

FWC
Division of Law Enforcement



Weekly Report
April 21, 2017 through April 27, 2017

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

Patrol, Protect, Preserve

NORTHWEST REGION

CASES

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

While checking several fishermen on the Bob Sikes Bridge, Officer Manning noticed fresh blood and large scales on the ground. A nearby fisherman denied knowing anything about it and claimed he had not caught anything. While checking the individual's cooler, Officer Manning found two large fillets. The individual at first insisted the fillets were from a grouper he bought from a fish market. Officer Manning determined the fillets were from a red drum and located a bloody knife. After additional questioning, the individual admitted to catching and cleaning the red drum. The subject was issued a notice to appear citation for the violation.

FRANKLIN COUNTY

While patrolling in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico aboard the Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) *Guardian*, Lieutenant Marlow, Officers Boyd and Nelson located a vessel approximately 14 miles south of Carrabelle. After boarding the vessel, Officer Nelson located cut-up red snapper on their bait table and hooks. An interview of the occupants reinforced that they had cut up the red snapper and were using it for bait during closed season. The violations of possession of red snapper during federal closure, not landing in whole condition and using reef fish for bait were addressed with the appropriate warnings and citations.

While patrolling in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico aboard the *Guardian*, Lieutenant Marlow, Officers Matechik and Nelson located a vessel approximately 24 miles south of St. George Island. While approaching the vessel from approximately 3 miles away, they observed the occupants moving it around quickly, turning south and coming on plane. Its original location was marked on radar, and after the vessel was stopped, the FWC officers boarded the vessel. The *Guardian* operated the vessel's course and located a goliath grouper floating in the prop wash. The 73-inch goliath grouper had large amounts of fillets removed and still had a metal gaff stuck in its mouth. The officers also located three whole gag grouper, three whole red snapper and two gag grouper fillets in the vessel's cooler. The vessel also had evidence of the goliath grouper on board with large bloody drag marks coming from the stern, through the dive door and into the vessel. Large scales consistent with a goliath grouper were also located. When interviewed, the occupants confessed to possession of the goliath grouper and throwing it overboard. The appropriate federal violations and warnings were issued for the offenses.

While patrolling in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico on board the *Guardian*, Lieutenant Marlow, Officers Boyd and Nelson located a vessel approximately 11 miles south of St. George Island. During the boarding, the officers located two gag grouper in

a cooler during federal closure. The officers addressed the violations with the appropriate warnings and citations.

HOLMES COUNTY

Lieutenants Walsingham, Bartlett, Brooks, Investigators Armstrong, Goss and Officers Brooks, Alsobrooks, Gore, White and Cutchin assisted the Holmes County Sheriff's Office in a manhunt for a burglary suspect that had fled the scene on foot. The suspect had numerous burglary warrants as well as charges stemming from a previous encounter with Officers Jackson and Brooks when he provided a false name and fled on foot. Through the cooperation and teamwork of numerous agencies, the subject was captured approximately ten miles away.

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officer Hutchinson was patrolling near Keyser's Landing and the Escambia River when he observed several men standing beside a truck that was stuck in a mud hole on the edge of the right of way. He approached the men and while speaking with them, he observed fresh tire tracks and deep ruts in front of the truck leading into private property. Officer Hutchinson questioned the men about the damage to the right of way and the private property. Two of the men admitted to purposely mud riding and damaging the property. Officer Hutchinson issued the two men notices to appear for damaging public land with a motor vehicle.

Officers Lewis and Jernigan were patrolling on the beach when they observed a man surf fishing. Officer Lewis asked the man for his fishing license and when he was retrieving it from his wallet, Officer Lewis observed him remove a small baggie containing pills from his wallet and try to conceal it. Inspection of the bag revealed a controlled substance. Another pill was also found in his wallet. The subject voluntarily stated that the pill in the baggie was Sub Oxone. Officer Lewis arrested and charged the subject with two felony counts of possession of a controlled substance without a prescription and possession of drug paraphernalia.

WALTON COUNTY

Officer Yates completed an investigation from 2016 involving a bear that was shot in a subject's yard. The subject stated that the bear was attempting to get his dog, but the investigation revealed that the bear was leaving the area. Lieutenant Walsingham and Officers Brooks, Letcher, and Kinney assisted. Charges have been direct filed with the Walton County state attorney's office.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Officer Gore was on patrol at Culpepper Landing on Holmes Creek when he observed a vessel with two occupants returning. As it neared, he smelled the odor of burnt cannabis and asked the male to step out of the vessel. He identified the odor was coming from

the subject and asked if he had any cannabis and the subject stated “yes.” A search of his person revealed cannabis and methamphetamine. The subject was arrested and transported to the Washington County Jail for the misdemeanor and felony violations.

