

FWC

Division of Law Enforcement Weekly Report



June 1, 2018 through June 7, 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

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Officer Jernigan was on water patrol on the Escambia River near the Highway 90 bridge when he saw two men fishing from one of the bridge supports. Both men had been fishing, but only one of them had a valid fishing license. Officer Jernigan noticed a line tied to the back of the piling that had several fish on it, including two redfish under the minimum size limit of 18 inches. One of the men admitted catching both fish and was charged with taking undersized redfish and warned for the bag limit violation.

Officers Long, Clark and Allgood were on patrol in Perdido Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The officers conducted a stop on a subject who was not wearing a seatbelt as he passed the officers. The operator pulled over, and after a brief conversation with the operator, Officer Long saw signs of impairment. Officer Long performed standardized field sobriety tasks on the operator and arrested the operator after performing poorly on the tasks for driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. He was charged with DUI second offense, refusal to submit to breath test second offense, knowingly driving while license is suspended second offense, attaching a tag not assigned to that vehicle and not wearing a seat belt.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

FWC with its partner agencies, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office marine unit and security personnel, Okaloosa County Jail Processing Center, U.S. Coast Guard, Escambia County Sheriff's Office marine unit, Fort Walton Beach Police Department,

Fort Walton Beach Fire and Rescue, Okaloosa Island Fire and Rescue, and Air Force Security Forces, provided public safety for the 63rd Billy Bowlegs Pirates Festival. Part of the Billy Bowlegs event involved about 600 to 700 vessels anchored off Santa Rosa Sound near the Fort Walton Beach landing. Law enforcement and first responder actions included 692 vessel stops; 2,256 citizen contacts; 18 BUI arrests; 56 uniform boating citations issued; 112 written warnings issued; 13 fight and disturbance interventions; 43 calls for service or public assist; four search and rescues; 19 medical responses; six medical transports; one medical transport to hospital; three drug possession charges; two intoxicated individuals secured at the drunk tent; one possession of alcohol under 21 years of age; and one boating accident.

Officer Corbin was on land patrol conducting boating safety, resource protection and license compliance in the Destin area. The officer saw three individuals actively fishing with rods and reels off the Destin Beach. Officer Corbin waited in the parking lot until one of the individuals returned to their vehicle. He made contact and asked to inspect the individual's required Eglin Beach permit. The individual did not have the permit. The other two individuals also returned to the vehicle. The officer explained that Eglin Beach closes at sunset. All three individuals did not have a saltwater fishing license. During the fisheries inspection, Officer Corbin saw beer in the cooler. All three individuals were under the age of 21. The owner of the vehicle claimed ownership of the beer and was issued a notice to appear citation. All individuals were issued citations for no fishing license.

Officer Corbin was on land patrol conducting boating safety, resource protection and license compliance at Cinco Bayou Boat Ramp. The officer saw a male subject exit a vehicle and enter the water with a spear gun and snorkel gear. He saw the subject swimming parallel with the bridge and spearfishing. About three hours later, the subject returned to his vehicle by land without his spear gun. Officer Corbin explained that he had saw him spearfishing within 100 yards of the bridge without a divers down device displayed. The individual did not have a valid fishing license. The individual intentionally left his spear gun on the other side of the bayou because he felt there was an FWC officer in the parking lot. The subject was cited for spearfishing within 100 yards of a fishing bridge, no divers down device and no fishing license.

Officers Corbin and Carter, Investigator Hein and Major Duval were on vessel patrol conducting boating safety inspection and resource protection in the Destin area. They saw a vessel returning from the Gulf of Mexico with rods and reels displayed. The vessel was stopped and a fisheries inspection revealed that a red snapper was harvested out of season. The boat operator was issued a notice to appear citation.

Officers Pifer, Winton and Investigator Patterson were on vessel patrol conducting boating safety inspection and resource protection in the Destin area. They saw a vessel returning from the Gulf of Mexico with rods and reels displayed. The vessel was stopped and a fisheries inspection revealed red snapper and gray triggerfish harvested out of season, along with an undersized red grouper. The operator was issued a notice to appear citation for the resource violations.

Officers Pifer, Winton and Investigator Patterson made a vessel stop that resulted in the arrest of the operator for BUI. Further, Officer Pifer charged the operator with possession of cannabis under 20 grams and paraphernalia. The operator was transported to Okaloosa County Jail.

