

FWC

Division of Law Enforcement



Weekly Report December 15, 2017 through December 28, 2017

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

Patrol, Protect, Preserve

NORTHWEST REGION

CASES

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Officer Land was on patrol in the Gulf Islands National Seashore with U.S. Park Ranger Robinson and witnessed multiple duck hunters near the Johnson Beach area of the park. Officer Land and Ranger Robinson contacted the hunters for a resource inspection. When Officer Land inspected one of the subject's firearms, he found that it was capable of holding more than three shells. The subject was issued a citation for the violation.

Lieutenant Hahr was working in the Perdido River Wildlife Management Area when he contacted a subject in the management area 1.5 hours after sunset as allowed by management area rules. While talking to him, he observed fresh blood on the trunk of the subject's car. The subject told Lieutenant Hahr that his friend killed a six-point buck that morning, but was evasive when describing the deer. After an interview with the subject and the subject's friend, who was hunting with him earlier in the day, the friend admitted to killing a "big cow horn." When Lieutenant Hahr located the carcass, the antlers were only slightly over 4 inches in length. He issued the subject a notice to appear for taking the illegal deer.

Officer Allgood received information that someone was possibly deer hunting in Big Lagoon State Park. He walked into the area and found where someone had been hunting on private property near the property line. There was also sign that the hunter had been in the park. A ground blind, a pile of corn and fresh blood was found on the

private property. After a short investigation, Officer Allgood found out who was hunting the area. Officer Manning joined Officer Allgood to interview the subject. After a short interview, the subject admitted to killing a doe deer out of season and illegally entering the park. Officer Allgood seized the deer meat and issued a notice to appear citation for the violation.

Officer Allgood received information that a subject killed two doe deer in one day during the recent doe weekend. The past antlerless weekend it was legal to harvest one antlerless deer per day on private property. Officer Allgood interviewed the subject and obtained a confession. The deer meat was seized as evidence and the subject was issued a notice to appear for the violation.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officers Roberson, Wilkenson, and Lugg were searching a road near a primitive campsite for a subject who had fled from local deputies. Officer Roberson observed a man lying face down in the dirt road. The officers determined that the elderly man was alive but incoherent and called EMS. They turned him over to EMS and identified him as a missing man from Alabama. The man had been missing for four days. He had gotten his truck stuck in a mudhole about 100 yards away and may have been trying to walk out of the remote area. The man was transported to the North Okaloosa Medical Center for treatment.

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officers Mullins and Officer Roberson responded to a call in Blackwater River State Forest where a subject was reported to have shot a doe out of season. The subject stated that he had shot the doe by accident and was aiming at a buck. The subject was also hunting two days before deer season reopened in Blackwater River State Forest by management area rules. Officer Roberson issued the subject a misdemeanor citation for hunting out of season and a warning for taking a doe out of season.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CASES

NASSAU COUNTY

Officer Sweat checked two subjects on Middle Road in Nassau County who were trying to catch their deer hounds that were on a piece of Rayonier property that is closed to hunting. The two subjects were pursuing deer with Walker hounds on a private twenty-acre piece of property and a separate forty-acre piece of property within Rayonier land. The dogs got away from the registered hunting area and onto Rayonier property. There was insufficient information on the dog collars. A notice to appear and a warning were issued.

Officer Sweat received a call from a Nassau County landowner about an ongoing problem with deer-hunting dogs. Officer Stuhr was within a few miles of the property and made contact with the subjects at the entrance of the property as they were attempting to leave. Officer Sweat approached the area south of the location of the complaint and caught two beagle hounds as they were pursuing wildlife on the complainant's property. After an interview, the subject was issued a notice to appear and a warning on deer dog hunter responsibility requirements.

NORTHEAST REGION

CASES

VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officers West and Bertolami issued criminal citations to adult males for fishery violations. Officer Bertolami found an adult male on the inlet jetty in possession of an out of slot size limit snook and without a permit. Officer West checked an adult male who was in possession of multiple undersized mangrove snapper.