Officer Gore was at the same location days later and observed another vessel returning to the ramp. It had an expired registration and when he conducted a safety inspection, he observed grass, mud, scales and a cast net in the bottom of the boat. When he asked the two subjects if they had been fishing, they replied that they had. A check revealed 120 bream, 20 over the daily bag limit. Both subjects were issued citations for taking over the daily bag limit of bream, written warnings for possession of an illegal fishing device (possession of a cast net while in possession of game fish), and the operator was issued a written warning for an expired registration.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Officer Long taught the laws section of a hunter’s education class this week. The class was held at the Molino Community Center in Molino.

HOLMES COUNTY

Lieutenant Walsingham, Officers Yates and Kinney assisted with a Holmes County 4-H Youth Fishing Day. The 25 elementary-aged children had completed their classroom portion and spent the afternoon on the water fishing. Valuable skills were learned and everyone had fun in the outdoors.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officers Pifer and Corbin participated in an outreach event called “Construction Junction,” presented by the Community Police Officers of Fort Walton Beach. This is a community event where kids interact with construction equipment, military, and law enforcement vehicles and personnel in a safe environment.

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officer Land conducted a youth outreach event at Shoreline Park in Gulf Breeze for approximately 100 students from Gulf Breeze Middle School. Officer Land had an FWC vessel on display and educated students about the role and responsibilities of an FWC officer. He had boating safety items on display and explained the importance of safe boating and answered questions from students regarding boating rules, resource regulations, and public safety concerns.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CASES

BAKER COUNTY

Officers Burnsed, Gill and Tyler were working the last weekend of spring turkey season targeting illegal hunting over bait. Shortly after daylight, Officer Burnsed located a vehicle that was parked in a small wooded section of a hunting club. The vehicle had been parked in the same location for three straight weekends. Suspecting the hunter was hunting over bait, K-9 Officer Gill and Officer Tyler arrived to assist. K-9 Friar was deployed on the track of the hunter to locate his hunting area in the wooded lot. After a short track, K-9 Friar located the hunter actively hunting turkeys. The hunter was found to be hunting over bait and was cited for the violation.

CLAY COUNTY

Officers Burnsed and Tyler were on water patrol working a Boating Under Influence (BUI) detail to target unlawful operation of vessels while under the influence. The officers observed a vessel that did not have a proper registration displayed and motioned for the vessel to approach. The operator of the vessel ignored the officers' instruction and continued to drive away. The officers stopped the vessel to address the violation. While speaking with the operator, the officers could smell a strong odor of alcohol on the operator's breath and the operator was struggling to maintain normal faculties. The officers performed field sobriety tasks on the operator to determine if he was under the influence. Based on the sobriety tasks, the operator was placed under arrest for BUI and transported to the Clay County Jail. At the jail, the operator blew a .16 and .18 on the breath intoxilizer.

DUVAL COUNTY

Lieutenant Arkin and Officer Culbreth were dispatched to Haulover Creek in Duval County to investigate the report of two subjects using a gill net to fish. Upon arrival, Lieutenant Arkin contacted one of the subjects and Officer Culbreth contacted the other subject. Only one of the subjects had a fishing license. A fisheries inspection revealed a 5-gallon bucket of mullet and unregulated fish. Both officers then checked the nets the two subjects were using. One of the subjects possessed a monofilament entangling net which contained wet saltwater debris. The owner of the net stated that one of his friends gave him the net in Mexico and admitted using it to catch the fish. Officer Culbreth placed the owner of the net under arrest for illegal use of nets/entangling net. Officer Culbreth wrote the other subject a non-criminal infraction for having no saltwater fishing license.

Lieutenant Arkin and Officer Hoover were on vessel patrol in the St. Johns River when they conducted a fisheries inspection. Officer Hoover discovered two redfish hidden in a compartment during the vessel stop/fisheries inspection. The two redfish measured 31 and 39 inches. The legal-size limit for redfish is between 18 and 27 inches. Officer

Hoover charged the subject with possession of oversized redfish and issued a notice to appear.

SUWANNEE COUNTY

Officers Johnston, Drew, and Cline recently worked the Suwannee and Santa Fe rivers in response to a request for assistance from the Gilchrist County Sheriff's Office. The sheriff's office anticipated a large crowd with above-average boat traffic due to a large party being held at a bar located on the Santa Fe River. The officers conducted enforcement efforts from the water on the day of the event, checking several vessels and dozens of users. The officers issued three boating citations and thirteen written warnings.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

LAFAYETTE COUNTY

Officers Drew and Britton participated in a Hunter Safety Course held at Daddy's Gun Shop. Officer Drew spoke on hunting regulations, wildlife management areas (WMAs) and the importance of safety while participating in recreational activities.

