

FWC
Division of Law Enforcement



Weekly Report
August 19 through August 25, 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

FWC received a Wildlife Alert complaint from a citizen that saw a suspect pick up a gopher tortoise, place it in his truck, and drive away. A short time later, the truck was located and stopped by the Blountstown Police. FWC Officer Baber took over the investigation and charged the suspect with illegal possession of a gopher tortoise.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Officers Allgood, Cushing, Roberson, Manning, Miller and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Pensacola worked commercial shrimp boats in Pensacola Bay for several nights. Multiple net and safety violations were documented with warnings and citations. A total of four oversized shrimp nets were seized. One of the nets measured more than 900 square feet, almost twice the legal size.

Officers Allgood, Cushing and McHenry worked offshore onboard the *FinCat*. During an inspection of a commercial reef fish vessel, Officer Allgood discovered a grossly undersized greater amberjack in an ice box. One of the crew members stated that he was going to use it for bait. A federal citation was issued for the violation. While approaching a different vessel during the patrol, the FWC crew noticed a red snapper floating in the water behind it. During the inspection, Officer Allgood located several undersized Spanish mackerel. While alongside, the FWC crew members observed several large red snapper scales on the transom of the vessel. After speaking with the subjects on board, Officer Allgood was directed to a bag of red snapper fillets. Federal citations were issued for the violations.

While approaching a recreational vessel, the *FinCat* crew observed one subject on board move to the rear of the vessel and throw something out of the vessel. The FWC crew observed a one-gallon bag full of fish fillets floating on the water. During the subsequent vessel inspection, Officers Allgood and McHenry discovered several more bags of fillets including gray triggerfish, greater amberjack, red snapper and another 50-pound greater amberjack in whole condition. Federal citations were issued for the violations.

Lieutenant Hahr was patrolling in the Perdido River Wildlife Management Area (WMA) when he observed a car pull into an area where nighttime access is prohibited. He made contact with the driver and observed signs of impairment. After field alcohol tasks were performed, he arrested the driver for driving under the influence (DUI). She was transported to the Escambia County Sheriff's Office where she provided a breath sample of .099 almost 2 ½ hours after the stop. She was booked for driving with a breath alcohol level of .08 or above.

JEFFERSON COUNTY

In August 2015, FWC Dispatch received a complaint about the looting of an archaeological site deep within the Aucilla WMA. Since that time, Officers Anderson, Brookes, Johnson, Wilcox, Menard, Reserve Officer Trussell, Investigator Louque, Lieutenant Wass de Czege, FWC Biologist Davis and Department of State Archaeologist Duggins have conducted surveillance on the site. During this investigation, four suspects were identified. On August 12, 2016, arrest warrants were obtained for the four suspects. Officers Anderson, Boutwell, Travis, Bell, Investigator Louque, and Lieutenant Wass de Czege located and arrested three of the four suspects that day. The fourth suspect turned himself in the following day.

On the same weekend of that arrest, Investigator Louque, Officers Boutwell and Mallow, and Lieutenant Wass de Czege were working in a different area of the Aucilla WMA when they caught two men actively digging with shovels on another archaeological site. The two men were booked into the Jefferson County Jail on felony charges for illegal excavation of an archaeological site. One subject was also charged for misdemeanor possession of less than 20 grams of cannabis.

Officers Boutwell, Nelson and Robb were on vessel patrol in the area of the St. Marks Lighthouse when they saw three individuals on a vessel working a spotlight. They watched the vessel for approximately 30 minutes when they heard a shot. After the vessel passed by their location, they conducted a vessel stop to conduct a resource inspection. There were two alligators on the boat. One of them had a CITES tag in its tail and the other did not. Upon further inspection, it became apparent that the CITES tag that was in the gator's tail was for a lake in Leon County. The two adults were each charged with failing to tag an alligator and using a tag from a different Alligator Management Unit. Both charges are misdemeanors. The alligator and tags were seized as evidence.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Arnette located a large amount of household garbage that had been dumped along the Yellow River. An inspection of the contents of the garbage revealed the name and address of a suspect. The suspect was later questioned and admitted to dumping the garbage. The garbage has been cleaned up and the subject was cited for littering.

