



FWC

Division of Law Enforcement

Weekly Report

April 22 through April 28, 2016

This report represents some events the FWC handled over the past week; however, it does not include all actions taken by the Division of Law Enforcement.

Patrol, Protect, Preserve

NORTHWEST REGION

CASES

BAY COUNTY

Officers Hellett and Goodwin found a turkey bait site on a hunting lease near a shooting house. The bait (whole corn) was less than 50 yards away from the shooting house. The officers arrived early one morning and set up to observe the site. A subject arrived at daybreak and climbed into the shooting house. They observed the subject hold a turkey box call out the window of the shooting house attempting to call turkeys. They made contact with the subject and issued a citation for hunting turkey over bait and no turkey permit. The officers heard another shot near their location and located bait and turkey feathers consistent with a fresh harvest. Through investigative work, they located the other hunter and a freshly taken turkey. The subject admitted to taking the turkey over bait and was issued citations for the violation.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Officers Land and Cushing patrolled both state and federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico aboard the *FinCat*, targeting illegal fishing activity. The officers conducted numerous fishing inspections resulting in resource cases for possession of gag grouper during the closed season, possession of undersized triggerfish, possession of undersized amberjack, and possession of red snapper during the closed season. All subjects were issued the appropriate paperwork for these violations.

Officers Land, Roberson, Cushing and USCG Boarding Officer Dziama patrolled both state and federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico, aboard the *FinCat*, targeting illegal fishing activity. The officers conducted numerous fishing inspections during the day, one of those resulting in several violations. Prior to the officers boarding a recreational fishing vessel to conduct a fisheries inspection, the operator stated that he had some triggerfish and red snapper on board. Additionally, he stated that he knew red snapper was closed, but he didn't know what to do with the ones he was catching. During the inspection, Officer Land discovered three undersized gray triggerfish in a cooler and a bag of red snapper fillets in the bottom of a bucket of ice with fishing gear piled on top. The owner of this vessel was issued the appropriate citations for these violations.

Over the course of the week, Officers Manning and Allgood conducted resource and boating safety inspections in state and federal waters. They documented several violations including four misdemeanor notices to appear for possession of undersized triggerfish, undersized amberjack, and red snapper out of season. They also documented several other boating safety-related violations.

While conducting resource inspections near the Pensacola Pass, Officers Allgood and Manning noticed several signs of impairment from the operator of one vessel. These signs included a strong smell of an alcoholic beverage on his breath, slurred speech, and glassy red eyes. The operator agreed to perform several field sobriety tasks and performed poorly on them. Officer Allgood placed the operator under arrest and transported him to the Escambia County Jail for boating under the influence (BUI). The operator refused to give a breath sample. This was the operator's second arrest for BUI.

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officer Hutchinson received information about a group of people camping along the Escambia River and fishing illegally. He patrolled the river by vessel and made contact with three of the suspected violators. He conducted a vessel stop and discovered several untagged bush hooks in the vessel. While running the subjects' information, he discovered that one of them had four outstanding warrants out of Escambia County. He issued two written warnings for the bush hook violations and arrested the subject who had the warrant.

Officers Lewis and Ramos were on forest patrol in Blackwater River State Forest when they observed a group recreating around a campfire. They observed the group cutting live vegetation and littering. The officers heard a truck's engine revving in a nearby parking area. They observed the group around the campfire leave the area without extinguishing the campfire. The officers ran approximately a half mile toward the truck they heard. When the parking area was in sight, Officer Lewis observed a truck spinning its tires and a "rooster tail" of sand coming up from beneath the vehicle. He approached the truck and found a group of people around it. He observed that the truck was immobile and dug large ruts in the parking lot. Officer Lewis identified the truck's driver. The driver admitted that he was showing off and intentionally spun his truck's tires.

Meanwhile, Officer Ramos intercepted the group that was around the campfire as they were heading toward the parking area where the truck was revving its engine. The group around the campfire was with the group with the stuck vehicle. Officer Lewis charged the truck's owner with destruction of state lands by motor vehicle. Both officers issued multiple citations for forestry violations including not extinguishing the campfire, cutting live vegetation, and littering.

