

FWC
Division of Law Enforcement



Weekly Report
July 29 through August 4, 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

Officer Allgood was on water patrol near the Big Lagoon State Park conducting fisheries and boating safety inspections when he observed a vessel with no registration numbers displayed on the starboard side of the vessel. While conducting a boating safety inspection, there were several signs that indicated the operator was impaired. Officer Allgood asked the operator if he would consent to performing the standard field alcohol tasks and the operator agreed to do so. After administering these tasks, Officer Allgood developed probable cause to believe that the operator was in fact operating a vessel under the influence, and the subject was arrested for BUI.

Officers Clark and Manning were dispatched to a civil disturbance in the Little Sabine area. FWC Dispatch advised that a female complainant and her children were being threatened while paddle boarding by a male subject. The male subject was making threatening physical and verbal gestures and during the confrontation, then went to a nearby residence and boarded a vessel. The male subject started to return to where the female and children were, but then decided to exit Little Sabine Bay. The female gave a description of the subject and his vessel. Officers Clark and Manning located the vessel matching the description and made contact with the operator, who was intoxicated and showing multiple signs of impairment. The operator refused to perform the field alcohol tasks. Officer Clark arrested the operator for BUI. The subject later refused to submit to a breath test and was transported to the Escambia County Jail. Additional charges are pending upon completion of the investigation.

HOLMES COUNTY

Officer Yates responded to a trespass call and arrived to find a subject working on a junk car. During the investigation, Officer Yates determined that the subject had bought the car, but did not have permission to be on the property where the car was being stored. The subject was in possession of methamphetamine, cannabis and drug paraphernalia. The subject was issued a written warning for trespass and booked into the Holmes County Jail for the drug violations. Charges for the stolen property are being investigated.

LEON COUNTY

Lieutenant Marlow and Officer Raker were working the Apalachicola National Forest Wildlife Management Area (WMA) regarding complaints of damage to managed lands. They observed an individual operating an ATV close to midnight (after designated hours) and being followed by a vehicle. The individual on the ATV then used his ATV to cause damage to the managed lands in an intersection of the road. The officers observed the individuals drive their vehicles into a closed area and throw beer cans into

the woods. Illegal drugs were also located near the beer cans. Appropriate action was taken for the violations.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Corbin was on vessel patrol in the area of Crab Island/Destin Pass conducting boating safety and resource protection and observed two individuals snorkeling at the end of the Destin West Jetty. Officer Corbin observed one of the snorkelers in possession of a loaded spear gun while snorkeling. A fisheries inspection revealed one mangrove snapper which had been speared. Spearfishing is prohibited around the east and west jetties in the Destin Pass. The snorkeler was issued a notice to appear citation.

Officer Corbin was on land patrol and observed two individuals leaving a known popular spot for fishing for inshore marine species. After making contact with both individuals, he determined that both individuals were fishing. A fisheries inspection revealed one undersized red drum and one undersized mangrove snapper. One of the individuals admitted harvesting/possessing the undersized red drum and mangrove snapper. The individual was issued a notice to appear citation and written warning.

Officers Molnar and Pifer responded by vessel to a boating accident that occurred in the East Pass. The vessels involved were a personal watercraft (PWC) and a tri-hull-style catamaran. Officer Molnar made contact with both vessel operators. While Officer Molnar was interviewing the PWC operator, he noticed signs that the operator was impaired and requested the operator to perform field alcohol tasks. Based on the performed tasks, the operator was arrested for BUI. The operator provided a breath sample and a urine sample. He was transported and booked into the Okaloosa County Jail. Officer Pifer issued a citation to the PWC operator for violation of navigational rule (improper lookout).

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officers Hutchinson and Clark were on land patrol conducting fisheries and license checks in the Yellow River WMA. They made contact with a male subject at the end of Log Lake Road who was standing by the river. There was also a running vehicle with a female asleep in the passenger side. He immediately stated he had not been driving. The officers identified the subjects through FWC Dispatch and both subjects had active warrants out of Santa Rosa County. Both subjects were placed into custody and transported to the Santa Rosa County Jail.

Officers Hutchinson and Clark were on vessel patrol conducting boating safety and fishery checks on Blackwater River. The officers observed a male and female fishing from the bank just south of the Shell Pile Boat Ramp. When the officers made contact, there was a bag of white powder and glass pipe in plain view next to the male. During this time, another male had walked over to the area. When the officers identified both males and female, FWC Dispatch advised the female had an active warrant out of

Pasco County and the male subject that was not fishing had an active warrant locally. All three subjects were placed into custody. The male that was fishing was charged with possession of methamphetamine and paraphernalia. The female and male were charged with active warrants.

WAKULLA COUNTY

Lieutenant Marlow and Officers Raker and Hofheinz were working the Apalachicola National Forest regarding complaints of damage to managed lands. Lieutenant Marlow and Officer Raker were on foot and observed several individuals operating their vehicles in a closed area and one driver using his vehicle to cause damage to the WMA. They returned to their vehicle and notified Officer Hofheinz and followed them to another location where the same activity continued. They made contact with the individuals and addressed damage to managed lands, operating in a closed area and alcohol and drug-related violations.

Officers Hofheinz and Raker were working the Apalachicola National Forest. Officer Hofheinz observed several individuals operating their vehicles in a closed area and damaging lands. Officer Hofheinz notified Officer Raker and they made contact with the individuals. It was determined that each of these individuals were under age and in possession of alcohol. Appropriate action was taken regarding the violations.