Officers Corbin, Matechik, Carter and Investigator Hein were on vessel patrol in the Destin Harbor. A boating safety stop was conducted on a 2007 21-foot vessel. While conducting the boating safety inspection, Investigator Hein, who is a Drug Recognition Expert (DRE), saw a vape pen when a subject opened a compartment on the center console of the vessel to retrieve the vessel registration. Investigator Hein saw the oil in the vape pen was not consistent with the type of oil normally used in a vape pen. The oil inside the vape pen was thick and a dark yellow color, consistent with Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) which is the intoxicant inside cannabis. Upon consent to a search, Investigator Hein detected an odor of cannabis. A field test was done and it was determined the oil in the vape pen was THC. The owner was issued a notice to appear citation.

Officers Corbin, Carter, Investigator Hein and Major Duval were on vessel patrol conducting boating safety inspections in the Destin Pass. The officers saw a vessel being operated on the east side of Crab Island with several adults and children on board. There was also an infant, 6 months old onboard not wearing a lifejacket (PFD) while the vessel was underway. They conducted a vessel stop and advised the operator of the violation. The officers asked the operator if he had a PFD onboard the vessel for the infant and he provided a PFD for a child weighing less than 50 pounds, the improper size for an infant. It was determined the vessel was rented and the livery failed to provide the proper life jacket. The livery personnel who rented the vessel issued a notice to appear citation.

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officer Ramos was on vessel patrol in the Santa Rosa Sound and conducted a boating safety inspection on a pontoon vessel with five adults and three children onboard. During the safety inspection it was discovered that there were only adult personal flotation devices (PFDs) on board and no proper fitting PFDs for the children onboard. The operator stated that the vessel was rented from a nearby livery. Officer Ramos asked the pontoon vessel to return to the livery where he ensured they received the correct sized PFDs for the children. He then identified the person responsible for issuing the safety equipment for the rental and issued the employee a notice to appear citation for not providing the proper safety equipment to the vessel.

WAKULLA COUNTY

Officers Hughes and Korade were on land patrol on Forest Road 305 in the Apalachicola Wildlife Management Area (WMA) near the intersection of Forest Road 376 when they saw vehicle lights going in circles at the intersection. They stopped the

vehicle and contacted the occupants, at which time an open alcoholic beverage container was noticed. The passenger advised that the alcohol belonged to him. Citations were issued to both subjects; the driver for damage to public lands and the passenger for open container.

Officer Morales was approached by a St. Marks Refuge employee who advised that a State Park employee was being harassed by a patron to the park. Officer Morales followed up the investigation with the assistance of Officers Carr and Hughes. The patron was located and issued a trespass warning for the park as requested by the park manager.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

LEON COUNTY

Officer Johnson and Lieutenant Wass de Czege participated in the "Annual Kids Fishing Day" at Alfred B. Maclay State Park. They talked to the participants about fish identification and rules and regulations before they headed off to fish. The officers also helped award certificates and prizes for the biggest fish, smallest fish, and most fish caught. Approximately 150 people attended the event.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CASES

CITRUS COUNTY

Citrus County officers worked a detail focusing on blue crab violations. The detail resulted in two resource citations, seven boating citations, and 54 written warnings.

Officer Ulrich was on patrol when he checked a subject who was in possession of two undersized red drum and snook out of season. The subject was issued a citation for the snook and warnings for the red drum.

Citrus officers worked offshore fisheries details before and after the opening of the charter red snapper season and recreational grouper season. Officers worked Crystal River, Homosassa River, Ozello area and offshore patrols to inspect vessels harvesting fish. Because of their efforts, the officers collectively accounted for the following cases being written. During the detail, more than 10 resource warnings were written as accompanying enforcement efforts to the below cases:

Possession of gag grouper out of season: 3
Possession of undersized gag grouper: 5
Possession of undersized red grouper: 1
Possession of undersized cobia: 4

Possession of undersized hog snapper: 2
Possession of undersized red drum: 2
Possession oversized red drum: 1
Possession of oversized trigger fish: 1
Possession of oversized red snapper: 1
Possession of undersized mangrove snapper: 1
Possession of undersized black drum: 1
Interference with an FWC officer: 1

TAYLOR COUNTY

Officers Robson and Wilder were on federal water patrol along the coast of Taylor County. While approximately 22 miles offshore near the Buckeye Artificial Reef, the officers saw four men actively fishing from a vessel. Upon making contact and performing an administrative resource inspection, the men aboard the vessel were found to be in possession of two gag grouper, with one undersized. The captain of the vessel was cited accordingly. The fish were seized and donated to charity.

