

The “Target Illinois Poachers” program became operational on January 1, 1984. Developed by the then Department of Conservation, the intent of the program was to encourage concerned citizens who witness a conservation



offense to report the violation. Twenty-five years later, the TIP hotline remains an important ally for citizens who witness or suspect violations involving our natural resources. Callers are not required to give their name—all sources are strictly confidential. Information received is investigated by a Conservation Police Officer.

Between 1984 and 2007, an average of 336 calls were received each year, with 65 percent of the calls taking place from October through January. About half of the calls made involved some alleged violation involving white-tailed deer, but the range of violations is vast.

■ A TIP complaint about a person unlawfully possessing baby raccoons resulted in the person being taken to

jail on an active warrant and being issued a written warning for the unlawful possession of the raccoons.

■ A TIP complaint led officers to a subject who was stealing eggs from the nests of Canada geese and keeping the geese after the eggs hatched.

■ Officers arrested a subject for illegal dumping in a creek after his downstream neighbor observed a number of fish carcasses and entrails floating past his house.

■ A neighbor complained about a large sheen on the pond behind his house, leading officers to discover a homeowner dumping paint in the storm sewer by his house.

■ An anonymous caller reported a couple he believed were digging ginseng at Matthiessen State Park. An officer responded and issued one citation for digging ginseng in a restricted area.

■ A complaint was reported via the Internet of three geese and four beavers being killed with a rifle. The property owner admitted to killing the geese, claiming they were spreading duck weed on his pond. One citation was issued.

■ A caller reported a subject taking short muskie at Lake Shelbyville. While cleaning fish at the cleaning station the 15-year-old angler tried to dispose of the fish when he saw the officer approaching. One citation was issued for failure to immediately release short fish.

■ Following up on a TIP report of deer poaching in Pope County, an officer observed a suspicious vehicle in an area where deer poaching had been reported. Interviewing the driver, the officer was able to obtain permission to search the subject’s residence. The driver supplied details of his poaching activity for the past 14 years. In addition, the driver was a convicted felon in possession of marijuana and numerous firearms. The CPO made 15 conservation arrests and 11 criminal arrests, and the local sheriff’s department made multiple criminal arrests.

Accurate and timely information is critical to law enforcement officers. If you suspect a violation has occurred, try to take down information on the vehicle driven (license number, color, make and year), violator (name, address, age and description) and the violation (type of violation, where it occurred and location of contraband).

Conservation Police Officers can not apprehend all violators on their own. They need the guidance and assistance of the public to be most effective.

Good law enforcement is everybody’s responsibility. If you see a violation, report it.

Sam Flood



Target Illinois
POACHERS
Call Toll-Free
1-877-2DNR-LAW
1-877-236-7529

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