Officers Miller, Raker and Hofheinz were working the Apalachicola National Forest. Officer Miller and Hofheinz observed a vehicle being operated carelessly, causing damage to the WMA. They notified Officer Raker and then made contact with the individuals. They also located additional alcohol related violations. Appropriate action was taken regarding the violations.

Lieutenant Marlow and Officers Nelson, Raker and Robb were working late-night complaints on the Ochlocknee River and noticed small flashlights coming from the camping area of Wood Lake in the Apalachicola National Forest. They also noticed loud chopping sounds. The officers went to the area and observed two individuals attempting to set up camp around midnight. They heard the individuals mention using narcotics and then observed them start to use the drugs. The officers approached the individuals and located narcotics and paraphernalia. After speaking with the individuals, they had not paid the WMA fee. The issue of littering was also addressed with the individuals. Appropriate action was taken to address the violations.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

BAY COUNTY

Officer Leonard represented the FWC at the 9th Annual "National Night Out" which was held in the parking lot at the Panama City Mall. There were many law enforcement and first responder agencies in attendance. At the conclusion of the event, it was estimated that 2,500 people attended.

FRANKLIN COUNTY

Lieutenant Marlow and Officers Nelson and Raker assisted the Youth Network 2016 Saltwater Fish Camp. They provided a tour of the Offshore Patrol Vessel *Guardian* to 11 kids and talked to them about the vessel and its work-related missions. They, along with four additional FWC staff, provided an underway tour of the vessel to St. George Island.

WALTON COUNTY

Officer White attended an Outdoorsmen Sportsmen Banquet at Friendship Baptist Church. He provided literature on boating safety, fishing, hunting, and local WMA's. He answered numerous questions about youth hunts and rules regulating fish and wildlife.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CASES

ALACHUA

Officer Stanley was on foot patrol at Watermelon Pond when he observed a motorcycle enter a restricted area. As the motorcycle was leaving the area, Officer Stanley stopped the individual and asked to see the operator's driver's license but the operator stated he did not have one. Officer Stanley ordered the operator off the bike and asked for his name. After providing a false name and date of birth, the driver fled on foot. A records check of the motorcycle determined it was stolen out of Gainesville. Investigator Ayers and Lieutenant Ferguson arrived on scene to assist. The following day, Officer Stanley was able to positively ID the operator. Officer Stanley filed one felony and five misdemeanor charges with the Alachua County State Attorney's Office.

Officers Stanley and Troiano received information from Investigator Hoyle in reference to two subjects catching an American alligator. The two officers made contact with one of the subjects who admitted to the violation. The subject was issued a citation for taking American Alligator without a permit. The second subject is being questioned in another region.

Officer Troiano was on patrol late at night in the area of Grove Park WMA. While traveling on a county road, he observed a vehicle parked in the middle of the road with no lights on. The officer attempted to conduct a traffic stop to address the violation. The vehicle fled the area and, with the assistance of the Alachua County Sheriff's Office, the driver of the vehicle was apprehended a few miles down the road. The driver was arrested and booked into the Alachua County Jail on charges of fleeing and eluding and possession of drug paraphernalia.

BAKER COUNTY

Officer Burnsed received information from a club member that some individuals were trespassing at one of the hunting clubs. The club member advised Officer Burnsed that he had seen two trucks running dogs on the property and had witnessed an individual shoot from the vehicle. The member was able to get a vehicle tag number to relay to Officer Burnsed who made contact with the club member and obtained a written statement. Lieutenant Huff and Officer Burnsed went to interview the subject in question and after questioning, the subject admitted to catching his dogs on the lease and shooting at a hog. Charges on trespass and running dogs on property without permission will be filed with State Attorney's Office.

Officer Burnsed was on patrol when he passed a vehicle with a ladder tree stand in the back that looked identical to one that belonged to him. The vehicle was traveling from his hunting club, and when Officer Burnsed went to his club he saw that his stand had indeed been stolen. The next day, Officer Burnsed went to his hunting club to locate the vehicle, since a logging crew was harvesting timber in the club. Officer Burnsed recognized the vehicle that he saw the previous day. Lieutenant Huff, Officers Gill and McDonald arrived to assist. When the owner of the vehicle returned, he was questioned by the officers and admitted to taking the tree stand. The tree stand was recovered and the subject was charged with theft.

Officer Burnsed received information that two subjects had shot several deer at night in Baker County. The two subjects went to a residence to clean the deer and then sold the meat. Lieutenant Huff, Officers Burnsed and Gill went to the residence in question, where they found fresh blood on the ground where the deer were cleaned. The owner of the residence stated his daughter's boyfriend and another subject had brought the deer to his house around daylight to clean, and that the deer were in the trunk of a car. After photographing the scene, the officers went to another residence where one of the subjects lived. The subject at first denied killing any deer. After receiving consent, the officers opened the trunk of the car and found fresh blood and hair from the deer that was killed. The subject then admitted he had killed two deer the night before with a shotgun off a highway north of their residence. He stated they took the deer to the other house and cleaned them, dumped the carcasses and the other subject sold the deer meat. The other subject had seen the officers and ran. The subject who ran from the officers had already been identified by the officers and had an active warrant for his arrest. The two subjects will be charged by direct file with the state attorney's office with two counts each of taking deer during the closed season, two counts each of taking deer at night and two counts each for taking wildlife from road right of way. In addition, charges of unlawful sale of deer meat will be filed.

