

**Law Enforcement Division
Bi-Weekly Field Report
2/22/09 – 3/7/09**

DISTRICT 1

COs Douglas Hermanson and Denny Gast each caught local anglers with overlimits of Lake Trout on Keweenaw Bay.

CO Brian Bacon received a complaint of a coyote being left in a trap for a week. CO Bacon located the coyote and the responsible subject. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Dave Painter contacted an angler he had checked a few weeks ago. The angler stated in the prior contact that he had his license but was unable to locate it. CO Painter advised the subject that he would be following up on whether he actually had a fishing license. CO Painter found the angler fishing again this weekend and informed him he did not have a current fishing license. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Grant Emery worked a fishing tournament on Lake Gogebic. Fishing activity was good, but many anglers were found to be in violation of fishing regulations. Tickets were written for no license, fishing with more than two lines, undersized walleye, and unattended lines.

COs Doug Hermanson and Jason Wicklund were on patrol near the mouth of the Huron River when they came upon a large gathering of people at a township park. The COs observed a snowmobile race track set up on the ice and snowmobiles racing around the track. When several bystanders were questioned about this unsanctioned snowmobile race, the COs were told that it wasn't a race, just "a bunch of friends having a picnic". In addition to the illegal race, numerous snowmobile violations were addressed which included operating unregistered, not wearing helmets, defective exhaust and careless operation.

CO Ryan Aho contacted an angler who was fishing with more than two lines. The angler stated he thought the new three line regulation was in effect. CO Aho explained the law did not take effect until April 1, and that he still would not be able to fish with the four lines he had out. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Denny Gast wrote two anglers tickets for littering on Keweenaw Bay. He conducted surveillance and watched one angler clean up his area by placing trash in a small plastic bag. The angler then looked around and buried the trash in the snow prior to leaving.

CO Mark Leadman ticketed a subject who trespassed on private property to access a lake. He was fishing with six lines.

CO Mark Leadman contacted a subject operating a snowmobile without a registration or trail permit. A closer look revealed he was suspended and revoked, as well.

DISTRICT 2

COs Mike Hammill and Derek Miller were first on the scene of a head-on snow machine accident in northern Schoolcraft County. The COs administered first aid until emergency medical personnel arrived. The accident happened when both machines met at the crest of a steep hill off the groomed trail.

In another case, COs Mike Hammill and Derek Miller responded to a complaint of illegal cutting of trees on state land. Nearing the site, the COs stopped the suspect vehicle as it was leaving and found that the operator not only was cutting wood illegally but also had his driving privileges twice suspended. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Mike Hammill and Sgt. Dave Rantanen followed up on a complaint of anglers leaving lines out all night on a Mackinaw County lake. After searching the lake, action was taken on one subject for fishing with too many lines and the use of marijuana.

Another report involving possession of marijuana in a fish shack has gone to the prosecutor's office for charges. This case is being handled by CO Kyle Publiski. While this has been increasingly common for the last several years, this year seems to have produced a real spike in these incidents.

CO Gerald Thayer contacted an angler fishing without a license who had driven to the location in a motor vehicle on a suspended driver's license. Further investigation revealed the subject was wanted on an outstanding warrant. As the conversation broadened, CO Thayer recognized the subject as someone he had arrested years ago in a distant district for illegal taking of game. The subject's reaction to this revelation ... "Wow, how much area do you cover?"

DISTRICT 3

CO Steve Speigl checked three anglers crowded into a small portable shanty. One of the anglers told CO Speigl that he had a fishing license. That was not the case and the subject was issued a ticket. CO Speigl also ticketed eight more snowmobile operators and was the first on the scene of a snowmobile accident. It appears that the driver of one machine hit the railroad tracks at a high rate of speed, vaulting him and the machine into the air. The victim was conscious and was transported to an area hospital.

COs Andréa Erratt, Steve Speigl, and Andrea Albert conducted a group snowmobile patrol in Antrim County. Also participating in the patrol were deputies from the Antrim County Sheriff's Department. In all, 28 people were ticketed for various snowmobile infractions, three subjects were arrested on outstanding warrants, and assistance was given on a snowmobile accident.

CO Andrea Albert responded to a complaint of subjects spearing fish on the Torch River. CO Albert contacted three subjects attempting to spear northern pike and musky from a boat. The subjects did not spear any fish and were advised that the spearing season for those species was through the ice and not on open water or in a trout stream. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Andrea Erratt, while checking hunters in Charlevoix County, came across a group of rabbit hunters at Fisherman's Island State Park who had unloaded a snowmobile and driven by a "No Vehicles" sign. She observed four hunters out on a point, two were not wearing hunter orange. She contacted the snowmobile as the hunters returned, and ticketed the operator for illegally operating. Meanwhile, one of the hunters had hid his gun and claimed he was just walking his dog. CO Erratt explained she had been watching with binoculars as they were hunting and that he should retrieve the gun he had been carrying. Another hunter wearing full camouflage hid in the woods, and the only legal hunter said his friend did not want to talk to the CO. CO Erratt explained no one was leaving until he came out of the woods and with his friend's encouragement, he finally presented himself to the officer. Two of the hunters were ticketed for failing to wear hunter orange while rabbit hunting.

