

FWC
Division of Law Enforcement



Weekly Report
November 18, 2016 through December 1, 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 Basford and Palmer were working night hunting when they heard a shot from a rifle. They noticed a vehicle leaving a dead-end road near their location at a high rate of speed. The officers conducted a stop of the vehicle, and as the vehicle came to a complete stop, the passenger exited the vehicle and ran into the surrounding neighborhood. The driver of the vehicle remained at the scene. After questioning, the driver stated that he and the passenger shot at a deer near the end of the dirt road, but left when they missed. The driver identified the passenger and the officers determined that the passenger was a convicted felon. The driver stated that the passenger threw the rifle out the vehicle window when the officers turned on the blue lights. Officer Gore and K-9 Kane were called out to assist with locating the firearm. After a thorough search, K-9 Kane located the firearm just off the side of the highway. The driver was charged with attempting to take deer with a gun and light as well as hunting from the right of way. Charges on the passenger will be direct filed through the state attorney's office.

Officer Basford was working night hunting when he saw a vehicle traveling south very slowly on Old Allanton Road. He noticed the vehicle turn off of the road into one of the fields and sweep the field with its headlights in a manner capable of disclosing wildlife. After the vehicle returned to the road and passed his location, Officer Basford noticed the barrel of a rifle sticking out the passenger side window. He then followed the vehicle down the road and watched the vehicle enter several different fields and a powerline right of way - each time sweeping the area with the vehicle's headlights. Officer Basford conducted a stop of the vehicle with two occupants. He found a loaded 30-06 rifle in the back seat and a .243 in the front seat. Both the driver and the passenger were charged with attempting to take deer with a gun and light.

Officers Wicker and Basford were on patrol in federal waters off Inlet Beach when conducted a resource inspection on a vessel with two individuals on board. During the inspection, one of the individuals said they had some lion fish and snapper. A closer inspection of their catch showed several lion fish, three red snapper and a few other fish. One of the individuals stated he shot the red snapper and the other individual only shot the lion fish. The one individual was issued a citation for possession of red snapper in federal waters during closure.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

While on water patrol in Pensacola Bay, Officer Cushing conducted a resource inspection of a recreational vessel returning from a fishing trip. While alongside, Officer Cushing asked the persons on board if they had any fish. The operator/owner of the vessel responded that they had ten mahogany snapper. Upon further inspection, it was

revealed that they had eleven undersized red snapper during closed season. The appropriate action was taken for the violation.

Lieutenant Lambert was working in the area of Salter's Lake in the Escambia River Wildlife Management Area (WMA) when he heard a gunshot nearby. Several hours later, he spoke to a hunter exiting the area who witnessed two individuals dragging a deer. Lieutenant Lambert responded to the area and spoke to two individuals who were at their truck in the parking area. Both subjects denied shooting anything. One of the subject's boots had a large smear on it. The subject explained the blood was from cleaning a squirrel the day before. After interviewing the subjects, one of them admitted to killing a deer. Both subjects led Lieutenant Lambert to a small buck with spikes approximately one inch in length. The deer had been gutted and left approximately 500 yards away. A notice to appear citation was issued for the illegal deer.

Officer Clark responded to a call in which the complainant advised that there was an owl caught on a line on an adjacent piece of property. The complainant escorted the officer around the property, where a dead barred owl was seen caught in a steel trap, one of three which were set on top of wooden poles. There were also more than 100 chickens on the 2-acre piece of property, housed in a variety of containers and some roaming free, with little sign of food and water. The small amount of food and water was mixed with feces and appeared old. The landowner claimed the chickens belonged to her son and he must have set the steel traps. Officer Clark interviewed the suspect and confirmed he set the traps. The subject was cited accordingly for setting steel traps in an attempt to take wildlife and for killing the owl. The officer also contacted animal control regarding the chickens. The animal control officer responded and issued both subjects citations for 79 counts of animal cruelty.

Officers Long, Manning and Allgood conducted a fisheries inspection on the commercial fishing vessel, *Family Feud*, where they discovered 28 undersized vermillion snapper, two undersized red snapper, and one undersized gray triggerfish. The fish were seized and the captain of the vessel was issued notice to appear citations for possession of undersized vermillion snapper, red snapper, and gray triggerfish. The captain will also be subject to enhanced penalties due to similar citations previously issued within the last six months.

FRANKLIN COUNTY

Officer Nelson was conducting oyster enforcement in the East Point area and observed a commercial oyster vessel with one individual on board approach his location. A resource inspection of the vessel revealed the individual was in possession of four bags of oysters, which is in violation of the allowable three bags per person, per day commercial limit for Apalachicola Bay. Prior to the completion of the resource inspection, the individual threw one bag of oysters from his vessel into the water. A brief search for the missing bag of oysters revealed that the bag of oysters was in shallow water in close proximity to the oyster vessel. The bag of oysters was recovered from the water and appropriate action was taken.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Pifer was on vessel patrol conducting state fisheries inspections in the Destin Pass, and stopped a vessel returning from fishing in the Gulf of Mexico. There were two individuals on board and said that they caught four red snapper. One of the individuals started lifting the fish out of the cooler for the officer's inspection. After the fourth fish, Officer Pifer saw what appeared to be a fifth red snapper underneath a bag of ice. After boarding the vessel, it was confirmed the fish was a red snapper. The boat operator was cited accordingly for over the bag limit.

Officer Pifer was on land patrol conducting state game and license inspections on Eglin WMA when he observed two vehicles parked off Range Road 207 in the Jackson North hunting area. Officer Pifer began foot patrol, with the assistance of Officer Corbin, to locate the hunter(s). They located a hunter next to his tree stand who was beginning to track a blood trail from a deer he had shot with his bow and arrow. The hunter and the officers located the downed deer, which was a spotted fawn. The hunter was cited accordingly.

Officer Molnar pulled alongside a 45-foot cabin motor vessel anchored in the Destin Harbor. He had prior knowledge that the current owner had not transferred the vessel title into his name. As he pulled alongside, Officer Molnar could smell a strong odor of cannabis coming from the vessel. When he announced his presence, the vessel owner came up from inside the cabin. When asked, the subject stated there was a pipe in the cabin. A search revealed a glass smoking device, cannabis less than 20 grams and a cannabis grinder. The subject provided a bill of sale and the vessel title documenting the purchase transaction of the vessel. Officer Molnar charged the subject with possession of cannabis less than 20 grams, possession of drug paraphernalia and failure to apply for a vessel title within 30 days of change in ownership. The subject was also issued a warning for not displaying a hull identification number.

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officers Clark and Hutchinson received a complaint from a resident that someone had shot an 8-point buck on his property the night before. The complainant reported that the suspect was driving a white truck with a loud exhaust and the deer was left in the field. Later that evening, the officers observed a white pickup traveling at slow speed and displaying a light out the driver side window in a manner capable of disclosing the presence of deer. They followed the vehicle a short distance and observed the vehicle turn off the road and park in tall brush as if trying to conceal the vehicle. The officers initiated a stop and found the driver in possession of a loaded rifle. In the truck, a cooler with fresh deer meat and the head of a 6-point buck were found. The suspect claimed he hit the deer with his truck although the truck had no apparent damage. While being questioned, the suspect admitted he shot the buck a couple nights before. The suspect then led the officers to the location of the deer carcass. Only the back strap meat had been removed. The cooler in the suspect's truck contained meat from an entire deer.

