

TURKEY CASES

March 19 – 25, 2010

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officer Royce Johnson and Reserve Officer Lila Wise were working turkey hunting in Blackwater Wildlife Management Area when they observed a man hunting. The man appeared nervous, so after the officers checked him, they returned to watch his vehicle. The man continued to hunt for an hour and a half after legal hunting hours and was surprised to see the officers waiting for him at his vehicle. He was issued a notice to appear for hunting turkeys after legal hours.

Lieutenant Dan Hahr was working turkey hunting and observed a man hunting over bait. The man was in possession of a shotgun with turkey loads and was using a box call. The subject was issued a notice to appear for hunting turkeys over bait.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Van Barrow was on patrol of an area known for turkey hunting. Officer Barrow worked this area last year and became very familiar with the turkey population. When Officer Barrow arrived, he noticed fresh signs of an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) entering the wooded area. He heard the ATV exiting the area and was unable to hide before the individuals spotted him. The passenger appeared to have thrown something off the ATV. When Officer Barrow made contact, he observed a firearm and one harvested turkey. The ATV operator explained he was the only hunter and the passenger was helping him with some work. Officer Barrow obtained identification including home addresses for both men. After the individuals left the area, Officer Barrow went to the area where he had the passenger had thrown the object. Officer Barrow located a second turkey that had been freshly harvested. Officer Barrow located both individuals and issued a citation for over the bag limit of turkey. Also, the hunter was issued a warning for failure to possess a valid non-resident hunting license and turkey permit.

JACKSON COUNTY

Several days before spring turkey season, Officer David Arnette located an automatic feeder filled with corn. Approximately 25 yards from the feeder was a ground blind with freshly cut brush on it. On opening day, Officer Arnette checked the blind shortly after daylight and found two hunters inside, both with shotguns. Appropriate citations were issued.

LEON COUNTY

RPU Lieutenant Kent Harvey was off duty turkey hunting on a lease in Leon County. While hunting, he heard several small caliber rifle shots coming from an area on the

lease about 100 yards from where he was hunting. Lieutenant Harvey investigated and found an individual trespassing on the property. The subject stated he had shot a turkey from the road and had wounded it. He then stated he climbed the fence and fired several more shots at the wounded bird. Lieutenant Harvey called dispatch and Officer Billy Kemp responded along with Officer Ros Welborn and K-9 Harley. Lieutenant Harvey and Officer Kemp were unable to locate the turkey that had been shot. Officer Welborn and K-9 Harley conducted an extensive area search where the suspect stated the turkey had run. Once ruling this area out, Officer Welborn started searching the opposite side from where the turkey had supposedly been shot. A short time later, K-9 Harley located the turkey. The suspect had shot a Jake. Officer Kemp charged the individual with shooting from the road and trespassing. The turkey and rifle were seized.

ALACHUA COUNTY

Officer Brad Stanley apprehended two subjects hunting turkeys over a baited area. Officer Stanley concealed himself early that morning near the bait he had located several days before the season. At first light, he observed a vehicle drive into the area. Two subjects exited the vehicle and set up their turkey decoys and hunting equipment. After Officer Stanley watched and heard both subjects using turkey calls, he walked up behind them and identified himself. Both subjects received a citation for attempting to take turkeys within 100 yards of a feeding station.

Officers Dustin Bonds and Brandon Lasher were working a baited area when they heard someone calling turkeys on the adjacent property. Officer Bonds called Officer Brad Stanley and relayed the information. Officer Bonds knew that Officer Stanley had located a baited area on the property earlier that week. Officer Stanley quickly issued the citations on the first bait case and approached the area from another direction. The three officers converged on the area and caught two subjects attempting to take turkeys over two different baited areas. Officer Stanley and Bonds issued citations for attempting to take turkeys within 100 yards of a feeding station.

