

FWC
Division of Law Enforcement



Weekly Report
September 2 through September 8, 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

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officers Pifer and Corbin were on vessel patrol conducting state fisheries inspections at the East Pass/Marler Bridge. The officers performed a fisheries inspection on a vessel returning from the Gulf of Mexico which revealed an undersized king mackerel. The vessel operator was cited and issued a notice to appear.

Officer Corbin assisted a Florida Highway Patrol trooper with a vehicle crash investigation. At some point during the trooper's investigation, the driver of the vehicle escaped from the trooper's vehicle while still handcuffed. Officer Bartlett came to the scene to assist in the search and attempt to apprehend the escaped felon. Just prior to midnight, Officers Corbin and Bartlett located the fleeing felon in a wooded area on the Eglin Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The driver had moved the handcuffs from his back to the front of his body, but the officers un-handcuffed and repositioned the cuff to the back. The driver again attempted to escape by trying to pull away and kicking at the officers. The driver was eventually placed in the prisoner cage in the back of the FWC patrol truck.

Officer Nichols was conducting off-road patrol on Roberts Pond Unit in the Eglin WMA and conducted a traffic stop on a white truck to verify the occupants had valid Eglin Recreation Permits. While making contact with the driver, Officer Nichols observed approximately 11 bags of harvested saw palmetto berries in the bed of the truck. He asked the occupants for their identification and Eglin Recreation Permits and they stated they did not have any permits and provided their identification. The harvest of saw palmetto berries season is closed. Officer Nichols requested Eglin Range Patrol to assist. Investigator Armstrong, Officers P. Rockwell and Maltais also arrived on scene to assist. Officer Nichols charged the occupants with no recreational permit and issued written warnings for possession or removal of saw palmetto berries from any WMA. Eglin Range Patrol issued trespass warnings to the occupants and escorted the vehicle out of the area.

Officer Pifer and Lieutenant Clark were on land patrol conducting a state/federal fisheries inspection of a commercial fishing vessel at a local wholesale dealer. The commercial vessel failed to land within the timeframe based on the vessel's landing notification per Code of Federal Regulations and was approximately 1 1/2 hours late. The fisheries inspection revealed the vessel operator failed to declare weight on all species under the Individual Fishing Quota Program (IFQ). The operator and crewman were run through the NCIC and FCIC, and the Tallahassee Regional Communication Center (TRCC) confirmed the operator had an active warrant for violation of probation. The operator was arrested and an Okaloosa County Sheriff's Deputy transported him to the Okaloosa County Jail.

Officers Bartlett and Pifer were on night vessel patrol in the Intracoastal Waterway/Santa Rosa Sound and observed a vessel not displaying the required navigational lights near Liza Jackson Park. During the subsequent vessel stop, the officers noticed the operator displayed slurred speech and appeared to be disoriented. He was unsteady on his feet and his eyes were watery and glassy. The field sobriety task performed by the operator showed indicators of impairment and the operator was arrested for BUI and transported to the Okaloosa County Jail. The operator refused to provide a sample of his breath. The operator was also cited for failure to display navigational lights.

Officers Pifer and Corbin were on vessel patrol conducting state fisheries and license inspections in the Destin Pass/Marler Bridge area, and observed a vessel returning from the Gulf of Mexico displaying rods and reels. The officers stopped the vessel and conducted a fisheries inspection. The inspection revealed there were four undersized greater amberjack on board. The operator and a passenger were cited and given notice to appear citations for possession of undersized/over the bag limit of greater amberjack.

Officers Jarvis and Maltais were on vessel patrol in the Destin Pass when they observed two individuals climbing out of the water on the East Jetty. Both men were wearing snorkel gear and one of the men was in possession of a spear gun and three speared mangrove snapper. Officer Jarvis issued one of the subjects a citation for spear fishing within 100 feet of a jetty. Both men were issued warnings for no diver's down flag.

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officer Jones was conducting fisheries inspections at the Navarre Fishing Pier and issued citations to two different fishermen for being in possession of multiple undersized Spanish mackerel.

WALTON COUNTY

Officers Corbin, Pifer and Bartlett were on vessel patrol at Hogtown Bayou conducting boating safety and resource inspections. The officers observed an "at-risk" vessel anchored. The vessel displayed silt on the hull of the boat which indicates the vessel had sunk at some point. The officers determined the owner of the vessel. The owner purchased the boat in June 2016, and failed to transfer the title of the vessel into his name within 30 days, per Florida Statutes. The owner was cited and issued a notice to appear citation and a written warning for his vessel being at risk of becoming derelict.

RESCUES

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officers Petty, Roberson, Ramos and Cushing responded to Coldwater Creek to the report of an overdue tuber that missed the take out. Santa Rosa Fire Rescue found the missing tuber and returned her to safety.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officers Cushing and Jones responded to Okaloosa County to assist Officers Bartlett, Arnette and Pifer search for an overdue boater in Santa Rosa Sound alongside U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Destin. The person left from Liza Jackson Boat Ramp in the late afternoon on a personal watercraft headed to a family member's home on the water near Mary Esther. The family reported him missing sometime after dark. After several hours of searching, the missing person was located on shore and unharmed.