The suspect then admitted to killing a doe deer a few days before - also at night with a rifle. The officers asked the suspect if he had any pictures of the deer he shot. He voluntarily showed the officers several photos, some of which were other bucks. Additional questioning revealed the suspect had shot five deer over the past couple of weeks. Two of the deer were shot in daylight hours and three were not. All of the deer were shot with a rifle. Upon completion of the interview, the officers seized a six-point deer, seven-point deer, eight-point deer, nine-point deer, a glass pipe with drug residue, 270 rifle with scope, 270 caliber bullets, sim card from phone, spotlight, and deer meat. The suspect was issued a notice to appear citation for attempting to take a deer with a gun and light and possession of drug paraphernalia. Warrants will be obtained for the additional charges of taking a deer with a gun and light along with taking a deer by illegal methods.

Officer Hutchinson was on foot patrol near a baited hunting site within the Blackwater State Forest. As he was walking towards the baited site, he observed two subjects in camouflage standing near a parked vehicle in close proximity to the trail leading to the bait. Officer Hutchinson crawled towards the vehicle for approximately 75 yards until he was within 10 yards of the vehicle. After watching the subjects for a while, he observed another subject walking towards the vehicle coming from the area of the trail leading to the baited site. After the subject reached the parked vehicle, another vehicle drove up and the third subject got in it. Officer Hutchinson made contact with all subjects and questioned them about the baited site. The third subject was untruthful at first. Officer Hutchinson checked the tread on the subject's boots and then followed his tracks in the sand to the baited site while the subject accompanied him. He then admitted to placing the bait and the hunting stand on the management area. He was issued a notice to appear citation for placing bait in a management area.

Officer Hutchinson received a complaint regarding a subject who had dumped two deer carcasses on the side of the road. The complainant informed him that the subject drove a small truck with an Alabama license plate and was traveling south along the road. After several minutes, the complainant contacted Officer Hutchinson again and informed him of the location of the suspect's vehicle. Officer Hutchinson drove to where the deer were dumped and discovered an antlerless deer and a spotted fawn carcass dumped along the right of way. He then drove to the suspect's location and observed fresh deer blood, hide and pieces of the fawn in the back of the truck. After questioning, the suspect admitted to harvesting the deer in Alabama and dumping the carcasses on the side of the road. After checking the subject's Alabama hunting license, Officer Hutchinson discovered that he didn't list either one of the deer on his license and he didn't report harvesting the deer, which is a requirement in Alabama. The subject was issued a notice to appear citation for littering in excess of 15 pounds and for possession of a spotted fawn. The subject removed the carcasses from the right of way. Alabama Game and Fish officers were notified of the violation in Alabama.

During the opening week of archery season, Officer Ramos discovered signs of illegal hunting over bait in the Eglin WMA. Over the course of several weeks, he conducted patrol and surveillance of the baited area, but found no one hunting over the bait. This

past Saturday, he returned to the area and found a subject hunting from a tree stand near the bait. After an interview, the man admitted to placing bait in the management area and was charged accordingly. In addition to several criminal charges, the suspect's hunting and fishing privileges in Eglin WMA were revoked for one year.

Officer Hutchinson was patrolling in Blackwater State Forest when he made contact with a male subject parked along one of the forest roads. The subject informed the officer about a shot he just heard from what sounded like a high-powered rifle. With more details, he determined that the shot came from a large piece of property surrounded by state forest. He drove to the private property and observed a mobile home and a camper parked under a shed approximately 300 yards away from the mobile home. A male subject walked out from behind the shed and Officer Hutchinson made contact with the subject, who appeared very nervous. While questioning the subject about the gun shot, he admitted shooting a doe deer with a high-powered rifle. He showed Officer Hutchinson the deer which was inside of a tractor bucket behind the shed. After further questioning, Officer Hutchinson discovered the subject was a convicted felon. The subject took Officer Hutchinson to where he placed the firearm after shooting the deer. Officer Hutchinson then discovered that the deer was shot on the Blackwater State Forest and the subject did not have a valid Florida hunting license or a WMA permit. After further investigation, Officer Hutchinson discovered another firearm that belonged to the subject. After seizing both firearms for evidence, the subject was issued a notice to appear citation for taking a deer during archery season with a firearm. He was issued a citation for hunting without a valid hunting license. Other charges are pending for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

Lieutenant Clark was on land patrol in Navarre when he observed billowing black smoke drifting over the highway and into surrounding communities. He located the source of the black smoke and fire at a residence off Highway 98, where the homeowner was spraying water on the fire with a garden hose. Prohibited material was being burned: a bed mattress, particle board type furniture and a PVC pipe. The homeowner was cited and issued a notice to appear environmental citation.

Officers Hoomes and Long were working archery season in Eglin WMA when they observed a truck parked near an area Officer Hoomes had previously located baited with corn. The officers walked to the area and observed a subject hunting from a tree stand approximately 15 yards from the corn. The subject denied placing the corn but did say he knew it was there. The subject was issued a citation for hunting over bait in a WMA.

RESCUES

FRANKLIN COUNTY

The offshore patrol vessel, *Guardian*, received a call for service from the U. S. Coast Guard (USCG) that a 42-foot vessel was sinking approximately 40 miles offshore with two individuals aboard. Lieutenant Marlow and Officers Boyd, Fletcher, Miller and Rice

responded in the rough conditions. As the *Guardian* travelled offshore, a USCG rescue helicopter came on scene and lowered a pump to the sinking vessel. The prevailing conditions and the damaged vessel continued to take on water and eventually sank, resulting in the individuals being forced to abandon the vessel. The USCG sent a rescue swimmer in to recover the individuals and they were safely returned to shore.

The offshore patrol vessel *Guardian* received a call for service from the USCG that a 60-foot commercial vessel was not operational and was taking on water just offshore of Little St. George Island. On board the *Guardian*, Lieutenant Marlow and Officers Matechik, Nelson and Raker responded in the rough conditions. The commercial vessel was positioned in shallow water and rough seas. The vessel had some damage resulting in the vessel taking on water and unable to start the engines and operate out of the shallow shoal area. The crew passed a battery to the disabled vessel in an attempt to start the engines. A USCG rescue helicopter arrived on scene and lowered a dewatering pump to the *Guardian* who in turn brought the pump to the vessel to assist with water evacuation from the vessel's hull. The vessel's crew maintained efforts to dewater the vessel and eventually the vessel started and was operated out of the dangerous area and unsafe conditions and returned to port safely.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

Officers Allgood and Clark conducted resource inspections in state waters in the Gulf of Mexico. They issued six misdemeanors for several violations to include possession of red snapper and gray triggerfish during the closed season.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officers Rockwell and Trueblood participated in a joint training evolution with the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office and Fort Walton Beach Police Department's SWAT on Okaloosa Island. The captain and crew of the offshore patrol vessel *Vigilance* provided a safe and steady platform for Sheriff's Office snipers during the scenarios. All three agencies worked efficiently together and their collective efforts resulted in a positive training evolution and outcome.

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officer Lewis attended College and Career Day at Jay High School. He spoke with the students on how to become an FWC officer and what to expect from a career as an FWC officer. Officer Lewis also answered many fish and wildlife related questions during the event.

Officer Lewis spoke with approximately 75 fourth grade students, teachers, and parents of Bagdad Elementary School at Blackwater River State Park. He explained FWC's mission, duties of an FWC officer, and the importance of conservation.

Officers Pifer and Molnar attended an outreach event at the Fort Walton Beach Police Department for the Fort Walton Beach Citizens' Police Academy Alumni. Sixteen individuals were in attendance. The officers spoke about the primary duties of an FWC officer as it relates to hunting/fishing/boating safety regulation and enforcement. The officers also spoke about the K-9, SOG, and Aviation Sections within the Division of Law Enforcement. The officers answered numerous questions from the group.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CASES

BAKER COUNTY

Lieutenant Huff was on land patrol in the John Bethea State Forest working a deer-dog hunting detail after concealing himself in the still-hunt portion of the state land when he observed a truck with dogs travelling into the still-hunt area. The hunter in the truck then cast hunting dogs into the still-hunt area in an attempt to run deer back into the dog hunt area. The hunter, after being checked, denied having knowledge of the still-hunt area even though he possessed a pamphlet with the correct information including signs posted in the area. The hunter was cited for use of dogs in the still-hunt area.