LEVY COUNTY

Officers Schulz and Starling were on night patrol at Clay Landing in Manatee Springs State Park when they observed two vehicles come down to the boat ramp, and one of the vehicles doing doughnuts at the parking area. The two vehicles parked a short time later. Six subjects exited the vehicle and headed to the swimming area. The officers

discretely followed the subjects and observed them consuming alcohol while swimming in the Suwannee River. The officers contacted the subjects for having alcohol in the state park, found cannabis, drug paraphernalia and discovered that one subject had given a false name and date of birth. Only one of the six subjects were of legal age to consume alcohol. The officers issued proper citations and warnings for the cannabis, drug paraphernalia, minor in possession of alcohol, destruction to state property, and giving a false name to a law enforcement officer.

Lieutenant Umhoefer was on night patrol near Clay Landing in Manatee Springs State Park when he saw a vehicle approximately 100 yards beyond the concrete road barriers that separate the parking area from the wooded area of the park. Lieutenant Umhoefer walked to the vehicle in the woods, made contact with the driver and passengers in the car and asked why they had driven around the concrete barriers. They said they wanted to drive into the woods and did not think there was anything wrong with that. The car was unregistered with no paperwork or insurance. Appropriate citations were issued to the occupants.

BRADFORD COUNTY

Officer Justus received a call in reference to the illegal taking of freshwater mussels from a shallow portion of Sampson Lake. Officer Justus arrived on scene and observed the same subject that had been caught taking freshwater mussels on two previous occasions in the same location. He issued a notice to appear citation to the subject for illegal method to take freshwater mussels and released the illegally taken mussels alive to the resource.

CLAY COUNTY

Officer Barber and Lieutenant Glover were on water patrol on Black Creek in Clay County when they observed a jet ski with two passengers violate a wake zone. The officers stopped the vessel to address the violation and noticed signs of impairment demonstrated by the operator. Field alcohol tasks were performed by the operator of the Jet Ski who showed signs of impairment. The operator was placed under arrest by Officer Barber for BUI and transported to the Clay County Jail.

RESCUES

ALACHUA COUNTY

Officers Stanley and Troiano were called out in the middle of the night in reference to a call for assistance from the Alachua County Sheriff's Office and the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP). A semi-truck ran off I-75 into Payne's Prairie State Park. The cab of the semi was fully submerged. The passenger of the semi was able to exit and swim to shore but the whereabouts of the driver was unknown. The officers responded with an airboat and were able to provide assistance by transporting dive team members and

medical personnel back and forth from the scene. The driver was later located deceased in the semi-truck.

UNION COUNTY

K-9 Officer Gill responded to a call for assistance of an elderly man who was lost in the Raiford WMA. The man had made contact with Union County officers by cell phone and advised that he was in need of medical assistance. Officer Gill responded and went with K-9 Friar in search of the man in the dense woods. Due to the heat and extreme terrain, it took some time for Officer Gill to get to him. Officer Gill had to cut his way into the woods to reach the man and assist medical personnel into the area. The man was given medical attention and brought to safety.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

CLAY COUNTY

Officer Heath conducted the law portion training to an annual boating safety course that was offered in Clay County by the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary. There were approximately 25 attendees and the topics included proper boating safety equipment and navigational rules.

NORTHEAST REGION

CASES

ORANGE COUNTY

Officer Haslett was dispatched to Wekiwa Springs State Park for a disorderly patron who was yelling threats at people in the park. When he arrived on scene, he observed a young male, naked in a parking lot area. Officer Haslett attempted to converse with the subject and calm him. He did not seem to understand what was going on and Officer Haslett could not make sense of anything he was saying. The subject was very agitated and confused and was later found to be on LSD. As Officer Haslett attempted to place him in custody, he resisted by pulling away and was eventually placed in handcuffs. The subject was transported to a hospital to be checked out and then to jail. He was booked for resisting arrest without violence and disorderly intoxication.

PUTNAM COUNTY

Officer Jones was checking a vessel that was leaving from fishing near Federal Point on the St. Johns River when he observed the operator showing signs of impairment. After completing field alcohol tests, the operator of the vessel was charged with BUI and was booked into the Putnam County Jail.

Officer Jones was on patrol at Rodman Dam when he observed a suspicious vehicle. Upon further investigation, it was found that the driver of the vehicle had attached a tag from another vehicle on the car. It was also found that the driver had a suspended driver license. The subject was issued a notice to appear for attaching a vehicle tag that was not assigned to it and a citation for driving with a suspended license.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CASES

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Lieutenant Ruggiero and Officers Salem and Perry responded to a call about several people picking palmetto berries in a WMA. Once on scene, the officers were able to locate several people picking the berries in the WMA. They educated them on the violation and explained how the berries are a source of food for the wildlife that live there. They were all issued infractions for not having a valid day-use permit and given warnings for the criminal violations.

HARDEE COUNTY

Officers Cloud, Bontrager, Scinta and Franks were working a night-hunting detail and stopped a vehicle on Everett Whidden Road for a traffic violation. Inside the vehicle, the officers located two spotlights and two boxes of .22 ammunition, but no gun. An area search conducted by K-9 Donzi revealed a .22 caliber rifle that was thought to have been thrown from the vehicle. The gun was taken to the Hardee County Sheriff's Office as found property.