Officer Hutchinson was patrolling in the Blackwater State Forest where he located a subject using a GPS to locate hunting dogs in the field trial area. He made contact with him and after further investigation discovered that he had six hunting dogs with him that were pursuing wildlife. While he was talking to him, he smelled the odor of cannabis and found him in possession of cannabis cigarettes. Officer Hutchinson charged him with hunting with dogs out of season and possession of not more than 20 grams of cannabis.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officers Brooks and H. Rockwell patrolled the shoreline of the Gulf of Mexico to ensure compliance with bag and size limit regulations for pompano. The officers made contact with 36 subjects fishing and answered questions about license requirements and fish regulations. Three subjects were found to have license violations of which two were issued warnings and the other cited.

Officer Pifer was on vessel patrol in the area of the Destin Pass when he observed a 15-foot vessel with six individuals on board being operated under the Marler Bridge. The vessel appeared overloaded because the rub rail was touching the water. As Officer Pifer got closer, he could see approximately two-four inches of water inside the vessel. Officer Pifer identified the operator and instructed him to take his vessel to shore. Once ashore, Officer Pifer determined from the vessel's capacity plate that the vessel was rated for four people. Also,

multiple empty alcoholic beverage containers were observed in the vessel. During a boating safety inspection, the operator did not have the required number of personal flotation devices (PFDs) and signs of impairment were observed. A BUI investigation was conducted and the operator was subsequently arrested for BUI. At the U.S. Coast Guard Station (USCG) Destin, the operator provided a breath sample of 0.129 and 0.127. The operator was charged with BUI, operating a vessel over capacity, and insufficient PFDs.

Officers P. Rockwell, Pifer and Corbin were on offshore patrol in federal and state waters on the patrol vessel *Vigilance*. The officers conducted a fisheries inspection on a charter boat in state waters. The fisheries inspection revealed two undersized gray triggerfish. The Captain/operator was issued a notice to appear citation.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officers Pifer and Corbin were dispatched to two bear complaints, one in the Niceville area and the other in the Fort Walton Beach area. When the officers arrived at both locations, they observed garbage cans knocked over and household trash spread throughout the yard and into the wooded area behind the residences. The officers observed black bears eating the household trash. At one of the homes, the officers and an FWC bear biologist attempted to scare the bear into the wooded area, but were unsuccessful. The bear eventually climbed up a tree. At the other house, the officers successfully scared the bear back into the woods. Both homeowners were given educational brochures and issued a non-compliance notification.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Officer Barnard and Investigator Livesay attended the Annual Kid's Fishing Clinic in Pensacola. Over 1,500 people attended the event where kids were given free fishing gear and an opportunity to fish at the Vince Whibbs Sr. Maritime Park. Officer Barnard and Investigator Livesay provided educational material and answered questions. They also provided assistance to a member of the public who was later transported by EMS to a local hospital.

Officers Manning and Allgood attended the Annual Hunt Club Meeting hosted by Laforesta Perdida for hunt club members. Laforesta Perdida, a timber company, leases several thousands of acres to several different hunting clubs. Issues that arose last hunting season were discussed.

Lieutenant Lambert and Officer McHenry attended the Annual Law Enforcement Appreciation Event held at Marcus Point Baptist Church. Several different local, state and federal agencies were in attendance.

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officer Lewis received a complaint regarding a hunter possibly illegally turkey hunting on a private field adjacent to the complainant's property. He located and checked the hunter and found no violations. He then spoke with the complainant and explained turkey hunting rules

and regulations on private lands. Officer Lewis was fortunate to meet a landowner he had not met before and have a positive conversation, building a relationship between FWC and landowners.

Over the weekend, officers performed vessel safety inspections at local boat ramps. To inform boaters of problems before they were underway, the officers performed the inspections prior to the vessels entering the water. Several boaters were educated on boating safety regulations.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CASES

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Officer McDonald observed a subject fishing in Kirby Pit, a closed Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) state land area. Officer McDonald recognized the subject from previous encounters at the same location with the same violations. After observing the man fish for approximately 30 minutes and after seeing him put at least one fish in a back pack he was carrying, Officer McDonald went to make contact. As Officer McDonald approached, he was seen by the subject. Without hesitation, the suspect abandoned all of his fishing gear and ran on foot away from the officer. Officer McDonald pursued the suspect on foot, but was unable to catch him. Later that day, the man was located and taken into custody after being picked up by a friend and then running out of gas. Lieutenant Kiss just happened to come up to the disabled truck and observed a man in the passenger seat and recognized him as the suspect. Lieutenant Kiss called in other FWC officers for backup and together the suspect was apprehended. The suspect was then booked into Columbia County Jail for trespass after notice, resisting an officer without violence and possession of three undersized black bass. He was also issued a citation for no freshwater fishing license.

