

FWC
Division of Law Enforcement



Weekly Report
August 12 through August 18, 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

CALHOUN COUNTY

Officer Baber responded to a complaint on the Chipola River from a group of tubers who claimed that a vessel drove by at a high rate of speed and nearly struck one of the tubers. Officer Baber conducted interviews of everyone involved, presented his findings to the local State Attorney who charged the vessel operator with reckless operation.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Officer Clark observed a motorhome stopped in the middle of the road on south Fairfield Avenue. As the vehicle began moving, the operator was driving erratically. Officer Clark stopped the vehicle, made contact with the driver and smelled an odor of an alcoholic beverage on his breath. The officer also observed an open beer container on the floor. The operator agreed to submit to field alcohol tasks and performed poorly on all tasks. He was arrested for DUI and transported to the Escambia County Intoxilyzer Room where he declined to provide a breath sample. He was then transported to the Escambia County Jail for booking and processing. The driver was charged with driving under the influence (DUI), refusal to submit to a breath test, and knowingly driving without a valid license.

HOLMES COUNTY

Officer Yates contacted Captive Wildlife Investigator Williams to report that he was responding to Doctors Memorial Hospital regarding a subject bitten by a water moccasin that the subject illegally possessed at his residence. The individual was bitten on his left hand and brought the live venomous snake with him to the hospital for identification purposes. Officer Yates issued the subject a citation for possession of a venomous snake without a permit and multiple warnings for other captive wildlife violations. Investigator Williams followed up with the subject at his residence to complete a bite report and ensure the subject was not housing any other regulated reptile species.

JACKSON COUNTY

Officer Forehand located four suspects picking palmetto berries on Econfina Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The suspects had picked approximately 1,000 pounds of berries. Officer Forehand interviewed the person that hired the suspects to pick the berries and he admitted the other suspects did not know they were on lands where picking the berries are prohibited. This suspect was charged with removing palmetto berries from state lands and operating an ATV on state lands.

Officer Forehand saw a suspect throwing a cast net near Chattahoochee Landing. He watched the suspect keep game fish from the cast net and place them on a stringer. The suspect was charged with taking freshwater game fish by illegal method.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Lieutenant Hollinhead and Officer Arnette patrolled an area on Eglin Air Force Base WMA after observing signs of a vehicle driving in prohibited areas. Seven subjects checked in the area failed to produce a daily recreational permit and were issued warnings. A warrants check of one of the subjects revealed an active warrant for failure to pay child support. The subject was taken into custody and transported to the Okaloosa County Jail.

Officers P. Rockwell and Jarvis were on land patrol conducting state fisheries and license inspections in the Destin area. As they were traveling over the Marler Bridge, Officer Jarvis saw an individual, underneath the bridge along the shoreline, in possession of what appeared to be a large fish. The officers drove their patrol vehicle underneath the bridge and located the individual. A fisheries inspection revealed a grossly oversized red drum had been harvested and the individual had begun to fillet the fish. The individual was cited and issued a notice to appear.

Officer Corbin was on land patrol conducting state fisheries and license inspections in the Destin area. He observed an individual actively fishing with a rod and reel at a local marina near Crab Island. A fisheries inspection revealed the individual was over the bag limit of gray (mangrove) snapper and was cited and issued a notice to appear.

WALTON COUNTY

Officer Pifer and Lieutenant Clark were on land patrol conducting quality control inspections and retail/wholesale license inspections at seafood houses/markets. A local business in the Grayton Beach area was advertising bait for sale. Officer Pifer observed shrimp, cigar minnows, squid, finger mullet, and sand fleas for sale. The employees were unable to provide the required saltwater retail license.