Officers Molnar, Bartlett, Nichols, Jarvis, Rockwell and Trueblood responded to a missing 14-year-old child with special needs. The child was last seen swimming near the East Jetty/East Pass. Officers Molnar, Rockwell and Trueblood responded by patrol vessels and Officers Bartlett, Nichols and Jarvis responded by land. Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) Marine Unit and the USCG responded in the search. Officer Molnar's vessel is equipped with a side-scan sonar. The officers were able to locate the child and the OCSO Dive Team recovered the teen.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Despite unfavorable conditions offshore, Officers Allgood, Cushing and Trueblood were able to patrol federal waters over the weekend. Crew members issued five federal citations to persons on board two different vessels. Violations included possession of greater amberjack and red snapper during the closed season.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING:

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officers J. Rockwell and Brooks participated in two different outreach events at Crestview and Baker High Schools. An FWC patrol vessel and ATV were displayed and the officers spoke about the core mission of the FWC Division of Law Enforcement and answered questions about their responsibilities as FWC officers. A reporter with the Crestview Bulletin covered the outreach event. A total of approximately 330 students were in attendance at both schools.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CASES

BAKER COUNTY

K-9 Officer Gill received information that two subjects had caught a fawn deer and held it down while they took group photographs of themselves with the deer. The subjects saw a doe deer with two spotted fawn, got out of their vehicle and proceeded to chasing one of the fawn deer and catching it. Photographs of the subjects posing with the deer were obtained revealing their identity. Lieutenant Huff and Officer Gill went to the residence where the subjects lived. While interviewing the subjects, they admitted to catching the deer for fun and taking pictures with it before releasing it. The officers explained the severity of exposing human scent on the fawn and that it constituted animal cruelty to the deer by chasing it down and pinning it against a fence. The subjects were charged with unlawful possession of wildlife and animal cruelty.

CLAY COUNTY

Officer Heath was on land patrol in the Ravines Conservation Area in Middleburg when Officer Heath smelled marijuana coming from a vehicle nearby with multiple subjects inside. Contact was made with the subjects in the vehicle and it was found that one of the occupants was in possession of a felony amount of marijuana and drug paraphernalia. Officer Heath contacted the Clay County Sheriff's Office for assistance. The subject in possession of the marijuana was arrested for possession of more than 20 grams of marijuana and drug paraphernalia and was transported to the Clay County Jail.

Officer Starling was contacted by a Clay County Deputy who observed two individuals in possession of an untagged alligator that was taken by illegal method. The deputy documented the interaction by taking photographs of the violation. After getting the photographs, Officer Starling conducted an investigation into the violation by locating the two alleged suspects and interviewing them. After concluding his investigation, the following charges are being direct filed with the state attorney's office: taking alligator by illegal method, taking and or possessing an alligator without a permit and not readily affixing an alligator tag to a caught alligator.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

K-9 Officer Gill was on water patrol on the Santa Fe River when he encountered a vessel with three subjects fishing. While performing a fisheries inspection on the vessel, Officer Gill found the fishermen to have an alligator snapping turtle inside their cooler. One of the subjects stated that the turtle was aggressive and that they would release the turtle if the officer liked. The alligator snapping turtle is listed as a species of special concern and is protected from unlawful possession. The operator of the vessel was issued a citation for possession of a protected species. The alligator snapping turtle was released back into the river.

Officer McDonald was traveling on US 41 in when he observed several individuals with large bags walking through Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD)

property. This area has many problems with people removing saw palmetto berries from the property. A short time later, Officer McDonald made contact with four subjects picking/removing saw palmetto berries. A warrant check was done of all subjects and one subject was wanted out of Marion County, Florida, on multiple felony warrants. Officer McDonald conducted a search on all the subjects and located 5 grams of marijuana in the sock of one subject. Officer McDonald issued the appropriate citations for removing saw palmetto berries from state lands, possession of cannabis less than 20 grams and arrested one subject on his warrants.

Officers Johnston and McDonald were on land patrol in the Ichetucknee Springs State Park when they observed a subject sitting in a car consuming an alcoholic beverage. The subject was also observed smoking from a marijuana joint. Upon contact, the officers discovered additional marijuana and a glass pipe. The subject was cited for consumption of alcohol in a state park and issued a notice to appear for possession of less than 20 grams of cannabis and drug paraphernalia.

Officer Johnston located two individuals removing saw palmetto berries from SRWMD land. Both subjects were issued notices to appear for removal of plant life from water management land.

Officer Johnston was sitting in a concealed location when he observed a subject unlawfully entering SRWMD land through a hole cut in a fence. The subject was also observed operating a motor vehicle in a closed area. A stop was conducted and the driver was found to be driving on a suspended driver's license with knowledge. He was arrested and booked into the Columbia County Jail without incident.

Officers Johnston, Cline and Investigator Bembry were on patrol in the Ichetucknee Springs State Park when they observed a subject smoking from a marijuana blunt. Upon contact, the officers discovered additional drug paraphernalia. A sworn complaint will be filed with the Department of Juvenile Justice for possession of less than 20 grams of cannabis and drug paraphernalia.

DUVAL COUNTY

Officer Lentz, who is a member of the FWC Resource Protection Unit, responded to a call in reference to a trap being set for an alligator in a retention pond near a doctor's office. Officer Lentz arrived on the scene and saw that a live chicken that was used for bait was released. He was about to reset the trap to make it look as if it was sprung when a white truck pulled into the parking lot with a long catch pole sticking out of the back of the truck. The driver drove right to the area where the trap was set, paused for a moment and went to leave the parking lot. Officer Lentz stopped the truck and questioned the driver as to his intentions. The driver responded that he was checking his gator trap. The driver was also operating his vehicle while his license was suspended. The driver was issued a citation for taking alligators or eggs or parts thereof and multiple other traffic violations.