Officer Bertolami stopped and inspected shoreline and vessel fishermen in the New Smyrna Beach area. On two shoreline locations, he found two adult males in possession of multiple undersized mangrove snapper. On a vessel stop, an adult male was found to be in possession of red snapper that was not landed in whole condition. All fishermen were issued notices to appear for their violations.

Officer Bertolami was checking the Daytona Beach area bridges when he found an adult male in possession of undersized red drum, black drum and mangrove snapper. The subject was issued a notice to appear for the violations and the fish were seized and released alive.

LAKE COUNTY

Officer Phillips was dispatched to private lands in Paisley where he made contact with the landowner, who stated he observed several hunting dogs running across his property with GPS collars attached. The land owner caught one of the dogs and provided a sworn written statement. Officer Phillips made contact with the owner of the hunting dogs, who admitted he put the dogs out to hunt at the end of the road, which is less than half a mile from the landowner's 142-acre property. The subject who owned the hunting dog was cited for the violation of allowing/using dogs to pursue or molest wildlife on the lands of another without written permission from the landowner.

BREVARD COUNTY

While on patrol at Sebastian Inlet State Park, Lieutenant Lightsey observed a man with a fishing cart returning to his vehicle. A resource inspection revealed the man was in possession of more than one oversized black drum. A records check showed the man had a history of resource violations. A citation was issued for the offense.

While on foot patrol at Sebastian Inlet's north jetty, Lieutenant Lightsey observed numerous fish on a deck. Next to the fish was a fish bag concealed by a rain jacket. After asking if there were any fish in that bag, one of the fisherman stated that he caught one snook. A measurement of the snook revealed that it was 33 inches in length, over the legal slot size. A citation was issued for the offense.

Officers Kearney, Matthews, Cybula, Dubose and Lieutenant Lightsey conducted a month-long detail focusing on Marine Sanitation Devices (MSD) at Brevard County marinas. Numerous citations and warnings were issued for MSD violations, along with several educational opportunities with vessel and marina owners.

Officer Balgo received a call via the Wildlife Alert program about three subjects taking numerous black drum who were currently in possession of at least fourteen oversized black drum. After observing the men for some time, the officer approached to conduct a fisheries inspection. Officer Balgo's inspection revealed that the men were in possession of fourteen oversized black drum, well over the one per person allowable limit. The men were cited for the violations.

OSCEOLA COUNTY

Officers Summers and Stelzer responded to a call about a deer being kept inside a small cage on someone's property. Upon arrival, a four-point buck was found inside a small enclosure. The owner did not have a license allowing him to possess the deer. The owner was cited for the violation and the deer was relocated to the wild.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CASES

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Officer Salem responded to a call about someone using heavy machinery to clear an area of land inside Babcock Ranch. After investigating, Officer Salem identified several areas where a tractor had been used to cut trails and clear some trees. He spoke with the quota holder who admitted to using a tractor in the area. The case is ongoing at this time.

Officer Salem was on patrol when he conducted a resource inspection on some duck hunters on an airboat. The inspection revealed that the men were in possession of a legal bag limit of scaup but did not possess a federal duck stamp or a migratory bird

permit. A citation was issued for the federal duck stamp violation and a warning was issued for the migratory bird permit violation.

HIGHLANDS COUNTY

Officer Smith responded to an individual intentionally feeding sandhill cranes while holding another crane captive in the back seat of a car. Once Officer Smith arrived on scene and spoke with the subject, the subject stated he was waiting in the parking lot for a friend when he saw three sandhill cranes walking behind his car. The subject said that he loves the bird and wanted one for his land. He opened the back door of his car where he had an open bag of cracked corn and began to pour it on the ground beside his car. He also began to feed the cranes by hand and lured one into the back seat of his car and closed the door. While still waiting for his friend he continued to feed the other two birds. One of the cranes bit his pinky finger and wouldn't let go. The subject began to choke the bird until a witness yelled at him to let the bird go. He quickly let go of the bird's neck and released the captive crane in the car. Officer Smith cited the subject with intentionally feeding sandhill cranes, and will be direct filing charges for capturing and harassing a state designated threatened species.

