

MAINE WARDEN SERVICE HISTORY

Early 1800's to Present

Early 1800s

Inland Fish were considered worthless because they could not be caught in commercial quantities.

1826

The year round hunter got a new opportunity, the first season was set up for Deer and Moose, but no bag limit was established.

1852

Seven Moose Wardens were appointed on a part time basis (one from each of seven counties) and paid a salary \$25 to \$75 a year.

Following the Civil War and into the 1870s things were changing, game was abundant and market hunting began: Moose, caribou and deer were being shipped by the hundreds by rail to points south.

1867

Two Fisheries Commissioners were appointed by the Governor.

1870

A Caribou season was set October thru January with no bag limit.

1873

A three deer a year limit was passed but still no Game Wardens.

Sixty Fish Wardens had no power to enforce the very few game laws. By the late 1870s, widespread violations of fishing laws brought about a closed season on landlocked salmon, trout, and togue. Eight people took 800 pounds of trout from Spencer Bay in Greenville to a market in Connecticut.

On March 9 of 1880, the Fishery Commissioners became responsible for enforcing game laws. The Department of Fish and Game was established.

The first summons. Three days after enacted (March 12th, 1880) two men were caught killing a doe in closed season. They ran a pregnant doe down in deep snow and slit her throat. They paid fines totaling \$71.

1881

The 60 fish Wardens were getting about \$25 a year! They now had the power to enforce game law also but most lived near the coast and enforcing game laws was difficult. The Wardens received half of the amount of the fines paid by the violators.

No licenses were required to fish and hunt.

1881

Commissioner Stanley's report to the Governor:

"Game wardens receive no regular salary at all. They are expected to be sustained by enthusiasm alone in game protection; to abandon home and the occupations that give bread to their families, and go forth to the forest for the reward of one-half of the penalties that they may obtain from captured and convicted law-breakers and the soul-stirring privilege of shooting on sight any dog which they may observe chasing deer."

Dogs were a very effective method of hunting deer and packs of dogs were used.

The public feared reporting fish and game violations- fearing burning of homes, poisoning of livestock and their lives endangered.

"Crusters" entered Maine along its borders and killed scores of Moose to sell the hides in the Toronto market. Over 1000 Maine hides were sold in 1881. The Canadian hunters were called Crusters because they came in when the snow conditions had formed a crust, thus enabling them to get around easier than the moose. They would get up to a moose and axe them to death. It was also reported that a band of Indians often got 40 or more moose skins during a single hunt to take back to Canada.

1882

A law was enacted prohibiting the exportation of game from Maine. Well-intended laws but there were no Wardens living on the boundary at the time.

Black Bass (largemouth and smallmouth) were being stocked.

The commissioner's report in 1883 cited a supervisor from Washington County as saying, "The year of 1882 was the most destructive of game of any for years. Market hunters swarmed into our woods from all parts of the state and Massachusetts, broke over all restraint of law and decency, used dogs, crust hunted and even shot the does upon the barrens in April. The frequent light snows of November and December gave the pothunters immense advantage.

At the close of the open season of 1882, the prospect was dark for the protectionist, for his work of years was nearly destroyed in a single season. The great success of these poachers promised to add ten times their number this season. I was discouraged, knowing from a long experience in this region the basis for game in Maine, that market hunting and game protection were perfectly incompatible and that it must be checked or our large game would be exterminated."

A one armed civil war veteran was employed in that area and was spoken of highly. "Most of the work has been done by Warden L.O. Hill, who entered his duties in September and has been constantly in the woods since, doing effective work. He has shown great interest in his work and has the confidence of our best citizens. He certainly has done good work and I hope we may retain his services in the future as an active game police for which service he is well fitted."

Supervisor S.B. Hunter

1886

The Boston Herald reported, "The state of Maine has the most rigid and best enforced code of laws for the protection of game and game fish of any state in the union!"

November 8, 1886

The first recorded Wardens to have died in the line of duty were Charles W. Niles and Lyman O. Hill. They had confronted two men who had been "dogging deer." When they attempted to seize the dog the poacher shot both Niles and Hill.

