

FWC
Division of Law Enforcement



Weekly Report

November 4, 2016 through November 10, 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 on patrol in Pensacola Bay, Officer Allgood found numerous fisheries-related violations including possession of red snapper during the closed season, undersized red snapper and undersized gag grouper. Four criminal summonses were issued for some of the fisheries violations as well as multiple warnings and infractions for boating safety and resource violations.

Officers Allgood and Clark conducted several resource inspections while on patrol in state waters of the Gulf of Mexico, and found violations involving possession red snapper during closed season. Six citations and associated warnings were issued for the violations.

BAY COUNTY

Officer Basford was on patrol at St. Andrews State Park when a subject approached her and advised that a great hammerhead shark was just caught on the fishing pier. The subject stated the individual who caught the shark had beached it and started hitting it in the gills; it was then released back into the water dead. Officer Basford went to the pier and interviewed the subject that caught the shark and saw the hammerhead laying on the bottom under the pier not moving. The subject admitted to punching the shark in the gills and said that is how you resuscitate a shark. Charges are being direct-filed with the state attorney's office.

HOLMES COUNTY

Officers Gore, Tison, Letcher, Forehand and Lieutenants Allen and Walsingham assisted the Holmes County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) with a manhunt for a subject with felony drug and escape warrants. Lieutenant Walsingham responded to a trespass complaint where the suspect was trying to access the Choctawhatchee Wildlife Management Area (WMA) through private property. The owner of the property approached the suspect who told the owner he was looking for a place to hide from law enforcement. The owner told the subject to leave and alerted law enforcement. Lieutenant Walsingham made contact with the deputies on the scene and, after a short bolo, the subject was encountered at Bear Hewitt Boat Ramp by a deputy. He fled by vehicle into the WMA with two other individuals. After a cooperative effort between FWC, HCSO, Walton County SO, and FL Department of Corrections' K-9 team, the suspect's vehicle was located stuck in the sand. The K-9 team was deployed and the subject was arrested after a short track.

JACKSON COUNTY

Officers Guy and Little checked an archery hunter at Apalachee WMA and found that the area where the hunter was hunting was baited with corn. The hunter was cited for hunting over bait in a WMA.

Officers Little and Burkhead checked a hunter in Apalachee WMA during the archery season and found the hunter was hunting with a cross bow. He was cited for attempting to take deer by illegal method in a WMA during archery season.

Officers Little and Burkhead located a large dump site. Based on evidence located in the garbage, they were able to identify and locate a suspect who admitted to dumping the trash. The suspect was cited for dumping.

Officer Forehand located a tree stand baited with corn in the Chipola River WMA. Later that day, Officers Forehand and Little located a hunter hunting over the corn. He was cited for hunting over bait in a WMA.

FRANKLIN COUNTY

While on patrol in the Offshore Patrol Vessel *GUARDIAN*, Officer Nelson boarded a commercial fishing vessel just south of Bob Sikes Cut to conduct a fisheries inspection. During the inspection, Officer Nelson observed a plastic bag containing marijuana and drug paraphernalia inside another large bag one of the occupants was looking into. Several additional violations were located and the appropriate action was taken.

While on patrol in East Point, Officers Nelson and Robb received a call from the Franklin County Sheriff's Office about untagged bags of oysters they located at a residence while in the process of making an unrelated arrest. The officers arrived on scene and acquired statements from the occupants of the residence. They also followed a lead and reviewed video surveillance at a business that showed the suspect in possession of the bags of oysters. The officers are in the process of filing warrants for the suspect.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

FRANKLIN COUNTY

The Offshore Patrol Vessel *GUARDIAN* participated in the kick-off of the Annual Apalachicola Seafood Festival with the "Blessing of the Fleet" event. The event invites local commercial fishing vessels, recreational vessels, law enforcement vessels, and other work vessels to participate. Thousands of people attended the event.

