

State Game Warden Recruitment

A Report to the Vermont Legislature on
The Status of Recruitment for Vacant State Game Warden Positions
November 2011



Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department
103 South Main Street, 10 South
Waterbury, VT 05671-0501

Patrick H. Berry
Commissioner

Introduction

The Fish and Wildlife Department has an authorized force of 43 State Game Wardens statewide. The Department is constantly in search of the highest quality applicants to fill vacant state game warden positions when they occur. The job of State Game Wardens is unique in that an officer works alone without direct supervision and establishes their work schedule based on daily and seasonal needs. This type of work environment requires a warden candidate to be highly motivated and possess the highest moral and ethical standards.

Due to retirements, 2011 will mark the fourth out of the previous five calendar years the Department has recruited to fill vacant game warden positions. Although the number of applicants has remained steady throughout this period, the quality of the applicants has been lacking. This shortage of quality applicants has prevented the backfilling of all vacant positions within the Warden force. This lack of quality applicants has not only been a problem for the Fish and Wildlife Department, but for all quality law enforcement agencies across the country. Reporting on the recruitment of State Game Wardens was directed from the 2011 session of the Legislature (Act 63 Section E.702).

Current Status

With the goal of attracting numerous applicants that represent the highest quality candidates, the Department launched an aggressive recruitment effort in 2011. Department representatives attended in state and out-of-state college job fairs, networked with military job fairs, and the created both television and radio public service announcements for play in local media. These extra efforts did not appreciably increase the number of applications the Department received; however, the quality of the applicants did improve.

In October, the 2011 Department recruitment process was completed. The process included a written exam, a physical agility and swim test, and oral interview. The Department selected the top ten applicants to participate in a final interview with the Director of Law Enforcement. In late October, the Department made four conditional job offers to prospective game warden trainees contingent upon the successful completion of a thorough background investigation, which also included a polygraph examination. Unfortunately, one of the initial four candidates declined our job offer. One additional conditional job offer has since been made and accepted with the same conditions. The background investigations are currently progressing. Assuming these four candidates satisfactorily complete their background investigations, they will begin work the first week of February 2012 and will be enrolled in the next full-time certification police academy recruit class beginning at that time.