RESCUES

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officers P. Rockwell, Jarvis and Trueblood were dispatched to a boating accident involving a 17-foot Cape Horn and a kayak near Tom's Bayou off Boggy Bayou. The operator of the kayak was transported to a local hospital for minor contusions and soreness in the hips. Officer Jarvis interviewed the operator at a local hospital, and the preliminary investigation revealed that the Cape Horn ran over the kayak causing the operator to roll out of the kayak as it was struck. The investigation is ongoing.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Lieutenant Walsingham participated in an outreach event at the Back-To-School Bash at Live Oak Church in New Hope. Approximately 300 people attended and topics covered included conservation, recruitment, and explanation of FWC rules and regulations. Numerous public safety organizations were there and events included haircuts, school supplies, informational materials, a dunking booth, a water slide, and a rock wall climb.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CASES

ALACHUA COUNTY

Officer Troiano observed three individuals hunting on Lochloosa Lake late at night. After checking permits, it was determined that the hunters were attempting to take alligators out of their assigned area. Officer Troiano issued two citations.

BAKER COUNTY

Officer Burnsed received information from a member of a hunting club that he had witnessed two people trespassing on the hunting club property without permission. The two people trespassing were reported to be running dogs on the property. Officer Burnsed responded to the area and made contact with the alleged trespassers. After interviewing the subjects, it was found they had cast their hunting dogs on the property of another hunting club that they did not belong to. Both subjects were charged with trespassing on private property and allowing dogs to pursue game on property without permission.

During a night flight, Officer Burnsed saw a vehicle displaying a spotlight in a searching manner consistent with looking for game late at night on a hunting club property. Officer Gill responded to the hunting club and found that the vehicle using the spotlight had cast hunting dogs to run deer. Officer Gill found signs that the hunting dogs had chased a deer out onto one of the club roads. The subjects stated they had put the dogs out on a bobcat, but knew they were running a deer. The subjects were charged with running deer during the closed season.

CITRUS COUNTY

Captive Wildlife Investigator Holmes received a complaint of abandoned wildlife at a wildlife rehabilitation facility which he had previously written multiple warnings. Upon inspection, he found that none of the previous violations had been corrected and conditions had deteriorated. Three misdemeanor charges were issued for wildlife kept in neglectful conditions, insufficient size caging, and improper rehabilitation of wildlife, in

addition to multiple warnings. All wildlife, to include eight raccoons, two gopher tortoises and one fawn deer, were transferred to another permitted facility for further care.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Officer McDonald was on patrol in Itchetucknee Springs State Park when he observed two individuals in possession and consuming alcohol. While one subject was retrieving his ID, Officer McDonald observed rolling papers and could smell marijuana in the vehicle. After getting consent to search the vehicle, Officer McDonald located a prescription pill bottle with marijuana inside. The subject admitted ownership of the marijuana which was seized as evidence, and appropriate citations were issued.

Officer Johnston observed a vehicle being operated in a posted closed area within the Osceola WMA (Big Gum Swamp). A stop was conducted and the driver and several passengers were found to be in possession of saw palmetto berries. Officer Johnston issued the driver a non-criminal citation for driving in a closed area and a notice to appear for operating a motor vehicle with no driver license. The U.S. Forest Service also issued citations for the removal of palmetto berries from forest service property.

Officers Johnston, McDonald and Cline were on patrol in the Ichetucknee Springs State Park when they observed a suspicious person sitting alone inside a vehicle. The officers watched the subject from a covert location before deciding to make contact. Upon contact, the officers could smell the odor of cannabis coming from the vehicle. The front seat passenger was detained and found to be in possession of approximately 11.7 grams of cannabis along with several articles of drug paraphernalia. He was issued notices to appear in court and the marijuana was seized as evidence.

DUVAL COUNTY

Environmental Investigator Terrones located a large pile of illegally discarded litter in Jacksonville. Most of the items in the debris were from underground utility work and a subsequent investigation revealed that a local utility company had sub-contracted the work to another company. Three of that company's employees decided to dump the materials rather than driving to the landfill. The three suspects were charged accordingly and the site was cleaned.

