

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



***Weekly Report***

***December 16, 2016 through December 29, 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**

#### **CALHOUN COUNTY**

Officers Guy and Hayes responded to a landowner's trespass complaint. When the officers arrived, the suspect had already left the property but the complainant had a photograph of the suspect's vehicle. The officers canvassed a nearby neighborhood and located the vehicle at a residence. While the officers spoke to the suspect about the trespass complaint, they noticed a fresh drop of blood on his boots. When questioned about the blood, the suspect stated his wife killed a deer that morning. The suspect led the officers to a deer carcass which was a spike buck with antlers only three inches long. The suspect was warned for trespass and his wife was cited for taking an antlerless deer.

#### **HOLMES COUNTY**

Officer Greene responded to a call where an individual heard shots and while patrolling the area, located a subject that killed a doe deer. The deer and rifle were seized and the subject was issued a citation for taking an antlerless deer during closed season.

#### **OKALOOSA COUNTY**

Officer Maltais was patrolling a closed area on Eglin Air Force Base when he discovered two large piles of trash that had recently been dumped on either side of the road. During an inspection of the trash, paperwork containing court documents, vehicle paperwork, and a business card for a parole officer were found. He and Officer Jarvis went to the individual's address and interviewed him about the trash. The man admitted to dumping the trash the night before and agreed to immediately clean up the trash. Because the area was exclusive jurisdiction, the individual received a 1-year suspension by Eglin Range Patrol.

Officer Jarvis was patrolling a closed area on Eglin Air Force Base when he observed a man and a woman in a truck. The subjects were from out of the area and neither one of them had a valid driver license. Officer Ramos, along with Eglin Range Patrol, arrived on scene to assist. The closed area they were in is exclusive jurisdiction and the case was turned over to Eglin Range Patrol. Both individuals received a 1-year suspension.

Officer Jarvis received a call from U.S. Customs agents in Destin regarding a vessel they had searched. The owner/operator of the vessel had 35 grams of marijuana in his possession. Officer Jarvis placed the individual under arrest for felony possession of cannabis over 20 grams.

Officers Hutchinson and Clark were patrolling the Blackwater State Forest/Blackwater Wildlife Management Area (WMA) when they observed a man whose vehicle was

parked in the middle of a forest road. The individual was standing next to his truck that had a dog box in the back and holding a device used to track hunting dogs. The officers made contact with the individual who first said that he was running rabbits with his dogs but later admitted to running deer with the dogs. After further investigation, they discovered that the subject did not have a required quota permit or the required correction device attached to any of the five dogs that he was hunting with. The officers also discovered that the subject's dogs were pursuing deer in a still hunt only section of the WMA. The subject was issued a notice to appear for failure to have the required behavior corrective device attached to his dogs while pursuing deer. He was issued a written warning for the other violations.

While talking to the subject, another hunter drove up and saw the officers. He immediately put his truck in reverse and started backing up. Officer Clark caught up to him and discovered that not only did he not have a required quota permit, but he was also smoking cannabis. The man was issued a notice to appear for the drug charges and a citation for the quota permit violation.

#### SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officer Hutchinson received information about a subject who shot an antlerless deer out of season with a modern firearm. After an initial investigation, he learned that the individual was a convicted felon and could not legally possess a firearm. Officers Hutchinson and Clark arrived at the individual's property in the early morning hours and made contact with his brother-in-law who also lives on the property. The officers discovered the antlerless deer carcass inside a barrel that was hanging from a skinning rack. They also discovered an ice chest with the meat from the antlerless deer. After questioning the individual, he agreed to take the officers to where the suspect was living on the property. They drove through the property to a wooded area that had a two-story shooting house in the bushes. The brother-in-law informed the officers that the suspect lived in the shooting house. The officers made contact with the suspect who admitted to using a modern firearm to shoot the antlerless deer out of season. The officers discovered that the suspect did not have a valid Florida hunting license and that he trespassed onto a nearby hunting club to harvest the deer. The suspect turned over the firearm used to harvest the deer. The officers seized the firearm and the deer meat. The suspect was issued a notice to appear for taking an antlerless deer out of season. Additional charges are pending.

Officer Jones was patrolling the Eglin WMA when he encountered a hunter driving a vehicle on an Eglin Range road well before legal time to enter Eglin property. The officer issued a notice to appear citation for early entry.

Officers Hoomes and Long were patrolling the Roberts Pond in the Eglin WMA when they located footprints leading into a closed area. The officers located a freshly killed antlerless deer approximately 50 yards from where an individual entered the closed area. The officers also located a receipt from a local retail vendor which appeared to have been left as a marker to locate where the illegal deer was killed. The officers

located the individual by using information from the receipt and interviewed him about the deer. The suspect admitted to shooting the deer and leaving it in the woods because some hunters in the area saw him attempting to retrieve it. The subject also admitted to dropping the receipt on the edge of the road as a marker when he returned to retrieve the deer. The subject was issued citations for taking an antlerless deer during closed season and for hunting in a closed area in Eglin WMA. He was issued a warning for the willful and wanton waste of wildlife.