Officer Brad Stanley was on foot patrol when he located two individuals from Kentucky, hunting turkeys. Both subjects checked out okay but stated they had two others from New York hunting with them. Officer Stanley could not locate them on the property and notified Lieutenant David Ferguson and an area investigator. Lieutenant Ferguson and the investigator arrived and began searching the adjacent property where others had been known to trespass in the past. Eventually the two were apprehended and after Miranda Warning, they admitted to hunting for turkeys on the property. Officer Stanley issued two citations for trespass per the landowner's request.

Lieutenant David Ferguson and Officer Brandon Lasher were working a baited site when they heard someone calling turkeys. After approaching the hunter with caution, they found him sitting on the ground against a tree with two decoys placed in a baited area. Both officers approached the subject and identified themselves. The subject was allowed to retrieve his decoys and escorted back to his vehicle where he received a citation for attempting to take turkeys within 100 yards of a feeding station.

Investigators were assisting officers with locating a suspect when something unusual occurred. While waiting for the suspect, an individual walked up to investigators and told them how his grandson killed two turkeys earlier that morning. After locating the grandson, the investigators believed he understood the daily bag limit law. However, he was issued a citation for no hunting license and a warning for over the daily bag limit.

CITRUS COUNTY

Officers Matt Steelfox and Ian Sweat from Sumter County worked a bait site in the Floral City area of Citrus County. The officers observed a subject hunting wild turkeys within 17 yards of a feeding station using decoys. A citation was issued for the violation.

DIXIE COUNTY

Officer Darby Butler was on foot patrol when he observed a suspect hunting turkey over a baited area. Officer Butler noticed the hunter using an electronic calling device to lure turkey to his location. He made contact with the hunter and cited him for attempting to take wild turkey within 100 yards of a feeding station and attempting to take wild turkey by an illegal method.

GILCHRIST COUNTY

Lieutenant Roy Williams and Officer Todd Nichols were on foot patrol when they found an individual hunting turkey over a baited area. While the officers were conversing with the hunter they heard another person attempting to call turkeys. Lieutenant Williams located the other hunter approximately 200 yards away. This hunter was also hunting over a baited area. Officer Nichols issued both hunters citations for attempting to take turkey within 100 yards of a feeding station.

LEVY COUNTY

Lieutenant Jay Russel located two out of state men illegally hunting turkeys over bait. The men were hunting in a blind approximately 22 yards from an abundance of freshly spread millet seed. Several turkeys were feeding on the bait when they shot a gobbler. As they went to retrieve the turkey Lieutenant Russel made contact with them. The men admitted that they knew not to hunt turkeys over bait. Lieutenant Russel issued a citation for taking wild turkey within 100 yards of a feeding station and seized the turkey.

MADISON COUNTY

Officer Clay Huff was on foot patrol in when he found an area where corn had been placed on the ground approximately five yards in front of a camouflage ground blind. Officer Huff then observed an individual place four turkey decoys in the area the corn was found and enter the blind. After hearing several turkey calls coming from the blind,

Officer Huff identified himself and cited the individual for attempting to take turkey within a 100 yards of a feeding station.

TAYLOR COUNTY

Officers Chad Albritton and Clinton Bean conducted surveillance on two turkey bait sites located on the same property. Officer Albritton watched two subjects set up seven turkey decoys and get into a shooting house approximately 58 yards from a feeding station. After several turkey calls were heard coming from the shooting house, the officers identified themselves and cited the two individuals for attempting to take turkey within a 100 yards of a feeding station.

CITRUS COUNTY

On the opening day of spring gobbler season Officers Ian Sweet and Matthew Steelfox were working a turkey hunt on private land just west of the Withlacoochee River and arrested a subject hunting turkey over bait. The decoy the man was using was a taxidermy turkey hen, located right in the middle of the bait. Officer Sweet had discovered the turkey blind and bait site earlier in the week.