SUWANNEE COUNTY

Officers Mobley, Boone, Drew, Nichols, Vazquez and K-9 Officer Wiggins conducted an FWC Day at the Suwannee Intermediate School. The officers spoke to approximately 750 children on several different topics such as boating safety, the Division of Law Enforcement Core Missions, the K-9 program and safety concerns associated with native wildlife.

NORTHEAST REGION

CASES

BREVARD COUNTY

While patrolling Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, Officer Rasey saw a subject fishing from a nearby walking trail. After several minutes, the fisherman packed up and walked toward a vehicle in a boat ramp parking lot. Officer Rasey then conducted a resource and license inspection and discovered that the individual was in possession of six undersized spotted seatrout, two over the allowable bag limit. The suspect was also fishing without a license and possessed an undersized gray snapper. Two citations and two warnings were issued for the resource violations.

Officer Rasey and Lieutenants Davis and Bonds received Wildlife Alert intel regarding a person with illegal fish on a stringer in Merritt Island. The lieutenants responded by

water and located the subject actively fishing in a no trespassing area. Officer Rasey responded to the scene by land where multiple black drum and stone crab violations were discovered. Upon contact, the subject was initially deceptive, but then admitted that the stringer of fish was his. A check revealed the subject had previously been warned for trespassing and had received a federal citation for undersized fish. The subject was issued citations for the offenses and littering and a fishing license violation was also addressed.

Officer Marroquin was conducting resource inspections at Lone Cabbage Boat Ramp when he saw two individuals returning to their vehicle with a bucket and a cast net. An inspection revealed the subject had caught three black bass with the cast net. Black bass can only be caught with rod and reel. Appropriate citations were issued.

Officer Marroquin was conducting off-road patrol when he found a vessel that had been dumped in a wooded area. A vessel hull identification number was found and a Florida registration number was also visible. The registered owner was contacted and advised of the location of the vessel. The owner recovered the vessel that day and hauled it to the local landfill. Appropriate action was taken with the owner.

FWC dispatch received a call about a hit-and-run car accident at Sebastian Inlet State Park. While responding to the scene, Officer Cybula saw a damaged SUV fitting the suspect description traveling north away from the park. The officer conducted a traffic stop and spoke to the woman operating the vehicle. The woman admitted to having hit the vehicle at the park and leaving the area. Further investigation revealed numerous violations of law and the woman was arrested for leaving the scene of an accident with damage, driving with a suspended license with knowledge, a tag not assigned to the vehicle and violation of probation.

Officer R. Miller responded to a report of a man in Melbourne shooting at seagulls in a marina. When he arrived, he saw a man matching the description holding a scoped air rifle and standing near the boat lifts. Several moments later, the man raised the rifle and shot at an osprey that was perched on a beam. The shot missed and hit the beam under the bird. The man was given a citation for attempting to take a migratory bird.

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

Officer Marroquin was working at Sebastian Inlet State Park when he saw an individual moving rapidly towards the cleaning station. A resource inspection revealed that the individual possessed an undersized snook. The individual did not have a valid saltwater shoreline license or a snook permit. Officer Marroquin issued appropriate warnings and citations.

Officer Marroquin saw a subject catch a large snook and immediately move towards his vehicle. A resource inspection revealed the individual possessed an oversized snook. The individual was issued a citation for oversized snook and a warning for no snook permit.

Multiple warnings and citations were issued for consuming alcohol in a state park, no snook permit, no saltwater shoreline license, and littering.

LAKE COUNTY

Officer Scrambling was flagged down off CR 439 because a driver of a red truck almost ran another driver off the road. Officer Scrambling saw the truck failing to stay in a single lane and conducted a traffic stop. The subject appeared to be highly intoxicated and was arrested for DUI. The subject submitted to the breathalyzer at the jail where he blew a .310.

PUTNAM COUNTY

Lieutenant Dickson responded to a domestic violence complaint in the Rodman Campground. Upon arrival at the entrance, it was reported that a male subject grabbed his wife by her neck and was choking her when another camper stepped in and confronted the subject. A separate fight then ensued between the husband and the other camper. Lieutenant Dickson responded to the campsite where he was advised that the domestic violence suspect had just fled from the scene in a vehicle. A traffic stop was made near the campground entrance and the suspect was placed under arrest. Officers Guirate, Jones, Mason, Ramsey and deputies from the Putnam County Sheriff's Office arrived on the scene to complete the investigation. The suspect was charged with domestic violence by strangulation and was booked in the Putnam County Jail. It was determined that the other camper was acting to defend the victim and was not charged.

Officers Guirate and Mason conducted a fisheries inspection on two subjects on Crescent Lake. An investigation revealed that one subject had his fishing privileges revoked for life and the other was in possession of over the bag limit of speckled perch. The violations were appropriately addressed.