Officers Robson and Wilder received a complaint about an active trespass occurring in a private hunt club in Taylor County. This has been an ongoing issue. When the officers received the description of the UTV and ATV, they began patrolling the area and located the reported two vehicles. The subjects riding the off-road vehicles were also found and interviewed about the trespassing complaint. The subjects admitted to trespassing and were cited accordingly.

CITRUS COUNTY

Officer Boyer and Investigator Bembry were conducting JEA offshore vessel patrol for compliance with saltwater fishery regulations, when they saw a vessel with two occupants fishing. As they came up to the vessel, one occupant emptied a bucket with fish into the water. A further inspection of the vessel revealed two red snapper, which were not in season for recreational harvest and an undersized gag grouper. The two subjects were cited accordingly.

Investigator Thomason organized a combined boating fatality/serious bodily injury training with CISM response training for North Central Regional officers, Northeast Regional officers and an FWC biologist. The training was held on the Withlacoochee River and was designed to show officers how to better prepare mentally and physically for a boating accident involving a fatality/serious bodily injury. The CISM team training provided the officers and CISM team members with a reality-based scenario of what the CISM teams function would be in case of a crisis. Investigator Ayers from the North Central Region, Investigators Weis and Investigator Sumpter from the Northeast Region were very instrumental in making the boating accident training a huge success. Administrative Assistant Buchanan was also instrumental in making sure the CISM training was successful.

DIXIE COUNTY

Officers participated in a detail focusing on the illegal harvest of oysters in prohibited waters along the coastline in Dixie County. Officers were conducting surveillance in an area known for the illegal harvest of oysters when they saw three vessels with several subjects actively harvesting oysters. As the officers approached, the subjects pulled anchor and began to leave the area at a high rate of speed. The officers initiated their emergency lights and one of the vessels stopped shortly thereafter. Officers followed the second vessel up a private canal, where the oysterman abandoned their vessel and fled on foot. After contacting K9 Officer Wiggins, they set up a perimeter with the help of the Dixie County Sheriff's Office. Officer Wiggins arrived and tracked the subject who was found hiding in a nearby shed. The subjects were arrested and booked in the Dixie County Jail for obstruction and several resource violations. The third suspect was later identified and charges will be direct filed with the State's Attorney Office in Dixie County.

DUVAL COUNTY

Following heavy rainfalls, an individual placed large tree trunks along the back of their property to prevent erosion into a river. Several dump truck loads of fill dirt were brought in to fill the void from the erosion. An investigation revealed the property was a designated wetland, prohibiting the alterations of the land. Environmental Investigators Terrones and Starling observed tree debris and concrete on an additional wetlands property with the same owner. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection will require the property owner to remediate both sites. Appropriate citations were issued.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

MADISON COUNTY

Officers Vazquez and Ransom attended an outreach event at the Greenville Elementary School where numerous students, faculty members and the local press were in attendance. Both officers spoke on dealing with conflict wildlife, boating safety and the aspects of resource law enforcement.

NORTHEAST REGION

CASES

PUTNAM COUNTY

Officer Jones was assisting a disabled vessel around the sandbar and Brown Landing Boat Ramp. The persons on board were from out of town and having engine trouble. Officer Jones helped by hip towing them across the river to the boat ramp. While in tow, Officer Jones saw a vessel coming from behind with loud music and a lot of lights. The oncoming vessel shined a light on Officer Jones' position several times. Both Officer

Jones' vessel and the disabled vessel had their all around and navigational lights illuminated. As the oncoming vessel got closer, it was heading directly towards the two vessels so the officer activated his blue lights. At the last second the oncoming vessel veered within 15 feet of both vessels while still on full plane. A vessel stop was conducted and the operator showed signs of impairment. After conducting sobriety tests the operator was arrested for boating under the influence and reckless operation of a vessel. The operator refused to provide a breath sample.

VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officers Malicoat and Pelzel were conducting resource inspections on the shoreline in the Edgewater area. An adult male was unable to provide the proper fishing license upon request and after a check through FWC Dispatch, it was determined he had an outstanding arrest warrant for forgery. He was arrested and booked into the Volusia County Jail.