Officers Roberson, Hoomes and Long responded to a complaint of individuals hunting with dogs in the Yellow River WMA. The officers located the individuals who were hunting rabbits with dogs. The area is closed to this activity and they were issued citations for the violations.

#### WALTON COUNTY

While Officer Bartlett was patrolling the Eglin WMA, he heard a rifle shot and located a truck parked nearby. When the hunter returned to his vehicle, Officer Bartlett made contact with the individual who advised he shot at a deer but had not yet located it. Officer Bartlett and the hunter returned to the area where the individual had attempted to harvest the deer to try to locate it. When they arrived at the location, Officer Bartlett located bait (corn) that had been distributed close to the individual's hunting blind. When questioned, the hunter admitted to hunting over the bait and was issued a notice to appear citation.

While Lieutenant Hollinhead was patrolling Eglin WMA, he observed hunters parked along a dirt road releasing a dog to attempt to catch a hog. As he approached their location, one of the subjects fled on foot. A search of a wooded area revealed two firearms that had been dropped in the dirt where the subject was running. The subject was located in a thick brush area near the firearms trying to hide. The subject was taken into custody and denied knowledge of the firearms. A check through FWC Dispatch revealed the subject had five prior felony convictions and could not possess a firearm or ammunition. A search of his person revealed three shotgun shells. Officers Tison and Pifer responded and assisted with interviewing other hunters that had witnessed the subject run with the firearms. When the subject was interviewed, he admitted to fleeing with the firearms as Lieutenant Hollinhead approached him. The subject was charged with resisting arrest without violence, no Eglin hunting permit, and no hunting license. Charges for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon will be direct filed with the state attorney's office. Eglin Security Officers responded and issued the subject a five-year suspension from Eglin property for the violations.

#### WASHINGTON COUNTY

Captain Lee and Lieutenant Walsingham were off duty when they observed a subject exiting the woods with a doe deer. They identified themselves and cited the subject for taking an antlerless deer during closed season.

While checking a hunter in the Choctawhatchee River WMA Gum Creek Unit, Officer Jackson observed a vehicle exiting the area. As the vehicle approached her location, it suddenly turned around and went back into the area. She called Officer Brooks for assistance and after a short time, the vehicle returned. The two subjects were wet and said they had been trying out two new kayaks that were in the back of the truck and had turned around looking for a paddle they lost. The subjects were checked for warrants and one individual's identity could not be confirmed. Officer Brooks arrived on scene and a short search revealed that the subjects appeared to have been indeed kayaking. The subjects stated that the kayaks belonged to one of their fathers and they had borrowed them. The individual with the unconfirmed identity stated that his identification was just down the road at a residence where he was staying and the father was there and they could ask about the kayaks. The officers followed the subjects to the residence and the subject went to get identification and never returned. The three residences and the area was searched by FWC K-9 and assistance from Washington County Sheriff's deputies without success. The father of the other subject stated that he had never seen the kayaks before. Officer Jackson later learned the true identity of the subject and determined that he had active warrants from Washington and Holmes counties. Additional charges were filed at the state attorney's office for giving a false name to a law enforcement officer and resisting arrest without violence, as well as providing the information to Washington County Sheriff's Office on the possible stolen kayaks.

## RESCUES

### ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Multiple agencies responded to a call regarding a man who fell into the Escambia River and was missing. Officers searched the area by land, water and air. Shortly after arriving, FWC Pilot Tolbert and Lieutenant Golloher located the victim by air within a mile from where he fell in. Uniformed officers recovered the body by vessel.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

### OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officers conducted a targeted enforcement action in the Blackwater WMA focusing on closed road violations and the taking of illegal deer. Approximately six officers participated, working more than 125 hours and issuing eight citations for hunting violations. Additionally, four uniform traffic citations and 12 written warnings were issued. Officers handled only two dog-hunting complaints in the WMA.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officers Molnar and Bartlett conducted an outreach event at Baker High School where approximately 30 students were in attendance. The officers spoke about the recruitment process, core missions of FWC, and the daily job responsibilities of an FWC officer.

## **NORTH CENTRAL REGION**

### **CASES**

#### **ALACHUA COUNTY**

While working fishing activity on Lochloosa Lake, Officer Harris had dispatch check an individual for licenses. Dispatch confirmed the individual did not have a fishing license and had a warrant out of Levy County. The individual was transported to the Alachua County Jail for the warrant.