ST. JOHNS COUNTY

While working at Guana State Park in the early morning hours, Officer Campbell saw four male subjects catching undersized red drum and keeping over the daily bag limit. He saw one subject catch 11 undersized fish and another catch five undersized fish. Officer Campbell then saw two other subjects catch eight undersized red drum. He approached the first group as they were packing up to leave and found the two subjects possessed 16 undersized red drum. They also failed to pay the park entrance fee and were in the park after permitted hours. The other two subjects were directed to not move or touch the fish they had hidden in a crevice between the sidewalk and the dam structure. As Officer Campbell dealt with the first group, he saw another subject throwing all his red drum over the fence back into the water. Officer Campbell directed him to stop, but the subject continued to throw three more red drum over the fence. All the fish were sucked through the dam structure making it impossible to retrieve them.

Officer Campbell charged the subject who threw the fish with failure to allow FWC inspection and being in the park after permitted hours. His partner was charged with no saltwater fishing license and being in the park after permitted hours. A charge of resisting without violence was also filed on the first subject. In total, he charged four subjects with a total count of six misdemeanors, three infractions and six warnings.

Officers Graves and B. Miller were on fisheries patrol in their work truck when they observed two local men fishing in the San Sebastian River on Highway US 1, just west of downtown St. Augustine. In addition to inshore species, this local fishing spot is known habitat for juvenile offshore species. During the fisheries inspection, the officers found that the two men possessed 12 mangrove snapper, nine of which were undersized and two fish over the daily bag limit of five fish per harvester, three undersized and out-of-season gag grouper, and one redfish and one spotted sea trout. The officers issued the fishermen notice to appear citations for the snapper and grouper violations.

Officer Greenier led the inaugural FWC Advanced Conservation Academy (ACA) focusing on the Florida East Coast Shrimp Bed Closure in state waters during the months of April and May. Officer Greenier enlisted the assistance of his squad mates to operate four vessels patrolling the offshore waters north and south of St. Augustine Inlet and receiving enforcement assistance from Pilot Lieutenant Cain in her helicopter, Officer McDonough and his crew in the OPV *Osprey*, and Lieutenant Givens and his crew out of Duval County in OPV *Sentinel*. With Lieutenant Cain's assistance, Officer Greenier and his boarding team located and boarded a Volusia County shrimper 2.7 nautical miles from northern St. Johns County. The captain, a repeat commercial shrimping violator, was cited for trawling within state waters during the closure, while the National Marine Fisheries Service Special Agent Chesler led several of the ACA officers in the inspection of the shrimper's nets and turtle excluder devices.

SUMTER COUNTY

Officer Sweet was patrolling the Richloam WMA when he discovered numerous boxes containing household materials on a forest road. In the trash were documents with names. The investigation led him to Polk County and after several interviews, Officer Sweet obtained a confession from a subject who was then cited for the violation. The subject returned to Richloam WMA and properly disposed of his trash.

VOLUSIA COUNTY

FWC investigators notified Officer West of a social media posting offering shrimp for sale from a residence in the New Smyrna Beach area. Officer West followed up on the information and, after checking three separate locations, located the seller. The subject was issued a criminal notice to appear for offering to sell saltwater products without the proper licenses and educated her on the prohibitions of recreational harvesters selling saltwater products without the quality control protocols that protect the public and Florida's seafood industry.

Officers North and Haskins were on vehicle patrol on a county road that runs through the middle of Bulow Creek State Park when they observed a vehicle pulled off onto the shoulder of the road. The occupant of the vehicle took a live raccoon from a trap and released it into the park as the officers watched. The man was given a warning for transporting a live raccoon and issued a citation for releasing wildlife in a state park.

RESCUES

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

While on ATV patrol at Sebastian Inlet State Park, Officer Kearney saw a surfer lying on the shoreline in a remote area. After speaking to the man, it was revealed that he had injured himself and needed emergency medical services. EMS was called and arrived on the scene but were unable to transport the man the long distance back to the ambulance in the soft sand. Using his agency-issued side by side, Officer Kearney transported the injured man and EMS workers to the ambulance.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

LAKE COUNTY

Officers Scrambling and Shaw participated in a public outreach event at Seminole State Forest. The event included boating safety, archery, and fishing information. The approximately 100 members of the community were educated on the importance of conservation and boating safety.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CASES

HERNANDO COUNTY

Officer Spradlin was on patrol in the Croom WMA when he observed a vehicle drive off a designated forest trail, passing official signage indicating the area was closed to vehicles. The vehicle's driver purposely travelled up a steep embankment spinning its tires which caused damage to the environment and forest vegetation. The driver was issued a notice to appear for damage to state land by vehicle.