ST. JOHNS COUNTY

Officers Thomas, Lawrence, Harris, Miller, Greenier, Bertolami, and Lieutenant Zukowsky conducted a detail focused on inspecting retail/wholesale bait shops and seafood dealers in St. Johns and Flagler Counties. Seventeen retail/wholesale dealers were inspected. During the detail, Officers Thomas, Lawrence, and Harris inspected two bait shops without the required retail license. Both bait shops were issued citations for selling bait without a retail dealer's license. During an inspection of a wholesale dealer, nine quality control violations were identified. The wholesale dealer was issued warnings for the same violations last year. Officers Thomas, Harris, and Lawrence issued the wholesale dealer citations for the nine quality control violations. The officers deemed the seafood unsafe for human consumption and the dealer voluntarily gave up the unwholesome items for disposal.

BREVARD COUNTY

While on foot patrol in Port Canaveral, Officer Balgo saw an individual fishing on the seawall. A resource inspection located six mangrove snappers, five of which were undersized. The individual was cited for possession of undersized mangrove snapper and received warnings for over the bag limit and no fishing license.

While on water patrol near Ski Island, Officers Balgo and Humphrey stopped a vessel for a safety inspection. During the stop, Officer Balgo detected the odor of an alcoholic beverage coming from the operator and saw signs of impairment. Officer Balgo administered seated field sobriety exercises and determined that the operator's normal faculties were impaired. The operator was arrested for boating under the influence (BUI) and transported to the Brevard County Jail.

Officer Balgo received a call about a subject at Mather's Bridge catching an oversized red drum and then leaving in his vehicle. After getting a description, Officer Balgo

located the vehicle. A fisheries inspection located one 40-inch red drum. A citation was issued for the violation.

While on patrol at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, Officer Rasey saw two suspicious subjects near a busy boat ramp. The subjects were standing in the middle of the launch area and staring at the officer's patrol truck. After several minutes, the subjects walked out of sight. Shortly after, they emerged from a nearby wooded trail carrying a cooler. After walking by the patrol truck and attempting to avoid eye contact, Officer Rasey stopped them and initiated a resource inspection. The inspection revealed that one subject was over the bag limit of red drum. A citation was issued for the violation.

While patrolling Merritt Island Refuge, Officer Humphrey inspected a vessel at the boat ramp. During the stop, the individual admitted to having two black drum. An inspection of the black drum revealed they measured 28 ¼ inches and 30 inches. The subject was issued a citation for possession of more than one black drum over 24 inches.

Officers Maslo and Miller located three individuals keeping undersized fish behind a local business. Officer Maslo saw three subjects meeting the description provided by Officer Miller, who was observing from a concealed location. Officer Maslo found the group to be in possession of undersized sheepshead. One subject was issued a citation for undersized sheepshead.

Lieutenant Lightsey and Officers Delano and Cybula saw a man operating a vehicle at a local boat ramp. Once the operator got out of the vehicle he approached the dock where friends and family were in a vessel. The man did not get into the vessel, instead he allowed family to load the vessel. During the interaction the operator of the vehicle swayed while walking, would not make eye contact with the officers when being spoken to and leaned against the trailer with his head. After speaking with the man, who admitted to drinking several alcoholic beverages, Officer Delano asked if he would participate in standardized field sobriety tasks (SFSTs). During the SFSTs the man stopped and stated that he could not perform any more tasks. The man was placed under arrest for driving under the influence (DUI). He refused to submit to a lawful test of his breath and was turned over to the Brevard County Jail without incident.

Officer Dubose saw two men using a cast net to catch fish under a local bridge. After observing the men for some time a resource inspection was conducted. The inspection revealed that one of the men was in possession of one undersized sheepshead and one undersized black drum. A citation was issued for the violations.

Lieutenant Lightsey received information that someone was keeping undersized pompano at a local beach. Lieutenant Lightsey along with Officers Cybula and Delano located the subject and conducted a resource inspection, locating two undersized pompano. Officer Delano issued the man a citation for possession of undersized pompano.

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

Officers Kearney and Stephenson conducted a resource inspection of a man fishing late at night at the Wabasso Causeway. During the check, the subject was unable to produce a fishing license or identification. Lieutenant Lightsey arrived on scene to assist in identifying the man. After investigating further, it was found that the man had given a false name and had a tag not assigned to him in his vehicle. He also had an active arrest warrant out of Indian River County for theft. Officer Stephenson arrested the man on the warrant and filed additional charges of giving a false name to law enforcement while legally detained and attaching tag not assigned.