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Officer Guerin was patrolling Upper Hillsborough WMA when he encountered two individuals walking down one of the trails on the east part of the property. They were wearing camouflage and carrying a rifle and a shotgun. The two subjects were advised of their Miranda Rights, and admitted they had been hunting deer on the property illegally for years by crossing railroad tracks and climbing a fence from an adjacent property. The rifle and shotgun were seized and both subjects received misdemeanor citations for attempting to take deer in a closed season, illegal entry onto SWFWMD property, as well as warnings for illegally hanging three tree stands which were removed.

Officer Wilkins spearheaded a night hunting detail that encompassed numerous counties within the Southwest region. Officers from four surrounding counties, along with FWC Aviation participated in the detail. The detail was a success and charges for felony trespassing were issued to two subjects during the course of the night.

Officers Berg and Guerin responded to a call that there was an individual lost in the woods in Lithia that had been out there all night. The officers were familiar with the area and located the individual quickly. Upon making sure the individual was safe and not in need of medical attention, they observed a large knife with blood and what appeared to be deer hair on it. They also located a loaded .270 rifle behind a tree. The officers interviewed the individual and he admitted that he and his friend had been out the day before hunting deer on Mosaic property. He stated that he did not use the rifle and that he was just tagging along with a friend. Once made aware of the other individual's name, the officers attempted to locate him. They spoke to him briefly on the phone but he hung up and did not answer any more calls. Officers Berg and Guerin were given a

possible location in Mulberry of where he was hiding. He admitted to hunting Mosaic property with the .270 rifle and shooting at a deer. He was charged with trespassing, attempting to take a deer during closed season and possession of a firearm by a felon.

While on patrol, Officer Messman observed an individual fishing from the CSX railroad bridge over the Palm River. The individual accessed the bridge by passing multiple posted "No Trespassing" signs. An FWC history check revealed the individual had been previously cited for trespassing on CSX property. The individual was cited for trespassing and escorted off the bridge.

LEE COUNTY

FWC officers and investigators responded to a two-vessel boating accident that occurred at Fort Myers Beach. The two vessels collided causing serious bodily injury. This is an ongoing and active boating accident investigation.

FWC officers and investigators responded to a single vessel boating accident in Pine Island Sound. The operator left the vessel in gear and walked to the bow leaving no one in actual physical control of the vessel. The vessel struck a sandbar ejecting the subject. The vessel continued to make way and struck the subject who consequently died on the scene. This is an ongoing and active boating accident investigation.

Officer Stanley and Officer Hardgrove stopped a vessel to conduct a marine fisheries and safety inspection. The vessel had four people on board, and immediately upon being stopped the owner stated that they were on a two-day charter. A fisheries inspection revealed two of the red grouper were undersized and one yellowtail snapper was undersized. A notice to appear citation was issued to the charter captain for possession of two undersized red grouper and one undersized yellowtail snapper. The charter captain had been stopped two days prior by FWC Officer Winton, and had been issued a written warning for possession of out of season amberjack.

Officers Thompson and Hardgrove were patrolling Charlotte Harbor and Pine Island Sound enforcing commercial mullet regulations when they spotted a fisherman throwing a cast net in the mouth of a creek. As they approached the fisherman, they realized he was throwing the cast net onto a group of fish that was encircled by two seine nets. It is a violation of net fishing regulations to fish with more than two nets at one time. In addition, the two seine nets were connected to be fished as one net in excess of 500 square feet. The fisherman also had approximately 100 pounds of mullet, a food fish, on the deck of his boat with no ice. The fish and the three nets were seized. The fisherman was charged with two major violations.

Officer Winton responded to a boating accident near the Fort Myers Beach Pier. During the investigation, it was determined that one of the vessels was a rental jet ski. A criminal investigation was conducted to determine if the livery met all statutory requirements for renting vessels, and several violations were discovered. As a result, four criminal charges are being filed with the state attorney's office.

