

cellant cooperative relationship with all our conservation agencies and most especially with our Game & Fish Commission. But most of all we have an effective Boating & Water Safety Program financed by those who live under its rule and reap the benefits of its actions. We like our organization the way it is. Its sole responsibility is that of Water Safety. We intend to keep it that way.

Thank You

*FLORIDA'S EXPERIENCE WITH FULL-TIME
UNDERCOVER INVESTIGATORS AND FULL POLICE
POWERS*

*Captain Alan Lamarche
Inspection and Investigation Supervisor*

The use of undercover investigators is not a new concept in the field of wildlife law enforcement, however, the concept of full-time undercover investigators (as used in Florida) may be an innovation to further enhance the effectiveness of our chosen profession.

Full police powers by wildlife officers is also not an entirely new concept in wildlife law enforcement. It is interesting to note, however, that, at this time only twelve (12) of the fifty-one (51) states have taken the necessary legislative action to give their wildlife officers full police power status.

Within the last two (2) years, the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Water Fish Commission has initiated a program utilizing full-time undercover investigators, and has also acquired full police powers for its wildlife officers.

Today, I will attempt to relate our experiences in the two aforementioned innovative concepts of a progressive wildlife enforcement program.

I never wear a uniform and my hair may not be the same color or length tomorrow. I supervise a statewide team of inspectors and investigators. Lieutenant Ashley has explained the role of the uniformed inspector in his paper. Our investigators work undercover and appear to be ordinary civilians. Our undercover investigation program is considered a full-time special statewide project. The upward chain of command for this project is from the undercover investigator, to the Inspection and Investigation Supervisor, to the Chief of Law Enforcement, to the Director. At no time is this chain of command violated, for we have found that the number one priority for a successful undercover program is complete confidentiality as to the identity of the undercover investigators as well as all aspects of present or future investigations.

I feel it is important to make the following point clear at the outset. Our investigators are used solely for the purpose of investigating fish and game violations. Many years ago, our Commission, like so many others, used plain clothes investigators to check on their own personnel. Perhaps, in those days it was a necessary action, today it is not! We have a sufficient number of highly trained professional supervisors and a chain of command that eliminates any need for inhouse personnel investigations. This practice crippled the prospect of initiating a full-time undercover investigation program for many years. Minor rumors of suspicion by some old-timers still circulate throughout our uniformed ranks.

There are two basic approaches to modern wildlife law enforcement—prevention and apprehension. Uniformed officers in marked cars provide the most efficient and effective method of preventing game violations and are, indeed, the backbone of any enforcement agency. In today's world, law enforcement administrators are finding a need to place more and more emphasis

on prevention. As a consequence, the uniformed officer has less time to concentrate on apprehending organized groups of game and fish violators. Our experiences have proven that a highly organized group of profit hunters can effectively operate around a preventative patrol for years without being apprehended. When a uniformed officer is fortunate enough to catch a profit hunter in the act of illegally killing a deer, the courts will usually view the violator as just another hunter out for camp meat.

Undercover investigations are generally expensive and may be very time consuming, but they afford the most effective means of apprehension. An investigator who works into a group of profit hunters, for example, and witnesses or participates in a large number of violations is able to prove the magnitude seriousness and profits of the illegal activities of the group. Hopefully, the courts will levy penalties in comparable proportions to fit the crime.

If complete confidentiality and thorough planning are lacking in an undercover investigation, there is likely to be one of two disastrous occurrences that will terminate an investigation.

In the early stages of our full-time undercover investigation program, we experienced one such occurrence. After several months of painstaking efforts, one of our agents was able to convince a major dealer in illegal alligator hides that he was a big money man who was willing to make a sizeable investment in some green gator hides. Meetings were held between our man and the dealer. Prices were agreed on by the foot for both belly skins and hornbacks. The deal resulted in an agreement that our man would purchase the \$20,000.00 worth of illegal hides the dealer had on hand. Our agent had documentary evidence where the dealer had personally written the prices, footage and other agreements of the transaction. The exact location of the hides was not known to us, but our man was to be taken to them the following day for an inspection of the merchandise.