1886

The Commissioner's report stated, "Of caribou it is difficult to make any estimate of increase or decrease. The reports to us are of plenty and in all sections. We have heard of many being killed, but of all our game animals, the caribou is the most capable of taking care of itself. But still, in all changes of our laws for venison we wish to have caribou included."

1888

A Warden seized a whole carload of caribou meat on its way to a Boston market. 1894 it was estimated that 4,000 caribou would be killed that year.

1899

Closed the season on Caribou and by 1900; it was found that "there are practically no caribou in the state of Maine.

1899

The first attempt at a license program was started.

"The September Law" was passed. It provided for a fee of \$4.00 for a resident and \$6.00 for a non-resident which would allow them to kill one deer in the month of September. It was abolished quickly because of its extreme unpopularity. Mainers had always felt that wild birds and animals of their forests, the leaping fish of their streams and lakes were fair game for anyone skillful enough to take them. The Department saw a need to conserve fish and game if Maine were to have any left.

1900

Damage to crops by deer was being investigated and owners of crops were reimbursed by the state.

Trapping season established for fisher, mink, muskrat and sable (Oct to April). Beaver were protected all year.

1830

Bounties started being paid. Crows were first and up through 1900 it had expanded to include Bear, Wolves, Wildcats, and Porcupines.

Lacey act was approved prohibiting interstate shipment of illegally killed game.

1907

The sale of trout, landlocked salmon, togue, white perch, and black bass was prohibited.

York County had a buck's only law. Many Sunday hunting violations were occurring and the "Old Sunday Law" used to apply to fishing also.

1916

Automobiles were beginning to be used to night hunt deer. By 1919, a law was passed prohibiting a loaded firearm in a motor vehicle.

1917

A non-resident fishing license fee of \$2.00 was passed and 7,500 visitors were licensed. This created six new Warden Positions.

1919

The Secret Service helped catch market hunters by conducting covert activities.

A lifetime resident hunting license cost .25 cents.

A lifetime resident fishing license cost .25 cents.

Cat owners were told to keep their cats out of the woods during the bird-nesting season or assume the responsibility of their cats killing birds.

1921

A non-resident fishing license increased to \$3.00.

1921

The third Warden to die in the line of duty occurred when twenty-year-old Arthur Deag drowned after capsizing his canoe while trying to run Pockwockamus Falls.

1921

The fourth Warden to die in the line of duty occurred when Warden Leslie Robinson was killed when his automobile rolled over during a snowstorm.

1922

The Warden Service was cut in half due to a lack of funding.

1922

The fifth and sixth Wardens to die in the line of duty disappeared while working illegal beaver trappers near Big Bog on the Canadian border. Their bodies were not discovered until ice out in May of 1923. It remains a mystery as to what had actually happened to them.

The Moose season was closed. Beaver were becoming numerous and the need to open a season on them was being considered.

1926

Deer bag limit one per year, hatchery expansion caused less funding for Game Wardens, dog law came into affect that if they were found running unaccompanied then owner would be liable for a penalty, and Wardens were referred to as Deputies.

1927

The seventh Warden to die in the line duty occurred when Lee H. Parker was shot and killed when stopping an automobile for night hunting.

1928

Warden Service was reorganized to four zones with supervisors (Chief Wardens) for each zone. They each retained a district as well.

1928

The season on Moose once again opened and resulted in 125 bulls being killed. It was then stated that they hoped there would be no further open season on moose because when they finally disappear they will no more return than the caribou had.

1928

Warden Edward King of Skowhegan lost a hand and a portion of his arm while on patrol in the woods. While snowshoeing, he tripped and got his arm wet and frozen.

1928

A \$25 dollar a month salary for Wardens was proposed.

1929

Resident licenses increased to .50 cents or \$1.00 for a combination license.

1931

Civil Service Exams were first given and candidates for the Warden Service were selected based on their scores, previously they had been politically appointed.

1931

Deer Kill was reported at 14,932 animals.

1932

Warden Leon Wilson was hired and Commissioner Stobie handed him a law book and said "Leon, half of your job lies between the pages of this book. The other half lies from your ears up."

1932

Commissioner Stobie was quoted as passing on advice to Governor Brann. Governor Brann asked Stobie to fire his 40 Wardens and hire 40 from a list provided by Brann. Stobie advised Brann to leave office and take his list of 40 with him.

