

Nevada game wardens dealing with pot on public lands

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Hunters, anglers and field scientists face a new danger tromping through Nevada's backcountry – one that is also requiring increasing time and attention of the state's limited force of game wardens.

Officials of the Nevada Department of Wildlife report a "tremendous increase" in illegal marijuana cultivation on public land in recent years, with much of the activity associated with violent Mexican drug cartels.

"It's been on our radar screen for years but not on the front of our radar screen," Chief Game Warden Rob Buonamici said. "It is now."

Indeed, dealing with marijuana grows is becoming one of the basic duties of game wardens, right along with checking hunting and fishing licenses, arresting poachers and conducting boat patrols, Buonamici said.

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