Lieutenant Huff, receiving information about a doe deer that was killed at night, went to the reported area and found a freshly killed doe deer that was shot with a small caliber rifle. After conducting multiple interviews, the suspects admitted to shooting the doe deer at night. The suspects could not find the deer they had shot and then tried shooting another deer in the field while using a spotlight. The second deer was not recovered. Two rifles were seized as evidence and the subjects will be charged with taking deer at night by use of gun and light and for taking an antlerless deer during the closed season.

BRADFORD COUNTY

K-9 Officer Gill received a call for assistance from the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) in reference to a fleeing suspect. The suspect had been in a high-speed pursuit with the troopers on State Road 100 into Bradford County. Officers Troiano, Stanley and Yates arrived at the scene to assist the troopers with securing a perimeter. With the perimeter established, Officer Gill deployed K-9 Friar on the track of the fleeing suspect, leading Officer Gill and the troopers through three fields, thick woods, crossing two fences and a creek two different times for approximately one mile. The track ultimately led the officers to an abandoned fruit stand by the side of the highway. K-9 Friar gave a positive response to Officer Gill indicating the suspect may have been concealed inside the fruit stand. The officers cleared the fruit stand and located the suspect inside. The suspect was apprehended and placed in the Bradford County Jail.

Lieutenant Glover was on land patrol in Bradford County when he heard sounds of individuals hunting doves. He located the property where the hunting was taking place and walked on foot to a concealed location to watch the hunters. Four subjects lined a pasture taking what appeared to be doves. After observing the subjects, Lieutenant Glover called Officer Barber to drive onto the property to conduct an inspection. During the inspection, they saw that the pasture was baited with cracked corn. They also found three of the subjects using shotguns that were capable of holding more than three rounds. Notices to appear in court were written for taking migratory birds over bait, using a shotgun capable of holding more than three rounds, and one infraction was issued for a license violation.

CLAY COUNTY

Officer Christmas was working the dog hunt at Camp Blanding WMA when he was notified of a subject using a spotlight from a vehicle attempting to take game before legal shooting hours. During a search of the area, he observed a truck with a roof mounted spotlight illuminating the woods as it traveled forward. The vehicle was stopped and the hunter was identified. A loaded 12-gauge shotgun was lying next to the hunter as he drove the truck and worked the spotlight. The hunter confessed to attempting to disclose the presence of deer with the use of the light. The hunter was cited accordingly.

Officer Christmas was working the dog hunt at Camp Blanding WMA when he observed a vehicle traveling on the roadway working a roof mounted spotlight before legal shooting hours. The vehicle was stopped and the hunter identified. A loaded 12-gauge shotgun was lying next to the hunter as he drove the truck and worked the spotlight. The hunter confessed to attempting to observe a buck deer with the use of the light. The hunter cited accordingly.

Officer Starling received information from Lieutenant Bridwell involving a subject taking illegal deer on private property and a convicted felon in possession of a firearm in the Maxville Area of Clay County. While in the area, he heard a shot coming from the property in question. A subject carrying a firearm dressed in camouflage came out of the woods where he had heard the shot. Officer Starling asked the subject if he had killed anything in which he stated that he had. After walking back with the subject to the area where he was hunting, it was found that the subject had shot an antlerless deer. Officer Starling issued the subject a citation for taking the illegal deer. Officer Starling then continued on his search for the subject in question and was able to locate him and another individual who confessed to killing two illegal deer on the same property. The two deer illegally killed were both under the allowed three points on one side or a total of ten-inch main beam rule. The investigation into the convicted felon in possession of a firearm is still ongoing.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Officer Johnston was off duty when he received an anonymous tip in reference to the unlawful take of an antlerless deer on private property in Columbia County. The information included an address and suspect's name. Officers Johnston and McDonald located the suspect at the address provided. After a brief interview, the suspect admitted to shooting an antlerless deer the previous morning. The suspect provided the officers with the harvested deer meat and location of the carcass and the rifle used to kill the antlerless deer. The deer meat was seized as evidence. The subject was cited accordingly.

DUVAL COUNTY

Officer Starling received information about a subject taking multiple deer illegally from both Cecil Commerce Center and Jacksonville Electrical Authority (JEA) properties. He was able to identify the subject and obtained a confession in reference to taking several illegal deer from both properties. The subject admitted to trespassing, placing corn alongside the roadway to attract deer and waiting several hours some mornings for deer to show up. Evidence found on the subject's cell phone corroborated the subject's story. The subject even used his company truck to transport the illegally taken deer home. Two firearms used in the commission of the crime were seized along with the illegally taken deer meat. There are several charges pending with the Duval County state attorney's office to include armed trespass, taking deer during closed season, taking deer by illegal method, taking deer not meeting the antlered restriction rule and several other infractions.

While working a duck-hunting detail in Duval County, Officers Rorer and Geib heard gunshots near Oak Harbor Boat Ramp. After more shots were fired, the officers were able to get near the area where the hunters were located. Several shots occurred after legal shooting hours (official sunset) and were recorded at the hunter's location. Several ducks were seen flying over the area. When the hunt was over the officers positioned their patrol boat to meet the hunters at the mouth of the creek. While talking with the hunters, they admitted they did not know the legal shooting hours. After conducting an inspection, a citation was issued for taking waterfowl after legal shooting hours.

Lieutenant Arkin was on vessel patrol in the St. Johns River in the vicinity of the downtown Jacksonville area between the Main Street Bridge and the Acosta Bridge when he observed a 16-foot Jon boat on a plane in the slow speed manatee zone. He made contact with the captain of the vessel, whose boat was taking on water. The captain pulled the vessel plug and began operating in circles in an attempt to drain the water. The vessel took on even more water and began sinking from the stern. One of the occupants moved to the bow of the vessel causing it to list to the port side and ultimately flip over. Both passengers and vessel captain ended up in the water when the Jon boat flipped. There was a strong outgoing tide when Lieutenant Arkin rescued the first passenger who was yelling for help, exhausted, and exhibiting symptoms of hypothermia. He then rescued the captain who had floated approximately 100 yards east of the Jacksonville Landing. Then the second passenger who was clinging to the Main Street Bridge bumper system was rescued. All three subjects refused medical

treatment from the Jacksonville Fire & Rescue Department. The vessel captain had slurred speech, was unsteady on his feet and had a strong odor of alcohol on his breath. Lieutenant Arkin conducted field sobriety tasks on the vessel captain and subsequently placed him under arrest for BUI. Lieutenant Arkin also charged the vessel captain with careless operation of a vessel and violation of a slow speed manatee zone. Officer Hoover is currently investigating the boating accident segment of this case.

Officer Hoover observed a truck parked at a locked gate for City of Jacksonville property off US 90, east of Baldwin in Jacksonville. Officers Schirbock and Hoover walked to the property looking for the subject. Both officers made contact with the subject at the back of the property as he was walking down a road. The subject stated that he was hunting and had permission to hunt on the property, but could not provide any paperwork proving that he had permission to be on the property. The subject was issued a notice to appear for hunting on City of Jacksonville property and a warning for trespassing.

