

DATE: December 2, 2003
TO: Secretary Scott Hassett
FROM: Randy Stark, Chief Warden
SUBJECT: 2003 Statewide Regular Deer Season Report

Hunter/User Conflicts

SOUTHEAST REGION

Complaints of trespassing and hunting too close to houses continue to be a problem in the Region. Warden Jason Roberts identified the practice of dumped carcasses of butchered deer on the side of the road creating negative impressions of hunters among the non-hunting public. In the Kettle Moraine State Forest, non-hunting activities continue to constitute a safety issue. On the nice days, hikers, bikers, and runners on the trails have no idea hunting season is open and do not typically dress with blaze orange. This increases the potential for accidents to take place.

Hunters in the Region need to contend with ever increasing development. Urban sprawl compounded by low interest rates is resulting in more and more houses being built in the countryside. Many of the homes are being constructed in the middle of the remaining wood lots in the area. Warden Rick Reed made a poignant observation: "The hunters in these areas are faced with a different landscape every year." There is less and less private land available for hunters each year.

In Waukesha County Warden Kyle Drake had one group of hunters track a wounded deer from their property through a subdivision to a swampy area through another subdivision into another chunk of swamp. The hunters did the right thing and talked to all the landowners before they entered private property. At one point the deer walked between a shed and a house at a distance of 20 feet from the house. Such is hunting in Waukesha County.

WEST CENTRAL REGION

Access to private land continues to become more of an issue every year. There are very few areas remaining where neighbors get together and cooperatively drive their adjoining properties. In Buffalo County, it appears that the competitive nature of the quest for the biggest buck continues to result in neighbors not allowing the tracking and retrieval of wounded deer on their hunting land.

The Red Cedar and Chippewa River Bike trails are open to public hunting. Many hunters frequent the bike trail and sit on the benches and hunt. If the weather is nice, bike trail users are using the trail also. This creates an unsafe environment. The bike trail users don't know to wear blaze orange and seem surprised to see hunters.

NORTHERN REGION

The vast majority of conflicts seem to be between those hunters utilizing bait and those who don't, especially on public lands where those who bait seem to think it entitles them to lay

claim to an area for their private use. There was only one report of a snowmobiler having a conflict with an individual hunting from a snowmobile trail.

Warden Ron Nerva reports many hunter conflicts with baited areas and the hunters then running out others because they feel it is their spot. This will continue on public land with the baiting.

Warden Dan Michels reported that several hunters complained that they were harassed or chased out of certain areas on public land where other hunters had established bait piles and didn't want anyone else hunting around them.

Warden Mark DiSalvo reported user conflicts between hunters on public property and public property boarding private property. Baiting was the main cause of the conflicts because of territorial issues. On the public property, the hunters claim the bait as "THEIR" place to hunt. On private property owners become upset when hunters on public property set stand along runs leading to the baits on private property.

Warden Sue Miller reported that there were several Sawyer County calls to hunter disputes. Most of the complaints were related to trespass issues. Warden Miller had several complaints from walking hunters complaining about ATV's running behind gates, barricades and berms on the Federal, State and County Forests. There were a large number of complaints regarding illegal ATV use by hunters. This season Sawyer County made a big effort to put up signs warning ATV's to stay out of the County Forestlands and keep to the trails. By the end of the week only about a third of the signs remained and you could see tracks everywhere running out into the woods past the signs that were remaining.

NORTHEAST REGION

Finding a Place to Hunt - Warden Jim Horne (Shawano) reported several calls from hunters on Saturday afternoon trying to locate private lands open to public hunting (Managed Forest Law). All were directed to the public library where the County Plat was put in the Reference section to assist hunters since the Shawano Office was closed.

Trespassing - Despite trespassing signs and warnings not to enter onto private property, some unethical hunters continue to give good hunters a bad name by shooting deer on private property and trying to "sneak" the deer out without the landowner's knowledge. The single biggest complaint from landowners is the fact that hunters are not asking permission before they hunt.

State Owned & Private Lands - Several blocks of private land, next to state land, have changed ownership over the past couple years and the new landowners are having trouble with hunters trespassing on the their land. In previous years the other landowners have allowed access onto DNR land, but the new owners have restricted that access. Unfortunately, this has caused poor attitudes between both landowners and those who hunt public land. Landowners have had to "aggressively post" their property to keep hunters from trespassing, which has resulted in arguments, the posted signs being torn down.