MANATEE COUNTY

Officer Klobuchar was on land patrol when he was dispatched to a possible undersized snook call. Upon arriving on scene, two subjects were seen wade fishing just south of the Terra Ciega Bay Condominiums pier. The two individuals were seen taking several species of fish and attaching them to stringers around their waists. Their vehicle was identified and the officer moved to a position where he could observe the subjects exiting the water. Multiple snook, trout, and red drum were seen as they were being placed into a bucket by the second subject. After both men exited the water, Officer Klobuchar approached the men at their vehicle and performed a resource inspection. The men were found to be in possession of four out of season and undersized snook, eight trout, three of which were undersized, and one undersized redfish. One of the individuals did not possess a valid fishing license or snook permit. Notices to appear were issued for out of season, undersized, and over the bag limit snook, as well as undersized red drum. Warnings were issued for the undersized trout, fishing without a valid shoreline fishing license, and no snook permit.

Officer Miller was working Northern Manatee County when he observed a vehicle at the canoe launch on Stotz Rd. A resource inspection revealed two undersized snook and four blue gill. One of the occupants claimed possession of the fish and admitted to catching all the fish with a cast net. The subject was issued citations for possession of undersized snook, over the bag limit snook, and possession of snook during closed season. Warnings were issued for taking snook by illegal method and taking freshwater game fish by illegal method.

Officer Davidson was on land patrol when he received a complaint that a man was poaching fish on the Anna Maria Fishing Pier. At the location, he found a man fishing in the area matching the description from the complaint. A resource inspection revealed that the man was in possession of two undersized gag grouper and several undersized grey snapper (mangrove snapper). The subject was given two criminal citations and will have to appear in court for his violations.

Officers Hertel and Klobuchar were on water patrol in Tampa Bay near the South Skyway Fishing Pier. The officers conducted a fishery inspection on a vessel with three people onboard. The inspection revealed two undersized gag grouper, 20 undersized mangrove snapper and four undersized sheepshead. One of the subjects claimed to have caught all the fish and was cited for three misdemeanors and one written warning.

PINELLAS COUNTY

Lieutenant Van Trees and Officer Wilkins were on land patrol at Tierra Verde Bridge checking fishermen when they approached three male subjects fishing from a seawall. Lieutenant Van Trees smelled the odor of marijuana coming from their car. One subject admitted to having marijuana. A subsequent search of the vehicle also revealed the subject was in possession of cocaine and MDPV (type of methamphetamine). The

subject admitted to all the drugs being his, and it was later discovered a second male had two warrants for his arrest. Both were arrested and booked into the Pinellas County jail and verbal warnings were issued for fishing license violations.

While on land patrol in South Pinellas County, Officer Bibeau observed four individuals that were actively fishing from atop a bridge posted "no fishing." Officer Bibeau watched the individuals from a concealed location and made contact with them as they were returning to their vehicle to conduct a fisheries inspection. The resource inspection revealed seven undersized gag grouper, three undersized mangrove snapper, and one undersized sheepshead. The subjects were issued the appropriate misdemeanor citations and warnings for the fisheries violations.

While on land patrol in St. Pete Beach, Officers Bibler and Wilkins approached a group of subjects fishing from a small pier to conduct a resource inspection. At the conclusion of their inspection, the officers found one of the subjects to be in possession of an undersized gag grouper. The subject was cited for the violation.

While on land patrol at the Fort Desoto Bridge, Officer Bibeau made contact with an individual to conduct a fisheries inspection and located four undersized stone crab claws and one whole stone crab in the subject's cooler. Officer Bibeau got permission from the subject to search his vehicle which was parked nearby, and found a small bucket with more undersized stone crab claws and whole stone crabs. In total, Officer Bibeau found the subject to be in possession of eight whole stone crab and 12 undersized stone crab claws. The subject was issued a misdemeanor citation and warning for the fisheries violations.

While on water patrol offshore of John's Pass, Officer Bibler stopped a vessel returning from a day of spearfishing. The captain of the vessel stated he only had hogfish and sheepshead, but Officer Bibler saw that he was concealing a gag grouper inside the cooler. A resource inspection revealed one undersized gag grouper, three undersized hogfish and two undersized sheepshead. The captain of the vessel was cited for the violations and given numerous warnings.