#### **BAKER COUNTY**

Officer Burnsed received information of an illegal doe deer that was killed in either Florida or Georgia. With the subject in question living in Florida, Officer Burnsed contacted Officer Williams with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to accompany him while interviewing the subject to help determine where the deer was killed. The officers made contact with the subject and found that the subject and his father had both taken a doe deer in Georgia and transported them back to their residence in Florida. The subjects did not possess a hunting license in Georgia and killed the two doe deer on days when it was not legal to harvest doe deer. The subjects were cited for the violations by the Georgia officer.

#### **CITRUS COUNTY**

Officers Wells and Ulrich were working a night-hunting detail when shortly before midnight, they observed a truck heading in their direction. As the truck got closer, the driver of the truck turned the headlights off. The officers watched as the occupants of the truck shone lights out of both sides of the truck. After following the truck down several side roads, a traffic stop was conducted. Upon inspection of the truck, the officers found four hand guns, a loaded rifle, and a loaded shotgun. The passenger was found to have twelve felony convictions. All the guns and lights were seized and both subjects were charged for night hunting. Additional charges will be filed for possession of firearms by a convicted felon.

Lieutenant Loyed was on his way to work a night-hunting detail when he stopped by a local gas station to get a cup of coffee. On his way into the store, he observed a male subject punch a female subject in the head. Lieutenant Loyed immediately removed the male subject from his car and placed him under arrest. After questioning the female subject, Lieutenant Loyed found out that the male subject had just threatened to kill the female and her mother and had just stabbed the dashboard of the vehicle with a knife.

The male subject was taken to jail and charged with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and aggravated battery on a pregnant victim.

During a recent patrol in federal waters off of Citrus County, the offshore patrol vessel *FinCat* documented two different vessels with violations. While approaching a vessel to conduct an inspection, Officers Canfield and Boyer observed three red snappers floating in the water behind the vessel. Further inspection revealed the recreational fishermen to be in possession of greater amberjack and grey triggerfish during a closed season, as well as expired visual distress signals. Federal citations were issued for the fisheries violations and the case will be forwarded to NOAA for prosecution. A warning was issued for the boating safety violation.

During another vessel inspection on a commercial vessel, Officer Boyer found the vessel's captain did not have a saltwater products license (SPL) nor the required federal documents available for inspection. One of the mates had speared and kept a grossly undersized gag grouper and another mate had caught an undersized vermilion snapper. A check through FWC dispatch revealed the vessel captain had a previous citation for not having the SPL on board. Citations were issued for the SPL violation and the grouper violation, and a written warning was issued for the undersized vermilion snapper.

## DUVAL COUNTY

Environmental Investigator Terrones and representatives of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and City of Jacksonville conducted a follow-up inspection at a truck repair business which had been issued warnings two times in the past 18 months for several used oil management violations. Several uncovered used oil containers and numerous used oil filters and containers with oil saturated dirt around them were observed. Evidence of open burning of prohibited materials was also observed. The business owner could provide no records of proper used oil disposal and was issued a Resource Citation for Improper Storage/Disposal of Used Oil. The DEP will require the business owner to clean and properly dispose of the used oil/filters and contaminated soil.

Lieutenant Arkin was northbound on the Buckman Bridge (Interstate 295) when he observed a male walking on the northbound shoulder of the bridge by the bridge hump. He activated his emergency blue lights and stopped to check on this subject's well-being. The subject stated that he just had a verbal argument with his wife and that she dropped him off on San Jose Boulevard. Lieutenant Arkin advised the subject that due to the danger of being on the bridge, he would give him a ride to the base of the bridge. Lieutenant Arkin conducted a frisk for weapons, a check for wants and warrants, and then placed the subject in the caged portion of his FWC patrol vehicle. Lieutenant Arkin proceeded to drive to the base of the bridge to get to a safer location due to the dangers of being on the bridge shoulder. While proceeding off the bridge, the Jacksonville Regional Communications Center (JRCC) advised that the subject had a warrant for sexual assault. While JRCC was confirming the warrant, Lieutenant Arkin proceeded off the bridge heading for NAS Jacksonville to the sentry post where other law enforcement

officers could assist him with placing handcuffs on the subject and conducting a search. Lieutenant Arkin was driving about 20 miles per hour as he was approaching NAS Jacksonville. The subject took his elbow and smashed out his patrol vehicle rear window from within the cage, pulled himself up on the window edge and jumped out the vehicle while it was in motion. Lieutenant Arkin yelled "stop, stop, stop, you are under arrest!" Multiple Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO) units and FWC units arrived on scene within a few seconds to assist with the search of the perimeter. The subject was recaptured just north of NAS Jacksonville on the west side of the railroad tracks by JSO officers. The subject resisted JSO officers with violence upon being recaptured. The warrant was for sexual assault with a \$25,000 bond. During a thorough search of the subject, a very small loaded firearm was discovered in his baggy pants back pocket. The firearm was a North American Arms .22 caliber revolver the size of an index finger. It was also discovered by JSO that this firearm had been stolen in a burglary their agency had worked several months earlier. The JSO is handling all the firearm-related charges, battery on a law enforcement officer charges, and resisting with violence charges. Lieutenant Arkin charged the subject with escape, resisting arrest without violence, and criminal mischief. Lieutenant Arkin also completed the detainer for the warrant for fugitive from justice.