State Parks and Hunting - There is a continuing conflict between non-hunters and hunters on some of our state park properties (Peninsula and Whitefish Dunes). Most of the deer that were harvested in Peninsula Park were harvested in the first two days and hunting pressure dropped off to almost nothing. A number of hunters indicated that would like to continue hunting during the muzzleloader season at Peninsula Park however the park will not be open. With Whitefish Dunes State Park not being open to hunting there is a significant population problem with deer around the park. With non-hunting areas increasing, it is suggested that our agency concentrate on areas where there is an abundance of deer and attempt to open the areas to help control the deer population.

Land Use Impacts on Hunting - Urban sprawl is impacting numerous traditional hunting areas in region. Some areas are impacted by township ordinances while others are impacted by the "100 yard shooting" requirement. Hunters need to understand the landscape is changing and it may require changing hunting locations. This has been difficult for some who have been hunting a particular area for years.

ILLEGAL HUNTING FROM CABINS OR RESIDENCES

Last year, wardens in northern Wisconsin saw a reduction in shooting at night from homes and cabins when all baiting and feeding was illegal. With the return of baiting and feeding, lighted bait piles behind residences and cabins was an issue again this year in roughly the northern half of the state. Throughout this fall, the incidence of people illegally harvesting deer over bait at night using lights or during the closed season from cabins or residences increased significantly as compared to last year. Wardens do not encounter these types of violations with baited locations in the woods to the extent they are encountered adjacent to dwellings. The convenience of the bait near the residence and difficulty in detecting and apprehending these types of violators creates opportunities for people inclined to violate in this manner. The table below lists some examples of the types of cases wardens made this fall that involved illegally shooting deer, often large bucks, from cabins or residences. These are labor intensive cases requiring many hours of surveillance, and generally come to our attention through public cooperation or patrol efforts.

REGION	SYNOPSIS
Northern	Subject arrested for shooting an 8 point buck after dark from his residence with a crossbow over bait using the yard light.
Northern	Subject arrested for shooting an 8 point buck after dark from his cabin with a crossbow over bait using the yard light.
Northern	Subjects arrested for shooting deer with a .22 rifle from the house using a light at about 10PM as it came in toward the feeder.
Northern	Subjected arrested for shooting deer after dark with a .22 rifle through kitchen window as it fed on a bait pile.
Northern	Subject arrested for shooting a doe out of cabin window over corn pile at 4:32PM with 30.06 Friday before season.
Northern	Subject arrested for shooting deer with a .270 from the house by moonlight while feeding on a bait pile.

West Central	Subject, a felon, arrested for shooting a large 10 point buck with a crossbow, over bait with a light at 9:15PM.
West Central	Subject arrested for shooting deer after dark with firearm as it fed on a bait pile that was illuminated by a yard light.
Northeast	Subjects arrested after firing four shots at deer after dark feeding on bait pile illuminated by a yard light.

DATE: December 7, 2004
TO: DNR Secretary Scott Hassett
FROM: Randy Stark, Chief Warden
SUBJECT: 2004 Gun Deer Season Report

Conflict in the field is increasing. Trespassing was in the spotlight this year due to the Sawyer County and Sauk County incidents. The violence that took place in these two incidents is rare; most property disputes are handled with diplomacy. However, over the years, wardens have increasingly reported that hunters are finding fewer and fewer places to hunt. Several larger societal issues are converging that suggest this issue will require attention on several fronts in the future. Some of these converging issues include:

- Changing land ownership patterns, large tracts are being cut up into smaller parcels
- Increasing numbers of people wanting to use land for different reasons and in different ways
- The tension inherent in property boundary conversations
- Land-use decisions that result in a decreasing amount of “hunnable land” available due to converting agricultural and other open lands to development.

HUNTER/LANDOWNER/USER CONFLICTS:

As agricultural lands formerly suitable for hunting are converted to development and "sprawl", conflict is increasing between landowners who live in subdivisions and hunters on adjacent properties. Hunters are getting more and more boxed in all the time, and can't find isolated areas to hunt in. They end up hunting in small wood lots and fields close to houses.

Many wardens reported a significantly increased numbers of trespass complaints. Two things were attributed to this increase. Fewer places to hunt and increased awareness created by the Sawyer County incident.

