

FWC
Division of Law Enforcement



Weekly Report
June 2, 2017 through June 8, 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

BAY COUNTY

Officers N. Basford and Wicker were on water patrol in Watson Bayou when they received a call from dispatch regarding a woman who was being threatened and held hostage on a sailboat near Shell Island. The complainant stated that she was contacted by a girlfriend of hers who told her that she was being threatened and held hostage by a male subject on a white sailboat. The officers started canvassing the area, checking white sailboats, and identifying the male subjects on board. It was later determined that they were on a blue sailboat. The officers located the sailboat near the city marina and conducted a vessel stop. The female on board stated that she was not being threatened and she was not being held hostage. She said that the male subject earlier had seen her smoke a cigarette and told her their relationship was over and that he does not date smokers. She stated that since it was not her boat that she felt like she had nowhere to go. The male subject stated to the officers that he had seen her smoking and that he told her he was done dating her. She asked to be taken back to where he keeps his boat, but because of the high winds, they were not able to return to where the boat is kept. He was having a friend meet them at the city marina to take the female subject to her home. Charges will be filed on the female subject with the state attorney's office for filing a false police report to law enforcement authorities.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

The FWC and partner agencies, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office marine unit and security personnel, Okaloosa County Jail Processing Center, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), Escambia County Sheriff's Office marine unit, Fort Walton Beach Police Department, Fort Walton Beach Fire and Rescue, Okaloosa Island Fire and Rescue, and Air Force Security Forces provided public safety for the 62nd Billy Bowlegs Pirates Festival. The joint efforts of law enforcement and first responders resulted in 199 vessel checks, 700 citizen contacts, 13 BUI arrests, 33 uniform boating citations issued, 35 written warnings issued, 9 fight interventions, 47 calls for service/public assistance, 10 medical responses/transport, 1 felony warrant arrest, 2 drug possessions, 6 intoxicated individuals secured at the drunk tent, 1 transported to the county jail, and 1 person transported to the emergency room. No boating accidents occurred. Ten patients were assessed and received medical treatment.

Officers Corbin and Pifer responded to a complaint of a burglarized vehicle at Henderson Beach State Park. There were two vehicles, both 2011 Chevrolet Tahoes. No forced entry into either vehicle was evident. Both vehicle owners had secured their personal items and locked their vehicle. It is believed that access was obtained with the use of a remote universal fob. An intel report was completed and forwarded statewide to all Florida state parks.

Officers Corbin and Wilkenson were on vessel patrol conducting boating safety inspections and state fisheries inspections in the Destin Pass and saw a vessel returning from the Gulf of Mexico. A fisheries inspection revealed an undersized scamp and red snapper fillets in a 4-gallon plastic bag. The owner/operator was cited and issued notice to appear citations.

Officer Nichols did a follow-up with a homeowner who recently received a letter of notification regarding the intentional feeding of bears. Upon arrival, the officer noticed the homeowner not only failed to remove the existing bread and birdseed, but had placed additional feed down. Officer Nichols cited the homeowner with a written warning and will follow up with another compliance inspection.

Officer Corbin conducted a dockside commercial fisheries inspection/offload on a federal-documented vessel. The inspection revealed undersized red snapper and vermilion snapper. The inspection also revealed the crew harvested gray triggerfish during a closed season. After the offload was completed, Officer Corbin discovered five additional gray triggerfish that were shoved and hidden underneath a fish box. The operator admitted to hiding the fish from the officer. This commercial vessel/operator has been cited with four federal fisheries violations in the last seven months. A National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) law enforcement officer was dispatched and several federal charges are pending.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Maltais was a guest speaker at Duke Field. He spoke to base personnel regarding boating safety, BUI enforcement, boating accident reporting, local waterways and state parks in preparation for the busy boating season and summer holidays.

