

FWC
Division of Law Enforcement



Weekly Report

May 20 through May 26, 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

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

FWC Officers Barnard and Cushing responded to a disturbance aboard a broken down vessel on the Escambia River. A nearby concerned citizen called in the disturbance after hearing threats from one of the subjects onboard this vessel that were directed towards several other subjects also onboard the vessel. The situation escalated and a second report was called in stating that the person making the threats was now armed. Officers Barnard and Cushing located the vessel and removed the suspect. An Escambia County deputy arrived and the suspect and the incident was turned over to the Escambia County Sheriff's Office for further investigation.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Corbin was on land patrol conducting state fisheries inspections at the Okaloosa Island Gulf Fishing Pier. Officer Corbin recognized an individual that he had previously cited for a derelict vessel violation. After confirming that the individual had failed to appear in court and the existence of an active arrest warrant, the officer arrested the individual and transported him to Okaloosa County Jail.

Officer Maltais was on land patrol conducting state fisheries inspections when he observed an individual fishing off a local marina in Shalimar. After making contact with the individual, the officer asked him if he caught any fish. The individual replied "white trout." A subsequent fisheries inspection revealed four grossly undersized spotted seatrout. The individual was issued a notice to appear citation.

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

While patrolling Blackwater State Forest, Officer Hutchinson and Investigator Hughes inspected several primitive campsites. During these inspections, they observed alcohol and illegal drug violations. They made several arrests for possession of illegal drugs, including a felony arrest for possession of methamphetamine, and issued citations for possession of alcoholic beverages in posted areas. The officers also made contact with and identified a subject who had multiple warrants for his arrest from Escambia County. The subject was placed under arrest and booked into the Santa Rosa County Jail.

While off duty, Officer Hutchinson observed a woman parked near a creek and retrieve a large plastic box from the trunk of her car and walk towards the water's edge. He observed the woman then dump several large goldfish into the creek. As she left the area, the officer was able to get her vehicle's tag information. He walked to the creek and discovered six goldfish swimming in the creek where the woman had dumped them. The goldfish were approximately 8 to 10 inches in length and had large sores on them. He was able to catch one of the goldfish but was unable to catch the other five. The following day, Officer Hutchinson made contact with the woman and interviewed her. She admitted to dumping the goldfish into the creek because she didn't want them anymore. He contacted Captive Wildlife Investigator Wilkerson who helped him properly identify the fish as comet goldfish which are not native to Florida. The

female subject was issued a citation for releasing a non-native species into Florida waters without a permit.

Lieutenant Keen and Officer Brady were conducting offshore patrols when they checked a vessel that had eleven red snapper onboard. Initially, the captain said he didn't realize he was in federal waters (15 miles offshore), but later admitted to knowing his location. The captain of the vessel was cited for the violation.

Officer Gore was contacted by Officer Goodwin concerning an oyster vessel that he was surveilling returning to a dock located behind a residence. Officer Gore went to the location and observed a subject sitting in the "doghouse" of the vessel smoking something out of a glass pipe. As Officer Gore approached, the subject quickly tried to hide the pipe. When asked for the pipe, the subject threw it overboard. The subject was handcuffed and the pipe recovered. Officers Alsobrooks and Hellet arrived to assist. Follow-up found an empty baggie containing residue that field tested positive for methamphetamine located on the deck of the boat where the subject was sitting and also a pipe with cannabis residue. The subject was booked into the Bay County Jail for possession of drug paraphernalia and resisting arrest without violence.

Officer Price conducted successful offshore patrols over the weekend. As he pulled up to one vessel, one subject was de-hooking a legal red snapper and returning it to the waters. A check of the cooler found four red snapper inside. During another stop, he found four red snapper onboard a vessel. And yet another inspection yielded twelve red snapper. Federal citations were issued for possession of red snapper during closed season. Another inspection found a filleted greater amberjack and several short grey triggerfish. When the captain was asked where the filets of the amberjack were, he said that he had eaten them. The amberjack was found to be undersized and a citation was issued.

Officer Price investigated a boating accident involving two personal watercraft (PWC) that were part of a Jet Ski tour group. As the group approached Grand Lagoon's idle speed zone, one of the PWC ran into the back of another PWC causing one passenger to be injured. A citation was issued after the investigation was concluded.

WALTON COUNTY

Officer Brooks positioned a camera in an area on Nokuse Plantation where trespassing was suspected. A photo revealed a subject trespassing on three different days. Patrols were increased in the area and Officers Tison and Letcher observed the subject in the same area. The subject was issued a trespass warning upon the request from the land manager.

