

# NORTH AMERICAN WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ASSOCIATION



*"The Voice of Resource Law Enforcement"*



2021 Annual Conference — Nashville, Tennessee  
Maxwell House Hotel  
July 11th thru July 17th

<https://www.naweo.org/2021-conference/>

Conference Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/173505916518726/>

**SPRING 2020**

**73rd Edition NAWEOA Newsletter**

# NAWEOA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

<b>President Rick Langley</b> Arizona, US	president@naweo.org
<b>Vice President Kurt Henry</b> Manitoba , Canada	vpresident@naweo.org
<b>Past President Shawn Farrell</b> New Brunswick, Canada	ppresident@naweo.org
<b>Secretary/Treasurer Steve Beltran</b> Illinois, US	secretarytreasurer@naweo.org
<b>Director Region 1 Brock Lockhart</b> Saskatchewan, Canada	region1@naweo.org
<b>Director Region 2 Martin Thabault</b> Ontario, Canada	region2@naweo.org
<b>Director Region 3 Josh Thibodeau</b> New Brunswick , Canada	region3@naweo.org
<b>Director Region 4 Jason Sherwood</b> Wyoming, US	region4@naweo.org
<b>Director Region 5 Jesse Gehrt</b> Kansas, US	region5@naweo.org
<b>Director Region 6 Daniel Fagan</b> Florida, US	region6@naweo.org
<b>Director Region 7 Larry Hergenroeder</b> Pennsylvania, US	region7@naweo.org
<b>Webmaster Mike Reeder</b> Pennsylvania, US	webmaster@naweo.org
<b>Conference Liaison Rich Cramer</b> Pennsylvania, US	conference@naweo.org

## SOUVENIR PATCHES AVAILABLE

2017 is the only current patch available.

The cost per patch (including shipping and handling)  
is \$7.00 each USD.

### **MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: NAWEOA**

**Mail to:** George A. Wilcox

P.O. Box 480

Millville, PA 17846

*[1996 through 2010 patches are only available over-the  
-counter at the Game Warden Museum*



## The President's Report

By Richard Langley



I can start off by using a bunch of clichés about how we are experiencing unprecedented events and how times are so difficult, but I'll refrain from dwelling on that and get to business. First, I want to

thank all of the members for the jobs you do and the support you are providing to your communities and continuing to protect our resources. I know we are all learning a new way of doing business and many of you may be facing tough times financially with spouses or family out of work. There are probably few of us who have not been touched by the pandemic and I sincerely hope we all come through this healthy and thriving.

Even before the pandemic began, members of the Board were facing some health challenges and tragedies touched our lives. We are all so thankful for the support of our family and friends.

The Executive Board has been busy trying to figure how to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on the Association and it has not been easy. We were able to hold our regular winter meeting at a great facility outside of Rockford, Illinois and we got a lot done. Please take the time to read the update provided by Region 5 Director Jesse Gehrt.

As most of you are now aware, we have decided to cancel the 2020 conference in Nashville, and we were fortunate that the TN hosts were able to negotiate the same contract and similar dates for 2021 in Nashville. This has weighed heavily on me as I am the first NAWEOA President to have to cancel a conference. This was not an easy decision and it was not en-

tered into out of convenience. I got a variety of opinions, some of disappointment and some from folks who were adamant that we just cancel. If it were not for the negotiation skills of Josh Landrum from TN and the willingness of the host hotel to postpone we would have been forced to carry on and try to run a conference. The financial implications of cancelling the contract, barring an emergency, with the hotel would have been devastating to the association. I know there are still details with registration refunds and hotel reservations that must be dealt with, so please be patient, we are all working hard for the best outcome. The TN crew has worked wonders, all while dealing with the pandemic, and don't forget the tornado that hit Nashville and killed many and destroyed businesses.

With the cancellation of the conference, the Board has also been forced to make many changes to our normal business that usually happens at a conference such as honoring a fallen officer and celebrating the achievements of our peers with awards. We will not be able to hold the elections for the upcoming Director vacancies nor hold our annual business meeting with the membership. Many of these activities are all centered around the annual conference and we are adapting and being forced to make some changes to the normal business model we have had for a long time. We will be transparent in all business decisions and continuing to focus on the solvency of NAWEOA. The Vice President's report will include the award winners for this year and we will honor those recipients at the 2021 conference if they choose to attend, along with the 2021 award recipients. The Past President's report will discuss how we are handling the elections for the Directors and changes to their terms. Absent a conference to present bids for the 2022 conference and only a single Association entering a

## The President's Report (Con't)

By Richard Langley

bid, we will, most likely be selecting the host for 2022.

Another big change is with the International Game Warden Magazine (IGW). After many years as our editor, Todd Vandivert is retiring as Editor. Todd has done an incredible job over the years and the quality of the magazine has never waivered. We are extremely fortunate that Todd had the forethought to bring on an associate who has mentored under Todd for the past couple years and who has graciously agreed to take the reins as Editor after the summer edition. Please welcome Marshall Nych from Pennsylvania as your new Editor.

Marshall comes with a background in teaching, outdoor writing, and was a Deputy Game Warden in Pennsylvania. Please thank Todd for his contributions, wish him well, and take the time to read the novels he is now writing. I just finished reading Poaching Spree and found it really entertaining and relevant. Speaking of IGW, please continue to submit articles and content! IGW is your magazine for your peers and it is up to all of us to keep it alive.

Thank you all for your continued support of NAWEOA and STAY HEALTHY, STAY SAFE, and STAY STRONG!

## The Vice President's Report

By Kurt Henry



Hello and good day to our membership.

This association is "your" association and it requires you to be active and en-

gaged. Take the time and read the newsletter, reflect the changes your department has made in the years of your employment. It is an every changing challenge to go to work and do the duties asked of us.

With the Covid pandemic I am sure protocol changed and made it difficult to say the least. We took on different work assignments. I know officers in Canada were manning check stations notifying travelers of restrictions and denying access to portions of the province

with the exception of essential workers. We had to vigilante with contact so our families were put at least risk. I know of officers that were in community lock downs and were unable to see the families. This puts additional strain on everyone's mental health. It is critically important that we look after our fellow officers. Reach out to your friends and coworkers as you can.

Most recently I am aware of Conservation Officers in Minnesota that are assisting in riot duty which can only be adding additional stress to our officers. Be SAFE!! The title we work under is varied and always changing from Game Wardens, Conservation Officers Environmental Police, and Natural Resource Officers to Fish and Wildlife Officers. Our duties are also changing from the days of being in the fields 24/7 catching bad guys to now tasked with what ever managements or



the government decides they need uniformed officers to do. We are in a changing time more then I have ever seen in my 30 year career.

2020 will no doubt be a year that is talked about for some time to come. It is the first time we have had to cancel a convention. We are grateful that Nashville has agreed to host in 2021 and I'm sure they will host a most memorable convention. The committees work has not stopped and continue to plan for 2021.

I had a once in a lifetime/career opportunity to go to Australia to assist in the wildfires. The experience and friendships made in that one month deployment reminds us of why I took this job. I returned just before the lock down of covid to work within the safety guidelines from our health professionals. We literally will not know what tomorrow brings both in

our work life and our personal life and have to live for the day and experience all that it brings. I was unable to make the winter meeting which was held outside of Chicago with some extra work from Mr. Beltran. Thanks for hosting a great event in a great facility. The ongoing business of NAWEOA never stops and I am realizing the work load of Vice President every time I open the emails. We work together as a team and get it done which is a common motto for game wardens.

I look forward to our winter meeting in the spring of 2021 fingers crossed and moving forward with the business of running your association. As I mentioned 2020 will be a year to remember but more importantly remember to look after each other, our family's and people we share our world with.

Be safe stay well.

## The Past President's Report

By Shawn Farrell



Hello everybody. I hope you have all weathered well over the winter and especially during this COVID-19 crisis. We are certainly living in different times and many of us have had to change the way we conduct daily business and work duties. As game wardens, our roles have expanded during this crisis as what was "normal" is no longer. Not knowing when this will end is difficult for all but we will do our due diligence to flatten the curve and be safe. Our winter executive meeting was held in Illinois this year. NAWEOA Secretary/ Treasurer Steve Beltran arranged for us

to stay at the Torstenson Youth Education Center, in rural Pecatonica, IL. Thank you, Steve, for arranging this. The facility was amazing and worked well for our executive meetings. You should have all received the winter meeting summary that was provided by our Region 5 Director Jesse Ghert.

Unfortunately, this year's conference will not take place. In the interest of our members' health and welfare the NAWEOA Executive board in consultation with the [Tennessee Wildlife Officers Association](#) decided to cancel. This cancellation is the first in 39 years. On a positive note our annual training conference has been rescheduled for 2021 and it will be held in Nashville, Tennessee. I would like to thank Josh Landrum and the Tennessee Wildlife Officers Association for committing

## The Past President's Report (cont.)

By Shawn Farrell

to next year as well thanks to the host hotel, the Millennium Maxwell House for their understanding and waiving this year's cancellation fees. The Millennium will host our NAWEOA family next year.

The NAWEOA executive board realized they were facing a few obstacles this year by not having an annual conference. Our constitution and by-laws policy manual direct what is to be done by the executive board. We have discussed items that occur during the summer and we continue to work with dealing with these. One of the big items that occurs every summer is elections. Canadian Directors are elected in even numbered years so this year the three Canadian Directors are up for election:

Region 1 – Brock Lockhart (2 terms complete)

Region 2 – Martin Thabault (1 term complete)

Region 3 – Josh Thibodeau (1 term complete)

As we all realize these are extraordinary times. Typically, the Director positions are

voted on by the membership at the annual meeting. This year the executive has voted to renew the Region 2 and Region 3 Directors positions until next years conference. Both have agreed to stay on. Our Region 1 Director Brock Lockhart will continue to fill the role as Director until his position is filled next summer. Therefore, next year we will have elections for all seven of our Director positions. The four US Directors will be elected for a full two-year term and the Canadian Directors will be running to complete one more year of their two-year term. Once this is done, we will be back to a normal director election rotation.

Lastly, I would like to thank the executive board and J-reps for everything you do to keep the wheels rolling. It is a pleasure to work with you all.

To our membership, take care of yourselves and family, stay safe and I look forward to summer 2021 when we can all meet again.

## NAWEOA Financial Report

By Steve Beltran

First let me say thanks to those who have contacted us during the pandemic. It has been reassuring to know our group remains strong and willing to do what it takes to stand together during this tumultuous time. A special thanks to those who keep up on the membership rosters and dues payments. This gives us the opportunity to communicate with each other and maintain open communication.

As of our Winter meeting our current financial information is as follows.

NAWEOA Checking 5609\* -\$71,290.93  
IGW Checking 6698\*-\$24,170.10

CC Account (BBW) 0197\* -\$5,579.10  
NAWEOA Saving 6566\*-\$133,863.55  
FOF Savings 8681\* -\$21,623.23  
IGW Savings (NAWEOA) 9093\* -\$2,002.47  
\$264,425.34 USD

NAWEOA Savings 4712\* -\$41,649.22 (as of 2-7-20)  
NAWEOA Checking 4079\*-\$5,818.70  
FOF Savings 4787\* -\$8,415.24 (as of 2-7-20)  
FOF Checking 7038\* -\$481.09 (as of 2-19-20)

\$56,364.25 CAD

## 2021 Conference Nashville, Tennessee



### Tennessee 2021

The TWAOA welcomes NAWEOA to Tennessee for the 2021 annual conference.

**7/13/21 - 7/17/21**

**Opening Ceremonies - Tuesday, July 13th**

**Banquet Dinner - Friday, July 16th**





## 2021 Conference Nashville, Tennessee



Room Rate: \$139.00 per night +taxes and fees

Free Parking



Maxwell House Hotel  
2025 Rosa Parks Blvd. Nashville, TN 37228

For Reservations : 1-800-457-4460  
Mention the 2021 NAWEOA Conference or  
use the group code: 2007NAWEOA if  
using the website.



### Information regarding **NAWEOA Jurisdictional Representatives,**

- ♦ Names
- ♦ Contact information
- ♦ The jurisdictions they serve
- ♦ Etc.

Can be found elsewhere on the NAWEOA website  
**[naweo.org](http://naweo.org)**



## 2020 NAWEOA Award Winners

NAWEOA would like to officially congratulate this year's award winners. Unfortunately with our annual conference canceled, we will not be able to recognize the winners in person. As we do every year, we received many outstanding nominations. It is always difficult to narrow it down to a select few. Thanks to everyone for your continued dedication to wildlife law enforcement and protecting our valuable resources.

### 2020 Officer of the Year

#### **Robert L. Currier III**

Senior Warden  
Burlington Patrol District  
Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department

### 2020 Torch Award

Nathan Gordon Thomson	Region 1	Environment and Climate Change Canada	Wildlife Enforcement Officer
Nicholas Woroniuk	Region 2	Manitoba Conservation Officer Service	Conservation Officer
Marjolaine Lagacé	Region 3	Environment and Climate Change Canada	Wildlife Enforcement Officer
Cody Johnston	Region 4	Arizona Game and Fish Department	Wildlife Manager/ Game Ranger
Peter B. Carlson	Region 5	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Conservation Warden
Ryan Locke	Region 6	Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Law Enforcement	Game Warden
Asa B. Sargent	Region 7	Vermont Warden Service	Game Warden

## 2020 Muddy Boots Award

Kristopher R. MacCabe  
District Game Warden  
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

## 2020 Loyal Partner Award

Derek Daly &  
K9 Gunner  
State Game Warden  
Pennsylvania Game Commission

## 2020 Certificate of Valor

Calvin	Meyer	SD	SD Game, Fish and Parks	Conservation Officer
Austin	Norton	SD	SD Game, Fish and Parks	Conservation Officer
Casey	Dowler	SD	SD Game, Fish and Parks	Conservation Officer
Dean	Shultz	SD	SD Game, Fish and Parks	Conservation Officer
Matt	Martinez	CO	Colorado Parks and Wildlife	Area Wildlife Manager
Travis	MacFarlane	NB	Department of Public Safety	Conservation Officer

## 2020 Lifesaving Award

Jeff	Grendler	SD	SD Game, Fish and Parks	Conservation Officer
Evan	Meyer	SD	SD Game, Fish and Parks	District Conservation Officer Supervisor
Matt	Talbert	SD	SD Game, Fish and Parks	Conservation Officer
Brian	Humphry	SD	SD Game, Fish and Parks	Conservation Officer
Andrew	P. Glidden	ME	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife; Wildlife Warden Service	Corporal
Robert	Johansen	ME	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife; Wildlife Warden Service	Game Warden
Kayle	Hamilton	ME	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife; Wildlife Warden Service	Game Warden