Officers Johnston and Yates worked together to apprehend a suspect with an active FWC warrant for resisting an officer without violence. The suspect had an active warrant for resisting Officer Johnston at the Alligator Lake Fish Management Area (FMA). Officers Johnston and Yates located the suspect leaving work in Lake City where he was detained without incident. The warrant was confirmed and he was arrested and transported by Officer Johnston to the Columbia County Jail.

Pilot Johnston and Officer Johnston were on foot patrol at the Alligator Lake FMA Boat Ramp. Pilot Johnston observed a subject at the boat ramp sitting in a vehicle smoking what appeared to be a marijuana blunt. Pilot Johnston could also smell the distinct odor of cannabis coming from the vehicle. The officers made contact with the subject who was then detained in handcuffs without incident. The subject was found to be in possession of less than 20 grams of cannabis and possession of drug paraphernalia. The subject was also found to be on drug offender probation from a previous marijuana charge. He was issued notices to appear in court for the above violations. The passenger in the vehicle was also detained and found to be in possession of a controlled substance without a prescription. Possible charges are forthcoming, pending positive identification of the controlled substance.

DIXIE COUNTY

After receiving a tip in mid-March about a doe deer that had been illegally killed and possessed, Officers Cline and Wiggins began to investigate by conducting several interviews and making contact with several uncooperative witnesses. Over time, Officers Cline and Wiggins were able to identify at least two suspects and seize the deer meat. After several more days, Officer Cline was able to locate and interview both suspects. During the interviews, both suspects denied killing the deer but admitted to retrieving, processing and possessing the deer meat. Charges were filed on both in Dixie County for possession of freshly killed deer during a closed season.

Officer Cline observed a commercial oyster vessel return to Shired Island Boat Ramp and load several bags of oysters from the vessel into a truck. A stop was conducted and a license and fisheries inspection was conducted. This inspection found the subject to be in possession of 12 untagged bags of oysters. The subject was issued a citation for possession of untagged oysters and the oysters were returned to the water.

While conducting pre-dawn marine fisheries patrol along the Dixie County coastline, Officer Cooper encountered a subject sitting in a vehicle along the highway. Officer Cooper made contact with the subject inside and could smell a strong odor of burnt marijuana emanating from the vehicle. The subject stated he had just smoked a joint. A further search of the vehicle uncovered a metal box containing more marijuana and rolling papers. The subject was issued a notice to appear for possession of marijuana less than 20 grams and for possession of drug paraphernalia.

Officers Butler, Willis and Allen conducted a two-day detail targeting illegal oystering on the Dixie County coastline. A total of seven persons were apprehended with commercial oystering violations which resulted in 7 misdemeanor citations for harvesting in closed waters, 1 misdemeanor for failing to tag oysters, 1 misdemeanor for no commercial license and 9 warnings for boating safety violations. In all, 33 bags of oysters were seized and returned to the Gulf waters.

NORTHEAST REGION

CASES

VOLUSIA COUNTY

As the Spring Turkey season draws to a close, officers report the following activity for the season: two cases of taking turkey in closed WMA, four cases for hunting turkey over bait, one for illegal entry into WMA, a dumping case involving a PWC, and six other licensing/WMA violations.

Officer West inspected a recreational fishing boat in the New Smyrna Beach area. The adult male operator was issued a criminal citation for possessing an oversized red drum.

Officer Demeter checked a man who was harvesting oysters from a closed area in New Smyrna Beach. The man provided a false name and date of birth. The ensuing investigation revealed the man's true identity. He was booked into the Volusia County Jail for harvesting

oysters from a closed area and providing a false name while being lawfully detained by a law enforcement officer. In a separate incident, Officer Demeter observed two men harvesting oysters from a prohibited area in New Smyrna Beach. Both men were issued criminal citations for the violation.