Officer Arnette observed a trap at a gopher tortoise burrow that was positioned to capture the tortoise. He later determined the property which contained the burrow was in the process of being cleared due to construction. A permit had not been issued for the removal of the gopher tortoise which is required when they are present where property will be developed. A subject with a construction company was later identified as the one who set the trap and was charged with the violation.

Officer Corbin was on vessel patrol conducting state fisheries and saltwater license inspections at the Marler Bridge. He observed an anchored boat with three individuals

actively fishing and pulled his patrol vessel alongside to conduct a fisheries inspection. The operator initially indicated they only had pinfish on board, but the inspection revealed an undersized red snapper on board. The season for red snapper is closed. The operator acknowledged that he knew the fish was a red snapper and was cited with a notice to appear citation for possession of red snapper during closed season and for no saltwater fishing license.

Officers Pifer and Corbin were on vessel patrol conducting state fisheries and saltwater license inspections in the East Pass/Marler Bridge, and observed a vessel anchored near the Marler Bridge. The officers noticed that an individual on the vessel moved quickly to the back stern of the vessel and retrieved a stringer from the water that had a large fish on it. The officers quickly headed over to the vessel and conducted a fisheries inspection. They observed the individual trying to revive an oversized red drum, but was unsuccessful. Officer Corbin cited the individual with a notice to appear citation.

Officers Pifer and Corbin observed two individuals actively snorkeling with spear guns on the east side under the Marler Bridge. The snorkelers were not displaying a diver down device. Marler Bridge serves as a fishing bridge. A fisheries inspection revealed the two individuals had speared mullet and gray snapper. Both individuals were cited and given notice to appear citations for spearfishing within 100 yards of a bridge where fishing is legally permitted and issued written warnings for not having a diver down device.

Officers Pifer and Corbin were on vessel patrol conducting state fisheries and saltwater license inspections near the Rocky Bayou Bridge. The officers observed two individuals fishing from the shoreline under the bridge. Officer Corbin was taken to the shoreline and exited the patrol vessel. A fisheries inspection revealed an undersized red drum. One individual accepted responsibility for harvesting the undersized red drum and was cited and issued a notice to appear citation.

RESCUES

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officers Molnar and Jarvis responded to a single vessel boating accident in the Santa Rosa Sound. The operator was backing a 15-foot vessel (skiff) out of a slip and struck a piling with the stern. The vessel started taking on water and eventually capsized. While interviewing the operator, Officer Molnar noticed he was showing multiple signs of impairment. Once the boating accident investigation was completed, Officer Molnar transitioned into a criminal BUI investigation. After field alcohol tasks were concluded, Officer Molnar arrested the subject for BUI. He was booked into the Okaloosa County Jail for BUI with normal faculties impaired. He was also issued a citation for refusal to submit to a breath sample and failure to maintain proper navigational lookout.

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officers Jones, Roberson, Barnard, Rockwell and Trueblood and the USCG responded to a missing boater in the Intracoastal Waterway near the Navarre Causeway. It was reported by fire rescue that two people were on board a small sailing boat when one of them fell overboard. Rescue units worked through the night searching for the missing person. The following morning the missing person was found alive and well at a family member's residence. The investigation is ongoing.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officers Ramos and Lewis taught the laws portion of the Hunter Safety Course at Avalon Middle School and Jay High School. As hunting season nears, FWC reminds hunters that anyone over the age of 16 and born on or after June 1, 1975, is required to complete the Hunter Safety Course unless using the Hunter Safety Mentoring Exemption and hunting under the supervision of a qualified hunter.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CASES

CITRUS COUNTY

Officer Suttles was on water patrol in Crystal Bay out of Crystal River when he patrolled the scallop grounds conducting boating safety and dive flag enforcement. He observed a vessel operating on plane near a dive vessel with divers in the water. The dive vessel was displaying a legal diver down device. Officer Suttles verified the distance to be less than 300 feet between the two vessels and initiated a vessel stop. Officer Suttles made contact with the operator and issued a citation for reckless operation.