HIGHLANDS COUNTY

In June 2016, Officers Stephens, Adams and Smith cited a fisherman for the taking of gamefish by illegal method. This week, the officers received a favorable disposition to their case. The subject was adjudicated guilty, fined \$500.00 and ordered to make a \$250 donation to the Wildlife Alert Fund.

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Officer Martinez was on land patrol in the area of Archie Creek. While on patrol, he stopped and performed a fisheries inspection on an individual returning from a day of fishing in Tampa Bay. During his inspection, he found that the individual was in possession of one undersized and out-of-season snook. The fisherman was given two criminal citations for his violations and must appear in court.

LEE COUNTY

Officer Zampella worked the opening day of archery season in Babcock Ranch WMA when he conducted a resource inspection on a hunter. The man was in possession of an illegal deer that did not meet the new antler point regulations. After interviewing the man and checking him for any prior FWC history, the man was issued a warning for the violation.

MANATEE COUNTY

Officer Martinez was on land patrol in the area of the South Skyway Fishing Pier and performed a fisheries inspection on an individual fishing from the pier. During his inspection, he found that the individual was in possession of an eight-inch red grouper. The subject was given a criminal citation for possession of undersized red grouper and must appear in court.

Officers Martinez and Berg were on land patrol in the area of the South Skyway Rest Area. While on patrol, they performed a fisheries inspection on an individual fishing from the relief bridge leading to the fishing pier. During the inspection, they found that the individual had caught and kept one undersized and out-of-season snook. The subject was issued two criminal citations for his violations and must appear in court.

Lieutenant Hinds was on land patrol in the area of the South Skyway Rest Area. While on patrol, he stopped and performed a boating safety and fisheries inspection on three kayakers who had been fishing near Joe's Island and were now returning to their vehicles. During the inspection, it was discovered that one of the men had caught and kept two red drum. The subject was cited criminally for possession of over the bag limit of red drum and must appear in court.

PASCO COUNTY

Officers Balfour and Williams were on land patrol when they observed a vessel traveling the Pithlachascotee River. The vessel crossed under the US 19 bridge and the officers each drove a side of the river in order to maintain a visual. Officer Williams noticed the vessel behind a waterfront restaurant and observed the two occupants speaking to an employee. During surveillance, Officer Williams heard the employee say to another employee, "You should see that snook they caught." Officer Williams was able to regain visual on the vessel for a short time before losing sight near a group of houses along the river. However, Officer Balfour located the vessel at a residence and made contact with the operator. Officer Balfour conducted a resource inspection and found an out-of-season snook. The operator was cited for the violation and the snook was seized as evidence.

PINELLAS COUNTY

While on foot patrol at the Gandy Bridge, Officer Bibeau observed an individual returning to his vehicle carrying a bucket and a fishing pole. As Officer Bibeau

approached the individual to conduct a fisheries inspection, the individual attempted to hide the bucket in the nearby mangroves. When the individual was questioned about the bucket, he admitted that it belonged to him as well as the fish inside. Officer Bibeau conducted a fisheries inspection and at the conclusion located an undersized and out of season snook. Officer Bibeau wrote the individual one misdemeanor citation for possession of a snook during the closed season, and warnings for possession of an undersized snook and not having a valid snook permit.

Officer Martinez was on land patrol in the area of the Gandy Bridge. While on patrol, he performed a fisheries inspection on two men fishing from the shoreline around the bridge. During his inspection, he found that the two men had caught and kept two undersized redfish, four undersized mangrove snapper and one undersized sheepshead. One of the men was given two criminal citations for possession of undersized redfish and undersized mangrove snapper. The other individual was given one criminal citation for possession of undersized redfish. Both men must appear in court.

POLK COUNTY

Officers Cloud, Bontrager, Scinta and Franks were working a public safety detail and observed a suspicious vehicle from a concealed position on Old Fort Green Road. Officers Cloud and Scinta initiated a vehicle stop on the truck, and located an individual that had a felony warrant. The officers booked the subject into the Polk County Jail on the warrant.

Officer Creel was dispatched to Lake Fannie in Winter Haven for a possible bag-limit violation. When he arrived at Lake Fannie Boat Ramp, he noticed a subject fishing on a small boat near the ramp and asked the subject to come to shore for a fisheries inspection. He counted 86 panfish - 36 fish over the limit. The subject's vessel registration was also expired. Officer Creel wrote the appropriate citation for over the bag limit and a warning for the vessel registration.

Officer Creel was dispatched to a residence due to a tip through Wildlife Alert regarding a subject in possession of a gopher tortoise in a small pool. Officer Creel arrived at the residence to find two gopher tortoises. The subject admitted to having them for a few weeks, and had one in a small pool and the other in a 20-gallon bucket. Officer Young arrived for routine back up. Officers Creel and Young used a translation line and wrote the appropriate citation for possession of gopher tortoises.

Officer Adams was patrolling on Arbuckle WMA near Lake Godwin when he observed three subjects as they were recreating on the fishing dock. Officer Adams walked out onto the dock to speak with them and observed a subject lighting and smoking a small cigarette-like object and detected the odor of burning cannabis. When he announced his presence, the subject immediately threw the cigarette into the lake. Officer Adams looked over the dock railing and discovered that the cigarette had not fallen into the water, but had landed on top of a lily pad. Officer Adams entered the lake from the dock,

waded out in around 4½ feet of water, and retrieved the cigarette. Officer Adams conducted a narcotics identification test on the substance, which indicated a positive result for cannabis. The subject was issued a notice to appear for possession of cannabis under 20 grams.

