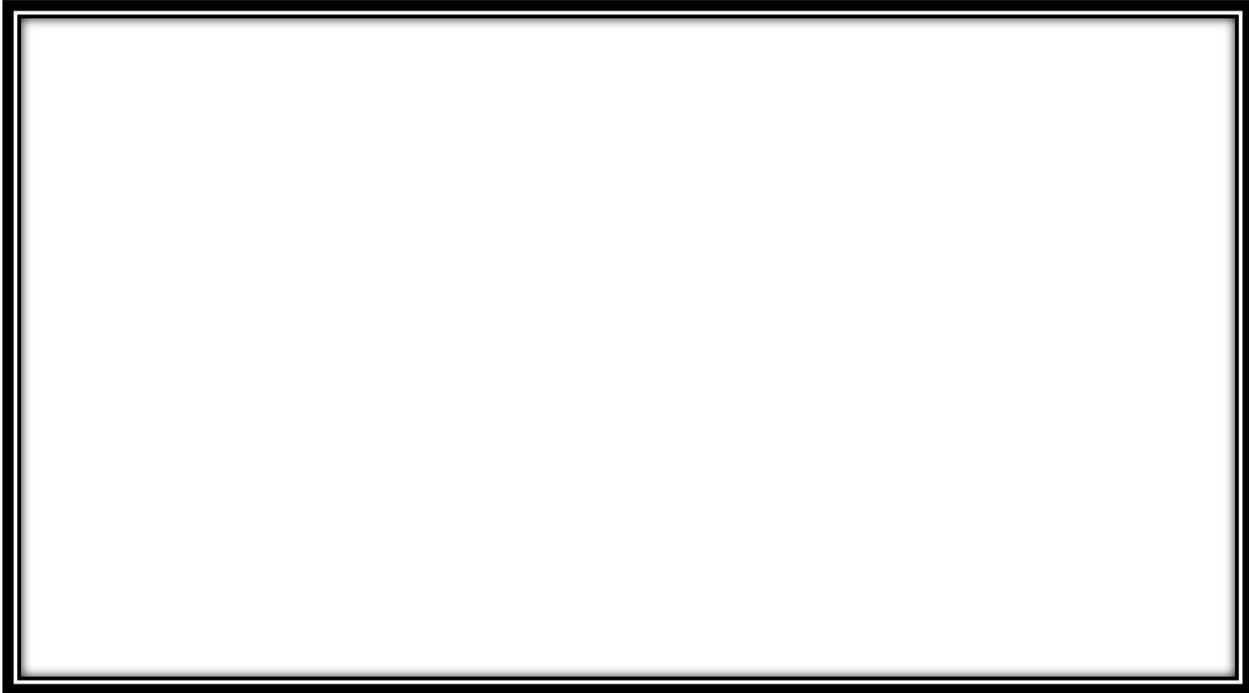


Hunter Mistakes Moose for Elk then Tries to Hide

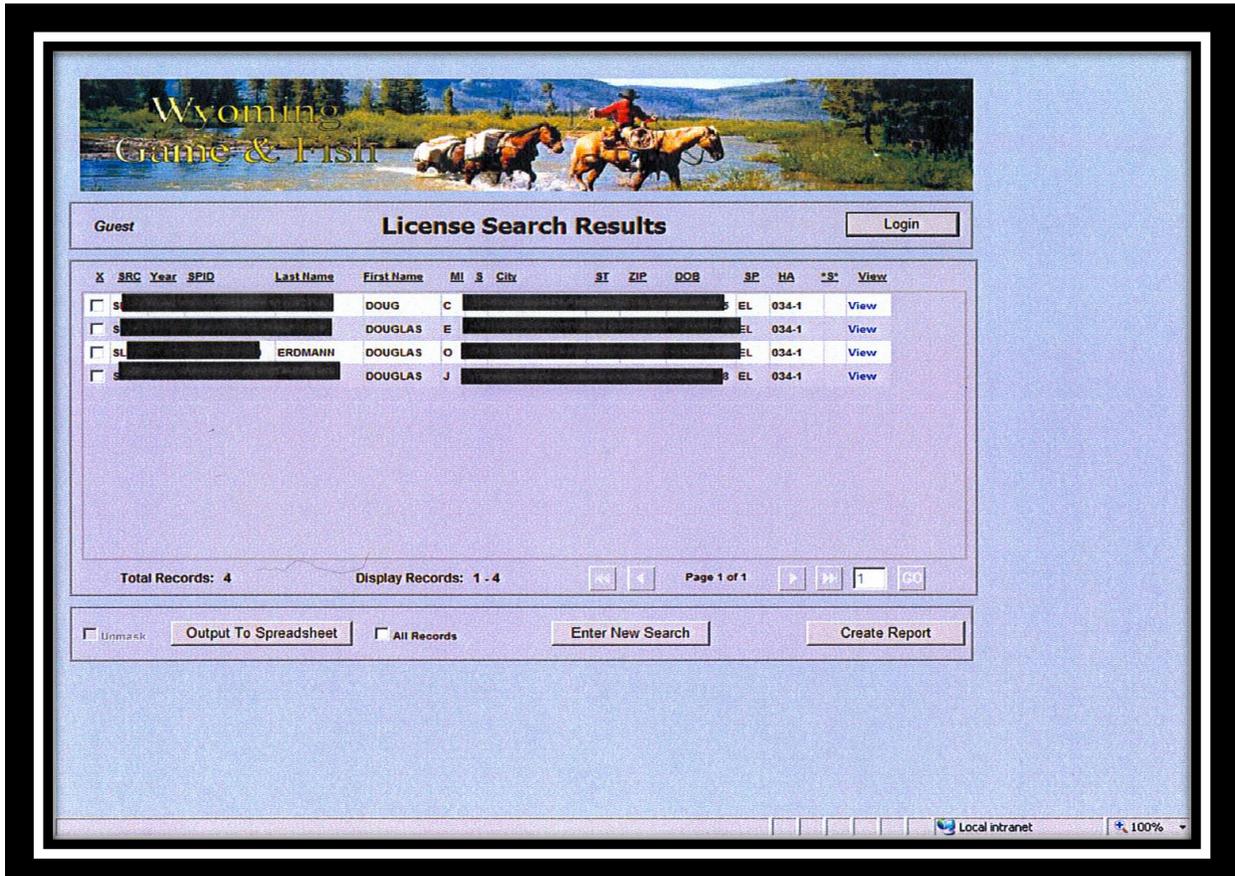
Good game warden work doesn't always include long days in the field. Buffalo Game Warden Jim Seeman demonstrated this on the evening of October 16, 2010, after he received a call from a concerned sportsman about a cow moose being shot and left to waste west of Buffalo in the Bighorn Mountains.



The reporting party (R.P) stated he met an elderly gentleman near a campground on the morning of October 16, 2010. The elderly man said he had just shot a cow elk and the R.P. offered his help. When the R.P. followed the hunter back to the location of the kill, he was surprised to see a cow moose instead of an elk. He told the older hunter that he must have mistaken the moose for an elk and that he should do the right thing by turning himself in. The hunter told the R.P. that he was not going to go to jail and that he thought he would just leave. The R.P left the area, but came back several hours later to see if the hunter had field dressed and removed the carcass. What he found was a bloated moose carcass that had obviously spoiled in the heat of the day. Unfortunately, the R.P. did not have much information to give officer Seeman, other than the hunter was an older gentleman and he thought his name might be Doug.

Officer Seeman felt overwhelmed at the possibilities of figuring out who this person was. He knew the man was elk hunting in a limited quota area (elk area 34). He also knew the man was older and possibly had a first name of Doug. With this information, officer Seeman ran a license query from his office computer using only the first name of Doug for area 34 elk. There were 1,400 licensed elk hunters in area 34. Seeman was quite surprised that only four of those hunters had a first name of Doug or Douglas. Two of the subjects were in their 30s. The other two were in their 70s and Officer Seeman happened to know one of them. Fortunately, the Doug officer Seeman knew had lived and hunted in Wyoming his whole life and, in fact, was an outfitter.