Lieutenant Eason was on patrol in the area of French Landing within Blue Springs State Park when he observed a mother and young child swimming in the beach area. He noticed the young child had thrown a plastic bottle into the river that the mother failed to retrieve. When the adult female loaded her vehicle up and began to drive away, Lieutenant Eason conducted a traffic stop to address the littering violation and on suspicion of driving under the influence (DUI). The female subject immediately asked if she was driving too fast to which Lieutenant Eason advised 10 mph was not too fast. Sobriety tasks were conducted and the adult female was arrested for DUI and driving on a suspended license with knowledge. Lieutenant Eason requested a Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) evaluation from Volusia County Sheriff's Office which was conducted at the Deltona substation. A breath test was provided and results were .000 G/210L. A urine sample was also collected. The DRE evaluation determined the subject to be under the influence of multiple prescription drugs. The adult female was transported to the Volusia County Branch Jail without further incident by Lieutenant Eason. The child was turned over to her father at the scene.

Acting on a tip from Investigator Corfield, Lieutenant Baer went to a local farmers market where someone was reported to be selling shrimp to the public without a retail license. Lieutenant Baer located the seller and found that her retail license had been expired for almost a year. A citation was issued for the violation.

Officer North responded to a boating accident on the St. John's River in Astor involving a jet ski that was fully engulfed in flames. The operator had just left the fuel dock and when he began to accelerate the Jet Ski exploded, blowing him off into the water. He was picked up by a passing boat who brought him to safety. He was checked out by paramedics and released without any injuries. His jet ski, which burned to the waterline, was a total loss.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

Officer Edson attended an outreach event for a local 4-H Club at Lake George Wildlife Management Area (WMA). There were six adult and 15 youth participants. Officer Edson explained the duties of an FWC officer and some of our local rules and regulations pertaining to hunting and fishing. He also demonstrated some of the equipment we use during the performance of our duties.

MARION COUNTY

Officer Simpson, with the help of Public Information Coordinator Workman, coordinated Project Spring Clean in the Ocala WMA. The event was a multi-agency coordinated effort between the FWC, the U.S. Forest Service, Marion and Lake County Waste Management, Lake County Sheriff's Office and Marion County Sheriff's Office. Members of the Marion County squad and numerous volunteers from multiple agencies and user groups, including several dog hunting groups, volunteered to help pick up various dump sites throughout the WMA. Over 40,000 pounds of trash was collected from the WMA.

Captain Smith responded to a call reference a deer being shot in the back yard of a residence in the Ocala National Forest. Once on scene, Captain Smith discovered a blood trail and the location the deer was actually shot. Captain Smith secured the area and called for assistance. Officers Teal, Florence and Simpson, along with K-9 Moose, responded. K-9 Moose successfully tracked back to a nearby residence. Occupants of the residence were questioned. It was determined during the investigation that a juvenile male had shot the deer. Charges have been filed by the Office of the State Attorney in this matter.

PUTNAM COUNTY

Officer Florence was on patrol at Rodman Dam when he conducted a fisheries inspection on a subject that was throwing a cast net. Upon looking at the subject's catch, it was found that he was keeping gamefish (bream) that were caught by illegal method (cast net). The subject was issued a citation for the offense.

Officer Jones was conducting a fisheries inspection under the Dunn's Creek Bridge when he observed what appeared to be a gopher tortoise in a bowl. A subject admitted to being in possession of the tortoise without a permit and was issued a citation for the offense. The tortoise was released back into the wild unharmed.

A night hunting detail was put together by the North St. John's River Crew that encompassed Putnam, Marion and Lake Counties. During this detail, an observation flight was conducted. The aircrew observed a vehicle using a spotlight on a closed road, near the southern end of the Ocala National Forest. Ground units responded and found the operator to be driving under the influence. The driver was arrested.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CASES

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Officer Zampella was on patrol when he observed some people fishing in a freshwater canal. When he asked if they had any fish, one of the people said she had some sheepshead and mangrove snapper. The woman said the snapper and sheepshead were all legal size and at least 10 inches long. Officer Zampella corrected the woman and told her sheepshead must be at least 12 inches long. After inspecting her catch, Officer Zampella found the woman to be in possession of 5 undersized sheepshead. Of the 5 undersized sheepshead, 3 of them were less than 10 inches long. A misdemeanor citation was issued for possession of undersized sheepshead.

