

Truck driver charged with killing deer

Written by BILL SCHANEN IV
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West Bend man accused of intentionally spooking, running over animal in city

A 29-year-old man was charged last week in Ozaukee County Circuit Court with intentionally killing a deer by running it over with his pickup truck near Port Washington's south beach.

West Bend resident Michael A. Cox, who faces one misdemeanor count of killing a deer without a license, flagged down a police officer at 5:26 a.m. Saturday, April 27, to report that he had accidentally hit a deer on South Beach Road just south of the WE Energies power plant while he was on his way to go fishing in the harbor, according to the criminal complaint.

Cox said he wanted to claim the dead deer.

But while speaking to Cox, the officer received a call from a dispatcher who said a WE Energies employee reported a different version of events.

That employee told police he saw the red Dodge Ram pickup truck driven by Cox accelerate and hit the deer intentionally. And if authorities needed proof, the employee said, the entire incident was caught on power plant surveillance video.

The video confirmed that report, as well as the account of another WE Energies employee who told authorities he saw Cox driving north on South Wisconsin, then stop at the intersection with South Beach Road where a number of deer were gathered.

The employee said Cox appeared to be trying to spook the deer by flashing the truck's headlights and making whistling noises. The deer ran east on South Beach Road and Cox followed, accelerating to a high rate of speed before hitting one of the animals, the complaint states.

Despite the accounts of witnesses and the video, a passenger in Cox's truck told police Cox did not intentionally hit the deer.

Cox, however, admitted to spooking the deer and said that as the animals ran away, he "gunned" his truck and hit one of them. He told authorities, "It was more intentional than not," according to the complaint.

If convicted, Cox, who is scheduled to make his initial court appearance on June 14, could be fined between \$1,000 and \$2,000 and sentenced to six months in jail. He would be not be able to hold a hunting, fishing or trapping license for three years.

Cox was also cited by police for endangering the safety of a person or property by reckless driving.

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