LAFAYETTE COUNTY

Officer Davenport responded to a complaint in reference to gopher tortoise burrows being disturbed. Once at the scene, an individual was observed clearing land using heavy equipment. During an interview, the subject claimed he was clearing the property to build chicken houses. A gopher tortoise burrow was located nearby that was run over by a front end loader. Officer Davenport made contact with the Regional Gopher Tortoise Biologist to do an assessment on the property and it was determined three burrows were disturbed by the land clearing activity. Officer Davenport filed the appropriate charges with the state attorney's office.

MADISON COUNTY

Officer Ransom was on land patrol in Twin Rivers State Forest when he observed an ATV being operated within the forest. Officer Ransom conducted a stop to address the violation. A warrants check through FWC dispatch revealed an active warrant out of Georgia. After confirming the warrant and extradition, the subject was arrested and transported to the Madison County Jail.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

BAKER COUNTY

K-9 Officer Gill received a call for assistance from the Union County Sheriff's Office in reference to helping recover the weapon used in a homicide case. Officer Gill, along with K-9 Friar, responded to the area where they suspected that the murder weapon had been disposed of. Within minutes, K-9 Friar located the .22 caliber handgun used in the crime. The recovered evidence will be crucial in prosecuting the case.

NORTHEAST REGION

CASES

LAKE COUNTY

Officers Morrow and Scrambling responded to a vessel accident on Lake Harris. The operator had been ejected from the vessel and the vessel was operating in circles unmanned. Upon the officers' arrival, they made contact with the operator of the vessel who had already aboard a separate vessel. Officer Scrambling then boarded a Lake County Sheriff's Office vessel and with help from the deputy, they were able to throw a rope in front of the out-of-control vessel and stabilize the situation. The operator was unharmed.

ORANGE COUNTY

Officers McGuire and Cogburn were on park patrol at Wekiwa Springs State Park to investigate a possible burglary at Camp Big Fork. Park staff had informed the officers that an individual who was camping at Camp Big Fork had complained that while he was away from his campsite on a walk, his tent was destroyed and his Go-Pro camera had been stolen. When the officers arrived at Camp Big Fork, they made contact with the subject and found he had a felony warrant out of Seminole County for his arrest. The subject was arrested and an additional charge was added for marijuana under 20 grams found in his backpack.

PUTNAM COUNTY

While on patrol at the Palatka City Docks, Officer Guirate checked an individual's catch. An inspection revealed that the individual had nearly twice his legal limit of shrimp. Charges were filed on the subject for having over the bag limit of shrimp.

Officers Taylor and Dias were conducting fisheries inspections at the Palatka City Docks when they observed a subject in possession of two speckled perch caught by cast net. The subject was issued a notice to appear for possessing game fish caught by an illegal method.

SEMINOLE COUNTY

Officer Baine was on water patrol on the St. Johns River when he observed a subject on a personal watercraft (PWC) violating the slow speed zone near Lake Monroe Park. He made contact with the operator and immediately observed signs of impairment. Officer Baine conducted a boating safety inspection during which he determined it was unsafe for the operator to stay on the PWC due to his level of impairment. Officer Baine brought the operator on his vessel where the subject refused field sobriety tasks and was placed under arrest for BUI.

VOLUSIA COUNTY

Four separate saltwater fishing violations by adult males were documented this past week from enforcement efforts by Officers Meurlot, Bertolami and West. The misdemeanor violations ranged from the Port Orange area to the Ponce Inlet jetties and included possession of undersized snook, possession of over the bag limit of red drum and possession of undersized mangrove snapper.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CASES

HERNANDO COUNTY

While patrolling water management district lands, Officer Henry came in contact with two subjects violating district rules. While dealing with this violation, Officer Henry found both subjects to be in possession of methamphetamine. Both subjects were arrested and booked into the Hernando County Jail.

Officer Henry stopped a vehicle in Chassahowitzka WMA. With evidence of the subject picking saw palmetto berries, Officer Henry gained access to the vehicle and discovered a bag with approximately 30 pounds of berries hidden in the spare tire compartment of the vehicle. The subject was cited for the violation.

Officer Henry was contacted by an FWC biologist that they had a truck in the Chassahowitzka WMA with saw palmetto berries in the bed. When Officer Henry arrived, three subjects had exited the woods and had additional berries. All three subjects were cited for the violation.

LEE COUNTY

Officer Price, Investigator Ruggiero and Lieutenant Ruggiero responded to an alligator attack call. The victim said she had been bitten on the hand after reaching under her car to pick up something when she arrived at work early in the morning. Officer Price responded to the hospital to interview the woman who had noticeable puncture holes in the palm of her hand. During the initial interview, the woman said she didn't know what bit her. All three officers investigated the location of the incident to look for evidence of what may have happened. The officers located the woman's vehicle and found a bag of dog food in the passenger's seat. They followed a blood trail over to a wooded area where they located several raccoons, which had obviously lost all fear of humans. One of the raccoons walked right up to Officer Price and touched his boot. At the end of the blood trail, approximately 50 yards from the woman's vehicle, was the woman's bracelet which had broken off and was laying on the ground. There was water nearby and an alligator as well, but the alligator didn't show any signs of being fed. Based on the evidence, the officers believed the woman may have been feeding the raccoons when she got bit. They returned to the hospital to do a follow-up interview with the woman, to ask about the blood trail, bracelet and dog food. The woman was adamant that she got bit at her vehicle and kicked the animal off of her. However, she couldn't positively identify what bit her. She stated that after she got bit she washed her wound in a puddle of water in the parking lot. As she was washing her hand in the puddle, she heard a noise in the bushes and went over to investigate it. That's why her blood trail went over to that area. As for the bracelet, she said she had lost it a few days earlier but didn't bother looking for it because it was cheap. Based on the appearance of the wounds and the raccoons in the area, the investigation determined it was not an alligator attack but most likely a raccoon bite. The owner of the property hired a trapper and is having the raccoons removed.