RESCUES

WALTON COUNTY

Lieutenants Hollinhead and Suggs, Pilot Tolbert, and Officers White, Brooks, and Tison searched with deputies from the Walton County Sheriff's Department for a subject lost in the Choctawhatchee River Swamp near Bruce Creek. During the late afternoon, a subject called 911 to report he was lost which started the search throughout the night and into the following day. The subject had traveled from Texas and launched his kayak at Bruce Creek in hopes of

observing and photographing an Ivory Billed Woodpecker. The subject became lost when he exited his kayak on foot to walk through the swamp. FWC Pilot Tolbert assisted from the air with the search while FWC vessels searched by water. The subject was located later in the afternoon in a wooded area and treated for dehydration.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

While patrolling in Blackwater State Forest, Officer Hutchinson and Investigator Hughes located a gopher tortoise digging a burrow in the middle of a heavily traveled dirt road. It appeared that the tortoise was preparing to lay her eggs in the hole. They relocated the tortoise to a different area where the chance of her and her eggs' survival were greater.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

FWC Officers Cushing, Land and Miller, along with NOAA Officer Harewell, patrolled the federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico targeting federal fisheries violations aboard the FWC vessel *Fincat*. The officers conducted fishery inspections on several vessels and found four to be in violation of federal fishery laws. Federal citations were issued for undersized greater amberjack, over the bag limit gray triggerfish and no federal reef fish permit.

WALTON COUNTY

Okaloosa and Walton county officers participated in an organized detail to enforce rules and regulations for pompano fishing along the shoreline of Henderson and Grayton Beach State Parks. The detail was organized by Officer White after receiving complaints last year of bag limit violations. Seventy-six people were checked with numerous citations and warnings issued for license violations.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING:

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officer Miller assisted with a youth bass fishing tournament. Officer Miller brought his patrol vessel for a display for the attendants and went over boating safety and new regulation in both saltwater and freshwater with both the young bass anglers and their parents. There were approximately 20 vessels entered in the tournament and 40 youth anglers.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CASES

BAKER COUNTY

Lieutenant Huff, Officers Burnsed and Gill were patrolling the Osceola National Forest targeting illegal dog running for deer, when late at night, the officers heard a pack of dogs running on forest property. The officers made contact with four individuals who were running dogs. At first, one of the individuals stated they were running raccoons, while another stated they were running fox on their issued fox permits. After interviewing the subjects, they admitted to putting the dogs out and running deer. The subjects were cited for running deer during the closed season with dogs and violation of their fox permits.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Officer Yates was on patrol in the Osceola National Forest off of FR 238 when he observed a vehicle driving erratically around a nearby pond mudding and destroying the bank. This type of violation is a consistent problem in this area. Officer Yates contacted U.S. Forestry officers to assist and after making contact with all persons in the vehicle, it was learned that a male subject had a possible warrant out of Columbia County. The FWC Dispatch confirmed the warrant out of Columbia County and the subject was arrested and taken to the Columbia County Jail. The U.S. Forestry officers issued the driver with a federal citation for destruction of federal lands.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

BAKER COUNTY

Lieutenants Huff, Wilson, Creech and Bevan, along with Investigator Hoyle and Officers Gill, Burnsed, Bailey and Yates, participated in an out-of-state investigation with Kansas Department of Parks and Wildlife involving several subjects in Baker County who had gone to Kansas and harvested numerous illegal deer. After three months of gathering intelligence on the subjects, the officers served two search warrants on two of the individuals involved. While interviewing the subjects, the officers confirmed they had killed numerous deer without licenses, falsified information on hunting licenses, shot deer with rifles during archery season and exceeded season bag limits on deer that they had killed for multiple years in Georgia. The officers seized three mounted deer heads and three deer racks from the subjects that were killed illegally in Kansas. The officers shipped the deer heads and racks to Kansas Parks and Wildlife for further prosecution. One of the subjects will be charged with unlawful sale of deer meat in Florida.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Officer Yates worked a public outreach event assisting the Kiwanis Club of Lake City with a Kids Day located at the Columbia County Fair Grounds. Approximately 1,200 parents and children attended the event. Officer Yates had a static display of a patrol vehicle and vessel that is generally used in our area. He discussed many topics of the FWC, mainly duties of a FWC officer and the equipment that we utilize. Also, boating safety and hunting rules were discussed during the event.

NORTHEAST REGION

CASES

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

Lieutenant Lightsey and Officer Rogers were on patrol at a local boat ramp when they observed a motorcycle operator driving erratically in the parking area. After watching the man nearly drop his motorcycle and hit a trash can, they approached the man. During the officers' investigation, it was determined that the operator was impaired beyond his normal faculties. Officer Rogers arrested the man for operating a vehicle while normal faculties were impaired and refusal to submit to a lawful test. The man was transported to the Indian River County Jail.

VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officer West received a favorable disposition this week from a boating under the influence (BUI) arrest last July 4th. The defendant requested a jury trial which ended in a guilty verdict on the BUI charge and on the charge of refusal to submit to a breath test. The county judge sentenced the defendant to ten days in county jail (to be served immediately), one year of probation, completion of a substance abuse program, 150 hours community service, in excess of \$2,000 in fines and court costs, \$100 for FWC investigative costs, \$100 for the State Attorney's investigative costs, requirement to re-take the Boater Safety Course, and a 30-day impoundment of the defendant's vessel upon release from custody.

SEMINOLE COUNTY

Lieutenant Hudson located a known violator's vehicle and trailer at Mullet Lake Park and set up surveillance on it. The subjects returned to the deserted ramp shortly before 11:00 PM. A fisheries inspection was conducted and the pair of commercial fishermen were found to be in possession of a large wet gill net with fish scales and slime in it. Officer Mendelson and Lieutenant Tye arrived on scene to assist with the investigation. The net was seized and photographs were taken of tilapia that showed signs of being taken with the gill net. Officer Mendelson met with the Seminole County State Attorney's Office and presented the facts of the case. Warrants were obtained for the owner/operator of the vessel and he was arrested for being in possession of a gill net exceeding 2,000 square feet on Florida state waters and for being in possession of fish taken by illegal method.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

BREVARD COUNTY

Officer Kearney conducted a survey of sea turtle nests along the coastline from Melbourne Beach to the Indian River County line. During the survey, multiple sea turtle nests were observed. Contact was made with the staff of the Barrier Island Sanctuary to ensure interagency cooperation. Officers will continue to patrol the numerous sea turtle nests in the area to ensure their safety and prevent theft.

FWC officers in Brevard County, working in conjunction with the Florida Aquatic Preserves (Department of Environmental Protection), identified a spoil island containing a nesting pair of American Oystercatchers. Patrols have been stepped up in the area to prevent the newly

hatched chicks from being disturbed. Proper signage was also provided by the FWC to help make the public aware.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CASES

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

K-9 Officer Stasko observed a vehicle parked in a vacant lot next to a canal in Port Charlotte. Officer Stasko made contact with the subject walking back to his truck. The subject stated he was fishing and playing the guitar. When asked to see his ID or fishing license, the subject stated he did not have it. Officer Stasko ran his information provided through FWC Dispatch, which returned a warrant out of Charlotte County. After dispatch confirmed the warrant, Officer Stasko and Morrison took the subject into custody and transported to Charlotte County Jail.

Officer Birchfield was dispatched to a call at the Tom Adams Fishing Pier in Charlotte County, of an individual keeping undersized grey snapper. When Officer Birchfield arrived on scene, he was able to locate the individual and observed him fish for some time. During the subsequent resource inspection, the individual stated he had not caught anything that afternoon but was found with seven undersized grey snapper ranging from 8"-9 3/4". A notice to appear for over the bag limit and undersized grey snapper was issued to the individual.

HERNANDO COUNTY

Officers Beckman and Henry responded to a search and rescue call off the coast of Hernando Beach. The information was received from the United States Coast Guard (USCG) about a vessel that was taking on water. Prior to FWC's arrival, USCG removed all the vessel occupants. The vessel was left at anchor and partially submerged. Officer Beckman completed a boating accident investigation and determined no violations occurred. However, the vessel owner was informed about the responsibility to remove the vessel from state waters.

K-9 Officer Wolff was on land patrol in the Weeki Wachee Preserve when he noticed a group of individuals consuming alcohol and swimming in the lime rock pit. He contacted the group and asked they exit the water, in order to address the violations. While the individuals were gathering their belongings a concealed firearm fell out of some clothing one person was holding. The individual reached to pick-up the firearm and Officer Wolff directed them to stop. Officer Wolff then requested assistance and several FWC Officers responded. During the investigation, the officers determined multiple violations had occurred. Charges will be referred to the State Attorney's Office for possession of a concealed firearm, possession of alcohol by person under 21, and possession of less than 20 grams of cannabis. The firearm and narcotics were seized as evidence.

HIGHLANDS COUNTY

Officer Wester responded to a red tail hawk a citizen had discovered on the side of State Road 66. The hawk was rescued and taken to Sue Arnolds Wildlife Rehab where it was discovered

the hawk was being raised in captivity. Officer Wester is conducting an investigation along with captive wildlife section to locate the owner of the hawk.

Officer Tyer was contacted by dispatch in reference to an individual possessing turkey eggs taken from the wild. A Winter Haven police officer related that during a traffic stop, he observed, in plain view, approximately ten turkey eggs in the back of a pickup truck. Officer Tyer quickly arrived on scene and following a brief interview, received a statement from the subject. The subject stated that while working in a local farm field, he observed a hen turkey fly from a nest. He stated he took the eggs so he could hatch them at his home. The subject was issued a notice to appear for taking turkey out of season.

