

FWC
Division of Law Enforcement



Weekly Report

October 14, 2016 through October 20, 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

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

While working offshore patrol in federal waters aboard the *FinCat*, Officers Allgood, Cushing, Land and Manning stopped several vessels and found violations for possession of red snapper, gray triggerfish and greater amberjack during the closed season. A total of ten federal citations were written to address the violations.

While conducting resource inspections in state waters, Officer Allgood stopped and conducted an inspection of a charter vessel. During the stop, it was determined the captain did not have a valid charter license. The appropriate citations and warnings were issued.

While conducting resource and license inspections near Three Mile Bridge in Pensacola Bay, Officer Allgood stopped a recreational vessel. During the inspection, seven undersized red snapper were discovered in a cooler. The season for red snapper is closed and all of the fish measured less than 13 inches. The appropriate citations and warnings were issued.

FRANKLIN COUNTY

While working aboard the offshore patrol vessel *Guardian*, Lieutenant Marlow and Officers Nelson and Robb boarded a large offshore commercial shrimping vessel in nearshore and inshore waters. The vessel was trawling with four large otter trawl nets. Further inspection of the vessel revealed an active and in-use brine tank. Once the nets were brought aboard, an inspection was conducted. The net mouth circumference was nearly twice the lawful limit of 66 feet and the overall square footage of the nets were in excess of four times the legal limit with a size exceeding 2,200 square feet. The appropriate citations and warnings were issued for the violations and the nets were seized as evidence.

While conducting oyster enforcement efforts in the East Point area, Officers Boyd and Nelson stopped several commercial oyster vessels. One stop resulted in the occupants of the oyster vessel found to be in possession of 30% undersized oysters. The oysters were returned to the water alive and the violations were addressed with the appropriate citations and warnings.

While working aboard the offshore patrol vessel *Guardian*, Lieutenant Marlow, Officers Nelson, Robb and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Officers Harwell and Widener conducted a detail regarding shrimping nets and turtle excluder devices (TEDs). The officers boarded several vessels and noted some minor violations. While on patrol, they observed two large offshore commercial shrimping vessels operating in nearshore and inshore waters. They stopped both vessels and conducted

resource and gear inspections. The first vessel was trawling with four large otter trawl nets and was in possession of an active brine tank. Inspection of the nets revealed the net mouth circumference was well in excess of the lawful limit of 66 feet and square footage legal limit with a size exceeding 2,700 square feet each. The other vessel had several violations related to the legal parameters of the TEDs. The appropriate citations and warnings were issued for the violations and the nets were seized as evidence.

While working in the Apalachicola Bay area, Officer Robb received a call regarding a guide fisherman keeping undersized spotted sea trout. With a description of the vessel, Officer Robb located four individuals matching the description returning to a boat ramp in Apalachicola. Officer Robb spoke to the captain and conducted a resource inspection. During the inspection, multiple undersized spotted sea trout were located in a cooler. Officer Stephens arrived and assisted with interviews. The appropriate citations and warnings were issued for the violations.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

While aboard the offshore patrol vessel *Vigilance* and approximately 15 miles south of Destin in federal waters, Officers Rockwell and Trueblood boarded a 46-foot vessel. During the boarding, eight red snapper and four gray triggerfish were located. The season is closed for both red snapper and gray triggerfish and seven of the snapper were undersized. The appropriate federal citations and warnings were issued for the violations.

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

While on patrol in the early morning hours in the Yellow River Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Officer Ramos was contacted by a local landowner that several trucks were off-roading in the WMA. The landowner stated that it sounded like they were mud bogging. Once in the area, Officer Ramos encountered three trucks, two of which were heavily coated in fresh, wet mud. The trucks left a fresh mud trail to a closed area of the WMA where the trucks had dug deep, muddy ruts. After speaking with the subjects, Officer Ramos cited them for destruction of public lands. A traffic citation and three separate warnings were issued for other minor violations.

Officer Roberson was on land patrol conducting state fisheries inspections at the Navarre Beach Fishing Pier when he observed an individual who was standing next to a rod and reel and a cooler. Officer Roberson asked the individual if he could look inside their cooler and the individual gave him permission. Upon inspection, the individual was in possession of seven undersized Spanish mackerel. The individual was issued a misdemeanor citation for the violation.

