

## U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT



SA Lucinda Schroeder with a defendant while working in a covert capacity on the Texas coast in 1987.

The Division of Law Enforcement of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is responsible for the protection of domestic and international fish and wildlife resources. This is accomplished primarily through the enforcement of six major criminal statutes passed by Congress: the Endangered Species Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Bald Eagle Protection Act, the Lacey Act, the Marine Mammal Act and the Airborne Hunting Act.

FWS special agents conduct investigations into violations of these wildlife laws which involve participation in raids, interviewing witnesses, searching for physical evidence and seizures of contraband, securing and serving search warrants, making arrests, developing evidence for presentation to the United States Attorney and other legal officers, testifying in court, preparing detailed written reports and carrying out covert operations.

FWS special agents are involved in considerable travel, frequent periods away from duty stations, and substantial amounts of overtime, for which they

are compensated.

The work of FWS special agents is as varied as any law enforcement work can be. Agents prioritize their own case leads, travel and develop cases with little direct supervision. They often become involved in investigations into smuggling, fraud, the interstate commerce of wildlife taken in violation of state laws, the unlawful taking of eagles and other migratory birds and the commercial exploitation of wildlife. Every investigation brings different challenges to the investigator and provides ample opportunity for the development of a variety of professional skills.

In addition to investigations, special agents are involved in extensive field work during the fall waterfowl hunting seasons. Special agents work in the field documenting violations of state and federal hunting regulations and at times participate in undercover hunts.

To qualify for employment, special agents must have a four year degree in either a police science or wildlife/biology curriculum. On the job training is provided in both of these areas as part of

career development.

The FWS Division of Law Enforcement is a small division consisting of 210 agents, 12 of whom are women. This provides for a cohesive group of agents who all know one another and experience a level of camaraderie and loyalty uncommon in larger agencies. The Fish and Wildlife Service provides many opportunities for women who are interested in making a long-term commitment to protecting wildlife resources while furthering their law enforcement careers.

Lucinda (Cindy) Schroeder has been a FWS special agent since 1974 and has had experience in many aspects of wildlife law enforcement. After having been stationed in Washington, DC; Raleigh, NC; Brigham City, UT; and Watertown, SD, she is currently stationed in Madison, WI, and can be contacted at (608) 264-5237 for further information about a law enforcement career in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.