LEON COUNTY

Officer Travis was on land patrol in the Apalachicola WMA when he observed a vehicle stationary on the side of the road. Upon making contact with the driver, he learned that the driver's friend was hunting nearby and the driver was to pick him up later that

afternoon. The subject in the vehicle admitted to putting bait out, and that his buddy was hunting with a muzzleloader during archery season. Officer Travis contacted Officer Bell and K-9 Officer Anderson to assist in locating the bait. Upon making contact with the subject actively hunting, K-9 Scout located bait approximately 25 yards from the subject's hunting blind. The subject admitted to placing the bait in the WMA and hunting over bait. The subject was arrested for having a prohibited firearm in his possession while being a convicted felon. Charges for illegal method (attempting to take a deer with a muzzleloader during archery season) and attempting to take a deer over bait in a WMA will be direct filed. The subject was also cited for not having the appropriate hunting licenses and permits. The firearm was seized as evidence, and the subject was transported to the Leon County Jail.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CASES

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Officers Johnston and Cline were on foot patrol at the Alligator Lake Fish Management Area and conducted surveillance on three people fishing at night. From a concealed position, the officers were able to identify that the people had caught a small alligator and were recording videos with it. The officers approached the people and removed the alligator from their possession. Citations were issued for the unlawful taking and possession of an American Alligator.

Officer McDonald was on foot patrol on Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD) land when he located an individual hunting on the property closed to hunting. The man was hunting from a tree stand that overlooked a feeder that contained corn. Officer McDonald had located the feeder and stand the previous hunting season, but was unable to make contact with the individual. The man was cited for hunting and placing seed (corn) on SRWMD land. A warning was issued for operation of an ATV on SRWMD land.

DUVAL COUNTY

Officers Waldo and Griffis were patrolling a hunt club off Thomas Creek Road (Rayonier Property) when they heard a gunshot. Both officers checked several individuals who were coming out of the woods and also driving in the area of the gunshot. It was discovered that several subjects, who were related, were hunting and shooting at turkeys. One of the subjects, a juvenile, was issued written warnings by Officer Griffis for not having a hunting license or turkey permit. During the investigation, it was discovered that the group were hunting turkeys over bait. Officer Waldo issued one of the subjects a notice to appear for hunting turkey over bait, less than 100 yards from feeder.

FWC officers from the Jacksonville Area II worked a joint enforcement operational plan during the weekend of the Florida/Georgia Football Game. FWC officers worked with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, United States Coast Guard (USCG), and the US Fish & Wildlife Service on vessel patrol during the event. Several written warnings and boating citations were issued during the event.

FWC officers from the North Central and Northeast regions assisted the Jacksonville Beach Police Department with providing public safety and law enforcement vehicle and land-based water patrol during the annual Sea & Sky Blue Angels Air Show. FWC officers worked on Jacksonville Beach alongside Jacksonville Beach police officers for the four-day event which brought in thousands of spectators. There were only minor incidents during the four-day event with no FWC citations or arrests.

LAFAYETTE COUNTY

Officer Davenport was on land patrol in Lafayette County when he observed several individuals hunting dove inside a high-fence game farm. While continuing to watch the hunters actively hunt dove, Officer Davenport contacted Officers Ransom and Mobley to assist. Officers Davenport, Ransom and Mobley entered the game farm and made contact with the game farm owner and advised they would be inspecting licenses and bag limits of the hunters. While inspecting the area, FRM 3-Way Scratch, wheat, corn and milo were found scattered throughout the entire field. Approximately 15 hunters were inspected and a subject was cited for an unplugged shotgun violation by Officer Ransom. The hunters stated they were unaware of the bait that was placed on the ground and advised they paid to hunt dove in the field. The owner of the game farm was interviewed and photographs were taken of the baited dove field. The appropriate charges are being filed with the state attorney's office.