LAKE COUNTY

Lieutenant Kevin Steinke responded to a call he received in reference to a gobbler turkey being shot from a county road and across a gate in a local orange grove. The witness got a tag number from the truck and followed it. Lieutenant Steinke retrieved the freshly killed gobbler and eventually met with the suspect. The investigation continues and charges are pending for shooting from the roadway and trespass.

On the opening day of spring gobbler season, Officer David Straub arrested two men for hunting turkey over bait on two separate bait sites on the same private property south of Groveland. Officer Straub located the bait sites earlier in the week.

Lieutenant David Adams arrested two men hunting turkey over bait out of the same blind on private property south of Clermont. Lieutenant Adams located the bait site earlier in the week in an extremely remote area based on information he had obtained about a year ago.

MARION COUNTY

Officer John Wilke worked opening morning of turkey season on a previously found turkey bait site but no one showed up. He quickly went to another local hunt club and found a truck parked at a gate near an area where he previously found turkey bait. He hid his truck and began to track the turkey hunter. He saw the hunter go down a road that was baited and also saw the hunter's decoy. As the officer got closer to the hunter, a shot rang out. He made his presence known and surprised the hunter soon after he killed a big gobbler over bait. The hunter was cited for hunting turkeys over bait and the bird was seized.

MARION COUNTY

Officers Wayne Hargabus and Joe Simpson worked opening morning on a turkey bait site they had previously found. Before daylight a couple of hunters showed up and began turkey hunting. The officers made their presence known and cited both hunters for hunting turkeys over bait.

OSCEOLA COUNTY

Prior to the opening of turkey season, Officer Kurt Arendas located two turkey blinds baited with a large amount of cracked corn only a few yards away in an orange grove. On the opening morning, Officer Arendas set up on the blinds and saw two Pasco County men enter the blinds after setting out decoys and he heard them begin to use turkey calls. After establishing they were hunting turkeys, Officer Arendas announced his presence and conducted an inspection of their licenses and hunting area. During the inspection, he found the cracked corn was still present within one hundred yards of the blinds and one of the men was hunting without a turkey permit. Both men were issued notices to appear for the violations.

VOLUSIA COUNTY

On opening day of spring turkey season, Officers Duane North and James Yetter conducted surveillance of a baited blind Officer Yetter had previously located from the helicopter. Shortly before daylight they observed a subject enter the blind. They watched the subject for over an hour from a concealed location and then approached the blind. As they approached, the subject exited the blind carrying a shotgun. When asked what he was doing, he replied "watching turkeys". Further investigation revealed the subject's shotgun was loaded with #4 turkey loads. A second shotgun was located in the blind loaded with 00 buckshot. The subject initially stated he wasn't hunting, but after questioning the subject further, he couldn't explain how sitting in a blind overlooking cracked corn on opening day of turkey season with a shotgun loaded with turkey shot was not turkey hunting. The subject stated, "Well I guess everybody needs a ticket once in a while." Officer Yetter cited the subject for attempting to take turkeys over bait.

Officer Jeff Gier and the local investigator worked a baited blind on private property on the Volusia/ Flagler county line near State Road 11. The hunter did not show up to the blind, but they heard another hunter nearby. Upon checking him, it was discovered he was hunting a baited site as well and was issued a citation for the violation.

Officers North, Gier and the local investigator checked property in the Volusian Forest Area that had an active feeder and corn spread on some roads. The officers encountered two hunters on the property who were not near the bait, but were non-residents and had not purchased any hunting licenses or non-resident turkey stamps. They were each cited for all the license violations.

HARDEE COUNTY

The opening morning of spring turkey season, Officer Erika Zimmerman was positioned near a plywood hunting blind located 15 yards from a game feeder. Since the feeder

did not disperse corn that morning, she suspected the timer was set for the evening and she returned that afternoon. An individual arrived and began hunting the area. Officer Zimmerman made contact with the hunter, who was using a double-barreled shotgun loaded with turkey shot and issued him a citation for attempting to take turkey over bait and failing to have a turkey stamp.