By the next morning the dealer was nowhere to be found. Word was, that he found out our man was an undercover agent and that he had hauled the hides out of the state during the night. We eventually learned that the mistake we made was in not covering the agent's vehicle registration sufficiently. We covered it in the same manner as other law enforcement agencies. That is, when someone called in on the tag, they got a stock answer to the effect, "I'm sorry, but that information is out of the file at this time." The hide dealer had the right connection and when he made his final check on our agent before closing the deal, it paid off for him. One of the disastrous occurrences did take place—we blew the investigation. Our oversight in planning a minor detail, not only resulted in our blowing the investigation, but also in our losing \$20,000.00 worth of alligator hides. We were grateful, however, that the second of the two disastrous possibilities did not take place—no physical harm came to our undercover agent.

The game and fish violator, who is in the business for profit, is a cunning and paranoid individual. He is cunning because he must be, in order to successfully evade apprehension. He is paranoid because, he too has heard of others who were "betrayed" by a friend who turned out to be an undercover agent. Every stranger he meets in the course of his illegal operation is a potential undercover agent. When a stranger acts too friendly, or get too close, the smart violator checks him out. He will run a check on his employment, his license tag, ask to see his driver's license, social security card, and voter's registration. His background had better be airtight. We have had some go so far as to call our office posing as a creditor, seeking information about an employee who happens to be an undercover investigator.

When we select an undercover investigator for a particular assignment, we go to considerable lengths to choose a man with the exact looks and personality for the particular investigation at hand. He is given a new identity and background that is foolproof. He may be a college student making his way through school by

illegally hunting alligators. He may be a commercial fisherman or an insurance salesman trying to make a little extra money on the side. We supply him with a vehicle to fit his identity and background; he may drive anything from a Cadillac to a beachbuggie, but a license tag check will return as being registered to his fictitious name. His wallet will contain his fictitious driver's license, social security card, and various fictitious identification papers and receipts. He may even have an arrest record in his new name. The undercover agent will be supplied with printed business cards, if necessary, and he will have his own personal checking. His new name, address, and telephone number will appear in the local telephone directory. He becomes a new member of society with a logical background that, if checked out, will be covered from all angles. Once he begins an investigation, he will remain on it full-time through the termination, if it takes two (2) months or two (2) years.

The investigator will most likely be promoted from the uniform ranks with a ten percent (10%) increase in salary (\$650.00 per month, minimum). Minimum qualifications for an investigator are three (3) years of wildlife law enforcement experience, or a four (4) year specialized college degree. On occasion, an investigator will be employed from outside our agency, if it is necessary for the success of a particular investigation. Once the identity of an investigator has become publicly known to the point where his continued functioning as an undercover investigator would be dangerous to his person, or make him ineffective, he is guaranteed the opportunity of returning to the uniformed ranks, in the county of his choice, where vacancies occur.

Most game commissions are able to spread a rumor across an entire state as rapidly as a women's club can pass a rumor through a Thursday night card party. When we promote a wildlife officer to an investigator position, we do it as discretely as possible. His fellow officers back home, however, are so proud of "Ole Joe" and the fact that he was promoted that they have to tell someone. Before very long, all of the uniformed officers know that "Ole Joe" is an investigator. In a coffee shop, an outlaw will overhear some officers talking about "Ole Joe" and, believe me, the rumor will spread just as rapidly through his peer group. For this reason, we feed an occasional false rumor into the grapevine to keep the opposition off balance.

A careless switchboard operator at the office may, unknowingly, give the identity of your investigators to a seemingly innocent telephone caller. The personnel office may, mistakenly, give the investigator's name and address to a creditor who may or may not be honest. The people in the fiscal department have access to his financial records and all people who work for Game Commissions have the same weakness—they gossip. The point is, that your own personnel will often, unintentionally, hinder your undercover investigation program. Because of such unintentional leaks in a department, the administrators of an undercover program must work doubly hard to hide the fictitious identity of the agent. It is a fact that his real identity can only be covered for a short time.

The life expectancy (in terms of effectiveness due to identity) of an undercover investigator may vary widely with the individual. Ingenuity in changing his physical appearance, as well as, flexibility and stamina in managing his personal and family life will help determine his length of service as an undercover investigator. The ideal situation, of course, is if the investigator is not a married man.

At this time I would like to share with you a memorandum that our Chief of Law Enforcement, Major Brantley Goodson, sent to all enforcement personnel in the early stages of our program. The memo speaks for itself and, I feel, has contributed to the success of our program because of its forward and open approach.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Law Enforcement Personnel
 FROM: Major Brantley Goodson, Chief of Law Enforcement Division
 SUBJECT: Undercover Investigation Procedure

"The Commission's Law Enforcement Division has added an Undercover Investigation Unit to assist the uniformed ranks apprehend commercial violators of game and fish laws. Investigators of the unit will usually pose as violators for the purpose of infiltrating the groups of organized violators (profit hunters) in order to gather inside information of their activities.