RESCUES

ST. JOHNS COUNTY

Officer Martino, assigned to the South B Region, was traveling on the interstate through St. Johns County when he was passed by a St. Johns County Sheriff's deputy vehicle with lights and siren on. The deputy waved his hand in a "follow me" motion, so Officer Martino activated lights and followed the deputy. The officers stopped on the side of the highway behind a Toyota truck where a woman was standing outside her passenger door and an unconscious adult man was slumped in the passenger seat. She told the officers her husband was having a heart attack and they pulled him from the truck. The deputy checked for vital signs and started chest compressions while Officer Martino retrieved the AED from the deputy's car. Officer Martino applied the AED patches and assisted with chest compressions until EMS and other deputies arrived. EMS transported the victim to Flagler Medical Center.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

SUWANNEE COUNTY

Officer Mobley participated in the Suwannee County Fall Festival with more than 1,000 people in attendance. Officer Mobley brought an American Alligator to display and answered questions about the FWC as well as hunting and fishing regulations.

NORTHEAST REGION

CASES

LAKE COUNTY

Officers Morrow and Scrambling were flagged down by a motorist on County Road 452 because a male was exposing himself to traffic. Both officers approached the subject, who continued to expose himself. While attempting to arrest the subject, he actively resisted. The subject was turned over to the Lake County Sheriff's Department who had him transported to a local hospital and committed for a mental health evaluation under the Baker Act.

VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officer Sapp, while on patrol in Tiger Bay State Forest, observed a male subject wearing camouflage. While speaking with the subject, Officer Sapp saw specks of blood on the male's pants. When asked about the blood, the subject said he had taken his first turkey and showed Officer Sapp a small hen turkey. The subject was charged with hunting in the WMA during closed season and taking turkey during closed season. The turkey and the subject's shotgun were seized as evidence.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officer Demeter participated in the annual "Tomokafest" event at Tomoka State Park. Officer Demeter used the exhibit trailer to share information and explain the agency mission to 60 attendees of the event.

Captain Smith, Lieutenant Dickson, Officer Taylor, K-9 Officer North and K-9 Max, along with Public Information Officer Weber attended the Southeastern State Park Directors Conference. There were approximately 80 representatives from as far away as Arizona. The FWC partnered with the Florida State Parks, the Florida Forest Service, St. Johns River Water Management District and the US Department of Agriculture. Regional Wildlife Assistance Biologist Susan Carrol Douglas and Stacey Lamborn from the Florida Youth Conservation Center Network were also on hand and provided the State Park Directors with information on other programs which our agency offers.

Lieutenant Chase attended the “Become an Outdoor Woman” event at the Ocala Youth Camp. This was a two-day event focusing on women learning outdoor skills usually associated with hunting and fishing, and a variety of outdoor pursuits. There were 110 women in attendance. Lieutenant Chase taught boating safety, boat handling, kayaking, canoeing and geocaching.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CASES

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

While on land patrol, Officers Ahlers and Martinez observed a subject cast net fishing near Palm River. A subsequent resource inspection revealed the subject had cast netted two undersized snook, the largest being 12 inches. The subject was cited for possession of undersized snook and over the daily bag limit of snook and warned for catching them through illegal method.

While on land patrol near Kracker Avenue, Officer Martinez noticed a man walking out of a dead-end road carrying a large white cooler. The subject admitted to cast netting and said he didn’t know what he had. The subject gave Officer Martinez permission to search his cooler, and a subsequent search found that he was in possession of five black drum, all of which were 10 to 11 inches (legal size is 14 inches). The subject was cited accordingly for the violations.

MANATEE COUNTY

Investigator Laskowski was conducting resource inspections along the relief bridge at the Skyway Bridge fishing area when he observed a male subject wearing a wet suit exit the water near the south seawall. Investigator Laskowski also observed several subjects spear fishing, using scuba equipment with no diver down device displayed. He continued to observe the subjects from a concealed location until Officer Buckson arrived on scene to assist with the resource inspections. The officers identified themselves and conducted a resource inspection as the spearfishermen were leaving the area. Two subjects were found to be in violation and were cited for possession of over the bag limit of snook, undersized snook, undersized gag grouper, illegal method for taking snook, no snook stamp and one expired fishing license. Both subjects were given a mandatory court appearance for the misdemeanor violations.

