



**MAJ.  
SANDY DARES**

## Update

by Maj. Sandy Dares, Region 11 Representative

**A**t the time this was written, we were well into hunting season. Hot weather and mosquitoes were conspiring to hinder hunters from totally enjoying their days in the field, but they were making the best of it. We were blessed with nary a hunting accident, and the numbers of boating accidents were also down.

Our cadet academy was also scheduled to start in early 2005. We had hoped for 20 cadets, but several declined or were otherwise eliminated. We continue to have problems attracting the number of candidates we need to keep our ranks at full strength.

Cadets will spend six long but fruitful months obtaining a tremendous amount of knowledge and skills to apply in their careers as wildlife agents. They will work hard to get into shape, qualify with pistols and shotguns and become proficient in numerous areas of expertise. They will also earn their POST certifications, as required for law enforcement officers.

Although the academy is a huge challenge and a great accomplishment, it represents

only the beginning of a learning process that lasts the agent's entire career. Cadets spend four to six months in the Field Training Program immediately after graduation. They work with experienced agents and are evaluated each week. If they make sufficient progress during the FTO period, they are reallocated to the agent position and cleared to work alone. Partner agents and the regional lieutenants continue to closely monitor new agents on the job.

This profession demands continuous attention to updating skills, gaining knowledge and, most of all, getting the experience needed to deal with ever-changing situations and challenges. Poachers employ technological advances in the same way that law enforcement officers do. They sometimes do surveillance on our agents to determine if the coast is clear for their illegal activities.

The good news is that voluntary compliance is improving each day. Our sportsmen and sportswomen have become a group that largely obeys the law and supports enforcement agents in their efforts to pro-

mote conservation. They are teaching their children to hunt, fish and boat within the laws, and they are reporting poachers more than ever. This peer pressure will continue to be an important part of the overall conservation effort, which is a joint effort between the various user groups, enforcement agents, biologists, conservation organizations, educators and other government agencies.

An important factor in the success of our program is the recruitment of agents. We are always seeking qualified men and women who wish to pursue a career in wildlife law enforcement. Work conditions, including pay, have greatly improved. We have excellent equipment, outstanding training and top-notch personnel. If you or someone you know is interested, please have them contact our human resources office at 225-765-2850 for more information.

We are all looking forward to favorable spring weather and the nice boating opportunities it affords. Please check out all of your equipment before you go out on the water, and be safe out there! 🐾

### REGION 11

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# A Case From the Covert Files: Night Hunter Becomes the Hunted

by G.W. Undercover

“I’ll never go to jail for hunting deer at night.... If I go, it’s gonna be for killing a game warden. I’ll kill any game warden that catches me,” the poacher boasted with contempt in his voice.

Little did this old outlaw know that his bravado was being captured on a digital recorder by his hunting partner—an undercover wildlife agent!

The outlaw was a local legend, an infamous old-time outlaw. He hunted deer at night. It was in his blood. Night hunting was a way of life for him, and it was also profitable. He sold illegally taken deer, ducks and rabbits—all at the expense of Louisiana’s legal hunters and fishermen.

“The game wardens will never catch me...,” he continued with his rant. “I know how they work, I used to work as an undercover game warden... They’ll never catch me.”

But the outlaw’s hunting partner was also from the old school of night hunting. His prey, however, was poachers. And he had a prize trophy in his sights. The state of Louisiana was about to recoup some of

its longstanding losses.

As the relationship between the two hunters grew into a full-time friendship, the old outlaw started talking about other areas of far more serious criminal intent. It seemed that his new quarry was a local judge who had at one time jailed the outlaw for battery of a police officer.

“I’d like to have a silencer on my rifle...I want to smoke a judge...,” the outlaw threatened. “He locked me up for six months one time.... He took six months out of my life, and I am going to kill him for it. I know the route he takes to work. I can lay up in some bushes and take him out.”

The covert agent, with his recorder still rolling, knew it was time to wrap up the case. Threats of this nature are taken very seriously, and enforcement officers are bound to take action to prevent a person from being harmed.

A few weeks later, the undercover agent sold a silenced rifle to the old outlaw. “This is a fine Christmas present—Christmas in June! There won’t be a deer left in Louisiana—it’s

gonna be a bad day for the judge, too,” the outlaw warned.

But this time, the covert agent had brought along some of his own friends—uniformed agents from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and agents from the ATF. The arrest was made without difficulty, and the outlaw’s ego deflated like a blown-out tire on the interstate.

When he appeared in court, the old outlaw pleaded guilty to one count of possessing an unregistered firearm, and he admitted to buying a screw-on silencer for his own rifle and another silenced rifle from the covert agent. He confessed to knowing the route that a district judge drove to work every day and to contemplating

an ambush to kill the judge.

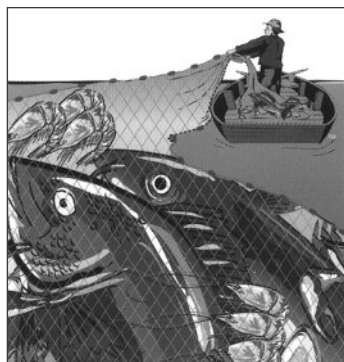
He begged for a sentence that included no more jail time. “I don’t want a gun no more...I just want to go home to my family,” he pleaded. The U.S. district judge rejected his request. Instead, he sentenced the old outlaw to two years in prison. When the outlaw is released from the federal penitentiary, he will still face the state charges for selling deer meat and hunting at night.

With this case made, the threatened judge can sleep better at night. And for sure, the deer, duck and rabbit populations in the outlaw’s corner of the world are in a lot better shape while their predator serves his prison time—all due to greed, ego and meanness. 🐾

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