Officer Seiler was on water patrol in Crystal River when he observed a vessel with fishing rods displayed and stopped the vessel to conduct a boating safety and fisheries inspection. Upon completion of the inspection, it was found that the operator was in possession of an undersized gag grouper. The operator was cited for the undersized gag grouper and issued written warning for a boating safety violation.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Officers McDonald and Yates were on land patrol in the Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD) Gar Pond Tract and observed two subjects removing palmetto berries from the property. The vehicle belonging to the subjects was located on adjacent land that is private property. Both subjects were cited for illegally removing palmetto berries and for trespassing.

Officer McDonald was on land patrol on the SRWMD Gar Pond Tract when he heard an ATV coming in his direction. He could see that there were two individuals on the ATV with three large garbage cans in the back bed of the vehicle. Officer McDonald observed the two individuals park and begin harvesting palmetto berries. Citations were issued for illegally removing palmetto berries from and operating an ATV on state lands.

Officer McDonald was on water patrol with two assistant state attorneys riding along with him for the day. While at the mouth of the Itchetucknee and Santa Fe Rivers, they heard a loud disturbance coming from a small river vessel. He watched as an occupant of the vessel began cursing very loudly and threatening to fight other people in the area. Officer McDonald conducted a stop on the vessel in an attempt to resolve the conflict and deescalate the situation. The subject was very intoxicated and was threatening all the occupants of the vessel. After having the operator put the vessel to shore, the man was taken into custody for failure to obey lawful commands of an FWC officer and for continuing to threaten the people he was with. The subject was arrested for public intoxication, disorderly intoxication and resisting without violence. Both assistant state attorneys provided detailed written statements as witnesses to the incident. The subject was booked into the Suwannee County Jail.

DUVAL COUNTY

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) contacted Environmental Investigator Terrones for assistance at a Jacksonville water services business. The complaint came in after a citizen drove through a puddle in front of the business and upon exiting his vehicle noticed liquid on his leg and felt a burning sensation. The citizen contacted the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and Fire Department (JFRD) which found approximately 20 chemical containers ranging in size from 1 to 55 gallons, in poor condition, located in a roll-off dumpster. After interviewing the employees at a nearby business, two individuals admitted to placing the chemical containers in the roll-off dumpster which was not equipped to handle leaking liquid containers. Subsequent lab testing of one of the chemicals revealed it to have a pH reading of 1.2. Anything below a pH of 2.0 is classified as hazardous due to its corrosive characteristic. Arrest warrants were obtained for the two employees who improperly disposed of the containers.

LAFAYETTE COUNTY

Officer Ransom was on land patrol in Lafayette Blue Springs State Park when he observed a subject walking through the parking area holding two alcoholic beverages. He observed the subject get into a vehicle with several other individuals and, once inside the vehicle, the subject and the driver discarded trash from the vehicle onto the ground and then began driving away. Officer Ransom stopped the vehicle to address the littering violation. A warrants check of the passenger revealed an out-of-county warrant. The warrant was confirmed and the subject was arrested and transported to the Lafayette County Jail. A citation was given for having an open container in the vehicle and warnings were issued for littering.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

MADISON COUNTY

Officer Ransom taught a boating enforcement class for the Madison County Sheriff's Office. He was able to answer many questions regarding the new boating regulations and boating safety stickers. Officer Ransom provided many references for the deputies to use as a guide and assisted them in their enforcement efforts.

NORTHEAST REGION

CASES

BREVARD COUNTY

Officer Hadwin, while conducting surveillance at night, observed a vessel returning to Leroy Wright Boat Ramp. Officer Hadwin could see equipment on the vessel that is commonly used while hunting alligators and had checked the subject the night before while alligator hunting. Officer Hadwin approached and conducted a resource inspection of the hunter and his vessel and found the subject to be in possession of an approximately seven-foot alligator that was not tagged with a CITES tag. Officer Hadwin issued the hunter a citation for failure to immediately tag a harvested alligator.