PINELLAS COUNTY

While on foot patrol at the Tierra Verde Bridge, Officer Bibeau observed multiple people actively fishing. He conducted a fisheries inspection and, at the conclusion, found an individual to be in possession of an undersized gag grouper that measured only 12 inches. The individual was cited accordingly.

Officers Bibeau and Godfrey were on water patrol in Clearwater Pass when they stopped an individual on a kayak to conduct a boating safety and fisheries inspection. While conducting the inspection, the individual on board the kayak advised the officers that he had caught a redfish and showed them a redfish that was located on a stringer. The officers were able to observe a second redfish that was also attached to the stringer that the individual was attempting to conceal. Officer Godfrey wrote the individual a misdemeanor citation for being over the daily bag limit of redfish.

While on patrol near the North Skyway fishing pier, Officer Martinez observed a subject who had been fishing. When asked if he had any fish in a large cooler next to him, the subject stated he just had bait fish. After giving consent to search, Officer Martinez found one gag grouper that measured 10 1/2 inches (legal size is 24 inches). The subject was cited accordingly.

POLK COUNTY

Lieutenant Futch received information that a subject entered the Green Swamp WMA in a non-designated entry point and killed an illegal deer. Once on scene, a witness statement was obtained from the complainant, and a location was found with blood and drag marks leading to the fence of the WMA. Lieutenant Futch contacted Officer Tyer and provided her with the information, including the suspect's tag number. Officer Tyer went to the suspect's home and made contact. Following a brief interview, the subject admitted to entering the WMA illegally and provided her with the deer's head and antlers. Officer Tyer determined the antlers were not legal and seized the deer as evidence. Charges will be direct filed with the state attorney's office.

Lieutenant Futch was working a detail during the statewide alligator season, and observed a vessel displaying a light and determined the occupants were hunting alligators. From a concealed location, he heard the distinct sound of a firearm discharge. As the vessel began to move, he made contact with the subjects. Lieutenant Futch asked if there were any firearms on board and one of the subjects stated he had a pistol. The subject later stated he killed the alligator with the pistol. Lieutenant Futch issued the subject a notice to appear for taking alligator by illegal method.

Officer Tyer was on land patrol when she observed a vehicle pulling a boat trailer with a faulty taillight. She initiated a traffic stop and made contact with the driver. As she asked for the appropriate documentation, the driver advised her he was a habitual traffic offender and knew he was not supposed to be driving. Officer Tyer verified the information and subsequently placed the subject under arrest for felony driving while license suspended or revoked.

Officer Tyer began an investigation when she observed a vessel dumped on the side of a public roadway. Through her investigation, she determined who the owner of the vessel was and made contact. The owner admitted to illegally dumping the vessel. Officer Tyer will be direct filing charges with the state attorney's office.

SARASOTA COUNTY

Officer Hughes was on land patrol in the area of the John Ringling Bridge and stopped and performed a fisheries inspection on a man fishing from the seawall underneath the bridge. During the course of the inspection, the subject was found to have caught and kept an undersized gag grouper. The subject was cited accordingly.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

POLK COUNTY

On opening weekend of general gun season, Officer Creel initiated a targeted enforcement plan to check hunters at the Avon Park Air Force Range WMA. Officer Creel utilized officers from several patrol areas to help with this detail. More than 200 users were checked and multiple citations were issued for resource and traffic violations.

SOUTH A REGION

CASES

BROWARD COUNTY

Captive Wildlife Investigator Corteguera conducted an inspection in reference to possible animal neglect. The request for assistance was received from a local police department and Investigators Alford and K-9 Officer Wright assisted with the inspection. The inspection revealed that an individual was in possession of a ring-tailed lemur without the required license. The animal was emaciated and being kept in poor living conditions. The owner was cited for possession of the animal without a license and received eight warnings for violations pertaining to the illegal possession, housing, and welfare of the animal. The individual released ownership of the ring-tailed lemur to the FWC, which placed it at a properly permitted facility where it is receiving veterinary care.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer McLendon responded to the J.W. Corbett WMA in reference to the taking of a short-antlered buck. Upon questioning, the deer hunter admitted to shooting the deer several times with his shotgun from a tree stand. When measured, the antlers of the buck were several inches short of the required 10-inch main beam or 3 points on one side requirement. The deer was seized and the hunter was cited accordingly.