## 2020 Lifesaving Award (cont.)

Gary	B. Sibley	ME	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife; Wildlife Warden Service	Game Warden
Seth	Powers	ME	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife; Wildlife Warden Service	Game Warden
Joe	Bailey	ME	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife; Wildlife Warden Service	Game Warden
Bill	Rivale	CO	Colorado Parks and Wildlife	Wildlife Technician
Alain	Pronovost	ON	National Capital Commission	Senior Conservation
Maxime	Lortie	ON	National Capital Commission	Conservation Officer
Jesse	Alford	FL	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	Investigator II
Edward	M. Webb	FL	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	Officer Specialist
Dan	Hahr	FL	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	Officer
Julian	Keen	FL	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	Officer

## 2020 Outstanding Service

Dan	Scott	ME	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife; Wildlife Warden Service	Colonel
Kevin	Anderson	ME	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife; Wildlife Warden Service	Investigator
Anthony	Gray	ME	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife; Wildlife Warden Service	Corporal
Carleton	Richardson	ME	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife; Wildlife Warden Service	Game Warden
Chad	Robertson	ME	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife; Wildlife Warden Service	Game Warden
Steven	Couture	ME	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife; Wildlife Warden Service	Game Warden
Chris	Dyer	ME	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife; Wildlife Warden Service	Game Warden



## 2020 Outstanding Service (cont.)

Kyle	Hladik	ME	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife; Wildlife Warden Service	Game Warden
Troy	Dauphinee	ME	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife; Wildlife Warden Service	Game Warden
Ethan	Buuck	ME	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife; Wildlife Warden Service	Game Warden
Kim	Bates	ME	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife; Wildlife Warden Service	Game Warden
David	Walsh	NH	New Hampshire Fish & Wildlife; Game Department	Assistant Chief of Law Enforcement
Kyle	Yurewitch	FL	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	Officer
Jon	Browning	FL	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	Officer
Jeff	Allgood	FL	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	Officer
Benjamin	Norbrothen	FL	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	Officer
Michael	Scott	PA	Pennsylvania Game Commission	Deputy Game Warden
Gina	Tyler	MD	Maryland Natural Resources Police	Corporal
Eric	Voigt	SD	SD Game, Fish and Parks	Conservation Officer
James	Patrillo	VA	Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries	Conservation Police Officer (K9 Handler)
Joe	Lefebvre	ME	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife; Wildlife Warden Service	Game Warden
Mike	Swaro	CO	Colorado Parks and Wildlife	Assistant Area Wildlife Manager
Travis	Abele	OH	ODNR - Ohio Division of Wildlife	Wildlife Investigator
William	Brehun	PA	PA Game Commission	State Game Warden

## 2020 Outstanding Service (cont.)

Jon	Scharbarth	WI	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Conservation Warden
Dorothy	Manera	NJ	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - Special Investigations Unit	Senior Special Agent
Chris	Maier	SA	Ministry of Environment	Senior Conservation Officer
Quinn	Fogle	GA	Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Law Enforcement Division	Corporal
Asa	Dias	FL	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	Officer



# 2020 NAWEOA Winter Meeting Report

## Nashville, Tennessee

By Jesse Gehrt

The following is a summary report of NAWEOA business items discussed during the most recent winter executive meeting held February 23–28, 2020. One of my duties as your Regional Director is to provide a report to you following the winter executive meeting and summer conference. This report should reach all members that are interested in NAWEOA business.

The official minutes from the winter meeting will be posted on the private website once they have been reviewed and edits have been made as required.

The NAWEOA Executive Board met at the Torstenson Youth Education Center, in rural Pecatonica, IL. This center is a 750-acre facility located outside of Pecatonica, IL, along the Pecatonica River, and was built in memory of Mr. Robert Torstenson to carry on his legacy of nature conversation. The venue and grounds provide the ideal setting for field trips, workshops, meetings such as ours, or any type of lessons on outdoor conservation and environmental education. The center serves schools, conservation and scouting organizations, park districts and other outdoor related groups throughout Illinois. The center included a shooting range complex, shooting house, and target range. It supports four types of shooting skills; rifle,

shotgun, archery and 3-D archery. There is also a fishing pond stocked by the IDNR with handicapped accessible pier.

On the grounds is a beautiful 11000 square ft. log cabin lodge, which overlooks an oxbow lake with camping and hiking trails. The board was able to sleep and cook on site, providing a cost-savings and added networking time for all attendees.

Day one: The Winter Business Meeting was called to order by President Langley by 0830 hours in the formal meeting room. A welcome by President Langley and a rundown of the facility was given by Sec/Treas. Beltran. Two board members were absent; Vice Pres. Henry was deployed overseas for fire protection, and Reg. 3 Director Thibodeau could not attend due to personal reasons. Past President Farrell was in attendance and stepped in for the Reg. 3 Director, with a report. The minutes of the 2019 summer meeting were reviewed and accepted. Each board officer and member then went into their respective regional reports. The day was very productive, with many agenda topics discussed.

A report was submitted from the Game Warden Museum, and they are requesting old/new uniform items from Game Warden agencies, as well as other artifact donations, to display at the museum. This request will be sent out through the board soon. The North American Game Warden Museum can be found at the following link <http://www.gamewardenmuseum.org/>.

Under old business, the topic of a NAWEOA Commemorative Henry Rifle was also discussed, with no new information to pass on. Past President Farrell will look into this option for NAWEOA members. A thank you gift for past two-term serving board members was also further discussed, and will be taken care of.

Under new business, several items were discussed. An update on fallen officers from 2019 was given, there were five that were reported, with one being line-of-duty. A \$1,000 fallen officer fund payment was provided to the family of Minnesota Red Lake Dept. of Public Safety Conservation Officer Barron, who passed away in early July, 2019 while on duty. CO Barron will be recognized at the 2020 conference.





# 2020 NAWEOA Winter Meeting Report

## Nashville, Tennessee

By Jesse Gehrt

Four other officers passed away under other circumstances off-duty, with condolences and small donations sent to their families. Rich Cramer reminded the board that the 2020 conference in Tenn. will be his last as conference liaison. The board is currently looking for a replacement, the position will be re-advertised in the spring newsletter.

Webmaster Reeder reported that the printer and laptop have reached the end of their service life and will need to be replaced in the near future. The board approved the future purchases, pending a provided estimate. NAWEOA annual awards were discussed and an award selection committee was setup. This committee will assist the VP in reviewing each applicant to ensure they meet all the criteria for each award and they will assist with the Officer of the Year selection process. The award policy and by-laws were reviewed, with the nomination deadline for most awards changed to April 1<sup>st</sup>, with notification given by April 15<sup>th</sup>. Awards such as lifesaving will be received until the summer conference.

The topic of conference patches, pins, and coins was discussed. Sec./Treas. Beltran introduced a poker chip style token. With a great cost savings to NAWEOA, the poker chip style token was decided on to be used for the 2020 summer conference, instead of a coin. The idea of recognizing members for how many conferences they have attended was also discussed, such as brassards, it was determined that the cost was not efficient with the allotted budget for this type of item. The board decided to add a number on an individual's name tag to represent the number of conferences attended. At a previous meeting, it was decided to have an individual video the next conference, for production of a NAWEOA promotional video. Unfortunately, the individual that the board had in mind is no longer available. That topic will be looked at in the future.

The board discussed their travel plans for the upcoming summer conference, citing arrangements needed to be made at least six weeks prior to the selected date, and that any expenses for reimbursement, for both the winter and summer meetings, need be submitted in a timely manner thereafter. Discussion was had about the recent survey that was sent out from TWS. The board agreed that more information about

these types of surveys would be requested before being allowed to be sent out to the membership.

The three Canadian Regional Director positions will be up for election this year. At the 2020 Summer Conference, Director Lockhart will have served two terms for Region 1. The board thanked him for his dedication to NAWEOA. Discussion was had where if at election time no other member from a respective region volunteered to run, and an outgoing director had served two terms (which is the current limit cited in the by-laws) what would happen. After much discussion, the board proposed that, in the event where there were no nominations from the floor for a position, and the outgoing director was willing to serve, the President could, on a one-time basis, appoint the same individual to serve a third term. The by-law change will be documented in the spring newsletter and voted on at the summer conference business meeting by the membership. The board agreed that the current NAWEOA Policy Manual and By-Laws needed to be reviewed and updated. A formal and in-depth review of the Officer Exchange Policy and the By-Laws was discussed over multiple days. Director Hergenroeder reported to the group that Pennsylvania is discussing hosting the 2025 Summer Conference and was asked to present a proposal to the membership at the 2020 conference.

Day two: The Executive Board was seated before 0830 hours and continued with new business. Liaison Cramer read a brief report submitted by Oklahoma in reference to the 2019 conference. The total revenue brought in was \$42,673.38, making NAWEOA's share \$32,005.04 and leaving OK with \$10,668.34. Over 400 people attended the Torch Run. The training sessions, hospitality rooms and banquet, were all a success. The board agreed this was a very successful conference and thanked the Oklahoma crew for their support.

Conference Liaison Cramer stated that we currently do not have a 2021 conference host, so the board will have to work diligently to find one. A past report highlighting potential future conference sites was discussed, with some board members investigating those options. There were lengthy discussions about potential future liaisons and conference sites.

# 2020 NAWEOA Winter Meeting Report

## Nashville, Tennessee

By Jesse Gehrt

The afternoon session was stopped at around 1400 hrs. The group then departed for Forreston, Ill. for a stop at Groenewold Fur Company (GWC). GWC is a privately-owned corporation, with over 40 years of experience in the fur exporting business. They are the largest and most experienced direct receiver of wild fur, buying nationwide in the US and Canada. Tens of thousands of hides pass through their doors to be transported throughout the world. This was a great experience for the group, seeing an operation of this scale. The next stop was a short drive down the road, to an Illinois Dept. of Nat. Resources CWD station. Here the group was met by Wildlife Biologist Doug Dufford, who took the group through the history of CWD in deer in Illinois, and how it has spread. He highlighted the CWD program being used by the agency to combat the spread, including past and present measures they have for sampling the deer. Dufford had a freshly taken whitetail doe deer at the facility, and the group was able to witness how the samples are taken from a specimen. Both of these stops



were very educational and the group was grateful to Beltran for setting these up.

Day three: The Executive Board was seated before 0830 hours and continued with new business. More discussion took place regarding updates to the Officer Exchange Program, policy manual and by-laws. Final drafts were completed and approved by the board. The draft by-laws will be brought before the membership this summer in Tennessee for a final vote. A report was given from Liaison Cramer regarding the 2020 Summer Conference. Tennessee is on track with acquiring sponsorships, and is actively looking for

state associations to sponsor nights for the hospitality suites. The original hotel for lodging is reported to be full and a secondary one is secured. Tennessee said that they are ready for the conference! The board is expecting a great turnout in Nashville.

Sec/Treas. Beltran gave his report in a detailed line by line list of revenue and expenses. The board finalized the projected budget for FY21. Financial reports can be found at: <http://www.naweo.org/protected/financial/FinancialReportsIndex.htm>. Protected site username **naweo** and password **fish-cops**.

Various group membership dues have been received for 2020 with others still outstanding. Please check with your individual association to ensure your dues are paid. If there are any questions, please contact your Regional Director. Please continue to remain current with your roster updates. Submit an updated roster, *in its entirety*, twice each year prior to the deadline for the newsletter (Oct 1<sup>st</sup> and April 1<sup>st</sup>) to your Region Director. The board agreed that all directors will reach out and attempt to secure officer rosters and contact information for inactive jurisdictions before the July meeting in Tennessee. Beltran will add in a "Pending" member category to the database.

A report from Marion Hoffman regarding IGW business was read by President Langley. They are still in search of article submissions for future publications. An IGW Visioning Committee was created and will research options to help the magazine continue to thrive. Information on the magazine can be found at the following link <http://www.igwmagazine.com/>. A reminder to all members that there is a 10% commission for securing advertisements for IGW. The board wants their NAWEOA magazine to continue to grow for the membership. Rebranding and thoughtful marketing of NAWEOA was discussed again, at length. The board agreed to continue talks with a marketing firm to update the NAWEOA "brand," and help move the Association into the future sustainably. A Marketing Committee was setup to further this discussion, consisting of Sherwood, Gehrt, Thabault, and Langley.

Director Gehrt gave a report on a potential summer conference cell phone app. Gehrt has used apps such

# 2020 NAWEOA Winter Meeting Report

## Nashville, Tennessee

By Jesse Gehrt

as this at other conferences and reported it can be a great tool. Everything about the conference can be put in the app, such as schedules, maps, training sessions, and officer bios. There is even a messaging board that will send out an instant message when something has changed, such as a training session time or location, or when new real-time information needs to be sent out immediately. The board agreed that it is too late in the planning process to incorporate for the 2020 conference but the conference application feature was added into the proposed conference hosting agreement.

Day four: The board traveled into the city of Chicago, next to Navy Pier along Lake Michigan, meeting up with the Chicago Police Department Marine Unit. Board members traveled up the Chicago River in two of the CPD patrol boats, with great narrations and discussions by their officers.

Many thanks to Steve Beltran for setting up these off-site events for the board for the 2020 Winter Meeting.



### NAWEOA CONFERENCE LIAISON POSITION

NAWEOA is soliciting candidates for the NAWEOA Conference Liaison position. The person selected for this position will, in years where there exists a traditional jurisdictional host, act as the direct liaison between the NAWEOA Executive and all summer conference organizers. In those years, the liaison will administer the NAWEOA conference hosting agreement, the conference planning guide, chair meetings between past and future conference hosts, assist with the coordination of future conference bid presentations, and review all conference financial statements. The person selected for this position shall, when no traditional conference host exists, actively seek out conference locations and venues, deal directly with any planning organization hired by the Executive as representative of the Executive, act as chairperson of the summer conference and insure all needs of the Association are met at the summer conference. A candidate must be a regular member in good standing of NAWEOA, have excellent computer skills and home access to the internet and have attended at least three NAWEOA conferences. Having served on a previous conference planning committee is recommended, but not required.

The liaison is expected to attend each annual NAWEOA conference and winter Executive Board meetings as required by the NAWEOA president. The liaison is fully reportable to the Executive. The liaison shall be compensated for travel costs at the same rate as members of the NAWEOA Executive. For more detailed information, visit the NAWEOA website at [www.naweo.org](http://www.naweo.org) and access the protected site, then click to the Constitution and By-laws and look for the link to the Conference Liaison position on the left. Interested candidates are asked to provide a letter/resume electronically outlining their skills and abilities to NAWEOA President Rick Langley at [president@naweo.org](mailto:president@naweo.org). Any questions may be sent to Rick at the above email address.