Lieutenant Arkin was on patrol at Lighthouse Marina Boat Ramp and the Cedar River where there have been ongoing complaints of criminal activity and boating violations. While patrolling the boat ramp, Lieutenant Arkin observed a Polaris PWC that was having mechanical problems and the operator was paddling back to the ramp. The vessel operator advised that the PWC was his neighbor's and he was testing it with the intention of buying it. Lieutenant Arkin observed a green registration decal on the PWC which expired in 2011. Lieutenant Arkin ran the Florida registration numbers and it came back expired in June 2015. Further investigation revealed a warrant on the subject out of Duval County. The subject was placed under arrest without incident. The first warrant was for failure to pay (Level I Violation) with a bond of \$353 and a second

warrant was for driving while license suspended or revoked with a bond of \$358. The subject was transported to the Duval County Pre-Trial Detention Center in compliance with the warrants and was issued a uniform boating citation for operating a vessel on state waters with an expired registration and a written warning for no certification on board.

Lieutenant Arkin, Officers Sapp, Culbreath and nuisance alligator trapper Shumaker, responded to a complaint of an alligator in a homeowner's swimming pool. The six-foot alligator was trapped and removed from the swimming pool without incident. There were several neighbors on scene, including a local city councilman, who were all very appreciative of the efforts of the FWC officers and the trapper.

SUWANNEE COUNTY

Officer Ransom was on land patrol in Suwannee River Water Management Woods Ferry Tract when he observed a white pickup driving on a road designated closed to vehicles. Officer Ransom made contact with the subjects and discovered they had been illegally harvesting saw palmetto berries. A warrant check of the subjects was conducted and revealed an out-of-county warrant for violation of probation. The subject with the warrant was taken into custody and transported to the Suwannee County Jail. All subjects were issued warnings for illegal removal of plant life from district lands and the berries were returned to the resource.

Officer Johnston observed a vehicle being operated in a closed area on Suwannee River Water Management District land. Officer Johnston followed the vehicle as it left the water management district land and trespassed onto a private hunting lease. He continued to follow the vehicle as it left the hunting lease and trespassed onto additional private property. A traffic stop was conducted and Officers McDonald and Yates arrived to assist. The driver and passengers were found to be in possession of 16 bags of saw palmetto berries (roughly 2,000 pounds) that were taken from water management district land. The driver had no driver license, and the driver and another passenger had received notice to appear citations from FWC nine days earlier for removing palmetto berries from state land. The driver and passenger were subsequently arrested and booked into the Columbia County Jail for operating a vehicle with no driver license, removal of palmetto berries from water management district land and operating a vehicle within a closed area of water management district land.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

ALACHUA COUNTY

Officers in Alachua County began working area lakes for the alligator season that recently opened. Officers have checked numerous hunters and have observed several alligators harvested throughout the county.

RESCUES

ALACHUA COUNTY

FWC officers are assisting Dixie County units with search and rescue efforts in the Gulf of Mexico for a missing boater.

CITRUS COUNTY

FWC Citrus County officers responded to two separate incidents in the Gulf of Mexico due to an afternoon storm. Officers Seiler and Canfield responded to the first call off the Homosassa River involving two vessels and ten people. While enroute to the first call, Officer Canfield was diverted to a second call involving a vessel taking on water with four persons on board off Crystal River. Officer Canfield located the vessel and assisted them back to Shell Island. They were able to stop the incoming water and bail it out. Officer Canfield then responded to the original call with Officer Reid following in another patrol vessel. A short time later, the officers were notified that the vessels and occupants involved in the first call were returning to shore and no longer required assistance.

NORTHEAST REGION

CASES

ORANGE COUNTY

Officer Mendelson was on patrol near Hal Scott Preserve when he observed a truck parked on the side of the road with a large amount of harvested saw palmetto berries. Officer Mendelson later observed three individuals, each with a five-gallon bucket filled with palmetto berries, jump over the fence from Hal Scott Preserve to leave the area. Each individual was issued a notice to appear for the removal of the berries from St. Johns River Water Management District lands.

