

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



***Weekly Report***  
***September 30 through October 13, 2016***

*This report represents some events the FWC handled over the past two weeks; however, it does not include all actions taken by the Division of Law Enforcement.*

***Patrol, Protect, Preserve***

## **NORTHWEST REGION**

### **CASES**

#### **BAY COUNTY**

Officers Gore, Wicker and K-9 Kane responded to a complaint of subjects catching over the limit of redfish. Upon arriving at the area, K-9 Kane was released in the parking lot for an area detection search and alerted on a vehicle. The owner, who was identified fishing a short distance away, denied catching or possessing any fish. After a short interview, he and the passenger of the vehicle were found in possession of seven red drum. Both subjects were issued notice to appear citations for possession of over the daily bag limit of red drum.

Officer Alsobrooks received a call from U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) requesting assistance. The USCG stated they had conducted a vessel stop in St. Andrews Bay and the vessel had a strong smell of cannabis emanating from on board. Upon arrival at the Panama City Marina, the USCG stated they had found a small amount of cannabis and a small package of a white substance along with multiple paraphernalia products on the vessel. After a brief investigation, the powdery substance was tested and confirmed to be methamphetamine. The suspect was placed under arrest and booked into the Bay County Jail for possession of methamphetamine, possession of less than 20 grams of cannabis, and possession of paraphernalia. The Florida Highway Patrol and Bay County Sheriff's Office K-9 assisted with the investigation.

#### **ESCAMBIA COUNTY**

Lieutenant Hahr was patrolling in the Escambia River Wildlife Management Area (WMA) at Cotton Lake campground when he observed a couple sharing a pipe as they smoked cannabis. Both were charged with possession of not more than 20 grams of cannabis and possession of drug paraphernalia.

While on board the Offshore Patrol Vessel *Fincat*, Officers Cushing, Pettey and Tolbert patrolled federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico over the weekend. They boarded numerous vessels and found violations for failure to allow inspection, possession of red snapper during closed season, possession of gray triggerfish during closed season, and no federal reef fish charter permit. The appropriate citations and warnings were issued.

#### **JACKSON COUNTY**

Officers Forehand and Burkhead checked several dove hunters and found that one hunter had killed 20 doves, five over the daily bag limit. The hunter was charged with taking over the daily bag limit of dove.

#### **OKALOOSA COUNTY**

Officers Pifer and Corbin conducted a resource inspection of a commercial fishing vessel at a local wholesale dealer. During the course of the inspection, the officers found 138 undersized vermillion snapper and 8 undersized red snapper on board the vessel. The vessel captain was issued a federal citation for the violation and the undersized snapper were seized as evidence. The seized snapper were photographed and turned over to a National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) law enforcement officer.

Officer Bartlett was on land patrol conducting fisheries inspection at a local boat ramp in Destin. He observed a vessel returning to the boat ramp with fishing rods displayed. The fisheries inspection revealed that the operator was in possession of four stone crab claws. Stone crab claw season is closed. The operator was cited and issued a notice to appear citation.

While Officer Corbin was on land patrol conducting state fisheries and license compliance, he observed three individuals fishing off a pier at a local marina in Destin. A fisheries inspection revealed three undersized bluefish and one undersized lane snapper. One of the three individuals was cited and issued a notice to appear citation.

Officer Corbin was on land patrol conducting state fisheries inspections and received a call from Officer Pifer regarding an individual he saw catch two red drum. Officer Pifer did not see the individual return either fish to the water. Officer Corbin located the individual and asked if he had caught any fish. The individual stated that he and another individual caught four red drum. After Miranda warning, the individual admitted to catching all four red drum. The subject was cited for a major violation and issued a notice to appear citation.