## Region 1 Director Brock Lockhart



All of the sudden 4 years and 2 terms as the Region 1 NAWEOA Director have come and will soon go for me. It really is amazing how fast time passes by! I would like to take this moment to thank NAWEOA, the NAWEOA

board and all of Region 1 for giving me the opportunity to represent us on an international level. I have really enjoyed my time on the board and yet, am excited to move onto other projects and priorities in my professional life. At this time, I have at least one potential candidate in mind who I will nominate to replace me. Having said that competition is always a good thing and I hope others will have their names put forward as well. Interest in the joining the NAWEOA executive will inevitably keep our association alive and operating as we all desire it to be.

Thank you to the Region 1 J Reps who have submitted the below reports from their agencies/associations.

### Saskatchewan

Submitter – Chris Maier

First off on behalf of the Saskatchewan Association of Conservation Officers we would like to pass on our thoughts with Tennessee Officers. Shows a strong association to keep on working on the convention after the devastation of the tornado on March 2-3.

Back in Saskatchewan we are still grinding away at paperwork, file clean up, mainte-

nance, and some officers getting out in the field.

In the past couple of months, we had Conservation Officers Jared Bonneau, and Scott Andrew assist in locating some snowmobilers in the far north of Saskatchewan that were stuck in slush and started experiencing hypothermia. We also recently had Inspector Kyle Drumheller and Conservation Officer Zach Neudorf go out on river ice to locate a suicidal male that walked out onto thin ice and removed his jacket and laid in the snow. Kyle and Zach located the male and brought him back to the village in a toboggan before the male was transported by EMS to a hospital. Good job to these officers for putting themselves at risk to help out members of the public.

We recently lost three positions during government cutbacks. I can't say for sure how many positions we have lost over the years but I'm sure it's getting close to 30 in the past 13 years.

More duties + less bodies + more reporting = less time in the field checking the resource users.

The good news is Saskatchewan and SACO are proud to host Matt SABO from Washington State Fish and Wildlife Police. Matt was the lucky winner of the NAWEOA officer exchange. Saskatchewan was the lucky province that Matt has decided to visit (with a little persuasion from me).

I've arranged a 10 day whirlwind trip for Matt that will cover off approximately 15% of the landmass of Saskatchewan. But in that trip we've partnered Matt with some great officers that protect some very unique and diverse landscapes. I'm hoping he has a good time and shows off Saskatchewan and it's beauty to all the delegates at the conven-

## **Region 1 Director Brock Lockhart**

tion.

We have a few upcoming retirements and hopefully we retain those positions to fill with the new trained up staff.

### **Alberta**

Submitter – Jason Lefrancois - President

Hello from Alberta! We will be presenting the 2020 Alberta Fish and Wildlife Officer of the Year Award to Detective Sergeant Kelly Moran, who is this year's recipient. D/Sgt. Moran has served on the branch's surveillance team and has been involved in many large investigations. He has made significant contributions to our branch in the areas of leadership, mentorship, ingenuity and professionalism. He is a role model, an outstanding team player and truly exemplifies what is best in our organization. Congratulations to D/Sgt Moran.

In addition, we have been and are expecting many changes coming to our department within the next year. We are still waiting for many of the official announcements but I can share the following with you as it has been recently been announced. Our Government on November 6, 2019 made one of the biggest announcements that will have a significant effect on our members. They announced that they are taking a harder line against rural crime, which is a significant problem in our province. Our Minister announced the Rural Alberta Provincial Integrated Defence Force (RAPID) will be created and will train about 400 fish and wildlife officers, sheriffs and commercial vehicle enforcement personnel to respond to 911 calls about rural crime and assist the RCMP on broader issues such as traf-

fic enforcement. The idea is to reduce response times when no RCMP officers are near and to allow RAPID force officers the ability to respond to a wider range of calls and to assist the RCMP and other police services in some emergencies. Fish and Wildlife Officers will be assisting with 911 responses. The plan is to have the additional personnel trained and ready to assist on rural Alberta calls by fall 2020. We are still waiting for many more details on this initiative. Along with the changes, we are also bracing for some budgetary reductions/restrictions as our Government is cutting spending and trying to save significant dollars. It is still uncertain how this will all affect some of the changes to come. Stay tuned with us. I hope that I will be able to share more news of the changes in the near future.

Stay safe out there.

### **Canada National Parks**

Submitter – Neil Schroeder

Hello again NAWEOA, we hope everyone out there had a pleasant fall & winter, I for one can say we are all very much looking forward to spring north of the 49<sup>th</sup>.

First off I would like to make a small correction from our last newsletter. It was pointed out that we in fact sent in an update in 2013, so it had only been a modest 6 years since we last talked.

Our Branch welcomed a new director back in September. Jeffery Fernback joins us after a long career managing the enforcement unit of Service Canada for the Ontario region. He has been a welcome addition to the Law Enforcement Branch.

Additionally our Branch also launched a

## Region 1 Director Brock Lockhart

Peer Support Team for workplace mental wellness in the New Year. Six Park Wardens have been trained and will offer one-on-one support and help co-workers connect with other mental health services. They can be contacted anonymously, or may get “referrals” from other staff who think that someone may need help but doesn’t want to reach out by themselves.

On the HR side, we are just in the middle of finishing up another recruitment campaign. Interviews are currently ongoing and new prospective recruits will report for training late summer/early fall. New last year, the Branch also launched a recruitment for “experienced officers”. Armed peace officers with 2 or more years’ experience were eligible to apply and received a modified training course on legislation applicable to National Parks, as well as a refresher in firearms and police defensive tactics.

Lastly, four Park Wardens and one LE Branch Manager travelled to Nepal in November to represent the Agency at the 9<sup>th</sup> World Ranger Congress. They were among more than 500 peers from over 70 countries who gather every 4 years to discuss important issues facing

rangers and protected area management worldwide. Our team gave presentations on topics covering Female Rangers, Capacity/Training, Technology, and Education.

On the Association side, we were recently welcomed back into NAWEOA after allowing our membership to lapse. A big thank you to the board for supporting our return. Be sure to check out our Facebook page (National Park Warden Association) for more info and pictures of our national park wardens. Finally a few of our members have been flexing their creative minds and are working on developing some “swag” for us.

We hope to see some of your smiling faces next summer in Nashville.

All the best from your National Park colleagues in Canada.



# NAWEOA



## Region 2 Director Martin Thabault



Greetings from the Canadian Capital,

It's been a while since we were in touch last with the publication of the 2019 fall newsletter. A lot has happened since then.

Most of us went through our busiest time of year when the fall hunting seasons were in full swing. Then the Holidays came and went. Winter brought its share of administrative duties and planning. Your Executive met in late February in Pecatonica (Illinois). Our local hosts NAWEOA Secretary Treasurer Steve Beltran and his wife Jennifer spared no efforts to make it a success. Thank you both for your hospitality and for all the behind the scenes logistics. It was an enjoyable and productive meeting. Then came March (or maybe I should say "Then the pandemic marched in"...). We all had to adapt to a new reality. As Law Enforcement Officers, we all know that disasters and crises bring out the best and the worst out of people. I am sure each one of us has seen his/her share during the last three months. For the first time since our Founding Fathers met in Regina back in 1982, we will not have a summer conference. Thankfully, no efforts of the Tennessee Wildlife Officers Association (TWOA) members were vain. How disappointing this would have been. We will reconvene in Nashville in July 2021. We soon should be able to rebook our hotel reservations at the Maxwell House Millennium and the TWOA was able to get us more rooms for our attendees, which means more of us will be able to stay in the conference hotel. Thank you Josh Landrum and crew! This year both our Officer Exchange winners from 2019 had elected to take their trips in the spring. Matt Sabo (Washington) had made plans to visit Saskatchewan, and Trevor Johnson (Alberta)

was planning to visit Oklahoma...and maybe fill his turkey tag. Their plans had to be changed. Unfortunately, you will have to wait until the spring 2021 newsletter to read about their travel experiences.

My agency, the Wildlife Enforcement Directorate of Environment and Climate Change Canada, is represented in Region 2 of NAWEOA. This year we submitted the names of two promising young Wildlife Officers for Torch Awards. Because we are a Federal Agency our Officers physically work across 3 different regions of NAWEOA (namely 1, 2 and 3). I am pleased to announce that our Officers were awarded the Torch Award for Regions 1 and 3 (ironically we didn't have any nominees for our "own" Region 2...)



Nathan Thomson, Federal Wildlife Officer, Vancouver (British Columbia, Canada)  
2020 Torch Award Winner for NAWEOA Region 1



## Region 2 Director Martin Thabault Continued



Migratory Birds Regulations modernization has been postponed and is planned to now come into effect for the fall 2021 migratory bird hunting season. This means that the current regulations will still be in force for the next migratory bird hunting season. "This delay will not impact the biennial MBR hunting amendments for the 2020-21 and 2021-22 hunting seasons, open seasons, bag and possession limits. These are anticipated to be published in the Canada Gazette, Part II in June 2020."

ECCC-WED's participation in OP NANOOK 2019. Two officers carried out a joint patrol with the Canadian Navy to some of our protected areas in the western arctic that are difficult to access without a ship.

Marjolaine Lagacé (right), Federal Wildlife Officer, Québec City (Québec, Canada)  
2020 Torch Award Winner for NAWEOA Region 3

Congratulations Marjolaine and Nathan! I am very proud of you.  
Please read on to get an update from the active Region 2 Jurisdictions.  
Martin Thabault

### **Environment and Climate Change Canada, Wildlife Enforcement Directorate**

The 100th Game Officer Anniversary (designation of the first migratory birds protection officer) came and went in November 2019. ECCC featured a few officer profiles on social media and ECCC'S website. One of those is a profile of your NAWEOA Region 2 Director- Martin Thabault. WED was also featured on the IGW cover and in article for the Fall 2019 edition.

A commemorative challenge coin was produced to honor the occasion with the Game Officer past and current badge on it.

NAWEOA Newsletter Spring 2020

See below for a couple of Enforcement Notifications for WED (August to December 2019).  
In summary:

- A reminder to photographers and ornithologists that using recorded bird calls to lure birds out of their nest could be considered contrary to the MBR and CWA;
- A real estate development company from Montreal's South Shore, pleaded guilty to destroying 25 to 55 migratory bird nests. The company received a suspended sentence but was ordered to pay \$20 000 to the Environmental Damages Fund (EDF);
- A company pled guilty in Ontario for charges laid contrary to Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act (WAPPRIITA). The charges stem from the illegal import of 26 live Arowana fish from Malaysia. The trade in Arowanas is controlled because the species is listed in appendix I of CITES, the most trade-restrictive category. A total penalty of \$35,000 was directed to the EDF and a court order was issued prohibiting the application for permits for 2 years.

**Region 2 Director  
Martin Thabault  
Continued**

d) An individual in Trois-Rivieres was fined \$5,000 for violating the Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994. He was fined \$5,000, and his migratory bird hunting license was suspended for one year after he pleaded guilty to possessing a crossbow in the Nicolet Migratory Bird Sanctuary to hunt white-tailed deer;

d) Overview of two separate operations for MBCA enforcement, one on the North Shore of Montréal and the other on the Magdalen Islands, enforcement officers, in collaboration with Québec wildlife conservation officers and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, carried out several actions.

- Discovery and closure of 16 illegal baiting sites;
- Apprehension of 40 individuals who were violating the law;
- More than 90 violations reported;
- Seizure of more than 80 ducks and two geese taken illegally in violation of applicable laws and regulations;
- Confiscation of two firearms that were handed over to the Sûreté du Québec (Quebec Provincial Police) since the holders did not have the appropriate certificates;
- Over \$25,000 in fines and Administrative Monetary Penalties issued to offenders

Julie Horvath  
Wildlife Officer, Ottawa  
ECCC Wildlife Enforcement Directorate

**National Capital Commission**

Greetings from the NCC, our agency has once again seen many staffing changes in the last year. We have hired an additional two full time position Junior Conservation Officers and two term officers. After a 6 month competition, a new Conservation Officer Manager

has been retained. Mr. Pietro DiRinaldo has transferred to us from the Ontario Provincial Police and officially began his new tasks on February 24th. Also worth noting is all the conservation officers just completed a 2 week training with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). Officers were put through an Investigators course with a Police Defensive Tactics component. I am pleased to report all officers successfully completed the training and testing.

NCC Officers have worked several illegal hunting cases this fall. For those of you unaware, no hunting is permitted on NCC lands at anytime. Having said this, 2 deer hunters and 2 waterfowl hunters were intercepted this fall and all have been charged with various offences under our legislation. Fishing is permitted on NCC federal lands and officers have also worked many illegal fishing files.

This year 2 of our officers have been nominated for a NAWEOA lifesaving award. In short, they rescued 4 canoeists that had overturned during a violent rain storm. Congratulations to those officers for braving the elements and saving these people.

Jason Pink  
Senior Conservation Officer  
J-Rep, National Capital Commission

**Manitoba Department of Conservation and Climate**

Following the Manitoba Provincial Election on September 10, 2019, the Department of Sustainable Development was restructured resulting in the creation of several new ministries. The Manitoba Conservation Officers Service is now identified as a branch of the Department of Conservation and Climate. Several other significant and exciting changes have been scheduled to take place this year.

**Region 2 Director  
Martin Thabault  
Continued**

Joey Foxon  
Conservation Officer, The Pas  
J-Rep, Manitoba Department of Sustainable  
Development

This past winter, all Conservation Officers were issued Panasonic Toughbooks to replace existing computer systems. In addition to the Toughbooks, new enforcement software known as TraCS (Traffic and Criminal Software) will be released this spring. This program is intended to improve officer efficiency in the field and serve many purposes such as data collection, records management, and reporting. This software will result in a transition to a paperless system where officers can complete all enforcement documents digitally and file forms accordingly. This information can then be accessed by officers across the province and be utilized in future investigations.

In addition to the improved enforcement technology, the Manitoba Government is rolling out their first ever online e-licencing system for hunting and fishing licenses this spring. Although this isn't a new concept in many provinces/states, this has been long overdue in Manitoba and there will be many benefits for both resource users and officers. One such benefit to the officers will be the roll out of a mobile law enforcement App to assist in checking and validating licenses.

Officer recruitment and retention has become a serious concern over the past couple years. The Conservation Officers Service proudly announced the hiring of eight new officers this past November. The recruits are becoming familiar with their districts and are proving to be a great addition to our team.

The MCOA is also currently attending trade shows and taking part in public outreach programming.

**Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources**

Some CO vacancies are being filled in the Province which is positive. There had been minimal hiring occurring with the new Government in place.

Our trucks are now coming with some modifications including:

No light bars on top (concealed lights at the top of the front window, grill, side windows, mirrors and back). This was to eliminate driving noise and provide a more sleek look

Long gun locking storage to coincide with an update long gun policy (we had nothing in recent years)

Elimination of computer docking station, printers and card scanners in the trucks (we weren't using them)

Officers have now been issued tourniquets with mandatory carry requirements on the external body armor carrier or weapon side cargo pocket.