PUTNAM COUNTY

Officer Taylor stopped a vessel at night on the St. Johns River that was working a spotlight along the shoreline and appeared to be hunting alligators. Upon inspection, it was found that the occupants of the vessel were actively hunting alligators more than three miles outside of their designated area. The permit holder was issued a notice to appear for attempting to take alligators outside of his permitted area.

VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officer North and K-9 Max encountered a group of palmetto berry pickers in Lake George WMA. One subject disappeared into the woods as Officer North apprehended the other two. Officer Bresie arrived as back-up and K-9 Max was deployed to track the

third suspect. A short time later, the third suspect emerged from the woods and was apprehended. It was discovered he had a no-bond warrant out of Volusia County for violation of probation. All three suspects were issued misdemeanor citations for removing plant life from a WMA without a permit and the man with the warrant was booked into the Volusia County Jail. The next day, Officer North issued misdemeanor citations to two other suspects picking palmetto berries in Tiger Bay State Forest/WMA without a permit.

Officer West stopped a 35-foot power boat that was being operated by an adult male in violation of a regulated speed zone in the New Smyrna Beach area. The operator showed signs of impairment and was arrested for BUI and transported to the Volusia County Jail. He was also issued a citation for violation of the slow speed zone.

Officer McKee was on patrol in the area of Gemini Springs when he observed several fisherman fishing off the dock. Upon inspection of their cooler, three striped bass and one largemouth bass were observed. Officer McKee examined the fish and determined none had evidence of being taken lawfully by single hook and line. He conducted a field interview with the fishermen and an adult male claimed responsibility of the fish and taking them by illegal method (snatching). The subject was issued a citation for the violation.

BREVARD COUNTY

While working in Port Canaveral, Officer R. Miller responded to reports of a 70-foot motor yacht operating carelessly inside the port. Officer Miller found the operator to be impaired and arrested him for operating a vessel with an unlawful breath alcohol content of .206. The vessel operator had one previous DUI with enhanced penalties.

Officers Maslo and Miller were on patrol in Merritt Island checking fishermen, when they encountered a man with two redfish, one over his daily bag limit. One of the redfish measured 30 inches, well beyond the legal size of 27 inches. A citation and warning were issued for the violations.

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

While on patrol at Sebastian Inlet State Park, Lieutenant Lightsey observed a group of divers pulling a small vessel. After observing the men for a while, the officer saw a spear gun in one diver's hands. Spearfishing is prohibited in state parks. As the men got closer to the shoreline, the officer waded out to them and conducted an inspection. The men were found to be in possession of undersized sheepshead, three spear guns, as well as dive flag and boating safety violations. Warnings and citations were issued for the offenses.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

BREVARD COUNTY

Lieutenant Lightsey spoke to the Eau Gallie Chapter of the Rotary Club. Approximately 30 community leaders attended where a brief presentation was given on the Indian River Lagoon as well as a question-and-answer session.

VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officers Krynicki and Weber attended the National Night Out event held in Deltona. The officers set up a display trailer and a vehicle/ATV static display. They also had two baby alligators on hand to entertain the more than 100 adults and 200 youths who attended the event.

Officer Edson set up a vehicle/vessel static display at the National Night Out event held in Deland. Several hundred adults and youths attended this event.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CASES

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Officers Furbay and McColgin responded to a call in reference to taking an illegal deer in Babcock Ranch during archery season. The officers made contact with a subject in the Tier II hunt area of the ranch and conducted a resource inspection. The officers found the subject in possession of an undersized buck. The subject was cited for the violation and the deer was donated to the Octagon Wildlife Sanctuary.

