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Activist's UAV Shot Down In SC

SHARK Vows To Press Charges After Disrupting Pigeon Shoot

This may be a new wrinkle in the debate over domestic drone surveillance and privacy. A Mikrokopter drone being flown by an animal rights group to document a live pigeon shoot in South Carolina was reportedly shot down by angry gun enthusiasts after their event was called off Sunday. The UAV owner has filed a police report, and vows to press charges.



The Times and Democrat quotes Steve Hindi, president of SHARK (short for Showing Animals Respect and Kindness) in reporting that the live pigeon shoot was to have taken place at Broxton Bridge Plantation Sunday near Ehrhardt, SC. Hindi says law enforcement officials and an attorney claiming to represent the plantation attempted to stop SHARK from flying its small drone, which is equipped with a video camera.

Hindi tells the paper, "It didn't work; what SHARK was doing was perfectly legal. Once they knew nothing was going to stop us, the shooting stopped and the cars lined up to leave." He says the drone was launched anyway. "Seconds after it hit the air, numerous shots rang out. As an act of revenge for us shutting down the pigeon slaughter, they had shot down our copter.

"It is important to note how dangerous this was, as they were shooting toward and into a well-traveled highway." The small aircraft reportedly came down on US Highway 601.

Hindi adds, "This was SHARK's first encounter with the Broxton Bridge Plantation, but it will certainly not be the last. We are already making plans for a considerably upscaled action in 2013."

Until now, much of the debate over the use of unmanned aircraft for domestic surveillance has been driven by concerns over potential abuse by government civilian agencies, including law enforcement. In this case, a UAV is being used by an activist group to expose often legal but potentially embarrassing activities by hunters, rodeo promoters and even participants in government-sponsored wildlife population control efforts.

FMI: <http://sharkonline.org/>