When sufficient information is uncovered and good cases can be made, the uniformed officers of the local enforcement area will be notified to conduct raids, make arrests and assist in prosecution. The Investigator will move on to another area and, hopefully, will not be identified.

In order to insure the continued success of the undercover investigation program, there are certain procedures that you as a wildlife officer should know. Your cooperation, trust and assistance is of vital importance. I fully understand that there are certain types of violations that you have difficulty in handling because of your known identity, uniform, marked car, or because of insufficient time.

When followed, these procedures will assist you and the Division in providing more efficient wildlife law enforcement.

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1. If you have any knowledge of suspected large scale or commercial game or fish activities in your area that should be investigated, send detailed information regarding names, vehicle descriptions, tag numbers, suspected activities, hangouts, etc., directly to the Chief of Law Enforcement.

2. Do not talk with the public about our Investigation Unit or any information you may have relayed. If this program is to be a success you must keep it confidential.

3. Normally, you will not be advised of investigations in your area until a substantial case is built for your area to take over, make arrests and assist in prosecution.

4. If you encounter an officer that you know in the company of known violators, *do not* show any indication that you recognize him unless he advises you to do so. If he is involved in a violation, treat him the same as any other violator and complete a citation using the name he gives you. This is extremely important to insure the personal safety and continued confidential identity of the investigator.

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In most cases, Investigators will be selected from the ranks of the Law Enforcement Division.

Investigators are used solely in the investigation of fish and game violations and are in *NO* way used to investigate Commission personnel."

A copy of this memo and a detailed explanation of our program is given to each new wildlife officer we employ.

Money is a subject that is of paramount importance to any undercover operation. We have found that a revolving fund is necessary. It is essential because our investigators deal strictly in cash or checks from their personal fictitious checking account. An agency that is not willing to adequately fund an undercover program should not go into the business on a full-time basis. I do not wish to imply that using full-time undercover investigators is the only possible way to accomplish a successful undercover investigation. There are some states that are conducting successful investigations by utilizing uniformed men on a

daily or weekly basis. We have found in Florida, however, that the full-time investigator is most practical for our needs.

Our investigators keep daily reports and information on a miniature tape recorder that looks like an ordinary transistor radio. He also has miniature electronic listening devices at his disposal. I maintain clandestine meetings with our investigators on a weekly basis and pick up his tapes for transcription into written reports. At these meetings, I give him enough cash to meet all his needs, such as purchasing evidence, gasoline, travel expenses, etc. The investigator keeps all his financial records on the miniature tapes, leaving no papers to give him away.

This leads to the touchy area of audits. I record every nickel we spend in a ledger that is available to our chief and director exclusively. Each expenditure will include the date, item purchased, amount, place of purchase and a receipt when possible. Receipts are a rarity for the obvious reason that they can blow your cover. The investigator's original tapes are maintained for added security. We have explained our system to the auditors, and although they are not completely happy because they are denied access to our records, we have experienced no serious problems to date. Occasionally a reward will be paid to a confidential informer and a receipt is required here.

The decision of when to terminate an investigation for the purpose of prosecution or lack of progress is left primarily to the investigator. He alone is the best judge for this type of decision. He lives with the outlaws and he can see the entire forest when I may only see a few trees.

At this time, I would like to relate some circumstances of a noteworthy undercover investigation.

The Ocala National Forest is located in the central part of our State and has always had a boutiful white-tail deer herd that attracts thousands of sportsmen annually.

In 1969, surveys indicated a marked reduction in the herd with a further, more drastic reduction in 1970. One of our most popular wildlife management areas (Citrus), located within thirty (30) miles of the Ocala Forest, also experienced a comparable depletion in its deer population. Rumors circulated concerning market hunting in these areas. Reports from our uniformed wildlife officer supported the theory of possible market hunting activities.

An undercover investigator was sent into the area for the sole purpose of verifying the rumors and feeding back more specific information. After two (2) months, the investigator was able to positively substantiate the fact that there was market hunting in the area and a full scale investigation was warranted.