Warden Jason Roberts received a complaint during the gun deer season from a caller that lived near Lake Michigan concerning duck hunters on Lake Michigan. The complainant stated that the hunters are too close to shore and shooting repeatedly. Warden Roberts responded and saw three hunters in a boat with several large strings of decoys. Warden Roberts used his range finder and was able to determine that the hunters were nearly 1500 feet from the shoreline. This was more than three times the distance required for open water hunters on Lake Michigan. Warden Roberts contacted the complainant and informed her of the distance requirement and told her about the duck season framework. The complainant was not happy with the duck hunters and stated she was going to speak to her neighborhood association about the hunting activity.

Warden Rick Reed reported several complaints involving multiple users of the Kettle Moraine State Forest. Mountain bikers, horseback riders, and hikers were all found on the trails without blaze orange.

Warden Dale Hochhausen responded to a call where an individual trespassed on a person's property and shot a buck without first earning a buck tag. The person was also dressed in

camouflaged clothing and not wearing his backtag. The landowner came out to the location and got into a minor confrontation with the individual before the Racine County Sheriff's Department arrived.

Sauk County had a trespass incident that ended in violence and the arrest of two persons for substantial battery. In this incident a 63-year old man confronted two white male trespassers and was allegedly assaulted by one of the hunters causing some significant injuries to his face.

Warden Supervisor David Holmes and Warden David Horzewski checked a small group of hunters that felt they were being forced to move out of a small piece of state property in northern Richland County. A large group of hunters moved into the property even after they saw the other hunters on the property and set up a deer drive that went right through their small group of hunters that were set up waiting for deer to move in the evenings. The small group of hunters left the property after the drive and were disgusted by the unsafe and unethical conduct of the large group of hunters.

Warden Krueger has received complaints from individuals who have been hunting public hunting grounds. The callers state that some landowners go to the public hunting grounds to harvest their antlerless deer. The landowners then hunt bucks on their own property. This is creating great animosity between the two hunting groups.

Wardens Boyd Richter and Dave Wood investigated a complaint of a hunter trespassing and shooting before hunting hours on the first Sunday of the gun deer season. The complainant was walking with his son at about 6:10 AM when the suspect shot twice, while trespassing on the land the complainant was hunting. The complainant wrote down the suspect's backtag number and called the DNR Hotline. The suspect stated he shot at a coyote and did not have a small game license so Wood issued a citation for hunting small game without a license. Richter passed the trespassing complaint on to a Rock County Sheriff's deputy who cited the suspect for trespassing.

Warden Jim Cleven (Colfax) assisted the Dunn County Sheriff Department with a complaint involving a deer hunting party that shot and killed two llamas and one horse. A second horse was wounded. The hunting party admitted that they shot and killed the two llamas, but not the horses. The hunting party stated that the owner of the llamas and horses does not keep his animals on his own property, that the animals continually trespass onto their property and eat all their deer food plots. The hunting party claim that this has been occurring for the past 3 to 5 years. Both llamas were on the hunting party's property when they shot them.

Property line disputes are nothing new, but wardens are beginning to see the tempers flaring more than in the past. Examples of the behavior include neighbors refusing to allow a kid to recover a deer that he shot on his family's land which died a few feet across a fence line on a neighbor's property, and vandalism to hunter's vehicles while legally hunting on a property. This type of behavior has an adverse impact the image of hunters overall and on recruiting new people into hunting. Newcomers to the sport will no doubt quit if they have these types of experiences while legally hunting.

In the northern part of the state, following the Sawyer County tragedy, it seems more hunters wanted wardens to know about incidents on public land where verbal altercations took place. Some incidents mentioned were several years old but just surfaced this season. The U.S. Forest Service is also investigating similar incidents that might have otherwise gone unreported to authorities and are considering using Disorderly Conduct charges for situations of this nature.

DATE: December 7, 2005
TO: Scott Hassett
FROM: Randy Stark – Chief Warden
SUBJECT: 2005 Law Enforcement Nine Day Deer Gun Season Report

Hunter/User Conflicts:

There were hunter/user conflicts reported to wardens throughout the state and most seem to relate to conflicts between neighboring property owners and frequently associated with the preceding land use issues. Other than in Sawyer County, the number of trespassing incidents was similar to previous years. However, Wardens Sue Miller and Brian Knepper reported that in Sawyer County, trespass complaints were noticeably down, noting that people seemed to be more courteous about boundaries this year. Perhaps this occurred as a result of last year's tragedy. Wardens responded to several hunter harassment complaints. The Sawyer County incident seems to have caused people to get law enforcement involved right away instead of confronting problems themselves. The following are some examples of hunter conflicts noted in warden reports:

- Warden Brad Biser of Douglas County received a complaint of a hunter walking over to another hunter's bait pile and urinating on it. He tossed the other hunters mineral block into a puddle and told the other hunter that he was lucky he did not defecate in the bait pile. The back tag number was noted and a written statement was taken. The follow-up investigation continues with a case of hunter harassment. The suspect has a long history of unethical practices.
- Wardens Barry Fetting and Jeremy Peery of Rusk County investigated two incidents where the subjects, who were violating game laws, were also found to be trespassing. The landowner in the first case held the subjects on the roadway near their vehicle until a Sheriff's Deputy and Warden Fetting arrived. The landowner was very upset and told Fetting that these types of hunting/trespassing violations have been occurring on his property for the past six years. Citations were issued to the subjects in question for loan and borrow deer carcass tag, hunting after hours and failure to immediately validate deer carcass tag. They were also cited for trespassing by the Sheriff's Deputy.
- In another Rusk County trespass incident a landowner observed a male subject being dropped off on his property by an individual driving a truck. The landowner watched as the man walked onto his property and shot a buck in the landowner's field. The landowner then confronted the man while in the field and brandished a handgun. Fetting and Perry responded to the incident and investigated. The individual received a citation from the Sheriff's Department for trespassing.
- Warden Heather Gottschalk (Beaver Dam) and a Dodge County deputy responded to a call of trespassing and threats. The complainant told Gottschalk that she saw a man drive into the hunting property they leased to hunt. When she approached him and told him that he was trespassing, the suspect said, "Remember what happened last year." Gottschalk and the deputy approached the suspect at his residence and he told them that he knew what he was

doing was wrong and that the land was posted, but used the excuse that he was retrieving his wounded deer as he was required to. When Gottschalk asked what his intent was when he stated, "Remember what happened last year" he stated he needed to protect himself. Gottschalk and the deputy had both individuals agree not to have contact with one another and if they had another trespass issue to contact the Sheriff's office instead of making contact with the trespasser. Both subjects were calm upon leaving their premises.

- A defendant allegedly involved in the trespass and battery of a landowner in Sauk County last deer season was caught trespassing again on the same property. The hunter was contacted by several hunters on the property and they recognized the name of the hunter. The hunter tried to pay money to the people that caught him so he would not be reported since he was out on bail for the previous incident. One condition of his bail was that he was to not have contact with the landowner he assaulted or be on the landowner's property. Warden David Horzewski (Reedsburg) and Deputy Warden Paul Zajackowski assisted the Sauk County Sheriff's Department with attempting to locate the suspect. The hunter was located the next day and arrested for felony bail jumping.
- Warden Kyle Drake of Waukesha County made contact with one hunter who was walking out at closing time. He had earlier had a confrontation with a trespassing hunter. The trespasser was very belligerent and threatened the other hunter. The trespasser was not wearing a backtag. The other hunter did the correct thing and just walked away. A search was made for the trespasser, but he had left and did not return the next day.
- Warden Jason Roberts of Racine County received a complaint of shots being fired in the town of Caledonia by some goose hunters. The complainant did not like hearing the loud shots in the morning. The local police responded to the area, but the hunters were complying with all state and local municipal laws. Roberts explained to the complainant that the hunters were hunting legally and abiding by both state and local laws. The complainant threatened to try and scare the geese in the future to keep people from hunting in the field across from her home. Roberts explained to the complainant that by doing so she would be violating a state law and would be charged. The complainant protested that everyone wants to protect the hunter and no one is concerned about her well-being or peace of mind.
- Warden Joe Paul, working in Racine County, spoke with one hunter who was concerned about ATVs riding on land near where he hunts. The hunter said that horseback riders use the property as well. The owner of the property contacted the ATVers and the horseback riders and asked them not to recreate on his land. The hunter said the ATVers and the horseback riders were upset over this. The same hunter advised he owns seven acres in Pleasant Prairie that he no longer hunts on because he gets harassed every time he hunts there. The hunter set up a stand for his father this year on the property. When the hunter's father went to hunt the stand, someone had cut the metal rungs in the ladder and the platform so whoever used it would fall out.
- Wardens Jennifer Niemeyer and Joe Paul in Kenosha County contacted a waterfowl hunter who said people were harassing him while he was hunting. The location where he was hunting used to be a legal area to hunt. Recently the property has been annexed by the city of

Kenosha. As the city gets larger, hunters are finding it more difficult to find land to hunt on and contact with those opposed to hunting is increasing.