While conducting an offload inspection of a commercial vessel at a local wholesale dealer in Destin, Officer Corbin observed several undersized vermillion snapper coming off the vessel. After removing and measuring the vermillion snapper from four bins, a total of 142 vermillion snapper were found to be undersized, approximately 50 pounds. A total of 277 pounds of vermillion snapper were offloaded from the vessel, including the undersized. Officer Corbin contacted a NOAA law enforcement officer regarding the violation. The boat operator was cited for a Code Federal Regulation violation.

Officer P. Rockwell was on vessel patrol and observed an individual spearfishing with no diver down flag along the west jetty of the East Pass. This area of the jetty prohibits spearfishing. The individual was instructed to head to the shore where Officer Corbin, who was on land patrol, met with the subject. The individual was issued a notice to appear citation and two written warnings for no diver's down flag and no saltwater fishing license.

While on board the Offshore Patrol Vessel *Vigilance*, Officers Rockwell, Cushing and Tolbert, along with NOAA Officer Harwell, patrolled the federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. During the patrol, the officers located multiple vessels with fisheries violations. Those violations consisted of possession of red snapper during closed season,

possession of gray triggerfish during closed season and possession of undersized Spanish mackerel. The appropriate citations and warnings were issued for the violations.

## WALTON COUNTY

Officer Corbin was dispatched to a boating accident involving a PWC hitting a dock in Miramar Beach. The operator was attempting to dock the PWC at a residence in Choctaw Bay. The operator hit the accelerator instead of brake/reverse on the PWC causing the vessel to crash into the dock, taking out a piling and supports on the dock. The operator hit his head and was transported to a local hospital as a precaution. The operator was released with minor injuries. The boating accident is still under investigation.

## WASHINGTON COUNTY

Officer Jackson located a small dove shoot while on patrol. A check of the field and hunters revealed that it was baited. Three subjects were issued notice to appear citations for taking migratory birds (doves) over bait and one juvenile was warned.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

## SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officers Jernigan and Lewis, alongside FWC biologists, worked a public outreach event at the Munson Heritage Festival. More than 2,000 people visited FWC's booth. The officers discussed FWC-related topics with hundreds of visitors.

## WASHINGTON COUNTY

Officer Greene taught the law portion of the hunter safety class at Hard Labor Creek Plantation. Approximately 30 students were in attendance.

## **NORTH CENTRAL REGION**

## CASES

## ALACHUA COUNTY

Lieutenant Ferguson and Officer Troiano responded to a trespass complaint in a local hunt club late Friday. The suspects were located in the Archer area and all individuals were issued trespass warnings. One suspect had a warrant from Gilchrist County for burglary and was transported to the Alachua County Jail.

## BAKER COUNTY

Officer Burnsed was patrolling the Osceola WMA when he found an area that had been baited with corn. A lock-on tree stand overlooked the corn from approximately 15 yards away. The next morning, Officer Burnsed and Lieutenant Huff went into the area and found a subject hunting over the baited area. The subject admitted to placing the corn out and was issued a citation for placing bait on a WMA.

## COLUMBIA COUNTY

Officers Johnston and Cline were on land patrol in south Columbia County when they overheard shots near their location. The officers set up surveillance on foot and monitored a large field occupied by approximately ten hunters. After approximately one hour of surveillance, the officers decided to make contact. Upon contact, the officers observed whole corn, millet and rye grass seeds scattered across the field. One hunter failed to have a hunting license or migratory bird permit. Another hunter was found to be hunting with an unplugged shotgun. A total of seven notices to appear were issued for hunting dove over a baited field, one notice to appear was issued for hunting dove with an unplugged shotgun, one non-criminal infraction was issued for no hunting license and one written warning was issued for no migratory bird permit.