Officers Schirbock and Hoover were on private land patrol on the west side of Jacksonville when they observed a silver Chevrolet truck stuck in a ditch on the Florida Power & Light (FPL) power lines road, north of Yellow Water Road. Both officers made contact with a male and female subject in the truck with a dirt bike. They both admitted to riding on FPL property on the dirt bike and in the truck. Another male, who was part of the group stuck in the ditch, was observed walking down the power line with a baby. The adult males and the female were all issued a notice to appear for trespassing on posted private property and the juvenile was issued a written warning for trespassing on posted private property.

Officers Rorer and Geib were on land patrol near the Little Jetties Park where they noticed several individuals fishing from the shore. As the officers approached, both individuals made their way into the water. They returned to their truck where the officers conducted an inspection, which revealed they were in possession of four undersized spotted sea trout. The appropriate citations were issued.

NASSAU COUNTY

Officer Christmas was on routine patrol after sunset when he observed two vehicles in violation traveling in Four Creeks WMA for approximately 1 1/2 hours. He attempted to stop both vehicles using the blue lights on his patrol truck when the front vehicle refused to stop and fled down a dead-end road. The vehicle turned around abruptly and came back towards Officer Christmas before he finally stopped. Officer Christmas observed marijuana on the floorboard by the driver's feet and had the driver exit the vehicle. The driver stated that leaving the marijuana on the floorboard was poor judgment and that he was going to jail anyway. More marijuana and a drug pipe were found in his black bag on the rear passenger seat. The bag was opened and a total of 10.2 grams of marijuana was located. A drug pipe and grinder were both found and seized as evidence. The driver was arrested and booked in the Nassau County Jail. He was charged with possession of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia. Both he and the other vehicle driver were cited an infraction for being in the WMA after hours.

Resource Protection Officer Tim Sweat responded to shots fired near private property that borders Four Creeks State Forest. Upon arrival, Officer Sweat was met in the street by an agitated landowner. After a brief explanation by Officer Sweat, the landowner became cooperative. He escorted Officer Sweat to the north boundary of his property where a hunter was located. The hunter was in possession of a freshly shot bobcat. The hunter had shot the cat on the Four Creeks State Forest within four feet of a pile of corn. The hunter admitted to placing the grain on state land. A notice to appear was issued for taking bobcat out of season. Two written warnings were also issued.

SUWANNEE COUNTY

Officer Boone received a call from a local landowner in reference to a deer that was possibly killed illegally on his property. At the location, blood, drag marks and shoe prints leading into the adjacent property were discovered. On the fence separating the two properties, there was blood and deer hair. Behind the adjacent residence, located at the edge of the wood line, there was a skinning rack covered with fresh blood and deer hair. At the base of the skinning rack was a planter bucket which contained a freshly butchered doe deer carcass. While conversing with the property owner, Officer Boone discovered his shoes matched the shoe prints from the adjacent property and there was blood on them. The subject admitted to shooting the doe deer on the neighboring property and transporting it back to his property where he cleaned the deer. The subject was also aware that antlerless deer were not in season. The charge of taking an antlerless deer out of season will be filed with the state attorney's office. At the request of the property owner, the subject was issued a written warning for trespassing.

While on night patrol in Twin Rivers State Forest Anderson Spring Tract, Officer Ransom observed a white Saturn parked in the parking area after hours. Three individuals were standing near the car and two of them appeared to be using lighters and smoking. As he approached, one subject discarded a clear glass pipe. This subject consented to a search of his person which revealed a plastic baggie of marijuana, a receipt containing marijuana and a small plastic travel container of dental floss. Upon closer inspection of the dental floss container, a plastic baggie holding a clear crystal-like substance was found hidden inside. The crystal-like substance fielded tested positive for methamphetamine. The subject was placed under arrest for felony possession of a controlled substance. A consensual search of the second subject uncovered a glass pipe and a marijuana cigarette. The second subject was cited for possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of marijuana and released at the scene. All the illegal items were seized and secured into evidence.

While on land patrol near Suwannee River Water Management District Mattair Spring Tract, Officer Ransom and Lieutenant Williams saw a UTV turned over in the roadway. The vehicle was occupied by one adult and two juveniles. The adult appeared to have sustained severe head injuries during the accident. Emergency medical services (EMS) was notified for an immediate response. Officer Ransom and Lieutenant Williams provided first responder care until EMS arrived on scene. The adult was air-lifted to

Shands Hospital in Gainesville. The juveniles were treated for minor injuries and released to family members. The FHP arrived on scene to investigate the vehicle accident.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

CITRUS COUNTY

Officers Canfield and Boyer were recently reassigned to the 2005 *Fin Cat* Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) based in Crystal River. On their first patrol in federal waters off Citrus County, their first vessel stop/inspection revealed one of the occupants to be in possession of an undersized gag grouper. The violation was documented and Officer Boyer will submit the case to National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for prosecution.

While conducting Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA) patrol in federal waters off Citrus and Hernando counties aboard the *Fin Cat*, Officers Canfield and Boyer conducted numerous vessel inspections resulting in the documentation of four separate federal fisheries violations: one for possession of gray trigger fish during a closed season; one for possession of greater amberjack during a closed season; one for possession of red snapper during a closed season; and one for possession of red snapper during the closed season and possession of undersize red grouper. All cases will be submitted to NOAA for prosecution.

While on patrol aboard the Patrol Vessel *Sentinel*, Officer Read discovered two red drum fish on a boat during an inspection. Red drum have been illegal to possess in federal waters of the South Atlantic since 1990. Officer Read issued federal citations for the violation and will submit the case to NOAA for prosecution.

On a separate patrol aboard the *Sentinel*, Officers Boyer, Canfield, Read and Lieutenant Givens patrolled the North Florida Marine Protected Area (MPA), a 100 square-mile area approximately 60 miles east of the St. Johns River entrance. While inside the MPA, the crew saw a commercial fishing vessel anchored inside the boundaries. Upon boarding the vessel, Officers Boyer, Canfield and Read discovered that the vessel was rigged for fishing, had baited hooks and were also in possession of grouper and snapper. It is a violation to fish for and to possess grouper/snapper complex species with fishing gear not properly stowed inside the MPA. Further inspection also revealed the fisherman to be in possession of one undersized gray trigger fish and one almaco jack during closed season. Officer Read issued federal citations for the violations and will submit the case to NOAA for prosecution.

NORTHEAST REGION

CASES

BREVARD COUNTY

While on patrol on board the offshore patrol vessel *Sea Hawk*, Officers Luce, Bohne and Eller located two commercial shrimp boats trawling in state waters at night offshore of Brevard County. The officers boarded the vessels and issued criminal citations to the vessel captains. It is illegal for commercial shrimp boats to pull their nets in state waters at night along the east coast during this time of year.

The Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) requested assistance in conducting a traffic stop on a vehicle in reference to a domestic battery. Investigator Horst responded to the area to provide assistance. Brevard County Sheriff's deputies and FHP troopers were able to get the vehicle stopped, but were notified by the female victim that a gopher tortoise was in the vehicle. Investigator Horst arrived on scene and interviewed the male and female subjects in the vehicle. The investigation determined that the subjects had passed through Archbold Biological Station and observed a tortoise on the side of the road. The male subject decided they would take the tortoise home and eat it. The male subject later broke off the radio transmitter device used to track animals' movements. The tortoise that was taken was part of an ongoing 49-year gopher tortoise study. The tortoise has been a part of the study for over 30 years and is frequently used in educational outreach programs at Archbold. Investigator Horst seized the tortoise and worked with biologists from FWC and Archbold to arrange returning the tortoise unharmed to Archbold. The male subject was charged with possession of an endangered/threatened species and criminal mischief under \$200. FHP investigated the domestic dispute.

