

STAFF SUMMARY FOR DECEMBER 6-7, 2017

15. DEPARTMENT INFORMATIONAL ITEMS – NON-MARINE**Today's Item****Information** **Action**

This is a standing agenda item to receive and discuss informational updates from DFW that are non-marine in nature:

- (A) Director's Report
- (B) Wildlife and Fisheries Division, and Ecosystem Conservation Division
- (C) Law Enforcement Division
- (D) Other

Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)**Background**

Verbal reports are expected at the meeting for items (A) through (D).

- (C) DFW's Law Enforcement Division has moved from a monthly report to a quarterly report; the Jul through Sep report is included as Exhibit C1.

Significant Public Comments (N/A)**Recommendation (N/A)****Exhibits**

- C1. [DFW LED third quarter report \(Jul-Sep 2017\)](#)

Motion/Direction (N/A)

California Department of Fish and Wildlife Law Enforcement Division Quarterly Report 3rd Quarter 2017

The majority of California's outdoors, hunting, and fishing communities are law-abiding citizens. A small percentage are not. From poaching and pollution investigations, to handling calls about problem wildlife, responding to assist allied law enforcement agencies, other general law enforcement and more, here is a snapshot of Wildlife Officers and their stories from July to September 2017.



Deputy French Memorial: Hundreds of officers from around the state including several from CDFW turnout to pay respects and honor the life of Sacramento County Sheriff's Deputy Robert French, 52. French was struck by gunfire during a gun battle at hotel, responding to reports of shots fired. He was fatally wounded by an armed, fleeing gunman as a bullet passed through his shoulder and hit his heart. French was a 21-year veteran of the department. California wildlife officers were there to honor his service and his family.

End of Watch: August 30, 2017

Wildlife officers' continued effort and pursuit paid off. Shawn Eugene Hof, Jr. the suspect wanted for attempted murder of a wildlife officer turned himself in after nearly one year on the run. A CDFW wildlife officer was patrolling in Humboldt County. The officer saw a pickup truck with multiple occupants using spotlights. The officer attempted an enforcement stop of the truck when the driver sped away. A pursuit ensued and a person in the rear of the truck, believed to be Hof, began shooting at the wildlife officer during the attempt to get away. The suspects crashed their vehicle into a tree before fleeing on foot into the woods, where they escaped.



In the preliminary hearing for Hof, he was held to answer on several felony charges including attempted murder of a peace officer.

Wildlife officers assigned to a specialized enforcement team targeting unlawful public land cultivation sites were conducting an eradication operation when one officer encountered an armed suspect. The officer, perceiving the suspect as an eminent threat, fired his duty weapon at the suspect striking the suspect. The suspect was taken into custody and transported to a nearby medical facility where he received treatment for non-life threatening injuries before being taken to jail.

Wildlife officers continuing their commitment to assisting those in need while serving their communities participated in the annual "Shop with a Cop – Back to School" program. Each officer escorted one child who received \$200.00 to purchase new clothing and school supplies. The event provided aid to approximately 20 children who were escorted by local law enforcement agencies for this unique shopping experience.



A **wildlife officer**, working with just a small tip of hearsay information from a conversation overheard at a restaurant combined with a suspect's license plate number, began compiling evidence, conducting surveillance and building a poaching case. The officer utilized electronic data and digital media to garner evidence showing the suspect, a previously convicted felon (prohibited from possessing firearms), amassed an array of firearms including assault style rifles, which ultimately led to the service of a search warrant. During the warrant service officers found a recently poached doe deer, over-possession limits of fish, hunting tag and fishing report card violations as well as two AR-15 style rifles (both without serial numbers), a Glock .45 with new production high capacity magazine, a 12 gauge shotgun, as well as hundreds, possibly thousands of ammunition rounds. The suspect was arrested and booked into jail for the violations.



A **wildlife officer** conducted night patrol at a lake known for producing crappie and sunfish limits. He observed two subjects on a small boat not far from shore shining a flood lamp into the water to attract bait-fish while "jigging" with a rod in each hand. The officer observed the suspects catch and maintain possession of numerous crappie on their boat. The subjects eventually returned to the boat launch where they were greeted by the officer for an inspection of their catch. The officer found the suspects in



possession of total of 84 crappie/bluegill, 34 over their legal limit. Both suspects were cited and the over limit of fish was seized.