HERNANDO COUNTY

While patrolling the Citrus-Hernando Shrimping and Trapping Zones, Officers Bergwerff and Fagan located a line of stone crab traps in a closed zone. There were 160 stone crab traps in the line, 125 of them which were inside the closed zone. The owner was located and a notice to appear was issued to the owner of the traps.

LEE COUNTY

Officer McColgin and Lieutenant Ruggiero were on plain-clothes water patrol around Sanibel when they observed two vessels approaching a dock. After starting a conversation with one of the operators, he admitted to catching a bunch of snook and keeping one. The officers identified themselves and conducted a fisheries inspection on both vessels. Officer McColgin inspected the man with the snook and found it was undersized. The FWC records showed the man had received a few manatee citations and a misdemeanor for hunting turkeys over bait. He was issued a misdemeanor for the undersized snook. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Ruggiero inspected the second vessel and found 16 trout on board the vessel which was occupied by four men. All four men admitted to catching and keeping the trout but couldn't determine who caught which ones. The trout were measured and Lieutenant Ruggiero determined 12 of the 16 fish were undersized. One of the men said he thought trout only needed to be 12 inches long to keep. Misdemeanor citations were issued for the violation and the men were given a copy of current fishing regulations.

Officer Kyle Rogers responded to a tip that a subject was keeping undersized snook while fishing from a private dock. Officer Rogers approached the area and set up to watch the subject fishing from a concealed location. After about an hour, the subject packed up his gear in a car and began to leave the area. Officer Rogers conducted a fisheries inspection and found the subject to be in possession of three snook, two of which were under the legal minimum size of 28 inches total length. Appropriate citations were issued.

MANATEE COUNTY

Lieutenant Wells, Investigator Dallarosa, and Officers S. Smith, Freemon and Burks got underway on the FWC Offshore Patrol Vessel *Gulf Sentry* for three days of offshore patrol. The officers patrolled between 20-65 nautical miles offshore from Tampa Bay south to Boca Grande. The patrol focused on commercial fisheries with other focuses on commercial boating safety as well as recreational fisheries and recreational boating safety. An inspection of a charter boat approximately 35 miles west of Egmont Key was conducted. This particular vessel was on an active charter. The captain of the vessel did not have any proof of drug (drug test card with Captains License) testing that is required by federal law when there are paying customers aboard. This case is being turned over to USCG investigations. Multiple fisheries warnings were issued to other vessels during the patrol.

PASCO COUNTY

Officer Pulaski was on water patrol in the Pithlachascotee River when he observed a vessel violate the slow speed zone. Officer Pulaski initiated a stop of the vessel to address the violation. During the stop, Officer Pulaski noticed the operator was showing signs of impairment. Officer Pulaski arrested the operator for BUI after the individual performed poorly on field sobriety tasks. The operator was transported to Pasco County Jail, where he refused to provide a sample of his breath.

Lieutenant Parisoe was on land patrol in the Trinity area when he observed an individual fishing out of an unregistered vessel. Lieutenant Parisoe contacted the individual and conducted a fishery and boating safety inspection. The inspection revealed numerous violations, to include: taking over the bag limit of black bass, possession of undersized black

bass, no vessel registration, and no personal flotation device. The individual received the appropriate citations and warnings for the violations, and the undersized fish were seized as evidence.

SARASOTA COUNTY

Lieutenant Wells, Investigator Dallarosa, and Officers S. Smith, Freemon, and Burks got underway on the FWC Offshore Patrol Vessel *Gulf Sentry* several days of offshore patrol. An inspection on a longline vessel was conducted approximately 65 miles west of Sarasota County. The officers dug through hundreds of pounds of bait and ice. On the bottom, hidden under all the legal bait were approximately 60 pieces of king fish. The captain alluded to the fact he was going to use the king fish for bait. The king fish were seized and the case is being turned over to NOAA.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

PASCO COUNTY

Lieutenant Parisoe participated in the 2016 Pasco County Hurricane Expo. The Expo was held in New Port Richey and numerous disaster response personnel were on scene. Lieutenant Parisoe provided information, and he responded to numerous questions from the public about hunting and fishing.

