

DNR Natural Resources Police Officers Uncover Extensive Deer Poaching Operation.

A three-month investigation by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries resulted in the arrest of six West Virginia residents in an extensive deer poaching ring.

DNR Natural Resources Police officers executed a search warrant at two homes in Hedgesville, West Virginia and uncovered an extensive deer processing operation. The investigation revealed the group was routinely killing deer in West Virginia, processing the meat, and shipping it across state lines to be sold.

“Early into this investigation it became apparent that this was a large scale operation which was in fact illegally killing wildlife, processing and selling it, and potentially transporting it out of West Virginia,” said Captain T.R. Stuckey of the DNR Law Enforcement Section. “Once these facts were established by numerous undercover buys of wildlife and wildlife parts in West Virginia by our undercover officers, a joint investigation was launched in conjunction with the

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.”

Officers started the probe in September after getting information the group may have been illegally killing deer. They were also getting large numbers of crop damage permits from various farmers and other individuals in the Eastern Panhandle.

Virginia Conservation Police officers working undercover made numerous buys of butchered deer from the eastern panhandle operation. Undercover officers from both states were also able to buy illegal drugs in both states from the same suspects.

The search warrant which yielded the illegal deer processing operation also yielded 341 marijuana plants at the home of two brothers from Hedgesville. The brothers, along with the wife of one of the brothers, are charged with multiple game and drug law violations in West Virginia. They face a range of charges in Virginia as



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Evidence seized by West Virginia DNR Natural Resources Police officers.

well. Three other men were arrested for their involvement in the ring.

Charges for the ring leaders included spotlighting, killing deer during closed season, taking deer with an illegal weapon, illegal sale and transport of wildlife out of state, and a felon in possession of a firearm, among other drug-related charges. Others involved with the illegal operation were charged with fewer charges.



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WRS Employee Receives Award from Wings Across the Americas

Kieran O'Malley, wildlife diversity biologist working from the DNR Romney office, was recognized at the 78th North American Wildlife and Natural Resource Conference by the “Wings Across the Americas” program for his contributions to and coordination of DNR participation in the Eastern Golden Eagle Working Group. This group was the first winner in the Research Partnership Award category.

“Over several years, Kieran has led our work to establish baiting sites to trap and tag golden eagles, and most recently, has been heavily involved in the use of trail cameras to photograph them for a population dynamics study,” said DNR Wildlife Resources Section Chief Curtis Taylor.

Golden eagles breed in eastern Canada but recent research by the Working Group has identified the tremendous importance of West Virginia as wintering habitat.

Explore West Virginia's Free Wildlife Epub Page

Wildlife Resources has an Epubs (electronic publications) page that is now available online. Go there and read a book, print a map or poster, check the hunting and fishing regulations, and interact with the new mapping tool. This page offers something for everyone. There are snake field guides, wildlife magazines, and coyote quiz books to learn about wildlife in West Virginia, first deer and first fish certificates to print, wild game recipes, butterfly gardening how-tos, and wildflower ID charts. "Outdoor enthusiasts have been asking for these for a while, and we are really excited to offer these now," said Frank Jezioro.

Nature techies can go to the DNR website and try it all out today. To access the page, go to: www.wvdnr.gov/wf.



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New Dents Run Shooting Range Open

The newest West Virginia Division of Natural Resources public shooting range opened to hunters this fall. The Dents Run Shooting Range is located on the Dents Run Wildlife Management Area one mile west of Mannington in western Marion County. It was built entirely by DNR employees to help control costs, according to Frank Jezioro, DNR Director.

The range features four standard benches and one bench for persons with disabilities. The benches are made of concrete and are covered with a shelter, so it is hoped they will stand up to prolonged use. Target frames and backstops are located at 25, 50 and 100 yards.

"The construction of this new facility was made possible through the cooperation of the DNR, CONSOL Energy and the National Rifle Association, and with the support of our state and federal leaders," Jezioro said. "We expect that this new facility will receive a lot of use."

Hunters and recreational shooters are urged to follow the rules of the range which will be posted and enforced.

The shooting range can be reached by taking county Route 1 (Buffalo Creek Road) from Mannington and then turning right onto Dents Run Road (CR 5). The entrance to shooting range is approximately 1 mile on the right.

For additional information pertaining to Dents Run Wildlife Management Area and the shooting range, please contact the Farmington District I DNR Office at 304-825-6787.

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