



O.C.O.A.

ONTARIO CONSERVATION OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

www.ooa.ca

MEDIA RELEASE

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CONSERVATION OFFICERS ASK FOR PUBLIC'S HELP IN CATCHING POACHERS

The members of the Ontario Conservation Officers Association (O.C.O.A.) are asking for assistance from the public in apprehending persons responsible for abusing the natural resources of the province during the fall hunting seasons.

“Hundreds of thousands of Ontario residents hunt every fall. Our officers find that approximately 95% of those persons hunt legally, thereby ensuring the sustainability of our wildlife populations.” says O.C.O.A. president Dan VanExan, “Unfortunately, there will always be members of our society who do not abide by the law, and we need the help of the public to enforce these laws.”

Conservation Officers (COs) are highly trained law enforcement officers with a wide range of investigative tools at their disposal, including detector dogs, firearms ballistics and DNA testing. However, all of this expertise cannot be effectively used without help from the public in providing information about poachers and their activities. “Imagine how hard it would be for a police officer to solve a theft if no one reported the crime”, said VanExan. “Wildlife relies on concerned members of the public to speak for them, they cannot speak for themselves. Our officers are very effective at solving cases brought to their attention, but we need your help to alert us to these crimes.”

The most serious violations encountered by officers during the moose hunting season include: hunters who shoot an animal for which they do not have a valid licence, and moose tagged illegally by persons who are not members of the party who shot the animal. Ontario law states that persons hunting in a party must be within 5 km of each other, and must have a reliable means of communication with the tag holder. Methods of communication include two way radios, cell phones, whistle blasts, or signal shots.

In addition, many moose are shot and abandoned every fall by poachers. Some of these animals are killed by hunters who inadvertently shoot an animal for which they do not have a licence – in many cases young adult moose are mistaken for calves. “I encourage hunters who make an honest mistake to contact us immediately. While the onus is certainly on the hunter to be sure of their target before shooting, officers will usually exercise leniency when dealing with hunters who call and report their mistake”, says VanExan.

Anyone with information about a wildlife related crime is encouraged to call the 24 hour violation reporting line at 1-877-TIPS-MNR (847-7667), contact their local CO directly, or call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

For more information about natural resources regulations and enforcement, please visit the O.C.O.A. website at www.ooa.ca, or contact your local Conservation Officer.

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