Officers Jordan Hilliard and Darrell Henderson were monitoring activity near feeders when two subjects were observed by Officer Hilliard hunting from a blind 20 yards from a corn feeder. Both subjects were cited for attempting to take turkeys within 100 yards of a game feeder.

HIGHLANDS COUNTY

On opening morning of spring turkey season, Lieutenant Rodger Brutus and Officers Jared Cloud, Matt Prowant were monitoring three corn feeders near some recently built blinds on private property, near Arbuckle Creek. Two hunters were observed in the area dispersing corn near the feeder at daylight. Both hunters were later located in a blind less than 60 yards from the corn. Officers Prowant and Cloud cited both subjects for attempting to take turkey within 100 yards of a game feeder. In addition, one individual was also cited for failing to have a hunting license and turkey stamp.

On the opening day of spring turkey season, Lieutenant Joe Allen and Officer Matthew Ervin were on foot patrol in the Bluff Hammock Safety Zone on the Kissimmee River Public Use Area. Two subjects were located in a hunting blind within the safety zone, which prohibits hunting and the possession of guns. Only one individual was hunting and in possession of a shotgun. He received a notice to appear in court for hunting and for the possession of a gun in the Bluff Hammock Safety Zone.

POLK COUNTY

Officers Jeff Brown and Dirk Williamson staked out a feeding station in the River Ranch Hunt Club on opening day of spring turkey season. They observed a subject in a ground blind attempting to take wild turkey within 100 yards of the feeding station. The hunter was issued a notice to appear for the violation.

Officer Eric Hansberry was patrolling a section of private property near Deen Still Road when he heard a shot shortly after sunrise. Knowing the area had several active feeders, he went to investigate and located a turkey hunter in a blind 18 yards from an active feeder. On the ground under the feeder was a dead turkey. Officer Hansberry seized the turkey and issued the hunter a notice to appear for taking turkey over bait.

March 26 – April 1, 2010

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Lieutenants Brian Lambert and Dan Hahr and Officers Steve Hoomes, Joe Murphy, Kenneth Manning and Faris Livesay worked turkey hunting in Escambia County. One case for hunting over bait and three cases for license violations were made.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Officer Leslie Sharp was conducting surveillance at a blind located roughly fifteen yards from an active feeder. Officer Sharp later observed a subject sit in the blind and begin calling turkeys as the feeder went off. The subject was subsequently cited for taking turkeys within 100 yards of an active feeding station.

HAMILTON COUNTY

Officer Arlo Rissman was working a baited area he located on the north end of Hamilton County near the Florida/Georgia line. Officer Rissman slipped into the location and observed two subjects hunting turkeys over the baited area. He issued both subjects a citation for attempting to take wild turkeys within 100 yards of an active feeding station and one a warning for no turkey stamp.

LAKE COUNTY

Officers David Straub and Ian Sweet cited two individuals for hunting turkeys over bait. Both bait sites had bird seed and cracked corn within 25 yards of the blind from where they were hunting. One jake turkey was seized.

SEMINOLE COUNTY

Officer Naomii Tye followed up on information she received last year about subjects hunting turkey over bait. She came out on her days off and caught two individuals hunting over turkey bait and filming the hunt for "prosperity". The camera was seized and will be inspected for evidence.

HIGHLANDS COUNTY

Lieutenant Joe Allen and Officers Matt Ervin and Kristen Gavagni conducted surveillance on three feeding stations on a ranch near Lorida. Five subjects arrived to hunt and were observed attempting to take wild turkey within 100 yards of the feeding stations. The individuals were issued notices to appear in court for the violations.

April 2 – 8, 2010

BAY COUNTY

Officer Joe Chambers issued a citation to an individual on a private lease hunting turkeys 17 yards from a large pile of cracked corn and bird seed. Officer Chambers, along with Officers Kenny Atkins and Mike Nobles, had maintained surveillance on the location since the opening day of spring turkey season. The site had been "sweetened

up” on several occasions, but never hunted. This ended Saturday and when cited, the hunter said due to his work schedule, this was his first opportunity to hunt.