Officers Maltais and Jarvis participated in an outreach event with a local news channel. The news channel interviewed the officers regarding boating safety. The officers took the media crew on vessel patrol to Santa Rosa Sound (Brooks Bridge) and Crab Island where they conducted vessel stops and addressed a diver's complaint call. The footage was aired the following day.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CASES

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Officers Johnston and Cline were on land patrol at Rum Island Park along the Santa Fe River when they discovered a subject with multiple felony warrants. The officers ran the subject's vehicle registration for general investigative purposes and determined the tag

attached to the vehicle was not assigned. A check through FCIC/NCIC also revealed the registered owner of the vehicle had active felony warrants. Officer Cline set out on foot along the Santa Fe River for a better vantage point to determine if the vehicle was occupied and if the occupant matched the physical description of the subject with the warrants. Officer Cline determined the vehicle was in fact occupied by the wanted subject. Shortly thereafter, both officers approached and detained the subject without incident. His identity and active warrants were confirmed. He was then transported by the officers and booked into the Columbia County Jail for four active felony warrants for failure to appear on multiple charges.

Officers Johnston and Cline were on patrol around Lake Desoto when, from a concealed location, they saw three subjects fishing with rods and reels. The officers made contact to conduct a resource/fishing license check. Officer Johnston recognized one subject from a previous contact and suspected he may have an active warrant for his arrest. The subject could not provide a fishing license, and FWC Dispatch reported the subject had an active warrant for failure to appear on an original charge of driving while license suspended or revoked (DWLS/R). The officers transported the subject and booked him into the Columbia County Jail. This was the subject's second fishing license violation within 36 months which requires him to pay an enhanced fine amount. Officer Cline also issued another of the three subjects a citation for no freshwater fishing license.

Officer McDonald was on foot patrol in Kirby Pit when he encountered two individuals fishing. Kirby Pit is a lake on DEP lands and is closed to the public. Upon inspection, 12 largemouth bass were found on a stringer in the water. The female admitted to catching three of the bass and the male subject admitted to catching nine of the bass. Citations were issued for taking over the daily bag limit of black bass and no fishing license. Warnings were issued for trespassing on property other than a structure or conveyance. The fish were released alive.

LEVY COUNTY

Officers Johnston, Hilliard, Starling and Lieutenant Umhoefer conducted a targeted speed enforcement detail in the Manatee Springs State Park at the request of park management personnel. They had been receiving numerous complaints of excessive speeding on the main entry road leading to camping areas and around adjacent walking trails. During the detail, 39 vehicles were speed checked with radar and 11 citations were issued for exceeding the speed limit (in some cases double the posted limit). Park personnel reported that they received positive feedback from several park visitors after the detail.

DUVAL COUNTY

The Resource Protection Squad responded to the report of illegal harvest and possession of goliath grouper at a local marina. A plain-clothes officer responded and located the spot on a dock where a large fish had apparently been cleaned. The officer spoke to the manager who at first denied any knowledge of a fish being cleaned. When

the manager's attention was directed to the fish blood, fish slime and rather large grouper-looking scales stuck to his shirt, he admitted to harvesting and cleaning the fish. He was issued a misdemeanor notice to appear and more than 100 pounds of grouper meat was seized.

Officer Sapp and Lieutenant Conboy were on water patrol when they noticed a man in a kayak, in the middle of the ICW channel, waving his paddle in the air and yelling at passing boaters. When they got near the kayaker, Lieutenant Conboy asked the operator if he was ok. The subject told the officers that he was drunk. The kayaker was brought on board the patrol vessel and was given a series of field sobriety tasks. He performed poorly on the tasks and was handcuffed and arrested for BUI. While the officers were leaving the docks to take him to a patrol truck, the man became belligerent, kicked Officer Sapp and tried to run. Officer Sapp and Lieutenant Conboy restrained the subject, but he continued to yell and resist for a few minutes. Eventually, the subject was taken to the Duval County Jail where his breath alcohol was measured at over two and one-half times the legal limit. The subject was charged with BUI and resisting arrest with violence.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

The Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) *Fincat* conducted enforcement patrol in federal waters during the three-day recreation red snapper season, resulting in numerous vessel stops.