Officer Spradlin apprehended a subject who set up bush hooks on a small pond on private property and caught an approximately 8-foot alligator. The subject came onto the property to check the hooks, and was in possession of a .22 rifle. The subject was charged with armed trespassing and attempting to take an American alligator. The subject was booked into the Pasco County Jail.

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

While on water patrol near Ben T. Davis Beach in Tampa, Officer Phillippi and Lieutenant Van Trees observed a PWC operating with an expired registration. After stopping the PWC and talking with the operator, he learned that the PWC was rented thru an illegal online livery. After collecting information from the operator, the officers waited for him to return it to the suspect at the Courtney Campbell Causeway Boat Ramp. The officers identified the suspect operating the illegal livery and after confronting him, he admitted to running the illegal livery through several websites. The suspect was cited for not having the proper insurance to operate a PWC livery, and additional charges will be filed with the state attorney's office.

LEE COUNTY

Officers Stanley and Perry responded to a boating accident on the Caloosahatchee River where a vessel struck a double-piling manatee marker and the operator abandoned the vessel at the Centennial Park Boat Ramp. The manatee marker was broken off at the water line and there was significant damage to the vessel. The officers eventually contacted the owner's girlfriend, who stated that her boyfriend and his passenger had gotten into a boating accident but had left the scene. Through their investigation, the officers located the operator and charged him for leaving the scene of an accident and for failing to maintain a proper lookout.

Officers Stanley and Winton stopped a commercial charter vessel out of Fort Myers Beach to conduct a marine fisheries inspection. During the inspection, the officers determined the marine sanitation device (MSD) had an open valve directing the sewage overboard. The owner/operator was cited for having an MSD plumbed to direct sewage overboard. The same owner had previously been charged with the same violation in 2006 and 2011.

Officer Hardgrove was on patrol in Bokeelia when he noticed a vessel at the marina that had many fresh oysters lying on the deck and under a wet carpet. Upon approaching the vessel, he noticed an individual was observing him from a distance. He approached the individual and asked him if he had harvested the oysters. The individual stated that he had harvested the oysters earlier that morning. Officer Hardgrove then stated to the individual that he appeared to be over the bag limit for oysters. The individual admitted to knowingly being over the bag limit for oysters because he needed them for a party. Officer Hardgrove allowed him to pick through the oysters and keep the best ones to fill his limit. A total of 9, 5-gallon buckets (approximately 350 pounds) were returned to the resource alive. The subject was issued a notice to appear for possession of over the bag limit of oysters.

Officer Hardgrove responded to a request for assistance from Lee County Sheriff's Office (LCSO). The LCSO had stopped two subjects commercially fishing and had discovered possible fisheries violations. Officer Hardgrove checked the coolers on board and noticed that they had numerous types of snapper as well as barracuda.

When Officer Hardgrove asked for the vessel's saltwater products license (SPL), the SPL did not show a restricted species endorsement (RS), which is required to harvest certain species such as the yellowtail snapper and mangrove snapper they had on board. Per Florida statute, it's required to have a RS endorsement in addition to an SPL to commercially harvest species that are considered restricted in the State of Florida. Both subjects were issued a notice to appear for no RS endorsement.

PINELLAS COUNTY

While on water patrol in Tierra Verde, Officer Bibeau stopped a vessel to conduct a fisheries inspection, which revealed two zip-lock bags that contained fillets. The operator of the vessel admitted that the fillets were snapper and porgies. The operator was issued a misdemeanor citation for possession of reef fish not landed in whole condition. The fillets were submitted to the FWC Forensics Program to be tested to determine the exact species.

Officers Martinez and Bibeau were on water patrol near the Skyway Bridge when they observed two individuals that were actively spear fishing from a paddle board. The officers approached the suspects to conduct a fisheries inspection and found two gag grouper, one of which was only 14 inches. Officer Martinez wrote one of the individuals two misdemeanor citations for possession of undersized and out-of-season gag grouper.

While on water patrol near the North Skyway Relief Bridge, Officers Bibler and Godfrey stopped a vessel returning from offshore. A subsequent resource inspection revealed two undersized scamp grouper and one undersized and out-of-season red snapper. The officers issued a notice to appear for the violations, along with numerous warnings for the resource and registration violations.

While conducting boating safety and resource inspections at a boat ramp in south Pinellas County, Officers Pettifer and Ludtke observed signs of alcohol impairment from a vessel operator. Standardized field sobriety tasks were administered and the operator of the vessel further demonstrated signs of impairment during the tasks. The operator was placed under arrest and transported to the Pinellas County jail for operating a vessel while under the influence of alcohol.