- In La Crosse County, one landowner/hunter was reported to have fired three shots at a neighboring landowner/hunter participating in a deer drive on the neighboring property. According to the complainants, the hunter had made threats to anyone getting close to his property in the past. Warden Henry Bauman (Onalaska) and Deputy Warden Julie Modjeski investigated the complaint with La Crosse County Deputies. Deputies arrested the suspect for reckless endangerment by use of a firearm based on witness statements and direction from the La Crosse County DA. The wardens also cited the man for hunting with an improper license since he had no valid tags left in his possession while hunting alone.
- Opening day, Warden Bill Miller (Adams) was called in on a dispute over a deer that both parties said they shot. At first they were told that whoever killed it gets it, which was relayed to the hunters by a friend who had the cell phone. This caused the hunter who did not put the killing bullet in the deer to become angry and shoot the dead deer 5-8 times with his rifle and stating “You can have the %&#@ deer”. There were two other people nearby when this happened. Warden Miller will be referring the case to the Adams County District Attorney for a criminal charge of Negligent Operation or Handling of a Firearm.
- Warden Dean Gullickson (Chippewa Falls) assisted a Chippewa County Sheriff’s Department investigator in a case involving the theft of a dozen tree stands over two years. A camera was set up on a tree stand in the area of the thefts. The bandit struck again, stealing the decoy tree stand. When the suspect was confronted he confessed to stealing the decoy tree stand but swore he hadn’t taken any others. After further questioning, with the warden and investigator pointing out a drag trail from a ladder stand that went to his property, the suspect confessed to stealing that tree stand also but swore he had not taken any others.
- In a trespassing incident in St Croix County a landowner was assaulted for kicking a group of deer hunters off his property. The assailant was intoxicated. The landowner simply left the scene and called the Sheriff’s Office. Warden Rick Rosen (Hudson) responded to the scene after recognizing the names of the suspect(s). In addition, Warden Rosen’s investigation of the subject resulted in an illegal buck that was taken after hours during the October Zone T season with a rifle in a shotgun zone. Warden Rosen seized a .243 Caliber rifle.

DATE: December 5, 2006
 TO: Secretary Scott Hassett
 FROM: Chief Warden Randy Stark
 SUBJECT: Significant concerns from the Warden Service regarding baiting and feeding of deer.

- Baiting and feeding creates conflict between adjacent landowners and hunters on public lands. This in turn spawns unethical conduct and potentially dangerous emotional conflict between armed people.
- Baiting related issues are frequently the genesis of arguments between hunters on public lands. This leads to ruined hunting experiences and the escalation of conflict.

2006 Rank	2005 Rank	Violation	2006	'05	'04	'03	'02	'01	% Change
1	1	Illegal use of bait - Firearms	254	221	150	76	87	99	15%
2	2	Trans. loaded gun in vehicle	106	102	113	112	112	118	4%
3	3	Trans. uncased gun in vehicle	88	75	84	117	117	131	17%
4	7	Shoot w/in 50' of a road or across roadway	68	39	65	82	82	83	74%
5	4	Failure to validate tag	48	67	57	52	51	54	-28%
6	9	Hunt deer or bears before or after hours	45	32	27	31	41	39	41%
7	15	Feeding wild animals violations	45	20	27	16	28	0	125%
8	5	Hunt w/in 50' of paved road center	44	51	75	68	69	85	-14%
9	12	Hunt without a license	32	23	8				39%
10	19	Hunt without blaze orange	30	16	16	31	23	33	88%

Baiting is causing conflict.

Baiting is often one of the contributing factors in an increasing amount and intensity of conflict among hunters and landowners on both public and private property.

In light of these issues, it is incumbent on us to proactively work with the hunting community in Wisconsin to promptly open proactive, thoughtful, and serious dialogue with the people of the State of Wisconsin regarding the prudence of continuing to allow baiting and feeding of deer.

DATE: December 5, 2006
TO: Secretary Scott Hassett
FROM: Chief Warden Randy Stark
SUBJECT: 2006 Nine Day Deer Gun Season Report

- The amount and intensity of conflict is increasing. The conflict generally is the result of a combination of one or more of the following: competition for hunting spots on public land, baiting, land access or adjacent landowner disputes. Pay particular attention to the trends in the conflict portion of this report as well as the supplemental baiting report.