ST. LUCIE COUNTY

K-9 Officer Payne responded to a complaint of an individual who was supposedly in possession of a gopher tortoise. Gopher tortoises are a protected species and specimens, including eggs and burrows, are not to be handled or molested. Upon his arrival at the residence, he met with the complainant, who had rightful access to the property and showed the officer the location of the tortoise. Officer Payne observed the tortoise swimming in a plastic container and the shell was not of normal coloration. Contact was then made with the individual keeping the tortoise. He stated that he had assisted the tortoise in crossing the street and that all he wanted to do was give it water. The subject was issued a citation for possession of a threatened species.

Officer Shermetaro was on patrol in the western part of the county very late at night and observed a vehicle on the roadway which was shining a light onto private property. On approaching the driver, he observed a loaded rifle near his seat. After further investigation and interviews, Officer Shermetaro concluded that the subject did not have permission to hunt on the property. The defendant was issued a citation for hunting from a roadway with a gun and light.

Officer Shermetaro was conducting surveillance at a local spillway in Fort Pierce, looking for subjects harvesting undersized snook. He observed two men catch a snook that appeared to be undersized. The men immediately walked towards their vehicle and placed the snook in their truck and began to drive away. Officer Shermetaro followed the suspect's vehicle and conducted a traffic stop. Contact was made with the driver and a resource inspection was conducted. The snook was found to be undersized and the driver was issued a citation for the violation.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

MARTIN COUNTY

Officers Morrow and Aswall conducted high-visibility water patrol along the St. Lucie River and Intracoastal Waterway, in reference to the Stuart Airshow. The officers maintained a presence in areas heavily populated by vessel traffic and addressed safety violations and navigation rules.

SOUTH B REGION

CASES

COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Miller was on land patrol in the area of Port of the Isles when he observed two individuals fishing from a bank. He approached the individuals and performed a resource inspection. The individuals stated that they had no fish. Officer Miller then observed a bucket behind a van that was parked up the bank from them and asked if it belonged to the individuals. One of the individuals stated that it was his and that he had

a small redfish, but wasn't sure how big it needed to be. Officer Miller measured the fish which was 15 inches. The individual who claimed the fish was cited accordingly, and the fish was returned alive to the resource.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

Officers were on water patrol near the Haulover Sandbar when they observed several PWCs plowing through the posted manatee zone. Upon stopping the first two PWCs, it was apparent to the officers the PWC was rented from a livery operation. An inspection was conducted and subsequent violations were discovered. The livery operator was cited for several violations and was provided guidance to gain compliance.

An officer was on patrol at dusk in the Southern Glades WMA when he heard multiple gunshots. The officer searched the area along with some abandoned buildings but could not locate the subjects. However, he discovered a parked car near an entrance gate so he covertly waited to see if anyone would return to it. Approximately two hours later after dark, he detected three subjects returning to the vehicle. With a federal officer also on the scene, the FWC officer confronted the subjects who admitted to doing the shooting. One subject had actually shot himself in the finger while cleaning his gun. EMS was called to the scene to transport the injured subject to the hospital for further treatment. All three subjects received citations for discharging their firearms in an prohibited area.

An FWC officer was on patrol when he observed a van on the north side of the road with one male subject littering from the van. The officer stopped the vehicle and returned to the area where the dumping occurred. The garbage included one pallet and several cardboard boxes. The subject was wanted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement and was arrested and cited accordingly.

MONROE COUNTY

Officer Plussa, while conducting a boating safety inspection, discovered that the operator had a suspended driver license. Officer Plussa then requested his vehicle and trailer registration and proof of auto insurance. The suspect could not produce valid auto insurance or the trailer registration certificate. A safety inspection also revealed an unserviceable fire extinguisher and no functioning all-around white light. The vessel inspection revealed that the vessel did not have a Hull Identification Number (HIN) displayed as required by law. The subject was cited accordingly.