On the opening day, Officers Canfield, Boyer and NOAA's Officer Widner were aboard the OPV *Fincat* just outside the Middle Grounds, and saw a charter vessel engaged in fishing. Officer Boyer boarded the vessel to conduct an inspection. Officer Boyer found one of the charter captains to be in possession of an American red snapper and the vessel had exceeded the one-day bag limit on the first day of fishing. After consulting with NOAA's Officer Widner, the captain was issued a federal citation for charter vessel captain or crew in possession of an American red snapper and given a verbal warning for possession of more than the daily bag limit. Officer Boyer issued numerous boating safety warnings after several other vessel checks during this patrol.

On the second day of the season, Officers Canfield and Boyer were aboard the OPV *Fincat* in federal waters when a commercial sponge vessel was seen engaging in diving. During an inspection of the vessel, Officer Boyer located an undersized gag grouper. Officer Boyer issued the captain of the vessel a state citation for the violation. Later during the day, a stop was conducted on a recreation vessel which resulted in Officer Boyer issuing a federal citation for over the limit of red snapper and possession of a greater amberjack during the closed season. A separate recreational vessel stop resulted in Officer Boyer issuing a state warning for possession of an undersized gag grouper. Several other vessel checks resulted in Officer Boyer issuing boating safety warnings during this patrol.

On the last day of the season, Officers Canfield, Boyer and Fox were aboard the OPV *Fincat* in federal waters when, during a stop of a recreation vessel, Officer Boyer found the vessel to be over the limit of American red snapper. The captain of vessel was issued a state citation for the violation. Several other vessel checks were conducted and no other violations were found.

NORTHEAST REGION

CASES

BREVARD COUNTY

Officers Miller and Graves stopped a vessel on the Banana River for violating a Manatee Zone. When the officers approached the operator of the vessel, they noticed that the vessel operator seemed to be under the influence of alcohol. The officers performed field sobriety tasks on the operator and determined that he was too impaired to operate a vessel. The operator was taken to the Brevard County Sheriff's Office East Precinct to give a sample of his breath. The operator of the vessel had a blood alcohol level of .152. He was arrested for BUI and taken to the Brevard County Jail.

Officers Miller and Graves were on water patrol on the Banana River. Officer Miller dropped Officer Graves off under the SR520 bridge so he could conduct a resource inspection on some fishermen. One subject was in possession of an undersized redfish and one subject in possession of an undersized trout. Both subjects denied catching the fish, saying that another fisherman gave them the fish. Officer Graves issued both subjects citations for possession of undersized fish.

While on airboat patrol, Officer Hadwin saw an individual throwing a cast net from the shoreline and harvesting a largemouth bass. A resource inspection revealed the individual had harvested four largemouth bass, two bluegill, and several tilapia. The individual was issued a citation for taking game fish by illegal method.

NOAA Office of Law Enforcement, in coordination with FWC's OPV program, served a \$7,285 notice of violation to the vessel captain and owner of a commercial fishing vessel. This fine stems from a 2016 case the OPV *Sea Hawk* made in April 2016. During that patrol, which was the day before the opening of the commercial amberjack season, FWC Officers Bohne and Luce boarded and documented more than 1,200 pounds of illegally harvested amberjack. The vessel had begun fishing before the legal season opened to beat the competition to the best fishing spots. In addition to protecting the resource, one of the main roles for FWC's OPV program is to maintain a fair playing field for commercial fisherman.

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

Officers Stelzer and Cybula were conducting water patrol of Sebastian Inlet State Park when a PWC was seen running carelessly at an excessive speed through a congested slow speed manatee protection area. A vessel stop was initiated and the operator appeared to be impaired. Seated field sobriety tasks were performed and the operator was placed under arrest for BUI and cited accordingly.

Officer Summers and Investigator Loeffler were on water patrol in Sebastian Inlet for Memorial Day weekend and noticed an individual operating a zodiac-style vessel in a bizarre manner. The individual was leaning over the port side of the vessel with half of his torso outside the boat and his head in the water with one hand on the motor. Officer Summers did a boater safety inspection and the operator was showing signs of impairment during the inspection. Officer Summers conducted field sobriety tasks that indicated signs of impairment. The subject was taken to the Indian River County Jail. Infractions were issued for refusal to submit to a breath test and for not having a life jacket on board his vessel.

