

WILDLIFE LAW ENFORCEMENT PROJECT

The Department must enforce wildlife-related laws and regulations to protect wildlife and wildlife habitat, protect public health and safety, and sustain ample recreation opportunities. These law enforcement activities are administered through the Field Operations Division and the Law Enforcement Branch (LEB) housed in the Phoenix central office, and implemented by Wildlife Managers and law enforcement personnel assigned to each of the state's six regional offices. The Division and Branch provide administrative structure, planning, training, oversight and coordination for Project personnel and cooperators.

The Department uses law enforcement patrols, officer visibility, officer contact, and information and education programs to enhance public awareness and knowledge of wildlife-related laws and regulations as a means of improving voluntary compliance. This includes the development and implementation of enforcement strategies and techniques, including use of patrols and volunteers, to increase deterrence, detection, and apprehension of violators, improve compliance rates, and enhance constituent involvement and public awareness. Over the next two years the Department will continue to implement a Law Enforcement Vision that will maintain the professionalism and effectiveness of our officers, and increase program effectiveness through innovation. As part of this vision, the Department will strive to develop a data driven and responsive program with the goal of increasing voluntary compliance.

The Department is the only state agency with the legal mandate to manage all Arizona wildlife, but it is only one of many state and federal agencies involved in natural resource management. The Department must cooperate with enforcement and land or resource management agencies in Arizona, other states, and other countries to implement and enforce wildlife-related laws, regulations, and policies.

The LEB provides training to Department employees, volunteers, and cooperating law enforcement agencies regarding wildlife-related laws, regulations, and policies. We strive to be a workforce that is highly skilled and trained and utilizes the most appropriate law enforcement techniques to accomplish our objectives.

The Department's Communication Center is a part of LEB, and strives to provide effective communication for activities around the state, and to provide exceptional service to both internal and external customers. The Communication Center and LEB also maintain all enforcement records databases, and provides employee training in its use.

The Department utilizes customer and other available data to drive Law Enforcement efforts. We continually strive to be the best in our profession through continuous evaluation and improvement of our program, rule and regulations, use of new and emerging technology and techniques.

OPERATIONAL APPROACHES

Marked Unit and Special Patrols

1. Design, implement, and evaluate statewide and regional patrol efforts based on an evaluation of available data. Constantly strive to improve the data used and the methods of collection. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.A.5, 1.B.6, 1.B.9, 2.D.2)
2. Special Patrols and Decoy projects - each Region should use decoy methodology to target road-hunting, safety issues and “buddy hunting” as applicable. Each Region should plan on at least one special wildlife patrol activity during the year. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.A.5, 1.B.6, 1.B.9, 2.D.2)
3. Regions will continue to emphasize patrols for big game and angler compliance. (1.A.1, 1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.B.3, 1.B.6, 1.B.9, 2.A.2)
4. Regions will emphasize archery deer harvest reporting statewide to increase compliance. (1.A.1, 1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.A.9)
5. Region II will conduct concentrated patrol efforts for fishermen with special emphasis on Lee’s Ferry, Lake Powell, Upper Lake Mary and Lower Lake Mary. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.A.5, 1.B.6, 1.B.9, 2.D.2)
6. Regions III, IV, V and VI will target illegal commercial reptile collectors during the first and last quarters of the fiscal year. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.A.5, 1.B.6, 1.B.9, 2.D.2)
7. Region IV will continue emphasis on early dove hunt compliance and coordinate efforts with Region VI and the USFWS. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.A.5, 1.B.6, 1.B.9, 2.D.2)
8. Region V will design focused patrol activities to decrease incidents of rangeland vandalism. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.A.5, 1.B.6, 1.B.9, 2.D.2)
9. Region VI will provide law enforcement response to address Bald Eagle nest closure area issues, the Lower Gila River area and associated Department Wildlife Areas. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.A.5, 1.B.6, 1.B.9, 2.D.2)
10. Phoenix based officer support will be directed as per the following wildlife enforcement emphasis (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.A.5, 1.B.6, 1.B.9, 2.D.2):
 - i. July-Sept Quarter – Archery Deer (Region II) and Dove Hunts (Regions IV, V, & VI)
 - ii. Oct-Dec Quarter – Elk Hunts (Regions I & II) and Region V Deer Hunts
 - iii. Jan-Mar Quarter – Javelina Hunts (Regions III, V and VI)
 - iv. Apr-Jun Quarter – Wildlife law enforcement related emphasis is directed at fishing regulation compliance in relation to watercraft enforcement.