## DUVAL COUNTY

While on land patrol in Four Creeks WMA, Officers Griffis, Hayes and Lieutenant Bridwell heard multiple gunshots coming from a Rayonier Hunting Club across State Road 200. They left the WMA and initiated a vehicle stop on two vehicles, a white four-door Jeep and a white crew cab GMC 2500. They made contact with the suspects in the Jeep and the GMC truck and learned that none of the four suspects were members of any Rayonier Hunting Clubs. Officer Griffis ran a records check on each subject and read Miranda warnings to all of the suspects. At that point, they admitted to shooting their rifles at trees in the woods. The records check revealed that three of the suspects were written a warning the night before in Four Creeks WMA for entering after hours. All suspects were issued citations for trespass and instructed not to return to any Rayonier property without written permission.

Officer Stuhr was on plain clothes park patrol in Little Talbot Island State Park when he noticed two men fishing in the marsh by Simpson Creek. Officer Stuhr waited for the individuals to walk back to their truck to conduct a fishery inspection. One defendant walked faster than the other and arrived at the truck before the other. While observing through binoculars, he noticed a plastic bag was removed from the subject's fishing bucket and placed in the front seat of the truck. The bag appeared to contain fish. The defendant then placed the bucket in the back of the truck bed. He then got in the truck, drove cautiously by Officer Stuhr's vehicle and parked at a different location, while his friend was still walking through the marsh to get to the truck. When the other defendant exited the marsh, Officer Stuhr conducted a stop on the individuals for a fishery inspection. After speaking with them briefly, Officer Stuhr asked about the bag in the front seat that may contain fish. The defendants denied there was a bag. Officer Stuhr

obtained consent to search the truck and found a plastic bag filled with undersized black drum lying under a black jacket on the driver's side floor board. There were eight undersized black drum between the two subjects. They were cited accordingly.

Officer Culbreth was on land patrol in Jacksonville when he observed a subject fishing on a railroad bridge posted with "no trespassing" signs. The subject attempted to sneak through the woods back to his vehicle after spotting Officer Culbreth. The subject was contacted and a saltwater fisheries inspection and records check were conducted. The subject had an active Capias for driving while license suspended with a bond of \$358. The subject was placed under arrest and transported to the Duval County Pre-Trial Detention Center. The subject was also issued a written warning for trespassing and a written warning for no saltwater shoreline license.

## SUWANNEE COUNTY

Officer Boone received a call from a landowner about hunting equipment found on his property. He met with the landowner and located a hunting stand and game camera just inside the landowner's property line. Several days later, during archery season, Officer Boone returned to the stand in the early morning hours. As he approached the stand, he observed a subject dressed in camouflage holding a rifle. As he watched the subject from a concealed location, the individual picked up the rifle and looked through the scope at the surrounding area. After the subject climbed down from the stand, contact was made. Officer Boone noticed the subject left the rifle in the stand and also observed a cross-bow still in the case at the base of the tree. The subject initially stated he was hunting deer with the cross bow, but after Officer Boone advised the subject he had been watching him for over an hour and then climbed in the stand to retrieve the rifle, the subject then freely admitted to hunting with a rifle during the archery season. The appropriate charges will be filed with the state attorney's office.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

### ALACHUA COUNTY

Officers in Alachua County are continuing to work area lakes for the alligator season. Officers have also been working area dove fields for migratory bird compliance. Several hunters have been checked and violations have been observed.

Lieutenant Ferguson, Officers Troiano, Stanley and Harris are working patrols in area state parks, especially on college game days in Payne's Prairie State Park to provide for public safety.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### ALACHUA COUNTY

Lieutenant Ferguson and Officer Stanley worked Payne's Prairie State Park most of the day on Saturday. Payne's Prairie hosted the annual sport mobility event again this year where several hundred people with disabilities were able to participate in several different events throughout the day. Water skiing, kayaking and canoeing on Lake Wauburg, archery and a rock climbing wall were some of the events in which the participants competed.

## **NORTHEAST REGION**

### **CASES**

#### **BREVARD COUNTY**

Officers Lejarzar and Hallsten were targeting duck hunting violations on the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge during teal season. Officer Lejarzar observed two hunters in the Peacocks Pocket area of the refuge standing in a duck blind attempting to take ducks. The hunters fired multiple times at a mottled duck, which fell approximately 200 yards away. Officer Lejarzar waded into the water and conducted a resource inspection. The hunters were unaware of the ducks they were shooting at. Notices to appear were issued for attempting to take mottled ducks out of season and a warning was issued for an unplugged shotgun.