MARION COUNTY

Officer Rice was patrolling the Ocala Wildlife Management Area (WMA) when he saw a vehicle parked near a pond. The officer went to the woodline and saw one subject fishing with a rod and reel and two subjects fishing with cane poles. Officer Dias was contacted to assist with surveillance from a plain-clothes capacity and saw the subject with the rod and reel catch multiple bass and put them on a stringer that already had bass on it. The subjects stopped fishing and began walking back to the vehicle. Officer Dias contacted Officer Rice and advised him they were leaving. Officer Rice encountered the individuals at their vehicle, but they did not have the stringer of fish. He walked down towards the water and saw the rod and reel leaning against a tree and the stringer of fish on the ground. There were ten black bass and one blue gill on the stringer. Post Miranda, one of the subjects admitted to catching nine of the bass. The subject was issued a notice to appear for over the bag limit of black bass and a warning for no freshwater fishing license.

ORANGE COUNTY

Officer Mendelson patrolled Tosohatchee WMA where he saw a set of headlights more than an hour after the WMA closed. During an inspection on the vehicle, Officer Mendelson saw a cooler with tilapia, black bass, and a cast net nearby in the bed of the truck. The black bass showed signs consistent with being taken by a cast net. The driver also admitted to taking the bass with the cast net. The individual was charged with illegal method of taking game fish and was issued a warning for being inside the WMA after dark.

SUMTER COUNTY

Officer Teal received a call about subjects lost in the Richloam WMA and responded to the area along with forestry personnel. When the subjects were found, Officer Teal went

in search of the two vehicles. Both vehicles were found stuck deep in the state forest, far from a closed road. Both subjects were issued criminal citations for destruction of state lands by motor vehicle.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

SUMPTER COUNTY

Officer Sweet steered a Target Enforcement Action for public safety in the Richloam Wildlife Management Area involving two regions – the Northeast Region and the Southwest Region. Officers from the Northeast Region involved were Officers Sweet, Morrow, Teal, Phillips and Lieutenant Chase. Officers from the Southwest Region were Officers Balfour, Spradlin, and Lieutenant Parisoe. A total of 11 Citations and 22 warnings were issued during two nights including charges of destruction of state lands, driving on closed roads, ATVs, possession of alcohol, and litter. The multi-regional enforcement detail was very successful.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CASES

LEE COUNTY

Lieutenant Spoede and Officers Perry and Winton were on water patrol and conducted a vessel stop in New Pass on a vessel with an expired registration sticker displayed. During their investigation, the officers noticed several empty beer cans on the deck of the boat and saw that the operator displayed signs of impairment. The officers took the suspect on their patrol vessel and conducted field sobriety tasks. After completing the tasks, the officers determined the suspect was impaired and he was placed under arrest for BUI. He was charged with operating a vessel while normal faculties impaired, and refusal to provide a breath sample.

Officers Bradshaw and Price received a tip that several subjects were cast netting snook at a popular local fishing location. The officers arrived on the scene, set up surveillance of the area, and quickly identified three men matching the description from the tip. When the three men gathered up their fishing gear and began to leave the area, the officers approached them. A search of their vehicle revealed five undersized snook hidden in the trunk. Appropriate charges were filed.

PASCO COUNTY

Lieutenant Parisoe responded to a complaint of juveniles removing a gopher tortoise from the water at a local park. While in route, he learned the juveniles had left the area and returned to a nearby residence. Lieutenant Parisoe was successful in speaking with the juveniles at the residence. He also located two gopher tortoises that were kept as

pets. Lieutenant Parisoe took possession of the tortoises and educated the juveniles about the law. The tortoises were released at a local permitted facility.