Investigator Cooke responded to a serious boating accident near the Chadwick Cove area of Englewood. He observed a personal watercraft drifting and the operator floating next to it during a severe thunderstorm. Due to reasons unknown at this time, the operator suffered injury and was transported to a local hospital for treatment. This investigation is ongoing.

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

The FWC Dispatch Center received an anonymous complaint about a subject fishing near the dam on the Hillsborough River at Rowlett Park. The complainant advised that he observed a male subject catching a snook, placing it in a black garbage bag, and then hiding it in the woods approximately 100 feet from where he was fishing. Officers Ahlers and Wolf were quick to respond to the complaint. During the course of their investigation, Officer Wolf and K-9 located the snook in the bushes near where the subject was fishing. The subject was cited for possession of snook out of season, given a warning for undersized snook and must appear in court.

PINELLAS COUNTY

Officers Bibeau and Bibler were on water patrol in Bunces Pass when they observed two individuals walking the shoreline near the boat ramp, carrying a small cooler and spear guns. Officer Bibeau made contact with the two individuals to conduct a fisheries inspection. He located legal-sized mangrove snapper and sheepshead inside the small cooler. Officer Bibeau asked the individuals if they had a cooler in their vehicle, and they advised the officer that they did and only had water inside the cooler. Officer Bibeau got consent to search the cooler and located an undersized cobia which one of the subjects admitted to catching earlier in the day. Officer Bibeau wrote the subject a misdemeanor citation for the illegal harvest of an undersized cobia.

Officers Burks and Smith were working federally and state-permitted commercial fishing vessels. They had knowledge that one vessel was heading back to the fish house with insufficient allocation of their reef fish quota. The officers met the vessel at the fish house and observed the offload of thousands of pounds of fish. After all the fish were weighed, it was determined that the vessel had over their quota of reef fish. A federal citation was written and the case will be turned over to NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) for applicable penalties.

POLK COUNTY

FWC Officers and Florida Highway Patrol Troopers participated in a joint speed enforcement detail in Saddle Creek Fish Management Area (FMA). The detail focused on motorists driving through the area at high rates of speed. Families often fish and walk along the edge of the roadway, and speeding motorists increase the risk of possible injury to these users. During the detail, officers issued 13 warnings and more than 25 traffic and resource-related citations.

Officer Tyer was on land patrol when she received a complaint for trespass. She arrived on scene and observed several subjects on the property. A couple of hours later, Officer Tyer received another complaint from the same property owner. Again, she arrived on scene and observed two different subjects on the property. The subjects were issued a notice to appear for trespass on property other than structure or conveyance.

Lieutenant Futch was on foot patrol in the Tenoroc FMA when he observed where someone had recently walked down a hiking path. As he followed the footprints to a secluded area near a lake, he observed a male subject sitting down by a tree. As he neared the subject, he observed him holding what appeared to be a pipe in one hand and cannabis in the other. The subject was subsequently arrested for possession of cannabis and drug paraphernalia.

Officer Tyer was conducting fisheries inspections at Saddle Creek FMA when she observed a subject actively fishing with a cast net. She made contact with the subject and discovered he was in possession of several freshwater game fish. Once Officer Tyer determined the subject caught all the fish with the cast net, she issued the subject

a notice to appear for possession of a cast net in Saddle Creek FMA and taking freshwater game fish by illegal method.

SOUTH A REGION

CASES

HENDRY COUNTY

Officer McLendon received a complaint during the recent archery hunt in the Okaloacoochee Slough WMA involving the harvest of an illegal deer. Officer McLendon arrived on scene and encountered a couple attempting to check out a 3.5-inch spike at the check station. They were informed of the current regulations stating a legal buck had to have an antler of 3 points or more on one side or a 10-inch main beam. The shooter was issued a misdemeanor citation and the deer was seized as evidence.