Officer Hutchinson was patrolling in the Blackwater State Forest in the early morning hours when he observed a light being shined from the cab of a vehicle into the woods. He watched the vehicle and observed the driver of the vehicle shine the tree line and the ditch along a roadway as he drove very slowly along the road, stopping several

times. Once the truck reached an intersection, he observed the light being shined into an open field area. Officer Hutchinson pulled to the intersection with his headlights on. He visually identified the driver of the vehicle as being a male subject who he had previously arrested for driving with a suspended driver license. He knew the license was still suspended. The subject turned onto the roadway and Officer Hutchinson turned around and conducted a traffic stop on the vehicle. When he made contact with the driver, he observed a hunting rifle leaning against the passenger seat and a flashlight lying in the subject's lap. He asked him for his driver license and the subject informed him that he did not have one and that it was suspended. After further investigation, Officer Hutchinson discovered that the rifle was loaded and had a bullet in the chamber. After further questioning, the subject admitted to using the handheld light to look for deer and bobcat. The subject was placed under arrest and transported to the Santa Rosa County Jail. He was charged with possession of a gun and light at night. He was also charged with driving with a suspended driver license.

While patrolling a dirt road leading to a boat ramp along the Escambia River, Officer Hutchinson observed a vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. He pulled behind the vehicle and followed it a short distance before the vehicle pulled over. He made contact with the driver who informed him that he stopped because he thought he was getting pulled over. After speaking with the subject, Officer Hutchinson turned around and drove in the direction from where the vehicle came. While driving along the dirt road, he observed several areas where fresh ruts and spin-out marks were in the roadway. Officer Hutchinson noticed the tire tracks in the ruts matched the tire tread on the subject's vehicle that he had just stopped. After photographing the damage to the roadway, he turned around and drove back and made contact with the subject again. After questioning, the subject admitted to spinning out and tearing up the road with his vehicle. Officer Hutchinson issued him a notice to appear citation for damage to public lands while using a motor vehicle.

Officer J. Rockwell received a call from dispatch advising there was a car accident in Blackwater State Park. When he arrived at the intersection of Deaton Bridge Road and Boat Ramp Road, he made contact with the Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office who advised him that all the vehicle occupants were juveniles and all refused medical treatment from Emergency Medical Service. Officer Rockwell separated the driver and three passengers to obtain sworn statements. Officer Clark arrived on scene to assist. Upon interviewing the driver and passengers, Officers Rockwell and Clark determined alcohol was a contributing factor. The driver submitted to a portable breath test and her blood alcohol content was .013. Officers Rockwell and Clark charged the driver and passengers with possession of alcohol by person under the age of 21. Warnings were issued for no seat belt. The driver was also charged with careless operation of a motor vehicle.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROL

FWC officers conducted a detail targeting illegal hunting in the Eglin WMA. Lieutenant Berryman along with Officers Jones, Land and Ramos concentrated their efforts in the

area where a 48-hour hog hunt was occurring in the WMA. While officers checked several hunters, no violations were found.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

A 911 call was made by a woman who became lost in the Eglin WMA. Her vehicle was stuck on a sandy road and the sun began to set. She told dispatchers that she was low on fuel and her cell phone was about to die. She was unsure of her location and was requesting help. Officers Ramos, Land and Tolbert responded to the area and began searching. Based on her cell phone location, the officers located her shortly after sunset and removed her vehicle from the sand. She was escorted back to the main highway.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Officer Cushing spoke to a group of 20 Cub Scouts at the U.S. Coast Guard Pensacola station. They were preparing to earn a badge for fishing. Officer Cushing spoke and answered questions about the agency's mission and different types and species of fish they hoped to catch.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CASES

ALACHUA COUNTY

Officer Stanley was working a bait site in Grove Park WMA and approached a known homemade corn feeder. He observed a hunter in the tree stand with a crossbow approximately 15 yards away. Officer Stanley asked the hunter to come out of his ladder stand and a juvenile emerged. He escorted the juvenile to his residence and spoke with his mother, where he educated the mother and juvenile about the WMA rules not allowing a juvenile to hunt without a supervised adult.

