

# **Editorial-**

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## **GAME WARDENS**

The job of game warden is like no other. To say that game wardens are a close knit group is a huge understatement, as I have never seen any other job class in which members have so much pride, and care so much about one another. In my many years as a game warden I have been able to travel around most of the US and many parts of the world, and have always found that game wardens (no matter where they might be) are normally willing to openly accept each other into their lives and even into their homes. A game warden from one area can easily call a game warden any other area and ask for advice on where to go on a family camping/fishing trip, and find themselves eating a meal with that officer and his family only to later be given a private tour of the best spots to experience in the area. Just try that in any other job. To most of us, being a game warden is way more than a job, it is an identity.....a part of who we are.

A game warden's job can be the most rewarding and even fun job on earth, but it can also be the source of a great deal of stress and heartache. The long hours, the dangers, the competitiveness and the controversy can all take a toll on us. We are so driven to catch poachers, that we sometimes forget what is really most important.

In a number of other job settings (where people work in a large group) most employees truly only care about themselves. In those work environments, employees will often tear down other employees in a twisted attempt to make themselves look better. Employees rarely work to help another employee get a job done, unless it directly benefits them too. In other large work places, backstabbing, rumor mongering, and sabotage are common. That is not to say that we haven't seen these same behaviors amongst our ranks, but those who behave as such soon find themselves banished by the game wardens they work with. Overall, game wardens look out for each other and take care their own.

It is that same sense of camaraderie which also brings our group strength when one of us faces tough times. In this magazine you will find both celebrations of our accomplishments and stories of tremendous tragedy. Every time a game warden family (from any part of the world) faces a great loss, we all feel it, but nothing makes me more proud than to see the instant response from other game wardens. We are a family, and we come together as one during the tough times. What each of you might not understand is how important that response is to the individuals in our circle. Trust me that your calls, cards, and support mean the world to your fellow game wardens. Nothing can make the hurt go away for those directly impacted, but having a large group of close friends sure helps us get through the tough times.

I have been very lucky to have had a career as a game warden, and to have worked with some of the best people in the world. I have always said that when (if) I ever retire I won't miss the job, but I'll miss the people. The events of the last few months drive that point home.

To all of you; never forget that while the job we do is important, nothing is more important than our families and the people we trust and care for. For those of you who might have forgotten

that; take a serious look at your life and make a sincere effort to get back on track. You will not be judged by your colleagues just from how many poachers you caught, but also by how you treated others.