MARTIN COUNTY

Officers Morrow and Rogers conducted a dockside fisheries inspection on a vessel returning from the St Lucie Inlet. Upon inspecting the cooler on board the vessel, the officers located an undersized mutton snapper. When asked if he knew what kind of snapper he possessed, the Captain stated "a lane," and then stated the corresponding size limit. The Captain was then educated on ways to identify a lane from a mutton and was issued a warning for undersized mutton snapper.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

While on water patrol, Officers Moss and Trawinski inspected a dive charter vessel. One of the occupants of the vessel was found to be in possession of an egg-bearing spiny lobster. The individual was issued a citation.

Officer Church noticed a vehicle being driven carelessly on I-95. Officer Church initiated a traffic stop after the driver veered onto the shoulder, nearly hitting another vehicle. Upon approach of the vehicle, Officer Church could smell an odor of alcohol and saw beer cans in the vehicle. After administering roadside field alcohol tasks, the operator was determined to be impaired and was arrested and booked into the Palm Beach County Jail.

Officers Moss, Schroer, and Rogers were on patrol near the Jupiter Inlet and conducted a vessel stop on a vessel that was in transit from the Bahamas. Upon inspection, the officers found 13 queen conch, eight Florida spiny lobster (not in whole condition), one bag of hogfish snapper fillets, and one bag of mutton snapper fillets with skin not left intact. The operator of the vessel advised he was not aware of the laws that pertained to transiting back from the Bahamas. The operator was issued one misdemeanor citation for possession of conch and the queen conch was seized as evidence. The operator was also issued one written warning each for transporting Florida spiny lobster not in

whole condition and for transporting the fillets without the skin intact while in transit from the Bahamas.

Officer McLendon conducted a vessel inspection at a residence for an individual hoping to acquire a title for a vessel. While inspecting the vessel, the serial number on the 25-Horsepower outboard motor was checked. The outboard motor was confirmed stolen from another county in Florida. The motor was seized and later returned to the original owner. Charges are pending upon further investigation with the reporting agency.

RESCUES

BROWARD COUNTY

Investigator Coffin, along with other uniformed patrol officers, responded to an alligator bite incident. The victim was located on the dock area at the Willard campsite located in Conservation Area 2A. The victim attempted to retrieve an empty soda can that had rolled off the dock and into the water. When she reached down into the water to retrieve the can, a 6.5-foot alligator that was under the dock bit her on the right hand. Two witnesses reacted and grabbed the victim by her legs and kept her from being pulled into the water and were able to free her hand from the alligator's grasp. The victim was transported to the boat ramp via an airboat and airlifted to Broward General Hospital North. The alligator remained in the area and was successfully taken by an authorized alligator trapper. The victim sustained tearing and puncture wounds to the right hand. She was taken into surgery immediately upon arrival at the hospital.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer McLendon was on road patrol around midnight when he encountered a motorcycle on fire at a busy intersection. With help from an off-duty EMT, first aid was given to the conscious but severely burned motorcycle rider. Only one vehicle was involved in the accident and Fire Rescue arrived shortly thereafter to transport the burn victim to St. Mary's Hospital.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Hankinson and Godward conducted snook conservation patrols in the Jupiter area, primarily focusing on bridges and land access points. Several anglers were educated about returning snook unharmed from bridges and other elevated areas.

SOUTH B REGION

CASES

COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Johnson was on water patrol in the Marco River when she observed a vessel with multiple fishing rods in rod holders alongside the vessel. Officer Johnson conducted a resource check and asked the individuals if they had any fish on board. One of the individuals stated that they were traveling from the Keys and that they had some lobster on board. Officer Johnson asked if she could observe the catch and was given permission. The individual then opened a cooler and pulled out a zip-lock bag of six spiny lobster tails. The individual also claimed the tails. Officer Johnson explained that there was a violation with the lobster being in wrung condition and the individual was issued a resource citation for having possession of them.