Conflict:

As indicated earlier, the frequency and intensity of conflict is increasing. The vast majority of the conflict being reported has at its roots changing land use and ownership patterns, dwindling hunter access to places to hunt, public land crowding and territorialism, baiting, rural housing density, and increasing number of rural residents who do not hunt.

Wardens are hearing that conflict of this nature is causing some hunters to re-evaluate their hunting experience and reassess their commitment to the tradition. Some signal they are souring on hunting because of the conflict. They do not want to be drawn into these conflict situations and recognize these situations can be dangerous due to the emotional dimensions of these conflicts.

Wardens are being drawn into these situations with increasing frequency. This will be a continuing challenge in the future. The following are examples to provide understanding of this issue in no particular order:

A new trend is emerging throughout the state in developed areas - "metro poaching". Wardens are contacting more subjects who are trespassing in wooded areas between subdivisions where they hid rifles in treestands, wore camo clothing without backtags, and hunted over illegal bait piles to avoid being noticed by local residents. These sites are in locations only accessible by foot behind suburban residences. The safety implications and potential for conflict here are quite obvious and have great potential to erode the image of hunters and hunting.

In many cases hunters are doing nothing wrong but are getting complained about. An example comes from Warden Rick DeWitte, Grant County, who reports two complaints from rural residents about hunters hunting too close to their homes. In both cases, the hunters were on adjoining property with permission, and were considerably further than the minimum 100 yard requirement. Neither resident was satisfied with this answer and one is considering seeking legislation to change the minimum distance. DeWitte comments that he feels these situations will continue to become more common as more people build in the country in the middle of deer habitat. More Mississippi River bluff areas and Grant County farm land has been sold for housing development. This past summer a large land company offered hundreds of thousands of dollars for river bluff lands to landowners south of Cassville. It is hard to fault a farmer for selling when faced with current farm commodity prices and a large amount of cash for a few acres of farm land.

Warden John Buss of Sauk City received one call that a landowner hunter was hunting on his own property and a person had built a house next to his land within 100 yards of the property line. The hunter landowner stated that when he came out of the woods the neighbor had walked over and left notes on their vehicles stating the hunters were too close to the person's house to be hunting. The landowner hunter stated the neighbors walked on his property to place the notes on his vehicles' windshields several times and he was contemplating filing a trespassing complaint.

Many of the wardens report conflict is becoming more common as deer hunters try to locate new lands to hunt, or end up spilling over onto private lands from adjacent public hunting grounds.

Many conflicts center on wounded deer running onto a neighbor's property and the associated issues with retrieval. The number of these incidents is definitely increasing which is another indicator of the impact of urban sprawl and fragmentation of the rural landscape.

Some wardens report that some hunters are continuing to complain about Asian hunters, but have no factual basis for the complaint. They simply appear to be predisposed to stereotype all Asians as violators. Wardens are working objectively to distinguish valid complaints from stereotyping. Wardens are attempting to educate people on this issue.

Warden Mark Schraufnagel assisted the Shawano Sheriff's Department in a report of two hunters shooting at people. The investigation produced evidence the suspect was attempting to "scare" the hunters who they thought were trespassing. Several felony and misdemeanor charges are pending.

Warden Mike Young (Outagamie County) received calls of hunter harassment where a landowner put up a snow fence to try to keep deer on his property. The landowner admitted to placing the fence to keep the neighbors from shooting small bucks. The landowner practices his own brand of QDM where he does not shoot does.

Warden Todd Wippermann (Waupaca County) received a call from a registration station owner by cell phone advising that two subjects were "about to go at it" in the parking lot over a doe fawn. One hunter was accusing the other of stealing his doe fawn from his truck while he was out hunting. Investigation reveals that the other hunter in fact did steal the doe fawn from the other hunter's truck so he could obtain an EAB sticker.

Several complaints were received by area wardens regarding hunters shooting too close to houses, conducting deer drives near roads, etc. In most cases hunters were hunting legally. The increasing number of rural areas are definitely keeping an eye on hunters to make sure they are being safe and respectful of landowners' rights.

Some hunters are under the misconception, "that years of hunting an area" gives one rights to claim public hunting grounds as their own property. That includes the parking area too. For example, Warden Schartner (Bayfield County) talked to a group of hunters that claimed to have hunted the area for the past 26 years and did not intend on sharing the area with anyone else, especially the two parking areas.