While patrolling the waters of Pasco County, Officer Williams saw a vessel with several individuals fishing. As the vessel was leaving the area, Officer Williams conducted a resource inspection and found an out-of-season snook in the live well. The operator of the vessel was issued a citation for the violation and the snook was seized.

PINELLAS COUNTY

While on water patrol, Officers Pettifer and Martinez stopped a vessel in Bunces Pass. During a resource inspection, the officers found one 21-inch gag grouper. The operator of the vessel admitted to catching the grouper and was cited for possession of gag grouper during a closed season and possession of undersized gag grouper.

While on land patrol, Lieutenant Laskowski saw two individuals in a vessel fishing. During a subsequent inspection, three gag grouper were discovered in a cooler measuring at 14, 15.5 and 15.5 inches in length. One of the individuals admitted to catching all three grouper. He was issued a citation for possession of undersized gag grouper and given a written warning for possession of over the bag limit of gag grouper.

While on vessel patrol offshore of Bunces Pass, Officers Caldwell and Ludtke conducted a vessel stop on an inbound vessel returning from a fishing trip. A resource inspection was conducted which revealed one undersized gag grouper measuring 16 inches. Post Miranda, one of the subjects on board admitted to catching the grouper and was cited accordingly for possession of undersized gag grouper. The minimum size limit for gag grouper in the Gulf of Mexico is currently 24 inches.

The OPV *Gulf Sentry* completed a three-day patrol for the opening of the federal waters red snapper season. The crew consisted of Officers Smith, Burks, Martin, Alvis and Bergwerff. The officers worked the commercial reef fish fleet as well as recreational fishermen. The OPV *Gulf Sentry* covered a large area ranging from Pinellas County north to Dixie County, out to approximately 88 nautical miles west of the coast. The officers also patrolled the Florida Middle Grounds, Edges and the Desoto Canyon. The OPV *Gulf Sentry* had the following activity: 51.5 Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA) hours, 30 vessel inspections, four federal commercial cases, three federal recreational cases, three state recreational cases, and several warnings. Some of the violations consisted of closed season red snapper, over the bag limit of red snapper, red snapper as bait, undersized red snapper, closed season amberjack, reef fish not in whole condition and over the bag limit of grouper.

Officers Alvis, Bergwerff and Burks were conducting fisheries inspections of vessels offshore. During an inspection, they discovered anglers who harvested a greater amberjack out of season and over the bag limit of American red snapper. As they pulled alongside the vessel, they noticed an individual surreptitiously drop a fish in the water. The fish was later recovered and identified as a red snapper. Also, the bait the subjects

were using was cut red snapper. Officer Bergwerff issued several citations and warnings for taking over the daily bag limit, harvest during closed season, interference with an FWC officer, and not landing snapper in whole condition. The unlawful fish were seized as evidence.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

PASCO COUNTY

Officers from the Southwest Region assisted personnel from the Northeast Region with a detail in the Richloam WMA. The officers checked numerous personnel for compliance with forestry regulations. Over several days, the officers issued numerous warnings and citations for violations.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

LEE COUNTY

Officer Sehl conducted a hunter's education seminar at the local Bass Pro Shops where she got the opportunity to interact with the public and discuss laws pertaining to hunting. She also answered questions about local WMAs, FWC's quota system, and general hunting regulations.

PASCO COUNTY

Officer Pulaski conducted an outreach event at Crews Lake Park and educated 30 children that were participating in the summer day camp. The day camp is offered by Pasco County Parks and Recreation and Natural Resources Department. During the outreach, Officer Pulaski taught the children (ages 8-12) the duties and responsibilities of an FWC officer, resource rules and regulations, and the important role of the FWC biologists and resource conservation. Finally, Officer Pulaski assisted in instructing archery classes to the students along with certified National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) instructors.

SOUTH REGION A

CASES

BROWARD COUNTY

Lieutenants Carcasses, Laubenberger, Investigator Teems, and several officers responded to a boating accident involving two vessels. The accident resulted in two fatalities and several injuries. The incident occurred on the Intracoastal Waterway in Fort Lauderdale. FWC is handling the boating accident investigation.