#### **VOLUSIA COUNTY**

Officers located a feeder and tree stand in Tomoka State Park near a residential development and multiple officers checked the stand almost daily since the opening of archery season. One morning, Officer Ward located a subject sitting in the stand over the feeder. The man was wearing full camouflage and holding a compound bow with a broad-head tipped arrow nocked and he admitted to hunting. He parked in the yard of one of the nearby houses and entered the park through the woods behind the house. He was issued a notice to appear for hunting in a state park and a written warning for feeding wildlife in a state park.

Officer Ward was driving by Lake George WMA late one night when he noticed taillights down one of the WMA roads and turned around to investigate. The taillights were from a John Deere Gator utility vehicle being operated by a male. During the course of the investigation, Officer Ward located another John Deere Gator stashed in the woods down a firebreak. The subject driving the Gator told Officer Ward he took both vehicles from a tree farm up the road in Flagler County where he worked and that he had permission to use the Gators anytime he wanted. Volusia County deputies were called to assist. The deputies were unable to locate any emergency contact information for the tree farm so it was not possible to prove or disprove the man's story. The man was arrested for knowingly driving with a suspended license and the Gators were towed pending further investigation. Officer Ward investigated further and found out that the suspect in this case was a former employee of the tree farm. He did not have

permission to go onto the property or to use any of the vehicles. Officer Ward presented his case to the State Attorney's Office and obtained warrants on the subject for two felony counts of theft of a motor vehicle and one count of trespassing. The day after the warrant was issued, Officers Ward and Sapp located and arrested the suspect who was then booked into the Volusia County Jail without incident.

## **COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING**

Officer Ward attended a youth fishing clinic held by the friends of DeLeon Springs State Park, where he spoke to the 25 juveniles and 27 adults in attendance about fishing laws and the mission of FWC as it relates to fish and wildlife protection and conservation. He also handed out awards and FWC whistles, bookmarks and lanyards.

## **SOUTHWEST REGION**

### **CASES**

#### **DESOTO COUNTY**

Officer Cloud was dispatched to a report of a wildlife attack on a person. Officer Cloud arrived on scene and learned that a whitetail deer had attacked a woman working in her yard. The deer, a 7-point buck, caused injuries to the woman requiring medical attention. Lieutenant Fugate and Investigator Gregory arrived on scene to assist. The investigation is ongoing.

#### **HARDEE COUNTY**

Officer Stephens was off duty fishing on the Peace River and noticed three subjects in a blue fiberglass vessel, loaded with coolers, camping and hunting equipment. Through friendly conversation they stated they were going on a camping trip. After going on duty, Officers Stephens and Smith launched an unmarked vessel at Gardner boat ramp and headed north, in attempt to locate where the men decided to set up camp. After conducting surveillance, they observed the subjects returned wearing a leafy suit, and carrying a compound bows with an arrow nocked actively hunting. They said they were hunting for deer but didn't have permission. The subjects said a friend told them it was legal. After investigation, fresh deer meat was discovered inside one of the coolers. The subjects were arrested for felony trespass and booked into the county jail.

#### **HERNANDO COUNTY**

Officers Beckman, Fagan, and Spradlin responded to a call of a suspicious person yelling for help in the Chassahowitzka WMA. Officer Beckman located an individual who was sweating profusely and he could see numerous scrapes and scratches on the individual's arms. Officer Spradlin soon located two other individuals who were attempting to conceal themselves. During a conversation with one individual, Officer



Beckman obtained consent to search his person when the individual attempted to conceal something. The individual then fled on foot into the woods. After a short search, Officer Beckman took the subject into custody. From the investigation, Officer Beckman learned the subject was trying to conceal narcotics, and the individuals were in the WMA to pick saw palmetto berries. Officer Beckman transported the subject to the Hernando County Jail where he was charged with the harvest of saw palmetto berries and resisting arrest without violence.