SOUTH REGION A

CASES

MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Norbrothen received information that a man was keeping a juvenile American Alligator in his bathtub to keep neighborhood kids from harassing it. The individual told Officer Norbrothen that kids were repeatedly and purposefully catching the alligator using fishing poles and releasing the alligator back into a pond without removing the hooks. Officer Norbrothen gave the individual a verbal warning (education) about illegal possession of alligators. He then took the alligator and released it into a nearby WMA.

While conducting fisheries inspections at Hobe Sound Beach, Officers Cobo and Morrow made contact with a subject who was found to be over the recreational bag limit for bluefish. The subject was issued a misdemeanor citation and educated on bluefish regulations.

Officers Cobo and Morrow were dispatched to Jonathan Dickinson State Park in reference to an unwanted guest who had previously made verbal threats and been issued a trespass warning. Upon their arrival, the officers were advised by park staff that the subject had entered the park under his son's name and had set up camp in the equestrian area. Officers Cobo, Stone and Morrow proceeded to the campsite where they instructed the subject to gather his belongings and vacate the area. The subject was advised of his trespass warning and left the park without incident.

Officer Willems was on patrol in the Allapattah WMA when he discovered an unoccupied pop-up camper in an area where camping is not allowed. He waited near the campsite for the campers to return. Eventually a vehicle with two occupants drove in towards the campsite, but they passed by without stopping. A few minutes later the same vehicle drove in to the campsite. It was observed that the male that was originally driving was now in the passenger seat and the female passenger was now driving. Contact was made with the individuals, and the male subject gave a false name. Some research was done, and the male subject's real name was revealed along with the fact that he had six prior driving while license suspended citations. Since this subject had a record of fleeing and resisting arrest, a Martin County Deputy arrived for back-up along with FWC Officers Koch and Carrol. The male subject was placed under arrest and taken to the Martin County Jail. The subject was charged with one felony count of driving while license is suspended, one misdemeanor count of giving a false name to law enforcement, one warning for illegal camping, and one warning for illegal campfire.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Webb was patrolling the Corbett WMA when he observed three trucks and several individuals parked near a gate. A male entered one of the trucks and started it up. Officer Webb gave verbal commands to not go anywhere and that he needed to check their daily use permit. The subject did not comply and quickly reversed away from the officer as he ran toward the vehicle. The subject refused to comply with the commands given by the officer to stop. The officer returned to his vehicle and unlocked the gate and followed the vehicle tracks to a water hole where the fleeing vehicle was found partly submerged and unoccupied. Numerous beer bottles were scattered throughout the vehicle and one open container was in the cup holder next to the driver's seat. The officer then tracked the foot prints where he located the two subjects lying just within the tree line. The driver was arrested for fleeing and eluding, resisting without violence, possession of alcohol by person under 21, and obstruction of FWC officer. He was also cited for operation of unregistered vehicle, improper tag attached, and open container. He was booked into the Palm Beach County Jail without incident.

Lieutenant Phillip, Investigator Fowler, and Officers Stone, Mathews, Trawinski, Spanier, and Guerin worked a detail enforcing boating safety and boating under the influence. Palm Beach County Assistant State Attorney Lettman and Public Information Coordinator Carol Lyn Parrish also rode along for this event called Boca Bash. During the one-day event, over 100 boats were inspected and the officers responded to 49 public assist situations. One case that stood out for the day involved an intoxicated canoer. He overturned his canoe with his dog. In a panic, he tried to rescue his dog but was too intoxicated to do so. Some good Samaritans helped rescue the dog and brought it to shore. The intoxicated man thought these people were trying to take his dog away, so he pulled a knife on them. He made threats to kill them if they came close to him. FWC officers were able to detain him without incident. He was arrested and charged for aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

Officers Nasworth, Green, Bodden and Deweese responded to the Roland Martin Marina in Clewiston due to a boating accident that occurred on Lake Okeechobee. The accident included one vessel. The operator was transported by helicopter to the Lee Memorial Hospital because of breathing issues from injuries and the passenger was transported to Hendry Regional Hospital due to a large laceration on her leg. The investigation is ongoing as to what contributed to the accident.