CO Mark DePew was out on his sled patrolling the snowmobile trails when two sleds abruptly passed him on a curve. Upon catching up to them, CO DePew issued a ticket for careless operation. CO DePew wrote several other careless operation of a snowmobile tickets on trails in an attempt to keep the trails safe for all the recreational snowmobile operators.

CO Joe Molnar, while working a fish patrol, observed four unattended tip-ups on Lake Avalon. After almost an hour, a person came out to check his tripped tip-up. CO Molnar determined that the angler was not only leaving his lines unattended, but that he was also using four lines. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Bill Webster responded to a RAP complaint of feeding deer with hay. On the fourth try he was finally successful in contacting the owner. CO Webster discussed deer feeding with the owner and the harm that hay can cause, and issued a ticket for the violation.

CO Eric Bottorff received a complaint of unattended fishing lines on Burt Lake. Just before dark, CO Bottorff located the set lines, which consisted of plywood with a fishing reel affixed to the board, and the board then covered with snow. CO Bottorff checked the lines the next morning at 5:00 a.m. and found the subjects attending to the lines left out the night before. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Eric Bottorff is investigating a situation where rabbit hunters found a bear cub and took it to a wildlife rehabilitator. While rabbit hunting in the Pigeon River Country state forest, the hunters' dogs spooked the sow bear and it left two cubs at the den. The hunters left and checked back later and found one cub still at the den site. Instead of leaving it on site, they picked it up and delivered it to the rehabilitator, who then kept it

for three days before notifying the DNR. Biologists with the DNR and COs then placed the cub with a radio collared sow with cubs, hoping she will adopt the cub as one of her own. The hunters and wildlife rehabilitator situation is currently under investigation.

Area 3-2 COs conducted a winter feeding enforcement patrol in both Presque Isle and Cheboygan Counties, with the assistance of the Wildlife Division pilot and aircraft. Thirty-five suspected feeding sites were checked and several tickets were issued for feeding violations.

CO Andrea Erratt patrolled the Jordan Valley Trail System with Forest, Mineral and Fire Management Division (FMFMD) personnel. They posted "No Snowmobile" and "Stay on the Trail" signs throughout the valley where people had been illegally jumping off the trail, climbing hills, and crossing creeks. CO Erratt stopped three juveniles, including a nine year-old, on a sled with an expired registration. He was riding with his 15 and 16 year-old brothers. The father was called and he met CO Erratt and the boys at the nearest trailhead with a trailer. The father was ticketed for allowing a nine year-old to operate without adult supervision.

DISTRICT 4

CO Brian Brosky ticketed a Mason County woman for violating the deer feeding ban. The woman has been warned the last two years for violating the two gallon limit for feeding by feeding the deer large round bales of hay. When the COs contacted her, she said she figured the CO would be stopping to speak to her again.

COs Steve Converse and Sam Koscinski ran a marine and fish patrol on the Big Manistee River in Manistee County but had to cut their patrol short because of the frigid temperatures. The COs couldn't keep the patrol vessels throttle/gear shifter from freezing up. As the COs were loading the boat back onto the trailer, they could hear a snowmobile's motor wind up and observed a snowmobile cross the open water of the Manistee River. The COs contacted the operator and issued a ticket for careless operation.

CO Mike Bomay responded to a Mecosta County complaint of a subject trespassing. CO Bomay found the subject and determined that he had set a number raccoon traps. The season for this activity was closed. Enforcement action was taken for out of season trapping and trespass violations.

CO Steve Converse reports that a subject he charged last Halloween for taking a deer by illegal method recently pled guilty. The subject was charged a total of \$2,000, was sentenced to five days in jail, forfeited his equipment and lost his hunting privileges through 2013.

CO Jim Espinoza assisted a Mason County deputy with an arrest of a subject who had an outstanding warrant. The subject, a local farmer, refused to be cuffed until he

finished feeding his stock. The officers allowed him to finish his chores and then arrested him without further incident.

CO Diane Drogowski received a complaint regarding four unattended tip-ups near the Maritime Academy in Traverse City. CO Drogowski went to the location and found the tip-ups, then tripped one of the flags and waited for someone to come. Approximately 15 minutes later, a student from the academy came out and explained to the CO that he and some other students set the lines at 10:00 a.m. and would check the lines between classes. When the CO asked the subject where the other students were, he stated they had left for the day. When the subject produced his fishing license, CO Drogowski noted the license had been purchased after the CO had tripped the tip-up flag. The subject was ticketed for the unattended lines.