#### HAMILTON COUNTY

Officers Nichols and McDonald were conducting surveillance in the area of a pre-located bait site on Suwannee River Water Management District land when the officers heard a single shot just before dark. A short time later, the officers heard two additional shots and observed a flashlight coming from the direction of the shots. Contact was made with a husband and wife while both subjects were carrying firearms and fresh deer meat. They were also in possession of two raccoons. The female hunter admitted to harvesting an antlerless deer and the male subject told officers he had killed the two raccoons. Appropriate citations were issued for taking antlerless deer during closed season, hunting on district lands and for placing bait on district lands. The officers also located a freshly killed deer carcass near the blind in which they were hunting.

#### COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

#### ALACHUA COUNTY

Lieutenant Ferguson and Officer Stanley participated in the Alachua County and High Springs Christmas parades. Thousands of people were in attendance and enjoyed all of the different style floats.

#### CITRUS COUNTY

Officers Canfield and Boyer, crew of the offshore patrol vessel *Fincat*, recently participated in the "Citrus County Sheriff's Office Shop with a Cop" program at a local Walmart store. The program teams qualified local youth with law enforcement officers to guide them as they shopped for gifts. FWC officers were teamed up with a boy who has



a strong interest in fishing and hunting who, not surprisingly, spent most of his time in the fishing and hunting section of the store. Upon completion of his shopping, the young boy and his family also received a complete Christmas dinner from the local Kiwanis Club.

## **NORTHEAST REGION**

### **CASES**

#### **BREVARD COUNTY**

A local county judge and a historian participated in a ride along on the Banana River. Officer R. Miller was able to educate the men on resource and boating safety laws and their application in the area. Additionally, manatee education and review of the ecosystem was conducted. Photographs of landmarks were taken to add to the historical record of the area as well. During the tour, a commercial fisherman was stopped and a resource inspection was conducted. The commercial fisherman was found to be in possession of a five-gallon bucket full of pufferfish. Pufferfish are illegal to possess in Brevard County. As the officer spoke to the man, the fisherman dumped the fish overboard. After recovering the fish, a citation was issued for possession of pufferfish.

While on patrol, Officer R. Miller observed a man throwing a large cast net from the end of a pier. When the officer approached him, the man attempted to grab the bucket and empty it into the water. The officer was able to stop the man from emptying the bucket which was found to contain four undersized spotted seatrout. The man was issued a notice to appear for possession of undersized spotted seatrout.

While on patrol of Sebastian Inlet State Park, Officer Kearney conducted a resource inspection on two men fishing from the shoreline. The officer's inspection revealed two undersized black drum. One of the anglers stated that he caught both of the fish. A citation was issued for possession of undersized black drum and the fish were returned to the resource.

A man arrested in July by Lieutenant Lightsey for boating under the influence (BUI) was sentenced to the following: 12 months supervised probation, 10 days of vehicle impoundment, 30 days vessel impoundment with a certified letter by a marina stating such, no alcohol allowed on his vessel, 50 hours of community service, must attend a DUI or boating safety course and \$550.00 of court costs and fine.

#### **INDIAN RIVER COUNTY**

Officer Hallsten was conducting park patrols at Sebastian Inlet State Park when he conducted a fisheries inspection on a subject loading fishing gear into a vehicle. The inspection revealed three oversized black drum. Citations were issued accordingly.

## **VOLUSIA COUNTY**

Officers Bellville and North responded to a residence in Daytona Beach in reference to someone keeping a gopher tortoise in captivity without a permit. Upon arrival, they found a gopher tortoise in a plastic tub with no food or water. There was also a deceased, rotting river cooter carcass in the tub. The officers located the shell of another gopher tortoise in the man's backyard. The resident was unable to provide any reasonable explanation as to why he was keeping the tortoise in a tub in his back yard. He was charged with possession of a gopher tortoise and keeping captive wildlife in unsanitary, neglectful conditions.

Officer West was working the New Smyrna Beach area docks and piers checking for fisheries compliance when he came across an adult male that had some of his catch in a bucket. When a duffle bag nearby was inspected, there were other bags that contained multiple undersized mangrove and lane snapper. The fisherman was issued a notice to appear for the violations.

## **COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING**

The "Shop with a Cop" program was conducted in the town of Sebastian in Indian River County. Numerous law enforcement officers, including FWC Lieutenant Lightsey, Officers Maslo, Kearney, Cybula and Eller, participated in the large holiday event. Hundreds of children were able to shop with a law enforcement officer for Christmas gifts. A fun time was had by all, and Santa even showed up!