LAKE COUNTY

Officer Morrow was patrolling in the Emerald Marsh Conservation Area when he heard the sound of several gun shots nearby in an area that was closed to hunting. Officer Morrow responded to the area and located two male subjects loading a Jon boat onto a trailer in the closed area. Officer Weber was nearby and responded to assist. After conducting a vessel safety inspection, several empty and loaded shotgun shells containing lead bird shot were found scattered on the deck of the boat. After a resource inspection, Officers Morrow and Weber discovered eleven ducks, two of which were moorhens which were out of season. They also discovered an unplugged shotgun. Both men were issued the appropriate citations for the violations.

MARION COUNTY

K-9 Officer Simpson responded to a complaint of an antlerless deer that was unlawfully harvested in the Ocala WMA. After the investigation, Officer Simpson obtained a confession from a subject that admitted to killing a button buck on the WMA. The subject was charged with unlawful harvest of an antlerless deer and for not having a WMA permit.

PUTNAM COUNTY

Officer Jones was conducting fisheries inspections at the Palatka City Docks when he made contact with two male subjects harvesting shrimp. During the inspection, it was found that the subjects were in possession of 20+ gallons of shrimp (two times more than the limit) and black bass that had been caught by cast netting. Both subjects were issued citations for over the bag limit of shrimp and unlawful method of taking black bass. All evidence returned to the resource.

ST. JOHNS COUNTY

Officer Graves was on land patrol checking the boat ramps off the ICW in south St. Johns County when he observed a Volusia County commercial fisherman about to put his vessel on its trailer. As he approached the fisherman, he saw a cast net and a mixture of 150 black and striped mullet in multiple plastic baskets in the boat. The fisherman told Officer Graves that he had been recreationally harvesting mullet for bait to restock his blue crab traps. The fisherman was advised that the recreational vessel bag limit for mullet during September 1–January 31 is 50 per day. A misdemeanor citation was issued for exceeding the daily mullet bag limit.

Officers Graves, Harris, Lawrence, J. Miller, Taylor, Demeter and Lieutenant Zukowsky teamed up with USCG enforcement personnel from Sector Jacksonville and Station Mayport to conduct a joint operation focusing on Turtle Excluder Device (TED) and commercial shrimping regulation enforcement. Three boarding teams got underway out of St. Augustine Inlet and the St. Johns River. The FWC OPV *Sentinel*, captained by Lieutenant Givens, worked out of Mayport and targeted vessels off of Duval and north St. Johns counties. The FWC OPV *Osprey*, captained by Officer McDonough, and one FWC local patrol vessel working with a USCG Station Mayport vessel worked out of St. Augustine Inlet. The three boarding teams boarded four vessels and discovered only two fisheries/gear violations on one of the vessels: TED flaps at 28 inches and 27 inches were corrected on the spot to the maximum allowable 24 inches.

SUMTER COUNTY

Officer Shaw responded to the check station at Half Moon WMA due to a subject who harvested an illegal deer. The subject stated he saw the deer and believed it was legal. Officer Shaw measured the spike deer and the longest main beam measured 7.5 inches. The subject was cited for violation of Half Moon WMA legal game, which is a 10-inch minimum main beam, or 1 antler with 3 or more points.

VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officer Laroche and Lieutenant Eason responded to Blue Spring Run in reference to two swimmers in the manatee sanctuary. There were reported to be five manatees present in the same area which is restricted to swimming. Upon arrival, two adult male subjects were observed swimming in the restricted area. Officer Laroche ordered the two subjects out of the water. One of the male subjects had a bottle of liquor in his hand and discarded it into the water once ashore. The subject was then ordered to collect the

bottle even though he denied being in possession of the alcoholic beverage. Both subjects were 20 years of age. Two noncriminal citations were issued for swimming in a restricted area. Also, the subject who discarded the bottle of liquor was given an additional citation for littering and a criminal citation for possession of alcohol by a person under 21 years of age.

Officers North and Bellville encountered three individuals in the campground after sunset at Tiger Bay State Forest, Rima Ridge Unit. The state forest is closed to visitors at sunset except for registered campers. The officers determined the group was not registered to camp and while addressing the violation, the officers observed a marijuana roach in plain view on the picnic table. Upon further investigation, the officers found one of the individuals to be in possession of 15 individually packaged, 8-gram baggies of cannabis, scales, baggies and drug paraphernalia. The total weight of the cannabis was approximately ¼ pound. The suspect was arrested for possession of cannabis with the intent to distribute and booked into the Volusia County Jail.

Officers worked a special detail targeting illegal hunting on opening morning of general gun season in Lake George WMA. One person was charged with attempting to take deer at night with a gun and light. A .243 rifle, ammunition and spotlight were seized as evidence.

Officer Krynicki responded to a complaint where a landowner caught two hounds that were running deer on his property. Officer Krynicki obtained a sworn, written complaint from the landowner, then met with the hunter to return the hounds. The charge of allowing dogs to pursue wildlife on private property without landowner permission was direct filed against the owner of the hounds.

Officers Malicoat and Goodreau were on water patrol in the Edgewater area when they observed a vessel with two adults on board and the vessel operating on full plane speed in violation of a posted regulated idle speed zone. Once the vessel was stopped, a fisheries inspection was completed. The vessel occupants were found to be in possession of two goliath grouper which are prohibited to possess at any time. They were also in possession limit of sheepshead under the legal size and did not have a saltwater fishing license. The harvester was issued the criminal notice to appear for the goliath grouper violation and the other violations were also documented.

Officer Malicoat responded to a tip that adults were possibly keeping illegal fish near the Canaveral National Seashore Park. She arrived and identified those individuals who were still actively fishing and where they had stored their catch. She inspected their catch and found them to be in possession of several spotted seatrout and mangrove snapper under the legal size limit. The adult who claimed the catch as his was issued the criminal notice to appear for the violation.

Officers were working the pre-dawn hours in Lake George WMA when they observed a man illuminate a deer with a spotlight and fire a shot at it. The man was taken into custody. At the man's vehicle, the officers detected the smell of marijuana coming from

the truck. The man told officers he had marijuana and methamphetamine in the truck, along with Adderall pills that he had no prescription for. A search of the truck turned up all of the items the man told officers were in the truck and a smoking pipe. He was arrested and booked on various felony and misdemeanor drug charges, as well attempting to take deer at night with a gun and light.

Officer McKee was returning to his vehicle from water patrol at Pier 44 when he observed a small vessel occupied by two adults and one small child heading north through the slow speed zone. The vessel was being operated at a high speed and moving erratically to the left and right. Officer McKee used his loud speaker to advise the vessel operator to slow down. Officer McKee then left Pier 44 and headed to Ed Stone Park where the vessel was heading. He conducted a boating safety inspection on the vessel and detected a strong odor of an alcoholic beverage when the operator spoke to him. Alcohol was present inside the vessel and the vessel operator openly advised Officer McKee that he was "drunk." After submitting to seated sobriety tasks, the subject was placed under arrest for BUI. The suspect provided a breath sample which was almost twice the legal limit.