MONROE COUNTY

Resource Protection Officers Garrison and Munkelt were on Sunshine Key when they observed two adult subjects in the channel with multiple shells on a float. The male subject was smashing one of the shells. The officers continued to observe the subjects while waiting for them to return to shore. The female subject motioned to two juvenile males who were on shore and then came towards the subjects in the water. The male subject handed queen conch shells to the one juvenile and proceeded to leave the area in front of the juveniles, thus separating himself from the queen conch. Once the juvenile with the queen conch was on shore, Officer Garrison intercepted the male subject while Officer Munkelt seized the queen conch from the juveniles. A total of three, live queen conch were recovered. The male subject was cited and the queen conch were returned to the resource alive.

Officer J. Lopez was on vehicle patrol at Stock Island Lobster Company on Stock Island when he observed a male fishing from a dock catch a snapper, remove the hook and walk away when he noticed the officer. Officer Lopez made contact with the fisherman and asked him where the snapper was that he had just caught. He replied that "he didn't know." Officer Lopez found the snapper underneath a truck inside a plastic bag and asked the man if he had any more fish. He answered that he did and finally showed the officer the rest of his catch which was hidden in a nearby lobster trap. Inside the lobster trap was a bag with 9 mangrove snapper. The man was charged with 2 misdemeanor citations for possession of undersized and over the limit of snapper.

Officers Wagner and Rubenstein were on foot patrol at a Marathon boat ramp checking incoming boats and fishermen at the dock. Officer Wagner noticed an individual with a bucket walk away from the area he was about to check and followed him. The individual set the bucket on the other side of his vehicle and walked back towards the dock. Officer Wagner asked if the bucket he just set down belonged to him and he replied that it did. The bucket contained three undersized mangrove snapper, two undersized lane snapper, and two undersized schoolmaster snapper. He was issued three criminal citations.

Officer Baumgartner was at Indian Key Fill near Islamorada when she noticed individuals in the water under the bridge with a spear gun sitting on shore. She then walked to the other side of the bridge where she saw a dive flag through the bushes.

Officer Baumgartner observed from cover and followed them as they made their way back under the bridge. Eventually, she made contact with the individuals while they were still in the water and one individual had a spear gun in his hand. At the conclusion of the resource inspection, one individual was cited for spearfishing in the Upper Keys and not having a valid fishing license. The diver was transported by Officer Hein to Plantation Key Jail on an active warrant for grand theft out of Miami.

Officer Mattson was on water patrol and observed two snorkelers harvesting spiny lobster in Lignumvitae State Park. When asked if they had caught anything, one of the men stated that his catch was on his boat. Officer Mattson accompanied them back to their boat and one of the men admitted to doing all the harvesting. Inside the live well was an undersized lobster and a Bahama starfish. The starfish was illegal and the man said that he was going to take a picture and return it to the water. Officer Mattson cited the man for the starfish violation and a warning for the undersized lobster.

Officer Mattson was on water patrol when he observed an unnumbered, unregistered vessel towing a kayak towards the Indian Key Fill Boat Ramp. The officer advised the reason for the stop and asked if they had caught any fish. The men replied that they had caught fish and an inspection of the cooler revealed 21 mangrove snapper, exceeding their bag limit of 5 per person. Officer Mattson cited one of the men who admitted to catching over his limit of snapper. He was also cited for operating an unnumbered, unregistered vessel on state waters.

RESCUES

COLLIER

Officer Osorio-Borja was patrolling in state waters adjacent to Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park when he observed a young female on a hydro bike trying to get back to the Pass. The officer approached the female and asked if she needed assistance. She indicated that she did because the steering mechanism had broken. The officer safely approached the hydro bike with his patrol vessel, helped the female on board his vessel, and towed the hydro bike back to Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Kleis received a complaint regarding multiple individuals violating the newly formed Second Chance Critical Wildlife Area (CWA). Officer Kleis responded to the location and observed multiple boats in the area, as well as people walking within the CWA. Officer Kleis issued warnings to the violators and educated them on the importance of CWAs.