## **SOUTHWEST REGION**

### **CASES**

#### **CHARLOTTE COUNTY**

Officer Zampella was on land patrol at Babcock Ranch when he approached a hunter who had taken a deer during a general gun quota hunt. When he asked the hunter if he had gotten anything, the man said he got a deer but it might be a little short. Deer must have at least one antler with a 10-inch main beam or three points on one side to be legal. The deer harvested had only 1 point on each side and the longest main beam was 6 and 3/8 inches long. Officer Zampella asked the man about the hunt and how far away he was when the shot was taken. The man admitted when he shot the deer, he thought it wasn't legal, and that he shot it from approximately 120 feet away using a rifle with a magnified scope. Officer Zampella issued the man a citation for taking an illegal deer. The deer was seized as evidence.

Officers McColgin and Hardgrove were on water patrol when they observed a man commercially fishing. They began a fisheries inspection and determined the man was

fishing from a recreationally registered vessel. Further inspection revealed the man did not have an individual saltwater products license to fish commercially. He was issued a misdemeanor citation for the violation.

## LEE COUNTY

Officer Collazo located a white Ford 250 parked next to gate 6 of the CREW Wildlife Environmental Area (WEA). The Ford had a Florida license plate registered to a white male with no hunting license. Officer Collazo heard several gun shots coming from the WEA. He brought K-9 Roscoe out to track the subjects. K-9 Roscoe immediately began to track, crossed the WEA gate where there was a sign which reads "hunters do not access this gate, please access the area through gate 5 of Corkscrew Road." K-9 Roscoe continued to track through the area, crossed a large cattle pasture, while the gun shots continued. Officer Collazo located the area where there were two subjects hunting ducks. He decided to place K-9 Roscoe back in the patrol vehicle, and waited for the two subjects to return from the area. Officer Collazo observed both subjects climb over the gate and gather all of their hunting gear (decoys, bags, etc.), and introduced himself. The subjects stated they were hunting ducks but had no licenses. The last shot was at 5:57 PM and sunset that day was at 5:37 PM in Lee County. He retrieved the subjects' shotguns and checked to make sure that they were both plugged. There were no violations with the shotguns. Officer Collazo issued both subjects citations for entering the WEA at a non-designated entry point, warnings for hunting without having their hunting licenses in their possession, and for shooting ducks after sunset. Both subjects were underage, 16 to 18 years old, and had no previous history of hunting violations. No ducks were located inside the bags and the subjects stated that they did not kill any.

Officer Furbay was on land patrol when he observed a commercial fishing vessel parked at a gas station. He positioned himself where he could observe the commercial fisherman from a concealed location. After a short time, he observed the commercial fisherman give a blue cooler and a five-gallon bucket of blue crabs to a man in exchange for cash. As the men prepared to leave, Officer Furbay approached the commercial fisherman and asked if he had been selling fish. The fisherman said no and that he had just given away some mullet. After Officer Furbay told the fisherman that he saw them exchange the cash, the man admitted he didn't have a retail license which was required to sell the fish to the public. Several quality control violations were also observed. The fisherman was issued a misdemeanor for selling saltwater products without a retail license.

While on water patrol at night near Pine Island with his Field Training Officer, Officer Hardgrove saw a 16-foot aluminum boat with two people on board gigging fish. During a subsequent fisheries inspection, a redfish was found inside the cooler on the vessel still alive and had gigging marks on the side of its head and upper body. The redfish was measured and was found to be over the 27-inch maximum size limit. The vessel owner stated he thought it was a mullet. The vessel owner was issued a citation for possession of oversized redfish and taking redfish by illegal means.

## MANATEE COUNTY

Officer Hinds was on land patrol at the South Skyway Rest Area when he spotted two snorkelers spear fishing along the jetty rocks. He saw one of the subjects spear a snook and bash it against the rocks to kill it. The subject then hid the snook and continued fishing. As the subjects began to work their way back towards their vehicle, they repositioned the snook and hid it along the shoreline, leaving it there to pick up when they were finished. Unable to see the subjects any longer, Officer Hinds drove over to the relief bridge where the subjects had parked. After relocating the subject that had speared the snook, Officer Hinds initiated a resource inspection with the subject still in the water. The subject immediately became confrontational and Officer Hinds requested routine backup from the Manatee Sheriff's Office (MSO). Simultaneously, the second spear fisherman and a third subject appeared from the mangroves. Officer Hinds controlled the subjects and was able to get them up and onto the roadway. At that time, MSO arrived. As MSO collected the subjects' information, Officer Hinds drove back and found the hidden snook. When Officer Hinds returned to the scene, the subject that speared the snook had been placed in hand cuffs by MSO. The MSO physically arrested the subject that had speared the snook for giving false information. He was also cited with three misdemeanors by FWC for possession of snook out of season, possession of undersized snook, and illegal method of take. Additionally, the subject was written two warnings for failure to allow inspection and snorkeling without a divers-down device.