CO Diane Drogowski reports that a subject she observed physically abusing a child last fall pled to 2nd degree child abuse and domestic violence. The felony charges were dismissed. Besides \$1,000 in fines and costs, the subject was sentenced to one year in the county jail, probation, counseling, and parenting classes. The subject was also ordered to have no future contact with his stepchildren and soon to be ex-wife.

DISTRICT 5

CO Mike Hearn was first on scene of a snowmobile personal injury accident on the trails. The operator was driving too fast for conditions and hit a tree. The subject suffered a compound leg fracture and had to be transported two miles to a road.

CO Chris Bowen worked a complaint regarding illegal wood cutting on state land and located two local subjects who had just dropped a tree and had several more loaded in their pick-up truck. Both subjects were ticketed.

CO Chris Bowen ticketed two Canadian citizens who had kept a few short pike taken from Houghton Lake. The subjects claimed they did not know the rules, but had a fishing guide in the shanty.

CO Warren MacNeill responded to a complaint of a subject burning a house trailer. The subject was burning it as a means of disposal. CO MacNeill issued a ticket to the subject for the illegal disposal of solid waste.

CO Brian Olsen followed fresh vehicle tracks on state land in a known wood cutting area. CO Olsen met a truck coming back out of the woods with a fresh cut load of wood. Further investigation revealed the subject had cut the wood illegally. A ticket was issued.

DISTRICT 6

CO Nick Atkin received a RAP complaint where 24 bags of garbage and newspaper were dumped on the side of the road. The CO investigated the area with Sgt. Ron

Kimmerly. The garbage was traced to a local school. The school was contacted and a few days later the principal provided the COs with information that students were supposed to take the trash to the local dump. After waiting in line at the garbage facility the students decided they did not want to wait any longer and dumped the trash on a nearby road. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Chad Foerster received a RAP complaint in the Gratiot/Saginaw State Game Area about a large tree that appeared to be on fire inside the trunk. CO Foerster located the tree and found it had been on fire inside at the base but was no longer burning. It is unknown how the fire started due to the fact that it did not appear to have been struck by lightning.

CO Daniel Lee was contacted by a Saginaw County resident who needed help with a bald eagle. The subject had seen two eagles flying together earlier in the day. After returning to the same location, the man saw one eagle in a field being attacked by dogs. The CO responded and helped the man gently capture the eagle using a jacket and a recycling container. The eagle was then dropped off at a local rehabilitator.

While patrolling an area for coyote hunters, CO Ken Lowell dropped CO Phil Hudson off to observe the hunters from a hidden location. CO Hudson observed a subject with an uncased and loaded firearm hunting from a vehicle. CO Hudson called CO Lowell and advised him to come to his location and stop the vehicle. CO Hudson then observed the subject stop his truck and start unloading his firearm. CO Hudson ran to the truck and ordered the subject to get out of the vehicle. The subject told the CO to quit yelling as he was trying to get his gun unloaded before the DNR arrived. A loaded rifle and an uncased shotgun were recovered. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Holly Pennoni issued a ticket to a small game hunter who took possession of an illegally killed bobcat and tried to tag it as his own several days after the fact. The bobcat was taken out of season without a license and the person attempted to falsify the registration information.

CO Holly Pennoni was checking anglers on Saginaw Bay when she came across two anglers who had caught three walleye. One of the anglers asked if she wanted to see his fishing license, and handed her a waterfowl license. He then discovered that he did not purchase a fishing license. CO Pennoni didn't know what was worse, the fact that the angler received a ticket for fishing without a license, or that the individual's fishing partner was heckling him and was not going to let him forget his mistake.

DISTRICT 7

After a lengthy period of surveillance, CO Mike Mshar checked a group of coyote hunters in Allegan County. One subject was in possession of an uncased firearm in a motor vehicle and a small quantity of marijuana.

CO Jeff Rabbers of Barry County was the guest of the National Wild Turkey Federation at their national convention in Nashville, Tennessee, where he was honored as Michigan's Wild Turkey Enforcement Officer of the Year.

CO Mike Holmes watched a subject looking for fish along a stream in Kalamazoo County and saw the subject toss an empty oil can in the stream. CO Holmes contacted the subject and issued a ticket for litter.

CO Mike McGee ticketed a subject in Berrien County for feeding deer. CO McGee had previously given a verbal warning on the RAP complaint, but a subsequent complaint and another trip to the location revealed his warning was not taken seriously. The subject advised he was feeding deer to keep them from consuming his \$10,000 landscape project.