As first aid certification expires, we're rolling into Wilderness First Aid certification with in-house trainers.

We now have approximately 17 Sargent/ Enforcement Operations Specialist positions (1 yr. acting assignments) across the Province. These positions are non-management but provide supervisory roles and focus on operational planning, delivery, legislative and technical advice to field officers within a work unit.

We have an ongoing wage and classification issue that is in gridlock with the union and Management Employee Relations Commit-

**Region 2 Director**  
**Martin Thabault**  
**Continued**

tee. Conservation Officers are a small part of a broader government employees union and we aren't recognized appropriately. Officers are seeking a modernized classification and wage increase to be more in line with other provincial investigators including Environ-

ment, Mines and Labor which have reduced portfolios, training requirements and other job duties.

Davis Viehbeck  
Conservation Officer, Thunder Bay  
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry





## Region 3 Director Josh Thibodeau



Hello everyone,  
I hope everyone had a safe and productive Winter season in their respective jurisdictions. I would like to thank the J-Reps for passing along information and keeping us updated on news from their agencies. There

has certainly been a lot happening since the fall newsletter. Due to health issues I was not able to attend the 2020 winter meeting in Illinois. I would like to thank the NAWEOA executive board for working hard and having a productive winter meeting.

The Corona Virus pandemic has swept over the whole world and it has also found New Brunswick. Our officers are working very hard working at border check points, responding to calls for service and patrolling communities enforcing the province while under state of emergency.

We are hoping for a quiet spring flood season as we are coming off one of the worst flood seasons ever last year. The residents here in New Brunswick are hoping for a slow snow melt and some help from mother nature. Early predictions are indicating the spring freshet is looking good which is welcome news as our officers are busy dealing with the Covid 19 response.

Region 3 has also received some bad news from one of their jurisdictions. The Province of Nova Scotia Conservation Officers Association has decided that the Nova Scotia group of Conservation Officers will not renew their NAWEOA membership for the time being. I had discussions with a couple members of

their associations executive board and their association has fallen on some difficult times. With depleted funds and not a vast interest at this time some hard choices had to be made. I will stay in touch with members of this association and I hope they will be able to turn things around and for them to once again be part of NAWEOA. I wish them luck as they try to gain traction in their association and look forward to them being part of NAWEOA again in the near future.

I am truly disappointed that there will be no summer conference due to the current corona virus pandemic, but safety of our officers and their families is the number one priority. I would like to thank the Tennessee Conservation Officers Association for their dedication to NAWEOA and pushing back their conference a year to 2021. Look forward to seeing everyone in Nashville for the summer conference in 2021. Take care and stay safe.

Region 3 Director Josh Thibodeau

### **NEW BRUNSWICK**

Hello from New Brunswick, we are glad that the spring is finally at the door.

This past winter was fairly quiet with the exception of a few storms where some officers were asked to assist the Department of Transport and RCMP. Our Conservation Officers are being asked more and more to assist other agencies for a multitude of tasks, which in return takes them away from their core mandate.

The special investigations team have had great success in special operations; some of which are still ongoing. These officers are very keen doing this risky job.

Being a bilingual province, it is becoming harder to get French or Bilingual officers in the North of the province. The North is mostly francophone. Due to budget constraints the province is not offering very much enforcement training other than the training that is

**Region 3 Director**  
**Josh Thibodeau**  
**Continued**

mandatory. Officers from our department have been taking SFST training, to date we gave approximately 30 officers training with a vision to have every field officer trained. The department has purchased road side screening devices and approximately 10 officers have been trained but training is now on hold.

Individuals who wish to pursue a career as a Conservation officer must go to the Atlantic Police Academy in PEI to take their Conservation training. This training is only offered in English. (Only one or two classes have ever been offered in French). Our training officers have been assisting with different courses at the Atlantic Police Academy.

Presently we have about 11 vacancies and 6 new Officers were recruited last year. The total number once all vacancies are filled should be around 72 field staff, 3 Inspectors, 1 Superintendent and a Corporal (K9) and Sergeant (Training Officer) attached to HQ.

Some officers are talking about retirement more than ever, probably due to the extra workload added over the last 4 years.

Our previous employer (Department of Natural Resources) have made commitment to change some regulations (no more restriction on caliber for nuisance animal control, hunting on Sunday after the deer season, opening new lakes for winter fishing....) These changes do not please everyone.

Early budget cuts (Oct) in our branch, created a negative feeling among most officers. This means that that no hiring to fill vacancy, limited to get equipment. Every penny is counted. (hopefully that the next budget will be adjusted.)

Our contract has been expired for two years. A job study was done to compare the work load of Conservation compared to Commercial vehicle inspection and Off-Road Enforcement Officers. This was to be the benchmark for negotiation. So far, the bargaining team and the employer where not able to agree on how this study will be implemented for the salary adjustment.

Our officers have done their use of force training, this is demanding on the instructors. Our instructors have done a great job with combining Instructors from different branches within our department.

There is a couple of awards that were received by 2 of our Conservation Officers. Conservation Officer Kevin MacBeth was the recipient of the New Brunswick Shakar Safari wildlife officer of the year. Kevin has over 35 years experience and remains a valued member of the New Brunswick Conservation team. Congratulations Kevin!

Conservation Officer Robert Thibodeau who is the father of NAWEOA Region 3 Director Josh Thibodeau received the 2020 Blue Line lifetime in law enforcement achievement award. This award is a national award for a law enforcement officer with over 15 years experience who has shown a exemplary leadership and commitment to their community and their peers. Congratulations Bob!

I will end by inviting everyone to participate in the next NAWEOA Convention that will be held in Nashville in July 2021.

Thanks to the board of directors who are doing a great job in keeping the association running smoothly and making sure that future conferences are being planned.

Submitted by J Rep Roger Selesse

**Region 3 Director**  
**Josh Thibodeau**  
**Continued**

**NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR**

Our department (Department of Fisheries and Land Resources) is still in a “reconstruction” phase, which is supposed to include merging our Enforcement Division with Forestry enforcement. The plan is to have forestry (conservation officers) join our enforcement division to create a larger division, since we will be taking on more “land resource” legislation including the forestry act and crown lands act. This announcement was made three years ago and is still in process.

This time of year the division strongly focuses on the illegal caribou hunt in Labrador which in recent years has been a challenge to enforce. Herds in Labrador remain in trouble, so efforts are put in when possible, by our officers to try and help prevent the illegal hunt from furthering their populations.

Salmon enforcement also remains a top priority for our province due their declining stocks. Salmon netting remains a significant contributor to their decline, so efforts are focused in the summer on this activity. We have had some salmon netting convictions announced in the past months, that have resulted in serious fines and in some cases, imprisonment.

Even with all the “uncertainty” with our government and our department at this time, we are still focusing on our goal, which is to protect the fish and wildlife species in our province. While at the same time, our association has been doing what it can to get answers for our members, to ensure we have the tools and means to go out and do the job we remain passionate about.

Submitted by J Rep Katlin Young

**PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND**

Here on the Island we are the lead agency responding to Covid-19 complaints of people not self isolating, gathering in crowds of more than 5 and not self distancing, etc. We are tasked in going door to door and investigating these complaints brought forward from the Department of Health in regard to the Public Health Order that has been issued in the province. We are not really sure on how this has happened, we have a small force of 6 full time Officers and 1 casual Officer. Our workload seems to keep growing exponentially with many more duties and responsibilities added every year over the last several. We are however very dedicated to protecting the people of Prince Edward Island through these uncertain times.

Submitted by J Rep Locke Jones

## Region 4 Director Jason Sherwood



While Region 4 officers are certainly all struggling with a variety of COVID-19 issues (on top of the ubiquitous personnel and budget shortages, resource management challenges, fickle publics, and the likes), I hope,

by the time you're reading this, the worst will be over. It seems most appropriate to focus on exciting items that point to our future for this newsletter (with one exception for a group that could use some specific help)...

Personally, I'm excited that Utah J-Rep Sean Spencer and his team have already been putting in some strong legwork in pursuit of hosting the 2022 NAWEOA annual conference. It is still very early for too many details, but it definitely sounds like they have some good options in the works to bring our members back to Region 4 (likely a short distance from Salt Lake City). The Utah crew is being thoughtful and working hard to create another great conference and launching point for family vacations in the West.

Wildlife officers in Idaho recently enjoyed a notable success, supporting an important tool to most wildlife officers: the use of wildlife check stations. For the second time in Idaho history, the use of check stations was challenged as an unlawful seizure in Federal Court. The court affirmed (as in the 1999 case as well), it is in the best interest of the state to know and manage wildlife resources, and the use of check stations as a management tool does not constitute a seizure. Idaho requires

two questions be asked of each person stopped at a check station: 'Have you hunted today?' and 'Are you transporting any fish or wildlife today?' The detention is minimally brief after negative answers to these two questions and an apparent lack of any other violations California game wardens are facing an extra challenge right now. Despite their officer association being created in 1922, and successfully maintaining their 501(c)5 non-profit status since their 1937 incorporation (I looked to make sure those numbers weren't transposed), they are currently struggling with a rift between their wardens association and their union (which includes many other professions and only a small percentage of law enforcement officers). The state's law enforcement officers attempted to create a separate group, the "Peace Officers of California," with a legal defense fund for members. However, the union has recently managed to block the use of the legal defense fund and has repeatedly attempted to leverage other funding sources and support services to force them back into the union. If your association has been through similar issues, please reach out to our California J-Rep, Lorraine Doyle, or the California Fish & Game Wardens Association President, Nick Buckler with your experiences and ideas.

I'll end with the most exciting news for NAWEOA: work on a marketing plan to help promote our association into the future. At the winter board meeting, a subcommittee was created to work with a private marketing expert to develop a marketing plan and start a rebranding effort, culminating numerous discussions of potential outcomes, goals, and consideration of NAWEOA's strong sense of tradition. Popular businesses rebrand frequently and are experts at "marketing." As you drive through town (keeping appropriate social distance, of course), take note of how many successful businesses have changed their look over the years. Walmart subtly



## Region 4 Director Jason Sherwood

changes their logo every few years and has gone through several huge makeovers in the past couple decades. Similarly, fast food chains of today barely resemble the restaurants they started out as in the previous century. Keeping logos, colors, and terminology “fresh” keeps a brand relevant to customers, grows with their changing needs, and keeps them more connected than their competition. With only a small fraction of our 9,000+ members truly engaged and active in NAWEOA, and the public having much more recognition for the Hells Angels than our organization, we need to do a better job of getting our messages out.

On the other hand, I’ve been proud to wear the “same” red uniform shirt traditionally recognized as *the* Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Maintaining tradition holds trust and shows respect for those who have gone before us, and cannot be overlooked. The patch collectors among us know the uniforms

have changed bit-by-bit over time. Likewise, we all still know what the “golden arches” stand for, even though they are now shaped a bit differently and a different shade of yellow.

While change must be done thoughtfully and will still bring some stress, it also builds opportunity and stimulates growth. To enjoy a healthy and vibrant future, NAWEOA needs to be recognizable and relevant to a greater audience, both in membership and with those who would donate or otherwise support wildlife law enforcement efforts. Once our “brand” is current, we will be doing further work to help get our group’s “message” out. Expect to see more information between now and the 2021 conference. We hope you will be engaged and thoughtful throughout the process and will be excited to help approve the final products as we help ensure the future of *our* professional organization. (And, of course, I hope you stay healthy, mentally and physically during these historic times!)



# NAWEOA

## Region 5 Director Jesse Gehrt



Greetings to all from NAWEOA Region 5, in Kansas. Our Spring storm season is in full swing here. One day it may be in the 70's and sunny, maybe a chance of rain and

hail, then turned in to a tornado, followed by potential flooding, wrapped up with a freeze warning...if you wait five minutes it will change. As a reminder, I was newly elected to the NAWEOA board at last summer's annual meeting in Oklahoma. I attended our winter meeting this past February in Illinois just as this COVID-19 mess was ramping up. Ever since then, it has definitely been an interesting time. One thing this has let us do, is an increased time spent with family at home on the farm. With a teacher as a spouse, home-schooling has been in full swing. Kansas, like most I assume, has been in a stay at home order for that past couple of months, with a slow transition back to a normal coming in mid May.

People are encouraged to go outside and stay active. This has led to a tremendous increase in outdoor recreation; hunting, fishing, boating, more hunting. With this increase, officers have seen record high numbers using our resources, and that brings inexperienced citizens recreating. Kansas waterways are seeing the biggest increase in users, from fishing to boating/kayaking/canoeing. A big challenge has been educating these users as to the legal and safety requirements needed, such as the use of PFDs. Wardens have unfortunately been working drownings on state waterways. With the pandemic not yet peaked here,

I see this trend here for a better part of the summer. As you all have heard, the board has postponed the 2020 Conference in Nashville to 2021. I look forward to seeing you all next year.

### Nebraska

Nebraska continues to be hiring conservation officers. Nebraska Law Enforcement Division has 5 new FTE in the legislature on this biennium budget. Applicants will be selected for interviews based on their job experience, education, and relevant knowledge/skills/abilities. Much of our old scoring criteria has been incorporated into the application process and we're confident we'll be able to select quality candidates with the updated process.

Only non-certified applicants who are given conditional offers will be required to complete the TABE and NLETC physical fitness testing before a final offer of employment is given. This is something we've been discussing for some time, but the COVID-19 situation will require us to embrace the change immediately. Chance Vorderstrasse, Keith Jadowski, and Jaden Porter are currently in field training. These officers will be at the Ogallala, Ne duty station. One officer will be entering the Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center in May 2020. Mike Thome and Dan Kling have been promoted to lieutenant positions.

State Law Enforcement Bargaining Council created sergeant positions. This provides opportunity for field Conservation Officers. Within our ranks there are minimal opportunities for advancement. This will help in addressing this need. By contract Sergeants will receive a 2.5% increase above their current pay-line.

### Oklahoma

Several promotions have taken place in recent

## **Region 5 Director Jesse Gehrt**

months. Lt Col Nathan Erdman has been promoted to Colonel and District 5 Captain Wade Farrar is now the Lt Col. Lt Gary Emmons is now the District 5 Chief. Warden Marni Loftis has been promoted to Operations Manager, a Captain position. In the field, Wardens Joe Alexander, Paul Welch, Max Crocker and Chad Strang have all been promoted to Lt. or supervisor.

We have also just completed our first in house academy for new hires. Six new wardens attended the academy and are now in the field participating in the FTO program.

New trucks in 2019 and 2020 are Rams. It's been a while since we had Dodges (hence the name change). I think everyone who has a 2019 likes them. They have built in storage boxes (one part of which can double as an ice chest). Radio boxes, computer mounts, locked long gun racks, and a well lit light package are all featured in the new rides. Still takes about 90-100K miles to get a new unit. When the legislative session reopens there are some bills out there that have the potential to impact our jobs. The Oklahoma Game Warden Association lobbyist is watching closely and working with our agency to fight off those bills.