While on patrol, Lieutenant Laskowski observed an individual wade fishing with a large fish on a stringer tied around his waist. Lieutenant Laskowski watched the individual fish for approximately an hour from a concealed location. After the individual waded back to the mangroves, waded by his parked vehicle, and then continued fishing, Lieutenant Laskowski initiated a resource inspection. When asked if he caught anything, the individual initially said "no." When asked about the fish on the stringer, the individual said he was just keeping it so he could take a picture of it when he got back to his vehicle. The fish was identified and measured as an oversized snook. Since the individual was in possession of the fish for over an hour, and waded by his vehicle

without stopping to take a picture of it, he was cited for possession of an oversized snook.

RESCUES

LEE COUNTY

Officers Birchfield, Sehl, Stasko, Mitchell, Fogle, Investigator Ruggiero and Lieutenant Ruggiero responded to a wildfire in Lehigh Acres. The fire started small but spread over 400 acres. The officers moved quickly and assisted Lee County Sheriff's Office and Fire and Rescue to prevent potential injury and loss to residences. The officers performed traffic control, assisted Lee County Animal Services, and guarded a downed powerline. Fire and Rescue got the fire under control after the winds died down and the weekend brought much needed rain to the area.

POLK COUNTY

Officers Tyer, Earls, and Kobs responded to a fire around Indian Lake Estates. Once on the scene, the officers assessed the situation and immediately began evacuating homes that were in the path of the fire. Working alongside Polk County Sheriff's deputies, the officers assisted families in getting out of their homes as well as removing animals from the houses. After several hours, Polk County Fire Rescue and the Florida Forest Service were able to contain the fire.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

HARDEE COUNTY

Officer Franks responded to an alligator complaint in Fort Green. The complainant reported the alligator to be in a local creek with its mouth taped shut. Officer Franks located the alligator, secured it, then removed the tape from the alligator's mouth and released it unharmed.

LEE COUNTY

Officers Hazelwood, Thompson and Lieutenant Spoede responded to a beached dwarf sperm whale on the shores of Sanibel Lighthouse. When they arrived on the scene, the whale was already beached and thrashing in the water. Upon arrival of the biologist, the officers assisted in securing the whale and drawing blood samples for further research. Once the samples were taken, the officers, Good Samaritans, and biologists carried the whale to the rescue vehicle where it would be transported to the research lab.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

HERNANDO COUNTY

Officers Fagan, Scinta, and K-9 Officer Wolf participated in an Earth Day outreach event at Fox Chapel Middle School. The officers spoke with approximately 700 students about the duties of an FWC officer and the importance of resource and environmental protection. Officer Wolf completed several canine demonstrations with canine Chaos, and Officer Fagan gave educational presentations with the aid of a live American alligator to the students.

PASCO COUNTY

Officer Pulaski participated in the 2017 Disaster Expo held by Pasco County Office of Emergency Management. He brought an FWC utility vehicle for a static display. Additionally, he provided freshwater fishing, saltwater fishing and hunting regulations, as well as boating safety brochures. He educated approximately 100 individuals and answered several questions on various topics.

Officer Bergwerff, Wildlife Assistance Biologist Parks, and Lieutenant Parisoe addressed members of the Oak Creek Community. They answered questions on fishing and provided information on feeding wildlife and alligators. Approximately 15 individuals attended the presentation.

PINELLAS COUNTY

Officers Ferguson and Godfrey participated in the two-day "Island Earth Days" event at Honeymoon Island State Park, hosted by The Friends of the Island Parks. The event had food, live music, live animal shows, and nature and history displays and many other activities. The officers spoke with more than 900 attendees about fishing, hunting, the environment, local issues and wildlife-human interaction.

SOUTH REGION A

CASES

BROWARD COUNTY

Officers Ryan, Banks and Holcomb were dispatched to Plantation in response to a report of a five-foot alligator on someone's front doorstep. Officer Ryan captured and secured the alligator with assistance from Officers Banks and Holcomb. The officers transported the alligator to the Everglades and released it unharmed.

Officer Vacin was on water patrol near the marina located at Mizell-Johnson State Park. He observed an individual fishing with an oversized cast net, and he had just warned the same individual the day before. The oversized cast net was seized as evidence and the individual was issued a criminal citation.

Officers Ryan and Holcomb were on patrol in Mizell-Johnson State Park and observed a vehicle driving recklessly and sounding its horn erratically. Upon contact with the operator of the vehicle, it was determined that the operator had a warrant for his arrest. Officer Holcomb placed the operator under arrest for the warrant and transported him to the Broward County Jail.

Officers Tarr and Holcomb responded to a spillway to investigate information from Officers Banks and Ryan about illegal fishing activity. Officer Holcomb issued one individual a criminal citation for possession of two undersized snook. The fish were seized as evidence.

