

Authorities investigate shooting of two bald eagles

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News

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Agents for the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are investigating the shooting deaths of two bald eagles. Cash rewards are available for information leading to convictions in the cases.

On January 17, MDC Conservation Agent Vincent Crawford found a dead eagle with a gunshot wound near the Panther Creek low-water crossing on Toledo Drive in Caldwell County. Crawford found the eagle after receiving a citizen tip. He is investigating the case along with James Persson, a special agent for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Agent Crawford can be reached at 660-605-2912.

In Clay County, a rider on horseback found a dead eagle on Feb. 18 on the Jack Rabbit Bend Trail at Smithville Lake. The location is near a power line cut east of Collins Road on the south side of the lake. An examination revealed that the eagle had been shot, but that it was in good health prior to the shooting. The bald eagle is our nation's symbol, and this raptor was killed on federal land managed for fish and wildlife.

The dead eagle was reported to Conservation Agent Daniel Schepis of Clay County. Schepis is investigating the case along with Special Agent Persson of the USFWS. Agent Schepis can be reached at 816-392-4578. Special Agent Persson can be contacted at the USFWS Office of Law Enforcement at 816- 461-5245.

Persons with information about the case may also call the Missouri Operation Game Thief (OGT) toll-free hotline, 800-392-1111. Persons calling the Missouri OGT hotline do not need to leave their name, they do not have to appear in court, and they may be eligible for a cash reward.

The unlawful shooting of a bald eagle is a state and federal offense, which violates the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The penalty under the Eagle Protection Act is a fine of up to \$100,000 and not more than one year incarceration or both. The penalty under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act is a fine of up to \$15,000 and not more than six months incarceration or both.