Officers Mendelson, Hadwin, Hallsten and Investigator Loeffler were working the St. Johns River south of SR 50 on airboat patrol during the alligator hunt. Investigator Loeffler and Officer Mendelson located a vessel that was shining a spotlight on the river bank. The spotlight was being shined in a manner capable of disclosing the presence of deer. Officer Mendelson and Investigator Loeffler observed one subject holding a rifle while the other subject was working a spotlight on land. The subjects were issued citations for attempting to take deer at night with gun and light.

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

An Indian River County man arrested by Officer Kearney earlier this summer for BUI pled guilty in court. The man, whose blood alcohol level was .212, was assessed \$2,600 in fines and associated court costs.

PUTNAM COUNTY

Officer Guirate was on patrol in Etoniah State Forest when he observed four subjects unlawfully picking palmetto berries. After completing his investigation, all four subjects were charged with taking palmetto berries from state property without a permit.

Officer Florence responded to Dunn's Creek State Park in reference to a subject picking palmetto berries unlawfully. Upon completing his investigation, one subject was charged with unlawful removal of plant life from a state park.

VOLUSIA COUNTY

A team of port investigators and K-9s participated in a detail inspecting fish and wildlife shipments coming to and from the central Florida area in conjunction with the National Reptiles Breeders Expo. A total of 60 shipments were inspected at commercial shipping companies and airlines. Compliance was very high with very few violations encountered.

Captive Wildlife Investigator McDaniel and Officer Edson responded to a property in the Deleon Springs area to assist the Sheriff's Office with a death investigation. During the course of their investigation, multiple unpermitted captive wildlife were discovered. The wildlife included four alligators, a pygmy rattlesnake, two common boas, a Northeastern Pine Snake, blue tongue skinks, various turtles and tortoises, and several fish believed to be piranha. Investigator McDaniel and Officer Edson coordinated the removal and placement of the fish and wildlife.

Officer West stopped a power boat operated by an adult male in the area north of Ponce Deleon Inlet in the Halifax River. The operator showed signs of impairment and following an investigation, he was arrested for BUI and transported to the Volusia County Jail.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CASES

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Officer Stanley and Lieutenant Ruggiero responded to the Webb WMA in regards to a man picking palmetto berries. The man was located and they determined he had picked a small amount of berries. The man did not have a valid day-use or WMA permit. He was educated on the laws pertaining to picking berries in a WMA and cited appropriately. Lieutenant Ruggiero then saw another vehicle entering the WMA without a day-use permit displayed. He stopped the vehicle and determined the four occupants did not have a day-use or WMA permit. Lieutenant Ruggiero observed several buckets in the back of the vehicle which indicated they were going to pick palmetto berries and the driver admitted they were going to pick berries. When asked for a driver license, the driver admitted he never had a valid driver license. He was issued a notice to appear for driving without a valid driver license and an infraction for no day-use permit.

HIGHLANDS COUNTY

Officer Smith received a call from dispatch regarding an individual capturing and transporting a gopher tortoise from the roadway in Sebring. After making contact with the complainant, Officer Smith was able to get a vehicle description and Florida tag number, and located the registered owner's address in Sebring. Officer Smith located a vehicle fitting the description and displaying the given Florida tag number. After making contact with the owner of the residence, he asked for the location of the gopher tortoise. The owner showed Officer Smith an enclosed, fenced-in area approximately 70 by 60 yards behind his residence, where he was keeping gopher tortoises. Officer Alvis and Investigator Holcomb arrived to help count approximately 36 gopher tortoise active burrows and visually counted 16 gopher tortoises located within the burrows. FWC biologists and Officer Smith returned to the property and seized 26 gopher tortoises. The investigation is ongoing.

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Officers Caldwell and Ludtke were on water patrol when they observed four subjects throwing a cast net off the Courtney Campbell Causeway. Officer Ludtke conducted a shore inspection and the subjects were found to have three coolers full of fish. Inside were multiple illegal fish of different species. In total, the officers found them to be in possession of 3 undersized and out-of-season snook, an undersized redfish, 6 undersized sheepshead, and an undersized mangrove snapper. They had no fishing rods and were only using a cast net, an illegal method to harvest game fish. Each individual was charged with the multiple violations.