Officers Brock and Grant were on water patrol in the Hillsboro Inlet and observed two individuals spearfishing next to the north jetty with no dive flag displayed. The officers conducted a marine fisheries inspection on the two individuals and found speared fish in their possession. Officer Grant issued one non-criminal citation to one diver for no diver-down flag displayed and a criminal citation to both divers for diving too close to the jetty. The spear guns were seized as evidence.

Officers Brock, Banks and Grant were on water patrol in Boca Lake. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service officers on water patrol asked for their assistance. After consultation, one individual was charged with (underage) BUI. The juvenile was issued a citation and released to his parents.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Godward is working a boating accident that occurred in the ICW near Burt Winters Park. A motor-powered vessel struck two teenage boys that were on a racing Skull. The two boys were taken to the hospital where one was treated for head injuries and the other was released.

ST. LUCIE COUNTY

The Investigations Section located a "Craigslit" post advertising a six-foot Alaskan black bear mount for sale. Florida law prohibits the sale or purchase of any taxidermal black bear mount or black bear parts in the State of Florida. Investigator Woolrich, Officer Godward and Officer Turner located the seller and addressed the violation by issuing a criminal citation.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

GLADES COUNTY

Officers Alford and Worrell responded to an alligator incident at the Fisheating Creek campground. The officers arrived on the scene to investigate an incident where a family's dog was taken by an alligator. The officers met with the nuisance alligator trapper to help identify the alligator involved in the incident. They also took pictures of the scene and documented the GPS coordinates to include in the report.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

BROWARD COUNTY

Lieutenant Laubenberger commanded the Broward Police Multi-Agency Honor Guard at the annual Broward Law Enforcement and K-9 Memorial held at the Broward College/Davie campus. Lieutenant McDonald, Investigator Teems and Officers Coker and Tarr attended the ceremony as well.

Officer Banks was on patrol in Mizell-Johnson State Park when she received reports from the park rangers that a dog was running loose in the park and on the road way. She was flagged down by citizens stating that a dog had run across the road and down an embankment. Officer Banks observed the dog jump into the Intracoastal Waterway and alerted an approaching boat that it was about to hit the dog. The boaters managed to grab it and bring it over to Officer Banks. Officer Banks carried the dog up the embankment. Through contact with the state park rangers, the dog was transferred to a no-kill shelter and awaits claim by its owner or adoption.

GLADES COUNTY

Officers Toby and Dial participated in the Law Enforcement Special Olympics Torch Run alongside officers from the Glades County Sheriff's Office in Moore Haven.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Environmental Investigator Booth responded to a report of a missing and endangered subject. Information received stated the individual was possibly suicidal and in or near state WMAs. Investigator Booth located a vehicle, matching that of the subject, parked in a WMA. Officer Morrow and local deputies arrived to assist. A semi-conscious subject was located lying down inside the vehicle along with an empty bottle of medication. Fire rescue was called in to respond the subject was transported to a local hospital for treatment. The deputies followed to the hospital to complete the investigation into the incident.

Duty Officer Supervisor Pereira, Duty Officer Stamp, Call Taker Harrass and Officer Mann participated in the Special Olympics Tip-A-Cop event at a Duffy's restaurant. Numerous agencies were there participating and raising money for the Special Olympics.

Numerous duty officers and FWC officers participated in the Law Enforcement Special Olympics Torch Run in Palm Beach County.

ST. LUCIE COUNTY

Captive Wildlife Investigator Douglas received information of a deer being killed illegally on a licensed hunting preserve and game farm. Investigators Douglas and Doricchi

responded to the game farm to investigate the allegations and collect evidence. A knife, blood and soil samples were recovered from this area as well. Recent tire sign from a vehicle was located and documented in a concealed location nearby. Investigators Douglas, Doricchi, Patterson and Officer Gouveia conducted interviews on multiple subjects alleged to be involved in the incident. The information obtained in the interviews indicated where the deer meat was located, and Officer Davis obtained meat samples at the location. One suspect had a truck matching the vehicle in the picture provided, as well as tires matching the tire sign located at the scene. This vehicle was seized to process further and a search warrant was obtained to search the vehicle. Investigators Douglas, Patterson and forensic Biologist Lopez executed the search warrant. Five firearms, blood samples, soil samples and various electronics were collected from the vehicle. Forensic analysis of the evidence collected was completed and confirmed that the blood and meat samples collected at the scene matched the blood recovered from the vehicle, and the meat recovered at the location. The soil samples from the scene and the vehicle also matched. An arrest warrant was obtained for the subject involved for charges including felony grand theft, felony trespass, simple trespass, and taking a deer at night. The subject was booked in to the St. Lucie County Jail the following day.