COs Steve Mooney and Zach Doss investigated a hunting incident where a small game hunter sustained injuries. Subjects were rabbit hunting when one hunter accidentally shot another. The hunter sustaining injuries had a pellet lodge in his leg and is expected to make a full recovery. The COs also discovered that one of the subjects involved did not have a hunting license.

CO Andy Bauer responded to a marine accident on the St Joseph River in Berrien County. A 17' vessel carrying three occupants was taking on water. Upon arrival, the three subjects aboard the sinking vessel had been rescued by local charter boat captains. The operator of the 17' boat had tied the anchor line to the stern of the boat in a high current area. Water came over the stern and the boat began to sink. Water temperature at the time of the incident was approximately 34 degrees. This is the second time the one charter boat captain has saved a boater in distress.

CO Jeff Robinette responded to concerns over a news story that aired regarding a licensed rehabilitator's sub permittee. In the news coverage images of a deer entering a house were shown, a clear violation of rehabilitation guidelines. CO Robinette contacted both the primary permit holder and the sub permittee about the news story.

DISTRICT 8

CO Dan Prince located an angler utilizing the last of the winter ice and also found him to be utilizing four lines. A ticket was issued.

CO Pete Purdy located a tree stand left out on state land. CO Purdy located enough information to track down the owner and issue a ticket.

Sgt. Troy Bahlau responded to a trespass complaint against a rabbit hunter. After interviewing both parties it was determined the small game hunter was within his legal rights and followed all regulations to retrieve his hunting dogs from the complainant's property. No enforcement action was required.

CO Rick Villerot reports two anglers going through the ice on a Lenawee County Lake. They were rescued by other anglers and are okay.

DISTRICT 9

CO Dan Walzak walked up to two ice anglers at Lake Erie Metro Parks Marina and asked to see their fishing licenses. One of the anglers said "Got mine right up front; knew you were going to ask". The second angler, not saying anything and not making any eye contact with CO Walzak, got his wallet out and started looking for his license. As the angler was looking for the second time, CO Walzak noticed the first angler look at his friend in disbelief. He then shook his head and went back to fishing. CO Walzak checked the angler through the Retail Sales System, and found that the angler had not purchased a fishing license for the current year. Enforcement action was taken and while walking back to the patrol vehicle, CO Walzak heard the first angler laughing and saying, "I told you, I told you to get a license."

CO Jonathan Sklba issued a ticket to an individual who was shooting on state land. The subject stated that he was not shooting anything. CO Sklba had the subject show him where he had just walked. CO Sklba observed several broken bottles and cans that had been shot. The subject admitted to shooting the cans and agreed to pick up the mess he had created.

CO Brandon Kieft was patrolling a hilly property in northern Oakland County in search of ORV trespassers. After conducting a stop on a large 4x4 truck "mud-running" on the property, he questioned the driver. The driver stated that he was just testing the 4-wheel drive on his new truck. However, the real "test" would come minutes later for the driver. After CO Kieft issued him a ticket for ORV trespass, the trespasser attempted to turn his vehicle around and got stuck in the mud. After borrowing a shovel from CO Kieft and making his passenger push, the truck was finally back on the main road 30 minutes later.

CO Kris Kiel watched a large group of ice fishermen for some time from his truck. They were targeting pan fish and perch over a large weed bed in Anchor Bay, Lake St. Clair. CO Kiel noticed one subject struggling with the weight of his bucket as he moved from hole to hole. CO Kiel parked at the house of a subject he knows and borrowed a bucket and a spud. He put on his snowmobile suit and ice creepers and headed out to check the group. After quietly checking a couple of anglers, he made his way over to the heavy bucket. CO Kiel had him dump his bucket and found he had 42 large sunfish and a crappie (17 over the limit). He tried to say that his buddies had been throwing fish in his bucket too. CO Kiel let him know that he had been watching him for over an hour and that no one had put any fish in his bucket but him. He then admitted that the fish were all his. Running DNR priors, CO Kiel found the subject has been caught with an over limit of walleye in the past. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Kris Kiel was working the Cotton Road area of Lake St. Clair watching a large group of anglers who were targeting the jumbo sunfish that had stacked into the area. He

watched as one subject left with his bucket on an ORV and returned a short time later. At dusk, CO Kiel made contact with the suspect and found that he had 18 pan fish in his bucket. CO Kiel followed him to his vehicle to find the 15 pan fish he had "dumped" earlier. Enforcement action was taken on the over limit of fish. Later that night, CO Kiel got a RAP complaint on that same subject. He took pride in telling the complainant that he had already caught the subject.

CO John Borkovich observed a vehicle parked on the side of a county road. As he watched from afar, he observed the operator get out of the vehicle and throw five garbage bags into the ditch before driving off. CO Borkovich stopped the vehicle and enforcement action was taken and the trash removed.