Warden John Windt (Iron County) had several hunters who complained about being contacted by other hunters with stands on public land, and being told that they should be hunting somewhere else due to the fact that they have a stand here and this is their hunting area.

Warden John Krull (Douglas County) received a few reports of hunting camps intentionally blocking access to county forest roads, keeping other hunters out of “their” area. This activity violates county ordinances and was handled by the Sheriff’s Department.

Warden Brad Biser (Brule) followed up on Hotline complaint of hunter harassment. It was determined that three hunters confronted another hunter on public land. The hunter who was confronted was hunting in an area the three other men have traditionally hunted over the years. All three of the confronting hunters used loud and abusive language and one of the men fired four shots. The loud language and firing of the four shots were an attempt to get the lone hunter to leave their hunting area. The man who fired the four shots is facing enforcement action.

Wardens received many telephone calls from individuals reporting conflicts over property line hunting and activities by individuals intended to disrupt or disturb the hunts of others on adjoining properties.

Wardens Jeremy Peery and Robin Barnhardt (Rusk County) encountered a hunter from a group whose members had been accosted at gunpoint by a landowner nearby. Wardens responded to the scene and arrived prior to a responding Deputy, finding the hunters and landowner waiting for them. The hunters claimed they had been confronted by the landowner when they asked permission to cross his property while dragging out the deer they had recovered on property which they had permission to hunt. The landowner pointed a loaded rifle at them, placed them under “citizen’s arrest”, ordered them to ground their firearms, and marched them to his house. There he demanded \$250.00 from each as a trespass fee or the choice to wait for a Sheriff’s Deputy. They chose to wait for a Deputy. The landowner claimed the right to defend his property and denied nothing. He was arrested on numerous charges and transported to jail.

There were the usual calls from hunters who had asked for permission to retrieve downed deer on adjacent properties only to be told by the landowner they could not enter the property to retrieve the deer.

One conflict occurred at a registration station in Dunn County between several bar patrons and two Asian hunters. The Asian hunters were verbally harassed when they tried to register deer.

Warden Mark Little (Tomah) and Special Warden Julie Modjeski responded to Mill Bluff State Park where two hunters confronted each other and one allegedly threatened: “I’ll blow you out of that tree stand.” Apparently, a youth was advised by his grandfather to sit in a certain location not knowing other hunters were in the same area. When the boy was confronted by a third hunter to move away, the grandfather and third hunter engaged in a heated argument.

Warden Ken Thomson (Eau Claire County) reported investigating two complaints of hunter harassment and both cases involved new landowners buying small chunks of land surrounded by

large landholdings. The hunters that had previously hunted the large blocks of land for years were taking actions designed to foil the new landowner hunting.

Warden Scott Thiede (Eau Claire County) talked with several landowners who voiced concerns about neighboring landowners placing strings containing soap or scattering moth balls on the property line in apparent attempts to keep “their deer” from leaving the private property.

Warden Paul Leezer assisted Clark County Sheriff Deputies with a trespass complaint where, upon confrontation, the suspects removed their back tags and jackets so as to not reveal identifying information. The suspects were later tracked down by license plate information.

Warden Mike Clutter, Sheboygan County, reports disputes between hunters on neighboring lands are increasing, with tree stands stolen and bickering over retrieving deer, property lines, placement of hunting stands, ethics, and common courtesy.

DATE: December 5, 2007
TO: DNR Secretary Matt Frank
FROM: Chief Warden Randy Stark
SUBJECT: 2007 Nine Day Deer Gun Season Report

1. Wardens report that some people hunting public property seem less tolerant of other hunters resulting in conflict. Throughout the state wardens reported conflicts revolving around baiting and stand placement on public lands. The upshot is that hunters believe that placement of bait or setting out stands or erecting blinds on public lands reserves their spot.
2. Wardens are reporting increased “neighborly tension” as there are more landowners on the landscape and more efforts are directed to patrolling their property lines during deer season. In one instance, wardens and a Shawano County Sheriff’s Deputy mitigated a conflict that resulted from hunters who were leasing land mistakenly ordered a landowner off his own land by telling the landowner he’d cut the tree down while the landowner was sitting in it if he did not leave. The individual leasing the land thought the landowner was on the land they were leasing. Fortunately, the landowner kept his composure, left and called authorities. Investigation revealed an apparent miscommunication or misunderstanding regarding the boundaries of the areas leased by the hunters.