Officer Hughes responded to a complaint that someone was trying to kill an alligator illegally on private property. When Officer Hughes arrived on scene, he interviewed a man and a woman who admitted to firing a gun at an alligator in a pond on their property. The suspects claimed they did it because they were worried about the alligator eating their calves. Officer Hughes explained to the individuals that there are laws protecting alligators and methods to have them removed if they fear their property is endangered. A criminal citation was issued to one of the suspects for attempting to illegally harvest an alligator. Officer Hughes called a licensed trapper to remove the alligator from the property.

## PASCO COUNTY

Officer Pulaski was on land patrol within the Green Swamp West WMA when he located a vehicle with a dog box and several dogs. During an inspection, Officer Pulaski learned the individuals had entered the WMA to retrieve a dog that came over from Richloam WMA. After a brief conversation, the individuals admitted they had come through a cut in the fence. Officer Pulaski followed them to the entry point and located fresh tire sign and another vehicle which belonged to one of the individuals. Officer Pulaski issued the occupants a citation for illegal entry into the WMA.

Officer Pulaski responded to a single vessel boating accident that occurred in the Anclote River area. The operator of a personal watercraft was injured after being

ejected in a shallow area with heavy vegetation. The operator was taken to a local hospital for treatment of several injuries.

## PINELLAS COUNTY

While on patrol in the area of Coffeepot Bayou, Officers Enos and Alvis observed subjects on a vessel fishing for striped mullet with a cast net late at night. The officers waited until the subjects came within feet to their location on a dock and attempted to perform a fisheries inspection. The subjects on the vessel tried to flee the area, resulting in one of the subjects being arrested for obstruction.

A saltwater fisheries inspection performed by Officer Alvis at a popular shoreline fishing spot resulted in one subject receiving a citation for possession of several mangrove snapper that were shorter than the minimum size limit of 10 inches. The subject also received a warning for possession of over the daily bag limit of mangrove snapper.

## SARASOTA COUNTY

Officers Davidson, Ridgway and Buckson met at seafood shop to perform a wholesale and retail inspection. They had received a tip that this business was selling saltwater products to the public without the proper licenses. During the inspection, they met with the store owner and conducted an inspection of numerous freezers containing both saltwater and freshwater products. They also inspected the wholesale dealer's receipts from whom he had purchased the products. It was determined that the store owner was not only buying saltwater products without the proper license, he was also selling alligator meat without the proper licensing. The store owner was given two criminal citations for his licensing violations and will have to appear in court.

Investigator McCorkle, Officers Buckson and Davidson were working a lead that an individual was trying to sell saltwater products using the internet. Investigator McCorkle arranged a meeting with the suspect so that he could see if the individual would indeed sell him saltwater products. During the meeting, the suspect offered Investigator McCorkle sting ray filets in exchange for cash. Once the deal was done, Officers Davidson and Buckson arrived on the scene and cited the man for selling saltwater products without the proper license. This is a criminal offense and the suspect will have to appear in court.

## RESCUES

### CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Officers Cohl, Mitchell, Scinta and Lieutenant Ruggiero responded to assist other agencies in a search and rescue for some overdue boaters. The vessel, two adults and two children left a residence on Monday before noon but had not returned by sundown as planned. Around 8 p.m., the officers received the call and began searching for them. A short while later, the Sheriff's department located the vessel using a helicopter. The

vessel was stranded in the mangroves far away from any safety, but fortunately all four occupants were unharmed. It was later determined that the vessel ran out of fuel a short distance from home and then drifted several miles to the west before coming to rest in the mangroves. The vessel and all occupants were returned to safety by the Punta Gorda Fire Department.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

### LEE COUNTY

Officers worked an operation in conjunction with the Lee County Sheriff's Office Marine Unit targeting the use of illegal nets by commercial mullet fisherman. Throughout the three-day operation, there were six individuals arrested with a total of 42 charges. The violations included the use of oversized nets, the use of entangling nets, and the use of connected nets. All of these are considered major violations and can result in fines, incarceration, forfeiture of fishing gear and suspension of licenses.

Officer Price conducted panther enforcement on Alico Road in an effort to reduce speeding in the known panther crossing areas. During the enforcement, he stopped nine vehicles for speed-related violations and issued 4 traffic citations and 6 warnings. The highest recorded speed was 74 miles per hour in the 45 mile per hour zone.