Investigator Ervin filed charges against a defendant for illegally taking wildlife from a public road in Highlands County in April 2016. The eleven-point buck was standing in the property owner's front yard at night when the defendant shot it from a vehicle. This week, Investigator Ervin's three-month investigation resulted in the defendant's guilty adjudication and fines, court and investigative costs totaling \$428.00, plus an additional \$250.00 to be paid to the Wildlife Alert Program. The court also ordered the defendant to forfeit the deer mount and to pay \$450.00 to the taxidermist.

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

While on patrol in Tampa Bay, Officers Berg and Messman approached a commercial fishing vessel that was stopped outside the main shipping channel. Upon making contact with the commercial fisherman, the officers noticed that the fisherman had his four seine nets connected together with clear tubing. The suspect was charged with indirect transit of seine net greater than 500 square feet. The net was seized and later measured and found to be approximately 2,000 square feet.

Officers Martinez and Ahlers was on land patrol in the area of the Courtney Campbell Causeway. While on patrol, they performed a fisheries inspection on a gentleman that was using a seine net to catch fish in Tampa Bay. During their inspection, they found that the man had caught and kept three undersized gag groupers and seven undersized flounder. The man was given a criminal citation for possession of undersized gag grouper and several warnings for other fisheries violations.

LEE COUNTY

Captain Navarro hosted the 2nd quarterly meeting for the Florida Marine Intelligence Unit (FMIU), in the Southwest Region, Lee County. FMIU is committed to providing a well-rounded and unique training experience to serve law enforcement, and private partners with an interest in the marine community. This quarterly meeting addressed topics including: USCG and local Intelligence brief from Lee County Sheriff's Office and Customs & Border Patrol; marine theft case study presented by Lieutenant Marvin; manatee training by D. Boyd from Fish & Wildlife Research Institute; and an overview addressing HB703 Vessel Stops conducted by FWC Captain Walsh. The meeting was successful in bringing various law enforcement agencies and other organizations including Tow Boat U.S/Geico Insurance, United SAR Inc., Cape Coral Police Department, St. Pete Police Department, Pasco County Sheriff's Office, Venice Police Department, the National Park Service, and Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office together for a highly productive training, and networking opportunity. This forum allowed for the exchange of

intelligence, knowledge, and experience that would otherwise not be available to this unique type of audience. Also, in attendance from the Southwest Region were: Captains Carpenter and Mravic; Lieutenants Dunnigan, Frantz, Iten, Sushil and Barrett; Investigators Ruggiero and Van Trees; Officer Bell; and Duty Officer Supervisor Cobb.

Officers Fogle and Rogers responded to Blind Pass near the Sanibel Captiva Road Bridge in reference to a report of three male subjects catching and keeping snook. The information was received via an email to the tip line from another concerned fisherman who had been watching the subjects. After making contact with the reporting person, the officers were able to locate and conduct surveillance on the suspected individuals. After approximately one hour, all three suspects were observed departing from the fishing area and walking back to their vehicle with fishing gear in hand. A fisheries inspection conducted by the officers revealed that two of the suspects were in possession of a total of three snook that were undersized and out of season and in one case over the bag limit. It was noted at the time that all three snook were totally caked with sand which made it obvious that the suspects had buried the fish on the beach in order to conceal them. The suspects received criminal notices to appear for the snook violations and written warnings on associated fishing license violations. The snook were documented and returned to the resource.

Officers Perry and Salem were on patrol in Lee County near Matlacha and watching a popular boat ramp late at night. A vessel arrived, and an individual ran across the parking lot to his vehicle in an attempt to quickly load the vessel. The officers made contact with the occupants of the vessel and determined the individuals had been fishing. A resource inspection revealed a live snook in the boat's rear live well. The snook was seized, photographed and released, and one individual was issued a citation for possessing a snook out of season.

Lieutenant Ruggiero was on land patrol when a suspicious vehicle caught his attention. He observed the vehicle pull off the road and park in a weird location. He approached the vehicle to see if everything was ok. During the stop, the driver admitted to having marijuana in the vehicle. The drugs were located in the driver's side door and the driver was issued a misdemeanor notice to appear for the violation.

Officer Price performed panther enforcement in the Lee county zones. In four hours of patrol, he checked people and issued 3 traffic citations and 3 written warnings. The highest speed was 73 in the 45 mile-per-hour zone.

Lieutenant Frantz was contacted by the manager of Gasparilla State Park concerning four spear fisherman on the park beach that had speared two out-of-season snook. The manager had been contacted by a patron. Lieutenant Frantz arrived to witness the fisherman spearfishing off the beach approximately 30 feet away, with no dive flag. They later admitted to spearing the out-of-season fish, but released them due to the notification of the park staff. The fisherman were issued citations for not using a dive flag, and warnings for spearfishing in the park, illegal method of take and out-of-season for the snook.

K-9 Officer Collazo responded to a radio call in reference to a six-foot alligator tied down by a rope inside the Villagio at Estero Community. A maintenance worker stated that he observed a subject who tied a six-foot alligator with a rope and left it hanging on the walkway bridge near the pool area, alive and swimming in the water. Officer Collazo observed the subject standing next to the roped alligator. The subject stated that he tied up the alligator with the rope

because kids had been feeding him and he was becoming a nuisance. He stated that he had an alligator license and he was permitted to take the alligator. The subject stated that he was going to call FWC to remove the alligator from the location. Officer Collazo explained that he needed to call the State Nuisance Alligator Program and that they would dispatch a licensed trapper to the location. The Alligator Agents permit does not authorize the possession, removal or take of any alligator without the presence of a licensed trapper. The subject was issued a notice to appear for the violation and the alligator was released alive back into the water.

MANATEE COUNTY

Officer Martinez was on land patrol in the area of the South Skyway rest area. While on patrol, he performed a fisheries inspection on a man that had been collecting stone crabs around the rocks. The individual was in possession of numerous stone crab claws out of season and all of the claws were severely undersized. The individual was also in possession of several undersized grey snapper. The subject was cited criminally for possession of stone crabs out of season and given a warning on the other fisheries violations.

PASCO COUNTY

Officer Beckman was on land patrol in the Holiday area when he observed two individuals that were removing kayaks from a canal. The canal is a commonly used spot by persons who are engaged in wade fishing, paddle boarding and kayaking. After making contact, Officer Beckman could see fishing gear was present. He asked if the individuals had caught any fish, and he received no response. Officer Beckman could see a covered compartment on one kayak, and he asked if the individual would open the compartment. After opening the compartment, the individual removed a plastic bag which contained two fillets. Officer Beckman spoke with the angler about the fillets, and learned they were from a redfish the angler had caught earlier. Officer Beckman seized the fillets as evidence, and he issued a citation for the violation.

Officer Williams was on land patrol in the Richloam Wildlife Management Area (WMA) when he located a vehicle that was stuck in a large mud hole down a closed road. He could also see several individuals that were working on the vehicle. Officer Williams was speaking with vehicle operator, when he observed a softshell turtle in the bed of the truck. The operator told Officer Williams that he caught the turtle in the river. Officer Williams seized the turtle as evidence and issued the individual a citation for the harvest of the softshell turtle during a closed season and two warnings for the operation of the vehicle.

PINELLAS COUNTY

Officer Ferguson was on land patrol in the area of Sand Key Beach. While on patrol, he performed a fisheries inspection on a man that had been fishing from the beach. During his inspection, Officer Ferguson discovered that the subject had caught and kept a 32" snook out of season. The subject was given a criminal citation for possession of snook out of season. After some effort from Officer Ferguson, the snook was released alive.

Officers Ferguson and Martinez were on water patrol in the area of the Seminole Boat Ramp. While on patrol, they performed a fisheries and boating safety inspection on a vessel returning to the boat ramp. During the course of the inspection, the two officers found that the individuals

on the vessel had caught and kept several undersized trigger fish and one undersized red grouper. One individual on the vessel was cited criminally for possession of undersized trigger fish and given a warning for the undersized red grouper.

Officers Bibler and Bibeau responded to a report of a vessel hitting a dock and causing damage in the area of Coquina Key. Upon arrival on scene, they located the 43-foot vessel and made contact with the operator. After performing a boating safety inspection and interviewing the operator, it was clear that the subject was impaired and under the influence of alcohol. When requested to perform field sobriety tasks to determine his level of impairment, the operator refused. The subject was arrested for failure to submit to field sobriety tasks and booked into the Pinellas County Jail. His vessel was impounded.

Officer Martinez was on land patrol in the area of Fort Desoto Park. While on patrol, he performed a fisheries inspection on a man fishing from the bridge leading into the park. Upon completion of his inspection, he found the man was in possession of two undersized cobia. He wrote the man a criminal citation for possession of undersized cobia and a written warning for over the bag limit of cobia.

FWC personnel participated in a multi-agency detail developed by the USCG. The coordinated efforts of law enforcement members from the USCG, FWC, Pinellas County Sheriff Office, Pasco County Sheriff Office, and the Clearwater Police Department were to enforce federal regulations regarding Operators of Uninspected Passenger Vessels (OUPV) licenses, or charter captain's licenses. OUPV violations put the passengers at risk, increase the risk of casualty at sea, and take business away from the properly licensed captains. Lieutenant Wells and Officers Burks, Smith and Ferguson utilized two FWC vessels to participate in the detail. The FWC participation resulted in 18 vessels stopped, 75 users checked, 1 medical emergency, 12 warnings and 1 federal case. The cooperative enforcement efforts resulted in many more warnings and multiple boating safety citations, including one terminated voyage. This surge op fostered communication and teamwork throughout all levels of boating law enforcement entities in Pinellas and Pasco counties and will facilitate future operations. The federal regulations training gave all attendees new tools in dealing with federally licensed operators.

FWC personnel utilized a marked agency vessel to attend the burial-at-sea of an important USCG Auxiliary member. The law enforcement turnout was greatly appreciated.

RESCUES

PASCO COUNTY

K-9 Officer Wolff, Officer Peterson, Lieutenant Parisoe, and Pasco County Sheriff's deputies responded to Richloam WMA to search for a missing individual. After a brief search, Officer Peterson located the subject and his vehicle near Meg's Hole Campground. The individual's vehicle had become disabled after getting stuck. A short time later, several friends arrived to help tow the disabled vehicle home.

PINELLAS COUNTY

Officers Bibler and Bibeau were on patrol in the area of Tierra Verde, when they were flagged down by a fisherman on the bridge, who informed them that two people had just jumped from the bridge and that one of them was drowning. The incident occurred about 100 yards away and the officers made their way towards the two subjects. As they got closer, they could see two subjects being swept out by the current which was approximately 5 knots. One of the subjects was able to keep his head above water and appeared to be trying to help the other subject. The other subject was conscious but unable to keep his head above water. Numerous times the drowning subject's head submerged beneath water out of the officers' view but the other subject was able to keep him close by. Both officers were able to pull the drowning subject aboard their vessel. It was learned shortly after rescuing the drowning subject that he had just had a seizure in the water and, as a result, was unconscious while in the water. While on the officers' boat, the subject was breathing but went in and out of consciousness and was unable to speak at times. Officers Bibler and Bibeau transported the subject back to the dock where they were met by EMS who transported the subject to the hospital. The uninjured subject who jumped from the bridge received a traffic citation.

POLK COUNTY

Officers Alvis and Creel were first on the scene of a multi-car accident in Polk County. Both officers quickly assessed the scene, administered first aid, and notified EMS. The officers were able to keep the victims calm and assisted EMS in removing them from the vehicles. The victims were subsequently transported by EMS to a local hospital for treatment

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

LEE COUNTY

Officers in south coastal Lee County conducted directed patrols of the Little Estero Critical Wildlife Area, and the sections of private beach property that attract hundreds of nesting shorebirds every year. The officers and other FWC staff continued working to maintain an ongoing relationship with private property owners to maintain a safe nesting area.

POLK COUNTY

Officer Creel conducted targeted patrols in Saddle Creek Fish Management Area for fisheries violations and boating safety. Officer Creel was able to contact numerous fishermen and boaters. Officer Creel issued numerous citations and warnings during his patrols.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Officer Price presented a hunter education course to a large group of students. The presentation focused on the laws pertaining to hunting, seasons, licenses and trespass and gave students the opportunity to ask questions and gain insight on how to hunt safely.

HIGHLANDS COUNTY

Lieutenant Brooks and Officer Smith participated in Memorial Elementary School Safety and Science night. Lieutenant Brooks and Officer Smith were on hand to answer questions and talk about the mission of the FWC. Lieutenant Brooks and Officer Smith displayed a patrol truck, airboat, and alligator to more than 400 people.

Captain Isambert attended the Manatee 100 Club awards ceremony in which Investigator Laskowski was among local law enforcement officers honored by the club.

FWC officers attended Bear Aversion Training at Highlands Hammock State Park in Highlands County. The training was provided by state biologist Mike Orlando and his staff.

LEE COUNTY

Lieutenant Ruggiero participated in a table-top exercise at the Lee County Emergency Management Center in preparation for the upcoming hurricane season. Participants in the exercise included representatives from the county's emergency responders and allowed everyone to familiarize themselves with a new system designed to provide faster response to local residents in the event of a disaster.

Officer Spoede conducted an on-camera interview for an Eco Tour Environmental Education video created for the continued protection of the Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve.

PASCO COUNTY

Officer Balfour spoke with approximately 50 Pasco County residents about the laws pertaining to feeding wildlife. More specifically, he addressed issues with feeding sand hill cranes, alligators and raccoons. He also provided information on who to contact for removal of nuisance wildlife and alligators.

PINELLAS COUNTY

Officers Smith, Freemon and Burks have been actively engaging with commercial federal and state licensed fish houses throughout Pinellas County. They have also been performing dockside individual fishing quota inspections on commercial reef fish vessels landing at such fish houses. Throughout the last couple of weeks, the officers were able to answer numerous questions from commercial fishermen and fish house owners, forming relationships, and gathering intelligence on some illegal activity occurring. One such incident required Officer Burks to be called out in the middle of the night to assist NOAA agents on a federal case.

Officers Burks and Smith had a multijurisdictional meeting coupled with boating safety training with the USCG, Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, Pasco County Sheriff's Office, and Clearwater Police Department. It has been identified that numerous charter boats in the Pinellas and Pasco county areas are operating businesses and taking passengers out on charters without possessing the required licensure through the USCG. The multiple maritime agencies are working together to address the issue to ensure safe and enjoyable maritime charters for Florida's boating public and visitors.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

MANATEE COUNTY

Officer Polaszek worked in conjunction with biologists Clifton and Stotten in regards to a subject in Manatee County wanting to remove a tree in his yard with a possible active woodpecker nest. It is still yet to be determined if the nest is active.

SARASOTA COUNTY

Officer Polaszek worked in conjunction with biologists Stotten and Clifton in regards to two separate bat colonies in Sarasota County.

Lieutenant Gerkin and biologist Stotten met with Captain M. Rose of the Venice Police Department in regards to several coyote complaints in the City of Venice. One dog was attacked a few days prior and several citizens have complained about several coyotes in the downtown area during early morning hours.

SOUTH REGION A

CASES

BROWARD COUNTY

Officers Vacin and Strader were on patrol in the Port Everglades Inlet area when they observed an individual diving. As the diver exited the water, they conducted a marine fisheries inspection. The individual had a dive bag with him and was found to be in possession of an undersized and speared spiny lobster. They issued the individual a criminal notice to appear for possession of spiny lobster out of season, possession of a spiny lobster by use of illegal means (spearing) and no saltwater fishing license. The dead spiny lobster was seized as evidence.

Officers Stower and Strader were dispatched to a boating accident call on the New River in the vicinity of the I-95 overpass bridge. They arrived on scene and talked to three individuals, who relayed that they had been travelling under the bridge in the opposite direction of a larger vessel at the same time. The larger vessel made contact with their boat and broke out their left side windshield. The larger vessel failed to stop and to relay their information. This boating accident investigation remains open for any further information.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Alford and Bodden were patrolling Lake Okeechobee by vessel before sunrise. The officers observed a commercial haul seine crew working outside the GPS boundary. The GPS boundary requires that the haul seine crews not pull net anywhere shoreward of the boundary. The officers marked the locations of the net that were outside the boundary, contacted the captain of the permit, and advised him that he was in violation. This in an ongoing investigation.

Officer Spradling was on land patrol at the Lake Worth Spillway. After checking some anglers, he noticed two men on the north side of the spillway, one sitting on top of the fence fishing. Due to the fence being a posted no trespassing area, he watched the subject fish for

approximately 30 minutes to determine if he was violating any resource laws. Officer Spradling walked up to the subject who had just caught a snook and asked the subject, who was given a verbal warning for trespassing on that same fence a few days prior, if he was going to keep that snook. He replied "No, it's too small" and threw the fish back in the water. Officer Spradling then noticed a bucket containing a 22-inch snook. The subject was issued a misdemeanor citation for possession of a snook under the legal size limit.

Officers Bodden and Nasworth observed a vessel operating on state waters with no navigation lights. Officer Bodden conducted a boating safety inspection at the boat ramp. During this inspection, an individual was identified to be in possession of ten undersized black crappie. The individual was issued a misdemeanor citation for this violation and a written warning for no navigation lights.

Officer Delatorre was on patrol in Storm Water Treatment Area (STA) 3/4 and observed an individual fishing inside the closed area. He made contact with the individual who was found to be in possession of six large (all over the 14-inch mark) black bass. With information gathered, he issued the individual a criminal notice to appear for possession of more than 1 black bass larger than 14" and fishing inside the restricted access area. Five dead oversized black bass were seized as evidence and the individual was allowed to keep his one oversized fish.

RESCUES

BROWARD COUNTY

Officer Stower was on water patrol in Port Everglades on a windy day. As he was exiting the inlet, he observed a vessel close to the rocks on the north jetty. As he pulled closer, he saw that the cover was off their engine and the boat was drifting and about to hit the rocks. He quickly rigged a tow line and towed the boat away from the rocks and into a safe area of the Port where he called a towboat to take the boat to its home dock.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers McLendon, Merizio and Norbrothen responded to a search and rescue along the Intracoastal Waterway late at night. The Palm Beach Police Department requested assistance from the FWC and the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office in locating three missing persons that were last seen fishing along a heavily wooded mangrove island. After several hours of searching, two of the subjects were located by land units and a third was discovered by water and pulled aboard a patrol vessel by FWC. All three subjects were in good condition and appeared happy to be reunited with family members on the scene.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Newman and Cobo were conducting fisheries inspections at Burt Reynolds East Boat Ramp. During the inspections, 5 citations and 7 warnings were issued. The public was informed that the HMS (highly migratory species) is a vessel permit attached to the vessel. The public was also educated on reporting their billfish to NOAA within 24 hours of landing the catch in federal waters.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

BROWARD COUNTY

Lieutenants Hayes and Laubenberger participated in the Annual Hollywood Police Department's Memorial Service. Honored were the police department's fallen officers killed in the line of duty.