RESCUES

PUTNAM COUNTY

Lieutenant Dickson and Officers Campbell and Taylor received information through FWC dispatch that there was a lost boater on the Ocklawaha River. The lost boater called and was trying to give information about his location, but FWC dispatchers had trouble communicating with him due to a language barrier. FWC dispatchers had an FHP dispatcher interpret. The FWC was given GPS coordinates from the lost boater and launched a vessel to locate and assist the lost boater. The lost boater did not want to move because it was dark and he didn't know what direction to travel in. Lieutenant Dickson tried to go along the shore by vehicle, but the woods along the river were too thick. Officer Campbell informed some other boaters in the area that were frog-gigging to be on the look-out for the lost boater and gave them his card. That paid off when the other boaters found the lost boater up a small creek off the river that was nowhere near the GPS coordinates FWC was given. Officers Campbell and Taylor escorted the boater back to the boat ramp.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

BREVARD COUNTY

Officers Bohne and Humphrey gave presentations about local waterfowl to children at Jefferson Middle School on Merritt Island. The event was in support of the Junior Duck Stamp Contest. The officers used taxidermy specimens of various types of ducks and discussed species identification, and the various types of habitats in which ducks may be found. The officers taught several blocks throughout the day and spoke to more than 150 students.

VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officer Ward attended a public meeting in Deland dealing with issues and concerns over dog hunting in the Ocala National Forest.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CASES

GLADES COUNTY

Several months ago, Officer Furbay assisted in an arrest of an individual who burglarized a hunting camp and was in possession of cocaine. The case was settled and the subject pled to 66 months in jail.

HERNANDO COUNTY

While working commercial stone crab vessels, Officer Canamero located three trigger fish inside a cooler. He informed the captain of the vessel that trigger fish is closed to harvest in Gulf waters. The captain advised he was keeping the fish for dinner. The captain was cited accordingly.

Officer Canamero received a call about an illegal deer taken in Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area. After he arrived on scene and interviewed the hunter, he admitted to knowing the antler restrictions and shooting the deer. The deer was seized as evidence and the hunter was issued a notice to appear for the violation.

HIGHLANDS COUNTY

Investigator Ervin received information regarding the illegal take of a doe deer during antlered deer season on private property. Once on scene, Investigator Ervin observed a dead doe deer and saw two individuals leaving the property that matched the description of the suspects. The two individuals were stopped to conduct a resource inspection and one of the individuals admitted to shooting the doe deer and advised he thought it was a spike. Investigator Ervin explained that a spike buck is still considered an antlerless deer and illegal to take during antlered deer season. The individual was cited for taking an antlerless deer during a closed season and issued warnings for not having a valid hunting license and deer stamp.

While on foot patrol in Hickory Hammock WMA during small game season, Investigator Ervin observed two individuals hunting with a shotgun and crossbow. During an inspection he found both individuals did not possess a valid hunting license. When asked why they did not have hunting licenses, one of the individuals replied, "they were hunting hogs and that did not require a hunting license." Investigator Ervin advised the

two individuals they needed a hunting license to hunt hogs on state lands. He also explained that the management area was closed to hog hunting during the first fourteen days of small game season. After giving sworn written statements, the subjects were cited for attempting to take hogs in a management area during a closed season. They were issued warnings for not possessing valid hunting licenses.

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

While on water patrol in Old Tampa Bay, Officer Phillippe noticed a PWC operating on plane in a slow speed zone. A subsequent inspection revealed the operator was under 14 years old with other juvenile passengers. Numerous boating safety and registration violations were also found. During his investigation, it was found that an adult at the child's residence gave them permission to take the PWC out. The adult was cited for letting a child under 14 operate a PWC.

MANATEE COUNTY

Officers Brown and Dalton were on land patrol when they received a complaint of some individuals spearing snook at Long Boat Pass on Anna Maria Island. When they arrived on scene, they located the individuals spear fishing as well as a cooler containing four speared snook. After interviewing the two subjects, one of the fisherman claimed responsibility for spearing all the snook. The subject was cited criminally for possession of undersized and oversized snook. He was also cited for possession of over the bag limit of snook and snook taken by illegal method. The fisherman will have to appear in court for his violations. The snook were seized as evidence. The second spear fisherman was taken to jail for possession of a felony amount of cannabis that was found during the course of the investigation.

PINELLAS COUNTY

While on land patrol, Officers Bibeau and Godfrey received a call from dispatch advising them of a subject that was keeping a gopher tortoise as a pet. The officers arrived at the residence a short time later and located a gopher tortoise that was fenced inside a small garden on the property. The officers waited for the homeowner to arrive and conducted an interview. The subject admitted to catching it earlier in the week and bringing it home to keep as a pet. Officer Godfrey issued the subject a misdemeanor citation for the illegal possession of a gopher tortoise.

While on foot patrol at the Gandy Bridge, Officers Bibeau and Godfrey observed an individual catch a small snook, run into the nearby mangroves, then walk back out of the mangroves and return to fishing. The officers conducted a fisheries inspection and while conducting the inspection, the individual told the officers that he hadn't caught any fish yet. Officer Bibeau found a blue mesh bag tied off in the nearby mangroves and found a small 22 inch snook hidden inside. The individual admitted to catching the snook and was written a misdemeanor citation for the violation.

While on foot patrol at the Gandy Bridge, Officers Bibeau and Godfrey conducted a fisheries inspection on a group of individuals that were actively fishing. During the inspection, one of the individuals admitted to catching a small fish and placing it in a nearby cooler. The officers conducted a fisheries inspection and located a small 21 inch snook. Officer Godfrey wrote the individual a misdemeanor citation for the fisheries violation.

While patrolling Honeymoon Island State Park, Officer Pulaski responded to a call from the gate attendant of a vehicle that ran through the arm barrier of the emergency lane. The attendant attempted to stop the driver; however, he drove into the park at a high rate of speed. Officer Pulaski was able to locate the vehicle and made contact with the driver. During the accident investigation, Officer Pulaski noticed indicators of impairment and conducted field sobriety tests. Officer Caldwell and Investigator Schefano assisted with the investigation. The subject was subsequently arrested and charged accordingly with no further incident.

While on land patrol in Clearwater near Tampa Bay, Officer Ferguson watched two subjects cast net fishing in the bay. When the subjects returned to shore, Officer Ferguson conducted a resource inspection which revealed an undersized redfish (11 inches) and several undersized sheepshead. The subject was cited for possession of undersized redfish and warned the subject for possession of undersized sheepshead.

While on land patrol near the Seminole Street Boat Ramp in Clearwater, Officer Ferguson observed three men cleaning fish. A resource inspection revealed a bucket of snook next to the mullet the men were cleaning. One of the subjects admitted the fish were his, but denied catching the fish and told the officer they were given to him. Officer Ferguson told the subject it's illegal to possess the undersized and over the bag limit fish even if he didn't catch them. He cited the subject with the possession of 12 undersized snook, a major violation, and warned the subject for the possession of 5 undersized sheepshead. All 12 of the snook were under 15" and appeared to have been cast netted.

While on water patrol just north of Dunedin Causeway, Officer Ferguson observed two subjects harvesting stone crabs commercially. One of the two subjects produced an individual saltwater products license (SPL) that was issued to the vessel owner who was not on board. Neither subject could produce a valid individual SPL nor did the owner have a vessel SPL. The two subjects were issued misdemeanor citations for commercially harvesting stone crabs without a valid SPL. Officer Ferguson issued warnings for improper display of commercial trap numbers and not having commercial PFDs.

SARASOTA COUNTY

Officers Brown and Dalton were on water patrol in the area of Lemon Bay and performed a fisheries and boating safety inspection on a transiting vessel. During the course of their inspection, they found that one of the subjects on the vessel had caught

and kept an undersized king fish. The subject was cited for possession of undersized king fish and was issued a citation.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Officer Sehl put together a targeted enforcement for the Webb nine-day hunt. Officers from Lee and Charlotte County patrolled the management area and inspected approximately 1,000 hunters over the course of the nine days. Some of the hunters were observed riding in a UTV and shooting migratory birds from a moving vehicle. Another group of hunters were observed shooting at a deer. When the officers inspected them, they learned the men were hunting without a quota permit and claimed their underage children were the hunters. Other violations included day use and an illegal deer. In all, 11 citations and 18 warnings were issued.