OSCEOLA COUNTY

Officer McLendon was patrolling Lake Jackson Fish Management Area when he saw two subjects along the shore. Officer McLendon saw one subject catch and keep several large bass, which is a violation of the fish management area rules of catch and release for bass. Upon conducting a fisheries inspection, Officer McLendon discovered the subject had eight bass in his possession, six of which were over 16 inches. The same subject was also in possession of an undersized black crappie. The subject was charged with possession of bass on Lake Jackson, possession of undersized crappie on Lake Jackson, and over the daily bag limit for bass.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

LAKE COUNTY

Officer Morrow was on patrol at Summerall Park in Tavares when he was waived down because a pregnant woman had collapsed in the parking lot. He quickly ran over to the woman who was face down, unconscious and unresponsive. He immediately began to provide first aid. Once she regained consciousness, he placed her on her side with a jacket covering her body and a blanket under her head. He continued to monitor her breathing until EMS arrived.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CASES

DESOTO/HARDEE/POLK COUNTIES

Officers in Desoto/Hardee/Polk Counties participated in boating safety patrols during the Memorial Day weekend. Because of the inclement weather, the number of boaters out for the holiday weekend was lower than past years. Even with the bad weather, FWC officers checked 170 users, conducted 47 vessel inspections, issued 40 written warnings and 5 infractions. Officers Cloud and Geeraerts apprehended five subjects

night hunting in west Hardee County issuing each subject a misdemeanor notice to appear.

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

While on land patrol at Cockroach Bay Boat Ramp, Officers Caldwell and Rorer saw a small vessel pull onto the beach. As they approached the vessel to conduct a resource inspection, Officer Caldwell noticed a snook next to the individual that appeared to be swimming slowly away. After the officers read the individual his Miranda Rights, he admitted to throwing the snook overboard when he saw the FWC truck. The individual was cited accordingly for undersized and out of season snook.

LEE COUNTY

While on plainclothes water patrol near New Pass in Lee County, Officer Price saw two individuals throwing a cast net and catching snook. He directed a uniformed officer to their location. Officer Rogers conducted a resource inspection and cited the individuals for violations to include three undersized, out of season, over the bag limit, cast-netted snook.

MANATEE COUNTY

Officer Gonzales was on water patrol around Long Boat Pass near Jew Fish Key. While on patrol he stopped and performed a boating safety inspection on a vessel that was transiting near the key. During the boating safety inspection, it appeared that the captain of the vessel was under the influence of alcohol. After an investigation, the operator was arrested and taken to jail for boating under the influence and will have to appear in court for his violation.

Officers Dalton and Gonzales were on water patrol in the area of Long Boat Pass near Jew Fish Key. While on patrol they stopped and performed a boating safety inspection on a vessel that was operating near the key. While approaching the vessel, the two officers witnessed two separate men operate the vessel while underway. The officers stopped the vessel and conducted a boating safety inspection and it appeared that both operators were under influence of alcohol. After an investigation, the operators were arrested and taken to jail for boating under the influence. They will have to appear in court for their violations.

PINELLAS COUNTY

While on patrol near the Pinellas Bayway, Officer Pettifer conducted a fisheries inspection. The individual said he caught a snook. Upon measuring the snook, Officer Pettifer discovered it was only twenty-two inches long and under the legal minimum size limit of twenty-eight inches. Snook season is also closed. He was issued a citation for possession of a snook during closed season.

While on water patrol west of John's Pass, Officer Pettifer saw a vessel actively engaged in fishing. Upon approaching the vessel to initiate a fisheries inspection, Officer Pettifer saw a red grouper floating near the stern of the vessel. Officer Pettifer recovered the grouper which measured fourteen inches. Through the course of the inspection, one of the individuals admitted to catching the red grouper and throwing it off the boat when he saw Officer Pettifer's patrol vessel approaching. That individual was issued citations for illegal take of an undersized red grouper and interfering with the duties of a FWC Officer by not allowing an inspection of his catch.

While on patrol at the North Skyway Fishing Pier, Officer Pettifer conducted a fisheries inspection. He found the individual to be in possession of one undersize gag grouper. The individual was issued a citation for the violation.