1932

Deer crop damages paid out for \$3,378.53

1932

Chief Warden Alonzo Carlson was shot in the leg and beaten while trying to apprehend an automobile full of violators.

1932

Warden Bert Tupper of Rockwood fractured his left leg and sustained chest injuries while apprehending night hunters. He spent 6 weeks in the hospital.

1932

Department hired its first engineer and built the Gray Game Farm, which resulted in the Pheasant stocking program: 1,660 in 1933, 8,500 in 1940, 17,000 in 1949, and 30,000 in 1960

1933

The eighth Warden to die in the line of duty occurred when Jean Baptiste Jalbert drowned on the St. Francis River when his canoe struck a submerged log during high water and overturned.

1933

The licensing of house cats was urged by legislatures to try to protect wildlife. In addition, many deer were reported clubbed to death in deep snow conditions by people needing to put food on the table.

1934

Beaver continue to become a nuisance under the current protection. The deer kill fell off 40%.

1935

The largest Fish Hatchery in the World was built in Gray, Maine. The hatchery was federally funded.

1935

Commissioner Stobie has a party at Mooshead for the President's Cabinet. All the east coast Governors were invited.

1935

Licenses referendum raised licenses from .50 CENTS to \$1.00.

1935

Warden Clifford Chaples had arrested some night hunters that resulted in a physical altercation. He actually was tried for assault and battery but was found not guilty.

1935

Warden George Bradbury broke his hip and spent several months in the hospital.

1935

Warden Bradbury attempted to stop a vehicle for night hunting and they would not stop. He shot at the vehicle.

1935

A Millinocket man got 60 days in jail and a \$100 fine for killing a moose.

1935

A three-day moose hunt was held in three counties, (Knox, Lincoln, and Waldo) with a two prong, 3-inch antler restriction.

1935

Law passed requiring shotguns to be plugged for duck hunters.

1935

A Howland man was charged with attempted murder of three Wardens in a night hunting apprehension.

1935

Wardens Sampson and Whitten jumped on the running board of a fleeing automobile while attempting to stop them for night hunting. They grabbed a gun from a passenger which caused the gun to go off. A fight broke out and the Wardens smashed the windshield. Warden Sampson was knocked unconscious with a flashlight and fell to the ground. Warden Whitten smashed the other side of the windshield and removed the keys from the moving vehicle. Two men were apprehended and one got away.

1935

The ninth Warden to die in the duty occurred when Warden Supervisor Robert Moore was killed at a railroad crossing when the converted rail car he was on collided with an automobile in Moscow.

1936

Commissioner Stobie issued Wardens new uniforms.

1936

Night hunting of raccoons was now legal.

1936

Wardens were busy cleaning up Washington County of market hunters and had actually bought twenty deer from one hunter.

1936

The first Warden Academy was held at Orono, Maine.

1937

Warden Service Flying service starts. Commissioner Stobie gave the Department the use of his personal Gull-wing aircraft. Bill Turgeon was named the Warden Pilot.

1937

The Pittman-Robinson Bill was passed in congress providing federal funding for conservation of game animals.

1937

A Washington County sting resulted in the seizer of 40 deer and

1938

Warden Frank Hoar was hit in the hand with a five-cell flashlight while apprehending night hunters. It split his fingers open on his hand.

1938

Warden Ned Hutchinson was named as the second Warden Pilot.

1938

The state paid out \$11,000 dollars in bounties on Bobcats. They were \$5 each and 2,200 cats were killed.

1938

An investigation in the Solon/Skowhegan area netted poachers selling 15 deer for \$15 to \$100 each going to New Hampshire.

1938

Warden Edward King was deemed the oldest man on the force at age 77.

1938

There was a five day annual training session held in Orono, Maine.

1939

Warden Service organizes a Pistol Team.

1939

Warden Frederick Jorgensen wrote a book, "25 years a Game Warden."

1940

Warden Lyle Smith was apprehending night hunters and suffered three broken ribs, torn muscles, head lacerations, and back injuries.

1940

Warden service started responding on occasion to lost hunters. They spent a considerable amount of time on crop damage complaints.

1941

Warden Raymond Harrington ruptured his naval while pushing vehicle out of the mud.