LEE COUNTY

Lieutenant Ruggiero was flagged down by a motorist who said he observed a white Mercury swerving along the road and crashing into a curb, blowing out two of its tires. Lieutenant Ruggiero went to the location and observed the white Mercury, another car, a male and two females. He identified the subjects and determined the owner of the Mercury had a history of drug violations. Lieutenant Ruggiero asked if he could search the vehicle but the man refused. A K-9 was requested to respond to the scene and arrived shortly thereafter. The K-9 alerted to drugs in the vehicle and several items of drug paraphernalia including a spoon, needles, and prescription medications. The female owner of the second vehicle gave permission to search her vehicle and a bag of marijuana was located in the driver's side. The case was turned over to the Sheriff's Office for appropriate arrests and to investigate the traffic accident.

K-9 Officer Collazo received information that there was a black Jeep vehicle inside the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW) Closed Area, and individual(s) were discharging firearm(s) somewhere in the area. Officer Collazo and Lieutenant Andriano immediately responded to the area to investigate. Upon their arrival, they observed several spent 12-gauge shotgun shell casings scattered on the dirt road. Officer Collazo continued to follow fresh tire tracks observed near the shell casings, which eventually led him to where the Jeep was stuck on the dirt roadway. Shortly thereafter, the male driver of the vehicle and his female passenger were located and

detained for questioning. The driver stated that he used to shoot guns in this area with his friends and didn't see the closed area signs. The subject also stated that he had been "doing doughnuts" on the dirt road when he lost control of the Jeep and became stuck. Both subjects were cited for being in a closed water management area, littering on public lands and causing damage to public lands by a vehicle.

Lieutenant Ruggiero responded to a school where a curious raccoon had gotten his head stuck in a plastic peanut butter jar. When he arrived on scene, the raccoon was about 30 feet up inside an oak tree. Lieutenant Ruggiero waited in hopes of the raccoon coming down, but it appeared it was up there for the day. After a while, he called the local fire department to see if they could assist with a ladder. Just before the fire department arrived, the raccoon wobbled slowly down the oak tree and walked towards Lieutenant Ruggiero. When the raccoon observed Lieutenant Ruggiero, he ran back towards the oak tree. After attempting to snare the raccoon with a catch pole, Lieutenant Ruggiero caught the raccoon as it started to run up the tree. The fire department arrived on scene and with the use of some thick gloves and a towel, the plastic bottle was removed from the raccoon's head. It was then released back into the wild unharmed.

POLK COUNTY

Officer Tyler was working the opening phase of the statewide alligator season at Lake Hancock. As she watched a vessel through binoculars, she observed a subject on board using what appeared to be a soda can as a pipe. She made contact with the subjects and conducted a resource inspection. During the resource inspection, Officer Tyler asked the subject if he was in possession of methamphetamine. The subject picked up a soda can, and a small bag of cannabis and stated, "No, I was just using this to smoke weed." Officer Tyler issued the subject a notice to appear for possession of less than 20 grams of cannabis and drug paraphernalia.

Officers Alvis and Creel were heading home after working a detail for the opening phase of alligator season when a vehicle passed them at a high rate of speed. The vehicle continued to operate in a careless manner and the officers conducted a traffic stop. While talking with the operator, they detected the strong smell of cannabis emanating from inside the vehicle. In plain view, Officer Alvis saw a plastic bag containing what appeared to be cannabis in the passenger-side floorboard. Following a search of the passenger side of the vehicle, the officers discovered a stolen handgun. The subject was subsequently arrested for possession of less than 20 grams of cannabis and possession of a stolen firearm.

Lieutenant Futch and Officer Sweat were working the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes during the opening phase of alligator season when they observed an airboat operating with no navigation lights. They followed the vessel to the boat ramp and conducted a vessel safety inspection. During the inspection, the operator displayed several signs of impairment. Following field sobriety tasks, the operator was arrested for BUI and

transported to the Polk County Jail. While at the jail, the subject submitted to a breath test that yielded a .143g/210l and .141g/210l blood alcohol.

Officer Sweat was working the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes for alligator season when he saw an airboat operating at night with no navigation lights. Officer Sweat conducted a vessel stop to conduct a resource inspection. During the stop, the operator showed several signs of impairment. Officer Sweat arrested the subject for BUI and the subject later refused to submit to a lawful test of his breath.

Officer Adams located a subject removing palmetto stalks loaded with berries from the Hesperides Section of the Lake Wales Ridge State Forest. He was cited for removing the berries from state lands and entering the forest through an undesignated entry point.

Officer Adams located a subject trespassing on the Tiger Creek Preserve section of the Nature Conservancy. The subject admitted he entered the property in order to harvest palmetto berries. He was in possession of a feedbag containing palmetto stalks and berries. Officer Adams contacted the property managers who met with him on the scene. The subject was verbally warned for harvesting the berries and received a notice to appear for trespass. A small amount of berries was recovered and taken by the property managers to be planted on conservancy property.

Officer Adams located two subjects removing palmetto stalks and berries from the Hesperides section of the Lake Wales Ridge State Forest. Both subjects received citations.

While assisting with a Polk County Sheriff's Dive team call out, Lieutenant Brooks observed a vessel operator power loading a vessel at the ramp. Lieutenant Brooks and Deputy Farrell conducted a boating safety inspection and observed signs of impairment. Seated sobriety tasks were performed and the operator was arrested for BUI. Polk County Sheriff's deputies had just been instructed in the seated sobriety task earlier in the week by Lieutenant Brooks and Investigator Cooke.

RESCUES

SARASOTA COUNTY

Officers Stasko, Polaszek, Sehl and Lieutenant Gerkin responded to a group of lost hikers on the Deer Prairie Reserve. A family of five were hiking on the Reserve and became disoriented and lost. They were able to make contact with Sarasota County's 911 center via cell phone but due to excessive rain for the last week, the trails on the reserve were extremely muddy and under water. The officers were able to make it to the general area of the hikers and the Sarasota Sheriff's helicopter was able to direct the officers in their direction. Officers Stasko and Polaszek had to blaze their own trail to make contact and the hikers were then transported to their vehicle. One of the juvenile hikers had to be transported to Englewood Hospital for heat-related illness.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

LEE COUNTY

Officers Spoede, Price, Bell and Captain Carpenter assisted marine mammal biologists from the Florida Wildlife Research Institute with the rescue of an injured manatee in Estero Bay. The female manatee was suffering from injuries sustained in a boat strike. She was rescued and brought to the Lowry Park Zoo for rehabilitation.

Officers Spoede, Rogers, Furbay and Lieutenant Barrett assisted marine mammal biologists from the Florida Wildlife Research Institute with the rescue of an injured manatee in Estero Bay. The male manatee was suffering from injuries sustained in a boat strike. He was rescued and brought to the Lowry Park Zoo for rehabilitation.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

HIGHLANDS COUNTY

Officer Smith attended an outreach in celebration of Saunders Veterinarian Hospital's 35th Anniversary. Saunders Veterinarian Hospital services and cares for our beloved FWC K-9 Donzi. Officer Smith was the highlight of the celebration by bringing an airboat and a live alligator for display.

LEE COUNTY

Officers Spoede, Rogers and Lieutenant Barrett participated in an outreach event, along with staff from Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserve and manatee biologists from Florida Wildlife Research Institute. The officers spent Saturday morning at Punta Rassa Boat Ramp and Sunday morning at Carl Johnson Boat Ramp. The officers spoke with boaters about the dangers of boat strikes to manatees, and the importance of protecting seagrass in the area's aquatic preserves. One of the boat operators who the biologists later spoke with reported an injured manatee in Estero Bay, leading to a successful rescue. The officers also conducted approximately 70 boating safety inspections, and found about 50 of those in compliance with safety equipment carriage requirements.

SOUTH A REGION

CASES

BROWARD COUNTY

During the opening weekend of alligator hunting season, Lieutenant McDonald was patrolling the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Stormwater Treatment Area (STA) 3/4. Lieutenant McDonald observed a vehicle on a levee on the west side of the STA past where vehicles are allowed. As Lieutenant McDonald

approached the vehicle, she observed three subjects in the Holey Land WMA canal with a small vessel and an alligator. One of the subjects then shot the alligator with a bang stick. The subject that shot the alligator only had a permit for STA 3/4. He was issued a misdemeanor citation for taking the alligator outside of his permitted area.

MARTIN COUNTY

While patrolling a county boat ramp, Officer Morrow observed a truck and trailer backing down the ramp at an unusually high rate of speed. Noting this, the officer approached the vehicle on foot and began speaking with the driver. The officer observed the subject was slurring his words and refusing to make eye contact. FWC Officer Cobo, FHP troopers and Martin County Sheriff's Office deputies arrived to assist. The subject was then asked to participate in field sobriety tasks and was subsequently arrested for DUI. The subject continued to be uncooperative and combative and fled from the officers on foot. The subject was apprehended and transferred to the Martin County Jail and charged with DUI, two counts of resisting arrest without violence and one count of felony escape.

Officer Morrow made contact with a vessel that had just returned from fishing in the Intracoastal Waterway. Upon conducting the inspection, the officer located a 10-inch mutton snapper. Florida law requires mutton snapper to be 16 inches for recreational harvest in Florida Atlantic water. The illegal fish was seized and the subject was issued a misdemeanor citation for possession of undersized mutton snapper.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Moss, Schroer and Rogers conducted water patrol in state and federal waters east of Palm Beach and Martin counties. They stopped a charter fishing vessel offshore that was engaged in fishing. The owner/operator of the boat was unable to produce any valid federal permits or fishing licenses for the vessel. The subject stated he was conducting a paid charter, but was only able to produce an expired charter fishing license. On board his vessel were multiple snapper and a kingfish. When asked why he did not have a federal snapper grouper charter license, the captain advised that he did not need one. The captain was educated and issued an infraction and a warning for the violations. The following day, the officers conducted seven federal fisheries inspections ranging to 20 miles offshore. They stopped a vessel returning from the Bahamas and during the fisheries inspection, lobster were located "not in whole condition," one of which was undersized. Also found were fish fillets without the skin intact and conch, all of which were violations. The subjects on board were asked about the violations and they advised that they were not aware of the current laws. One criminal citation was issued along with multiple warnings for the violations. Before the day was over, one other vessel was stopped returning from the Bahamas with skinless fish fillets. They were educated and issued written warnings.

Officers Newman and Hankinson responded to reckless PWC operators near the Hilton Hotel at the Stub Canal Boat Ramp. Both officers issued verbal warnings and written warnings, as well as uniform boating citations.

ST. LUCIE COUNTY

Officer Payne was conducting resource inspections in Ft Pierce when a vessel, with fishing gear and three people on board, came to a local dock. During the inspection of a cooler, 13 of the 14 vermilion snapper on board were under the required 12-inch minimum size limit. Two undersized tripletail were also located. A subject on the vessel stated that he did not have a saltwater fishing license and was not fishing during the trip. This would mean that the two remaining fisherman on board the vessel were over the 5-fish daily bag limit for vermilion snapper. While talking with the captain of the vessel, he stated that he knew the tripletail were undersized, but did not know about the vermilion snapper. The two subjects were issued a citation for possession of undersized vermilion snapper and possession of undersized tripletail. They were also given a copy of the saltwater regulation book.

SOUTH B REGION

CASES

COLLIER COUNTY

While driving through the Picayune Strand State Forest, Officer Arbogast observed a vehicle returning from a non-designated trail without proof of paying the day-use fee. During the vehicle stop, it was discovered that all three occupants were never issued a driver license, including the driver. Officer Kleis arrived on the scene to assist with the investigation. During the investigation, the driver was showing several obvious signs of impairment and Officer Arbogast decided to perform field sobriety tasks on the driver. It was apparent that the driver was impaired and was subsequently placed under arrest for DUI as well as driving without a valid driver license. The driver was transported to the Collier County Jail. Citations were issued for driving off designated trails and not paying the appropriate day-use fee.

While on patrol at night in the Picayune Strand State Forest, Officers Lugg and White observed a swamp buggy driving very slowly down the roadway. The buggy was not registered and was not allowed to be on the roadway. The officers stopped the buggy and observed many signs of impairment from the driver and open beer cans in the vehicle. When asked to perform field sobriety tasks, the driver claimed that he had a hip replacement which prevented him from doing the walk and turn as well as the one leg stand. Therefore, the officers administered seated field sobriety tasks. The driver was arrested for DUI and supplied a breath alcohol sample of 0.138.

While on night-time water patrol, Officers Lugg and White observed a vessel with improperly installed navigation lights. When they stopped the vessel to address the violation, they observed that the operator showed many signs of impairment. The operator consented to perform field sobriety tasks and performed poorly. He was arrested for BUI, but refused to provide a breath alcohol sample.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

CASES

An officer was on patrol at Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park when he observed a subject catching lobster off of the park's sea wall. The officer made contact with the subject and discovered him to be in possession of nine lobsters, one of which was undersized. Though the subject had a valid lobster stamp, he did not possess a valid fishing license. The subject was cited for not having a fishing license, possession of over-the-bag limit of lobsters and possession of an undersized lobster.

MONROE COUNTY

CASES

Officer Hein was on water patrol, Oceanside of Islamorada, when he noticed a commercial crawfish vessel heading back to shore. He conducted a resource inspection on the vessel and found that the vessel was fishing commercially for snapper/grouper, not crawfish. The operator on board had all of the proper federal permitting as well as proper saltwater products licenses and endorsements to harvest snapper/grouper. At the conclusion of the resource inspection, Officer Hein determined that the commercial fisherman was in possession of a number of undersized yellowtail snapper. The fisherman was cited for possession of undersized yellowtail snapper, arrested and transported to a detention facility.

Officer Hein was on land patrol in the Upper Matecumbe area when he noticed a scuba diver sitting on rocks that were out of the water, with a bag of spiny lobster. Officer Hein conducted a resource inspection and determined that the man was in possession of undersized spiny lobster. The man was cited accordingly

Officer Hein was on water patrol offshore of Alligator Reef Lighthouse when he noticed a vessel heading towards land with multiple fishing rods displayed. He conducted a vessel stop to perform a resource inspection and during the inspection, all of the occupants bragged about being fishing charter captains at a nearby marina and explained that they were only fishing for tuna offshore. Officer Hein allowed one of the occupants to pull all of the catch out of a large cooler that was filled with bloody water and ice to the point that the contents of the cooler were hidden. The occupant pulled out multiple legal fish. After the officer boarded the vessel and searched the cooler, he found several other fish inside. At the conclusion of the resource inspection, one occupant was cited for possession of undersized dolphin.

Officer Hein was on water patrol near Lower Matecumbe when he noticed a bully-netting boat doing figure eights on a small grass flat. The boat displayed a commercial crawfish number, so he headed toward the vessel. Once the occupants on board the vessel noticed, they turned and began heading away from him at a high rate of speed. As Officer Hein got closer, he noticed one of the occupants was tossing spiny lobster off of the boat. The vessel finally stopped, and a resource inspection was conducted. When one of the occupants opened up the center console for registration documents, an out-of-season stone crab claw fell out of the hatch. The occupant quickly stepped on it with his foot in an attempt to conceal it. Officer Hein observed the behavior and again requested the vessel registration. The occupant made a sudden movement and shuffled the claw off the vessel into the water. The occupant was immediately arrested, and the second occupant arrested several minutes later. Another stone crab claw was located hidden in the center console. At the conclusion of the resource inspection, the operator of the vessel was charged with tampering with evidence, possession of out-of-season stone crab, possession of undersized lobster, possession of undersized lobster not in a recirculating live well while commercially harvesting, improper aerial display, and improper water display. The occupant was charged with tampering with evidence, possession of undersized lobster, possession of out-of-season stone crab, and possession of undersized lobster not in a recirculating live well while commercially harvesting. Lieutenants Haney and Lyne arrived on the scene at the docks for assistance. Lieutenant Haney noticed that the vessel also did not have a Hull Identification Number. At the conclusion of the encounter, the vessel was also seized for investigative purposes.