SOUTH REGION B

CASES

COLLIER COUNTY

While on federal patrol aboard the *C.T. Randall*, Captain Mravic, Lieutenant Shea, and Officers Thurkettle, Reams, Johnson and Araujo conducted a fishery and TED (turtle escape device) inspection on a shrimp boat. During the inspection, four Bahamian starfish were discovered on board the shrimp boat. The subjects were issued citations for harvest/possession of Bahama starfish.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

Two officers on water patrol issued 8 resource misdemeanor citations, 6 uniform boating citations and 2 warnings.

MONROE COUNTY

Officer Rubenstein observed a truck and trailer in a parking area by a bridge in the lower keys and recognized it as a known poacher. Officer Rubenstein was then dispatched to a boat on fire and left the area, but alerted plain-clothes Officer Wagner and uniformed Officer Piekenbrock. The two officers sat in an unmarked truck waiting for the individuals to return. Later, plain-clothes Officer Garrison arrived on the scene. When the individuals returned, Officers Wagner and Garrison approached the three males where they returned to shore while they unloaded fishing gear, coolers, and

buckets containing fish. Officer Piekenbrock conducted a resource inspection and found four illegally harvested pork fish. A filleted shark in another cooler at their truck and trailer. A hidden hatch contained seven undersized mutton snapper, one undersized hogfish, and one illegally harvested tang. Officer Piekenbrock interviewed all the occupants of the vessel and arrested the operator for multiple resource violations and interference.

Officer Garcia was patrolling near County Road 905 and Card Sound Road in Key Largo when he encountered a male and female in a white SUV. The male subject was in control of the vehicle and appeared very nervous. When Officer Garcia repeatedly directed the driver to put the vehicle in park, the two subjects fled from Officer Garcia and headed northbound towards Ocean Reef community. The driver used the vehicle to ram the gate and trespass into the private community. The vehicle was stopped by Officer Schroth while attempting to exit the community. FHP Trooper Martin and Monroe County Sheriffs Deputy Babula also assisted in the apprehension. Officer Garcia placed the driver under arrest and charged the individual with multiple criminal counts including but not limited to DUI, DUI with property damage, reckless driving and fleeing and eluding a law enforcement officer.

Officers Mobley and Wagner were dispatched to a marina in the Lower Keys due to an employee reporting a carcass of a goliath and black grouper in a trash bag. Once on the scene, the employee showed Officers Mobley and Wagner the vessel the bag came from. The officer contacted the owner of the vessel who admitted he had harvested the black grouper and his son had harvested the goliath grouper. The father, as operator of the vessel, was charged with undersized, out-of-season black grouper and possession of a goliath grouper. The father was placed under arrest and booked into the Stock Island Jail.

RESCUES

COLLIER COUNTY

FWC officers assisted with a large wildfire that had broken out in the Golden Gate neighborhood of Naples. A mandatory evacuation order was issued for approximately 7,000 homes in the affected area. FWC officers assisted area law enforcement officers and fire fighters with evacuations as well as traffic control within the evacuation zone. The fire, which burned over 7,400 acres in the heavily populated area, destroyed five homes.

A male subject out of Miami was reported missing by his family. Three days later, the subject's vehicle was located at the Gator Hook Trail Head on Loop Road in the Big Cypress National Park. The park rangers hiked the trail and found items belonging to the subject, confirming he had been there and may still be in the area. The National Park Service Supervisor Herrin and Park Ranger Radford contacted FWC's Lieutenant Sushil to request assistance from members of the SOG team and K-9 units. The next day, Lieutenant Sushil, Lieutenant Cox, two SOG members, Officers Reams, Araujo, K-

9 Officers Stasko, Cloud and Kirkland met with Big Cypress rangers at the Gator Hook Trail Head and began to hike the trail to search for the subject. SOG and K-9 began the first search with a support team to follow. After hiking harsh terrain, the SOG team members located the subject alive, but severely dehydrated and hungry. They provided him with water and something to eat, then assisted him out of the thick and harsh terrain. The team came out of the woods and delivered the subject to waiting EMS personnel. The round-trip search took approximately 6 hours, and officers traveled about 11 miles on foot during the search.

MONROE COUNTY

Officers Piekenbrock and Mason were dispatched to a vessel that was in distress and drifting without an anchor around midnight near Ramrod Key. The two officers proceeded to a vessel to try and locate the individuals in heavy winds and waves. Officers Wagner and Rubenstein responded by land and were in communication with the subjects on board the distressed vessel. They coordinated with the officers on board the patrol vessel to help find the disabled vessel. The two people were located and brought safely back to shore.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

Officer Dube and FWC Commissioner Spottswood attended the release of a manatee on Key Colony Beach that was injured last year. The manatee was injured from a boat strike in the same area and was rescued by FWC and staff from the Miami Seaquarium. The manatee was rehabilitated at the Miami Seaquarium after losing a large portion of its rear paddle. There were approximately 200 people in attendance for the release.