RESCUES

DESOTO COUNTY

Officer Stephens responded to a search and rescue on Peace River at Brownville Park. A man and woman canoeing were headed down river. While having an argument with each other, the intoxicated woman jumped out of the vessel and began walking into the woods. Desoto Sheriff's deputies arrived on scene and began a search. Officer Stephens launched a patrol vessel and began patrolling the river for the missing woman. FWC K-9 Officers Stasko and Cloud were called out to assist. The woman was now missing for two hours. While searching the area, Officer Stephens located the woman hiding in the bushes on the river bank. She was taken back to Brownville Park and given an evaluation by Desoto County Sheriff's deputies.

LEE COUNTY

Officers Zampella and Birchfield responded to a call about a missing boater near Boca Grande. The initial call reported a person in the water and a capsized boat on the beach. Responding agencies were able to locate the man who was far offshore after being swept out with the strong tide. He was checked out by EMS and walked away from the incident without injury.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

PASCO COUNTY

The FWC received information of illicit activities that were occurring late at night in the Richloam WMA. The information stated that individuals were destroying state lands with vehicles, operating carelessly in the forest, drinking alcohol, and possibly driving under the influence. Multiple FWC officers patrolled the area with the assistance of the FHP. During the patrol, numerous vehicles were stopped and persons inspected. Both FWC and FHP officers issued numerous warnings and citations for state law violations.

SOUTH A REGION

CASES

BROWARD COUNTY

While on water patrol in the area of Lauderdale-By-The-Sea, Officer Moore was checking divers during the spiny lobster sport season. She observed a group of divers and approached them to conduct a marine fisheries inspection. During her inspection, she observed that they were in possession of spiny lobster, four of which were undersized. Two of the lobster were still alive and able to be returned to the water alive; the other two were seized as evidence. Two subjects were written a citation for possession of undersized spiny lobster.

Officers Gamage and Coker were on patrol early in the morning when they responded to the Pompano Pier in reference to a spiny lobster call. Upon arrival, they spoke to an individual that had a spiny lobster in a McDonald's bag on the pier. With information gathered, Officer Gamage issued the individual a criminal notice to appear for possession of spiny lobster out of season. The lobster was released back into the water alive.

Officer Vacin responded to the vicinity of the 15 Street Boat Ramp in Fort Lauderdale and met up with a Fort Lauderdale Police marine vessel. The police vessel had rescued a large, loggerhead sea turtle (approximately 300 pounds) on their vessel. They had spotted it offshore, where it had apparently been struck by a vessel. Marine Biologists from the Sea Turtle Stranding Program also met the officers. Unfortunately, the sea turtle died. Officer Vacin, with the help of Fort Lauderdale Public Works, hoisted the turtle into his patrol truck. From there, he delivered the turtle to the Gumbo Limbo Rescue/Research Center in Boca Raton.

The FWC received complaints that a boat & PWC rental livery, located in Pompano Beach, was over-charging for the temporary boating certificate (TCP test). Liveries are only allowed to charge a maximum of \$3.00 per test as outlined in Florida Statute. Investigators Warne, Sierra, Coffin, Officer Matthews, and Lt. Harp organized a plan to ascertain the amount the livery was charging for the TCP test and address other possible violations. Investigator Warne went to the livery in plain clothes posing as a customer wanting to rent a PWC. Investigator Warne made contact with an employee at the location and asked what was the age requirement and cost to take the test. The employee replied to Investigator Warne that the cost to take test was \$10.00 and that he would have to take the test based on his age to rent a PWC. The employee gave Investigator Warne instructions on how to take the test and provided him with a Florida Personal Watercraft Booklet. The employee stated "the test answers are in the book." Investigator Warne proceeded to take the test. While taking the test, Investigator Warne observed that some of the answers in the Florida Personal Watercraft Booklet were underlined and/or marked by a pencil or pen as to draw attention. After completing the test, Investigator Warne gave the answer sheet to the employee and confirmed the test price was \$10.00. The employee stated "yeah." Investigator Warne gave the employee \$10.00. At this point, Investigator Warne notified Investigator Sierra and Officer Matthews to enter the livery and assist with violations. Investigator Warne issued the employee citations for providing assistance to an examinee during testing and charging more than \$3.00 for the temporary certificate examination. The Florida Personal Watercraft Booklet was seized as evidence.

MARTIN COUNTY

On day two of the mini-lobster season, Officer Aswall stopped a diving vessel offshore of the St Lucie Inlet at Peck's Reef to conduct an inspection. The operator advised her that he had 3 spiny lobster on board his vessel. When asked if he measured his catch, the subject advised that he did not. Upon inspection, Officer Aswall found the subject to be in possession of 2 undersized spiny lobster. Officer Aswall issued the subject one misdemeanor for possession of undersized spiny lobster.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Guerin, Webb and Morrow responded to a report of four males with rifles hunting in the vicinity of Trail 9 in 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 for hunting out of season in a WMA and were provided information about hunting in WMAs.

