

# FWC

## Division of Law Enforcement Weekly Report



**May 4, 2018 through May 10, 2018**

*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**

Officer Brady and Reserve Officer Chesser were conducting patrols near Deer Point Dam when they saw a vessel with what appeared to be an alligator tail hanging over the stern. The officers contacted the operator and conducted a resource inspection of the vessel. When asked about the alligator, the operator stated he found it floating in the lake near a yellow house with what appeared to be a gunshot to the head. The alligator was approximately four feet long. After questioning the individual, the officers located the house. One of the residents stated her boyfriend was not home but would be returning soon. A brief time later, the boyfriend returned and the officers questioned him about the alligator. During questioning, one of the officers located a spent .410 shotgun casing near the water's edge behind the house. When asked about the spent casing, the individual admitted to shooting the alligator because it was close to his property. The alligator was seized and appropriate citations were issued for the violation.

##### **ESCAMBIA COUNTY**

Investigator Molnar and Officer Cushing conducted a BUI and federal marine fisheries refresher training at the Coast Guard Station on Naval Air Station Pensacola. Approximately 50 US Coast Guard, Escambia Sheriff's Office deputies, and local FWC officers attended. Topics discussed were the upcoming red snapper season along with other federal fisheries identification and seasons. A demonstration of the seated field sobriety tasks used to determine impairment was conducted.

## FRANKLIN COUNTY

Officers Peterson and Pestka were conducting an oyster detail in the Eastpoint Area. The officers saw a boat returning from harvesting oysters and stopped it to complete a resource inspection. There were two subjects on the vessel and three bags of oysters. Officers Peterson and Pestka counted and measured every oyster in two of the bags. The bags contained 69% undersized oysters. Officer Peterson cited one subject and seized 374 undersized oysters. The oysters were returned alive to the Apalachicola Bay.

Officers Richardson and Sauls conducted radar patrol in St. George Island State Park. The patrol addressed speeding in the state park around shorebird nesting areas. The officers issued two resource citations and four written warnings for excessive speed within a state park.

## JEFFERSON COUNTY

While on vessel patrol on the Wacissa River, Officer Wilcox was conducting a vessel inspection when another vessel almost struck her vessel and left a large wake when it passed. When she caught up to the vessel, the operator showed several signs of impairment. After Officer Wilcox conducted field sobriety tasks on the operator, she transported the subject to the Jefferson County Jail where he blew a .336 on the breath test machine. The subject was cited for BUI.

## OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Nichols was conducting speed enforcement at Henderson Beach State Park when he received a complaint of a subject standing and walking in the protected sand dune habitat. Officer Nichols went to the location of the complaint and found a camouflage shirt laying in the sand and footprints walking back down the sand dune. Officer Nichols noticed a subject squatting down behind a saw palmetto bush attempting to conceal his location. The officer established communication with the subject, who was intoxicated and appeared to be a transient. Officer Nichols issued the subject a trespass notice and escorted him off the park's property.

Investigator Molnar and Officer Bartlett were on vessel patrol conducting boating safety inspections at Crab Island. A vessel stop was conducted on a personal watercraft (PWC) for violation of the idle speed/no wake zone. The operator showed multiple signs of impairment. After conducting field sobriety tasks, Investigator Molnar arrested the operator for BUI. The operator was cited for violation of idle speed zone, improper display of registration numbers, BUI first refusal and BUI with normal faculties impaired.

Officers Bartlett and Wilkenson were on vessel patrol during the early evening hours. While coming into the entrance of Boggy Bayou, the officers saw a stationary vessel on the left side of the channel without its navigation lights displayed. As the officers approached the vessel, they saw the vessel was grounded and there was a male and

female onboard. The male occupant was highly intoxicated. The officers freed the boat from the bottom and anchored it out of navigational waters. The boat owner was cited and issued a notice to appear citation for careless operation and failure to transfer vessel title within 30 days.

Officer Corbin was conducting a livery inspection of a local business in Destin. The inspection revealed that a sale/purchase of a vessel was not recorded at the local tax office within the required 30 days. The livery owner was cited and issued a notice to appear citation.