Wildlife Law Enforcement Investigations

1. Officers will respond to Operation Game Thief (OGT) calls expeditiously and in accordance with Department protocol. All identified Reporting Parties (RPs) who desire a call back should receive a follow-up call from the assigned officer 100% of the time. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.B.9)
2. Assist regional personnel in implementing Unit Watches to promote OGT philosophy and conducting outreach targeting units or areas with higher permit numbers and higher potential for violations or to address Regional needs: (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.B.9, 2.D.1-4)
3. Conduct a repeat offender project as initiated from Regional intelligence and utilizing Special Operation Unit (SOU) resources. Unlawful commercial wildlife activity will receive highest priority relative to project consideration. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.B.9)
4. Investigative priority will be directed towards license fraud detection and prosecution. Region IV plans to enhance investigation activities in regards to Special Licenses. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.B.9)
5. In support of SOU operation support to Regional needs, two Regional officers, one at a time for a maximum of six months, during the year may be short-term detailed to SOU. They will be assigned to short-term investigations in direct support of the Regions. Candidate selection will be done informally in coordination with the Regional Supervisors. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.B.9, 4.A.5)
6. In conjunction with the Department's internal auditor, all completed SOU cases will receive a closeout audit. Additionally, the OGT reward payment process will receive regular audits. (3.A.5, 3.B.3)
7. Department will maintain membership and/or participation with the annual Quad State Meeting in Nevada, IANRC, RMIN, Western States Wildlife Investigators Conference, Tri-State Intelligence Association and instate intelligence meetings as coordinated by DPS. (1.A.4, 1.A.5, 2.D.1-4)

Urban Wildlife Law Enforcement

1. Provide enforcement presence for hunts in 11M, 38M, 26M, 25M and 47M with emphasis on Tucson Mountain Park and rural interfaces where hunters may infringe upon private property rights. Additionally, Region VI will enhance enforcement efforts in the Phoenix Valley area to ensure habitat protection on PLO 1015 lands administered by the Department. Patrol efforts should be directed at opening weekends of small game and dove seasons. Safety issues and concerns should be targeted. Opportunities for outreach to hunters and others engaged in urban wildlife-related activities should be developed and fostered. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.A.5, 1.B.6, 1.B.9, 2.D.2)

2. Provide enforcement for special hunts and other wildlife-related activities within designated urban districts. Regions with Urban Lakes will continue to work coordinated patrol efforts in support of the Urban Lake Program, and look for partnerships with other agencies and public groups. As available, Phoenix based officer support will be used to augment this activity. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.A.5, 1.B.6, 1.B.9, 2.D.2)
3. Provide urban law enforcement support for the OGT and investigations efforts originating from or terminating in urban areas. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.B.9, 2.D.1-4)

Communication/Dispatch/Records

1. Maintain and continue deployment/enhancement of WILDS and the contact database. Regional and LEB personnel will continue to serve on the standing WILDS Committee. During the next two years we expect to provide connectivity to/for all officers, and update training for officers as to use of system. User manual will be finalized and distributed as well. (1.A.1, 1.A.2, 1.A.4, 3.B.3)
2. Conduct data entry and reporting as per Commission, Department and Wildlife Violator Compact needs and requirements. (1.A.4, 1.A.5, 2.D.1-3)
3. Maintain dispatch services seven days a week 24 hours per day with emphasis on personnel and aircraft safety and monitoring. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 2.B.1, 2.B.2)
4. Public records requests will be responded to and supported as per Department policy. (2.D.2-4)
5. Maintain the use of a mix of telephone lines and microwave link for radio communication to DPS, to enhance quality reliability of radio transmissions and save on telephone costs. Department will maintain necessary frequency sharing with other cooperating jurisdictions to enhance officer safety and law enforcement information/dispatch exchange. Grant monies will be pursued to resolve interoperability issues between the Department's radio system and those of other law enforcement jurisdictions. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 3.A.6, 3.B.3)
6. Complete conversion to and maintain the use of computer based ACJIS connections at each radio room workstation, so that the Department most effectively uses our IT resources. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 3.B.3)
7. Department will maintain membership and/or participation with the ACJIS/NCIC, CARNAC, Arizona Spillman Systems Users Group and AZ700RPC Region 3 Committee. Radio system support and maintenance will continue to be coordinated with DPS. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.D.2-4, 3.B.3)