Lieutenants Carcasses, Harp, McDonald, Investigators Coffin, Teems, Luher and several officers responded to the report of a capsized vessel with multiple subjects in the water offshore of Port Everglades in Fort Lauderdale. A Good Samaritan on a vessel rescued one of the three subjects who was located near the sunken vessel. The

remaining two subjects were later located by responding FWC and Fire Rescue vessels and were pronounced deceased a short time later. The FWC is handling the boating accident investigation.

Captain Hodges and Officer Brock were on water patrol in central Broward County when they conducted a vessel stop on a vessel violating a wake zone. With information gathered, Officer Brock placed the operator of the vessel under arrest for BUI. The operator was transported to the Broward County Jail without incident.

Officers Ryan and Banks conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle in western Broward County. The occupants were previously trespassing and fishing in a posted area of the storm treatment area. Officer Ryan discovered that one juvenile in the vehicle had been reported as a missing juvenile. He transported the person to the Margate Police Department, and the juvenile was reunited with his parent.

Lieutenant Laubenberger and Officers Brock and Vacin were on water patrol just offshore of the Broward/Miami-Dade county line. They conducted a marine fisheries inspection on an individual spearfishing. Officer Brock issued the individual a criminal citation for possession of an undersized mutton snapper. One undersized mutton snapper was seized as evidence.

HENDRY COUNTY

Officer Nasworth was conducting patrol in the stormwater treatment area when he saw a subject trespassing. Officer Nasworth approached the subject and discovered he also had multiple warrants out of Hendry County. Officer Nasworth confirmed the warrants with dispatch and placed the subject under arrest. Officer Nasworth transported the subject to the Hendry County Jail for the outstanding warrants and issued the subject a warning for trespassing.

ST. LUCIE COUNTY

Investigators and officers investigated possible gill net violations in the St Lucie and Indian River counties during the mackerel migration season. Intelligence gathered by investigators and officers indicated that a suspect was possibly fishing with a gill net. Subsequently, an arrest warrant was filed for a suspect for the charge of carriage of proscribed nets across Florida waters. Investigator Patterson booked the subject into the St. Lucie County Jail on the outstanding warrant.

RESCUES

BROWARD COUNTY

Captain Hodges, Lieutenant Laubenberger, and Officers Brock, Vacin, Banks, Ryan and Defeo were having a squad briefing late at night at the Marina Boat Ramp at Mizell-Johnson State Park. The meeting had just ended when all officers heard a faint voice. They listened and made out a faint scream for help. All Officers responded by foot, by boat and by vehicle. Officers Vacin, Ryan and Brock ran into the water at the beach and reached a female as she was about to go under. They successfully pulled her to safety

and onto the beach. The Hollywood Fire Department responded and transported her to the hospital.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

GLADES COUNTY

Lieutenant Brown, Officer Nasworth and Officer Worrell participated in the Hurricane Preparedness Day in Moore Haven. Officers Worrell and Nasworth brought a swamp buggy for display. Lieutenant Brown, Officer Nasworth and Officer Worrell spoke with several citizens and had positive interactions with them.

SOUTH REGION B

CASES

COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Araujo was on foot patrol near the Jolly Bridge in Marco Island when he saw a subject fishing from shore. He saw a small cooler and a bucket of shrimp near the subject, and asked if he had any fish. The subject said no. When asked to see inside his cooler, the subject opened and closed the cooler before Officer Araujo could see inside. When the subject opened the cooler the second time, the officer saw a white bag in the bottom, and concealed beneath were four undersized mangrove snapper. The subject also stated he had a fishing license, but did not have it with him. A license check revealed that his license had expired in 2015. The subject was cited accordingly.