While on water patrol near Blind Pass, Officer Bibler stopped a vessel returning from offshore. A subsequent resource inspection revealed the fishermen had four out of season gray trigger fish, two of which were undersized. Officer Bibler advised the occupants that trigger fish had been closed for harvest for quite some time and cited the individuals accordingly for the violations.

While on water patrol near the Maximo Boat Ramp, Officers Bibler and Martinez stopped a vessel that failed to obey the slow speed requirements. During the stop, signs of impairment from the operator were observed, including falling over and having a hard time balancing. Field sobriety tasks were initiated with the subject, but were later refused. Officer Bibler and Martinez also discovered that the operator had given them a false name upon first contact. An hour later at the jail the operator provided a breath

sample of .015. The subject was booked into jail for BUI and providing false information to a law enforcement officer.

SARASOTA COUNTY

Officer Dalton was on water patrol around Stickney Point Bridge, saw a subject fishing in the ICW and performed a fisheries and boating safety inspection. A resource inspection revealed the subject was in possession of undersized spotted seatrout and undersized snook out of season. The subject was given a warning on the spotted seatrout and two criminal citations for possession of snook out of season and undersized snook. He will have to appear in court for his violations.

POLK COUNTY

Officer Earls responded to a hunting accident that occurred in Arbuckle Wildlife Management Area. The hunter had fallen from his tree stand and received minor injuries. Officer Earls will be completing a hunting accident report.

Lieutenant Brooks was patrolling the Avon Park Air Force Range when he observed a subject in possession of a deer that did not meet the antler requirement. Lieutenant Brooks spoke with the hunter and she admitted to knowing that it was too short, but had shot it anyway. Lieutenant Brooks issued the hunter a notice to appear for the violation and the deer was seized as evidence.

RESCUES

POLK COUNTY

Officers Carter, Young, Earls, Fagan, and Pilot Fields responded to Green Swamp Wildlife Management area for a lost hunter. The hunter's family reported him missing after he did not return home. The officers requested assistance from Sumpter County Sheriff's Office, Polk and Sumpter Corrections K-9 units. The officers located the hunter's vehicle and started running K-9 tracks to locate the missing hunter. Officer Carter and a K-9 team from Polk Corrections Institute located the hunter. The hunter had fallen 30 feet from his tree stand in the early morning where he had sustained major injuries. The hunter was transported to a local hospital for treatment. Officer Carter will be completing a hunting accident report.

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Officers Birchfield and Salem received a report from a boat rental company that a boat was overdue. Later, the subject called and said he was going to commit suicide in the boat. The family of the 24-year-old subject called and reported that he had taken a rifle with him. The officers located the rental boat and the subject with a rifle pointed at his chest. They were able to get the subject to put the rifle down and move away from the

gun. The subject was transported back to the dock where they were met by two clergymen and a deputy.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

PASCO COUNTY

Officer Balfour was on land patrol along the riverbank on the border of Green Swamp West (WMA) and Richloam (WMA). After a short while he could hear a vessel in operation and watched the operator beach the vessel. The vessel occupant then entered Green Swamp West (WMA) and began to remove the water management district signs. Officer Balfour conducted a stop of the vessel, and he charged the individual with criminal mischief and illegal entry into the WMA.

SOUTH REGION A

CASES

OKEECHOBEE COUNTY

Investigator Ervin and Officers Allen and Smith were conducting an airboat detail to detect subjects harvesting wildlife from moving vessels in the Kissimmee River Public Use Area marsh. Investigator Ervin and Officer Smith identified two subjects hunting deer from an airboat without the required hunter orange clothing and advised Officer Allen. Officer Allen made contact with the subjects who received citations for the violation.

Officer Allen was towing an airboat to the Kissimmee River PUA marsh through Hickory Hammock WMA before daylight when he saw a small spotlight turn on and off in front of him. He detained three subjects on foot, an adult male and two juveniles, who had four freshly killed rabbits. The adult male stated he illuminated the four rabbits prior to legal hunting hours with his head light while his juvenile son shot the animals. The man received a notice to appear in court for the violation

Officers Fijalkowski and Crosby were on patrol in the Okee-Tanti Campground conducting resource inspections on individuals fishing the bank of the Kissimmee River. After speaking with a fisherman, the subject stated that he had not caught any fish. Officers Fijalkowski and Crosby found a hidden bucket with black crappie under a bush. When the subject was asked about the bucket he confessed it was his bucket. Upon measurement of the fish, one was found to be under the 10-inch size limit. The subject was issued a citation.

