunters killed bucks and claimed they were “Archery kills.”
- Warden P. Cottrill made a Holiday Antlerless Deer Season “Archery” buck case also.
- Warden Grace assisted District 1 with a huge netting search warrant where 50 some illegal deer were documented along with many other illegal wildlife parts.
- Lt. Paul is busy with Waterfowlers: Besides a 6-whack covey shot for 4 hunter’s several license infractions, where one nonresident hunter thought he was good to go with a HIP, Fed duck stamp, and a 5-day commercial hunt area license (\$45 spent)

## **Investigations – Capt. Loftis**

- The 2025 Game Warden Academy begins on February 3rd and runs for 10 weeks, concluding on April 11th.
- 10 newly hired game wardens will be participating in the academy.
- 17 new Field Training Officers (FTOs) recently completed the FTO training school, joining 25 existing FTOs to prepare for training the new hires. The FTO program requires a minimum of 3 FTOs and 1 Lieutenant over a minimum of 14 weeks to train each new hire.
- A Career Development Program is currently in development, with courses being written. This 2-year program will follow the completion of the FTO program and focus on advanced training in police work.
- Upcoming training includes 4 wardens attending a rescue diver course.
- On approximately September 2023, GW Moore received a call about a deer that was shot and killed from the side of the road. GW Moore received intel from the community leading to interviews. Through interviews, GW Moore located a suspect, wrote and executed a search warrant, and received cellular data evidence. GW Jackson and GW Cornett reviewed and analyzed the data which placed the suspect at the time and location of the deer being shot. On January 17, 2025, the suspect received a deferred sentence, and probation and was ordered to pay a \$500 fine, court costs and costs to the state.
- Inv Long traveled to Corpus Christi, TX with USFWS and worked a two-day special emphasis checking waterfowl hunters and educating the public on Whooping Crane identification and laws. Approximately 50 hunters were checked.
- Inv Long assisted District 8 with investigating a violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act by a waterfowl guide service hunting waterfowl over bait. This case is ongoing.