MONROE COUNTY

Officer Garcia was patrolling northbound on US1 near mile marker 54 in Marathon. He saw a vehicle almost go onto the sidewalk on the northbound lane. Officer Garcia gave dispatch a description of the vehicle along with the tag number. The vehicle came back as a stolen van out of Jensen Beach, FL. Lieutenant Cox, along with Officers Carroll, Piekenbrock and Garcia conducted a high-risk felony stop on the vehicle and detained the driver with neither party being injured. While conducting an inventory search on the vehicle, Officer Carroll discovered a machete hidden behind the passenger seat. The driver of the stolen vehicle was charged with grand theft of a vehicle, possession of a concealed weapon, driving with a suspended license with knowledge, careless driving, not producing a driver's license and was transported to jail.

Officers Hettel, Rubenstein and Lieutenant Payne responded to a call regarding a large tarpon being harvested from a local commercial dock on Stock Island. Upon arrival, the 5 individuals stated there was no tarpon, only a yellowtail snapper. Having found tarpon scales in the vessel, Lieutenant Payne went in the water with mask and fins to look for evidence. Under the vessel were the guts of a large fish. After searching the area and the transport truck, a large tarpon carcass was found in the commercial truck under ice.

The captain of the vessel admitted to harvesting the large tarpon and cutting it up. The captain was arrested and taken to Stock Island Jail and cited for 4 misdemeanors.

Officer Pestka was on land patrol near the Channel 5 fishing bridge and noticed 2 men on the east side under the bridge near the sea wall. One male subject was actively fishing while the other male subject was seated, but both were near fishing equipment and a large red cooler. She asked the subjects if they had any luck and they indicated that they had only caught small fish. Officer Peska searched the red cooler and found 11 undersized schoolmaster snapper and 5 undersized yellowtail snapper. Both men were charged with possession of the undersized snapper and failing to possess a valid fishing license.

RESCUES

MONROE COUNTY

Officer Carroll was dispatched to a call of multiple men in the water after a boat sank near Marathon. Officer Carroll rode to the scene with the local USCG Marathon response team, and arrived at where the vessel was sinking and three males were using it to keep themselves above water. The officers pulled the subjects on board and the owner stated that they were at anchor when a wave came over the stern and caused the batteries and bilge to fail after the vessel was swamped. Once the boat was swamped, it slowly took on more water which caused it to sink. All the passengers were transported to shore and no injuries were reported. The vessel was recovered the following day by a commercial salvage company.

Officers Swensson and Sutter responded to an overdue boater call near Card Sound in North Key Largo. A teenager had taken a jet ski and told his father he would meet him at an area beach. When the subject never made it to the beach, the father called FWC. Pilots Willman and Perez began a search of the Card Sound area, including the many nearby creeks. Officers Swensson and Sutter began searching the ocean side as they worked their way into Card Sound. Officer Swensson spotted a jet ski, matching the description given by dispatch, aground on a flat. The officers positioned the patrol vessel as close to the flat as they could. Officer Swensson walked out to the individual and identified him as the overdue boater. He then helped the subject push the jet ski from the flat. The subject stated that he had been stuck for almost 3 hours and the tide had been falling. Once the jet ski was removed from the flat, the subject was escorted back to his father safely.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Yurewitch and Plussa were on patrol when they received a call about an alligator inside a hallway in an East Naples condo complex. When the officers arrived, they discovered a 9 ½ foot alligator blocking a doorway in the entry way of the condo

building. The officers secured the alligator utilizing techniques they learned in their recent alligator handling training, and turned the alligator over to the licensed trapper.

Officers Yurewitch, Plussa and Arbogast assisted FWC, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Mote Marine Laboratory biologists in releasing “Frank,” a recently rehabilitated Green Sea Turtle. “Frank” was transported to a remote area of Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge and successfully released back into the wild.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

MONROE COUNTY

Lieutenant Lyne (Dive Team Leader) and Officers Rafter, Baumgartner (Dive Team) and Investigator Daniels, along with USCG Station Islamorada, joined forces at the Whale Harbor Sandbar in Islamorada for an after-holiday clean-up effort. With the high level of visitors over the Memorial Day weekend, it’s not uncommon for trash to accumulate on the sandbar, detrimental to the environment. Marine life mistakes the plastics for food and people visiting the sandbar risk injuries from broken bottles and cans.