POLK COUNTY

FWC staff discovered several anomalies on an individual's application to import non-native reptiles into Florida. This led to an investigation by Lieutenant DeLacure, Captive Wildlife Investigator Hough, and Captive Wildlife Investigator McDaniel. The subject was located and found to be in possession of bush vipers that were unlawfully imported. Further investigation revealed the subject imported 10 gaboon vipers and 15 spitting cobras to Charlotte County. Captive Wildlife Investigator O'Horo went to this location to inspect the facility and interview the subject. Two misdemeanor citations were issued for the illegal importation and illegal possession of venomous snakes.

PASCO COUNTY

Lieutenant DeLacure and Captive Wildlife Investigator Hough responded to a complaint regarding the unlawful possession of venomous snakes. Upon arrival to the subject's residence, the individual was found to be in possession of a sidewinder rattlesnake without the required license. Eight misdemeanor citations were issued for the unlawful possession and related violations.

Deputies responded to an accident involving a stolen vehicle. Upon arrival, the subject was found to be in possession of a capuchin monkey. Lieutenant DeLacure responded and interviewed the subject. The investigation revealed the subject did not have the required license to possess the monkey. In addition to the grand theft, two misdemeanor charges were filed for the illegal possession and for failure to provide a source of acquisition for the monkey. The monkey was transported to a licensed primate boarding facility.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

LEE COUNTY

While on plainclothes undercover water patrol in the New Pass area, Officer Price watched three men wading and throwing a cast net. As he was approaching the area,

he heard yelling coming from the New Pass Bridge. He saw people running off the bridge and down to the seawall and a man (later identified as Danilo DeLeon) clinging to a concrete seawall area which was covered with barnacles. He also saw two men (Olo DeLeon and Isel Lustein Lopez Gonzalez) clinging to barnacle-covered pilings on the New Pass Bridge. The three men in distress were the same three men he had seen wade fishing earlier during his patrols of the area. As he approached the seawall, bystanders and family had pulled Mr. Danilo DeLeon to safety onto the top of the seawall. He moved to assist the other two men struggling to hold onto the bridge's pilings in the swift current of the outgoing tide. Officer Price pulled up to each piling, he instructed the men to grab hold of the bow of his patrol vessel. He backed the boat away from the bridge and toward the seawall. Before he arrived at the seawall, his motor shut off. The cast net the men were throwing earlier and had tossed away when they were swept out with the tide had become entangled in his patrol vessel's propeller. Using a makeshift push pole, Officer Price maneuvered his boat to the seawall. He pulled Mr. DeLeon and Mr. Gonzalez into his vessel and onto the safety of the top of the seawall. The men collapsed from exhaustion and had numerous lacerations from the barnacles. Officer Price asked dispatch to contact EMS to evaluate their injuries. EMS arrived on the scene and assessed the three men and Officer Price removed the cast net from his vessel's propeller. The men were cleared by EMS and all parties involved safely left the area.

SOUTH REGION A

CASES

MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Carroll and Officer Brevik were conducting water patrol near the St. Lucie River and Hell's Gate. The officers saw two personal watercraft operating recklessly. The officers saw a subject in the water and two personal watercraft operating in circles around the subject, accelerating toward the subject and then turning at the last moment to splash the subject in the water. The officers conducted a vessel stop and determined the operators of the personal watercraft were impaired. Officer Carroll arrested one operator for boating under the influence and Officer Brevik arrested the other operator for boating under the influence and reckless operation of a personal watercraft.

Officer Brevik and Officer Carroll were conducting water patrol near the Palm City Bridge Boat Ramp when they saw a truck parked with the passenger door open. The officers approached the vehicle and saw a subject hanging out of the vehicle. Officer Brevik approached the subject to check on his condition. The officers saw the subject was passed out. The subject woke up and exited the vehicle staggering and was unable to stand without bracing himself on the vehicle. Through their investigation, the officers determined the individual was driving while impaired. The individual was arrested and booked into the Martin County Jail.

Officer Carroll was conducting patrol at Sandsprit Park when he saw a vessel with several fishing poles and tackle onboard. The vessel was stopped after it attempted to evade the officer. Officer Carroll discovered the vessel was returning from the Bahamas and conducted an investigation. He discovered 30 grouper filets with no skin attached, 16 tuna filets, 5 conch shells, 32 conch, 1 common purple sea fan, 1 piece of coral, 1 marlin head and tail, 18 lobster out of season, 31 hogfish filets with no skin attached, and 6 wahoo filets with no skin attached. The lobster was hidden under chum blocks in a deep freezer onboard the vessel. The 3 men on board were arrested and booked into Martin County Jail for the violations.