LEE COUNTY

Officers from Lee and Charlotte Counties participated in a targeted enforcement of the local panther zones in an effort to increase protection for panthers in those areas. After multiple days of patrols, the officers issued 29 written warnings and 14 citations. Two of the highest speeds were recorded at 81 and 84 miles per hour, but the highest recorded speed was in excess of 120 miles per hour in the 45 mile per hour zone.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

PASCO COUNTY

Officer Pulaski, Officer Williams, and Lieutenant Parisoe took part in the Great American Teach-In. The officers spoke at Sand Pine Elementary, Schrader Elementary, Ozona Elementary, and Crew's Lake Middle School. In all, approximately 500 students attended the presentations. The officers focused their presentations on the job of an FWC officer and FWC rules.

PINELLAS COUNTY

Lieutenant Wells participated in the Great American Teach-In at Plato Academy in Largo. Lieutenant Wells taught a 5th grade science class about the life cycle of alligators, the dangers of feeding alligators, and what alligators eat in the wild. Lieutenant Wells used FWC's website on alligators which was integrated into the classroom's smart board. To really grasp the student's interest, Lieutenant Wells brought in a live alligator to show the class.

Officer Martin participated in the Great American Teach-In at Curtis Fundamental Elementary. He taught numerous classes of students why releasing invasive species is

bad for the total ecosystem. Officer Martin brought in numerous invasive reptiles including snakes, lizards, and tortoises.

Lieutenant Wells, Officers Martin, Alvis, Burks, and NOAA Special Agent Moran Kalamas, conducted a federal fisheries patrol on the OPV *Gulf Sentry*. Five students from the University of Florida's Conservation Law Class were also on board. Lieutenant Wells and Agent Moran Kalamas taught the fisheries portion of the course (FWC teaches a different topic every Tuesday). The students were able to interact with the officers and have casual conversation with them. Additionally, the students were able to experience what it is like to do a law enforcement boarding and see how law enforcement interacts with the public. Several vessel inspections were conducted with multiple resource warnings issued.

SOUTH A REGION

CASES

BROWARD COUNTY

Captive Wildlife Investigator Corteguera conducted an investigation in cooperation with Captive Wildlife Investigator Larson from Duval County. The investigation was in response to an anonymous complaint alleging that a subject out of Duval County illegally sold captive wildlife in Broward County. During the investigation, it was found that the subject sold captive wildlife, specifically a Fly River Turtle, in Broward County. A records check revealed that the subject was not permitted for the sale of captive wildlife. Investigator Larson previously issued the subject a warning for captive wildlife violations and has also educated the subject on the required license to sell wildlife. Attempts to contact the subject were unsuccessful. With information gathered and presented to the Broward County Assistant State Attorney's Office, a criminal charge was direct filed against the subject for the illegal sale of wildlife without a license.

An individual licensed to possess venomous reptiles went to a facility licensed to possess venomous reptiles to pick up a shipment of three sharp-nosed vipers. He was bitten on the hand while transferring the snakes from the shipping package to another container to transport the snakes to his home. He was transported to and treated at a local hospital. Captive Wildlife Investigator Corteguera responded and investigated the incident. No violations were documented regarding the snake bite. A subsequent inspection of the facility revealed no violations as well.

While on patrol in Stormwater Treatment Area (STA) 3/4, Officer Tarr observed three individuals fishing approximately two miles inside of the STA. He watched the three individuals and as they left the area, he made contact with them and recognized two of the three individuals as he had previously issued them warnings a few months prior in the exact same location for fishing the interior of the STA without a freshwater fishing license. As a result, Officer Tarr issued those two individuals two citations for fishing the

interior of the STA and two citations for not having a freshwater fishing license. He issued the third individual a warning for fishing the interior and a warning for not having a freshwater fishing license.

The opening weekend of waterfowl hunting season, Officer Coker created a work plan to have a strong law enforcement presence to promote legal hunting and safety. Numerous FWC law enforcement officers participated including Officers Tarr, Gamage, Delatorre, Forrest, Investigators Warne and Coffin, and Lieutenant McDonald. Numerous criminal resource violations were discovered to include several over the bag limit of waterfowl cases and an unplugged shotgun case. The officers worked with biologists and check station operators with the FWC Division of Habitat and Species Conservation to enforce the STA hunts in Broward and Palm Beach counties.

Officer Stower was patrolling Dr. Von D. Mizell - Eula Johnson State Park where he conducted a vessel stop at the marina on a vessel with three people on board. As the boat came closer, he noticed a sailfish lying on the floor of the boat with a large gaff mark on the side of it. The subjects had not measured the fish prior to gaffing and killing the fish and were also not in possession of a Highly Migratory Species (HMS) permit which is required for possessing sailfish. The sailfish was measured and determined to be undersized. Sailfish must measure 63 inches from the lower jaw to the fork of the tail. The subject was issued a resource citation for the undersized sailfish.

MARTIN COUNTY

While conducting fisheries inspections on the Stuart Causeway, Officer Morrow located a subject in possession of a live, undersized black drum. The subject advised that he was unaware that the fish was undersized. The subject was issued a warning for possession of the undersized fish and provided a saltwater regulations guide. At the conclusion of the call, the undersized drum was returned to the water alive.

OKEECHOBEE COUNTY

Officer Allen was on foot patrol in the Chandler Slough Unit of the Kissimmee River Public Use Area (PUA) when he encountered six hunters and four hunting dogs. Three of the four hunting dogs did not have the required name and address on the collars. Two of the subjects were hunting with center fire rifles which is prohibited in the PUA. Officers Davis and Boulware arrived to assist Officer Allen. The subject who owned the dogs was issued a notice to appear in court for attempting to take wildlife with dogs without the owner's name and address on the collar. The two men with the center-fire rifles were issued notices to appear in court for attempting to take wildlife with a center fire rifle in the PUA.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

In late June 2016, FWC investigators and officers received information that marine turtle nests in the vicinity of the Jupiter Inlet Colony displayed signs of possible human

disturbance and/or missing eggs. Area investigators and officers initiated and conducted patrol efforts in the area. Early in July at night, a subject was observed taking the eggs of a loggerhead turtle that was actively nesting. The subject was in possession of 107 loggerhead turtle eggs. He was subsequently arrested and booked into the Palm Beach County Jail on 3rd degree felony charges of disturbing the nest of marine turtle and felony possession of marine turtle eggs. Investigator Sierra, Officer Stone and Biologist Koperski attended a hearing in late November in the Circuit Court, Fifteenth Judicial Circuit in and for Palm Beach County regarding the arrest. The defendant pled guilty and was sentenced as follows:

1. 180 days with credit for time served;
2. approximately \$15,000 in fines consisting of 100 per egg, court costs and restitution;
3. 3 years of probation; and
4. 75 hours of community service.

Officer Toby observed someone fishing on the Lake Okeechobee Levee in Belle Glade and conducted a fisheries inspection. The individual was in possession of one undersized black crappie. Officer Toby issued the person a misdemeanor citation three months ago for the same offense. The undersized fish was photographed and returned to the water alive. The individual was then issued a misdemeanor citation pertaining to the possession of the undersized black crappie.

Officer Toby observed two people fishing in a restricted area on South Florida Water Management District's property near Lake Okeechobee. The two individuals were instructed to exit the restricted property and a fisheries inspection was conducted. One of the individuals had an active felony warrant for aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. Officer Toby requested assistance from the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office due to the nature of the felony warrant. Both individuals were issued a misdemeanor citation pertaining to the trespassing violation and the individual with the felony warrant was arrested and transported to the Palm Beach County Jail.

