



Region 9 Continued

Opening Morning of Lake Bouef

By Agent Dean Aucoin

It was about 4:00 a.m. on the morning of Nov. 18, 2006. The alarm went off and I jumped out of bed like a kid going on his first hunting trip with his dad. But I was not going on a hunting trip I was going to work. It was the opening morning of duck season in the East Zone, my first time working the

opening of duck season since graduating from the Academy. The night before Sr. Agent Jamie Folse, Sr. Agent Joseph Arnaud, and I had decided to work the Lake Bouef Area in North Lafourche Parish. After contacting our Captain and Lieutenant we were given permission to work in plain clothes to

blend in as if we were fellow hunters. I was excited about the morning because since the first day in the field as an Agent, everyone I work with talked about the opening morning of the East Zone and Lake Bouef.

Bright and early I got in my truck and headed to the Raceland fire station to meet Sr. Agents Folse and Arnaud. While on his way to meet us Sr. Agent Folse advised us that the Lake Bouef boat launch was crowded and trucks were having to park at least a 1/2 mile down the road. So after hearing this information we decide to go get a bite to eat for breakfast, allow the hunters to launch and then proceed to launch our boats.

After grabbing a bite to eat, we all three headed to the Lake Bouef launch off of Louisiana Hwy 308. As we were coming to the launch I

looked at Sr. Agent Jamie Folse and told him how I had never seen so many duck hunters at one launch in my life. If there weren't 200 trucks hooked up to boat trailers there wasn't a one.

We launched our boats and headed out to the lake. In order to get to the lake you have to travel about three to four miles in a Bayou going through Bouef Wildlife Management Area, and then it opens up to the lake. As we were making the last turn to get into the lake I was astonished at what I was hearing. It sounded like a war was going on. The birds in that lake didn't have a chance. Now I say that they did not have a chance being sarcastic. But little did I know they really did not have a chance.

Not five minutes in the lake Sr. Agent Arnaud called us over to

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his location where he had two people stopped for hunting migratory game birds out of a moving motorboat. Sr. Agent Folse and I proceeded to his location. As we pulled up to their location we observed a vessel not any more than 10 yards from us driving his boat into a flock of coots and shooting straight in the middle of them killing at least one coot. I looked at Sr. Agent Folse in shock. All he did was turned around, looked at me and said, "Welcome to opening morning of Lake Bouef". I was shocked at how unaware people were that Agents were right there and they still proceeded to break the law. These people knew we were going to be out on the lake and still they were showing no sign of trying to hide the fact that they were hunting migratory game birds from a moving motor-

boat.

About two hours had passed and Sr. Agent Folse and I called Sr. Agent Arnaud to see where he was. We decided to meet in the middle of the lake to see what each boat had done. Sr. Agent Folse and I by this time had made about five hunting migratory game birds from a moving motorboat cases and Sr. Agent Arnaud had four of the same cases. We looked in the bottom of each vessel and realized we had well over a hundred seized coots in the bottom of our boats. When a suspect is sighted for hunting migratory game birds from a moving motorboat, his birds that were killed and are in his possession are seized. We figured out that we made about nine different cases within a two-hour period of the same offense. I told my fellow Agents about my comment earlier in the



Senior Agents Arnaud, Folse, and Agent Aucoin with over 150 coots seized in nine separate Hunting Migratory Game Bird from a Moving Motorboat cases in the East Zone in Lake Bouef in Lafourche Parish on opening morning.

morning about all the shots we heard and that the birds did not have a chance. Well, this is when I thought to myself, these birds did not have a chance when people run them up in their boats and shoot at them when they get close enough to kill the birds.

The shooting had begun to stop and we decided to head back to the launch so we could begin finding people to donate the coots to. Most people on the lake that morning had their limits of coots and we did not see a single big duck or teal killed that morning. I was a little surprised when we got to the launch that a guy was holding up a goose. I looked at Sr. Agent Folse

and told him that that goose must have been lost. Those birds did not have a chance that morning on Lake Bouef.

Now that the boat was on the trailer I began to count the number of coots on our boat. I counted approximately 160 dead coots seized that morning. I was amazed at the number of boats in the lake that morning that did not even think twice about breaking the law knowing Wildlife Enforcement Agents were going to be on the lake. All of the coots were donated to needy families in Lafourche and Terrebonne Parishes. After the day was over I went home excited and amazed at what an opening morning of Lake Bouef was all about.

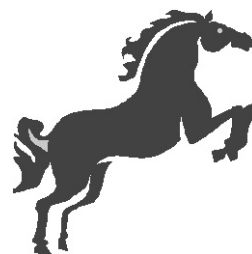
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