In OSGWA news we have a new President, Allen Couch, and a new secretary, Russell Bradford. New board members are Austin Jackson, Cody Youngblood, and Brad Magby. The board looks forward to the new members and officers working together for the good of all Oklahoma Wardens.

### **Wisconsin**

Wisconsin Wardens part of LE effort at the

Rainbow Family of Living Light gathering in Northern Wisconsin.

From June 28th through July 4th, 2019, Wisconsin Conservation Wardens served an integral role within the law enforcement and public safety community as a small town in northern Wisconsin found itself host to several thousand members of the Rainbow Family who held their annual gathering on the Chequamegon National Forest near Iron River in Bayfield County.

The Rainbow Family of Living Light is a very loosely organized group that holds a national gathering annually around July 4th, each year in a different area of the country. The event is planned without permits, without local input, and often in rural areas where the large influx of people puts a significant strain on local resources. This year, approximately 7,000 attendees established loose camps over about a two square mile section on Northern Wisconsin wilderness.

Law enforcement officers from the National Forest Service have years of experience in working these gatherings and through intelligence gathering were able to provide local law enforcement agencies with information as to what to expect before, during, and after the gathering. As smaller agencies, Bayfield County and Iron River PD found themselves greatly short staffed for the gathering, considering the normal high activity for the time of year in northern Wisconsin's vacation country. Along with the WI State Patrol and Wisconsin Division of Criminal Investigations, the Wisconsin DNR stepped up. Wardens worked as patrol partners with Bayfield County Deputies and US Forest Service Officers from around the country. Wardens also manned the Incident Command Center and provided response resources including ATV's, UTV's, boats, trucks with mapping and GPS enabled computers.

## Region 5 Director Jesse Gehrt

A highly visible and engaged LE presence with 24 hour coverage kept the event safe overall. LE officers intercepted several vehicles transporting illegal narcotics into the event, including synthetics and hallucinogens not normally seen in that part of the state.

Our wardens on patrol gained valuable experience working with other agencies in the incident command structure and will not forget the shouts of "SIX UP!" that warned other revelers of the presence of law enforcement on patrol, as well as the shouts of "Lovin' You!" after the LEO's had passed.

More importantly, our wardens were valued partners who helped make the event safe for everyone, including the many Forest Service LEO's unfamiliar with the area and Wisconsin law. During the event, our wardens met and worked with many top-notch officers, trading skillsets and experiences, while establishing contacts that will last a lifetime.

### Kansas

Kansas recently implemented an electronic licensing system which allows hunters, anglers and fur harvesters to purchase their licenses electronically and then store them on their mobile device. We have been informed that this most likely will be followed by electronic tagging for big game species, but have yet to see that part take place.

The mobile office of the Kansas Game Warden is continually getting better as we are replacing patrol trucks that have less than 100,000 miles for the first time in a very long time. This is a big boost in warden morale as we all know and understand the beating these vehicles take over a period of 100,000 miles.

Most (if not all) wardens are now equipped with a Panasonic Toughbook and mounting station in their patrol vehicles. Wardens are now able to take their computers with them and attach to a mobile docking station for easier access to electronic licensing/tagging systems in the field. This is also allowing wardens to spend more time in the field instead of returning to an office to complete paperwork.



Kansas is continuing to see a large push from the sporting public in the direction of night hunting predators and possibly fur bearing animals. The push is to allow night vision, thermals and red/green lights to pursue these animals during dark hours. Wardens feel the pub-



lic has a good chance at seeing this through the KDWPT commission. 3 Wardens (along with 7 other KDWPT staff) recently completed Basic Air Rifle "Train the Trainer" training which kicked off the beginning of the Student Air Rifle Program in Kansas. NASP has been extremely successful in KS and we are excited



## Region 5 Director Jesse Gehrt

to see where the Air Rifle Program can go. We also look forward to another avenue in possibly introducing hunter education in the schools.

Many awards were presented at the annual banquet. KDWPT Game Warden of the year was presented to Warden Ross Uhrmacher. Many notable cases were made throughout the fall with a few to showcase. A Warden in Western KS wrapped up a multi-year investigation. Charges filed in 5 KS counties and one in a NE county. 19 bucks seized (many other wildlife as well) with 13 of the bucks having an average score of just over 173 inches. Over 100 charges are expected to be filed in total. Court conclusion pending. Wardens in Western KS followed up on a tip regarding the possible illegal taking of a trophy mule deer. After interviews and investigations concluded, the end result was the seizure of a 220 inch mule deer buck in Stevens County KS. Case was settled with a \$10,000 fine and a 1 1/2 year hunting suspension. Wardens in Eastern KS wrapped up a multi year investigation regarding two suspects who illegally took 8 deer and 17 turkey with over 100 violations documented. Charges have been filed, 3 of which are felonies. Court conclusion still pending.

Wardens in Eastern KS followed up on a tip regarding the illegal taking of a trophy elk. Yes, we have elk in Kansas! Investigation and interviews led to the seizure of a trophy bull elk that gross scored over 330 inches with a fine and restitution value that could reach approximately \$40,000. Court conclusion still pending. As this report is being submitted,

We are in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. I am sure this has affected every state natural resource law enforcement unit

throughout the US in some way or another and wardens are being tasked in ways never before. This certainly is the case in Kansas, and we are trying to stay optimistic and taking each day and policy change in stride. We have some of the highest use ever observed on our wildlife and parks managed areas and public waterways. We as wardens certainly understand all too well that our jobs tend to have no limits, however providing security at a virus testing facility was probably something not many of us thought they would be doing in this profession. Kansas Game Wardens continue to provide a much-needed service in protection of people and natural resources in Kansas and will continue to answer the call.



## Region 5 Director Jesse Gehrt

### Texas

#### Shark Fin Enforcement

Texas Game Wardens hold criminally responsible 10 restaurants and markets in the Houston and Dallas area for selling shark fins and shark fin products. Protecting the many shark species residing and migrating through the Gulf of Mexico, as well as the illegally trafficked sharks from around the world, offered for sale in Texas is one of the division's highest priorities. Texas Game Wardens will continue to proactively work investigations related to illegal shark fin products and violations against the many species of wildlife found throughout the state.

#### Captain Murchison Patrol Vessel

The Law Enforcement Division has taken delivery of its new long-range vessel. The patrol vessel (PV) Capt. Murchison is 80'x 27' aluminum Teknicraft designed hydrofoil-assisted catamaran vessel. The new vessel combines innovative design features critical to modern law enforcement on the water.

One specific feature is Teknicraft's revolutionary Rapid Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (RHIB) launching system. The system will increase safety and reduce both the time and manpower required to deploy the vessel's RHIB. This vessel will be a game changer in the state's efforts to protect its cherished natural resources and protect its maritime border.

#### Law Enforcement User Partnership

After identifying that patrols in the shallow bays, ponds, and estuaries of the middle coast are problematic, TPWD partnered with Flatsworthy to seek a solution. Our current patrol platform in these areas was only by airboat and that did not lend itself to the user

groups that sought these areas out for the solitude and unique experience. In late summer 2019, Chuck Naiser with Flatsworthy proposed the use and acquisition of a specialized boat to accommodate this need. Flatsworthy partnered with the Parks and Wildlife Foundation and received a huge amount of support for this project from many individuals, including Chairman Chuck Nash. The result was a custom, hand-made boat, by Tim Clancy of New Water Boats in San Antonio.

In February 2020, TPWD took delivery of a 17-foot Curlew Skiff, the first ever of its kind in the game warden fleet. The Curlew is a center console outboard, with a specific design and tunnel hull configuration, allowing it to not only handle the waters of the open bay but to ingress and egress extremely shallow water with little to no impact on the environment, including seagrass. The result is that our game wardens will be able to easily and safely have a visible presence in areas they have historically been unable. This community partnership embodies TPWD's long history philosophy of community-oriented policing.

#### Texas Game Warden Academy

In late April, the Texas Game Warden Training Center held a private commissioning ceremony for 38 new Texas Game Wardens and 15 State Park Police Officers who recently completed seven months of intensive training. This class had many challenges, but the biggest was the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. At one point, the cadets had to be sent home out of an abundance of caution over concerns for the spread of COVID-19. Ultimately, the cadets completed their training and are ready to serve the people of the State of Texas.

The Game Warden Academy also monitors and delivers in-service training for the field. While conducting the 63<sup>rd</sup> academy, special operations assisted the GWTC in presenting

## Region 5 Director Jesse Gehrt

transition training for all field officers for our new long gun and handgun platforms. This was a huge challenge and a tremendous success.

### Texas Game Warden Citizens Academy

The Law Enforcement Division is conducting the 2020 Texas Game Warden Citizens Academy. This event marks the fourth year for the Citizens Academy to provide community leaders and stakeholders an inside view of the diverse challenges, duties, and responsibilities carried out by Texas Game Wardens as they serve the citizens of our great state. An overview of program functions will include game warden training, law, land and marine patrol techniques, outreach, accident investigations and reconstruction, criminal investigations, search and rescue, K9 operations, officer safety, technology, and recruiting. The program will consist of four sessions and began January 30, 2020. Each session provides opportunities for attendees to interact with and develop an in-depth knowledge of the complex and ever-evolving duties of Texas Game Wardens. Unfortunately, with the concerns over COVID-19, the Citizens Academy has been interrupted and will resume this fall. This Cohort will have the distinction of being the largest and longest running Citizens academy since its inception.

### Strategic Planning Initiatives

TPWD-LE operates a fleet of 650 four-wheel drive trucks, with a five year or 100,000 mile power-train warranty. LE tries to replace vehicles at the 100,000 mile mark to reduce maintenance and repair costs. Also, the four-wheel drive trucks have a high resale value at the 100,000 range, which aids in replenishing capital funds to purchase new vehicles.

TPWD and Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) have entered into a partnership to merge state-wide communications infrastructure. This will result in increased radio coverage and greater situational awareness for both agencies.

TPWD LE remains behind modern law enforcement regarding technology. The division is continually seeking funding and researching varying platforms to allow better leveraging of technology for wardens to provide increased services and improve safety.

LE division will need to address its aging aviation fleet.

### What to Expect in the Next 6 Months

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a toll on Texas' economy. The effects will be long term and will create a strain on funds that are appropriated to TPWD. This will present challenges to all divisions including TPWD.

Evaluate the divisions current brick and mortar structures as well as ways to streamline business and decrease costs.

Develop and look for non-contact business solutions to reduce potential disease transmission now and in to the future.





## **NAWEOA Board Member Recognized**

Lieutenant, Jesse Gehrt, was acknowledged for his efforts towards recreational boating safety and was selected as the Boating Educator of the Year for the Western Association of Boating Administrators after being selected as the Departments Boating Educator of the Year. Jesse became one of three finalist for the Boating Educator of the Year award for the National Association of Boating Law Administrators and was announced as the recipient of that award during the Annual NASBLA Fall Conference recently held in Anchorage Alaska. Lt. Gehrt's nomination included many accomplishments towards the promoting recreational boating safety. A few of the highlights of his nomination included the statistic of Milford Reservoir claiming 1 to 3 drowning per year, mainly Fort Riley soldiers. During the 12 years that Lt. Gehrt worked on Milford and his efforts to incorporate boating safety classes at the Fort Riley Military Base and the Base owned marina, there has been 3 drownings within the 12 years total. Lt. Jesse Gehrt also coordinated efforts with K-State to include the Kansas Recreational Boating Safety class into a curriculum for college credit and Lt. Gehrt teaches the laws and regulation portion of the class.

Lt. Gehrt is also sought after for his instruction for KDWPT law enforcement staff and other agencies as well, where he is a NASBLA certified instructor in the BUI SFST and Seated Battery instruction, KDWPT's airboat and vessel operations instructor, Side Scan sonar instructions, Officer Water Survival instruction, Boating and Hunter Education Instructor and one of the few Boating Education Regional Coordinators. Over the course of his career, Lt. Gehrt averages between 21 to 25 educational and instructional courses per year. Officer Jesse Gehrt has attended several NASBLA conferences, and in 2018 was a Graduate of the NASBLA Leadership Academy.



*Pictured are Major Dan Heskett (Left) and Lt. Jesse Gehrt (Right)*



## Region 6 Director Dan Fagan



### Florida

Greetings from the great State of Florida! As conservation law enforcement officers, we encounter unique cases, and being in Florida is no exception. I would like to share with you two recent cases that garnered media attention.

#### Trafficking of Galapagos Tortoise

In August of 2019, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) officers discovered a suspicious package at a local FedEx store. A further inspection revealed a juvenile Galapagos Tortoise inside the package. The Galapagos Tortoise, which is listed in the Endangered Species Act, was being shipped to Las Vegas, Nevada.

An investigation led to the arrest of Alan Wheelock of Las Vegas. Wheelock, who saw an advertisement for the Tortoise on a licensed breeder site, enlisted the help of his cousin, Maurico Perez, to pose as an in-state buyer. It should be noted that a captive-bred wildlife registration permit (CBW) is required to possess if purchasing captive wildlife from out of state.

Prosecutors say that Wheelock used Facebook to contact Perez and set the plan into motion. Later, Perez met with the breeder, posted video and photographs on Facebook, then purchased the Galapagos Tortoise for \$3,900.00.

Surveillance footage at the FedEx store in

Florida showed Perez mailing the Tortoise in a package. In Las Vegas, Wheelock was captured on video picking up the package containing the Tortoise. A Special Agent with United States Fish and Wildlife Service also observed the transaction.

After pleading guilty, Wheelock was sentenced to two years of probation with 120 days of home confinement, \$7,000.00 in fines and 100 hours of community service.

#### Two arrested for Turtle Trafficking

Two Florida men were arrested on numerous charges related to the illegal take and sale of turtles. The destination for the turtles was the international black market. The men were thought to have poached thousands of turtles.

“The illegal trade of turtles is having a global impact on many turtle species and our ecosystems. We commend our law enforcement’s work to address the crisis of illegal wildlife trafficking,” said FWC Executive Director Eric Sutton.

“Putting a stop to this criminal enterprise is a significant win for conservation”, said Col. Curtis Brown with FWC.

Dr. Craig Stanford, Chairman of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature’s Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group, stated that traffickers smuggle protected species of turtles outside of the United States, “usually for export to the Asian pet market”.

FWC began their investigation in February of 2018 and discovered a ring of wildlife traffickers. Turtles were collected in large numbers then sold to a buyer with links to Asian markets.

Over 600 turtles were able to be released back to the wild.