Officer Carroll and Officer Rogers stopped a commercial fishing vessel at Sandsprit Park and saw several fish not on ice. Their investigation determined the fish were going to be sold and issued the subject a quality control citation.

OKEECHOBEE COUNTY

Investigator Patterson filed charges with the Okeechobee State Attorney's Office which closed out a year-long investigation into the private lands collection of alligator eggs. The case was closed with charges being brought against two subjects for the illegal collection of alligator eggs and failure to verify the nest survey.

Captive Wildlife Investigator Alford and Officer Crosby responded to a report of a monkey attack at Home Depot. Upon arrival, they learned that a spider monkey was left unattended in a vehicle. The monkey got out and was roaming the parking lot. An employee attempted to lead the monkey into the store by the leash that was around its neck. The monkey bit and scratched the employee while she was attempting to lead it inside. The owner was located, and it was determined she did have a license to possess the spider monkey. Further investigation revealed a similar incident occurred at this same location a week prior, but was not reported. During that incident, the owner brought the monkey inside the store, where it scratched the cashier while checking out. An inspection of the caging was performed at the facility where the monkey resides and numerous deficiencies were noted there as well. Six misdemeanor citations, one infraction, and two warnings were issued for the incidents and facility inspection.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Langley was on vessel patrol in the intracoastal-waterway near Spanish River Park when he saw a large vessel almost strike two kayakers. He approached the kayakers and made sure they were okay then conducted a vessel stop on the boat. The operator was cited accordingly.

Officer Schroer and Officer Rogers conducted a fisheries inspection on a vessel transiting from the Bahamas to Florida. During the inspection, Officer Schroer found the captain of the vessel to be in possession of two gallon sized plastic bags filled with fish fillets that had no skin left intact. The captain said the bags contained mutton snapper and hog snapper fillets. When transiting from the Bahamas to Florida by boat,

recreational harvesters may transport their daily Florida bag limit of fish fillets from dolphin, wahoo, snapper or grouper if the skin remains intact for identification. The captain of the vessel was cited for being in possession of snapper fillets with no skin intact while transiting from the Bahamas to Florida.

Captive Wildlife Investigator Howell responded to the report of the illegal possession of a baby raccoon. A local police agency was on scene for a separate incident and noticed the raccoon. Investigator Howell took possession of the raccoon and issued warnings for the illegal possession and related violations. The raccoon was turned over to a licensed facility.

ST. LUCIE COUNTY

Investigator Patterson saw a vehicle driving very slowly. As the vehicle passed him, the operator had a blank stare on his face. He initiated a traffic stop on the subject who did not use his turn signal when turning into a fish house. Seeing signs of impairment, he asked the subject to perform field sobriety tasks. The subject did very poorly on the tasks. He arrested the subject for driving under the influence and requested a drug recognition expert to meet him at the jail. After an evaluation was performed, the drug recognition expert (DRE) determined that he was under the influence of three various categories of illegal and prescription drugs.

Officer Miano was on park patrol at the Fort Pierce Inlet State Park when she saw a vehicle parked near a popular fishing spot. Officer Miano began to walk towards the fishing area. She encountered a subject walking briskly in the opposite direction, carrying a snook in one hand and a zip lock bag and a fishing pole in the other. An inspection revealed the snook to be of legal harvest size measuring 29 inches long. The zip lock bag however contained two small snook fillets. The subject was cited for possession of snook not in whole condition and over the bag limit of snook. The fish was seized as evidence.

HENDRY COUNTY

Captive Wildlife Investigator Alford and Officer Krasco responded to a complaint regarding the illegal discharge of oil. The officers identified the location and found it was discharged into a drainage canal on a county easement. Officers Allen and Madsen arrived to assist on scene. The suspect confessed that he had been spilling used motor oil behind his residence for years. A Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Emergency Response Team (ERT) arrived to assess the contamination of the water and soil. The suspect was issued a misdemeanor citation for illegally discharging used oil. Further investigation by Environmental Investigator Booth revealed the subject was operating a commercial mechanic operation from his residence, making the illegal dumping a felony. After consulting with the State Attorney's Office, felony charges were filed for the illegal dumping of used motor oil from a commercial entity.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