Officer Pifer received a complaint regarding a federally permitted commercial vessel that harvested and were attempting to sell a greater amberjack to a wholesale dealer. The commercial season for amberjack is closed. The officer arrived at the wholesale dealer in Destin and contacted the boat captain of the commercial vessel. Officer Pifer determined the boat captain removed the amberjack to his personal vehicle. The officer took possession of the amberjack and photographs were taken. The boat captain was cited and issued a notice to appear citation for the closed season violation.

Officers Bartlett and Wilkenson were on vessel patrol conducting boating safety inspections at Crab Island. The officers saw a personal watercraft (PWC) in violation of the idle speed/no wake zone. The officers initiated a vessel stop. During the communication with the operator, Officer Bartlett developed cause to believe the operator was impaired. The operator performed field sobriety tasks and indicators of impairment were seen. The operator was arrested for BUI and provided a breath sample resulting in a .117 and .118. The operator was transported to the Okaloosa County Jail where the intake process was completed.

#### SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officer Lugg was on vessel patrol near the Pensacola Bay Bridge when he encountered four individuals fishing from a vessel. Officer Lugg contacted the vessel and while conducting a marine fisheries inspection, located five oversized red drum in a cooler located in the front of the vessel. Officer Lugg issued citations to all four subjects onboard for possession of oversized red drum.

#### WAKULLA COUNTY

While conducting fisheries inspections, Officers Carr and Morales stopped a vessel on Ochlockonee Shoals and noticed the smell of marijuana. The officers conducted a boating safety and fisheries inspection. Officer Carr asked the occupants if there was anything on the vessel that was illegal that they should not have in their possession. They responded by saying they had nothing onboard. The officers continued their investigation, which concluded with one of the subjects coming forward with a plastic pipe with marijuana residue that he pulled from his pocket and a metal pipe that contained marijuana particles from the other pocket. The subject was cited for possession of drug paraphernalia.

## WALTON COUNTY

Lieutenant Hollinhead, Officers Brooks, Tison, White, Letcher, and Greene worked a targeted enforcement activity detail on the Choctawhatchee River to ensure compliance with freshwater fishing and boating safety regulations. The officers inspected 57 vessels with 116 users. Ten citations and 22 warnings were issued for various violations.

Officers Tison and Greene saw a gate that had been torn off its hinges on a private hunting lease. The officers followed fresh vehicle sign by the gate to a creek on the property where they located a vehicle and two occupants. The subjects did not have permission to be on the property and had ignored the no trespassing posting. After contacting the owner, the subjects were cited for trespassing.

## NORTH CENTRAL REGION

### CASES

#### CITRUS COUNTY

While aboard the Offshore Patrol Vessel "Vigilance", Officers Rockwell, Nelson, Smith and Alvis, along with a NOAA Officer were working the shrimping fleet off Citrus County. They boarded a vessel to conduct a gear and fisheries inspection. During the fisheries inspection the officers located a container with bay scallops in it. An interview of the crew revealed that they had been harvested during the trip. Bay scallops are currently closed to harvest. The appropriate action was taken for the violation.

#### TAYLOR COUNTY

Officer Albritton was performing resource inspections near the Econfina River. During an inspection, a subject was found in possession of five spotted sea trout. Four were undersized. A citation was issued for the possession of undersized spotted sea trout.

Officer Wilder and Albritton were on offshore patrol in federal waters targeting gag grouper during a closed season. Officer Albritton noticed a vessel coming in from federal waters offshore. Both officers contacted the occupants of the vessel. Upon inspection, the officers found five gag grouper. The officers seized all fish and the captain of the vessel was cited for possession of gag grouper during the closed season.

Officer Wilder was on offshore patrol targeting gag grouper in federal waters. Officer Wilder noticed a vessel about three miles into federal waters and contacted the occupants on board. Upon inspection of the vessel, Officer Wilder found three gag grouper with one undersized. During the inspection it was learned that the operator was a charter captain and was currently conducting a charter trip with customers on board. Officer Wilder seized the three gag grouper and charged the captain of the vessel with

possession of gag grouper during the closed season and issued a warning for possession of undersized gag grouper.

## **NORTHEAST REGION**

### **CASES**

#### **VOLUSIA COUNTY**

Officer Ward was on water patrol on the St. Johns River when he stopped a vessel for improper display of registration numbers. During the stop, Officer Ward detected the odor of an alcoholic beverage coming from the operator and saw signs of impairment. The operator admitted to drinking several beers. Officer Ward administered seated field sobriety exercises and determined that the operator's normal faculties were impaired. He was arrested for boating under the influence (BUI) and transported to the Volusia County Jail. The operator agreed to provide a breath sample. The results were .190 and .187.

#### **PUTNAM COUNTY**

Lieutenant Dickson conducted a prolonged investigation with the assistance of Captain Smith, Officer Jones, and Officer Campbell about a theft complaint received from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The investigation revealed that a contractor for DEP unlawfully removed approximately 100 deadhead logs from Rodman Reservoir. The contractor was cited for grand theft over \$20,000. It was also found that machinery used to conduct work was leaking a large amount of hydraulic fluid on the ground. DEP's Office of Emergency Response personnel were brought in for analysis. The company that owned the equipment properly cleaned up all contaminated soil and properly disposed of it, pursuant to DEP's request.

#### **MARION COUNTY**

Officer Dias was on patrol in Hog Valley just after dark when he came across a truck and trailer parked at the public boat ramp. The officer noticed a bag of FRM feed in the bed of the truck. FRM feed is commonly used to chum for shiners. Officer Dias then saw a man and woman tossing feed and throwing a cast net from a Carolina Skiff near the boat ramp. The two were taking large quantities of fish. The Carolina Skiff returned to the ramp where Officer Dias conducted a fisheries inspection of the vessel. Officer Dias asked the male subject if they had any gamefish onboard. The male subject replied that they had no game fish, that they had 38 dozen shiners. The subject stated that they were a commercial operation and they sold to the local bait stores in the area. Officer Dias asked to check their commercial freshwater fishing license which the subject could not produce. An FWC records check showed that the man did not have a commercial license and he was cited in 2014 for the same violation. Officer Dias issued the subject a notice to appear for no commercial freshwater license.

## SEARCH AND RESCUE

### MARION COUNTY

Officer Hargabus responded with Marion County Sheriff's deputies to Ross Prairie Trailhead where an elderly couple had become lost on the Florida Greenways property. The Sheriff's Office could ping the victims cell phone and get their approximate location. Officer Hargabus recognized the coordinates and set out to search the area located off the Greenways property on Ross Prairie Wildlife Management Area (WMA). After a short search, the Sheriff's Office helicopter located the couple near Officer Hargabus' location and guided the officer to their position. The couple was transported back to their vehicle where Marion Fire/Rescue was waiting to evaluate them.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### MARION COUNTY

Members of FWC partnered with Marion County, Lake County, US Forestry Service and local hunt clubs, Jeep clubs and Boy Scout Troops to conduct Project Spring Clean, a joint effort to clean up the Ocala National Forest. During this year's event, approximately 37 tons of trash were removed from the National Forest and disposed of properly. This was the third year the event has taken place and over the three years, approximately 90 tons of trash and debris have been removed. Members of FWC participating in the cleanup included Investigators Miller and Sumpter, and Officers Simpson, Rice, Wear and Seiler.

## SOUTHWEST REGION

### CASES

#### CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Officer Zampella responded to a complaint about a woman feeding racoons. He was familiar with the location because he had responded to the area before and educated the woman about creating a nuisance from feeding racoons. After watching the area for a while, the woman exited her residence, walked to the end of her driveway, and looked around as if she was trying to see if anyone was watching. The woman saw Officer Zampella and waved to him then went back inside. Officer Zampella left the area and drove around the block where he could watch the location. While waiting for the woman to return, a large number of racoons were observed coming and going from the woods across the street from the woman's house. About an hour later the woman came back out and started throwing food out for the racoons. Officer Zampella approached her and told her she was going to receive a citation for creating a public nuisance by feeding the

racoons. The neighbors were thankful for the response. A trapper will be contacted due to the number of racoons that became accustomed to eating food there.

## DESOTO COUNTY

Lieutenant Fugate received information about a vessel that had been stolen and the identifying numbers had been removed. Lieutenant Fugate located the vessel behind a residence and located the rightful owner. The vessel was stolen in 2016. The vessel was turned over to Desoto County Sheriff's Office and returned to the owner.

## HERNANDO COUNTY

Officer Pulaski was on land patrol in the Weeki Wachee Preserve. During his patrol he saw an individual that appeared to be drinking alcohol and smoking from a glass pipe. Officer Pulaski approached the individual to address the possible violations. After his investigation he issued a citation for possession of alcohol by a person under the age of 21.

## HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

While on patrol at Picnic Island Park, Officer Rorer saw two individuals actively engaged in fishing from a pier. She approached the individuals to initiate a resource inspection. As she approached, one of the individuals looked at her, walked to a bucket and dropped two fish over the side of the pier. After reading the individual their Miranda rights, they admitted that they saw Officer Rorer approach and dropped the fish because they did not know if they were legal and did not want to risk getting a ticket. The individual was cited for interfering with the duties of a FWC Officer by not allowing an inspection of their catch.

While on patrol at the Cockroach Bay Boat Ramp, Officer Caldwell conducted a resource inspection on two individuals coming back on a boat. An inspection of the vessel revealed one 17-inch undersized and out of season gag grouper. One of the individuals admitted to catching the grouper. He was cited for possession of gag grouper during a closed season.

Officers Caldwell, Wise, and Balfour responded to a jet ski accident with injuries on Lake Keystone. After rendering first aid and securing the accident scene, it was discovered that one of the jet ski operators had an active warrant for a violation of his probation. The warrant was confirmed and he was transported and booked into the Hillsborough County Jail.

## MANATEE COUNTY

Lieutenant Hinds was on land patrol around the South Skyway Fishing Pier. While on patrol he noticed a man spear fishing underneath the fishing pier. When the subject returned to shore, Lieutenant Hinds performed a fisheries inspection to see what the

man had caught. During the inspection, Lieutenant Hinds found that the subject had speared two undersized snook. The subject was cited criminally for possession of snook out of season, possession of snook taken by illegal method, possession of undersized snook, and over the bag limit of snook. The subject was also given a warning for no saltwater fishing license. He will have to appear in court for his violation.

## PASCO COUNTY

While on patrol, Officer Pettifer saw an individual actively fishing and initiated a resource inspection. An inspection of his cooler revealed him to be in possession of three undersized mangrove snapper. He was cited accordingly.

Lieutenant Parisoe responded to Werner Boyce Salt Springs State Park regarding a drunk pedestrian that was causing a disturbance. When Lieutenant Parisoe arrived, he was met by park staff who identified a female as the source of the complaint and relayed information on what occurred. Lieutenant Parisoe spoke with the individual to investigate. The female initially refused to identify herself and Lieutenant Parisoe requested additional law enforcement support. Officer Balfour and Port Richey Police arrived to assist. The female decided to cooperate and provided her identification. The pedestrian was issued a trespass warning and escorted from the park.

## PINELLAS COUNTY

While on patrol at the North Skyway Fishing Pier, Officers Rorer and Pettifer conducted several resource inspections. As they were working their way up the pier they came to some unattended fishing gear. They asked a nearby person who the gear belonged to and were given a description of the owner of the gear. They located and identified the owner who had walked away to avoid being checked. Next to the fishing gear they saw a black trash bag covered in blood and fish scales in a trash can. After reading the individual his Miranda rights, he admitted to throwing the bag with fish in it away because he did not want to be checked. An inspection of his catch revealed him to be in possession of 14 mangrove snapper, eight of which were under the legal-size limit of 10 inches. He was also in possession of an undersized and out of season gag grouper and an undersized black seabass. He was cited accordingly.

While on land patrol in South Pinellas County, Officer Bibeau contacted an individual that was preparing to launch two personal watercrafts (PWCs). He noticed that one PWC had an expired registration, while the other had no registration affixed. Officer Bibeau searched for the unregistered PWC's HIN and found that it had been altered, wasn't permanently affixed, and didn't come back as being assigned to the vessel. After investigating the PWC's model and serial number, it was revealed that the PWC had been stolen a month earlier in Pinellas County. Officer Bibeau seized the stolen PWC to be returned to the rightful owner. He also seized the other PWC and an open motorboat to investigate to determine the rightful owner. Charges will be direct filed through the Pinellas County state attorney's office.



## POLK COUNTY

While on water patrol on the Winter Haven Chain of Lakes, Officer Carter saw a vessel with no navigation lights. Officer Carter conducted a vessel stop for the violation and conducted a safety inspection. During the safety inspection Officer Carter saw multiple signs of impairment and requested the operator to conduct standard field sobriety tests (SFSTs) to which he complied. The operator performed poorly on the SFSTs and was placed under arrest. The subject was transported to the Polk County Jail where he provided a breath sample of .130 and .114. The subject was charged appropriately.

Officer Carter saw a black truck parked in the parking area of a closed boat ramp/park at Banana Lake. Officer Carter spoke with the driver and immediately detected a very strong odor of alcohol. There was a case of beer on the passenger floorboard that was opened. As the driver was speaking with Officer Carter he tried to avoid making eye contact and ignored questioning. When the driver did speak he would cover his mouth with his hands. The driver admitted to drinking 4 beers earlier in the night. While retrieving the requested documentations, Officer Carter saw multiple signs of impairment and requested the driver to perform SFSTs to which he complied. The driver performed poorly on the tests and was placed under arrest and transported to the Polk County Jail. At the jail the subject provided a breath sample of .153 and .151. He was cited for DUI over .08.

## SARASOTA COUNTY

FWC investigators saw a suspicious person near a bridge with some gear they knew was typically used for taking alligators. They drove around the block and within a short time they heard gunshots coming from the direction of the suspicious person. When they came back to the location they saw the man with some bolt cutters going down the embankment of the bridge. When asked if he was okay the man said yes, that he had fired a few shots but everything was fine. A short while later, the investigators identified themselves and found a 9-foot alligator dead on the bank. Officer Zampella responded to the scene to assist. The man agreed to speak with the officers and admitted to shooting the alligator. He was cited accordingly.

## SEARCH AND RESCUE

## HERNANDO COUNTY

Officer Balfour, Officer Fagan, Officer Scinta, and Lieutenant Parisoe responded to the Croom portion of the Withlacoochee State Forest. Hernando County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) requested assistance searching for a missing hiker. The hiker had been last seen in the Tucker Hill area. While conducting a search, Officer Balfour located the missing hiker who was deceased. The investigation was turned over to HCSO.

## PASCO COUNTY

Officers Angelis, Jones, and Scinta responded to a report of a vessel taking on water 18 miles west of Hudson. According to the information, the vessel captain noticed the vessel was taking on water while the other six occupants were diving. FWC, Pasco County Sheriff's Office, and Sea Tow all responded. All individuals were retrieved from the sinking vessel and transported back to Hudson Beach. The vessel was towed in by Sea Tow.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### HIGHLANDS COUNTY

Officer Adams, Cloud, Investigator Ervin, and Lieutenant Fugate hosted FWC airboat training for Highlands County and Flagler County Sheriff's Departments on Lake Istokpoga. There were seven airboat operators that graduated.

## **SOUTH REGION A**

### CASES

#### GLADES COUNTY

Officer Keen and Lieutenant Steelman were dispatched to a boating accident that occurred on Lake Okeechobee. Upon arrival, Lieutenant Steelman and Officer Keen contacted the operator of the vessel who gave them a statement of what happened. One passenger was ejected and taken to the hospital. Officer Brodbeck was nearby and got a statement from the ejected passenger. A local vessel recovery team was able to unbeach the vessel safely. Officer Keen followed the vessel back to the loading dock to ensure it didn't sink.

#### HENDRY COUNTY

Officer Keen was on patrol westbound on SR 80 when he saw a vehicle traveling the wrong way. The officer initiated a traffic stop to address the violation. Upon contacting the driver, who did not have a driver's license, multiple open containers were noticed inside the vehicle. The driver gave Officer Keen two different names. Officer Brodbeck and Lieutenant Steelman were nearby and arrived on scene to assist. The driver was placed under arrest for driving without a license and transported by a Hendry County Sheriff's Deputy. After being fingerprinted at the jail, it was discovered that the driver had an active warrant out of Hendry County and was cited for giving a false name to a law enforcement officer. While completing the stop, Lieutenant Steelman saw another wrong-way driver approaching their location. Officers Keen and Brodbeck, along with Lieutenant Steelman conducted a traffic stop on the second vehicle. While the driver of the vehicle was searching for his driver's license, which had been expired for almost a year, Officer Brodbeck saw drug paraphernalia in plain view. The subject stated that he was suffering from medical issues and requested medical transport. Hendry EMS

transported the subject, and upon release, was placed under arrest for driving with an expired DL and possession of drug paraphernalia. Citations were issued for the traffic offenses to both drivers.

## MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Willems was on patrol in the Dupuis Wildlife Management Area (WMA). While at the family campground conducting permit checks, two individuals were found to have an expired camping permit. Both individuals had been talked to numerous times in the past for various issues and were aware of the rules regarding permits/camping. Both individuals were issued criminal citations for camping without a valid permit.

Officer Willems was conducting resource checks at Jimmy Graham boat ramp when he saw an individual having difficulty backing a trailer down the boat ramp. Contact was made with the driver and field sobriety tasks were conducted on the individual. The driver performed poorly on the tasks. When asked, the individual stated that he had 12 beers and Xanax. The individual was arrested for DUI and booked into the Martin County Jail.

Officer Brevik was on patrol when he checked an individual saltwater fishing from shore. The person was found to be in possession of 6 undersized mangrove snapper and 1 undersized red drum. A records check showed the subject to be on probation with a stipulation of his probation being house arrest. The subject was taken into custody and booked into the Martin County Jail on violation of probation, possession of undersized mangrove snapper, possession of over the bag limit of mangrove snapper, and possession of undersized red drum.

Officer Carroll was on water patrol around Manatee Pocket when he saw a vessel being operated at night without displaying proper navigation lights. After stopping the vessel, Officer Carroll saw 2 young children not wearing life jackets as required. During the stop Officer Carroll determined that the operator of the vessel was impaired. The operator was arrested and booked into the Martin County Jail and cited for boating under the influence.

Officer Carroll was on water patrol around St. Lucie Inlet near Sailfish Point when he saw a vessel on plane in the slow speed boating safety zone. The vessel was weaving in and out of other vessel traffic in the congested channel in a careless manner. Officer Carroll stopped the vessel to address the violation. During the stop it was determined the operator was impaired. The operator was arrested and booked into the Martin County Jail and cited for boating under the influence.

Officer Rogers was working at the Stuart Causeway when he noticed a van that fit the description of a past BOLO for a possible fish poacher. Officer Rogers ran the license plate of the vehicle and discovered the registered owner did not have a valid driver's license. As the van passed by, the driver was positively identified as the person with suspended or revoked license matching the subject to the BOLO picture. Officer Rogers

followed the subject and conducted a traffic stop on the vehicle. While Officer Rogers was taking inventory of the vehicle for the tow receipt, he discovered a pipe that was used for smoking crack cocaine and cannabis (under 20 grams). The subject was booked into the Martin County Jail on numerous charges.

Captive Wildlife Investigator Toby responded to a report of an individual in possession of a pet raccoon without the required license. Upon arrival, the illegal possession was verified. One misdemeanor citation was issued for the violation. The raccoon was turned over to a licensed facility. Officer Crosby assisted on the incident.

## PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Stone, Kirkland and Defeo patrolled the Corbett WMA over the weekend and responded to four calls for service. Individuals were illegally riding off trail and damaging state lands. In total, seven citations and five warnings were issued for various WMA violations. The officers also found 2 vehicles that had improper license plates attached. The operators of those vehicle were issued criminal citations.

Officers Nasworth was on foot patrol around Lake Harbor locks conducting fisheries inspections when he saw a subject actively fishing with rod and reel. He contacted the subject who was in possession of 4 black crappie less than 10 inches. Officer Nasworth seized the fish for evidence and issued the subject a court date for the violation.

## ST. LUCIE COUNTY

Officer Payne received a call from the St. Lucie Sheriff's Office about a person that had beached a vessel on the shoreline between the power plant and Nettles Island and was possibly impaired. A small child was onboard the vessel. Upon contacting the vessel operator, Officer Payne detected signs of impairment and requested the subject performs field sobriety tasks. The subject performed poorly. The subject was arrested and transported to the county jail without incident. The operator advised Officer Payne that he was a Sea Tow member and they were called to remove the vessel from the beach. The subject's 9-year-old son, who was the only other person on the vessel, was turned over to his mother. The subject was cited for child neglect and boating under the influence.

Captive Wildlife Investigator Toby responded to a report of an individual in possession of a raccoon without the required license. The individual applied for the required license and stated that she was in possession of a raccoon from the wild. Raccoons taken from the wild are prohibited as pets. Investigator Toby responded and educated the individual on the regulations. A warning was issued for the violation. The raccoon was seized and placed a licensed facility.

## MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

### PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Stone, Schroer and Investigator Fowler responded to a call from the Tequesta field lab marine turtle department asking for assistance. A 600-pound leatherback turtle with boat strike injuries was found at the 707 Bridge. With help from the FWC biologist, Division of Law Enforcement and the Juno Marine Life Center, the turtle was removed from the water and treated by Juno Marine Life staff.

Lieutenant Hankinson responded to a bottlenose dolphin stranding near Lost Tree Village in the City of North Palm Beach. Lieutenant Hankinson secured the scene and assisted FWC biologists with the removal of the sick dolphin. The dolphin was transported to a facility to be evaluated.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROL

### PALM BEACH COUNTY

Several officers and investigators from around the region provided public safety enforcement at a large-scale boating event known as “Boca Bash.” Seventeen FWC Officers worked with the Boca Raton Police and Fire Rescue to set up a command post for the event at the Silver Palms Boat Ramp. FWC utilized a mobile BUI trailer for on-site breath testing of impaired vessel operators. During the one-day event FWC issued 9 boating safety citations, 11 boating safety warnings, rescued 16 individuals that were attempting to swim to or from the sandbar in unsafe conditions and made 6 arrests for boating under the influence.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Schroer visited a local cub scout troop at Lake Catherine during their annual fishing derby. He spoke with the scouts about fishing regulations, boating safety and best practices when harvesting resources. Parents and scouts were encouraged to ask any questions they had during the event and put their newfound knowledge to the test while they fished at Lake Catherine.

Lieutenant Haworth along with Duty Officers Pereira, Gibson, Stamp and Patterson assisted with the Family Fishing Event at the Jupiter Lighthouse. FWC biologists were also in attendance and assisting approximately 60 children that were fishing and having fun. The scenery and weather was beautiful and everyone involved had a great time.

## **SOUTH REGION B**

### CASES

### MIAMI DADE COUNTY

While on land patrol in Miami, Officer Padilla saw a vessel operating on plane in a posted slow speed zone. He saw a young child not wearing a Coast Guard approved life jacket while the vessel was underway. The individual renting and operating the boat advised the officer that he did not receive pre-ride instructions or instructions on boat handling from the livery operator. He also did not have a registration onboard. At the business location, no yellow boating safety signs were displayed as required by law and the operator had no proof of insurance. Officer Padilla cited the individual for the violations as well as renting a vessel without required safety equipment.

Captive Wildlife Investigator Smith responded to a report of an individual in possession of a Burmese python without the required license. Upon arrival, the illegal possession was verified. One misdemeanor citation was issued for the violation. The snake was seized and turned over to a licensed facility.

Captive Wildlife Investigator Landa assisted another agency with the seizure of wildlife. While serving a search warrant for unrelated matters, the agency found an individual to be in possession of an alligator, a lemur, and a screech owl without the required licenses. After contacting our agency, Investigator Landa responded to seize the wildlife and place it at a licensed facility. Officer Dominguez assisted on this incident.

## MONROE COUNTY

Investigator Mattson was dispatched to a boating accident with no injuries in the area of "Robbie's Wheel Ditch" in Islamorada bayside of MM 77. A Boynton Beach man was operating his vessel through the area and slowed down as a courtesy to kayakers. A PWC driven by an adult was following too close and at a high rate of speed when he hit the back of the boat. The strike caused no injuries to the persons involved. However, the boat's cowling was cracked and a hole was punched in the port side stern of the boat. The operator was cited for two boating violations.

Officer Robison responded to assist Monroe County Sheriff's Office and Fire Department (MCSO/MCFD), as well as U.S. Fish and Wildlife reference to a suspect setting a fire on Big Pine Key near Wilder Road. Officer Robison met with Deputy Stalken of MCSO and USFW Officer Brierley who contacted a man living in the woods of Big Pine in the WMA. The man admitted to starting a fire in the woods in a shopping cart where he was living. The fire consumed approximately a half-acre of land. The man was arrested and cited for the violations.

## COLLIER COUNTY

Captive Wildlife Investigator Alford followed up on caging violations at a captive wildlife facility. He inspected the facility the previous year and documented violations for two of the enclosures. Warnings were issued and Investigator Alford provided the facility with the necessary steps required to comply. Upon reinspection, the owner of the facility did not make the necessary changes to come into compliance. The facility was issued two

misdemeanor citations for the violations. Captive Wildlife Investigator Toby, Investigator White, and Officers Thurkettle and Araujo assisted with this incident.

## DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROL

### MONROE COUNTY

Officers Wagner, Mason, and Piekenbrock were on federal water patrol in the Looe Key Existing Management Area when they saw a vessel with dive flag displayed. They waited for the diver to surface and approached the vessel. The diver had spearfishing equipment and speared fish. Looe Key Existing Management Area is closed to spearfishing. Once on board the officers discovered the vessel was a commercial fishing boat that had commercial quantities of speared fish. The operator of the vessel was issued two federal citations for possessing spearfishing equipment and possessing more than five speared fish in the management area.

Officers Baumgartner and Petru were on federal water patrol when they came across a vessel actively fishing on a popular wreck offshore. After the occupants of the vessel admitted to keeping a mutton snapper, Officer Petru boarded the vessel for a fisheries inspection. Officer Baumgartner began running the occupant's information and discovered one of them had active felony warrants with extradition out of New York. The individual was arrested and taken to Plantation Key Jail.

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

### MONROE COUNTY

Officer Rubenstein worked a public outreach event at Key Colony Beach City Hall to help answer questions and to address issues and concerns regarding iguanas and other pest problems post Hurricane Irma – and give the public information to help control the green iguana population on private property.

## SEARCH AND RESCUE

### MONROE COUNTY

Officer Powell and Officer Hettel responded to a call of an overturned kayak near Spanish Harbor Bridge. Officer Powell responded by vessel from U.S. Coast Guard Station Marathon and Officer Hettel responded by patrol vehicle. Upon reaching the area, Officer Hettel learned that a group of three kayakers were ocean side of the bridge being pushed seaward by the strong outgoing tide. Officer Hettel boarded the vessel with Officer Powell and contacted three individuals one mile from the bridge, one of which was in the water holding on to his capsized kayak. Battling 20 knot winds and choppy seas, Officer Hettel maneuvered the vessel alongside and Officer Powell quickly pulled the man aboard to safety. With the conditions too rough for the kayakers to make it back to Scout Key, the officers directed them to paddle with the wind to Big Pine Fish

Camp. The individual on board was transported to Spanish Harbor Boat Ramp and the two other persons made it to shore safely.