## HIGHLANDS COUNTY

Lieutenant Brooks was checking fishermen at the 621 spillway when he observed a subject quickly pack up and attempted to leave the area. During a subsequent fisheries inspection on the subject, the subject was found to be over the daily bag limit of crappie. The subject was cited accordingly.

## HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Officer Smith responded to a call from dispatch regarding FHP needing assistance for a reportedly mentally ill individual walking along Interstate 275, carrying what appeared to be a propane tank on his back, and walking close to oncoming vehicles. Officer Smith arrived on scene with FHP and stopped the individual. After talking to him, the subject said he was walking along I-275 trying to get to his mother's house and claimed he found the tank on the shoulder of I-275 and wanted to keep it. The individual left a medical facility and had a court order to remain at that facility for mental evaluation. The individual was transported back to the medical facility by FHP.

## PASCO COUNTY

Officer Beckman was on land patrol in the vicinity of Green Key, when he observed an individual with a kayak and fishing equipment. While speaking to the angler, the officer could see a snook that appeared undersized. An inspection revealed the fish was undersized. A citation was issued for possession of undersized snook and a warning for no snook stamp.

## PINELLAS COUNTY

While on land patrol in Tierra Verde, Officer Bibeau watched an individual actively wade fish for approximately one hour. From his concealed location, the officer waited for the individual to begin to pack up his belongings before making contact to conduct a fisheries inspection. At the conclusion of the inspection, he found the individual to be in possession of eight trout, all of which were undersized. The individual was cited accordingly.

While on land patrol in Tierra Verde, Officer Bibeau located a subject that was actively wade fishing from the shoreline. He watched the subject fish from a concealed location for approximately one hour. He waited for the subject to finish fishing before making

contact to conduct a fisheries inspection. At the conclusion of the inspection, the subject was found to be in possession of two redfish, one of which was oversized. The subject was cited accordingly.

Officer Bibeau and Lieutenant VanTrees were on water patrol in St. Petersburg, when they received a call from dispatch in reference to two subjects catching and keeping undersized snook from the Davis Island Bridge in Tampa. The officers responded to the location by vessel and located the two subjects. Lieutenant VanTrees was dropped off on land and made contact with the subjects to conduct a fisheries inspection. At the conclusion of the inspection, Lieutenant VanTrees located two undersized snook. Both subjects admitted to catching a snook and were written a misdemeanor citation for possession of an undersized snook.

While on water patrol near the North Skyway Relief Bridge, Officers Bibeau and Martinez noticed a group of individuals that were fishing along the shoreline. Officer Bibeau dropped Officer Martinez off on land to perform a fisheries inspection. At the conclusion of the inspection, Officer Martinez found an individual to be in possession of 7 mangrove snapper, 6 of which were undersized. Officer Martinez wrote the individual a misdemeanor citation and a warning for the fisheries violations.

## POLK COUNTY

Lieutenant Futch was conducting resource inspections at the dove field located in the Tenoroc Fish Management Area. He received information that a female hunter was "peppered" in the left arm earlier by another hunter. Lieutenant Futch made contact with the female and observed she did not receive injury beyond first aid. She stated some other hunters injured a dove, and it fell between her and the shooter. As the shooter approached the injured bird, it took flight and he fired at it. She immediately felt a burning sensation on her left arm and detected a pellet striking her sunglasses. At the conclusion of the investigation, both parties involved were reminded how important it is not to fire your weapon below the horizon when bird hunting.

Lieutenant Futch was working a detail during the final phase of the statewide alligator-hunting season and observed a vessel displaying a light and determined they were attempting to harvest alligators. The vessel had no navigation lights on, and they were hunting in an area not specified on their permit. The subjects were issued the appropriate citations for the violations.