GADSDEN COUNTY

Officers Hank Forehand and Lane Bentley worked turkey bait on the Sandy Hill Hunt Club in west Gadsden County. They located a subject hunting turkey from a blind 26 yards from an area baited with cracked corn. The subject was hunting with a Remington 12-gauge model 870 shotgun and was using #5 Nitro turkey shotgun shells and a Primos Box turkey call. The officers also located another hunter adjacent to the baited area. They identified this hunter as the son of their first subject. As the officers checked the hunter’s license, the first subject took responsibility for the turkey bait and knew he was hunting less than 100 yards from the bait. Citations were issued for attempting to take turkey over bait.

LAFAYETTE COUNTY

Officer Bryan Humphries was working in the Mallory Swamp Wildlife Management Area when he observed a subject dressed in camouflage clothing and carrying a shotgun, exit the woods. While conducting a field interview, the subject admitted that he was hunting turkeys. Officer Humphries issued the subject a citation for hunting turkeys during the closed season in the wildlife management area. A Mossberg shotgun was photographed as evidence.

TAYLOR COUNTY

Investigator Scott Lee observed an individual in possession of two turkeys and contacted Officer Leonard Bailey for assistance. During multiple interviews with several witnesses it was determined that the individual killed two turkeys that morning, violating the one a day bag limit on wild turkeys. Officer Bailey cited the individual for the violation.

ST. JOHNS COUNTY

Officer Rich Wilcox located a turkey blind with cracked corn within 25 yards of the blind. He later found a hunter hunting turkey from the blind and cited him for hunting turkey over bait.

HIGHLANDS COUNTY

An individual pled guilty to charges of hunting in a safety zone and for possessing a gun in a prohibited area on the opening day of spring turkey season. He was assessed a fine and court costs in Highlands County Court. Officer Matt Ervin, who was attending the arraignment, was able to secure a \$500 donation to the Wildlife Alert fund.

April 9 – 15, 2010

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Danny Arnette checked a subject exiting private property after turkey hunting. The subject was in possession of two harvested turkeys and claimed his cousin had taken one of the turkeys. When Officer Arnette inquired about the cousin's identity, the subject corrected his story and admitted to taking both turkeys. He was cited for taking over the daily bag limit of turkeys.

JACKSON COUNTY

While patrolling northern Jackson County, Officer David Arnette and K-9 Officer Mike Guy checked several bait sites on private property. While checking one of the sites, they discovered a fresh turkey feather which showed signs of being broken off, as if shot. While heading to another bait site, they heard two gunshots. They came upon two hunters carrying two freshly killed turkeys. Just beyond the hunters, the officers observed that the hunters had set up on a food plot where wheat seed was scattered over the ground. There were also fresh turkey feathers in the food plot where the turkey had been killed. When questioned about the second turkey, the two hunters took the officers to where they had killed it. This area was also baited with wheat seed. Interviews were conducted and one of the hunters also admitted to killing two turkeys the day before, one of which was also taken over a baited site. This hunter was in possession of a resident hunting license, although he is actually a resident of Alabama. Three of the four turkey hunts had been filmed for an outdoor hunting show the two men produced. Charges for taking turkey over bait, taking over the daily bag limit, taking over the season bag limit, and obtaining a resident hunting license by giving false information have been direct filed with the State Attorney's Office.

GADSDEN COUNTY

Lieutenant Harry Parker and Officers Hank Forehand, Lane Bentley, and Mike Fish worked a detail targeting illegal turkey hunting. Several baited sites were checked. Two hunters were found hunting over bait at two of the sites and were issued citations.