ST. LUCIE COUNTY

Officer Shermetaro was on water patrol in Fort Pierce when he observed a charter fishing vessel returning from off shore. Officer Shermetaro, along with a member of the United States Coast Guard (USCG), boarded the vessel to conduct a license and resource inspection. The inspection revealed several undersized black sea bass. The subject explained that he had measured the fish and provided the officer with the measuring device. Further inspection determined that the device was old and out of date. The subject received a citation for the violation and the fish were seized as evidence.

Officer Fretwell had just returned to port from a day on water patrol when he was flagged down by a pedestrian who reported that a male subject in an adjacent park had struck a female subject. As Officer Fretwell made his way to the park in an attempt to locate the subjects, he observed a female walking along the seawall. After observing and speaking with her, she did not provide any clues or information which would lead to what the witness had stated. He located the male subject sleeping on a bench, and he did not provide any conclusive information as to the alleged battery. He only stated that he had consumed a pint of vodka. Officer Fretwell then advised them he would be around the area for a while longer. Walking back to his truck, he observed the couple from a distance. At that time, Officer Fretwell observed the male subject forcibly grab the female subject and throw her to the ground. Before any further action was taken by the male subject, he was placed under arrest and booked into jail for battery.

RESCUES

BROWARD COUNTY

Officers Delatorre and Matthews responded in the early morning hours to the vicinity of Mile Marker 46 and Alligator Alley. Broward Fire Rescue requested assistance in finding stuck, lost air boaters in the Everglades WMA. The officers arrived on scene with Broward Fire Rescue and were able to successfully locate and assist the lost air boaters back to a boat ramp.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Godward and Newman responded to a complaint of an ATV being driven over turtle nests on the beach at Singer Island. The officers were able to follow the tire tracks back to an ATV being used by employees of a local hotel on Singer Island. Officer Godward spoke with the hotel staff and advised them of the possible consequences if the employees continued driving over the marked nests. The hotel staff advised Officer Godward that the behavior would be addressed and stopped.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

BROWARD COUNTY

Officers Brock, Gamage, Coker and Lieutenant Laubenberger assisted with a security perimeter around the *Lady Luck*, a freighter that was being sunk as a new artificial reef offshore of Pompano Beach. There were several hundred onlooker vessels. The freighter took quite a while longer to sink than originally estimated, but it landed upright and in good condition on the bottom.

MARTIN COUNTY

Several officers worked the local WMAs and made five arrests for subjects taking palmetto berries from the WMAs.

SOUTH B REGION

CASES

COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Arbogast was on water-related land patrol at the Bayview Boat Ramp when he observed a vessel occupied by two individuals tied to the dock in front of the fish-cleaning station. The two individuals placed two red grouper on the cleaning table. After further investigation, both red groupers were under the 20-inch size limit. Officer Arbogast had the individual bring out the measuring device he was using and the individual produced a foldable, paper measuring device. Using the individual's device,

each grouper was still clearly undersized. The individual was also unable to produce a valid saltwater fishing license. Officer Arbogast charged him for the two undersized red grouper and the expired saltwater fishing license.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

While on patrol southbound of SR-826 and Coral Way, Officer R. Perez observed a gray sedan passing him at a high rate of speed (more than 90 MPH). The vehicle was also weaving through traffic and changing multiple lanes at time in a reckless manner. The officer turned on his blue lights and siren to stop the vehicle, but the vehicle continued without stopping southbound on SR-874. The officer then diminished the pursuit due to the reckless and high speed of the vehicle he was following. The officer immediately reported to dispatch the description of the vehicle to BOLO to other enforcement agencies in the area. The officer never lost sight of the vehicle and saw when the vehicle exited SR-874 at SW 88 Street. The officer was finally able to get behind the vehicle when it stopped at the exit red light. The officer again turned his blue lights and siren on to conduct a stop, but the vehicle then turned left heading west on SW 88 Street without acknowledging the lights and siren. At that point, multiple Miami-Dade police units arrived and proceeded to follow the vehicle to SW 88 Street and 107 Avenue where it came to a complete stop due to traffic and a red light. The operator was ordered to exit the vehicle and placed under arrest. The operator and registered owner of the vehicle had a suspended license. FWC Officers Dominguez and Almagro arrived to assist. The officers searched the vehicle and found a small black cylinder container with residues, two marijuana cigarettes, and a silver grinder; all were seized as evidence. The operator was asked why he didn't stop and he replied that he thought the officer was trying to stop someone else. The officers asked if they knew about the suspended license and they replied that they did. The operator/owner was charged with reckless driving, driving with a suspended driver's license, and possession of cannabis 20 grams or less. The operator/owner was transported to TKG Jail by FHP.

Miami's offshore patrol vessel crew was on a recent nighttime patrol during the two-day mini-lobster sport season when they encountered a vessel with six properly licensed divers on board. The patrol crew stopped the vessel to inspect their catch and immediately observed three catch bags and a mesh dive equipment bag, all of which contained live crawfish, on the vessel's deck. The owner of the vessel immediately stated that they had "found" the equipment bag containing crawfish, tethered to a line, on the seafloor while diving and that a suspicious boat had been circling them nearby." The owner also stated that they had not yet counted or measured any of the crawfish that they had caught or "found." The crawfish were transferred to the patrol vessel so a proper check could be conducted. The six divers were found to be in possession of eighty-nine crawfish, fourteen of which were undersized. Of those fourteen, thirteen of the undersized crawfish came from the catch bags that the divers claimed to be theirs. The owner of the vessel was thus cited for the over-the-limit and undersized crawfish violations.