BROWARD COUNTY

Officers Matthews and Ryan responded to the area of the Everglades Holiday Park in for a call of assistance from the Pembroke Pines Police Department. The call was about ATV riders violating a no trespassing area and shots being heard. The police department was able to arrest one individual. Officers spotted the other ATV riders but they fled the area.

Officer Brock was on patrol in Mizell-Johnson State Park when he heard a Park Ranger requesting assistance on the park radio. Officer Brock responded to the Ranger's location. Once on scene he located a subject walking naked down the beach with numerous other beachgoers in the area. The subject was arrested and booked into Broward County Jail for indecent exposure.

MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Morrow conducted a fisheries inspection on a subject who was fishing. When asked about the contents of his cooler, the subject advised he was in possession of sand perch. Upon inspection of the cooler, two undersize mutton snapper, measuring 11" and 13" were located. The subject, who had been previously warned for undersized saltwater fish just weeks prior, was issued a misdemeanor citation. The illegal fish were seized and returned to the water.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Pecko, Langley, Mclendon and Stone were on land patrol when they received a phone call about a subject cast-netting snook. The officers responded and found the subject had no fishing license and was in possession of two snook. The subject was cited accordingly.

Officers Pecko and Webb were on land patrol in STA 1W conducting hunting inspections when two subjects were found missing four of the five licenses/permits needed to be hunting migratory birds. Both subjects were cited accordingly.

Captive Wildlife Investigators Howell and Toby responded to a report of an individual in possession of a reticulated python without the required license. Upon arrival, the illegal possession was verified. The subject was issued a misdemeanor citation for the illegal possession and several warnings for other violations relating to the incident. The snake was seized and turned over to agency biologists. Officer Loach assisted in this incident.

RESCUES

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Banks was on patrol on the Western side of Palm Beach County when she was flagged down by a Good Samaritan who wanted to report a boat that had crashed into the bank and was stuck in some grass. Officer Banks located the vessel and made sure the single occupant was uninjured. She then contacted Officer Brock to respond with a

vessel to assist the subject with removing his vessel from the grass. The subject and his vessel were safely removed from the grass and towed back to the boat ramp. The vessel suffered no damage and no one suffered injuries.

SOUTH REGION B

CASES

MIAMI DADE COUNTY

Officers were on patrol and stopped a subject conducting livery inspections. After a wanted/warrant check on one of the involved subjects, they found him to have a bench warrant reference prior noncompliance with livery laws.

An officer stopped a vessel at Black Point and found the subject to be in possession of two undersized mutton snapper and seven undersized yellowtail snappers. The subject was cited accordingly.

While on patrol, an officer made contact with a subject in a common illegal dumping area. This officer saw a bird trap in plain view in the rear foot well of his vehicle with an indigo bunting inside. The subject stated he was trapping birds in the area and had one other trap deployed with a painted bunting inside. The officer recovered the deployed trap which contained one painted bunting inside the bait section of the trap. Subject was in possession of one painted bunting, one indigo bunting, two bird traps and one holding cage. Defendant was cited for possession/trapping of migratory song birds, which is prohibited by the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Captive Wildlife Investigator Landa continued his enforcement efforts targeting the illegal display of wildlife on South Beach. Several individuals were issued warnings for exhibiting wildlife without a license, including birds and snakes. Two subjects checked for exhibiting wildlife were found to be in the country illegally. The subjects were arrested and turned over to Border Patrol. Officers Martir and Cosculluela assisted with the case.

COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Curbelo stopped a vehicle in the Picayune State Forest after hours. FWC dispatch advised him that the driver of the vehicle had three active warrants. Officers Araujo and Knutson responded for back up and Officer Curbelo suspected DUI. During the DUI investigation, a container of marijuana was found outside the vehicle. The subject later admitted to throwing it out the window. Additionally, a small tube of cocaine was found in the subject's possession. Field sobriety tasks indicated that the subject was driving under the influence. When asked to give a breath sample, the subject refused. Officer Curbelo booked the subject for DUI refusal, multiple traffic violations, drug offenses and the three warrants for violation of parole.

MONROE COUNTY

Monroe County Sheriff's Office's (MCSO) license plate reader hit on the vehicle/subject reported missing and endangered from Sarasota County after he reportedly pulled a knife on his mother. MCSO attempted to pull the subject over, but he refused to yield. The subject twice avoided spike strips that had been deployed and almost struck an MCSO deputy on the roadside. MCSO dispatch contacted FWC asking for any officers around the 90-mile marker for assistance. They advised that the driver might have mental issues. Officer Garcia was northbound waiting to intercept, as Officer McKay was in route southbound. Officer Garcia was near Founder's Park when he saw the approaching deputies. The subject stopped on the roadway behind Officer Garcia and contact was made. MCSO was able to safely take the subject into custody.

Officer McKay was driving home when he observed a driver following too closely, making improper lane changes and violating traffic control devices. Officer McKay stopped the vehicle and the driver handed him a Florida ID card after admitting that his license was suspended for child support delinquency. The license was also expired and suspended for failure to pay traffic fines, with two past suspensions for DUI. The driver was placed under arrest and his vehicle was towed. Appropriate traffic citations were issued.

Officer Wagner was in his unmarked patrol vehicle when he observed an individual catch and place a tarpon inside a plastic bag. The subject then began making phone calls and looking around. A few minutes later, two females arrived in a separate car and retrieved the fish from the subject and began walking back to their car. As Officer Wagner approached the female with the bag, he noticed the bag was missing. After explaining that he had observed the entire situation, she showed him the bag that had been thrown into nearby bushes. Shortly after, Officer Alvarez arrived on scene where he began interviewing the fisherman. The subject was placed under arrest for harvest/possession of a tarpon.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Kleis responded to an alligator complaint in which a person had caught an alligator while fishing, and the alligator was currently in the subject's yard. After removing the alligator from the residence, Officer Kleis was flagged down by a frantic couple who stated that their 7-year-old nephew was missing. Officer Kleis interviewed the missing child's family while waiting for the local sheriff's office to arrive on scene to assist and found that they hadn't seen the child in over 3 hours. He was last seen riding his bike with his brother. Officer Kleis spoke with the brother of the missing child, who was also 7 years old. He pointed Officer Kleis in the direction that he had last seen his missing brother. Officer Kleis located the missing child nearby and unharmed. It was discovered that he was taking a nap after a long day of riding his bike and he was reunited with his family.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

MIAMI DADE COUNTY

The Columbus High School Anglers Club was invited to partake in the Annual FWC Christmas Luncheon at the Miami Regional Office. They were provided with a guided tour and a video interview. They received responses to questions about life as an FWC officer, resource protection, boating safety and search and rescue. The luncheon presented a special opportunity to establish a rapport with the next generation of sportsmen. There were approximately 25 student contacts.

On December 21, 2017 FWC officer Alexander Dinu on behalf of SRB took part in a community event taking place at Texas Roadhouse restaurant in West Miami. The event featured several police agencies including Sweetwater PD, Coral Gables PD, as well as recruiting members of the United States Army and the National Guard.

Several High School Junior ROTC and their families used the event to raise money for their programs. The event was a good opportunity to promote awareness of the different armed forces and police agencies available as careers for the high school students going forward after graduation.

Officers Wagner and Alvarez participated in career day at Bridge Prep Academy Elementary School in Miami where they presented a program on alligators and the FWC mission. Officers brought a live alligator, and educated the students about the reptile's behavior and biology. Officers spoke to approximately 150 individuals including teachers, parents, and students ranging from first to fifth grade, emphasizing the importance of safety and an individual's behavior when an alligator is encountered in the wild. Officers also taught the children about the agency and its role in conservation.