GLADES COUNTY

Officer Brodbeck was on patrol when he received a call regarding an alligator on a soccer field in Clewiston. Upon arrival, a seven-foot alligator was on the field with many children nearby. Officer Brodbeck captured the alligator and placed it in the bed of his patrol truck. Due to the alligator not showing a fear of people, the alligator was transferred to a licensed nuisance alligator trapper.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

A concerned citizen called FWC Dispatch because her niece had brought a baby gopher tortoise home with her from Ocala. Officer Mann immediately retrieved the tortoise and transferred it to Officers Kirkland and Hudson who brought it to Gopher Tortoise Conservation Biologist King for observation.

SOUTH REGION B

CASES

MIAMI DADE COUNTY

Investigator Stiffler, K-9 Officer Martir-Negron and Officer Cosculluela assisted with an investigation of a suspect offering to sell a pair of Florida box turtles. The suspect offered to sell the turtles to an undercover investigator. The suspect was issued a warning for selling wildlife without a license and relinquished ownership of the turtles. The turtles were taken to a private holding facility.

Several officers and trainees conducted operation “Buckle up” in Oleta River State Park to ensure operators and passengers in vehicles entering and exiting the park complied with safety restraint laws. The detail resulted in two felony charges and one misdemeanor charge for narcotics, two misdemeanor charges for DWLS and one misdemeanor charge for no driver’s license. Over fifty infractions were issued for violations ranging from speeding to no seatbelt. Due to the proactive presence there were no reported vehicle burglaries.

Captive Wildlife Investigator Smith responded to a Vervet monkey that was reported at a local school. There is an established population of non-native Vervet monkeys in the Dania Beach area. This particular monkey had roamed well away from the established colony and there were public safety concerns with it visiting school grounds. Investigator Smith was able to successfully capture the monkey using chemical immobilization equipment. The monkey was transferred to a licensed facility.

MONROE COUNTY

Officers Conrad and Garcia were on water patrol near Whale Harbor. Officer Garcia received a call from a United States Coast Guard vessel regarding a possible impaired operator. The officers responded and began a boating under the influence investigation. The operator was not found to be impaired, but a vessel occupant was found to be in possession of a green, leafy substance that later tested positive for cannabis. The subject was charged with possession of cannabis under 20 grams, as well as possession of drug paraphernalia. Another occupant of the vessel was issued a warning for being a minor in possession of alcohol.

COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Araujo and McVaney were performing resource inspections on incoming boats at Caxambas Pass Park when they saw 4 subjects loading a boat on a trailer. When the officers contacted the subjects, they saw several fishing poles and spearfishing gear. The officers asked to inspect the catch and discovered two out of season, undersized triggerfish and one over the slot limit barracuda. The subjects were charged accordingly.

A concerned citizen contacted FWC Miami Dispatch regarding possible snook poaching in Naples. The caller saw a subject catch a large snook, wrap the fish in a shirt, place the fish in a bucket and then place the bucket inside a vehicle. The caller provided dispatch with a description of the subject, the vehicle, and the license plate. Officer Arbogast was notified of the possible violation. Based on the information provided, he found an address for the possible poacher. When he arrived at the address he saw a vehicle matching the description in the driveway. He also saw a subject standing in the garage and what was clearly an oversized snook on the ground. Officer Arbogast contacted the subject, and post Miranda, the subject admitted to knowing the season and size limits for snook. The fish was seized as evidence and the subject was cited accordingly.

Officer Plussa was conducting patrol in Naples when he saw four subjects cast netting a storm canal. Two subjects were actively using the net and placing harvested fish into a bucket. When Officer Plussa approached and announced an inspection, the four subjects attempted to flee and one began throwing fish from the bucket back into the water. All four subjects were detained and the inspection of the bucket revealed a undersized and out-of-season snook, undersized snapper, multiple black bass and panfish – all illegally taken by cast net. The subjects were arrested and booked into the Collier County Jail with seven misdemeanors for the fisheries violation and an additional charge of interference with an FWC officer.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING

COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Arbogast, Curbelo, and Araujo attended the Collier County Sheriff's Office Youth Safety Fair at the Collier County Charter Academy, along with members of

FWC's bear and panther biology staff. The officers brought a UTV and explained to children and parents FWC's responsibilities in Collier County as well as the different equipment utilized in daily operations.