Officers Richards, Wagner and Mobley were on a night-shift JEA patrol out of Key West on the Offshore Patrol Vessel *Interceptor*. While exiting Key West Harbor, a small vessel was observed without registration numbers. During a boating safety and registration check, the vessel was found to have several prior warnings and citations for similar violations. Officer Mobley issued a notice to appear for the criminal violations. The officers then inspected an 85-foot shrimp trawler that had been fishing in the Atlantic. The vessel failed to have an active federal south Atlantic shrimp permit, and

Officer Mobley filed a federal case packet for the violation. The remainder of the patrol was spent working the Tortugas Shrimp Sanctuary.

Lieutenant Peters, Officers Lopez, Garrison and Munkelt served a warrant for a mate of a vessel that has been fishing untagged traps on the ocean side of Marathon. The arrest comes after a two-month investigation into the untagged traps, crew and vessel. In all, 19 traps were documented to be fished while being untagged along with improper numbering on the traps and buoy display. The individual was charged with a total of 71 misdemeanor counts. The Captain of the vessel is currently in Cuba, but an active warrant is out for his arrest. The mate was booked into the Monroe County Jail with a bond amount of \$71,000.

Officer Rubenstein was on patrol in Duck Key when he conducted a resource check of a subject fishing near the entrance to Duck Key. Officer Rubenstein noticed the individual was having some luck but the fish appeared to be undersized. When approached and asked if he had kept any fish, he walked over and showed the contents of his cooler. He was in possession of 3 undersized lane snapper, 3 undersized yellowtail snapper, 1 undersized mutton snapper, and 3 puddingwife marine life species, along with many other unregulated species. The individual admitted to catching and keeping all the fish in the cooler and was educated and cited accordingly.

Officers Mattson and Garcia were patrolling southbound on US 1 when they noticed two vehicles parked next to Tea Table Relief Bridge in Islamorada. Upon searching the area, they observed a family trespassing on private property. During the investigation, Officer Mattson discovered a hidden cooler next to a tent which contained 6 gray snappers, 3 of which were undersized. One individual was cited accordingly.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Curbelo and Johnson were dispatched to Cypress Wood Presbyterian Church regarding an alligator on the property in close proximity to children. The officers arrived on the scene and with guidance from Officer Johnson, his Field Training Officer, Officer Curbelo utilized his catch pole to secure the approximately 4-foot alligator. The alligator was relocated to a canal in a more rural part of the county. This was Officer Curbelo's first time capturing an alligator since his assignment to Collier County.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

An officer responded to a call of an alligator attacking a pet dog near Coral Way. Upon arrival, the wife explained that the husband was walking their dog alongside a nearby canal. The dog walked down the embankment and was suddenly attacked by an approximately eight-foot alligator. The husband threw several rocks at the alligator and startled it into letting go of the dog. The husband recovered the dog and transported him

to a nearby veterinary clinic where it was successfully treated. Arrangements were being made to locate and remove the alligator from the residential area.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Barringer, Johnson, Osorio-Borja, Tidwell and White conducted a manatee zone enforcement detail from Johnson's Bay to Keewaydin Island. Their enforcement efforts were designed to raise awareness of manatee speed zones to seasonal and local boaters. Using an educational approach, the officers issued several citations and warnings.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

MONROE COUNTY

Officers Dube, Wagner and Mobley were invited to give a presentation to staff and residents of the Venture Out Boat Club on Cudjoe Key. Officer Dube was asked to talk about the history of the FWC along with how the FWC Commission works and its law-making procedures. Officer Dube also discussed current events and recent regulation changes that concerns boaters. The presentation concluded with a question and answer session about the screwworm problems with the Key Deer and current and proposed fishing regulations. There were approximately 150 people in attendance and, after the presentation, many of them spoke with and praised the officers for their professionalism and efforts to conserving the resources of the state.