1941

Warden Fred Smith was struck by a night hunter's car and suffered a neck laceration, cut tendons and a damaged kneecap.

1942

Warden Mose Jackson broke his wrist while apprehending night hunters.

1943

Law was passed making Wardens responsible for searching for lost people.

1943

Wardens were now issued boots, shirts, and parkas. The Warden Service was restructured to 12 Divisions and 88 Districts, 27 of which were filled with temporary Wardens.

1943

No outboard motors were available during this time due to World War II.

1943

The greatest manhunt in history occurred. A Canadian draft dodger had been hiding in Northern Piscataquis County. He started traveling, searching for food, and shot a man. The search resulted in his death.

1944

Wardens were called upon to search and capture two groups of escaped German prisoners that had been being held as prisoners of war in Maine.

1946

The tenth Warden to die in the line of duty occurred when Warden Randall Shelley suffered a heart attack while attempting to push his stuck vehicle out.

1946

Warden Maynard Marsh suffered a leg injury when he was struck by a night hunter's vehicle. He initially spent three months in the hospital and ended up in and out for the next two years.

1946

Wardens documented 320,776 hours in the field and 136,858 foot miles.

1946

Temporary Wardens were relieved because the full time Wardens were returning home after service to their country in World War II.

1946

The numbers of Game Violations were at an all time high; Illegal Deer Hunting, Night Hunting, and Fishing Without a License cases were plenty.

1947

Night Hunting increased and was at an all time high. During July, August, September, and October there were 335 violations.

1947

More equipment became available for the Warden Service. Because of a severe drought, fall hunting season was curtailed. The drought was very detrimental to fish in the brooks and streams.

1948

Warden Roland Abbott of Bethel was wounded with a .45 caliber pistol while checking a subject in a gravel pit. The man was eventually found running a roadblock in New York and shot to death.

1949

Demands on the Warden Service showed an increase in nearly every aspect of a Warden's activities.

1949

Wardens were issued police .38 caliber revolvers, belts, holsters, and cartridge boxes.

1950

Commissioner Stobie retires. He was an extremely influential man in the Warden Service's development. He was a great, tall man, admired by employees as well as the sporting public for his efforts in fish and game matters.

1950

Night hunters apprehended had dropped to 117 with 362 the year before. The decline was attributed to stiffer penalties that had been imposed.

1951

Record deer harvest of 41,730.

1956

The eleventh Warden to die in the line of duty occurred when Warden Pilot George Townsend crashed his new plane into Maranacook Lake in Winthrop. He and his passenger, a Biologist, both died in the crash.

1956

The Warden Service was issued two-way radios.

1957

Fish stocking was now a regular duty of Warden Pilots.

1957

Four new Warden Camps had been built; Nicasious Lake, Baker Lake, Allagash Lake and Eagle Lake.

1957

Fiscal year ended with violations numbering 2000 cases and a 94% conviction rate. There were 170,000 licensed deer hunters with a 25% success rate.

1959

Record deer harvest of 41,735.

1959

Half the Warden Service was issued state owned vehicles.

58 temporary Wardens were hired for the fall hunting season

Warden salaries increased to \$72.00 a week. Top pay was \$90 week.
The Greenville hangar was completed.

1960

New law required boats with ten horsepower and over motors to be registered and numbers to be displayed on the hulls.

The other half of the Warden Service was issued state owned vehicles. All were equipped with two way radios, blue lights, and sirens.

Litter laws enacted and added to Warden's responsibilities.

1961

Creel census were conducted and compiled by District Wardens.

340 night hunters were prosecuted.

A 250-watt radio base station was now in operation in Greenville.

The Illuminating Law came into effect. Reduced night hunting by 66%.

Lie detector (polygraph) tests were demonstrated to Warden School candidates.

1962

Seven new snowmobiles were purchased for law enforcement.

271 deer were reported as having been killed by domestic dogs. Northern Wardens were assigned to help with dog problems in southern and central Maine.

Warden house was built for the newly created Clayton Lake district.

Purchased six new boats with large motors.

State personnel law comes into effect authorizing compensation time off for working holidays.

Three weeks of annual leave was approved for 15-year employees.

Pittston camp replaced the 20-mile camp.