Lieutenant Laubenberger commanded the Broward Multi-Agency Police Honor Guard during an Honor Flight. World War II veterans are taken to Washington, D.C., given a tour, honored at various sites and also visit the World War II Memorial. Upon their return to Hollywood / Ft. Lauderdale Airport, they are rendered honors and greeted at the gate by the Honor Guard, military personnel and family. The Honor Guard led the veterans through the terminal in a parade that passed approximately 2,000 well-wishers.

SOUTH REGION B

CASES

MIAMI DADE COUNTY

Officer Dominguez conducted a marine fisheries inspection at Cape Florida State Park Pier 4. The suspect possessed seven gray snapper, the largest one being only eight and a half inches. The suspect was determined to have a warrant out of Miami-Dade County and was arrested and transported to Turner Gilford Knight Jail by Officer Romero. He was also charged with possession of undersized gray snapper and over-the-bag limit of gray snapper.

MONROE COUNTY

Officers Trueblood and Wilkins were on night water patrol on bayside of Islamorada. The officers observed a vessel cruising along the mangroves without displaying navigation lights. They stopped the vessel and during the inspection, both men emitted the smell of an unknown alcoholic beverage. Officer Trueblood began the investigation into the impairment of the operator. The operator was very compliant but the passenger was very belligerent. Upon conclusion of the impairment investigation, the operator was arrested for BUI. The vessel and passenger were also transported safely to a nearby dock. Multiple other infraction citations were issued.

Officer Mattson was on water patrol in the area of Channel 5 Bridge on the bayside. He observed 3 men actively fishing from their vessel. During the subsequent resource inspection he observed 8 undersized mutton snapper, 9 total barracuda, which put them over the vessel limit of 6 and an undersized nurse shark. They were cited for the violations. In addition, one of the men was taken into custody on an active warrant out of Monroe County. He was transported to jail by Monroe County Sheriff's deputies.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

COLLIER COUNTY

Each year, the City of Naples hosts the Great Dock Canoe Races in Naples Bay. Tangent to this event is a celebratory gathering at the southern end of Keewaydin Island, where thousands of people and hundreds of boats gather during the after party of the event. Law enforcement's role is to control disorderly conduct, disorderly intoxication, and BUI activity associated with this public event. During this year's event, FWC provided 7 patrol vessels and 22 FWC personnel including members of the South Region.

While on patrol around Keewaydin Island, FWC personnel had contact with approximately 1,300 people and checked 250 vessels. The officers' enforcement efforts resulted in the issuance of 37 uniform boating citations and 73 boating safety and other written warnings while providing assistance to approximately 18 vessel operators. As with many large-scale boating events, BUI is at the forefront of maritime enforcement efforts. The local FWC officers and members with the BUI Task Force collectively arrested 7 vessel operators for BUI. These patrol efforts are critical to the overall safety to the visitor and resident boating community. The BUI Task Force, along with other maritime law enforcement assets from the USCG, Collier County Sheriff's Office, City of Marco Island Police Department, City of Naples Police Department and Fire and Emergency Medical Service teams were stationed in and around Keewaydin Island throughout the duration of the after party event.

MONROE COUNTY

Officer Boyd conducted State Park Patrol at Fort Zachary Taylor in Key West. While on patrol, Lieutenant Cabanas and Officer Boyd identified several subjects drinking inside the park and issued two of the men citations for consumption of alcohol inside the state park.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

Investigator Rodriguez and Public Information Officer Veloz were guest speakers at the Doral Mast Academy. More than 200 students and staff enjoyed the animals and learned about invasive species in Florida.

MONROE COUNTY

Officers Dube, Steinmetz and Hein gave a presentation at the High Adventure Sea Base Camp of the Boy Scouts of America in Islamorada to their incoming summer staff. The officers explained several ongoing safety issues relating to boating safety, snorkeling and diving. The officers also explained the "Do's and Don'ts" related to living and working in the Keys since most of the entire staff of 150 is from out of the State of Florida. Officer Steinmetz also spoke to several staff members that were interested in joining the FWC as a career.

Officers Dube and Steinmetz were guest speakers on a local Radio show in Key West with Host Judd Wise, a local fishing guide. The officers spoke about the upcoming Memorial Day weekend and provided tips on boating safety, diver safety and BUI. Officer Steinmetz also spoke about the FWC recruiting efforts for new officers.

RESCUES

MONROE COUNTY

Officers Wilkins and Trueblood responded to a call of three stranded persons at Indian Key State Park offshore of Islamorada. The officers arrived on scene to find 3 men who had snorkeled out to Indian Key from the nearest beach as darkness approached. After sunset, the men had no way to return to land. The officers had the 3 men board the patrol vessel and transported them safely back to shore.