### PASCO COUNTY

Multiple FWC officers participated in a night flight over portions of Hernando and Pasco counties. During the flight, Pilot Fields and Reserve Officer Thompson observed a vehicle in Green Swamp West WMA. The vehicle was driving on a closed road and headed towards the Richloam WMA area of 'wooden gate.' Officers Dearborn and Pettifer stopped the vehicle within Richloam WMA and issued the operator a citation for illegal entry into the WMA. During the stop, the officers learned another vehicle was within Green Swamp West and the operator was engaged in hunting hogs. Pilot Fields and Reserve Officer Thompson located the second vehicle off of Oil Well Road. Officer Balfour, Reserve Officer Van Ost and Lieutenant Parisoe responded to the area. After a brief search, the officers located the vehicle which was driving with no lights in order to elude law enforcement. During the stop, the officers issued several citations for illegal entry into the WMA and illegal hunting. The vehicle operator also received citations for operating a vehicle off a designated roadway and driving without headlights.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### LEE COUNTY

Officer Bell and Lieutenant Ruggiero participated in "Wreaths across America" to honor our country's soldiers who have died at sea. The event drew a big crowd and many local veterans were there. Several dedications and speeches were made to honor local fallen soldiers. After the dedications, the crowd climbed aboard a vessel and made way

to a location off of Sanibel where a wreath from each military service was laid into the ocean. The FWC, United States Coast Guard, Lee County Sheriff's Department, Fort Myers Police Department and Cape Coral Police Department participated in the event.

## PASCO COUNTY

Officer Pulaski provided instruction for the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) - approved seated battery to members of the Florida Highway Patrol. The troopers who attended the training are assigned to the Hernando/Pasco area.

## PINELLAS COUNTY

Officers Boogaerts and Phillippi attended an outreach event at the United States Coast Guard Air Station in Clearwater. They provided information to approximately 400 individuals on topics such as the duties of an FWC Officer, boating safety, and boating accidents. The officers also answered general questions on recreational fishing, commercial fishing and hunting.

## **SOUTH A REGION**

### CASES

#### BROWARD COUNTY

Officer Tarr was on patrol in western Broward County when he noticed a campsite set up inside of the Rotenberger WMA on a weekday where camping is only allowed on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. As he approached the campsite, he made contact with two individuals and advised them of the camping rules. As the male subject produced his identification, he was acting strange and his hands were visibly shaking. Officer Tarr checked both subjects' identification through FWC dispatch and was advised that one of the subjects had two warrants out of Broward County. Once the warrants were confirmed, he placed the subject under arrest and transported him to the Broward County Jail.

#### MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Willems was on patrol in the C44 area. The C44 is a construction area, and will be a storm water treatment area (STA) in the future. Access to the area is prohibited while it is under construction. A vehicle was observed in the area occupied by two individuals who were using binoculars to observe wildlife in the adjacent Allapattah WMA. When contact was made, the two individuals stated they had a lease that was near the area and were just looking. They stated that they knew it was a risk driving in the area. Both individuals had been warned two weeks prior that they were not allowed in the area. Criminal citations were issued to both individuals.

## PALM BEACH COUNTY

While conducting land patrol in the JW Corbett WMA, Officers Morrow, Stone, Spradling and Brevik made contact with a group of subjects in the process of unloading multiple ATVs off of their trailers. ATV usage in JW Corbett WMA is prohibited. After making contact with the subjects, Officer Morrow noticed the smell of marijuana emitting from the vehicles. When asked, the subjects admitted there was marijuana in the vehicles and consented to having their vehicles searched. At the conclusion of the call, two subjects were given misdemeanor citations for possession of cannabis under 20 grams and drug paraphernalia. All subjects were issued warnings regarding ATV usage in the JW Corbett WMA and failure to obtain a day-use pass.

Officer Cobo responded to a call in which a subject was in possession of a soft shell turtle out of season. The subject had also pierced a hole in the turtle's soft shell and ran a string through it to tie the turtle to the bed of his pick-up truck to keep it from escaping. The subject appeared in court and was adjudicated guilty as charged, paying all associated court fees. A documented warning was also issued for cruelty to animals.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

### MARTIN COUNTY

Officers Rogers, Hankinson, Newman, Brevik and Morrow conducted patrol with a special emphasis placed on commercial fisheries and commercial boating safety equipment. Stops were conducted in Martin County as well as northern Palm Beach County. Numerous vessels were inspected, yielding nine written warnings in the course of the two-day detail.

### PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Hankinson and Brevik conducted approximately fifty resource inspections while at the Storm Treatment Area 1-West. Multiple written warnings were given for not possessing proper licenses and permits.

Officers Brevik and Hankinson were on water patrol in the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW). While on patrol, both officers observed multiple people speeding through the regulated manatee zones. Two warnings were issued and officers educated the operators by showing them where the manatee zones are located.

Officer Spradling patrolled the J.W Corbett WMA as part of a detail to target environmental and WMA violations such as fires outside of designated campsites, illegal entry, destruction of state land and littering. Numerous warnings and criminal citations were issued.



