



Field Notes

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.

Sealed with a fang

Officer Rick Scilabro responded to a venomous-reptile-bite victim that was being treated at Tampa's St. Joseph's Hospital. Investigator James Manson conducted the ensuing investigation. Investigator Manson ascertained the victim was a venomous reptile licensee who was moving a manacled cobra into a transport container. After the top of the container was sealed, the cobra managed to strike the victim's left index finger causing a single fang puncture injury. The incident was attributed to a lack of attention and handling error by the licensee.

Stuck in a stand

On opening day of general gun season, Officer Royce Johnson and Reserve Officer Lila Wise checked a hunter sitting in a climbing stand in the Blackwater Wildlife Management Area. The hunter was not wearing the required upper garment of hunter orange nor did he have any hunter orange on him or in his truck. The hunter also did not possess a still hunt quota permit. When Officer Johnson requested the man exit his stand, the deer hunter replied, "I can't...I'm kind of stuck up here." Officer Johnson observed the lower platform of the stand lodged against the tree about six feet above the ground. The hunter did not have both platforms secured together properly, causing him to be stranded when he lost control of the lower part of his stand. He had hunting buddies around, but it was early morning and there was no way of telling how long it would be before they came to check on him. He did not have a cell phone or way to contact his friends. Officer Johnson managed to push the platform up with a long stick and free it from the trunk of the tree. Officer Johnson managed to tie the rifle cord to the stand platform so the hunter could pull it up and eventually climb

down. The hunter was lucky to be rescued, but unluckily had citations issued for the two hunting law violations.



Emus are large flightless birds native to Australia. They can weigh 110 pounds or more and run at speeds up to 40 mph.

Big bird

Early on a Sunday morning, while returning from a long day in the Ocala WMA, Officers Emily Vought and Kat Kelley encountered "Big Bird." The 5-foot-tall emu was running in and out of traffic along CR 464 in Silver Springs Shores. Officers from the Marion County Sheriff's Office assisted in corralling the bird. The bird would not go quietly though, and after it gave a couple of high kicks, officers moved from capture mode to containment while awaiting the assistance of animal control. After more than two hours of chase, "Big Bird" was finally sedated and turned over to Marion County Animal Control.

The wild life

Investigator Ken Holmes discovered multiple violations while conducting an inspection in Chiefland. An indoor marijuana facility was seen through a window along with a serval cat, American crocodiles and a gopher tortoise. Investigator Holmes obtained a search warrant and returned with Investigator Chip Bradshaw and members of the Levy County Sheriff's Office. The search

revealed more than 100 marijuana plants under cultivation in the house. The owner did not have permits for the animals, which were seized and temporarily housed with a permitted person. The owner was arrested and transported to the Levy County Jail, his wife also was cited. The charges consisted of cultivation/possession of marijuana and possession of wildlife without a permit.

Blown in the wind

After a front moved through the Pensacola area, dropping temperatures 20 degrees within two hours and increasing winds, two wind surfers decided to go offshore and take advantage of the winds. One of their surfboards got away from them and they decided to retrieve it with a kayak. After they were reported missing, FWC coordinated with the U.S. Coast Guard who responded and located the wind surfers/kayakers 22 miles offshore.

Good call

Officer Chris Creese received a call from a concerned citizen who alleged his next-door neighbor might have killed a hawk. The citizen heard the shot, came out of his house to find the dead bird and then exchanged words with his neighbor. The citizen retrieved the dead bird, identified it as a red-shouldered hawk and placed it in his freezer. Officer Chris Goodreau took a statement from the man, then went to the subject's home and talked with the subject's wife and daughter. The suspect was not home, but his spouse made some incriminating statements. Officer Creese later met with the suspect for an interview. After receiving the Miranda warning, the man confessed to killing the hawk, stating it was trying to get his chickens. Charges of taking a protected species will be filed through the state attorney's office.