

Texas Game Warden Field Notes

Ignorance Isn't Always Bliss

A landowner notified a Hays County Game Warden that a hunter killed a white-tail doe out of season. The hunter, who paid a fee to hunt hogs that day, was visiting from Maryland with his son. The landowner found out about the doe after he received pictures from the hunter and his son posing with their harvest and asking for a ride back to their truck. The hunters became irate after the game warden told them it was not deer season. The landowner provided the game warden the signed liability waivers from the hunters, which only mentioned hog hunting. The hunters said they were never told they needed hunting licenses and that they should have been provided with certain services like a hunting guide, verbal education on hunting regulations and signage around the site stating hunting laws. They also assumed that, like Maryland, they didn't need a hunting license and could hunt anything on private property. The hunters stated that after a day without services and no animal sightings, they became upset with the landowner. During a phone conversation, the landowner stated, "everything is open." The hunters interpreted the landowner's statement as every animal on the property is open to be killed, when instead, the landowner was referring to every blind and stand being open for the hunters to use. The game warden issued citations for hunting and possessing white-tail deer in a closed season and not having a nonresident hunting license.

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Investi-gators at the Ready

While responding to an anonymous call about alligator poaching on the Neches River, game wardens from Anderson, Henderson and Smith counties found an alligator shot with a compound bow behind the Lake Palestine Spillway. After injuring the 4.5-foot alligator, the suspect jumped into the river to retrieve the alligator. Two other people assisted in dispatching it with a knife before the trio began taking pictures and a video to post on social media. Eventually, the two accomplices left the scene with the alligator while the shooter remained behind and was discovered by the Henderson and Smith County game wardens. The shooter initially swam to the other side of the river, but ultimately returned to the wardens. After interviewing the suspect, the wardens pieced together a timeline of events and gathered enough evidence to file appropriate charges against the shooter. However, their attempt to locate the alligator and the second and third suspects proved unsuccessful until the shooter provided video to the Anderson County Game Warden better identifying the individuals. As a result of the wardens' investigation, multiple cases were filed including hunting alligator during a closed season and hunting without a license. The cases are currently pending along

with civil restitution.

Never Split the Party

A Williamson County Game Warden responded to multiple reports of two men spearfishing and keeping a large quantity of fish. The warden contacted the individuals as they were exiting the woods and returning to their vehicle. During their conversation, he noticed they did not have any fish or spears in their possession. He learned that the reporting party threatened the men with calling the police. Nervous about police interference, they said they released the fish and stashed their spears in the woods. The warden followed the men into the woods to retrieve the spears. During their walk, one of the gentlemen walked slowly while the other walked further ahead at a quicker pace. Realizing that they were trying to split up, the warden ran to catch up to the man furthest away, catching him with two spears in his hand and a bag with 70 speared and gutted fish

including sunfish, bluegill, Rio Grande cichlids, fresh-water drum, undersized black bass and channel catfish. Neither man possessed a fishing license. The warden issued multiple citations.

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