

NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND FISH HISTORY OF THE BADGE

The badge worn by officers is a symbol of authority dating from the middle ages. Knights in armor carried shields which displayed their family's coat of arms and thereby gave identification. Modern officers carry a badge that usually identifies their organization, often with the coat of arms or great seal of their state.

1903-1927



The earliest badge was the old-time star worn by sheriffs, marshals and other law enforcement officers in the days of the frontier west.

From territorial days to the mid-twenties there were few paid Game Department enforcement officers, usually the direc-

tor and one field assistant. Volunteer deputies did the bulk of the enforcement work and usually had to purchase their own badge.

This policy was found to have a shortcoming, however, because if a man lost his commission, he still had his badge - which sometimes made administration difficult.

1927-1934



The next badge to come into use was the famous Buffalo Badge, designed by Aldo Leopold, the father of modern game management and founder of the New Mexico Game Protective Association.

The buffalo head was the insignia of the state GPA and the badge was worn

by both paid and volunteer deputy game wardens. The slot in the bottom of the badge was for a metal tab which showed the dates of the officer's commission. If a man's commission was not renewed, he did not get a new metal tag for his badge. The badge came in under Warden E. L. Perry who served from 1927 to 1931. The badge was used by reserve officers until the mid-thirties.

1934-1943



In 1934 the state was divided into five districts, each served by a deputy game warden.

A badge showing the district number was issued to the officer in the district.

The badge was adopted by Elliott S. Barker, who

was game warden from 1931 to 1953.

This is the first badge on which appears an eagle, a symbol of authority used on most law enforcement badges in New Mexico today.

1943-1953



In the forties there was a feeling in the Department that a large badge was too gaudy and might tend to make the wearer a little "badge happy." Also, men had begun returning from the war.

More districts were created and more badges were needed. The small-

est badge of the group was adopted in 1943.

The badge was similar to the New Mexico State Police badge and all commissioned officers wore one. A few buffalo badges were still being used by reserve officers.



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1953-1964



The next change came in 1953 when it was decided that the small badge was too difficult to see at night - and so made identification of the officer difficult.

Also, badge numbers were added for the first time as an additional identification feature.



The regular officer's badge was bronze and the reserve officer's badge was silver. This badge was used until March of 1964. There were 120 badges issued.

1964-2012



The 1964 badge more readily identifies its wearer as an officer of the Department of Game and Fish.

The arrowhead is symbolic of the west and the Department's bear head emblem is plainly shown.

The badge can be kept clean with a minimum of effort and can be easily seen. They are numbered, with the first 25 numbers given in the order of seniority of the wearer. The badge number is usually the radio call number of its wearer.

The badge was designed by Officer J. W. "Jim" Peckumn, who was at that time Chief of Law Enforcement.

2003 Centennial Badge



In celebration of the department's centennial anniversary, a new badge was produced and issued in 2003.

The design of the commemorative badge was identical to the 1903 Deputy Game Warden, except for a few embellishments.

The center of the star includes the bearhead medallion like the 1964 badge. The medallion is encircled with the words "1903 Centennial 2003" and there is a badge number at the base of the top point.

This badge was worn by the officers only in 2003.

2012-Present



In 2012, the department decided to retire the 1964 badge design. The design sought to capture the entire history of the department's honored shield.

As was the focus of the centennial badge, a return to the original 1903 Deputy Game Warden

badge was the focus. The bearhead, font and size were modernized. The preferred designation, since the 1950s, "Conservation Officer" replaced "Deputy Game Warden".

The badge was designed in collaboration with Lance Cherry, Chief of Information and Chris Chadwick, Assistant Director.

The history of the badge is compiled from an article written by Dave Jackson, appearing in the "New Mexico Wildlife" magazine, ca. 1964, reprinted by Thomas M. "Tommy" Moody, Retired NMDGF and updated to reflect the current badges by Lance Cherry, Information and Education Division Chief.



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