**Region 6 Director**  
**Dan Fagan**  
**Continued**

**NAME AND TITLE:**

Sgt. Michael Pounds- Conservation Officer/  
MS Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and  
Parks

The two men arrested face the following charges:

- Dealing in stolen property as an organizer
- Over the bag limit of turtles
- Over the possession limit of box turtles
- Sale and offer for sale turtle taken from the wild
- Transporting wild-caught turtles without a permit
- Standard caging requirements for captive wildlife
- Possession of marine turtle parts
- Possession of black bear parts
- Possession of cannabis over 20 grams
- Possess with intent to sell/deliver (drugs)
- Possession of a controlled substance (THC oil)

These are just two examples of the commercialization and illegal trade of wildlife in Florida. Cases such as these, can and are happening in every State. It's important to remember, these cases can start with just a simple resource inspection along a rural roadway or shoreline.

Stay vigilant and stay safe out there.

-Lt. Dustin Lightsey  
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
Dustin.lightsey@myfwc.com

**Mississippi**

**MISSISSIPPI FLYWAY WATERFOWL PROTECTION OFFICER OF THE YEAR NOMINATION**

**STATE / PROVINCE / REGION:**

Mississippi / Walthall County / South Region

**JOB DUTIES AND SHORT DESCRIPTION OF NOMINEE:**

Sgt. Michael Pounds has been a Conservation Officer with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks since 2011. Sgt. Pounds attended the University of Southern Mississippi earning his bachelor's degree in criminal justice with a Minor in Forensic Science. Michael and his fiancée, Tiffany make their home in Kokomo, MS. Sgt. Pounds is a life-long resident of South Mississippi and has spent his entire life hunting and fishing within the "Magnolia State". Michael's heritage, passion of the outdoors, concern for waterfowl habitat, and knowledge of waterfowl conservation have all been contributing factors for him becoming an outstanding waterfowl enforcement officer within the heart of the Mississippi Flyway. He has spent much of his off-duty time in the outdoors with his friends and family enjoying and promoting the sport of hunting waterfowl.

**1. WATERFOWL EDUCATION:**

Sgt. Pounds has successfully completed the waterfowl enforcement training provided by the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks and has demonstrated a strong knowledge of the law in the field of migratory game birds. Sgt. Pounds has developed a superior knowledge of waterfowl habitat, migratory patterns, and activities and has shared this knowledge to train and mentor numerous young officers in the field of waterfowl enforcement techniques and waterfowl education. Sgt. Pounds is also a MDWFP Boating Safety Instructor and has used this opportunity

**Region 6 Director**  
**Dan Fagan**  
**Continued**

to emphasize to current and future waterfowl hunters, the importance of boating safety in regard to waterfowl hunting.

**2. WETLANDS PROTECTION:**

Sgt. Pounds is constantly mindful of increasing stressors on waterfowl and their diminishing habitat. Concerns for the protection of wetlands in the Bogue Chitto and Pearl River basins of Walthall, Marion and Lawrence Counties encourage Sgt. Pounds to be observant in his daily patrols for threats, as well as improvements that effect wetlands in his area of responsibility. Sgt. Pounds provides feedback of his observations to landowners, local agencies, and the general public to maintain and improve wetlands within his assigned areas.

**3. INVOLVEMENT WITH YOUTH IN WATERFOWLING:**

Sgt. Pounds regularly takes time to work with youths as a Hunter Education Instructor, educating them on waterfowl Laws, introducing them to waterfowl activities and the opportunities that are available to them in their areas. He attends sportsman groups and meetings that promote youth waterfowl activities. Sgt. Pounds uses his opportunities as a boating education instructor to stress to young waterfowl hunters the hazards associated with waterfowling and the importance of being safe on the water while hunting.

**4. PARTICIPATION WITH WATERFOWLING ORGANIZATIONS:**

Sgt. Pounds is always eager to attend public events and inform the public on Laws and Regulations relative to waterfowl hunting, latest waterfowl data collected by agency biologist, and emphasizes both firearm and water safety while afield. Sgt. Pounds instructs

Hunter Education and Boating Safety classes, attends NRCS Farm Safety days and multiple public events in his community to educate the public on migratory waterfowl, the importance of preserving their habitat and the proud heritage of waterfowl hunting.

**5. ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY:**

November 29, 2019 Sgt. Michael Pounds was patrolling the Morgantown area of Marion County for hunting violations at daylight. Officer Pounds heard gunshots he associated with duck hunting and proceeded to investigate on foot. After a lengthy walk, Sgt. Pounds reached the slough off the Pearl River and observed corn that had been placed in and around the slough. Sgt. Pounds located two (2) adults shooting wood ducks and a total of 15 bagged ducks. Sgt. Pounds cited the two men with Baiting Ducks, Unlawful Possession of Wildlife, no Federal Duck Stamp and Exceeding the Bag Limit. The ducks were seized and taken to a needy family providing a much-needed additional food source. Although Sgt. Pounds had worked much of the night prior on head lighting complaints and this was the opening week of deer season, his dedication to waterfowl enforcement overpowered his fatigue and interrupted a blatant violation of State and Federal waterfowl regulations. Officer Pounds also made multiple Dove hunting cases during the 2019 season which were often a product of investigating suspicious activity ahead of the main hunts, inevitably saving the resource for legal, future sportsmen in the area.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

Sgt. Pounds, in addition to his waterfowl activities, is a member of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks Special Response Team. Sgt. Pounds devotes extra time for training, responding to Natural Disasters, Man Hunts, Search and Rescue, Executive Protection details and other events requiring a special skill set. Sgt. Pounds strives to maintain a high degree of readiness for any

**Region 6 Director**  
**Dan Fagan**  
**Continued**

task asked of him. Sgt. Pounds' eagerness, attitude, and performance is an example for all Conservation Officers to follow. Sgt. Pounds is an invaluable asset to the conservation of our natural resources and reflects great credit upon himself, the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, and the State of Mississippi.

SEAFWA 2019 OFFICER OF THE YEAR  
NOMINATION FORM NOMINEE: Wesley  
Cole Edwards

NAME ON AWARD PLAQUE: Cole Edwards

STATE: Mississippi Pin Color- Silver

**Teamwork and Public Outreach:**

Corporal (CPL) Cole Edwards has always been a team player working alongside his superior officers and coworkers. CPL Edwards is an officer that is dedicated, works diligently to get the job done, and goes above and beyond his call of duties. CPL Edwards strives to serve the public no matter the time of the call. CPL Edwards consistently volunteers and works hard to educate the public on game and fish laws, hunter safety, boater education, and career opponents, even outside of his assigned county. CPL Edwards maintains professionalism with the public daily, even when not in uniform.

**Excellence and Innovation:**

CPL Edwards always takes initiative and strives to make solid cases. CPL Edwards always ensures that his equipment needed for the task is functioning properly and that everyone is briefed and properly equipped for the task at hand. CPL Edwards preplans and strategically maps out his objectives, depending

on the task, by considering the weather, population, complaints, terrain, and manpower. CPL Edwards takes initiative in learning and knowing all state laws pertaining to the task at hand for whatever season or case at hand.

**Attitude and Leadership:**

CPL Edwards is a positive individual. No matter the difficulty or setbacks from assignments to everyday work, CPL Edwards maintains a positive attitude. He is a leader to numerous officers that are in the area working with or around him. He does a great job in influencing and being a positive role model to the new officers that he trains when in the position of being a Field Training Officer (FTO). CPL Edwards has trained two (2) new Officers and currently assigned his third consecutive field Officer for three (3) different counties. CPL Edwards serves on the Special Response Team (SRT) where he played a vital role in Hurricane deployments, Congressional Black Caucus Protection, and a military plane crash in Itta Bena.

**Achievements and Accomplishments:**

CPL Edwards has written sixty-two (62) citations, six (6) BUI's, assisted his trainee in an additional ninety-eight (98) citations, assisted two trainees' in four (4) more BUI's, and countless federal citations pending while leads continue to unfold outside of the state of MS. CPL 1 Edwards total ticket count was one hundred and seventy (170) citations. CPL Edwards also gave just over fifty (50) verbal warnings as well.

BUI's — CPL Edwards issued a total of six (6) Boating Under the Influence (BUI) citations and assisted trainee PVT Watson and PVT Marascalco with four (4) more BUI's for a total of ten (10) BUI's during the 2018-2019 boating season. Seven (7) of the ten (10) BUI Cases were found guilty while the other three (3) are pending upon court date. Commercial Fishing - CPL Edwards turned over an un-



**Region 6 Director**  
**Dan Fagan**  
**Continued**

tagged hoop nets case to Arkansas Game and Fish from the MS River in the summer of 2018.

**Contraband Interception** — During a head-lighting detail scheduled in Sunflower County, CPL Edwards conducted a stop on a suspicious vehicle in a field behind the Parchman Prison. CPL Edwards chased a subject down and arrested him attempting to smuggle more than twenty thousand dollars (20,000.00) in contraband into the Parchman Prison. The case is still pending on a Federal level where more subjects are being uncovered in participation.

**Paddle fishing** - In March 2018, CPL Edwards assisted with a Paddlefish case on the MS River in Coahoma County where a subject illegally possessed seven (7) whole Paddlefish. A total of thirteen (13) class one (1) citations were issued. Case pending Federal conviction. In January 2019, CPL Edwards stopped two (2) subjects in Coahoma County with illegally taken Paddlefish eggs. The Case consisted of more than one hundred (100) class one (1) state level citations and is pending Federal decisions with more leads unfolding.

**Duck Hunting** - In January 2019, CPL Edwards busted three (3) subjects jump shooting ducks from a boat at the Pon of Rosedale. Case was turned over to the Feds and found guilty.

**Life-Saving Act**

On December 15, 2018, CPL Edwards assisted SGM Gates with three (3) subjects stranded on Desoto Lake in Coahoma County. After a long tiring day, CPL Edwards received a call, while ending his shift, in regards to a subject that had been stranded for more than six (6) hours

in dark, freezing cold temperatures, and strenuous flood waters on the MS River. CPL Edwards and trainee PVT Watson retrieve their state issued patrol boat and proceed to the scene. CPL Edwards launched his patrol boat and navigated his way into the flood waters of the MS River where he found a subject, whom appeared to be in a hypothermic state in a tree two hundred (200) yards from dry land, CPL Edwards helped the subject into his patrol boat and gave him the clothes off his back. CPL Edwards navigated the boat back to the boat ramp for transport to the Medical Center.

During the follow-up investigation the Bolivar Medical Center made it known the subject would have been deceased within the hour from hypothermia had the Officers not arrived in time.

Submitted by Jason Blaylock

**Georgia**

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Law Enforcement Division, currently has 207 POST-certified Game Wardens with statewide authority and full arrest powers and 27 non-sworn staff members. The primary duties of these Game Wardens are enforcement of all laws and regulations pertaining to hunting, fishing, commercial fishing, environmental violations, and recreational boating, as well as to provide public safety on all our DNR-controlled properties.

The 33rd Georgia Game Warden Academy began on January 6th at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center. During the 23-week academy, the cadets completed Basic Peace Officer Certification as well as the Advanced Game Warden Academy which totaled 935 hours of training. Nineteen Game Warden Cadets graduated from the 33rd Game Warden Academy on June 14th. They are currently in the process of completing the Division's field training pro-

## Region 6 Director Dan Fagan Continued

gram in their assigned counties throughout the state.



During the year, in-service training for all Georgia Game Wardens statewide included NASBLA Seated Battery and a Standardized Field Sobriety refresher, Police Legitimacy and Procedural Justice, De-escalation, Use-of-Force, Firearms training/re-qualification, and Policy/Legislative Updates. Game Wardens also underwent statewide Officer Water Survival Training.

During 2019, the Division's firearms training staff was tasked with researching and selecting a new duty handgun. After testing several models, the decision was made to transition from the current Glock Gen4 model 22, .40 caliber pistol to the Glock model 45, 9mm pistol. The pistol was issued to Game Wardens in the field statewide in early October. Each Game Warden is now issued the Glock Models 45 and 43 9mm handguns, the Daniel Defense DDM4 5.56 Tactical Rifle and the Remington 870 12-gauge shotgun.

The first two Phases of X2 TASER deployment were completed during 2019. Seventy-three Game Wardens were trained and have been issued X2 TASER units for use in the

field. The deployment of TASERs concentrated on field level Game Wardens under the rank of Lieutenant and will continue until all field personnel are trained and equipped.

A committee was also formed to explore and research possible changes to the Game Warden hiring and selection process. The goal of the committee was to recommend changes that would increase the number, quality and diversity of candidates for the position of Game Warden. Recommendations were made to exempt honorably discharged veterans, with a minimum of four years of active duty military service, from the current minimum educational requirement of an Associate Degree or 60 Semester/90 Quarter hours of completed college credit. The committee also recommended a restructuring of the current pre-employment physical agility tests. The recommendations included combining the two  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile runs in to one 1.5-mile run, and the addition of a push-up and sit-up event. The recommendation was made to modify the current swim event by replacing the 50-yard fully clothed swim with a 20-meter swim assessment. This assessment was determined by the Division's water survival instructors to be sufficient in determining the minimum amount entry level ability necessary for a cadet to enter the water survival training program. Cadets will then be required to complete the academy swim and Officer Water Survival training programs.

Last year, the Investigative Unit conducted and managed 285 investigations and calls for assistance from the field and from other agencies (both in and out-of-state). These investigations were comprised of intelligence gathering, buy/bust, and both short and long-term investigations. The focus of many of these investigations included the sale or possession of wildlife and wild animals. Additionally, the Marine Theft Unit received 47 abandoned vessel/stolen boat requests from the public and fielded numerous phone calls related to the

**Region 6 Director**  
**Dan Fagan**  
**Continued**

abandoned vessel process.

The DNR Law Enforcement Division Aviation Support Unit supports all DNR Divisions and other state agencies utilizing two Bell 407 helicopters, one Bell L4 and a fixed wing Quest Kodiak 100 airplane. In 2019, the Aviation Unit flew 588 hours in support of the Division's Game Wardens as they conducted their core mission of protecting the states waterways and woodland areas. This consisted of flying support throughout the hunting season from early fall through early spring. Game Wardens were flown on county surveys looking for baited food plots, duck ponds and illegal shrimping along the Georgia coast. Flight support was also provided for Operation Dry Water, night deer poaching/spotlighting patrols, and searches for missing person and drowning victims across the state.

The Aerial Observer program has proven to be very successful. The additional trained aerial



crewmembers in northern Georgia have expedited the response time for search and rescue (SAR) requests. This past year the Aviation Unit trained to insert a Game Warden from the

aircraft, via rappel technique, into rugged and remote locations. The Aviation Unit conducted five other successful long line rescues and flew 98 hours for search and rescue (SAR), drownings and missing person missions with aerial observers.