Whitefield camp purchased as Division B headquarters.

Wardens issued new uniform coats.

Warden Inspector position established and ten were promoted.

Test was set up for Warden Specialists.

1964

Warden Service Rescue Unit was formed with mountain climbers and Scuba Divers

Twenty-three Caribou were released on Mt. Katahdin. They all migrated out of Maine. The department tried to stock them again in the eighties and they all died of brain worm at Orono.

Meat Identification Lab was established by Sgt. Buchanon

A new department patch was made called the Speers Patch. Game Wardens had a rocker put under the patch.

Warden Divisions reduced to 10 with an inspector's position created and one inspector assigned to each of the divisions. 99 District Wardens employed with 119 field positions.

1968

The twelfth Warden who died in the line of duty occurred. Lyle Frost was killed in a dynamite explosion when he was attempting to blow up a beaver dam.

New uniforms were issued, Stetsons and Ridgeway caps. One more division was added to make 11.

District Warden positions increased from 99 to 104 totaling 125 field positions.

1969

The Division of Snowmobile Registration was formed. This was later changed later to the Snowmobile Safety Division.

1970

Sixty four Warden Aids were appointed.

1972

Warden Service obtains Army surplus helicopters.

1972

The thirteenth Warden who died in the line of duty occurred. Warden Pilot Richard Varney crashed his helicopter in Maranacook Lake in Winthrop. He drowned. There was only eight feet of water where he crashed.

The next Warden School candidates had to be able to swim.

1973

Blaze Orange law goes into affect statewide. It had been in affect in the southwestern part of the state for six years already.

The book "You alone in the Maine Woods" was published.

1974

New Warden house built at Daaquam and a new garage was built at Estcourt Station. Remodeled the Naples and Round Pond Camps.

Personal Floatation Devices (PFD's) now became required for watercraft.

A salmon stamp was now required.

Chief Warden Allen attended the FBI Academy.

1975

Remodeled the Eagle Lake Camp and the pilot's home.

Regional Headquarters were now in operation.

Color Guard team was established.

The Department's name was changed to The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to reflect its expanded mission to include non-game wildlife as well as traditional game species and expanded its regulatory authority.

Maine Warden Service Relief Association was established

A 28-day work period was established by Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Wardens had high ban police radios installed in their vehicles.

1976

Warden Service attends pursuit-driving course for the first time.

Night hunting penalties were increased to \$500 and 3 days in jail.

Inspectors were sent to supervisor school at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy.

1978

Warden Deb Palman is the first female Game Warden hired.

Practical training commences on Swan Island and is incorporated with Warden School.

The ranks of Colonel, Major, Sergeant, and Corporal were established.

1980

Warden Service K9 Team began with Sgt. Bill Allen and Warden Deb Palman.

1981

Search and Rescue Overhead Team was established and a Command Post created. A van and a blazer were utilized.

Warden Service personnel now consisted of:

- 1 Chief Warden
- 1 Deputy Chief Warden
- 8 Field Lieutenants
- 1 Regulations Lieutenant
- 18 Field Sergeants
- 1 Detective Sergeant
- 1 Warden Detective
- 5 Corporals
- 100 District Wardens

A total of 136 Warden Service positions.

1982

Department reorganization:
Eliminated two pilot positions and sold three planes.
Eliminated the 20-year retirement plan.
Abolished three Lieutenant positions.
Abolished seven District Warden Positions.
Closed the Greenville hanger.
Eliminated one aircraft mechanic position.
Eliminated the Chief Warden Pilot's position.
Several layoffs.
Sold several Warden Camps.
Had eleven vacant Warden Districts.

1983

Hired 5 Wardens and 23 part-time Wardens.
Using high mileage vehicles.
Legislature re-instated the Department's layoff positions.

1985

25 year/ age 62 requirement for retirement.
The first turkey season begins.

1986

Hired five Wardens.
ATV laws started and added onto responsibilities.
New Antlerless Deer Season restrictions.
Limited under Garcia ruling to 8.5 hours a day.

1987

Hired several more Wardens.
Steel shot requirement for migratory waterfowl hunting. This started in the southern half of the state only.

1989

Hired several more Wardens.