While on patrol of the Corbett WMA, Officer Norbrothen observed a vehicle operating off the main grade in an area closed to vehicular traffic. Once the vehicle returned to the main grade, a traffic stop was made and several other violations were observed. The officer discovered none of the vehicle's four occupants had day-use passes or WMA permits, and the vehicle was transporting alcohol. In the Corbett WMA, all recreational users are required to have a WMA permit or a day-use pass and alcohol is only allowed to be transported directly to or from the established camps. The appropriate citations and warnings were issued.

A careless driver was pulled over on I-95 and found to not have a driver's license. The driver was knowingly driving with a suspended license since 2009. He was given a misdemeanor citation with mandatory court appearance.

ST. LUCIE COUNTY

Officers Fretwell and Miano were on water patrol in the Fort Pierce area late in the evening when a call came in from USCG requesting their assistance on a vessel stop. Upon their arrival, it was determined that the vessel the USCG had stopped was being operated by an impaired person. The subject was compliant and agreed to submit to field sobriety tasks. After the tasks were completed poorly, showing signs of impairment, the subject was placed into custody and transported to the county jail for processing. The subject was charged with operating a vessel while impaired.

Officer Shermetaro was on water patrol in Fort Pierce when he observed two personal watercrafts operating on plane in a manatee zone near Museum Point Boat Ramp. Both PWC's displayed expired registrations and some safety violations. After checking both subjects through dispatch to verify identity and vessel ownership, one subject had an active local warrant. Both subjects received citations for the infractions and one subject was transported to jail for the warrant.

RESCUES

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Newman responded to a disabled vessel located near the 6th Avenue Bridge at Lake Osborne in John Prince Park, Lake Worth. The reporting party advised they contacted alternate agencies prior to calling FWC and they were told that there were no fresh water units available. Officer Newman and a Good Samaritan jet skier assisted the disabled vessel to the boat ramp where they also assisted the reporting party in loading the boat on to the trailer.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Rogers was on patrol when dispatch called him to investigate land clearing with known gopher tortoises and gopher tortoise burrows on the property. Upon arrival, Officer Rogers was able to verify that the people on the property were FWC biologists who were trying to capture a gopher tortoise. The landowner had all the proper permits. The biologists were able to catch the gopher tortoise and will be relocating the tortoise.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Spradling and Stone responded to an alligator call of a 6-½ foot alligator in a playground area near Boynton. They caught the gator and turned it over to a Statewide Nuisance Alligator Program (SNAP) trapper.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

MARTIN COUNTY

Officers identified tree stands left in the WMA's after hunting season. The rules for these areas clearly explain that hunting equipment shall be taken out after hunting season. Several stands were removed and are being stored for 90 days for hunters to claim. Some stands that were found had no value and were destroyed.

The Dupuis WEA offered a hog hunt the last nine days of the season. This is the first hog hunt that has been offered after the normal hunting season. Officers were on hand to answer questions and educate the hunters on the rules. More than 200 hunters were checked during this time.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

MARTIN COUNTY

A trail race was held in the Dupuis WEA that attracted many different levels of runners. Approximately 100 people ran in the race and no serious incidents occurred.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Spradling spoke to approximately 200 middle school students at American Heritage School about what FWC Law enforcement does and how to get involved.

ST. LUCIE COUNTY

Officers Matthews and Albert attended the annual Safety Festival, sponsored by the City of Port Saint Lucie and held at Tradition Field home of the Mets. The festival showcases safety related topics in all areas such as home, driver, water, bike, pedestrian, pet, ID, school, hurricane safety and more. Officers Matthews and Albert were able to discuss safety while boating, hunting and enjoying the outdoors. Various handouts and brochures were also available for the public to take home.