ST. LUCIE COUNTY

Investigator Turner and Officers Shermetaro and Irwin conducted off-shore vessel resource inspections near the Fort Pierce Inlet. While conducting these inspections, they came upon a local charter boat where they found undersized mutton snapper on board in a cooler. The charter captain did not have a measuring device on the boat and did not believe the fish to be undersized. The captain was issued a citation for the violation.

Officer Fretwell was conducting resource and license inspections at a local fishing spot in Fort Pierce. He observed two subjects throwing a cast net and harvesting blue tilapia. While speaking with the subjects, it was determined that neither of them had a fishing license. Further investigation revealed that one of the subjects had an active warrant for

failure to appear in court. Officer Fretwell placed the subject under arrest and transported him to jail.

While working at the Savannas Preserve State Park, Officer Miano responded to a complaint of a subject feeding corn to wild hogs, within the parks boundaries. An investigation was initiated and Officer Miano began to develop leads and determine the location and times the violation would occur. Officer Miano was then able to observe the subject feed and also provide water to the hogs. The subject was identified and located at his residence where a citation was issued to him for the violation.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Cobo and Morrow worked the Loxahatchee River during Thanksgiving week and wrote numerous citations and warnings for underage drinking, not wearing a life vest while tubing, no proper lookout in a vessel while pulling a skier, improperly worn life vest while operating a jet ski (jacket not zipped), jet ski operation at night and no proper photo ID along with boating safety ID card in possession.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Godward and Stone provided waterborne security for President-elect Donald Trump.

SOUTH B REGION

CASES

COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Plussa and Arbogast were conducting off-road patrol of Picayune Strand State Forest when they responded to an airboat accident near Everglades City. An airboat charter collided with a tree and injured multiple passengers, including several children. Upon arrival, officers found that five of the six occupants were injured and three were receiving medical care. Two seven-year old boys had to be flown by helicopter for head, neck and facial injuries. Officers Polly, White, and Lieutenant Bulger all assisted by responding to the scene or to different hospital locations for a combined investigative effort. Officer Plussa's investigation determined that the operator of the airboat had violated three navigation rules: failure to operator at a safe speed; failure to take action to avoid a collision, and failure to maintain a proper lookout.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

Three individuals licensed to possess venomous reptiles were cleaning enclosures at a venomous reptile facility. While moving a 14-foot King Cobra from the enclosure to a holding container, one individual was bitten on the hand by the snake. He was treated at a local hospital. Captive Wildlife Investigators Corteguera, Smith and Stiffler responded and investigated the incident. No violations were documented regarding the snake bite. A subsequent inspection of the facility resulted in the issuance of three warnings for violations unrelated to the bite.

While on water patrol near the area of Bear Cut ocean side in Key Biscayne, an officer stopped a vessel to conduct a fisheries inspection. The occupants on board were found to be in possession of five undersized mutton snapper. A notice to appear was issued along with a vessel safety citation.

While on water patrol north of Cape Florida Channel ocean side, an officer observed and stopped a vessel to conduct a fisheries inspection. It revealed the occupants were in possession of six over the bag limit of grouper. A notice to appear was issued to the angler taking responsibility.

An officer was dispatched to Crandon Marina in Key Biscayne reference a complaint of two individuals in possession of bonefish. Upon contact with those two individuals matching the description, the officer observed two bonefish and an undersized mutton snapper. The subject was cited accordingly and provided information on possession restrictions on certain species.

MONROE COUNTY

Officer Rubenstein was conducting early morning resource inspections on Long Key Bridge when he observed one party that appeared to be catching fish. When asked if they had any fish, they said they had caught a bunch and had them in the cooler. When checking the cooler, it contained 18 undersized mutton snapper. After completing that check, Officer Rubenstein went back out on the same bridge to find another case of 14 undersized mutton snapper and 1 undersized hog snapper. Both groups were cited accordingly.

Officers Wagner and Rubenstein were on foot patrol on a bridge in the middle keys and encountered a group of individuals next to tents under the bridge and asked if they had any luck. One man said he had been fishing and showed Officer Wagner a bucket of fish. Officer Wagner asked if he was the only one fishing which he replied "yes." The bucket contained three undersized mutton snapper, one undersized schoolmaster snapper and one undersized yellowtail snapper. The man claimed there were no more fish. While searching the rocks where the man had come from, Officer Wagner found two more undersized yellowtail snapper. During Officer Wagner's conversation with the man, Officer Rubenstein had found a bag of two parrotfish hidden in another bag behind a column next to the tents. The man claimed he saw men catch the fish earlier and they must have put them there. The man again said he had no more fish. Officer Rubenstein

then inspected a cooler by the same tents with permission and found two undersized black grouper. The man admitted to catching all the fish in question but the parrotfish. He was booked in the Marathon Jail for five criminal violations.

Officers Janzen and Hein were on state land patrol in the Long Key area when the officers conducted a resource inspection on a large group of individuals actively fishing. When asked if they had any luck catching fish, one of the men replied “small ones.” At the conclusion of the resource inspection, two individuals were cited for possession of undersized mutton snapper, possession of undersized yellowtail snapper, and possession of deceased marine life.

Officers Janzen and Hein were on state land patrol in the Long Key area when they conducted a resource inspection on an individual actively fishing off of a bridge. At the conclusion of the resource inspection, the man was cited for possession of undersized mutton snapper.

Officers Janzen and Hein were on state land patrol in the Islamorada area when the officers conducted a resource inspection on several individuals actively fishing. At the conclusion of the resource inspection, one individual was cited for possession of undersized yellowtail snapper and possession of deceased marine life.

Officers Janzen and Hein were on state land patrol in the Islamorada area when they noticed a vessel being pulled from the water at a local boat ramp. The officers conducted a boating safety and resource inspection. During their inspection, the officers noticed the license plates of the trailer and the truck to be exactly the same. They also noticed no VIN on the trailer. At the conclusion of the inspections, the operator was cited for a number of boating safety violations, possession of undersized mutton snapper, attaching a tag not assigned, and operating an unregistered motor vehicle.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

MONROE COUNTY

Lieutenant Lyne was off duty fishing when she observed a turkey vulture trying to stay afloat in Lignumvitae State Park waters. She brought the bird on board her personal vessel and Officers Hein and Jenzen brought the bird to shore where Officer McKay met them and took the bird to a local bird mission center. The juvenile vulture was at first thought to have had a broken wing but no fractures were located. It turned out the young bird had old puncture wounds that never healed properly. The wounds most likely came from an animal. After receiving care at the center, the bird was transferred to a nearby sanctuary to complete its rehabilitation where a full recovery is expected.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

MONROE COUNTY

Officer McKay has been working pre-opening patrols of John Pennekamp State Park after a trespasser was located sleeping near a garbage bin by the concession and the park management requesting additional patrols. Since then, Officer McKay has come upon several persons who were either camping in the wrong areas of the park or had trespassed and entered the park after hours to sleep in their cars and/or RVs. Numerous warnings were issued and several of the violators paid the fees that were due to the park. The park reservation system, Reserve America, entered notes documenting the violators in case they make any future reservations in the parks and cause any problems. Additionally, all violators were entered into the MCT creating Master Name Index files on each for future reference. Also during this time, Officer McKay documented many early morning public outreach contacts to registered campers where he answered questions about John Pennekamp and other state parks where camping is offered.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

Officers participated in a brief overview of FWC's responsibilities and laws to a group of law students who are part of the Maritime Law Society at St. Thomas University. There were approximately 20 students in attendance who asked several good questions. The presentation included a PowerPoint slide show and several photographs of various boat accidents.