Officer Alvis was conducting freshwater fisheries enforcement, when he observed a vessel on Lake Hollingsworth. After conducting surveillance on the vessel for a while, he made contact. During a resource inspection, he discovered they were 18 fish over their daily bag limit of black crappie. The subjects were cited accordingly.

Officer Adams was patrolling the Hesperides section of the Lake Wales Ridge State Forest and located two subjects who had entered the property through an undesignated entrance. The subjects were cited for illegal entry.

Officer Adams was patrolling on Arbuckle Wildlife Management Area, where he observed a subject removing palmetto stalks and berries. The subject was cited for removing the berries and for entering the property without paying the appropriate fee.

## **SARASOTA COUNTY**

Officer Brown was on land patrol in the area of Blackburn Point Bridge and performed a fisheries inspection on a man that he had watched carry a bag full of fish back to his car. After inspecting the man's catch, he found that the subject had caught and kept several undersized grey snapper and one 21 inch snook. The subject was cited criminally for possession of undersized snook and given a warning for possession of undersized grey snapper.

## **SOUTH A REGION**

### **CASES**

## **MARTIN COUNTY**

While conducting fisheries inspections, Officer Morrow made contact with a subject who was found to be in possession of four undersized gray (mangrove) snapper which were still alive. Officer Morrow educated the subject on the importance of bag and size limits and provided him a copy of current saltwater regulations. The subject was then issued a warning for the size limit violations and the undersized mangrove snapper were returned to the water alive.

Officer Willems was on patrol in Allapattah Flats WMA when he observed two individuals picking items off of the ground and putting them in bags. As the individuals approached the parking area, they hid their bags in high grass. Officer Willems made contact with the individuals and instructed them to go and get the bags. They complied and approximately ½ pound of mushrooms were found in their bags. Both individuals received citations for removal of natural resources from a WMA.

Officer Willems was on patrol in Allapattah Flats WMA when he observed a small utility trailer full of trash in one of the parking areas. The tag had been removed from the trailer and it appeared to have been in the area for an extended time. A name and address was found in the trash, and Officer Willems went to the address to question the individual. The individual admitted to leaving the trailer stating that he thought scrappers would take it. He then agreed to retrieve the trailer. The individual's roommate came out and drove him to where the trailer was. Once back at the trailer, the roommate was checked through dispatch, and his license was suspended. The roommate was issued a criminal citation for driving with his license suspended. Criminal charges were filed with the State Attorney for littering over 15 pounds for the individual that abandoned the trailer. The trailer was removed, and taken to the dump.

## RESCUES

### MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Aswall worked with Martin County Sheriff's Office and Stuart Police Department on a 3-day search and rescue mission to locate a subject that had jumped from Roosevelt Bridge. After 3 days of searching, the deceased victim was located and proper notifications were made.

## **SOUTH B REGION**

### CASES

#### COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Kleis initiated a derelict vessel investigation and, with the assistance of Officers Johnson and White, the owner was located and notified of the vessel's condition. The officers gave the owner an ample amount of time to either improve the vessel's condition or remove it from state waters. After a few weeks had passed and no effort was made to improve the condition of the vessel, Officer Kleis issued him a citation for having a derelict vessel on the waters of the state. Vessel removal is pending.

Officer Kleis was on land-based water patrol in Everglades City when he observed two individuals fishing under a bridge. As the individuals appeared to be preparing to leave the area, Officer Kleis made contact with them to perform a resource and fishing license inspection. The individuals appeared nervous, said that they had not caught anything and did not have fishing licenses. One of the individuals provided Officer Kleis with a driver license, while the other provided a name and date of birth. A search of the name and date of birth provided did not match the individual. Further investigation revealed that the individual provided his brother's name because he thought he had an outstanding warrant. The odor of marijuana was present on both individuals and around their vehicle. Officer Lugg arrived on the scene to assist and a search revealed a bag of marijuana, drug paraphernalia, a pill bottle of hydrocodone and oil-based tetrahydrocannabinol (TCH). Both individuals were placed under arrest and transported to the Collier County Jail for providing a false name to a law enforcement officer, possession of marijuana under 20 grams, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of a controlled substance without a prescription (hydrocodone), and possession of a controlled substance (THC). Warnings were issued for fishing without a license.