Miami's offshore patrol vessel crew was again on patrol during the two-day mini-lobster sport season when they observed and stopped a vessel with two subjects on board who appeared to be diving for crawfish in Biscayne Bay's finger channels, a part of the bay that is within the boundaries of the Biscayne Bay-Card Sound Spiny Lobster Sanctuary. An inspection of their catch revealed the subjects to be in possession of twenty-three crawfish, twelve of which were undersized. Citations were issued for over-the-limit, undersized and sanctuary violations.

Officers responded to a boat fire where one of the victims was admitted to the hospital. During the investigation, the lead officer learned the victim had an active warrant out of Miami-Dade County. The victim returned to the hospital for treatment and officers waited outside to take him in to custody.

While on early patrol near Miami-Beach, officers inspected the bucket of a fisherman who was observed fishing from a posted "No Fishing" bridge. The subject was found to be in possession of 14 undersized fish and out-of-season lobster. The subject was cited accordingly.

While on early morning patrol near downtown Miami, officers inspected the cooler of five fisherman who had been on a vessel fishing all night. The fisherman were found to be in possession of six undersized fish and had an expired vessel registration. The subjects were cited accordingly.

Officers Blanco, and Perez were on water patrol in the area of Homestead Bayfront when they observed a vessel entering the marina channel with multiple fishing rods. Officers approached the vessel for a fisheries inspection. There were two occupants aboard the vessel and multiple fishing rods on the stern. Upon inspecting the vessel's fish compartment, the officers found 8 yellowtail snapper, 15 mangrove snapper, 1 mutton snapper, 1 schoolmaster snapper and 1 speckle hind grouper. Both occupants had a valid fishing license. Both subjects were cited for possession of snapper over the aggregate limit (10 per person).

MONROE COUNTY

Officer Rubenstein was enroute to his patrol vessel when he saw a vehicle parked at a popular fishing channel. Officer Rubenstein observed a male snorkeling without a dive flag, actively trying to harvest lobster. After a few minutes, Officer Rubenstein made contact with the individual and asked if he had any luck fishing and the individual stated that he had some fish in his cooler. Officer Rubenstein asked if he had seen any lobster in the rocks and the subject stated "no, no lobster." While the snorkeler was getting out of the water, Officer Rubenstein noticed a sock with what appeared to be lobster tails stuffed inside and tied to his belt loop. While the individual was walking to his cooler, he pretended to trip and fall, throwing the sock into the rocks near the water. The sock contained 2 wrung, short, out-of-season lobster tails. The individual was cited accordingly.

Officer Plussa was on foot patrol near the Long Key Bridge in the Middle Keys checking the many fishermen harvesting lobster over the two-day mini-lobster season. Officer Plussa observed a subject actively taking lobster under and off the rocks near the bridge. He asked the subject to hand him his catch bag for inspection. The subject stated his bag was for himself and the two other snorkelers near him and those on shore. Upon hearing this, two other separate bystanders each stated that they were not with the subject the officer was speaking with. Only one person in the water stated he was with the suspect. Officer Plussa directed him to exit the water for inspection. The subject then stated that two female subjects in his vehicle were lobstering with him. Both of them were asleep in his vehicle and were wearing dry pajamas. The subject then told the officer that two other friends of his were lobstering with him and had left. He could not remember their names nor explain why they had left without their lobster. The subject's catch bag, attached to his person in the water, was found to contain 26 lobster, seven of which were undersized, and one of which was speared and harvested by illegal means. FWC Officer Bartlett arrived and informed Officer Plussa that he had checked this same group earlier in the morning and they told him that they just arrived the second day of the mini-lobster season. Officer Bartlett also found 13 additional lobster in the suspect's cooler in his vehicle, bringing the total in his possession to 39. After completing their investigation, Officer Plussa criminally cited the second diver for over the limit of lobster and arrested the suspect and booked the primary suspect into the Marathon Jail for over the limit, undersized, and speared/punctured spiny lobster harvested by illegal means.

Resource Protection Officers Garrison and Munkelt arrested two subjects for possession of live, hard stony coral with live rock in the Lower Keys. There were a total of 6 specimens of coral that were recovered. One was on live rock. Both of the subjects were from out of the county. The live coral was turned over to FWRI for proper handling for viability.

Officer Foell observed a center-console vessel with three subjects on board coming into a marina in the Lower Keys. He approached the vessel and observed one of the subjects drop a mesh bag which contained fish into the water. The bag was recovered and contained multiple mangrove snapper. There were 27 mangrove snapper and 17 yellowtail snapper in total between the bag and fish cooler on the vessel. The three subjects were charged accordingly for bag-limit violations.

Officer Mattson was on water patrol in the area of Whale Harbor Channel and observed a vessel with improperly displayed FL numbers. He stopped the boat to perform an inspection, during which he suspected the operator was impaired. The operator had the odor of an alcoholic beverage, watery, glassy eyes and slurred speech. The operator was placed on the FWC patrol vessel to perform field alcohol tests on which he performed poorly. Officer Mattson arrested the operator for BUI, and the operator also refused to provide a breath sample. The operator was written two infractions and transported by Lieutenant Haney to the Plantation Key Jail.

Officer Mattson was on land patrol and he stopped to conduct an inspection of a man selling “premium fish dip” on the side of the highway. The subject Officer Mattson was inspecting had an active arrest warrant out of Monroe County. Officer Mattson arrested him for the probation violation and transported him to the Plantation Key Jail.