PASCO COUNTY

Officer Beckman observed a vehicle parked off a designated roadway at Werner-Boyce Salt Springs State Park. From a concealed location, Officer Beckman waited for the vehicle operator to return. After the vehicle operator returned, the officer spoke with him and located drug paraphernalia and discovered damage to state park property. After the investigation, several citations and warnings were issued for various violations. The drug paraphernalia and several other items were seized as evidence.

Officer Williams was on land patrol at Nick's Park when he observed a vessel in route to the boat ramp. The vessel operator violated the idle speed zone and during a boating safety inspection, Officer Williams noticed signs of impairment. He then conducted field sobriety tasks on the operator, who performed poorly. While conducting the investigation, Officers Beckman and Pulaski arrived to assist. When Officer Williams placed the individual under arrest, he immediately became verbally abusive and combative. All three officers worked to restrain the individual for the safety of everyone involved. While he was combative, the individual kicked Officer Pulaski. After he calmed down, Officer Beckman transported the individual to the jail where he was booked for battery on a law enforcement officer, resisting arrest with violence and BUI.

PINELLAS COUNTY

While Officer Martinez was on land patrol in the area of Clearwater Beach, he performed a fisheries inspection on a man fishing from Pier 60. During the course of his inspection, he found that the man was in possession of an undersized cobia. The subject was cited criminally for possession of undersized cobia and will have to appear in court.

POLK COUNTY

Lieutenant Futch was on patrol when he observed a vehicle parked in an area bordering the Hilochee WMA-Osprey Unit. He saw fresh foot sign from one person and two dogs entering the WMA. He followed the sign for about half a mile when he observed a male subject calling out to two Cur dogs. When Lieutenant Futch made contact, the subject stated he wasn't hunting, he was just letting his dogs "stretch their legs." The subject was escorted out of the WMA and was issued a notice to appear for hunting hogs during closed season, and possessing hunting dogs in a WMA during closed season.

Officers Creel and Alvis were working alligator season and observed a vessel on Lake Parker displaying a light capable of disclosing the presence of alligators. They stopped the vessel and conducted a resource inspection. During the resource inspection, the officers discovered the permit holder was not authorized to hunt the area. The permit holder was issued a notice to appear for hunting out of area.

Officer Alvis was conducting fisheries inspections at popular fishing areas, made contact with a subject fishing alone and conducted a fisheries inspection. During the inspection, Officer Alvis noticed a small plastic box near the subject. Officer Alvis asked if he could look in the box and the subject indicated the box did not belong to him. Inside

the box, Officer Alvis discovered a glass drug pipe containing a powdery residue. The residue field-tested positive for methamphetamine. The subject was subsequently arrested for possession of methamphetamine and drug paraphernalia.

Officer Adams was on land patrol when an individual made contact with him and told him that he might have a warrant for his arrest. A warrants check was conducted and found no active warrant. Officer Adams contacted Polk County Sheriff's office for assistance. The subject kept asking Officer Adams if he could return to his vehicle to retrieve something. Polk County deputies arrived on scene and found the individual was a suspect in a felony battery on a person over sixty-five years of age, a case which they were actively working. Polk County deputies arrested the subject and during a search of the vehicle, a shotgun was found. The subject admitted that he had tried to commit suicide with the shotgun, but it had misfired.

Officer Creel was dispatched to a trespassing complaint and when he arrived, he found a vehicle on the side of the road near an open gate. Officer Alvis arrived and stayed with the vehicle as Officer Creel walked to look for signs of entry. Officer Creel found where the subject entered and found the subject in an orange grove. The subject was trespassing and stealing palmetto berries. Officer Creel issued the appropriate citations.

RESCUES

LEE COUNTY

Officer Salem delivered a swamp buggy to Pasco County to assist with the flooding from Tropical Storm Hermine. The buggy was very useful in transporting medical personnel into isolated locations where they were needed, and getting people out of their houses who were stranded because of the high waters.

PASCO COUNTY

Multiple FWC Officers were deployed to a request for assistance from Pasco County Emergency Management Personnel. FWC provided shallow draft vessels and a swamp buggy for possible swift water rescue missions. The officers conducted several reconnaissance missions checking water levels in impacted areas. They also provided assistance with several goodwill missions by bringing bottled water and other supplies to residents in flood zones.

POLK COUNTY

Polk County Sheriff's Office requested assistance from FWC with a missing person in the Peace River. The missing person had jumped into the swift, flooded river to save his sister and mother that had slipped from a dock. The sister and mother were able to make it back to safety, but the brother had disappeared from sight. The FWC deployed 4 vessels, 12 officers, and 1 aircraft to search the area with Polk County Sheriff's Office. Using side-scan sonar, FWC officers found the missing person in the river the next day,

and the Polk County Sheriff's dive team was able to recover him. The brother is being hailed as a hero for saving his mother and sister from the river.

