



*Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission sworn personnel are fully constituted police officers with the authority to enforce all laws of the state, not just those relating to resource conservation.*

### Lost and found

Lt. Kenneth Harvey and Officer Thomas Shipp were notified by dispatch at 3 a.m. about an overdue boater and proceeded to search the Wacissa River by airboat. The officers found an elderly gentleman and another occupant about 5 a.m. Their boat had capsized around dark the previous day. The boaters had managed to swim to shore and build a fire at a hunting camp. After a long night and an encounter with a bear, they were glad to be reunited with their family at the boat ramp.

### Suspicious minds

Officers Travis Huckeba and Don Walker were in their patrol vessel near the Florida State University Marine Lab at Turkey Point, where they suspected illegal netting activity. Using advanced night-vision equipment, the officers spotted a vessel heading in their direction. The officers conducted a stop, and upon inspection of the suspect vessel, found three people on board in felony possession of monofilament trammel net and about 300 pounds of illegal fish. The net and fish were seized and the three suspects were jailed.

### Fly like an eagle

Pilot Joe Johnston assisted a troop of Boy Scouts in earning their aviation merit badges. The FWC is a regular at such events to demonstrate the differences between “fixed-wings” and “rotary-wings.” It’s also an opportunity to expose the scouts to the FWC and the role it plays in Florida law enforcement.

### Big rig roundup

Officer Troy Starling was checking anglers on the Ocklawaha River when he was approached by a man who claimed his wife was following a stolen trailer (18-wheeler). The big rig was traveling south toward Lake County. Officer Starling issued a BOLO through FWC dispatch.

Lt. Gregg Eason was traveling north and heard the transmission. Within minutes, he passed the suspect vehicle. Lt. Eason stopped the driver of the truck and took him into custody without incident. The case was turned over to the Lake County Sheriff’s Office.

### Putting out the corn

Officers Joe Simpson and Emily Vought completed an illegal-baiting investigation, which occurred in the Ocala WMA. The case started when U.S. Forest Service Officer Joe Andrews checked a hunter exiting the woods with his small child. During conversation with the hunter, the little girl told Officer Andrews, “The only thing we have done today is clean the swimming pool and put out a bunch of corn.” The officer noticed Dad pinch his daughter. The illegal hunter was later charged with distributing bait on a wildlife management area.

### Can’t escape the charges

FWC officers responded to an incident at Mallory Square, Key West, after a street performer was reported missing. A local man who regularly performs acts of illusion and escape, dressed himself in a strait jacket and wrapped himself in heavy chains. Without warning, he jumped into Key West Harbor. The water along Mallory Pier is 29 feet deep with strong currents. Moments later, a Key West Police officer dove in after the performer, but was unable to locate him. The performer was eventually located safe and unharmed. Charges were filed by Key West Police Department, and compensation for cost of search-and-rescue efforts will be pursued.

### A long night in the dark

Officers Fred Cagle, Doug Loyed, Darral Thomason, Ryan Maier and Lt. Dennis Delapaz were involved in a lost hunter search in the Flying Eagle WMA. FWC biologists, Timberline Security personnel and the Citrus County Sheriff’s Office

helicopter assisted with the search. A 53-year-old female hunter became lost after leaving her tree stand. She didn’t have a light, but did have a cell phone with a weak signal. One call indicated she was fine and prepared to spend the night since she could not see to walk. The search continued at first light and she was found, uninjured and in good spirits.

### Tracking traffickers

Officer Danny Arnette, K-9 Luke and Alabama officers combined efforts in a deer and drug case. K-9 Luke located a deer carcass in Lake Seminole, a duffle bag containing a large quantity of drugs (marijuana and methamphetamines) and scales, and alerted at the scene of a deer killing in a churchyard in Gordon, Ala. Five churchyards were searched in Alabama. Several charges are pending in both states. A search warrant executed by Jackson County Sheriff’s Office yielded three buried tanks of anhydrous ammonia, a chemical used in the manufacture of methamphetamines.

### Hunt interrupted

Officer David Burnsed was watching a bait site with a tree stand nearby on Twelve Mile WMA when, after a couple of hours, a hunter climbed into the tree stand to begin his hunt. Officer Burnsed stepped out of the woodline and abruptly ended the hunt by issuing the man a citation for hunting over bait in a WMA. Officer Burnsed informed the hunter he could continue to hunt elsewhere in the management area; he just couldn’t hunt over corn.

### It’s good to share... usually

As Officer Chris Jones approached the Bert Maxwell Boat Ramp, he observed two “Good Samaritan” anglers share their catch with some not-so-fortunate fishermen. Unfortunately for the “Good Samaritans,” eight of the fish they were so generously giving away were undersize black drum. Two citations were issued.