

**FWC**  
**Division of Law Enforcement**



***Weekly Report***

***May 27 through June 2, 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**

Captain Clements, Officers T. Basford and Wicker conducted a resource inspection on a charter vessel in the Gulf of Mexico. The charter was in possession of an undersized scamp and two undersized red snapper. The vessel captain was issued a citation for the violations.

Officer Goodwin observed a vessel coming from offshore heading towards the Panama City Pass. He observed fishing rods in the vessel and conducted a resource inspection. His inspection revealed amberjack fillets in the bait well. The fisherman stated that he was using the amberjack fillets for bait. A citation was issued for failure to land amberjack in whole condition.

#### **ESCAMBIA COUNTY**

Officer Allgood concentrated his patrols this week in state waters. He issued six notice to appear citations for possession of undersized trigger fish and two for undersized greater amberjack. He also issued several other related warnings.

Lieutenant Lambert observed an individual operating a vessel in violation of the idle speed zone near the Navy Point Boat Ramp. When he stopped the vessel to address the violation, he noticed several signs that indicated the operator was impaired. The operator performed poorly on several sobriety tasks and was arrested for boating under the influence (BUI). The operator was transported to the Escambia County Jail, where he refused to give a breath sample.

#### **GULF COUNTY**

While on water patrol on the Apalachicola River in Gulf County, Officers Henderson and Boutwell were asked by a houseboat owner to check out his vessel. As they approached the houseboat, they observed three people on the rear of the boat. After boarding the vessel, the officers identified the three people and found a fourth person asleep inside. One of the four people was a juvenile. The owner of the houseboat confirmed that none of the subjects had permission to be aboard the vessel, and gave permission for officers to search the houseboat. During the search, officers found a .22 caliber long rifle, a handgun case, a wallet with a large amount of cash, two digital scales and a glass mason jar containing baggies, white crystalized powder consistent with methamphetamine and a large quantity of cash. One subject, who had two prior felony convictions, claimed ownership of all the material and weapons. He was placed under arrest and charged with convicted felon in possession of a firearm and possession of methamphetamine with intent to sell and manufacture/delivery of drug paraphernalia. He was transported to the Gulf County Detention Facility. The juvenile female was turned over to her mother.

#### **SANTA ROSA COUNTY**

Officer Roberson and Lieutenant Berryman were conducting boating safety and fishery inspections at the Navarre Beach Boat Ramp when they observed a vessel come in with improper navigational lights and an expired registration decal displayed. Additionally, the officers observed fishing gear and two open beer cans on the console of the vessel. As the operator retrieved his vehicle to load his boat and while loading his boat onto the trailer, he showed signs of possible impairment. Officer Roberson conducted a boating safety and marine fishery inspection and spoke to the operator about his navigational lights and his expired registration. During this conversation, Officer Roberson became more suspicious that the operator may have been impaired and asked if he would perform field sobriety tasks. The operator agreed to do so and subsequently failed these tasks. He was placed under arrest for operating a vessel while under the influence. He was then transported to the Santa Rosa County Jail where he refused any additional testing.

Officers McHenry, Clark and Hutchinson were patrolling the Intracoastal Waterway near Big Lagoon State Park and observed a vessel travelling towards them in an idle speed zone creating a wake. The vessel was passing other vessels who were obeying the idle speed restriction. The officers stopped the vessel and observed a male subject with four female subjects on board who all appeared to be under the influence of alcohol. While speaking with the male subject who was operating the vessel, they noticed several alcoholic beverages inside of the vessel. After conducting a boating safety inspection and interviewing the operator, it was clear that the subject's normal faculties were impaired from being under the influence of alcohol. The female subjects had a friend meet them and take possession of the vessel. The subject was arrested for BUI and transported to the Escambia County Jail.

Officer Ramos encountered a man fishing on the beach. A records check revealed that he had three warrants from another state for sexual assault. The man was arrested without incident.

## OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Corbin received a complaint of an ATV being operated on Eglin Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in the Mary Esther community. When Officer Corbin arrived, he began foot patrol and observed obvious signs of an ATV doing 360-degree turns, destroying the habitat. He tracked the ATV to a house that backs up to Eglin's property, interviewed the homeowner and determined he was the individual operating the ATV. The operator was cited for riding an ATV on Eglin's property and destruction of property/habitat.

## WAKULLA COUNTY

Investigator Louque responded to a complaint that an individual had purchased a reticulated python, a conditional reptile, from someone earlier in the week. Upon making contact with the suspect at his residence, it was confirmed he was in possession of a reticulated python without a proper permit. While at the residence, Investigator Louque also found the suspect to be in possession of two gopher tortoises and five eastern box turtles. The subject was issued citations and the reticulated python and turtles were seized from the individual.

## RESCUES

## ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Officers Cushing, Manning, Livesay, Ramos, Roberson and Lieutenant Berryman responded at the request of the U. S. Coast Guard (USCG) by land and sea to two overdue paddle boarders in the Gulf of Mexico at Pensacola Beach. Approximately 1 ½ hours into the search, the two missing parties were located safely on land by emergency personnel.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

### ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Officers Manning, Pettey and Investigator Livesay patrolled offshore in federal waters this weekend conducting fisheries inspections. They documented 15 federal violations for possession of red snapper in a closed season and also documented several other state violation warnings.

### SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officers Cushing and Land patrolled both federal and state waters over the Memorial Day weekend conducting marine fisheries inspections. The officers conducted fishery inspections on 45 vessels and found 12 of them to be in violation of marine fishery regulations. The violations included possession of red snapper during the closed season, possession of undersized gray triggerfish, possession of undersized greater amberjack, using reef fish as bait and failure to allow for inspection. All suspects were issued federal citations.

### OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officers P. Rockwell, J. Rockwell, Jarvis, Pifer, and Investigator Nelson conducted offshore federal and state fisheries patrol on the offshore patrol vessel *Vigilance*. Their patrol resulted in the following federal citations being issued: three operators were cited for possession of red snapper during closed season; one operator was cited for possession of gag grouper during closed season; two operators were cited for possession of undersized red snapper; one operator was cited for undersized gray triggerfish, and one operator was cited for resisting a law enforcement officer. The officers issued 12 resource warnings.

The south Okaloosa squad conducted high-profile vessel patrol throughout the Memorial Day weekend, focusing on public safety, state parks and resource protection. A summary of their activities:

- Made contact with 744 individuals
- Conducted 391 boating safety vessel inspections
- Issued 35 boating infraction citations and 52 boating safety warnings
- Conducted three boating accident investigations with one vessel exploding with no injuries
- Responded to two medical emergencies
- Responded to one physical altercation at Crab Island
- Issued 18 warnings to individuals consuming alcohol at the state park
- Issued 4 warnings to individuals evading state park fees

There were a total of four BUI arrests made. Officer Molnar arrested two individual boat operators. One operator refused to provide a breath sample and the other operator provided a breath sample, resulting in 0.117 and 0.120. Officer Bartlett made one BUI arrest. The

operator provided a breath sample resulting 0.144 and 0.141. Officer Corbin made one BUI arrest. The operator refused to provide a breath sample. All four operators were transported to the Okaloosa County Jail.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officer Roberson attended an event put on by Audubon Florida where Navarre community volunteers put up fences along the Navarre causeway to prevent Black Skimmer hatchlings from crossing the roadway. Officer Roberson met and spoke with many of the community volunteers. There were approximately 100 volunteers who helped with this event.

Officers Lewis and Ramos spoke to 200 military personnel attached to an air squadron at Whiting Field. They educated the group about area camping, fishing and hunting opportunities, regulations, license and permit requirements and discussed boating safety matters. They placed a strong emphasis on Boating Safety Week and the importance of responsible vessel operation and PFD requirements.

## NORTH CENTRAL REGION

### CASES

#### ALACHUA COUNTY

FWC Officers in Alachua County assisted Citrus, Dixie and Gilchrist county units over the busy holiday weekend. While Officer Stanley was on water patrol on the Suwannee River, he observed an individual operating a vessel in a careless manner and nearly hitting Officer Stanley's vessel. After contact was made, the operator consented to a field sobriety test. After failing the test, he was transported to the Dixie County Jail where he refused a breath test. He was charged with BUI.

#### COLUMBIA COUNTY

Officer McDonald was on patrol in the Osceola National Forest/WMA when he observed a vehicle sitting at a bar pit. Officer McDonald decided to check the vehicle and observed a subject smoking a substance consistent with cannabis. Officer McDonald approached the vehicle and could smell the strong odor of cannabis coming from the vehicle. The subject admitted to smoking a marijuana cigarette. Two marijuana cigarettes were located in a pack of cigarettes. The evidence was seized and the man was issued a notice to appear for the violation.

#### LAFAYETTE COUNTY

Officer Davenport was on land patrol in an area where we had received information regarding illegal hog hunting on state lands. As he passed a pickup truck, he observed two dogs and some logs in the back and recognized it as one of the vehicles described to him in the information received. Officer Davenport was then flagged down by a citizen who reported he

observed the driver of that vehicle removing logs from state lands and he had photos. Officer Davenport radioed the information to Officer Boone who was in the area, and he located and stopped the vehicle. A check of the tag and subject's driver's license revealed the tag was not assigned to the vehicle and the subject's license was suspended. A search of the vehicle revealed a .22 caliber rifle and a clear crystal-like substance, later identified as methamphetamine, wrapped in tin foil. The subject also admitted, after being advised Miranda, to taking the logs off the WMA property to make axe handles. The subject was arrested and transported to the Lafayette County Jail. The appropriate charges will be filed with the state attorney's office.

## MADISON COUNTY

Officer Ransom was on patrol in Madison Blue State Park when he observed several people at the back of a vehicle who appeared to be drinking alcohol. When the subjects began to leave the area, Officer Ransom noticed the driver was not wearing his seatbelt and initiated a traffic stop. During the stop, the officer could smell alcohol coming from the vehicle and the driver's eyes were blood shot and glassy. While retrieving the required paperwork, Officer Ransom observed additional signs the driver was impaired. Officer Ransom requested the driver perform sobriety tasks and the driver agreed. During the pre-task questions, the driver admitted to currently using Tramadol and had used Hydrocodone the day before. After evaluating the driver's performance on the sobriety tasks, it was determined he was operating under the influence to the point that his normal faculties were impaired. The driver was placed under arrest and transported to the Madison County Jail. A test of the driver's breath revealed a breath alcohol level of .034 and .032. Officer Ransom then requested the driver submit to a urine sample and the subject refused. The driver was charged with driving under the influence (DUI), refusing to submit to a test of his urine, drinking alcohol in a state park and operating a vehicle without a seatbelt.

## SUWANNEE COUNTY

Officers Pekerol and Boone were on water patrol at the confluence of the Santa Fe and Suwannee Rivers when they observed a passenger riding in an air boat throw what appeared to be a beer bottle into the water. The officers stopped the vessel to address the violation and conducted a safety inspection. During the safety inspection, the operator of the air boat showed several signs of impairment. Officer Pekerol then requested the operator perform sobriety tasks to determine if his normal faculties were impaired, and the operator agreed. After evaluating the operator's performance on the sobriety tasks, it was determined he was under the influence to the point that his normal faculties were impaired. The operator was then placed under arrest and transported to the Suwannee County Jail. Once at the jail, the operator consented to a test of his breath. Officer Boone administered the breath test which revealed a breath alcohol level of 0.158 and 0.176. The operator was charged with operating a vessel with an unlawful breath alcohol level of .08 or higher.

## RESCUES

### DIXIE COUNTY

Lieutenant Ferguson, Officers Acevedo, Troiano and Stanley are assisting Dixie County units with search and rescue efforts in the Gulf of Mexico for a missing boater.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

### ALACHUA COUNTY

Officers in Alachua County continue efforts on checking area lakes for game fish violations. Bream species continue bedding on area lakes and several fishermen are catching their limits. Several fishing license violations, a cast net violation and boating violations cases have been written throughout the county.

### COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### MADISON COUNTY

Officer Ransom performed an outreach event with faculty and students from Lee Elementary School. The event was a fishing day for Lee Elementary School's safety patrol at Lee Pond. Officer Ransom discussed the numerous water-related activities and brought a live alligator. The students were educated on alligator facts and safety points when participating in water-related activities. Approximately 40 people attended the event, including students, faculty and parents.

## **SOUTHWEST REGION**

### CASES

### CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Officer Sehl coordinated a targeted enforcement at the Webb WMA to show an increased presence during the busy holiday weekend. Officers focused on day-use permit violations as well as off-road driving. The detail was successful and compliance was good. Altogether, 135 people were checked, 6 warnings were issued for resource violations, 8 warnings were issued for day-use violations and 1 warning was issued for driving on a closed road.

### HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Officer Baker was on land patrol when he performed a fisheries inspection on a local bait shop. During the course of his inspection, he noticed that one of the bait tanks inside the store contained a snook. Officer Baker charged the store owner for possession of snook out of season and gave him a criminal citation. Officer Baker was able to release the snook alive back into Tampa Bay.

While targeting snook poaching and speed-zone violations in South Hillsborough County, Officers Dearborn and Patterson wrote numerous warnings as well as citations regarding the manatee zone. While conducting fisheries inspections, Officer Dearborn found two anglers in possession of three snook out of season after they reported no fish were on board. The individuals were charged accordingly.

### LEE COUNTY

Officers McColgin, Thompson and Rogers were on patrol on Sanibel when they observed a man catch and keep a snook, which is currently out of season. The officers saw the man scale and gut the fish and then begin cooking it on a grill right on the beach. When the officers approached, the man quickly closed the lid of the grill. A misdemeanor charge was issued for possession of snook out of season.

Officer Price was working in Boca Grande enforcing tarpon regulations when he observed someone fishing with an illegal jig. It is illegal to fish with a lure that the bait and weight hangs lower than the hook. After speaking with the individual and checking his history with FWC, Officer Price educated the man and issued a warning for the violation.

Officer Bell was contacted by the City of Cape Coral Community Development Division in reference to a construction company that may have destroyed several Gopher Tortoise burrows with heavy equipment. He followed up with the call and was provided documentation that there were active burrows on the property. Officer Bell was able to identify and interview an individual associated with the company. After concluding his investigation, a mandatory court date was issued to the subject.

Officer Wilkenson received information that an individual was fishing and keeping undersized sharks at the Cape Coral Yacht Club Fishing Pier. While speaking to a group of fishermen who stated they did not catch anything, an inspection of their coolers revealed two undersized sharks. The sharks were not in whole condition and were identified as spinner sharks. The individual that caught the sharks was given a notice to appear for being in possession of two spinner sharks less than the required length and warnings for over the bag limit and not in whole condition.

Officers Spoede and Thompson, Investigator Ruggiero and Lieutenant Barrett stopped a vessel for a fisheries inspection approximately 25 miles southwest of Big Carlos Pass. As they approached the vessel, the operator was seen removing something from a fillet table and throwing it under the transom gunwale. During the inspection, the officers found eight undersized red grouper. They also found a red grouper fillet under the transom gunwale, apparently what the operator had tried to conceal. While checking the fishing gear, the officers found another grouper fillet being used as bait. The vessel operators, who were clearly not expecting to be inspected so far from shore, were charged with multiple criminal fisheries violations.

## PASCO COUNTY

FWC officers responded to a sunken vessel off the Pithlachascotee River. A Good Samaritan located the 48-foot vessel in a shallow area with the engine still running. A search was conducted of the surrounding area with the assistance from the Pasco County Sheriff's Office (PCSO) and the USCG. No one was located during the search; however, the vessel owner was identified. After extensive attempts, the USCG spoke with the next of kin who positively verified the individuals were safe. According to information received, the individuals abandoned ship after the vessel started taking on water. Several days later, Officer Balfour spoke with the vessel operator to complete the boating accident report. The PCSO is handling the derelict vessel investigation.



Officers Cocke and Williams responded to a complaint of individuals spearing snook in the Holiday area. While conducting surveillance of the area, Officer Williams observed another set of individuals that were cleaning fish. The officers conducted an inspection, and they determined the individuals were in possession of American red snapper, gag grouper, and red grouper. The anglers had harvested several fish that were undersized and out of season. The officers issued several citations and warnings for the violations, and the fish were seized as evidence.

Lieutenant Parisoe was on water patrol on the Pithlachascotee River when he observed a personal watercraft (PWC) that was violating the idle speed zone. The PWC operator was also not wearing a Personal Flotation Device (PFD). Lieutenant Parisoe contacted the operator at Nick's Park Boat Ramp to address the violations. While conducting a boating safety inspection, signs of impairment were observed. During field sobriety tasks, Officers Balfour and Beckman arrived to assist. When Lieutenant Parisoe told the operator he was under arrest, he refused to comply. The operator decided to run and made contact with Lieutenant Parisoe as he fled. The officers pursued the individual on foot, and he was subsequently arrested a few minutes later. Officer Beckman transported him to the Pasco County Jail where he was booked for battery on a law enforcement officer, resisting arrest with violence, and BUI.

FWC officers responded to several calls for service over the Memorial Day Weekend, including the investigation of several disputes at the Anclote River Boat Ramp, and a report of theft that had occurred at Honeymoon Island State Park.

Multiple FWC officers responded to Werner Boyce Salt Springs State Park to conduct a search. The FWC received information about a personal locator beacon that had been activated in the area. With the assistance of the PCSO, the officers searched the area of the GPS coordinates. The officers did not locate any individuals, vessels, or the locator beacon. The search was concluded after several hours.

## PINELLAS COUNTY

Officers Smith and Freemon were patrolling the waterways in the Treasure Island area. They stopped a vessel to conduct a safety inspection. The operator was showing signs of impairment, so the officers performed field sobriety tasks on the operator to determine if he was able to safely operate his vessel. The officers determined that the operator was impaired and he was arrested for BUI. The operator refused to provide a breath sample, and was charged with an additional \$500 civil penalty.

Officers Smith and Freemon were patrolling the waterways in Clearwater. During a boating safety inspection, the operator was showing signs of impairment, so the officers performed field sobriety tasks on the operator to determine if he was able to safely operate his vessel. The officers determined that the operator was impaired and he was arrested for BUI. The operator refused to provide a breath sample, and was charged with an additional \$500 civil penalty.

Lieutenant Wells, Officers Smith and Freemon were patrolling the waterways in Clearwater when they stopped a vessel to conduct a safety inspection. The operator was showing signs of impairment and the officers performed standardized field sobriety tasks on the operator to

determine if he was able to safely operate his vessel. The officers determined the vessel operator was impaired, therefore, the operator was arrested for BUI. The operator refused to provide a breath sample and thus was charged an additional \$500 civil penalty.

Lieutenant Wells, Investigator Dallarosa and Officers Smith, Freemon and Burks received a call in reference to a domestic violence battery occurring on a vessel. The officers caught up with the vessel at a marina. As soon as the FWC vessel arrived at the marina, the suspect took off running. The officers knew the suspect was running north, so Officers Smith and Freemon headed north and Investigator Dallarosa and Officer Burks approached from the north heading south. The officers eventually caught up with the suspect while Lieutenant Wells stayed with the other family members at the marina. Pinellas County Sheriff's Office (SO) then arrived to assist. The suspect was arrested for domestic violence. Pinellas County SO and FWC are working the joint investigation.

Multiple FWC officers responded to a PWC accident just south of Dunedin Causeway. Two PWCs were involved and one person was transported as a trauma alert and the other person was treated and released at a local hospital. The officers had to work with EMS to transport the trauma alert patient as he was on an island. The two PWC were seized as evidence pending the investigation. Investigator Tsongranis is the lead investigator.

Officers Bibeau and Bibler were on water patrol in the area of Tarpon Key when they stopped a vessel to conduct a boating safety and fisheries inspection. As the officers were approaching the vessel, one of the occupants picked up a small red grouper and threw it overboard. The officers instructed the individual to stop throwing fish and the individual complied. The officers were unable to retrieve the red grouper but, at the conclusion of the inspection, were able to locate an out-of-season gag grouper. Officer Bibler wrote the individual a misdemeanor citation for possession of gag grouper out of season and a warning for interference with a FWC officer.

## RESCUES

### PINELLAS COUNTY

Officer Ferguson was on water patrol in the area of north Pinellas County when he responded to a report of a PWC accident with injured persons in the water. Officer Ferguson located the accident site and an individual with his body half in the water and half on the beach of the Dunedin Causeway. The subject was bleeding from several spots on his head and was unresponsive. Officer Ferguson performed critical lifesaving techniques to establish an airway for the victim until emergency medical personal could arrive and take the victim to the hospital.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

### LEE COUNTY

Officers Spoede and Thompson, Investigator Ruggiero, and Lieutenant Barrett took advantage of the beautiful holiday weekend weather to take part in Operation Bluewater, a directed conservation patrol to enforce federal fisheries regulations in the Exclusive Economic Zone extending up to 200 miles offshore in the Gulf of Mexico. The officers conducted a number of fisheries inspections including a commercial bandit rig boat, recreational pelagic and reef fish

hook and line anglers and spearfishing boats. The officers documented a high number of fisheries violations including undersized red grouper, triggerfish, and greater amberjack, using reef fish for bait, not landing reef fish in whole condition, and not using circle hooks when targeting reef fish.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### LEE COUNTY

Officers Spoede, Price and Captain Carpenter attended a boating safety awareness event at Centennial Park in Fort Myers. The Boating and Waterways Section brought along their "Wear It Florida" boat for display. The officers spoke to multiple media outlets to spread the message for National Safe Boating Week. The event was capped off when Officer Price jumped into the water from his patrol vessel to demonstrate the auto inflate feature of his personal flotation device.

Officers Bryson and Spoede, Lieutenant Barrett, and Captain Carpenter conducted Operation One to Remember, patrolling around Lovers Key State Park and Estero Bay State Preserve prior to, during, and following a large boat party held on Big Hickory Island over the weekend. The officers coordinated with the USCG, the Lee County SO, and Cape Coral PD to ensure a consistent and measured presence during the event to gain voluntary compliance with boating safety regulations and to deter boating under the influence. The event was a success resulting in no serious boating accidents and no serious injuries.

## SOUTH REGION A

### CASES

#### BROWARD COUNTY

Investigator Teems was on patrol at John U. Lloyd State Park. She was advised by a park ranger that they received a complaint about two fishermen at the first cleaning station on the jetty, where they had undersized yellowtail and marine fish. She made contact with the park ranger at the jetty parking lot where she met with two males. One of the males had a plastic grocery bag with several fish inside. She asked him where he caught the fish. He stated he caught them on the jetty. She asked him if he knew what he had caught and he stated no. She explained that he was in possession of an undersized yellowtail snapper which was only 6" long and two marine fish, one being a parrot fish and the other an angel fish. John Lloyd State Park has a sign with the different fish species to identify specific fish at the entrance of the jetty. Investigator Teems issued a resource citation for yellowtail snapper under 12" and issued a warning for being in possession of an oversized angel fish.

Investigator Teems was on patrol at John U. Lloyd State Park by the main entrance when she observed a maroon Dodge with 6 children on the back seat. She initiated a traffic stop and checked the attached tag through the computer database. The tag was assigned to another vehicle. The driver only had a Florida ID card to which he stated was suspended for failure to appear in court. He also had an active warrant out of Miami-Dade County for failure to appear, but they would not extradite. She continued with her investigation asking the driver about the

tag that was currently on his truck. He stated it was his wife's and he put the tag on the truck to go to the park. He also stated the truck was not registered and did not have insurance for it. Investigator Teems issued several citations for no proof of insurance, seat belt violation, knowingly driving on a suspended license, no motor vehicle registration and attaching a tag not assigned. His vehicle was towed from the park.

Investigator Teems was on patrol at John U. Lloyd State Park. She was traveling southbound crossing over the bridge, where she observed a grey Chevy vehicle with an infant in a passenger's arms. When she initiated a traffic stop, the driver was not able to produce a driver license. After identifying her through a computer check, her license came back as suspended and expired in 2011 for failure to appear. She also had an active warrant out of Miami-Dade County for failure to appear, but they would not extradite. When Investigator Teems asked her about her license, she stated that she wasn't from here. Investigator Teems stated to her that she was from Miami and did not understand what she was trying to say. She stated that she did not know she couldn't drive in a state park. The driver was issued several citations for an expired driver license for more than six months, knowingly driving on a suspended license and no child restraint (car seat).

## MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Willems was on patrol in Dupuis WMA when he spotted a vehicle that had only one working headlight. A traffic stop was conducted on the vehicle. When the vehicle was approached, the smell of marijuana was detected. The operator was asked if any marijuana was in the vehicle. The driver handed Officer Willems a glass pipe filled with marijuana. The driver retrieved a marijuana grinder and handed that over as well. The driver and the passenger stated that they had been fishing and were on their way back to their campsite at the Dupuis family campground. When asked, they could not produce fishing licenses or a permit for camping. They were then escorted back to the campground, so they could break down their camp. The operator was issued three criminal citations: one for possession of drug paraphernalia, one for possession of less than 20 grams of cannabis, and one for camping more than 8 days consecutively on South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Lands. The operator also received a warning for faulty headlights. Both subjects received warnings for no freshwater fishing license, and no permit for camping on SFWMD lands.

Investigator Patterson was on water patrol in the intracoastal waterway near the Stuart sand bar. He observed a vessel leaving the sand bar and the operator was having difficulties operating the vessel. Investigator Patterson initiated a vessel stop to do a boating safety inspection. During the safety inspection, Investigator Patterson observed clues that the operator was under the influence of an alcoholic beverage. After having the operator perform standardized field sobriety tasks, Investigator Patterson placed the operator under arrest for boating under the influence. At the jail, the subject submitted to a sample of his breath, which resulted in his blood alcohol level of .117.

## PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Gouveia was patrolling Lake Osborne and observed an individual that appeared to be very young operating a PWC. He watched to see where this individual was docking his vessel and made contact with the group. The individual was an 11-year-old boy and was granted permission to operate the PWC from his mother. The mother and son were educated on the

laws related to PWC and the mother was issued a warning for allowing someone under 14 years of age to operate a PWC. Approximately 3 hours later, he witnessed the same boy operating the same PWC on Lake Osborne by himself. As the boy pulled ashore, he could see the officer approaching and took off his life jacket and ran. The officer went into the group of people, found the mother and issued her citation with a notice to appear in court for allowing someone under 14 years of age to operate a PWC.

Court was held for the defendant that threw an alligator through the Wendy's drive-thru window, which made national news. He was found guilty for the offense and charged with unlawful possession of an alligator and assault. He will serve 12 months of probation, 75 hours of community service, and \$1,200 in fines. He is also prohibited to make contact with any animals.

Officers Guerin, Webb, and Morrow responded to a report of four males with rifles hunting in the vicinity of Trail 9 in the Corbett WMA. Upon their arrival, the officers observed the males arriving back to their vehicle, with rifles in hand. When questioned about their intention with the rifles, the males stated they were hog hunting. All parties were issued warnings reference hunting out of season in a wildlife management area and were provided information regarding hunting in WMAs in the future.

## ST. LUCIE COUNTY

Investigator Turner was on patrol at the Fort Pierce Inlet State Park conducting traffic and radar speed enforcement during his patrols. While conducting stationary radar along the park's main road, Investigator Turner observed a vehicle traveling eastbound at a higher rate of speed than the posted speed limit of 25 miles per hour. Investigator Turner obtained a target speed of the vehicle to be traveling at 31 miles per hour. As the vehicle passed Investigator Turner's location, he observed a rear-seat passenger not in use of the vehicle safety belt. Investigator Turner conducted a traffic stop on the Buick and made contact with the operator. Upon making contact with the operator, the subject advised the vehicle was gifted to him and the tag attached was not assigned to the vehicle. Investigator Turner conducted an FCIC/NCIC check of the vehicle tag, which returned as canceled status. Investigator Turner issued the passenger a traffic citation for failing to use the vehicle's safety belt. He towed the vehicle utilizing a local tow company. Investigator Turner arrested the operator and booked the subject into the St. Lucie County Jail. The operator was charged with attaching a tag not assigned and issued a traffic citation for the speed violation.

Investigator Turner was assigned to conduct traffic and radar speed enforcement during his patrols in the Ft. Pierce Inlet State Park. While conducting stationary radar along the park's main road, Investigator Turner observed a Chevrolet SUV traveling eastbound at a higher rate of speed than the posted speed limit of 25 miles per hour. Investigator Turner obtained a target speed of the vehicle to be traveling at 40 miles per hour. As the vehicle passed Investigator Turner's location, he observed the vehicle's windows were unlawfully tinted. Investigator Turner conducted a traffic stop on the vehicle. Upon making contact with the operator, Investigator Turner smelled an obvious odor of cannabis emitting from within the vehicle. Investigator Turner completed a window tint check of the driver's window, which returned a light transmittal reading of 18%. The window must transmit 28% of light or greater. The vehicle was occupied by three juveniles ages 6, 4 and 3. Investigator Turner explained to the operator that a vehicle search would be performed. The operator advised Investigator

Turner the cannabis was in the glove box. Investigator Turner conducted a search of the vehicle and found cannabis in the glove compartment. Additionally, Investigator Turner located a cannabis blunt and cannabis roaches in the center console. The cannabis found within the center console field tested positive. The operator was issued two traffic citations in violation of side window tinting and unlawful speed. The operator was arrested for the possession of cannabis and booked into the St. Lucie County Jail.

## RESCUES

### PALM BEACH COUNTY

While on water patrol in the Boynton Beach Inlet, Officer Newman assisted a swimmer in distress. The man refused medical treatment and was transported to the Lantana Boat Ramp to be reunited with his girlfriend.

## MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

### PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Guerin, Koch, and Morrow, along with an alligator trapper, responded to the report of an alligator in a residential swimming pool in Palm Beach Gardens. Upon their arrival at the residence, the officers observed a five and one-half foot alligator in the bottom of the swimming pool. Utilizing a catch pole, the officers were able to successfully remove the alligator from the pool without incident. The alligator was then transferred to the care of the alligator trapper.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

### PALM BEACH COUNTY

Over the Memorial Day weekend, FWC aircraft flew over the Corbett WMA and looked for violations. Lieutenant Hayes was a spotter in the helicopter and directed Officers Guerin and Webb to several violations. A total of 80 users were checked with 13 citations and 20 warnings written for violations ranging from off-trail, hunting out of season, unlicensed vehicles, and no day-use fee.

Several officers assisted the Martin County Sheriff's Office in the search for the remains of a missing Hobe Sound woman. The killer admitted to dumping the body in the Hungryland WEA. The FWC officers brought a buggy and ATVs to aid in the search of any evidence that would relate to this case.

During the Memorial Day weekend, Officer Newman Patrolled the Boynton Beach Inlet to ensure boating safety and compliance were met. A total of 80 users checked, 5 boating citations, 4 written warnings, and many verbal warnings were given.

## SOUTH REGION B

### CASES

## COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Reams, along with the Collier County SO, responded to a call reference a boating accident involving an airboat in Everglades City. When Officer Reams arrived on the scene, one subject was being loaded into an ambulance whom he later found out was the captain of the airboat. In addition to the captain, there were five other subjects on the vessel who were all uninjured. The investigation revealed that the airboat was traveling through a small mangrove tunnel when a low lying branch caught the cage of the airboat causing it to jerk to the right and hit a large mangrove tree. The captain was thrown from his seat and landed on the side of the vessel. The captain sustained lower back injuries, along with several cracked ribs and a cracked pelvis. The investigation is still ongoing at this time.

Lieutenant Sushil and Officers Despian, Johnson, Lugg and Reith responded to a call for assistance from the Collier County SO in the Marco River. They assisted Collier County SO with processing an impaired vessel operator. After performing the field sobriety tasks, the operator was placed under arrest by for BUI. Officer Lugg transported the subject to jail, where Officer White obtained a breath alcohol sample of 0.160 and 0.179, more than twice the legal limit of 0.08.

While on state water patrol, Officer Lugg was approximately nine miles offshore when he stopped a vessel traveling eastbound returning from offshore. Officer Lugg performed a marine fisheries inspection on the vessel after the captain acknowledged that he and his passenger had a good day fishing. Upon a closer inspection, the two occupants on board had caught 54 lane snapper, 6 red grouper, and multiple other non-regulated species. Five of the six red grouper were undersized, the shortest being 10 ¼ inches and the largest being 20 inches. Each occupant on board received misdemeanor summons for the violations.

While on state water patrol, Lieutenant Sushil and Officer Lugg observed a shrimping vessel anchored approximately four miles offshore and well within a designated closed shrimping area. While the officers maintained surveillance, they observed the vessel pull its anchor and begin trawling even further into the designated closed area. The officers stopped the vessel and after a brief interview, the captain of the vessel admitted to shrimping in the closed area. The captain received a misdemeanor summons for shrimping within the designated southwest closure line boundaries.

While on water patrol with the Collier County SO, Officer White observed a PWC running at about 40 miles per hour at night. The PWC ignored the patrol vessel's blue lights and fled. The officers followed the PWC and found it aground on a sand bar where the operator was frantically trying pull the PWC into the water. Officer White gave loud, verbal commands for the operator to stop attempting to free the PWC. The operator ignored Officer White's commands and Officer White was able to apprehend the subject. The subject was transported to the Cocohatchee River Park Boat Ramp where he was asked to perform field sobriety tasks. The subject exhibited sufficient clues to indicate impairment. Officer White arrested the subject for BUI and the subject refused to provide a breath alcohol sample. The subject was also charged with eluding a police officer with a vessel, reckless operation of a vessel, resisting an officer without violence and additional citations.

Lieutenant Mahoney, Investigator Doricchi and Officer White were on federal water patrol approximately 20 miles east of Naples when they conducted a federal resource inspection on a

vessel. During the inspection, they discovered two undersized red grouper, over the bag limit of red grouper, undersized yellowtail snapper, federally undersized mangrove snapper, and reef fish being used as bait. The fish were returned to the water alive. Appropriate warnings and citations were issued.

## MIAMI DADE COUNTY

Officer Washington made contact with a vessel about two miles offshore of Cape Florida Lighthouse. They were unable to start their engine and stranded. They refused towboat services due to financial difficulties. The Miami-Dade County marine patrol towed their vessel in to the nearest dock and Officer Washington conducted a safety and resource inspection. Two male subjects admitted to harvesting fish. There were numerous fish onboard, including undersized red grouper, undersized mutton snapper, undersized gray triggerfish and deceased queen triggerfish. One subject failed to produce a valid saltwater license, the other subject's saltwater license was expired. Both were cited accordingly.

Major Escanio was on water patrol when he observed a PWC operating on plane in a posted slow speed zone in the ICW and Broad Causeway. Upon contact with the operator, Major Escanio detected an odor of alcohol emanating from the operator's breath along with glassy and bloodshot eyes. When asked if he had anything to drink, the operator stated he just had a few drinks at the sandbar. Officers Ludtke and Washington arrived to assist with a BUI investigation. Officer Ludtke performed seated field sobriety tasks on the operator on which he performed poorly. The operator provided a breath sample of .109 and .106 and was charged with BUI and cited for speeding in a slow speed manatee zone.

Officer Ludtke and Major Escanio were on water patrol in the ICW near 79 Street Boat Ramp when they stopped three PWC for operating on plane in a posted slow speed zone. During the stop, it was discovered that two of the PWC were rentals and were being guided on a tour by the third operator. None of the PWC had a sound producing device and one of the operators was not given a boating safety certificate by the livery as is required due to his age. Major Escanio instructed the guide to follow his patrol vessel to the livery location. Once at the livery location, it was discovered that proof of insurance could not be provided and boating safety information was not displayed. The livery owner was given four misdemeanor citations.

Officers were concentrated on US 41 from Francis Taylor Boat Ramp westbound to Tippy's Boat Ramp. From the pump station to Tippy's, officers were mainly enforcing freshwater fisheries and licenses. Between both days, there were approximately 30 citations just for license violations. Once at Tippy's, they enforced boating safety resulting with 42 citations. They also assisted in a search and rescue mission where both individuals were found, had a DUI arrest, and two misdemeanors for illegal hunting.

FWC officers found several underage teens drinking and trespassing and the teens were warned and turned over to their parents. One individual over 21 was written for contributing delinquency to minors and trespassing. There were approximately 3 license violations found as well. Participating officers were Lieutenants Marvin, Miranda and Officers Gilbert, Little, Dominguez, Romero and Mirabal.

FWC's primary missions this past weekend was to create a safe environment for our boating public as well as those who enjoy our state parks, greenways, trails, wildlife management



areas and forests. Through education, a strong law enforcement presence, hard work and dedication, their efforts resulted in a total of 17 BUI arrests, 2 DUI arrests, and 2 Disorderly conduct arrests with no serious injury or fatal boating accidents.

## MONROE COUNTY

Officers Wagner and Brierley (USFW) were on water patrol in the area north of Cottrell Key and observed an individual snorkeling from a vessel without a dive flag. When approached about diving without a dive flag, the female said they had not been in the water yet. The officers explained that they saw one of them diving through binoculars and the male stated that he had got in quickly to spear some fish and must have forgotten it. An inspection of their cooler revealed multiple mangrove snapper and more than one person's limit. The limit is five per person and the female then said that she had been diving to spear earlier at a different location. When counting the snapper out of the cooler onto the deck, the male left the tenth snapper in the cooler. We asked him to remove it to see under and in the ice was a very undersized gag grouper. The male said he shot it, knew it was short, and tried to hide it. A citation was issued for undersized gag grouper.

Officers Wagner and Brierley (USFW) were on water patrol in the area south of Key West. They observed multiple people snorkeling with spear guns around a commercial trap vessel and approached to conduct a fisheries inspection. The operator of the vessel said they had only shot one hog fish and showed the officers the contents of their cooler containing the hog fish. Due to the large size of the commercial vessel, Officer Wagner said he needed to come on board to see inside some of the other hatches. Before coming on board, he asked again if there was any other fish on board. The operator said yes and led him to a deep hatch on the other side of the boat and brought out an undersized black grouper. He said he shot it and knew it was undersized and a citation was issued for undersized black grouper.

Officers Rubenstein, Plussa, and Investigator Cox were conducting Memorial Day weekend water patrol near Duck Key when Officer Rubenstein spotted fishermen fishing onshore in an area known for recent resource violations. At his request, Officers Plussa and Cox dropped him off by boat onto the jetty rocks to conduct a resource investigation, while they provided cover from the hovering vessel. Officer Rubenstein single-handedly inspected their many coolers and discovered the subjects to be in possession and over the limit of more than a dozen grossly undersized schoolmaster snapper, mangrove snapper, black grouper, oversized and illegally harvested marine life species, and out-of-season Florida spiny lobster. Officer Rubenstein issued a total of six criminal misdemeanor charges for the violations in addition to multiple warnings.

Officer Mattson was on water patrol in the area of Whale Harbor Channel. Officer Mattson observed a vessel with improperly displayed FL numbers. He stopped the boat for a boating safety inspection. Multiple violations were identified for lack of safety equipment. Officer Mattson asked the subject for identification and the man said that he did not have any ID. He stated that his ID was out of Massachusetts. The man was extremely nervous and tense the entire time. Officer Mattson ran the subject through FWC dispatch and no record was found. Lieutenant Haney and Officer Wilkins arrived to assist. After thorough questioning by Lieutenant Haney and Officer Mattson, as well as a Monroe County Marine deputy, no record was found. The man claimed that he never had a driver's license issued in any state. The deputy had him write his information on a sheet of paper. After 45 minutes, the deputy found

him through his dispatch with a completely different middle name and a suspended Florida Driver's license for failure to pay. The man was arrested for resisting without violence. He was transported to Plantation Key Jail by Lieutenant Haney. He was also issued 3 infractions for the safety gear violations.

Lieutenant Cabanas was patrolling on Geiger Key in the Lower Keys when he observed a vehicle sitting on the side of the roadway. Lieutenant Cabanas observed a man shoot a pellet rifle into a Blue Crab hole. Lieutenant Cabanas then witnessed the man pull a dead crab from the hole and hand it to the individual in the parked vehicle. Lieutenant Cabanas ordered the man to place the rifle on the ground and secured the weapon. Lieutenant Cabanas cited the man for 13 blue crabs that were taken by illegal method.

While working with the resource protection unit, Officers Munkelt and Garrison were on water patrol on the bayside of Channel 5 Bridge when they observed an individual enter the water from land and begin spearfishing with a pole spear. From approximately 100 yards away, Officer Garrison observed the individual with binoculars while Officer Munkelt operated the patrol vessel to keep a constant visual on the subject. Officer Garrison could clearly see the individual spear a lobster then take it back to shore. Once back to shore, the diver put the lobster in a bag designed for dive fins. The officers observed him do this two more times. Before they could get to the individual, he was able to harvest a 4<sup>th</sup> lobster. When the officers approached the diver, they asked him where the lobster were and he retrieved the bag. Upon inspection of the bag, there were 6 lobster. Upon measuring the lobster, all 6 were undersized. After reading Miranda, the individual admitted to harvesting all 6 lobster by spearing them. The individual was charged with spearing lobster, possession of lobster out of season, possession of undersized lobster, harvesting lobster without a measuring device, and spearfishing in the Upper Keys. He was also issued citations for no dive flag and no license.

Officer Baumgartner came across an individual actively engaged in fishing, tucked inside the mangroves. She conducted a resource inspection on the individual and discovered he had an out-of-county warrant for a probation violation. The subject was placed under arrest and transported to the Plantation Key Jail.