DIXIE COUNTY

Officer Justin Allen observed a subject hunting turkeys over a baited site. At approximately 8:00 a.m., the subject shot a gobbler turkey standing in the cracked corn. Officer Allen watched as the suspect picked up all the feathers from the turkey. During interviews the suspect admitted that he picked up the feathers to prevent the game warden from finding them. The suspect was cited for taking wild turkey within a hundred yards of a feeding station.

LEVY COUNTY

Officer Garret Fields was on patrol when he received information from Officer Sam Dishman in reference to a possible turkey bait violation. Officer Fields responded to the area and followed fresh tire and foot sign to a food plot with an active feeder. Officer Fields monitored the area for approximately an hour when he observed a man shoot a

gobbler that was feeding on the corn. The hunter was approximately 35 yards from the feeder when he shot. Officer Fields seized the gobbler and issued the man a citation for taking wild turkey within a hundred yards of a feeding station.

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Officer Jonathan Ruggiero and a ride-along were working the final day of turkey season at a ranch in Charlotte County. They walked nearly two miles through mud and knee deep water to get to a bait site located on the northwest section of the ranch. Two hunters arrived at the site shortly afterwards and began calling turkeys. After observing the hunters call turkeys for a time, Officer Ruggiero conducted a regulatory hunting inspection. During questioning, one of the individuals stated that the feeder wasn't set to operate and the only corn on the ground was from the squirrels. However, the individuals had three turkey decoys and the bait was measured to be approximately 40 yards from the blind. A citation was issued for attempting to take turkeys over bait.

SUWANNEE COUNTY

After discovering a baited area during a helicopter flight, Officer Arlo Rissman observed two subjects attempting to take wild turkeys from a pop-up blind on private property in the Wellborn area. The subjects had set their blind up 50 yards away from a feeder and placed their turkey decoys between their blind and the feeding station. Officer Rissman listened to the subjects call turkeys for 35 minutes before identifying himself. He cited one subject for attempting to take turkeys within 100 yards of a baited area, and the second subject for no hunting license, and warnings for no turkey stamp and attempting to take turkeys within 100 yards of a feeding station.

April 16 – 22, 2010

SUWANNEE COUNTY

After discovering a baited area during a helicopter flight, Officer Arlo Rissman observed two subjects attempting to take wild turkeys from a pop-up blind on private property in the Wellborn area. The subjects had set their blind up 50 yards away from a feeder and placed their turkey decoys between their blind and the feeding station. Officer Rissman listened to the subjects call turkeys for 35 minutes before identifying himself. He cited one subject for attempting to take turkeys within 100 yards of a baited area, and the second subject for no hunting license, and warnings for no turkey stamp and attempting to take turkeys within 100 yards of a feeding station.

April 23 – 29, 2010

BRADFORD COUNTY

Officer Ricky Justus and Lieutenant Gary Knowles worked a baited turkey site. A blind had been set up within 10 yards of an area where corn and peas had been scattered. Around 6:30 p.m., a subject arrived at the area, scattered additional corn on the ground, and then entered the blind. One hour later, Officer Justus observed the subject shoot a hen turkey that was approximately 18 yards from the blind. The hunter failed to possess his hunting license and did not have a valid turkey stamp. Officer Justus cited the subject for taking turkey within 100 yards of a feeding station and taking hen turkey during gobbler season. A written warning was issued for no turkey stamp and failure to possess a hunting license. The subject's shotgun and the hen turkey were seized.

LAFAYETTE COUNTY

Officers Dennis Sharpe and Rodney Boone worked a baited site that Officer Bryan Humphries had found earlier in the season. Upon their arrival at the property, they tracked the hunter into the baited area. After following the hunter's foot prints, they observed a subject attempting to take wild turkey from a blind that was 20 yards from a feeding station. After making contact with the subject, he admitted to putting the feed out, and stated "Ya'll got me." Officer Sharpe issued the subject a citation for attempting to take wild turkeys within 100 yards of a feeding station.