A **wildlife officer** was on patrol in a high mountain trout stream area when she came across a subject in a pickup with fishing equipment in the back. The subject repeatedly stated he had not been fishing nor did he possess any fish. Upon further inspection, the officer located a dip net and a hidden bag of 76 freshly caught and gutted trout. Upon questioning, the subject stated he had used a dip net to take all 76 native trout out of a nearby creek. The subject was cited for the over limit of trout and the illegal method of take, along with an

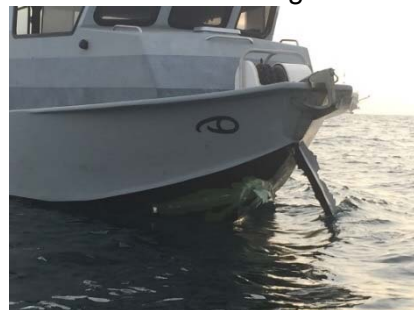


enhancement charge for possession of more than 15x the daily bag limit. The fish and net were seized as evidence.

Wildlife officers arrested four suspects for suspicion of unlawful commercialization and trafficking of abalone. The arrests were preceded by a five-month investigation of the suspects, some of whom have been previously cited and/or convicted of similar violations. The investigation revealed that the extended group of people were harvesting abalone and allegedly selling it on the black market. The uncovered evidence suggests various poaching crimes among the group, including unlawful sale of sport caught abalone, take of abalone for personal profit, commercial possession of sport caught abalone, exceeding the seasonal limit of abalone and falsification of abalone tags. In addition to dive gear and falsified abalone cards, officers seized over \$47,000 and statements from buyers as to prices paid for each abalone.



Wildlife officers assigned to a long-range patrol vessel were on routine patrol when they heard an emergency distress call came over a marine radio frequency. The caller requested Harbor Patrol assistance to their vessel's "unknown" location because they hit a "buoy" and were taking on water. The CDFW crew continued to monitor the radio traffic between the distressed vessel and US Coast Guard, while preparing the smaller skiff for emergency launch with life-saving equipment and water rescue items. The crew discovered the vessel in distress hit a metal mooring buoy off an oil platform and were on-scene with active response within 15 minutes of the initial distress call. CDFW officers assessed all four persons on board for injuries and were able to stabilize the vessel from further sinking. Vessel Assist responded and towed the distressed vessel back to their homeport.



Wildlife officers, while on vessel patrol for lobster, received information and responded to an unconscious diver at a nearby harbor. The officers immediately started CPR and began transport to a dive chamber. The officers maintained CPR duties and administered oxygen while in transit and up until the diver was moved into the chamber. Despite their efforts, the diver did not recover consciousness.

A **wildlife officer** was patrolling along a rural railroad track in a secluded area surrounded by vast private ranches. He stepped out of his patrol vehicle to inspect a road washout. As he stood in the silence, he heard the faint sound of a person calling for help. Unsure where the voice was coming from and with darkness setting in, he radioed additional officers to respond and assist as he began searching. He located the injured male subject lying in a creek bottom two-thirds submerged in the water, barely conscious, and unable to move. The officer assured the victim while awaiting for emergency medical response. Due to the rough terrain, fire and ambulance could not drive into the area. As a solution crews and equipment were loaded into wildlife officer off-road capable patrol trucks for transport. The subject was placed on a backboard then transported on the rear of the patrol truck to the awaiting ambulance.



Officers eventually learned from the subject the he was walking along the creek when he attempted to jump across the small water. As he jumped he struck his head on a low-lying branch which knocked him onto his back causing him to hit the back of his head and neck on the ground, fracturing three vertebrae, and paralyzing him. The man was laying calling for help for hours before the wildlife officer arrived in the area by chance. It is with near certainty the man would not have been found otherwise and would likely not have survived.

A **wildlife officer** responded to a report of a mountain lion crashing through an apartment window landing upon a sleeping woman in the bed below. The woman sustained superficial scrapes on the leg, which she believed came from the window glass.