Officers Troiano, Stanley and Investigator Bembry were working Cracker Boys Hunt Club late at night for trespassing complaints when they observed two vehicles travelling to the end of a long county road where they parked. From a concealed location, Officer Troiano observed, through night-vision equipment, suspicious activity that was consistent with illegal drug activity. All officers converged on the vehicles and after a brief conversation of being parked illegally in the middle of the county road, the officers were able to locate two different bags of crystal methamphetamine on the male driver of the first vehicle. The individual was transported to the Alachua County Jail and charged with possession of the crystal meth. The female driver of the second vehicle was released and warned of illegal parking in the county road and driving with a revoked

license. Due to the age of the female and being nine months pregnant, the female's parents were notified and she was released to them.

DUVAL COUNTY

Lieutenant Arkin was on land-based water patrol at the Mandarin Park Boat Ramp when he observed a vehicle at the boat ramp after the park was officially closed. He checked the vehicle tag through the Florida Crime Information Center and the National Crime Information Center (FCIC/NCIC) and it came back stolen. The vehicle was reported as stolen by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office. The vehicle was unoccupied and there are no known suspects in this case. Lieutenant Arkin completed a stolen vehicle recovery incident report and turned the vehicle over to the registered owner.

Officer Christmas conducted a boating safety/fishery inspection on a subject who was flounder fishing in the Trout River. The subject told Officer Christmas that he was a "professional fisherman." A license check revealed that the subject's fishing license privileges had been revoked for not paying child support. The subject was cited for fishing while privileges are revoked and his suspended driver's license was seized.

LAFAYETTE COUNTY

Officer Davenport received information from the Lafayette County Sheriff's Office in reference to a deer being shot at night off a county road in Lafayette County. He responded to the scene and observed a three-point buck, white-tailed deer that had been shot three times. Witnesses were interviewed and the deer was photographed. One of the witnesses described the suspect vehicle that was observed at the scene. The vehicle and owner were identified and located later that night. A total of three suspects were identified and subsequently admitted to being there during the shooting of the deer. One subject admitted to killing the deer with a .22 magnum rifle while using a light at night. All violations are being filed with the state attorney's office. The deer was seized as evidence.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

ALACHUA COUNTY

Lieutenant Ferguson, Officers Troiano, Stanley and Harris are working with park managers in area state parks for illegal hunting activities.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

ALACHUA COUNTY

Lieutenant Ferguson worked the Annual Alligator Warrior Festival event on Saturday hosted by the O'Leno State Park. The event included a reenactment of the 1836 "Battle of San Felasco Hammock," living history camps, several demonstrations of different tools within the time period of 1800 to 1859 and different cultural dances throughout the day. Several hundred people attend the event every year.

NORTHEAST REGION

CASES

BREVARD COUNTY

While conducting patrols on the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, Officer Hallsten observed two fishermen hastily pack up their fishing gear and speed off as he approached. The officer observed the vehicle carelessly driving 60 miles per hour in a 45 mile-per-hour speed zone and conducted a traffic stop on the vehicle. He observed an oversized redfish in plain view on the floorboard of the vehicle, confirmed the redfish was over the legal size limit and issued the subject a citation for possession of an oversized redfish and a warning for speeding on the refuge.

While conducting fisheries inspections on the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, Officer Hallsten observed a glass smoking pipe in plain view next to a fisherman. When asked about the pipe, the fisherman stated "just some weed" and pulled out a plastic bag containing 12 grams of cannabis. A field test confirmed the contents of the bag to contain marijuana. The fisherman was issued a notice to appear for possession of cannabis under 20 grams.

Officer Balgo encountered numerous marine fishery violations in six separate cases which included oversized red drum, undersized red drum, over the bag limit of red drum, undersized black sea bass, undersized black drum, undersized sheepshead, and possession of tarpon. Citations were issued to the fishermen for the violations.

While on land patrol, Officer Rasey received a wildlife alert call about a subject taking a large amount of undersized spotted seatrout at a local pier. Officer Rasey arrived on scene just in time to meet the individual at his vehicle. A resource inspection revealed 13 spotted seatrout, all undersized. The fisherman was issued a citation for over the bag limit of spotted seatrout (nine trout over the limit), undersized spotted seatrout, and fishing without a saltwater license.