The United States Forest Service had been holding public meetings and had received similar reports of market hunting. Being equally concerned, they sent Special Agent Wayne W. Wilson, Sr., U.S.F.S. to our Chief of Law Enforcement and suggested a joint undercover investigation be conducted in and around the Ocala National Forest. He advised that the Forest Supervisor in Florida was willing to supply a special agent from another state to work with our investigators and split the costs of the investigation. We enthusiastically accepted the offer, and in September 1971, the investigation began in earnest. The complete results of this investigation are not available today because three (3) of the principle defendants will not be tried until later this month.

Six months of close cooperation and hard work between our Commission and the U.S. Forest Service resulted in thirty-five (35) state charges and ten (10) federal charges against thirteen (13) defendants for illegally killing, buying, or selling a total of forty-seven (47) deer. The violations were spread over a three (3) county area which included the Ocala National Forest and the Citrus Wildlife Management Area.

Ten (10) defendants have been tried on twenty-seven (27) charges to date, resulting in twenty-six (26) convictions and one *nol prosequi*. Fines exceeding

\$4,000.00 have been levied to date with defendants paying \$2,100.00 to the Florida Game and Fresh Water Commission for replacement of deer in the Ocala National Forest and the Citrus Wildlife Management Area. Federal and county judges have passed jail sentences totalling seven and a half (7½) years, with most time being suspended pending payment of moneys to replace deer. Sentences included up to two (2) years of strict federal probation per defendant requiring each of them to report to a probation officer weekly, in addition to the suspension of all hunting privileges for two (2) years. One case was recently lost in a Federal Appeals Court on the technicality that the recording device was not working during the original trial of the defendant. This appeal nullified a \$500.00 fine and two (2) year jail sentence imposed by the trial judge.

For obvious reasons, I cannot go into all the details of the investigation, but will be happy to talk with you individually later. It will suffice to say that this investigation resulted in the complete break-up of an organized illegal commercial deer ring with the arrest of the hunters, the middle man (who operated an ice plant and bought deer which he resold for profit) and a number of persons who provided the market by buying deer for parties, personal consumption and commercial dining establishments.

A significant point to be made is that this was the first such cooperative undercover investigation between any state Game Commission and the U.S. Forest Service. The cooperative effort contributed to the success of the investigation by combining the manpower and ingenuity of both agencies, while costing each agency only fifty percent (50%) of the financial burden of an independent investigation.

Wildlife criminals rarely limit their illegal activities to fish and game. Many of them are involved in moonshine, cattle rustling, drug traffic and numerous other unlawful profit activities. This brings out the concept of whether or not wildlife officers should have full police powers.

A number of factors caused our Commission to petition our State Legislature (2 years ago) to pass a law making our wildlife officers constituted peace officers with authority to arrest for violations of all state laws.

Like the rest of the United States, most crime occurs in Florida's metropolitan areas. In recent years, however, our State Legislature and the Federal Government, through LEAA, have been taking actions and appropriating funds to areas that strengthen and improve local police and sheriffs departments. The result has been a reduction in crime in many of our cities and an increase in crime in rural and wilderness areas. Although our wildlife officers were patrolling these areas for fish and game violations, they were continuously encountering violations such as vandalism, drunken driving, cattle rustling, narcotics, and dangerous drugs and crimes of violence.

Some may say that, "Wildlife officers have no business enforcing such laws because most Game and Fish Commissions, like Florida's are funded by hunters' and fishermen's dollars. And besides, a game warden doesn't know anything about those laws and he shouldn't mess with the sheriff's business." Try to tell this to the victims of these crimes when a wildlife officer may be the only symbol of authority within twenty (20) miles of a family being robbed as they camp beside a wilderness lake.

It is true that the sportsman should not foot the entire bill for the general police protection our officers provide in rural and wilderness areas, but then that is another subject altogether.

We have found that most sheriff's offices are not jealous of our authority, but then, we do not abuse it. Our state sheriff's association was cautious when legislation was introduced to give us peace officer status. We assured them, however, that we would not become an investigative agency for all crimes, but that we would be there to back them up and assist when possible. Our officers do not answer routine complaints unrelated to fish or wildlife, and they do not

arrest every speeder or transient that they encounter. They apply their authority with great discretion.

There have been numerous occasions where our peace officer status has helped our men in the enforcement of game and fish laws. Night hunters in vehicles who flee and dispose of weapons and necessary evidence during the chase can now be arrested for traffic violations, drunkenness or a multitude of other infractions instead of getting off scott free as they once did.