The Georgia DNR Law Enforcement Division Special Permits Unit is responsible for permitting captive wildlife and wild animals in addition to some specialty-take permits such as Scientific Collection Permits. The Unit also coordinates inspections on all permitted wild animal facilities throughout the state. This past year, the Special Permits unit issued 2,242 permits, collecting \$68,735 in generated fees.

The Ranger Hotline program, which provides a way for citizens to report anonymously potentially illegal wildlife and other conservation law violations, continues to be successful. If the information leads to an arrest, the tipster receives a cash reward funded by the Georgia Natural Resource Foundation, whose mission is to protect wildlife by increasing public support for wildlife law enforcement.

## **Alabama**

### **Rural Operations Training Program**

As the saying goes, great things take time. I had forgotten exactly how long the idea of a "rural operations" course had been in my head. While digging through some old emails recently, I located a conversation from 2010 between me and a now retired former Chief. In the email, I mentioned the need for a "rural patrol techniques" course. The conversation revolved around the idea of a course that would help our newly hired Conservation Enforcement Officers become proficient in their job skills, without the need to gain that proficiency through trial and error. Simple concepts such as what to look for in following a trail or how to respond to a serious injury in remote areas.

**Region 6 Director**  
**Dan Fagan**  
**Continued**

Oftentimes officers enter service with our agency having little or none of the self-reliant problem solving or woodsman ship skills that were more common a generation ago. Nearly a decade after that initial email conversation, that course exists and has been completed by nearly every law enforcement officer employed by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

The process of gathering the information that would make up the curriculum for the course took several years. We knew that it needed to be predominantly a tracking course with wilderness first aid stressed throughout. For the tracking portion of the course retired Wildlife Biologist Tracy Nelson provided the bulk of the material. Tracy had a superb understanding of the art and science of tracking skills. Equally important, he was good at effectively conveying that knowledge to others. He assisted our instructor team with techniques for teaching man tracking to a wide audience. Over a period of years our instructors refined their techniques by teaching these skills to rural rescue squads across the state. This proved to be a mutually beneficial undertaking. Although routinely called upon to assist in locating lost children or those suffering from Dementia or Alzheimer's disease, many rural rescue squads receive insufficient training. We used the rural ops training to build strong community ties with those working on rescue squads that Game Wardens may have never come into contact with otherwise.

For the Wilderness First Aid portion of the course, Hugh Coffee of Ditch Medicine provided the bulk of our instructor development. Ditch Medicine LLC provides innovative techniques for dealing with immediate medical

needs when professional help isn't close at hand. Fortunately, the instances when our officers become injured on duty or are the target of gunfire are rare. However, when this occurs or when they must render aid to an injured hunter they are dealing with life or death decisions. The expert guidance that Hugh Coffee has given makes us and those that we serve much safer.

The final block of instruction in the Rural Operations Training Program seeks to put it all together. Officers are taught formations that aid in man tracking and give good protection from those that intend to do harm. Officers are taught to track, communicate, fight and render aid as the scenario dictates. In an increasingly violent world these skills are sadly necessary when they wouldn't have been to those who wore the uniform in decades passed.

Throughout the Spring of 2019 five separate Rural Operations courses were conducted across the state training nearly 150 law enforcement officers representing the Alabama Divisions of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, Parks and Lands. Many local law enforcement agencies received the training as well. Such an ambitious task would not have been possible were it not for the public support of our program and close working relationships within the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Several of the sessions were held in Gunterville State Park and Lakepoint State Park. The Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Law Enforcement Section assists the State Parks Division with additional law enforcement staffing during the peak park attendance times over the last several years. In return the State Parks Division has hosted much of our training in their facilities, providing top notch accommodations for our officers. Often the State Parks Law Enforcement officers train alongside other officers from DCNR in the parks



## Region 6 Director Dan Fagan Continued

where they are stationed. Working relationships like this made the scheduling process for training simple. Support from local hunting lodge owners and land managers allowed several sessions in areas where personnel accommodations were scarce. This is true testament to the support our program receives from those in the public.

Feedback from all officers and agencies in attendance has been overwhelmingly positive. Requests for the Rural Operations Training Program have flooded in from across the state and in several instances, from other states. Alabama Game Wardens are and have always

In times of struggling budgets, conducting



been the preeminent subject matter experts in this state when it comes to locating people “off pavement”. The Rural Operations program not only serves to train future generations of our officers but also to give other state and local agencies a resource to turn to when they need training in rural patrol techniques. As game and fish agencies nationwide face the crisis of remaining relevant in a society that is becoming ever increasingly urban, programs such as this serve to be one way that conservation officers and agencies can step outside their stereotypical duties and provide lifesaving assistance and training that reaches far beyond just those in the hunting and fishing public.

such an elaborate training program would be otherwise impossible were it not for the unwavering support of our Alabama Conservation Enforcement Officers Association. When the task of developing the Rural Operations Training Program began, it was understood that the equipment cost would be well beyond what the already taxed Law Enforcement Section budget could provide. The ACEOA stepped in and not only provided that equipment necessary to conduct the program but much more. Every program conducted by the Alabama Department of Conservation serves an outreach function in its own way, this one is unique to law enforcement and were it not for the support of the A.C.E.O.A. it would not exist.

## Region 7 Director Larry Hergenroeder



Greetings NAWEOA members! I am penning this report as we make our way across a snowy Interstate 80 from the Executive Winter Meeting in Pecatonica, Illinois.

In my home state of Pennsylvania, the 2019 hunting seasons brought one for the record books with a record black bear harvest of 4,653 bears. With the implementation of the new muzzleloader, Jr. and Sr. firearms and expanded archery black bear seasons, resident and non-resident hunter's took advantage of the additional time afforded to take one of PA's four big game animals. The previous record was set in 2011 where 4350 bears were taken.

With all that is good, Pennsylvania was also the unfortunate center of an incident involving two teenaged males. One of the two subjects involved, video recorded a senseless assault on an antlered deer that was wounded by the other subject on the new, Saturday regular firearms deer season opener.

Pennsylvania changed the first day of regular firearms deer season to the Saturday after Thanksgiving from the traditional Monday opener to give hunters maximum opportunity to participate in the opening day of the state's most popular big game season. No one could fathom an incident like this would have taken place when the tough decisions to move the opening day were being made by the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Board of Commissioners. The public outcry from this video that went viral on a global stage consumed several weeks of man and K-9 power investigating the incident. The Jefferson County District At-

torney eagerly assisted with the investigation and the pending prosecution of the two subjects identified and charged in the aggravated animal cruelty case. Once the subjects deviated from the legal hunting methods of take allowed by PA Game Law Pa.C.S. Title 34, the crime progressed to the level found in the Animal Cruelty Laws of Pa.C.S. Title 18 Crimes Code. The collection of evidence on scene to social media platforms, interviews and cellular phone warrants for forensic analysis, was a daunting task as those that have investigated social media cases know all too well. Later this year, justice will be served and hopefully this prosecution deters anyone else from committing this same type of act against wildlife we Game Wardens are sworn to protect.

The following is reported from the Jurisdictional Representatives of Region 7.

### **JRep Jackie Peterson from the Rhode Island Environmental Police / Department of Environmental Management reports:**

The Rhode Island Environmental Police had several promotions this year including; Captain Daniel White, Captain Steven Criscione, Lieutenant Francis Either and Lieutenant Michael Schipritt with more promotions to follow in the coming months. Captain Jack McIlmail retired this year after many years of dedicated service to the department. Three trainees will be added to the Marine Division.

Rhode Island continues to be a fishing and boating destination, as well as, an active commercial fishing port. Several notable fisheries and hunting cases were made this year. The department has started to utilize social media to educate and inform the public about regulations and cases of interest. The use of this platform has led to renewed public interest and several features by local news and media outlets.

One case of note was an effort in conjunction



**Region 7 Director**  
**Larry Hergenroeder**  
**Continued**

with Massachusetts Environmental Police and the US Coast Guard to identify several suspects that were commercial fishing illegally for striped bass in Rhode Island and Federal waters. The illegally caught fish were then being transported to Massachusetts for sale. After many hours of surveillance officers arrested two suspects at one of their residences as they unloaded 38 striped bass from their boat and into coolers. The striped bass seized had a total weight over 1,000 lbs. with an estimated dock side value of approximately \$6,000. The story of the arrest was posted on the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Facebook page where it went viral, reaching 115,000 people (11% of RI population) within 24-hours. The story also became one of the Top 10 most read stories of 2019 in the Providence Journal. The Rhode Island Environmental Police will continue to generate public interest in our work using social media to garner public support for changes to legislation and more positive outcomes in the courts.

The Rhode Island Environmental Police Officer's Association will have their annual sporting clay shoot on April 25, 2020 at the Peace Dale Shooting Preserve.

**JRep Anne Quirk from the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife reports:**

The New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife hired six Conservation Officer Recruits in February, bringing the Bureau of Law Enforcement's sworn staff to fifty-one, the fullest the ranks have been in some time. Joining the Marine Region are Colby Capri and Ryan Szelc. Nicholas DellaVella signed on for the Northern Region. Michael Bickerton will work in the state's Central Region. Jonathan Ma-

linski and Dane Bahrle will work in the Southern Region, which had the lowest staffing of all the regions. By the time this newsletter is out the recruits will be in Gloucester County Police Academy. They may have a slight advantage over their municipal counterparts come range exercises, having had the benefit of two weeks of intensive firearms training from retired Captain Mike Boyle.

In other personnel actions, Bryan Mascio received a promotion to Lieutenant of District 3 in the Central Region in January.

On the last day of the legislative session, the New Jersey House and Senate passed a bill that the NJ Conservation Officers' Association had been following the progress of for over a year. Governor Murphy signed into law the addition of "Police" to the title of Conservation Officer. Though our officers have had full police powers for several decades, we have continued to encounter members of the public, outside the usual constituent groups of hunters and anglers, who challenge our authority in the field based on a lack of familiarity with our function and status. We are now Conservation Police Officers by title. Hopefully this change, with continuing outreach efforts, will improve the general public's understanding of our mission and authority.

The NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife is hosting the International Hunter Education Association's HRSI Academy at the end of March. The NJCOA is organizing the welcome dinner for the students and instructors on the first night. A genuine Garden State surf and turf experience is on tap.

New Jersey will also be co-hosting the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies conference in April, which is new territory for us all. NJDFW staff has been busy planning presentations on wildlife topics under their expertise, while the Bureau of Law Enforce-

**Region 7 Director  
Larry Hergenroeder  
Continued**

ment's Honor Guard is practicing the presentation of the colors for the opening ceremony. We extend a welcome to the wildlife enforcement officers who will be joining us 'Down the Shore' this spring.

**JRep Kris MacCabe from Maine Warden Service/Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife reports:**

**Retirement of Colonel Joel Wilkinson:**

The Maine Warden Service would first like to congratulate Colonel Joel Wilkinson on his retirement from the Agency. Colonel started wearing a game warden uniform in 1992 when he was sworn in at age 19 as a Deputy Game Warden. Colonel Wilkinson started his Law Enforcement career working as a Deputy Warden and was hired as a reserve officer at the Gorham Police Department and the Oxford County Sheriff's Department. When he was 20, he was hired by the Windham Police Department as a full-time patrolman and worked for them for nearly 2 years before being fortunate enough to be hired by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife as a Maine Game Warden. Colonel Wilkinson stated, "Serving as a Maine Game Warden for the State of Maine was my lifelong childhood dream."

Prior to landing at the Main Office in Augusta in 2006, Colonel Wilkinson was a District Warden, Investigator, Sergeant, Captain, Acting Major, Acting Commissioner and finally Colonel. Colonel Wilkinson served under three separate Governors and administrations representing the Maine Warden Service and

the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Colonel Wilkinson left with this closing note "You all work for the very best fish and wildlife agency in the country and should be proud of the collective work this department provides. Take care of your health, your families and remember to plan for the future as it will be here before you know it. I will see you all out there in woods and waters and will be forever and fiercely loyal to this department and to all of you that risk your bodies each and every day to save people's lives and apprehend those who steal our precious natural resources."

**Lieutenant Dan Scott Promoted to Colonel of the Maine Warden Service:**

In November of 2019 Acting Colonel Dan Scott was sworn in as Colonel of the Maine Warden Service by Governor Janet Mills.

Colonel Scott, a game warden for over 22 years, was most recently the lieutenant of Division C in Bangor. As lieutenant, he supervised 20 game warden in an area that covered Washington, Hancock and Penobscot Counties. Prior to that Scott was a Game Warden Captain for four years, after being promoted from his role as investigator. He also served as a district game warden in Bangor area for nine years.

Colonel Scott stated "I am honored and humbled for the opportunity to lead the Maine Warden Service and am thankful for confidence Governor Mills and Commissioner Camuso have placed in me. There are upcoming challenges facing all law enforcement agencies, including the Maine Warden Service, and I look forward to leading the Maine Warden Service to meet these challenges."



**Region 7 Director  
Larry Hergenroeder  
Continued**

Commissioner Judy Camuso stated "As the Maine Warden Service enters its 140<sup>th</sup> year, I am excited at the opportunities that lie ahead for the agency and the warden service. Dan's experience, enthusiasm, and leadership will be invaluable not only to the warden service, but to the state as well."

**Maine Game Warden Retirements:**

The Maine Warden Service would also like to take a chance to thank the following for their dedicated service to the State of Maine and hope they all have a great retirement.

**Game Warden Jim Fahey- Bangor District**

Warden Jim Fahey has retired after 25 years of dedicated service to the people and natural resources of the state of Maine. Jim started his journey with warden service as a night-time dispatcher at the old Bangor office in 1990. He was hired as a deputy in 1992 and then as a fulltime warden in 1994.

Fahey spent the first half of his career in Aroostook County. He started in Caribou for 10 months and then onto the Masardis district for another year and a half. Fahey finally settled in Portage Lake for more than 9 years, patrolling remote regions of the North Maine Woods and the Fish River Lake Region. Fahey then moved south to Bangor to reconnect with his roots spending his days in Southern Penobscot County and on the many corners of the Penobscot River.

For several years Fahey has served as the war-

den service representative on the Guide's Board. He plans to continue his affiliation with the guiding industry, only now the view will be from the stern of a canoe or within earshot of a baying beagle with his wife Shelley and two sons, James and Scott by his side.

In 2015 Warden Fahey was named Game Warden of the Year in the state of Maine. Fahey said that during his storied career, he had the opportunity to learn from some of the top wardens in the state. Fahey stated that when one member of the family is a game warden, they all are, and admitted that it is not always an easy life. Wardens never really know when they may receive a call regarding another incident. A call can come any time of day, even during the middle of the night or on a major holiday.

We wish Fahey a happy retirement and continued success. In 2015 Fahey said it best citing a line from his favorite movie "Outlaw of Josey Wales" from 1976 "endeavor to persevere."

**Game Warden Bayley Grant- Jonesport District**

Warden Grant retired from the Maine Warden Service on Monday 30 December 2019.