Officers Miller and Kearney were checking a local bank fishing spot when they encountered two men with multiple red drum. The men had caught eight red drum, some of which were oversized. Citations were issued for the size and bag limit violations.

Officer Miller conducted several inspections on local retail and wholesale dealers in Brevard County. After finding several violations, Officer Miller organized a detail with Officers Kearney, Maslo, Hallsten, Balgo and D. Humphrey. Forty-nine misdemeanor violations and 13 major violations were discovered during the week-long detail, while inspecting approximately 40 locations. Violations included no retail license, no wholesale license, inadequate records, falsifying trip tickets, unlawful purchase of saltwater products from an unlicensed seller and possession of blue crab eggs.

VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officer Demeter was performing marine fisheries inspections in the New Smyrna area when he encountered a man and woman fishing from the bank. A check of the cooler in their possession revealed two undersized redfish. The man and woman each claimed to have caught and kept one of the redfish. Both received citations for the violation.

Officer Bertolami inspected a recreational fishing vessel returning to a Port Orange boat ramp. The adult male operator was asked if he had any catch on board and he replied that he did not. Officer Bertolami inspected the vessels compartments and located two snook. The individual was issued the two criminal charges for possession of snook outside the slot-size limit and possession of snook in excess of daily bag limit. He was also issued the non-criminal infraction citation for not having the appropriate snook permit.

Officer Bertolami was working an area of New Smyrna Beach and checking shoreline fishermen. An adult male was subsequently charged with the criminal violations of possession of red drum outside the slot-size limit and possession of red drum in excess of the daily bag limit. He was also issued a written warning for failure to maintain red drum in whole condition.

OSCEOLA COUNTY

While conducting resource and license inspections at Bull Creek WMA for archery season, Officer Mendelson encountered a hunter that had harvested a spotted fawn. The spotted fawn was seized for evidence and the individual was issued a notice to appear for the violation.

MARION COUNTY

While patrolling the Ocala WMA, Officer Rice located a fresh dump site. It contained a large amount of shingles, plywood, nails, and other various roofing supplies. Officer Rice went through the material in an attempt to locate evidence and found a bar code label from one of the shingle packages. He took that label to local roofing dealers in an attempt to locate who sold the shingles and found a dealer in Ocala where the dumped shingles were sold. He obtained a name of who purchased the shingles and an address where they were delivered. Officer Rice went to that address and observed that the roof had new and old shingles that matched the dumped ones. Officers Rice and Dias spoke

to the homeowner who stated that the old shingles were taken to the local landfill. The officer went to that landfill and was able to confirm that no roofing material had been brought there. He returned to the suspect's address with Investigator Lasher to interview the homeowner again. The subject gave the officers information on the individuals he paid to haul the material to the dump. Officer Rice and Investigator Lasher were able to match the material from the dump site to the old material that was still on the roof. They tracked down three suspects and obtained sworn statements from each. One of the suspects gave a full confession to pocketing the cash paid for using the dump and tossing the roofing material in the Ocala WMA. Charges were filed appropriately.

Officers Simpson and Rice stopped to check an individual in a restricted area of the Ocala WMA. The individual was found to be in possession of less than 20 grams of cannabis and drug paraphernalia. The subject was charged with the offenses and released from the scene.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CASES

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Officer Cohl and Lieutenant Frantz were on water patrol when they noticed a dock construction barge underway in one of the residential canals in Port Charlotte. Due to maneuverability of the barge, it was followed until it reached a safe boarding location. Upon boarding, an inspection revealed that the barge had no safety gear and was not registered. The owner of the company was contacted, and the operator was cited and warned for the violations.

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

While on land patrol in the area of Bullfrog Creek, Officers Martinez-Rivera and Ahlers observed a group of people fishing from the Bullfrog Creek Bridge. As Officer Martinez-Rivera approached, a male subject walked away and then threw a small baggie into the creek. Officer Martinez-Rivera rushed into the water and retrieved the baggie which was later proven to have methamphetamine inside. The subject was arrested and charged with possession of methamphetamine and obstruction.