Florida has a statute law that established a Police Standards Board which sets minimum qualifications for employment, education and training of all law enforcement officers. Our wildlife officers fall under the preview of the Police Standards Board and are required to receive the same minimum 280 hours of basic law enforcement training that other police receive. The 280 hour classroom course includes everything from homicide investigation, to drug identification, to burglary investigation and traffic control. Our wildlife officers receive an additional 200 classroom hours of instruction related fish, game and environmental law enforcement. In other words, we insure that they are sufficiently trained and capable of using their full police authority.

Because of the geographic location of our State, we have a great deal of drugs being smuggled into the United States through Florida from South America and the outer islands. The Everglades is a favorite dropping point for smugglers of marijuana who fly small planes. As city narcotics squads put pressure on members of the drug scene they head for the Everglades to gang up, make their illegal transactions and hold drug parties. In one month this year, our wildlife officers made thirteen (13) arrests for smuggling, possessing, using or otherwise dealing in narcotics and dangerous drugs in the Everglades and surrounding wilderness areas. During these arrests, our officers seized over 700 pounds of marijuana and a quantity of hard drugs.

Every drug arrest and seizure was made while our wildlife officers were performing routine patrols for fish and game violations. In all instances, where possible, local sheriffs or police were called in to continue the investigation and share in publicity or credit for the cases. There have been numerous other arrests for crimes against persons and property, but to elaborate on them would not clarify the issue.

Full police powers have been good for the image of our Commission. Through our wildlife officers, we have gotten closer to the people of our state. We have been able to help them in times of need for problems not always related to fish and wildlife.

Our wildlife officers have worked more closely with other law enforcement agencies and have gained the respect of these agencies as well as an enhanced appreciation from the courts, government officials and sportsmen.

Our police powers were recently put to use during the two National Political Conventions in Miami Beach. Sixty (60) wildlife officers were assigned to security and riot control duty during both Conventions for twenty-one (21) days, and a number of arrests were made for various violations related to the attempted disruptions of this political process.

Perhaps I should clarify at this point that the only members of our Commission with full police powers are those in law enforcement. Other field personnel in game or fish management have arrest authority, but only for violations of the fish and game laws.

The respect the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission has gained from the citizens of our state through prudent exercise of its full police powers and the effectiveness of our undercover investigation program have made our Commission proud of these two innovative wildlife law enforcement concepts.

I & E SECTION
SYMPOSIUM — “TV AND THEE”
“An Abstract”

By
Larry Richardson

The impact of television as a mass media has been a powerful force in this country. Probably no other media has had such a powerful effect in such a short existence. In the wildlife public relations business, we are constantly looking for media which will present our programs in a sharp, specialized and pinpointed approach to an audience. Nowhere is this more applicable than in television. What other medium has such a widespread captive audience. Ninety-six out of every 100 American homes has one or more television sets. Surveys have shown that the average home will have their tv's turned on over six hours each day. Americans are so attuned to this media that by the time they reach age 21, 30,000 hours have been logged in front of the television screens.

The use of television for the promotion of wildlife conservation and hunting and fishing is relatively new. The first hunting and fishing series was produced only about 20 years ago.

There is a need for *quality* programs of varying lengths presented on educational and commercial television. Even the one-minute spot has been recognized as a valuable tool in reaching not only the sportsmen but all interest groups.

News reporting is an essential portion of wildlife conservation programs. Factual, concise and timely news is a must and the inclusion of visual materials such as photos, slides and film clips is preferred. News commentators should be encouraged and aided in participating in wildlife management and sporting activities as an investment in promotional advertisement.

Today a vast audience has been developed and the opportunities seem to be unlimited. Although magazines and newspapers are by no means dead, the broadcasting vehicle offered by television must be utilized if we expect to keep in step with the times.

SCIENCE TO FICTION

By
Woody Bledsoe

When Larry Richardson asked me to present a paper at this conference, he gave me a general idea of what he wanted me to expound on. In essence, it was days of converting the findings and writings of our wildlife biologists to laymens language for public consumption in our news releases, magazines and through out radio and TV broadcasts.

Today's public is better educated and hep to modern technology than we in the business of Information are prone to give them credit. However, I think just good common sense applies if we are to do a good job of conveying our conservation story in an understandable fashion. Now, I'm more closely allied with the listening and viewing audience than with the reader since my speciality is radio and TV, although I've been known to write an article on occasion. So, with that in mind, my concentration will be centered more toward the radio and TV audience.