SOUTH A REGION

CASES

BROWARD COUNTY

Investigator Teems and Officer Gamage conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle that had a driver and front-seat passenger inside in Mizell/Johnson State Park. As the officers approached the vehicle, they could observe the individuals changing seats inside the vehicle. After interviewing the occupants, both individuals received several citations and misdemeanors to include interference with an officer, possession of drugs and drug paraphernalia, knowingly driving on a suspended license and knowingly possessing a suspended driver license.

MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Carroll was on water patrol when he came in contact with a vessel that had just been pulled out of the water at Sheppard's Park. Officers Rogers and Morrow arrived to assist and the officers discovered a 33.5-inch snook and a 22-inch king mackerel on board the vessel. Officer Carroll cited the individual for being in possession of snook greater than 32 inches in length. Officer Morrow issued the subject a warning for being in possession of undersized king mackerel.

Officers Rogers and Morrow have been patrolling in late hours conducting fisheries inspections, mainly looking for snook violations. They checked multiple fishermen, and all snook that the officers encountered were in the 28-32-inch slot. The officers also issued written warnings for oversize redfish and undersize king fish.

OKEECHOBEE COUNTY

Investigators Turner and Lafoy were investigating a single set of tire tracks on private and CXS Railroad property, posted "No Trespassing." While investigating the tracks, several corn piles were observed that are commonly used to bait wildlife for hunting purposes. In addition, Investigator Turner heard four gunshots in the distance. Shortly after hearing the shots, they observed a white light and made contact with two individuals. After asking them if they had been hunting or dumping corn, they insisted they were attempting to pick berries. During a search of the subject vehicle, Investigator Turner located several .22 magnum bullets, spent .22 magnum shell casings, .243 rifle ammunition and a glass pipe containing methamphetamine. Investigators Turner and Lafoy then learned one of the two subjects threw a rifle into the bushes. While searching the bushes, Investigator Turner located a .22 lever -action Winchester rifle, which was chambered with a live round along with ten rounds in the magazine tube. Investigator

Lafoy located a bolt action .243 Remington rifle, which Investigator Turner recovered and cleared. The Remington rifle had a live round in the chamber and four rounds in the magazine. Both firearms were located within approximately fifteen feet of the subject's vehicle. One subject was placed under arrest for armed trespass, possession of a firearm by convicted felon, possession of methamphetamine and possession of drug paraphernalia. A notice to appear citation was issued to the second subject for trespass on property other than a structure or dwelling. Additional charges on the second subject are pending further investigation. The firearms, ammunition and narcotics were seized as evidence. The subject vehicle was impounded.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Mann was on foot patrol at Phil Foster fishing pier and observed some people fishing. Upon inspecting their catch, Officer Mann found six undersized lane snapper and one undersized yellowtail snapper. They were cited accordingly.

While on patrol at Boynton Inlet Park, Officer Mann observed two individuals spear fishing on the northwest side of the park without a dive flag. The two were given citations for no dive flag.

Officers Spanier, Hankinson, Newman, Mathews, Investigators Sierra, Luher and Booth, along with Lieutenants Russo and Fillip, worked a grounded, 60-foot vessel on the beach just south of Palm Beach Inlet. The operator was charged with BUI by the Palm Beach Police Department. The USCG and Sea Tow are attempting to remove the vessel from the beach.

ST. LUCIE COUNTY

Officer Fretwell was conducting resource inspections at the Fort Pierce south jetty when he came up to a man that was fishing. Making contact with the subject, he asked him if he had caught any fish. The subject replied that he had only caught a few, but they were small, and he had thrown them back. At the time of the interaction, the subject was reeling in a mutton snapper that appeared to be undersized. Officer Fretwell stated that the fish was too small and he agreed. An inspection of two buckets revealed no fish. As Officer Fretwell left the area, another subject approached and advised that his prior contact was hiding fish in a brown bag near the jetty rocks. Officer Fretwell began observing the subject from a distance and saw him retrieve a brown sack from in between the rocks near his fishing location. A subsequent inspection determined the subject to be in possession of two undersized mutton snapper. The subject was issued a citation for the violation.

Investigator Patterson was on patrol when he saw a vehicle traveling southbound in the northbound lane of US 1. The vehicle almost caused a head-on accident with the oncoming traffic before turning into a parking lot. Investigator Patterson initiated a stop on the vehicle. During the stop, he determined the operator was under the influence of an alcoholic beverage. The subject was not able to perform field sobriety tasks and was

arrested and transported to the St Lucie County Jail. At the jail, he submitted to a breath test which resulted .117 and .115. The subject was charged with DUI.

RESCUES

BROWARD COUNTY

Officer Brock and Lieutenant Laubenberger were on patrol in the Atlantic Ocean near Mizell/Johnson State Park. They heard a female voice on the marine vhf radio saying "Mayday- Mayday on the mooring balls in Dania Beach". The USCG immediately responded back to the caller asking location and nature of distress. She relayed that a person was in the water next to her boat and could not get back in. Officer Brock and Lieutenant Laubenberger responded to the area as they were only one mile away. They arrived on the scene and encountered an individual in the water who said he was swimming off the boat and the ladder broke when he went to get back on board. He was struggling to stay afloat and swim. The Officers, noticing the need for an immediate rescue, maneuvered their patrol vessel alongside the swimmer and were able to lift him onto their inflatable patrol vessel. He was winded and tired, but rested on the patrol vessel for a while. The officers did an assessment and asked the swimmer if he wanted medical attention. The swimmer stated he was now fine and did not want medical assistance and was successfully transferred back over onto his boat.

Officer Stower was flagged down by a vessel in the ICW in Port Everglades. A man who identified himself as the father of a teenager on board the vessel stated his son was in medical distress, with chest pain and other medical symptoms. Officer Stower took the teenager onto his vessel and proceeded quickly to the Harbor Town Marina in Dania Beach. Fire Rescue/EMS was notified and was dispatched to the marina. The teenager's mother was at the marina and immediately took the teenager into her car and stated she was headed to the local hospital. No other action was required by the officer.

Three FWC patrol vessels responded to the area offshore of Dania Beach in response to reports by the FAA of a small plane crashing into the water. Officers Brock, Vacin, Strader, Stower and Lieutenant Laubenberger arrived on scene in the area approximately two miles offshore of Dania Beach. Also on the scene were the Broward Sheriff's Office Marine Unit and Helicopter, the Ft. Lauderdale Police Marine Unit, the Hollywood Police Marine Unit, US Customs Marine Unit and C-130 plane, USCG, Ft. Lauderdale Fire Rescue vessel, Sea Tow and Towboat US. All vessels began search patterns. The Broward Sheriff's helicopter located the sunken plane in 20 feet of water and also spotted two bodies in the water one-half mile from the crash site. Investigator Teems responded to the USCG Station Ft. Lauderdale to interact with the command post. With all information gathered, the two bodies recovered in the water were confirmed to be from the small plane. There were no other people on board the plane. The NTSB and Broward Sheriff's Office have an ongoing investigation into the crash.

Officers Brock and Stower and Lieutenant Laubenberger, in their patrol vessels, responded 1.5 miles offshore of the Hillsboro Inlet in reference to a call of a capsized vessel and people in the water. Towboat US had already arrived on scene and had the two uninjured persons on their vessel. Towboat US was able to re-right the boat and tow it to George Alsdorf Boat Ramp in Pompano Beach. Officer Stower is conducting a boating accident investigation at this time.

MARTIN COUNTY

Officers Carroll, Cobo, and Lieutenant Harris responded to a call in Dupuis WEA in regards to individuals harvesting saw palmetto berries in the WEA. As the investigation proceeded, it was brought to the officers' attention that a 16-year-old individual was lost in the woods. Several officers, with assistance from the Martin County Sheriff's Office, conducted a search that lasted approximately 24 hours. Additional officers and aviation units from St. Lucie, Martin, and Palm Beach counties joined the search to locate the subject. The subject was located and turned over to his family in good health.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer McLendon was on road patrol when he witnessed a vehicle cross an intersection and impact a guardrail on the opposite side. The officer approached the vehicle and noticed the driver had sustained severe head trauma from striking the windshield. Officer McLendon provided first aid assistance until EMS arrived and transported the injured occupant to the nearest hospital.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Aswall assisted FWC biologists with recovering a deceased manatee from the Indian River in Stuart. Also, Officer Aswall worked with Park Rangers from St. Lucie Inlet State Park to remove a deceased whale.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

MARTIN COUNTY

Officer LeBlanc represented FWC at a disaster preparedness outreach event for the public. The event was hosted at the Lowes home improvement store in Jensen Beach.

SOUTH B REGION

CASES

COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Arbogast and Kleis were on state water patrol when they initiated a vessel stop on a pontoon boat that was occupied by six individuals. The operator indicated several signs of impairment and there were many empty alcohol containers on the vessel. Officer Arbogast performed field sobriety tasks on the operator and came to the conclusion that his normal faculties were impaired. He was placed under arrest for operating a vessel while impaired. A breath alcohol test was conducted and results were below 0.08. A Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) was able to conduct further evaluation of the individual. The DRE concluded that the operator was under the influence of a combination of alcohol and drugs. The operator was booked into the Collier County Jail.

Officer Kleis initiated a vessel stop in the Marco River to perform a boating safety inspection. During the inspection, Officer Kleis observed several possible indicators of impairment including slurred speech, red glassy eyes, and the odor of an alcoholic substance coming from the operator. After completing the vessel safety inspection, Officer Kleis asked the operator to perform field sobriety tasks. The operator consented to the field sobriety tasks. Upon completion of the tasks, the operator was placed under arrest for BUI and was transported to the Collier County Jail.

While on Joint Enforcement Federal water patrol, Officers Miller and Thurkettle conducted a fisheries inspection on a vessel with two subjects on board. Officer Thurkettle located 64 snapper on board the vessel, 24 over the bag limit. Federal citations were issued to both subjects.

Officers Barringer and White conducted a vessel stop in Dollar Bay for violations with a personal watercraft and performed a boating safety inspection. During the inspection, the officers observed several indicators of impairment including slurred speech, lack of coordination, and the odor of an alcoholic substance coming from the operator. After completing the vessel safety inspection, the officers asked the operator to perform field sobriety tasks. The operator consented to the field sobriety tasks and, upon completion, was placed under arrest for BUI. The operator was transported to the Collier County Jail.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

Three officers were on water patrol in Biscayne Bay when they stopped a vessel to conduct a fisheries inspection. Two of the four male subjects on board claimed to have been spearfishing and produced legally speared fish that were stored in a cooler. However, after further investigation, one of the officers discovered a bag of lobster tails and two, live queen conchs hidden in a compartment. The bag contained thirty-one lobster tails of which twenty-two were undersized and one was egg-bearing. One subject was arrested and taken to jail for multiple violations.

Officers were on patrol at Black Point Marina when they conducted a fisheries inspection of occupants on a vessel that had returned to the dock. The officers

discovered eight speared parrotfish and a speared, undersized hogfish on board. One subject was cited for the violations.

Officers were on water patrol east of Government Cut when they observed a subject fishing from an anchored vessel. The officers stopped to conduct a fisheries inspection and discovered that the subject was in possession of five undersized yellowtail snapper. He was cited for the violation and received a ticket and warnings for boating safety equipment infractions.

Officer Reynaud conducted a short surveillance on an individual selling lobster out of his car in a shopping center parking lot. He confronted the subject and conducted a fisheries inspection which revealed he was in possession of 33 lobster in two coolers and selling with no retail SPL. K-9 Officer Martir and K-9 Mag provided assistance in the search. The subject was cited accordingly.

MONROE COUNTY

Officers Schroth and LaRosa responded to a report of lobster poaching activity in progress in Little Angelfish Creek within the Card Sound Lobster Sanctuary. Resource Protection Officers Rodriguez and Diaz from Dade County also responded. The officers searched the many creeks in the area when they located a black, 17-foot vessel with two men on board. When the officers activated their emergency blue lights, the vessel did a 180-degree turn and fled. The officers quickly caught up to the vessel and once it was stopped, they observed one occupant go to the bow of the vessel and dump a large bucket of live lobster overboard into the water, disregarding the officers' orders to put the bucket down and not to discard the product. Officers boarded the suspect vessel and placed both of the subjects in handcuffs. Officer LaRosa immediately dove into the water with a mask and snorkel to try and retrieve the product and observed dozens of live lobsters in a large group on the sea floor. The subjects, who were brothers, were arrested and transported to Monroe County Jail and their vessel was seized for possible forfeiture due to their prior history of conservation violations. Both subjects were charged with Illegal to Molest, Harvest Spiny Lobster in Card Sound Lobster Sanctuary, and one was also charged with Interference with an FWC Officer.

Resource Protection Officers Garrison and Munkelt were at a boat ramp in Marathon observing people loading their boats. They noticed occupants next to a vessel devein lobster tails, put them in a cooler in their vehicle and then grab new tanks to return to the water in their boat. Officers Garrison and Munkelt alerted two nearby uniformed officers of the possible multi-tripping and left the scene. Officers Wagner and Rubenstein waited at the boat ramp hiding behind a wall until the vessel came back. The officers conducted a resource inspection on the vessel when it came back and found 14 lobster on board, 4 undersized. An inspection of their cooler in the vehicle found 11 more wrung lobster tails, 2 undersized. The total number of lobster put the four occupants over their bag limit. At the end of the inspection, two criminal citations were issued for over the bag limit and undersized lobster.

Officers Johnson, Richards and Foell were on JEA patrol aboard the 12-meter *Interceptor* in the Lower Keys. The officers observed a commercial spiny lobster vessel actively pulling lobster traps along the reef line west of Key West. Officers Foell and Richards boarded the vessel to conduct a fisheries inspection. During their inspection, the officers located a dead, egg-bearing spiny lobster inside a cooler. Upon further inspection of the lobster vessel, the officers located two more egg-bearing lobsters in the live-well, making a total of three on board. The commercial aerial display of the buoy color and number located on the roof of the vessel were under the legal minimum size. A criminal notice to appear citation was issued accordingly.

Officers Plussa, Foell, Munkelt, Steinmetz and Lieutenant Robison provided public safety support for the Monroe County Sheriff's Office on a search and recovery mission to find a missing person. Monroe County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) Patrol, Marine, and Investigations units, Federal Rangers with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, members of the Monroe County Fire Rescue all assisted in this wilderness man-tracking search of a portion of the Key Deer National Wildlife Refuge on Big Pine and No Name Keys. They concluded their efforts after an all-day effort of more than 28 hours in total, searching by boat, truck, foot, ATV and with the use of multiple K-9 units. The case has been turned over to MCSO's major crimes and special operations unit as a suspicious missing person incident. The investigation is ongoing.

Officer Plussa and Lieutenant Robison were conducting water patrol bayside of Marathon in conjunction with an ongoing derelict vessel operation. Officer Plussa had observed a subject on board a known abandoned and believed derelict vessel that had been the focus of a recent investigation. An inspection of the vessel and the motor skiff moored to it determined that both unnumbered vessels belonged to the subject and that he had failed to register or title both in his name, despite being warned for this same violation with these vessels in November 2011 and that he had taken no action on to rectify. The marine toilet on board the vessel below deck was later found to be unsecured in a way that sewage could be pumped overboard, and Officer Plussa observed the engine compartment flooding along with the lavatory. The subject stated that the vessel has no power and cannot sustain its own bilge pumps. Because of the substantial growth on the sides and hull of the vessel, the inoperable motor and bilge pump, the inoperable rudder, and the fact that it was in junked and abandoned condition, Officer Plussa charged him with operating and storing a derelict vessel on state waters. Due to the subject's substantial criminal history, including three prior failures to appear in Florida, he was arrested on a total of seven misdemeanor charges including derelict vessel, failure to transfer title on both vessels, failure to transfer registration on both vessels, operating an untitled vessel, buying an untitled vessel, operating a vessel with no HIN number, and eight civil boating citations relating to registration display, status, and the marine sanitation toilet device. He was booked into the Marathon Jail without incident. His vessel will be marked, seized and removed from state waters within 30 days if he fails to bring it into compliance.

Officer Baumgartner was driving southbound over the Channel Five Bridge in the Upper Keys when she noticed an individual in the water without a dive flag displayed. She

parked the patrol truck on the opposite side of the road and tucked herself in along the embankment to observe the individual. She was able to identify the individual actively engaged in spearfishing with a mangrove snapper and hogfish still attached to the shoot line. The individual was also in possession of another speared mangrove snapper and a Cubera snapper after checking his catch bag. The individual was charged accordingly.

Officer Plussa, Investigator Cox, and MCSO Deputy Hager completed the first two phases of their county-wide derelict vessel sting operation, focusing on Marathon's Boot Key Harbor and Key West Harbor. A total of 25 targeted vessels were inspected during this operation, with Investigator Cox marking 17 as derelict that now sit in que for removal from state waters. A total of 7 suspects were physically arrested with 6 arrest warrants pending for additional violators. A total of one felony and 52 misdemeanor charges were issued, and an additional 67 civil boating citations were issued by Officer Plussa during the high-volume sting portion of the operation. The detail was a major success due to use of the Intelligence Lead Policing Model recently adopted by coordinating officers. Lieutenant Robison routinely assisted in the operation, and Resource Protection Officers Munkelt and Garrison provided plain-clothes surveillance during the sting. Additional phases of this derelict vessel operation are being planned, focusing law enforcement efforts in different locations throughout the Florida Keys targeting derelict vessels.

Officers Munkelt and Garrison were on water patrol bayside of MM 60 when they observed 3 individuals in the water. Officer Munkelt operated the patrol vessel while Officer Garrison watched the individuals with stabilizing binoculars. While watching the 3 individuals, the officers could see that one was using an orange pole spear in the rocks next to shore. The officers then conducted a resource inspection on the individuals. Upon inspection, the individual with the pole spear was in possession of two spiny lobster and Officer Munkelt noticed a third spiny lobster in the water. Upon inspection of a bucket onshore, they found a fourth spiny lobster. Three of the lobster were undersized and three showed signs of being speared. After reading Miranda, the individual with the pole spear admitted to harvesting the lobster. The individual was placed under arrest and transported to the MCSO Jail in Marathon by Officer Plussa. He was charged with harvesting undersized spiny lobster and harvesting lobster by illegal method.

In April 2015, Officers Swensson and Sutter filed warrants for two subjects regarding resource violations they discovered after a stop on a vessel. Both subjects were picked up on the warrants. On September 1, 2016, one of the subjects went to trial for the violations - possession of lobster during closed season, possession of undersized lobster, possession of wrung tails on the water, molesting, taking or trapping spiny lobster in Card Sound Lobster Sanctuary and possession of undersized stone crab claws. The jury found the subject guilty on all charges and sentenced to 240 days in Monroe County Jail as well as additional probation and fines. The second subject has another warrant out for his arrest.

RESCUES

MONROE COUNTY

Officers Richards and Wagner were on board the offshore patrol vessel *Interceptor* when they received a call of a snorkeler in medical distress on board a dive boat off Key West. The officers responded in rough seas to Sand Key Light Sanctuary and transported the individual to their boat. She was very fatigued, had shortness of breath, and tingling in her fingers. The officers gave her oxygen and made way to USCG Key West where USCG and EMS personal assessed her and took her to the hospital.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

MONROE COUNTY

Officer Baumgartner responded to a call from a Good Samaritan about a dolphin that was significantly wounded and beached on a flat. The Good Samaritan and Officer Baumgartner were able to get the dolphin safely relocated to Sea Base Islamorada. Once there, four employees also assisted in helping to keep the distressed dolphin safely afloat. The dolphin was transferred to the Dolphin's Plus Center for treatment and recovery. Ten other dolphins had also been taken there after being stranded due Tropical Storm Hermine's development in the Gulf of Mexico.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

COLLIER COUNTY

Due to the Labor Day holiday, a very high visitation level was expected at Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park. The FWC provided the law enforcement presence to maintain public safety and enforce violations that had been observed in previous years during the holiday weekend. Lieutenant Mahoney and Officers Barringer, Osorio-Borja and Tidwell also focused on enforcement of boating safety violations in the area around the park. The officers wrote 29 warnings and issued 20 citations for operation of a personal watercraft or other watercraft in closed areas, consumption of alcoholic beverages, and other violations observed throughout the holiday weekend. One citation was issued for BUI.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

MONROE COUNTY

Lieutenant Robison, Recruiting Officer Steinmetz, and Officer Plussa participated in an outreach and recruiting event at the 2016 Heroes Salute weekend at Hawks Cay Resort. This event was created to support law enforcement, fire rescue, and public safety officers within the community. This event lasted throughout the Labor Day weekend with hundreds of attendees participating in the 5K run, BBQ, and interactive exhibits from local agencies. Members of the Monroe County Sheriff's Office marine

unit, dive unit, and bomb squad, the Florida Highway Patrol, and Monroe County Fire Rescue also participated. The FWC officers received much attention while allowing children and families to hold different animals and interact with multiple snakes, turtles, alligators, and a few other Florida critters. The event was a major success overall with hundreds of interactive citizen encounters and dozens of youth developing and voicing their aspirations to someday become FWC officers.