While on land patrol at the 22nd Street Causeway, Officer Martinez-Rivera observed and approached a subject loading his vehicle with fishing gear. The subject stated he did not have any fish and allowed the officer to complete an inspection. After observing clues that there were fish present, Officer Martinez-Rivera found four red drum, three of which were undersized, and two undersized black drum hidden in a five-gallon bucket. The subject was cited accordingly for his violations, which included a major violation of red drum.

K-9 Officer Wolff and Lieutenant Parisoe responded to a complaint of trespass on a piece of property that borders Interstate 275. Lieutenant Parisoe located a vehicle parked behind the wood line and next to a fence. K-9 Officer Wolff and Lieutenant Parisoe conducted surveillance on the vehicle and a short time after dark, an individual returned to the vehicle with several dogs. The officers conducted an investigation, and they learned the individual did not have permission to hunt hogs on the property. Lieutenant Parisoe will direct-file charges for trespass and criminal mischief with the State Attorney's Office.

PASCO COUNTY

Officers Pulaski and Beckman were on land patrol in Werner-Boyce Salt Springs State Park. They observed a vehicle run the stop sign and evade the entrance fee. Officer Pulaski stopped the vehicle for the violation. During the stop, he learned the driver was operating the vehicle on a suspended license with knowledge. Additionally, Officer Pulaski smelled a strong odor of cannabis from inside the vehicle. A search of the vehicle revealed less than twenty grams of marijuana and several items of paraphernalia, including a digital scale and a pipe. The officers issued citations for the violations and the narcotics and paraphernalia were seized as evidence.

Officer Beckman was on land patrol in the area of Brasher Park when he observed an individual with a kayak and fishing equipment. Officer Beckman asked the individual if he had caught any fish, and he replied "no, I only caught short reds." In plain view, Officer Beckman could see a bucket inside the vehicle which contained a snook and red drum. An inspection of the catch revealed the snook was undersized. Officer Beckman seized the snook as evidence and issued the angler a citation for the violation.

Officer Pulaski and Lieutenant Parisoe responded to a complaint in the Withlacoochee State Forest "high bluffs" area. According to the complaint, a large number of individuals were consuming alcohol in the forest. During a cursory inspection, Lieutenant Parisoe located two individuals who were openly drinking alcohol. He obtained identification for the individuals and learned one individual had an active warrant. Officer Pulaski and Lieutenant Parisoe returned to the group to take the individual into custody; however, the individual had left the area. Lieutenant Parisoe will direct-file the charge of resisting arrest without violence with the State Attorney's Office.

PINELLAS COUNTY

Officers Ferguson, Beckman, Phillippi, Bibeau, and Lieutenant Van Trees responded to a boating accident near the Dunedin Causeway. Four passengers were thrown from one of the vessels, some requiring medical attention. Upon interviewing the operator of one of the vessels, Officer Ferguson noticed signs of impairment. After completing field sobriety tasks, the operator was arrested for BUI. When the operator was being booked into jail by Officer Beckman, it was discovered that the individual had concealed two baggies of cocaine in his wallet and was subsequently charged.

While on land patrol at the Fort Desoto Bridge, Officer Bibeau located several subjects that were actively fishing. After watching the subjects from a concealed location, the officer made contact with the individuals as they were preparing to leave the area. A fisheries inspection was conducted and found the subjects to be in possession of six undersized red drum. One individual admitted to catching five red drum and another admitted to catching one. Officer Bibeau wrote the two individuals misdemeanor citations for the fisheries violations, which included a major violation of red drum.

While on land patrol at the Seminole Boat Ramp, Officer Ferguson observed a vessel approaching the ramp with no navigation lights on. He made contact with the two males on board and conducted a fisheries inspection after being told they had fish on board. Officer Ferguson found three red drum in a cooler; one subject caught an oversized red drum and the other subject caught two red drum. The subjects were cited accordingly for possession of oversized red drum and possession of over the bag limit of red drum.

POLK COUNTY

Lieutenant Futch was working a detail during the statewide alligator hunting season. He observed a vessel displaying a light and determined they were hunting alligators. After making contact with the subjects, he discovered one of the subjects hunting did not have a permit. Another hunter was checked and found to be hunting outside of the permitted area. All three subjects were issued the appropriate citations for the violations.