1992

The 14th Warden died in the line of duty. Warden Bill Hanrahan suffered a heart attack as he was returning to his truck after running a track trying to locate some intoxicated hunters who fled.

Established Five Division Headquarters with the public getting access to a 1-800 number.

1994

Warden Service transitioned from owning and maintaining it's own patrol vehicles to leasing it's vehicles through Central Fleet Management in Augusta.

1995

Warden Service patrol vehicles began to transition from regular cab pickup trucks to extended cab trucks. By 1997, there was a 50/50 split between regular cabs and extended cab vehicles. By September of 2000, no regular cab trucks remained in the fleet and all were now extended cab vehicles.

1999

Maine Warden Service transitions from the Smith and Wesson revolver to the new Sig Sauer P226 .357-caliber semi automatic handgun.

2000

In an effort to increase warden visibility and enhance public relations, the Outdoor Partners Program (OPP) was established. This program involved the use of a tow behind trailer fully marked with Department logos and business sponsors such as LL Bean. The trailer was used as a mobile information booth and was large enough inside to accommodate two wardens and hundreds of other items such as posters, law books, and clothing items. The OPP trailer was scheduled at major public relations events such as fishing derbies, county fairs, and other fish, wildlife, and recreational vehicle events. The program was a huge success and created a non-law enforcement environment for members of the public to speak directly with wardens about any issues or questions that they might have.

2004

Game Wardens receive a pay range change from 18 to 20. This resulted in approximately a dollar and a half pay raise. Prior to this change, the warden job description and responsibilities had not been reviewed since the late 1970's.

2006

A new work schedule was implemented and provided game wardens with a revolving four day on, two day off work schedule known as the 4 & 2. Prior to this, wardens worked more consecutive days in a row without days off. The schedule struck a balance between the needs of the Bureau and the needs of wardens looking for an improved quality of life. The new schedule provided more relief for the stress and demands of conservation law enforcement work.

2005

For the first time ever, all wardens were issued state owned lap top computers to be used in daily work operations. Approximately 125 Dell computers were distributed with an

intensive training course accompanying deployment. Wardens also received color printers for use at their homes to print a variety of work related documents.

2008

January 1, 2008 began with an electronic means to manage warden service calls for service, inventory, and prosecution data. The new Records Management System or RMS was developed by Motorola and was in use by the Maine State Police. The RMS significantly reduced hand written reports and allowed for much timelier and professional data input and data gathering regarding warden work.

Mobile Data Terminals (MDT's) were installed in a warden trucks which provided mobile internet use in many regions of Maine. Wardens were not able to run inquiries, write reports, email, and use mapping software from the seat of their trucks. Sergeant and investigator vehicles were also provided a thermal printer for mobile printing needs. Amplifiers were also used to boost internet signal and cell phone reception.

On October 6, 2008, twenty-one members of the Maine Warden Service participated in a first ever half marathon (13.1 miles) to remember the sacrifices of Game Wardens who have died in the line of duty. The Fallen Officer Memorial Run began at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy in Vassalboro and finished at the Law Enforcement Officer Memorial in front of the state capital building in Augusta. Here, the memorial displays all of Maine's fallen officers including fourteen Maine Game Wardens. Maine has lost more Game Wardens in the line of duty than any other state, county, or municipal law enforcement agency.

2009

January 1, 2009 began with a completely new activity reporting system referred to as WSAR. The new on-line electronic reporting system eliminated hand written reporting requirements which had previously been unchanged for decades. Wardens now had the ability to summarize their workday activities electronically for more specific and efficient report analysis.

The electronic Maine Crash Reporting System or MCRS now included recreational vehicle crash fields for entry of ATV and snowmobile crash information. Prior to this, only motor vehicle crashes were entered into the MCRS system. MCRS helped eliminate hand written reporting requirements and provided a more efficient and thorough crash investigation reporting process.

Colonel Joel Wilknsn initiated the construction of a completely new website specifically for the Bureau of Warden Service. As part of the new website design, a first ever two-minute "teaser" video was created for recruitment purposes. The video depicted game wardens in their everyday functions and put the video to music, creating a esprit décor for game wardens and excitement for those looking to join the bureau.

The first annual report was produced by Colonel Joel Wilkinson to summarize enforcement efforts and budget information for 2008.