

# YUKON FISH AND WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENT TRUST

## FINAL REPORT 2013-2014



### Turn In Poachers/Turn in Polluters 2013 Overview



**The Turn in Poachers/Turn in Polluters (TIPP) program has been in effect in the Yukon since 1991. It was established as a joint effort of the Department of Environment and the Yukon Fish and Game Association to provide Yukoners with the opportunity to report resource violations to Conservation Officers using a toll free number.**

#### **What kinds of activities should I report to the TIPP Line?**

- hunting or fishing out of season
- exceeding the bag limits
- illegal sale of fish or wildlife
- deposit of harmful substances in lakes and streams, and on the ground
- littering

What should I do if I see a suspected violation or know of one?

Contact your local Conservation Officer Services office, or call 1-800-661-0525 as soon as possible. Trained staff will take your call, record the information you supply and immediately pass it on to the nearest available Conservation Officer.

#### **You should try to observe and record the following details:**

- date and time of activity
- exact location
- vehicle licence number
- vehicle description
- description of persons involved

- details of the violation

### **Never approach or attempt to apprehend a suspect!**

The TIPP Line operates 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

### **Do I have to identify myself?**

No. Anyone who calls the TIPP line (1-800-661-0525) or provides information to a Conservation Officer or district clerical staff may remain anonymous. A unique identification number will be assigned to you when your call is taken. This number will be used to identify you in any future communications.

### **How do I qualify for a reward?**

If the information you provide concerns a resource violation and results in the laying of a charge by a Conservation Officer, you are automatically eligible for a reward. The person taking your call will provide you with the details of the procedure.

### **Who supplies the reward money?**

The Yukon Fish and Game Association has a Rewards Committee which oversees the handling of the Reward Fund.

This program is intended to serve as a compliance promotion initiative by raising public awareness concerning the illegal harvest of fish and wildlife and illegal environmental activities such as dumping waste. The knowledge that such a program exists and is well advertised not only educates and informs the public about potential areas of concern, but may act as a deterrent to those who would commit violations. While the reporting of matters that may otherwise be undetected is a direct benefit of this program, the most significant value of this program is in promoting compliance with resource legislation through education and awareness.

The TIPP line is in operation 24 hrs/day to receive information about fisheries, wildlife and environmental violations. A trained answering service passes information received to the appropriate Conservation Officer. If the information or intelligence provided results in the laying of a charge, or identifies individuals leading to potential charges, the caller is eligible for a cash reward. The program also provides reward payments to individuals who provide information directly to a Conservation Officer.

The Fish and Game Association and Yukon Environment Conservation Officer Services Branch form a Rewards Committee annually to review and oversee TIPP Reward submissions. They make a reward recommendation based on the information, case outcome, and risk associated to the information received from the caller. On Feb 26<sup>Th</sup> 2014, the committee reviewed the 2013 submitted cases, and recommended reward payments based on the information provided.

Most persons who report matters do not request reward payment, and report matters out of genuine concern for our natural resources. Others however, would not report without the incentive of reward payment. Several significant poaching cases have been resolved through information received from persons who were seeking a reward. These are matters that would almost certainly never have been solved had it not been for the existence of the TIPP program. This has included cases involving the wasting of meat, use of poisons, hunting of elk and deer and dangerous hunting. To date, (including 2013 rewards) the Fish and Game Association has reviewed 49 cases where rewards were requested and has paid approximately \$34,163.00 to persons for reporting resource violations. The money is paid directly to persons who provided the information, by the Conservation Officers who investigated the matter and a witness.

The Department of Environment and the Fish and Game Association promote the program through various media, including TV, Radio, road signs, telephone book highlighting and through dispensing promotional material such as mugs, ball caps, key chains etc. These promotional materials are distributed by Conservation Officers during field patrols, when conducting public educational programs such as school talks, or given to various groups and organizations such as Scouts. To reduce costs, this material is often cost shared with agencies promoting conservation messages such as Fisheries Branch promoting Live Release Angling, or First Nations promoting a Harvest Reporting program. The TIPP logo also appears on most departmental licences, many brochures, on Conservation Officer Vehicles etc.

The Department of Environment contributes approximately \$6,000 annually towards promoting the TIPP program, as well as pays for administration of the British Columbia based answering service and telephone book listings. The Fish and Game Association also usually contributes annually towards the purchase of promotional material, and when required, provides reward payments.

The Wildlife Act provides authority for courts to order monies paid into the Conservation Fund (not yet established, but legislation now enables this to occur) be directed to “a violation reporting system”. In the future, this may provide revenue towards the TIPP program.

The TIPP line normally receives about 75-110 calls annually that require a response from a Conservation Officer. The same phone number is also used to record information for the Southern Lakes Caribou Recovery program, voluntary wildlife kills, wildlife sightings and concerns the public would have with respect to Human / wildlife conflicts such as Bear sightings in or around populated areas. The line is sometimes used by campground staff to report campground complaints such as loud parties, theft of firewood or vandalism.

The “Turn In Poachers / Polluters” program has proven successful numerous times since it’s inception. It’s difficult to measure the deterrent value of such a program, however it is clearly a positive, proactive way of informing and educating the public about concerns many Yukoner’s share about protecting our natural resources.

### **What’s new for 2014?**

Yukon Environment is working on the implementation of an “On-Line” TIPP reporting system on our web page. This new format will allow the general public to report similar unlawful activities with respect to the environment and Yukon wildlife as they would using the toll free TIPP line. The on-line format will also allow for the inclusion of photos. It is hoped that this new service will be up and running by the arrival of our busy summer months of 2014.

## **Summary of 2013 TIPP calls:**

### **Wildlife Sightings**

Southern Lakes area: 74  
Whitehorse area: 293  
Remainder of Yukon: 85

### **Calls for Conservation Officer immediate Services:**

(Possible illegal acts – road kills requiring a CO)

Whitehorse Area 171  
Remainder of Yukon: 48

### **Calls for Conservation Officer Services requiring follow up:**

(Road kills involving wildlife - no threat to public)

Whitehorse Area: 165  
Remainder of Yukon: 44

Once again, a significant increase from the previous year's TIPP calls was made using our toll free TIPP line. A testament to the importance of this program.