Officer Tyer was working on Lake Parker during alligator season when she observed a vessel displaying a light. She made contact with the subject and determined they were hunting alligators. During a resource inspection, she discovered they were hunting in an Alligator Management Unit not listed on their permit. The subject was issued a notice to appear for the violation.

Lieutenant Futch received information that a subject was fishing in the Saddle Creek Fish Management Area with a cast net. After arriving on scene and making contact with the subject, he was found to be in possession of a cast net and was issued a notice to appear for the violation.

Officers from Polk County and the surrounding area participated in a detail during the Hog-Dog Hunt in the Green Swamp WMA. Over the years, the annual Hog-Dog Hunt in the Green Swamp WMA has generated numerous complaints and had an increase of illegal activity. The detail was successful in reducing the amount of complaints and trespassing issues.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Lieutenant Frantz received a call from an off-duty Lieutenant of Lee County Sheriff's Office concerning a falcon that had been in his driveway for an hour without moving. The falcon still had the leather straps on one of its legs, which indicated it was a trained bird. The falcon was captured and relocated to a rehabilitator without incident.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

LEE COUNTY

Officers Furbay and McColgin performed panther enforcement on Daniels Parkway and Corkscrew Road in an effort to enforce the speed limit in the area of the panther habitat. The officers stopped 9 vehicles, issuing 3 infractions and 6 warnings for speed-related violations. The highest speed was 79 miles per hour in the 45-mile per hour Panther Zone. The operator received a mandatory court date for the excessive speed.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

LEE COUNTY

Officers Sehl, Mitchell and Lieutenant Ruggiero performed a hunter's education course this week. The officers presented the legal portion of the hunter's education course to approximately 30 people and answered their questions before they moved on to the ethical portion of the training. At the end of the training, the students must demonstrate safe firearm handling and pass a written test before receiving their certificates.

PINELLAS COUNTY

Lieutenant Van Trees attended the Tierra Verde Oktoberfest with personnel from the FWC Volunteer Program. Together, they answered questions about the coyote population on the island and discussed volunteer opportunities for community members.

SOUTH A REGION

CASES

BROWARD COUNTY

While on patrol in the area of Mizell-Johnson State Park, Officers Vacin and Strader observed an individual spearfishing in the vicinity of the jetty. Upon conducting a resource inspection, the individual was found to be in possession of a speared and undersized snook. Officer Vacin issued the individual a criminal notice to appear citation for possession of a speared snook and possession of an undersized snook. The snook was seized as evidence.

Officer Gamage responded to the Hillsboro Inlet due to a call about people possibly taking snook illegally. He surveilled the area but found no one with snook. He did conduct a marine fisheries inspection on an individual exiting the south jetty. At the conclusion of the inspection, he issued a criminal notice to appear for possession of undersized snapper. Two mutton snapper were seized as evidence.

Officer Strader and Vacin were on patrol in Mizell-Johnson State Park. Park rangers contacted FWC and reported a disturbance at one of the parking lots. Both officers arrived on scene to find a distraught female. After a brief interview, they searched the area for a male assailant that had stolen the female's car. Officer Vacin came in contact with the suspect a short time later and placed him under arrest for grand theft auto and resistance without violence.

Officer Gamage was on patrol in Mizell-Johnson State Park conducting marine resource inspections on the jetty. He made contact with an individual who was fishing on the jetty. The person was issued a criminal notice to appear for possession of undersized king mackerel and undersized bluefish. One kingfish and three bluefish were seized as evidence.

Officers Vacin and Strader were on patrol at the Port Everglades northern jetty when they observed an individual on the rocks with a bag. Upon conducting a marine fisheries inspection, the individual was issued a criminal notice to appear for possession of undersized snook. One snook was seized as evidence.

Officer Vacin was on patrol in Mizell-Johnson State Park in the vicinity of the fishing jetty. He conducted a marine fisheries inspection on two individuals leaving the jetty and issued criminal citations to them for possession of undersized mutton snapper and undersized cobia. Three mutton snapper and one cobia were seized as evidence.

