

## VIRGINIA HUNTING DOG ALLIANCE

### NEWS ALERT

In simultaneous Sunday morning raids VDGIF agents shut down fox pens across Virginia. The real reasons behind this action are not clear at this time, but since the citations given to some pen owners (one dog owner whose hunting license had expired 24 hours earlier was found inside one pen, one 2 week old fox fur ball found inside a pen) certainly do not seem to rise to shutdown level. Some of those at the Wylliesburg meeting (Mecklenburg Co.) recall Bob Duncan saying that “the coyote experiments were over for now” and that some out of state animals were being brought in and bringing exotic diseases with them.

Dr. Bryan Morris, VHDA Co-Chairman reports that DGIF Commission member Ward Burton says the commission knew nothing of this “sting”. The “sting” has been the culmination of an 18 month study involving 9 states (presumably by U.S. Fish & Wildlife). They are supposed to have a meeting with pen owners in Mecklenburg, where they “promise to expedite getting the pens open that have minor infractions.” This was a major operation with undercover agents selling illegal game to the pens.

It is reported that Billy Pools big pen, Noel Atkins pen and one other remain open. Billy Poole told VHDA representatives that he had not been keeping proper records. Davy Hackett reported that he had the records but not in the proper format. They had mentioned to him that the question of illegal animal purchases would come up.

One can only wonder if the cost of this effort will produce results of equal benefit to the Sportsmen of Virginia. We will try to provide more information as it becomes available.

Check the Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance website at [www.vahda.org](http://www.vahda.org) for more information

#### **A statement by Colonel Mike Bise of Chief DGIF Law Enforcement Division:**

Mike Bise

Date Posted: Nov 12, 07 - 10:12 AM

Email: [mike.bise@dgif.virginia.gov](mailto:mike.bise@dgif.virginia.gov)

Message: As Chief of Law Enforcement at DGIF I am taking the unusual step of responding to this matter due to the fact that there is so much more behind the scenes.

For the past 18 months we have been participating with 9 other states in a covert operation investigating the interstate commercialization of wildlife, primarily foxes and coyotes. The primary market driving this commercialization is fox hound training pens. This interstate venture is a hundreds of thousands of dollars industry.

Three issues loom large here: 1) commercialization of our wildlife resources should turn the stomach of any hunter or outdoorsman, and has been illegal for a century or so. 2) Translocation of any wildlife conjures up many disease issues. 3) The conditions we found in SOME pens during the covert investigation were abhorant. Due to media releases by involved states, the public will learn of these conditions.

Due to all the above, our approach was a comprehensive compliance inspection of Virginia pens. Any violations found resulted in a temporary suspension until we can get a better handle on the overall situation discovered in the covert operation. Some Virginia pens clearly purchased imported, illegal wildlife; thousands of dollars worth.

This has nothing to do with the hound issues. It has everything to do with potential felony violations of long standing state and federal wildlife protection laws. I hope you understand this is something we must deal with.