Santa Clara County Office of the Sheriff
Underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle
Annual Surveillance Report: July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

1. Description of How the Technology Was Used

The Office of the Sheriff Underwater Search Unit (USU) utilizes an Underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) to make observations and provide mission-critical updates to assist first responders in a variety of public safety operations in an underwater environment, such as water rescue operations, body or evidence recovery operations, intelligence gathering missions, and hazardous materials mitigation. Industry best practices recommend the use of all available remote methods of information gathering possible before physically putting a diver in the water. The use of the ROV supports this best practice. Below is a summary of ROV uses during this reporting period.

Underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) Deployments
7/1/2022 – 6/30/2023

Date	Incident Type	Use Summary
7/14/2023 & 7/15/2023	Vehicle Driven into Reservoir	Sheriff's divers (USU) responded on a report of a vehicle driven into the Chesbro Reservoir as reported by fishermen across the lake. Divers responded as a rescue response initially because the driver had not been located. As divers were arriving on scene, Park Rangers located the driver clinging to a tree in the lake. Divers used the fish finder/sonar to locate the vehicle underwater. Two objects were located on the fish finder and were marked with floating buoys. Divers entered the water but were unable to locate the objects located on the fish finder. Due to the late hour and the fact the driver was located and stated there was no one else in the vehicle, the vehicle recovery operation was postponed until day light hours the next day. The next day, USU deployed the ROV in the area of the two marked objects. Within 5 minutes, the ROV located the vehicle. USU used the tether line for the ROV to send down a diver and mark the vehicle with a floating buoy. Divers were only used to assist the tow company with the recovery of the vehicle. Using the ROV to locate the vehicle really cut down on diver fatigue and drastically reduces diver risk.

7/25/2023	Drowning	Sheriff's divers (USU) responded on a report of a male that drowned near the shoreline of the picnic are at Stevens Creek Reservoir. Divers responded and immediately entered the water in an attempt to rescue the victim. Divers also responded and deployed the ROV. Just as the ROV entered the water, divers located the victim and brought him to the surface. Due to this call originally being a rescue and not a recovery, divers entered the water immediately; however, the ROV was deployed quickly and could also be used as a rescue resource.
8/7/2023	Vehicle Driven into Reservoir	Sheriff's divers (USU) responded to the report of a vehicle driven into the Uvas Reservoir that was reported by fishermen across the lake. Divers arrived on scene in a short time and received new information from the California Highway Patrol (CHP). Evidence on scene led investigators to believe this vehicle was dumped and not involved in an accident. However, USU had deployed the boat and used the fish finder to locate an object under the water. USU marked the object and returned the following morning during daylight hours. The ROV was deployed in the area of the buoy marker and was able to locate the vehicle in a few minutes. USU was able to use the ROV to determine there were no people in the vehicle and obtained the license plate on the vehicle. Divers used the ROV tether as a guide down to the vehicle and safely attached a cable from the tow truck to recover the vehicle. The ROV was key to minimizing diver fatigue by locating the vehicle. This allowed divers to only enter the water to assist the tow company with the recovery of the vehicle. Using the ROV also reduces time on scene and underwater, therefore, increasing staff safety.

2. Data Sharing with Outside Entities

The Underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle was deployed during this reporting period; however, no data was shared with outside entities.

3. Community Complaints or Concerns

Any community complaints regarding the use of the Underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle are routed to the Internal Affairs Lieutenant for tracking and response. There were no community complaints or concerns expressed to the Office of the Sheriff regarding the use of Underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle during this reporting period.

4. Non-Privileged Internal Audits / Policy Violations

All Office of the Sheriff staff are provided all Surveillance Use Polices via an internal web-based portal requiring annual review and attestation of acknowledgement completion. Unit supervisors are required to monitor and periodically audit the data obtained by and the use of the Underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle to ensure compliance with the Surveillance Use Policy and other Sheriff's policies. Internal audits were performed during this reporting period and no violations were observed during this reporting period.

5. Effectiveness in Achieving its Identified Purpose

The Underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle have proven to be an effective tool to gather intelligence in underwater environments with little to no visibility before sending a diver down. The Office of the Sheriff considers this equipment vital and effective in locating persons, vehicles, and other items of evidence underwater.

6. Public Records Act Requests

The Office of the Sheriff has a process in place to track California Public Records Act (CPRA) requests where designated staff are assigned to receive and respond to each request. The Office of the Sheriff did not receive any California Public Records Act requests for the data from the Underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle during this reporting period.

7. Annual Costs

The procurement of the Underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle was a one-time purchase before this reporting period. There are no recurring annual costs associated to the operation of the Underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle.