

FWC

Division of Law Enforcement



Weekly Report December 29, 2017 through January 5, 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

BAY COUNTY

Officer Letcher stopped a vehicle after observing it being operated in a careless manner nearly causing an accident. The driver displayed signs of being impaired and admitted to consuming alcohol. Field sobriety exercises revealed the driver was too impaired to be operating a vehicle due to being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The subject was placed under arrest and transported to the Bay County Jail where they agreed to provide a breath sample to determine their breath alcohol content. The breath sample documented was .220, nearly three times the legal limit. The subject was booked into jail and charged with driving while under the influence of alcohol.

CALHOUN COUNTY

Officer Hayes received a call from a landowner who heard a rifle shot from the roadway near his residence. The landowner also heard a vehicle speed away from the location. Officer Hayes responded and searched the area for any shell casings or evidence that a deer had been shot. Unable to locate any evidence, Officer Hayes concealed his patrol vehicle and conducted surveillance over two nearby farm fields. Approximately three hours later, a truck drove by slowly shining the fields with a spotlight. Officer Hayes conducted a traffic stop and found the driver to be in possession of a loaded 12-gauge shotgun. The suspect was charged with night hunting. The firearm and light were seized as evidence.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Officer Cushing observed a vehicle being operated without any lights on and initiated a traffic stop to address the safety concern. While behind the vehicle with emergency lights on, the passenger was observed discarding several small items out of the passenger window while the vehicle was moving. When the vehicle was stopped, several indicators that the passenger and the operator may be under the influence were observed. Neither subject had any form of identification nor did the operator have a valid driver's license. Additionally, the tag was not assigned to the vehicle. Pensacola Police Department (PPD) arrived on scene to assist and the PPD K-9 unit alerted on the vehicle. The driver of the vehicle was found to be in possession of illegal narcotics and the case was turned over to PPD.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Corbin was requested by the U.S. Coast Guard for assistance in identifying the vessel owner of an abandoned anchored boat. The boat was anchored in the North Channel causing a navigational hazard in Destin. The officer determined ownership and contacted the owner. The owner explained he was towing the vessel to Navarre to dock at a private wet slip when the towing vessel ran out of gas. The towed vessel, after the owner anchored it, sank. Officer Corbin met with the vessel owner and cited him for failure to transfer title and issued a derelict vessel citation.

Officer Corbin was conducting boating safety and resource protection at Marler Park when he observed a vessel returning to the boat ramp from a fishing trip. During a resource inspection, one of the five individuals provided an expired license. Through a routine criminal history check, the Tallahassee Regional Communication Center determined the individual had a warrant issued by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The individual was arrested and transported to the Okaloosa County Jail where the intake process was completed.

Officer Corbin investigated a boating accident with injuries that occurred in June 2017. The accident involved one occupant on a personal watercraft that struck a private dock in Fort Walton Beach. The operator was transferred to a local hospital for a fractured lower leg. A medical blood draw sample legally checked revealed a BAX of 0.230, almost 3 times over the legal limit. A warrant was obtained and the operator was arrested and transported to the Okaloosa County Jail.

Officer Nichols responded to a bear complaint in a Fort Walton Beach neighborhood. The officer observed several garbage cans knocked over with the white household garbage bags pulled out and torn open. Officer Nichols made contact with one of the homeowners who failed to secure their garbage can. The homeowner was provided an educational brochure of the laws and rules in securing attractant and methods of how to secure the garbage can and issued a non-compliance notification letter.

Officers Trueblood and Rockwell responded to a call regarding suspected illegal camping in the Blackwater Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The officers made contact with three subjects in a creek-side camp where they had illegally accessed the campsite via a closed road. While addressing the violation, deputies from Escambia County, Alabama, arrived to question the same three subjects about multiple burglaries and thefts. The two FWC officers and Alabama deputies found more than \$10,000 in reported stolen property out of Alabama. The Alabama deputies used these findings to obtain an arrest warrant on one of the men. Several days later, an Escambia County, Alabama, deputy attempted to conduct a traffic stop on the man who now had six felony warrants. The subject fled from the Alabama deputy and crossed the state line into Blackwater WMA where he bailed out of his truck and ran into the forest. Okaloosa Correctional Institute (OCI) K-9 team arrived and deployed their man-tracking team, with Officer Ramos and an Okaloosa County deputy. Lieutenant Hahr, and Officers Jernigan, Wilkenson, Lugg, and Roberson joined the effort and set up checkpoints in the surrounding area in conjunction with the Sheriff's Office. The joint OCI K-9 team tracked the subject for more than five miles through the forest before turning the track over to the Santa Rosa County Corrections K-9 team. Officer Cushing joined the K-9 team on the foot chase and they tracked the suspect for several more miles before the suspect was taken into custody without incident. The suspect's apprehension was an example of cooperative law enforcement work between FWC, Escambia County, Alabama Sheriff's Office, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office, OCI K 9 team and the Santa Rosa County Corrections K-9 team.

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officer Hutchinson was patrolling late one night when he observed a truck moving slowly in an area known for night hunting. He observed the driver shine a spotlight along the edge of a field in an attempt to disclose the presence of deer. When Officer Hutchison attempted to stop the truck, the driver did not stop immediately and he was observed throwing an object out of the window of the vehicle. Once the operator stopped, a muzzleloader rifle with a flashlight taped to the stock was located inside the vehicle. A Santa Rosa County Deputy arrived to assist and located a bag containing methamphetamine and glass pipes where the subject threw it out the window. The subject was a convicted felon and had a suspended driver license. Additionally, blood from a recently killed deer was found in the bed of the truck and it was determined that the man had killed an illegal buck a few days earlier. The subject was arrested and charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of ammunition by a convicted felon, attempting to take deer at night, driving on a suspended license and possession of an illegally taken deer.

Officer Jones responded to the Escribano Point WMA at the request of a FWC biologist who had encountered subjects removing a Jeep from a wetland within the management area in an area where public entry by vehicles is prohibited. An investigation revealed that the driver had driven around a locked gate and proceeded into the area. He drove across a small bridge that was not intended for vehicles which resulted in considerable damage to the bridge. After driving throughout the area, he then drove across a creek

and through a wetland for approximately a mile causing considerable damage to the land, trees, and plants. Charges are being prepared for two counts of destruction of state lands by a motor vehicle.

Officer Jones received a complaint from a Santa Rosa County marina owner that he was ordering off his property a sailboat, its owner and other associated persons. The officer arrived the following morning to find that the boat was tied to a piling near the marina as well as to structures of the marina. A patron of the marina pointed to a small dingy boat that was tied alongside of the sailboat. The patron said that the dingy was the property of the marina owner. A man and a woman were on board the vessel. After watching the boat and the area, the officer observed the female occupant of the sailboat proceed in the dingy to shore at a nearby park. It was confirmed that the dingy was recently stolen. The woman was charged with theft, operating a vessel with no personal flotation devices and operating a vessel with no registration.

Officer Wilkenson and Investigator Hughes responded to a complaint of individuals harvesting juvenile stone crabs at the Bob Sikes Fishing Bridge. Based on the description provided by the complainant, the officers located the individuals quickly. The individuals were actively fishing with rods and reels. In plain view, a bucket that contained several juvenile whole-body stone crabs was observed. It was determined the individuals were using the stone crabs as bait. There was a total of 14 whole body stone crabs in the individuals' possession. The subjects were cited for possession of whole stone crabs and undersized stone claws. The officers released the stone crabs alive.

WAKULLA COUNTY

Officer Nelson and Lieutenant Marlow were working a detail in the Apalachicola National Forest and observed a vehicle displaying a spotlight out the passenger window. They stopped the vehicle and spoke to the occupants who admitted to looking for deer. They were in possession of two loaded firearms. The occupants were issued citations for the violations.

WALTON COUNTY

Officer Nichols was on land patrol conducting hunting license/permit/game compliance on Eglin WMA. The officer stopped a vehicle that entered the Choctaw East hunting unit. The driver did not have the required Eglin Recreational User permit to access Eglin. A criminal history check on the driver confirmed that the driver had a warrant from Sarasota County for failure to pay child support. Investigator Armstrong arrived on scene to assist. The driver was arrested and transported to the Walton County Jail.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CASES

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Officer Johnston received information from a concerned citizen regarding possible illegal hunting taking place at the Alligator Lake Public Small Game Hunting Area during designated waterfowl hunts. Responding to the complaint, Officers Dasher and Johnston worked Alligator Lake targeting hunting violations related to migratory birds and boating safety. The officers encountered multiple hunting and boating safety violations. A combination of 15 citations and warnings were issued for a wide range of violations which included the following: No federal duck stamp, no hunting license, no migratory bird permit, no state waterfowl permit and multiple boating safety violations. One subject was found to have no boating safety gear and none of the licenses and permits required by state and federal law to lawfully take ducks. Appropriate paperwork was issued.

UNION COUNTY

Officers Burnsed, Gill and Fanelli were targeting dove hunting when they observed two hunters actively shooting dove. The officers watched the hunters for some time and approached them as they finished hunting for the day and started gathering up their equipment. One of the hunters was found to be in possession of over the daily bag limit of dove. An inspection of their hunting area revealed the hunters were hunting dove over a baited area that was baited with corn. Both hunters were charged with hunting dove over a baited area and one hunter was charged with exceeding the daily bag limit of dove.

NORTHEAST REGION

CASES

BREVARD COUNTY

FWC dispatch received a call about a father and two sons that had not returned from duck hunting in the Indian River. Due to heavy fog in the area, air units could not respond. Lieutenant Zamonis, Officers B. Graves and Cybula began a search of the area by vessel and discovered duck decoys floating in the water east of a spoil island. As they neared the island they saw a flashing light. After arriving at the island, the father and two sons were found. After speaking with them, it was discovered that the hunter's vessel had drifted away the night before. They informed the officers that it contained their bird dog, shotguns, and ducks that they had harvested. After a diligent search, the vessel was found with the dog unharmed, the guns secure and most of the ducks intact.

Officers Hadwin and Marroquin received information of duck hunters trespassing on private property along a local waterway. After observing a vessel in an area near the private property, Officer Marroquin called Officer Hadwin for assistance. When the subjects returned to the boat ramp, the officers were able to identify them. A walk of the

property revealed several clues of trespass and illegal harvesting of ducks. Over the next week a further investigation was conducted and statements were taken resulting in the arrest of ten men for armed trespass. All of the subjects were booked into the Brevard County Jail and their weapons were seized as evidence.

Officer Eller was on land patrol in Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge checking waterfowl hunters. Ten minutes before shooting light a group of hunters climbed into their blind and began vigorously calling ducks. However, all of their headlights were still on. As soon the officer began to return to his vehicle, the entire group with headlights still on began to fire multiple rounds, still 7 minutes before shooting light. An inspection of the hunters revealed boater safety violations as well as violating shooting light hours. After interviewing the hunters, they were cited accordingly.

Officer Eller was working an area that had several duck hunters. Three subjects were seen making their way down the canal towards the officer. A large number of ducks could be seen on the bow of the vessel. A resource inspection revealed one of the hunters was in possession of lead shot. The subject was cited accordingly.

Officers Hallsten and Eller worked several nights at the Haulover Canal on the Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge during the black drum run. Through their efforts the officers were able to catch three separate suspects who were attempting to leave with over the bag limit of oversized black drum. The officers issued the appropriate misdemeanor citations and the fish were seized.

VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officer North was on patrol in Dexter Mary Farms WMA during the closed season when he encountered a man who was squirrel hunting. The man claimed that since small game season was open on private lands he thought that applied to the WMA also. During an investigation, Officer North discovered that the man had called the Florida Forestry Service for a day use permit and said he wanted access to the WMA for sightseeing purposes, which is not required during the normal hunting seasons. He was cited for hunting during the closed season.

Captive Wildlife Investigator Wilkenson investigated a case of grand theft related to a red-tailed hawk. The hawk escaped from a permitted falconer in Orange County and was subsequently recovered and transported to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator in Volusia County. The hawk's owner received information that the hawk was in the custody of the rehabilitator so he contacted the rehabilitator and attempted to get the hawk back. The rehabilitator refused to return the hawk to the falconer and threatened to release it should law enforcement be contacted. By the time FWC was notified and had contacted the rehabilitator, the hawk had already been released. The hawk was the falconer's personal property with a value of more than \$300 and a charge of grand theft was filed against the rehabilitator.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CASES

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Officer Birchfield was working land based water patrol and observed an individual catch and keep an out of season snook at a local fishing pier. The individual placed the snook into a handbag and hid it in their vehicle. When Officer Birchfield spoke with the angler, he said they did not keep any of the fish he caught that evening. Officer Birchfield informed him that he saw them catch and keep the snook. The fisherman admitted to keeping the snook and was issued a citation for taking snook out of season.

K-9 Officer Stasko responded to a Wildlife Alert complaint of two fishermen who kept a snook out of season at the El Jobean Fishing Pier. When Officer Stasko arrived at the pier, the complainant stated that the subjects left the area with the snook in a bucket but they gave a good description of the vehicle and license plate. Officers Stasko, Birchfield, and Zampella went to the address and observed the vehicle described. The officers spoke with the suspect who admitted to catching, keeping and eating the snook. The officers recovered the carcass of the snook and the subject was cited for possession of snook during closed season.

Officers Stasko, Birchfield, and Zampella conducted targeted water patrol in Turtle and Bull Bay. Some of the violations encountered were manatee speed zone, boating safety gear, and one captain operating a fishing charter without a valid license.

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Lieutenant Laskowski, Officers Messman, Caldwell, LaRosa, Pettifer, Gonzalez, and Davidson responded to a boating accident on the Little Manatee River. On scene, Officers LaRosa and Pettifer assisted Hillsborough County Fire Rescue with extinguishing the vessel which was fully engulfed in flames. Four people onboard at the time of the fire were transported to shore by a Good Samaritan. One person was transported to a local hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. The incident is currently being investigated as a boating accident with assistance from the Hillsborough County Fire Department.

LEE COUNTY

Officer Furbay observed a vehicle swerving in and out of its lane. Suspecting that the operator may be driving under the influence, the vehicle was pulled over. The operator was covered in frosted flakes cereal and claimed he was having a diabetic problem. EMS was contacted to ensure he was okay. A license check revealed the operator had been arrested four times previously for driving while his license was suspended. After being cleared by EMS, the operator was arrested for felony habitual driving while license suspended. A search incident to arrest of the vehicle revealed two packages of

methamphetamine, a marijuana cigarette, a scale, cash, and some paraphernalia. The operator was charged with felony possession of narcotics and for possession of narcotics with intent to distribute.

While on patrol at the Matlacha Public Boat Ramp, Officer Hardgrove encountered two subjects as they tied up their recreational fishing vessel to the dock. When asked if they had brought any fish home, one subject stated "No," while the other stated, "Not really." A fisheries inspection revealed a stringer tied to the stern of the vessel containing a sheepshead and a redfish. The redfish measured just over 16 inches. The subject who caught the redfish was issued a notice to appear for possession of undersized red drum. The redfish was eventually released alive after several minutes attempting to revive it.

While on patrol in Bokeelia, Pine Island Officer Hardgrove encountered a subject fishing under the bridge. He conducted a fisheries inspection and located a spadefish, a large blue crab, a sand trout and two mangrove snapper that appeared to be under the legal minimum overall length of 10 inches. An FWC history check revealed that the subject had three prior criminal cases for resource violations, in addition to several warnings and citations. The subject was issued a notice to appear for possession of undersized mangrove snapper.

Officer Winton was on water patrol in Pine Island Sound when he saw a vessel returning from offshore waters. The vessel was stopped to conduct a fisheries inspection and the captain was found in possession of three undersized red grouper. A notice to appear was issued for the violation.

Officers Winton and Hazelwood were on water patrol near Fort Myers Beach on New Year's Eve when they saw a vessel being operated without a boating safety sticker. The officers stopped the vessel to conduct a boating safety inspection, at which time they noticed that the operator exhibited signs of impairment. Field sobriety tasks were conducted and it was determined that the operator had been boating while his normal faculties were impaired. He was placed under arrest and transported to the Lee County jail with charges of boating under the influence and failure to submit to a breath test.

Officers Hardgrove and Thompson located a vessel loaded down with monofilament gill net tucked back in a creek. The boat had no motor attached and was apparently being used as a place to store the net so that it could be accessed for illegal use. The officers seized the net and the boat for investigative purposes. When they measured the net, they found it to be over 1000 yards long, more than a half mile. The investigation is ongoing, but if successfully prosecuted, the suspects could face the forfeiture of the vessel and net, thousands of dollars in fines, up to five years in prison, and a suspension of saltwater licensing privileges.

Officers Hardgrove and Goggin stopped a commercial net fishing vessel while the two men onboard were retrieving seine nets used to catch mullet. The officers noted that the two men had deployed and retrieved four seine nets from the same boat. Use of more

than two nets from a vessel at one time is illegal. Furthermore, after examining the nets they found that they were constructed illegally. While a legal seine net cannot have more than 500 square feet of mesh, these nets had more than 1,500 square feet of mesh hung in a manner that created folds in the net designed to entangle fish. Both suspects were charged and, if convicted, face serious penalties.

MANATEE COUNTY

Officer Dalton was on land patrol around Coquina Boat Ramp on Anna Maria Island and performed a fisheries inspection on an individual returning the boat with a large quantity of mullet. The inspection revealed that the fisherman did not have the proper licensing to possess commercial quantity mullet. He was cited criminally for his violation and will have to appear in court.

PINELLAS COUNTY

While on land patrol, Officer Bibeau along with Lieutenant VanTrees made contact with two individuals to conduct a fisheries inspection. The individuals both stated that all they caught was a lady fish. A small snook was found hidden underneath a cast net at the bottom of a bucket. After reading the individuals their Miranda rights and questioning them about the snook, Officer Bibeau found that one subject caught and landed the snook while the other subject harvested the snook by placing it in the bucket. Both subjects were written citations for the fisheries violations.

While on patrol, Officer Caldwell observed two individuals fishing with a cast net. A resource inspection revealed the individuals were in possession of an undersized snook during closed season. One of the individuals admitted to catching the snook with the cast net. He was cited for possession of a snook during a closed season and harvesting a snook by an illegal method.

Lieutenant Wells and Officers Smith, Alvis, Grenz, Nelson, Boyer and a NOAA Enforcement Officer conducted a multi-day law enforcement patrol on the Offshore Patrol Vessel Gulf Sentry. The officers were working commercial longline vessels that were fishing 40-80 nautical miles from the coast in the Gulf of Mexico. The officers boarded one vessel as they were getting ready to pull their longline. The officers counted every single hook that came up on their 4 miles long longline. Current regulations state the vessel cannot possess more than a total of 1000 hooks; including hooks on board the vessel and hooks being fished – and cannot possess more than 750 hooks rigged for fishing at any given time. The vessel was fishing with more than 750 hooks and they had over 1000 hooks on board. The officers issued two federal citations and turned the investigation over to NOAA.

Officers Alvis and Smith were on offshore patrol working commercial reef fish vessels. The officers inspected several vessels. One vessel they inspected was using red grouper on their bandit fishing gear. Additionally, there was cut up red grouper in the

bait box. The captain of the vessel was issued a notice to appear for not landing reef fish intact.

SOUTH REGION A

CASES

BROWARD COUNTY

Officers Brock and Vacin were on water patrol in northern Broward County and conducted a marine fisheries inspection on a vessel. After the inspection, the individual onboard was issued a citation for possession of two undersized mutton snapper. Two undersized mutton snapper were seized as evidence.

Captive Wildlife Investigator Landa continued his enforcement and education efforts towards individuals exhibiting wildlife on South Beach. He observed an individual on a hover board with a large Burmese Python allowing the public to hold the snake. Investigator Landa approached the individual and while identifying himself as law enforcement the subject fled on the hover board. Several days later, a positive identification of the subject was made and investigators again observed him in possession of two Burmese Pythons without the proper licenses. The subject was issued four misdemeanor citations and several warnings for the violations relating to the illegal possession of the snakes. The snakes were seized and turned over to agency biologists. Lieutenant Garzaniti, Investigators Booth, Alford, and Officer Sullivan assisted on this incident.

GLADES COUNTY

Officers Loach and Nasworth were conducting water patrol on Lake Okeechobee near Moonshine Bay and identified an individual operating a vessel who had been hunting ducks. After conducting an inspection, they discovered the subject was in possession of eight ring neck ducks. The subject admitted to shooting seven of the ducks that day and one of the ducks the day before. The individual was issued a misdemeanor citation for possession of over the daily bag limit of ducks.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

While conducting land patrol in the JW Corbett WMA, Officers Kirkland and Morrow conducted a vehicle stop on a subject that was driving erratically. Upon contact with the driver, one of the occupants appeared to conceal an item when Officer Morrow approached the car. The owner of the vehicle gave consent for the officers to search the vehicle. A container containing cocaine was located by Officer Kirkland. Further investigation revealed that the cocaine belonged to the driver of the vehicle. The driver was arrested and charged with felony cocaine possession and cited for his traffic

violation. In addition, the occupant was issued a citation for having an open container of alcohol.

SOUTH REGION B

CASES

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

For New Year's Day, officers in Miami-Dade county worked a BUI detail in the area of Bayside and Miami River. Two officers responding to a boating accident noticed individuals on a pontoon boat driving carelessly while throwing items overboard. When stopped, the officers deescalated an active domestic dispute and the officers arrested the operator for BUI.

An officer in Miami-Dade County conducted a vehicle stop in a known dumping area. The officer observed a small white pick-up truck driving at a very slow rate of speed with the bed of the truck filled with junk. Due to the area being a popular spot for illegal dumping of trash and waste, the tag was checked. The registered owner, who matched the driver, had an invalid license and eighteen prior convictions for driving while license suspended/revoked and an active arrest warrant. When stopped, narcotics were found in the vehicle. The operator was arrested for possession of cocaine and driving while license suspended/habitual.

MONROE COUNTY

Lt. Lyne observed a black pickup truck on the shoulder of US1 on Craig Key. In the darkness, she could make out one male subject removing black industrial trash bags and broken base boards from the bed of the truck and throwing them in a trash pile on the side of the roadway. Officer Garcia arrived to assist. The subject was booked into the Plantation Key jail on felony dumping charges.

COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Arbogast, Kleis, and Oldsen were on water patrol when they observed a blacked-out vessel and conducted a vessel stop. During the stop, the operator revealed several indicators of impairment. The inspection also revealed that the PFDs and the fire extinguisher onboard were not in a serviceable condition and flares were expired. When Officer Arbogast asked the operator how much he had to drink, he responded, "About 4 drinks." The occupants consented to opening their cooler which contained a large bottle of rum. Officers Kleis and Oldsen gathered everyone's identification which confirmed that no one aboard was 21 years of age or older. Officer Arbogast administered field sobriety tests on the operator who performed poorly. The operator was placed under arrest for underage possession of alcohol, BUI, and was issued citations/warnings for vessel safety violations.

Officer Oldsen, Arbogast and Kleis were on water patrol conducting resource and vessel inspections and observed a boat with two male occupants with fishing equipment. As the vessel passed, Officer Arbogast asked if they had any fish onboard. They replied with "Yes. One 33-inch Snook". Officer Oldsen conducted a vessel stop and upon inspection of the cooler found a snook. After Officer Arbogast read them their Miranda rights, he asked who caught the fish. One of the occupants admitted to catching the snook. Officer Oldsen issued the appropriate citations for possession of a snook out of season, no saltwater fishing license, and no snook permit.

Officer Plussa conducted a follow up investigation of an at-risk sailboat that was located in Wiggins Bay. The owner was given numerous warnings and citations over a two-month period to remove the vessel. The owner did not comply and attempted to evade law enforcement. Officer Plussa located the owner and placed him under arrest for abandoning the derelict vessel in state waters. He was issued citations for no navigation lights, expired registration, and interfering with navigation.

Officer Plussa assisted Collier County Sheriff's Marine Corporal Darren who had stopped a commercial stone crab vessel running into port without navigation lights late New Year's Eve. Officer Plussa and Corporal Darren conducted an inspection and found a substantial quantity of undersized stone crab claws. The vessel had no hull identification number and numerous marine safety and registration violations. The captain of the vessel was charged for the undersized claws and cited accordingly for other violations.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Knutson, Officer Araujo and Lieutenant Mahoney were dispatched to a panther that was hit crossing County Road 951 in Collier County. Upon arrival, there were traces of the panther where it was hit and then moved into the woods nearby. According to the individual that called in about the matter, the panther was wearing a tracking collar, so the officers contacted the local panther biologists to help with location. The panther was found, tranquilized and then transported to the local animal hospital to be evaluated. After evaluation, the panther underwent surgery to repair a broken back leg and will be rehabbed at White Oak rehabilitation facility. The panther will be released when well.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Plussa and Lieutenant Mahoney were conducting land-based water patrol focusing on shoreline areas of Marco Island and Goodland that were frequently used as unlawful dumping sites. Throughout their patrol they encountered multiple subjects and vehicles and issued a combination of citations and warnings for various violations

including: littering, fishing license violations, alcohol violations, and multiple criminal public health violations at an abandoned marina being used as a transient camp.