RESCUES

MONROE COUNTY

Officer Mattson responded to Mariners Hospital in response to a 12-year-old victim being struck by a boat propeller. The girl was jumping off the boat and into the water when she sustained a deep gash which luckily missed the femoral artery. Another young lady also suffered cuts to her toes. No charges were filed.

Officer Mattson was called to the scene of a boating accident with injuries. He responded to the Islamorada Resort and began to speak to two ladies in the Fire/Rescue truck who were on a PWC that had been struck by another. After interviewing the witnesses, Officer Mattson determined that a man also on a PWC tour did not reduce his speed in time or take any action to avoid a collision and crashed his PWC into the one occupied by the ladies. The man was cited for the navigation rule violation. One victim suffered a cut to the arm and a rib injury. The other victim was complaining of a headache.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

COLLIER COUNTY

Lieutenant Shea and Officers Miller and Thurkettle were on plain-clothes water patrol in the Keys when they came upon a vessel with a marked dive flag in the water. Officer Thurkettle entered the water as a diver and found an individual harvesting spiny lobster from an artificial habitat. It is illegal to harvest spiny lobster within 10 yards of an artificial habitat. Officer Miller entered the water and determined that the individual’s anchor line was directly over the habitat. The individual received a citation and the one lobster observed being caught was released back into the water.

Officer Araujo was on state water patrol with the USCG at Whale Harbor Channel in Islamorada to enforce resource violations. While the USCG was conducting a vessel stop, a diver entered the vessel with a mesh lobster bag. Once he was on board and saw Officer Araujo, the diver quickly sat down on the stern and began opening the bag. He then stated, “Wait, I still need to measure these lobster.” After inspecting the diver’s catch, Officer Araujo cited the individual for six, undersized spiny lobster as well as over the bag limit by three.

Officer Araujo was on state water patrol with the USCG near Lignumvitae Channel in Islamorada to enforce resource violations. While the USCG was conducting a vessel stop, a diver slowly came back to the vessel with a mesh lobster bag. When Officer

Araujo asked the diver if he had any lobster, the individual replied, "No." The mesh bag appeared to be empty. However, as Officer Araujo was about to depart, he noticed a female take the bag, roll it up and put it in a corner of the deck. Upon closer inspection, Officer Araujo found that the bag's bottom was partially zipped open, but it still had one severely undersized spiny lobster in it. The diver was cited appropriately for the violation.

Officer Araujo was on state water patrol with the USCG at Whale Harbor Channel in Islamorada to enforce resource violations. While driving through the channel, the USCG crew and Officer Araujo noticed a scuba diver dangerously close to their vessel and far from any dive flag. The USCG crew saw the diver release a full lobster bag from his dive belt. The diver was recovered and returned to his vessel where the rest of his group was found diving for lobster. In addition, Officer Araujo saw a second scuba diver drop his tickle stick and net. Three of the four subjects denied harvesting lobster or having possession of the equipment they were witnessed dropping. Officer Araujo grabbed his snorkel gear and dive vest and entered the water. He recovered the tickle stick and net. The FWC Dive Team arrived on the scene and recovered the lobster bag that was dropped by the first scuba diver. The bag was completely zipped open, but it still had one undersized lobster in it. In total, four misdemeanor citations were issued to the subjects for having undersized lobster and interfering with an FWC officer.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

Captive Wildlife Investigators Smith and Mert responded to an American black bear viewed on a security camera in a densely populated neighborhood of South Miami. The investigators followed reports of sightings and evidence of the bear for approximately two hours, over a 2-mile block of residential neighborhoods. After the bear was located in a tree, Miami-Dade police officers as well as FWC Officer Blanco and Lieutenant Carpenter arrived on scene to help maintain public safety. Investigator Smith successfully darted the bear in the shoulder with chemical immobilization drugs. The bear was removed from the tree and was then transported to FWC bear biologists in Naples. The bear was found to be in great health and was released in Picayune Strand State Forest.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

MONROE COUNTY

FWC officers and personnel participated in the "National Night Out" Campaign in multiple locations throughout the Florida Keys. Local families meet with their public safety officers and children get to interact with the officers and their various equipment. In the Upper Keys, Officers Steinmetz and Dube worked the Key Largo event and Officers Hein and McKay in Islamorada. In the Middle Keys, Officer Plussa, Lieutenant Robison, and Marathon Administrative Aid Marie-Anne Barcomb handled the event.

Officer Martino worked the Lower Keys event in Key West. The officers brought patrol equipment, boating safety and fisheries educational materials, and even live alligators for participants to interact with. The national event allowed children and their families to get to know our FWC officers better. Other participating local agencies included representatives from the Monroe County Sheriff's Office Patrol Division, Monroe County Sheriff's Office Jail Division, Monroe County Fire Rescue, Key West Police, USCG, Florida Department of Corrections, FHP, and the Florida Forestry Fire Service.

Officer Dube, along with Gabriel Delgado from FWRI, gave a presentation to the Founders Park Summer Camp Program in Islamorada. Mr. Delgado brought a touch tank filled with lobster, Queen Conch, snails and Bahama Starfish for the kids to handle. Officer Dube taught the importance of being a Good Steward of our environment and our oceans along with tips to keep everyone safe while on the water. There were approximately 50 campers along with park staff and parents attending the presentation.