Bayley began his affiliation with Maine Warden Service as a deputy in 1983 and was hired full-time in 1992. Since that time, Bayley has faithfully served the people of Hancock and Washington Counties, focusing his efforts on protecting the fish and wildlife resources of Down east Maine. On a given day Bayley could have been found patrolling the Pleasant River in his square stern canoe or possibly the expanse of blueberry barrens keeping the fishermen, hunters and trappers of the Centerville region honest.

**Region 7 Director  
Larry Hergenroeder  
Continued**

Bayley traveled to the storehouse last Monday to turn in his gear and truck. He was accompanied by his wife Becky who provided him a ride back home.

A fitting culmination to his career. After all, Becky provided him his original ride to the storehouse more than 28 years ago to pick up his first truck.

Considering his excellent hard work and great dedication to the Maine Warden Service, we wish Bayley a relaxing, healthy retirement as he enters this new chapter in his life.

**Maine Warden Service New Hires:**

The Maine Warden Service continues the hiring process hiring 5 new Game Wardens this past year. The Maine Warden Service is continuing to recruit qualified applicants. Three of the most recent hires are attending the current Basic Law Enforcement Training Academy and will graduate in the Spring of 2020. All five new members of the Maine Warden Service will then participate in the Advanced Warden School before continuing Field Training throughout the entire State. The following are the newest members of the Maine Warden Service.

Cory Cepelak, Jr.  
Marc D'Elia  
Nicholas Johnson  
Nicholas Mangino  
Steven Milton

**JRep Rick Finnegan from the Pennsylvania Game Commission / COPA reports:**

State Game Warden Brad Kreider & Land Management Group Supervisor Phil Kasper have been selected as the National Wild Turkey Federation Officers of the Year and are invited to the NWTf National Conference in Nashville, TN

State Game Warden William "Bill" Brehun was selected as the Shikar-Safari Officer of the Year. SGW Brehun's excels in every aspect of the profession earning him the much deserved honor. The Pennsylvania Game Commission sponsors the Shikar-Safari award winner to attend the NAWEOA Conference annually.

State Game Warden Jason Amory has been selected as the NECLECA Officer of the Year. SGW Amory's dedication to law enforcement with the emphasis on major cases involving the unlawful taking of big game in the Commonwealth has earned him the much deserved honor. SGW Amory will be recognized at the annual NECLECA conference later this year.

The PGC is continuing to implement the P25 radio systems that replaced the outdated low band radio system that was used for decades. This major change has been instrumental in communication capabilities and officer safety. The agency also has been updating new external body armor for its wardens, outfitting each warden with the latest in safety technology.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission is moving to a central dispatch center at the Harrisburg headquarters. The current model has a dispatch center at each of the six regional field offices. The new structure will allow for 24/7 staffing and better service to the public.

**Region 7 Director  
Larry Hergenroeder  
Continued**

A statewide Deputy State Game Warden training conference was to be held on March 21<sup>st</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> in Lewisburg, PA. The Pennsylvania Game Commission's deputy program has been in place for 117 years and continues to be a valuable asset to the agency, wildlife and hunters. The PGC Executive Office recognizes their commitment and held the conference in appreciation for their service. There were over 1,500 deputies in the 1970's and now the agency operates with less than 300 statewide. The 2020 deputy class with 28 candidates reported for training at the Ross Leffler School of Conservation March 7<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup>. Candidates that successfully completed the training will have a final written exam to pass before being commissioned as officers this summer. A year long probationary period with an 80 hour ride along mandate will also have to be completed in the probationary year. Unfortunately, due to the Corona Virus protocols enacted by Governor Wolfe the conference was cancelled.

Ross Leffler School of Conservation 32<sup>nd</sup> PGC State Game Warden Cadet Class started on March 29, 2020. Conditional employment had been offered to 37 cadets enrolled in the class. An orientation / open house was offered to the families of the cadets on March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The application period opened to apply for the civil service test for the PGC SGW 33<sup>rd</sup> cadet class which is scheduled to start soon after the graduation of the 32<sup>nd</sup> class. Back-to back classes are scheduled as there are 50 vacancies anticipated statewide by the graduation of the 32<sup>nd</sup> class.

Three new Special Investigator / K-9 officer positions were offered in January. The interviews for candidates were held in mid-March for the positions that were available in the three southern regions of the Commonwealth. Successful applicant's will be required to live in a certain area of the region they are selected for and be responsible for an area encompassing ten counties. The K-9 training will begin immediately as the lab puppies will be acquired by the first week of May.

Jason DeCoskey has been promoted to Director of the Bureau of Wildlife Protection and Mark Rutkowski has been promoted to the Assistant Director position.

**JRep Chad Lauer from the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission/COPA reports:**

2020 is off to a promising start, and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's Bureau of Law Enforcement recently promoted 7 field officers to sergeant and recognized the following Waterways Conservation Officers for their work in Conservation Law Enforcement.

WCO Daniel Wilson received the Greiner Award for his efforts in detecting environmental crimes, his grassroots work with NGOs, and other conservation-oriented organizations to subdue environmental pollution and disturbances.

WCO Sean Sauserman received the Top Gun Award for his efforts in BUI education, detection, and prevention.

WCO Walter Buckman received the PFBC's NECLECA Officer of the Year Award for his overall efforts on a day to day basis.

The Bureau is also pleased to provide updates

**Region 7 Director**  
**Larry Hergenroeder**  
**Continued**

on the 22nd Class of Waterways Conservation Officers currently enrolled in the H.R. Stackhouse School of Fisheries Conservation and Watercraft Safety. 19 Trainees have graduated from the ACT 120 program in December and are currently preparing for field training in the spring, and anxiously awaiting graduation in July.

**JRep Joshua Zientek from Ohio DNR Division of Wildlife reports:**

Shortly after cadets from the 29th Wildlife Officer Cadet Training Academy graduated in March of 2019, preparations were underway to hire our next group for the 30th academy—our first “back to back” hiring and academy programs in many years. Recruiting and the job posting got underway in earnest and we continued to expand our use of social media in getting the word out about our cadet positions. Regular posts on the agencies social media pages as well as the purchase of Facebook “advertising” showed considerable promise.

A record 931 applications were received in which a large percentage of the applicants noted they learned of the positions through social media or our agency website, particularly having news shared with them from friends, relatives, or even our own agency staff. We also maintained a recruiting database of over 1,000 people who are interested in the wildlife officer cadet career and wished to be notified of future opportunities and established relationships with dozens of colleges, universities, and career/technical schools in Ohio and outside the state, where the cadet opportunity was advertised. Additionally, dozens more schools were contacted through the “Handshake” sys-

tem that educational institutions use to post job and career events. Our new cadets started training in February and will be in the field by early September to start their field training program. They will fill all vacant assignments we currently have – a first for many years. We hope to continue to learn from and build on the recruiting and job posting success we have enjoyed recently. It has also become clear that we must embrace applicants with diverse outdoor interests and interests in service and conservation, as opposed to emphasizing strong “traditional” backgrounds or interests in hunting and fishing backgrounds. Hiring and training the best applicants who possess the drive and attitude for success is now at the forefront.

**Officer Awards:**

Wildlife Officer Supervisor/District Manager Scott Angelo - Shikar Safari Wildlife Officer of the Year from Ohio

Wildlife Officer Jarod Abele - Wildlife Officer of the Year from the Ohio Bowhunter's Association

Wildlife Officer Gus Kiebel - Wildlife Officer of the Year from the National Wild Turkey Federation

Investigator Travis Abele - Fraternal Order of Police, Wildlife Officers Lodge 143 Officer of the Year

Wildlife Officer Adam Smith - NAWEOA Lifesaving Award

**JRep Robert Johnson from New York ECON Police reports:**

New York's ENCON Police, as well as most other agencies, is busy doing their part in combating the novel Coronavirus (“COVID-19”). Members of the Incident Support Team (“IST”) have been working around-the-clock assisting factions of New York State government with crisis management. Members of the sampling team who are trained to properly fit



**Region 7 Director**  
**Larry Hergenroeder**  
**Continued**

respirators to users have been fit-testing Department of Health (“DOH”) doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals. Non-essential civilian staff are directed to work remotely starting March 17th. Governor Andrew Cuomo is ordering restaurants and bars to close and move to take-out services only. Additional orders call for theaters, gyms, and casinos to temporarily close and gatherings of people to be limited to 50 people. Most universities are conducting remote studies, schools are closed, and many counties have declared a state of emergency.

In February graduates of 22nd Basic School for Uniformed Officers finished their field training and were released to work without their Field Training Officer (“FTO”). Successful completion of the FTO process also allowed for many Environmental Conservation Officers (“ECO”) to transfer sectors based on seniority.

NYCOA Future of the Division Award - Presented to a Member with five or fewer year's total time in service with the Division who has done an outstanding job in their area of responsibility.

**WINNER: ECO Lucas Palmateer Region 3**

The other nominees for this award included ECO Robert McCabe from Region 1, ECO Josh Harvey from Region 2, ECO Dustin Osborne from Region 4, ECO Max Nicols from Region 5, ECO Spencer Noyes from Region 6, ECO Andrew Kostuk from Region 7 and ECO Tony Drahms from Region 8.

NYS Rifle & Pistol Association Award - Presented to a Member who promotes and person-

ally participates in marksmanship competitions and one who encourages such participation by New York's youth.

**Winner: ECO Ike Bobseine Region 1**

The other nominees for this award included ECO Charles Eyler from Region 3, and ECO Ricardo Grisolini from Region 7.

Shikar – Safari Award - Presented to the Member who has done an outstanding job in the area of wildlife law enforcement.

**Winner: ECO Darryl Lucas Region 6**

The other nominees for this award included ECO Kyle Bevis from Region 1, ECO Josh Harvey from Region 2, ECO Adam Johnson from Region 3, ECO Steve Shaw from Region 5, Lt. Kenric Warner from Region 7, ECO Vern Fonda from Region 8 and ECO Tim Machnica from Region 9.

Northeast Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs Association Award - Presented to the Member who has done an outstanding job in his or her areas of responsibility.

**Winner: ECO Tim Machnica Region 9**

The other nominees for this award included ECO Kyle Bevis from Region 1, ECO Max Woyton from Region 2, ECO Ricky Wood from Region 3, ECO Shane Manns from Region 5, ECO Osman Eisenberg from Region 7, and ECO Ron Gross from Region 8.

Division of Law Enforcement Lifesaving Award - Presented to the Member or members whose extraordinary actions saved, or attempted to save, the life of a fellow officer or member of the public.

**Winners: ECOs Charles Eyler and Craig Tompkins Region 3**

## NAWEOA Awards

N.A.W.E.O.A. believes deeply in recognizing the commitment of the wildlife law enforcement professional. The awards recognize people and agencies that have performed outstanding work, exemplary service to the public, or have contributed to wildlife law enforcement in other ways. Look at the award categories below and consider nominating your fellow officers for accomplishments. Submitting an award is easy. Go to [NAWEOA.org](http://NAWEOA.org) and sign in to the webpage. If you do not have an account register for one.

In the main menu under “**Awards**”, is “**Award Application**”. Click that link after you are signed in and you will be taken to the online Award Application.

### **N.A.W.E.O.A. OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARD**

1. Must be a fully certified conservation officer in the state, province, territory, or country in which employed.
2. Must be a full time field officer, up to and including first line supervisors from the field in the last calendar year.
3. Both nominee and person submitting nomination must be a member of NAWEOA.
4. An officer whose character is beyond reproach.
5. An officer who is competent, knowledgeable and capable.
6. An officer who promotes wildlife law enforcement.
7. An officer who demonstrates professionalism in every facet of life.
8. The person submitting the nomination shall provide background material when submitting the nomination. Background material shall be in written narrative format, not exceeding 5 pages. Other supportive articles, certificates, awards, media coverage, etc. may be included with the nomination.
9. All nominations must be received by the Vice President of NAWEOA not later than April 1st each year. The successful officer will be notified by April 15th..

### **NAWEOA TORCH AWARD**

- Presented annually to an officer from each region, to encourage the professional development of recently appointed officers. The selection criteria are as follows:
- Both nominating and nominated officers must be regular NAWEOA members.
- Nominated officer must not have worked as a wildlife enforcement officer more than five years.
- Must have demonstrated a genuine desire to protect the resource and develop professionally.
- Must demonstrate exceptional ability and initiative in the performance of his or her duties, including public education.
- Must be respected by his/her peers and the general public.
- Nominations must be received by April 1st each year. Winners will be notified by April 15th.
- Awards will be presented at annual conference; attendance encouraged but not mandatory.

### **OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD**

Anyone who is eligible for regular or deputy membership may be nominated for this award. It is given for outstanding achievement or service in the field of Wildlife Law Enforcement, to NAWEOA executive or outgoing NAWEOA Directors. (Amended Winter 2003, West Palm Beach)

### **CERTIFICATE OF RETIREMENT**

Anyone who is eligible for regular or deputy membership may be nominated for this award. It is given to honor years of service to the profession. This award is distributed on behalf of NAWEOA by regional reps and is not subject to executive review.

### **AWARD OF VALOUR**

Anyone who is eligible for regular or deputy membership may be nominated for this award. It is given to the officer who performs a heroic act, or risks or receives serious injury, in the line of duty in an attempt to protect him\herself or a member of the public from a dangerous situation or circumstance. It infers bravery in the face of adversity.

### **LIFESAVING AWARD**

Anyone who is eligible to be a regular or deputy member of the association or anyone who is a member of the association may be nominated for this award. It is given for any act at any time which saves the life of another person. (Amended Winter 2003, West Palm Beach)

### **CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION**

Anyone who in any way is helpful to the association and/or it's members may be nominated for this award. This includes, but is not limited to speakers, conference or workshop hosts, fundraisers, committee or special project members, citizens or politicians.

### **HONOURARY LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP**

Anyone who has performed an extraordinary service to the association over a number of years may be nominated for this award. It is one of our most prestigious awards and may only be given in rare circumstances. Anyone who is eligible for regular membership in the association who receives this award shall maintain their voting privileges within the association.

### **K-9 AND HANDLER "LOYAL PARTNER AWARD"**

1. Must be a fully certified conservation officer in the state, province, territory, or country in which employed.
2. Must be a full-time field officer, up to and including first line supervisors from the field in the last calendar year.
3. Both nominee and person submitting nomination must be a regular member of NAWEOA.
4. Three years minimum experience and active as a K-9 handler at time of nomination.
5. All nominations must be received by the Vice President of NAWEOA not later than April 1st each year. The successful officer will be notified by April 15th.
6. Both K-9 and handler must demonstrate exceptional ability and initiative in the performance of his or her duties.
7. Award will be presented at annual conference; attendance encouraged but not mandatory.



# **NAWEOA**