## RESCUES

### COLLIER COUNTY

In the early evening, the Collier County SO issued a Marine Emergency Response Team (MERT) alert for a missing kayaker near Tigertail Beach on Marco Island. The kayaker had last made contact with his friends at 5:00 pm and severe weather was building in the area. Officers Despian and Lugg responded to assist in the search by vessel out of Rose Marina while Officer Arbogast responded to assist the search by land on Marco Island. Also, Officer White responded by locating to the Marco Island Fire Department to coordinate with MERT command. After searching for an hour in severe thunderstorms, the subject was located on a beach, tired and frightened. Officers Despian and Lugg brought the subject onto their vessel and transported him to Caxambas Park to be checked out by EMT before he was picked up by his friends.

### MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

## MONROE COUNTY

Officer McKay responded to a Key Largo shopping center plaza to meet with bird center rescue staff due to a recovered Least Tern hatchling. The hatchling had fallen from the roof and rescue center staff were concerned about possible construction on the roof. After gaining access to the roof, numerous nests with eggs and several other hatchlings were observed. No construction activity on the roof was detected. The recovered hatchling was placed with another hatchling. Rescue center staff contacted the property manager to advise them of the nesting season and to have any construction workers use extreme care when walking on the roof as the nests/eggs/hatchlings blend in with the gravel roof.

The FWC Manatee Group, concerned local citizens and FWC officers worked diligently to aid a manatee that was in distress. The local citizens noticed the manatee at the dock early in the morning and reported that the manatee seemed distressed and even injured. Upon arrival, they stated the manatee could not swim down or use its left fin. There was bottom paint transfer and a recent prop scar on the manatee's back. The citizens stayed with the manatee until the Manatee Group was able to arrive. With an officer operating the vessel, the Manatee Group was able to hoop-net the injured manatee and safely load him into their transport vehicle. The manatee was taken to Miami for further evaluation and treatment.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

### COLLIER COUNTY

Over a two-day period, FWC officers from Collier and Lee counties conducted targeted enforcement patrols along the Panther Zone on Corkscrew Road and resulting in 26 uniform traffic citations (24 in reference to speeding violations), 32 warnings, 3 misdemeanors, and 1 physical arrest.

While conducting proactive enforcement in the Panther Zone on Corkscrew Road, Officers Reams and Reith conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle traveling at an excessive speed. When the officers asked for the subject's driver's license, she stated that she left it at home and provided the officers with a name and date of birth (DOB). A check of the name did not yield a Florida driver's license being issued. Investigator Van Trees and Officer Polly arrived to assist. The officers attempted to verify the information the subject had provided and she again confirmed the name and DOB. The subject was detained and her vehicle was inventoried in preparation of it being towed. While inventorying the vehicle, a Florida Identification Card was found that identified the subject as having a different name and DOB than what she provided. The subject was arrested for knowingly driving while having a license suspended or revoked, providing false information to an officer, and for obstruction by a disguised person. The subject also received citations for unlawful speeding and failing to display a registration.

### MONROE COUNTY

For the last five months, the FWC has been conducting investigations with USCG with regard to illegal charter boats in the southern Florida Keys. Based on complaints from the local Key West Charter Boat Association, as well as self-initiated internet searches, social media postings, anonymous complaints and local patrols, several subjects were identified. The

majority of those identified had proper licensing through USCG and FWC. The majority of local charter boat captains were concerned that this type of activity was bad for business because of the complex fishing laws, lack of insurance and drug testing. FWC investigators identified a local man from the Key West area offering fishing trips for \$50 per-person, plus tips, through Key West Yard Sale. While offshore, FWC Officer Richards cited that subject for an expired registration and operating without a charter boat fishing license. Additionally, Officer Richards documented that the captain did not have a USCG Merchant Mariner's Credential (captain's license). Officer Richards provided the information to USCG Investigators for review. The captain faces civil penalties as high as \$27,500 for no credentials and \$7,000 for no drug and alcohol testing. The USCG will conclude their investigation this week to determine what action will be taken. The USCG provides information pamphlets for charter operations and guidance for masters and passengers. The pamphlet defines "passenger for hire" as a passenger for whom consideration is contributed as a condition of carriage, whether directly or indirectly flowing to the owner, charterer, operator, agent, or any other person having interest in the vessel. If a vessel carries just one individual passenger or "hop on" who provides anything more than a voluntary sharing of the actual cost of the trip, the vessel is operating as a passenger vessel and requires a USCG licensed operator. The FWC will continue looking for unlicensed charters and responding to complaints about illegal charter companies.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### COLLIER COUNTY

Lieutenant Sushil and Officer Kleis attended the "Wear It Campaign," hosted by the Marco Island Sail and Power Squadron, a non-profit educational, social and service organization. The purpose of the event was to raise boating safety awareness and to encourage boaters to wear their life jackets. Approximately 60 people were in attendance.

### MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

Officer Veloz attended the Miami Dade Mayors dedication of the first week before Memorial Day weekend as Boating Safety Week in Miami Dade County. Several agencies participated in the all-day event at City Hall. More than 500 guests attended the start of boating safety week.

### MONROE COUNTY

Officer Dube appeared on a couple of different radio shows prior to the Memorial Day weekend. Officer Dube promoted the "National Safe Boating Week" giving safety tips on boating safety, BUI's and dive and snorkel safety tips.

Officer Dube assisted a local student from Coral Shores High School with his final requirement to become an Eagle Scout. Eagle Scout Robbie Majeska's final project to reach the level of Eagle Scout was to build collection boxes for retired American flags and to place them throughout the Upper Keys at local establishments. As part of the final project, he was to organize and hold a Flag Retirement Ceremony to properly retire old and tattered American flags. Mr. Majeska held the ceremony at the Elks Club in Tavernier on Memorial Day and was attended by several Boy Scout troops, EMS, law enforcement agencies and with local

politicians. According to the US Flag code, the American flags that are to be properly retired are to be folded and placed on a fire. Mr. Majeska collected over 250 American flags of various sizes from his collection boxes for this event. The flags were placed on a table for attendees to select one before walking over to the fire and gently place their flag into the fire.