Officer Seeman ruled this hunter out quickly, as well. The only other hunter left was a gentleman by the name of Doug Erdman of Aberdeen, South Dakota. The warden ran a license history check and found that Mr. Erdman had applied for licenses for several years, but had never hunted or received an elk license in Wyoming. In less than an hour from his office computer, officer Seeman had a suspect - first time elk hunter, first name of Doug, and 71 years old.



Officer Seeman knew that apprehending and interviewing the hunter before he left the state was vital. For the next few hours, all officer Seeman could do was to make telephone calls and leave messages. Officer Seeman had the Aberdeen Police Department attempt to find someone at Mr. Erdman's home. Seeman also found that Erdman had applied and was successful in a party with two other hunters. Telephone calls were made at all the hunters' homes in an attempt to find where exactly the hunters may be staying. Seeman also checked all the local motels and campgrounds. At approximately 1:30 a.m. Warden Seeman received a call from Doug Erdman. Mr. Erdman's first words to officer Seeman were; "I think I made a mistake." Erdman explained he, indeed, was on his way back to South Dakota after hunting only one day. Erdman told the officer he and his hunting party were at a truck stop in Gillette, WY. Officer Seeman advised Erdman to stay there until he arrived at 5:30 a.m., at which time Erdman was issued two citations, one for taking a moose without a license and the other for needlessly allowing a big game animal to go to waste. On October 29, 2010 Erdman was fined \$2,080 and lost his hunting privileges for nine years.