Surveillance video showed the lion running across the main street in town narrowly missing being struck by a pickup truck before crashing into the closed glass front doors of a bowling alley, then running into the parking lot of the neighboring apartment complex where it jumped through the window. The lion was likely disoriented from the unfamiliar urban environment.

The woman remained calm and opened the back door of her apartment to let the mountain lion out. Physical evidence such as hair, blood, and prints were collected from the scene. Subsequent positive DNA results as well as security camera footage ultimately confirmed the incident, with video showing the mountain lion was in the apartment for almost 45 seconds.

The lion was last seen running toward riparian habitat along the river fifty yards away. Wildlife officers remained in the area searching but never located it.

Wildlife officers responded to a call regarding two bears that had wandered into the city. The sow and cub were over a mile from suitable habitat and had to cross several main thoroughfares to get to so far into urban. Both bears had climbed high into a large tree, so the Fire Department was called to assist with getting the bears out of the tree. The Fire Department sprayed the tree with water to encourage the bears to climb down. The sow climbed down from the tree allowing opportunity for a wildlife officer to successfully dart and tranquilize it. The cub

climbed out of the tree shortly after to accompany its mother. The cub was also tranquilized once it was out of the tree. Both bears were moved back to the nearby National Forest and released into more suitable habitat.

Wildlife officers responded to a beach house regarding a loitering bear. The officers arrived and saw the bear exhibited unusual “seizure-like” behavior. It did not appear threatening or dangerous, but it did not appear healthy. Officers monitored the bear, which remained in the same location for over twelve hours. The next morning, wildlife officers and a biologist tranquilized the lethargic, older male bear. A wildlife veterinarian examined the ten year old bear and determined it had significant health issues, concluding its survival was unlikely if returned to the wild. CDFW law enforcement and wildlife management divisions agreed with the doctor’s assessment. The bear was euthanized due to its poor health and condition. The bear was necropsied and was later determined to have a brain tumor that was causing the peculiar behavior.



CDFW’s new enhanced penalties for trophy poaching law saw its first case application, reflecting serious penalties for the violator. The suspect was sentenced to two years probation with a restriction from hunting during that time and ordered to pay \$5,150 in fines and penalties as well as ordered to take hunter education.

The case began months prior when wildlife officers, acting upon an anonymous CalTIP (Californians Turn in Poacher and Polluters), began an investigation. The investigation revealed the suspect unlawfully killed a trophy class “buck” deer in a private property orchard without permission. Additionally the suspect did not possess the required deer tag at the time of the killing. Officers recovered photographic evidence, deer antlers, numerous packages of meat related to the crime.

Court Dispositions

A **wildlife officer** testified in court for a Gaper clam over limit case involving 54 total clams for two suspects. The men were ordered to pay \$4,800.00 for taking 34 clams in excess of the limit.

A **wildlife officer** attended court for a case involving 490 undersize Pismo clams. The subject plead no contest and was ordered to pay \$2,500.00.

A **wildlife officer**, through active communication and cooperation with our western states allies, determined that a suspect was claiming dual residency in California and Montana. The suspect appeared in court in Montana and plead guilty to falsely claiming residency in both states and was subsequently banned from all hunting, fishing, and trapping for 18 months and ordered to pay \$1,600.00.

A **wildlife officer** who cited a suspect for taking deer over a baited area, learned that the conviction resulted in the suspect receiving a one year no hunting restriction and the order to pay \$4,500.00.

A **wildlife officer** learned that a suspect who he previously cited for spotlighting, taking deer without a tag, and other violations was recently convicted. The suspect received 200 hours community service, three years probation, 18 months prohibition from hunting, as well as being ordered to take a hunter safety course and pay \$2945.00.

A **wildlife officer** learned that a suspect in an elk poaching case he investigated received a three month jail sentence, three years searchable probation, three years loss of hunting privileges, and was ordered to forfeit the involved firearms and pay \$19,000.00.

Wildlife officers who cited a commercial lobster fisherman last year for taking undersized lobster learned that the suspect plead guilty this month for the unlawful possession and received one year probation and was ordered to pay \$4,000.00.