Wildlife Law Enforcement Administration, Management and Training

1. Revocation/Civil Assessment Cases will be processed in accordance with law, Commission Rule and Department procedure with monthly presentations before the Commission. (1.A.3, 1.A.3, 1.B.9, 2.A.1)
2. Training for a recruit classes will be supported during this two-year cycle. The current projections are that the Department will hire and train two groups of officers in each year. Each class will also undergo academy and post academy training, and Wildlife Manager Training Officer (WMTO) training. Regional personnel will be necessary to support all wildlife manager training efforts. Additionally, one or two Wildlife Managers or Law Enforcement Specialists will be needed as counselors to support training classes in the academies. (1.A.3, 1.A.4, 1.B.3, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.B.6, 2.B.7, 2.B.94.A.5, 4.A.6)
3. Law enforcement continuing education training will be coordinated and administered for all Department officers at Department Schools. Law, rule, policy and procedure update materials as well as continual progress review of the LE Vision implementation will be prepared and distributed during Department School. (1.A.3, 1.A.4, 1.B.3, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.B.6, 2.B.7, 2.B.94.A.5, 4.A.6)
4. Over the next two years LEB staff will develop and implement continuous training needs assessments to guide the continuing education efforts. (1.A.3, 1.A.4, 1.B.3, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.B.6, 2.B.7, 2.B.94.A.5, 4.A.6)
5. Reserve Officer recruitment will be ongoing, and Reserve Officer training will be incorporated with regular Wildlife Manager post-academy training. Training time will be approximately 40 hours. Reserve Officer time contributes directly to our field presence. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.A.5, 1.B.6, 1.B.9, 2.D.2, 4.A.8)
6. Additionally, LEB Staff member will participate on Wildlife Views Advisory Board. (1.A.4, 1.B.1, 1.B.2, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.A.3, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.B.9)
7. Wildlife Assets Program will continue to be supported with the majority of the Department's annual surplus being sold at public auction in association with the annual Sportsman's Expo held in Phoenix in spring. Each FOD work unit will continue to work with local conservation organizations using opportunities and venues to dispose of available assets to augment the program and foster outreach for law enforcement. The project plans to work closely with the Information Project to maximize the outreach benefits that the Department receives from this effort. (1.A.4, 2.A.3, 2.D.3, 3.A.5)
8. Department will maintain membership and/or participation with IAFWA, NACLEC, WAFWA, WWLE Workshop, Tri-Lateral, ANRET, NFTOA, CLEA and AACOP. (2.D.1-4)

LINKAGES TO OTHER OPERATIONAL PLANS

Business Administration Program: The Wildlife Law Enforcement project regularly receives support from the Business Administration program function of the Department, particularly as it relates to the hiring of Wildlife Managers (Human Resources) and as it relates to maintenance of the Wildlife Theft Prevention Fund and the Wildlife Assets Fund (Financial Management).

Sportfish Subprogram:

Law enforcement is a management tool used to support the Sportfish subprogram's efforts to enhance and maintain sportfish populations. LEB will coordinate with the Sportfish subprogram to determine areas that need focused law enforcement patrols during the cross-program coordination meeting and the implementation planning process.

Game Subprogram:

Law enforcement is a management tool used to support the Game subprogram's efforts to enhance and maintain game populations. LEB will coordinate with the Game subprogram to determine areas that need focused law enforcement patrols during the cross-program coordination meeting and the implementation planning process.

Nongame Subprogram: Law enforcement is a management tool used to support the Nongame subprogram's efforts to enhance and maintain nongame populations. LEB will coordinate with the Nongame subprogram to determine areas that need focused law enforcement patrols during the cross-program coordination meeting and the implementation planning process.

Information & Education Projects:

LEB benefits from support received from the Information and Education projects that help to educate the public and increase voluntary compliance. LEB has committed to conduct regular coordination meeting with the I & E projects during quarterly Law Enforcement Program Manager meetings to proactively discuss outreach and education needs.

Research Project:

There are currently plans for the Research project to conduct a Fisheries Compliance Study and LEB personnel will coordinate extensively with Research personnel in the planning and implementation. Additionally, as LEB continues to develop a data driven enforcement program, we may request support from the Research project in developing data analysis processes.

Habitat Project:

As access becomes a larger issue around the state, it is anticipated that law enforcement support will be needed to address issues such as vandalism, trespass, and littering in areas that are under access agreements. LEB and the Habitat project will coordinate these efforts on a state and regional level as needed.

Development Project:

There are not any plans currently for the Wildlife Law Enforcement project to work directly with the Development project. However, should Development Branch identify a law enforcement need associated with any of their projects LEB can accommodate there needs through the cross programs and implementation planning processes.

Wildlife Area Project:

While the Development Branch has statewide responsibility for Wildlife Area Management, regional wildlife program personnel manage each individual Wildlife Area. Regional law enforcement personnel currently coordinate law enforcement needs on these areas. The Wildlife Law Enforcement project regularly provides support to the Wildlife Areas, as needed, through the coordinated cross-program and implementation planning processes.