One evening, Officer Arbogast observed a vehicle parked alongside of US 41 with two occupants and fishing rods. Officer Arbogast decided to do a routine fisheries inspection and license check. The driver was still sitting inside the car when he approached, and while talking to the driver, a strong odor of cannabis was emanating from inside of the vehicle. When asked if there was any cannabis inside of the car, the driver said, "There was previously, but not anymore." Officer Arbogast had the driver step outside of the

vehicle and when he stood up, he revealed a plastic bag containing cannabis. Officer Arbogast again asked if there was anything else in the car. The driver again said, "No." With further investigation, there was a larger bag of cannabis stuck in between the center console and the driver's seat. The driver was issued a notice to appear and charged with possession of cannabis under 20 grams.

## MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

While on late-night water patrol, officers stopped a vessel to conduct a fisheries inspection. During the inspection, the occupants were found to be in possession of 25 yellow tail snapper over the allowable daily bag limit. The operator took responsibility for the bag limit and was cited accordingly.

While on late-night water patrol, and surrounded by storm clouds, officers performed a vessel stop for fisheries inspection which revealed the occupants had possession of five undersized mutton snapper, three undersized yellowtail snapper, two undersized gray snapper and one undersized trigger. The operator took responsibility for the bag limit violation and was cited accordingly. The officers beat the storm to the dock before the conditions deteriorated.

While on water patrol near Miami Seaquarium, officers conducted a vessel stop for a manatee zone violation. The operator stated he was unaware of the zone and was heading to pick up some passengers. During the stop, it was revealed the operator had an active warrant for his arrest on DUI charges. The operator was subsequently arrested and taken to the Miami-Dade County Jail.

While on water patrol near Broad Causeway, a vessel was stopped for a safety and fisheries inspection. The operator was asked if there was any fish on board, and immediately stated "yes." The operator was found to be in possession of grouper fillet and wrung spiny lobster.

While on land patrol, an officer spotted a group fishing along the canal. The officer observed the men look up as the officer's truck approached and hide a white bucket in the bushes. When asked, the subjects claimed they did not have a bucket with them and had no fish. The officer was able to locate and retrieve the white bucket which contained several undersized snapper. The subjects were subsequently cited for interference and possession of undersized snapper.

While on park patrol in Cape Florida, an officer conducted a fisheries inspection on one of the fishing piers. A subject was observed fishing with a cooler nearby. Once the officer identified the cooler with the owner, he began a fisheries inspection and the cooler contained four undersized mutton snapper and one undersized lane snapper. The fisherman was educated on the regulations of fishing in a state park and the requirement to possess a shoreline license. He was also issued citations regarding size limits for snapper.

Officers are investigating a vessel which capsized overnight leaving two people clinging to the vessel until rescued by a Good Samaritan the following day. Both occupants were treated and released. Their vessel remains approximately 80 feet below the surface of the water.

## MONROE COUNTY

Officers Piekenbrock, Wagner and Rubenstein were on water patrol in the Lower Keys checking commercial fisheries. A commercial crawfish vessel was stopped in order to conduct a resource inspection. Officer Piekenbrock boarded the vessel and, upon further inspection, discovered that the captain was in possession of stone crab, which is out of season. The captain was cited accordingly.