## **SOUTH B REGION**

### **CASES**

#### **COLLIER COUNTY**

Officers Johnson and Tidwell were patrolling Dollar Bay and observed a vessel without navigational lights on while boating at night. During the vessel stop, Officer Tidwell observed that the vessel did not have a hull identification number (HIN). The officers then proceeded to follow the vessel to Bayview Boat Ramp and Officer Tidwell noticed another mullet skiff at the dock. During an inspection of the skiff he discovered that it also did not have a HIN and after a closer look, he noticed that the motor's serial numbers had been defaced/removed. Both vessels were seized as evidence for further investigation. There are pending charges for the individuals for operating the vessels without a HIN, title fraud and possession of an outboard motor with no serial numbers.

Several Collier County FWC Officers in conjunction with the Marine Unit from the Collier County Sheriff's Office and the City of Naples Marine Unit, participated in a BUI Enforcement Flex Operation from Doctors Pass to Goodland. The Operation was a collaborative effort, and used 7 patrol vessels from the agencies and paired teams of boat operators with members. A large number of stops were conducted in high traffic areas in an effort to detect and deter impaired vessel operators and boating safety equipment issues. During the enforcement effort, several law enforcement personnel received positive feedback from the public confirming that law enforcement efforts in continued BUI enforcement are working countywide. There were a total of 55 stops (39 for violations and 16 for safety inspections), 6 Citations were issued, 27 Warnings were issued, and 1 Notice to Appear was issued for failure to transfer a title/registration.

#### **MONROE COUNTY**

Officer Rubenstein was conducting early morning resource inspections on Long Key Bridge and saw one party that seemed to be catching fish. When asked if they had any fish they said they had caught a bunch and had them in the cooler. The cooler contained 18 undersized Mutton snapper. After finishing that stop, another case was made with 14 undersized mutton snapper and 1 undersized hog snapper. Both groups were cited accordingly.

Officer Foell was on land patrol in the Lower Keys when he observed two subjects actively fishing off the side of the road. As Officer Foell approached the subjects, one subject looked at the Officer and began to throw what appeared to be snapper into the water. Once in close proximity, multiple mangrove snapper could be seen lying on the shallow ocean floor. Officer Foell asked the subject to retrieve the snapper, and the subject complied. The subject who threw the snapper into the water, later admitted to catching them. A further inspection of the snapper revealed four were undersized. The subject was cited accordingly.

Officer McKay was driving north on US 1 in Key Largo when a vehicle passed him at a high rate of speed and then tried unsuccessfully numerous times to pass a tractor trailer. While doing so he cut off several vehicles, while following too closely all vehicles ahead of him. When the lanes merged, the driver intentionally cut off the tractor trailer causing it to lock its brakes. Officer McKay stopped the driver, who held a Class B Commercial driver license, and arrested him for reckless driving and transported him to the Monroe County Jail.

Officers Lopez and Foell were on vehicle patrol in Key West and were advised by FWC Dispatch that USCG sector Key West received a call via VHS stating that a man reported a woman battering him in the Marqueses Key, 20 miles west of Key West. Officers responded by water on board a USCG vessel to the Marqueses Key. Upon arrival, there was a woman sitting in a small dingy tied off the main sailing vessel. She told officers that she was making beans when a glass broke on the stove and her boyfriend got upset at her and she threw a plastic bottle at him. A scuffle occurred and then he then tried to kiss and hug her to apologize. She told him no go away, and bit him on his nose. The female was arrested for battery. Officers brought her back to land and was transported to the Monroe County Detention Center without any incident. The female still remains in jail on a \$75,000 bond.

While Officer Piekenbrock and Officer Mason were on water patrol in Monroe County, they observed a commercial stone crab vessel with one man on board, actively pulling traps. The vessel was stopped south of Munson Island in order to conduct a marine resource inspection. There were four buckets on board containing legal stone crab claws. Upon further inspection, Officer Piekenbrock found another bucket near the trap puller, containing 50 undersized stone crab claws. Records indicated that the subject was cited for the same violation less than one year ago. The subject was cited accordingly for the second time.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

### COLLIER COUNTY

In light of the recent panther deaths in Collier and Lee Counties from vehicle strikes, Lieutenant Bulger and Officers Lugg, Polly and Reams conducted Panther Zone Speed Enforcement on U.S. 41, east of Turner River Road. The detail resulted in 6 citations (with 2 violators clocked in excess of 80 miles per hour) and 7 traffic warnings. The Collier team is committed to preventing future traffic related panther deaths and conducts monthly Panther Zone enforcement details.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Barringer attended the Annual Rookery Bay Adventure Race in Naples. Racers gathered behind the Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center to participate. This

unique event raises funds for the Friends of Rookery Bay by engaging individuals and teams in an exciting nature experience with a 3K kayak course on Henderson Creek and 4K trail run through old Florida forest on the Snail Trail and two primitive loops. Officer Barringer had the privilege to announce the start of the race. There were about 30 racers that took on the challenging course and all finished with great times.