MARTIN COUNTY

Officers Morrow and Arnold encountered a diesel spill coming from a damaged vessel that was being removed post Hurricane Matthew. The officers documented the situation and notified the National Spill Hotline. The USCG and Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) later responded. An investigation is still ongoing at this time.

OKEECHOBEE COUNTY

Captive Wildlife Investigator Douglas observed a vehicle back crash into another vehicle in a parking lot. He approached the driver and identified himself as a law enforcement officer. While doing so, he observed an open beer can between the driver's legs. At this time, he contacted the local police department for routine back up. A check of the driver's information revealed that he had a suspended license. Signs of impairment were displayed by the driver as well. Investigator Douglas arrested the subject for driving under the influence, driving while license is suspended, and cited him for the open container. The local police department did the traffic accident report and

transported the subject to jail. Upon arrival to the jail, the subject's blood alcohol content tested at .17, above the legal limit of .08. A subsequent search of the vehicle revealed three hand grenades inside of a bag. The scene was secured due to the potential explosive devices. A bomb expert was called in to remove the hand grenades. The devices were removed and later tested negative for being explosive.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Toby observed two individuals inside the South Florida Water Management District's (SFWMD) Stormwater Treatment Area 1 West property. The two individuals were in an area that was closed to public access. One individual was fishing in this area and had multiple game fish inside their bucket. The officer escorted both individuals out of the property and addressed the violations. The individual who was fishing was issued three misdemeanor citations for fishing in a closed area, conducting an activity on SFWMD lands that is prohibited by signage (closed to public access), and fishing with a revoked fishing license. The second individual was issued a misdemeanor citation for conducting an activity on SFWMD lands that is prohibited by signage (closed to public access). Both individuals were also issued a warning for illegal entry and exit onto this property.

Officer Cobo worked a boating incident involving a vessel which struck another docked vessel while attempting to dock at a local restaurant on the water. The owner of the striking vessel left the scene and did not report the incident or exchange information with the docked vessel owner. With help from the restaurant owner and the owner of the damaged vessel, the operator of the striking vessel was located. Both parties met and the matter in reference to the minor damage was resolved. No criminal charges were filed.

SOUTH B REGION

CASES

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

FWC officers were alerted by Sunny Isles Beach Police Department that they had stumbled upon a trap robbery in progress in Haulover Park. The officers responded to the scene where they found two subjects (a male and a female) in possession of a stolen commercial blue crab trap. The officers interviewed the suspects who subsequently admitted to robbing the commercial blue crab trap, being in possession of a stone crab and possession of an undersized blue crab. The male suspect was arrested and charged accordingly.

MONROE COUNTY

Officers Wagner and Rubenstein were conducting a resource check on the Channel 5 Bridge in the Upper Keys. While walking out to the span of the bridge, two individuals were making their way back from the fishing area to their car. Officer Wagner asked if they had caught any fish. An inspection of their cooler revealed that one individual was in possession of 3 undersized mutton snapper and 4 undersized schoolmaster snapper. The individual was cited accordingly.

Officer Plussa was on patrol on Boot Key Harbor in an effort to locate and apprehend a known violator that had been switching between his multiple derelict vessels. Officer Plussa located him and monitored his actions on board a marked and posted derelict vessel for a lengthy period of time. Officers Garrison and Munkelt arrived and the three proceeded to stop and inspect the vessel. Officer Plussa did a follow-up derelict vessel inspection with the owner present and determined that the absence of motors, power, rotten wooden decks, substantial dismantling, and the overall junked condition indicated it was still derelict. Additionally, the suspect was delinquent in virtually all boating safety and registration requirements and had a marine toilet (MSD) pumping right into the bilges of the boat and overboard into the water. The suspect had made no efforts to repair or improve the vessel, and had attempted to scrape off the derelict vessel notice posting. Officer Plussa secured the suspect in a life jacket and handcuffs, placing him under arrest for storing a derelict vessel on state waters. Officer Plussa photographed the partially removed derelict vessel posting. This suspect had been the focus of a long-term, 3-month investigation of his multiple derelict vessels by Investigator Cox. After the more than 15 previous citations and more than 5 law enforcement encounters with Officer Plussa, Investigator Cox, and other FWC and Sheriff's officials, the suspect deliberately continued to remain in violation and out of compliance, evading officers. During a Post-Miranda interview with Officer Plussa, the suspect admitted to trying to remove the notice. He was booked into the Marathon Jail on 1 misdemeanor charge for the derelict vessel and 8 boating citations, including the \$250 fine for the MSD violation.