Officers Rubenstein and Wagner responded to a tip from off-duty Officer Larios, who informed them that he was fishing at the Channel 2 Bridge and had watched an individual catch and put what appeared to be a grossly undersized black grouper into a bucket. Upon making contact with the individuals described by Officer Larios, Officer Rubenstein asked the group if they had caught any fish and if they had any fish in their bucket. They said they had not caught any fish and had no fish in their possession. While Officer Wagner was checking fishing licenses, Officer Rubenstein searched the rocks where the individual crawled out from and found 3 mangrove snapper and a grossly undersized black grouper. Post Miranda, the individual stated he had caught the fish and kept them. He was cited accordingly.

Officer Plussa responded to a boating accident in Marathon. According to witness statements, a male subject took five people night cruising on a 52-foot cabin motorboat during the remnants of Hurricane Matthew. According to witnesses, the operator was drinking heavily and acting irrationally. When occupants voiced their desire to return to port due to the foul weather, the operator drew a firearm, pointed it at them and fired it into the boat near the occupants. After a struggle, one occupant disarmed the suspect of his multiple firearms, but the suspect refused to take them back into port. After over an hour of the occupants talking on the phone with 911, the vessel operator attempted to dock at the Marathon Marina. In attempting to do so, he first ran aground, then took out and destroyed a very large dock piling, crashed into a 62-foot motor yacht and its 11-foot tender docked nearby, finally coming to rest after crashing into a main portion of the marina slip dock. The suspect was arrested by Monroe County Sheriff's Office for aggravated battery, four counts of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Officer Plussa obtained statements from two witnesses on board the vessel at the time of the accident, statements from the two witnesses on board the struck yacht who observed the accident, and a post-Miranda sworn statement from the suspect admitting his involvement and command of the vessel during the accident. After reviewing their accounts of the incident and the available physical evidence at the accident scene, Officer Plussa found the suspect's careless operation of the vessel, excessive and unsafe speed during docking, and improper lookout to avoid a collision, as the primary causal factors in the accident. Officer Plussa issued him a total of four boating citations relating to navigation rule

violations resulting in an accident, careless operation of the vessel due to the approximate damage of over \$5,000 to the marina and other vessels involved, and a misdemeanor citation for operating a vessel without a hull identification (HIN) number. Because of the more than 10-hour time delay in the accident and Officer Plussa being the first FWC officer to respond, he was unable to conduct a BUI investigation involving the operator in this incident. The suspect remains in custody in the Monroe County Jail on a \$65,000 bond.

Officers Lopez and Foell were on foot patrol at Fishbusterz Fish House in Stock Island, conducting commercial vessel stops as vessels came to shore. During a check of the spiny lobster catch on the vessel named *R&J*, the officers found three undersized spiny lobster. Officer Foell was at the weight scale measuring lobster and found two more undersized spiny lobster. A total of five undersized lobster were found on board the vessel. The vessel captain was cited accordingly.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

### MONROE COUNTY

Officer Mattson taught a class of eight USCG men and women from Station Islamorada. He instructed them in the 8-hour NASBLA seated field sobriety task class. Officer Mattson received good feedback about the class and his instruction as well.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### COLLIER COUNTY

Lieutenants Bulger and Shea attended a meeting of the Naples/Ft Myers Chapter of the Safari Club International (SCI) at the Naples Zoo. At the meeting, SCI presented FWC with a new trailer dedicated to the FWC Youth Hunting Program. The trailer will be used to promote and educate the public about the Youth Hunting Program.

### MONROE COUNTY

Officers Dube and Mattson gave an FWC presentation to the Monroe County Sheriff's Office Cadet and Explorer Program at the new FWC substation located at Whale Harbor. The officers gave the deputies and visitors a tour of the new facility and the grounds while also allowing them to see a wide variety of FWC patrol vessels that were located there secured for the Hurricane Matthew. The officers talked about the FWC's mission and responsibilities of its officers, underage drinking/BUI and some of the issues facing youth and law enforcement in today's society. There was a lot of questions and feedback for the officers. The cadets and explorers were from the surrounding middle schools and the group ended their stay with some photos alongside some of the FWC patrol vessels.