SOUTH REGION B

CASES

COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Kleis was checking the fishing licenses of two individuals fishing on the bank of a pond in Collier County when Officer Kleis found that one of the individuals had an out-of-state warrant against him. Officer Kleis then placed him in custody and called for assistance from Officer Arbogast. Upon obtaining permission to search the individual's vehicle, the officers found a pipe with cannabis in it. One of the individuals claimed the paraphernalia and drugs as his and was charged for possession of paraphernalia and possession of cannabis under 20 grams. Both individuals were issued warnings for not having valid freshwater fishing licenses.

While on land patrol, Officer Lugg observed an individual fishing alongside US 41, north of the Collier-Seminole State Park bike trail entrance. After approaching the individual, three other individuals were then spotted further down the road sitting on the highway safety railing. The first individual had all required licenses and permits. Officer Reams arrived on scene and they proceeded to approach the other three individuals and found a wet cast net pulled alongside the bank that contained two undersized snook within it, as well as other non-game fish alongside the cast net. After observing the individuals, only one was wet from the chest down in a fashion typical with cast netters. After a brief interview, the individual admitted to throwing the cast net and harvesting the two undersized snook. The individual was given a notice to appear for being in possession of two undersized snook, being over the bag limit, and taking by illegal method. The individual was also cited for not possessing a valid non-resident saltwater fishing license and warned for not possessing a valid snook stamp.

MONROE COUNTY

Officers Foell and Willman observed three subjects fishing along the shoreline in the Lower Keys. The subjects did not have fishing licenses in their possession and stated their licenses were in their pickup truck nearby. The officers followed the subjects to their pickup truck and observed multiple coolers in the bed of the truck. The subjects gave the officers consent to look inside the coolers. The subjects stated they had been fishing for four days along different bridges in the Keys, and that the cooler possessed all of the fish from the four days. The coolers contained 71 mangrove snapper in total. The subjects were cited for 11 over the bag limit of mangrove snapper.

RESCUES

MONROE COUNTY

Officers Mattson and Schroth were on water patrol in Tavernier Creek and stopped a vessel for an inspection. The 19-year-old operator did not have a boater ID card with him. An inspection of his on-board cooler revealed he was in possession of alcoholic beverages. Post Miranda, he admitted that the alcoholic beverages belonged to him. He was issued a notice to appear for possession of alcoholic beverages by a person under 21 years of age.

Officers Mattson and Schroth were on water patrol in the area of the Whale Harbor Sandbar. They observed a pontoon vessel leaving the area and stopped it for an inspection. The operator had slurred speech and watery, glassy bloodshot eyes. He had the moderate odor of an alcoholic beverage on his breath and had a difficult time locating the safety equipment. He also did poorly on the seated field sobriety exercises. He was arrested for BUI, was read the implied consent and, after refusing to provide a breath sample, was transported to the Monroe County Jail.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Tidwell received a call in reference to an alligator reported to be near the bus stop at the farm worker's village in Immokalee. He was able to capture the alligator and then spent time talking with the kids in the area about wildlife safety and conservation.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

COLLIER COUNTY

The FWC Offshore Patrol Vessel, *CT Randall*, and other FWC small boats participated in a three-day Marine Emergency Response Team (MERT) training exercise with multiple agencies to include the Collier County Sheriff's Office, Marco Island Police Department, Naples Police Department, Marco Island Fire Department, City of Naples Fire Rescue, Collier County Emergency Medical Service, North Collier Fire Department, and the USCG. All local agencies with marine units responded to simulated vessel distress calls for help. Scenarios included four missing divers from a dive boat and a large vessel colliding with a smaller vessel with five people missing. Responding units were coordinated by MERT command and the first vessel to arrive on scene started coordinating the search and rescue. All scenarios were successfully completed locating all simulated people in the water.

FWC officers from Collier and Lee counties worked together to patrol panther zones and conduct speed enforcement in the area. The officers worked the Collier/Lee county line near CR 850 for the two-day enforcement detail. Throughout the two days, there were several stops conducted. In one instance, a driver and passenger were pulled over for speeding, and the driver was issued a citation. Later that evening, the previous passenger became the new driver and drove by FWC officers going well over the posted speed limit. That subject was also pulled over and issued a citation. The officers issued over 20 Uniform Traffic Citations and 20 Uniform Traffic Warnings. The officers encouraged motorists to follow the speed limit in order to cut down on vehicle-related panther deaths in the panther zone areas.