Officer Plussa was contacted by FWC Pilot Willman about a possible derelict vessel in a very shallow seagrass and mangrove area of Whiskey Creek, near Boot Key in Marathon. He attempted to get into the shallow area by patrol vessel but was unsuccessful, so he used a paddleboard on another day to get back to the vessel, documenting its registration numbers and GPS position. Officer Plussa and Investigator Cox took advantage of an unusually high tide caused by the tropical storm system to get back to the vessel by patrol boat. They inspected the vessel and determined it was derelict under multiple conditions and marked it accordingly with a notice. The next day, Officer Plussa was contacted by Officer Adams that the vessel was being moved in another location in Marathon, possibly in an effort to conceal its location from the DV investigation team. Officer Plussa arrived and arrested the suspect for using, storing, and leaving derelict vessels on state waters. He was booked into the Marathon Jail without issue.

Officer Plussa and Investigator Cox inspected a group of sailing vessels for which Officer Plussa had issued the single owner multiple misdemeanors for each vessel regarding their registration, title, and other status. After months of exchanges,

encounters, and documentation, they obtained a warrant for his arrest for violation of probation as he did not bring his vessels into compliance. Both officers returned to the vessel the subject lived on and directed him onto their patrol vessel. The subject did so but pulled out his camera and began recording the encounter. Officer Plussa advised they had a warrant for his arrest and directed him to turn around to be handcuffed. The subject refused to comply after three consecutive lawful verbal commands. Officer Plussa assisted the subject in turning around and secured him into handcuffs without issue. The suspect was arrested and booked into the Marathon Jail accordingly.

RESCUES

MONROE COUNTY

Officers Rubenstein, Piekenbrock and Mason responded to a missing person in Bahia Honda State Park. The person had called about 6 p.m. and reported being lost in the salt marsh off of the hiking trail. FWC officers, Monroe County Sherriff's deputies and the DEP Park Service conducted a search throughout the park. Officers Rubenstein and Piekenbrock took a kayak into the salt ponds and located the camper laying down next to a small fire around 10 p.m. She seemed to be mentally and physically exhausted, suffering from minor scratches to her legs and arms. She was walked back through the mangroves back to the kayak and brought back to the main road where EMS was waiting for her. Emergency Medical Services transported her to Fisherman's Hospital and treated her for low body temperature and dehydration.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

MONROE COUNTY

The FWC Middle and Lower Keys Derelict Vessel team, Investigator Cox and Officer Plussa took to the waters of Marathon, Big Pine and Key West targeting derelict and pre-derelict or "At-Risk" vessels. Their efforts were aimed at tracking down owners of these environmental and navigational hazards, and taking steps for the owner to remove them from the water. In many instances, these owners failed to come into compliance after multiple weeks, if not months, and arrest warrants were issued for their noncompliance. Multiple violators have been apprehended, including a Marathon man who attempted to move and hide his vessel after it being marked derelict by officers, another who refused to comply with the law, and a third whom had attempted to evade officers' detection and was found in a trailer park in Marathon. Several other suspects are being actively sought. During this phase of their operation, the FWC has found that many other derelict vessels have been removed from the waters by the owners compliantly, without using state tax dollars to remove them and without facing additional criminal penalty. Florida law authorizes FWC officers to identify, investigate, and remove any derelict vessel from the state waters that has been left, stored, or abandoned.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Araujo and Osorio-Borja participated in the Celebrating Safe Communities outreach event hosted by the Collier County Sheriff's Office to generate support for anti-crime efforts and strengthen neighborhood and police partnerships. The free event included all kinds of food and activities for families to enjoy while getting to know their local officers. Officers Araujo and Osorio-Borja brought an airboat and a live alligator for the public to view. The officers answered many questions about what it is like to be an FWC officer.